



Commissioners' Message

TO IMPROVE OR NOT TO IMPROVE, THAT IS THE QUESTION

To improve your parks or not to improve your parks, or any of the in-between is the question. In the next few weeks, the Anderson Township Park District will be conducting a random telephone and online survey to gauge the community's perceptions on plans for park improvements.

This survey will focus on the community's support for all, some, or none of the following components:

- **Purchase the Beech Acres Parenting Center's property and the RecPlex** adjacent to Beech Acres Park (the park district does not own the RecPlex or the land on Beechmont Avenue), upgrade the RecPlex, and extend the Beech Acres Park trail;
- **Build a new community recreation center;**
- **Improve the eight existing outdoor parks.**

Land/RecPlex Purchase

We expect it is news to much of the community the park district does not already own the RecPlex (a.k.a. Geiger Center, the "building with the gym"), or some of the surrounding property on Beechmont Avenue. The community has been the benefactor of a long-standing relationship between the park district and Beech Acres Parenting Center. This property has enabled the park district to support the recreational needs of the community. Beginning with our renting of the Geiger Center gym in 1990, followed by our purchase of Beech Acres Park in 1997, generations have enjoyed these assets for recreational purposes.

This property is essential to the immediate, mid-term, and long-term ability for the park district to meet the recreational needs of the community.

Beech Acres Park is a signature feature of Anderson Township. The RecPlex and surrounding property is a gateway to our community. The residents of Anderson have been using this property as recreation space since the 1950's. The additional property would expand Anderson's most popular park into a center for active, healthy life-style opportunities. The land purchase is time sensitive; the time is now for residents to make a choice about this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Immediately, the land purchase would continue the park district's RecPlex business as the hub of our recreation programs, leagues, and events. The current, rented RecPlex is Anderson's only public recreation center. Most large events at Beech Acres Park require the RecPlex and surrounding property, including Greater Anderson Days. The Beech Acres Park maintenance compound also resides on this property, which serves all park district properties. The land purchase would include funds for basic upgrades to the RecPlex (electric, HVAC, ADA accessible restrooms, parking, etc.) and to prepare the new park property for public use, including extending the Beech Acres Park paved trail through this land.

Indoor Recreation Space

The indoor recreation component would bring indoors the best of what the park district does outdoors. The indoor space envisioned includes just the basics:

multi-use athletic courts/event space, activity rooms, and a walking trail. No pools or fitness equipment are envisioned (these are well-represented in the community), but simply what we have learned is needed from our 24 years of experience renting the RecPlex gym and nearly 40 years of providing active recreational opportunities.

Park Improvements

The park district conducted a public input process in 2013 and 2014 to determine the direction for future improvements in the eight existing outdoor parks. Through surveys and community input gathered online and from public focus group sessions, our residents helped shape the list of improvements, including: trail extensions; shade structures; restrooms; infrastructure; indoor space and land acquisition adjacent to existing parks.

The Anderson Township Park District exists to meet the community's recreational needs of today and of tomorrow. The results of this survey are important as it is simply up to the community to help decide the legacy of your Anderson Parks. We value your input, and strongly encourage you to participate.

Please contact Ken Kushner with any questions you may have: KKushner@AndersonParks.com or (513) 388-2492.

Your Board of Park Commissioners:
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