

MUNSTER

PARKS & RECREATION

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

2025-2029



munster
PARKS
AND RECREATION



ADOPTION RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO: 2024-03

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, LAKE COUNTY, INDIANA, ADOPTING THE 2025-2029 PARKS AND RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN

WHEREAS, the Town of Munster Parks and Recreation Board ("Board") is aware of the parks and recreation needs of the residents of Munster, Indiana; and

WHEREAS, the Board realizes the importance of sound planning in order to meet the needs of its citizens; and

WHEREAS, the Board has undertaken the update of its five-year parks and recreation master plan which describes the communities physical and social characteristics, existing parks and recreation facilities, and the desired actions to be taken to improve the parks and recreation facilities; and

WHEREAS, the 2025-2029 Town of Munster Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan was drafted by the professional consultant planning team at HWC Engineering, Inc. following a long planning process which included public input meetings, a public input survey, discussion with the Board and staff from the Town of Munster and the Parks and Recreation department;

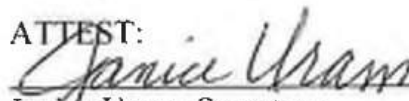
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Parks and Recreation of the Town of Munster, Lake County, Indiana, officially adopts the Town of Munster 2025-2029, Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan as its official planning guide for the next five years, for growth and development of parks and recreational opportunities in the Town of Munster, Indiana.

0 RESOLVED and ADOPTED this 16th day of July, 2024, by a vote of 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION OF
THE TOWN OF MUNSTER, LAKE COUNTY,
INDIANA


Dan Repay, President

ATTEST:


Janice Uram, Secretary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

PREPARED FOR

Munster Parks & Recreation Department

CONTACT INFORMATION

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PARK BOARD

Dan Repay, President

Scot Pierce, Vice President

Robyn Paulsen, Member

Mike Sowards, Member

Kristen Smith, Member / School Board Liaison

STEERING COMMITTEE

Mark Heintz, Director of Parks and Recreation

Jill Higgins, Superintendent of Recreation

Kevin Dark, Superintendent of Operations

Sergio Mendoza, Planning Director

PREPARED BY



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01

INTRODUCTION

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OVERVIEW

The Munster Parks and Recreation Department manages a parks system encompassing over 427 acres of land within 34 town park facilities and 17.1 miles of trails. In addition to the physical facilities and amenities, the parks and recreation department also offers a variety of programs and facilities geared to a wide range of ages and user groups.

MISSION

As a part of planning process for this master plan, the mission statement was updated to reflect the priority of the department which is to serve the citizens of Munster. The updated mission statement of the Munster Parks and Recreation Department is written below:

"Provide and maintain quality parks, facilities, natural space, programs and services which will enhance the physical, social and emotional well being of all the citizens of Munster."

After discussion held during a planning workshop, the parks board and parks staff determined the words "and surrounding Communities" should be removed as the priority of the parks department and parks board is to serve the residents of the Town first ahead of those outside of the Town limits.



West Lakes Park, a newer facility within the system, offers open space, walking trails, play equipment, and sports fields.

PURPOSE AND DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of the plan is to serve as a guide for the Town as it moves through planning and implementation of parks and recreation projects, updates, and programming over the next five years.

This plan was developed through an extensive process of inventory, data collection, and several public input processes. The results of this work has informed and shaped the outcomes and recommendation, which are prioritized in the 2025-2029 Action Plan within the Recommendations Chapter.

It is understood not all recommendations can, or will, be implemented during this five year period, but this document will serve as a guidebook to aid leaders and decision makers as they look to implement projects and purchases.

GOALS OF THIS PLAN

- Develop a plan for increasing indoor program offerings through a new space, shared space, or other means.
- Foster partnerships with schools in order to maximize community resources.
- Invest in facilities that support recreational programming and opportunities in different seasons.
- Prioritize parks and facilities for residents of Munster while balancing that they are also attractive to bring visitors to the community which can furthermore help the local economy
- Explore ways to decrease expenses while maintaining operating standards
- Present the plan to local government and citizens and gain acceptance of the plan
- Submit the plan to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Outdoor Recreation for approval and ultimately grant eligibility.

PHYSICAL LOCATION

Located in Lake County, along the Illinois border, Munster, Indiana is located within the Northwest Region of Indiana and included as part of the Chicago metropolitan area. This region is the second most populated area in the state as well as the second largest economic hub after the Indianapolis metropolitan area.

Munster shares municipal boundaries with Hammond, Highland, Dyer, and Schererville, Indiana as well as Lansing and Lynwood, Illinois. The town is located approximately 30 miles southeast of the Chicago Loop and less than 10 miles from Lake Michigan.

REGIONAL RESOURCES

Resources from the surrounding region provide Munster residents with additional cultural and recreational opportunities. Immediately adjacent to Munster,

Hammond offers a variety of outdoor opportunities at the Hammond Lakefront Park and Bird Sanctuary, Gibson Woods Nature Preserve and Trail Park, as well the Hammond Sportsplex and Community Center. Other indoor recreation facilities include the Lincoln Community Center located in Highland. Additionally, several of the surrounding communities including Hammond and Schererville, provide YMCAs with a variety of recreational opportunities. Casinos, historical sites, golf courses, and city parks are also draws to area residents and visitors. More detail on the location of these regional resources can be found in Chapter 04, Park System Inventory.

On a grander scale, the proximity of Munster to the Chicago metro area provides residents access to world-class museums, entertainment, shopping, restaurants, major league sporting events, as well as recreational and cultural venues in the country's third most populous city. Lake Michigan beaches, boat launches and marinas, and cultural venues are also a short distance away for Munster residents.

PLANNING AREA

A map of the planning area is shown on Figure 1.1. For the purposes of this plan, the limits are the corporate limits of the Town of Munster. Munster serves residents from many of the adjacent communities outside of our municipal boundary which is unsupported by the local tax base; however Munster residents are the first priority of the parks system.

Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the Town's parks and recreational facilities as well as major features, including waterways and vehicular circulation, that may help shape their uses.

FRINGE AREA PARTNERS

Due to the close proximity of the adjacent communities, residents from the regional community (Lansing, Hammond, Schererville, Dyer, and Highland) use Munster parks and recreation facilities. For this reason, the Town has agreements with several key resources in adjacent communities for reciprocity on user rates. More information on these partnerships can be found in Chapter 04, Park System Inventory.

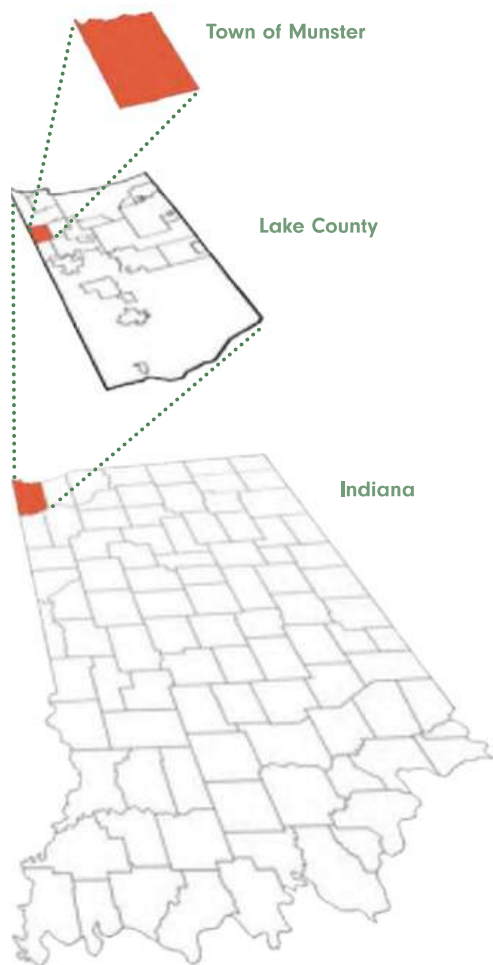
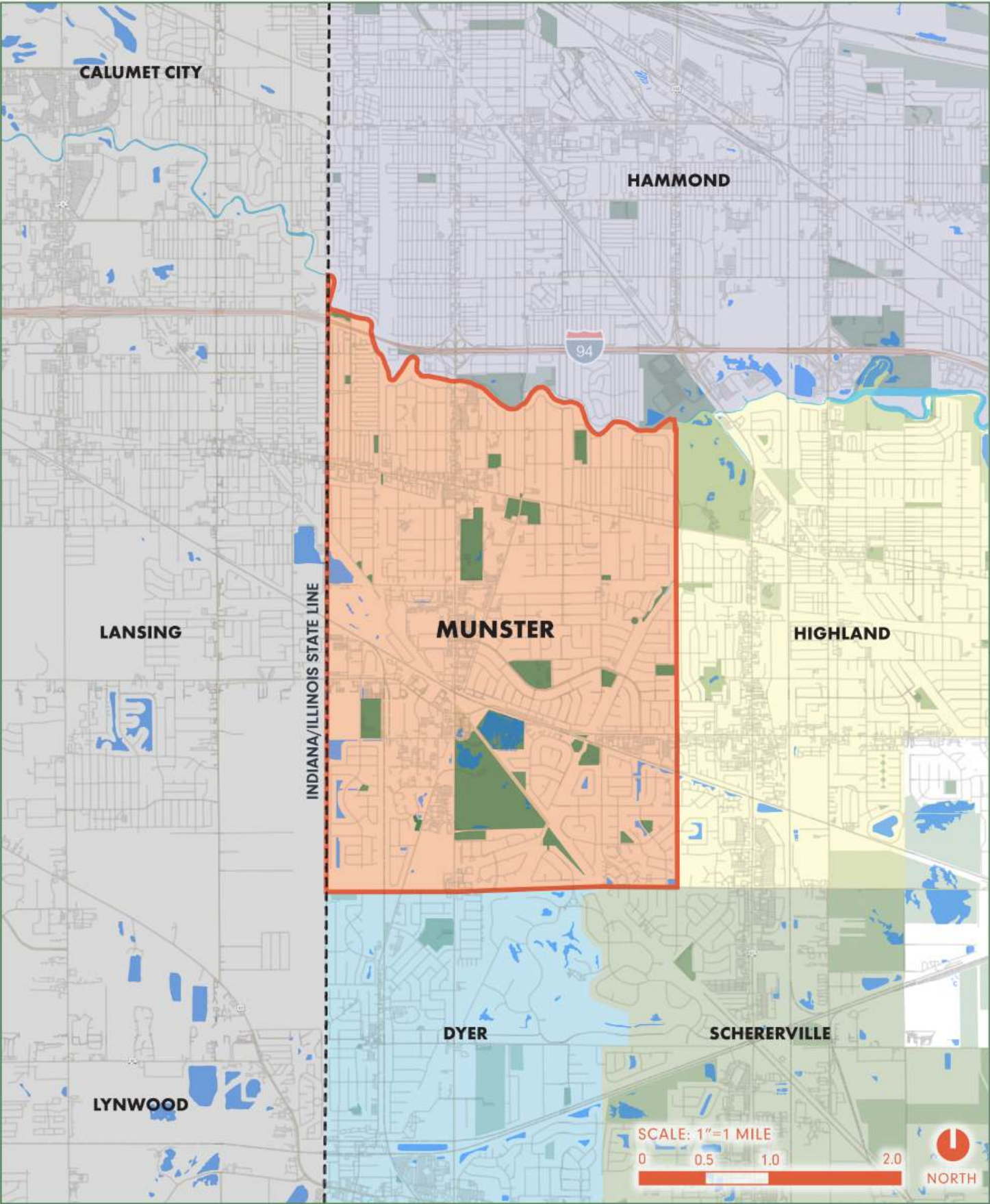


FIGURE 1.1: PLANNING AREA



MANAGEMENT & ORGANIZATION

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT CONTACT INFORMATION

1005 Ridge Road

Munster, IN 46321

Phone: (219) 836-7275

Email: parksoffice@munster.org

Website: www.munster.org

STAFF

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for providing recreational programming for the residents of Munster and maintaining the park facilities. The current Parks staff consists of both full and part-time employees, which are outlined below:

DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION

- Mark Heintz

PARKS DIVISION:

- Kevin Dark, Supt. of Park Operations
- Bob Webb, Maintainer IV - Centennial Park
- Ron Moss, Maintainer III
- Christina Edwards, Maintainer III
- Michael Talarico, Maintainer II
- Fernando Lopez, Maintainer II – Centennial Park
- Anthony Magnabesco, Maintainer II

RECREATION DIVISION:

- Jill Higgins, Supt. of Recreation
- Abby Kresal, Recreation Supervisor
- Mara DiCarlo, Recreation Supervisor
- Donna Chant, Marketing Coordinator
- Janice Uram, Administrative Assistant

PART-TIME:

The parks department manages approximately 140 part-time employees. This number fluctuates annually. Part-time employees are filling positions such as pool lifeguards and staff, park maintenance assistants, recreation program leaders, referees, sports instructors, camp aides, social center supervisors, and similar types of positions.



Summer camp programming requires part-time staff each year.

PARK BOARD

The Munster Parks Board oversees the operations of the Munster Parks and Recreation Department. Board meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at the Munster Town Hall and are open to the public.

The current Munster Park Board members are listed below:

➤ Dan Repay, President

- Term: January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2025

➤ Scot Pierce, Vice President

- Term: January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2026

➤ Robyn Paulsen, Member

- Term: January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2027

➤ Mike Sowards, Member

- Term: January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2024

➤ Kristen Smith, Member/School Board Liaison

- Serving since January 1, 2023

USER FEES

The Munster Parks and Recreation Department provides both free and fee-based programs and facilities. Munster strives to keep fees low to provide access to all residents. Social equity will continue to be considered as current programs and fees are evaluated and new programs added. Efforts should be made to provide low fees or assistance to those in the community who may be economically disadvantaged.

MUNSTER COMMUNITY POOL

Fees include admission to the Munster Community Pool and aquatics facility. The pool offers daily admission fees at a rate of \$10 for residents under the age of 65 (\$15 for non-residents) and \$8 for senior citizens age 65+ (\$13 for non-residents). Children under the age of 2 are free to enter the pool. With few public pools remaining in the area, Munster offers an increasingly unique amenity to residents and visitors from adjacent communities. Season passes are also available at the rates described in the table below:

SEASON PASS TYPE	EARLY BIRD (RESIDENT)	AFTER 5/12 (RESIDENT)	EARLY BIRD (STANDARD)	AFTER 5/12 (STANDARD)
INDIVIDUAL (17+)	\$85	\$100	\$135	\$150
2-PERSON	\$150	\$170	\$205	\$220
3-PERSON	\$200	\$230	\$265	\$280
4-PERSON	\$235	\$270	\$310	\$325
EACH ADDITIONAL	\$35	\$40	\$45	\$50
CHILDCARE PROVIDER	\$55	\$80	\$70	\$85
AGES 2 AND UNDER	FREE	LOST ID CARD		\$10

*Fees listed were for the 20024 season.

CENTENNIAL PARK GOLF COURSE

Green fees for the 9-hole Centennial Park Golf Course are \$15 to walk and \$25 to ride from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays (\$19 to walk and \$30 to ride on weekends) and \$13 to walk and \$23 to ride from 3 p.m. to close on weekdays (\$16 to walk and \$25 to ride on weekends). Some programs have other associated specific fees.



A busy summer day at the Munster Community Pool.

REVENUE

The Parks & Rereation Department receives funds from a combination of property taxes and user fees. The revenue for 2023 was \$2,856,722. A further breakdown of this total is listed below:

- Taxes: \$1,976,698
- Misc.: \$206,699 (includes rentals, advertising)
- Reimbursements: \$6,883
- Fees: \$666,442 (programs, activities)

OPERATING BUDGET

- 2023 Parks and Recreation Budget: \$2,697,825
- 2023 Expenses: \$2,694,398

The department has a non-reverting fund which is separate from the above and is set up to track specific donations, sponsorships and the like to ensure revenues are used as they have been specified for particular activities, events, programs or improvements.

These budgets cover all operating expenses, salaries of employees and all capital improvements. As the Munster Parks and Recreation Department continues to grow and offer additional park acreage, amenities, and programming to the park system, the operating budget will need to be considered. See Chapter 05 Needs Analysis for a comparison of operating budgets to national trends.

JOINT-USE AGREEMENTS

Over the years, there have been many iterations of a joint use agreement as it pertains to Frank H. Hammond Park. Originally initiated in the 1970's, the parks department would like the agreement to be cleaned up to be made clearer and more useful to both parties. Written agreements are in place for the shared use of playgrounds at each of the school sites (Eads, Elliott, and Frank H. Hammond Schools).



Frank H. Hammond Elementary School Playground



Eads Elementary School Playground



Elliott Elementary School



02

THE COMMUNITY

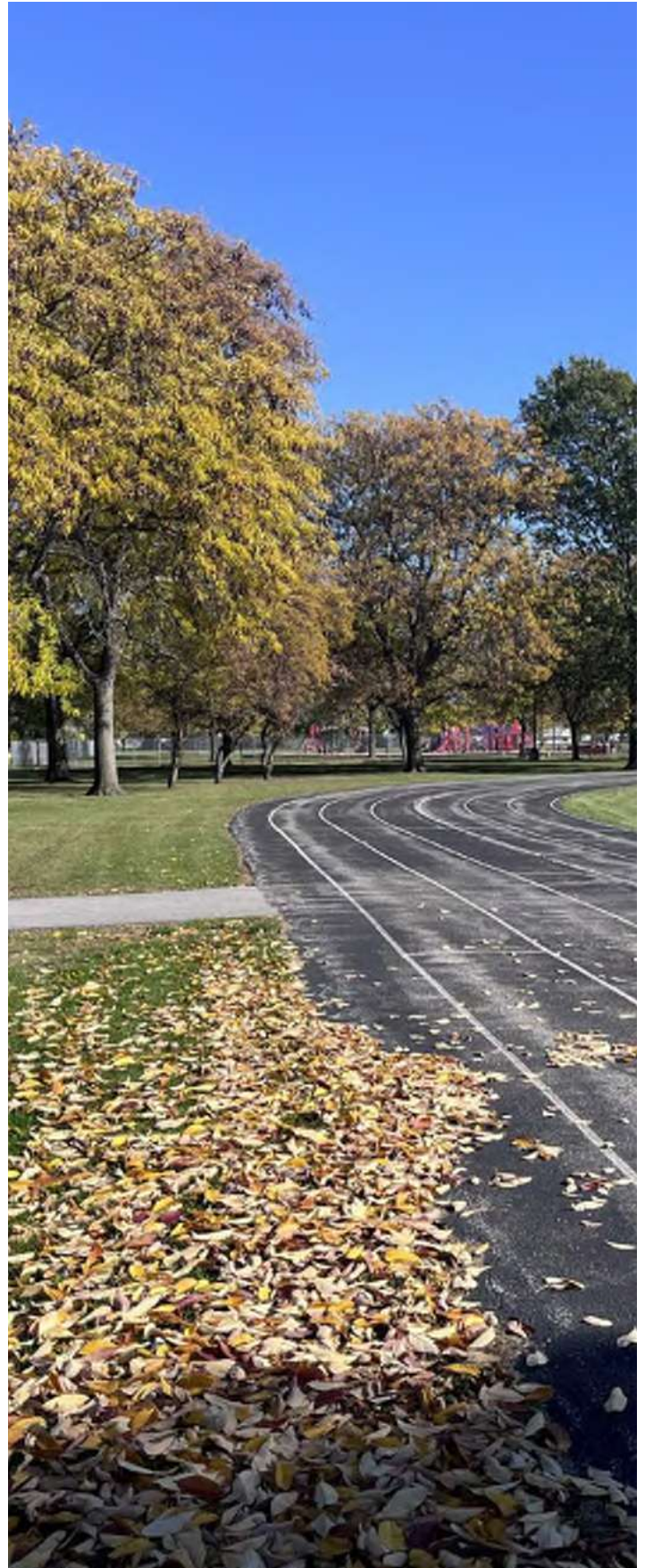
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CHAPTER CONTENTS

This chapter identifies existing conditions and issues within the parks system in three main categories:

- Natural Features and Landscape
- Man-made, Historical, and Cultural Features
- Social and Economic Factors.

Once identified, considerations are analyzed, and strategies are suggested.



NATURAL FEATURES AND LANDSCAPE

Though the Town of Munster and surrounding areas are continuously built up, there are two waterways unique to the town's location of which to make note.

Little Calumet River

The Little Calumet River is a shallow river defining the northern border of the town and features a narrow strip of woodland along its banks within a levee. It stretches from east of Munster west into Illinois and eventually into the Calumet River and Lake Michigan. In 1926 the river was engineered for construction of the Portage Burns Waterway (Burns Ditch) and the Indiana Burns International Harbor in 1965. The river has suffered heavy pollution from the surrounding industries and has subjected its adjacent areas to frequent flooding, including a major flood of Munster in 2008.

Schoon Ditch and Plum Creek (Hart Ditch)

Schoon Ditch and Plum Creek, locally known as Hart Ditch, are part of the Little Calumet River system and an important component of the Little Calumet River Flood Control system. Schoon Ditch originates near Harrison and Flsher Streets on the west and runs due east to Hart Ditch, which flows into the Little Calumet River. Hart Ditch runs north and south, through backyards of neighborhoods and the Lawler Park Greenspace. Both ditches have suffered from poor water quality and frequent flooding, but have undergone various flood-control renovations directed by the Lake County



Hart Ditch shown above from the pedestrian bridge in White Oak Park.

Drainage Board and the Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission.

OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL AREAS WITH PARK POTENTIAL

Opportunities for new parks, trails, and/or open space connections have been identified—one in a previous annual report effort and two during this planning process. They are each described below and identified on the adjacent map graphic.

Community Estates Park

The department recognized a need for a neighborhood park within the southwest quadrant of the community where a new residential development is underway. A property was identified on the west side of Columbia Avenue south of Richard S. McClaughry Jr. Drive, which is now under the parks control. A goal in the 2023 Munster Parks and Recreation Annual Report is to begin initial development of this park in 2024. A concept plan for this project can be found later in this document.

NICTD West Lake Corridor Project

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) has a plan to construct the West Lake Corridor Commuter Rail Project. This 8-mile southern branch extension of the South Shore Line will begin in Hammond and extend south through Munster. A station will be located on Manor Avenue, north of Ridge Road, as well as on the western extension of Main Street. The open space adjacent to this commuter rail could provide an opportunity for a trail extension and green space corridor, which would connect the southwest quadrant of the community into the existing network connecting along Superior Avenue.

Civic Campus Connection

A second trail and green space corridor connection opportunity that could improve the parks system is the wooded areas between Munster Town Hall, the Center for Performing and Visual Arts, Community Park, and Munster High School. Developing a network of trail connections and preservation of green space

FIGURE 2.1: TRAIL AND PARK POTENTIAL





Park users are drawn to Maynard Lake, a central component of Centennial Park, for fishing and wildlife viewing.

between these centralized community assets would greatly improve connectivity and strengthen the idea of a central civic campus within the community.

MAN-MADE FEATURES SURFACE WATER FEATURES THAT WOULD SUPPORT RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Maynard Lake

Unfortunately, Maynard Lake, the main water body within Centennial Park, is not suitable for non-motorized watercraft activities for the following reasons, which would cause too many dangerous liability issues for the Town: (1) there are underwater obstacles, such as elevation changes and construction debris that would make it unsafe for non-motorized watercraft, (2) the walkways and bridges over the lake are too low to allow non-motorized watercraft to pass under safely, and (3) the existing fountains would be difficult to block off from non-motorized watercraft users. Effort could be put towards improving recreational activities such as fishing instead with the addition of docks that allow park users to get closer to the waters edge in multiple locations.

Clayhole Lake

Currently controlled by the parks, Clayhole Lake could be developed with recreational amenities such as a perimeter trail and/or an internal boardwalk system that would encourage passive recreation activities such as bird watching and hiking. The use of non-motorized watercraft within Clayhole Lake may be possible; although, water levels are not very high in many locations, which may discourage users as well as limited access points.

TREE COVERAGE

Similar to other highly urbanized areas, tree cover in Munster has been reduced through development overtime. The exception for the town is Bieker Woods, part of the original Stallbohm - Bieker property.

Continued Effort to Increase Shade

The parks department has been diligent about adding new trees to the parks system each year. This is evident by the varying ages of trees that can be seen in each park from fully mature to newly planted. Developing shade by planting new trees will be a priority in Community Estates Park as it is an open green space with little to no tree coverage. Burlwood Park is another candidate that could benefit from additional trees.

Canopy Composition

The Town has a limited tree inventory for Centennial Park due to the memorial tree program that has been implemented there over the years. This is the only tree inventory within the parks system. As new plantings have been installed over the years, diversity in species has also been a priority. A wide variety of trees were observed in the parks including Red Sunset Maple, Sugar Maple, Crimson King Maple, Autumn Blaze Maple, Pin Oak, Flowering Magnolia, October Glory, and Blue Spruce.

As Munster continues to become more densely redeveloped, maintaining an urban tree canopy in its parks, neighborhoods, and streetscapes will become more critical. Healthy urban tree canopies can mitigate rising summer air temperatures, reduce air pollution, and decrease stress levels. Additionally, tree canopy will provide much needed bat habitat, which is one mammal listed on the IDNR Threatened and Rare Species List for Lake County.

A community-wide tree inventory and urban canopy assessment would begin to put an emphasis on this effort and help to focus efforts towards implementation projects. IDNR offers grants for these types of projects as well as plantings, community awareness, and education/training.



No Mow April, No Mow May, or Low Mow Spring is a movement that encourages reduced or infrequent mowing in order to create habitat and increase the abundance and diversity of wildlife, especially pollinators.

Monitoring and Maintaining Trees

Although there is not a Town Forester or Arborist on staff, the department has used outside contractors to offer assistance with the evaluation of existing trees and suggestions on future tree species. Parks staff install and maintain trees when manageable. Tree plantings are either done by parks staff or using local landscape contractors—both entities are required to follow the Indiana DNR Forestry Division guidelines for planting. Parks staff have had various tree training over the years as opportunities have become available. Chainsaw safety is reviewed on an annual basis with any staff using that equipment. The Town’s Public Works department will chip branches from the parks trees when necessary.

TOPOGRAPHY, HYDROLOGY, AND SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS

Topography and Hydrology

The topography of Munster is relatively flat as a result of the advance of the Lake Michigan glacier, with the exception of a ridge created by the sediment deposition as the lake retreated. Elevations range between +630 at Bieker Woods to +595 on the northernmost boundary of town. The fairly level and flat topography is advantageous for trail development.

The Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission (LCRBDC) is responsible for the banks along Hart Ditch and inside the levee of the Little Calumet River in Munster. They have been working to re-establish the banks of Hart Ditch over the past few years and continue to make repairs. Frequently they access the sites by going through Munster parks but

consistently restore the park to conditions that existed prior to completing the work.

Severe Weather Conditions

Munster has not experienced drought conditions or severe snowstorms, outside of the expected ice and snowstorms for this area, within the last five years.

TURF CONDITIONS, MAINTENANCE, AND IRRIGATION

Turf Conditions and Maintenance

Turf conditions vary from park to park. High clay content in the soils is an issue at West Lakes Park making growing lush turf grass more difficult.

Turf maintenance, mowing of grass within the park system, will utilize up to \$200,000 a year using a combination of contracts with outside vendors and parks maintenance staff. Four parks—Centennial Park, Community Park, West Lakes Park, and John Friend Park—are currently maintained using contractors for mowing. All other parks within the system are maintained by parks maintenance staff.

Although many communities struggle with public perception that maintenance is being ignored when trying to implement this strategy, establishing some no-mow zones within the parks could be considered. Reducing high-maintenance turf in parks could save money, provide habitat, encourage deeper root growth, and enhance scenic beauty (for some).

Another option may be to implement a "No Mow May" campaign, which encourages no mowing or low-mowing (every 2-3 weeks rather than every week) for one month of the year. This allows small flowers to be more available for bees at the start of the growing season, especially critical in urban areas.

Turf Irrigation

Irrigation has been implemented in numerous parks, but typically reserved for high use sites including: Centennial Park and golf course, Community Park ball fields, and all of West Lakes Park. Water for Centennial Park is pulled from Maynard Lake. Water for irrigation at West Lakes Park is pulled from the adjacent retention pond.

MANMADE, HISTORICAL, AND CULTURAL FEATURES

Centennial Park Clubhouse

Due to structural issues, the Centennial Park Clubhouse facility closed on October 28, 2021. The building housed a formal banquet center, kitchen, restaurant, washrooms, and ample storage on the side of the building with more serious structural issues. It also housed the golf course pro shop and storage of golf carts. Those areas continue to be used until new facilities, currently under construction, can be opened in 2024.

The existing Clubhouse will likely be demolished once golf operations are moved into the new buildings. However, significant work will be needed to redirect certain utility and network connections for much of the park which connect to that building such as electrical controls for parking lot lighting, wireless signals to control the dog park access gates, and power for the park's irrigation system.

Opportunities for re-imagining the Clubhouse area once the building is removed were discussed during the parks board planning workshop and public meetings. Options discussed included a new banquet hall to support the golf course and provide indoor programming space, a new community center, a destination playground and/or splash pad, and a flexible plaza/outdoor gaming type area.

Social Center



The Centennial Park Clubhouse is a prominent architectural element in the largest park within the system.

The Social Center sits within Community Park and is in good condition. The indoor venue is available to residents to rent for parties and gatherings. Popular, due to its location and the inexpensive rental rate, the facility is booked most weekends throughout the year and is relatively simple to staff. The facility has been updated regularly over the years and serves its purpose well. Window replacement and tuckpoint work on the exterior facade are planned in 2024.

Park Maintenance Garage

The parks maintenance garage is located at the public works facility and is in the process of updating the restrooms in 2024.

Former Warming House

The former 'warming house' which was used for storage of recreational equipment at Community Park was replaced in 2023 with a new structure in the same location. The previous building would flood and had mold, so it was deemed necessary to replace.

Performance Stage

The performance stage at Centennial Park needs repair and the attached landscaping walls have had structural issues that need to be rectified. Additionally, there are concerns with visibility for attendees in some locations of the lawn that adjusted grading could resolve.

Art Installations

Public art pieces have been installed across the parks system through donations and other means. These features require maintenance, which needs to be accounted for in future budgeting as an action item, if not accounted for by the Munster Divic Foundation.

Munster Community Pool

Over the past few years, significant reinvestment has been made at the Munster Community Pool. The following is a non-comprehensive list of recent capital investments:

- New sound system
- New pool heater

- Replaced the liquid acid tank with a tablet system
- Replaced the chlorine system
- New diving board
- Replacement of the sand volleyball court with an expanded concessions patio and tables
- New large shade umbrellas
- New HVAC unit in the pool offices building
- Repairs to the pool floor and walls
- Gel coating of all the slides
- Replaced the HVAC in the admissions booth
- Added air conditioner to the concession stand
- Replaced windows in the concession stand
- Updated computers
- Ran a fiber optics line to the pool
- Replaced a gas line that feeds the pump house

The facility is updated regularly. Additional repairs currently known are repairs to the pool floor and fencing, replacement of the landscaping rope, and repairs to the concessions equipment. The pool parking lot and drop off area also need to be repaved.

Park Roads, Parking Lots, and Sidewalks

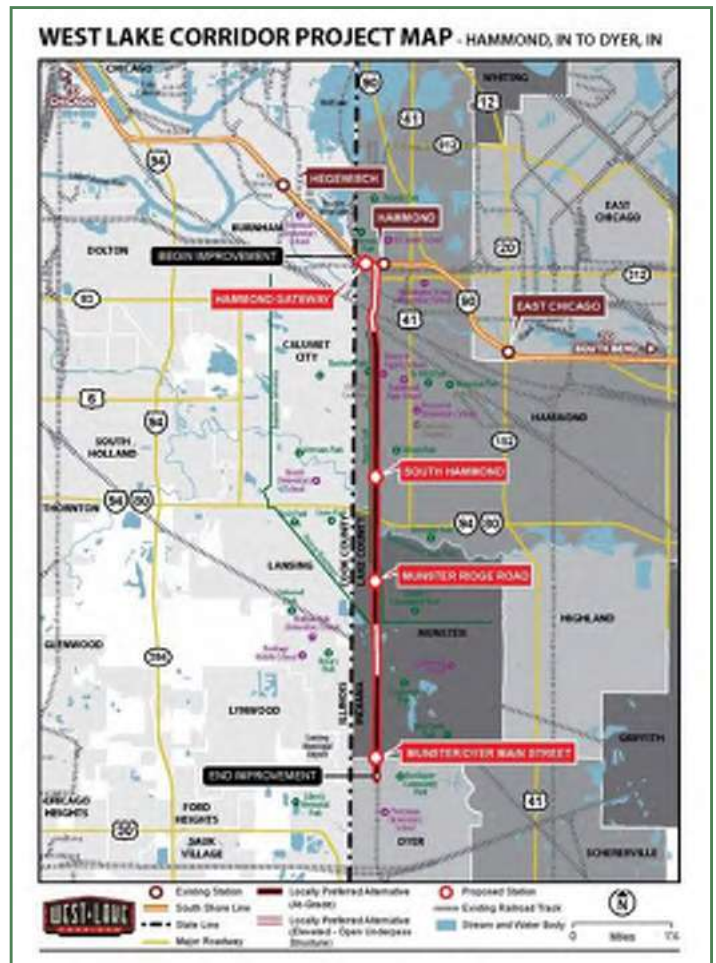
Parking lots, drives, and paved pathways in the park system are generally in good condition due to a continual rotation of update work. As an example, the Stewart Park parking lot was repaved in the last few years.

Resurfacing will be required at the following locations in the near future:

- Community Park (pool parking area)
- Centennial Park (north and south parking areas)
- River's Edge Disc Golf Course parking areas need to be expanded as they are frequently over capacity throughout the year.
- The skate park parking lot needs to be repaved if it is decided to keep it in the same location during this planning process.

Asphalt pathways at the following parks will require updating in the next few years:

- Centennial Park
- Fisher Street Bike Trail
- Frank Hammond Park Track



The proposed NITCD West Lake Corridor Project is underway, which will bring a commuter rail and two stations along the western edge of Munster.

- Monon Trail

Bicycle and Pedestrian Access

Calumet Avenue can be difficult to cross for those on foot or bike at certain times of the day. Providing safe access for people on bikes and pedestrians is a desire as community improvements are considered.

Suggested pathway connections that could provide alternative transportation routes for people to walk or ride a bike to parks are illustrated in Figure 2.1 within this chapter.

Public Transportation

There is a Gary public bus route through Munster(www.gptcbus.com/routes/) The anticipated June 2025 operation of the NITCD West Lake Corridor Project will bring commuter rail to Munster in the next few years.

MANMADE, HISTORICAL, AND CULTURAL FEATURES

Connectivity to trails and parks from the planned stations should be considered as future trail and sidewalk improvements are made system-wide.

HISTORICAL FEATURES

STALLBOHM BARN-KASKE HOUSE

In 1968, the Munster Board of Parks and Recreation and the Munster School Board purchased 32-acres of the land, with the Parks Department maintaining a wooded section along Ridge Road and naming it Bieker Woods in honor of the previous owners. In 1986, the Munster Parks Board purchased the remaining 11 acres containing the house and barn and established the property as Heritage Park. The house built in 1909 was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998.

The Kaske House at Heritage Park is in need of new windows. The facility houses a museum which is coordinated with the Munster Historical Society. However, updates to this building are not high priority to the Park Board at this time.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

EDWARD P. ROBINSON COMMUNITY VETERANS MEMORIAL

Across Calumet Avenue from Centennial Park, the Edward P. Robinson Community Veterans Memorial, opened in 2003 and part of the Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana, honors all branches of the U.S. military with bronze and granite sculptures, life-size military equipment and military branch flags. The 6.5-acre park also features ample green space, a pond and walking trails, among other amenities.

As more than just a memorial to the fallen soldiers of the 20th century military conflicts, this memorial was designed with the intention of revealing the harsh reality of armed conflict with graphic displays in the hope that it will "challenge those who shape the future...to break the repetition of violence...to imagine and hope for peace".

The management of this facility will be turned over

to the parks department in October 2035. The parks board has discussed relocating the memorial and using the property for a different park use, but is undecided at this time.

CENTER FOR VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Built by the Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana, the Center for Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) is a 72,660 square foot facility that opened in 1989. The facility has hosted meetings, seminars, banquets, weddings, theater performances and fine arts galleries over the years, but is currently for sale. Both the parks and the schools have considered purchasing the property to incorporate into their facilities. For the parks, the cost to staff, operate and maintain this large indoor facility would be the major concern.



Edward P. Robinson Community Veterans Memorial



Center for Visual and Performing Arts

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

DEMOGRAPHICS

The following demographics were reviewed in order to help identify specific needs or opportunities within the parks system.

POPULATION & AGE

The current population of Munster is 23,495 people, as reported by www.worldpopulationreview.com, which represents a slight decline from the U.S. Census Bureau 2020 population data of 23,894 but a 3.3% increase over the 2016 population of 23,103 as reported in the previous parks plan. The 2023 population for Lake County, from the same source, is 499,510, a 1% increase from the 2020 U.S. Census population data of 498,700.

Although Munster may not be seeing a significant increase in population, new developments in housing and transportation could influence the makeup of the age of population. The current median age of 45.6 for Munster is 8.6% older than Lake County at 39.4 and 8.5% older than the state of Indiana.

Many of the existing housing options are single family residential, which attracts families with children. The planned commuter rail (illustrated on pg.18 and pg.23) may bring more young professionals looking for housing within commuting distance to Chicago.

Although, undeveloped land is minimal within the limits of the town, Munster is beginning to show signs of developing "up" rather than "out". Centennial Village, a development currently underway north of Centennial Park, will bring multi-story buildings with multi-family residential options to the area, which could also attract more young professionals.

As existing residents age in place and a younger demographic begins to move in, the parks system should consider programming and amenities that serve both user groups. Indoor programmable space would allow for senior-focused activities like dances, cooking classes, and book clubs as well as recreational leagues and workout facilities for younger, more active residents.

DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT



POPULATION

2016: 23,103
2020: 23,894



minimal
population
increase
since 2016

+3.3%

MEDIAN AGE

Indiana: 38.5 years

Munster: 45.6 years



96.5%

High School Diploma
or Higher



90.7%

High School Diploma
or Higher

45.9%

Bachelor's Degree
or Higher

27.1%

Bachelor's Degree
or Higher



HOUSING

Total Households: 9,070

84% of homes are single-family households

6% Poverty Rate



RACE & ETHNICITY

Munster's population race and ethnicity makeup includes White (75%), Hispanic (14%), Black (5%), Asian (5%), and Native American and other (1%) people.

The Hispanic population has increased 10.2% since 2010. It is recommended in future planning processes that public input opportunities be made available in Spanish as well as English to be sure these populations are represented and a better grasp of their specific parks and recreation needs and desires are understood.

The West Lakes Park neighborhood has a concentration of cricket players from India and other South Asian countries. Munster has an opportunity to reach out to these unique communities to potentially discover, encourage, and inform new types of recreational activities and programming that better serve the population.

ACCESS & DISABILITIES

When housing is predominantly single family, access to parks within walking distance can be difficult to achieve. Many of the older neighborhoods in Munster were developed around a school that shares a park space; however, the parks in the northwest quadrant of the community are considerably smaller in acreage size than those in the central and southern portion of the Town. As new residential areas have been developed in the southwestern part of the community, land has been set aside for open space and parks.

Approximately 2,765 individuals or 11.6% of the population within Munster are identified as having a disability. Of those with disabilities, 8% are hearing impaired and 65 or older; 5.9% are vision impaired and 65 or older; 18.7% have cognitive difficulties and are between 35 and 64; 28% experience ambulatory difficulties and are between 35 and 64; and 13% have self-care difficulties and are over 65.

As improvements and amenities are developed for the parks over time, improved access and safety for the hearing and vision-impaired should be considered alongside the more obvious wheelchair accessibility.

HOUSING AND UNEMPLOYMENT

The median household income in Munster is \$96,938, which is 31.8% higher than Lake County at \$66,085. However, unemployment rate is 7.6% for both Munster and Lake County, which is higher than the 4.7% rate for the state. Munster is home to 9,570 housing units, 84% of which are single family units and 86% are owner-occupied.

This compares to Lake County's 217,680 housing units, 79% of which are single family and 71% owner-occupied. The median value of the owner-occupied housing units is \$242,500 in Munster and \$225,200 in Lake County.

Generally the household income data suggest Munster is a stable community with many residents owning their homes and seemingly having discretionary income to spend on parks and recreation events; however, the unemployment rate suggests providing a range of lower user fee or free programming would also serve individuals well within the Town.

EDUCATION TRENDS

Munster residents achieve a higher percentage of high school graduation at 96.5% and 45.9% with a bachelor's degree or higher. than Lake County at 90.7% and 27.1%, respectively. The income-generating influence of higher education is evident in the higher median income in Munster compared to Lake County.

Individuals with a higher education tend to participate more frequently in recreational activities and have a greater demand for such activities in their community. The health and wellness benefits of a robust parks and recreation system can attract better educated and higher earning population.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Education, health care and social services are the highest percentage of employers in Munster at 26.7%, followed by manufacturing at 14.4%, professional, scientific and management at 9.0%, transportation, warehousing and utilities at 8.9% and finance, insurance and real estate at 8.8%.

The major employers include Community Hospital, Munster schools, Town of Munster, Peoples Bank, KGM, Inc., CFS Bancorp, Inc., *The Times of Northwest Indiana* newspaper, PepsiCo bottling and distribution facility, and the Whole Foods Market distribution center.

Providing outdoor recreation for workers confined inside during the work day contributes to the health and wellness of the population. Recreational facilities provide opportunities to connect with family and friends at different levels of physical activity that can meet the needs of workers with sedentary jobs with physical activity to those with a high level of activity job seeking a quiet respite.

Time spent with family and friends was one of the top five reasons Munster residents use local parks. Efforts to continue to provide and maintain these spaces should be made, especially as more professionals may seek this area for residence.

PARK DEFICIENCY

The northern half of Munster is park deficient than any other quadrant.

Community Estates subdivision is currently without a park but that need will be met when a proposed site officially becomes part of the park system in the next couple years.

Areas around Eads School and St. Paul School in Munster meet some outdoor recreational space need in their neighborhoods. Without the school facilities or if for some reason they are no longer available to the public, those neighborhoods would be deficient in park space.

Frank Hammond Park is on property owned by the School and leased to the Town. If that sites was ever taken back by the School Town, it would make that area park deficient.

The walkability map on pg. 109 further illustrates where parks may be deficient.

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The majority of the direct feedback the parks department receives is from parents of children, which is a huge user group for the parks and programming. Service clubs have also made suggestions from time to time.

Recent direct complaints have included the following:

- Desire for more indoor recreational space
- A drop-in senior facility that the Town subsidizes
- More events for adults where alcohol is allowed
- More events held at the community stage



The Grape Escape was a wine festival event that was held for many years in Centennial Park. This event was popular and throughout the public input process many requested that it, or a similar event, return to the Town.

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03

**PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION**

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARIES

A summary of the input received and key takeaways is summarized in this chapter. Meeting minutes, sign-in sheets, and the full survey results can be found in the appendix.

Public input and feedback was sought in the following ways during this planning process:

- Workshops
- Public Input Sessions
- Public Survey
- Public Presentation

The schedule below illustrates when in the process these events took place:



Public Input Sessions No.1 and No.2 began with a brief presentation describing the planning process and meeting goals.

PUBLIC INPUT OFFERING	DATE/LOCATION	PARTICIPANTS
Steering Committee Meeting No.1	October 24th, 2023 10:00am @ Munster Town Hall	9
Online Survey Available	November 3rd, 2023 through February 6th, 2024	776
Joint Facility Workshop	December 19th, 2023 9:30am @ Munster Town Hall	10
Steering Committee Meeting No.2	December 19th, 2023 2:00pm @ Munster Town Hall	9
Public Presentation/Input Session No.1	January 23rd, 2024 12:00pm @ Munster Town Hall	15
Public Presentation/Input Session No.2	January 23rd, 2024 5:00pm @ Munster Town Hall	15
Parks Board Workshop No.1/ Steering Committee Meeting No.3	February 13th, 2024 5:00pm @ Munster Town Hall	9
Parks Staff Workshop	March 20th, 2024 10:00am @ Munster Town Hall	4
Parks Board Workshop No.2/ Steering Committee Meeting No.4	April 16th, 2024 5:00pm @ Munster Town Hall	9
Public Plan Presentation	Tuesday, May 28th, 2024 5:00pm @ Munster Town Hall	5

WORKSHOPS

Workshops or visioning sessions were held with the following three groups during the planning process:

- Joint Facility (Schools and Parks) Workshop
- Parks Board Workshop
- Parks Staff Workshop

Key take-aways from these workshops are included on the following pages.

Joint Facilities (Schools and Parks) Workshop

Because many of the school facilities within the community sit directly adjacent to a park, a joint session with representatives from the schools and the parks was held. The following people were in attendance:

- Mark Heintz, Director of Parks and Recreation
- Jill Higgins, Superintendent of Recreation
- Sergio Mendoza, Planning Director
- Chuck Gardiner, Town Council
- Bret Heller, Superintendent
- Steven Tripenfeldas, Asst. Superintendent
- Colleen Bregren, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

The first part of the discussion reviewed those school and park facilities that are shared today—key discussion points are summarized below:

- Tennis courts and playgrounds are open to the public during certain parts of the day.
- Tennis courts are popular with residents and used consistently.
- Due to liability, lack of lifeguards, and scheduling issues, the indoor pool at the High School is currently not open to the public as a recreational swimming facility

The second part of the discussion revolved around a current project the schools are working on related to expanding indoor recreation space—key discussion points are summarized below:

- School has added boys volleyball and girls wrestling, so the need for indoor recreational space has increased.

- The schools are working on a concept for a multi-use indoor sports facility ranging in size from 30,000 to 50,000 square feet that could house a large turf field, batting cages, sports courts, and a walking track.
- The addition of this multi-use recreational indoor space could open up opportunities for parks programming after school or on the weekends.
- Early in the process, the schools are currently touring other school facilities and funding is well underway. The current conceptual estimates for the facility are in the range of \$26 million dollars.
- The potential location for the facility that is being considered is between the high school and middle school adjacent to Community Park.
- A new location for the existing school tennis courts would need to be determined.

The third part of the discussion reviewed the existing shared parking between the schools and the parks and the hospital to the south—key discussion points are summarized below:

- Open park green space is limited in Community Park due to all of the surface parking lots and interior road network.
- Surface lots within the park serve as overflow lots for the High School and the hospital to the south. There is an agreement in place between the Town and the hospital.
- The hospital is expanding their parking garage, so this need may dissipate.



Joint Facility (Schools and Parks) Workshop

- In an effort to capture more park open green space, consideration for a shared parking garage between the school and the parks was discussed.
- The marching band uses the surface parking lot for practice.

The fourth part of the discussion reviewed the parks current needs for indoor recreation space and those nearby facilities that could fill or accommodate that need even temporarily—key discussion points are summarized below:

- The Center for Performing and Visual Arts does not have the capacity to accommodate the school's events, so the school is not interested in owning and operating that facility.
- Several churches in the Town currently share indoor space with the parks for some indoor programming needs.
- Deep River Water Park, Crown Point YMCA, and Hammond's YMCA will all have indoor aquatic facilities that residents could patron for a fee. The Town has a reciprocal agreement with Highland Lincoln Center, so Munster residents can use that facility with no additional non-resident fee.
- The parks staff would like to have a large indoor facility with classrooms and recreational court space for programming opportunities.

Parks Board Workshop No.1



Parks Board Workshop No.1

The first Parks Board workshop was held in February. The purpose of this meeting was to review the mission statement, review public input and preliminary needs analysis, and to review preliminary recommendations for two of the largest parks.

The first part of the discussion reviewed the parks current mission statement—key discussion points are summarized below

- It was determined the words, "and the surrounding communities" should be removed from the current mission statement as the focus of the Parks Board is to serve the residents of Munster.

The second part of the discussion reviewed the public input received thus far. The board confirmed the need for indoor facility space as highlighted in the public survey and public input exercises.

The third part of the discussion involved reviewing preliminary park concept plans for Community Estates Park, the newest proposed park, Community Park, and Centennial Park. A summary of this discussion is outlined below:

Community Estates Park

- Concern that sidewalk access passes between residential lots
- Grading and drainage will require further detail to be sure it does not affect adjacent neighbors

Centennial Park

- Seems to be confusion about who has to pay to park—clarification is needed
- Don't want to encourage people to get into the water at Clayhole Lake
- A water access opportunity for non-motorized watercraft could be made available along the Little Calumet River near the disc golf course instead of at this site.
- Liked the idea of placing a destination playground in the location of the existing clubhouse.
- Also liked the idea of an event lawn, game area, beer garden, flexible plaza in that location.
- An access drive connecting the two parking lots was reviewed and disliked.

- Shifting the northern parking lot closer to Centennial Village was discussed as a way to reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts in the park during large events. Defining the Centennial Park parking versus the Centennial Village parking would present a challenge, but could be considered.

Community Park

- School already has an indoor pool that could accommodate open swim and swim lessons—the need for the outdoor pool was questioned.
- Starting to rent out the pool more for private parties and events.
- The existing pool is nearly 20 years old, high maintenance and requires a lot of funding and staffing. The board liked the idea of replacing the pool with a splash pad that can be open for longer periods throughout the year and doesn't require lifeguards.
- The interior circulation of the park was also discussed. The church on the north side has multiple entrances that could be consolidated.
- The southwest side of park needs improved circulation and connectivity. The sidewalk ends abruptly in one case.
- Updating, relocating, or removing the skatepark was also discussed.
- A connection from Community Park to Town Hall was sketched over the aerial and discussed.

West Lakes Park

- The desire for a restroom building a that could also include storage was discussed.

Misc.

- A greenway corridor along the commuter rail corridor was also reviewed on the aerial maps.
- Veterans Memorial will be give to the town in 2035 according to the current agreement—potential reuse, alternative use ideas for this property were discussed. It was questioned whether or not it was large enough to potentially locate an indoor recreation center there in the future. Options to relocate the memorial were also discussed.

Parks Board Workshop No.2

A presentation was made to the parks board on April 16th, 2024 at a regularly scheduled parks board meeting. A brief summary of the planning process was presented along with preliminary recommendations. Reactions from the parks board are outlined below:

- The use of a new, regional playground proposed at Centennial Park was questioned. Although a playground exists there now, the location doesn't seem to fit as well with the development of the adjacent Centennial Village. A multi-use flex space for events and passive recreation opportunities for adults was desired.
- Diversifying the opportunities for play within the parks system was well received by the board.
- The option to add a pump track as a different kind of amenity to add to or replace the existing skate park was interesting to the board.
- Comments from the public included concern about the suggestion to remove the pool at Community Park and ideas for how to attract youth to become lifeguards or camp counselors in order to engage them within the parks system.

Playgrounds: Diversify types of "play" offered.

- Increase offerings in nature play, inclusive play, pretending and performance play, music play.
- Offer solitude options or hideaways for those on the autism spectrum.
- Consider quality over quantity of play areas.



Upgrade, relocate, or remove outdated facilities.

- **Skate Park:** Although one of the first in the region, now competing with parks in Highland, Schererville, Dyer, St. John, Lansing, and Hobart.
- **Current Trends:** Pump tracks are a recent trend in skate park development. Attracts more bikers and users of varying ages.
- **Investigate:** Use drone photography usage survey and community input survey to understand actual use of existing facility.
- **Considerations:** (1) Upgrade facility to meet need and current trends, (2) Relocate facility as smaller, 'skate spots' in other parks, (3) Remove facility if no longer 'sparkling joy'.



Two slide from the presentation to the parks board on April 16th, 2024.

PUBLIC INPUT SESSIONS

Two public input sessions were held on January 23rd, 2024 at different times in the day to capture as many residents as possible. Key take-aways from these events are included on the following pages.

Presentation and Station Exercises

After a brief presentation introducing the plan, process, and purpose of the open house, two stations were set up with exercises for public input. Comments received as well as voting results can be found in the tables within this chapter.

The following observations were made after reviewing the comments received and voting results:

- Trails/walking/running were mentioned (12) different times.
- Indoor multi-purpose, recreation, meeting space was mentioned (7) times in the station exercises. "Multi-purpose Indoor Facility" (13 votes) and "Indoor-Outdoor Rental Pavilion" (14 votes) received more votes than any other category in the voting exercise.
- Ice skating was mentioned (5) times in the station exercises.
- "Concessions", "Outdoor Games", and "Fire Pits" all received (7) votes in the voting exercise. "Concessions" were also mentioned (4) times in the station exercise.
- Festivals/events were mentioned (4) times in the station exercise.

Based on these observations, the following strategies are outlined below:

- Continue to build, improve, and expand the trails system.
- Consider opportunities for indoor space, parks run, or shared.
- Consider a location/space for ice skating or other winter focused activities.
- Continue to invest in events that build community and provide social gathering opportunities all year.
- Consider an outdoor multi-use space for concessions, games, programming, and events.



Social Media Post - Public Input Session Advertisement



Station No.1 - Precedent Imagery Preference Survey



Station No.2 - Question-based Post-it Exercises

STATION NO.1	POST-IT EXERCISE
What would you like to see in Centennial Park?	
COMMENTS	Nature Center
	We go to Crown Point to Ice Skate
	Pollinator garden at the top of the "dump" (landfill)
	"Downtown" feel with ice rink/bowling in Centennial Village
	Indoor recreation center/multi-purpose building
	Need indoor space
	Kayak/canoe rentals by a private company
	Destination playground like ValPLAYso
	Nature center, trails, connected driveway
	Ice skating area, winter
	Community garden, ice skating, winter activity
	Bike signage of destinations nearby
	Fishing, paddle boats, motorboats

STATION NO.1	PRECEDENT IMAGERY PREFERENCE SURVEY
What would you like to see in Centennial Park?	
7 votes	Fire Pit
7 votes	Outdoor Games
4 votes	Game Yard
2 votes	Destination Playground
1 votes	Inclusive Playground
1 votes	Promenade Swings
13 votes	Multi-purpose Indoor Facility
14 votes	Indoor-Outdoor Rental Pavilion
3 votes	Multi-purpose Splash Deck and Plaza
4 votes	Beer Garden/Concessions
2 votes	Interactive Water Feature
7 votes	Concessions



Comment Cards

Comment cards were also made available for written input if attendees were not interested in speaking aloud during the formal question and answer period after the presentation.



Public Input Session - Station No.1



Public Input Session - Station No.1

STATION NO.2		POST-IT EXERCISE
What do you love about Munster Parks and Recreation?		
COMMENTS		Pool is a great asset that could be developed, keeping it open longer would be great
		The improved bike trails
		The variety of parks/playgrounds
		Centennial Park for walking/running/events/festivals
		Security in Centennial Park
		Thanks for parking change it really helps in the "security department"
		Potential for outdoor events at Centennial Park
		I like to walk the trails and birdwatch near Clayhole Lake
		Biking around the park
		Walking trails
		4th of July events, music, and movie nights
What issues have you experienced in Munster Parks?		
COMMENTS		The canceling of men's open basketball
		Inadequate concessions at Community Park and the pool
		Access to areas of town by bike is limited and when trails/paths are built they run on heavily trafficked roads
		Security that was solved somehow with paid parking
		Pool hours not easy for working parents to be worth the cost
		Concessions at community prices and not being run by town, 3rd party gets profits
		Concessions, food supply, prices, needs work
		Having to pay for parking as a Munster resident after paying taxes



Public Input Session - Station No.2



Public Input Session - Station No.2

STATION NO.2		POST-IT EXERCISE (CONTINUED)	
What would you like to see in Munster Parks?			
COMMENTS		See access to indoor school facilities for programs like volleyball and basketball	
		More shaded spots and more attractions at Munster Pool	
		Better basketball hoop at Cobblestone Park	
		Indoor multi-purpose facility	
		Reinstate the men’s open basketball league	
		Indoor multi-use building – maybe Harley Davidson Building?	
		Something centered around teenagers	
		Centennial wine or beer event	
		A multi-use facility for indoor sports practicing/game, seniors, and meeting space	
		Extension of bike trail into Highland/Lincoln Avenue	
		Ice skating/winter activity at Centennial Park	
		Centennial ice-skating area in the winter	
		Basketball hoops, games, markets	
		A strong Farmer’s Market	
		Indoor multi-purpose facility	
		Ice skating return to the community	
		More native plants and flowers and a pollinator garden	
		Outdoor facility similar to Maggie Daly Park	
		Beer/ale fest back at Centennial Park	
		Introduce archery field in Munster community	

PUBLIC SURVEY

An online survey was advertised on town social media platforms and made available from November 3rd, 2023 through February 6th, 2024. 776 responses were documented during that time.

Race, income, and residential status were not included in the survey questionnaire. Interest in representation was brought up in a public meeting by an attendee. It was found this information could have been a useful tool to understand representation and will be considered in future planning efforts.

A summary of the survey findings as well as strategies can be found in the table below as well as on the following pages:



Social Media Post - Online Survey Advertisement

DEMOGRAPHIC	INPUT	SUMMARY/STRATEGIES
Age	Most respondents (59%) were between the ages of 20 and 54 years old. Nearly 40% of respondents were 55 or older. 0.7% of respondents were under 20 years old.	The median age in Munster is 44.6, 8.5% older than the state of Indiana, so this aligns that most respondents were middle aged and older.
Children under 18	81% of respondents have children younger than 18 years old within their household.	Youth and teens are not well represented in this survey directly; however, 81% of respondents have children younger than 18, so guardians of this age group are well represented.
Residential Status	82.6% of respondents were town residents. Remaining respondents were a combination of Munster business owners who don't reside in the town, residents considering or planning to move to Munster, or residents in adjacent communities.	Non-residents are concerned about and use the parks system. With communities so close to one another in this dense region, citizens frequent parks and recreation amenities in adjacent communities. For this reason, more shared use programs and facilities may be considered in the future.
Disabilities	9.7% of respondents have a member of the household with a disability. Respondents requested more programming, more accessible restrooms, voiced a preference for rubber surfacing versus mulch at playgrounds, concerns about high traffic speeds near playgrounds, and general maintenance of walking paths to ensure they are free of obstacles.	According to the current demographic data, 11.6% of the Munster population has a disability. While access is a priority system-wide, specific parks could be designated to prioritize more inclusive amenities and facilities such as poured-in-play surfacing at some select playgrounds.

TOP 5 FACILITIES USED

PARK	INPUT	SUMMARY/STRATEGIES
Centennial Park	69.6% of 750 responses	Two of the largest parks, they both draw users from throughout the community as well as the region with a variety of amenities and events.
Community Park	42.4% of 750 responses	
White Oak Park	25.6% of 750 responses	The most well-used of the neighborhood parks, White Oak offers ample parking, a variety of amenities and open space, and is walkable from many neighborhoods.
Multi-use Trails	25.2% of 750 responses	Trails are plentiful and popular in the parks system—over 17-miles of regional and loop trails exist today.
Community Pool	24.3% of 750 responses	Although only open seasonally, the community pool is well used.

TOP 5 ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY	INPUT	SUMMARY/STRATEGIES
Walking, Jogging, and Exercise	76.3% of 671 responses	Because trails are available in Munter, these activities are popular. Investments in trail facilities and upkeep should continue.
Special Events and Festivals	44.4% of 671 responses	Events and festivals were mentioned in the public meeting and comment sections of the survey as a favorite type of programming.
Time with Family and Friends	43.2% of 671 responses	Many people of varying ages and numbers were observed in the parks during the site inventory—families with children, groups of adults picnicking, and seniors socializing. Areas for socializing should be a priority and for varying age groups.
Concerts	38.4% of 671 responses	Concerts and events at Centennial Park were mentioned in the public meeting and comment sections of the survey as a desired program to continue and improve. Improving events with more convenient parking, better concessions should be considered.
Bicycling	35.5% of 671 responses	Because trails are available in Munter, this activity type is popular. Investments in trail facilities and upkeep should continue.

TOP 5 BARRIERS FOR NOT USING THE PARKS

BARRIER	INPUT	SUMMARY/STRATEGIES
Happy with Parks System	43.4% of 660 responses	Generally, Munster parks are well maintained and offer a variety of amenities and facilities, so respondents were pleased in both the response to this question as well as in many of the comments.
Lack of Restrooms	18.5% of 660 responses	Portable restrooms are available in most parks within the system. Comments revealed that some individuals prefer not to use them and consider them “unpleasant”. One individual at the public meeting also did not “count” portable restrooms as restroom facilities.
Lack of Awareness	15.7% of 660 responses	Respondents relayed they are finding out about park information and events via two main communication tools—social media platforms and the seasonal brochures. Signs, email, the utility bill, and the website are also used. Several individuals mentioned they’d like to see more posts and an updated website.
Outdated Amenities	13.0% of 660 responses	Comments included a desire for play surfacing over mulch at playgrounds, lack of water fountains and insufficient seating.
Lack of Youth Programming	11.9% of 660 responses	Programming like cooking, yoga, and youth exercise classes were mentioned here. Comparisons between other communities offerings were also stated.

TOP 5 DESIRED PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	INPUT	SUMMARY/STRATEGIES
Community events	68.9% of 616 responses	
Hobby/interest classes	43.9% of 616 responses	
Fitness classes	43.1% of 616 responses	
Nature programs/env. education	39.7% of 616 responses	
Indoor recreation opportunities	36.7% of 616 responses	

Synthesis of Written-in Suggestions (58 responses):

- Cricket programs, events, camps, tournaments, etc.
- Special needs programs for children and adults
- Day trips to festivals and events in other communities
- Indoor programs for sports leagues
- Pickleball summer camps, toddler-aged programming, and art-related events

TOP 5 HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS

PROJECT	INPUT	SUMMARY/STRATEGIES
Add trails for walking/jogging/biking	33.9% of 605 responses	Trails are popular and respondents would like to see more of them. Continue to maintain and invest in the system-wide trails as well as park interior loop trails.
Add nature trails	28.9% of 605 responses	Woodlands and wetlands within the town limits are limited. However, opportunities for a boardwalk at Clayhole Lake and nature trails at other wooded properties, including the Center for Visual and Performing Arts property, could be explored.
Update/add lighting to parks	28.4% of 605 responses	Lighting for sports fields, soccer and tennis were most frequently mentioned. Being mindful of nearby residential neighbors when considering lighting in parks, this upgrade would extend the useful hours of these facilities in the colder months.
Add splash pads/spray grounds	24.9% of 605 responses	Suggestions for splash pads and re-purposing or updating the existing pool facility were discussed. The pool is invested in regularly and requires continual upgrades. A long-term plan for aquatic features upgrades overtime could be considered.
Add community garden plots	20.5% of 605 responses	Interest in community gardens along with a focus on native plants and pollinators were suggested.

Synthesis of Written-in Suggestions/Comments (389 responses):

Common themes:

- Concerns related to the pool, including afford-ability, extended hours, and potential updates.
- Suggestions for adult-focused activities like beer/wine tasting, craft and cooking classes.
- Requests for a variety of events, concerts, festivals, classes for all age groups.
- Asks for more inclusive events and activities.
- Emphasis on walkability, better connected recreational trails, and bike lanes.
- Suggestions to preserve and add more natural areas and nature trails.

ARE RESTROOM FACILITIES ADEQUATE?

OPTIONS	INPUT	SUMMARY/STRATEGIES
Yes	54.6% of 626 Respondents	Most residents are pleased with the existing facilities. Port-o-lets are provided in most parks that do not have a permanent facility.
No	45.4% of 626 Respondents	See comments synthesis below for common themes of those dissatisfied park users. Many park systems are moving towards seasonal, non-permanent restroom solutions due to the high construction cost, on-going maintenance, and constant vandalism they face with permanent structures. However, implementing a few more permanent facilities within high-use parks could be considered.

Synthesis of Written-in Comments (198 responses):

- Dissatisfaction with current facilities—port-o-lets are mentioned as unpleasant.
- Desire for permanent, indoor restroom facilities that are unlocked and accessible. (May require heating and insulating to keep available year-round.)
- Specific parks listed for permanent restrooms included Bluebird, West Lake, and Grove Parks.
- Suggestions for improvement included more frequent cleaning, monitoring, and security measures.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION

A public presentation of the plan was presented to an audience of (5) attendees on Tuesday, May 28th, 2024. The weather was particularly stormy the night of the meeting, which may have been the reason for limited attendance. After the presentation, concept plans were reviewed with the audience—comments received are outlined below:

Community Estates Park

- Generally, the concept is well received
- With little to no parking access, meant to be a pocket park that serves the neighborhood
- The playground (visible from the road) may attract more visitors than are desired
- Consider native plantings here as a buffer from the adjacent private yards

Community Park

- Generally, feel the school and park share the space and facilities well
- Concern the “open space” concept may impact the Lion’s Club Memorial Grove (mature trees)
- Limited the vehicular flow through the park was considered—traffic flow through the park is not an issue

Centennial Park (south)

- Would like to see an interactive fountain/art piece in the space
- Game yard/Plaza space concept very well received
- Suggestion that the game yard/plaza space concept could work by Centennial Village as well
- Like the rental pavilion/indoor-outdoor concept
- Non-profits and small groups need a place to meet, want to encourage involvement
- Invasive plants around lake need to be addressed—would like to see this be a higher priority for parks

Centennial Park (north)

- Like the idea of the flex space plaza concept here
- Discussed making Community Park more “child-oriented” and Centennial Park more “adult-oriented”
- Could see the space used for events and festivals, food trucks, etc. so parking is not used up
- Centennial Village residents could walk to this space for passive recreation

Community Park Pool/Skatepark

- Parks are spending well over \$100,000 a year on pool maintenance and upkeep
- Finding lifeguards is challenging, have already had closures due to no guards this season
- Communities are closing pools and moving towards splash pads
- YMCA’s are filling the need for swim lessons
- Agreement that the skatepark is outdated and underutilized
- Have observed other communities building new facilities, but not sure the use is there

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04

**PARK SYSTEM
INVENTORY**

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The Munster Parks and Recreation Department offers a wide variety of programs and facilities geared towards a range of ages and user groups. The department works closely with many businesses, clubs, and non-profits within and around the town to further enhance the opportunities that are available to the community. Below is a list of some of the main partnerships/agreements that the Town of Munster shares in:

- Munster Civic Foundation (MCF)
 - Financial support from the MCF has made available the Civic Monday Concert Series, July 3rd Independence Day Celebration, Northwest Indiana Symphony, Light the Night, and other town-wide special events.
- School Town of Munster
 - Partnership allows for use of gyms, classrooms, pool, and cafeteria spaces during after-school hours free of charge.
 - In turn, the School Town gets free shelter rentals for school use, use of parking lots during school hours, and the use of extra picnic tables and trash cans as needed for Booster Club events.
- Sports Groups - Munster Babe Ruth, Little League, Pop Warner, Soccer Club, Cricket, Challenger Baseball, Girl's Softball, Lacrosse, and Midwest Wings Soccer
- Town of Dyer - Park Programming
 - Partnership allows Munster residents to receive Dyer resident rate for programming.
 - In turn, Dyer gets Munster resident rate for programming (reducing the program cost \$5-\$10/program.)
- Town of Highland - Lincoln Fitness Center
 - Partnership allows Munster residents to receive Highland resident rate for memberships at the Lincoln Fitness Center.
 - In turn, Highland gets Munster resident rate for pool fees and dog park membership. Golf fees are the same for everyone to be consistent in the golf course industry.

Many of the programs offered by the Munster Parks and Recreation Department take place during the summer and fall months. The following pages highlight the programs provided throughout the various seasons.



The parks department is actively leading or supporting community events throughout the year within the parks and Town facilities.

PROGRAMMING SNAPSHOT

SUMMER PROGRAMS

MUNSTER COMMUNITY POOL

- Adult Open Swim
- Swimming Lessons
- Summer Camp

YOUTH EDUCATION

- Spanish Lessons
- Babysitting & Safety Training
- Ceramics
- Flashlight Flag Hunt
- Koolaid and Canvas
- Pint Size Camps
- Dance Lessons
- Tread the Path of Fashion
- Survival Skills
- Wet N Wild Camp
- Wonderful World of Wizardry

YOUTH SPORTS

- Challenger British Soccer Camp
- Baller Basics
- Corndog Baseball
- Dribble, Kick, and Goal
- Golf Lessons
- Spring Soccer League
- No Tackle Touchdown
- Skateboarding Lessons
- Wado-Ki Karate Lessons
- Tennis Lessons

ACTIVE ADULT

- Gardening
- Cardio Drumming
- Cuban Dance Class
- Birding in Munster
- CPR Certification
- Drawing Basics

- Ladies Empowerment Walk
- Pilates
- Cycling Classes
- Yoga
- Multimedia Painting
- Smart Phone Photography
- Private Computer Lessons
- Tai-Chi-Gong

KEEN-AGER

- Bowling
- Lunch Shows
- Mahjong
- Bingo

FALL PROGRAMS

YOUTH EDUCATION

- Spanish Lessons
- Babysitting & Safety Training
- Ceramics
- Crochet 101
- Baking Lessons
- Art
- Intro to Violin

YOUTH SPORTS

- Gymnastics
- Dance Lessons
- CSRI Open Gyms
- Golf Lessons
- Intro to Cricket
- Fall Soccer League
- Little Sluggers
- Slam Dunk Basketball
- Sporties for Shorties
- Super Strikers
- Tiny Punters

- Skateboarding Lessons
- Tiny Tykes Soccer Lessons
- Wado-Ki Karate Lessons
- Tennis Lessons

ACTIVE ADULT

- Tennis Lessons
- Cardio Drumming
- Birding in Munster
- Cuban Dance Class
- CPR Certification
- Draw, Paint, and Sculpt
- Golf Lessons
- Intro to Basket Weaving
- Munster Rueda de Casino
- Print Making 101
- Private Computer Lessons
- Salsation
- ServSafe Food Manager
- Zumba
- Crochet 101

KEEN-AGER

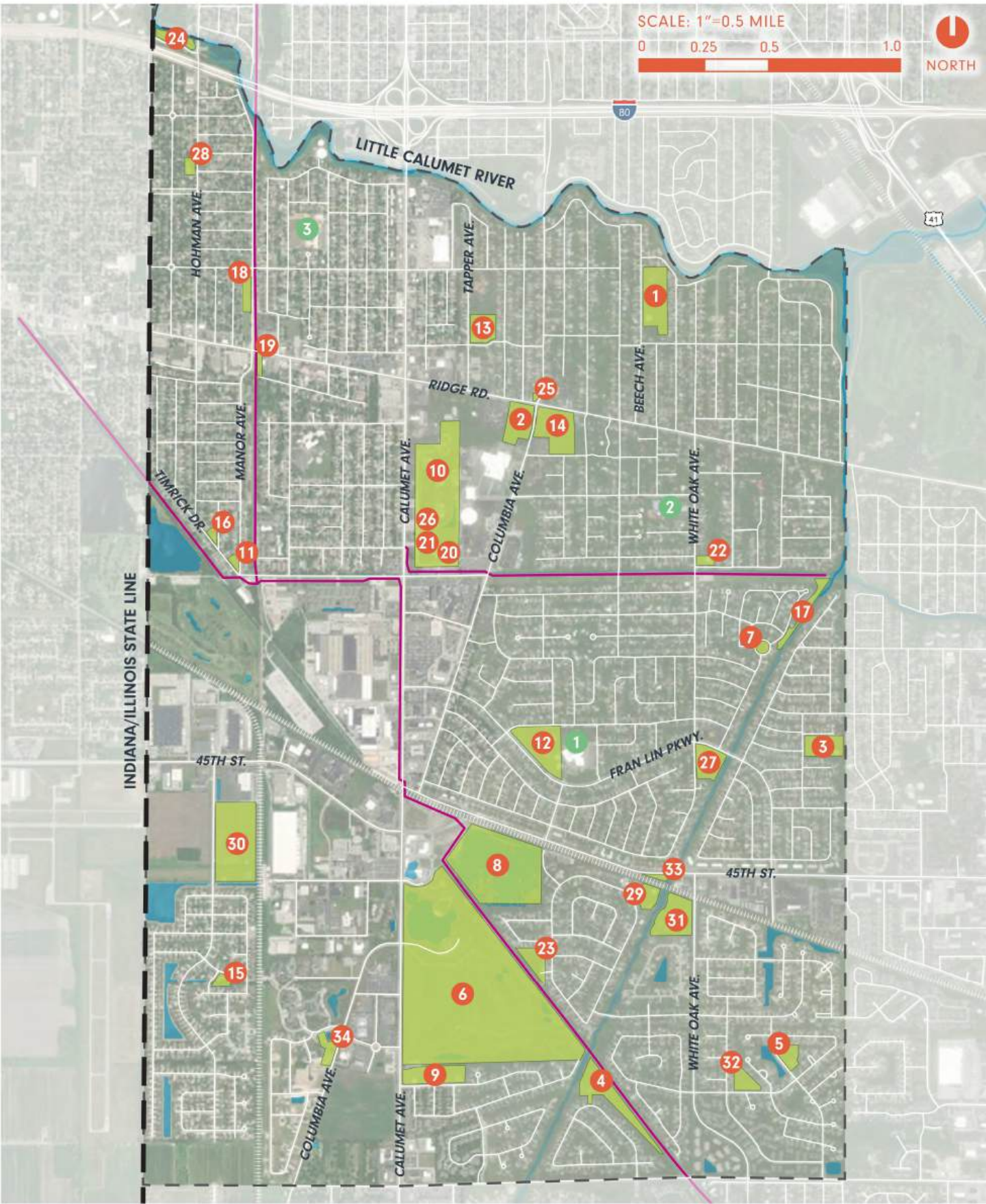
- Bingo
- Crochet 101
- Draw, Paint, and Sculpt
- Lunch Shows
- Healthcare and Retirement

PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

The Munster Park System is comprised of 34 park facilities (see Figure 4.1). Additionally, the Munster Parks Department has partnerships with some of the local schools, to allow public access to their playgrounds. These schools include Frank H. Hammond Elementary School, Elliot Elementary School, and James B. Eads Elementary School, and are noted on the map to the right.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Beech Park | 20 Munster Community Pool |
| 2 Bieker Woods Park | 21 Munster Skate Park |
| 3 Bluebird Park | 22 Orchard Park |
| 4 Briar Creek Park | 23 Redbud Greenspace |
| 5 Burlwood Park | 24 River's Edge Park |
| 6 Centennial Park | 25 Rotary Park |
| 7 Circle Park | 26 Social Center |
| 8 Clayhole Lake Greenspace | 27 Stewart Park |
| 9 Cobblestone Park | 28 Sunnyside Park |
| 10 Community Park | 29 Twin Creek Park |
| 11 Evergreen Park | 30 West Lakes Park |
| 12 Frank H. Hammond Park | 31 White Oak Park |
| 13 Grove Park | 32 White Oak Woods |
| 14 Heritage Park/Kaske House | 33 45th Avenue Greenspace |
| 15 John Friend Park | 34 Community Estates Park |
| 16 Kiwanis Park | 1 Frank H. Hammond Elementary School |
| 17 Lawler Park Greenspace | 2 Elliot Elementary School |
| 18 Manor Park | 3 James B. Eads Elementary School |
| 19 Monon Trailhead | |

FIGURE 4.1: PARK SYSTEM MAP



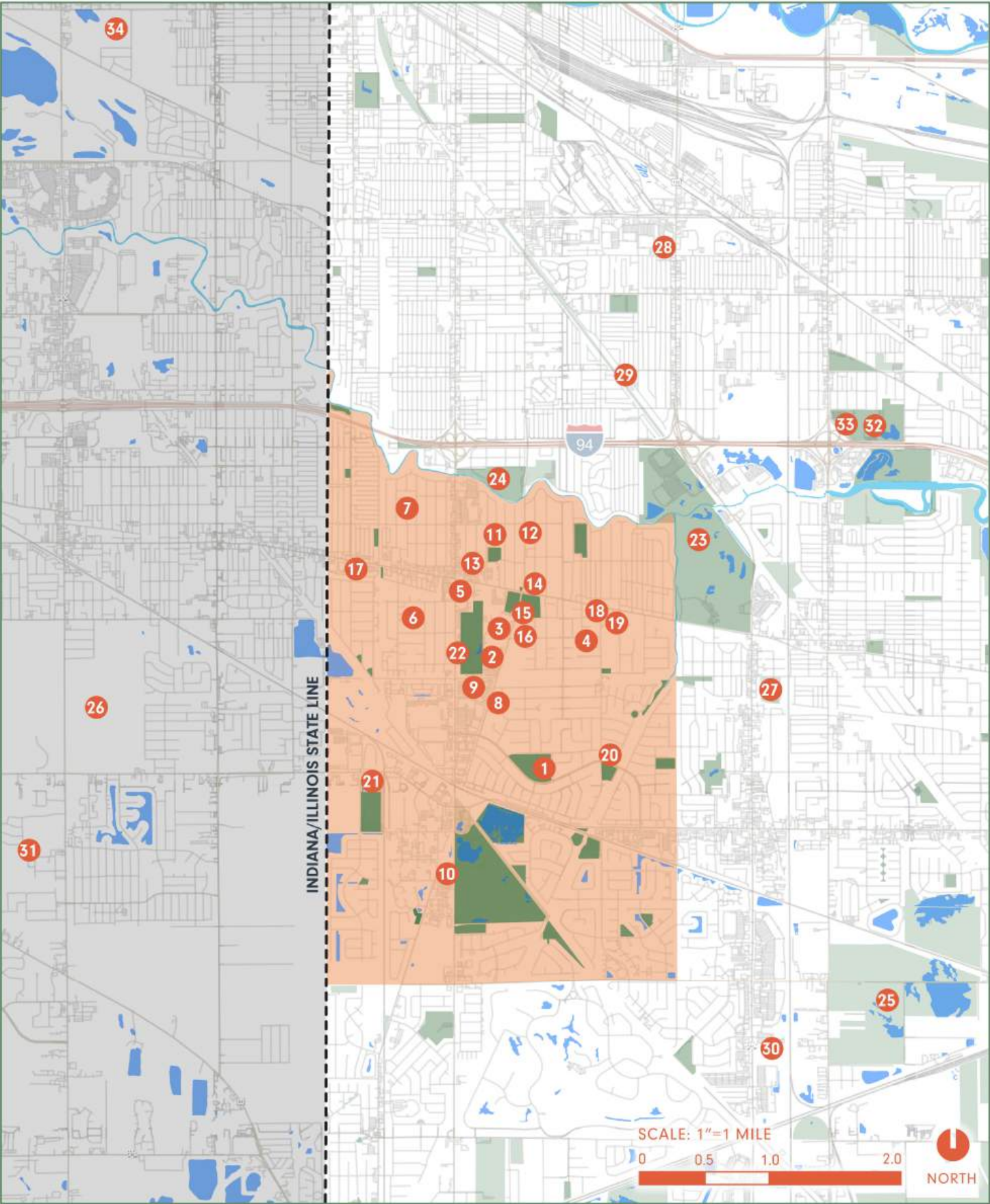
OTHER COMMUNITY RESOURCES

In addition to the facilities owned and run by the Town of Munster and Munster Parks and Recreation Department, a number of other recreational facilities can be found throughout the community and region. Figure 4.2 on the following page illustrates some of these additional community resources that are available to the community.

Areas not shown on the map include Lake Michigan, Indiana Dunes National Park, Oak Ridge Prairie, Deep River County Park, Lemon Lake County Park, and Wolf Lake. Across the state line to the west, Illinois also has a variety of other nature and forest preserves that provide numerous other recreational opportunities.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Frank H. Hammond Elementary School | 24 Riverside Park |
| 2 Munster High School | 25 Hoosier Prairie State Nature Preserve |
| 3 Wilbur Wright Middle School | 26 Brownell Woods |
| 4 Elliot Elementary School | 27 Lincoln Community Center |
| 5 St. Thomas More Church + School | 28 Hammond Sportsplex |
| 6 St. Paul's Lutheran Church + School | 29 Hammond Family YMCA |
| 7 James B. Eads Elementary School | 30 Schererville Family YMCA |
| 8 Westminster Presbyterian Church + Preschool | 31 Southland Center |
| 9 Munster Community Hospital | 32 Jean Shepherd Community Center |
| 10 Fitness Pointe | 33 The Kube |
| 11 South Side Christian Church | 34 Sand Ridge Nature Preserve |
| 12 St. Nicholas Church | |
| 13 Mercy Hill Church | |
| 14 Faith Church Munster | |
| 15 St. Paul's Episcopal Church | |
| 16 Ridge United Methodist Church | |
| 17 Munster Church | |
| 18 St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Church | |
| 19 Carmelite Fathers | |
| 20 Fairmeadow Community Church of the Nazarene | |
| 21 Family Christian Center | |
| 22 Lake County Public Library | |
| 23 Wicker Park | |

FIGURE 4.2: COMMUNITY RESOURCES MAP



TRAILS AND LINEAR PARK SYSTEM

The Town of Munster has several existing trails and greenways that provide valuable connections both within the town limits as well as other surrounding communities within Indiana and Illinois. The three main trails throughout the parks and recreation system include:

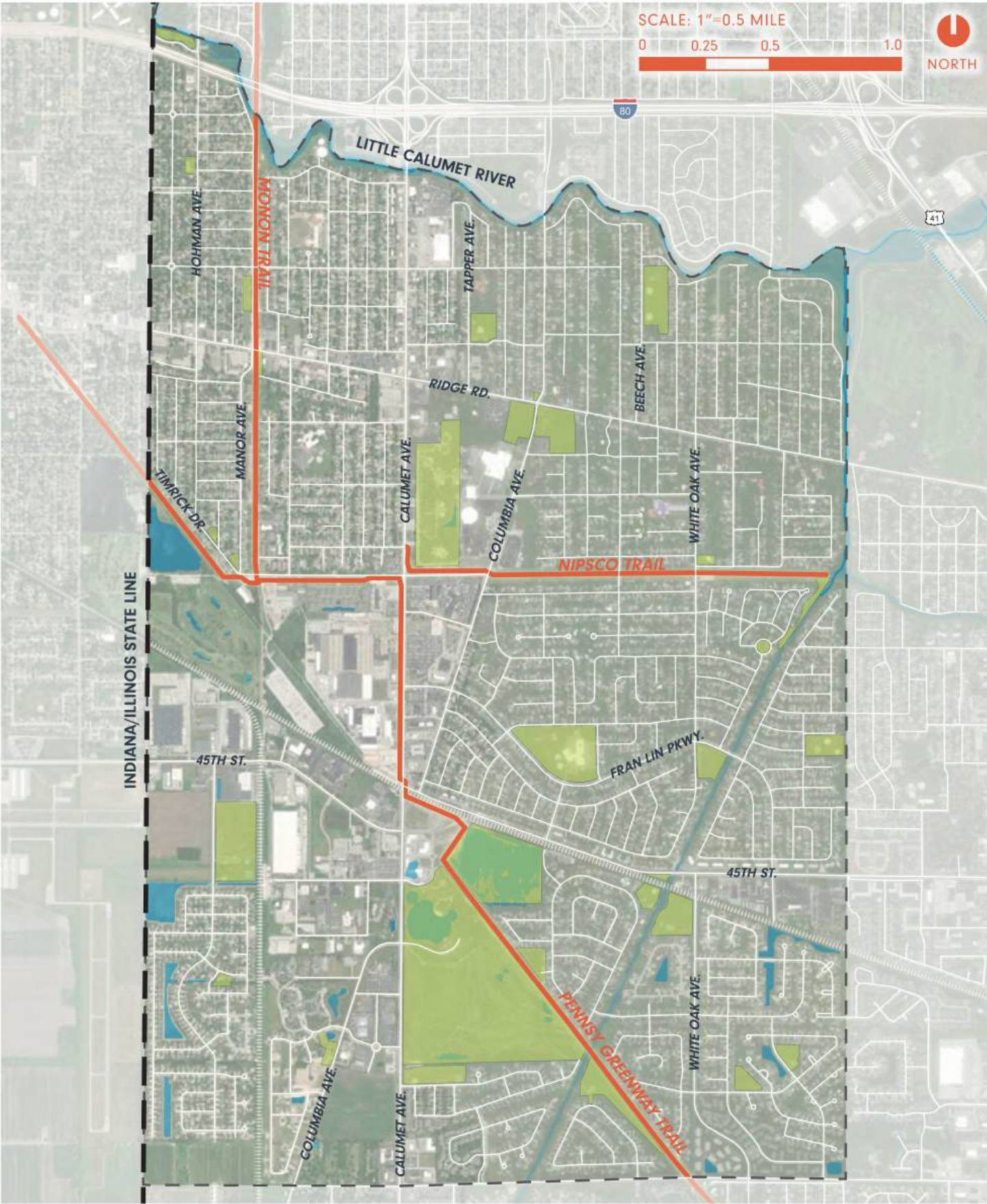
- Monon Trail - The total amount of trails is 1.6 miles.
- NIPSCO Trail - The total amount of trails is 1.5 miles.
- Pennsy Greenway Trail - The total amount of trails is 3.4 miles.

Other trails include various lengths of walking trails throughout several parks within the park system, including nearly 3 miles of trail in Centennial Park and over 2 miles in Community Park. Bieker Woods and Heritage Park provide an additional 2 miles of nature trails. Figure 4.3 shows the existing trail network.

The Town has made a priority to add more trail sections to the existing trails and views trails as linear parks. The trails are in good condition and provide connections to several parks and other local destinations.



FIGURE 4.3: TRAILS MAP



CURRENT PARK SYSTEM AMENITY SNAPSHOT



PARK INVENTORY SHEETS

The next several pages walk through current inventories for each park. The organization for each inventory is shown below.

NAME OF PARK OR TRAIL

Address of Park
Ownership of Park



TYPE OF PARK FACILITY

Park Size



1



2



3

Park Amenities

Quantity

PARK DESCRIPTION

PARK INVENTORY PHOTOS	

AERIAL LOCATION MAP

PARK FACILITY TYPES



MINI PARK

These parks are typically under half an acre in size. These parks typically serve the immediate local population and can offer a variety of functions such as small event space, play areas for children, space for passive recreation, etc.



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

These parks tend to be smaller and typically are between 3-15 acres. They usually serve people within a 0-15 minute walk of the park. Typical amenities include: walking paths, playgrounds, open space, and picnic tables. Some parks in the Munster Park system include ball fields.



COMMUNITY PARK

These parks tend to be larger than neighborhood parks, and serve a wider area due to the amenities they offer. They still cater to the nearby residents, but offer amenities that can draw people in from a further distance. These amenities often include: special programming, splash pads, dog parks, and centerpiece playgrounds.



GREENSPACE

These areas include open or forested green spaces that are yet to be fully developed into programmable parks or are being saved as natural areas.



SPECIAL USE PARK

These parks serve a single purpose or to meet special use. These parks are likely to bring in users from a wider area due to their specialized nature. The size of these parks vary and there is no set standard from the NRPA.

CONDITION

The condition of each park was evaluated on general observations. The condition is to give a general comparison between facilities. Facilities were observed on one day only and may not reflect recent maintenance or improvements. Features of good, fair and poor facilities are listed below.

Good- Amenities need no repairs and are fully operational. There maybe some minor cosmetic improvements needed that can be easily made. Areas are clean and maintained well. Good conditions encourage active park use.

Fair- Amenities may need minor repairs, but are operational. Some deficiencies or safety concerns may be present.

Poor- Amenities may need major repairs or be completely unusable. Areas may present safety concerns and poor conditions discourage park use.

BEECH PARK

Address: 8101 Beech Ave.

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

10.5 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

Beech Park offers a wide variety of amenities including a playground, basketball and tennis courts, as well as baseball and open space for soccer fields. The loop trail around the park was very active on the day of the site visit. Mature trees provide shade at the playground and along the loop trail. Some minor cracking was observed on the basketball courts. In discussions with the parks staff, basketball and tennis facilities may be better used if separated or one facility type is eliminated.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Remove basketball court.
- Add (4) pickleball courts next to the tennis courts at the north end of the park to satisfy the growing trend.
- Add direct sidewalk connections from the accessible parking aisle to the trail at the parking lot at the south end of the park so park visitors aren't required to walk through the drive aisle to access the trail and park amenities.
- Continue to replenish the urban tree canopy by planting new trees along the loop trail.



BLUEBIRD PARK

Address: 1900 Holly Lane

Ownership: Town of Munster



COMMUNITY PARK

5.99 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

On the day of the visit, seniors were gathered at the baseball field bleachers socializing and multiple families with young children were using the play equipment. Play equipment accommodates a range of user age groups. A mix of younger and more mature trees are represented here. All facilities were in good condition.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Remove large mature tree where roots are compromising the trail pavement. Replace tree with new tree planting.
- Repair or replace tennis court surfacing where damaged.
- Designate accessible parking spots.
- Provide an accessible route from the trail to the baseball field spectator area with a landing area for spectators with disabilities.
- Add concrete companion areas next to benches along the trail for wheelchairs or strollers to site next to benches. Benches could also be shifted to one side to allow for these spaces.
- Provide (1) wheelchair accessible picnic table within each shelter.
- Continue to replenish the urban tree canopy by planting new trees along the loop trail.





BIEKER WOODS PARK

Address: 1050 Ridge Rd.

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

5.9 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

This wooded park provides nature trails throughout its 5.9-acres. Sections of the trails are in need of maintenance to clear limbs and other debris.

Condition Assessment:

Fair

Action Items:

- Consider updating signage long term.
- Continue trail maintenance and invasive species removal efforts.



BRIAR CREEK PARK

Address: 10299 Fox Run

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

7.88 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

The pedestrian bridge over Hart Ditch could use some attention. Horizontal bars on the railing are creating a climbable condition and the spacing between the bars may be greater than 4-inches, which would not be considered code compliant. The connection between the asphalt path and the structure warrants renovation to create an accessible transition. The basketball court and multi-purpose asphalt game court are both looking tired and could be updated, renovated to a different use type, or removed to provide more open space within the park. A major tree planting effort on the south side of the park has been implemented overtime to create shade as well as a buffer between the residential homes and the public park space.

Condition Assessment:

Fair

Action Items:

- Widen asphalt loop trail to a minimum of 8'-wide throughout the park.
- Consider renovating the existing basketball court into a skate spot—especially if it is decided to remove the existing skate park from Community Park.
- Update the railing on the pedestrian bridge over Hart Ditch to meet code requirements. Smooth transition between the walk leading up to the bridge and the structure itself.



BURLWOOD PARK

Address: 10139 Burlwood Dr.

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

2.94 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

The open lawn in this park attracts geese from the retention pond across the street. A planted edge along the pond may discourage their presence; however the property with the retention area is not owned by the parks, so this is outside of their control. Newer play equipment sits within an engineered wood fiber play area. Newer trees have been planted around the playground area to provide shade overtime.

A newer park within the system, major improvements are not a priority here. Outside of minor asphalt trail decay, paint touch-ups on the shelter, and replenishing the engineered wood fiber, the facilities are generally in good condition at this park.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Paint repair on shelter roof fascia.



CIRCLE PARK

Address: 1700 Inner Circle

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

0.72 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

The park consists of a large playground, bench seating, and a full basketball court. An asphalt path follows the circumference of the park connecting amenities and providing access to the surrounding neighborhood. Play equipment was recently updated here and stands in good condition.

Tree canopy is mature inside the circle with newer, younger trees planted between the path and the street. Cracking was observed on the basketball court and the asphalt loop trail.

Although ample seating is provided, none can be reached via an accessible pathway. If not reached via walking, street parking is available. The asphalt path reaches the street at three locations. When future upgrades are made to the asphalt path, accessible ramps and with truncated domes may be considered here.

Condition Assessment:

Fair

Action Items:

- Resurface basketball court.
- Resurface asphalt trail and widen.
- Upgrade ramps at park access points to accommodate those with disabilities.
- Continue to replenish the urban tree canopy by planting new trees along the loop trail.



CENTENNIAL PARK

Address: 1005 South Centennial Dr.

Ownership: Town of Munster



COMMUNITY PARK

200 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

On the day of the visit, the golf course, playground, and walking trails were most active.

Due to structural issues, the existing banquet hall is uninhabitable and has been for several years. Studies procured by the Town suggest it would be more expensive to repair the building than to rebuild new. An architectural gem atop the hill, a large void would be left in the park if demolished. It has been approved to demolish one golf course into new buildigs.

A new pro shop for the golf course is under construction on the south side of the south parking area.

Facilities in this park include a golf course, entertainment stage, outdoor shelters, a playground, formal gardens, a dog park, Maynard Lake with multiple viewing plazas and picturesque bridges, public art, fitness stairs, and a network of trails.

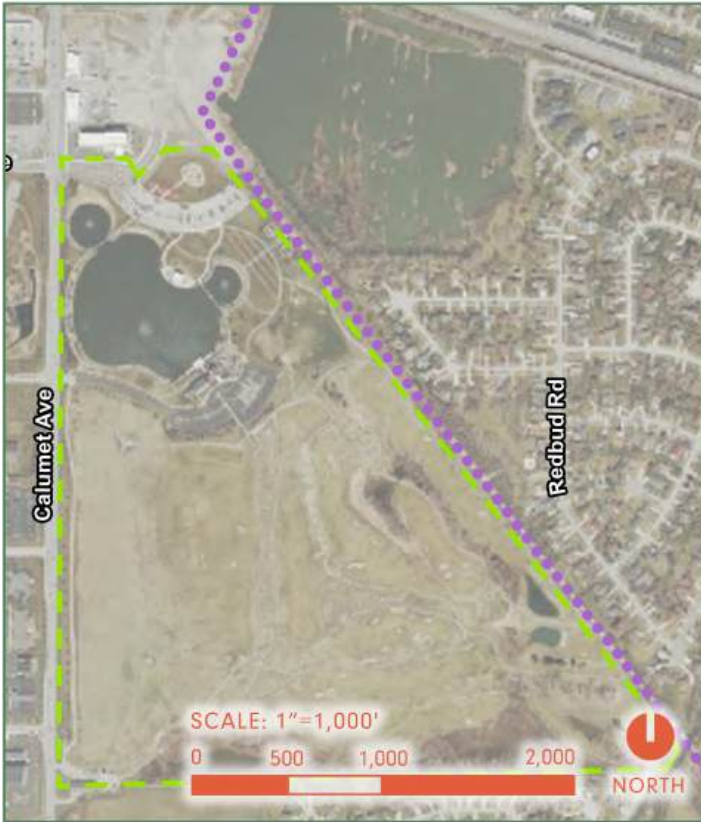
A regional draw, the parking lot was often full. After receiving complaints from residents, a pay to park program was implemented for non-residents, which will help generate revenue to maintain the park. On the day of the site visit, ample parking was available.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Resurface north and south parking lots.
- Renovate performance stage retaining walls to resolve structural issues. Regrade viewing lawn to provide better site lines to the stage for spectators.
- Update asphalt pathway with additional proposed connections including one that bypasses the bridge at the northwest corner of Maynard Lake and one that connects the north parking lot to the trail along Clayhole Lake.
- Upgrade and expand the playground in existing location with new equipment, including swings, shade structures, and seating. Invest in poured in place surfacing and inclusive play equipment to provide an accessible playground at a higher level than what is provided in most parks within the system. Consider unique play equipment or a themed setting that provides a different play experience.
- Demolish the existing banquet hall and redevelop with a architecturally iconic indoor-outdoor pavilion with restrooms and a plaza space with gaming equipment. Ensure the new space can accommodate golf outings or social events tied to the golf course, parks programming, rentals for residents, and possibly concessions for festivals/events that include the sales of alcohol.
- Provide a service building to house utilities from banquet hall once demolished.
- Continue to replenish the urban tree canopy by planting new trees within the park while being mindful of designated open spaces for picnicking, kite flying, and games of Frisbee.
- Add additional outdoor exercise stations along the pathway from the exercise stairs to the new pro shop. Consider the addition of native plantings in this location to further enhance/attract pollinators and other wildlife.
- Provide a landscape buffer between the development to the north and the playground while ensuring pedestrian access is available.
- Improve Drainage at the dog park.



CLAYHOLE LAKE GREENSPACE

Address: 1200 Tuckahoe Place

Ownership: Town of Munster



GREENSPACE

38.8 Acres

Site Visit Observations:

The Centennial Village project is under construction to the west of Clayhole Lake. When at the lake, it felt uninviting as private property signs surround the western edge and facilities have not been developed. Components include mature trees and natural plantings along the water's edge.

Condition Assessment:

Poor (with potential)

- Provide public pedestrian access to Clayhole Lake via a meandering boardwalk for passive recreation opportunities like hiking and birdwatching as well as programming opportunities like a wetland discovery dip netting experience.
- Be mindful to keep any new access on the west and southwest sides of the water body in order to provide clear separation from private residential properties to the south and east.



COBBLESTONE PARK

Address: 801 Treadway Rd.

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

8.58 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

The multi-use court and tennis courts show signs of deterioration. The community garden within the park appears neglected. The play equipment, shelter house, and parking area are in good condition. Walking trails were active and football equipment was set up for practice the day of the visit. The path accessing the neighborhood at the east end has a grade too steep to be considered accessible.

Condition Assessment:

Fair

Action Items:

- Refinish the multi-use court at the west end.
- Remove tennis courts to provide more greenspace and/or a ball diamond (long-term).
- Upgrade play equipment.
- Refresh community garden with new programming/leadership or remove.



COMMUNITY PARK

Address: 8601 Calumet Ave.

Ownership: Town of Munster



COMMUNITY PARK

49.72 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

While this park is primarily programmed for baseball and softball, it provides many other recreational opportunities for the community including (2) poured-in-place play surfacing playgrounds that cater to ages 5-12 and 2-12, walking paths, the Social Center, Munster Community Pool, large shelters, a skate park, and multiple parking lots. Parking areas and drives are shared with adjacent school.

Continued investment in the park and building facilities, equipment, and maintenance at this park is apparent. Tree plantings have also been a priority.

See the "Munster Community Pool" on pg. 81 for further assessment and observations of that facility.

The large parking lots and remaining open space are necessary requirements for the many large scale festivals and events that are hosted at this central location within the community. Lions Club Drive seems to bisect the open space on the southwest corner of the park.

One of the first in the region, the skate park at the southwest corner of the park is over 20 years old. (see pg.82 for enlargement plan and imagery). Usage is present, but minimal. The facility feels outdated and the adjacent dedicated parking seems unneeded.

Options for a path forward may include the following:

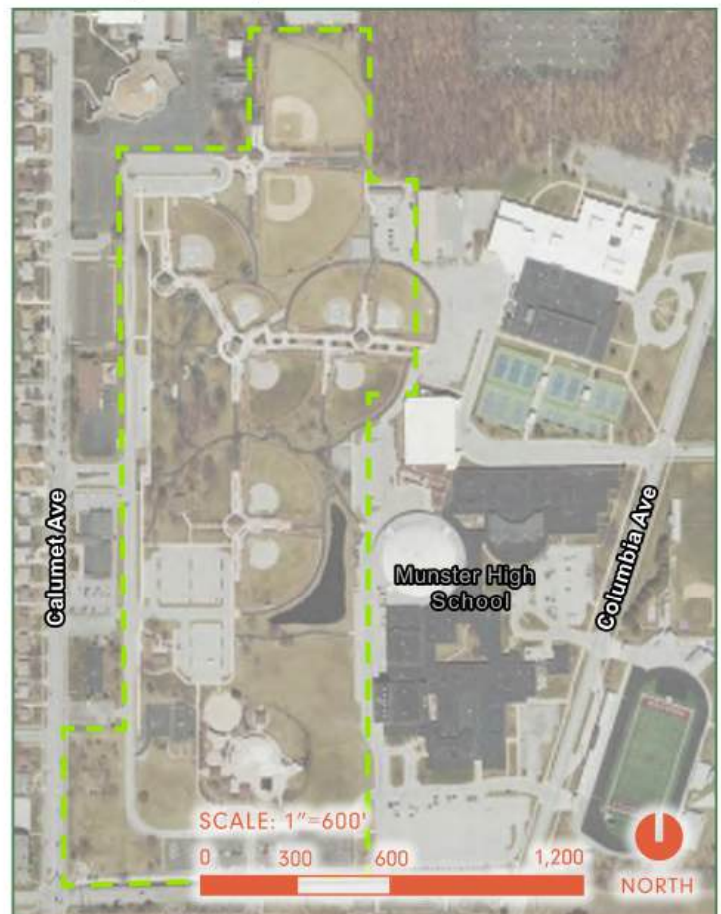
- Refresh the skate park with new equipment/features and adding a pump track to compete with surrounding skating facilities in the region.
- Remove the skate park and develop a series of "skate spots" or smaller skating elements throughout a number of different parks in the system.
- Remove the skate park and parking area to allow for more programmable open space for events.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Resurface pool parking lot and Lion's Club Drive.
- Choose a longterm plan for the skate park and implement.
- Continue to replenish the urban tree canopy throughout the park.





EVERGREEN PARK

Address: 8840 Manor Ave.

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

0.54 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

This small neighborhood park consists of a small asphalt path connecting to an asphalt pad that was previously used as a basketball court but is now striped for outdoor games.

The intersection adjacent to this park will be redone in the future which will affect the layout of the park slightly.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- The intent for this park is to remain green space once the intersection improvements are implemented, so no action items are proposed here at this time.
- Long term, the urban tree canopy should continue to be replenished here.



GROVE PARK

Address: 8201 Tapper Ave.

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

4.86 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

Grove park offers various recreational opportunities including a half court basketball court, multi-use tennis/pickleball courts, baseball and soccer fields, as well as two playgrounds. Additionally, the park includes a picnic shelter and walking paths in both concrete and asphalt. There are no accessible routes into the small toddler playground space. In addition to the green space found within the park's boundaries, South Side Christian Church located just north of the park, allows the parks to use their green space located on the southside of their parking lot. Though no formal agreement has been established, this allows for space for a soccer field with the Department maintaining that area in return.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Remove the basketball court.
- Add U4-6 soccer field in the location of the basketball court.
- Add split rail fence at end of field to provide barrier from the street.
- Upgrade play equipment (long-term).
- Provide accessible entrances into the play areas.
- Continue to replenish the urban tree canopy by planting new trees along the loop trail.



FRANK H. HAMMOND PARK

Address: 1101 Fran Lin Parkway

Ownership: School Town of Munster, Leased to Parks Board



COMMUNITY PARK

12 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

This park shares common space with Frank H. Hammond Elementary School. Mature trees surround large, open, manicured lawns. The outdoor workout station, walking trails, walking track, and tennis courts were in active use on the day of the visit. Outside of a broken net on the volleyball court, all facilities were found to be in good or excellent condition.

The parks department recently upgraded the playground equipment for the school with the agreement that the fence gate would be open to the public when the school is not in session.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Resurface running track.





HERITAGE PARK/ KASKE HOUSE

Address: 1154 Ridge Rd.

Ownership: Town of Munster



COMMUNITY PARK

10.7 Acres



1

0.72

This park offers nature trails through a large wooded area. The trail provides educational opportunities through informational signage. In addition to the trails, the park also includes open green space with picnic tables as well as a gazebo structure.

The Historic Kaske House, which serves as the Munster History Museum, also sits within this park. Overall, this park is in good condition, but opportunities are present to improve accessibility.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Consider updating signage long term.
- Continue trail maintenance and invasive species removal efforts.
- Develop accessibility plan for the park.





JOHN FRIEND PARK

Address: 9931 Lands End

Ownership: Town of Munster



MINI PARK

1 Acre



Site Visit Observations:

This park offers no parking but is within a residential area and is easily accessible by foot or bike. Mature trees line the southern boundary. No restroom, but this park is used by adjacent residents near their own facilities. Overall, excellent condition—no recommendations at this time.



KIWANIS PARK

Address: 213 Timrick Dr.

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

0.54 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

This small neighborhood park includes a playground to the south and open green space to the north with large shade trees. On the day of the site visit, this playground was very active and families were seen walking and riding their bikes to the park from the surrounding residential homes. The play equipment was in excellent condition but there was no accessible route into the play space.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Develop accessibility entrance into the play area.



LAWLER PARK GREENSPACE

Address: 9000 E. Delaware Parkway

Ownership: Town of Munster



GREENSPACE

1.1 Acres

Site Visit Observations:

This greenspace is located between the backs of private residential properties along Hart Ditch. Most of the site is not accessible due to the sloped terrain and dense vegetation. It is recommended this area continue to act as a greenspace with replenished urban tree canopy overtime. No specific recommendations at this time due to the location and limited access.



MANOR PARK

Address: 8200 Manor Ave. Ownership: Town of Munster



GREENSPACE

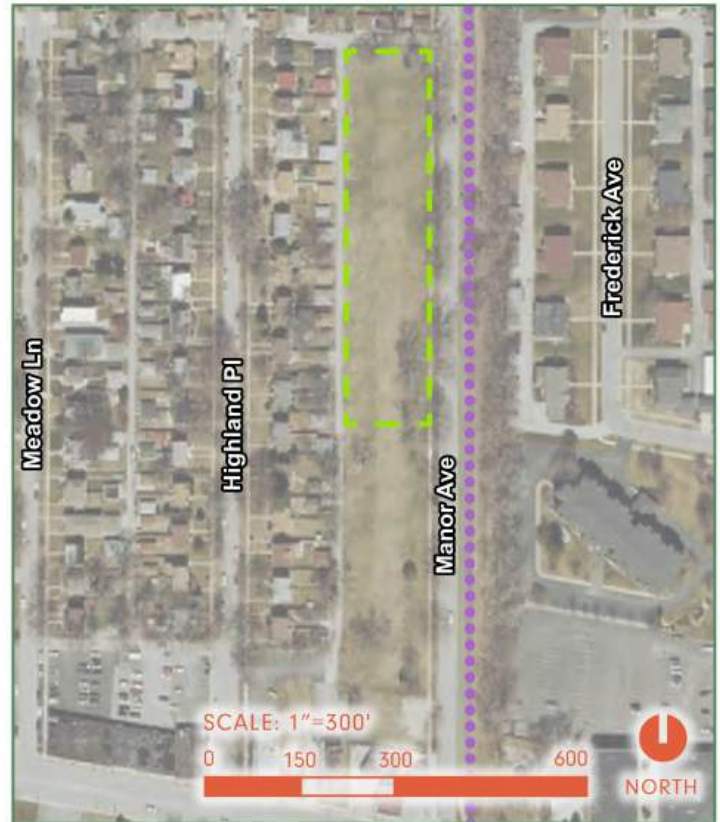
2 Acres

Site Visit Observations:

This proposed mini park will share the site with the future commuter rail station (see concept below—source: Engineering News-Record).

Action Items:

- Work through final design and implement construction of mini park.



MONON TRAILHEAD

Address: 410 Ridge Rd.

Ownership: Town of Munster



GREENSPACE

0.15 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

On the day of the site visit, this trailhead plaza space was undergoing improvements to the fountain and sidewalks. This space includes a trellis, fountain, seating, bike racks, and a Monon Trail sign/map. No recommendations or action items at this time.



MUNSTER COMMUNITY POOL

Address: 8837 Calumet Ave.

Ownership: Town of Munster



SPECIAL USE PARK



Site Visit Observations:

Munster Community Pool is located on the south end of Community Park. The pool includes a zero-depth beach entry, slide tower, diving board and lap swim area. In addition to the pool itself, this space also includes concessions with seating and a large shelter. Overall, the pool is a very popular facility in the summer months.

The Munster Community Pool is not a young facility. It is nearing a major fork in the road decision point. Options for a path forward may include the following:

- Upgrade amenities and expanding the facility to include new features (lazy river as one example) to remain strong as one of the few remaining public pools in the region.
- Remove the pool to make space for a community center building, indoor field house, or event center (similar to Bulldog Park in Crown Point).
- Downsize to a splash pad with lower operating costs/staffing needs and a longer season, while allowing more open space within the park for events.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Develop a longterm plan for the pool facility, associated buildings, and parking lot.



MUNSTER SKATE PARK

Address: 8601 Calumet Ave.

Ownership: Town of Munster



SPECIAL USE PARK



Site Visit Observations:

Located to the west of the community pool and south of the social center, the skate park is a flat paved asphalt area directly connected to a parking lot. The facility includes modular ramps and rail bars. See pg. 68 for further observations and action items.



ORCHARD PARK

Address: 8807 White Oak Ave.

Ownership: Town of Munster



MINI PARK

1.33 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

Orchard park is a small park located adjacent to the Town of Munster water tower. This park includes a small playground and open green space with several large shade trees. Play equipment is in good condition but sidewalks around the edge of the park have significant buckling occurring due to the roots of surrounding shade trees, causing uneven surfaces.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Repair sidewalks.



REDBUD GREENSPACE

Address: 1150 Parkside Dr.

Ownership: Town of Munster



GREENSPACE

3.2 Acres

Site Visit Observations:

This park is located behind a neighborhood to the north and east side, as well the Centennial Park golf course located on the west side. The site consists of open green space as well as a large number of mature shade trees. A paved path located on the south end of the site connects the park to the Pennsy Greenway. The site is in good condition—no recommendations or action items at this time.



RIVER'S EDGE PARK

Address: 1 River Dr.

Ownership: Town of Munster



SPECIAL USE PARK

4.09 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

Programmed specifically as a disc golf course, this park is set in a natural area along the edge of the Little Calumet River, entirely included within the Little Calumet River Flood Protection levee system, with large shade trees and undulating topography. The course includes 9 holes and was seen being actively used on the day of the visit.

An additional 9 holes were built adjacent to the park across the Illinois border by another organization.

Tee boxes feature rubber mats to minimize wear, though there are other areas throughout the course where bare spots are seen in the turf due to heavy use. Outside of a small pull-off area, the park does not have any dedicated parking, which would be warranted due to the popularity and frequent usage.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Maintain bare turf areas.
- Provide additional parking.



ROTARY PARK

Address: 1054 Ridge Rd.

Ownership: Town of Munster



GREENSPACE

0.2 Acres

Site Visit Observations:

This park includes mostly open green space with a few large trees along with a large raised landscape bed that features '9' park sign and three large metal sculptures. The park is well maintained. Outside of continuing to maintain the planting beds and artwork, replenishing the tree canopy over time, and the consideration of a reduction in manicured lawn, the park should continue to act as green space.



SOCIAL CENTER

Address: 8751 Lions Club Dr.

Ownership: Town of Munster



SPECIAL USE PARK



Site Visit Observations:

The Social Center serves as a valuable resource for the community. This space includes a large open common area with tables and chairs as well as a full kitchen, two meeting areas, and an outdoor patio space. The center can accommodate up to 125 guests and allows for year-round events and programming to occur.

Action Items:

- Replace windows.
- Tuck point work on exterior facade.
- Seek to dampen sound inside.



STEWART PARK

Address: 1600 Fran Lin Parkway

Ownership: Town of Munster



COMMUNITY PARK

6.31 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

Larger in acreage, Stewart Park is considered a Community Park. Asphalt lot, shelter, sidewalks, and play equipment were all found to be in good condition. Soccer goals not in use were stored along the edges of the multi-use fields.

Mature trees line the east boundary of the park—new trees have been installed along the parking lot and playground. A large Cottonwood tree needs to be removed from this park due to age, decay of limbs, and concerns for safety.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Remove large Cottonwood tree.
- Replace lost tree canopy near playground for shade.
- Consider short court turf soccer field with dashboards here as an added amenity. The large existing parking lot could serve this amenity where other parks could not.





SUNNYSIDE PARK

Address: 7800 Hohman Ave.

Ownership: Town of Munster



MINI PARK

1.2 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

This park consists of a large playground that is divided by a looping asphalt path, into separate play spaces for various ages. All play equipment appeared to be in good to excellent condition. The park also features a small gazebo, bike racks, benches, as well as a "little library". No specific action items at this time.



TWIN CREEK PARK

Address: 9747 Twin Creek Blvd.

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

5.03 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

On the day of the visit families were enjoying picnicking in the shade of mature trees. The t-ball field is in excellent condition with new benches. The Hopscotch and Four-Square games area is faded and weed growth was observed in the play areas.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Redevelop half court basketball court as one half basketball and the other half hitting wall for tennis, soccer, etc.
- Replenish engineered wood fiber in play area.



WEST LAKES PARK

Address: 9700 Margo Ln.

Ownership: Town of Munster



COMMUNITY PARK

23.68 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

A newer facility, this park features a range of well-maintained landscaping from manicured multi-use fields to shrubs and perennials in and around the parking lot to trees and grasses along a swale and retention area. A unique feature of this park is a small rock garden. All facilities were in excellent condition.

Most parks within the system are served by port-o-lets. Due to the size and use type of this park (recreational fields), which can experience high volumes of people, a permanent restroom building should be considered here as an added improvement.

Condition Assessment:

Good

Action Items:

- Build a restroom building.
- Reset volleyball court poles.



WHITE OAK PARK

Address: 9700 White Oak Ave.

Ownership: Town of Munster



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

10.46 Acres



Site Visit Observations:

This park offers ample open space for passive recreation. Patrons on the day of the visit were active on the playground, picnic tables, and bike paths. The pedestrian bridge connecting Twin Creek Park is in good condition. Hart Ditch has steep banks, but is densely landscaped presenting no safety concerns. Facilities are in good condition—no recommendations or action items at this time.



WHITE OAK WOODS

Address: 1725 Somerset Drive

Ownership: Town of Munster



GREENSPACE

2.3 Acres

Site Visit Observations:

This space consists of about half open lawn and half mature trees creating a shady, wooded respite. Replenishment of the urban tree canopy overtime and the potential reduction of manicured turf lawn could be considered here. Otherwise, the site is in good condition—no specific recommendations or action items at this time.



45TH AVENUE GREENSPACE

Address: 1500 45th St.

Ownership: Town of Munster



GREENSPACE

1.3 Acres

Site Visit Observations:

A little over an acre of open green space, this site is located adjacent to 45th Street and is also bordered by the Canadian National Grand Trunk Western railroad to the south as well as Hart Ditch to the east. The site includes an access drive leading to a utility box and large flag pole/cellular tower located on the southeast corner. The space is in good condition—no specific recommendations or action items at this time.



COMMUNITY ESTATES PARK

Address: 10180 Columbia Avenue

Ownership: Town of Munster



COMMUNITY PARK

3 Acres

Site Visit Observations:

This park is currently open greenspace with a retention pond. There are future plans for this space to become a small community park. The new park will include a playground area, walking path, as well as flexible lawn space. This park will serve the adjacent neighborhood and surrounding community. A preliminary concept of this park can be found on the following page.



FIGURE 4.4: COMMUNITY ESTATES PARK CONCEPT PLAN



ACCESSIBILITY & UNIVERSAL DESIGN

TOWN OF MUNSTER EXISTING POLICY

The Town of Munster and Munster Parks and Recreation Department support the American Disabilities Act by making reasonable accommodations in serving individuals with disabilities. Program and facilities are offered on a non-discriminatory basis. The designation "accessible" indicates access for wheelchair users in compliance with the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard (ADA).

In 2012, the Town adopted an ADA Transition Plan for public right-of-way. The plan has since been updated as of November of 2022. This plan establishes an ADA coordinator and outlines the grievance procedure. The Town of Munster's ADA Coordinator is responsible for the development and implementation of the ADA Transition Plan and the overall compliance. This includes both public right-of-way and public structures and facilities. This person is:

Patricia Abbott, Town Manager
1005 Ridge Road
Munster, IN 46321
p: 219. 836. 6905
e: pabbott@munster.org

The parks department notifies the public of on-going activities, amenities, programs, services and special events through the Town's monthly newsletter, Facebook page, email marketing, as well as through a parks and recreation guide that is mailed out three times a year (Summer, Fall, Winter/Spring). These are also available on the Town website. There may be an opportunity to identify specific accessible programs and amenities through those formats.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

The grievance procedure may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Town. The complaint form can be found on the Town of Munster's website under the Office of the Town Manager at <https://www.munster.org/departments/> or in the ADA Transition Plan, and should be presented to the ADA

Compliance Coordinator either in writing or in person. For the complaint to be considered, the complaint must comply with the following requirements:

- Submitted no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the alleged occurrence;
- Contain the following information - full name, address, and phone number of the complainant;
- It must state the location of the occurrence, date, and description of the alleged discrimination;
- Specify the Department involved and any employee and/or witness involved in the occurrence;
- Upon request, alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape/video recording of the complaint, will be made for a person with disabilities;

Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Compliance Coordinator will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions.

Within fifteen (15) calendar days after this meeting, the ADA Compliance Coordinator will then respond in writing or in another form acceptable to the complainant. This response will provide a final resolution of the complaint.

If the individual who has filed a grievance continues to have concerns after this process concludes, he or she can bring any unresolved concerns to the Town Manager of the Town of Munster.

PARK SYSTEM ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility covers a variety of disabilities including but not limited to:

- Visual impairments/blindness
- Hearing impairments/deafness
- Many varieties of mobility limitations
- Cognitive impairments

In 2017, the Town's engineering consultant completed an inventory of sidewalks and curb ramps. Curb ramps were assessed for slope, width, landing area, and presence of detectable warning strip. Sidewalk

tripping hazards were identified and ranked on a scale of 1 to 4, ranging from 3 inches or higher (Hazard Rating 1) down to less than one inch (Hazard Rating 4)

Every year, the Town replaces approximately 3,000 to 4,000 feet of sidewalk as part of the 50/50 Sidewalk Replacement Program. Replacement sections are prioritized based on severity of hazard and proximity to schools, parks, and commercial areas. The Town budgets nearly \$150,000 each year for its this replacement program.

As sidewalk conditions change and deteriorate over time due to various causes, a reassessment of these conditions should be made regularly.

ISSUES IN THE PARK SYSTEM

The following general issues were observed during review of the existing park system:

- Although most of the playground areas provide access—ramps into the engineered wood fiber (EWF)—only a few provide poured-in-place surfacing with a flush transition between the sidewalk and the play area.
- Most of the play equipment is not accessible for wheelchairs other than ground level interactions but do have transfer stations.
- Several playgrounds had edging that was not flush, creating a barrier into the play space.
- In some cases, picnic tables are set directly in the grass, which is not accessible/universal design acceptable; however, in most cases a picnic table in a shelter house on concrete was accessible in the same park. A picnic table product that offers a space for a wheelchair to pull up on the side rather than the end would be recommended.
- The ramps at Cobblestone Park that lead across the street into the neighborhood are too steep to be considered accessible—affecting accessible access to the park



Playground edging at Grove Park



Adjacent sidewalks along Grove Park are heaving and uneven



Ramps leading into Cobblestone Park

IMPROVEMENTS SINCE THE LAST PLAN

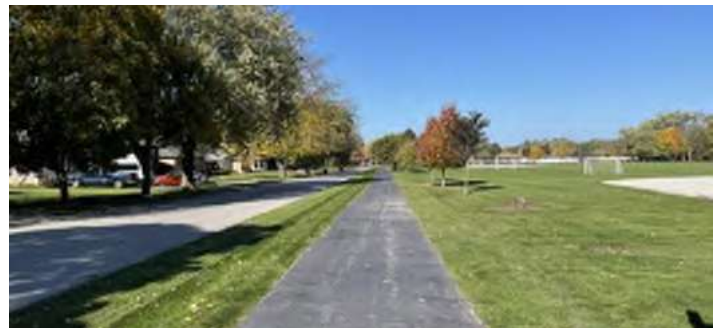
Improvements specific to accessibility since the last plan include the following:

- An asphalt paved walking path was added at Beech Park in 2018 which connects the parking lots to the playground, athletic courts, and the neighborhood sidewalk.
- In 2018, crushed limestone was replaced with concrete at the north and south ends of the dog park at Centennial Park improving accessibility.
- In 2019, a new playground was added to Orchard Park. An accessible route to the playground was added as part of the improvement.
- Accessible sidewalk connection was added from the Circle Park walking path to the playground area.
- Tennis courts have been repaired or rebuilt at Grove Park, Beech Park, West Lakes Park, and Frank Hammond Park to remove any potential tripping hazards for all users.
- Numerous safety/ADA compliance issues were evaluated and followed up with corresponding repairs in 2016-2018 at Centennial Park.
- ADA parking spaces, including van accessible spaces, were added with signage at all of the parking lots in the park system in 2021 except for Stewart Park which was completed in 2022.
- Concrete improvements were made to eliminate tripping hazards around the Twin Creek Park shelter and inside the parks maintenance garage.
- Gates to the tennis courts at Frank Hammond Park were rebuilt to allow for an accessible entrance to the facility in 2023.
- Red brick dust was replenished in 2023 to bring up many of the stone walkways and public art locations at Centennial Park which had become depleted.
- The sand volleyball court was removed and an accessible concrete expansion of the concession stand patio area was expanded at the Community Park pool.

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS FOR THIS PLANNING PERIOD

Some planned improvements to accessibility for the next planning period include:

- Accessible concrete/paved walkways through Community Estates Park connecting to the playground.
- An accessible route located in the southwest corner of Cobblestones Park which will allow for a safe crossing of Calumet Avenue at a newly installed traffic light controlled intersection.
- Areas have been identified for pathway connections at Community Park and Centennial Park providing continuous connectivity throughout the parks.
- Consideration for providing a better variety of inclusive play equipment and increasing the number of playgrounds with poured-in-place surfacing for a better experience for those with disabilities.
- Improvement of direct access from ADA parking to a park trail or pathway rather than directing park users to navigate through the parking drive aisle to get to the park trail or pathway (multiple locations).



Paved loop trail at Beech Park



ADA parking spaces at Stewart Park

ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE FORM

**ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE WITH:
ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ACT of 1968 (As Amended);
SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (As Amended);
AND TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990
(As Amended)**

The Town of Munster, Indiana (Applicant) has read the guidelines for compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (As Amended); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (As Amended); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (As Amended) and will comply with the applicable requirements of these Acts.

SIGNATURE

[Signature]

APPLICANT PRESIDENT

DAN REPAY

(President's printed name)

SIGNATURE

[Signature]

JANICE URAM

(Secretary's printed name)

DATE

May 24 2024

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05

NEEDS ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

This chapter will identify the needs of the Town of Munster parks by comparing industry standards to the current park system. A review of industry recognized parks and recreation benchmarks will help establish a baseline for the types of services and facilities which are currently in demand. This information is compared to the existing programs and facilities provided by Munster Parks and Recreation, to identify surpluses and deficits within the system. All this information is further influenced by the public input gathered throughout the planning process identified in Chapter 3 Plan Development.

It is important to note that the benchmarks reviewed in this chapter are just for comparison to the Munster park system. There is not a “one size fits all” approach to parks and recreation planning. Each community has unique needs, desires and challenges, and future planning should reflect this.

CURRENT TRENDS

SCORP AS A CITY COMPARISON

Indiana’s 2021-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is an information resource that quantifies and analyzes the state’s outdoor recreation resources and is intended to support local, regional, and state-level recreation decision making. It is important to not only understand national recreational trends but also local recreational trends.

TRENDS

From the Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey results, the top-three reasons why respondents participate in outdoor recreation were:

- To be with family and friends (38%)
- Physical health (37%)
- Mental health (34%)

The top-five outdoor recreation activities that respondents participated in more than once per week include:

- Walking / hiking / jogging / running
- Relaxation / spiritual renewal
- Gardening / landscaping
- Bird / wildlife watching
- Health-related activities (Exercise, Yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates etc.)

The top-ten “favorite” outdoor recreation activities described by respondents were:

- Walking, running, jogging
- Camping / RV camping
- Hiking / backpacking
- Fishing
- Boating, wake-boarding, sailing, tubing, jet skiing, water skiing
- Picnicking, barbecuing / cookout
- Gardening, landscaping, yard work, mowing

- Swimming, snorkeling, diving, scuba, splash pad
- Bicycling
- Golf

LEVEL OF SERVICE GUIDELINES

Indiana's SCORP Level of Service (LOS) Guidelines recommend 20 acres of public recreation area per every 1,000 residents within a local area such as a county, township, city, or town. Public, local recreation areas are described as being owned by the township, municipality, county, or being privately owned but open for public use. SCORP excludes all schools as many schools do not allow public access to their outdoor facilities.

Munster is deficient in acreage outlined by Indiana's SCORP. Based on the recommendation of 20 acres per 1,000 residents, Munster should be providing 473 acres of public recreation area for a population of 23,664 (U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates) and has current existing acreage of 428, leaving a local deficiency of 45 acres.

TRAILS

Since the 1995 SCORP, walking/jogging/running has been the top most popular outdoor recreation activity for Hoosiers. It is no surprise that this fact proves to be true for Munster as well with approximately 76.3% of survey respondents identifying walking/jogging/exercise as the most popular activity and amenity in the public survey. Respondents also identified adding trails for walking/jogging/biking as one of the top three desired capital improvement projects.

The SCORP identifies the Great American Rail Trail (see Figure 5.1) as a long-distance corridor that runs through Lake County. This route has been identified through Munster as the Pennsy Greenway extending from Schererville to the IL/IN state line at Lansing.

The SCORP 2016 Visionary Trails identifies the 13.02-mile Erie Lackawanna trail that passes nearby through Hammond and the 182.59-mile American Discovery Trail North that has been identified as the Pennsy Greenway through Munster (see Figure 5.2). Connections to these trails would provide Munster with access to a larger network of connecting trail.

FIGURE 5.1: INDIANA SCORP NEW & POTENTIAL TRAIL CORRIDORS



Image Source: 2021-2025 Indiana SCORP

FIGURE 5.2: 2016 INDIANA VISIONARY TRAILS SYSTEM



Image Source: 2021-2025 Indiana SCORP

NRPA AS A CITY COMPARISON

The National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) is a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to building strong, vibrant and resilient communities. The NRPA provides parks and recreation professionals with up-to-date data to help agencies make informed decisions and equip leaders with insights that help them make the case to key stakeholders and elected officials for greater and more sustainable funding. The reports reviewed for this plan include the 2022 NRPA Engagement With Parks Report and 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review.

FIGURE 5.3: 2023 NRPA AGENCY PERFORMANCE REVIEW KEY FINDINGS



Image Source: 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review

2023 NRPA ENGAGEMENT WITH PARKS REPORT

Since 2016, the NRPA research team has conducted an annual survey to better understand how people connect with parks and recreation across the United States. This report provides parks and recreation professionals insight on how local parks and recreation facilities impact people's lives across the nation.

According to this report, the top four reasons why residents visit parks are to:

- Be with family or friends (54%)
- Exercise or be physically fit (53%)
- To have a break from day-to-day stresses (52%)
- To be closer to nature (50%)

Users also identified their favorite park and recreation activities in the 2022 Engagement With Parks Report which included:

- Visiting a local park, playground, dog park, or other open space (73%)
- Hiking / biking / walking on a trail (53%)
- Playing sports with family / friends / neighbors (32%)
- Visiting a local swimming pool / aquatic center (24%)
- Visiting a local recreation / senior center (22%)
- Taking part in classes / lessons / activities at a local recreation center (17%)
- Participating in an organized sports league (17%)
- Children participate in an out-of-school time program (13%)

These results closely correlate with the Indiana SCORP findings. Knowing what motivates an individual or family to visit a local park and/or recreation facility can help agencies customize their offerings to specific needs, wants and desires.

2023 NRPA AGENCY PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Combined, the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review and NRPA Park Metrics feature the most comprehensive collection of park and recreation-related benchmarks and insights informing the public on the state of the parks and recreation industry. Key benchmarks and insights are identified in the following sections. These benchmarks are then compared to the current park system in Munster.

The NRPA benchmarks identified on the following pages are for jurisdictions serving 20,000 to 49,999 in population which correlates to Munster's community size for a better comparison. It is important to note that benchmarks can change significantly between the jurisdiction's population size or from the median of all agencies. For instance, agencies serving 20,000 to 49,999 in population provided one outdoor ice rink facility per 13,247 residents. Agencies serving 50,000 to 99,999 in population provided one outdoor ice rink facility per 33,214 residents while the median of all agencies provided one outdoor ice rink facility per 17,741 residents.

PARK SYSTEM SIZE

For agencies serving jurisdictions 20,000 to 49,999 in population, there is one park for every 2,014 residents. This would equate to about 11.7 parks for the population of Munster at 23,664 (U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates). Munster currently has 31 parks in its park system that it oversees, which is a 19-park surplus according to NRPA data.

Parks and recreation agencies serving jurisdictions 20,000 to 49,999 in population manage 11.3 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. This equates to about 267 acres of parkland for the Town of Munster. Currently Munster has 428 acres of parkland in its system, which is an excess of 161 acres.

INDOOR AND OUTDOOR PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

As identified by both NRPA reports and the Indiana SCORP, trails are a popular park amenity for exercising or to walk, bike, or hike. It is no surprise that 81.0% of

park and recreation agencies have trails, greenways and/or blueways as part of their outdoor offerings. Agencies serving jurisdictions 20,000 to 49,999 in population, manages or maintains a median of 8 miles of trail for walking, hiking, running and/or biking in its network. The lower quartile provides 5 miles and the upper quartile provides 20 miles. Munster currently has 17.1 miles, a surplus of 9.1 miles.

The 2023 Performance Review also offers insight into facilities offered by other park and recreation agencies and provides facilities to persons ratios. This data is used to determine overall surpluses and deficiencies. Figure 5.5 identifies target parkland and facility inventories for Munster based on NRPA benchmarks. These target inventories are based strictly on NRPA data and Munster's current population data. As previously stated, there is not a "one size fits all" approach to parks and recreation planning and the following analysis is to establish a baseline understanding of how Munster compares to other jurisdictions of similar size.

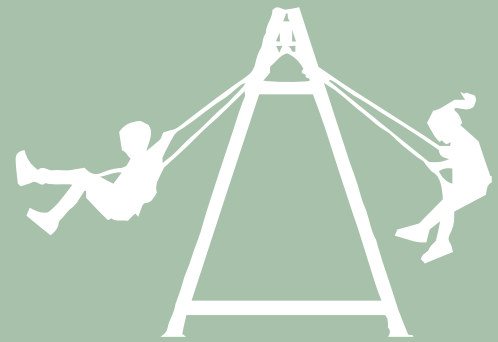
Munster's current park system indicates both surpluses and deficiencies compared to agencies serving jurisdictions of similar size. Most notably, some surpluses identified were in playgrounds (+13.2) and soccer fields (+10.2). Deficiencies in outdoor facilities included outdoor ice rink (-1.8), multi-purpose synthetic field (-0.9), and multi-use courts (-0.6). The highest deficiencies for indoor facilities include a recreation center (-1.0), an ice rink (-1.0), a senior center (-0.8) and an indoor performance amphitheater (-0.8).

While this data shows some deficits in both indoor and outdoor facilities, it is important to identify resources within the community that fill these gaps. The Town of Munster has an agreement with its neighboring community, Highland, for Munster residents to use the Lincoln Community Center at a lower rate. This provides residents access to indoor athletic facilities. Additionally, the Center for Visual & Performing Arts, though not run by the Parks Department, is located just north of Community Park and provides an indoor performance space for the community.

FIGURE 5.4: TOP RECREATION ACTIVITIES

SCORP: TOP 5 RATED OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- Walking, Hiking, Jogging, and Running
- Relaxation and Spiritual Renewal
- Gardening and Landscaping
- Bird and Wildlife Watching
- Health-Related Activities (Exercise, Yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates, etc.)



NRPA: TOP OUTDOOR FACILITIES PROVIDED BY AGENCIES

- Playgrounds
- Basketball Courts
- Diamond Fields: Baseball Field - Youth
- Tennis Courts (Outdoor)
- Rectangular Fields: Multi-Purpose



NRPA: TOP INDOOR FACILITIES PROVIDED BY AGENCIES

- Recreation Centers (Including Gyms)
- Community Centers
- Senior Centers
- Performance Amphitheaters
- Nature Centers

TPL: TOP PARK AMENITIES

- Basketball Hoops
- Off-Leash Dog Parks
- Playgrounds
- Recreation and Senior Centers
- Restrooms
- Splash Pads and Spray Grounds



FIGURE 5.5: CURRENT AMENITIES AND TARGET RATIOS

Amenity	NRPA Target Ratio (1)	Current Inventory	Current Ratio	Unit	Target Inventory 2023 Data (2)	Surplus/Deficit
Park System Size						
Acres of Park Land	11.3 acres per 1,000 residents	428.0	1.6	Acres	268.0	160.0
Miles of Trails	8 miles per 20,000 to 49,000 residents	17.1	0.9	Miles	8.0	9.1
Outdoor Facilities						
Playgrounds	1 facility per 3,028 residents	21.0	2.7	Ea.	7.8	13.2
Basketball Courts	1 facility per 7,117 residents	8.0	2.4	Ea.	3.3	4.7
Tennis Courts	1 facility per 5,815 residents	8.0	2.0	Ea.	4.1	3.9
Pickleball Courts	1 facility per 9,257 residents	4.0	1.6	Ea.	2.6	1.4
Multi-Use Courts: Tennis, Pickleball	1 facility per 9,667 residents	7.0	2.9	Ea.	2.4	4.6
Multi-Use Courts: Basketball, Volleyball	1 facility per 14,800 residents	1.0	0.6	Ea.	1.6	-0.6
Diamond Fields: Baseball - Youth	1 facility per 5,033 residents	14.0	3.0	Ea.	4.7	9.3
Diamond Fields: Softball - Youth	1 facility per 9,060 residents	6.0	2.3	Ea.	2.6	3.4
Rectangular Fields: Soccer Field - Youth	1 facility per 4,947 residents	15.0	3.1	Ea.	4.8	10.2
Multipurpose Synthetic Field	1 facility per 25,330 residents	0.0	0.0	Ea.	0.9	-0.9
Swimming Pools (outdoor only)	1 facility per 25,191 residents	1.0	1.1	Ea.	0.9	0.1
Ice Rink (outdoor only)	1 facility per 13,247 residents	0.0	0.0	Ea.	1.8	-1.8
Community Gardens	1 facility per 26,741 residents	1.0	1.1	Ea.	0.9	0.1
Skate Park	1 facility per 32,000 residents	1.0	1.4	Ea.	0.7	0.3
Dog Park	1 facility per 28,000 residents	1.0	1.2	Ea.	0.8	0.2
Golf Course	1 facility per 32,990 residents	1.0	1.4	Ea.	0.7	0.3
Indoor Facilities						
Recreation Centers	1 facility per 24,380 residents	0.0	0.0	Ea.	1.0	-1.0
Community Centers	1 facility per 26,696 residents	1.0	1.1	Ea.	0.9	0.1
Senior Centers	1 facility per 31,199 residents	0.0	0.0	Ea.	0.8	-0.8
Teen Centers	1 facility per 31,645 residents	0.0	0.0	Ea.	0.7	-0.7
Nature Centers	1 facility per 32,000 residents	0.0	0.0	Ea.	0.7	-0.7
Aquatic Centers	1 facility per 31,645 residents	0.0	0.0	Ea.	0.7	-0.7
Ice Rink	1 facility per 24,838 residents	0.0	0.0	Ea.	1.0	-1.0
Performance Amphitheater	1 facility per 30,283 residents	0.0	0.0	Ea.	0.8	-0.8

(1) Target ratio standards are from the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review for agencies serving 20,000 to 49,999 residents. Population for one facility per XX residents.
(2) Target inventory is calculated by dividing the current population data by the target ratio. Population data sourced from U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimates and was 23,664 for these calculations.

TPL AS A CITY COMPARISON

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a charitable organization that works to create parks and protect land for people to ensure that communities are healthy and livable. The TPL's Center for City Park Excellence works to make cities more successful by providing data for park professionals and planners on urban park and recreation systems. The 2023 City Park Facts and ParkScore generated by TPL analyzes and evaluates how large cities are meeting the need for parks and recreation.

According to this evaluation, the overall median of parkland per 1,000 residents is 13.1 acres. Additionally, the average percent of population that is within a walkable distance (1/2 mile radius) to access publicly owned parks is 74%. The 2023 City Park Facts also gives insight into balancing natural and built park environments. The average percentage of designed parkland is 47% and the average percentage of parkland that is natural is 53%.

Based on the TPL standards of 13.1 acres per 1,000 residents, Munster should have about 310 acres of parkland. Munster currently has 428 acres of parkland which is a 118 acre excess.

PARK SERVICE AREAS

The public survey results showed that 47% of respondents who live in Munster live within a 5-minute walk (0 - 1/4 mile) of a park and 27% of respondents who live in Munster live within a 10-minute walk (1/4 - 1/2 mile) of a park for a total of 74% of respondents living within a 10-minute walk of a park, which meets the national average of 74% as presented by TPL.

Figure 5.6 depicts the walkability to current park and recreation facilities. All park facilities are shown with 1/4 mile radius (5-minute walk) and 1/2 mile radius (10-minute walk). Figure 5.6 includes both parks and trail facilities.

This map illustrates that a significant portion of the town is located within a 5-minute walk of a park and nearly every area of the town is within a 10-minute

walk to the nearest park. This aligns directly with the data that was drawn from the public survey. It is important to note that the planned improvements at Community Estates Park help to fill a gap in the southern part of the town.

While there are a few small areas that are not captured within a 10-minute walk of a Munster park facility, the majority are within proximity to park facilities located within the neighboring communities. These areas are identified on the map and noted below.

Area 1

- Located just west of Wicker Memorial Park, a North Township regional park facility, in the community of Highland.
- This area is within a 5-minute walk to this park.
- Park offers many amenities including an 18-hole golf course, 3 miles of trails, sand volleyball courts, a dog park, inclusive playground, picnic areas, and splash pad.

Area 2

- Located northeast of James B. Eads Elementary School with a shared playground as well as just south of Riverside Park in the community of Hammond.
- This area is within a 5-minute walk to Riverside Park.
- Riverside Park offers many amenities including a dog park, athletic fields, ball diamonds, playground, and trails.

Area 3

- This area includes much of the previous Lansing County Club
- While this area is not within a 10-minute walk of a park, it is still within a mile (20-minute walk) of parks such as West Lakes Park, Frank H. Hammond Park, and Centennial Park.
- As future commercial development is implemented in this area plans will include the addition of pathways and public open space, as well as connect missing segments of the Pennsy Greenway which will supply the need for this area.

FIGURE 5.6: PARK ACCESS MAP



OPERATING EXPENDITURES AND
FULL-TIME STAFF

BUDGET

There are several ways in which the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review compares operating expenditures. These include annual operating expenditures, operating expenditures per capita, operating expenditures per acre of park and non-park sites, and operating expenditures by the amount of parkland managed. The following statistics are the median population for jurisdictions serving 20,000 to 49,999 in population:

- Annual operating expenditures range from \$1,996,538 (lower quartile) to \$6,279,749 (upper quartile) with a median of \$3,255,771. **Munster’s annual operating budget for 2023 was \$2,697,825.**
- Operating expenditure per capita ranges from \$64.04 (lower quartile) to \$197.61 per person with a median of \$103.95 per person. **Munster’s operating expenditure per capita was \$114.00 per person in 2023.**
- Operation expenditure per acre of park and non- park site has a median of \$8,106. **Munster’s operating expenditure per acre of park and non- park site was \$6,303 in 2023.**

The table below illustrates the Munster Parks and Recreation budget, expenses, revenues, and non-reverting fund from 2023.

2023 STAFFING	
Full Time Employees	12
Part-time Employees	138

EXISTING STAFFING

Just as park and recreation agencies differ by size and jurisdiction served, so too do staffing levels. The typical park and recreation agency has 8.9 Full Time Equivalents (FTE’s) on staff for each 10,000 residents in the service area, which would equate to about 21 FTEs for Munster. For jurisdictions serving 20,000 to 49,999 in population, FTEs range from 5.6 FTEs (lower quartile) to 19.7 FTEs (upper quartile) with a median of 10.7 FTEs.

ADDITIONAL STAFFING

A general argument for additional staff could be had as the number of parks and overall park acreage within the system is higher than many other communities comparable population sizes.

A more specific argument for increasing FTEs would be to ensure there is a succession plan as existing staff leaves and to provide adequate coverage of all department services. Many times the recreation office is covered by the Superintendent of Recreation or Recreation Supervisors due to a lack of support staff during times of vacation, sick or other leave for the administrative support staff.

2023 PARKS AND RECREATION FUND BUDGET			
Budget			\$2,697,825
Expenses			\$2,694,398
Revenues	Taxes	\$1,976,698	\$856,722
	Misc. (Rentals/ Advertising)	\$206,699	
	Reimbursements	\$6,883	
	Fees (Programs/ Activities)	\$666,442	
Non-reverting Fund	Donations/ Sponsorships		\$354,953

The maintenance division would also benefit from consistent on-the-job training from veteran staff to newer employees for when the veterans move on from Town employment or to cover in times of leave, vacation or other missed time from work.

NEW FACILITY STAFFING

The addition of an indoor facility would require additional FTEs to manage, program, and operate. A nature center would require several naturalists, and/or curators, a property manager, and an office manager or administrative position. Depending on the facility size, a senior center might have a full time executive director as well as a full time program director. A recreation center would require a facilities manager as well as program director responsible for hiring



Outings and Ready Steady Boxing are two of the many offerings at The Social, a senior center in Greenwood, Indiana.

fitness instructors and orchestrating programming and scheduling court and classroom use.

SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMMING

Munster Parks have typically operated programs/activities as long as they can support themselves through user fees or sponsorships—the one exception being the golf course, which is subsidized. A senior center facility would likely be subsidized as many in other communities are.

The Social, in Greenwood is supported by many organizations, but is predominantly a partnership between CICOA Aging and In-home Solutions, The United Way, and the City of Greenwood. A membership offers seniors the opportunity to participate in clubs, local outings as well as organized trips, exercise clubs, health and wellness gym, cards and games, educational seminars, a daily congregate lunch, and volunteer opportunities.

CURRENT PROGRAMMING TRENDS

According to the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review, programming is a key method of engagement that drives the use of park and recreation facilities, and when associated with registration fees, it is also the largest source of non-tax revenue for most agencies. The lack of programs can equate to reduced usage rates, less community support and reduced budgets.

The 2023 Performance Review identified key programming activities offered by at least seven out of ten parks and recreation agencies. These include:

- Themed special events (89%)
- Social recreation events (88%)
- Team sports (86%)
- Fitness enhancement classes (81%)
- Health and wellness education (80%)
- Individual Sports (77%)
- Safety Training (71%)
- Racquet sports (71%)

- Aquatics (69%)
- Natural and cultural history activities (63%)
- Performing arts (62%)
- Cultural crafts (62%)
- Visual arts (61%)
- Trips and tours (61%)
- Martial arts (57%)
- Running / cycling races (52%)
- Golf (48%)
- eSports / eGaming (23%)

Agencies jurisdictions serving 20,000 to 49,999 in population typically offered the following most prevalent programs targeted specifically for children, seniors, and people with disabilities:

- Summer camp (93%)
- Specific senior programs (87%)
- Programs for people with disabilities (80%)
- Specific teen programs (77%)
- Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs (68%)

Munster Parks offers most of the above through some form of it's programming except eSports/eGaming programs, which is a fairly new activity becoming more popular over the last five years.

Active adult programming, teen programs, STEM offerings, and summer camps are all strong in Munster Parks. Additional programs specific to those with disabilities could be considered. A list of programming can be found in Chapter 4 Park System Inventory.

KEY ANALYSIS TAKEAWAYS

SCORP guidelines as well as the NRPA and TPL benchmarks, in addition to public input help form a complete picture of the amenities and services Munster Parks should strive to provide to its residents. This analysis resulted in a number of observations and recommendations for the future direction of the park system. The following pages provide a summary of the primary takeaways of this analysis.

PARK ACREAGE

When looking at any of the available metrics (NRPA, SCORP, or TPL), Munster is not lacking in park acreage; however, additional park space for a multi-purpose football/lacrosse/soccer field is desired from local athletic clubs and programs. If such a space is found, a synthetic turf field with lights would provide optimum hours for use and minimal maintenance.

STAFFING

NRPA benchmark comparisons suggest that Munster Parks could be considered understaffed based on it's population size and number of parks and could add new staff to the Munster Parks team. It is recommended that Munster Parks add 2-3 FTEs to bring numbers closer to the median FTEs provided by agencies serving jurisdictions 20,000 to 49,999 in population.

Additionally, the parks department is responsible for addressing issues associated with the landfill or the gas to energy generator at the Centennial Park landfill. This is unique to Munster and takes away FTE time from normal park related tasks. This is likely equivalent to having one fewer employees due to the amount of time dealing with this facility between a number of department employees and provides even more support for increasing staff.

If indoor space is added to the parks system in any capacity, staffing would need to increase to accommodate such facilities in addition to the 2-3 FTEs recommended.



West Lake Park in Carmel, Indiana offers a meandering boardwalk as a part of it's interior loop trail system.

NATURAL PARKLAND

Public survey results indicate that the community has interest in naturalized parkland.

- The second highest rated response for "High Priority Projects" was "Add nature trails".
- The fourth highest rated response for "Desired Program" was "Nature Programming/Environmental Education".

Reports from TPL note that the average percentage of natural parkland is 52% (which is much higher than Munster's current offerings) and activities such as hiking and bird/wildlife watching ranked in the top-five rated outdoor activities in the SCORP, there is a need for continued emphasis on providing natural areas.

In this densely developed region there aren't many natural areas for the parks department to obtain. Instead, the following strategies could be considered:

- Preserve and protect existing wooded areas within the park system like Bieker Woods and areas of Heritage Park as natural areas.
- Maintain Clayhole Lake as a natural area. Although not as densely wooded, it provides opportunities for bird watching and a lowland water-loving landscape. The addition of a boardwalk would allow more passive access to the public.
- Look for opportunities to maintain or create open

greenspace within existing parks. Older parks systems can often make the mistake of adding over the years, but not editing or removing leaving facilities cluttered. Open space may provide the desired respite park users are looking for in many cases.

- If any natural or wooded properties or properties adjacent to the existing parks become available, the Town should consider acquiring that acreage and adding it to the park system. Such acquisition should be considered especially when adjacent to the natural and/or wooded parks.

SURPLUSES AND DEFICIENCIES

The analysis of NRPA benchmarks show surpluses and deficiencies in the park system.

Surpluses

Most notable surpluses include park acreage, trails, playgrounds, and youth recreational fields. Even with the surplus in trails, the public survey results indicated that the community still desires more trail amenities and improvements. Although plentiful, the playgrounds could provide more variety in the type of play offered—nature play, inclusive play, and performance and social play spaces could be explored.

Deficiencies

Most notable deficiencies include outdoor ice rinks and all indoor facilities within the table—senior centers, teen centers, community centers, aquatic centers, nature centers, and indoor performance facilities.

The opportunity to add an outdoor ice rink is noted as a deficiency and was brought up in the public meetings as well as the public survey. However, many comments were noting the ice rink facilities nearby that residents enjoy using. See map to the right of the many facilities available regionally.

An outdoor ice rink was attempted in the past, but it was found refrigeration would be required as consistent winter weather will not cooperate with natural freezing annually. Such a facility would also require a restroom facility, a warming building, and skate rental.

A refrigerated rink becomes a regional level facility, possibly indoor or covered if outdoor. There are indoor ice rinks in Hammond and St. John and a covered outdoor rink in Crown Point. Indoor facilities are highly desired and would get more use as a year-round facility. Indoor facilities should seek to fill a gap where local businesses and other recreation providers are not already offering such opportunity.



"Playcosystems" are a growing trend in nature themed play areas.



Central Park Plaza Ice Rink - Valpraiso, IN

Regional Indoor Ice Rink Facilities

- Kube Sports Complex
 - Hammond, IN (5 Miles)
- Midwest Training and Ice Center
 - Crown Point, IN (23 Miles)
- Flossmoor Park District Ice Arena
 - Homewood, IL (13 Miles)
- Arctic Ice Arena
 - Orland Park, IL (25 Miles)

Regional Outdoor Ice Rink Facilities

- Central Park Plaza Ice Rink
 - Valpraiso, IN (30 Miles)

OUTDOOR FACILITIES "WISH LIST"

- Repave the Frank Hammond track when Fran-Lin Parkway is paved.
- Replace playgrounds at Briar Creek Park, Cobblestones Park and Centennial Park.
- Begin initial development of Community Estates Park.
- Replace the gas-to-energy landfill generator.
- Replace the park sign at Grove Park and resurface the tennis courts at Beech Park.
- Seal the pathway at Burlwood Park.

INDOOR FACILITIES "WISH LIST"

- Complete the Centennial Park Golf buildings project with a new Pro Shop, Cart Storage Building, and Shelter.
- Determine the fate of current Centennial Park Clubhouse and any next steps with that facility.
- Tuckpoint and replace windows and remaining doors at the Social Center.
- Construct a washroom and storage building at West Lakes Park for the large amount of soccer and other users at that site.
- Consider renting, leasing or acquiring existing facilities in Munster to provide indoor space for additional recreational opportunities. Facilities with large indoor space are desired for the potential of indoor activities. Properties adjacent to existing Town parks would rate as the highest desired if opportunity exists.

MAINTENANCE & EQUIPMENT "WISH LIST"

- Complete 2023 bond issue vehicle replacement purchases.



Centennial Park Pro Shop Rendering



Centennial Park Driving Range Rendering



Centennial Park Pro Shop Rendering

FIGURE 5.7: TRAILS AND GREENWAYS



TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

- Complete the long-awaited bridges over Hart Ditch and Cady-Marsh Ditch to connect the pathway from Munster to Highland in the NIPSCO utility corridor which parallels Fisher Street. Include a segment running south between the two ditches through a separate NIPSCO utility corridor to eventually connect to Bluebird Park.
- As noted previously, the American Discovery Trail north segment has been identified as the Pennsy Greenway through Munster. Ensuring any missing segments through the Town are completed as development or redevelopment occurs is noted as highly important.
- Connecting a segment from the Pennsy Greenway going west through future development of the former Lansing Country Club property into Illinois to allow for a connection to the regional trail system in Illinois is highly important.
- A corridor paralleling the new commuter train line through Community Estates subdivision north to Superior Avenue is a desired connection for a pathway to allow access to the train station and to existing trails leading to Centennial Park and other trails in Munster.
- Any opportunities to connect trails from Munster south to Dyer are desired as none currently exist. Dyer is the last community surrounding Munster to have a pathway connection once the bridge path connection to Highland is complete.

PROGRAMMING

- Continue to explore partnerships with other recreation or space providers to allow for increased recreational opportunity.
- Explore renting or leasing space which could be used for expanded recreational activities. Traditional retail space could become available if on-line purchasing continues to shift buying patterns for the community.
- Continue to work with the School Town of Munster to be efficient in using available school facilities as available.
- Avoid duplication of services if other recreational providers already supply such service in the community.



Pennsy Greenway gateway signage at the Indiana, Illinois state line.

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06

RECOMMENDATIONS

SYSTEM WIDE GOALS

The following tables illustrate system-wide goals that were inspired by park planner and park staff observations, public input, and acknowledgment of growing trends. These goals can be applied across the parks system.

1	CONTINUE TO ADD TO THE GROWING NETWORK OF TRAILS.
OBJECTIVES	Complete bridges over Hart Ditch and Cady-Marsh Ditch and connect to Bluebird Park.
	Connect Munster south to Dyer.
	Connect Community Estates subdivision north to Superior Ave.
	Complete any missing segments of the Pennsy Greenway and connect into Illinois to continue the American Discovery Trail.
WHY?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Walking, jogging, and biking was the number one reason survey respondents use the system facilities as well as the number one project parks should prioritize.

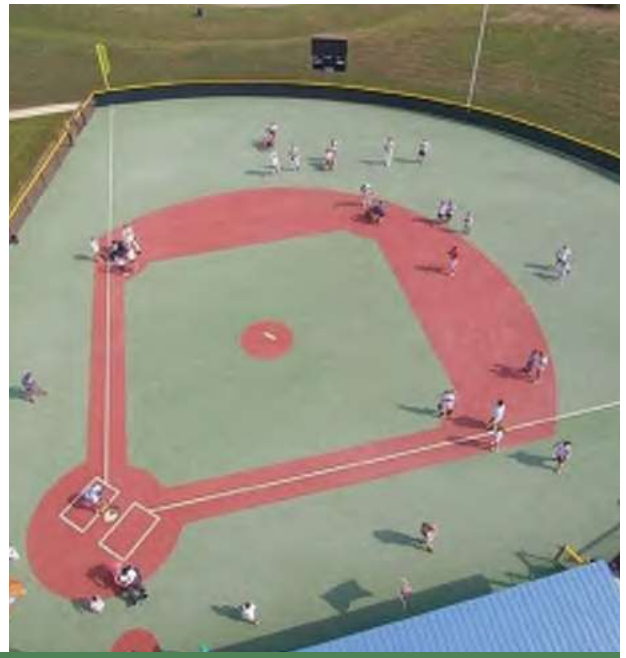
2	DIVERSIFY PARK FACILITY MAKE-UP.
OBJECTIVES	Rather than having one of each type of sports court in each park, increase the quantity of one type of sports court and remove the others.
	Basketball court users are typically more youthful. Although pickleball is a multi-generational sport, pickleball users in Munster tend to be predominantly seniors. Offering more separation between these types of facilities may alleviate conflict.
	Develop a pickleball focused facility with 8-10 courts in either Beech Park or Grove Park to consolidate facilities and accommodate a growing trend.
WHY?	<p>Why is this being recommended?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Complaints within the survey about basketball court users playing loud music. ➤ Aging population with high interest in pickleball.



Concepts to Consider:

Pickleball is a growing trend that is popular with seniors but also very much a multi-generational sport attracting young people to the game. Increasing the number of courts within a few select parks is recommended.

Concepts to Consider: Expensive to build, challenging to maintain, and a haven for vandalism, restrooms are a necessary evil in parks systems. Prefabricated options can be more economical and options have expanded (below left). Example of an accessible ball field (right).



3	EXPAND PUBLIC RESTROOM OFFERINGS.
OBJECTIVES	Continue to offer temporary or seasonal restrooms at park facilities as needed.
	Update Centennial Park restroom flooring, lighting, walls and partitians.
	Develop a solution for restroom access to the Pennsy Greenway or signage directing to it.
	Add new permanent restroom facilities at key locations with high use like West Lakes Park
	Look for funding opportunities to support upgrading restroom facilities with heat and insulation in order for them to be available year-round.
WHY?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Desire for more permanent facilities brought up in public meetings. ➤ 18% of survey respondents listed “lack of restrooms” as a barrier from using the parks. ➤ 45% of survey respondents said the restroom facilities were not adequate.

4	IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS SYSTEM-WIDE.
OBJECTIVES	Ensure current codes are being met related to accessibility by taking a closer look at access to parks from neighborhoods (slopes of ramps, detectable warnings, etc.), parking spaces and travel aisles, companion seating and access to spectator viewing areas at recreational fields and courts.
	Make accessibility a higher priority by offering unique amenities that can also be used by able-bodied individuals. Playground features and a wheelchair accessible tee-ball diamond/kickball field as some examples.
WHY?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Park planners observed examples where updates are needed to meet code. ➤ Requests for more special needs and autism programming and facilities mentioned multiple times in the written comments within the survey.

5	ACTIVELY "EDIT" FACILITIES THAT ARE OUTDATED OR NO LONGER USED.
OBJECTIVES	<p>Reduce or eliminate the number of deteriorating smaller asphalt game courts (four square/hopscotch) in order to increase the open space and declutter parks.</p> <p>Consider transitioning the memorial tree program to more general plantings within the system and consolidating individual plaques to a central location.</p> <p>Assess the active use of the existing skatepark facility using drone photography or a public questionnaire before making a final decision on whether to remove or renovate.</p> <p>Consider removing aging tennis courts if schools build a larger facility.</p>
WHY?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Park planners observed the skatepark is outdated and may be better served in a different location as master planning for Community Park is considered. ➤ Although very popular as the first skatepark in the region when first built over 25 years ago, the parks board and parks staff brought up concerns about the skatepark's current priority and use within the system. Several surrounding communities have implemented new skate parks that serve as regional attractions.

6	PROTECT, ENHANCE, AND INCREASE NATURAL AREAS.
OBJECTIVES	<p>Preserve and protect existing natural areas (Bieker Woods/Heritage Park).</p> <p>Enhance Clayhole Lake as a natural area—provide access to the public via a boardwalk and opportunities for bird watching, or nature programming.</p> <p>Seek out opportunities to maintain or create open greenspace within existing parks.</p> <p>If any natural or wooded properties or adjacent areas become available, consider acquiring.</p> <p>Consider new, unique, low-impact ways to program existing natural areas.</p>
WHY?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nature trails were the second most popular reason why survey respondents use the park system. ➤ A nature center, nature programming, birdwatching, and more nature trails were common themes in all forms of public input.

7	DIVERSIFY OR EXPAND THE TYPES OF "PLAY" OFFERED IN THE SYSTEM.
OBJECTIVES	<p>Increase offerings in nature play, inclusive play, and pretending and performance play.</p> <p>Offer solitude options or hideaways for those on the autism spectrum; consider toddlers.</p> <p>Improve caregiver experience with passive (shaded seating) and active (exercise equipment) offerings nearby the play zones.</p> <p>Encourage parent involvement and interaction with play equipment that requires their presence.</p>
WHY?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Parks planners observed many of the parks seem to be a carbon copy version of the last. ➤ Trends in different types of play equipment are growing and expanding.



Concepts to Consider: Add nature play features to existing woodland trails (top left) and consider a boardwalk along the edge of Clayhole Lake to provide access to residents in a low impact way (right).



Concepts to Consider: Consider updating the skatepark to include a pump track (upper left) or bowl (upper right). Examples of toddler play, performance play, and a hideaway for solitude (bottom row).



Concepts to Consider: Don't forget about the adults in playground design—offering exercise equipment near the play zones and interactive equipment will encourage them to be active as well.



Concepts to Consider: Accessible play equipment has come a long way—many options encourage both able-bodied children and those with disabilities to play together. Poured-in-place surfacing provides access as well as color and dimension to play zones. Quiet spaces for contemplation and problem solving should be considered as well and may be desired by those on the autism spectrum.

NEXT BIG QUESTIONS

Not all conundrums can be resolved within the time frame of one planning process. The tables on the following pages illustrate three "Big Questions" for Munster Parks and Recreation. Careful consideration and further planning will be required prior to moving forward with these significant facility decisions.

1	INDOOR FACILITIES
CHALLENGE	Compared to national standards based on population size, Munster is deficient in all categories of indoor space (Nature Center, Senior Center, Recreational Center, etc.). The one exception is "Community Center"—the existing Social Center checks this box.
QUESTION	How can the parks system address the deficiency of indoor facilities in the future, and should indoor facilities be the responsibility of the park system?
CONSIDER	Nature Center? Sand Ridge Nature Center and Gibson Woods Environmental Center are less than 10-miles away and are available and accessible to Munster's citizens. Nature programming could increase but be provided in the general indoor space of a public, multi-use building or existing park facility.
	Senior Center? The median age in Munster is higher than both Lake County and the state of Indiana. Facilities and programming for seniors will continue to be desired in this community. With the support of additional staffing, programming could be developed within existing facilities or within a new, multi-use facility.
	Recreational Center? Indoor recreational space is a high priority for both the parks and the schools and will continue to be in the future.
NEXT STEPS	Conduct a feasibility study reviewing potential locations, cost, maintenance, operations, and staffing needs for indoor facilities to understand if this is something the parks system can take on in the future.
	Continue to work closely with the schools to understand what plans they may have in the works to establish indoor facilities that may also serve the needs of indoor parks and recreation programming.

Concepts to Consider: Indoor facilities can be used for much more than just sports activities—the indoor facility in New Albany, Indiana (right) hosts the annual Easter Egg Hunt as well as indoor sports tournaments, exercise classes, archery events, and many other types of programming.



2	AQUATIC FACILITIES
CHALLENGE	With Hammond closing several public pools, outdoor public swimming facilities within 20-miles of Munster are limited to Hobart Community Pool, and Lake Station Community Pool, which are all smaller, neighborhood facilities. Munster's Community Pool provides a quality-of-life amenity with services and programming (swim lessons) to those who cannot afford a membership-based facility like a YMCA. However, the Munster Community Pool is reaching its lifespan, is over 25 years old, requires significant investment for annual maintenance and staffing, lifeguards are in high demand and difficult to secure, and the active pool season is less than 11 weeks long.
QUESTION	Should the parks system continue to operate and maintain an outdoor public pool?
CONSIDER	Alternative No.1: Continue to provide a public swimming facility through the existing Munster Community Pool, invest and upgrade the facility each year, expand programming and features, and extend hours of use.
	Alternative No.2: Develop a long term plan to replace the outdoor facility with an indoor aquatics center that is a part of a larger indoor recreation center.
	Alternative No.3: Develop a long term plan to replace the pool facility with a destination splash pad facility that requires no lifeguards, less maintenance and annual investment, extends the season of use from 8 weeks to 5 months, and is a unique aquatic facility for the area.
NEXT STEPS	Procure an aquatics consultant to do a full assessment of the existing conditions of the facility and project it's lifespan for practical use.
	Work with a consultant to develop a feasibility study for an indoor facility that illustrates capital cost, staffing, maintenance, and operations.
3	UNIQUE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
CHALLENGE	Surrounded on all borders, new land or open space for potential acquisition within the Town of Munster is hard to come by. As more amenities and parking lots are constructed, and indoor facilities are considered, open space is decreasing. Although the population is not growing rapidly, it is steadily increasing.
QUESTION	Could Munster consider unique developments that go vertical to conserve space, provide more indoor and outdoor square footage, and provide parking?
CONSIDER	As new facilities are needed for the parks (and the school system), consider how rooftop facilities might meet needs for sports courts, outdoor space, event space, and parking.



Concepts to Consider: Rooftops can be tennis courts (top left) gardens and open space (top right), and parking. As Munster explores developing vertically, park space should be a priority in the scheme.



Concepts to Consider: There are many types of facilities that can meet the aquatic need and provide a seasonal amenity to communities without the added frustration of staffing lifeguards each year.

CONCEPT PLANS

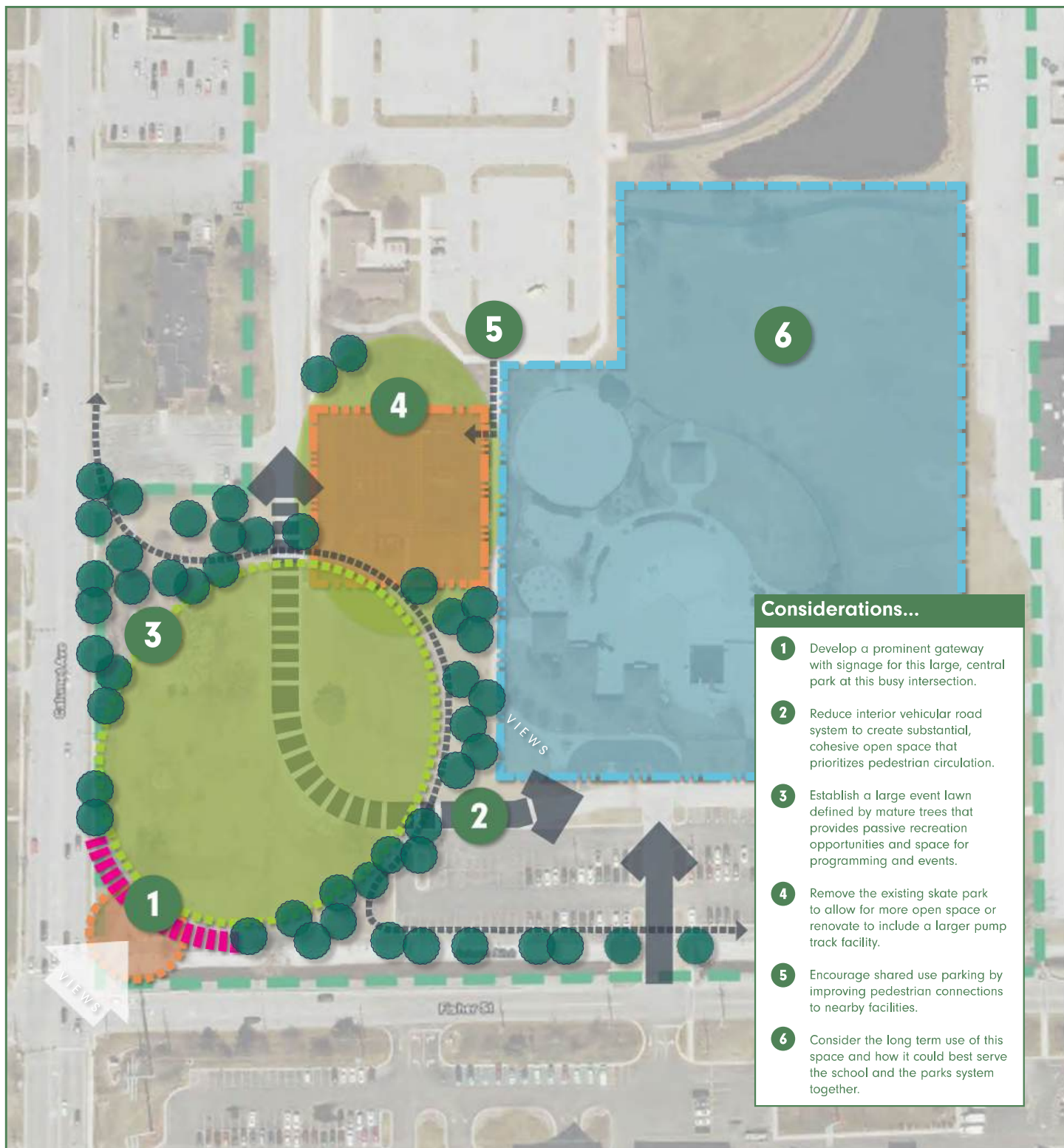
COMMUNITY ESTATES PARK: NEW PROPOSED PARK

The newest park in the system will provide open space and recreational amenities for a developing neighborhood in the southwest quadrant of the town. Components include a playground, walking path, and tree plantings. Diversity of play offerings may be considered in this new facility.



COMMUNITY PARK: CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for Community Park were discussed throughout the plan. Because the park is well established and built out in many regards, changes to the park involve removal or renovation of existing amenities. The diagram below illustrates some of the ideas explored through discussion around the future of this facility.





CENTENNIAL PARK: NORTH END

Centennial Park as a whole is more adult-oriented—home to a dog park, gardens, walking paths, sculptures, a golf course, and exercise stairs, it does have a playground, but children are not necessarily it's priority user group.

On one hand, it is a large, centrally located park that could accommodate a destination playground as a regional draw. On the other hand, as Centennial Village is developed to the north, does this location call for something different? This park often hosts large festivals and events, and could use a flexible space to accommodate the influx of people during those times as well as smaller gatherings on a normal day.

The plan below provides context for this location within the park as well as illustrates the potential for a boardwalk at Clayhole Lake.



CENTENNIAL PARK: NORTH END (EVENT LAWN)



Two options were considered for the north end of Centennial Park—ultimately, it was decided the park should be more oriented towards festivals, events, and adult-oriented recreation rather than a playground. The plan above illustrates a flexible green space that reacts positively to Centennial Village rather than ignoring it. An enlargement of the playground concept can be found in the appendix for reference.



CENTENNIAL PARK: SOUTH END

With the banquet hall (left) destined to be demolished due to structural issues, this prominent site on the lake will need to be reimagined. One concept, popular at public input sessions, as well as with the parks board, is to develop a flexible overlook/plaza/event space. Elements would include an architecturally significant indoor/outdoor rental pavilion that could support events at the golf course as well as programming and private events, plazas for outdoor concessions/beer garden, social seating, and outdoor game spaces.





Concepts to Consider: Social seating, outdoor games, an architecturally striking indoor/outdoor pavilion, artwork, and plaza area to accommodate special events (lower right) are all amenities proposed in the flexible plaza/overlook space illustrated on the opposite page.

ACTION PLAN: 2025

PARK	ACTION	BUDGET	FUNDING
Bluebird Park	Remove tree along existing path and repair walking path.	\$10,000	Operating Budget
Briar Creek Park	Upgrade/replace play equipment.	\$125,000	Bond Issue
Burlwood Park	Paint repair on shelter roof fascia.	\$1,500	Operating Budget
Centennial Park	Replace golf course cart fleet vehicles and utility.	\$300,000	Bond Issue
	Make drainage improvements at the dog park.	\$20,000	Bond Issue
	Replace the gas-to-energy landfill generator.	\$1,000,000	Bond Issue
Cobblestone Park	Refresh community garden with new programming and leadership or remove and create open space.	TBD	Operating Budget
	Upgrade/replace play equipment.	\$150,000	Bond Issue
Community Park	Resurface pool parking lot and Lion's Club Drive.	\$520,000	Bond Issue
	Community Pool upgrades including repairs to the pool floor, concession equipment, fencing, and replacement of the landscaping rope.	\$100,000	Bond Issue
Grove Park	Remove vacant basketball court and repair asphalt.	\$5,000	Operating Budget
	Provide accessible entrances into the play areas.	\$10,000	Operating Budget
Heritage Park	Repairs to gazebo (rotting wood).	\$15,000	Operating Budget
	Develop accessibility plan for the park.	TBD	Operating Budget
Orchard Park	Repair sidewalk (buckling due to tree roots)	\$10,000	Bond Issue
Kiwanis Park	Provide accessible entrances into the play areas.	\$10,000	Operating Budget
Monon Trailhead	Refurbish site after NICTD train construction.	\$150,000	Bond Issue
Stewart Park	Add new trees for shade around the playground.	\$5,000	Operating Budget
West Lakes Park	Reset volleyball court posts.	\$5,000	Operating Budget
Community Estates Park	Engage consultant to develop concept into bid documents.	\$100,000	Bond Issue

ACTION PLAN: 2026

PARK	ACTION	BUDGET	FUNDING
Beech Park	Add ADA connection from parking spots to existing pathway.	\$10,000	Bond Issue
Bluebird Park	Improve accessibility through designated accessible parking spots, wheelchair accessible picnic tables, and concrete companion areas next to benches.	\$50,000	Bond Issue
Circle Park	Upgrade ramps at park access points to accommodate those with disabilities.	\$15,000	Bond Issue
Centennial Park	Hire consultant to assess structural issue with retaining walls at stage and potential to regrade the amphitheater lawn to improve visibility for spectators.	\$35,000	Bond Issue
	Art painting/restoration	\$100,000	Bond Issue
Cobblestone Park	Resurface multi-use courts	\$100,000	Bond Issue
	Remove tennis courts to provide more greenspace	\$35,000	Bond Issue
Community Park	Use drone photography or another mapping tool such as AI Placer to monitor usage for 6 months, develop community survey specific to skatepark usage, and gather input to understand the usage of the facility. Consider 1) upgrading facility to meet need (if established) and current trends (pump track), 2) relocate the facility as smaller "skate spots" within other existing parks, or 3) remove facility if no longer 'sparking joy'.	\$15,000	Operating Budget
Frank H. Hammond Park	Repave track	\$100,000	Bond Issue
Grove Park	Upgrade play equipment.	\$125,000	Bond Issue
Heritage Park	Work with fabricator to update signage.	\$15,000	Bond Issue
River's Edge Park	Parking and accessibility improvements.	\$150,000	Bond Issue
Social Center	Engage consultant to determine plan to dampen sound inside facility.	\$10,000	Bond Issue
Stewart Park	Consider short court turf soccer field with dashboards as an added amenity. Hire consultant to plan and bid.	TBD	Bond Issue
Twin Creek Park	Old asphalt courts - remove 4-square.	\$15,000	Bond Issue
West Lakes Park	Build new restroom/storage facility (utilities are stubbed).	\$350,000	Bond Issue

ACTION PLAN: 2027

PARK	ACTION	BUDGET	FUNDING
Beech Park	Remove basketball courts and convert to a pickleball complex.	\$250,000	Bond Issue
Centennial Park	Add pedestrian connections at east side of park near proposed restroom.	\$35,000	Bond Issue
	Add pedestrian connections at northwest corner of park.	\$75,000	Bond Issue
	Resurface north and south parking lots.	\$500,000	Bond Issue
	Resurface pathways and part of Pennsy Trail	\$200,000	Bond Issue
	Implement structural repairs and amphitheater regrading.	TBD	Bond Issue
Manor Park	Work through final design and implement construction of mini park.	Varies	Bond Issue
Social Center	Tuckpoint work on exterior facade.	\$40,000	Bond Issue
System-wide	Conduct a community-wide tree inventory and urban canopy assessment.	TBD	IDNR Urban Forest Assistance Grant
	Engage consultant to develop a plan to deal with invasive species system-wide.	\$10,000	IDNR Urban Forest Assistance Grant

ACTION PLAN: 2028

PARK	ACTION	BUDGET	FUNDING
Bluebird Park	Update/renovate tennis courts	\$200,000	Bond Issue
Briar Creek Park	Update walking path to 8' wide asphalt trail (0.5-mile).	\$125,000	Bond Issue
Circle Park	Resurface basketball court.	\$20,000	Bond Issue
Centennial Park	Add restroom facility at north end to accommodate events and trail use.	\$300,000	Bond Issue
Community Park	Engage consultant to explore opportunities for a trail and green space corridor connection between Munster Town Hall, the Center for Performing and Visual Arts, Community Park, and Munster High School.	Combine with other Trails Plan	Bond Issue
Heritage Park	Engage consultant to establish recommended updates for the Kaske House Museum located in the park - in line with the historical era of the facility.	\$25,000	Bond Issue

ACTION PLAN: 2029

PARK	ACTION	BUDGET	FUNDING
Briar Creek Park	Establish ADA accessible transition from path to pedestrian bridge and update railing to meet code.	\$20,000	Bond Issue
Centennial Park	Determine erosion solution to southwest corner of landfill.	\$500,000	Bond Issue
Clayhole Lake	Provide boardwalk/overlook areas	\$650,000	Bond Issue
White Oak Park	Repair pickleball courts.	\$40,000	Bond Issue

ACTION PLAN: Annual / Biannual

PARK	ACTION	BUDGET	FUNDING
Bieker Woods Park	Remove invasive species and maintain as urban woodland	\$2,500	Volunteer Groups and Bond Issue
Heritage Park	Remove invasive species	\$2,500	Volunteer Groups and Bond Issue
System-wide	Continue to replenish the urban tree canopy by planting new trees within the existing parks and along trails.	-	Grants

ACTION PLAN: Dependent Upon Long-term Planning Decisions

PARK	ACTION	BUDGET	FUNDING
Briar Creek Park	Introduce skateboarding spot in replacement of basketball courts/game area.	\$125,000	Bond Issue
Centennial Park	Reimagine playground at north end into a multi-use flexible event space (or) upgrade/expand playground (see concept plan options).	\$1.5-2.0M	IDNR Land and Water Conservation Fund / Building Corp.
	Demolish the existing banquet hall and redevelop with a architecturally iconic indoor-outdoor pavilion with restrooms and a plaza space with gaming equipment.	Study Dependent	Operating Budget / Bond Issue
	Provide a service building to house utilities from banquet hall once demolished.	Varies	Bond Issue
Community Park	Explore opportunity to change softball and baseball fields to synthetic turf.	Varies	Bond Issue
System-wide	Consider the addition of 2-3 FTEs.	Varies	Operating Budget
	Explore opportunity areas for a multi-purpose synthetic turf football/lacrosse/soccer field.	Varies	Bond Issue
	Indoor Recreation Facility	Varies	Bond Issue / Building Corp.

ACTION PLAN: Trails

PARK	ACTION	BUDGET	FUNDING
Trails	Complete the bridges over Hart Ditch and Cady-Marsh Ditch to connect the pathway from Munster to Highland in the NIPSCO utility corridor. Include a segment running south to eventually connect to Bluebird Park.	Currently Underway	Operating Budget
	Ensure any missing segments of the Pennsy Greenway (American Discovery Trail) through the Town are completed as development or redevelopment occurs.	Trails Plan or Routing Study \$50,000	Bond Issue / Private Development / Grants
	Engage consultant to explore opportunities for a trail segment from the Pennsy Greenway going west through future development of the former Lansing Country Club property into Illinois.		
	Engage consultant to explore opportunities for a trail corridor paralleling the new commuter train line through Community Estates subdivision north to Superior Avenue.		
	Engage consultant to explore routing opportunities to connect the trail system south into Dyer.		
	Asphalt repairs along the Monon Trail.	Varies	Bond Issue
	Asphalt repairs along Fisher Street Bike Trail.	Varies	Bond Issue
	Add a 'welcome' entry sign or archway to the Pennsy Greenway at the south end of town near Main Street.	\$50,000	Bond Issue

REPAIR + REPLACEMENT TABLE: 2024

The following tables identify a schedule for repair and replacement of park amenities for 2024.

Repair & Replacement Schedule January 2024 Site / Item		Comments	Original Purchase Date	Life Expectancy	Est. Repl. Date	Est. Repl. Cost	Repl. Priority Rank 1-5 (1 soonest)
Beech Park							
	Playground		2015	12-14 years	2028	\$100,000	3
	Tennis Courts (2)	Re-Surfaced and painted, added pickleball lines in 2023	2015	10 years	2025	\$10,000	2
	Basketball Court	Rebuilt 2015	2015	10 years	2025	\$6,000	2
	Parking Lot	Sealcoated 2015	2015	4-5 years	TBD	TBD	3
	Walking Path	Added in 2018	2018	4-5 years	TBD	TBD	5
	Shelter		2004	40 years	2044	\$35,000	3
Bluebird Park							
	Big Playground (South)	Okay condition	2006	14-15 years	2025	\$75,000	3
	Tot Playground (North)	Replaced in 2017	2017	14-15 years	2031-2032	\$45,000	5
	Zip Line, Merry Go Round	Added in 2017	2017	14-15 years	2031-2032	\$30,000	5
	Tennis Courts (3)	Added flex tile, repair under surface every 5 years	2017	15-18 years	2032-2033	\$50,000	5
	Backstops	Replaced 2018	2018	15 years	2033	\$25,000	5
	Parking lot	Replaced in 2022	2022	20 years	2042	\$50,000	5
Briar Creek Park							
	Playground	Replace soon	2006	15	2024	\$100,000	2
	Swings	Good condition; not as old as playground	2016	15	2031	\$5,000	4
	Basketball Court/asphalt play area	Resurface every 10 years	2016	5	2026	\$4,500	3
	Walking path	only 4' wide, make 8' wide when repave			2025	\$60,000	3
	Shelter			40 years	TBD	\$35,000	4
Burlwood Park							
	Playground	Replaced 2018	2018	15-16 years	2034	\$100,000	5
	Walking Path	Repaired/sealcoated 2015	2016	7-8 years	2024	\$2,500	2
	Shelter			40 years	2043	\$25,000	4
Circle Park							
	Playground	Replaced in 2021	2021	15 years	2036	1000,00	5
	Basketball Court	Asphalt replaced Fall 2015; resurface every 10 years	2015	10 years	2025	\$6,000	4
	Walking Path	Asphalt replaced & path widened 2015	2015		TBD	TBD	4
Cobblestones Park							
	Playground	Signs of wear	2007	15 years	2024	\$100,000	3
	Drums and chimes		2019	15 years	2034	\$5,000	5
	Tennis Courts (2)	Need major repairs or change	2024		2024	\$70,000	2
	Walking Path	Sealcoated 2015	2015		TBD	TBD	4
	Parking Lot	Sealcoated and striped 2015	2015		TBD	TBD	3
	Basketball/volleyball area	needs repaving	2024			\$25,000	2
	Field	Lacrosse/Football use			2024	\$5,000	3
	Shelter	repaint/stain posts and fascia			TBD		4

Repair & Replacement Schedule January 2024 Site / Item	Comments	Original Purchase Date	Life Expectancy	Est. Repl. Date	Est. Repl. Cost	Repl. Priority Rank 1-5 (1 soonest)
Community Park						
Playground	Extremely high avg. usage	2012	15+ years	2028	\$185,000	2
Playground Rubberized Surface	starting to peel from edges	2012	8-10 years	2024	\$30,000	2
Skate Park	Ramps repaired in 2022, more Skatelite is on hand	2016	10 years	on-going	\$5,000	3
Skate Park Parking Lot	needs repaving	2017		2024	\$50,000	2
Storage Buildings	replacing 2023	2023	40 years	2043	\$50,000	5
Electronic Sign (Calumet Ave.)	Good condition	2017	8-10 years	2025-2027		4
Wayfinding Signage		2017	15 years	2032	\$25,000	5
Entrance sign from Calumet			TBD	TBD		3
Lions Shelter	Painted/stained	2017	15-20 Years	2032	\$15,000	5
Rotary Shelter	Needs stain/paint work/roof			2032	\$18,000	5
Parking Lots	Seal-coated/striped in 2018	2018		TBD		5
Pool parking lot and south Lions Dr	repave, add curb to Lions Club Dr. (Town share, hospital participates)			2024	\$520,000	2
Ballfields	Refurbish 1 set annually (softball, LL, Babe Ruth)				\$20,000	3
Ball field lights	Musco covers maint. for 25 years			TBD		5
Press boxes/washrooms/storage				TBD		4
Split rail fence along Schoon Ditch	repaired 2023			TBD		4
Maintenance Garages				TBD		5
Fiber Optics line	added to pool, social ctr, & triple play café	2023	25 yrs	2048	\$75,000	5
Batting Cage nets (12)	replace all 12 nets (ordered Jan. 2024)	2024	8 years	2032	\$25,000	5
Dugouts	repaint fascia on dugouts			TBD		2
Community Estates Park						
initial development	grading, playground, pathway connection, landscaping			2024	\$425,000	1
Evergreen Park	Open Space					
<i>no further development until Lansing</i>	<i>Country Club development is confirmed, Kiwanis Park is 500' away</i>					
Frank Hammond Park						
Park Playground	Fitness/obstacle area added in 2019	2019	15-16 years	2034-2035	\$70,000	5
School Playground (main structures)	New	2019	15 years	2034	\$80,000	5
Volleyball courts (2)	crack filled/recolored	2023		2028	\$10,000	4
Sidewalks (Fran-Lin side)	New 2018	2018	30 years	2048	\$60,000	5
Drainage	South & southeast corner of park; Partial fix 2018			2017-2018	\$30,000	1
Running Track	Sealed/Striped 2016, repave 2024-2025			2025	\$12,000	3
Tennis Courts (3)	Crack repaired/recolored, striped, added pickleball	2023		2028	\$20,000	5
Pickleball court (1)	crack fill/recolor	2023		2028	\$2,000	5
Tot swings (2)	Installed in 2023	2023	15-20 years	2043	\$5,000	5
Shelter				TBD		4
Eads School Playground	Replaced in 2019	2019	15 years	2034	\$100,000	5
Elliott School Playground	Replaced in 2019	2019	15 years	2034	\$100,000	5

Repair & Replacement Schedule January 2024 Site / Item		Comments	Original Purchase Date	Life Expectancy	Est. Repl. Date	Est. Repl. Cost	Repl. Priority Rank 1-5 (1 soonest)
Grove Park							
	Playground	Okay condition	2010	15 years	2025	\$100,000	4
	Tennis Courts (3)	Seal, color, striped in 2022, added pickleball lines 2023	2019	5 years	2027		5
	Basketball Hoop	Re-built in Fall 2015; resurface as needed	2015	12 years	2027	\$4,000	4
	Walking Path	seal-coated in 2019	2019		TBD	TBD	3
	Ball field backstop	Replaced in 2018	2018	15 years	2033	\$25,000	5
	Shelter				TBD		4
	Park sign replacement	wooden sign is rotting			2024	\$10,000	
Heritage Park							
	Kaske house exterior paint	Repainted 2015, front porch clear coat in 2024	2015	13 years	2030	\$18,000	5
	Kaske House Windows	Very Bad - 30+ years old				\$20,000	1
	Brick driveway and lighting	Repaired in 2018	2018	20 years	2038	\$80,000	5
	Gazebo	Replaced roof, repaired boards, painted 2017	2017	10 years	2027	\$15,000	5
	Wedding chairs (plastic)	Added fifty from Centennial in 2022	2022	5 years	2027	\$6,000	5
	Pathway from church parking	Recently Upgraded/add more mulch annually	annually			\$3,000	5
	Gazebo	stamped concrete patio in 2022, hand rails needs replacing	2022				5
	Storage shed	restained in 2023			2035		3
John Friend Park							
	Playground	Built 2017	2017	15-16	2032-2034	\$90,000	5
	Walking Path		2019		TBD	TBD	5
Kiwanis Park							
	Playground	good condition	2017	14-16 years	2031-2033	\$95,000	5
	Split rail fence, white, plastic	repaired in 2023			TBD		4
Manor Park		<i>open space</i>					
	<i>no development planned until South Shore train project is completed to see what land is available</i>						
Monon Trailhead							
	Repairs/Updating	<i>wait until South Shore train project is completed as it's so close to construction zone</i>			2025	\$100,000	2
		<i>fountain is leaking, paint pergola, replace rotting sign</i>					
Orchard Park							
	Playground	New in 2019	2019	15-17 yrs.	2034-2036	\$95,000	5
	Asphalt Entrance	New in 2019	2019	20 years	2039	\$20,000	5
River's Edge Disc Golf Park							
	Off Street Parking	Built Fall of 2015;	2015				5
	add more parking	Added extra parking in 2018					4
	Replace baskets		2030			\$15,000	4
Rotary Park							

Repair & Replacement Schedule January 2024 Site / Item		Comments	Original Purchase Date	Life Expectancy	Est. Repl. Date	Est. Repl. Cost	Repl. Priority Rank 1-5 (1 soonest)
	public art & sign maintenance				2030	TBD	5
	Stewart Park						
	Playground	Replaced in 2018	2018	15 years	2035	\$85,000	5
	Soccer Fields	Seed and aerate as needed			TBD	\$8,000	2
	Parking lot	repaved and added accessible path to shelter	2022	20 yrs.	2042	\$100,000	5
	Shelter				2033	\$40,000	4
	Sunnyside Park						
	Playground (5-12)	OK condition	2010	14-16 years	2031	\$60,000	3
	Walking path	Resealed in 2016	2016		TBD	TBD	3
	playground (2-5 yrs)			12-14 years	2026	\$35,000	5
	Chance's Kingdom	Added in 2019	2019	14-16 yrs.	2033-2035	\$70,000	5
	Shelter				2034	\$20,000	4
	Twin Creek Park						
	Playground	New playground 2018	2018	15 years	2033	\$130,000	5
	Ballfield Benches	New 2018	2018	14-15 years	2032-2033	\$8,000	5
	Backstop	New 2018	2018	15 years	2032	\$15,000	5
	Ballfield	Built 2018	2018		TBD	\$5,000	5
	Basketball and aphalt court play area	repave			2026	\$9,000	3
	Shelter	repaired concrete at shelter in 2023			2031	\$35,000	4
	West Lakes Park						
	Playground	Replaced in 2019	2019	14-15 years	2033-2034	\$110,000	5
	Soccer Fields	Aerate and seed	2019			\$8,000	3
	Bathrooms/Concessions	add if needed			TBD	\$140,000	5
	Parking lots		2008		TBD		3
	Shelter				2036	\$130,000	4
	Basketball/VB/Tennis courts	added pickleball striping on tennis cts in 2023	2019	8 years	2027	\$13,000	5
	Cricket Pitch	Added in 2022 (replace turf)	2022	12 Years	2034	\$40,000	5
	Wooden bridges				TBD		3
	Irrigation water well				TBD	TBD	5
	White Oak Park						
	Playground	Replaced 2016, good condition	2016	15 years	2031	\$150,000	4
	Parking Lot		2019			TBD	5
	Parking Lot	Need patching around catch basins, crumbling	2023			TBD	1
	Pickleball	Resurface	2016	8-10 yrs.	2024	\$15,000	2
	Shelter	New roof 2017/re-stain structure soon			2025	\$6,000	1
	Pathway	Repairs to be made 2023 after shoreline project by others	2023		2029	TBD	3
	Bridge to Twin Creek Park				TBD		

Repair & Replacement Schedule January 2024 Site / Item		Comments	Original Purchase Date	Life Expectancy	Est. Repl. Date	Est. Repl. Cost	Repl. Priority Rank 1-5 (1 soonest)
Parks - Miscellaneous							
	Wooden Picnic Tables	20 added in 2022, maintain inventory	2022	6 years	2028	\$4,500	5
	Technology improvements	on-going computers, fiber, etc.				TBD	3
	drinking fountains	on-going replacement \$3K each				\$15,000	3
Centennial Park							
	Granite Walkways	added material in 2023	2023		2028	\$20,000	5
	Drainage in the dog park	shot grades in 2023 with SEH			2024	\$20,000	2
	Parking lot repairs		2019		2025	\$25,000	3
	Park entrance sign		2018	20 years	2038	\$80,000	5
	Repaint/repair metal work		2016	10 years	2026	\$20,000	4
	Re-stain clubhouse siding	Completed 2017	2017		TBD		5
	Shelters	Repairs	2017	7 years	2025	\$16,000	4
	Playground	Equipment past life expectancy, add rubber surfacing	2002	11-13 years	2023	\$500,000	1
	Stage area retaining walls	Rebuild in grass, repair around stage	2007		2025	\$200,000	2
	Entertainment Stage	concrete repairs needed	2016		2024	\$100,000	3
	Stage speakers/Sound system	replaced speakers and sound system	2023		2031	\$25,000	5
	Dog park shade structure		2019	10-12 yrs.	2031	\$25,000	5
	Pathway replacement	annual pathway replacement improvements	ongoing			\$20,000	2
	Shade umbrellas (patio)	added 2016	2016	9-10 years	TBD	\$18,000	5
	Walking paths	maintenance			2023	\$25,000	3
	Art repairs/painting	as needed			2027	\$20,000	3
	Map kiosk area along Pennsy	added in 2023	2023	12 yrs.	2035	\$25,000	5
	Railroad historical marker	along Pennsy, added in 2023, sign to be added in 2024	2023	12 yrs.	2035	\$25,000	5
	Wooden bridge	need to replace bridge deck and railings			2025	\$75,000	2
	Steel bridge	repainted 2017			TBD		4
	Site lighting/amenities				2029	TBD	3
	people traffic counters along Pennsy	added in 2023, grant from NIRPC (also one near State Line)	2023		2033	TBD	5
Community Pool							
	Rope	Replaced 2015	2001	TBD	2025	\$5,000	4
	Child slide and water feature	Slide gel-coated, other zero depth features re-painted	2021	8 years	2029	\$10,000	5
	Perimeter fencing	Repairs/bump-outs removed 2023	2001	40	2041	\$35,000	3
	Lockers	Replaced 2018	2018	15 years	2033	\$6,000	4
	20' Umbrellas (5)	All five replaced in 2022	2022	7-10 years	2031	\$20,000	5
	Slide Painting	Painted blue slide 2017, gel coated both 2023	2023	5 years	2028	\$12,000	5
	Low temp/sump pump alarms	new in 2019	2019	5 years	2024	\$1,500	5
	Chairs/Loungers	replaced in 2019	2019	6-8 years	2026	\$20,000	5
	Vacuum Cleaner (1)	replacing in 2024	2023	5 years	2028	\$6,000	1
	Vacuum Cleaner (2)	replaced in 2019	2021	5 years	2026	\$7,000	4
	Lifeguard Chairs/Stands (5)	on-going, one expected in 2024	2019	12 yrs.	2031	\$9,000	5
	Concession stand patio furniture	older tables soon	2008	16-18 yrs.	2026	\$25,000	2
	Expand concession patio	new in 2023 (tables 20 years)	2023	20	2043	\$25,000	5

Repair & Replacement Schedule January 2024 Site / Item		Comments	Original Purchase Date	Life Expectancy	Est. Repl. Date	Est. Repl. Cost	Repl. Priority Rank 1-5 (1 soonest)
	Sound/PA system	Speakers and sound system replaced 2023	2023	7 years	2030	\$25,000	5
	Security Cameras	added in 2022	2022				5
	Sand Filter	New sand in 2020	2020	17 years			5
	Diving Board	Board replaced in 2020, stand replaced in 2021	2020	10 years		\$6,500	5
	Acid delivery system	New in 2023	2023	20 years			5
	Admissions ac/heat	New mini-split system in 2022 to admissions booth	2022	15 years	2037	\$10,000	5
	Building HVAC unit	replaced 2023 (manager ofc, guard room, concessions)	2023	15 years	2038	\$6,000	5
	Park/Pool Concessions	<i>(includes Triple Play Café)</i>					
	Concession/Admissions Windows	replaced in 2022		20 yrs.	2042	\$20,000	5
	2 door Reach-in fridge (5)	Okay condition		10-12 years	2026	\$17,500	4
	2 door reach in freezer (2)	Okay condition		10-12 years	2027	\$4,500	4
	3 door reach in freezer (3)	Okay condition	2013	8-10 years	2028	\$12,000	4
	Undercounter fridge (6)	Okay condition	2012	8-10 years	2028	\$6,000	4
	Ice machines (2)		2002/2006	10-12 years	2033	\$8,000	5
	Shaved Ice machine (2)	Okay condition	2006/2012		2028	\$1,200	3
	Expand security camera system	New	new	15	New	\$10,000	3
	AC for pool concessions	New mini-split system in 2019-A/C only, no heat	2019	15 years	2035	\$7,000	5
	Industrial microwaves (2)	Replaced in 2018	2018	3	2027	\$2,000	4
	Food Cooker/Warmer (2)		2018	3	2028	\$1,000	4
	Social Center						
	Chairs (125)	Replaced 2021 (order racks next time too)	2021	5 years	2026	\$10,000	5
	Card Tables (20)	Replaced 2017	2007	8 years	2025	\$6,000	5
	Paint & updates	Done annually			TBD		5
	Banquet Tables (12)	4 new in 2023	2023	6 years	2029	\$4,500	5
	Flooring	Replaced in 2017 with laminate	2017			\$10,000	5
	Bathrooms	Painted, new floors & fixtures 2017	2017			\$25,000	5
	Kitchen	new cabinets & flooring 2017, new lights 2023	2017		2027	\$12,000	5
	AC (2 units)/Furnace	Replaced in 2019	2019	10-20 yrs.	2029-2039	\$15,000	5
	Additional Fan	30" wall fan added to large room in 2020	2020	10 years	2030	\$1,500	5
	Windows and remaining exterior doors	Wood is rotting, will be replaced in 2024			2024	\$25,000	1
	main entry doors east and west sides	installed in 2023	2023		2043	\$30,000	5
	Electrical Update	installed in 2023	2023	40 years	2063	\$43,000	5
	Backup generator	installed in 2023	2023	40 years	2063	\$20,000	5
	gas lines to kitchen for equipment	to be able to move oven/warmer from Centennial			2024	\$10,000	3
	Youth Sports						
	4-5 Yr. old Soccer Goals	new nets in 2024		10-15 yrs.	2027		5
	6-7 Yr. old Soccer Goals	New in 2022		10-15 yrs.	2032		5
	8-9 Yr. old Soccer Goals	New in 2022		10-15 yrs.	2032		5
	10-13 Yr. old Soccer Goals	New in 2022		10-15 yrs.	2032		5

Repair & Replacement Schedule January 2024 Site / Item	Comments	Original Purchase Date	Life Expectancy	Est. Repl. Date	Est. Repl. Cost	Repl. Priority Rank 1-5 (1 soonest)
Parks & Recreation Office						
Chairs: Desk (6)	Replaced 2017	2017	10 yrs.	2027	\$2,500	5
Reception Chairs (6)	Replaced 2017	2017	10-15 yrs.	2032	\$5,000	5
Carpet	worn and stained (replace when T.H. is remodeled)	2000	8-10 yrs.	2015	\$20,000	3
Desks/hutches Rec. Sups.(2)	Replaced 2019	2019	20 yrs.	2039	\$2,600	5
Display Racks/Case	replace when Town Hall is remodeled	Unknown			\$4,000	3
Centennial Maintenance Office						
Desk/cabinet/storage (2)	Maintenance office; from landfill office			2015-2018	\$2,000	4
Chairs (2)					\$500	2
Park Maintenance Building	<i>(at public works)</i>					
office & break room floors & paint	Office floor replaced, painted office/breakroom 2023	2023	10-15 yrs.	2036	\$10,000	5
Washrooms	flooring, paint, partitions, etc.			2024	\$20,000	2
Centennial Park Clubhouse	strikethrough all on hold due to facility closure, not updated					
Banquets	Portable keg system	2017			\$3,000	
Carpet for Banquet facility	Replaced with Luxury Vinyl Tile	2016	7-9 years	2024	\$50,000	4
Partition Walls	Replaced 2017	2017			\$35,000	4
Front storefront entrance	Twisted, bent due to shifting*	2006		2016		
All interior doors	adjusted/alterd many times, can no longer adjust*	2006		2016	25,000-50,000	4
Restaurant tables & chairs	Replaced in 2016	2016	8-10 years	2024-2026	\$13,000	5
All hallway furniture	Fabric splitting; tables damaged; Replace	2006		2016	\$40,000	2
Outdoor patio furniture	Signs of wear, will exceed lifespan soon	2007	10 years	2018-2020	\$30,000	2
Banquet chairs	Paint is chipping; fabric is stained and worn	2007		2017-2018	\$22,000	2
Outdoor wedding chairs	original to building - several in need of replacement	2006		2020-2022	\$10,000	5
Banquet tables	Chipped and damaged; replace some every year	2007	8 years	2016	\$2,500	2
China/silverware	Replaced 2018	2008	ongoing	yearly	\$3,000	
Table Skirting	Replaced 2018	2007	5 years	yearly	\$3000 a year	
Building alarm system	In need of overhaul; doors do not line up	2007		2016	\$5,500	2
Update HVAC computer and controls		2020			\$25,000	5
Portable bar	Replaced 2018	2018	5	2023	\$5,500	2
Backflow preventer	Failed inspection - Replacement is required		15	2020	\$9,000	2
NEW						
Pro Shop/cart storage/shelter	new facilities for golf course	2024	50	2074	\$4,250,000	1
Golf Course/Maintenance						
Driving range mats (25)	ok condition	2016	6-8 years	2024-2025	\$7,500	5
Irrigation Boxes	All replaced 2020-2022	2022	15 years	2037	\$63,000	5
5 Gang Range Rover picker		2020		2027	\$7,000	5
Superwash ball washer		2019	5 years	2024	\$12,500	5
10 K Ball machine	replaced in 2023	2023		2031	\$8,800	5

Repair & Replacement Schedule January 2024 Site / Item		Comments	Original Purchase Date	Life Expectancy	Est. Repl. Date	Est. Repl. Cost	Repl. Priority Rank 1-5 (1 soonest)
	Practice Bunker/Chipping green	find space	new		2025	\$30,000	5
	35 Golf Carts	purchased electric in 2020	2020	5-6 years	2026	\$300,000	5
	Bunkers	good condition		15 years	2033		5
	Cart Path Repairs	budget annually			annually	\$15,000	3
	Drainage	Repair and add new			2024	\$20,000	2
	Pump station fencing	Good condition	2016	15 years	2031	\$20,000	5
	Equipment Lift	Good condition	2017	15 years	2032	\$25,000	5
	exterior display case/bulletin board	pro shop New in 2021	2021	10 years	2031	\$2,000	5
	maintenance yard auto gate closer	New in 2022	2022	12-15 years	2034	\$10,000	5
	Golf Shanty building	replace broken heater		10-14 years	2024	\$10,000	1
	New golf shelter picnic tables			15 years	2024	\$20,000	1
	Vehicles						
	There is a separate Vehicle and Equipment Schedule for entire department.						
	Funding needs by year not including vehicles:						
	2024	2025		2026			
	\$1,466,500	\$1,318,000		\$2,134,500			
	not including new Pro Shop project	\$668,000 (items added from above)		\$734,500	items from above		
		\$500,000 (clubhouse demo?)		\$1,000,000	pave Cent. parking and paths		
		\$150,000 (stage structural/concrete repairs)		\$400,000	erosion control SW hill		

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