

# Butler Eagle 4-10-2025 Penn Township Planning More Additions for Harcrest Park

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Harcrest Park in Penn Township is pictured at sunset. William Pitts/Butler Eagle.

PENN TWP — Township Supervisors have approved some new additions for Harcrest Park, a 64-acre community park located on Three Degree Road.

During a meeting Tuesday, April 8, the board voted to begin work on constructing an accessible trail at the park, to be paid for with Community Development Block Grant funding which it received last fiscal year.

The trail would connect disabled visitors to a pavilion at Harcrest Park which is currently inaccessible from the park's accessible parking spaces.

For the 2024 fiscal year, Penn Township received \$104,079 in Community Development Block Grant funding, with 15% of that allocated to administrative costs and the rest earmarked for a major project.

The block grant is a federally funded grant which is passed down to Pennsylvania municipalities by the state's Department of Community and Economic Development. Funds from the grant are intended to be used to finance housing, infrastructure and recreation improvements in smaller municipalities.

According to Township Supervisor Sam Ward, fellow Supervisor Doug Roth has worked with Butler County grant liaison Wendy Leslie to make sure that an Americans with Disabilities Act compliant trail was an appropriate use of CDBG funds.

"She got permission from the powers that be that it would qualify as a project, so they've designated that money to us," Ward said. "So, our second step last night was to authorize our engineer to give us a price to do the design work to plan the walking trail."

In past years, Penn Township has also used block grant funds for housing rehabilitation, road reconstruction, and to offset the cost of sanitary sewer tap-in fees for dozens of low-income residents.

The park also received a grant of \$7,500 from Butler County Parks and Recreation's Local Park Renovation program to construct a new 20-by-20 "shade shelter" pavilion with a concrete pad. The grant — one of 13 such awards from BCPR this year — covers 75% of the cost of a particular project up to \$10,000, meaning that the maximum grant amount is \$7,500.

As part of the grant, the Township will contribute a "match" of \$5,466, bringing the total cost of the pavilion up to \$12,966. The shelter is planned to be located at the west end of the park's (planned) walking trail.

In total, Butler County parks will award \$120,000 in Local Park Renovation program grants this year.

"Last year the county gave us a similar grant, and we used the \$7,500 to purchase stormwater pipe for the park, and it's ready to be installed," Ward said during Tuesday night's meeting.

The Township is also planning to make the walking trail more attractive by surrounding it with a total of 175 trees of various types, including red oak, red maple and magnolia.

"One of Doug's agenda items is choosing a tree species," Ward said. "And then he's going to go to a tree nursery and identify 36 trees. They'll tag them for us and they'll actually dig them and store them there until Fall 2025 when it's time to move them and plant them."