BEECH GROVE PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

2026-31

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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Definition of Planning Area	5
Goals of the Plan	6
Parks Board & Department Information	7
Natural Features & Landscape	12
Manmade, Historical & Cultural	15
Social & Economic Factors	20
Accessibility & Universal Design	26
Public Participation	29
2026-2031 Master Plan Implementation	44
Appendix A: Parks Facilities, Features & Amenities	47
Appendix B: Parks System Activities	53
Appendix C: Greenscape Commission Plan & Tree Inventory	63

Beech Grove Parks & Recreation

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Introduction

On behalf of the Beech Grove Board of Parks and Recreation, Beech Grove Parks and Recreation staff, and the City of Beech Grove, we submit this 2026-2031 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

This five-year plan brings together information about our city, the work that has gone into creating spaces to better serve the community where residents can enjoy nature and the goals we are aiming for in the future. Guided by community feedback and the dedication of the Parks Board and staff, we will continue to enhance and care for the spaces that have created lasting outdoor memories while making room for many more to come. We look forward to seeing these plans take shape and sharing our progress with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in the years ahead.

Respectfully Submitted,
Beech Grove Parks and Recreation Board

Definition of Planning Area

Beech Grove is located just south and east of downtown Indianapolis in Marion County, Indiana. When Uni-Gov was established, the Indianapolis City Council and the Marion County Council merged to form the City-County Council. Beech Grove and three other local governments chose to remain autonomous and were not included in Uni-Gov. Residents of these "excluded" cities elect their own mayors, clerk-treasurers, councils, and boards. As part of Marion County, however, they still pay countywide taxes. Because the Indianapolis mayor's authority covers the entire county, residents of Beech Grove and the other excluded cities can vote for the mayor of Indianapolis and for a city-county council member.

Beech Grove parks attract users from the surrounding Indianapolis population; some because Beech Grove parks are closer to their residence than the nearest Indianapolis park, others for amenities such as the Paw Patch Dog Park, Hornet Park Community Center and Fitness Center, summer youth and music programs, and other public events. There is no evidence to suggest that non-resident users affect the Parks Department's ability to maintain and operate city parks. In fact, revenues derived from non-residents for banquet and meeting room rentals in the Community Center, Dog Park memberships, and Fitness Center memberships benefit the city and parks. The city also recognizes that local businesses depend on a broad customer base to thrive and encourages visitors from outside Beech Grove to explore the community and patronize local businesses.

The planning area for the Beech Grove Parks Master Plan is the Beech Grove city limits, with consideration of non-resident users of the park in a two-mile radius outside city limits.

Figure: Map of Beech Grove city limits with four principal parks

Goals of the Plan

Mission Statement

The mission of the Beech Grove Parks Board is to create and responsibly manage a citywide system of parks, open space, and cultural resources; and to provide recreational, cultural, and educational programs based on these resources to enhance the quality of life for all Beech Grove citizens.

Summary of Goals

Goals for the Master Plan derive from the Mission Statement and the ongoing experience of providing for the recreational and open space needs of Beech Grove citizens.

- Ensure enough open space and natural areas are available to meet the present and future needs of Beech Grove residents and that these resources are located relative to the population throughout the city.
- Demonstrate sound environmental practice and sensitivity, and contribute to a healthy community through the treatment of the parks' natural systems.
- Create partnerships to enhance and develop the benefits of the park system and the community, including, but not limited to: capital sponsorships, active general partnerships, and passive limited partnerships.
- Increase programs that cultivate inspiration, recreation, health, and quality of life in residents from youth to seniors.
- Provide the community with an attractive park setting where visitors feel comfortable, safe, and secure.

Parks Board & Department Information

Management Structure

A six-person Board of Park Commissioners – three appointed by the Mayor, two appointed by the city council along with one member of the Board of School Trustees ex-officio – oversee the Beech Grove Department of Parks and Recreation. All terms are for four years. The Board of Parks and Recreation is an independent policy-making body, with a bipartisan appointment process for Mayoral appointees. It was established in 1977.

The Beech Grove Board of Parks and Recreation conducts public meetings on the second Wednesday of each month that are live-streamed and recorded in accordance with Indiana Code. It is at these meetings that policies, financial allocations, and special projects are discussed. Additional public hearings and special task force committees are utilized to receive public input on specific projects and community needs. The Board has a generous policy regarding public comment at these meetings for addressing questions or concerns.

Park Board Membership

MEMBER	POSITION	APPOINTMENT	TERM EXPIRES
Tara Wolf	President	Mayoral	12/31/2028
Jeff Woehler	Vice Pres.	Mayoral	12/31/2027
Autumn James	Secretary	Mayoral	12/31/2027
Pam Stallard	Member	Council	12/31/2028
Jane Henry	Member	Council	12/31/2029
Jannis King	Ex-Officio	School Board	12/31/2027

Parks & Recreation Staff Overview

At the time of this printing, the Department of Parks and Recreation has two full-time directors: the Parks Director and the Community Center Director, two full-time staff members: the Facility Manager and Program Manager working at the Community Center, and a total of 15 part-time associates working between the Community Center and parks.

Part Time Staff Members

Our part time staff support the maintenance and cleanliness of the parks and trails, community events and programs, and the Hornet Park Pantry.

Full Time Staff Members

The Community Center has two full time staff members under the Director – the Facility Manager and the Program Manager. The Facility Manager takes care of the center's overall upkeep and handles maintenance contracts, overall cleanliness, inventory, and rental setups. The Program Manager mainly oversees our Hornet Park Pantry, but also handles volunteer management/recruitment, and community event planning.

Community Center Director

This position was reclassified from full time manager to full time director in 2017. This decision was made in part due to community feedback requesting more programs and due to the implementation of the Hornet Park Pantry. The Community Center Director operates under the Parks Department and answers directly to the Parks Board. The Community Center is responsible for all community programming and events within the Parks Department. The Parks Department relies heavily on this position to help with sponsorship tasks, community engagement, and new and innovative programming.

Parks Funds

Park shelter fees and weekday community center rental fees are received into the city's General Fund and redistributed at the beginning of each fiscal year. The Parks and Community Center's allocated budgets are established by the City Council. In addition, the council has established two non-reverting funds: one that collects roughly $10,000 each year from the Hartman Park cell tower used for capital improvements, and another to collect program and rental fees, sponsorship and donation revenue, and other miscellaneous revenues. This non-reverting fund brings in roughly $85,000 yearly. The Parks Department has also set up a specific park donation non-reverting fund used for additional park improvements.

Point of Sale System

The Community Center's Point of Sale system, CivicRec, has allowed the Parks Department to accept credit cards for rentals, programs, and donations, as well as provide an easier way for users to pay program or rental fees online. All fees associated with accepting credit cards is offset by a nominal $2 fee charged to users per transaction. These funds are deposited into the non-reverting fund and applied to fees associated with offering this service.

YEAR	PARKS BUDGET	HPCC BUDGET
2026	$335,645	$310,532
2027	$335,645	$310,532
2028	$335,645	$310,532
2029	$335,645	$310,532
2030	$335,645	$310,532
2031	$335,645	$310,532

The Community Center budget increased by about 3% each year from 2021 through 2025. Although the 2026 budget saw cuts in certain categories, employees still received 3% pay raises. The Parks Department and Parks Board submit budget requests to the city, but final funding depends on available resources and the needs of all departments. Due to recently passed state legislation, the department expects little to no budget growth in the near future.

Hornet Park Food Pantry

The Hornet Park Food Pantry, located within the Hornet Park Community Center, plays a vital role in supporting Beech Grove residents experiencing food insecurity. The pantry operates each Wednesday from 4:00–6:00 p.m. and on the first Friday of each month from 1:00–3:30 p.m., serving eligible households within zip codes 46107, 46237, and 46203. In partnership with Gleaners Food Bank, Campbell's, and Second Helpings, the pantry provides a consistent supply of nutritious food to local families. In 2025, the pantry experienced significant growth, now assisting an average of 100 families per week. Supported primarily through community donations and grant funding, the pantry recently underwent a layout renovation to improve efficiency and enhance the client experience. This collaborative effort reflects Beech Grove's commitment to meeting the basic needs of its residents while fostering a strong sense of compassion and community support.

Existing Park and Recreation Facilities Inventory

The National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) Classification System for Parks and Recreation facilities categorizes park facilities according to size and the population that is served by the facility. The City of Beech Grove contains four facilities classified as neighborhood parks, ranging in size from 11.2 acres to nearly 32 acres. According to the NRPA Classification System, neighborhood parks may include recreational facilities, such as field games, court games, crafts, picnicking, and playgrounds. The desirable size for a neighborhood park is 15 acres, though these parks can come in a variety of sizes.

Neighborhood parks in Beech Grove include:

Sarah T. Bolton Park: 1300 Churchman Avenue

This nearly 32-acre park facility can be accessed from the intersection of Churchman and South 13th Avenues, from 17th Avenue, and from Main Street. Park features include the Franciscan Trail and Hornet Greenway, picnic areas, and rolling topography. Lick Creek winds through the property, athletic courts and fields, the one-acre Paw Patch Dog Park, a native pollinator prairie, a council ring, and play equipment with nearby shelters and three restrooms. This is the most used and could be best described as Beech Grove's most traditional park.

Don Challis Park: 1100 South 9th Avenue

Don Challis Park, a 14.31-acre facility, is located south of South Grove Intermediate School and is accessible from 9th Avenue. Park features include picnic shelters, play equipment, a volleyball court, one restroom facility, and an open lawn with mature trees as well as access to the Franciscan Trail.

Hornet Park: 5425 Hornet Avenue

Hornet Park is a 14.49-acre park with a picnic area and open lawn. It is adjacent to Beech Grove High School. The Community Center building connects with Hornet Park Elementary School and is used in partnership with other youth activities. Several acres of woods are on the site. The center also houses meeting rooms, banquet rooms, and workout rooms with fitness equipment, along with an enclosed courtyard and food pantry. A walking path and bridge have been built through part of the woods, but they remain mostly undeveloped for recreation. There is also access nearby to the Franciscan Trail and the Hornet Greenway. The Hornet Park Fitness Center features workout rooms and a range of group exercise classes. While it competes with larger private gyms that offer more equipment and amenities, it is a convenient and affordable option for the community. City employees, retirees, school staff, seniors, and other groups can also benefit from discounted rates or free memberships.

Hartman Park: 700 South 9th Avenue

Hartman Park, just a quarter-mile northwest of Don Challis Park on the west side of 9th Avenue, covers 11.2 acres and is the smallest city park. The park is used primarily for Little League Baseball with five diamonds, a restroom building, and a concession stand.

Centennial Park: Corner of Garstang Street & Emerson Avenue

Centennial Park is a small pocket park honoring the city's veterans and public safety heroes with dedicated plaques. Its trees, flowers, and ornamental plantings add a touch of nature to the southwest corner of the Beech Grove Amtrak Facility. Created in 2007 as part of the Emerson Avenue Project, the park includes bench seating that could serve as a rest area in a future phase of the Beech Grove Greenway system. While not officially designated as a park property, Centennial Park is maintained by the Parks Department.

Undeveloped Parks

The Beech Grove Department of Parks and Recreation currently has no fully undeveloped park properties. The City also maintains a soccer field located on the Public Works Department grounds.

Paw Patch Dog Park

The Paw Patch Dog Park – located in beautiful Sarah T. Bolton Park – is a one-acre fenced area where dogs are allowed to run off-leash under their owner's supervision. The Paw Patch Dog Park is open during regular park hours, which are dawn to dusk, 365 days a year. Amenities include a beautiful, natural grass area with plenty of shade, a secure electronic gate system with entry key access, one acre of grass to run on and play, doggie waste stations for owners to pick up after their dogs, and park benches provided for dog owners' comfort.

Paw Patch Dog Park

Natural Features & Landscape

Much of Beech Grove's original landscape has been altered by development. Prior to urbanization, the southeastern portion of Marion County where Beech Grove sits was largely farmland and woodland. Today, the city contains two waterways: Lick Creek, which flows into the White River on the southwest side of the city, and a smaller tributary of White River. These natural features continue to influence drainage patterns, vegetation, and long-term park planning.

Hornet Park contains several wooded acres with mature native trees. The Parks Board and Greenscape Commission remain committed to preserving this woodland in its natural state. A walking path and bridge allow visitors to move through the area while minimizing disturbance to the landscape.

According to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, no formally designated significant natural areas exist within Beech Grove's planning boundaries. One of the most persistent environmental management issues within the parks system is bush honeysuckle, an invasive species commonly found along park edges and wooded transitions. The Parks Department routinely removes this growth as part of regular maintenance, using herbicides sparingly to protect wildlife and park visitors.

With very little undeveloped land remaining, opportunities for traditional park expansion are limited. Over the past five years, the department has planted 300 new native trees, many funded through memorial donations. Identifying suitable locations for additional large canopy trees is increasingly difficult due to space constraints and existing infrastructure.
In 2020, the Parks Department partnered with Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. to establish a one-acre pollinator garden featuring native plants, artwork, educational displays, and seating areas. Six years later, the pollinator garden has performed as intended. It is established, self-sustaining, and requires minimal intervention beyond seasonal upkeep. Volunteers continue to assist with its maintenance. While it is not a primary attraction within the parks' system, it fulfills its environmental purpose and demonstrates the viability of native, low-maintenance plantings within municipal spaces.

Some less accessible park areas have intentionally been left un-mowed to promote natural growth, with perennials added to encourage naturalization. Near the park office, a naturally occurring milkweed patch now supports Monarch butterflies and has been preserved as part of this approach.

Shade coverage varies across the parks system. Sarah T. Bolton Park benefits from mature canopy cover. Additional tree plantings have been added along trail corridors and within Don Challis Park to improve long-term shade and tree diversity. Hartman Park remains the park with the least shade due to the presence of Little League diamonds where open sight lines and field conditions are prioritized over canopy. Opportunities still exist to add shade trees near seating areas, playground spaces, and walking paths where they will not interfere with athletic use.

Ground conditions across the parks remain generally stable despite heavy use. Athletic activities and community events create predictable wear patterns, but not to the extent of long-term damage. Routine weed control and fertilization are necessary due to traffic volume and the need to maintain safe, playable surfaces.

Weather events over the past five years have periodically affected park conditions. High wind events, heavy rain, and winter storms have resulted in fallen trees and limb damage requiring removal and cleanup. Flooding occurs several times per year along Lick Creek and in low-lying areas, but these areas drain effectively, and the primary maintenance issue is debris removal rather than lasting damage.

Over the past several years, the City has also prioritized stabilization of the Lick Creek corridor to address erosion, improve water quality, and protect adjacent park land. Thanks to the DNR, a Lake And River Enhancement (LARE) funded project, native plantings and bio-engineering techniques were installed along sections of the creek bank to slow runoff, reinforce soil, and restore a more natural riparian edge. These improvements have strengthened shade coverage along the waterway, reduced sediment loss during heavy rain events, and decreased long-term maintenance needs associated with repeated washouts and debris removal.

Because acquiring additional land for parks is extremely challenging, the City's 2025 Economic Redevelopment Plan prepared by the Redevelopment Commission includes discussion of repurposing a potential brownfield site, including a former landfill area, into park space. There have also been conversations about incorporating rain gardens and the possibility of a community garden as part of future naturalized or multi-use green space planning.

Manmade, Historical, & Cultural

Incorporated in 1906, following the establishment of the Beech Grove Shops railroad facility, the City of Beech Grove has a proud heritage shaped by hardworking residents. While notable figures such as Clifton Webb and Hoosier poet Sarah T. Bolton have ties to the city, most of its story has been written by everyday people. Now surrounded by the consolidated City of Indianapolis–Marion County, Beech Grove's "landlocked" position encourages a focus on maintaining and improving what lies within its borders. The city's public and private spaces reflect a deep, enduring history of culture and community that residents continue to enjoy today.

Public Spaces and Cultural Places

The Beech Grove Shops, Amtrak's primary maintenance facility, located in the city's northeastern corner, stands as a striking reminder of Beech Grove's historic roots. This 100-acre rail facility includes twenty significant structures and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Just west of the Shops, Main Street – stretching from Emerson Avenue to 8th Avenue – continues to cultivate a welcoming small-town atmosphere with its restaurants, boutiques, and specialty shops. The area also hosts cultural events such as Fourth Friday Art Walks, organized by local artists in collaboration with nearby businesses. In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, several restaurants expanded outdoor seating by utilizing additional sidewalk space along Main Street to safely accommodate patrons under capacity restrictions.

Beech Grove's four main parks provide diverse recreational opportunities. The Franciscan Trail, opened in 2022, connects Sarah T. Bolton Park and Don Challis Park with surrounding neighborhoods, schools, the public library, and eventually plans to connect to the Main Street district. The trail includes three pedestrian bridges over Beech and Lick Creeks, along with major crosswalk and sidewalk improvements at Hornet and Emerson Avenues. The Hornet Greenway, opened in 2025, continues the path from Emerson Avenue, around Beech Grove City Schools, and back to Churchman Avenue.

Bolton's historic home still stands nearby on 17th Avenue. A memorial near the park's entrance honors Beech Grove residents who lost their lives in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, and Iraq.

Beech Grove's parks are more connected to surrounding neighborhoods and destinations today than at any point in the city's history, largely due to the addition of the Franciscan Trail and Hornet Greenway and recent sidewalk and bike lane improvements along Main Street.

The Franciscan Trail begins at the northeast corner of Sarah T. Bolton Park where it meets an existing bike lane and sidewalk on Main Street. That bike lane travels east to Emerson Avenue and passes the public library, City Hall, restaurants, bars, and numerous service businesses along the way. Heading south through the park, the 2.1-mile greenway connects two major neighborhoods, South Grove Intermediate School, Don Challis Park, and the Hornet Park Community Center.

From there, the Hornet Greenway runs 1.5 miles through Hornet Park and around Beech Grove High School. The trail then connects to a sidewalk that runs north to Churchman Avenue, providing pedestrian access to multiple apartment complexes, a fire station, and a shopping area. Continuing west and then north along Emerson Avenue, the trail completes a walkable loop back to Main Street.

These connections tie parks directly to schools, the library, residential neighborhoods, and the Main Street business district. The most significant remaining pedestrian and bicycle gap is along Emerson Avenue, where perceived traffic speeds and limited pedestrian infrastructure make it less comfortable for non-vehicular users. The City has received a $17 million Safe Roads 4 All grant to improve the Emerson corridor, which includes pedestrian access improvements that will directly strengthen these connections. Construction is set to begin in 3 years.

The equipment and installation within the parks is generally sound, but several amenities will require attention over the next five years as part of normal lifecycle replacement. Playground equipment, shelter houses, benches, and restroom facilities will need phased rehabilitation or replacement due to age and use. Sports backstops, fencing, and bleachers at ball diamonds experience regular wear. Walking paths and trail surfaces will require periodic resurfacing, particularly in shaded or low-lying areas. Ballpark costs for these types of improvements typically range from $25,000 for small shelter or bench replacements to $250,000 or more for full playground or restroom renovations, depending on scope.

Vandalism is an occasional issue, most commonly involving graffiti on restroom buildings, shelters, and signage. This is addressed through prompt removal, routine monitoring, and maintaining well-lit, well-used spaces that discourage loitering.

Manmade, Historical & Cultural

Continued investment in lighting, visibility, a robust camera network, and routine presence by staff and park users is the most effective deterrent. The top challenges for maintenance staff are practical and consistent:

1. Wear and tear on facilities due to heavy use of ball diamonds, shelters, and playgrounds.
2. Aging infrastructure that requires reactive rather than preventive maintenance due to budget limits.
3. Time spent addressing invasive species such as bush honeysuckle along park edges.
4. Equipment strain and maintenance needs for mowers, utility vehicles, and power equipment used daily across multiple sites.
5. Limited staff capacity to balance daily upkeep with long-term improvement projects.

At present, maintenance staff do not hold a Certified Playground Safety Inspector certification, as the prior certificate lapsed. There are plans in place to get certified in 2026.

During public input, residents noted aging playground equipment, restroom conditions, and the desire for continued trail connectivity and improved walking access between parks and neighborhoods. These concerns align directly with planned maintenance cycles, the Emerson corridor improvements, and continued investment in the greenway system.

Other Regional Facilities

While Beech Grove continues to strengthen its own network of parks and community spaces, residents also benefit from a wide range of nearby recreational opportunities across the Indianapolis metropolitan area. As an enclave within Marion County, Beech Grove is well-positioned to take advantage of Indy Parks, which manages more than 200 parks, 135 miles of greenways, 21 aquatic facilities, and 13 recreation centers throughout the region.
Within just a few minutes' drive, several major destinations expand the range of outdoor and cultural amenities available to Beech Grove residents:

- Garfield Park, one of Indianapolis's oldest and most beloved parks, features an aquatic center, arts center, and the historic Sunken Gardens and Conservatory, offering year-round programs and performances.

- Bethel Park, located just northwest of Beech Grove, includes a splash pad, sports fields, and a community center that provides programming for families.

- Sandorf Park, renovated in 2020 with a $2 million investment, now offers an inclusive playground, outdoor fitness stations, and ADA-accessible pathways.

- The Pleasant Run Trail Greenway provides a scenic multi-use path for walkers, runners, and cyclists connecting neighborhoods and parks throughout the southeast side of Indianapolis.

- The Sarah Shank Golf Course, bordering Beech Grove to the west, remains a popular public golf course offering affordable play and youth programs.

Beyond these destinations, residents can reach larger regional attractions such as Southeastway Park (an 188-acre nature and environmental education park), Freedom Springs Aquatic Park in Greenwood, and Smock Golf Course on the south side of Indianapolis, all within a 15-to-30-minute drive.

Community Partnerships

The Parks Department has developed numerous community partnerships that have helped strengthen Beech Grove's sense of connection and civic pride. These collaborations have played a key role in revitalizing community culture and expanding local opportunities. Examples include:

- The Beech Grove Promoters Club hosts the annual July 3rd Fireworks in Sarah T. Bolton Park.
- Next Stop, Beech Grove leads efforts for Fourth Friday art events with the businesses of Main Street.
- Hartman Park is home to Beech Grove Little League, and the organization shares responsibilities for maintenance and improvements of the playing fields and facilities.
- Beautify Beech Grove sponsors an annual Family Walk/Run in Sarah T. Bolton Park, most recently in 2023.
- The Beech Grove Parks Foundation, formed in 2021, is a friend and partner of the Beech Grove Parks system and holds year-long fundraisers to support parks initiatives. Past support includes new batting cages for Hartman Park, a partnership with Gleaners Food Bank to support the food pantry, swing sets, and concert sponsorships.
- The Beech Grove Greenscape Commission shares an interest in protecting and developing green space throughout the city. The commission maintains an inventory of city trees (most recently completed in 2025) and holds an annual Arbor Day event at Hornet Park Community Center called Going Green in the Grove. This event is free to the community and includes native tree and plant giveaways and various vendors offering information related to environmental education. See more about the Greenscape Commission's work in Appendix C.
- The Beech Grove Lions Club is a proud partner of Hornet Park Community Center and sponsors events like the annual holiday community dinner and actively supports the weekly food pantry, along with regular donations to the center.

Social & Economic Factors

Throughout the 1990s, while the region was growing and many smaller municipalities were annexed into Indianapolis, Beech Grove remained a separate jurisdiction. Now, in 2026, with its landlocked boundaries and minimal population growth (estimated at 15,002 residents). The Parks Department faces the challenge of maintaining and upgrading park infrastructure and programming to not just serve existing residents, but also enhance the city's appeal to nearby Indianapolis residents.

Implications for parks:

- Some newer residents may be unfamiliar with the locations of local parks and recreational opportunities, creating an awareness gap.
- Many of these residents relocate from Indianapolis, where higher levels of park development, facilities, and programming may be the norm—so expectations may be higher for what Beech Grove can offer.

Housing and Families

As of 2024, Beech Grove has an estimated population of roughly 15,000 residents. The city's housing stock reflects a balance between homeowners and renters, with about 55% of homes owner-occupied and the remaining share rented. The median home value has risen in recent years, climbing from approximately $169,500 in 2023 to an estimated $190,000–$195,000 in 2024. Roughly one-third of Beech Grove households include children under the age of 18, underscoring the city's family-oriented character. These trends reflect a small, stable, and close-knit community that continues to balance affordability and accessibility within the Indianapolis metropolitan area.

Implications for parks:

- With nearly half of housing units rented there may be greater mobility and changing resident needs—public facilities must adapt to a mix of tenured and newer households.
- Moderate median income and home values suggest affordability is a strong factor in housing for many residents; recreation programming and facility upgrades should reflect cost-sensitive opportunities.
- The demographic mix – including renters, families with children, and older residents – supports a layered approach: "everyday" access (walkable parks, trails) and targeted programming (youth sports, adult-wellness, senior engagement).

Age

According to the most recent American Community Survey estimates for 2019-2023, the median age in Beech Grove is 36.4 years. While detailed breakdowns of every age cohort are not available in the publicly cited summary, older datasets show that approximately 15% of residents are aged 65 or older, and about 23 % are under age 15.

This relatively young median age suggests a community with a strong presence of families, children, and working - age adults — underscoring the importance of parks, recreation programs, and amenities that appeal across all life stages.

Implications for parks:

- Beech Grove's median age of 36.4 years of age reflects a relatively young, family-oriented population with many working-age adults and children.
- This demographic supports strong demand for family and youth programs, including playgrounds, sports leagues, and community events.
- The presence of an older adult population (about 15%) calls for age-friendly amenities such as walking paths, shaded seating, and low-impact fitness options.
- Accessibility and ADA compliance remain essential as more residents choose to age in place.
- Overall, the city's age distribution underscores the need for inclusive, flexible, and affordable recreation programming that supports residents through every stage of life.

Minority Population

As of recent estimates (2019-2023), Beech Grove's racial and ethnic profile is roughly 83.4% White (non-Hispanic), with about 6.3% Black or African-American residents and approximately 4.9% Hispanic or Latino of any race. The city also includes smaller percentages of residents identifying as two or more races (around 5 %) and Asian (under 1 %).

Implications for parks and recreation:

- The presence of a diverse minority population, though still a small proportion, means that programming and facility design should reflect cultural inclusivity and accessibility.
- Multicultural outreach is valuable: ensuring that promotional material, signage, and events appeal broadly, and perhaps offering language-accessible options or culturally responsive programming.
- Partnerships with community groups representing minority populations could help tailor programs that resonate with under-represented residents, thereby increasing participation and community cohesion.
- Awareness of demographic change is vital: even if the minority share is currently modest, regional growth trends suggest increasing diversity, and the Parks Department would benefit from staying ahead of shifting expectations and needs.

Education

In Beech Grove, approximately 88.7% of adults aged 25 and over have at least a high-school diploma or equivalent. About 22% of that same population holds a bachelors degree or higher. The local public school system, Beech Grove City Schools (grades PreK-12), serves roughly 2,717 students.

- With roughly one in five adults having a bachelor's degree, and the majority holding a high-school diploma, there is an opportunity to tailor programs that bridge formal education and informal learning: park's programs can offer community-based educational elements (nature walks, sustainability workshops, "learn-through-play" features) that complement formal schooling.
- Recent improvements in academic performance in the school district highlight the potential role of parks and recreation in supporting youth development outside school hours: after-school programs, structured activities, tutoring in outdoor settings, and safe places to gather can reinforce learning in a less formal environment.
- Given the need for broader support, parks and the community center can partner with schools and local nonprofits to offer educational adjacent recreation: things like environmental literacy programs, youth skill-development camps, or collaborations with libraries and schools.

Economic Data: Employment, Industry, and Commerce

According to recent data for Beech Grove (2023), approximately 7,190 residents are employed — a decline of about 4.5 % from the prior year. The leading industry sectors for local workers are Retail Trade (approximately 1,201 people), Health Care & Social Assistance (around 789 people), and Educational Services (about 753 people). In terms of income, the city's median household income is estimated at $49,452, while per-capita income is around $29,484. "White-collar" jobs make up roughly 74.5% of the workforce, with the remaining 25.5% in blue-collar or service roles. Self-employment sits at about 7.2 %. The unemployment rate for the area is monitored at about 3.9%, the same as Marion County as a whole.

Beech Grove's population has been relatively steady and is not showing sustained growth, which is consistent with a city that is largely "built out" and landlocked. Recent estimates put Beech Grove at about 15,082 residents with a median age of 36.4, and the city's limited footprint (about 4.5 square miles) reinforces that future growth is more likely to come from reinvestment and redevelopment than greenfield expansion. (Census Reporter)

The 2021–2025 Indiana SCORP cites Ball State research (via the Indiana Chamber Foundation/Wellness Council "Healthy, Wealthy, Wise Index") emphasizing that people increasingly choose communities based on "quality of place," and that businesses tend to follow people, not the other way around. In Beech Grove, this also intersects directly with household financial capacity and the local tax base. United For ALICE (Asset, Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) defines households below the ALICE Threshold as those in poverty plus those who earn above the federal poverty line but still cannot afford basic necessities where they live. With 52% of Beech Grove households below the ALICE Threshold, parks funding and operations have to be approached with that reality in mind: residents rely on parks as a low-cost "third place," but the same financial pressure can limit fee-based program participation and constrain the community's ability to absorb higher costs through property taxes or additional user fees.

According to the most recent American Community Survey estimates compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau and reflected in STATS Indiana data sources, about 10.3% of Beech Grove's population (approximately 1,529 people) live below the federal poverty line. Within that broader figure, roughly 27% of Beech Grove residents are under age 18, meaning that of the city's 15,000 residents, over 4,000 are children, and a significant share of those children are included in the overall poverty count. While city-specific estimates of the poverty rate for children under 18 are not published directly at the municipal scale by STATS Indiana, county-level data for Marion County show that more than one in five children under age 18 live in poverty countywide, pointing to persistent economic hardship among families with children in the region that likely affects Beech Grove as well.

Implications for parks:

- This economic profile carries several implications for the city's recreational investments and especially for the proposed or existing community gathering place, like the Community Center.
- Because many residents work in retail, healthcare, and education sectors that can involve non-traditional hours and shift work, the Community Center's programming schedule should include evening and weekend options to accommodate varied work schedules.

- With median household income and per-capita incomes below state averages, affordability is a key consideration. Membership fees, rental rates, or program costs at the Community Center should reflect this economic reality. Sliding scale or subsidized options may boost participation.
- Given the local unemployment and job-loss fluctuations, the Community Center can serve as a resource hub: offering job-search workshops, continuing-education space, and community meeting rooms can help integrate economic and social development.
- Because many commuters likely travel outside the city for work, the Community Center should be positioned as a local "third space:" a convenient, accessible gathering location that reduces the need for residents to travel elsewhere and strengthens civic attachment.

Redevelopment

In August 2025, the Beech Grove Redevelopment Commission (RDC) adopted a new five-year Consolidated Economic and Redevelopment Plan, establishing a long-term framework to guide growth, investment, and infrastructure improvements across the city. The plan serves as a roadmap for both economic development for areas lacking private investment where public action could stimulate growth, and for redevelopment, focused on underutilized or vacant properties needing revitalization.

The five-year strategy emphasizes visible community improvements, such as gateway signage, Emerson Avenue trail development, and infrastructure upgrades to roads, sidewalks, and utilities. Policy recommendations call for collaboration with schools to support family life, transparency in financial transactions, and strengthened partnerships with regional economic-development agencies. The plan also outlines new zoning tools including potential overlay districts to ensure local control over design standards and encourage compatible development.
Overall, Beech Grove's redevelopment framework positions the city to attract new residents and businesses while preserving its small-town character. Through targeted investment, the plan aims to strengthen the Main Street corridor, improve connectivity between parks and neighborhoods, and reinforce the Beech Grove Community Center as a civic and economic hub supporting workforce development, wellness, and community engagement.

Implications for parks:

- Infrastructure and connectivity: Projects such as the Emerson Avenue safety and gateway improvements will improve mobility, beautify key corridors, and link neighborhoods to commercial areas and community spaces. This aligns with the city's broader goal of fostering walkable, connected environments.
- Local control through zoning: The introduction of overlay districts for Main Street, Emerson Avenue, and Churchman Avenue gives Beech Grove more autonomy in shaping the character and design of redevelopment. This shift supports context-sensitive growth that complements the city's established neighborhoods.
- Strategic flexibility: The plan acknowledges that opportunities will arise beyond its forecast period. Maintaining policy flexibility will allow Beech Grove to respond quickly to private-sector interest or state/federal grant programs, ensuring that the city remains competitive within the Indianapolis metro region.
- The Beech Grove Community Center will become increasingly important as a venue for workforce-readiness programs, small-business support, senior and youth engagement, and wellness activities—helping translate economic gains into community well-being.

Accessibility & Universal Design

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) took effect on January 26, 1992, requiring all new public facilities built after that date to be accessible to individuals with disabilities. Existing public facilities must remove physical barriers when it is readily achievable to do so. When removal is not feasible, alternative methods must be provided to ensure people with disabilities can access the same services and experiences.

Since 2009, the City of Beech Grove has been actively working to identify and correct areas that do not meet ADA standards. This includes reviewing parks, public buildings, infrastructure, city programs, and administrative procedures. In 2012, the Beech Grove Common Council adopted a formal ADA Resolution establishing an ADA Coordinator and Grievance Procedure, giving residents a clear process to report accessibility concerns. The City also partnered with locally owned transportation and development consultants, CrossRoad Engineers, to develop the ADA Transition Plan: Pedestrian Network, which outlines steps to improve accessibility throughout the community.

The City is committed to ensuring equal access to all programs, services, and activities. Upon request, Beech Grove will provide appropriate aids and services to facilitate effective communication for individuals with disabilities—such as qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, or other accessible formats for those with speech, hearing, or vision impairments. Reasonable modifications to policies and procedures will also be made as needed, including allowing service animals in areas where pets are typically restricted.

ADA Review of City Parks Summary:

All four Beech Grove parks have designated handicap-accessible parking spaces, and all parking areas are fully paved. The Hartman Park lot was reconstructed in 2015 to correct drainage issues and replace gravel with asphalt, improving accessibility. All of our picnic shelters, restrooms, and playgrounds are connected by asphalt or concrete walkways. There are ramps that aid in the entry to the play areas. The surface we use in all the play areas is a certified playground mulch, and we have never had an ADA complaint relative to the surface in these areas.

Nearly every restroom facility located near playgrounds or shelters is ADA-compliant, and accessible picnic tables are provided at each shelter. Restroom signage is correctly mounted on the latch side of doors and is being updated to include Braille markings. Each playground includes at least one Therapeutic Swing Seat to accommodate children with special needs.

The Hornet Park Community Center also meets accessibility standards, featuring automatic door openers at the main entrance and a fully accessible exercise room. The city's online point-of-sale system is ADA-compliant, ensuring inclusive digital access.

Beech Grove's ADA Implementation

The City's ADA coordination, grievance process, and public notice requirements are established in the Title VI / ADA Implementation Plan adopted in January 2026.

The DPW Director serves as the City's ADA/Title VI/504 Coordinator, reporting directly to the Mayor and overseeing compliance across all departments, including parks. The public may contact the Coordinator at 806 E. Main Street, Beech Grove, IN 46107 or by calling 317-803-9091.

The City maintains a formal ADA grievance procedure with a standardized complaint form and tracking log. Any individual who believes they have experienced discrimination may file a signed complaint identifying the incident, location, and requested remedy. Complaints are documented, reviewed, and resolved through a structured process rather than informally.

Public notice of ADA obligations is provided through the City's official Notice of Nondiscrimination, which states that the City does not discriminate based on disability in access to facilities, programs, or services. The notice also specifies that alternate formats and language assistance are available upon request.

Through required staff training and onboarding procedures, ADA compliance is incorporated into daily operations, ensuring that park facilities, programs, and services are communicated and maintained in a manner that provides equitable access to the public.

Despite significant progress, accessibility issues remain across the parks:

Sarah T. Bolton Park

Two areas of concern have been identified:

- The sidewalk between the Geshwiler Fountain and the maintenance building/restrooms is too steep, and the sidewalk from the parking lot to the maintenance building requires replacement.
- A new walkway to the basketball court is needed, as the area is currently surrounded by grass with no accessible path.

Hartman Park

The restroom building is not ADA-compliant. A wheelchair-accessible portable restroom is provided during summer months as a temporary measure until permanent upgrades can be funded.

Centennial Park

This pocket park is highly accessible due to its central location along a major thoroughfare, though it lacks a curb ramp, requiring visitors to step onto the surrounding sidewalk for entry.

Soccer Field (Department of Public Works Grounds)

The soccer field at 5520 Churchman Avenue now includes an asphalt walkway connecting the parking area to the field and a small, paved spectator zone.

ADA Implementation Progress

Since the 2016–2020 ADA Transition Plan, the Beech Grove Parks Department has made continuous progress:

- Restrooms at the Sarah T. Bolton Park office were reconfigured for ADA compliance.
- Prefabricated, ADA-compliant restrooms were installed at both the Main and Hilltop areas of Sarah T. Bolton Park, with asphalt walkways connecting them to shelters and playgrounds.
- Don Challis Park's restroom was already compliant and is now connected to recreation areas by a paved path.
- Inclusive play equipment was installed at both Sarah T. Bolton and Don Challis parks.
- An automated door system was added to Hornet Park Community Center.

Two final restroom upgrades remain: one at Hornet Park and one at Hartman Park. Temporary accommodations—such as portable ADA units—are in place until funding becomes available for permanent improvements.

Public Participation

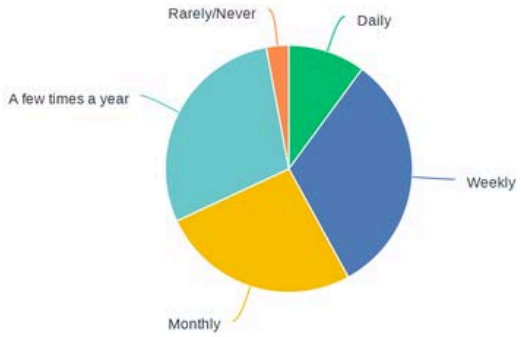
Method One: January 2026

An online community survey was launched on January 4, 2026, and residents were encouraged to fill out and share their thoughts, ideas, and concerns about Beech Grove Parks and Recreation.

Five Year Parks Planning

Q1 How often do you visit our city parks?

Answered: 238 Skipped: 1

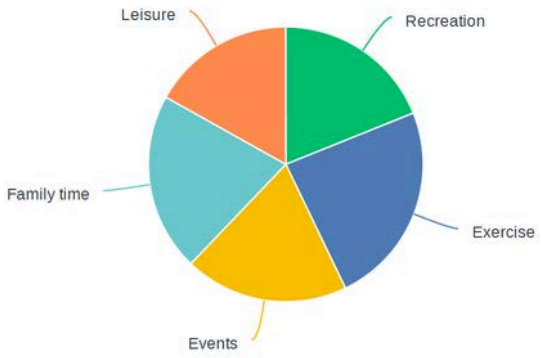


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Daily	10.08%	24
Weekly	31.93%	76
Monthly	26.05%	62
A few times a year	28.99%	69
Rarely/Never	2.94%	7
Total		238

Five Year Parks Planning

Q2 What do you mainly utilize our parks for?

Answered: 237 Skipped: 2



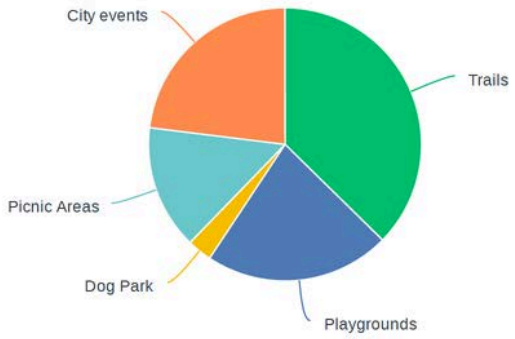
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Recreation	18.92%	102
Exercise	23.93%	129
Events	19.29%	104
Family time	20.96%	113
Leisure	16.88%	91
Total		539

Public Participation

Five Year Parks Planning

Q3 Which amenities in our parks do you use the most?

Answered: 237 Skipped: 2

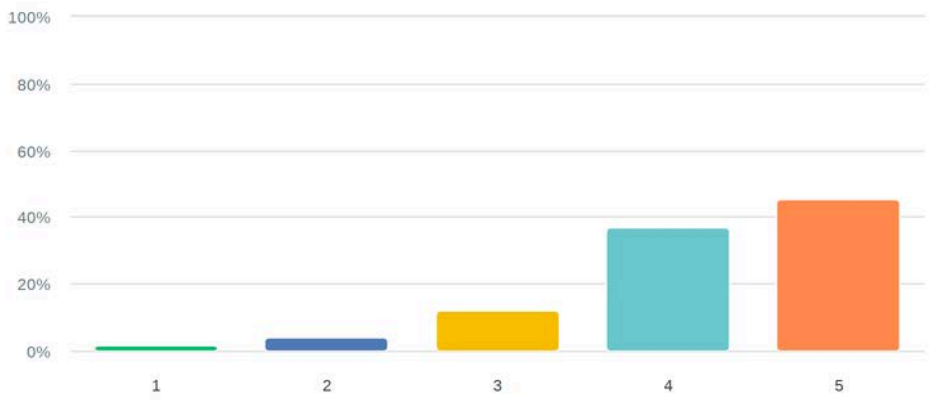


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Trails	37.34%	180
Playgrounds	21.99%	106
Dog Park	2.90%	14
Picnic Areas	14.73%	71
City events	23.03%	111
Total		482

Five Year Parks Planning

Q4 How would you rate the overall safety and security of our parks?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 0

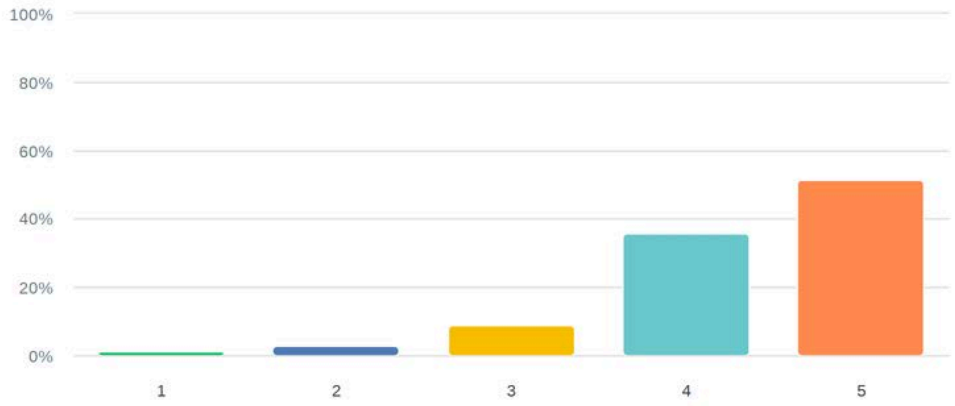


Rating	Percentage	Responses
1 / 5	1.67%	4
2 / 5	4.18%	10
3 / 5	12.13%	29
4 / 5	36.82%	88
5 / 5	45.19%	108
Average 4.20		239

Five Year Parks Planning

Q5 How would you rate the overall cleanliness and maintenance of our parks?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 0



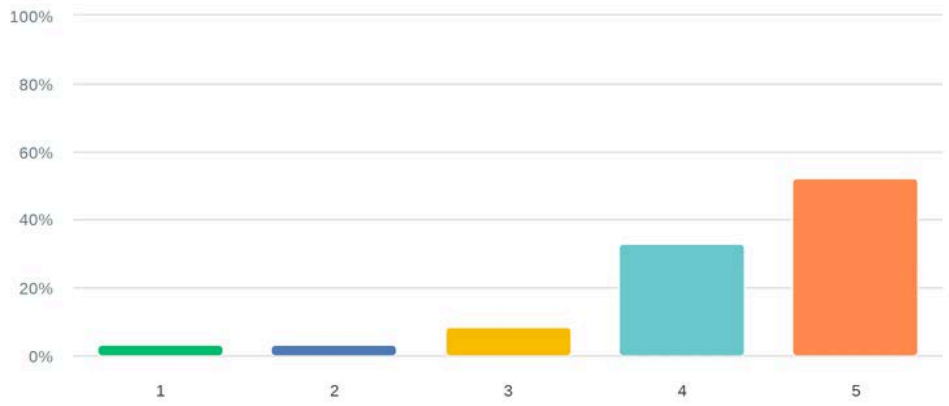
Rating	Percentage	Responses
1 / 5	1.26%	3
2 / 5	2.93%	7
3 / 5	8.79%	21
4 / 5	35.56%	85
5 / 5	51.46%	123
Average 4.33		239

Public Participation

Five Year Parks Planning

Q6 How would you rate the cleanliness of the Hornet Park Community Center?

Answered: 197 Skipped: 42

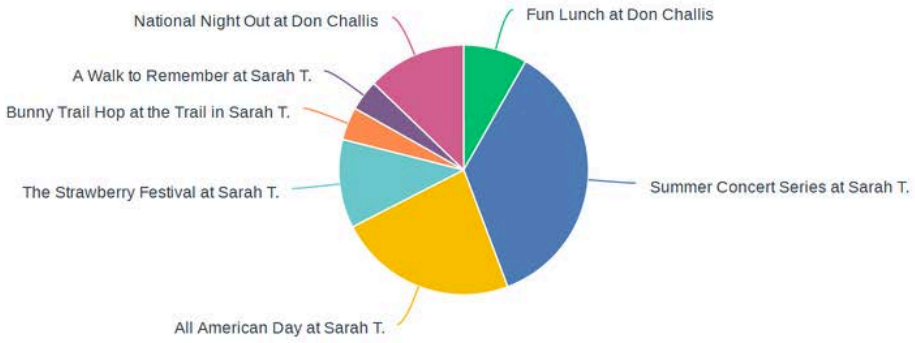


Rating	Percentage	Responses
1 / 5	3.05%	6
2 / 5	3.05%	6
3 / 5	8.63%	17
4 / 5	32.99%	65
5 / 5	52.28%	103
Average 4.28		197

Five Year Parks Planning

Q8 Have you attended any of these park's programs in the past year?

Answered: 179 Skipped: 60

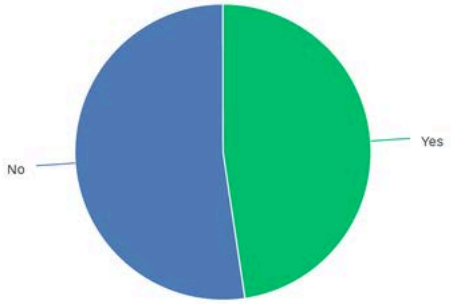


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Fun Lunch at Don Challis	8.27%	31
Summer Concert Series at Sarah T.	36.00%	135
All American Day at Sarah T.	23.20%	87
The Strawberry Festival at Sarah T.	11.47%	43
Bunny Trail Hop at the Trail in Sarah T.	4.27%	16
A Walk to Remember at Sarah T.	4.00%	15
National Night Out at Don Challis	12.80%	48
Total		375

Five Year Parks Planning

Q10 Would you be interested in pickleball courts?

Answered: 233 Skipped: 6

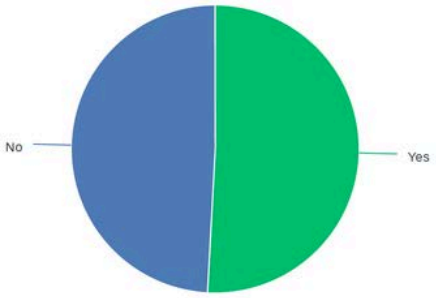


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Yes	47.64%	111
No	52.36%	122
Total		233

Five Year Parks Planning

Q11 Would you be interested in an outdoor gym?

Answered: 230 Skipped: 9



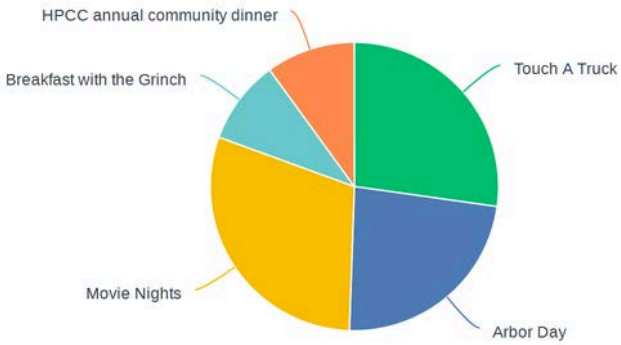
Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Yes	50.87%	117
No	49.13%	113
Total		230

Public Participation

Five Year Parks Planning

Q12 Have you attended any of these community center events in the past year?

Answered: 105 Skipped: 134

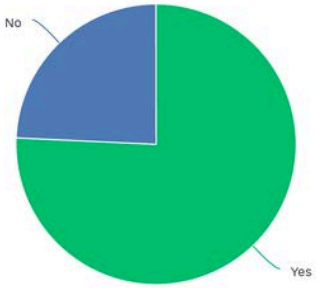


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Touch A Truck	27.22%	49
Arbor Day	23.33%	42
Movie Nights	30.00%	54
Breakfast with the Grinch	9.44%	17
HPCC annual community dinner	10.00%	18
Total		180

Five Year Parks Planning

Q14 Were you aware that the Hornet Park Community Center offers a Pantry?

Answered: 235 Skipped: 4

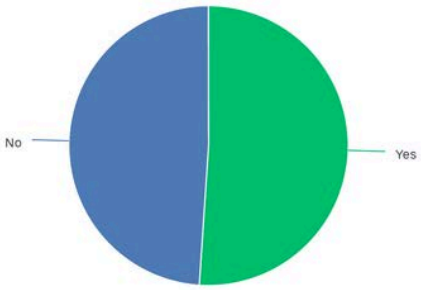


Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Yes	75.74%	178
No	24.26%	57
Total		235

Five Year Parks Planning

Q15 Do you subscribe to the Community Center Newsletter?

Answered: 233 Skipped: 6



Answer Choices	Percentage	Responses
Yes	51.07%	119
No	48.93%	114
Total		233

Public Participation

Which one of our city parks do you visit the most and why?(Sarah T./Hartman/Don Challis)

This was a multiple-choice, multiple-select question with an overwhelming use of Sarah T. Bolton Park.

Total participants 214

Repeated answers:
- Sarah T. Bolton Park (171)
- Don Challis Park (46)
- Hartman Park (10)

Why people go there:

- Proximity to home
- Size and variety
- Trails and walkability
- Historically, the bridge connection

This park is the functional "central park" of Beech Grove. Access and connectivity, not amenities drive usage.

What new amenities would you like to see in the parks?

This was an open-ended question with a variety of interests.
Total participants: 161

Repeated answers:
- Splash pad/ water feature/ pool (46)
- Pickleball courts (21)
- Bathrooms/restrooms/water fountains (16)
- Playground equipment (updated or toddler area) (15)
- Trails/walking/biking connectivity (15)
- Bridge access (13)
- Amphitheater/stage (6)
- Seating/benches/shade (6)

What program or event would you like to see at the Hornet Park Community Center?

This was an open-ended question with a variety of interests.

Total participants: 70

Repeated answers:

- Classes (yoga, fitness, gardening, dance) (21)
- Community events (markets, fairs, music, picnics) (21)
- Kids programs / after-school activities (10)
- Senior or adult programming (4)
- Better publicity/awareness of offerings (3)
- Adult craft/activity nights (4)
- No changes wanted (7)

If you could make one improvement to the Community Center, what would it be?

This was an open-ended question with a variety of interests.

Total participants: 74

Repeated answers:

- More programs/events for kids and families (13)
- Better communication/awareness (7)
- Longer hours (6)
- Better fitness equipment (3)
- Indoor playground for winter (2)
- No improvements wanted (17)
- N/A do not use the center (2)

If you could make one improvement to the Parks, what would it be?

This was an open-ended question with a variety of interests.

Total participants: 139

Repeated answers:

- Security cameras/more police presence/safety on trails (16)
- Bathrooms/restrooms (14)
- Trails/connectivity (12)
- Playground upgrades, including toddler-specific equipment (12)
- Improved marketing (4)
- No improvements needed (4)
- Community garden / natural areas (4)
- Art installations and murals (4)
- Pickleball/tennis courts (2)
- 10% of participants want the bridge to remain closed, 9% to open back up (25)

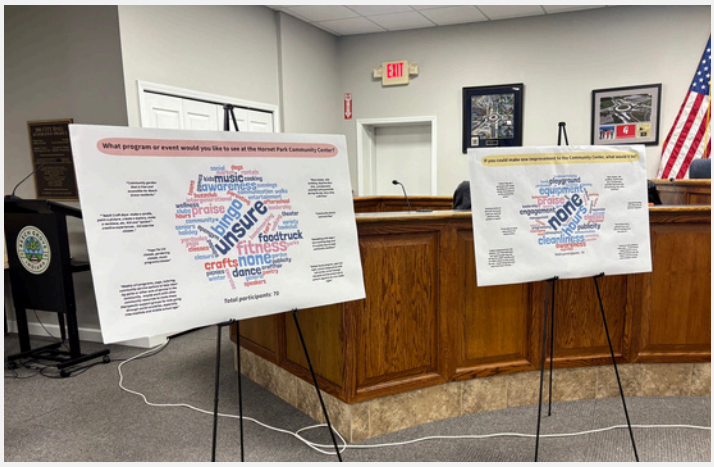
Total participants: 139

Method Two: Community Open House

Beech Grove Board of Parks and Recreation public input meeting for 5-year plan: This meeting was advertised on social media, by local news station WISH-TV, by newsletter, on the city's website, and via fliers in public buildings. The meeting was held on February 11, 2026, at 5 pm in City Council Chambers at City Hall.

At the open house, residents were able to review the current stage of the plan and were able to view the online survey results. Attendance was higher than expected, with 24 attending. There were representatives from the Parks Board, Parks Foundation, Beech Grove Public Schools, RDC, Little League, Beech Grove Police Department, and Board of Works, along with the Mayor and Clerk Treasurer. Word clouds were printed out to show community answers to what they would like to see improved or added in the parks. Residents were also given the opportunity to write down suggestions while they were there.

Community feedback focused on expanding recreational amenities, improving trail connectivity, and enhancing safety and accessibility within the parks. Residents suggested adding features such as a splash pad, pickleball courts, a sand volleyball pit, playground improvements, and a Story Walk along the trail, along with programming like a covered softball league. Several comments emphasized better trail infrastructure, including improved connections between neighborhoods and trails, clearer mileage signage, and the addition of a Pacers Bikeshare station. Accessibility and basic amenities were also mentioned, including ADA-compliant bathrooms and additional dog waste bins. Safety concerns included requests for a safer intersection at the 17th Avenue park entrance and maintaining pedestrian safety. Feedback on the park bridge was mixed, with some residents asking that it remain closed while others supported reopening it.



Public Participation

2026 - 2031 Master Plan Implementation

Year	Park	Project	Est. Cost	Progress
2026	Sarah T. Bolton	Replace pedestrian bridge	$400,000	City budget Municipal bond
2026	Hornet Park Community Center	Upgrade and expand camera network	$20,000	City budget Parks non-reverting fund
2026	Hornet Park	Develop wooded area at HP with trail and educational area for programs	$25,000	In-kind donations Grants donations
2026	Hartman Park	Replace restrooms	$50,000+	City Budget Parks non-reverting fund RDC
2027	Hornet Park Community Center	Improve handicap accessible bathrooms	$30,000	Municipal bond City budget
2026-2031	All Parks	Expand or develop natural areas, dedicate to native growth/plantings and pollinators	$1,000	In-kind donations Grants
2026	Hornet Park Community Center	Update and improve history mural that is currently in the event banquet area and move to the main hallway	$1,000 -$2,000	Fundraising, in-kind donation
2026 - 2031	Hornet Park Community Center	Update AV system in banquet room	$25,000	Fundraising, in - kind donation
2027	Paw Patch Dog Park	Upgrade sign up system, add small/ low energy dog area, improve turf quality	$10,000	Fundraising, in-kind donation

Past Planning Successes

Year	Park	Project	Progress
2016	Hartman Park	Renovate diamond for multi-level use	Completed with 60’ and 90’ bases and portable mound
2016	Sarah T. Bolton	New trees along the road at new lawn area	Completed upon completion of Greenway Trail
2017	Sarah T. Bolton	Develop Outdoor Education Classroom	This area is now part of the Greenway Trail
2018-2019	Sarah T. Bolton & Don Challis	Replace playground equipment	New playgrounds were installed in Sarah T Bolton and Don Challis in 2019
2016-2020	All Parks	Address remaining ADA compliance issues	All playgrounds, shelters, and restrooms are connected
2017-2020	Sarah T. Bolton	Pave roads and parking lots	Two sections paved, done upon completion of the Greenway Trail
2018-2020	All Parks	Franciscan Trail	Construction began in 2020, completed in fall 2021
2022	Hornet Park Comunity Center	Added full time event manager	Completed
2022	All Parks	Create Non-Profit Parks Foundation	Completed and active
2024	Sarah T. Bolton	Add sidewalk/crosswalk at entrances to park, connections to Greenway	Completed
2025	Sarah T Bolton	Creek bank stabilization, north of pedestrian bridge	Completed
2024	Hartman Park	Purchase of batting cages for Little League use	Purchased and installed in 2025

Past Planning Successes

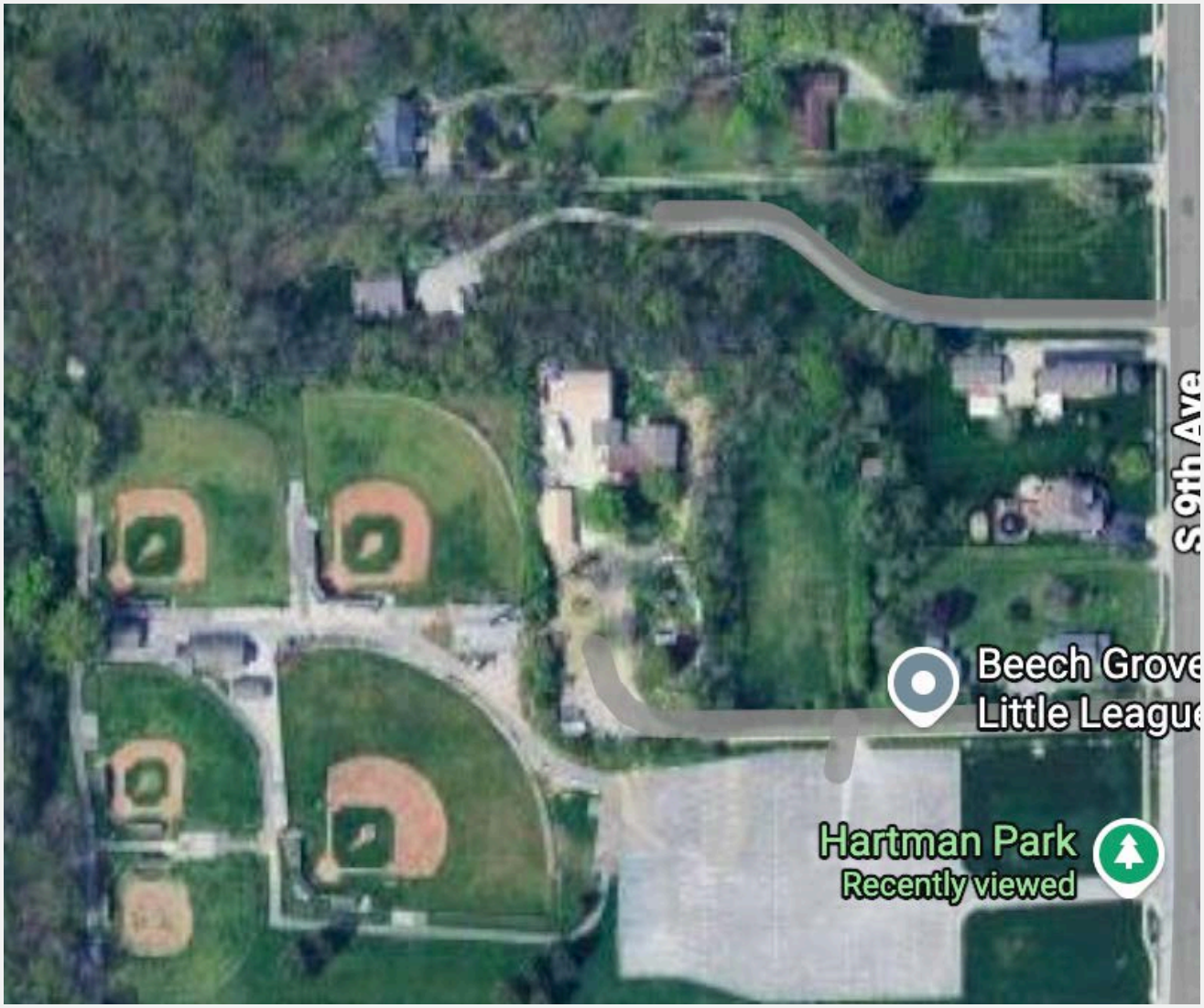
Year	Park	Project	Progress
2025	Hornet Park	Replace roof	Completed
2026	Sarah T. Bolton	Multipurpose event shelter	In progress with completion in Spring 2026
2023	Sarah T. Bolton	Resurface baskertball courts	Completed
2023	Hornet Park	Reconstuct parking lot	Completed

Appendix A: Parks Facilities, Features, & Amenities

Parks Facilities, Features, & Amenities

	Sarah Bolton Park	**Don Challis Park**	Hartman Park	Hornet Park	Pocket Park
Acres	32	14.31	11.2	14.492	>0.1
Picnic Area	X	X	X		
Shelter	X	X			
Comfort Station	3	1	X		
Benches	X	X			
Ball Diamond	1	1	5		
Basketball Court	2				
Playfields	2	1			
Playground	X	X			
Fountain	X				
Community Center				X	
Tot Lots					
Open Space	X	X	X	X	
Tennis Courts				X	
War Memorial	x				
Trails	x	x		x	
Horseshoe Court					
Volleyball Court	2	1			
Natural Areas	X			X	
Asphalt Area	X	X	X	X	
Soccer Field				X	
Elementary School				X	

Hartman Park



Hornet Park

Vehicles
Hornet Park
Community Center
Recently viewed
A St
Hornet Park
Elementary School
A St

Sarah T. Bolton Park

Don Challis Park

Appendix B: Parks System Activities

All- American Day Fireworks Celebration

The annual All American Day in the Park & fireworks celebration at Sarah T. Bolton Park presented by the Beech Grove Promoters Club brings together thousands of residents each July 3 for an evening of food, games, music, and a grand fireworks display around 10 p.m.

Summer Concert Series

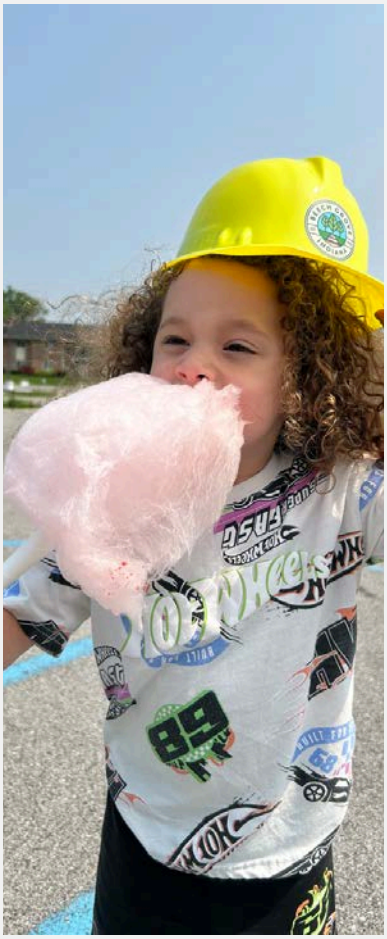
Our Summer Concert Series has now become a recurring community favorite here in Beech Grove. Held outdoors in Sarah T. Bolton Park on select Thursday nights during the warmer months, these concerts feature a mix of local and regional artists, covering a variety of musical genres that appeal to a broad audience. On average, this event brings in 200 to 400 people each night of the series. Thankfully, we have been able to keep this series free due to the overwhelming support of our community partners. Our series continues to bring families, neighbors, and visitors together for live music, local food trucks, kids' activities, and community connection. In 2026, an entertainment shelter will be completed and serve as the new stage.

Going Green in the Grove

Going Green in the Grove is Beech Grove's annual sustainability event held each April at the Hornet Park Community Center. The celebration brings together families, gardeners, local groups, and environmentally minded residents for a day focused on native planting, tree distribution, recycling resources, and practical ways to support a greener community. Attendance generally reaches 300 to 500 people with steady participation across all age groups. Sponsor support helps fund native plants and trees, educational booths, hands on activities, and materials that empower residents to adopt simple and effective sustainability habits.

Touch-a-Truck

Touch a Truck is a hands on community event hosted at the Hornet Park Community Center where children and families can explore city vehicles, meet first responders, and interact with local construction, utility, and transportation partners. Last year's inaugural event welcomed about 400 attendees and interest continues to grow as families look for interactive and educational activities close to home.



Summer Fun Lunches

Our Summer Fun Lunch program provides free, nutritious lunches to children during the months when school is not in session, ensuring kids continue to have access to healthy meals throughout the summer. In partnership with Beech Grove City Schools, free lunches are provided at local parks, helping remove food insecurity barriers while supporting the well-being of local families.

The Community Center also offers kid-focused activities alongside these free lunches that encourage creativity, movement, and social connection. This program gives families peace of mind and kids something to look forward to all summer long.

Bunny Trail Hop

Our Bunny Trail Hop is a sensory-friendly Easter scavenger hunt designed for fun, exploration, and connection with nature. Children stroll along our beautiful Franciscan trail while searching for themed items listed in their hunt passport. The experience is paced, welcoming, and engaging, allowing kids and families to enjoy the trail at their own comfort level.

Along the way, kids get to interact with their favorite fictional characters including the Easter Bunny. Once all passport items are found, children can turn in their completed hunt for a festive goodie bag. This event helps get people out on our trails and also helps generate revenue for the community center.

Holiday Dinners & Events

Our Community Holiday Dinners bring neighbors together to share a free, festive meal in a spirit of connection and celebration. Open to all, these dinners create a welcoming space where families, individuals, and friends can gather, enjoy good food, and feel a sense of belonging during the holiday season.

To make the evening extra special, our Beech Grove City Schools show choir fills the room with holiday carols, adding tradition and joy to the experience. Through good food and togetherness, our holiday dinners celebrate the heart of the season.

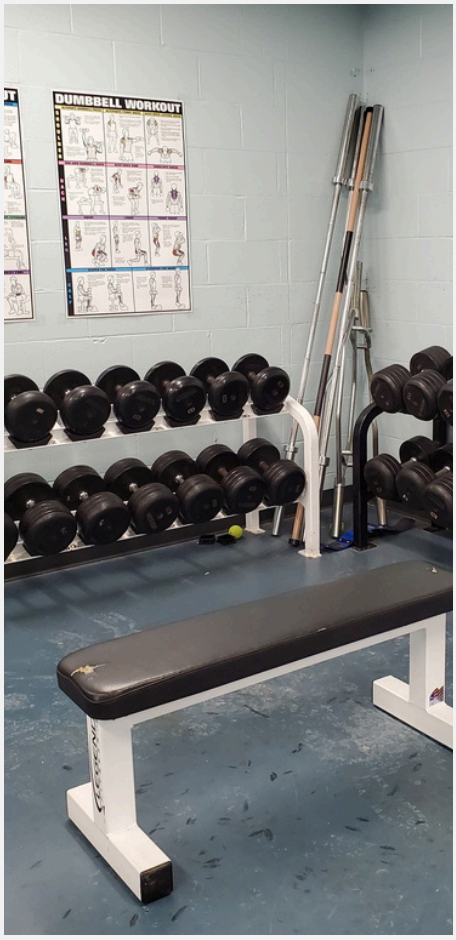
Movies by the Bonfire

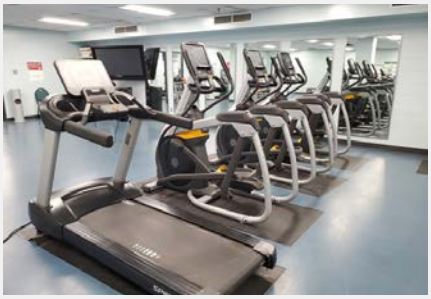
Our free outdoor community movie nights held in Sept. and Oct. invite neighbors of all ages to come together for family-friendly Halloween and autumn-themed films. These screenings celebrate the season with cozy vibes, classic favorites, and a little spooky fun. By removing cost barriers and encouraging connection, the program offers a simple way for community members to gather, relax, and make lasting memories together.

Fitness & Recreation Activities

The Community Center offers low-cost dance, Zumba, and pound classes as well as a full-service gym. Our Zumba class is a high-energy, feel-good workout that blends fun dance moves with upbeat music and is designed for all fitness levels. It helps improve cardiovascular health, coordination, and confidence while burning calories and boosting your mood. Pound is designed as a full-body workout that combines cardio and strength training through rhythm-based movement using lightly weighted drumsticks.

This year, through a brand-new partnership with dance2connect, a local nonprofit organization, the community center now offers ballet, tumbling, hip hop and jazz to kids for the spring and fall semesters.





Appendix C: Greenscape Commission Plan & Tree Inventory

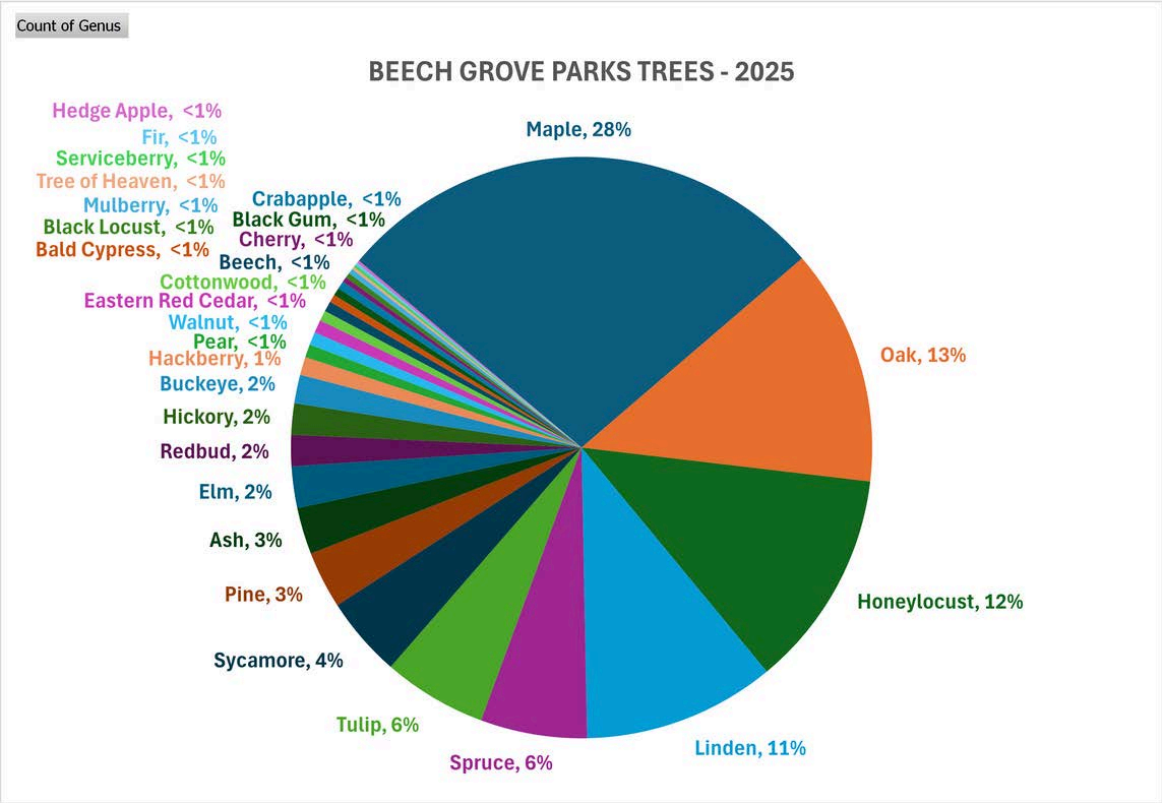
Beech Grove Greenscape Commission Tree Management Plan

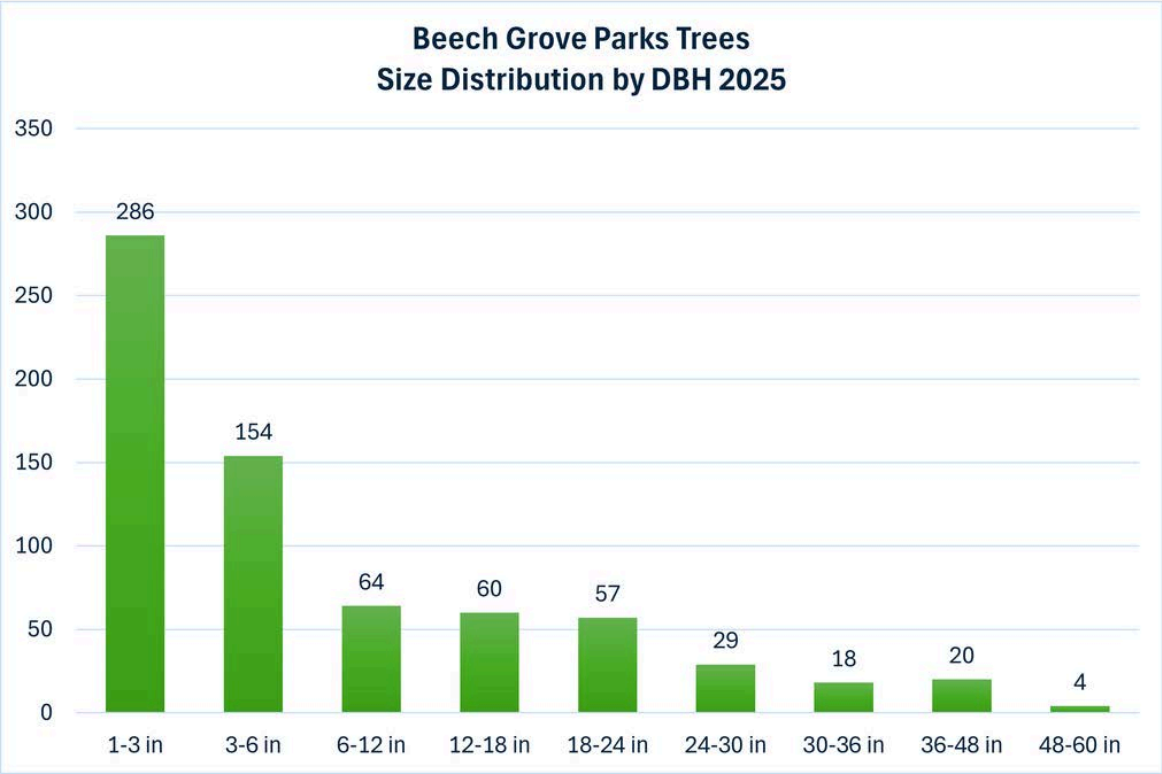
The Beech Grove Tree Management Plan was developed by SavATree Consulting Group in July 2025 following a city-wide tree inventory funded by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. The inventory covered 1,247 trees and 59 planting sites across city-owned properties and rights-of-way. Data collected included species, size, condition, risk level, and maintenance needs. The report found the urban forest generally healthy, with a stable size distribution and good species diversity. However, maples are slightly overrepresented, exceeding recommended limits for genus and family diversity, which could increase vulnerability to pests or disease outbreaks.

Key issues identified include structural and health concerns from girdling roots and damaged surface roots, oak-specific pests and diseases, and improper mulching practices ("mulch volcanoes"). The report recommends removing dead or failing trees, correcting poor mulching, initiating pruning based on priority, avoiding further planting of high-risk species like ash and Bradford pear, and using the Indiana DNR's preferred species list to guide future plantings. Priority planting locations were identified in areas with low tree equity. These actions aim to support a healthier, more resilient urban canopy in Beech Grove.

We created an iTree Eco Tree Benefit report using the data collected during the inventory. We found that on average the trees in Beech Grove sequester 8.66 tons of carbon per year and help the city avoid over 120,000 gallons of runoff annually. The structural value of Beech Grove's public tree population is worth $1,957,816.29.

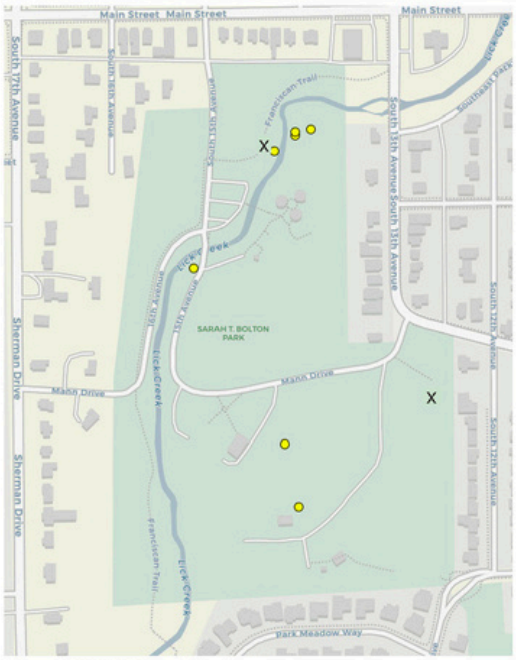
The full plan can be found at www.beechgrove.com/greenscape-commission.


Count of Genus
BEECH GROVE PARKS TREES - 2025
Hedge Apple, <1%
Fir, <1%
Serviceberry, <1%
Tree of Heaven, <1%
Mulberry, <1%
Black Locust, <1%
Bald Cypress, <1%
Crabapple, <1%
Black Gum, <1%
Cherry, <1%
Beech, <1%
Cottonwood, <1%
Eastern Red Cedar, <1%
Walnut, <1%
Pear, <1%
Hackberry, 1%
Buckeye, 2%
Hickory, 2%
Redbud, 2%
Elm, 2%
Ash, 3%
Pine, 3%
Sycamore, 4%
Tulip, 6%
Spruce, 6%
Linden, 11%
Honeylocust, 12%
Oak, 13%
Maple, 28%

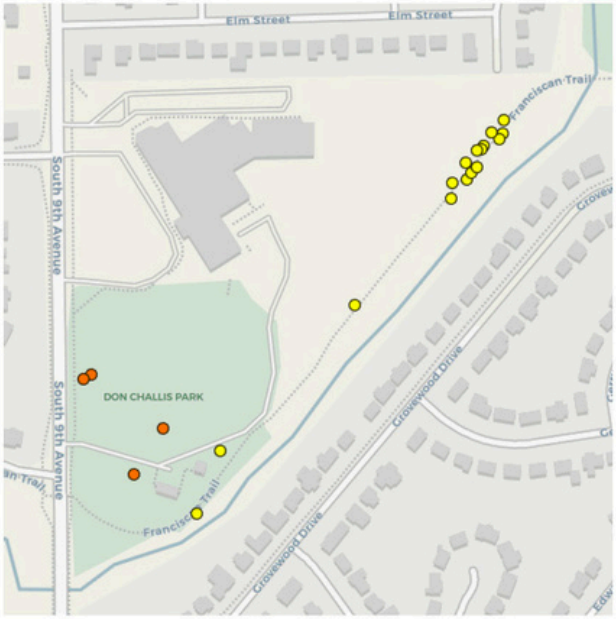

Beech Grove Parks Trees
Size Distribution by DBH 2025
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
286
154
64
60
57
29
18
20
4
1-3 in
3-6 in
6-12 in
12-18 in
18-24 in
24-30 in
30-36 in
36-48 in
48-60 in

Recommended Removals - •High & •Medium Priority

Tree Id	Address	Common Name	Scientific Name	DBH (in)	Condition	Status	Priority	GTC R	Pruning Ob	PH	Risk Rating
X ~~67~~	~~Sarah Bolton Park~~	~~Silver maple~~	~~Acer saccharinum~~	~~24.5~~	~~Poor~~	~~Alive~~	~~High~~	~~Remove~~			~~Low~~
68	Sarah Bolton Park	Boxelder	Acer negundo	9.5	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
89	Sarah Bolton Park	Red maple	Acer rubrum	3	Very Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove	Young Tree Training		Low
90	Sarah Bolton Park	Littleleaf linden	Tilia cordata	3	Very Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove	Young Tree Training		Low
94	Sarah Bolton Park	Red maple	Acer rubrum	2	Dead	Dead	Medium	Remove			Low
174	Sarah Bolton Park	Black walnut	Juglans nigra	24	Fair	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
204	Sarah Bolton Park	Norway maple 'Cri	Acer platanoides 'Crimson King'	14	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
230	Sarah Bolton Park	Littleleaf linden	Tilia cordata	21	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Moderate
X ~~282~~	~~Sarah Bolton Park~~	~~Tree of heaven~~	~~Ailanthus altissima~~	~~32.06~~	~~Fair~~	~~Alive~~	~~Medium~~	~~Remove~~			~~Low~~
X ~~283~~	~~Sarah Bolton Park~~	~~Mulberry~~	~~Morus spp~~	~~28.43~~	~~Fair~~	~~Alive~~	~~Medium~~	~~Remove~~			~~Low~~



Sarah T. Bolton Park



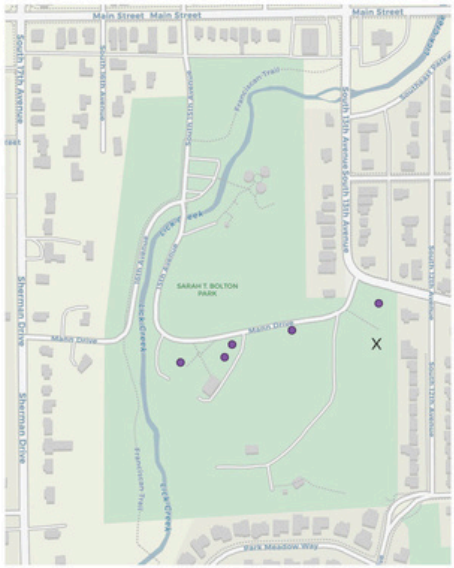
Don Challis Park & Fransican Trail

Tree Id	Address	Common Name	Scientific Name	DBH (in)	Condition	Status	Priority	GTC R	Pruning Ob	PH	Risk Rating
356	Don Challis Park	Hedge maple	Acer campestre	19	Very Poor	Alive	High	Remove			Low
357	Don Challis Park	Hedge maple	Acer campestre	16	Very Poor	Alive	High	Remove			Low
362	Don Challis Park	Norway maple 'Cri	Acer platanoides 'Crimson King'	18	Poor	Alive	High	Remove			Low
416	1100 South 9th Avenue	Honeylocust	Gleditsia triacanthos	2	Very Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
431	Don Challis Park	Silver maple	Acer saccharinum	41	Poor	Alive	High	Remove			Moderate
463	Don Challis Park	Honeylocust	Gleditsia triacanthos	2	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
503	Don Challis Park	Honeylocust	Gleditsia triacanthos	2	Very Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
507	Don Challis Park	Honeylocust	Gleditsia triacanthos	2	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
508	Don Challis Park	Honeylocust	Gleditsia triacanthos	2	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
509	Don Challis Park	Red maple	Acer rubrum	2	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
516	Don Challis Park	Tulip tree	Liriodendron tulipifera	2	Very Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
517	Don Challis Park	Tulip tree	Liriodendron tulipifera	2	Very Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
526	Don Challis Park	Northern red oak	Quercus rubra	2	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
529	Don Challis Park	Pin oak	Quercus palustris	2	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
534	Don Challis Park	Pin oak	Quercus palustris	2	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
536	4600 South 9th Avenue	Pin oak	Quercus palustris	2	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
537	4600 South 9th Avenue	Northern red oak	Quercus rubra	2	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
542	4600 South 9th Avenue	Northern red oak	Quercus rubra	2	Dead	Dead	Medium	Remove			Low
550	Don Challis Park	Northern red oak	Quercus rubra	2	Dead	Dead	Medium	Remove			Low
572	Don Challis Park	Northern red oak	Quercus rubra	2	Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low

Recommended Removals - •High & •Medium Priority

Tree Id	Address	Common Name	Scientific Name	DBH (in)	Condition	Status	Priority	GTC F	Pruning Ob	PH	Risk Rating
579	Hornet Greenway	American sycamo	Platanus occidentalis	40	Dead	Dead	High	Remove			Moderate
581	Hornet Greenway	Honeylocust	Gleditsia triacanthos	10	Very Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Low
582	Hornet Greenway	Northern hackberr	Celtis occidentalis	25	Very Poor	Alive	Medium	Remove			Moderate

Hornet Park & Hornet Greenway

Recommended Removals - Invasive Species

Tree Id	Address	Common Name	Scientific Name	DBH (in)	Condition	Status	Priority	GTC F	Pruning Ob	PH	Risk Rating
183	Sarah Bolton Park	Callery pear 'Bradford	Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'	17	Good	Alive	None at this time				Low
189	Sarah Bolton Park	Callery pear 'Bradford	Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'	13.5	Fair	Alive	Low	Remove			Low
190	Sarah Bolton Park	Callery pear 'Bradford	Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'	20	Fair	Alive	Low	Prune	Improve aesthetics		Low
X	~~282 Sarah Bolton Park~~	~~Tree of heaven~~	~~Ailanthus altissima~~	~~32.06~~	~~Fair~~	~~Alive~~	~~Medium~~	~~Remove~~			~~Low~~
X	~~283 Sarah Bolton Park~~	~~Mulberry~~	~~Morus spp~~	~~28.43~~	~~Fair~~	~~Alive~~	~~Medium~~	~~Remove~~			~~Low~~
287	Sarah Bolton Park	Callery pear 'Bradford	Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'	16	Good	Alive	None at this time				Low
289	Sarah Bolton Park	Callery pear 'Bradford	Pyrus calleryana 'Bradford'	15	Good	Alive	Medium	Prune	Manage risk, Develo		Low