

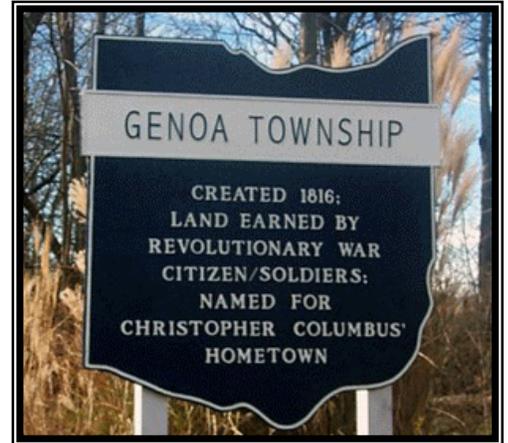
GENOA TOWNSHIP

◆ PARK & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN ◆

September 22, 2004



Analyzing the present...



Remembering the past...



Reaching for our future.

ONE GENERATION PLANTS THE TREES...



... THE NEXT ENJOYS THE SHADE.

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◆ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ◆

A

This master plan was prepared with the assistance, direction and cooperation of the Township Trustees, Administration and a Committee which is comprised of Township residents.

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◆ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY ◆

Purpose

The Parks Committee makes recommendations to the Trustees and residents of Genoa Township. This document summarizes the Committee's current recommendations based on their research of Genoa Township's existing facilities and national standards. As stated in the Genoa Township Comprehensive Plan (1999), the provision of open space for parks and recreation is a key ingredient in the overall development plan for Genoa Township.

The Committee recognizes that Genoa Township has experienced tremendous growth and population increases during the past decade and this growth is expected to continue. In order to meet the demand of an expanding community and to maintain the high quality of life currently enjoyed by its residents, the Township needs to establish a vision for parks and open spaces. Opportunities to create bike path networks and to develop neighborhood and community parks need to be explored today to ensure their success tomorrow.

Scope of this Master Plan

Current zoning regulations often require new developments to set-aside specific amounts of land as open space. At the same time, the Township desires to acquire land and make improvements for its residents.

The scope of this document seeks to answer the following:

- What is the best use of Township park and open space property?
- What are the needs of existing and future Township residents?
- How will future parks compliment existing parks?

The Township has limited recreational opportunities for its residents and is challenged by the need to meet the expected level of service and demands of its growing population. Some of these needs are currently met by neighboring communities, private organizations and schools.

The Township should strive to satisfy this demand while, at the same time, not compete with the neighboring communities or other recreation outlets. The Township should identify the future needs of its residents and devise a holistic approach to address the demand. This includes Westerville, Columbus Metro-Parks, City of Columbus, Preservation Park District of Delaware County, churches, schools and private organizations. Through this collaboration, the Township residents' needs can be satisfied in a manner that respects the Township's budget and resources.

It is important that residents have knowledge of places, people, and events that are historically significant to Genoa Township. As parks and public spaces are developed, elements should be added to designs that reflect the past. These elements inject meaning into a space and help make the area unique.



A portion of the master plan contains historic information to help residents to **remember the past**. Existing parks exhibits, population data and level of service maps are included to aid in **analyzing the present**, and recommendations are provided so we can **reach for our future**.

Method

The Parks Committee, comprised of Township residents and a consultant from R.D. Zande, created the plan through research, discussion and analysis. Information from the Trustees, county census, Township wide questionnaire, and interviews with selected youth sports league leaders was gathered and compared with existing parks and National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards. Preliminary recommendations were prepared for review and comment from the Trustees and Township Zoning Department. Unfortunately, the responses from the Township wide questionnaire were not sufficient to extract accurate conclusions regarding the needs and desires of Township residents. The Committee concluded that only some of the NRPA standards applied to Genoa Township: such as minimum radius criteria for park placement and open space area per resident ratios.

Results

Based on its research, the Parks Committee established goals, objectives and recommendations for the Township Trustees. These are presented in this Master Plan along with supporting research, historical data and summaries of national park standards. It is the Committee's sincere opinion that this document will become a worthwhile tool for Genoa Township leaders: assisting them in decisions that will help grow parks and open space systems which adds value to the lives of Genoa Township residents.

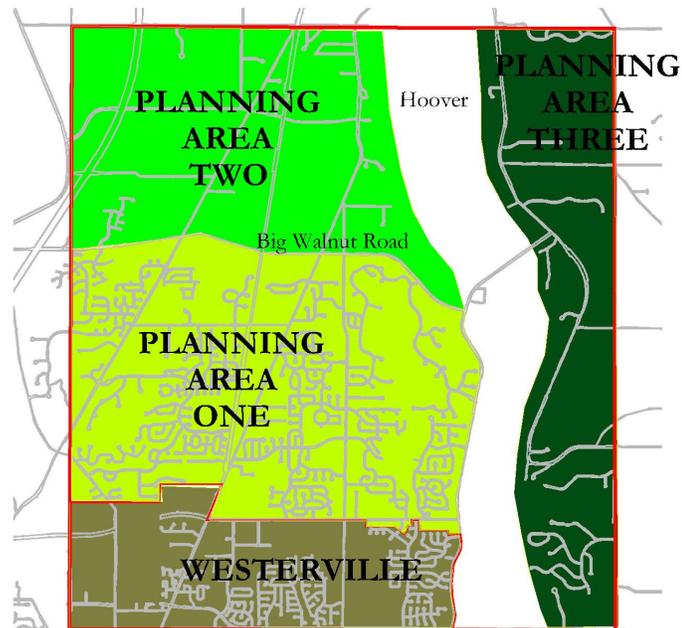
Study Area:

All of the land within the Township that is not part of the City of Westerville or the City of Columbus is considered the study area. This area was divided into three planning areas.

Planning Area One:
(South of Big Walnut Rd.)

Planning Area Two:
(North of Big Walnut Rd.)

Planning Area Three:
(East of Hoover Reservoir)



Study Area Analysis:

- **Planning Area One:**
 - Much of the area has been developed with single family residential neighborhoods with little useable open space
 - There are approximately 5,150 parcels in Area One
- **Planning Area Two:**
 - Much of the area has not been developed.
 - There are approximately 500 parcels in Area Two
- **Planning Area Three:**
 - Much of the area has been developed with large lot single family homes
 - Sewer service is currently not available in Area Three
 - There are approximately 600 parcels in Area Three

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES

1. Evaluate the current Level of Service (LOS) provided by Home Owner Association (HOA) property, neighborhood and community parks to Township residents and address deficiencies.
2. Connect neighborhoods through paved pathways.
3. Assure park improvements are of high quality and a point of pride.
4. Adopt a strategy to address various issues of organized sports.
5. Create a Township Park District to maintain the Park Master Plan and implement the recommendations.
6. Preserve historic sites.

◆ *LEVEL OF SERVICE* ◆

Objective 1: Evaluate the current Level of Service provided by Home Owner Association (HOA) property, neighborhood and community parks to Township residents and address deficiencies.

Areas of the Township, which currently do not meet the minimum Level of Service (LOS) should be considered for park improvements. The LOS will improve as the Township acquires more property and makes improvements to property it currently owns. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) recommends that people should live **no more than a half-mile from a neighborhood park and three miles from a community park**. Pages C-6 and C-7 graphically depict the areas that do not meet this standard. Since some neighborhoods contain parks and open space areas that are not owned by the Township, and are not included in this document, it is necessary to inventory these areas and to hold a workshop with neighborhood residents to determine if their needs are being met.

Planning Area One: (South of Big Walnut Road, West of Hoover Reservoir)

Community Parks

Recommendation for Planning Area One

Creation of a community park in Planning Area One is **not** recommended primarily because there are no undeveloped parcels large enough in Planning Area One to support a community park.

The southern portion of the Planning Area is within the service area of Hoff Woods Park and Cleveland Avenue sports complex, both of which are owned and maintained by the City of Westerville.

The central portion of the Planning Area is not serviced by a community park and, unfortunately, there are very few opportunities to create a traditional community park. However, there may be an opportunity to work with Westerville City Schools. Alcott Elementary and Central High School have indicated their facilities are available for area residents. Opportunities for the Township to add additional park and park facilities adjacent to these sites may exist. By combining Township owned parks and facilities with Westerville City School properties and facilities a place can be realized which comes close to satisfying the area's community park needs.

The northern portion of the planning area is within three miles of McNamara Park. Even though McNamara is technically considered a neighborhood park, as more improvements are made this park can grow and continue to satisfy some of the area's community park needs.

Planning Area One: (South of Big Walnut Road, West of Hoover Reservoir)
Neighborhood Parks

Area A: North of Westerville, south of the OSU tower, east of Worthington Road, west of SR 3. Neighborhoods include Augusta Woods, Highland Lakes South, Highland Lakes Estates, and Parkmoor Estates.

Recommendation for Area A:

The Township currently does not own property within this area and it appears the area is underserved by neighborhood parks. However, there are HOA properties in the area. Once these have been inventoried, further analysis can occur. If it is determined that the minimum LOS is not met and there are opportunities for the Township to improve the LOS, then a neighborhood workshop should be held to gather input from the residents to determine what improvements are desired.

Area B: North of the intersection between the western township boundary and Worthington Road and south of Big Walnut Road. Neighborhoods include Highland Lakes north, Willow Bend, and Highland Hills.

Recommendation for Area B:

Grand Oak Park is within a half-mile radius of this area however Big Walnut Road is a significant barrier for park visitors to cross.

The Township currently does not own property within this area and it appears the area is underserved by neighborhood parks. However, there may be HOA properties in the area. Once these have been inventoried, further analysis can occur. If it is determined that the minimum LOS is not met and there are opportunities for the Township to improve the LOS, then a neighborhood workshop should be held to gather input from the residents to determine what improvements are desired.

Area C: North of Freeman Road, south of Big Walnut Road, east of Worthington Road, west of SR 3. Neighborhoods include Oaks at Highland Lakes and Blackhawk Forest.

Recommendation for Area C:

Freeman Road Park is within a half-mile radius of this area however Freeman Road is a significant barrier for park visitors to cross. The Township does not have any property within this area however the minimum LOS may still be met. Much of the area is currently under development. Once the HOAs are controlled by the residents, not the developer, a neighborhood workshop meeting should be held to determine what improvements, if any, are needed.

Planning Area Two: (North of Big Walnut Road, West of Hoover Reservoir)
Community Parks

Recommendation:

Other than the City of Westerville's Hoff Woods Park and Cleveland Avenue Sports Complex, which only service a small area of the Township, the Township is not home to a community park that can satisfy the current and future needs of the residents. There are several large, undeveloped parcels within Planning Area Two and the Parks Committee recommends the Township acquire at least fifty acres in this area to develop a community park and possibly a community center.

The Township should undertake an evaluation of the advantages for the Township in creating a Community Center. Should such a project proceed, care should be taken to assure that included uses are compatible, integrated and sited respectful of adjacent uses and truly aimed at meeting the needs of Genoa Township residents.

Genoa Township Comprehensive Plan (1999)
Development Strategies #7, pg. 29

Neighborhood Parks

Recommendation:

Development that is occurring in this area usually includes Township park and community open space areas. The Parks Committee will assume that any new development that occurs in this area will also have adequate park and open space areas: some belonging to the Township and others to the HOAs. This is a function of the zoning process and requirements that are now in place but were not when Planning Area One was developed. It should not be necessary for the Township to acquire land in Planning Area Two, however, it may be necessary for the Township to make some improvements: such as shelters, walking paths, play equipment, benches, and landscaping. For this analysis of Planning Area Two, the Parks Committee has considered McNamara Park a neighborhood park serving areas within a half-mile radius.

Planning Area Three: (East of Hoover Reservoir)
Community Parks

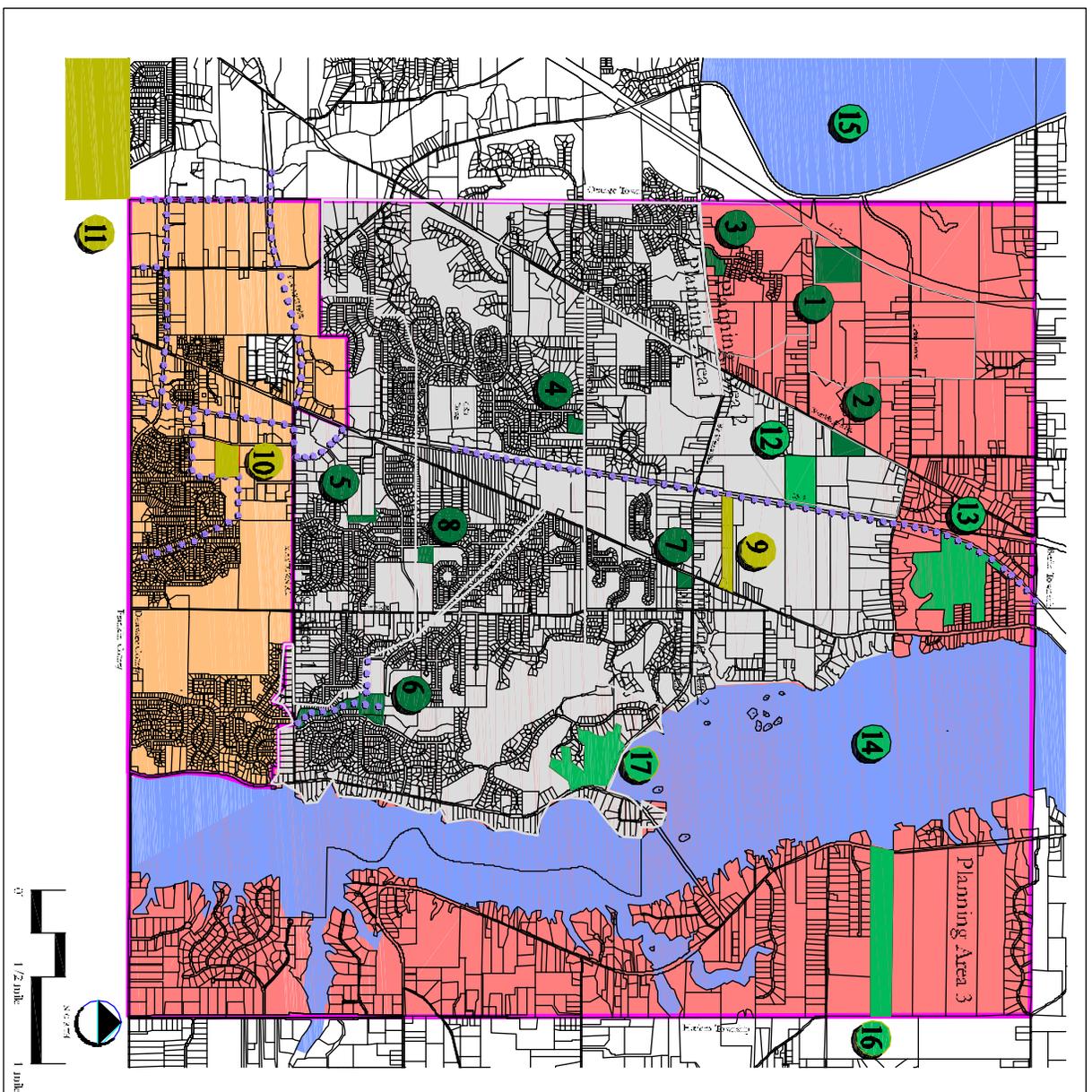
Recommendation:

No community parks are recommended for Planning Area Three.

Neighborhood Parks

Recommendation:

The Parks Committee recommends one neighborhood park should be located in the northern half, and one in the southern half, of this study area. Because of the abundance of open space, parking areas, fishing access, and trails along Hoover Reservoir, it is not necessary for the Township to acquire additional property for the purpose of creating a neighborhood park. Rather, the Township should work with the City of Columbus to encourage development of facilities on land adjacent to Hoover Reservoir which the City currently owns.

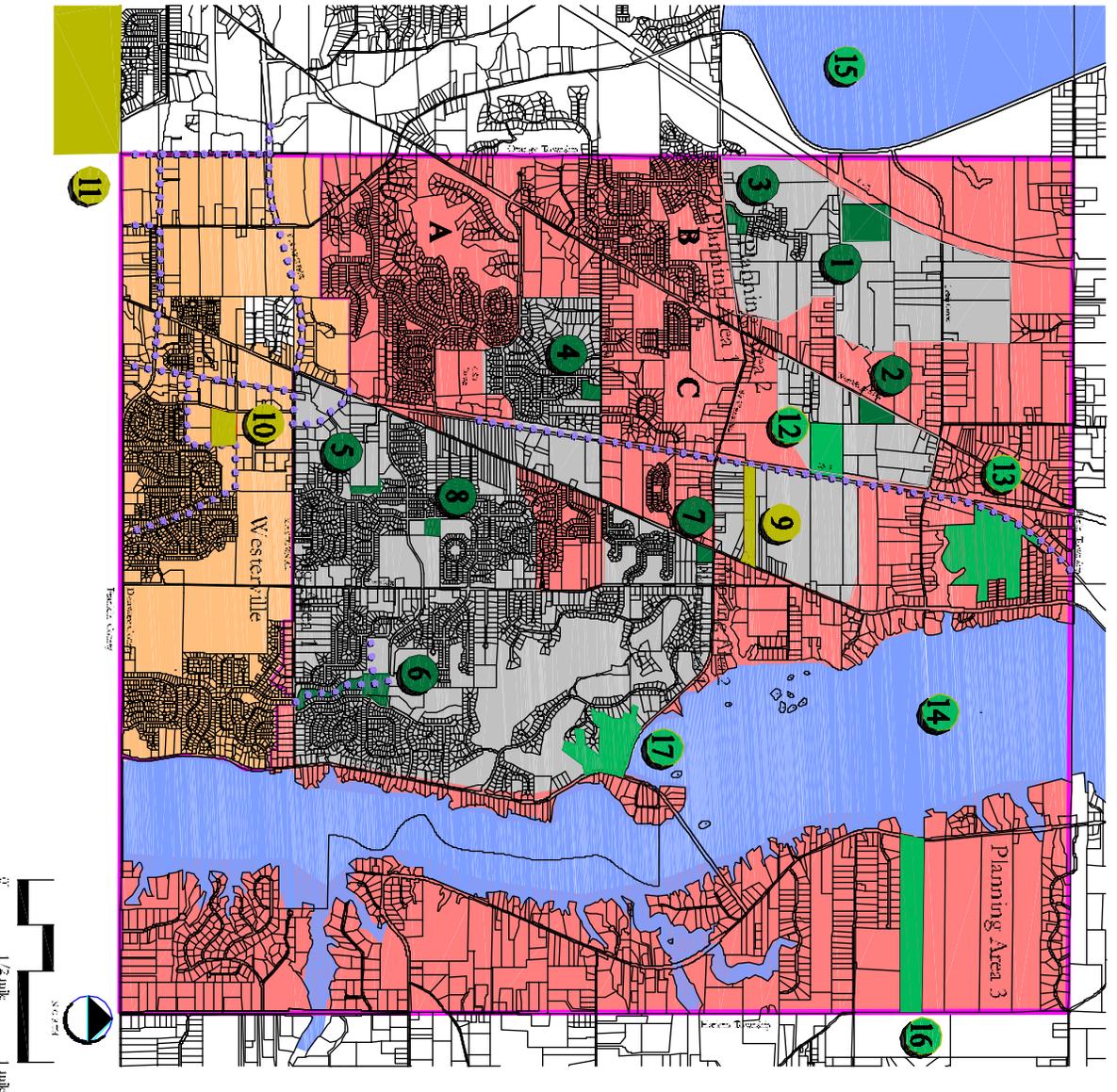


COMMUNITY PARK SERVICE AREA

- Areas not currently served by a community park
 - Areas currently served by a community park
 - **NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**
 - **COMMUNITY PARKS**
 - **NATURAL PARKLAND**
1. SHEFFIELD PARK WEST
 2. SHEFFIELD PARK EAST
 3. GRAND OAK PARK
 4. FRIEMAN ROAD PARK
 5. ORCHARD LARKS PARK
 6. HARVEST WIND PARK
 7. TOWNSHIP HALL
 8. SHERBROOK PARK
9. MCNAMARA PARK
 10. HOFF WOODS (Westville)
 11. CHEVIE AND AVENUE SPORTS COMPLEX (Westville)
12. TLEBUR PARK
 13. CHEAR-MEAR RIDGE PRESERVE (Preservation Park)
 14. HOOVER RESERVOIR (Coleridge)
 15. ALTON CREEK RESERVOIR (Ohio)
 16. HOOVER MEADOWS (Coleridge)
 17. MIDD-HEN MARSH (Coleridge)



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE AREA



A, B, and C - See sheet C-3 for recommendations in these areas.

- Areas not currently served by a neighborhood park
- Areas currently served by a neighborhood park
- Existing Power Pathway
- Township Boundary
- Westerville Limits

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

1. SHEFFIELD PARK WEST
2. SHEFFIELD PARK EAST
3. GRAND OAK PARK
4. FRIEMAN ROAD PARK
5. ORCHARD LARKS PARK
6. HILWEST WIND PARK
7. TOWNSHIP HALL
8. SHERBROOK PARK

COMMUNITY PARKS

9. MCNAMARA PARK
10. HOFF WOODS (Westerville)
11. CHEVIE AND AVENUE SPORTS COMPLEX (Westerville)

NATURAL PARKLAND

12. TLEBUR PARK
13. CHEAR-MEAR RIDGE PRESERVE (Preservation Parks)
14. HOOVER RESERVOIR (Coleridge)
15. ALTON CREEK RESERVOIR (Ohio)
16. HOOVER MEADOWS (Coleridge)
17. MIDD-HEN MASH (Coleridge)



◆ PAVED PATHWAY PLAN ◆

C

Objective 2: Connect neighborhoods through paved pathways

Nearly 100 million people in the United States own bicycles. The Bicycle Federation of America estimates that fewer than 5 percent would qualify as experienced or highly skilled bicyclists. Therefore, the pathway system should accommodate the needs of both experienced and less experienced riders. The experienced rider is most likely interested in many miles of safe cycling for exercise. This rider will appreciate the rails-to-trails link as well as connections to Westerville's system. The less experienced rider is most likely interested in short trips to a destination: such as a neighbor's house or a convenience store. These riders will most appreciate the links to neighborhoods and parks with safe crossings at roadway intersections. A well thought out network will adequately address both types of users, as well as, walkers, joggers, and kids enroute to school.

Definition of terms for this Master Plan:

Paved Pathway: A paved surface that is suitable for pedestrian and non-motorized travel.

Pathway User: A person who is walking or traveling by a non-motorized means such as a bicycle, scooter, rollerblades, wheelchair, or pushing a stroller.

As the township continues to develop, there is an increasing need to have a people oriented, pedestrian environment. It is Genoa Township's intention to encourage bicycle and pedestrian linkages.

Genoa Township Comprehensive Plan (1999)
Specific Issues: Pedestrian Orientation, pg. 33

The Parks Committee recommends that a strategy to connect the Township with a network of paved pathways should be adopted. The following alignments are illustrated on page C-11.

Existing Paved Pathways:

1. All local streets in the study area
2. Former railroad corridor on the east side of State Route 3
3. From Maxtown Road to Harvest Wind Park behind Barrington Estates
4. Throughout McNamara Park
5. Throughout Freeman Road Park

Commitments have already been made for the construction of other paved pathways:

1. Complete the railroad corridor path from Plumb Road to the Westerville System at Maxtown Road
2. Connection throughout Harvest Wind Park and west to Alcott Elementary School
3. Connection from the end of Tussic Street at Old 3C, through Vinmar Estates to railroad corridor path
4. Around pond in Sherbrook
5. Paths within The Oaks at Highland Lakes
6. Paths within Sheffield Park

Recommendations:

Proposed Paved Pathways: The Parks Committee recommends the following paved pathways be installed to complete the network.

1. Connect Hoover Reservoir to Alum Creek along Lewis Center Road
2. East – west connection along Big Walnut Road to railroad corridor path
3. North-south connection along Tussic Street
4. Coordinate with Westerville to complete east – west connection from Northgate to Sunbury Road along Maxtown Road
5. Connect neighborhoods along Africa Road to Westerville system at Polaris Parkway
6. Connect neighborhoods along Freeman Road to railroad corridor path
7. Coordinate with City of Columbus, Galena, Berkshire Township and Westerville to provide a paved pathway loop around Hoover Reservoir.

There are three types of paved pathways. The type of pathway used will be dependent on many factors that are too detailed for this level of analysis. This plan does not recommend what type of paved pathway should be utilized along a recommended alignment; rather, the most appropriate type will be selected during a design process based on local surroundings, cost, and the constraints of each individual alignment.

The three types of paved pathways are:

1. **Pathway User Only Alignment:** (See definition on page C-8) These facilities are on exclusive right-of-way with minimal cross flow by motor vehicles. Pathway User Only Alignments should be used to serve corridors not served by streets and highways. The most common applications are along streams, canals, utility right-of-ways, former railroad right-of-ways, or within and between parks. While Pathway User Only Alignments should be designed with the bicyclist's safety in mind, other users such as, joggers, dog walkers, people pushing baby carriages, persons in wheelchairs, skate boarders, and in-line skaters are likely to use these paths and their needs should be considered as well.
2. **Shared Roadway Alignment (no signage or designation):**
Any neighborhood street can be considered a paved pathway. A neighborhood street is defined by Delaware County as a road that carries no more than 1,500 average trips per day (ADT). Most of the local streets in the study area have an adequate width, low traffic volumes, and low vehicle speeds. Responsible drivers use these streets expecting to encounter children playing, walkers and bike riders; therefore, it is not necessary to provide designated pathways adjacent to these types of streets. In addition, sidewalks are often present which are ideal for walkers and children.

3. Signed Shared Roadway Alignment: A Signed Shared Roadway Alignment relies on existing collector or arterial streets to provide Pathway User travel. A collector street is defined by Delaware County as a road that carries 1,500 to 3,500 ADTs, and an arterial street carries over 3,500 ADTs. Collector and arterial streets are not normally safe for this purpose. Design modifications are often necessary in order to provide for the safe movement of pathway users and motor vehicles on the same section of road. Pavement width is the most critical issue. Additional width can be provided by increasing the outside lanes or paved shoulders. Also, additional signage and striping are needed to designate bicycle and pathway user movements.

As the Township continues to grow, improvements to collector and arterial streets will continue. If pathway user circulation is considered during the design phases, they can be constructed in conjunction with the major roadway improvements at substantially less cost than if they were added later.

The following criteria should be considered prior to signing a route:

- The route should provide through and direct travel in high-demand corridors.
- The route connects discontinuous segments of paved pathways.
- An effort has been made to adjust traffic control devices to give greater priority to pathway users on the route.
- Street parking has been removed or restricted in areas of critical width to provide improved safety.
- Maintenance of the route will be sufficient to prevent accumulation of debris.
- A smooth surface and adequate pavement width has been provided.
- Shoulder or curb lane widths generally meet or exceed The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO) width requirements.
- Signs and pavement markings are intended to delineate and separate the right-of-way assigned to pathway users and motorists and to provide for more predictable movements by each.
- Pathway user lanes should be one-way facilities in the same direction as adjacent motor vehicle traffic. On one-way streets, pathway user lanes should generally be placed on the right side of the street.

◆ PARK QUALITY AND PRIDE ◆

Objective # 3: Assure park improvements are of high quality and a point of pride.

Truly successful parks should help bring people together, build community and cause people to interact. Parks should encourage socialization and participation by people in the community and serve as locations for public expression. They should be interesting, physically comfortable and safe.

Parks are places for activity including relaxation. Parks leave a strong, lasting, positive impression. They catch the eye and the imagination. They are joyful places to be and, given a chance, one wants to return to them again and again.

Anytime improvements are made with public money there may be scrutiny. Residents who feel over-taxed jump at the opportunity to criticize stewards of community budgets for wasting precious resources. Often, anything that does not directly contribute to the intended function of the improvement is deemed unnecessary. If something's value cannot be precisely measured against the intended use then it should be discarded. This will free up more money for other things; so the logic goes.

Early in the process, the Parks Committee established a vision to create a park system that enhances neighborhoods, builds a sense of community, and is viewed as a valued investment in our daily lives. Beauty and elegance in public places are worth having. The return on a park improvement is not measured merely by how well it facilitates the task it was designed for, rather, it is the whole pleasure that it provides the community. **Cheapness has never been a criterion for great spaces or buildings.** The Committee understands that improvements can be expensive, and Township resources must be spent wisely; but well designed, successful, parks can be a great bargain for the pleasure they provide.

One must consider, during all steps of the design process, how the proposed improvement will affect its surroundings. Does the proposed building augment and enhance the existing context or does it stand in distinct and deliberate contrast? Design is important. Creating worthwhile spaces and structures is important. Once a building is constructed, it becomes as much a part of the environment as a tree or a rock.

The amount of open space is not nearly as critical to the Township as the quality of the land dedicated to recreation activity, including its location, accessibility and relationship to other open space areas.

Genoa Township Comprehensive Plan (1999)

The following is a list of elements often found in successful parks and public spaces:

- Focal Point

All parks need at least one focal point and larger parks may need several. This is the one place, set apart from the rest, which has the most importance. Our eye is drawn to it. This gives the remainder of the park more order and justification. Focal points can be expensive elements such as buildings or sculpture; or less expensive elements such as a specimen tree with accent lighting. Focal points are often found at the end of a long framed view or in the center of a circular form: most people are able to visually find the center of a circle and will expect to find something interesting there.

- Places for people to walk with leisure

One does not meet people while driving in a car. People meet and experience others while walking and sitting. Parks create opportunities for chance encounters and spontaneous conversation between strangers. Parks, if designed properly, can contribute to a sense of community.

- Physical comfort

Successful parks are as comfortable as they can be in their own settings. They offer warmth, or sunlight, when it is cool and shade when it is hot. They offer reasonable protection from the elements without trying to avoid the natural environment.

- Maintenance

The realization of a park's design is the responsibility of the maintenance staff. Keeping plants healthy, controlling weeds, repairing, painting and resurfacing paved areas ensure the parks get better with age. Park visitors appreciate maintenance. People would rather not visit a poorly maintained place.

- Definition

Parks should create well-defined spaces that serve a variety of purposes. Well-designed spaces have boundaries that communicate clearly both vertically (through the use of buildings, walls, and trees), and horizontally (established through the spacing and length of the vertical elements).

- Quality of construction and design

Even the very best maintenance cannot make a crooked line straight or a skewed line vertical. Nor will it cure a sloppy putty job, make a muddy color come to life, nor make "right" a "wrong" tree. These are matters of craftsmanship, materials, design standards, and oversight during the construction process.

- Trees

Given a limited budget, often the most effective expenditure is on trees. Trees can transform a bland open field more easily than any other physical improvement. Trees provide a sense of human scale in what often are very large and wide-open spaces. Trees provide a 'ceiling' to outdoor rooms, define edges, and screen unsightly views. Of course, existing trees and large shrubs should be left in a design whenever possible.

- Details

Although there are many details a community can invest in to promote a well-designed park; a few important ones should not be overlooked:

- Lighting – can define spaces and promote a safe environment.
- Paving – can be used to define spaces and establish textural qualities for vehicular and pathway users uses.
- Benches – invite our presence by providing rest, conversation, and allow for the passing of time. They help make a welcoming park.
- Structures – picnic shelters, restroom facilities and concessions can serve as key park elements. Structures define style and focal point locations. These must be designed and constructed with quality materials and reflect a command of architectural principles such as scale, proportion, rhythm, style, texture, light and color.

Objective 4: Adopt a strategy to address various issues of organized sports

Genoa Township has a responsibility to its residents to provide recreational opportunities. This should happen only at facilities that are designed to accommodate this activity. There are many families in the Township that are currently participating in organized sports. As the Township grows, more participants are added to rosters each year to a point where game space is becoming limited. Since a significant portion of these teams consist of Genoa Township residents, it is up to the Township to ensure these opportunities are available. By planning for this use the Township can assure its availability and compatibility with other activities. The following guidelines should be considered as the Township adopts a strategy to handle organized sports.

Guidelines for field usage

Today, the Township does not have any facilities suitable for organized sports. As a general rule, games should not occur in a neighborhood park. In some instances, it is possible to design for this scenario but careful consideration should be given so that this one activity does not dominate all other park activities. Neighborhood parks are meant for the neighborhood they serve; however, occasional practice sessions by organized teams should be easily accommodated in most neighborhood parks but only after permission has been granted to the coach. Consider the following:

- Locate games in community parks specifically designed for this activity.
- Provide adequate parking for the planned activity. It is also recommended that areas for overflow parking are considered to keep parked vehicles out of neighborhoods or off major streets.
- Provide adequate restroom facilities and drinking fountains.
- Fields may not require lights.
- Fields should be located with respect to adjacent property owners with setbacks from property lines and landscape buffers.
- The Township should maintain the fields: mowing, fertilizing, etc. The league should chalk fields, provide equipment and bases.
- League participants should pick up trash after events.



Guidelines for programs

The Township is fortunate to have excellent existing organizations dedicated to providing a variety of sports to a variety of age groups. It is not necessary for the Township to form its own organizations; this would be an inefficient use of resources and could create conflicts. The Township should take a leadership role in scheduling fields so that all approved organizations can use Township facilities.

- The Township should create a list of leagues approved to use Township parks.
- The Township should create a schedule indicating who will use its fields and when. Schedules will have to be adjusted to accommodate make-up games, tournaments and post season playoffs.
- The Township could limit games to certain times.

◆ PARK DISTRICT FORMATION ◆

Objective 5: Create a Township Park District to maintain the Park Master Plan and implement the recommendations

Before significant improvements are made to existing parks and additional parkland is acquired, Township officials should consider the creation of a Township Park District with permanent funding for future operations (recreation programs) and maintenance.

Genoa Township Comprehensive Plan (1999)
Development Strategies #6, pg. 28

The Township Trustees should appoint a group of residents to attend to park and open space issues. The group could aid the Trustees in implementing the recommendations in this document, as well as, assisting with future park and open space issues. With the support of the Trustees, this group could grow to become a District as defined by chapter 5111 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Anderson Township, in Hamilton County, (a state leader in the formation of park districts, provided the Parks Committee their opinion regarding the benefits of forming a Township Park District.

- Members can be appointed by the Genoa Township Trustees if the District is coterminous to the Township. They typically serve a three-year term without limits.
- The Park District can operate on a separate levy and independently manage funding in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code (Chapter 511). Financial matters are audited by the State of Ohio and funds are distributed directly from the County Auditor's Office.
- Districts are a form of government separate from Township policy. This allows the Board to focus on parks and recreation issues. There is no competition for funds with police, fire, maintenance and zoning.
- The District has direct control over its budget.
- It permits partnerships with other entities and organizations but allows for arms-length agreements.
- Enabling legislation protects lands acquired by the District
- The District is eligible for many kinds of grants and other funding outside of the voted levy: inside millage, revenue assistance funds, local government funds, library funds, state and federal grants, gifts and endowments.
- The Park District is allowed to participate in Joint Recreation Agreements with other entities.

◆ HISTORIC STRUCTURES ◆

Objective 6: Preserve historic sites

Ode to Barns Past

Conceived in need, and built with pride,
By careful loving hands.
Mystique, with styles of purpose blend,
Form your ancestral lands.

Your mow stall made food for all,
With plenty left to sell.
You've sheltered countless and flocks,
And served your masters well.

Technology, or laziness,
It's hard to trace the blame.
For our neglect of your distress,
We all share common shame.

As future craftsmen reconstruct
Your every joint and truss,
May history be as kind to you
As you have been to us.

A death no reason justifies,
A tragic way to end.
So as we say our last goodbye,
We must add, "Thank You, Friend."

-Richard Talada (1990)

The American barn is disappearing from the landscape. One-fourth of the barns listed in the 1997 *Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings* are now gone. Genoa Township is changing as it grows from an agricultural landscape to suburban neighborhoods. The temptation is great to destroy barns as many see them as more trouble than they are worth: high maintenance, fire hazard, invite vandals, rodents, etc.

*"When an old barn falls, we lose
more than a building. We lose a
sense of place".*

Steve Stier, a noted barn restorer

Barns may not evoke the nostalgia of a one-room schoolhouse, covered bridge, or lighthouses, but for more than 200 years they have stood as a symbol of hard work and a rural way of life. Barns are privately owned and built to suit a variety of purposes. As a result, the designs vary giving every barn a history to tell.

The Parks Committee recommends an inventory of historic sites be created with the aid of volunteers and local experts. Barns, and other significant structures in the Township, should be documented, located, and categorized. If an opportunity arises to preserve a structure the Township will be prepared. The committee does not recommend saving historic structures for the sake of nostalgia; expecting them to remain frozen in time as museum pieces. Rather, the challenge is to find new uses and practical reasons to save the things that are worth saving.