



PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN



2025–2029

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is with gratitude that we acknowledge the many individuals from the Terre Haute community who helped develop this plan:

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Assurance of Accessibility Compliance	4
Resolution Adopting the Master Plan	5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7

Master Plan Goals and Objectives	11
Planning Area Overview	13
Needs Assessment Summary	14
Recommendations Summary	15

EXISTING CONDITIONS 17

Community Profile	18
Parks Planning History	32
Existing Park System	40
Accessibility & Universal Design	66

NEEDS ASSESSMENT 71

Public Engagement	72
Top 5 Survey Response Trends	74
Public Meetings	76
Leadership & Steering Committee Meetings	81
Focus Groups	82
Benchmark Study	84
Level of Service Analysis	88
Summary & Takeaways	92

RECOMMENDATIONS 95

A Vision Restored	96
Future Parks & Trail System	97
Programming & Events	104
Governance & Finances	110
Operations & Maintenance	112
Recommendations	118

IMPLEMENTATION 133


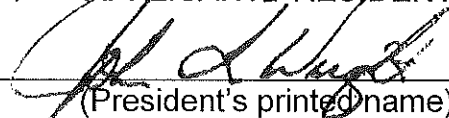
Implementation Recommendations	134
Plan Accountability	135
Funding Opportunities	136


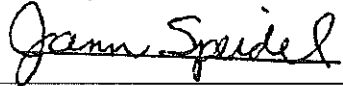
APPENDIX 143

ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE

**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 Park Board (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 
APPLICANT/PRESIDENT

(President's printed name)

SIGNATURE 

(Secretary's printed name)

DATE 9-18-2024

RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE MASTER PLAN

RESOLUTION No. 2, 2025

WHEREAS, the Terre Haute Park and Recreation Board is aware of the importance of being aware of the Parks and Recreation needs of the residents of Terre Haute, Indiana and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE TERRE HAUTE PARK AND RECREATION BOARD, by unanimous declaration, does adopt the 2025-2029 Park and Recreation Master Plan as its official plan for the next five years, for the growth and development of parks and recreational opportunities in Terre Haute, Indiana.

See Attached.

Passed and signed this 16th day of April, 2025

Board President



Nathan A. Schaumleffel, President

Board Secretary



Lori Danielson, Secretary





Executive Summary

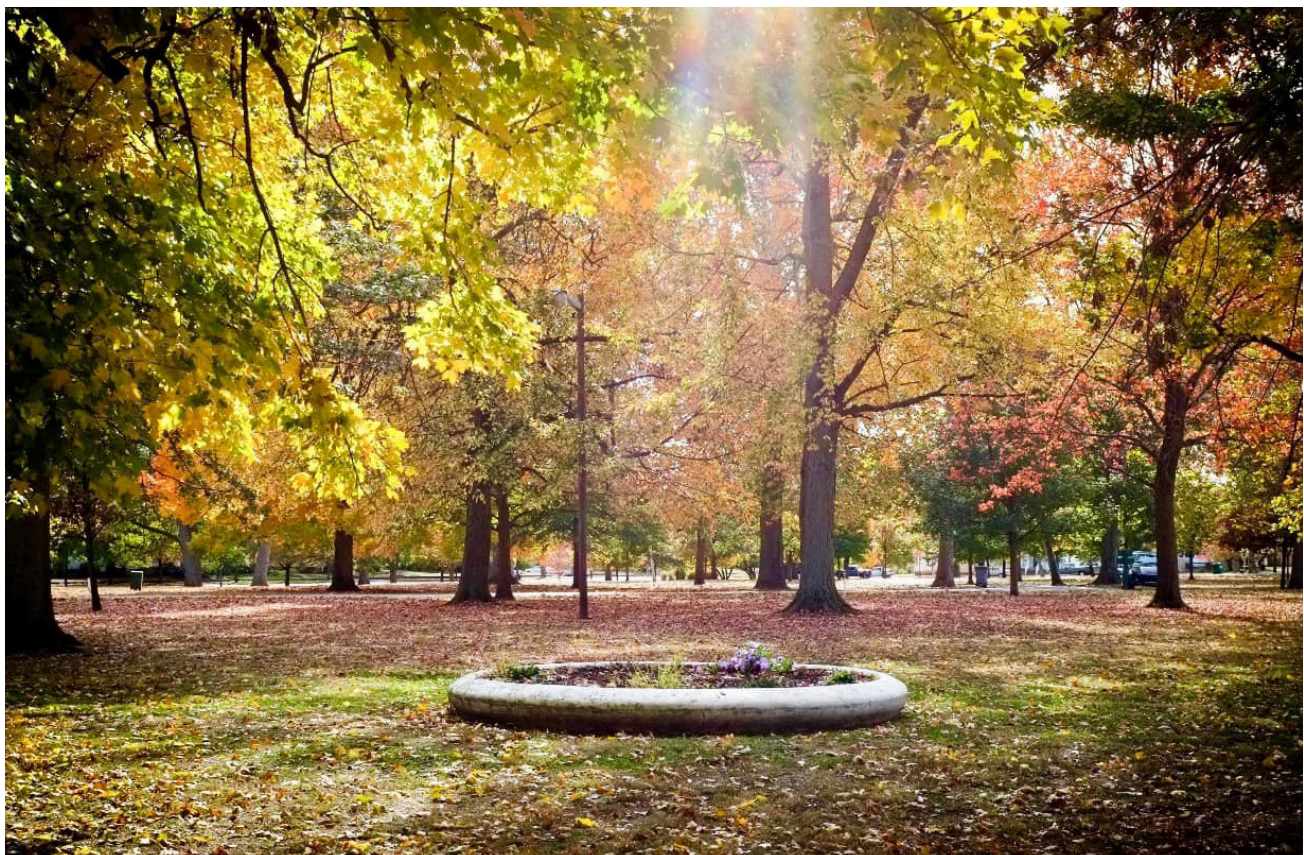


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

The City of Terre Haute Parks Department initiated this master planning process to update its previous five-year plan, ensuring compliance with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (INDNR) requirements while maintaining relevance in addressing the community's evolving recreational needs. The updated plan focuses on responsibly maintaining and enhancing the city's natural and man-made recreational resources, maximizing the impact of every dollar spent, and exploring diverse funding opportunities. By setting clear goals and providing a framework to track accomplishments, this master plan offers a flexible, responsive strategy to guide the growth and improvement of Terre Haute's park system over the next five years.

This plan builds upon the legacy of George Kessler's 1921 vision of an interconnected network of parks, open spaces, and greenways, which aimed to unite the community through enhanced access to green spaces. While revitalizing this historic concept, the plan integrates modern needs such as expanding trail systems, improving recreational programming, and developing new blueways along the Wabash River. It also emphasizes branding improvements, environmental conservation, and sustainable management practices. Through extensive public engagement, data analysis, and cross-department collaboration, the plan prioritizes upgrading existing facilities, enhancing community access, and ensuring long-term sustainability. Terre Haute Parks Department remains committed to delivering high-quality recreational opportunities for all residents while preserving the city's natural resources for future generations.



USING THIS PLAN

The master plan update should serve as a guiding framework for the future of the parks and recreation system. The plan's recommendations are detailed in Section 4. As with any planning document, it should be reviewed annually by staff to track shifts in public needs and changes in available funding sources. The plan should remain flexible, allowing it to adapt to new opportunities as they arise, such as alternative funding streams, financial and land donations, or public-private partnerships.

PLAN METHODOLOGY & PROCESS

This plan builds upon nearly 15 years of previous planning efforts for the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department. Incomplete goals from those efforts were reviewed and assessed for their viability as ongoing priorities. Some have been brought forward into the recommendations for the next five years.

The development of this plan involved a comprehensive process, including property inventory, data collection, analysis of previous plans, meetings with park staff, and public input. Feedback from the general public was

gathered through various methods, including online surveys, focus group meetings, a park blitz, and multiple public open houses. Specific issues and opportunities were discussed and are documented throughout this plan.

The priorities outlined in this plan were reviewed by the Parks Board, the Mayor's Office, city planners, engineers, and Parks and Recreation staff. All goals and objectives were then presented to the public before finalizing the plan.

PLANNING VISION & GOALS

The primary vision and goals for the 2025-2029 Parks Plan are outlined on the following page. It is not an exhaustive list of everything that will take place in the parks during the next five years, but rather an overview of the department's key trajectory.

An updated mission and vision statement were developed to reflect the parks pathway to renewal. Also a slogan and clear department goals were developed based on current planning efforts, public input, along with contributions from staff, key stakeholders, local advocates, and community leadership.

PROCESS

RECEIVE + UNDERSTAND

Task 1

Project Kickoff
& Plan Management

Task 2

Review of Community,
Existing Conditions,
Plans & Documents

ATTEND + REMEMBER

Task 3

Community
Engagement & Needs
Assessment

Task 4

Analysis of Existing
Parks, Recreation
Facilities and Programs

EVALUATE + RESPOND

Task 5

Future Parks,
Recreation Facilities
and Programming

Task 6

Operational and
Financial Analysis

A NEW PATH FORWARD

MISSION

Our mission at the Terre Haute Parks Department is to **DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** across all city parks, trails, and open spaces **WHILE ENSURING NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ARE CONSERVED** for the lasting enjoyment of future generations.

VISION

Our vision is to make “Your Terre Haute Parks” a sustainable, vibrant, and community-centered network of beautiful, family-friendly spaces that engage, educate, and invigorate.

SLOGAN

“Your Terre Haute Parks”—where community, connection, and character flourish.





FACILITIES

Evaluate facility conditions and recommend improvements for expanding clean, accessible restrooms and four-season buildings.

ACCESS

Analyze walking path connectivity, identify gaps, and recommend strategic connections to improve neighborhood access and link parks through expanded greenway systems.

AMENITIES

Identify and prioritize opportunities to reinvest in and modernize existing amenities, including picnic shelters, playgrounds, sports courts, and fields, to better serve parks users and patrons.

MAINTENANCE

Develop strategies for managing park open spaces with no-mow and other sustainable practices to enhance ecologic biodiversity and reduce costs.

AWARENESS

Elevate planning process awareness through community engagement within the parks through creative and unique communication and outreach efforts.

PROGRAMMING

Create program events to increase department staff participation in the planning process through on-location events and activities.

PLANNING AREA DEFINITION

The City of Terre Haute is located in the western portion of Vigo County, bordering the Wabash River and providing access to the larger metropolitan area of Indianapolis and neighboring regions. A map of the planning area is shown on the following page.

This plan primarily focuses on the corporate limits of the City of Terre Haute, but given that the City accounts for nearly half of Vigo County's population, it also considers park facilities and amenities, such as the riverfront and recreational areas, that attract users from beyond the city limits. The primary study area is the Terre Haute Corporation Boundary, while the secondary study area includes the larger urbanized area, covering population centers of 50,000 people or more, as defined by the FHWA. Although the Terre Haute parks system primarily serves city residents, it is recognized that it also draws regional users who do not financially contribute to the system through property taxes. While addressing this issue through non-resident fees is a long-term goal for the Parks Department, it is not an immediate priority for this plan, and such fees are not feasible at this time.

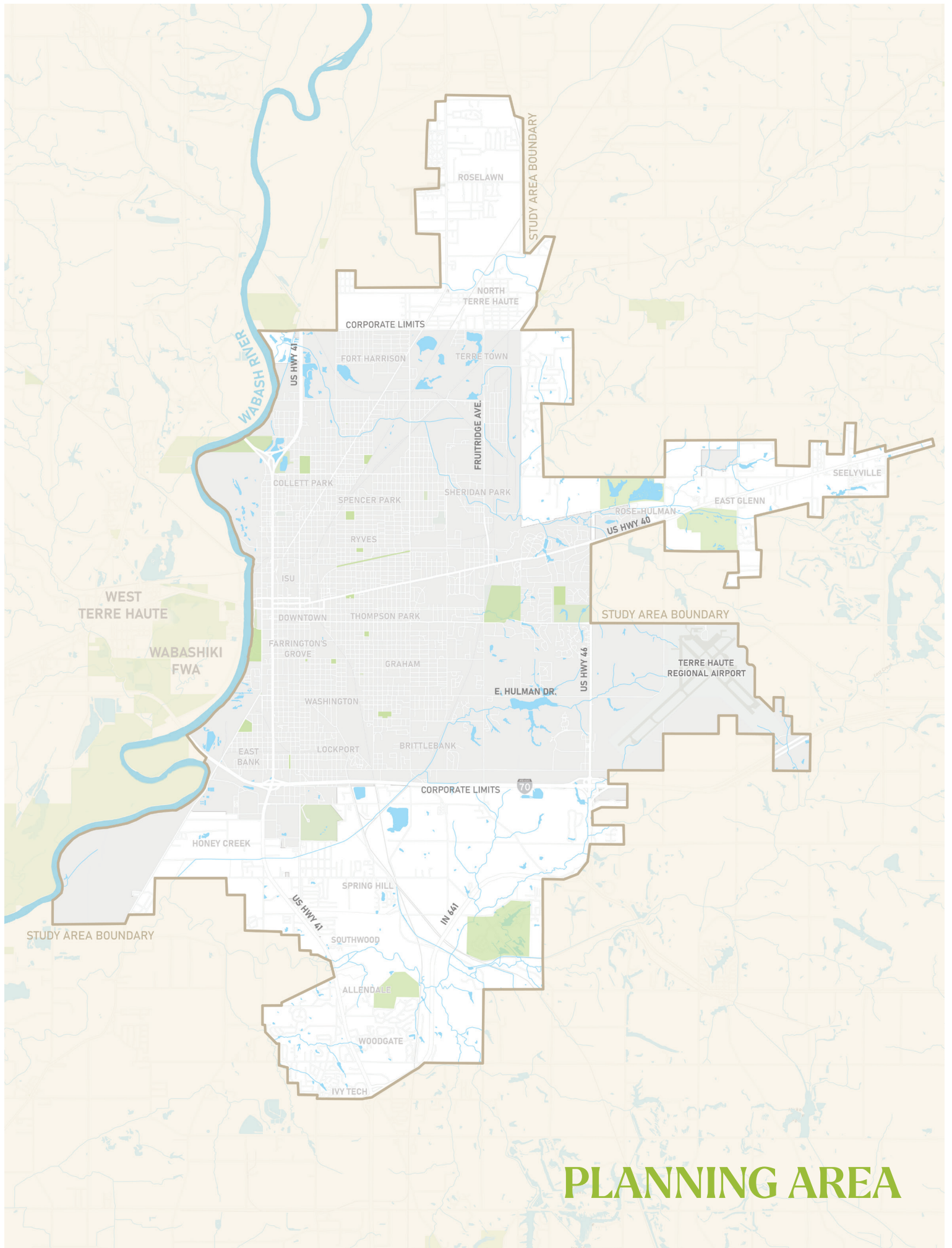
The Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Planning Area encompasses not only Terre Haute, IN, but also the residences within the surrounding urbanized area. The service area extends outside the city limits to include several smaller towns.

Although this is the primary service area, the parks provide service to all communities in Vigo County and beyond. The Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department collaborates with all areas of the community and nearby regions to ensure a safe environment where anyone, regardless of residency, age, mental or physical abilities, or socio-economic status, can participate in a variety of recreational activities.

Overlap between the City of Terre Haute Parks and Recreation facilities and Vigo County Parks and Recreation facilities remains, as the County still maintains several facilities within the city limits. These include the Vigo County Fairgrounds and the popular Fowler Park, located just outside the city limits. Additionally, Hawthorn Park, situated on the east side of the city, is another significant Vigo County park that draws visitors from both within and outside the city.

While non-resident users increase maintenance costs, they also drive economic growth by boosting tourism, local businesses, and tax revenue. Investing in quality-of-life amenities offers a strong return on investment, as Terre Haute attracts enough outside visitors to justify strategic park improvements. Enhancing recreational infrastructure can provide long-term economic benefits that outweigh the opportunity cost of inaction.





PLANNING AREA

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The needs assessment for the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department provides a comprehensive overview of community priorities and serves as the foundation for future planning and improvements. This process, driven by public engagement, surveys, and benchmarking against other parks systems, has identified key areas where the parks system must focus its efforts over the next five years to meet both local and national standards.

Public input was a critical component of the needs assessment, gathered through a series of public meetings, surveys, and focus group sessions. These methods revealed a consistent desire for improvements in several areas, including facility upgrades, expanded recreational programming, better communication, and enhanced safety and accessibility. A notable finding from the public survey highlighted the importance of maintaining and upgrading existing park facilities before focusing on new developments. Restrooms, playgrounds, splash pads, and walking trails were frequently mentioned as needing improvements, especially regarding accessibility features that ensure parks are inclusive for all users.

The community expressed a strong interest in expanding recreational programming for all age groups. Suggestions included additional youth programs, adult sports leagues, and family-oriented events. Popular requests were for more pickleball courts across the city, fitness classes, and special-needs-friendly activities. This expansion of programs is seen as vital for increasing community engagement and encouraging greater use of park facilities.

Safety and infrastructure improvements also emerged as key concerns. Respondents advocated for better lighting, security cameras, and more clearly marked signage throughout parks to create safer environments for all

visitors. Improved trail connectivity across parks and neighborhoods, with a focus on separating pedestrian and vehicle traffic, was highlighted as an important factor in enhancing the overall safety and functionality of the parks system. The community also supported efforts to increase greenway and bike path connections to create a more accessible and connected network of parks and trails.

Environmental stewardship was another priority identified during the public engagement process. The community expressed strong support for initiatives such as tree planting, invasive species removal, and the creation of pollinator spaces through no-mow practices. Expanding naturalized areas within parks and offering educational programs focused on environmental conservation were frequently mentioned as ways to align the parks system with broader sustainability goals.

While the parks system is generally well-served in terms of parkland per capita, the assessment identified a shortfall in staffing and budget. Terre Haute's Parks and Recreation Department operates with an annual budget and staffing levels below both national and state averages, limiting its ability to maintain facilities, address deferred maintenance, and expand services. Increased investment in both staffing and budget will be crucial to keep pace with the community's growing needs and ensure the parks system remains a valuable resource for residents.

In conclusion, Terre Haute's parks system must prioritize upgrading existing amenities, expanding programming, improving safety, and enhancing environmental stewardship. Addressing these needs through thoughtful planning and increased resources will ensure that the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department can meet the evolving needs of the community while preserving natural and cultural resources for future generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The future of Terre Haute Parks is rooted in the original vision of George Kessler, which aimed to create an interconnected system of parks, trails, and open spaces throughout the city. Over the next five years, the plan for “Your Terre Haute Parks” seeks to revitalize this vision by enhancing connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles, creating a unified loop across the city. This plan emphasizes a blend of historic preservation and modernization, ensuring the park system remains relevant while addressing the needs of today’s residents. The Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department remains committed to delivering high-quality recreational opportunities while conserving natural and cultural resources for future generations.

A key element of this revitalization is improving the city’s trail network. While significant progress has been made, the department will continue collaborating with local organizations to expand trails and enhance connectivity between neighborhoods and parks. The future park and trail system map highlights the importance of completing these connections to provide multi-modal routes for walking, cycling, and recreation. Public input has underscored the demand for additional trails, and partnerships with groups like Riverscape’s Trails Committee and Thrive West Central will be essential in driving these developments forward. Additionally, the Parks Department will budget for the maintenance of the expanding greenway network, ensuring long-term sustainability.

In conjunction with trail development, the Wabash River is set to become a central feature of Terre Haute’s recreational landscape through the creation of a blueway. This water trail will offer opportunities for kayaking, canoeing, and rowing, while promoting environmental conservation. The Wabash River Blueway will include accessible launch sites, wayfinding and interpretive

signage, rest areas, and partnerships with local organizations to foster community engagement and support tourism. The blueway will connect key locations along the river, including Fairbanks Park and The Mill, creating a vibrant and scenic water route through Terre Haute.

Recreational programming is also a priority for the Terre Haute Parks Department. Expanding programs for all ages, particularly seniors and underserved groups, is vital to improving quality of life for residents. The Department plans to introduce fitness classes, nature-based programs, and community events while strengthening partnerships with local organizations to enhance the variety of offerings. Outdoor programs such as hiking, fishing, and adventure play will take advantage of the city’s naturalized spaces, further enriching the community’s recreational experiences.

Branding and marketing are essential to the success of the park system’s revitalization. The department will focus on improving signage, launching a dedicated parks website, and promoting events through social media and partnerships. A cohesive branding strategy, combined with improved physical infrastructure, will help restore the positive image of Terre Haute’s parks and attract more visitors.

In summary, the next five years will see a revitalization of Terre Haute’s park system, with a focus on restoring historic visions, expanding trails and blueways, enhancing programming, and improving park branding and infrastructure. These efforts will ensure that Terre Haute’s parks continue to serve the community and conserve natural resources for future generations.





Existing Conditions



COMMUNITY PROFILE

HISTORY OF TERRE HAUTE

Terre Haute, known as the “Queen City of the Wabash,” is a city steeped in history, with its roots deeply intertwined with the Wabash River, early Indiana settlement, and a lasting cultural influence.

As the seat of Vigo County in western Indiana, Terre Haute occupies a 10-mile-square plateau above the river, from which it derives its French name meaning “high ground.” Located 71 miles west-southwest of Indianapolis along Interstate 70 and about two-hours north of Evansville, on Highway 41. The map to the right shows the location of Terre Haute & Vigo County within the context of the State of Indiana.

The city’s strategic position historically made it a key meeting place for Native American tribes, with the Ouiatanon Indians, part of the Wea Tribe, establishing a settlement in the area as early as 1802. This village remained until 1818, following their forced removal after the Treaty of St. Mary’s.

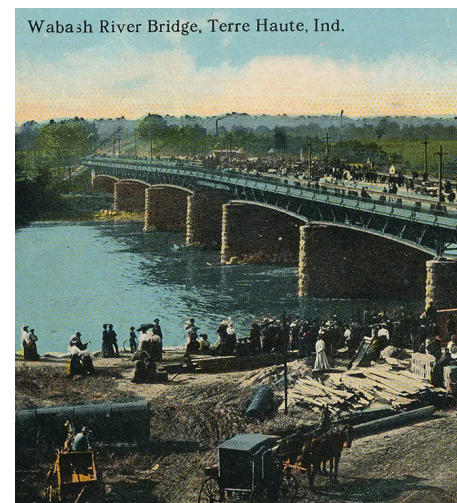
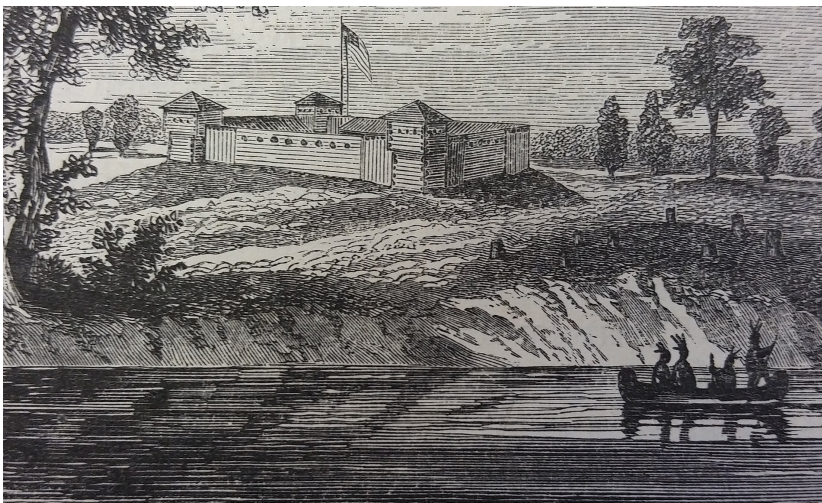
Fort Harrison, constructed in 1811 just two miles north of the tribal settlement, played a significant role during the War of 1812, frequently facing attacks by Tecumseh’s Shawnee. Terre Haute was officially laid out in 1816 and designated as the county seat in 1818. The town quickly emerged as an important community along the Cumberland (National) Road by 1835 and later solidified its

status as a transportation hub with the arrival of the Wabash and Erie Canal in 1849 and the Terre Haute and Richmond Railroad in 1852.

The discovery of local bituminous coal deposits in the 1860s, along with the development of several oil wells, stimulated industrial growth and positioned Terre Haute as a center for labor organizing. The city is a prominent landmark in labor history, with Eugene V. Debs, a native of Terre Haute, founding the American Railway Union in 1893, the country’s first industrial union. His 1890 home still stands as a memorial and labor museum.

By the late 19th century, Terre Haute’s economy had diversified, with industries ranging from

Terre Haute
Vigo County



pharmaceuticals to packaging products, and later to the manufacturing of trailers and audiocassettes. During World War II, the city played a vital role in supporting the war effort, and its federal penitentiary, built in the 1940s, remains a significant presence just south of the city.

Terre Haute is also culturally significant as the birthplace of the iconic Coca-Cola bottle. In 1915, the Root Glass Company in Terre Haute designed the winning bottle for Coca-Cola's national challenge, creating one of the most recognizable designs in the world. The city is also the birthplace of renowned author Theodore Dreiser and his brother, composer Paul Dresser, whose legacy is preserved at a state shrine and memorial. The Sheldon Swope Art Museum, which exhibits American works dating from the 19th century, further enriches the city's cultural heritage.

Higher-Education has long been a cornerstone of Terre Haute's success. Indiana State University, established in 1865, and Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, founded in 1874, are major institutions that continue to thrive. Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College, founded in 1840, is located just five miles north of the city. The LaVern Gibson NCAA Cross Country Course, one of the premier cross-country venues in the country, regularly hosts national sporting events, including the NCAA Division I Cross Country Championships, enhancing Terre Haute's reputation as a hub for both education and athletics.

The city's new Convention Center, opened in 2022, adds to its cultural and economic landscape, featuring a ballroom, conference rooms, and the much-anticipated Larry Bird Museum. This museum honors the achievements of the ISU alum and NBA legend, showcasing memorabilia from Bird's illustrious career and celebrating Hoosier sports.

In recent years, Terre Haute has focused on developing its community assets, with a particular emphasis on riverfront and park improvements. Organizations like Art Spaces, the Turn to the River project, and Riverscape continue to highlight the Wabash River as a vital cultural and historic asset, with initiatives like the Wabashiki Fish and Wildlife Area contributing to the city's recreational offerings. Additionally, Indiana State University has committed to riverfront development with their track and field stadium and The Mill, a large entertainment and music venue, recently located along the river to enhance the area's appeal. These efforts play key roles in the city's ongoing development, helping to drive economic growth, job creation, and talent retention in the region.

Today, the primary focus of this 5-year park planning effort is on improving and maintaining existing park assets. Terre Haute leaders recognize the renewed potential of these public lands to enhance quality of life, housing, and the overall economic viability of the city, ensuring that the "Queen City of the Wabash" remains a vibrant and culturally significant hub in the Wabash Valley and west central Indiana.



RESOURCES

NATURAL RESOURCES

The natural features that make Terre Haute unique also present special challenges and considerations for park development. Below is a brief overview of the surrounding natural features and their significance to the region.

HYDROLOGY & WATER RESOURCES

The Wabash River forms the western boundary of Terre Haute. The name derives from the Miami-Illinois word “waapaahsiiki”, which means water over white stones. French explorers called it “Ouabache” and was pronounced “Wa-Bash” by American settlers. It is the most prominent natural feature within the city. As the Wabash is designated as Indiana’s state river, it has been used for trade, energy, and recreation for hundreds of years throughout the state. Through the 1800s it was navigable by large flatboat cargo ships and Terre Haute was a regular stop for river steamers. Its watershed is within the Mississippi River Basin and drains more than 60 counties across Indiana, Ohio and Illinois. Terre Haute sits within the Middle Wabash Watershed. Historically the Wabash and Erie Canal, which bisected the city, followed much of the river along the eastern bank. Relics of aqueducts and towpaths can still be seen today from HW 41 near the confluence of Otter Creek.

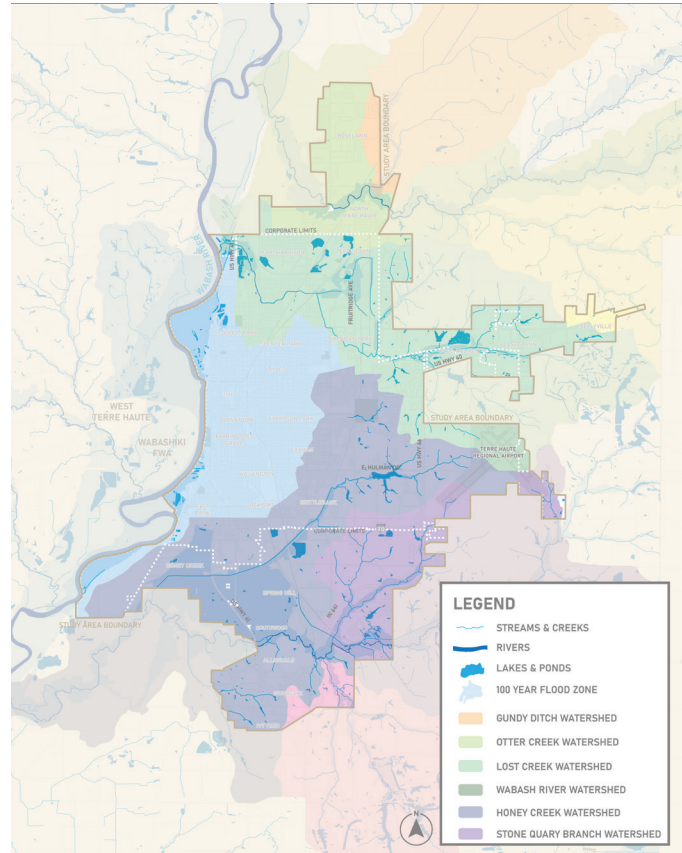
TOPOGRAPHY & SOILS

“The Wabash Lowland” is the larger physiographic region of West Central Indiana and averages about 500 feet above sea level. The area in and around Terre Haute is characterized by these lowlands along the Wabash River, with elevated bluffs offering views of the river valley to the East.

According to Indiana Geological & Water Survey, relatively nonresistant siltstone and Pennsylvanian shale are dominant rock type.

As the French traversed the land near the Wabash River, they settled in the “Terre Haute”. This is

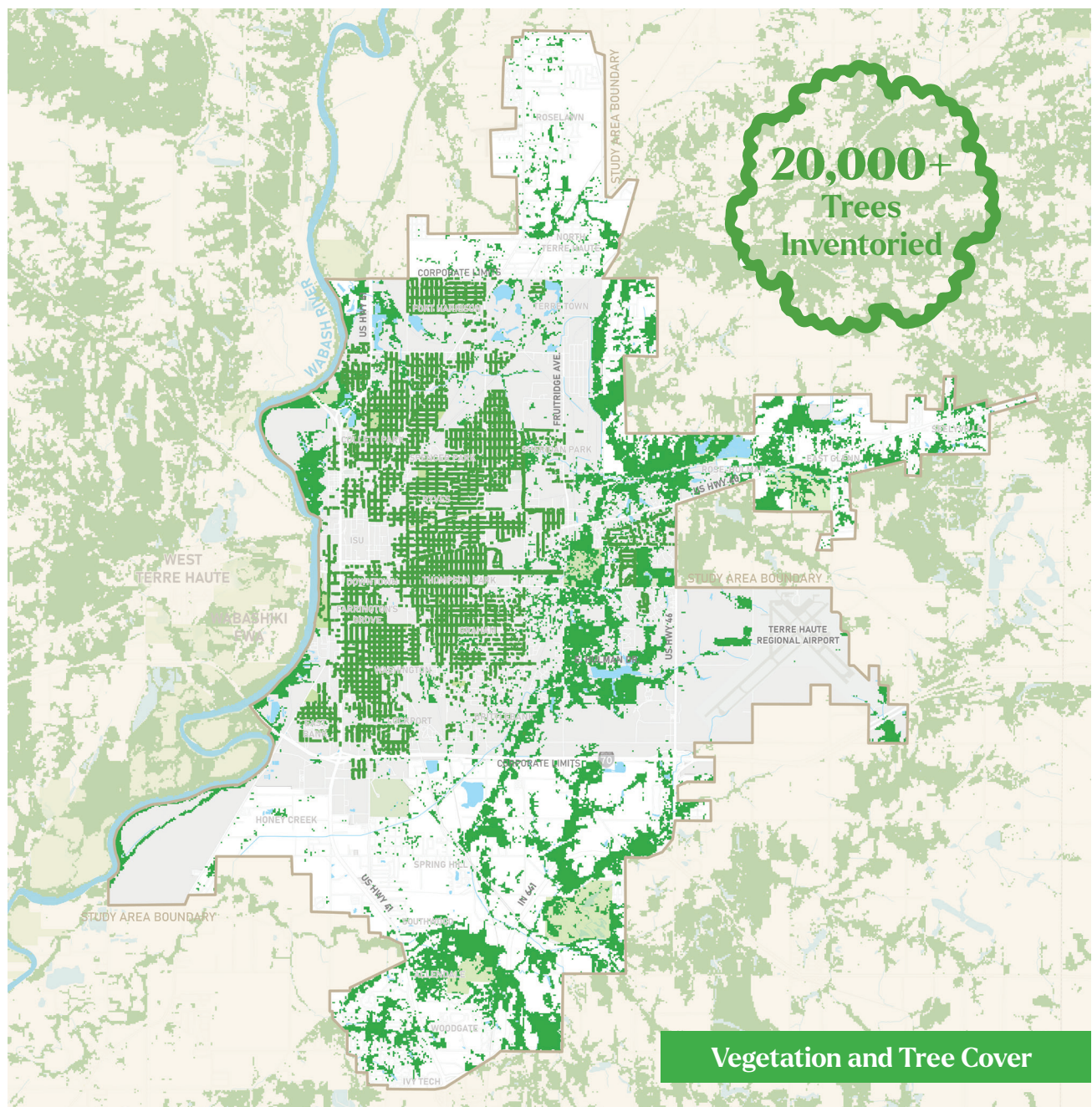
Watershed & Subwatersheds



consistent with much of the eastern bank of the river, known for its high bluffs and dramatic overlooks in the region. In addition, the rolling plateaus and uplands are ideal land for the surrounding agricultural land use. The low land to the west is mostly floodplain including the city of West Terre Haute which is protected by an earthen levee.

The soil makeup consists primarily of a combination of silts and sandy loams deposited during the Wisconsin Glacial Era. Further East in Vigo County, clay soil makes up a large portion of the soil typology. Early 1900s agricultural practices led to draining these soils specifically through tiling and waterway channelization for production. As a result, increased flooding downstream occurs from time to time in the Wabash Valley as the soil does not have adequate infiltration rates due to this practice.

The topography in Terre Haute Parks is largely flat or rolling hills with soils made up of silts, sands



and loams. The silty loam soils in the eastern parks can cause some difficulty with drainage while the sandy soils of the parks near the river contribute to more extensive building foundation requirements and stabilization practices.

More detailed information regarding the various soil types throughout the city can be found by utilizing the USDA's "Web Soil Survey" tool online at: <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/app/websoilsurvey.aspx>

VEGETATION & TREE COVER

Due to increasingly destructive storm damage and decades of urban growth through the 70s, 80s and 90s with minimal policies in place to protect and replenish the urban tree canopy, Terre Haute has seen a trend of declining tree coverage within the study area in the last 60 years. According to TREES, Inc., a local Terre Haute non-profit dedicated to improving the environmental quality of the city, for every four trees that die in the city, only one is replaced. TREES has since been instrumental in advocating for urban forestry education and revitalization,

including partnering with the City to develop a departmental Urban Forestry program that has contributed to introducing approximately 17,000 street trees throughout the city over the past 22 years, which gained Terre Haute a Tree City USA designation from the National Arbor Day Foundation. To achieve this designation, the community had to meet four overarching standards; Maintain a tree board or department, have a community tree ordinance, spend at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry, celebrate Arbor Day. In 2014 received the prestigious Sterling Tree City USA award for its 10-year commitment to professional management and improvement of the city's canopy.

Per the 2021 Urban Forestry Management Plan, the city has inventoried and will continue to study the 147 tree species in its canopy of over 20,000 trees. This plan is accessible on the city's website.

Trees within the 900+ acre park system contribute significantly to the canopy coverage within the city and urbanized study area. The parks have lost coverage in key parks due to recent storms and high winds. Where appropriate, the parks should increase tree coverage at key locations and near high use amenities such as along trails, near playgrounds and in naturalized open space areas.

Parks in the system that would benefit from additional tree coverage include Fairbanks Park (near the river walk and playground), Deming Park (replace from storm damage), Memorial Park (build on the Indiana Mile), Rea Park (reestablish golf course fairway buffer areas) and along the National Road Heritage Trail when appropriate.

NATURE-RELATED CHALLENGES

The parks system faces several nature-related challenges that require proactive solutions. Establishing a permanent natural debris dump and planned burn sites would address current inefficiencies, while a phased clean-up plan for brownfield areas adjacent to Fairbanks Park and the river could tackle long-standing environmental issues. The significant crow population in Terre Haute creates sanitation and perception challenges, which could be mitigated using humane deterrents such as sound devices,

reflective surfaces, and tree pruning. Additionally, implementing strategies for invasive species management, riparian habitat protection, and degraded area restoration, supported by community involvement and grant opportunities, would enhance the ecological and recreational value of the parks.

NATURAL RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Across Vigo County many natural recreation opportunities exist. With the Wabash River as the backbone to the region, it provides a significant outlet for fishing, birding, hunting and a range of watersports. Wabashiki Fish and Wildlife Area is a large contributor on the western bank of the river. Managed in conjunction with DNR and Vigo County Parks, the Wabashiki wetlands is an incredible asset to walkers, kayakers, runners, and cyclists. INDOT recently constructed a 1.2 mile trail connecting Terre Haute, to the Wabashiki wetlands trailhead at Dewy Point.

Other large natural recreation draws in the area include Elliot Woods, Hawthorn Park, and Maple Avenue Park, and Dobbs Nature Park. Of these natural recreation assets, Maple Ave and Dobbs are city parks. There are many opportunities to expand the city parks naturalized offerings, including developing new kayak and boat launch points to the Wabash River, protecting and connecting to additional passive and naturalize areas along creeks and streams near parks such as connecting Coy Park with Wabash Valley Girls Softball Fields and Lost Creek. Reclaiming Thompson Ditch as a natural recreation amenity in the city also provides opportunity for trail and waterway and riparian habitat reconstruction during the upcoming expansion of the Riley Spur Trail project.

Smaller pockets of natural areas may also be provided in portions of the parks as the department sees fit. There are many benefits from naturalization including habitat growth, tree canopy increase, and a reduction in mowing of underutilized turf grass areas.



Eugene V. Debs House & Museum

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Terre Haute's history has contributed to many noteworthy and meaningful events, innovations and legacies in the region, state, nation and world. From the birthplace of the Coca-Cola Company's Contour Bottle to Hulman & Company's Clabber Girl Baking Powder and the Tony Hulman Family ties to Indianapolis Motor Speedway, the city has a renowned track record of achievements benefiting history and culture through the years.

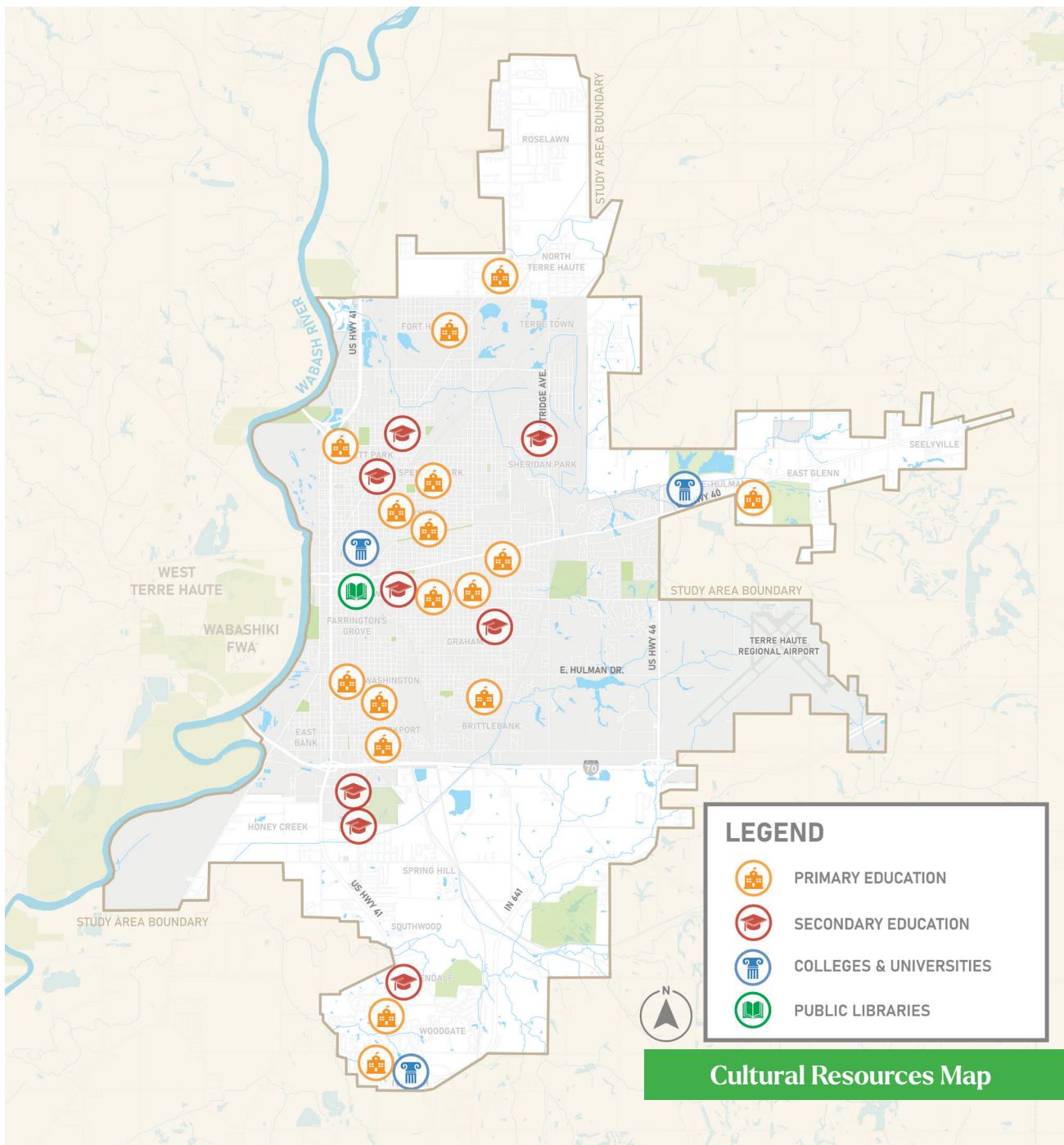
With the city's 1800s and early 1900s booming growth, Chauncey Rose, a businessman and railroad mogul was instrumental in bringing commerce and investment to the Wabash Valley. The Rose Memorial, now located in Fairbanks Park, commemorates his contributions, philanthropy and endowment toward the initial charter of Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. The memorial is currently in disrepair and is largely inaccessible due to concrete and brick failure. Terre Haute Parks and Rec. along with the Mayor's Office are actively seeking funding to repair the historic feature. In addition to these unique resources, Terre Haute also acknowledges its heritage and ties to the indigenous peoples' groups of the area such as the Wea Indians a faction of the Kickapoo Tribe and Miami Nation. Wea resided in the land prior to French settlers and the village was known as Jaccos Towne. A commemorative plaque is in Fairbanks Park along the riverwalk.

The Wabash River will always be intertwined in Terre Haute's historic, cultural and natural resource timeline. Paul Dresser and Theodore Dreiser were brothers who were born and grew up in Terre Haute. Dresser became a song writer and his famous, "On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away" was adopted as Indiana's state song in 1913. Paul's brother, Theodore, was a journalist and novelist. Their boyhood home is a historic landmark and sits within Fairbanks Park near the south entrance. Art Spaces, Inc. drew new attention to the home upon commissioning the sculpture, "A Song for Indiana" by artist Teresa Clark.

Indiana Landmarks Western regional office is located in Terre Haute and is dedicated to preserving and restoring buildings and places across the 17 county region. Of the many significant historic sites in the study area here are a few significant neighborhoods, sites and historic districts.

- Collett Park
- Collett Park Neighborhood Historic District
- Eugene V. Debs House
- Paule Dresser Birthplace
- Farrington's Grove Historic District
- Citizens' Trust Company Building (Sycamore Building)
- Highland Lawn Cemetery
- Indiana Theater
- Markle House and Mill Site
- Ohio Boulevard- Deming Park Historic District
- Rea Park
- Saint Mary-of-the-Woods Historic District
- Twelve Points Historic District
- Wabash Avenue-East Historic District
- Wabash Avenue-West Historic District

In addition to these districts and sites there are over 50 properties within the city individually listed on the National Register of Historic places. Of these, Collett Park should be noted as the first park in Terre Haute to be directly listed on the register in 1981.



Later in 2017, Rea Park and Golf Course was nominated and accepted. These two parks contribute significantly to the department's overall park system regarding entertainment, recreation, community planning and landscape architecture. All of which should continue to be conserved, preserved and maintained for future generations to enjoy and utilize.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Terre Haute has a wealth of cultural resources from museums, music and theater groups to historically significant homes and businesses. The following is a list of some of the many cultural resources available within the city and region. Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department is expanding programming and events.

CULTURAL FEATURES:

University Cultural Features

Rose Hulman Institute of Technology

- Oakley Observatory
- Hatfield Hall

Indiana State University

- Hook Observatory
- Hulman Center
- University Art Gallery
- Tilson Auditorium

St. Mary of the Woods

- Providence Center at St. Mary of the Woods
- St. Mary of the Woods Art Gallery
- White Violet Center for Eco-Justice

Art Groups & Galleries

- Wabash Valley Art Spaces, Inc.
- Arts Illiana, Inc.
- Sheldon Swope Art Museum
- The Halcyon Contemporary Art Gallery
- Titzer Art Studios and Back Gallery
- Music & Theater
- Community Theater of Terre Haute
- Sweet Harmony Women's Barbershop Chorus
- Terre Haute Children's Choir
- Terre Haute Community Band
- Terre Haute Masterworks Chorale
- Terre Haute Sinfonietta Pops Orchestra
- Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra



Museums & Attractions

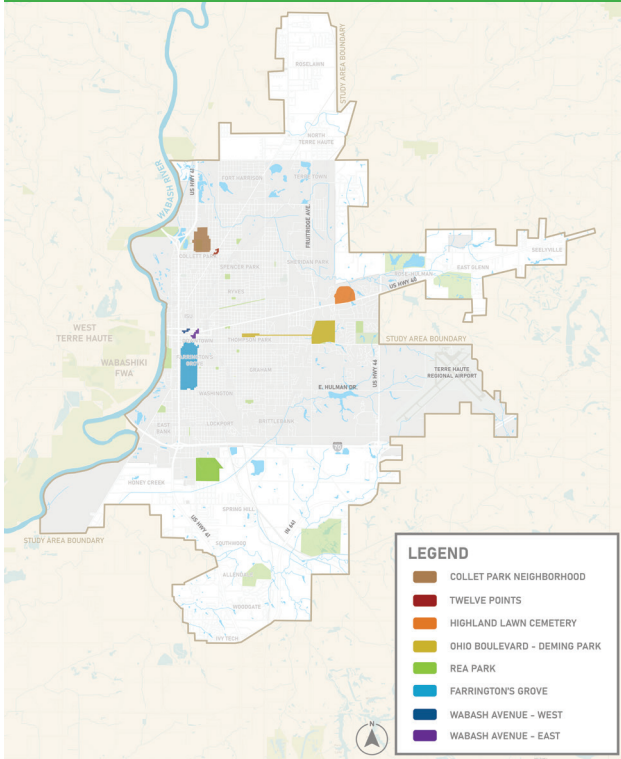
- CANDLES Holocaust Museum and Education Center
- Terre Haute Children's Museum
- Clabber Girl Museum and Country Store
- Larry Bird Museum
- Indiana Association Track and Field Cross Country Coaches Museum
- Eugene V. Debs House Museum
- Fire-Police Museum
- Veterans Memorial Museum
- Fowler Park Pioneer Village (Vigo County Park)
- Dobbs Park Nature Center
- Native American Museum at Dobbs Park
- Paul Dresser Memorial birthplace
- Terre Haute Brewing Company
- Vigo County History Center
- Wabash Valley Railroad Museum
- The Mill Music and Entertainment Venue

Fairs & Festivals

- Farmers Market
- Bikepalooza (Griffen Bike Park)
- Terre Haute Balloon Festival
- Terre Haute Air Show
- Wine on the Wabash
- Banks of the Wabash Festival
- Covered Bridge Festival (Parke County)



Historic Districts Map



MAN MADE RESOURCES

Terre Haute's prosperity is largely due to its strategic location and transportation infrastructure. The city has long been a regional hub for rail, freight, shipping, and industry. The Cumberland Road, which became National Road Highway 40, facilitated westward migration to St. Louis. Highway 41 further enhanced connectivity, linking Chicago to Nashville and beyond. The intersection of HW 40 and HW 41 was crucial for commerce and earned Terre Haute the title "Crossroads of America."

Today, Interstate 70 along the city's southern edge continues to drive commercial development, with recent growth at the I-70 and HW 46 interchange and the southern bypass allowing trucks to avoid much of the city and access HW 41 South.

CSX and Indiana Railroad both have rails that go through Terre Haute. CSX maintains a bulk transfer site in Terre Haute.

Terre Haute International Airport provides military, commercial, corporate, private, and government transportation service for the region. The area surrounding the airport has been designated by the Indiana General Assembly as an Airport Development Zone to encourage development and growth.

In 2023, the newly opened Terre Haute Casino emerged as a significant resource for the city, with an expected annual impact of \$190 million on the local economy. This includes \$10 million distributed among the city, county, school corporation, and a non-profit foundation. The casino's profits are set to provide substantial support for the city budget, aiding in the maintenance of parks, roads, and other amenities.

TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS

Terre Haute is a car-reliant city with a walkability score of 77 out of 100. Although this score indicates some walkable areas, many parts of the city are challenging for pedestrians or cyclists. The most walkable neighborhoods are near downtown, including the ISU campus and Farrington's Grove, while the least walkable areas are on the south and east sides due to suburban sprawl, outdated commercial policies, and vehicle-centric road designs. Major barriers like HW 46, HW 41, HW 40, I-70, and the railroad network disrupt non-vehicular transportation, with heavy traffic making pedestrian crossings difficult.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Expanding bike and pedestrian access through trail connections, crosswalks, and complete streets initiatives, along with repurposing abandoned rail corridors and developing a multi-use trail along Thompson Ditch, would strengthen the trail network. Partnering with the Convention and Visitors Bureau can boost events, revenue, and engagement, while securing grants for park upgrades and historic preservation ensures long-term sustainability. Enhancing security and community patrols can reduce vandalism and improve park safety.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

Data is from US Census American Community Survey 2023 5 year estimates unless otherwise specified.

POPULATION TRENDS

- Terre Haute 2023 US Census Population is 58,502
- Vigo County's current population is at 106,224
- The Median Age in Terre Haute is 32.5 years
- 51.2% male, 48.8% female (approximately 1.05:1)
- 82.2% White, 10.7% Black/African American, 4.3% Two or more races, 2.8% Hispanic, 1.6% Asian, 1% Other races, 0.2% Native American
- Average household size is 2.3 people. Total number of households in Terre Haute is 21,723
- 5.3% of Terre Haute's population speaks a language other than English at home

PAST TRENDS

- Population peaked in 60's with 72,500
- Decreased steeply from 70's to 80's with large unemployment
- Many residents and businesses withdrew from downtown area around this time
- Continued decreasing until slightly increasing early 2000's

CURRENT TRENDS

- Population has been increasing slowly while Vigo County as a whole is in decline
- Strain on parks from increasing population and seasonal college students
- Largest age group is 25-34 years – younger population means parks are important for insuring the health of families and youth
- Median family income is \$38,061 (average: \$54,114), unemployment rate is 3.8% (ntnl average 4%), about 1/3 of population below federal poverty level

ECONOMY

- 7.5% unemployment rate
- Median household income \$41,230, 26.4% poverty rate (significantly larger than IN rate: 12.6%)
- Home ownership rate 53.0% (IN: 70.8%)
- 60.7% of owners of owner occupied units have a mortgage
- Housing units: 22,406 occupied units, 3,484 vacant units (13.5% vacancy) (US rate: 5.7%)
- Median gross rent \$847 (IN: \$972)
- Moved 2021 or later: 10.6% of renter occupied, 2.0% of owner occupied
- 10% of households have no access to a vehicle
- 26.4% of people live below poverty line (IN: 12.6%)
- Education/healthcare/social assistance makes up the largest portion of the workforce with 30.9%

EDUCATION

- 92.9% of population has a high school diploma or higher
- 23.1% have bachelor's degree or higher

COMMUTING

- The average travel time for workers is 17.2 minutes.
- 73.6% of workers commute by driving alone, and the rest by carpooling and walking.

SUMMARY & APPLICATION TO PARKS

The demographic and economic landscape of Terre Haute underscores the critical need for accessible and inclusive parks that serve its diverse and economically challenged population. With a growing younger demographic and 26.4% of residents living below the poverty line, parks must provide affordable recreation, promote public health, and create equitable gathering spaces for families and individuals of all ages.



As a city that includes college students, working-class families, retirees, and a significant number of ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households, Terre Haute faces unique challenges and opportunities in park and recreation development. Meeting the needs of these varied groups requires strategic planning, active community engagement, and innovative funding solutions to ensure that public spaces remain welcoming, functional, and sustainable for all residents.

PROPOSED METHODS TO SERVE DIVERSE DEMOGRAPHICS:

Inclusive Recreational Programming:

- **Affordable Activities:** Offer low-cost or free recreational programs, such as community sports leagues, fitness classes, and cultural events, to ensure accessibility for all income levels.
- **Student Engagement:** Develop partnerships with local universities to create programs that attract students, such as intramural sports, study-friendly park areas with Wi-Fi, and student-led community service projects.

Accessible Facilities:

- **Universal Design:** Ensure that park facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities and the elderly by incorporating universal design principles, such as smooth pathways, adequate seating, and accessible restrooms.
- **Transportation Access:** Improve public transportation routes and provide bike-sharing stations to facilitate easy access to parks for those without personal vehicles.

Community Partnerships:

- **Local Organizations:** Collaborate with organizations like the United Way of the Wabash Valley to identify and address the specific needs of ALICE households, leveraging existing programs and resources.
- **Volunteer Programs:** Establish volunteer opportunities for residents to contribute to park maintenance and programming, fostering community ownership and reducing operational costs.

FINANCIAL STRATEGIES FOR PARK DEVELOPMENT:

Given Terre Haute's median household income of \$41,230 and a poverty rate of 26.4%, funding new park developments and their associated

maintenance costs requires creative financial strategies:

Grant Funding:

- State and Federal Grants: Pursue grants specifically designed for community development and recreation, such as those offered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources and federal programs.
- Private Foundations: Seek funding from private foundations that support urban green spaces and community health initiatives.

Public-Private Partnerships:

- Corporate Sponsorships: Engage local businesses in sponsorship opportunities for park facilities and programs, providing them with recognition while offsetting costs.
- University Collaborations: Partner with local universities to share resources for park development, leveraging their interest in providing recreational spaces for students.

Community Fundraising:

- Crowdfunding Campaigns: Launch community-driven fundraising campaigns to finance specific projects, fostering a sense of ownership among residents.
- Membership Programs: Implement membership programs for frequent park users, offering benefits while generating steady revenue.

Operational Efficiency:

- Energy-Efficient Infrastructure: Invest in energy-efficient technologies to reduce long-term operational costs.
- Volunteer Maintenance Programs: Organize community volunteer days for park maintenance, reducing labor expenses and promoting community engagement.

By implementing these strategies, Terre Haute can develop and maintain park facilities that cater to its diverse population, ensuring that recreational opportunities are accessible and sustainable for all residents.

IMPACT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

As a university city, Terre Haute experiences economic and social fluctuations driven by its student population. Home to Indiana State University (ISU), Rose-Hulman, and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods, the city sees seasonal economic shifts and a lower median age due to student influx. However, limited retention of highly educated residents (23.1% with a bachelor's or higher) affects its demographics, economy, and poverty rates. While students support local businesses, their low reported incomes skew poverty data and highlight disparities between temporary and permanent residents.

College students create a younger median age, but the city's working-class and retiree populations create an age divide. During the school year, students drive demand for housing, transportation, and entertainment, benefiting bars, coffee shops, and outdoor recreation, particularly trails like the National Road Heritage Trail through ISU and Rose-Hulman. In summer, focus shifts to family-friendly events, and museums and parks see demographic changes.

Students earn income through part-time jobs, financial aid, and gig work, with spending peaking at semester starts and slowing during finals. Restaurants, retail, and entertainment benefit most. However, beyond students, industrial decline and unemployment pose real economic challenges for residents.

To address these issues, public-private partnerships should expand job opportunities and stabilize seasonal economic shifts through internships and student engagement programs. Expanding affordable public transit and housing can ease financial strain. Parks should emphasize multi-use, low-cost spaces, funded through grants, sponsorships, and university collaborations. Data-driven planning will help create policies that support both students and permanent residents, ensuring long-term economic stability.

MANAGEMENT & ORGANIZATION

STAFFING

Terre Haute Parks and Recreation currently employs 54 full-time employees and approximately 74 part-time and seasonal staff to assist with operations during peak seasons and to help manage special-use facilities. Staffing levels fluctuate based on demand for park services and programming, particularly during summer months when maintenance and recreational offerings are at their highest.

As the Terre Haute Parks system continues to grow and offer more amenities and programming to the community, staffing needs will need to be re-evaluated. The Department is not only focused on maintaining the current facilities and programs but also working towards significant upgrades and expansions to its offerings. To support this growth, it will be critical to fill any vacant positions and regularly assess staffing requirements to meet operational goals.

Additional responsibilities placed on the department, whether through new facilities or expanded programming, may require increased staffing resources. To meet these demands, several options should be considered:

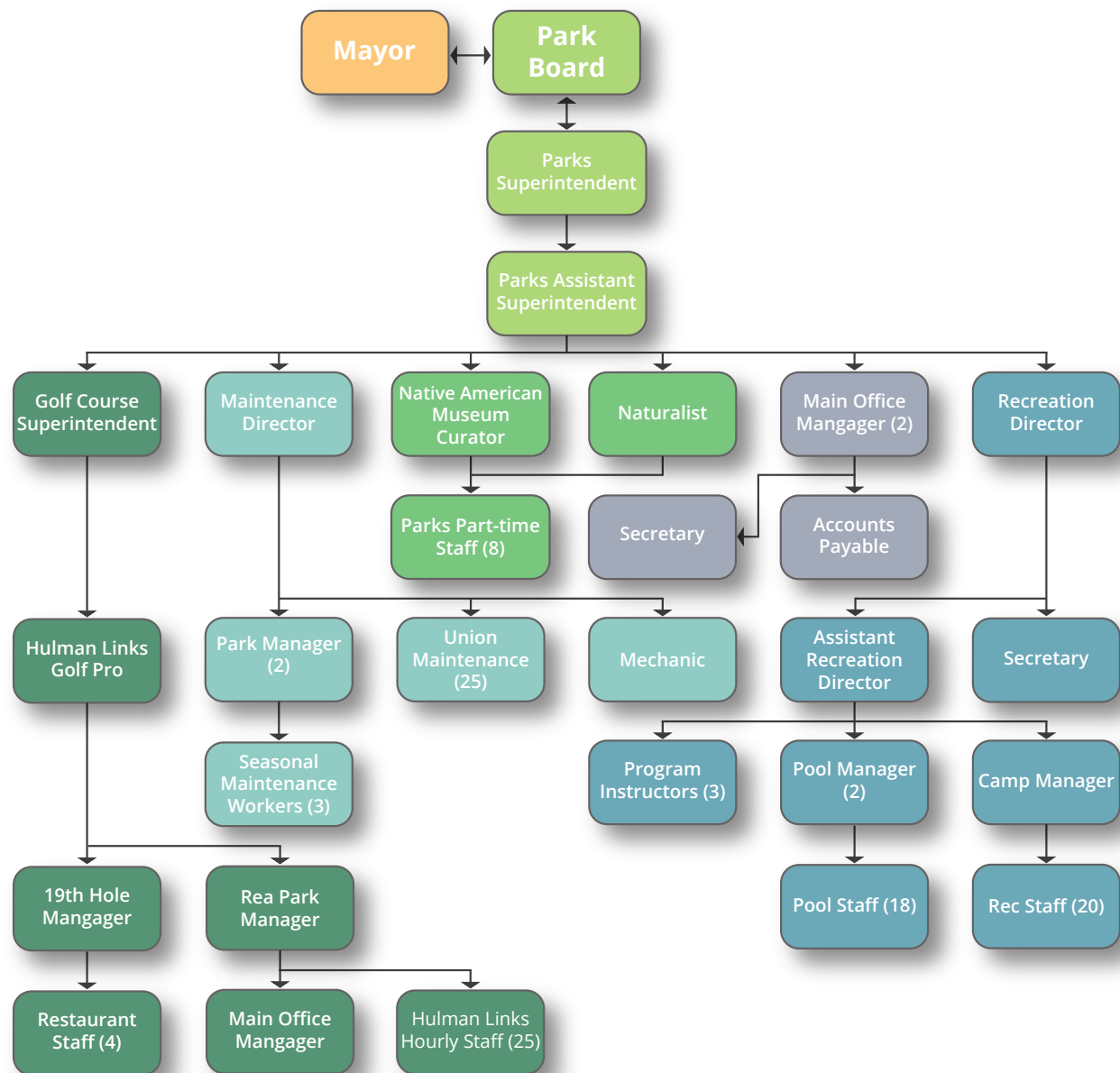
- Hiring additional full-time staff to support expanded facilities and services
- Employing more seasonal staff to handle peak season demand for new programs and facilities
- Contracting with external vendors for specialized maintenance or operations of certain park functions

BUDGET

Terre Haute Parks and Recreation oversees a variety of parks and recreational areas with an annual operating budget of approximately \$4.5 million. This budget supports the day-to-day operations of the parks, which include staff salaries, wages, and benefits, as well as operational costs like programs, services, supplies, utilities, and overhead. Maintenance of buildings, equipment, sports fields, and other park properties is also included.

While the current budget covers general operations, any significant facility improvements or capital projects that exceed a specified threshold must be requested through the Park Board and City of Terre Haute. Capital improvement funding is allocated separately and distributed by the city based on needs and available resources.

TERRE HAUTE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



The Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department organizational chart reflects the current hierarchy and chain of command in leadership and delegation within the organization. It is recommended that this structure be revisited and updated to create a clearer framework for the Department's future.

PARKS PLANNING HISTORY

PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

In 2008, the City of Terre Haute embarked on an extensive park planning process, culminating in the 2009-2013 Parks Master Plan. This long-term vision emphasized the value of parks and served as a guide for preserving this vital community asset. However, subsequent budget cuts led to reduced staffing levels, deferred maintenance projects, and cuts to programming.

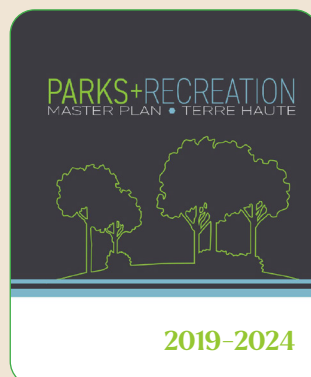
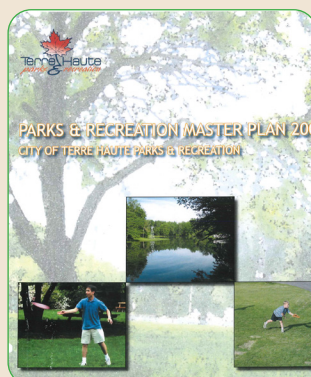
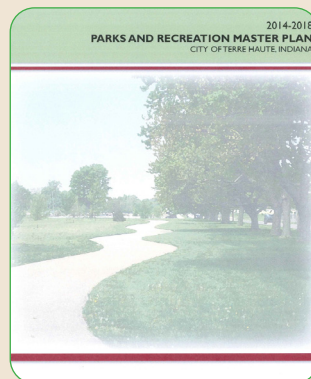
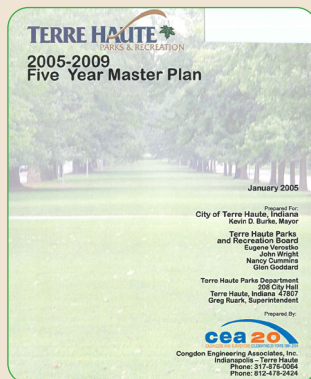
The 2014-2018 Plan anticipated these lean years, focusing on maintaining existing assets—addressing deferred maintenance, replacing outdated equipment, and updating aging facilities.

With the 2019-2023 Plan, the department looked ahead as the budget began to slowly recover. Incremental progress was made, leveraging additional funding from various local, state, and federal sources, particularly through COVID Relief funds. This allowed the department to build momentum and continue moving forward.

As the department now revisits these previous planning efforts, there is a renewed commitment to the long-term vision and goals established by earlier plans. The upcoming five-year plan will include new goals, evaluation metrics, timelines, budgets, and resources. A key focus will be on neighborhood parks, which will handle the day-to-day needs of the primary service area, while Regional Parks will serve as the anchors, providing facilities that cater to the surrounding five-county region.

There is also a recognition that many critical issues throughout the parks system require action plans, but hold little departmental accountability. Deferred maintenance must be addressed, golf operations need investment, aging and defunct aquatics facilities must be upgraded, and the trails network needs expansion to better serve the city's population. Strong local leadership will be essential to implementing solutions to these challenges over the next five years and beyond.

PREVIOUS 5-YEAR PLANS FROM 2005–2024



COMMON THEMES & ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN PREVIOUS PLANNING

- Maintenance, Safety & Equipment Concerns
- The Wabash River is an underdeveloped resource
- Many Playgrounds & Programs Facilities are outdated and non-ADA compliant
- Financial Constraints
- Staffing & Programming Limitations

RELATED & PAST PLANS

SOURCE: FAIRBANKS PARK MASTER PLAN



RECENT PARK-SPECIFIC PLANNING EFFORTS

- Wabash River Regional Master Plan
- Fairbanks Park Master Plan
- Regional Aquatic & Athletic Facility Feasibility Study
- Deming Park Aquatic Center
- Herz-Rose Park Master Plan
- Herz-Rose Park Construction
- Rea Park Master Plan
- Rea Park Clubhouse Construction
- Turn To The River Phase 1
- Turn To The River Phase 2
- Riley Spur Trail Plan
- Racer Air Plaza
- Fairbanks Park Crew Boathouse
- Lost Creek Settlement Art Sculpture
- Brittlebank Park Renovations
- Sheridan Park Skatepark
- Voorhees Skatepark Expansion
- Downtown Civic Plaza

See appendix for further information on the park-specific plans

HISTORIC PARKS PLANNING

THE LEGACY OF GEORGE KESSLER AND HIS IMPACT ON THE TERRE HAUTE PARK SYSTEM

George Kessler was born in Germany in 1862. As a young boy, he immigrated to the United States with his family a few years later. His education and skill in forestry, botany, engineering and gardening led Kessler to become one of the most impactful landscape architects of the early 1900s with over 200 projects in 100 cities across the United States. Kessler gained recognition in Indiana through his park and boulevard plans in Indianapolis and Fort Wayne. Terre Haute leaders also saw the value of his skills and enlisted him to plan for the rapidly growing city on the Wabash River.

As journalist Mike McCormick stated in his July 18th, 2004 newspaper article, "The impact of nationally renowned landscape architect and city planner, George Kessler has long been forgotten in Terre Haute."

Today in Terre Haute, Kessler's influence is still visible if you know where to look. During the days of Chauncey Rose, Kessler was first commissioned in the Terre Haute area to design the Rose Polytechnic Institute campus. This school later grew to become the prestigious civil engineering school known today as Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. This initial commission opened the door for Kessler to work with Mayor Charles S. Hunter and influenced the decision to establish Terre Haute as the first "Parks District City" in Indiana.

This pivotal decision afforded Kessler the opportunity to influence and design many iconic parks that Hautians and Wabash Valley residents continue to frequent and enjoy today, including Fairbanks Park, Deming Park, Memorial Stadium, Ohio Boulevard, Collett Park, Rea Park, and Spencer Ball Park. Under his recommendation, the park board even established a visionary plan to create a parkway, Paul Dresser Drive, that would circumvent the entire city as a link between many of the anchor

parks. Although the parkway was not realized, this dream lives on and is known locally as the "Terre Haute Emerald Necklace"; paying homage to Kessler's mentor Fredrick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace park chain in Boston, Massachusetts.

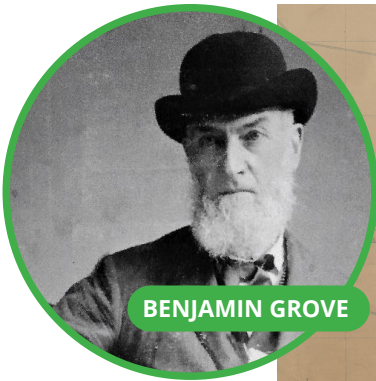


It's clear that these plans established the framework of the Terre Haute parks system we know today. Unfortunately, due to Kessler's tragic death in 1923, the vision of a physically connected park system was not fully realized and left the parks fragmented.

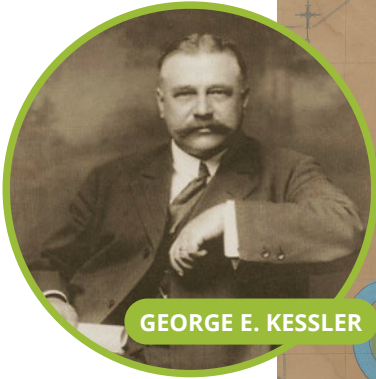
At the time of Kessler's death, his apprentice and Indiana native, Lawrence Sheridan, became the successor who continued to implement many of the Indiana projects set in motion by Kessler, such as Kessler Boulevard in Indianapolis. The most notable of Sheridan's work in Terre Haute is the Rea Park golf course and clubhouse, which is currently undergoing renovation.

In 2016 a map was recovered from Terre Haute City Hall and restored by Indiana University Head of Conservation, Jim Canary. The map showcases the visionary layout of the Kessler parkway system. The historic map to the right depicts this vision. Additional plans created by Kessler were scanned as part of this project. See Appendicies for these plans including Spencer Ball Park, Fairbanks Park, Deming Park, and Vigo County Fairgrounds (Memorial Stadium).

HISTORIC GEMS IN THE PARK SYSTEM



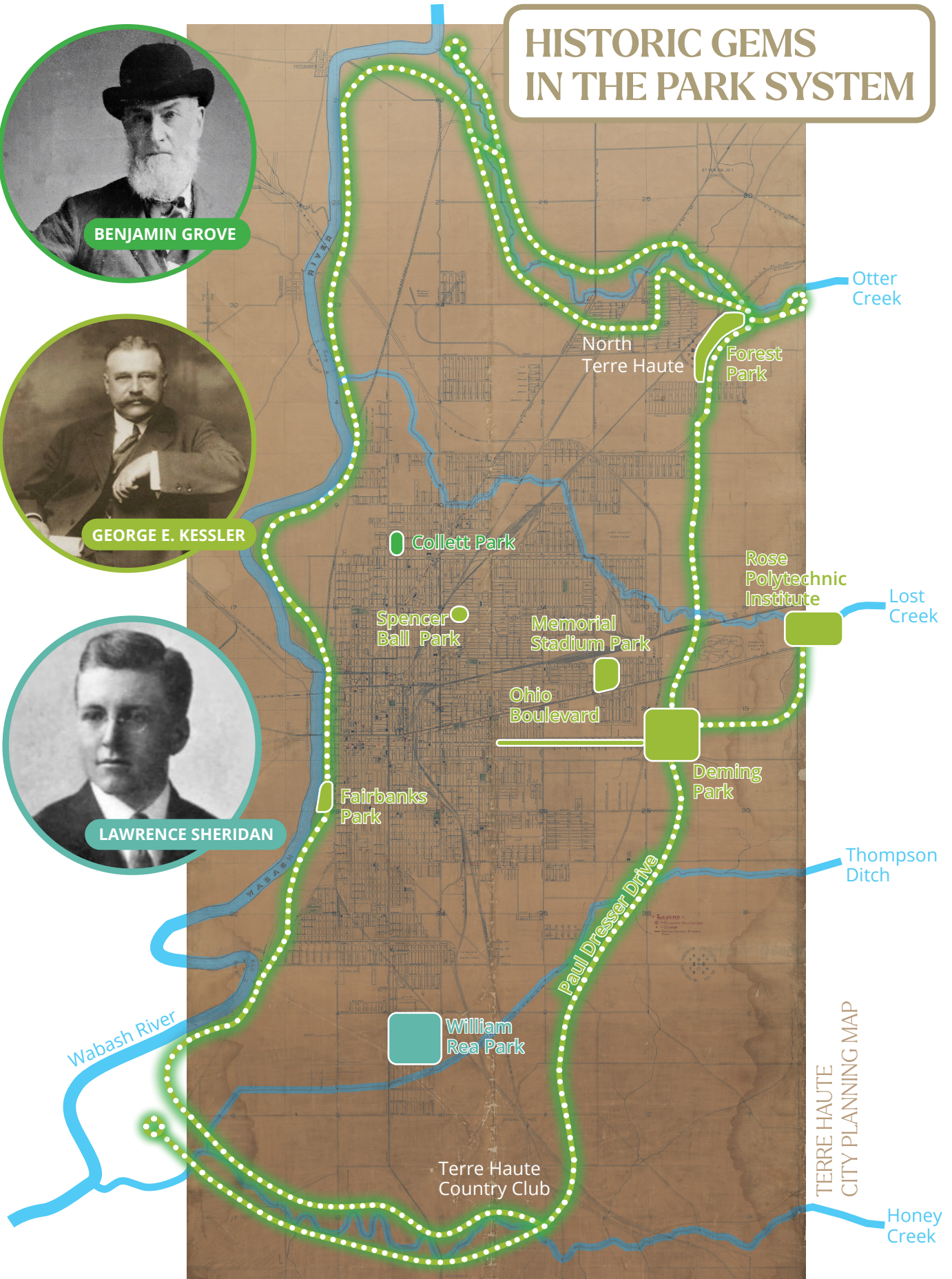
BENJAMIN GROVE



GEORGE E. KESSLER

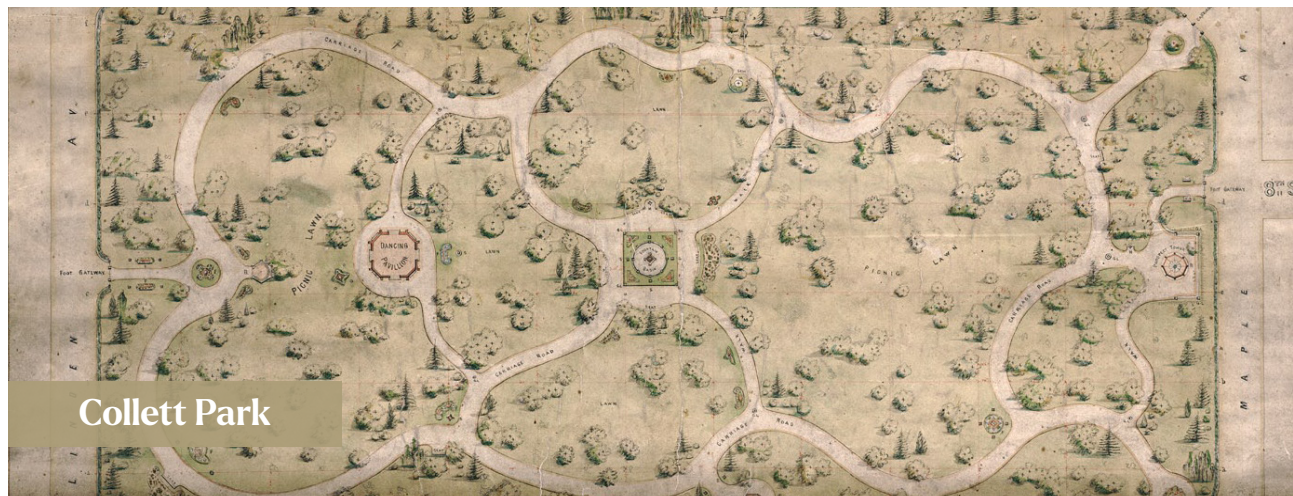


LAWRENCE SHERIDAN



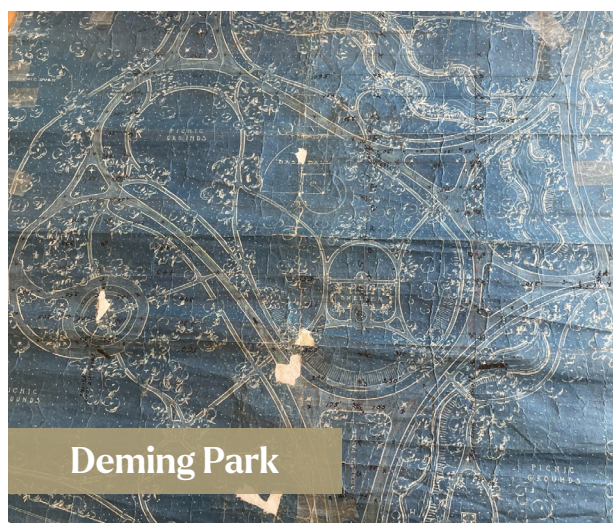
HISTORIC PLANS

BENJAMIN GROVE 1883



Collett Park

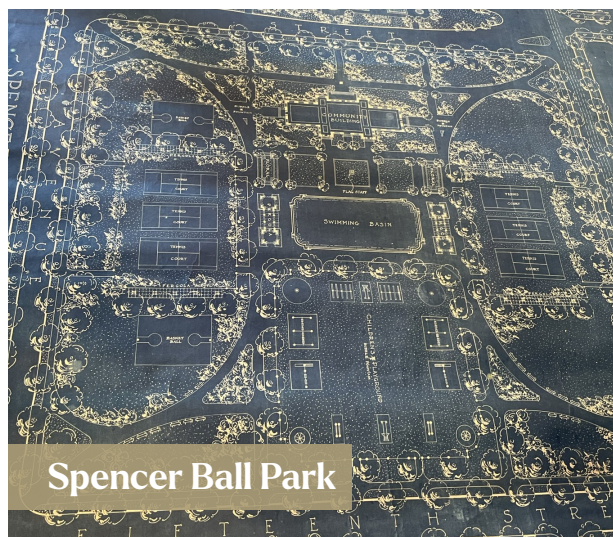
GEORGE KESSLER 1921



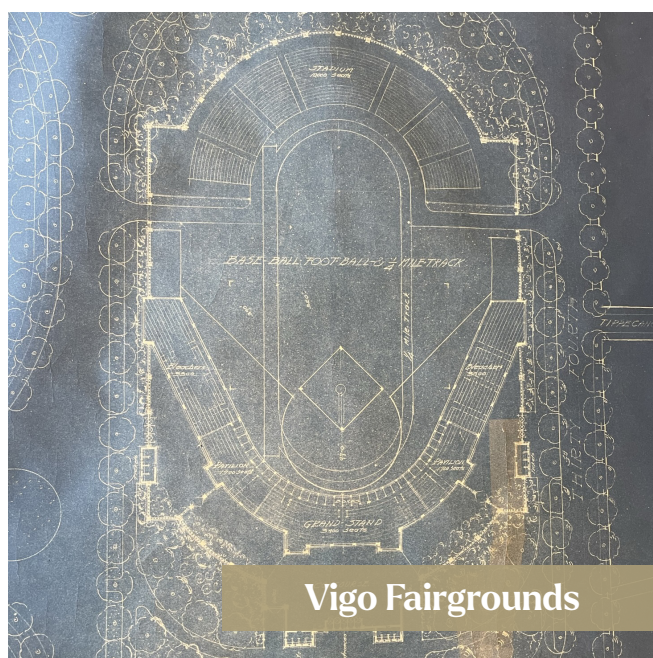
Deming Park



Fairbanks Park

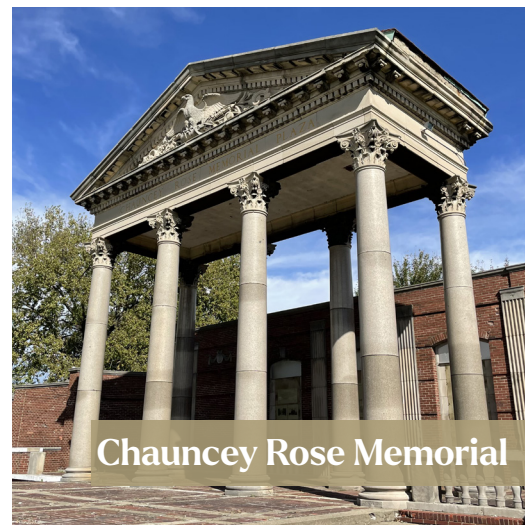


Spencer Ball Park



Vigo Fairgrounds

HISTORIC STRUCTURES



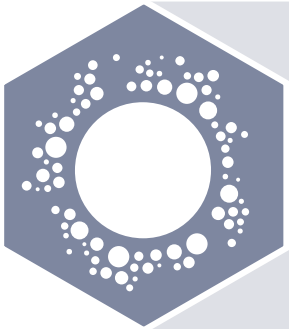
FACILITY CLASSIFICATION TYPES

The classification of parks and facilities within the Terre Haute system, established during the last 5-year plan, was analyzed and reevaluated. This format became confusing and difficult for the parks department over time. A new classification type was generated during this planning process using a nationally recognized standard published by the National Recreation and Park Association. This classification system guide provides a simple grouping of parks and facilities based on their size, service area, and/or special amenity offerings. The NRPA acknowledges that each community is unique in its geographic, cultural,

and socio-economic make-up. These broad definitions have been adapted to meet the demographics and conditions of Terre Haute.

The 6 primary categories include:

- Regional Parks
- Nature Parks
- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Linear Parks & Greenways
- Pocket Parks



REGIONAL PARKS

- Typically the largest parks within a municipal system, serving the recreational needs of the entire community and often those of surrounding smaller communities
- Usually span 75 acres or more and often feature a mix of maintained lawns, natural areas, forests, lakes, and riverfronts.
- Amenities found in community parks, regional parks often include nature centers, concession buildings, multiple athletic complexes, and expansive natural areas.



NATURE PARKS

- Large areas of natural, undesignated landscapes, such as wooded areas, wetlands, or meadows
- These spaces remain in their natural state, they are still accessible to the public and are managed on a larger scale to ensure their preservation.
- Allows visitors to experience nature while maintaining the integrity of the ecosystem.



COMMUNITY PARKS

- Typically larger than neighborhood parks, serve a broader area due to their extensive amenities, such as skate parks, splash pads, dog parks, and larger playgrounds.
- These parks are designed and sized to serve a significant portion of the city's population, often covering 10 to 75 acres with a service area of up to three miles.
- They may include facilities for community-wide activities, such as athletic complexes, aquatic facilities, and public restrooms, along with passive open spaces and unique features like lakes or creeks.



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- Similar to pocket parks but on a slightly larger scale, typically no more than 5 acres.
- They offer amenities like walking trails, playgrounds, picnic shelters, and open spaces that can be utilized in various ways by nearby residents within a one-mile service area.
- Located in established urban neighborhoods, neighborhood parks offer localized spaces for gathering, socializing, and enjoying the outdoors, with amenities often tailored to families and community groups.



LINEAR PARKS & GREENWAYS

- Include narrow green spaces, trails, and pathways designed to serve city-wide or regional connectivity purposes.
- These parks often follow natural features like rivers or ridgelines, or they may be established along former railways or utility corridors.
- They also play a crucial role in linking different neighborhoods and communities, creating a continuous network of green spaces.



POCKET PARKS

- Previously identified as “block parks” in Terre Haute’s 5-year parks plan, play a vital role in providing access to open space. Often referred to as “mini parks,” these spaces are typically no more than one acre in size.
- They can be found in overlooked areas like residual triangles along roadways, vacant lots, or flexible spaces in urban environments.
- These unique, often understated spaces can serve as quick points of interest for meeting up with friends, connecting to trails, seating areas, community gateways, or simple playgrounds and recreation amenities.



GOLF COURSES

- Expansive landscapes designed for players of all levels, featuring well-maintained greens, fairways, and various hazards. Courses capture a large range of users in the Wabash Valley Region with some traveling up to 45 miles+.
- Typical amenities often include elements such as driving ranges, clubhouses, and pro shops, making them comprehensive environments for both practice and play.



SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

- Dedicated spaces designed for specific activities or purposes, such as sports complexes, community centers, or cultural venues.
- These facilities often provide specialized amenities and resources tailored to their unique function, attracting a focused audience for events, programs, or recreation.
- Located strategically within the community, they enhance the local infrastructure by offering unique services or experiences that may not be available elsewhere.

EXISTING PARKS SYSTEM

EXISTING PARK SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The Terre Haute Parks System is comprised of facilities managed under Terre Haute Department of Parks and Recreation jurisdiction. The Department of Parks and Recreation maintains and operates 34 parks with 9 special use facilities across 1,152 acres of land with over 18 miles of paved and soft surface trails. The department of parks and recreation oversees a wide range of programming and events including nature education, golf, festivals, day camps, aquatics, exercise and athletics.

REGIONAL PARKS

- 1 DEMING PARK
- 2 FAIRBANKS PARK
- 3 WILLIAM S. REA PARK

NATURE PARKS

- 4 DOBBS MEMORIAL PARK
- 5 MAPLE AVE. NATURE PARK

COMMUNITY PARKS

- 6 BRITTLEBANK PARK
- 7 COLLETT PARK
- 8 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK
- 9 VOORHEES PARK

GOLF COURSES

- 10 REA PARK GOLF COURSE
- 11 HULMAN LINKS

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- 12 COY PARK
- 13 STEEG PARK (GILBERT)
- 14 HERZ-ROSE PARK
- 15 PAUL DRESSER MEMORIAL PARK
- 16 SHERIDAN PARK
- 17 SPENCER F. BALL PARK
- 18 THOMPSON PARK
- 19 WASHINGTON PARK

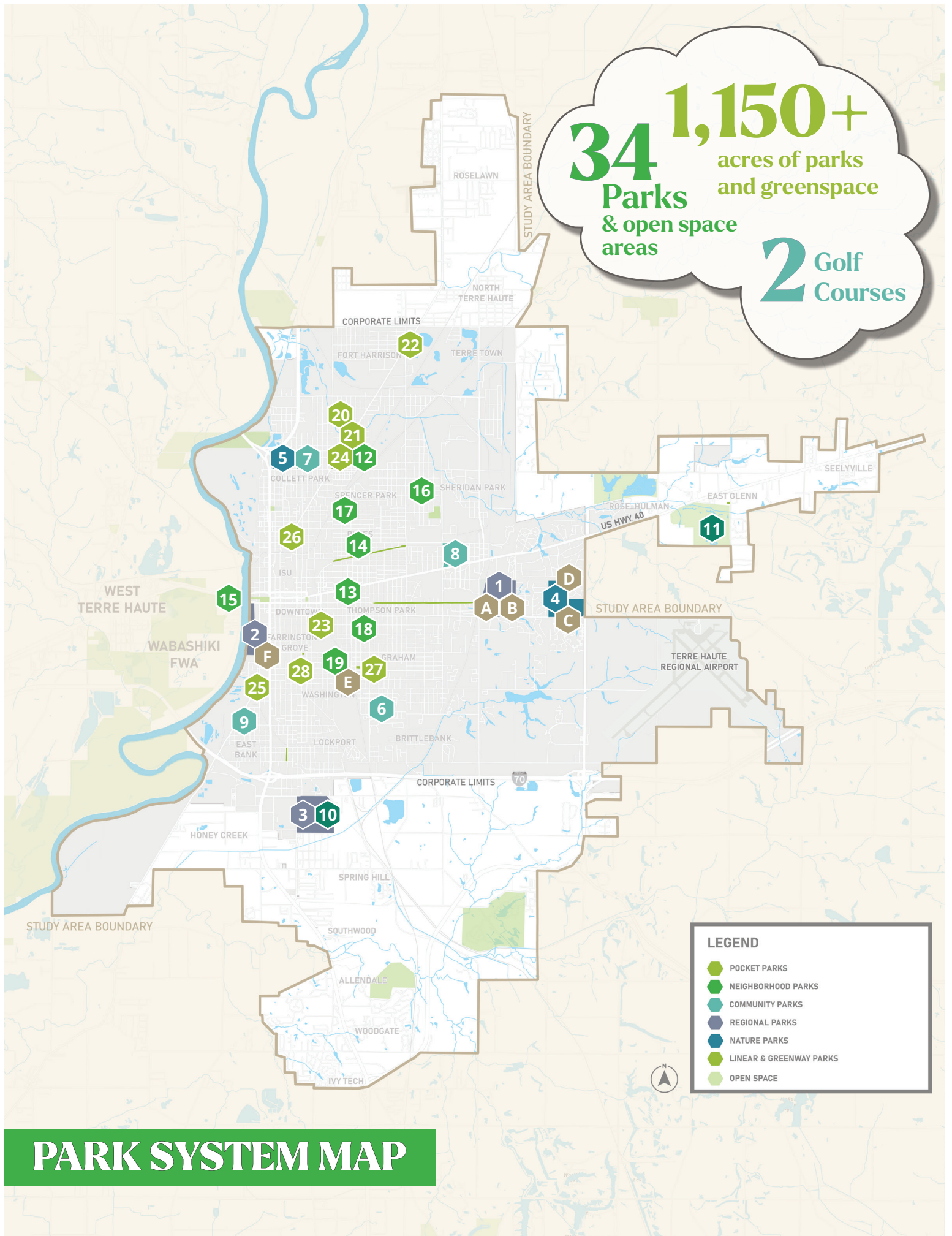
POCKET PARKS

- 20 ANACONDA PARK
- 21 BOY SCOUT PARK
- 22 FIVE TRIANGLES PARK
- 23 FIRE & POLICE MEMORIAL PARK
- 24 GOLD MEDAL PARK
- 25 JOHN HANLEY JR. PARK
- 26 VI COTTRELL PARK
- 27 GRAHAM PARK
- 28 OAKLEY PARK

SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

- A DEMING PARK POOL
- B TORNER COMMUNITY CENTER
- C DOBBS NATURE CENTER
- D NATIVE AMERICAN MUSEUM
- E BOOKER T. WASHINGTON COMMUNITY CENTER
- F VIGO COUNTY YMCA

34 **1,150+**
Parks acres of parks
& open space and greenspace
2 Golf Courses



EXISTING TRAIL NETWORK

EXISTING TRAIL & GREENWAY NETWORK OVERVIEW

Terre Haute's 18-mile greenway system promotes outdoor recreation, community connectivity, and alternative transportation through multi-use trails that support walking, running, and cycling. Key features include the National Road Heritage Trail and Wabash Heritage Trail. While the greenway fosters healthy lifestyles and environmental stewardship, improvements are needed to better connect parks, neighborhoods, and attractions. Though expansion is planned, an actionable greenway and trails plan is not yet in place. The city is actively pursuing funding for a bicycle and pedestrian plan to assess current and future connectivity needs.

BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES & CLASSIFICATION TYPES

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Terre Haute parks provide a variety of paths and trails that promote recreation and connectivity. Concrete and asphalt multi-use paths accommodate walkers, runners, and cyclists, while soft surface trails offer a more natural hiking experience. Trailheads are equipped with parking, restrooms, and bicycle racks to ensure convenience and safety.

Future expansions will further enhance the network, with planned trails like the Riley Spur and connections to the Wabashiki Fish and Wildlife Area, Parke County, and Clay County.

Typical bicycle and pedestrian facilities include:

- Multi-use paths & sidewalks
- Bicycle Lanes & sharrows
- Soft surface trails
- Trailhead nodes with parking, restrooms, and bicycle racks
- Informational and directional signage



LINEAR PARKS & GREENWAYS

- 1 CENTENNIAL PARK
- 2 NATIONAL ROAD HERITAGE TRAIL (NRHT)
- 3 NRHT JONES TRAILHEAD
- 4 NRHT TWIGG REST AREA
- 5 OHIO BOULEVARD
- 6 SIXTH STREET BOULEVARD
- 7 WABASH RIVER HERITAGE TRAIL
- 8 INDIANA VETERANS' MEMORIAL MILE

46.2

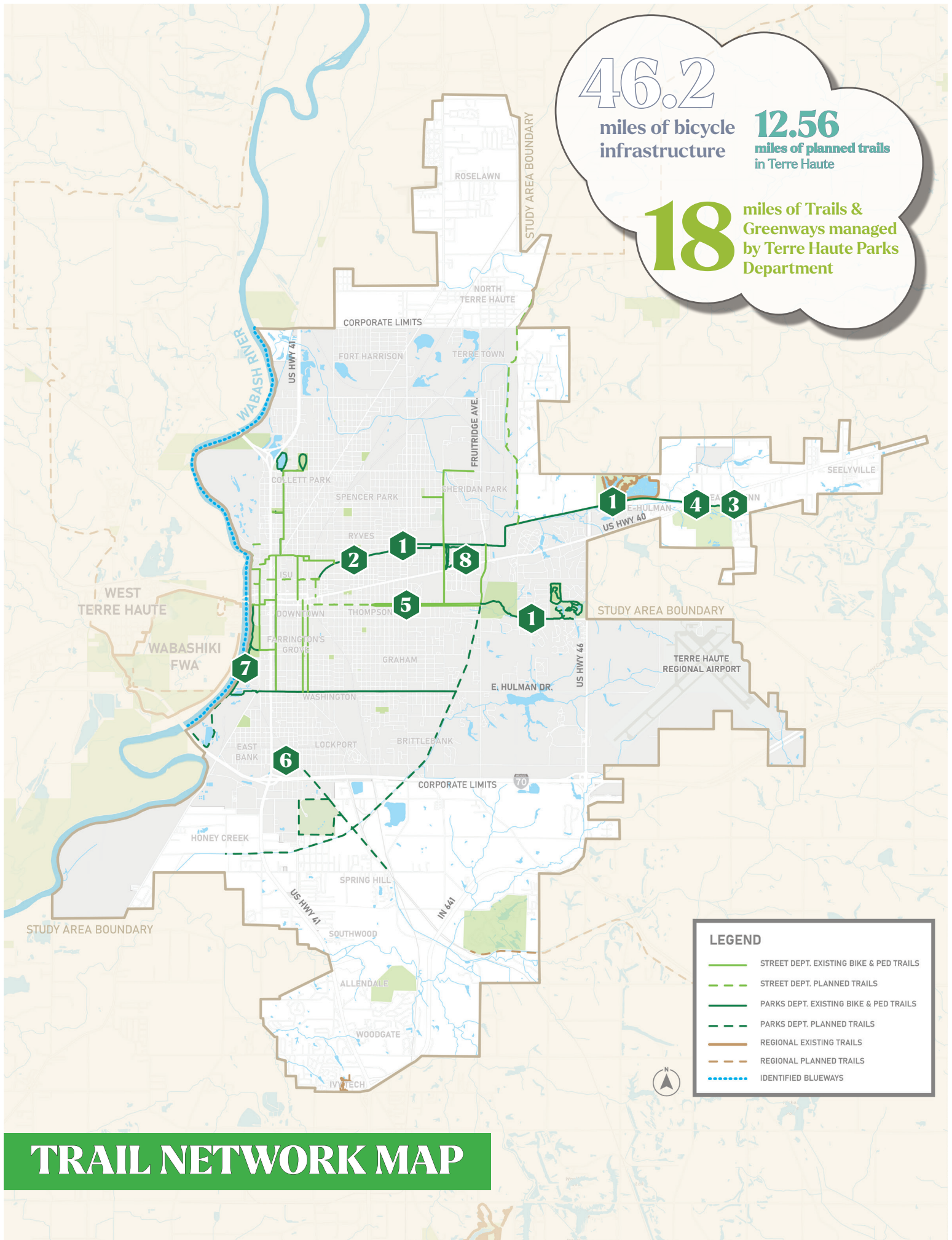
miles of bicycle
infrastructure

12.56

miles of planned trails
in Terre Haute

18

miles of Trails &
Greenways managed
by Terre Haute Parks
Department



LEGEND

- STREET DEPT. EXISTING BIKE & PED TRAILS
- STREET DEPT. PLANNED TRAILS
- PARKS DEPT. EXISTING BIKE & PED TRAILS
- PARKS DEPT. PLANNED TRAILS
- REGIONAL EXISTING TRAILS
- REGIONAL PLANNED TRAILS
- IDENTIFIED BLUEWAYS

TRAIL NETWORK MAP



REGIONAL



DEMING PARK

177 ACRES

500 S FRUITRIDGE AVENUE

Deming Park is the largest park in Terre Haute and contains the Deming Pool. It has an excess of open space and shelters. There are sport amenities for basketball, tennis, soccer, softball, and disc golf. It additionally houses the Oakley Playground and Spirit of Terre Haute Miniature Train.



FAIRBANKS PARK

48 ACRES

625 DRESSER DRIVE

Fairbanks Park is the only Terre Haute park along the Wabash River, providing public access for the city. It features a large community amphitheater, the Chauncey Rose Memorial Plaza, and the Paul Dresser Home. It also has a playground, riverwalk trail, multiple shelters, a dog park, and houses the YMCA facilities. The playground is inaccessible, and many of the facilities such as the restrooms are outdated and in need of renovation.



WILLIAM S. REA PARK

176 ACRES

1115 E. DAVIS DRIVE

Rea Park has a historic clubhouse, a new training academy building, golf course, driving range and tennis courts. Accessible parking and paths are not well defined. The tennis courts are in poor condition. Friends of Rea Park, Inc. has conducted a Master Plan referenced in the Appendices. Additional coordination may be required to realize this plan in phases and update as needed.



BRITTLEBANK PARK

7.5 ACRES
1960 S. 20TH STREET

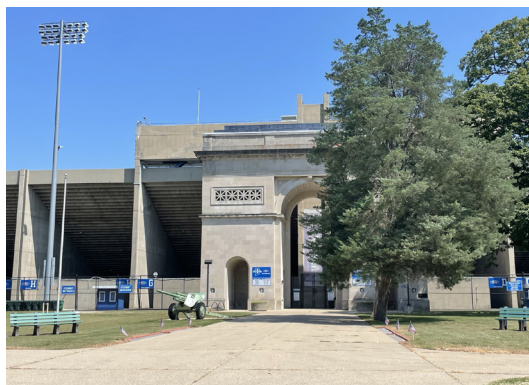
Brittlebank Park has several pickleball courts, a basketball court, playground, and shelters. Beyond the courts, there is an abundance of recreation open space for youth football and soccer. No accessible routes connect the East and Southern sides of the park.



COLLETT PARK

21.3 ACRES
700 MAPLE AVENUE

Collett Park is the oldest park in Terre Haute. It includes several mature trees, shelters, and the Collett Park Pavilion. Recreational amenities include a playground, soccer pitch, horseshoe pits, tennis courts, and a fitness trail. Needs more accessible routes and play surfacing.



VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

51.18 ACRES
3300 WABASH AVENUE

Veterans Memorial Park contains the ISU Football Stadium. It also has an interpretive loop trail named the "Indiana Mile" as well as workout equipment along the trail.



VOORHEES PARK

13.4 ACRES
2320 PRAIRIETON ROAD

Vorhees Park is an action sports hub with a concrete skatepark and shares property with Vigo County School Corp. Aquatic Facility. The park also includes a playground, basketball court and shelter. There are no restrooms or accessible walkways leading into the park.



NEIGHBORHOOD



COY PARK

4.5 ACRES

1610 BARBOUR AVENUE

Coy Park includes a playground, basketball court, and softball field. There is an excess of open lawn and few trees. There are no accessible routes or playground surfacing.



STEEG PARK (GILBERT)

3.07 ACRES, 1401 WABASH AVENUE

Steeg Park, also known as Curtis Gilbert Park is an urban park located east of downtown along Wabash Avenue. The park includes several mature trees, a playground, basketball court, shelter and restroom facilities. It lacks accessible parking and requires more accessible paths.



HERZ-ROSE PARK

5.18 ACRES

1515 LOCUST STREET

Herz-Rose Park includes a playground, basketball court, shelter and restroom facilities. It requires internal walkways and accessible play surfacing. This park is currently undergoing a total renovation.



PAUL DRESSER MEM'L PARK

5.55 ACRES

14 S. SCHLEY PLACE (US 40 WEST OF WABASH RIVER)

Paul Dresser Memorial Park is a little known historic rest stop along Hwy 40. It includes no built facilities, but is part of the RiverScape Master Plan for riverfront recreation. Opportunities identified here include creating a city gateway experience.



SHERIDAN PARK

4.21 ACRES
2800 BUCKEYE STREET

Sheridan Park includes a playground, shelter, basketball court, unused softball/baseball field, and recently constructed skate-park where the park pool used to be located. Restrooms are non operational and non ADA compliant. On-street parking only.



SPENCER F. BALL PARK

8.33 ACRES
1401 S. 7TH STREET

Spencer F. Ball Park's primary feature is the competition baseball/softball field. It also has restrooms, tennis courts, a basketball court, playground, and a plaza area. There are no accessible routes, and the tennis courts are in poor condition.



THOMPSON PARK

4.73 ACRES
1701 OAK STREET

Thomson Park includes several mature trees, a basketball court, playground, and restroom facility. It lacks perimeter sidewalks and internal walkways. The playground surfacing is inaccessible.



WASHINGTON PARK

2.4 ACRES
1101 S. 13TH STREET

Washington Park is historically significant in Terre Haute as it was the only park designated for African-Americans during segregation. The park includes a community center (leased to CASY), playground, shelter, basketball court, and splash pad.



NATURE



DOBBS MEMORIAL PARK

105 ACRES
5170 POPLAR DRIVE

Dobbs Park is home to the Native American Museum and Dobbs Park Nature Center. It is mostly wooded and includes a wetland, pond and 3.5 miles of trails. There is also a playground and restroom facility.



MAPLE AVE. NATURE PARK

25 ACRES
500 MAPLE AVENUE

Maple Avenue Nature Park includes a large lake, natural areas, and a fishing pier. It also includes multiple shelters and a pavilion used for rental. A trail loops the lake and connects to the Collett Park pathway.



GOLF COURSES



REA PARK GOLF COURSE

176 ACRES
1115 E. DAVIS DRIVE

Rea Park Golf Course features a historic clubhouse, 18 holes, a driving range, and a putting green. The front acreage also includes nine tennis courts, which are underutilized.



HULMAN LINKS

220.41 ACRES
990 N CHAMBERLAIN STREET

Hulman Links offers a picturesque yet challenging 18-hole golf course, with streams, ponds, rolling hills, and mature trees enhancing the landscape. Course renovations are needed.



POCKET



ANACONDA PARK

0.3 ACRES

2941 N. 14TH STREET

Anaconda Park is a small block park with a playground and half basketball court. There are no accessible routes or play surfacing. The basketball court is in poor condition.



BOY SCOUT PARK

0.32 ACRES

LAFAYETTE AVENUE AND BARBOUR AVENUE

Boy Scout Park is a traffic island with signage and benches. There are no accessible paths to the benches.



FIVE TRIANGLES PARK

0.3 ACRES

25TH STREET AND DAHLEN STREET

Five Triangles, also known as Terre Town Park is residual open space due to multiple intersecting streets. There are no park amenities. This could be a great location for a Gateway feature welcoming visitors into the city from the North. Opportunities identified include creating a community gateway experience at this park.



POCKET



FIRE & POLICE MEMORIAL PLAZA

0.1 ACRES
1728 SOUTH 8TH STREET

Also known as One Triangle Park, this is a corner property adjacent to the historic brick Terre Haute Fire Station #9 building. The grassy yard containing a flagpole and Fire & Police memorial.



GOLD MEDAL PLAZA

0.3 ACRES
2108 N. 13TH STREET

Located in the heart of 12 Points neighborhood, the plaza is a traffic island that includes paths, benches, landscaping, and a unique memorial to Olympic Gold Medalists.



GRAHAM PARK

0.96 ACRES
1601 DEAN STREET

Graham Park is a block park in South Terre Haute. It includes mature trees and a playground. The play equipment is in poor condition, and the play surfacing is inaccessible.



JOHN HANLEY JR. PARK

0.3 ACRES

1651 S. 1ST STREET

Hanley Park is a traffic island that includes a flag pole, landscaping, and sign. The park is inaccessible by bicycle or pedestrian use. It could serve a larger role in connecting Hulman Street bike lanes to Dresser Trail.



OAKLEY PARK

0.5 ACRES

1100 S. 8TH STREET

According to a 2019 correspondence Oakley Park is mistakenly still deeded to Vigo County School Corp. and maintained and managed by the Parks Dept. A corrective deed to transfer to the city was requested in 1981. This needs reconciled. The park is near Fire Station #2. It includes play equipment and a basketball court. The park lacks accessible walkways.



VI COTTRELL PARK

0.1 ACRES

635 LAFAYETTE AVENUE

Named after a local diner owner whose restaurant once occupied the site, features a shaded picnic table, a few benches, small flower gardens, and mature trees. There is no designated ADA parking but on-street is available nearby.



SPECIAL-USE FACILITIES



DEMING PARK POOL

500 S FRUITRIDGE AVENUE

The Deming Park Pool, open May to September, is the city's only aquatic facility and a key amenity. However, it has exceeded its useful lifespan and requires extensive renovations, including mechanical repairs and pool house updates. The addition of an ADA-compliant zero-entry area, slides and lazy river are in planning.



DOBBS NATURE CENTER

Dobbs Park Nature Center offers diverse programs throughout the year, including the junior naturalist program, craft sessions and educational activities. Significant events include the Terre Haute Bird Festival in May and the Indiana Bat Festival in September. Seasonal offerings include a Craft Time Open House in January and December, along with a Fall Woods Walk.



TORNER COMMUNITY CENTER

The Torner Community Center is a versatile event space offering a range of facilities for various gatherings and activities. The center also hosts summer camps, utilizing the building and its concession stand for snacks and train tickets. However, entry to the building can be confusing due to unclear outside signage and parking circulation turnaround issues for visitors.



NATIVE AMERICAN MUSEUM

5170 POPLAR DRIVE

The Native American Museum in Dobbs Memorial Park features rotating seasonal exhibits, a permanent exhibit on the history and culture of local tribes, and a library. The museum also offers weekend programming for children and adults.



OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE



WABASH AVE YARD

17.41 ACRES, 4311 WABASH AVENUE

With prime access along Wabash Avenue, this property is an underutilized asset to the Parks and Recreation Department. Currently used for natural waste and maintenance, this property could make an excellent circulation conduit between Deming Park, the NRHT, and function as an Eastern city gateway.



DEMING PARK YARD

500 S FRUITRIDGE AVENUE

The Deming Park Maintenance Yard is the hub for park maintenance in the East and Central areas. Crews report here before being dispatched. The yard has two barns for equipment storage, vehicle repairs, and storage for picnic tables and yard waste.



FAIRBANKS PARK OFFICE

1110 GIRLSGOUT LANE

The Fairbanks Park Office houses the administrative staff, including the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and support staff. It serves as a primary meeting location for the park board but would benefit from Internet upgrades and interior renovations to better accommodate larger meetings.



DOBBS PARK YARD

5170 POPLAR DRIVE

The Dobbs Park Maintenance Yard is dedicated to maintaining the nature park. Crews report here before being dispatched. The yard features six barns for equipment storage and vehicle repairs, along with an on-site greenhouse for nursery stock.



LINEAR & GREENWAY



CENTENNIAL PARK

0.93 ACRES

25TH ST. + NATIONAL HERITAGE ROAD TRAIL

Centennial Park was constructed by the Terre Haute Rotary Club. It includes a shelter, benches, and landscaping. There are no accessible paths to the shelter and benches.



NAT'L RD HERITAGE TRAIL (NRHT)

APPROXIMATELY 64 ACRES

TWIGG REST AREA TO ISU CAMPUS

The National Road Heritage Trail includes 6.5 miles of paved multi-use trail with benches and litter receptacles. It connects several block parks and amenities.



NRHT JONES TRAILHEAD

2 ACRES

1652 CHAMBERLAIN STREET

The trailhead includes parking, bike racks, a shelter, and a vending area. There are also multiple bioretention areas on the site in good condition.



NRHT TWIGG REST AREA

2 ACRES

US 40 EAST OF OVERPASS

Twigg Rest Area is a trailhead along the National Road Heritage Trail near Rose-Hulman Campus. It includes an ADA restroom facility, parking, bike racks, information kiosk and a vending machine.



OHIO BOULEVARD

46.1 ACRES
19TH STREET TO FRUITRIDGE AVENUE

Ohio Boulevard acts as an entry to Deming Park. It is lined with a broadleaf canopy and expansive lawn. It also includes bike lanes, fountains and gateway pylons of limestone.



SIXTH STREET BOULEVARD

5 ACRES
HELEN AVENUE TO MARGARET AVENUE

Sixth Street Boulevard is a wide open space that extends for one and a half blocks near the Riley Spur. Opportunities to activate this park will be realized through the Riley Spur connection.



WABASH RIVER HERITAGE TRAIL- “PAUL DRESSER”

0.56 miles built

A multi-use soft surface trail for running and walking along the Wabash River. The trail begins at the southern end of Fairbanks Park and runs south to Hulman Street.



INDIANA VETERANS' MEMORIAL MILE

3300 WABASH AVE

The Indiana Mile is an interpretive trail in the shape of Indiana located within the Indiana Veterans Memorial Park. Outdoor workout equipment exists along the trail.

GOLF COURSE FACILITIES

VALUE OF GOLF IN THE COMMUNITY

While community leaders aim to make golf operations more financially responsible, it's crucial to recognize the broader value golf brings to Terre Haute and its surrounding areas. Annually, golf events raise over \$200,000 for local charities, though these events reduce potential revenue from general admission and sales that could otherwise boost profits.

Golf is a key quality-of-life amenity for many residents, and offering affordable golf recreation enhances the overall value of the parks while making Terre Haute a more attractive place to live. As a result, golf has become an essential asset for local businesses. The Parks Department should continue to build partnerships with area corporations to generate additional capital for course improvements and to educate the community on the value of the sport.

The Parks Department oversees two golf courses: Hulman Links and the William S. Rea Golf Course that both operate on non-reverting funds.

HULMAN LINKS

Hulman Links, established in 1978, spans 230 acres and features streams, ponds, rolling hills, and mature trees, creating a beautiful and challenging 18-hole golf course. In 2008, Golf Digest awarded Hulman Links a 4 ½-star rating, naming it a “must-play” course. The facility includes a small restaurant area with a bar, a driving range, and a putting green.

While once considered one of Indiana's premier courses, Hulman Links has faced challenges that have diminished its status. Issues with irrigation and maintenance have negatively impacted the course, leading to decreased usage and financial losses. To address these concerns, the city established a Golf Oversight Committee to review the issues and provide direction to the Golf Pro and maintenance departments. Their recommendations have been well-received and are currently being implemented.

In 2013, the City made significant investments in Hulman Links and overall golf operations. Drainage systems were upgraded throughout the course, drought-tolerant Zoyzia grass was introduced, and a second water source for irrigation was implemented.

Improvement observations:

- The entire irrigation system, originally built in 1976, has surpassed its 25-year life expectancy and requires replacement. The system is experiencing issues with pumps, leakage, and the shutoff control system. Although the pumps were rebuilt in 2000, further upgrades are necessary. The estimated cost for these improvements is between \$1.5 million and \$2 million.
- A second water source for irrigation should be secured.
- A maintenance equipment obsolescence plan needs to be established.
- The crumbling cart paths require resurfacing.
- The course maintenance building needs various improvements, including a new roof.
- The greens need to be rebuilt.

These improvements are crucial for restoring Hulman Links to its former status as one of Indiana's top golf courses.



WILLIAM S. REA GOLF COURSE

Opened in 1925 with funding from Mrs. Geraldine Rea, Rea Park Golf Course spans 160 acres and features a historic clubhouse listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The course includes 18 holes, a driving range, and a putting green. Additionally, there are nine tennis courts on the front acreage that are currently underutilized for public recreation and unplayable.

Unlike Hulman Links, Rea Park is built on sandy soil and benefits from a reliable water supply for irrigation. This allows the course to remain playable during hot and dry conditions that may render other area courses unsuitable.

In 2018, the Friends of Rea Park, Inc. initiated a master plan to update the facility. Renovations on the clubhouse are currently underway as part of Phase 1, with plans to transform the historic building into a community event center that will generate additional revenue for the parks and golf course. Phase 2 involves constructing a perimeter trail around the park that will connect it to the Terre Haute Trail System.

Improvement observations:

- Resurface the cart paths.
- Establish a tree succession plan to ensure new plantings when mature trees die or are damaged by storms.
- Enhance the driving range as part of the renovation project, including the development of a golf academy program.
- Coordinate these efforts with a broader master plan for the front acreage along 7th Street, elevating the property into an amenity hub for indoor and outdoor aquatics, pickleball, 5k events, and other athletic programs.



CURRENT AMENITIES

OVERVIEW

Terre Haute’s park system offers a wide variety of amenities designed to engage all ages and interests, providing both active and passive recreational opportunities. The system includes playgrounds, baseball, football, soccer, and softball fields, as well as practice fields, disc golf courses, skateboard parks, batting cages, and an indoor turf field. For water activities, there is a splash pad and a pool/aquatic center. Various parks also feature golf courses, recreation centers, an indoor gymnasium, basketball courts, a dog park, and canoe/kayak access. Additional amenities include an amphitheater, a mountain

bike pump track, and concessions areas, ensuring a comprehensive recreational experience for visitors.

ACTIVE AMENITIES

The park system provides a wide range of active amenities to meet various recreational needs. Playgrounds, baseball, football, soccer, and softball fields, along with practice fields, cater to sports enthusiasts. Other options include disc golf courses, skateboard parks, batting cages, and an indoor turf field. Splash pads, golf courses, and a pool/aquatic center offer year-round enjoyment. Facilities such as basketball courts, an indoor



gymnasium, and recreation centers provide further opportunities for fitness and organized programs. For adventure seekers, the mountain bike pump track and canoe/kayak access are available, with concessions areas supporting events and activities.

PASSIVE AMENITIES

Passive amenities within the park system provide spaces for relaxation and outdoor enjoyment. Picnic shelters, miles of walking trails, and

natural areas offer opportunities for peaceful recreation and exploration. Fishing docks and ponds create tranquil spots for anglers, while the dog park provides outdoor fun for pets and their owners. The amphitheater serves as a venue for community events and performances, and historic or cultural sites, such as the Rea Park clubhouse and Native American Museum, add an educational aspect. Restrooms are conveniently located throughout the park system to enhance visitor comfort.



CURRENT PROGRAMMING

OVERVIEW

The City of Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department offers a range of recreational programs and activities designed to engage residents of all ages. The department is active on social media, particularly Facebook, where it posts updates about upcoming events and programming opportunities. Residents can also explore programs through the department's website, to view age groups (adult, teen, youth, and preschool), park location, or type of activity.

In addition to the online promotion, the department creates event specific brochures for the various seasonal events and programs including Summer Camp at Deming Park, Kids Cooking, Bass Fishing Fundamentals and more. These brochures can be viewed on the parks website or picked up at locations offering programming. Examples of these brochures are available in the appendix.



EVENTS & STAFF

The agency's recreation programming is overseen by a Director of Recreation and an Assistant Director of Recreation. Together, they are responsible for developing programs and special events within the parks system. Core activities for the 2024 summer program season include:

- Summer Camp
- Bass Fishing Fundamentals
- Kids Cooking
- Swim Lessons
- Lifeguard Certification Courses
- Nature Center Classes (Monthly)
- Adult Pickleball Tournament
- Adult Kickball Tournament
- Native American Museum Craft Classes (Monthly)
- Deming Park Pottery Studio Classes:
 - Advanced Pottery Open Studio
 - Beginning Pottery
 - Couples Pottery

The recreation coordination office is located in the Torner Center, staffed by a secretary and a full-time programming employee. In addition to the Torner Center, two special program facilities at Dobbs Park—the Native American Museum and the Nature Center—serve as hubs for youth and adult learning, with many activities held at these locations.



PROGRAMS CONDUCTED BY THE PARKS DEPARTMENT	AGES SERVED	SEASON	LOCATION
Summer Camp	Youth	Summer	Deming Park
Bass Fishing Fundamentals	All Ages	Fall	Maple Ave. Nature Park & Dobbs Park
Kids Cooking	Youth	Summer	Deming Park
Swim Lessons	Youth	Summer	Deming Park/YMCA
Lifeguard Certification Courses	Young Adult	Spring/Summer	Deming Park/YMCA
Nature Center Classes (Monthly)	All Ages	Ongoing	Dobbs Park
Adult Pickleball Tournament	Adult/Seniors	Ongoing	Brittlebank Park
Adult Kickball Tournament	Adult/Seniors	Ongoing	Fairbanks Park
Native American Museum Craft Classes (Monthly)	All Ages	Ongoing	Dobbs Park
Banks of the Wabash Festival	All Ages	Summer	Fairbanks Park
Pottery Studio Classes	All Ages	Summer	Deming Park
Pictures with the Easter Bunny	All Ages	Spring	Deming Park
Easter Egg Hunt	Youth	Spring	Deming Park
Annual Bird Festival	All Ages	Spring	Dobbs Park
July 4th Fireworks	All Ages	Summer	Fairbanks Park
Bat Festival	All Ages	Fall	Dobbs Park
Old Fashion Day	All Ages	Summer	Collett Park
Trunk or Treat	Youth	Fall	Deming Park
Un-Haunted Halloween	Youth	Fall	Deming Park
Haunted Halloween	Youth	Fall	Deming Park
Dog Costume Contest	All Ages	Fall	Deming Park
Christmas in the Park Lighting Ceremony	All Ages	Winter	Deming Park
Candy Cane Hunt	Youth	Winter	Deming Park
Christmas in the Park	All Ages	Winter	Deming Park
Pictures with Santa	All Ages	Winter	Deming Park
Kids Christmas Cookie Extravaganza	Youth	Winter	Deming Park
PROGRAMS CONDUCTED BY OTHER ORGANIZATIONS			
USING THE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES	AGES SERVED	LOCATION	
Terre Haute Balloon Festival	All Ages	Fairbanks Park	
Wine on the Wabash	Adult/Seniors	Fairbanks Park	
Flowering Fairbanks	All Ages	Fairbanks Park	
Wabash Valley Crew Rowing Regatta	All Ages	Fairbanks Park	

PROGRAM LOCATIONS & FACILITIES

Programs and activities are hosted at various locations throughout the city. The Torner Community Center serves as a hub for many indoor programs, while the Dobbs Park facilities, including the Native American Museum and Nature Center, offer additional opportunities for youth and adult learning. Booker T. Washington Community Center and other park event buildings, such as Collett Park, also host various programs. Additional annual Department hosted special events include the following:

- Easter Egg Hunt - Deming Park
- Annual Bird Festival - Dobbs Park
- July 4 Fireworks - Fairbanks Park
- Bat Festival - Dobbs Park

- Old Fashion Day - Collett Park
- Trunk or Treat - Deming Park
- Un-Haunted Halloween - Deming Park
- Haunted Halloween - Deming Park
- Christmas in the Park Lighting Ceremony - Deming Park
- Candy Cane Hunt - Deming Park
- Christmas in the Park - Deming Park

DOBBS PARK NATURE CENTER

The Nature Center, located in Dobbs Memorial Park, operates year-round, five days a week, except on major holidays. It is managed by a full-time Naturalist. The center offers programs for schools and organizations and frequently

promotes Saturday programming and a Junior Naturalist program to encourage weekend and evening use. The Center also features educational exhibits, including dioramas on wildlife, environmental topics, and the plants and animals of the Midwest. Additional topics commonly covered in programming include weather, the universe, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and crustaceans.

NATIVE AMERICAN MUSEUM

The Native American Museum, also located in Dobbs Memorial Park, is staffed by a full-time curator and operates year-round, except on major holidays. The museum offers unique programming focused on hands-on training and education about native tribes and indigenous peoples. Exhibits highlight ancient animals, prehistoric habitats, and living structures such as longhouses of the Miami Indians and other Midwest tribes. Public feedback has suggested expanding programming to include tribal gatherings and Native American festivals.



BOOKER T. WASHINGTON COMMUNITY CENTER

The Booker T. Washington Community Center, located at 13th and College Avenue, is owned and operated by the Parks Department. The center houses Chances and Services for Youth (CASY), a local nonprofit organization that provides after-school and other programs for local youth. CASY collaborates with local, state, and national nonprofit organizations, businesses, and governmental and law enforcement agencies to offer cost-effective programs for infants through college-age children and their families. The center's gymnasium is a valuable asset that could be utilized more extensively by the community.

PROGRAM QUANTITY & PRICING

In 2024, the lowest program fee was \$4.00, with several offerings available for free. The mid-range programs, such as tournaments and sports leagues, were between \$60-. The cost for a one-week summer camp ranged from \$30 per day to \$980 for the full summer grand slam experience. Financial assistance is not available at this time.



The Department-managed golf courses strive to offer the best value to residents, with costs ranging widely from \$15 for a nine-hole round for seniors to \$1,100 for an individual season pass to both courses.

SPORTS & ATHLETICS

The Recreation Department offers sports and athletics programming and encourage women's, men's, and co-ed adult recreational programs at various skill levels at the following facilities:

- Softball Diamonds
- Tennis Courts
- Disc Golf Course
- Soccer Fields
- Pickleball Courts
- Kickball Fields

The Director of Recreation schedules and manages participants across all leagues. Most leagues are held in the evenings and weekends.

Swim Lessons: A variety of swim lessons for children are provided at Deming Park pool. The lessons run from June-July and start at \$48 per session.

Indoor Programs: The Washington Community Center and Torner Community Center operate several youth programs, including: pottery, kids cooking, crafts, and event space for parties.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM SUMMER CAMPS

Additional Programming: The City of Terre Haute is constantly working to expand its offerings with new programs that vary by season. While the list of available programs is extensive, it is continually evolving to meet the needs and interests of the community.



CULTURE & THE ARTS IN THE PARK SYSTEM

PUBLIC ART & SCULPTURES

Public art and sculptures in Terre Haute play a significant role in enriching the cultural landscape of the city. Since their inception, these sculptures have transformed public spaces, making art accessible to all residents and visitors while fostering community pride and engagement. Some of these sculptures reflect the region's history and values, promoting dialogue and interaction among citizens. By integrating art into everyday life, Terre Haute not only enhances its aesthetic appeal but also supports the economic growth and tourism, emphasizing the vital connection between public art and community identity.

HISTORIC LANDMARKS

Terre Haute boasts several historic landmarks that showcase its rich architectural and cultural

heritage. The following are all landmarks you can find located within the city's park system:

- Chauncey Rose Memorial
- Collett Park Pavilion
- Paul Dresser Birthplace
- Memorial Stadium

PERFORMING ARTS

Institutions like the Terre Haute Symphony Orchestra utilize the parks and amphitheaters for summer performances, enriching the city's cultural offerings. These events provide vibrant experiences while attracting visitors, boosting tourism, and supporting local businesses. Expanding opportunities for plays, concerts, and performances in parks should be encouraged and incentivized to further enhance the city's cultural appeal and engagement.

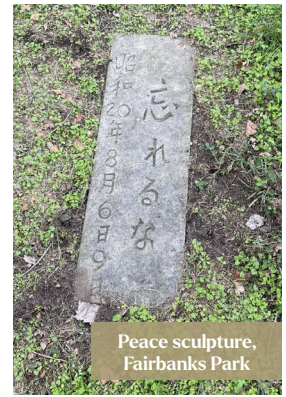




TREE, Veterans Memorial Park



Composite House for Terre Haute, Gilbert Park



Peace sculpture, Fairbanks Park



Year of the River, Fairbanks Park



Hiroshima Memorial, Fairbanks Park



Train Station Mural, Deming Park



Hiroshima Memorial, Fairbanks Park



On the Wings of Flight, Deming Park



A Song for Indiana, Fairbanks Park

ACCESSIBILITY & UNIVERSAL DESIGN

CURRENT POLICY

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a comprehensive Federal civil rights statute enacted in 1990. Comprised of five major parts, or “titles”, the ADA’s stated purpose was to provide a “clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities”. It is estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau that over 50 million U.S. residents have a disability, and over 50% of senior citizens age 65 or older have a disability. Title II requires that all public entities with 50 or more employees perform a self-evaluation, prepare a transition plan, make the transition plan available for three years, publish a notice of non-discrimination, designate an ADA Coordinator, and develop a formal complaint form and grievance procedure.

The City of Terre Haute values each individual’s civil rights and wishes to provide equal opportunity and equitable service for its citizens. As a local government entity, the City of Terre Haute conforms to all Titles of the American’s with Disabilities Act (ADA) and all related statutes, regulations, and directives, which provide that no person shall be excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any services, programs, or activities from the City of Terre Haute on the grounds disability, perceived disability, or association to a person with a disability. The City of Terre Haute further assures that all departments will provide an

equally effective opportunity to participate or benefit from any services, programs, or activities from the City of Terre Haute.

ADA PUBLIC NOTICE

The Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department ensures equal access to its facilities, programs, and services for all individuals, regardless of disability, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable laws. While there are areas of improvement identified in the ADA Transition Plan, public notices of non-discrimination and available accommodations are provided through signage at shelters and parking areas, as well as digital postings on the park department website, while ADA-compliant routes, accessible signage, and bus stop route maps are clearly marked both online and in physical locations. Individuals needing accommodations can request assistance through an online form, phone inquiry, or in-person at park offices and community centers to ensure full and equal access to all services, facilities, and programs.

The following individual has been identified as the City of Terre Haute’s ADA Coordinator and is responsible for initiating and monitoring Title VI activities, preparing reports and performing other responsibilities:

Anne-Therese Ryan, Human Relations
Commission Director
ADA Coordinator
17 Harding Ave.
Terre Haute, IN 47807
Human.Relations@TerreHaute.IN.Gov

GRIEVANCES

The City of Terre Haute takes complaints of discrimination seriously. The City’s Policy for ADA Complaints and reporting form can be found on the city’s website.

Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practice



under the ADA may file a complaint with the City of Terre Haute. For more information on the City of Terre Haute's Title VI policy, procedures, or to file a complaint, contact 812-244-5611, email human.relations@terrehaute.in.gov or visit our office at City Hall 17 Harding Ave., Terre Haute, IN 47807.

ADA TRANSITION PLAN

In February 2021, the Board of Public Works adopted the ADA Transition Plan.

City facilities evaluated in 2020 included all building facilities, parks, and trails based on the Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design (ADASAD). These evaluations included only areas open to the public as well as limited employee-only common use areas, including restrooms, entrances, and break rooms. Exterior spaces such as parking lots and sidewalks were assessed. The decision to exclude some areas restricted to employees does not remove the need of the City to ensure full accessibility is provided to employees with disabilities, consistent with the requirements of Title I of the ADA. Reasonable accommodation requests from employees should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to allow employees with disabilities to perform their essential job functions.

All city parks, trails and facilities were included in this self-evaluation process. Barriers are also identified in the self-evaluation. See the appendix for more detailed information.

PUBLIC INPUT AND STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

Public input on ADA compliance was a major theme throughout the process, from restrooms, to sidewalks, benches and water fountains. The team conducted an assessment based on the public input gathered. This is outlined on the following page. A comprehensive recommendation list of all parks and facilities from the City of Terre Haute, IN ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan are outlined in the appendix.



ACCESSIBILITY ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESSIBLE PARKING AREAS

Several of the larger parks have dedicated parking lots that lack the required number of accessible parking spaces or proper color delineation (blue). In some cases, these can be easily added, while others will require more extensive curb and walkway modifications. Some areas can be addressed with additional striping and signage. Most neighborhood and pocket parks have little or no off-street parking, such as Oakley Park. While many park visitors arrive on foot or by bike, accessible spaces should be designated within on-street parking. An accessible route should then be provided from these spaces to the main park elements, including buildings and playgrounds.



ACCESSIBLE ROUTES

The most frequently noted deficiency was the absence of accessible routes connecting different amenities within the parks. Often, there are no curb cuts or accessible paved walkways from the road or parking area to playgrounds or shelters. Parks that are particularly inaccessible include Anaconda Park and Graham Park.



PLAYGROUND SURFACING

Engineered wood fiber mulch is an acceptable, though not ideal, playground surface. It requires regular replenishment as the wood decomposes and settles, and weeds must be managed. Several play areas had low mulch levels, making transfer platforms inaccessible for children with mobility devices. Additionally, many playgrounds have no ADA compliant entry point or containment edging, which requires ongoing maintenance.



ADA RAMPS & SIDEWALKS

As accessible routes age, elevation gaps greater than 1/4" can develop, causing them to fall out of compliance with ADA regulations. This issue is particularly concerning around ramps, where even slight discrepancies can significantly impact accessibility. The Department should regularly monitor these routes, including ramps, and establish a schedule for the timely repair or replacement of these surfaces as they deteriorate.



PUBLIC TRANSIT

Some park sites and facilities are not accessible by public transit, limiting access for users who rely on public transportation, limiting access for users who rely on public transit. The Department should collaborate with Terre Haute Transit to extend routes to all parks and expand service as needed. Coordination with reentry programs for incarcerated individuals is also important, as Fairbanks Park is the first stop on public transit from prison facilities.



WATER FOUNTAINS

Most parks have older drinking fountains that don't meet current ADA guidelines. These should be replaced with new fountains that meet the required spout height of 36 inches and 27 inches of vertical clearance. Updated guidelines also require dual-height drinking bowls, with one at ADA height and the other higher. It's important to ensure the ADA-compliant fountain is correctly oriented to the accessible route.

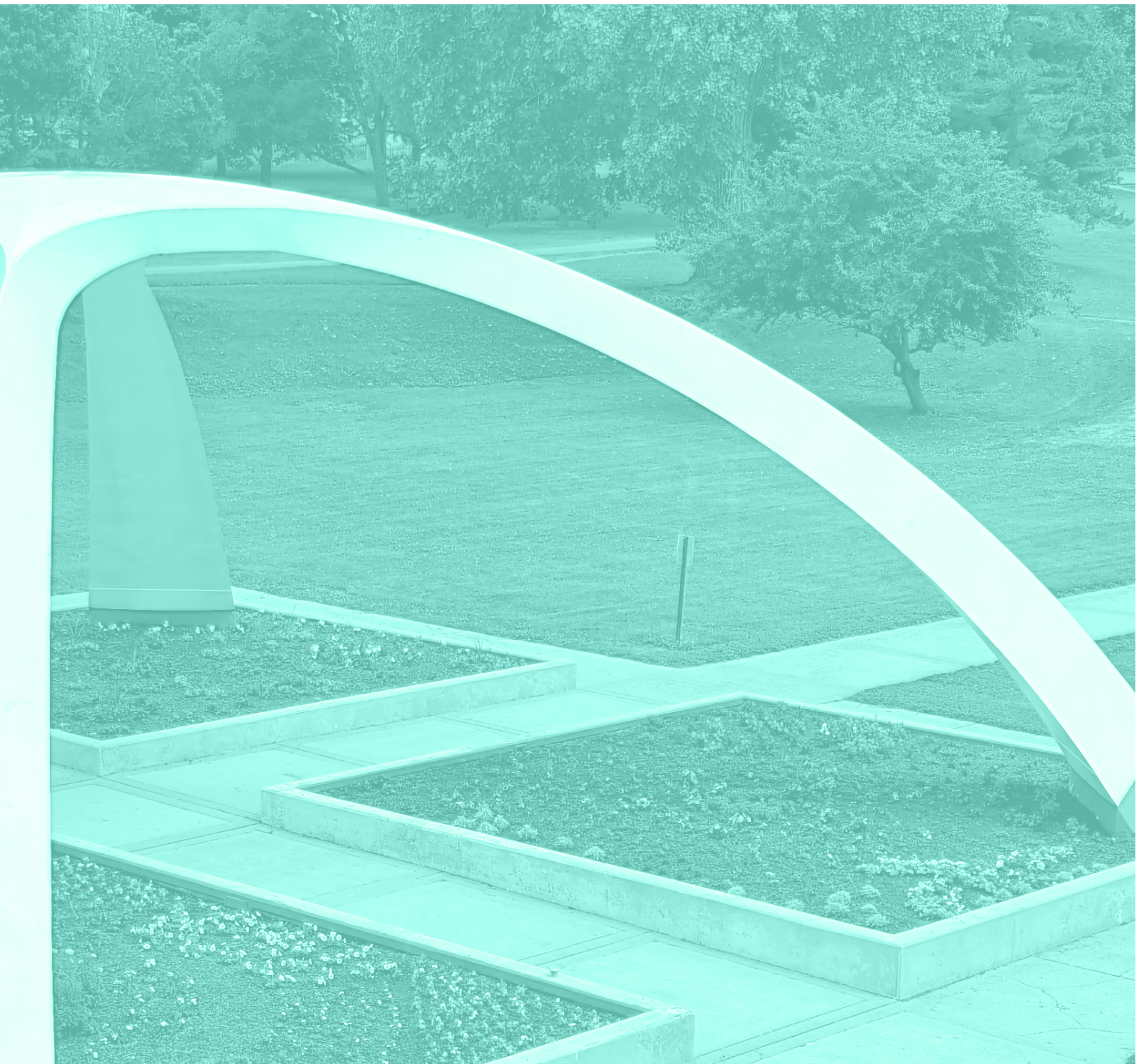


ADA SEATING & APPROACH AREAS

There are numerous instances where benches are placed near sidewalks but are not connected to the pavement. Benches should be located along paved, accessible routes, and 25% of benches in a given park should include companion spaces for individuals using wheelchairs.







Needs Assessment



INTRODUCTION

The needs assessment process is essential for defining and understanding the priorities of the Terre Haute community. Through a series of evaluations, analyses, and public input, the community's needs are identified, forming the foundation for the plan's recommendations.

This section provides a summary of the public engagement process, level of service analysis, and benchmark comparison for the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department. Full details from public input meetings and the community survey can be found in the appendix.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The public engagement process and needs assessment are closely intertwined. This approach identifies the priorities and needs of both the department and the broader community through park inventory, classification, benchmarking, and public engagement. Strategies for collecting public input will be customized for Terre Haute, recognizing the unique participation opportunities each community offers. The strategies to be implemented are outlined below.



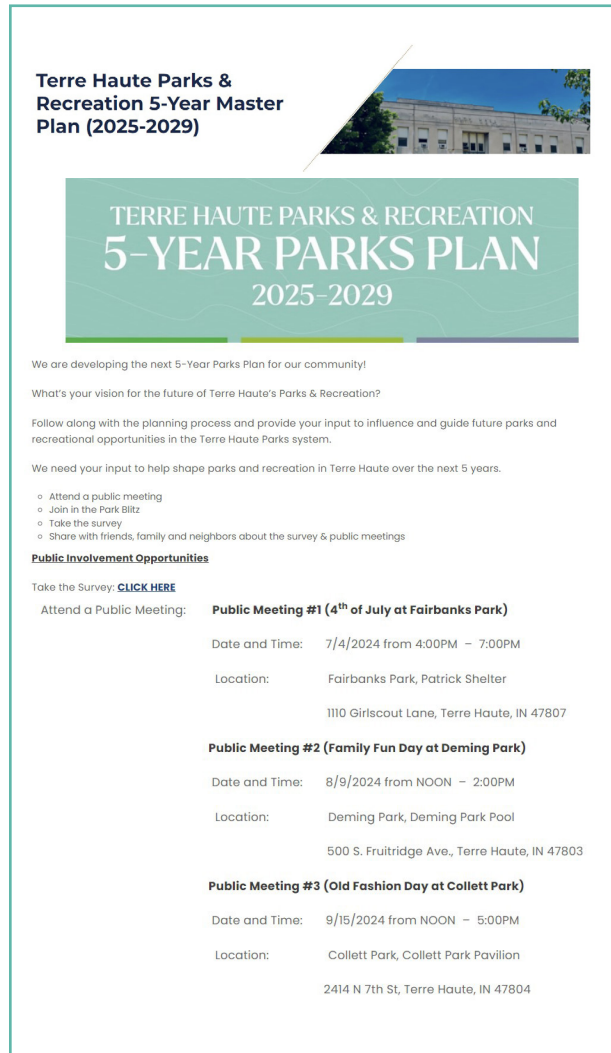
ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website was hosted by the Parks and Recreation Department in conjunction with the city IT Department. The website launched on June 12, 2024. The site was periodically updated as event dates and survey information became available for public input. The website functioned primarily as a hub for users to gain preliminary information about the plan and as a source for updates regarding the project status such as when and where to attend the next public meeting, Frequently Asked Questions, and a link to access the Public Survey.

WEBSITE LANDING PAGE

Terre Haute Parks & Recreation 5-Year Master Plan (2025-2029)



PUBLIC SURVEY

A survey with 18 questions was developed and administered online. The survey targeted park users and community members within the study area (approx 58,000). With a confidence interval of 95% and a margin of error at 5%, the sample size required to yield viable results equated to 382 survey responses. The project yielded 249 responses, including 14 paper copies, over a 3 month period from July - September.

Survey promotion consisted of email blasts to park volunteers and neighborhood champions, stakeholders and park staff, schools, advocacy groups and general social media blasts. The survey was made more visibly and functionally accessible through the use of a QR code printed on yard signs and placed in key high traffic locations in each of the parks throughout the system.

QR CODE YARD SIGNS PLACED IN HIGH-USE AREAS



TOP 5 SURVEY RESPONSE TRENDS

Paper copies of the survey were also distributed and collected during each of the public meetings. Additional public locations maintained paper copies such as the Vigo County Public Library, City Hall, Dobbs Park, and the Park Department Office. Those results were collected and entered with the online responses.

A summary of the top 5 trends and findings is provided on the following pages. A full report of the survey results can be found in the plan appendix.

1. FACILITY UPGRADES, MAINTENANCE, AND ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS:

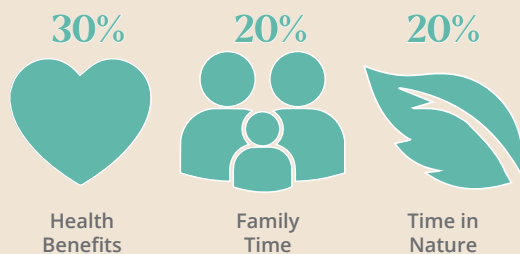
Respondents consistently highlighted the need to upgrade and maintain existing facilities such as restrooms, splash pads, pools, tennis courts, and playgrounds. There were specific calls for improved accessibility, including handicapped-

accessible restrooms and better trail markings. Proper maintenance of existing parks, including water fountains, trash removal, and ensuring restrooms are open longer, was emphasized as crucial before any new developments are considered.

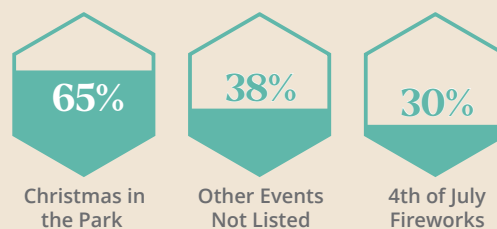
2. EXPANSION OF ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGE GROUPS:

Many participants requested more diverse recreational activities for all age groups, from youth programs to adult sports leagues. Suggestions included coed kickball, skateboarding facilities, parkour courses, pickleball courts, and indoor recreation centers. Respondents also mentioned the need for more family-oriented and special-needs-friendly activities, with ideas like train rides for kindergartners and more fishing and hunting education programs for youth.

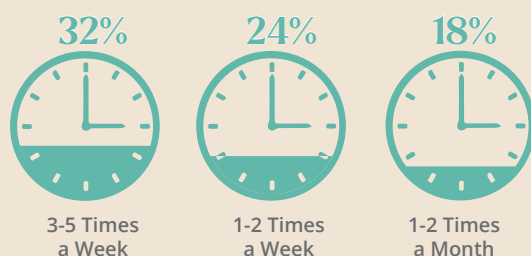
TOP REASONS TO RECREATE



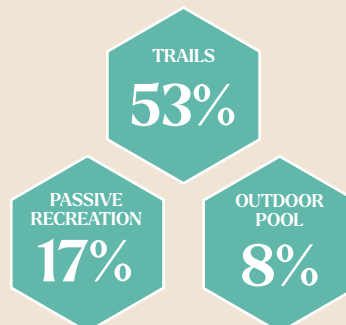
MOST ATTENDED EVENTS



PARK VISITATION PATTERNS



TOP FEATURES



3. IMPROVED COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH:

A recurring theme was the need for better communication about park events and programs. Respondents suggested using school newsletters, digital marquees, and multiple media channels to inform the community. Many indicated that they often hear about events too late, so a more coordinated outreach strategy could help boost participation in recreational services and events.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND TREE PLANTING INITIATIVES:

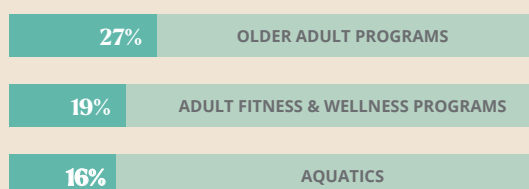
Tree planting and environmental conservation were frequently mentioned, with respondents advocating for the maintenance of existing trees and the removal of invasive species, especially in parks like Deming and Dobbs. Several suggested educational programs focused on the benefits of trees, with a goal to plant 2,000 trees annually to replace those lost in Terre Haute. Many also supported creating pollinator spaces to enhance the city's natural habitats.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE AND SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS:

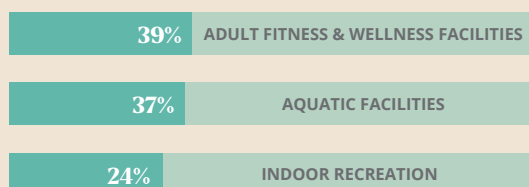
Safety concerns were raised, especially in larger parks like Deming, where separating pedestrian and vehicle traffic was suggested. Respondents also called for infrastructure improvements, such as better lighting, security cameras, and clearer signage to ensure safe recreational spaces. Enhanced trail connectivity across parks and neighborhoods, including bike paths linking the Heritage Trail and Deming Park, was another major focus, with respondents supporting efforts to improve trail infrastructure for both walkers and cyclists.

This feedback emphasizes the Terre Haute community's desire for facility upgrades, enhanced activities, better communication, environmental initiatives, and improved safety and infrastructure for future park planning.

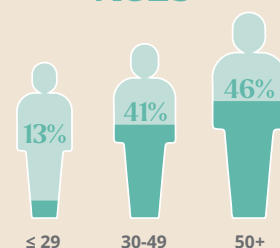
TOP UNMET PROGRAM NEEDS



TOP UNMET FACILITY NEEDS



AGES



PARKS CONDITION



PUBLIC MEETINGS

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department hosted public meetings to gather community input for the next five-year parks plan, allowing residents to share concerns, suggest improvements, and provide feedback on proposed recommendations. This input helped shape priorities for facility upgrades, expanded programming, safety enhancements, and environmental initiatives across the park system.

PUBLIC MEETING #1

Date: July 4, 2024

Location: Fairbanks Park

Time: 3:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Attendees: 33 sign-ins, 120 approx. not signed in

The first public meeting, held on July 4, 2024, during the 4th of July Celebration at Fairbanks Park, attracted a large audience over four hours leading up to the fireworks display over the Wabash River. The open-house format allowed the project team and park volunteers to engage the public on various topics, including safety, facilities, programming, and park proximity. Stations with maps and prompts for each park type encouraged attendees to provide input on parks needing improvement, gaps in

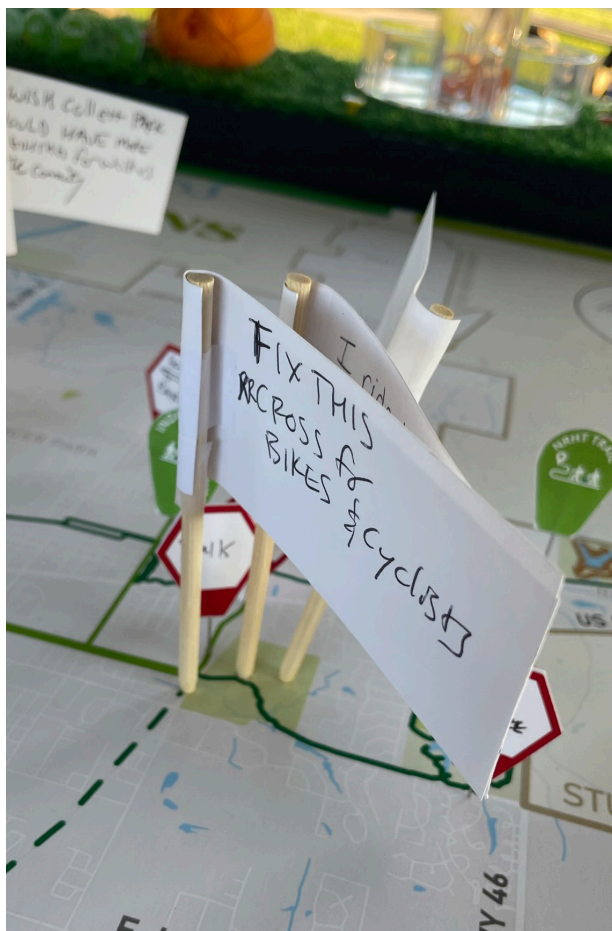
existing facilities, and ideas for new recreational programming. Participants used yarn and pins to connect their homes to the parks they frequented most, helping the team understand usage patterns and inform trail network recommendations.

Overall, attendees were eager to participate and supportive of the project's goals. They acknowledged staff and budget limitations contributing to deferred maintenance but remained optimistic about the future of parks and recreation. Negative feedback was minimal, with primary concerns focused on homelessness, trash, and the lack of adult programming.

The comments and outcomes of the public open house trend closely with those comments expressed by the stakeholder group and later focus group sessions of:

- Increased maintenance budget and staffing
- Re-investment in current amenities, less emphasis on park expansion
- Additional trails and greenway connections
- Longer hours and improved restrooms
- Additional safety elements such as lighting and call stations for security.
- Expand community events and park programming with organizational partners.





PUBLIC MEETING #2

Date: August 8, 2024

Location: Dobbs Nature Park, Deming Park, Rea Park, Maple Avenue Park

Time: 10:30 am-4:30 pm

Attendees: 7 sign-ins, 35 approx. not signed in

A second open house was held on August 8, 2024, from 10:30 am- 4:30pm. The event was advertised to the public via social media, website blasts, personalized emails to specific park champions and stakeholders, and by word of mouth. The unusually mild 74-degree August weather allowed for a very pleasant outdoor experience for public guests to attend the event. The multi-site open-house format allowed for people to come and go at their leisure generated a comfortable atmosphere for candid responses and valuable input. As a component of the public meeting, the project team conducted a “Park Blitz” to rapidly collect qualitative data of each park visited. This further validated early analysis findings related to accessibility, maintenance, and daily usership of each park.

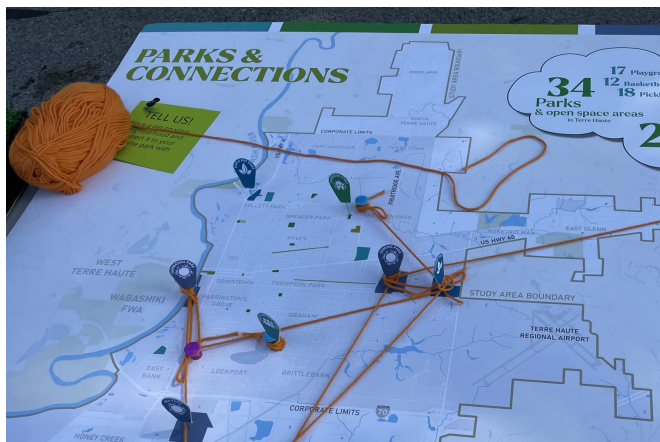
The focus of the second open house was to gather input and feedback on proposed recommendations for the parks network. System-wide and park specific recommendations for each park visited (Dobbs Nature Park, Deming Park, Rea Park and Maple Avenue Park) were on display at each of the blitz stations. Recommendations and improvements included walking accessibility to and within each park via trails and pathways, renovations to playground equipment and safety surfacing areas, renovate restrooms for ADA compliance and increased program offerings like fishing tournaments, “Native American Days”, and Live Action Role Playing (LARPing) events. Meeting attendees reacted to these programs and amenities positively and provided additional recommendations for individual park improvements.

During the Dobbs Park Blitz, a mother who was visiting the park with an out-of-town homeschool co-op group of 40 people provided an unfortunate insight on the status of ADA compliance within the park. The mother stated

that another of the co-op members had to leave two of her four children, who are wheelchair users, at home. She said that upon learning the homeschool group would be attending Dobbs Park for the day, she knew her children would not be able to participate due to the playgrounds lack of ADA features, and highly inaccessible location by wheelchair, which is across a large grassy field with no pathway or trail connection from the parking lot. This comment was noted and will be included in the park specific recommendations for Dobbs Nature Park. Beyond the continued feedback of the parks system’s lack of ADA accessibility related to either outdated facilities or lack of connectivity, the public’s responses toward the proposed recommendations were positive.

The Public Meeting and Park Blitz ended overlooking the fishing pond at Maple Avenue Nature Park. Participants agreed with the proposed facility, amenity, program and accessibility features and were hopeful about the planned improvements.





PUBLIC MEETING #3

Date: September 15, 2024

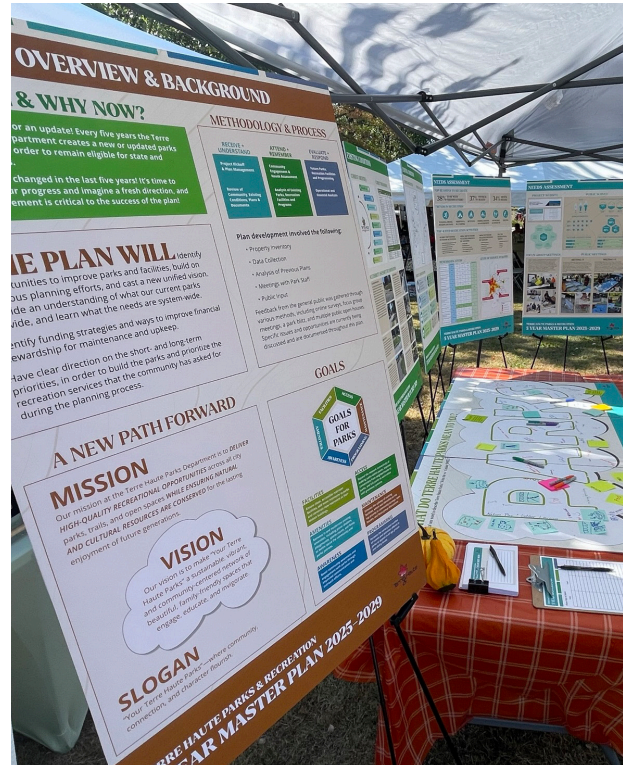
Location: Collett Park

Time: 12:00 Noon-4:00 pm

Attendees: 16 sign-ins, 30 approx. not signed in

A final public open house and comment period for the draft park plan took place on September 15th at Old Fashioned Days in Collett Park. This opportunity gave the public a last chance to provide feedback before the plan's adoption by the park board, expected after incorporating any final comments from the DNR. The public comment process included an overview presented at the October Park Board Meeting and a physical copy of the draft plan was made available at the Park Office, along with comment sheets for feedback. Additionally, the plan and appendices were posted online, with links shared via social media and local media, allowing comments to be submitted through an online form or directly on the draft plan.

Additional comments can be found in the appendices.



LEADERSHIP TEAM & STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Steering committee and leadership meetings were conducted during the planning process.

The first meeting was held at Collett Park on June 12, 2024. 15 community stakeholders attended. The purpose of this meeting was to kick-off the project, inform the group about the planning process, and encourage steering committee attendees to participate in the public input process. The team conducted breakout discussions with groups of 4-6 at each table and learned about user needs, and larger issues such as public engagement and lack of participation in park events and programming. The following summary provides an overview of this discussion and the results. A full list is provided in the Appendices.

Biggest Successes in the Last 5 Years:

Starting Riverfront Development, increased events at Deming Park, trail connections, Herz-Rose Plan, Rea Park Historic Preservation, and the Brittlebank Park project were noted as major wins.

Incomplete Goals from Last Plan:

Key incomplete goals include riverfront development, aquatics facilities, neighborhood park activation, safety improvements, and trail expansions. Additional areas needing focus are adult sports, partnerships, and long-term aquatics planning.

Three Words to Describe Terre Haute Parks:

Common descriptors included: family-friendly, scenic, underutilized, potential, and beautiful.

Challenges for the Next 5 Years:

Major challenges include securing funding for improvements, deferred maintenance, accessibility, and coordinating planning efforts with various stakeholders.

Ideas for the Future:

Vision for the future includes improved advertising, community engagement, better park access and amenities, stronger partnerships, and a well-maintained, active park system that aligns with broader community goals.

Key Messages to Motivate Participation:

Focus on health, wellness, and family activities with the message of "Your Parks." Engage the community where they are, through grassroots methods like neighborhood focus groups and public outreach.

Additional Feedback:

Suggestions included improving bike and pedestrian access to parks, adding amenities like tables and benches, enhancing neighborhood engagement, and focusing on accessibility and native plantings for a more environmentally sustainable park system.

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS

FOCUS GROUPS MEETINGS

On July 10 & July 11, 6 focus group listening sessions were held to learn about each particular groups interest and role in the park system. The groups consisted of 25 attendees from the following organizations:

Trees, Inc. VCSC Aquatic Center, Vigo County Parks, Riverscape, Friends of Rea Park, ISU, Terre Foods, Terre Haute Parks Maintenance Department, Swope Art Museum, Vigo County Public Library, Thrive West Central, Landsbaum Center For Health Education

Those invited to participate were given a list of questions prior to the meeting as a means to spark ideas for conversation.

Focus Group #1: Maintenance & Operations

Finance, maintenance, and safety challenges are interconnected, with staff shortages during busy seasons, low pay leading to turnover, and inconsistent safety training. Maintenance issues include drug needles, graffiti, and homelessness, while parks lack proper equipment and vehicles are in poor condition. Rea Park and the golf course are understaffed and in need of equipment updates, and shelter revenues are not reinvested into park improvements.

Focus Group #2: Park Advocates

Terre Haute is highly ranked in parks per capita but needs better connectivity and trail maintenance. Dobbs Park's aging trees and invasive species require attention, and its Nature Center needs more support. Rea Park renovations are underway, but more attention is needed for non-golf areas, and new trails are planned to improve access between parks and city amenities.

Focus Group #3: Recreation & Athletics

Vorhees Park is ready for Phase 2 of the skatepark. More repairs and attractions like pickleball courts are needed across parks. Playground improvements, disc golf courses, and trail connectivity are important priorities, along with improved accessibility for seniors and the disabled. Crowding at Deming Park highlights the need for more family-friendly amenities like an aquatics facility at other parks such as Rea Park.

Focus Group #4: Riverfront

From ISU to the oxbow, the riverfront master plan calls for more local amenities like coffee shops and restaurants along the river. Trails need better signage and maintenance, and the riverfront should be revitalized through naturalized spaces and community partnerships, similar to the success seen at Deming Park.



Focus Group #5: Education & Wellness

Programs like “Tea in the Park” and public art are popular, but there is a need for more partnerships to expand programming and improve communication about offerings. The recreation department operates in limited space, and more coordination is needed to restore staffing and increase program offerings.

Focus Group #6: Quality of Life

Disc golf, dog parks, and family-friendly activities are key to attracting and retaining locals. More after-school programming, community events like “Movies in the Park,” and family-oriented facilities are desired to improve the parks’ offerings for all ages.

The project team also facilitated an activity where attendees were asked to prioritize their own unique park budget based on a set amount of “bucks” and “gems”. This yielded valuable insight on how each individual would spend park dollars to improve the system. Additional patterns and trends emerged as each group finished the exercise. As anticipated, the maintenance focus group participants were primarily concerned with their respective maintenance category and sub category of improvements like building upkeep, equipment, safety and staffing.

Refer to the appendix for all notes & sign-in info.



BENCHMARK STUDY

The benchmark study was used to compare the Terre Haute Department of Parks and Recreation with other Indiana communities that share common geographic characteristics. These characteristics include significant areas within the floodplain, proximity to major metropolitan areas, and cities with large and/or multiple universities. The results of the benchmark study are shown on the following page.

The results indicate that Terre Haute compares well with benchmark communities in terms of acreage and the total number of parks. At a glance, Terre Haute's annual operating budget appears reasonably close to cities like Richmond and Lafayette, as well as the national average. However, a deeper look at the budget reveals that this is not the full story.

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET

Terre Haute's parks and recreation department operates with an annual budget of \$4,497,212, which equates to \$77.02 per capita. This figure falls below the national average of \$93.01 per capita, as well as the per capita budgets of Richmond at \$81.84 and Lafayette at \$85.79. The lower per capita funding in Terre Haute restricts the department's ability to invest in park improvements, maintain facilities, and expand services to meet the community's growing needs. This budget shortfall presents a challenge in keeping Terre Haute's parks system aligned with state and national standards.

STAFFING

Terre Haute's parks and recreation staffing is also below both national and state averages. The department employs 54 full-time and 74 part-time staff members, resulting in 128 total employees or 59.7 full-time equivalents (FTEs). According to NRPA's national averages, a city of Terre Haute's size should have around 104 FTE employees, indicating a significant staffing gap. Comparable Indiana cities employ over 200 FTEs, further highlighting this shortfall.

With nearly 50% of full-time staff typically dedicated to operations and maintenance, the staffing shortage directly impacts Terre Haute's ability to keep up with park maintenance and facility improvements. This shortage has led to delays in upkeep, which in turn affects the overall quality and functionality of the parks system. Addressing both the staffing and budget gaps will be crucial to enhancing the parks and recreation services for Terre Haute's residents.

COMPARABLE CITIES ANALYSIS

	Terre Haute	Lafayette	Richmond	Carmel	NRPA Standards
Population (2020 Census)	58,389	71,402	35,513	101,964	N/A
Population Growth (2010-2020)	-3.94%	5.43%	-2.97%	25.97%	N/A
Total Land Area (Square Miles)	35.27	47.68	24.08	50.17	N/A
Total Land Area per 1,000 Population	0.6	0.67	0.67	0.5	N/A
Number of Parks	31	20	16	20	N/A
Total Park Acreage	1152	700	1,037.80	535	N/A
Total Park Acreage per 1,000 Population (1*)	19.73	9.80	29.22	5.25	10.40
Residents per Park	1,883.52	3,539	2,232.50	4,987.85	2,323.00
Full-Time Employees	54	35	23	30	
Part-Time & Seasonal Employees	74	200	150	121	
Total Employees	128	235	173	151	
Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	59.7	58.08	40.31	90.5	104.4
Number of FTE per Acre of Parks	0.05	0.08	0.04	0.17	
Number of FTE Employees per 10,000 Residents	10.2	8.13	11.35	8.88	8.9
Annual Parks Operating Budget (2)	\$ 4,497,212.00	\$ 6,125,240.00	\$ 2,906,235.00	\$ 11,478,757.00	
Operating Budget per capita (2)	\$ 77.02	\$ 85.79	\$ 81.84	\$ 112.58	93.01

AMENITY TARGET RATIOS

The following table outlines the surplus/deficit of certain park amenities.

AMENITY	NRPA RATIO	CURRENT RATIO	INVENTORY
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PARK SYSTEM SIZE

Acres of Park Land	10.2 acres per 1,000 residents	1.67	992 acres
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AMENITY	NRPA BENCHMARK RATIO (RESIDENTS PER AMENITY)	CURRENT RATIO (RESIDENTS PER AMENITY)	CURRENT RATIO
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OUTDOOR FACILITIES

Playgrounds	3,707	3,435	1.08
Basketball Courts	8,363	4,866	1.72
Pickleball Courts	10,500	3,244	3.24
Tennis Courts	5,865	3,649	1.61
Volleyball Courts	26,612	N/A	N/A
Rectangular Fields	4,070	29,195	0.14
(non parks)			
Diamond Fields	3,675	8,341	0.44
(non parks)			
Golf Courses	68,208	29,195	2.34
(non parks)			
Pools	46,353	58,389	0.79
Splash Pads	54,100	58,389	0.93
Community Gardens	56,150	N/A	N/A
Amphitheaters	59,000	58,389	1.01
Dog Parks	55,135	58,389	0.94
Disc Golf Courses	58,603	58,389	1.00
Skate Parks	60,904	29,195	2.09
Ice Rink	29,378	N/A	N/A
Exercise Equipment	35,000	29,195	1.08

Facilities shown in orange do not meet the NRPA Benchmark Ratio.

* NRPA ratio data was pulled from the 2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review, specifically, benchmark data of parks with jurisdiction populations 50,000 to 99,999

AMENITY	NRPA RATIO	CURRENT RATIO	INVENTORY
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Miles of Trails	18.1 mi per 50k-100k residents	0.78	14.03 miles
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CURRENT INVENTORY	TARGET INVENTORY (2024)	TARGET INVENTORY (2029)	SURPLUS/DEFICIT (2024)	SURPLUS/DEFICIT (2029)
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17	15.75	15.19	1.25	1.81
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12	6.98	6.73	5.02	5.27
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18	5.56	5.36	12.44	12.64
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16	9.96	9.60	6.04	6.40
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0	2.19	2.12	-2.19	-2.12
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2	14.35	13.84	-12.35	-11.84
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31				
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7	15.89	15.32	-8.89	-8.32
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18				
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2	0.86	0.83	1.14	1.17
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3				
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1	1.26	1.21	-0.26	-0.21
---	------	------	-------	-------

1	1.08	1.04	-0.08	-0.04
---	------	------	-------	-------

0	1.04	1.00	-1.04	-1.00
---	------	------	-------	-------

1	0.99	0.95	0.01	0.05
---	------	------	------	------

1	1.06	1.02	-0.06	-0.02
---	------	------	-------	-------

1	1.00	0.96	0.01	0.08
---	------	------	------	------

2	0.96	0.92	1.04	1.08
---	------	------	------	------

0	1.99	1.92	-1.99	-1.92
---	------	------	-------	-------

2	1.67	1.61	0.33	0.39
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*Target inventory was taken by applying NRPA benchmark ratio to Terre Haute 2020 census population

*Surplus/deficits were calculated by subtracting current inventory from target inventory

LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

This section assesses the needs of Terre Haute Parks and Recreation by comparing industry standards with the current park system. It begins with a review of industry-recognized benchmarks, establishing a baseline for the types of services and facilities currently in demand. These benchmarks are then compared to the existing programs and facilities in Terre Haute to identify any surpluses or deficits. Public input gathered through earlier methods further shapes this analysis.

The Level of Service (LOS) Analysis helps the Department of Parks and Recreation set standards to meet the community's recreational needs. While this analysis provides valuable insight, it must be considered alongside other factors, as parks and recreation facilities are unique to each community. Understanding the specific desires of local residents is key to developing appropriate LOS standards, and regularly updating the parks plan ensures these

standards evolve as community needs change.

LOS standards can be developed using various metrics, such as land per capita, facility availability, and park access. For Terre Haute, the LOS focuses on land per capita and permanent outdoor amenities. While the parks are well-distributed, the LOS study alone cannot fully assess whether all neighborhoods are adequately served.

It's essential to remember that LOS serves as a guideline, not a strict rule for expansion, and doesn't account for local preferences or the precise distribution of facilities.

CURRENT TRENDS AND SCORP COMPARISON

Indiana's 2021-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides a valuable resource for assessing local and statewide outdoor recreation trends.

TOP REASONS TO RECREATE

38% TO BE WITH
FRIENDS & FAMILY

37% PHYSICAL
HEALTH

34% MENTAL
HEALTH

TRENDS IN RECREATION



WALKING, HIKING,
JOGGING, RUNNING



PRIMITIVE &
RV CAMPING



BICYCLING



FISHING, BOATING
& WATERSPORTS



PICNICKING
& COOKOUTS



GOLFING

SOURCE: Indiana's 2021-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

TOP-RATED RECREATION ACTIVITIES

SCORP: TOP 5 RATED OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

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

NRPA: TOP OUTDOOR FACILITIES PROVIDED BY AGENCIES

- Playgrounds
- Basketball courts
- Tennis courts (outdoor)
- Youth baseball diamonds
- Adult softball fields

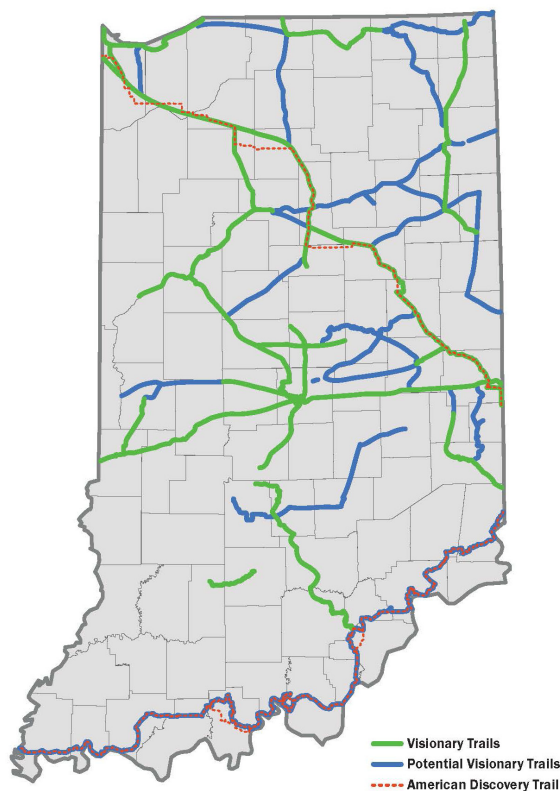
NRPA: TOP INDOOR FACILITIES PROVIDED BY AGENCIES

- Community centers
- Recreation centers
- Senior centers
- Performance amphitheater
- Nature centers

TPL: TOP RECREATIONAL TRENDS

- Interactive water feature
- Dog parks
- Pickleball
- Disc golf

SCORP: Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan; NRPA: National Recreation & Park Association; TPL: Trust for Public Land



SOURCE: Indiana's 2021-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)

Understanding both national and local recreational patterns is essential for effective decision-making. Key findings from the Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey reveal that the top reasons people engage in outdoor recreation are to be with family and friends (38%), for physical health (37%), and for mental health (34%). Popular activities include walking, hiking, jogging, relaxation, gardening, and bird watching, while the top favorite activities include walking, camping, hiking, fishing, and boating.

NRPA COMPARISON

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) provides benchmarks through its 2023 NRPA Park Metrics, offering a comparison for park and recreation agencies nationwide. According to the 2023 metrics, the typical U.S. park and recreation agency provides:

- One park for every 2,287 residents
- 10.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents

- Operating expenditure of \$94.77 per capita per year
- Revenue-to-operating expenditure ratio of 24.6%
- 8.9 full-time employees per 10,000 residents
- 51.5 total full-time equivalent employees

TRAILS & GREENWAYS IN TERRE HAUTE

Since the 1995 SCORP, walking, jogging, and running have consistently been the most popular outdoor recreation activities for Hoosiers. The Indiana SCORP includes an Indiana Trails Plan that outlines key goals for 2021-2025, which are relevant as Terre Haute continues to expand its trail network. These goals include:

- Developing more miles of trails to meet growing demand
- Better maintaining Indiana's existing trails
- Increasing stakeholder capacity for trail management and the use of best practices
- Improving the trail user experience

As Terre Haute works to enhance its trail system, it will be important to refer to these SCORP goals in conjunction with local planning strategies to ensure the city's trails meet the needs of both the local community and the broader region.

The Indiana Trails Plan also highlights the National Road Heritage Trail and the Parke County Community Rail Trail as key corridors for future development within the Visionary Trail System. The National Road Heritage Trail is a cross-state trail that aims to connect Terre Haute with other major cities in Indiana, providing a significant recreational and transportation asset for the community. Additionally, the Parke County Community Rail Trail is another important segment that will further enhance regional connectivity, linking Terre Haute to neighboring communities. These trails are part of a broader effort to expand Terre Haute's trail network, promoting outdoor recreation and providing more access to scenic areas in and around the city.

CURRENT PROGRAMMING TRENDS

According to the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review, programming is essential for increasing community engagement and facility use within parks and recreation. Programs that include registration fees also serve as a major source of non-tax revenue for many agencies. Without strong programming, agencies may experience reduced usage, lower community support, and budget constraints.

Programming provided by park and recreation agencies spans a wide range of activities, many of which align with NRPA's Three Pillars: Health and Wellness, Equity, and Conservation. Key programming activities offered by at least seven in 10 agencies 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%)
- Racket sports (71%)
- Aquatics (69%)

These programs help promote physical fitness, social interaction, and community well-being. Terre Haute Parks and Recreation offers many of these activities, enhancing community engagement and support through diverse recreational programming.

WABASH RIVER AS A BLUEWAY WATER TRAIL THROUGH TERRE HAUTE

The DNR's Water Trails Survey, which gathered feedback from 341 respondents, revealed key insights into water trail usage and preferences along Indiana's waterways, including the Wabash River in Terre Haute. The primary reason respondents visited the water trails guide was to find information about public access sites. Among Indiana's water trails, the Wabash River was one of the most popular, following Sugar Creek and the White River.

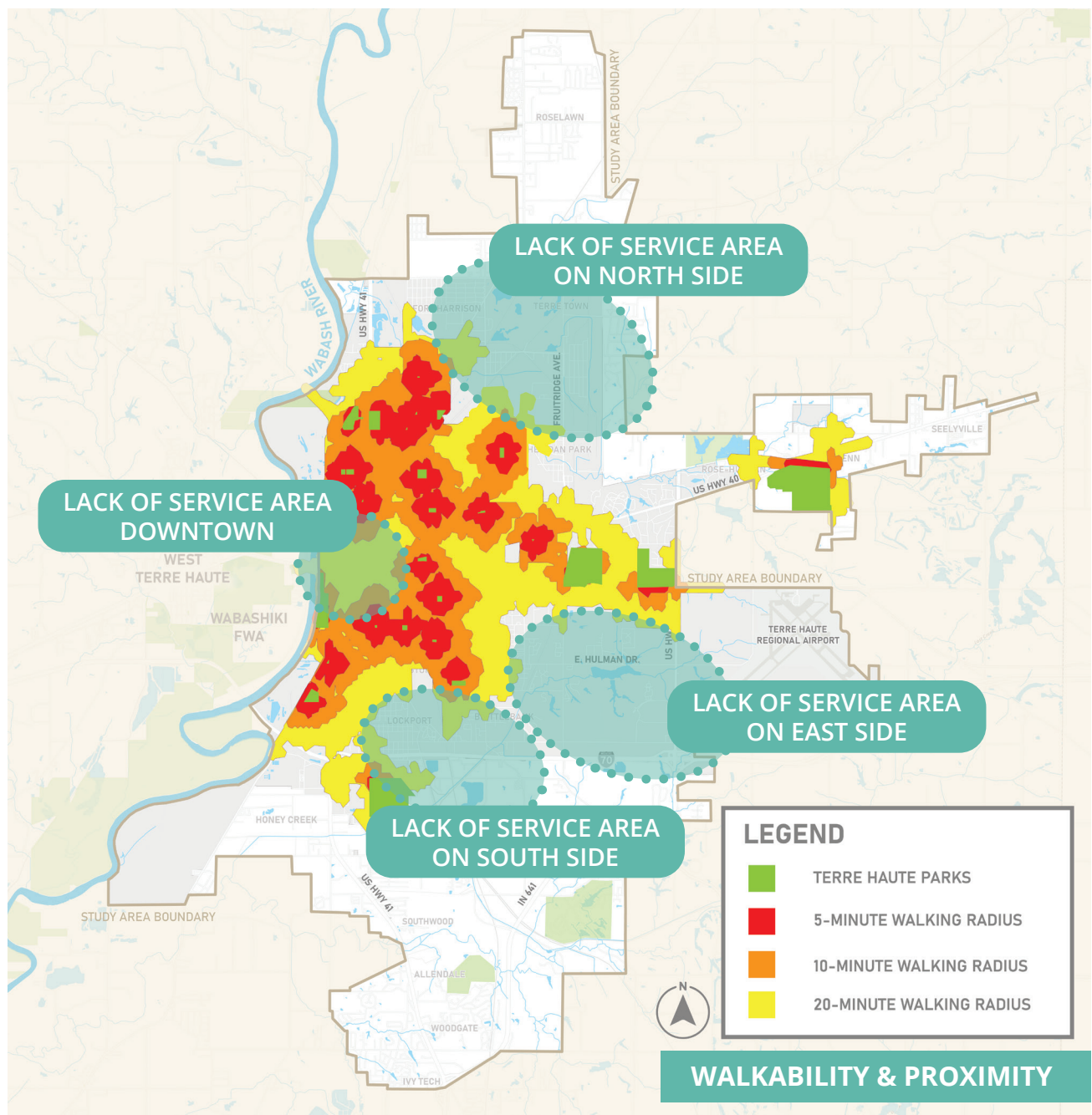
Over 90% of survey respondents indicated that they primarily use kayaks on water trails, with 53% using canoes and 10% using standup paddle boards. Additionally, respondents overwhelmingly prefer to access information about water trails via websites (89%) or mobile apps (55%).

For Terre Haute, these findings emphasize the potential to further develop water trails and blueways along the Wabash River, focusing on improving public access points, offering better digital resources, and catering to the growing interest in kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding.

ACREAGE LOS

According to the Indiana State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Terre Haute should provide 20 acres of public recreation space per 1,000 residents, which equates to 1,168 acres for the city's population of 58,389. Currently, Terre Haute has 1,152 acres, resulting in a small deficit of 16 acres. While Vigo County meets the local outdoor recreation acreage recommendation, it falls short in State/Federal recreation land.

The 2023 NRPA Park Metrics show that the national average is 10.8 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, meaning Terre Haute's 19.7 acres per 1,000 residents exceeds this national standard. However, while the national average is one park per 2,287 residents, Terre Haute has one park per 2,550 residents, indicating fewer parks than the national average.



Overall, Terre Haute generally meets or exceeds national benchmarks for parkland, with a higher-than-average acreage per capita despite having fewer parks per resident.

AMENITY LOS

Amenity LOS compares the availability of recreational facilities to national benchmarks. Terre Haute has an abundance of facilities for golf, playgrounds, tennis and third-party field sports facilities which may warrant lower priority for new construction. However, there are notable

deficits in outdoor performance venues, splash pads, and dog parks. Other amenities in need of attention include paved trails, basketball courts, community gardens, and pools. Indoor facilities, such as community centers, are also slightly below national averages, though the larger Deming Torner Community Center help offset this.

In conclusion, Terre Haute's parks are generally well-served, but there are opportunities to address gaps in amenities and ensure that all neighborhoods are adequately supported.

SUMMARY & TAKEAWAYS

The needs assessment for Terre Haute Parks and Recreation, informed by public input, NRPA benchmarks, and SCORP guidelines, provides a comprehensive view of the system's strengths, challenges, and opportunities. This assessment has formed the foundation for future recommendations to ensure that Terre Haute's parks system meets the community's evolving recreational needs. Below is a summary of the primary takeaways:

PARK ACREAGE AND DISTRIBUTION

Terre Haute provides 19.7 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, slightly below the state recommendation of 20 acres but well above the national average of 10.8 acres. However, the city faces a shortage in the number of parks, with 1 park per 2,550 residents, compared to the national average of 1 park per 2,287 residents. While the city is generally well-served in terms of overall parkland, there is a need to improve the distribution of parks and add more facilities, particularly in underserved areas.

FACILITY UPGRADES AND ACCESSIBILITY

Public feedback consistently emphasized the need for upgrading and maintaining current park facilities, including restrooms, playgrounds, splash pads, and trails. Accessibility improvements, particularly regarding ADA compliance and trail connectivity, were identified as key priorities. Ensuring that facilities are well-maintained and accessible to all residents is crucial for the park system's success.

PROGRAMMING EXPANSION

There is strong demand for expanded recreational programming, with particular interest in activities for all age groups, such as youth programs, adult sports leagues, and family-friendly events. Popular program requests include pickleball courts, fitness classes, and special-needs programming. Expanding programming will help increase community engagement and promote greater use of park facilities.

SAFETY AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Safety concerns were a recurring theme, with suggestions for improved lighting, security cameras, and better signage throughout the parks. Respondents also called for improved trail connectivity and infrastructure, such as pedestrian and vehicle separation, to enhance safety in larger parks like Deming. Better linking parks through bike paths and greenways remains a top priority to encourage more active use of the parks system.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AND NATURAL AREAS

The community expressed strong support for environmental initiatives, including tree planting, removal of invasive species, and the creation of pollinator spaces. Expanding naturalized areas and developing educational programs on environmental conservation will align with community desires and national trends in outdoor recreation. Emphasizing sustainability and environmental stewardship will enhance the park system's appeal and long-term vitality.

STAFFING AND BUDGET

Terre Haute's parks department operates with an annual budget of \$4.5 million, or \$77.02 per capita, which falls below the national average of \$93.01 per capita. Additionally, the department has 59.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, significantly below the recommended 104 FTEs for a city of its size. This staffing and budget shortfall limits the department's ability to address maintenance needs, upgrade facilities, and expand programming. Increased investment in both staffing and budget is essential for the park system to keep pace with the community's growing needs.

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

Enhancing trail connectivity remains a top priority for Terre Haute, as the community desires more greenways and bike paths linking parks and neighborhoods. Developing additional connections between key parks, such as the Heritage Trail and Deming Park, will promote more outdoor activity and create safer, more accessible routes for walkers and cyclists.

CONCLUSION

The needs assessment process has revealed that while Terre Haute's parks system is generally well-served in terms of park acreage, there are clear gaps in facilities, programming, and staffing that need to be addressed. The system's strengths lie in its parkland per capita, which exceeds national standards, but there are critical areas requiring improvement to meet both state and community expectations.

To better serve Terre Haute's residents, the focus must shift toward upgrading existing amenities, expanding diverse programming for all age groups, and enhancing safety and accessibility throughout the parks. Public input consistently highlighted the need for improved maintenance, ADA compliance, and more comprehensive communication about park events. Additionally, environmental stewardship, such as tree planting and conservation efforts, should become a core focus moving forward, reflecting the community's strong support for green spaces and sustainability.

Significant staffing and budget shortfalls also hinder the system's ability to deliver high-quality services. With an operating budget and staffing levels below national averages, it is crucial to invest in additional resources to maintain and improve park facilities, address deferred maintenance, and expand recreational offerings.

By focusing on these areas—facility upgrades, programming expansion, safety improvements, environmental conservation, and increased staffing—Terre Haute's parks system can better align with both state and national standards while meeting the evolving needs of its community. Addressing these priorities through thoughtful planning and increased investment will ensure that Terre Haute's parks continue to be a valuable and vibrant resource for all residents for years to come.





Recommendations



A VISION RESTORED: THE QUEEN CITY RECREATION RING

OVERVIEW OF FUTURE PARK SYSTEM

The future of Terre Haute Parks is grounded in George Kessler's 1921 vision of an interconnected system of parks, open spaces, and trails. The "Your Terre Haute Parks" plan aims to revive this concept through a modernized "Recreation Ring," linking green spaces across the city for park patrons, cyclists and pedestrians alike. By restoring Kessler's vision, the plan reestablishes the parks' vital role in connecting the community and enhancing public engagement.

This initiative blends Kessler's historical framework with modern needs, integrating updated operations, staffing, and ecological strategies to ensure sustainability and improved recreational opportunities. Through this revitalization, the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department continues its mission to provide high-quality recreation while preserving natural and cultural resources for future generations. The department intends to create a culture of best practice in public parks and recreation administration and work towards NRPA CAPRA accreditation.



LINEAR PARKS & GREENWAYS

Connect the parks by developing a network of multi-use trails and greenways throughout the city. This promotes healthy and active lifestyles while closing the gap on a fragmented and vehicle centered park system. Identified trail expansion projects include: Lost Creek Greenway, Thompson Ditch Trail, Graham Grain Line and Prairieton Road Multi-Use Path.



NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Based on the LOS gaps on in the northern areas, it is recommended that the department establish public-private partnerships with groups in Terre Town to develop a neighborhood park that serves North Terre Haute. Possible locations include Terre Town Baseball Complex, Terre Haute North Little League or naturalized open spaces near Haythorn Ave. & 25th Street.



NATURE PARKS

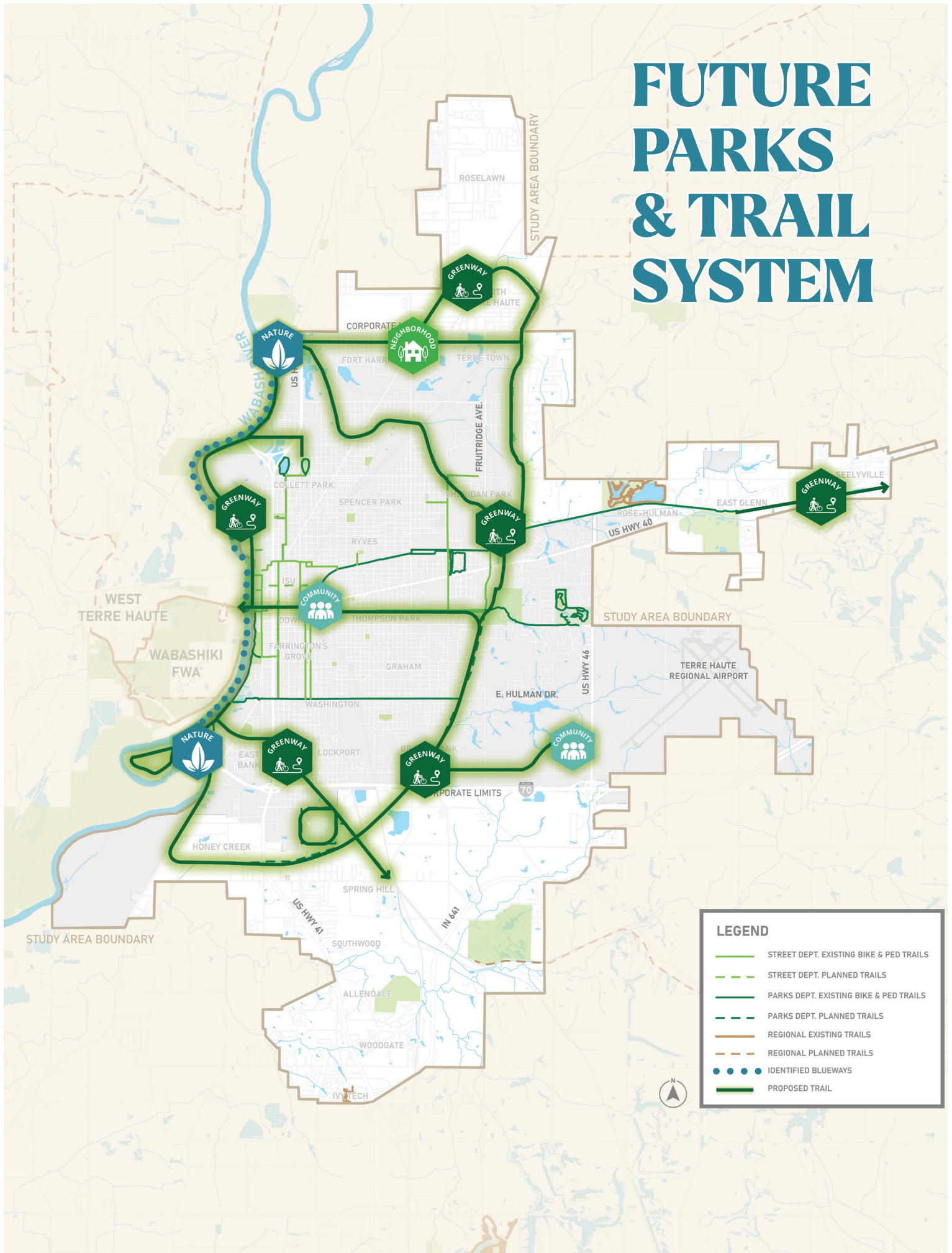
Establish public-private partnerships with IDNR and riverfront land owners to develop northern and southern launch points and nature rest areas to anchor the Wabash River Blueway. Statewide Water Trail popularity and demand increases make this highly viable. Possible locations include Ft. Harrison Road northern terminus, Florida Ave. central terminus and the I-70 Oxbow DNR property southern terminus.



COMMUNITY PARKS

Based on Level of Service gaps, it is recommended that the department establish public-private partnerships with downtown and southeast-side neighborhood groups and housing developers to gauge viability of a community park that serves two locations: downtown plaza and the growing HW 46 corridor. Possible locations identified include agriculture land or naturalized open space near New Margaret Drive.

FUTURE PARKS & TRAIL SYSTEM



THE QUEEN CITY RECREATION RING

Our mission at the Terre Haute Parks Department is to **DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** across all city parks, trails, and open spaces **WHILE ENSURING NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES ARE CONSERVED** for the lasting enjoyment of future generations.

1

FACILITIES

2

ACCESS

6

MAINTENANCE

VISION

Our vision is to make “Your Terre Haute Parks” a sustainable, vibrant, and community-centered network of beautiful, family-friendly spaces that engage, educate, and invigorate.



3

AWARENESS

4

AMENITIES

5

PROGRAMMING

PARKS & AMENITIES

PARKS AND AMENITY IMPROVEMENTS OVERVIEW

The future of Terre Haute Parks and its amenity spaces should continue to align closely with the needs and desires of the community. Listening to what the public wants in their parks is essential to retaining population, talent and quality-of-life. As emphasized in the mission and slogan, “Your Terre Haute Parks” truly belongs to the people.

Public input was crucial in identifying opportunities to enhance park amenities. The community seeks more creative, experience-based options that promote recreation, learning, and connection with one another. These could include nature-inspired playgrounds, water features, and adventure courses to encourage activity and wellness. Art installations, performance space a/v upgrades, and community gardens would support creativity, social interaction, and environmental awareness. Tech-enhanced features like smart park programming apps, security kiosks, wifi and charging stations would provide modern conveniences, ensuring parks meet the needs of all visitors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand nature-based play and learning opportunities by incorporating unique wooden intergenerational playgrounds in neighborhood parks like Thompson and Spencer Ball, and tree house adventure park at Dobbs Nature Park.
- Enhance action sports amenities with additional investments in cycling recreation, such as improving the asphalt pump track, and natural ninja course at Maple Avenue Park.
- Upgrade restroom facilities and shelters throughout all parks to improve visitor comfort and convenience.
- Improve Deming Park Pool Facility and develop a large-scale aquatic and wellness facility at Rea Park to serve as a major recreational hub for the community and region.



Example of asphalt pump track: St. Charles, MO



Example of nature play experience: Long Cove, TX



Example of regional waterpark: Spivey, GA



Example of bouldering feature: Columbus, OH

TRAIL & GREENWAY NETWORK

TRAIL NETWORK AND CONNECTIVITY OVERVIEW

The Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department and the City's planning department is currently reviewing the trail network at a regional scale. While the city and parks department has not yet undertaking a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian facility inventory and review, the departments are working with local organizations to identify funding for the study. These trails are crucial for providing multi-modal connections between neighborhoods and parks, as well as offering recreational opportunities for walkers, runners, and cyclists.

The city has made significant progress in establishing a connected and inclusive trail network, featuring greenways, on-street bike lanes, paved trails, and soft-surface trails within parks. Despite these advancements, there remains a need to improve connectivity and expand the network. Public feedback has highlighted a strong demand for additional trails and enhanced connectivity.

The Future Park and Trail System map illustrates existing connectivity and highlights proposed trails & greenways. While smaller neighborhood connections should be continually assessed and incorporated, prioritizing the completion of the outlined network will facilitate better access for residents traveling by foot or bike.

In response to public input emphasizing the ongoing importance of trails, it is recommended that the Department of Parks and Recreation continue collaborating with the City Engineer, City Planner, Metropolitan Planning Organization, and local trail organizations such as Riverscape's Trails Committee to achieve the connections outlined in the current trail development plans.

The Department is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the greenway network. As new trails are planned, budget increases should be included to cover the additional maintenance and operation costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish partnerships with local trails organizations such as Riverscape's Trails Committee and the Crossroads Trails coalition at Thrive West Central who can help champion development of trails.
- Implement and install emergency call station kiosks where appropriate along the trail system.
- Continue to pursue grant programs to plan and implement greenway segments.
- Begin budgeting for the annual maintenance of existing greenway and trail facilities.
- Explore opportunities to expand the proposed system, such as the Lost Creek Greenway on the northside, and Thompson Ditch Trail, which extends from around the East and South side of the city connecting Deming Park, Rea Park and the Riley Spur Trail.



Example of innovative trails in Asheville, NC



Example of trailhead restroom

WABASH RIVER BLUEWAY

THE WABASH RIVER BLUEWAY

A blueway is a designated water trail or route that provides recreational opportunities for activities like kayaking, canoeing, crew rowing, and paddleboarding, while also promoting the conservation of natural waterways and surrounding environments. Similar to greenways, which are land-based trails, blueways enhance public access to water bodies such as rivers, lakes, and wetland areas, often featuring amenities like launch sites, signage, and rest stops similar to the Taylorville launch site at Wabashiki FWA. These trails not only offer outdoor adventure and scenic beauty but also support local tourism and environmental education by encouraging sustainable interaction with aquatic ecosystems.

In Terre Haute, the Wabash River is set to become a central feature of the city's recreational offerings as a designated blueway route. This initiative will transform the river into a vibrant water trail, offering residents and visitors opportunities for kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding while promoting the conservation of the Wabash and its surrounding habitats. As part of the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation strategy,

developing a master plan for the Wabash River Blueway will improve public access to the river through planned amenities such as launch sites, interpretive signage, camping sites and scenic rest areas. By partnering with local groups like Riverscape, Wabash Valley Rowing Crew, and Ouabache Land Conservancy, the integration of the Wabash River into the city's recreational framework will not only provide unique outdoor experiences but also boost local tourism and strengthen the community's connection to Terre Haute's natural heritage.

The approximately 8.3 mile extent of the blueway route identified reaches from the northern put-in located near The Landing at Ft Harrison, to the DNR public land known as "The Oxbow" on the southern end of the route near Interstate 70. Identified accessible launch sites and rest areas include Fairbanks Park, The Mill, Riverfront Lofts near ISU's Track and Field facility, and DNR property along Florida Avenue.





Example of kayak launch in Asheville, NC



RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Develop Accessible Launch Sites:** Identify, construct and/or upgrade multiple, strategically placed launch sites along the Wabash River, ensuring they are accessible to all users, including those with disabilities. These sites should include amenities like parking, restrooms, and signage detailing water conditions and safety information.
- **Create Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage:** Install clear wayfinding signs along the river and at key access points to guide users through the blueway. Include interpretive signage that educates visitors about the river's ecological, historical, and cultural significance, fostering a deeper connection with the area.
- **Create Rest Areas and Stopover Points:** Establish designated rest areas along the blueway route with seating, shade structures, and picnic spots. These areas can also serve as educational hubs with information on local wildlife, plant species, and conservation efforts. Integrate Wabash Valley Rowing Crew's strategic plan for a boathouse and launch points.
- **Integrate Safety and Maintenance Protocols:** Develop a comprehensive safety and maintenance plan for the blueway, including regular inspections of water quality, removal of debris or hazards, and the installation of emergency access points. Training and equipping local park staff and volunteers to assist with blueway maintenance and safety is also crucial.
- **Promote Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Engage with local clubs, such as Wabash Valley Rowing Crew and other groups, and businesses to promote the blueway and encourage stewardship of the Wabash River. Establish a partnership plan with local outfitters and tourism agencies to provide rental equipment and guided tours, boosting both awareness and usage of the blueway including hosting statewide and national collegiate rowing events.

PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

ENHANCING RECREATIONAL RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

One of the key responsibilities of the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department is to provide quality and comprehensive recreational resources for the city's residents. This includes not only maintaining physical facilities within parks but also offering a diverse range of recreational programs. The Department currently offers various programs, including free options, and recognizes the importance of expanding these to meet the evolving needs of the community, particularly as the population ages.

To ensure a better quality of life for all residents, the Department is committed to growing its recreational programs in a sustainable manner. This expansion will require careful planning, additional resources, and potentially increased staffing. Alongside the development of new programs, there is a need to continuously evaluate existing offerings. Popular programs should be expanded with additional time slots, while less popular ones may need adjustments or improved promotion, potentially involving more locations or partnerships with community facilities.

As the city expresses a desire for more naturalized park spaces, there is also a growing interest in outdoor recreation and nature-based educational programs for both youth and adults. As Terre Haute develops these naturalized areas, the Department should create programming to take full advantage of these assets. Activities such as hiking, tree walks, adventure play, fishing, outdoor skills workshops, compass navigation, astronomy, and pond visits can complement the existing or planned natural areas, enriching the recreational experiences available to the community.



Programming such as 'Flowering Fairbanks' is a partnership between RiverScape in Fairbanks Park. The event is implemented in partnership with the Honey Creek Garden Club, The Herb Society, Xi Mu Alpha Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi, and Master Gardeners and friends.



Interactive apps for sharing adventures



Mentorship programs and clean up days



Improved safety and patrol image in parks

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Community Engagement Staff:** Proceed with plans to add a Community Engagement staff position dedicated to developing additional programming for underserved age groups, including children, families, and seniors.
- **Development & Promotion:** Review survey responses and introduce new programs that align with community needs including education based apps like WishTrip app for kids to share their outdoor adventures. Also evaluate how to more effectively promote both existing and new programs through community engagement, social media, the city website, and partnerships with local groups.
- **Community Partnerships:** Include partnerships with local community organizations to educate residents about healthy food options, and gardening.
- **Fitness & Wellness in the Parks:** Plan health and wellness classes, including Zumba, yoga, Pilates, cooking, nutrition, and gardening/ community gardens. Additionally, implement a free *Fitness in the Parks* program in collaboration with local fitness partners like Union Hospital, ISU and YMCA.
- **Senior Programming:** Increase programming offered for seniors, including both physically active and social programs. Additionally, begin utilizing the Girl Scout Building Event Center for community programs, events, and fitness activities such as rowing and cycling classes.
- **Neighborhood Events:** Work with local neighborhood associations and community groups to organize events in as many parks as possible to restore parks image.
- **Cultural Programming:** Implement new cultural programming in areas of the community where it is currently lacking.
- **Emergency Personnel Interaction:** Create park activity opportunities that incorporate interaction with emergency personnel, including members of the THPD and THFD. This could include one-time events, recurring events, or ongoing collaborations to increase their presence at park events.

PARK IMAGE & BRANDING

MARKETING & BRANDING: SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT TERRE HAUTE PARKS

In addition to physical renewal, Terre Haute's park system needs improved branding, as many parks currently suffer from poor reputations. While maintenance and management improvements are underway, positive marketing can reinforce the message of transformation. Enhancing perceptions will boost park activity and contribute to a stronger sense of safety.

Improving branding involves upgrading both physical signage and online marketing for park events. Developing a fresh park logo and department website independent of the City's website is critical to the success of long term image. In addition to the website, here is a quick list of all the areas that need to be addressed for the Parks Department to establish a more cohesive branding experience across all platforms.

Physical

- Signage
- Brochures/ collateral
- Maps
- Park Vehicles
- Trash Cans
- Staff Uniforms
- Customer Service Standards
- Letterhead and Envelopes

Virtual

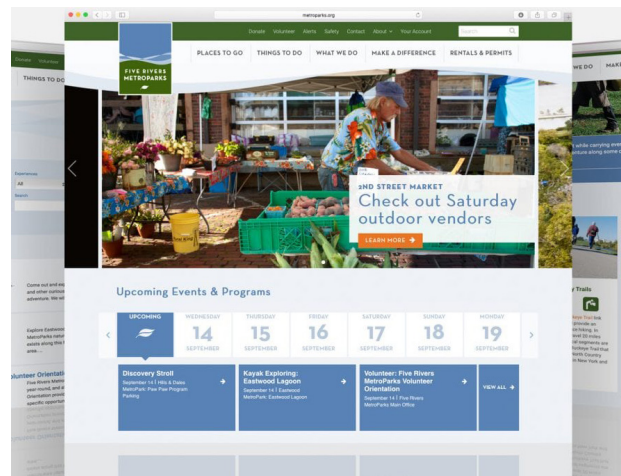
- Department Logo
- Website & Event Calendar
- Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- E-Newsletter
- Videos (YouTube and other formats)
- Email Signature
- Partner Websites

Coordinating a quarterly event calendar with partners like Visit Terre Haute, Haute Happenings, and local news outlets will foster a more positive atmosphere and perception of the parks.

Many special moments within the parks currently go unnoticed by visitors, so there's a need to share the positive stories, rich history, and memorable places within the park system. Creating maps that highlight these key locations will encourage greater exploration, and physical signage will help orient users and enhance park usage. Wayfinding signage within and between parks, such as bicycle routes and greenways, will welcome pedestrians and cyclists.

Investing in color-coded bicycle routes could create a memorable, engaging system. Improved signage within parks will also help establish a positive tone, with rules clearly posted and framed to encourage good behavior rather than simply listing prohibitions.

Together, a stronger message, better signage, and effective marketing can create a consistent, high-quality brand for the Terre Haute Parks System that people will want to visit and enjoy.



Example of park department website

ENTRANCE & GATEWAY SIGNAGE

Park entrances create the first impression for visitors, and the signage at these entry points plays a crucial role in ensuring that impression is positive. Signage should be thoughtfully designed, featuring the park name in large, easily visible lettering, as well as smaller, pedestrian-scale signs that convey important information such as park rules, hours, and expected behavior.

Entrances should be welcoming for those arriving on foot or by bicycle. Signage also provides an opportunity to reinforce the overall

identity of the Terre Haute Park System. While consistent across the system, the signage can be adapted for special use facilities or regional parks. For instance, Fairbanks Park and Hulman-Links Golf Course might have their own distinctive design styles, yet still align with the cohesive color and material quality of the broader system. Neighborhood and community parks should share a unified style to clearly signal their inclusion in the overall system.

The following case studies highlight ways the Terre Haute Parks Department could unify branding, signage, and identity.

CASE STUDIES

Great Miami Riverway logo and merch branding by Guide



Forest Park signage family design in St. Louis by Corbin Design



CULTURE PRESERVATION & PUBLIC ART INTEGRATION

OVERVIEW

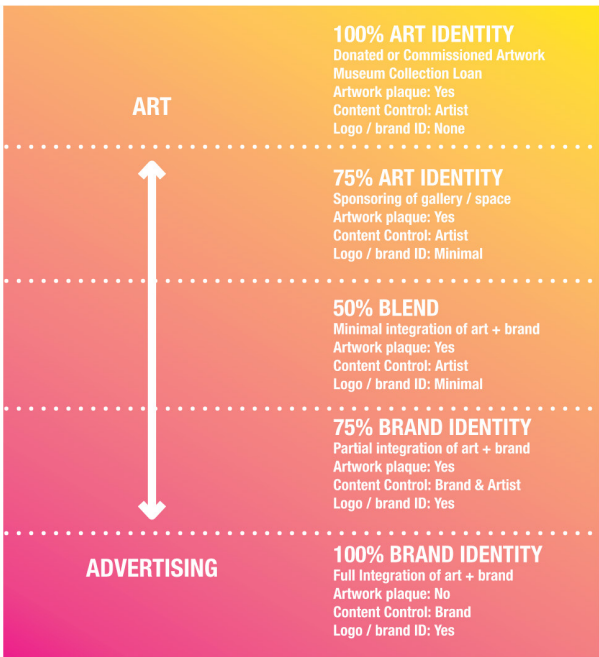
Public art is a powerful medium for community expression and cultural preservation within Terre Haute parks. Created across various forms of media, public art is designed to be visually, audibly, and physically accessible to all, regardless of whether it is placed in public or private spaces. In Terre Haute, public art plays a vital role in preserving the city's cultural values, history, and identity, contributing to a unique sense of place that reflects the spirit of the community.

The creation of public art in Terre Haute is a collaborative process that brings together artists, architects, designers, community members, civic leaders, and funding agencies. This collective effort ensures that public art resonates deeply with the local community, connecting past traditions with contemporary issues and future aspirations. By balancing professional expertise with community input, public art fosters an ongoing dialogue between the artist, the environment, and the public, enriching both the artwork and the community.

Public art not only embodies the ideals of a community but also serves as a cultural marker, safeguarding its heritage for future generations. These artworks can highlight the community's history, involve residents in the creative process, and evolve through public interaction, keeping cultural traditions vibrant and relevant. Whether created by local or outside artists, successful public art engages with its environment and the people who experience it in meaningful ways.

Site-specificity is essential to the success of public art, requiring thoughtful integration into the environment with attention to content, scale, safety, and accessibility. The Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department actively supports public art, with numerous installations completed in partnership with Wabash Valley Art Spaces, Inc.

Developing a comprehensive public art master plan in collaboration with Art Spaces would further strengthen the vision and provide a clear framework for implementing and maintaining public art across the city's park system.



Cloud Gate, by Anish Kapoor, 2006
Vessel - Hudson Yards, Heatherwick, 2019



Boeing Galleries, Millennium Park, Chicago, IL
Uniqlo Park Expressions Grants, New York, NY



WDCH Dreams, Refik Anadol
Dolby Art Series, Iconographic Transmission, by
GMUNK
Calvin Klein, featuring Sterling Ruby, Flag (4791)



Sunset Spectacular, Tom Wiscombe & Orange
Barrel Media
Apple Billboards
OkCupid, Maurizio Cattelan & Pierpaolo Ferrari



Coca Cola Billboard, San Francisco, CA

Example of arts master plan: coVIBE ARTS MASTER PLAN BY FUTUREFORMS

PRESERVATION EFFORTS

In addition to fostering new public art, Terre Haute has prioritized the restoration and enhancement of historical landmarks, such as:

- The Chauncey-Rose Memorial Restoration
- The Unity Arch Fountain Restoration
- Dresser House Tours & Interaction
- Deming Park Train Enhancements
- Archival of historic park documents

- Installation of educational signage throughout the parks to preserve and share historical narratives

EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

To deepen community engagement with public art, Terre Haute is developing initiatives such as:

- A Cultural Art Walk and Education App
- Promotional events celebrating the history of performing and fine arts in the parks
- Collaboration with other arts organizations to attract cultural tourism and promote the city's rich artistic heritage

By embracing these recommendations, Terre Haute can continue to enhance its parks with public art that preserves its cultural heritage, engages the community, and attracts visitors, making the parks vibrant centers for creativity and reflection.

Example of art space in Fort Worth, TX



RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure a consistent and impactful approach to public art, the following criteria are recommended for guiding the creation and installation of artwork in Terre Haute parks:

- Strengthen the community's identity by reflecting the character of the people who live here.
- Interpret and creatively showcase historical or archaeological research.
- Foster collaboration with community members who have historical ties to the area.
- Promote awareness and provoke thoughtful discussion.
- Encourage interaction in public and social spaces.
- Attract cultural tourism through the uniqueness of public art.
- Invite meaningful engagement between the artwork and its audience.
- Ensure inclusivity and accessibility for people of all backgrounds, ages, and abilities.



GOVERNANCE & FINANCES

PARK OPERATIONS & FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

As municipal budgets tighten, it has become increasingly important for park systems to develop strategies that promote self-sufficiency. Across the country, parks are exploring creative ways to increase revenue, and Terre Haute should prioritize implementing revenue-generating projects in its larger regional parks. These projects can help support overall park operations as well as smaller neighborhood parks. However, each initiative must be carefully planned to ensure its viability and alignment with the park system's goals.

Where possible, involving third-party vendors or creating partnerships can reduce the financial burden on the city. For example, Bridgeport, Connecticut's adventure park has successfully generated new activity and revenue, with the city receiving 10% of proceeds and projected annual revenues exceeding \$2.5 million. Similar opportunities in Terre Haute, such as developing aquatics facilities or destination restaurants along the riverfront, could provide substantial financial support.

The city's unique riverfront also offers significant revenue potential through rowing and water sports events. For instance, Rockford, Illinois' "Head of the Rock" regatta generates about \$1 million annually in registration fees, sponsorships, and hospitality income. This demonstrates how creative, well-planned projects can enhance both community engagement and park funding.

Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships by developing a "Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Foundation" to build strong partnerships with businesses, corporations, and individual donors to fund park improvements. A park and recreation foundation should focus on developing similar collaborative efforts to generate sustainable resources for parks and community programs and align with City and community needs.

The Terre Haute Parks 2025 budget highlights both opportunities and challenges for the park system. While the Parks General Fund remains financially stable, both Hulman Links and Rea Park are facing significant financial difficulties, signaling the need for focused attention on these areas. The projected revenues for 2024 suggest an optimistic outlook for the Parks General Fund, but these revenues are expected to fall short of covering all operational expenses, particularly at Hulman Links and Rea Park, where expenses are likely to exceed income. This highlights the importance of careful financial planning to manage the budget and prevent further deficits.

Addressing these challenges will require a multi-faceted approach. Optimizing operational efficiency through cost-saving measures such as improved maintenance practices and energy-efficient upgrades will be crucial. Expanding revenue opportunities by offering more paid programs, events, and facility rentals, as well as pursuing grants and sponsorships, can also provide the financial boost needed to support operations and reduce reliance on city funds. In the case of Hulman Links and Rea Park, targeted strategies like reviewing operational costs, developing partnerships with third-party vendors, adjusting user fees, and securing sponsorships could help align revenues with costs. Promoting large-scale events can further generate substantial revenue to balance the budget.

To support, reallocate and increase budget for the Terre Haute Parks Department, the Park and Recreation Board, Mayor's Office, City Council and other key stakeholders can take several strategic actions recommended on the following page.

It is recommended that the Department work towards NRPA CAPRA Accreditation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. REALLOCATION OF EXISTING FUNDS:

- **Prioritize Essential Services:**
Reallocate funds from less critical areas to park operations and improvements, focusing on key services and addressing deficits in critical areas like Rea Park and Hulman Links.
- **Capital Improvement Funds:**
Redirect capital improvement funds to enhance parks infrastructure and revenue-generating projects, such as restrooms, aquatics facilities or riverfront developments.
- **Leverage Economic Development Funds:**
Tap into economic development funds, emphasizing parks as community assets that boost quality of life, property values, and tourism.

2. ENCOURAGE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

- **Facilitate partnerships with local businesses or third-party operators** to introduce new amenities like adventure parks or restaurants, generating additional revenue without a heavy financial burden on the city.
- **Tax Incentives for Private Investment:** Offer tax incentives for private companies that invest in park development, attracting more funding for amenities and maintenance.

3. ESTABLISH OR INCREASE DEDICATED FUNDING STREAMS

- **Park-Specific Bonds:** Propose dedicated bond measures for parks and recreation improvements, generating substantial funding for operations and new projects.
- **Tourism and Hospitality Taxes:** Increase or reallocate a portion of tourism and hospitality taxes to support park improvements, tying enhancements directly to economic benefits.

4. ADVOCATE FOR STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS

- **Pursue state and federal grants** aimed at recreational development, environmental sustainability, and community health. Allocate resources to grant-writing efforts to secure funding for infrastructure upgrades and sustainability initiatives.
- **Collaborate with Nonprofits:** Partner with local nonprofits or land trusts to access grant funds or donations for specific park improvements, bringing in targeted funding.

5. SUPPORT REVENUE-GENERATING PROJECTS

- **Approve or support new revenue-generating projects** like large-scale events, destination venues, or enhanced park amenities that can attract additional income.
- **Promote Tourism Events:** Help market major events such as rowing regattas or riverfront festivals, generating substantial revenue through hospitality, sponsorships, and tourism.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

- **Encourage continued community input and advocacy** for park funding through public forums or surveys to align council funding with public priorities.
- **Volunteer Programs:** Expand volunteer programs to reduce staffing costs for maintenance and event management, freeing up the budget for other essential areas.

By focusing on reallocation strategies, partnerships, dedicated funding streams, and revenue-generating projects, the Terre Haute Parks Department and other stakeholders can ensure the long-term financial sustainability of Terre Haute's parks system while maintaining high-quality services for the community.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

PARK OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE ASSESSMENT

Given the recent challenges in operations and funding, a thorough review of park operations and maintenance practices was conducted as part of this plan. The assessment included a review of current budget information, public input comments, and ongoing coordination meetings with Parks Department staff. Focus group meetings with the maintenance team were held to gain insights from those directly involved in the ongoing upkeep of park facilities.

As noted in earlier sections, the current (2024) Parks Department budget is \$4.5million, with 54 full-time employees. The Parks Department allocates approximately 25% of its annual budget to managing golf courses.

Through the research and input process, several key areas for improvement and balance in maintenance operations were identified.

The department's level of service goals should incorporate:

MAINTENANCE

Provide Terre Haute residents with well-maintained parks, restrooms, athletic fields, play areas, and playgrounds that set a high standard for West Central Indiana and the Wabash Valley.

HORTICULTURE

Offer residents enjoyable seasonal landscaping and garden displays in the most visible and utilized areas within each park, such as near signage, entryways, and key amenities.

FORESTRY

Ensure that residents have access to quality, healthy, and safe urban forests, streetscapes, and parks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create Maintenance Standards:** Establish clear standards to ensure consistency across the park system.
- **Equipment Modernization:** Replace outdated and broken equipment with new technology for safer, more efficient management.
- **Promote Professionalism:** Continue to recruit and evaluate seasoned professionals to manage the parks effectively.
- **Urban Forest Management:** Maintain, expand, and care for the park's tree canopy per the City's 2021 Urban Forestry Management Plan.
- **Volunteer Engagement:** Maximize the use of volunteers by empowering them with tasks that benefit the department without compromising quality.
- **Maintenance Deficits:** Address poor quality and deteriorating conditions noted throughout the park inventory.
- **Staff Training:** Provide ongoing skill and knowledge development for maintenance staff.
- **Design Standards:** Standardize park components and equipment, such as playground features, lighting, and wayfinding elements.
- **Regional Cooperation:** Explore maintenance and equipment-sharing opportunities with Vigo County Parks and Terre Haute Public Works Department.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Educate staff on the value of sustainable practices, such as no-mow and controlled burn techniques, to reduce conventional lawn mowing and free up resources for other maintenance needs.

MAINTENANCE IMPROVEMENTS

Ongoing maintenance remains a persistent challenge for the Parks Department. Developing a maintenance manual and quality control inspections will establish standards, work schedules, and guidelines for assessing and renovating special-use facilities. These standards can be implemented gradually, allowing staff to adapt and ensure consistency across the system. Park-specific concept plans can also help reduce maintenance demands by designating potential low-mow areas throughout the park system. Additionally, instituting a work order system for both preventative and demand maintenance will help prioritize tasks for seasonal and full-time staff.

NO-MOW & LOW-MOW LAWNS

Park-specific recommendations identify ideal candidates for implementing no-mow grass practices. Establishing these seed mixes, locally sourced from Indiana growers like Spence Restoration Nursery, can significantly reduce lawn maintenance time. No-mow grasses, typically blends of fescue varieties, grow to about five inches tall once established. They are suitable for sunny or partially shaded areas used for activities like picnicking and walking but do not require grooming for sports. Despite the name, no-mow grasses require a single annual mowing to control weed growth. Additionally, fescues have

deep root systems, making them more drought-tolerant and reducing irrigation needs.

SITE PREPARATION

Proper site preparation is crucial for successfully establishing no-mow lawns. The ideal seeding time is between September 1 and November 1, as fescue grasses germinate best in cool, damp conditions, while most weeds remain dormant. The first step is to remove all existing grasses and weeds using one of the following methods:

- Smothering
- Sod-cutting
- Cultivating
- Herbicide application

After removing existing vegetation, the site should be graded as needed, with any necessary amendments, such as sand for improved soil drainage, added. The site should then be tilled and finely graded to ensure firm seed-to-soil contact. The seed can be applied using a drop seeder or hand broadcasting. Finally, lightly rake the seed into the soil and roll it to ensure firm contact. During the first two to three years, the grasses will require extra care, mainly focusing on weed control. Additional mowing may be needed to suppress weeds until the grasses are fully established. Importantly, no-mow grasses should not be fertilized, as this promotes weed growth.



Existing open lawn at Coy Park that could be converted into a no-mow landscape.



Example of a No-Mow Prairie installation in a Carmel, IN park with maintained two foot lawn along walkway.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS & VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

While there is a clear need to increase the size of the Parks Department staff, this expansion will take time. Additionally, it is impractical for the City of Terre Haute to bear sole responsibility for park quality. Various organizations and volunteers contribute to park upkeep, but their involvement varies significantly from park to park and year to year, leading to inconsistent quality across the system. Moreover, there are no formal mechanisms to regulate the duties of the City and Parks Department in relation to friends groups, volunteer groups, and private foundations.

The plan recommends establishing a pattern of meetings that bring together managers, volunteers, staff, and local friends groups. This pattern should be institutionalized and formal agreements established with Friends Groups, outlining the tasks to be completed by Parks staff and those to be handled by Friends Groups.

To alleviate staffing challenges, the department could contract services for tasks they cannot complete independently, such as trash removal, allowing existing positions to be redirected to grounds maintenance. Temporary positions could help bridge the gap. Staffing resources can also be augmented by interns from local colleges such as ISU, Rose-Hulman, St. Mary-of-the-Woods, and Ivy Tech, particularly those majoring in recreational management, turf management, organizational leadership, mechanical trades, and athletics.

Additionally, the department should quantify the labor costs associated with trash pickup and educate the community about the financial implications, while increasing littering fines. Empower clubs and groups to organize cleanup days and establish volunteer park watch groups. Reaching out to civic and faith-based organizations for volunteer recruitment is also recommended.

STAFF SKILLS TRAINING & PERFORMANCE

Park staff training should emphasize enhancing customer service, safety, and maintenance skills while fostering knowledge of community engagement and environmental stewardship.

Continuing education opportunities, such as workshops on innovative recreation programming, sustainability practices, and certifications in first aid, landscaping, and outdoor education, are essential to ensure staff can meet evolving park and visitor needs. Performance should focus on key areas, including customer service, safety and maintenance, community engagement, professional development, and teamwork, to create a safe, engaging, and well-maintained park experience for all.

PARK	# BEDS	Sun.	Mon.	Tues.
✓ Collet	5	5/2	2	1
✓ Boy Scout	1	1/2	2	1
✓ Booker T. Wash	3	1/2	1/2	2
✓ Deming	14	14	1/2	6
✓ Dobbs	7	Full	22	1
✓ Dresser	1	Full	20	1
✓ Fairbanks	11	Full	24	1
✓ Gilbert	1	1/2	7	1
✓ Graham	1	1/2	7	1
✓ Hanley	1	Full	7	1
✓ Hulman Links	7	Full	23	1
✓ REA Park	6	Full	20	1
✓ City Hall	3	Full	10	1
✓ Blakely	1	Full	12	1
✓ 500 Maple	4	Full	20	1
✓ Rose	1	1/2	7	1
✓ Sheridan	1	Full	7	1
✓ Spencer	1	Full	11	2
✓ Thompson	1	Full	7	1
✓ Twigg	4	1/2	20	1
✓ 12 Points	7	Full	60	1
✓ Vicottrell	1	1/2	1	1
✓ Voorhees	1	1/2	1	1
✓ Girl Scout	5	Full	2	1
✓ Wabash	2	Full	22	2
✓ 19th and Ohio	4	Full	22	2
✓ Highland Cem.	5+2 Urns			
✓ Woodlawn Cem.	1			
3798 total.				

* Colored Hosta Bed

Jackies garden/pink & purple

Vickie Cochran
master gardeners

Existing flower bed maintenance checklist

INSPECTION TEMPLATE SAMPLE

PARK QUALITY CONTROL INSPECTION

TERRE HAUTE PARKS DEPARTMENT

Park Inspection _____

NAME _____

8.28.24

Time:1010-11 am

72* sunny

Item	Needs Attention	OK	N/A	Describe Action Needed	Corrective Action Complete
Baseball/ Softball Fields	x			sod cut D field	both sod cutters are currently out of service
Backstops		x			
Benches/ Bleachers		x			
Bench Swings		x			
Bollards		x			
Bridges			X		
Court Hardware- Pavement			X		
Disc Golf			X		
Drainage/ Storm Water		x			
Drinking Fountain		x			
Erosion-Sink Hole-Uneven Surface (Turf)	x			add dirt to hole at drive thru gate on D field	been added to next monthly inspection
Fencing	x			replace temp fence section on B field, remove all old foul poles, adjust fence gate drive thru A 3rd base side, fence fitting 3rd base side of D field middle pole @ bleacher	been added to next monthly inspection
Insects: Ants / Wasp / Bees		x			
Fitness Equipment			X		
Irrigation	x			paint all valve boxes	Nick collins 7-10-2023
Landscaping	x			weedeat around fence lines, spray out fence lines and rip rap and batting cage	Nick collins 7-18-2019
Litter/Trash - Area		x			
Lights - Courts / Fields / Parking Lots / Walks / Buildings		x			
Picnic Shelters/ Tables		x			
Parking		x			
Playground Structure			X		
Playground Surface			X		
Plaza Areas - Pavement		x			
Restrooms - Exterior		x			
Restrooms - Interior		x			
Retaining Walls		x			
Score Tower- Building		x			
Signs		x			
Multi-purpose Fields			X		
Splash Pad			X		
Stairs- Handrails		x			
Swings			X		
Trash Cans		x			
Trees (Dead, Hanging limbs, Limb up)	x			remove tree B field behind the fence	eric mccall, zach blair, steve Gonzalez, scott merriotte 7-10-2018
Turf (mow, Trim, damage)		x			
Walking Trail- Pavement			X		
Pulled up old fence poles that had been cut off close to the ground on hill between D field and concession steve Gonzalez, zach Blair, steven Allen 7-21-2017					

This inspection sheet is a preliminary example for tracking maintenance items. It is recommended that the Department explore additional technology to improve tracking processes such as app based programs and software.

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE PLANNING

MAINTENANCE PLAN OVERVIEW

As part of the current Terre Haute 5-Year Parks Plan, a strategy has been established to “provide safe, attractive, multi-use parks.” To support this, the preventative maintenance plan aims to enhance the quality and efficiency of park upkeep. The plan outlines specific maintenance tasks and the frequency at which they should be performed, with the goal of reducing costly reactive maintenance and mitigating risks.

The preventative maintenance plan (PMP) applies to all Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department (THPRD) facilities, equipment, and vehicles. A key component of the plan’s success is employee training, ensuring staff are equipped to carry out these tasks effectively. The following is a preliminary outline of recommended procedures. While not comprehensive, it serves as the foundation for the department’s adopted maintenance plan.

DAILY

1. **All employees** - Vehicles and maintenance equipment should be inspected before use. Any defects found during inspection should be addressed before the vehicle or equipment is used. Daily inspection forms are submitted to the Maintenance Manager at the end of each month.
2. **Facility Coordinators or designee** - A building walk through should be conducted to check for damage and/or non-operational items. This walk through should also include building exteriors and parking areas. Issues that cannot be addressed by a Facility Coordinator should be communicated to a Recreation Manager. If needed a work order will be submitted to the Parks & Recreation Facilities Maintenance Team.
3. **Facility Coordinators or designee** - Restrooms, gyms, kitchens, lobbies, activity rooms, offices, and parking areas should be cleaned - each facility may have an individualized checklist.



4. **Maintenance Supervisors or designee** - A visual inspection should be conducted at all regional parks to check for any damage and/or non-operational items.

WEEKLY

1. **Maintenance Supervisors** - All playgrounds will be inspected by a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI)

MONTHLY

1. **Facility Coordinators or designee** - Public buildings should be inspected (this includes building exteriors and parking areas) utilizing a monthly building inspection form developed by the department. Issues that cannot be addressed by a Facility Coordinator should be communicated to a Recreation Manager. If needed, a work order will be submitted to the Parks & Recreation Facilities Maintenance Team. Monthly building inspections should be sent to the Recreation Manager for filing digitally.
2. **Assistant Maintenance Manager** - All parks should be inspected utilizing the monthly park inspection form. Identified issues should be communicated to and addressed by the appropriate Maintenance Supervisors or their designee. All monthly park inspections are to be filed digitally.
3. **Safety Committee** - A monthly safety committee meeting should be held to discuss facility, patron, or personnel issues related to safety and/or security. This committee is led by the Assistant Parks and Recreation Director and comprised of key department personnel. Preventative maintenance items and schedules should be discussed at this meeting. Meeting minutes are filed in the department's digital database.

QUARTERLY

1. **Contractor and Facilities Maintenance Department** - All HVAC systems should be inspected. Two quarterly inspections should be done by an outside contractor. Two quarterly inspections should be done by the Parks & Recreation Facilities Maintenance

Team. These inspections should be coordinated by the Maintenance Manager.

2. **Assistant Maintenance Manager** - All vehicles and equipment due for service should be tracked and scheduled through a Fleet Services Coordinator.

SEMI-ANNUALLY

1. **Maintenance Supervisors or designee** - All outdoor water fountains and unheated bathrooms should be winterized in late fall - depending on outside temperature. All outdoor water fountains and unheated bathrooms should be turned back on and repaired, if needed, in the spring - depending on outside temperature.
2. **Maintenance Supervisor or designee** - The splash pad at Washington Park should be winterized in early fall. The splash pad should be re-started and repaired, if needed, in late spring.
3. **Maintenance Supervisor or designee** - Any equipment that will not be used in the winter should be winterized until spring - each piece of equipment may have an individualized procedure.

ANNUALLY

1. **Contractor** - All fire extinguishers and cooking hoods should be inspected by a licensed contractor. These inspections should be coordinated by the Maintenance Manager. Inspection records will be filed in the digital database.
2. **Contractor or Facilities Maintenance Team** - All water meter backflow systems should be inspected either by the Parks & Recreation Facilities Maintenance Team or an outside contractor. These inspections will be coordinated through the Maintenance Manager. Inspection records will be maintained by the Parks & Recreation Facilities Maintenance Team.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS OVERVIEW

This section provide a series of measurable and detailed recommendations for the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department to work toward in the next 5 years and beyond. These priority based items are the synthesized result of existing conditions analysis, demographic data review, past plan review, public engagement, staff discussions, stakeholder interviews, benchmark analysis and the level of service study.

The recommended actions are grouped into these main action categories:

- **Top Ten Priority Actions**
- **System Wide actions**
- **Maintenance actions**
- **Park Specific Actions**
- **Programming Actions**
- **Admin & Operation Actions**

EVALUATION

To achieve its goals in the coming years, the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department will use the Action & Recommendation Tables to guide decision-making and prioritize projects for implementation. The department will periodically review the plan to ensure alignment with these recommendations.

The following table outlines the top ten priorities with the intent of initiated a minimum of 2 priority actions per year. This ambitious projection sets up goals of completion in the next 5 years and beyond.



TOP TEN PRIORITY ACTIONS

1. PUBLIC AWARENESS & IMAGE RESTORATION

Strategically improve the public perception of Terre Haute's park system through targeted messaging and positive marketing, reinforce the "YOUR TERRE HAUTE PARKS" message of renewal and safety, helping to increase park usage and foster a stronger sense of security within the community.

2. FAIRBANKS PARK REVITALIZATION & RIVERFRONT CATALYST

Implement the Fairbanks Park design, which includes a destination playground, Chauncey Rose Memorial, amphitheater restoration, Unity Arch Fountain, and a boathouse addition to the park office building. These enhancements will help revitalize the riverfront, encourage private reinvestment, and attract visitors from across the region.

3. MARKETING & RE-BRANDING INITIATIVE

Strengthen marketing efforts for event facilities, recreational, and nature-based programs by re-branding and revitalizing the park department's presence in the community. This includes updating the website, signage, and gateways to effectively engage both young adults and seniors.

4. OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE FACILITIES OVERHAUL

Develop a phased improvement plan to modernize maintenance and operational facilities, ensuring they are safe, ADA-compliant, and equipped with up-to-date technology to enhance events, programming, and service effectiveness.

5. SYSTEMWIDE PLAYGROUND & RESTROOM UPDATES

Upgrade or replace one playground and restroom facility annually, incorporating naturalized play areas where appropriate. Prioritize ADA-compliant restroom updates near playgrounds, with a focus on equipment replacement at Spencer Ball Park, Thompson Park, and Dobbs Park.

6. REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTER IMPLEMENTATION

Execute the Regional Aquatic Center design at an appropriate location, such as Rea Park, to attract visitors from across the region. This should be done in tandem with renovating Deming Park pool facility to handle capacity.

7. NATURE & ADULT/SENIOR PROGRAMMING

Enhance and create new, engaging programs for adults and seniors, focusing on outdoor education and nature-based activities like gardening, tree planting work days and wildlife stewardship.

8. GREENWAY EXPANSION & DEVELOPMENT

Support the development of a comprehensive citywide greenway and trail expansion plan, including the study and implementation of connections between the Wabash Heritage Trail, Thompson Ditch Greenway, and Riley Spur Trail.

9. PARK AMENITY IMPROVEMENTS

Create a prioritized short-term (1-2 year) and long-term (3-5 year+) replacement schedule for park amenities, including benches, shelters, picnic tables, trashcans, basketball backboards, drinking fountains, lighting, and splash pad features. Utilize casino dollars for these projects to bring amenities up to recommended standards.

10. NATURALIZE PARK SPACES & LONG RANGE FACILITY EXPANSION PLANNING

Increase naturalized park spaces through converting portions of existing properties no-mow and reforested areas. This should be done on a revolving basis and incorporate additional stakeholders.

SYSTEM-WIDE ACTIONS

The following table outlines recommendations for meeting the outlined goals across the entire park system.

ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
	1	2	3	4	5+		
Develop and implement a unified branding appearance across all parks starting with Regional and Community parks including signage wayfinding, architectural styling, paint, etc.	●					\$20,000 (planning) \$130,000 (implementation)	Operating Budget Capital Improvements
Plant 100 additional trees in the parks system in the next 2 years to jumpstart canopy recovery from major storms.		●				\$500-\$800 per tree	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
Work with northern riverfront property owners to partner and develop a blueway trail with kayak access and waterfront trailhead parking				●		\$500k-750k	Local Funding ITP Grant LWCF Grant Private Developers
Develop a feasibility study for future park expansion opportunities in North, East and Downtown to fill gap in service areas					●	\$50,000	Capital Improvements

PROGRAMS ACTIONS

This table outlines recommendations for meeting the outlined goals across the entire park system.

ACTION	TIMELINE (TERM)		ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
	SHORT	LONG		
Hire additional programming staff to assist as events come online		●	\$50,000	Operating Budget
Implement a revolving recreation internship program partnership with ISU	●		\$7,000	Operating Budget
Upgrade A/V equipment for event programming in community buildings		●	\$68,000	Local Funding


MAINTENANCE ACTIONS

The following table outlines recommendations for meeting the outlined goals across the entire park system.

ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
	1	2	3	4	5+		
Execute improvements identified in ADA Self Evaluation Plan for maintenance facilities		●				See Appendix	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
Adjust hourly and salary staff pay as the budget permits, taking into account performance, efficiency, and years of service for parks maintenance personnel.	●					3-4% yearly increase	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
Create a trail operation & maintenance plan to help influence regular inspections and resurfacing of walking, biking, and hiking trails to ensure they are accessible and ADA-compliant.		●				\$10,000	Local Funding
Implement an onboarding safety course for new employees who encounter hazardous situations that need to be handled in an appropriate manner.	●					\$5,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
Create an updated perennial and annual flower bed planting and care schedule for all parks maintenance staff to follow.	●					\$4,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
Update signage and lighting to help visibility and provide a clear sense of wayfinding and direction throughout the parks.		●				\$20k - \$40k per park	Capital Improvements
Work with waste removal to develop hazardous waste protocol for disposal of items and fluids.	●					\$6,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
Schedule orders for needed equipment and tools such as chipper, lift at golf course, blower for gator, bucket truck and vehicle repair	●					\$6,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor

PARK-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

The following table outlines recommendations for individual parks.

 POCKET								
PARK	ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
		1	2	3	4	5+		
12 POINTS GOLD MEDAL PLAZA								
	Develop plaza revitalization plan with improved gathering spaces that catalyze 12-Points Neighborhood Redevelopment	●					\$18,000	Local Funding Community Foundations Neighborhood Association
	Create a unique water feature & celebration space for performances			●			\$450k-700k	Local Funding
	Partner with Art Spaces to incorporate public art in plaza				●		\$120,000	Local Funding & National Endowment For The Arts
ANACONDA PARK								
	Replace basketball court			●			\$61,000	Local Funding
	Replace existing playground					●	\$85,000	Local Funding
	Add accessible walkways & ramps	●					\$45,000	Local Funding
BOY SCOUT PARK								
	Partner with Art Spaces to incorporate sculptural art gathering place with seating and plant elements		●				\$145,000	Local Funding & National Endowment For The Arts
FIVE TRIANGLES								
	Create iconic North Terre Haute Gateway welcoming signage & gathering area				●		\$90k-\$170k	Local Funding & National Endowment For The Arts
	Implement no-mow prairie & wildflowers to minimize mowing	●					\$5,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor

PARK	ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
		1	2	3	4	5+		

GRAHAM PARK

	Add ADA perimeter walk	●					\$42,000	Local Funding
	Provide seating spaces/benches	●					\$4,600	Operating Budget
	Replace existing playground	●					\$85,000	LWCF Grant
	Designate on-street accessible parking	●					\$5,800	Operating Budget
	General accessibility improvements	●					\$40,000	Local Funding

JOHN HANLEY PARK

	Implement no-mow prairie & wildflowers to minimize mowing	●					\$8,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
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OAKLEY PARK

	Provide seating spaces/benches			●			\$4,000	Local Funding
	Designate on-street accessible parking		●				\$10,000	Operating Budget

FIRE & POLICE MEMORIAL PLAZA (ONE TRIANGLE)

	Implement no-mow prairie plaza & wildflowers to minimize mowing	●					\$35,000	Local Funding
	Develop concept plan for plaza's future		●				\$4,000	Local Funding

VI COTTRELL PARK

	Implement no-mow prairie & wildflowers to minimize mowing		●				\$10,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
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BOOKER T. WASHINGTON PARK

	Update or replace existing playground		●				\$85,000	LWCF Grant
	Add drinking fountain	●					\$4,000	Capital Improvements
	Add interpretive signage explaining the park's historical significance				●		\$7,500	Local Funding
	Rehabilitate existing basketball court			●			\$54,000	Local Funding
	Add accessible interior paths	●					\$32,000	Local Funding
	Plan expansion of splash pad				●		\$120,000	LWCF Grant



NEIGHBORHOOD

PARK	ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
		1	2	3	4	5+		

COY PARK

	Facilitate neighborhood discussion of park future & plan goals	●					\$4,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
	Work with VCSWCD establish no-mow pollinator prairie to 70% of park area.	●					\$24,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
	Work with Wabash Valley Softball to connect loop path and accessible interior paths between facilities		●				\$35,000	Neighborhood Association Local Funding

CURTIS GILBERT PARK

	Designate on-street accessible parking		●				\$18,000	Capital Improvements
	Replace or remove existing basketball court				●		\$49,000	Capital Improvements
	Add accessible paths to park amenities		●				\$34,000	Capital Improvements
	Add trail connection				●		\$100,000	Capital Improvements
	Renovate playground & surfacing			●			\$150,000	Local Funding

HERZ-ROSE PARK

	Execute and oversee current park reconstruction project	●					\$25,000	Capital Improvements
	Establish an operations and maintenance plan for park as a best practice for future O&M in parks		●				\$18,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor

PAUL DRESSER MEMORIAL PARK

	Implement no-mow pollinator lawn	●					\$25k-\$50k	Operating Budget
	Consider donating to Vigo County Parks		●				Credit	

PARK	ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
		1	2	3	4	5+		

SHERIDAN PARK

	Engage neighbors & skatepark patrons to program events & contests	●					\$5,000	Local Funding Community Foundations
	Add accessible paths to park amenities			●			\$36,000	Operating Budget
	Designate on-street accessible parking	●					\$45,000	Capital Improvements
	Update playground, add accessible play surfacing & restroom updates			●			\$194,000	LWCF Grant Capital Improvements
	Implement large no-mow prairie		●				\$17,000	Operating Budget

SPENCER F. BALL PARK

	Upgrade accessible parking areas			●			\$67,000	Capital Improvements
	Upgrade concessions				●		\$79,000	Community Foundations
	Add pickleball courts					●	\$84,000	Capital Improvements
	Renovate playground & ADA surfacing				●		\$210,000	LWCF Grant
	Construct new playground near softball field				●		\$225,000	Local Funding ITP Grant LWCF Grant
	Repair existing basketball court					●	\$49,000	Capital Improvements
	Work with Mayor's Office and neighborhood to create park specific master plan		●				\$85,000	Local Funding Community Foundations

THOMSON PARK

	Designate accessible on-street parking		●				\$10,000	Operating Budget
	Renovate basketball court			●			\$40k-\$65k	Local Funding Community Foundations
	Renovate playground & ADA surfacing				●		\$190,000	LWCF Grant
	Add accessible interior paths & seating					●	\$78,000	Local Funding
	Upgrade shelters & restrooms			●			\$80k-140k	Operating Budget



COMMUNITY

PARK	ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
		1	2	3	4	5+		

BRITTLEBANK PARK

	Construct loop trail		●				\$90,000	Local Funding
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COLLETT PARK

	Add dog park	●					\$12,000	Donations
	Add ADA parking along loop			●			\$15,000	Capital Improvements
	Create pedestrian loop trail		●				\$68,000	Local Funding
	Replace play surfacing	●					\$87,000	Capital Improvements
	Add fountain/ splash pad water feature				●		\$250,000	Local Funding
	Resurface tennis courts as pickleball		●				\$45,000	Local Funding Community Foundations
	Upgrade playground area		●				\$250,000	LWCF Grant
	Replace existing perimeter sidewalks and improve lighting	●					\$97,000	Local Funding Community Foundations

VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

	Create park master plan		●				\$45,000	Community Foundations
	Collaborate & support Racer Air Plaza Committee on implementation	●					\$150,000+	Local Funding
	Support tree installation and maintenance along Memorial Mile Trail			●			\$500-\$800 per tree	Donations, Community Foundations

VORHEES PARK

	Construct wider perimeter walk		●				\$80,000	Capital Improvements
	Update play equipment				●		\$95,000	Local Funding
	Expand skate park per skate park advocates plan					●	\$100,000	Donations, Community Foundations
	Plan for future greenway connection to Graham Grain Line/ Riley Spur Trail	●					\$25,000	Local Funding
	Partner with city to make multi-use trail along park (West) side of Prairieton Road with crosswalk to park			●			\$280k-\$430k	Local Funding & Next Level Trails



NATURE

PARK	ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
		1	2	3	4	5+		

DOBBS PARK

	Make interior accessibility improvements to Nature Center and Native American Museum					●	\$150,000-250,000	LWCF Grant
	Create protection plan for intrusion by adjacent residents with access control			●			\$75,000	Local Funding Community Foundations
	Relocate maintenance building & create welcoming entrance experience					●	\$150,000-250,000	Capital Improvements
	Create nature based adventure playground experience				●		\$275,000+	LWCF Grant
	Provide ADA route to playground		●				\$68,000	Local Funding Community Foundations
	Expand trails & connect to HW 42					●	\$189,000	Capital Improvements
	Add trailheads & improve ADA trails				●		\$90,000	Capital Improvements
	Increase outdoor nature programming		●				\$40,000	Operating Budget
	Remove invasive plant species	●					\$20,000	Operating Budget
	Make repairs to shelters	●					\$25k-\$55k	Capital Improvements
	Stabilize pond banks & add fishing pier			●			\$75k-\$125k	Operating Budget

MAPLE AVENUE PARK

	Add rental pavilion overlooking the park on east side			●			\$50,000	Local Funding Community Foundations
	Address mud on walkways after flooding	●					\$25,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
	Create pilot project for community gardens	●					\$10,000	Operating Budget, Parks Dept Labor
	Upgrade playground facilities for ADA and accessibility compliance		●				\$75,000	Capital Improvements
	Upgrade dirt pump track to velosolutions style asphalt pump track			●			\$90k-\$160k	Local Funding Community Foundations
	Relocate fishing pier from Fairbanks Park to Lake at Maple Avenue Park					●	\$80,000	Capital Improvements Donations
	Develop fishing tournament program	●					\$5,000	Operating Budget



REGIONAL

PARK	ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
		1	2	3	4	5+		

DEMING PARK

	Upgrade miniature train & ADA seating	●					\$100,000	Local Funding
	Implement the pool facility renovation plan	●					\$1,750,000	Local Funding
	Budget for Oakly playground repair & resurfacing	●					\$120,000	Local Funding
	Re-open East entrance to pedestrians		●				\$50,000	Local Funding
	Plan and implement an annual planting and reforestation plan		●				\$15,000	DNR Community & Urban Forestry Assistance Grant
	Create an art integration plan for long term public art in the park				●		\$20,000	Art Spaces & National Endowment For The Arts
	Plan and implement a multi-use trail network within the park separate from vehicular roadways			●			\$700,000	Local Funding & Next Level Trails

FAIRBANKS PARK

	Build destination playground per master plan (see appendix)	●					\$800,000	Local Funding ITP Grant LWCF Grant
	Refurbish the unity arch per master plan		●				\$450,000	Art Spaces & National Endowment For The Arts
	Improve boat docks per master plan			●			\$700,000	LWCF Grant
	Program use of Dresser Home	●						Operating Budget
	Renovate Chauncy Rose Plaza and Memorial per master plan	●					\$1,500,000	Community Foundations
	Enhance park entrance signage		●				\$80,000	Local Funding
	Expand event marketing efforts		●				\$40,000	Operating Budget
	Add more accessible parking		●				\$35,000	Local Funding
	Replace existing fishing pier			●			\$150,000	Local Funding
	Add more landscaping				●		\$180,000	Donations
	Improve lighting throughout park				●		\$220,000	Local Funding
	YMCA renovations				●		\$500,000	Local Funding

PARK	ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
		1	2	3	4	5+		

REA PARK

	Parks Department lead a master plan unification process with Friends of Rea Park and City Engineering	●					\$75,000	Community Foundations Local Funding
	Construct Riley Spur bike and pedestrian trail including Rea Park Loop		●				\$1,100,000	Local Funding ITP Grant LWCF Grant
	Re-evaluate the current regional aquatic center feasibility study with Rea Park as a prime facility location rather than Deming Park. Implement based on findings.			●			\$17,000,000	Local Funding LWCF Grant Community Foundations Bond Issue
	Build playground facility per master plan design			●			\$370,000	Local Funding LWCF Grant
	Make golf course enhancements as time and money permits				●		\$150,000	Capital Improvements
	Add pickleball courts			●			\$120,000	Capital Improvements
	Create greenway trailhead on NE side of park to connect to Riley Spur Trail		●				\$75,000	Local Funding
	Upgrade existing tennis courts				●		\$86,000	Local Funding



LINEAR PARKS & GREENWAYS

PARK	ACTION	TIMELINE (YEAR)					ESTIMATED COST	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCE
		1	2	3	4	5+		

6TH STREET BOULEVARD

	Implement No-Mow grass areas	●					\$14,000	Operating Budget
	Construct trailhead area for Riley Spur				●		\$135,000	ITP Grant
	Construct playground & ADA walkways			●			\$150,000	Operating Budget
	Construct restroom facility & signage				●		\$110,000	Local Funding

CENTENNIAL PARK

	Add accessible path to shelter and benches		●				\$35,000	Local Funding
	Implement No-Mow grass areas	●					\$12,000	Operating Budget

JONES TRAIL HEAD

	Construct restroom facility		●				\$105,000	Local Funding
	Create plan for bioretention and native area management	●					\$14,000	Operating Budget
	Install event amphitheater				●		\$120,000	Local Funding
	Extend east end of trail to county line				●		\$800,000	ITP Grant

NATIONAL ROAD HERITAGE TRAIL

	Repair pavement & new restrooms		●				\$150k-\$250k	Capital Improvements
	Extend west end of trail south along 10 1/2 Street and connect to Wabash Avenue adjacent to railroad					●	\$400k-\$600k	ITP Grant
	Work with downtown Terre Haute stakeholders to create plan for linear park along railroad				●		\$80,000	Private Developers, Community Foundations

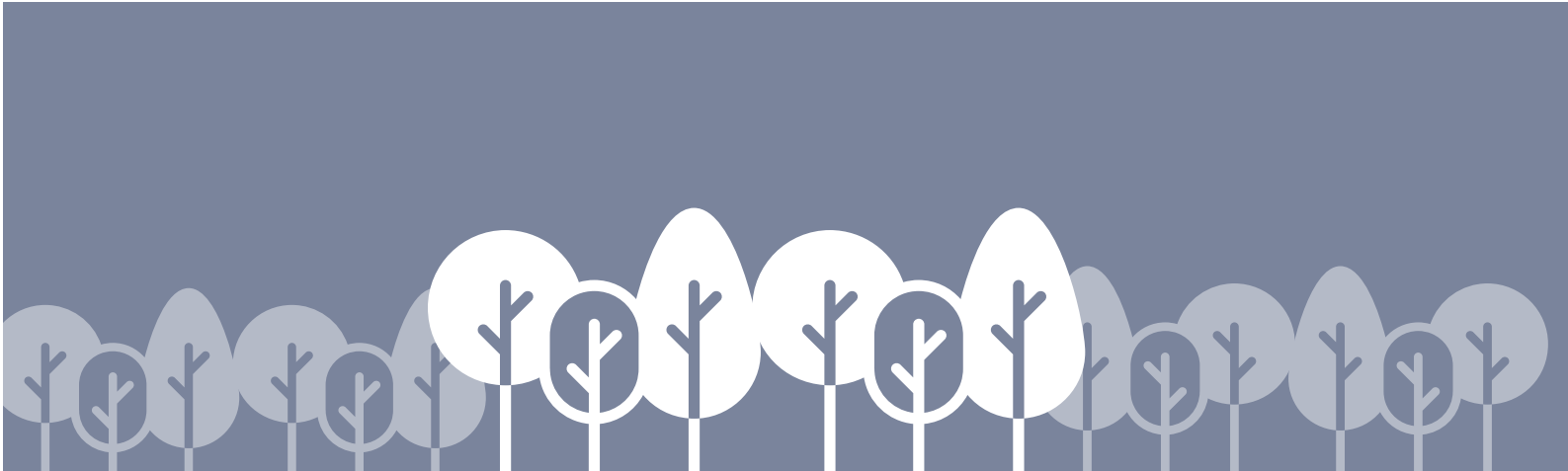
OHIO BOULEVARD

	Create a boulevard promenade experience that improves crosswalks, fountains, walking path areas & seating		●		●		\$400k-\$600k	Operating Budget LWCF Grant Bond Issue
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TWIGG REST AREA

	Provide ADA access to benches and trash receptacles	●					\$45,000	Capital Improvements
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Implementation



IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation of the 5-Year Parks Plan will require a coordinated and strategic approach to ensure its success. Many projects will likely need a combination of public and private revenue sources, making public/private partnerships key to executing the initiatives outlined in this master plan update.

This involves establishing a dedicated task force to oversee the plan's execution, prioritizing projects based on community needs, and securing necessary funding through budget amendments, grants, and partnerships. Regular collaboration with local agencies and state officials will be essential to leverage additional resources and support. The plan should also be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect evolving priorities and best practices, ensuring that the Terre Haute Parks & Recreation Department continues to meet the community's recreational and operational needs effectively.



PLAN ACCOUNTABILITY

1

CREATE A TASK FORCE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Create a dedicated task force to assist with the implementation of the 5-Year Parks Plan. This group should meet regularly to coordinate efforts and will be most effective if it includes local public officials and key representatives from other agencies.

2

HELP GUIDE LOCAL SPENDING

Utilize the 5-Year Parks Plan to amend the annual budget by including line items for recommended improvements. A Capital Improvement Plan can also help phase and develop new infrastructure over the long term, incorporating the improvements suggested in the 5-Year Parks Plan.

3

ENGAGE LOCAL AGENCIES

Share the 5-Year Parks Plan with other entities and explore opportunities for support and implementation assistance as a department.

4

GUIDE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISIONS

The Terre Haute Parks & Recreation Department should consider the 5-Year Parks Plan when making decisions, such as enhancing recreation facilities, improving maintenance and operations, and ensuring alignment with the needs of local government offices.

5

INFLUENCE STATE DECISIONS

Meet with IDNR Community Grants and Trails Staff to explore grant programs, processes, and vet potential projects, ensuring alignment with state requirements for successful funding.

6

UPDATE THE PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Regularly review and update the 5-Year Parks Plan to reflect current community desires and best practices. The Plan Implementation Task Force can champion this task.

Potential Partners

Partners may include, but are not limited to:

- Trails Coalitions & Clubs
- Terre Haute Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Terre Haute Economic Development Corporation
- Wabash Valley Community Foundation
- Wabash Valley Art Spaces, Inc.
- Happiness Bag
- Hulman and Company Foundation
- Riverscape, Inc.
- Thompson Thrift Foundation
- Terre Haute Rotary Club
- Downtown Terre Haute
- Indiana State University
- Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology
- Terre Haute School Corporation
- YMCA & YWCA
- Vigo County Parks
- Vigo County Historical Society
- CenterPoint Energy Foundation
- AABLI & United Way of the Wabash Valley
- Wabash Valley Master Gardeners Association Inc.
- Clubs such as Rotary Club, Lions Club, and others

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

GRANTS & FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Numerous funding opportunities are available through grants and nonprofit organizations to support the development and planning of programs and facilities. These funds should be supplemented with additional financing mechanisms, including partnerships, grants, and bonds. The following list serves as a starting point and provides a summary of alternative funding sources for the department's consideration.

PARTNERSHIPS

Creating new partnerships is more vital than ever. Public/private partnerships are arrangements between government and private sector institutions. These usually involve initial private funding and long-term payoff from revenue.

PHILANTHROPY

Private gifts from individuals, corporations, or endowments are still a common method for people and organizations to give back to their community.

RECREATION IMPACT FEES

Sometimes called Park Impact Fees, these are fees paid by developers to the city to help cover the added costs of providing infrastructure and services to the new development.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Volunteer activities bring enthusiastic public helpers into parks and recreation programs to assist staff. Trained, passionate volunteers can free up paid staff to work elsewhere and accomplish more for less labor cost.

BONDING

A bond is a debt security issued by a municipality, typically used to finance large-scale capital improvements. The cost of financing the bond is

then repaid over a predetermined period by the city's taxpayers. Bonding is the most common method municipalities use to fund capital projects.

For parks and recreation improvements, there are two primary types of bonds, distinguished by their means of guarantee.

- General obligation bonds are issued by governmental entities, and are not backed by revenue from a specific project but by the issuer's credit and taxing capacity.
- Revenue bonds are guaranteed by a specific revenue source, such as utilities or TIF funds, generated by the issuer.

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW (BIL)

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) supersedes and continues the Transportation Alternatives program from previous STBG, MAP-21, and TE programs. This legislation highlights safety, modernization, climate and equity, and covers a wide range of projects, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity.

The Department should stay informed about the annual allocation of BIL funds to the State of Indiana and their designated uses. Federal funding under BIL is allocated through 2026.



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a grant program that reimburses up to 50% of the cost for the acquisition and/or development of outdoor recreation facilities for approved projects. The municipality must initially cover 100% of the cost. Potentially eligible amenities include spray pads, playgrounds, picnic areas, natural areas, ball fields, and dog parks. LWCF grants range from \$50,000 to \$250,000, with applications typically due on June 1st.

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP)

Part of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the ORLP grant program supports urban communities by funding recreational space projects, especially in underserved areas with poverty rates greater than 20%. Eligible communities must have at least 30,000 residents. Grants range from \$300,000 to \$15 million, requiring a 1:1 match from state, local, or private sources, and cover land acquisition, park development, and facility improvements. ORLP fosters environmental stewardship, community cohesion, and healthier urban neighborhoods across the U.S.

STATE GRANTS & PROGRAMS

Applying for and managing grants can be time-consuming, often requiring detailed justification and rationale. This master plan update can streamline the application process by leveraging the established goals and vision within the plan. Additionally, graphics from the plan can be extracted and included with grant submissions.

Below is a list of commonly used grant sources administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IN DNR) Indiana Department

of Transportation and many others. While this list is not exhaustive, it provides a starting point. As grant opportunities frequently change, the Department will need to conduct further research to identify specific requirements and deadlines for each. The Department may also consider working with a grant writer to assist with the applications.

Indiana Trails Program

The Indiana Trails Program (ITP) replaced the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) in 2021. While RTP funds were previously provided through federal dollars, the new ITP will be funded by the state, though it will remain largely similar to the RTP. The ITP offers grant assistance ranging from a minimum of \$50,000 to a maximum of \$250,000, with a 20% local match requirement. Eligible projects include trail construction, trailhead development, bridge construction, and the acquisition of easements or property for trails.

Next Level Trails

Next Level Trails has invested \$150 million in the development of regionally and locally significant trails across Indiana. The initial program included three rounds of grants, and the state government may provide additional funding for future rounds. Grant amounts range from \$200,000 to \$2 million for locally significant projects and from \$250,000 to \$5 million for regionally significant projects. All grants require a 20% local match.

NLT grants can fund multi-use public trails (excluding sidewalks or bicycle lanes) that connect schools, parks, neighborhoods, and attractions. Eligible costs include trail construction, land acquisition, design and engineering, and basic trail amenities.



Next Level Conservation Trust Fund

The Next Level Conservation Trust (NLCT) has replaced the Indiana Bicentennial Nature Trust. This program provides funds solely for the acquisition of land for conservation, recreation, and historic preservation. Property acquired through this fund will become part of the public trust, ensuring its protection for future generations.

Each project requires a 3:1 match (\$3 NLCT funds to \$1 local match), with a minimum project size of \$100,000 for the NLCT portion. Submission deadlines are February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1.

Creating Places

The “CreatINg Places” program by the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCD) partners with Patronicity to use a crowdgranting model, where citizens contribute to community projects through online donations. If funding goals are met, IHCD matches the donations. This initiative aims to foster public involvement in enhancing local spaces, offering financial support for projects such as streetscape beautification, park creation, and public plaza development. Eligible projects can receive up to \$50,000 in matching funds.

Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT)

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) replaced the Transportation Enhancement 21 (TE-21). It is a federal grant administered by INDOT. Transportation systems: i.e. trails, sidewalks and street improvements are typical projects. Funds 80 percent of construction cost with 20 percent match by applicant.

Safe Routes to School Fund (SRTS) is a federal

grant administered by INDOT. Non-infrastructure activities will be limited to a cost of \$75,000. Infrastructure projects will be limited to a cost of \$250,000. SRTS activities and projects must be programmed in the statewide transportation improvement program to receive federal funds. School must be within two-mile radius of construction improvements project.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Fish & Wildlife

Lake and River Enhancement: This program provides technical and financial assistance for qualify projects. The goal of this program is to protect and enhance aquatic habit for fish and wildlife, to insure the continued viability of Indiana’s publicly accessible lakes and streams for multiple uses, including recreation opportunities. This is accomplished through measures that reduce non-point sediment and nutrient pollution of surface waters to a level that meets or surpasses state water quality standards. Sub text description about funding source

IDNR Forestry

Arbor Day Grant: \$500 - \$1,000 for activities that promote Arbor Day.

Urban Forestry Grants: \$2,000 - \$20,000 for community projects focused on program development, planning, and education.

IDNR Historic Preservation & Archaeology

Historic Preservation Fund Program: Federal grant that U.S. Congress appropriates approximately \$37 million to the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). The HPF provides matching grants to encourage private and non-federal investment in historic preservation efforts nationwide, and assists State and local governments, and Indian tribes



with expanding and accelerating their historic preservation activities nationwide. Grant serves as seed money for preserving and protecting our nations' irreplaceable heritage. Funds are distributed through the National Park Service to State Historic Preservation Programs.

IDNR Outdoor Recreation

Recreation Trails Program: funded as a part of MAP-21. Provides funds for motorized and non-motorized trails and trails related projects. Program provides 80/20 percent reimbursement/match assistance for eligible projects (\$10,000 to \$100,000 maximum available).

Land and Water Conservation Fund is matching a 50 percent reimbursing federal assistance program. Program provides a minimum of \$10,000 to \$200,000 maximum available for one project per year. Maximum amount may be increased dependent on current budget at Federal level.

Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (DNPA)

The DNPA provides matching funds to communities to assist in the preparation of community-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans to facilitate more active living in Indiana. The maximum award is \$20,000 for each community. A dollar-for-dollar local match is required from a municipality or eligible applicant. DNPA uses grant funds awarded to the ISDH from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Heart Disease, Obesity and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health program. <https://www.in.gov/isdh/25141.htm>

Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA)

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) Federal grant administered by OCRA. Provides annual grants on a formula basis to local government and states for wide ranging planning initiatives. CDBG funds are intended for activities that benefit low and moderate income persons, prevent or eliminated slums or blight, and address urgent community development needs. <https://www.in.gov/ocra/cdbg.htm>

President Benjamin Harrison Conservation Trust Fund (PBGCTF) (Previously Indiana Heritage Fund)

The fund was created to fund the purchase of natural areas for public use. It is funded by the sale of environmental license plates and donations. The money is used for land acquisition. A project committee reviews the proposed projects submitted to the PBGCTF committee which makes recommendations to the Governor. A portion of the funds are available to the Division of Outdoor Recreation for the purchase of land that meets established criteria. Projects may include greenways and land for trails.

Additional Local Sources

- Impact Fees
- Non-reverting account funds
- Lease purchase
- General Obligation Bond
- Gifts
- Donations (land, cash, labor, materials and equipment)



**Indiana
Department
of
Health**



NextLevel
CONSERVATION TRUST



SELECTED REFERENCES

RESOURCES

Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Census Bureau

Indiana Department of Workforce Development

Indiana University Business Research Center

Indiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2021-2025

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Agency Performance Review 2023

Trust for the Public Parkscore 2018 and 2017 City park facts

U.S. Census 2000, 2010

U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

Active Transportation Alliance

<http://www.activetrans.org/>

Bicycle Indiana

<http://www.bicycleindiana.org/>

Central Indiana Bicycling Association

<http://www.cibaride.org/>

Federal Highway Administration.

Designing Sidewalks and Trails for Access: Part I of II: Review of Existing Guidelines and Practices. 1999

http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/sidewalks/index.cfm

Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, AASHTO, 2012

Health by Design

<http://www.healthbydesignonline.org>

INDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Program

<https://www.in.gov/indot/current-programs/trails-and-greenways/bicycle-and-pedestrian-program/>

IndyCOG

<https://indycog.org/>

ISDH, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity

<https://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/TemplateThree.aspx?s=12653&ds=1>

League of American Bicyclists

<http://bikeleague.org/>

MUTCD 2011

<http://www.in.gov/dot/div/contracts/design/mutcd/2011MUTCD.htm>

NACTO Urban Bikeways Design Guide, 2013

<http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/>

National Complete Streets Coalition

<http://www.completestreets.org>

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>

National Safe Routes to School / Walk Bike to School

<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org>

<http://saferoutespartnership.org/>

<http://walkbiketoschool.org/ready/why-walk-or-bike>

Small Town and Rural Design Guide

Ruraldesignguide.com "Small Town and Rural Design Guide Facilities for Walking and Biking"

The American Planning Association

<http://www.planning.org>

