

ELLETTSVILLE/RICHLAND TOWNSHIP REORGANIZATION



Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Sub-Committee Report Addendum

February 2026

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RESOLUTION 39-2025

A RESOLUTION TO EXPLORE A REORGANIZATION WITH RICHLAND TOWNSHIP, MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA

WHEREAS, the Town of Ellettsville, Monroe County, Indiana (the "Town"), is a political subdivision existing under the provisions of Ind. Code § 36-4-1, et seq.;

WHEREAS, the Ellettsville Town Council (the "Council") is the fiscal body of the Town that oversees the operations of the Town's business within its jurisdictional boundaries;

WHEREAS, the jurisdictional boundaries of the Town are currently bordered by Richland Township, Monroe County (the "Township") to the north, east, west, and south;

WHEREAS, the Town and the Township are separate and distinct governmental bodies; however, residents of the Town and Township live as one community;

WHEREAS, both the Town and the Township recognize that their shared community is now a targeted destination for economic growth and development as a result of I-69;

WHEREAS, both the Town and the Township understand and appreciate the opportunity to be part of the economic growth and development and ensure that their residents continue to be part of the same community, decision-making, and overall sustainability;

WHEREAS, to ensure this occurs, on November 10, 2025, the Township adopted its Resolution (Exhibit A) agreeing to explore a reorganization with the Town;

WHEREAS, the Town also desires to explore a reorganization with the Township, to at least some degree, to formally determine whether this is in the best interests of the community;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Ellettsville Town Council as follows:

1. This Council hereby proposes that the Town of Ellettsville explore a reorganization with Richland Township, Monroe County, Indiana.
2. This Council directs the Ellettsville Clerk-Treasurer to certify this Resolution and send it to the Richland Township, Monroe County Trustee pursuant to Indiana Code § 36-1.5-4-13(b).
3. This Resolution shall be in effect immediately.
4. The Council reserves the right to rescind this Resolution at any time.

ADOPTED BY THE ELLETTSVILLE TOWN COUNCIL, MONROE COUNTY,
INDIANA, THIS 24th day of November, 2025.

ELLETTSVILLE TOWN COUNCIL

FOR:

AGAINST:

	Scott Oldham	_____
	Dan Swafford	_____
	Pamela Samples	_____
	Trevor Sager	_____
	William Ellis	_____

Attest:

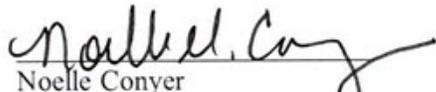

Noelle Conyer
Ellettsville Clerk-Treasurer



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Differences between Towns and Townships in Monroe County, Indiana

In Monroe County, the terms "town" and "township" sound similar, but they do very different jobs for us:

Townships (The Big Picture): Think of these as the 11 large puzzle pieces that make up the entire county. Whether you live in a busy neighborhood or a quiet rural area, you live in a Township (like Richland). Their primary job is to provide a local safety net and manage things like fire protection and cemeteries for the whole area.

Towns (The Local Hubs): These are specific, smaller communities—like Ellettsville or Stinesville—that have "incorporated." This means they have their own local government, like a Town Council, to handle things specific to town life, such as local police, street maintenance, and town parks.

Think of it as layers. Everyone in Richland Township is a township resident, but only some are *also* residents of the Town of Ellettsville.

- If you live in rural Richland Township: Your local representative for emergency aid and fire protection is the Trustee.
- If you live in Ellettsville: You have two layers of support! You get municipal services from the Town and safety-net services from the Township.

Feature	Townships (The Whole Area)	Towns (The Local Hub)
Who Governs?	Township Trustee & 3-Member Board.	Town Council (and Council President).
The Reach	Covers everyone in the county—including rural areas.	Limited to the specific town limits (like Ellettsville).
Primary Job	The Safety Net: Emergency relief (rent/utilities), fire protection, and cemetery care.	Municipal Services: Local police, streets, water/sewer, and town parks.
Police	Relies on the County Sheriff.	Typically has its own police department.

If you need help with...	Call the Township	Call the Town
Emergency Financial Relief (Rent, utilities, food)	X	
Town Parks & Recreation		X
Cemetery Maintenance & History	X	
Local Police & Street Lights		X
Fire Protection	X	X
Trash & Snow Removal (Inside town limits)		X
Township Assistance Applications	X	

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Ellettsville, Indiana

Founded in 1837 and named after our first merchant, Edward Ellett, Ellettsville has always been a place with deep roots. While we're just seven miles from the energy of Bloomington and IU, our town of 6,829 (Census Bureau, July 2024 estimate) offers something you won't find in the city: a true hometown atmosphere. Whether it's enjoying nearby Lake Monroe or gathering for the Monroe County Fall Festival, this is a community where friends stay friends and neighbors always look out for one another. If you've ever lived here, you know—it's more than just a town; it's home.

Richland Township

In Indiana, we believe the best kind of support comes from those who live right down the road. While our state is made up of over 1,000 townships, here in Richland Township, we focus on the 35 square miles that we call home—covering everything from the streets of Ellettsville to the western edge of Bloomington with a population of 15,098 (Census Bureau 2020). Whether you're a lifelong resident or a newcomer, Richland Township is more than just a spot on a map—it's a community.

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Population Characteristics Richland Township

- **Total Residents:** 15,098
- **Under 19:** 3818 (approx. 25.29% of the population)
- **Age (20-64):** 8,553 (approx. 56.65% of the population)
- **Seniors (65+):** 2,727 (approx. 18.6% of the population)
- **Gender Split:** 47.7% Male / 52.3% Female

A more detailed breakdown of the population characteristics from the United States Census Bureau can be found in the Appendix.

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Park System

Richland Township in Monroe County, Indiana, is home to several parks that range from athletic complexes to peaceful nature trails. Since the township includes the Town of Ellettsville and parts of West Bloomington, you have access to both township-managed and county-managed facilities.

Primary Parks & Recreation Areas

- **Richland Township Park:** This is the township's central athletic hub. It features baseball fields (leased to Richland Bean Blossom Youth Sports), basketball courts, a playground, and a new pickleball court. It is also the home of the annual Monroe County Fall Festival every September.
- **Campbell's Park:** This park is a community staple featuring a playground, picnic shelters, and open green space. It is often a go-to for local families and small gatherings.
- **Marci Jane Lewis Park:** This park offers a large shelter house and a nice playground area. It's well-known for its pedestrian bridge and proximity to the Ellettsville branch of the Monroe County Public Library.
- **Flatwoods Park:** A massive 198-acre Monroe County park located on the western edge of the township. It's perfect for those seeking a quieter experience, offering over three miles of mowed trails, a paved interpretive trail, a butterfly garden, a giant sundial, and multiple playgrounds. It is a park managed by Monroe County Parks and Recreation and will remain within their system.
- **Porter West Nature Preserve:** is an 188-acre "hidden gem" located in western Monroe County, managed by and will remain with the Sycamore Land Trust. It is particularly known for its unique blend of geological features, historical remnants, and seasonal wildflower displays.
- **Stewart Park:** is one of Ellettsville's most significant recent developments. It was designed to bridge the gap between local history and modern community needs. It is a year-round indoor facility equipped with a 15-foot stage, meeting rooms, a kitchen, and Wi-Fi. It is intended for plays, concerts, festivals, and community classes. Future additions include a music venue, dog park and playground features.
- **Will Detmer Park:** this 24-acre park is the west side's go-to spot for a more relaxed, community-focused outdoor experience. It serves as a key trailhead for the Karst Farm Greenway. It is a park managed by Monroe County Parks and Recreation and will remain with their system.
- **The Heritage Trail:** is a charming, shorter pathway that serves as both a history lesson and a critical link in the regional trail network. While many people think of it as just a sidewalk near downtown, it is actually a dedicated "linear park" that celebrates the town's deep roots in the limestone industry. This trail connects with Karst Farm Greenway.
- **Town Hall Park:** is located directly behind the Ellettsville Town Hall at 1150 W. Guy McCown Street. While smaller than the sprawling Richland Township Park, it is highly valued for being one of the most modern and accessible play spaces in the area.

- **Memorial Park:** is often used interchangeably with the grounds surrounding the town's military memorials, specifically the area just behind the Monroe County Public Library (Ellettsville Branch) and near the Town Hall.
 - **Prominence Place and Tecumseh Pocket Parks:** these parks are located within their subdivisions.
 - **Karst Farm Greenway:** The greenway is a 7.3-mile fully paved asphalt trail that connects the City of Bloomington to the Town of Ellettsville. Southern End: Starts at Karst Farm Park (2450 S. Endwright Rd, Bloomington) and ends at Campbell's Park. The trail is known for its "karst topography," featuring rolling hills, sinkholes, and views of local farmland. Near Ellettsville, the path follows a former railroad corridor, offering a flat and scenic route past pastures (where you might see cows) and along a picturesque creek.
 - **Wells Park:** 19.69 acres of wooded acreage located between Harman Farms, the disc golf course and baseball/softball fields at Edgewood.
-

Nearby Notable Parks

While technically on the border or in adjacent areas, these are frequently used by Richland Township residents:

- **Karst Farm Park:** Located just to the south/east of the township line, this is one of the county's most popular parks. It features a splash pad, a dog park, disc golf, and extensive athletic fields.
- **McCormick's Creek State Park:** Located about 15 minutes west in Spencer, it is the oldest state park in Indiana and offers hiking, camping, and waterfalls.
- **Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve:** is a premier 824-acre wetland complex managed by the Sycamore Land Trust. It is widely considered one of the most important ecological sites in Indiana and was recently recognized as the state's first "Wetland of Distinction." While it is located just north of the Richland Township line in Bean Blossom Township, it is a major destination for residents throughout the Ellettsville and Bloomington areas.

Richland-Bean Blossom Community Schools

The Richland-Bean Blossom Community School Corporation (RBB) offers extensive athletic facilities, primarily centered at the Edgewood High School (EHS) and Edgewood Junior High (EJHS) campus in Ellettsville.

While these are school facilities, they are often available for public use through rentals or scheduled community hours.

1. The Edgewood High School Pool

The EHS Pool is one of the few indoor public-access aquatic facilities in the area.

- Public Open Swim: The pool typically offers community hours (e.g., early morning lap swim and weekend open sessions).
- Rentals: The pool is a popular spot for pool party rentals, which are generally available on Saturdays in two-hour blocks (typically 2:00–4:00 PM or 4:30–6:30 PM).
- Location: Access is usually through the "Link" (the glass-enclosed area between the High School and the parking garage).

2. Athletic Fields (The Complex)

The district recently underwent a major renovation of its outdoor facilities to create a high-tier athletic complex:

- Football Stadium & Track: Features a state-of-the-art synthetic turf field and all-weather track runways. It includes ADA-compliant bleachers and upgraded restroom/concession facilities.
- Baseball & Softball Fields: There are multiple fields on campus, including the main high school varsity fields and auxiliary fields used by Richland Bean Blossom Youth Sports (RBBYS).
- Soccer Fields: Includes both the main competition grass fields and practice spaces.
- Tennis Courts: Several courts are available on the Edgewood campus, some of which feature lighting for evening play.

3. Indoor Gyms

The school district rents several gymnasiums for community sports and events:

- Edgewood High School: Main Gym and Auxiliary Gym.
- Junior High & Intermediate Schools: Multiple gyms and a Multi-Purpose Room at EJHS.

4. Playgrounds, basketball courts, cross country course, nature trail and disc golf are available to the public with no fee.

Public Use & Rental Info

If you aren't part of a school-sanctioned team, you can still access these facilities through the Facilities Use Request system. The district has a set fee schedule for public rentals:

Facility Type	Est. Hourly Rate (Resident)
Gyms	\$100 – \$125

Facility Type	Est. Hourly Rate (Resident)
Baseball/Softball Fields	\$30 – \$40 (extra for lights)
Soccer Fields	\$40
Tennis Courts	\$30 – \$40
Football Field / Track	\$150+

Note: Many of the local facilities, such as the basketball courts and shelter houses at the Township Park, are managed through a partnership between the Richland Township Trustee and the Ellettsville Parks Department.

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Park Metrics

The National Recreation and Park Association published a report titled NRPA Agency Performance Review in 2025. This review contains information regarding facilities, programming, staffing, budget and agency funding based on population.

NRPA recommends the following.

Parkland Acres per 1,000 Residents by Town Size

Smaller jurisdictions generally have a higher ratio of parkland per resident than larger cities.

Key Metrics for Small Towns (<20,000 Residents)

- Parkland Acres: 12.0– 12.6 acres per 1,000 residents.
- Park Access: One park for every 1,233–1,300 residents.
- Playgrounds: Roughly 95% of agencies provide playgrounds.
- Trails: The typical agency manages 17 miles of trails.

Ellettsville/Richland Township	
Name	Acreage
1 Memorial Park	0.17
2 Campbell's Park	2
3 Marci Jane Lewis Park	4.15
4 Well's Park	19.69
5 Tecumseh Pocket Park	2.05
6 Town Hall	44.91
7 Stewart Park	23.79
8 Heritage Trail, Phase 1	1.15
9 Heritage Trail, Phase 2	4.29
10 Prominence Place Pocket Park	0.69
11 Karst Farm Greenway	3.53904
12 Richland Township Park	18
*Richland Township Park is an estimate	
Sub Total Acreage	124.429

Monroe County Parks and Recreation	
13 Flatwoods Park	198

14 Will Detmer Park	24
Sub Total Acreage	222
Total Acreage	346.429

Richland Township has a population of 15,098 and per the guideline listed above should have a minimum 181.18 acres of parkland. Total acreage for parks in Richland Township is 124.429 acres. When the parks within the Monroe County Parks and Recreation, Flatwoods and Will Detmer, are added total acreage is 346.429 which exceeds the minimum acreage of 181.18.

Richland Township/Ellettsville has a total of 12 parks and exceeds the minimum number of 11.61385 per 1000 people based on a population of 15,098.

However, the township and town fall well beneath the average of 17 miles of trails. This can be corrected if the Flatwoods Connector is constructed or town connectivity as outlined in The Comprehensive Plan that was published in 2023.

The Comprehensive Plan can be found here.

<https://ellettsville.in.us/egov/apps/document/center.egov?view=detail&id=1384>

NRPA guidelines can be found here:

<https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/agency-performance-review/>

Future Plans for Parks and Recreation

The Ellettsville to Spencer Trail Connection

This project creates a seamless multi-county trail system connecting Ellettsville to Spencer via the following route:

- Segment 1: Ellettsville Connection
 - Starts at Wells Park and extends to Flatwoods Park.
 - Developed in partnership with Monroe County Parks and Recreation.
 - Segment 2: To the County Line
 - The trail continues west from Flatwoods Park to County Line Road.
 - Segment 3: Into Owen County
 - The path connects to the Owen County trail section, leading directly into McCormick's Creek State Park.
 - Segment 4: The Spencer Loop
 - The trail runs through the Town of Spencer and concludes at the Owen County YMCA.
-

Why This Matters

- **Regional Connectivity:** It links two counties (Monroe and Owen) and two major community hubs (Ellettsville and Spencer).
- **Outdoor Recreation:** Provides safe, non-motorized access to a State Park, multiple local parks, and a YMCA.
- **Economic Impact:** Connects downtown Spencer and Ellettsville to the growing regional trail tourism market.

Town Hall Park:

- Completion of the Heritage Trail and restrooms.
- Construction of a mountain bike trail.
- Adding a corn hole course.
- Adding historical activities that involve the cabin.

Events/Activities:

Current recreational programming effectively serves residents under 18 and over 65; however, a strategic void exists for the 19–64 age demographic. Ellettsville Parks and Recreation should seek to create offerings to ensure this significant portion of the population is no longer underserved.

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Other Service Agencies

Ellettsville Boys and Girls Club

The Ellettsville Club is one of several units operated by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Bloomington. It serves the youth of Ellettsville and the surrounding area, specifically focusing on students from the Richland-Bean Blossom Community School Corporation and Seven Oaks Classical School.

Quick Facts & Contact

- Location: 8045 W. State Road 46, Ellettsville, IN 47429
 - Phone: (812) 935-6970 (Front Desk: 812-300-0102)
 - Membership Fee: Approximately \$20 per year, making it an affordable resource for local families.
 - Ages Served: 5 to 18 years old (Kindergarten through High School).
-

Hours of Operation

The club provides a structured environment during the times kids are most likely to need it:

- After-School: Monday – Friday, 3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Summer & Break Camps: 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
- Summer Drop-In Hours: 12:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Core Programs

The club focuses on three "priority outcomes" to help kids thrive:

1. Academic Success: Daily homework help, tutoring, and STEM-related activities (like Robotics).
2. Healthy Lifestyles: Gym games, gardening, and "SMART Moves," which teaches kids about healthy decision-making.
3. Good Character & Citizenship: Leadership programs like Torch Club and various community service projects.

Available Activities

The Ellettsville unit is known for a variety of specialized "clubs within the club," which often include:

- Arts & Crafts: Photography, Crochet, and Artist Spotlight sessions.
 - Sports & Rec: Gymnastics, Karate, and Skateboard programs.
 - Life Skills: Garden Club and "Healthy Habits" cooking/nutrition classes.
-

Eligibility & Registration

To attend, a child must be at least 5 years old and enrolled in school (typically Kindergarten through 12th grade). There is a 24-hour processing period after a membership application is submitted before a child can start attending.

Would you like me to find the specific registration forms for the upcoming school year or look into volunteer opportunities for adults at the Ellettsville location?

Area 10 Agency on Aging

Located right on the edge of town, the Area 10 Agency on Aging is a powerhouse of a nonprofit that serves as a "one-stop shop" for seniors and individuals with disabilities in Monroe and Owen counties.

While its main office is in Ellettsville, its reach is huge—providing everything from bus rides to home-delivered meals.

Core Services

- **Rural Transit:** This is one of their most visible programs. It's a public bus service available to anyone (not just seniors) in Monroe, Owen, Lawrence, and Putnam counties.
 - **Cost:** Usually around \$3.00 for a one-way trip within a single county.
 - **Accessibility:** All buses are wheelchair accessible and offer door-to-door service if scheduled in advance.
- **The Endwright Center:** Located within their Ellettsville building, this is an active-aging community center. It's not your average "bingo hall"—they offer evidence-based fitness classes (like Tai Chi and strength training), art workshops, and tech help.
- **Nutrition & Meals:** They operate the Mobile Food Pantry and deliver more than 67,000 meals annually to homebound residents. They also host "congregate meal sites" where seniors can eat and socialize together.
- **In-Home Support:**
 - **REPAIRS Team:** Volunteers help with minor home modifications like installing grab bars or ramps to help people age in place safely.
 - **Caring Companions:** Matches volunteers with seniors for friendly visits, light housekeeping, or running errands.

Endwright Center Fitness & Classes

The center is located at 631 W. Edgewood Drive. Most group classes cost approximately \$30 per month or a \$10 drop-in fee. Members (\$45/year fee) get additional perks like access to the gym equipment.

Current Weekly Highlights (Ellettsville Location):

- **Mondays & Fridays:** Improving Your Balance (Live on Zoom and in-person) at 10:00 a.m.
- **Wednesdays:** Gentle Floor Yoga at 10:00 a.m. (led by Sarah Peters).
- **Thursdays:** Access to exercise equipment (Nusteps, treadmills, and strength machines) from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- **Other Activities:** The center also hosts a Knitting Circle, Euchre tournaments, and a Garden Club in partnership with local Ellettsville enthusiasts.

Note: There is a second location called Endwright East in the Bloomington College Mall. It has a slightly different schedule, including "Balance with a Beat" on Tuesdays and "Tai Chi Easy" on Wednesdays.

Northwest YMCA

The Northwest YMCA (located at 1375 N. Wellness Way) is the newer, modern branch of the Monroe County YMCA. It opened in 2013 to serve the north side of Bloomington and the Ellettsville community. While slightly smaller than the Southeast location, it is highly regarded for its state-of-the-art design and bright, open atmosphere.

Facility Highlights

- Aquatics Center: Features a 25-yard multi-functional heated pool with zero-depth entry (great for accessibility) and a splash pad area for kids.
- Wellness Center: A spacious area packed with cardio machines (treadmills, ellipticals), weight machines, and a dedicated free-weight section with squat racks and dumbbells.
- Indoor & Outdoor Tracks: Includes a climate-controlled indoor running/walking track and access to the Karst Farm Greenway trails just outside.
- Gymnasium: A full-sized basketball court used for open gym, youth sports, and volleyball.
- Child Watch (Play & Learn): A major perk for parents; members get up to two hours of free childcare while they work out (for kids 6 weeks to 6 years old).

2026 Membership Rates

Membership grants you access to both the Northwest and Southeast Bloomington branches.

Membership Type	Monthly Rate	Joiner Fee
Youth (7–18)	\$23	\$25
Young Adult (19–29)	\$43	\$50
Adult (30–64)	\$60	\$50
Senior (65+)	\$53	\$50
2 Adult Family	\$78	\$75
2 Adult + Dependents	\$87	\$100

Note: Financial assistance is available for those who qualify to ensure the Y remains accessible to everyone.

Programs & Perks

- Group Exercise: Members get over 70 free classes per week, including Yoga, Cycling, Aqua Fit, and HIIT.
- Senior Lunch & Learn: A popular series for older adults featuring free lunch and guest speakers on topics like health, finance, and technology.
- Youth Sports: Seasonal leagues for soccer, basketball, and volleyball, plus summer day camps that utilize the wooded site.
- IU Health Integration: The facility uniquely houses an on-site IU Health Foot and Ankle office.

Hours of Operation

- Monday – Friday: 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.
- Saturday: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Sunday: 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Would you like me to check the current "Pool Schedule" for lap swimming times, or are you interested in a guest pass to try the facility out first?

Ellettsville Youth Sports

Established in 2022 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, EYS is currently the main hub for several major youth programs. Their goal is to balance skill development with sportsmanship.

- Basketball: They offer tiered leagues for different age groups:
 - K-1 League: Focuses on fundamentals with lower goals (8') and wristband-matched man-to-man defense.
 - 2-3 & 4-5 Leagues: Transition toward higher goals (9' and 10') and introduce more advanced rules like free throws and limited pressing.
- Football & Cheer: Recently integrated into the EYS umbrella, the Mustangs Youth Football program focuses on building the "Mustang" spirit from the ground up, offering fall leagues and summer clinics.
- Baseball & Softball: EYS also manages spring and fall ball seasons, ranging from T-Ball and "3-4 Development" up to 12U/14U divisions.

Park Board

The Ellettsville Parks and Recreation Board is a five-member volunteer body responsible for overseeing the town's park system, setting recreation policies, and managing new development projects.

While Ellettsville doesn't have a large standalone Parks department staff (maintenance is often handled by the Street Department), the Board is the primary decision-making group for local leisure spaces.

Meeting Information

- When: The first Monday of every month.
 - Time: 5:30 p.m.
 - Where: Ellettsville Town Hall (1150 W. Guy McCown Street).
 - Public Participation: Meetings are open to the public. If you wish to address the board officially, you must contact the Town Hall at least one week in advance to be placed on the agenda.
-

Board Structure & Leadership

The board is made up of five "at-large" members. To ensure a mix of town and school representation, four members are appointed by the Town Council, and one is appointed by the Richland-Bean Blossom Community School Corporation.

Current Board Members (as of early 2026):

- Jimmie Durnil: President (School Board Appointment)
 - Ronnie Vandeventer: Vice President
 - Laura Hale: Member
 - Katey Michael: Member
 - ?
-

Major Projects & 2026 Focus

The Parks Board is currently heavily involved in two major town-wide initiatives:

1. **Heritage Trail Extension & Stewart Park:** A major focus has been finishing the Heritage Trail, a paved path that runs through the downtown area. The board has also been overseeing the development of the Ellettsville Heritage Center at Stewart Park (located at the site of the old barn), which serves as a new community gathering and music venue.
2. **Richland-Ellettsville Reorganization:** There is an ongoing process to potentially merge the Ellettsville town government with Richland Township. The Parks Board is part of a sub-committee studying how to combine park responsibilities, budgets, and trail systems if the merger is approved by voters in November 2026.
3. **Recent Budget Adjustments:** In late 2025, the Town Council transferred some Parks Department funds originally meant for a part-time director toward town improvements (specifically paving for the Heritage Trail) due to a tight 2026 budget.

As of 2026, members of the Ellettsville Parks Board receive \$100 per meeting attended. This rate was recently increased from \$50 per meeting as part of a push by the Town Council to encourage more public engagement and make it easier to fill vacancies on local boards.

Key Details on Board Pay:

- **Per-Meeting Basis:** Unlike the Town Council, which typically receives an annual salary, Parks Board members are only paid for the meetings they actually attend.
- **"No Double-Dipping" Rule:** If a member of the Town Council also serves on the Parks Board (which sometimes happens to ensure coordination), they do not receive the extra \$100. Their standard Council salary is considered their full compensation for all board duties.
- **Budget Context:** This pay increase was passed in late 2025 (effective for the 2026 budget) alongside similar raises for the Plan Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Redevelopment Commission.

Volunteer vs. Paid

While there is a "per diem" (the \$100 per meeting), these positions are still largely considered public service or volunteer-adjacent. The total annual compensation is relatively low—typically between \$1,200 and \$1,500 per year depending on how many special sessions are called beyond the monthly scheduled meetings.

Master Plan Providers

Should the Ellettsville reorganization receive voter approval this November, the Town should immediately begin the procurement process for a professional Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Developing this comprehensive roadmap is not only a strategic necessity for local growth but also serves as an essential prerequisite for securing competitive state and federal grants.

Eppley Center for Parks and Public Lands – local

<https://www.iidc.indiana.edu/eppley/index.htm>

HWC Engineering – master plan for city of Sheridan

<https://www.hwcengineering.com/>

PROS Consulting – master plan for Carmel

<https://prosconsulting.com/>

Foundation Creation

While the Ellettsville Parks Board manages the "business" of the parks (budgets, ordinances, and land use), a Foundation acts as the "philanthropic engine." For a town like Ellettsville—especially during tight budget years like 2026—a foundation can be the difference between a park just "existing" and a park "thriving."

Here is how a foundation specifically helps a municipal department:

1. Financial Flexibility & Fundraising

- **Grant Eligibility:** Many private and federal grants (like those from the NFL Grassroots Program or T-Mobile) actually require a 501(c)(3) nonprofit partner to apply. A government board often cannot apply for these on its own.
- **Private Donations:** People are generally more willing to donate to a nonprofit foundation than to a "government tax fund." Foundations can also accept tax-deductible gifts, land donations, and planned estates.
- **The "Rainy Day" Factor:** While town budgets are strictly audited and must be spent within a fiscal year, a foundation can save and grow funds over several years for a major "legacy project," like building a new community center.

2. Serving Beyond the Tax Base

Town governments are legally restricted in how they spend tax dollars. A foundation has more freedom to:

- **Scholarships:** Provide "camperships" so low-income kids can attend summer programs for free.
- **Niche Programming:** Fund things like community concerts, "Movies in the Park," or specialized inclusive playground equipment that the town's general fund might view as "non-essential."

3. Advocacy & Community "Shield"

- **Politics-Free Zone:** Parks Boards are subject to the shifts of local politics. A foundation provides a stable, long-term vision that stays consistent even when town council members change.
- **Volunteer Engagement:** Foundations are often better at organizing "Friends of the Park" volunteer groups for cleanup days or trail maintenance, reducing the labor burden on the town's Street Department.

The Local Context

Currently, Ellettsville often leans on the Monroe County Parks & Recreation Foundation for broader regional support, but as the town grows—especially with the potential Richland-Ellettsville reorganization in late 2026—the discussion of a dedicated Ellettsville-specific foundation often surfaces to keep local funds local.

Local Foundations with Grant Opportunities

Finding funding for parks often involves a mix of local corporate foundations, community-specific organizations, and regional utilities. Since Ellettsville is in Monroe County, you have access to several major players that prioritize "Quality of Place" projects.

Here are the primary companies and foundations in the Ellettsville/Monroe County area that offer grant opportunities for parks:

Local & Regional Corporate Foundations

- **Smithville Charitable Foundation:** Based right in the Ellettsville area, this is one of the most significant local funders. They regularly provide grants for community health, education, and recreation projects that improve the lives of residents in Smithville's service areas.
- **Duke Energy Foundation:** Duke Energy offers "Nature Grants" and "Community Impact Grants." They recently launched an "America250" initiative specifically to improve shared green spaces. They typically offer grants up to \$20,000 for local government entities and nonprofits.
- **Cook Medical / Cook Group:** While their direct corporate grants often focus on healthcare and education, the Cook Family Foundation and Cook Medical support local community development. They are a major stakeholder in Ellettsville and often partner on "vibrancy" projects.
- **Old National Bank Foundation:** They provide grants for "Community Development," which can include public space enhancements that foster economic growth or neighborhood stabilization.

Monroe County Specific Organizations

- **Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County:** This is a vital resource for Ellettsville. Their **Community Impact Grants** (ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000) specifically list "recreation," "beautification," and "the environment" as key interest areas.
- **Monroe County Parks & Recreation Foundation:** While they primarily fund county-run parks, they are a key partner for regional trail connectivity and land acquisition. If the Ellettsville reorganization leads to a formal department, this foundation is a primary networking partner.
- **Sophia Travis Community Service Grants:** Provided by the Monroe County Council, these grants are available to nonprofits (which a park board could partner with) for community-improving projects.

National Companies with Local Presence

Many large retailers in the Ellettsville/Bloomington corridor offer "Hometown" or "Local" grants:

- **T-Mobile Hometown Grants:** Offers up to **\$50,000** for community revitalizations, specifically targeting towns with populations under 50,000. Public parks and gathering spaces are their top priority.

- **Lowe's Hometowns:** Provides grants and volunteer support for "community anchor" projects, including park renovations and playground builds.
 - **Walmart Local Community Grants:** Local store managers have the authority to award small-scale grants (\$250–\$5,000) for local community needs.
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Pro-Tip: The "Master Plan" Connection

Most of the organizations above (especially the Community Foundation and Smithville) will require or heavily prioritize applicants who have a Parks Master Plan. They want to see that their grant isn't just a "one-off" fix, but part of a 5-year strategy for the town.

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Annual Events

Ellettsville is known for several high-energy annual traditions that draw visitors from across the region. Here are the staple events you should have on your calendar:

1. Monroe County Fall Festival (September)

This is the "big one"—it celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2025 and remains a homecoming tradition for the community.

- Where: Marci Jane Lewis Park.
- Highlights: A massive three-day event featuring a popular parade on Saturday morning, two stages of free live music, a large flea market, craft vendors, and a "Queen Contest."
- Education Day: Friday morning is traditionally dedicated to local school children with specialized learning activities.

2. Ellettsville Summer Concert Series (May – July)

A newer tradition started by the Chamber of Commerce, this series turns Marci Jane Lewis Park into a community hub on Saturday evenings.

- The Vibe: Free admission, 8–10 rotating food trucks, and a diverse music lineup ranging from '80s rock to Jimmy Buffett tributes and country.
- Time: Usually 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

3. Indiana Limestone Symposium (June)

Because Ellettsville is the "Limestone Capital of the World," this annual event is core to the town's identity.

- What happens: Expert carvers and beginners gather at the Bybee Stone Company to practice the art of limestone sculpture.
- Public Access: You can often watch the carvers at work or sign up for a multi-week course to try it yourself.

4. Independence Day Fireworks (July)

- Where: Edgewood High School.
- Details: Hosted by the Ellettsville Volunteer Fire Department. The display traditionally starts at dusk, with crowds gathering in the school parking lots and cross-country fields.

5. Ellettsville Farmers Market (May – October)

- When: Every Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- Where: Chandler Funeral Home parking lot.
- What to expect: Fresh local produce, baked goods, and handmade crafts.

6. Chamber Annual Awards (October)

A more formal gathering hosted by the Greater Ellettsville Area Chamber of Commerce to honor local businesses, educators, and community leaders.

7. The Hilly Hundred Weekend (October)

While the ride passes through three counties, Ellettsville serves as the official headquarters for this legendary cycling event. It isn't a race, but a non-competitive tour known for live music and "hill-defying" snacks.

- 2026 Dates: Friday, October 9 – Sunday, October 11, 2026.
- The Hub: Everything starts and ends at Edgewood High School. The campus transforms into a small village where thousands of cyclists camp, shower, and eat.
- The Route: Riders tackle about 50 miles each day, climbing nearly 9,000 feet in total. The Saturday route typically heads toward Whitehall and Newark, while Sunday often heads toward the Morgan-Monroe State Forest.
- Best Perk: The rest stops. You'll find live bands, free food, and the famous Schwann's ice cream waiting for you at the finish line.

8. The Ellettsville 5K (and 1-Mile Fun Run)

Held annually in mid-September, this race is part of the Mag 7 Series (a collection of seven prestigious local races). It is known for being a "PR-friendly" course (meaning it's fast and flat) and is a great way to kick off the fall season.

- Expected 2026 Date: Saturday, September 19, 2026 (typically the Saturday before the Fall Festival).
- The Course: A flat "out and back" route that primarily utilizes the Karst Farm Greenway Trail.
- Schedule: * 8:00 a.m.: Free 1-Mile Kids' Fun Run.
 - 8:30 a.m.: 5K Run & Walk start.
- Tradition: If you break a course record for your age group, you get to "Ring the Bell" at the finish line—a local honors tradition that comes with a special prize.

9. Santa on Sale Street

A beloved annual holiday tradition in Ellettsville, Indiana, typically held on the second Saturday of December. It transforms the downtown area into a festive hub for families, centered around the arrival of Santa Claus.

The Main Event: Santa's Arrival

The highlight of the morning is Santa's grand entrance. Instead of a sleigh, Santa arrives in historic downtown Ellettsville by fire truck, usually around 9:30 AM.

Activities & Locations

The event is spread across several spots on and near Sale Street:

- **Masonic Lodge (201 N. Sale St.):** Often hosts a breakfast buffet (proceeds frequently benefit the Eastern Star) and holiday crafts.
- **Ellettsville Branch Library:** After his fire truck ride, Santa typically heads here for a "meet and greet." Children can get a free photo and often receive a small toy or goody bag.
- **Downtown Festivities:** The street comes alive with cookie decorating, hot chocolate stations, balloon animals, and live music or dance performances from local groups.

Other Notable 5K Races

Beyond the official town race, Ellettsville hosts two other popular runs:

1. **Seven Oaks Travel Trot 5K:** Held in late fall at Seven Oaks Classical School, this family-friendly race ends with a massive chili and bake sale.
2. **Run for the Animals 5K:** While often based at Karst Farm Park nearby, many Ellettsville residents participate in this October fundraiser for the Monroe County Humane Association.

References

Town of Ellettsville Population, estimate

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/ellettsvilletownindiana/PST045224>

Richland Township Population, 2020

https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDP2020.DP1?g=040XX00US18_060XX00US1810564152&d=DEC+Demographic+Profile

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	Count	Percent		Count	Percent		Count	Percent
Total population	15098	100.0%	Male population	7200	100.0%	Female population	7,898	100.0%
Under 5 years	932	6.2%	Under 5 years	486	6.8%	Under 5 years	446	5.6%
5 to 9 years	996	6.6%	5 to 9 years	506	7.0%	5 to 9 years	490	6.2%
10 to 14 years	1007	6.7%	10 to 14 years	502	7.0%	10 to 14 years	505	6.4%
15 to 19 years	883	5.8%	15 to 19 years	455	6.3%	15 to 19 years	428	5.4%
20 to 24 years	597	4.0%	20 to 24 years	299	4.2%	20 to 24 years	298	3.8%
25 to 29 years	930	6.2%	25 to 29 years	457	6.3%	25 to 29 years	473	6.0%
30 to 34 years	1137	7.5%	30 to 34 years	524	7.3%	30 to 34 years	613	7.8%
35 to 39 years	1032	6.8%	35 to 39 years	512	7.1%	35 to 39 years	520	6.6%
40 to 44 years	985	6.5%	40 to 44 years	500	6.9%	40 to 44 years	485	6.1%
45 to 49 years	938	6.2%	45 to 49 years	435	6.0%	45 to 49 years	503	6.4%
50 to 54 years	895	5.9%	50 to 54 years	409	5.7%	50 to 54 years	486	6.2%
55 to 59 years	1016	6.7%	55 to 59 years	479	6.7%	55 to 59 years	537	6.8%
60 to 64 years	1023	6.8%	60 to 64 years	460	6.4%	60 to 64 years	563	7.1%
65 to 69 years	874	5.8%	65 to 69 years	383	5.3%	65 to 69 years	491	6.2%
70 to 74 years	768	5.1%	70 to 74 years	354	4.9%	70 to 74 years	414	5.2%
75 to 79 years	497	3.3%	75 to 79 years	228	3.2%	75 to 79 years	269	3.4%
80 to 84 years	311	2.1%	80 to 84 years	132	1.7%	80 to 84 years	188	2.4%
85 years and over	277	1.8%	85 years and over	88	1.2%	85 years and over	189	2.4%

Median Age by Sex
 Both sexes: 40.2
 Male: 38.6
 Female: 41.6