

February, 2015

A MONTHLY MESSAGE  
FROM



**MAYOR  
TODD GOTTEL**



City of Rowlett  
4000 Main Street  
Rowlett, TX 75088

972-412-6100  
[www.rowlett.com](http://www.rowlett.com)

The 2015 State of the City  
Address was presented on  
Tuesday, February 3.

My passion for the quality of life amenities in our City is no secret. I feel that a great community has something to offer every citizen, at every stage of life! This month I'd like to bring you an update on the City's plans for the new and improved Kids Kingdom. As you may remember, the original playground, built by the community in 1997, was removed in 2013 after serious safety hazards were determined during the national playground inspection process. At that time, the City Council recognized the history and significance of Kids Kingdom to our community and pledged \$100,000 toward its replacement. And now the time has come for a community effort to raise the additional funds necessary to replace the playground with a safe and more sustainable structure!

The Rowlett Parks and Recreation Department, along with the Parks Advisory Board, have spent the last almost two years exhaustively researching and planning for this amazing new structure! Steps taken have included months-long community discussions regarding a location for the new playground. While Herfurth Park emerged early on as an option, to enhance and build upon all of the exciting new development coming to downtown, the City Council, Parks Advisory Board, City staff and the Rowlett citizens who offered their input ultimately agreed that Kids Kingdom should be rebuilt in its original spot: nestled in the trees at Pecan Grove Park.

So who gets to design this fabulous new playground? Why, our community's kids, of course! We went straight to the source when contemplating what to include. An extremely successful Design Day event was held in partnership with the schools in Rowlett, which allowed the children to submit their designs and let their voices be heard! I'll go into more detail about that fun process later in this newsletter.

The new, 20,000 square foot facility will be a playground for this and future generations to come, designed using up-to-the-minute technology and safe, sustainable materials, accessible for children of all abilities and age groups. The \$750,000 cost to build it reflects that commitment, so the City Council made the decision to include \$557,500 in the CIP Bond Election package. This will allow you, the Rowlett citizen, to decide at what level to fund Kids Kingdom by casting your vote on May 9 (I am also happy to share with you that NO City tax rate increase will result from the passage of this bond package!). A community fundraising effort will soon get underway for some very special features as well!

Folks, this is truly a community project, tirelessly planned and promoted by those volunteering their time by serving on the Parks Advisory Board. It has been designed by our community's children, will be funded by our community through our votes and donations, and ultimately will be physically constructed by those in our community willing to volunteer their enthusiasm, expertise and experience. Stories are still told about the original Kids Kingdom build process and friendships made have lasted over 20 years. I know some parents from the original build who are eagerly anticipating playing with their *grandchildren* on the new Kids Kingdom. I hope you'll join us as we move forward with the commitment made to bring Kids Kingdom back to Rowlett!

Regards,

Mayor Todd Gottel





## Community Design Day

Over 400 children and their parents attended the unveiling of the Dream Design for rebuilding the Kids Kingdom Playground in Pecan Grove Park on January 16 at Rowlett High School. With the help of many eager and enthusiastic volunteers, park designers had interviewed and brainstormed all that day with children at the Rowlett elementary and middle schools, who submitted their vision of the perfect community playground. This is something that, in a city the size of Rowlett, has never been done before. Thousands of children came up with drawings and designs of amenities they wanted to see in their new Kids Kingdom. Ideas included jet packs, elevators, teleporters, rollercoasters, pools, donuts, dinosaurs, merry-go-rounds, giant robots, racing slides, tunnels, sharks, taco play houses and gymnastic bars, just to name a few.

## Design and Features

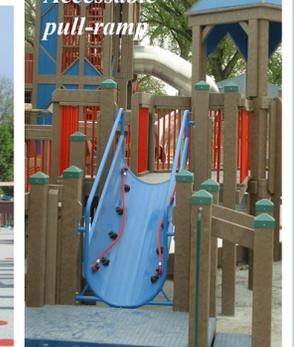
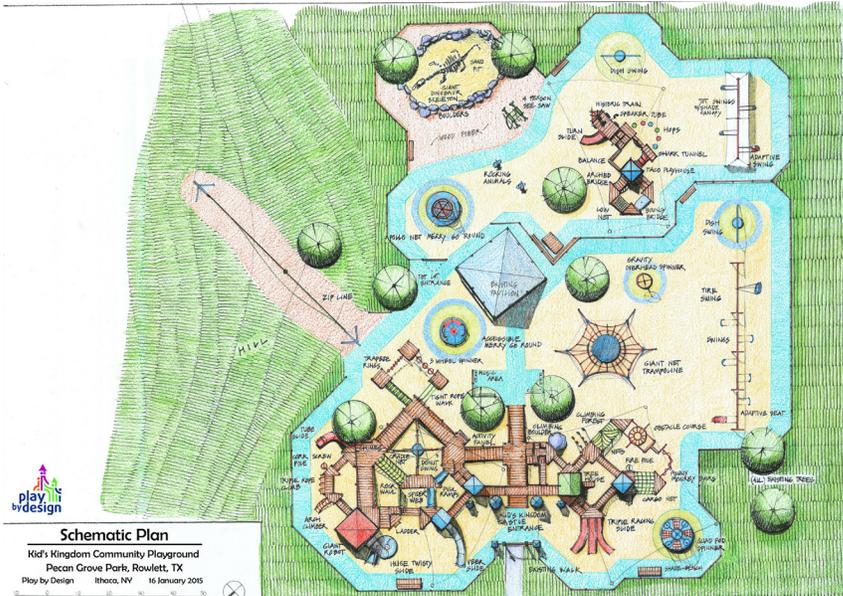
After the brain-storming sessions, designers took all of the ideas to the drawing board, condensing the children's ideas into a one-of-a-kind, safe, over-the-top, playground that is all their own.

The new 20,000 square foot facility will be accessible to children of all abilities and will be constructed from modern materials. It will include shade structures as well as a poured rubber surface, which will aid in accessibility and save the approximately \$18,000 cost per

year to maintain engineered wood fiber.

There are many special features on the playground; a taco playhouse, giant robot, shark tunnel, historic train, giant net trampoline and, of course, the magic of the former Kids Kingdom was honored with a castle entrance.

*Here are some examples of features that Kids Kingdom may include:*



## Cost and Funding

AS PRESENTED, KIDS KINGDOM WILL COST \$750,000



**\$100,000 committed to by the City Council**

and funded in the City's FY2015 Adopted Budget

**\$557,500 included in the 2015 Community Investment Program Bond Election Package -**

If voters approve the bond program on May 9, the community will be able to build the bulk of the playground including the castle structure at its entrance and the little children's area.

**\$92,000 community fundraising effort**

Once the Playground Committee is formed, fundraising will begin in earnest. Corporate and private donors will be given the opportunity to sponsor all or part of five special playground features, such as the dinosaur sandbox area or the zip line, which range in cost from \$10,500 to \$37,000. Kids Kingdom will include as many of the special features as the committee is able to raise money for, and more features could be added with continued fundraising.

*Citizens have already donated over \$10,000 toward the new playground...before there was even a specific plan in place. This will pay for one of the five special features. I LOVE the can-do spirit of this community!!*



*Wayne and Gracie Ellen, whom he recently adopted from the Rowlett Animal Shelter.*

I would like to encourage the community to make a donation. We need to raise \$92,000! Make your tax deductible contribution to the City of Rowlett Kids Kingdom Fund.

Let's **Build this Park** for the kids of Rowlett!

Wayne Baxter  
Parks Advisory Board Chair

## A Playground Built by Volunteers!

Many, many volunteers are needed to build this magical playground so please consider sharing your excitement, expertise and experience! The Parks and Recreation Department will be planning events throughout the spring and summer to recruit volunteers. You don't have to be handy with tools, there are SO many different ways you can help!

**Volunteer needs include:**

### VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

### FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

### BUILD WEEK VOLUNTEERS:

- **Skilled Construction Team Members** – those volunteers who are comfortable using professional grade power tools, ladder work and lifting.
- **Construction Team Members** – volunteers who can paint, carry and assist the skilled team members.
- **Childcare Members** – volunteers interested in assisting with childcare for the construction team members.
- **Food Service Members** – volunteers to support the construction teams by manning the food and beverage tents.
- **Check In and Runners** – volunteers to man the check-in/volunteer tent and perform miscellaneous tasks.

Even though the focus of this project is to build a playground for our children, this community build event offers adults the opportunity to reach out across the community to make new contacts, new friends and strengthen ties within neighborhoods. I encourage you and your family can become a part of Rowlett's history!

*For more information or to sign up now, please contact Parks Division Manager Keith Flournoy at 972-412-6462 or via [email](#). Send donations to Kids Kingdom Fund - P.O. Box 99 - Rowlett, TX 75030*