

Preserving Our Legacy

As we grapple with the decision of whether or not to allow private entities to lease and develop publicly held land, we should ask ourselves the question, "What would the children and residents of Muncie 50 years from now want us to do in this moment?"

The decision to give up a public green space is deeply significant. Currently Muncie only has about 3.4 acres of green space per 1000 persons compared to the 6.25-10.5 acres recommended by the National Recreation and Park Association. Muncie has the lowest number of acres dedicated to parklands, a fact our own master plan laments. Perhaps the fact that Tuhey has been under-supported over the years makes it seem like an insignificant loss. However, maintaining it for all is the commitment we made when it was dedicated to the public good.

Of course, once public land is surrendered into private control, it is unlikely to be returned. Once this public resource is gone, it is gone.

The leadership in the City of Muncie is working hard to find ways to build our community and I greatly appreciate their efforts. Indeed, the YMCA is a committed community actor who wants the best for its members. However, the long-term costs of losing this public asset will far exceed the benefits. Tuhey Park does not need to be the location of this development. It is simply one of many possible locations. I am hopeful that working together we can find an alternative location that can support the YMCA while also protecting a valuable community asset that is Tuhey Park.

Decisions like this set a precedent. Giving control of our valuable limited park assets makes all of our community assets more vulnerable to the point that eventually there will be no public assets to lose. Is this the legacy we want to leave behind?

Past generations made this park possible for us today. We need to honor their commitment to the public good by preserving green space and public parks for Muncie's next generation.

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