



# Anderson Park District

## Plan for the Expansion of Beech Acres Park

2023 purchase of 17 acres at 6881 Beechmont Avenue

10/9/2023

The Anderson Township community has always been the benefactor of a positive, long-standing relationship between the Anderson Park District and the Beech Acres Parenting Center. The bond between these two entities was forged by many years of a shared commitment to serving the families of our community.

Over the past three decades, the Anderson Park District and the Beech Acres Parenting Center have partnered to provide our community with essential recreational opportunities, beginning with the lease of the Geiger Center gym in 1990 (later renamed RecPlex), followed by the sale of 25 acres for Beech Acres Park in 1997, and the sale of the RecPlex to Anderson Township Government in 2018, which the Anderson Park District continues to lease.

Beech Acres Park is the Anderson Park District's most popular park and one of the "crown jewels" of our community. The new property addition expands and protects this valuable asset, and in turn, expands the future opportunities for active and healthy lifestyles in the heart of the community.

This property is an essential part of the Anderson Park District's vision for meeting the recreational needs of our community for generations to come.

The Board of Park Commissioners has set forth the following priorities for the unfolding and expansion of this property, understanding that great things take time to create:

### Immediate Property Plan:

- The former Beech Acres Parenting Center campus is officially park property. Park staff is readying the area for immediate community access:
  - Adding benches, picnic tables, doggie mitt stations, family swings, portable restrooms, and garbage cans.
  - Filling potholes, and securing spaces.
  - Removing obsolete utility equipment, debris, invasive species, and dead trees.
  - Taking down all "THIS IS NOT PARK PROPERTY" signs.
- Expand and extend the existing network of walking trails.
- Make improvements as park use dictates, including athletic field development and plantings.
- Expand programming and events deemed to be a good fit for the property, including the extremely popular Summer Camp program and annual Anderson Day Festival.
- Enhance parking.

- Continue the Anderson Park District's functions that have required the current Beech Acres Parenting Center campus, including overflow parking for large events and programs.
- With respect to structures, the property consists of 11 existing buildings: 3 will be kept for the immediate future; 1 will be evaluated; and 7 will be razed.
- Develop a historical display of the remarkable property in partnership with Beech Acres Parenting Center.
- Promote and advocate for the installation of a sidewalk on the property frontage along Beechmont Avenue to facilitate a safe pedestrian corridor and access to the park.

Very importantly, Anderson Park District will continue to utilize the Operations and Recreation depot on the newly acquired property, which the Anderson Park District has been leasing from Beech Acres Parenting Center since 2009. The depot warehouse serves as a logistics service center for park maintenance, equipment, and programming. If Anderson Park District was not able to secure this property, this critical facility would immediately need to be rebuilt on an existing portion of Beech Acres Park. The estimated cost to rebuild the depot warehouse is \$1,500,000.

#### **Intermediate Property Plan:**

- Construct additional recreational amenities, taking into consideration the future footprints associated with the long-term plan described below.
- Continue to add premier recreational amenities as park visitation dictates, including:
  - Athletic field areas (all weather and/or natural grass).
  - Dog field.
  - Basketball courts (half-court pod design to maximize how the courts are typically used).
  - Shelters.
  - Flushable restrooms.
- Continue to build upon programming, events, and rental opportunities.

#### **Long-Term Property Plan:**

The opportunity to grow in the future is now and only possible because the property is secured for the residents of Anderson Township. The ultimate vision for the property is to construct a new building or substantial addition to the RecPlex that would feature multi-use indoor athletic fields and courts, event and activity space, and an indoor walking trail. This facility will serve as a hub for indoor recreation that helps attract and retain residents while bringing visitors to support local businesses in Anderson Township.