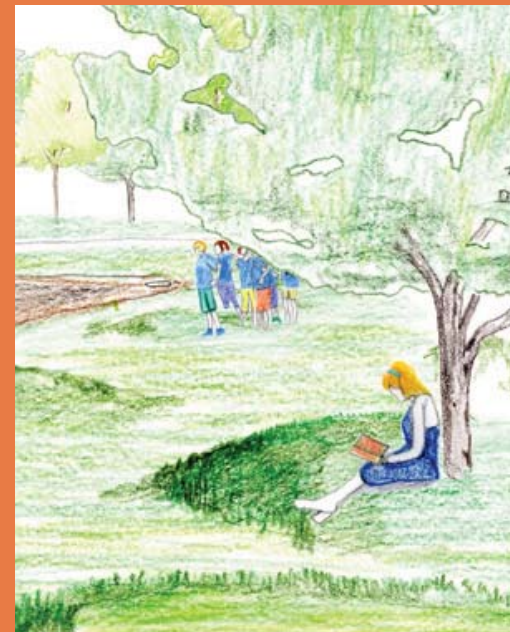




BLENDON PARKS MASTER PLAN



RIDGEWOOD PARK • SUNBURY WOODS COMMONS • PHELPS ACRE • SUNBURY GATEWAY



BLENDON PARKS MASTER PLAN

Blendon Township, Franklin County, Ohio

Adopted January 10, 2012



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Blendon Parks Master Plan

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Disclaimer: We produced the maps, figures, tables and other information in this document only for Franklin County business purposes. While we made every effort to include complete information, the maps, figures, tables and other information are not guaranteed to be accurate. The content of this plan is for reference purposes only, and shouldn't be used for any survey, engineering or commercial purpose.

01/26/2012

ABOUT THE PLAN

The Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department hired the Neighborhood Design Center to develop a Parks Master Plan that included four sites in Blendon Township. These sites are located in the Huber Ridge and Sunbury Woods subdivisions.

Origins

The Blendon Community Plan, adopted by Franklin County Commissioners in May 2010, recommended undergoing a Parks Master Plan for Blendon Parks.

The challenge

Residents of Blendon Township expressed interest in redesigning their parks because they view them as important. The challenge was to create a series of parks that met the community's desires.

The process

The design team from the Neighborhood Design Center used the Blendon Community Plan to begin their analysis. After compiling general research, the Neighborhood Design Center Visioning Team presented the findings to the community and they

sought input on the community's desire for the future. The team took the research and feedback, and developed design possibilities for each of the four sites. Later, the community was presented with a range of possible park designs. With feedback on these alternatives, the team presented the consensus design possibilities.

Next steps

As an amendment to the Blendon Community Plan, the Blendon Parks Master Plan offers a vision for the future. In the coming years, Blendon Township and Franklin County will work together to realize the community's goals.

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RIDGEWOOD PARK



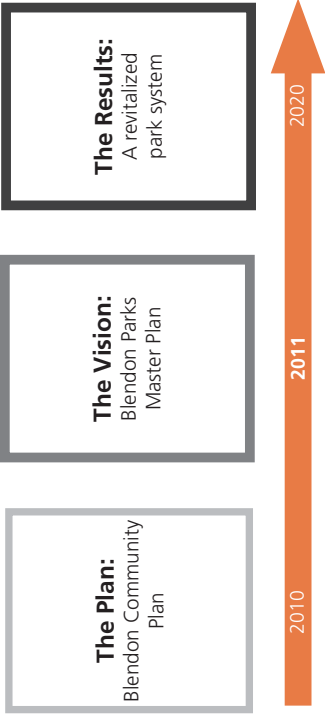
SUNBURY WOODS COMMONS

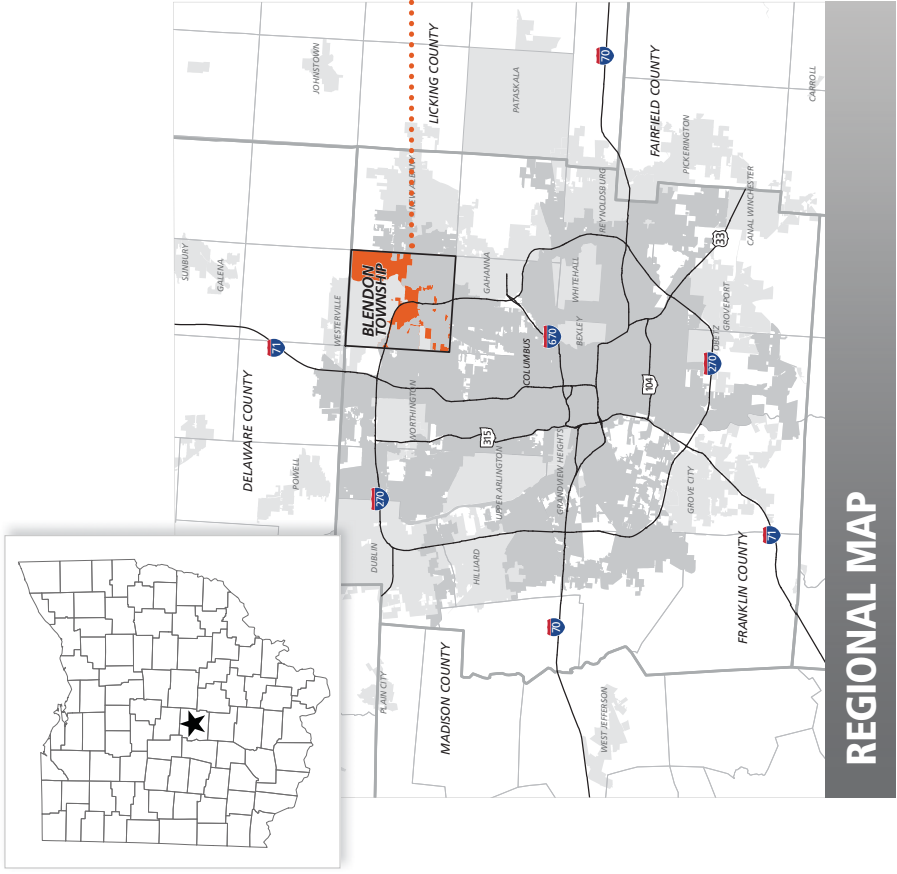


PHELPS ACRE



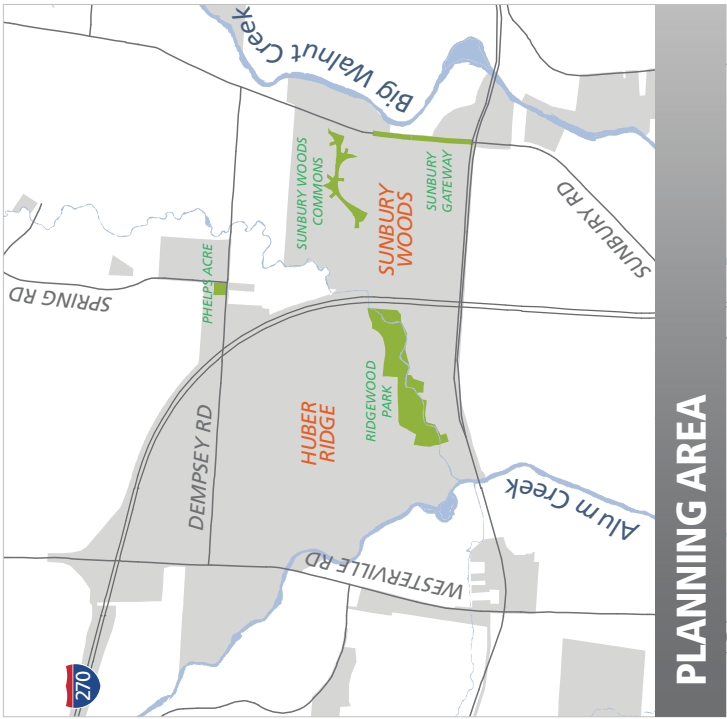
SUNBURY GATEWAY





The Blended Parks Master Plan project area is located in northeast Franklin County, within Blended Township

PLANNING AREA



The parks contained in this plan are located in the Huber Ridge and Sunbury Woods neighborhoods

RIDGEWOOD PARK



CURRENT CONDITIONS

Location

Ridgewood Park is located within the Huber Ridge neighborhood. The park serves the Huber Ridge neighborhood to the north and the apartment communities to the south.

Park Features

The park features baseball fields and playground equipment at the entrance along Buena Vista Boulevard. Further in Ridgewood Park, hiking trails cross through the wooded areas. A tributary of Alum Creek runs through Ridgewood Park.

The major features of the park are listed below:

- A Baseball fields
- B Playground Area
- C Benches along Alum Creek
- D Hiking Trails
- E Parking
- F Wooded Area

Major Issues

While the park continues to be an active community center, many of its facilities are degrading. The playground equipment needs rehabilitating, and residents desire better baseball facilities.

Another major issue for the park is access. There are few entrances into the park from the surrounding neighborhoods. Without formal entrances into the park, the steep hills make using the park difficult and unsafe. Additionally, bicycles cannot access the park from the Alum Creek trail because of a river crossing.



CURRENT CONDITIONS

RIDGEWOOD PARK



HIGHLIGHTS

The design recommendations for Ridgewood Park are divided into two parts: a standard proposal and further possible enhancements. These complementary design recommendations allow for near-term changes to address the most pressing concerns while providing a larger-scale vision for further enhancements. The image to the left shows the near-term design for Ridgewood Park. The recommendations for further enhancements begin on page 16.

The park design addresses residents' three major concerns with Ridgewood: better access, increased activity, and preservation of natural elements.

Better Access

Better access could be achieved through the addition of entrances into the surrounding neighborhoods. Switchbacks could allow residents to easily and safely navigate the steep slopes in the park. A second parking lot entrance could provide better circulation and a drop off point. Finally, a bike path and bridge over Alum Creek could connect Ridgewood Park with the Alum Creek trail.

Increased Activities

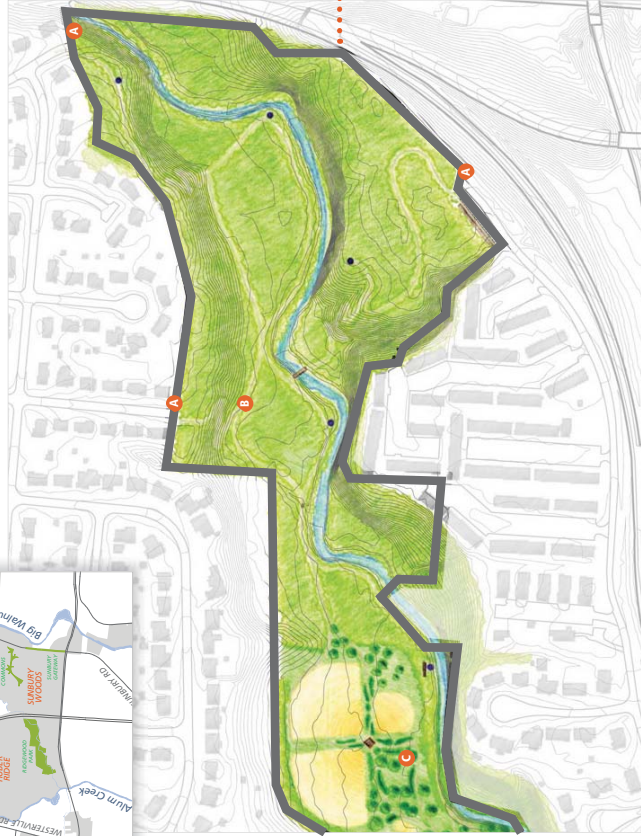
The vision for Ridgewood Park includes revamped baseball fields with tall mounds for spectators to sit on, and a new concession stand to make watching games more enjoyable. A new *rampitheater* could provide space for young skaters and sand volleyball courts could encourage use of the park.

Preservation of Natural Elements

Residents want to keep and enhance the natural elements of Ridgewood Park. Existing trails would link with new ones and include new points of interest such as pavilions and educational posts describing the park. Stream viewing areas could enhance these paths and encourage use of the natural environment.

PROPOSED DESIGN

RIDGEWOOD PARK



Park Boundary

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS



A New Park Entrances
With new entrances proposed at Spohn Drive, Harbin Drive, and Bashaw Drive, residents would be able to easily access the park without having to go to the Buenos Aires Boulevard entrance. Recommended new park entrances resemble the picture at left. Gathering spaces would provide a place to meet with friends, and benches would give a place to rest after a walk through the park. Ornamental trees could help mark these new entries, making them recognizable and attractive.



B Switchbacks and Boardwalks
To navigate the steep slopes between the new entrances and the park below, new switchbacks would allow visitors to safely navigate to the lower portions of the park. Additionally, new boardwalks would replace ground-level paths in wetland areas. This would create safer, more reliable routes through the park even when it rains.



C Improved Baseball Facilities
The baseball fields could be reoriented to create a central viewing area for all games. A new concession stand could provide food to spectators. As shown at left, a proposed series of raised mounds would provide seating for spectators, doubling as a year-round natural play area for children.

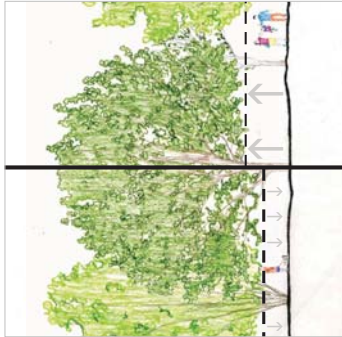
RIDGEWOOD PARK



RECOMMENDATIONS



D New Shelter with Trellis
The existing shelter could be modified and improved with a new trellis. A larger, more beautiful shelter could become part of a larger outdoor classroom in which people will learn about the natural environment around them.



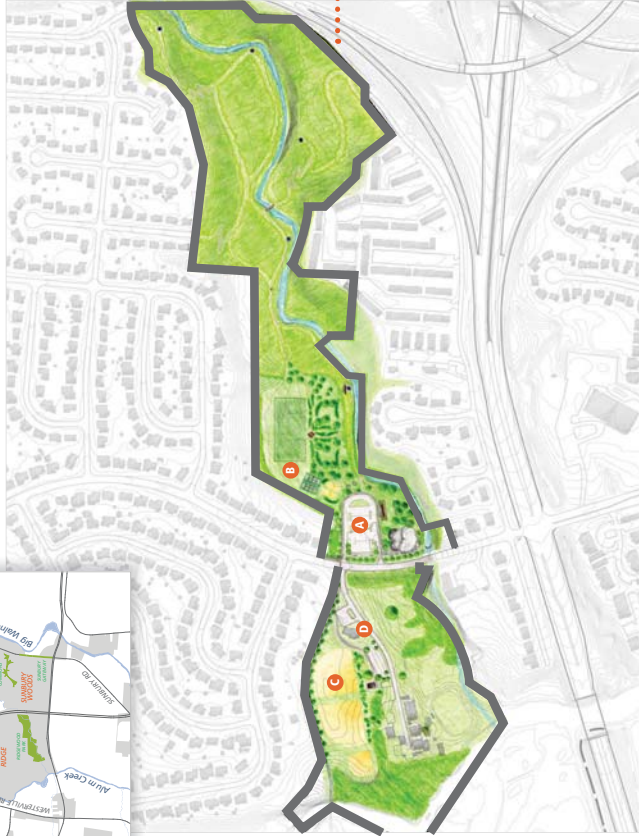
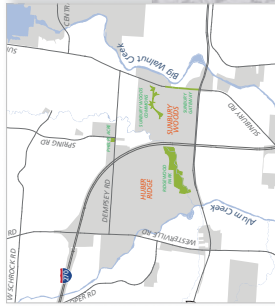
E Tree Trimming
New, usable space could be created by trimming the lowest branches of the trees within this section of the park.
Tree trimming also creates safer environments by opening up the park.



F Skate Park and Rampitheater
A new skate park consisting of a series of ramps and rails could allow local skaters to enjoy the use of the park. The steps within the skate park would create a *rampitheater* that would allow spectators to watch local talent.
By creating the specialized area, skaters will not damage the rails and steps of other areas of the park. Its close proximity to Buenos Aires Boulevard also ensures visibility of the park at all hours of the day.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONT'D

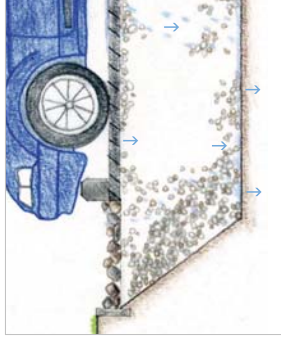
RIDGEWOOD PARK



Park Boundary

FURTHER ENHANCEMENTS

RECOMMENDATIONS



A Expand Parking Lot
Expanding the parking lot would accommodate additional vehicles during the park's busiest times, such as baseball games.
A newly expanded parking lot should use eco-friendly design. This means using methods that allow storm water to drain into the ground, keeping polluted water from directly entering area streams.



B Add Tennis Courts and Multipurpose Fields
New tennis courts and a multipurpose field could accommodate soccer games or field hockey. This will create new opportunities for exercise and sporting events for area residents.



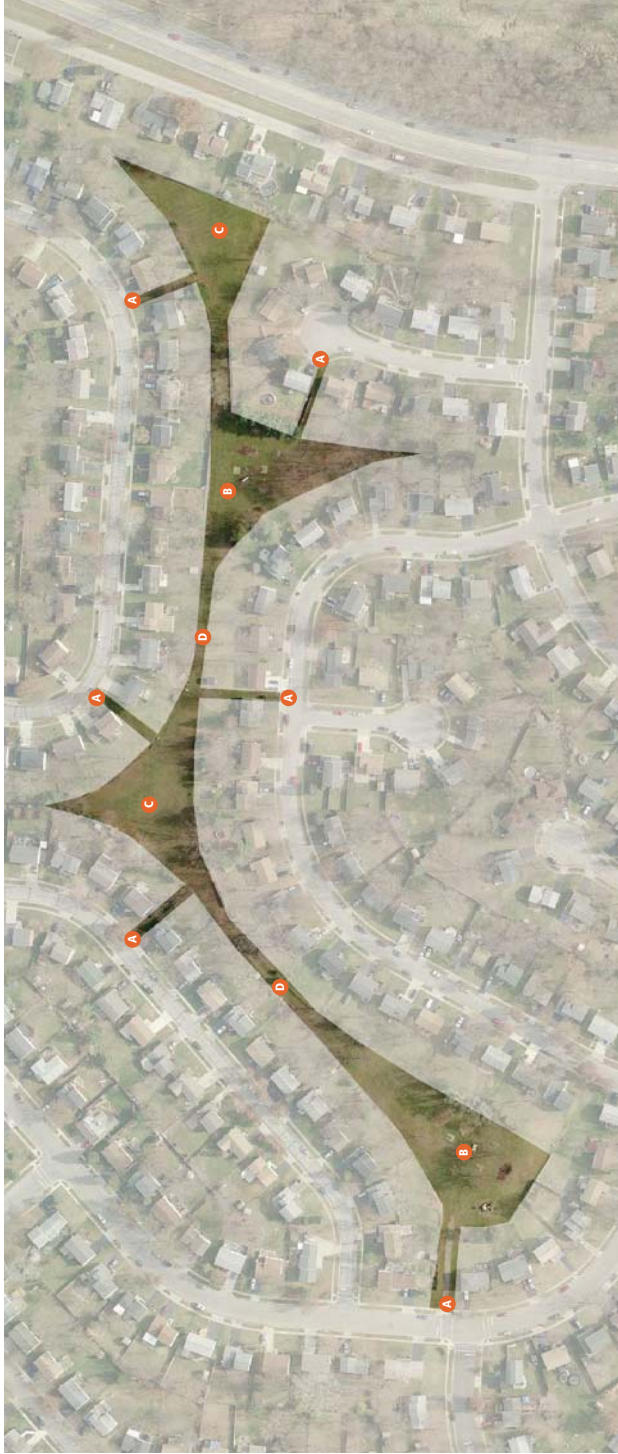
C Relocate Baseball Fields
The baseball fields could be relocated across Buenos Aires Boulevard onto land currently owned by Ohio American Water. The relocated fields will allow the park to expand and provide further amenities for those watching the games.



D Add Restrooms
Along with relocated baseball fields, restrooms could be added. This would make visiting the park easier, especially for families.

SUNBURY WOODS COMMONS

CURRENT CONDITIONS



Location
Sunbury Woods Commons is located within the Sunbury Woods neighborhood behind neighbors' backyards. This creates unique issues and opportunities for the park.

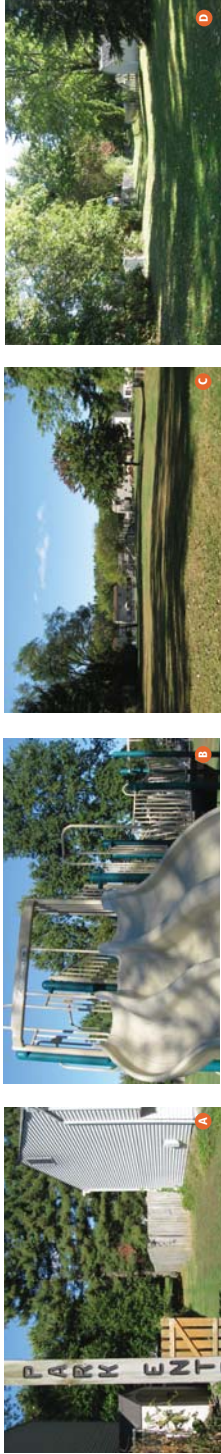
Park Features
The park features four larger areas for recreation connected by a series of smaller paths. Because the park is located behind homes, visitors must enter between houses to give access to the space. The major features of the park are listed below:

- A Park Entrances
- B Existing Play Equipment
- C Open Spaces
- D Pathways between Sections

Major Issues
The park's four sections feel disconnected. Residents said they barely recognized the Northeast spaces as part of the park.

Residents also expressed a desire to maintain a safe, family-friendly park. The lack of prominent entrances and the location make it very secluded. Residents want any new design for the park to ensure safety.

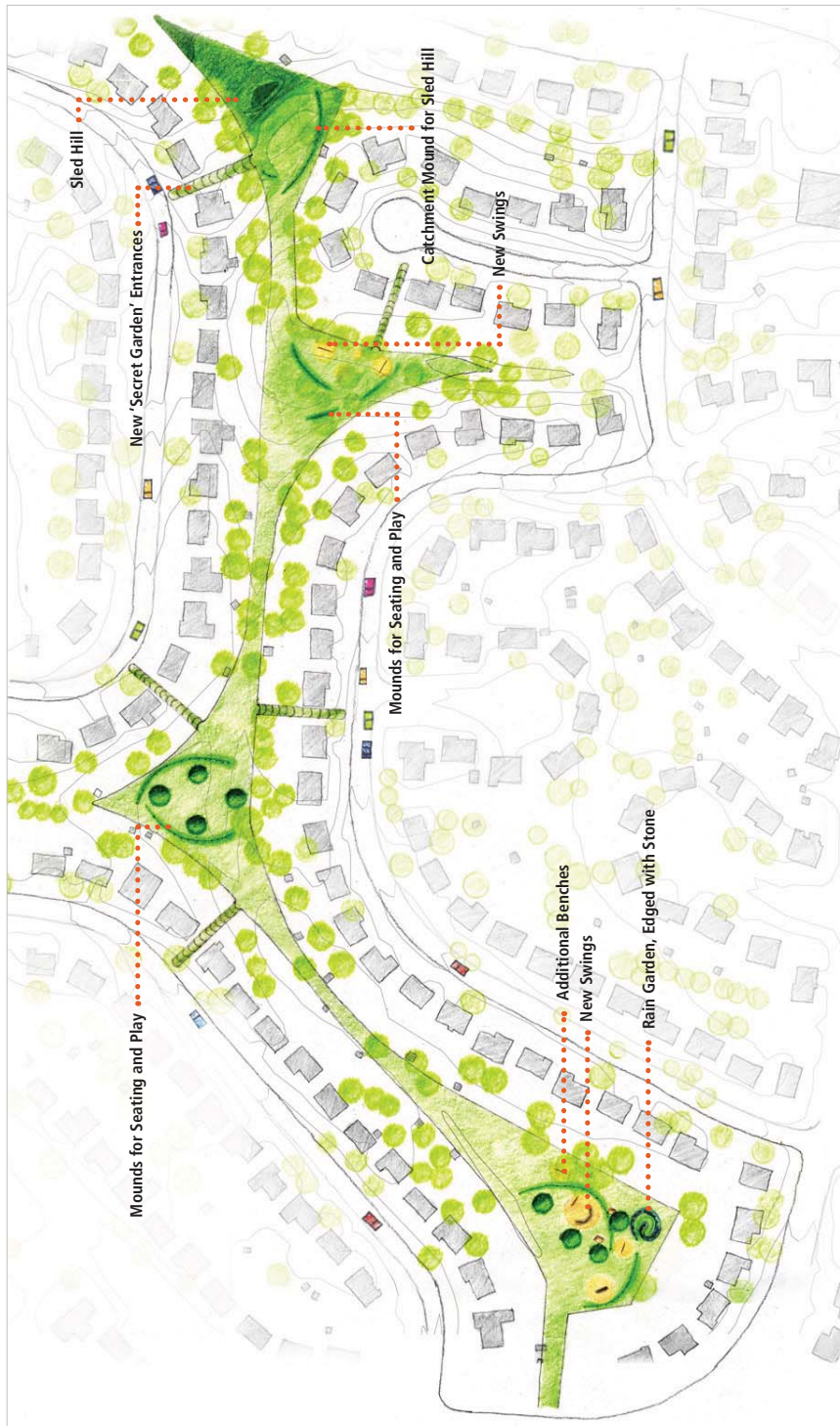
Finally, residents want easy accessibility to the park. Because of its location, park-goers must walk between houses to enter Sunbury Woods Commons. Often these entrances are poorly marked.



CURRENT CONDITIONS

SUNBURY WOODS COMMONS

HIGHLIGHTS



The proposed design for Sunbury Woods Commons uses natural elements to create a community backyard that is an inviting and active park for all ages. Natural hills and better placement of trees and plants create new spaces for games, relaxing or sledding. The park also addresses residents' desires for creating a safe, connected, and easily accessible park.

Community Backyard

New natural elements could be built to create better spaces for children and residents. A new sledding hill and catchment could be built. Additionally, low mounds for sitting could surround a small field, with four trees placed to serve as bases for kickball. Finally, a new rain garden would help capture and absorb stormwater.

New swingsets and additional benches could also be installed.

Better Access

New *secret garden* park entrances will visually distinguish the entry locations for Sunbury Woods Commons. These entrances will make the park more accessible and better connect the park areas. Visible entrances attract attention, making the park safer for children and residents.

Low Maintenance

Residents desire a low-maintenance park. Native plants and major new natural features of the park such as the sled hill would require little maintenance.

PROPOSED DESIGN

SUNBURY WOODS COMMONS



RECOMMENDATIONS



A Open Play Areas
Low earth mounds would frame the central gathering space of Sunbury Woods Commons. The mounds will create places to sit and relax while watching a pick-up game of kickball or enjoying the sun.



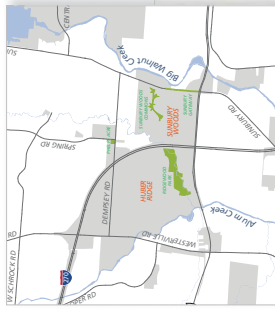
B 'Secret Garden' Park Entrances
New entrances would allow easier access into Sunbury Woods Commons. The entrances could feature tunnels constructed of interwoven willow branches and extensive vines. New posts could mark park entrances and include the new Blendon Parks logo.



C Low Mounds as Gathering Spaces
The open areas of the park allow residents to use the space any way they choose. Residents want these areas preserved and enhanced with shade trees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SUNBURY WOODS COMMONS

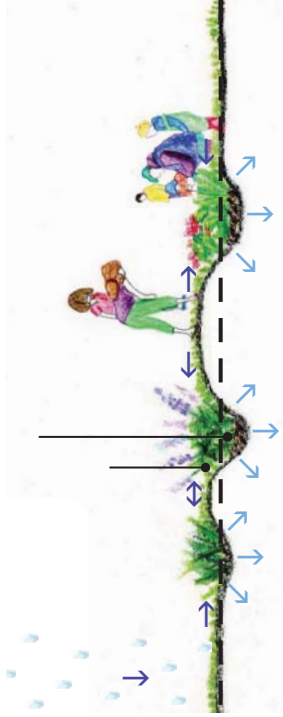


RECOMMENDATIONS



D New Swingsets

New swingsets will replace the current, aging structures. These new sets will continue to encourage physical activity in the park.



E Rain Garden

A rain garden is an attractively planted depression that allows excess rainwater to collect and percolate into the ground. Deep-rooted, native plants filter pollutants before water soaks into the ground.

PHELPS ACRE



CURRENT CONDITIONS

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Location

PHELPS Acre is the proposed name for the park located at the corner of Hempstead and Dempsey Roads. The intersection is a major intersection in Blendon Township. Blendon Central Cemetery and residential neighborhoods line the sides of the park.

Park Features

The park is the former site of a historical church. An existing fence and historical sign mark the site of the church. Current park equipment includes an old swingset and benches.

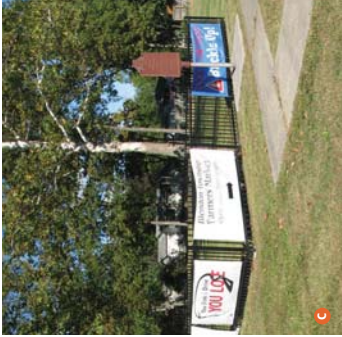
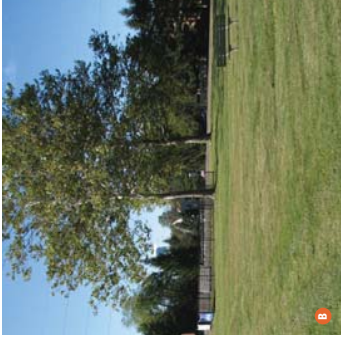
The major features of the park are listed below:

- A Swingset
- B Benches
- C Historical Marker/Church Memorial
- D Playset
- E Slide

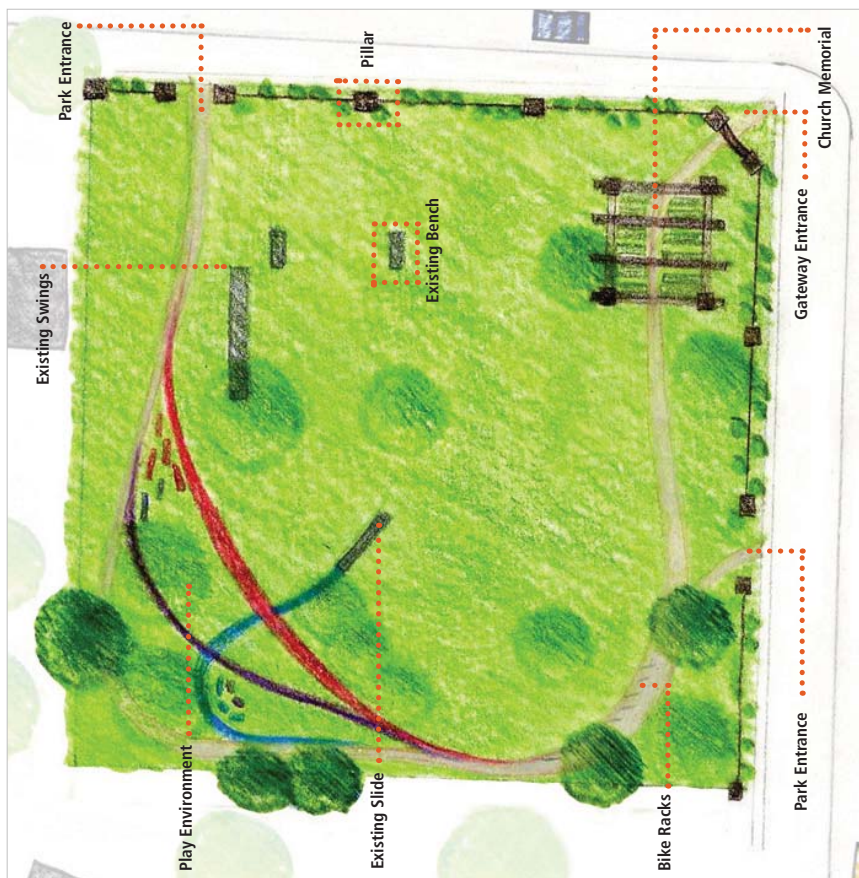
Major Issues

As a gateway to the community, the park does not present a particularly attractive entrance. The view of the church memorial is often blocked by signs, and the park is not easily recognizable as a public space.

Secondly, existing features of the park are not well-used by area residents.



PHELPS ACRE



HIGHLIGHTS

The design for Phelps Acre seeks to establish a visible entryway to the community while defining a space that residents will want to enter and use.

A Community Gateway

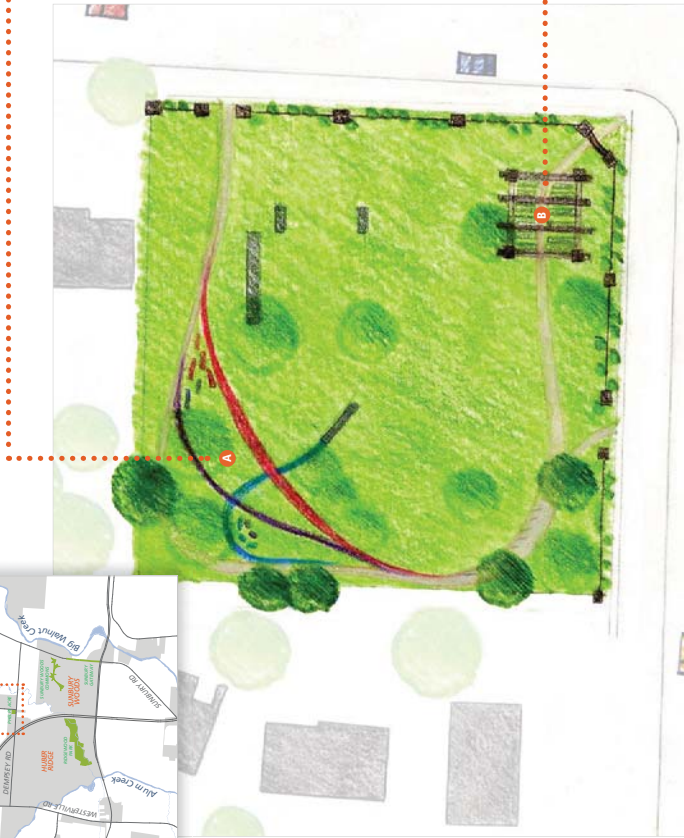
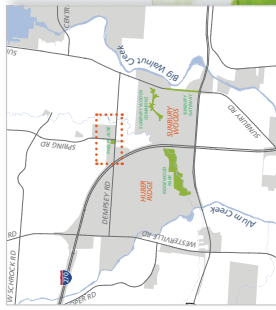
Residents embraced the historical reference in proposing to name the park Phelps Acre. By naming the park and improving its view from the street with decorative fencing, the community gateway will distinguish Blendon Township from Westerville.

A Space for Residents

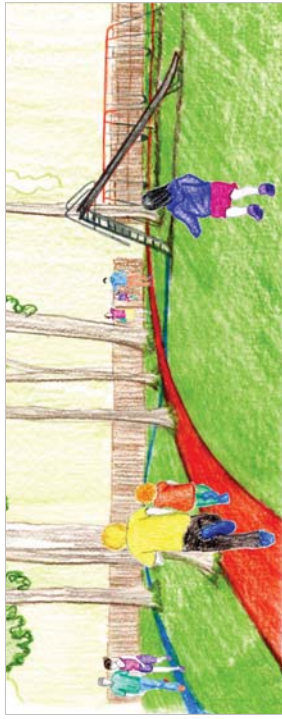
Other improvements aim to make a space residents will want to use. The church memorial can be rebuilt to create a useable space. Bike racks can be added to give easier access to the park. Finally, new colored paths will criss-cross through the wooded area of the park to encourage use and connect different parts of the park.

PROPOSED DESIGN

PHELPS ACRE



RECOMMENDATIONS



A Play Environment

The new play environment could consist of brightly-colored pathways that will criss-cross through the back of Phelps Acre. These paths would draw residents into the park.



B Gateway and Church Memorial

The name *Phelps Acre* could be prominently displayed on a gateway arch at the corner of Hempstead and Dempsey. New fences would line the park along Hempstead and Dempsey Roads and would match the fencing across the street at Blendon Central Cemetery.

A new church memorial could consist of seating and a trellis with panels describing the site's history.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SUNBURY GATEWAY



Currently, a large, concrete wall separates businesses from the roadway. Built as part of the Sunbury Road reconstruction, the wall was not designed to be attractive. As such, it currently is a blank canvas that could become a community amenity. When presented to the businesses and residents of Sunbury Commons, there was unified opinion that the wall should be improved.

CURRENT CONDITIONS



A East wall on Sunbury



B Width of wall on Sunbury Road



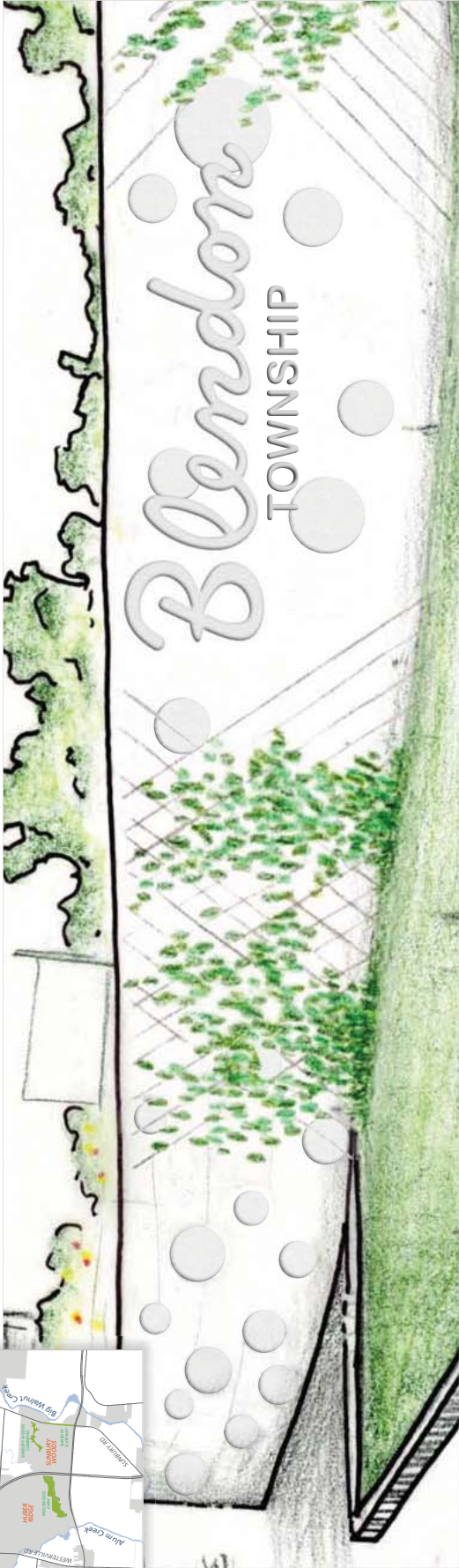
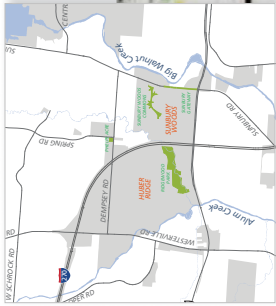
C Wall on Sunbury Road



D West Wall

CURRENT CONDITIONS

SUNBURY GATEWAY



Highlights

The Sunbury Road Barrier could become a gateway to the community. Etching Blendon Township into the wall would tell visitors and residents that they are in a community. New vegetation could grow over the wall to soften its appearance and frame the gateway signage.

PROPOSED DESIGN

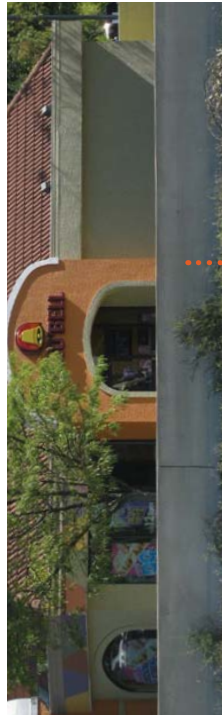
SUNBURY GATEWAY



RECOMMENDATIONS

Etched Signage

By etching 'Blendon Township' into the wall, the gateway would become a welcoming sign into the area. Both sides of the wall could feature signage, with a larger symbol on the Kroger parking lot side and a smaller one on the Sunbury Road side.



Vegetation

Vegetation could be planted that would grow over the wall. This would soften the appearance of the concrete and beautify the wall. Salt-tolerant shrubs, perennials, and trees should be specifically chosen to last longer under the harsh conditions next to Sunbury Road.

RECOMMENDATIONS



The recommendations of the Blendon Parks Master Plan are meant to start the process of implementation. The recommendations listed do not have a funding source, nor does this plan call for a specific funding source.

What the Blendon Parks Master Plan does is specifically outline the community's vision for their parks. With that vision in hand, Blendon Township and Franklin County officials should work together to identify ways to implement these recommendations. This includes applying for grant funding and studying the feasibility of a parks levy.

The Blendon Parks Master Plan provides a powerful tool in attempting to gather this funding. Because officials can show exactly what residents want in Blendon Township, they are more likely to secure funding.

When implemented, the plan will provide attractive parks for Blendon Township. They will attract users and provide spaces for the community to interact and grow.

IMPLEMENTATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project team thanks the following individuals and groups for input, technical advice and assistance overall with the Blendon Parks Master Plan:

- | | |
|---|--|
| Kristen Ball, <i>Working Committee</i> | Nancy M. White, <i>Planning Commission, Chairman</i> |
| Ralph Burrell, <i>Working Committee</i> | Rosyenne Burns, <i>Planning Commission</i> |
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| Deborah Candow, <i>Working Committee</i> | Benjamin Drake, <i>Planning Commission</i> |
| Pamela Clegg, <i>Working Committee</i> | William Flaherty, <i>Planning Commission</i> |
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| Eric Moore, <i>Working Committee</i> | Mary Wicks, <i>Planning Commission</i> |
| Nick Olah, <i>Working Committee</i> | Joe Martin, <i>Rural Zoning Commission, Chairman</i> |
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| Larry Ward, <i>Blendon Township Board of Trustees</i> | |
| Wade Essep, <i>Blendon Township Board of Trustees, Fiscal Officer</i> | |

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