

Dear Representative Richardson,

The village of Magnetic Springs is eagerly applying for a community park construction grant. This new public park would enrich our residents' wellbeing.

Our vision is to build a space for villagers of all ages to gather, play, and connect with nature. We need funding assistance to turn this dream into a reality.

Specifically, plans for the 4-acre park include a walking trail, a picnic pavilion, parking lot, and natural spaces. We will maximize community volunteerism and partnerships to cover maintenance costs.

This park addresses a true need - providing recreation and wellness resources lacking in our small rural village. Your grant would uplift an underserved community.

On behalf of Magnetic Springs, thank you for considering our proposal. This funding will provide a shared space to enhance residents' health, happiness and quality of life for generations to come.

We welcome any questions and appreciate your time reviewing our submission. Your participation would directly enrich many lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chad Wilson', with a large, stylized initial 'C'.

Chad Wilson  
Magnetic Springs Village Council President

1) Project name, a general description of the overall project, and a specific description of the purposes or specific portion(s) of the overall project for which state capital dollars would be used.

The Village of Magnetic Springs Community Park. This project consists of the redevelopment of the former Leesburg-Magnetic Springs Elementary School site (North Union School District) into a rural park featuring a walking trail that connects with the village sidewalks, a parking lot, and picnic facilities including a shelter house.

The goal of the project is to provide a safe, public space for the families and residents of all ages within the village (and to a limited degree to those from Leesburg township) to connect socially while engaging in physical activities and recreation. In addition, it is believed that the addition of the park will attract younger families to the village and help with the growth and sustainability of the village over time.

#### Planned Amenities

- Picnic Pavilion: A covered pavilion with picnic tables and grills will accommodate group gatherings, community events, and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Walking Path: A paved walking path around the park will provide an ideal space for daily exercise and outdoor recreation. The path will create a safe space for walking and biking off the busy main roads.
- Parking Lot: A small gravel parking lot will provide safe and convenient access for visitors.

2) Physical location and address of the project (city / village / township / and county)

The planned park is located on the 4-acre site of the former Leesburg-Magnetic Springs Elementary School between S. Main St. and May St. and connected by Fountain Ave., Parcel No: 2100010750000, Magnetic Springs, Union County.

3) Legal Entity Name and any alternative Doing Business As (DBA) trade names on file with the Ohio Secretary of State and the organization sponsoring the project.

The project is being sponsored by the Council of the Village of Magnetic Springs, the village in which the park will be located.

4) Identification of the facility or asset owner during construction and after work is completed.

The facility is currently owned by the Board of Education for North Union Exempted School District. However, ownership is currently being transferred to the Village of Magnetic Springs and will continue to remain under the authority of the village Council thereafter.

5) Amount of state funding being requested for the FY 2023-24 biennium.

- Picnic Pavilion - \$55,850

This includes the supplies for a 48' x 40' pavilion and for a concrete pad. The Board of Education for North Union Local School District recommended using their students for construction, as they are always actively looking for projects their students can complete as part of their curriculum.

- Amenities - \$16,300

Includes outdoor charcoal grills, picnic tables, trash receptacles, a bike rack, several benches, and a dog waste disposal station. Recycled materials are used when available; when unavailable, low-maintenance and long-lasting materials will be used.

- Walking Path - \$40,400

Quoted from Union County Engineers office for installing a base 10" deep, followed by a double coat of chip seal. Currently awaiting a quote from a private contractor for asphalt.

- Parking Lot - \$40,400

Similar in construction materials to the Walking Path, a parking lot where residents may park to access the park and its amenities is needed.

TOTAL - \$152,950

6) Amount and source of non-state funding, including private, not-for-profit, local, and Federal funds supporting the project.

The Town Council for the Village have committed up to one hundred and fifty-three thousand dollars (\$153,000) over 5 years towards the cost of the project. These monies are a combination of donated land, labor, and maintenance.

7) The amount and source of state funding the project or asset has received in the past, and Whether the project will be requesting additional state funding in future capital biennial.

To date, the village has not received any funding from the state regarding the park or the proposed improvements to the lot. If funded as requested the project would be complete and would not require additional funding. However, the trustees could make additional requests in the future for other improvements to the facility as use dictates.

8) Identification and a description of any use by or involvement of private for-profit businesses Not for profit entities.

The proposed facility is a public park; there is no expectation of private or not for profit involvement in the project. As a park, various not for profit entities may make use of the park as any other member of the public.

It is hoped that the development of the site will encourage community activities such as a farmer's market to be located within the village at the park in the future.

9) Identification and description of any use by or involvement by the federal government.

There is not currently, nor is there an expectation, of any federal government involvement with the project.

10) Identification of the annual amount of and source(s) of funding for ongoing operational cost.

The Council for the village of Magnetic Springs is committed to providing ongoing support and maintenance to the facility. If the project is successfully funded, the operations budget of the village will be increased to account for the maintenance of the improvements, i.e. care for the walking trail and picnic equipment, maintaining the natural spaces, etc. The North Union Local School Board of Education estimated \$5,000 in annual maintenance costs.

Village residents are already excited about having a new park area to share. One resident sent the following communication in support of the project:

*“Professionally I teach a program at Tolles Career Center where I work with trees, turf, wild flowers, soils and just about anything pertaining to park maintenance, design and to some extent, build. Prior to teaching, I spent 30 years in the green industry. I am a graduate of OSU College of Agriculture and I have picked up additional education during my 40 years of outdoor experience.*

*If you need help with plant recommendations, agronomic or horticulture practices, I am happy to help.*

*I am also happy to help with park maintenance. <Name redacted> and I were responsible for community beautification for several years when we lived in the Strawberry Farms area in north Columbus. I have been involved in park trail projects, many Eagle Scout outdoor projects, maintenance of common areas, and landscape renovations.*

*I believe in Magnetic Springs and I like living here. I want to do what I can to make this an even better place for families and one thing I can do is help with a new park if you need help with planning, installation and maintenance.”*

The local library in neighboring Richwood, OH, has requested the opportunity to add a book drop into the Village. This park would be the perfect place to add in community ties like this to bring people and towns together.

11) Any additional relevant information that the requesting organization believes would be of Assistance in evaluating the project’s value and eligibility to receive state capital funding.

The village of Magnetic Springs needs a community park for its residents. With a population of approximately 341 individuals and 146 households, Magnetic Springs is by all accounts a typical small rural village with limited amenities. Currently, there are no public parks or recreational

spaces in the village. This lack of green space and recreational areas negatively impacts the quality of life for Magnetic Springs residents.

Additionally, the village demographics skew older, with more than 12% of the population over the age of 65 and few young families. For older residents, parks and recreational spaces are necessary to maintain lifelong health through physical activity and social engagement, while for young families parks are an important consideration when choosing a place to live. By investing in a new community park, Magnetic Springs can provide an essential space for residents to gather, exercise, and enjoy nature. This would greatly benefit the physical and mental wellbeing of all current and future residents.

With only limited resources for such a capital project, Magnetic Springs would be unable to construct the park without state support of this essential community investment. A new park would fill a void and provide recreational opportunities for villagers of all ages. This proposal outlines the need and plans for a new community park that will greatly enrich life in Magnetic Springs.

#### Demographics

Magnetic Springs and the adjacent townships are largely within census tracts 502 and 503.04, neither of which has easily accessible recreation or park facilities for exercise. The catchment area for the proposed park includes Leesburg Township and to a lesser degree both Taylor and Dover Townships within Union County. The combined population within Union County potentially served by the proposed park as of the 2020 census is reported to be 5,062 with an additional [3,742 + 659] residing in the adjacent townships of Scioto and Thompson in Delaware County.

Tract 502 has also been identified as a food desert: a food desert is defined as a census tract that is both low income and has low-access to nutritious foods. Low-access is characterized by at least 500 people or 33% of the population living more than one mile from a supermarket or large grocery store in an urban community or more than ten miles in a rural community. At 32.8%, Census Tract 502 has one of the highest percentage of households paying 30% or more for housing. Families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost burdened and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.

#### Age

The demographics of Magnetic Springs reveal an aging population in need of more young families. According to the latest census, 34% of residents are over the age of 65, with 21 aged 65-69 and 31 aged 60-64. At the other end of the spectrum, only 12% of the population is under 18 years old. There are 21 children under 5 years old and 14 children between 5-9 years old.

These numbers showcase the need to attract young families with children to Magnetic Springs in order to establish a multi-generational community. While the older population requires amenities, the lack of families explains the urgent need for new recreational spaces suitable for

children and teens. A community park would provide a gathering place for residents of all ages and serve as an incentive for young families to move to the village.

### Income

The income levels in Magnetic Springs also showcase the need for grant funding to construct a new park. Census data shows that 12% of households earn less than \$10,000 annually. A further 13% earn between \$15,000-\$24,999. With 25% of the village earning less than \$25,000 per year, there is very limited individual income to contribute to a park. Additionally, 36% earn between \$75,000-\$99,999 which provides some discretionary income but not enough to fully fund a park build. With only 6% of households earning over \$100,000, and no capital budget, Magnetic Springs requires financial assistance to make a community park a reality.

It should be noted that census tracts 502, and 503.04 have median incomes below the county average with 502, which includes Magnetic Springs also having one of the highest poverty rates within the community. Combined with tract 502's 32.8% housing burden which above both the state and national averages (defined as households paying 30% or more for housing) it suggests that a public facility may be the only reasonable option for physical fitness and recreation available to many families in the area and a critical component of improving or maintaining the best physical and mental health for the residents in the area.

### Summary

Demographically, the two Union County census tracts most likely to use the park and the village have a high proportion of residents over the age of 65, a population that benefits greatly from easy access to walking paths and park areas for fitness and socialization. At the same time, the village is poised for growth and a park facility within the village will help to encourage young families to relocate to the area.

### Budget Restrictions

The village of Magnetic Springs operates on an extremely limited budget that underscores the need for capital funding to construct a new park. Annual revenue for Magnetic Springs over the past 15 years has fluctuated between \$21,000-\$38,000. With such small budgets each year, there are no feasible options for the village to self-fund a park build. Despite revenue constraints, the village is committed to supporting the park and will commit \$153,000 in capital outlays, donated labor, and ongoing maintenance.

However, without state support, it is unlikely that the village will be able to fully finance a public park that its residents deserve. The village's historical revenue numbers showcase an ongoing inability to afford major community investments without outside financial assistance. A park grant would tremendously benefit the village and fill a major void.

When the village revenues are compared to expenditures, it becomes even clearer that outside funding is imperative for a park. In most years, Magnetic Springs spends nearly as much as it takes in. With such tight annual budgets, and no room to cut costs further or raise revenue

substantially, there is no fiscal option for the village to self-fund a park. This comparison of inconsistent revenues versus fixed costs undoubtedly proves that Magnetic Springs needs full capital funding assistance to construct the public park that would greatly benefit its residents. The village simply does not have the budgetary means to dedicate any funds towards such a major community project.

12) Description of how the project's support will benefit the general public and how often the Public will be able to gain access to the facilities or services provided by the community Project funds.

A new community park would provide immense benefits for the health, social connection, and quality of life of Magnetic Springs residents.

Currently, there are no public spaces for villagers to gather, exercise, and enjoy nature. A park would provide free and accessible recreation right in town. Studies show that access to parks increases physical activity for all ages. The walking trails, playground, and open greenspaces would allow residents to exercise, play sports, and enjoy fresh air. This is especially beneficial for senior citizens and families looking for safe spaces to be active.

In addition, a park creates a central place for community gathering and socializing. The picnic pavilion, farmer's market area, and open lawns give opportunities for village events, classes, markets, and other programming that brings people together. Parks strengthen social ties between neighbors and build a sense of community pride and spirit.

Parks also provide mental health benefits and stress relief from time spent in nature. Spending time outdoors and taking in views of trees, flowers, and greenery has measurable positive impacts on mental wellbeing. With limited green space currently, a park would allow all villagers to reap these advantages.

Finally, a park improves the overall quality of life and makes Magnetic Springs a more attractive place to live. Parks increase property values and make villages more appealing, especially for young families. With updated amenities, community activities, and natural beauty, the park would enrich daily life for all.

**Table 1 – Project Cost Breakdown**

	Quantity	Materials	Labor	Tax	Total	Notes
Pavillion	48' x 40'	\$ 14,600	\$ -	\$ 1,095	\$ 15,695	Labor donated by Tri-Rivers Academy
Concrete Pad	48' x 40'	\$ 34,560	\$ -	\$ 2,592	\$ 37,152	
Landscaping		\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3,000	
					\$ 55,847	
Charcoal Grills	2	\$ 625	\$ -	\$ 47	\$ 1,344	
Picnic Tables	6	\$ 1,175	\$ -	\$ 88	\$ 7,579	Recycled material and ADA compliant
Trash Receptacles	4	\$ 575	\$ -	\$ 43	\$ 2,473	Recycled materials
Bike Rack	1	\$ 650	\$ -	\$ 49	\$ 699	Maintenance free
Benches	4	\$ 720	\$ -	\$ 54	\$ 3,096	Maintenance free
Dog Waste Station	1	\$ 1,054	\$ -	\$ 79	\$ 1,133	Recycled materials
					\$ 16,323	
Walking Path	1/4 mile	\$ 17,522	\$ 17,911	\$ -	\$ 35,433	Union County Engineers
Chip Seal	1/4 mile	\$ 4,473	\$ 470	\$ -	\$ 4,943	Union County Engineers
					\$ 40,376	
Parking Lot	210'x60'	\$ 17,522	\$ 17,911	\$ -	\$ 35,433	Union County Engineers
Chip Seal	1/4 mile	\$ 4,473	\$ 470	\$ -	\$ 4,943	Union County Engineers
					\$ 40,376	

**GRAND TOTAL**

**\$ 152,922**

**Table 2 – Capital Request vs. Self-Contribution**

<b>Land Current Market Value</b>	\$ 92,000
<b>Donations</b>	
Pavilion Labor	\$ 25,000
Property Maintenance (5 Yrs)	\$ 25,000
Equipment Installation	\$ 7,500
<b>Village Council</b>	\$ 10,000
<b>Total Village Contribution</b>	\$ 159,500
<b>Capital Request</b>	\$ 152,922
<b>Contribution %</b>	51%