

**Anderson Township Indoor Recreation & Aquatics
Assessment / Feasibility Study
Prepared by Anderson Township - July 17, 2020**

A group comprising of Anderson Township (Township), the Township's Economic Development Committee (EDC), Anderson Park District (APD) and the Forest Hills Local School District (FHSD) began meeting in early April 2020 to discuss the future of indoor recreation/aquatics in the Township. Other community partners, such as the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati and Mercy HealthPlex leadership, were brought into this dialogue, and outreach occurred to possible private investors and companies.

This effort stemmed from repeated community expressed needs for additional indoor recreation venues, the condition of existing pools at Anderson and Turpin High School, and the possibility of a public-private partnership that may provide for a regional aquatic facility in the Anderson Area. All were needs or discussion points among the EDC; thus, this became a Committee initiative in 2020 and the Township led the dialogue on the matter.

The primary need, as expressed by FHSD, was for a pool that could replace those in need of repairs at Turpin and Anderson. A 25-meter pool with diving facilities, could serve that purpose, though a 50-meter pool may capture demand or use from across the region. From the APD perspective, a facility with indoor court space for basketball/volleyball, or flex space for these and other sports, as well as walking track, would address the needs they have heard and seen in community surveys. A facility of approximately 60,000 sq. ft. is projected to accommodate this need.

These conversations, which ultimately occurred virtually through video/conference call, have and continue to occur through the COVID-19 pandemic. This certainly impacted discussion and direction on the topic. The meeting summaries from April 21, April 30, and June 1, and June 30, provide a helpful overview of discussion and direction and the full group is scheduled to meet next in early August. Those summaries should be reviewed to provide context to the following discussion.

In advance of this next meeting and sensing it may not be possible to address all these desires at one time, or in one facility, Township staff suggested a mini-feasibility study be conducted, or assessment, looking at these options. The following seeks to serve as that working summary, to be discussed at the next meeting and use as a springboard for the next steps. It is intended to continue the conversation with community partners, and others, to see what may be possible.

The narrative begins with the Grand Vision of a combined, single mixed-use center; however, this is rather brief in nature since all are privately controlled and would take considerable individual analysis on their own. Thus, this high level review instead delves into smaller sites that present opportunities within the community to provide components of this vision, which was the focus of this analysis.

Grand Vision – Single Community or Mixed-Use Center

The opportunity to create a multi-use facility, addressing these and other components, remains a vision for our community. Whether public, public-private, or all private in nature, there is a sentiment that this would fill a demand, and be well received, in the Township. Of course, there are many constraints to such a facility, including available land (not only for the building, but for a projected large volume of parking) and financing of site acquisition, construction, ongoing maintenance, staffing, management, etc. Commonly discussed sites for such a use include the following locations:

- Ancor Area (or northern part of Anderson Township)
- Kellogg Corridor (such as a component of a redeveloped portion of Coney Island or vacant Coney, Belterra or Township/Hilltop land)
- Former Skytop Shopping Center

It is encouraged to continue to pursue this vision not only from the public perspective, but also to look for private investors/companies that may introduce such a development. With this in mind, it is definitely a longer-term goal, but with public needs and use (as demonstrated through existing needs or community surveys), such an existing “built in” demand may help to leverage such an investment.

“Component” Strategy

It is becoming increasingly clear, at least in the short term, that a more feasible or implementable strategy, may entail separating these needs or opportunities by site and function. Township staff, in consultation with the EDC, based upon conversations and notes in our meetings, took the lead of compiling this DRAFT list of ideas or opportunities. This appears on the following pages and pertains to the following sites:

- Anderson High School/Former FHSD Administration Building
- M.E. Lyons YMCA
- Mercy HealthPlex
- Nagel Middle School
- Wilson Elementary School
- Ayer Elementary School (including Veteran’s Park)

**FHSD Former Administration Land / Anderson High School
7550 Forest Road
Site Area: 1.25 Acres**

This site, about 200' x 250', owned by FHSD, is positioned between various parking facilities, owned by Forest Hills, Kossman Group (controlled by Christ Hospital/Kroger) and Neyer (Anderson Professional Center). This creates an opportunity for construction of a nearly 40,000 sq. ft. facility. A larger opportunity exists if this area is expanded west into the practice and/or baseball field. The surrounding parking field of 120 spaces on FHSD land, 70+ on Kossman and 100+ on Neyer, represent a tremendous benefit as this parking could be utilized during non-peak hours, such as evenings or weekends, which are peak for the proposed use.

Based on FHSD's expressed need for a possibly new aquatics facility, this may be the more ideal direction for this property, though an indoor recreation facility may be possible as well. The site may be accessible both from Forest Road and Beechmont, via an easement to the traffic signal at Wolfangel Road. It is centrally located and would also complement nearby uses. As a possible standalone facility, it may also be used by the community, such as through memberships. In addition, it could house FHSD swim/dive teams and free up existing pool dedicated space within Anderson and Turpin for other uses (such as auxiliary gym space which may also help to address this need in the community).



M.E. Lyons YMCA
8108 Clough Pike
Site Area: .8 Acres

In 2019, the M.E. Lyons YMCA removed the tennis courts on their facility on Clough Pike, replacing it with grass but leaving the lighting in place. As such, this portion of this site, which is about .8 acres (135' x 225'), creates an opportunity for a variety of recreation functions. It appears unlikely that the YMCA needs another pool, yet, an indoor pool does represent an opportunity to better serve the members and would be a partnership opportunity with the FHSD. If so, it would also free up pool space for other uses, including indoor recreation, at Turpin and Anderson.

Another direction would be the creation of additional indoor recreation space, for YMCA functions but also for community use and leasing. It would also add to the single gym existing at the YMCA. A third opportunity may include a field turf type situation that would allow for greater season use of this site (spring, fall, and evenings since it is lighted). Like the FHSD site, it is conveniently located in Anderson and the opportunity exists to use some of the existing 275+ space parking lot, though such uses may overlap with parking needs for the current YMCA facility. It's also owned by the YMCA with minimal current use.



Mercy HealthPlex
7495 State Road
Site Area: 1.4 Acres

Mercy Health & Wellness operates a fairly large facility at the southeast corner of State and Five Mile Road, nearly 275' x 225'. Mercy indicated their current facility addresses most of their members' needs/desires, and these persons may see joint use of their existing facility as possibly impacting their opportunities. However, there is the change for possible daytime use of pool or gym space in the building (weekdays, late morning through mid-afternoon).

In a conversation with Mercy, it was noted that over the years the concept of an outdoor pool was discussed and would enable them to better line up with their current "competition" (though a bit geographically removed), the Cincinnati Sports Club. Mercy does lease their land from Henkle Schueler, so the land is neither publicly owned, nor owned by Mercy. However, Mercy has a long-term lease arrangement and they've occasionally eyed the land close to the corner for such a possibility. It would be removed from the current building, so as not to impact parking for their Club or other tenants in the building. It could also be a standalone type opportunity. Depending on the size, it may likely remove 50+ parking spaces and force the relocation of the detention facility. However, it could also tap into many of the 400 spaces that may remain north and west of the building/main entrance drive from State Road.

If something like that was pursued, the concept of "doming" it for winter use by the schools could be an opportunity, like what is done at the M.E. Lyons YCMA. Thus, during summertime, it would be an outdoor pool, an added benefit for HealthPlex members and marketing tool for memberships (even seasonal, like the YMCA). During the winter, it could be leased or reserved for school use, for as an "addition" it would not be taking away from current facilities at the HealthPlex that are paid for by members. It would also free up pool space for other uses, including indoor recreation, at Turpin and Anderson. Since it is separate from the HealthPlex, it would not require the public to enter the current facility, etc. It is also extremely visible and accessible and would be compatible with nearby uses.



Nagel Middle School
1400 Nagel Road
Site Area: 3 Acres

The Nagel Middle School property currently has approximately 3 acres (350' x 525') that is used for some school use (summer band, football practice fields, Nagel softball, and Freshman baseball). This area is at the northeast corner of their site and does represent an opportunity for a standalone facility, be it a pool or indoor recreation, on all or a portion of the site. If a pool use, it would also free up pool space for other uses, including indoor recreation, at Turpin and Anderson.

There may be some overlap, however, with functions at the school, which would compete for the 225+ parking spaces on a portion of the site north of the school (excluding lot facing Nagel or off Northport). However, depending on the size of the facility, ample space would exist for additional parking on site, but this would add to the cost.

The use of this space would likely impact school use of this site, but many of those functions could possibly move to nearby Juilfs Park or another school/park facility. The ability to perhaps replace the stadium grass with turf would enable that site to take a greater load of activities as well. There are also community organizations, such as youth football, that lease the field, providing a revenue stream, but perhaps they too could move to another FHSD site. The site is centrally located and could be well-buffered from nearby properties. It also has signaled access to Nagel Road.



Wilson Elementary School
2465 Little Dry Run
Site Area: 2.2 Acres

The former location of Wilson Elementary, in “front” of the current building, presents an opportunity for an indoor recreation or aquatics facility in an area approximately 350’ x 275’. If a pool use, it would also free up pool space for other uses, including indoor recreation, at Turpin and Anderson. There may be some overlap, however, with functions at the school, which would compete for the 110+ parking spaces on the site. Also, depending on the size of the facility, space would exist for additional parking on site, but this would add to the cost.

The space currently has minimal use/function for school or other uses. It also would be a standalone building, separate from the school. There could be multiple access points (though both would be on Little Dry Run). The site is located amidst residential uses and special care would need to be taken to ensure it fits with the neighborhood.



Ayer Elementary School (Veteran's Park)
8471 Forest Road
Site Area: 2.4 Acres

With Ayer Elementary and Veteran's Park located next to each other, and the general seasonal nature of the park coupled with Ayer land (about 275' x 375') that is generally not used for school function, an opportunity exists for an indoor recreation or aquatics facility. It also would be a standalone building, separate from the school. If a pool use, it would also free up pool space for other uses, including indoor recreation, at Turpin and Anderson.

There may be some overlap, however, with functions at the school, which would compete for the 110+ parking spaces on the site. Again, though, if this was a facility that catered more towards wintertime activities/use, it could likely tap into many of the 90+ spaces at Veteran's Park. Also, depending on the size of the facility, space would exist for additional parking on site, or on a portion of Veteran's Park, but this would add to the cost.

By combining access on these sites, there could be multiple access points (though both would be on Forest Road). The site is located amidst residential uses and special care would need to be taken to ensure it fits with the neighborhood, but there are buffer opportunities to surrounding residences.

