



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

SUBJECT: Kids Park Replacement

STAFF CONTACT: Grant Brown – Recreation & Cultural Affairs

COUNCIL MEETING CYCLE: March 16th – March 23rd, 2026

RECOMMENDED COUNCIL ACTION: Approve resolution accepting the Leathers & Associates proposal to design and construct the replacement of Kids Park in an amount not to exceed \$940,000.

BACKGROUND/SUMMARY:

- The original Kids Park, constructed as a community build in 1996 using natural wood materials, has reached the end of its useful life and is now in poor condition.
- A 2014 inspection documented significant deterioration caused by persistent moisture on the site, resulting in compromised wood and fasteners. The recommendation at that time was to replace the structure using composite, low-maintenance recycled plastic materials wherever feasible.
- In 2018, the City engaged residents to re-envision Kids Park and presented design options to the City Council Recreation Committee. While traditional metal and plastic play systems were explored, the Committee expressed a clear preference for a replacement that honored the character and charm of the original structure.
- To extend the park’s usability and maintain safety, staff performed structural repairs and applied stain and sealant to the existing wood while long-term funding for a “like-kind” replacement was planned and secured.
- The Kids Park replacement project was included in the 2026 Capital Plan and Leathers & Associates is ready to assist with the project.



SMALL TOWN, BIG BEACH™

RELATED ISSUES:

Leathers & Associates has submitted sole-source documentation, approved by the City's Procurement Officer, enabling the City to partner with them once again to design a playground shaped by community input and to construct it using a hybrid model that blends onsite contractors with City staff, equipment, and support

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTIONS: The Kids Park replacement is included in the **2026 Capital Plan** with a budget allocation of **\$950,000**.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: Total financial impact – Up to **\$950,000**
Account Number for expenditure of funds: **Capital Outlay 38-879-84200**

KEY DATES:

Planning and Design: **April 2026 – May 2026**
Construction: **September 2026 – October 2026**
Expected Completion: **November 2026**

ATTACHMENTS:

Leathers & Associates
 Proposal
 Sole Source Letter
 Sole Source Justification
 Sample Renderings

Public Engagement Plan



Scope of Services and Proposal
for the construction of a new Leathers Playground
Kids Park at Johnnie Sims Park

Leathers & Associates, Inc. PO Box 3364 Jupiter, FL 33469-9998 DATE: 1/8/26	Grant Brown c/o City of Gulf Shores, AL 1930 West 1st Street Gulf Shores, AL 36542 Financial Services: PO Box 299 1905 West 1st Street Gulf Shores, AL 36547
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READ THIS ENTIRE PROPOSAL CAREFULLY. IT CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR YOUR PROJECT.

This is a lump sum contract between Grant Brown c/o City of Gulf Shores, AL (Client) and Leathers & Associates, (L&A) for design services and construction services to build a one-of-a-kind playground.

This proposal constitutes an estimate of the work our office will provide for your project and the associated fees. The fees described in this proposal assume that we are providing standard design services based on the original design by L&A. The fees outlined here will vary only if additional work is requested or required. Any modifications to this proposal will be handled through written change orders.

The construction phase will not change except by mutual agreement between L&A and the Client.

The following pages contain an outline of the scope of work, associated responsibilities and cost. This proposal is valid through 2/8/26.

PROJECT GOALS:

To design and construct a new unique custom designed playground. The design will be based on approximately 12,400 Square feet. The main materials will be a variety of recycled plastic lumber. The new playground should be expected to last minimally 30 years with proper maintenance. The playground will be designed and constructed to the current ASTM F1487 and & CPSC Pub.325 safety standard and current ADA requirements. The design will be completed by L&A. The construction will be completed by L&A. with assistance from the client

SCOPE OF WORK:

General:

This proposal is based on a hybrid construction including L&A and the client.

Construction:

Ensure that that the finished work complies with the current version of ASTM F1487 and CPSC Pub.325. L&A will provide the materials, labor and small tools necessary to perform the work unless otherwise specified under Client's responsibilities. The work will be performed under the supervision of a Certified Playground Safety Inspector. Upon completion, we will perform a final inspection assuring safety compliance.

Safety Surfacing:

Included in this proposal is mainly engineered wood fiber surfacing and some PIP pathway. Type of sub-base is to be determined, and currently not included in this scope of work. Any required drainage would be outside our scope of work and if needed should be completed a minimum of two weeks prior to the construction start date. The Client is responsible for the installation of the engineered wood fiber

Construction period:

- The completion date for the project is estimated for 2026 and will be evaluated and agreed upon by both parties
- Construction is expected to take approximately 6-7 weeks.

L&A responsibilities:

- Develop a schematic design based on client feedback
- Develop a final design based on client feedback
- Develop a materials list and order the necessary materials for the project
- Provide onsite construction labor and supervision to ensure everything is built in conformance with the drawings
- Provide final site cleanup of construction materials
- Certify the final product meets ASTM F1487 standards, CPSC Pub.325 guidelines

Client's responsibilities:

- Supplying a liaison from the Client to help coordinate the design and construction process between the Client and L&A
- Obtain any necessary permits if applicable

- Typically permits are not required for public playgrounds. ASTM F147-11 standards are the design standards for the project
- Provide any demo of existing structures
- Provide any necessary site work, such as grading or drainage
 - Site may need to have a maximum slope to 1.5% in any direction
- Stakeout the playground perimeter and post locations. L&A will provide a CAD file.
- Provide any heavy equipment for construction (lull skid steer etc.)
- Provide any temporary fencing if required
- Accept delivery of some of the materials
- Supply 8 skilled workers for 5 consecutive 40 hr weeks to assist L&A's construction crew
- Provide power and water to the construction site
- Complete any site cleanup restoration like grass area outside of playground border

Modifications to this proposal:

Any modifications to this proposal shall be handled through written change orders and approved by both L&A and the Client.

L&A Fees:

The following is an outline of fees for Leathers & Associates' professional services:

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS PHASE

Pre-construction All design work, Project Management/Construction Coordination, and construction documents	\$35,900
Construction L&A Construction Consultants: Includes all labor and travel expenses & tools to complete the project	\$449,018
Final inspection Inspected by L&A's CPSI for safety compliance	\$1,500
Estimated materials Shipping costs may increase at the time of delivery Cost does not include any applicable taxes.	\$443,750
<u>TOTAL PROJECT COST</u>	\$930,168

*If needed at any time prior to construction, any site visits will be billed at \$2,700 per trip.

*Please note that the estimated budget amounts shown do not include sales tax. Taxes will be applied, if applicable, in accordance with local and state regulations.

Payment schedule

Timing	Amount
Upon acceptance of proposal	5% = \$46,508.40
Upon completion of pre-construction phase	10% = \$93,016.80
Eight weeks prior to construction start date	50% = \$465,084
Upon substantial completion of construction phase	30% = \$279,050.40
Upon final completion	5% = \$930,168

BASIC SERVICES

The Basic Services consist of the phases described below.

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT/CONSTRUCTION DOCUMENTS PHASE

Pre-construction phase

L&A shall review the design criteria including a budget with the client to establish a schematic design and consult with the client on any design modifications. Based on the scope of work. L&A will prepare a materials list and order the necessary materials.

As part of this phase we will automatically make adjustments to the design to bring the project up to current ASTM F 1487, CPSC Pub. 325 standards and guidelines. We will also ensure compliance with ADA requirements. Individual details, traffic flow and budget constraints shall be considered.

Construction

L&A shall prepare the necessary working drawings and specifications setting forth the requirements for the construction of the entire project as needed by our construction consultants. The final drawings will conform to the current safety and accessibility guidelines (ASTM 1487, CPSC Pub. No. 325).

These documents typically consist of plan view drawings and are outlined below:

1/8" plan view, 1/4" plan view, 1/8" stakeout, and any other drawings L&A deems necessary. These drawings are not typical construction drawings and are prepared for our trained construction consultants. We will also provide a 3-D artist rendering of the final design.

If necessary, L&A shall assist the client in filing the required documents for the approval of governmental authorities having jurisdiction over the project. It is, however, the client's responsibility to identify any such requirements and authorities and to follow through with any required filings. Any additional work that may be needed is not included in this proposal.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT PHASE

The client will be assigned a project manager, who will serve as the community's main contact through the construction of the project. The project manager is available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern Time and can be reached by telephone and email.

CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Exact construction dates and completion to be determined. L&A will provide the materials, labor and to complete the job as outlined above. L&A will inspect the completed playground for compliance with the drawings and all relevant safety aspects.

INSURANCE

L&A will carry the following minimum insurance coverages:

- General liability policy \$1,000,000/occurrence, \$2,000,000 general aggregate
- Professional liability \$1,000,000
- Automobile liability \$1,000,000
- Worker compensation and employer's liability \$1,000,000 each accident
- L&A will name Grant Brown c/o City of Gulf Shores, AL as additional insured under the general liability policy upon receiving a signed contract

Leathers & Associates, Inc.

_____ Title: President _____ Date _____
Marc Leathers

Grant Brown c/o City of Gulf Shores, AL

_____ Title: _____ Date _____
Authorized Agent



Sole Source Justification Letter

Marc Leathers
Owner
Leathers & Associates, Inc.
PO Box 3364
Jupiter, FL 33469-9998

12/8/25

City of Gulf Shores
1905 W. 1st Street
P.O. Box 229
Gulf Shores, LA 36547

Re: Sole Source Justification – Custom Playground Design and Equipment

Thank you for the opportunity to work with your community on the development of a custom playground. This letter serves as formal documentation that Leathers & Associates, Inc. is the sole source provider for the design and required equipment associated with your custom playground project.

Leathers & Associates specializes in true custom-designed and custom-built playgrounds, which differ significantly from pre-manufactured playground systems. Our playgrounds are engineered as integrated structures where the design, layout, and safety compliance depend on the precise specifications of both our custom-built components and certain select manufactured components chosen specifically for your design.

1. Custom Integrated Design

Our playgrounds are unique to each project and are engineered as one cohesive system. The structural layout, elevations, access routes, platforms, and play features are all designed together. These custom components are fabricated specifically for your playground and are not available from any other vendor.

2. Safety Compliance Requires Exact Components

The design is developed to meet all applicable safety standards, including:

- ASTM F1487
- CPSC Public Playground Safety Handbook

Safety compliance depends on:

- Exact fall heights
- Clear use zones
- Entrapment/entanglement prevention
- Deck-to-component alignments

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Changing components (even if similar) can compromise these safety calculations and would require significant redesign.

3. ADA Accessibility Depends on the Specified Components

Accessibility requirements are met through carefully coordinated:

- Transfer platform heights
- Reach ranges
- Approach angles
- Clear floor spaces
- Accessible routes

Substituting equipment from another manufacturer may result in noncompliant transfer heights, incorrect geometry, or inaccessible routes.

4. Manufactured Components Used in the Design Are Also Sole Source for This Project

Although some components (such as slides) are sourced from reputable manufacturers, once a specific component is selected, it becomes the only component compatible with the approved design because:

- Dimensions, mounting requirements, and exit geometry differ across manufacturers
- Structural attachment points are engineered around that exact product
- ADA and safety requirements are met using that specific component

Thus, no other manufacturer's equipment can be substituted without redesigning major portions of the playground.

5. Competitive Bidding Is Not Applicable

Due to the custom and integrated nature of the design and the proprietary combination of custom and selected components:

- No other vendor can provide equipment compatible with the design
- No equivalent products exist that would meet the same technical, safety, and accessibility requirements
- Redesigning the playground for alternative components would increase cost, delay the project, and compromise design intent

This qualifies Leathers & Associates as sole source by design necessity, safety requirements, ADA compliance, and lack of compatible alternatives.

Conclusion

For these reasons, Leathers & Associates, Inc. is the only vendor capable of providing the equipment and design elements necessary to complete this playground as engineered. This letter is provided for your procurement records to support sole-source purchasing requirements.

Sincerely,
Marc Leathers
Owner
Leathers & Associates, Inc.



Leathers & Associates, Inc.
PO Box 3364
Jupiter, FL 33469-9998

Sole-Source Explanation for Manufactured Components Used in Custom Playground Designs

Use Case: Cities procuring a manufactured piece(s) of equipment (e.g., a slide) that is required for a custom playground design.

Overview

Leathers & Associates designs and builds **true custom playgrounds** that integrate a combination of custom-fabricated structures and selectively chosen manufactured components. In these cases, manufactured items (such as slides, climbers, or specialty features) are chosen **not interchangeably**, but because their **exact dimensions, geometry, and performance characteristics** are required for the custom design to meet safety and accessibility standards.

Even though these components come from outside manufacturers, they are still considered **sole-source for this project** because **no other manufacturer's product can be substituted without compromising the approved design, safety compliance, or ADA accessibility.**

Why This Manufactured Component Is Sole Source

1. The Custom Design Is Engineered Around This Exact Component

The playground structure and layout were created using the specific:

- Deck heights
- Attachment points
- Chute angles and exit geometry
- Structural load requirements
- Use zones

These specifications vary significantly between manufacturers.

Substituting the component would require **substantial redesign** of the custom structure and the surrounding play environment.

2. Safety Compliance Depends on This Exact Equipment

The design was reviewed using the safety requirements of:

- **ASTM F1487** (Playground Equipment Safety Standard)
- **CPSC Public Playground Safety Handbook**

These standards rely on precise measurements for:

- Fall heights
- Use zone clearances
- Entrapment/entanglement prevention
- Structural stability

Switching to another manufacturer's component may create:

- Incompatible deck-to-slide transitions
- Hazardous gaps or pinch points
- Noncompliant fall zones

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- Improper exit geometry

Thus, the selected component is **the only safe option** that fits the engineered design.

3. ADA Accessibility Requirements Are Built Around This Equipment

ADA access features are coordinated with:

- Transfer platform height
- Handrail locations
- Reach ranges
- Clear floor spaces
- Slope and grade of accessible routes

A different manufacturer's similar product may have:

- Different sidewall heights
- Different transfer point requirements
- Different deck interface geometry
- Different approach angles

Substitution may result in **loss of ADA compliance**.

4. No Equivalent Product Can Be Substituted Without Redesign

Although other manufacturers produce slides or similar components, **they are not dimensional or functional equivalents** for the custom layout. Any change would require:

- Redesign of structural elements
- Recalculation of use zones
- Adjustment to accessible routes
- Additional engineering reviews
- Possible permitting modifications

This falls under widely recognized procurement criteria for:

- "Sole source by technical necessity"
- "Design compatibility restrictions"
- "Component uniqueness essential to the overall system"

Conclusion

While the component itself is not exclusive to Leathers & Associates, it is **sole source for this project** because it is the **only product compatible with the custom design** and necessary for maintaining **ASTM safety standards and ADA accessibility compliance**.

Competitive bidding is **not appropriate** because no alternative manufacturer can provide a fully compatible substitute without compromising the integrity, safety, and compliance of the entire playground design.



ARTIST'S CONCEPT BY
Playgrounds by
LEATHERS
Dream. Build. Play!





Playgrounds by
LEATHERS
Dream. Build. Play!



THE **HIDEOUT**²

MARLOW, OKLAHOMA
ARTIST'S CONCEPT 2025

PEEK'S PARK PLAYGROUND

THE NEXT GENERATION



CEDARTOWN, GEORGIA
ARTIST'S CONCEPT SKETCH BY



Playgrounds by
LEATHERS
Dream. Build. Play!

HAND IN HAND PLAYGROUND 2.0

BLACKSBURG, VA



Playgrounds by
LEATHERS
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ARTIST'S CONCEPT
Trees outside fence
not shown for clarity

Meeting Overview: Gathering Input for Rebuilding the Kids Park at Sim's Park

Purpose

To outline public engagement strategies and communication plans for collecting community input on the design and features of the new Kids Park.

Public Engagement Methods

1. General Public Survey

- Distributed online and at community locations.
- Goal: Gather broad input on desired features, accessibility, and amenities.

2. Survey for Parents of Special Needs Children

- Targeted outreach through schools, local organizations, and online.
- Goal: Ensure inclusive design and accessibility considerations.

3. In-Class Assignment for Elementary School Children

- Activity: "Design Your Dream Park" drawing or short writing exercise.
- Goal: Capture ideas directly from kids who will use the park.

4. Community Event at Existing Park

- **Event Name:** *Come Play with Us! Let's Build a New Kid's Park — For Real This Time!*
- **Event Overview:**
 - **Activities for Kids:** Drawing station where children create their "favorite park" ideas.
 - **Adult Engagement:** Survey stations for parents and community members.
 - **Entertainment:** Music, face painting, games.
 - **Treats:** Snow cones, cotton candy.
 - **Possible Business Sponsorship:** Explore local business involvement?

- **Timing:** Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon (exact date TBD).
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Communications & Marketing Needs

- **Social Media Campaign**
 - Promote event details and survey collection times.
 - Share countdown posts and teaser content.
- **School Outreach**
 - Print flyers for backpack distribution.
 - Coordinate with school administrators for in-class assignments.
- **Ongoing Updates**
 - Regular posts on park progress and milestones.
- **Digital Engagement**
 - Build out an online town hall platform for virtual feedback.
 - Include surveys, design previews, and Q&A sessions.