

Berkshire Township parks and trails master plan

NOVEMBER 9, 2018





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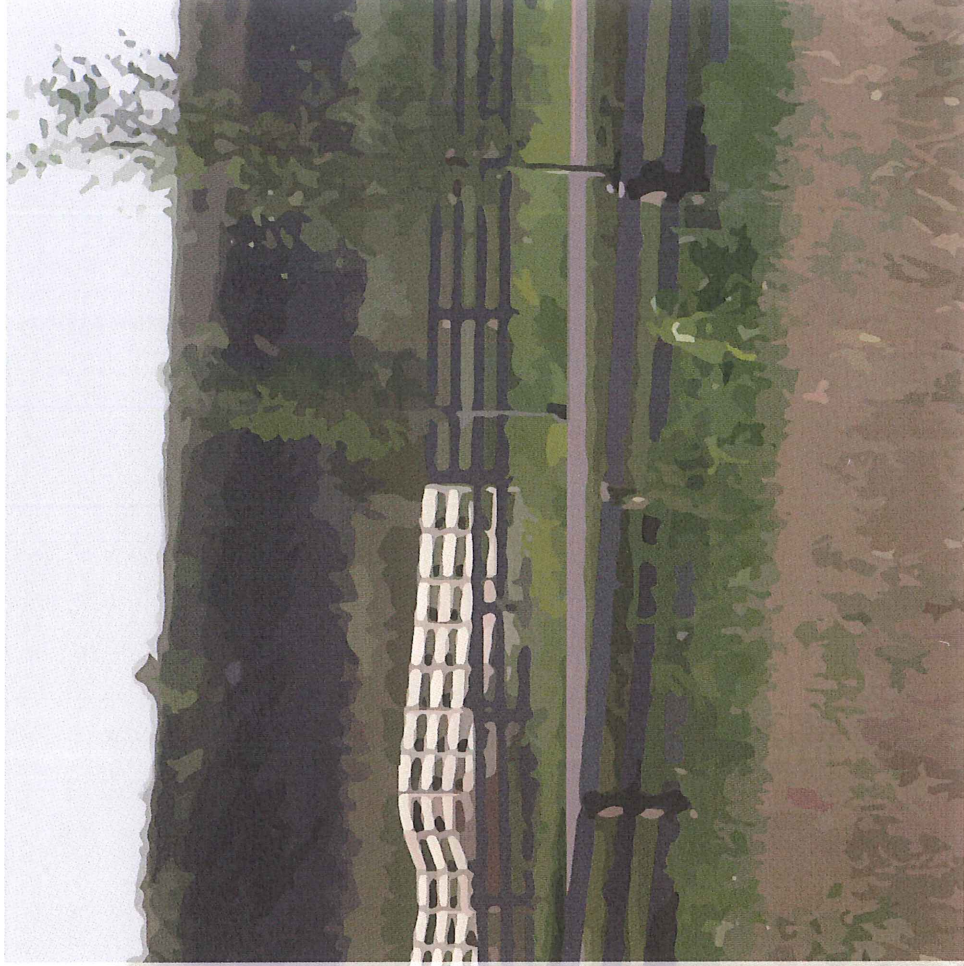


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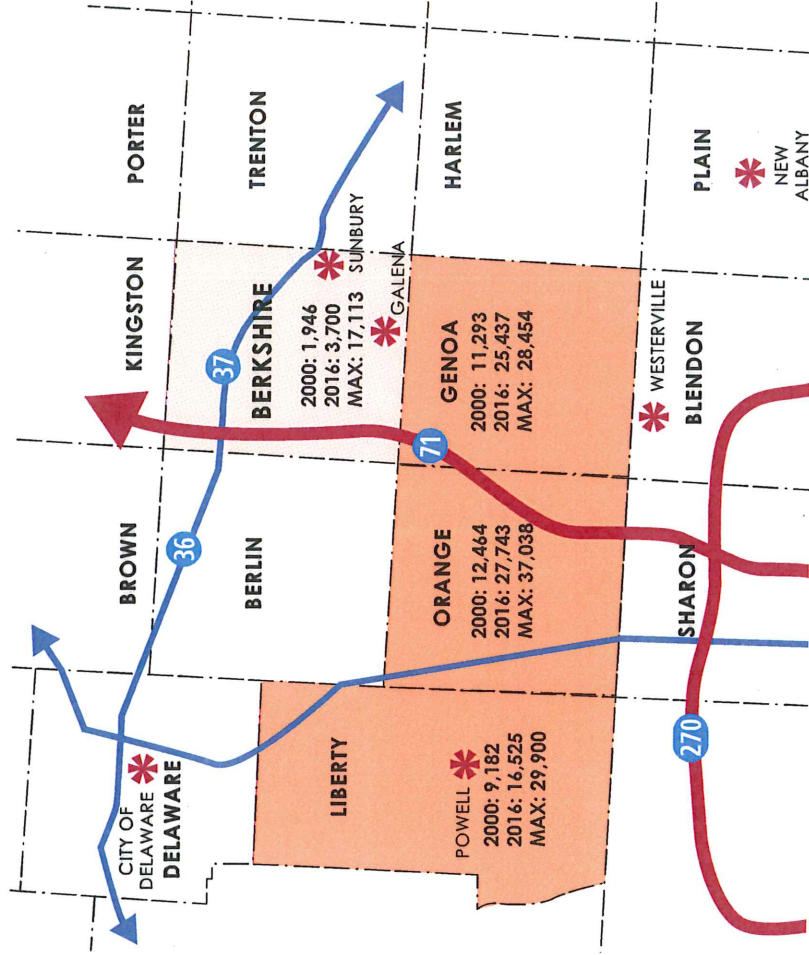




INTRODUCTION

Berkshire Township is a scenic rural community in Delaware County, Ohio. It primarily consists of agricultural land uses that surround two incorporated areas – the Villages of Sunbury and Galena. The rural landscape includes multiple farms, large lot residential properties, mature wood lots, and scenic stream corridors. In recent years, the landscape has begun to change as development pressures have moved north from Columbus and impacted much of southern Delaware County. For Berkshire Township, this has included several planned residential communities and a retail outlet mall. As population continues to grow in the Township, proactive planning and coordination with other jurisdictions on issues of land use, transportation, and infrastructure will be critical to preserving the quality of life for Berkshire Township residents. This also includes a forward-thinking strategy regarding parks, trails, and recreation. By establishing a parks and trails master plan, the Township can preserve natural assets and rural character, enhance the sense of community for all residents, and create a recreational framework that contributes to economic development.

The recommendations of this plan respond to current recreational needs and desires of township residents while supporting regional initiatives for connectivity. It is important to understand that this plan is intended to be a flexible document that responds to a growing Township. Aspects of this plan, including recommendations and implementation strategies, should be regularly reviewed and refined in order to best respond to new opportunities and evolving recreational priorities.



TOWNSHIP GROWTH

Population growth of select Delaware County Townships since 2000 and the maximum population capacity based on Township Comprehensive Plans produced by Delaware County Regional Planning.

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

The Parks and Trails master planning process was initiated in January of 2018. It was organized in three planning phases. First, an **Inventory and Analysis** phase was conducted which included a review of current demographics, a study of existing physical conditions, and the completion of a statistically valid survey of Township residents. This information created the foundation for the **Recommendations** phase of the process. This step included preliminary recommendations for future parks, trails, and recreational programs. Preliminary ideas were also provided for the funding and long-term maintenance of a proposed park system and a potential organizational structure. Following the public review and comments on the recommendations, a final **Implementation Plan** was prepared and incorporated into this final Parks and Trails Master Plan.

Public input and guidance were fundamental to the creation of this master plan. A Planning and Advisory Committee was created to guide the consultant team from the outset of the project. Numerous stakeholder groups were engaged throughout the process including the local school systems, Preservation Parks of Delaware County, Delaware County Regional Planning, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning, and Township staff. Status reports and feedback were received from the Township Trustees at critical points in the process. Perhaps most importantly, the resident survey provided all residents with an opportunity to participate in establishing the recreational needs and priorities of the Township.



MISSION & GOALS

As part of creating the first Township Park in 2017, Trustees, staff and stakeholders established the following Mission Statement to guide the future of parks and recreation for the community.

The Mission of the Berkshire Township Parks is to provide diverse year-round leisure opportunities for residents of Berkshire Township. We strive to strengthen the bonds of community and enhance quality of life for present and future generations.

In support of this mission, the consultant team worked with the Planning and Advisory Committee to establish more specific goals that would guide the planning recommendations of this master plan. These goals are as follows:

GOALS

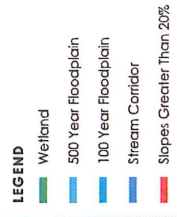
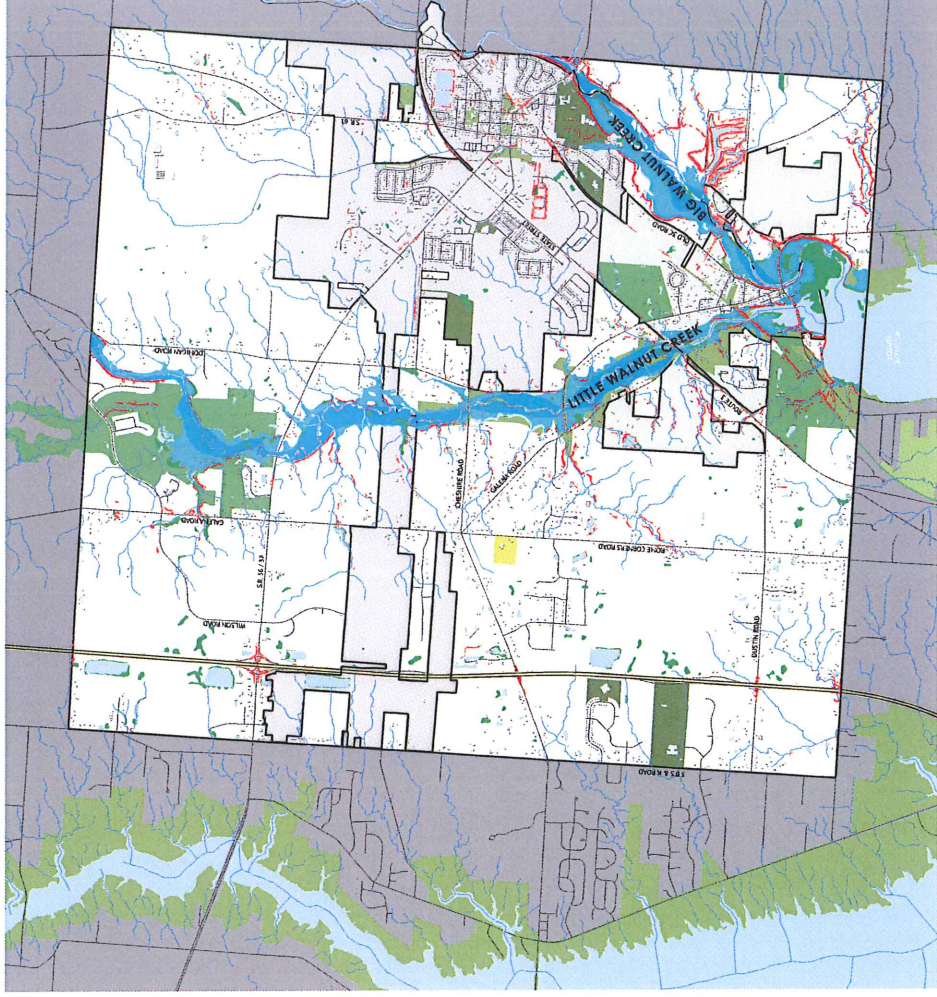
- 1 | **Create Community.**
Preserve and reinforce the unique sense of place of Berkshire Township. Create a place that people value and desire to live, work, and play.
- 2 | **Attainable and Flexible.**
Establish a vision for a parks and trails system that is financially attainable while creating places and facilities that are flexible and multi-functional to respond to evolving needs of the community.
- 3 | **Preservation Ethic.**
Establish a culture that values the Township's natural, historical and cultural resources.
- 4 | **Recreation for All.**
Create recreational facilities for all people regardless of age or ability.
- 5 | **Connect.**
Connect destinations through a comprehensive and safe trail system. The trail system should be recognized by users as part of the overall park system.
- 6 | **Economic Impact.**
Utilize parks and trails as part of the economic development strategy of the Township. This includes coordinating parks and connections with land use planning, zoning and development plans, and transportation strategies.



2 INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

NATURAL ASSETS

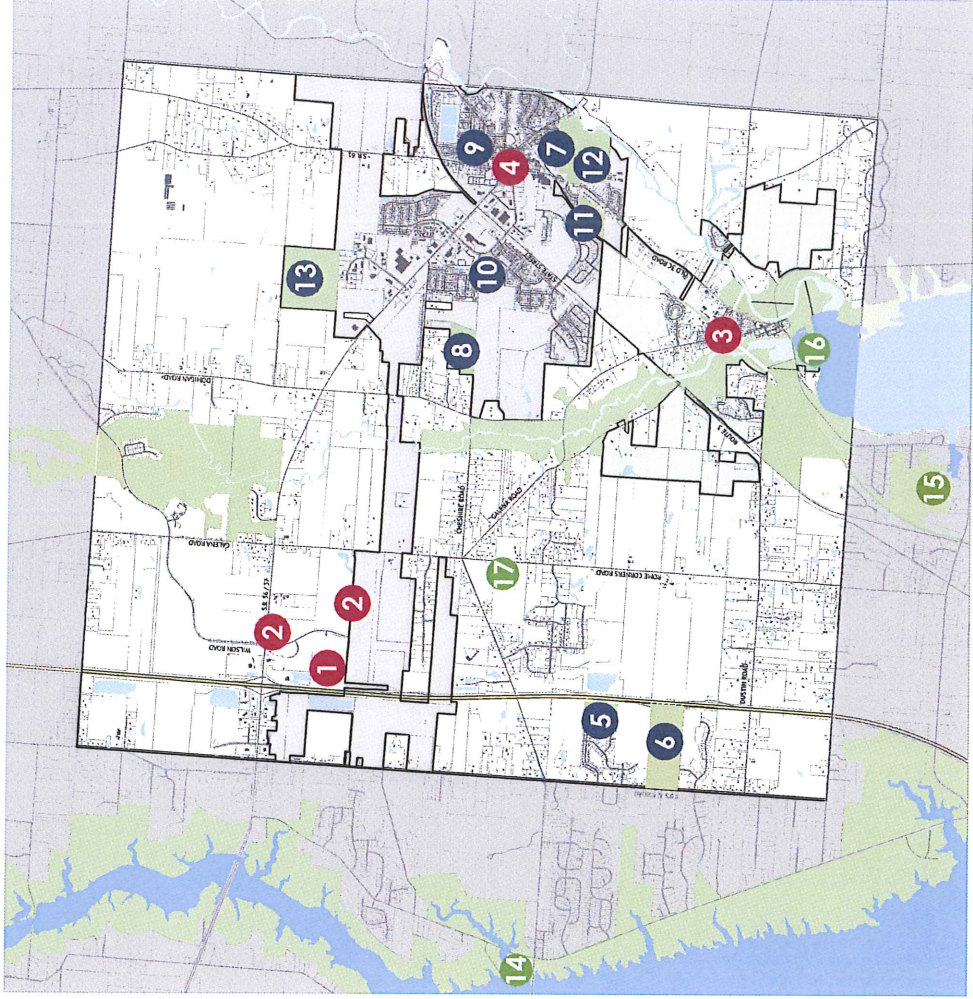
Berkshire Township's best natural features are generally associated with the Little Walnut Creek and Big Walnut Creek watersheds. These streams feed into the Hoover Reservoir and Recreational Area to the south. These scenic stream corridors include mature woods and wildlife. The Little Walnut Creek creates a natural north/south corridor from the Northstar community in the northern part of the Township to Galena and Hoover Reservoir to the south. The City of Columbus owns a significant portion of the land immediately adjacent to the Little Walnut Creek as a water quality protection measure for the Hoover Reservoir water supply.



EXISTING DESTINATIONS

In order to prepare a vision for future parks and trails in Berkshire Township, it is important to identify the existing places that currently are considered important destinations within the community. These include schools, shopping/entertainment hubs, and existing parks and open spaces.

- MIXED USE**
- 1 Tanger Outlets
- 2 Future Mixed-Use Development Zone
- 3 Downtown Galena
- 4 Downtown Sunbury
- SCHOOLS**
- 5 Johnycake Corners Elementary
- 6 Berkshire Middle School
- 7 Big Walnut Intermediate School (5-6)
- 8 Big Walnut Middle School (7-8)
- 9 Harrison Street Elementary
- 10 General Rosecrans Elementary
- 11 Big Walnut Elementary
- 12 Big Walnut High School
- 13 Future Big Walnut High School
- PARKS**
- 14 Alum Creek State Park
- 15 Char-Mar Ridge Park
- 16 Hoover Reservoir
- 17 Central Park + Township Hall



Schools

Berkshire Township is fortunate to be served by two successful school districts. The Big Walnut School District serves most of the Township including all areas east of Interstate 71. The district currently includes a high school, middle school, intermediate school, and four elementary schools and is currently planning for expansion including a new high school and new elementary school that will be located on the northern edge of Sunbury.

The Olentangy School District serves the western edge of the Township including all areas west of Interstate 71. A middle school and an elementary school are located along 3Bs & K Road.



Big Walnut Middle School



Olentangy Berkshire Middle School

Mixed-use Areas

Downtown Sunbury and Downtown Galena are mixed use areas with a limited mix of retail, restaurants, and professional offices. They are unique environments with historic character and walkable streetscapes. These districts both have good access to the Ohio to Erie trail corridor. A more recent destination is the Tanger Outlet Mall. This is primarily an auto-oriented destination, but trail access has been provided via Wilson Road.

In the future, the Township can anticipate significant mixed-use development in the area near the Route 36/37 & Interstate 71 interchange. In addition, a recent annexation by the Village of Sunbury anticipates a new interchange south of the current interchange along with a new mixed-use corridor known as "Sunbury Parkway". A shared use path is planned along this corridor.



Downtown Sunbury



Downtown Galena



Tanger Outlets

Recreational Areas

Berkshire Township is fortunate to have several significant recreational areas in very close proximity. Alum Creek State Park is located just west of the Township and can be accessed from State Route 36/37, Cheshire Road, and Dustin Road. This park offers boating, fishing, camping, hiking, and mountain biking. Hoover Reservoir and Recreation Area is located along the southern boundary of the Township and offers boating, fishing, hiking, and other outdoor pursuits.

Char-Mar Ridge Park is part of the Preservation Parks of Delaware County open space system. This park is located just south of the Township in Genoa Township. This is a 128-acre passive park that is mostly wooded and includes a trail system.

There are also several golf courses within Berkshire Township. Blackhawk Golf Club is a public facility located along Dustin Road. Bent Tree Golf Club is located along State Route 36/37 and is also open to the public. NorthStar Golf Club is a private golf course that is part of the NorthStar planned community.



Hoover Mudflats Boardwalk



Char-Mar Ridge



Alum Creek State Park

EXISTING AND PLANNED PARKS AND TRAILS

In 2017, **Central Park** was established as the first park in the Township. It includes a play area, pollinator garden, and learning trail. This park is centrally located and adjacent to **Township Hall**. A master plan currently exists for expanding this park. In the summer of 2018, the Township was awarded a matching grant from the Delaware County Trails Fund to establish the first phase of the **Rome Corners Road Trail**. This segment will be constructed at Central Park along the Rome Corners Road frontage.

The Delaware County Trails Plan was completed in 2017. This plan established a unified vision for a complete trail system throughout the County. Key connections within Berkshire Township include:

Ohio to Erie Trail

This is a recreational trail that spans the State of Ohio from Cincinnati to Cleveland. It passes through the southeast portion of the Township. This trail is nearly complete across the State, but a few critical segments still need to be completed near Sunbury and Galena. Completion of this trail is a high priority.

Cheshire to Galena Route

This connection is identified as an on-road route that provides an important east/west connection across the county connecting several important trails. Within Berkshire Township, this route would provide an important connection from Alum Creek State Park to Galena and the Hoover Recreation Area.

Wilson Road Trail

This existing trail has been partially constructed as part of the NorthStar Community and the Tanger Outlets. Final segments are planned to be completed as development continues in this area.

Sunbury Parkway Trail

Although not specifically identified in the Delaware County Trails Plan, a shared use path has also been proposed as part of the Sunbury Parkway plan within the Village of Sunbury. This will provide an important east/west route that should be considered part of the overall trail network.



Central Park



Ohio to Erie Trail



Central Park



Galena Road

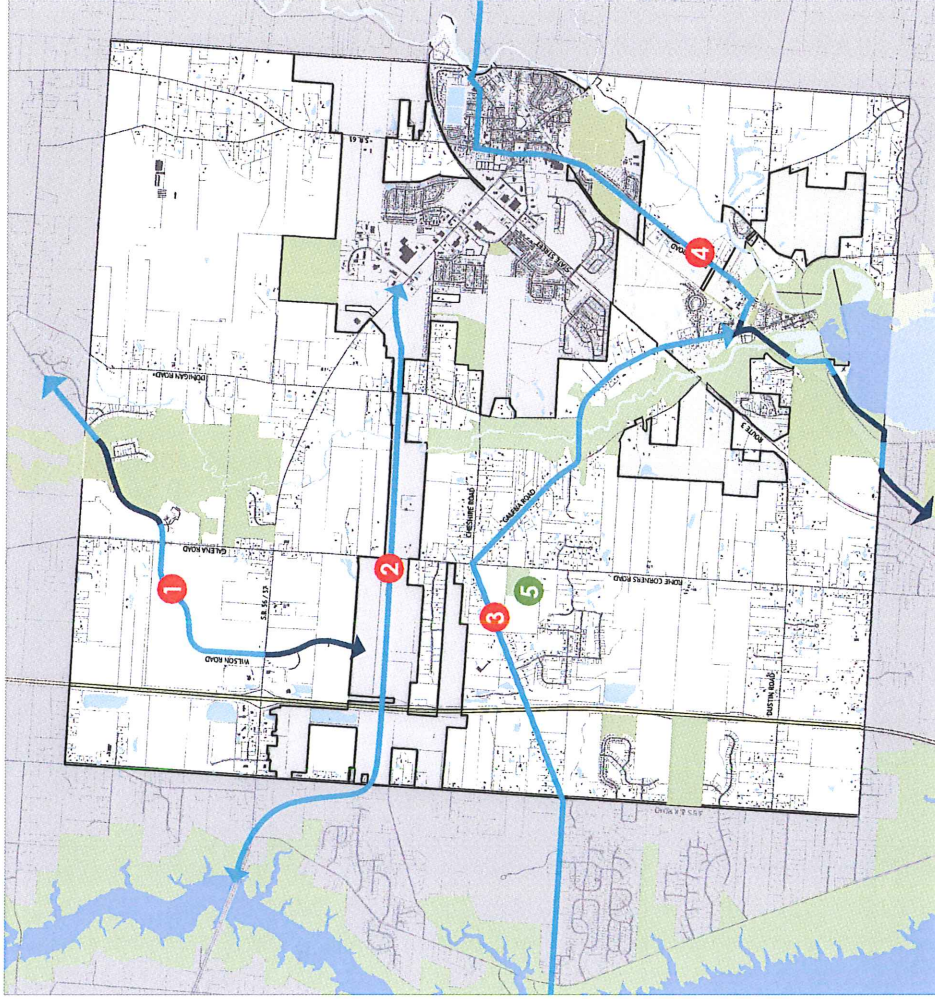


Berkshire Township Hall



Wilson Road Trail

EXISTING TRAILS AND PARKS

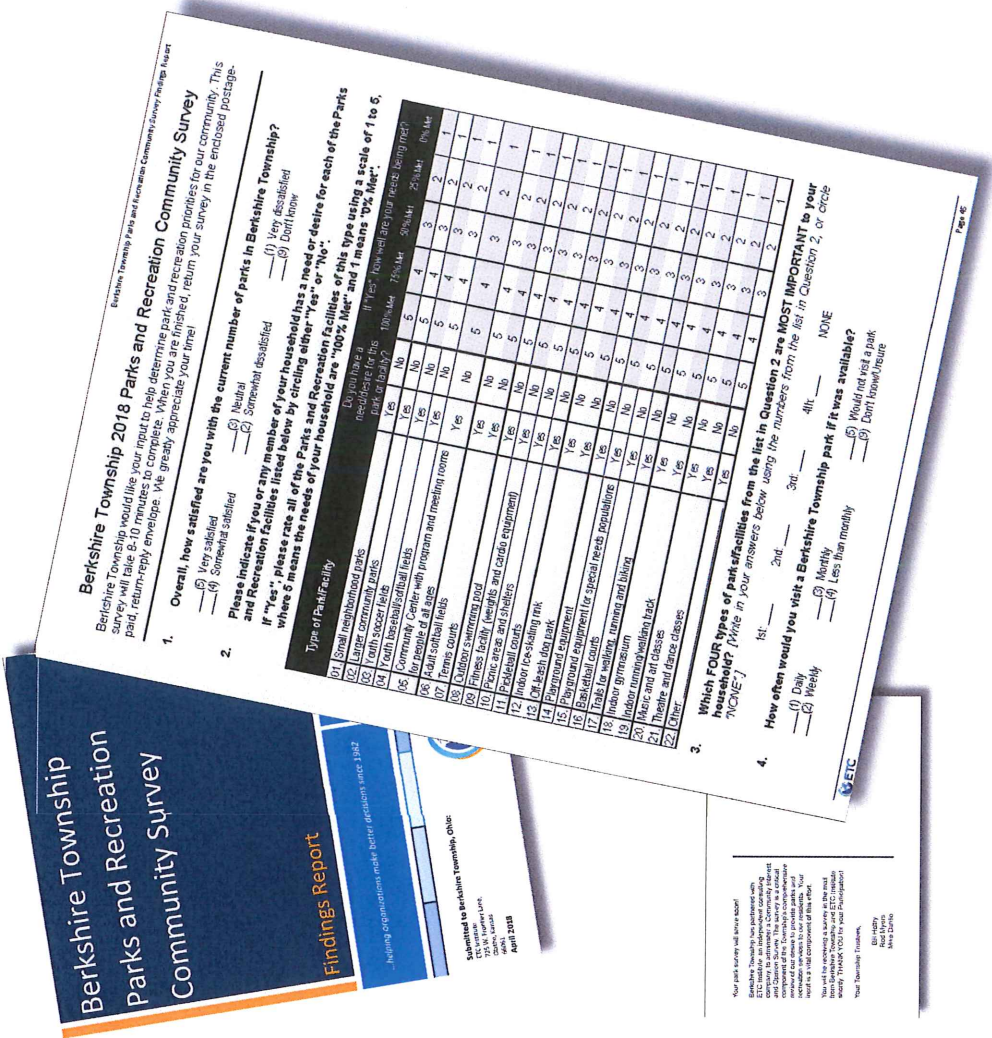


COMMUNITY SURVEY

In the spring of 2018, a community survey was conducted to help the Township establish priorities for the future needs of residents for parks, recreation facilities, programs, and services. This survey is a critical element that helps the Township develop a community-driven approach to decision-making regarding parks, trails, and recreation.

Frequently Asked Questions About the Survey

- 1. Who was surveyed?**
A survey was mailed to every Township household with follow up correspondence typically by email, phone call or post card.
- 2. How many surveys were sent out and how many were completed and returned?**
The survey was sent to 1,633 households. The goal was to receive 200 completed surveys in order for the survey to be considered statistically valid, however 402 were completed and returned. This is an excellent sample size.
- 3. How accurate are the results of this survey? How does just 402 completed surveys represent all 1,633 households?**
For a sample of 1,633 households, 402 completed surveys has a margin of error of +/-4.25% at the 95% level of confidence. This means that if the survey was conducted 100 times, 95 times the results would be within +/-4.25% of what was reported.
- 4. What makes this survey "statistically valid"?**
The reason that this survey is "statistically valid" is that every household in the Township was mailed a survey and the demographics (e.g. age, gender, family size, etc.) of survey respondents reflects the actual population demographics of the Township.

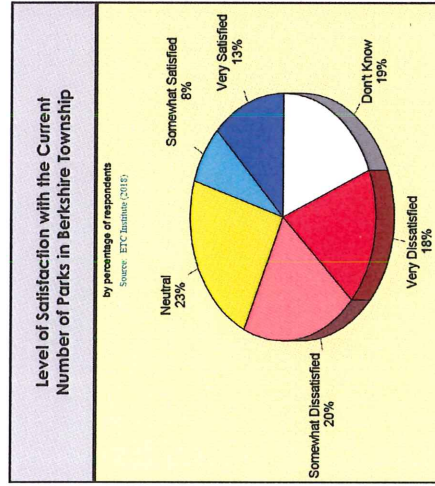


Summary of Survey Results

The following is a summary of some of the key findings from the community survey. For more details regarding the results, please see the Berkshire Township Parks and Recreation Community Survey Findings Report.

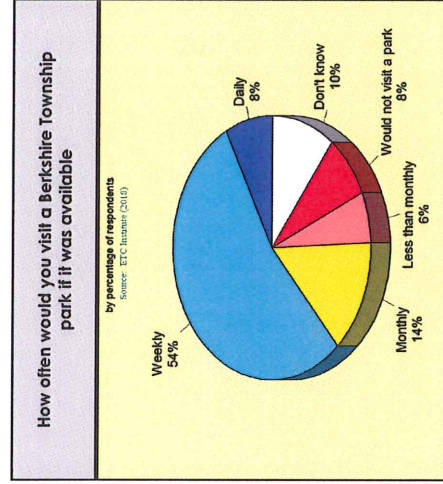
Result #1: Level of Satisfaction

Residents are not satisfied with the current number of parks in Berkshire Township. Only 21% are "very satisfied" or "satisfied", compared to 38% who are "somewhat dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied".



Result #2: Potential Frequency Of Use

Over 80% of households would visit a Township park if it were available. This includes 62% that would visit a park at least weekly.



Result #3: Highest Priorities for Investment

In order to identify the highest priority recreational facilities or amenities, survey questions that asked residents about "unmet park and facility needs" were weighed with questions that asked residents about the relative "importance of parks and facilities". The following four facilities were rated as the highest priorities for investment.

1. Trails for walking, running and biking
2. Outdoor swimming pool
3. Larger community parks
4. Fitness facility

Result #4: Program Needs and Priorities

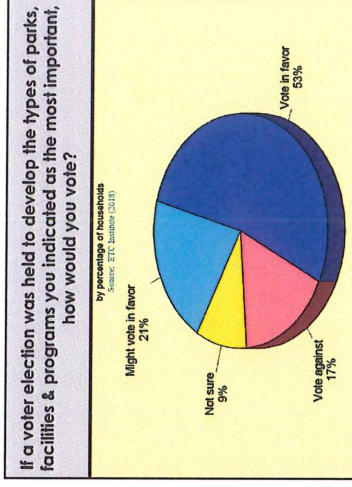
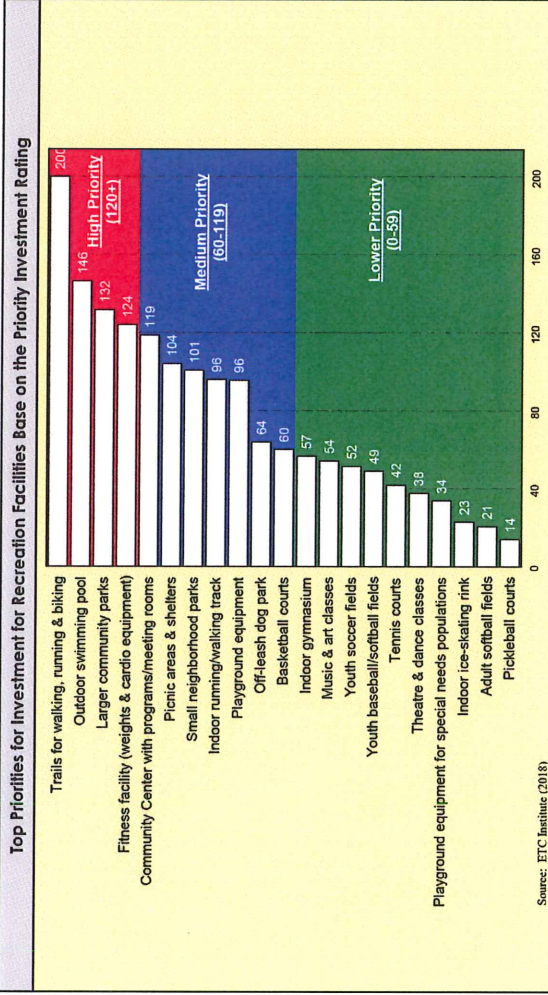
Residents were also asked to rank the potential recreational programs that they would be most interested in supporting. The following four programs were rated highest priority.

1. Community-wide special events
2. Nature and outdoor recreation programs for youth and adults in future township parks
3. Recreation programs for youth and adults in sports
4. Recreational youth summer camps and after school programs

Residents were generally more interested in supporting the creation of new facilities such as parks, trails, and amenities over the creation of recreational programs.

Result #5: Level of Support

There is strong support for developing the types of facilities and programs that were ranked by residents as high priorities. Nearly three-fourths of households would "vote in favor" (53%) or "might vote in favor" (21%) in an election. Only 17% would "vote against".



5 RECOMMENDATIONS

PARKS & TRAILS FRAMEWORK PLAN

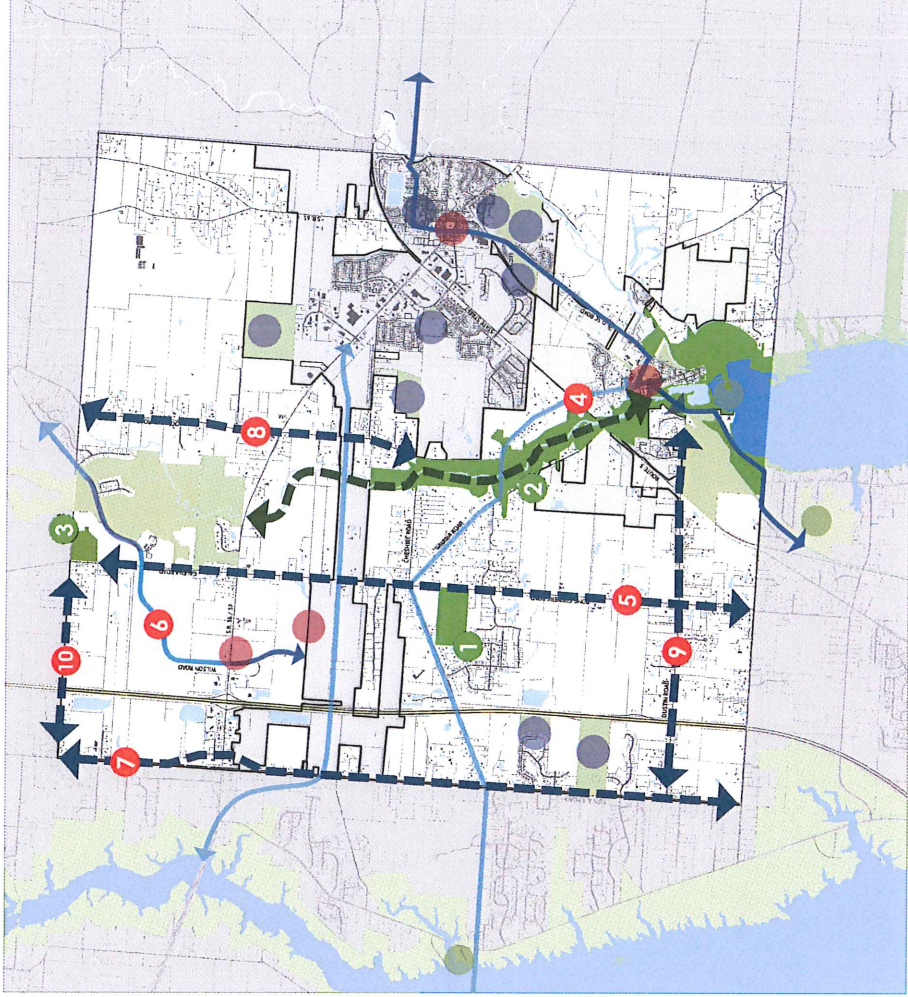
The vision for parks, trails, and recreation in Berkshire Township is the result of combining numerous factors and influences. Existing natural features must be protected while anticipating future growth and responding to the community's desires for recreational facilities and programs. Proactively identifying the places that people value and protecting them for future generations is a critical first step. Secondly, creating connections between these destinations for pedestrians, cyclists, and automobiles expands a multi-modal network that benefits the entire region. Simply put, **Destinations & Connections** are the foundation of the Berkshire Township Park System. The following Framework Plan builds upon previous planning efforts by Mid-Ohio Regional Planning, Delaware County, and other adjacent Townships and Municipalities to create a vision for parks and trails in Berkshire Township that not only benefits its residents, but also the entire region.

In addition to existing destinations such as schools, mixed-use districts, and regional recreation areas, this Framework Plan identifies the following Township Park Destinations:

1. Central Park
2. Little Walnut Creek Greenway
3. NorthStar Park

The following proposed network of Township Trail Connections will provide connectivity to destinations throughout the Township and to the greater regional trail network:

4. Cheshire to Galena Bike Route
5. Rome Corners Road Shared-Use Trail
6. Wilson Road Shared-Use Trail
7. 3B's & K Shared-Use Trail
8. Dustin Road Shared-Use Trail
9. Carter's Corners Shared-Use Trail
10. Berkshire Road Shared-Use Trail



LEGEND

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PROPOSED PARK DESTINATIONS

Central Park

Central Park was created in 2017 and is the first public park space in the Township. The central location of this park and its adjacency to the Township offices and service complex makes it the ideal place to centralize many of the Township's future recreational needs. Several high priority facilities that were identified by the resident survey could be accommodated at this location. This park will benefit through adjacent land acquisition allowing phased improvements over time. The following recommendations are intended to respond to the highest priority needs with an attainable near-term solution. Long-term considerations are also identified to provide guidance for potential future recreational needs of the Township.

Near-term Improvements (1 to 5 years):

1. Establish the park as the Township's primary community park by creating an active zone on the eastern portion and a more passive zone on the western portion.
2. Create a new park entry to the south of the existing Township Hall entry. This will create a main entrance to the park that minimizes conflicts with daily operations of Township Hall and service vehicles.
3. Enhance the eastern portion of the park with pedestrian paths, parking area, a pavilion/restroom building, a fishing pond/storm water retention pond, an event lawn, and a completed children's garden.
4. Enhance the western portion of the park with nature trails, a shelter and trail head kiosk, and parking area. Preserve the woodland area and establish a naturalized meadow area. Incorporate signage to identify trail distances and to describe interpretive/educational elements of the meadow and woodland.
5. Establish the first phase of the Rome Corners Road Trail along the west side of Rome Corners Road. Build the trail to match Delaware County standards.



Existing Children's Garden



Play Structure



Pavilion/Restroom



Pond/Fishing



Event Lawn



Shelter/Trail Head



Meadow Trail



Woodland Trail

Long-term Considerations (beyond 5 years):

Parcel A

The community survey identified an outdoor pool as a high priority recreation facility. The area designated as the event lawn in Parcel A could be considered as one of the potential future pool locations. Any decision to locate the pool in this area should consider the value of the event lawn for daily recreation and community programs. Parking areas in Parcel A can be expanded to respond to long-term demands. Future demand could be the result of increased Township population and/or changing uses within the park such as recreation fields, an outdoor pool, etc.

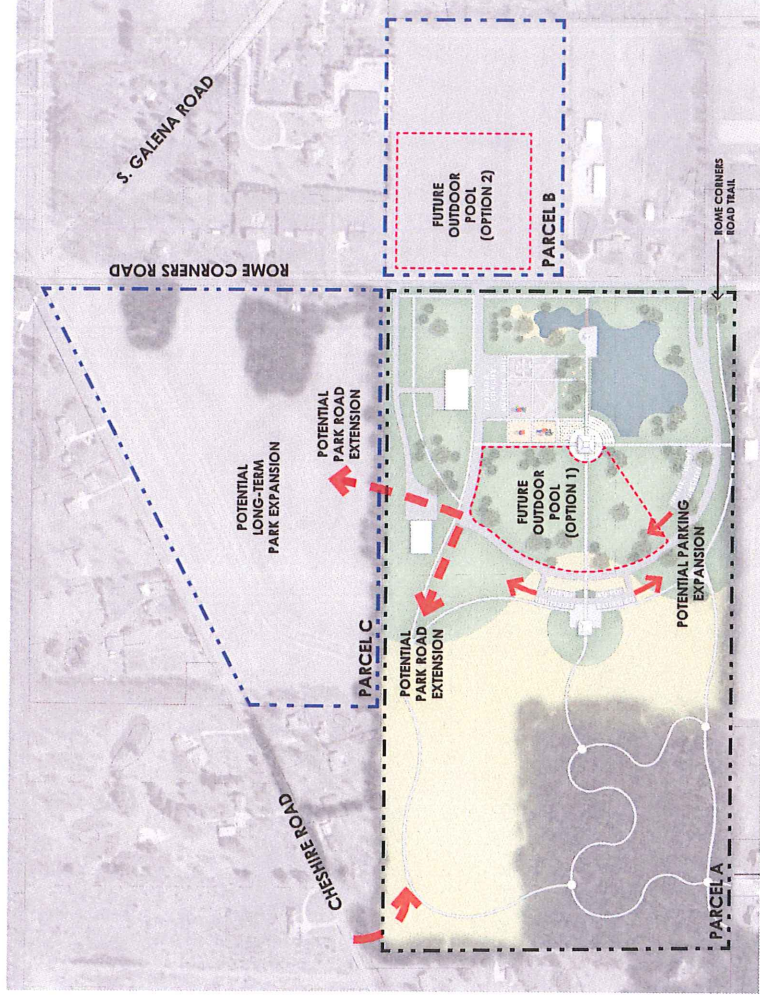
Parcel B

This +/-12-acre parcel east of Rome Corners Road provides flexibility for a variety of potential future uses. An outdoor pool could be considered on this site with area remaining for recreation fields and parking. If recreational facilities are developed on Parcel B, then careful consideration should be given to providing safe pedestrian access across Rome Corners Road.

Another long-term consideration for Parcel B would be to utilize this area as a future Township Service Complex. As the Township grows, additional area may be required for various departments including vehicle service and storage. This would allow additional area on the west side of Rome Corners Road that is currently being used for service functions to be used for park program expansion.

Parcel C

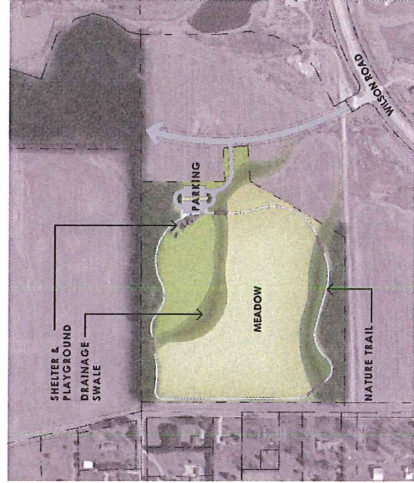
This +/-27-acre parcel is located directly north of Parcel A and represents a long-term area for potential expansion of Central Park. Consideration of the acquisition of this area should be based on Township growth and the potential need for recreational facilities that require larger amounts of acreage. Such facilities may include multiple recreation fields and/or a community center. This parcel offers direct access to Cheshire Road and high visibility to the "five points" intersection.



PROPOSED PARK DESTINATIONS

NorthStar Park

NorthStar Park is a 29-acre undeveloped open space that is part of the planned community of NorthStar. This parcel was designated for public use as part of the community approval process. While this parcel is privately owned, the future use of the park should provide recreational benefit to the larger community. An initial phase could include a small parking lot, a picnic shelter, a playground, and a walking/jogging path. As the population grows and recreational needs change, this park could provide additional amenities including recreation fields. Connectivity to this park will be provided via the Wilson Road shared use trail.



NorthStar Park Concept Plan

Little Walnut Creek Greenway

Perhaps the most significant natural asset within the Township is the Little Walnut Creek corridor. The City of Columbus owns substantial property along the corridor to preserve the watershed which provides a primary water source to the City via the Hoover Reservoir. Berkshire Township should continue to partner with the City to provide a unique recreational opportunity to residents through the identification of a trail system and a few trail head locations that are most sensitive to this environment. Design solutions should be created in collaboration with the City of Columbus for tree/plant protection, invasive species mitigation, trail locations, trail materials, interpretive signage, and trail head parking areas. Preservation Parks of Delaware County should also be included as a strategic partner regarding discussions of land acquisition and design. These partnerships will be critical to preserving this important asset.



Potential Greenway Trail Character



Typical Greenway Cross-Section

PROPOSED TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Connectivity between the various destinations of Berkshire Township will create a network that allows residents to choose alternative forms of transportation including walking and biking. This system of trails will be built with safe and accessible routes for all users. The trails will match the standards and specifications that are recommended by Mid-Ohio Regional Planning and Delaware County in order to insure consistency within the larger regional trail system.

As discussed in the Inventory and Analysis chapter of this report, the Ohio to Erie Trail is a high priority statewide trail that crosses the southeast quadrant of the Township. The completion of the remaining segments of this trail will provide a recreational and economic benefit to the region and Berkshire Township. In addition, the Sunbury Parkway Trail will provide an important east/west connection across the township as it connects Downtown Sunbury to the future mixed-use district near Interstate 71. While these major routes may be located within adjacent municipalities, they are important pieces of a larger network of connectivity. The following corridors should be priorities for Berkshire Township as they attempt to link destinations and connect to a larger network of trails.

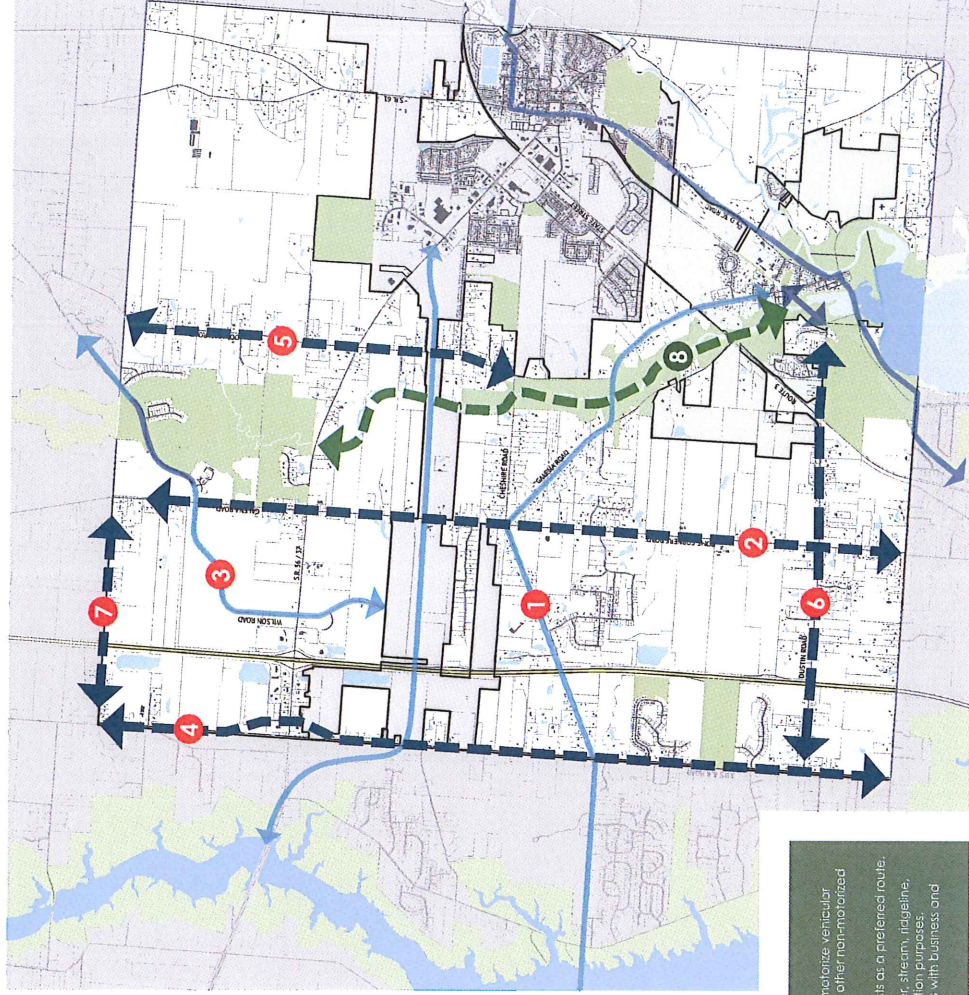
1. Cheshire to Galena Bike Route
2. Rome Corners Road Shared-Use Trail
3. Wilson Road Shared-Use Trail
4. 38th & K Shared Use Trail
5. Dustin Road Shared-Use Trail
6. Carter's Corner Shared-Use Trail
7. Berkshire Road Shared-Use Trail

Trail Types:

Shared-Use Trail: Shared-use trails encompass facilities physically separated from motorized vehicular traffic by an open space or barrier and may be used by pedestrians, bicyclists and other non-motorized users.

On-Road Route: A shared lane, either signed or unsigned, that is for use by bicyclists as a preferred route, to-trail, canal, or other route for conservation, recreation, or alternative transportation purposes. Greenways can connect parks, nature preserves, cultural facilities, and historic sites with business and residential areas.

Source: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning, Central Ohio Trail Design Standards.



LEGEND

- 1 Cheshire to Galena Bike Route
- 2 Rome Corners Road Shared-Use Trail
- 3 Wilson Road Shared-Use Trail
- 4 38th & K Shared-Use Trail
- 5 Carter's Corners Shared-Use Trail
- 6 Dustin Road Shared-Use Trail
- 7 Berkshire Road Shared-Use Trail
- 8 Greenway

1. Cheshire to Galena On-Road Route

This is an east/west route that was identified in the Delaware County Trail Plan as a high priority. It provides connectivity from Alum Creek State Park to Downtown Galena and the Hoover Recreation Area. This linkage is identified as an on-road route. West of Rome Corners Road, the route is part of the Cheshire Road corridor. East of Rome Corners Road, the route follows South Galena Road to Little Walnut Creek and continues to Galena. As Berkshire Township coordinates the future implementation of this route with MORPC and Delaware County, consideration should be given to maximizing functionality, use, and safety. This may include the consideration of bicycle markings on pavement, signage, dedicated bike lanes, and possibly segments where the trail is separated from vehicular lanes of traffic. Opportunities for separated shared use trails are dependent on right-of-way widths and/or easements that can be attained from property owners.



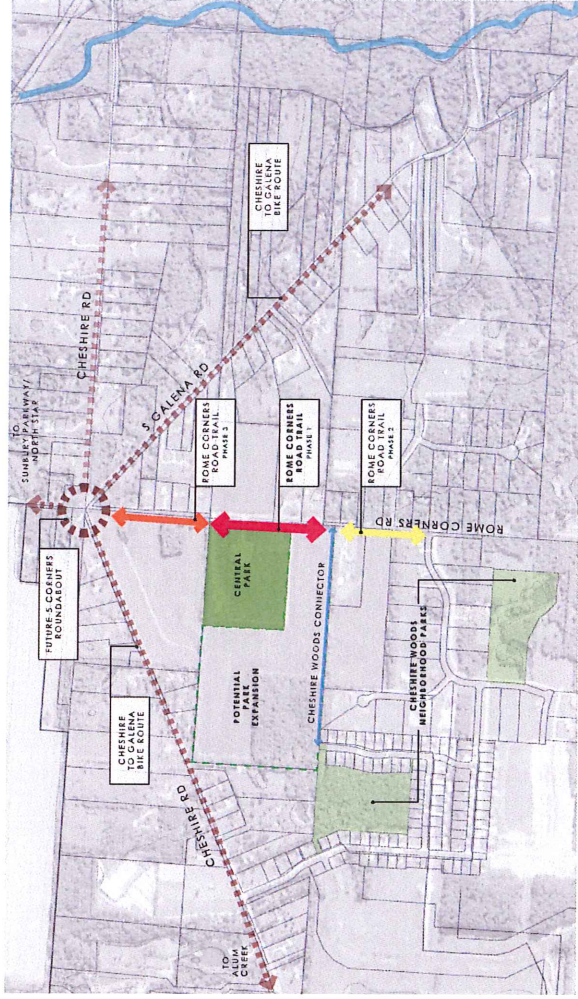
Galena Road Corridor

2. Rome Corners Road Shared-Use Trail

This corridor represents an important north/south connection that provides linkages to numerous destinations including the NorthStar Community, the Sunbury Parkway corridor, and Central Park. In addition, this route will provide a critical trail connection for future residential development that is anticipated within the southwest quadrant of the Township.

Phase 1 of the trail will occur at the existing Central Park along the west side of Rome Corners Road. This Parks and Trails Master Planning effort was instrumental in receiving a grant from Delaware County Trails Fund in the summer of 2018. Future phases should connect the trail south to the Cheshire Woods subdivision and north to the five points intersection.

Long-term phases should be coordinated with future mixed-use development along South Galena Road (north of the five points intersection) and with future residential development to the south along Rome Corners Road. The Rome Corners Road Trail should be developed as a shared use trail that is separated from vehicular traffic to maximize safety for a diverse group of potential users.



3. Wilson Road Shared-Use Trail

This existing shared use trail has been constructed as part of roadway improvements associated with the NorthStar Community and the Tanger Outlet Mall. The missing segments of this trail should be constructed as part of future development that will occur along Wilson Road. The trail should ultimately be extended to the south to the future Sunbury Parkway and the Sunbury Parkway shared use trail. Based on the anticipated growth in this part of the Township, the Wilson Road Trail will likely become a very heavily used route.



Existing Wilson Road Trail

4. 3Bs and K Shared-Use Trail

Although this corridor is located at the western edge of the Township, it serves a similar function as the Rome Corners Road Trail. It provides a north/south connection that provides linkages to numerous destinations including the SR 36/37 interchange mixed-use area, the future Sunbury Parkway corridor, and an Olentangy elementary and middle school. This route will provide a critical trail connection for existing and future residential neighborhoods along the 3Bs and K Road corridor. In 2018, a shared use path was constructed as part of the initial phase of the Northlake Woods subdivision along Fourwinds Drive near SR 36/37. This segment represents the initial phase of this north/south corridor.



3B's & K Corridor

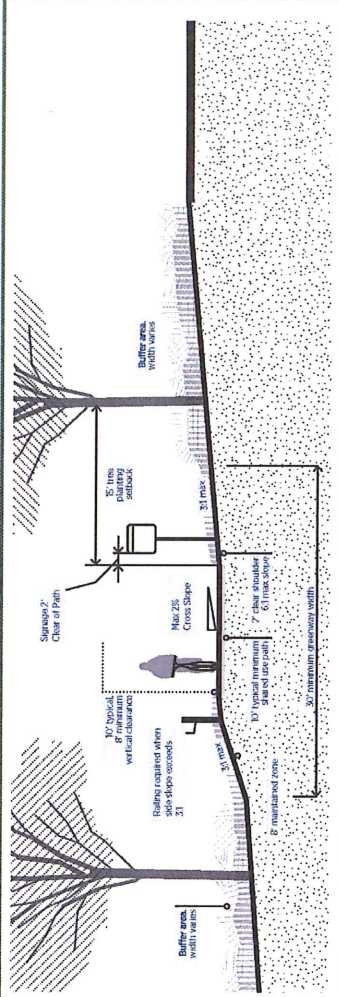
5. Dustin Road Shared-Use Trail

This corridor is located along the southern edge of the Township and provides an east/west connection for residents in the southwest quadrant to Blackhawk Golf Club, Hoover Recreation Area, and Downtown Galena. This route will provide a trail connection for existing and future residential neighborhoods along the Dustin Road corridor. This trail should be developed as a shared use trail that is separated from vehicular traffic to maximize safety for a diverse group of potential users.



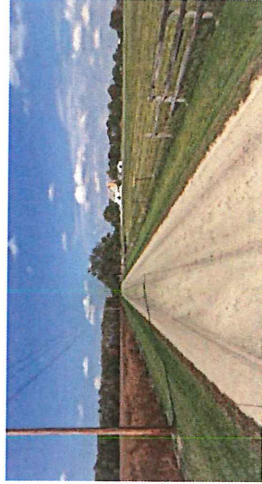
Dustin Road Corridor

Shared Use Trails – Design Guidelines
 When possible, new trail connections within the Township should be designed as shared use trails that are separated from vehicular lanes of traffic. All trail design should be coordinated with existing guidelines and standards that are recommended by Delaware County and/or Mid-Ohio Regional Planning. The following standard shared use trail section is a guideline provided by Mid-Ohio Regional Planning. Additional guidelines and trail resources can be found at www.centralohiogreenways.com/community-resources



6. Carter's Corner Shared-Use Trail

Carter's Corners Road provides a north/south link to the northeast quadrant of Berkshire Township. Establishing a trail along this corridor should be coordinated with future residential development. If residential land uses occur in this area, a shared-use trail will provide important access south to the future Sunbury Parkway shared-use trail and the Little Walnut Creek Greenway. In addition, this corridor may also provide a critical route to the future Big Walnut High School. Safe Routes to School grants could be pursued to help fund critical segments of this trail system.



7. Berkshire Road Shared-Use Trail

Berkshire Road creates the northwest boundary of Berkshire Township. A shared use trail along this corridor should be coordinated with future improvements to NorthStar Park and any additional residential land uses that occur along the corridor. Residential communities west of Interstate 71, such as Northlake Woods, will also increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic along this corridor. Berkshire Township should coordinate with Kingston Township to the north regarding final trail location based on future land uses within both Townships and anticipated Berkshire Road improvements.



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND CONNECTIVITY

While the framework of major destinations and connections is described in this master plan, individual neighborhoods also contribute to the overall recreational system. Township zoning standards prescribe requirements for open space and subdivision development that are essential to the quality of life of all residents. This is evident in the planning and development of recent neighborhoods in the Township. With the creation of this Parks and Trails Master Plan, future development can be planned with this vision in mind resulting in a Township that is even more connected through recreation and wellness. The following components of future neighborhood development will help insure this vision.

Neighborhood Parks

The creation of meaningful park spaces is part of the planning and design of quality neighborhoods. Residential developers should follow zoning and subdivision design standards and create public places that benefit neighborhood residents. These places should typically be 1 to 2 acres in size and should provide neighborhood amenities such as playgrounds, walking paths, informal open lawn areas, furniture, and lighting. These parks should be within an easy walking distance (typically 1/4-1/2 mile) to residents and be accessible to all potential users. Home owner associations should be established to insure upkeep and maintenance of these parks.

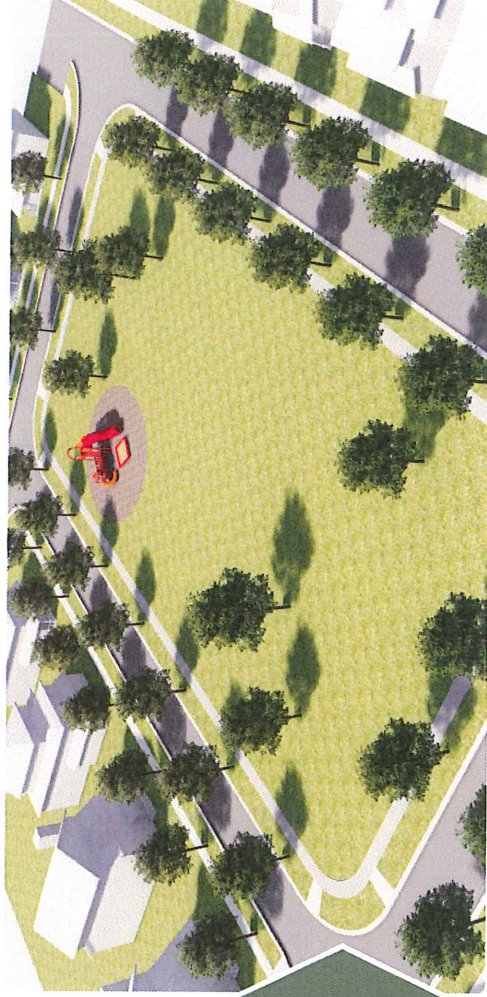
Design Principles for Neighborhood Parks:

1. Typical size should be 1/2 acre to 2 acres. Larger parks may be appropriate when preserving existing natural features including trees, wetlands, drainage corridors, and steep slopes.
2. Locate neighborhood parks within 1/4 mile to 1/2 mile of residents.
3. Parks should include neighborhood amenities such as open lawn areas, walking paths, playgrounds, furniture, and lighting.
4. Parks should be highly visible from the front of adjacent homes and from public streets to create visual surveillance of the park.

Township Trail Implementation
New neighborhoods that are developed along the Township Trail corridors established in this master plan should build the segments of these trails that occur within that neighborhood's road frontage. For example, a new neighborhood built along 500 feet of Rome Corner Road frontage would be required to build that 500-foot long segment of the Rome Corners Road Trail. The trail would be built to the standards required by the Township and Delaware County. The trail could be located within the public road right-of-way or within an easement that is part of a building or lot setback from the adjacent public road. The Township should continue to pursue matching grants from various sources to create additional connectivity between these neighborhoods along the critical routes described in this master plan. Safe Routes to School grants should be considered near school destinations.

Complete Streets Policy

As the Township grows and changes, establishing a philosophy of how people will move along public corridors will contribute greatly to the quality of life for all residents. New neighborhood streets and improvements to existing roads should all be contributing to a vision for Complete Streets. Complete Streets are roadways designed to safely and comfortably accommodate all users, including, but not limited to motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, transit and school bus riders, delivery and service personnel, freight haulers, and emergency responders. "All users" includes people of all ages and abilities. Numerous Central Ohio communities have adopted a Complete Streets Policy including Liberty Township in Delaware County, The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission works with communities to establish Complete Streets Policies and provides on-line resources. The Township should develop their own policy to guide future development.



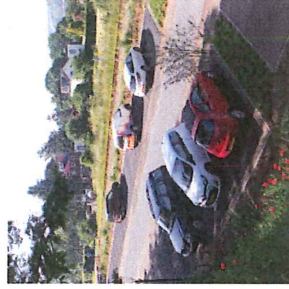
THE PARK SYSTEM BRAND

The Master Planning process included engagement with a Planning Advisory Committee, Township Trustees, and the general public through a resident survey and public open house. Through this process, several themes began to influence the image and identity of a future park system. Certainly, the community values the open space that is so prevalent throughout the Township. As the population grows, it is important to preserve natural assets and the rural character of the community. The following brand elements are intended to establish excitement about the future of parks, trails, and recreation within the Township while celebrating its history and natural features.

Logo Concepts



Park Elements



RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

In addition to recommendations for new parks and trail facilities, recreational programs bring communities together, create bonds, and improve mental and physical health. As part of a survey, residents were asked to prioritize the recreational programs that were most important to them. The following four programs were ranked as the highest priorities:

1. Community-wide special events
2. Nature and outdoor recreation programs
3. Recreation programs for youth and adults in sports
4. Recreational youth camps such as summer camps and after school programs

The following matrix identifies where these programs would likely be provided based on the future park destinations identified in this master plan along with additional community partners that should be included in order to meet potential programming needs.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES		
PARK	POTENTIAL PROGRAMS	POTENTIAL COMMUNITY PARTNERS
CENTRAL PARK	Community-Wide Special Events	Local Business and Civic Partners
	Nature and Outdoor Recreation Programs	Preservation Parks of Delaware County
	Youth and Adult Sports	Local Sport Leagues and School Districts
LITTLE WALNUT CREEK GREENWAY	Youth Camps and After School Programs	School Districts
	Nature and Recreation Programs	Preservation Parks of Delaware County
NORTHSTAR PARK	Community-Wide Special Events	Northstar Developer / HOA & Local Businesses
	Youth and Adult Sports	Local Sports Leagues and School Districts



4 IMPLEMENTATION

This Parks and Trails Master Plan establishes a long-term vision for open space, connectivity and recreation that will serve Berkshire Township for years to come. In order for this vision to be realized, it is critical that attainable near-term action steps are established that will create the foundation of this park system. The following recommendations are organized as **Stage 1** tasks that will be necessary to complete a 1 to 2-year implementation plan and a **Stage 2** strategy that establishes a budget for the 10-year implementation plan. **Funding Scenarios** are provided based on these implementation recommendations and an **Implementation Matrix** is provided as a planning tool for Township Staff as they move toward the realization of the Parks and Trails vision.

STAGE #1: THE 1 TO 2 YEAR PLAN

The Berkshire Township Park and Trails System will be set in motion by implementing the following tasks. These tasks should be implemented concurrently.

Task 1: Commit to "The Parks Business"

By adopting this Parks and Trails Plan, The Township Trustees are making a commitment to being in "The Parks Business". This means that the Township will commit to a plan for capital improvements and operations of a park system. This requires education/training of staff, grant-writing and fundraising, and a commitment to recreational programming that meets the needs of Township residents.

Task 2: Pursue Grants

Many opportunities exist to reduce the cost of land acquisition, capital improvements, and design fees through local, state, and federal grants. Most successful parks systems include these grant opportunities as part of their on-going business plan. Developing long-term relationships with these funding agencies will be critical to the success of the park system. In 2018, the Township was successful in receiving trail funding for the Rome Corners Road Trail through the Delaware County Trails Grant Program. Additional grants should be pursued immediately. This Parks and Trails Plan, the statistically valid survey results, and matching funding from the Township should be used as the foundation for pursuing additional grants. See the Summary of Grant Opportunities.

Task 3: Add Staff

Additional staffing will be necessary to create this park system. In the near-term, it is anticipated that one full-time equivalent staff be added to manage the day-to-day implementation of the phase 1 park, pursue additional grants, negotiate land acquisition, refine business/maintenance plans, and prepare for a future bond issue. This staffing need could be achieved with one individual or multiple part-time individuals and/or consultants.

Summary Of Grant Opportunities

Delaware County Trails Grant Program
In 2018, Delaware County launched a grant program to help local communities advance the Delaware County Trail System. The program provides \$100,000 annually that can be distributed to applicants as matching grants. Berkshire Township was successful in pursuing this grant in 2018 and received \$20,000 toward phase 1 of the Rome Corners Road Trail.
<https://co.delaware.oh.us/blog/2018/05/24/delaware-county-trails-assistance-program-launched/>

Preservation Parks of Delaware County Multi-Use Trail Grant
As part of Preservation Parks, 10-year plan, the park system is being developed through a multi-year grant program to assist townships and municipalities in planning, engineering, and/or constructing connector trails in Delaware County.
<https://www.preservationparks.com/about/ten-year-plan/>

Ohio Public Works Commission – Clean Ohio Fund / Green Space Conservation Fund
This program is dedicated to environmental conservation including acquisition of green space and the protection and enhancement of river and stream corridors.
<http://www.pwc.state.oh.us/GSC/default.html>

Ohio Department of Natural Resources – NatureWorks
This grant program provides up to 75 percent reimbursement for acquisition, development, or rehabilitation of public park and recreation areas.
<http://realstate.ohioadmr.gov/outdoor-recreation-facility-grants>

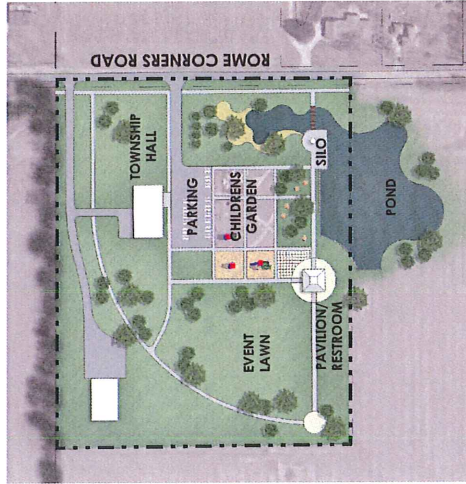
Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Clean Ohio Trails Fund
This grant is for local governments, park and joint recreation districts, conservancy districts, soil and water conservation districts, and non-profit organizations. The grant may provide funds for land acquisition for a trail, trail development, trailhead facilities, as well as engineering and design.
<http://realstate.ohioadmr.gov/outdoor-recreation-facility-grant>

Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Recreational Trails Program
This grant is for cities and villages, counties, townships, special districts, state and federal agencies, and non-profit organizations. The grant may provide funds for development of urban trail linkages, trail head and "trailside" facilities; maintenance of existing trails; restoration of trail areas damaged by usage; improving access for people with disabilities; acquisition of easements and "property" recreational trail construction; new trails; purchase and lease of recreational trail construction equipment; and trailhead facilities, as well as environmental and safety education and interpretation trails.
<http://realstate.ohioadmr.gov/outdoor-recreation-facility-grant>

US Dept. of Trans. Federal Highway Administration Funds
The primary programs for trails include the Surface Transportation Program – Transportation Enhancement and the Recreational Trails Program. The State of Ohio has its own application and selection process for both of these funds. Efforts to receive these funds should be coordinated with the Delaware County Engineers Office and/or other local agencies.
https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/Environment/recreational_trails_enhancements/
https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/Environment/recreational_trails/

Task 4: Implement Central Park Phase 1

Phase 1 will be constructed on existing Township Property. The project will include the completion of the Children's Garden and Playground, the restoration of the existing silo, a new Park Pavilion (includes restroom and shelter), a multipurpose event lawn, and a storm water retention pond. Note: an easement may be required with the adjacent property owner to the south to create a stormwater retention basin. If an agreement cannot be reached, then all storm water management solutions will be accommodated on the existing Township property. See 1-Year Budget for Phase 1 Park Costs.



1 Year Budget	
Central Park Phase 1 - Construction Costs (Playground, Pavilion, Silo Restoration, trails/sidewalks, event lawn, pond)	\$1,000,000 - \$1,200,000
Central Park Phase 1 - Design, Permits, Administration	\$150,000-\$180,000
Annual Township Staff Costs (assume addition of 1 full-time equivalent staff/consultant)	\$80,000 - \$100,000
Total First Year Costs	\$1,230,000 - \$1,480,000

*Note: Estimates shown are based on 2018 construction costs

Task 5: Acquire Land

It is important that the Township establishes a strategy and time frame for acquiring property adjacent to Phase 1 of Central Park. As the Township grows, the park will need to expand to address the growing recreational needs of residents. Acquiring the land or solidifying a long-term acquisition strategy in the near-term will help the Township plan for future phased expansions and protect the investments made in the initial phases of improvements. Several options to acquire some or all of the property are outlined below. These options should each be explored in order to arrive at the best option for the Township, the land owner(s), and any other involved parties.

Phased Purchase

Negotiate a phased purchase of property from the adjacent land owner. A strategy could be developed that prioritizes the property that is most critical to the expansion of Central Park and balances those needs with the development potential/value of the property for the landowner. A "first right of refusal" clause could also be included between the seller and the Township for future land purchases.

Land Trust

A Land Trust is a non-profit organization that can be used to help orchestrate relationships between various parties. In some cases, the Trust can assist in purchasing the property and transferring it to the beneficiary (i.e. The Township) over time. The Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts along with the Trust for Public Land are both active in Ohio and can provide expertise and resources to the Township.

Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts
<http://www.ohiolandtrusts.org/>
The Trust for Public Land
<https://www.tpl.org/our-work>

Partnerships with Other Agencies

Two local agencies may be able to purchase some or all of the adjacent property and transfer it to the Township over time. The Delaware County Port Authority and Preservation Parks of Delaware County both have the ability to play this role, however both agencies would likely have limits on the amount, timing and process required.

Open Space Dedication

Adjacent properties could be privately developed. As part of the development plan approval, the developer could make an open space dedication to the Township. The Township could coordinate with the developer on the acreage and configuration of the open space dedication that would best support the Central Park Master Plan.

Bond Issue

The Township could put a levy on the ballot to fund the purchase of the property. However, there is also the need to fund future capital improvements, staffing, and maintenance of those capital improvements. Therefore, it is recommended that the initial levy would take all of these needs into consideration.

Task 6: Establish Events & Programs

Creating recreational programs and events that appeal to the broadest possible segment of Township residents is critical to the long-term success of the parks and trails system. An Events & Programs Committee should be assembled that represents various community stakeholders and interests. This group should establish goals and tactics for providing a few recreational programs and one community-wide event within the next two years. Partnerships and sponsorships will also be important in terms of broadening the impact of the program and providing additional operational funding. This Committee may also be the beginning of a "Friends of Berkshire Parks" group that could become a non-profit volunteer organization that provides advocacy, fundraising, and programming opportunities.

STAGE #2: THE 10-YEAR PLAN

This Park and Trails Master Plan establishes a long-term vision for the creation of a connected open space system. This vision will require additional land acquisition, capital improvements for parks and trails, operations (staffing, maintenance), and programming. The following represents a budget estimate for these items. Some elements of the plan including many of the trail connections, Northstar Park improvements, and the preservation of the Little Walnut Creek Greenway should largely be realized by others. For example, the majority of the trails will be constructed by developers as part of the implementation of new residential and mixed-use communities.

The priorities of this 10-year Plan are rooted in the results of the Resident Survey. Establishing a central community park and providing a connected system of trails to all Township destinations is paramount. Supporting these physical improvements with a broad range of events and programs creates a park system for all residents of the Township.

10-Year Budget	
Land Acquisition - for Central Park expansion and other potential isolated parcels for trail access	\$1,700,000
Capital Improvements - Parks (Central Park full build out)	\$3,000,000
Capital Improvements - Trails (Matching costs for private trail segments, Township share of these trail segments is 20-25%. All other trails built via private development.)	\$700,000 ((\$70,000 x 10 years)
Staffing - Park director and additional staff person as park system grows	\$1,000,000 (average of \$100,000 per year x 10 years.)
Maintenance (Central Park maintenance and Trail maintenance)	\$1,500,000 (average of \$150,000 per year x 10 years.)
Programming (Township programs and/or contribution to events/programs sponsored by others)	\$500,000 ((\$50,000 x 10 years)
Sub Total	\$8,400,000 (\$840,000 Annually)
Revenue - Revenue generated via facility rental, events, programs, etc.	\$500,000 (average of \$50,000 per year x 10 years.)
Total	\$7,900,000 (790,000 Annually)

*Note: Estimates shown are based on 2018 construction costs

NEAR-TERM & LONG-TERM FUNDING SCENARIOS

Based on the 10-year projected costs, the Township could elect to fund the build-out of the park system in a variety of ways. The following three scenarios provide a range of approaches that balance near-term expenditures (1 to 2 years) that would be funded from existing revenue streams with long-term expenses (3 to 10 years) that would likely be funded through a bond issue.

Funding Scenario 1:
Hire staff and/or consultants and Prep for Bond Issue. Bond issue to be used for land acquisition, Central Park Improvements, and future Improvements/operations.
 Utilize existing Township funds to hire full-time staff member and advance the design of Central Park. Staff member will assist with preparation for bond issue to support Central Park and future land acquisitions, capital improvements, and operations. Staff member will also pursue additional grant opportunities
Near-term Costs (1 to 2 years): \$150,000
Long-term Costs (Bond Issue): \$ 7,750,000

Funding Scenario 2:
Hire staff person, build Phase 1 on existing Township land, and prep for Bond Issue. Bond issue to be used for land acquisition, future capital improvements, and operations
 Utilize existing Township funds for Phase 1. Consider bond issue in late 2019 or early 2020 to fund future land acquisitions, capital improvements, and operations.
Near-term Costs (1 to 2 years): \$1,480,000
Long-term Costs (Bond Issue): \$6,420,000

Funding Scenario 3:
Hire staff person, acquire all of the land for Central Park and build Phase 1. Bond issue for future capital improvements/operations.
 Utilize existing Township funds to acquire some or all of Central Park land and build Phase 1. Consider bond issue in late 2019 or early 2020 to fund capital improvements and operations.
Near-term Costs (1 to 2 years): \$2,980,000
Long-term Costs (Bond Issue): \$4,920,000

IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX: A PLANNING TOOL

The following Implementation Matrix includes a summary of near term priority projects, funding strategies, potential partnerships, performance measures, and estimated timelines. This matrix provides a framework to guide decision-making and allocate resources. It should be incorporated into annual work plans and budgets and monitored on a continuous basis. As priority projects are accomplished, mid to long-term recommendations of this Parks and Trails Master Plan can be added to this matrix.

It should be noted that this Implementation Matrix is not intended to be definitive, but rather to provide a working document for discussion and further development by the Township. The intent is that the Township can use this Implementation Plan to carry out the vision, mission, and recommendations defined in this plan. Future community surveys and master plan updates may shift the priorities as the Township grows and its recreational needs change. The Implementation Matrix should be updated to reflect these changing priorities.

PROJECTS	LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY	FUNDING SOURCES	POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIMELINE	STAFF/ GROUP RESPONSIBILITY
PARKS						
Central Park- Phase 1	None required. Construct on existing Township Property.	Bond issue and/or general funds. See Funding Scenarios on page 27.	None	Phase 1 Completed in 2019-2020	2019-2020	Administrator / Parks Director
Little Walnut Creek Greenway	Collaboration with City of Columbus Public Utilities (assume City of Columbus maintains ownership)	County, State and Federal sources. Possible additional land acquisition by the City of Columbus.	Additional land acquisition may be provided by the City of Columbus. Capital improvements for trail heads or trail development may be provided by Preservation Parks.	Create a Land Management Plan/ Master Plan With Potential Partners By 2020. Gain consensus on goals and strategies from all stakeholders.	Management Plan/ Master Plan by 2020.	Administrator / Parks Director
NorthStar Park	Ownership by NorthStar developer/ HOA	Developer/HOA	Developer and/or NorthStar HOA	Developer/HOA to refine master plan and implementation plan in 2019. Review and approval by Township.	Refined Master Plan by end of 2019	Administrator / Parks Director
TRAILS						
Cheshire to Galena Route	By others based on future road improvements.	County, State and Federal	Delaware County, MORPC	Route Completed 2023. Subject to County priorities and funding.	2023. Subject to County priorities and funding.	Administrator / Parks Director
Rome Corners Road Trail- Phase 2 & 3	Acquire easements by 2021. Assume significant segments constructed by developers.	Significant segments by developers and/ or part of future road improvements. Private, county, state and federal funding.	Developers, Delaware County, MORPC	Trail Completed 2024. Completion based on pace of development projects and roadway improvements.	2024. Based on pace of development and roadway improvements.	Administrator / Parks Director
Wilson Road Trail	Acquire easements by 2021 or included in Wilson Road high-lowway. Assume constructed by developers.	Privately funded. Possible assistance from county, state and federal sources.	Developers, Delaware County, MORPC, Village of Sunbury	Trail Completed 2024. Completion based on pace of development projects.	2024. Based on pace of development projects.	Administrator / Parks Director
38th & K Trail	Acquire easements by 2023. Coordinate with development.	Private (developers), county, state, and federal sources.	Developers, Delaware County, MORPC, Berlin Township	Trail Completed 2026. Subject to pace of development.	2026. Subject to pace of development.	Administrator / Parks Director
Dustin Road Trail	Acquire easements by 2024. Coordinate with development.	Private (developers), county, state, and federal sources.	Developers, Delaware County, MORPC	Trail Completed 2027. Subject to pace of development.	2027. Subject to pace of development	Administrator / Parks Director
Carter's Corner Trail	Acquire easements by 2026. Coordinate with development.	Private (developers), county, state, and federal sources.	Developers, Delaware County, MORPC, Walnut Schools, Village of Sunbury	Trail Completed 2029. Subject to pace of development.	2029. Subject to pace of development	Administrator / Parks Director
Berkshire Road Trail	Acquire easements by 2027. Coordinate with development.	Private (developers), county, state, and federal sources.	Developers, Delaware County, MORPC, Kingston Township	Trail Completed 2030. Subject to pace of development.	2030. Subject to pace of development	Administrator / Parks Director

PROJECTS	LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY	FUNDING SOURCES	POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIMELINE	STAFF/ GROUP RESPONSIBILITY
PROGRAMS						
Community Events	N/A	Operational Budget and Sponsorships	To be determined. Could include local businesses, civic partners, school districts, etc.	Establish Events Committee in 2019. Hold First Community-Wide Special Event in 2020.	2020	Administrator / Parks Director
OPERATIONS						
Staffing	N/A	Operational Budget	N/A	Park Director or Staff in 2019.	2019	Administrator/ Parks Director
Maintenance Plan	N/A	Operational Budget	N/A	Maintenance budget established for 2019 and 2020 based on Central Parks Plan. Develop 10-year Maintenance Plan based on 10-year vision.	2019	Administrator/ Parks Director
BRANDING, PROMOTION & ADVOCACY						
Volunteer Group "Friends of Parks"	N/A	Township Operational budget to provide support. Goal to become non-profit volunteer group.	N/A	Volunteer Group established in 2019. Establish group by end of 2019. Provide advocacy, fund raising, programming, etc.	2019	Administrator/ Parks Director

