

Geist Waterfront Park Overview

November 2018

Background

In 2018, the City of Fishers acquired approximately 70 acres of waterfront property on Geist Reservoir for new park development. The park will be developed on the last-remaining undeveloped parcel of the 1,900-acre reservoir, located approximately at 111th Street on the east side of Olio Road.

Mayor Scott Fadness has called this a “100-year park.” It is a once in a lifetime opportunity to connect residents to Geist Reservoir and create a park setting unlike anything that exists today in central Indiana. It will be a place for residents to enjoy water views and non-motorized water activities, walk in nature, and experience the wetlands and wildlife who’ve made this habitat their home. The new park development will give this property, that has been used as a rock quarry headquarters for almost 50 years, a second life and create a distinct landmark for the Geist District of Fishers.

Commonly Asked Questions

1. What is the timeline for opening the park?

The City is currently in the conceptual design phase, seeking public input on what residents would like to see at the new park. The exact timeline of park opening will be determined once the design is complete. It is likely the park will be developed and opened in stages. The City’s goal is to open the park to the public within the next five years.

Timeline:

Now – December 2018	Gather public input to inform park design and amenities through community open houses and online submissions at playfishers.com/GeistWaterfront .
January – March 2019	Finalize park design with more opportunity for public input. IMI will cease operations on this land by January 1, 2019.
2019	Phase 1 of construction is expected to focus on building a gated entrance and rehab/regrade the land as needed.
2020 and beyond	TBD. Phasing of park development will be determined once a final design has been identified.

2. What is the budget for the park?

In summer of 2018, the City of Fishers acquired approximately 70 acres along Geist Reservoir for new park land for a cost of \$15.76 M. The City paid for the property through a series of bond issuances. Payments for the bond have already been absorbed into the City's municipal tax rate.

The City recently sold a ¼ acre parcel to American Tower Corporation for \$1 M. That parcel, which sits on the new park property, holds a pre-existing cell tower that will remain. The revenue generated from the land sale will be used to help develop the park.

The total cost of the park is undetermined and will be based on the community's input for the design of the park which will be completed in the Spring 2019. The park will be constructed in phases, giving the City time to adequately plan and budget.

3. How will the City manage traffic around and in the park?

Similar to a state park, the new Geist waterfront park will be gated with a secure entrance that will require a pass or payment to enter for vehicles and pedestrians. The City is working with A&F Engineering to consult on the site design and traffic flow within and around the park. Final design of the site plan and gated entrance will be shared with the public in early 2019 for further input and refinement.

Visitors will not be permitted to park their vehicles in nearby neighborhoods at any time. The City will work with Fishers Police Department to ensure proper enforcement.

4. Will there be an entrance fee?

Non-residents will pay a fee to visit the park. Currently, the vision is for Fishers residents to have free admittance. Once the design is finalized for the park, the City will study fees and make a recommendation to the Fishers Parks Advisory Committee and Fishers Board of Works and Safety. Proceeds from the park fees will be used to maintain and develop the park.

5. What are the hours of operation of the park?

Generally, Fishers Parks are open to the public from dawn to dusk. Exact hours of operation and amenities are yet to be determined.

6. What amenities will be included in the park?

That's the question we are asking residents to help answer! Given the unique site location, it is not place envisioned for more athletic fields, and no motorized boat launch will be permitted. The rest of the design is open for public input. Stay up to date and share your ideas at playfishers.com/GeistWaterfront

7. Will the park be accessible by boat?

While there may be opportunities for kayakers to access the park by water, there will not be access points for motorized boats to preserve the tranquility of the park and surrounding wetlands.

8. Will the City dredge around the park?

Yes. Fishers Department of Public Works (DPW) is working with Citizens Energy Group and regulatory agencies to begin dredging in the area as early as November 2018. The preliminary area identified for dredging includes the open water area just east of Olio Road bridge and north of the new park land. Further dredging areas may be identified as park design is finalized and with public input.

Proceeds from the project bonds and the sale of the cell tower property (as described in question #2) will help pay for dredging. Additionally, Citizens Energy Group has committed to dredging a portion of the open water areas over the next three years to meet its needs.

A large portion of the cost of dredging is due to the need to haul away the materials. The City plans to utilize the nutrient rich materials for the new park land, which will provide cost savings due to not having to haul away materials. This will also provide a soil rich for new growth and rehabilitation. The City will follow guidelines set forth by state regulatory agencies that include site testing *before* dredging to ensure the materials are appropriate for re-use on the park land.

9. Is the water in Geist Reservoir safe for water recreation? How will the new park affect water quality?

Geist Reservoir is safe for water recreation activities. The reservoir is owned by Citizens Energy Group, a water and energy utility company that relies on the reservoir as a source of water for central Indiana. Citizens Energy Group regularly tests the water and treats as needed. Additionally, between the months of April through October, the Hamilton County Health Department conducts water sampling testing each month. One goal of the new park design is to improve the environment of the land and surrounding water through the sustainable plantings, building, and ongoing stewardship.

If you have further questions about the water quality for recreation in Geist Reservoir, please contact Jason LeMaster or Morgan Bennett from the Hamilton County Health Department by calling (317) 776-8500 or email health@hamiltoncounty.in.gov. Read more at <https://www.hamiltoncounty.in.gov/334/Recreation-Water-Sampling-Program>.

10. How will the City address visitor safety?

Visitor safety in our City parks is of utmost importance. Fishers Police Department is involved in the planning of the park design and will be an ongoing partner in maintaining a safe park environment. A gated access point for both vehicles and pedestrians will offer additional security to ensure guest safety.

11. Will there be road closures for construction of the park?

No, we do not anticipate any full road closures related to this project. A majority of the park development will occur on the park site, out of the road and right of way.

12. Who should I contact with questions or concerns about the new Geist Waterfront Park?

Please contact Megan Schaefer with Fishers Planning and Zoning at schaeferm@fishers.in.us.