

NEWS RELEASE

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County, City of Southfield partnership will invest millions in Southfield park and repurpose former golf course as Southfield Oaks County Park *Major improvements coming to Beech Woods Park*

PONTIAC, MI – Nov. 16, 2023 – Final approval was granted today by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners for a partnership between Oakland County Parks (OCP) and the City of Southfield aimed at improving recreational opportunities for residents of Southfield and surrounding communities. Under the terms of the agreement:

- OCP will repurpose a 39-acre portion of the former Beech Woods Golf Course as a nature centered public park to be named Southfield Oaks County Park which will be located adjacent to the City of Southfield's Beech Woods Park.
- A total investment of more than \$7 million will be made at Beech Woods Park and Southfield Oaks County Park within three years to enhance recreational amenities and restore natural features utilizing a combination of federal, county and city funding sources.

County and City officials celebrated approval of the partnership agreement and planned park improvements:

"Oakland County Parks continues to be a great partner to the city of Southfield as we work collectively together to expand recreational opportunities throughout Southfield and the County," said **City of Southfield Mayor Dr. Ken Siver**. "This partnership and investment in Beech Woods Park will greatly improve the amenities such as walking and hiking trails as well as the park's infrastructure and access improvements."

"The plan for Beech Woods Park in Southfield is another great example of how well Oakland County Parks is collaborating with communities to improve and expand the parks that make Oakland County such a unique and attractive place to call home," said **Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter**. "Our investment in the parks system is a key priority that helps fulfill our goals of creating livable, accessible neighborhoods that contribute to a more sustainable environment."

"This represents another exciting expansion of our county parks systems that improves equitable access for residents and visitors," said **Oakland County Board of Commissioners Chair David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak). "Oakland County is proud to lean in to protect green space, expand recreation opportunities and create the new

Southfield Oaks.”

“These investments will allow residents the opportunity to enjoy Beech Woods Park for generations to come,” **Commissioner Janet Jackson (D-Southfield)** said. “I’m happy the planned upgrades will make improvements at what is already a great resource for our community.”

“When I started my work as a commissioner, I was surprised at the lack of recreation opportunities available in the southernmost portion of the county,” **Commissioner Yolanda Smith Charles (D-Southfield)**, who serves on the Oakland County Board of Commissioners and Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission, said. “The parks commission and Director Chris Ward heard my plea and the citizens of Southfield and surrounding area will benefit mightily. As a county official and resident of the area, it brings me great pride to see this partnership come together!”

The partnership was made possible under Oakland County’s Healthy Communities Park and Outdoor Recreation Investment Plan, a \$20.2 million program aimed at enhancing park and recreation opportunities in communities hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funds matched by OCP. A portion of these funds were dedicated toward the expansion of the Oakland County park system through long-term agreements with local governments to assume responsibility for the management of existing municipal parks. Agreements to create Pontiac Oaks in the City of Pontiac, Oak Park Woods in the City of Oak Park and the addition of Ambassador Park to Red Oaks County Park were approved earlier this year.

Southfield Oaks will be located on the former 39-acre Beech Woods Golf Course, which closed in 2019. OCP plans to transform the property into a public park for people to relax, socialize, be active and immerse themselves in nature. A budget of \$2 million has been budgeted for this project. The City of Southfield will retain ownership of the property and residents of the City will continue to enjoy free park entry. The 20-year renewal partnership agreement provides for collaborative decision-making and cost sharing between the parties.

Beech Woods Park is home to the City’s popular Recreation Center, driving range, tennis and volleyball courts and a universally accessible playscape. More than \$7 million will be invested in improved park amenities and infrastructure utilizing a combination of city, county and federal funding sources. Planned improvements include the construction of a new playscape, four season restroom facilities, picnic shelters and improved pedestrian walkways. The County will contribute \$1.5 million to support these projects.

“Oakland County Parks is grateful to the leadership of the City of Southfield and our county elected officials for making this partnership possible,” **OCP Director Chris Ward** said. “Southfield Oaks promises to be an outstanding addition to the Oakland County park system and a wonderful opportunity for residents of the area to enjoy the benefits of spending time in nature.”

For more information about Oakland County Parks, visit OaklandCountyParks.com. Join the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).

Photo caption: Oakland County Executive Dave Coulter (at podium) with Oakland County Parks Director Chris Ward (second from left) at a press conference announcing the \$20 million Healthy Communities Park and Outdoor Recreation Investment Plan on Nov. 2, 2022, at Beech Woods Park in Southfield.