



INDY PARKS & RECREATION

Comprehensive Master Plan

Executive Summary



Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the many citizens, staff and community groups who provided extensive community input for the development of this Indy Parks Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan. The efforts of the community through this plan will continue to ensure the success of Indy Parks.



Adopted by the Metropolitan Development Commission as an element of the Comprehensive Plan for Indianapolis and Marion County

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CHAPTER ONE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INDY PARKS “BY THE NUMBERS”

This Indy Parks Comprehensive Master Plan was developed to provide a vision for how Indianapolis Parks and Recreation Department (Indy Parks) manages the needs and resources of residents for the next five to ten years. The Comprehensive Master Plan will inform residents where Indy Parks is currently positioned and what the future can hold for parks, public spaces, trails, recreation facilities, and programs in this great city.

Every great city looks to a great park system as a catalyst to the quality of life for the residents and to attract residents and visitors. The park system that Indianapolis residents desire encompasses the entire public domain. This master plan illustrates all the positive elements of the park and recreation system and clarifies areas that need to be addressed to help make Indianapolis an even greater city for all of its residents. For this to occur, the park system needs to be observed as a quality of life and economic tool. Much needs to be done to achieve this vision.

To begin the process of the Indy Parks Master Plan, it is important that the community understand its park system.

The following information illustrates what Indy Parks is responsible for managing. This data provides insight to the park system amenities offered to the residents in the community.

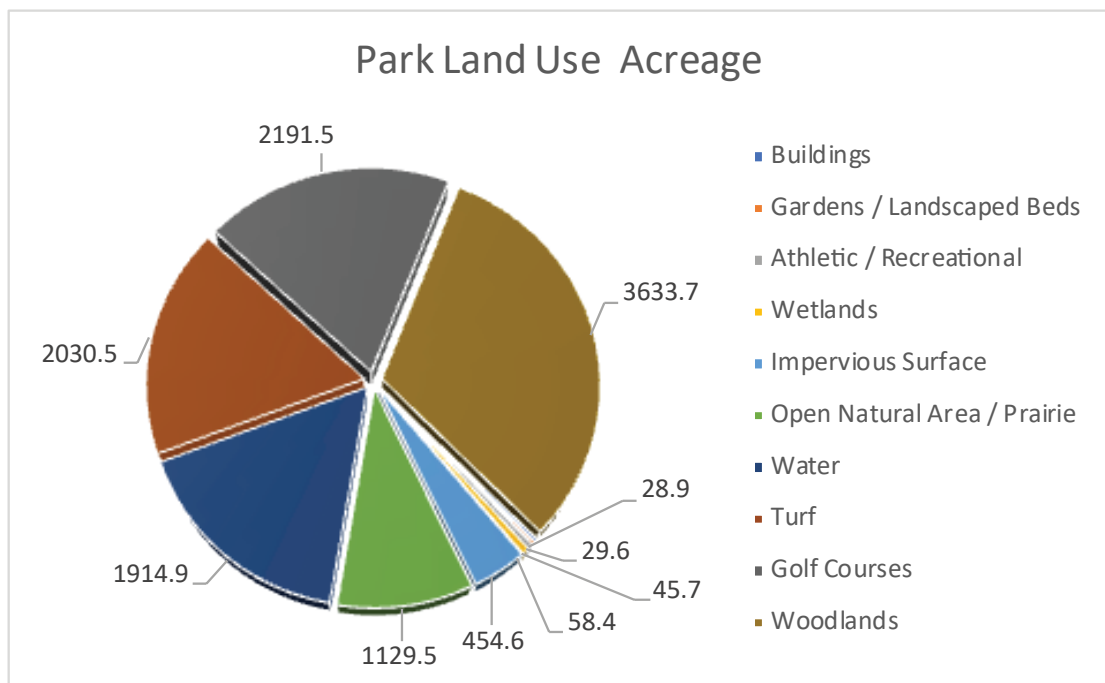
- Garfield Park, Indianapolis' first park, acquired in 1873
- Indy Parks manages 11,254 acres of park property
- Eagle Creek, Indy Parks' largest park at 4,279 acres, acquired in 1962
- \$198 million in assets, less land and amenities valued at \$100,000 or less
- 125 full time staff that manage 210 park properties
- Indy Parks amenities include:
 - 23 recreation centers and nature centers
 - 563,548 square feet of built space
 - 15 outdoor pools
 - 13 public golf courses
 - 125 playgrounds
 - 22 free public spray grounds
 - 87 youth ball fields
 - 68 soccer, football and cricket fields
 - 135 miles of trails
 - 96 basketball courts
- Operating Budget (2014 actual): \$23,730,503
- Per capita operational spending: \$25.93
- Capital spending (2015 budget): \$3,452,080
- Operational cost recovery as part of the Operating Budget: 23.59%
- Percent of the population within walking distance (1/2) mile: 32%



1.1.1 PARK LAND USE ACREAGE

The following table outlines the park land use by type and associated acreage in Indy Parks.

CATEGORY	ACRES
Buildings	28.9
Gardens / Landscaped Beds	29.6
Athletic / Recreational	45.7
Wetlands	58.4
Impervious Surface	454.6
Open Natural Area / Prairie	1129.5
Water	1914.9
Turf	2030.5
Golf Courses	1928.7
Woodlands	3633.7
GRAND TOTAL	11,254.5



1.2 INTRODUCTION

Beginning in early 2015, Indy Parks began the process of updating the previously adopted 2009 Indianapolis-Marion County Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Many changes have occurred over the last seven years in the City of Indianapolis and in Marion County. Demographic growth of the region continues to enhance the need for more open space and for the protection of natural resources, which includes the need for quality parks, recreation facilities, and program services. In an effort to remain ahead of development, Indy Parks chose to create a Comprehensive Master Plan to address the expressed needs of residents for the next five to ten years. The goals of the Comprehensive Master Plan include:

- Engage the community, leadership, and stakeholders in meaningful and innovative public input to build a shared vision for parks and recreation that supports the economic and community goals for the City of Indianapolis
- Utilize a wide variety of data sources and best practices including a statistically-valid survey to forecast trends and patterns of use and how to address unmet needs in the city
- Determine unique Level of Service Standards for the city to project appropriate actions regarding services, open space, connectivity, infrastructure, and programs that continue to rebuild and sustain Indy in the future
- Shape financial and operational preparedness through innovation and “next” practices in revenue generation to achieve the strategic objectives, recommended actions, and implementation strategies outlined in the plan
- Develop a dynamic and realistic action plan that can ensure long-term success and financial sustainability for the city’s parks and recreation system

As with any quality comprehensive planning process, the community was highly involved in the development of the master plan through focus groups, stakeholder meetings, intercept surveys, public meetings, a crowd-sourcing public website, online survey, and a statistically-valid citizen household survey. These strategies were used to prioritize and identify the issues that needed to be addressed in the master plan and to support the key recommendations that need to be implemented over the next five years. The master plan is a living document with many moving elements that must be achieved simultaneously.

In an effort to continue to keep citizens involved beyond this Master Plan process it is suggested that Indy Parks leadership and the mayor’s office convene on an annual basis a “Great Park Summit”. The summit would include key corporate leaders, foundations and partners. The intent would be to address shortfalls of the park system and to embrace a new vision – a vision that parks are an economic tool worth long lasting investments, and to raise the bar on expectations and funding. These commitments will demonstrate to residents, and newcomers, the value of living in Indianapolis through the development of a great park system. The resulting practice will demonstrate that great parks are the foundation of great cities.

1.3 PROJECT PROCESS & PURPOSE

The foundation of the Indy Parks Comprehensive Master Plan included many public participation processes. It was very important to engage people who are always participating in the planning process and to encourage involvement from others who typically do not participate. The outcomes, as outlined in this plan, provide guidance for short-term and long-term goals in a financially sustainable and achievable manner. The plan represents Marion County’s renewed commitment to providing a quality park and recreation system. The process of developing the Comprehensive Master Plan followed a logical planning path, as described below.



This document is not intended to be an end product. The plan is rather a means to guide the provision of parks and recreation and to advance the overall mission and vision of Indy Parks. The goal is to guide the delivery of excellent parks, trails, public facilities, activities, programs, and services that will contribute to community prosperity and improve the quality of life for residents and visitors to Indianapolis.

The purpose of this plan is three fold. First, it puts into place a systematic inventory, analysis, and assessment of the park system that helps address unmet needs, now and in the future. Second, the master plan will determine the context and provision of needs for park and recreation facilities and programs city wide. Third, it will specifically measure the effectiveness of programs and services, as well as park amenities system wide for years to come. Ultimately, this work will guide Indy Parks in an appropriate direction for current and future programs and services, and provide specific means to meet the vision and mission. This study is essentially a process of determining: “Where are we, where do we want to be, and how do we get there?”

As part of the master plan update, public involvement was conducted to vet, or refine, community values and issues leading Indy Parks’ vision. The PROS Consulting Team utilized its Community Values Model™ as the foundation of the study. The Community Values Model™ is an innovative approach used to gather comprehensive public input and insight. Insight is gained from extensive discussions with key community leaders, stakeholders, the general public, and users of the system. The results of this research help to define the overall guiding principles and values of the community that are related to the delivery of parks, recreation facilities, and program services.

The Community Values Model™ is used as the basis for developing, or reaffirming the vision, mission, and community values’ strategic objectives. The strategic objectives address six unique areas of parks and recreation planning that include:

Community / Mandates Priorities	Standards	Levels of Services	Financial / Revenue	Partnerships	Governance / Organization
Safety & Health / Wellness	Land and Open Space	Levels of Service Delivery	Funding Mechanisms to Support Operations & Capital	Public / Public	Design / Align Organization to Support Vision and Values to Community
Principles of Community	Facilities	Core Services		Public / Not-for-Profit	
Mandatory Elements for Facilities, Programs & Services	Programs	Role in Delivery vs. Other Service Providers		Public / Private	
	Maintenance				

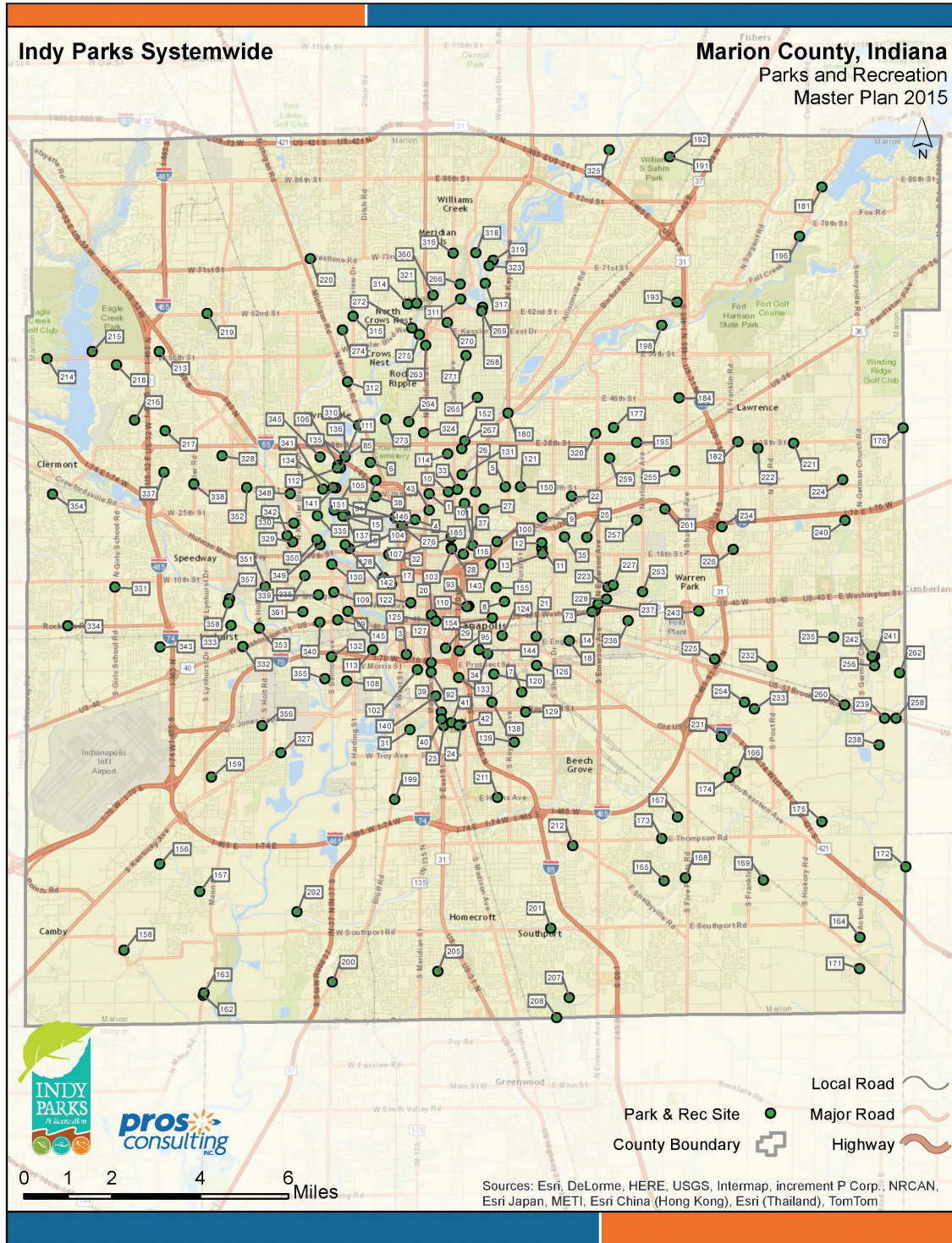
The utilization of this model provides Indy Parks a roadmap and clear direction to develop a park and recreation system that will lead the community into the future.

The values that developed from the Community Values Process are as follows:

- “Health and safety”
- “Equity”
- “Access”
- “Connectivity”
- “Sustainability”
- “Beauty”
- “Multiple Benefits”
- “Quality Maintenance”
- “Inspirational Experiences”
- “Updated Infrastructure”

1.4 CURRENT PARKS MAP & DEFINITION OF PLANNING AREA

The planning area for the master plan includes all areas within the boundaries of Marion County. While this plan recognizes that the actual service areas of some Indy Parks' facilities, parks, and programs may extend beyond the defined boundaries of the planning area, the primary purpose of this plan is to, first and foremost, identify and address the park and recreation needs of Indianapolis residents. The Indy Parks map depicts the planning area and location of Indy Park sites, as well as other municipal facilities within Marion County.



Number Key for Systemwide Maps

Map #	Site Name	Map #	Site Name	Map #	Site Name
1	Al E. Polin Park	136	Riverside Golf Course	237	Kin Hubbard Memorial
3	Babe Denny Park	137	Riverside Park	238	Kitley & Troy Park
4	Barton Park	138	Sandorf Park	239	Kitley Woods
5	Beckwith Memorial Park	139	Sarah Shank Golf Course	240	Lappin Way
6	Bertha Ross Park	140	Sexson Park	241	Paul Ruster Dog Park
7	Bethel Park	141	Soap Box Derby Hill	242	Paul Ruster Park
8	Beville Park	142	South Grove Golf Course	243	Pennsy Trail
9	Brightwood Park	143	Spades Park	253	Pleasant Run Golf Course
10	Broadway & 29th Park	144	Stacy Park	254	Raymond Park
11	Brookside Family Center	145	Stringtown Park	255	Shadeland Maintenance Facility
12	Brookside Memorial Grove	146	Taggart Memorial	256	Stable Chase Nature Sanctuary
13	Brookside Park	150	Washington Park	257	Virginia Lee O'Brien Park
14	Brown's Corner	151	Watkins Park	258	Warren Township Little League
15	Burdal Parkway Esplanades	152	Watson Road Bird Preserve	259	Wes Montgomery Park
17	Cancer Survivors Park	154	Willard Park	260	Whispering Hills Golf Course
18	Christian Park	155	Woodruff Place Esplanades	261	Windsor Village Park
20	City Market Plaza	156	Carson Park	262	Wright's Fields
21	Clayton & LaSalle Park	157	Dollar Hide Creek Park	263	Alice Carter Place
22	Colorado & 29th Park	158	Griffin Woods	264	Andrew Ramsey Park
23	Confederate POW Memorial	159	Seerley Creek Park	265	Arsenal Park
24	Conservatory & Sunken Gardens	162	Southwestway Park	266	Art's Center Canoe Launch
25	DeQuincy Park	163	Winding River Golf Course	267	Boulevard Station
26	Douglass Golf Course	164	Acton Park	268	Broad Ripple Dog Park
27	Douglass Park	165	Basswood Park	269	Broad Ripple Park
28	Dr Martin Luther King Jr Park	166	Century Park	270	Dan Wakefield Park
29	Edna Balz Lacy Park	167	Copper Grove	271	Canterbury Park
31	Emhardt Park	168	Five Points & Edgewood Park	272	Crows Nest Entrance
32	Graham E Martin Park	169	Franklin Township Community Park	273	Elwood & Mary Black Park
33	Fall Creek & 30th Park	171	Retherford Park	274	Fox Hill Manor
34	Finch Park	172	Southeastway Park	275	Friedman Park
35	Forest Manor Park	173	Thompson Park	276	Greenway - Fall Creek
37	Frank and Judy O'Bannon Soccer Fld.	174	Wildwood Park	310	Greenway - White River
38	Frank Young Park	175	Wolf Run Park	311	Greenways Depot
39	Garfield Memorial Grove	176	Carroll Road & 42nd Street Park	312	Highwoods Park
40	Garfield Pagoda	177	Doris Cowherd Park	314	Holiday Park
41	Garfield Park	180	Fall Creek Pkwy Preserve	315	Juan Solomon Park
42	General Lawton Monument	181	Fall Creek Trail at Geist Dam	316	Marott Park
43	George E. Kessler Park	182	Franklin & 38th Park	317	North Broad Ripple Park
48	Greenway - Fall Creek	184	Gardner Park	318	Ravenswood Overlook Park
73	Greenway - Pleasant Run	185	Greenway - Fall Creek	319	Riverwood Park
85	Greenway - White River	191	Sahm Golf Course	320	Roselawn Park
92	Hendricks Park	192	Sahm Park	321	Ruins at Holiday Park
93	Highland Park	193	Skiles Test Nature Park	323	Stamm Park
94	Highway Parcel #15	195	Talley Park	324	Tarkington Park
95	Hot Shot Tot Lot	196	Upper Fall Creek Loop Trail	325	Town Run Trail Park - Mtn Biking
99	Indianola Park	198	Woolens Gardens	327	Bel Aire Park
100	John Ed Park	199	Bluff Park	328	Bowman Park
101	JTV Hill Park	200	Glenns Valley Nature Park	329	Centennial & 20th Park
102	Kelly Park	201	Gray Park	330	Centennial & Groff Park
103	Kennedy-King Park Center	202	Greenway - Little Buck Creek	331	Chapel Hill Park
104	Kuntz Soccer & Sports Complex	205	Perry Park	332	Christina Oaks Park
105	Lake Indy - Boating	207	Smock Dog Park	333	Chuck Klein Sports Complex
106	Lake Sullivan	208	Smock Golf Course	334	Cloverleaf Conservation Area
107	Landmark for Peace Memorial	211	Southside Park	335	Coffin Golf Course
108	LaShonna Bates Indoor Aquatics Ctr	212	Tolin-Akeman Park	336	Denver Park
109	Lentz Park	213	Eagle Creek Dog Park	337	Faculty Park
110	Little Valley Park	214	Eagle Creek Golf Course	338	Gustafson Park
111	Major Taylor-BMX Track	215	Eagle Creek Park	339	Haughville Park
112	Major Taylor-Skate Park	216	Eagle Highlands Neighborhood P	340	Hawthorne Park
113	McCarty Triangle Park	217	Gateway West Park	341	Iron Skillet - Restaurant
114	McCord Park	218	Mayor's Garden	342	James Foster Gaines Park
116	Monon Acres Park	219	Northwestway Park	343	Krannert Park
120	Orange Park	220	WISH Park	345	Major Taylor Sports Complex
121	Oscar Charleston Park	221	Bellamy Park	348	Moreland Park
122	Peace Park	222	Dubarry Park	349	Municipal Gardens
124	Porter Playfield	223	Ellenberger Park	350	Municipal Gardens Memorial Grove
125	Presidential Place	224	Grassy Creek Regional Park	351	Olin Park
126	Pride Park	225	Grassy Creek Wood Conservation Arc	352	Patricia Park
127	Ranger Station at Nobel Place	226	Greene Park	353	Ridenour Park
128	Ransom Place	227	Greenway - Ellenberger	354	Robey Park
129	Red Maple	228	Greenway - Pleasant Run	355	Ross Claypool Park
130	Rev Mozel Sanders Park	231	Hanover North Park	356	Stout Field Park
131	Rev. Charles R. Williams Park	232	Indianapolis World Sports Park	357	Thatcher Golf Course
132	Rhodus Park	233	Indy Island Indoor Aquatics Ctr	358	Thatcher Park
133	Ringgold Park	234	Indy Urban Acres Park	360	Blickman Trail
134	Riverside - Marina	235	Iron Gate Conservation Area	361	Central Green
135	Riverside Golf Academy	236	Irvington Circle		

1.5 PARK BOARD / DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

1.5.1 CURRENT INDY PARKS ORGANIZATION AND BUDGET

Indy Parks provides parks, greenways, recreation facilities and programmed experiences throughout the City of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana. Indy Parks enforces city ordinances and state laws pertaining to parks and recreation facilities. It has the authority to levy general property taxes to acquire, operate and maintain park and recreation facilities and it also has the power to issue General Obligation Bonds for the same purpose. The Indy Parks budget is reviewed and approved by the Mayor and the City County Council. A five-member board, administered by the Director, oversees Departmental policies, reviews the annual budget and approves all contracts. The Board of Parks and Recreation consists of the Director of the Department who is appointed by the Mayor, two members appointed by the Mayor and two members appointed by the City County Council. The Indy Parks Director serves as the Chair of the Board. The four members serve renewable one year terms.

1.5.2 INDY PARKS ORGANIZATION

The Indy Parks organizational structure has changed since the last Comprehensive Plan was completed in 2009, primarily due to decreases in budget and staffing levels. Over the last six years Indy Parks has lost over 24 Full Time positions. Many areas of responsibility have been combined so that the responsibilities remain the same, but have been reassigned to create efficiencies. Prior to 2009, the Park Rangers were moved to the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department. The most significant recent changes have occurred within the areas of Park Maintenance and Resource Development. In an effort to increase efficiencies, Park Maintenance has been moved to the Department of Public Works- Operations Division. Resource Development is now part of the Department of Public Works- Engineering Division. The current organizational functions within Indy Parks are as follows:

- **Administration/Finance-** Budget Administration, Revenue Facilities, Human Resources, Payroll, Contract Administration, Auditing, Special Facilities, Lease Management, Golf Contract Management
- **Communications-** Public Information, Website Management, Customer Service, Community Outreach, Community Relations
- **Operations-** Center South Region, Center North Region, North Region, Southwest Region, Southeast Region (includes Facility Management, Sports, Environmental Education, Arts), Aquatics, Camps and Programs, Training and Risk Management

The results of these realignments have been mixed. Some of the positives include the ability of the Department of Public Works to fund work within the park system beyond what is available within the Indy Parks capital budget. Having a combined workforce allows for employees to be fully utilized during all times of the year with no seasonal down times. Also, having the planning staff working closely with DPW Engineering has provided additional staff resources for management of park projects and the benefit of closer collaboration on project planning.

The challenges have been effective communication between departments and communication with the general public-many do not have a clear idea of who is responsible for what. Establishing priorities within a limited budget is always a challenge, especially when dealing with maintenance requests and unforeseen events. There is also a perception that the level of maintenance has been negatively affected. But, it is a reality that in all areas of Indy Parks there are fewer staff doing more work with fewer resources. Closing facilities has, so far, been avoided by finding efficiencies. Having fewer staff available in facilities translates to limited facility operational hours, less building coverage and fewer program offerings. Inadequate resources for maintenance dictate a lowering of expectations. A critical component of this plan must be finding new revenue sources to offset budgetary restrictions, developing new partnerships that provide support to the Indy Parks mission and expanding the role of volunteers for service projects.

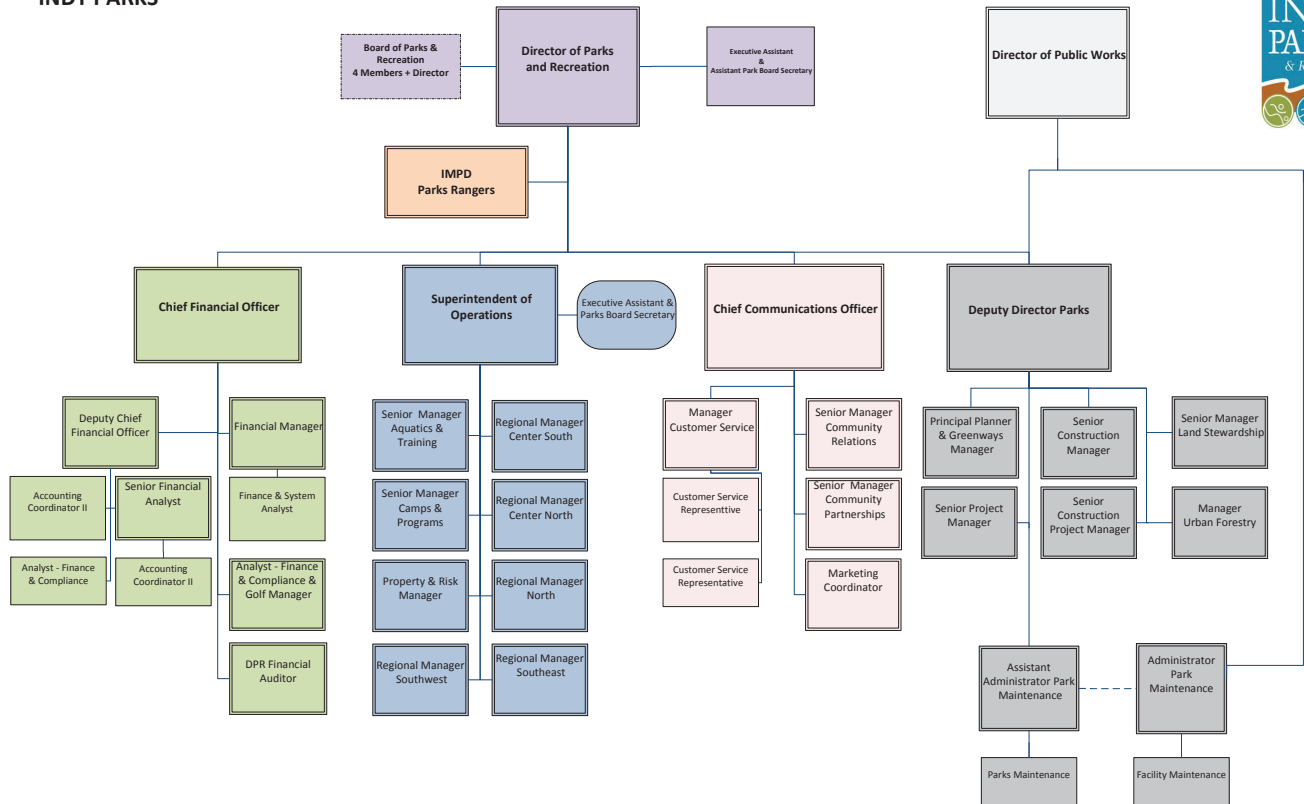
In order to address the maintenance issues, Indy Parks and DPW have agreed to share the position of Deputy Director of Parks. This position will administer Park Planning, Park Capital Improvements, Land Stewardship, Forestry and Beautification, Greenways/ Trails and Park Maintenance. A new position, Administrator of Park Maintenance, has been created, which will now report to the Deputy Director of Parks. This change in management should address communication and prioritization issues. In order to fully address the level of maintenance it is recommended that current practices be analyzed to determine what level of service is provided with existing resources, what level of service is desired for the future and what will be required to get to that level. New assets that are brought on line should have costs to operate and maintain identified up front and, when using private funding sources; establishment of maintenance endowments should be explored.

For the first time since Park Maintenance and Resource Development was transferred to DPW, the 2017 budget will now show the expenses for Park Maintenance and Resource Development/ Capital Improvements in the Indy Parks budget. These expenses will be shown as a chargeback to DPW from Indy Parks for services rendered. Additionally, the two Departments have agreed to finalize a mutually acceptable Memorandum of Understanding which outlines the responsibilities of each Department as it relates to Maintenance and Capital Improvements.

Indy Parks & Recreation – Comprehensive Master Plan

The current Indy Parks organizational structure is detailed below:

City of Indianapolis INDY PARKS



1.6 PURPOSE, VISION, MISSION, AND ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

1.6.1 VISION STATEMENT

The following vision presents how Indy Parks desires to be viewed in the future:

“With over a century of history advancing the value of parks, Indy Parks is committed to protecting and enhancing the community’s assets for the future. We will be a leader in making Indianapolis a vibrant, happy, and healthy place to live. By providing premier greenspaces and recreation opportunities, we will connect all residents to nature, to the community, and to themselves. Our work is vital to contributing to the economic, social, and environmental health of our city.”

1.6.2 MISSION STATEMENT

The following is the mission for how Indy Parks will implement the vision:

“We connect communities by providing places and experiences that inspire healthy living, social engagement, and a love of nature.”

1.6.3 TAG LINE

Creating places and experiences that inspire.

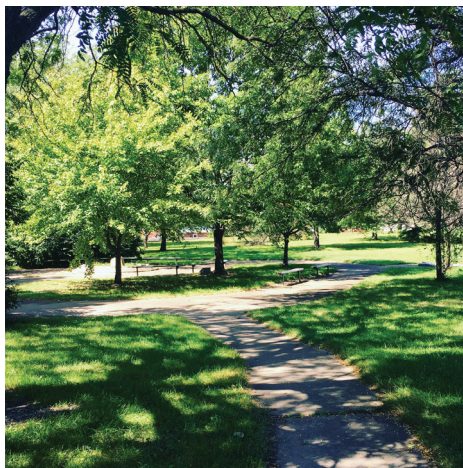
1.6.4 ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

The organizational values that Indy Parks incorporates into its daily operations include the following:

- Fun...we love what we do, the people we serve, and we enjoy doing it
- Inclusion...we respect each other and those we serve
- Collaboration...we work together as an organization and with the community
- Sustainability...we create the capacity to endure and thrive
- Innovation...we are creative and challenge the status quo in every segment of our work

1.6.5 GOALS, STRATEGIES, INITIATIVES AND TACTICS, AND MEASUREMENTS

- Goals: confirm the vision and mission.
- Recommendations: indicate how the goal will be accomplished.
- Initiatives and Tactics: demonstrate what process will be used to fulfill the recommendations and measurements tell the team what is expected, why it is important, who is involved, when it is to occur, and which attributes are important.



1.7 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1.7.1 COMMUNITY VISION FOR PARKS

“Our vision is to ensure adequate parkland, facilities, and programs are available in all townships by meeting recommended levels of service standards.”

GOAL:

Seek to achieve a minimum land acquisition goal of 12 acres per 1,000 residents in each township.

STRATEGIES:

- Where possible, explore use of impact ordinance in underserved areas
- Complete the Greenways Plan by 2024 with a completion goal of 18 miles/year
- Make neighborhood park enhancements to support revitalization and livability with 10 neighborhood parks updated annually
- Create 10 signature parks through multiple funding sources to demonstrate the value of parks and ensure that all age groups are represented in the park with appropriate levels of amenities
- Seek a 70%-30% balance of use for all park land. 70% allowed for development and 30% allowed to not be developed and left as undeveloped open space
- Finish one (1) site specific park master plan, annually, so the park can achieve the desired participation levels desired, cost recovery, and economic value to the community or neighborhood
- Eliminate underutilized amenities in the system and introduce exciting amenities that will energize and inspire the community surrounding the park and create a stronger sense of place
- Customize facilities and park-related programs to the demographics of the people served

1.7.2 COMMUNITY VISION FOR FACILITIES

“Our vision for facilities is to make them as inviting as possible to maximize their use and productivity for people of all ages.”

GOAL:

Update three (3) key recreation facilities each year as it applies to recreation centers, pools or sports fields.

STRATEGIES:

- Evaluate capacity utilization for each community recreation facility and ways to maximize use through capital improvements
- Implement the Eagle Creek Park, Garfield Park and Sports Fields Business Plans, as outlined in the development of the Comprehensive Master Plan
- Program underutilized facilities through effective partnerships with the community surrounding the facility
- Develop new amenities that follow national trends for sports, outdoor adventure and education, community recreation facilities, and aquatic based facilities in the city
- Using the asset maintenance report developed for Indy Parks, determine what assets need to be updated that will support the future needs of the community
- Develop an amenity replacement schedule for playgrounds, sports lighting, restrooms, parking lots, sports courts, pools, shelters, and trails in the system

1.7.3 COMMUNITY VISION FOR PROGRAMMING

“Our vision for programming is to increase program participation from Indianapolis residents from 15% to 30% over 5 years by offering programs that target unmet community needs and activating parks and facilities.”

GOAL:

Establish 10 core program areas to service the recreation needs of Indianapolis residents.

STRATEGIES:

- Establish a regional approach to achieve a level of service standard for recreation programs across all townships
- Develop new programs for active adults 55+ and older, expand adult sports, outdoor adventure, fitness and wellness, urban youth programs, family programs, and outdoor education programs
- Restore lost recreation programmers (14) and use these programmers for core program areas to activate spaces in parks and recreation facilities
- Promote interpretation and education of historic, cultural, and natural resources in parks
- Partner with Visit Indy to provide authentic experiences for residents and visitors alike
- Reprice program services based on cost of service and service classifications
- Create equitable program partnerships across the system



1.7.4 COMMUNITY VISION FOR OPERATIONS AND STAFFING

“Ensure that Indy Parks is actively connected with other city departments and initiatives, enhancing the notion of “One City”, where all goals are collaboratively aligned.”

GOAL:

Indy Parks and the Department of Public Works will work closely to enhance the quality of park maintenance in city park facilities to meet the community’s expectations.

STRATEGIES:

- Institute demonstrated management practices and measure performance in park and recreation services based on NRPA Annual Field Report
- Seek support for a dedicated funding source to support operations and maintenance standards
- Develop maintenance standards and communicate their importance to maintenance staff
- Allow Indy Parks to keep the revenues earned through a non-reverting funds policy to support operational costs and raise the operational budget to manage the system to the level of service desired by the users of the system
- Develop earned income opportunities to support capital and operational needs
- Engage a goal to increase volunteer support to 15% of the entire organizational employee hours

1.7.5 COMMUNITY VISION FOR FINANCING

“Seek to create a per capita spending goal of at least \$50 from the existing \$26 to properly operate and maintain the system.”

GOAL:

Work to develop creative financing options for the department using all available resources.

STRATEGIES:

- Seek to become 50% self-supporting with cost recovery goals for each core program area and recreation facility
- Enhance “friends” and volunteer groups for recreation facilities/parks programs, as well as create new “Friends of” groups throughout the city
- Explore the development of a Business Development GAPS office (grants, alliances, partnerships, and sponsorships) to create more earned income
- Develop stronger partnerships for signature facilities that are capable of raising more operational and capital dollars for the system, and ensure all partnership agreements incorporate mutual goals with measurable outcomes
- Collaboration with Indianapolis Parks Foundation to support incremental capital improvements and marketing needs of the department
- Maintain what the park system owns and invest in rebuilding the infrastructure while creating new parks and facilities in under-served areas of the city





1.7.6 COMMUNITY VISION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

“Our vision for economic development is to create the entire park system as an economic tool through strong parks, outstanding facilities, and programs that make living in the city a decision people choose.”

GOAL:

Demonstrate through an economic impact study that parks provide far greater economic impact than the money the city currently spends on the system.

STRATEGIES:

- Tie the parks system to Plan 2020 initiatives, Neighborhood Quality of Life Plans, Great Places 2020, Promise Zone, 16 Tech, etc.
- Track and communicate the economic value (housing and commercial) of parks and trails to the city on a yearly basis
- Tie parks, recreation facilities, and programs to health and wellness, food deserts, and public safety through appropriate design of parks, trails, and recreation facilities
- Partner with Indiana Sports Corp for future sports facility development to target more sports tourism through parks and recreation facilities in Marion County
- Create more trailside development (parks and amenities) to lift the property values and create an enhanced park experience using redevelopment funding

1.7.7 COMMUNITY VISION FOR MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

“Our vision for marketing and communications is to enhance the systems visibility and awareness to drive more use and revenue.”

GOAL:

Increase citizen awareness of Indy Parks services to 80%+ using parks and 30%+ involved in park programs.

STRATEGIES:

- Develop an updated marketing and branding plan for the system
- Update existing website to a responsive design site and build a mobile app.
- Dedicate increased resources for marketing and communications staff – i.e. best practices are 3%- 4% of operational value nationwide
- Incorporate technology, analytics, and data-based decision making into marketing practices to maximize decisions on users of the system



1.8 CONCLUSION

Park and recreation services are essential when establishing and maintaining a healthy, livable city. Availability and accessibility to recreation opportunities and parks provide a host of positive benefits and outcomes. Critical to the future vitality of Indianapolis is a parks system that can provide recreational opportunities, inclusive of all users, that promote physical and mental well-being, provide immaculate settings that create memorable experiences, and unite citizens in a positive, supportive, and fun environment.

The Indy Parks Comprehensive Master Plan was developed to provide Indy Parks a roadmap for managing the future. This planning process incorporates a comprehensive series of analyses to understand the workings of Indy Parks and integrates a strong community engagement process to inform key recommendations.

The Comprehensive Master Plan includes a system-wide approach for accomplishing short and long-term goals, initiatives, and tactics to ensure Indy Parks continues to protect the region's park assets and provide quality services, programs, and facilities to the community for many years to come. Indy Parks has been an undervalued asset in Indianapolis in both awareness and funding. Not since the early 1970s has the system had the level of public investment in funding to meet a growing city that desires a strong neighborhood livability climate that can attract people of all ages to want to live in the city.

In order to meet the recommendations outlined in this plan, Indy Parks will serve as an enabler/facilitator for the development and/or provision of some parks and recreation services and as a direct provider for some services. Indy Parks must continue to incorporate effective partnerships in the development of trails and recreation facilities.

This master plan outlines a sustainable framework from which to operate. New funding opportunities are outlined to support operational costs if the administration will allow the park system to retain dollars earned. The park system has never had the opportunity to ask the taxpayers to invest in the system. Maybe the time is now.

If given the opportunity, Indy Parks can deliver on the recommendations in this master plan. Delivery of these recommendations require a total commitment by the city, community partners, and leaders, who have helped many other community-based institutions to grow and prosper by helping them to "right size" their organizations. Indy Parks needs all stakeholders of the system to support the operational and capital improvement recommendations outlined in this plan to move forward. Given the opportunity, Indy Parks is poised to capitalize and build upon its previous successes. For Indianapolis to continue to thrive, parks and public open spaces must be a part of an economic strategy to encourage people to want to live in the city. Great Parks are the foundation of Great Cities.

