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**A NEW ERA FOR  
BELLEFONTAINE PARKS**  
BELLEFONTAINE JOINT RECREATIONAL DISTRICT  
MASTER PLAN 2023



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## **FORWARD**

There is an increasing awareness of the need for socially conscious development of park and recreation facilities. Community leaders are beginning to understand that quality of life is tied to the local economy and that creating walkable towns with safe and attractive park systems can improve the lives of their citizens and attract vital businesses.

The City of Bellefontaine identified the need for a study for future park and recreation planning.

A Steering Committee was organized with Park Board members, community, and business leaders for guidance during this process, and their insight and leadership was invaluable

Community involvement was critical. An open online survey was conducted in the Fall of 2022 to facilitate public input and nine interviews were held with various individuals and groups. This information and the array of different perspectives were invaluable in the process.

The Bellefontaine Joint Recreational District Parks Master Plan is a compilation and analysis of the findings and a recommendation for how the City should maintain and develop the Park System for the next 10 to 20 years.



# BELLEFONTAINE JOINT RECREATION DISTRICT MASTER PLAN

## Acknowledgments

The following individuals and organizations were instrumental throughout the entire planning process. Their assistance is greatly appreciated in this Master Plan study.

### City Council Members

Benjamin Stahler, Mayor	Jenna James
Zeb Wagner, President	Mick Lile
John Aler	Jordan Reser
Deb Baker	Kyle Springs
Peter DeSomma	

### Parks and Recreation Board Members

Pat Ellis, President	Joliece Reed
Tammy Fowler, Vice President	Davey Roberts
Joan Haushalter	Kaileigh Vermillion
Keyne Strickland	

### Master Plan Steering Committee

Matt Comstock	Joan Haushalter
Bryn Daring-Stewart	Yvette Hunsicker
Pat Ellis	Josh Stolly
Craig Fultz	Ben Vollrath

### Bellefontaine Joint Recreation District

Kristopher Myers	BJRD Director
Tim Hales	BJRD Recreation Coordinator
Rusty Shields	BJRD Staff
Jon Mathys	BJRD Staff
JP Schulz	BJRD Part-time Staff

## Interviews

Fred Brentlinger	City Auditor
Benjamin Stahler	Mayor
Wes Dodds	Service Safety Director
Matt Comstock	BCS Athletic Director
Sergeant Kennedy	Bellefontaine PD
Lt. Scott Marlow	Bellefontaine PD
Ben Vollrath	Logan Co. Chamber of Commerce Exec. Dir.
Jeff Radde	YMCA Executive Director
Brad Hall	Bellefontaine City Schools Superintendent
Cliff Core	Bellefontaine HS
Erin Gillig	Bellefontaine ES
Whitney Stolly	Bellefontaine IS
Gavin Yoder	Bellefontaine MS
Shannon Reese	Small Nation Marketing Coordinator
Nick Davis	Small Nation Business Development Assoc.
Keyne Strickland	Small Nation Property and Leasing

### City of Bellefontaine GIS Mapping

Heather Harpst	Code Enforcement Officer/GIS Coordinator
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### Park History Information

Logan County History Center  
Bellefontaine Joint Recreational District Website

### Project Consultants

Cindy Driskell, PLA	Jaccyn Design Group, LLC
John Freytag, PLA	Freytag and Associates, Inc.



# **A NEW ERA FOR BELLEFONTAINE PARKS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. Major Objectives
2. The Process

## **GATHERING THE DATA**

1. The Survey
2. The Interviews
3. Key Findings

## **ACTION PLAN**

1. Overview
2. Strategic Action Plan
3. Facility Scope
4. Funding

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1. What Makes a Great Park System
2. What Makes a Great Park
3. Types of Parks

## **CREATING UNITY WITHIN THE PARK SYSTEM**

1. Branding / Logo
2. Website Improvements
3. Wayfinding
4. Connectivity

## **PARK INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

1. Neighborhood Parks
2. Community Parks
3. Regional Parks
4. Special Use Parks

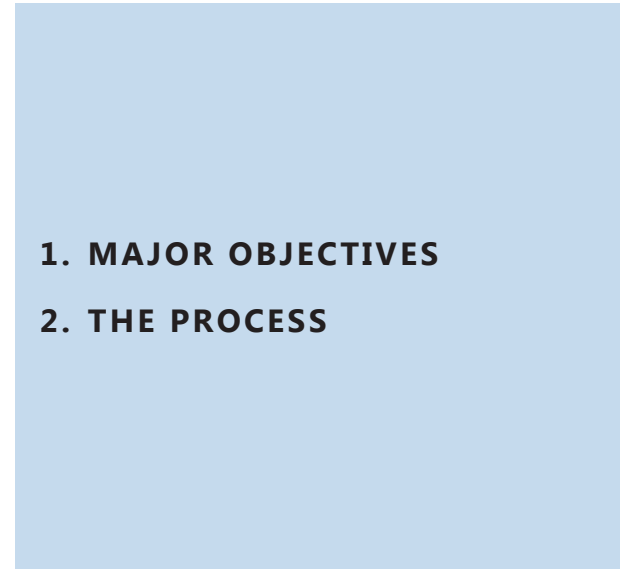
## **CONCEPTUAL PARK MASTER PLANS**

1. Harmon Park
2. Rattleff Memorial Park
3. Oakland Square Park
4. Kelly Court

## **APPENDIX**

Full Survey Results

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# **INTRODUCTION**

## A NEW ERA FOR BELLEFONTAINE PARKS

Recreation and parks are very significant elements in our communities and a factor in our health. Recent renewed interest in outdoor activities shows the benefits that parks, trails and recreation resources have in our lives. Parks have a positive effect on many aspects of daily life by:

- Improving our quality of life
- Enhancing physical and mental health
- Attracting new community members
- Helping to retain people and jobs
- Supporting economic growth
- Improving the environment

Bellefontaine's strategic location in central Ohio is well placed for expansion and economic growth. A well maintained and diverse park system is an important growth catalyst. The existing network of parks and open spaces are well-distributed throughout the community. Placing a focus on maintaining and enhancing these existing assets is an investment in Bellefontaine's future. The recommendations in the Master Plan will begin to address the comments and ideas expressed by the community based upon public input during this process.

The Bellefontaine Joint Recreational District Parks Master Plan is a recommendation for how the City should maintain and develop the Park System for the next 10 to 20 years. This plan was developed with community input and staff assistance. It is a planning tool to guide the community and local leaders in making informed decisions to improve Bellefontaine's parks and recreation opportunities.

### BJRD MASTER PLANNING MAJOR OBJECTIVES

#### IMPROVE PARK MAINTENANCE

- Develop an annual maintenance schedule
- Improvements to streamline maintenance

#### UPGRADE PARK FACILITIES

- Replace antiquated equipment
- Upgrade existing facilities
- Develop new toilet facilities
- Replace Hoffman Pool
- Develop indoor recreation opportunities
- Install splash pads in a couple locations

#### ENHANCED PATHWAY SYSTEM

- Link parks, neighborhoods and the downtown
- Connect to the Simon Kenton Trail

#### INCREASE DEPARTMENT FUNDING

- Consider an alternative source of funding
- Increase the annual budget
- Establish annual maintenance budget
- Develop a capital improvement budget

#### MARKETING AND AWARENESS

- Improve wayfinding
- Website and branding upgrades
- Annual Review of Park Programs

## BJRD MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

### INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

- Steering Committee Intro Meeting
- Mission and Vision Review

### RESOURCES & DATA COLLECTION

- Compile Existing Information
- Develop Park Evaluation Criteria
- Collect On-Site Information for Every Park
- Operation & Maintenance Review

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Set Goals & Objectives
- Develop Interview & Survey Questions
- Conduct Survey & Interviews
- Review Survey Information
- Steering Committee Review Meetings

### ASSESSING THE INFORMATION

- Survey & Interview Data Assessment
- Key Findings
- Park Assessments
- Park Descriptions & Recommendations
- Steering Committee Review Meetings

### MASTER PLANNING & ACTION PLANS

- Major Objectives
- Park Descriptions & Recommendations
- Specific Park Improvements
- Connectivity / Gaps
- Capital Infrastructure Improvements
- Possible Costs & Funding Source Study
- Strategic Action Plan
- Master Plan Report & Adoption

## HOW DID THE PROCESS START?

### LEADERSHIP

The City of Bellefontaine identified the need for a study for future park and recreation planning in the community. The leadership role in the process came from city staff, elected officials, park board, and steering committee members.

### STEERING COMMITTEE

A committee was organized with Park Board members, community, and business leaders for guidance during this process, and their insight and leadership was invaluable.

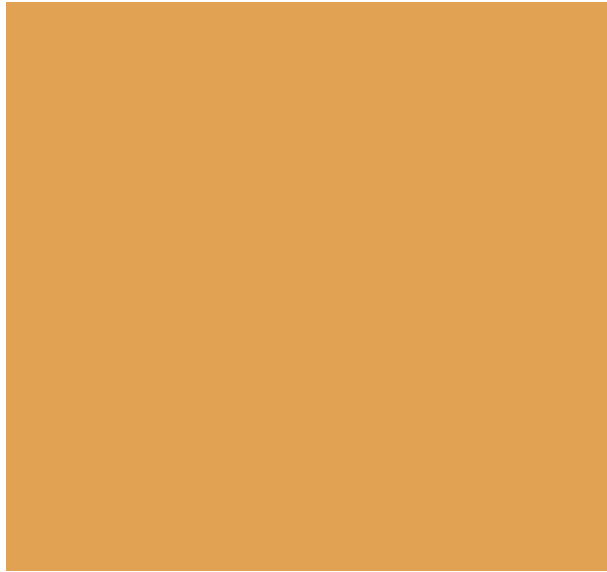
### GENERAL PUBLIC INPUT

Community involvement was critical. An online survey was conducted in the Fall of 2022 for opinions from as many people as possible. Survey questions were developed and then refined by the Steering Committee to allow respondents the best opportunity to assess community parks and programs. There were 541 respondents.

### INTERVIEWS

Nine interviews were held with groups or individuals representing the City, Bellefontaine Schools, Chamber of Commerce, YMCA, and private or business individuals. The interviews allowed each person to focus on issues of personal interest to them. These different perspectives were invaluable.

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- 1. THE SURVEY**
- 2. THE INTERVIEWS**
- 3. KEY FINDINGS**

## **GATHERING THE DATA - WHAT WE LEARNED**





## THE SURVEY

The online survey was issued from September 1 through October 15, 2022.

Following are key issues identified in the online survey.

# 541

Total Participants

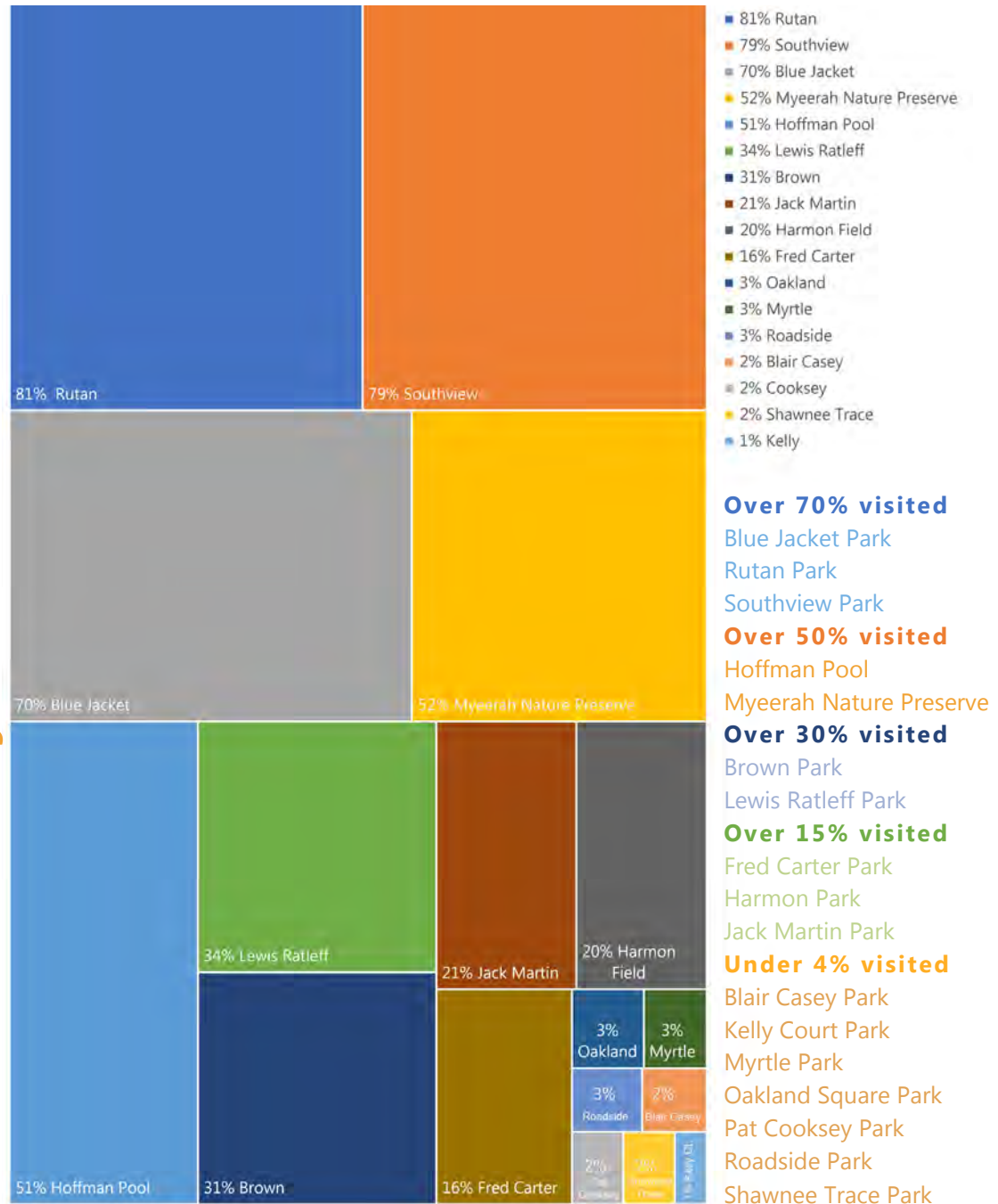
# 85%

Live in Bellefontaine or Bellefontaine School District

# 87%

Were between ages 26 & 65

## Which Parks did you visit?



**Over 70% visited**

Blue Jacket Park

Rutan Park

Southview Park

**Over 50% visited**

Hoffman Pool

Myeerah Nature Preserve

**Over 30% visited**

Brown Park

Lewis Ratleff Park

**Over 15% visited**

Fred Carter Park

Harmon Park

Jack Martin Park

**Under 4% visited**

Blair Casey Park

Kelly Court Park

Myrtle Park

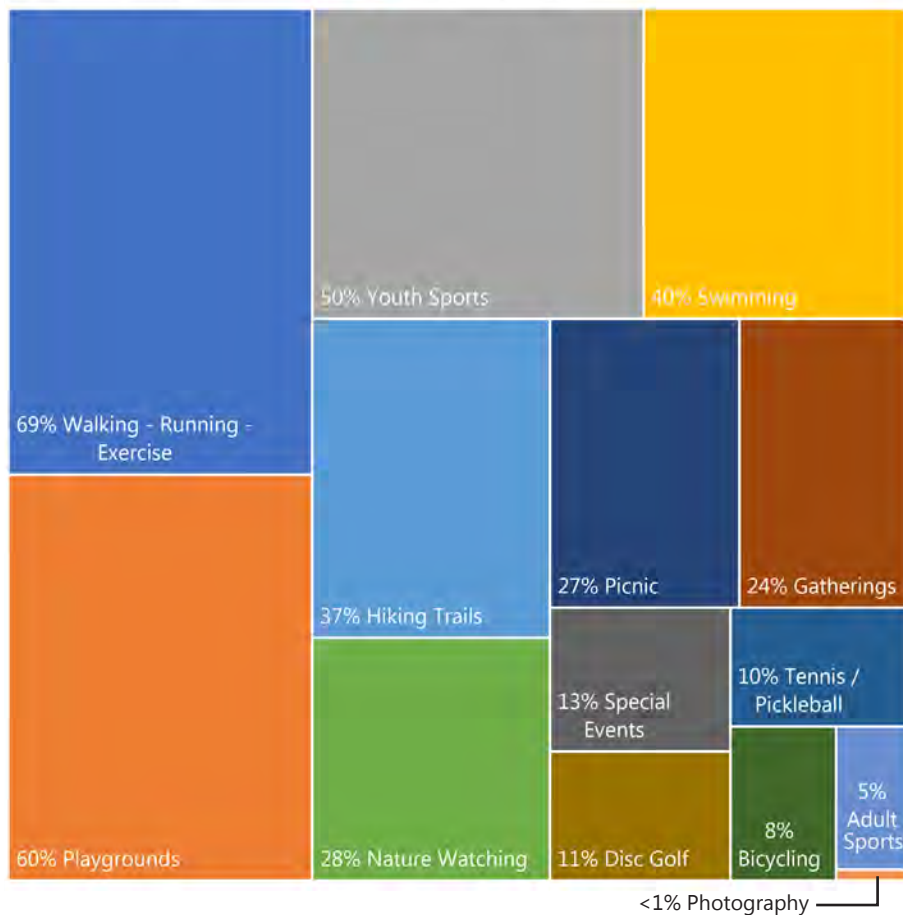
Oakland Square Park

Pat Cooksey Park

Roadside Park

Shawnee Trace Park

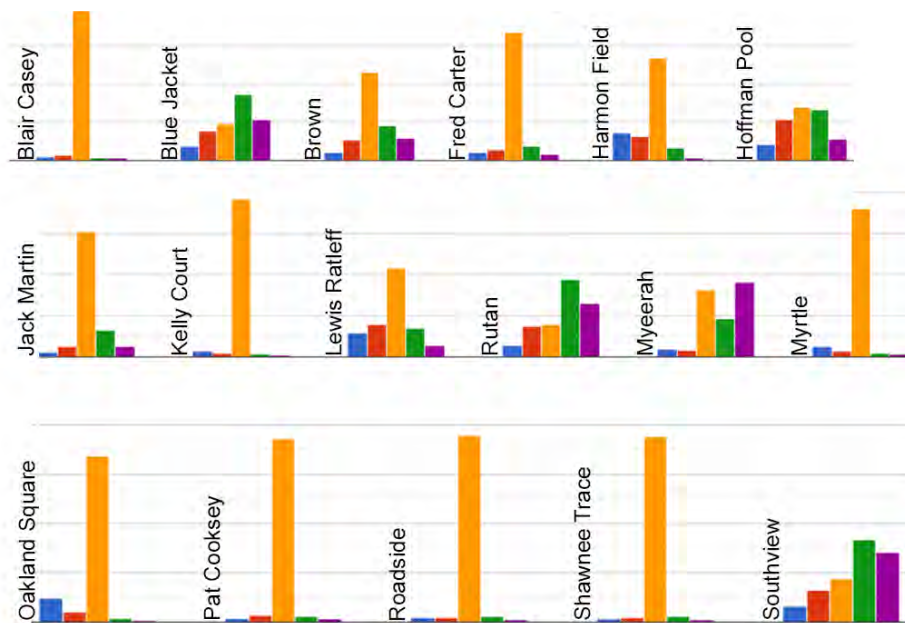
- 69% Walking - Running - Exercise
- 50% Youth Sports
- 37% Hiking Trails
- 27% Picnic
- 13% Special Events
- 10% Tennis / Pickleball
- 5% Adult Sports
- 60% Playgrounds
- 40% Swimming
- 28% Nature Watching
- 24% Gatherings
- 11% Disc Golf
- 8% Bicycling
- <1% Photography



## What was your primary purpose for the visit?

## What do you think of the Park conditions?

- Very Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- No Opinion
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Very Satisfied



### Over 60% had no opinion of

- Blair Casey Park
- Fred Carter Park
- Kelly Court Park
- Lewis Ratleff Park
- Myrtle Park
- Oakland Square Park
- Pat Cooksey Park
- Shawnee Trace

### Majority Satisfied

- Blue Jacket Park
- Jack Martin Park

- Rutan Park
- Myeerah Nature Preserve
- Southview Park

### Small Majority Satisfied

- Hoffman Pool

### Majority Unsatisfied

- Harmon Field
- Oakland Square Park

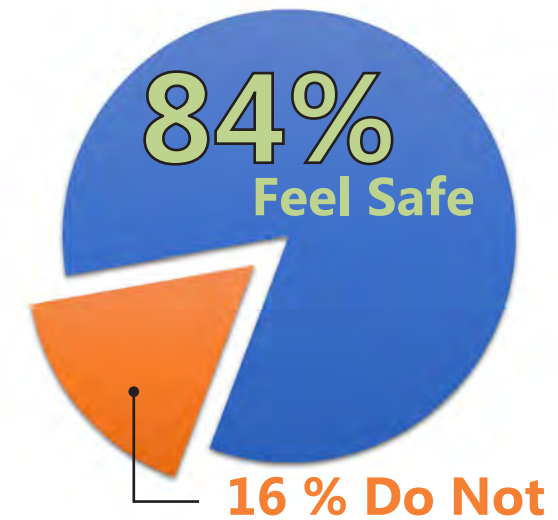
### Small Majority Unsatisfied

- Lewis Ratleff Park
- Myrtle Park
- Oakland Square Park

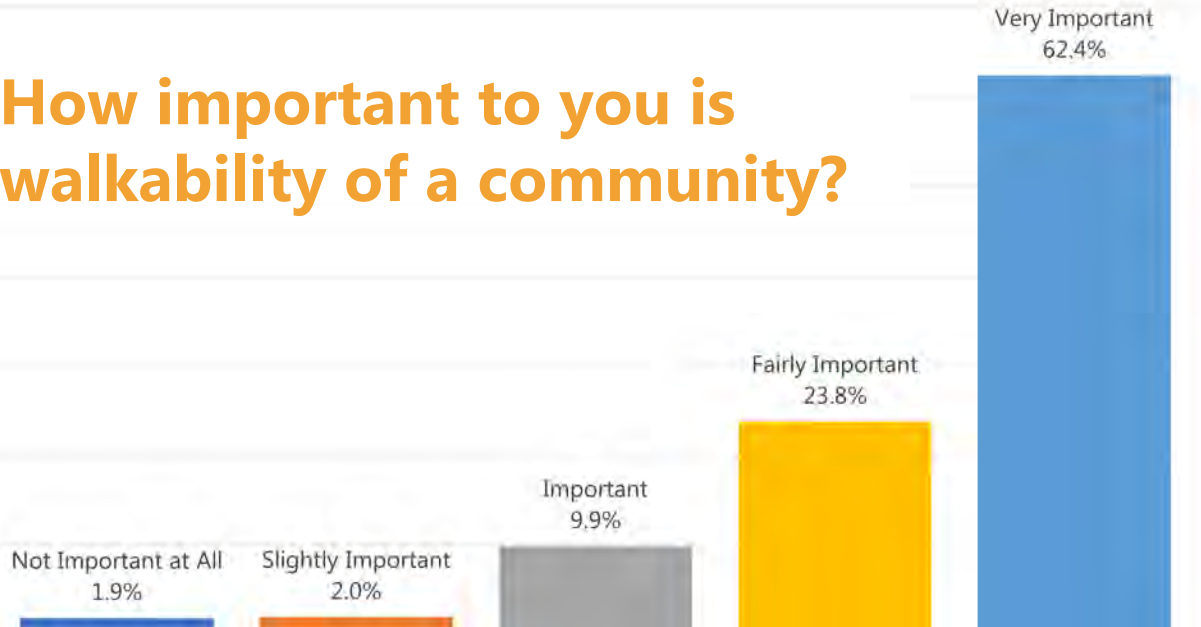
## How important is walking or biking to downtown?



## Do you feel safe in our Parks?



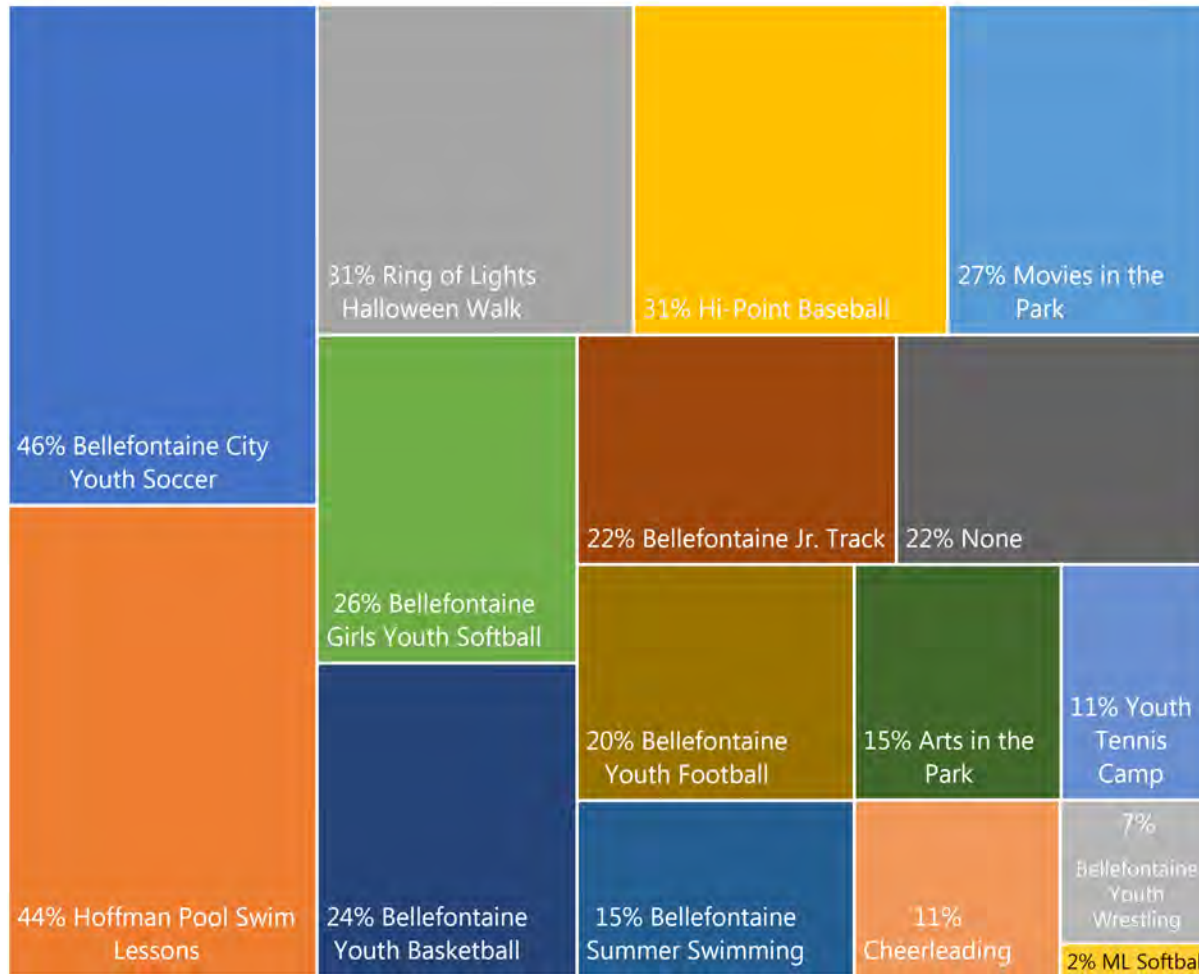
## How important to you is walkability of a community?



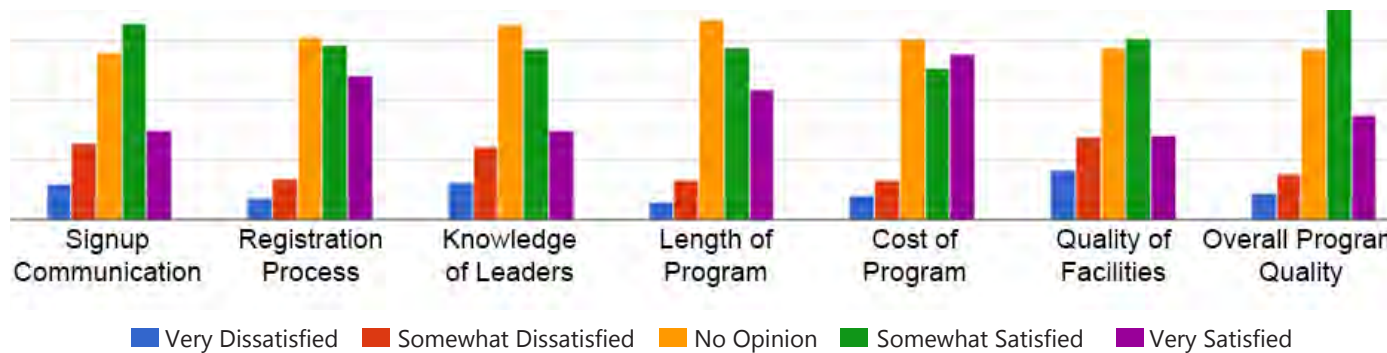
A majority of respondents feel a walkable and bikeable community is important

# What Programs have you used?

Which of the following programs offered by BJRD have you or your children participated in?

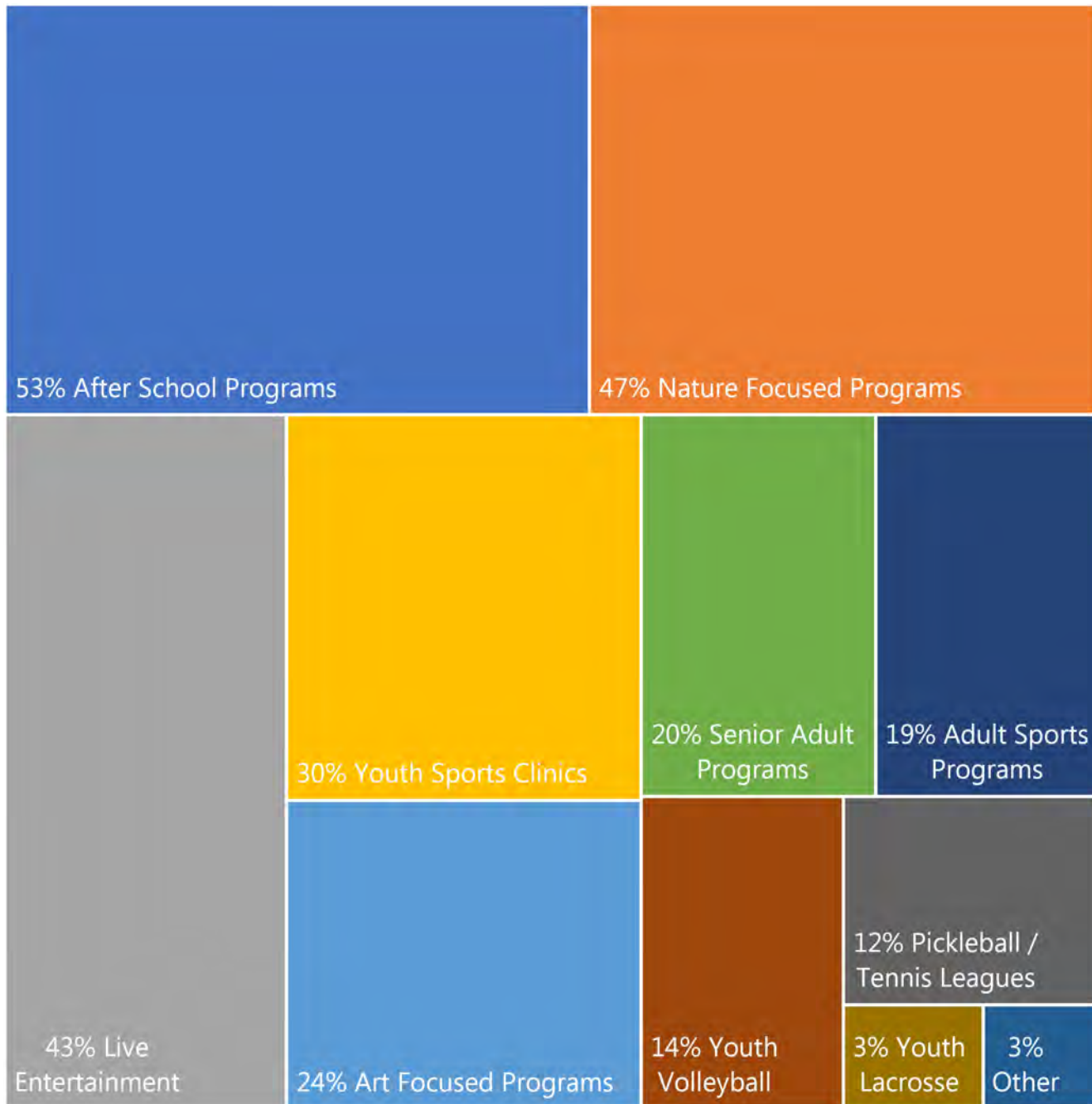


- 46% Bellefontaine City Youth Soccer
- 44% Hoffman Pool Swim Lessons
- 31% Ring of Lights Halloween Walk
- 31% Hi-Point Baseball
- 27% Movies in the Park
- 26% Bellefontaine Girls Youth Softball
- 24% Bellefontaine Youth Basketball
- 22% Bellefontaine Jr. Track
- 22% None
- 20% Bellefontaine Youth Football
- 15% Bellefontaine Summer Swimming
- 15% Arts in the Park
- 11% Youth Tennis Camp
- 11% Cheerleading
- 7% Bellefontaine Youth Wrestling
- 2% Miracle League Softball



What is your experience and satisfaction level with the programs?





- 53% After School Programs
- 47% Nature Focused Programs
- 43% Live Entertainment
- 30% Youth Sports Clinics
- 24% Art Focused Programs
- 20% Senior Adult Programs
- 19% Adult Sports Programs
- 14% Youth Volleyball
- 12% Pickleball / Tennis Leagues
- 3% Youth Lacrosse
- 3% Other

## What new programs would you like considered?

For future program development, please select three items BJR should prioritize.



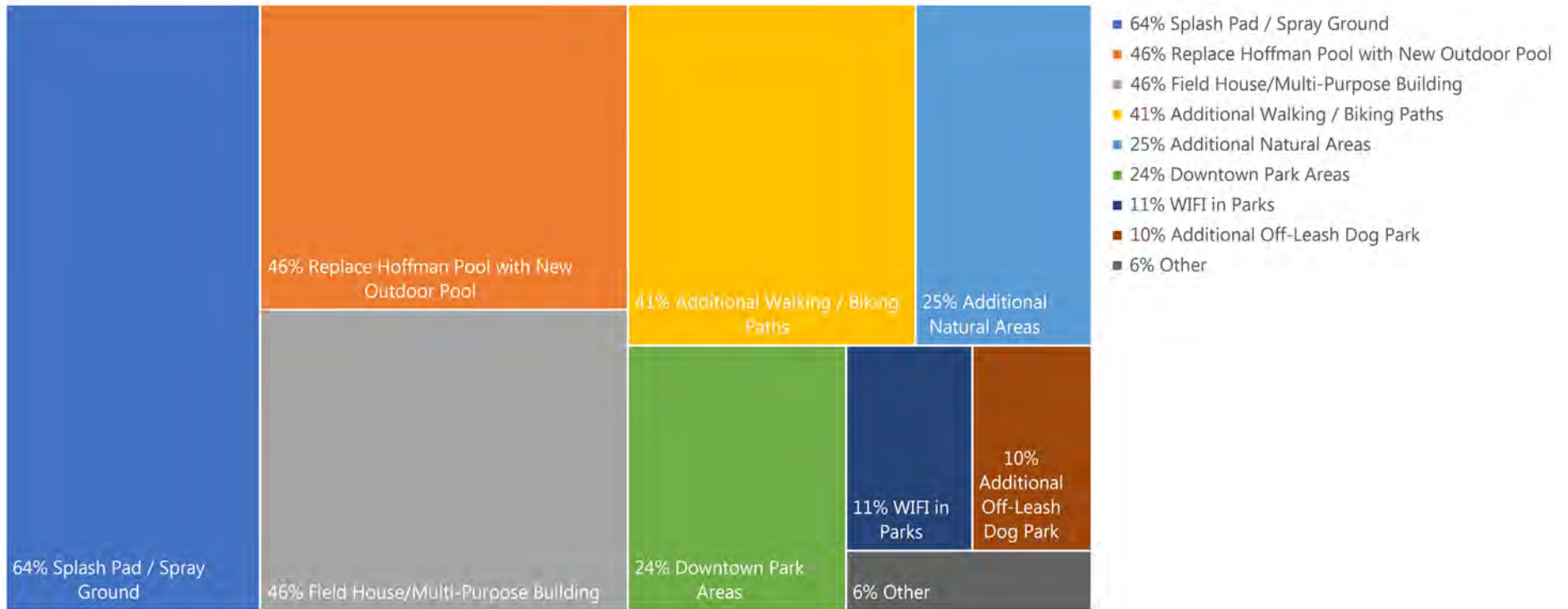
- 75% Restrooms
- 50% Playgrounds
- 33% Walking Paths
- 24% Shelter Houses / Picnic Areas
- 22% Facility Lighting
- 19% Trails
- 15% Baseball / Softball Fields
- 9% Park Drives / Parking Lots
- 9% Basketball Courts
- 7% Myeerah Rental Buildings
- 5% Disc Golf
- 5% Skate Park
- 3% Soccer Fields
- 1% Repair Existing Pool

## What existing park features should we improve?

Of the existing infrastructure listed, please select three items BJR should prioritize.

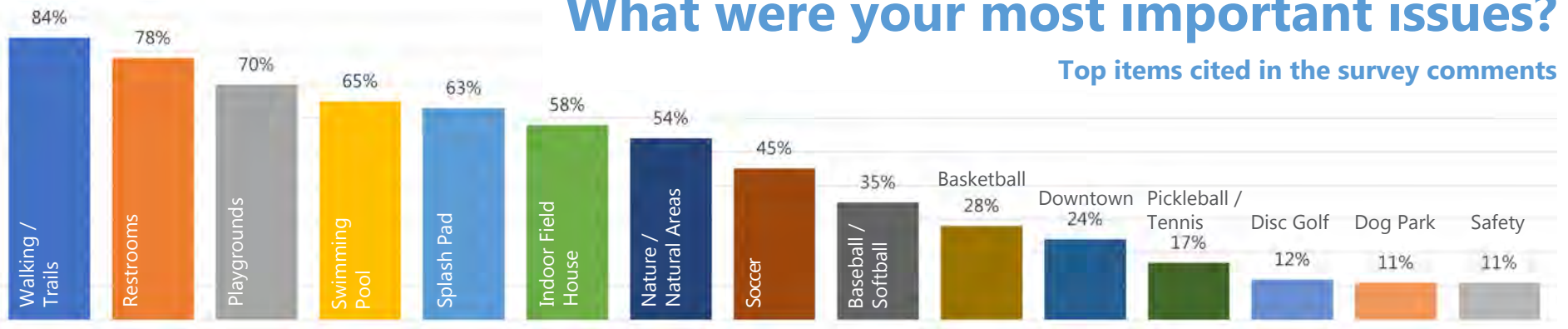
# What new facilities should we focus on?

Of the future improvements listed, please select three items BJRD should prioritize to develop new.



# What were your most important issues?

Top items cited in the survey comments



## WHAT WE LEARNED IN THE INTERVIEWS

### GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

- Number and distribution of parks is good.
- Parks budget slashed 33% in 2004 and has never recovered
- City desire to have inclusive parks
- Harmon Park underutilized
- Biggest needs:
  - Funding
  - Maintenance
  - Staffing
- Conditions at Hoffman Pool

### BELLEFONTAINE SCHOOLS STAFF

- Community needs an Indoor Recreation Facility
- Need better signage
- Improve recreation opportunities on the west end
- Improve equipment maintenance
- New play equipment in more parks
- More inclusive playgrounds
- Should increase trails and access pathways
- More summer youth programming

### PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- Good parks are an incentive to community growth
- Condition of parks a reflection on the community
- Connectivity between parks and other amenities is important
- Connect Simon Kenton trail to more amenities
- Improve signage and identity
- Need downtown event / greenspace
- New activities: Splash pad(s)
- Businesses provide assistance such as "Adopt a Park"
- Need for BJRDC "Branding"

### BJRDC STAFF

- Need additional summer staffing in the future
- More time allocated for maintenance
- Ability to provide new and improved programming
- Need volunteer coaches, concession help
- Need winter activity space

## KEY FINDINGS

### PARK BASICS

- Outstanding potential
- "Good Bones"
- Parks are well distributed throughout the community
- Good variety and range of activities

### PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

- Aging structures
- Needed maintenance
- Widespread lack of accessibility

### CULTURE

- Heritage and history
- Public interest
- Neighborhood park upgrades desired
- Lack of cohesive signage
- Need for better wayfinding

### FINANCES

- Improved funding needed
- Capital improvements are behind
- Seasonal staffing needs

### PROGRAMMING

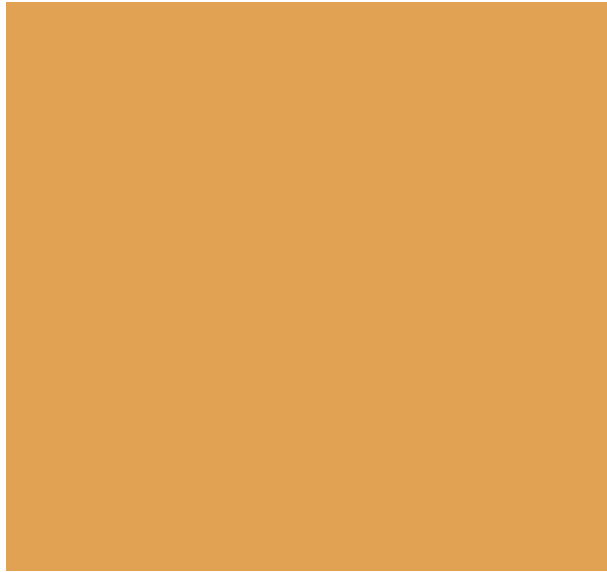
- More winter programs
- More youth programs

### STRIDES TAKEN

- Grant funding
- Public-Private Partnership
- New equipment

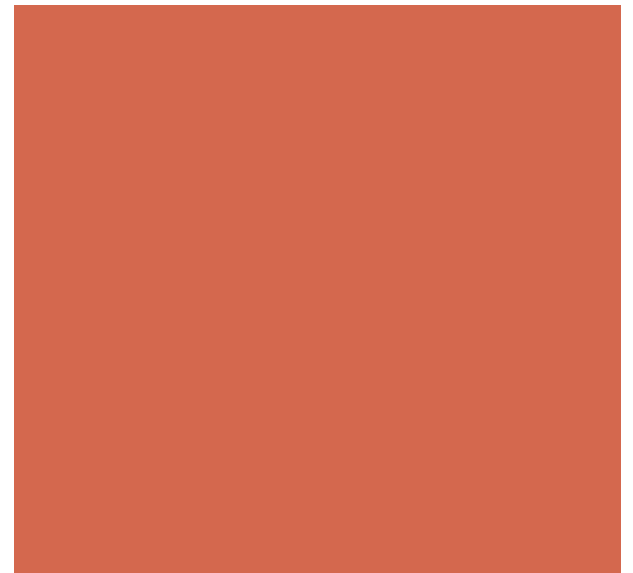


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- 1. OVERVIEW**
- 2. STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN**
- 3. FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS  
PROJECT SCOPE**
- 4. FUNDING**

## **ACTION PLAN**



## OVERVIEW

Bellefontaine's strategic central Ohio location offers opportunities for economic growth and its well-distributed network of parks and open spaces are a key assets in the community. Improving and enhancing these assets is an investment in Bellefontaine's future.

The Strategic Action Plan is based on public input and provides a mechanism for incremental improvements for:

- Advancing maintenance
- Upgrading antiquated equipment
- Developing new facilities
- Interconnecting parks and other key spaces
- Improving wayfinding and branding
- Addressing funding

## PUBLIC INPUT

The community provided important contributions to the process. Key items identified:

1. Community Parks are most visited but Neighborhood Parks are very important to their neighborhoods
2. Most common reason for visits:
  - Walking/running/exercise
  - Playgrounds
  - Youth sports
  - Swimming
  - Hiking/Nature Watching
  - Picnics/Gatherings
3. Walking and biking are very important activities
4. Existing programs are viewed favorably, and the following additional programming is desired:
  - Winter programming
  - After School
  - Nature Focused
  - Live Entertainment
5. Upgrades to existing facilities is important and most desired upgrades are:
  - Restrooms
  - Playgrounds
  - Walking paths/trails
  - Shelter houses
  - Facility lighting
6. New facilities are a high priority with the most mentioned facilities being:
  - Spray pad(s)
  - Multi-purpose indoor facility
  - Hoffman Pool replacement
  - Additional walking/biking paths
  - Additional Natural Areas
  - Downtown Park Space

## PLAN PRIORITIES

The Strategic Action Plan chart lists action items and the following are activities that should have high priority based on community input:

### 1. Immediate Actions

- Facility and equipment maintenance
- Immediate improvements are needed on safety, accessibility, and making existing items functional and enjoyable to use
- An annual program for maintenance must be instituted

### 2. New Play Equipment

- The replacement of worn-out playground equipment and installation of additional play equipment and safety surfacing must be addressed immediately and put on a replacement schedule

### 3. New Facilities

- Hoffman Pool: Effective use of Hoffman Pool and infrastructure has reached its limits and deterioration worsens yearly. A replacement process must be implemented immediately.

### 4. Special Project

- Harmon Field Park: Bellefontaine should initiate planning and renovation of one of its historic yet under-utilized parks. The park is located in a large residential area and has great potential. The Conceptual Master Plan for Harmon Field, located in the Conceptual Park Master Plans section of this document, provides an idea showing how to transform the park into a local gem.

### 5. Increased or Alternative Funding Stream

- The Funding section addresses funding challenges, an alternative funding source, and important funding source benefits.

## STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

The Strategic Action Plan chart will show a timetable for action items based on need, priority and the ability to accomplish the activity.

### SHORT TERM

Completed or started within 0 to 3 years

### MID-TERM

Completed or started within 4 to 5 years

### LONG TERM

Completed in 5 years or beyond

### ON-GOING

Continual or Annual Actions

SHORT TERM (0-3 YEARS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase or create new park department funding to support long-term vision</li> <li>• Expand maintenance program &amp; institute an annual maintenance assessment</li> <li>• Park improvements to streamline weekly maintenance operations</li> <li>• Replace aging play equipment</li> <li>• Improve and coordinate wayfinding</li> <li>• Develop plans to connect parks, schools, and amenities for walk/ bike access</li> <li>• Expand summer youth programming</li> <li>• Expand BJRД marketing and branding</li> <li>• Expand individual park information on the BJRД website</li> <li>• Annual review of Park programming</li> <li>• Initiate plans to construct a splash pad at Harmon Park</li> <li>• Begin planning process to replace Hoffman Pool</li> <li>• Develop a biennial online survey to assess user satisfaction and opinions</li> </ul>

MID-TERM (4-5 YEARS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace Hoffman Pool</li> <li>• Replace and add new play equipment</li> <li>• Expand connectivity between parks and other Bellefontaine amenities</li> <li>• Improve accessibility in all parks for special needs and all ages</li> </ul>

LONG TERM (BEYOND 5 YEARS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Field house for indoor recreation opportunities</li> <li>• Install a new splash pad</li> <li>• Update Park Master Plan</li> <li>• Replace or add new restroom facilities</li> <li>• Increase connectivity between parks and other Bellefontaine amenities</li> <li>• Expand the Simon Kenton Trail to interconnect with Bellefontaine amenities</li> </ul>

ON-GOING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual maintenance assessment of each park</li> <li>• Annual budgetary assessment</li> <li>• Annual review of park programming</li> <li>• Utilize social media to identify user opinions</li> <li>• Expansion of park interconnectivity</li> <li>• Promote sidewalks city-wide for park access</li> <li>• Improve and update play structures</li> <li>• BJRД marketing and branding</li> <li>• Coordinate and recognize volunteer contributions</li> <li>• Landscape improvements and planting of shade trees</li> </ul>

## HARMON FIELD PARK RENOVATION

### Site Improvements

- Earthwork
- Site Utilities
- Landscape / Seeding / Fencing
- Site Lighting
- Shelter Demolition and Improvements
- Pavement & Basketball Court Improvements

### Spray Pad

- Spray Pad & Filtration Equipment
- Filtration Equipment Structure

### Restroom Facility

### New Playground Equipment and Surfacing

Planning, Soft Costs, Contingency & Inflation (35%)

**Probable Project Cost Range      \$1.3 to \$1.5 M**

## MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD HOUSE FACILITY

### Site Improvements

- Earthwork
- Paving
- Site Utilities
- Landscape / Seeding

### Field House Facility

- Multi-Purpose Gym & Track
- Multi-Purpose Turf Area
- Office Space
- Meeting Room
- Toilets, Storage, Mechanical

Total Building Area    41,000 sf

Planning, Contingency & Inflation (35%)

**Probable Project Cost Range      \$10.5 to \$12.0 M**

## NEW HOFFMAN AQUATIC CENTER

### Site Improvements

- Earthwork and Demolition
- Paving
- Site Utilities
- Landscape / Seeding / Fencing

### Aquatic Center

- Pool Areas Filtration Equipment
  - 8 Lane Competition Pool
  - Zero-depth Pool, Kiddie Area, Lazy River
  - Diving Boards
- Recreation Equipment
  - Slides and Spray Pad
- Bathhouse and Concession Building
- Pool Heaters
- Lighting

Planning, Contingency & Inflation (35%)

**Probable Project Cost Range      \$8.5 to \$10.0 M**

## FUNDING

### ANNUAL FUNDING CHALLENGES

Economic conditions through the 21st Century brought financial challenges for the City of Bellefontaine. The Bellefontaine Joint Recreation District's operation budget is funded annually from the City's General Fund. The annual operation budget is submitted to City Council each year and reviewed in detail before it is ratified. Budget challenges in 2004 resulted in a significant decrease to the City's recreation budget. The annual operation budget has remained at this reduced level and over the last 6 years ranged from \$410,000 to \$496,000 or approximately 5 to 7% of the Bellefontaine's annual General Fund Budget. BJRDC receives additional income of \$125,000 per year on average from the swimming pool operations and shelter rentals.

National municipal park annual operating expenditures can be analyzed on a per capita basis. The median national average Park Operating Expenditure per Capita for a city with a population of less than 20,000 was \$85.84 in 2016 according to the National Recreation and Park Association. The population for Bellefontaine from 2021 U.S. Census data is 14,701. A comparison of Bellefontaine's average annual recreation funding versus a funding level at the national average follows:

<b>Current Annual Funding (avg.)</b>	<b>National Average Funding</b>
\$600,000	\$1,208,284
14,701 Population (2021)	14,701 Population (2021)
\$35.52 per capita	\$85.84 per capita

These funding levels are for operational expenditures only and do not include capital expenditures for new equipment and major improvements.

The Master Plan provides recommendations for improvements and additional recreational facilities. Implementation will require a commitment by the City and additional financial resources. Given the City of Bellefontaine's budget constraints, these financial resources will require a new source of income to boost the BJRDC's operating budget.

## AVAILABLE FUNDING SOURCES

Below is a list of funding sources to potentially increase recreation funding including public and private opportunities at the Federal State and local levels rather than an increase in the City's annual budget:

- Municipal Bonds
- Tax Levy
- Public / Private Partnerships
- Park Dedication Fees
- Development Impact Fees
- Event, Membership or Use Fees
- Intergovernmental Grant Programs
- Corporate Sponsorships

### Examples of Ohio Funding/Grant Programs include:

- State of Ohio Capital Funds
- Ohio Community Services Division
- Ohio Community Development Program
- NatureWorks Grants
- Clean Ohio Trail Fund and Recreational Trails Fund, (ODNR)
- Clean Ohio Fund Green Space Conservation (ODNR)

### Examples of Federal Funding/Grant Programs include:

- Recreational Trails Program
- Safe Routes to School Program
- Surface Transportation Program (Trails)
- Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program
- Bikes Belong Grants
- People for Bikes Community Grant
- American Trails Grants
- American Hiking Society National Trails Fund
- Community Forest and Open Space Program (Parks / Greenspace)
- Army Corp of Engineers Grants
- Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byways Program

## RECOMMENDED FUNDING SOURCE

A new source of funding is recommended to provide additional operating funds to provide for necessary operation, maintenance, and staffing needs. This new funding source would also generate funds for capital improvements, equipment and major improvements.

An increase to the Municipal Income Tax rate, specifically earmarked for BJR operations, is a viable method to provide necessary funding to implement the recommendations in this Master Plan. The following illustrates one possible Municipal Income Tax adjustment strategy:

Current Income Tax Rate	1.33%
Suggested Rate Increase	0.267%
New Income Tax Rate	1.6%
Approx. Annual Revenue	\$1.4M to \$1.5M

### FUNDING SOURCE BENEFITS

This could provide the following benefits:

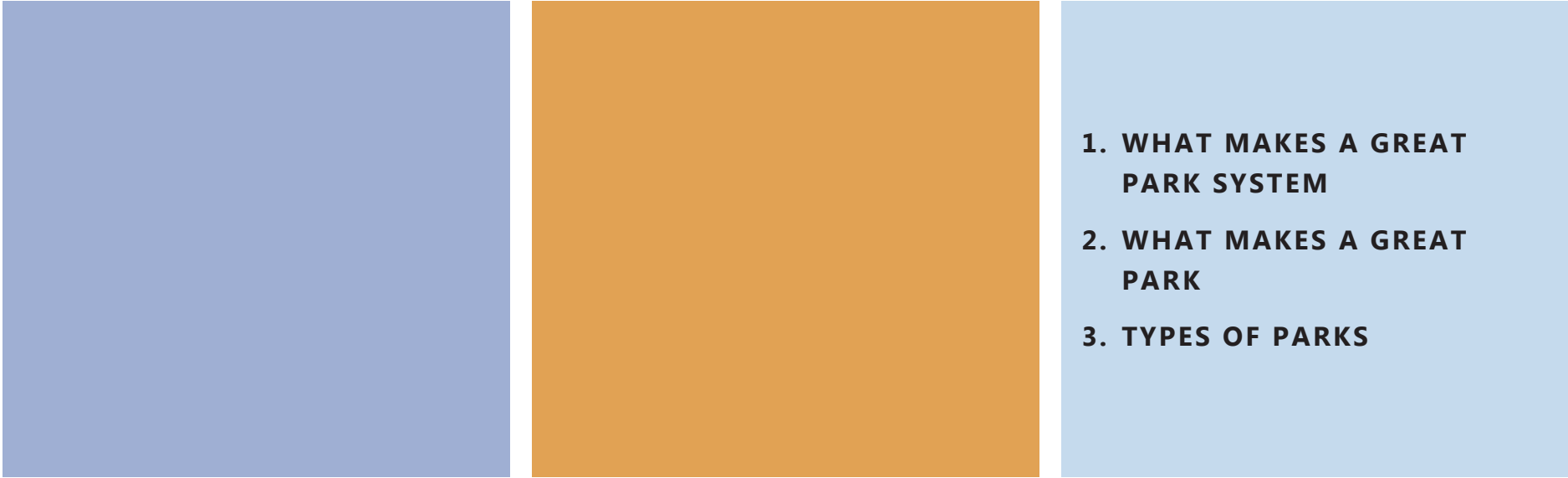
1. Increased funds in the City's Annual Budget available to other departments
2. Address priorities identified in the Survey
3. Improve on-going park maintenance
4. Provide adequate staff levels in the future
5. Provide capital for play equipment upgrades to meet safety and accessibility standards
6. Special projects to enhance park experience
7. Plan and fund major capital improvement projects over an extended time period
8. Ability to apply for Grants requiring matching funds
9. Opportunity to "catch-up" years of maintenance & equipment inadequacies due to lack of funding
10. An innovative opportunity to implement **A New Era for Bellefontaine Parks**

## GRANT APPLICATIONS

Continue to apply for grants specifically those tied to Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) or transportation grants. Grant applications are competitive and that generally require the City to commit to the process and may require matching funds. Bellefontaine should invest the time in tracking and applying for grants opportunities.



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- 1. WHAT MAKES A GREAT PARK SYSTEM**
  - 2. WHAT MAKES A GREAT PARK**
  - 3. TYPES OF PARKS**

## **DEFINING PARAMETERS**



## WHAT MAKES A GREAT PARK SYSTEM

In his introduction to Peter Harnik's *The Excellent City Park System*, Will Rogers, the President of the Trust for Public Lands, wrote "Great cities are known for their great parks, and one measure of any city's greatness is its ability to provide recreation, natural beauty, and signature open spaces for its citizens."

But how do you get there? While not complicated, it is multi-faceted. Harnik's publication recommends seven basic fundamentals that will put park departments on track for creating an excellent system. Those fundamentals and how to apply them are listed below.

### A. A CLEAR EXPRESSION OF PURPOSE

The daily reality of running a park district can often lead to tunnel vision while trying to juggle the immediate needs of the parks, staff, public and budget. Having a clear purpose for 'being' that is shared throughout the organization helps to keep top priorities on top and to stay focused on the big picture. Once a purpose is defined, what basic standards each park and the district as a whole should meet to support the purpose should be clearly delineated.

1. Mission/Goals: "A New Era for Bellefontaine Parks"
  - a. Define the core purpose of BJR D
  - b. Develop a basic standard of quality expectations for the parks and map out a plan to bring them up to the standard
  - c. Integrate the Park Plan into *Bellefontaine's Community Master Plan*
2. Annual Report with Precise Numbers

An Annual Report conducted by BJR D forces the district to take stock of how and if the district is directing their resources in a way that meets its core purpose, quality standards and responsibility to the public. It also allows to public to better

understand what is happening in the park district.

- a. Accomplishments-toot your horn!
  - i. How many programs/activities
  - ii. How many people were served
  - iii. What improvements were made
- b. Challenges and the plan to address them
- c. Crime/Security issues
- d. Volunteers/Partnerships
- e. Finances
- f. Goals met and goals for the upcoming year

### B. ON-GOING PLANNING AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

While the Annual Report serves as an assessment of the past year and a guide for the coming year, it is important to continually track the budget, make adjustments and try to anticipate upcoming expenses, capital improvements and maintenance needs, to avoid a pile up of repairs and replacements that outpace the district's financial and staffing ability to keep up.

A timeline for future redesign and construction of parks that have aged out of their usefulness and appeal needs to be budgeted for and built into the short term and long range planning documents. The plans should be coordinated with local development and city planners to assure community goals are being supported. The goals laid out in the Master Plan should guide even small park improvements to assure the parks meet the needs of the community and support the park's core purpose.

1. Review the Master Plan frequently and update the plan every five years

2. Look for opportunities to encourage community involvement
3. Provide park programming to reach a wide variety of interests, ages and abilities
4. Develop a park volunteer program
5. Coordinate park planning with local development, the schools and health agencies to reinforce a shared vision
6. Look for opportunities to add connective trails in new housing developments
7. Track and update the budget and yearly improvement goals
8. Create an inventory system to track maintenance and replacement of play equipment, site furniture, shelters and restrooms
9. Conduct regularly scheduled site visits to each park to assess, record and review maintenance issues along with a detailed maintenance tracking system, that is reviewed weekly

### **C. SUFFICIENT ASSETS IN LAND, STAFFING AND EQUIPMENT**

For a park district to be truly successful, it needs to have the funds needed to properly staff the department to handle the maintenance and upkeep of all of the parks. The district needs to be able to replace as well as to keep up with capital improvements, and to have the ability to apply for matching funds when opportunities become available.

1. Increase revenue to sufficient levels
2. Plan how donations can best support the goals laid out in the Master Plan to maintain unity in site furnishings and to avoid causing maintenance issues for the staff
3. Involve staff in developing maintenance standards, such as pavement around new benches or tables to eliminate trimming, and avoiding adding signs or site furniture in a way that is difficult to maintain after installation

4. Make sure there is sufficient land area to support the function of the parks and to provide equitable access to parks as new development moves outward from the city





## D. EQUITABLE ACCESS

1. All people are within 10 minutes or 1/2 mile of a park on foot or by bike or “six blocks from a park”
2. Assure parks and access to parks are user friendly to all abilities and all incomes
3. Develop safe pedestrian corridors to and through parks where possible
4. Develop safe pedestrian corridors between parks and to other points of interest where possible
5. Provide proper and unified signage and wayfinding to ease use of parks and trails



## E. USER SATISFACTION

1. Conduct bi-annual surveys of use, attendance and satisfaction
2. Make it easy for park patrons to personally contact BJR D
3. Develop a branding and marketing plan to publicize park offerings and strengthen the BJR D image
4. Improve user experience of the website

## F. SAFETY FROM HAZARDS AND CRIME

1. Conduct a continual inspection program to eliminate site hazards
2. Frequent police patrols and presence
3. Maintain crime/disturbance data.
4. Provide proper lighting
5. Park Zone (traffic calming) signage near the park

## G. BENEFITS BEYOND THE PARK BOUNDARIES

1. Cleaner air and water
2. Health benefits from exercise
3. Highlighting and providing wayfinding information at the park to local businesses and other points of interest can increase business vitality
4. Increased property values: Just as a great park can add value to a neighborhood, a neglected park can pull values down
5. Natural beauty and serenity

Harnik, Peter “The Excellent City Park System. What Makes It Great and How to Get There”. THE TRUST for PUBLIC LAND, Reprinted 2006

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**CHARACTER** 4

- Does the park have features that promote repeat visits?
- Are the facilities well maintained?
- Is there a distinct entry or entries?
- Does the park feel welcoming and interesting?

**INVENTORY** 4

- Are there things to do for a range of ages?
- Are there quality play structures and facilities?
- Are there shelters, restrooms, picnic tables, benches?
- Is there a working drinking fountain?

**WAYFINDING** 4

- Is there a park sign at major entries?
- Does the park have a cohesive layout?
- Is there adequate signage to park activities?
- Is there a sign showing nearby points of interest?

**ACCESSIBLE** 4

- Can people easily walk/bike to the park?
- Are there options to sit in the sun or the shade?
- Do sidewalks link the park's activity centers?
- Can people of all ages and abilities enjoy the park?

**SAFETY** 4

- Are there items that make the park feel neglected?
- Is the lighting adequate?
- Are there open site lines into the park?
- Are there buffers from the street & traffic calming signs?

## WHAT MAKES A GREAT PARK

The preceding list of items are generally accepted as positive park attributes, but rating a park can be a sticky wicket. It's subjective and nearly impossible to suss out a successful park vs a failing park with a number. A natural park with few amenities can be a delightful place even without play structures and shelters. A park with the best play structure in a nice setting may be wonderful for a certain age group, but if it lacks accessibility or variety, it may be considered impossible to enjoy to another group.

## RATING THE PARKS

As the team reviewed and inventoried the 17 parks in the Bellefontaine Joint Recreation District, each park was toured, inventoried, and assessed against a myriad of elements that fell into the five listed categories. Photos were taken, park goers were surveyed and interviewed, and the final compilation of data was analyzed. Despite the difficulty, ratings were assigned to each category of each park.

1. **Character:** Almost without exception, the team felt the park district had "good bones," meaning a nice stock of mature shade trees, well-kept lawns, several types of parks, good locations and distribution throughout the city, a wide variety of settings, and a wide range of opportunities for play, hiking, sports, serenity and access to nature. All very positive and important attributes. Most of the individual parks lack a unified design with mis-matched site furniture, a lack of connection between park activities, ill-defined parking and some strangely placed picnic areas and structures.
2. **Inventory:** With some obvious exceptions, the team found a majority of the play structures, restrooms, and shelters to be aging out of usefulness and in dire need of a replacement or a repair strategy.

3. **Wayfinding:** Signage throughout the park system lacks consistency. There are a wide range of sign types, some parks lacking signs and some signs show severe aging.
4. **Accessibility:** Very few parks have accessible parking areas or walkways to the various amenities, making them impossible to enter or use for people with accessibility issues. Very few play areas are accessible.
5. **Safety:** The Bellefontaine Police Department did a safety assessment of the parks and largely reported adequate lighting and good visibility into the park to help public safety officials monitor park activities. There were traffic calming signs in most locations. Some parks need safety barriers from the street and others had items that need to be removed.

## TYPES OF PARKS

The parks in the BJRDC system were sorted into four categories. While some may not currently live up to the category they were placed in, those parks have the potential to become more than they are and are in **bold**.

### NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Small parks, up to 3 acres with a few amenities such as play structures, open space, walking paths and picnic areas, that are intended to serve the local neighborhood.

1. Blair Casey
2. Brown
3. Cooksey
4. Kelly Court
5. Myrtle
6. Oakland Square
7. Shawnee Trace

### COMMUNITY PARK

Parks over 2 acres that have a wide variety of activity options or with unique offerings that draw people in from across the community.

8. Fred Carter - Unique nature park
9. **Harmon - Future water play and wide range of activities**
10. Jack Martin - Dog Park

### REGIONAL PARK

Parks that have a specific function or unique character that have the ability to repeatedly draw users in from beyond the immediate community. The size of the park is less a predicate than the quality of the activity offered. Regional parks generally need to provide more parking spaces.

11. Ratleff - Sports Complex
12. Southview - Sports Complex and wide range of activities
13. Blue Jacket - Skate park, sports fields
14. **Hoffman Pool - Once improved will attract visitors**
15. Rutan Park - Disc golf, tennis and paddle ball
16. Myeerah - Unique nature park

### SPECIAL USE PARK

A park that serves a specific function more than a specific neighborhood, and that does not necessarily draw in people from the community or beyond.

17. Roadside Park



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- 
- 1. **BRANDING**
  - 2. **WEBSITE**
  - 3. **WAYFINDING**
  - 4. **CONNECTIVITY**

## **CREATING UNITY WITHIN THE PARK SYSTEM**



## BRANDING and LOGO

Bellefontaine Joint Recreational District is a distinct entity under the municipal system. The Joint Recreational District was formed in 1984 and has a BJR D Board of Trustees. Currently, BJR D shares a logo with the City of Bellefontaine with the addition of the park district's name under the city's logo.

Throughout the park analysis, the report discusses the importance of wayfinding, accessibility and connectivity. While each category has different applications and implications, they share the core concept of needing a recognizable brand / logo. The BJR D system contains 16 parks across the city and Myeerah several miles from the city. There are a variety of sign styles and some parks have no signs at all. In addition, BJR D runs park programs, social media accounts, and an informational website. It is a huge enterprise with a lot of public outreach and interaction that would benefit from simplification.

As BJR D embarks on it's journey toward 'A New Era for Bellefontaine Parks', it is important to take a holistic approach to create unity across the system by connecting everything related to the system with a visual icon (logo) and brand that singularly represents BJR D. This helps to promote instant recognition of the park district programs and properties, to build public trust in the park system, and to ease use of the parks.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Engage a graphic design / branding professional to bring BJR D through a branding and logo development process
2. Develop a sign design series to reflect the several hierarchies of signs needed to be employed in specific use situations (See Section on Wayfinding)
3. Develop a look for the website and social media accounts that carries the brand through
4. Develop a template for program announcements and fliers
5. Make the logo simple and easy to replicate on a variety of products
6. Design a really cool park t-shirt with the new logo



BJRD's current logo



## WEBSITE USER EXPERIENCE

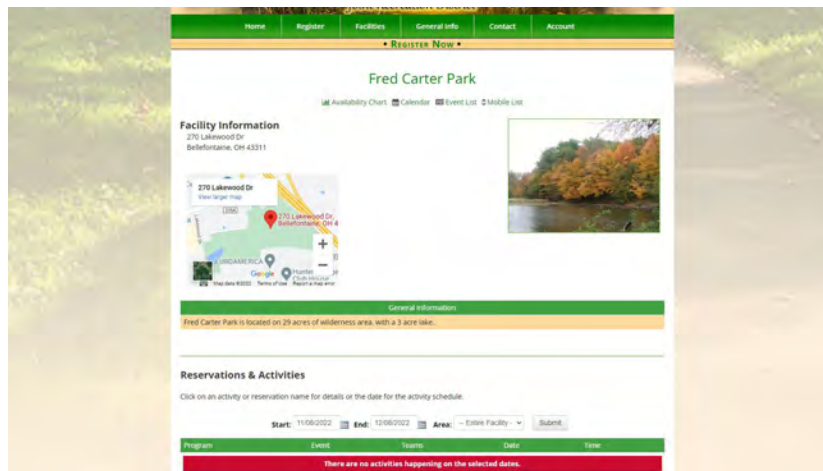
BJRD's existing website, while being available to the public for information, is also a specialty website that helps the park track certain information. Wholesale redesign of the website is not feasible.

The existing website contains a lot of information. Across the first ribbon, users can find information on park programs, permits, passes and rentals. There is a tab leading to the District's Facilities, General Information and Contacts. Users are also given the opportunity to sign up for an account, which facilitates use of the system for rentals, permits and passes.

The Program section of the web page leads to links of the various park programs with more information available from the link and is highly informative.

The Facilities section is set up with a list of the parks and a link to a new page for each park. The amount and quality of the information for each park varies, but each contain the park address, an interactive map and some general information about the park that lacks consistency across the park system.

Some relatively simple changes can help the public better understand what each park has to offer, the park hours, location, trail and parking information. Providing some information about the character and history of the park better connects citizens to their parks.



A screenshot of Fred Carter Park's web page

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- In addition to the Facility List, add an clickable map showing all of the District's parks in a single view. Clicking the park should take the user to the park's page and with a link back to the map from each park's page.
- On each park page, provide the following information:
  - Park Name
  - Park Address
  - Park's size
  - A description of the park including if the park is accessible
  - A link to and description of the shelters for rent including the size, capacity, if lighted, if nearby grills are available and if they are accessible
  - Parking information and park rules
  - A description of any trail system with length of trails, trail types and difficulty
  - A list of sports facilities and any rules associated with use
  - Park Hours
  - Attractive image
  - List of the Amenities





## WAYFINDING

Imagine visiting The Ohio State University in Columbus for the first time. Within a few minutes, a signage pattern emerges. The signs look alike, they have the name of the school, the building, the address, and so forth. As a new visitor is exposed to the next sign, their brains have already processed how to filter out the information they don't need, to quickly find the information they need. Even as you leave the Main Campus for West Campus, you know when you arrive because the signage is the same.

In the above example, wayfinding and accessibility are aided because the information is consistent and easy to digest, negating the need to reinterpret the signage each time. The consistency of look and style help people to instantly connect separate and possibly disassociated locations with the same overall entity. It helps park users navigate a space, confirms the park's identity, and builds user confidence by helping people orient themselves in their physical space.

The key to successful wayfinding is good signage that has clarity and good visibility, with placement that anticipates traffic patterns and user needs, and is consistent with the park's brand and logo for easy recognition. The following images show examples of sign 'families' and hierarchies to aid in wayfinding in a variety of situations.



This collection of signs by Avid Trails for the Calesa Township Trail System show a unifying element (A), hierarchy of signage types (B), and an example of providing a larger context to highlight connections to other parks, greenways and local businesses (C).

<https://www.avidtrails.com/>



This group of signs was designed by the LA Group and shows a well thought out signage system to address the various wayfinding needs encountered throughout the extensive Niagara Falls State Park.

<https://www.thelagroup.com/portfolio/niagara-falls-state-park-wayfinding-signage/>



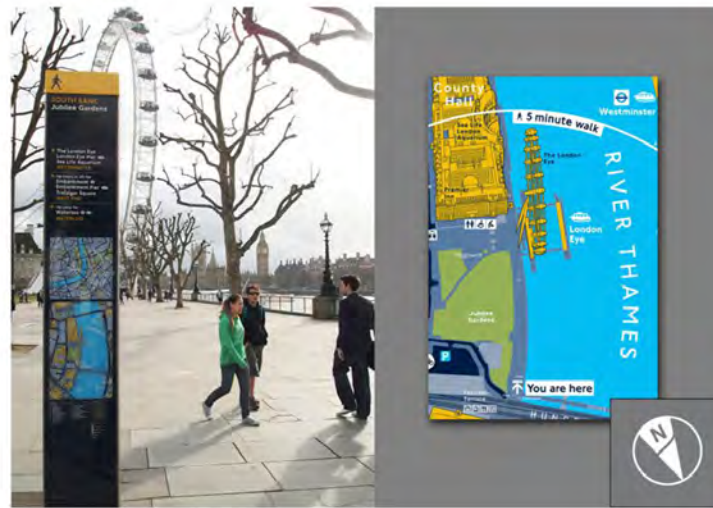
This pole mounted sign provides highly visible wayfinding for the Tulsa, Oklahoma, 918 Trail Network. It is a good example for showing park to park routes within the City of Bellefontaine.

<https://gtrnews.com/incog-and-river-parks-authority-launch-918-trails-network-connecting-the-region/>



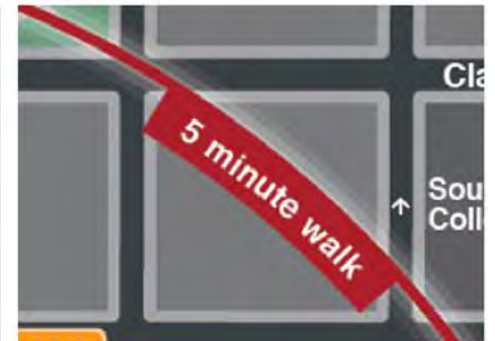
Examples of route markers that could indicate park to park, or park to points of interest routes along the city sidewalks.

<https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/projects-and-programs/programs/urban-design-program/pedestrian-wayfinding>



Above and to the right are examples of signs developed for the 'Legible London' project. They were designed to help people find and walk to their destinations more easily. This type of contextual signs would be most useful in parks that are more highly visited by people from outside the community and where there are good walking or biking routes from park to park or to other points of interest. This type of sign would be useful at the Simon-Kenton Trailhead to help draw trail users to local businesses.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/boroughs-and-communities/legible-london>



## CONNECTIVITY

The survey results show the city residents have a strong interest in a walkable / bikeable community. A walkable community has compounding benefits. It provides opportunity for exercise when citizens have the ability to walk from home to jobs, schools, parks, restaurants and shopping. Providing opportunities for walking and biking helps to promote the health and well-being of the community. With public transportation in short supply, people with limited or no access to transportation gain affordable access to their city when accessible options for walking are available. A walkable community helps to promote the local economy as well. People are more likely to pop in at more than one nearby business when on foot, compared with driving through a business district where parking options may be limited. Finally, by leaving the car at home, there is less pollution being generated.

Developing a walkable city with a multi-use trail system is a major undertaking that warrants an independent study designed to create a unified vision of an overall trail system. A successful trail system would connect where people live to recreational, entertainment and economic destinations. Developing safe routes under a myriad of traffic situations calls for a variety of solutions. Transforming the streetscape to safely accommodate vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles

could involve development of dedicated or protected bike lanes, buffered bicycle lanes, standard lanes, separate bike paths, and so forth. With the exception of a new trail developed on dedicated land, each solution would be required to fit into the existing city infrastructure. While engaging in a multi-use trail system study is recommended, steps can be taken to improve walkability and strengthen city connections.

In the following **Park Inventory and Analysis** section, each park was analyzed for its connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood, to main city circulation routes, to business districts, and to other parks. Key existing routes between entities were identified on plans, and potential future pedestrian routes were also noted. The following list of actions will improve connectivity:

1. Extend public sidewalks from park entries into the surrounding neighborhoods
2. Identify and mark safe places to cross near parks with signage, pavement marking and pedestrian alert systems where warranted
3. Map out and identify with signage or route markers preferred pedestrian routes between destinations and major city street routes that connect the park system.

4. Provide adequate lighting along routes
5. Review the preferred public sidewalk routes for accessibility and make necessary improvements
6. Provide 8' wide multi-use trails through the existing park system designed to link amenities and entries
7. Look for opportunities to include multi-use trails through existing and future residential developments. The trail from Shawnee Trace to the cemetery is a good example
8. Work with the Simon Kenton Trail Association to extend the trail further into the city

### MAP KEY - PARKS

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Myrtle               | J. Southview              |
| B. Blair Casey          | K. Simon Kenton Trailhead |
| C. Shawnee Trace        | L. Pat Cooksey            |
| D. Harmon               | M. Kelly Court            |
| E. Oakland Square       | N. Blue Jacket            |
| F. Brown                | O. Jack Martin            |
| G. Rutan / Hoffman Pool | P. Fred Carter            |
| H. Shawnee Trace        | Q. Roadside               |
| I. Lewis Rattleff       |                           |







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**NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**

**COMMUNITY PARKS**

**REGIONAL PARKS**

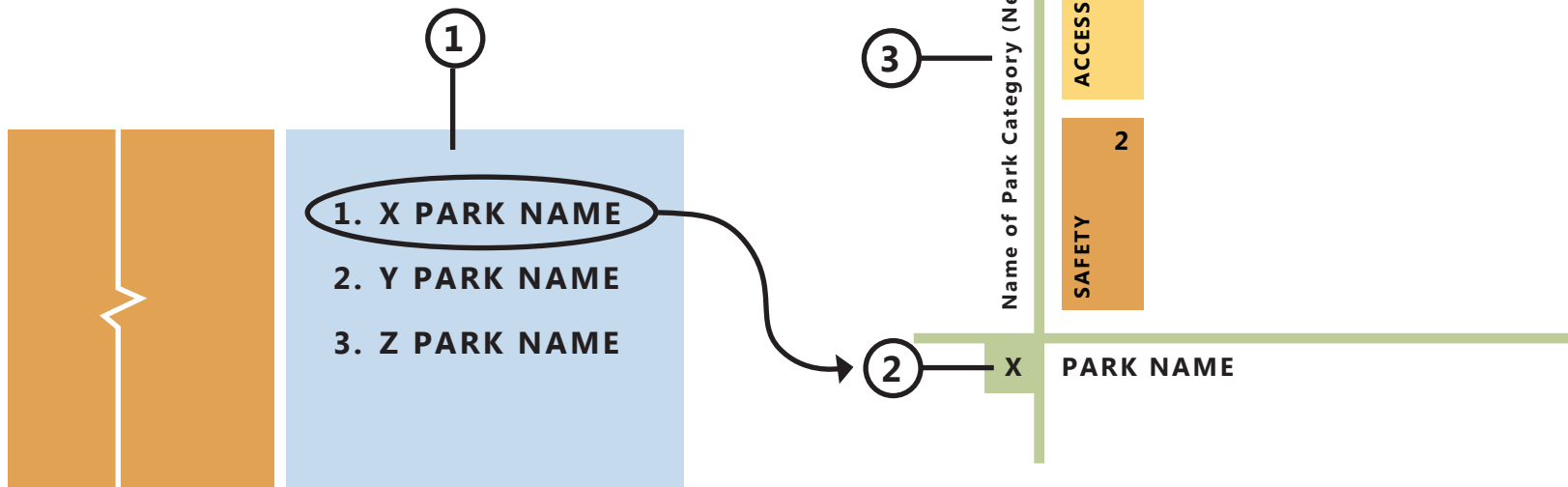
**SPECIAL USE PARKS**

# **PARK INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

**IN THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:**

The parks are separated into types of parks and numbered within their category. The categories are: Neighborhood, Community, Regional, and Special Use

1. The page divider contains a numbered list of parks falling within one of the above categories.
2. The number of the park is in the lower left hand corner, followed by the park name to the right of the border.
3. Left of the border, is the name of the Park Category.
4. Right of the border, there are five rectangular boxes listing the evaluated categories, described in greater detail in that park's section
5. In the upper right hand corner of each box is a number. The number represents a subjectively assigned rating for each category (as described in "What Makes a Great Park"). The ratings are from 0-4, with 4 being the best rating possible.



- 
1. BLAIR CASEY PARK
  2. BROWN PARK
  3. PAT COOKSEY PARK
  4. KELLY COURT
  5. MYRTLE PARK
  6. OAKLAND SQUARE
  7. SHAWNEE TRACE

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

SAFETY

3

ACCESS

1

WAYFINDING

0

INVENTORY

1

CHARACTER

2



1 BLAIR CASEY - 3 Acres

**PARK CHARACTER**

Blair Casey Park sits on a slight rise on Blair Avenue between homes and businesses facing State Routes 68 and 47. Maple trees, that have lost their battle with the utility company, line the front of the park on the south. The plaque dedicated to the park’s namesake, Dr. Wilbert Blair Casey, is located in the lawn behind the row of trees and contains the only indication of the park’s name.

The park has a quiet, rural feel despite being between two state routes. Wide open lawn undulates through the park and is shaded by just a handful of trees on its south end. An alley lines its west side and the north west corner is bounded by undeveloped, partially wooded land. Mary Rutan Hospital’s Dowell Avenue facility is within 100 yards of the north end of the park.

The park was opened to the public in 1957 and the existing swing and merry-go-round are quite possibly original to the park’s initial development. A tube slide / climbing structure is also located in the stone mulched play area. The park contains a non-working water fountain, a picnic table and grill. Vandals have twisted the seats of the picnic table.

There are no sidewalks to or within the park, no distinct entry and no signage visible from the street or alley. Parking is limited to street parking on Blair Avenue.

Despite its shortcomings, Blair Casey is ripe for improvement. The size of its open space and topography are assets that lend themselves to offering a variety of amenities including an extensive walking / biking path to the benefit of surrounding residents and workforce.



## INVENTORY

- Stone mulched play area with an aging swing set (with one missing swing, 1 toddler swing and 1 regular swing), an aging merry-go-round and a small play structure with a rock wall, tube slide and climber
- One picnic table with twisted seats
- Grill
- A non-working drinking fountain
- A memorial plaque



View looking north



## WAYFINDING

- The only sign indicating the park is on the memorial plaque and not visible from the street

## ACTIONS

- Provide signage indicating the park facing Blair Avenue and where visible from the alley connecting to SR 68



## ACCESS

- **The park is not accessible**
- There are no sidewalks within the park
- There are no accessible parking spaces

## ACTIONS

- There are no easy fixes to improve accessibility. The park needs a new vision and design that incorporates accessible parking and sidewalks to the park's amenities





*Survey: Blair Park needs to be updated / Our family frequents Blair Park and while the grass is always mowed, the park itself is filled with weeds and hasn't been updated or repaired in quite some time. There is also plenty of room there to add a soccer field or some other recreational entertainment / With today's cost of living rising. I feel as community we will benefit from having our parks for families to spend time together and I'd be nice if the picnic table at Blair Park could be updated...*



## SAFETY

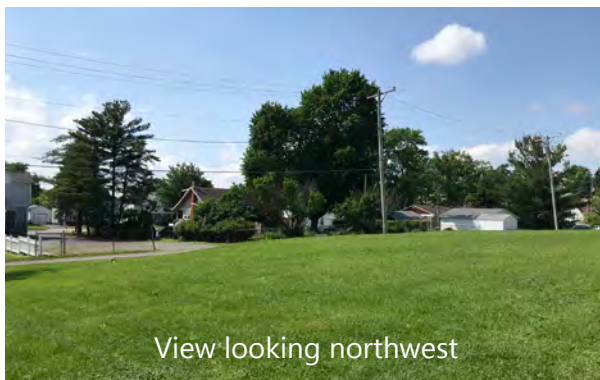
- There are several concrete foundations on the park grounds including a footing visible in the stone mulch play area where a see saw was removed
- There's no pedestrian access to the park along Blair Avenue

## ACTIONS

- Remove concrete foundations
- Connect public sidewalks from Rush Street to Main Street



View looking south



View looking northwest

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Blair Casey is practically a blank slate for redevelopment. While the park, in its current state, provides a welcome break from the cityscape and does offer a few amenities, it has potential to be a great park and destination with the features people look for in today's urban parks.

Its location next to the alley provides ample opportunity to add accessible parking with room for a nice entry, signage and for a hub where walkways that connect the park amenities meet.

The odd shape of the park allows for highly active play zones to be separated from more quiet areas. Because the majority of the shade is at the south end, that area is ideal for a large playground and picnic tables.

Although Blair Casey is too narrow for regulation sized sports fields or ball diamonds, it still offers plenty of open space for neighborhood pick up games. The long narrow section of the park, with its sloping topography, is the perfect location for hiking / biking trails that loop around the space and connect to the parking area and playground. It may be possible to develop a direct connection to the Mary Rutan Hospital facility on Dowell Avenue and strengthen connections to Mary Rutan Hospital and Rutan Park.

City sidewalks should be extended to the park and lead to a welcoming pedestrian entry at Blair Avenue.

## BLAIR CASEY

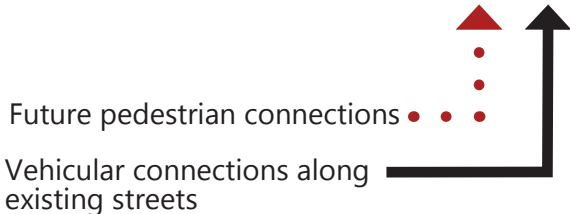


**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

- The peaceful setting of Blair Casey belies its proximity to local businesses and services making it a likely destination for those seeking mid-day solace beyond the surrounding neighborhood.
- Pedestrian or bicycle routes to the park would involve using the local streets and alley due to a lack of sidewalks near the park.
- There is direct vehicular access from the park to State Route 33 and to the businesses on both the north and south ends of Main Street

**ACTIONS**

- Extend neighborhood walks to the park
- Provide signage indicating the location of businesses, restaurants and other parks in high visibility areas and include a QR Code that helps visitors locate points of interest
- Pursue opportunities to make a direct pedestrian connection to the Mary Rutan Hospital facility north of the park





2 BROWN - 2.5 Acres

**SAFETY**

4

**ACCESS**

1

**WAYFINDING**

3

**INVENTORY**

2

**CHARACTER**

4



**PARK CHARACTER**

Brown Park, Bellefontaine's second oldest park was "gifted to the city in 1881 by Rebecca Shaw Brown as a memorial to her husband Dr. Benjamin Stanton Brown." ([bellefontaineoh.myrec.com](http://bellefontaineoh.myrec.com)) Early park features included greenhouses, flower gardens, a goldfish pond (It's rock fountain structure still in place), extensive walkways, a statue of Dr. Brown and a concrete platform stage constructed in 1946. It's peaceful setting provided a venue for "concerts, outdoor theater and religious services." (Logan County History Center) An 1890's map of the park ([www.historicpictoric.com/historic-1890-map-atlas-logan-county-ohio-bellefontaine](http://www.historicpictoric.com/historic-1890-map-atlas-logan-county-ohio-bellefontaine)), superimposed over the current park, shows three aligned circles connected by arching walkways to entries on each side of the park. The concrete platform and marble statue that formally commanded the north circle remain, and the concrete stairs on the north end are likely a remnant of one of the original entries.

Although the walks, fish pond and plentiful flower beds are gone, Brown Park draws the appreciative attention of motorists on Sandusky Avenue with the beauty of its natural setting in the middle of a developed area. The gently sloped open lawn is dotted with massive shade trees creating a serene atmosphere within the park despite the busy street to the south.

The Logan County Law Enforcement Memorial is located near the southeast corner and a Historical Marker honoring the Mills Brothers is on the southwest corner.

There are sidewalks on the perimeter of the park on the north, east and south sides with crosswalks and curb ramps connecting to the neighborhood walks, but not across Sandusky. A narrow paver walkway connects the northeast corner to the small accessible parking area on the west side; the walk changing to concrete as it nears the west edge.

One picnic area is located on the southwest corner very close to the alley and public sidewalk. Although there is paving around the table, it does not connect to the sidewalk. There are areas in the park with plantings and a couple of benches, one of which is accessible. In fact, accessibility, extending about 50' into the park, is limited to access to the Law Enforcement Memorial and to the aforementioned bench.



Park lighting is provided from atop a utilitarian wood pole located mid-lawn and from street lights.

Brown Park is a restive park with good curb appeal but that has very limited usability. The south end is in danger of becoming too cluttered with unrelated elements (the picnic area, historical marker, park sign and memorial) but offers no entry into the park. The concrete platform around the statue is in disrepair and should be removed or replaced with a simplified form. The furnishings are mismatched and the site lighting does not fit the character of the park. The only walk into the park is not accessible.

## INVENTORY

- 1 Picnic Area
- 1 Mini library
- 2 Benches

## WAYFINDING

- There is a monumental sign with the park name on the south side
- The west and north entries do not have park signs

## ACTIONS

- Update sign to new sign standard





## ACCESSIBILITY / WALKABILITY

- The only walk (pavers) through the park is not accessible
- The picnic table is not accessible

## ACTIONS

- Replace paver sidewalk with a ADA compliant sidewalk. Removed pavers can be used as a border
- Extend pavers under the picnic table to meet the adjacent sidewalk



## SAFETY

- The park has adequate lighting
- There is good visibility of park patrons
- There are Park Zone signs
- The sidewalks, with cross-walks and curb ramps at the corners (but not across Sandusky), provide pedestrian access to the perimeter of the park on the north, east and south sides.
- The proximity of the picnic table to the alley and Sandusky Avenue is not ideal for families with small children

## ACTIONS

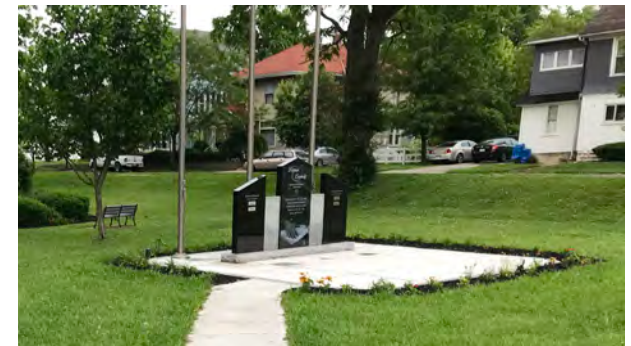
- Add another picnic area further into the park to provide options for patrons



## RECOMMENDATIONS

As Bellefontaine's second legacy park and with its location so near the city center, the park is in need of a new Park Master Plan with a design that celebrates its history, provides opportunities for walking, resting and picnics, preserves its setting as a place of respite and keeps large spaces of open lawn for events.

The design should include development of distinct entries and a framework of accessible walkways to unify its various elements and to allow users to stroll through the park to enjoy its quiet beauty. There is a need for additional picnic areas and benches. Although there was a comment on the survey in favor of a playground, that should not be the main focus of park improvements.



*Survey: It would be nice if the Library used this park for outdoor story times or monthly summer time activities in the park, like a traveling zoo, or magician, etc / Brown Park needs more benches and maybe a small fountain...*

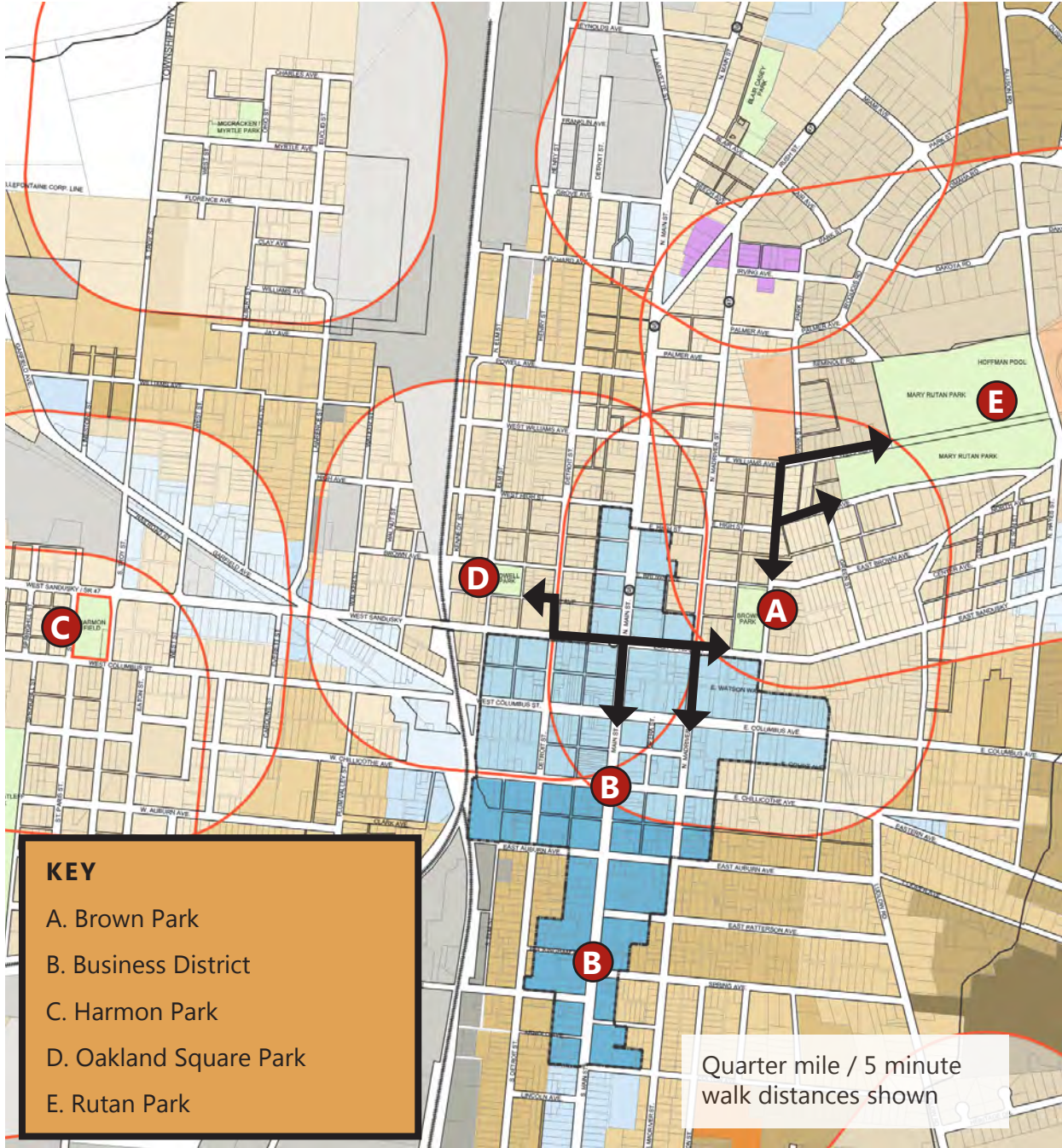


**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

- Brown Park has high connectivity along existing sidewalks to the downtown business district making it a perfect destination for a quick lunch walk or picnic
- Brown Avenue connects the north end of both Oakland and Brown Parks, but there isn't a safe crossing at the intersection of Brown Ave. and Main Street. Oakland Park can be safely reached via Sandusky to Elm
- Rutan is a 5 minute walk from Brown Park with sidewalks along Park Street and High Avenue

**ACTION**

- Pedestrian connection to Oakland Park should be highlighted along Sandusky to N. Elm Street
- A pedestrian connection to Rutan Park could be emphasized and improved from Park Street to High Ave
- Provide signage indicating the location of businesses, restaurants and other parks in high visibility areas and include a QR Code that helps visitors locate points of interest





**CHARACTER** 3

**INVENTORY** 2

**WAYFINDING** 3

**ACCESS** 0

**SAFETY** 2



**PARK CHARACTER**

BJRD’s smallest park, Pat Cooksey (the name changed from Iron City Park in 1987), is tucked along the east side of the city alongside a manufacturing district next to the Simon Kenton Trail on the west. It is one block from the business district lining Main Street on the east. It serves a relatively small neighborhood with large lots, few sidewalks and calm traffic. There are no sidewalks around the park and no crosswalks at the intersections leading to the park. Cars park by pulling off the side of the street into the grass.

Cooksey has an inviting feel with its mature shade trees, a well-kept generous green space, and nice plantings under the existing sign. Detracting from this is the tall grass under the picnic table, the non-functioning drinking fountain, and the incomplete safety surfacing under the new play structure. The remaining play equipment is from another era and lacks safety surfacing.

**INVENTORY**

- Picnic Table
- Trash can
- Non-working drinking fountain
- Newer multi-activity structure\*
- Aging merry-go-round\*
- Aging swing/slide combination\*

\* No or partial safety surfacing



## WAYFINDING

- There is a large park sign with a landscape bed on the north end

## ACTION

- Update sign to new standards



*Survey: Iron City Park [Cooksey] was updated this year or last, but it could use more amenities / Iron City Park [Cooksey] could use an update. There are lots of kids in that area / Cooksey could use a parking space...*

## ACCESSIBILITY

- **The park is not accessible**
- There are no sidewalks around or within the park
- There are no accessible parking spaces

## ACTIONS

- Add accessible parking along Ingalls Avenue or Detroit Street. Avoid parking along Carlisle Street due to possible damage to tree roots
- Add a sidewalk on the south side of the park from corner to corner with crosswalks to adjacent walks
- Provide a 5' walkway to connect public sidewalks and parking areas to the play and picnic areas within the park



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop a Park Master Plan to direct future improvements to create a fun and welcoming park.

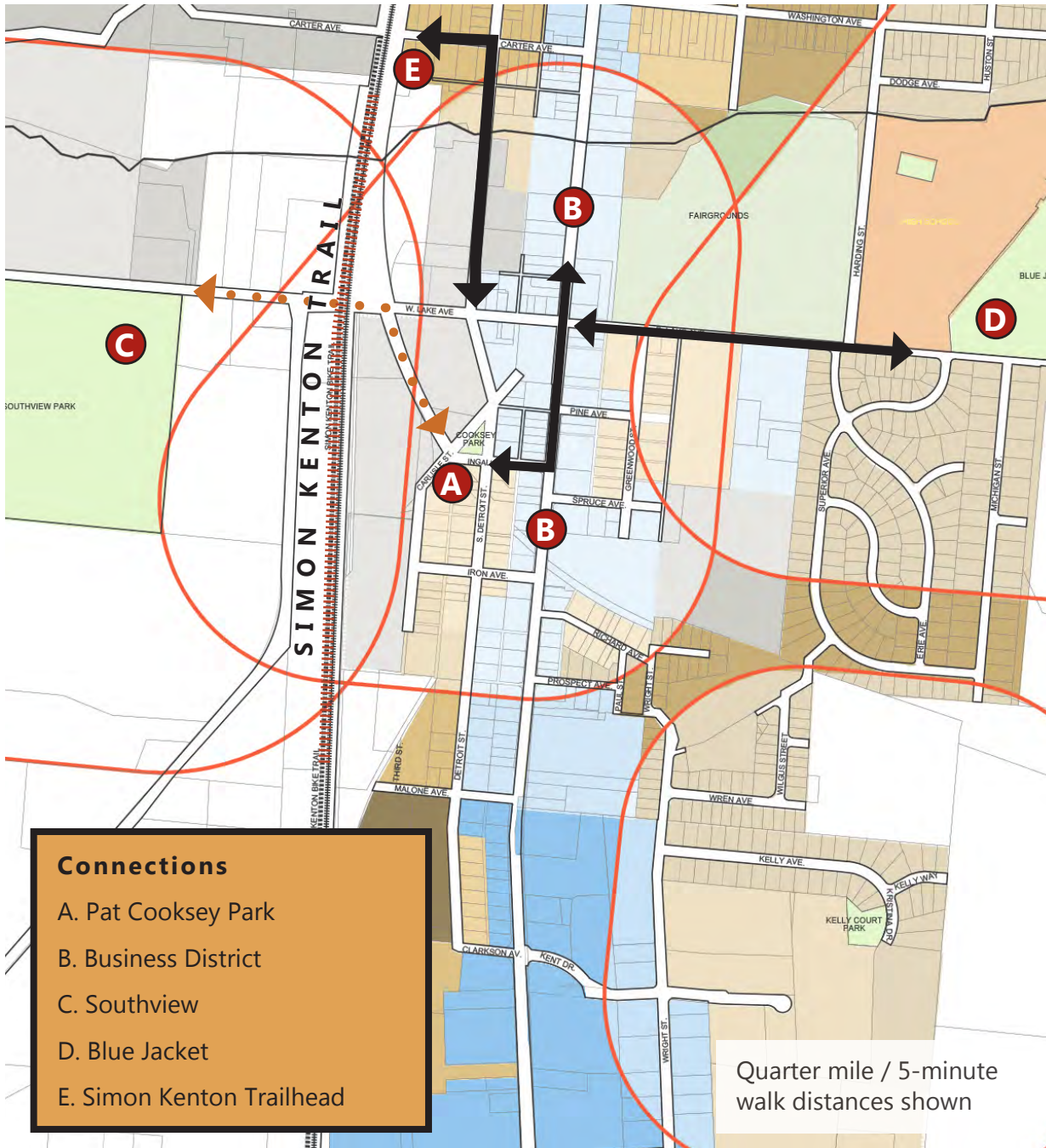
## SAFETY

- The existing streetlight provides adequate lighting
- Visibility of park patrons is good
- There is safety signage indicating a park along Carlisle Street
- There are no defined safe pedestrian routes to the park
- The picnic table is too close to the street
- None of the play structures have adequate safety surfacing

## ACTIONS

- Create safe pedestrian routes to the park and within the park.
- Update aging play structures
- Provide adequate safety surfacing for all structures
- Move the picnic table and associated elements further into the park to provide a larger buffer between the street and park users
- After the table is moved, prevent tall grass under the table by placing the picnic table on a concrete slab of sufficient size to provide a mowing strip around the table





## CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY

- Walkability to the park from the local neighborhoods would be easier and safer if sidewalks were added along the city streets
- The park falls within a half mile of Southview on the west and Blue Jacket on the east
- There is close connectivity to the west side of the Main Street businesses via Ingalls Avenue
- Pat Cooksey is within a 7 minute walk (and an even quicker bike ride) from the Simon Kenton Trailhead at Carter Ave. via Detroit St. Making it a viable picnic area for Simon Kenton trail users. Sidewalks along Detroit St. would provide safe pedestrian access between the two destinations. Wayfinding signage is needed to show the connection
- If a pedestrian route could be developed from Lake Ave. up to the Simon Kenton Trail, a trail within the abandoned rail spur could connect Lake Avenue to Pat Cooksey Park providing a closer connection to Simon Kenton Trail

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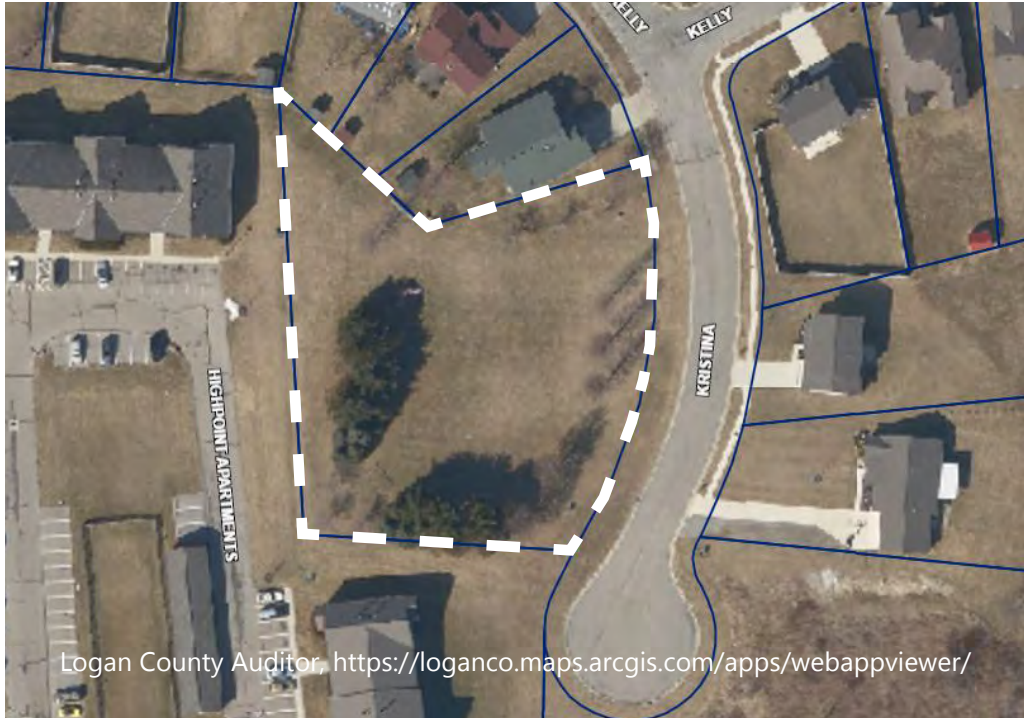
**CHARACTER** 3

**INVENTORY** 1

**WAYFINDING** 0

**ACCESS** 0

**SAFETY** 4



Logan County Auditor, <https://loganco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/>

**PARK CHARACTER**

Kelly Court is the southernmost park in the BJR system and was part of a required development set-aside intended to serve the surrounding neighborhood. The park is on a slight rise that affords good views of rolling hills to the east. There are two nice stands of mature evergreen trees and several nice shade trees. The trees on the south side of the park form a thicket that shows signs of fort building and natural play.

Although the park has potential with its many good qualities, there is little to compel local residents to visit it in its current state. Because of the lack of signage, some may not be aware it is a public park. There are no walkways into or through the park and few amenities. Survey respondents indicated their disappointment in the park and have a strong interest in seeing it improved.

**INVENTORY**

- 1 Picnic Table
- 1 Bench
- 1 Non-working drinking fountain
- 1 Small multi-activity structure with no safety surfacing
- 1 Empty swing frame



Expand concrete base to eliminate trimming

## WAYFINDING

- There are no signs indicating the park

## ACTIONS

- Provide signage indicating the park on Kristina Drive and at the apartment loop on the west side of the park.



View of east side of the park facing south



View within the park facing north

## ACCESSIBILITY / WALKABILITY

- **The park is not accessible**
- The surrounding neighborhood has good walkability, but no walks lead past the park boundary or into the park
- There are no accessible parking spaces

## ACTIONS

- Add accessible parking along the west side of the park
- Connect the walks in front of the north and east units of Highpoint Apartments and extend the walk on Kristina Drive to the apartments south of the park.
- Provide a 5' walkway to connect public sidewalks and parking areas to the play and picnic areas within the park.
- Assure play structures are accessible



## SAFETY

- The existing streetlight provides adequate lighting
- Visibility of park patrons is good
- No Park Safety Signage
- Safe pedestrian routes end at park boundary
- The aging play structure does not have safety surfacing

## ACTIONS

- Extend safe pedestrian routes to encompass the park and to connect park elements
- Update aging play structures
- Provide adequate safety surfacing for all structures

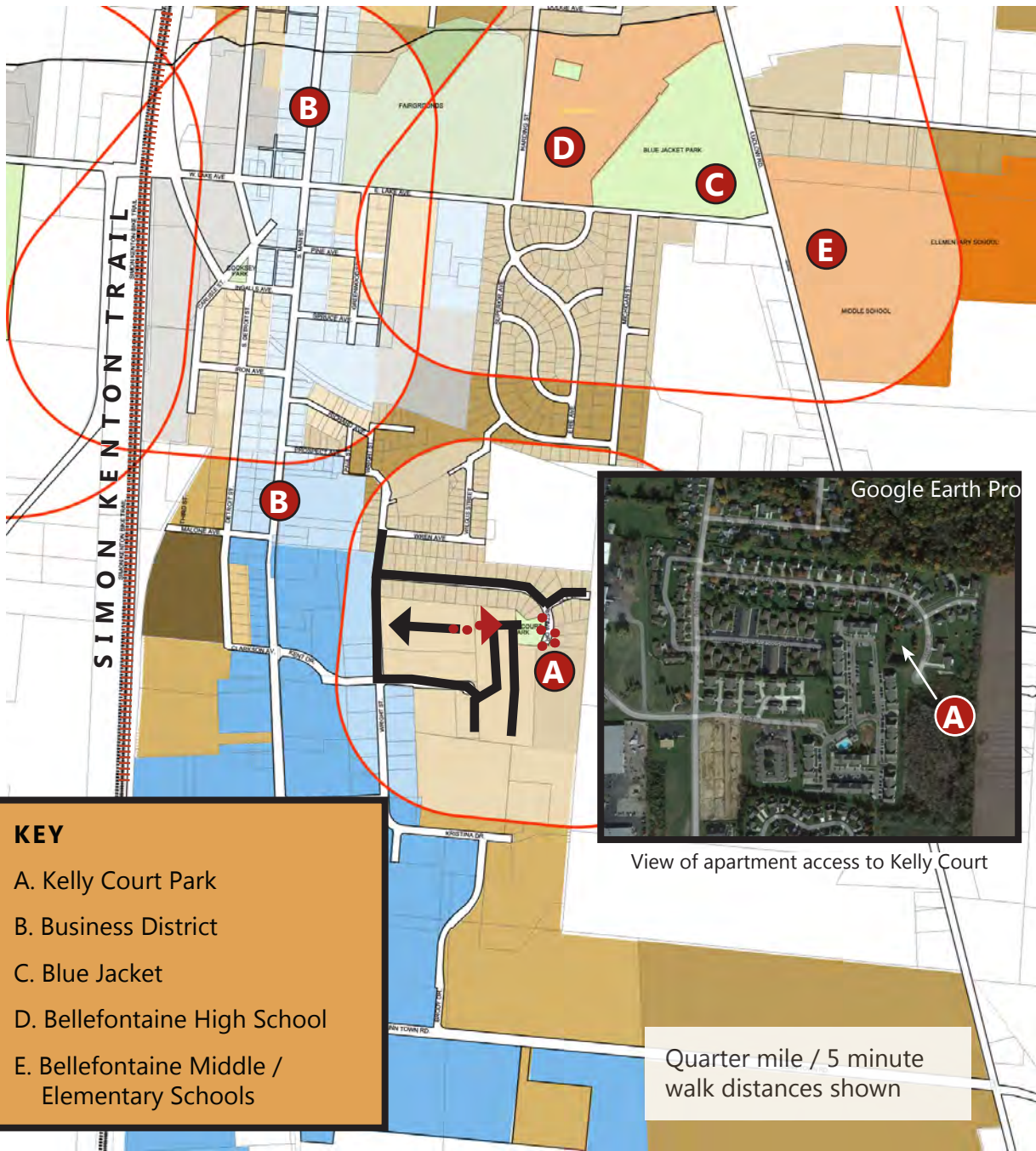
## RECOMMENDATIONS

See an idea for park improvements in the Conceptual Master Plans section



View of west side of the park facing south





**KEY**

- A. Kelly Court Park
- B. Business District
- C. Blue Jacket
- D. Bellefontaine High School
- E. Bellefontaine Middle / Elementary Schools

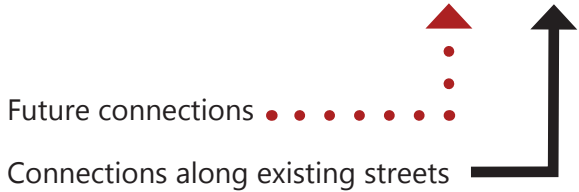
Quarter mile / 5 minute walk distances shown

**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

- Kelly Court has little potential to connect with other parks, adjacent neighborhoods and businesses due to several factors. Residential properties block a close connection from Wren Avenue to Kelly Court Park. Residents living on Wren Avenue and north, would need to walk to Wright St. for pedestrian access to the park via Kelly Way. Blue Jacket Park would be a comparable distance, but a more direct route and more likely choice. Residents south of Highpoint Apartments have no walkable route to Kelly Court Park. The businesses located in the walkable zone are big box stores designed for the efficient movement of cars making it unfriendly to pedestrians.

**ACTION**

- Priority should be given to making Kelly Court a functional park that is then connected to the adjacent neighborhood walks including connecting the sidewalk from Belle Meadows Apartments to the sidewalk at Highpoint Apartments. In addition, the public walks should connect to each other as shown in the concept



**KELLY COURT**

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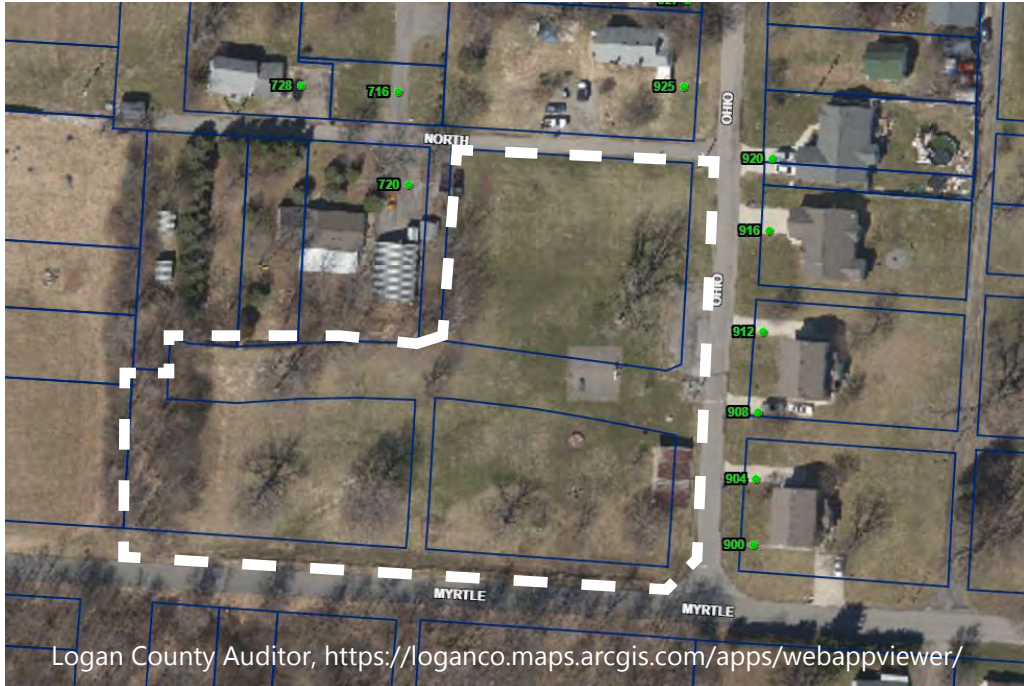
**CHARACTER** 3

**INVENTORY** 3

**WAYFINDING** 4

**ACCESS** 0

**SAFETY** 4



**PARK CHARACTER**

Myrtle Park (formerly McCracken Park) is Bellefontaine’s only park in the northwest corner of the City. The park has an expansive lawn with some nice shade trees. The surrounding neighborhood abuts the City Corporation Limit on the north and west and the railroad separates it from the city on the east. There is a wooded lot south of the park and homes with large lots bordering three sides of the park giving it a rural feel. There are very few sidewalks in the neighborhood and none that bound or lead to the park. The streets are fairly quiet with limited traffic.

A split rail fence defines the south edge of the park and separates the shelter area from the street on the east, ending at the small gravel parking lot.

The park’s amenities are clustered in its southeast section. The 60’s or 70’s era shelter is approximately 25’ x 40’, sports a zigzag metal roof, has a concrete floor, several picnic tables, a trash can and a nearby grill. The

40’ x 40’ basketball court anchors the north end of the play area. The park installed a new play structure in January of 2023 and expects to add mulch around existing play structures.

The park has a very nice, calm atmosphere. Although the fence helps patrons understand the south and east limits of the park, it is difficult to know where the boundary is next to the residence at the northwest corner. According to survey respondents, the park has barely changed in decades. The new structure, installed after the survey, is a step in the right direction, but more needs to be done to improve its usability.



View looking south

**MYRTLE - 1.7 Acres**



## INVENTORY

- Play area with an aging swing set (1 hand grip, 1 regular swings, 2 empty swing sections), a merry-go-round and a newly installed play structure
- 25' x 40' Shelter (the roof needs attention)
- 3 Picnic Tables
- Grill
- 40' x 40' Basketball Court
- Gravel Parking Area

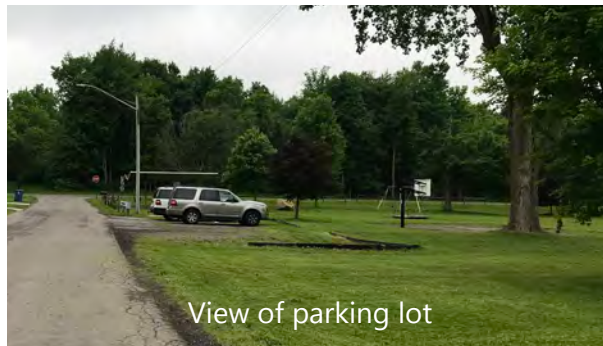


## WAYFINDING

- There is an existing, aging park sign

## ACTIONS

- Replace sign with a standard park sign



## ACCESSIBILITY

- **The park is not accessible**

- There are no sidewalks around or within the park

## ACTIONS

- Extend pavement from the street into the parking area for an accessible parking space
- Provide a walk from the parking lot to the picnic area and grill and to the basketball area
- Extend the sidewalk to the play area





## SAFETY

- Visibility of park patrons is good
- There's no pedestrian access to the park from the surrounding neighborhood
- There is a 'Watch for Children' sign
- Two lights are out on Ohio Street
- The uncapped steel post in the middle of the lawn is a hazard

## ACTIONS

- Contact proper entity to replace street lights
- Remove post and concrete from lawn



View looking east from park

*Survey: Myrtle Park either needs taken down or completely redone / [It] seems to be forgotten / Myrtle park looks the same as it did when I went there and I am 56. There's been no new equipment and there's hardly any equipment for the kids to get on and have fun and play...*



View of grass taking over parking lot



View of basketball court

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop a Park Master Plan for Myrtle Park. As with the other BJR parks, Myrtle has a very nice setting that just needs to be updated to today's standards to provide a variety of experiences for park patrons of all ages.

- The neighborhood does not have many sidewalks, there is a need for a hiking / biking path around the perimeter of the park to give residents a place to push a stroller, take a walk out of traffic and for little ones to safely ride a bike
- Pave the parking lot
- Create a distinct and welcoming entry into the park. Extend a sidewalk from the parking lot through an entry into the park. Connect the sidewalk to the basketball court, the shelter area and grill and continue to the play area and perimeter walk
- Add play structures suitable for kids aged 2-5 and that would appeal to teenagers
- Replace or paint the shelter roof. If improvement costs outweigh the benefits, construct a new shelter with architectural interest

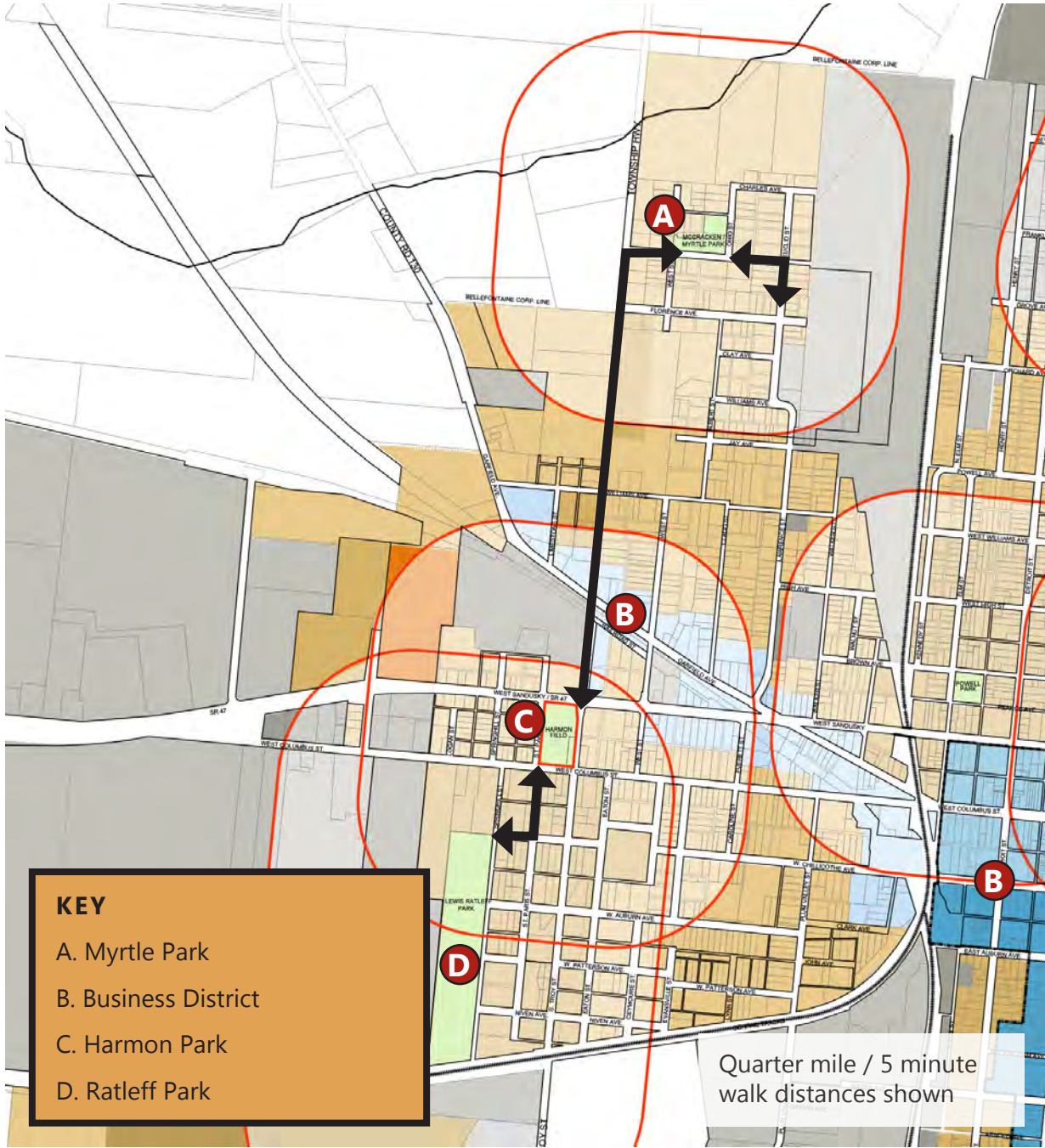


**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

Myrtle Park is fairly isolated. It is bordered by dead end streets on three sides, and the surrounding neighborhood abuts the limits of the city on the north and west. There is an extensive woodland on the south, and the railroad to the east effectively cuts the area off from the rest of the city. Despite these limitations, the park is close to Troy Avenue providing a direct vehicular link to Harmon Park.

No sidewalks lead to the park. For the immediate neighborhood, pedestrian and bicycle access require using the narrow, but quiet local streets. The parking lot at the park is a real asset with the lack of pedestrian routes.

Troy Street offers the most direct vehicular access to other parks and the downtown area via Garfield Avenue. Highlight that connection with flags on light poles.



**KEY**

- A. Myrtle Park
- B. Business District
- C. Harmon Park
- D. Ratleff Park

Quarter mile / 5 minute walk distances shown

Future pedestrian connections ● ● ●

Vehicular connections along existing streets

6 OAKLAND SQUARE / POWELL - 1 Acre

CHARACTER 3

INVENTORY 2

WAYFINDING 1

ACCESS 0

SAFETY 2



**PARK CHARACTER**

Oakland Square / Powell Park is a legacy park with a history that may surprise current Bellefontaine residents. Based on a report by Rev. Ronald Irick of West Liberty, Ohio, HMDB.org, when the town was laid out, it was the location of the town’s cemetery and was the grave site of two of Bellefontaine’s founding fathers; William Powell, buried there in 1835, and John Tullis. He notes that several years later, the cemetery was moved to the east side of town and the original burial grounds became a city park. The Bellefontaine Chapter of the Daughter’s of the Revolution “marked the grave sites of the two founders of the City.” One of the plaques still exists at the park and the other is being stored at the Logan County Historical Museum. According to information received from the Logan County Historical Society, the land for the new cemetery was purchased in 1850 and it opened in 1851-52, making

the park approximately 170 years and Bellefontaine’s oldest park.

The park has a wonderful stock of mature trees providing an inviting shady canopy in the summer that balances out the open space.

A 15 inch retaining curb separates the south border of the park from Pearce Avenue. Sidewalks line the north and west sides of the park, but there are no walks in the park or that lead to the curb ramp on the corner of Pearce and Oakland.

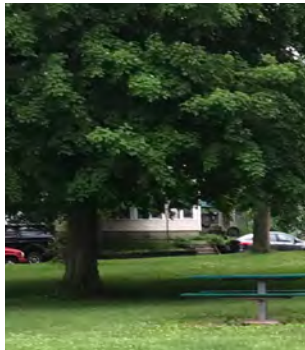
Oakland Square Park is a diamond in the rough that could be a wonderful little neighborhood park. Although some improvements have been made in the last 10-15 years, the park is in need of a new vision that preserves the existing trees and honors its legacy, while improving its usability. The existing play equipment is dated and offers limited diversity of play options. There are items in disrepair that leave a negative impression, and the lack of sidewalks has resulted in dog paths crisscrossing the grounds, and makes it difficult for those with mobility issues to enjoy the park.





## INVENTORY

- Picnic Area with a grill
- Picnic table with missing seats
- Bench near play area
- Dismantled drinking fountain
- Mulched Play area with a small climbing structure and a swing set with one swing
- Broken mini library box
- 40' x 36' basketball court (not lined)
- Trash can



## WAYFINDING

There are signs indicating rules, but no signs indicating the name of the park

### ACTIONS

Add a main sign indicating Oakland Square / Powell Park at the key entry

## ACCESSIBILITY / WALKABILITY

- **The park is not accessible**
- There are no pedestrian routes to the interior of the park, or that link amenities, and no walks to the curb ramp at Pearce and Oakland

### ACTIONS

- Add a walk on the east side of the park, leaving a 5' tree lawn that connects the curb ramp with the north sidewalk



## SAFETY

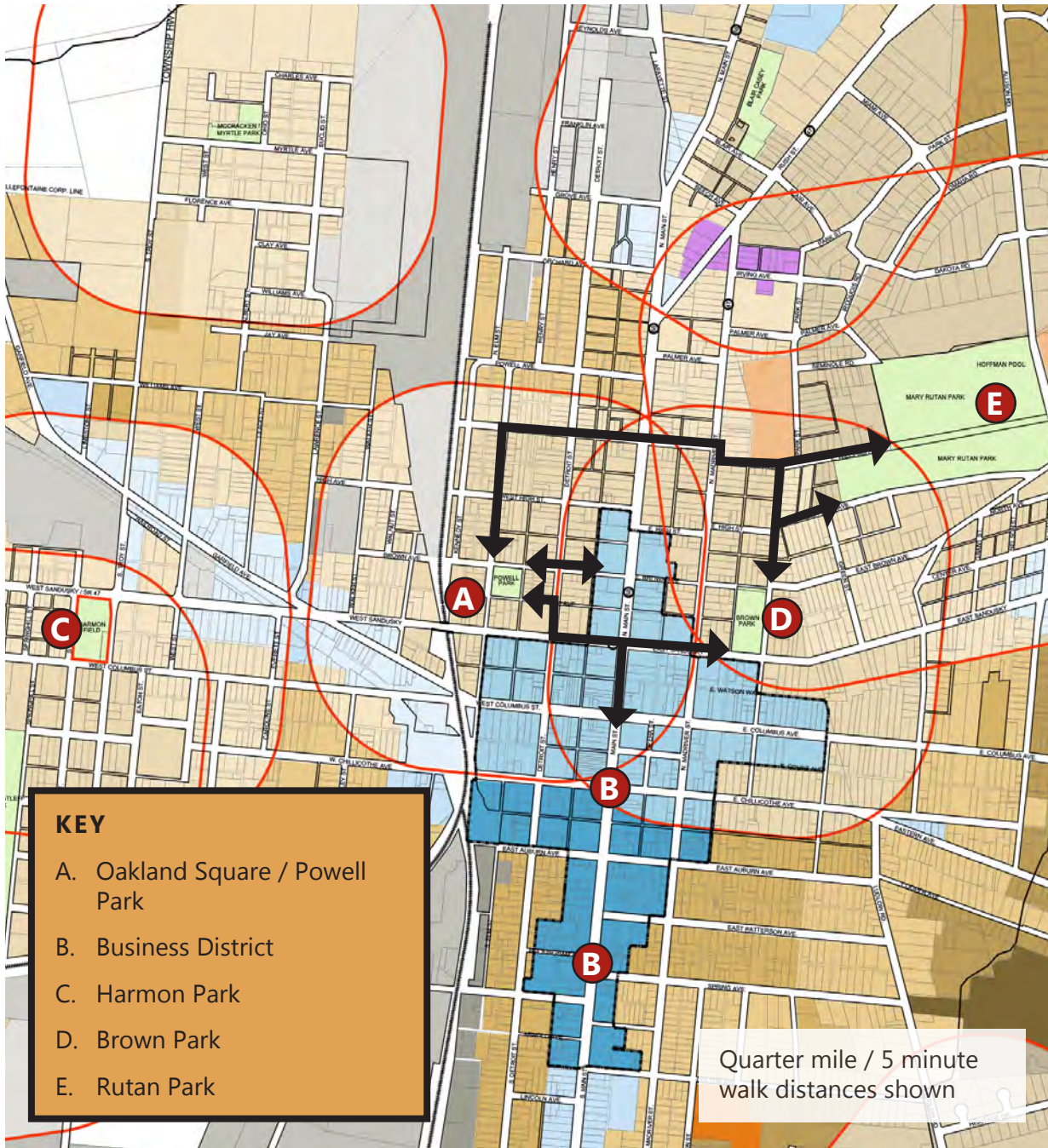
- The park has adequate lighting
- There are Park Zone signs
- Two sidewalks, with cross-walks and curb ramps at the corners, provide pedestrian access to the park on the north and west sides, but the curb ramp on the southeast corner does not lead to a sidewalk
- There's no visual or structural barrier on the south side between the 15" tall curb and driving lane
- Buried footings with cut off pipes are located randomly in the lawn
- The broken mini library has exposed sharp edges

### ACTIONS

- Remove damaged items and the concrete footings from the lawn
- Add a hedge or fence along the 15" curb
- Remove or repair the water fountain
- Add a sidewalk with a tree lawn to connect the curb ramp with the north sidewalk

## RECOMMENDATIONS

See an idea for park improvements in the Conceptual Master Plans section



## CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY

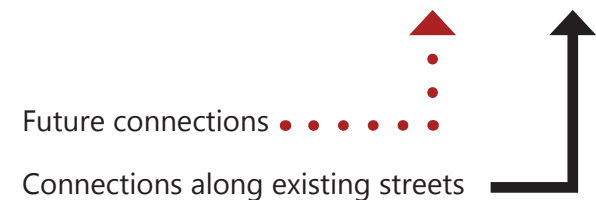
Although the neighborhood served by Oakland Square is bordered by a rail line effectively cutting off access to the park from the east, the business district and two other parks are within a 5-10 minute walk

Brown Avenue connects the north end of both Oakland and Brown Parks, but there isn't a safe crossing at the intersection of Brown Avenue and Main Street and the sidewalks are narrow and exposed to moving vehicles in the stretch along Community Market and Lanes Lube Express.

### ACTION

A pedestrian route to Brown Park should be marked along Sandusky via N. Elm Street or Pearce to Detroit

A pedestrian connection to Rutan Park could be highlighted and improved from Elm or Detroit north to W. Williams Avenue.



## OAKLAND SQUARE / POWELL



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**CHARACTER** 3

**INVENTORY** 1

**WAYFINDING** 0

**ACCESS** 0

**SAFETY** 3



**PARK CHARACTER**

One could be forgiven for not having heard of Shawnee Trace Park. This largely undeveloped park appears to be an empty lot on the east half, and part of the apartment property on the west. There isn't a sign indicating a public park. Across the street from the private trail that leads to the cemetery, the park trail connects to the curb at the southwest corner, then follows a steep slope to the pond stopping short of reaching a bench near the pond edge. Another bench sits at the top of the hill.

The site is open with a few trees along its north and west border. It is sloped from east to west, dropping about 26' from the southeast corner to the pond. The site is well situated to capture the sunrise and the topography is highlighted as the sun rises. The more natural northwest corner of the site is pretty and has a waterway draining into the pond from SR 33. The State Route sits at a higher elevation than the park and the road noise is hard to ignore, but the park offers nice views and has potential to create an interesting space.

**INVENTORY**

- Trail from road to pond
- Two benches, one with a cracked seat
- Pond





## WAYFINDING

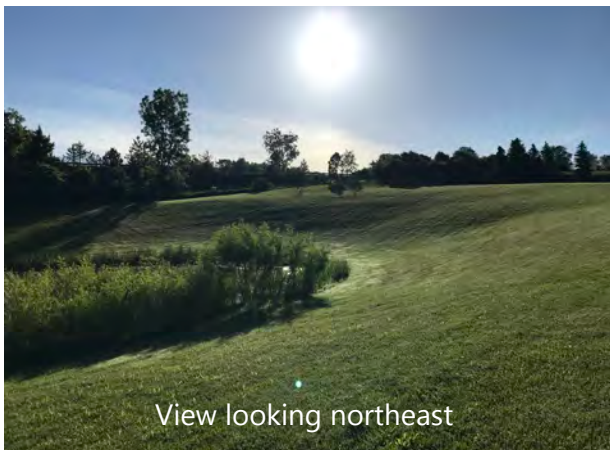
- There are no signs indicating the park

## ACTION

- Provide updated park signage near hiking trail and at the east side



View of trail facing west



View looking northeast

## ACCESSIBILITY

- **The park is not accessible**

## ACTION

- Move the bench to enable it to be reached from the paved trail
- The park would need a comprehensive design to address accessibility

*Only 2% of survey respondents have visited Shawnee Trace*



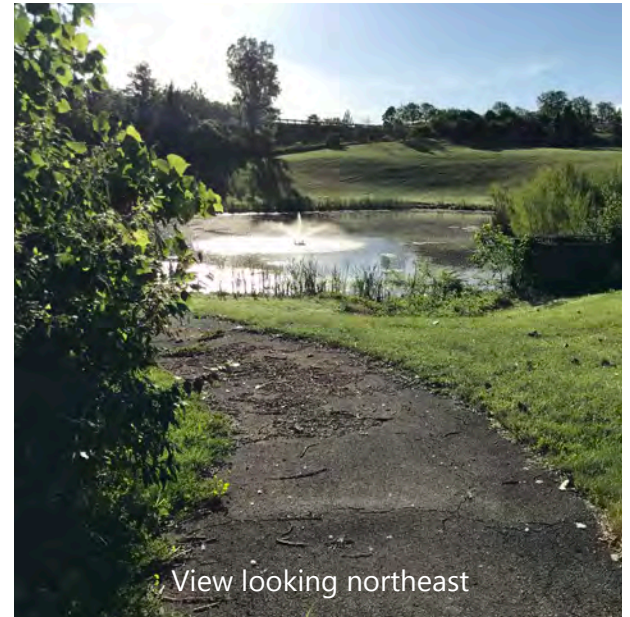
View of trail by pond edge facing north

## SAFETY

- Visibility of park patrons is good
- There is a street light at the southeast edge of the park, but no other lighting
- There are no park safety signs along the street

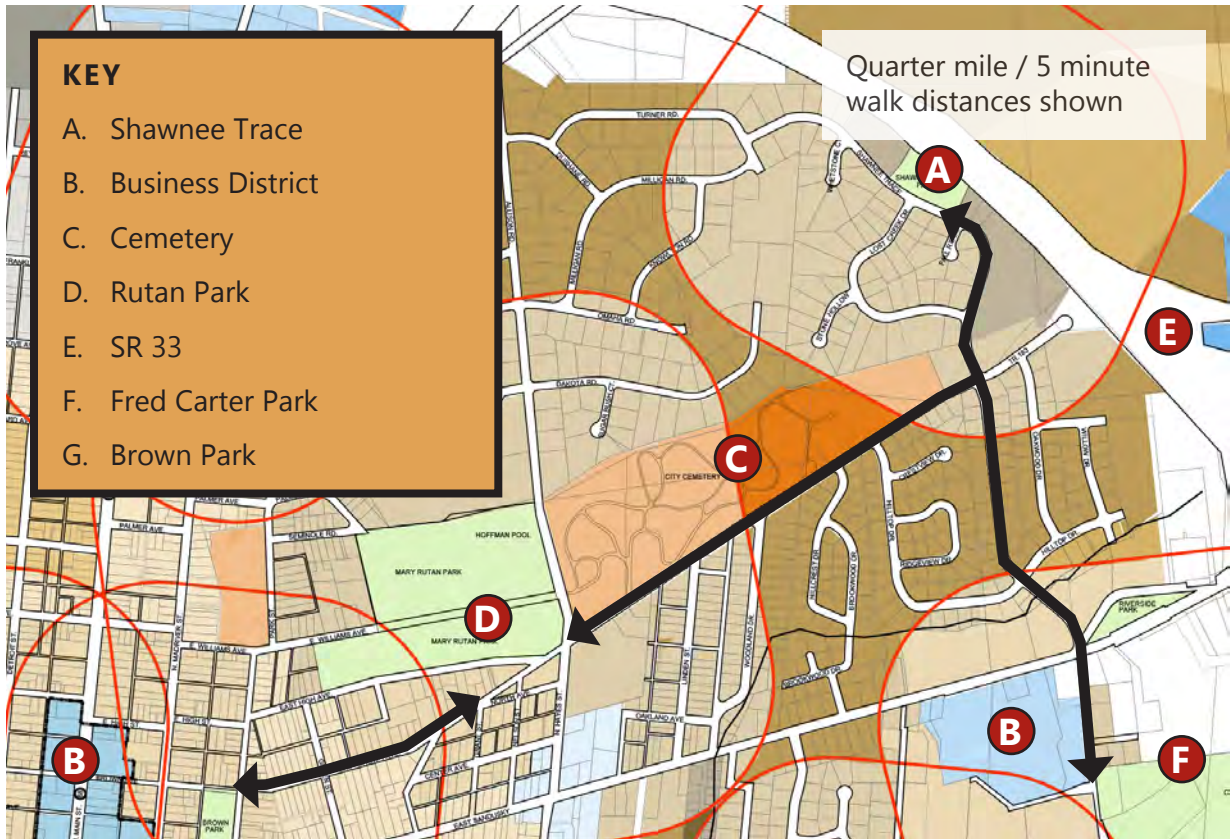


View looking east



View looking northeast





**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

Shawnee Trace Park is located to serve the adjacent neighborhood. It is off the beaten track and the layout of the neighborhood and lack of sidewalks further limit pedestrian access to the park. The exception is the connection to the private trail starting across from Shawnee Trace Park that leads to Rutan Park via the cemetery drives. Although the walk would take 20 minutes or so, the trail, known as the “pretty trail”, offers a pleasant place to stroll through a more natural setting away from traffic.

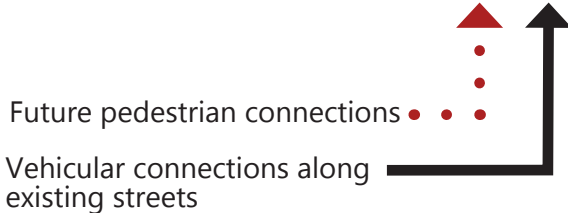
Vehicular access is indirect from Allison Road, but fairly direct from Brown and E. Sandusky Avenues. The only parking available at the park is along the street.

**ACTIONS**


- Add a crosswalk connecting the private trail to the Shawnee Trace Park trail
- Add a sidewalk along Shawnee Trace that connects to the trail

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Develop a design for the park that allows patrons to accessibly enjoy the space and that takes advantage of the topography and sunrise. Perhaps its a winding trail that leads to a series of play hubs offering unusual play opportunities or slides built into the hillside. Additionally, the park needs to cover the basics: a few parking spaces, signage, connectivity within the park, picnic and seating opportunities and a distinct entry.



**SHAWNEE TRACE**

- 
- 8. FRED CARTER PARK
  - 9. HARMON FIELD PARK
  - 10. JACK MARTIN PARK

## COMMUNITY PARKS

CHARACTER 4

INVENTORY 2

WAYFINDING 1

ACCESS 3

SAFETY 2



Logan County Auditor, <https://loganco.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/>

### PARK CHARACTER

The land for Fred Carter Park was acquired in 1971 and is a very unique and special place offering a natural experience within the City's limits. According to the BJRDC website, the park was dedicated April 14, 1987, and formally "christened" Fred Carter Park by a student, Sara, who won a contest to name the park after a neighbor that had vast knowledge and affection for Bellefontaine and Logan County.

Fred Carter Park is flush with natural beauty with its rolling topography, open space and woodland that bursts with color in the fall. Its pond and wetlands provide a rich and varied habitat. The park is about 93% wooded with sloping topography that drains into wetlands and a two-acre pond. The remaining 7% is open lawn. There is the beginning of a mowed trail that follows the north side of the pond before turning into the woods for a stretch before becoming impossible to follow. On the south side, the trail quickly transitions to a narrow footpath as it goes up the slope and across the hillside with a view of the pond below. The

trail is overgrown and hard to find as one follows it east and around the north end. There are downed trees that impact the trail and a lack of wayfinding. The trail disappears then reappears, leading people to find their own way through the woods before exiting at the edge of the lawn on the north side.

The open lawn in the northwest portion of the park is mowed and mostly hill-side. The park's boundaries are hard to discern and although the approach from the north offers a great view of the open space backed by the woods, it's not clear that it is park land.

Dominating the entire length of the west side of the pond, is a ill-defined gravel parking lot lined on its east edge with cut off steel beam posts holding a chain separating the parking lot from the pond.

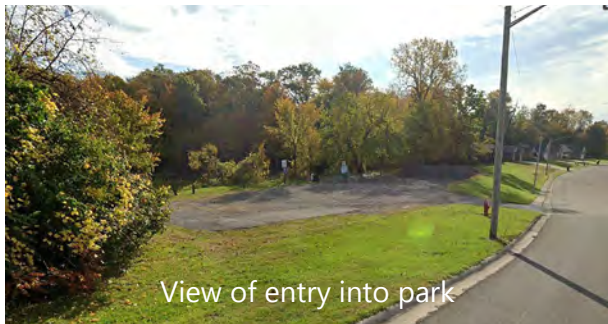
There are two wooden picnic tables, both in disrepair. One table is tucked into an opening carved from the woods adjacent to the open lawn. The other is at the edge of the parking lot and doesn't have a bench on one side.

There is a dated park sign near the south trail head, and other signs with various rules and warnings. The entry into the park is not inviting despite the pretty surroundings. There are no structures or cleared areas to provide easy access to fishing.



## INVENTORY

- Woodland trail
- Two damaged picnic tables
- Pond
- Parking Lot



## WAYFINDING

- Provide updated park signage at entry
- Provide updated park signage at northwest view
- Provide distinct trailhead signage with trail information
- Add distance and wayfinding signage along trails



## ACCESSIBILITY

- A sidewalk leads to the park but ends at the drive
- There are no sidewalks within the park
- Due to the topography, an accessible trail would be detrimental to the natural surroundings on the south and east sides.

## ACTIONS

- It may be possible to develop an entry and accessible trail on the north side for a limited distance.
- Extend a sidewalk from the parking area to the picnic areas





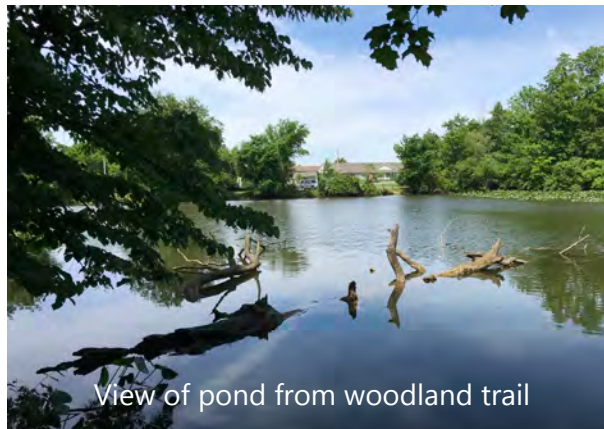
## SAFETY

- Visibility of park patrons is poor due to natural setting
- There is pedestrian access to the park drive from the surrounding neighborhood but not into the park
- There are no park safety signs along the street
- There aren't any parking lot lights and cars sometimes park there after hours
- The lack of wayfinding makes it easy to go into marshy areas while looking for the trail

## ACTIONS

- Add lights in parking lot
- Make trails easy to follow and provide signage

*Survey: Fred Carter Park needs to be cleaned up... The park is underutilized...The path needs to be developed*



View of pond from woodland trail



View of wetland from woodland trail

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Fred Carter Park is a diamond in the rough and a wonderful asset for the park system. The following recommended improvements will improve patron experience and create a welcoming destination.

### Wayfinding

- Define the park frontage and north lawn boundary with a fence and signage.
- Place a sign at the main entry and at the north end indicating the park and direction to the main entry
- Provide informational signs at all trailheads with difficulty, trail condition and distance listed
- Mark trails with 0.10 mile markers and wayfinding signs and maps

### Welcoming

- Open up the view to the pond by reducing the parking area. End the parking lot 44' north of the entry drive. That is enough room for a few accessible parking spaces facing north and a drive aisle for backing. This will provide about 60' of greenspace with room for a small, sheltered picnic area with a view of the pond
- Create a distinct entry to the park by separating the parking area from the pedestrian spaces with a fence or landscape



- Plant pockets of native wildflowers for seasonal color

### Accessibility

- Add an ADA compliant walk from the parking lot to the picnic areas. Extend the accessible walk as far as possible along the north side of the pond and into the woods with a loop trail that ties back to the entry.
- Extend the public sidewalk into the park and connect to a new cross-walk leading to Bellefontaine Manor Apartments

### Usability

- Provide access to the water with a pier or boardwalk along the west side of the pond with areas to allow for seating or fishing. Alternatively, place a ledge-stone seawall to provide a stable place to sit or stand
- Provide a boardwalk, accessible from the ADA compliant trail, through the marshy areas for wildlife observation
- Assure the trails are clear, easy to follow and well marked
- Provide benches along the trails
- Add picnic areas in different settings offering varied views
- Add a trailhead with a trail that connects to the overall system at the corner of Maple Ridge and Evergreen

### Drives

### Maintenance

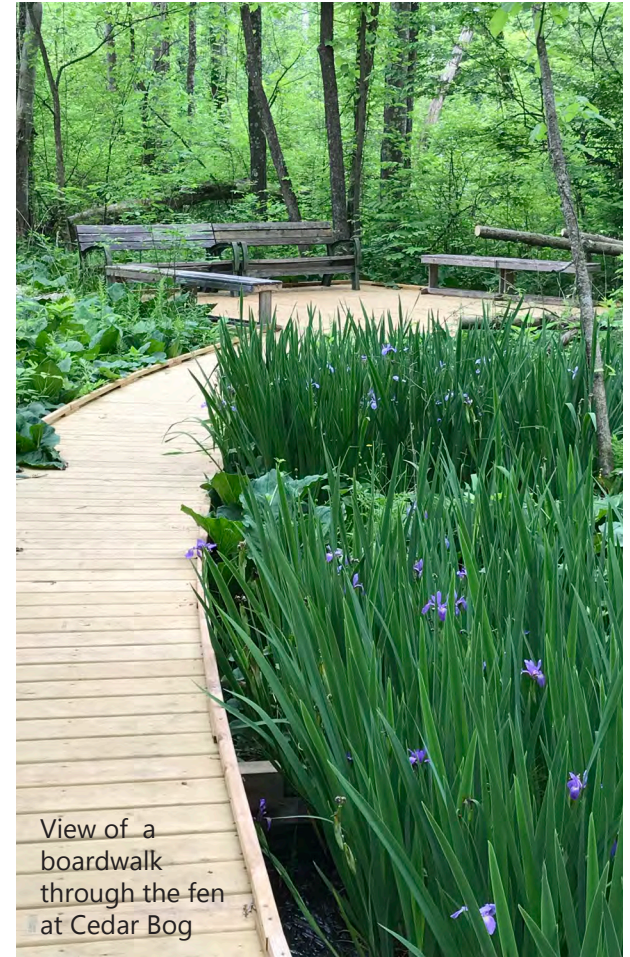
- Define the gravel drive with timber edging or a curb placed at an elevation to double as a mow strip
- Extend pavement around picnic areas to avoid trimming
- The fence should have a lower rail placed high enough to allow for ease of mowing

### Safety

- Add pedestrian scale lighting along the west side of the pond



Picnic shelter at Brookside Park, Sidney by Freytag & Associates

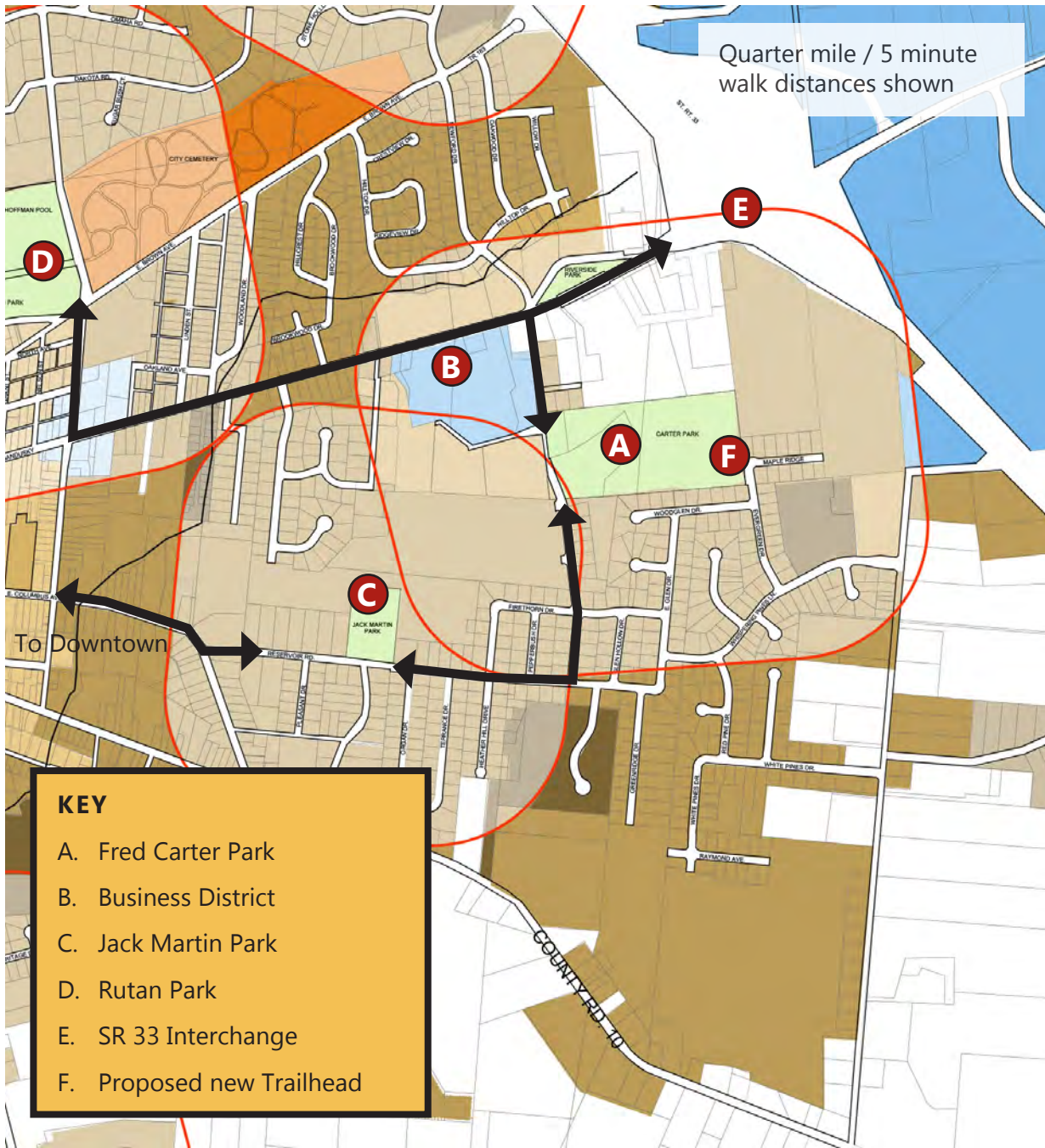


View of a boardwalk through the fen at Cedar Bog



Ledge-stone seawall at Big Lake Park West, Council Bluffs Iowa designed by Genus L.A.





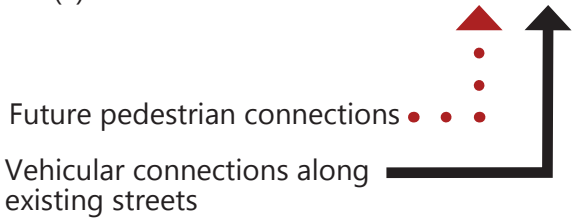
**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

As improvements to the park are made, Fred Carter Park will become a destination park due to its unique features. There is good vehicular access and connectivity to other parks as well as good pedestrian access from the surrounding neighborhood to the park drive.

The park is conveniently located just off E. Sandusky Ave. (SR 540) and close to SR 33, making it easy to access by car. Access to the park is limited on the north and west sides and the lots are largely undeveloped. Most of the neighborhoods south and east of the park have sidewalks that ultimately connect to the park providing good pedestrian access, with the exception of the area connecting to Reservoir Rd. south of Pepperbush Dr.

**ACTIONS**

- Add a crosswalk connecting to the walk from Bellefontaine Manor Apartments, then extend the walk to the park
- Provide signage indicating the location of businesses, restaurants and other parks and include a QR Code that helps visitors locate points of interest
- Provide access to the park from the corner of Maple Ridge and Evergreen Drives (F)



**FRED CARTER**



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SAFETY

3

ACCESS

3

WAYFINDING

2

INVENTORY

3

CHARACTER

2



## PARK CHARACTER

Harmon Field is another one of Bellefontaine's legacy parks. Dedicated in 1923, it was one of 32 parks across the U.S. to benefit from the Harmon Foundation that donated the land for a play field. It was officially turned over to the city in 1943. (<https://www.wchsmuseum.org/william-elmer-harmon.html>)

Harmon has a great stock of large shade trees. On the south end, the trees frame the view of the park and on the north, a row of trees separates the park from Sandusky Avenue. A cluster of structures dominates the southwest corner. There are two shelters fronting Columbus Street within 22 feet of each other. A small block storage building sits behind the two shelters. Near the Columbus Street entry is a non-working drinking fountain, a rock with the dedication plaque and a sidewalk leading to the brick columned shelter. On the southeast corner, there is a mulched play area with a newer swing set and older play structure with a missing activity panel. There is open access to the street from the park's play area and shelters.

A public sidewalk bounds three sides of the park. An interior sidewalk bisects the park and connects the block building restroom, located at the east entry of the park, to the accessible parking area on the west side of the park. Sidewalks connect to the bisecting walk and lead to the shelters and storage building, and to a full basketball court. Open lawn surrounds the basketball court and contains a mulched area with an empty A-frame suitable for a porch swing. The north portion of the park is dominated by a fenced ball diamond with lights. A half basketball court awkwardly fills the mid-section of the remaining lawn east of the ball field. There are several benches and picnic tables throughout the park.

The chain link fence is an eye sore and detracts from the north and west views of the park. The fence is tall in some areas and unwelcoming.



## INVENTORY

- 25' x 45' Shelter with damage
- 25' x 25' Shelter
- Several benches and picnic tables
- Small play structure - missing panel
- Swing set with regular, accessible and toddler swing
- Full and Half Basketball Courts with degraded pavement
- Fenced ball diamond with lights
- Restrooms
- Non-working drinking fountain
- Accessible parking
- Empty swing frame

## WAYFINDING

The park sign is located under the roof line of the west shelter

## ACTION

Provide standard park signs at the north end and south entry

## ACCESSIBILITY

Sidewalks bisect the park and lead to all amenities except for the play area

## ACTION

Connect an accessible walk to the play area.





## SAFETY

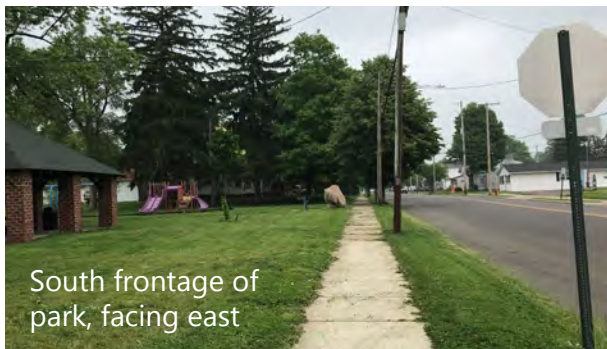
- Visibility of park patrons is good
- The park is not well lit
- There are park safety signs along the street
- No buffer between the park and Columbus Avenue may be a safety concern
- Add a pedestrian controlled crosswalks across Sandusky and Columbus

## ACTION

- Add lighting to shelters and storage area
- Add a decorative fence or hedge along the south end to create a buffer between the shelters, play area and the street

## RECOMMENDATIONS

See an idea for park improvements in the Conceptual Master Plans section



South frontage of park, facing east



View of the restroom, facing east



View facing west



View of the half basketball court



View of the park from the northeast corner from SR 47



The fence along the north frontage is the dominant view from SR 47



The fence along the west side is dismal

## HARMON FIELD



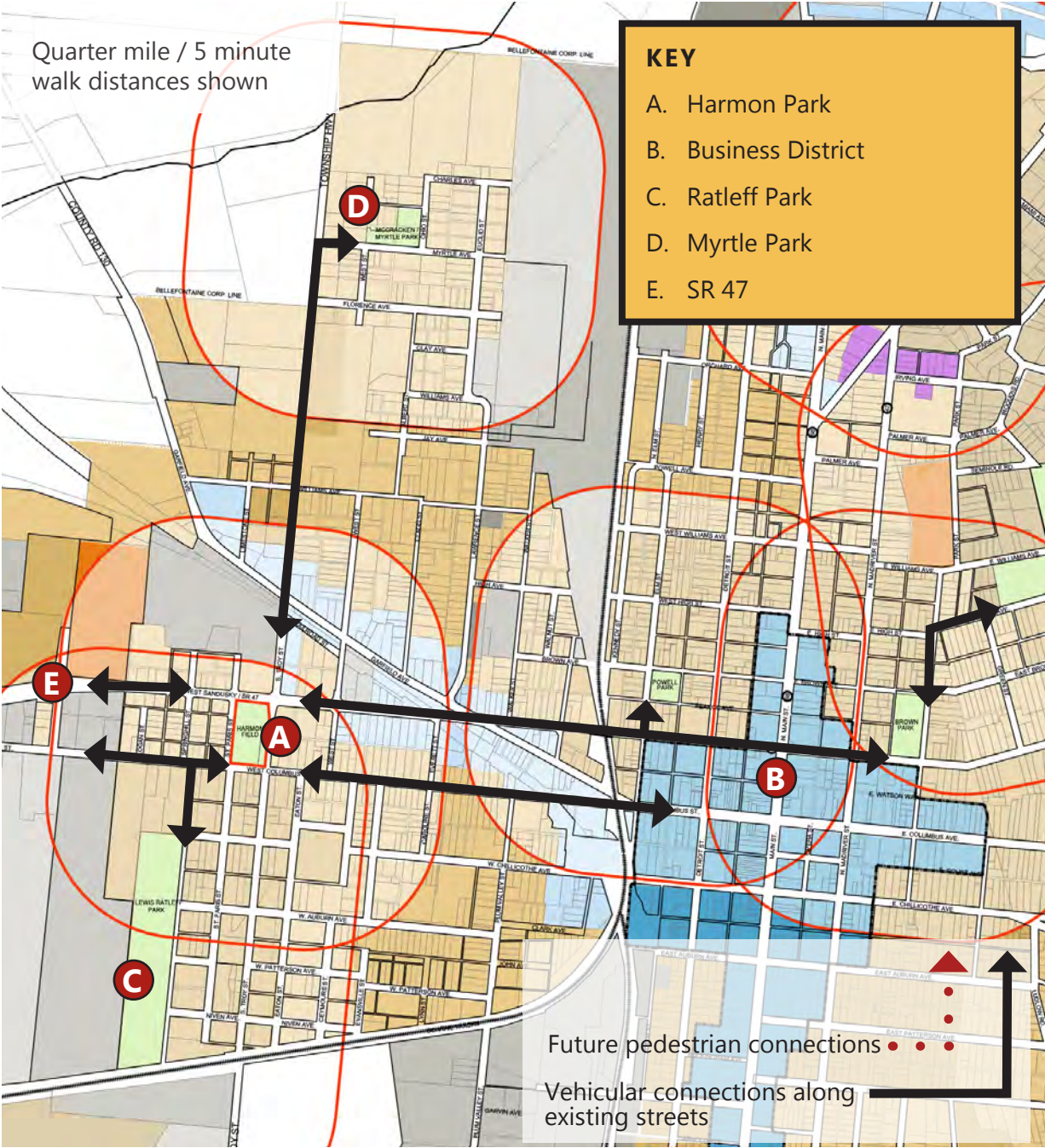
**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

Like Fred Carter Park, as improvements are made to Harmon, its status as a community park will grow. It is in a highly visible location that is easily reached by visitors to the city as well as its residents. It is bordered on two sides with major city streets leading directly to the downtown area. Troy Road is along Harmon’s east border and offers a direct route to Myrtle Park on the north end of town and Southview Park at the south end of town.

Harmon is within an easy walk of Ratleff Park. The connection between the parks needs to be strengthened through better wayfinding and clearly marked and improved pedestrian routes.

**ACTIONS**

- Work with State officials to provide a safe crossing zone across Sandusky Avenue.
- Provide signage indicating the location of businesses, restaurants and other parks and include a QR Code that helps visitors locate points of interest
- Provide route markers between Harmon and Ratleff parks to highlight the safest pedestrian route
- Add banners to Troy Road light posts to show connection between Myrtle, Harmon, Ratleff and Southview





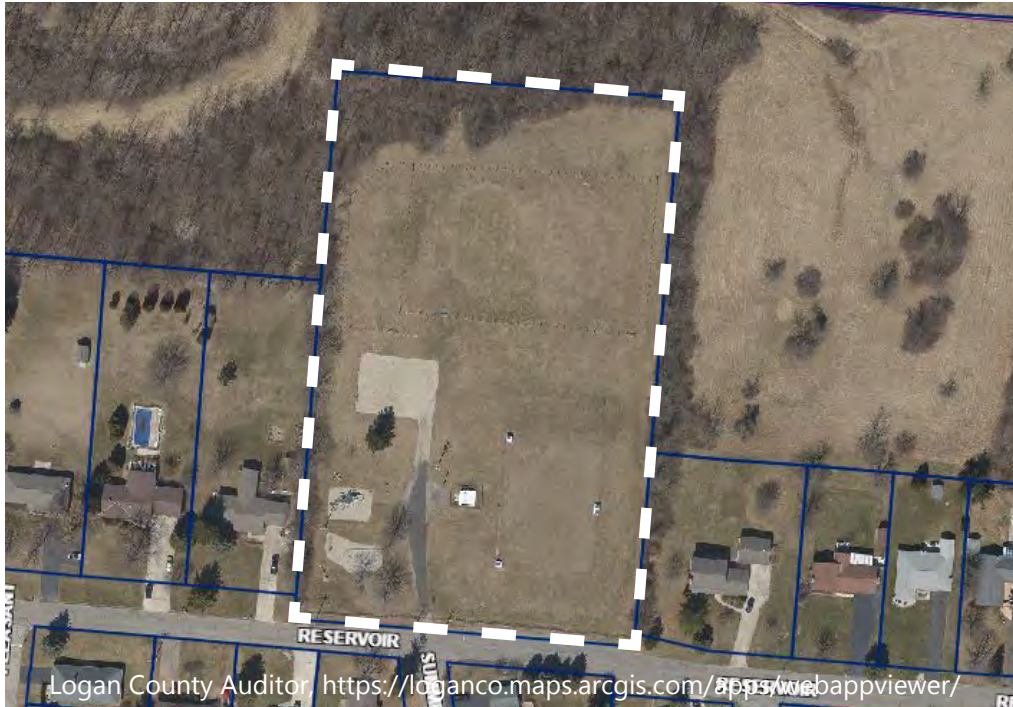
CHARACTER 3

INVENTORY 3

WAYFINDING 4

ACCESS 2

SAFETY 3



### PARK CHARACTER

Fifty-two year old Jack Martin Park sits among the neighborhood flanking the southeast quadrant of Bellefontaine. The north portion of the park is surrounded by a large swath of woodland providing a disconnect between the park and the neighborhoods to the north, but that gives the park a secluded setting. It is home to Bellefontaine's only dog park, Friendly Paws Dog Park, opened in 2019. The park is sometimes referred to as the 'sledding park' due to the distinct rectangular hills formed by the City's water reservoir. The hill adds to the park's sense of enclosure.

A split rail fence and large shade trees create a nice entry into the park, but the metal farm gate is unappealing and in need of repair. The fence is an effective barrier between the park and the street and the shade trees create a nice atmosphere in the picnic and play area.

There is a mix of old and very old play equipment. The older pieces need to be painted and a seat is missing from the seesaw. The 'newer' struc-

ture is faded and has a panel that needs to be replaced. There is stone mulch under the large pieces. There is more variety of play at Jack Martin than other parks, but the equipment is aging and doesn't offer many options for younger children.

The adjacent neighborhood lacks consistent sidewalks and there are no walks that lead to the park. Parking is available within the park along the side of the drive near the playground and at the dog park.

There is a picnic table near the playground and a bench at the dog park. The shade is concentrated in the southwest corner of the park, but some trees have been planted near the dog park.

There is a outdated park sign facing Reservoir Road and arrow-shaped signs with dog paws indicating the dog park.





## INVENTORY

- Play area with an aging swing set (2 toddler swings, 2 regular swings), monkey bars, an aging seesaw with a missing a seat, aging spring toys and a newer large play structure with a variety of activities
- Picnic table
- Bench
- Dog Park
- Mini library
- Non-working water fountain



## WAYFINDING

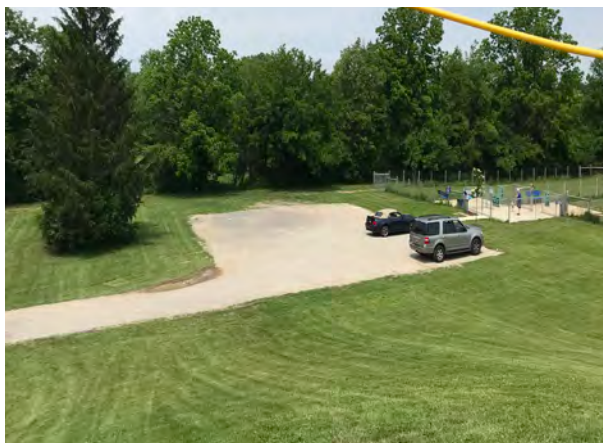
Old park sign facing street

## ACTIONS

Provide updated park signage



View looking north

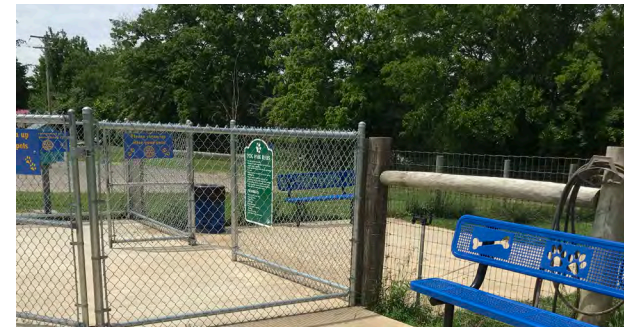


## ACCESSIBILITY

- The park is accessible via vehicles only
- There is a sidewalk from the parking area to the dog park, but no other walks
- The play equipment is not accessible due to the loose pea gravel mulch

## ACTIONS

- Connect all amenities with a sidewalk
- Change mulch to provide accessibility to the play area



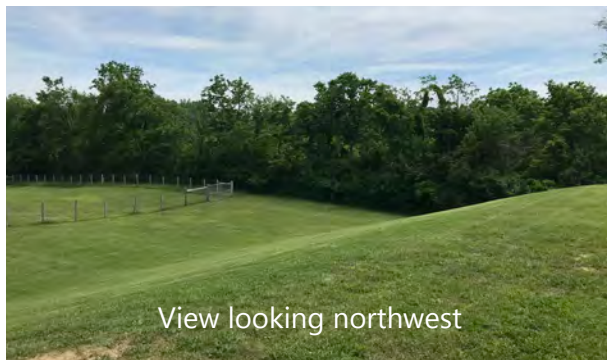


## SAFETY

- The north section of the park is not well lit.
- There's no pedestrian access to the park from the surrounding neighborhood
- Missing seat on seesaw

## ACTIONS

- Add lighting near the dog park and parking lot
- Add a dedicated bike lane along Reservoir Road to the park
- Repair seesaw



View looking northwest



*Survey: The parks should have play equipment for smaller children to be able to easily play on / Jack Martin Park needs to be updated / While the dog park is nice at Jack Martin, the playground equipment is in major need of repair. It is a heavily visited playground and it would be nice to have better equipment that kids could play on while parents take their dog to the park...*



View looking east from entry



View looking west of broken gate

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Jack Martin Park has some very nice features. The fence along Reservoir Road defines the limits of the park and the entry, which is reinforced by the large shade trees and man-made hillside. As the location of Bellefontaine's only dog park, it draws visitors from outside its neighborhood and potentially other communities. It should be seen through the lens of being a community park and improvements should provide a variety of experiences.

- Update the playground equipment with structures geared toward multi-generational use and inclusiveness to reach a wider age range of children and teens and provide fitness opportunities for adults.
- Add hiking / biking trails and possibly a small bicycle playground or pump-track, offering kids the opportunity to hone their biking skills. Any new design should not impede the popular sledding portion of the hill.



Bentonville  
Bike Park  
Arkansas



**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

- Jack Martin Park is cutoff from direct access to north neighborhoods by a privately owned woodland and sits in a neighborhood with very few sidewalks. No sidewalks lead to the park
- Pedestrian or bicycle routes to the park would involve using the local streets. Providing pedestrian access to Jack Martin would be a major project
- There is direct vehicular access to Fred Carter Park (just a few blocks away), Rutan Park, the Central Business District and SR 33.


**ACTIONS**

- Provide signage indicating the location of businesses, restaurants and other parks in high visibility areas, such as near the play area and dog park, and include a QR Code that helps visitors locate points of interest





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- 11. RATLEFF PARK**
  - 12. SOUTHVIEW PARK**
  - 13. BLUE JACKET**
  - 14. HOFFMAN POOL**
  - 15. RUTAN PARK**
  - 16. MYEERAH**

## **REGIONAL PARKS**

SAFETY

3

ACCESS

3

WAYFINDING

3

INVENTORY

3

CHARACTER

2



## PARK CHARACTER

Lewis Ratleff Memorial Park, formerly known as Civic Park and West Side Park, is home to the Hi-Point Baseball Association and Chieftain Classic Baseball Tournament. The park's namesake was a Park Board of Trustee and Service Safety Director. (<https://bellefontaineoh.myrec.com/>)

A split-rail fence defines the park's east boundary along S. Springhill Street. There is a nicely landscaped curbed plant bed with the park sign at the parking lot entry. The linear park is sandwiched between a manufacturing zone along its west side and a vast residential district on its east side. The residential district wraps around the north side of the park. While an active railroad at the park's south border makes access to the park more limited, the Simon Kenton Trail is within 1.5 miles from Ratleff Park.

The park is set up to favor vehicular traffic. The sidewalk along Springhill stops at the park's north boundary and the one point of access to a park sidewalk from the street is at south end of the park. The large parking lot divides the park into two parts with 1/3 of the park on the north end and 2/3 on the south end. There are accessible parking spaces in the parking lot, and additional parking available on the empty lot across from the two center ball diamonds on the south.

The north end is particularly inviting. A nice stand of trees separates the parking lot from the park's shelters, play area, restroom and ball diamond. In addition, shade trees create a welcoming canopy near the shelters. A sidewalk leading from the accessible parking area zig zags past bike racks to the shelters and restroom, with a walk leading to a viewing area at the ball diamond's center field. No walks lead to the newly renovated play area or to the bleachers.

The south end of the park feels nearly treeless, but the openness is mitigated somewhat by the stand of trees along the west property line. Trees have been planted in recent years and will make a good impact in the future. Like the north end, a sidewalk leads from the accessible parking aisle to viewing areas at three of the four fields and to the aging concession stand/restroom building. No sidewalks lead to any of the bleachers.

Three of the ball diamonds have lighting for night games and there are two lights in the parking area. The shelter roofs need to be painted or replaced, but are otherwise in good condition. The buildings have outlived their usefulness, and the dugouts on three of the fields need to be replaced. Ratleff has huge potential to be a top tier park.



## INVENTORY

- 5 ball diamonds with fencing, 4 with dugouts, 3 with lights
- 2 shelters with picnic tables
- Play area with new play structure (5-12)
- 2 restroom buildings
- Concession stand
- Parking lot with accessible parking
- Storage buildings
- Batting cage
- Benches
- Grills near the shelters

## WAYFINDING

There is a large park sign at the parking lot entry



## ACCESSIBILITY

- The park is accessible from the parking lot.
- While sidewalks connect to the shelters and restrooms, walks do not lead to the play area or bleachers or dugouts of any of the fields. Accessible viewing areas are located at the outfield fence line only.

## ACTIONS

- Extend sidewalks to the bleacher areas and dugouts to allow park patrons with accessibility issues to watch the game from a better vantage point.
- Extend the public sidewalk from its current end point to the south end of S. Springhill Street



## SAFETY

- Visibility of park patrons is good
- The shelter houses are well lit
- The parking lot lights are not functioning
- The concession stand has been the target of break-ins in the past
- The streets near the park are calm making biking to the park fairly safe
- There are park safety signs along the street
- Pedestrian access to the park is hindered by the sidewalk ending at the park's north boundary
- The parking lot separating the north and south sections of the park creates an unsafe environment as kids move between the two areas

## ACTION

- Repair parking lot lights
- Add lighting to the concession stand area
- Add parking along the street and reduce size of on-site parking to connect the parks two sections
- Extend the sidewalk along South Springhill Street to the sidewalk along the park to provide pedestrian access to the park

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Lewis Ratleff Memorial Park is ripe for the type of redevelopment that can bring the park from its status as a place to play ball, to a vibrant community hub and activity center that draws all ages back to the park throughout the year. See the Conceptual Master Plan in another section of this report for one idea to transform Ratleff Park.

Meanwhile, there are things that need attention.

### Wayfinding and Accessibility

- Extend the public sidewalk from the border of Ratleff Park through a landscaped pedestrian entry that ties into the park's existing sidewalk.
- Add easy to see Field indicators and a wayfinding map of the park at the pedestrian entries
- Replace the sign with the standard park sign
- Extend the sidewalk to the new play area
- Provide signage indicating the location of businesses, restaurants and other park and include a QR Code that helps visitors locate points of interest
- Add picnic tables near the south ball diamonds

- Assure field visibility from the accessible landings located at the end of the fields

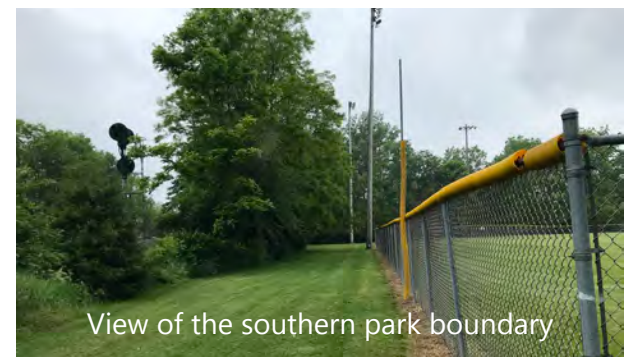
### Maintenance

- Work out a replacement schedule for the wooden dugout structures. The replacement should be a structure that is low maintenance with a long lifespan
- Repair areas of the fence where the foundations are heaving
- Paint or replace shelter roofs
- Place the bike racks on a concrete pad and secure

View of the typical dugout



View of the southern park boundary





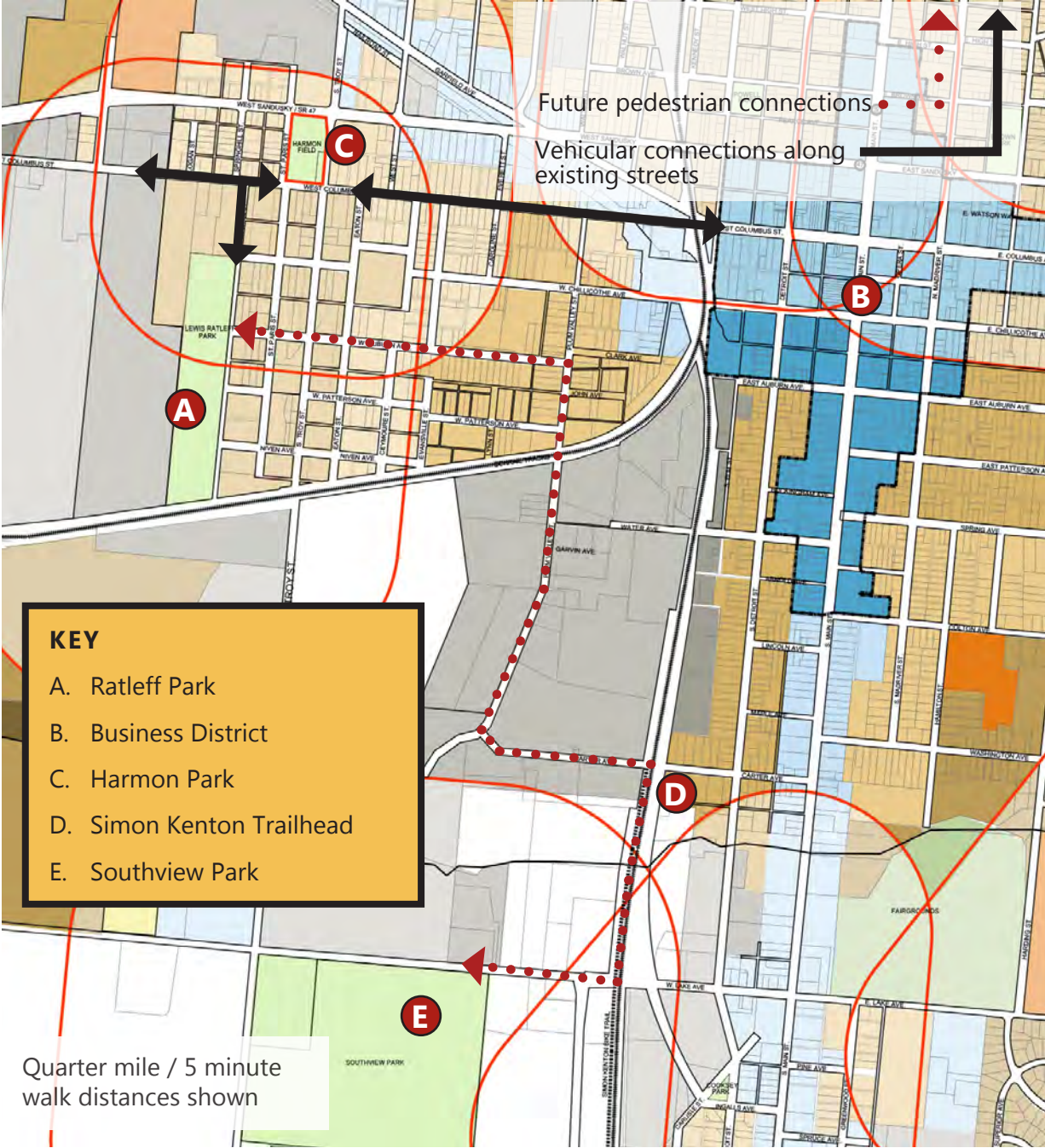
**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

Although Ratleff Park is somewhat off the beaten track, the park draws many visitors for its sports programming and would benefit from building stronger connections to the surrounding area.

Ratleff is a few minutes walk from Harmon Park and an improved pedestrian connection between the two parks would benefit both. Troy Road, a vehicular connection from Myrtle Park to Southview Park, is two blocks east of Ratleff. The route from Troy Road to Ratleff should be highlighted. The Simon Kenton Trail is 1.5 miles away. Development of a bike trail extension to Ratleff would add a recreational destination to SK Trail users.

**ACTIONS**

- Provide signage indicating the location of businesses, restaurants and other park and include a QR Code that helps visitors locate points of interest
- Provide route markers between Harmon and Ratleff parks to highlight the safest pedestrian route
- Add banners to Troy Road light posts to show the connection to Ratleff Park
- Provide route markers to highlight the connection between Ratleff and the downtown area to ease wayfinding for visitors





SAFETY

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ACCESS

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WAYFINDING

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INVENTORY

3

CHARACTER

3



### PARK CHARACTER

Southview Park, BJR's most recent park addition within the city, was completed in the early 2000's. It is a regional park located on the outskirts of town that offers many amenities. The sports fields bring in visitors from other communities for games and tournaments. The district's west maintenance facility is located on the grounds as well.

The park has large swathes of open space and a small stand of trees. The mile long walking path circles the centrally located ball diamonds then continues to other areas of the park. One spur loops around the soccer fields, links to the basketball courts, the shelter, and a large play area. The walk continues through the sloping, wooded southeast corner of the park, and reconnects to the rest of the trail. There are picnic areas and benches located throughout the park and a story board lines the wood-

ed portion of the walkway.

While the park is generally aesthetically pleasing, there are no well-established shade trees along most of the walking path or in the area where people gather to watch ball games. There is a stand of evergreen trees southwest of the ball diamonds, but the heavy clay soil has thwarted several efforts to plant and establish shade trees.

The park is beset by drainage problems that appear to be concentrated around the ball diamonds and concession stand area. The soil and drainage problems are creating an unappealing environment at a highly used area of the park.

The water issues are taking a toll on the walkways, popping fence posts and washing soil off of the fields. As water flows across the fields, it is directed to the walks where gravel and mud get deposited. The asphalt is heaving and cracking, and the standing water and debris left behind is an ongoing maintenance issue. BJR has made considerable and multiple efforts to build up the fields to redirect the water, but it is an issue that needs to be addressed at its root on a larger scale.

BJR installs and removes tarps over the dugouts at the beginning and end of each season and desires to add permanent shade structures over the dugouts and for spectators.

## AMENITIES

- 6 Picnic Areas - 5 are not accessible
- Multiple Benches
- 1 Drinking fountain
- 1 Mulched Play area with a large play structure, swing set with four swings, and a small climbing unit
- 1 Shelter House with restrooms
- 4 Ball diamonds with fenced dugouts and bleachers
- 1 Batting cage
- 2 Basketball courts (need to be painted)
- 4 Soccer fields (8 acres)
- 1 Concession stand with restrooms
- Multiple trash receptacles



## WAYFINDING ACTIONS

- There is good signage at the Lake entry. Provide signage indicating the park at the west entrance on Troy Street
- Provide signage with trail information at key points
- Provide 0.10 mile markers along walking path
- Add signage at entry indicating location of soccer fields, play area and shelter



## ACCESSIBILITY / WALKABILITY

- Play area mulch needs to be consistently full to improve accessibility
- Most picnic areas are not accessible
- Accessible spectator access to soccer fields is limited
- The park can be accessed by vehicles only.

## ACTIONS

- Develop a safe pedestrian / biking route linking Lake Avenue from the east side of the rail tunnel to Simon Kenton Trail and from Simon Kenton Trail to the west side of the rail tunnel. There are no safe options along Lake Avenue through the tunnel.
- Add spurs from the existing walkway to create accessible soccer viewing areas
- Picnic areas need to be connected to walking paths with an accessible route





## SAFETY

- The park has lighting throughout and along the wooded section of the trail, but most are not typically on. There have been reports of cars parked in the darker sections of the park
- The shelter, concession stand and maintenance buildings all have adequate lighting.
- Visibility of park patrons is good from existing drives with the exception of the wooded section of the park
- There are 'Park Entrance' signs on Lake Avenue on both sides of the park entry but none on Troy Street
- The play area has safety surfacing
- There are turn lanes at the main entrance to the park
- Speed limit is 35 mph
- There is a safe route to the playground from the ball diamonds without crossing drives on the east end of the south parking lots

## ACTIONS

- Keep lights on along the drives for added safety
- Add 'Park Entry' signs on the north and south sides of the park entry on Troy Street
- Add a park sign at west entry

## DRAINAGE ISSUE

A review of the initial grading plan confirms that water flow is directed down the center of the south and east asphalt walks. Water may be blocked by the concession stand that was added at a later time. It does not show on the grading plan.

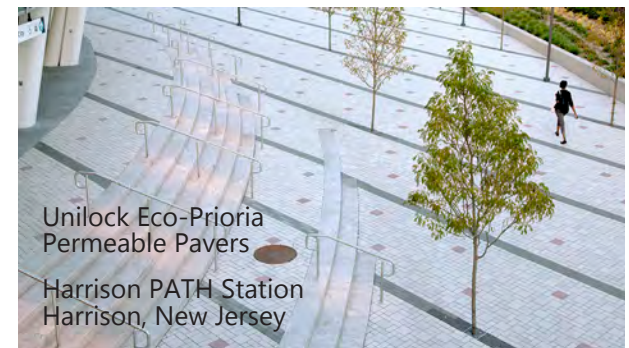
A new survey of the area impacted by drainage problems needs to be completed to develop a new stormwater management plan.

If water continues to need to be directed toward the paved areas between the diamonds, replacing the asphalt with permeable pavers would allow the paved areas to absorb and store water while improving aesthetics.

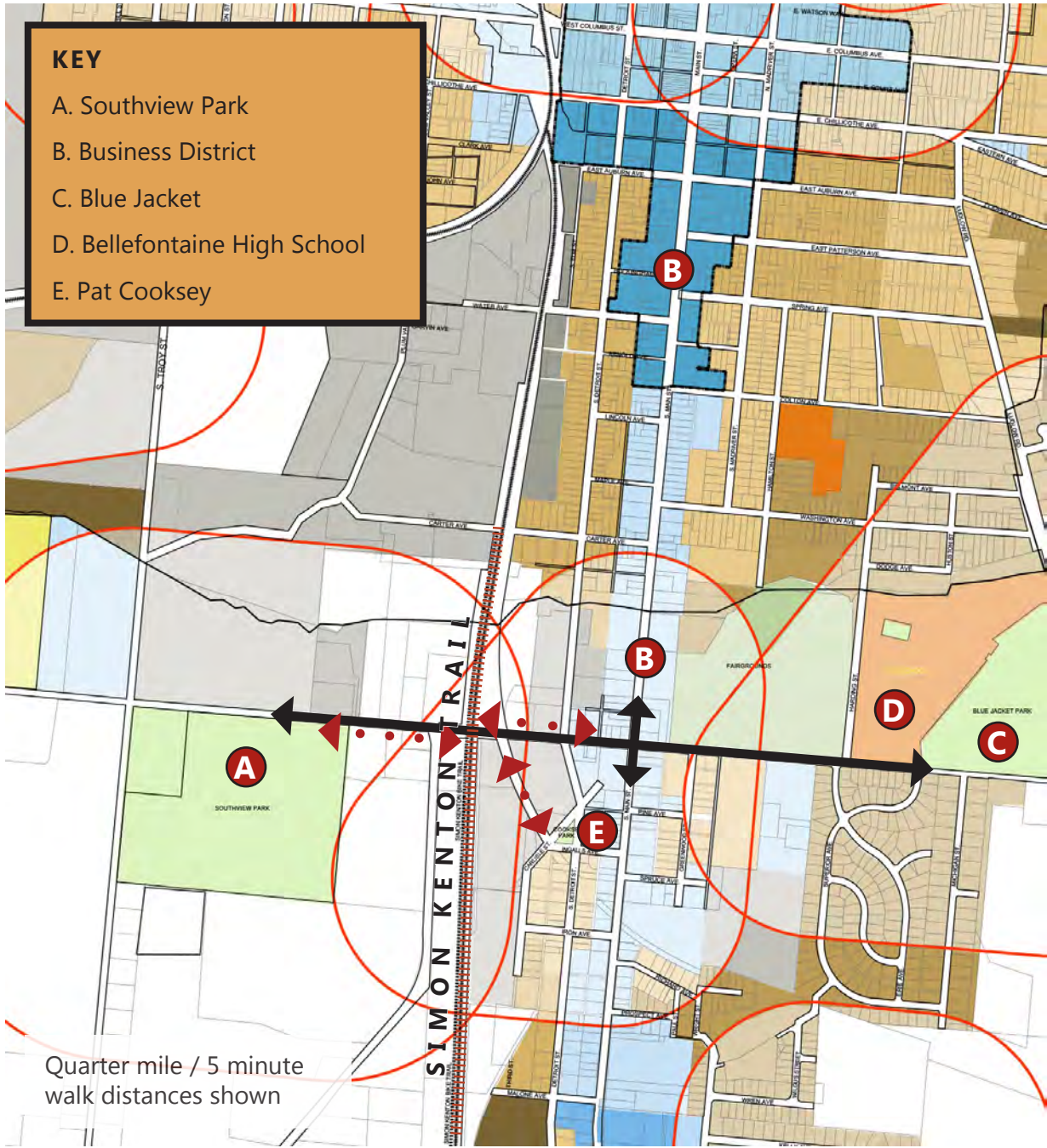


## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fix drainage issues
  - Obtain a survey of the areas plagued by poor drainage
  - Develop and implement a new stormwater management plan
- Create an accessible route to the picnic areas from nearby walkways and parking areas
- Repair benches with warped or broken boards
- Provide a concrete apron around benches to connect to the walking path to eliminate trimming and assure accessibility
- Add safety call boxes in isolated areas
- Expand planting area where new shade trees will be planted to remove or amend heavy soils. Being able to grow shade trees near the bleachers will eliminate the need for shade structures





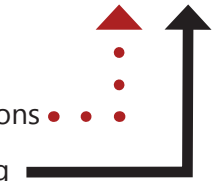


**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

- Although Southview seems disconnected from the city, its location on Lake Avenue provides a direct vehicular route to the downtown area and Blue Jacket Park
- There are no safe pedestrian / bicycle routes to the park
- Bicycle access is limited due to the narrow roads with poor visibility and should not be encouraged without a dedicated route.

**ACTIONS**

- Create a safe pedestrian / bicycle route from Simon Kenton Trail to the park and from Simon Kenton Trail to Lake Avenue
- Provide signage indicating the location of businesses, restaurants, the Simon Kenton Trail, and other parks in high visibility areas and include a QR Code that helps visitors locate points of interest



SAFETY

3

ACCESS

3

WAYFINDING

2

INVENTORY

2

CHARACTER

3



### PARK CHARACTER

Blue Jacket Park dominates the corner of Lake and Ludlow adjacent to Bellefontaine High School. The park encompasses the high school's baseball and softball diamonds, some track facilities, the football and soccer practice fields, as well as the tennis courts. The tennis courts are separate from the main park and sit in a sea of asphalt just west of the school's football stadium.

Due to the several fields, the park is largely open space with shade trees scattered along the field perimeters, near the two shelters and along the walking path. There are two nice stands of evergreen trees. One forms a nearly 400' line between the football and soccer practice fields and the other hugs the western and southern boundaries of the city's only skate park.

There is a large parking lot on the east side of the park with an adjacent sidewalk that connects to the park's 7/8 mile loop walk, to the skate park,

ball diamonds, fields, one of the park's shelters, and to the public sidewalk located north of the park along Ludlow. The walk also connects to the sidewalk at the corner linking to the Middle and Elementary schools across Ludlow. The walk does not lead to any play areas. BJRDC recently received a grant to improve the walking path.

The park has two shelters on hilltop locations. There is an aging wooden climbing structure near one of the shelters with sand playground surfacing. A second play area is near the soccer fields and is very old. There's no safety surfacing around any of the pieces, which consist of a stage coach shaped climbing structure, a spring toy, a concrete base from a missing spring toy, a slide and swing set with two missing swings. There are three horseshoe pits near the play structures that lack safety covers over the posts and appear to need new surfacing.

There is a skate park in an area about 72' x 124' with older equipment. West of the skate park are two long concrete rectangles tucked along the evergreen trees that may have been shuffleboard courts at one time.

The overall site is fairly flat, but there are areas of rolling terrain. The park would benefit from a plan to increase the size and quality of the skate park and play areas.



## INVENTORY

- 2 Shelters with picnic tables
- Skate Park
- Walking path (7/8 mi) with lighting
- Approximately 6 benches
- Horseshoe pits
- 1 play area with a climbing structure
- 1 play area with swings, slide, climbing structure and a spring toy
- HS Baseball diamond with lights
- HS Softball diamond with lights
- 2 soccer fields with an accessible route between the fields
- 1 football practice field
- Large parking lot
- Track and field spaces for field events
- Bike rack in an odd location
- 2 unpainted shuffleboard courts

## WAYFINDING

- There is a large park sign facing the corner of Ludlow and Lake

## ACTIONS

- Provide updated park signage to replace corner sign
- Place signage at the parking lot indicating the park entry
- Provide distinct trailhead signage with trail information
- Add distance and directional signage along trails

## ACCESSIBILITY

- The park is accessible from city streets
- There is good pedestrian access to the park and into the park, with the exception of one shelter and the two play areas
- There is accessible parking in the parking lot

## ACTIONS

- Extend a sidewalk to the playgrounds after improvements are made
- Extend a sidewalk to the shelter located in the middle of the park





## SAFETY

- Visibility of park patrons is good in most places
- There is pedestrian access to the park from the surrounding neighborhood
- There are park safety signs along Lake Avenue
- The lighting isn't bad, but could be improved
- The play area near the soccer field has a few items that need attention:
  - Safety surfacing
  - Horseshoe Pits
  - Concrete with metal plate in the lawn

## ACTIONS

- Add additional lights in the skate park
- Utilize poles with existing flood lights



## THE SURVEY SAYS...

*For the most part our parks look very good. There were times areas needed mowing. More time needed to be spent on trimming and weed control / The walking track at Blue Jacket could use some work to repair cracks and low spots. It would be difficult for someone in a wheelchair to get around comfortably. The parks are very well used and appreciated. / Playgrounds are broken or old / Blue jacket needs a new park entirely. I walk with my kids here very often and it's barely a park / Blue jacket Park desperately needs an updated playground / Blue jacket has no fully functional [play area] / I have said for years that I would love to see lights all the way around blue jacket park. It would be great to be able to walk in the crisp fall/winter evenings after work! / The skate park is unsafe and too small / [The] Skate Park needs upgrades including operational lighting for the evening. Also the Skate Park equipment needs to be upgraded and graffiti removed. A lot of people use the park and it is an awesome asset to have in town / Families practice [at Blue Jacket] a lot and would be great if there was something for play / I like playing at the skate park. I think that it could be updated and lights added / Blue Jacket really needs an upgraded play facility. If that's not in the plans at the very least take what is there out. It's pretty terrible and an eyesore to the park in general and to those visiting the town for ball games and school events / Blue Jacket needs a basketball court as in the past / I've grown up a block from blue jacket park for years and I'd love to see the shelter houses redone and to have something other than just downtown being recreated and beau-*

*tiful. That park has been the same since I was 9 years old I'm now 24 with a husband and a child. I'd also like to maybe have a pavilion or bigger shelter house where the skate park sits because it has more privacy and better parking for any events. I think we should keep the skate park but improve it for those who do use it daily and move it to the other side where that shelter house is with tire swings / Blue jacket doesn't have anything for kiddos to play on...*



View of ball diamonds



View of walking path

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Blue Jacket Park commands a prime location and needs a new vision. A Park Master Plan should be created to develop a cohesive design that meets the current needs of the public. The park is unique in that it shares many spaces with the School District. While most of the land is used for sports fields, there is still plenty of area to work with to create a more interesting and vibrant place. The skate park in particular, if improved, could become a well-used space with regional draw. Blue Jacket Park, with its location near schools with Pre-k through high school students should have activities for all age levels and abilities.

### Wayfinding

- Place a park sign at the main entry of the parking lot and at the far west and north ends of the park boundaries.
- Provide informational signs at the two trailheads on either side of the parking lot listing trail difficulty, trail condition and distance
- Mark trails with 0.10 mile markers and directional signs and maps
- Place a sign or kiosk with information on location and nearby parks, museums and other points of interest

### Amenities

- **Skate Park:** Redesign and expand

the skate park to provide for a wide range of skill levels with more challenging and interesting elements. Incorporate sitting and picnic areas nearby for users and spectators. Take advantage of the topography to add dimension to the skate park

- **Play Areas:** Redesign the play areas to provide modern play equipment for a variety of ages. Consider activities specifically targeting teens as well
- **Tennis Courts:** Study moving the tennis courts to the school property east of Blue Jacket Park. Provide for a well-designed space with benches, tables, accessible walks and a parking area.

### Accessibility

- Extend the accessible walks to any new play areas, courts or special activity zones
- Provide benches along the walking path and expand picnic areas beyond the shelters where people might gather during sport practices, near the skate park and near play areas
- Extend public sidewalks from the business district to the park
- Add a sidewalk from the school parking lot to the walking path

### Maintenance

- Place a concrete slab under any site

furniture to eliminate the need for trimming

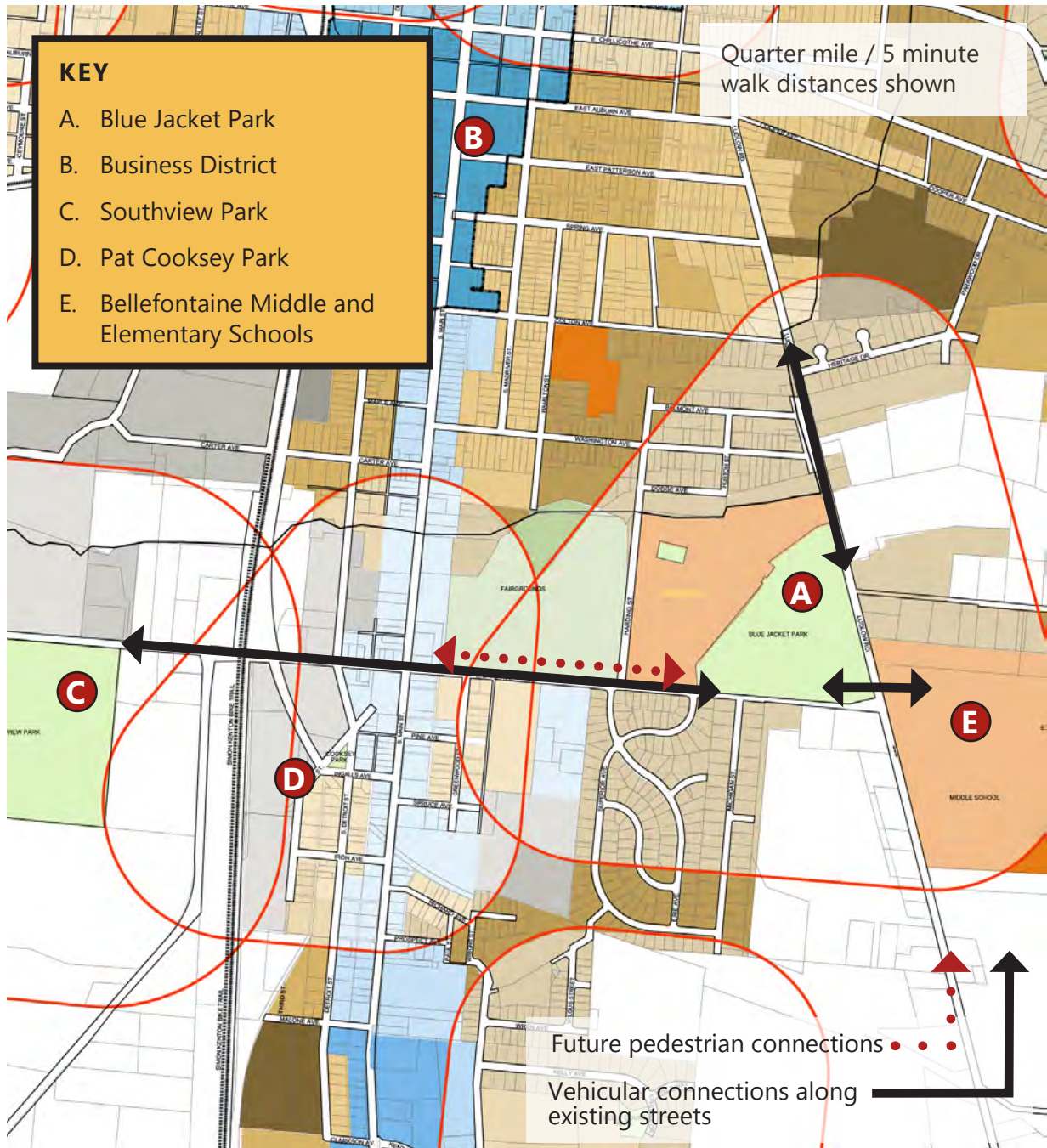
### Safety

- Provide pedestrian-scale, decorative lighting throughout the park to enhance safety and usability



This Santa Fe, NM skate park incorporates landscape, site lighting and sitting areas to create an inviting public space





**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

As improvements to the park are made, Blue Jacket could become a park with regional draw due to its unique features and high visibility to visitors of high school activities.

**ACTIONS**

- Strengthen the connection to Southview and the downtown by installing a wide public sidewalk along both sides of Lake Avenue
- Provide signage indicating the location of businesses, restaurants and other parks and include a QR Code that helps visitors locate points of interest
- Add signage on the west side and north sides of the park as well as at the parking lot entry
- If the tennis courts are moved to the elementary school property, provide park signage to indicate public use availability



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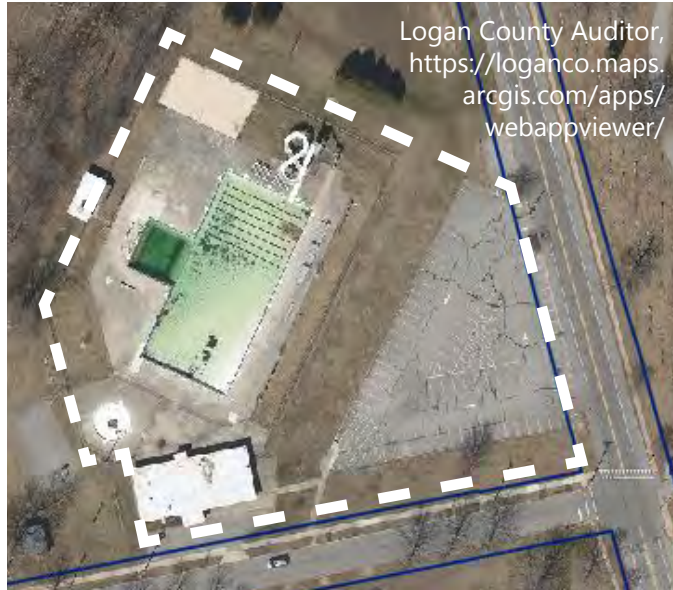
CHARACTER 2

INVENTORY 2

WAYFINDING 3

ACCESS 3

SAFETY 3



### PARK CHARACTER

Hoffman Pool is an important asset to the community that has strong public support based on the survey responses. As far back as 2007, Bellefontaine commissioned a feasibility study of Hoffman Pool to determine whether the pool could be repaired and upgraded or replaced. The result was the recommendation that the pool be replaced. During that same time frame, there was an economic downturn that made any investment in a new pool impossible. BJRDC has made extraordinary efforts in the intervening years to make needed repairs, equipment replacements and improvements when possible. In the summer of 2022, the baby pool was inoperable and perhaps a sign of things to come. The pool will eventually reach a point of no return. It is vital to begin the planning process for replacement.



### THE SURVEY SAYS...

*Hoffman pool needs big improvements! / The pool needs to be updated, needs more umbrellas for shade, bathrooms updated, needs entrance that doesn't consist of walking through bathrooms. This makes it easier with parents with young kids that don't want their kids to walk through a bathroom without them. Also, a family restroom would be nice. The volleyball area inside the pool is not needed, change that to a covered picnic area or splash pad. Sand volleyball area can be moved over to the area by the tennis courts. Update and utilize the old ball diamond by the swimming pool. / The pool needs a complete makeover / Hoffman pool needs big improvements! / The Hoffmann pool would be great as an aquatic park ; areas for small children and big children . This year they didn't have the baby pool full and it is completely separate, so moms cannot take multiple children if they vary age and watch them closely / It would be nice to add a splash pad to one of the parks, or even at the pool where the volleyball court is that just grows weeds. / Hoffman pool needs upgraded into something nicer and more exciting for younger kids, like a splash pad area with smaller slides and toys that spray or dump water. Also, the baby area at the pool leaves a lot to be desired. / While the Hoffman Pool has been well maintained, it is very old. The baby pool was not available most of the summer and this facility does not have the attractions of other local pools (fountain, water playground, splash pad, etc.) / The pool facilities (especially the restrooms) is a major complaint of mine! The pool itself is good, but the girl's restroom/locker area needs updating! Thanks for conducting this survey and looking into this :)*





View of the Baby Pool

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Determine the size and type of pool needed to fit the needs of the community and swimming program
- Develop cost estimates
- Determine a funding structure
- Begin the planning / design process



### Examples of new pools

1. Marysville: View of zero entry pool
2. Decorative pool fence creates a welcoming character
3. Oxford, Ohio Pool
4. Marysville, Ohio Pool





SAFETY

3

ACCESS

2

WAYFINDING

2

INVENTORY

3

CHARACTER

3



### PARK CHARACTER

Rutan Park is BJR D's largest and most diverse park within the city limits. It commands a fairly central location in the city, surrounded by a large residential district. The main entry into the park is via East Williams Avenue. The center section of Williams Avenue has a delightful allee of mature trees that create a shady, tunnel-like affect in the summer. Williams Avenue can be closed to traffic with a gate on the east at Allison Road and a gate on the west just past the park restrooms.

The rolling terrain throughout the park creates an interesting setting. A natural drainage ditch that provides play opportunities, runs from the northeast corner of the park diagonally past the park's maintenance buildings. The creek and the road effectively divide the park into four sections: **1 - Northwest, 2 - Northeast, 3 - Southeast and 4 - Southwest.**

From Williams Avenue, there is a loop drive (A) leading to **Section 1** of the park. The drive up the hill goes to two of the park's four shelters.

They are about 45' apart and sit approximately 30' above the valley. Shelter **B** is newer with an accessible ramp and stairs leading to the picnic area. Shelter **C** is a WPA building with brick columns. The concrete steps on the east side of this shelter are damaged. There is a medium sized, newer play structure (D) for ages 5-12, located near the shelters. The surrounding hillside is a mix of open lawn and scattered mature shade trees.

There are a few parking spaces and a pedestrian entry, although not an accessible entry, from the residential area located northwest of the park at the corner of Seminole and Palmer (E).

East of the hilltop loop, the drive (F) leads to Shelter **G**, an older shelter with a nearby aging playground (W) and access to the creek. Northeast of that shelter a pedestrian bridge (H) crosses the creek and leads to the large open lawn outside of the fenced Hoffman Pool (I) in **Section 2.**

The drive (J) connecting Williams with East High Avenue forks as it heads south. The west drive heads up a slight hill through **Section 4**, the more wooded part (K) of the south side. It's a particularly peaceful area, but despite the lovely setting, there is only one picnic table and no benches.

The east fork leads into the maintenance and parking area (L) for park staff, and two BJR D maintenance buildings.

The Mary Rutan Disc Golf course winds through the entire north side of the park before crossing over Williams to **Section 4** on the south side.

The park's only restrooms (M) are located along Williams Avenue. They are aging facilities in block buildings. There are parking spaces next to the restrooms and an accessible walk along the north side of Williams Avenue.

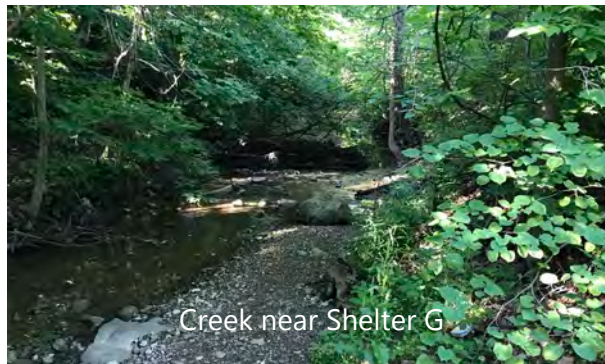
In **Section 2** of the park, there are two basketball courts (N), areas of open lawn that contain disc golf course tee pads and baskets, and Hoffman Pool (I). The pool building fronts Williams Avenue and offers some accessible parking spaces for pool patrons. The topography is less dramatic in this section of the park, but does rise quickly next to the pool. The main pool parking lot (O) sits 10' above the pool elevation offering good views of the pool below, and is accessed from Allison Road. Aside from the trees lining Williams Avenue and the creek, Section 2 is very open.

South of Williams Avenue, the park's highest point is in **Section 3**. Open lawn dominates this section sweeping down from Allison Road to the creek. At the top of the hill, the park sign (P) faces the corner within a nicely landscape plant bed. There is a bike rack (P) nearby, but not close to anything else. It's placement is a mystery.

The Logan County Vietnam War Memorial (Q) is also located at the top of the hill, surrounded by newly planted shade trees. A sidewalk leads from the public walk along Allison Road to the memorial where there are also benches and a flagpole.

Heading west, Shelter **R** sits next to the newly built tennis and pickle ball courts (S), with a sidewalk connecting the two facilities. West of the courts is a large, fenced accessible playground (T) with an adjacent parking lot (U). Sidewalks lead from the parking lot to the playground and from the playground to Williams, but there isn't a marked cross-walk connecting to the walks on the north side of the street. There are no walks connecting the courts or shelter to the parking lot or playground.

A partially fenced ball diamond (V) with lights and a small set of bleachers hugs the east bank of an exposed portion of the creek. The open space between the playground and ball diamond is dotted



with shade trees.

There is a public sidewalk on the north side of Williams Avenue that continues into the neighborhood on the west and leads to a crosswalk across Allison Road on the east. The walk on the south side of Williams enters the park from the west and ends at the park drive (J). A sidewalk starting at the pool parking lot (O), crosses Williams and continues along Allison Rd. curving around to meet the sidewalk that lines High Avenue the full length of the park and into the neighborhood west of the park. There isn't a trail system through the park and connectivity between park amenities is very limited. Pedestrians and bicycles share the park drives with vehicles.

The asphalt drives are cracking and need repair.





## INVENTORY

### Section 1

- 3 Shelters with picnic tables
- 1 Newer play structure with mulch
- 1 Play area with aging structure with stone
- Disc Golf tees and baskets
- Small paved parking lot with accessible parking spaces
- Grills (some broken), trash receptacles, benches and picnic areas
- Restrooms
- Dumpsters near shelters B, C & G
- Access to the creek

### Section 2

- 2 Basketball courts
- Pedestrian bridge (to Section 1)
- Hoffman Pool
- Large parking lot
- Access to the creek
- Disc Golf tees and baskets

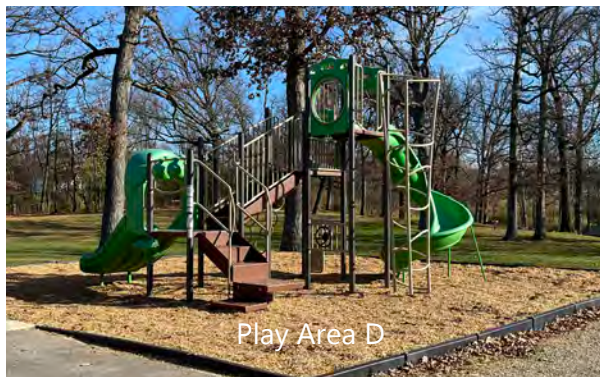
### Section 3

- Park sign
- Vietnam Veteran Memorial
- Bike Rack

- Tennis and Pickle Ball Courts
- Large, newer accessible playground
- Partially fenced ball diamond with lights
- Access to the creek

### Section 4

- Maintenance Yard and Buildings
- Access to the creek
- A picnic table
- Park sign
- Disc Golf tees and baskets



## WAYFINDING

- There is a large park sign facing the corner of Allison Road and East High Avenue
- There is a large park sign facing west on Williams Avenue at the west entry

## ACTIONS

- Provide updated park signage where existing signs are located
- Add signage at High Avenue near the park drive
- Add signage at the pedestrian entry at the northwest corner of the park
- Name sections of the park for easier wayfinding
- Add directional signage for major park activities, parking and newly named sections





## ACCESSIBILITY

- The park is somewhat accessible
- There is accessible parking in the parking lots
- The restrooms are accessible
- There are public walks that border the park
- There is an accessible play area on the south side, but the ramp from the parking lot needs to be widened
- The hilltop play area is accessible, but the play structure is limited to 5-12
- The swimming pool is accessible
- The tennis courts are accessible from the nearby shelter and a walk extends to Williams Avenue



## ACCESSIBILITY ACTIONS

- Develop a park master plan to address accessibility throughout the park. The goal should be to interconnect the park's amenities with an accessible sidewalk or walking trail that doesn't require excessive street crossings to get to other sidewalks
- Extend a walking trail from the north-west pedestrian entry to the shelter and play area
- Widen ramp to new accessible playground
- Provide crosswalks where sidewalks lead to the street
- Provide a crosswalk where park drives intersect with Williams Avenue



## SAFETY

- Visibility of park patrons is good in most places
- There is pedestrian access to the park from the surrounding neighborhood
- There are park safety signs along Williams Avenue
- Some lights need to be repaired
- The pool and new playground area are well lit

## ACTIONS

- Add a light near the basketball courts and storage building
- Repair the streetlight near shelters B & C in Section 1
- Add a light near the shelter G in the valley in Section 1



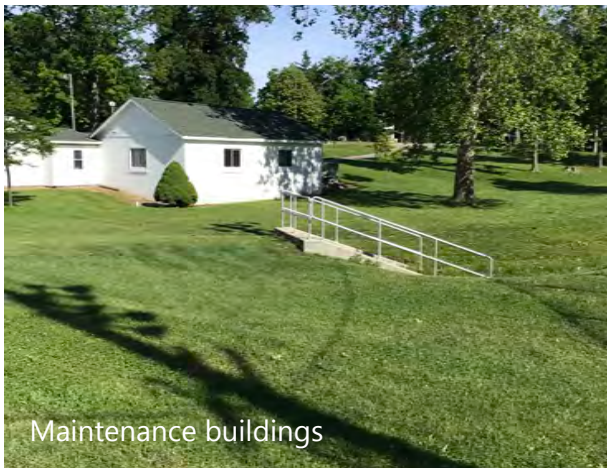




Recently added playground



Concrete issue at WPA Shelter



Maintenance buildings



View of ball diamond



View from lawn toward pool



View of allee

## THE SURVEY SAYS...

I would like to see the old baseball field near Mary Rutan Park sprayed for weeds so that it can be used. Other than that, we really love all the parks we have been too. Mary Rutan is our favorite! / Hoffman pool or kaleidoscope park has no access to bathrooms year around. I don't take my toddlers there anymore because we had to drive home for a bathroom which causes bathroom accidents. It's a shame because it's probably the nicest park in town / Mary Rutan Park was clean and friendly / Mary Rutan Park is great, but needs more benches for parents since it's so popular and some more shade sails! / Mary Rutan Park is under monitored and over run by teenagers/young adults who leave trash and intentionally make patrons of the park feel unwelcome. / My children range in age from 1-14. There is not a park in town I can take them to that has toys/equipment for every age. Mary Rutan Park is very limited, it built to accommodate children with disabilities, which is wonderful. However, my 9 year old does not find that park to be fun / I wish there was more for children 8-12. In my honest opinion this is a toddler-kindergarten park. More needs to be available for the upper ages that still love parks. / Bathrooms are terrible at Mary Rutan Park or a lot of times blocked off completely / Mary Rutan park does a lot for the handicap community but it took away any big playground for older children. Now we have nowhere for [older children] to play that doesn't cost money. / Mary Rutan/Brown parks could use more police patrol ... maybe some foot/bike patrol. Too many teenagers making bad decisions up by pool area. / Mary Rutan is always beau-



tifully maintained. / I also believe the shelter houses at Mary Rutan park have been neglected we still rent them however they are not as nice as they could be with a little TLC. The old parks over there could also use new equipment nothing as big as the all new one but a new slide and swing set for those who do rent them for parties would be nice. My overall opinion is we're spending a lot of money and effort in downtown itself and not really expanding to the other parts which have been neglected for years. / Resurface upper & lower basketball courts, 2 new basketball goals on upper court; lighting on one or both courts comparable to tennis courts & access to drinking fountain facilities / A walking path around all of Mary Rutan Park would be very nice. / There are no drinking fountains at Rutan Park. The drinking fountains need re placed at the pool and park. / Mary Rutan Park needs more shaded space. / The parks department, along with the police did a great job getting a handle on Mary Rutan Park this summer...

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Of all the parks in the district, Rutan is transitioning more quickly than others into a park that meets the needs of today's consumers. The Peak Playground and tennis courts are wonderful new improvements. If the recommended pool replacement can happen, that will be another boon for Bellefontaine's residents. The sweeping landscape and natural features found at Rutan are visually engaging and present opportunities for a unique park experience. Basic

recommended actions are listed under the previous categories of Wayfinding, Accessibility and Safety. See below for additional recommendations:

### Accessibility

- 95% of the park's sidewalks are along the street with minimal or no safety buffer from traffic. Develop a new 8' wide hiking / biking trail that provides a continuous link to the park's entries, facilities and natural areas
- Provide benches and picnic areas along the new trail

### Wayfinding

- Once a trail is developed, mark it with 0.10 mile markers and directional signs and maps
- Place a sign or kiosk with information on location and nearby parks, museums and other points of interest near pedestrian hubs and entries

### Amenities

- Increase the variety of experiences with unique exercise or play equipment to engage a wide range of skill levels with more challenging and interesting elements.
- Add social spaces: Utilize the park's topography to create a shaded, well-lit, landscaped plaza with benches and picnic tables to provide an interesting social space

- Replace outdated play equipment with pieces that serve ages 2-13+

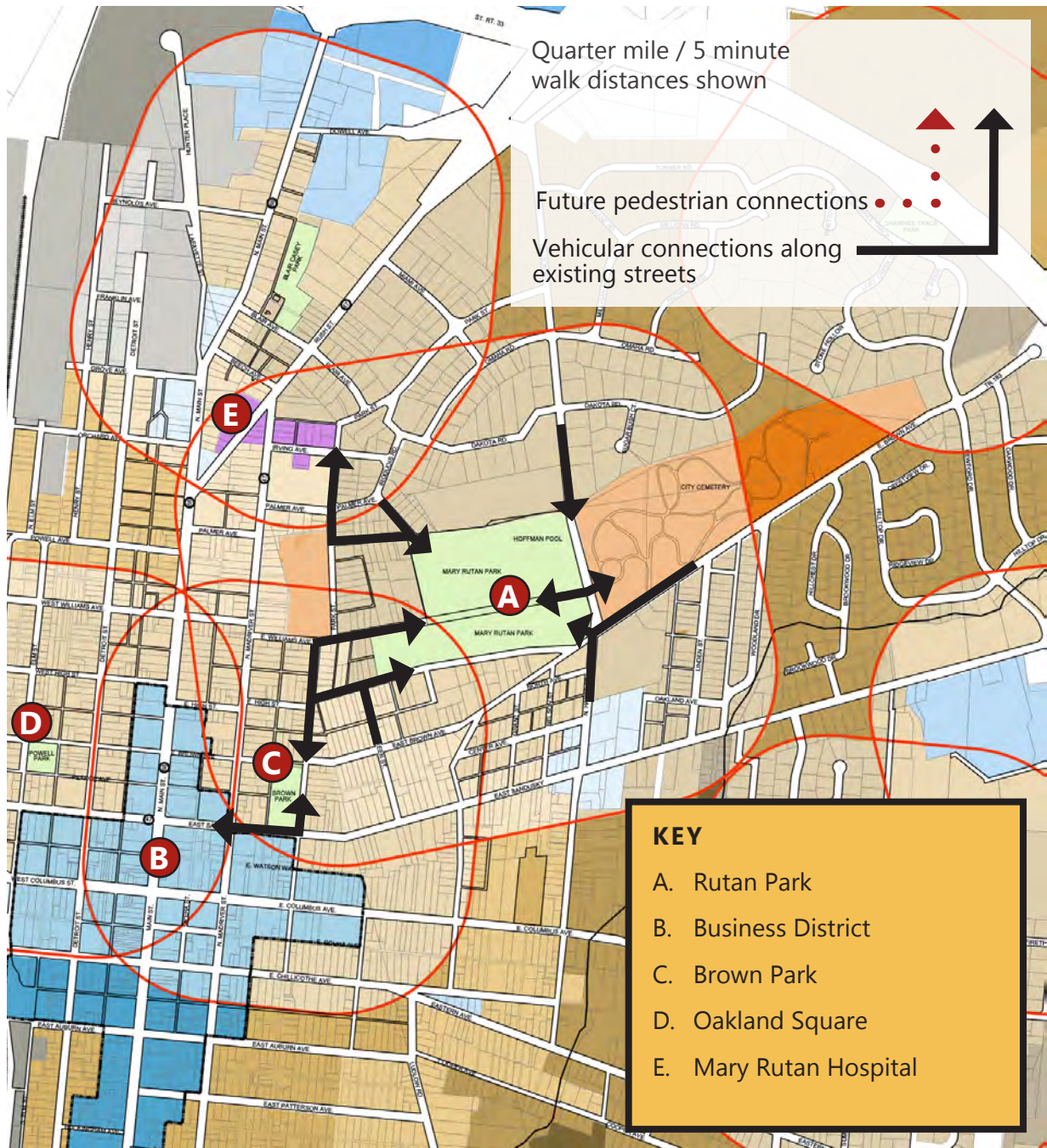
### Safety

- Provide pedestrian-scale, decorative lighting throughout the park to enhance safety and usability



Top: West End Square, Dallas, Texas, by James Corner Field Operations, Photographer Sam Oberter Photography, Chad Baumer Photography (<https://www.fieldoperations.net/project-details/project/west-end-square.html>) Bottom: Queens Plaza, Long Island City, by Margie Ruddick and Marpillero Pollak Arch, Michael Singer (<https://sunnysidepost.com/new-public-park-coming-to-queens-plaza-in-long-island-city>)





**CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY**

Rutan is easy to get to from across the city by car. Pedestrian access could be strengthened through a city sidewalk expansion program.

**ACTIONS**

- Link parks and neighborhoods by providing public sidewalks and crosswalks where they are lacking
- Provide signage indicating the location of businesses, restaurants and other parks and include a QR Code that helps visitors locate points of interest
- Rutan Park is within a 5 minute walk from Mary Rutan Hospital. A hiking trail through the park would provide a much needed respite from job stress for employees
- The park is within a 10 minute walk from Blair, Brown and Oakland Parks and the downtown. Mark the key corridors between these important landmarks with distinct wayfinding
- Connect the future hiking trail to welcoming pedestrian entries to allow park patrons to access the park when the park boundary is first encountered rather than forcing a longer walk to Williams Avenue

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SAFETY

2

ACCESS

3

WAYFINDING

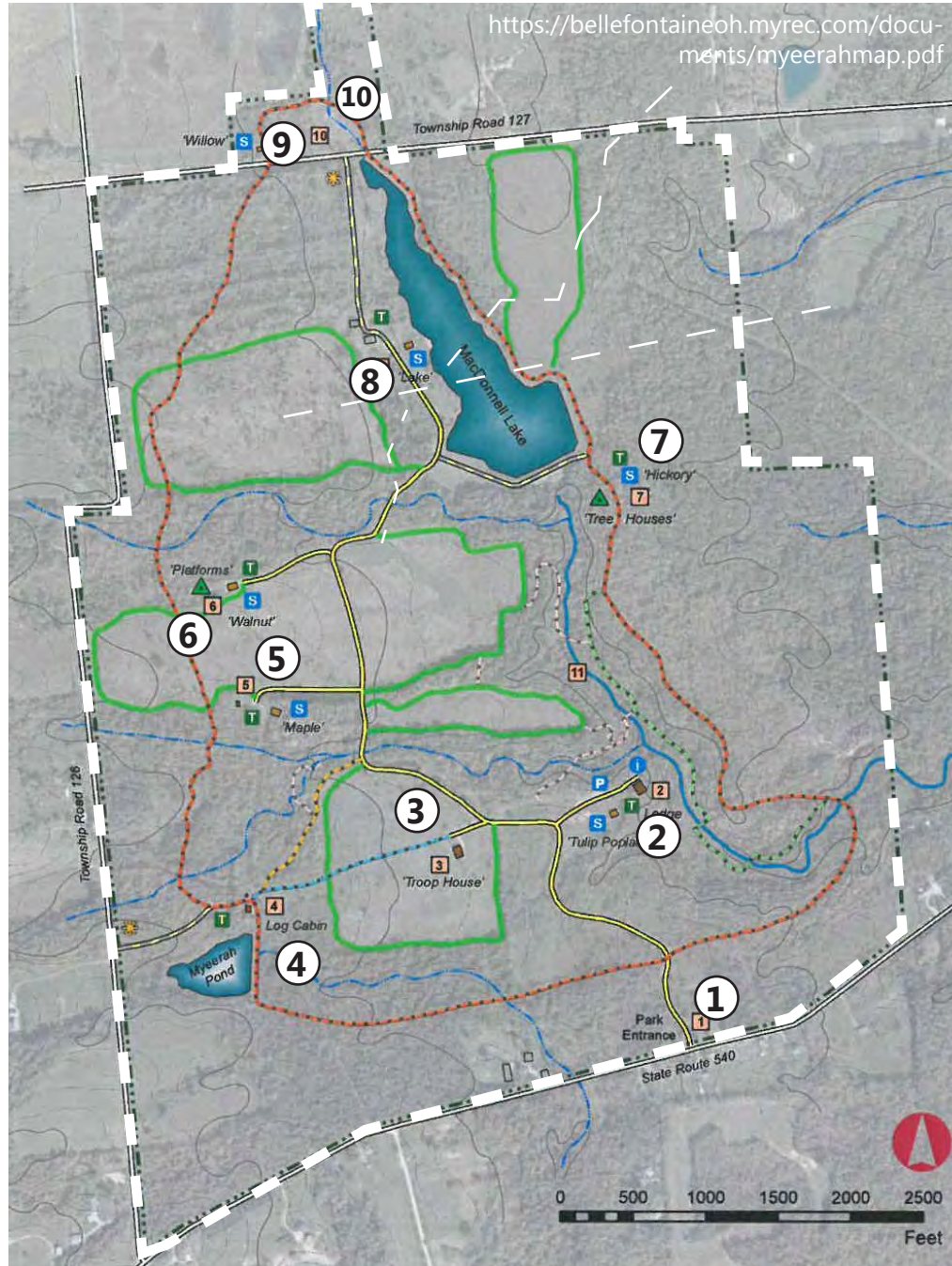
3

INVENTORY

3

CHARACTER

3



## PARK CHARACTER

Myeerah Nature Preserve is the BJR's newest park. The natural features of this parkland create varied wildlife habitats and the opportunity for unique recreational opportunities. Its 450 acres contain a mix of open meadows, steeply sloped woodlands and deep ravines. Intermittent streams feed into a stream branch of Mill Creek. There is a pond, a lake and a wetland with a boardwalk through its center. Add in the trails, the Log Cabin - with its views from the windows providing a glimpse into the past, The Lodge - an event and meeting venue, the Troop House - A reunion, meeting and overnight venue, and the Tree Houses - an elevated camping venue, and you have a rare recreational gem that feels more like a State Park.

From the entry at State Route 540, a gravel drive winds through the center of the park, ending just past the Lake Shelter House (8), with off-shoots that lead to the Lodge (2) not far from the entry, the Troop House (3), and both Maple (5) and Walnut (6) shelter areas. The drive to the north end of the park offers visitors a wonderful overview of the park and easy access to many of its offerings.

There are several trail types (lawn, gravel, partial boardwalks and natural woodland trails) that offer hikers a choice of trail experiences and more importantly, that instill a desire to return to the park.



There are modern public toilets at the Lodge, and pit toilets located at four of the shelters and near the Log Cabin. The pit toilets are showing their age and should be modernized with block structures and updated fixtures at some point.

The Tulip Poplar Shelter (2) is a newer structure with a metal roof, wind break and lighting. There is a large play structure without safety surfacing and a large open lawn nearby.

The Maple, Walnut, Hickory and Lake shelters still have remains from its time as a Scout camp with wooden tent platforms, hand washing / meal prep stations, pit toilets, and in the case of the Hickory Shelter, houses on stilts (aka: Tree Houses). Efforts are underway to remove some of the old wooden structures and there are piles of wood in places. The shelters themselves are aging and show signs of recent repair. Like the pit toilets, plans should be made to eventually replace the shelters.

The Willow Shelter (9) is located across TR 127 near the wetland with no nearby toilet.

Despite the somewhat messy appearance of the wooden camp holdovers, the structures lend an intriguing 'Ghost Town' quality to the spaces that is somehow appealing, and surely less mystifying to past scout camp attendees.

As Myeerah is a fairly new acquisition,

the full scope of the maintenance routine is still being established, but the park is in good shape and it's newest improvements, the boardwalk and wooden staircase, are terrific. There is a good mix of the built and natural environment and the park seems to be headed in the right direction with it's several rental options being used to pay for the park's upkeep.



## INVENTORY

- Play structure (5-12) near Lodge building
- Sand volleyball pit
- 6 Shelters
- Troop House with kitchen and overnight facilities
- Lodge event center
- Log Cabin
- Canoe dock
- Tree Houses
- Two houses
- Barn
- Wetland with boardwalk
- Wooden staircase and boardwalk near the Lodge
- Several benches and trash cans





## WAYFINDING

- There is a large park sign facing State Route 540
- There is a sign about a mile prior to the entry to prepare drivers

## ACTIONS

- Provide wayfinding signs with directional arrows along the main drive through the park
- Add signage at the trail heads with trail name and details at every trail. Include an aerial map of the park for locational understanding
- Provide clearly understood directional and distance trail markers along each trail
- Provide information to Bellefontaine's other parks and points of interest at the information kiosk near the Lodge



## ACCESSIBILITY

- The park is somewhat accessible
- The restrooms at the lodge are accessible
- The woodland trails are not accessible and it would be difficult to make them accessible

## ACTIONS

- Look for opportunities to provide accessible trails in woodland settings
- Take steps to improve existing trails for accessibility



## SAFETY

- Visibility of park patrons is good in some places
- The nature of the trails and setting make it incumbent upon park users to be aware of their surroundings and to be cautious while hiking across uneven terrain.
- There is a sign warning of the coming park entry along SR 540

## ACTIONS

- Remove the piles of wooden debris from the public areas
- Fix broken handrails and sand rough handrails





## RECOMMENDATIONS

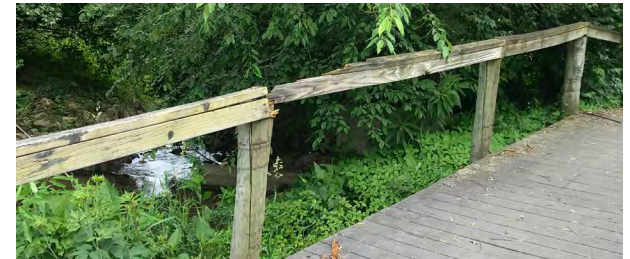
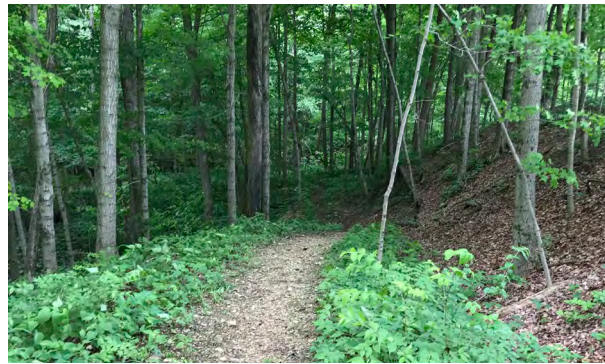
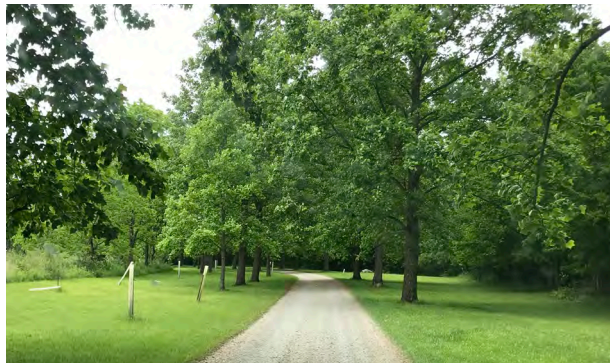
In addition to the previously mentioned actions:

### Maintenance

- Place the park's shelters and pit toilets on a replacement schedule
- Hike every trail and list the needed repairs. Follow up with regularly scheduled hikes to stay on top of potential trail safety hazards

## THE SURVEY SAYS...

*Myeerah needs a disc golf course / Please consider partnering with COMBO (Central Ohio Mountain Bike Organization) to develop and maintain mountain bike trails at Camp Myeerah / I do enjoy the updates and trails at Myeerah / We love Myeerah so much!! We live near West Liberty so our kids participate in sports there, but we spend a lot of time hiking and picnicking at Myeerah. We have also rented facilities there for birthday parties, which have been great experiences! We miss the nature programs and would love to see those return! / Myeerah could use some love as far as maintenance of trees, trails, and invasive species. / Myeerah driveway is a mess, especially in winter and spring. Needs gravel, maybe blacktop. If you're not going to support it, turn it over to the ODNR. / We would like a dedicated mountain bike trail at Myeerah / I'd love some mountain bike trails, please. And some budget for improvements at Myeerah*





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17. ROADSIDE PARK

## **SPECIAL USE PARKS**





SAFETY

3

ACCESS

1

WAYFINDING

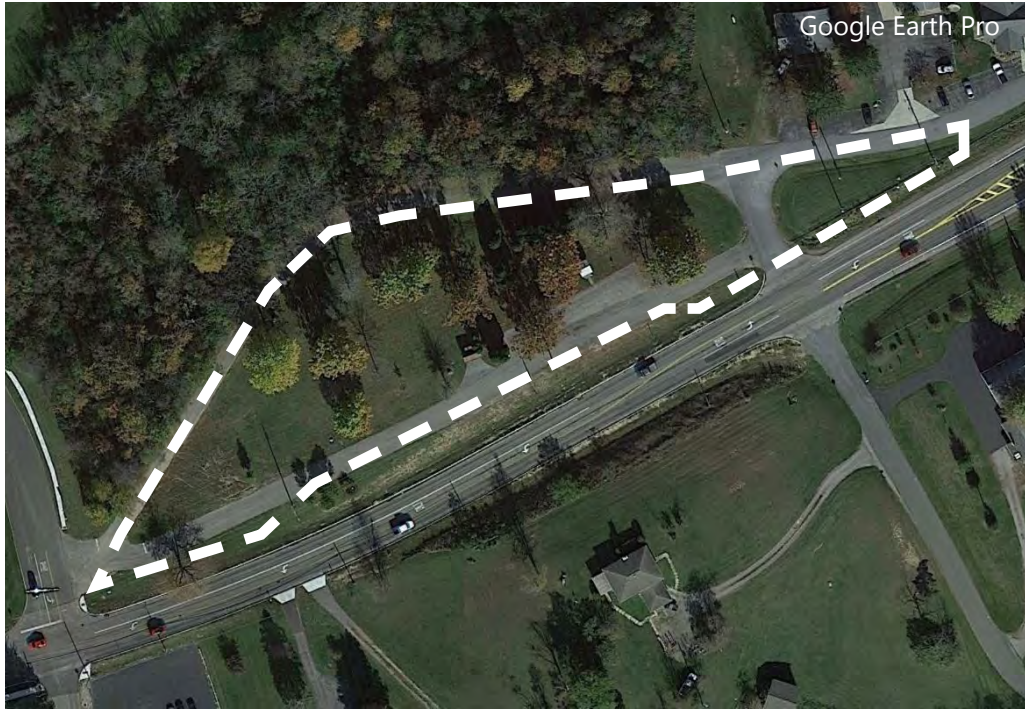
2

INVENTORY

2

CHARACTER

3



**PARK CHARACTER**

Roadside Park is a classic park designed for motorists that predates the modern rest area. The idea of a roadside park was first conceived and built along Rt. 2 in Michigan by Herbert Larson in 1918, then widely adopted across the United States by the 1920's. (Wikipedia: Roadside Parks)

Bellefontaine's Roadside Park is true to its roots offering a place for travelers to find a restroom, picnic area and a break from the road as well as tourist information at its self-serve Welcome Center. It is an inviting space with paved parking, a Port-a-John, an open lawn, a large number of mature shade trees and a few evergreen trees. There is an interesting shelter with two built in stone benches flanking a non-working water fountain. There is a picnic table and a grill that are not near each other and a slab of concrete with a grill post. There are no sidewalks.

**INVENTORY**

- Picnic Area
- Shelter with benches
- Port-a-John





## WAYFINDING

Provide signage indicating the park at the east and west entries



## ACCESSIBILITY

- The park is not accessible
- There are no sidewalks within the park or that lead to the picnic table or grill

## ACTIONS

- Add an accessible sidewalk from the parking lot to the picnic table and grill. Extend pavement around the picnic table to eliminate trimming

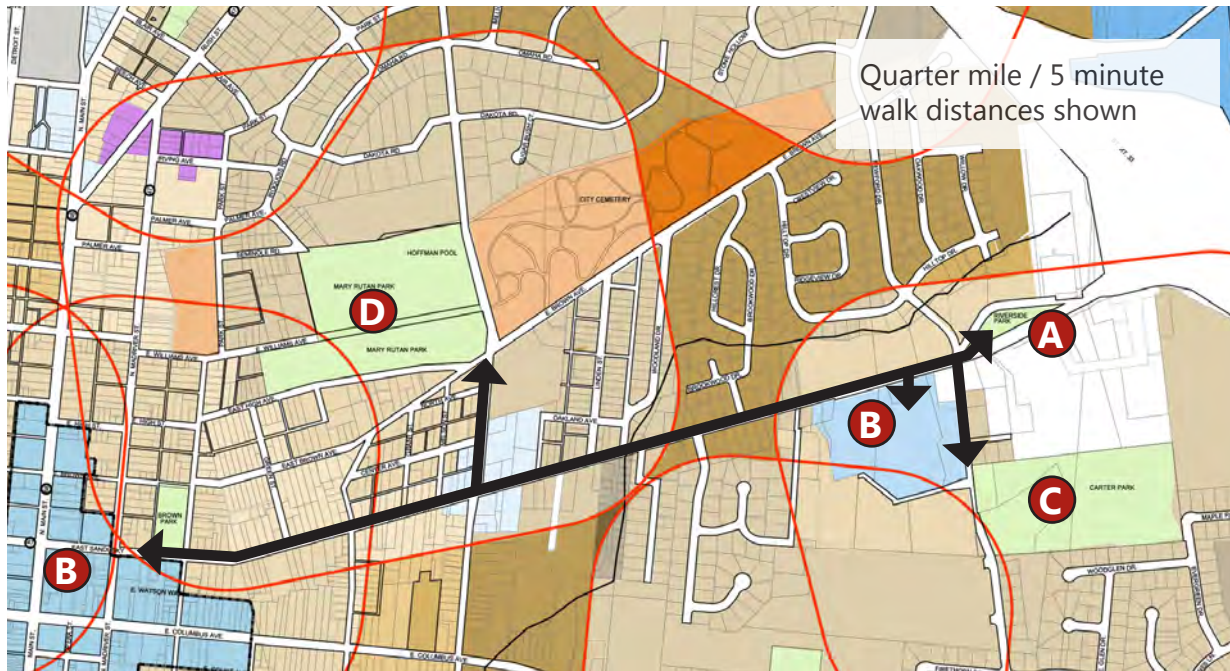
## SAFETY

Remove concrete slab and old grill post

## CONNECTIVITY / WALKABILITY

Due to Roadside Park's primary function as a motorist wayside, developing a pedestrian route to the park is not a high priority

- Roadside Park has direct vehicular connectivity to the center of Bellefontaine, Fred Carter Park and Mary Rutan Park making it an effective Welcome Center
- State Route 540 creates a barrier to any pedestrian connection from Roadside Park to Fred Carter Park and the business district on the south side of the road. The first crosswalk is more than 0.5 miles away
- A sidewalk located on the east side of Newford Drive stops short of the intersection, but could be extended to a crosswalk providing pedestrian access to Roadside Park



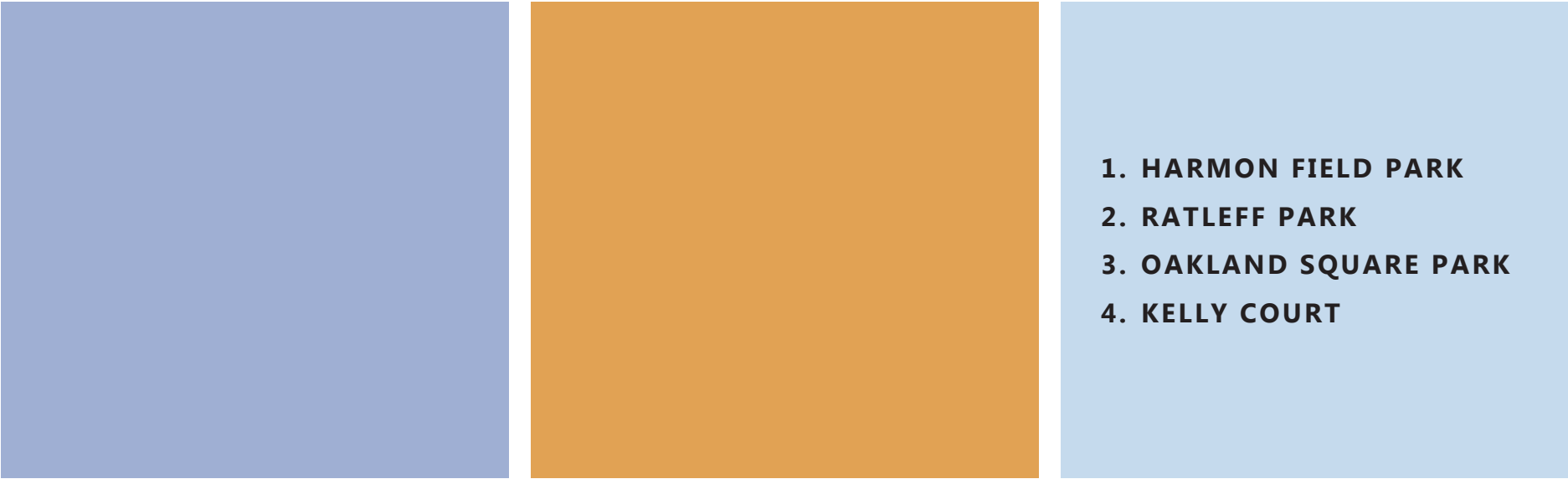
Future connections .....  
Connections along existing streets

## KEY


- A. Roadside Park
- B. Business District
- C. Fred Carter Park
- D. Rutan Park

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- 1. HARMON FIELD PARK**
  - 2. RATLEFF PARK**
  - 3. OAKLAND SQUARE PARK**
  - 4. KELLY COURT**

## **CONCEPTUAL PARK MASTER PLANS**



The following conceptual plans are not to be used for construction and remain the property of Jaccyn Design Group, LLC.

They were created to expand the reader's imagination and help to illustrate what potential improvements could look like.

## THE SURVEY SAYS ...

Survey respondents had a lot to say about Harmon Field. Below are snippets from the survey comments:

*Currently underutilized / Harmon Field needs to be cleaned up and used again / I truly believe that Harmon Field needs to be updated / Harmon Field should feature the water park / Harmon Park needs a lot of upgrades / The bathrooms are a problem / Harmon Park needs a lot of work and upkeep / Harmon Field could use updates and better play equipment / Harmon Field is an eyesore / the ball courts are horrible / Harmon Field and Lewis Rattleff Park are in the worst shape and are in desperate need of some new / updated playground equipment and swings for the children to play on / The bathrooms at Harmon Field need a major upgrade / Harmon Field is not cared for compared to other parks / Improve overall upkeep of this park including basketball goals, nets and restrooms / Harmon Field needs attention and things for the kids to do / the park needs serious upgrades / Restrooms need to be repaired / Shelters need repair / I would love to see an Obstacle course and/or splash pad go in somewhere in Bellefontaine...*

## A DESIRE FOR CHANGE

Harmon Park appears to have sentimental value to the community with multiple interviewees recalling the once thriving park with fondness. Perhaps nostalgia for the park led to the strong opinions from the public, which had recurring themes centered largely around the desire to see a new vision for Harmon Park. One commenter wanted to start from scratch stating it needed “to be bulldozed”.

Harmon has many positives. It is one of the few parks in the City that has accessible walks to and through the park that connect most amenities. It has distinct entries, accessible parking, shelters, play structures, plenty of open space, benches and picnic tables. But a park is more than the sum of its parts. The walks and surfaces are aging, the west shelter needs repair, the drinking fountain no longer works, the chain link fencing dominates the park adding an industrial and unwelcoming feel, and the bike rack is becoming swallowed by the tall grass. While the swing set is new, the play structure serves only young children and needs to be replaced. The two shelters are so close to each other, BJR D rents them together. The restroom and storage buildings are aging and unattractive, and the restroom facilities are in desperate need of improvements.

It is not enough to just repair what is broken. The public knows the park no longer meets their needs and they long for a new vision to bring the energy of the past back to the park.

## TIME FOR A NEW ERA

With its rich history spanning generations, Harmon has the right ingredients to become a community hub with regional draw. It is in a prime location within a dense residential neighborhood, and in close proximity to Rattleff Park and the downtown area. It has high visibility from State Route 47, and enough land to be able to create a park with a cohesive design that provides for separate activity areas, gathering spaces, places to stroll, picnic and play options for all ages.

Beyond creating a new and special park, access to the park from the neighborhoods north of Sandusky Street and connections to the downtown, Simon Kenton Trail and Rattleff Park need to be strengthened. That may mean working with local and state agencies to install pedestrian crossings, marking the routes between points of interest with distinct wayfinding signs, and providing information or maps at park kiosks. QR codes at the kiosks may link to maps to orient visitors and let them know where to find restaurants, museums and businesses, and additional recreational opportunities.





## KEY

1. **Safety:** Separate the park from the street with a decorative (not chain link) fence and/or planting
2. **Welcoming:** Add consistent signage at main park access points to welcome the public to use the space
3. **Accessibility:** Add sidewalks for pedestrian access around and through the park. Vary the user experience with wide walks that connect main entries with highly used spaces, the plaza and play areas, and narrower walks leading to other park amenities. Provide accessible parking in both lots.
4. **Play Area and Splash Pad:** Create a dynamic, high activity play area near the center of the park allowing quieter activities to populate the outer regions. Provide an area for water play separate from but close to an accessible playground, benches and picnic areas. Provide a secondary play area near the shelter.
5. **Restroom:** Replace the current restroom with an updated facility with expanded space for changing rooms, storage and splash pad filters and pumps. Provide a drinking fountain on the outside wall.
6. **Existing amenities:** Protect existing trees and incorporate the historic marker into any new design. Repair the existing shelter and replace basketball court surfacing
7. **Create Spaces:** Use sidewalks, open space, nice fencing and planting to create spaces and separate uses. Screen the back of the bleachers and play field from the active play area with plantings and fencing that also separates the north end of the park from Sandusky Avenue. Separate the active play area from the parking lot with open green space and trees. At the shelter, provide a fence or hedge to provide a safety buffer from the street and define the shelter area.

## HARMON FIELD CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



## THE SURVEY SAYS ...

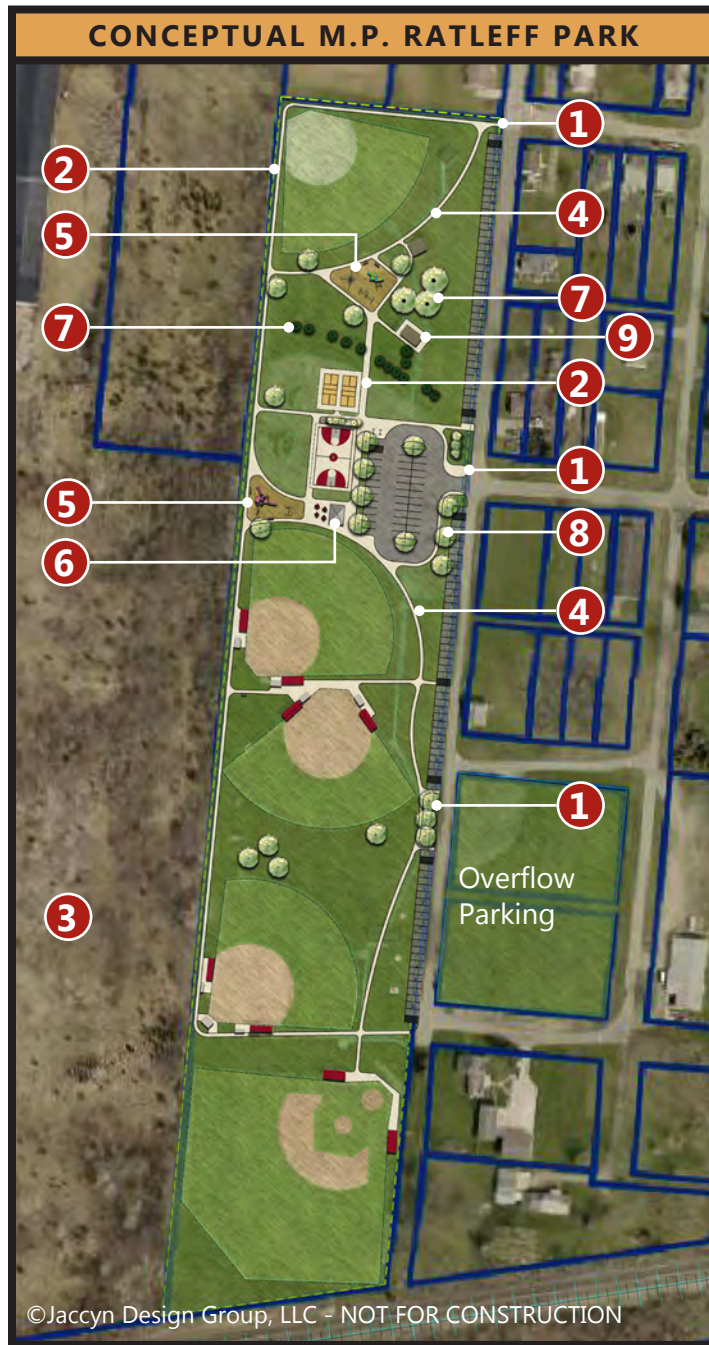
*The baseball fields at Ratleff continue to improve. The restrooms are embarrassing. Dugouts and other areas need improvement / The parking lot at Lewis Ratliff is terrible / The restrooms at Ratliff Park are very outdated and are usually filthy. Something also needs to be done for parking at that facility. So much money could be made from concessions. During tournaments you could have sandwiches and other options besides popcorn and candy. / Lots of upgrades are needed! Restrooms need a major overhaul at Ratleff! Playgrounds need updated and new equipment added! Baseball fields need weeds pulled, dugouts are very dated with holes in the roofs, and the outfield fences need to be taken all the way to the ground, not hanging midair. The fields are a major disappointment and hold water constantly! / Lewis Ratliff Park needs a lot, especially with baseball games being played there / Ratleff needs some updates to the playground / Lewis Ratleff Park are in the worst shape and are in desperate need of some new/updated playground equipment and swings for the children to play on. / The last time I was at Lewis Ratleff Park, it was sad, had graffiti and a broken slide. Those I spoke with on the west side felt as if nobody cared about them since it wasn't in a "nice neighborhood". Very sad. It would be nice to see it get some more attention and a face lift to help lift community pride in that area. / there is a need for basketball court at this park (even 1/2 court concept) & improve restrooms / I think Ratliff Park needs some extra attention. I've heard from other 'fields' people complaining how terrible the fields are at Ratliff. Every field and facility should have an AED device at each location for safety and first aid kits at each one too. / Bellefontaine City Officials and Bellefontaine Park Board members should be embarrassed at the over condition of these two parks (Ratleff and Southview). Parks Dept can only do so much with a shoestring budget. / Ratliff Park still looks like the same as it did 30 years ago outside of putting some roofs over some dugouts / Fences and fields at Ratliff and Southview need lots of work...*

Example of a 2-13+ playground.  
Image from Landscape Structures



## TIME FOR A NEW ERA

Ratleff currently brings in groups from outside the community for ball games, thus becoming an accidental ambassador for Bellefontaine. Providing well maintained fields and facilities needs to be a top priority along with improving recreational opportunities for the local community and visiting patrons during long ball tournaments. Simply reducing the on-site parking lot provides room for a wide range of new activities and unifies the park. Adding a series of walks to connect amenities provides much needed accessibility and a place to walk or safely ride bikes on quiet evenings. The following concept shows one idea for improving Ratleff Park to make it into an important community hub.



## KEY

1. **Welcoming:** Provide clear signage at the main entries into the park to welcome the public to use the space. Add several pedestrian access points with wayfinding information such as field locations
2. **Wayfinding:** Organize the space to make it easy for park patrons to move from place to place and for easy visibility of highly used spaces.
  - In this concept, a 10' wide walkway, separated from the parking lot with a tree island, connects the main activity zone where the restroom and concession stand are also located, with the north play and shelter area, and walks that lead to the south fields.
  - A walk on the west side provides a clear circulation path that connects to every amenity in the park away from any traffic
3. **Maintenance:** Study the need to add drainage to existing ball diamonds. Repair fencing and replace existing dugouts with an easily maintained style. Repair or replace existing shelter roofs
4. **Accessibility:** Add sidewalks for pedestrian access around and through the park, including a walking path to each bleacher area. Eliminate the isolating accessible viewing areas at the ends of the fields
5. **Activities:** Create a high activity play area with open lawns and courts near the center of the park to appeal to a wide range of ages. Provide a secondary play area, with equally diverse play options, near the shelters.
6. **Restroom / Concession:** Replace the existing concession stand and restroom buildings with an updated facility. Provide a drinking fountain on the outside wall, several picnic tables, and wayfinding information to the park's fields and nearby points of interest
7. **Existing amenities:** Protect existing trees
8. **Safety:** Provide safe access between the five ball diamonds and various play areas by reducing the existing parking lot to unite the north and south sections of the park. Add parking along Springhill Street to make up for lost parking spaces.
9. **Create space:** Provide room around the shelters to separate gatherings from the main circulation routes



### THE SURVEY SAYS ...

Oakland Square needs a complete overhaul and more activities for teenage kids / Just like the downtown, [improving] one house or building or park at a time will create a domino affect in the area / The less pleasing or bad [parks] should be included in [plans] for a face-lift / Oakland Park needs more play items...

### A DESIRE FOR CHANGE

While actions to address park issues are listed on the park's Inventory and Analysis pages, the public survey comments show that citizens recognize Oakland Square / Powell Park should be so much more.

Over the years, although some items have been added, many amenities have disappeared. The drinking fountain no longer works and if there were sidewalks, they are gone leaving only worn paths through the lawn. One picnic table lacks its benches and the lighting is unattractive. In general, like one survey respondent said, "Oakland Square needs a complete overhaul."



Example of a multi-age playground  
Image by Landscape Structures



Example of a furniture family for consistency throughout the park

Images from DuMor Site Furniture

### TIME FOR A NEW ERA

As we come off the heels of a pandemic that led people to seek outdoor spaces, it's worth noting that Oakland Square / Powell Park came into being as a movement was taking place in American cities to build parks "to address the specific social and health problems facing American cities." (Samuel Kling, *Design and Health in Historical Perspective: American City Parks in the Late 19th Century*). It's status as the city's oldest park should be celebrated and recognized as an important Bellefontaine landmark.

The park needs a new master plan that brings accessibility into the park with a network of walks that connect its spaces. Despite it's nod to history, the park needs a modern and dynamic play area offering a variety of play options for kids of all ages. There should be places to picnic or sit near the active spaces as well as in the more passive spaces. The site furniture and lighting should have a similar character throughout the park for unity. The history of the park could be woven into the design through story boards and site furnishings that reflect the Victorian Era of its inception.

The concept on the next page is one idea of how to transform Oakland Square / Powell Park.



## CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN FOR OAKLAND SQUARE



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Example of decorative fencing  
Image by Eagle Fencing

### KEY

1. **Safety:** Separate the park from the street with a fence and / or planting
2. **Wayfinding:** Add signage at main park access points to welcome the public to use the space
3. **Connectivity:** Add a sidewalk with a

tree lawn along the west side to connect the north walk and entry with the southeast corner

4. **Play Structures:** As the only park near the neighborhood with a play area, it's important to improve the basketball court and provide a play area with a variety of play experiences to appeal to a wide age range. A sidewalk around the play area can double as a mulch barrier
5. **Accessibility and Community:** Connect the four access points with sidewalks that lead to a central plaza space and to picnic and play areas.
6. **Amenities:** Provide benches and picnic tables in a variety of settings.
7. **Character:** In the plaza area, pavement openings would allow for colorful plant beds to provide seasonal interest, add shade and provide a place for story boards that tell the history of the park.
8. **Existing amenities:** Protect existing trees and incorporate the historic markers into any new design
9. **Amenities:** Replace and move the existing water fountain to be accessible from the sidewalk





Example of a multi-age playground  
Image by Gametime  
<https://www.gametime.com/products>

### THE SURVEY SAYS ...

*Kelly Court Park needs to be updated badly! It would be nice for the homes and apartments near it to have a place to take the kids to play / There is so much space and potential there. Please consider improving it / No one goes there because there isn't anything there / It doesn't look like a park / There needs to be a swing set or some other activity*

### A DESIRE FOR CHANGE

The snippets above, from the public survey comments, capture the sentiment that Kelly Court lacks basic park amenities and indicate a desire to see it improved. Improvements need to consider serving multiple age groups and abilities.

The concept to the right takes advantage of the park's existing assets. The two stands of evergreen trees create the framework for a narrowed entryway on the southwest corner with a view of the open lawn. The walkways are positioned to hug the trees taking advantage of their shade and to maintain the central open space. The northwest corner is relatively level and large enough for an expansive play area slightly removed from the quieter, more natural areas. Walkways connect the neighborhood to the park and its spaces within. While not inexpensive, basic improvements would transform a barely usable park into a neighborhood gathering space.



Bench swings at Cincinnati's Smale Riverfront Park entertains people of all ages



## CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN FOR KELLY COURT



### KEY

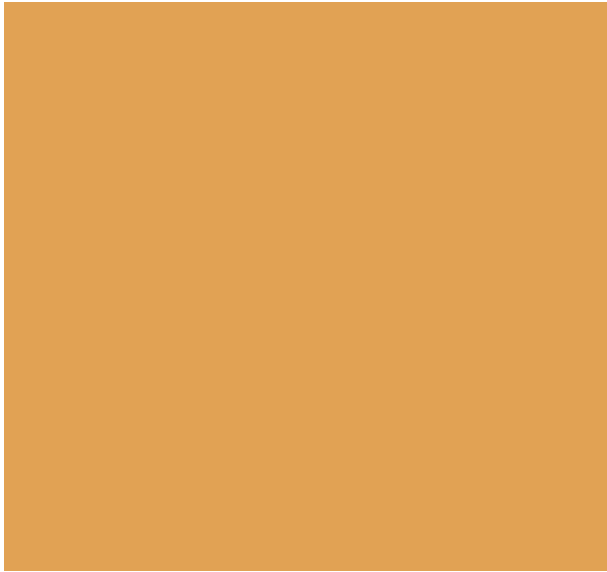
- 1. Parking:** Provide parking with at least one accessible parking space.
- 2. Wayfinding:** Add signage at main park access points to welcome the public to use the space
- 3. Connectivity:** Expanding public walkways and connecting them to the park helps create an accessible and walkable city and park system
- 4. Play Structures:** For this somewhat isolated park, it's important to provide a play area large enough to contain a variety of play experiences and to appeal to a wide age range
- 5. Accessibility:** Add a network of ADA compliant sidewalks (5' min. width) that connect the entries to the other park amenities. This will open up access to picnic areas, benches and play areas expanding the usability of the park for all ages and abilities
- 6. Accessibility:** Extend paved access to and around the picnic area and consider adding additional picnic areas
- 7. Accessibility:** Connect the existing bench to new walks and add additional benches along the walkway to provide opportunities to sit and relax
- 8. Maintenance:** Repair the drinking fountain and make it accessible from the sidewalk



## KELLY COURT CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN



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## **APPENDIX**

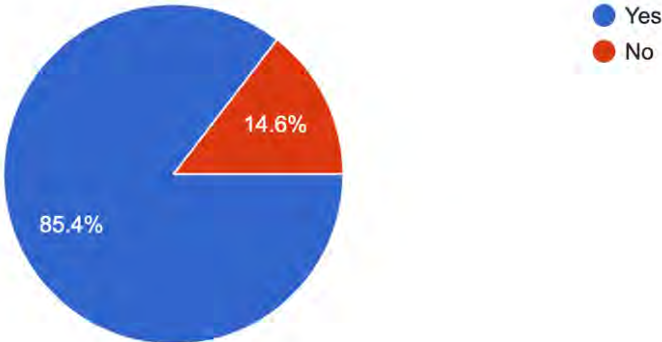




# Bellefontaine Parks Survey Results

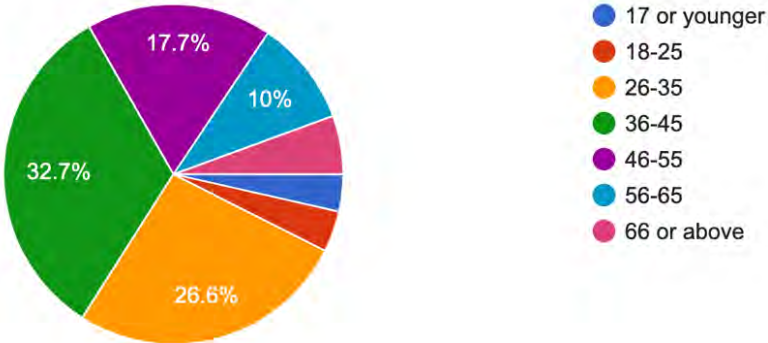
Do you live within the city limits of Bellefontaine and / or in the Bellefontaine City School District?

536 responses



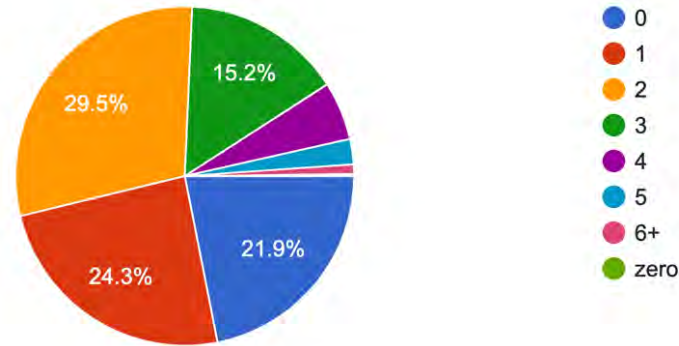
Which category below includes your age?

538 responses



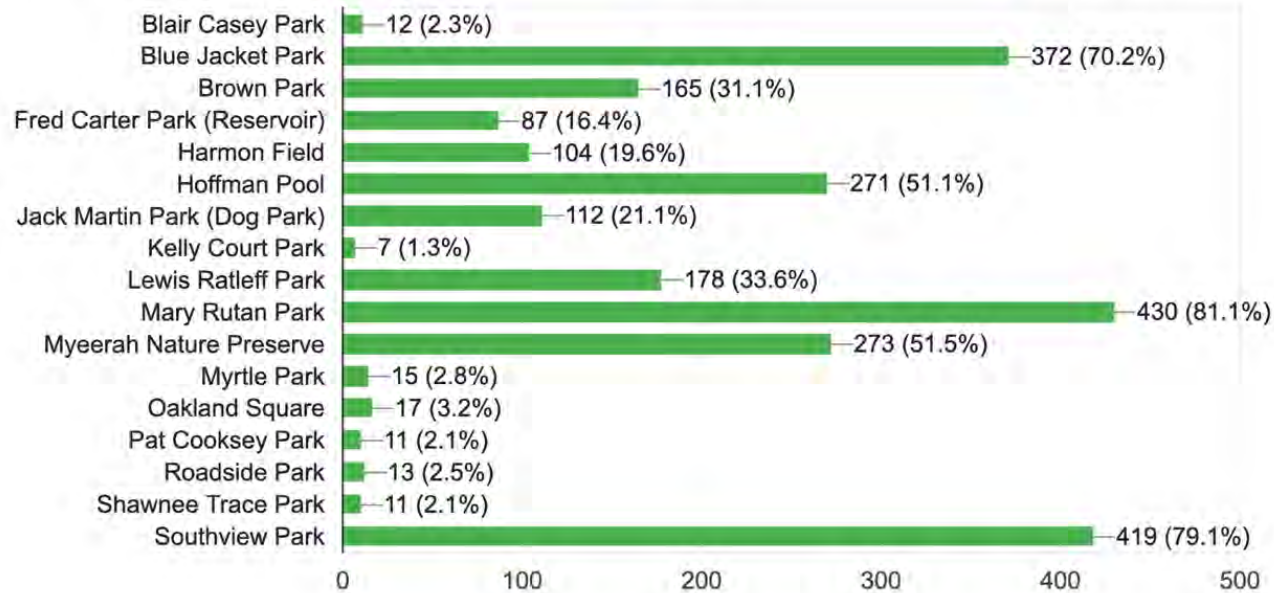
### How many individuals reside with you under the age of 18?

539 responses

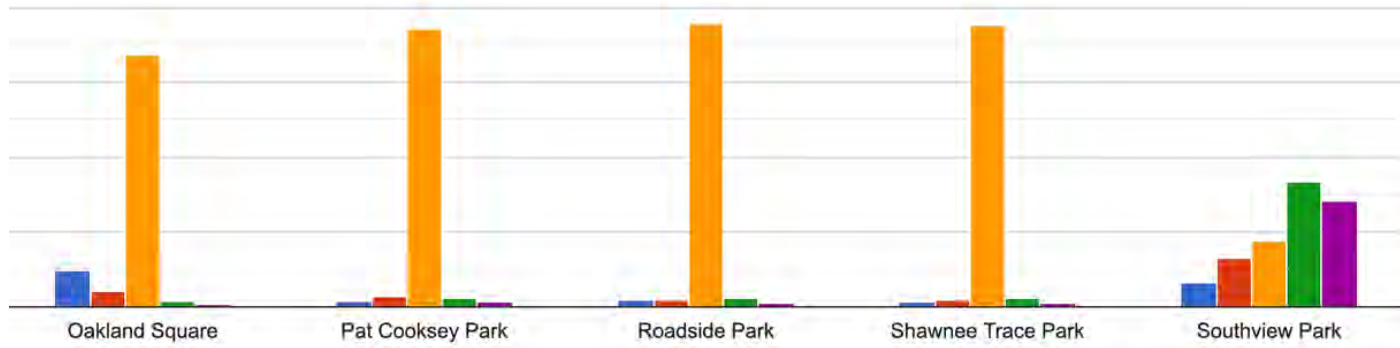
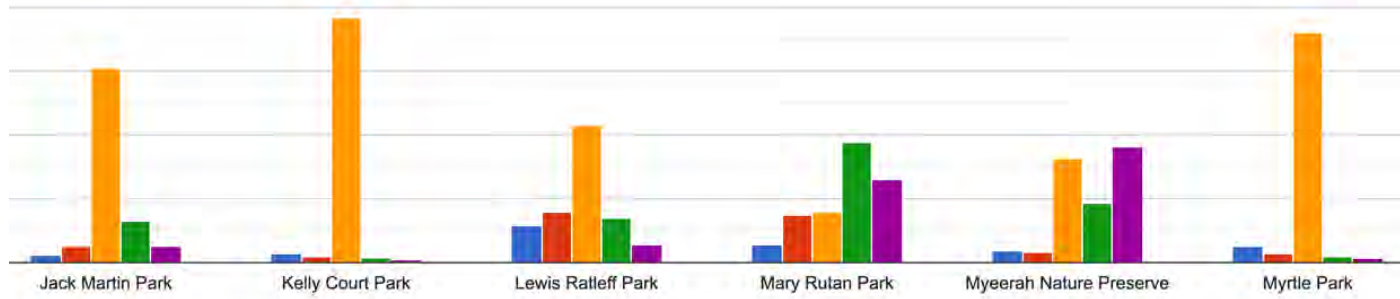
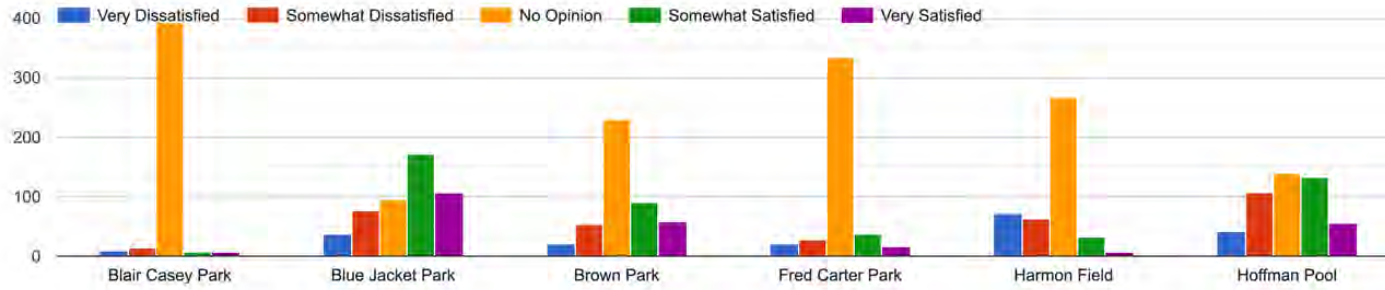


### Which Bellefontaine parks have you visited in the last year?

530 responses



Please rate the following parks on the condition of the park / facilities. If you are not familiar with a park please check 'No Opinion'.





**Please share any comments about the conditions of the parks in Bellefontaine.**

Our pool could use some up-dates, maybe a splash park (water feature) inside the fence

Some of the parks receive all the funding, and it's obvious which ones they are.

would like the pool updated

The restrooms are horrible or not able to be used. The play grounds are not kid friendly . The pool needs a complete make over it's sad our youth.

I would have put good condition for several parks, but that wasn't an option. The pool facilities (especially the restrooms) is a major complaint of mine! The pool itself is good, but the girls restroom/locker area needs updating! Thanks for conducting this survey and looking into this :)

Anything on the West side needs fixed and safe and clean restrooms, bathrooms needs rebuilt. Some little parks at least need some upgrades. Any where sports are played need some attention

Playground equipment needs updated for safety, or they need new playground equipment

Blue jacket doesn't have anything for kiddos to play on.

The parks should have play equipment for smaller children to be able to easily play on. Of walking age and up. I also wish there were more shade at the parks. The dog park is disgusting and we no longer go because no one picks up after their pets. I understand out in the field but it's near the concrete pad.

Kelly Court Park is very sad looking need an updated so bad the one small slide is so old and broken. Could be a really great place for all the kids at the apartment and houses next to it. There is so much space and potential there. Please consider improving it.

Rundown bathrooms/ not enough bathrooms

Harmon park needs a lot of work and up keep

Restrooms need repaired and better taken care of at Harmon Field and Ratliff. Would be nice to have covers over the dugouts at Southview. Bathrooms need to be unlocked when there are scheduled practices and games at those parks. The pool needs to be updated, needs more umbrellas for shade, bathrooms updated, needs entrance that doesn't consist of walking through bathrooms. This makes it easier with parents with young kids that don't want their kids to walk through a bathroom without them. Also a family restroom would be nice. The volleyball area inside the pool is not needed, change that to a covered picnic area or splash pad. Sand volleyball area can be moved over to the area by the tennis courts. Update and utilize the old ball diamond by the swimming pool.

The bathrooms at and surround the Hoffman pool are atrocious and embarrassing to bring visitors to. My son doesn't want to go to the boys bathroom because there are no doors on the stall. I don't feel comfortable sending my son in there for all to see him use the restroom. The restrooms at and around the pool and parks need updated as soon as possible.

Invest in the condition of the baseball/softball/soccer fields.

Lots of upgrades are needed! Restrooms need a major overhaul at Ratliff! Playgrounds need updated and new equipment added! Baseball fields need weeds pulled, dugouts are very dated with holes in the roofs, and the outfield fences need to be taken all the way to the ground, not hanging mid air. The fields are a major disappointment and hold water constantly!

Not all have restrooms. Some are overgrowth and outdated

Need more benches. Brown Park needs maybe a small fountain or something.

Love going to Myeerah!!

South view needs more parking. Seems like it could be added on the west end, people already make a parking lot out of the grassy areas di make it a real lot.

Fences and fields at Ratliff and Southview need lots of work.

Fences at Southview have been neglected and should have been repainted 10 years ago.

Fences at Ratliff have been neglected for decades. Kids can crawl underneath the outfield fences. The yellow field tile on top of the outfield fences is an eyesore and totally 1995 looking.

The fields are terrible and have very little sand on them. At this point for how terrible they drain I would start over with them.

You built Southview 20 years ago have done the bare minimum on upkeep for 20 years and it shows. Ratliff park still looks like the same as it did 30 years ago outside of putting some roofs over some dugouts that parks didn't pay for.

Bellefontaine City Officials and Bellefontaine Park Board members should be embarrassed at the over condition of these 2 parks. Parks Dept can only do so much with a shoe string budget.

While the dog park is nice at Jack Martin. The playground equipment is in major need of repair. It is a heavily visited playground and it would be nice to have better equipment that kids could play on while parents take their dog to the park. I know it is the same situation for Ratleff park as well.

Myeerah could use some love as far as maintenance of trees, trails and invasive species.

Most parks need updated equipment for all children to play on. Including disabled children. Yes we have one park but that is not enough.

Most of them are very old and falling apart. The new park has teenagers ruining it for the younger kids.

Bathrooms are terrible at Mary Rutan park or a lot of times blocked off completely. Blue jacket park is sad

Harmon Park needs a lot of upgrades and Lewis Ratliff park needs a lot as well, especially with baseball games being played there

All of them are in dire need of upgrades

It would be nice if blue jacket park had a better kids area to play, it's a little outdated. Southview park could use updated as well, there is a ton of space out there. Any park with more options for the kids. The park in Celina, Ohio is extremely nice with a splash pad, zip line, huge play ground, amphitheater, etc. Would be nice if bellefontaine could have something more diverse.

Alot needs updates need made to the parks and equipment. Would be nice to have a splash pad or something for kids todo as well during warm days

My children range in age from 1-14. There is not a park in town I can take them to that has toys/equipment for every age. Mary Rutan park is very limited, it built to accommodate children with disabilities, which is wonderful. However my 9 year old does not find that park to be fun or inactive . When BIS took them there ; the children sat around instead of playing . South view park could use another playground; it is a large complex and when we are there for games it would be great to send the younger kids to the park . Blue jacket has no fully functional

parks. The Hoffmann pool would be great as an aquatic park ; areas for small children and big children . This year they didn't have the baby pool full and it is completely separate, so moms cannot take multiple children if they vary age and watch them closely . All parks need better ball fields ; drainage . We are very active and spend a lot of time at the ball fields

The parks are wonderful. The pool needs a new bath house/refreshment area. It is embarrassing to go into the changing area and restrooms because they are disgusting. Come one city! Our kiddos and the residents deserve a nicer facility at our beautiful pool. My grands love the diving boards and slide!

Ratliff park is in need to two swings and merry go round need new one and weedeated

The one closest to me myrtle is terrible there's maybe one swing and broken equipment

Blue jacket needs a new park entirely. I walk with my kids here very often and it's barely a park. I run a moms group and many have stated there needs to be a new park built there for kids. Mary Rutan park is nice but it needs a new bathroom. Adding the benches was a great idea! Shading options at any of the parks would be nice.

Myrtle park either needs taken down or completely redone. It is unsafe for children and there are a lot of kids in that neighborhood.

I would love to see an Obstacle course and/or splash pad go in somewhere in Bellefontaine.

I live on park st. Right by Mary Rutan park and think the parks Dept along with the police dept. Did a great job getting a handle on Mary Rutan park this Summer.

They could use a little freshening up

While I understand the park remodel at Mary Rutan Park gears towards disabilities the new park is very boring to children older than 6. My kids are disappointed that they tore down the only fun park for all ages and turned it into what feels like a playground for toddlers. We know the renovation was necessary because the other one was falling apart but the old one had so much more to offer.

I truly believe that Harmon Field Park needs updated.

The parks are just okay. There's often times debris or something in the way for strollers or extra swampy for runners

Some of them I have no idea where they are. Myrtle park is such a disappointment I can't believe it is considered a park. The Hoffman pool I just wish we could play with some toys. It makes swimming a million times better. I understand the no floaties for safety reason but toys in general just add to the fun. The rest of the parks are okay. My daughter is handicapped and even the all inclusive park at Mary Rutan is still very limited for kids in wheelchairs, so if we could keep adding more inclusive things over the years that would be awesome. I would to see more of the parks do away with the mulch. That is the #1 hinder. We visit Southveiw the most since we have 4 kids in soccer, so that would be awesome to ADD to it have all inclusive. We truly do appreciate the Mary Rutan park upgrade as it has change thing for our handicapped children we have in the community.

Hoffman pool or kaleidoscope park has no access to bathrooms year around. I don't take my toddlers there anymore because we had to drive home for a bathroom which causes bathroom accidents. It's a shame because it's probably the nicest park in town.

Blue jacket Park desperately needs an updated playground.

Brown park would be better if it had a playground. A nature inspired playground would look very nice and blend in still. It would be nice if the Library used this park for outdoor story times or monthly summer time activities in the park, like a traveling zoo, or magician etc.

Ratleff needs some updates to the playground, like the pond that forms around the merry-go-round. If you put stones down and a rubber



mat like lions park in WL it would fix that problem.

It would be nice to get a trail connecting from the bike trail to South view park or one of the others.

The bathrooms were a problem at Harmon.

The pool building, area and bathrooms need a fresh coat of paint, and maybe not white, something that hides dirt better. The other pools we compete against make our pool look dirty.

It would be nice to add a splash pad to one of the parks, or even at the pool where the volleyball court is that just grows weeds.

No smoking should be aloud at any of the parks, especially next to the places our children play.

Parking seems to be an issue at most if not all parks. Southview doesn't have nearly enough parking near the soccer fields, while Ratleff parking is a free for all bout of chaos.

Harmon field could use updates and better play equipment. Blue jacket could use wider walking track. Need more basketball courts that kids can ride bike or walk to. Mary Rutan/brown could use more police patrol ... maybe some foot/bike patrol. Too many teenagers making bad decisions up by pool area. How about a nature based day camp run at myerah for kids in the summer with transportation to and from a park area?

They aren't taken care of very well

Restroom not always clean and young teens being rude so you have to leave

Mary Rutan park is under monitored and over run by teenagers/young adults who leave trash and intentionally make patrons of the park feel unwelcome.

The bathrooms are in need of serious cleaning and upkeep. The baseball fields at some parks are also in need of serious upkeep.

The handicap restroom at the pool has desperately needed a door or pull across curtain for years. Your management has ignored it and the complaints and continued to do nothing about it. Does a handicap person's privacy not matter to the Bellefontaine Parks Department? The parks themselves always looks great, but the bathrooms look atrocious. Cleanliness matters too. The ground of the parks are well kept, the grass is always mowed, and the lines on the fields are well laid.

We appreciate the effort that has been put in to maintain all of the city parks in the recent years.

Need to update playground equipment and add some where there is none. Swings at least

Lots of upgrades are needed! Restrooms need a major overhaul at Ratleff! Playgrounds need updated and new equipment added! Baseball fields need weeds pulled, dugouts are very dated with holes in the roofs, and the outfield fences need to be taken all the way to the ground, not hanging mid air. The fields are a major disappointment and hold water constantly!

No parks at Blue Jacket ; families practice there alot and would be great if there was something for play. Ratliff Park; fields flood , poor parks , bad bathrooms , Southview needs another park - bigger for kids 6 and older . Mary Rutan park does alot for the handicap community but it took away any big playground for older children. . Now we have no where for them to play that doesn't cost money

Restroom facilities at Hoffman Pool, Mary Rutan and Southview are in need of improvements. Drainage and track getting worn out also a concern at Southview. We love having a large community pool, but the locker rooms and area outside of the pool (volleyball court, concrete, etc.) need attention. We would utilize a community batting cage, volleyball court, and more updated playground equipment at Southview.

Absolutely love the new tennis courts. What a great remodel. I like the lights on the court but not sure if there are certain times that the lights are on.

Mary Rutan park is so small now. I miss the Kaleidoscope days. I wish there was more for children 8-12. In my honest opinion this is a toddler-kindergarten park. More needs to be available for the upper ages that still love parks.

Needs better access for handicapped children

Many need attention to the play areas, shade areas, and walking tracks

Myeerah driveway is a mess, especially in winter and spring. Needs gravel, maybe blacktop. If you're not going to support it, turn it over to the ODNR.

Oakland square needs a complete overhaul. Need more activities for the teenaged kids, all parks are being rebuilt to accommodate special needs and small children only leaving older kids nothing to do.

The Mary Rutan Park really could use a fence gate on the the road side between park and the pool.

Oakland and Cooksey tend to be a bit messy. Cooksey could use a parking space.

Improve water fountains, update restrooms, update playground equipment.

I would like to see the old baseball field near mary rutan park sprayed for weeds so that it can be used. Other than that, we really love all the parks we have been too. Mary Rutan is our favorite!

Iron City Park is not on here. The other parks are nice though.

Harmon and Ratliff need serious upgrades. I visit Southview on a regular basis and love it there. I think a great improvement here would be a splash pad for kids. There are some benches throughout the park also that are old and could stand to be replaced.

You don't have any control over the clientele, but the rifraff hanging out at Mary Rutan park has gotten out of control. I just moved out to the country and used to live down the road. The teenagers that hang out at the basketball court go over to the new park and are very hard on the equipment. It definitely discourages me from taking my 3 year old to play there. Many of the parks are lovely though and seem well taken care of. We are lucky to have so many options.

Some aging park equipment could be dangerous for kids (cracked slides, peeling protective coatings, sharp metal exposed, etc.). Overall, the space to walk, run and play is great!

The playground at south view is difficult for younger children to play on. The bridge needs replaced/fixed so it's not such a steep drop. Mary Rutan park is great, but needs more benches for parents since it's so popular and some more shade sails!

Blue Jacket really needs an upgraded play facility- if that's not in the plans at the very least take what is there out, it's pretty terrible and an eyesore to the park in general and to those visiting the town for ball games and school events. It just isn't what we want to show.

Need more options to keep older kids and toddlers separated

put more stuff at myrtle park or raise the basketball hoop

Getting better.

Very nice, take family there because it is near our home

Some of our parks need more lighting for those who want to walk later in the day and more security. There also needs to be more clean up around the town and parks and not just in the areas that bring in the most money. All areas need to be kept clean.

Additional waste bins would be great to keep local parks free of litter & waste

Mary Rutan children's play area must have sun shades! Nearly impossible to use a lit if the equipment in the summer as it gets direct sun and is too hot!

South view equipment is in disrepair. Mary Rutan's new play set is very nice. However, it doesn't really have equipment to help older kids get exercise anymore.

Jack Martin park needs updated. It is used a lot and is in terrible condition

Southview and Mary Rutan parks feel unsafe. Too many unsupervised minors at the basketball courts. Homeless people have been staying in their cars at the Southview park.

Hoffman Pool needs a major renovation. We have bought pool passes the last several years but I will not be purchasing in 2023 as I won't be visiting the pool. The locker rooms are filthy and the concessions were out of stock of most items through out the last season.

Would be nice to have nicer restrooms or more attention to cleaning the restrooms at Mary Rutan park.

The parks I have visited often seem to not be taken care of. Many times there are tons of weeds and unkempt grass. Also very disappointed with them closing the pool early. The pool was also not clean at all. Lots of hair and debris.

The last time I was at Lewis Ratleff park it was sad and had graffiti and a broken slide. Those I spoke with there on the West side felt as if nobody cared about them since it wasn't in a "nice neighborhood". Very sad and would be nice to see it get some more attention and a face lift to help lift community pride in that area.

Mary Rutan

I'd love to see an additional disc golf course put in another park. The one there now is nice but a second would bring in more people to the city!

Blair park needs updated. Pool needs updated and more staff. Rutan (inc/especially Play at the Peak) needs supervised because of older kids ruining experiences for younger kids.

I feel that families on the west side could use an update. I feel bad for the children at and near Myrtle park. It looks like a very old park circa 1960

The lack of maintenance of the restrooms, fields, lawns, parking lots, sidewalks, trees, insects, etc. make it discouraging to use the parks.

Kids are okay with the new playground at MaryRutan but the other playgrounds are needing attention. Also the discg golf park can use some investment or a second location. It is always busy and fighting for room to play.

Myrtle park looks the same as it did when I went there and I am 56 there's been no new equipment and hardly any equipment for the kids to get on and have fun and play, then they wonder why are kids are getting in trouble and turn into drugs there's nothing for them to do in the park is horrible it's an embarrassment for the city of Bellefontaine

fence lines could use some more attention.

Mary Rutan park needs some attention. Lots of mud on the astroturf in kids play area. Astroturf was peeling up (maybe fixed already?) some other pieces broken. Southview park soccer fields could use more seating

Blue Jacket the walking track needs to be repaired.



Harmon field is an eyesore, as well as Ratliff park.

Harman and Oakland parks need more play items. The excuse that they are not worth it.

They need more benches that are more comfortable. Bathrooms also need improvements.

The condition of the parks are terrible. I'm embarrassed when teams come from out of town to play in our city

Extremely dirty then locked bathrooms at Harmon field during tball. Having 4-7 year olds without a bathroom isn't acceptable. The parking lot at Lewis Ratliff is terrible

Kelly court park need updated badly! Don't think it could be considered a park. Would be nice for the homes and apartments near it to have a place to take kids and play.

While the Hoffman Pool has been well maintained, it is very old. The baby pool was not available most of the summer and this facility does not have the attractions of other local pools (fountain, water playground, splash pad, etc). When I visited Southview Park, there was no story in the story walk. I do enjoy the updates and trails at Myeerah.

Not only do our parks lack in major amenities the details are lacking too.

Pretty much all of them need work besides a few that seem to get most of the attention. ALL of the parks on the west side of town need lots of work especially Harmon.

The playgrounds at the above parks I marked as dissatisfied in some way, have either fallen into disrepair but still playable, or very unsafe for children. Brown Park is lovely but could do with bench swings or possibly some form of small playground.

My kids really enjoy going to the parks around town. Unfortunately some community members don't seem to care what the parks look like leaving trash laying around and vandalizing property.

I would love to see more of the inclusive playgrounds like the one at Fox Island/Indian Lake

South view park needs more for the kids to do beside that little kid park and sports fields

Parks need to be sure to have first aid kits available at all times.

Regarding disabilities enhanced playground at Mary Rutan, I find children without disabilities dont have much to do there, although it is great for the disabled.

Parks should be clean and well taken care of. Southview Park and Ratleff are never satisfactory. Weeds, fields not taken care of, landscape a mess. Looks run down as do several other parks in Bellefontaine.

I love all the parks. I marked somewhat satisfied with Blue Jacket park because the playground equipment is old and broken.

The parks themselves are fine. Tennis courts and pickle ball are great. The restroom facilities need improvement.

It seems that as the years go on, that the parks for the lower income children have less and are always forgotten about. Sometimes that is the only place that children can go to get away from what they are facing within their homes.

All parks seem to have the same issues, dog feces not being cleaned up, broken glass and trash because unfortunately the teens and kids have parents who didn't teach them any better. Bathrooms are always disgusting

The Hoffman Pool girls locker room and bathroom area is repulsive

Southview park needs new pavement in the visitor area behind the back stops. Also they need dugout improvements.

The bathrooms at south view are always dirty.

Rutan Park has gone down hill last couple of years. Harmon field needs attention and things for the kids to do

Run down and in need of major repairs

A lot of these parks are very run down. Ratleff host baseball games and the condition of the dugouts and stuff is ridiculous

Myerah needs a disc golf course

The restroom facilities/locker rooms have not been updated in minimum 20 years at most if not all of the places I identified. The cleanliness of all is unacceptable.

Most parks are nice but there does seem like a few could use a bit more care.

I like playing at the skate park.i think that it could be updated and get it some lights

Hoffman pool has not been updated for how long? The entrance very old with partial pieces of old turnstiles still in place. Rusty lockers and it smells. The pool seems well kept. Myrtle park in shambles. Not kept up even on the weeds around the parking area. Not much good play equipment.

Skatepark needs upgrades including operational lighting for evening time. Also the skatepark equipment needs upgraded and graffiti removed. A lot of people use the park and it is an awesome asset to have in town.

Bathrooms need updated. Particularly the pool and Ratleff. Ratleff fences need pushed the ground so their isn't the hazard of concrete sticking out. It would be nice if the pool could be updated like surrounding communities.

Southview Park needs more attention to yard maintenance, mowing, trimming, emptying trash cans especially when being notified about events being held there, restrooms being clean, unlocked, and stocked with toilet paper. Miss Biff Roberts!

Mary rutan park was clean and friendly

I don't feel safe walking at southview in mornings or evenings when no activities. Drug deals and very odd acting behaviors from some individuals. Ratliff park needs improvement!! Especially if they are hosting baseball tournaments. Embarrassed by the upkeep or lack there of.

If there was a community/volunteer day to clean up the parks we would volunteer!!

Harmon Field is completely ran down. The ball courts are HORRIBLE!

Hoffman pool needs a lot of work to be inviting for residents and be competitive with other municipal pools in the area. Slide needs paint, deck concrete needs power washed, better/fun signage, rule changes for kiddie pool, and spruce up grounds & parking area outside the fence.

Hoffman pool needs upgraded into something nicer and more exciting for younger kids, like a splash pad area with smaller slides and toys that spray or dump water. Also, the baby area at the pool.. leaves a lot to be desired.

Southview playground equipment, specifically the bridge part, needs some sprucing up. It's nearly impossible to cross the bridge efficiently, especially for children under 6-7 years old. It's way too steep and very unsafe.

For the ones I have visited, Fred Carter Park needed cleaned up, lots of trash and debris. Park Kelly Court is in SERIOUS disrepair. My granddaughter had her let pinched on the play set there because the plastic of the playset is so degraded. It needs replaced. Also, there needs to be a swing set or some other activity. The picnic area is a joke.

The pool needs significant updating

Some parks have aging facilities, and it would be great if they could be updated for improved community use.

Restrooms and facilities are filthy.

In most of the parks you are likely to find broken glass and other disgusting hazards.

Take better care of the fields and provide better playground equipment. Restrooms need improved.

Mary Rutan Park needs to be better monitored- often there are teenagers cussing and riding their bikes on the equipment  
Would love if blue jacket had a playground or the playground structure that's there was removed- it's a hazard

Southview park bathrooms near the pavilion need major attention. That is my only complaint about the park.

Despite being new, Mary Rutan park already has turf seams coming undone and places where equipment is anchored is showing severe wear and tear.

They need to be updated and took all the swings down and slides and it's not fair for the kids

Rest room cleanliness is almost always an issue.

Mary Routan is always beautifully maintained. ♡

I feel we could always improve. I am a big believer that things should look nice and inviting.

Mary Rutan Park needs more shaded space. The sunshade helps but some trees or coverage for some of the benches would be really nice.

There are no drinking fountains at Rutan Park. The drinking fountains need replaced at the pool and park.

Hoffman pool needs big improvements!

Blue Jacket - Need for basketball court as in past; Harman - Improve overall upkeep of this park including basketball goals/nets & Restrooms; Ratleff - Need for basketball court at this park (even 1/2 court concept) & improve restrooms; Rutan - Resurface upper & lower basketball courts, 2 new basketball goals on upper court; lighting on one or both courts comparable to tennis courts & access to drinking fountain facilities

Overall, basketball facilities, restrooms, & security at mentioned parks can use improvements & upgrades. The Parks & Recreation Department needs to continue to partner with the BPD (and other authoritative agencies) to help provide safe, appropriate use, and respectful users of our city parks. More signage posting park rules & policies including consequences for violators with follow through punitive actions.



All parks need spruced up with lighting, signage and newer/nicer attractions, including restrooms.

I think the Park Board should spend monies on parks located on the west side.

Some need better seating, improved landscaping, walking trails, and fencing.

Bathrooms are an embarrassment when family visit to watch our kids play sports. Playgrounds are broken (boarded up slide at Ratleff, missing seesaw horse at Jack Martin) or old (blue jacket). Myrtle park seems to be forgotten completely just like the neighborhood it's in

Harmon Field is not cared for compared to other parks

Southview park needs help. There is a dead tree that needs cleared and more equipment for young children.

Very unkempt. Trees need trimmed. Weeds need taken care of. Terrible attention to detail. Trash and other debris are very common.

i have lived on the west side of town for close to three years, and out of all of the parks in Bellefontaine, Harmon field & Lewis Ratleff park are in the worst shape and are in desperate need of some new/updated playground equipment and swings for the children too play on. the ball fields and shelter houses seem to be in good shape but there isn't any swings where there should be, or much for the kids to do or play on at either park. what is available is old, broken, or vandalized. Also the bathrooms at Harmon field would need a major upgrade and i think it would help the community tremendously!!

Most of the facilities are nice. Updated playground equipment that is suitable for all ages are needed.

The baseball fields at Ratleff continue to improve. The restrooms are embarrassing. Dugouts and other areas need improvement. Everything about Harmon is disappointing. We could use that field.

Many of the parks I have visited have equipment that is broken or in bad condition. The only playground we have visited that does not have equipment in bad repair is Play at the Peak

Harmon Field needs cleaned up and used again.

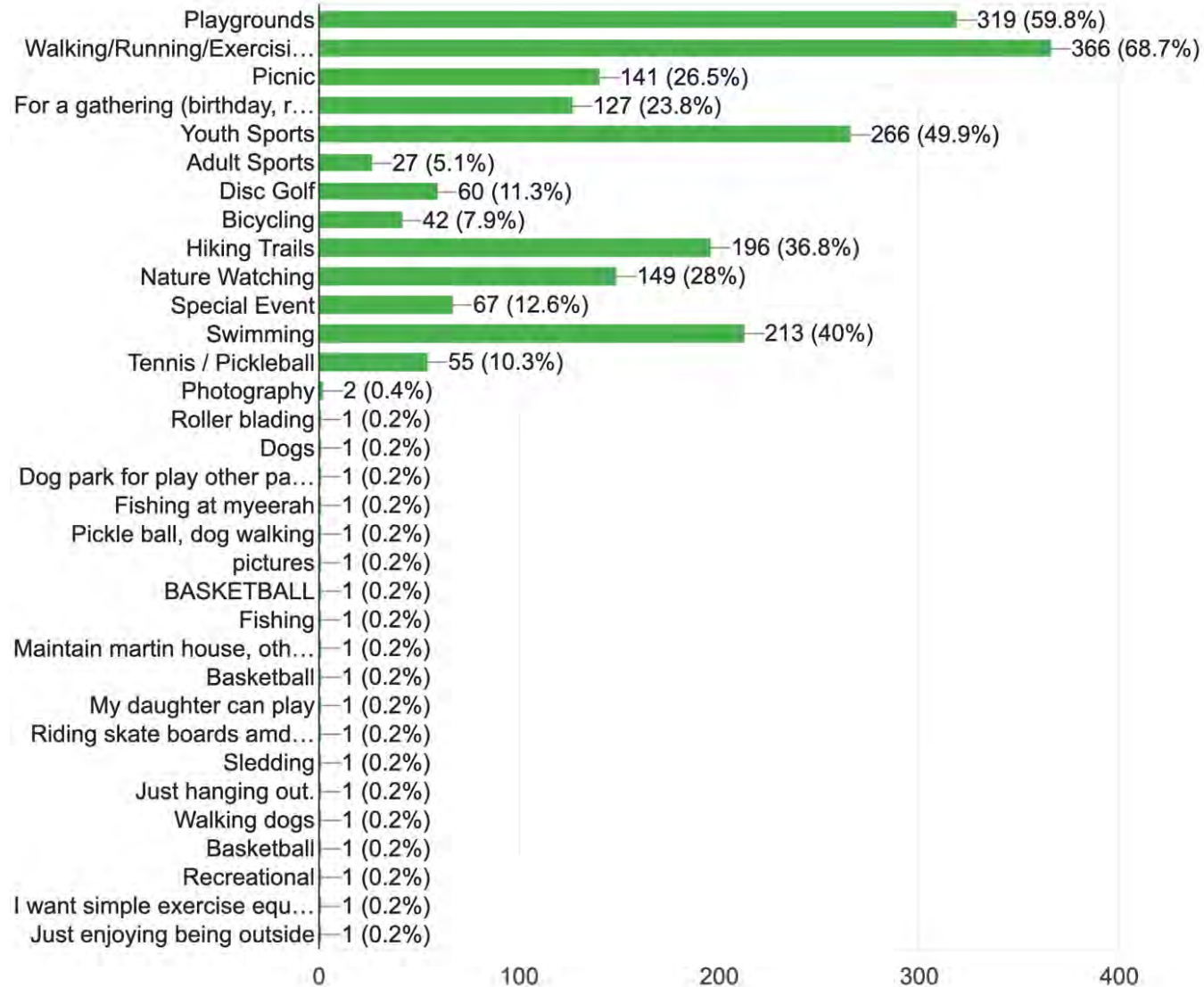
Maintenance of signs and paved paths could be better.

Mary Rutan Park - This past year there were large groups of teenagers playing loud obscene music, vaping THC, bullying people walking by, harrassing others and leaving trash all over the place. Park needs better supervision.

For the most part our parks look very good. There were times areas needed mowing. More time needed spent on trimming and weed control (not dandelions I understand that would be nice, but not practical. just mow them down)The brush at the creek going to Blue Jacket needs to be maintained better. The walking track at Blue Jacket could use some work to repair cracks and low spots. It would be difficult for someone in a wheelchair to get around comfortably. The parks are very well used and appreciated.

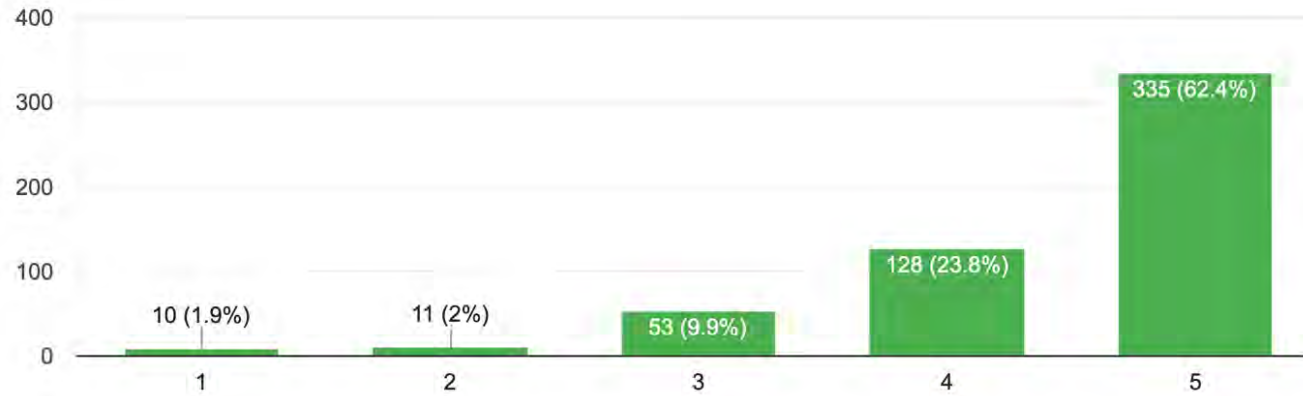
## What is your primary purpose for visiting our parks?

533 responses



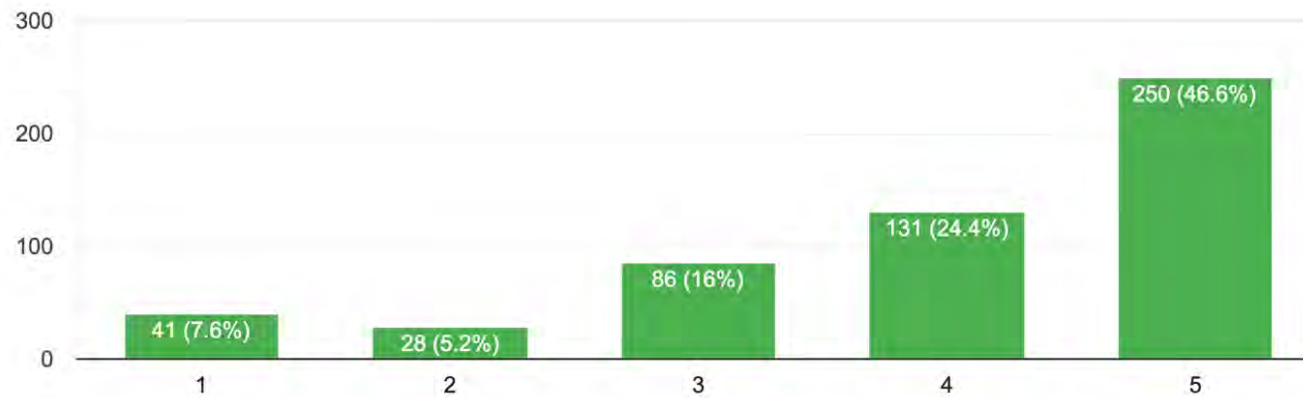
### How important to you is walkability of a community?

537 responses



### How important is it for you to be able to walk or ride your bike to parks or downtown?

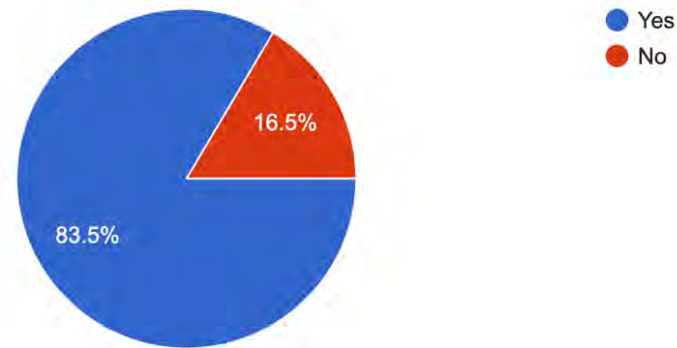
536 responses





## Do you feel safe in the parks?

534 responses



### "Do you feel safe in the parks?" Comments:

we're blessed to have so many parks for a community this size...especially the size and beauty within Myeerah Nature Preserve!

I feel safe myself, but do not feel safe sending my preteens on their own. Many trouble makers at Mary Rutan park. My kids have found vaping pens and other dangerous materials in the creek

Feel safe at parks, but not to let my kiddo play there alone

The basketball hoop near the pool is questionable and I do not let my kiddos near there while all the older kids are there.

Yes in walking parks but when I take my kids no..

Some parks are safer than others. Some parks are in much better condition than others.

For the most part feel safe but there are times not so much

Rutan Park is constantly getting vandalized and I'd never allow my children to pass through there on the way to school after some of the things I've seen take place!

I'd love some mountain bike trails, please. And some budget for improvements at Myeerah

I fear the safety of others by two hot head youth baseball coaches. One telling a woman he'd put her in the dirt and threatening his own athlete's parent. 9u travel ball past season.

Myeerah is the best park you have. The trails have gotten better over the last several years. I know it must take an incredible amount of work to keep it mowed and trails cleared but they typically seem to be in pretty decent shape.

I wish camera's were up. This would be an added safety feature.

The parks at time feel unsafe. But unsure how to improve this.

Ratliff Park needs fence for the baseball fields (field 1 specifically) also new dugouts. The baseball fields need redone or built back up and leveled out. There also is never much available at concession during games. The bathrooms need to be renovated as they never seem to be clean

Need patrol of parks due to rowdy teens that vape and smoke on the playgrounds

I don't know a lot of the parks listed, but these parks need cleaned up!

Camara would be amazing, just in case

Playgrounds need updated! And more of them, get these kids something to do other than be on video games

There is a lot of graffiti and broken objects near Ratliff . We have to go there for ball games and the environment does not give a safe feeling . Also my younger children. Can't play while we watch a game ( the park is across the parking lot )

Not enough police presence. Kids destroying things in the park, using disgusting language, and bullying younger kids, even using physical violence and death threats. I would never let my kids play alone at these parks.

We've had issues this year and last year with older teenagers coming to the new kaleidoscope park and trying to get little kids to climb up the jungle gym and jump off so they hurt themselves....their words. Last year I personally, with 2 other moms picked up glass they brought in a baggie and threw around on the turf. Some kind of camera might be a good idea if possible.

Need splash pad

The come play with me needs a retractable gate on the openings because special kids can run out and get hit in the street going after a ball

Broken equipment at some. Mary rutan park has juvenile vandals who also harass smaller kids

I will say I have picked up pocket knives and broken glass several times at mary rutan park

Several lights out at blue jacket park where I run after dark.

I've seen a lot of complaints about older kids causing problems at the park next to the pool, almost to the point where I hesitate to take my younger kids there despite how much they love the new equipment

I do not feel safe going alone to any parks as a younger female with children

Paved pathes are best. Southview park has an amazing path for the handicapped. More paved pathes would be awesome.

We like to bike and run/walk as a leisure activity. Not necessary for our commute.

I would like to see a water park

Teenagers are bored and need something to do with supervision and leadership/good citizenship instruction

Not all of them are in safe neighborhoods and sons have dilapidated equipment

Rutan Park is constantly getting vandalized and I'd never allow my children to pass through there on the way to school after some of the things I've seen take place!

Ratliff , Brown, Fred Carter, Oakland Square I would not allow my kids to walk to . They are full of broken equipment and graffiti

We feel safe sometimes. It would be nice to have community volunteers help maintain the parks.

Love hearing about the extension to blue jacket park in the beginning stages.

I feel my children are safe in the parks when I am with them. Even at 9 and 12, unless they are in a group I wouldn't let them go alone, to many older teenagers hang out at the parks.

Who ever thought it was a good idea for the City to own Myeerah? The State should control it.

Need splash pad, need to hold parents accountable of older kids who bully young kids at parks and spew profanity.

Oakland square is the least safe

Feeling of safety varies by park.

I wish the Simon Kenton Bike Trail was included in these lists. I walk the trail every single day and I would love to see some sort of obstacle course on there or even just a swing set and monkey bars nearby.

It's not easy to ride a bike thru downtown with how far some parked trucks stick out into the road - with oncoming traffic weaving to my side of the road.

Alot of drugs in the parks people in them after dark

Iron City Park was updated this year or last, but it could use more amenities.

I do not feel safe for myself nor my children to attend a park in town especially the Mary Rutan park by the pool. It has become a teen hangout and those teens leave the area littered with trash including glass bottles and pocket knives.

The building that is part of the Hoffman pool needs to be redone especially the bathrooms. It needs to be cleaned and remodeled or tore down and rebuilt. There needs to be more drug and vandalism control around the parks. The bathrooms located by Mary Rutan Park are awful and needs to be redone. It would be nice to have more hiking trails located more in town rather than the 10-20 minutes drive outside of town. Drinking fountains would also be nice at the parks along with the option to refill a water bottle.

Mostly safe

I never go into the "woods" at Southview unless I'm with another adult.

Myeerah is remote, I love it and go often, but safety is a concern there at times due to sometimes spotty cell service. A couple of call boxes may be helpful. Also, some nature programming out there? Wow it's such an amazing resource we could use to build respect for nature and eco responsibility for future generations!

Most parks need more lighting



We walk the cemetery. We are new and haven't explored other parks yet. Love hiking and walking.

There are some parks I feel safe in more than others. There needs to be more light and security.

I would like to be able to hike around the pond at Fred Carter Park, but the trail has not been maintained and there is a ton of trash dumped along the north part of the trail. It looks as though the residents who live above the trail just dump trash over the ridge.

I've never had problems personally, but I have heard many stories of unsupervised children bullying/assaulting other kids and ruining park facilities.

Some of the parks I feel safe, but not all.

Had a few negative situations in the parks in the recent past.

Connecting the Simon Kenton bike trail to Blue Jacket park or closer to downtown would be helpful.

Not all parks have the same safe feel to them. Some are better supported than others.

Myreeha is my main focus and would like to see increase efforts to improve the facilities, grounds, trails and roads. The cabin is a gem and hopefully can be restored. Consider allowing controlled bow hunting for a select few, possibly have a wild game potluck, organize workdays.

Some parks feel safer than others

The new Mary rutan park is amazing and my son with special needs loves it but some of the children there have no respect or morals and cuss, fight, smoke, etc and it makes me not want to take my children there due to that. We always go to south view park and it's quiet and barley anyone there but the equipment defiantly needs updated. Same equipment from when I was their age.

We need a splash park like west liberty

Some parks feel safer than others

In regards to safety, ratleff needs alot of work. There are random holes throughout the park people trip into or almost. The restrooms during games are tended to minimal at best and trash is usually overflowing. It seems as most staff are directed towards the bigger parks, Southview, blue jacket and rutan are the most tended to.

Down town side streets need much more lighting regardless if it pertains to the parks. Watched a young lady walk in the dark with a man following her one night. This was over by the DQ area.

Always Bullies in Mary Rutan Park. Broken, rusty equipment at Blue Jacket.

I feel safe in most parks, but Rattleff park is very closed off and "hidden" it feels like. I've seen drug paraphernalia at Rattleff in the past. My favorite parks are Southview and the new Kaleidescope.

they are unsupervised and a lot of vandals are destroying it for our youth

Not enough patrolling by law enforcement

I said yes, but the truth is I felt a lot safe taking my daughter as a toddler 7 years ago then I do now. Maybe I was just blissfully unaware back then, but now I feel like I am always on the lookout.

Too many dogs are walked without leashes as well as people smoking marijuana and other activities back in the woods at Southview.

Unruly and disrespectful kids at Mary rutan park

I think Ratliff parks needs some extra attention, heard from other fields people complaining how terrible the fields are at Ratliff and concessions not having a very good selection and out of date stuff. Every field and facility should have an AED device at each location for safety and first aid kits at each one too.

That small older park at Mary Rutan is a safety hazard!

I feel safe at the parks, however I don't feel that my kids are safe at certain parks and they are not allowed at them alone at times. (Ratliff, Harmon, and the basketball court by the swimming pool)

As previously stated young adults and teens like to play thug at night. My son was never allowed to be at the park without me. He's 15 and I still make him go with someone.

Need to watch for the youth smoking weed at Mary Rutan Park. It's too much of a hang out.

Some parks yes, some parks no.

Southveiw is mine and my kids favorite it's super clean and open to see the kids play

Side walks at Rutan are a safety hazard

The conduct of some of the neighborhood kids is crazy. You can't trust your young children because of the older ones cussing and fighting.

Would like a water park

Harman field should feature the water park

I feel safe for the most part. My children are still young so I keep a close eye on them. Mary Rutan park has had older children who misuse the park area or ride their bikes through the playground, making it unsafe for my children to play. I do appreciate the fence around the playground.

I have seen older men who come to the park and sit to watch kids play (giving me an uneasy feeling). Another reason why I keep a close eye on my children.

The overall condition of our parks has declined over the years , especially in comparison to the surrounding communities

At times there are large groups of individuals who make me feel uneasy in the parks.

As before I no longer walk at southview as I don't feel safe

somewhat safe, not at night and sometimes walking the track

I've grown up a block from blue jacket park for years and I'd love to see the shelter houses redone and to have something other than just downtown being recreated and beautiful. That park has been the same since I was 9 years old I'm now 24 with a husband and a child I'd also like to maybe have a pavilion or bigger shelter house where the skatepark sits because it has more privacy and better parking for any events. I think we should keep the skatepark but improve it for those who do use it daily and move it to the other side where that shelter

house is with tire swings. I also think adding in more trees and more life around the path would be nice as well so many people would rather go further out myself included for a more private path and peace and not a main school road. The old creek I used to play in and what used to be a nice spot to drink coffee and read a book in the nature preserve behind the highschool bleachers is no longer existent and those of us who knew about it growing up would love to take our kids there and read or just bond. I also believe the shelter houses at Mary rutan park have been neglected we still rent them however they are not as nice as they could be with a little TLC. The old parks over there could also use new equipment nothing as big as the all new one but a new slide and swing set for those who do rent them for parties would be nice. My overall opinion is we're spending a lot of money and effort in downtown itself and not really expanding to the other parts which have been neglected for years. Oakland square just like heritage is notorious for drugs however that park hasn't been touched either and the sad thing is the daily bread is right there to help people but kids are afraid to even go in the area when half of those people using drugs or not still may need legitimate help in doing house work and outside work but can't afford it and in return the younger generation is paying for it because they still have to live in it. I believe just like downtown one house or building or park at a time will create a domino affect in the area and I think the less pleasing known for bad should also be included in a face lift whether it's residential or not help is help I'm not saying completely redo their house but a drive of outdoor paints etc or nails and hand tools etc may help those who couldn't afford it afford it

Parking at Southview can be problematic when all fields are in use

I have said for years that I would love to see lights all the way around blue jacket park. It would be great to be able to walk in the crisp fall/winter evenings after work! Also, would be nice to walk while waiting on practice to be over for parents who have kids in Winter Sports at the High School.

Rutan park needs adult presence to deal with foul mouth teens!

Thankful that the police have ran off the gang of foul mouthed, vaping teens from Mary Rutan Park. Families don't want their children around their inappropriate behavior.

I grew up across the street from Myrtle park. It used to be a wonderful park even though there was not a lot there. My parents passed away and I inherited my childhood home on Ohio St and over the years I have watched the city take away the slide, not replace swings (there is 1 swing where there should be 4) as well as take away picnic tables and not bring them back and remove numerous other playground appliances including the grills and water fountain. I now am raising 6 wonderful children in this community that has many more and none of them will be able to share the memories that I grew up with in the albeit small yet forgotten corner of town.

Need more bike and or walking trails throughout the community.

Our community is walkable, but not as user friendly as larger communities with more active planning. Highlighted routes would add to the community. No major complaints in this area.

Please consider partnering with COMBO (central ohio mountain bike organization) to develop and maintain mountain bike trails at Camp Myeerah. [www.combomtb.com](http://www.combomtb.com) This kind of improvement would utilize existing facilities at minimal cost and also attract visitors to the Bellefontaine community who would learn both learn what the city has to offer and also patronize Bellefontaine businesses when coming to enjoy mountain bike facilities. My friends and I travel to other communities to ride mountain bike trails, and we always eat and shop in the nearby towns before/after rides.

Parks need to be accessible. My kids don't have any safe route to the park within our own neighborhood



Nothing has changed at Hoffman pool since the last 34 years that I've lived here !!! South view Park is the only thing new to our community and the shelter house is the only thing good there . Playground is for toddlers . We need a splash zone and better things to do for Teenagers. That's why so many kids lose their options for things to do in our community and end up in the court system .

Safety is a concern. With areas of disrepair and poor supervision, it is inviting to the wrong persons (troublemakers).

a lot of the parks have broken glass, trash, etc. Which makes it difficult to let your child play freely or walk your dog.

I feel safe at the parks but would be hesitant to let one of our children use without adult supervision.

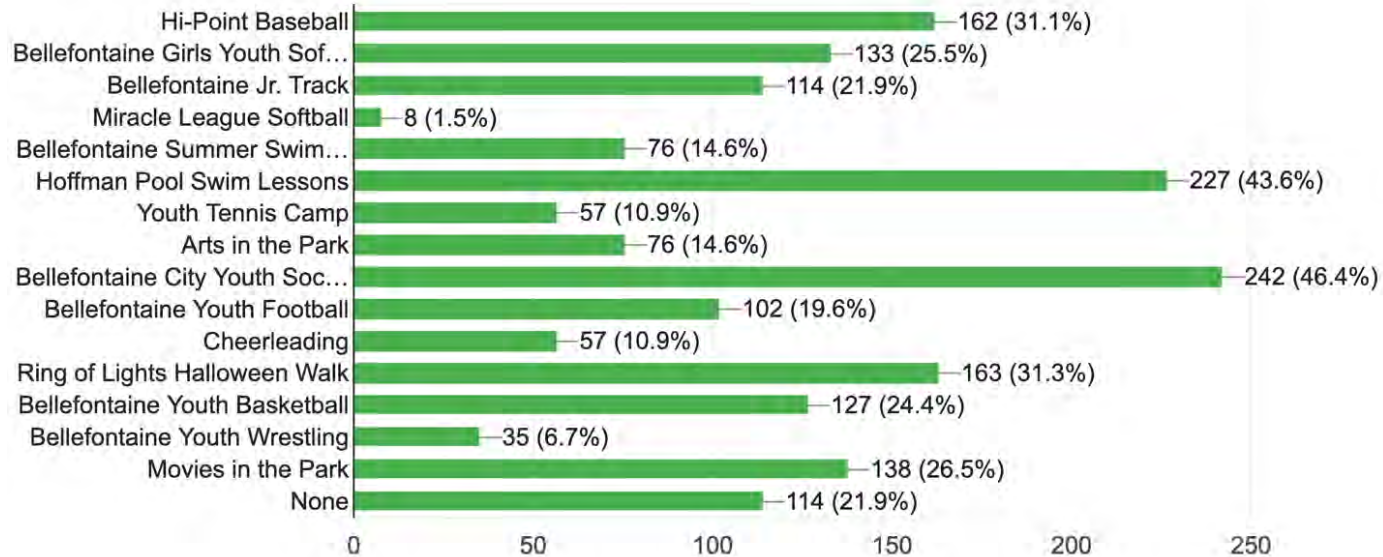
Overall very nice parks here, I'd love to see improved bathrooms at both south view and Hoffman pool. I know it's hard to maintain restrooms with unconditioned spaces. Maybe consider HVAC for those facilities?

I don't think Oakland Square park is safe and should be closed.

Better playground.

### Which of the following programs offered by the Bellefontaine Joint Recreation District have you or your children participated in?

521 responses



### How can we improve your experience?

<p>Youth basketball splitting travel and rec league was a mistake. The rec league kids had very limited opportunities to play and the family communication was limited.</p>
<p>Be consistent on movies in the park have food trailer actually stocked when the movie is on advertise more get the kids out movies are free there is no money being put in the movie at the park so make it a social gathering often</p>
<p>Provide playground equipment closer to the fields so parents with kids can allow their smaller children to play without missing the games</p>
<p>The swimming pool need to allow toys and floats</p>
<p>Update the parks that have been neglected for so long.</p>
<p>Update the fields/dugouts at southview, fix up Harmon field</p>
<p>More options for little kids, splash pad</p>
<p>Cleaner parks, better and well maintained equipment</p>
<p>Better coaches training and more selective coaching especially in the Baseball program.</p>
<p>There needs to be links on parks and recs website regarding each program that provides information regarding the program, the board members, meeting schedule, elections and meeting notes. Better transparency. Kids who are signed up for sports and stop participating should not be able to sign up the following years for the same sports. It leads to teams being short for games and other kids suffer from the lack of commitment. Need a softball camp. More camps need to be offered during evening hours or maybe partner with the school to provide transportation. This will give kids with working parents an opportunity to participate. Stick with sign up deadlines, allowing kids to register late makes team sizes to big. Team sizes need to be taken into consideration and maybe setting a maximum number of kids to register for each sport or start to do tryouts and cuts. Youth athletics in Bellefontaine are the laughing stocks of the county. There is no competition compared to other towns. There is a big problem with "names" and "status" in this town and if you don't have the "status or name" you get pushed aside. It's not about the best players play or working to get better. Seasons for programs can be shifted and made a little longer. Softball and baseball loses alot of time with starting early spring due to the weather. Not everything needs to be run around Honda or teachers schedules. Fall sports need to be played in the fall. Soccer camp was over priced. It cost more for the camp than it did to play the season. Would like to know what the registration fees are used for if the teams are sponsored by businesses. They layout at Ratleff fields is awful. It's hard to watch a game. The bleachers need to be moved behind home plate since there is a black rubber on the fence which would allow for more sitting space for chairs. Move the trashcans so people don't have to sit right beside them. The parking lot at Ratleff is horrible and needs paved with parking spots and direction arrows. Lighting at southview.</p>
<p>I would love to see a nicer facility at the Hoffman pool. Visit some of the surrounding area pools and see what they have to offer. We often go to Wapakoneta Waterpark, Splashzone and Jackson Center pool because the facilities are so much nicer. But I would love to not have to go so far when we could have something nicer closer to home.</p>
<p>Invest to upgrade the parks in safe neighborhoods</p>
<p>Find some more suitable coaches to be positive role models to our youth! Chieftain Classic was a real disappointment this year! Very few teams entered and no advertising was done to attract teams from outside the community. There was a pretty serious altercation between some coaches and parents that the parks department needs to investigate!</p>
<p>Better seating</p>
<p>Keep up the good work at myera</p>

More lighting at Blue Jacket. Myeerah needs a designated bike trail. Would be nice to have hiking and biking separate

I know one major improvement would be to go back to having the football team play other teams instead of each other.

Baseball 9u Rec and Travel - needs better conduct policy. Zero tolerance on saying stupid things. Its not cute, not funny. It's been ignored for far too long. Rob Palmer, Von Baughman.

Youth Baseball - pay fees to watch 5 teams play each other. Again, egos need dropped and participation in the County would make for a better experience and development for the kids. No town is further than 20 min from Bellefontaine and half of the games are still home games, IN BELLEFONTAINE. Six games of 20 minutes or less travel will not hurt the parents.in addition, for the fees paid, the kids don't get actual jerseys in rec ball. They get iron on logo t-shirts and a hat. Still have to foot the bill on pants and socks which is OK if it were a better jersey.

6,7,8 Soccer - two teams play against each other for a 7 game season. We pay fees to see this. It's not fun for the kids nor us. Drop the Bellefontaine ego and put some work in to find other towns to participate with.

Sponsor Program - open a sponsor program for low income families who can't afford fees. I know those kids fees get waived, however you lose money by doing so. Opening this program would still allow low income kids to play and allow other parents or community members to donate a set amount for fees. This way Parks doesn't lose money by waiving fees of a low income player. When parents or community members donate the fees, then tell the parents how their fees were applied. Whether it went to a low income player (without names of course) or to be applied to other things to do with parks. It's good to do and will keep your funds from taking hits. Also communicate this to the community. PR it so people know.

New pool facility including concession, bathrooms

Make the travel sports about the kids. Not who the coaches are friends with and pick the friends of their children. It needs to be fair and not about politics.

Better equipment on playgrounds

A lot needs to be renovated and done with harmon park as well as Ratliff

Adding more playgrounds and a splash pad somewhere would be nice.

Bellefontaine is amazing

The cheerleading coach was awful last year. Waste of money and pulled my child out. Communication is key. I asked twice through Facebook and email if it was the same coach and didn't get a response.

There is no play area for children over 7 .

Getting equipment kids can actually play with. Mary rutan park is new but definitely limits who and how many kids can play unlike before.

I don't hear of any events or camps. I'm not sure if they are posted on social media but also a newsletter would be great.

Clean up our parks and fix the actual broken parks. Myrtle doesn't even have a slide or a play set. Just a merry go round and a swing and maybe one or two of those bouncy things and a basketball hoop. It's be nice if we could also get a splash pad like west liberty. Not at myrtle just in general at a nice park none of ours are nice because of one thing or another.

Splash pad!



My only complaint would be accessibility to restroom facilities during practice and games.

Clean up and Improve equipment

I missed the deadline to sign my kids up for soccer. I don't remember seeing any communication except on Facebook

Add a splash pad

Offer events for older individuals such as yoga or a group exercise meetup. (I'll teach 😊)

Kaleidescape/Play at the Peak is overrun with older kids who are disrespectful, have bad language and scare little ones trying to play because they nearly run them over. Southview frequently has vehicles blaring loud music with exicit language at the kids playground area. More monitoring or law enforcement presence may deter these behaviors.

The sports seem very unorganized.

I definitely want to check miracle league softball.

Soccer is played on too big of a field, with too many players for the appropriate ages. And the goals for 4/5 are too big. It would be better to have older kids ump the baseball games just like they do for the soccer games.

The new signage is perfect at the soccer fields. The Soccer Refs need some new whistles, they blow hard and barely make any nose, hard for the kids to hear on such big fields.

Just like baseball has teams that travel and a team that plays in the fall with the best players, Soccer should do the same in the spring.

It would be nice if the coach shirts said coach on the back.

At the beginning of each season we should host a clean up day, inviting parents, players and coaches to come and clean up the parks or make minor repairs.

The parking lot at Rattleff needs updated.

Taking better care of the fields on ALL parks. The baseball diamonds at Harmon Field and Mary Rutan park are nearly unusable. Our family frequents Blair Park and while the grass is always mowed, the park itself is filled with weeds and hasn't been updated or repaired in quite some time. There is also plenty of room there to add a soccer field or some other recreational entertainment.

The pool really needs some updates

Better playground equipment

More programs for older kids that are not involved in seasonal sports; homeschool student options

Please please keep these parks safe and maintained

Offer the sports schedules and pictures to parents sooner (we got notice really late this year)

More free libraries, scavenger hunts, restrooms

Find some more suitable coaches to be positive role models to our youth! Chieftain Classic was a real disappointment this year! Very few teams entered and no advertising was done to attract teams from outside the community. There was a pretty serious altercation between some coaches and parents that the parks department needs to investigate!

Parks that accommodate families with a large age range . Better ball fields. Places to practice year round; there is a lot of travel leagues and County families have to drive to Plain City or Springfield to have their child practice

Mary Rutan needs to be better patrolled.
A splash pad/water play area that is free to use would be great.
As I mentioned, gravel, blacktop, maybe tar/chip for Myeerah's driveway. Also, close off the back drive to the big lake. No one needs to "tour" by automobile. A small gravel lot on the north end would satisfy people fishing.
More kids
Splash pad
Exercise equipment at the park like East Liberty has would be nice. Skate parks for the older kids.
Swim lessons were chaotic this year, with lots of different teachers who didn't seem to know what was going on. Quality has decreased markedly over 15 years of doing swim lessons with our kids. Our experiences with other youth programs have been largely positive, especially Junior Track.
help the underprivileged areas of town and build sidewalks on the west side of town
Adding some equipment to the Simon Kenton Bike trail would be really great for people who want to do more than ride bikes or walk/jog.
Sand volleyball courts !
Not applicable because our child is too young for most of these still. Cant wait to start T-ball!
Jack Martin could use a mowing more often or a treatment. Weeds in the dog park are tall.
Have the instructors more trained prior to offering lessons. Both my daughters, 1 and 3, did not receive quality instruction for tge 2 weeks we attended this past season due to the instructor sitting on the side of the pool letting the kids play instead of teaching swim lessons
Better restrooms, better parking, better fields for the athletes to play on, needs to be more appealing to draw in more tournaments and opportunities for the athletes.
Make more programs for 3-4 year olds
The pool is in need of a makeover and some upgrades. The locker rooms are pretty gross so I just changed my toddler in the grassy area.
I have heard many reports of Mary Rutan park being "overrun" with older kids who are destructive to equipment, use foul language, etc. so I do not plan on ever taking my children there to play, even though Mary Rutan playground is better suited for their age group. I'd prefer to take them to Southview where the equipment is slightly older and aged (with cracked slides, etc.) because I feel that is safer for my kids (and me!) than whatever risk is present at Mary Rutan. I also always take my kids to Urbana to swim or to West Liberty's splash pad as opposed to the Hoffman because of their age and swimming skill level. I can't take both kids by myself without one of them being in a float of some kind. I do understand the rule regarding floats (former lifeguard) but it is restricting for parents with multiple young kids. I'd love to see a splash pad in Bellefontaine but with the way Mary Rutan park is reportedly treated, I also would not want the equipment or space to be taken advantage of. I do plan to have my kids participate in swimming lessons and soccer league when they're a little older and hope the best for those programs! My husband and I are always looking for a casual but fun activity for us to do together, and while we haven't tried it yet, pickle ball sounds like it's our next game. I'd love to see more pickle ball courts around the area (Southview would be awesome)! :) Thanks for all you do and for taking the time to ask users what works best for them.
Better lighting, pet accommodations, walking biking improvements, beatification flowers, memorials, historical information posted, unique diversity

The pool needs to be updated. Look at Wapak for inspiration.
We would love more hiking trails and nature. We are new to community. Also interested in an adult exercise equipment area like the one in East liberty. Our son l'd 16. Plays basketball with other kids at the scope and union.
More lighting and more clean up
The tennis courts have enough lights to be seen from SPACE , but the basketball courts have 0 lighting ... If the tennis courts can have lighting for nighttime play , why can't the basketball courts have some light too ? Basketball only requires 1 person & a ball to play , making it much easier to play than Tennis where you need multiple people to play .
My child has done swim lessons several years and enjoyed them. Several years ago I signed her up for soccer. We never got a call from the coach, even after I got a number from the rec department office and called the coach myself. I have not signed her up since then for any sports. You may have updated this all since then but the programs should be more organized and less coach dependent. I know they are volunteers, but there should be more structure and uniformity in how things are communicated and organized.
Youth football needs to play other teams. They are behind in level of competition because they play the same kids every week.
More police supervision. A big THANK YOU to the Child of God program at Mary Rutan park. They do a great job!
Take care of what is there. Add more patrol for safety. Host other events and leagues geared towards adults. We drive to Marysville to play in a sand volleyball league, these types of programs are awesome.
Easy improvements to the disc golf parks & another course would be awesome.
Add a beginner disc golf course
Standardized practice plans for all teams (especially baseball) so kids are taught the same skills correctly from tee ball through pony league regardless of which coach they have.
Additional benches, Trash cans, monitoring in Mary Rutan Park.
Investment in disc golf parks, courses.
Provide transportation from smaller parks to the pool
Coordinate more events at the parks where more people can connect with nature and the out-of-doors.
Advertise more about events and possible transportation to and from said events
Coaches should have to pass more than a background check in order to coach our young people. Too many bad influences are being permitted to coach youth sports.
Better communication more advertisement
Take funds and apply them to rattleff park and diamonds. Being a travel ball parent this year was busy. We traveled from here in Bellefontaine to all over Ohio and also Iowa and our fields are a disgrace. Its sad that we don't take care of it as we should and hearing parents from out of town talk down on our facility is depressing to say the least. I've seen for too long the parks unplayable what all they've actually done to improve rather than just doing it, not just for parents but mainly the players. This is one reason most kid leave the city ball programs for out if town teams.



The Bellefontaine Parks website was difficult to use to sign up for Safety Town and Summer Swim Team. Our son has an August birthday and it said he was too young to register for these events because he wouldn't turn the correct age until later in the summer.

Update the playgrounds at Mary Rutan and Blue Jacket.

better monitor the parks, keep the restrooms clean and useable

Improving the communication timeline for signup, practices and games.

Better instruction and modeling at swim lessons and a guide for coaches to follow on the skills they need to teach at each level of our youth sports programs. Coaches need a rule book to follow too so they understand the rules of the game. If they are volunteers then they may have never played the game before.

I'd definitely say more meets are needed in track. It would be nice to have a more robust track program around the area.

Better parks for the younger kids while the older kids have sports

Alternate locations so kids in all neighborhoods can watch the movies. And have monitors at mary rutan so that parents aren't arguing with unruly teenagers

Hold monthly cleanups, have someone actually visit these locations regularly, instead of raffles for unnecessary stuff take donations to clean up these places and put the right equipment in the locations needed (batting cages for example ) you go to other baseball fields and they all almost have a couple batting cages to help the youth progress in baseball.

My experiences weren't bad. My issues are more with the viability of the parks. What is there to do at the park. Are the hoops and fields taken care of, is play ground maintained. Is it cleaned and landscaped. Things that draw me in.

Helping lower costs of game entrance online ticketing fees. I would rather give back to the school (at concessions or boosters) than pay excess fees associated with online tickets

Maybe have each park policed a little better by BPD hire more help for cleaning and restocking.

Better restrooms, more seating, clean / updated appearance.

Would love to play out in the county for baseball/football. Playing against your friends takes away from the competitive spirit.

I think it's very disappointing to allow coaches that are disrespectful to the youth and parents. It's ok to be competitive but it's more important to foster their abilities and be a supportive coach. When things are brought to the attention of those in charge, they brush it off. There also needs to be a better way for guardians to sign kids up for sports because not everyone has access to the internet or credit cards to pay.

Update Myrtle

None it is fine

Don't let people block the track while spectating

I love the sports in general but I feel like there should be a basketball team for 1st graders not just little dribblers.

Get a water park

I do not agree with the eventual elimination of Rec. ball in both softball and now baseball. I do realize numbers are low, but by changing the bylaws to allow parents to choose between rec ball and travel will eventually eliminate rec ball, where as numbers will begin to go down and then we will be required to have two teams and compete against county teams that practice as a community. This was attempted to be done by Brunswick 20-25 years ago and members of the HiPoint board did not allow it. I am saddened for my son and other young boys that may never get the chance to play the game unless they are considered "elite" at the ages of 8-12. Sad day...

I would love to see the skate park have lights and have some good care and or improved. The skate park is a place that a lot of people love and so do I, I would love to see an update to it. Thank you.

A good cleaning and upkeep would really improve.

Wrestling program is amazing.

A huge part of the problem for me is the restrooms, some of the parks the restrooms were not even open when my kids had practice and then the times they were open they were disgusting. Southview is the best in that category

My children are still young and haven't gotten in to many sports yet. I satisfied with swim lessons and feel they do a great job. I know of some people who travel from out of town just for Bellefontaine's swim lessons.

The programs itself isn't the problem. It's the condition of the parks. The bathrooms at Ratliff park are absolutely disgusting and the parks department should be ashamed.

For the most part we have had good experiences.

Our rec sports are way behind other communities' youth sports. We are too concerned with giving everyone an opportunity and not concerned with getting good coaching and giving our kids experiences that will allow them to grow and build. The rule that kids have to play rec first before playing travel ball is a joke. It is a conflict of interest because kids get bored of playing rec and get used up during the week and that impacts their availability for tourney play on the weekends. We should be able to have a travel team and make cuts. The kids that don't make it, should be told to play rec and told to get better and come out for travel the following year. I believe places like Wapak are doing it right.

As far as football goes, why aren't we in a league? Our kids deserve that. Instead they get very tired of playing each other here in house. We want to focus on how many kids are getting developed in house, but how many really are solely because of playing in house. Playing in a league for football creates excitement and adds to the respect of the rivalries. If parents don't want their kid to play travel, an in house option should be available. Also, why aren't the youth coaches coming and working/watching the HS coaches? Football is so much more than conditioning and lining up and doing the Oklahoma drill.

Updating the restroom facilities at locations like Harmon park and Ratliff

Downtown we have great options but if we can't make things widely available in all areas for all of Bellefontaine we have a bigger issue because those feeling left out or not able to be in downtown etc will leave or not be apart of the things happening in our town. Redoing the buildings downtown is great however if they aren't filled if they become empty or people get bored of the same shops they visit downtown for a few times a week the overall look isn't what appeals us it's what it has to offer. We have almost empty plain Jane mall strips that could use a face lift. Everyone loves the movies however those seats have been there since I was 6 and I know those are in fact not cleaned not to mention they aren't comfortable. Let's spend the money on things the whole family enjoys I vote we re-up some of these parks add better rental shelter houses we help a few houses with paint a year and we redo the movies. Do something before that movie theater eventually goes under like every other town and everyone travels to AMC I'm not saying it needs all the bells and ringers but we can afford to do one theater room at a time with new floor, clean the carpet, new comfortable seats that aren't jammed pack next to others like your sitting on a bus seat with three other kids in elementary. Screens are fine lights are fine, seats, floor, carpet.

The biggest concern is youth coaches. I personally know several families who have left the city youth sports due to coaching staff. Understandably, coaches are difficult to obtain but they are single handedly ruining the program. Team stacking is another major concern. Bridge the gap between the high school/middle school sports coaches to help with the youth.

Swim lesson teachers need to teach/model swim strokes to the kids and not just expect them to already know it. Soccer teams need more practice. There are too many games and kids haven't practiced enough to work on skills and game situations.

Cheer was disappointing my daughters first year and not enough uniforms to go around and we paid 50 dollars and still had to buy our own bottoms very dissatisfied

I think that their needs to be clearer expectations for youth coaches. I would love for there to be an emphasis on keeping kids engaged in sports long enough to have larger and more successful high school programs. I really think this needs to emphasize developing and playing ALL players, particularly in the ages before middle school. We have had several elementary aged teams that focused almost exclusively on winning and not on player development, where only a few players played consistently and others may not get in at all in a game. This has led to kids quitting the sport, and at such a young age it's really too early to know who is going to develop into a great player.

My kids were not able to take swimming lessons this year which was one of the reasons I bought a pool pass

I know a lot of people dislike taking their kids to the park (especially Hoffman pool area) because teenage kids like to hang out in the little kid area and smoke and cuss and act out. It would be nice to have this looked into more often.

Provide training to coaches and staff.

More lights around the track at night

Need more movies in the park for the kids not just one park and more events in different parks take kids freedom from them and some parents can't drive that far when other parks are closer

I would love to see flower pots at the Pool and make it look fun and tropical! I know people say it's a money pit but it's a great pool that other communities don't have. It's just time to make it more inviting and a place to be. I think we need better landscaping...especially at Blue Jacket park considering this is what people see when they come to the schools. I really feel landscaping and trees make such a difference! I think it's time for a change. Things have looked the same for years. I've been to a lot of parks and we just need to elevate our game. It would also be cool to have a couple of parks with neat attractions (artwork, rocks and waterfalls, really cool wooden signs, etc...)that kids could take their selfies at and lure young people in from surrounding areas.

The swimming pool needs dedicated adult supervision like when Bill Bullock was there. The up keep off the grounds is disappointing.

Simply put, Revitalize Myrtle park as a whole. There are far to many children in this corner of town and no place for them to hang out. I Have lived here for 20 years and I see more city workers at the park than I do kids when there are 20 children on this block alone. The park is in disrepair.

Continue to offer new programs and continue to supervise all parks for proper use.

Great experiences in each of the activities.

Install bathrooms. Make it convenient and clean and safe.

My experience now is as a grandparent/spectator.

Put a speaker system at the Rattleff ball diamonds. So we can play the national anthem before games.



Better prepare the coaches to handle conflict with parents and how to foster a sportsmanlike atmosphere

Nature lessons for children and adults.

give more attention to the parks, by keeping them more clean and clear from broken glass/trash/vandalism. possibly some sort of security to help prevent it in the future. Overall i would love too see updates on new playground equipment/swings/toys & bathrooms for Harmon field, and Lewis Rattleff parks.

The sports here offer a variety of options for our youth. The employees at the swimming pool are subpar and lack leadership. I felt my children received much below average instruction for swimming lessons which is an essential life skill.

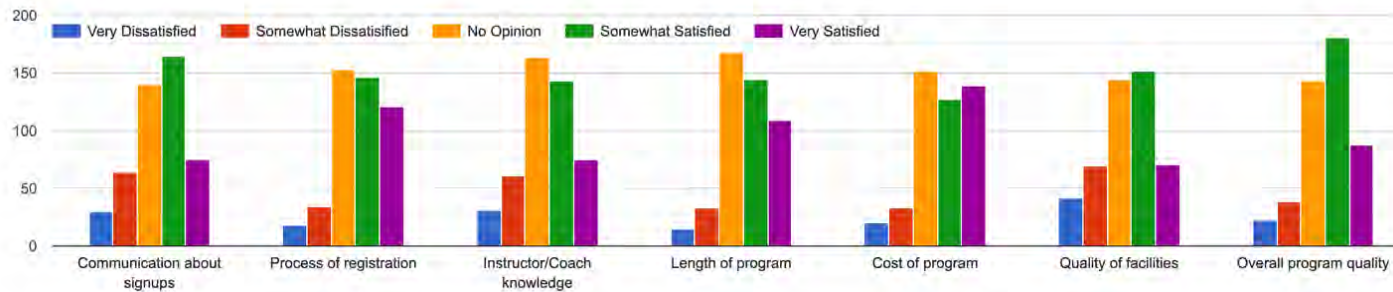
fix the walking track at Blue Jacket; consider a path at some of Myeerah

Have parks in better repair with updated equipment.

Add a record hop on tennis courts a couple times in summer for certain age children

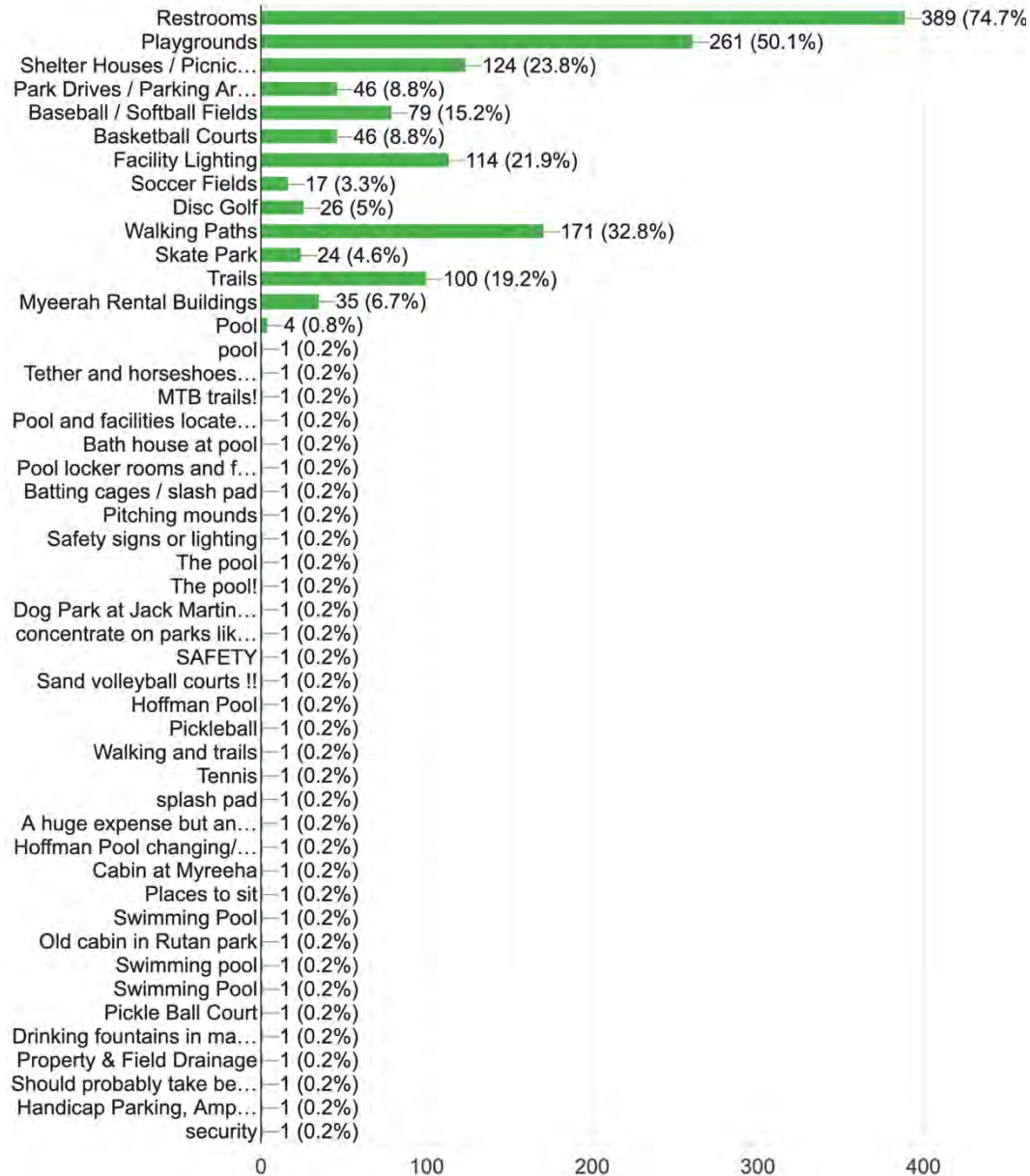
Would love to see new trees or gardens planted between the tennis courts and the war memorial in Mary rutan park. Much of the sidewalk on the west and south sides of Mary rutan needs repair as well.

Please tell us your experience and satisfaction in participating with Bellefontaine programs.



Of the existing infrastructure listed below, please select three items BJRJ should prioritize.

521 responses



**Comments on existing infrastructure BJRD should prioritize:**

Ratliff parking lot needs paved like south view . More than half the restrooms during baseball weren't open (locked) or couldn't use them because of no water (Harmon field) or destroyed no doors on the stalls. And playgrounds could all be updated.

Rest rooms should be open and in good working order. There should be more of them closer to the playgrounds where children need them

PA System at Ratleff

Bellefontaine needs a splash pad!

The youth baseball programs from farm league and up, should be able to play in the county and not only other teams from Bellefontaine

Blue jacket walking path is horrible in areas

The pool locker rooms/restrooms are just plain gross. Doors missing on bathrooms, no adequate place to change with privacy. An update to our pool would bring more people to it. Several go out of town to swim bc of the need of repair. Also, would love to see the volleyball court taken care of.

No lighting at any of our baseball/softball fields. Some games are called early due to darkness.

Night games . Electric for shelter house. Shade at games.

I think there needs to be more field options for softball/baseball. It is really frustrating that you can't find a field once games start for your team to practice on. You just have to show up and hope one is open.

The restrooms at Mary rutan park are always closed and not in the best conditions

Need for additional areas for pitching and maintenance of the existing.

Safety, loitering kids at Mary Rutan park

More baby swings needed in areas of Mary Rutan Park and others. Would be nice to have one available at each park.

Definitely adding more bathrooms atleast a Porta Jon by Mary Rutan main part would be awesome. Parking at Southview gets crazy during events and soccer. Everybody just parks in the grass adding.

Viewing other cities pools

The skate park needs a huge renovation

Fields are often flooded . Parks often are missing items or broken

Open the kiddy pool at the Hoffman Pool.

There are members of the community willing to volunteer with work and repairs or fundraising to help make improvements to our facilities.

The discus golf area is nice the addition of pickle ball is nice. The new playground is nice but many others need attention.

Hard to use Myeerah's nice rental buildings if you can't get to them.

The kids need prioritized

The pool itself is fine, but the changing rooms at the pool are deteriorating.



Our community is blessed to have an active park board that maintains parks well. Myeerah is probably under utilized and maybe is the biggest asset.
Dog Park at Jack Martin is nice, but lacks a little in maintenance attention this summer ie. mowing and especially trimming fence (maybe manpower issue?), trash removal and overall area of litter. We spent some time pickup up trash throughout the summer because of inconsiderate park users.
Need a year round soccer field, not just in fall season
Please add a splash pad somewhere in town and update the pool. I end up going to Marysville or Columbus to swim because it's better facilities and options. I would love to stay in town and give the community my money instead. Place facilities for older kids too would be great.
The playground area at Southview park is somewhat dangerous....especially the "bridge." Too steep for kids.
Should have longer bicycle trail
Nature programs!
An Ampitheatre and arts area would be terrific in Brown Park
We need more for older kids who are bored and just end up destroying playground equipment we also could use more supervision. This town could benefit from a splash pad and an update to our current pool would be willing to pay more in admittance fees for a nice aquatics area. Blue Jacket parks "playground" is unsafe and needs replaced we live in the Lake District and the kids that way have no playground that's within walking distance
I think there should be more nature preserves for people but constant clean up at all nature preserves.
Basketball can be played solo . Tennis cannot , & yet the Tennis courts have SO much lighting for nighttime play . The basketball court across the street has NO LIGHTING ! I enjoy living in Bellefontaine but as someone who enjoys playing Basketball , this is my biggest pet peeve ...
Getting us a larger tract of land to have a dedicated disc golf space would be great. We already have many people come from out of the city every week to play our course. A larger area would allow us to hold bigger and better events attracting even more visitors.
Need more disc golf courses
bellefontaine needs a splash pad
I live closer to Myrtle, I wouldn't even be able to gather family there because there's no water fountain there's no restroom facilities in the playground equipment is in horrible condition!
It would be nice to have a walking trail at Fred Carter park. It would not need to be paved. Trails like at Myeerah would work.
Making all parks priority
Restrooms at mary rutan should be better and one closer to the park
Like to see intercoms at Ratliff for playing of national anthems and other important announcements to made over them. Better care of each fields and first aid kits provided at each field. AED device at the park that stays there. Better lighting at the fields and better ran concession stands. Earlier signups and uniform distributed to teams earlier than actual picture day.
More handicap parking at Ratliff park

The skate park needs lights and really could be majorly updated to accommodate the many kids who go there. Its in a great location but needs some love. Huber heights has a beautiful skate park.

I would love to see the skate park have an improvement. That is a place that many people including me love to skate and hang but we only really use one side of it. We would love to have a full skate park that is super fun but also satisfies us, Thank you.

Have you considered asking for donations????

I also feel the rental houses at myeerah need updated especially the lakeside I rented one in July and was dissatisfied noone came to turn on the power. The picnic tables were broken,dock was broken, the little rooms you couldn't even use and there's definitely room to make them beautiful and more useful. Until then I would probably not rent the specific shelter house I had rented again.

The bathrooms near mary rutan park are ALWAYS filthy and never have hand soap. It's also frustrating in an emergency when you get clear over to them and they're locked.

We would love to see better restroom and park facilities. When we host things such as baseball tournaments, we have noticed our facilities do not compete with other communities.

Disc golf can be really good for our community if the proper effort is put into it. The parking is a big thing that needs addressed

Field house for ALL Bellefontaine youth sports and activities

Some of the bathrooms need to be updated,soap,toilet paper and should be unlocked all year long

Disc golf at Mary Routan is the reason I find myself traveling from Upper Sandusky to Bellefontaine, an hour one way commute. I would love to see updated baskets at Mary Routan, and perhaps the old baskets could repurposed at a second disc golf course in Bellefontaine. As a female who is an avid disc golfer year-round, it would be lovely to have bathroom access during the winter months. (I'm very appreciative of the port-o-john that is supplied, though.)

There is no lighting at this park. Which would normally be fine because of the street lights, however the city has not replaced the broken street lights on Ohio St in months

My kids were grown by the time I moved into the community so I have no say in sports related activities for the younger age group.

All of the above areas (excluding Myeerah rental buildings) need attention. We need better playgrounds each with at least one inclusive feature (e.g., one or two swings), but nothing like Play at the Peak (every feature being inclusive). I selected basketball courts, but really courts and diamonds are similar. The main issue court/diamond availability occurs during the winter (lack of indoor space) and spring/summer (better use of diamond space). Indoor space can be addresses with a multiuse building and outdoor diamond space can be fixed by going to 5:30, 7:15/30 back to back game times to maximize usage.

Need trails connecting our community

More focus on natural areas. Butterfly gardens and native species.

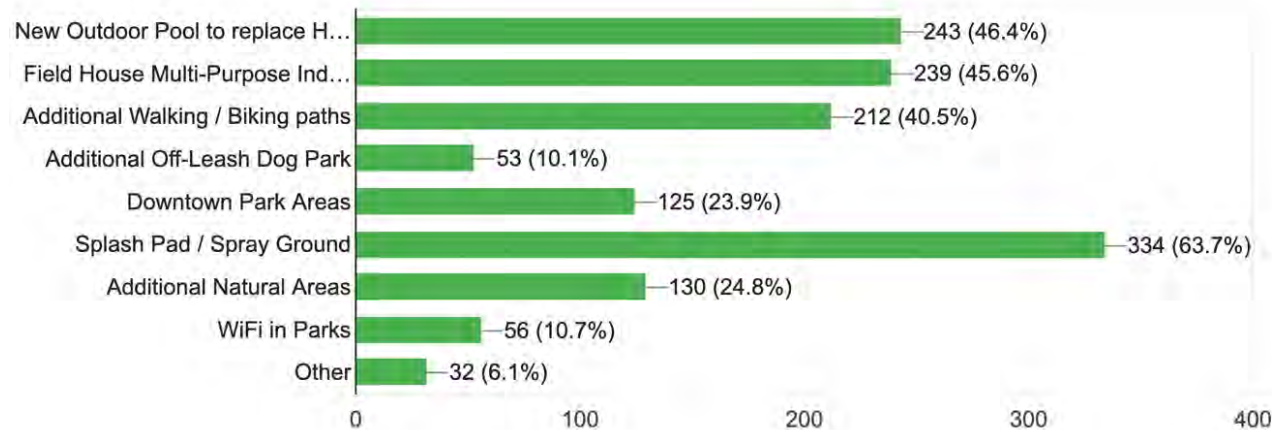
A playground at Blue Jacket park would be nice for families attending baseball, softball and soccer games. Some playgrounds in other areas need TLC.

restrooms at Blue Jacket are almost always locked

Use old softball Diamond at Rutan for amphitheater.

Of the future improvements listed below, please select three items the BJRD should prioritize to develop new.

524 responses



**Comments on future improvements BJRD should prioritize:**

- A sheltered seating area for Fred Carter park. It's beautiful there and it gets a sad picnic table. No benches, no shelter.
- Need to add lights to Southview ball diamonds
- Pool needs completely redone or update with a splash pad area around there as well. And would LOVE A INDOOR SPORTS FACILITY for our youth to grow in sports and exercise and to have the opportunity for teams be able to practice on their off season's.
- Agility equipment in the dog parks
- A playground in brown park and another basketball court or two around the east side brown park pool area.
- ALL restrooms need updated.
- No need for new pool. Just update and modernize current facility. Need more winter activities such as ice skating and hockey.
- MTB again!
- I picked the 3 things that take the least amount of maintenance. You don't keep up with the parks you already have.
- Improve or replace the existing playgrounds and work on maintenance of existing parks before focusing on new projects!



More playgrounds or update pool not a new one

A pool is number 1

We have nothing but run down parks for our kids. Nothing fun especially once summer is over.

I see absolutely no reason to build a new pool. I believe the kid area and the kid pool need major improvements. But I believe our pool is just fine.

New, confessions and restrooms at the Hoffman pool.

I have heard the pool needs work...but I think its good enough really, and the money spent on that could go very far in improving other parks or adding equipment that would have a longer season of use than the swimming season in my opinion. Look at Amberleigh Park in Dublin. They have a beautiful shelter house, nice bathrooms with baby changing areas, and awesome play options like music making equipment and play houses/stores. We also really need an indoor play option. Timber and Bow in Troy or Fun in the Jungle in Sunbury would be places to look for inspiration. I think so many in the community would love an indoor play option for kids - but would have to be monitored to keep older and destructive kids from ruining the experience for others.

I really wish there was a sport for the younger kids to play. Maybe 3+. Marysville has a soccer league that starts at 3 years old and that would be so awesome.

More things for handicapped individuals.

My other is a new playground at blue jacket, and or brown.

Hoffman Pool needs updated, not replaced. They also need to get all of their lifeguards on the same page of whether a child is tall enough to ride the slide. One will say a child is ok to ride, while the next one will tell the same child they are too short. It makes more sense to be based on skill of swimming, not height. We've also had some lifeguard allow dive sticks, while the next says we can't use them.

A splash pad similar to the one in West Liberty would do great as a summer activity.

The other, smaller parks could use more attention, updated equipment, and proper parking.

Families have to drive 40 miles if their child plays on a trav league . I think an indoor facility would be a great profit to the city/county.

Can a splash pad be added to the pool? What would be the reason of replacing the pool?

An indoor pool for year round use instead of outdoor summer only pool. Like the natatorium in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. An ice rink like Chillers in Springfield. Need more activities for young people and families.

A free splash pad area like West Liberty would be greatly used

Please ban mountain bikes from Myeerah.

Would love to have more walking/biking options, especially to connect existing parks and downtown.

Check out Eastview Park in Celina, OH. They have an obstacle course type playground. There are two running lanes, just for running races. (No wonder they raise athletes.)

Would be nice to have more biking paths...sidewalks could also use work on main st and side streets

Some place where visitors in rv or campers can park to visit/walk downtown.

A dog park in camp Myeerah would be cool, in the woods.

If new areas are developed, they should be monitored to allow families to enjoy the spaces without the threat of negative behavior happening around other children

Connect a splash pad to the pool.

Not a park board problem but there needs to be special parking spaces for the extended cab trucks. It is dangerous downtown as cars need to get into center line to go around them!

How can we utilize the YMCA and our schools to maximize dollars/space/opportunities, instead of an expensive field house?  
We are always really impressed with Wapak's pool. So much to do, lots more flexibility, opportunities for all ages and stages of development.

How can we make some of these above listed wishlist items accessible to those less fortunate in our community?

The city pool is wonderful. The diving boards are very specials- most public pools don't have diving boards. It would be nice to add to the existing pool area a splash pad/squirt park similar to West Liberty &/or Jackson Center Pool. Get rid of the sand volley ball area seeing that no one can use it...turn it into a play area for little kids.

A second more advanced disc golf course.

add more disc golf locations it brings in a ton of out of town residents to the area and it promotes active living

Fishing pond within the city. Myeerah is great, but requires travel. Fred Carter Park is fishable, though a poor fish habitat. Fred Carter Park draws only those interested in fishing - this park could potentially be expanded to better draw residents.

Im sure pool is a money maker and obtains lots of use. More programs related to the out-of-doors and understanding conservation and natural ares.

field house has been a need for years

Should not need Wi-Fi when outdoors

I know there is some consideration of shutting down Hoffman and including a pool in a new indoor facility. I feel this is the wrong direction. An outdoor pool is a vital piece of a community and cannot be replicated by splash pads and an indoor option.

New dugouts for all fields

Work on all parks update things that are broken/ old.

Need more things for the area beside crap places of more pizza and churches and empty builds going to waste. Bring in a decent sit down restaurant or things to do like a trampoline center for kids so parents have more event options when a birthday or a to do.

Fix the parks we already have instead of wasting money on new things. The kids on the west side of town deserve safe a fun parks!

A splash pad downtown would be absolutely fantastic!

Our experience with youth softball has shown a field house would be beneficial. We lose all practice time in the early spring due to weather and the kids get really behind. A Hoffman pool update would also be huge for the community. There are so many cool local pools these days.

It would be nice to have an indoor recreation area during the winter months. The YMCA is one of the only options but it's not affordable for everyone.

I like all the ideas for improvements, I wish I could select them all

Batting Cages. More infant/toddler friendly water zone— improve the kid area at the Hoffman pool, or providing approved rafts for them in the bigger section

I believe in equality for all children. Some of the children, of lower income, have no where to go due to being on the West End. There really needs to be something for these kids to feel like they matter. To give them some hope. The outreach center was a blessing to my kids but it is not very big, nor did the city invest in the programs. That helped my kids tremendously.

Hire more help for existing parks.

New and improved skate park with lights.

Skate park improvement

New restrooms at Ratliff park

Hoffman pool simply doesn't need to be changed besides maybe a new slide or maybe enclosing it for all seasons like a mini water park for kids and adults with the slide however then we may lose a lot of the YMCA business. I simply say if it's not broke and it's still popular leave it alone for now and come back to it later.

A field house would be invaluable for our sports teams, particularly when the weather prohibits outdoor practice. A new pool/outdoor water facility would also be a large draw in the city.

Disc golf pads and parking area

As a parent with a very involved child I would love to see an indoor facility!!

It appears that no money is being put into the pool to maintain it like it was in the Bill Bulluck days. It's basically just being left to fall apart until it can no longer run.

Wifi should not be needed in parks. Everyone has cell phones and can typically hotspot to their laptop or tablet if needed.

Need a place to use to practice indoors for all sports

Definitely more natural areas!

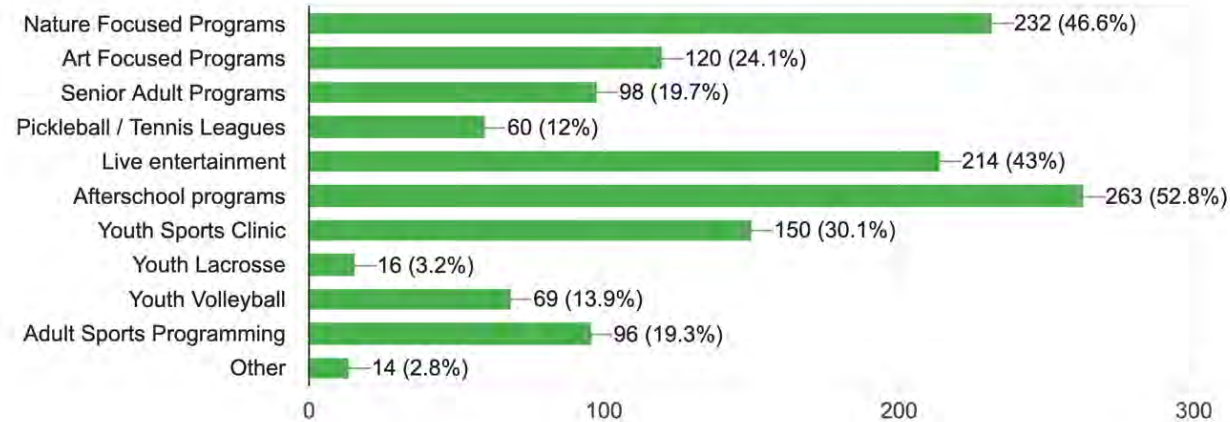
Same answer. Take care of current parks prior to adding.

The pool is one of the most underrated spaces in our town. Having a safe, clean, swimming facility that also includes lessons/swim team is essential to our city. A splash pad will not offer this. A splash pad is really only a good idea for small kids, not bigger kids nor their families. Our pool needs major upgrades, but is in a great location offering walkability for many of our youth and families.



For future program development please select three items BJRD should prioritize.

498 responses



**Comments on future program development BJRD should prioritize:**

Bring back movies in the park.

There isn't a lot for the 10-15yr old age group to do. They tend to take over the playgrounds and act belligerent not allowing my littles to enjoy the playground. My kids go home with a new vocabulary I don't want them to have

Nature preserve, prevent over development

Lacrosse would be great!

Would love to see some mental health options – yoga, meditation, nature-influenced reflection and writing/creating sessions, connecting with community and caring for shared spaces etc.

I think we are in dire need for after school programs. I think it should be centrally located. I'll think that our children need something besides Mad River mountain skiing in the winter time to go to.

It would be fabulous to get music in the park once a month or every other week in the summer on like Wednesday or Thursday night at one of the parks.

Mentoring program like big brothers and big sisters

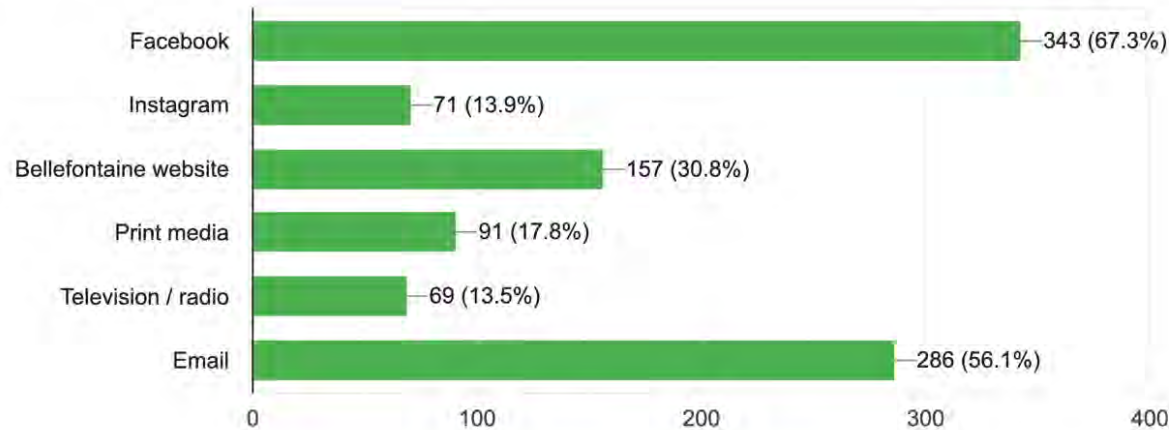
Parents have no where to send their kids after-school. There are two daycare/programs for school age children and they have a year waiting list .

Having pickle ball/tennis leagues would make the very limited courts unavailable to the general public sometimes and that would drive the average person that just wants to play for fun away. All leagues on public courts should be posted in advance.

Myeerah is such a treasure – would love to see more programming there.
Renee Price's COG program is a huge asset. Is there a plan to continue that with it without her? What if that were available all summer.
Would love slow pitch softball to come back again.
Bring back concerts to Brown Park.
After-school with transportation from school to area and it needs to be near poorer area of town so kids have something positive in those areas.
Bring back concerts in the Brown park!
The above was hard to pick just 3 – they're all great ideas!
Some youth need more instruction but can't afford private lessons or travel leagues. Free sports clinics (like softball did this year) would be beneficial to all.
Suffleboard courts would be a nice addition but would require equipment, controlled use, and fenced perimeter to help maintain function.
I love the idea of more options for my kid that get them out of their routine and outside. These could be 1 time things or something that lasts several weeks.
More than happy to help with youth volleyball
I believe somehow our community needs a humanity class. A class that unites all children. Teaching children how to be humble, what it is like to feed the homeless, what it is like for a child to cope with divorce, a life class if you will.
New awesome skate park that fits for all people including BMX, scooters, skate boards, and roller blades.
Teenager focused programs
More downtown nights focused for all age groups. More community wide events like a county cookout or something where everyone is invited and we all can do different things. Fall festival would be amazing to do one where it always is but then do more downtown. A county Halloween carving contest, a costume contest for all age groups,
Instead of being high price on things they need be reasonable mid class and low class can't afford some of yall prices but instead rich people get more involved
Sand Volleyball league
3 on 3 basketball league
I don't have any issues with the programming. We offer a lot. What we can offer is all based on volunteers. Who will run the leagues/programs? Of the above, I think Pickleball is the most likely to have takers. Youth volleyball would be good for the girls program.
Love the outdoor plays in Brown Park.
Senior adult programming is a phenomenal idea that should very much be looked at for development .
Possibly more activities available in the park such as badminton, volleyball, cross country skiing, additional basketball. I've been told many years ago there were a variety of activities available to kids at Mary Rutan Park. These would need to be supervised so equipment would be maintained.

## How can we best communicate with you?

510 responses



### What other comments would you like to share with the Bellefontaine Joint Recreation District?

thanks for offering the survey!

I think schools need to send home paper notes about all sports and events parents are over welmed with emails nice to have a paper on the fridge sometimes

Better pool! Open longer hours

Please just update Kelly court park!! We need it. No one goes there because there isn't anything there. Don't look like a park. I didn't even know the name of it till now.

Tim has been a great addition to the parks and rec department. Hope to see the ideas that come from this survey implemented.

Thank you for asking the community for input!

More friendly knowledge staff

Thanks for doing what you do!

Fix the parks you already have before adding any future development.

Youth Baseball - Needs to stop being based on a buddy system. Most communities usually are, but you can break the mold and do the right things. It's your program and your reputation to protect. Would be nice to see the status quo go away and see some out of the box thinking. Trying things and seeing if they work and if they don't, changing it back. Keeping it interesting will draw more kids into these



sports. Taking people's information seriously would be good. Also follow up as to what is being done when there is a complaint rather than a generic "we are looking into it internally" then hearing nothing but crickets. This lowers the faith in the parks department whether you're doing something or not. People think you're not when there isn't follow up. I've been vocal within the past year. In 6 years I've never had issues with any coach. My daughter played for Sam Varian in 2021. He cussed so much, at a Ridgemont game the umpire threatened to call the sheriff if he had said another word. I never said anything about that only because it was the last game of the season. You should have records and should be able to ask any coach of either of my kids and they will say they never had an issue with me. The issue started a year ago when my son didn't get a chance to try out for travel ball and Rob and Von had their team picked out. There was no real assessments that took place. It was for show. I was the wrong parent to get involved with on something like this. So I am being a pain and I am bringing facts about these two coaches in hopes that another child isn't put out of a team due to politics. And one last thing, there should be open parents meetings or better communication regarding baseball meetings for those who would like to be involved or know what is going on with the program.

Please enhance the playgrounds. They need serious attention. Especially Southview park.

Would love a splash pad and an updated pool more for young children. (Shallow part 1-2 foot) area

Soccer board has done an amazing job this season so far. Everything is running smoothly. Would recommend coaches utilizing the Remind app for parent communication. It's free and BMS/BHS sports and organizations use it.

I spend a lot of time at M.N.P, am very appreciative of all the trails and large space, thank you!

The pool is a great place just needs professionally cleaned and updated. Playgrounds are important for all youth to be updated and safe

More patrol watch at the parks

Overall great job!

Please always keep accessibility (physical, emotional, mental) in mind when planning the broad offerings you create for our community and visitors. Ease of access, comfort, and positive experiences will create a culture of joy associated with the parks. Along another line of thinking, it would be fantastic to have a bit of nature education options (I might be knowledgeable about current offerings) like nature guides, ranger lessons, animal study, conservation efforts - anything to engage and involve youth in understanding how complex and exciting it can be to care for natural spaces and be entrusted with maintaining community land. ALSO, how amazing would it be to have a butterfly house? Look to the park in North Ridgeville, OH for a great example. Perhaps these ideas are more state park level of intensity, but it would be wonderful for Bellefontaine to be known for its parks and offerings as exceptional and a cut above.

We would love to have more high quality playgrounds. Maybe some that incorporate natural play spaces with the equipment and bathrooms that are near the play space. Playgrounds that are safe, that don't have broken equipment should be a huge priority. We often drive out of town to play at better parks. Delaware Veterans Park is an example of a place our kids enjoy. We would also enjoy a pool that is more functional. One that allows you to have fun. A lazy river, toys or floats allowed in the pool, more slides, splash area. Maybe something along the lines of the Springfield Splash Zone. Or aquatic centers like Wapakoneta, or Tipp City. An indoor place to practice sports in colder months would be greatly utilized. I hear people all the time talking about how great it would be if we could keep practicing sports in the colder months.

It would be cool to have somewhere my kids can safely play whether it's from broken equipment, bullies (Mary rutan) or trash/glass/etc

Really looking forward to seeing what improvements or new parks you guys can come up with for the community. An indoor play place would greatly benefit the community as well.

I would love an indoor area to let my kids play in the winter months

Overall, BJRD is doing a GREAT job! My family really enjoys the programs offered. My only suggestion for BJRD is when adding additional features to the parks please consider cost and effort to maintain the projects. There have been some items added to the parks that were great ideas but have not been maintained well.

We appreciate all the hard work the city does for the community!!!

As a parent with children in sports, it is notable that the parks department is attempting to improve the parks and programs over the last few months and it is very much appreciated.

Love COG programming. I think kids of all ages need this right now

The skate park is unsafe and too small

Need to keep the teens with poor behavior and nasty mouths out of the pool. Lifeguards are clearly distracted and frustrated with them and I don't want my kids around that kind of behavior

The website experience feels dated and could be more user friendly for sharing information

There needs to be more in town walking/bike paths. Accessibility to the parks.

Thanks for all your hard work!

Thank you for all of your hard work.

I love our city and I just want what we already have to be more accessible to everyone of every age.

Mabe a mail flier when gets close too sports sign ups

The city should look into the same model that the City of Delaware does. The city and the YMCA combined to have all the programs run for the area. Also, if you are a Y member you get access to the public pool.

My wife and I moved here from Marysville so we had high expectations! Once we took a full Saturday morning to visit all the parks, we realized that we were really going to love it here. Mary Rutan park is great! I play disc golf often and our son loves the playground. We also really love the swimming pool. Very affordable!! And while it's an older pool, it is great to be able to cool off without breaking the bank.

It's nice that you're asking the community what they want. That is appreciated. The updated playground at Mary Rutan Park is horrible. The wooden play ground was such a memorable and iconic playground. And the new one is barley even handicap accessible. I don't know what the thought process was there. And there were children's handprints from, like the 90s, in the wall of the fence. Did anyone try to contact those people to see if they would like to have those? Iron City could use an update. Lots of kids in that area. A walking path around all of Mary Rutan Park would be very nice. Keep up the great work.

I think a splash pad would also be a great idea with it being next to a playground.

Thanks for all you do!

Please Build A Splash Pad In Multiple Parks Around The City, Also Indoor Gym and Games For Kids

It is wonderful to see so many people enjoying the new tennis courts.

Hello!

I recently visited a park out of state that had 2 designated play areas for different aged children. There was an enclosed playground where children under 3 could play safely with toys and slides at lower heights and about 100 yards away was a larger playground for the "big kids". Having an enclosed area was nice because you didn't have to worry about the toddlers running off where they shouldn't be. This park also had outdoor workout equipment for the adults! Having something for everyone was very appealing for our young family.

I was very excited to see this questionnaire in my mail this week. I look forward to seeing what you all improve!

Best, Hannah Hauck

Thank you so much for seeking community support. Very appreciative

We love Myeerah so much!! We live near West Liberty so our kids participate in sports there, but we spend a lot of time hiking and picnicking at Myeerah. We have also rented facilities there for birthday parties, which have been great experiences! We miss the nature programs and would love to see those return!

I'm mainly here for the Basketball courts ... other than the LACK of lighting on ALL Basketball courts in Bellefontaine , i believe the court beside the Hoffman Pool / Tennis courts should have a fence in between the Hoop & the Road . This will prevent the ball from bouncing out onto the road. ( E Williams Ave ) In Conclusion , The Basketball courts need MORE LIGHTING & potentially a fence to prevent any serious accidents from balls bouncing onto the street .

The park workers are amazing! They clean up after thankless teenagers and vandals. They deserve a raise!

The Hi-Point Hyzers take care of Mary rutan park, most improvements are done by us, but we would really appreciate more support from the parks. I really don't think we should be the ones removing downed trees and planting grass etc..

Need another disc golf course, it would benefit bellefontaine yearly with at least 1 more.

Great progress being made!

You're doing a great job! But keep going with improvements! I might not live in the city limits anymore, but I work and pay taxes here, and my son is open enrolled at BCS so we're here a lot and love our parks!

Limited park cameras to improve safety and deter crime.

It seems like disc golf club is willing to invest maintain Mary Rutan park and expand to others. Daily there is 30 to 50 people that come to the park just to play and it is a growing sport. Joint partnership and recognition would seem needed in order for it to survive.

Thanks for all your hard work, My children have enjoyed all the sporting opportunities

Would like to see a Logan County Joint Park District formed with a levy to support all the parkts and facilities, equipment and personel.

It would be beneficial to the community to have another in door pool facility.

Please focus on improving what we already have instead of adding new show the community you care about the children and not just making Bellefontaine look better.

The pool needs to be open a longer season!

Security guard at the playground, especially Mary Rutan Park

We really appreciate the parks in Bellefontaine. Most of our personal complaints have been from the youth sports aspect due to poor communication and poor coaching.



I know alot of families who travel outside of the county for swimming because kids are allowed floaties in other pools. Hoffman rules are too strict on some things

Kids shouldn't be picked by favoritism everyone should get a chance even if there parent isn't a coach. Last year that happened

I don't support any parks and rec levy especially with the current leadership, major's office on down. We need upgrades to the courts, police and fire departments. Not someone's personal agenda.

Since moving to columbus, I see alot of what our youth doesn't have. However I will say that the community and unity that Bellefontaine shares is definitely something that is missed on a daily basis. Bellefontaine has made great changes since I have been gone, and I truly enjoy coming back and seeing how much it has grown.

Additional seating and shade at the pool would be great. Not everyone wants to swim.

I have lived in bellefontaine all my life and I love it here. I hate seeing our parks be destroyed the way they have been.

Bellefontaine has made major improvements all over town and would love to see that continued through the parks.

Love the online registration- I would like to suggest a community clean up day.

Spend more time and money on other parks besides maryrutan

This is the argument as old as time, but I find the influence of parents living through their children to "win" titles at a young age for their kids to have "memories", instead of teaching fundamentals and love of sport is disheartening.

I see improvements all of the time, you are doing a great job with what you have to work with. Thank you!

Plases improve our skate park

Drug use is a big concern in the area parks.

I would volunteer to help clean/paint or assist in any of these projects!!

Stay humble I say this not as an insult but the meaning behind it is we've gotten so caught up in just doing downtown events and downtown nights that we forget we have so many neglected areas and so many who simply won't just travel downtown because of how it's become overwhelmed with events that haven't necessarily brought in things for everyone to do or be apart of we have a whole fair ground we can use out of season for live entertainment and vendors and food and room for the whole county to come be apart of something bigger than just a street worth downtown. We know the shops exist there and bars and restaurants however we come for the community ! Not what the strip has to offer. Before community based. We could have a huge amazing fall festival right here right down the road from downtown at our fair grounds and I'm sure families wouldnt have an issue bringing the animals to us just like fair for the kids. We can still do one at the farm. There's farmers with hayride property you could do a community hayride scare or something it doesn't have to be expensive for you to bring community together it's just needs to be a community event and events in other places of the community.

A thriving community needs activity and involvement. There needs to be things for families to do with their young children.

I am proud of our community parks and grateful to those who oversee them

We have a lot of beautiful parks! Why don't we take care of them?

More street lights and fix the other lights that don't work!

More things for kids to do and the castle park which my son calls it that should never be torn down it was fun park and now there is no park that is big like that one and I think it was mistake tearing that park down and far as handicapped people they could have there own spots and park there is room some people make poor choices but it doesn't matter cause some of these comments do go through it gets read and out the door this town is to high prices of stuff when it comes to kids and events

The restrooms at Ratliff Park are very outdated and are usually filthy. Something also needs to be done for parking at that facility. So much money could be made off of concessions. During tournaments you could have sandwiches and other options besides popcorn and candy. There is much money to be made. The kids could also do a fundraiser, I know for baseball there was no fundraiser that I am aware of which means more lost revenue. I have talked with many parents during baseball games and hear the same thing over and over, they say no one will help do anything but intern no one asked the parents to help with anything

The Parks superintendent needs to be more present especially at Rutan and Hoffman Pool.

The area around Myrtle Park (mostly Albert St northward) genuinely as a whole has felt forgotten by the city. I am a mailman for the city and see most of the parks on a fairly regular basis, Myrtle and Oakland square park need help please.

Print media info with water bills is excellent way to communicate! We all receive them (except some renters).

Doing a great job, keep it up!

I do appreciate the job you guys do in keeping up facilities, I know it can't be easy and costly.

I enjoy working with the Parks and all of the programs. An expanded budget to allow for consistent maintenance, repairs and replacement of our infrastructure will add immensely to our wonderful community.

Thank you to the BJRD for all of the work you do to make the city parks and programs great!

Doing a great job with what is available, need additional grants, donations, and tax levy funds.

To be competitive with other communities we need better Park's and trails

Bird watching gatherings would be a nice addition.

A dedicated mountain bike trail at Myeerah.

My family and I have to travel an hr in any Direction to mtn bike. We then end up spending are time and money in these other communities shopping and eating.

We would much rather keep are money more in-house and support local.

Groundskeeping is extremely poor. Parks should be part of the community showcase, not an eyesore. Should be a source of pride, not embarrassment.

With todays cost of living rising. I feel as community we will benefit from having our parks for families to spend time together and I'd be nice if the picnic table at Blair Park could be updated. 😞

We played Rec soccer in Marysville in 2019 and we STILL get their emails ... all the dang time. I still think email is a great way to communicate and could we have some sort of master contact list that when signups are happening or next season etc we just send a master email blast out that goes to any participants family in the last 5 years... just an idea.

appreciate all the Parks director does...great job

Thank you for all the work that is done with youth sports and maintaining the parks. The tennis courts look great! Adding the pickleball courts was a wonderful addition. Our parks and activities are an attraction and we have a lot going on for a small community!