

SHIELDS FARM PARK

Master Site Development Plan

ADOPTED {MONTH & YEAR}

This project was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, {Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund}, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation.

Acknowledgments

The Shields Farm Master Site Development Plan was completed to understand community recreation values, needs and wants and to identify and organize in a clear manner what physical projects, programming and visual improvements that Delmont Borough will pursue at Shields Farm. The Shields Farm Master Site Development Plan relied heavily on input from the Steering Committee and guidance from Delmont Borough residents. This Master Site Plan balances community goals and objectives with realistic and implementable project and programming recommendations. All involved understand that implementation of the recommended projects may take years to complete and will be subject to available funding and/or volunteer labor support levels.

Members of the Shields Farm Steering Committee include the following:

Project Steering Committe Members

Andrew Shissler - Delmont Borough President
Jeffrey Cunningham - Delmont Borough Council Member
Stan Cheyne - Delmont Borough Vice President
Chris Askins - Delmont Borough Volunteer
Dan McCool - Delmont Recreation Committee Member

Master Plan Study Committee

Delmont Borough and the Shields Farm Park Master Site Development Plan Steering Committee acknowledge the efforts provided by staff of The EADS Group, Inc. that participated and contributed to the development of the Master Plan:

Alana Nulph - ASLA, Graduate Landscape Architect
Tracy Frampton - Senior Planner/Marketing Representative

Key Stakeholder

The Shields Farm Park Master Site Development Plan Steering Committee and The EADS Group, Inc. would like to acknowledge Andy Shissler, Borough Council President, and
James Passarelli - Franklin Regional XC/TF
Bill & Denni Grassel - Pilgrimage
Chief TJ Klobucar - Delmont Borough Chief of Police
Vicki Walters - Delmont Historical Society
Brandy Walters - Apple ‘n Arts
Andrew Orischar & Zane Lape - Fort Allen Antique Equipment Association

Special thank you to the Borough Secretary, Dawn Earhart for assisting with gathering information about Shields Farm and thank you to the other residents and community members that provided input during open house events and interviews.

Delmont Borough and the Shields Farm Master Site Development Plan Steering Committee acknowledge the efforts provided by staff of The EADS Group, Inc. that participated and contributed to the development of the Shields Farm Master Site Development Plan:



Alana Nulph, ASLA, Graduate Landscape Architect, The EADS Group, Inc.

As a Graduate Landscape Architect, Ms. Nulph has experience with the development of basic designs, contract drawings, and planning projects; as well as utilizing her expertise in computerized drafting programs to blend her academic knowledge and practical experience for each project. She also assists with planning and design projects by engaging with clients/community members, analyzing various sources of data, and creating spaces that resonates with the needs of the those involved.



Tracy Frampton, Senior Planner/Marketing Representative, The EADS Group, Inc.

In addition to his regular marketing responsibilities, Tracy has worked on multiple community development and recreation-related planning projects including the Master Site Development Plan for Albion Park, an Active Transportation Plan and a Comprehensive Park & Recreation Plan for Union City Borough, and multiple county-wide and local municipal and multi-municipal comprehensive plans. He has extensive experience in successfully applying for and administering a wide variety of recreation, transportation and trail related grant projects. Mr. Frampton currently serves as the chairman of the Slippery Rock Township (Butler County) Planning Commission.

Learn more about The EADS Group, Inc. at https://www.eadsgroup.com

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I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

Delmont Borough, first known as 'New Salem' or 'Salem Crossroads,' is a small suburb 25 miles east of Pittsburgh. The town consists of just 1.1 square miles and is home to approximately 2,621 people. The town is nestled near the intersection of two major highways: Route 22 and Route 66. It's neighboring towns are New Alexandria, Export, Murrysville and Jeannette. Delmont was settled in 1814 and formally incorporated in 1833. Currently, the borough is home to a number of local businesses, a golf club, an ice skating rink, thriving library and hosts a number of events throughout the year, many of which take place at Shields Farm Park.

SHIELDS FARM PARK

The Shields Farm Park in Delmont was acquired in 1980 by the Salem Crossroads Historical Restoration Society, a group dedicated to preserving the area's rich history. This acquisition was part of the society's broader efforts to maintain and restore historic sites in the region.

POPULATION PROFILE

The 2023 US Census reported there were 2,604 people living in Delmont Borough. The population has fluctuated over the past 5 years. In 2020, the population was 2,592, which decreased to 2,569. Since then the population has been on the rise, sitting at 2,604 people.

AGE PROFILE

Delmont's population is aging. The median age of Borough residents has been slowly increasing over the last several years. In 2020 the median age was around 47.7 or lower, and as of 2023, the median age has increased to approximately 50.1.

HOUSING PROFILE

There are approximately 1,411 housing units in Delmont Borough. 1,354 of which are occupied, leaving 57 units unoccupied. About 56.65% of the homes are owner occupied.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The following are other important characteristics of the Borough. It provides an overall profile of the demographic characteristics in the Borough:

- Median household income - $65,291
- Education - 39.3% have a bachelor's degree or higher
- Employment - 1,483 residents employed (~2.4% unemployed)
- Health - 4.6% without Health Care Coverage
- Poverty Rate - 8.64% of residents are living below the poverty line.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Shields Farm Park in Delmont is surrounded by rich history, including the preserved Shields log cabin, once part of a 19th century tannery. Just nearby is the Salem Crossroads Historic District, home to dozens of restored buildings from the 1800s. Visitors can also see the original water trough fed by the "Big Spring," historic churches, and remnants of early farm structures. The area comes alive each year during events like the Christmas Pilgrimage, celebrating Delmont's small-town heritage.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Delmont Borough is situated on the edge of the Appalachian Plateau, featuring native hardwood forests like oak, maple and hickory trees, that support wildlife. The area is also part of the Turtle Creek Watershed, with natural springs and small streams such as the historic "Big Spring" near Shields Farm, which have provided water since the borough's early settlement.

MAJOR PARK EVENTS

The park is a lively community space in Delmont that hosts popular annual events like the Apple 'n Arts Festival each October, featuring crafts, food vendors, antique farm equipment, and family activities. During the holiday season, the park transforms for the Christmas Pilgrimage with interactive displays. Throughout the year the park also supports local sports and recreational events for the community.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN, 2018

Adopted in 2018, this county-wide plan sets long-term goals across seven major themes, driven by input from over 5,000 residents.

1. Align workforce, education, employers, and entrepreneurship
2. Discover Westmoreland (arts, tourism, agribusiness)
3. Reposition towns (housing, revitalization, open space)
4. Connect with parks and nature (trails and recreation)
5. Build healthy and whole communities (infrastructure, beautification)
6. Plug into new economy (broadband and technology)
7. Create transportation choices (mobility, multi-modal transit)

A master plan for Shields Farm Park would strongly align with the goals of the 2018 Westmoreland County Comprehensive Plan, Reimagining Our Westmoreland, by advancing several of its core strategies. It would enhance access to parks and nature by improving walking trails, walkability, and green infrastructure--potentially connecting the park to the nearby Westmoreland Heritage Trail. It would also promote the county's vision for "Healthy and Whole Communities" through upgrades that support recreation, ADA accessibility, and year-round use. As a key community gathering space and home to heritage events like the Apple 'N Arts Festival and Christmas Pilgrimage, the park also contributes to the plan's goals to "Reposition Our Towns" and "Discover Westmoreland."

The value of improving Shields Farm Park would strengthen Delmont's identity, preserve open space, support environmental sustainability, and position the borough to attract funding and partnerships--helping it thrive within the county's broader strategy for livability, tourism, and small-town revitilzation.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AT THE CROSSROADS, 2023

Adopted in September 2023, this plan aims to improve walking, biking, and rolling infrastructure. Key goals include:

- Connecting Delmont to the Westmoreland Heritage Trail
- Enhancing pedestrian and bike access to Newhouse Park via Route 66
- Improving sidewalks and residential streets to like neighborhoods with local businesses and parks
- Preserving open spaces and promoting accessible walking routes

COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACES PLAN, 2024

Adopted in March 2024, Delmont Borough Council approved a CRPOS Plan Development with funding from the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). The plan, created in partnership with Environmental Planning and Design (EPD) involved public meetings and surveys to gather community input for upgrading and maintaining parks, trails, programming, and open spaces. It complements the borough's broader efforts in active transportation and aligns with state-level recreation and conservation goals.

The plan highlights Shields Farm Park, highlighting the 145 acres of open space and woodland areas. The CRPOS plan calls for improving amenities such as nature trails, park furnishings, accessibility and connectivity--ensuring Shields Farm remains a well-supported venue for events, sports and passive recreation.



II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The EADS Group along with the Steering Committee conducted multiple public engagement initiatives during the planning process that provided local stakeholders and officials multiple opportunities and options to participate and to provide input. The public engagement process included the following:

- Open House Event (Public Meeting #1) - held June 25, 2025, at the Delmont Borough Building
- Final Public Meeting (Public Meeting #2) - held October 15, 2025, at the Delmont Borough Building
- Community Survey - conducted using an online Google Forums System. The survey was prepared to obtain input from the community members on a Draft of the Master Plan Design. The survey was also used to gain more information on what demographic uses the park, when they use the park, how they use it, and what would make them use it more.

SHIELDS FARM
DRAFT
MASTER PLAN

https://forms.gle/bi427dj-d1yDUfm8s9

CONTACT:
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- The Shields Farm Steering Committee was engaged several times throughout this planning process, along with the members participating in the Public Engagement opportunities.





DELMONT BOROUGH

SHIELDS FARM DRAFT PLAN

OPEN HOUSE

JUNE 25, 2025
5:30 PM

WHERE:
Delmont Borough Municipal Office
77 Greensburg Street
Delmont, PA 15626

WHO:
Residents, Community Members, & Steering Committe Members

WHAT:
Join us for our in-person workshop! Give your input on the Draft Master Plan of Shields Farm Park.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

KEY PERSON INTERVIEWS

- Jim Passarelli, Franklin Regional XC/TF
- Chief TJ Klobucar, Delmont Borough Police Department
- Vicki Walters, Delmont Historical Society
- Brandy Walters, Apple N Arts
- Andrew & Zane, Fort Allen Antique Equipment Association
- Bill & Denni Grassel - Pilgrimage



DRAFT SHIELDS FARM MASTER PLAN
DELMONT BOROUGH
SCALE: 1"=200'

OPEN HOUSE EVENT - JUNE 25, 2025

A community engagement event was held at the Delmont Borough Building on June 25, 2025. Nearly 20-25 residents participated. The event was designed to gather input and guidances from the residents on types of improvements the community wanted at Shields Farm Park and to determine if the Draft Master Plan reflects such. Members of The EADS Group Consultant Team, Key Persons, and Steering Committee Members attended. The following highlights important input and guidance obtained at the Engagement Event.

- Review of how we got to this point in the design process. We used information from the Comprehensive Recreation, Parks and Open Spaces Plan.
- Draft Plan - Revisions to the Draft Plan were identified. Widening the walking/biking path to be ten feet, ensuring there's emergency access for the events, suggested that the parking area near the amphitheater should be smaller due to drainage in the area
- Park History - The park was dedicated on June 21, 1980.
- People stressed maintenance should be considered when adding to or changing the park.
- Repaving the existing walking path around the Christmas Pilgrimage..
- Architecture to match the integrity of the park.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

FINAL PUBLIC MEETING - OCTOBER 15, 2025

On October 15, 2025, Delmont Borough hosted a public meeting at the Delmont Borough Building to review the Shields Farm Park Master Plan. Approximately 15 residents attended the session. The purpose of the meeting was to review the overall structure of the plan, including its table of contents, share how survey feedback had been applied to the recommendations, and explain the difference between project clusters and phased implementation. The meeting was designed as an open discussion, encouraging attendees to share thoughts and priorities directly with the planning team.

Residents expressed strong support for beginning improvements with the two new pavilions and restroom facility in the central park area near the Apple 'n Arts buildings, describing this as the catalyst project that would set the stage for all future development. Some attendees initially expressed hesitation about adding a playground to the park, concerned about its fit with the character of Shields Farm, but ultimately understood and acknowledged its value in drawing families and supporting community use.

Additional input included a suggestion to exaggerate the topography in front of the amphitheater to create a more stepped or tiered effect, improving viewing areas for performances. The group also discussed that Delmont Borough intends to take on more maintenance responsibilities for the park in the future, and that existing contracts with partner organizations can be updated when appropriate to reflect changing needs.

Overall, participants were very positive about the presentation, expressed enthusiasm for the direction of the plan, and appreciated how their feedback from the survey had been incorporated into the recommendations.



DRAFT PLAN SURVEY

DRAFT PLAN SURVEY

There were (41) responses to the Shields Farm Draft Plan Survey. The Survey was opened on June 25, 2025. Information from the survey was initially distributed to the community at the Open House Event, and then was posted on Facebook and shared with the community on the Delmont Borough Website, and was posted on local bulletin boards. To distribute information we used a combination of QR codes, posters, hyperlinks, and quick-grab business card sized slips for people to share at the open house. The survey remained active through September of 2025.

The majority of the respondents were from persons older than 30 years of age. Approximately 39 of the responders were in the 30-60 range, and 9 of the responders were in the 60+ range. These response numbers demonstrate that the input gathered address the needs, wants and priorities of families as well as other segments of the community.

Draft Plan Improvements: the survey results provide a good representation of wanted park improvements. The following highlights the top improvement priorities identified in the survey based off the Draft Plan:

1. Access
2. Events
3. Facilities
4. Amenities

Access -

- Pedestrian Access & Connectivity - suggests a need for safer and more direct walkways into the park from residential/ commercial areas
- Traffic & Safety on Event Days - concern about too much traffic on busy days. Indicates a need for improved traffic flow, event-day parking, or access control to ease congestion and ensure safety.
- Parking Enhancements - respondents liked the plan's inclusion of added parking
- General Accessibility - respondents reacted positively to multi-use access (walking, sports, disc golf, etc.). People also responded positively to the need of a longer walking trail, which implies a desire for more navigable, continuous routes within the site.

Events -

- Annual Community Events & Festivals - people frequent the park for these kinds of events, it's important park facilities are maintained and enhanced to support these large events and festivals.
- Entertainment - respondents like the idea of being able to use the amphitheater area more frequently, along with adding parking and restrooms to make the area more usable.
- Recreation & Children - Include more things for kids to do at the park and maintain existing sporting events. Respondents liked the idea of adding a playground and programming more events geared towards kids (water days)

(See next page for Facilities and Amenities)

DRAFT PLAN SURVEY

Facilities -

- Enhance the use of the existing amphitheater - music and entertainment
- Playground - add a small playground
- Pavilions/Gathering Spaces
- Disc Golf
- New walking/biking opportunities - connect to the existing wooded trails, 10’ wide trail surface aggregate, include benches, pet waste stations, shade relief in open areas.

Amenities -

- Restrooms - Additional locations throughout the park
- Maintenance

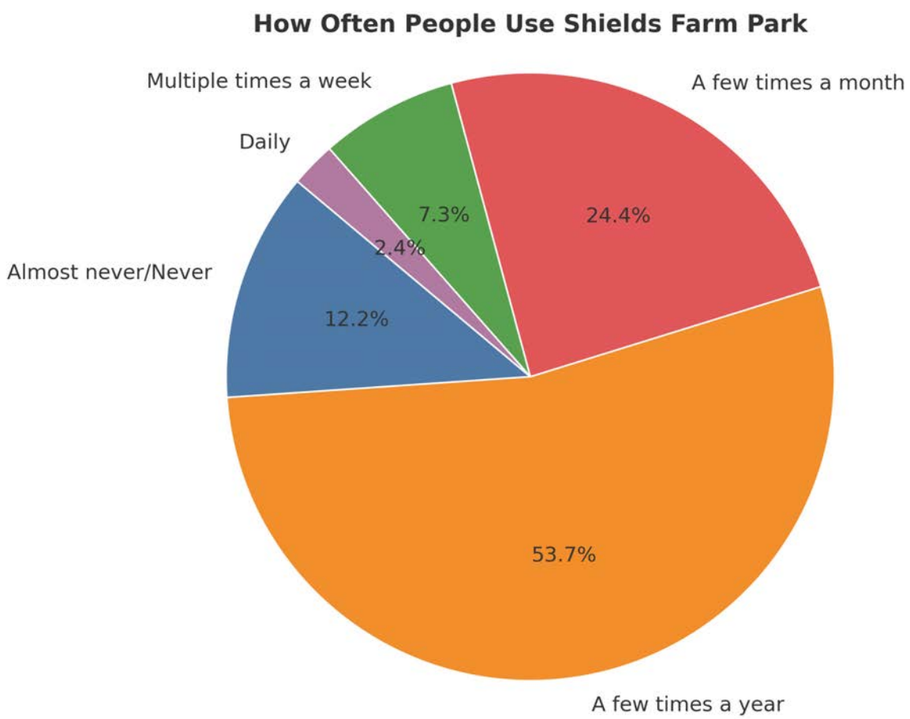


The following pages summarize the responses received for each question asked on the survey. At the end of this section (pg. 15) there will be a general summary provided of all of the responses.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE THE PARK -

The survey results show that Shields Farm Park is most commonly used a few times a year, with over half of respondents (53.7%) selecting this option. About a quarter (24.4%) visit the park a few times a month, while 12.2% reported rare or no use. Only a small portion of respondents use the park more frequently—weekly or daily use accounted for less than 10% combined.

This suggests that while the park holds value for occasional community events—like the Apple Festival—it may benefit from improvements or programming that encourage more regular, everyday use by local residents.



DRAFT PLAN SURVEY

WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE PARK? -

The responses to the question “What brings you to the park?” reveal a diverse range of uses and interests among community members. Since respondents were allowed to list multiple reasons, the results reflect overlapping uses and broad appeal.

The most frequently mentioned draw was the Apple ’n Arts Festival (16 mentions), confirming its role as a major anchor event for the park. Walking and dog walking followed closely (14), highlighting the park’s importance as a space for daily wellness and recreation. Baseball (10 mentions) also stood out, reinforcing the value of organized youth sports in drawing visitors.

Other notable reasons included attending general events, like baseball, or festivals (8), hiking (4), and simply enjoying the open space (5)—demonstrating the park’s value as both a programmed and passive-use space. Less frequent, but still meaningful, responses included composting (3), maintenance duties (1), and hunting (2), indicating a variety of practical or seasonal uses.

Overall, the results show that Shields Farm Park serves multiple community needs—from recreation and celebration to relaxation and stewardship—supporting its role as a flexible and valued public space.

DO YOU THINK THE DRAFT PLAN SHOWCASES THE KIND OF PARK YOU’RE LOOKING FOR? -

Community feedback on the draft plan for Shields Farm Park shows a mix of support, suggestions, and concern. About half of respondents expressed clear or general approval, calling the plan “beautiful,” “fine,” or a “good start.” Others offered conditional support, emphasizing the need for additions like playgrounds, especially near pavilions or baseball fields, as well as bike paths, pickleball courts, and hiking options.

Several responses highlighted concerns about the balance between development and natural space. Comments noted too much emphasis on parking and not enough greenery, with some requesting pollinator gardens or more trees. These suggestions reflect a desire to preserve the park’s natural character while making it more usable for families and everyday visitors.

A smaller group expressed strong opposition, citing issues like traffic, long-term maintenance, and the risk of displacing popular events. Some questioned whether the community has the resources to support the proposed improvements. Overall, while many support upgrades to Shields Farm Park, they also call for a plan that is realistic, environmentally mindful, and responsive to both passive and active park users.

DRAFT PLAN SURVEY

WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU WANT TO COME TO THE PARK MORE? -

The responses to this question was organized into key themes:

- Playgrounds & Family Features - Respondents frequently requested playgrounds, swing sets, and child-friendly spaces—often comparing the need to larger parks in nearby communities.
- Walking Trails & Paths - Improved walking trails, better maintenance, longer paths, and features like shade and benches were common suggestions to support regular passive use.
- Events & Programming - Concerts, live music, food trucks, and picnic opportunities were popular ideas that reflect a desire for social and seasonal activities in the park.
- Basic Amenities - People emphasized the need for practical infrastructure—especially restrooms, parking, and pavilion rentals—to support longer and more comfortable visits.
- Natural Features & Preservation - Some respondents valued keeping the park's rural feel, calling for native plants, more trees, and limiting overdevelopment.
- Other Uses & Opinions - A few mentioned hunting and archery access as reasons they use or would use the park, suggesting space could accommodate multiple recreational types.
- No Change Needed - Several respondents said they are happy with the park as it is or only visit during events like the Apple Festival, and wouldn't come more often regardless of changes.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE PLAN? -

The most commonly praised feature of the draft plan was the inclusion of walking paths and trails. Many respondents highlighted the walking trail or proposed extensions as their favorite part of the plan, indicating strong support for low-impact recreational opportunities. These features were appreciated not only for recreation but also for how well they integrate with the park's existing layout.

Restrooms and other basic amenities also received consistent positive feedback. Respondents noted the importance of adding restrooms, pavilions, and parking to improve the park's overall usability. Some highlighted how these features would better support frequent visitors and community groups who already use the space for activities or events.

Playgrounds and family-friendly features were another well-received element. Several people specifically mentioned the playground addition as something that would enhance the park, especially when paired with walking trails and open space. This reinforces previous community feedback favoring more inclusive, multigenerational spaces.

A few respondents also appreciated the simplicity and flexibility of the overall plan. Words like "spacious," "comprehensive," and "available for multiple uses" suggest that many see the draft as a balanced approach—adding helpful infrastructure while preserving the natural character and open feel of Shields Farm Park.

DRAFT PLAN SURVEY

WHAT WOULD ADD OR CHANGE TO THE PLAN? -
Responses to the question “What would you add or change to the plan?” reflect a range of perspectives, from those seeking additional amenities to others emphasizing preservation. Many respondents suggested enhancing family-friendly features, such as adding or relocating playgrounds, installing a splash pad, or creating gathering spaces like a pavilion near baseball fields. These additions were often tied to improving the experience for families attending games or events, showing continued interest in accessible and active recreation.

Others proposed more specialized uses, including a fenced-in dog park, an archery practice area, and permit-based hunting access. These responses indicate a desire to accommodate a broader set of recreational interests and preserve activities that some community members already value at the park. Infrastructure-related suggestions were also common, including expanded gravel parking, wider entry roads to manage event traffic, and better placement of restrooms and pavilions to improve accessibility during festivals.

A notable group of respondents focused on preserving the park’s natural and agricultural character. They advocated for planting more native trees and grasses, limiting new construction, and maintaining the open feel that makes Shields Farm distinct from other parks. Several urged the borough to avoid turning Shields into a duplicate of Newhouse Park, instead positioning it as a quieter, event-based space that supports unique community traditions like the Apple Festival and Christmas Pilgrimage.

A few responses also addressed practical concerns like trail maintenance, pedestrian access from downtown, and general upkeep—highlighting the need to balance new features with sustainable, long-term care. Overall, the feedback reveals a community that values both improvement and identity, with a shared interest in ensuring that Shields Farm remains a meaningful and usable space for diverse users.

SUMMARY -
Park Use Frequency: Most respondents visit the park a few times a year, with fewer using it monthly or weekly. Occasional, event-driven visits (like the Apple Festival) are most common.

Reasons for Visiting: The top reasons include the Apple ’n Arts Festival, walking/dog walking, baseball games, and other events or general enjoyment. Many listed multiple reasons, showing the park serves varied interests.

Draft Plan Reactions: A majority expressed general or qualified support for the draft plan, especially for its inclusion of walking trails, restrooms, and playgrounds. Some praised its simplicity and balance of open space.

Desired Features: Respondents want more walking paths, playgrounds, restrooms, and event programming like concerts and food trucks. Some also emphasized the need for shade, maintenance, and natural preservation.

Plan Strengths: Most liked the walking paths, restrooms, and disc golf, along with the plan’s integration of new infrastructure while keeping open space.

Suggested Changes: Feedback included calls for splash pads, dog parks, improved parking and traffic flow, and safe pedestrian access. Others urged limiting development to maintain the farm’s unique, rural identity.

Overall, the community values a balance between family-friendly amenities, natural character, and thoughtful use of space—with interest in both enhanced features and long-term sustainability.