



Memo

To: City Commission
From: Toby Dougherty, City Manager
Date: September 15, 2025
Re: September 18, 2025 Work Session

Please refer to the attached materials from Sarah Meitner regarding items 2 and 3 of the September 18, 2025 Work Session agenda. City staff is supportive of both proposals.

Item 2 – The Arc of Central Plains – Request to Proceed with Phase 3 of the ARC Park

The Arc of Central Plains is requesting the City Commission's approval to move forward with Phase 3 ARC Park improvements. Those improvements would consist of new shelter houses, a gazebo, and a tournament cornhole improvement. If the Commission approves moving forward with Phase 3, the Parks Director will monitor the construction phase of services to help ensure a smooth process and good outcome.

Item 3 – Heartland Community Foundation and the Ellis County Youth Action Council – Request for Permission to Install Painted Bison Statues in the City of Hays Including Some Public Spaces

This is a Countywide initiative being undertaken by the Heartland Community Foundation and the Ellis County Youth Action Council. Only a small portion of this project would involve City-owned property. If the City Commission is amenable to having these pieces of art on specific City-owned properties, approval can be given at the September 25, 2025 City Commission Meeting that directs the City Manager to put in place the specific terms for installation on City property.

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CITY COMMISSION WORK SESSION

City Hall, 1507 Main Street, Hays, KS

Thursday, September 18, 2025 – 4:00 P.M.

AGENDA

1. **September 4, 2025 Work Session Notes (PAGE 1)**
Department Head Responsible: Kim Rupp, Director of Finance
2. **The Arc of Central Plains – Request to Proceed with Phase 3 of the ARC Park (PAGE 5)**
Person Responsible: Sarah Meitner, Executive Director of Heartland Community Foundation
3. **Heartland Community Foundation and the Ellis County Youth Action Council – Request for Permission to Install Painted Bison Statues in the City of Hays Including Some Public Spaces (PAGE 13)**
Person Responsible: Sarah Meitner, Executive Director of Heartland Community Foundation
4. **Other Items for Discussion**
5. **Executive Session (if required)**
6. **Adjournment**

ANY PERSON WITH A DISABILITY NEEDING SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS TO ATTEND THIS MEETING SHOULD CONTACT THE CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE 48 HOURS PRIOR TO THE SCHEDULED MEETING TIME. EVERY ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO ACCOMMODATE ANY REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE.

City of Hays
City Commission
Work Session Notes

Thursday, September 4, 2025 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Sandy Jacobs, Mason Ruder, Alaina Cunningham, Toby Dougherty, and Don F. Hoffman

August 21, 2025 Work Session Notes

There were no corrections or additions to the minutes of the work session held on August 21, 2025; the minutes stand approved as presented.

General Nuisance Abatement for 515 East 11th Street

Jesse Rohr, Director of Public Works, stated that the Planning & Development Division is requesting a resolution to abate the nuisance violations located on the property at 515 E 11th Street. Up to this point, all proper notification has been given to the owner of the property, and to date, little to no progress has been made by the owner to clean up the lot. If all the nuisance items are removed by the City, all costs of abatement will be charged to the property owner. Staff recommends approving the resolution allowing the nuisance items located at 515 E 11th Street to be abated by the City.

At the September 11, 2025 Commission Meeting, Commissioners will be asked to approve a Resolution to abate the nuisance items located on the property at 515 E 11th Street, ten (10) days after the approval date.

General Nuisance and Inoperable Vehicle Abatement for 1716 Douglas Drive

Jesse Rohr, Director of Public Works, stated that the Planning & Development Division is requesting a resolution to abate the nuisance violations and inoperable vehicles located at 1716 Douglas Drive. Up to this point, all proper notification has been given to the owner of the property, and to date, little to no progress has been made by the owner to clean up the lot or to remove the

inoperable vehicles from the property. If all the nuisance items and the inoperable vehicles are removed by the City, all costs of abatement will be charged to the property owner. Staff recommends approving the resolution allowing the nuisance items and inoperable vehicles located at 1716 Douglas Drive to be abated by the City.

Mr. Rohr also stated that this property has not had water service since January 2025, and they have no gas service turned on at the property; however, it is believed that the property is occupied.

Discussion was held about people living in the property without any utility services. It was the consensus that everyone is concerned about the residents and this property as a health and safety risk, and the Commissioners asked for more investigating to be done in regards to this property.

At the September 11, 2025 Commission Meeting, Commissioners will be asked to approve a Resolution to abate the nuisance items and inoperable vehicles located on the property at 1716 Douglas Drive, ten (10) days after the approval date.

General Nuisance and Inoperable Vehicle Abatement for 231 East 12th Street

Jesse Rohr, Director of Public Works, stated that the Planning & Development Division is requesting a resolution to abate the nuisance violations and inoperable vehicle located at 231 E 12th Street. Up to this point, all proper notification has been given to the owner of the property, and to date, little to no progress has been made by the owner to clean up the lot or to remove the inoperable vehicle from the property. If all the nuisance items and the inoperable vehicle are removed by the City, all costs of abatement will be charged to the property owner. Staff recommends approving the resolution allowing the nuisance items and inoperable vehicle located at 231 E 12th Street to be abated by the City.

Emily Weigel, the property owner, stated that she is aware of the problems, and they are working hard to take care of the issues.

Mayor Jacobs assured her that as long as she is in communication with City staff and actively cleaning up the property, they will work with her.

At the September 11, 2025 Commission Meeting, Commissioners will be asked to approve a Resolution to abate the nuisance items and inoperable vehicle located on the property at 231 E 12th Street, ten (10) days after the approval date.

Other Items for Discussion

Commissioner Cunningham reminded everyone of the event, Pedal in the Park, that is coming up on September 13th.

Commissioner Ruder wished luck to the Thomas More Prep Marian Monarchs on their home season opener.

Mayor Jacobs asked City staff to look into the one-way streets on Fort Street and Ash Street. Since there has been changes to the schools within the City and the new Police Station moving to Fort Street, she is curious if we need to make those streets two-way traffic.

Toby Dougherty, City Manager, stated that City staff would look into it and report back.

The work session was adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

Submitted by: _____

Jami Breit –City Clerk

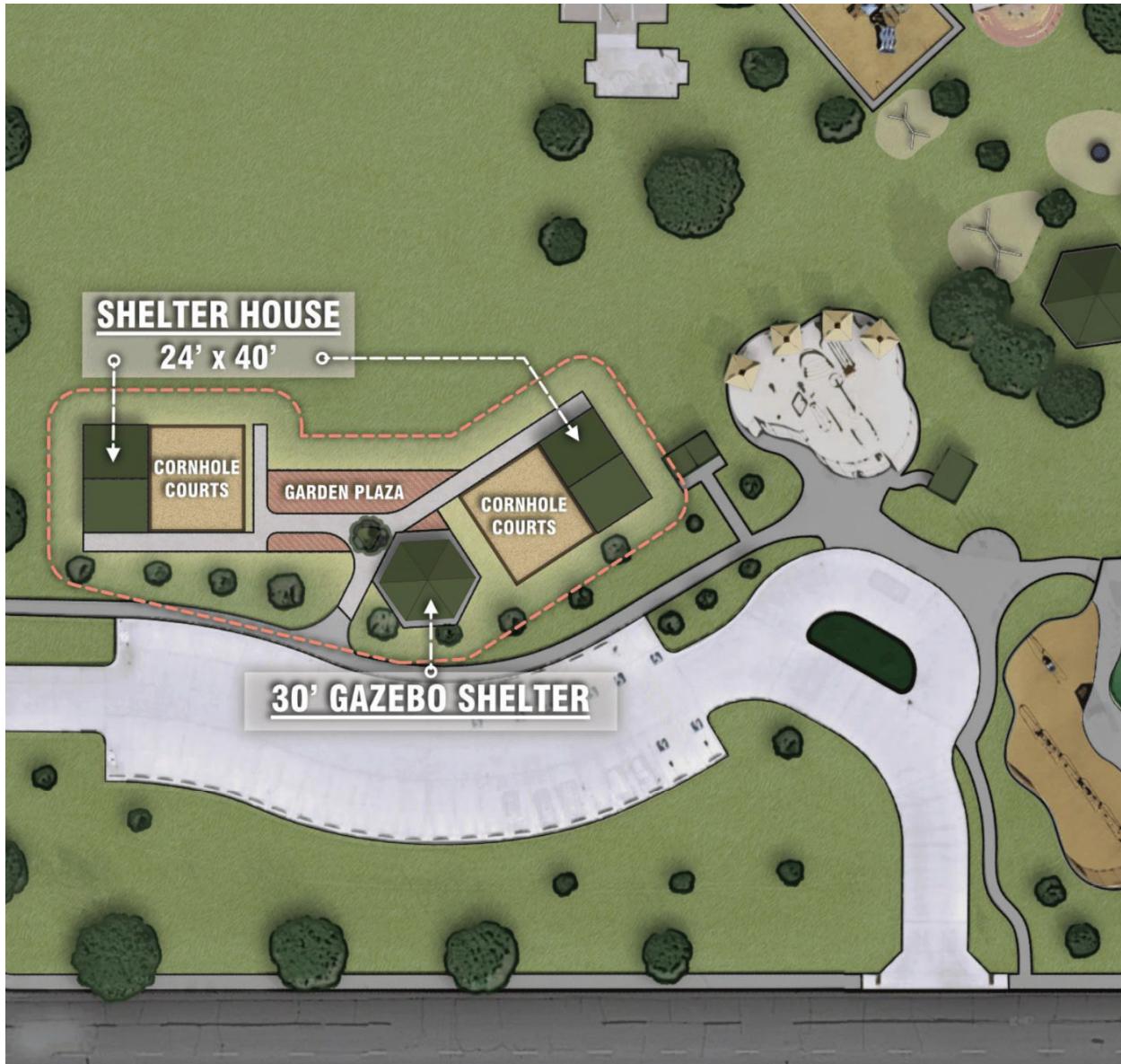
ARC Park PHASE 3



SITE PLAN

Phase 3 of Arc Park focuses on enhancing recreational opportunities while staying within current funding constraints and rising costs. Key elements include:

- New Picnic Pavilion / Covered Shelter: Provides a shaded, versatile space for gatherings, events, and everyday use.
- Permanent Cornhole Lanes: 10 lanes built with concrete and turf for durability and low maintenance, creating a new recreational feature for all ages.
- Covered Dugouts with Benches: Situated along each side of the cornhole lanes, offering seating and shelter for players and spectators.
- Garden area



SCALED BACK SITE PLAN

While we have adjusted prior plans due to limited funding and rising costs, Phase 3 continues to meet the community's needs and introduces a fun, new play area in town.



CORN HOLE



Accessible

New Sp. Olympics Sport

Turf/Concrete

Bright Design

Shaded Area

Tournament Potential

PICNIC SHELTER



Welcoming

Community Need

Sustainable

Hex Design

Shaded Area

Future Events



OTHER INFORMATION

- **Cost**

Estimate with contingency:
\$500,000

- **Request for Bid**

We plan to utilize a local contractor to facilitate the project with a request for bids.



ACTION REQUESTED

The Arc of Central Plains requests City Commission approval to proceed with the construction of Phase 3 at the Hays ARC Park as presented.



BISON ON THE LOOSE

Public Art Request



A close-up photograph of a life-size fiberglass bison statue. The bison is light brown with intricate blue and purple paintwork on its mane and forehead. Its large, dark eye is prominent. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a parking lot or outdoor area.

Examples from other communities

Overview

Bison on the Loose is a countywide public art project featuring up to **25 life-size fiberglass bison statues**, each painted by local and student artists to reflect our community's heritage, pride, and history and funded entirely through donations. The bison are intended for high-visibility locations that draw attention and encourage visitors to explore nearby businesses and attractions. Maps, walking tours, and social media campaigns will guide visitors, generating foot traffic and economic activity. Led by the Youth Action Council of the Heartland Community Foundation, with representatives from all four Ellis County high schools, the project provides teens with meaningful leadership experience while creating a lasting source of community pride.



Examples from other communities

Why?

Celebrate Local Heritage

- Highlights Ellis County's history, culture, & identity through public art.
- Creates visible symbols that residents can connect with and take pride in.

Boost Tourism & Local Economy

- Draws visitors to explore multiple locations, supporting shops, restaurants, & attractions.
- Generates family-friendly experiences that attract both locals and out-of-town guests.

Encourage Engagement

- Invites residents to interact with public spaces in new ways through maps, tours, and events.
- Strengthens connections between neighborhoods, downtown, and parks.

Promote Arts & Creativity

- Showcases the work of local and student artists in prominent public spaces.
- Inspires creativity and appreciation for the arts across the community.

Why bison?

In 2026, we celebrate 110 years since James "Scotty" Philips brought Hays' first bison herd in 1916, honoring the city's historic herd, its frontier heritage, and the bison's significance to our community.

Ellis County Collaboration

- **Unified vision:** The Youth Action Council worked to design a project that benefits all of Ellis County, including Hays, Victoria, and Ellis.
- **Inclusive input:** Students from all four high schools contributed ideas and feedback throughout the planning process.
- **Countywide impact:** The goal is to place bison statues countywide, fostering pride and connection across the county.
- **Community engagement:** The project encourages collaboration between teens, local artists, schools, and businesses to celebrate shared heritage and identity.



air Grounds
Teen-led community initiative!

YAC
YOUTH ACTION COUNCIL

- Sponsorship price per bison is \$5,000
- All donations of \$500 and above will be recognized on a statue of their preference, with a limit of up to 10 sponsors per statue
- Gifts of any amount are welcome!
- All dollars raised will be used on the project.

- Each uniquely painted in a theme that reflects the history, culture, or heritage of Ellis County
- Painted by local professional and student artists from the high schools and FHSU, utilizing the MicroFactory.
- Theme possibilities:** Volga German, railroad, Wild West, Big Creek, FHSU, native tribes, Oktoberfest, veterans, downtown, oil/ag, hospital, historic Fort, roundabouts, white bison, sunflowers, fossils, water, and bike trails!

- Lifesize, fiberglass bison statues (6.5'x5.5')
- Installed in various locations throughout Ellis County, with a goal of 3 in Ellis, 2 in Victoria, and 20 in Hays
- Total number of statues will depend on funds raised.

- Production of each bison includes: manufacturing, shipping, concrete base, mounting/moving, paint supplies, artist's time for planning and painting, auto topcoat, and money saved for a second topcoat in 7-10 years

- Covered in a clear auto topcoat for longevity and weather resistance
- Additional funds will be saved for a second topcoat in 7-10 years and to pay for any repairs
- If a statue is damaged beyond repair, it will be removed.
- The goal is for the majority of the statues to last 15-20 years

- Mounted on concrete for safety and durability
- Sign at the base will feature the statue's sponsor name(s)
- Each bison will receive a fun themed name

Statue Specs
BISON ON THE LOOSE



Examples from other communities

Other details

Collaboration with FHSU Art

- Art in the Community students assist with painting and jury process.
- Faculty oversight ensures quality, supply logistics, and educational value.
- Provides hands-on public art experience for students.

Ensuring Art Standard

- All designs will go through a design submission and jury process before approval.
- No offensive imagery, words, or business logos allowed.
- Clear auto paint applied to protect statues.

Partnership with Hess Services

- Professional installation and concrete anchoring of all statues.
- Transportation between locations provided as needed.
- Costs included in project budget; resources offered charitably.

Project Timeline

- Fundraising largely complete, but additional pledges are expected
- Painting coordinated with FHSU and local artists, upon shipment from manufacturer this winter
- Statues installed in spring 2026; hoping for a 15-20 year lifespan

What happens if one is damaged?

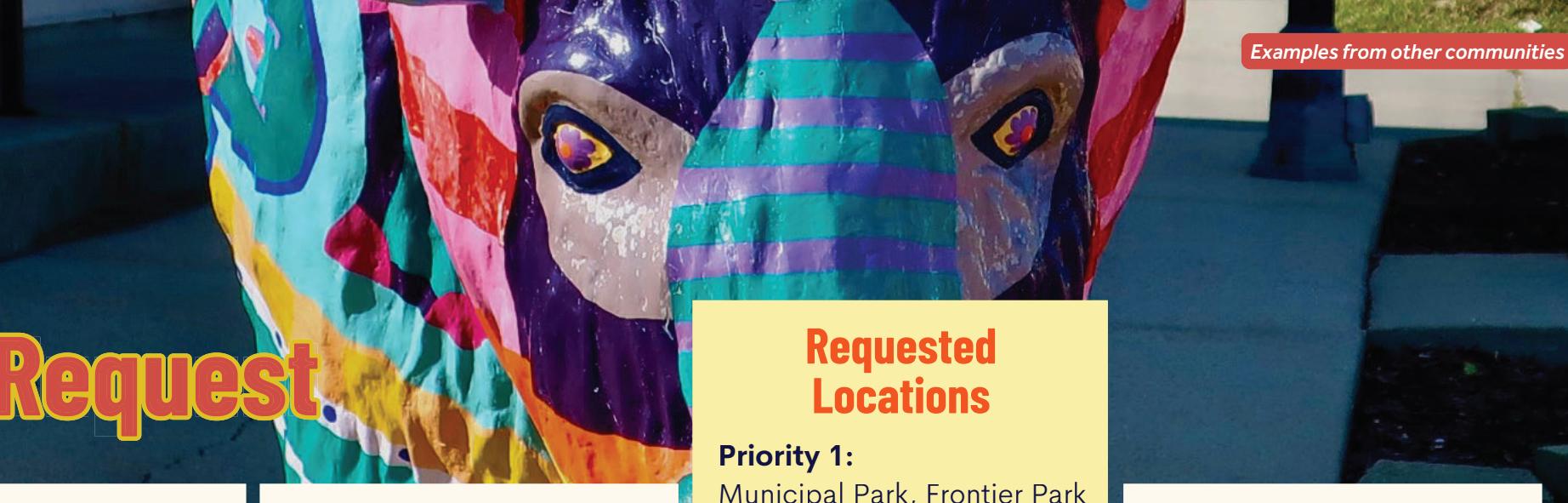
If a statue is damaged, funds held at the Heartland Community Foundation will cover repairs or touch-ups; if it's beyond repair, the statue will be removed. It will only be replaced if a donor chooses to fund a replacement.

A large, colorful bison statue is the central focus. It is primarily blue with yellow highlights on its mane and tail. The statue is positioned outdoors in a grassy area with trees in the background.

Examples from other communities

Total Raised/Pledged: \$115,000

The Youth Action Council has raised **\$115,000** in donations, grants, and pledges to date, bringing the project within \$10,000 of its \$125,000 goal. This funding comes from local businesses, community members, and individuals, with minimal public promotion so far. With approval from the City and additional community outreach, the remaining funds—and potentially more—are expected to be secured. If not, we will order the most number of bison statues possible. Grants received: *Union Pacific Railroad, Patterson Family Foundation, Heartland Community Foundation, Schmidt Foundation*



Our Request

Support of the Project

Endorse this countywide initiative as a positive community and cultural effort.

Permission for Public Spaces

Allow placement of bison statues in select city-owned locations to maximize visibility and community engagement.

Requested Locations

Priority 1:

Municipal Park, Frontier Park by bike path, Sunrise Park, Hays Airport, Downtown Pavilion, the Library

Priority 2:

Welcome Center, ARC Park, Frontier Park by the bison herd, City Hall, Hays Pool, Bickle-Schmidt Complex

Priority 3:

Veterans Park, Reynolds Nature Trail, Aubel-Bickle Park

Examples from other communities

Feedback and Collaboration

Provide input on preferred locations, themes, or design considerations for statues on public property to ensure alignment with city priorities.

With recognition of these students:

Youth Action Council 2025-26:

Ava Biggs, Hays High, senior
Jenna Brull, TMP-Marian, senior
Payten Burd, Ellis High, senior
Savannah Clingan, Hays High, senior
Emma Dinkel, Victoria High, senior
Mariella Dreiling, Hays High, senior
Brayden Gilmore, TMP-Marian, senior
Brinly Licher, Victoria High, senior
Braylee Kinderknecht, Hays High, senior
Oakleye Wickers, Hays High, senior
Isaac Bloom, Hays High, junior
Jocelyn Eck, Ellis High, junior
Taylor Kohl, Ellis High, junior
Kamden McBride, Hays High, junior
Charlie Meitner, TMP-Marian, junior
Piper Nowlin, Victoria High, junior
Hannah Rose, TMP-Marian, junior
Lydia Balthazor, TMP-Marian, sophomore
Elisabeth Bergman, Hays High, sophomore
Zoe Dinges, Victoria High, sophomore
Carson Kraus, TMP-Marian, sophomore
Grace Younger, Victoria High, sophomore



YAC alums (former members)

who also contributed:

Jake Brady, TMP-Marian
Aiden Burton, KAMS
Lexi Burton, Hays High
Ben Dome, Victoria High
Isabella Eck, Ellis High
Henry Fitzthum, Hays High
Amelia Herrman, TMP-Marian
Addison Kohl, Ellis High
Brody Nowak, Victoria High
Aurora Nowlin, Victoria High
Madelyn Rozean, TMP-Marian
Breanna Seiler, TMP-Marian
Tessa Wentling, TMP-Marian

Action Requested:

Support the Bison on the Loose public art project in Hays and allow placement of bison statues on select city-owned properties, with input on locations and themes as appropriate.

