



Parks

—
Lenier A. Crawford
Parks Manager

City of Pataskala Parks and Recreation Department Council Report

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide quality programming that's inclusive to all residents in our community by offering sports, health and wellness opportunities as well as giving the community options to take advantage of our open spaces.

Vision:

Our recreation vision is to provide quality programming that's inclusive to all residents in our community by offering sports, health and wellness opportunities as well as giving the community options to take advantage of our open spaces.

Administrative

- **Volunteer Park Improvements**
 - Installation of playground structure is complete. The engineered wood fiber and border will be install by internal staff. Once this is completed within the next month the playground company will come and complete the rest of the install. Adding the swing components and the ropes.
 - The Lion's Grove has officially started. The additional trees on site are creating a new look for the park.
 - Split rail fencing is installed. There is still a little more to go which will be completed by the end of February.
- **Foundation Park: Athletic Field Development Project:** Preliminary planning for the future of our parks and recreation program growth. Additional parking will be included in the plan as well for this facility improvement.
 - Due the cost of the full project we are working with engineers in 2023 for additional parking. Cost of the parking based on the engineer's estimate which is set to come February or early March. We will have several exhibits with parking lot options within the park to show council and to gather feedback.



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Licking Park District:

Freedom Park Walking Path-

- Signed Resolution for bidding out the project was sent to LPD.
- An invoice will be sent to LPD to receive \$25,000. Once the \$25,000 is received by the CFO we will come back to council for a supplemental
- *Seeking to put project out to Bid in Spring of 2023.*
- *Working with Verdantas to do the following: Site plan, proposals for engineering of path and parking lot.*
- *Project: Walking path with an alternate bid to include the parking lot expansion*

Park Projects completed/to be completed:

- Pool facility inspections will begin in February.
- Material bay structure at Foundation Park maintenance garage area completed. Seeking contractors to add concrete to 2 of the 4 bays early in 2023.
- We are maintaining all asphalt paths within the parks through the winter months.
- Soil Samples completed with results for Foundation Park turf management. Spring fertilizer treatments will begin late May and early May.
- Changing soccer field layouts at Foundation Park, Measurements completed to ensure we can now have enough fields for all age groups to practice during the week.
- Installation of park signage will be taking place over the next few weeks.
 - Citizens Park Signs Replacement
 - Identifying all parking lots in Foundation Park
 - Municipal Park Signage changing
 - Install lot identification at Volunteer Park
- Citizens Parks is being surveyed. Once completed the parks department will use stored split rail fence to delineate the boundary. This is adding some aesthetics and separation from the adjacent properties and to delineate the entrance of the park.
 - More rails and In-line posts are being ordered to ensure we can install prior to April 2023



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Parks and Recreation News/ New Updates:

Aquatic Hiring Process

- **A PBR meeting approved 15+ applications.** Interviews will be starting February 2nd.
- **Another PBR meeting is scheduled for February 7th for the next round of applications**
- Hiring until all positions available are filled to operate the swim lesson program and regular pool operations such as managers and lifeguards and guest service team members.
- The goal is to hire/onboard as many our previous staff early in the year to allow for training to begin in March 2023



COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAM PLAN

COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAM PLAN

- Youth Sports
- Adult Sports
- Esports and Technology
- Health and Wellness
- Outdoor Adventures
- After School Programs

YOUTH SPORTS:

PAST and PRESENT - Our Pataskala Parks and Recreation Youth Soccer League has been a community staple for decades. Each spring and fall, an average of 450-550 kids from pre-school through high school use our fields for games and practices. Likewise, our ball diamonds host youth softball and baseball leagues, local school teams and special tournaments all through the spring and summer. These programs continue to grow in popularity, and we need more playing fields to accommodate them.

FUTURE - We would like to expand our youth sport offerings to include flag football and kickball.

ADULT SPORTS:

PAST and PRESENT - Our Adult Softball League and tournaments are also very popular and growing, with 12 to 16 teams per season. Our adult players have served as great partners and stewards of our fields, helping to maintain and make improvements. Scheduling tournaments in the shoulder season has helped ease the competition for field time, but more playing fields will benefit the adult program as well.

FUTURE - We would like to expand our adult sport offerings to include flag football and community kickball tournaments.

ESPORTS AND TECHNOLOGY:

PAST and PRESENT - Our Esports and Youth Technology Program was introduced in 2019 through a partnership with a local technology company to provide computers and accessories for a computer lab where local youth can compete in Esports tournaments. Esports is a rapidly growing activity, with colleges offering scholarships for the best young gamers, as well as bachelor degrees in the field.

Just like traditional sports leagues, participants are placed on teams and compete against their peers. Players build social skills and learn the importance of sportsmanship and teamwork while cultivating better discipline and higher self-esteem. Cognitive benefits include improved memory, focus and attention while learning problem solving

skills. On-line safety is a priority, and all participants are supervised at all times by adults and volunteers.

Opportunities to build Pataskala's Esports program include partnering with the Licking Heights and Southwest Licking school districts as well as other organizations (YMCA, Lions Club and local churches) to host an Esports club, with practices on weeknights and tournament play on Saturdays.

FUTURE - Virtual reality technology offers many exciting applications for recreation, education and health and wellness. With the addition of virtual reality headsets, our computer and technology lab can become a place where students and adults can explore the natural world in new ways.

Opportunities to take full advantage of our technology lab and serve our community include partnering with COTC and others to provide VR technology based classes on a broad range of topics from health science and exercise science to geography and social studies. Fitness coaches and athletic trainers can also use the technology in conjunction with our city-wide health and wellness initiatives.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS:

PAST and PRESENT - Helping our community stay active in the outdoors is a top priority for Pataskala Parks and Recreation. Our current initiatives to promote a healthy active lifestyle include our Fitness in the Parks program, Pace with Passion annual 5k and run/walk club, Community Garden, and events held with partners including Healthy Kids Day, Active Fit and Walk with a Doc. We offer an outdoor fitness rig at Karr Park and fitness stations along the trail at Foundation Park.

FUTURE - We would like to expand our offerings in partnership with the YMCA to include outdoor fitness classes for adults and kids, with morning and after-school options, one to three days a week. Instructors could include certified trainers and university students with an interest in exercise science. A travel fitness trailer, which could be sponsored by community partners, would provide the focal point for fitness programs at our city parks and allow us to expand our outreach to include our local schools, nursing homes, churches, apartment complexes and neighborhood pocket parks.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS:

FUTURE - Our local school districts are experiencing unprecedented growth. More than ever, families need options for wholesome after-school programs and enrichment for their children. We can serve our community and create positive youth outcomes by offering kids the chance to spend after-school time being active in the outdoors, exercising, learning, sharing and making new friends in our parks.

Foundation Park can serve as one of the hubs for active recreation including archery, baseball, basketball, fishing, flag football, nature walks, soccer games and skills training, trail running and nature walks. Our existing concession facility and shelterhouse at Foundation Park can serve healthy snacks.

Another hub for the program is Volunteer Park at the Pataskala LEADS Center. Volunteer Parks currently offers baseball and soccer fields along with a basketball court. The shelterhouse offers gathering space for snacks and quiet activities such as arts and crafts. Our Community Garden Program provides an opportunity for kids to help grow food for the LEADS food pantry.

Partners are key to making this proposed program work. Local school districts are the primary point of contact with kids and their parents. Our public library is also a great resource for engaging families and promoting programs. Schools as well as local churches can provide additional gym and meeting space during periods of inclement weather. Our program would be recognized as Commit to Health Site aligned with the National Recreation and Parks Association's Commit to Health Program, which provides guidance and technical assistance.



Volunteers and interns from local high schools, colleges and universities can assist as activity leaders and facilitators. The students would gain valuable experience as well as volunteer credit. Some of the funding for the program could come from several sources including a fee paid by parents for expenses including food, materials and transportation; fundraising (such as shopping boss app); and, potentially, grant awards.

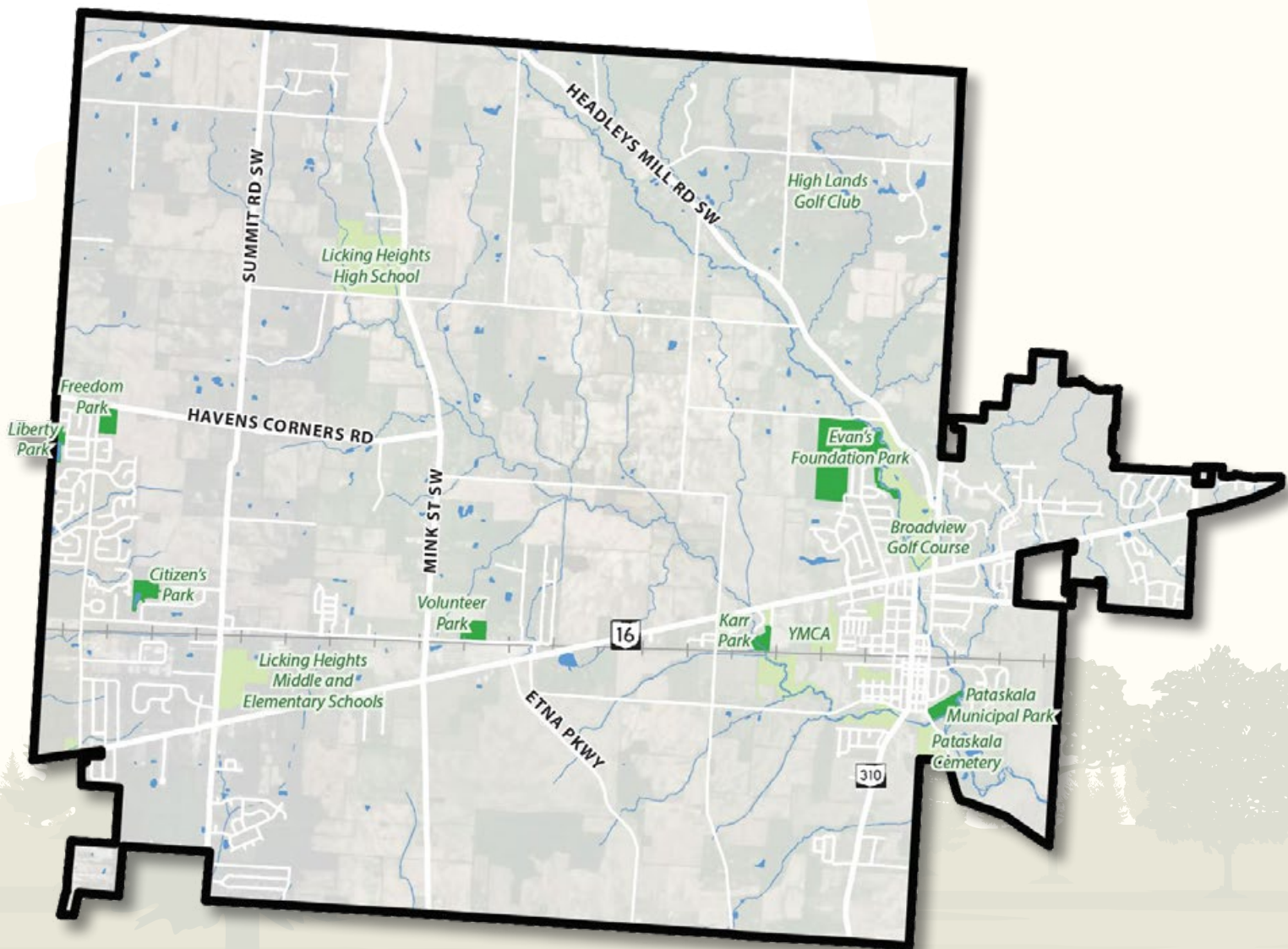
OUTDOOR ADVENTURES:

PAST and PRESENT - Archery programs have been featured at some of our special events for several years. The Licking Park District archery trailer is available to us on a limited basis upon request.

FUTURE - Archery programs could expand to become a more permanent offering through our park system. Archery could be included as an activity for the proposed after-school program, and we could partner with our local school districts to offer archery as a school based program. Other potential opportunities include partnering with service clubs such as Summit Lions Club to develop an archery range. Various grant programs may be available to obtain equipment such as bows, targets and backdrops.

PAST and PRESENT - We offer the Passport to Fishing Program for youth and families every summer in partnership with ODNR. This program introduces kids to the basics of fishing, and provides free poles and bait.

FUTURE - With stocked ponds at Foundation, Liberty and Citizens parks, many of our neighborhoods have easy access to fishing. We have an untapped opportunity to connect with local youth and adults who love to fish and could help run programs and create data. We also have an untapped opportunity to offer community wide fishing derbies and competitions for kids, families and adults. We could take advantage of state and federal grants to promote fishing, as well as sponsorships from local businesses to offer handouts and prizes.



FOUNDATION PARK

At 78 total acres, including 22 acres of woodlands, this is Pataskala's largest city park where all main city events and activities take place. Foundation Park links the Broadview Crossing and Settlements at Pataskala developments with rural neighbors near MacIntosh Road. The park was established in 1998 through the efforts of J. Gilbert Reese, Chairman of the Thomas J. Evans Foundation, and President Sarah Wallace to enhance local recreational opportunities. Annual events hosted here include the Easter Egg Hunt, Community Fireworks in July, Antique Power Show in September, and the annual Outdoor Adventure Day featuring fishing, archery and environmental science activities. Foundation Park is also the home of the Pataskala Youth Soccer program, and provides game and practice fields for local club teams.

Amenities currently available at Foundation Park include:

Soccer Fields	2 playgrounds
Baseball/Softball Diamond	Gaga Pit
Basketball Court	Fishing Pond
Soccer and Softball Concessions	1.4 mile perimeter trail
3 shelter houses (1 with grills)	1 mile woodland trail
Flush restrooms with rentals	

Potential Improvements and Additions include:

- Host site for various sports tournaments. Youth Soccer and Baseball/Softball: add additional athletic fields and drainage
- Electrical service at shelter houses
- Additional woodland trails within Conaway's Trail
- Paving of perimeter trail

Ambitious future proposals dependent on grant funding and partnering with local organizations and businesses include:

- Splash pad feature for summer play
- Indoor dome facility that could support various sports for year-round programming
- Tennis courts



MUNICIPAL PARK

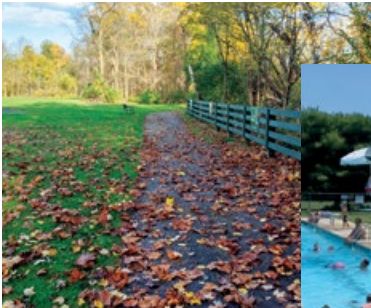
This well developed 15 acre park along Township Road is Pataskala's original city park on the edge of the historic village. The Municipal Park pool offers swimming lessons and open swims for families and adults, as well as private rentals for pool parties. A paved trail along the scenic South Fork of the Licking River skirts the park and provides easy access for pedestrians and bicycle riders from the Bright Waters neighborhoods. Prior to 1998 Municipal Park was the home to all of Pataskala's park events and activities. Today it offers everything families want for a fun afternoon outing.

Amenities currently available at Municipal Park include:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Swimming Pool | Sand Volleyball Court |
| Pool Concession | Shelter house with grills and electricity |
| Soccer Field | Playground |
| Baseball Diamond | Paved multi-use trail |
| Basketball Court | Little Free Library |

Potential Improvements and Additions include:

- Improved pool facilities
- Multi-generational fitness area
- Improved baseball facilities



WILLIAM V. KARR PARK

Located on the campus of Pataskala City Hall and the Pataskala Police Station, and adjacent to the Conine Village neighborhood, this 9-acre park is a green retreat from the bustle of Broad Street. Recent improvements made possible through an ODNR NatureWorks grant make this hidden gem even more inviting for multiple generations, providing active outdoor pursuits as well as quiet time in nature. Karr Park is home to Pataskala's new Community Garden program, which has already provided nutritious food for neighbors and will serve as a teaching garden for youth and adults interested in gardening. Through partnerships with the Licking County Master Gardeners and the Licking County Soil and Water Conservation District, native trees and wildflowers have been planted to enhance the park's beauty and diversity.

Amenities currently available at Karr Park include:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| Multi-generational fitness equipment area and functional fitness rig | Flush restrooms with rentals |
| Paved 600-foot walking path | Playground |
| 2 Shelter houses with grills (1 with electricity) | Community Garden |

Potential Improvements and Additions include:

- Additional paths to connect all features of the park
- Outdoor Education Location: ODNR Wild School Site potential
- Refurbished volleyball facility
- Additional native trees



FREEDOM PARK

Freedom Park is the proud home of a military flag display, which inspires its name. Located at the corner of Taylor Road and Havens Corner Road, this 8-acre park links rural Pataskala with nearby neighborhoods. The Taylor Road multi-use walking path which spans 2.52 miles along Taylor Road north of Broad Street offers easy access from the Brookside developments for pedestrians and bicycles. The park's wide open spaces offer opportunities for casual soccer games and outdoor play. The shelter house and nearby playground are popular for gatherings. Future amenities are being planned for this site to accommodate the large number of residents along this corridor.

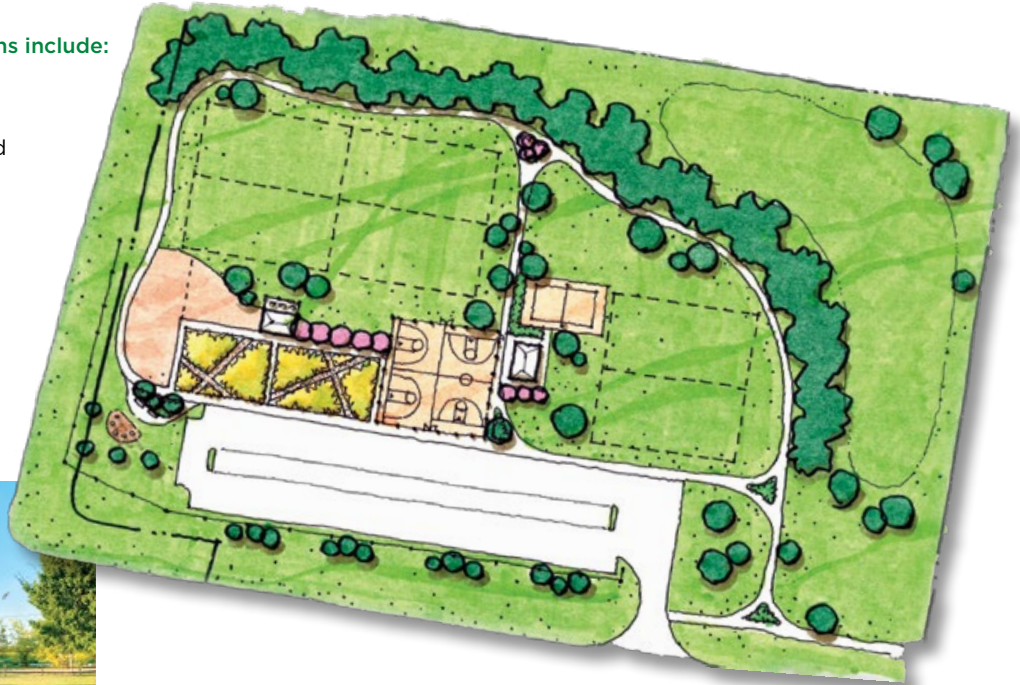
Amenities currently available at Freedom Park include:

Shelter house with electricity and grills
Playground with inclusive features
Fitness station

Multi-use playing fields
Little Free Library

Potential Improvements and Additions include:

- Caged basketball courts
- Sand volleyball court
- Expanded parking lot
- Expand onto existing playground
- Shade structure
- Walking path
- Wildflower habitat and path



VOLUNTEER PARK

Pataskala's community spirit is on display at Volunteer Park, located adjacent to Pataskala Leads Center. This 11-acre park gets its name from the countless hours local volunteers and Eagle Scouts have put into bringing this active recreation area to life. Facilities for baseball/softball, basketball and soccer invite local youth, families and leagues to come out and play.

Amenities currently available at Volunteer Park include:

Soccer Field
Basketball Court

Baseball/Softball Diamond
Large Shelter house

Potential Improvements and Additions include:

- Improved baseball facilities
- Improved soccer facility
- Multi-use walking path
- Playground
- Potential for a garden to help supplement the Pataskala Leads Center
- Improved parking lots



LIBERTY PARK

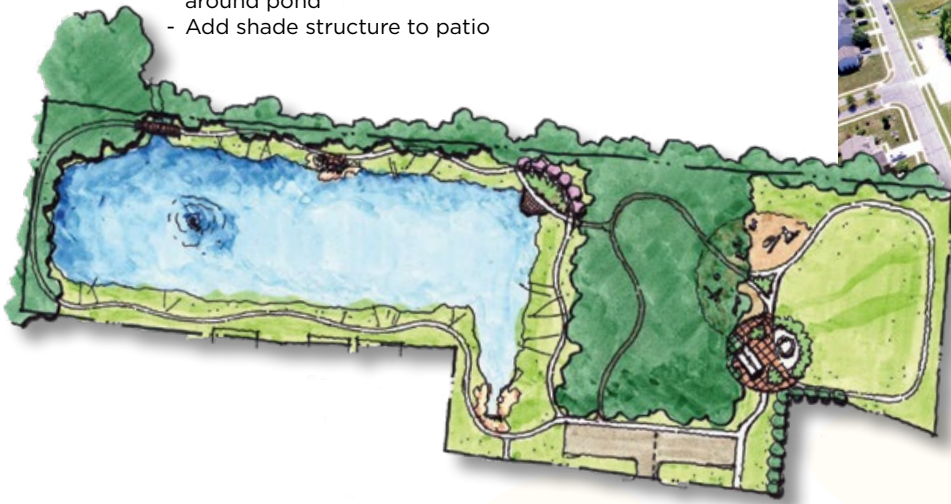
Liberty Park offers an appealing blend of natural features and recreation facilities nestled in the Taylor Glen subdivision off Taylor Road. This 8-acre park boasts a 2-acre pond and a woodlot with mature trees in addition to sunny open fields. Bird nesting boxes have been installed and the pond has been stocked with fish to enhance these natural features. Recent park improvements made possible through an ODNR NatureWorks grant include a walking path, a nature play area in the woods, and a patio for picnics and other gatherings.

Amenities currently available at Liberty Park include:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Fishing pond | Picnic patio with grill |
| Nature playground | Paved walking path |

Potential Improvements and Additions include:

- Fishing overlook/boat ramp
- Add caged basketball court
- Extend existing asphalt walking path around pond
- Add shade structure to patio



CITIZENS PARK

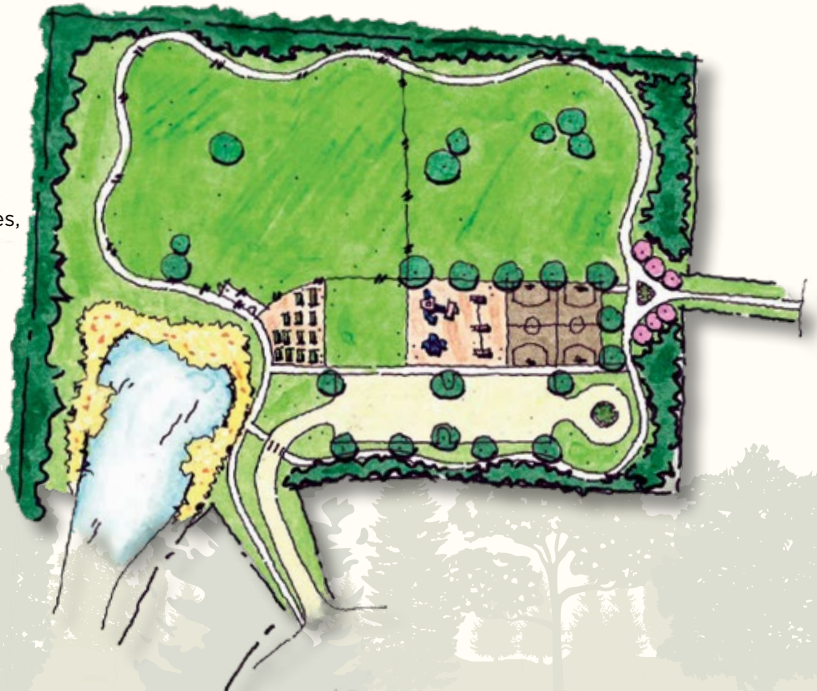
Citizens Park, tucked into the Glenbrooke subdivision off Cleveland Avenue, offers 9 acres of potential for recreation amid fields and meadows. The park features a pond and a playground, and plenty of space to run and play, or relax and enjoy nature.

Amenities currently available at Citizens Park include:

- Fishing pond
- Playground

Potential Improvements and Additions include:

- Improved playground features
- Multi-generational fitness equipment space
- Caged basketball court feature
- Perimeter walking path/possible boardwalk path
- Multi-use athletic fields to host flag football leagues, kickball and more
- Disc golf practice area/driving range





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