



Village of Farmersville
and Jackson Township



Parks and Recreation Alternatives

...

Best Practices Research and Report



Prepared by
Miami University
Department of Geography
Geospatial Analysis Center

Project Scope



The Farmersville/Jackson Township Joint Park is a shared community asset and source of pride, collaboratively developed and maintained over decades by the Village and Township. Both the park and community will continue to evolve, presenting a challenge and opportunity to those decision makers charged with managing limited resources. It is important that community conversations and decision-making be informed by both existing realities and diverse possibilities.

Most notably, in recent years, the community pool has become a growing challenge to maintain, requiring major renovation or replacement. Staffing is also a persistent issue, leading to the pool's closure for the 2025 season. Deciding what to do about the pool won't be easy, but it provides an opportunity to take a broader look at the park and how community resources might be focused moving forward.

To inform decision-making, the Village and Township contracted with the Miami University Department of Geography – and its Geospatial Analysis Center – to provide a “Farmersville Parks and Recreation Alternatives: Research and Report.” Over the course of a semester, a consulting team of a Miami faculty member and undergraduate student collaborated with local representatives to better understand existing conditions and current best practices, providing a basis for future planning and investing in the future of parks and recreation in Farmersville.

The project focused on:

- *inventorying existing conditions*: analysis of current facilities, operating costs/revenues, existing and projected needs, and funding sources;
- *researching best practices*: exploration of innovative recreational facilities and programs scalable to a small-town context, approximate capital and operating costs, and funding;
- *engaging stakeholders*: collaborate with local officials, present findings to the public.



David Prytherch
Professor of Geography

On behalf of Miami University, project researchers Dr. David Prytherch (Professor of Geography, an urban geographer, and planner with experience in local government) and undergraduate researcher Anna Sekula (an Urban and Regional Planning major) would like to thank the Farmersville/Jackson Township Joint Parks Committee, Village of Farmersville Council, and Jackson Township Trustees for the opportunity to collaborate on this project.



Anna Sekula
Undergraduate
Research Assistant

The Park, an Evolving Community Asset



The Farmersville/Jackson Township Joint Park has a unique history. The land was originally known as “The Bottle Farm,” owned by folk artist and “zero-waster” Winter Zeller (Zero) Swartzel. His collection and display of recycled materials was long a local attraction and tourist destination; the sound of the wind in the bottles was part of life in the area. Upon his death in 1953, the Village took possession of and demolished the Bottle Farm and dedicated the land for use as a future park.

Over subsequent decades, the 24.5-acre park was jointly developed and maintained by the Village of Farmersville and Jackson Township, in partnership with local organizations and residents. Improvements were made incrementally to meet community needs. The park has traditionally featured open space, a community pool, a community center, and baseball/softball diamonds, with other amenities added over time. The park reflects the community’s values and priorities over time, a dynamic place shaped to meet changing needs, today and into the future.



Parks and Recreation Planning

Parks are complex public systems. Even in small towns, developing and operating parks must contend with diverse and sometimes competing priorities and scarce resources. To help ensure short-term decisions align with long-term vision, many communities undertake parks and recreation planning. This is a multi-step process including:

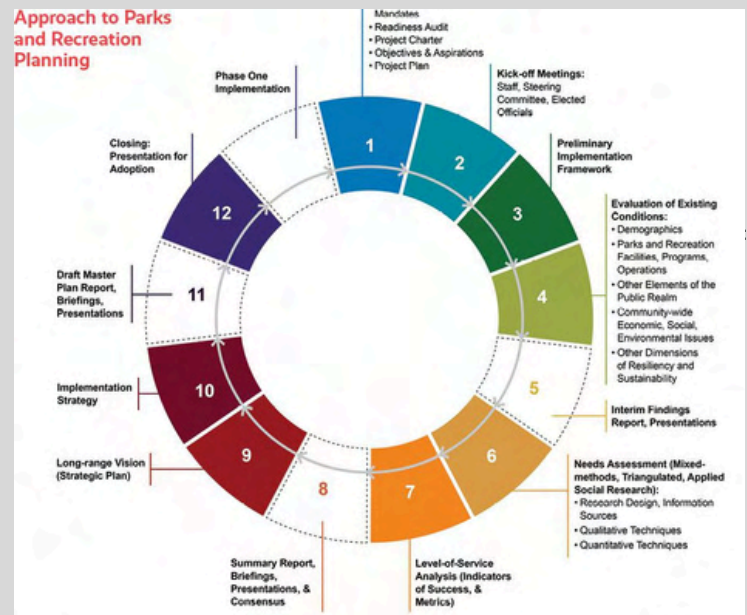
- setting vision and goals
- assessing existing conditions
- researching best practices
- assessing needs
- drafting a long-range plan
- soliciting public input
- adopting a plan
- funding and implementation

This project focused on two foundational parts of the process: analysis of existing conditions to understand the park today and best-practices research to learn what could be possible in the future.

The project unfolded over a set of research and engagement activities between October 2025 and January 2026.



- project kick-off
- background research
- site visit and inventory
- case study research & tour
- present preliminary findings
- focused research
- final plan preparation



Oct. 13 and Nov. 5: site visit and existing conditions inventory



November 21: tour of peer- community facilities



November 21: tour of peer- community facilities with committee members

ACTIVE PARKS!

Increasing Physical Activity through
PARKS, TRAILS, AND GREENWAYS



Concepts

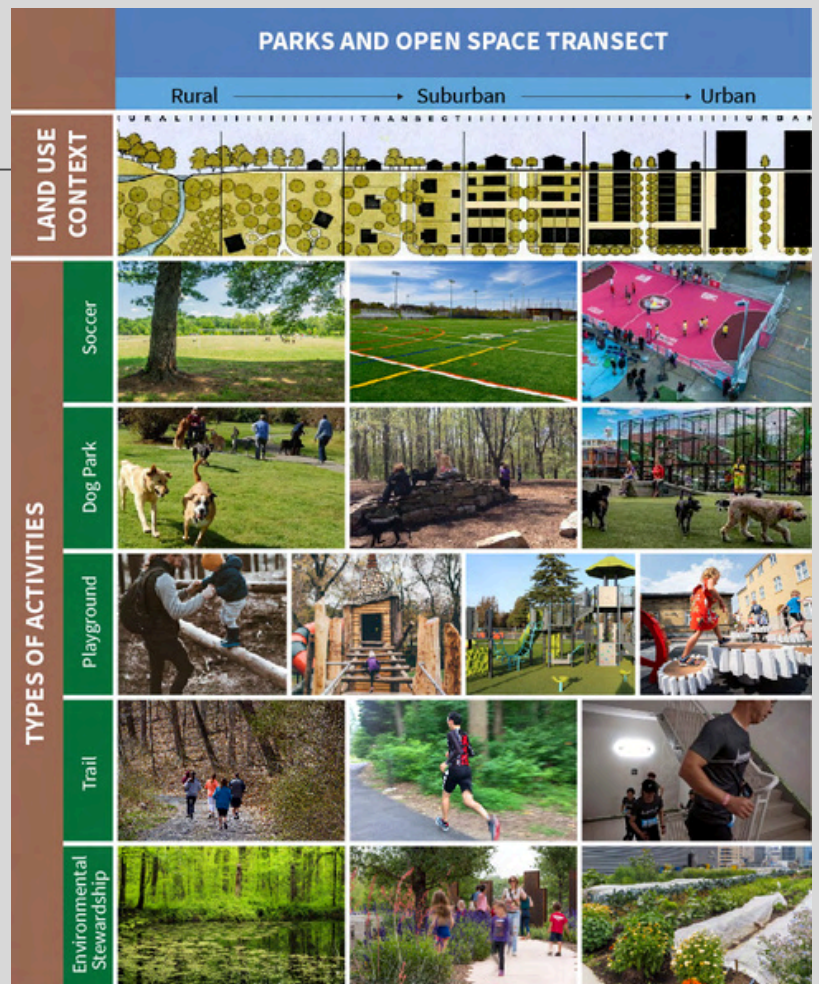
Some broad concepts are helpful for thinking about what makes a good park, both as a physical place and a vibrant community setting.

- active recreation: getting people moving
- passive recreation: relaxation and reflection
- facilities: physical places or amenities
- programming: scheduling and planning of a program, “activating” the park
- inclusive: activities for diverse users
- accessibility: ensure equal opportunity for all

Techniques

These ideas are implemented through physical elements as diverse as the kind people and activities they support.

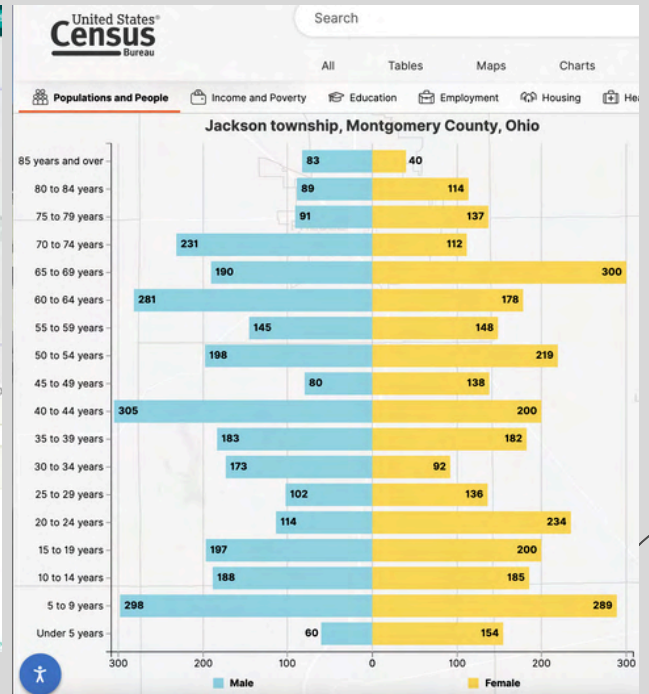
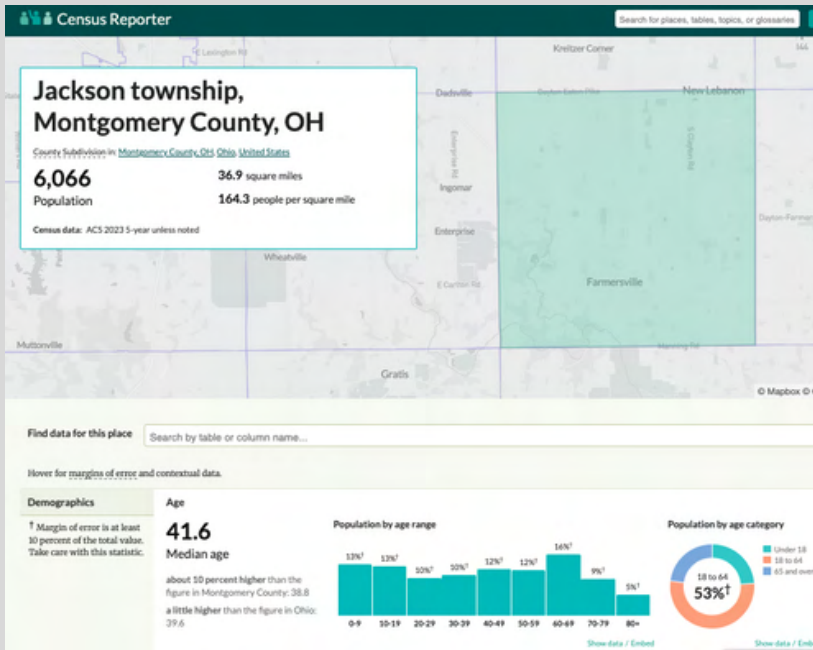
- playfields
- hardball courts
- trails
- benches/seating
- open spaces
- community centers
- water features
- landscaping
- playgrounds
- game areas
- pet areas
- parking areas
- lighting



While this project’s scope did not include development of a full parks and recreation plan, by providing a better understanding of current park conditions and best practices, this report can help inform upcoming decisions (i.e.. the future of the pool) and provide a foundation and blueprint for long-range planning in the future.

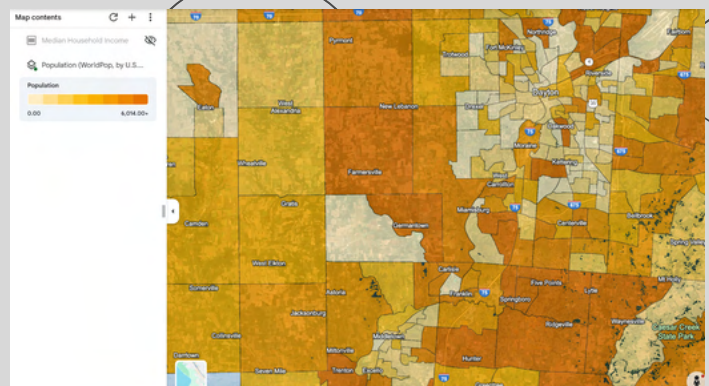
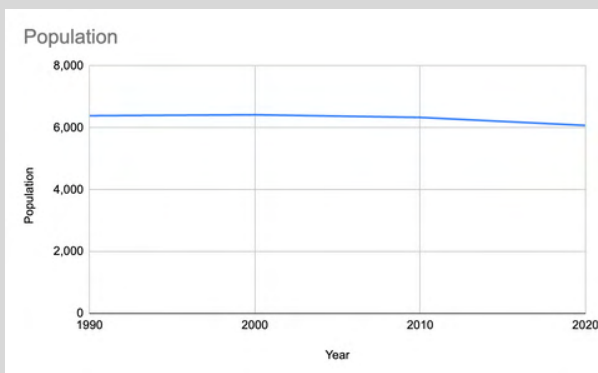
Community Context

Parks reflect and reinforce their surrounding communities. The Village of Farmersville is set within rural Jackson Township, located at the western edge of Montgomery County and the Dayton metropolitan area. These are two separate jurisdictions; one is nested within the other, yet the park is jointly managed and shared by what is functionally one community. And though this park is *the* local recreation system, it – like the community it serves -- exists in a regional context.



Population

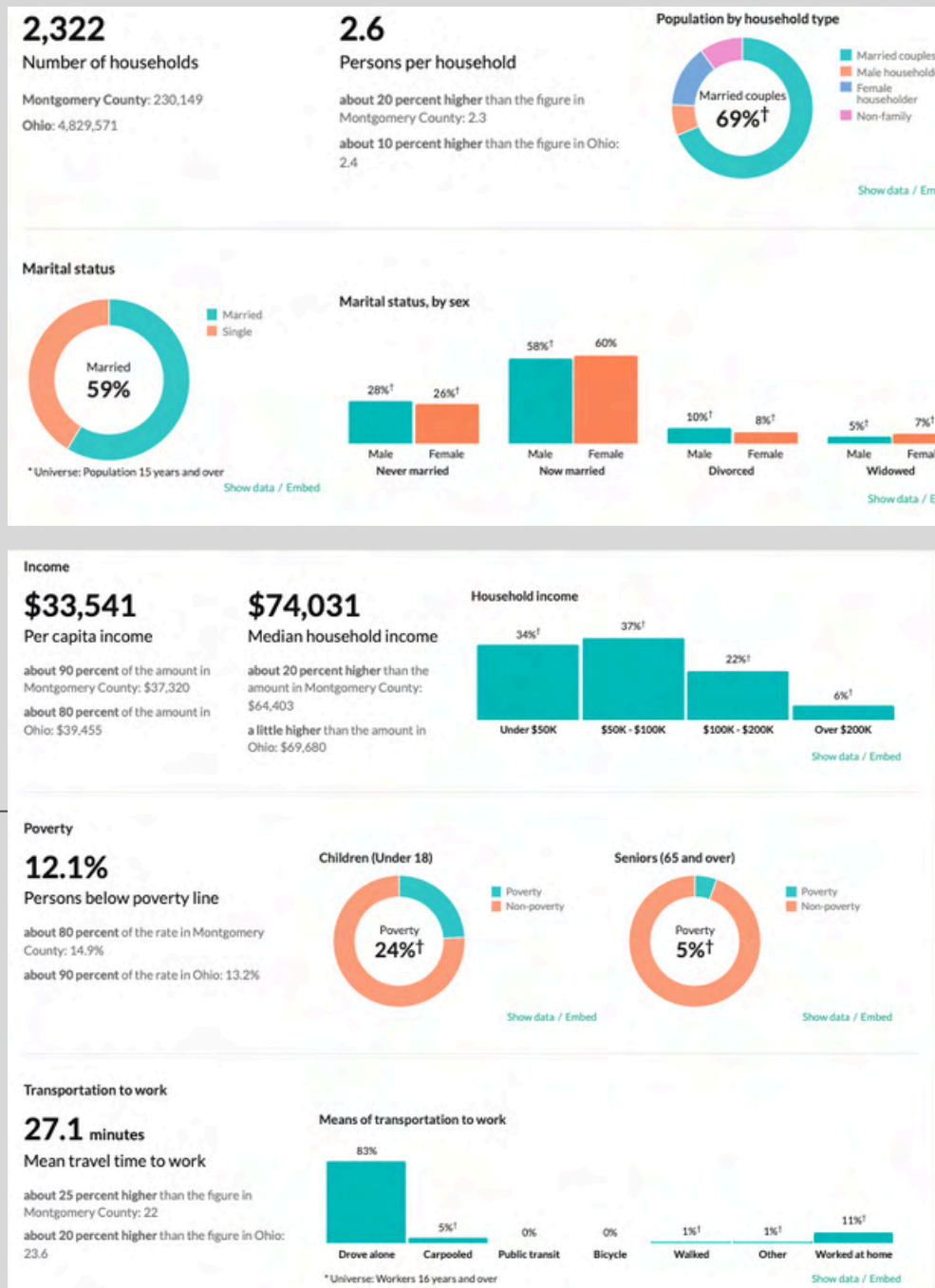
According to the U.S. Census (2023), the population of Jackson Township is 6,066 people, which includes approximately 1,000 within the Village of Farmersville. So if the village is small, the combined population would meet Ohio's standards for a municipality. The population is not racially diverse (97% of the population classify themselves as "White, non-Hispanic"), but it contains diverse age cohorts and income levels. Among these age cohorts, there are relatively high percentages of both older adults (60-74 years) and young children (5-9).



Jackson Township remains a primarily rural portion of Montgomery County with a stable population (with perhaps some slight decline). Montgomery County is projected to see declining populations in future decades (-8.4% 2020 to 2050, according to the Ohio Department of Development). Yet the Dayton metropolitan area has seen rapid urban sprawl and exurbanization even with stagnant populations, so Farmersville and Jackson Township can anticipate future development.

Households and Economics

Jacksonville Township's social and economic metrics are fairly typical of Ohio at large. There are 2.6 persons per household on average. The median household income is \$74,031 per year, which is 20% higher than the remainder of Montgomery County, yet only slightly higher than Ohio. The poverty rate is also quite typical, at 12.1%. Household demographics vary slightly from national averages.



While there are local employers, including in the agricultural sector, for many locals this is a “bedroom community” to live in while working elsewhere. Residents are choosing this community for reasons like quality of life and amenities. Farmersville is a quaint village set in a beautiful rural setting. The local Valley View Schools were ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* as #16 among Dayton area high schools in 2023-24. The area offers diverse recreational opportunities nearby, including Germantown Metropark and the Germantown Aquatic Center.

A key question becomes: How can the park best serve the recreational needs of existing locals while offering the amenities that could help retain or attract future residents?

Existing Conditions: Facilities

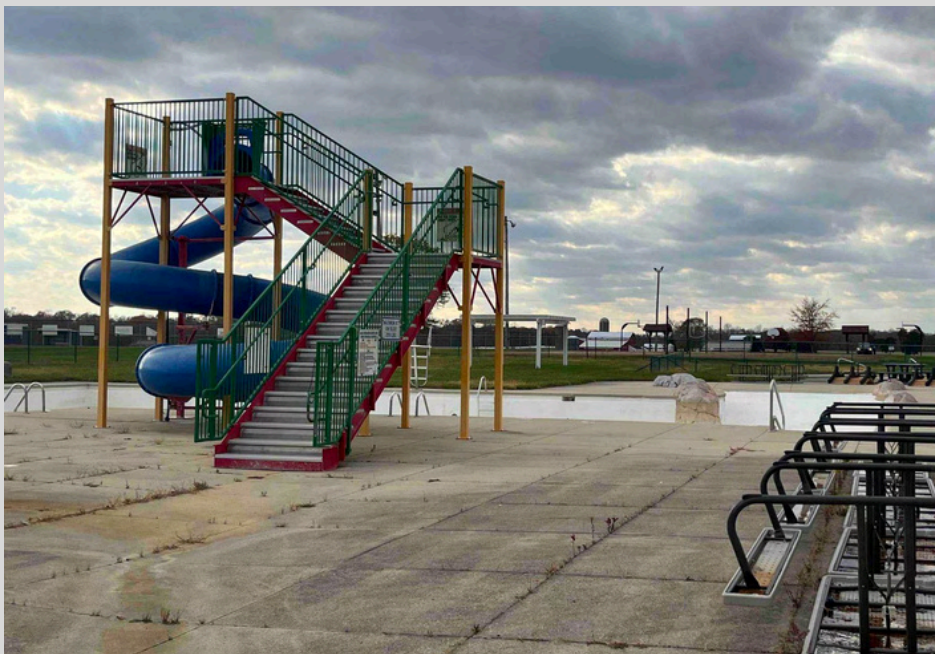
Community Center

One of the park's original facilities, it offers a multi-purpose gathering place with an open room to accommodate large groups, a full kitchen, and indoor restrooms. In front of the structure is a memorial garden honoring community veterans, and next to it are patio spaces for outdoor gatherings.



Aquatic Center

Water has long also been a key feature of the joint park, today including an adult swimming and diving pool, a baby pool, a concession building, and a pump house. While some of these facilities are in good condition (e.g., concession building), the pool has deteriorated and requires major renovation or replacement, with renovation alone estimated to cost \$1.5 M. In addition, pools require staffing, which has been difficult to secure, causing the pool to not be opened for the 2025 season.



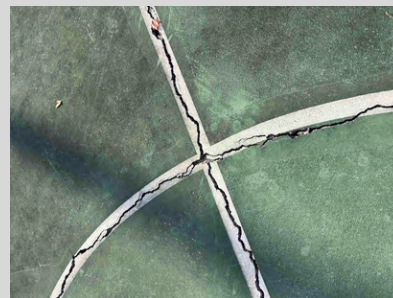
Baseball/Softball Diamonds

The great American pastime has also been a key focus of the park, in terms of both layout and activity. The park includes four baseball/softball diamonds and associated fencing, backstops, and dugouts. These are maintained through collaboration with local leagues. The park also includes related facilities like a concession stand as well as a (currently unused) tower for observing/scoring.



Basketball Courts

The park also includes a single, unfenced basketball court with an additional hoop. The courts are in relatively good condition but will likely need resurfacing (and perhaps reconstruction/leveling) in the future.



Sand Volleyball Courts

The courts are in good condition, though sand is compacted and needs replacement. Relatively low utilization suggests that fewer courts could serve community needs.

Playgrounds

The park offers two different playgrounds that serve the area's children. The “Community Center Playground” (below, **left**) is adjacent to that facility and its associated facilities and parking. It includes a playground, swings, and other equipment (a teeter-totter). This playground is considered to be in “fair” condition, but will need updating at some point relatively soon. A second “Shelter Playground” (below **right**) is located to the south near the picnic shelter and associated parking, and is considered to be in “poor” condition, needing more immediate replacement. Both are surrounded by rubber mulch, which has been recently refreshed but is considered “messy” to maintain.



Walking Path

A key community asset is the asphalt, multi-use path that connects the village to the park, and provides loops connecting park facilities. Not only does it provide a recreational amenity and access for village residents who want exercise or cannot drive (i.e. children), but it also offers safe walking/biking/rolling to residents of rural Jackson Township who lack sidewalks. The path is in good condition, especially in the recently resurfaced portion connecting to the Village. This already good local system is poised for connection to area destinations like the recently renovated Valley View K-12 school and Germantown.



Natural Areas and Open Spaces

The southern portion of the park is more naturalistic, including a beautiful fishing pond lined by a pine forest. At the very tip of the park is a small woodland that is currently not accessible to the public. This portion of the park is more oriented towards passive recreation and nature appreciation.



Facility Condition Index

In addition to inventorying park facilities, this project included interviews with local officials to better understand condition and operating issues. This included estimation of year of facility construction/renovation, condition, known capital or equipment needs, annual operating/maintenance needs, estimated utilization, and any relevant information. This information is included in the report appendix.

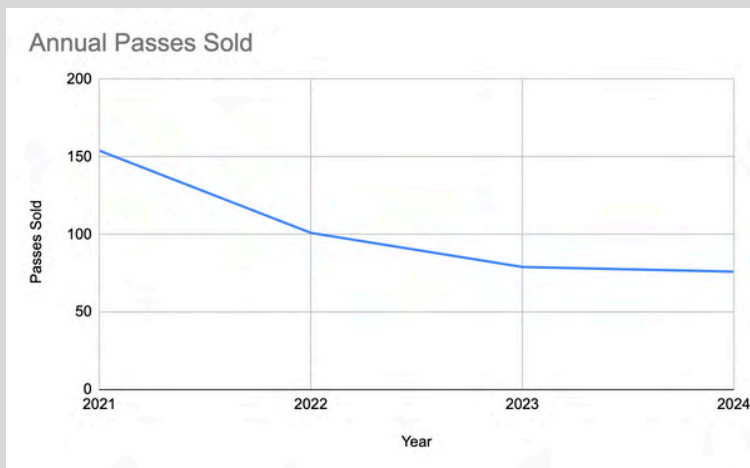
1	facility	year of construction	condition	capital cost/needs	operating/maintenance needs	utilization	notes
2	community center	1950s	good	some updating and covered pavilion	general	good	limited weeknight utilization
3	pool (large and baby)	1960s (renov. 2012)	fair	est. \$500 for repair, \$1.5M for renovation	staffing challenges	fair	repair via renewal levy?
4	pool concession and restrooms	renovated 2012	excellent	none	staffing and ongoing maintenance	same as pool	restrooms could be used year round
5	baseball diamonds (4)	1970s-1980s	fair to good	?	maintained by coaches, some equip.	good	possible updating, people have asked about turf
6	baseball press boxes	?	fair to poor	remove?	?	none	remove?
7	walking path	2000-2010	good	periodic resurfacing	periodic milling and resurfacing	good	
8	community center playground	2002-2003	fair	progressive replacement (est. \$90K)	rubber mulch	good	better utilization of two playgrounds (90/10)
9	shelter playground	2002-2003	poor	needs replacing (est. \$60K)	rubber mulch	good	lower utilization of two playgrounds (10/90)
10	pond	2000-2010	excellent	bridge	stocking	good	
11	shelter	2000-2010	good	none	powerwashing	fair	
12	basketball court	2002	good	mill and resurface needed	replace nets	fair	right sized for park?
13	volleyball courts	1990s	fair	already have sand, need to dig out and re	need weekly tilling	poor	need? possible reduce to one court
14	fairground area	1950s	good	none	mowing	2 events per year	potential usage for band or festival
15	port a johns (3)	n/a	n/a	none	monthly service	good	
16	baseball restrooms	?	poor	?	poorly designed, typically not used	limited	not used
17	wooded area	n/a	n/a	none	n/a		nature trail?
18					total park operating \$80-90 per year		

Utilization and Financial Trends

The joint park is a public resource primarily funded through separate park and pool levies and some fee revenues. These have never fully covered operating expenses and capital improvement, requiring general fund transfers. Local leaders agree that the park's goal is to provide public services, not to generate revenue, but it is important to evaluate recent trends. First, annual pool pass sales have declined over time, dropping by 50% from 2021 to 2024, perhaps reflecting a shift in demand to private pools and the pool in Germantown. Second, pool operating expenses – staffing costs, utilities, etc. – have significantly exceeded revenue in recent years. Pool concessions, though modest, have been breaking even. The Community Center has never been a major source of revenue, but has consistently generated more revenue than expenses.

All park facilities will require annual maintenance, periodic capital improvements, and some staffing. To ensure that the park is financially sustainable, future decisions about renovating or adding to the park should take into account not only initial capital costs, but also likely utilization and ongoing maintenance/staffing.

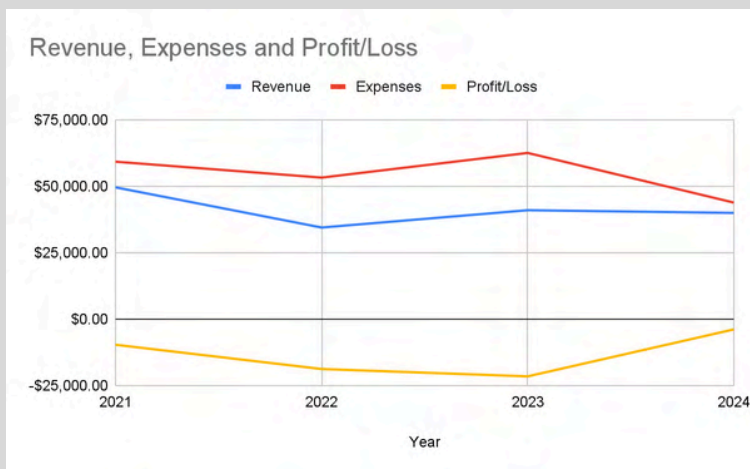
Pool Pass Sales



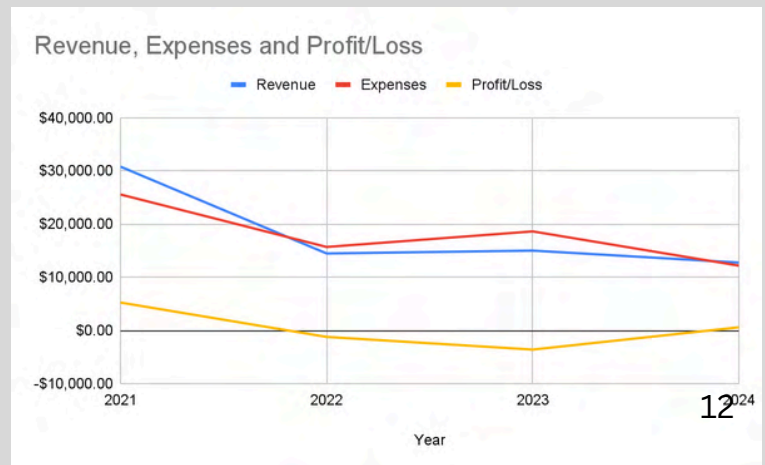
Community Center



Pool Profit/Loss



Pool Concessions



Big Picture

The joint park is charming, well-maintained, and situated in a beautiful rural setting. Located in the township, it is well connected to the village by a newly repaved multi-use path. It is a multi-purpose park that has evolved to serve diverse community needs, though it could better highlight community distinctiveness (e.g. the history of the Bottle Farm). Facilities have been added over time: some are relatively new, others quaint, and others simply dated. Collaborative management by Jacksonville Township and the Village of Farmersville is notable. The community will face big decisions in the future, particularly surrounding the pool, but the park and the community have a good foundation from which to evolve and grow.



Best Practices and Case Studies



A primary part of this project was to research best practices in parks and recreation, with a focus on park elements that might be relevant to Farmersville. This included web-based research of park best practices and peer communities across the U.S., but we focused on field research on neighboring Miami Valley communities that have recently upgraded their parks. Though some of these communities are much larger than Farmersville, all communities have the same basic recreational needs and many park elements are either modular or scalable to a small-town context. Highlighting local examples can assist Farmersville and Jackson Township residents and decision makers in visiting local parks and talking to peer officials before deciding which best practices to apply at home.

Ball Fields

Fields for team ball sports are key elements of any park system. Such facilities are essential for organized youth and adult leagues. Such fields are also spatially extensive, taking up a significant amount of park space, but they also provide open spaces for informal play.

Baseball and Softball



natural turf fields, Middletown OH



planned artificial turf infield upgrades,
Kettering Field Sports Complex, Dayton OH

Baseball and softball fields have been, and will remain, popular amongst youth and adult sports. These fields are a necessity in many regions. The upfront costs of these fields depend on the developer's wishes, the main decision being the choice of natural grass vs. turf. Here are some expected costs:

- Natural grass fields can cost 400k-600k to install.
- The maintenance of natural grass involves mowing, watering the grass in the mornings, treating with fertilizer and treating for weeds.
- Artificial turf can cost 420k - 1.2M, much higher than natural grass
- The maintenance of artificial turf is less frequent, but it involves replacing it, which occurs every 10 to 20 years depending on wear and tear.

There is no exact answer for what type of grass is better for a park or community. That is an individual decision. However, natural grass is cheaper but not usable year-round, while artificial turf is more expensive but usable year-round.

The Farmersville/Jackson Township Joint Park has long featured baseball as a key recreational activity. It has four natural turf baseball diamonds, backstops, and dugouts, along with associated facilities. These are currently in good condition and maintained by league coaches. However, the community will, over time, need to monitor utilization to ensure facilities are right-sized to demand and consider if facility upgrades (e.g. converting infield to artificial turf) are desired.

Soccer



Champions Park, Louisville KY

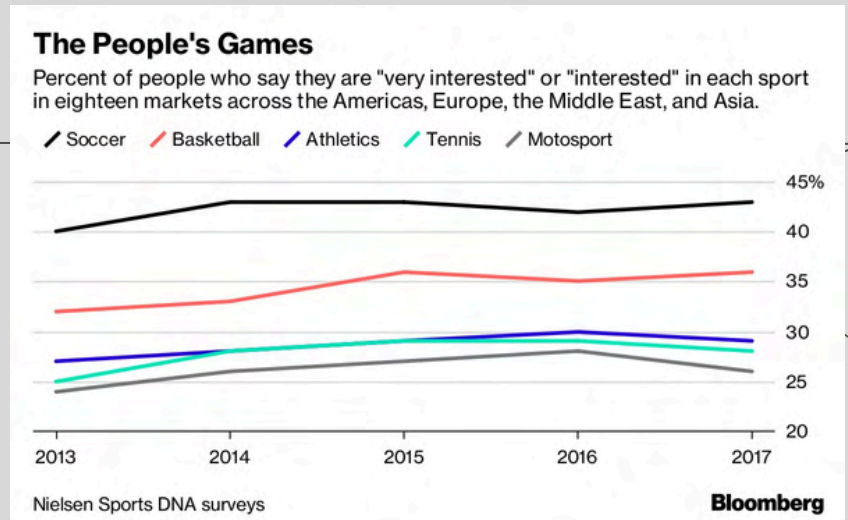


FC Cincinnati Mini-Pitch, Middletown, OH

As soccer becomes more and more popular among all age groups, there has been an influx of soccer fields built in the region. Indoor soccer fields are becoming popular also. Soccer fields can be surfaced with natural or artificial turf, with distinct pros and cons (see below).

ARTIFICIAL GRASS	NATURAL GRASS
PROS:	PROS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WATER CONSERVATION • ALL-WEATHER • EXTENSIVE USES • SAFE FOR CHILDREN AND PETS • COST EFFECTIVE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NATURAL AND FRESH AIR • NATURAL GRASS HAS THE POTENTIAL TO LAST FOREVER • BIODIVERSITY SUPPORT
CONS:	CONS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE INITIAL COST • ARTIFICIAL GRASS ABSORBS HEAT IN HOT WEATHER 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOT DURABLE ENOUGH • EASILY CAN BECOME AN EYESORE

Bloomberg, a data media company, shows that soccer is the most popular sport globally



CC Grass, a grass installation company, made this graphic to help clients.

The Farmersville/Jackson Township Joint Park currently does not have any soccer fields, yet has the space to install a full or mini-pitch. The maintenance of a soccer field is mainly in turf management or natural grass maintenance. Due to the park's open nature, there is potential for a soccer field if interested.

Ball Courts

Ball courts provide essential recreational sport, which makes any park complete. Most municipal parks have at least one ball court, especially with pickleball increasing in popularity. Tennis courts have long been a popular sport, and are present at many parks.

Tennis and Pickleball



Tennis + Pickleball,
Sycamore Trails Park Miamisburg, OH



North Park,
Springboro
OH



Felix Ritcher (Data Journalist), 2024

Due to pickleball's increasing popularity among young to middle-aged adults, installing courts is a way to draw people into the park. Tennis has long been a popular sport, and courts that are not private or associated with a school are perfect for recreational use. When combined, you can get both with the maintenance of one.

- The cost of installing a court is between \$15K and \$40K.
- The maintenance is cleaning of the courts, resurfacing as needed, and replacing nets when torn.
- A reservation system is often easy to install and helps monitor people who come and go to the park, such as a private website (such as CourtReserve) or a page on the municipality's website.

The park has basketball courts currently; however, they are in poor condition. Resurfacing the ball court would be a good idea, or you could also replace the volleyball court with tennis or pickleball, adding a regional draw to the park. A combined tennis/pickleball court would be a practical way to do both at the same time.

Splash Pads/Spray Grounds

Splash pads are popular among families as safe, fun water activities, often enjoyed especially by young children. They are accessible, as opposed to traditional pools, and require no lifeguard. They also help with sensory development and motor skills.



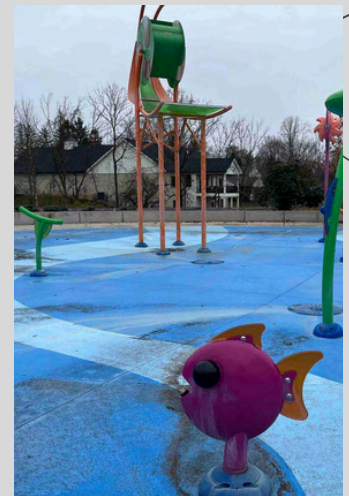
Riverfront Park, Miamisburg, OH
Source: Miamisburg Parks and Recreation

Splash pads can have any theme, take on any scale, and can be purchased in parts. Purchasing in parts allows for flexibility and creativity. Miamisburg's splash pad, pictured above, does not have any creative components but a mural, yet is heavily used.

- Splashpads can cost \$30,000 to \$150,000.
- Most of the cost comes from underground plumbing, leveling, and drainage.
- There is ongoing maintenance (pumps, water chemistry), but much less staffing and utility costs than a full pool.

Below is Kacie Jane Park, a good example of a more colorful and creative splash pad. Elements such as these can be found by companies such as Aquatix or similar.

Kacie Jane Park,
Springboro, OH
aquatix.playlsi.com



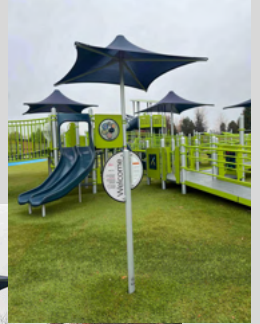
A splash pad is one good alternative to a pool for aquatic recreation, providing relief from the heat and water for play, all while being more affordable to the community.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds are essential recreational features, providing safe outdoor spaces for children to play and providing a setting for formative social experiences.



North Park, Springboro, OH



“Adventure Playground”

Sycamore Trails, Miamisburg, OH



Playgrounds can be bought in one of two ways: component by component or as one large unit. They increasingly come in different themes, for example Miamisburg has an adventure-themed playground.

Playgrounds are additionally often split into two different age ranges: Pre-K (ages 2-5) and Older Kids (ages 5-12). This ensures safety, as the older playground is often designed for kids who are larger and have less of a risk of falling. Moreover, these playgrounds should also consider the element of accessibility, as they should be for all kids, not just some.



North Park, Springboro, OH

While many park features are somewhat standard across communities, some are unique features that stand out on their own or create a regional draw. In Springboro, Ohio, the playground design features a small mound that the children love playing on. It's simple and unique, drawing in interest.

Another way to make a playground unique is to make it an all-ages playground by including areas for adult recreation (other than sports). Fitness courts are great areas for adults to exercise. This means young kids, older kids, and adults can use the park at once, allowing for multigenerational play.

- Typical element costs: \$5,000 and \$30,000 per element.
- A full new playground typically costs between \$250,000 and \$750,000.

Landscape Structures and Gametime are two vendors used by communities in the Miami Valley.



40 yard dash, Sycamore Trails, Miamisburg

Farmersville's Joint Park already has two good playgrounds, but the location of them prevents them from being considered a singular unit. They both offer the same age range of play. As they need to be replaced, they might be differentiated by age and style, and expanded progressively component by component as resources allow.

Disc Golf

Disc golf is a popular recreational sport increasingly found in park systems. Installation has a low upfront cost and attracts people into the park. This is a great way to utilize underutilized land.



Sycamore Trails, Miamisburg, OH

Disc golf courses vary most by the number of holes, which typically ranges from 9 to 18. The number of holes varies according to the square footage of the land on which the course is being installed.

- A disc golf course typically costs between \$5,000 and \$25,000, with the range depending on the length of the course, materials, and terrain.
- The maintenance of disc golf involves mostly cleaning of the infrastructure.

Skatepark



Skate parks cater to a teenage demographic, which is often poorly served by park systems.

American Ramp Company is one national vendor that designs and builds skate parks, by components or as a whole.

Most skate parks start around \$100,000 a project.

The Farmersville/Jackson Township park currently has the space and flexibility for a disc golf course. A skatepark could be a regional draw, but may not suit the needs of the community.

Community Centers/Event Spaces

Parks have long included community centers providing spaces to host events and social gatherings. However, these spaces have recently started to be elevated to host more elaborate event spaces.



Orange Co., CA
source: [orange co. master plan](#)



Benham's Grove, Centerville, OH

Costs to construct an event space vary widely.

Columbus, Ohio
[Columbus Parks and Rec Department](#)



Farmersville's current community center is comfortable, well-maintained, and well used. It may not, however, meet the standards required for formal events such as weddings, receptions, or other large gatherings. If there were a strong community interest in elevating the space, upgrading the facility into a higher-quality event venue could create a new regional draw for the park and support additional economic and community activity.

Performance Venues/Stages

In addition to places of recreation, parks host public and cultural events like concerts, plays, and performances. These programs draw people into the park. There are two types of stages: *amphitheaters*, which are large, and *bandstands* or *gazebos*, which are smaller.



Baraboo Mirror State Park, Baraboo, WI



North Park, Springboro, OH

Any of these can serve as a sheltered vessel for entrainment, fun, and community. The Wisconsin example shows a top-of-the-line, small amphitheater, while the Springboro and Miamisburg examples showcase larger designs. Bandstands and gazebos offer the same opportunity, but without seating, at a smaller scale.

- A bandstand or gazebo costs at least \$50,000.
- An amphitheater can cost from \$200,000 to \$2M, depending on size.
- Maintenance includes cleaning, rust treating, and repairs.

Regular programming is vital to the success of a performance venue in drawing people into a park.



prefabricated gazebos can be purchased from vendors like ICON Shelters.



Riverfront Park, Miamisburg, OH

The Farmersville/Jackson Township park has lots of potential locations for a stage, and due to its rural location, this feature would be an asset. This would create a venue for community events and setting for creative performance, providing a service that is not currently in the park.

Dog Parks

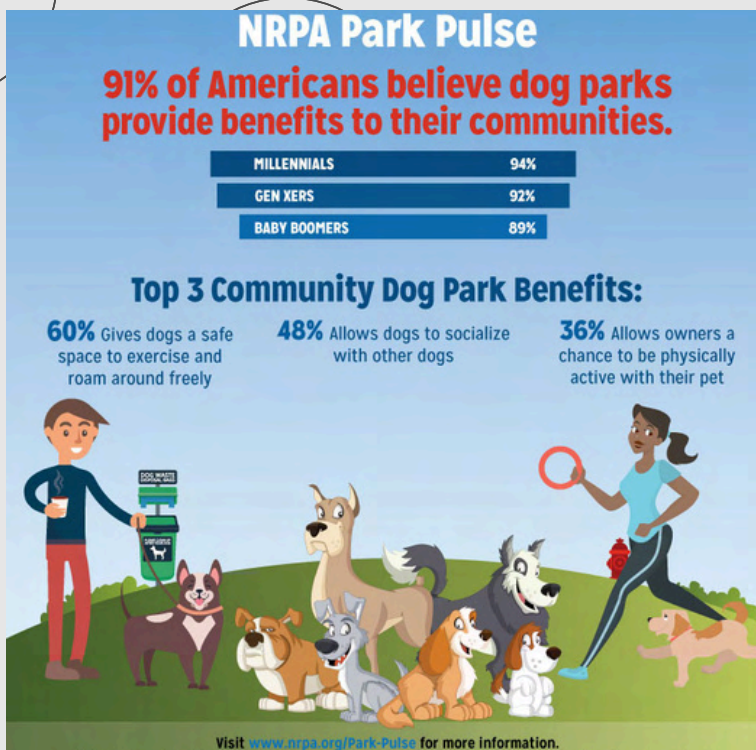
Dog parks are increasingly in higher demand among people who like to socialize with their dogs.



Oxford,
OH

Most dog parks are open and accessible to the general public. However, some communities (e.g. Miamisburg) require memberships to ensure vaccinations and proper contact information. These memberships can include fees, which help reduce the maintenance expenses and manage demand.

- Dog parks are not inherently expensive; however, features such as courses, ponds, and water spurts are great amenities to elevate a dog park. These would be an additional cost.
- Fencing and public water supplies are the most expensive part of a dog park, which ranges in cost between \$10,000 and \$200,000.



The joint park has some open areas which would be ideal for a dog park, which offer social opportunities for both dogs and their owners.

However, the community would need to determine if such an investment meets local needs.

National Recreation and Park Association, Research Report

Placemaking

A place having a strong sense of identity is very important, as every park should have a distinct feel. Uniqueness is why people are drawn to spend time in certain places. Placemaking transforms an ordinary space into a vessel of social activity, while helping establish community identity.

Public Art



Centerville Activity Park



Audubon Aullwood Nature Center, Englewood, OH

Art is a really great placemaking tool. Local artists can be commissioned to make unique pieces. On the left is a colorful mural, allowing for a cool photo for visitors. On the right is a statue in Dayton, which people in the region travel to see. While the statue project is on a large scale, a series of statues could be scaled down to create a regional draw.

- Typical murals cost anywhere from \$15 to \$75 per square foot.
- Statues vary in price, from anywhere as low as \$500 to \$100,000 per statue.

Historical Markers and Signage



Sycamore Trails Park, Miamisburg

Historical signs can add a lot of meaning and intention to a park. Historic signs tend to cost somewhere between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

Since the park already has a historic sign, this is a great feature that should be kept or upgraded. It adds lots of value to the park, perhaps showcasing the unique history of the Bottle Farm.

Fountains



Cherokee Park, Louisville, KY

Fountains create beautiful gathering spaces in parks, creating a central focal point. The soothing sound of the water is relaxing for park visitors, creating vibrancy within the park. This example in Louisville demonstrates the power of a fountain as a gathering space.

- Fountains typically cost between \$3,000 and \$15,000, depending on size.

Lighting



Fell's Point, Maryland

Lighting is a key though often overlooked aspect of any park. The quality of lighting really creates different types of feelings. If parks are closed after dark, there is reduced demand for lighting. However, if visitors are around at night, this is necessary for both aesthetics and safety.

- The Wisconsin Lighting Lab is one vendor with pricing for all types of lighting.



Arlington, VA

Gateway Feature

Gateways can make a place like a park feel like a destination. This is a great example in Virginia. One company, Icon Shelters (iconshelters.com), has renderings of potential signs.

While the park is currently a familiar destination for community members, having an official sign would help distinguish it for visitors.

Permanent Games



Centerville Activity Center, OH

Permanent games provide a source of entertainment for visitors to the park, a cool niche that draws people in.

- These games can be purchased for \$1,000 to \$1,500.

Firepits



Broughton Nature and Wildlife Area, Marietta, Ohio

Fireplaces are great areas for socializing, encouraging visitors who do not have firepits to come to the park.

- Prices vary between \$1,000 to \$5,000.

Water Fountains



Water fountains are sometimes overlooked, but they are a valuable feature in any public park. A functional water fountain allows visitors to stay at the park for longer and prevents dehydration.

Bike Rack



Bike racks are also sometimes overlooked, but they are great to have. Some zoning codes even require them. Bike racks tend to run between \$300 and \$600 apiece.

Overall, the joint park currently has a distinct feel due to its scenic location; however, the right combination of features would help it be unique.

Shelters and Seating

Shelter and seating are vital components of any park, as they provide comfortable spaces for passive recreation, rest, and social interaction. Shaded seating areas offer visitors relief from the summer heat, encouraging longer stays and more frequent use of the park. Thoughtfully designed shelters and seating can also enhance the park's overall appeal, helping to attract visitors and elevate the park as a welcoming community destination.



Riverfront Park, Miamisburg, OH

Pictured above are scenic seating areas in Miamisburg, located along the river's edge. These seats are not randomly placed; they are intentionally designed as a destination in themselves, inviting visitors to pause, gather, and enjoy the surroundings. Their shaded placement helps keep them cool during the summer months, increasing comfort and usability. When incorporating seating and shelters into a park, it is important to thoughtfully consider viewsheds, natural features, and other site amenities so that these elements enhance both the visitor experience and the character of the space.

- A fully shaded picnic bench can cost \$6,000 and \$8,000.
- Shaded swings can cost \$2,500 and \$7,000.
- A picnic table costs between \$1,200 and \$4,000, and the shade above costs between \$6,000 and \$12,000 per shade.



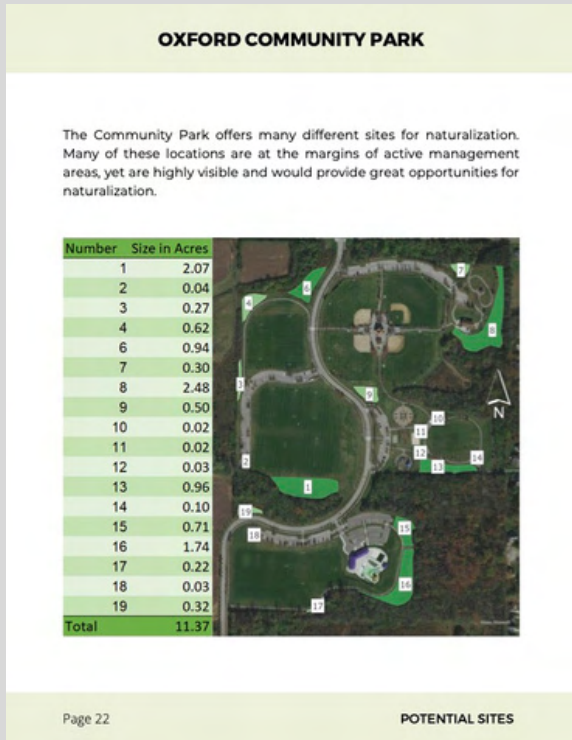
Kacie Jane Park, Springboro OH

The joint park currently has some shaded structures, but there could be benefits in reimagining/expanding the number of shaded seating spaces.

Natural Areas and Landscapes

Many communities seek to reduce mowing/watering by ‘naturalizing’ underutilized turf. “Low mow” maintenance and periodically cutting/bush hogging (to remove woody species) can create attractive, prairie-like landscapes. More biodiverse native landscapes can be created by removing turf with herbicides, seeding with native grasses or wildflowers, and periodic high mowing.

- Low-mowing of non-native fescue can create grasslands with no additional costs, but they have reduced habitat value and can become less attractive over time.
- Native prairies require site preparation and seeding (\$500 per acre), but once established, require only periodic mowing or herbicide spot treatment to prevent invasive species.



The City of Oxford identified areas of underutilized turf for phased conversion into native landscapes.



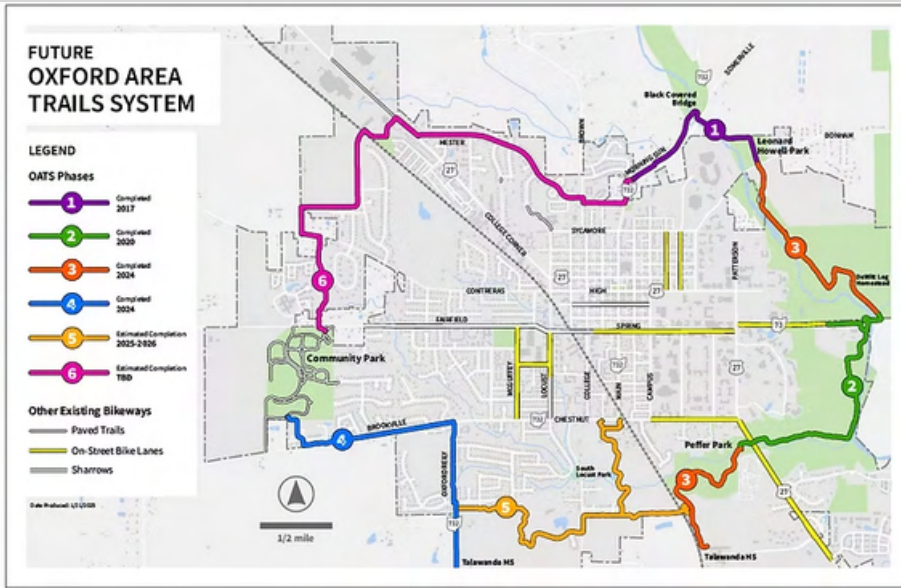
Hueston Woods State Park

The southern tip of the joint park contains approximately 1.6 acres of woodland. This area is large enough to support a small trail loop, which could be linked to the pond with footpaths and naturalized prairie landscaping.

Recreational Trails

A growing number of communities – including Farmersville – have invested in multi-use paths to support walking, biking, and rolling for recreation and non-motorized transportation. These increasingly link recreational amenities like parks to other destinations like schools and shopping in wider community and even regional systems to better serve local residents and attract visitors.

- Multi-use pathways are engineered like roadways, so they are expensive to develop: often \$1M per mile.
- Grant funding is available from regional councils of government (e.g., Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission) and the State of Ohio (e.g. Clean Ohio Trail Fund) with a local match.



The Oxford Area Trail System has been decades in planning, but grant funding matched by a local levy has constructed more than 6 miles of trail.

Funding and Partnerships

A variety of public and private funding sources can support park development and upkeep. Parks in the region have supplemented taxpayer levies and general fund spending with:

- Ohio Outdoor Recreational Facility Grants such as NatureWorks and the Clean Ohio Trail Fund
- corporate naming and sponsorship (e.g. local hospitals or health care providers)
- individual/family sponsorship and naming opportunities

Department of Natural Resources

OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITY GRANTS

- Clean Ohio Trail Fund**: The Clean Ohio Trail Fund works to improve outdoor recreational opportunities for Ohioans by funding trails for...
- Land and Water Conservation Fund**: For the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Compliance**: For grant recipients. Continuing Recreational Use and Section 101 Compliance.
- UMCF Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)**: For qualifying urban areas.
- NatureWorks**: Grant funds for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.
- Recreational Trails Program**: For development, maintenance and restoration of recreational trails.



Takeaways and Next Steps?

A Foundation for the Future

This project was designed, within a limited budget and time frame, to help inform the conversation and decision-making about the future of the Farmersville/Jackson Township Joint Park. The current park has grown organically over time to serve community needs and must continue to evolve in the future, presenting sometimes difficult choices about how to focus future investments. To better understand the range of options available, this project assessed existing conditions/recent trends and explored best practices currently employed by peer communities.

The report authors do not presume to make recommendations to a community that knows its own facilities, needs, resources, and future vision best. But, through our research and conversations with local officials, consensus emerged over some ideas and themes.

Some Insights

The joint park is a cherished amenity that reflects the community's history and values as a small village set among rural farmlands. Yet the park could better and more specifically communicate that history and character to strengthen a sense of place. For example, public art evoking the Bottle Farm – created by local students – could not only reaffirm the town's unique history but also distinguish it within the region for residents and visitors alike.

The park is charming, yet some facilities are outdated. Upgrades will be required to address deficiencies and meet modern needs. But this is an opportunity to go beyond simple maintenance to invest in new directions that reflect where the community wants to go in the future. For example, the addition of pickleball courts will bring Farmersville in line with popular trends.

Within limited space and budgets, some older features may need to be phased out to make room for new ones. The pool has been an important recreational element and tradition, but has experienced declining attendance, growing operational costs, staffing difficulties, and a need for major renovation. Rather than focus public dollars on one service, those resources could be shifted to new and diversified amenities. For example, a splash pad could serve aquatic recreation with much lower operating costs, allowing money saved to support other facilities and programs.



The joint park has been a multi-purpose community recreation focused on serving local needs, but could also focus on developing features that distinguish it within the region. For example, if Farmersville could secure an FC Cincinnati mini-pitch, it could introduce soccer to the park in a way that is unique among local communities.



Park improvements aren't cheap, but investing in quality of life generates returns not only for existing residents but also potentially attracts others to the community. Farmersville is a great place to live, but in a region whose population may decline in the future, individual communities will need to dedicate resources to remain attractive to new residents and investment.

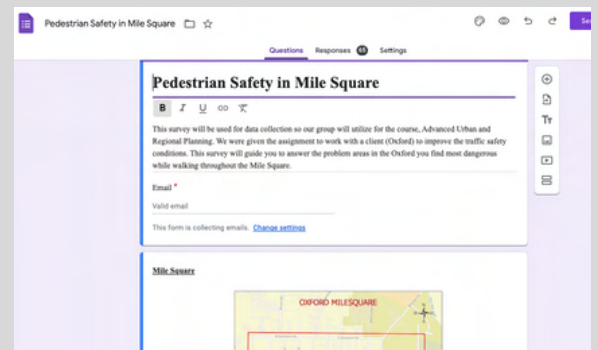


Next Steps

Farmersville and Jackson Township are now poised to plan the future of their joint park. This work could be contracted to a consultant, but most of this work could be done in-house or with local talent (e.g. residents or students), saving resources for park improvements.

Community Survey. Online or paper surveys could be designed with tools like Google Forms to better understand what community members think about the current park, their hopes for the future, and their preferences for future improvements.

- Questions could include “When you imagine the park you’d like to see in 10 years, what adjectives would you use?”



Public Design Exercise. Building on this report and the survey, a community visioning session could include:

- a white-board exercise to articulate a long-range vision and goals for the park
- a mapping exercise using aerial photos and markers to brainstorm the possible location and arrangement of different features.



Drafting and Finalizing a Plan. New chapters could be added to this document articulating in words and diagrams the future vision of the park, providing a basis for formal design, engineering, and implementation.

Park planning, improvement, and maintenance are ongoing processes. Hopefully this report and analysis of existing conditions and best practices can provide a foundation for making more informed decisions in the short term and undertaking long-range planning in the future.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	facility	year of construction	condition	capital cost/needs	operating/maintenance needs	utilization	notes
2	community center	1950s	good	some updating and covered pavilion	general	good	limited weeknight utilization
3	pool (large and baby)	1960s (renov. 2012)	fair	est. \$500 for repair, \$1.5M for renovation	staffing challenges	fair	repair via renewal levy?
4	pool concession and restrooms	renovated 2012	excellent	none	staffing and ongoing maintenance	same as pool	restrooms could be used year round
5	baseball diamonds (4)	1970s-1980s	fair to good	?	maintained by coaches, some equip.	good	possible updating, people have asked about turf?
6	baseball press boxes	?	fair to poor	remove?	?	none	remove?
7	walking path	2000-2010	good	periodic resurfacing	periodic milling and resurfacing	good	
8	community center playground	2002-2003	fair	progressive replacement (est. \$90K)	rubber mulch	good	better utilization of two playgrounds (90/10)
9	shelter playground	2002-2003	poor	needs replacing (est. \$60K)	rubber mulch	good	lower utilization of two playgrounds (10/90)
10	pond	2000-2010	excellent	bridge	stocking	good	
11	shelter	2000-2010	good	none	powerwashing	fair	
12	basketball court	2002	good	mill and resurface needed	replace nets	fair	right sized for park?
13	volleyball courts	1990s	fair	already have sand, need to dig out and re	need weekly tilling	poor	need? possible reduce to one court
14	fairground area	1950s	good	none	mowing	2 events per year	potential usage for band or festival
15	port a johns (3)	n/a	n/a	none	monthly service	good	
16	baseball restrooms	?	poor	?	poorly designed, typically not used	limited	not used
17	wooded area	n/a	n/a	none	n/a		nature trail?
18							

Appendix: Existing Facilities Condition

