

Fresno City Council approves \$9 million for park

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FRESNO, Calif. (KFSN) -- Neighborhood residents have been waiting a long time for the empty field at Gettysburg and Vista, next to Harvest Elementary School to be turned into a park.

Bruce Rudd said, "This project actually started back in December of 2006."

City manager Bruce Rudd told the city council the city expected to finance the project with housing fees from developers, but the collapse of the housing market dried up those funds. But now the state is providing the city with about \$9 million.

The plan is to build a larger version of Oso De Oro Park, a universally accessible playground, which is near Forkner and Barstow.

It's a park residents like Amanda Flores really appreciate. "There should be more parks like this. Every neighborhood should have a nice park like this."

The new park will be in council member Blong Xiong's district. He's been fighting to get it done for 8 years. "When they say quality of life park is very highly rated up there as one of those criteria's that families look to."

But while the state is paying for construction, council member Paul Caprioglio has concerns about annual maintenance costs of from one to three hundred thousand dollars a year. "For me until we have that money in the bank to sustain the park I can't support it."

Nonprofit groups are stepping up to pay some of the bill and city manager Bruce Rudd assured the council the city could find the money to pay for maintenance.

The council voted five to one to approve the contract to get the park built. Caprioglio voted no and council member Clint Olivier was absent.

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