

# Chapter 11

# Inventory & Assessments







# Park Inventory and Assessments Natural Landscape Features

#### Ridge Road

Ridge Road is the most iconic corridor in Munster, Indiana. This is not just because of its historical setting during settlers' era, but it also was an ancient shoreline of Lake Michigan long before settlers arrived and the water receded to its presentday shoreline. From the north of Ridge road, the elevation descends significantly, until it reaches the Little Caulmet River.

#### Little Calumet River

The Little Calumet River establishes the most northern edge of Munster, Indiana. It runs west from the Hart Ditch, a light stream bordering much of Munster's eastern edge. This river has experienced disturbances that affect both the nearby social and ecological systems. It floods regularly, with one particular flood in 2008 after consequential rain from Hurricane Ike. The floods resulted in major damage. It has also seen significant pollution due to industrial activity throughout the past century. Clean up initiatives are in process, but the River still needs time to recover.

#### **Bieker Woods**

This is the most preserved and protected natural feature in Munster. It is originally a lakeshore native oak savanna/woodland, given its proximity to Ridge Road. It also used to be a wooded area spaning hundreds of acres, but was reduced in size during the expansion of the Town. The species primarily situated here are oak trees, witch hazel, serviceberries, and redbuds.

In 2006, the Woodland Restoration Project commenced as part of a Lake Michigan Coastal Zone grant. The project set out to clear Bieker Woods of invasive, non-native, and agressive vegetation such as mulberry, buckthorn, honeysuckle, and box elder. Because maples crowded out the oaks for so long, after this project, the results were many younger oaks growing alongside more mature maples.







#### Natural Landscape Features, cont.

#### Schoon Ditch

Running east-west, this small creek travels alongisde the NIPSCO trail. It is named after the Schoons, a Dutch farming family that established themselves in Munster during the later part of the 19th century. They owned a great deal of land between Ridge Road and the ditch to the south, and farmed various crops such as onions, cabbage, potatoes, and cucumbers.

The western origin of the Schoon Ditch is underground in drainage pipes and culverts, but when it reaches Calumet Ave, it then opens up into a narrow creek with rip-rap along the basin. As it makes its way east, it intersects with the Hart Ditch, then feeding into the Little Calumet River.

#### Hart Ditch

Running north-south, this slightly larger creek passes through residents' backyards and offers natural space, such as Lawler Park Greenspace, alongside other portions of its shoreline. Not only does Schoon Ditch feed into Hart Ditch, but so does Dyer Ditch, Schererville Ditch, Cady Marsh Ditch, and Plum Creek. These creeks drain a 90-square-mile area into the Little Calumet River.

Earlier this century, there were complaints about erosion of the Hart Ditch and the loss of property for the residents whose backyards were adjacent to the ditch. Structural damage was a concern for both sides of the ditch near Circle Park. Renovations along the creek's edge were constructed in the early 2000's as a way to prevent this from continuing.

As it approaches the river, flooding remains a general concern for the Hart Ditch, even with the construction of the flood levees. At the same time, there is a greater distance between homes and the Hart Ditch once it gets closer to the Little Calumet, slightly reducing risk of property damages. The open space, protected by high berms, eventually replaces the flood levee, providing potential for flood prevention by utilizing rain gardens and level spreaders.







#### Man-Made Landscape Features

#### **Clayhole Lake**

Clayhole Lake used to be a clay pit for National Brick, a former company in the Town of Munster. When the brick operation ceased, the pit transitioned to a series of lakes and ponds. It is located south of 45th Street, northeast of Centennial Park, and west of the Twin Creeks neighborhood. Much discussion has surrounded the use of the lake for recreation; currently, fishing is not allowed in the lake and access to the body of water itself is a challenge because no paths are established there. Boating is possible in Clayhole Lake, but the multiple strips of land that break through the water will make it more challenging. There's a plan, from JF New & Associates, to integrate walking paths throughout these strips of land.

(see right for images of National Brick and lake plan)

#### Maynard Lake

A component of Centennial Park, Munster's flagship park, Maynard Lake is man-made and stocked for public fishing. It serves as a focal backdrop for various destinations, including "The View" dining at the Centennial Park Clubhouse, the entertainment stage, with a row of trees to the east and sulpture art to the west.







# Man-Made Historical and Cultural Features

#### Edward P. Robinson Community Veterans Memorial

This open green space is located on the west side of Calumet Ave., across the street from Centennial Park. Although it serves (in part) as a park, this destination is not a part of the Munster Parks and Recreation Department. In fact, it is a part of the Community Foundation of Northwest Indiana, a notfor-profit that "provides leadership and resources for the enhancement of health and the quality of life in Northwest Indiana".

The 6.5 acre memorial features bronze and granite sculptures, life-size military equipment, and flags from all branches of the military. It has a pond, a walking path, restrooms, and ornamental landscaping, as well. The effort put into this site is apparent in all the details of this memorial, and the attraction manifests in the 90+ reviews on Trip Advisor's website.

The imagery of the Community Veterans Memorial hardly holds back from the reality of armed conflict and perpetual warfare, as those combatants experienced it. The resulting discomfort, rather than glorification, of war up-close is intended by the committee. Not only is it a graphic history lesson, but it also is a "challenge... to break the repetition of violence... to imagine and hope for peace".













#### Stallhbohm Barn - Kaske House

A house listed in the National Register of Historic Places since 1998, the Stallbohm Barn-Kaske House is located in Heritage Park. It was built around 1890 and has been preserved, in part, by the Munster Historical Society since 1988.

There is a bronze plaque that commemorates the "Brass Tavern", Munster's first active building on Ridge Road, placed at the home's front entrance. Today, the House serves as the location for Munster's History Museum. It is a unique feature in the town.





## Munster, Indiana

Figure 37: Community Parks and Service Area





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#### Munster, Indiana

1 mile

1/2

1/4

0



76 Mini Parks



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Green Spaces, Mini, & Neighborhood Parks 🏠 🛀

77

# Munster, Indiana



 $_{\rm 78}$ Playgrounds



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**N** 0

1/4

1/2

1 mile

79

Shelters, Rental

#### Munster, Indiana



80 Drinking Fountains



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81



**Tennis Courts** 

## Munster, Indiana



82 Basketball Courts



Schools and Facilities <sup>0</sup>

## Chapter 11: Park Inventory and Assessments

5

1/4

1/2

1 mile



Figure 46: Schools and Facilities

Many schools in Munster are, for the most part, concentrated in the northern half of the town. However, much of the schools and facilities are centrally located, likely planned in such a way to serve as geographically feasible for all resident.

If there is a population increase within Munster and any additional schools are needed, it's worth noting that currently there are no schools within the southeast region of the town.

# <u>Legend</u>

(1) Eads Elementary School
(2) Salvation Army
(3) Munster Town Hall
(4) St. Paul's Lutheran School
(5) St. Thomas More School
(5) Wilbur Wright Middle School
(6) Wilbur Wright Middle School
(7) Munster High School
(8) Community Park Social Center
(9) Elliot Elementary School
(10) Munster Community Pool
(11) Community Hospital
(12) F.H. Hammond Elementary School
(13) Fitness Pointe

84

## Munster, Indiana



Although Munster does not (1)border Lake Michigan, there are a number of water bodies worth noting. Some of them are owned by other entities, shared, or owned entirely by Munster. This inventory, in part, shaped the upcoming recommendations for water-based activities. Legend 1 Little Calumet River Potentially accessible (2)(4)(4)(2) Lansing Country Club 6 Inaccessible to public ③ Industrial Swamp/Marsh Inaccessible (4) Schoon Ditch Inaccessible (6)(5) Clayhole Lake Potentially accessible 6 Hart Ditch Inaccessible ⑦ Maynard Lake Accessible (8) Centennial Park Golf (6)(6)Course Ponds 1/21 mile 1/4 Accessible 0 **Bodies of Water** 



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Figure 48: Soils of Munster



This data, from the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the USDA and overlayed onto GIS software, indicates the location of various soil types throughout the town of Munster.

It serves as a reference for Munster's existing conditions and recognize the possibilities for future developments, although site-specific soil surveys are still necessary whenever new projects commence.

# Legend

Bono silty clay
Clay pits
Gilford fine sandy loam, 0-1%
Maumee loam fine loam, 0-1%
Maumee silt loam
Milford silt loam, overwash
Pewamo silty clay loam, calcareous variant
Plainfield fine sand, 0-6% slopes
Rensselaer loam, calcareous subsoil variant
Sparta fine sand, 0-4%
Sparta fine sand, silty clay loam substratum, 0-4%
Urban land
Water
Watseka loamy fine sand
Wauseon fine sandy loam

#### 45th Ave. Greenspace

Address: 1500 45th Street Classification: Other (Open Green Space) Status: Owned

45th Avenue Greenspace is a 1 acre open green space located just south of 45th Street, just north of the Canadian National (Grand Trunk Western) railroad, and adjacent to the west side of the Hart Ditch.

There are utility poles running along the edge of the north side and dense vegetation running along the edge of the south side. There is a large flag pole that is situated on the southeast corner of the greenspace, giving this space the informal name of "flag pole park".

There is currently no pedestrian access to the space, and only a single lane vehicular drive leading to a utility box next to the flag pole. It is concealed, in part, by upright arborvitae bushes.

Because this is a narrow property alongside a heavy traffic corridor, it has limited potential.











Figure 49: 45th Avenue Greenspace

Conditions Assessment		
Curb Appeal	Fair	
Pedestrian Access	Poor	
Internal Access	N/A	
Playground	N/A	
Sand Play	N/A	
Shelter	N/A	
Toilets	N/A	
Basketball Courts	N/A	
Sitting Area	N/A	
Ball Field	N/A	
Soccer Field	N/A	
Athletic Turf	N/A	
Lawns	Good	
Landscaping	Fair	
Paths/Trails	N/A	
Parking	N/A	
Park Sign	N/A	
Site Furnishings	N/A	
Maintenance	Fair	





## **Beech Park**

Address: 8101 Beech Ave Classification: Neighborhood Status: Owned

Beech Park is an approximately 11-acre neighborhood park located at 8101 Beech Avenue. The park site is located at the north end of Town between Beech Avenue and Kraay Avenue north of Fairway Avenue.

The park's sign is located along Beech Avenue near the southwest corner of the site. The sign appears to be relatively new and is in fair to good condition.

The park features several active play areas including tennis courts, a soccer field, basketball court (full court) and two ballfields. There are two off-street parking areas which appear to service the ballfields. The south parking area has access to Fairway Avenue. The drive to Fairway Avenue has multiple traffic calming strips to slow traffic. The connection creates a potential "cut-thru" from Fairway to Beech Avenue, however there doesn't appear to be much advantage gained by using this route as a shortcut. It does improve traffic exiting following games at the south ballfield.

There is no identifying signage at the exit/entrance along Fairview Avenue. There is a stop sign at the exit point but no stop bar on the pavement. The access road is narrow and would be conducive to one way traffic outbound. Parking spaces are defined by pavement



striping and curb stops. Curb stops make it difficult for snow removal during winter months and can be relatively easily dislodged during plowing operations.

Additionally, a creative play area and an open-air shelter is located on the south end of the park. The shelter includes 6-8 picnic tables and is in fair to good condition. There is a lightning monitoring system on the shelter to provide weather warnings for the park activities.

The surface containment around the play area is a raised plastic curb system that is in poor to fair condition. The raised curb limits or prevents accessible entrance points to the play apparatus. The play equipment is in average to above average condition.









Figure 50: Beech Park

The woodchip surface needs replenishment or replacement as there are several areas showing exposed roots from adjacent trees.

The ballfields are limestone screenings infields which are relatively easy to manage and care for during the baseball/softball season. The backstops are limited to behind home plate with no foul line fencing down either foul line. Seasonal equipment storage boxes are located behind backstops.

The outfields of the ballfields provide area for soccer overlays and the multipurpose use of the park open space.

Spectator seating for both ball fields are near the play areas and are not accessible from the public areas.

Many trees have been damaged by string trimmers.

Tennis courts at north end of park were resurfaced and color-coated in 2015. The net posts are showing signs of base failure which could be from base failure or excessive subsurface moisture. The basketball courts were rebuilt in 2015 and color coated.

There is an expanse of under utilized asphalt pavement adjacent to the basketball court.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Fair
Pedestrian Access	Fair
Internal Access	Poor
Playground	Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	Good
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	Fair
Sitting Area	Fair
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	Fair
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Good
Landscaping	Good
Paths/Trails	Fair
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Good
Site Furnishings	Fair
Maintenance	Good





#### **Bieker Woods**

Address: 1050 Ridge Road Classification: Other (Wooded Park) Status: Owned

Bieker Woods is a 7.0 acre wooded park located at 1050 Ridge Road on the southwest corner of Columbia Avenue and Ridge Road. It is located just east of the Center for Visual and Performing Arts, north of the Wilbur Wright Middle School and west (across Columbia Avenue) from Heritage Park. The park features only passive activity.

The park's sign is located on the corner of Columbia Avenue and Ridge Road. It appears relatively new and is in very good condition. It is directly across Columbia Avenue from Heritage Park's sign and across Ridge Road from Rotary Park and its sign. The Bieker Woods sign is elevated behind a segmented retaining wall (approx. 3' tall in front of sign with varying heights) that continues along the woods' edge south along Columbia Avenue separating the woods and the sidewalk. (This same segmented retaining wall also lines Heritage Park's signage paver plaza continuing south along Columbia Avenue and defines Heritage Park's western edge along the sidewalk.) There is a paver plaza in front of the Bieker Woods sign (approx. 430 sq. ft.) on the entire corner where the 2 sidewalks along Ridge and Columbia meet. There is a crosswalk signal there and the curbs are accessible. Other signage is placed adjacent to the Bieker



Woods sign at different times of the year (i.e. Munster Farmer's Market, Munster High School's Arts & Crafts Fair, etc.) since there is high visibility from the busy signalized intersection.

The trailhead is located on the east side of Bieker Woods about halfway down between Ridge Road and the Munster School District building. The wooden kiosk and signage are in fair condition. There are a handful of wooden benches with memorial plaques attached that are in fair condition but do allow for ample seating. The trail itself is not well defined through the woods and leads westward toward the rest of the woods between Community Park, the Center for Visual and Performing Arts and the Wilbur Wright Middle School.







Conditions Assessment		
Curb Appeal	Excellent	
Pedestrian Access	Excellent	
Internal Access	Very Good	
Playground	N/A	
Sand Play	N/A	
Shelter	N/A	
Toilets	N/A	
Basketball Courts	N/A	
Sitting Area	Very Good	
Ball Field	N/A	
Soccer Field	N/A	
Athletic Turf	N/A	
Lawns	N/A	
Landscaping	N/A	
Paths/Trails	Fair	
Parking	N/A	
Park Sign	Good	
Site Furnishings	Fair	
Maintenance	Very Good	





#### **Bluebird Park**

Address: 1900 Holly Lane Classification: Community Status: Owned

Bluebird Park is an approximately 6 acre community park located at Holly Lane and Crestwood Avenue in the east-central portion of the Town. The eastern boundary of the park is a utility right of way and immediately east of the right of way is Highland, IN. The park is surrounded on the north, west and south by single family residences in Munster, on the east by single family residences in Highland.

The park sign is located at the northwest corner of the park and appears to be relatively new and is in fair to good condition.

The park features several active play areas including tennis courts, ball fields, a recently renovated (spring 2017) active play area for tots and pre-teens. The play apparatus was replaced generally within the same footprint as the original equipment. The play area includes a new zip line. The park includes an open air shelter with a solar powered severe weather warning device, a perimeter path and perpendicular off street parking along Crestwood. The parking stalls are delineated by pavement striping and wheel stops. There is no accessible route along the parking lot and no accessible connection from the parking lot to the perimeter path system. The mountable curb



between street and off-street parking is deteriorating. It appears the parking is not convenient for park users, onstreet parking along Holly Lane during ballfield use is common.

The tennis courts were recently resurfaced using a PVC court surface material to provide a renewed playing surface. This material and surface appears to be working well, we do not have any feedback on the playability of the surface from users.

Many trees have been damaged by string trimmers.

The ballfields are limestone screenings infields which are relatively easy to manage and care for during the









Figure 52: Bluebird Park

baseball/softball season. The backstops are limited to behind home plate with no foul line fencing down either foul line. Seasonal equipment storage boxes are located behind backstops. The northwest field has spectator seating, the southeast field does not.

Tennis court fencing is in fair to good condition. Some tennis court fence post footings are heaving, possibly due to frost or excessive soil moisture. There is an additional 4-ft fence between tennis courts and Holly Lane, with an undetermined purpose.

Conditions Assessment		
Curb Appeal	Very Good	
Pedestrian Access	Good	
Internal Access	Very Good	
Playground	Very Good	
Sand Play	N/A	
Shelter	Good	
Toilets	N/A	
Basketball Courts	N/A	
Sitting Area	Fair	
Ball Field	Good	
Soccer Field	N/A	
Athletic Turf	N/A	
Lawns	Very Good	
Landscaping	Good	
Paths/Trails	Very Good	
Parking	N/A	
Park Sign	Good	
Site Furnishings	Fair	
Maintenance	Very Good	



#### Briar Creek Park

Address: 10299 Fox Run Classification: Neighborhood Status: Owned

Briar Creek Park is a 7.9 acre neighborhood park situated adjacent to a low-traffic residential bend on the south (Marlou Dr and Fox Run) and cornered on the northwest and northeast ends by narrow creeks. Access into this discretely located park comes from 3 different places: the path from the residential sidewalk on the south end, the bridge from Boxwood Drive on the west end, and the east corner to the Pennsylvania greenway.

The hard surfacing within the park is sinking and now presenting hazards with potential tripping and pooling of water in unsuitable spots, both on hardscape and turf. The basketball court and hopscotch/4-square surfacing is also notably cracked, as well. There is an existing shelter at the center of the park, with posts that are in need of repainting. The amount of wood fiber surfacing is currently insufficient, as it doesn't meet an appropriate level to cover all footings (such as the toddler spring riders), leaving many pieces of play equipment exposed (such as the rock climber).

Overall, the playground equipment is in good condition. It is a combined 2-12 apparatus, and the swings are both belt and bucket (one of the buckets is designed as a special model to accompany the child's parent/guardian).



There is a standalone backstop on the open turf space that allows for a pickup game, indistinguishable from a softball or baseball field. There is no spectator seating at this field.

Overall landscaping is minimal, but the new trees are of diverse selection and the park's perimeter is graced with mature trees that align the creeks to the northwest and northeast.

Many existing trees were lost to the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). A significant reforestation plan is in progress with 50% of the plan complete and the remainder scheduled in the fall of 2018.









Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Very Good
Pedestrian Access	Very Good
Internal Access	Good
Playground	Very Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	Fair
Sitting Area	Good
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Excellent
Landscaping	Very Good
Paths/Trails	Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Excellent
Site Furnishings	Good
Maintenance	Excellent





#### **Burlwood Park**

Address: 10139 Burlwood Drive Classification: Neighborhood Status: Owned

Burlwood Park is a 2.9 acre neighborhood park site located in the White Oak Estates subdivision just north of Somerset Drive. The park includes playground equipment, open play/turf area, walking path, drinking fountain, shelter/gazebo, and landscaping.

The play area consists of two composite play structures manufactured by Landscape Structures for ages 2-5 and 5-12, a stand-alone hammock-like structure, and two independent swing structures (one swing structure with 2 belts swings, and the other swing structure with 2 tot bucket seats). Age-appropriate signage was evident at the park. The play area was updated within the past 6 months.

The woodchips of the playground are contained by wood timbers. The surface elevation throughout the play area appears to be well below the recommended surface elevation where slide exit chutes and steps/ transfer modules meet the surface. These wood timbers have also begun to age and weather. Seating opportunities for care givers and parents to watch and supervise their children were limited to a picnic table located beneath the existing gazebo/shelter. Since the initial inventory, additional benches have been installed at the park.





The gazebo/shelter is a small prefabricated structure with cedar shingles that can only accommodate one picnic table. The structure is centrally located within the park on a concrete pad which appears to be in good condition. However, the asphalt path leading to it does not meet the top of the concrete pavement flush, creating a trip hazard for park patrons. The shelter structure has begun to age, weather, and deteriorate from 19 years of exposure to the exterior elements. The drinking fountain is an older version of Murdock Fountains. While still operable, the drinking fountain is not ADA accessible and the color of the fountain's exterior steel frame has faded lacking curb appeal.



Entrance into the park is flanked by a blue 30 gallon drum used as a refuse container and a 4x4 wood post





Figure 54: Burlwood Park

with signage identifying park information and rules. Although serving a vital role to park patrons, the sign and litter are both unattractive and non-welcoming.

The asphalt path loops the entire park connecting to the existing concrete walk within the parkway. The asphalt surface appears to be level and free of major cracking, however, the surface needs seal coating to provide a fresh look to the park. Along the path leading to the gazebo/shelter are two independent bike racks surface mounted on a concrete pad. The bike racks appear to be in good condition.

The park site consists of minimal landscaping. The site appears to be very open and void of many shade opportunities. The few trees which are located within the park overall are in good to fair condition. Overall maintenance is very good. The turf is in fair condition.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Good
Pedestrian Access	Good
Internal Access	Good
Playground	Very Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	Good
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Fair
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Fair
Landscaping	Fair
Paths/Trails	Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Good
Site Furnishings	Fair
Maintenance	Fair



## **Centennial Park**

Address: 1005 South Centennial Drive Classification: Community Status: Owned

Centennial Park is a located near the intersection of S. Centennial Dr. and Calumet Ave/Columbia Ave. on Calumet Avenue, just south of 45th Street. Centennial Park serves as Munster's "Flagship" park. It is not only one of the newest parks, but is also the largest piece of real estate the Town has dedicated solely to recreational use for family oriented enjoyment.

The site consists of a large playground area, outdoor shelter/pavilions, entertainment stage, formal garden area, sculpture art garden area, 3-acre Dog Park, walking paths, a 9-hole, par 36 executive golf course and practice facility designed by Tim Nugent, a clubhouse with banquet facilities, and restaurant with outdoor seating, catch and release fishing, and expanses of natural area open space. Summer concerts are also held at the entertainment stage.

The golf course and driving range account for roughly 95 of the total 150 acreage of the park. For the purposes of this assessment, we will limit our assessment to the active and passive recreational activity areas only and not the golf course facility at this time.

Centennial Park has great curb appeal. The park





frontage is landscaped with varied topography, well maintained turf grass, and mature vegetation which serve as a natural screen to the adjacent golf course, driving range and parking lot located at the entry. There is no park sign at the parking lot entrance from Calumet Ave.

The site consists of two large expansive parking lots located on the north and south ends of the park facility. Both parking lots are constructed in a sweeping arc fashion for aesthetic and visual interest. The parking lot surfaces appear to be in good condition with clear and noticeable striping.

Centennial Park features a variety of active recreation activities. The detailed descriptions of these site elements are as follows:







The entertainment stage serves as an iconic backdrop to Maynard Lake and provides a concert in the park series annually. The entertainment stage area consists of terraced lawn seating and decomposed granite seating areas to accommodate those with disabilities. The decomposed granite area appears to have remained at the installed elevation, little to no settling was apparent. The retaining walls in the terraced lawn seating area appear to have remained sturdy, and do not show signs of differential settling. The alignment has remained true so there is no undulation within the courses. The stage is accessed by concrete surfacing and concrete steps (front and rear). Settlement of the concrete surface is apparent in several areas surrounding the entertainment stage. Stone walls flank both sides of the entertainment stage. The stone walls have missing caps in some places. The stone walls and both sets of concrete steps appear to have shifted and settled over time and further study of how to address the deterioration of these features should be considered.

The catch-and-release fishing area consists of pressure-treated timber boardwalk constructed in an oval fashion bordered by a precast limestone seat wall. The timber decking appears to be in good condition. The seat wall also functions as a retaining wall to a sloped native conservation planting area which surrounds the boardwalk. The natural conservation area appears to consist of hearty natives and other vegetation indigenous to the area. This native planting area appears to be overgrown and in need of management for aesthetic reasons. Attention to this native area is also recommended to promote undergrowth and maintain diversity of plant species and structure.

The creative play area is in fair to good condition but nearing the end of its useful life expectancy. There are two composite apparatus structures with multi-level decks; one for primary age users 2-5 and another for schoolage users 5-12. The area also consists of a pyramid net climber with rock climbing wall and a three-bay swing set. The independent swing set includes 4 belts and 1 bucket seat – at the time of the site tour, one bucket seat was missing. Both of the composite apparatus structures, the pyramid net climber and the independent swingset is in good condition. There is some fading of play panels and slides, but no peeling of the finishes was apparent. The playground's accessible surface material is wood fiber mulch (woodchips). The wood chips are at an appropriate level and free of weeds. The play area is bordered by concrete containment curb/walk. The concrete around the play area is in good condition. There were minimal seating and shade opportunities surrounding the creative play area.

The reservable shelters and washroom building are in good condition. The concrete surface beneath the shelter area appears to be in good condition as well. Other site furnishings consist of picnic tables and litter receptacles. The litter receptacles were white 55 gallon drums and were not consistent with the style of receptacle located



throughout Centennial Park. The picnic tables under the shelter are in fair to good condition.

Centennial Park also hosts an interesting variety of public art and garden sculptures that create treasured cultural resources for the community. This sculpture garden area includes decomposed granite paths. Where these decomposed granite paths meet intersecting surfaces, new decomposed granite material should be added to create a smooth transition to these surfaces. All other areas of the decomposed granite surface material appear to be in good to fair condition. Along the paths leading up to the public art locations are interpretive signs. Many of the images on these signs have either faded or are none existent and should be replaced to continue to educate and inform park patrons of Centennial Park.

The park is home to a 3-acre members-only dog park located on the east side of the park, south of the formal garden area. The dog park consists of black vinyl chain link security fencing with controlled access gates, dogsize drinking fountains, and separate off-leash areas for small and large dogs, a dog playground, and a hilltop view that overlooks the entire park.

The entrance to the dog park lacks the curb appeal from rest of the park. The screening surface at the dog park entrance needs to be replenished or an alternate hard surface installed to address the heavy foot traffic of the park. In order for people to enjoy the dog



park, additional seating and shade structures should be considered for use by park patrons and visitors to the area. Seating and additional shade within this area will ensure everyone stays comfortable when visiting the park. No ADA accessible paths exist within the dog park. A paved pathway/trail network should be considered throughout this 3 acre area.

Centennial Park has two formal garden areas adjacent to one another across from the dog park. Each garden is accessed through an entrance arbor with shade pergola and enclosed with a white picket fence. The Gardens include a variety of roses, ornamental grasses, flowering shrubs, perennials and annuals. Within the garden space are strategically placed large rocks and small ponds to enhance the experience of the park visitor. The path







network within the formal garden area is made up of limestone screenings bordered by wood timbers. Where the limestone screenings surface meets adjacent hard surfaces (i.e. concrete of asphalt) additional screenings should be installed to provide a smooth transition between the two surfaces.

A network of asphalt walking trails surrounds Clayhole Lake and meander throughout the balance of the park. These trails afford great views of the park. These asphalt trails appear to be in good condition showing minimal signs of surface cracking and differential settling.

The steps leading down from the clubhouse has a handrail installed on one side. The grade slopes away from the steps on the opposite side, causing areas of concern.

Overall maintenance is fair to good. The turf is relatively weed-free. There are large low areas with standing water.

Conditions Assessment		
Curb Appeal	Excellent	
Pedestrian Access	Very Good	
Internal Access	Very Good	
Playground	Good	
Sand Play	N/A	
Shelter	Very Good	
Toilets	Good	
Basketball Courts	N/A	
Sitting Area	Good	
Ball Field	N/A	
Soccer Field	N/A	
Athletic Turf	N/A	
Lawns	Very Good	
Landscaping	Good	
Paths/Trails	Very Good	
Parking	Very Good	
Park Sign	Excellent	
Site Furnishings	Very Good	
Maintenance	Good	





## **Circle Park**

Address: 1700 Inner Circle Classification: Neighborhood Status: Owned

Circle Park is a roughly <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> - acre site located at 1700 Inner Circle Drive on the interior of the rotary. Traffic flows clock-wise one way around the site.

The park features a basketball court, a playground for preteens, a perimeter path, and a small open play space. There is a single park sign located at the Foliage Drive entrance to the rotary. The landscaping adjacent to the sign screens the sign from either the left or right.

This is a small neighborhood park where most activity is "walk to" the park. Parking is available on street on the inside of the rotary.

Basketball court dimensions are not correct for free throw distance. The basketball goal support post is in line with the playing court end line.

The preteen playground is in fair to good condition. Even though the perimeter path touches the playground of that point, it does not provide an accessible connection to the play surface at that point. The play area is bordered by timbers on all sides except adjacent to the basketball court on the south side.



General access to the playground from public sidewalks is lacking. Loose woodchip fill needs to be maintained and monitored.

The play apparatus is a combination of GameTime and Landscape Structures equipment and is nearing the end of its useful life-expectancy.

Perimeter timber curbing is broken in some areas and should be inspected/replaced. Accessible routes to play surface when replacing containment should be considered.



Site furnishings are showing age and may be reaching end of their useful life.






Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Very Good
Pedestrian Access	Very Good
Internal Access	Very Good
Playground	Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	Fair
Sitting Area	Fair
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Fair
Landscaping	Good
Paths/Trails	Very Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Very Good
Site Furnishings	Fair
Maintenance	Good





# **Cobblestones Park**

Address: 1005 South Centennial Drive Classification: Neighborhood Status: Owned

Cobblestones Park is an 8.6 acre community park just south of an emergency vehicle garage at Centennial Park, east of Calumet Avenue, north of Treadway Road, and west of the homes on Tudor Court. There is a small parking lot on the west end of the park, with a total of 26 spots, 2 of which are accessible parking spaces. The path network encompasses the perimeter of the entire park.

To the north of the parking lot is a hardscape court, combining basketball and volleyball. It currently has notable cracking down the middle. To the east of the parking lot is a softball field with limestone screening surfacing, along with a new and well-structured backstop.

The creative play area is at the south central of the park. The bucket swings and toddler spring riders separate the play space into two segments. The additional play equipment consists of a rock climbing wall, a 5-12 apparatus, and an additional swing set with four belt swings. There is a shelter in between the two play zones with picnic benches underneath. The path leading to it has two benches, each facing the areas for observing the play. The creative play area is deficient in wood fiber surfacing. Plastic logs act as borders, however some of the logs are misaligned and do not contain the play



surface. There is a solitary picnic bench on the outside of the CPA boundary.

To the north is an open space for soccer, and to the south there are additional parking spaces (semi-off street) with accessible spots in places far from the entry to the creative play area.

There are two tennis courts to the east of the creative play area. They are below average condition, with significant cracks throughout. The entry to the courts from the gates is a concrete pad. It doesn't connect to any path.



Landscaping at this park is minimal, and aside from the shelter, there is a lack of shade throughout the site.







Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Very Good
Pedestrian Access	Very Good
Internal Access	Very Good
Playground	Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	Very Good
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	Excellent
Sitting Area	Good
Ball Field	Very Good
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Excellent
Landscaping	Good
Paths/Trails	Very Good
Parking	Good
Park Sign	Good
Site Furnishings	Fair
Maintenance	Good





### Clayhole Lake Greenspace

Address: 1200 Tuckahoe Place Classification: Other (Water Body) Status: Owned

Of all the properties belonging to the Town of Munster's Parks and Recreation Department, Clayhole Lake Greenspace carries the most potential for recreational development.

Access into the site is obscure and uninviting. Currently, it is a narrow path coming from the northeast end of the lake near one of the newer residential developments on Tuckahoe Place. There is a berm that runs along Tuckahoe Place, discoraging use of the nearby lake; no formal entrance exists currently. Situated just south of the existing railroad tracks, it is limited in its access to residents north of the site.

The vegetation is dense, and moderately represented with invasive species such as buckthorn and honeysuckle. The quality of the water, at first glance, is moderately low given its murky appearance. Fishing here is not promoted, currently. Neither is swimming, boating, or ice skating.











Figure 58: Clayhole Lake Greenspace

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Poor
Pedestrian Access	Poor
Internal Access	Poor
Playground	N/A
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	N/A
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	N/A
Landscaping	Poor
Paths/Trails	Poor
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	N/A
Site Furnishings	N/A
Maintenance	Poor



### **Community Park**

Address: 8601 Calumet Ave Classification: Community Status: Owned

Community Park is a 49.7 acre community park located at 8601 Calumet Avenue. It is a large and very active rectangular site that is accessed from Calumet Avenue from the west and Fisher Street from the south. It is located just west of the Munster High School and Wilbur Wright Middle School, creating a large public campus feel. Lion's Club Drive is an inner roadway that runs parallel to both Calumet Avenue and Fisher Street on the west and south sides of the site, accessing internal parking lots and amenities. The Calumet Avenue street frontage between the internal drive features a Boy Scout office and facility, the Munster Branch of the Lake County Public Library, and St. Thomas More Weis Center Preschool and Church. There is a mix of multi-family residential, commercial and office space, as well as an arts center to the north side of the park, and a pathway connection to Bieker Woods Park.

Community Park features a variety of active recreation activities. The detailed description below describes these elements from the south side moving north.

The south side of the site along Fisher Street features a large rip rap swale that runs along the street





along both the park and high school street frontage. The south parking lot connects to the internal park drive and the west parking lot as well as the high school parking lot. An asphalt multi-use trail runs along the south side of the park adjacent to the swale with a wood split rail fence on the south swale side. This path connects at the corner of Fisher and Calumet to a trail head on the opposite corner that heads west and south. The path also runs north along Calumet Avenue up to where it exits the site at the corner of Calumet and Fisher Place. The Munster Firefighters Tribute Park is located at the corner of Calumet and Fisher and features a circular brick plaza with a custom logo, seating, a drinking fountain, flag poles, a fire fighter statue, and a series of stone monuments commemorating Munster firefighters. There is no park sign at the Fisher Street parking lot entrance.







Figure 59: Community Park

Munster Community Pool is located on the south end of the site. The pool is a popular summer facility for the community, and features swim lessons, party rentals and lifeguard training as well as open swimming and concessions. The main entry and access for the pool is from the south off of Fisher Street. Additional parking is available on the west side of the site, which can be accessed via the internal drive from Fisher Street or Calumet Avenue. The pool is accessed via the main entrance, where patrons can purchase single day admission or use their season pass. The main attraction is the pool itself, which features a large concrete pool deck with portable seating and several shade umbrellas, zero depth access to play areas in the shallow water area, a diving board, a simple water slide, a large water slide, and a lap pool area. Additional activities include a concession stand with access from both outside and inside the pool fence, lighting, a sand playground area, picnic seating adjacent to the concession stand area, a large shelter, a large grass berm area, and a large circular sand volleyball area.

The south portion of the site around the pool is open lawn space that features soccer fields to the east side and looks to serve some stormwater management functions on the west side. Munster's skate park is located in Community Park adjacent to the Munster Pool on the west side. The skate park features a flat asphalt paved area with modular ramps, including 4 large ramps, 1 small ramp and a metal rail rider. The skate park has its own parking lot which is accessed from the internal park drive. The parking lot and the skate park are delineated with striping with no other barrier between the skate surface and the parking lot area. A skate themed sculpture is located in this area titled "Tearin' it Up". An electronic marquee sign is located on Calumet Avenue in this area. The sign displays messages about programming activities at the site. A sidewalk along the internal park drive terminates just north of the skate park parking lot entry drive and runs northward towards the Munster Community Park Social Center, which offers a variety of indoor programming throughout the year.

Just north of the Social Center is the main parking lot. This lot is just south of the main park entry from Calumet Avenue, and is adjacent to walks to the pool, skate park, social center, a large park shelter, concession stand and two of the south ballfields. A detention pond is situated at this location on the east side of the park. A decorative plaza is just north of the main parking lot at the terminus of the main park entry which identifies the entrance into the park. It is comprised of lighted brick pillars, concrete and brick paver hardscape, decorative landscape, planted urns, stone balustrades and up-lighting.

A smaller parking lot just north of the main entry allows for easy access to the Community Park playground area. There are two main playground areas that feature pouredin-place rubber surfacing. The one closer to the parking lot is an age 5-12 play area with a modular structure, a net climber and other freestanding play elements. There





is seating around the play area and a bike rack plaza to the east side of this play area. The play surfacing has areas that seem to have settled, causing an uneven play surface. The second playground area is deeper in the park and features an elevated ramped modular structure that seems to be designed for ages 2-12, a swing area, and play panels with a musical theme. The play equipment is generally in good condition, with some typical wear on the plastic elements and the poured in place surfacing. The play equipment and site look to be ADA accessible.

The primary programming for the Community Park site is baseball and softball. There are six baseball fields, including two 90-foot diamonds, three 60- to 70- foot diamonds, and one smaller 50-foot diamond. There are four softball fields with 60-foot skinned infields to the south part of the ballfield complex. There are five main buildings; concession, restroom, and press box brick buildings located strategically to cover each of these fields. All the fields feature dugouts with full fencing and low walls, benches, batracks, bleacher seating, and full backstop. The line and outfield fencing is black vinyl. There are 3 sets of batting cages - 1 in each segment of softball, Little League, and Babe Ruth. There is also a smaller parking lot located at the north side of the site to allow for closer parking for the north ballfields. The ballfields are very well maintained and are in good condition.



Community Park is a large and very active park. The amenities and facilities seem to be in good condition, showing normal wear that is expected for such a popular destination.









Conditions Assessment		
Curb Appeal	Good	
Pedestrian Access	Good	
Internal Access	Good	
Playground	Very Good	
Sand Play	Good	
Shelter	Very Good	
Toilets	Excellent	
Basketball Courts	N/A	
Sitting Area	Very Good	
Ball Field	Good	
Soccer Field	N/A	
Athletic Turf	N/A	
Lawns	Good	
Landscaping	Good	
Paths/Trails	Very Good	
Parking	Good	
Park Sign	Excellent	
Site Furnishings	Good	
Maintenance	Excellent	



# **Evergreen Park**

Address: 8840 Manor Ave Classification: Neighborhood Status: Owned

Evergreen Park is a .5 acre neighborhood park located at 8840 Manor Ave. It is a "pie-shaped" wedge where Timrick Drive and Manor Avenue meet. It is located in a quiet residential area with residential streets on two sides and backyards on the third. The park features both active and passive uses, with the active hardscape area on the north end abutting two residences and the passive open space area at the south end. The park is conveniently located adjacent near the bike path on the south end.

The park's sign is at the southern point of the site, appears to be newer and in good condition. However, there is large utility bank located just behind the sign that is largely unscreened and causes visual clutter. The existing evergreens would have been better left unlimbed as they would have camouflaged the equipment more. There is no parking lot for the park; however there is plenty of on-street parking on both Timrick Drive and Manor Ave. There are concrete sidewalks along both streets that meet at the southern end of the site and split to allow crossing for both streets. The walks are accessible and are in good condition.



The south end of the park is predominantly open space with lawn and widely spaced trees. There are no furnishings located there, except for 1 picnic table. Toward the north end of the park there was a half-sized basketball court that has been converted to other court games including hopscotch-foursquare / tic-tac-toe play court. The hardscape surface is in poor condition in areas and would most likely need resurfacing in its entirety.

There is an asphalt path that crosses the park from Manor Avenue's sidewalk to the walk on Timrick Drive. Adjacent to this walk there is a concrete pad and bike rack toward the center of the site. The simple u-shaped bike racks are in fair condition, with slightly rusty metal. At the east end of the asphalt path is a dog waste station and a plastic tub in good condition. The use of the plastic tub is undetermined.









Figure 60: Evergreen Park

The passive areas on the site have a generous amount of open space with lawn and some mature trees. There is plenty of shade for the park overall and a healthy mix of tree species throughout. The ornamental landscaping of ornamental trees, shrubs and perennials is lacking however. The park looks like it is maintained fairly well and has fair curb appeal to the neighborhood. Overall, this park is not inviting and inspiring.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Fair
Pedestrian Access	Very Good
Internal Access	Good
Playground	N/A
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Fair
Ball Field	Good
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Very Good
Landscaping	Poor
Paths/Trails	Very Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Very Good
Site Furnishings	Poor
Maintenance	Good





# F.H. Hammond Park

Address: 1101 Franklin Parkway Classification: Community Status: Owned

F. H. Hammond Park is an approximately 12.2 acre site adjacent to Frank Hammond Elementary School. The school parking is available to park users during non-school times. The school uses its own playground and basketball courts.

F. H. Hammond features supplemental parking offstreet along Oriole Drive. A running track surrounds an active court area comprised of tennis, volleyball, and pickleball. The infield of the track also includes an active playground area for pre-teens. The playground area loose fiber fill surface is contained by above ground plastic curbing. The curb breaks to permit access from the adjacent asphalt pathway. The raised curb creates issues with maintenance of adjacent turf. The access point may not meet ADA access requirements. The play apparatus appears to be in fair condition, however, it is faded and worn. Some components are peeling paint and rusting, and it may be reaching its useful-life.

The tennis court surfaces are in poor to fair condition. Surface shows evidence of standing water and mildew. Vegetation is planted as backdrops on the north and south end of the courts. The plantings



along the south side are too close to the surface and can drop litter and debris onto the court surface.

The existing running track surface appears in fair to good condition, with striping visible.

The ballfields have limestone screening infields which are relatively easy to manage and care for during the baseball/softball season. The backstops are limited to behind home plate with no foul line fencing present. Seasonal equipment storage boxes are located behind backstops. The south field (foul balls down the right field line) may conflict with the north field. A tree overhanging north field may create issues for players and fly balls on









Figure 61: F.H. Hammond Park

the left side of the infield. The south field has spectator seating on both sides of the field, while the north field has spectator seating only on the first base side. There are no accessible routes to either ball field or the spectator areas from the public walk or school parking.

Many trees have been damaged by string trimmers. A single drinking fountain is located between the playground and the active court area. The fountain is not ADA accessible or compliant. The park includes a small open air shelter inside the running track. The perimeter walk is incomplete along Fran-lin Parkway.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Good
Pedestrian Access	Very Good
Internal Access	Good
Playground	Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	Good
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Fair
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Good
Landscaping	Fair
Paths/Trails	Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Poor
Site Furnishings	N/A
Maintenance	Fair





#### Grove Park

Address: 8201 Tapper Ave Classification: Neighborhood Status: Owned

Grove Park is a 5.5 acre neighborhood park located at 8201 Tapper Avenue. It is a rectangular-shaped park on the Northeast corner of Tapper and Ridgeway Avenues. It is located just north of the Munster Police Department and Munster Town Hall. There are homes on the east and west boundaries of the park with South Side Christian Preschool to the north. The park features both active and passive uses.

The park's sign is located on the west side of the park along Tapper Avenue and appears to be newer and in good condition. There is an off street parking lot for the park located on Ridgeway Avenue with 21 spaces. There are no accessible ADA spaces and none of these spacves have backstops or curbing. There are concrete sidewalks along Tapper Avenue that connect to asphalt paving that runs adjacent to the play area. The walks are accessible and are in good condition. Another asphalt walk connects the Ridgeway Avenue sidewalk with the full basketball court. There are two hoops in good shape; no fencing around the court, and no lights. To the south of the court is another hardscape area with an undetermined purpose. It may have been a former court, but there is no striping on it to designate an obvious purpose. There is a "mutt mitt" dog waste station in between the parking and this court as well as plastic tub trash receptacle in good condition.



There are 3 tennis courts surrounded with vinyl chainlink fencing all around. The courts are in good condition with some ponding marks. To the north of the tennis courts is the softball field. There is a ballfield galvanized backstop (some rust and wear) with 2 spectator bleachers (metal, 15 x 5 rows with no fence but backed by wood timbers). The infield is limestone screening. There are neither field lights nor dugouts. To the east of the ballfield is a large soccer field (they may double as a football field) oriented north-south. One soccer goal was present.

To the west of the ballfield is a non ADA compliant drinking fountain and concrete pad for 3 u-shaped metal bike racks in good condition. The asphalt path connects these elements to the reservable open shelter structure









Figure 62: Grove Park

(capacity  $\sim 40$  persons with picnic tables). Adjacent to the shelter is the park sign with minimal landscaping. North of the sign is a memorial to Corporal Robert Grove and flagpole, which surrounded by pavers.

In the north, the asphalt path leads to the two play areas. There is an ages 2-5 and an ages 5-12 area. They are integrated pieces of equipment, not accessible with wood borders and EWF surfacing. The structures are a mixture of Landscape Structures and Gametime. There is a swing set with 2 buckets and spring toys. The play area has plenty of shade from mature trees and two benches along the path on concrete pads.

The passive area to the north as well as the east half of the park (where the soccer field is located) has a generous amount of open space, with lawn and several mature trees. The park is maintained well and has very good curb appeal.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Very Good
Pedestrian Access	Excellent
Internal Access	Excellent
Playground	Very Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	Excellent
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	Very Good
Sitting Area	Excellent
Ball Field	Good
Soccer Field	Good
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Very Good
Landscaping	Good
Paths/Trails	Very Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Excellent
Site Furnishings	Fair
Maintenance	Very Good



# Heritage Park

Address: 1154 Ridge Road Classification: Community Status: Owned

Heritage Park is a community park and is home to the Kaske House and the Munster Historical Society (MHS). The total site is approximately 10.8 total acres of which approximately 2-acres is programmed. The programming includes a gazebo, historical windmill, and the historical Kaske House that serves as the home for the Munster Historical Society. The MHS manages the house and provides a number of public service events as well as private engagements and functions.

The condition and operation of the house was not included as part of the site inventory.

The MHS offers the site for rentals such as weddings, as well as conducts several public service events throughout the year. Access to the site is via a brick paved drive from Columbia Avenue. The access is narrow and visibility into and out of the site is difficult. Site capacity is severely restricted by parking.

The site is home to a gazebo that is used for wedding ceremonies and bridal party photography. The gazebo is accessed via a nicely crafted ramp, but may not meet ADA accessibility requirements given it is across the



inaccessible lawn. The back of the house is cluttered with "modern maintenance appurtenances".

There is a connection from the gazebo to a short loop trail winding through the adjacent woodlands returning to the open space south of the gazebo.

Southwest of the house is a meditation walkway with benches and statuaries along the path. The wooded path is in reasonable condition but likely not considered as ADA accessible due to boulders restricting access to the path, path materials, and the slope/gradient.

A historic windmill is located on the site southeast of









Figure 63: Heritage Park

the house. The windmill was originally manufactured in Colorado, was put in service in Jasper County Indiana, and later donated to the Munster Parks and Recreation Department. The windmill was relocated to the present site in 2001.

Parking on-site is limited, with ingress/egress difficult due to size of parking surface. Vehicles have difficulty exiting once in the site. Additional parking is available through an agreement with the adjacent Church.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Very Good
Pedestrian Access	Fair
Internal Access	Good
Playground	N/A
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	Very Good
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Very Good
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Good
Landscaping	Very Good
Paths/Trails	Fair
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Very Good
Site Furnishings	Good
Maintenance	Fair



### John Friend Park

Address: 9931 Lands End Classification: Mini Status: Owned

John Friend Park is located in one of the newer residential areas in Munster; the southwest region. It is nested in a corner with houses adjacent on each side and across the streets.

This park features new play equipment, EWF as surfacing, a picnic bench, a park bench, a bike rack, a waste bin, two belt swings, and two separate bucket swings. There are a row of maturing trees to the south edge of the park, with an effect of partial screening the homes to the south. The infrastructure was such that the path is of asphalt, the play surfacing is engineered wood fiber, and the curbing of the play area is plastic, and the entry into the play area is ADA compliant.

Certain elements to the park require adjustment and/or upgrade. During the site visit, the picnic bench was situated in the middle of an entry path. The waste bin is outdated, as is the park bench in the play area. With the exception of the trees to the south, there is a lack of landscaping throughout the site.











Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Very Good
Pedestrian Access	Very Good
Internal Access	Very Good
Playground	Excellent
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Good
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Very Good
Landscaping	Good
Paths/Trails	Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Very Good
Site Furnishings	Good
Maintenance	Good





#### **Kiwanis Park**

Address: 213 Timrick Drive Classification: Neighborhood Status: Owned

Kiwanis Park is a .52 acre neighborhood park located at 213 Timrick Drive and is a "pie-shaped" wedge where Timrick and Meadow Lane meet. It is surrounded on all sides by a quiet residential area. The park features both active and passive uses, with the active playground area toward the south end and the passive open space area at the north end abutting two residences.

The park's sign is at the southern point of the site, and appears to be newer and in good condition. There is no parking lot for the park; however there is plenty of on-street parking on both Timrick Drive and Meadow Lane. There are concrete sidewalks along both streets that meet at the southern end of the site and split to allow crossing for both streets. The walks are accessible and are in good condition. A concrete pad and bike rack are located in the middle of the site on the Meadow Lane side. The bike rack is a very simple u-shape metal rack in fair condition with some rust. A trash receptacle is also located on this pad. It is an inexpensive plastic tub in good condition.

The play area equipment is for ages 5-12, looks relatively new (replaced in 2017) and is in very good condition. It is Playcraft Systems. It has integrated pieces and is not accessible. The surface of the play area





is EWF with a wood play area border. Next to the play equipment are swings: 2 buckets and 2 belts and are in good condition. White plastic composite split-rail fence on both sides of the play area has mold stains and is not in great condition. The fencing effectively defines two spaces. A swing bench located on a concrete pad adjacent to the play area is in fair condition. The swing provides great sight lines of the play area. A drinking fountain is located where both sidewalks terminate and is in good physical condition but is not ADA accessible. Two picnic tables located in the lawn areas adjacent to the play area are also in good condition.

The passive area to the north end has a generous amount of open space with lawn and some mature trees. There is plenty of shade for the park overall and a



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Figure 65: Kiwanis Park

healthy mix of tree species throughout. The ornamental landscaping is lacking however, and there are no planting beds of shrubs, perennials or groundcovers on the site. The park looks like it is maintained fairly well and has very nice curb appeal to the neighborhood.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Very Good
Pedestrian Access	Excellent
Internal Access	Good
Playground	Very Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Good
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Good
Landscaping	Fair
Paths/Trails	Very Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Very Good
Site Furnishings	Good
Maintenance	Very Good





### Munster, Indiana

Figure 66:Manor Ave. Greenspace/ Monon Park

# Manor Ave. Greenspace/Monon Park

Address: 8200 Manor Ave Classification: Mini Status: Owned

The Manor Avenue Greenspace is approximately 3.2-acres and located at the northwest corner of Ridge Road and Manor Avenue, behind the Citgo gas station. The site was formerly 16-single family residences that were purchased by the Town of Munster and razed between 2013 and 2015. The site is nearly 1,000 ft from north to south while only  $\pm$ 140-ft deep. The site has some mature trees throughout, as well as parkway trees along Manor Avenue.

There are some areas of the site with remnants of the building foundations still visible.





Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Poor
Pedestrian Access	Good
Internal Access	N/A
Playground	N/A
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Poor
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Good
Landscaping	Fair
Paths/Trails	Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Poor
Site Furnishings	N/A
Maintenance	Fair







# Monon Trailhead

Address: 410 Ridge Rd Classification: Mini Status: Owned?

The Monon Trail Head and Fountain is located on the southeast corner of Ridge Road and Manor Avenue. The site features an overhead shade trellis, fountain, drinking fountain, memorial brick plaza. It serves as a trail head for the Monon Trail which is a former railroad right-ofway. The trail is part of the northwest Indiana regional trail network currently. In the future, it will connect to a trail network in Illinois and continue south to a spur of the Pennsy Path and the Burnham Greenway. The trail would parallel the proposed right-of-way of the West Lake Line of the NICTD South Shore Line extension toward Lowell, Indiana.

The site is in excellent condition and sets the standard for the Munster Parks and Recreation Department's site furnishing. The site furnishings are in good condition, the fountain is the centerpiece of the trailhead. The site is ADA accessible and provides ADA accessible drinking fountain. The drinking fountain color is inconsistent with other site furnishings.

The fountain mechanical systems are hidden behind landscape beds. The electrical panel and systems are exposed and visible.

Bicycle racks similar to other racks within the park system, but inconsistent with site furnishings at this site.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Good
Pedestrian Access	Good
Internal Access	Good
Playground	N/A
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Good
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Good
Landscaping	Very Good
Paths/Trails	Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Poor
Site Furnishings	N/A
Maintenance	Fair



### **Orchard Park**

Address: 8807 White Oak Ave Classification: Mini Status: Owned

Orchard Park is a <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> - acre park located at 8807 White Oak Avenue in the shadow of a Town of Munster water tower. The site provides passive recreational opportunities to sit and reflect. It is on the northeast corner of White Oak Drive and Fisher Street. The sign is located at the southwest corner of the site and is visible by northbound traffic on White Oak. The sign is not clearly visible by vehicles travelling in most other directions.

The site has scattered benches and picnic tables that are in various states of deterioration. The benches are distributed throughout the lawn areas which makes them not ADA accessible. Their locations also complicates maintenance activities as mowing and trimming must occur around the bench supports. The site also has a bike rack along Fisher Street.

There is an existing bocce ball court on the east side of the site that has been abandoned. The site does not appear to be very heavily used as there is little or no signs of wear under the existing benches and tables.

Several newly planted trees have memorial plaques associated with them.











Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Poor
Pedestrian Access	Fair
Internal Access	Poor
Playground	N/A
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Fair
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Good
Landscaping	Good
Paths/Trails	N/A
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Good
Site Furnishings	Fair
Maintenance	Good





# Redbud Open Space

Address: 1150 Parkside Drive Classification: Other (Open Green Space) Status: Owned

The Redbud Open space is a 3.2-acre greenspace with mature cottonwoods situated next to the Pennsy Path, nearby Centennial Park.

This greenspace offers exclusively well-shaded open play. However, the location itself serves as a gateway into the Penny Path and Centennial Park for residents to its east.

There is also a waste disposal bin and a bag dispenser for walker's with dogs. The path is in good condition. There are many opportunities to expand on the services this park can offer, given its size and open areas.









Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Good
Pedestrian Access	Very Good
Internal Access	Good
Playground	N/A
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	N/A
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Good
Landscaping	Fair
Paths/Trails	Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	N/A
Site Furnishings	N/A
Maintenance	Fair





# River's Edge Disc Golf

Address: 1 River Drive Classification: Special Use Status: Owned

River's Edge Disc Golf Park is a 4.1 acre wooded park located at 1 River Drive along the Little Calumet River just west of Homan Avenue and north of the 94/80 Tollway. The park features a disc golf course and open space.

There is a standard park sign at the Homan Avenue corner that identifies the park site. The park contains many mature trees and a naturalized, if a bit overgrown, shoreline. There is another wood sign and some off street gravel parking at the west end of the park site along with a picnic table and waste receptacle. This location features hole #1 of the disc golf course. The tee boxes feature rubber mats to reduce wear, while the disc hole stands are simply set in the turf or landscape. The course meanders north into a more wooded and natural section of the park where it looks as if some additional holes have been added by residents that are not part of the official course and may not all be on park property. The sign in this location has been modified to note hole 2 "a, b, c, and d" and hole 3. This area has some interesting brick and block and wood patio and seating elements and a lot of grade change leading back into a more wooded landscape. The course then doubles back out along the river to



the far east end of the site and then loops back towards the west end with hole #9 as the final hole back at the southwest corner of the site. The site slopes down from the road to the river so that the course has quite a bit of grade change while maintaining open view sheds.

The park site is across the road from a large barrier wall to the 94/88 tollway and the highway noise is noticeable and constant. Despite this, the site has a very natural character. There are no other specific programmed recreational uses.







Figure 70: River's Edge Disc Golf

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Good
Pedestrian Access	Good
Internal Access	Fair
Playground	N/A
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	N/A
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Very Good
Landscaping	Good
Paths/Trails	Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Excellent
Site Furnishings	Good
Maintenance	Good





### **Rotary Park**

Address: 1054 Ridge Road Classification: Mini Status: Owned

Rotary Park is a .2 - acre mini-park located at 1051 Ridge Road on the northwest corner of Columbia Avenue and Ridge Road. It is situated between 2 residences kitty-corner from Heritage Park. Rotary Park features only passive activity.

The park's sign is located in the center of the park in a raised landscape bed. The retaining wall is a segmented block wall in varying heights. The sign is roughly 30 years old and is chipping. It is scheduled for replacement. There is a small plaque in front of the sign commemorating the bicentennial.

The park is predominantly green space of lawn with a few trees and 3 large metal sculptures. The sculptures are approximately 12-14' tall and are in good condition. There are light fixtures that uplight the sculptures and trees. A paver plaza in front of the Rotary Park (approx. 830 sq. ft.) leads up to the corner where the 2 sidewalks along Ridge and Columbia meet. There is a crosswalk signal there and the curbs are accessible.

The park has good curb appeal and appears to be well maintained. The landscape in the raised bed would benefit from enhancement with more attractive and diverse species.











Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Very Good
Pedestrian Access	Very Good
Internal Access	N/A
Playground	N/A
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	N/A
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Poor
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Very Good
Landscaping	Fair
Paths/Trails	N/A
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Very Good
Site Furnishings	N/A
Maintenance	Very Good





# Stewart Park

Address: 1600 Franklin Parkway Classification: Community Status: Owned

Stewart Park is an approximately 6-acre site located at the southeast corner of Fran-lin Parkway and White Oak Avenue. The site is open space utilized for soccer. There is off-street parking with multiple access drives off White Oak Avenue on the west side of the site.

The playground is for ages 2-12 with an Engineered Wood Fiber (EWF) surface contained by plastic above ground curbs. The west side of the playground touches the parking lot asphalt to provide access to the playground. The playground includes a bench and large tree.

A small pre-engineered shelter with a solar powered severe weather warning system is located adjacent to the parking lot. Nearby is a landscape planting of Arborvitae that screens a possible portable restroom site.

There is a beehive drainage grate in the middle of an open turf area. This could be a potential obstacle. A concrete pad is located south of the parking area, possibly the remnant of a small shelter.



The parking lot is accessed from White Oak Avenue via curb cuts in the middle of the lot and at the south end of the lot. It appears ingress and egress geometry is inadequate for the turning movements of entering and exiting vehicles. Islands are rutted and damaged by vehicles. The north end of parking lot is a dead end. If no spaces are available, turning around is difficult and potentially causes traffic congestion and conflicts. The parking lot is in need of sealcoating and striping. Parking stalls are delineated by wheel stops which could be damaged or displaced during plowing and winter maintenance.









Figure 72: Stewart Park

Soccer goals are stored along tree line near the creek. According to the Indiana Floodplain Information Portal, Stewart Park is not within the floodplain of the adjacent Hart Ditch. The floodplain is restricted to the stream channel and adjacent banks. Existing trees show damage from string trimmers. Additionally, several trees had guy wires and were staked.

Site furnishings do not match other parks. The playground was replaced in 2018. Play surface containment is black plastic ties that restrict access into play area. The containment ties add to trimming times and maintenance efforts. There appears to be significantly underutilized play surface areas that increase maintenance costs/ construction costs with little to no additional play value.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Fair
Pedestrian Access	Fair
Internal Access	Fair
Playground	Very Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	Very Good
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Fair
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Fair
Landscaping	Fair
Paths/Trails	N/A
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Good
Site Furnishings	Fair
Maintenance	Good



# Sunnyside Park

Address: 7800 Hohman Ave Classification: Mini Status: Owned

Sunnyside Park is a 1.2 acre mini park located at 7800 Hohman Avenue. It is a rectangular-shaped park aligned north-south along the west side of Hohman Avenue. It is surrounded by residential with homes on three sides: the north, west (across an alley) and south sides and with houses across the median-lined street of Hohman Avenue to the east. The park features both active and passive uses. There are a couple mature specimen street trees in the parkway along Hohman.

The park's sign is located on the east side of the park in the middle of the site perpendicular, to the traffic along Hohman Avenue. The sign appears to be newer and in very good condition. Other informational signs are placed in this area at different times of the year due to the high visibility from Hohman Avenue. The rest of the eastern half of Sunnyside Park is passive and has a generous amount of open space with lawn and some mature trees. However, the ornamental landscaping is lacking. There are no planting beds of shrubs and perennials around the park sign. There are only a couple ornamental trees adjacent to the sign.

There is on-street parking only for the park located on Hohman Avenue. There is a concrete sidewalk along Hohman Avenue running north-south. This sidewalk





connects to an asphalt path north and south ends, forming a figure 8 through the site around the creative play areas and gazebo. The asphalt looks relatively new and is in good condition. There is one bench (in poor condition) on a concrete slab adjacent to the path. The location of the south connecting path should be relocated to align with the cross-walk at Hohman Avenue.

The large play area has a 5-12 integrated play apparatus, a swing set with 2 belt seats, a net climbing structure and other play features sporadically located on EWF (Engineered Wood Fiber) surfacing with wood borders. The equipment is in good condition. The play area is not accessible nor shaded.

The reservable gazebo structure is situated between





Figure 73: Sunnyside Park

the north and south play areas on a concrete pad and is in good condition. It has a 20 person capacity, with a picnic table underneath the shelter which would be inadequate for 20 people. To the west of the shelter is a concrete pad with 2 u-shaped metal bike racks and a plastic trash receptacle; all in good condition. West of the bike racks is a standard Munster drinking fountain on a small concrete pad which is not ADA accessible.

To the north of the shelter is the smaller play area for ages 2-5. There is 1 integrated play apparatus, 1 swing set with 2 bucket seats, and several other play pieces. The surface is EWF as well with wood borders. All the equipment is in good condition. The area is not accessible and there is limited shade at the site.

The passive landscape areas surrounding the play areas between the asphalt path and adjacent alley has a fair amount of open space with lawn and some mature trees. The ornamental landscaping is lacking however, and there are only the couple of ornamental trees adjacent to the park sign. The park is maintained fairly well and adds very nice curb appeal to the neighborhood.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Good
Pedestrian Access	Good
Internal Access	Good
Playground	Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	Very Good
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Very Good
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Very Good
Landscaping	Fair
Paths/Trails	N/A
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Very Good
Site Furnishings	Good
Maintenance	Good





### Twin Creek Park

Address: 9747 Twin Creek Blvd Classification: Neighborhood Status: Owned

Twin Creek Park is a 5-acre neighborhood park that is on the west side of Hart Ditch and is connected by a bridge to White Oak park on the east of the creek. It has an open green space with a field backstop. It recently added limestone screenings to the northeast. There are no spectator furnishings for this area.

At the time of inventory in November 2017, the remainder of the park was partitioned into separate zones for different uses: swings, 2-12 play, hardcourt basketball and foursquare, and a shelter. There is a layout of paths that connect all of these zones to a centralized location holding the shelter, and also connects a path that follows the entire perimeter of the park. It would not be advisable to design parks this way in today's time, because all areas are notably distant from each, and a disconnection exists. This doesn't accommodate families with children both under the age of 5 and between the ages of 5-12.

In addition to being very spatially distant, much of the park's accessories at the time of inventory were dated, such as the play equipment, water fountain, hardcourt surfacing, waste bins, and benches. Much of this has since been updated, including the play apparatus, waste bins, and benches.



The landscaping has no major issues, although there are several young, dead trees. The concrete within the shelter area is cracking, and on the asphalt path near the backstop, there's a mature tree whose roots have upended the surface. This could cause hazards for people with strollers, wheelchairs, rollerblades, bicycles, or limited mobility.

In 2018 the primary play equipment was replaced and the infield for the ballfield was installed as limestone screenings.









Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Excellent
Pedestrian Access	Excellent
Internal Access	Fair
Playground	Very Good
Sand Play	Poor
Shelter	Very Good
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	Good
Sitting Area	Fair
Ball Field	Fair
Soccer Field	N/A
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Very Good
Landscaping	Good
Paths/Trails	Excellent
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Excellent
Site Furnishings	Fair
Maintenance	Fair





#### West Lakes Park

Address: 9700 Margo Lane Classification: Community Status: Owned

West Lakes Parks is a 23.7 acre community park mainly used for open space athletics, such as soccer. It also includes spaces for half-court basketball, volleyball, and tennis.

For visitors accessing from the north, there is no clear marking by a park sign currently is present when entering from the North. Parking spaces are plentiful, split into 2 large wings, although it's difficult where ADA spaces are intended to be located. There are two roundabouts within the parking lot and a narrow planting island in the middle of each large wing.

West Lakes Park has a very clear layout, utilizing a streambank to separate the large open space on the north portion from the slightly smaller open space on the south portion. The north portion includes open space for numerous soccer fields, a hard surface volleyball court, a half basketball court, and the aforementioned parking lot. The south portion holds two tennis courts, a shelter, and a combined age group creative play area. There are two bridges in the park that connect the south and north.

The play apparatus is dated, showing signs of red discoloration. It has wood fiber surfacing with plastic





logs serving as the creative play area border. The drinking fountain is in poor shape and not ADA accessible. An existing sound talk tube, directly buried in the ground, has bee's nests within the concave exposed ends. Each swing is isolated from one another in this play area, as well.

The hard court surfacing is in need of repair, particularly on the volleyball and tennis spaces where cracks, holes, and puddling are present. The path network connects users to all parts of the park and is well laid out. Some asphalt deterioration, particularly around the corners of the existing bridges, presents a hazard. Amenities such as benches and bike racks are in suitable condition, although bench pads could be more accommodating to comply with accessibility standards and users with







mobility limitations.

Landscaping overall is very good, as there is noticeable attention given towards the parking lot planting islands and streambanks. There is minimal screening between the park and the railroad tracks, leaving clear views to the park's eastern boundary. The south end has a narrow east-west oriented detention pond that attracts geese and has rip-rap along the edges.

Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Very Good
Pedestrian Access	VeryGood
Internal Access	Excellent
Playground	Good
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	Very Good
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	Excellent
Sitting Area	Excellent
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	Very Good
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Excellent
Landscaping	Very Good
Paths/Trails	Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	N/A
Site Furnishings	Fair
Maintenance	Good





# White Oak Park

Address: 9700 White Oak Ave Classification: Neighborhood Status: Owned

White Oak Park is a 10.4 acre neighborhood park south of 45th street and west of White Oak Avenue. It has an open green space large enough to comfortably fit a soccer field, with a well-conditioned asphalt path around the green space's perimeter.

To the southeast corner of the park, there is a parking lot of over 100 stalls with 5 accessible spaces. This relatively larger number is consistent with the picnic shelter west of the parking lot, and has a capacity of roughly 260 people (although no specific number is defined on any existing shelter sign).

To the east of the shelter are 3 pickleball courts aligned east-west and paved in orange and blue. The condition of these courts is outstanding, perhaps due in part to the relatively new introduction of pickleball by various parks and recreation departments/agencies. To the east of the pickleball courts is a playground area with an apparatus suitable for the 5-12 age group. With colors matching the pickleball court, this apparatus also happens to be a relatively new in installation. Its condition is excellent- it has a stand-alone infant swing and a bucket swing that allows for the parent/guardian to sit and swing along with the child.



Landscaping is good quality. Fencing along the southwest corner is unnecessary and unsafe due to spear-like ornamental features along the top margins. It's possible, however, that this fencing is privately owned. The concrete surfacing of the shelter is sunken along the boundary, and it can pose as a tripping hazard. Along the path, there are dead trees in need of replacement within the circle nodes. Waste bins do not meet desired standards, as well. There is safety lighting at this park which requires additional evaluation.

To the east boundary of the park, there is a community of mature trees along the Hart Ditch and a bridge that crosses over the neighboring park, Twin Creek.









Conditions Assessment	
Curb Appeal	Very Good
Pedestrian Access	Excellent
Internal Access	Excellent
Playground	Excellent
Sand Play	N/A
Shelter	Excellent
Toilets	N/A
Basketball Courts	N/A
Sitting Area	Very Good
Ball Field	N/A
Soccer Field	Good
Athletic Turf	N/A
Lawns	Good
Landscaping	Good
Paths/Trails	Good
Parking	N/A
Park Sign	Excellent
Site Furnishings	Very Good
Maintenance	Fair

