

# PARKS & RECREATION PLAN



Prepared for the City of Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation



## Acknowledgements

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\* The Board of Park Commissioners oversees the Evansville Department of Parks & Recreation and Mesker Park Zoo & Botanical Gardens. The Board consists of five members who serve four-year terms. The Board is an independent policy-making body with a bipartisan appointment process. Because the taxing district includes all of Vanderburgh County, three members are appointed by the Mayor of Evansville and two are appointed by the Vanderburgh County Commissioners.

Plan Completed for the City of Evansville, Department of Parks & Recreation in March 2015.

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# Executive Summary

## Overview of This Document

This Parks and Recreation Plan is composed of the main planning document and an appendix of supporting information. All information presented in the main document is intended to provide the public and department with an understanding of the current status of the Parks and Recreation Department, key findings from the planning process, an analysis of community needs, and action steps intended to set a course for the next five years.

The Appendices of this plan contain supplemental information that are more technical clarifications of analysis, records of results for documentation purposes, internal department worksheets, and future considerations for the department that are not applicable to a five-year plan but serve as future reference material.

## Introduction

The City of Evansville is located in southwest Indiana within Vanderburgh County and is the social and economic hub for the region with 65 parks and 21 recreation facilities on 2,500 acres of land. Located within the tri-state area of Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky, Evansville contributes to the livability of the region with company headquarters and several educational institutions. Parks and Recreation facilities and programming play a key role in this livability as national trends indicate access to parks, specifically greenways, greatly impact their decision on where to live. Previous planning efforts by the City, County, and Municipal Planning Organization emphasize the importance of parks facilities. The National Recreation and Parks Association lists numerous benefits and focus specifically on Conservation, Health & Wellness, and Social Equity.

## Process

The planning process was founded in exploring existing data and recommendations adopted through previous planning efforts. Public input, GIS analysis, and field observations were layered to understand the needs of the community and craft a set of recommended action steps for the next five years.

The first step in gathering public input was the formation of a steering committee. This group served as representatives of the community providing multiple perspectives from law enforcement to human health. During the first steering committee meeting, the group defined a vision for this plan (see below). They also crafted goals that would carry the department through this planning process and into the future (see i-3 for goals).

Throughout the process three steering committee meetings were held, a survey was distributed throughout the community, the department collected input during National Night Out, and a presentation was given during one of the Mayor's Travelling City Hall.

*"The City of Evansville is dedicated to preserving and enhancing quality of life by providing beautiful green spaces, healthy outdoor activities, and engaging programs that enrich the health and wellness of all people."*

## PLAN GOALS

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**CONNECTIVITY** Weave the community together with a network of trails that provide access to green spaces.

**SUSTAINABILITY** Promote sustainability through park development, maintenance, and public education.

**SAFETY** Design spaces that foster a sense of comfort and safety for users of all ages.

**HUMAN & SOCIAL HEALTH** Create spaces that encourage healthful living, social interaction, and a sense of ownership for all citizens.

**DIVERSITY** Generate a variety of offerings throughout park spaces and within programming that stimulate personal and community growth.

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### Key Findings

For this plan, the study area is the city limits of Evansville. Within those limits are 65 parks and 21 special facilities that serve a population of approximately 120,310 citizens. Since 1990, the population has grown very little. This affords the department an opportunity to rebalance their parks and plan for the addition of future space as the state standard indicates the city is slightly deficient in park space per 1000 citizens.

The planning process included several layers of analysis that are detailed through the chapters and appendices of this document. One major need in the community as indicated by the steering committee, through the survey, and is consistent with national trends is the need to expand the greenway system. Top activities people want to participate

in include walking, running, and biking. Residents would like to be able to safely travel by foot or bike to downtown, shopping, parks, greenways, work, and Newburgh.

### TOP NEEDS DETERMINED BY PUBLIC INPUT

The following needs surfaced as critical needs and desires from the citizen survey, Mayor's Travelling City Hall, and National Night Out:

- Increase awareness of existing parks and programs (many respondents indicated they were not aware of facilities and programs offered)
- Increase facilities that promote walking and bicycling, such as greenways, bike lanes, and improve crossings at intersections
- Connect recreation, residential, and commercial centers with active recreation facilities

- Improve the safety and maintenance of park facilities, such as lighting improvement, trash collection, and general infrastructure maintenance
- Improve the diversity of park facilities and offered programs to equitably serve age-specific interests
- Improve the awareness of park facilities and what programs are offered
- Offer more outdoor concerts and fitness programs and encourage walking/hiking/running, biking, and dog walking activities through increased infrastructure (top five requested activities)

### TOP NEEDS DETERMINED BY DEMOGRAPHICS, SUPPLY, AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

Reviewing Census data, GIS modeling, and services areas, the following needs emerged:

- The analysis revealed a relatively even distribution of the youth population (18 and under) – The department should incorporate offerings to serve multiple age groups, such as climbing, kick ball, and walking trail facilities to complement current playground equipment.
- The 65 and older population is concentrated in select areas - Wesselman Park, Mesker Park, Kleymeyer Park, and parks near these high concentrations should include activities and facilities appropriate for the 65 and older population.
- Offer special needs oriented programs and improve ADA accessible facilities near Lamasco Park, Sixth Avenue Park, Fulton Park, and Willard Library Park.
- Areas near downtown, Mesker Zoo and Mesker Park, Diamond Valley Park, and Deaconess Hospital have a high demand but are well served by nearby park facilities. Programs should be increased in these areas to serve and encourage demand.
- There is not enough supply to meet the high demand at North Park Shopping Center, the southeast corner of the city near Newburgh Road, and along Oak Hill Road. Future park facilities should be considered in these areas to serve the high demand.

### NEEDS BASED ON DEPARTMENT OBSERVATION AND EXPERIENCE

Discussions with department staff revealed the need to:

- Continue to build the greenway system
- Update signage and provide wayfinding to increase awareness of parks and greenways
- Re-evaluate the performance of golf courses (golf is becoming less popular and many communities are repurposing their facilities - see Appendix H for details)
- Provide programs suitable for senior citizens
- Improve customer service interfaces including signing up for programs and tracking satisfaction
- Continue to add programs such as Energize Evansville to connect citizens with healthy activities and eating habits

Throughout the needs analysis, five key categories emerged. Therefore, recommendations and action steps are organized by:

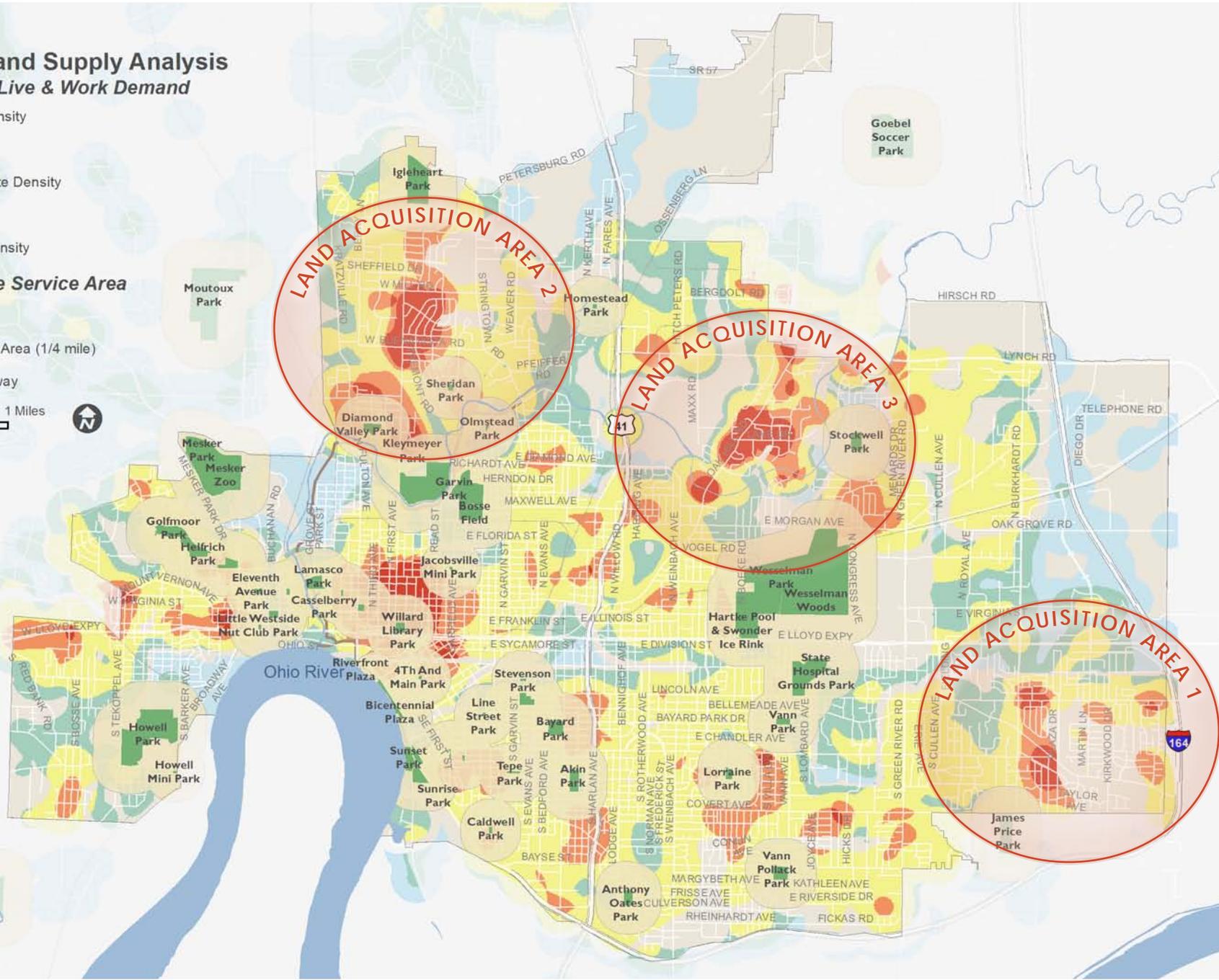
- Park Facilities
- Greenways and Connectivity
- Programs
- Policy
- Management

Maps on the following pages address some of these needs by identifying potential areas to expand the park system (due to a deficiency in space as identified by the state and areas of high demand for parks with low supply), and a diagram for how the greenway system can expand to serve citizens without cars and connect people with places where they live, work, and play.

**Demand and Supply Analysis**  
**Composite Live & Work Demand**



**Quarter-Mile Service Area**

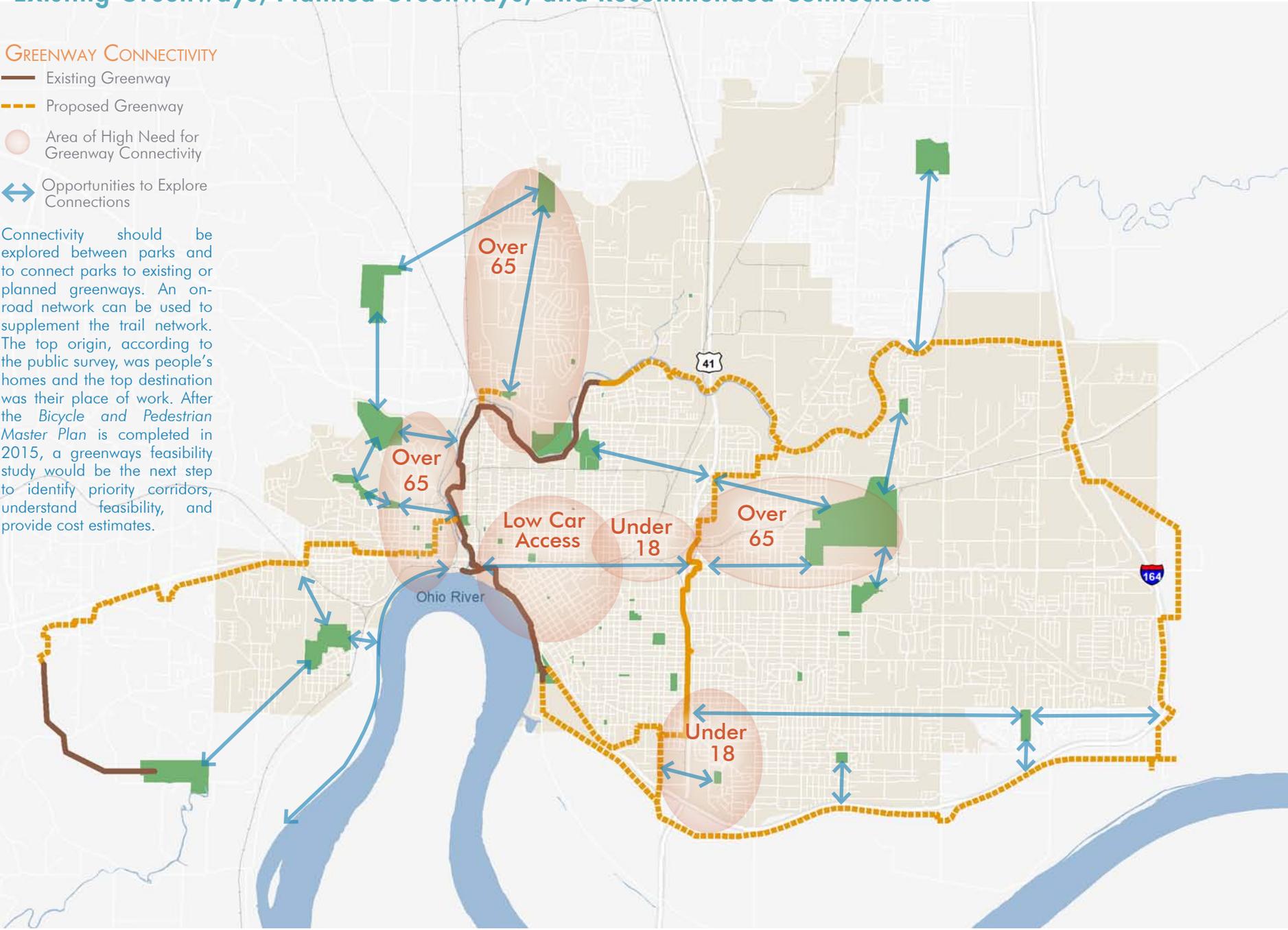


# Existing Greenways, Planned Greenways, and Recommended Connections

### GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY

- Existing Greenway
- Proposed Greenway
- Area of High Need for Greenway Connectivity
- Opportunities to Explore Connections

Connectivity should be explored between parks and to connect parks to existing or planned greenways. An on-road network can be used to supplement the trail network. The top origin, according to the public survey, was people's homes and the top destination was their place of work. After the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* is completed in 2015, a greenways feasibility study would be the next step to identify priority corridors, understand feasibility, and provide cost estimates.



## Critical Action Steps

While there are a variety of recommendations and action steps documented in this plan, a top fifteen list was compiled to illustrate how the Department can achieve the goals set forth in this plan and address key needs of the community.

The action steps that coincide most directly with the goals of connectivity, sustainability, safety, human & social health, and diversity are:

### PARK FACILITIES

Work with the Urban Forestry Department to identify where Oak and Ash Trees are located throughout the City. Devise a plan to prioritize treatment of the trees to protect them from the Horned Oak Galls and Emerald Ash Borer. Consult with adjacent communities to determine which methods and supplies are proving successful and cost effective.

Standardize maintenance practices with checklists for each park, schedules, staff responsible, and logs. Assign a staff member to remain current in their knowledge of national standards for safety surfaces, equipment, and best practices. Update checklists and manuals as needed. Incorporate guidance and standards in line with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) with particular focus on Garvin, Sunset, Howell, and Greenways. Address lighting issues in parks with programming and activities after dusk.

Focus on repurposing playgrounds to better suit the demographic composition of neighborhoods. Start with parks on the equity map indicating populations over 65 on page E-3 (Ingleheart, Sheridan, Diamond Valley, Kleymeyer/Garvin/Bosse Field, Jacobsville Mini Park, Wesselman, Roberts, Mesker, Helfrich, Eleventh Avenue, Casselberry, Little Westside Nut Club, Westside Library Park). Survey the surrounding neighborhood to understand their needs and desires. Potential activities include community gardens, pickleball, bocce, and walking.

As the Parks Departments moves forward implementing Roberts Park, it is important to consider the following:

- The site should be ADA accessible to address the needs of the special populations in the area
- The park should be accessible by safe bicycle and pedestrian connections
- Bicycle parking should be included in the design
- The park should focus on multi-generational activities
- The park can address the top ten and top twenty requests of the community
- The sight should include a trail that connects the uses within the park and provides a walking loop to address the health and fitness needs of your aging population
- Along this trail there should be places to sit, approximately every 1/4 mile to accommodate mobility challenges
- Design a playground suitable for multiple ages (not a tot lot) with opportunities for climbing and social play.

Re-evaluate the department golf courses. Consider using this land for another purpose such as soccer golf, stormwater management, reforestation, trails, or other conservation-based park. This may be conducted in house or through a consultant.

## GREENWAYS AND CONNECTIVITY

The planned greenway system should be segmented into named sections for feasibility and public awareness purposes.
Explore grant opportunities, new funding sources, and develop private and nonprofit funding sources to supplement greenway funding.
Integrate greenway connections into all future planning studies with the intent to connect places where people live, work, play, and learn.
Conduct a system wide study to refine the planned greenway system based on: The Demand and Supply analysis conducted in this Plan, the <i>2015 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan</i> , connections to community and regional classified parks, and connections to future growth areas established in the <i>City of Evansville Comprehensive Plan</i> . This plan will serve as an update to the <i>Pigeon Creek Master Plan (1994)</i> .

## PROGRAMS

Research online booking software that allows citizens to sign up and pay for programs. This will also serve as a scheduling program and help the department organize booking of rooms, shelters, and other facilities. Launch the software in the near- or long-term depending on funding required and training of staff.
Enhance the Energize Evansville Program with more opportunities to educate citizens about nutrition. Create programs in partnership with local health focused organizations and advocacy groups including: Deaconess Hospital, St. Mary’s Medical Center, Evansville State Hospital, Evansville Psychiatric Children’s Center, and ECHO Community Health Care.
Audit the skills of the existing staff to understand how to add more programs for seniors and to combat the obesity epidemic. Initial program ideas include aquatics programs as these are suitable for a wide range of abilities and are ideal for those with joint issues or physical challenges due to a history of being sedentary or overweight.
Review the following needs (requested by survey participants) concerts, walking/hiking/running, biking, dog walking, fitness programs, canoeing/kayaking, adventure/ropes courses, aquatics/swimming, performing arts, arts and crafts. Determine how the department can offer new programs and facilities that meet these needs. In some cases, the department may have programs and facilities already, but need to augment how they are advertised.

## MANAGEMENT

Update PRORAGIS (Park and Recreation Operating Ratio & Geographic Information System) yearly to understand if Evansville is on track with national trends in similar communities.
Work with the Area Plan Commission to update GIS park data yearly. This will include land acquisition or sales, facility offerings, management, greenways, and park type.
Improve the website so it is easier to navigate and find programs by topic, age range, and location. Consider connections that reduce the number of links and redirects but increases overlap of categories - such as the overlap between pools and aquatic programming.

# Chapter One



# Introduction

## Park Board and Department

The Board of Park Commissioners oversees the Evansville Department of Parks & Recreation and Mesker Park Zoo & Botanical Gardens. The Board consists of five members who serve four-year terms. The Board is an independent policy-making body with a bipartisan appointment process. Because the taxing district includes all of Vanderburgh County, three members are appointed by the Mayor of Evansville and two are appointed by the Vanderburgh County Commissioners.

The Board of Park Commissioner's conducts bi-monthly meetings on the first & third Wednesdays of each month at 12:00 noon. Meetings are held in the Kevin Winternheimer Chambers, Room 301, Civic Center Complex, One NW Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Evansville, IN 47708.

Roles of the Board include establishing policies, financial allocations, and approval of special projects. Additional public hearings and special task force committees are frequently utilized to receive public input on specific projects and community needs.

### PARK BOARD COMMISSIONERS

Gary Shetler, President	Roberta Heiman, Member
Sarah Dauer, Vice President	Kenny Overton, Member
Jerome Stewart, Member	

The Administrative Offices are located next to the Lobby of the C. K. Newsome Community Center, 100 E. Walnut Street.

### PARK ADMINISTRATION

Denise A. Johnson, Executive Director  
Brian Holtz, Deputy Director

## Planning Area

The City of Evansville is located in southwest Indiana within Vanderburgh County and is the social and economic hub for the region. Located within the tri-state area of Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky, Evansville contributes to the livability of the region with company headquarters and several educational institutions. Founded in 1812 on a scenic bend in the Ohio River, Evansville was a major stop for steamboats and quickly became a major producer of coal mining, manufacturing, and hardwood lumber. The city experienced a boom in economic growth during the twentieth century, becoming one of the largest hardwood furniture centers in the world and a critical industrial site for World War II military equipment and vehicles. Evansville has since developed into the third largest city in Indiana and is considered the commercial, medical, and service hub for the region.

Affectionately referred to as "The River City," Evansville was recognized as the "2006 Community of the Year" by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, as one of the "100 Best Communities for Young People" in 2005 by the Alliance for Youth, and was awarded with the prestigious "All-American City Award" in 2004 by the National Civic League. Historically significant landmarks include the third-oldest professional baseball stadium in the nation and Willard Library, established in 1885, which is the oldest operating library in the State of Indiana. With 65 parks and 21 special facilities, the City of Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation is committed to improving the quality of life of its residents. As noted by Indiana's Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and recorded by the United States Census, the population of Vanderburgh County has experienced little growth; experiencing only nine-tenths of a percent

growth from 2010 to 2013. The City of Evansville population growth from 2010 to 2013 is estimated around two-tenths of a percent with a 2013 population approximation of 120,310. Serving this population is Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve - a National Natural Landmark and is the largest tract of virgin forest located inside any city limits within the United States. In recent years, a strong effort to further improve quality of life and sustainability has enabled the Parks and Recreation Department to construct the first segment of the Pigeon Creek Greenway Passage that is planned to circle the city.

*For the purpose of this study, the boundary is defined by the City limits. Within these 28,557 acres, the Parks and Recreation Department operates and manages approximately 2,500 acres of land.*

## Mission, Vision, and Goals

### BOARD AND DEPARTMENT MISSION

The Mission of the Evansville Board of Park Commissioners is to create and responsibly manage a community-wide system of parks, open space and cultural resources and to provide recreational, cultural, and educational programs based on these resources to enhance the quality of life for all Evansville-area citizens.

### DEPARTMENT GOALS

Goals from the 2009-2013 Plan were adopted as the goals of the department. These goals were derived from the mission statement and the ongoing experience of providing for the recreational and open space needs of citizens. These goals state:

- That sufficient open space and natural areas be available to meet present and future needs of Evansville-area residents, and that these resources be located in relation to the population throughout the metropolitan area.
- That recreational opportunities not otherwise available in the Evansville area be considered for inclusion in the park system where compatible, and that the quality of current recreational programs judged as successful and appropriate be improved where possible.
- That outdoor educational programs be provided that encourage environmental awareness and interaction between people and nature.

- That interpretive programs be provided that give residents a framework of the community's cultural and historic origins.
- That cultural resources and programs be provided that give residents an opportunity to participate in the arts.
- That all visitors to park facilities and participants in parks programs have a positive enjoyable and safe experience.
- That existing facilities and programs be adequately maintained, staffed and funded before adding new programs and facilities and that new programs and facility budgets incorporate funding mechanisms for their long-term viability.
- That innovative funding sources and creative partnerships be developed with either public and private sector agencies or groups to facilitate park and open space land or facility development.
- That information promoting public awareness and identification of the Evansville park system be effectively disseminated both locally and regionally.
- That the Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation be an advocate for federal, state, and local agency and private sector initiatives that support the park and open space mission of the department.

### PLAN VISION

This Plan's vision was inspired by the needs of the community and developed by the City of Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation and Steering Committee. It is derived from the mission of the department: *to create quality of life opportunities by providing safe environments and affordable programs to enhance fun, fitness, and education for residents of all ages in the community.*

This vision for the plan established an end goal for the recommendations and action steps.

With this vision guiding the project development process, the project team surveyed residents and collaborated with stakeholders to learn the desires and needs for the City's Parks and Recreation Department. This feedback established a foundation for the project and led to the development of the Plan's five goals.

## VISION STATEMENT

*“The City of Evansville is dedicated to preserving and enhancing quality of life by providing beautiful green spaces, healthy outdoor activities, and engaging programs that enrich the health and wellness of all people.”*

## PLAN GOALS

The goals established for the plan were inspired by NRPA’s key themes of Conservation, Health and Wellness, and Social Equity. These five goals localize the NRPA’s themes, bringing specific achievable measures to the community in Evansville. The following goals acted as the pillars of the Plan, guiding the Department toward its mission of creating quality of life opportunities for all Evansville residents.

### PLAN GOALS

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**C**ONNECTIVITY Weave the community together with a network of trails that provide access to green spaces.

**S**USTAINABILITY Promote sustainability through park development, maintenance, and public education.

**S**AFETY Design spaces that foster a sense of comfort and safety for users of all ages.

**H**UMAN & SOCIAL HEALTH Create spaces that encourage healthful living, social interaction, and a sense of ownership for all citizens.

**D**IVERSITY Generate a variety of offerings throughout park spaces and within programming that stimulate personal and community growth.

## Methodology

A systematic planning process was employed to learn about residents' park and recreational needs and to follow the vision of this Plan. This process assessed the current status of facilities, identified recreational needs for the community, determined whether these needs are being met, and established a plan of action.

The first step of this process was to conduct a thorough analysis of existing plans, understand the demographics of the city, visit facilities, and review the program inventory. Understanding the demographic characteristics of the city, existing facility and program offerings, and conducting a review of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) revealed the opportunities and challenges of implementing the Plan's vision. Considering the city's features, trends, and the parks and recreation facilities and programs established a holistic view of the quality of life in Evansville. The use of matrices and maps provided a thorough understanding of the existing conditions, allowing for evaluation, quantification, and analysis.

The second step of the process involved assessment of local needs and analysis of supply and demand. Feedback was gathered from Evansville residents regarding their impressions of existing facilities and programs, while inquiring about future desires. Analyzing the supply and demand of facilities allowed the team to visually represent facility gaps and identify demand for future improvements. Input from the public was gathered at public functions and through a survey. Team members surveyed participants at local recreation events, and via an online tool hosted on the project website. The survey was advertised through email blasts, Facebook links, City websites, and Twitter.

The combination of existing inventory, supply and demand analysis, public comments, and stakeholder feedback guided the development of the Plan recommendations and action steps that will support the department through the achievement of the vision for the future of Evansville facilities and programs.

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# Chapter Two



# Existing Features and Context

## Overview

Natural and cultural features can be celebrated by the Parks and Recreation Department. Often these are the formative features of citizen and visitor access to nature and history, providing opportunities for learning and leisure. However, natural and man-made features can become barriers to recreation. As in all communities, man-made features and development should be monitored by department staff to prevent loss as well as to creatively overcome challenges such as highway impediments to greenway and trail development.

In addition to understanding the natural, cultural, and man-made environment, it is critical to understand who lives in and visits the community of Evansville. A demographic analysis provides insight into the population's typical needs, based on community characteristics.

## Natural Features and Landscape

### TOPOGRAPHY

The City of Evansville is located in the southwest portion of Indiana bordering the state of Kentucky and very near to Iowa. A large portion of the city lies in a shallow valley surrounded by rolling hills with the southern boundary situated on an oxbow in the Ohio River. The eastern portion of the city is protected by a series of levees along Interstate 164.

Evansville is known for its prime agricultural land. Glacial erosion and flooding from the Ohio River has resulted in flat topography with large deposits of clay, silt, sand, and gravel. Of the 154,240 acres of land in Vanderburgh County, over 100,000 acres of this land is considered highly suitable for agriculture. This suitability lends itself well to park lands.

There are no significant topographical challenges that would prevent active or passive recreation. Where topography is noticeable - along levees and surrounding the river - these have, and can continue to be, used as opportunities for trails and passive recreation.

### VEGETATION

The major natural vegetation types found in this region are broadleaf forests and oak savannas. Large portions of Vanderburgh County are currently used for the production of corn or soybean agriculture; however large portions of Evansville are urbanized with dedicated greenspace. The Evansville park system is expansive, encompassing more than 2,500 acres of passive and active park facilities stretching out into Vanderburgh County. The Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve, located in east Evansville, has nearly 200 acres of virgin bottomland hardwood forest and is a National Natural Landmark. The City has an active Urban Forestry Department to maintain city trees, and through their hard work and collaboration with the Tree Advisory Board, Evansville has been classified as a "Tree City USA" community for the last 14 years. Additionally, the Keep Evansville Beautiful organization is committed to beautifying the community through their Greenspaces program.

Recent tree vegetation concerns include the Horned Oak Galls (Cynapid wasp galls) and the Emerald Ash Borer. The Horned Oak Galls have become more numerous in recent years, and while not a direct threat, the combination of drought conditions and the overburden of galls may cause undue stress resulting in premature death. In addition, the Emerald Ash Borer has become more active in southwestern Indiana and is a threat to the 631 ash trees in Evansville. The Emerald Ash Borer has devastated tree populations across

the nation, and unless ash trees are properly treated prior to the infestation, there is little that can be done to mitigate the infestation. Evansville will need to strongly consider treating the 454 ash trees on City property (the remaining 177 ash trees within the city are on county or state land) or risk losing approximately seven percent of their tree population.

### CLIMATE

Evansville is located in a humid subtropical climate and experiences the four seasons; summers are hot and humid and the winters are cool to cold. The temperatures within the region range from an average high of 78 degrees Fahrenheit in July to 32 degrees Fahrenheit January. Average rainfall averages 45.3 inches and seasonal snowfall averages 11.8 inches.

The climate does not pose significant limitations to recreation. In fact, the climate provides an opportunity for outdoor park facilities to be used throughout each season.

### SOILS/GEOGRAPHY

The soil profile for Evansville is primarily composed of deep silt and clay loam. These soils are well drained, have a high water storage profile, and generally classified as prime farmland. Most slopes in this area range from 0 to 18 percent. These soil conditions are suitable for active and passive recreation.

### WATER RESOURCES

The Pidgeon Creek watershed spans approximately 323 square miles and flows through Vanderburgh County and Evansville before it empties into the Ohio River. Situated on a bend in the Ohio River, Evansville has been affectionately nicknamed the “River City” due to the historical importance of the river as an economic engine. The large watershed and the proximity of the city to the river resulted in massive flooding in 1937 and prompted the construction of an extensive flood protection system composed of earthen levees and concrete floodwalls. The flood protection system has regulated flooding in the region but creates a barrier between the City and the water resource. The resulting floodplain expanses present an opportunity for recreation open space. The City should explore more options to celebrate and gain access to this resource.

## Man-Made, Historical and Cultural TRANSPORTATION LINKS

Evansville marks the beginning of Interstate 69 and is approximately 6 miles away from the interchange of Interstate 64 and Interstate 69. Highway 41 runs through the center of the city and is the major north-south connection when crossing the Kentucky/Indiana border. Highway 62 and Highway 66 cross through the city at Highway 41 and establish the major east and west routes into and out of Evansville. Interstate 64 connects the city to St. Louis to the east (166 miles) and Louisville to the west (127 miles).

As the City prepares to grow their system of greenways, these highways will create challenges for crossings. Under- and over-crossings will require higher investment, but can also create connections that improve economic vitality of the community.

### EVANSVILLE PARK DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The City of Evansville has a long and storied history of park and recreation development, tracing its origins back to early settlers traversing the Ohio River. The city was strongly influenced by the City Beautiful movement in the 19th and 20th centuries and much of Evansville’s structure and park amenities can be traced back to its ideologies. Mesker Park, Garvin Park, and Oak Hill Road were a result of the 1926 Proposed Park and Pleasure Driving System Plan that proposed a system of parks and open spaces linked through a series of tree-lined parkways and boulevards.

The following sites were early park locations and are now listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

#### AKIN PARK

Circa 1913-1930, the Akin Park Historic District is a residential area with representative architectural styles from the early 20th century. The district is located southeast of downtown Evansville and situated next to Akin Park, a 10 acre wooded area.

#### ANGEL MOUNDS (NOT OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE DEPARTMENT)

The 103 acre site is the location of a Middle Mississippian Native American town from the 14th and 15th centuries. The approximately 1,000 inhabitants lived in thatched-roofed houses and placed

important communal buildings on earthen mounds. Considered one of the most important archaeological excavations in Indiana, the largest mound is 44 feet tall and covers four acres. The dig site was active from 1938 to 1962 and is now managed by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

#### BAYARD PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT

In 1901 a ten acre grove of mature oak trees was donated to the City by the Bayard family. The grove was donated by Mrs. Martha Bayard in memory of her late husband Samuel Bayard. Following the donation, the surrounding area was developed into a residential area by the Bayard family.

#### BURDETTE PARK (NOT OWNED AND OPERATED BY THE DEPARTMENT)

Established in 1928, the 40 acre park is composed of the Ohio River bottoms, steep bluffs, and Bayou Creek. Originally created under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the park has since grown in size and added additional buildings to the original WPA structures and landscape features. Burdette Park is now owned and managed by Vanderburgh County.

#### EVANSVILLE STATE HOSPITAL

Established in 1883, this site has extensive grounds include two lakes, a swimming pool, athletic fields, and a bike trail. The hospital was originally named the Southern Indiana Hospital for the insane and many of the existing buildings date from the early to mid-twentieth century. A fire has since destroyed many of the original buildings; however, some of the structures that still remain include a barn, greenhouse, hospital building, a neoclassical recreation hall, and a chapel.

#### GARVIN PARK

Founded in 1915, Garvin Park is one of the oldest parks in the City. The park was designed by Myron H. West, a student of Fredrick Law Olmstead, and included the design of Evansmere Lake, park drives, playgrounds, and a greenhouse within the 90 acre park.

#### BOSSE FIELD

The Art Deco-inspired baseball stadium was established in 1915 by Harry E. Boyle. The stadium is now a School Corporation facility.

#### MESKER PARK ZOO

Mesker Park was established in 1928 following the desire to create a first-rate zoo in Evansville. Much of the zoo's infrastructure was created in the 1930's and the 1940's via federally funded programs such as the National Youth Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the Works Progress Administration. These programs helped create the Helfrich Field Shelter House, many of the animal barns and exhibits, paths, bridges, and soil conservation projects.

#### WILLARD LIBRARY

Established in 1885, the Willard Library is the oldest public library building in Indiana. The three-acre site also includes a scenic courtyard.

#### THE PAGODA

Established in 1912, The Pagoda is a park pavilion structure overlooking the Ohio River. The structure has recently been renovated to serve as offices for the Convention and Visitor Bureau, and as a visitor center with a rooftop viewing terrace. The Pagoda is located on the grounds of the Museum of Art, History, and Science building.

#### NEIGHBORHOODS

The city has many distinct neighborhoods of varying heritage and history, and by interacting with these neighborhoods individually, the Parks Department receives community-specific feedback directing program and facility improvements for the respective neighborhood parks. Collaboration also creates a sense of ownership that has been shown to improve stewardship, curb vandalism, and improve security. Notable historic communities include Babytown (German heritage) and Baptistown (African-American heritage).

## Social and Economic Factors

Understanding the population (demographics) and spatially where people reside was critical to setting a baseline for facility and park needs. Over the past few years, the population of Evansville has remained relatively constant. The slow growth rate, if continued, will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to adjust and respond to the existing population relatively easily (in comparison with a rapidly growing city). Population and growth characteristics indicate gender, age, race, ethnicity, and level of education. An equity analysis indicates areas within the city that possess special needs as a result of

criteria culled from the American Community Survey (ACS). These factors contributed to determining which types of programs and facilities should be offered to cater to the composition of the community.

Previous planning efforts documented park facilities, therefore this study does not include a comprehensive inventory of each park site. Instead, previous planning efforts were reviewed to influence the recommendations. Mapping and Geospatial Information Systems (GIS) modeling were used to illustrate the existing facilities and refine park types. Other existing plans, including the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) supplemented exploration of trends, goals, and a vision for how Evansville will contribute to the overall purpose of parks and recreation in the State of Indiana.

## Population and Growth Characteristics

The City of Evansville functions as the commercial, medical, and cultural hub of the Southwestern Indiana with a broad economic base that reaches into the tri-state region of Illinois-Indiana-Kentucky. As such, the parks and recreation facilities of Evansville are often used by people across the region and serve a diverse population. According to the *Comprehensive Plan*, large percentages of the surrounding communities commute to Evansville for work. A demographic comparison of the tri-state area, and an equity analysis of Evansville were completed to better understand local and regional constituents.

The City has not experienced much population growth since 1990, when its population was 126,252 according to the US Census Bureau. The 2013 population, as noted by the US Census Bureau was 120,310. The following sections examine characteristics of the population with geographic references to where certain populations reside.

## AGE

The City of Evansville has a relatively evenly distributed population, with the 20 to 29 age bracket having the largest percentage of the population at 16.7 percent and the 10 to 19 age bracket having the lowest percentage of the population at 10.4 percent. All other population brackets are within a range of 11.3 to 13.4 percentage of the population.

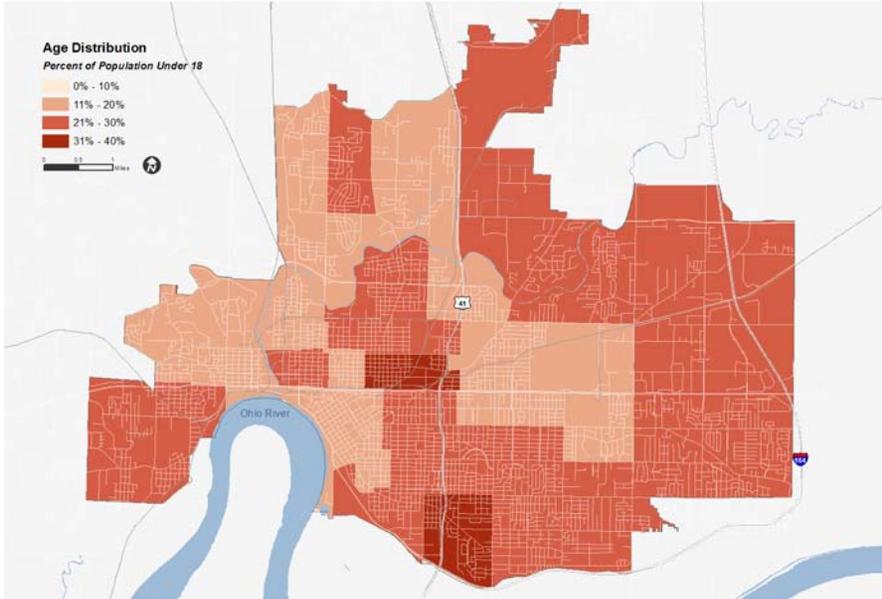
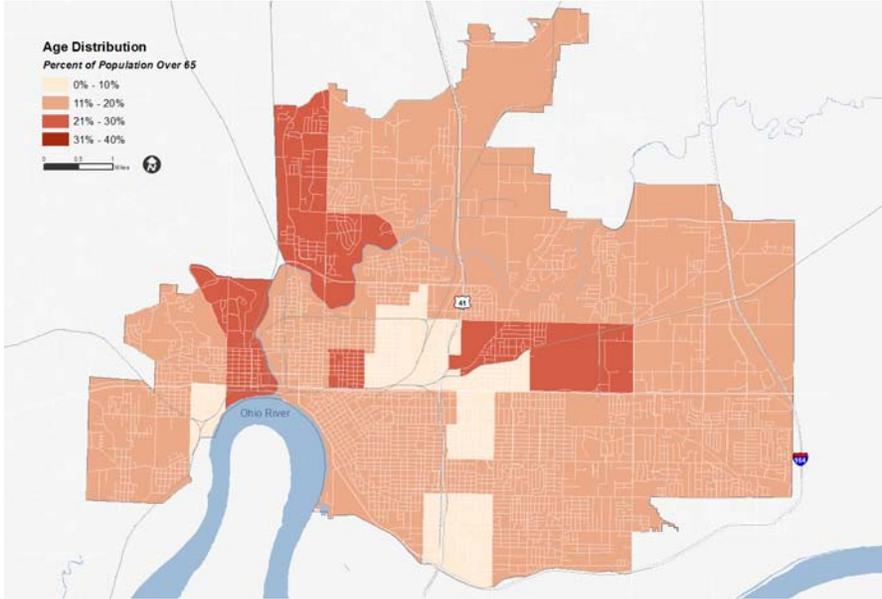
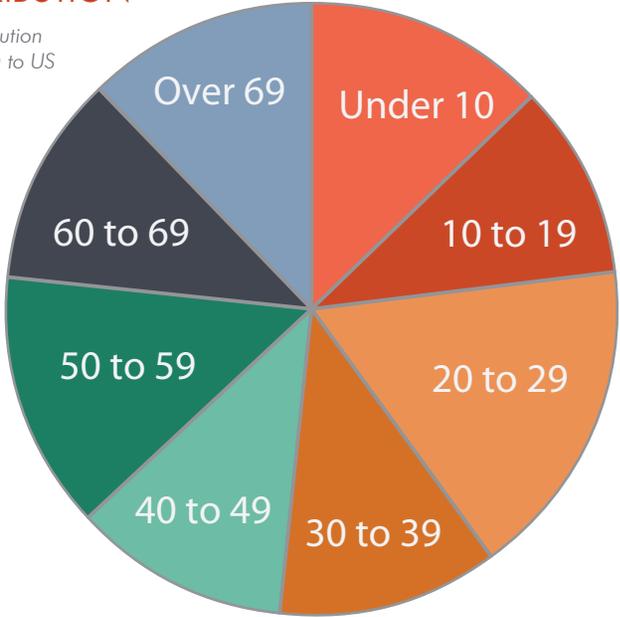
CHARACTERISTIC	EVANSVILLE	INDIANA	ILLINOIS	KENTUCKY
MALE POPULATION	48.2	49.3	49	49.2
FEMALE POPULATION	51.8	50.7	51	50.8
UNDER 5 YEARS	6.8	6.7	6.5	6.4
5 TO 19	16.5	21.2	20.8	20.1
20 TO 64	60.2	65.8	66.6	66.6
65 AND OLDER	16.4	13	12.6	13.3
MEDIAN AGE	35.5	36.9	36.6	38
WHITE	85.5	86.9	74.1	89.8
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	14.3	10.1	15.3	8.6
AMERICAN INDIANA AND ALASKA NATIVE	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.7
ASIAN	1.2	1.9	5.2	1.4
NATIVE HAWAIIAN AND OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	N	0.0	0.1	0.1
SOME OTHER RACE	1.3	2.3	6.7	1.1
HISPANIC OR LATINO	3.1	6.0	15.9	3.0
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE	28.5	31.3	27.7	33.5
BACHELORS DEGREE OR HIGHER	9.0	8.8	12.3	7.8

Information gathered from the 2010 US Census.

Age can also be mapped to indicate areas of concentration for specific groups. Maps to the right geographically illustrate concentrations of the over 65 and under 18 groups. These two groups are often key users of parks and recreation programs and facilities. Identifying geographic concentrations of these ages will lead to recommendations suitable for these populations in proximity to where they live.

### AGE DISTRIBUTION

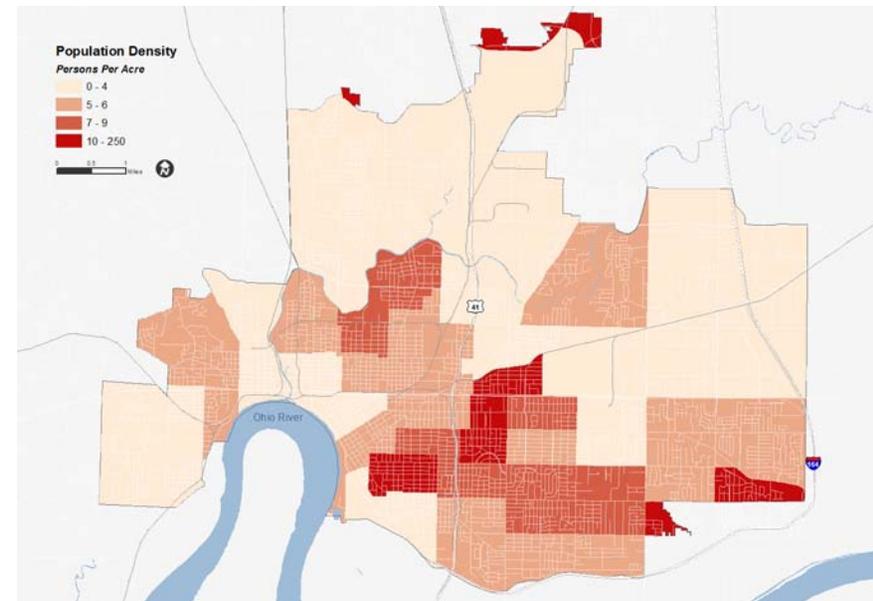
Population distribution by age according to US Census Data.



## POPULATION DENSITY

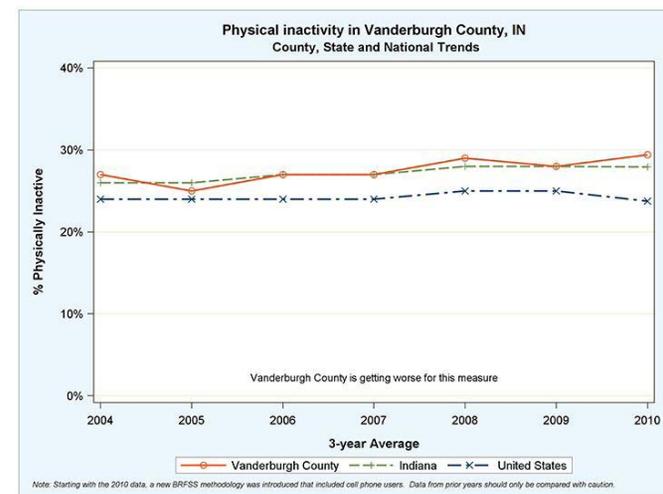
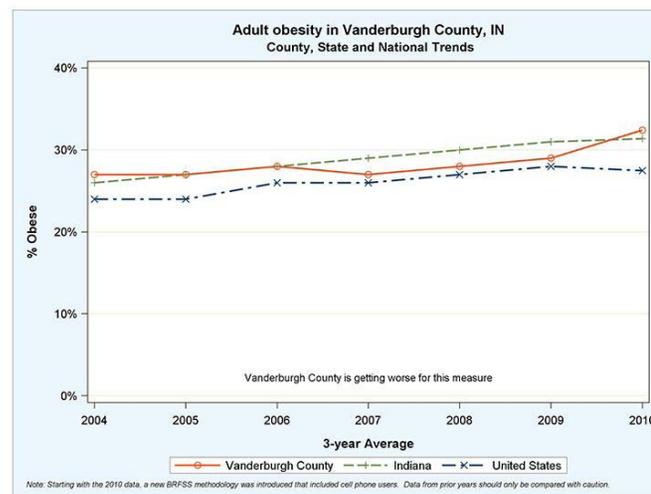
The map to the right illustrates the population density (persons per acre) for the City of Evansville as of the 2012 American Community Survey. Evansville is located in the third most densely populated county (Vanderburgh), with a citywide average population density of 4.2 persons per acre. The least dense areas in Evansville exist mostly on the periphery of the city to the north, east, and west; however, there are also low density areas downtown and north of the Ohio River.

More densely populated areas, with densities from 10 to 15 persons per acre, are located in the central and southern areas of the city near the University of Evansville and along Washington Avenue and Newburgh Road.



## HEALTH CHARACTERISTICS

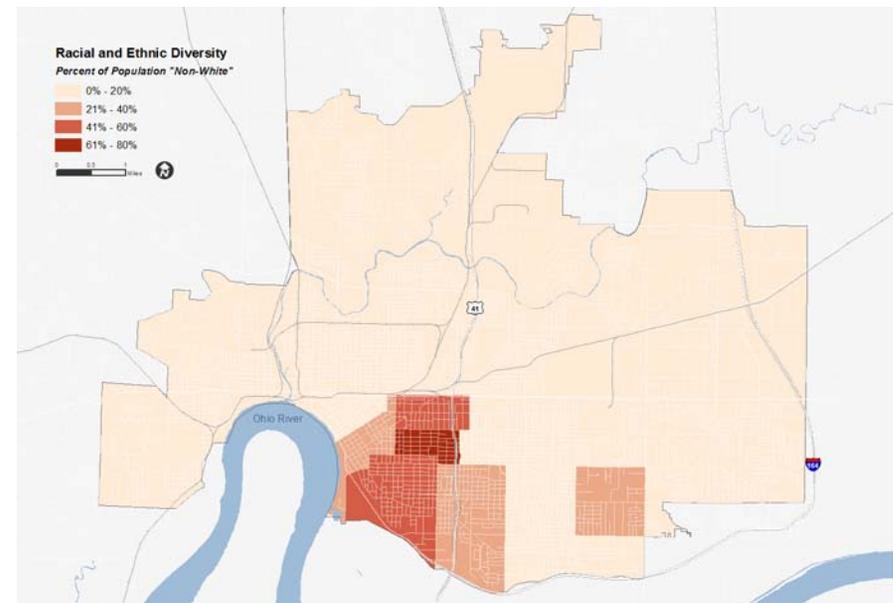
In keeping with the pillar of Health and Wellness, it was imperative to understand any overarching themes in health risk behaviors. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) reveals adult obesity and physical inactivity in Vanderburgh County are not only above the national average, but are trending up instead of down. This can lead to increased health care costs, heart disease, and lower life expectancy. Parks and Recreation facilities and services can activate communities and provide programming focused on health (fitness and food choices) to combat this trend.



## Equity Analysis

### RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY

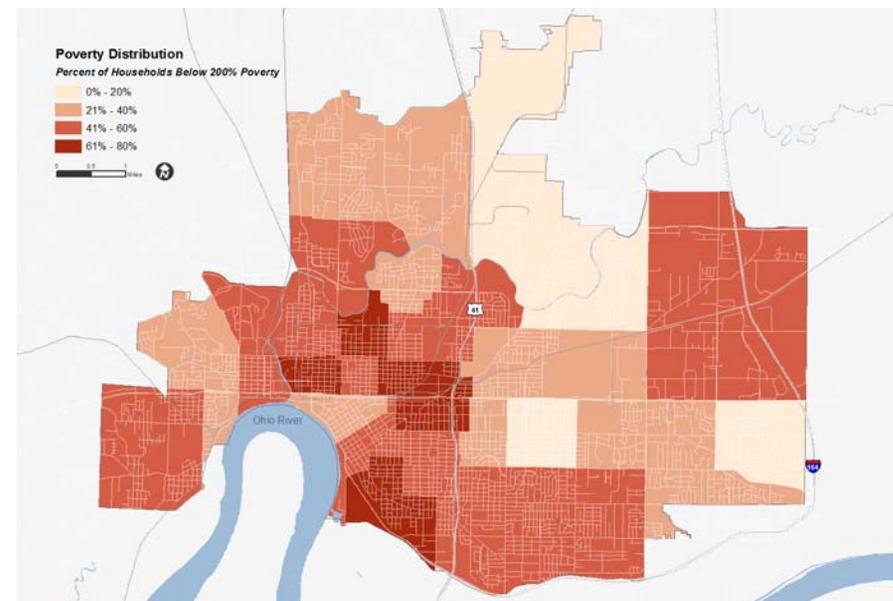
This map shows the percentage of Evansville residents who identified themselves as “non-white” in the 2012 American Community Survey. The map indicates that the largest percentage of non-white residents live in the downtown area to the west of Highway 41. The highest percentage of non-white residents (60 to 80 percent) live between Lincoln Avenue and Washington Avenue, surrounding Bayard park. Outside of downtown, a large majority of Evansville residents are predominately “white” (80 to 100 percent). The highest percentage of white residents are located north of the North Park Shopping Center along N First Avenue.

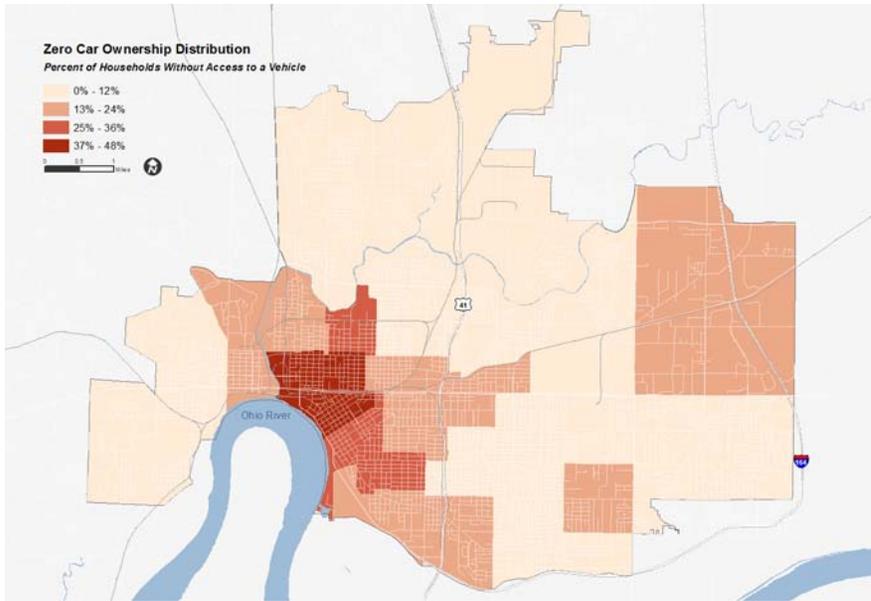


### POVERTY

The median household income in 2010 for Indiana was \$43,993 and for Vanderburgh County was \$36,832. Comparatively, the median household income for Evansville was \$35,947 in 2010.

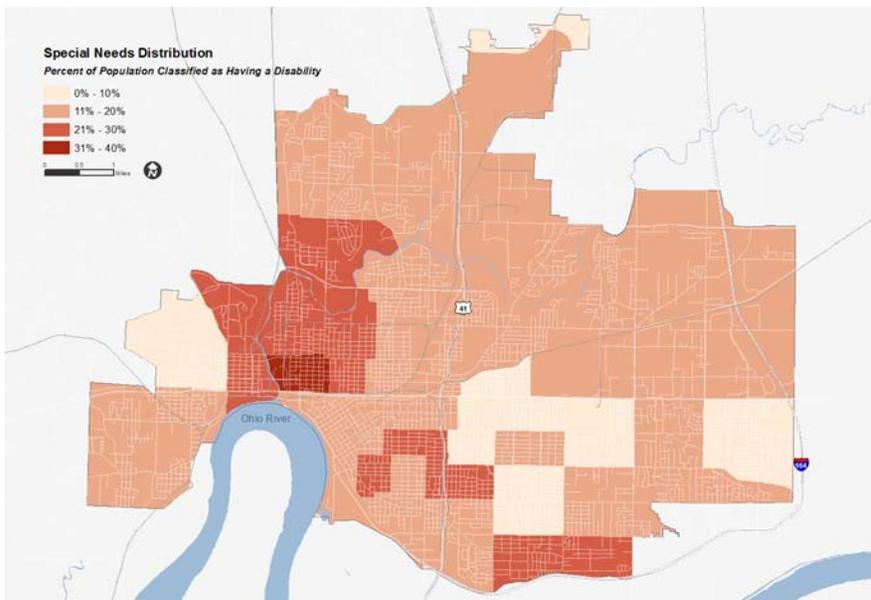
This map indicates the percentage of Evansville residents that are classified in the 2012 ACS as being at 200 percent of the national poverty level or below (the national poverty level in 2012 was \$11,170). Many of the locations throughout the city have a 20 percent or greater percentage of residents that classify as having a median household income less than the poverty level. The highest levels of poverty (61 to 80 percent) are located in the areas surrounding the intersection of Highway 41 and 62, Deaconess Hospital, Lamasco Park, and to the south of downtown. The lowest percentage (0 to 20 percent) of residents that are classified as having a median household income less than the poverty level are located in the areas surrounding Melody Hill.





## POPULATION WITHOUT ACCESS TO A VEHICLE

This map shows the percentage of households without access to a vehicle. On average, 9.7 percent of Evansville households do not have access to a vehicle. The highest percentages of these households are located downtown and just north of downtown (south of Columbia Street), where zero vehicle access makes up 42 to 48 percent of the households. Adjacent to these areas, 26 to 34 percentage of the households around Garvin Park and Washington Street west of Highway 41 also do not have access to a vehicle. Zero vehicle access seemingly dissipates as households fan out from downtown. The census tracts on the periphery of town fall within 0 to 12 percent of households, save for the areas east of Green River Road.



## DISABILITY STATUS

According to the 2010 Census Summary, there are approximately 19,809 residents, or 17.2% of the population, with disability status living in the city. The largest special needs age range is 65 years and older with 7,250 residents or 39.8 percent of the age range. The under 18 years population has 1,383 special needs residents, or 5.5 percent of the age range. As shown here, large portions of Evansville have a 10 percent or greater percentage of special needs residents. The highest percentage of residents are located near Lamasco Park (32 percent) and around the surrounding area (22 to 27 percent). The lowest percentage of special needs residents are located just south of the University of Evansville near Bosse High School (3.5 percent).

## What do these features and factors mean for Evansville?

A few key findings include:

- There are many cultural resources throughout the City.
- The tree population has two significant threats that the parks and recreation department can help curtail.
- The above demographics indicated that almost half of the City's residents are over 49, however many facilities and very few programs cater to these individuals.
- Evansville is not a very wealthy community and therefore should support the health and wellness of their citizens with moderate and low-cost facilities and programs.
- Human health is a critical component that needs to be addressed city-wide and parks and recreation facilities and services should play an integral role in reversing obesity and inactivity.
- The parks and recreation department can enhance connectivity for residents without vehicles by continuing to develop a greenway system.
- There are concentrations of special populations within the City limits who should be surveyed for their particular needs and how parks and recreation can enhance their livability.

# Chapter Three



# Supply Analysis

## Overview

The City of Evansville currently provides citizens with 65 parks and 21 special facilities (including a zoo) and five golf facilities. Many of the parks are small mini-parks with single uses, such as playgrounds. Wesselman Park and Woods is the largest park in the system, providing a variety of uses from passive to active recreation. This is the most popular park in the system with the widest reaching service area.

This section inventories the facilities and programs offered within the city limits of Evansville.

## Park Classifications and Typical Criteria

It is common practice to use a classification system and designation of park zones to help define the park types offered and where they may be found within the city. As Evansville continues to grow and diversify, it will need to provide a variety of parks and facilities where demand increases. The following park classifications were derived from the *Indiana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan* and tailored to City of Evansville based on current facilities and demand for new ones.

### MINI-PARKS

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- 0 – 1 acres
- ¼ mile service area
- Should promote partnerships with neighborhoods, homeowners association, or businesses for maintenance
- Often used in high density area (e.g. downtown)
- Parking is uncommon

### NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

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- 1 – 20 acres
- 1.0 mile service area
- Incorporated in or adjacent to residential areas
- Should promote partnerships with neighborhoods or homeowners association for maintenance
- Parking (not typical in neighborhood park) will vary

### COMMUNITY PARK

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- 20 – 50 Acres
- 1.5 mile service area
- Service large portions of the community
- Should offer support services such as restrooms, concessions, and parking
- Should be accessible by trail, sidewalk, and street networks
- Should promote partnerships for community use
- Should accommodate active and passive recreation activities
- Parking size will vary based upon components

### REGIONAL PARK

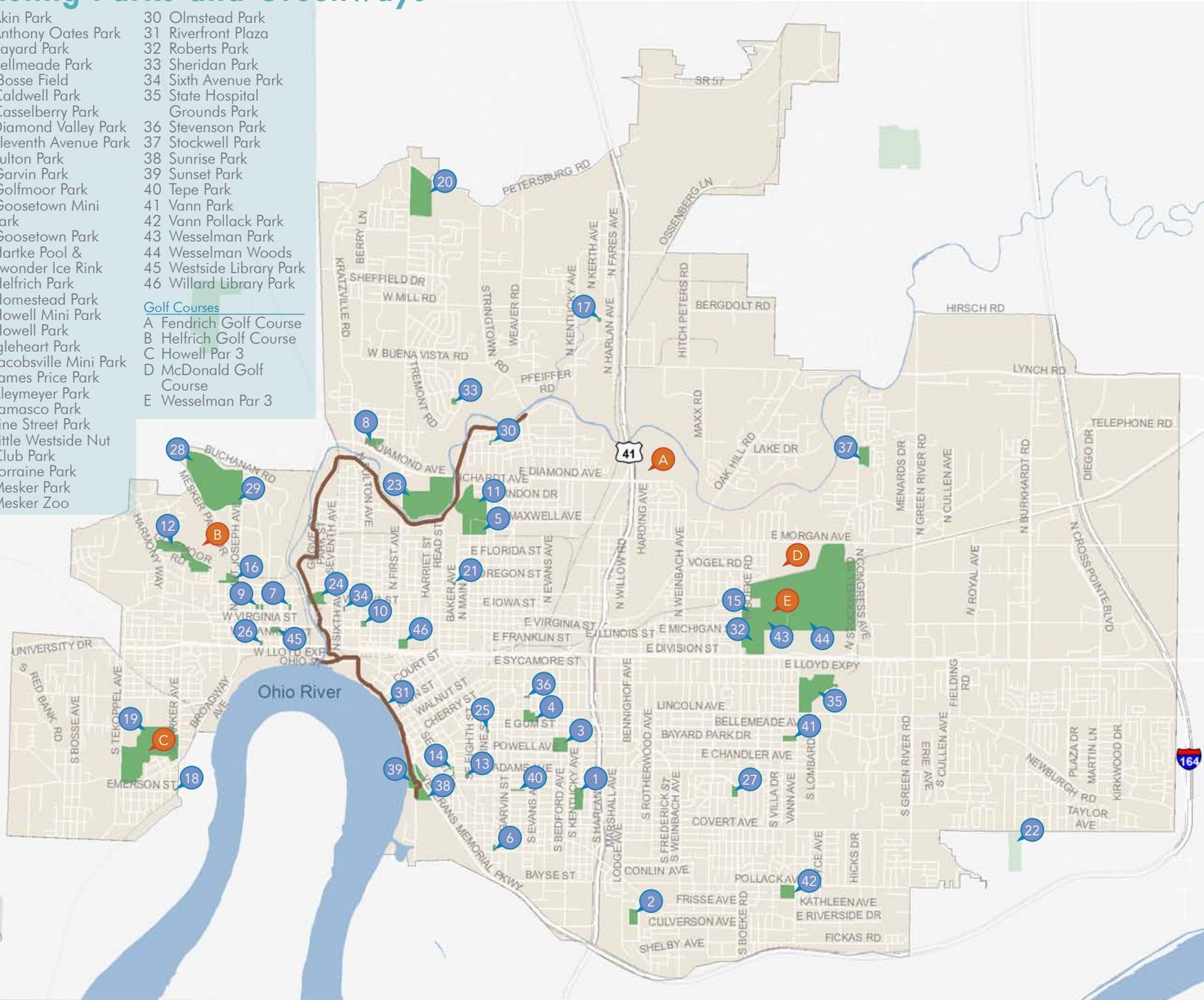
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- 50– 100+ Acres
- Services the needs of multiple communities
- Support services such as restrooms, concessions, and parking should be provided
- Examples of regional parks include, but are not limited to: county parks, state parks and natural areas
- Typical activities include picnicking; boating; using nature and greenway trails; nature study; and, in some cases, camping
- Parking size will vary based on components

# Existing Parks and Greenways

- 1 Akin Park
- 2 Anthony Oates Park
- 3 Bayard Park
- 4 Bellmeade Park
- 5 Bosse Field
- 6 Caldwell Park
- 7 Casselberry Park
- 8 Diamond Valley Park
- 9 Eleventh Avenue Park
- 10 Fulton Park
- 11 Garvin Park
- 12 Golfmoor Park
- 13 Goosetown Mini Park
- 14 Goosetown Park
- 15 Hartke Pool & Swonder Ice Rink
- 16 Helfrich Park
- 17 Homestead Park
- 18 Howell Mini Park
- 19 Howell Park
- 20 Igleheart Park
- 21 Jacobsville Mini Park
- 22 James Price Park
- 23 Kleymeyer Park
- 24 Lamasco Park
- 25 Line Street Park
- 26 Little Westside Nut Club Park
- 27 Lorraine Park
- 28 Mesker Park
- 29 Mesker Zoo
- 30 Olmstead Park
- 31 Riverfront Plaza
- 32 Roberts Park
- 33 Sheridan Park
- 34 Sixth Avenue Park
- 35 State Hospital Grounds Park
- 36 Stevenson Park
- 37 Stockwell Park
- 38 Sunrise Park
- 39 Sunset Park
- 40 Tepe Park
- 41 Vann Park
- 42 Vann Pollack Park
- 43 Wesselman Park
- 44 Wesselman Woods
- 45 Westside Library Park
- 46 Willard Library Park

- Golf Courses
- A Fendrich Golf Course
  - B Helfrich Golf Course
  - C Howell Par 3
  - D McDonald Golf Course
  - E Wesselman Par 3



## Existing Inventory: Parks, Greenways, and Programs

### PARKS

The Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation completed a comprehensive inventory of parks during previous planning projects. Therefore, this plan did not include an evaluation of each site. The following matrix documents the presence of facilities and amenities in each park.

NAME	LOCATION	PARK TYPE*	ACERAGE	PLAYGROUND	PICNIC PAVILION OR SHELTER	OPEN SPACE	WALKING PATH	BASKETBALL COURTS	HORSESHOE PITS	SWINGSET	POOL	SOCCER FIELDS	FORMAL GARDENS	GREENWAY TRAILHEAD	LAKE	FISHING OVERLOOK	BASEBALL FIELD	TENNIS COURTS	SOFTBALL FIELD	YOUTH BASEBALL FIELDS	MINI-GOLF	FOOTBALL FIELD	HANDBALL	DISC GOLF	TRAILS	AQUATICS CENTER
Akin Park	Parkside Drive & Taylor Avenue	N	9.7	x				x																		
Anthony Oates Park	2439 Sunburst Boulevard	N	6.8	x				x			x															
Bayard Park	Bayard Park Drive & Kentucky Avenue	N	10.7	x			x																			
Bellemeade Park	750 Bellemeade Avenue	N	7	x							x						x									
Caldwell Park	S. Governor & Sweetser Avenue	N	1	x	x			x																		
Casselberry Park	Ninth Avenue & W. Iowa Street	M	0.95	x					x																	
Diamond Valley Park	1100 Fulton Parkway	N	6.2	x			x	x							x	x										
Eleventh Avenue Park	Eleventh Avenue & W. Virginia Avenue	N	1.7	x				x																		
Fulton Park	Fulton Avenue & Franklin Street	N	1.8	x	x			x																		
Garvin Park	1600 North Main Street	C	40.6		x			x			x			x				x							x	
Goebel Soccer Complex	6800 N Green River Road	R	81.9									x														
Golfmoor Park & Lakview Tennis	Golfmoor Road & Lakeview Boulevard	C	28.8					x										x					x			

\*Park Type codes correspond with classifications listed on 2-7. M = Mini-Parks N=Neighborhood Park C=Community Park R = Regional Park

NAME	LOCATION	PARK TYPE*	ACERAGE	PLAYGROUND	PICNIC PAVILION OR SHELTER	OPEN SPACE	WALKING PATH	BASKETBALL COURTS	HORSESHOE PITS	SWINGSET	POOL	SOCCER FIELDS	FORMAL GARDENS	GREENWAY TRAILHEAD	LAKE	FISHING OVERLOOK	BASEBALL FIELD	TENNIS COURTS	SOFTBALL FIELD	YOUTH BASEBALL FIELDS	MINI-GOLF	FOOTBALL FIELD	HANDBALL	DISC GOLF	TRAILS	AQUATICS CENTER
Goosetown Mini-Park	Putnam St and Jefferson Ave	M	0.61	x			x																			
Goosetown Park	Adams Ave and SE 2nd Street	M	0.86																							
Helfrich Park	St. Joseph Avenue & Marland Street	N	6.5	x							x															
Homestead Park	Homestead Avenue and Evergreen Avenue	M	0.88	x																						
Howell Mini Park	S. Barker Avenue & Emerson Street	M	0.37	x																						
Howell Park	Barker Avenue & Broadway Avenue	R	93.2					x			x															
Igleheart Park	6101 N. First Avenue	C	45	x				x			x							x							x	
Jacobsville Mini-Park	Baker and W. Maryland Street	M	0.44																							
Kleymeyer Park	2301 N. First Avenue	R	72.4																x			x				
Lamasco Park	Seventh Avenue & Delaware Street	N	9.4	x									x						x							
Line Street Park	761 Line Street	M	0.57		x																					
Little Westside Nut Club Park	Eleventh Avenue and Indiana Avenue	M	0.8	x				x																		
Lorraine Park	2399 S. Boeke Road	N	3.3	x	x						x															
Mesker Park	1555 Mesker Park Drive	R	50.2	x	x																			x		

\*Park Type codes correspond with classifications listed on 2-7. M = Mini-Parks N=Neighborhood Park C=Community Park R = Regional Park

NAME	LOCATION	PARK TYPE*	ACERAGE	PLAYGROUND	PICNIC PAVILION OR SHELTER	OPEN SPACE	WALKING PATH	BASKETBALL COURTS	HORSESHOE PITS	SWINGSET	POOL	SOCCER FIELDS	FORMAL GARDENS	GREENWAY TRAILHEAD	LAKE	FISHING OVERLOOK	BASEBALL FIELD	TENNIS COURTS	SOFTBALL FIELD	YOUTH BASEBALL FIELDS	MINI-GOLF	FOOTBALL FIELD	HANDBALL	DISC GOLF	TRAILS	AQUATICS CENTER
Olmstead Park	2774 N Heidelberg Ave	M	0.6	x		x																				
Price Park	Covert Avenue	C	24.2	x	x						x															
Riverfront Park	Fulton Avenue	N	4.9				x						x													
Sheridan Park	3403 Sheridan Road	N	1.5			x				x																
Sixth Avenue Park	Sixth Avenue & Virginia Street	M	0.6	x	x																					
State Hospital Grounds Park	Vann Avenue & Lincoln Avenue	C	41.7																x			x	x	x		
Stevenson Park	E. Cherry Street & Morton Avenue	M	0.72	x																						
Stockwell Park	Stockwell Road	N	9.3	x							x							x								
Sunrise Park	Waterworks Rd & Riverside Drive	N	8.3	x								x														
Sunset East Park	Riverside Drive & Shawnee Drive	N	13.1	x																						
Tepe - Mary C. Kixmiller Park	1212 S. Garvin Street	N	1.2	x	x																					
Vann Park	Vann Avenue & Bayard Park Drive	N	4	x	x																					
Vann-Pollack Park	Vann Avenue & Pollack Avenue	N	9.4		x			x									x									
Wesselman Park Complex	551 N. Boeke Road	R	99.2	x															x							
Wesselman Woods Nature Preserve	552 N. Boeke Road	R	232.4																							
Westside Library Park	Franklin Street & Wabash Avenue	N	2.82				x																			
Willard Library Park	21 N. First Avenue	N	4.63				x					x														

\*Park Type codes correspond with classifications listed on 2-7. M = Mini-Parks N=Neighborhood Park C=Community Park R = Regional Park

## GOLF COURSES, DRIVING RANGE, AND MINI-GOLF

Each golf course is listed below with facility details.

NAME	LOCATION	FACILITIES
FENDRICH GOLF COURSE	1900 Diamond Avenue	18 Holes, Par 70, 5,791 yards
HELFRICH GOLF COURSE	1550 Mesker Park Drive	18 Holes, Par 71, 5,324 yards
HOWELL PAR 3 COURSE	1045 S. Barker Avenue	9 Holes, Par 3 and miniature golf course
MCDONALD GOLF COURSE	2905 E. Morgan Avenue	9 Holes, Par 36, 3,265 yards
WESSELMAN PAR 3 COURSE	551 N. Boeke Road	18 Holes, Par 3, 1,748 yards

## GREENWAYS

Only one named greenway is constructed. It is segmented into corridors as indicated below.

NAME	LENGTH (MILES)	WIDTH (FEET)	TYPE
PIGEON CREEK GREENWAY PASSAGE	6.75	10	Paved
MIDDLE LEVEE CORRIDOR	1.7	10	Paved
RIVERFRONT CORRIDOR	1.5	10	Paved
INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR	3.5	10	Paved

## TRAILHEADS

Pigeon Creek greenway is accessible via the below trailheads.

Garvin	Uhorn	Lamasco
Mead Johnson	Sunrise Park	





### SPECIAL FACILITIES

The following table lists facilities categorized as “special” due to the unique offerings of facilities.

NAME	LOCATION	FACILITIES
CK NEWSOME COMMUNITY CENTER	100 E. Walnut Street	Room Rentals
GRESHAM MEMORIAL HOME	2 Wedeking Avenue (Garvin Park)	Historic home
ANGEL MOUNDS BOAT LAUNCH	Lynn Road & Ohio River	Public Boat Launch
DOGTOWN BOAT LAUNCH	Old Henderson Road & Ohio River	Public Boat Launch
SWONDER ICE ARENA	209 N. Boeke Road	Ice Rink, Fitness Center, Figure Skating, Ice Hockey
MESKER PARK ZOO	1545 Mesker Park Drive	Zoo and Botanical Gardens

### EXISTING PROGRAMS

#### ENERGIZE EVANSVILLE

Energize Evansville is an initiative targeted at incorporating healthy activities throughout the city to enable residents to live more active lives. The Parks and Recreation Department has enlisted the help of over fifty local health experts, nutritionists, and other health-conscious minds to help achieve the goals of Energize Evansville.

A major portion of the Energize Evansville initiative allows the public to get active in the City’s parks and other locations. Its purpose is to bring people together and raise awareness about health and the city at the same time. Fitness in the Park is being coordinated by the Parks and Recreation Department and will include a new location every month.

Other scheduled programs are listed on page 3-10.

PROGRAMS CONDUCTED BY THE PARKS DEPARTMENT	AGE SERVED	SEASON	WHERE HELD	ATTENDANCE
CAMP SWONDER	6-12	Summer	Swonder Ice Arena	670
SWIM TEAMS	5-65	Summer	Neighborhood Pools/Lloyd Pool	500
PLAYGROUND PROGRAM	5-13	Summer	Various Locations	800
ADULT BASKETBALL	18-60	Fall	CK Newsome Center	80
ADULT BASKETBALL	18-65	Winter	CK Newsome Center	80
ADULT SOFTBALL	18-70	Spring	Lamasco, Wesselman, Kleymeyer, Igleheart	900
ADULT SOFTBALL	18-70	Summer	Lamasco, Wesselman, Kleymeyer, Igleheart	1520
ADULT SOFTBALL	18-70	Fall	Lamasco, Wesselman, Kleymeyer, Igleheart	980
FLAG FOOTBALL	18-45	Spring/Fall	Goebel Soccer Complex	63
PICKLEBALL	21-80	Summer/Fall/Winter/Spring	CK Newsome Center	700
ADULT SOCCER	17-60	Spring/Summer/Fall	Goebel Soccer Complex	224
SAND VOLLEYBALL	17-65	Summer/Fall	Wesselman Park	536
INDOOR VOLLEYBALL	17-60	Spring/Fall/Winter	CK Newsome Center	846
YOUTH HOCKEY	4-18	Fall/Winter/Spring	Swonder Ice Arena	350
ADULT HOCKEY	18-81	Fall/Winter/Spring	Swonder Ice Arena	140

PROGRAMS CONDUCTED BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS USING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES	AGE SERVED	WHERE HELD
YOUTH BASEBALL	7-15	Garvin Park, Golfmoor Park, Helfrich Park, Highland Park, State Hospital Park, Vann-Pollack Park
ADULT LACROSSE	18-55	Goebel Soccer Complex
YOUTH SOFTBALL	7-15	Golfmoor Park, Howell Park
HIGH SCHOOL SOFTBALL	14-18	Howell Park
YOUTH FOOTBALL	7-12	Kleymeyer Park
YOUTH SOCCER	7-15	Price Park, State Hospital Park

# Chapter Four



# Accessibility

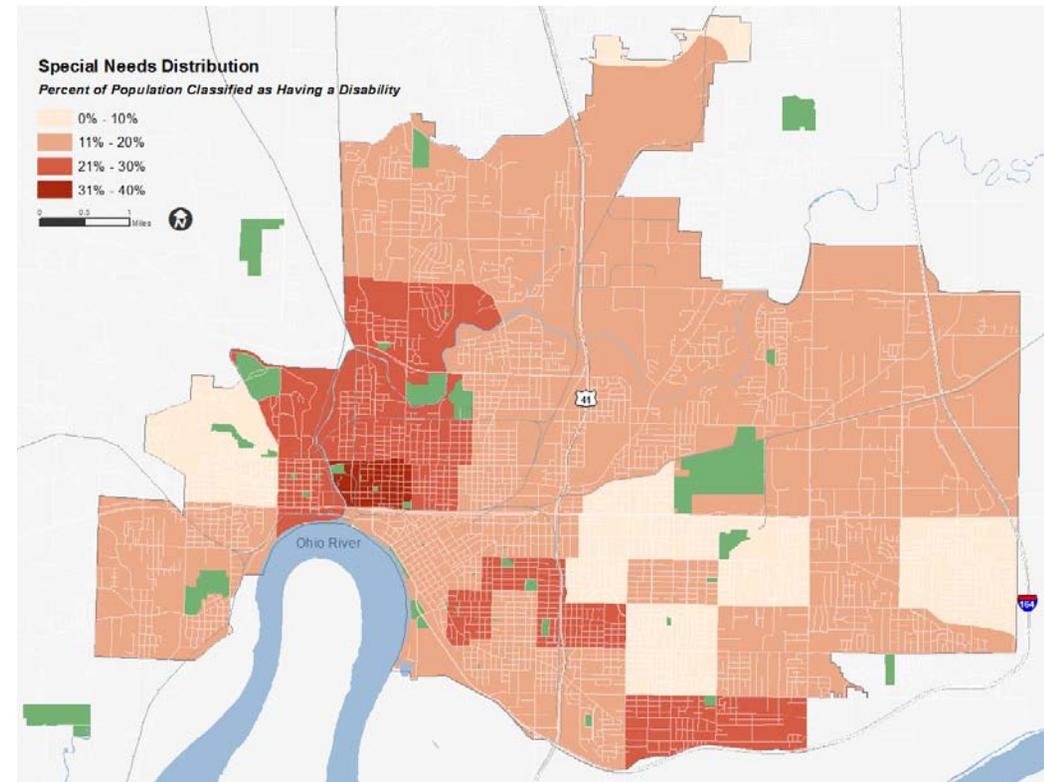
## Overview

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President of the United States on July 26, 1990. This legislation extends civil rights protections to people with disabilities and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all aspects of employment, in accessing public services such as transportation and recreation, and guaranteeing access to public accommodations, commercial facilities, and telecommunications.

According to the 2013 American Community Survey, there are approximately 19,809 residents, or 17.2 percent of the population in Evansville, that classify as having a hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living disability. The following are the breakdowns per age group:

- Ages 5 to 17: 1,380 residents or 1.17 percent of the population
- Ages 18 to 64: 9,653 residents or 8.21 percent of the population
- Ages 65 and older: 6,890 residents or 5.86 percent of the population

As shown in the Special Needs Distribution Map, large portions of Evansville have a 10 percent or greater group of residents that classify under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The highest percentages of residents are located near Lamasco Park (32 percent) and in the surrounding area (22 to 27 percent). The lowest percentages of special needs residents are located just south of the University of Evansville near Bosse High School (3.5 percent).



Current ADA leadership includes Diane B. Clements, the Executive Director of the Human Relation Commission and the standing Disability Advisory Board for the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County. In order to meet the recreational and park needs of visitors with special needs, it is the goal of the Disability Advisory Board and the Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation Director, Denise A. Johnson, to offer barrier-free programs, services, and facilities that are inclusive of all users whenever financially and physically feasible. The following sections discuss the results of previous studies documenting ADA compliance for sites and parks operated and maintained by the Evansville Parks Department.

## Prior Studies

### EVANSVILLE PARKS AND ACCESSIBILITY EVALUATION

In 2014, a group of graduate occupational therapy students from the University of Southern Indiana evaluated park and play structures throughout the City of Evansville. The resulting Evansville Parks Accessibility Evaluation study uses ADA standards to identify potential barriers to fully participating within parks and on playgrounds including: parking lots, restrooms, pathways, and playground equipment. The study suggests way to improve the accessibility of park and play structures currently available in Wesselman Park Complex, Garvin Park, Otter Park, Howell Park, Sunrise Park/Kids Kingdom, and Sunset Park East.

#### WESSELMAN PARK COMPLEX

- Add curb cuts and replace sidewalk
- Regrade curb ramps to 1':12"
- Install ADA accessible swing
- Adjust handrail positions to allow space for wheelchair maneuvering
- Insert a paved pathway and accessible ramp/curb cut at the playground next to the shelter house
- Install bathroom signs with the International Symbol of Accessibility and braille
- Adjust paper towel, toilet paper, and soap dispensers to a more accessible height

#### GARVIN PARK

- Add handicap accessible parking spaces and curb cuts from the street
- Sidewalks should be installed on either side of roadways leading to the park
- Add accessible ground play equipment, such as parallel bars and water or sand tables
- Install ADA accessible swing

#### OTTER PARK

- Lower ground play features to a more accessible height
- Spread mulch evenly
- Improve sidewalk access to the park

#### HOWELL PARK

- Replace sand surface in playground #2 with more suitable materials such as mulch/wood chips, rubber tiles, or poured in place rubber
- Construct ramps to picnic area and near the pool and basketball areas
- Install ADA accessible swing
- Add handicap marked spots near playground and shelter house
- Install bathroom signs with the International Symbol of Accessibility and Braille
- Adjust paper towel, toilet paper, and soap dispensers to a more accessible height

#### SUNRISE PARK/KIDS KINGDOM

- Frequently rake the mulch to create an even ground surface
- Adjust ground features to increase maneuverability for wheelchairs
- Install handicap accessible parking spots with proper signs, markings, and loading zone
- Repaint parking lot lines

#### SUNSET PARK EAST

- Create an accessible route of travel from the street to the playground, including curb cuts where appropriate
- Replace ground surface with more suitable materials such as mulch/wood chips, rubber tiles, or poured in place rubber
- Install ADA accessible swing

## COMMON ADA IMPROVEMENTS IDENTIFIED IN THE STUDY

In general, common ADA improvements that need to be made system wide include:

- Playground resurfacing
- Sidewalk and path surfaces
- Provision and designation of ADA parking spaces
- Access into building, shelters, and other structures
- Provision of accessible playground amenities

In some cases, ADA requirements for playground amenities and parking designation are being met; however, other facilities are lacking accessible playground equipment and the provision of (and designation of) appropriate parking spaces. Barriers to existing public accommodations must be removed to improve accessibility, where feasible. If accessibility improvements are not achievable, alternative methods of providing access or service must be identified and offered.

## SELF AND CONSULTANT ASSESSMENTS

In 1993, the Department of Parks and Recreation completed a self-evaluation for the conformance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. In addition, a consultant conducted an assessment of all major outdoor facilities managed and operated by the City of Evansville in 2008. The study reviewed accessibility and identified facilities that are not in compliance with ADA standards.

The self-evaluation, consultant, and academic studies conducted on ADA accessibility and standards are a crucial component to achieving universal access to the 65 plus sites and parks managed by the Parks Department. The Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation and the Board of Park Commissioners worked to implement the recommended ADA improvements contained in this report.

## PUBLIC NOTICE AND GRIEVANCES

Public notices of ADA requirements are provided through the Human Relations Commission for the City of Evansville. The City website contains a wealth of information on human rights, how to file complaints, and ordinances and regulations. The main page of the website can be found here: <http://evansville.in.gov/index.aspx?page=55>.

A brochure link is provided on the website with details about rights and the following process for filing a complaint:

**WHO** - Any person claiming to be aggrieved by a discriminatory practice or act contrary to the provisions of the City-County law may file a complaint with the City-County Human Relations Commission (CCHRC).

**WHEN** - A complaint must be filed within ninety (90) days from the date of occurrence of the discriminatory act (except in housing cases). A complaint alleging a discriminatory housing practice must be filed with in one (1) year after the discriminatory act has occurred.

**HOW** - Complaints may be filed by either personal delivery, mail, or fax. If needed, the CCHRC staff will provide assistance in drafting and filing the complaint. The complaint must be in writing and signed under penalties of perjury.

**WHERE** - The Human Relations Commission, 1 NW Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room 209, Evansville, IN 47708  
Office: (812) 436-4927  
Hearing Impaired: (812) 436-4928 Fax: (812) 436-4929

## Park Access and ADA Accessibility

One of the core values of all parks and recreation departments is social equity - which includes accessibility. However due to deteriorating or inadequate facilities, many of the natural features and park facilities that residents and visitors enjoy are inaccessible for individuals with physical challenges. The aging “baby boomer” generation has brought these issues to the national forefront recently and Evansville is no exception.

The community survey revealed that one of the main reasons people do not use parks or facilities is due to a lack of accessibility - particularly the difficulty seniors and mobility challenged individuals have accessing and circulating within parks. Issues such as missing curb cuts, uneven pavement, and challenging slopes often act as barriers to enjoying park facilities. With 16.4 percent of the population being 65 and older and 17.2 percent classifying themselves as a special population, improving the ADA accessibility of the park system is an important recommendation of this Plan.

Additionally, a large percentage of the survey participants indicated the desire to bike or walk from their homes to parks and stated that greenways, bike lanes, and improved crossings at intersections would encourage active transportation. Improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities leading to a park (including curb ramps and truncated domes) would encourage both active transportation and park use.

In future self evaluations, the following parks should be examined for ADA accessibility due to the frequency of use:

- Wesselman (included in the 2014 Study)
- Garvin (Included in the 2014 Study)
- Kid's Kingdom (Included in the 2014 Study)
- Howell (Included in the 2014 Study)
- Bayard Park (Not included in the 2014 Study)

Due to the proximity of populations with special needs, the following parks should be evaluated:

- Lamasco Park
- Sixth Avenue Park
- Fulton Park
- Willard Library Park

*A copy of the signed 504 is attached to this Plan.*

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# Chapter Five



# Public Participation

## Overview

Public involvement is imperative in parks and recreation planning. In addition to analyzing demographics and comparing trends, there is no better gauge for identifying needs than asking users for their desires, opinions, and ideas. For this plan, public input was gathered by communicating with the Steering Committee, distributing hard-copy and electronic surveys, and attending “piggy-back” events. The electronic survey was accessible via a project website. Members of the steering committee encouraged citizens to participate in the survey process through email, Facebook links, Community Associations, and distribution via the Mayor’s Facebook Page and Twitter feed. The survey remained open from June 16th to September 8th.

The process for public involvement was:

1. Steering Committee Meeting: Kick Off
2. Launch Project Website
3. Launch Survey (distributed online and in hard copy)
4. National Night Out Public Event
5. Analysis of Community Survey
6. Mayor’s Traveling City Hall
7. Steering Committee Meeting: Needs Assessment and Recommendations
8. Steering Committee Draft Plan Review
9. Public Draft Plan Review

## Steering Committee Meeting #1 Kick Off May 20, 2014

The Steering Committee serves as the gateway to the public. Each member was selected based on their connection with the community and unique perspective on how parks and recreation facilities contribute to the livability of Evansville.

During the Kick Off Meeting, nine members of the committee shared why they were interested in being a part of the planning process. They cited reasons from health and wellness to safety and crime prevention. The group shared that the most important components of the process would be an action plan and road map, a comparison of other community budgets, creating connectivity, and providing safe places for kids to play.

The agenda walked the committee through the planning process and vetting key items including the vision and goals. A final list of past plans to review was organized and later entered into the client organizer spreadsheet. Public input methods were also discussed and it was agreed upon to attend a large event to aim for reaching a diverse audience. This was discussed as a better option as citizens typically do not attend public meetings and intercept surveys in parks only reach user groups and fail to answer the critical question of why people do not use Evansville parks.

The committee discussed a survey that would be distributed via the project website; a link on the department website; distributed to friends, family, and acquaintances by the steering committee; posted on the mayors social media outlets, and distributed via hardcopy at the public input event.

Questions for the survey were formulated and distributed to the committee for final comment before creating the final online and paper copy surveys.

### Project Website

A project website was developed to post the vision and goals, announce public involvement, and serve as a portal for the online survey. A comment form was also established and any comments collected throughout the process were forwarded to department staff.

### Community Survey

The community survey was crafted with the assistance of the steering committee, based on the vision and goals of the plan, and aimed toward answer critical questions that will inform the future direction of the department. The hard copy survey is found on this page, a summary can be found starting on page 5-6, and the full data is available in Appendix C.

## The Evansville Parks and Recreation Department wants to hear from you!

What do you like to do? What activities do you enjoy? Where would you like to play?

Please take the time to let us know your ideas so we can provide quality Parks and Recreation experiences to our residents and visitors.

1. Are you an Evansville resident?  
 Yes     No
2. If yes, how long have you lived in Evansville? *Check one.*  
 Less than 3 years     6 - 10 years     Over 15 years  
 3 - 5 years     11 - 15 years     N/A
3. Please provide your zip code \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your gender?     Male     Female
5. What are the ages of the members in your household?  
*Please indicate the number of people in each age group.*  
 Under 5     Age 15 - 19     Age 35 - 44     Over 65  
 Age 5 - 9     Age 20 - 24     Age 45 - 54  
 Age 10 - 14     Age 25 - 34     Age 55 - 64
6. Please check all that apply to your household. We have:  
 Individuals with physical disabilities     Individuals with limited English proficiency  
 Individuals with mental disabilities     Elderly people needing assistance  
 Economically disadvantaged family members     Single parents
7. Do the populations above use Evansville parks and recreation facilities or programs?  
 Yes    Which programs or facilities? \_\_\_\_\_  
 No    Why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not applicable to my family
8. Please share any additional comments about your household special needs or suggestions for the parks and recreation department related to your special needs family members.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you feel safe in Evansville Parks?  
 Yes     No     In some but not all
10. If no, or some from question 9, which park(s) do you not feel safe in and why?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
11. Where would you like to be able to walk or ride your bike?  
*This can be any origin or destination in Evansville, this is not limited to parks. Examples include home, work, shopping, dining, and the names of specific places.*  
 FROM: \_\_\_\_\_ TO: \_\_\_\_\_
12. What factors would encourage you to walk or bike? *Check all that apply.*  
 Trail or greenway access to my home     Bike Lanes  
 Trail or greenway access to where I want to go (park, work, restaurant)     Slower traffic  
 A park closer to my home     Improved crossings at intersections  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
13. How often do you and/or your family members use Evansville parks, trails, or facilities?  
 Daily     Once per month  
 Two - four times per week     Rarely  
 Once per week     Never  
 A few times per month
14. If rarely or never from question 13, why?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
15. How often do you and/or your family members use Evansville programs?  
 Daily     Once per month  
 Two - four times per week     Rarely  
 Once per week     Never  
 A few times per month
16. If rarely or never from question 15, why?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

(CONTINUES ON BACK)

17. Please check the box IF it applies to your participation or knowledge of the below programs. If you have suggestions for improvements of these programs, please share your ideas.

	I/My Family Participates In This Program	I/My Family Did Not Know This Program Existed	Suggestions/Improvements
Ice Skating Lessons			
Public Skating			
Camp Swonder			
Youth Swim Lessons (indoor)			
Youth Swim Lessons (outdoor)			
Swim Teams			
Youth Summer Adventures Too			
Youth/Adult Ice Hockey Leagues			
Energize Evansville/ Fitness in the Park			
Adult Softball			
Adult Sand Volleyball			
Adult Pickleball			
Adult Soccer			
Adult Flag Football			

18. Please tell us which groups are served well by programs and which are underserved.

	Well Served	Underserved	Suggestions For Additional Programs
Youth (0-3)			
Youth (4-12)			
Teens (13-17)			
Adults (18-64)			
Seniors (65 and up)			
Special Needs Populations			

19. What top five (5) activities do you and your family enjoy?

*Please number your top five with 1 as your favorite.*

- |                                                 |                                            |                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatics/Swimming      | <input type="checkbox"/> Biking            | <input type="checkbox"/> Disc Golf               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football               | <input type="checkbox"/> Sightseeing       | <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness Programs        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerobics               | <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Watching     | <input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer            | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Climbing           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Crafts        | <input type="checkbox"/> Softball          | <input type="checkbox"/> Horse Shoes             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking/Hiking/Running | <input type="checkbox"/> Bocce             | <input type="checkbox"/> Badminton               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Walking            | <input type="checkbox"/> Concerts          | <input type="checkbox"/> Ping Pong               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball               | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis            | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing                | <input type="checkbox"/> Camping           | <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure/Ropes Courses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball             | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sailing/Boating        | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing/Kayaking |                                                  |

20. What activities should be added to the parks and recreation department?

*Check all that apply.*

- |                                                 |                                            |                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aquatics/Swimming      | <input type="checkbox"/> Biking            | <input type="checkbox"/> Disc Golf               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Football               | <input type="checkbox"/> Sightseeing       | <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness Programs        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aerobics               | <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Watching     | <input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Golf                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer            | <input type="checkbox"/> Rock Climbing           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Crafts        | <input type="checkbox"/> Softball          | <input type="checkbox"/> Horse Shoes             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking/Hiking/Running | <input type="checkbox"/> Bocce             | <input type="checkbox"/> Badminton               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog Walking            | <input type="checkbox"/> Concerts          | <input type="checkbox"/> Ping Pong               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball               | <input type="checkbox"/> Tennis            | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing                | <input type="checkbox"/> Camping           | <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure/Ropes Courses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball             | <input type="checkbox"/> Volleyball        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sailing/Boating        | <input type="checkbox"/> Canoeing/Kayaking |                                                  |

21. How do you learn about parks, programs, facilities, and/or special events?

- |                                    |                                         |                                      |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook  | <input type="checkbox"/> Website        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twitter   | <input type="checkbox"/> Flyers         | _____                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper | <input type="checkbox"/> Family/Friends |                                      |

22. What would you suggest are the best methods for the parks and recreation department to reach you, your family, and friends with news and announcements about facilities, programs, and events?

\_\_\_\_\_

23. Please let us know any additional thoughts or comments.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



## Analysis of Community Survey

The 2014 survey consisted of 24 questions followed by a free response comment option. Questions were calibrated to identify demographics, assess perception, determine use, understand desires, and comprehend appropriate avenues for outreach. A total of 1,323 responses were recorded from June 16th to September 8th. Overall people showed an interest in activities that would promote more biking and walking, connect them with places to shop and recreate, and often cited Owensboro’s Smothers Park as a great public space. Concerns surfacing in multiple question types include maintenance and safety.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the 1,323 participants, 93 percent indicated they were Evansville citizens with 42 percent male and 58 percent female. Age composition of households indicated which sampling of the population provided feedback on the perception and use questions within this survey. Demographic composition in Chapter Two indicates the survey participants are not a direct representation of the composition of the community, therefore recommendations account for Census data demographic indicators when responding to facility and program recommendations that will serve the growing community. Families who participated in the survey accounted for 4100 individuals. Each respondent indicated how many persons of each group resided in their homes.

The household composition indicates:

AGE PRESENT IN HOUSEHOLD	PERCENT PRESENT IN HOUSEHOLD REPRESENTED	PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION REPRESENTED
CHILDREN UNDER AGE 5	82%	11%
AGES 5-9	83%	11%
AGES 10-14	81%	8%
AGES 15-19	81%	6%
AGES 20-24	81%	5%
AGES 25-34	88%	17%
AGES 35-44	85%	16%
AGES 45-54	83%	10%
AGES 55-64	83%	11%
OVER 65	82%	5%

This count indicates that of the households represented in the survey, about 30 percent of the population represented includes ages 19 and under with the majority represented being in the 25-54 age category and only 5 percent of the over 65 age group was represented.



The crowd was engaged with physical activities at the Parks and Recreation booth at National Night Out.

According to survey results, 23 percent of participants indicated their household has a special need – which may include individuals with physical disabilities, individuals with mental disabilities, economically disadvantaged family members, individuals with limited English proficiency, elderly people requiring assistance, and single parents. Single parents were represented in 12 percent of the respondents.

### PERCEPTION

When asked why people do not use parks or facilities, the free response answers aligned with seven major categories. The most prevalent category of comments revolved around the lack of the park facilities and programs catering to the individual. This involved interests, age appropriateness (facility and program), and a lack of accessibility – particularly relating to the circulation throughout parks being inaccessible for senior and mobility challenges individuals. Categories pertaining to safety and maintenance challenges, geographic gaps, and an overall unawareness of park facilities and programs were the next highest themes. Other responses indicated they were, in general, not interested (many saying they are not “outdoorsy” people), they do not have time, and they prefer facilities in other cities/towns.

For programs, the question was asked if particular age groups were well-served or underserved by programs. Seniors and special needs populations were perceived as being underserved while Youth 4-12 topped out as well served in the opinion of respondents.

Safety was a common theme throughout public input sessions, the steering committee discussions, and comments in many survey responses. Approximately 48 percent of participants feel safe in Evansville parks with 6 percent indicating they do not feel safe and 46 answering they feel safe in some but not all. Some respondents called attention to Garvin, Sunset, Howell, Greenways, and any park downtown or after dark. Many of the comments about safety also included trash, lack of lighting, and general lack of maintenance in their responses. Each of these challenges contribute to a perceived lack of safety, even in the presence of no documented incidents and should be addressed to improve this negative perception.

### USE

Often, when surveys are disseminated by the parks and recreation department, participants are captured by seeing an advertisement for the survey in a parks and recreation facility, or hear about the survey while participating in a parks and recreation program. In this case, 49 percent of the respondents communicated they do use Evansville parks and recreation facilities and programs. This implies the remaining 51 percent do not use, or think they do not need to use the offerings of the parks and recreation department. Only 5 percent of users noted they use Evansville parks, trails, or facilities daily. Most respondents use parks, trails, or facilities a few times per month (26 percent) and two to four times per week (22 percent). When asked the frequency of program use, 37 percent selected rarely with 29 percent revealing they never have participated in any Evansville Parks and Recreation programs. The overwhelming majority of reasons why they do not, or have not participated in programs was that they do not know about them or are not aware of what the term means.

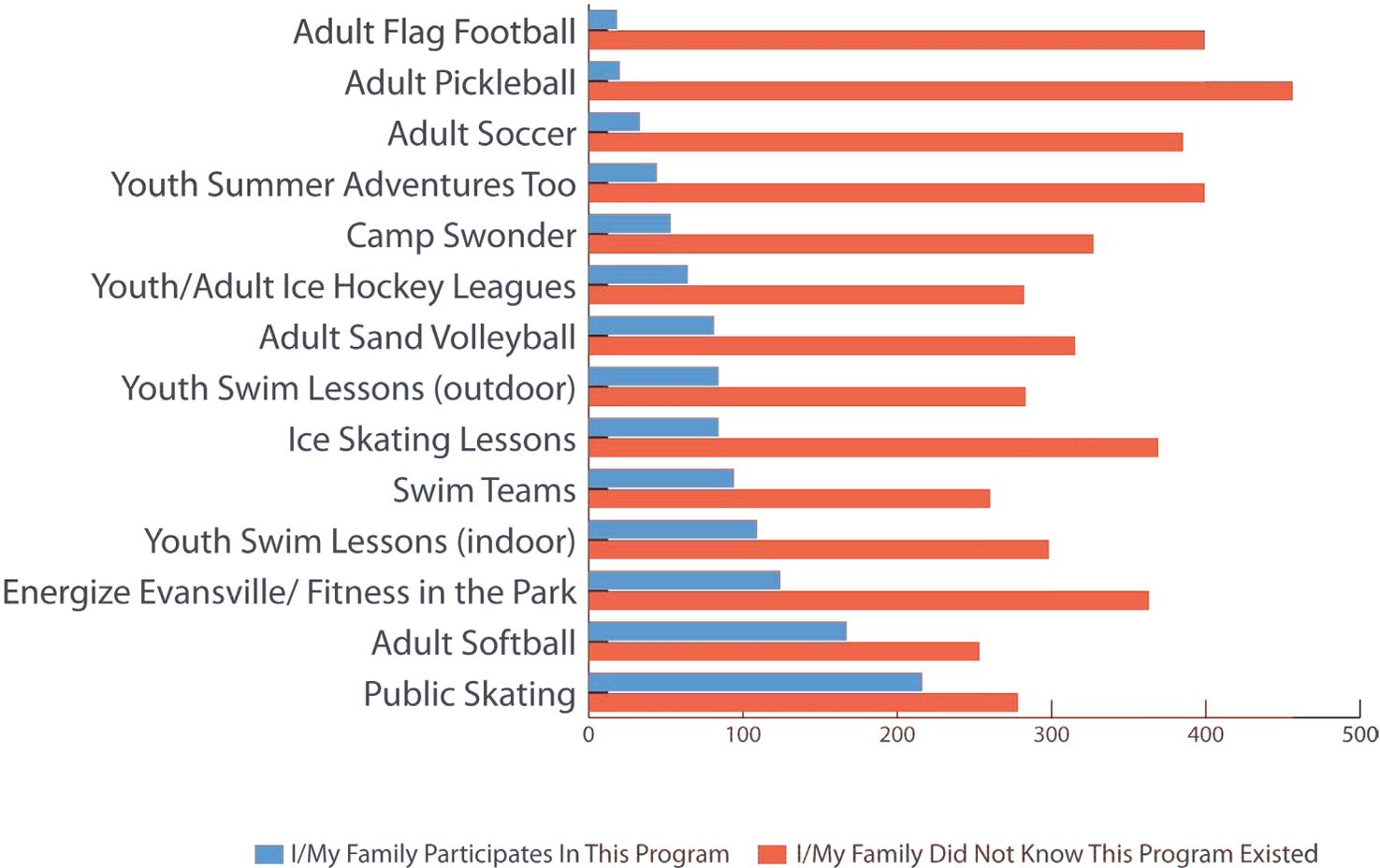
Raw results can be found in Appendix C, but for the purpose of a quick visual summary, word clouds offer a snapshot of survey results by creating a “cloud” of words where the largest word accounts for the most responses. It is clear from the word cloud below that the most frequented park by survey respondents is Wesselman – followed by Garvin, Burdette, Howell, Pools, Kids Kingdom, and Greenways.



### AWARENESS OF PROGRAMS

When asked about specific programs, many individuals were not aware of the programs listed. The bar graph below shows the relationship between respondents who participate in programs and those who are not aware the program is offered by Evansville Parks and Recreation. This spurred many comments requesting more marketing, specifically for a website or web interface that provides more information and enables sign up.

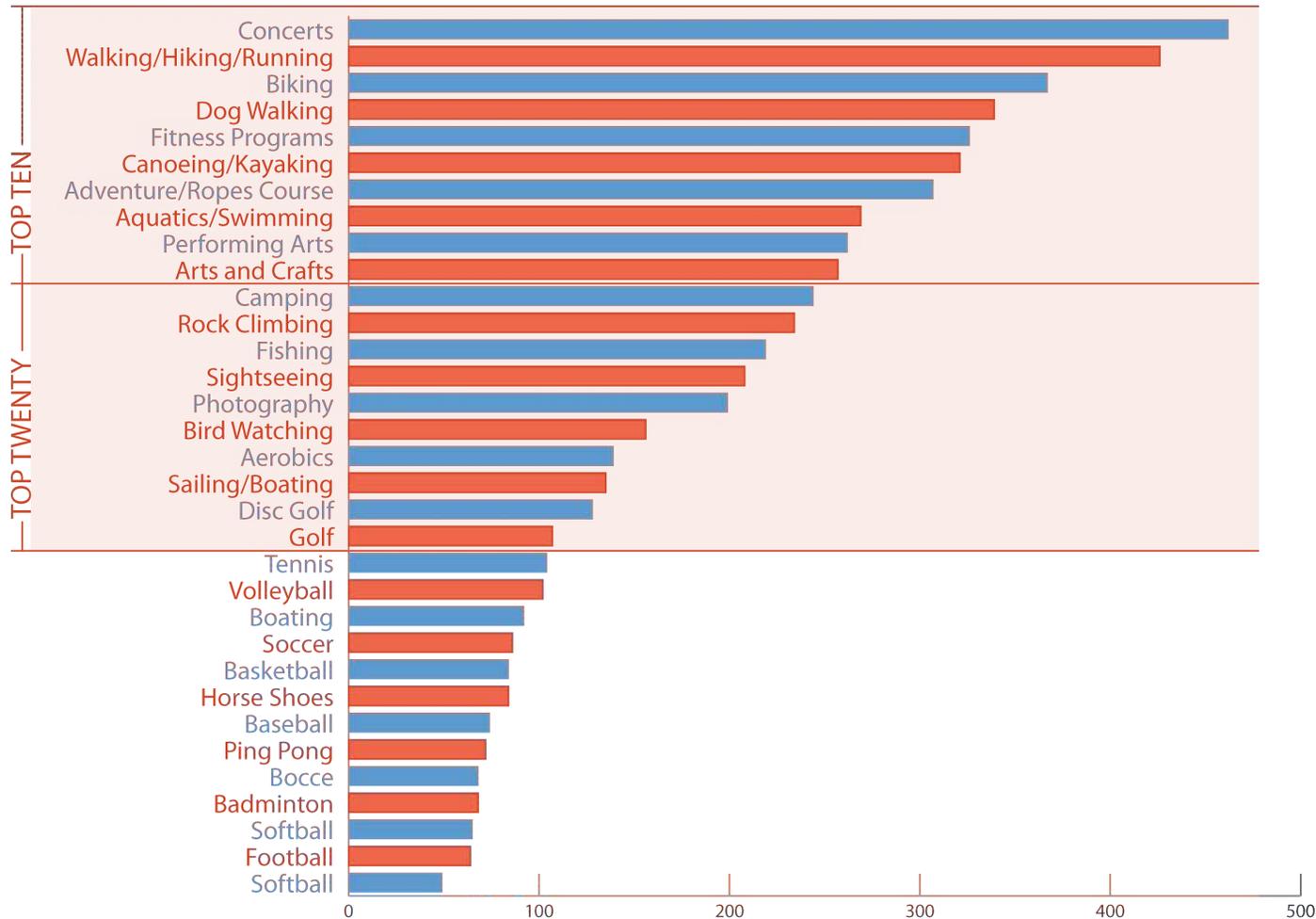
#### PARTICIPATION AND AWARENESS OF PROGRAMS



### COMMUNITY DESIRES

To determine what types of facilities or programs the Parks and Recreation Department should offer, citizens are polled to understand activities they enjoy. The top activity was walking/hiking/running. The next number one choice was aquatics and swimming. Other activities represented in the top five were biking and concerts. The next step was to ask what they think Evansville Parks and Recreation should offer. The top requests were concerts, walking/hiking/running, biking, dog walking, and fitness programs. The chart below illustrates the number of votes per activity.

TOP TEN AND TWENTY REQUESTS FOR ACTIVITIES



Overwhelmingly participants indicated they want to be able to bike or walk from their homes to other key destinations. The top desired destinations were downtown, shopping, parks, greenways, work, and Newburgh. Participants of the survey were asked to select each factor that would encourage them to walk or bike. Factors the community supports include:

- Trail or greenway access to where I want to go (69 percent)
- Trail or greenway access to my home (58 percent)
- Bike lanes (55 percent)
- Improve crossings at intersections (46 percent)
- A park closer to my home (30 percent)
- Slower traffic (21 percent)

Additional factors noted in the free response were sidewalks, lighting, and bike facilities.

### OUTREACH

Currently the Parks and Recreation Department uses the following outlets to create awareness of facilities and programs:

- Facebook
- Twitter (periodically)
- Newspaper
- County/Department Website
- Email Database (for Sports and Energize Evansville)
- TV in Civic Center
- Flyers in City Buildings

Of the sampling, 479 hear about facilities, programs, and special events through friends and family, 470 learn from Facebook, 405 listed newspaper as a source, and 262 visit the department website. Additionally 169 indicated they watch for flyers and 84 have learned about parks and recreation offerings via Twitter. When asked how BEST to reach the community Facebook surfaced as the number one method for reaching those surveyed.

## Mayor's Traveling City Hall Community Discussion September 24, 2014

The Mayor's Traveling City Hall is an opportunity for residents to meet with the Mayor and various city department heads to ask questions and discuss the status of the Evansville Community. A group of 50 – 75 members of the community were present to discuss the needs assessment, potential recommendations, and their desires for the future of the parks and recreation department.

A presentation was given to highlight key benefits of parks and recreation and review the vision and goals of the plan. Needs assessment was discussed through the lens of GIS analysis – including a Live, Work, Learn, Play demand model and service area analysis based on NRPA national standards (found in Appendix D). The demand overlapped with the services areas revealed potential land acquisition areas to the community. Survey results were also shared which revealed concerns for safety, a lack of awareness of park facilities and programs, the top activities residents would like to see the department add, and how the department should communicate with residents in the future.

Thoughts shared by the public included:

- Concerns about budget cuts and school closings
- Concerns about dog park placement on State Hospital Grounds Property
- The need for more senior activities and designated pickleball courts
- A concern about people not picking up after their dogs – especially a problem on the trails
- A request to add outdoor workout equipment for senior citizens and physically challenged residents
- Concerns about people acting inappropriately around the state hospital property, including teasing patients through fence

## Steering Committee Meeting #2 September 24, 2014

The Steering Committee met to discuss the results of the needs assessment and begin to craft draft recommendations. Ideas generated included:

### CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

- It would be great to have a park in walking distance
- Interactive play structures
- Learning play
- Partnership opportunities for parks development and programs

### WILLARD LIBRARY

- How our building interacts with the park is important
- More of a passive environment, formal gardens, picnics and passive use
- There is a lot of transient use, how do we address this? Design, enforcement?

### EASTLAND MALL

- Greenway connection
- Anchor and serves needs such as food for/between Wesselman Woods and State Hospital. Serve a public/private interaction and provide non-motorized transportation choices for visitors and employees.

### DOWNTOWN

- The downtown will be doubling residential capacity, adding a new hotel and trying to draw new business. There is somewhat of a pushback towards multi-family downtown.
- Bicentennial Park and 4th and Main are current park spaces, but the downtown needs much more with the new influx and trying to attract Millennials. The lawn, plaza and fountain at Old National Bank serves as an effective park/splash park
- Need a much more walkable environment downtown.

- There needs to be a designated space for a farmer's market. Main Street could be programmed differently, car free or car free days? Farmer's market on Main? How does this affect businesses?
- Surface lots around downtown could be converted into park space.

### HEALTH COMMUNITY

- Non-motorized activity and connections to parks are key.
- A permanent farmers market somewhere would be great, with access to parks and the greenway. Food co-op programs and feeding the needy are potential ideas
- The idea of a "green" greenhouse on a current vacant space could be a good use.
- There will be a community learning garden at CK Newsome soon, Evansville Voice is helping with this.
- Could old pools being filled in be used as gardens?
- We have the space to do these things, how should we best do them?

### GENERAL COMMENTS:

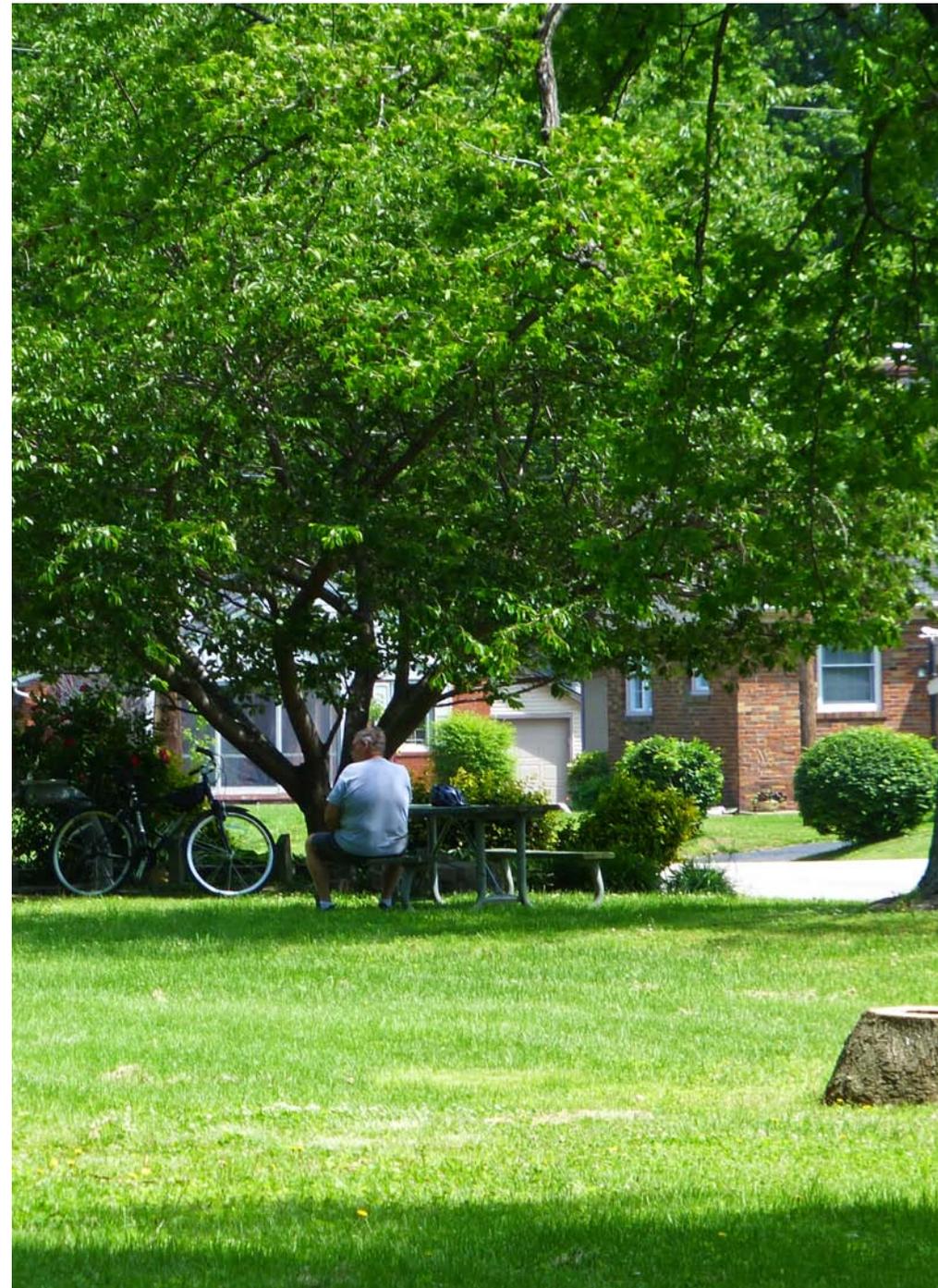
- There needs to be more communication between groups and programs, there also needs to be more programs. Evansville parks should strive to program more activities and connect these groups. A lot of times groups start new leagues without knowing these activities already exist.
- Better walkability and non-motorized transportation is key throughout Evansville
  - Often roadways in the park make riding or walking in the park dangerous – prime examples: Wesselman Woods and Garvin Park
- Patrolling is currently based on need, there is not enough surveillance in the parks according to EPD representatives.
  - Police Department reps are open to the idea of volunteer park/trail monitors or ambassadors in the parks if there is a good partnership and training program.

## Steering Committee Meeting #3: December 2014

After receiving an electronic draft of the Parks and Recreation Plan, the Steering Committee was invited to review and comment on the entire document. A digital forum was available in order for all Steering Committee Members to view each other's comments and suggestions. A meeting was offered for those who were interested in gathering to discuss the content. After a two-week period, staff reviewed the comments and the consultant team incorporated revisions and modifications into the final draft plan.

## Public Draft Plan Review

Following revisions to the Draft Plan, the document was reviewed during a special Mayor's Meeting and then released for public comment. The public comment period was open from April 1st through April 10th, 2015. The public was informed via a link on the City/County website, a link posted on the Department's Facebook Page (the number one requested means of communication according to the survey), and distributed to Leadership Evansville for board and member comments. A digital comment forum was available via notable PDF. Only eight users were registered to notable PDF with no recorded comments.



# Chapter Six



# Needs Analysis

## Overview

The City of Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation strives to achieve the vision of preserving and enhancing quality of life by using the five plan goals as a measure of success:

### PLAN GOALS

**C**ONNECTIVITY Weave the community together with a network of trails that provide access to green spaces.

**S**USTAINABILITY Promote sustainability through park development, maintenance, and public education.

**S**AFETY Design spaces that foster a sense of comfort and safety for users of all ages.

**H**UMAN & SOCIAL HEALTH Create spaces that encourage healthful living, social interaction, and a sense of ownership for all citizens.

**D**IVERSITY Generate a variety of offerings throughout park spaces and within programming that stimulate personal and community growth.

Using the Plan vision and goals as guidance, needs were determined by overlapping and analyzing the *2009-2013 Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Master Plan*, relevant city and MPO plans, facility and program inventory, the demographic and equitable makeup of Evansville, and staff, stakeholder, and public input.

Needs can be determined by reviewing park board facility standards and critical items that surfaced through public input. After understanding the needs of the community, five key areas for recommendations surfaced.

- Park Facilities
- Greenways and Connectivity
- Programs
- Policy
- Management

This section summarizes the critical needs of the community as revealed by the board standards and public input.

In addition, Appendix E provides a narrative of recommendations based on the five key areas. This narrative provides a thorough explanation of each of the areas and how the recommendations are supported by standards, GIS analysis, field observations, and public input.

The recommendations are carried into the priorities and action steps chapter in a concise abbreviated chart.

### MAJOR THEME REVEALED

Several of the existing plans acknowledge the importance of connecting people to greenways. This is consistent with national trends, the SCORP, and citywide efforts. By enhancing the greenway system, the parks and recreation department will contribute to all of the plan goals as well as the three pillars (conservation, health & wellness, and equity) of NRPA's guidance for the creation of parks and how they benefit communities. Greenways and trails also contribute to transportation infrastructure and sustainability. Therefore, this plan recommends modifying the "City within a Park" concept to a "City Connected to A Park." According to the *Millennial Plan* conducted by the Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization, a major goal is to provide a park or greenway within ¼ mile of every citizen. This connectivity can be achieved by expanding the greenway system and ensuring the population centers of Evansville have access to park facilities that are within walking and biking distance.

## Park Board Facility Standards and Need

One of the biggest takeaways from the plan analysis and survey was the need for more park space. While the SCORP does not identify Evansville as a critical area for land acquisition, it does fall below the level of service analysis used that indicates there should be a fixed amount of park acres per citizen. The level of service recommendation by the SCORP is categorized by park type: Local (20 acres/1000 people), Regional (35 acres/1000 people), and State (55 acres/1000 people). Since Evansville is not currently a critical need (due to slow population growth), but is deficient, there is an opportunity to strategically plan for land acquisition.

The supply and demand analysis (found in Appendix D) revealed the lack of parks in east, northwest, and central Evansville relative to residential and employment density (see map on 6-4). This is consistent with the survey, where participants indicated a need for more park facilities in the eastern and northern areas of the city. To provide an adequate level of service for citizens and visitors, Evansville can meet recreation needs and continue to protect its natural and cultural resources by focusing on future potential land acquisitions or explore other city or county owned lands in these areas for repurposing to serve the recreation and conservation needs of the city. The redevelopment of Roberts Park in conjunction with improved bicycle and pedestrian connectivity via greenways has the potential to immediately serve land acquisition area three.

Park types and level of service should be determined based on a combination of demand and department resources. More aggressive land acquisition strategies should be discussed to a meet greenway connectivity recommendations as this is a focus of the SCORP, *Millennial Plan*, and *City of Evansville Sustainability Policy*.

In the five-year time frame, the City should evaluate each of the land acquisition areas and determine what land may be available, ownership of the land, opportunities for purchase/acquiring/using the land, and challenges or barriers to acquiring land. If an opportunity arises to use existing land (as in the case of Roberts Park) or purchase land at a reasonable price, this will determine which area is pursued first. After identifying the available land, the parcel will need to be evaluated for site conditions that match the immediate needs of the community (this will be an action performed beyond 2019).

## Needs Based on Public Input

In total, 1,323 individuals participated in the community survey administered both online and via hard copy at various events. When accounting for family size, the number increases to a total of 4100 individuals that were represented via the survey. In addition to the survey, numerous families and individuals visited the booth on National Night out and 50 to 75 members of the community attended the Mayor's Traveling City Hall Community Discussion. The general needs assessed from the steering committee, survey, and public input events are as follows:

- Increase awareness of existing parks and programs (many respondents indicated they were not aware of facilities and programs offered)
- Increase facilities that promote walking and bicycling, such as greenways, bike lanes, and improve crossings at intersections
- Connect recreation, residential, and commercial centers with active recreation facilities
- Improve the safety and maintenance of park facilities, such as lighting improvement, trash collection, and general infrastructure maintenance
- Improve the diversity of park facilities and offered programs to equitably serve age-specific interests
- Offer more outdoor concerts and fitness programs and encourage walking/hiking/running, biking, and dog walking activities through increased infrastructure (top five requested activities)



## Needs Based on Demographics and Supply Analysis

Both an Equity Analysis and a Demand and Supply Analysis were conducted using GIS mapping tools and census data. The full methodology and individual map analyses can be viewed in Appendix D.

The Equity Analysis (found in Chapter 2) spatially represents age distribution, racial and ethnic diversity, poverty, households without access to a private vehicle, and disability status of Evansville Residents via census tracts. Viewing the spatial representation of equity factors is an important consideration when determining deficiencies and where special accommodations should be implemented. Facility and program needs identified by the Equity Analysis are as follows:

- The analysis revealed a relatively even distribution of the youth population (18 and under) – The department should incorporate offerings to serve multiple age groups, such as climbing, kick ball, and walking trail facilities to complement current playground equipment.
- The 65 and older population is concentrated in select areas - Wesselman Park, Mesker Park, Kleymeyer Park, and parks near these high concentrations should include activities and facilities appropriate for the 65 and older population.
- Offer special needs oriented programs and improve ADA accessible facilities near Lamasco Park, Sixth Avenue Park, Fulton Park, and Willard Library Park.

The Demand and Supply Analysis was conducted to assess the expected demand for parks and recreation facilities and how it relates to the available supply. The model identifies expected demand by identifying the locations where people live, work, play, and go to school as factors for regional demand. The results are used to identify areas with have high demand for parks and recreation facilities but are not adequately served by current facilities.

The resulting analysis is an important component of assessing parks and recreation needs because it provide a data-driven illustration of facility demand and supply.

The map on 6-4 suggests the following:

- Areas near downtown, Mesker Zoo and Mesker Park, Diamond Valley Park, and Deaconess Hospital have a high demand and are well served by nearby park facilities. Programs should be increased in these areas to serve and encourage demand.
- There is not enough supply to meet the high demand at North Park Shopping Center, the southeast corner of the City near Newburgh Road, and along Oak Hill Road. Future park facilities should be considered in these areas to serve the high demand.

## NEEDS BASED ON DEPARTMENT OBSERVATION AND EXPERIENCE

The Department's focus is on matching facilities and programs with the needs of the community. Parks and recreation staff are also expected to maintain facilities, provide customer service, and work with the board to manage the budget. The following needs are a result of the internal requirements of the department as well as their desire to better serve residents:

- Continue to build the greenway system
- Update signage and provide wayfinding to increase awareness of parks and greenways
- Re-evaluate the performance of golf courses (golf is becoming less popular and many communities are repurposing their facilities - see Appendix E, page 6 for details)
- Provide programs suitable for senior citizens
- Improve customer service interfaces including signing up for programs and tracking satisfaction
- Continue to add programs such as Energize Evansville to connect citizens with healthy activities and eating habits

## Pairing Needs With Action Steps

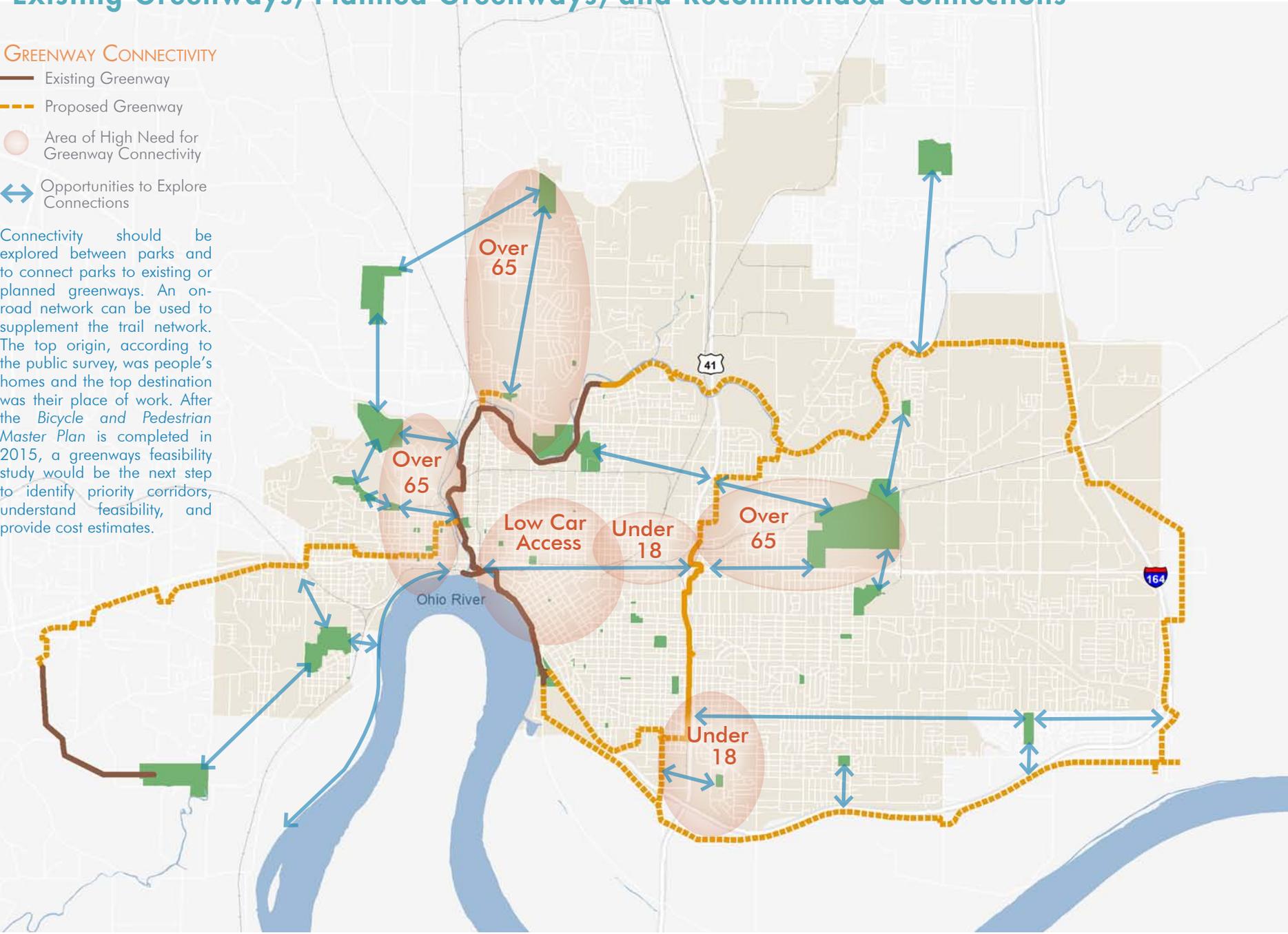
As needs determined by community input, field analysis, national trends, and department observations begin to overlap, they reveal recommendations. These recommendations are translated into action steps which can be found in Chapter Seven.

# Existing Greenways, Planned Greenways, and Recommended Connections

### GREENWAY CONNECTIVITY

- Existing Greenway
- Proposed Greenway
- Area of High Need for Greenway Connectivity
- Opportunities to Explore Connections

Connectivity should be explored between parks and to connect parks to existing or planned greenways. An on-road network can be used to supplement the trail network. The top origin, according to the public survey, was people's homes and the top destination was their place of work. After the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* is completed in 2015, a greenways feasibility study would be the next step to identify priority corridors, understand feasibility, and provide cost estimates.



# Chapter Seven



# Priorities and Action Steps

## Overview

The needs assessment in this plan is summarized in Chapter Six and accompanied by a more thorough narrative of recommendations in Appendix E. The narrative and maps are used to illustrate results of a planning process driven by goals, enriched with public participation, and cross examined with professional park industry analysis. These recommendations provide guidance for department staff and the public for how multiple parties can work together to accomplish the vision of this plan and the mission of the department. Planning level cost estimates have been included for each recommendation to help prioritize projects, advise on when to apply for funding opportunities, and plan for budget allocation. In an effort to keep this plan off the shelf and serve as a tool the department should create a list of key staff, tasks, subtasks, benchmarks, a timeline, and evaluation measures for each action item. This should be refined at least once per year in a departmental meeting to set the course for successful planning, implementation, and evaluation.

## Prioritization

This Plan recognizes that development patterns, resident interests and funding options may change over time. Department staff should move forward with the recommendations detailed in this plan, while adjusting priorities when appropriate to reflect the community's evolving needs and interests.

Recommendations and the subsequent action steps are segmented into five main categories:

- Park Facilities
- Greenways and Connectivity
- Programs
- Policies
- Management

It is recommended that action items be clustered into the following timeframe to help establish an action plan for implementation:

- Immediate Needs (0-2 years): Elements residents feel are needed to meet current demand
- Near-Term Needs (3-5 years): Elements Evansville should address through planning, funding allocation, grant sources, and/or land acquisition

Recommendations for Future-Term Needs (beyond five years) have been included in Appendix H. Future-term recommendations should be considered as the city develops and the population grows.

✱ Top critical recommendations and action steps are noted with an asterisk.

## Action Steps

### PARK FACILITIES

ACTION STEP	RECOMMENDED TERM	ESTIMATED COSTS
<p>* Work with the Urban Forestry Department to identify where Oak and Ash Trees are located throughout the City. Devise a plan to prioritize treatment of the trees to protect them from the Horned Oak Galls and Emerald Ash Borer. Consult with adjacent communities to determine which methods and supplies are proving successful and cost effective.</p>	Immediate	Cost to be shared with the Urban Forestry Department. Costs will also depend on the action strategy and methods executed.
<p>* Standardize maintenance practices with checklists for each park, schedules, staff responsible, and logs. Assign a staff member to remain current in their knowledge of national standards for safety surfaces, equipment, and best practices. Update checklists and manuals as needed. Incorporate guidance and standards in line with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) with particular focus on Garvin, Sunset, Howell, and Greenways. Address lighting issues in parks with programming and activities after dusk.</p>	Immediate	In-house costs
<p>* Focus on repurposing playgrounds to better suit the demographic composition of neighborhoods. Start with parks on the equity map indicating populations over 65 on page E-3 (Ingleheart, Sheridan, Diamond Valley, Kleymeyer/Garvin/Bosse Field, Jacobsville Mini Park, Wesselman, Roberts, Mesker, Helfrich, Eleventh Avenue, Casselberry, Little Westside Nut Club, Westside Library Park). Survey the surrounding neighborhood to understand their needs and desires. Potential activities include community gardens, pickleball, bocce, and walking.</p>	Immediate	N/A
<p>* As the Parks Departments moves forward implementing Roberts Park, it is important to consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site should be ADA accessible to address the needs of the special populations in the area</li> <li>• The park should be accessible by safe bicycle and pedestrian connections</li> <li>• Bicycle parking should be included in the design</li> <li>• The park should focus on multi-generational activities</li> <li>• The park can address the top ten and top twenty requests of the community</li> <li>• The sight should include a trail that connects the uses within the park and provides a walking loop to address the health and fitness needs of your aging population</li> <li>• Along this trail there should be places to sit, approximately every 1/4 mile to accommodate mobility challenges</li> <li>• Design a playground suitable for multiple ages (not a tot lot) with opportunities for climbing and social play.</li> </ul>	Immediate	N/A

ACTION STEP	RECOMMENDED TERM	ESTIMATED COSTS
* Re-evaluate the department golf courses. Consider using this land for another purpose such as soccer golf, stormwater management, reforestation, trails, or other conservation-based park. This may be conducted in house or through a consultant.	Immediate	In-house costs OR \$40,000 - \$80,000  For a consultant to provide research/ case studies/economic analysis.
Hire a consultant to develop a wayfinding package for the park and greenway system. Use this as a branding opportunity and method for activating the public by posting walk and bike times as well as community signs directing people to nearby parks and greenways. This should also include interpretive signage to celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of Evansville.	Immediate	\$40,000 - \$80,000 (Design and placement) Implementation costs vary by materials and sign quantities.
Audit the potential of existing facilities for indoor and outdoor health and wellness activities. Assign spaces suitable for more health, wellness, and fitness related classes and group activities. These activities and facility pairs may be using a greenway segment with a "silver sneakers" over 65 walking group, or a park near a school for an aftercare/physical health open space.	Immediate	In-house costs
Study the potential of incorporating dog parks in an existing park. Monitor demand for a new facility. Ensure that all trails are equipped with dog waste stations.	Immediate	In-house costs  Dog waste stations: \$6,000 - \$10,000
As new facilities are acquired and existing facilities are modified, the city should ensure passive and unprogrammed space is included. This supports the NRPA pillar of conservation and will expand opportunities for a variety of department run programs in these open spaces.	Immediate - Ongoing	N/A
Survey special needs populations to understand their facility needs. Target the neighborhoods with a high density of special needs as indicated on the map on E-4.	Near	In-house costs
Conduct an access audit every three years - This audit will assess the status of bicycle and pedestrian access into the park system and how it can be improved. Focus on a quarter-mile radius around the park for bicycle and pedestrian access and coordinate with public works to improve access via planned roadway projects. Critical and low cost immediate action should be taken to implement cross walks from adjacent streets to park entry points.	Near	Costs should be shared with other departments for audit and implementation of facilities.
Update signage (e.g. entry monuments, wayfinding, etc.) at park facilities where there is no signage or signage is in disrepair. Provide signage detailing the rules and regulations at each park and accompany this signage with a wayfinding map of park facilities at all community and regional parks. Update all facilities based on the new sign package.	Near	\$200 - \$2,000 (per sign)  Costs vary by sign type.

ACTION STEP	RECOMMENDED TERM	ESTIMATED COSTS
<p>Conduct an ADA accessibility plan to audit the current status of ADA facilities for parks and how they can be improved. Potential audit categories include, but are not limited to the following: bathrooms, drinking fountains, curb cuts, slopes, parking, playground surface, access to playground, route access to and within the park, and wheelchair accessible play (e.g. raised sandboxes, sensory gardens).</p> <p>The following parks should be examined for ADA accessibility due to the frequency of use: Wesselman, Garvin, Kid’s Kingdom, Howell, Bayard Park.</p> <p>Due to the proximity of populations with special needs, the following parks should be evaluated: Lamasco Park, Sixth Avenue Park, Fulton Park, Willard Library Park.</p>	Near	\$25,000 - \$40,000
<p>Land acquisition should be considered in the southeastern portion of the city as indicated in the map on page 4-8. There is a high demand in this area with a low supply.</p>	Near	\$100,000 - \$300,000
<p>Expand recreational opportunities for age groups as indicated by the equity analysis and illustrated on pages E-3 and E-4. Focus on teens by planning for speciality facilities such as skate parks, climbing structures, and rope courses. Focus on the over 65 population by adding walking trails, ADA accessibility, benches, bocce, shuffleboard, or horseshoes. Poll each age group prior to moving forward to understand their specific needs.</p>	Near	N/A

## GREENWAYS AND CONNECTIVITY

ACTION STEP	RECOMMENDED TERM	ESTIMATED COSTS
<p>* The planned greenway system should be segmented into named sections for feasibility and public awareness purposes.</p>	Immediate	In-house costs
<p>* Explore grant opportunities, new funding sources, and develop private and nonprofit funding sources to supplement greenway funding.</p>	Immediate	In-house costs
<p>* Integrate greenway connections into all future planning studies with the intent to connect places where people live, work, play, and learn.</p>	Immediate	N/A
<p>* Conduct a system wide study to refine the planned greenway system based on: The Demand and Supply analysis conducted in this Plan, the 2015 Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, connections to community and regional classified parks, and connections to future growth areas established in the City of Evansville Comprehensive Plan. This plan will serve as an update to the Pigeon Creek Master Plan (1994).</p>	Near	\$60,000 - \$100,000

ACTION STEP	RECOMMENDED TERM	ESTIMATED COSTS
Take steps for the feasibility study, acquisition, design, and construction of the greenway segment that connects the University of Southern Indiana with the existing Pigeon Creek Greenway. This corridor will provide a connection from the university to downtown and connect the existing Pigeon Creek Greenway with the Burdette Park Greenway.	Near	\$1,000,000 / mile (design and construction)
A portion of the annual budget should be allocated for construction and maintenance of the greenway system. For context, the construction of a greenway is typically \$1 million per mile with design fees ranging between 15 to 20 percent of the construction costs. Cost estimates will become more refined once a planning or feasibility study is completed for each segment.	Near	N/A
Create a user-friendly greenway map accessible online, in an application and/or via hard copy. Be consistent with the Energize Evansville message by designing the map to be health focused with time and distance notes, sources for fresh foods, and other health oriented tips.	Near	\$3,000 - 10,000 (design)  Printing costs vary by quantity

## PROGRAMS

ACTION STEP	RECOMMENDED TERM	ESTIMATED COSTS
* Research online booking software that allows citizens to sign up and pay for programs. This will also serve as a scheduling program and help the department organize booking of rooms, shelters, and other facilities. Launch the software in the near- or long-term depending on funding required and training of staff.	Immediate	N/A
* Enhance the Energize Evansville Program with more opportunities to educate citizens about nutrition. Create programs in partnership with local health focused organizations and advocacy groups including: Deaconess Hospital, St. Mary's Medical Center, Evansville State Hospital, Evansville Psychiatric Children's Center, and ECHO Community Health Care.	Immediate	In-house costs
* Audit the skills of the existing staff to understand how to add more programs for seniors and to combat the obesity epidemic. Initial program ideas include aquatics programs as these are suitable for a wide range of abilities and are ideal for those with joint issues or physical challenges due to a history of being sedentary or overweight.	Immediate	In-house costs
Review the following needs (requested by survey participants) concerts, walking/hiking/running, biking, dog walking, fitness programs, canoeing/kayaking, adventure/ropes courses, aquatics/swimming, performing arts, arts and crafts. Determine how the department can offer new programs and facilities that meet these needs. In some cases, the department may have programs and facilities already, but need to augment how they are advertised.	Immediate	N/A

ACTION STEP	RECOMMENDED TERM	ESTIMATED COSTS
Establish a program to implement community gardens in applicable park facilities to promote and encourage healthy eating habits.	Immediate	\$5,000 - \$20,000 (Depending on scale)
Expand special events programming, such as concerts, movies, and family-friendly activities.	Immediate	N/A
Provide more programs for underserved age groups: youth and teens, seniors, special populations.	Immediate	N/A
Plan classes that seek to improve health and wellness such as Zumba, yoga, pilates, cooking, nutrition, and gardening/community gardens.	Immediate	N/A
Review the following needs (requested by survey participants) camping, rock climbing, fishing, sightseeing, photography, bird watching, aerobics, sailing/boating, disc golf, golf. Determine how the department can offer new programs and facilities that meet these needs. In some cases, the department may have programs and facilities already, but need to augment how they are advertised.	Near	
Establish online and hard copy brochures for local and regional park facilities and programs that service the special needs community.	Near	
Establish a program by which Evansville Cultural Resources are celebrated. This program should incorporate a bicycle tour to encourage healthy transportation choices. Park sites include: Akin Park, Angel Mounds, Bayard Park Historic District, Burdette Park, Evansville State Hospital, Garvin Park, Mesker Park Zoo, Willard Library, The Pagoda (Sunset Park Pavilion), and Neighborhoods - Babytown, Baptistown.	Near	N/A
Create a strategic marketing plan to ensure residents are aware of available programs and have an opportunity to make recommendations for future offerings through surveys. These surveys should be distributed at the close of each program. This will allow the department to evaluate staff, structure, enjoyment, benefits, concerns, and user recommendations to refine and improve the program to better serve the community.	Near	\$5,000 - \$10,000
Partner with local schools to initiate programs that educate students about healthy food choices, local food options, and active living to promote health and wellness.	Near	In-house costs
Use Energize Evansville and the public golf courses to develop a pilot program to encourage healthy living. This may include free or discounted golf (or soccer golf) to encourage physical activity and/or closing the course periodically to allow the public to walk the trails.	Near	In-house costs

## POLICIES

ACTION STEP	RECOMMENDED TERM	ESTIMATED COSTS
Review the sustainability policy and create action steps by which the Parks and Recreation Department will comply with the policy.	Immediate	N/A
Adopt a policy that requires a market analysis to determine feasibility for any significant revenue generating facility.	Near	N/A

## MANAGEMENT

ACTION STEP	RECOMMENDED TERM	ESTIMATED COSTS
* Update PRORAGIS (Park and Recreation Operating Ratio & Geographic Information System) yearly to understand if Evansville is on track with national trends in similar communities.	Immediate	N/A
* Work with the Area Plan Commission to update GIS park data yearly. This will include land acquisition or sales, facility offerings, management, greenways, and park type.	Immediate	N/A
* Improve the website so it is easier to navigate and find programs by topic, age range, and location. Consider connections that reduce the number of links and redirects but increases overlap of categories - such as the overlap between pools and aquatic programming.	Near	In-house costs
Adopt a planning process to provide direction when new facilities are being considered. This process will help generate support and suitably meet the needs of the community by involving the public and elected officials into the planning process.	Near	N/A
Hire a staff member to become the public information officer for the department. The responsibilities of this position would include: managing the P&R content on the website, social media, creating a quarterly newsletter, establishing a database of parks and recreation photography, creating flyers, writing press releases, contacting media for PSA opportunities, managing an interpretive program in all parks, recruiting talent for large events, organizing events, managing user feedback including post program surveys and yearly needs assessment surveys. Consider the use of interns initially, then build into a full time position.	Near	\$40,000 - \$50,000 / year
Seek out partnerships with local colleges to develop an internship position(s). This could be in parks and recreation management, physical training, nutrition, or other discipline as deemed appropriate by facility and programming offerings.	Near	\$10,000 - \$15,000 / year

## Funding Sources

### FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

Federal funding is typically directed through state agencies to local governments, either in the form of grants or direct appropriations, independent from state budgets, where shortfalls may make it difficult to accurately forecast available funding for future project development. Federal funding typically requires a local match of approximately 20%, but there are sometimes exceptions, such as the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus funds, which did not require a match. Since these funding categories are difficult to forecast, it is recommended that the local jurisdiction work with its MPO, in the case of Evansville, the Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization, on getting pedestrian projects listed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), as discussed below.

The following is a list of possible federal funding sources that could be used to support construction of many bicycle and pedestrian improvements that fall under the purview of park facilities. Most of these are competitive, and involve the completion of extensive applications with clear documentation of the project need, costs, and benefits. However, it should be noted that the FHWA encourages the construction of pedestrian facilities as an incidental element of larger, ongoing projects.

#### MOVING AHEAD FOR PROGRESS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY (MAP-21)

The largest source of federal funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects is the USDOT's Federal-Aid Highway Program, which Congress has reauthorized roughly every six years since the passage of the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916. The latest act, Moving Ahead for Progress in the Twenty-First Century (MAP- 21) was enacted in July 2012 as Public Law 112-141. It replaces the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), which was valid from August 2005 - June 2012.

MAP-21 authorizes funding for federal surface transportation programs, including highways and transit for the 27 month period between July, 2012 and September, 2014. It is not possible to guarantee the continued availability of any listed MAP-21 programs, or

to predict their future funding levels or policy guidance. Nevertheless, many of these programs have been included in some form since the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, and thus may continue to provide capital for active transportation projects and programs.

In Indiana, federal monies are administered through the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Most, but not all, of these programs are oriented toward transportation versus recreation needs, with an emphasis on reducing auto trips and providing inter-modal connections. Federal funding is intended for capital improvements and safety and education programs, and projects must relate to the surface transportation system.

There are a number of programs identified within MAP-21 that are applicable to bicycle and pedestrian projects that can complement park facilities, including trail and greenway projects. These programs are discussed below.

For more information, visit: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/summaryinfo.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/summaryinfo.cfm)

#### TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES

Transportation Alternatives (TA) is a new funding source under MAP-21 that consolidates three formerly separate programs under SAFETEA-LU: Transportation Enhancements (TE), Safe Routes to School (SR2S), and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). These funds may be used for a variety of pedestrian, bicycle, and streetscape projects, including sidewalks, bikeways, multi-use paths, and rail-trails. TA funds may also be used for selected education and encouragement programming, such as Safe Routes to School, despite the fact that TA does not provide a guaranteed set-aside for this activity as SAFETEA-LU did. MAP-21 provides \$85 million nationally for the RTP.

Complete eligibilities for TA include:

### 1. TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS AS DEFINED BY SECTION 1103 (A)(29)

This category includes the construction, planning, and design of a range of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, including “on-road and off-road trail facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle infrastructure, pedestrian and bicycle signals, traffic calming techniques, lighting and other safety-related infrastructure, and transportation projects to achieve compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.” Infrastructure projects and systems that provide “Safe Routes for Non-Drivers” is a new eligible activity.

For the complete list of eligible activities, visit: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation\\_enhancements/legislation/map21.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_enhancements/legislation/map21.cfm)

### 2. RECREATIONAL TRAILS

TA funds may be used to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Examples include hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, and other non-motorized and motorized uses. These funds are available for both paved and unpaved trails, but may not be used to improve roads for general passenger vehicle use or to provide shoulders or sidewalks along roads.

- Recreational Trails Program funds may be used for:
- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- Purchase and leasing of trail construction and maintenance equipment
- Construction of new trails, including unpaved trails
- Acquisition of easements of property for trails
- State administrative costs related to this program (limited to seven percent of a state’s funds)
- Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails (limited to five percent of a state’s funds)

For more information, visit: [www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4101.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4101.htm)

### 3. SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

The purpose of Safe Routes to Schools is to promote safe, healthy alternatives to riding the bus or being driven to school. All projects must be within two miles of primary or middle schools (K-8).

Eligible projects may include:

- Engineering Improvements. These physical improvements are designed to reduce potential bicycle and pedestrian conflicts with motor vehicles. Physical improvements may also reduce motor vehicle traffic volumes around schools, establish safer and more accessible crossings, or construct walkways, trails or bikeways. Eligible projects include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming/speed reduction, pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements, on-street bicycle facilities, off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and secure bicycle parking facilities.
- Education and Encouragement Efforts. These programs are designed to teach children safe bicycling and walking skills while educating them about health benefits and environmental impacts. Projects and programs may include creation, distribution and implementation of educational materials; safety based field trips; interactive bicycle/pedestrian safety video games; and promotional events and activities (e.g., assemblies, bicycle rodeos, walking school buses).
- Enforcement Efforts. These programs aim to ensure that traffic laws near schools are obeyed. Law enforcement activities apply to cyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles alike. Projects may include development of a crossing guard program, enforcement equipment, photo enforcement, and pedestrian sting operations.

For more information, visit: [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org)

#### 4. PLANNING, DESIGNING, OR CONSTRUCTING ROADWAYS WITHIN THE RIGHT-OF-WAY OF FORMER INTERSTATE ROUTES OR DIVIDED HIGHWAYS.

At the time of writing, detailed guidance from the Federal Highway Administration on this new eligible activity was not available.

- Average annual funds available through TA over the life of MAP-21 equal \$814 million nationally, which is based on a 2% set-aside of total MAP- 21 allocations. Current projected obligations for Indiana are available at this website: [www.fhwa.dot.gov/MAP21/funding.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/MAP21/funding.cfm). Note that state DOT's may elect to transfer up to 50% of TA funds to other highway programs, so the amount listed on the website represents the maximum potential funding.
- Remaining TA funds (those monies not re-directed to other highway programs) are disbursed through a separate, competitive grant program administered by INDOT. Local governments, school districts, tribal governments, and public lands agencies are permitted to compete for these funds.

#### **SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM**

The Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides states with flexible funds which may be used for a variety of highway, road, bridge, and transit projects. A wide variety of bicycle and pedestrian improvements are eligible, including on-street bicycle facilities, off-street trails, sidewalks, crosswalks, bicycle and pedestrian signals, parking, and other ancillary facilities. Modification of sidewalks to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is also an eligible activity. Unlike most highway projects, STP-funded bicycle and pedestrian facilities may be located on local and collector roads which are not part of the Federal-aid Highway System. 50% of each state's STP funds are suballocated geographically by population; the remaining 50% may be spent in any area of the state.

#### **HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

MAP-21 doubles the amount of funding available through the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) relative to SAFETEA-LU. HSIP provides \$2.4 billion nationally for projects and programs that help communities achieve significant reductions in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, bikeways, and walkways. MAP-21 preserves the Railway-Highway Crossings Program within HSIP but discontinues the High-Risk Rural roads set-aside unless safety statistics demonstrate that fatalities are increasing on these roads. Bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements, enforcement activities, traffic calming projects, and crossing treatments for non-motorized users in school zones are eligible for these funds.

#### **TRANSPORTATION FOR ELDERLY PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

This program can be used for capital expenses that support transportation to meet the special needs of older adults and persons with disabilities, including providing access to an eligible public transportation facility.

For more information, visit: [www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093\\_3556.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/13093_3556.html)

#### **RIVERS, TRAILS, AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) is a National Parks Service (NPS) program providing technical assistance via direct NPS staff involvement to establish and restore greenways, rivers, trails, watersheds and open space. The RTCA program provides only for planning assistance—there are no implementation funds available. Projects are prioritized for assistance based on criteria including conserving significant community resources, fostering cooperation between agencies, serving a large number of users, encouraging public involvement in planning and implementation, and focusing on lasting accomplishments.

For more information, visit: [www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm)

#### **THE CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM (CACFP)**

The CACFP provides aid to child and adult care institutions and family or group day care homes for the provisions of nutritious foods

that contribute to the wellness, healthy growth, and development of young children, and the health and wellness of older adults and chronically impaired disabled persons. This program is best for parks and recreation departments that run afterschool programs.

For more information, visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program)

### SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM (SFSP)

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was established to ensure that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Free meals, that meet Federal nutrition guidelines, are provided to all children 18 years old and under at approved SFSP sites in areas with significant concentrations of low-income children. Parks and recreation departments can use this program to offer free health lunches during the summer.

For more information, visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program-sfsp](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/summer-food-service-program-sfsp)

## STATE FUNDING SOURCES

### INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (INDOT) STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (STIP)

The STIP is a four year planning document that lists all projects expected to be funded in a four year window either Federal funds and those state projects that have been deemed as regionally significant. The STIP contains funding information for various transportation divisions of INDOT, including: highways, aviation, enhancements, public transportation, rail, bicycle and pedestrians, and the Governor's Highway Safety Program. Access to many federal funds require that projects be incorporated into the STIP.

For more information, visit: [www.in.gov/indot/2348.htm](http://www.in.gov/indot/2348.htm)

### HOMETOWN INDIANA

The Hometown Indiana Grant Program Act was established in 1988 by the Indiana General Assembly and became effective on July 1 of that year. The program is a state matching assistance program

that provides grants for 50% of the costs for the acquisition and/or development of recreation sites and facilities, historic preservation and urban forestry. The Hometown Indiana grant applicants may request amounts ranging from a minimum of \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$200,000.

For more information, visit: [www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4068.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4068.htm)

### DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANTS

Cities, towns and non-profit organizations can receive funding to enhance urban trees and forests. The Indiana DNR, Division of Forestry offers four grant programs that help improve, protect, maintain and increase the number of trees in Indiana communities. This federal and state funding is provided on an annual basis by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and the U.S.D.A. Forest Service Grantees must match the grant with an in-kind and/or monetary match.

For more information, visit: [www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/2876.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/2876.htm)

### THE LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The LWCF is a matching assistance program that provides grants for 50% of the cost for the acquisition and/or development of outdoor recreation sites and facilities. Since the program began, Indiana has received approximately \$75 million in federal funds. The allocation usually is divided between Department of Natural Resources' projects and local government park projects depending on funding levels. Over \$36 million has been provided to local agencies through the program. More than 30,000 acres of land have been acquired in Indiana with Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance for public outdoor recreation use and conservation. The program provides 50% reimbursement grants to assist park and recreation boards in acquiring and developing outdoor recreation areas for public use. The minimum grant amount awarded is \$10,000 and the maximum grant amount is \$200,000.

For more information, visit: [www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4071.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4071.htm)

### DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES SHOOTING RANGE GRANT PROGRAM

The Department of Natural Resources Shooting Range grant program is an assistance program for the development of rifle, handgun, shotgun, and archery facilities. The main objective of this program is to provide the citizens of Indiana with additional and safer places to fire their guns, and train hunter education students. The Shooting Range program will provide 75% matching reimbursing assistance for eligible projects. Applicants may request a minimum of \$10,000 and a maximum of \$100,000.

For more information, visit: [www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4070.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/outdoor/4070.htm)

### HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND

Each year, the DHPA receives funding under the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The HPF Program helps to promote historic preservation and archaeology in Indiana by providing assistance to projects that will aid the State in meeting its goals for cultural resource management. Three categories of projects include: architectural and historic projects, archaeological projects, and acquisition and development projects.

For more information, visit: [www.in.gov/dnr/historic/3671.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/historic/3671.htm)

### BICENTENNIAL NATURE TRUST (BNT)

The BNT was created to preserve and protect important conservation and recreation areas throughout Indiana by matching donations of land or dollars. Property acquired with this fund will become part of the public trust to ensure that the land is protected for future generations of Hoosiers to use and enjoy. The BNT is designed to encourage local participation, so each project requires a \$1:1 match. To ensure availability of funds for a wide variety of projects in every corner of the state, a cap of \$300,000 has been set for the BNT portion of an individual project.

For more information, visit: [www.in.gov/dnr/heritage/7309.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/heritage/7309.htm)

### THE INDIANA HERITAGE TRUST PROGRAM

The Indiana Heritage Trust program offers funding to preserve land in Indiana. Project types eligible for funding under the Indiana Heritage Trust include the acquisition of property for new and existing state parks, state forests, nature preserves, fish and wildlife areas, and outdoor recreation, historic, or archaeological sites.

For more information, visit: [www.in.gov/dnr/heritage/4420.htm](http://www.in.gov/dnr/heritage/4420.htm)

### INDIANAPOLIS PARKS FOUNDATION

The mission of Indianapolis parks foundation is to enhance the recreational, educational, and cultural life of the Indianapolis community by encouraging and soliciting support for the city's parks system. The foundation helps Indy Parks and Recreation build a world-class parks system by providing funding for land acquisition, park programs, capital improvements, and maintenance

For more information, visit: [www.cicf.org/about-cicf/funds-and-foundations/special-focus-funds/indianapolis-parks-foundation](http://www.cicf.org/about-cicf/funds-and-foundations/special-focus-funds/indianapolis-parks-foundation)

### LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Municipalities often plan for the funding of pedestrian facilities or improvements through development of Capital Improvement Programs (CIP). In Raleigh, for example, the greenways system has been developed over many years through a dedicated source of annual funding that has ranged from \$100,000 to \$500,000, administered through the Recreation and Parks Department. CIPs should include all types of capital improvements (water, sewer, buildings, streets, etc.) versus programs for single purposes. This allows municipal decision-makers to balance all capital needs. Typical capital funding mechanisms include the following: capital reserve fund, capital protection ordinances, municipal service district, tax increment financing, taxes, fees, and bonds. Each category is described below. A variety of possible funding options available to Indiana jurisdictions for implementing pedestrian projects are described below. However, many will require specific local action as a means of establishing a program, if not already in place.

### CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

Municipalities have statutory authority to create capital reserve funds for any capital purpose, including pedestrian facilities. The reserve fund must be created through ordinance or resolution that states the purpose of the fund, the duration of the fund, the approximate amount of the fund, and the source of revenue for the fund. Sources of revenue can include general fund allocations, fund balance allocations, grants and donations for the specified use.

### CAPITAL PROJECT ORDINANCES

Municipalities can pass Capital Project Ordinances that are project specific. The ordinance identifies and makes appropriations for the project.

### LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS (LIDs)

Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) are most often used by cities to construct localized projects such as streets, sidewalks or bikeways. Through the LID process, the costs of local improvements are generally spread out among a group of property owners within a specified area. The cost can be allocated based on property frontage or other methods such as traffic trip generation.

### MUNICIPAL SERVICE DISTRICT

Municipalities have statutory authority to establish municipal service districts, to levy a property tax in the district additional to the citywide property tax; proceeds provide services in the district. Downtown revitalization projects are one of the eligible uses of service districts, and can include projects such as street, sidewalk, or bikeway improvements within the taxing district.

### TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Project Development Financing bonds, also known as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), is a relatively new tool in Indiana. It allows localities to use future gains in taxes to finance the current improvements that will create those gains. When a public project (e.g., sidewalk improvements) is constructed, surrounding property values generally increase and encourage surrounding development or redevelopment. The increased tax revenues are then dedicated to finance the debt

created by the original public improvement project. Tax Increment Financing typically occurs within designated development financing districts that meet certain economic criteria that are approved by a local governing body. TIF funds are generally spent inside the boundaries of the TIF district, but they can also be spent outside the district if necessary to encourage development within it.

### INSTALLMENT PURCHASE FINANCING

As an alternative to debt financing of capital improvements, communities can execute installment or lease purchase contracts for improvements. This type of financing is typically used for relatively small projects that the seller or a financial institution is willing to finance or when up-front funds are unavailable. In a lease purchase contract, the community leases the property or improvement from the seller or financial institution. The lease is paid in installments that include principal, interest, and associated costs. Upon completion of the lease period, the community owns the property or improvement. While lease purchase contracts are similar to a bond, this arrangement allows the community to acquire the property or improvement without issuing debt. These instruments, however, are more costly than issuing debt.

### TAXES

Many communities have raised money for general transportation programs or specific project needs through self-imposed increases in taxes and bonds. For example, Pinellas County residents in Florida voted to adopt a one cent sales tax increase, which provided an additional \$5 million for the development of the overwhelmingly popular Pinellas Trail. Sales taxes have also been used in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, and in Boulder, Colorado to fund open space projects. A gas tax is another method used by some municipalities to fund public improvements. A number of taxes provide direct or indirect funding for the operations of local governments. Some of them are:

### PROPERTY TAX

Property taxes generally support a significant portion of a municipality's activities. However, the revenues from property taxes can also be used to pay debt service on general obligation bonds issued to finance greenway system acquisitions. Because of limits imposed on tax rates,

use of property taxes to fund greenways could limit the municipality's ability to raise funds for other activities. Property taxes can provide a steady stream of financing while broadly distributing the tax burden. In other parts of the country, this mechanism has been popular with voters as long as the increase is restricted to parks and open space.

Note, other public agencies compete vigorously for these funds, and taxpayers are generally concerned about high property tax rates.

### EXCISE TAXES

Excise taxes are taxes on specific goods and services. These taxes require special legislation and funds generated through the tax are limited to specific uses. Examples include lodging, food, and beverage taxes that generate funds for promotion of tourism, and the gas tax that generates revenues for transportation related activities.

### OCCUPANCY TAX

The Indiana General Assembly may grant towns the authority to levy occupancy tax on hotel and motel rooms. The act granting the taxing authority limits the use of the proceeds, usually for tourism-promotion purposes.

### FEES

A variety of fee options have been used by local jurisdictions to assist in funding pedestrian and bicycle improvements. Enabling actions may be required for a locality to take advantage of these tools.

### STORMWATER UTILITY FEES

Greenway trail property may be purchased with stormwater fees, if the property in question is used to mitigate floodwater or filter pollutants. Stormwater charges are typically based on an estimate of the amount of impervious surface on a user's property. Impervious surfaces (such as rooftops and paved areas) increase both the amount and rate of stormwater runoff compared to natural conditions. Such surfaces cause runoff that directly or indirectly discharge into public storm drainage facilities and create a need for stormwater management services. Thus, users with more impervious surface are charged more for stormwater service than users with less impervious surface. The rates, fees, and charges collected for stormwater management services may not exceed the costs incurred to provide these services.

### STREETSCAPE UTILITY FEES

Streetscape Utility Fees could help support streetscape maintenance of the area between the curb and the property line through a flat monthly fee per residential dwelling unit. Discounts would be available for senior and disabled residents. Non-residential customers would be charged a per-foot fee based on the length of frontage streetscape improvements. This amount could be capped for non-residential customers with extremely large amounts of street frontage. The revenues raised from Streetscape Utility Fees would be limited by ordinance to maintenance (or construction and maintenance) activities in support of the streetscape.

### IMPACT FEES

Developers can be required to pay impact fees through local enabling legislation. Impact fees, which are also known as capital contributions, facilities fees, or system development charges, are typically collected from developers or property owners at the time of building permit issuance to pay for capital improvements that provide capacity to serve new growth. The intent of these fees is to avoid burdening existing customers with the costs of providing capacity to serve new growth so that "growth pays its own way."

Impact fees are designed to reflect the costs incurred to provide sufficient capacity in the system to meet the additional needs of a growing community. These charges are set in a fee schedule applied uniformly to all new development. Communities that institute impact fees must develop a sound financial model that enables policy makers to justify fee levels for different user groups, and to ensure that revenues generated meet (but do not exceed) the needs of development. Factors used to determine an appropriate impact fee amount can include: lot size, number of occupants, and types of subdivision improvements. A developer may reduce the impacts (and the resulting impact fee) by paying for on- or offsite pedestrian improvements that will encourage residents/tenants to walk or use transit rather than drive. Establishing a clear nexus or connection between the impact fee and the project's impacts is critical in avoiding a potential lawsuit.

### EXACTIONS

Exactions are similar to impact fees in that they both provide facilities to growing communities. The difference is that through exactions it can be established that it is the responsibility of the developer to build the greenway or pedestrian facility that crosses through the property, or is adjacent to the property being developed.

### IN-LIEU-OF FEES

As an alternative to requiring developers to develop a greenway or pedestrian facility that would serve their development, some communities provide a choice of paying a front-end charge for off-site protection of pieces of the larger system. Payment is generally a condition of development approval and recovers the cost of the off-site land acquisition or the development's proportionate share of the cost of a regional facility serving a larger area. Some communities prefer in-lieu-of fees. This alternative allows community staff to purchase land worthy of protection rather than accept marginal land that meets the quantitative requirements of a developer dedication but falls short of qualitative interests.

### BONDS AND LOANS

Bonds have been a very popular way for communities across the country to finance their pedestrian and greenway projects. A number of bond options are listed below. Contracting with a private consultant to assist with this program may be advisable. Since bonds rely on the support of the voting population, an education and awareness program should be implemented prior to any vote. Billings, Montana used the issuance of a bond in the amount of \$599,000 to provide the matching funds for several of their TEA- 21 enhancement dollars. Austin, Texas has also used bond issues to fund a portion of its bicycle and trail system.

### REVENUE BONDS

Revenue bonds are bonds that are secured by a pledge of the revenues from a specific local government activity. The entity issuing bonds pledges to generate sufficient revenue annually to cover the program's operating costs, plus meet the annual debt service requirements (principal and interest payment). Revenue bonds are not constrained by the debt ceilings of general obligation bonds, but they are generally more expensive than general obligation bonds.

### GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

Cities, counties, and service districts are typically able to issue general obligation (G.O.) bonds that are secured by the full faith and credit of the entity. A general obligation pledge is stronger than a revenue pledge, and thus may carry a lower interest rate than a revenue bond. The local government issuing the bonds pledges to raise its property taxes, or use any other sources of revenue, to generate sufficient revenues to make the debt service payments on the bonds. Frequently, when local governments issue G.O. bonds for public enterprise improvements, the public enterprise will make the debt service payments on the G.O. bonds with revenues generated through the public entity's rates and charges. However, if those rate revenues are insufficient to make the debt payment, the local government is obligated to raise taxes or use other sources of revenue to make the payments. Bond measures are typically limited by time, based on the debt load of the local government or the project under focus. Funding from bond measures can be used for right-of-way acquisition, engineering, design, and construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Voter approval is required.

### SPECIAL ASSESSMENT BONDS

Special assessment bonds are secured by a lien on the property that benefits from the improvements funded with the special assessment bond proceeds. Debt service payments on these bonds are funded through annual assessments to the property owners in the assessment area.

### STATE REVOLVING FUND LOANS

Initially funded with federal and state money, and continued by funds generated by repayment of earlier loans, State Revolving Funds (SRFs) provide low interest loans for local governments to fund water pollution control and water supply related projects, including many watershed management activities. These loans typically require a revenue pledge, like a revenue bond, but carry a below market interest rate and limited term for debt repayment (20 years).

## PRIVATE AND NONPROFIT FUNDING SOURCES

Many communities have solicited greenway and pedestrian infrastructure funding assistance from private foundations and other conservation-minded benefactors. Below are several examples of private funding opportunities available in Indiana.

### BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

The Building Better Communities is designed to create and enhance nature-based playgrounds and natural play spaces for children, while also providing educational messaging and demonstration areas about water stewardship and conservation. Building Better Communities projects are supported with funding from AWCF and implemented through annual grants administered by NRPA. Building Better Communities grants of \$50,000-to-\$150,000 will fund projects in public parks that:

- Build and enhance nature-based playgrounds and natural play spaces for children
- Educate people on environmental stewardship practices related to water

For more information, visit: [www.nrpa.org/buildingbettercommunities](http://www.nrpa.org/buildingbettercommunities)

### WALMART STATE GIVING PROGRAM

The Walmart Foundation financially supports projects that create opportunities for better living. Grants are awarded for projects that support and promote education, workforce development/economic opportunity, health and wellness, and environmental sustainability. Both programmatic and infrastructure projects are eligible for funding. State Giving Program grants start at \$25,000, and there is no maximum award amount. The program accepts grant applications on an annual, state by state basis January 2nd through March 2nd.

Online resource: [walmartstores.com/CommunityGiving/8168.aspx?p=8979](http://walmartstores.com/CommunityGiving/8168.aspx?p=8979)

### BANK OF AMERICA CHARITABLE FOUNDATION, INC.

The Bank of America Charitable Foundation is one of the largest in the nation. The primary grants program is called Neighborhood Excellence, which seeks to identify critical issues in local communities. Another program that applies to greenways is the Community Development Programs, and specifically the Program Related Investments. This

program targets low-and moderate-income communities and serves to encourage entrepreneurial business development.

More information: [www.bankofamerica.com/foundation](http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation)

### AMERICAN GREENWAYS EASTMAN KODAK AWARDS

The Conservation Fund's American Greenways Program has teamed with the Eastman Kodak Corporation and the National Geographic Society to award small grants (\$250 to \$2,000) to stimulate the planning, design and development of greenways. These grants can be used for activities such as mapping, conducting ecological assessments, surveying, holding conferences, developing brochures, producing interpretive displays, incorporating land trusts, and building trails. Grants cannot be used for academic research, institutional support, lobbying or political activities. Currently, the grant program is on hold until further notice.

More information: [www.conservationfund.org/kodak\\_awards](http://www.conservationfund.org/kodak_awards)

### THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

Land conservation is central to the mission of the Trust for Public Land (TPL). Founded in 1972, the Trust for Public Land is the only national nonprofit working exclusively to protect land for human enjoyment and well being. TPL helps conserve land for recreation and spiritual nourishment and to improve the health and quality of life of American communities.

More information: [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)

### THE SIA FOUNDATION INC.

The SIA Foundation, Inc. is committed to making gifts to qualifying 501(c) 3 organizations or entities within the State of Indiana that will improve the quality of life and help meet the needs of residents. The Foundation achieves this mission through cash grants which are used to support the funding of specific capital projects in the areas of arts and culture, education, and health and welfare.

For more information, visit: [www.siafoundation.org/guide/guide.htm](http://www.siafoundation.org/guide/guide.htm)

### NATIONAL TRAILS FUND

The American Hiking Society created the National Trails Fund in 1998 as the only privately supported national grants program providing funding to grassroots organizations working toward establishing, protecting, and maintaining foot trails in America. The society provides funds to help address the \$200 million backlog of trail maintenance.

The National Trails Fund grants help give local organizations the resources they need to secure access, volunteers, tools and materials to protect America's cherished public trails. To date, the American Hiking Society has granted more than \$240,000 to 56 different trail projects across the U.S. for land acquisition, constituency building campaigns, and traditional trail work projects. Awards range from \$500 to \$10,000 per project. Projects the American Hiking Society will consider include:

- Securing trail lands, including acquisition of trails and trail corridors, and the costs associated with acquiring conservation easements.
- Building and maintaining trails that will result in visible and substantial ease of access, improved hiker safety, and/or avoidance of environmental damage.
- Constituency building surrounding specific trail projects, including volunteer recruitment and support.

More information: [www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org)

### LOCAL SPONSORS

A sponsorship program for trail amenities allows smaller donations to be received from both individuals and businesses. Cash donations could be placed into a trust fund to be accessed for certain construction or acquisition projects associated with the greenways and open space system. Some recognition of the donors is appropriate and can be accomplished through the placement of a plaque, the naming of a park facility, and/or special recognition at an opening ceremony. Valuable in-kind gifts include donations of services, equipment, labor, or reduced costs for supplies.

### CROWDFUNDING

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people usually through the internet. Raising funds for local projects using a crowdfunding platform such as Kickstarter, GoFundMe, or the park specific platform Fund Your Park engages loyal supporters and helps create new ones by allowing donors to share their experience with friends via the internet. Whether it's for building a new playground

or installing trail signs, crowdfunding allows the community to directly fund the improvement via any amount of money they wish to contribute.

### CORPORATE DONATIONS

Corporate donations are often received in the form of liquid investments (i.e. cash, stock, bonds) and in the form of land. Municipalities typically create funds to facilitate and simplify a transaction from a corporation's donation to the given municipality. Donations are mainly received when a widely supported capital improvement program is implemented. Such donations can improve capital budgets and / or projects.

### VOLUNTEER WORK

Residents and other community members are excellent resources for garnering support and enthusiasm for a greenway corridor or pedestrian facility. Furthermore, volunteers can substantially reduce implementation and maintenance costs. Individual volunteers from the community can be brought together with groups of volunteers from church groups, civic groups, scout troops and environmental groups to work on greenway development on special community workdays. Volunteers can also be used for fund-raising, maintenance, and programming needs.