



COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

FORT WAYNE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

August 2004





COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND
RECREATION MASTER PLAN
APPENDICES

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Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department

August 2004

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Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department

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Community Needs Assessment

Introduction and Summary

To ensure that the Fort Wayne Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan meets the leisure needs of the Fort Wayne community, the planning process included extensive public input. This process was grounded in a **citywide citizen survey and included a user group survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and public workshops**. Information from each source of public input was thoroughly reviewed to identify the park system's strengths and weaknesses. These findings, in turn, served as a foundation for many of the recommendations provided in this master plan.

The draft plan recommendations were published on the Parks and Recreation website and copies placed in libraries and Department facilities. After a two week review, a **two-day public open house** allowed citizens to discuss the plan individually with staff and consultants. The plan was

finalized based on the review of these public discussions.

While all avenues of public input were vital to the preparation of the plan, the **citywide citizen survey** offers the best overall picture of the opinions of the community. Over 800 people participated in the survey, giving the data statistical validity to predict community-wide interest. The focus groups consisted of 37 individuals, and stakeholders included 36 people, all with considerable involvement in the parks. These meetings were by definition special interest meetings that produced diverse viewpoints. The user group survey covered only organizations currently using parks or facilities. The results of the smaller group interviews and the public meetings serve well to color and add depth to the results of the survey, but the communitywide citizen survey documents the prevailing community opinion.

Upon reviewing the findings of the public input process, it is evident that Fort Wayne citizens desire high-quality parks, recreation

facilities, and programs. The community is proud of the park system's rich tradition of stewardship and wishes to build upon this for the future. Park users and the community-at-large are generally satisfied with the Department's efforts, although there is clearly room for improvement. Of people responding to the citywide citizen survey, 91% indicated that their top priority for the Department is to maintain clean and functional parks.

The public recognizes that the Department is unbalanced as it relates to programs, facilities, and the distribution of park locations and types. The establishment of new standards is viewed as critical in addressing the location and type of parks and facilities needed. Design standards are desired to ensure an appropriate balance of passive and active spaces and the placement of amenities that are appropriate for the location.

There is a general consensus for expanding the greenway system throughout the community. Citizens want a trail system that

connects neighborhoods to parks, schools, and other places of interest in the city and county. Improved connectivity is also desired for parks and neighborhoods dissected by major roadways, rivers, or other obstacles. The strong desire for trails includes trails within new and existing parks.

Residents are generally satisfied with park maintenance levels, although satisfaction slightly decreases as people look to specific amenities or properties. Most of the public accepts that current maintenance deficiencies are the result of budget cuts imposed on the Department. The community is proud of its older parks and has a strong sense of ownership. People want to maintain and improve the existing parks to meet their current needs. Before expanding the system, the community first wants to repair and properly maintain the existing assets.

Maintaining and conserving existing parks is clearly a value of the Fort Wayne community. Beyond the advocacy groups dedicated to the cause, survey results indicate the general public also supports the maintenance of the older parks as a function of the Department.

Program participants were largely satisfied with the quality of programs provided by the Department. After operating well-maintained parks and facilities, the community views the provision of programs as a top priority for the Department. Specifically, citizens view it as the responsibility of the Department to provide teen programs, special events for people of all ages, toddler and youth programs, and programs for people with disabilities.

Residents are generally satisfied with the quality and quantity of recreation facilities in

the community. There appears to be sufficient need within the community for a new family aquatic center (indoor and/or outdoor) and multi-court field house to warrant a feasibility study. Support also exists for continued improvements to the children's zoo.

The citizens of Fort Wayne want a sustainable parks and recreation system. To achieve this, residents expect the Department to work cooperatively with partners to maximize the community's resources and avoid the unnecessary duplication of services. Although there is also support for issuing a tax-supported bond for acquisitions, improvements, and development of the park system, there is a strong sentiment to explore alternative funding sources.

Comments from each group or public discussion are included as stated in the session. No adjustments have been made to correct or clarify the comments based on factual differences.



Focus Groups

Focus group meetings were conducted by the consulting team at the onset of the

planning process. A total of four focus groups were conducted involving 37 individuals. Meetings were held with the strategic/master plan steering committee, park foundation members, current partners, and advocacy group representatives. The same agenda was used for each focus group to ensure consistency in the topics covered. The detailed findings of the focus group meetings can be found in Appendix 1.1.

A common theme from the focus groups was the need for a visionary plan based on public input to guide the future management of the Department. The plan needs to have the buy-in of all the major stakeholders, including the Park Board, staff, partners, and advocacy groups. Key stakeholders need to have their roles identified in the plan. A coordinated effort is needed to achieve the community's vision for its park system. If this is accomplished, participants are confident that the needed funding to implement the master plan will follow.

Focus groups recognized a need to respect the rich tradition of the Department and its historic parks. The Cultural Landscape Report outlines measures for the conservation of three of the historic parks. A need for standards was identified to clarify the appropriate design, development, and maintenance of new and existing parks in accord with current user needs. Finding an appropriate balance between passive and active recreation to meet the community's needs was a focus in all of the meetings. Providing sufficient funding was also viewed as critical to the success of the Department.

Other issues identified from the focus group meetings included the following:

- There is a need for more trails and improved interconnectivity between parks and other key destinations.
- More park land is needed in newly or soon-to-be-annexed areas of the city.
- Existing partners are interested in continuing, if not enhancing, their relationships with the Department.
- Safety concerns exist on the rivergreenway and in some parks.
- New facilities desired include additional pavilions, a large field house, and additional tournament-quality ball fields.
- There is some desire for a stronger Park Board that works cooperatively with advocacy groups.
- Department resources are stretched too thin, making it difficult to sustain the existing park and recreation system.
- The Park Foundation desires a better focus to serve the needs of the Department.
- More adult, senior, and family-oriented programs are needed.
- The lack of appropriate facilities limits the Department's ability to enhance or expand programs.
- A forestry plan is needed to ensure a healthy canopy of trees in the city.
- There is a preference for quality over quantity in parks, facilities, and programs.
- The existing park system is out of balance in respect to the number and location of neighborhood, community, and regional parks.
- There is an expectation of improved intergovernmental planning for parks and recreation at the city, county, and state levels.
- Some groups believe that a landscape architect should be added to the Department's staff to implement and enforce design standards.
- The plan needs to proactively plan for an increasingly diverse population and growing community.

Stakeholder Interviews

The consulting team conducted a total of 17 key stakeholder interviews involving 36 individuals. Stakeholders were identified and contacted by the Department and included community leaders, special interest groups, and park support organizations. The questions used for stakeholder interviews were designed by the consultants and approved by the Department. The same questions were used in each meeting to ensure consistency in topics covered. The detailed findings of the stakeholder interviews can be found in Appendix 1.1.

The general consensus of participants in the stakeholder interviews is that Fort Wayne has a good parks system, although there is room for improvement. The biggest issues identified related to budgetary constraints resulting in excessive deferred maintenance, lack of design standards, and resistance

from the staff to accept input or assistance from some community groups.

Participants hope to have a comprehensive master plan that is visionary, sparks excitement in the community, establishes design and maintenance standards, strikes a fair balance between various user and interest groups, and respects the rich tradition of the parks system. There is a strong desire to have a usable plan that can be implemented despite political and administrative changes. The development of the plan needs to be accomplished through a sound public input process incorporating the needs and desires of the community. The plan should also clearly outline implementation steps, provide realistic goals, and reflect true capital and operating costs to ensure that everything is properly maintained.

Several stakeholders expressed the desire to create the best and highest-quality parks system within the means of the community. Maintaining a high-quality system was a common theme throughout all the stakeholder interviews.

One of the key issues facing the Department is the maintenance and upkeep of existing parks and amenities. While basic maintenance (mowing, upkeep of flowers, etc.) of parks was considered fairly good, it was repeatedly cited that many of the amenities (pavilions, sidewalks, river/water edges) are deteriorating and/or not well maintained. Participants acknowledged limited financial resources as a primary cause for the maintenance deficiencies.

There are some safety issues in parks and along the greenway that should be ad-

dressed. Areas mentioned included Swinney Park, McMillen Park, the rivergreenway trails, and Hanna Homestead Park. In some cases, the issue of safety was considered mostly a perception issue (for example, the trails and McMillen Park).

Several participants felt the Board and park staff were not open to feedback or assistance from the public or some groups. It was also cited that staff are sometimes reluctant to partner or collaborate with outside groups due to territorialism.

There was a belief that the Board has no bylaws from which to govern. Groups that appeared to have differences with the Board felt it should be enlarged and additional committees formed to provide input on specialty areas. Several individuals expressed the need for a conservancy group, especially to look out for historical elements of the system. The zoo parking lot controversy, along with differences in opinion or lack of trust with the Board/staff, resulted in the formation of new interest groups, several of which were represented in the interviews.

Among individuals interviewed, there was a strong interest in (or at least acknowledgment of) historical preservation as it pertains to the park system. Many stakeholders expressed the need to respect the rich tradition of stewardship of the parks system when upgrading existing parks or building new ones. There was some sentiment for the restoration of several historic parks to their original plans. Conserving, if not restoring, historical structures like the WPA pavilions was considered important. Those with a strong interest in restoration lobbied the need for an on-staff landscape architect

and design standards to maintain and capture the beauty of the parks.

There was some interest in the possible merger of the city and county parks systems, although this was viewed as a hot political topic and unlikely to occur. There was some sentiment for at least some combined planning and shared standards between the departments.

The biggest political sensitivity identified was the recent mayoral election. The controversy over the zoo parking lot in Franke Park remains a public relations issue for the Department.

Stakeholders place a high value on its park system, especially the quantity and location of parks throughout the community. There were some equity issues emerging, primarily due to annexation and expansion of the city. Participants also expressed satisfaction in the recreational offerings provided by the Department, although there was a longing for the return of summer park programs that provide supervision in neighborhood parks.

Overall, the community seems well served by the existing recreation facilities (based on input from the participants). There was strong support for the expansion of the trail system to connect parks and key destinations. There was some interest in an additional ice rink on the north side of town. Several requests were made for a sports complex so that softball, baseball, or hockey tournaments could be hosted.

There appear to be some partnering opportunities for the Department in its implementation of the strategic/master plan. All of the groups represented in the interviews ex-

pressed an interest in continuing, if not enhancing, their relationships with the city. The YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Sports Corporation, and Convention and Visitors Bureau stand as potential partners for recreation and sports programs. The Boys and Girls Club was also interested in the idea of sharing a new or existing facility.

Neighborhood associations, area businesses, churches, and public schools appear to be untapped sources for in-kind services and adopt-a-park programs. Several participants stated that the Department has simply failed to ask for support—the support that is there for the asking. Local universities, especially Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, also serve as potential partners for programming and joint-use facilities.

Foundations appear to be the largest source of funds within the community, although the amount of additional funds available for parks is probably limited.

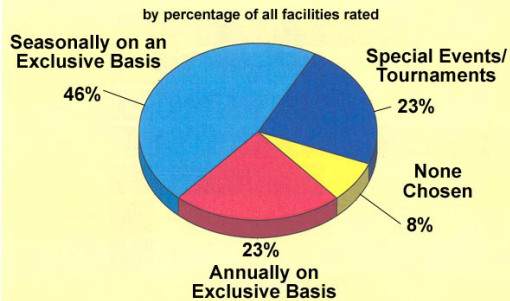
User Group Survey

From May through August 2003, the consultants conducted a user group survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather input from organizations that currently use the Department's parks and recreation facilities. Responses were designed to better understand who the organizations serve, the needs of the organization, and the overall satisfaction with the parks and/or recreation facilities. Out of 25 organizations selected to participate in the survey, nine organizations responded, generating 11 completed surveys (two organizations had two separate individuals complete surveys providing different answers). The detailed findings of the user group survey are available in Appendix 2.2.

Participating organizations serve a wide variety of users ranging from youth to seniors. Programs provided by these organizations include sports, cultural activities, youth programs, senior programs, and educational programs. Organizations vary in size, serving between 12 and 285,000 participants on an annual basis.

Nearly half (46%) of the participating organizations use facilities on a seasonal basis. Almost a quarter of the organizations use facilities throughout the year (23%) or for special events or tournaments (23%). All of the seasonal usage is during the summer months, especially from June through August. Facilities are most often used during weekdays, with the highest usages on Thursdays and Mondays. Organizations as a whole have minimal demand for facilities on Saturdays and Sundays.

Category that Best Describes When Organizations Use Facilities

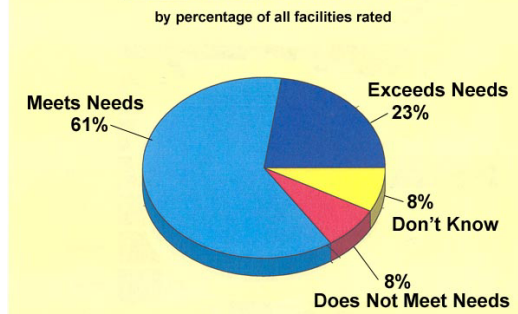


Respondents to the survey were largely satisfied with facility conditions, locations, dates and times of availability, cleanliness and maintenance, and space or size. In these categories, no more than 8% of the participating organizations indicated facilities did not

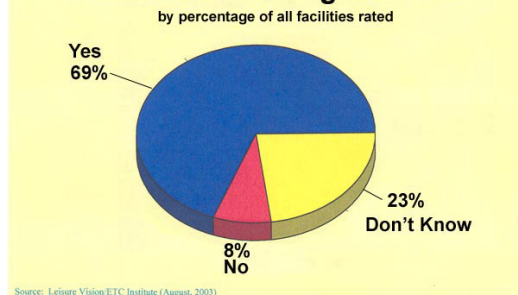
meet their needs. Safety was the largest concern among respondents, with 15% stating that facilities did not meet their needs.

Approximately two-thirds (69%) of the organizations indicated that they have a staff person from the Department specifically assigned to work with them. A quarter (23%) of the respondents did not know if they had an assigned staff contact.

Condition of Facilities

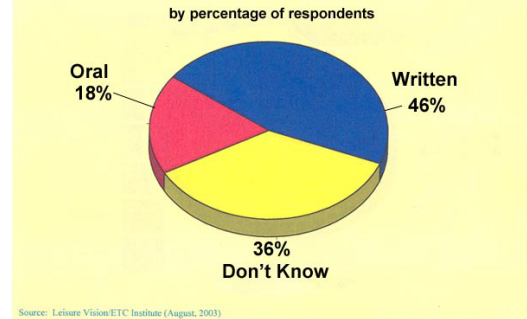


Is a Parks and Recreation Staff Person Specifically Assigned to Work With Your Organization?



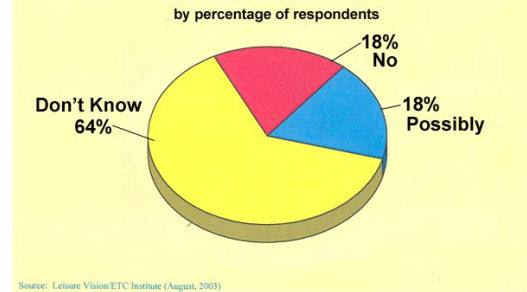
Nearly half (46%) of the respondents indicated that they have a written facility use agreement with the Department. An additional 18% have an oral agreement in place.

Does Organization Have a Written or Oral Facility Usage Agreement?



One-third (36%) of the organizations did not know if there is any type of agreement in place. Of the user groups that have agreements, approximately half (46%) have open-ended arrangements with no definitive contract period.

Willingness of Respondent to Share the Costs of Changes With the City of Fort Wayne



When asked what the organizations most liked about the facilities they use, location was the primary factor. Suggestions for improving facilities included: creating more appropriate spaces for the specific programs (i.e., smaller classroom, better pavilions, river access), grooming ball fields, installing handicap-accessible restrooms, and installing a security

system. Most respondents (64%) were unsure if their organizations could help share the cost of any proposed improvements.

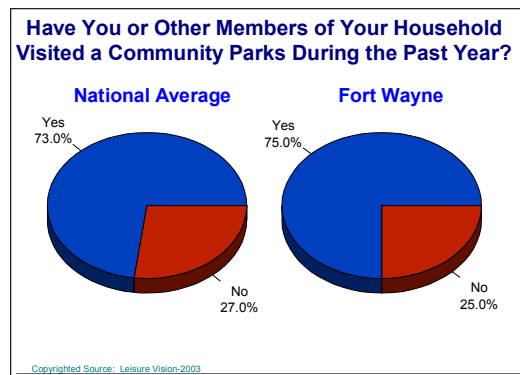
Citywide Citizen Survey

The consultants conducted a community attitude and interest survey from April to June 2003. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Fort Wayne and Allen County. Surveys were administered by mail and phone.

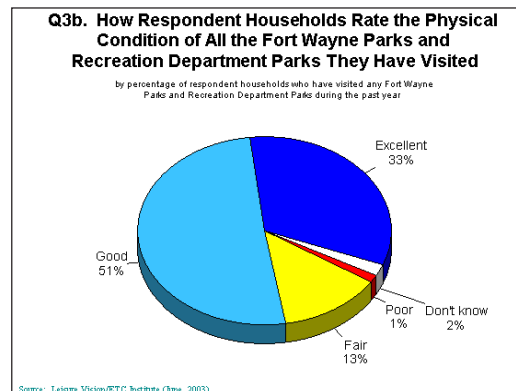
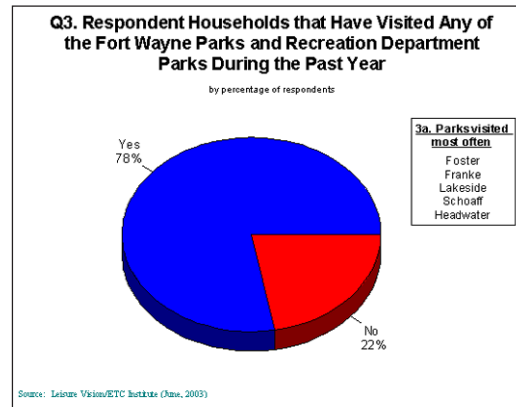
The goal of the survey was to obtain at least 800 completed surveys and a minimum of 125 completed surveys from each of the city's five planning districts. This goal was accomplished with a total of 804 surveys completed. The results of the random sample have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-3.5%.

The detailed findings of the citywide citizen survey can be found in Appendix 2.1. Key findings of this survey are as follows:

- Three-fourths (75%) of respondent households indicated that they have visited Fort Wayne parks in the past year.



- Foster Park is the park most visited by household respondents. Other parks with high visitation rates included Franke Park, Lakeside Park, Shoaff Park, and McMillen Park.
- Thirty-three percent (33%) of respondent households rated the physical condition of all Fort Wayne parks they have visited as excellent, and 54% rated the parks as good. An additional 12% rated the physical condition of parks as fair and only 1% rated them as poor. The remaining 2% indicated that they did not know.



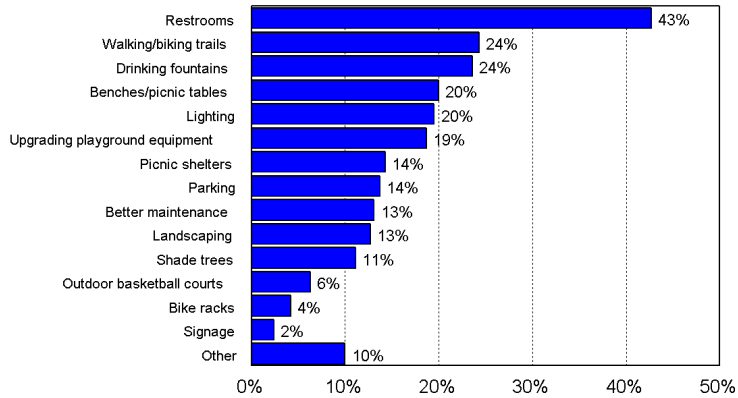
- At 43%, restrooms had the highest percentage of respondents rate it as one of the three most needed improvements. Four other improvements were rated by at least 20% of respondents as the top three improvements they would like to have made: walking/biking trails (24%), drinking fountains (24%), benches/picnic tables (20%), and lighting (20%). (Table Q4).

- Out of 25 recreational facilities listed, five of the facilities had over two-thirds of respondent households indicate they have a need for them. The facilities that the highest percentage of respondent households indicated that they have a need for included the children's zoo (76%), large community parks (76%), paved walking/biking trails (70%), picnic shelters/areas (68%), and the botanical conservatory (68%). Facilities with the lowest need included skateboarding/roller/inline skating (25%), soccer fields (25%), outdoor volleyball courts (23%), off-leash dog parks (22%), and outdoor football fields (21%). (Table Q5).

- Nine of the 25 recreational facilities listed had at least half of respondents indicate the facility completely meets the needs of their households. The facilities with the highest percentage of respondents indicating the facility completely meets their needs include the children's zoo (84%), botanical conservatory (74%), theaters (66%), golf courses (64%), large community parks (61%), community centers (57%), youth baseball fields (55%), playgrounds (52%), and softball fields (50%). Facilities with the highest

Q4. Improvements Respondents Would Most Like to Have Made to the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department Park They Visit Most Often

by percentage of respondents (three choices could be made)

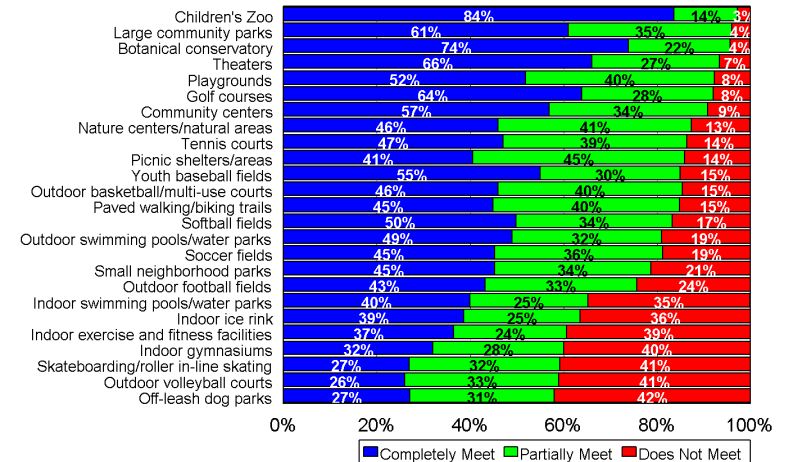


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2003)

Table Q4

Q5. How Well Existing Recreational Facilities in Fort Wayne Meet the Needs of Respondent Households

by percentage of respondent households that have a need for facilities

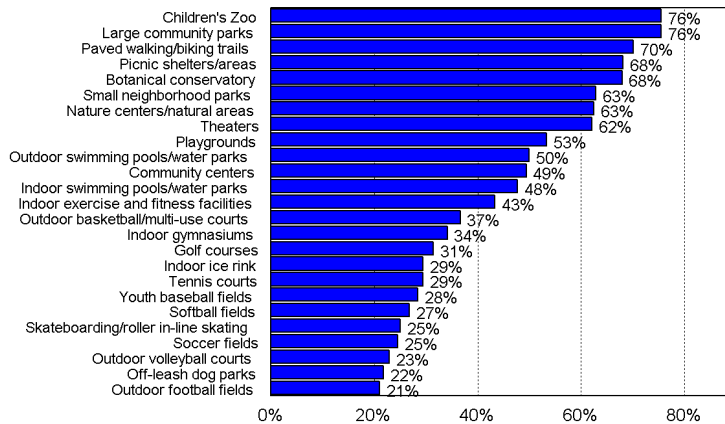


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2003)

Table Q5

Q5. Percentage of Respondent Households that Have a Need for Various Recreational Facilities

by percentage of respondents

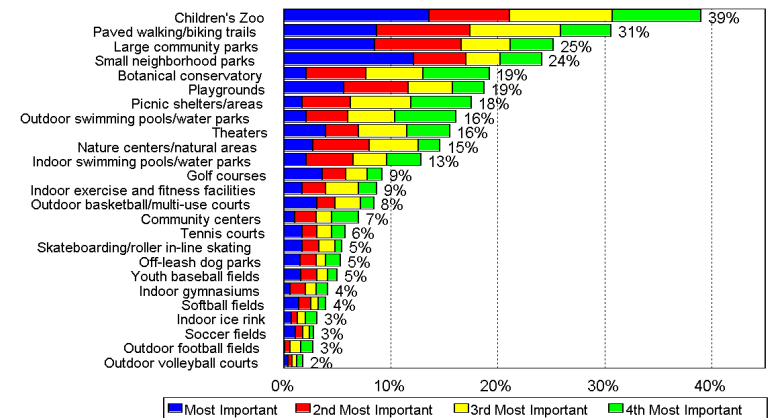


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2003)

Table Q5

Q6. Recreational Facilities that Are Most Important to Respondent Households

by percentage of respondents (four choices could be made)

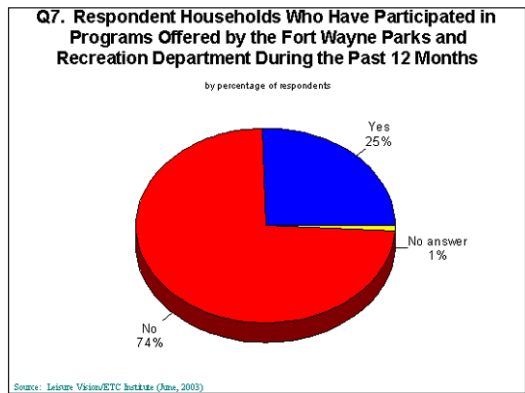


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2003)

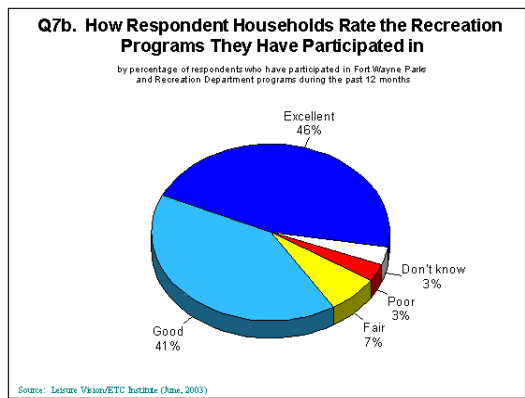
Table Q6

percentage of respondents indicating the facility does not meet their needs include off-leash dog parks (42%), outdoor volleyball courts (41%), skateboarding/roller/inline skating (41%), indoor gymnasiums (40%), indoor exercise and fitness facilities (39%), indoor ice rink (36%), and indoor swimming pools/water parks (35%). It should also be noted that 22 of the 25 facilities had at least 60% of respondents indicate the facility either completely or partially meets their needs. (Table Q5).

- The children’s zoo (39%) had the highest percentage of respondents rate it as one of the four most important recreation facilities to their household. Other facilities in which a significant percentage of respondents rated them as one of the four most important include paved walking/biking trails (31%), large community parks (25%), and small neighborhood parks (24%). It should be noted that the children’s zoo also had the highest percentage of respondents rate it as the number-one most important facility. (Table Q6).
- Twenty-three percent (23%) of respondents indicated they have participated in programs offered by the Department during the past 12 months.
- Program flyers (39%) appear to be the most effective means of informing households about recreation programs. The *Fun Times* seasonal program guide (36%) and word of mouth (30%) were the next largest source of information about programs offered by the Department. (Table Q7a).



- Nearly half (44%) of respondent households rated the quality of programs in which they have participated as excellent, with an additional 43% rating them as good. Only 7% rated program quality as fair and 3% poor. Three percent (3%) indicated they did not know.
- The top six functions for the Department, as rated by respondents as very important, included operating parks and facilities that are clean/well maintained (91%), preserving the environment and providing open space (73%), providing

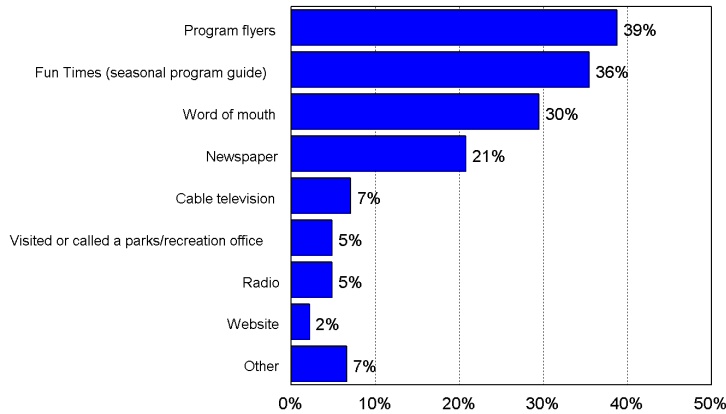


activities for teens (73%), providing places for the enjoyment of outdoor programs (71%), providing activities for people with disabilities (71%), and providing special events for residents of all ages (70%). (Table Q8).

- Operating parks and facilities that are clean/well maintained (55%) had the highest percentage of respondents select it as one of the four most important functions of the Department. Other functions that at least one-third of respondents selected as one of the four most important include providing activities for teens (42%), providing special events for residents of all ages (35%), providing places for the enjoyment of outdoor sports programs (34%), and providing facilities for toddlers and youth (33%). (Table Q9).
- When asked about options respondents would support for acquiring and developing open space, over half (56%) indicated open space should be acquired and developed for both passive and active uses as one of two options they most support. In addition, 42% indicated open space should be acquired and developed for passive usage. Only 13% indicated that no new open space should be acquired. (Table Q10).
- Exploring interest for new indoor recreation, aquatic, and fitness programming spaces, 57% of respondents indicated they would use an indoor, warm-water, family-oriented swimming center at least a few times per year. An indoor running/walking track (55%) is the other pro-

Q7a. Where Respondents Learned About the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department Programs

by percentage of respondents who have participated in Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department programs during the past 12 months (multiple choices could be made)

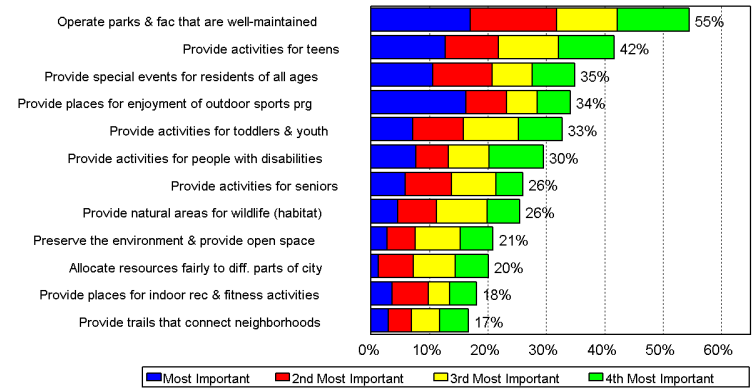


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2003)

Table Q7a

Q9. Most Important Functions for the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department to Provide

by percentage of respondents (four choices could be made)

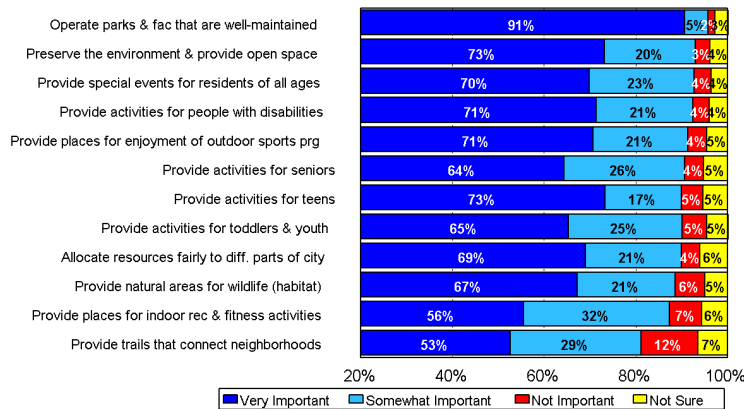


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2003)

Table Q9

Q8. Importance of Various Functions Performed by the Fort Wayne Parks & Recreation Department

by percentage of respondents

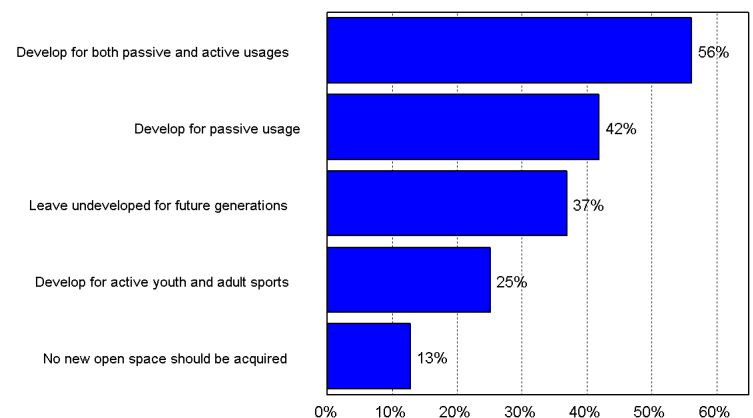


Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2003)

Table Q8

Q10. Options Respondents Would Support the Most Regarding Acquiring and Developing Open Space

by percentage of respondents (two choices could be made)



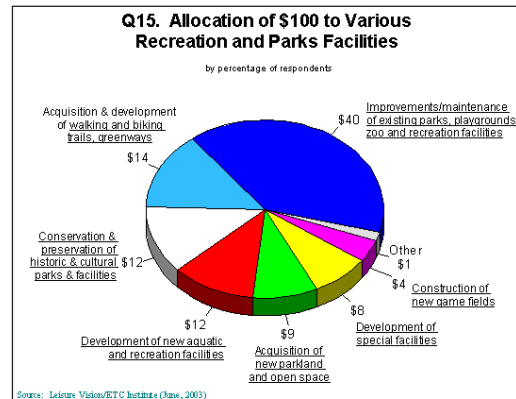
Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2003)

Table Q10

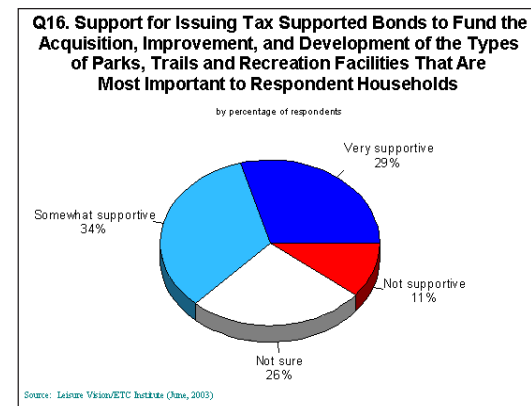
gramming space that over half of respondents indicated they would use at least a few times per year. (Table Q11).

- The top reason for not using parks, recreation facilities, or programs more often was that respondents were too busy or not interested (39%). Other reasons most frequently stated included not knowing what was offered (22%) or being too far from the respondent's residence (19%). Only 2% of respondents indicated poor customer service as a deterrent in using parks, facilities, or programs more often. (Table Q12).
- From a list of 13 possible actions that the Department could take to improve the parks system, respondents were most supportive of preserving and conserving older parks (65%), fixing/repairing older park buildings and facilities (63%), and upgrading the existing children's zoo (63%). Respondents were least supportive of upgrading existing golf facilities (36%), developing new skate parks (26%), and developing new athletic fields (24%). (Table Q13).
- Fix up/repair older park buildings and facilities (46%) had the highest percentage of respondents select it as one of the four actions they would be most willing to fund with their tax dollars. Other actions with strong support included preserving and conserving older parks (41%), upgrading the existing children's zoo (38%), and developing new walking/biking trails and connecting existing trails (31%). (Table Q14).

- When asked how respondents would allocate \$100 among various parks and recreation categories, \$42 was allocated to improving/maintaining existing parks, playgrounds, zoo, and recreation facilities. The remaining \$58 were allocated as follows: acquisition and development of walking and biking trails/greenways (\$13), development of new aquatic and recreation facilities (\$12), conservation and preservation of historic and cultural parks and facilities (\$11), acquisition of new park land and open space (\$8), development of special facilities (\$8), and construction of new game fields (\$4). The remaining \$1 was allocated to other.



- Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents indicated that they would be either very supportive (30%) or somewhat supportive (34%) of the city issuing a tax-supported bond to fund the acquisition, improvement, and development of parks, trails, and recreation facilities.



Public Workshops

Two rounds of five public workshops were conducted by the consulting team in each of the city's planning districts during September 2003. Meetings were announced through local news media and all interested citizens were invited to attend. A sixth meeting was held with community and business leaders during each round. The same agenda was used for each round of workshops to ensure consistency in the topics covered. The detailed findings of the public workshops can be found in Appendix 1.2.

A prevailing theme from all of the public workshops was the need to establish standards for the park system. Standards responsive to the growth of the community are needed to identify the appropriate amount of park land by park classification. Also needed are design standards that address appropriate uses by park classification, safety issues, handicap accessibility, and pedestrian access. Standards will ensure that parks provide sufficient passive space for visitors, a common concern among attendees.

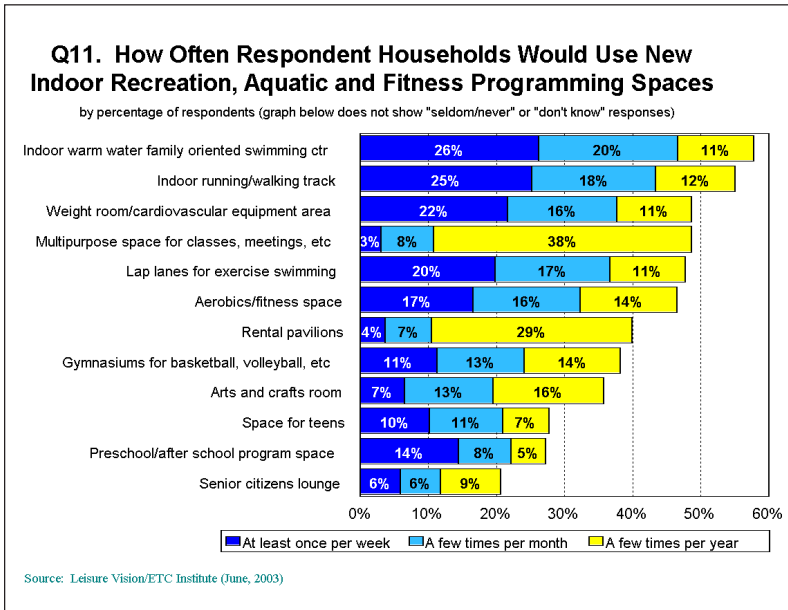


Table Q11

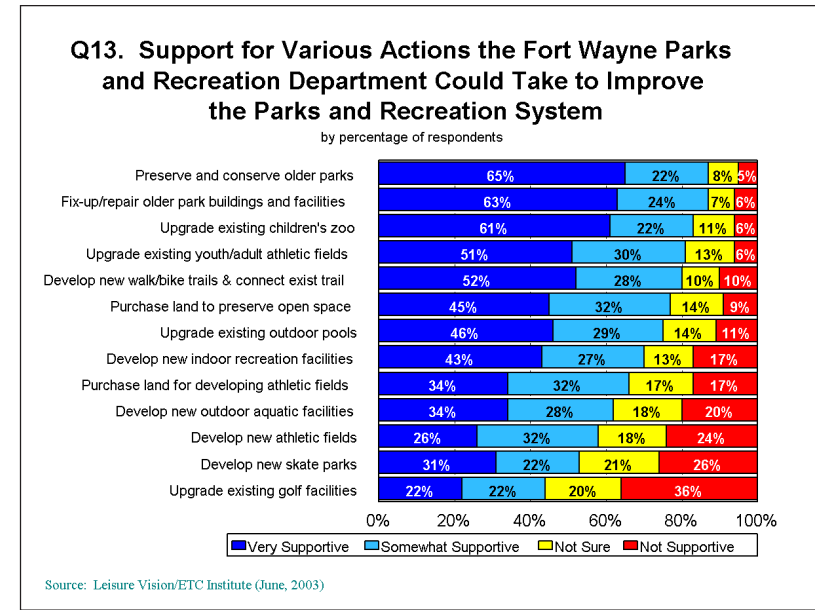


Table Q13

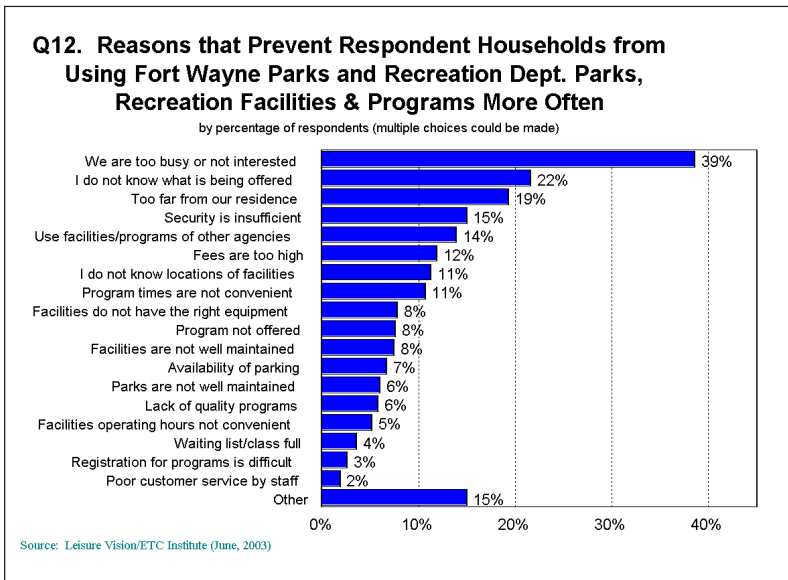


Table Q12

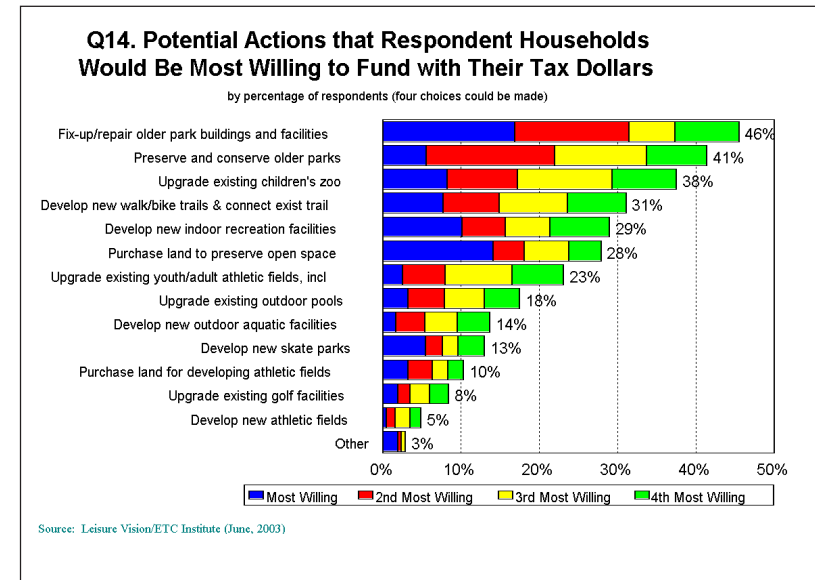


Table Q14

The historic parks were discussed in all of the meetings. Some members of the community have a strong desire to preserve and celebrate the city's historical and cultural parks through the implementation of the Cultural Landscape Report for the three parks it covers. Advocates expressed the importance of respecting the original design principles of these parks. There was some interest in placing the historical parks on the National Register of Historic Places. Preserving and finding a productive use for the old fort downtown was also routinely mentioned.

Consistent requests were made to expand the existing greenway system throughout the city. Participants expressed a need for improved connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and cultural assets in the community.

Ensuring that the Department has sufficient and sustainable funding was a common concern among attendees. Participants acknowledged that inadequate funding has compromised maintenance standards throughout the park system. Several individuals encouraged exploring alternative funding sources, from grants and in-kind services to privatization of the municipal golf courses.

Enhanced partnerships and intergovernmental cooperation were viewed as high priorities to maximize the community's limited resources and prevent duplication of services. Improved planning between, if not the outright merger, of the city and county park systems is desired. Neighborhood associations were identified as an untapped partner, especially for the historic and smaller parks.

While participants expressed a strong desire to take better care of existing parks and facilities before expanding the system,

several new needs were identified. Top among the needs is acquiring park land in newly annexed areas of the city and proactively purchasing land in future growth areas. New facilities mentioned included a family aquatic center, skate park, field house, and fitness center. Passive or non-traditional amenities such as benches, shelters, and a chess park were also recommended.

Limited comments were provided regarding the programs provided by the Department, although several attendees perceived the need for increased youth, teen, and senior programming. There appears to be some desire for directed youth programs or supervision in the neighborhood or smaller parks, similar to the old playground programs. Volunteers were identified as a potential source for providing this service.

Safety and vandalism were routinely cited as an issue by participants. Requests were made for increased lighting and/or the placement of emergency call boxes in secluded areas, especially along the greenway. Design standards that provide for appropriate amenities and improved access are needed to deter undesired behavior in parks.

Other issues brought up by participants during the public workshops included:

- Marketing efforts need to be enhanced to better inform the public about parks, facilities, and programs.
- The rivers need to be better utilized as a community resource by providing improved access.
- Parks bisected by major roadways or landmarks need pedestrian crossings to

improve the safety of users and increase the ease of use.

- Underused parks need to be reviewed with appropriate changes made to increase usage. The Department could consider selling or donating park properties with minimal public benefit.
- A natural resource management plan needs to be developed for each park.
- A comprehensive tree replacement program needs to be implemented to protect the vitality of the urban forest.

Public Open House

The Parks and Recreation Department conducted a two day Public Open House in July 2004, at the Community Center in downtown Fort Wayne. Department personnel and consultants were on hand to discuss the plan, take comments, and answer questions. About 100 people attended. Copies of the plan were available along with summaries of the strategies. Comment forms allowed citizens to record comments at the open House or submit them later. Over 45 written comments were received.

The comments range from specific suggestions for improvements to individual parks and facilities, to questions, and comments, and even a long-range vision for the City of Fort Wayne. Comments on the plan itself were positive, and no significant changes were suggested. Park specific comments were logged and will be included in the public input process to initiate and guide improvements to the parks.



Planning Themes

Theme One: Rich Tradition of Stewardship

Celebrate the rich 100-year tradition of stewardship, quality parks, open space, and greenways by balancing the organization’s resources to maintain existing parks and facilities, thus meeting the high expectations of the community and creating standards for new development to perpetuate quality parks in the future.

Community growth and budget constraints have resulted in reductions in the levels of maintenance that threaten the Department’s ability to sustain the quality that the community has come to expect and provide equitable maintenance throughout the system. The historic landscapes can no longer be maintained consistently at levels needed to sustain some key features to a level satisfactory to the community. As the community expands, access to the park resources that are the foundation of the system’s tradition

is becoming increasingly inequitable due to budget constraints on maintenance and unequal distribution of park types and open space in growth areas. Each of the planning districts is unique, with needs varying according to population. The parks infrastructure is no longer in balance.

The community has grown and become more diverse over the past few decades. The density of population has shifted, and the population is aging and becoming more diverse. Urban areas of the community have more need for smaller block and neighborhood parks within walking distance of homes, while suburban areas tend to need larger neighborhood and community parks. Rural areas also have park needs focused on larger parks and park land reserves for future growth. While the residential population has shifted farther away from the city center, there has not been corresponding growth in park acreage in all areas. There are fewer neighborhood parks farther away from the city center, and access to parks is

becoming less efficient. In contrast, there is a higher density of parks in the older established neighborhoods of Fort Wayne, and these parks were designed in a different time and in close proximity to a different demographic mix of residents than today.

Public input from stakeholder and focus groups, the survey, and public meetings shows both a high level of park use and a high level of satisfaction with parks and facilities and the way they are maintained.

Community identification of priorities and needs

- **Focus groups** showed a preference for quality over quantity and expressed a concern that Department resources are stretched too thin to maintain the parks at the levels of the past (Appendix 2.1).
- **Stakeholders** placed high value on the park system and many expressed the need to respect its rich tradition of

stewardship by maintaining a high-quality system with standards that strike a balance between user needs and respect for the rich tradition of the parks system. This group also expressed concerns about continued maintenance and acknowledged limited financial resources as a key issue (Appendix 2.1.1).

- The **surveys** show that maintenance and conservation of older parks and buildings and fixing and repair are the most important functions to continue and the most important actions to improve the system (Appendix 1).
- The 12 **public meetings** reinforced both the stakeholder comments and the surveys. A prevailing theme was the need to establish standards to respond to growth needs and maintain ample levels of passive space. There was a strong desire to celebrate the city's historical and culturally significant parks and expand the existing greenway. The need to take better care of existing parks before expanding was as important as acquiring new land to serve newly annexed areas (Appendix 2.2).

This pattern of responses reveals significant community pride in a system that has a strong tradition of well-designed and maintained parks and open space. The Department can celebrate this tradition of stewardship by dedicating staff and budget to conserving and maintaining current assets, and planning and budgeting for the distribution and development of new parks, greenways, and facilities that reflect the quality of the existing system. Celebrating

the system's tradition in this way should continue to sustain support for the system and funding for both maintenance of its physical assets and acquisition and development of new compatible assets.

Specific survey results that support this theme include:

- A high percentage of respondents (75%) visit parks.
- A high percentage (over 80%) rate maintenance as good to excellent.
- Respondents indicated they would allocate \$42 out every \$100 spent (more than double the next highest category) on parks and recreation to improve and maintain existing parks and facilities.
- While the most important functions that the Parks and Recreation Department can perform are operate maintained parks and facilities, (91% said very important) and preserve the environment and open space, all 12 functions listed are important to over 80% of respondents. When asked what the top four functions are, 55% of respondents said operate well-maintained parks and facilities.

The most important actions to improve the parks and recreation system include fix up and repair older park buildings and facilities and preserve and conserve older parks, along with upgrade the children's zoo, upgrade existing youth/adult athletic fields, and develop new walk/bike trails and connect existing trail. The athletic fields were slightly less important when respondents were asked to pick the four most important

actions.

Theme Two: Equitable Distribution of Parks and Services

Provide an equitable balance of neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, special recreation areas, and greenways throughout the city.

Community growth and budget constraints have resulted in the uneven distribution of park types and open space to the extent that areas of the community are not adequately served. Sectors of the population, especially in growth areas, are under-served by park and recreation facilities and greenways. Changes in neighborhoods and demographics have left parks and facilities in locations and with facilities that no longer serve current needs. The total park acres, number and size of facilities, and number of different park types are out of balance.

Public comments indicate that some groups, such as toddlers, teens, and seniors, are not as well served as others. Top-priority survey desires, such as fixing up older parks and allocating resources fairly to different parts of the city, reinforced workshop comments about equitable distribution of parks and facilities.

Focus groups expressed the concern that the system is out of balance with respect to the number and distribution of neighborhood, community, and regional parks. They want the plan to help the Department proactively plan for a growing community

with an increasingly diverse population, More park land is needed in newly annexed and soon-to-be-annexed areas, and many focus group members expressed a desire to see improved intergovernmental planning for parks and recreation.

The **stakeholders** place a high value on the park system, especially the quantity and location of parks throughout the community. However, they noted some equity issues emerging, primarily due to annexation and expansion of the city. The Southwest Planning District is not well served and needs stronger connections to the greenway. There was some sentiment for at least some combined planning and shared standards between the city, county, and state parks and recreation departments. The showcase parks are located in the older part of the city; newer areas either have no parks, undeveloped parks, and/or no connections to the greenway.

The **citizens survey** shows interest in balancing the distribution of park types throughout the community. High importance was given to the equitable distribution of parks and the acquisition and development of parks and greenways. Two of the top reasons for not using parks were listed as distance from home and not knowing locations of facilities (at least in part a result of distance) totaled 40% of respondents, more than any other reason.

The 12 **public workshops** identified the need to establish standards that are responsive to the growth of the community and identify the appropriate amount of park land by park classification. Top among the needs cited is acquiring park land in newly annexed

areas of the city and proactively purchasing land in future growth areas.

Specific survey results that support this theme include the following:

- When asked to rate the importance of various functions performed by the Department, 90% ranked the fair allocation of resources to different parts of the city as somewhat to very (69%) important. All 12 of the choices were ranked as important by over 80% of respondents, reinforcing the importance of balance in the system. (Q8. Importance of Various Functions Performed by the Fort Wayne Parks & Recreation Department, Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute, June 2003)
- Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents were somewhat to very supportive of issuing bonds for the acquisition, improvement, and developments of parks, trails, and recreation facilities. (Q16. Support for Issuing Tax Supported Bonds to Fund the Acquisition, Improvement, and Development of the Type of Parks, Trails, and Recreation Facilities That Are Most Important to Respondent Households, Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute, June 2003)
- The top reason for not using parks was that respondents were too busy or not interested (39%), but the combination of being too far from their residences and not knowing the locations of facilities accounted for 40% of the responses. (Q12. Reasons that Prevent Respondent Households from Using Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Dept. Parks, Recreation,

Facilities, and Programs More Often, Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute, June 2003)

The community has indicated strong support for developing standards for the types (classifications) of parks and amount of park acreage and facilities based on population. Standards will provide a very good foundation for balancing the distribution of park and recreation services. Acreage standards should include total number of acres of park land for the city and each planning district, as well as the acres of park land for each type of park. Park and facilities standards should include the appropriate level of development and amenities for each park



classification and facility. Standards can be applied to new development, but may best be applied as guidelines for evaluating existing parks and facilities which may function well without conforming exactly to the adopted standards

Theme Three: Physical Connectivity

Connect neighborhood parks, schools, and other destinations through greenways and trails to increase recreational opportunities throughout the city.

Connecting parks by expanding the greenway system was a common desire expressed during the public involvement process. Another key element of the public's desire for a citywide greenway system was the need for an increased sense of security on the trails.

Currently, the greenway system consists of 15 miles of completed trails. Distribution among planning districts is not balanced; there are:

- 5 miles of trail in the Northwest Planning District
- 3 miles of trail in the Northeast Planning District
- 1 mile of trail in the Southeast Planning District
- 6 miles of trail in the Southwest Planning District

In addition to the existing greenway system, there are three miles of trail in the Aboite Planning District.

Most of the existing greenway trails trace the boundaries of the planning districts along the river courses. Community input emphasized a desire to connect parks throughout the city.

The desire of the community to increase connectivity to parks is one factor related to the physical growth of the community. As residential neighborhoods have expanded, the expansion of the park system has not kept pace. Residential neighborhoods farther away from the city center have fewer opportunities to access neighborhood parks by walking or riding bikes. In these neighborhoods, access can be improved with designated bike trails and an expanded greenway system. As growth continues farther from the city center, housing density tends to be lower and residents are farther removed from many of the city's cultural institutions and resources.

- **Focus groups** also supported the need for a citywide greenway system. These groups stated that connecting existing parks and future parks, as well as other key destinations throughout the city, should be a priority of the city (Appendix 2.1).
- The safety and security of parks and the greenway system were concerns of **stakeholders**. Although safety in parks and greenway are a concern, **stakeholders** expressed strong support for the expansion of the trail system (Appendix 2.1).

- The **citywide citizen survey** revealed a strong desire for multi-use trails. Citizens also showed strong support for funding the maintenance of existing trails and expansion of the greenway system (Appendix 1.1).
- During the 12 **public workshops**, Fort Wayne residents expressed the need to improve connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and cultural assets throughout the city. The improvements to connectivity could range from expanding the greenway to enhancing pedestrian access to neighborhood parks (Appendix 2.2).

Specific survey results that support this theme include:

- A high percentage of citywide survey respondents (70%) indicated that there is a need for bike and walking trails.
- City residents also rated trails second highest (31%) in the importance of recreational facilities to their family. Only the children's zoo rated higher.
- When asked how they would spend \$100, city residents allocated the most money (\$42) to fixing/maintaining existing parks. The second highest allocation of money (\$13) was for the acquisition and development of walking/biking trails and greenways.
- The third highest reason (19%) for not using city parks was that the parks were too far from their residences.

It is apparent that the residents of Fort Wayne strongly support pedestrian connec-



tivity throughout the city. An expanded greenway system could continue to provide linkages from neighborhoods to parks, and the community's hopes for future expansions to the system could increase connectivity to other institutions such as schools and cultural institutions.

Theme Four: Essential Services

Establish and define the park system's essential services and commit sufficient resources to meet the needs of residents on an equitable, citywide basis.

To meet the needs of the Fort Wayne community, the Department provides a variety of essential services ranging from the provision and maintenance of parks and greenways to the delivery of recreation programs. Providing equitable, citywide access to essential park and recreation services is fundamental to the Department's mission and should remain a top priority. To ensure its continued success over the next 10 years, the Department should concentrate its resources and efforts on the essential services most desired by and beneficial to the community.

Based on public input gathered through the focus groups, stakeholder interviews, citizen survey, and public meetings, residents view the following services provided by the Department as essential: parks (especially community, neighborhood, and older parks), children's zoo, botanical conservatory, Headwaters Park, trails and greenways, park maintenance, recreation services, marketing, horticultural management, and riparian management.

- **Focus groups** identified the strong tradition of stewardship of the Department and its historic parks. Participants also expressed a need for an expanded greenway system and more adult, senior, and family-oriented programs (Appendix 2.1).
- Findings from the **stakeholder interviews** mirrored those identified from the focus groups. Additionally, stakeholders stressed the importance of maintaining existing parks and facilities, addressing riparian issues, maintaining community gardens, and providing appropriate mechanisms for public input and feedback (Appendix 2.1).
- The **citizen survey** clearly indicated that citizens view parks as important to their community. Residents also placed great importance in maintaining existing parks and facilities, preserving and conserving older parks, using and enhancing the trail system, providing recreation programs for people of all ages, and enhancing the zoo as a treasure for the community (Appendix 1.1).

- Responses from the 12 **public meetings** supported findings from the focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and citizen survey. Participants emphasized the importance of the historic parks, expanding the existing greenway system, maintaining existing park assets, better using the rivers as a community resource, and enhancing marketing efforts to keep the public informed about services (Appendix 2.2).

Specific survey results that support this theme include the following:

- Three quarters (75%) of households visit city parks, a number 2% above the national average.
- When asked about household needs for various recreational facilities, 76% identified a need for large community parks, 76% for the children's zoo, 70% for paved walking/biking trails, 68% for the botanical conservatory, and 63% for small neighborhood parks.
- When asked to rank the four most important recreation facilities provided by the Department, the children's zoo ranked as most important (with 39% of respondents ranking it in the top four), followed by paved walking/biking trails (31%), large community parks (25%), small neighborhood parks (24%), and the botanical conservatory (19%).
- Nearly one quarter (23%) of all households participate in programs offered by the Department.

- When asked to rank the importance of various functions performed by the Department, 96% indicated operating parks and facilities that are well maintained as important. Over half (55%) of all respondents ranked park maintenance as one of the four most important functions of the Department.
- At least 90% of respondents indicated that providing activities for people with disabilities, seniors, teens, toddlers, and youth was important. Providing special events for people of all ages was viewed as important by 93% of respondents.
- Preserving and conserving older parks was viewed as important by 87% of respondents. An equal percentage of respondents indicated that it was important to fix up or repair older park buildings and facilities.
- The top four potential actions households were most willing to fund with their tax dollars included fixing up or repairing older park buildings and facilities (46%), preserving and conserving older parks (41%), upgrading the children's zoo (38%), and developing new trails and connecting existing trails (31%).

Fort Wayne citizens place a high value on the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department and the essential services it provides. Fundamental to the Department's mission is the provision of high-quality parks and public spaces. There is clear public mandate to respect and build upon the rich tradition of the park system. Residents wish to preserve the beauty of the older parks while also ensuring equitable access to quality neighborhood and community parks.

The Fort Wayne Children's Zoo and Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory are both cherished by residents and viewed as key essential services of the Department. Both institutions have high satisfaction levels with the public. While the children's zoo operates with much autonomy, the public has expressed considerable willingness to publicly support continued enhancements at the zoo.

Residents indicated a high level of appreciation for the Department's greenways and trails. The public expressed a strong desire to expand the greenway and trail system to provide better connectivity between parks and neighborhoods, as well as throughout the community.

Key to providing quality parks, greenways, and facilities is properly maintaining these assets. Residents indicated a preference for properly maintaining existing assets before expanding the park system. Dedicating sufficient resources for park maintenance is clearly viewed as essential by the community.

Fort Wayne residents place a high value on the many recreation services provided by the Department. The Department has received many well-deserved accolades, both locally and nationally, for its Lifetime Sports Academy. Strong support exists within the community for a continued investment in prevention and socially-minded services for at-risk youth, seniors, and economically disadvantaged families in targeted neighborhoods. All programs, in general, received high levels of satisfaction from participants.

Residents expressed the need for a well-rounded approach to marketing by the Department. In addition to the improved

promotion of park services, citizens seek more opportunities to participate in the Department's planning efforts for parks, facilities, and programs.

In celebrating the history of the parks system, many residents indicated a great appreciation for the public gardens and landscapes available in many of the older parks. Although upkeep of the landscapes could fall under park maintenance, maintaining them at the quality level expected by the public requires dedicated horticulture resources. Given the significant amount of landscapes within the park system needing intensive maintenance, horticulture management can be viewed as a stand-alone essential service.

As identified both by residents and the Downtown Fort Wayne Blueprint for the Future, the rivers are a largely untapped resource of the city. The community sees Headwaters Park, at the confluence of the rivers, as an important community identity symbol and gathering place for special events enjoyed by a majority of citizens. To increase the recreational opportunities available from the rivers, water quality management will be essential. The Depart-



ment can work jointly with the Board of Works, Corp of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, and other agencies to increase efforts to restore riverbanks and improve overall water quality.

Theme Five: Social Connectivity

Connect the community socially to encourage broader participation in programs and events that unites neighborhoods as well as the entire community.

The public involvement process revealed a desire for the Parks and Recreation Department to increase the number of programs and special events that would serve a wide range of interests throughout the community.

Fort Wayne has changed over the past few decades in many ways. The city continues to physically grow, population density is shifting, the population is getting older, and the community is becoming more ethnically diverse. As the community grows and residents live farther and farther away from downtown, there is the perception that there is no need to drive downtown when newer commercial development is also located farther from the city center. In addition to population shifts, there is an increase in ethnic diversity, particularly in the Hispanic community.

- Proactively planning for an increasingly diverse community is an important element of the department's functions according to **focus groups** (Appendix 2.1).

- **Stakeholders** expressed a strong desire for a plan that sparks excitement in the community and strikes a balance between increasingly diverse user and interest groups (Appendix 2.1).
- In the **citywide citizen survey**, residents responded that one of the top functions of the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department should be providing a balance of special events for residents of all ages (Appendix 1.1).
- The 12 **public workshops** validated the results of the citywide citizen survey, focus groups, and stakeholder meetings. The community's desire for enhancing programs for youth, teens, and seniors was matched by their recommendation to increase the Department's marketing efforts to grow these types of programs (Appendix 2.2).

Specific survey results that support this theme include:

- A high percentage of citywide survey respondents (70%) indicated that there is a need for the expansion of special events for residents of all ages.

Residents have identified the shifts in the community's demographics as an important development that should be addressed by the Parks and Recreation Department. There is great potential for bringing the community together to celebrate the city's parks and the rich history within the park system; the changing cultural diversity within the city; and the cultural institutions that enrich the community.

Theme Six: Economic Development

Enhance the park system's role as a catalyst for economic growth in the city.

A well-maintained and managed park system can contribute to the economic wealth of a community. In a 2001 study by Miller of parks in Dallas, Texas, homes facing parks were valued at 22% more than those over one-half mile away. According to a 2003 study by Lindsey, Man, Payton, and Dickson on the impact of Indianapolis' Monon Trail, property located within one-half mile had a significant, positive effect on value accounting for 15% of average sale prices. Other studies have shown a positive correlation between higher property values and proximity to a park, golf course, or greenway. The increased property values result not only in more net wealth for property owners, but also increased tax revenue for local government.

Harder to measure, but also important, are the intangible impacts parks and greenways can have on a community. The beauty resulting from the mere presence of parks, greenways, boulevards, and streetscapes makes a city a more attractive and desirable place to live—an ideal held closely by the city's past planners. Residents and businesses often cite the availability of quality parks and recreation programs as contributing factors when relocating to a new community. The Downtown Fort Wayne Blueprint for the Future and its vision to enhance gateway entrances, update streetscapes, unify signage, and maintain flowerbeds in the central city are indications that city leaders understand these benefits.

Parks and greenways have been used by many communities to spark the redevelopment of depressed or neglected neighborhoods. Updating parks and providing programs targeted to specific areas can help revitalize neighborhoods by providing positive leisure time alternatives. Active parks and recreation programs are effective deterrents to crime, drug use, and other negative activities that can drain the financial resources of a community.

The success and popularity of the Children's Zoo, Botanical Conservatory, and Headwaters Park illustrate the viable impact the park system already has on tourism in the community. Efforts to market the many existing tourist attractions in Fort Wayne—provided both by the Department and other organizations—should be enhanced. Opportunities to increase the number of special events and jointly package these events with existing attractions as family destinations should be explored. Increased coordination between the Department, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and other organizations is critical to increasing the economic contribution of tourism.

As a regional destination, Fort Wayne also has the opportunity to benefit from amateur sports tourism. The ice arena has led the way in attracting regional and national competitions to the community. Opportunities exist to attract events in other sports, including youth soccer, baseball, and softball, but they will require a capital commitment to build tournament-quality sports fields—something largely lacking at this time.

Based on public input from the focus groups, stakeholder interviews, citizen survey, and

public meetings, there appears to be support for using the park system as a catalyst for economic growth.

- **Focus group** participants expressed the desire for a visionary plan that both excites and fulfills the needs of the community. Several participants indicated a need for high-quality sports fields to support amateur tournaments (Appendix 2.1).
- **Stakeholders** viewed the park system as a great asset for the community and a key contributing factor to the quality of life in Fort Wayne (Appendix 2.1).
- The **survey** results indicated that Fort Wayne citizens place a high value on their park system, as reflected by the high use rate of parks. Residents are very supportive and appreciative of the Children's Zoo and Botanical Conservatory, two of the city's top tourist attractions. Residents view the provision of special events as one of the top three functions of the Department (Appendix 1.1).
- Responses from the 12 **public meetings** generally supported findings from the focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and citizen survey (Appendix 2.2).

Specific survey results that support this theme include the following:

- Three quarters (75%) of households visit city parks, a number 2% above the national average.

- A high percentage of households indicated a need for the children's zoo (76%) and botanical conservatory (68%), two of the city's top tourist attractions.
- Satisfaction levels for the zoo or conservatory are extremely high. Of those expressing a need for the respective facilities, 97% indicated that the zoo meets their needs and 96% indicated that the conservatory meets their needs.
- The zoo and conservatory were rated as the first and fifth (respectively) most important recreational facilities provided by the Department.
- Providing special events was viewed as an important function of the Department by 93% of respondents, 35% of which rated it as one of its top three functions.
- Strong support exists to improve the zoo (83%) and upgrade existing youth/adult athletic fields (81%).

By calling for a visionary plan, it is clear that Fort Wayne residents want their park system to contribute to the quality of life and overall vitality of the city. High-quality parks, recreation programs, and special events make Fort Wayne an attractive place to live and visit. The park system serves as a catalyst for economic growth by helping retain current residents and businesses, attract prospective employers and new residents, and bring in visitors to its many attractions. The park system's contribution to the community's overall economy should be fully recognized and promoted.

The Department can further support economic development through participation in the implementation of elements of the Downtown Fort Wayne Blueprint for the Future. Initial efforts have begun with the Main Street median enhancement. Gateways on major community entries and lighting improvements, not only on the bridges, but throughout the downtown districts, can better define downtown. Parks can include not only the medians but also streetscapes, plazas, and linkages to the greenway system.

By developing a balanced green system of boulevards with trees, flowers, lighting, and gathering/sitting areas, downtown can feel like one singular place. Treescapes could connect the downtown to greenways and community or regional parks, providing connectivity and respite for people working in and visiting downtown, as well as a strong identity for a city that truly celebrates its park tradition.

Theme Seven: Sufficient Funding

Secure sufficient funding to maintain and enhance the parks and recreation system through revenue strategies consistent with the community's values.

As the community has continued to grow, the Department's funding sources have not kept pace with the accompanying demand placed on the parks and recreation system. This issue is exacerbated by the many park users who reside outside the city limits—increasing demand for services while paying no taxes to support the system. With resources stretched increasingly thin, it has

become more and more difficult for the Department to maintain and enhance the system to the high standards expected by the public.

To meet the park and recreation needs of Fort Wayne residents, as well as accomplish the public mandates identified in this plan, the Department must continue utilizing existing revenue sources and explore new funding mechanisms. While many funding sources exist for public parks and recreation agencies, it is critical that strategies consistent with the community's values be pursued. New funding components outside of user fees should be considered.

The Department must use a sound business approach to its operations. This includes recognizing the true operating and capital cost of existing and proposed parks, facilities, and programs. To avoid further straining the system, a policy should be established to prevent the development or expansion of parks, facilities, and services until sufficient funding is secured to cover initial capital cost and ongoing operational expenses.

Based on public input from the citizen survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and public meetings, lack of sufficient funding was clearly identified as a potential threat to the Department's long-term success.

- **Focus group** participants suggested that the lack of sufficient funding made it increasingly difficult for the Department to properly sustain the existing park system. Providing sufficient funding was viewed as critical to the success of the Department (Appendix 2.1).

- **Stakeholders** identified budgetary constraints as a primary source for deferred maintenance issues. Stakeholder also expressed the need to identify the true capital and operating costs of existing and proposed parks, facilities, and services (Appendix 2.1).
- Through the **citizen survey**, residents expressed a desire for tax dollars to be used to properly maintain existing park infrastructure and facilities. The survey further showed significant public support for a tax-supported bond to fund the acquisition, improvement, and development of parks, trails, and facilities (Appendix 1.1).
- Responses from the 12 **public forums** generally supported findings from the focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and citizen survey (Appendix 2.2).

Specific survey results that support this theme include the following:

- When asked to rank the actions people would most be willing to fund through tax dollars, fixing-up/repairing older park buildings rated highest, ranked in the top four by 46% of respondents.
- In allocating \$100 among various park and recreation activities, respondents on average dedicated \$42 for improving/maintaining existing parks, playgrounds, zoo, and recreation facilities.

- Nearly three-quarters (64%) of respondents indicated they would be either very supportive (30%) or somewhat supportive (34%) of the city issuing a tax-supported bond to fund the acquisition of parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

Residents recognize the limited financial resources available to maintain and enhance their parks and recreation system. At the same time, the public expects the system to be properly funded to meet the park and recreation needs of the community. The challenge presented to both the Department

and community leaders is securing sufficient funding consistent with the values of the community. While there is support for a tax-supported bond, it is clear that new funding approaches will need to be considered if the Department is to have long-term success and vitality.



Plan Recommendations

Introduction

In order to balance the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation system and ensure equitable and sustainable management and development of the programs, parks, and recreation facilities within the city, seven planning themes were derived from public involvement meetings and interviews conducted by the strategic action master planning team. The seven themes are:

- Rich tradition of stewardship
- Equitable distribution of parks and services
- Physical connectivity
- Essential services
- Social connectivity
- Economic development
- Sufficient funding

These seven themes then became the basis of the vision strategies for the planning, budgeting, and operations of the Department. These strategies provide the basis for specific recommendations for the parks and recreation facilities, programs, and essential services. These recommendations will ensure that the future development of the park system will be easily accessible and open to all of the citizens of Fort Wayne and beyond. The recommendations discussion is organized into seven overriding vision strategies.

The vision strategies were developed from the seven planning themes identified in Section 2: Planning Themes. The concepts recommended within these strategies will act as a guide for the parks services and programs within the City of Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department. These strategies will:

- Create a balanced approach to managing programs, parks, and recreation facilities

- Celebrate the tradition of stewardship
- Make connections
- Establish essential services based on the needs of the community
- Develop consistent management for each signature facility
- Provide an equitable balance of parks and greenways
- Operate within funding resources
- Implement consistent management standards for parks, facilities, and programs
- Serve as a catalyst to economic development within the City of Fort Wayne
- Establish new funding and an appropriate balance of funding strategies

The vision strategies are detailed next.



Strategy One: Celebrate the park system's rich tradition of stewardship.

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department will celebrate the rich 100-year tradition of stewardship, quality parks, open space, and greenways by prioritizing resources to maintain existing parks and facilities to meet the high expectations of the community, and by developing standards for design and maintenance to continue sustainable growth of the system in the future.

Goal: Recognize the qualities that distinguish the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation System and establish an operational and funding structure to maintain those qualities and perpetuate them in future development.

Strategies:

- Conserve older parks, park buildings, and facilities, keeping them suitable for current users.

- Develop design standards to guide the design of new parks and facilities to achieve quality similar to the best of the existing parks and facilities.
- Balance maintenance across all parks through maintenance standards that achieve a level of upkeep consistent with the design quality and intent of the existing parks.
- Document the cost of providing maintenance that will sustain the existing parks and facilities at an appropriate level, and apply this funding standard to a policy that will provide increased funding for maintenance on pace with the cost of living and expansion of the system.
- Establish a consistent approach to the endowment of new acquisition and construction investments to fund future maintenance.
- Create park and recreation opportunities focused on the city's rich cultural heritage by preserving and interpreting sites, celebrating events, and drawing on historical elements to establish park and greenway development, programming, and design themes.

Strategy Two: Provide an equitable distribution of parks and services.

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department will provide an equitable balance of neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, special recreation areas, and greenways throughout the city.

Goal: Balance the park and recreation system by adopting standards for park classifications and the amount of park land and facilities appropriate for the city and each of its planning districts.

Strategies:

- Adopt standards for block parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, special recreation areas, and greenways, including acres per thousand population.
- Recognize the different needs of urban and suburban neighborhoods in establishing park standards
- Adopt standards for facilities that reflect community needs and preferences, including number and size per population.
- Adopt design principles that support a balance of active and passive parks, reflecting community needs, neighborhood needs, and appropriate use of space.

- Adopt a process for public input into the park and facility design process.
- Secure the necessary funds to purchase new park land in under-served areas of the city.
- Adopt a policy to identify and reserve park lands in future growth areas in advance of development.
- Provide an equitable distribution of parks by classification type throughout the community.
- Use environmentally sound practices in the management of parks and public land.
- Interconnect parks and recreation facilities through an expanded greenway system.
- Recognize the true operating costs of parks, facilities, and programs based on desired community maintenance standards, and aggressively pursue opportunities to develop a secure funding stream.
- Provide appropriate maintenance funds to operate and maintain parks to the expectations of the public.
- Seek strategic partnerships to aid the Department in serving the leisure needs of the community and fulfilling its mission.



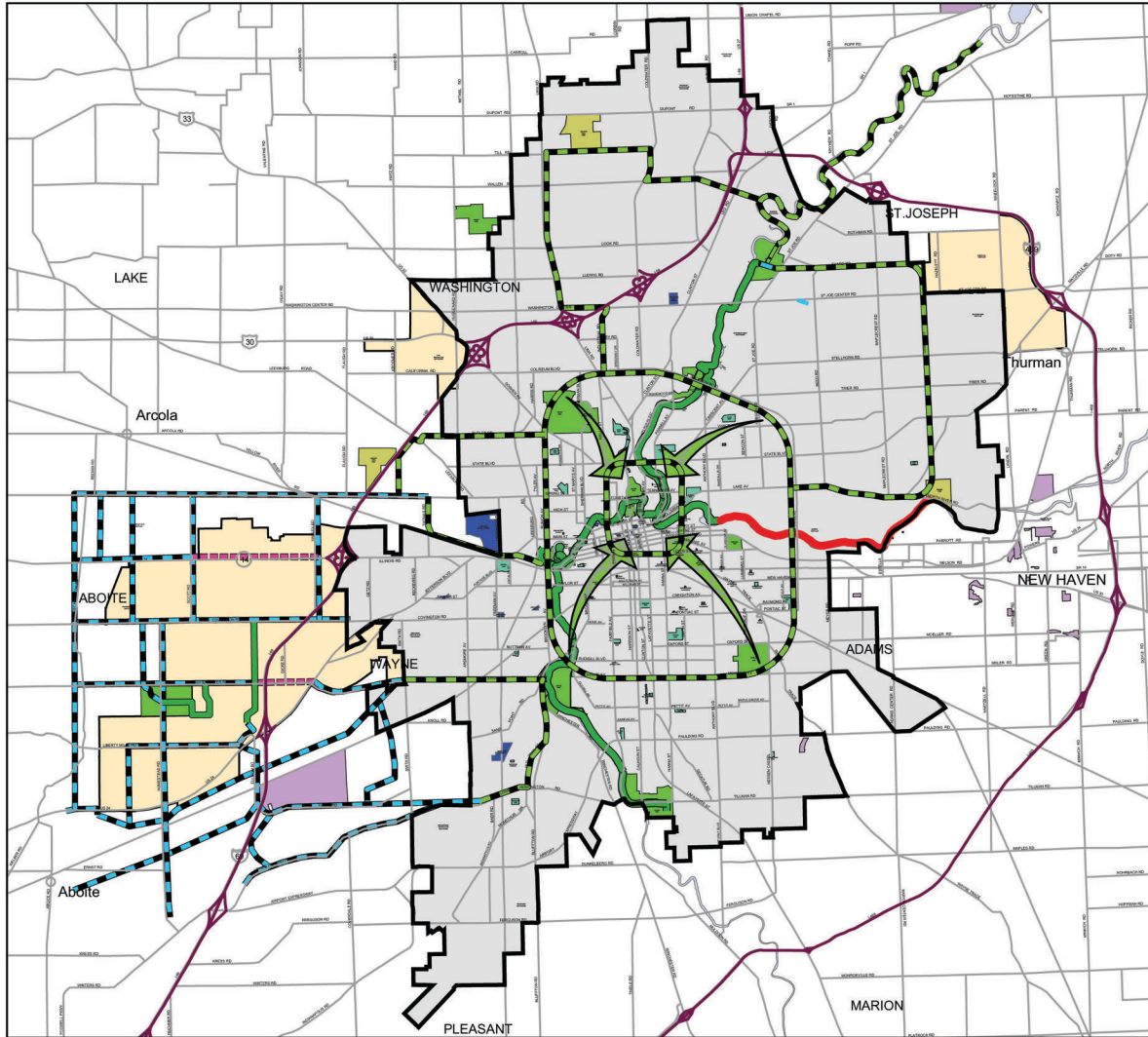
Strategy Three: Connect the parks through greenways and trails.

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department will connect neighborhood parks, schools, and other destinations through greenways and trails to increase recreational opportunities throughout the city.

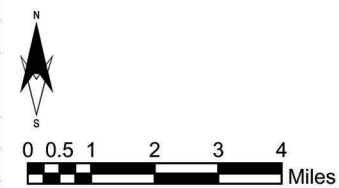
Goal: Develop greenways and facilities that interconnect parks and key points of interest in the community.

Strategies:

- Develop a comprehensive greenway system to connect major destinations throughout the city, allowing citizens to move freely without conflict with vehicles.
- Support the expansion of the sidewalk and bikeway system to supplement greenway connections.
- Develop themed trails utilizing parks, community heritage features, and greenways. Themes may include cultural, historic, rivergreenway, river (water-based) trails, rail trails, fitness trails, garden trails.
- As water quality safety standards are achieved, develop water trails for canoeing and kayaking that link waterfront parks and greenway connections.



- Legend**
- Fort Wayne
 - Rivers
 - Highways
 - Annexations
- Parks**
- Block
 - Neighborhood
 - Community
 - Regional
 - Special
 - County Parks
 - Allen County Greenways
 - Existing Greenways
 - Proposed Greenways
 - Greenway Expansion
 - Aboite Existing Greenway
 - Aboite Planned Greenway
 - Aboite Proposed Greenway



PROPOSED GREENWAY EXPANSION

Strategy Four: Establish and define the park system's essential services.

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department will establish and define its essential services and commit sufficient resources to meet the needs of residents on an equitable, citywide basis.

Goal: Establish a clear vision for each essential service, create appropriate service standards, and provide adequate funding to meet the needs and expectations of Fort Wayne residents.

Objectives:

- Identify high-priority neighborhoods that require essential park services.
- Work with community members to identify and help address issues.
- Develop programs, facilities, and parks in underserved areas.
- Develop maintenance standards for all parks, programs, and facilities based on the expectations of the public and obtain sufficient funding to achieve these standards.
- Develop an appropriate level of tax subsidy for each essential service.
- Create target partnerships with other agencies and groups to help support and fund essential services. Partnerships

should be set up on an equitable level as much as possible.

- Develop a balanced communications plan for all capital improvement projects.
- Review the Department's fees and charges strategy regularly to ensure economically disadvantaged citizens have adequate access to department programs, services, and facilities.
- Work with the county, Army Corp of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources on flood control, water quality management, and recreational opportunities on the rivers through Fort Wayne and Allen County.
- Design parks based on the needs of the neighborhood with the end goal of creating a balanced system of available park types.
- Develop a comprehensive greenway system that connects parks to neighborhoods and interconnects the community.
- Design and implement an ongoing community assessment process that identifies citizen and community priorities for recreation services.
- Use demographic information and analysis to plan, develop, and deliver programs and services without duplicating programs offered by other providers.



Strategy Five: Connect the community socially through parks, facilities, and events.

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department will connect the community socially to encourage broader participation in programs and events that unite neighborhoods as well as the entire community.

Goal: Enhance existing parks and community heritage features and develop destination parks and events that interconnect citizens and visitors and contribute to the overall quality of life in Fort Wayne.

Strategies:

- Provide opportunities for families and people of all ages to create and foster a sense of community pride.
- Support special events based on the cultural heritage of the people of Fort

Wayne that appeal to families and people of all ages.

- Customize existing parks to better serve the needs of the community.



Strategy Six: Enhance the park system's role in economic development.

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department will enhance its role as a catalyst for economic growth in the city.

Goal: Take an active role in supporting economic development through the provision of quality parks and facilities, development of downtown gardens and landscapes, and sponsorship of special events to improve the livability of the community and promote increased tourism.

Objectives:

- Track the property values of land adjacent to parks and greenways compared to property further from park land to measure the economic wealth generated by the park system. Use this information to help illustrate the economic impact of the park system.
- Work collectively with the Economic Development Department, Transportation Department, and Convention and Visitors Bureau to design and develop streetscapes, redevelop areas, and provide special events in the city.
- Develop events and admission packages between the Zoo, Botanical Conservatory, ice rink, golf courses, and public gardens to promote family getaways to Fort Wayne.
- Assess the economic impact of visitors to park attractions on the local economy,

focusing on auxiliary spending at local restaurants, retail stores, and hotels.

- Host prominent regional and national events in sports, arts, and cultural activities to increase tourism to Fort Wayne.
- Develop sports complexes for soccer, youth softball, and youth baseball to accommodate tournaments and promote sports tourism.

Strategy Seven: Secure sufficient funding to maintain and enhance the park system.

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department will secure sufficient funding to maintain and enhance the parks and recreation system through revenue strategies consistent with the community's values.

Goal: Establish new funding sources and an appropriate balance of revenue strategies to help cover the operational and capital costs of the Department.

Strategies:

Note: The following is a list of possible revenue strategies provided by the consulting team for consideration only. This list does not represent the official policy or position of the Board.

- Establish a policy prohibiting the development or expansion of parks, facilities, and services without securing sufficient

- funding to cover the initial capital costs and ongoing operations expenses.
- Create a policy requiring the identification of tax subsidy levels for all core programs and facilities for Board and public review; establish tax subsidy level targets for each area consistent with community values (current tax subsidy levels are provided in Appendix 7).
 - Expand the tax base through the continued annexation of unincorporated neighboring subdivisions.
 - Explore the feasibility of outsourcing business operations; outsource operations that provide an increase in net revenue to the Department.
 - Benchmark current funding practices against park and recreation agencies in communities of similar size; adopt or adapt best funding practices identified through benchmark process.
 - Pursue additional sponsorships and earned-income opportunities for parks, facilities, programs, and *Fun Times*.
 - Review existing relationships with concessions contractors; explore opportunities to increase concessions revenue.
 - Develop more friends organizations to support efforts of raising funds to enhance specific parks and/or programs.
 - Explore the feasibility of using subordinate leases where appropriate to develop recreation attractions and supplement Department revenue (for example, some downtown parks).
 - Outsource the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo to the Zoological Society; independence from the Department would likely place the zoo in a better position to secure additional earned income.
 - Create a downtown benefit district to fund landscape enhancements, uniform signage, and decorative lighting.
 - Establish a tree assessment through a new benefit district as a new source of funding for management of the urban forestry.
 - Expand the tax base through the development of a regional park authority; legislative approval will be needed.



Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan Appendices

Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department

August 2004

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Appendix 1: Surveys

To ensure that the Fort Wayne Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan meets the leisure needs of the Fort Wayne community, the planning process included an extensive public input process. The diversity of opinion recorded in the user group survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and public workshops confirmed the necessity of conducting statistically valid communitywide citizen surveys to assess overall community opinion. Information from the survey was thoroughly reviewed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the park system. These findings served as the foundation for many of the recommendations provided in this master plan.

1.1 Citywide Survey

The consultants conducted a community attitude and interest survey from April 2003 to June 2003. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Fort Wayne and Allen County. Surveys were

administered through a combination of mail and phone.

The goal of the survey was to obtain at least 800 completed surveys and a minimum of 125 completed surveys from each of the city's five planning districts. This goal was accomplished with a total of 804 surveys completed. The results of the random sample have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-3.5%.

The detailed findings of the citywide citizen survey can be found in the "Community Attitude and Interest Citizen Survey" by Leisure Vision, August 2003. Key findings of this survey are as follows:

- Three-fourths (75%) of respondent households indicated that they have visited Fort Wayne parks in the past year.
- Foster Park is the park most visited by household respondents. Other parks with high visitation rates included Franke Park, Lakeside Park, Shoaff Park, and McMillen Park.

- One-third (33%) of respondent households rated the physical condition of all Fort Wayne parks they have visited as excellent, and 54% rated the parks as good. An additional 12% rated the physical condition of the parks as fair and only 1% rated them as poor. The remaining 2% indicated that they did not know the condition of the parks.
- At 43%, restrooms had the highest percentage of respondents rate it as one of the three improvements they would most like to have made. Four other improvements were rated by at least 20% of respondents as the top three improvements they would like to have made: walking/biking trails (24%), drinking fountains (24%), benches/picnic tables (20%), and lighting (20%).
- Of the 25 recreational facilities listed, five had over two-thirds of respondent households indicate they have a need for them. The facilities that the highest percentage of respondent households

indicated that they have a need for included the children's zoo (76%), large community parks (76%), paved walking/biking trails (70%), picnic shelters/areas (68%), and the botanical conservatory (68%). Facilities with the lowest need included skateboarding/roller/inline skating (25%), soccer fields (25%), outdoor volleyball courts (23%), off-leash dog parks (22%), and outdoor football fields (21%).

- Nine of the 25 recreational facilities listed had at least half of respondents indicate the facility completely meets the needs of their households. The facilities with the highest percentage of respondents indicating the facility completely meets their needs include the children's zoo (84%), botanical conservatory (74%), theaters (66%), golf courses (64%), large community parks (61%), community centers (57%), youth baseball fields (55%), playgrounds (52%), and softball fields (50%). Facilities with the highest percentage of respondents indicating the facility does not meet their needs include off-leash dog parks (42%), outdoor volleyball courts (41%), skateboarding/roller/inline skating (41%), indoor gymnasiums (40%), indoor exercise and fitness facilities (39%), indoor ice rink (36%), and indoor swimming pools/water parks (35%). It should also be noted that 22 of the 25 facilities had at least 60% of respondents indicate the facility either completely or partially meets their needs.
- The children's zoo had the highest percentage of respondents (39%) rate it as one of the four most important recreation facilities to their household. Other facilities in which a significant percentage of respondents rated them as

one of the four most important include paved walking/biking trails (31%), large community parks (25%), and small neighborhood parks (24%). It should be noted that the children's zoo also had the highest percentage of respondents rate it as the most important facility.

- Nearly one quarter (23%) of respondents indicated they have participated in programs offered by the Department during the past 12 months.
- Program flyers (39%) appear to be the most effective means of informing households about recreation programs. The *Fun Times* seasonal program guide (36%) and word of mouth (30%) were the next largest sources of information about programs offered by the Department.
- Nearly half (44%) of respondent households rated the quality of programs in which they have participated as excellent, with an additional 43% rating them as good. Only 7% rated program quality as fair and 3% poor. Three percent (3%) indicated they did not know.
- The top six functions for the Department, as rated by respondents as very important, included operating parks and facilities that are clean/well maintained (91%), preserving the environment and providing open space (73%), providing activities for teens (73%), providing places for the enjoyment of outdoor programs (71%), providing activities for people with disabilities (71%), and providing special events for residents of all ages (70%).
- Operating parks and facilities that are clean/well maintained (55%) had the highest percentage of respondents select it as one of the four most important

functions of the Department. Other functions that at least one-third of respondents selected as one of the four most important include providing activities for teens (42%), providing special events for residents of all ages (35%), providing places for the enjoyment of outdoor sports programs (34%), and providing facilities for toddlers and youth (33%).

- When asked about options respondents would support for acquiring and developing open space, over half (56%) indicated open space should be acquired and developed for both passive and active uses as one of two options they most support. In addition, 42% indicated open space should be acquired and developed for passive usage. Only 13% indicated that no new open space should be acquired.
- Exploring interest for new indoor recreation, aquatic, and fitness programming spaces, 57% of respondents indicated they would use an indoor warm-water, family-oriented swimming center at least a few times per year. An indoor running/walking track (55%) is the other programming space that over half of respondents indicated they would use at least a few times per year.
- The top reason for not using parks, recreation facilities, or programs more often was that respondents were too busy or not interested (39%). Other reasons most frequently stated included not knowing what was offered (22%) or being too far from the respondent's residence (19%). Only 2% of respondents indicated poor customer service as a deterrent in using parks, facilities, or programs more often.

- From a list of 13 possible actions that the Department could take to improve the park system, respondents were most supportive of preserving and conserving older parks (65%), fixing/repairing older park buildings and facilities (63%), and upgrading the existing children's zoo (63%). Respondents were least supportive of upgrading existing golf facilities (36%), developing new skate parks (26%), and developing new athletic fields (24%).
- Fix-up/repair older park buildings and facilities (46%) had the highest percentage of respondents select it as one of the four actions they would be most willing to fund with their tax dollars. Other actions with strong support included preserving and conserving older parks (41%), upgrading the existing children's zoo (38%), and developing new walking/biking trails and connecting existing trails (31%).
- When asked how respondents would allocate \$100 among various parks and recreation categories, \$42 were allocated to improving/maintaining existing parks, playgrounds, zoo, and recreation facilities. The remaining \$58 were allocated as follows: acquisition and development of walking and biking trails/greenways (\$13), development of new aquatic and recreation facilities (\$12), conservation and preservation of historic and cultural parks and facilities (\$11), acquisition of new park land and open space (\$8), development of special facilities (\$8), and construction of new game fields (\$4). The remaining \$1 was allocated to other.
- Over half (64%) of respondents indicated that they would be either very supportive (30%) or somewhat supportive (34%) of

the city issuing a tax-supported bond to fund the acquisition, improvement, and development of parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

1.2 User Group Survey

From May 2003 through August 2003, the consultants conducted a user group survey. The purpose of the survey was to gather input from organizations that currently use the Department's parks and recreation facilities. Responses were designed to better understand who the organizations serve, the needs of the organizations, and overall satisfaction with the parks and/or recreation facilities. Out of 25 organizations selected to participate in the survey, nine organizations responded and generated 11 completed surveys (two organizations had two individuals complete surveys). The detailed findings of the user group survey are available in the "User Group Survey" by Leisure Vision, August 2003.

Participating organizations serve a wide variety of users ranging from youths to seniors. Programs provided by these organizations include sports, cultural activities, youth programs, senior programs, and educational programs. Organizations vary in size, serving between 12 and 285,000 participants on an annual basis.

Nearly half (46%) of the participating organizations use facilities on a seasonal basis. Almost one-quarter of the organizations use facilities throughout the year (23%) or for special events or tournaments (23%). All of the seasonal usage is during the summer months,

especially from June through August. Facilities are most often used during weekdays with the highest usage on Thursdays and Mondays. Organizations as a whole have minimal demand for facilities on Saturdays and Sundays.

Respondents to the survey were largely satisfied with facility conditions, locations, dates and times of availability, cleanliness and maintenance, and space or size. In these categories, no more than 8% of the participating organizations indicated that facilities did not meet their needs. Safety was the largest concern among respondents, with 15% stating that facilities did not meet their needs.

Approximately two-thirds (69%) of the organizations indicated that they have a staff person from the Department specifically assigned to work with them. One-quarter (23%) of the respondents did not know if they have an assigned staff contact.

Nearly half (46%) of the respondents indicated that they have a written facility use agreements with the Department. An additional 18% have an oral agreement in place. One-third (36%) of the organizations did not know if there is any type of agreement in place. Of the user groups that have agreements, approximately half (46%) have open-ended arrangements with no definitive contract period.

When asked what the organization most liked about the facilities they use, location was the primary factor. Suggestions for improving facilities included: creating more appropriate spaces for the specific programs (i.e., smaller classrooms, better pavilions,

river access), grooming ball fields, installing handicap-accessible restrooms, and installing a securing system. Most respondents (64%) were unsure if their organizations could help share the cost of any proposed improvements.



Appendix 2: Public Forums

2.1 Focus Groups

Focus group meetings were conducted by the consulting team in November 2002 at the onset of the planning process. A total of four focus groups were conducted involving 37 individuals. Meetings were held with the strategic/master plan steering committee, park foundation members, current partners, and advocacy group representatives. The same agenda was used for each focus group to ensure consistency in the topics covered. The comments were recorded as stated. They may not all be factually correct, and show a diversity of opinion, sometimes conflicting, and not necessarily that of a majority of the community (Appendix 1).

A common theme from the focus groups was the need for a visionary plan based on public input to guide the future management of the Department. The plan needs to have the buy-in of all the major stakeholders, including the Board, staff, partners, and advocacy groups. Key stakeholders need to

identify their roles in the plan. A coordinated effort is needed to achieve the community's vision for its park system. If this is accomplished, participants are confident that the needed funding to implement the strategic/master plan will follow.

Focus groups recognized a need to respect the rich heritage of the Department and its historic parks as outlined in the Cultural Landscape Report. A need for standards was identified to clarify the appropriate design, development, and maintenance of new and existing parks. Finding an appropriate balance between passive and active recreation to meet the community's needs was a focus in all of the meetings. Providing sufficient funding was also viewed as critical to the success of the Department.

Other issues identified from the focus group meetings include:

- There is a need for more trails and improved interconnectivity between parks and other key destinations.

- More park land is needed in newly or soon-to-be-annexed areas of the city.
- Existing partners are interested in continuing, if not enhancing, their relationships with the Department.
- Safety concerns exist on the river greenway and in some parks.
- New facilities desired include additional pavilions, a large field house, and tournament-quality ball fields.
- There is some desire for a stronger Park Board that works cooperatively with advocacy groups.
- Department resources are stretched too thin, making it difficult to sustain the existing park and recreation system.
- The foundation desires a better focus to serve the needs of the Department.
- More adult, senior, and family-oriented programs are needed.
- The lack of appropriate facilities limits the Department's ability to enhance or expand programs.

- A forestry plan is needed to ensure a healthy canopy of trees in the city.
- There is a preference for quality over quantity in parks, facilities, and programs.
- The existing park system is out of balance in respect to the number and location of neighborhood, community, and regional parks.
- There is an expectation of improved intergovernmental planning for parks and recreation at the city, county, and state levels.
- A landscape architect needs to be added to the Department's staff to implement and enforce design standards.
- The plan needs to proactively plan for an increasingly diverse population and growing community.

The Process

Key stakeholder interviews were conducted by the consulting team between January 16 and February 5, 2003. A total of 17 interviews were conducted involving 36 individuals representing various community leaders, special interest groups, and park support organizations. The purpose of the key stakeholder interviews was to identify perceptions of the Parks and Recreation Department and important community issues to be addressed in the master plan. The comments were recorded as stated. They may not all be factually correct, and show a diversity of opinion, sometimes conflicting, and not necessarily that of a majority of the community (see Appendix 1).

The key stakeholder groups involved in the interview process were identified and

contacted by the Parks and Recreation Department. The interviews were conducted either individually or in small groups. The same questions were used for each interview to ensure consistency in topics covered. Due to time constraints, not all of the questions were always asked based on the overall knowledge of the participants. The questions were designed by the consultants with input from the Parks and Recreation Department.

The findings from these interviews served as a basis for further research in the development of the master plan, including the development of a community-wide random survey.

A listing of all questions and responses are included at the end of this report.

Summary of Interviews

The general consensus of participants in the stakeholder interviews is that Fort Wayne has a good parks system, although there is room for improvement. The biggest issues identified related to budgetary constraints resulting in excessive deferred maintenance, lack of design standards, and resistance from the staff to accept input or assistance from some community groups.

Participants hope to have a strategic plan that is visionary, sparks excitement in the community, establishes design and maintenance standards, strikes a fair balance between various user and interest groups, and respects the rich history and heritage of the parks system. There is a strong desire to have a usable plan that can be implemented despite political and administrative changes.

This needs to be accomplished through a sound public input process incorporating the wants and needs of the community. The plan should also clearly outline implementation steps, provide realistic goals, and reflect true capital and operating costs to ensure everything is properly maintained.

Several stakeholders expressed the desire to create the best and highest-quality parks system within the means of the community. Maintaining a high-quality system was a common theme throughout all interviews.

One of the key issues facing the Department is the maintenance and upkeep of existing parks and amenities. While basic maintenance (mowing, upkeep of flowers, etc.) of parks was considered fairly good, it was repeatedly cited that many of the amenities (pavilions, sidewalks, river/water edges) are deteriorating and/or not maintained well. Participants acknowledged the limited financial resources as a primary root cause for the maintenance deficiencies.

There are some safety issues in parks and along the greenway that should be addressed. Areas mentioned included Swinney Park, McMillen Park, the Rivergreenway trails, and Hanna Homestead Park. In some cases, the issue of safety was considered mostly perception (i.e., trails, McMillen Park).

Several participants felt that the Board and park staff was not open to feedback or assistance from the public or some groups. It was also cited that staff is sometimes reluctant to partner or collaborate with outside groups due to territorialism.

There was a concern that the Board has no bylaws from which to govern. Groups that

appeared to have differences with the Board felt that it should be enlarged and additional committees formed to provide input on specialty areas. Several individuals expressed the need for a conservancy group, especially to look out for historical elements of the system. The zoo parking lot controversy, along with differences in opinion or lack of trust with the Board/staff, resulted in the formation of new interest groups – several of which were represented in the interviews.

Among individuals interviewed, there was a strong interest (or at least acknowledgment of) in historical preservation as it pertains to the parks system. Many stakeholders expressed the need to respect the rich heritage of the parks system when upgrading existing parks or building new ones. There was some sentiment for the restoration of several historic parks to their original plans. Preserving, if not restoring, historical structures like the WPA pavilions was considered important. Those with strong interests in restoration lobbied the need for an on-staff landscape architect and design standards to maintain and capture the beauty of parks.

Of the key stakeholders interviewed, there clearly was a strong representation of groups with a preference for historical preservation compared to other interest groups. Although the preservation of historical elements in the park was a common theme in several of the interviews, the consultant recommends that this issue be addressed and measured in the household survey. This will better determine if the preservation of historic park elements is a true community value and high priority of Fort Wayne citizens.

There was some interest in the possible merger of the city and county parks systems, although this was viewed as a hot political topic and unlikely. There was some sentiment for at least some combined planning and shared standards between the departments.

The biggest political sensitivity identified was the upcoming mayoral election. Clearly the controversy over the zoo parking lot in Franke Park remains a public relations issue for the Department.

The community seems to place a high value on its parks system, especially the quantity and location of parks throughout the community. There were some equity issues emerging, primarily due to annexation and expansion of the city. Participants also expressed satisfaction in the recreational offerings provided by the Department, although there was a longing for the return of summer park programs that provide supervision in neighborhood parks.

Overall, the community seems well served by the existing recreation facilities based on input from the participants. There was strong support for the expansion of the trails system to connect parks and key destinations. There was some interest in an additional ice rink on the north part of town. Several requests were made for a sports complex so that softball, baseball, or hockey tournaments could be hosted.

There appear to be some partnering opportunities for the Department in its implementation of the strategic plan. All of the groups represented in the interviews expressed an interest in continuing, if not enhancing, their

relationship with the city. The YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Sports Corporation, and Convention and Visitors Bureau stand as potential partners for recreation and sports programs. The Boys and Girls Club was also interested in the idea of a shared new or existing facility.

Neighborhood associations, businesses, churches, and public schools appear to be untapped sources for in-kind services and adopt-a-park programs. Several participants stated that the Department has simply failed to ask for support—support that is there for the taking. Local universities, especially IPFW, also serve as potential partners for programming and joint-use facilities.

Foundations appear to be the largest source of funds within the community, although the amount of additional funds available for parks is probably limited.

1) What are your expected outcomes of this long-range strategic master plan?

- To serve as a map for the future; an organized approach to confronting problems; identify and address opportunities.
- Needs to be able to survive a change in administration, whether a new mayor, parks director, city council, etc. Include implementation steps so can survive change.
- Want a useable plan, not one that sits on the shelf.
- Should reflect the needs and wants of the community.
- Incorporate successful ideas and trends from other communities.

Interviews were held in January and early February 2003 and included the following groups:

Interview Group Number		Date/Time	Participants
1	Parks Foundation	January 16, 2003 8:00 a.m.	Ian Rolland, Karen Kasper, Madelane Elston, John Shoaff, Richard Waterfield, Tom Jehl, Will Clark
2	Rivergreenway Expansion	January 16, 2003 10:30 a.m.	Jack Stark, Jim Schroeder, Roger Goodland
3	Planning and Development Department	January 16, 2003 11:30 a.m.	Mark Becker, Director
4	City Council	January 16, 2003 1:00 p.m.	Tom Henry, Tom Smith
5	YMCA	January 16, 2003 2:00 p.m.	Marty Pastura
6	Utilities and Fire Department	January 16, 2003 3:00 p.m.	Greg Mezaros, Director of Utilities; Tim Davie, Fire Chief
7	Cultural Landscape Committee	January 16, 2003 4:00 p.m.	Will Clark, Tom Carlin, Julie Donnell, Dan Orban
8	Convention and Visitors Bureau	January 17, 2003 8:30 a.m.	Dan O'Connell, Andrea Detlefsen
9	Boys and Girls Club	January 17, 2003 8:30 a.m.	Louise Jackson
10	Friends of the Parks	January 17, 2003 9:00 a.m.	Julie Donnele, Dan Ernst, Suzon Motz, Julie Waterfield
11	City Council	January 17, 2003 10:00 a.m.	Don Schmidt
12	Invent Tomorrow	January 17, 2003 11:30 a.m.	Jeanne Shaheen
13*	Fort Wayne Sports Corporation	January 17, 2003 1:30 p.m.	Andy Bengs
14	Chamber of Commerce	January 17, 2003 2:00 p.m.	Phil Laux
15**	ARCH Board	January 17, 2003 3:30 p.m.	List from A1-31
16	City Council	February 3, 2003 9:00 a.m.	Tom Haghurst
17	Mayor's Office	February 5, 2003 9:30 a.m.	Tom Teague, Chief of Staff

* Involved in spectator events, basketball tourney, Purdue spring game. Proactive in going after events with the facilities that Ft. Wayne has. Would be willing to support larger scale tourneys, but have not been asked.

** ARCH (Architectural and Community Heritage) is a local organization dedicated to historic preservation. Just became an affiliate with Historic Landmarks of Indiana. Deals with everything from sidewalks, streets, places, and parks. Has an interest in the history of entire parks system.

- Visionary plan that is forward looking but realistic to resources available. (Reference was made to the downtown plan, which was viewed as presenting some great but unrealistic ideas.)
- Prioritize needs based on the available resources so we can understand what is achievable.
- All improvements should positively contribute to the parks system and community. Do not make improvements just to spend money.
- Factor in the Parks Foundation in a realistic way.
- Ensure sufficient financial resources to maintain existing elements and any proposed new improvements. Important that improvements do not become a financial burden to the parks system.
- A lot of restoration work on existing parks is needed. Especially need to improve gateway parks, which enhance the overall image of the system.
- Respects and builds off of the work of previous consultants and the ideals of historic master plans (i.e. Kessler Plan). These plans helped define the city, made it livable, contributed to attractiveness of neighborhoods, helped increase property values, and addressed human needs. New plan should do the same without destroying the work of previous plans.
- Reflects the needs of a changing society.
- Need for open space. Keep recreation areas as open space for drop-in activities.
- Create a unified mission for Department, Park Board, and various support groups/ organizations so they can work together to make the parks better. Identify how each group fits in with the master plan.
- Address relative role between private and public sectors in support of parks. (Public tax support of parks has been continually eroded, resulting in less money for maintenance. Private contributors have become concerned that any investment by it allows tax dollars to be cut. To continue to receive private financial support, need to have financial commitment from city leaders to properly maintain existing park resources. Headwaters Alliance in existence because people didn't trust the Park Board to do an adequate job to maintain the park.)
- Outline any changes that need to be addressed with the state legislature.
- Create bylaws for the Park Board.
- Build public trust in parks system.
- Address need to hire highly qualified designers to carry through with proposals. Currently do not have well-designed parks system.
- Provide for the highest-quality parks system within the realities of the budget.
- Rearticulate goals of the park system that benefit the city. Showcase the pride the community has in the parks system.
- More greenways connecting parks and destinations (both new and expansion of existing trails).
- Renovation of historical parks that have not been maintained.
- Greenways expanded into a countywide system—not just within the city
- Coordinate recommendations with growth areas of city.
- Work to balance various interests that exist within the community (historical significance, cultural landscape, maintenance, contemporary active things, etc.)
- Leveraging existing money that the Department has to the best degree; developing economies of scale.
- More supervised recreation activities in the parks during the summer months; staffed program services; playground programs in selected parks.
- Focus and identification of marketing strategies and operating strategies for the parks department.
- Provide direction of where the Parks Department is going to go.
- The Department has a great reputation in the community for doing a lot of things, but the plan should identify how to better utilize the parks for the community.
- Outcomes of plan would help utilities in future planning by know what Department is doing.
- Ability to review master plans from a safety perspective; provides information in development of rescue plans.
- Overall broad-brush view of entire system, where it is going from a recreation and park infrastructure perspective.
- Where the park system heads from the perspective of conservation and reuse of historical resources within the system—to this point there has been no particular direction. Need direction, is there the recognition, what can be done to improve upon these things.
- Mainstreaming of maintenance and recognition of historical assets.

- Comprehensive review of system to provide a balance between recreation, vehicle use, and historic parks.
- Needs to respect historic city plans.
- Define and understand role of parks and recreation to the city.
- Understanding of cultural, historic, and natural resources
- Due respect is given to those resources through the planning process.
- Exciting, visionary, not average stuff, incorporating the needs of the entire community, useful, doable, and quite long term. Community leadership plays a vital role.
- Provides implementation steps and mechanism to provide the operational resources.
- Quality of the parks, how they are maintained and designed, has to be the number one priority of every planning process. Need to have the best-quality amenity that we can have. With the limited dollars, need to make the best parks we can make. If not kept at the top, people won't want to contribute.
- Build off the current successes; address zoo and other attractions that impact tourism to avoid stagnation.
- Develop plan for the historic fort.
- Don't need any more parks, but physical improvements to the existing parks are needed.
- Overall and specific recommendations for parks system in general and for specific parks.
- Identification of future needs and areas needing new parks based on future growth projections.
- Strategy for overcoming funding limitations.
- Gaining input from wide range of park users
- Evaluation of each park based on use and perceived needs.
- Neighborhood parks—how heavily are parks used and how valuable are they to the parks system in general?
- Reasonable plan that can be implemented. Not a plan to sit on the shelf.
- Assessment of current structure for administering and governing parks to determine if it is efficient. Need an organizational review with recommendations.
- Focus on proactive versus reactive planning.
- Improved park system.
- Visionary component to meet commitments/expectation of annexed areas. Challenge is that they will expect them to be pretty nice because they are used to country clubs.
- Expect to be a blueprint of what the community wants.
- Needs to include maintenance expenses of existing and new facilities.
- Flexible enough to change with the community's needs.
- Painting clear and concise picture of physical and programming needs.
- Continue to avoid duplication of service and competition with other organizations.
- Provide five- and 10-year goals of where the Parks Department can fill in the gaps of the community's wants and needs.
- Don't have any. Not city resident so not familiar with overall system personally.
- Provide sense of community, green space, and place for the community to escape and relax.
- Revisit the heritage of the parks from a design sense, and be respectful of that heritage.
- Address active and passive elements of parks.
- Bring back the luster of the formerly world-renowned system.
- Restores current elements of parks and provides additional trails.
- Respond to growth/sprawl of the community to serve needs of the entire population.
- Maintain existing system at a high level of quality; maintain existing structures.
- Provide generalities in totality as to how the system should function.
- Have wonderful park system that has been planned and managed; new plan needs to respects that heritage.
- Look to enrich the whole system by building on its history.
- Don't want zero-sum gain (i.e., sacrificing/removing a historical structure so have the resources to build a new facility, ball field, etc.).
- Need to meet and exceed expectations of the community.
- Need guidelines/standards.

- Restore what have first, then provide more trails.
- Upgrading majority of city parks.
- Making them more user friendly.
- Efficiently and effectively spending the additional resources the city is planning to put into parks.
- As an old planner by profession, has higher expectations with regard to process and outcomes of plan.
- Mayor, chief of staff, and senior management staff of city should have substantial input into deliverables.
- In mayor's office, want to have evaluation mechanism for every proposal to measure success. A tangible and explicit evaluation protocol is needed to determine if achieving objectives over course of the plan. City typically dedicates 10% to 12% of planning to evaluation. Fort Wayne is the first city in America to use a protocol developed by Motorola and has 70 to 80 people trained in statistical analysis.
- Would like to provide input on evaluation components.
- New skateboard park concept.
- Need or want for ice facility.
- Issue is have to compete with relatively scarce resources of the city.

2) What are the key issues that have been brought forward over the years that need to be addressed in the plan?

- Lack of joint planning between city and county.
- With continued growth of community and

city annexation efforts, a combine city-county park system should be considered to better utilize limited financial resources and overlap of services.

- Limited financial resources received from the state. Need to lobby to receive fair share of tax support.
- Financial resources are available within the community to implement the plan. Money will come with a visionary plan.
- Lack of by-laws for Park Board.
- Equity issues exist in quantity and quality of park amenities in the southeast quadrant of town populated by minorities and economically disadvantaged.
- Lack of coordination in park planning. Parks are not aesthetically pleasing.
- Large parks system with 90+ parks makes hard to pay attention to all parks.
- Lifetime Sports Academy is available for golf, swimming, and tennis for free. Highly successful program with all resources provided by public sector. Would like to see Fort Wayne provide more free recreation programs and lessons through public-private partnerships.
- Improvements and repairs are reactive and complaint driven, not proactive.
- Lack of common vision between the public and private sectors. Inability of community to come to a consensus on anything—not just parks. No organized or cohesive method to address changing economic and social climate.
- Most important issue in community is crime. Best way to address this is to keep people active in the parks. As a

taxpayer, feel building community values through park services is a good use of government resources.

- Safety is both a real and perceived issue. Need to make the parks places that families want to go.
- The Hanna Homestead identified as a small park where drug dealers line up against the fence to make sales. Park not used due to fear of being there.
- McMillen Park used to be a place where you could have a window shot out. Safety has improved since expansion of ice rink.
- Swinney Park is not attractive for casual users, known for unwanted homosexual activity.
- City provided police for additional security while Lifetime Sports Academy took place. No instances of arrest while police are there. Parents have taken pride in the parks because of this.
- Use to have three levels of security. Onsite caretakers, park police, and supervised park playground programs.
- Centrally located parking lots can make it possible for police to trap criminals in parks, but also result in innocent people being trapped in by thugs. Not attractive in integration of park.
- Enormous amount of passive users in parks.
- Park Board is a reactive board. Listens more to staff than the public. Need a larger Park Board. Should be encouraged to build committees. (Philharmonic Board was given as a successful example of good board-staff structure.)

- Park staff perceived as territorial; takes offense to public input.
- Trees removed and not replaced. Reference to cultural landscape plan in number of trees removed from historic parks.
- Maintenance of existing facilities and parkland is a major issue. Every aspect of the park system has been allowed to deteriorate over past three decades.
- Water quality is key issue, but not just with the parks. Lake in park that is drained and never refilled.
- Reluctance within the community to see and use the greenway as an alternative transportation source instead of just a linear park.
- Removal of trees without replacement.
- Need more appeal to teenage population.
- Swinney Park identified as a gay cruising area—reality and not just perception. Driving regular families out of the park.
- Women feel rivergreenway is not particularly safe, and there have been a couple of rapes, although it may only happen every five years.
- Central corridor of greenway has large homeless population living in trees. Adds to perception of safety, although in reality they are probably pretty harmless.
- Graffiti also adding to safety issue (Packard Park, rivergreenways, etc.).
- No budget is allotted specifically to greenways; has to compete with other maintenance issues resulting in its neglect. Would like to see as a standalone budget item for greenways, possibly like gardens in Foster and Swinney Parks.
- Problem is that Department is becoming financially strapped. At one point parks received 30% of the city budget—at a high point of the system.
- Given land that the Department does not want; no resources to maintain or develop.
- The showcase parks are located in the older part of the city. Newer areas either have no parks, undeveloped parks, and/or no connections to the greenway. Need to establish new parks in the growth areas and connect them to downtown by greenways.
- When developing parks, need to look at how park is currently being using so not to drive out existing users. For example, some undeveloped parks are popular with BMX bikers.
- Cultural landscape, recognize interest groups and studies to understand the rich history of Fort Wayne parks. Important to respect the integrity of historic parks while blending with contemporary needs.
- Imperative to involving the public throughout the process. Zoo parking lot situation illustrates need to have public input.
- Need for development of community-wide standards between city and county.
- Pay close attention to physical beauty of parks. Past planning has diminished the way parks look, impacting aesthetics and the natural beauty of parks. Illustrates need for a landscape architect.
- Some parks look functional—which is good, but not as inviting as they could be for the passive user.
- Physical plant issues are the number one complaint; not enough or well-maintained bathrooms.
- Not enough pavilions.
- Proliferation of baseball and softball leagues that overrun the fields. No ability for drop-in use for families/general public. Need to designate some fields for organized leagues and others for drop-in use.
- Need more signage. People get confused as to where things are.
- Complaints of young people are taking over Shoaff and Foster Parks (sex in the park, smoking pot, etc.). Some complaints valid, but probably mostly perception.
- Swinney Park known for gay activity; addressed through legislation.
- Festivals at Headwaters Park diminished ability to use for passive purposes.
- Most complaints received during summer; little complaints in September through April.
- Couple areas in community need more parks: due north (just recently annexed area), northwest (development has grown beyond Hamilton Park). Need to take a look at additional parks in growth areas of city.
- Rivergreenway is a real unused, undeveloped asset. Not a pretty river like San Antonio, but does have nice river flow from downtown to Coliseum area – key place of development even for a couple city blocks for shops, restaurants. Untapped resource.
- Beer not allowed at pavilions, would require change to city ordinances. If the

Department would open up pavilions to beer, would provide revenue opportunities. Receive requests from companies and groups to hold parties, but want beer and wine. Also an issue at the golf courses. (Beer is allowed for special events at Headwaters Park and at the Conservatory.)

- Parks Department can do a good job in improving the quality of life for young people, for example building an extreme park for teens. Currently there is nothing like that for kids in Fort Wayne. Has been talked about but nothing has been done. Louisville is a good example of providing things for young people making it an exciting place to be.
- City as a whole needs to think outside the box as it comes to bringing businesses to the community. Parks and recreation can be a major part of that.
- Staff (excluding the director) have a reluctance when it comes to collaboration. Noticed a little reluctance to collaborate due to territorial issues. Need to educate Parks Department employees that it is not their land, but the community's land.
- Have known last three directors (Bob, Phil, and Diane) and feel all are good quality people; Department is headed in the right direction.
- Kids are different today—have different interests. Have to think outside the box to serve their needs.
- Fort Wayne is a good place to raise a family. Parks needs to provide opportunities for kids and families.
- Often need to interface with parks for utility easements and improvements.

Utilities have the ability to assist parks with greenways, golf courses, etc.

- Some parks have problems with access control (dead-end entrances).
- Swinney Park has gay cruising.
- Fire Department uses parks for training, youth wet-down programs.
- From a safety perspective, if have retention ponds, things on rivers, need to have access for rescues.
- Need barriers to keep people out of dangerous areas.
- Opportunity for combined park/fire station locations—mini parks providing places for kids, exercise space for fighters, multi-use meeting rooms. Arrangement allows firefighters to interact with kids and serve as positive role models.
- A lot of outside factions tug on parks—Park Board, staff, friends, etc. Makes it hard to work with the Department because it will get multiple answers to questions.
- Would like to see the Parks Department focus on programs that encourage people that live in the neighborhood to use the facilities in their local parks.
- Need to create programs that match the needs of the community.
- Historic landscapes have been short-changed, not on purpose but through actions and a lack of listening or understanding.
- Hamilton Park improvements created a cookie-cutter park for sewer improvements. Has created a mess through overcrowding. Property values have dropped. Has been an increase in crime.

Park was designed by engineers and is not an attractive place.

- Need to differentiate between a sports complex (active) versus parks (passive). McMillen Park no longer viewed as a park due to abundance of sports activities.
- Some people are scared to go to Foster Park and McMillen Park due to safety issue perceptions.
- Pool at Swinney Park only open during working hours so adults cannot enjoy it.
- Need for a conservancy group, with its own mission and bylaws. Not an ad-hoc committee of the Board. Park Board would cede some governance to the conservancy on historic park issues. Need to augment the small Park Board with an entity that is committed to conservancy.
- Sometimes it is okay to do expensive things because the parks deserve it.
- Need to examine how Park Board and community groups can work together to get things done on preservation, or create another organization that can get stuff done.
- A primary goal for the Cultural Landscape Committee is to raise the community's consciousness of the outstanding and potentially wonderful parks system. If the community's consciousness can be raised, it will be possible to obtain financial support.
- No organization in place to ensure quality of work, efficient use of dollars is used. Should be role of the parks staff and a new conservancy group.

- Park Board members are transitory, do not have the time or knowledge to be dedicated to parks.
- Size of park board is too small—mandated by state law.
- There are no public hearings or press coverage of Park Board.
- Only one committee for a Park Board of four. Committee is struggling to understand and define role. Can bring in more expertise if form more committees.
- No bylaws for Park Board.
- Should create safety in parks though programs. Playground programs. Place activity in the park that many people can join in on.
- Need to place historic parks on national register—resistance from staff and mayor.
- The Department is a significant player in the city's economic means of attracting visitors to the city, more so than other cities. Has vast land holdings, but also facilities including the children's zoo, which is the number-one tourist attraction, serving 500,000 visitors a year of which half are from out of town, and provides a \$3.2 million economic impact to the city.
- Conservatory is similar operation, serving as an anchor for downtown. Provides opportunities to teach conservation, fauna, etc. Host 70,000 per year, mostly children.
- Headwaters Park offers variety of special events important to tourism.
- Historic fort was recently given to the city. Due to limited financial resources, the city changed it from an interpretive center to a park setting with a monument. There is a longing in the community for a return to some programming and activities. The fort needs a plan. Currently is an image problem for the city that needs to be addressed. Becoming a visitor complaint issue. There was a recommendation to move it to zoo so could be used as interpretive playground in conjunction with another tourist attraction. See as viable alternative from a tourism perspective.
- A lot of day users come to park attractions and then leave (i.e. Headwater, conservatory, zoo-90%). Have had some successes extending visits to zoo with other programs.
- Receive a lot of visitor requests about the rivergreenway. Parts of it are in disrepair. Also trail is perceived to be unsafe due to periodic crimes (attacks, harassments, stolen bikes, etc.), but in reality only happens a couple times a year. This perception needs to be addressed through more lights, police patrols, emergency phones, etc.
- Kraeger Park has become a fabulous site for soccer tournaments. There is a need for sports complex that can be used both by the community and for tournaments that have the potential to provide an economic return through tourism.
- Upkeep of parks. May be getting too many parks for the available resources.
- Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, and Park Department seem to work independently, could work together more.
- No procedures or public notice for changes made in parks.
- No bylaws for Board.
- Identify parking needs and proper location for system and specific parks and how best to address the issue. Parking lots should not be central feature of parks (Franke Park, Lakeside Park).
- Design professional or landscape architect needed on staff to address design needs. Would be met with resistance by staff, need strong person.
- Have lost a lot of amenities in parks due to lack of budget. Design and landscaping elements have made some structures difficult to maintain. Perhaps, with architect on staff, could have been redesigned for ease of maintenance instead of removed altogether.
- Board and foundation don't function in needed role. Not working boards. Respect and vitality for parks needed within organizations.
- Foundation sees its role as caretakers of money rather than critical planning. These entities don't serve as true advocates for the parks. They simply come to meetings and rubber-stamp decisions made by park staff.
- Accessibility to the parks is a key issue. Many parks are split from neighborhoods by major thoroughfares and natural boundaries. Need enhanced pedestrian and bike accessibility, maybe through tunnels, overpasses, etc.
- Leadership is a major issue. Many great grassroots groups that need direction.
- Staff needs to be respectful of community wants and needs.
- Have actively tried to avoid nature preservation. Lindenwood Nature

Preserve was an example. County tried to obtain natural easement, had to go around to Board, which was supportive but staff opposed.

- Buckner Farm Park was an outlying park area given 20 years ago. Recently a developer wanted to put sewer system through park. City was supportive because it wants a kick-back of money.
- Decisions in the city are about money, not what is good for the park.
- No lease between the Zoo Board and Parks Department. No legal relationship, definition or responsibilities. Need legal, binding agreement.
- Need to beautify natural things. Rivers are in poor condition.
- Need to look at growth areas to maintain green space. Look ahead to develop green space and trail connectors.
- Historic, cultural landscape studies have been tremendous step in preserving historic parks. Implementation of historic studies should be part of master plan.
- Tree canopy restoration needs to be part of regular plan.
- Parks need to be safe, have water, and have trash receptacles.
- Use to be rec supervisors in parks.
- Issue of park police seems to be brushed aside. Is there a reason? (Need to have authority, territorialism, elevation to law enforcement status) Explore park rangers, cooperation with police, allotment of police patrols for problem areas.
- Existing community center has never really found its niche—not vibrant or a focal point.
- Need for neighborhood recreation programs like old playground programs. With turnover in housing, younger families have moved back into older neighborhoods. Appropriate in some neighborhoods, but not all.
- Play doesn't have to be organized. Need to provide a place, if people will use it, to provide unstructured but supervised play.
- Planning Department needs to be supportive of aesthetics within the community, especially when the Park Department is asked to create more spaces for politician agendas. Parks needs to play a role in development of standards.
- Need new logo for Parks Department—image issue. Time for a new one.
- Staff perceived as not having the time to take on new initiatives. Resistant to help or input from neighborhood groups.
- Some communities, primarily in the south, seem to be able to do things on a different level than in Fort Wayne. Moved to Fort Wayne because it had a good park system and good reputation at that time. Even as good as it was, it didn't measure up to some of the southern cities.
- Some newer parks are off the beaten track and not as easily accessible and not as used. Krieger Park was cited as an example and was the result of having land given to city. Like parks more like Lakeside.
- Newer parks have poor design, no attention to detail, and therefore are not very aesthetic. Result of not hiring an architect. May cost more in the short run but will set the parks apart. Want facilities that make people say wow. Examples include Lakeside Park obelisk and flowers, reflecting ponds for ice skating, something unusual.
- Need to elevate standards, both in maintenance and capital improvements.
- Need better/more monitoring of parks for maintenance issues. Need to make repairs quickly.
- Blessed with three rivers, have done nothing with them. Facilitate or rent canoes, kayaks and provide more river access. Doesn't make use of river like it should. If Fort Wayne has fumbled the ball, it is on river development.
- Old fort has been an albatross around the city's neck. Take land and lease to some restaurant. Should keep most of the buildings. Provides nice overlook for rivers. Place for canoe rentals, etc.
- Some plans have been too grandiose. Need to have some small projects to kick off and build excitement before can achieve the bigger projects.
- Interaction with Parks Department has been very positive. Staff is good at helping come up with ideas.
- People don't recognize river as a downtown issue.
- Properties owned/controlled by Parks Department not used as well as they could be. Little outlet for food/concession, boat rentals, etc. Control fair amount of area downtown but they are passive. Currently Parks Department will not offer long-term leases of park land for private operations.
- Physical limitations with rivers—not enough water for big boats.

- Maintenance has been a huge issue with shrinking budget.
- Could better utilize botanical garden. Would have more use if charged lower rental rates. Need to encourage, not discourage use.
- Parks are great, but have struggled with money which is a shame.
- Need to keep up with the growth of city. The city has been aggressive with annexation and the expansion of Fort Wayne. The Parks Department hasn't been keeping up with the expansion.
- Live in the northwest part of town. Need parks that provide a place for families to go and socialize, practice sports, a place to take dog with sports complex or open fields. Existing park has education focus.
- Need for more partnerships to encourage active participation in sports by youth and families. Goal should be getting families out to exercise together in a park. Provides opportunity for parks to grow.
- Currently no intramural programs at high school level. Room for wider variety of sports, even if only a one month season.
- Maybe more recreational league sports in non-traditional sports.
- Not a lot of adult leagues for recreational play.
- Park system adds to the quality of life to attract new corporate entities. In all of the deals however, the Chamber has never said the city has a great park system. Still, the Chamber recognizes that parks contribute to the inexpensive, high quality of life.
- Parks system does not do a good job of marketing self.
- People don't understand that the Parks Department is part of the city. Need to promote who they are and how they contribute to the community.
- Most members of the business community remember the two-year controversy over the zoo parking lot.
- Because of the lack of marketing, there is a perception that all services are free. People are surprised that there is a fee, even though nominal. People don't know what they have or how much programs are.
- Chamber started Sports Corporation. Lifetime Sports Academy has benefited by corporate support. Need to continue this program. One of best models, programs, showcases that the parks system has.
- Most people use parks for passive activities.
- Growth of city might necessitate need to make the greenway a trail system throughout community, not just along the river. Trails/bike paths could be used for alternative transportation.
- Need to encourage in writing that should hire qualified architects, designers, etc. when developing master plans for individual parks.
- Nobody is asking to maintain original plan exactly, but not compromise the original goals and intents.
- When push comes to shove, Fort Wayne will come up with funds for restoration of historic parks. Interest groups need to be given the opportunity and invited to the table to help.
- Preserving the architectural and landscape architectural heritage of parks. Avoid homogenization of parks. Lost touch as to how parks were designed, and why—needs to be maintained in plan.
- Have treasure of WPA structures, that need maintenance that was deferred, that individually or collectively deserve to be on the national register.
- Have seen dramatic increase in amount of users in Foster Park—especially passive users (walking, biking, picnicking, playgrounds, etc.), but there is no maintenance and things are deteriorating.
- Need to maintain passive parks, not everything revenue driven.
- Some of primary goals of city pioneers were creating an attractive place to live.
- Efforts lately have resulted in the neglect of historical heritage in pursuit of the dollar.
- Concern with views, building within parks. Avoid direct interface between active and passive users. Need proper maintenance and upkeep.
- Staff needs to be responsive and open to outside input from the public.
- Consultants should review Ball State study of Kessler Plan. Helps explain significance of historical planning efforts made in Fort Wayne.
- Preservation of street trees also important.
- Lack of city and county strategic plan. Lack of smart growth.

- Aesthetics of city is important component, needs to be incorporated into plan.
 - Parks have a lot of old growth forest and trees; need to plan for new growth trees so don't lose the trees in the future.
 - Need to have discussion about what specific goal-directed uses are carried out in parks, such as current plan for skate park, zoo parking lot, to formulate a general policy of how to protect park land.
 - Need for public discussion if going to eliminate one acre of park land.
 - Due to limited time in Fort Wayne, did not feel was in position to answer question.
- 3) Are there political sensitivities that we need to be aware of?**
- Upcoming mayoral election.
 - Tension and turf battles between city and county make combined city-county parks system unlikely.
 - Taxpayers don't know and don't care about duplication in government. There are a few council members who are supportive of a combined system and are talking about it. Need to have taxpayer support for combined system to happen.
 - Plan should not identify with one particular politician or party.
 - Mayor and parks director have opposed designation of historic parks and facilities on the national register.
 - Inordinate amount of territorialism within special interest groups in the community. Sports groups and various special interest groups are protective of their areas.
 - Mayor has given \$5 million to parks, but will be hard to get any additional funds out of the city.
 - Mayor has asked for help from Parks Foundation to lobby for home rule at state legislature. Fort Wayne doesn't have presence like Indianapolis to draw state funds.
 - From the environmental/conservation perspective, expansion of parking lots and sewer systems should not take place in parks.
 - Governance and cooperation between city and county is a problem with greenways; many territorial issues.
 - Merger of city and county park systems is too volatile an issue for consideration, although probably wouldn't be an issue with the public.
 - Would like to see greenway have unified governance, or at least unified standards and consensus between city, county, and within various departments with oversight of the greenway.
 - Insure that public input process is sound, in both development and implementation of the plan. Need to have continual public involvement. Where Fort Wayne has failed as a community in the past is through lack of planning and failing to implement plans that do exist.
 - Currently developing a combined city/county comprehensive plan. There is an existing dialogue to merge planning departments. Would hope a combined park system could be looked at as well. Implementation of merger could be an issue.
 - No major sensitivities. If there is a political sensitivity, it is a renewed interest in the health of the parks system by decision makers.
 - When budget crunches come, parks budget has traditionally been cut, philosophy is being reversed by community leaders as witnessed in support of strategic planning initiative.
 - Parking lot issue at Franke Park sparked formation of citizens groups, Friends of Parks, etc. Foundations threatened to pull funds. Lawsuits were filed to block the parking lot. Was a tough year of political jousting. Park Department was called everything in book. Also impacted zoo directors image since was a zoo issue. Biggest political football in recent history.
 - Competition between special interest groups; charges one group receiving preferential treatment over another.
 - No. Always going to be naysayers.
 - Franke Park parking lot controversy. Not sure if Department simply did not do their homework or if it was just a small group of irritating citizens. Got tired of hearing about it in the press. Parks needs to make sure it is well prepared when making changes to avoid getting another black eye.
 - Different constituents and special interests groups.
 - Mis-steps with park staff with regard to community input. Didn't sufficiently air issues due to lack of good process. Resulted in a lot of negative energy.
 - Resistance to change; conservative nature of community with regard to change.

- Internal politics within Parks Department and Board.
- Need to be sensitive to southeast quadrant of Fort Wayne, which has been short-changed.
- Reports have generated two advocacy groups—challenge will be how do you channel that positive energy.
- Potential problem with advocacy groups is how do you balance their wants against the needs of the entire system.
- City/county issues with turf protection.
- Not aware of any.
- Park Board doesn't always represent the breadth of the community, tend to be political appointments, busy people more than willing to let staff handle everything. Should be a governing board but haven't taken leadership roles. Hopefully plan will be a wakeup call.
- Bring city and county together as far as parks, given lack of dollars. Big sensitivity. City Department needs to demonstrate an ethical commitment to preservation and nature before county would support. County Board members were concerned that merger would be focus of friends group.
- Annexed areas are getting screwed over. Have all the services from county they want. Being brought into city against will, facing 40% increases in taxes. One of their expectations is quality parks and recreation.
- Safety of parks. Activity in some parks makes them undesirable for families. Especially in the evenings.
- Not sure that there are any land mines.
- Election year issues. Biggest one in the state this year, so should receive a lot of attention.
- Have Parks Board, while highly interested and capable, don't have a clear understanding of how to manage the system. Defer to staff. Lack of understanding as to what Fort Wayne has.
- Voices of citizens get lost in the shuffle. Staff selectively filter concerns to the board.
- Need for board qualifications.
- Historically have had a legacy of strong individuals on the Park Board, representing the community. Vision came through the people. Mayor hasn't looked to putting people on Board who speak for the community and work together to create a shared vision. Park Board does not have a focused mission.
- Need for bylaws for Park Board.
- Formally lived quasi-independent. Had kind of leadership that was driven by the community.
- Parks director needs to demand that we have a world-class parks system. Too nice all the time.
- Need to maintain a balance between special interest groups. If given the opportunity to highlight structures and raise money, will do work for them. What they want is to help.
- McMillen Park has WBA pavilion that is no longer aesthetically pleasing due to new siding.
- Fort Wayne restorationist tend to be realist. They understand the realities of limited resources and as such seldom demand exact restorations of historical structures. Don't want to go exact, but instead have designs that are complementary and respectful to existing structures and plans. Current park staff is not capable of doing this. Need to pursue designer that can do so.
- Parks are a form of leisure activity available to all, rich, poor, and middle class. Need to ensure that everyone can afford to enjoy and benefit from them.
- Explore more cooperation between city and county parks. There is very little park space in suburbs. It is convenient that the city is developing and planning for new parks in the growth areas, but need to work with the county and encourage it to build more parks outside the city that can be enjoyed by both county and city residents.
- There are a lot of stakeholders that have a voice that need to be heard in the planning process.
- Election year—important to make sure to hear the mayor's point of view.
- Jump start phase—action plan needs to call for some immediate infusion of projects.
- Supportive of tying future parks and fire stations together.

4) Who are the key partners and stakeholders we need to speak with regarding this project?

Combined with Question 13

5) What are your expectations of communication from the consultant?

Question not asked.

- At appropriate times, would like to see drafts of the plan to provide comment. Doesn't need to be one-on-one; okay to review along with groups of other stakeholders.
- Appreciate inclusion of Pam from Planning and Development on the committee. Helps keep him informed about process.
- Escape traditional consultants role and exceed city's expectations by being innovative and creative.
- Incorporate or include role for wireless technology in Parks Department—mayor has goal for a wireless city.
- Should not be a traditional consulting engagement where all of the boxes are filled.

6) What do you value most about your park and recreation system?

- Green space, fresh air, beauty with nature, provides escape from the pressures of city. Values that should be considered fundamental, not a passing fashion, and incorporated within the new plan.
- Greenways that go from border to border—unique for city this size. Unfortunately kind of ignored by the city.
- Initially Fort Wayne was a leader in greenway development, but falling behind compared to other communities in Indiana and the Great Lakes region.
- Quantity and location of amenities.

- Trail systems.
- Quality and extent of parks system is pretty impressive.
- Variety of opportunities.
- Physical beauty of park system; undeveloped open space; subconscious fact of it just being there.
- Good parks, well spaced, and beautiful.
- Number of parks is very attractive, per capita, location.
- For most part, parks are pretty well maintained.
- Golf courses.
- Availability of green space.
- Civil war enactments in city parks.
- Existing amenities in parks (tennis courts, etc.) are in good shape.
- Rivergreenway system.
- Ability to use parks as corridors for utility service into heavily urbanized area.
- Easily accessible, kept clean, provides a lot of things/activities to do, beautiful places to eat lunch, trees/flowers.
- So many parks in so many areas.
- Fairly easy to create wonderful ball diamond or good soccer fields. Much more difficult to create a wonderful park that evokes a sense of beauty—takes an artistic talent. Have several in the system, need to value those things, but don't screw up the things that we have managed to create over time.
- Each park seems to be reasonably unique, have its own character. Not cookie-cutter parks. Don't have the same thing in every park—and that contributes to

the character of the parks. Not right now, but if things continue the way they are, they will all be identical.

- Sense that parks were created in the first place based on the image and values of the people who created the city and their aspirations. When have a vision like that, when can put forth and maintain it, it is a great thing. Staff has been good at maintenance and keeping parks clean, but does not have public support and financial resources to maintain the vision.
- Established quality that most of the parks have—mature trees, nice landscaping—there are some intrusions, but overall have nice amenities, well distributed, easy to get to.
- Park master planning early in the century resulted in the creation of a network of greenery—boulevards, urban forestry, park strips (grass between sidewalk and street). This collection of green space beyond the parks contributes to the overall aesthetics of the community. Over the years, people have disassociated park strip trees with the Parks Department.
- Original planners envisioned a city living in the park. Integrates itself to the community in its entirety.
- Manmade facilities are of very high quality through philanthropic support and city maintenance. City needs to commit resources to maintain these facilities. City has responsibility to cover operational expenses when donations are made to reach the attraction's full potential.
- Well-maintained parks.
- Availability of parks open to the public.
- Having green space. This is a real quality

- issue for the community, local industry, and manufacturing.
- Value of history. Some pretty significant history in Fort Wayne park system.
- Park programs.
- Having a park within walking distance.
- A lot of nicely situated parks.
- Willingness of new administration to work with Invent Tomorrow.
- Zoo, botanical when had young children. Foster and Lakeside now as drive through.
- Beauty of parks.
- Wide variety of things parks offer including flowers/trees, cross country skiing, disc golf, golf, nature center, zoo, etc.
- Programming does nice job, concentrating on seniors, youth sports, arts, etc.
- Until recently, felt that entire community was well covered by parks. See gaps now in growth area, but due to recent rapid growth.
- Does nice job of providing the facilities.
- Lifetime Sports Academy.
- Open green space in a urban area that can be utilized by citizens of community in any way they like—walk the dog, toss a ball, etc.—despite efforts to shrink and replace the open space.
- New and upgraded pools, such as McMillen Park, have been very popular and kid/family friendly.
- Provides a sense of community pride, sense of place, feeling that Fort Wayne is a city of parks.
- There is a duty, not just obligation, to preserve and extend parks.

- Of priorities that face Fort Wayne, the issue of parks would be in top 10 if not five.
- Citizens place high value in parks system; serves as cultural imprint of people.

7) What are your general perceptions of the quality of the parks you use?

- Have a few great parks (Foster and Lakeside Parks), others that are pretty good, and some that are just awful (neighborhood parks).
- Appears no one cares about neighborhood parks.
- Need to have more personnel in parks to implement programs similar to the old playground programs. Would provide perception of safety, give parents more piece of mind in letting kids use the parks.
- Parks viewed as generally in good shape, having received national recognition.
- Parks seem to be used, although maybe not to the degree they should be.
- Good personnel in place.
- Pretty good system that is not broken; no need to tear apart; just add to it.
- Need for more summer activities and general expansion of recreation programs.
- Parks are mainly neglected. Mow parks but let riverbanks overgrow. (Swinney Park used to have elaborate garden system but non-existent today.)
- Have allowed autos take up more space in the center of parks.
- In large parks, would be nice to have security, or at least someone there for the users—volunteer or whatever.

- Not sure of public perception. Overall not that bad.
- Big system, larger than most cities. Foster Park is outstanding. Neglect noticed in the older parks.
- Graffiti gives perception of gang activity and becomes safety issue.
- Generally the system is pretty good.
- Some issues related to maintenance.
- Overall quality of parks is good.
- Parks are for the most part well maintained.
- Quality of parks is perceived as excellent.
- Witness a very high perception from visitors to Fort Wayne. (Average score of a visitors' survey conducted at the children's zoo was 9 out of 10, when most places get 6.)
- Lakeside rose garden and Foster Park are very popular seasonally.
- Visit Foster Park frequently and think it is a gorgeous, outstanding, well-maintained park.
- All parks may not be as nice, but still good.
- Have roots for really wonderful park system, but not receiving vitality, respect, and community input needs.
- Declining. If valuable, need to maintain it.
- Detail is no longer there like 40 years ago. Due to financial constraints, ease of maintenance. Quality is stable, maintaining at current standards, but not attractive.
- Have a good base to start from. Little tattered around the edges, but don't have a long way to go to get to where we need to be.
- Excellent—especially the zoo.

- Good and improving. Instead of just providing a field, the Parks Department is providing top-quality facilities and maintaining sports facilities well, providing venues for competitive, advanced play. The Parks Department is doing more than just mowing a field.
 - Great. Perception is that there is a sound infrastructure, sufficient leisure water facilities, and good golf courses.
 - No major issue.
 - Quality is excellent; good variety of amenities; quite a bit of open space.
 - Despite the fact of vandalism of facilities, Parks Department does good job of keeping parks in good shape.
 - Generally very high quality, always can be better.
 - Perception is park system is well run and well maintained.
 - Good leadership and volunteer support.
 - Many issues that adversely affect parks not necessarily under control of park management (i.e., unhealthy activities, budget cuts, etc.).
- 8) What areas of maintenance need the most focus? Please provide examples and explain why. (i.e. tree care, turf care, amenity care, infrastructure improvements, landscaping, lack of appropriate amenities, trails, customer services/cleanliness, user behavior, program services)**
- No vista management; need for landscape management. Many parks have potential beauty, which is not capitalized on through proper landscaping.
 - WPA pavilions and structures in Foster and Shoaff Parks have been threatened with demolition. Would be a terrible loss historically and aesthetically. Appears to be a total lack of appreciation for historic components of parks system.
 - Maintenance division has poor time management, prioritization, and coordination for programs and special events.
 - Perception that park maintenance crews not performing work. GPS locators needed on all park trucks so know location of park crews.
 - Vista management needed in Swinney Park. Water and river edges poorly maintained. Unable to see the river due to overgrowth. People don't want to be there because it is simply ugly and not a nice place to be.
 - Removed picnic tables, grills, and garbage cans due to limited budget in all parks. Makes parks less friendly and usable.
 - Parks need to be more user-friendly and attractive.
 - Pond in Swinney Park was drained and never refilled.
 - Quick removal of graffiti.
 - Tree replacement and maintenance.
 - Overgrowth of riverbank; blocks view of river.
 - Spend too much time making parks into a big manicured lawn. Need more natural areas that require less maintenance time. Too much energy spent on parking lots and mowing.
 - Need picnic tables. Old table removed due to vandalism and not replaced.
 - Lack of restroom facilities; if available restrooms are frequently locked up. Especially bad on golf courses, where golfers use the bushes and face arrest for indecent exposure.
 - Things are not maintained in original condition. Examples include pond at Swinney Park that was never refilled, pathways covered with silt and not cleaned up. Need to instill stewardship/ownership within park staff. Appears to be a lack of pride within maintenance staff. Maybe need to establish territories and competition. Job appraisals for maintenance staff should be based on performance.
 - Signage is really poor. Signs with graffiti are either removed and never replaced or allowed to build up so they are not readable.
 - Expressed need for playground programs. Appears have thrown all energy in Franke Park summer program.
 - Do have a lot of programs—one of the Department's strong points. Made reference to quarterly program guides.
 - Receive good customer service when in contact with staff. Experiences included calling in maintenance issues, getting permits, playing at golf course. When people call in maintenance problems, have been respectfully dealt with. Maybe need to advertise ability to call in maintenance issues so more members of the public know about this service.
 - Need proactive tree replacement program.
 - Preventative maintenance schedule should be developed and followed.

Amenity care impacted by deterioration and vandalism.

- Overall think landscaping is good.
- Need to benchmark maintenance issues and model off of best practices.
- Parks are good, but could be much better, especially in terms of beauty and how they are laid out.
- Perception of parks is generally good.
- Need to mow along Dupont Road.
- Some missing signs in parks.
- Overall maintenance is good.
- Removal of graffiti.
- Greenway system is in disrepair at times, paths crumbling, graffiti, weeds, etc.
- Need more positive programs for children. Teach teamwork, interaction with others, do things to attract them to overcome “nothing to do” attitude.
- Playground equipment is getting older, not well maintained.
- Do well with mowing, trash removal, but capital issues (pond in Swinney Park) and large amenities are not taken care of. Solution seems to be if you don’t have the resources, mow it down or remove it.
- Do pretty good job removing graffiti, mowing. Reason they have time for these function is because the larger amenities have been removed because they don’t have the time or resources to repair structures and make them safe.
- Staff is very territorial and doesn’t accept help well.
- Don’t replace trees taken down. Three parks had significantly more trees in the 1920s. Preventative maintenance is a big

issue—funds are not available. Loss of trees and then growth of weed trees and invasive species that disrupt ecology and visual appeal of space are issues.

- Zoo, large downtown buildings, and ice rink seem to have priority over maintenance resources.
- Do mowing well, but what is bad is beyond the mowing. Missing a pond in Swinney Park. An additional small pond is nasty, and with overgrowth on the edges, it is not possible for the public to access.
- Ruined McMillen Park WPA pavilion by putting plastic siding on it for ease of maintenance.
- Staff sometimes too focused on doing things economically, versus doing something aesthetically.
- Problem is that Park Department has not taken care of things, resulting in overgrowth, which makes things not visible, which results in wanting to remove historical items.
- Park system does not have the resources to manage system long term. Need a substantial infusion of capital to make systems more self-sustaining. Lack of maintenance capital is starting to show up in big-ticket items. This is the result of trying to do more with less.
- Not just taking out structures, but the landscape elements too. Removing the things that make the parks attractive in the first place. Results in a substantial loss of audience.
- Some are better kept up than others as far as landscaping, tree care, flowers.

- Flagship parks are very well maintained (i.e. Foster Park).
- Smaller parks not as well maintained.
- Need to design landscaping from the beginning, making it part of the basic long-term plan.
- Monuments, structural elements need to be better maintained.
- Soil erosion around some of the lakes should be addressed.
- Need for trash and water in parks.
- A lot of restrooms are closed, even in summer time.
- Looking at appropriate park use, and providing the appropriate facilities.
- Maintenance facilities not well screened from park. Parks seem to be designed for the convenience of workers, not park users. Poor material selections have been used for maintenance facilities.
- Work on a showcase park. Need to pay attention to the development of vistas.
- Do good job mowing, maintaining shrubbery, flower and trees.
- Need to do a better job maintaining amenities.
- High-visibility places need to have detailed attention. Maintenance is currently not performed at needed levels. For example, apple trees given at bicentennial have not been cared for.
- Landscape and architecture need closer attention.
- Rely on volunteer help from service clubs for maintenance issues.
- No replacement program for trees.

- Pavilions, bathrooms, paths, statues, and other structures are poorly maintained. Many elements have disappeared all together.
 - Pedestrian bridges. Fort Wayne has one of the more elaborate pedestrian bridge systems in Indiana and the Midwest. Bridges have become a deferred maintenance item. If don't maintain, will lose access to portions of parks.
 - Have not maintained parks as they were originally planned. Placed elements as it was convenient, not respectful of integrity of plans.
 - Maintaining view of river, need for open landscape.
 - Not using smart planning currently.
 - Need to have landscape architect on staff.
 - Many of the historical structures that have been removed were in disrepair due to neglect and lack of maintenance. Should be held accountable to maintain existing structures so don't have to tear them down.
 - Removal of restrooms. Lindenwood is often closed.
 - Need to maintain what currently have, not tear anything else down.
 - More planting of new trees; tree replacements.
 - Should not shut down any park, even if unpopular, because it provides valuable open green space within the city. On some parks not being frequently used, in limited areas and only with citizen input, could stop mowing and allow to become nature areas for wildlife.
 - Need to be innovative in focusing on security for parks. Every park should have a plan to maximize security.
 - Not comfortable addressing due to short term in position.
 - Foster Park tennis courts could be better maintained—very low on the priority list.
 - No pressing needs.
 - Provide more resources so they can improve existing facilities and efforts.
- 9) Do you think the current image of the parks helps or hurts the City's image?**
- Total agreement that the parks currently help the image of the city.
 - Overall image of parks helps the city. Especially certain showplace areas including the rose gardens, Lakeside Park, golf courses, greenway, and Foster Park.
 - Parks are a big asset to quality of life in Fort Wayne. Not having mountains, parks really are the only asset.
 - Parks definitely help the image, especially at the gateways (Swinney Park, Memorial Park, Headwaters Park, etc.).
 - Parks help the image of the city.
 - Helps it. Still viewed as a strong positive overall.
 - Certain parks don't help image, but as a whole system is a positive. Swinney Park, when the grass isn't mowed, provides a bad image at a major entrance. People are not flocking to Memorial and Swinney Parks. Overall, the system still has potential.
 - The amenities within the parks give the city a positive image. Amenities are enjoyed by visitors.
 - Absolutely helps it.
 - Parks contribute to a very family-oriented community.
 - Probably helps. With all its problems, probably have a better parks system than other communities of similar size.
 - Haven't done all we can for parks as a community as has been done for the arts.
 - Living on past laurels.
 - Don't think it is helping at this time, status-quo, in decline.
 - Important from an economic stand point, not sure it is fully recognized. A lot more could be done to help the image. Doesn't necessarily hurt the city.
 - Image of parks has dropped in last decade. Have always said Fort Wayne has an outstanding parks system and still would today. Just not at same level as a decade ago.
 - Helps it.
 - There are some issues that detract from the image. The Japanese garden is in disrepair. Have had a reputation of several parks being used as gay hang-outs.
 - Helps. People in region realize that Fort Wayne has good activity parks and zoo.
 - Think it helps the image. Need to do a better job of marketing the positives.
 - Headwaters Park management group created some PR issues, but probably a good way to go with limited resources.
 - Overall it helps the image of the city. If

central city historic parks continue to be under maintained, don't know if it will continue to help.

- At the macro level is positive, looking at the system as a whole. On micro level, looking closely at a single park, it is not so positive.
- Looking from the outside, the quantity of parks is impressive. Can see lack of maintenance, when you look closely, it becomes negative.
- Helps, one of the draws for the city.
- Swinney Park gives a poor image.
- Image of parks is a huge plus for the city. When medical groups are recruiting doctors, one of the first things they do is show off the parks.
- Good image applies to certain parks such as Franke Park, the Zoo, Headwaters Park, Foster Park.
- Helps city enormously – no question.

10) What recreation facilities need the most focus and why?

- Maintenance and upkeep of structures need the most work.
- More picnic pavilions could be used. Need to do better job of maintaining existing structures, especially historic WPA pavilions. Need to also consider the beauty of setting—should be attractive place to go.
- Ice arena in great shape. Concern that proposed sports complex with ice for downtown would hurt McMillen Park ice rink, since would be more conveniently located and attractive.

- More spray playgrounds could be used. Headwaters Park fountain placed in as attractive feature but became a popular place for kids.
- Fishing popular in community; more places needed. Turn Reservoir Park into fishing pond; dredge out pond in Lakeside Park.
- Avoid building facilities as a stop-gap measure. Need to be built through proper planning and looking at the needs of the community as a whole.
- Pathways. Seems the busiest amenities in the parks system are the walking trails at Foster and Shoaff Parks and the golf courses. People want to get out to walk, but there are too few trails within the city.
- Supposed to have 50 miles of pathway per 100,000. Have 18 miles for 200,000.
- Ice facility, especially in northern area of city. Town is fairly attuned to hockey. Figure skating is big with girls, but there is no time available.
- Swimming facilities, especially up north. Lots of private facilities, clubs, but not everyone can afford. Private developments with clubs kind of isolate neighborhoods from the rest of the community.
- Indoor Olympic size pool, beside the one on the south side.
- Need regular sweeping and plowing of greenway. Portions are cleared but not all of it.
- Youth-oriented facilities and programming, including spray pools and aquatic centers. Need to focus on all youth (teens, toddlers, etc.). Keep finger on pulse of changes that will help ensure

that kids will continue to use it—extreme sports parks, etc.

- Additional trail development through coordinated efforts. Widening of several major roads with no sidewalks is a shame.
- Using the river, providing river uses, boat launches, canoes, docks, etc.
- Some parks have a perceived image problem. Some are just not as pretty to look at and never have been.
- State-of-the-art baseball complex. When go to other towns for tournaments, have beautiful baseball complexes. Don't have that here. When moved to Indiana from Charleston, WV, with all its flat land, Fort Wayne would have beautiful complexes, but was disappointed as a newcomer. Also serves as a nice destination/tourist impact.
- Extreme park could also bring in a lot of other people to the community—from small towns, dining, expos from pros, special events.
- Bike trails. Can serve as a destination point.
- Need newer playgrounds.
- Trail system.
- Playgrounds.
- Non-existent entities (Swinney Park needs a pavilion, used to have three).
- Soccer and sports complex for tournaments.
- Plan for historic fort.
- Ball diamonds, soccer fields. Focus on athletic fields.
- Pools and tennis courts are very good.

Have done an excellent job maintaining the three pools. Golf courses are good.

- Softball and baseball field complex—need to be lighted.
- Parks have tended to have little tennis courts at neighborhood parks, but not sufficient with tennis players. Need complexes. Sweeney has them, but not aesthetic. Improve surface of tennis courts.
- Only one full-length golf course, but not sure necessary to expend more with number of existing private courses. Probably under-served municipally, but over-served by private.
- Year-round skating facilities are needed
- Rather see more tennis courts and skating rinks versus golf courses.
- Have plenty of visual attractions in beauty, want more interactive things like a climbing wall.
- Connect trails to existing facilities.
- Lack of concentrated baseball park. Need three or four fields so can target adult league tournaments.
- Need more family recreation centers, not just in lower income areas. A place for kids and/or families to go year round. Potential partnership opportunity with the YMCA.
- Shortage of ice. Need another rink up north off of Dupont Road.
- Restoration of existing historic structures
- Additional pool space is needed, especially on northside.
- Almost all parks (around 90%) need upgraded playgrounds; more child-

friendly modern play structures like then ones showing up all over town.

- Spray columns, like the one in Louisville's Tyler Park, could be scattered around the city to provide places for kids to play and cool off. Should be simple and economical. Doesn't need to be elaborate spray park, but a place where kids can play in the water.
- Try to link parks together with greenway system—beyond river area.
- Bathrooms are the number-one complaint—both lack of facilities and limited facilities being frequently closed.
- Pavilions are closed, but people expect to be open.
- Need to keep facilities open more, or at least post facility hours so public knows when they will be open.
- Need for supervised activities. Something that was loved by parents. Good programs at Hamilton Park, Weisser Park, and McMillen Golf Academy, but need more in different parks.
- Need to shovel snow off sidewalks around parks for walkers and passive users.
- Do pretty good job with trees, manicuring of yards, mowing, flowers, etc.
- Physical plant needs are more important.
- Courts in pretty good shape.
- Need quick removal of fallen limbs. Some appearance issues.

11) 12) How much do you think the city invests on a per capita level for daily park and recreation operational maintenance costs? How much do you think it should invest?

- Participants had no idea other than not enough.
- Park Department is just keeping head above the water on existing maintenance; could increase by a substantial amount and do better.
- Come up with a budget of what they need to properly maintain the parks, not do with what they have. The budget is clearly nowhere near what it should be.
- Need to increase maintenance budget when build new facilities; factor in the operational budget—not just do more with less.
- No idea. Would assume above national average.
- Like past planning efforts of creating unique programs for different parks. McMillen for skating, Foster Park for flowers, Franke Park for zoo, etc. Want to avoid cookie cutter parks that provide everything everywhere.
- Not sure a lot of parks could support additional activities. Could put ice rink in one of the northern parks.
- Pavilions could be a lot more attractive. They're functional, but could look much better.

13) What would you like to change in the park maintenance work area if you could?

- Attention to detail, particularly in high-visibility areas. Speaks to the pride of the community. Weeds and dead planting materials are left unattended at Headwaters Park. Lawton Park sometimes has huge weeds at curbs. Was weeks into spring before flowers were planted at the courthouse
- Crews should be more observant—have means to take care of detail issues but don't do it.
- Task supervisors to walk the parks as quality control measure. Have city employees call in maintenance issues.

14) What other local companies, foundations, not-for-profit groups, etc. do you think it may be appropriate for the city to partner with to increase funds for improving the maintenance quality of parks?

- Have not tapped volunteers (neighborhood associations, users, nearby corporations) as a cost avoidance resource. For example, the riverbank cleanup and street planning were successes. Took special incentive to organize—no initiative by Parks Department.
- Greenways Committee has put up mileage markers on trails, but was not asked by Parks Department to do so.
- Volunteer base will make it easier if Park Department wants to build something new, get it out to volunteers and they will sell it to the community.

- Never has been an encouragement of neighborhood associations to help with maintenance of parks.
- Recreation clubs (bicycle club, hiking club, etc.)
- Foundations have not been thinking of the parks as contributing to the wellness of the community. Committee has been turned down for greenway development.
- No clear ideas of funding sources.
- Corporations that used to do things in city have closed doors or been purchased. Philanthropy isn't there like it use to be.
- There is a core of people that have promoted development of parks. Headwaters Park was spearheaded by Irene Waters and Ian from Lincoln Life.
- Needs to be a new influx of power players in Fort Wayne.
- Fort Wayne leaders have championed many projects (i.e. courthouse), but not parks.
- Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne is developing 13 soccer fields as a community facility—not for school. Considering a swimming facility.
- Developers have approached consortium regarding greenways.
- Need to have internal communication between city departments to prioritize community needs before approaching funding sources. Don't want to compete between various plans such as downtown plan. Need to have the mayor establish the priority.
- Adopt-a-park programs for corporations and neighborhood associations.
- Need to make sure using current allotment of funds efficiently before going after new money.
- TEA-21 grants for trails, etc. Note that will also go after these grants for downtown improvements.
- YMCA desires to do even more together. Perception is that staff is sometimes reluctant to work together due to territorial issues.
- At Solomon Farm, Roots is an outdoor business, would rent cross-country skies. Should develop similar collaborations in other parks so can provide services at no cost to city.
- Park Foundation and Friends of the Parks together bring in a sizable amount of money.
- Foundations have become a major source of funding for everything in community.
- Naming rights for pavilions, building, etc. Shoaff Lake—named after family but there is no sign—needs to be one. Gives families way to leave legacy. Could be used for trails, buildings, pavilions, etc.
- Many council members use their discretionary CEDIT funds to help support park projects. The projects they fund serve as a tangible contribution to community that voters see and appreciate. It is fun to give for parks and it makes you feel good as a councilman.
- Car shows at different parks.
- Not-for-profit groups with special interests.
- Hospital foundations. If can promote exercise, hospitals should be in for that.
- Utilities; can continue to foster relation-

- ship. Hamilton Park detention pool and improvements sited as positive example.
- Need to try and focus on outside organizations (Colts, Pacers, etc.). Need to reach outside local box, look into other agencies that focus on recreation.
 - A lot of large corporations doing business with city have foundations. These foundations could be leveraged to help with programs.
 - Foundations have been substantial supporting element with community issues—blessed with resources.
 - Foundations that deal with historic preservation and nature conservation. Parks hasn't tapped into these sources. This is because the staff seems to view itself as an urban parks system versus an entity responsible for the preservation of natural resources.
 - Friends of the Parks. Organized the Great Canopy Comeback to plant trees in the parks. There are a number of potential partnering opportunities.
 - Leadership Fort Wayne.
 - Neighborhood associations. Need to get them excited. Key is for the city to show that the neighborhood associations will get something back from the city for their assistance.
 - Don't rule out possibility that an individual might pay for high-ticket items. Staff has not developed these resources.
 - Grant writing in recent years is not where it could be. For example, the Department has not tapped into TEA-21 grants to the level it should.
 - Have recently pushed away preservation dollars from DNR.
 - Comments on the random survey to be administered to the entire community as it pertains to the historical elements of the parks system:
 - How important and significant are historical parks to the community? Question to include, but concern is that the community is not educated, may not understand what this means.
 - That the parks are historical is a point of fact. Regardless of opinions expressed by the entire community, they should be protected.
 - Perception of historical preservation is that it implies a freezing of things and has a negative impression.
 - Possible wording for survey would be support for the conservation and protection of historic parks and gardens. Other terminology is preservation of historic structures, protection and restoration of natural resources.
 - People need to physically see what you mean by preservation—show them the park—for people to fully understand. General public will not understand questions about historic preservation, what is meant.
 - Maintenance of pavilions, aesthetics of parks is what the public expects. If ask people how they feel about having gardens taken out of the parks they will tell you.
 - Whole point of historic preservation is not to preserve something historical, but to preserve something that provided pleasure.
 - Do historic features of the park add to the enjoyment of the parks?
 - Would hope that the city council does more than look at just the survey.
 - This group is concerned about the survey and wants to have input on it. Stated you can write a survey question so results support what you want.
 - Avoid term cultural landscaping, person thought was talking about paving.
 - Restoration and rehabilitation are terms used by the committee, not preservation, which refers to keeping the status quo.
 - Sense of place, importance of place—10 years ago each of the larger parks had a more defined sense of place. How important is or was that sense of place?
 - Of the different interests groups, sports groups and those involved in active recreation are usually more organized. Passive/social recreation users are typically less organized and overlooked.
 - Hotel/motel tax is countywide, dedicated to for the next 20 years to the convention center expansion.
 - Current and past directors have been extremely effective at receiving grants from foundations. Foundations include English-Bonner, Community, Foellinger, etc.
 - Need to partner with affluent individuals. Zoo has had success but parks has not attempted. Park Board does not have the connections and is not as powerful as it has been historically.

- Business community.
- Senior citizen groups as volunteers for rose garden, conservatory, etc.
- Women's organizations and groups.
- Key issue is that Parks Department has not asked for help or tapped into the potential for financial or in-kind assistance.
- Companies more than foundations and non-profits. Would think it would be hard to get money from foundations based on personal experience and NFPs have no money.
- Collaborative summertime programs with YMCA and Boys and Girls Club would be good and beneficial. Happy to work on sharing facilities, program offerings, staff, etc.
- Boys and Girls Club is looking for a fourth site and would be receptive to a partnership with the city or use of an existing parks facility if mutually beneficial.
- Park Foundation may be able to take a bigger role, but there was some skepticism about how large a role the group was ready to take.
- Skate park group has found some money, may look at where they received funds.
- Donations in Fort Wayne are primarily foundation driven; companies not as big a factor since not many companies are headquartered in the city.
- Historically private sector has had a huge impact.
- Neighborhood associations have a lot of potential (in-kind, supervisory, adopt-a-park programs).
- Church groups, youth groups, church.
- Schools. Some run after-school program. Was some funding from the Follinger Foundation for partnerships with school, but dried up.
- Friends of the Parks, not just funds but caring input.
- Headwaters Park Alliance is a model for some of the bigger parks. Group established to advocate for the park after the commission went out of business. Contract with Parks Department to oversee funds, planting, management.
- Up and coming businesses: Chocolate place, local restaurants, hospitals, medical industry in general. Hospitals get very turf oriented.
- Attorneys really came through with courthouse preservation.
- Need to figure out how to access funds from attorneys and medical groups – have traditionally been poorest givers.
- Lakeside Park and Sweeney Park have neighborhood association as advocacy parks.
- During the interview, Friends of the Parks were receptive to spearheading the following programs on behalf of the parks:
 - Park Ambassador Program/Community Watch Program: Neighbors have been trained to document problems in parks and inspect playgrounds. Can be done economically, paying usually \$5-10. Need to have a contract in place. Good to partner with neighborhood associations.
 - Workreation: Sweat equity scholarship program.
- Foundations in Fort Wayne have focused so long on social services (which overlap), that they have almost totally ignored capital improvements like parks.
- Existing commercial recreational facilities. Should not be a problem with competing. Roots brings canoes in parks to use as start/stop places.
- YMCA maybe, but may be too much overlap.
- Invent Tomorrow.
- Partner with correctional facilities (day job workers, etc.) to assist with maintenance needs.
- Sports Corp would be supportive in partnering on state-sanctioned tournaments for adult softball, adult soccer, high school soccer, basketball, etc. Willing to go out of the way to work with the Parks Department to draw these events if community has the quality facilities to attract them. Would take in a more proactive role in participant events if would.
- Convention and Visitor Bureau would be supportive in assisting with tournaments.
- Sports Corp has always been centered on partnerships. Has flexibility to respond to needs of the community. Has worked with local colleges, pro teams, local clubs, etc.
- Baseball and hockey clinics with pro teams are possible. Sports Corporation helped to fundraise for lifetime sports academy. Willing to assist on a summer-long sports fundamentals camp. There is a movement for after-school programs, which could be sports clinics.
- Work with local schools, colleges, high

school athletic directors to develop activities for kids, and not just kids on varsity teams. Currently no intramural programs at high school level. Room for wider variety of sports, even if only a one month season. Maybe more recreational league sports in non-traditional sports. Not a lot of adult leagues for recreational play—not just serious players.

- Need to maintain close relationship with Sports Corp to maintain the Lifetime Sports Academy. Critical relationship that needs to be maintained.
- Have done a decent job of grant writing.
- Think that local foundations are pretty tapped. Lilly Foundation may be a viable outside source.
- Private funds and volunteers. Community has filled own needs in spite of the government and lack of a plan.
- Little River Wetlands Project.
- ARCH. Parks Department has formal relationship with ARCH on the heritage trail, which provides content for guide and pays cost above routine maintenance on trail. See flyer. A book is available.
- Have neighborhood interested in reforesting and restoring Swinney Park, and are willing to contribute money. Want opportunity to help. Staff needs to be responsive or open to input.
- In discussions about the community survey, the following issues came forward:
 - Want to make sure that respondents reflect true composition of community, ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged, etc.

- Concern with how questions are asked. Won't get information that there are matching grants.
- Need to make sure historical and preservation interests are properly represented in the survey.
- Conservation and ` preservation preferred term over restoration.
- Friends of the Parks, need to consider the history of parks.
- River Greenway Commission.
- Neighborhood park groups, like at Nebraska and Sweeney Park; form adopt-a-park, police the park programs.
- High schools and other schools could adopt parks near the schools, such as Northside Park, which is used by the high school for tennis.
- See more partnering with local universities and developers.
- Want to see inclusion of universities—especially IPFW but other colleges as well—in planning process.
- Public school system—already use parks for variety of activities.
- Board of Health—had serious West Nile outbreak and had to spray in the parks, created issue of whether safe for students from schools to use parks.

Other comments:

- Appreciate fact that everyone involved in city leadership has bought into the process of reviewing of and planning for the parks system. Many times the parks have been sacrificed in the past when it comes to budget.
- Appreciate that the current mayor has

- made and secured significant public and private pledged amounts for the parks.
- Grew up in community, spent a lot of time in the parks growing up, and thinks parks are important for the development of kids. Parks are especially important for kids of families who can't afford summer lake cottages or trips out of town.

2.2 Public Workshops

Five public workshops were conducted by the consulting team in each of the city's planning areas during September 2003. Meetings were announced through the local news media and all interested citizens were invited to attend. A sixth meeting was held with community and business leaders. The same agenda was used for each workshop to ensure consistency in the topics covered.

A prevailing theme from all of the public workshops was the need to establish standards for the park system. Standards responsive to the growth of the community are needed to identify the appropriate amount of park land by park classification. Design standards that address appropriate uses by park classification, safety issues, handicap accessibility, and pedestrian access are needed. Standards will also ensure that parks provide sufficient passive space for visitors, a common concern among attendees.

The historic parks were a high priority in all of the meetings. There is a strong desire to preserve and celebrate the city's historical and cultural parks through the implementation of the Cultural Landscape

Report. Participants expressed the importance of respecting the original design principles of these parks. There was some interest in placing the historical parks on the National Register of Historic Places. Preserving and utilizing the old fort in downtown was also routinely mentioned.

Consistent requests were made to expand the existing greenway system throughout the city. Participants expressed a need for improved connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and cultural assets in the community.

Ensuring that the Department has sufficient and sustainable funding was a common concern among attendees. Participants acknowledged that inadequate funding has compromised maintenance standards throughout the park system. Several individuals encouraged exploring alternative funding sources, from grants and in-kind services to privatization of the municipal golf courses.

Enhanced partnerships and intergovernmental cooperation were viewed as high priorities to maximize the community's limited resources and prevent duplication of services. Improved planning, if not the outright merger, between the city

and county park systems is desired. Neighborhood associations were identified as untapped partners, especially for the historic and smaller parks.

While participants expressed a strong desire to take better care of existing parks and facilities before expanding the system, several new needs were identified. Top among the needs is acquiring park land in newly annexed areas of the city and proactively purchasing land in future growth areas. New facilities mentioned included a family aquatic center, skate park, fieldhouse, and fitness center. Passive or non-traditional amenities such as benches, shelters, and a chess park were also recommended.

Limited comments were provided regarding the programs provided by the Department, although several attendees perceived the need for increased youth, teen, and senior programming. There appears to be some desire for directed youth programs or supervision in the neighborhood or smaller parks, similar to the old playground programs. Volunteers were identified as a potential source for providing this service.

Safety and vandalism were routinely cited as an issue by participants. Requests were made for increased lighting and/or the

placement of emergency call boxes in secluded areas, especially along the greenway. Design standards that provide for appropriate amenities and improved access are needed to deter undesired behavior in parks.

Other issues brought up by participants during the public workshops included:

- Marketing efforts need to be enhanced to better inform the public about parks, facilities, and programs.
- The rivers need to be better utilized as a community resource by providing improved access.
- Parks bisected by major roadways or landmarks need pedestrian crossings to increase ease of use and user safety.
- Underused parks need to be reviewed with appropriate changes made to increase usage. The Department could consider selling or donating park properties with minimal public benefit.
- A natural resource management plan needs to be developed for each park.
- A comprehensive tree replacement program needs to be implemented to protect the vitality of the urban forest.



Appendix 3: Demographic and Growth Trend Analysis

3.1 Demographic Overview

An element of the needs assessment for the Fort Wayne Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the demographic analysis of Fort Wayne and Allen County.

The demographic overview of Fort Wayne includes historical population data; population projections; and information on age, gender, education, race, and household income. The review and analysis of historical demographic data—and the population projections for this plan’s timeframe (through 2012)—will influence the following aspects of the master plan:

- Recommendations for program development
- Size and type of recreation and park facilities
- Distribution of resources throughout the city

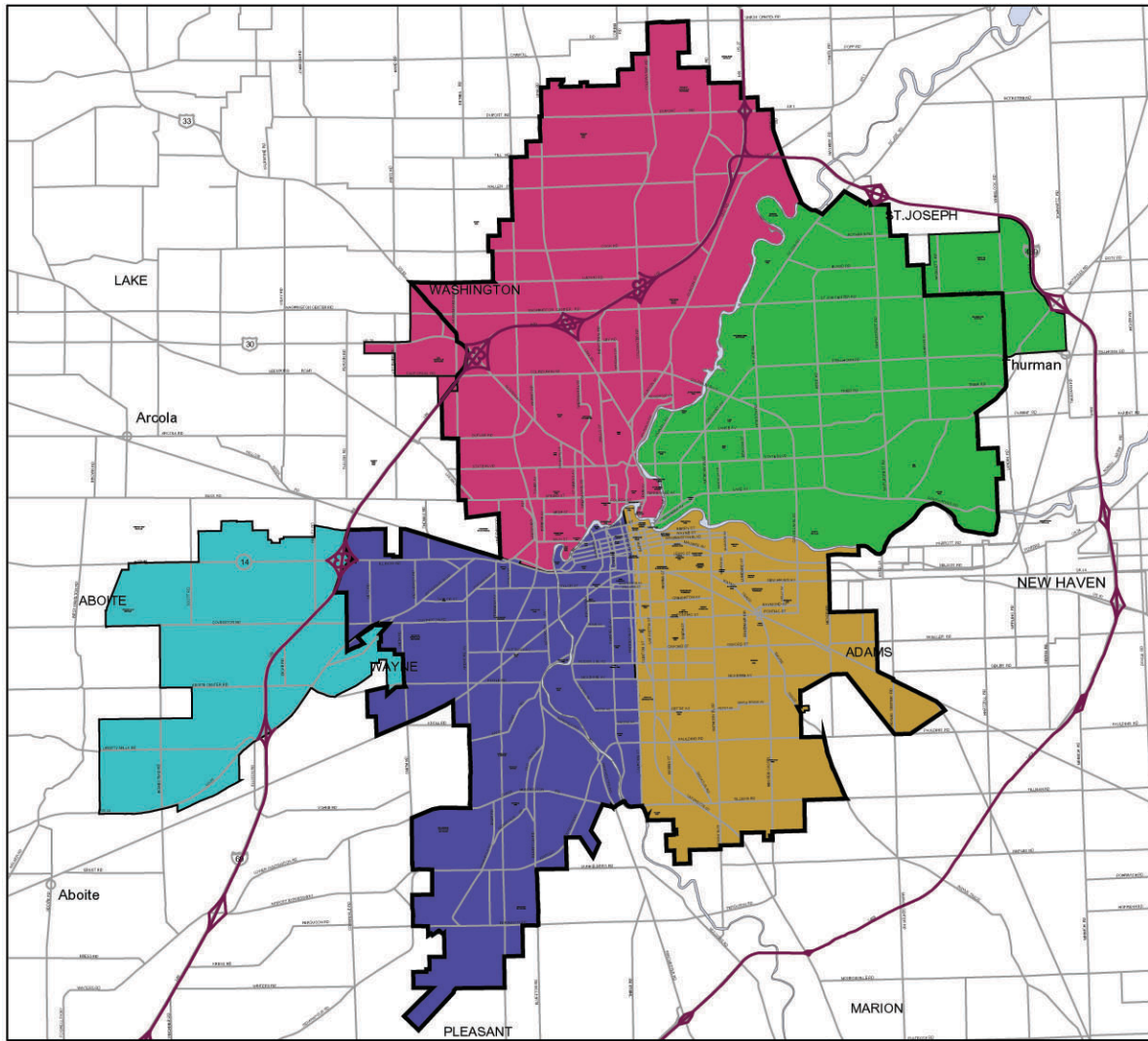
This overview also includes data on the local economy, growth trends, land use, and transportation as they relate to recreation and parks.

The demographic analysis for the master plan is based on the five planning districts in the City of Fort Wayne. The Fort Wayne Planning Department had been utilizing four planning districts to provide boundaries for researching demographic information and establishing planning policies. Because of recent annexation, the city’s municipal boundary has expanded significantly, resulting in a fifth planning district west of I-69. Planning district boundaries are based on natural features such as the St. Joseph and Maumee Rivers and major arterials such as Calhoun Street. Planning districts will be referred to as the Northwest Planning District, Northeast Planning District, Southwest Planning District, Southeast Planning District, and Aboite Planning District. The planning districts are illustrated in Figure A3-1.

Population

Historically, the rate of population growth in Fort Wayne has varied dramatically. In the 1950s, the city’s growth rate exceeded 26%. The growth rate decreased to around 20% in the 1960s (20% is still very high). The growth rate continued to decline in the 1970s, and the population increased a more manageable 8%. Much of the city’s population growth in recent years has been related to annexation. The spatial distribution of growth in Fort Wayne and Allen County over the past three decades has varied. Although there has been overall population growth in the city, there are areas that have experienced a decrease in population in recent decades. Population decreases have primarily been in the central portion of the city; however from 1970 to 1990, the southeast portion of Allen County experienced a small drop in population.

In 1990, the population of Fort Wayne was 173,072. Allen County’s population increased



Legend

- Fort Wayne
- Rivers
- Freeway

Planning Districts

- Northwest
- Northeast
- Southeast
- Southwest
- Alboite



**PLANNING DISTRICTS
FIGURE A3-1**

to 300,836 in 1990. By 2000, Fort Wayne's population increased to 205,727, and Allen County's population increased to 331,849. The population within the five planning districts in 2000 was 250,007 residents. The population in the city increased at a more rapid rate than it did for the entire county; however, much of the population increase was the result of annexation. Population shifts have occurred within the city during the last decade. While there was an overall population increase of 19% in the city, the population increases of the planning districts varied.

The Aboite Planning District had the greatest percentage increase in population, though its population is the smallest of the five districts. The Northeast Planning District had the largest population in 2000 while the Northwest Planning District experienced the largest percentage increase during the 1990s. The Southwest and Southeast Planning Districts experienced decreases in population in the 1990s. Table A3-1 summarizes the population of Fort Wayne and Allen County.

Figures A3-2 and A3-3 illustrate the spatial distribution of population change in Fort Wayne and Allen County over the past two decades.

The City of Fort Wayne Planning Department calculated population projections for each of the planning districts for the years 2005 and 2010 (see Table A3-1). Population projections show a continued increase in population in the Northwest, Northeast, and Aboite Planning Districts; however, the rate of population increase for the Northwest and Aboite Planning Districts will slow through the year 2010. The rate of population increase in the Northeast Planning District is projected to remain constant over the next few years. The Southwest and Southeast Planning Districts will continue to lose population, but the rate of population decrease will slow. The primary sources of demographic data used to develop this report were recently released data from the U.S. Census Bureau and from the Fort Wayne Planning Department.

Table A3-1: Planning District Population Estimates

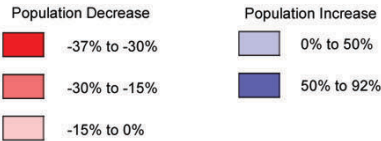
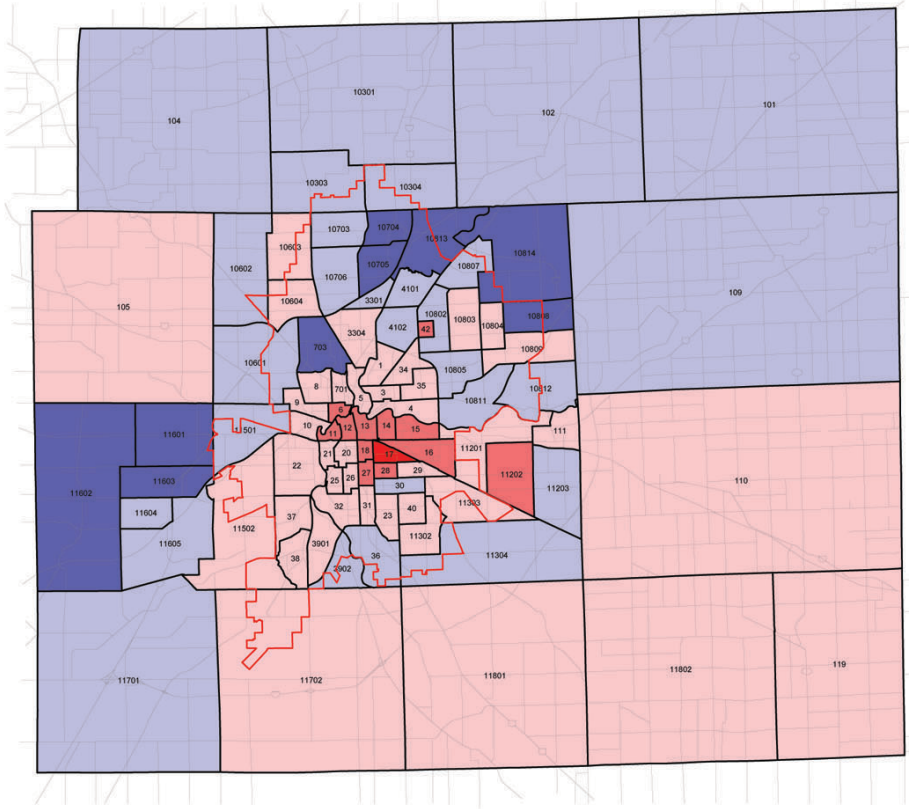
	1990	2000	Percent Change 1990-2000	2005	2010	Percent Change 2000-2010
City of Fort Wayne	173,072	205,727	19 %	—	—	—
Northwest PD	49,635	57,891	17 %	61,891	64,891	12 %
Northeast PD	68,241	72,065	6 %	74,082	76,157	6 %
Southwest PD	45,902	45,079	(2 %)	44,673	44,673	(1 %)
Southeast PD	52,643	49,878	(5 %)	48,581	47,950	(4%)
Aboite PD	17,324	25,094	45 %	26,994	28,894	15 %
Total for PDs	233,745	250,007	7 %	256,221	262,565	5 %
Allen County	300,836	331,849	10 %	NA	NA	NA

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, City of Fort Wayne Planning Department, 2003

Age and Gender

Because different age groups have different needs, the age distribution of city residents is an important element to consider when planning for services and amenities. Additional trends related to the aging population are evident. One trend is that longevity rates are not equal for men and women—women tend to live longer and have a lower mortality rate than men. The 1990 U.S. Census reported that gender distributions in Fort Wayne and Allen County were consistent with nationwide trends. Both the city and county reported population distribution as 52% female and 48% male. In 2000, the gender distribution was essentially the same as 1990. For 2000, this ratio of female to male is consistent through the age of 65. From the age of 65, the

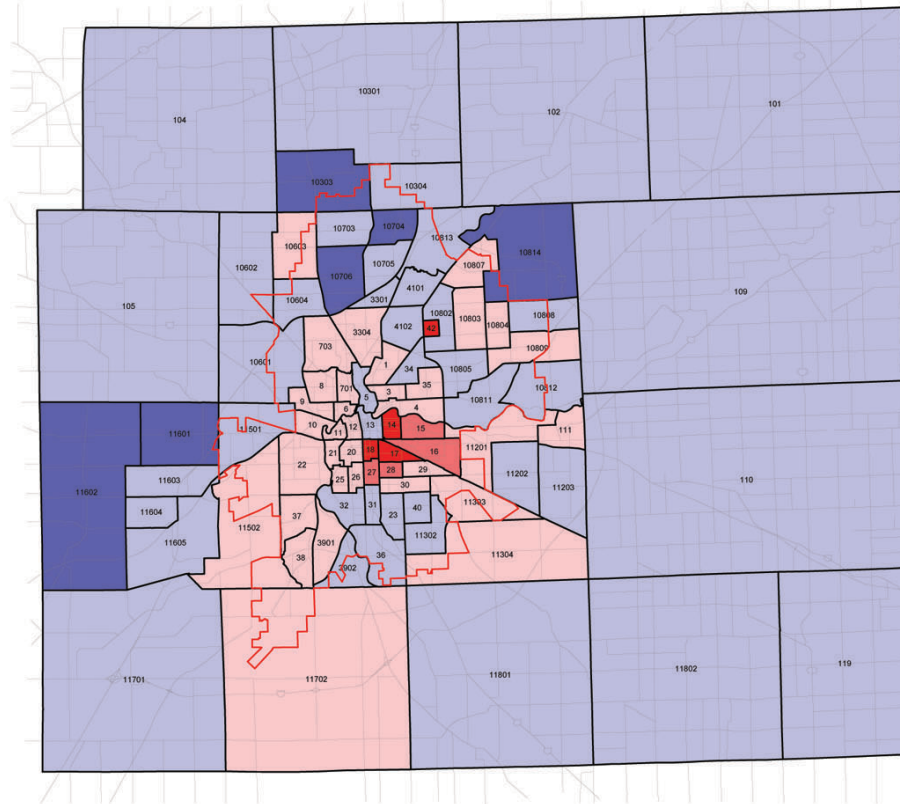
Allen County Census Tract Population Change 1980-1990



Prepared by the Fort Wayne Planning/GIS Department

FIGURE A3-2

Allen County Census Tract Population Change 1990-2000



Prepared by the Fort Wayne Planning/GIS Department

FIGURE A3-3

percentage of females increases to 62% while the percent of males decreases to 38% in the city. In Allen County, females account for 60% and males account for 40% of the senior population 65 and older. This gender distribution trend is anticipated to continue into the future.

To identify concentrations of elderly and youth within the city, specific age breakdowns were analyzed for the planning districts. The U.S. Census Bureau has divided age cohorts differently over the years so comparisons are difficult. For this plan, the ages of city and county residents are further refined to allow analysis of youth, teens, and seniors. Utilizing U.S. Census Bureau data for 2000, youth are ages 0 to 9, teens are 10 to 19, and seniors are 65 and older.

In the year 2000, there were more males in both the youth and teen category throughout the city. However, for the senior category, the trend reverses—there are significantly more senior females than males throughout the city. According to 2000 data, the greatest number of seniors and youth are located in the Northeast Planning District. Table A3-2 summarizes age and gender information.

Table A3-2: Age/Gender Summary for the Year 2000

	Years 0-9	Years 10-19	Years 65+
Fort Wayne			
Male	19,752	18,499	11,616
Female	18,870	17,854	18,151
Total	38,622	36,353	29,767
Northwest PD			
Male	4,410	3,948	2,608
Female	4,187	3,733	4,216
Total	8,597	7,681	6,824
Northeast PD			
Male	5,217	5,119	3,996
Female	4,952	4,965	6,247
Total	10,169	10,084	10,243
Southwest PD			
Male	3,366	2,408	1,927
Female	3,308	3,010	3,460
Total	6,674	5,418	5,387
Southeast PD			
Male	4,834	4,310	1,832
Female	4,590	4,235	2,885
Total	9,424	8,545	4,717
Aboite PD			
Male	1,925	1,998	1,062
Female	1,344	1,913	1,344
Total	3,269	3,911	2,406

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; City of Fort Wayne Planning Department, 2003

Educational Attainment

Based on the 1990 population of persons over age 25 for the city, 77% received at least a high school diploma (83,741 persons). Approximately 16% of these persons have completed some post-high school education. Educational attainment in the county was slightly higher in 1990: approximately 81% of county residents received at least a high school diploma and 19% had completed a bachelor's degree. By 2000, 83% of city residents had completed high school and approximately 19% had completed at least a bachelor's degree. Educational attainment in the county had a similar increase with approximately 86% with a high school degree and approximately 23% with at least a bachelor's degree.

Race

The city and county's population is becoming more ethnically and racially diverse. This trend was expected as African/American and Hispanic populations grow at a slightly more rapid pace than the white population because of higher birth and immigration rates. This is consistent with national trends.

In 1990, 80% of the city's population was white. The second largest racial component was the African/American population (17%). The Hispanic population was 3% and the Asian population accounted for about 1% of the city's population. In 1990, Allen County's population was 88% white, 1% African/American, and 2% Hispanic. Asians accounted for less than 1% of the county's population.

By the year 2000, the population of both the city and county had diversified to a greater extent. The percentage of white residents declined to about 77% while the African/American population increased slightly to approximately 19%. The Hispanic population also increased during the 1990s to about 6%. The county's white population decreased to 85% while the county's African/American population increased to 12%. Hispanic populations also increased in the 1990s to 4%. Although the Asian and other ethnic populations increased slightly in the 1990s, the total population is still a very small percentage of the overall population.

The minority population in Fort Wayne has historically been located in the central

portion of the city. The largest minority population is currently in the Southeast Planning District. This district has the greatest numbers of African/American and Hispanic residents and is the only planning district where the minority population is larger than the white population. The planning district with the largest percentage increase in minority population during the 1990s was Aboite Planning District; however, the number of minority residents in 1990 was so low that a small increase in total minority residents accounted for a large percentage increase. The largest percentage increase in minority residents has been the Hispanic population. Growth of the Hispanic community mirrors the spatial distribution of the overall minority population in the city. Table A3-3 summarizes race information.

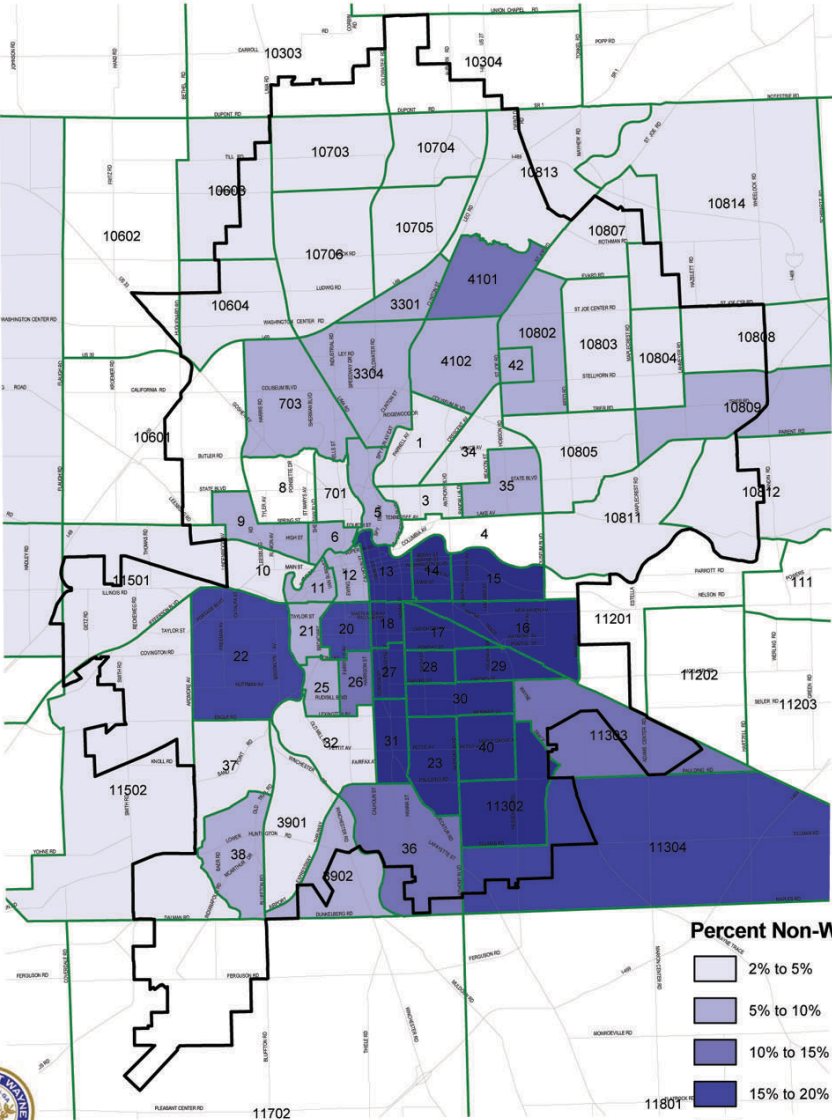
Figures A3-4 and A3-5 illustrate the change in total minority populations in the city over the past two decades. Figures A3-4 and A3-5 illustrate the increases in the Hispanic population over the past two decades.

Table A3-3: Summary of Race in the City of Fort Wayne, 1990-2000

	1990	2000	Percent Change
Fort Wayne			
White	139,244	155,231	12 %
African/American	28,989	35,752	23 %
Hispanic	4,679	11,884	154 %
Northwest PD			
White	47,324	52,411	11 %
African/American	1,161	1,983	71 %
Hispanic	736	2,178	196 %
Northeast PD			
White	65,107	65,941	1 %
African/American	1,877	2,974	58 %
Hispanic	770	1,684	119 %
Southwest PD			
White	41,997	37,563	(11 %)
African/American	2,272	3,648	61 %
Hispanic	1,372	3,626	164 %
Southeast PD			
White	26,636	17,368	(35 %)
African/American	24,218	27,566	14 %
Hispanic	1,974	4,694	138 %
Aboite PD			
White	16,946	23,477	39 %
African/American	141	513	264 %
Hispanic	186	534	187 %

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; Fort Wayne Planning Department, 2003

City of Fort Wayne 1990 Minority Population



Prepared by the Fort Wayne Planning/GIS Department

FIGURE A3-4

City of Fort Wayne 2000 Minority Population

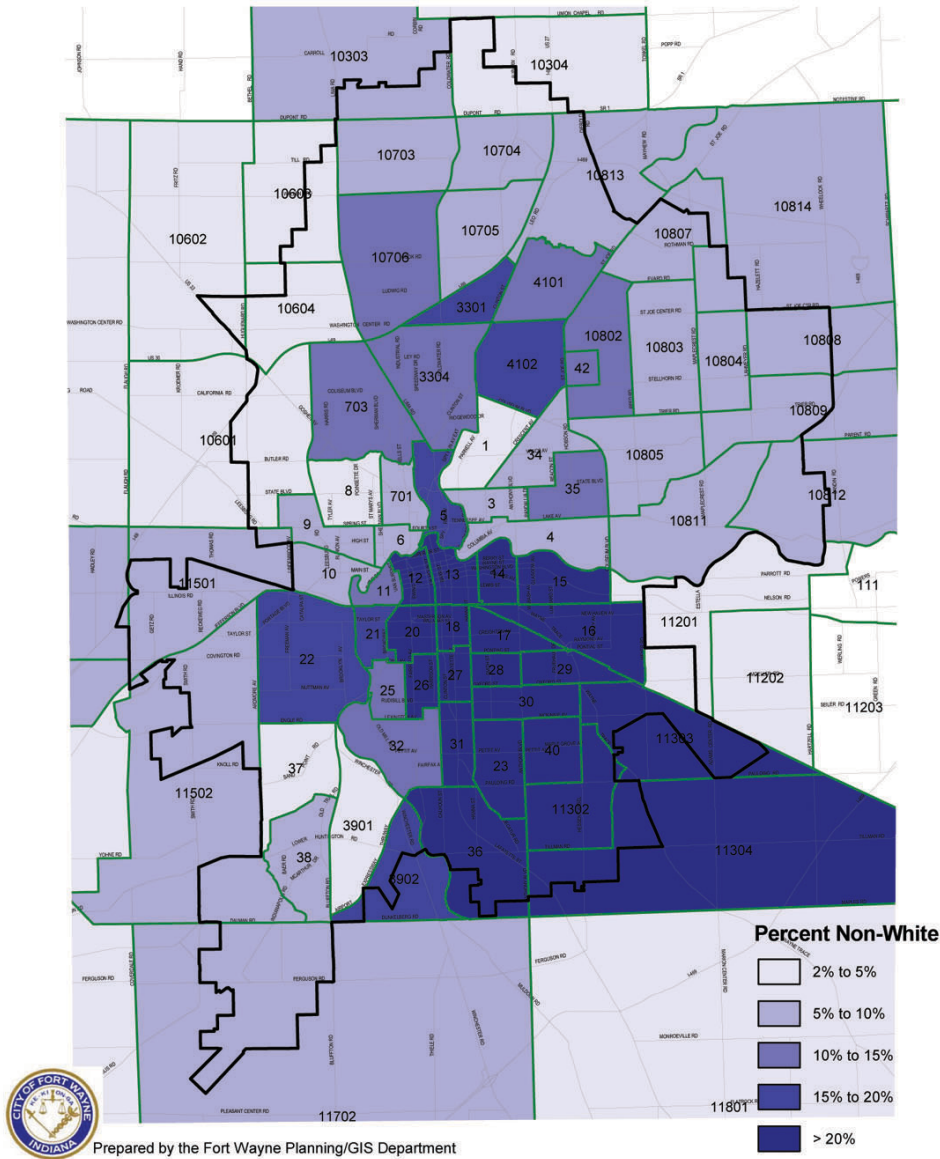


FIGURE A3-5

Households/Household Income

There were a total of 108,601 housing units in Fort Wayne in 2000. The Northeast Planning District has the most housing units in the city, and Aboite Planning District had the fewest. Most of the housing units were occupied, and most were owner-occupied. Table A3-4 summarizes housing data in Fort Wayne.

In 1990, there were a total of 69,627 households in Fort Wayne. By 2000, the number of households increased to 83,333. The number of households grew 14% in Allen County from 1990 to 2000. Although the number of households increased, the average number of persons in each household declined. The number of persons per household in Fort Wayne declined slightly from 2.43 in 1990 to 2.41 by 2000. The number of person per household in the five planning districts was 2.50 in 2000. The decline in Allen County was from 2.61 in 1990 to 2.53 by 2000.

Median household income increased in both Fort Wayne and Allen County between 1990 and 2000. Median income increased to \$36,518 in Fort Wayne and \$42,671 in Allen County. Although Allen County has a higher median income, residents in Fort Wayne did realize a larger percentage increase over the decade. The median family income in the city for 2000 was \$45,040; however, there are areas within the community where incomes are lower and city residents are living below the poverty line. Table A3-5 summarizes household income information.

Table A3-4: Housing data

	Housing Units	Occupied	Vacant	Owner Occupied	Renter Occupied
Fort Wayne	108,601	99,983	8,618	65,725	34,258
Northwest PD	25,489	23,840	1,648	15,914	7,927
Northeast PD	30,527	28,994	1,533	20,661	8,333
Southwest PD	21,263	19,148	2,115	11,038	8,110
Southeast PD	21,450	18,639	2,811	9,939	8,700
Aboite PD	9,872	9,362	510	8,173	1,189

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; City of Fort Wayne Planning Department, 2003

Table A3-5: Household Income in the Year 2000

	Number of Households Income	Average Household Poverty Line	Percent of Residents With Income Below
Fort Wayne	83,333		
Northwest PD	23,768	\$50,186	9%
Northeast PD	29,000	\$56,317	5%
Southwest PD	19,058	\$43,176	13%
Southeast PD	18,478	\$35,553	22%
Aboite PD	9,393	\$92,683	2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, City of Fort Wayne Planning Department, 2003

In 2000, there were 4,885 families in Fort Wayne living below the poverty line. This represents almost 10% of the total number of families in the city. Of the families below the poverty line, 3,187 are families without fathers. The Southeast Planning District has the highest number of households headed by single females with children.

Economic Overview

The City of Fort Wayne and Allen County economy is home to companies such as General Motors Truck and Bus Group and the Parkview Health System. Health services, educational institutions, and manufacturing companies create a high percentage of jobs for local residents. Table A3-6 summarizes the diversity of the city's economy. The city's annual unemployment rate for 2002 was 5.1%. The most recent monthly unemployment rate was December 2002. The unemployment rate for the city in December 2002 was 4.9%, which was slightly higher than the county's 4.8%. Attracting and retaining quality employees is a critical component of the region's economic development efforts. With unemployment rates dropping, competition for workers becomes stronger and may require more recruiting efforts outside the region. Although many factors affect a person's decision to relocate or to stay in a community, quality of life and recreation opportunities are important factors in their decision-making process.

Greenway/Making Connections

Land use and demographic information provide the foundation for identifying a community's transportation needs. Different

Table A3-6: Summary of Fort Wayne Employers

Industry	Number of Workers	Percent of Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing/hunting, mining	192	<1%
Construction	5,559	5.5%
Manufacturing	21,368	21.2%
Wholesale trade	4,254	4.2%
Retail trade	12,897	12.8%
Transportation and warehousing, utilities	4,655	4.6%
Information	2,765	2.7%
Finance, insurance, real estate	7,137	7.1%
Professional, scientific, management	6,637	6.6%
Educational, health, social services	19,681	19.5%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, hospitality	8,096	8.0%
Other services	5,050	5.0%
Public administration	2,386	2.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

land uses create a wide range of traffic impacts, and transportation improvements have a direct effect on development. Without a rational and efficient transportation system, road congestion would increase and the quality of life for residents and businesses in the Fort Wayne metropolitan area would be degraded.

The spine of the regional transportation system is Interstate 69, which connects Fort Wayne with Indianapolis and extends into Michigan. A bypass (I-469) was constructed around the east side of the city and provides linkages to U.S. highways south and east of the city. The city roadway system radiates

out from downtown with arterial roadways bearing the brunt of the traffic volumes.





FORT WAYNE PARKS AND RECREATION

Washington and Jefferson Boulevards are major east-west roads and Lafayette and Clinton Streets are major north-south roads.

The 2025 Transportation Plan—which was prepared by the Northeastern Indiana Regional Coordinating Council (NIRCC) for the Fort Wayne-New Haven-Allen County Metropolitan Area—identifies the transportation system and improvements for the region. There is minimal new construction slated for the next two decades; however, a number of road widening and improvement projects are scheduled for I-69 and other roads, primarily in the northern portion of the metro area.



The plan also addresses pedestrian circulation and transit services. The Citilink transit system provides mass transit services primarily in the urban areas of Fort Wayne. The system links residential areas with employment centers, including downtown, commercial centers, and industrial areas. Residential growth areas to the north, northeast, and west and industrial/business development in the vicinity of the airport will eventually be added to the expanded Citilink system. Many community and regional parks are located on the Citilink system, but others such as Shoaff Park and Memorial Park are not. There are currently no bike routes or bike lanes on city roadways.

The river greenway system in Fort Wayne has expanded to approximately 15 miles of linear trails along the St. Mary's, St. Joseph, and Maumee Rivers. The original river greenway plan was completed in 1984 and proposed a greenway system that meanders along the three rivers and extends out through the county to eventually reach regional greenway systems. The river greenway plan was based on a greenway corridor system that was intended to protect riparian habitat along the rivers, enhance economic and social activities in downtown, and increase outdoor recreational opportunities.

The current greenway system provides direct connections to numerous parks along the city's rivers. Greenway trails extend from Tillman Park to the south, to Johnny Appleseed Park to the north, and east to Kreager Park. The trail system meanders along the three rivers to connect Swinney Park, Guldin Park, Headwaters Park, Lawton

Park, and Lakeside Park. Access to the trail system is provided at trailheads in these parks. Additional trail access is located at bridges and street crossings. More details about the river greenway system can be found in the river greenway plan and at the river greenway website.

According to the 2025 Transportation Plan, the city's river greenway system is scheduled for expansion. The expansion will provide access north to Shoaff Park, east to Havenhurst Park and Moser Park in New Haven, and southwest to Allen County's Fox Island Park.

Access to parks and recreation facilities is another important factor in the success of park and facility usage. As the city continues to grow, the transportation system needs to reflect that growth and provide multiple forms of access to places of employment, shopping, and recreation. Access to these destinations should not be exclusive to each.

Transportation planning in the region reflects the needs of residents by identifying multi-modal options for residents. The citywide pedestrian system is planned for expansion and many parks are currently on the city bus system. Enhancing the pedestrian system would help to maximize opportunities for all city residents to improve their health and experience recreation programs and parks throughout the city.

3.2 Growth Trends

The City of Fort Wayne has grown dramatically since the middle 1800s. Growth has varied, but the city has consistently

annexed property. With the exception of the 1930 to 1950 era, growth has occurred at a rapidly increasing rate. Historically, growth has generally been concentric around the center of the city. Annexations in recent years have been focused to the north and northeast. The period from 1990 to 2009 will see the most extensive annexations in the city's history. Most of the growth will likely continue to be to the north, northeast, and west. By 2009, the city will encompass 68,000 acres (107 square miles) of land. Figure A3-6 illustrates the future annexation areas as well as the growth trends for the City of Fort Wayne.

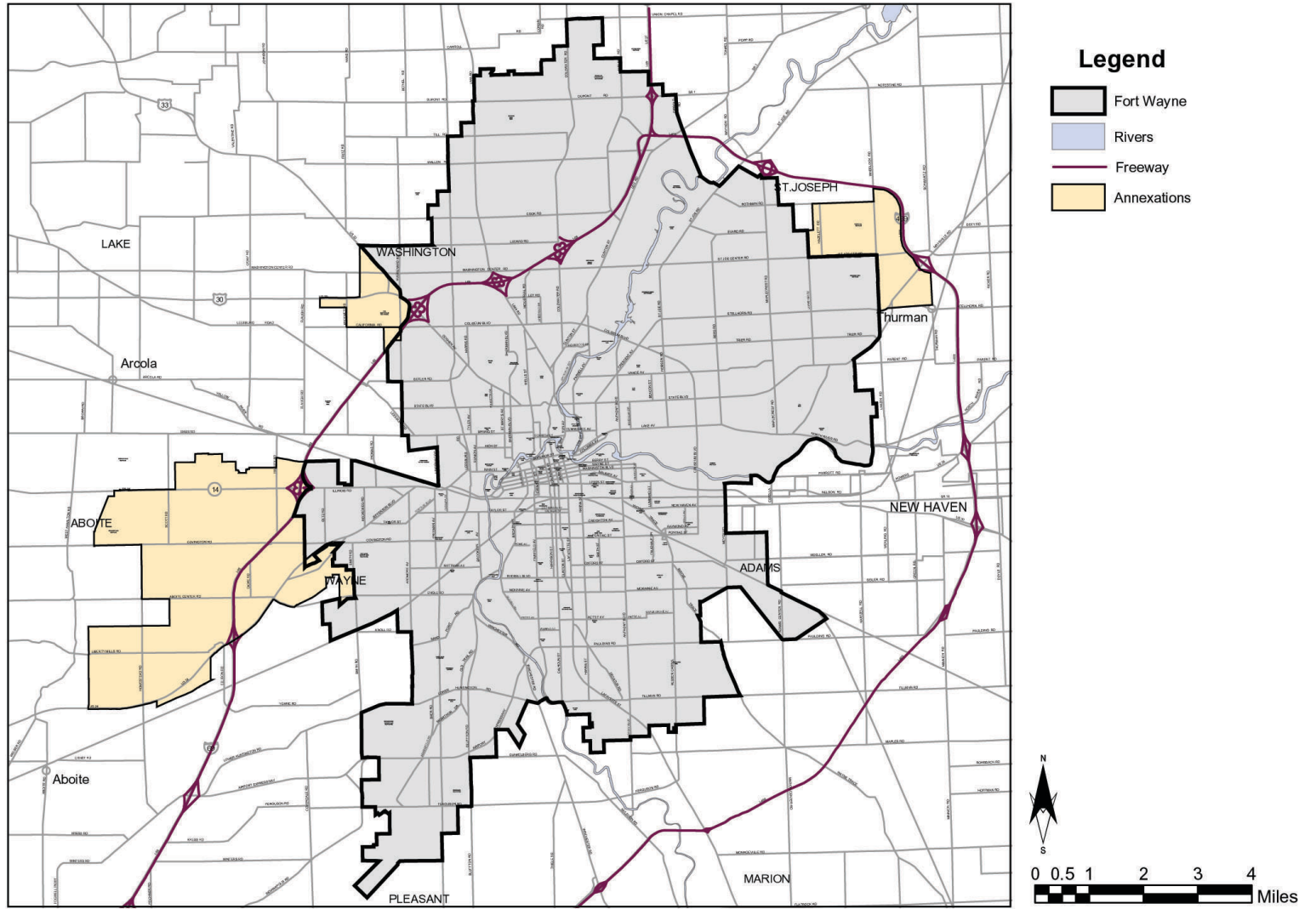
The most recent (2002) existing city land use map is illustrated in Figure A3-7. The development pattern is typical of most cities across the country. The commercial center of Fort Wayne dominates the older urban area. Radiating out from downtown is a heterogeneous mix of land uses. Further away from downtown, the land uses become more homogenous, with larger land parcels being utilized for college campuses, large industrial businesses, residential neighborhoods, and community or regional parks.

The existing land use categorization of parks/open space in the land use summary tables is not a specific calculation of the Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department properties. This categorization does include

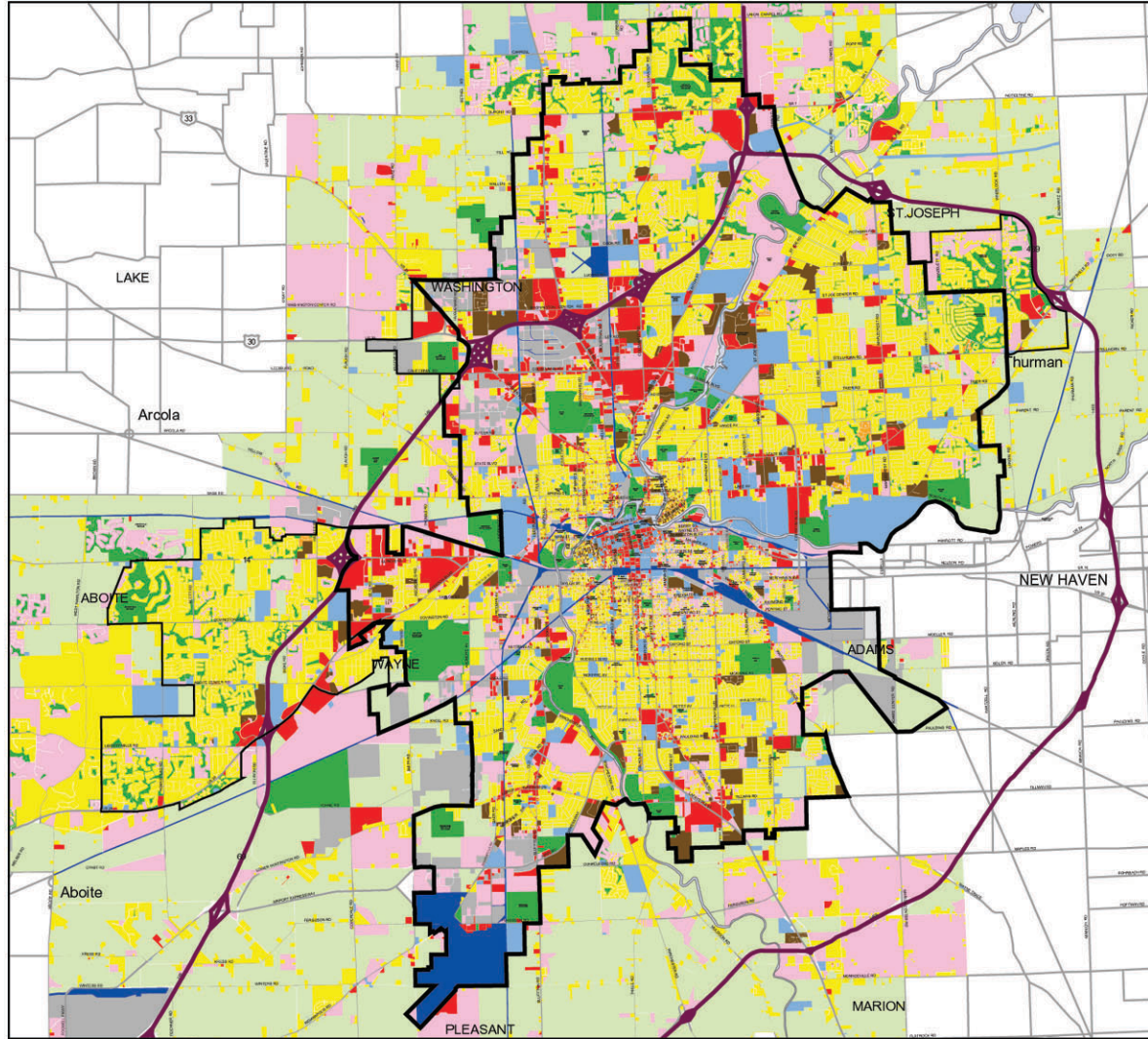
city parks, but also includes undeveloped land within the city. A more accurate listing of city parks in each of the planning districts is provided in the park acreage tables.

The city's current land use plan was adopted in January 1987. City officials have determined that the Fort Wayne and Allen County land use plans were in need of an update. The planning process is underway and the update will be completed in 2004.















Actual park acreage in the Northwest Planning District is summarized in Table A3-8. There are almost 1,000 acres of park land in the Northwest Planning District. Most of the

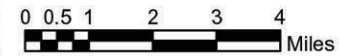


**CITY OF FORT WAYNE WITH ANNEXATIONS
FIGURE A3-6**



Legend

-  Fort Wayne
-  Rivers
-  Freeway
-  Annexations
-  Agriculture
-  Parks/Open Space
-  Single Family Residential
-  Duplex-Family Residential
-  Multi-Family Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Institutional
-  Transportation
-  Vacant/Undeveloped



**EXISTING LAND USE
 FIGURE A3-7**

Northwest Planning District

A mix of land uses anchored by large commercial and industrial facilities characterizes the Northwest Planning District. This planning district has had a large population increase during the 1990s (17%). Although the planning district has a growing population, it has a low percentage of parks/open space. Parks and open space only account for 6.9% of the acreage in the Northwest Planning District. Table A3-7 summarizes land use in this planning district.

Table A3-7: Summary of Land Use Acreage in Northwest Planning District

Type Use	Acres of Use	% of Total Area
Commercial	2208.53	11.27%
Government	161.48	0.82%
Utilities	220.38	1.12%
Schools	464.10	2.37%
Medical	0.00	0.00%
Church/cemetery	366.66	1.87%
Non-profit	80.42	0.41%
Agriculture	972.97	4.97%
Single-family	5483.76	27.99%
Two-family	88.75	0.45%
Multi-family	717.95	3.66%
Industrial	1594.53	8.14%
Parks/open space	1356.59**	6.92%
Transportation	301.82	1.54%
Vacant/undeveloped land	2688.85	13.72%
TOTAL ACRES	19592.60	

*Total includes right-of-way

**Includes open space in planned residential neighborhoods

Source: City of Fort Wayne Planning Department, 2003

Actual park acreage in the Northwest Planning District is summarized in Table A3-8. There are almost 1,000 acres of park land in the Northwest Planning District. Most of the park acreage is within the community park and regional park categories.

The Northwest Planning District should experience considerable growth by the year 2010. The increase in population is projected to continue due to annexations and the development of subdivisions within those annexations. As Table A3-9 indicates, the ratio of park acreage to population will decrease suggesting a potential need to acquire more land. Because of the large number of community and regional park acres already existing, the need may be in neighborhood parks.

Table A3-8: Existing Park Acreage Ratios in Northwest Planning District

2000 Population: 57,891

Park Type	Number	Acres	Acres/ 1000	Developed Acres	Developed Acres/ 1000
Block	5	1.19	0.02	0.9	0.02
Neighborhood	5	52.8	0.91	52.8	0.91
Community	4	447.8	7.74	447.8	7.74
Regional (metro)	2	363.8	6.28	170	2.94
Special Rec. Area	6	127.5	2.20	8	0.14
Totals	22	993.09	17.15	679.5	11.74

Source: Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department 2003, Woolpert 2003

Table A3-9: Future Park Acreage Ratios in Northwest Planning District

2010 Population: 64,891

Park Type	Number	Acres	Acres/ 1000	Developed Acres	Developed Acres/ 1000
Block	5	1.19	0.02	0.9	0.01
Neighborhood	5	52.9	0.82	52.9	0.82
Community	1	399.5	6.16	399.5	6.16
Regional (metro)	2	363.8	5.61	170	2.62
Special Rec. Area	6	127.5	1.96	8	0.12
Total Acres	19	944.89	14.56	631.3	9.73

Source: Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department 2003, Woolpert 2003

Northeast Planning District

The Northeast Planning District is characterized by homogenous land uses. The primary land uses are residential neighborhood and large institutional facilities that includes Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. Much like the Northwest Planning District, this district will grow through annexations and continued development of subdivisions. However, the university will influence population growth with increases in student population. This planning district has the largest population (72,065) and a relatively high percentage of land categorized as parks/open space. Parks and open space account for 10.3% of the acreage in the Northeast Planning District. Table A3-10 summarizes land use in this planning district.

Table A3-10: Summary of Land Use Acreage in Northeast Planning District

Type Use	Acres of Use	% of Total Area
Commercial	923.97	5.70%
Government	538.10	3.32%
Utilities	342.38	2.11%
Schools	514.94	3.18%
Medical	245.22	1.51%
Church/cemetery	447.39	2.76%
Non-profit	55.88	0.34%
Agriculture	1129.14	6.97%
Single-family	6781.66	41.87%
Two-family	122.87	0.76%
Multi-family	561.65	3.47%
Industrial	0.00	0.00%
Parks/open space	1673.14**	10.33%
Transportation	0.00	0.00%
Vacant/undeveloped land	742.10	4.58%
TOTAL ACRES	16198.00	

*Total includes right-of-way

**Includes open space in planned residential neighborhoods

Source: City of Fort Wayne Planning Department, 2003

Existing park acreage in this planning district is summarized in Table A3-11. The amount of park land per population is much lower than the Northwest District. However, much like the Northwest Planning District, there is considerable acreage in the regional and community parks categories. There are few neighborhood parks and no block parks within this district.

The Northeast Planning District will experience moderate growth by the year 2010. The increase in population is projected to continue due to normal growth trends and annexations. Table A3-12 illustrates that the ratio of park acres per population will not decrease significantly, but will remain much lower than other districts, suggesting a need to acquire more park land.

Table A3-11: Existing Park Acreage Ratios in Northeast Planning District

2000 Population: 72,065

Park Type	Number	Acres	Acres/ 1000	Developed Acres	Developed Acres/ 1000
Block	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Neighborhood	5	81.3	1.13	81.3	1.13
Community	1	184.5	2.56	184.5	2.56
Regional (metro)	1	223.6	3.10	223.6	3.10
Special Rec. Area*	2	360.5	5.00	0	0.00
Total Acres	9	849.9	11.79	489.4	6.79

*Treats Hurshtown Reservoir as passive/undeveloped

Source: Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department, 2003, Woolpert 2003

Table A3-12: Future Park Acreage Ratios in Northeast Planning District

2010 Population: 76,157

Park Type	Number	Acres	Acres/ 1000	Developed Acres	Developed Acres/ 1000
Block	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Neighborhood	4	81.6	1.07	81.6	1.07
Community	1	184.5	2.42	184.5	2.42
Regional (metro)	1	223.6	2.94	223.6	2.94
Special Rec. Area*	1	360.5	4.73	0	0.00
Total Acres	7	850.2	11.16	489.7	6.43

*Treats Hurshtown Reservoir as passive/undeveloped

Source: Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department, 2003, Woolpert 2003

Southwest Planning District

Much like the Northwest Planning District, the Southwest Planning District is characterized by a heterogeneous mix of land uses. The primary land uses are residential neighborhood and large industrial facilities such as the Fort Wayne/Allen County International Airport. This planning district has a population of 49,878 and the second highest percentage of parks/open space. Parks and open space account for 10.5% of the acreage in the Southwest Planning District. Table A3-13 summarizes land use in this planning district.

Table A3-13: Summary of Land Use Acreage in the Southwest Planning District

Type Use	Acres of Use	% of Total Area
Commercial	1228.97	8.64%
Government	143.29	1.01%
Utilities	120.35	0.85%
Schools	229.35	1.61%
Medical	24.74	0.17%
Church/cemetery	172.00	1.21%
Non-profit	93.74	0.66%
Agriculture	851.86	5.99%
Single-family	3456.90	24.30%
Two-family	88.01	0.62%
Multi-family	432.10	3.04%
Industrial	1016.24	7.14%
Parks/open space	1487.06**	10.45%
Transportation	1271.32	8.94%
Vacant/undeveloped land	1834.32	12.90%
TOTAL ACRES	14224.00	

*Total includes right-of-way

**Includes open space in planned residential neighborhoods

Source: City of Fort Wayne Planning District, 2003

The existing park acreage for the Southwest Planning District is summarized in Table A3-14. There is not currently a regional park in this district, suggesting the need to acquire land suitable for a regional park. Overall, the Southwest Planning District has 443.14 acres of park land, approximately one-half of the park land found in the Northwest and Northeast Planning Districts. While acreage is lower, the ratio of park land to population is higher than the Northeast Planning District.

The Southwest Planning District will experience a slight decline in population by 2010. However, as Table A3-15 illustrates, the decline in park population will have little effect on the park land needed.

Table A3-14: Existing Park Acreage Ratios in Southwest Planning District

2000 Population: 45,079

Park Type	Number	Acres	Acres/ 1000	Developed Acres	Developed Acres/ 1000
Block	6	3.14	0.07	3.13	0.07
Neighborhood	10	81.2	1.80	81.2	1.80
Community	3	323.1	7.17	323.1	7.17
Regional (metro)	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Special Rec. Area	7	35.7	0.79	25.62	0.57
Total Acres	26	443.14	9.83	433.05	9.61

Source: Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department, 2003, Woolpert 2003

Table A3-15: Future Park Acreage Ratios in Southwest Planning District

2010 Population: 44,673

Park Type	Number	Acres	Acres/ 1000	Developed Acres	Developed Acres/ 1000
Block	6	3.14	0.07	3.17	0.07
Neighborhood	10	81.2	1.82	81.3	1.82
Community	3	323.1	7.24	323.1	7.24
Regional (metro)	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Special Rec. Area	7	35.8	0.80	25.62	0.39
Total Acres	26	443.14	9.92	424.85	9.51

Source: Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department, 2003, Woolpert 2003

Southeast Planning District

The Southeast Planning District is smaller than the other original planning districts. Only Aboite Planning District has fewer acres. Residential neighborhoods are the primary land use. Larger parcel land uses include the Southtown Shopping Center (which is now vacant and will be redeveloped) and industrial facilities. This planning district has a population of 45,079 and the lowest percentage of parks/open space. Parks and open space account for only 4.5% of the acreage in the Southeast Planning District. Table A3-16 summarizes land use in this planning district.

Table A3-16: Summary of Land Use in the Southeast Planning District

Type Use	Acres of Use	% of Total Area
Commercial	682.06	6.44%
Government	120.61	1.14%
Utilities	152.11	1.44%
Schools	249.66	2.36%
Medical	0.00	0.00%
Church/cemetery	160.59	1.52%
Non-profit	32.94	0.31%
Agriculture	853.11	8.06%
Single-family	3023.50	28.56%
Two-family	52.95	0.50%
Multi-family	504.31	4.76%
Industrial	1235.38	11.67%
Parks/open space	473.82**	4.48%
Transportation	298.21	2.82%
Vacant/undeveloped land	957.55	9.05%
TOTAL ACRES	10585.60	

*Total includes right-of-way

**Includes open space in planned residential neighborhoods

Source: City of Fort Wayne Planning District, 2003

Table A3-17 illustrates the existing park acreage for the Southeast Planning District. Besides Aboite Planning District, this district has the least amount of park land—385.19 acres. However, the relatively low population results in a ratio of park land to population that exceeds both Aboite and the Northeast Planning Districts. There are no regional parks in this district.

Much like the Southwest Planning District, the Southeast Planning District will experience a slight decline in population by 2010. Table A3-18 shows that the decline will not significantly change the ratio of park land to population.

Table A3-17: Existing Park Acreage Ratios in Southeast Planning District

2000 Population: 49,878

Park Type	Number	Acres	Acres/ 1000	Developed Acres	Developed Acres/ 1000
Block	10	6.32	0.13	4.18	0.08
Neighborhood	10	62.20	1.25	58.5	1.17
Community	4	310.15	6.22	310.15	6.22
Regional (metro)	0	0.00	0.00	0	0.00
Special Rec. Area	4	6.52	0.13	1.92	0.04
Total Acres	28	385.19	7.72	374.75	7.51

Source: Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department, 2003, Woolpert 2003

Table A3-18: Future Park Acreage Ratios in Southeast Planning District

2010 Population: 47,950

Park Type	Number	Acres	Acres/ 1000	Developed Acres	Developed Acres/ 1000
Block	10	6.37	0.13	4.23	0.09
Neighborhood	7	60.1	1.25	56.4	1.18
Community	3	310.2	6.47	310.2	6.47
Regional (metro)	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Special Rec. Area	4	6.56	0.14	1.96	0.04
Total Acres	24	383.23	7.99	372.79	7.77

Source: Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department, 2003, Woolpert 2003

Aboite Planning District

The Aboite Planning District has recently been added as a planning and research district for the city. Soon to be annexed, it and is the smallest of the five planning districts. Residential neighborhoods and commercial are the predominant land uses. This planning district has a population of 25,094 and the highest percentage of parks/ open space in the city. Parks and open space account for almost 11% of the acreage in the Aboite Planning District. Table A3-19 summarizes land use in this planning district.

Table A3-19: Summary of Land Use in the Aboite Planning District

Type Use	Acres of Use	% of Total Area
Commercial	206.37	2.51%
Government	2.08	0.03%
Utilities	28.60	0.35%
Schools	18.44	0.22%
Medical	108.27	1.32%
Church/cemetery	279.97	3.40%
Non profit	3.18	0.04%
Agriculture	392.23	4.77%
Single-family	4174.38	50.73%
Two-family	16.50	0.20%
Multi-family	163.79	1.99%
Industrial	0.00	0.00%
Parks/open space	891.72**	10.84%
Transportation	0.00	0.00%
Vacant/undeveloped land	500.82	6.09%
TOTAL ACRES	8228.00	

*Total includes right-of-way

**Includes open space in planned residential neighborhoods

Source: City of Fort Wayne Planning Department, 2003

Existing park acreages are summarized in Table A3-20.

The population of the Aboite Planning District is projected to increase slightly by 2010. Table A3-21 shows the fact that despite the large amount of open space, there is only one park and a very low ratio of park acreage to population.

Table A3-20: Existing Park Acreage Ratios in Aboite Planning District

2000 Population: 25,094

Park Type	Number	Acres	Acres/ 1000	Developed Acres	Developed Acres/ 1000
Block	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Neighborhood	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Community	1	66	2.63	66	2.63
Regional (metro)	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Special Rec. Area	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total Acres	0	0	0.00	66	2.63

Source: Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department, 2003, Woolpert 2003

Table A3-21: Future Park Acreage Ratios in Aboite Planning District

2010 Population: 28,894

Park Type	Number	Acres	Acres/ 1000	Developed Acres	Developed Acres/ 1000
Block	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Neighborhood	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Community	1	66	2.28	66	2.28
Regional (metro)	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Special Rec. Area	0	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total Acres	0	0	0.00	66	2.28

Source: Fort Wayne Park and Recreation Department, 2003, Woolpert 2003

Summary

The size and the population of Fort Wayne have continued to grow since the 1900s. Much of the population growth, at least in recent years, has been directly tied to annexation. The growth of the city will continue to the north and west. The demand for park land will also increase to the north and west, creating the need for additional park land in these areas around the city. Future growth can be expected to include annexation. Therefore, the Department should continue to look for some of its new park and greenway land outside the city in potential annexation areas. Acquiring park land in advance of development will greatly reduce the cost of the land. While the

population has grown, it has also become more diverse. Minority populations have steadily grown, and in recent years, the Hispanic population has grown at a dramatic rate. Although diversity in all planning districts in the city has increased, the Southeast Planning District has the highest percentage of African/American and Hispanic residents. The high percentage of minority population in the Southeast Planning District continues to grow as the number of white residents continues to decrease.

Other factors that influence programming are age, gender, and income. The planning district with the most youth, teens, and seniors is the Northeast Planning District, which is to be expected since this is the

district with the highest population. The Southeast Planning District also has a high number of youth and teens, but it has a relatively low number of seniors. The ratio of males to females is fairly constant throughout most of the city and for most age groups; however, the ratio does widen for the senior population. There are many more senior females than males in all planning districts. The Aboite Planning District has the highest average household income, while the Southeast Planning District has the lowest. These factors need to be considered when balancing the needs of residents citywide versus the special needs for residents within each planning district.



Appendix 4: Program Assessments

As a component of the comprehensive parks and recreation master plan, the consulting team performed an in-depth assessment of essential services currently provided by the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department. Conclusions and recommendations are based on questionnaires completed by key supervisory staff, a review of post-participation surveys routinely conducted by the Department (where available), and onsite assessments performed by the consulting team.

Program assessments included a review of national and local participation trends to estimate the Department's share of the Fort Wayne market. Reviewing the Department's annual report, a revenue and expense analysis was performed to identify subsidy levels and cost recovery ratios for the programs. Pricing strategies, facility scheduling (if applicable), existing partnerships, marketing efforts, and customer service practices were also reviewed.

Camps

The Department currently provides three distinct nature camps for children during the summer months in addition to summer camps offered at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo and Foellinger-Friemann Botanical Conservatory. Excluding the zoo and conservatory camps, over 2,100 children enrolled in summer camps during 2002.

With nearly 60 years of history, the most successful nature camp is the Franke Park Day Camp, which alone had 1,844 participants in 2002. The Franke Park Day Camp operates at maximum capacity during the summer months. Increased summer participation will not be feasible without expanding the facility, adding new camp sites in other parks, or offering evening camp sessions. Expansion opportunities in Franke Park appear to be limited without displacing other existing activities in the park.

While the Franke Park Day Camp continues to attract large participation numbers, it should be noted that its Native American theme may not be appealing to everyone in the community, especially ethnic minorities. Instead of expanding the Franke Park Day Camp, the Department should consider offering more summer camps at additional locations throughout the city. The Department should also explore the feasibility of offering an evening camp program at the Franke Park site. Any new camps offered should utilize themes that appeal to a more diverse population.

Participation in the Franke Park Day Camp before- and after-care program has steadily declined over the past five years. The decline closely mirrors the reduction in the total number of scholarships provided. This suggests a possible correlation between the need for financial aid and participation in the before- or after-care program. A logical conclusion is that families needing financial assistance rely on park programs for

childcare during the workday. Efforts to provide scholarships through the Parks Foundation or other funding sources should be continued and expanded as resources permit.

The Salomon Farm Camp is a new program with much potential. In its first year of operation, the camp had 215 participants. The park site has the amenities and natural resources to accommodate a very unique and successful camp program. To expand camp enrollments, the Department needs to reach out to youth organizations that focus on farming, nature, and history. Key groups include 4-H clubs, scouting troops, and similar organizations. The Department should also consider partnering with the neighboring YMCA to jointly develop and promote camps at this site.

The Lindenwood Nature Preserve provides a good site for nature-themed camps. The obstacle to the success of camps at the preserve is the lack of an indoor nature center. A new facility would provide the flexibility to offer programs during inclement weather and beyond the summer season. A nature center would serve as a focal point for the park and create more traffic and awareness for camps at Lindenwood. It is unlikely that programs or participation numbers can be greatly expanded at Lindenwood without a nature center/learning facility.

The Department's various camp programs appear to be operated as largely independent entities with minimal efforts to cross-promote or tie in with each other. Most camps offered by the Department provide participants with a one-week

camping experience, leaving parents to find alternative camps or services for the remaining weeks of the summer. The Department should better coordinate and jointly promote all of its summer camp programs, including sports camps and programs offered through the zoo and conservatory. If the Department offers a wider selection of camps with greater demographic appeal that span the entire summer, the potential exists to expand camp revenue. The Department should consider adding more outdoor adventure camps, teen and pre-teen camps, and travel camps. The Department should strive to be the one-stop source for summer-long entertainment through camps.

The expansion of camp programs will only be possible through the addition of more full-time and seasonal staff dedicated to developing and running new camps. Ideally, both the Lindenwood and Salomon Farm sites should have a full-time, dedicated staff member for camps and programs. Any expansion of the Franke Park Day Camp or new camps will also require additional staff.

Financially, the Franke Park Day Camp serves as a good model for any camp offered by the program. This camp is priced sufficiently to stimulate demand and cover all operating expenses. To ensure the ongoing success of the camp, the operating surplus should be placed in a dedicated fund to cover future capital investments in the camp. All the camps are economically priced but generally undervalued for the services provided. The Department should continue to benchmark against other camp providers, and as long as all operating expenses are

covered, price accordingly. All camps, including the Franke Park Day Camp, should implement a resident/non-resident pricing structure. Camp prices for younger children should only be lower if warranted by the actual cost to deliver the program.

There is strong competition for camp participants in the Fort Wayne community. The Department's Franke Park and Salomon Farm Camps are unique and least impacted by other camp programs. The Lindenwood camps and workshops face the most head-to-head competition with programs offered by the County Parks Department and other providers (partially explaining the lower participation).

With the development of new partnerships with youth, nature-focused, or farm-related organizations, there should be some opportunity to expand camp and workshop programming beyond the current summer season. This is especially true for the Salomon Farm. Possible programs to consider include weekend camps, additional school programs, home school programs, and preschool programs. Facilities could be adopted by various youth organizations like 4-H clubs and scouts to help maintain or develop amenities on site (i.e., vegetable gardens, flower gardens, etc.).

All existing marketing and promotions efforts should be continued. Enhanced promotions are needed, especially for Salomon Farm and Lindenwood Camps. Post-program evaluations should continue to be conducted of all camps. Focus groups consisting of parents and children could periodically be conducted by marketing staff to ensure that existing programs are meeting participants'

needs and identify changes that should be made. Direct mailings promoting camps should be sent to the previous year's participants.

The Department should consider a pre-registration period for the following year's camp at the conclusion of camp sessions. A small, non-refundable fee in the range of \$5 to \$10 could be charged to hold a spot with full payment due in the spring. This helps build the excitement of participants and gives the Department an early indication of camp attendance. Low early enrollments can prompt the Department to either boost promotional efforts in the spring or make revisions to the camp to increase appeal.

The Department should continue to conduct customer service training for all camp employees. Customer service policies should be incorporated into the employee policy and procedure manual and provided to all staff members.

The existing performance measures should continue to be monitored. Additionally, the Department should also consider measuring (for each camp) the cost recovery rate, customer retention, program capacity, and facility capacity against established goals. Together, these measurements will be useful to management in making future decisions regarding the programs.

Community Center

Originally built as a senior center, the Community Center is responsible for the Department's preschool/youth, adult, and older adult programs. The facility is centrally located but has limited parking despite a recent expansion of the parking lot. The

Community Center lacks many amenities found in modern recreation centers, such as a gymnasium, fitness center, indoor walking track, or indoor aquatic center. The facility does not have sufficient multipurpose space to accommodate a wider selection of programs for all age segments. There is limited green space surrounding the center for outdoor activities. For these reasons, many programs offered by the Community Center must be facilitated off-site in local schools and other facilities.

There is no membership or daily fee to use the Community Center, nor is the facility currently operated in a manner to warrant or support a charge for admission. Although there is an information desk, the center lacks a centralized entrance point to effectively control entry. There are minimal areas within the facility to support self-directed recreation beyond a game room and central lounge. A small selection of fitness equipment is available, but the equipment is located in a hallway and appears to be non-commercial grade.

Over 5,300 individuals enroll in Community Center programs annually, with nearly 60% of these participants enrolled in preschool or youth activities. Despite a significant amount of senior program space within the facility, fewer than 250 people typically enroll in older adult programs offered through the center each year. Enrollments in community center programs have remained fairly stagnant since 1998. Attendance at the center has averaged slightly over 100 visitors per day.

As validated by the participation numbers, the Community Center provides a good

variety of programs for children under the age of 6. Few programs are available that would truly appeal to pre-teens, teens, and young adults. Program opportunities resume for adults, although most appear targeted to the senior population. The Department should complete a service audience matrix to ensure programs are targeted and offered for all age segments.

Based on available information, center operations and older adult programs are heavily subsidized by the city, recovering, on average, only 28% of their operating costs through user fees and earned income. Despite cost recovery goals of 100%, which are consistent with industry practices, youth and adult programs generated only 78% of their operating costs. The Department should implement activity-based costing for every program offered to ensure that programs are priced effectively to meet established cost recovery goals. If prices based on the true cost of delivering a program exceed the public's willingness to pay, the merits of offering the program should be evaluated.

The community center has limitations of space to accommodate more multi-purpose recreation use. However, it is a viable facility for the uses it does provide. In projecting the future uses of the community center, all spaces need to be evaluated according to current use. The greatest needs appear to be larger fitness space and more general purpose space. The community center still operates primarily as a senior recreation facility and there is good participation in the programs provided. Ideally the City needs more recreation center space in other parts of the city to create the opportunity for people of all ages to recreate. This does not

mean the city should eliminate the community center because it is serving a need in the community.

McMillen Ice Arena

McMillen Ice Arena is a quality facility well suited to meeting the recreational and sports ice needs of the Fort Wayne community. The ice arena is an attractive, well-designed facility that incorporates a good color scheme throughout. The pro shop and concession areas are prominently located for high visibility among visitors. The lounge area is an attractive public space that respects its prior history as a warming shelter for the original outdoor ice rink previously located on the site.

Unquestionably, the biggest hurdle facing McMillen Ice Arena is generating sufficient revenue to cover both the operating costs and \$410,000 annual debt service. Prior to its expansion in 2000, the ice arena was showing profit margins of 14% to 26%. Since the renovation and addition of the debt service obligation, expenditures have greatly exceeded revenue and resulted in a recapture rate of 77.8% in 2002 (for a loss of \$237,139).

McMillen Ice Arena is faced with the challenge of serving sports that, nationally, have witnessed stagnant to declining participation rates in recent years. Hockey participation in Fort Wayne exceeds the national average, although ice skating in general falls below the national norm. Participation numbers at the ice arena were given a significant boost in 2001 due to the recent renovation and expansion. The decline in public skating and hockey

participation during 2002 is following national trends. Countering these national and local trends presents a significant challenge to staff.

Based on sample schedules from the peak and non-peak seasons, the ice arena has a significant amount of excess capacity that needs to be filled. During the peak season, around 40% of the ice time between 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. was scheduled for public skating, programs, rentals, or special events. During the summer months, the capacity is around 17% when all three sheets of ice are operational. An unscheduled facility cannot generate revenue.

Although past efforts to expand public skating opportunities at the ice arena have been unsuccessful, the number of public skating hours in Fort Wayne is significantly lower than at many public facilities. Other facilities typically offer 10 to 11 sessions each week with at least one session per day, as opposed to the three to six sessions per week offered by McMillen Ice Arena. Past failures may be the result of poor time offerings or advertising efforts. Offering teen or family nights, possibly sponsored by a local radio station, may be an effective means of boosting attendance. Family night rates of \$20 to \$30 per family (including skates) can be effective in making skating events more economical and appealing. A reverse pricing method—charging adults lower fees than children—may help encourage greater adult participation on regular days.

There also is an opportunity to expand stick and puck drop-in play at the arena.

Currently, only two to three sessions are being offered. Additional sessions catering to targeted age or skill groups could be offered.

While over 40% of the ice arena's revenue comes from rentals, more rentals are needed to fill the excess capacity—especially during non-prime times. Local schools, colleges, daycare centers, and organizations like the YMCA serve as potential customers, either through rentals or catered programs, to fill regular hours between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Additional efforts to promote the ice arena should be pursued. Minimally, 4% of the operating budget needs to be dedicated to marketing and promotions and a higher investment is recommended. Pursuing potential media partners, such as local radio or television stations, can be an effective and less expensive way to promote special events from weekly family nights to tournaments.

Jennings Recreation Center and Weisser Park Youth Center

The Jennings Recreation Center and the Weisser Park Youth Center can best be described as neighborhood centers that primarily serve youth residing in the surrounding neighborhoods. The strength of both centers is that they provide positive, after-school and summer programs that address the social, educational, and recreational needs of at-risk youth. Both facilities have a strong social-services orientation and offer a variety of programs not typically provided by parks and

recreation departments in other communities.

While it appears that existing programs are generally well-utilized, the relatively small size of each facility hinders the ability to expand programs or increase participation rates. Both centers have a need for a gymnasium and additional multipurpose meeting space. Jennings Center's lack of open green space severely limits the ability to expand this facility. Given the age and relatively poor condition of Jennings Center, the Department should consider replacing it with a new facility better designed to meet today's recreational needs. Given its park location and newer age, Weisser Park Youth Center appears to be better suited for expansion.

The Department should consider implementing user fees to help support operations at the neighborhood centers. While it is acknowledged that both centers serve economically depressed and/or at-risk children, it is unheard of for a city to provide all programs for free. Even a nominal registration fee would help reduce the overall subsidy level, possibly freeing up funding for additional programming staff or materials. The Department should work with the Park Foundation and other sources to ensure partial and full scholarships are available for those families or individuals unable to pay.

The Department should continue efforts to secure earned income to help support programs offered at both centers. In 2003, \$63,000 in grant funds was secured at Weisser Center for the SBA Academy. At

Jennings Center, grants were also received for the Afternoon Rocks program (\$8,000) and Job Training (\$5,000).

Both facilities should continue to track all expenses (and revenues when applicable) by program or service area. This information will make it possible to calculate key performance measures, such as the cost per experience. Even if programs are provided for free, staff should complete an activity-based costing sheet to determine before a program is offered or continued the estimated delivery cost. Programs with a cost higher than an agreed to subsidy level should either be revised to lower subsidy levels, increase cost recovery, or canceled outright.

Minimal numbers were available for program registrations and facility attendance. Detailed statistics should be tracked for each program and facility. Performance measures should be implemented to monitor participation levels, program capacity, and programs offered versus held. Memberships and program registration capabilities should be added to each facility to effectively record these statistics. Additionally, tracking software could be used to maintain contact and other vital information for youth participants in the event of an emergency.

Outdoor Recreation and Education

Lindenwood Nature Preserve, Salomon Farm, and Hurshtown Reservoir provide three quality locations to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and education. The addition of a learning center at Salomon Farm provides a nice facility to base outdoor education programs, especially

on farm-related topics. Lindenwood Nature Preserve needs an indoor nature center/learning facility to become a truly viable, year-round location for outdoor education.

Given the human resources available, the Department offers a good number of outdoor education and recreation programs. A good mix of free and fee-based programs are offered. To expand program offerings, more permanent staff is needed. Ideally, both Lindenwood and Salomon should have a full-time staff member dedicated to programming at these sites. This would allow for the development and expansion of programs, including more family and multi-generational programs.

The Department is placing a greater emphasis on the provision of outdoor education programs to the exclusion of outdoor recreation programs. While the societal benefit of education programs is not questioned, there typically is a greater revenue-earning potential for outdoor recreation. In general, the Department needs to offer more outdoor programs that the public will perceive as fun. Environmental education can easily be integrated within these programs to fulfill the educational mission.

The Department should consider offering more outdoor adventure programs in such sports as canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking, sailing, and related activities. If promoted and priced effectively, these programs should be able to recover their operating expenses. More outdoor adventure camps focusing on specific sports should also be considered. Additional special

events should be provided and used to promote program offerings.

Sporadic participation numbers in outdoor programs suggests a lack of consistency in program offerings. This is likely the result of the small number of staff dedicated to this service. Low participation rates in programs labeled "outdoor recreation" are alarming given the high level of subsidy. These programs should be eliminated if they cannot recapture their operating expenses.

The outdoor education and recreation programs need to develop service audience matrices that focus on program needs by age segment or grade level (e.g., ages 2 through 5, 6 through 8, 9 and 10, 11 and 12, etc. or grades kindergarten through second, third and fourth, etc.). Currently, the program age segments appear too wide to be as effective as they could be. More targeted marketing is needed by age group and type of activity. The length of classes or workshops should remain three hours or less.

Greater effort is needed to create enticing themes for outdoor recreation and education programs. Examples of appropriate themes include: Women in the Outdoors, Outdoor Adventures, Teen Explorers, Outdoor Reality Programs, Life of a Farmer, and Eco-Trippers. Additionally, participants today want shorter programs, workshops, and clinics due to busy personal schedules. As an example, participants often have the daily constraints of demanding workdays followed by traffic congestion. It is understandable that participants want convenience and comfort in the programs they participate in, and it is imperative that convenience be considered when developing programs.

When program interest falls off, the cause is usually due to program content, length of session, and ease of access.

The pricing of services for outdoor recreation and education programs should be evaluated based on their direct and indirect costs. Currently the Department is subsidizing programs on an average by 87%. Many of these programs have better self-supporting capabilities. The Department should establish cost recovery goals by program type and establish prices based on a full cost analysis.

Athletic Programs

The Department currently provides athletic programming in basketball, volleyball, tennis, golf, and swimming through Youth Athletics, Adult Athletics, and the Lifetime Sports Academy. A variety of free and fee-based programs are available for youth in tennis, golf, and swimming.

Based on national and state participation statistics and program enrollments, the Department appears to control the majority of the city's youth market in tennis (99%) and golf (87%). With approximately 20% of the youth basketball market enrolled in city programs, the Department also is a significant player in this market. The Department is not as dominant in the adult market, reaching approximately 11% of likely volleyball players, 8% of tennis players, and 5% of basketball players.

Historically, the Department has taken the role of providing sports facilities to accommodate programs offered by other community organizations. As such, the

ability to successfully penetrate the market through expanded programming into soccer, baseball, softball, gymnastics, or youth football is limited. The Department may want to consider providing sports leagues or programming in lacrosse, roller hockey, or adult football (subject to the availability of facilities).

The Lifetime Sports Academy is a popular youth program that has garnered the Department significant positive recognition both locally and nationally. The academy has successfully introduced thousands of children to sports that can be enjoyed throughout their lifespan.

Overall enrollment in the Lifetime Sports Academy continues to rise each year, and in 2002, was up 38% from 1998 (based on 2002 participation numbers). While the academy is valuable and should be continued, the Department needs to recognize that its free programs directly compete with several of its fee-based programs. Academy programs are generally structured to introduce youth to sports and provide elementary skills. Advanced skill development should only be offered through the fee-based programs of the Department. In this way, the academy can nurture interest in lifetime sports and serve as a feeder for other youth programs. The elimination of direct competition between the two programs will help ensure the continued success of both services.

As funding sources permit, the Department should consider a two-fold approach to expanding participation in the Lifetime Sports Academy. Academy programs are primarily offered at McMillen Park, located in

the Southwest Planning District. The Department should consider expanding the program to sites in the city's other districts. The Department should also consider providing Lifetime Sports Academy programs in additional sports (i.e., hockey, ice skating, etc.) to increase exposure and demand for its other youth programs.

Except for basketball programs and the Lifetime Sports Academy, participation in the Department's athletic programs has generally declined over the past five years. While partially mirroring national trends, volleyball and tennis participation rates in Fort Wayne have fallen at larger rates. When developing programs, staff should closely review key participation demographics to ensure programs are targeted to the appropriate audience.

Having no Department-owned gymnasiums is a serious factor impacting the success of many athletic programs. While the Department has been effective in securing gymnasium space through local schools, the lack of control over the space results in periodic scheduling changes, relocations, and interruptions of programs. Sufficient gymnasium capacity does not exist within the community to significantly expand indoor sport programming.

The Department should explore the feasibility of building at least one centrally located, multi-court fieldhouse to host youth and adult sports programs. In the interim, the Department should update its use agreement with Fort Wayne Public Schools every three to five years. The contract should include provisions that prohibit changes or the cancellation of reserved times unless

mutually agreed upon. The use agreement should also explicitly state rental rates and identify priority-use arrangements of key facilities by day of week and time of day.

The Department has established cost recovery goals of 80% for youth athletics and 175% for adult athletics, which consistent with industry practices. Between 1999 and 2001, the Department reported cost recovery rates of 67% to 71% in youth athletics and 165% to 173% in adult athletics. Based on the financial information provided to the consultant, actual performance by essential services area could not be confirmed.

To assist staff in establishing program fees, the Department should revise its current program pricing form to incorporate all related direct and indirect costs for providing the service. This will allow staff to understand the true cost of delivery and to price programs to meet cost recovery goals. The Department should also benchmark against its primary competitors annually to ensure fees are in line with the local market.

Pools/Aquatic Facilities

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department operates four outdoor swimming pools within the city. While the facilities are well maintained and operated, all but the Northside Pool lack many of the modern leisure pool features that attract families in large numbers. With no significant amenities added since the 1996 renovation, the pools have witnessed declining attendance and learn-to-swim participation. This trend will likely continue

into the future if no significant capital improvements are made.

With the widest variety of family-friendly amenities, Northside Pool witnesses the highest attendance of all the city pools with 37,339 visitors in 2002. Swinney Pool, which is a popular destination for teenagers, had the next greatest attendance at 21,164. Attendance was 8,230 at McMillen Pool and 5,020 at Memorial Pool.

Over the past five years, the pools have realized operating deficits between \$200,000 and \$250,000, resulting in a cost recovery rate of 40.4%. Despite the limited amenities at McMillen, Memorial, and Swinney Pools, the Department should expect to recover 60% to 70% of the total pool operating expenses.

System-wide, the average subsidy per visitor over this time frame was \$3.19. As would be expected, the subsidy levels are significantly higher at the lower attended pools. In 2002, the average subsidy per visitor was \$10.61 at Memorial Pool, \$7.04 at McMillen, and \$5.66 at Swinney. In comparison, Northside Pool had an average subsidy of \$0.45 per visitor in 2002.

Unless significant amenity upgrades are made to the existing pools, the subsidy levels will likely rise in the future as attendance continues to fall. The continued operation of Memorial and McMillen Pools is not logical from a purely financial perspective, although it is recognized that both serve neighborhoods in need of positive recreation alternatives.

Given the demand at Northside Pool, the Department should consider expanding this facility to minimally include a lazy river. This amenity alone would increase both the appeal and capacity level of the pool, and would warrant an increased admission price for the experience received.

With existing pools limited to older neighborhoods in the city, the Department should explore the feasibility of building one or two indoor or outdoor family aquatic centers closer to the growth areas of the community. These facilities could be designed to recover most, if not all, operating expenses. An indoor facility would allow for year-round programming and could be used to enhance existing learn-to-swim programming. Strategic placement of one or more new facilities could also allow for the closure of a non-producing facility.

The Department should closely review its current arrangement for concession services at the pools. Average food and beverage expenditures per visitor at Northside and Swinney Pools were under fifty cents per visitor. Given the attendance at these pools, the average should minimally be \$1.50 per visitor. More efforts to promote concessions, such as hourly advertisements over the public address system or promotional signage placed strategically throughout the facility, should be considered. Minimally, vending machines should be installed. Consumption of beverages and snacks from vending machines can be limited to designated areas within the facility.

More efforts should be undertaken to secure after-hour pool rentals. Currently, rentals only provide less than \$6,000, or 3.6% of all

pool revenue. The Department should target scout troops, 4-H clubs, church youth groups, and other youth organizations for pool rentals via direct mailing efforts and community networking.

In addition to existing after-hour birthday parties, the Department should create birthday party packages during public swim hours. The package should provide a set number of entries; a reserved, shaded location for 1.0 to 1.5 hours within the facility; and meals or snacks from the concession area. Birthday party packages are extremely popular and can contribute up to 5% of the total revenue based on experiences in similar communities.

Despite recent increases, the current admission prices at Northside Pool are under-priced for the value received. Youth admission prices should be in the range of \$3.50, with adult rates \$1.00 above the youth fees. Other pool rates ideally should be raised \$0.50 to \$1.00, although this may not be possible at Memorial and McMillen Pools given the economic realities of these neighborhoods. The Department should consider implementing a resident/non-resident fee structure at all pools.

The season pass structure should be reviewed to ensure greater equity in the effective discounts received. Passes should be priced so that savings are realized after a minimum of 20 to 25 visits. As an alternative to the season pass, the Department could offer a punch card that provides 10 visits for the price of nine daily visits. This would ensure that visitors pay an equitable share of the pool's operating cost for each visit.

There is some opportunity to expand partnerships with the pool operations, especially at Northside. Sponsorships could be secured for the various pool features, such as the slides or umbrellas. Media partners could be developed to help promote and sponsor special events at the pool, such as a weekly family night swim.

Partnerships should also be explored with local youth organizations and area churches to expand the learn-to-swim program and facility rentals. The Department should actively pursue camp business, both internally and externally during low-use morning times. With limited programming, Memorial Pool especially has the capacity to generate rental revenue or admission fees from area camps before public swim times.

The Lifetime Sports Academy swim program is a valuable program that should be continued at McMillen Pool. All costs related to this free aquatic program should be closely tracked. Working with the Park Foundation, corporate and individual sponsors should continue to be solicited to underwrite the associated operating cost of the pool for providing this program.

To address safety concerns, especially at Memorial Pool, the Department could implement safety patrols using off-duty police or a security service to crack down on safety and language issues. The increased personnel will result in higher operating costs and subsidy levels initially. If patrols are successful, this effort may help result in increased attendance over time as word spreads and visitors perceive the pools to be safer. With continued reinforcement of rules by pool staff and park management, it may

be possible to reduce or eliminate security patrols over time—depending on severity of the situation at the respective sites.

Golf

With golf courses at Foster, Shoaff, and McMillen Parks, the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department offers the community three quality golfing experiences at an extremely reasonable price. Each course is unique in its layout and provides a variety of holes that effectively challenge the skills of golfers. Junior and adult programs, tournaments, and golf outings are also offered at each course. Additionally, McMillen Golf Course offers an excellent nine-hole practice course for the Lifetime Sports Academy's free youth program. Driving ranges are available at both Shoaff and McMillen Golf Courses.

Based on a review of financial statements from 1998 through 2002, total revenue from all three courses has generally been on the decline. During this timeframe, the net income from golf operations has ranged from a profit of \$88,184 (1999) to a deficit of \$74,549 (2002). The deficit was in the golf operating fund. In addition, \$125,000 was deposited in the capital fund from golf operations, which offset the loss in the operating fund. Ideally, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation should combine operational and capital funds into one report. The Department should seek to recover at least 10% profit from golf as a general rule for public-owned golf courses. Due to the severe flooding in 2003, financial statements for this year were not reviewed.

Looking at each course individually, Shoaff has been the most consistent income producer for the Department, with the course experiencing profits every year through 2002. It should be noted, however, that Shoaff barely broke even in 2002 with net income of just \$3,122. Foster's first operating deficit was \$7,706 in 2002, decreasing from a modest net income of \$7,339 in 2001. McMillen has consistently operated at a loss over the five-year evaluation period, with deficits ranging from \$21,468 (1999) to \$82,484 (1998), including driving range operations. McMillen lost \$69,965 in 2002. It should be noted that funds are set aside each year in a non-reverting capital account, and in 2002, an additional \$125,000 was generated from fees at the three golf courses. For capital dollars from golf fees which offsets these operating losses. The majority of public golf courses receive no tax support for operations.

The total rounds of golf played at the three courses have declined by an astonishing 30%, or 33,066 rounds, from 1998 to 2002. Each course has witnessed a decline in play every year since 1998. In 2002, Foster had the highest play with 29,003 rounds, followed by Shoaff at 27,216 rounds and McMillen at 19,417 rounds. By comparison, 18-hole courses typically should expect 40,000 to 45,000 rounds played and a nine-hole executive course should expect 25,000 to 30,000 rounds.

Based on the consultant's evaluation of golf operations, the poor performance of the city's courses in declining play can be attributed to five key factors: an antiquated

management model, inadequate pricing strategies, insufficient programming of the courses, ineffective marketing strategies, and excessive competition.

There are six commonly accepted operating models used for managing public golf courses in the United States. These models range from the total management of a course by a municipality to the outsourcing of all functions. The model Fort Wayne has in place utilizes a contracted golf pro who receives all cart and pro-shop revenues, as well as an annual salary. The pro also manages and received all income from concessions. The Department receives all green and driving range fees to offset maintenance costs. In the consultant's opinion, this model is outdated with fewer public courses continuing to following this type of structure.

The consultant recommends reviewing the current management model in place to ensure it is consistent with the community's values and Board's expectations. The consultants suggest considering a different management model based on specific performance measurements to create accountability for the desired goals. Regardless of the model used, business plans should be created for each golf course to guide the management practices.

While a variety of youth and adult programs, tournaments, and golf outings are offered and facilitated, it is the consultant's opinion that more programming is needed fill excess capacity. Efforts to further enhance the junior program, tournaments, league play, and corporate golf outings should be pursued. Identifying the current market seg-

ments being served at each course will provide information to cater programs appealing to existing users and segments currently untapped.

Due to the current pricing strategy utilized at the golf courses, the existing green fees are generally under-priced for the value received. Prices are currently established based on the going rate at competing courses. While benchmarking against prices in the local market is a sound practice, it is also advisable to consider the cost of providing the service in pricing decisions. Although the 2003 green fees were competitively priced between \$9 and \$19 (depending on the course and time of play), at most courses it typically cost \$14 to \$16 to produce a round of golf. Current prices leave little to no margin for profit. The consultant recommends conducting a cost of services analysis for each golf course and minimally pricing against an agreed to subsidy level consistent with the community's values.

With differential pricing for weekdays and weekends/holidays, the courses currently utilize prime and non-prime pricing strategies. Actual use patterns at the courses should be evaluated to implement different peak and non-peak rates to encourage increase play during slow times of the day. To ensure that frequent users are not subsidized at a significant level, the Department should consider replacing the season pass program with a value pass or similar multi-use discount program. Efforts to cross-promote all three courses should also be implemented.

The golf courses are currently promoted through the *Fun Times* seasonal brochure, television and radio advertisements, fliers distributed at the pro shops, direct mailings, Fort Wayne Golf Association mailings, and interviews on talk radio shows. While these marketing efforts are appropriate and should be continued, more efforts are needed to solicit public input and feedback from existing customers.

To enhance marketing efforts, the consultant recommends that the managing golf pros at each course begin holding periodic focus groups of existing customers. Post-participation evaluations and on-site surveys should be routinely conducted. Follow-up phone calls from the pro or appropriate course staff should be implemented, especially in situations where a customer has a complaint or suggestion. The feasibility of surveying former customers should also be explored to identify reasons people are no longer using the courses. All of these mechanisms should be used to help identify the demographics of existing customers, peak and preferred usage times, customer satisfaction levels, and new programs or services desired. This information will be useful in creating effective pricing strategies and enhancing program offerings.

A reality outside the control of the Department is the presence of 25 golf courses in Allen County, 20 of which are open for public use. Another 21 courses are located in the surrounding counties. The availability of so many public courses results in a very competitive and highly saturated golf market, which appears to be driving green fees to artificially low prices.

Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory

Located in downtown Fort Wayne, the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory is an extraordinary asset for the community. The conservatory features three quality indoor horticulture gardens, two with permanent collections and one offering rotating seasonal displays. Four outdoor gardens provide an attractive display of trees and flowers. The conservatory also features a variety of fun, interactive exhibits to teach children about horticulture and conservation.

The conservatory provides seven essential services or services for the public: youth programs, school tours and labs, adult tours, adult programs, special events, general admissions, and facility rentals. These essential services attract a wide target market and allow the conservatory to reach every age segment in the community. Each of the seven areas is an appropriate and viable line of business for the conservatory to pursue.

Through all seven program areas, the conservatory serves approximately 70,000 visitors on an annual basis.

Currently the conservatory does not use a business plan as a basis for management decisions. The consultant recommends development of a business plan that addresses each of the conservatory's major operations: horticulture gardens, programs, facility rentals, gift shop, administration, maintenance, and marketing and development. Specific budgets for each of these areas should be developed. The business plan should include performance measures

to identify the successful achievement of goals and objectives. Appropriate measurements would include, but are not limited to, subsidy level per visitor or program areas, length of stay, average gift shop expenditure per visitor, capacity levels, etc.

The total operating budget in 2003 was approximately \$867,783, of which approximately half was dedicated to personnel expense. Considering that personnel typically represent 55-60% of the budget in similar operations, this suggests that the conservatory is understaffed. Currently the conservatory employs only three full-time employees, along with some part-time staff and volunteers. The consultant recommends adding at least one new full-time programmer, who can also assist with marketing and development efforts, along with more part-time employees and volunteers.

The current marketing budget for the conservatory is only \$8,200, which is considerably low for this type of operation. The consultant recommends increasing the budget closer to 3% of the total operating budget. In addition to increased advertising, an increase would help support efforts to better assess customer satisfaction, visitor demographics, length of stay, and spending patterns. Because attendance is key to the conservatory's ongoing success, this information would in turn allow the conservatory to better create exhibits and programs to increase visitation and participation numbers.

The conservatory should continue its efforts to work with other attractions in the Fort Wayne community and region. Cross-promotional efforts with the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo and other attractions should

be enhanced to create multi-site packages for visitors. More efforts are needed to market the facility for bus trips, as well as a site for staff retreats and business meetings.

The current admission prices for the conservatory range from \$4 for adults to \$2 for youth. With the length of stay for most visitors estimated at approximately one hour, the conservatory is appropriately priced for the value received. Increased prices would not likely be supported by the public unless significant facility enhancements are made to increase the average visit beyond two hours.

While the existing gift shop serves as a source of income for the conservatory, the consultant recommends exploring the feasibility of small café for this attractive and valuable space. A restaurant has the ability to generate significantly more revenue for the conservatory. The gift shop could be relocated to another area of the building.

To increase rental income, the conservatory should consider enclosing the existing courtyard to make it more appealing for weddings and receptions. An exclusive caterer should be contracted to manage and book the site. For this type of arrangement, the conservatory should expect 15% of the caterer's gross revenue for all food and beverage served.

Fort Wayne Children's Zoo

Based on the consultant's evaluation of the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, it is easy to recognize why the zoo is locally celebrated and nationally recognized. The zoo has served the Fort Wayne community well over the last 36 years, hosting more than 14

million visitors. Annually, the zoo attracts approximately 450,000 visitors and supports a membership level of 11,370 people. The zoo grounds and exhibits are extremely attractive and well designed, helping create a memorable experience for youth and adults.

In 2002, a strategic business plan was developed for the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo by the consulting team of Schultz and Williams. Working with zoo staff, city staff, and the Zoological Society, the plan outlined three key initiatives for the zoo to reach its desired attendance and revenue goals. These three initiatives included:

- Enhancing management effectiveness by consolidating the current dual governing structure into a single management structure headed by the Zoological Society Commission
- Focusing on marketing and development to increase unearned revenue by growing memberships through enhanced member benefits, increasing corporate partners and sponsorships, and integrating the development campaign for planned giving with the annual fund drive
- Increasing opportunities for added revenue through improvements to the visitor experience as it applies to rides and enhancing concessions and retail spending

By focusing on these initiatives, the plan outlines a strategy to maintain the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo as the only self-supporting, municipally operated zoo in the United States.

As a component of the strategic action plan for the Parks and Recreation Department, the consultant met with the zoo director and parks and recreation director at the zoo. Through this process, the consultant reviewed the zoo's existing management plans, the agreement between the Park Commission and Zoological Society, and the current operating and capital budgets for the zoo.

Overall, the zoo has accomplished a great deal. The \$3.2 million operating budget and visitation numbers are quite impressive. The strategies outlined in the business plan and donor development plan provide good direction for zoo staff to follow. The performance goals outlined appear to be appropriate and attainable if the strategies are followed. Overall, the zoo has had good direction and leadership during the past 20 years under Zoo Director Jim Anderson and Former Parks Director Bob Arnold.

It is the consultant's recommendation that the framework outlined in the 2002 business plan be implemented. This includes the need for a new agreement between the Zoological Society and the City of Fort Wayne. The existing agreement does not recognize or authorize the current management operation. It is cumbersome and dilutes authority and responsibility for both the city and Zoological Society.

This strategic action plan provides the city with an opportune time to decide whether or not it wants to be in the zoo business. Sole management by the Zoological Society or city would greatly simplify zoo operations and eliminate unnecessary duplication (i.e., payroll, purchasing, insurance, etc.). While

the current system is working, it is not cost effective. Having the city take over total management of the zoo would be significantly more expensive than the current structure due to salary differences. Moving total management to the Zoological Society is the most feasible alternative. This option would motivate the society to augment earned and donated revenue activities by focusing the burden for financial support solely on the Zoological Society. Being a private, not-for-profit zoo would likely render requests for donations more appealing to potential donors than being perceived as part of the municipal government. The consultant recommends that all necessary parties, including the mayor, zoo director, parks director, Park Board president, and Zoological Society president, meet to update the existing agreement.

The following recommendations are provided to add value to the strategies already outlined in the 2002 business plan:

- The zoo needs to conduct more market research that focuses on overall visitor length of stay, each exhibit visitor observation stay by age, and the distance traveled to visit the zoo. This information will allow the zoo to establish primary, secondary, and regional marketing strategies.
- Track more closely all cost centers as they apply to efficiency, cost per experience, and revenue earned per visitor. The cost centers should include maintenance, four areas of animal care, gift shop, programs, volunteers, rides, concessions, events, exhibits, marketing, development, and administration.

- Create more pricing strategies. The current visitor per capita spending was \$5.89 for admissions, gift shop, food, and rides, which is extremely low. The current pricing of the zoo is low in comparison to the length of stay. An average recreation hour in the United States is \$4.50 to \$5.00 per hour. By tracking the length of stay, staff can measure the true value of the experience. Existing per visitor goals of \$1.65 for rides and \$1.10 for food service is low. More efforts are needed to package food products together the way fast food restaurants do to increase user spending. Current gift sales of \$1.07 per visitor is low as well. Greater efforts to attract users and to provide varying levels of items to purchase is needed to move gift sales to \$2.50 to \$3.00 per visitor.
- In the 2002-2005 strategic plan, there is a list of action items that are well laid out and focus on all elements of the zoo experience. The goals, objectives, and action items need to incorporate performance measures on how well each task is completed. Performance measures should focus on user satisfaction, efficiency, revenue earned, customer retention, capacity levels, marketing impact, etc.
- The donor development plan for 2001-2003 needs to be updated. The plan offered three over-arching strategies: increased awareness, increased market penetration activities, and intensified market development. The zoo should consider developing a weekend "Experience Fort Wayne" pass that people can buy online or through the visitor's bureau, which offers combo passes to

other attractions in the city such as the botanical conservatory.

- The zoo should work with the other park and recreation attractions to coordinate joint marketing efforts and cross-promote attractions in the city.
- If management and possession of the zoo is transferred solely to the Zoological Society, the zoo director should report directly to a new Zoological Society and not the parks director. It is very confusing

for the staff, public, and Park Board to understand this relationship.

- The zoo should consider licensing its name and materials to gain additional funding support from outside retail vendors.
- The zoo should consider contracting with several of the local caterers to provide and host events on zoo grounds. This would provide additional revenue and increase exposure to the zoo, especially from corporations.

- The zoo should consider developing a non-prime time rate for off-season times to encourage more visitors. By tracking capacity levels on a daily basis, the zoo will be able to determine off-season or non-prime times.
- The city should consider transferring the Diehm Museum of Natural History to another site and allowing the zoo to rent the space to conduct zoo programs. With a current annual visitation of approximately 2,000 individuals, this space could be used in a more effective manner by the zoo.



Appendix 5: Parks and Facilities Assessments

5.1 Introduction

This component is based on the input and conclusions drawn from staff interviews, stakeholder interviews, household and user group surveys, and public workshops, as well as an assessment of Department programs and operations. National benchmarks were used to help establish a framework for the standards and design principles recommended for Fort Wayne.

The parks and facilities are evaluated on criteria developed specifically for Fort Wayne to guide park land standards, facility standards, and design principles for each classification of park. These criteria are designed to guide the implementation of park land acquisition and program and facility improvements that will achieve the outcomes of the plan's seven foundational themes.

Park Land Standards

The overall standards for the amount of each type of park land per population reflect the existing and projected demographic structure of the Fort Wayne community and the current and projected usage of the system. These standards are generally within the ranges of standards found in comparable cities in the region.

Total acreage in the system, including boulevard strips and Hurshtown Reservoir, equals 2,789.41 acres in 84 parks. If Hurshtown Reservoir were not included, the total would be 2,429.41 acres. Of this total, 919.28 acres (38%) of the total system lies within a floodplain. Total mowed acreage (with athletic fields) is approximately 1,508.21 acres (62%) of the total system. Acreage in each planning district varies from the standards in different ways. The goal of this plan is to balance the system by bringing all sectors into a close approximation of the

citywide park land standards. These standards should also be used to anticipate the need for park land in potential annexation areas and to determine land purchases, possibly outside of city limits in advance of development

The parks in the Fort Wayne park system are classified into four types: regional parks (formerly referred to as metro), community parks, neighborhood parks, and block parks. Acreage standards do not apply to block parks, which by definition are very small, with value measured by function and location rather than size. Deficiency comparisons are not shown for block parks, since the plan recommends divestiture or reclassification of some block parks.

Based on the public input and comparisons to national and regional benchmarks, the following park land ratios can serve as guidelines for developing standards for the City of Fort Wayne:

- Total park land: 12 acres/1,000 population
- Regional parks: 4 acres/1,000 population
- Community parks: 3 acres/1,000 population
- Neighborhood parks: 1.5 acres/1,000 population
- All other assets (block parks, special recreation areas, plazas, greenways): 3.5 acres/1,000 population

Park Design Principles

In addition to adequate land area, each park developed on the land must also be programmed, planned, and designed to meet the needs of its service area and classification within the overall system.

The term programming, when used in the context of planning and developing park land, refers to the program or list of uses and facilities, not recreation programs to be run by staff. The program for a site can include such elements as ball fields, spray park shelters, restrooms, game courts, trails, open meadows, natural preserves, or interpretive areas.

Each classification of park serves a specific purpose and the features and facilities in the park must be designed for the number of age segments the park serves, appropriate length of stay, and assigned uses. Figure A5-4 illustrates appropriate service areas for these various park classifications. The following principles should be considered in developing design standards for each class of park:

Block Park

- Size of park: 2 acres or less
- Service radius: 0.25 acres per 1,000 residents
- Length of stay: One-half hour or less experience
- Age segments served: One to two
- Amenities: No signature amenities; minimal to no hard surfaces; no restrooms
- Revenue facilities: None
- Land usage: 100% active
- Programming: No essential services; park use self directed
- Maintenance standards: Higher than maintenance levels of surrounding neighborhood
- Signage: One park sign
- Landscaping: Minimal and low level
- Parking: None
- Lighting: One security light
- Naming: Not named after a neighborhood or person
- Other: N/A

Neighborhood Park

- Size of park: 2 to 10 acres
- Service radius: 1.5 acres per 1,000 residents
- Length of stay: One hour or less experience
- Age segments served: More than four
- Amenities: One signature facility (e.g. major playground, bandstand, etc.); no non-producing/unused amenities; no

restrooms; playground targeted to ages 2 through 8; no reservable shelters

- Revenue facilities: None
- Land usage: 85% active/15% passive
- Programming: None
- Maintenance standards: Higher than maintenance levels of surrounding neighborhood
- Signage: Strong signage throughout the park
- Landscaping: Low level
- Parking: Five to 10 spaces including handicap spaces; typically angled parking
- Lighting: Security lighting only
- Naming: Not named after a neighborhood or person; can be named after a natural landmark
- Other: Customize to demographics of neighborhood; safety design meets established standards (CPTED); integrated color scheme throughout

Community Park

- Size of park: 10 to 50 acres
- Service radius: 3 acres per 1,000 residents
- Length of stay: Two- to three-hour experience
- Age segments served: Six to eight
- Amenities: Four signature facilities (e.g. trails, sports fields, shelters, community playground, recreation center, pool, sports complex, water feature, etc.); public restrooms provided
- Revenue facilities: One to two (e.g. pool, sports complex, pavilion, etc.)
- Programming: 65% active/35% passive

- Land usage: Four to five essential services can be provided (e.g. sports, camps, aquatics, etc.)
- Maintenance standards: Higher than maintenance levels of surrounding neighborhood
- Signage: Strong signage throughout the park
- Landscaping: Strong landscaping throughout the park
- Parking: Sufficient for amenities; occupies no more than 10% of park
- Lighting: Acceptable (sports and safety)
- Naming: Not named to a neighborhood
- Other: Strong appeal to surrounding neighborhoods; safety design meets established standards (CPTED); integrated color scheme throughout the park; partnerships developed with nearby schools or not-for-profit organizations; looped trail connectivity; linked to regional park or facility

Regional Park

- Size of park: More than 50 acres
- Service radius: 4 acres per 1,000 residents
- Length of stay: All-day experience
- Age segments served: 10
- Amenities: 10 to 12 amenities to create a signature facility (e.g. golf course, tennis, fields, courts, lake, regional playground, 3+ shelters, recreation center, pool, gardens, trails, zoo, specialty facility, etc.) public restrooms provided; special events site
- Revenue facilities: More than two; park designed to produce revenue

- Land usage: Up to 50% active/50% passive
- Programming: More than three core services provided
- Maintenance standards: Higher than maintenance levels of surrounding neighborhood
- Signage: Strong signage throughout the park
- Landscaping: Strong focal entrance and landscaping throughout the park
- Parking: Sufficient for amenities
- Lighting: Acceptable (sports and safety)
- Naming: Not named to a neighborhood
- Other: Safety design meets established standards (CPTED); integrated color scheme throughout the park; linked to major trail systems; public transportation available; dedicated full-time staff with on-site manager

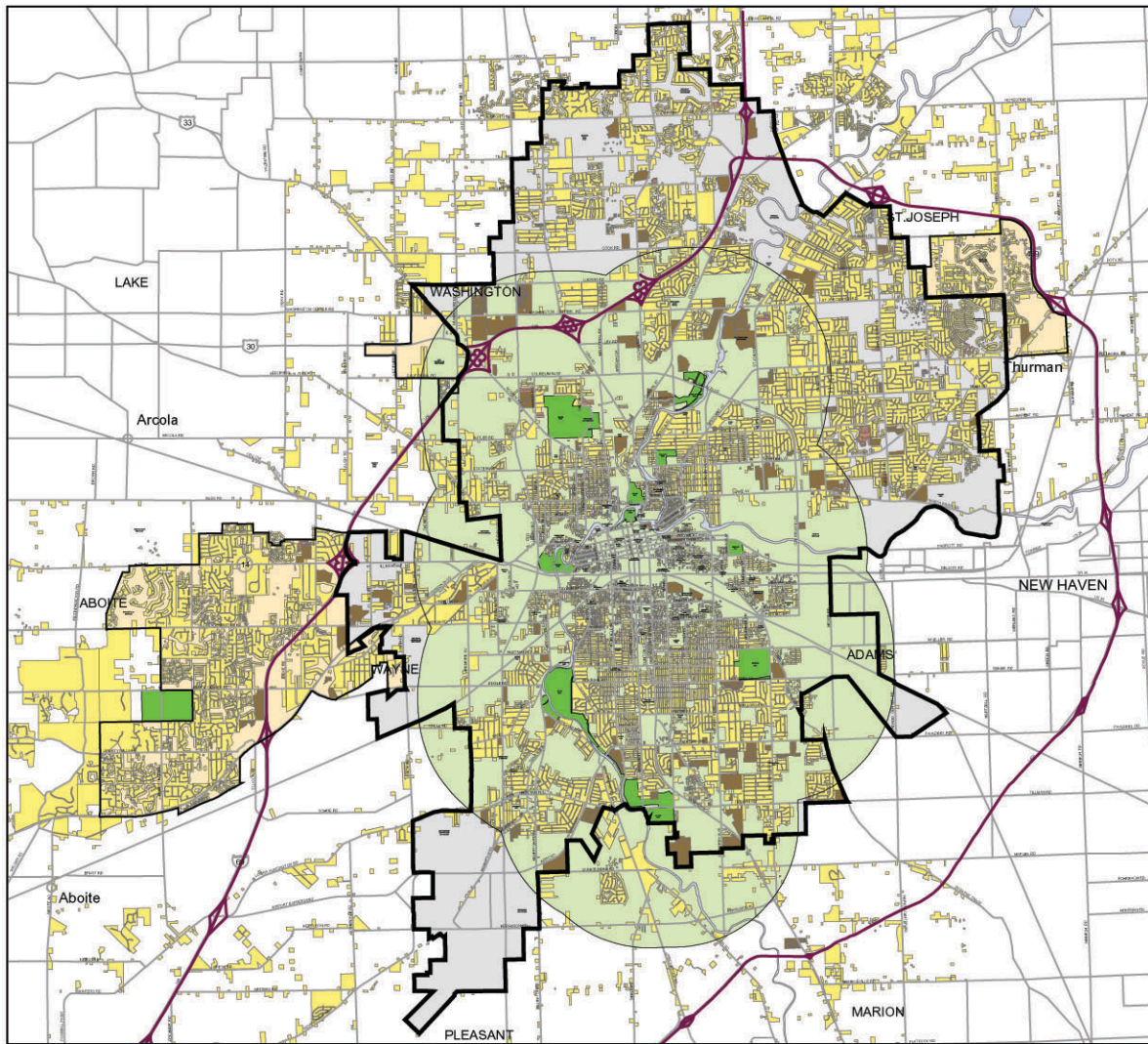
Greenway

- Age segments served: Six to 10
- Amenities: Walk, bike, run;
- Parking: Community or neighborhood trail access to parking
- Lighting: None
- Amenities: Restrooms at trailheads only
- Signage: Half-mile markers
- Maintenance standards: Higher than maintenance levels of surrounding neighborhood, with a consistent minimum level throughout the city
- Other: 12 feet or wider; strong color scheme; connectivity to signature/regional parks/facilities or attractions in the city

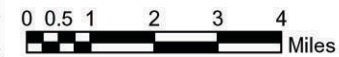
Park Distribution

As described in the Demographic and Growth Trend Analysis section, the demographic shift that is ongoing in the city has an effect on land use patterns. In the older sections of the city (less than three miles from the urban core), the land use pattern is urban, with a greater mix of uses, and in the newer areas, the land use pattern is suburban and much more homogenous. This land use pattern is reflected in all land uses, including parks. City parks in the older portions of the city are typically smaller block and neighborhood parks. Parks outside the three-mile radius from the urban core are typically larger community and regional parks, which are automobile oriented.

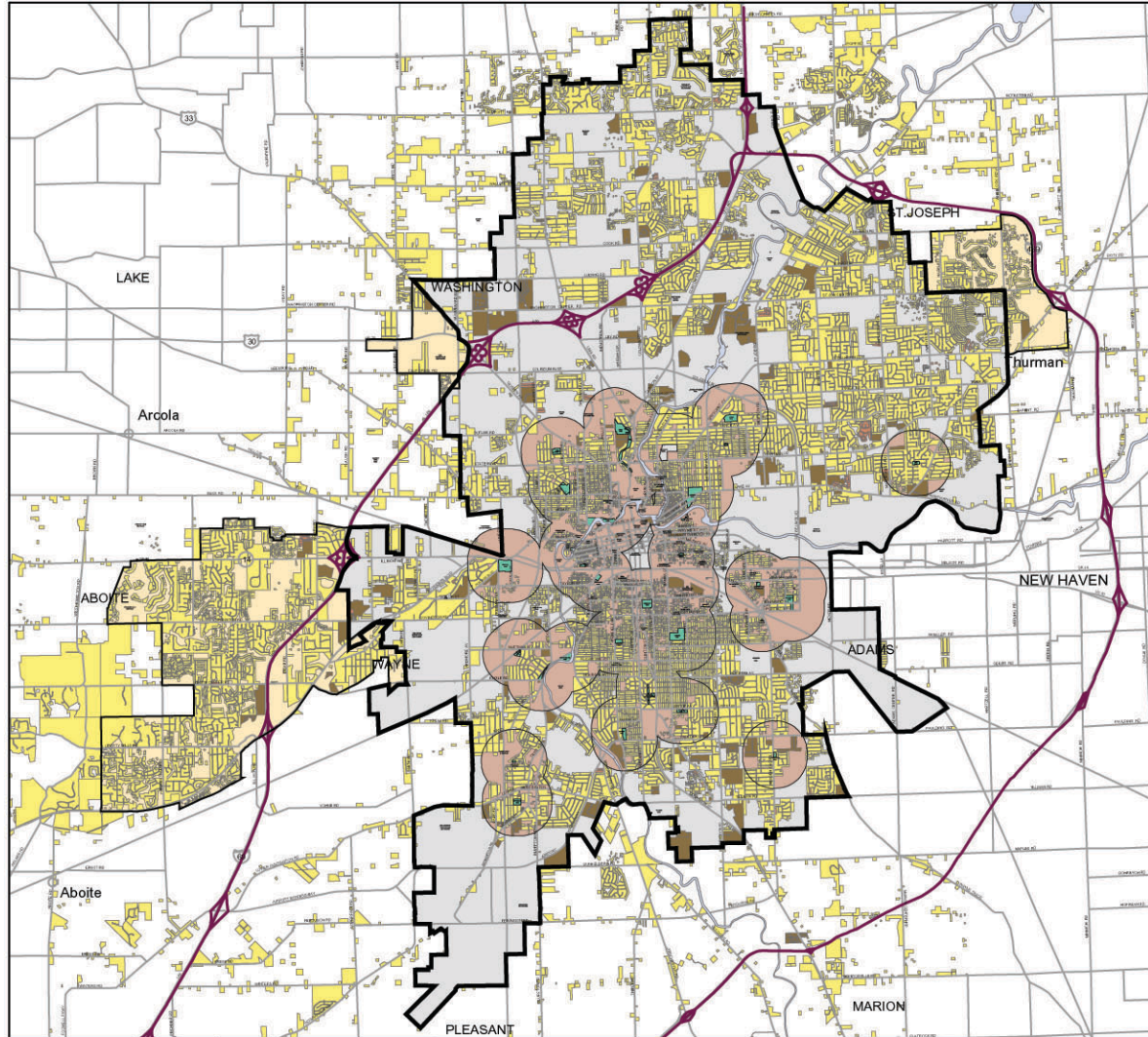
Smaller parks within two miles of the urban core have historically served a large population, but that population density has declined over the past few decades. Because the population density was higher in the past, more, but smaller parks were located in closer proximity to these residents. Because of the proximity to neighborhoods, pedestrian access to block and neighborhood parks in this portion of the city is generally better than parks beyond the three-mile ring; however there are opportunities for improvement to neighborhood connections to the cultural institutions in the urban core, schools, and the greenway. Improvements to linkages from neighborhoods to the greenway will provide access to parks, schools, cultural institutions, regional park resources, and employment centers.



- Legend**
- Fort Wayne
 - Rivers
 - Freeway
 - Annexations
 - Community Parks
 - Service Area
- Residential Land Use**
- Multi-Family
 - Duplex
 - Single-Family



**COMMUNITY PARKS SERVICE AREA
FIGURE A5-1**

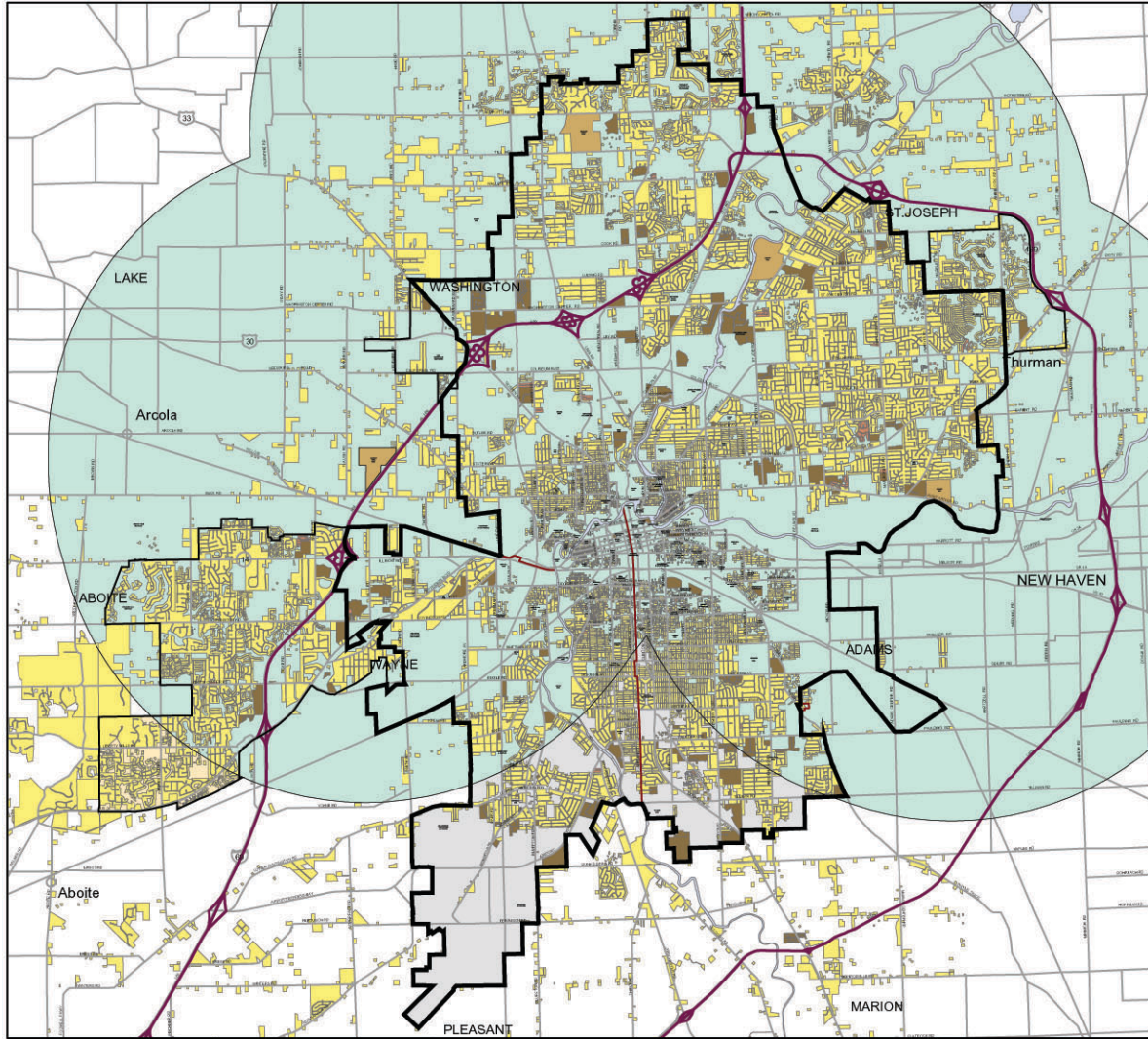


- Legend**
- Fort Wayne
 - Rivers
 - Freeway
 - Annexations
 - Neighborhood Parks
 - Service Area
- Residential Land Use**
- Multi-Family
 - Duplex
 - Single-Family

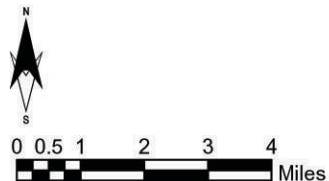


**FORT WAYNE
PARKS AND
RECREATION**

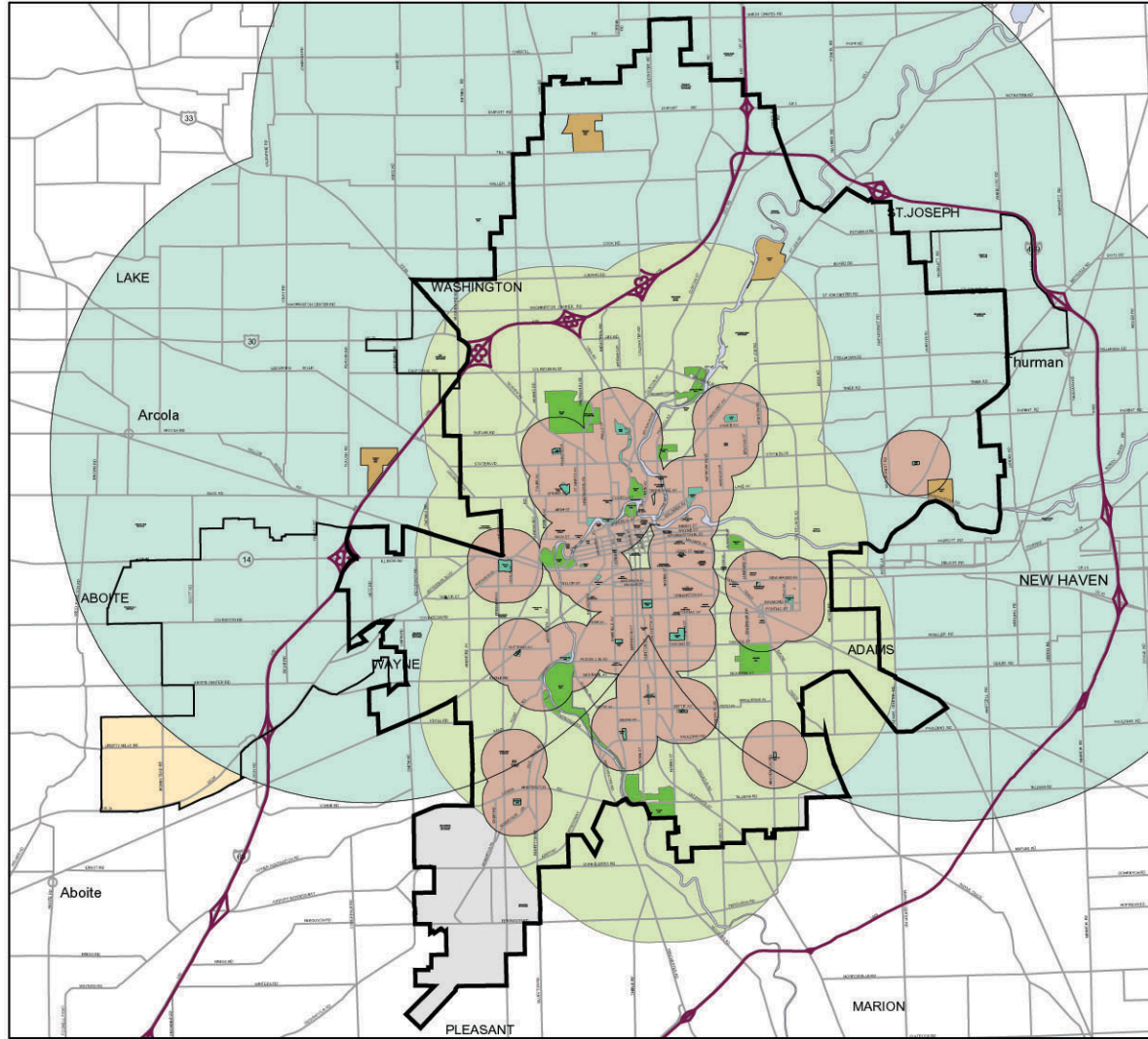
**NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS SERVICE AREA
FIGURE A5-2**



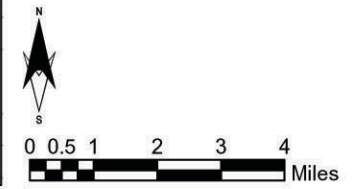
- Legend**
- Fort Wayne
 - Rivers
 - Freeway
 - Annexations
 - Regional Parks
 - Service Area
- Residential Land Use**
- Multi-Family
 - Duplex
 - Single-Family



**REGIONAL PARKS SERVICE AREA
FIGURE A5-3**



- Legend**
- Fort Wayne
 - Rivers
 - Freeway
 - Annexations
 - Neighborhood Parks
 - Community Parks
 - Regional Parks
- Service Area**
- Neighborhood Parks
 - Community Parks
 - Regional Parks



NEIGHBORHOOD, COMMUNITY, & REGIONAL PARKS SERVICE AREAS
FIGURE A5-4

Facility Standards

In addition to park land acreage, distribution of recreation facilities is important to balancing the system. Standards for numbers or size of facilities per population measurement reflect the demographics of Fort Wayne compared to benchmark communities elsewhere in the region and are adjusted in response to public input on needs and preferences.

In 2003, the Fort Wayne parks and recreation facilities included 93 buildings totaling 455,714 square feet (excluding the children's zoo), in addition to other facilities.

Building Breakdown

- Rental pavilions (18): Psi Ote Barn has separate upper and lower rental areas
- Open shelters (13): Not reserved or rented
- Tennis centers (2): Open shelters with restrooms
- Community centers (3)*
- Bath houses (4): At the pools
- Golf clubhouses (3)
- Ice arena (1): Two sheets of ice
- Learning center (1): Salomon Farm
- Day camp buildings (2): Franke Park
- Botanical conservatory (1)
- Greenhouse (1): 0.75 acre

*Existing community centers are undersized for modern community recreation centers

The remainder are support facilities, i.e. restrooms, maintenance, etc.

Playgrounds

- Individual playgrounds (61): At 52 parks
- Water playground (1)

Historic Structures (listed on Historic Register)

- Swinney Homestead at East Swinney Park
- Old Wells Street Bridge at St. Mary's River, Whipple Truss Bridge

Trees (not including woods and forests)

- Street trees (51,362)
- Park trees* (10,000)
- Total trees under the care of the Department (61,362)

Other Miscellaneous Facts

- Basketball courts (44): 11 with lights, all outdoors (30 full/14 half)
- Tennis courts (62): 39 with lights, all outdoors
- Ball diamonds* (39): 18 with lights (11 hardball/26 softball/2 pickup, including some diamonds no longer scheduled or used by leagues)
- Football/rugby/lacrosse fields (3): None lighted
- Soccer fields (20): None lighted
- Sand volleyball court (1): Outdoors
- Hard-surface volleyball court (3): Outdoors
- Cricket field (1): Not lighted
- Boat launches (3)

- River greenway (14 miles)
- NHL-size indoor ice sheets (2)
- Outdoor skating facilities (3)
- Community centers (3)
- Pools/aquatic centers (4): All outdoors, all heated, one with zero-depth area
- Public golf courses (3): Foster-18 holes, par 71/McMillen executive-18 holes, par 65/McMillen Mad Anthony Threes-nine holes, par 3/Shoaff-18 holes, par 3
- Golf driving ranges (2): Shoaff and McMillen
- Campground (1): 36 RV/camper sites, electricity, water fill, dump station, showers/restrooms, phone/Internet sites available
- Nature preserve (1): Lindenwood
- 1930s-era working farm (1)

Based on public input and comparisons to regional and national benchmarks, the following facility ratios can serve as guidelines for developing standards for the City of Fort Wayne:

- Playground: 1 per 2,500 residents
- Adult baseball field: 1 field per 8,000 residents
- Youth baseball field: 1 field per 4,000 residents
- Tennis court: 1 court per 9,000 residents
- Golf course: 1 hole per 6,000 residents
- Outdoor basketball court: 1 court per 2,500 residents
- Community pool: 1 pool per 50,000 residents
- Family aquatic center: 1 per 125,000 residents
- Indoor basketball court: 1 square foot per resident
- Recreation center: 1 square foot per resident
- Open picnic shelter: 1 per 5,000 residents
- Enclosed pavilion: 1 per 30,000 residents (200-person capacity)
- Dog park: 1 per 50,000 residents (5 acres)
- Skate park: 1 per 50,000 youth residents
- Restroom: 1 per 50 acres of community and regional park*
- Soccer field: 1 per 4,000 residents
- Rectangular field: 1 per 10,000 residents
- BMX outdoor facility: 1 per 250,000 residents
- Ice skating: 1 per 75,000 residents
- Spray park: 1 per 25,000 residents
- Fitness: 0.3 square foot per resident (cardiovascular, free weights, aerobic)
- Nature education facility: 1 per 50,000 residents
- Trail/greenway: 1 mile per 3,000 residents
- Outdoor adventure: 1 park per 100,000 residents

* Restrooms for special parks and facilities, existing parks, and neighborhood parks will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Park Master Plan and Design Process

A consistent approach to selecting park master planning design consultants will help to maintain balance in the system and consistency in the quality and approach to design. The Department's policy has been to select consulting landscape architects for most planning and design projects. The steps outlined below can expand that process by adding selection procedures for engaging design professionals in smaller projects using open-end contracts and annual/biennial selections.

Following the selection process outline is a generic planning and design process that provides consistent public input at key stages in the design process. It can also provide a consistent process that ensures ample public review.

Consultant Selection

1. Form a steering committee for the park project.
2. Prepare and issue a request for proposals (RFP) for a landscape architect to design the park.
 - a. The selection committee should consist of one or two Park Board members, two to three Park and Recreation Department staff, and one stakeholder associated with the specific park. An odd number of members is good for the selection committee; three is generally small, but can be appropriate depending on the size and complexity of the

project; seven or more can become unwieldy.

- b. For small projects (under \$250,000 in construction or \$25,000 in fees):
 - Solicit qualifications from appropriate design professionals (landscape architects, architects, and engineers).
 - Select one to three firms for open-end contracts to design small projects over a designated period of time (one or two years), and set a cap for the contract fees for each year.
 - As projects are identified, request project-specific proposals from the appropriate firms with open-end contracts.
- c. For larger projects (over \$250,000 in construction or \$25,000 in fees):
 - Request the firms' credentials and approaches to the project.
 - Identify any special qualifications needed for the project.
 - Short-list and interview three firms.
 - Negotiate the final scope and fee with the selected firm (if unsuccessful with the first firm, negotiate with the second-ranked firm).

General Scope of Work for Most Park Master Plans or Design

1. Data collection and site evaluation
 - a. A kickoff workshop with city staff and the steering committee to confirm the development program and level of design for the park, agree on a schedule of meetings and reviews, and assemble data available from the city on the site
 - b. Optional public workshop to gather information on public wants, needs, and concerns for the park prior to beginning analysis and programming (developing a list of uses)
 - c. Site reconnaissance to verify data and assess visual qualities and natural land organization
 - d. Summary memo and graphic site analysis
2. Conceptual plans
 - a. Program of uses, facilities, and improvements appropriate to the park
 - b. Up to three conceptual alternatives of the proposed park improvements and a cost opinion for each
 - c. Public workshop to review, discuss, and refine the alternatives into a preferred concept plan
3. Draft master plan
 - a. Draft master (general leading to a master plan) or master site devel-

- opment plan (schematic, leading to preliminary construction documents) and cost opinion for the park, including:
- Color-rendered illustrative plan with program elements listed
 - Black-and-white phasing plan with program elements listed
 - Opinion of probable construction cost
 - Sketches or sections if appropriate (master site development plan)
- b. Public workshop to review and approve the draft master plan
4. Final plan (master plan)
- a. Based on the third workshop, finalize and **submit** the master plan. The final master plan documents will be submitted in the following formats:
- Site analysis and plan alternatives—22" x 34" colored hardcopy and digital PDF on CD
 - Color-rendered plan—22" x 34" colored hardcopy and digital PDF on CD
 - Black-and-white master plan showing notes and phasing—22" x 34" hardcopy and digital AutoCAD 2000 file on CD
- Cost opinions—8.5" x 11" hardcopy and digital Excel file on disk
 - Workshop summaries and written master plan summary with phasing—8.5" x 11" hardcopy and digital Word file on disk
5. Construction documents; the consultant should provide the following:
- a. Preliminary design (review at 30% complete)
- b. Final design (review at 60%, 90%, and 100% complete)
- c. Bidding assistance
- Pre-bid meeting (if necessary)
 - Addenda
 - Bid opening
 - Evaluation of bids and recommendation for award
6. Construction administration
- Preconstruction meeting
 - Construction observation
 - Change orders (if required)
 - Review of pay requests and recommendation for payment
 - Punch list
 - Final walk-through
 - Project closeout

System Overview

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department desired to have an independent consulting firm assess and evaluate each of the system's 83 parks. This was accomplished by performing individual walkover and/or windshield site assessments for each of the 83 parks. Photo logs and field notes were created during a week-long tour of the park system.

Park staff insight and history was invaluable for formulating assessments and recommendations. Subsequent meetings with the steering committee and input at public meetings helped to complete the park assessments and recommendations.

Park assessments included the following parks:

Northwest District

- Trader's Pointe
- Historic Old Fort
- Zeis Park
- Little Turtle Memorial
- Griswold Avenue Playlot
- Vesey Park
- Johnny Appleseed Park
- Franke Park
- Northwood Middle School
- Salomon Farm Park
- Buckner Farm Park
- Lindenwood Nature Preserve
- Gren Park
- Hamilton Park
- Boone Street Playlot
- Roosevelt Park
- Camp Allen Park
- Bloomingdale Park E&W
- Superior Property
- Wells Street Park
- Lawton Park
- West Swinney Park

Northeast District

- Bob Arnold Northside Park
- Jehl Park
- Kraeger Park
- Klug Park
- Lions Park
- Hurshtown Reservoir (not observed)
- Hanna's Ford
- Shoaff Park
- Lakeside Park

Southeast District

- Headwaters Park
- Freimann Square
- Japanese Garden
- Courthouse Green
- Old Forte Park
- East Central Park
- Nuckols Memorial Park
- Brackenridge Playground
- Memorial Park
- Hanna Homestead Park
- Jennings Center
- Summit Street Block Park
- East Central Playlot
- Seiling Block Park
- John Street Block Park
- Bowser Playground
- Williams Park
- McCormick Park
- Weisser Park
- McMillen Park
- Turpie Playlot
- Casselwood Park
- Tillman Park
- Brewer Park
- Lafayette Park
- Reservoir Park

Southwest District

- Packard Park
- Rudisill/Fairfield Park
- Kettler Park
- Waynedale Park
- Waynedale Gardens
- Mason Drive LL Complex
- Bass Playground
- Strathmore Drive
- East Swinney Park
- Study Park
- Psi Ote Park
- Indian Village (Sears) Park
- Miner Playground
- McCulloch Park
- Moody Park
- Rockhill Park
- Ewing Park
- Botanical Conservatory
- Salon Plaza
- Community Park
- Orff Park
- Guildin Park
- Noll Park
- West Central Park
- Foster Park

Facility assessments included the following:

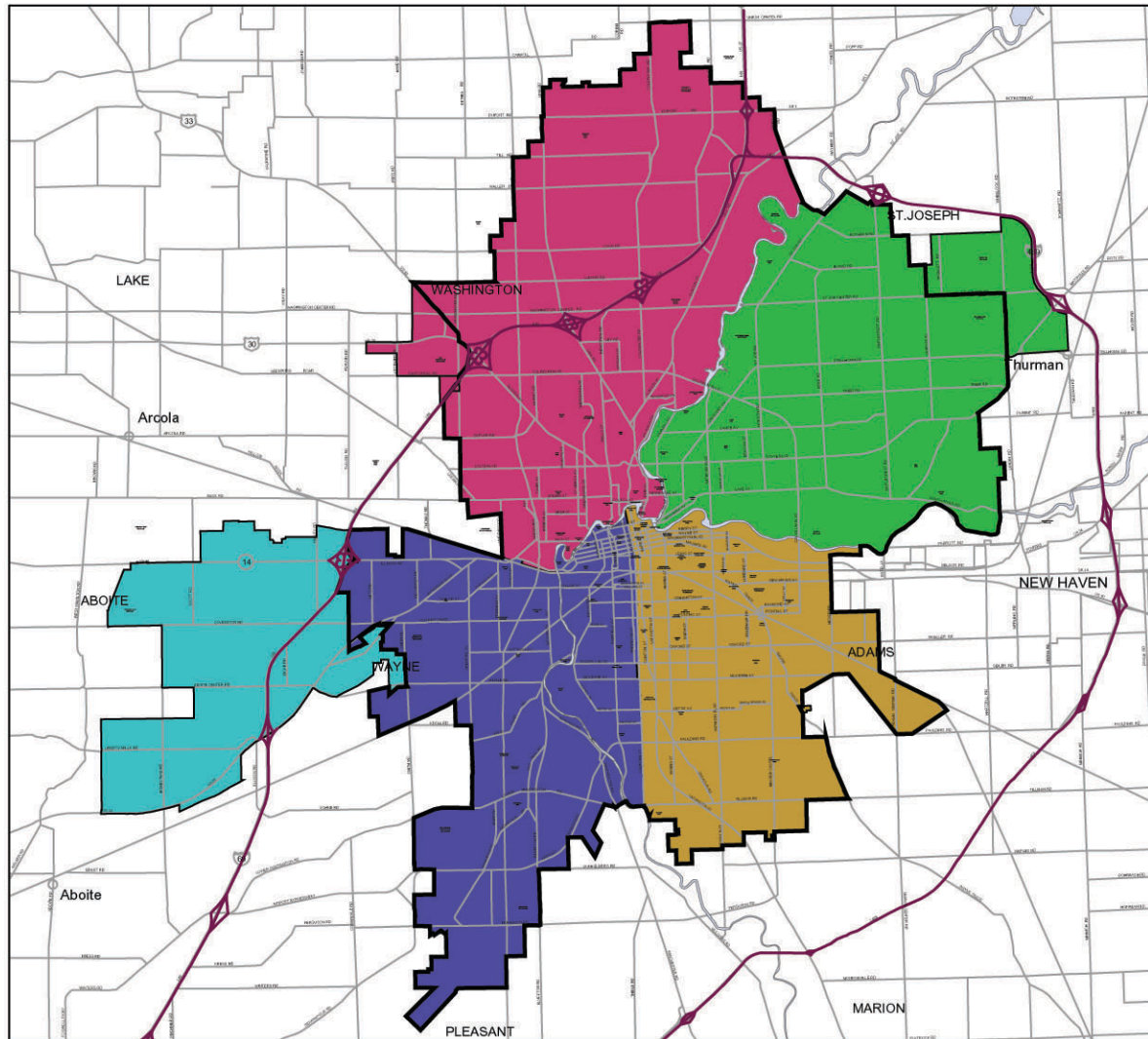
- **Franke Park**
 - Foellinger Theater
 - Center Restroom
 - Pavilion No. 1
 - Diehm Museum
 - Pond Pavilion
 - Day Camp Nature Center
 - Long House
 - Pavilion No. 2
 - Heavy Equipment Barn
 - Maintenance Barn
- **Historic Old Fort Park**
 - Old Fort
- **West Swinney Park**
 - Bath House
 - Restrooms
- **Swinney Park East**
 - Homestead
 - Tennis Center
- **Bob Arnold Northside Park**
 - Park Office
 - Pool Equipment Building
 - Psi Ote Barn
- **Shoaff Park**
 - Clubhouse
 - Golf Maintenance Barn
 - Conklin Pavilion
 - Riverlodge Pavilion
 - Restrooms
- **Jennings Center**
 - Building
- **McCormick Park**
 - Pavilion
 - Restrooms
 - Shelter
- **McMillen Park**
 - Ice Arena
 - Pavilion
 - Aquatic Center
 - Golf Operation Center
 - Ball Diamond Restrooms
 - Pool Bath House
 - Shelter at LSA Course
- **Memorial park**
 - Pool Bath House
 - Pavilion
- **Weisser Park**
 - Recreation Center
 - Pavilion
- **Botanical Conservatory**
 - Building
- **Community Center**
 - Building
- **Foster Park**
 - Golf Cart Storage
 - Golf Pavilion
 - Golf Course Restrooms
 - Golf Maintenance Barn
 - Pavilion No. 1
 - Pavilion No. 2
 - Pavilion No. 3
 - Restroom near No. 2
 - Restroom near Baseball
- **Foster Park West**
 - Soccer Field Restrooms
 - Pawster Dog Shelter
- **Lakeside Park**
 - Pavilion No. 1
 - Pavilion No. 2

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department manages nearly 2,670 acres of land and maintains and operates over 90 structures with over 450,000 square feet under roof. These structures range from a modest, pre-engineered, metal, open-air pavilion to a 48,000-square-foot botanical conservatory in the heart of downtown. The park land is comprised of several park types and sizes. For planning purposes the system is considered in five planning districts. The four original planning districts used by the Fort Wayne Planning Department—Northwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest—divided the city geographically into quadrants roughly defined by the rivers. Figure A5-5 depicts the planning districts.

A fifth planning district, Aboite, has been added to the city's comprehensive master plan in anticipation of the annexation of Aboite Township. To date, no parks or special recreation areas are owned or operated by the Department in this district; therefore, no assessments were performed for this planning district. The general recommendations apply to all five planning districts.

There are five types of parks distributed throughout the planning areas, as follows:

- Block parks (21)
- Neighborhood parks (28)
- Community parks (12)
- Regional (formerly referred to as metro) parks (3)
- Special recreation areas (19)

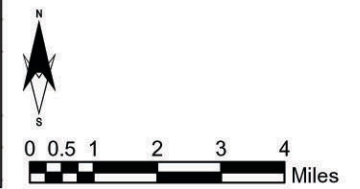


Legend

- Fort Wayne
- Rivers
- Freeway

Planning Districts

- Northwest
- Northeast
- Southeast
- Southwest
- Alboite



**PLANNING DISTRICTS
FIGURE A5-5**

Each district summary includes park assessments by type, size, distribution, and specific amenities. Following the general summary of each district are selected individual park assessments illustrating different classifications of parks as they exist in each district. In addition, these assessments cover the broad range of opportunities for the system as a whole. For example, Buckner Park may represent regional parks in the Northwest Planning District but may also represent new park additions in any planning district.

Overall Facilities Assessment

In general, the facilities are in good condition, provide a safe and secure environment, pose little risk to the Department, and comply with the American Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). The quality of the facilities is an asset for the Department; however, the unbalanced approach to facility management of the different facilities creates confusion within the community. The Department's programs provide the residents of Fort Wayne with a wide variety of activities, some of which are unique to traditional park and recreation departments. This variety does create a lack of definition of what constitutes essential and unique services, which diminishes the Department's overall image. The current facilities and programs are an invaluable resource to draw from in defining the future of the Department.

Most of the existing structures were audited and rated on the following four categories:

- Overall facility condition to determine condition and potential future capital expenditures

- Management of potential risk to the facility users and occupants
- Safety/security of the facility to protect the facility from criminal activity
- Facility compliance with ADAAG

The audits were performed by visual observation only with some of the audits from the exterior of the facility. The following rating system was used:

Overall Facility Condition

4 - Excellent

The facility is in new or almost new condition and will not require additional capital expenditures in the near future.

3 - Good

The facility is in good condition and will require capital expenditures in the future costing no more than 25% of the total replacement value.

2 - Fair

The facility is in fair condition and will require capital expenditures in the future costing no more than 50% of the total replacement value.

1 - Poor

The facility is in poor condition and major restoration is required, and the cost will exceed 50% of the replacement value. Demolition should be considered.

Risk Management

4 - None

The facility and/or use expose users to no risk of harm or injury.

3 - Slight

The facility and/or use expose users to slight risk of harm or injury, such as falling or tripping.

2 - Moderate

The facility and/or use expose users to moderate risk of harm or injury, such as drowning or falling more than 36 inches. The presence of cooking appliances presents a risk and should be evaluated.

1 - High

The facility and/or use expose users to high risk of harm or injury, such as drowning (unsupervised) or high-contact sports.

Safety/Security

4 - High

The facility is secure and safe.

3 - Moderate

The facility is moderately secure and safe.

2 - Low

The facility is unsecured but reasonably safe during daylight hours.

1 - None

The facility is unsecured and has little visual control from nearby roadway or walkway, even during daylight hours.

ADA Compliance

4 - Full

The facility was constructed or upgraded under current ADA guidelines.

3 - Mostly

The facility was constructed prior to current ADA guidelines, but has been reasonably

updated to meet current standards. Full compliance would require additional investigation.

2 - Partial

The facility was constructed prior to current ADA guidelines and does not comply due to some deficiencies; the facility could be upgraded to comply with major renovations.

1 - None

The facility does not comply with the ADA guidelines and should be replaced with a new facility. Parks are organized by planning district and listed in alphabetical order. Facility data is gathered from a variety of sources and should be used as reference material only; information provided should be verified prior to use for other purposes.

Assessments by District

5.2 Northwest Planning District

There are 22 parks in the Northwest Planning District totaling 1,078 acres, including over 27 facilities with more than 80,000 square feet. The inner city areas are served with a preponderance of smaller parks while the outer areas are served with a few larger parks. Approximately 85% of the parks comprise two-thirds of the district's park acreage and serve the inner city areas, leaving 15% of the parks comprising one-third of the district's park acreage. Figure A5-6 depicts the service area for community, neighborhood, and regional parks in this district.

Park Types

The Northwest Planning District park types are categorized as follows:

Block Parks (5)

- Zeis Park
- Little Turtle Park
- Griswold Playlot
- Boone Street Playlot
- Wells Street Park

Neighborhood Parks (5)

- Vesey Park
- Gren Park
- Hamilton Park
- Camp Allen
- Bloomingdale East and West Park

Community Parks (4)

- Franke Park
- Johnny Appleseed Park
- Lawton Park
- West Swinney Park

Regional Parks (2)

- Buckner Farm Park
- Salomon Farm

Special Recreation Areas (6)

- Trader's Point
- Historic Old Fort
- Northwood Middle School
- Lindenwood Nature Preserve

- Roosevelt Park
- Superior Property

Park Deficiencies

When park land guidelines and park and facility classifications are adopted, deficiencies and excesses will be found. The guidelines will help the Department balance the system. For example, if guidelines for park land are adopted, the Northwest Planning District would have the following deficiencies:

Neighborhood Parks (5)

- Shortage of 34 acres

Community Parks (4)

- Surplus of 274 acres

Regional Parks (3)

- Surplus of 132 acres

Special Recreation Areas (6)

- Shortage of 21 acres

Total Park Land

- Shortage of 15 acres

Selected Park and Facility Assessments

Special Recreation Area: Historic Old Fort Park

Park Assessment

This park is situated in the flood plain along the St. Mary's River. The site is extremely difficult to approach from Spy Run Avenue. Proposed parking on the opposite side of Spy Run Avenue will require extreme measures to ensure a safe pedestrian crossing over Spy Run, either via an overhead pedestrian bridge or a pedestrian underpass as previously proposed. Potential flooding could create adverse safety conditions in any proposed tunnels and a breach in the flood levee. This special recreation area is linked to Headwaters Park via a pedestrian bridge over the St. Mary's River. Efforts to direct pedestrian access from Headwaters Park would only improve the safety of this park. This park provides a place for a yearly re-enactment event and therefore provides a unique facility to the Department.

Facility Assessment

The park is home to a replica of the second fort in Fort Wayne, built by John Whistler, that illustrates historic construction types. The park is now partially hidden behind a new earth embankment, and is not entirely visible from the roadway.

- Risk Management: The facilities have a high risk rating. The structures are located within the flood plain, are in deteriorated condition, and portions are hidden from security surveillance.

- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure during daylight hours; however, the lack of visibility from the adjacent roadway prevents easy monitoring of the facilities.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities do not comply with the ADAAG because of narrow entrances and non-paved paths.

Neighborhood Park: Bloomingdale Park East and West

Park Assessment

Although slightly larger than the 2 to 10 acres suggested for a neighborhood park, this 11-acre park has the appropriate amenities to serve a neighborhood. The basketball courts and playground areas are typical signature facilities expected in a neighborhood park. The parking count exceeds the guidelines for a neighborhood park. With defined signage, security lighting, and maintenance plan, this park will continue to be an asset for the Department while protecting the riparian buffer along St. Mary's River.

Neighborhood Park: Hamilton Park

Park Assessment

This 16-acre neighborhood park generally meets the guidelines for a community park. The size falls within the 10- to 50-acre size of a community park, and its multiple signature facilities such as restrooms, tennis courts, ball fields, basketball courts, and playground area are typical amenities expected in a community park. These amenities support a length of stay of two to three hours, much longer than the one-half

hour expected of neighborhood parks. The majority of the ball field area also serves as a detention area for storm water runoff. Flooding could cause scheduling delays for league play. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park could serve nicely as a small community park.

Community Parks: Franke Park

Park Assessment

This 329-acre community park exceeds the suggested 50- to 200-acre size range of a regional park, and its multiple signature facilities and revenue centers are typical amenities expected in a regional park. These amenities support a length of stay of six to eight hours, much longer than the two to three hours expected of community parks. This park is in the flood plain and much of the open space also serves as a detention area. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park could serve as a major regional park.

Facility Assessment

Franke Park is home to the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, Foellinger Theater, Diehm Museum, Day Camp Nature Center, Long House, BMX facility, two full rental pavilions, two maintenance barns, and a restroom building. In general, the facilities are in good condition. The zoo structures were not assessed due to their unique qualities and the fact that they are currently maintained by the Zoological Society under an agreement with the Department. The Foellinger Theater was rebuilt in 1976 and has undergone recent improvements. The lessee of the BMX

facility maintains it.

- Risk Management: The facilities have a slight risk rating. All the structures, except for the BMX building and the nature center are located within the flood plain.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities, except for the nature center and the Diehm Museum, generally comply with ADAAG. The nature center's restroom entries are too narrow, and the showers are non-accessible. The museum is a two-story structure and may require an elevator to comply.
- Program Sampling
 - Park: Day camp (summer), outdoor education, outdoor recreation, trips (canoe, rock-climbing, caving, rafting, backpacking, hunting, and skiing)
 - Staff for entire program and three nature centers (one full-time, one part-time staff)
 - Low attendance
 - Free outdoor education programs to public
 - Full capacity at free programs
 - Special events: 2,400 attendance
 - Low-cost programs for schools/Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts
 - Competition: Allen County/YMCA/YWCA
 - Collaborations with: Acres Land Trust/Audubon/Hoosier Relief/Tri State 2 Cylinder Club (Antique Tractors)
 - Zoo programs: Education about animals, 50 sleepovers annually, teen programs

- Add new features periodically
- Good marketing/promotion
- Currently 500,000 visitors/year: Capacity 600,000/year (10-year goal)
- Open 365 days/year for programs; late April to mid-October; general public 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Budget \$3.2 million; 95% revenue generated; 5% other earned income
- 10,500 season pass holders/memberships
- 38% visitors from Allen County
- 90% visitors from 50-mile radius
- 330,000 participants/year for small group formal programs
- Some programs fee-based/some free
- Off-site: Visit third grade classes, preschools, and nursing homes
- More multi-use indoor program space needed
- Liquor license needed for fundraisers
- Staff: 45 full-time/20 part-time/50 seasonal/1,000 casual volunteers/200 active volunteers
- Full-time staff dedicated to programs

Community Park: West Swinney Park

Park Assessment

This 48-acre park falls within the suggested 10- to 50-acre size range for a community park and has the appropriate amenities to serve a community park. The gardens, ball fields, basketball courts, and playground area are typical signature facilities expected in a community park. The parking is ad-

equated for the facilities offered. The swimming pool, which needs improvements, is the featured revenue facility. Improvements could include sprays and slides to broaden activities and appeal. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this community park will continue to be an asset for the community. Identified as a cultural resource, future park improvements should adhere to the guidelines in the Cultural Resources Report.

Facility Assessment

The park is home to a pool house and a restroom building. The pool house is nearly 20 years old, and should be modernized.

- Risk Management: The pool facility has a moderate risk rating and should be evaluated.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG.
- Program Sampling: Lessons, water exercise, rentals

Regional Park: Buckner Park

Park Assessment

This undeveloped, 193-acre park is suited for development as a regional park. High-quality natural features are an asset that should be preserved using sound development practices. Securing adjacent undeveloped parcels could improve the flexibility to develop the park with minimal disruption to the best natural areas. Multiple revenue sources and signature amenities

can easily be situated on this property while maintaining its rural nature.

5.3 Northeast Planning District

Nine parks in the Northeast Planning District total 850 acres and include 18 facilities with over 85,000 square feet. The inner city areas are served with a few smaller parks while the outer areas are served with a few larger parks. Nearly 45% of the parks comprising 5% of the district's park acreage serve the inner city areas, leaving 55% of the parks comprising 95% of the district's park acreage. Figure A5-7 depicts the service area for community, neighborhood, and regional parks in this district.

Park Types

Block Parks (0)

Neighborhood Parks (5)

- Bob Arnold Northside Park
- Jehl Park
- Klug Park
- Lakeside Park
- Lions Park

Community Parks (1)

- Shoaff Park

Regional Parks (1)

- Kreager Park

Special Recreation Areas (2)

- Hanna's Ford
- Hurshtown Reservoir

Park Deficiencies

When park land guidelines and park and facility classifications are adopted, deficiencies and excesses will be found. The guidelines will help the Department balance the system. For example, if guidelines for park land are adopted, the Northeast Planning District would have the following deficiencies:

Neighborhood Parks (5)

- Shortage of 27 acres

Community Parks (1)

- Shortage of 32 acres

Regional Parks (1)

- Shortage of 65 acres

Special Recreation Areas (2)

- Surplus of 36 acres

Total Park Land

- Shortage of 375 acres

Selected Park and Facility Assessments

Neighborhood Park: Bob Arnold Northside Park

Park Assessment

This 37-acre neighborhood park falls within the suggested 10- to 50-acre size range of a community park, and its multiple signature facilities such as restrooms, tennis courts,

ball fields, basketball courts, and playground area are typical amenities expected in a community park. These amenities support a length of stay of two to three hours, much longer than the one-half hour expected of neighborhood parks. Parking is adequate for the facilities; however, distribution could improve as some amenities lack convenient access. The swimming pool is the featured revenue facility and the premier aquatic center in the city. With defined signage, lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park could serve as a marquee community park that is also the home of Department headquarters.

Facility Assessment

The park is home to the park headquarters, pool house, pump house, and two-level rental pavilion. The lower level of the rental pavilion is available year round. The facilities are in good condition and most do not require immediate capital investment; however the rental pavilion does require new wood exterior decking at the second floor entrance.

- Risk Management: The pool facility has a moderate risk rating and should be evaluated.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG.

Neighborhood Park: Lakeside Park

Park Assessment

This 24-acre neighborhood park falls within the suggested 10- to 50-acre size range of a

community park, and its multiple signature facilities such as ponds, pavilions, restrooms, tennis courts, basketball courts, and playground area are typical amenities expected in a community park. These support a length of stay of two to three hours, much longer than the one-half hour expected of neighborhood parks. Parking is adequate for the facilities and is centrally located to serve most amenities. A rose garden and pavilions are the featured revenue facilities. With defined signage, lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park could serve as a community park. Identified as a cultural resource, future park improvements should adhere to the guidelines in the Cultural Resources Report.

Facility Assessment

The park is home to two rental pavilions and the rose garden. The facilities are attractive, used regularly, and in good condition.

- Risk Management: The facilities have a slight risk rating.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG.

Neighborhood Park: Lions Park

Park Assessment

This 14-acre park is slightly larger than the 2 to 10 acres suggested for a neighborhood park but has the appropriate amenities to serve a neighborhood. The tennis and basketball courts, ball fields, and playground areas are typical signature facilities expected in a neighborhood park. The parking count

exceeds the guideline for a neighborhood park. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park will continue to be an asset and sustain the mature trees along Rolston Street.

Community Parks: Shoaff Park

Park Assessment

This 184-acre community park meets the suggested 50- to 200-acre size range of a regional park, with the multiple signature facilities and revenue centers that are typical amenities expected in a regional park. This park is one of three city parks with golf (a revenue center). These amenities support a length of stay of six to eight hours, much longer than the two to three hours expected of community parks. Parking and vehicular circulation is poorly arranged and in need of reconfiguration. This park is in the flood plain and its open space also serves as a detention area; flooding can curtail play on the golf course. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park could serve as a regional park.

Facility Assessment

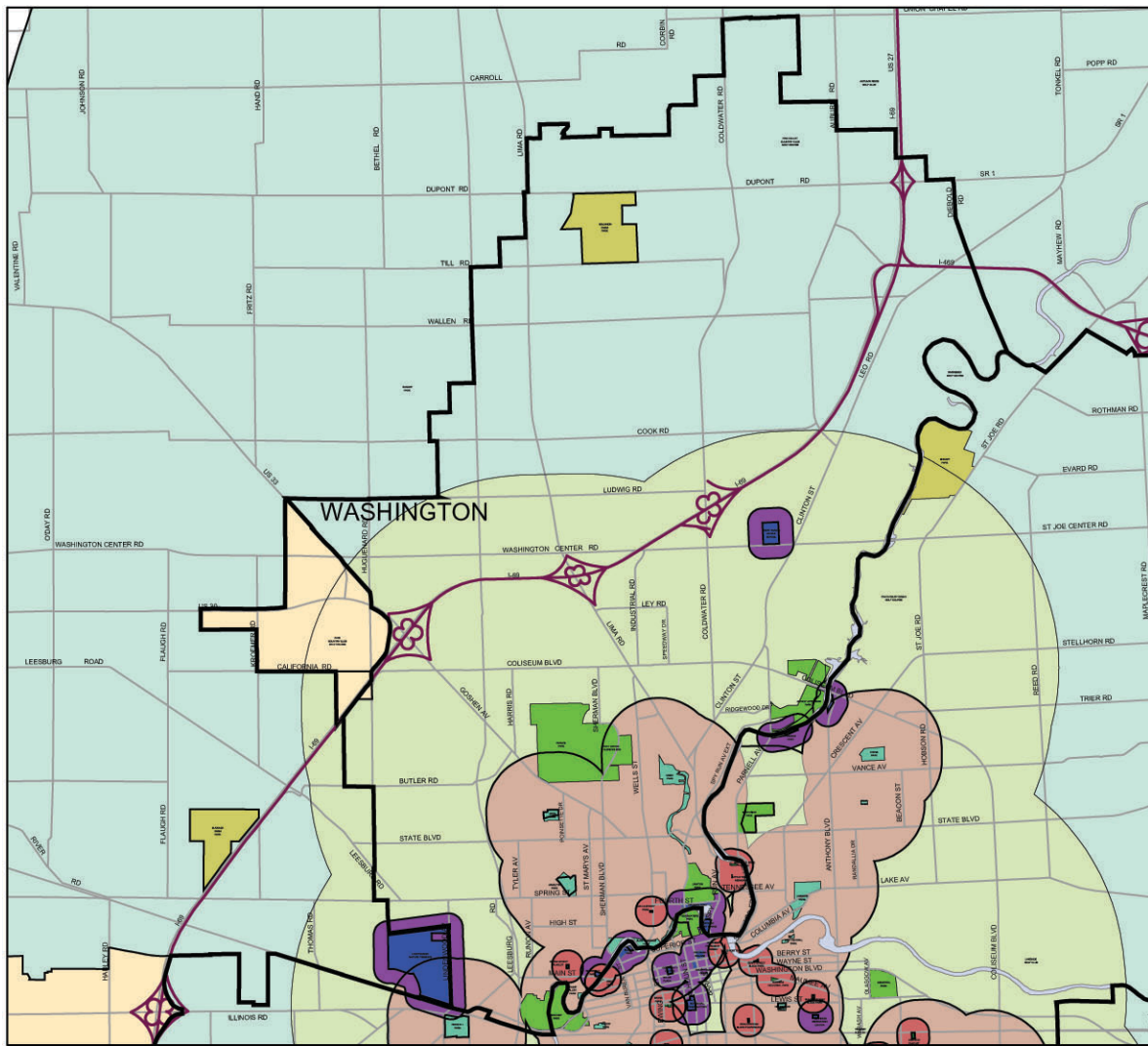
The park is home to the golf clubhouse, associated structures, park restroom building, and two rental pavilions. The existing maintenance barn is in need of extensive repair that will exceed 50% of the replacement value; therefore the structure should be evaluated for demolition and replacement. The golf clubhouse is a small, 1960s structure with limited space for a pro shop, concessions, and office. The park restrooms require renovation. The Conklin Pavilion is an attractive, large, 1957 stone

and heavy timber facility. The Riverlodge Pavilion was originally constructed in 1910 and has undergone several renovations. The pavilion is available for rental three seasons of the year; however, its proximity to the adjacent waterway exposes it to frequent flooding.

- Risk Management: The Riverlodge Pavilion has a moderate risk rating due to the frequent flooding of the adjacent waterway and should be evaluated. The two pavilions and restroom building are located within the flood plain.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure; the Riverlodge Pavilion should be evaluated for risk from flash floods of the adjacent waterway.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG, except for the clubhouse restrooms and park restrooms. The park restrooms require a paved path.
- Program Sampling: Junior golf, adult lessons, outings, leagues
 - Operates at 90% capacity during prime time
 - Operates at 80% capacity during non-prime time
 - Par 3 course is 40 years old
 - Best course for outings

5.4 Southeast Planning District

There are 26 parks in the Southeast Planning District consisting of 383 acres, including 19 facilities with nearly 100,000 square feet. The inner city areas are served with a preponderance of smaller parks while



Legend

- Fort Wayne
- Rivers
- Freeway

Parks

- Block
- Neighborhood
- Community
- Regional
- Special
- Annexations

Planning Districts

- Northwest

Service Areas

- Block Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Regional Parks
- Special Parks

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**NORTHWEST PLANNING DISTRICT
FIGURE A5-6**

the outer areas are served with a few larger parks. 77% of the parks comprising one-third of the district's park acreage serve the inner city areas, leaving 23% of the parks to comprise two-thirds of the district's park acreage. Figure A5-8 illustrates the service area for community, neighborhood, and regional parks.

Park Types

Block Parks (10)

- Bowser Playground
- Brackenridge Playground
- East Central Playlot (Eastside)
- John Street Block Park
- Nuckols Memorial Park
- Old Fort Park
- Seiling Block Park
- Summit Street Block Park
- Turpie Playlot
- Williams Park

Neighborhood Parks (8)

- Brewer Park
- Casselwood Park
- East Central Park
- Hanna Homestead Park
- Lafayette Park
- McCormick Park
- Reservoir Park
- Weisser Park

Community Parks (3)

- Headwaters Park

- McMillen Park
- Memorial Park

Regional Parks (0)

Special Recreation Areas (4)

- Courthouse Green
- Freimann Square
- Japanese Garden
- Jennings Center

Park Deficiencies

When park land guidelines and park and facility classifications are adopted, deficiencies and excesses will be found. The guidelines will help the Department balance the system. For example, if the guidelines for park land are adopted, the Southeast Planning District would have the following deficiencies:

Neighborhood Parks (10)

- Shortage of 16 acres

Community Parks (3)

- Surplus of 161 acres

Regional Parks (0)

- Shortage of 200 acres

Special Recreation Areas (4)

- Surplus of 23 acres

Total Park Land

- Shortage of 224 acres

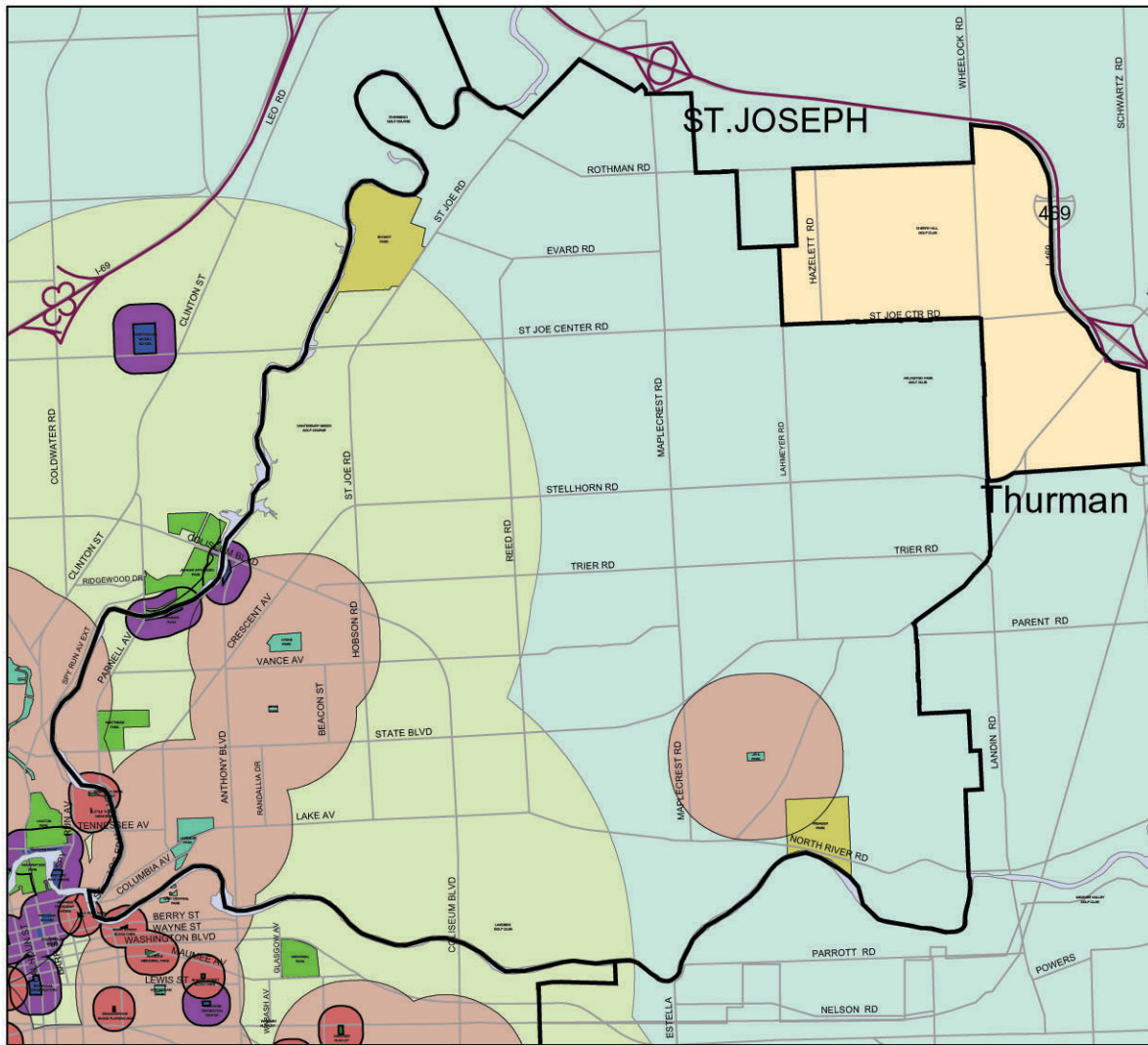
Selected Park and Facility Assessments

Special Recreation Areas: Jennings Center

Facility Assessment

The facility was built in 1947 and has had numerous improvements. The building is in good condition but needs a new roof over the entry and some masonry tuck-pointing. The existing building and parking lot are undersized for a typical community center.

- Risk Management: The facilities have a slight risk rating.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG.
- Program Sampling: Sports, arts and crafts, social programs, educational programs, after-school programs, special events
 - Target market is 5 to 18, 19 to 25, seniors
 - Programming is free based on the economic depressed area
 - Utilizes middle school gym and other community facilities for off-site programs
 - Most programs are walk-in and are at capacity based on the small size of the center
 - Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; open on weekends for rentals only



Legend

- Fort Wayne
- Rivers
- Freeway

Parks

- Block
- Neighborhood
- Community
- Regional
- Special
- Annexations

Planning Districts

- Northeast

Service Areas

- Block Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Regional Parks
- Special Parks



**NORTHEAST PLANNING DISTRICT
FIGURE A5-7**

- Current staff: One full-time, five part-time (eight part-time in summer)
- Staff to child ratio is 1 to 25 (1 to 40 in summer) and should be between 1 to 10 and 1 to 15 (summer)
- Volunteer base of 45 people for coaching and special events

Neighborhood Parks: McCormick Park

Park Assessment

Although slightly larger than the 2 to 10 acres suggested for a neighborhood park, this 12-acre park has the appropriate amenities to serve a neighborhood. The pavilion, basketball court, and playground areas are typical signature facilities expected in a neighborhood park. The parking count exceeds the guideline for a neighborhood park; however, the basketball court lacks appropriate access as parking often crowds around the intersection of McCormick Street and Redwood Avenue. Improved distribution of parking would help relieve this crowding. The on-call restroom would be an unnecessary amenity for a neighborhood park without a rented-out pavilion. If the pavilion were not a revenue source, then users most likely would not stay at this park for more than one hour, and restrooms would not be needed. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park will continue to serve as a neighborhood park.

Facility Assessment

The park is home to a pavilion, shelter, and restroom building. The pavilion is an attrac-

tive stone and heavy timber building, that will require a new roof and windows in the near future.

- Risk Management: The facilities have a slight risk rating.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG; however, there is no access to the shelter building with restrooms via a paved path.

Neighborhood Parks: Weisser Park

Park Assessment

This 20-acre neighborhood park falls within the suggested 10- to 50-acre size range of a community park, and its multiple signature facilities such as the recreation center, pavilion, tennis courts, basketball courts, and playground area are typical amenities expected in a community park. The adjacent school already draws the community to this location. These amenities support a length of stay of two to three hours, much longer than the one-half hour expected of neighborhood parks. Parking is adequate for the facilities offered and is centrally located to serve most amenities. The recreation center is the featured revenue facility. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park could serve as a community park while preserving a stand of mature trees adjacent to Drexel Street.

Facility Assessment

The park is home to the Weisser Recreation Center and a pavilion. The center was

constructed in 1996 and has been maintained well. The pavilion is in good condition.

- Risk Management: The center's extensive programs are non-traditional and should be evaluated.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG.
- Program Sampling: Trips, computer lab, tutoring, arts and crafts, meals, special events, pool, shuffleboard, table tennis, weight lifting, fitness, social programs
 - Partners with other centers in area, existing leagues, metro football, Y leagues
 - Operate at or over capacity; safety issue with the number and ages of children; staff to child ratio is extremely high
 - Current staff: Three full-time, four part-time, two grant-funded full-time
 - Normal hours: 12:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Saturday, events only on Sunday
 - Have 100 kids in Saturday school; had almost 800 kids in park for event

Neighborhood Parks: Brewer Park

Park Assessment

This 5-acre park generally meets the guidelines for a neighborhood park, and has the appropriate amenities to serve a neighborhood. The ball field and playground areas are typical signature facilities expected in a

neighborhood park. Since this park lacks parking, five to 10 spaces should be added. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park will continue to be an asset by providing facilities for organized groups.

Community Parks: McMillen Park

Park Assessment

This 168-acre community park meets the suggested 50- to 200-acre size range of a regional park, and its multiple signature facilities and revenue centers are typical amenities expected in a regional park. This park is one of three locations that provide golf (a revenue source). These amenities support a length of stay of six to eight hours, much longer than the two to three hours expected of community parks. Multiple revenue centers including the ice rink, the Lifetime Sports Academy, golf, and the aquatic center could cause congestion and conflicts. This park has significant infrastructure improvement needs, especially improving drainage south of the area. Improved separation of pedestrian and vehicular circulation and an improved informal walking path are needed. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park could serve as a major regional park.

Facility Assessment

The park is home to the ice arena, pool house, pavilion, and golf clubhouse and associated buildings. The ice arena was recently expanded in 2000, and a new parking lot was added in 2003. The pool house was built in 1949 and has had some recent improvements. The golf clubhouse

was built in 1960. The small size of the structure limits its potential as a revenue source. The pavilion is a stone and heavy timber building.

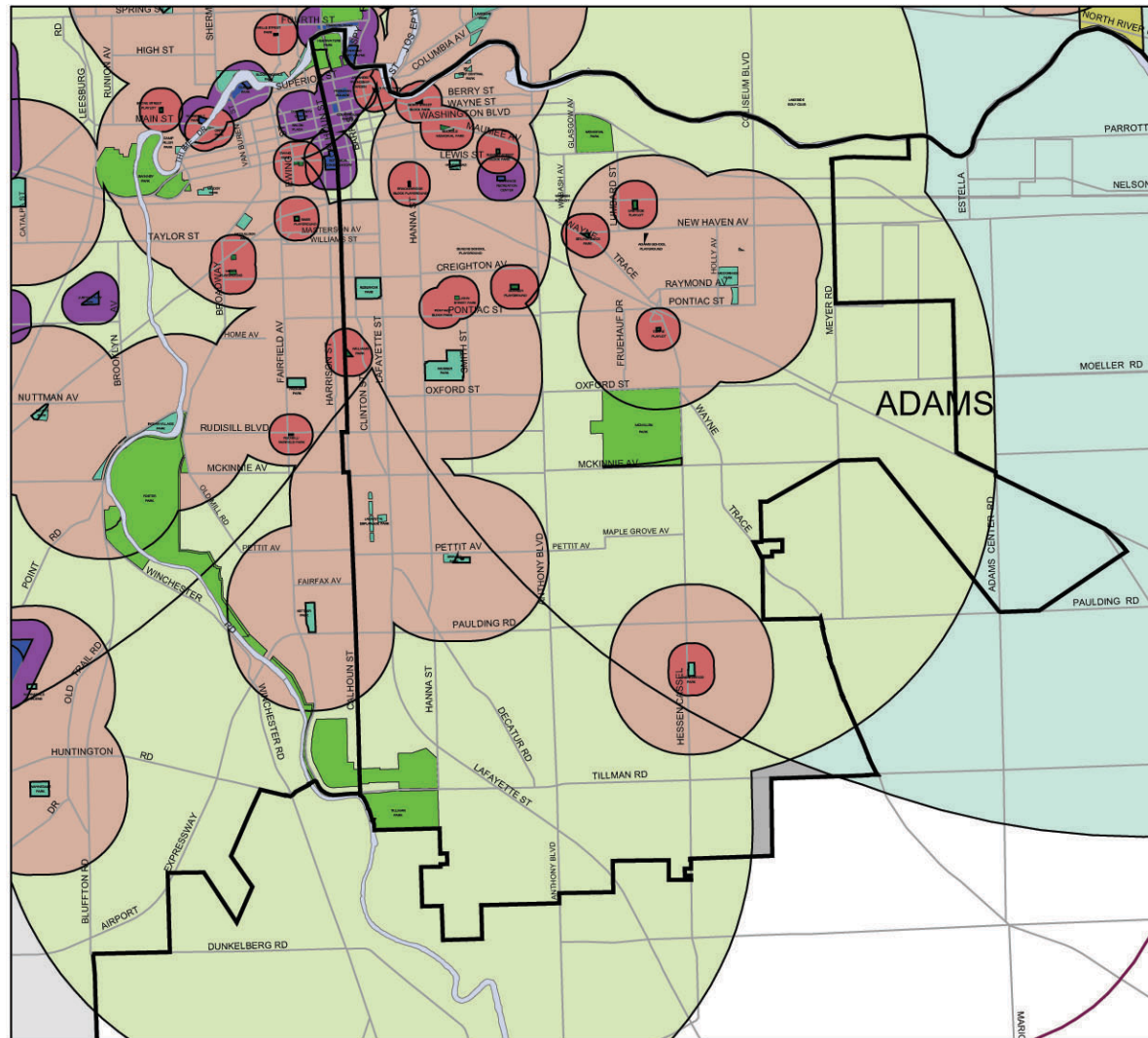
- Risk Management: The facilities have a slight risk rating, except for the pool house (moderate) and the ice arena (high). These two facilities should be evaluated.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure; however, the park suffers from the perception of being unsafe because of the park's inner city location.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG, except for the golf clubhouse, which needs new restrooms to comply.
- Program Sampling:
 - Ice Arena: Youth hockey, adult hockey, beginning skating, figure skating, lessons, birthday parties, open public skating, and ice rental
 - Rent ice to Fort Wayne Youth Hockey: Five travel teams and six high school teams
 - There are currently 28 house teams and two adult leagues programmed inhouse
 - Hockey is currently at 80% capacity with non-prime time available
 - Prime time is considered Monday through Friday, after 4:00 p.m., and all weekend hours
 - Prime time ice rental is \$210/hour
 - Non-prime time ice rental is \$150/hour, 12:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 - There are two sheets of ice plus a studio rink

- Concessions and pro shop are leased out to contracted vendors
- Open public skating hours are Friday, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.; Saturday, 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Sunday, 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Monday, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and Wednesday, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Current staffing level is four full-time and 20 part-time
- The operation is at 80% cost recovery with an annual debt service of \$400,000/year
- Pool: Lessons, water exercise, and sand basketball
- Renovated to add leisure pool components like slides, sprays, spray pool, sand basketball, and drop slide
- Utilized for Lifetime Sports Academy
- Golf course: Junior golf, outings, adult lessons, and leagues
- Operates at 85% capacity at prime time
- Operates at 60% capacity at non-prime time

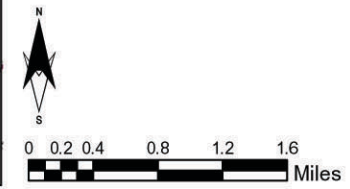
Community Parks: Memorial Park

Park Assessment

This 42-acre park falls within the suggested 10- to 50-acre size range for a community park and has the appropriate amenities to serve a community. The walking trails, ball fields, basketball courts, pool, and playground area are typical signature facilities expected in a community park. Unique to this park is a water play area that complements the signature facilities well. Parking is adequate for the facilities offered and is centrally located. Efforts to reduce vehicular traffic through the park have



- Legend**
- Fort Wayne
 - Rivers
- Parks**
- Block
 - Neighborhood
 - Community
 - Regional
 - Special
- Planning Districts**
- Southeast
- Service Areas**
- Block Parks
 - Neighborhood Parks
 - Community Parks
 - Regional Parks
 - Special Parks



**SOUTHEAST PLANNING DISTRICT
FIGURE A5-8**

succeeded. A swimming pool, water play area, and pavilion are the featured revenue facilities. Improvements are needed in the condition of some facilities. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this community park will continue to be an asset while preserving unique open space. Identified as a cultural resource, future park improvements should adhere to the guidelines in the Cultural Resources Report.

Facility Assessment

The park is home to a pavilion and a pool house. The pavilion is an attractive stone and heavy timber building. The pool house exterior was recently upgraded in 2003.

- Risk Management: The pool house has a moderate risk rating and should be evaluated.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure. However, there is some concern with safety at the pool caused by the unruly behavior of a few users.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG.
- Program Sampling:
 - Lessons, water exercise
 - Pool attendance is very low compared to other pools within the park system. A spray pool was installed adjacent to pool building, which may affect pool attendance

5.5 Southwest Planning District

There are 26 parks in the Southwest Planning District consisting of 443 acres, including 26 facilities with more than 130,000 square feet. The inner city areas are served with many small parks while the outer areas are served with a few large parks. 65% of the parks comprising one-quarter of the district's park acreage serve the inner city areas, leaving 35% of the parks comprising three-quarters of the district's park acreage. Figure A5-9 depicts the service area for community, neighborhood, and regional parks in this district.

Park Types

Block Parks (6)

- Bass Playground
- Ewing Park
- Miner Playground
- Orff Park
- Rudisill/Fairfield Park
- West Central Play Lot

Community Parks (3)

- East Swinney Park
- Foster Park
- Foster West Park

Neighborhood Parks (10)

- Indian Village Park
- Kettler Park
- McCullough Park
- Moody Park
- Packard Park

- Psi Ote Park
- Rockhill Park
- Study Park
- Waynedale Gardens
- Waynedale Park

Regional Parks (0)

Special Recreation Areas (7)

- Botanical Conservatory
- Community Center
- Guilden Park
- Mason Drive LL Complex
- Noll Park
- Salon Plaza
- Strathmore Drive

Park Deficiencies

When park land guidelines and park and facility classifications are adopted, deficiencies and excesses will be found. The guidelines will help the department balance the system. For example, if guidelines for park land are adopted, the Southwest Planning District would have the following deficiencies:

Neighborhood Parks (9)

- Surplus of 14 acres

Community Parks (3)

- Surplus of 187 acres

Regional Parks (0)

- Shortage of 180 acres

Special Recreation Areas (7)

- Surplus of 3 acres

Total Park Land

- Shortage of 108 acres

Selected Park and Facility Assessments

Special Recreation Areas: Community Center

Facility Assessment

The Community Center is in good condition and has recent interior improvements. The building is over 30 years old and appears to have been well maintained and modernized.

- Risk Management: The facility has a slight risk rating.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure; however, the parking lot does not have controlled access, which may be required given its downtown location.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG.
- Program Sampling:
 - Free programs, advice programs (health, taxes, financing, etc.), strong rental program
 - Few preschool programs on Saturdays, billiards, wood shop, arts and crafts
 - Strong rental program sometimes prohibits programming
 - Facility layout is not conducive to programming

- Liquor license in place
- Leases space to Council on Aging, program collaboration with Health Visions
- Programs are enrolled at over capacity
- Need more program staff; currently have four full-time, three part-time, and 60 seasonal (during summer)
- Have gone from nine full-time senior program staff to one full-time
- Current full-time staff for entire center includes one center director, one adult programmer, one youth programmer, one office manager
- Current part-time staff includes one custodian

Special Recreation Areas: Botanical Conservatory

Facility Assessment

The conservatory is in fair condition, except for the heating and cooling plant. The plant is scheduled for replacement in the near future, which should help reduce energy consumption. The building is over 30 years old and will require capital expenditures to modernize the remaining building systems. The facility does not have onsite parking for visitors but is across the street from a public parking deck.

- Risk Management: The facility has a slight risk rating.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG.

• Program Sampling:

- School course most popular; at capacity; curriculum for each age group/grade
- Youth: Starting to take off with new staff programmer
- Adult: Educational/entertaining/botanical-oriented
- Special events: Seven to eight per year, 1,000 to 2,000 participants per event, family-oriented
- Rentals: Most profitable, only place like it in town for weddings/proms/parties
- Current staff: 10 full-time/part-time; do their own instruction or with volunteers
- Strong volunteer group (350) with 200 active conservators
- No dedicated capital funding source in place and endowment/foundation is declining
- Attendance was strong when first opened, has consistently gone down
- Goal is to increase attendance; Got grant for marketing and attendance is slightly up

Neighborhood Parks: Packard Park

Park Assessment

This 4-acre park generally meets the guidelines for a neighborhood park and has the appropriate amenities to serve a neighborhood. The pavilion, tennis courts, ball field, and playground areas are typical signature facilities expected in a neighborhood park. Since this park has no parking, five to 10 parking spaces should be added. If the pavilion were not a revenue source, then users most likely would not stay at this park

for more than one hour, and restrooms would not be needed. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park will continue to serve as a neighborhood park

Community Parks: Foster Park (including West)

Park Assessment

This 277-acre community park exceeds the suggested 50 to 200-acre size range for a regional park, and its multiple signature facilities and revenue centers are typical amenities expected in a regional park. This park is one of three locations that provide golf (a revenue source). Golf supports a length of stay of six to eight hours, much longer than the two to three hours expected of community parks. Parking and vehicular circulation is in need of improvement. Improved separation of pedestrian and vehicular circulation is needed. Foster Gardens is a special site amenity and revenue center. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this park could serve as a regional park.

Facility Assessment

The park is home to the golf clubhouse, golf restroom building, golf cart storage building, golf rental pavilion, three rental pavilions, two park restroom buildings, and Pawster Dog Park. The clubhouse was recently renovated due to flood damage; however, the existing size of the building is insufficient for the pro shop, concessions, and office. The siding and roof on the cart storage building require replacement. The three pavilions are attractive stone and heavy

timber construction; however, because Pavilion No. 3 is severely deteriorated, secluded, and difficult to patrol, it should be relocated or removed. Pavilion No. 1 is in need of a new interior tin ceiling, and Pavilion No. 2 is in need of a new roof.

- Risk Management: The facilities have a slight risk rating; however, Pavilion No. 3 is currently inaccessible and not visible from the roadway, making the facility vulnerable to vandalism. All the structures are located within the flood plain.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure, except for Pavilion No. 3, for reasons noted above.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG, except for Pavilion No. 3, which is not accessible via a paved path.
- Program Sampling: Junior golf, adult lessons, outings, and leagues
 - Operates at 90% capacity at prime times
 - 80% capacity at non-prime times
 - Par 72 course is 75 years old

Community Parks: East Swinney Park

Park Assessment

This 46-acre park falls within the suggested 10- to 50-acre size range for a community park and has the appropriate amenities to serve a community. The pond, tennis courts, and playground area are typical signature facilities expected in a community park. Parking is adequate for the facilities offered. A tennis center is the featured revenue facility with the potential to produce revenue at the historic Swinney Homestead. This homestead provides yet another unique

asset to the community. Brush and young trees along the river which block water views and visually separate East Swinney from West Swinney should be thinned or removed. With defined signage, security lighting, and a maintenance plan, this community park will continue to be an asset. Identified as a cultural resource, future park improvements should adhere to the guidelines in the Cultural Resources Report.

Facility Assessment

The park is home to a National Historic Register-listed homestead and a tennis center. The homestead is an attractive 1880s home and is well maintained, but it will require ongoing monitoring to preserve it. The tennis center was renovated in 1996 but will require a new roof in the near future.

- Risk Management: The facilities have a slight risk rating.
- Security/Safety: The facilities are reasonably safe and secure.
- ADA Compliance: The facilities generally comply with ADAAG.

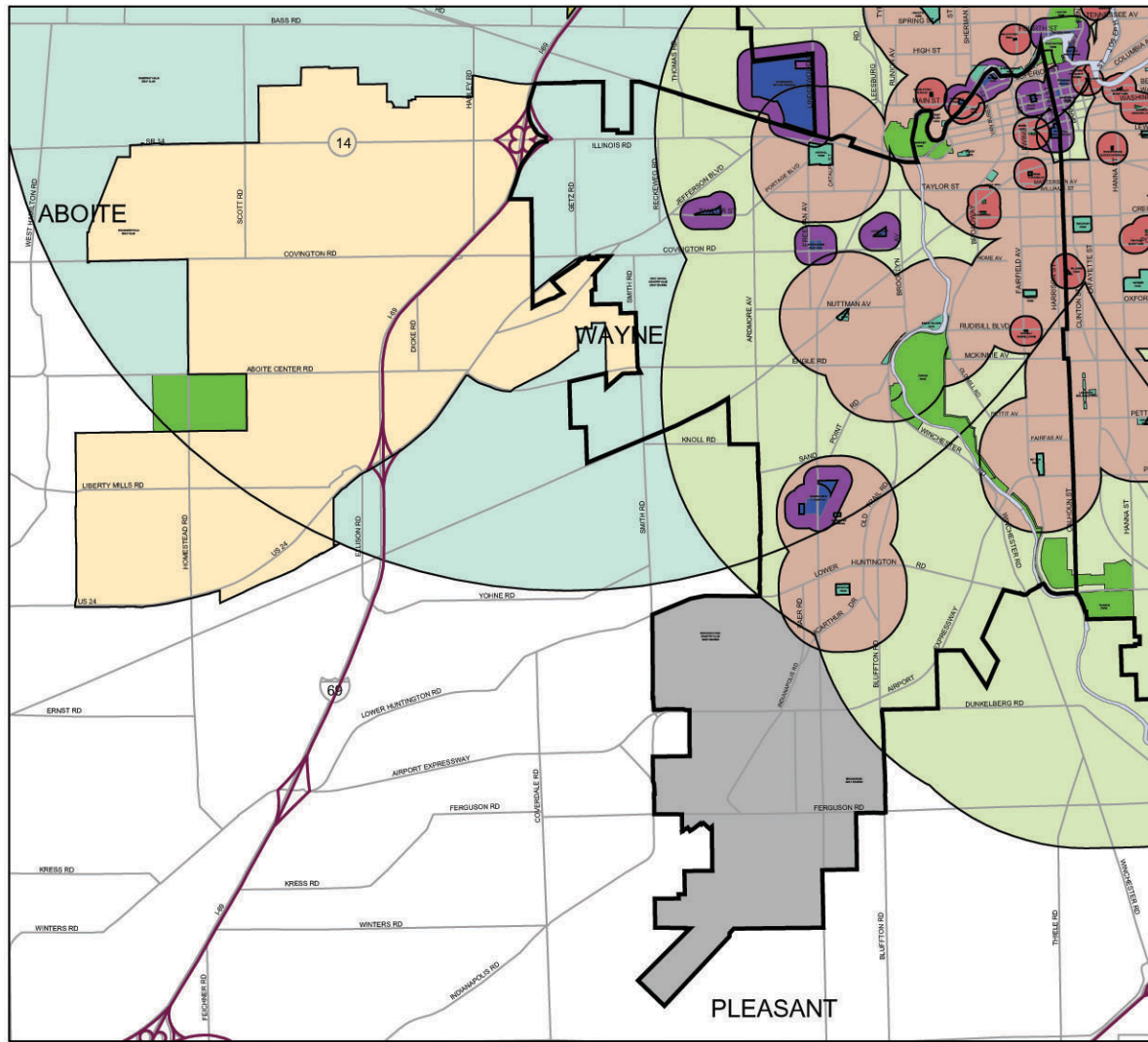
5.6 Aboite Planning District

The existing park in the Aboite Planning District is owned and operated by Aboite Township. The school and township collaborate on management. The school totals 66 acres and includes one facility. This park is currently the only park in the district.

Park Types

Block Parks (0)

Neighborhood Parks (0)



- Legend**
- Fort Wayne
 - Rivers
 - Freeway
- Parks**
- Block
 - Neighborhood
 - Community
 - Regional
 - Special
 - Annexations
- Planning Districts**
- Southwest
- Service Areas**
- Block Parks
 - Neighborhood Parks
 - Community Parks
 - Regional Parks
 - Special Parks



**SOUTHWEST PLANNING DISTRICT
FIGURE A5-9**

Community Parks (1)

- Aboite Township Park

Regional Parks (0)

Special Recreation Areas (0)

Park Deficiencies

When park land guidelines and park and facility classifications are adopted, deficiencies and excesses will be found. The guidelines will help the Department balance the system. The Aboite District is a suburban area with green space provided within planned neighborhoods. However, if the guidelines for park land are adopted, the Aboite Planning District would have the following deficiencies:

Neighborhood Parks (0)

- Shortage of 38 acres

Community Parks (1)

- Shortage of 9 acres

Regional Parks (0)

- Shortage of 100 acres

Special Recreation Areas (0)

- Shortage of 13 acres

Total Park Land

- Shortage of 235 acres

Selected Park and Facility Assessments

Community Park: Aboite Township Park

Park Assessment

This 66-acre neighborhood park generally meets the guidelines of a community park. However, it exceeds the suggested 10 to 50-acre size range of a community park, and its signature facility—a destination playground—and soccer fields are typical amenities expected in a community park. These amenities support a length of stay of two to three hours, much shorter than the six to eight hours expected of the larger regional parks, but typical of a community park.



Appendix 6: Essential Services Business Plans

6.1 Camps

Description of Program and Services

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of camps for youth ages 4 to 18. The camps are primarily hosted at Franke Park, Salomon Farm, or Lindenwood Nature Preserve. Each camp typically has a unique theme with activities related to this theme. Activities may include creative writing, nature study, outdoor camping skills, historical farm life, animal husbandry, art, science, and Native American lore.

All camps are held weekdays during the summer months when public schools are out of session. Camps are generally scheduled between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., with before- and after-camp care offered by the Franke Park Day Camp. Camps are operated one to seven weeks each summer.

Franke Park Day Camp

First established in 1946, this camp is the longest ongoing camp offered by the Department. Franke Park Day Camp provides children with enjoyable outdoor experiences that foster cooperation among participants through learning, playing, working, problem solving, and socializing. The emphasis in this camp is on basic camping skills, nature education, and Native American dances and art.

Programs are available for children ages 4 and 5, 6 to 8, 9 to 11, and 12 to 18. The advanced camper program, for youth ages 12 to 18, allows for progressive advancement to the status of counselor-in-training. Seven one-week sessions are offered, with campers up to age 11 limited to enrolling in one session each summer. The camp can serve 260 campers per week. Weekly camp fees are \$73 per child (\$63/week for counselors-in-training). Camp is held from 9:00 a.m. until 3:30

p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Wednesday camp times are from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Site amenities at Franke Park Day Camp include a nature lodge, large meeting room, trails, two ponds, a creek, canoes, and backpacking equipment. The camp has access to the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, which is also located within Franke Park.

Salomon Farm

Located on the outskirts of the city, Salomon Farm is home to the Farmin' Fun Day Camp. The camp allows kids to learn about farming life in the 1930s and 1940s, play period games, work in a garden, care for livestock (sheep and goats), explore nature, and make crafts. Salomon Farm offers the only farm-related camp in the Fort Wayne area.

Sessions are available for children ages 4 and 5 and 6 to 12. Six sessions are offered each summer with enrollment space for 30

to 50 participants per week. A resident/non-resident fee structure is used, with fees ranging from \$50 to \$96, depending on the age or resident status of the participant. Camp is held from 8:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. for ages 4 and 5 and from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. for ages 6 to 12.

Salomon Farm also hosts Aartvarks Young Artists Workshop for children ages 8 to 10. This camp introduces participants to tempera paints, oils, pastels, inks, and paper maché. Five concurrent one-week sessions can each accommodate eight to 16 participants. The registration fee is \$48 to \$58, depending on residency. Aartvarks is held from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Site amenities at Salomon Farm include a new, air-conditioned learning center; large barn; outbuildings; summer kitchen; vegetable garden; creek; farm fields; pond; wetlands; woods; and apple orchard.

Lindenwood Nature Preserve

This 110-acre wooded park is home to the Outdoor Explorers Day Camp. This camp focuses on nature study, ecology, outdoor initiative, and cooperative games.

This camp is for children ages 6 to 8. Five concurrent one-week sessions are offered in late June that can each accommodate 15 to 25 participants. The registration fee is \$35 to \$42, depending on residency.

Site amenities at Lindenwood Nature Preserve include four hiking trails (one of which is wheelchair accessible), a pond, old-growth forest, fire range, open-air

pavilion, and picnic tables. The preserve is also home to a variety of wildlife.

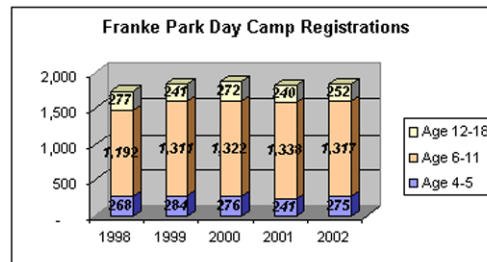
Other Workshops

Several outdoor-related workshops are provided by the Department at either Salomon Farm or Lindenwood Nature Preserve. These one-day sessions cover a variety of topics such as entomology, forestry, biology, and creating crafts from nature. The length of the programs vary from several hours to most of the day.

Market Assessment

Franke Park Day Camp

Participation at Franke Park Day Camp has remained strong over the past five years, based on the total number of registrations. Since 1998, the camp has served, on average, 1,821 youth per year or 260 campers per session. Registrations in 2002 were up a modest 6.2% from 1998. Without expanding the camp facilities, future growth is essentially impossible given that the camp is operating at 97% capacity.



Use of the before- and after-camp care program has generally been declining over the past five years. The number of participants enrolled in this service is down 44.6% between 1998 and 2002. Only 98 children, or 5.3% of all campers, were registered in the extended care program in 2002. As recently as 1999, nearly 11% of all campers were part of this program.

Historically, the Campership financial aid program has been offered to help children from economically disadvantaged families participate in Franke Park Day Camp. From 1998 to 2000, between 1.3% and 3.6% of all campers registered through the financial aid program. Over the past two years, no scholarships were offered by the day camp.

Utilizing population data from the 2000 census, Franke Park Day Camp serves approximately 4% of the Fort Wayne population ages 4 to 18. The camp has its highest market penetration in the 6- to 11-year-old segment, reaching around 7% of the population. Approximately 1% of the teen population (ages 12 to 18) participates in the advanced camper and counselor-in-training programs.

Salomon Farm Camp

In 2002, the first year of this new program, 215 youth between the ages of 6 and 12 participated in the farm camp. Historical comparisons are not available due to the age of this program. This camp serves less than 1% of the population in its target market of youth ages 4 to 12.

Lindenwood Camps and Workshops

In 2002, 46 children between the ages of 6 and 12 participated in the Lindenwood camps or workshops. Itemized registration figures, as reported in the Department's Program and Facilities Financial Statements and Attendance Report, were unavailable for camps offered at Lindenwood Nature Preserve. For this reason, a historical analysis could not be completed. The Lindenwood camps and workshops serve less than 0.5% of its target market of children ages 6 to 12.

Competition

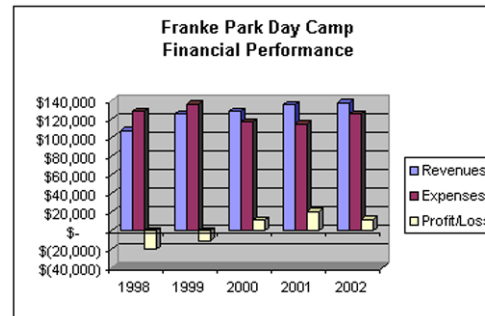
There are numerous summer camp programs offered in the Fort Wayne community beyond those provided by the Parks and Recreation Department. Other providers and camps include:

- Camp Crosley
- Canterbury School
- FAME Fine Arts
- Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory (part of Parks Department)
- Fort Wayne Children's Zoo (part of Parks Department)
- Fort Wayne Museum of Art
- Fort Wayne Sport Soccer Club
- Fort Wayne Theater
- Fox Island Day Camp
- Indiana Institute of Technology
- Kindermusic Summer Camp
- Lincoln Museum

- Red Cedar
- Salvation Army
- Science Central
- TAH CUM WAH Recreation Center
- YMCA/Camp Potawotami
- YWCA

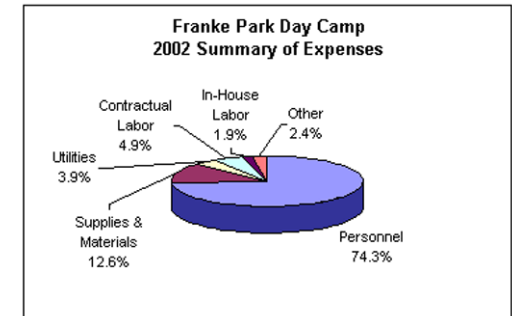
Revenue and Expense Analysis

Over the past five years, Franke Park Day Camps has transitioned from a subsidized to a break-even program. The camp posted an operating gain of \$12,106 in 2002, as opposed to the \$20,623 deficit realized in 1998. This change is the dual result of a four-year increase in revenues (27.9%) and decrease in expenses (1.9%).



As would be expected, personnel (regular, seasonal, and benefits) represented the vast majority (74.3%) of all expenses in 2002. Since 1998, personnel expenses increased by only 3.4%. Supplies and materials, which represents the second largest expense category, have increased by 47.2% in the past five years. Utilities have also noticeably increased by 39.2%

since 1998, but are largely due to significantly higher natural gas rates. Substantial cost savings have been realized over the five-year timeframe in contractual labor (59.9%) and inhouse labor (57.4%).



A detailed financial analysis could not be performed on the Salomon Farm and Lindenwood Nature Preserve camps based on the information provided to the consultant. These camps are services of other program areas and not maintained as independent cost centers.

Operations Assessment

Pricing Strategies

All of the camps and workshops offered by the Department, excluding Franke Park Day Camp, use differential pricing based on residency. The Department should consider implementing a similar resident/non-resident rate structure for the Franke Park program to reward the taxpayers of Fort Wayne.

Differential pricing is often used for camps with sessions catered to different age

segments. Staff provided a listing of competitors with camp prices, suggesting that the Department does benchmark against competitors' prices. No other pricing strategies were identified by staff or appear to be in place.

Facility Scheduling

The current time offerings for existing camps appear to be appropriate and in line with standard practices within the industry. Extended care is available for the Franke Park Day Camp to ensure working parents have the ability to enroll their children in the camp. As mentioned previously, the Franke Park Day Camp runs at approximately 97% capacity. Other camps have excess capacity that could be filled but lack the available staffing to offer significantly more programs. Camps currently do not extend beyond the summer months.

Partnerships

Both Salomon Farm and Lindenwood Nature Preserve have a variety of partnerships in place to benefit the camp programs. Partners include Hoosier Relief, Tri-State Two Cylinder Club, local Boy and Girl Scout troops, Acres Land Trust, University of Saint Francis, and Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Nature Preserves. Local schools (public and private), the Home School Network, and 4-H clubs serve as prime potential partners to expand camp participation and programs.

Current partnerships are not documented in writing. In the future, all partnership

arrangements should be documented. In addition to general terms, documentation should include all associated benefits and costs to both the Department and partner. The true costs (personnel expense, supplies, utilities, etc.) to the Department of providing a service or facility should be noted.

Marketing and Promotions

The primary means of promoting summer camps to the public is through the *Fun Times* seasonal brochure. Other advertising sources include printed materials distributed through the schools (children's brochure and Franke Park Day Camp brochure), news releases, and flyers available at various park facilities. Other marketing efforts include a post-participation survey.

In addition to existing marketing efforts, the Department should provide direct mailings to past participants, youth organizations (i.e., 4-H clubs, scouting organizations, church youth groups, parent-teacher organizations, etc.), and the Home School Network. Paid newspaper or radio advertisements could be run prior to registration deadlines. Additional news coverage from the local media both before and during the camps should be solicited to highlight the history (Franke Park Day Camp) or uniqueness (Salomon Farm Camp) of the programs. Focus groups with parents (both of participants and non-participants) could be held to increase participation and identify program needs. An enhanced and more visually appealing website should be developed to make it easy for the public to learn about and

register for recreation programs at their convenience.

Customer Service

Currently, there is no customer service plan in place for any of the existing camps. A plan outlining the appropriate delivery of customer service should be developed and included in the employee policy and procedure manual. The customer service plan should identify how to properly communicate with campers and parents, outline procedures for handling complaints, and generally illustrate the type of experience participants should have while in a camp.

Customer service training is provided to all employees on an annual basis for all seasonal summer staff. Customer service training should continue to be provided for all new hires and upon the start of the summer season.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are a valuable tool for Department management and the Board of Park Commissioners to track the success of programs and services offered by the Department. Current measurements used for the summer camps include cost per experience (costing form), customer satisfaction (post-participation evaluation surveys), revenue and expenses (annual report), participation levels (marketing report), and programs offered versus held (marketing report). In addition to the existing measurements, it is recommended that the following performance measures be implemented:

- **Cost Recovery:** Upon conclusion of a program or at set times for ongoing services, the total revenue from a program or service should be divided by its associated expenses. This ratio will indicate the profit or loss margin for the delivery of the program of service. The recapture rate should then be compared to an established subsidy or profit goal.
- **Customer Retention:** Track the percentage of returning participants from previous sessions of the program to find clues to customer satisfaction (happy customers usually return!). Obviously, the higher the retention rate the better, since it is usually easier (and cheaper) to keep a returning customer opposed to attracting a new one.
- **Program Capacity:** Track the number of program participants against the maximum spaces available for a program or service. Programs at low capacity should be reviewed to determine if they need to be changed or eliminated. Programs at maximum capacity may need to be expanded due to demand.
- **Facility Capacity:** Track the actual number of hours a facility or site is scheduled for activities versus the total number of hours the facility or site can be operated.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The following strengths, or positive issues *within the control of management*, directly impact the success of the camps:

- Facilities and amenities available at Franke Park and Salomon Farms

- Franke Park lodge and new learning center at Salomon Park provide opportunities for programming beyond the summer months
- Natural resources available at all three camp locations, providing excellent outdoor classroom
- Energetic and dedicated program leaders and camp staff
- Fee structure and containment of costs allowing Franke Park Day Camp to be financially self-sufficient
- Reputation and history of the Franke Park Day Camp
- Franke Park Day Camp remains a popular program operating at 97% capacity
- Camps priced very economically
- Opportunities to increase participation and programs through outreach to and partnerships with youth-minded organizations like 4-H, scouting troops, public and private schools, and home school networks
- Excess capacity to expand programs at Salomon Farm and Lindenwood Nature Preserve

Weaknesses

The following weaknesses, or negative issues *within the control of management* to varying degrees, directly impact the success of the camps:

- Camps and workshops are offered only during the summer months
- Low participation at Salomon and Lindenwood camps

- Availability of staff to expand programs at Salomon Farm and Lindenwood Nature Preserve
- Lack of indoor learning center at Lindenwood Nature Preserve
- Insufficient funds available to upgrade facilities
- Insufficient space to expand Franke Park Day Camp without taking over BMX track site
- Limited promotions beyond *Fun Times* and brochures distributed at schools
- Existing entrance to Salomon Farm is poorly marked as a park site; has old family sign at entrance
- Many programs priced below other local camps; possibly undervaluing services provided
- Many camps only provide one week of activities, and parents not able to enroll children for more than one week at Franke Park Day Camp

Opportunities

The following opportunities, or potentially positive issues *outside the control of management*, should be considered in any future decision-making:

- Salomon Farm is the only farm-related camp operated in the area, allowing the Department to capture a niche market.

Threats

The following threats, or potentially negative issues *outside the control of*

management, should be considered in any future decision-making:

- High level of competition within the local camp market
- Some vocal opposition to further changes in Franke Park—although may be less opposed to expansion of successful nature-related camp
- Continued economic slowdown erodes discretionary income of Fort Wayne families, making it difficult to afford camps

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Department provides high-quality summer camp options for the children of the Fort Wayne community. In 2002, over 2,100 children between the ages of 4 and 18 enrolled in camps offered by the Department. Unquestionably, the most successful program is the Franke Park Day Camp, which dates back nearly 60 years. This camp alone enrolled 1,844 participants in 2002.

The Franke Park Day Camp is operating at maximum capacity during the summer months. Increased summer participation will not be feasible without the expansion of the facility or offering an evening camp session. Expansion of camp facilities in Franke Park will not be possible without the removal of the existing BMX course. The other alternative is to create a second camp location elsewhere in the city, although it would likely be difficult to replicate the history of the camp at a second site.

Participation in the Franke Park Day Camp before- and after-care program has steadily declined over the past five years. This decline closely mirrors the reduction in the total number of scholarships provided. This suggests a possible correlation between the need for financial aid and the before- or after-care program. Single parents or two-parent working families are most likely to need both the daycare service and financial assistance.

The Salomon Farm Camp is a program with much potential. In its first year of operation, the camp had 215 participants. The park site had the amenities and natural resources to accommodate a very unique and successful camp program. To expand camp enrollments, the Department needs to reach out to youth organizations that focus on farming, nature, and/or history. Key groups include 4-H clubs, scouting troops, and similar organizations. The Department should also consider partnering with the neighboring YMCA to jointly promote camps.

The Lindenwood Nature Preserve provides a good site for nature-themed camps. The obstacle to the success of camps at the preserve is the lack of an indoor nature center. A new facility would provide the flexibility to offer programs during inclement weather and beyond the summer season. A nature center would serve as a focal point for the park and create more traffic and awareness for camps at Lindenwood. It is unlikely that programs can be greatly expanded at Lindenwood without a nature center/learning facility.

Currently, the most popular camp only allows campers under the age of 12 one week of camping experience, leaving parents to find alternative camps or services for the remaining weeks. If the Department offers a wider selection of camps with greater demographic appeal that spans the entire summer, the potential exists to expand camp revenue. The Department should consider adding more outdoor adventure camps, teen and pre-teen camps, and travel camps. The Department should strive to be the one-stop source for summer-long entertainment through camps.

Expansion of camp programs will only be possible through the addition of more full-time and seasonal staff dedicated to developing and running new camps. Ideally, both the Lindenwood and Salomon Farm sites should have a full-time, dedicated staff member for camps and programs. Any expansion of the Franke Park Day Camp will also require additional staff.

Financially, the Franke Park Day Camp serves as a good model for any camp offered by the program. This camp is priced sufficiently to stimulate demand and cover all operating expenses. To ensure the ongoing success of the camp, the operating surplus should be placed in a dedicated fund to cover future capital investments in the camp.

Camps are all economically priced, but generally undervalued for the services provided. The Department should continue to benchmark against other camp providers, and as long as all operating

expenses are covered, price accordingly. All camps, including the Franke Park Day Camp, should implement a resident/non-resident pricing structure. Camp prices for younger children should only be less if the cost of delivery is also less.

There is strong competition for camp participants in the Fort Wayne community. The Department's Franke Park and Salomon Farm Camps are unique and least impacted by other camp programs. The Lindenwood camps and workshops face the most head-to-head competition with programs offered by the County Parks Department and other providers, which partially explains the lower participation.

With the development of new partnerships with youth, nature-focused, or farm-related organizations, there should be some opportunity to expand camp and workshop programming beyond the current summer season. This is especially true for the Salomon Farm. Possible programs to consider include weekend camps, additional school programs, home school programs, and pre-school programs. Facilities could be adopted by various youth organizations like 4-H clubs and scouts to help maintain or develop amenities on site (i.e., vegetable gardens, flower gardens, etc.).

All existing marketing and promotions efforts should be continued. Enhanced promotions are needed, especially for Salomon Farm and Lindenwood Camps. Post-program evaluations should continue to be conducted of all camps. Focus groups consisting of parents and children could

periodically be conducted by marketing staff to both ensure existing programs are meeting participants' needs and identify changes that should be made. Direct mailings promoting camps should be sent to the previous year's participants.

The Department should consider a pre-registration period for the following year's camp at the conclusion of camp sessions. A small, non-refundable fee in the range of \$5 to \$10 could be charged to hold a spot with full payment due in the spring. This helps build the excitement of participants and gives the Department an early indication of camp attendance. Low early enrollments can prompt the Department to either boost promotional efforts in the spring or make revisions to the camp to increase appeal.

The Department should continue to conduct customer service training for all camp employees. Customer service policies should be incorporated into the employee policy and procedure manual and provided to all staff members.

Existing performance measures should continue to be monitored. Additionally, the Department should also consider measuring each camp's recapture rate (against an established goal), customer retention, program capacity, and facility capacity. Together, these measurements will be useful to management in making future decisions regarding the programs.

6.2 Community Center

Description of Program and Services

Located at 233 West Main Street in downtown Fort Wayne, the Community Center is a 17,000-square-foot facility built in 1977. The Community Center includes a central lounge, large multipurpose assembly room, adjacent kitchen, several meeting rooms, computer lab, billiard room, gift shop, limited selection of exercise equipment, registration area, and staff offices.

Originally built as a senior center, the Community Center now provides programs and services for all age segments in the community. The core program areas include:

- Preschool/youth activities
- Adult classes
- Older adult activities
- Facility rentals

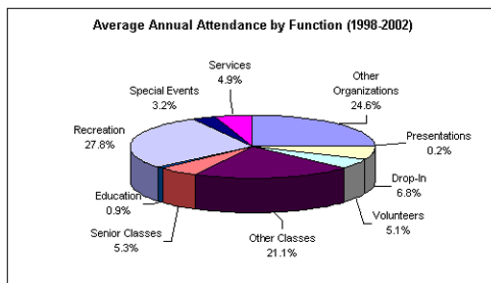
Market Assessment

Community Center Registrations and Attendance

On average, over 5,300 individuals enroll in programs through the Community Center each year. Nearly 84% of all participants are registered in preschool or youth activities which are held at other locations throughout the city. This is due to a lack of space available at the Community Center and many classes require athletic fields or gymnasiums. Senior programs yielded 25,794, 20% of the

total registrations. Except for one-year increases in adult classes (1998/1999) and preschool/youth programs (1999/2000), enrollments in community center programs have remained fairly consistent. Despite a significant amount of senior program space within the facility, 250 people typically enroll in older adult programs offered at the center each year. There are 1,179 different individual seniors listed as participating at the Community Center.

Attendance at the Community Center reached 43,913 in 2002, a 15.4% increase from 1998. Over the past five years, the average annual attendance is 38,745. Most visitors to the Community Center were participating in recreation programs (27.8%), attending programs provided by outside organizations (24.6%), or enrolled in other classes (21.1%).



Fort Wayne Leisure Interests

A key to having successful, well-attended programs is matching Community Center offerings to the leisure interests of the community. According to the 2003 SRDS Lifestyle Analysts, the following lifestyles and

interests are popular within households in the Greater Fort Wayne area:

Fort Wayne households are pursuers of communications technology. In over half of all households, at least one person uses a personal computer (56.9%) and subscribes to an online service (54.0%). IBM-compatible computers are most prevalent, with only 3.3% of households using Apple computers or iMacs. This indicates that there is demand for computer-related training, a course already provided at the Community Center.

Marketing and Promotions

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department currently utilizes a variety of advertising methods to promote programs and services offered by the Community Center. The primary source of information is through the Department's seasonal program brochure, *Fun Times*. This brochure is mailed quarterly to random households within the city.

All of the current promotional outlets are appropriate and should continue to be utilized. As funding permits, other advertising sources should also be considered. Targeted radio and television commercials can be effective for promoting special events or sparking demand during non-peak times. Tag lines on radio commercials from the Department's soda provider may be available as a source of free advertising.

Partnerships with local radio or television stations could also be developed around special events for the community. Stations

could sponsor special events by providing free pre-event advertising and day-of-the-event live coverage. Themed events could center around upcoming holidays, popular culture (ex. Harry Potter, reality TV shows, etc.), or ongoing family events.

To assess customer satisfaction, post-participation surveys are conducted by the marketing division for programs. Results from these surveys show that overall, there is a high degree of customer satisfaction for the programs and services provided. The Department should continue to use these instruments for customer feedback. With stagnant participation, the center should consider holding some focus groups to fully explore why people are not returning. The secret shopper program currently in place for the pools and theatre should also be extended to the Community Center. An enhanced and more visually appealing website should be developed to make it easy for the public to learn about and register for recreation programs at their convenience.

Customer Service

Currently, there is no customer service plan in place. A plan outlining the appropriate delivery of customer service should be developed and included in the employee policy and procedure manual. The customer service plan should address how to properly address customers, outline procedures for handling customer comments or complaints, and generally illustrate the type of experience customers should have when visiting the Community Center.

Since employees sometimes have a tendency of overlooking the importance of issues brought forward by immediate supervisors, it is helpful to use an outside person for the periodic training sessions. This can be accomplished by using staff from other divisions (like marketing), working with local colleges, or hiring outside facilitators. A variety of training programs are also available through the National Recreation and Park Association and other resources.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are a valuable tool for management and the Board of Park Commissioners to measure or track the success of programs and services offered at the Community Center. In addition to the existing instruments, it is recommended that the following performance measures be implemented:

- **Cost per Experience:** Using existing data, the measurement calculates how much it costs the Department to provide a program or service for the average participant. All costs, including direct and indirect, should be included. This information is valuable for effective pricing. This ratio should be calculated for each program and service at least once per year.
- **Cost Recovery:** Upon conclusion of a program or at set times for ongoing services, the total revenue from a program or service should be divided by its associated expenses. This ratio indicates the profit or loss margin for delivery of the program of service. The cost recovery

should then be compared to an established subsidy or profit goal.

- **Customer Retention:** Track the percentage of returning participants from previous sessions of the program. This information provides clues to customer satisfaction. Obviously, the higher the retention rate the better, since it is usually easier (and cheaper) to keep a returning customer versus attracting a new one.
- **Programs Offered versus Held:** Record the number of programs actually offered against the number of programs planned and advertised to the public. Frequent cancellation of programs could indicate that the program is not adequately meeting the needs of the community.
- **Program Capacity:** Track the number of program participants versus the maximum spaces available for a program or service. Programs at low capacity should be reviewed to determine if they need to be changed or eliminated. Programs at maximum capacity may need to be expanded due to demand.
- **Facility Capacity:** Track the actual number of hours of ice time scheduled for activities versus the total number of hours the facility is operated.
- **Market Potential:** Using data available from resources like the American Sports Data Superstudy of Sports Participation or National Sporting Goods Association Sports Participation Survey, determine the potential number of participants based on national or regional averages. See Market Assessment as an example.
- **Market Share:** Comparing the number of participants versus the market potential,

determine the percentage of the potential market that is utilizing the service or program. To effectively measure this, it is important to track at least the ages of participants to compare to the national data. Age segments, if used, need to correspond to the resources used.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Originally built as a senior center, the Community Center is responsible for the Department's preschool/youth, adult, and older adult programs. The facility is centrally located, but has limited parking despite a recent expansion of the parking lot. The Community Center lacks many amenities found in modern recreation centers, such as a gymnasium, fitness center, indoor walking track, or indoor aquatic center. The facility does not have sufficient multipurpose space to accommodate a wider selection of programs for all age segments. There is limited green space surrounding the center for outdoor activities. For these reasons, many programs offered by the Community Center must be facilitated off-site in local schools and other facilities.

There is no membership or daily fee to use the Community Center, nor is the facility currently operated in a manner to warrant or support a charge for admission. Although there is an information desk, the center lacks a centralized entrance point to effectively control entry. There are minimal areas within the facility to support self-directed recreation beyond a game room and central lounge. A small selection of

fitness equipment is available, but the equipment is located in a hallway and appears to be non-commercial grade.

Over 5,300 individuals enroll in Community Center programs annually, with nearly 60% of these participants enrolled in preschool or youth activities. Despite a significant amount of senior program space within the facility, fewer than 250 people typically enroll in older adult programs offered through the center each year. Enrollments in community center programs have remained fairly stagnant since 1998. Attendance at the center has average slightly over 100 visitors per day.

As validated by the participation numbers, the Community Center provides a good variety of programs for children under the age of 6. Few programs are available that would truly appeal to pre-teens, teens, and young adults. Program opportunities resume for adults, although most appear targeted to the senior population. The Department should complete a service audience matrix to ensure programs are targeted and offered for all age segments.

Based on available information, center operations and older adult programs are heavily subsidized by the city, recovering on average only 28% of their operating costs through user fees and earned income. Despite cost recovery goals of 100%, which is consistent with industry practices, youth and adult programs generated only 78% of their operating costs. The Department should implement activity-based costing for every program offered to ensure that programs are priced effectively to meet established cost recovery

goals. If prices based on the true cost of delivering a program exceed the public's willingness to pay, the merits of offering the program should be evaluated.

6.3 McMillen Ice Arena

Description of Programs and Services

Located at 3901 Abbott Street inside McMillen Park, McMillen Ice Arena has served the greater Fort Wayne community for nearly 50 years. The facility includes two full size ice sheets, one studio ice surface, multipurpose room, concession stand, full-service pro shop, locker rooms, and stadium seating for 1,024 spectators. The concession stand and pro shop are currently leased to private vendors. A \$5-million renovation and expansion of the ice arena was completed in the fall of 2000.

In addition to public skate times, a variety of skating programs are offered at the ice arena. Hockey services provided by ice arena staff include the Hockey Initiation Program (for beginners to McMillen hockey programs) and House League (recreational hockey league). Travel hockey and high school hockey leagues are facilitated by Fort Wayne Youth Hockey (FWYH). All youth hockey leagues are part of FWYH and registered with USA Hockey. Other adult leagues are operated by outside groups who contract ice time at the arena. McMillen Ice Arena also serves as the practice facility for the Fort Wayne Komets.

McMillen Ice Arena has professional skating staff available for group and private instruction. The arena provides a learn-to-

skate program along with a more competitive advanced skating program. All program participants are registered with the United States Figure Skating Association (USFSA). Staff also work with the Fort Wayne Ice Skating Club (FWISC) to host skating competitions and special events at the ice arena.

National Participation Trends and Demographics

Utilizing the 2002 Superstudy of Sports Participation, the following national participation trends were identified for hockey and ice skating. General demographics of sport participants are also identified. Please note that national participation statistics are not collected for children below the age of 6.

- Hockey: Less than one percent (0.9%) of the American population, ages 6 and above, plays ice hockey at least once per year. Hockey participation in the state of Indiana slightly trails the national average, with only 0.7% of Hoosiers playing hockey at least once per year.

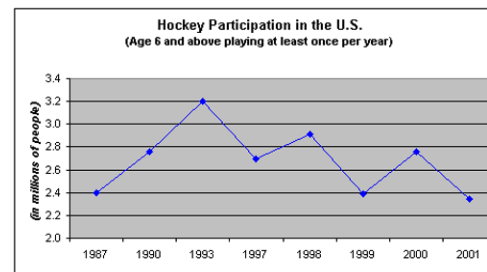
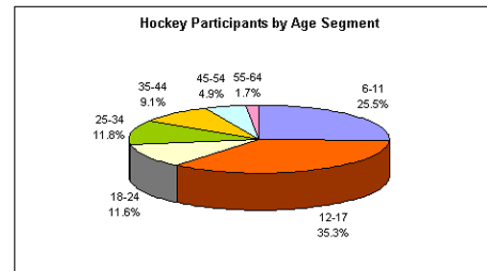
Frequent participants, or those playing hockey 25 or more days per year, represent only 0.3% of the national population. These are the individuals most likely to participate in a hockey program or league offered at the ice arena. Males represent 87.3% of all frequent participants. While the average age of frequent players is 19.9, children under the age of 17 play hockey at the highest rates of all age groups (1.1% or teens age 12 to 17 and 0.8% of children age 6 to 11). Youth comprise 60.8% of

frequent players. The average household income of frequent participants is \$73,800. Generally speaking, the higher the household income, the more likely a person will be a frequent player.

During 2001, hockey experienced both one-year (15.1%) and 14-year (2%) declines in participation rates. These changes are statistically insignificant according to the Superstudy of Sports Participation. Within the 14-year period, hockey experienced some sporadic spurts of growth and decline.

The average player (both frequent and infrequent) plays hockey 34 days per year. Hockey players, on average, have played the sport 10 years. Beginners, or those that have played for one year or less, represent 15.2% of all players. Over a third (35%) have played 10 or more years.

Not surprisingly, 60.6% of hockey players also ice skate (beyond playing hockey). Other sports activities that hockey players are most likely to participate in include: swimming (73.6%), camping (53.8%), fishing (51.8%), roller skating (49.7%), bowling (48.6%), and bicycling (48.2%). Only 25.9% of hockey players also play roller hockey. A significant percentage of hockey players also do some form of strength training or conditioning, with 45.5% using strength equipment and 38.3% using both free weights and cardio equipment.



- Ice Skating: Nationally, 6.7% of the population, age 6 and above, ice skates at least once per year. Ice skating participation in the state of Indiana is similar to the national average, with 6.6% of Hoosiers skating at least once per year.

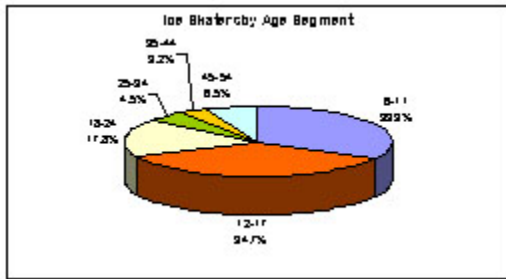
Frequent participants, or those skating 25 or more days per year, represent only 0.3% of the national population. These are the individuals most likely to participate in an intermediate or advanced figure skating program offered at the ice arena. Females represent 60.7% of all frequent participants. The average age of frequent skaters is 17.3. Children under the age of 17 skate at the highest rates of all age groups and

represent 68.0% of all skaters. The average household income of frequent skaters is \$65,900. Household income does not play a significant role in the likelihood of someone skating.

According to the 2002 Superstudy of Sports Participation, ice skating has experienced four consecutive years of declining participation through 2001 (the most recent year for which data was available). From 1998 to 2001, the total number of skaters declined by 10.5%.

The average skater (both frequent and infrequent) skates 7.3 days per year. Ice skaters, on average, have skated 9.2 years. Beginners, or those that have skated one year or less, represent 21.8% of all participants. Seasoned skaters that have skated 10 or more years comprise 29.9% of all skaters.

Other sports activities that ice skaters are most likely to participate in include: swimming (81.3%), bicycling (55.6%), bowling (53.4%), roller skating (52.7%), and camping (47.8%). Approximately a third of all skaters also do some form of strength training or conditioning, with 35.1% using strength equipment, 32.6% using cardio equipment, and 28.1% using free weights.

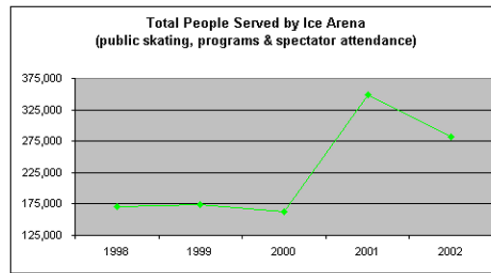


McMillen Ice Arena Participation Trends

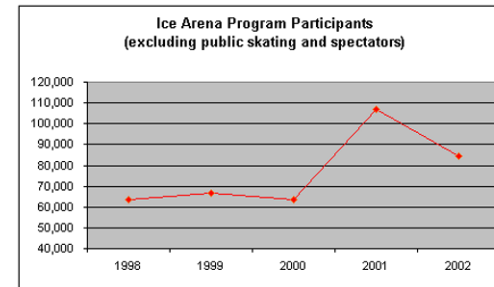
Based on participation statistics collected from staff between 1998 and 2002, the following trends were identified for McMillen Ice Arena:

- **Total People Served:** Since its renovation and expansion in 2000, McMillen Ice Arena has served a greater number of people through its various programs and services. Unfortunately, 2002 witnessed a decline in participation in all program and service areas (as measured by the number of participants), excluding special programs. In 2002, a total of 282,164 people either attended public skating, participated in hockey or ice skating

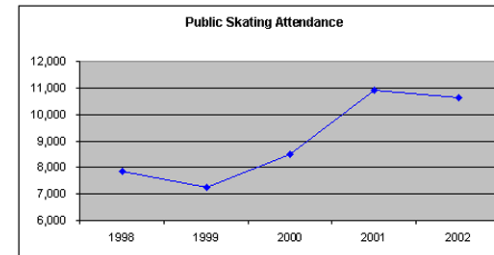
programs, or were spectators at various events hosted at the arena. While this represents a 65.0% increase from 1998, the total number of people served by the ice arena was down 19.0% from the previous year.



- **Program Participation:** Program participation numbers have unquestionably benefited from the addition of more ice at the arena. The stick and puck "drop-in" adult hockey program more than tripled (3.4 times greater) between 1998 and 2002 to 1,780 participants. Participation in special programs, which includes tournaments, camps, ice shows, and other special events, dramatically increased from 184 participants in 2001 to 3,009 participants in 2002. The number of hockey and figure skaters witnessed a significant one-year bump from the expansion, increasing by 167% from 2000 to 2001 (the first full year after expansion). The impact, however, was somewhat short-lived with participation declining 24.1% in 2002 to 79,794. Despite the recent decline, the total number of hockey and figure skating participants is still roughly 17,000 greater than before the renovation.



- **Public Skating:** Public ice skating attendance in 2002 was 10,659. This represented a 36% increase from 1998. Similar to overall program participation, public skating also witnessed a drop in attendance during 2002. The 2.4% decline, however, represented less than 300 people. In 2002, skate rentals were secured from 40.6% of the public skaters. This was down from a five-year high (as measured by a percentage of public skating attendance) of 55.1% in 1999.



Hockey Participation Rates

	U.S. Participation Rate	Estimated Fort Wayne Participants	Estimated Allen County Participants	Estimated Total Participants
Total by Population	0.3%	559	344	903
Total by Median HH Income	0.3%	559	344	903
Age 6-11	0.8%	149	96	246
Age 12-17	1.1%	193	139	331
Age 18-24	0.3%	66	28	94
Age 25-34	0.3%	95	46	141
Age 35-44	0.2%	62	45	106
Age 45-54	0.1%	25	20	45
Age 55-64	0.1%	15	11	26
Age 65+	0.0%	0	0	0
Total by Age Segment	---	605	384	989
Male	0.6%	538	341	880
Female	0.1%	97	58	154
Total by Gender	---	635	399	1,034
Range	---	559 - 635	344 - 399	903 - 1,034

Competition

The sole competitor to McMillen Ice Arena within the greater Fort Wayne area is the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum. While public skating times are not offered, ice rentals are available October through May (see rates below). Memorial Coliseum does compete for some potential user groups, but McMillen Ice Arena generally has better ice times and a convenient location. Memorial Coliseum is also home to the Fort Wayne Komets of the United Hockey League. The arena has permanent seating for 10,000 spectators. See the following table for rental rate information.

Ice Rental Rates in Fort Wayne

McMillen Ice Arena	NHL (2) Studio	\$210 \$80	\$150 \$80
Memorial Coliseum	NHL	\$185	\$110

Market Potential and Share

Using Fort Wayne and Allen County populations based on the 2000 U.S. Census and national participation statistics as reported in the 2002 Superstudy of Sports Participation, the following estimates were made regarding market potential in the immediate service area. Sports participation ranges as a factor in national participation rates based on total population, median household income, age segmentation, and gender (national participation statistics are not collected for children below the age of 6).

Ice Skating Participation Rates

	U.S. Participation Rate	Estimated Fort Wayne Participants	Estimated Allen County Participants	Estimated Total Participants
Total by Population	0.3%	559	344	903
Total by Median HH Income	0.2%	373	229	602
Age 6-11	1.1%	206	132	338
Age 12-17	1.2%	210	151	361
Age 18-24	0.6%	133	55	188
Age 25-34	0.1%	32	15	47
Age 35-44	0.1%	31	22	53
Age 45-54	0.1%	25	20	45
Age 55-64	0.0%	0	0	0
Age 65+	0.0%	0	0	0
Total by Age Segment	—	636	396	1,032
Male	0.3%	269	171	440
Female	0.4%	387	231	617
Total by Gender	—	656	401	1,057
Range	—	373 - 656	229 - 401	602 – 1,057

- Hockey: National trends suggest that between 559 and 635 Fort Wayne residents age 6 and above would play hockey on a frequent basis (25 days or more per year). Within Allen County (excluding Fort Wayne), there would be an additional 344 to 399 frequent hockey players. In total, there could be between 903 and 1,034 frequent hockey players in Fort Wayne and Allen County. Assuming participation rates at the national average, this is the pool of potential participants within the immediate service area for hockey programs offered by or facilitated at the ice arena,

Of the hockey programs offered at McMillen Ice Arena, most participants fall between the ages of 3 and 17. Staff indicated that in fall 2002, there were 700 participants in the hockey programs. National participation rates predict approximately 577 frequent hockey enthusiasts in Fort Wayne and Allen County between the ages of 6 and 17. This suggests that hockey participation rates in Fort Wayne are above the national average and the ice arena's service area extends beyond Allen County. Between McMillen Ice Arena and the Memorial Coliseum, the demand for hockey within the Fort Wayne community is likely being met. This conclusion is further supported by the 2003 community attitude and interest citizen survey, which found that only 4% of all households ranked the ice arena as one of the four most important recreation facilities operated by Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation. Staff also indicated that enrollment in hockey programs is generally full with periodic waiting lists.

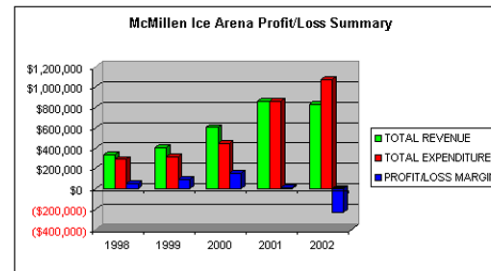
- Ice Skating: National trends suggest that between 373 and 656 Fort Wayne residents age 6 and above would ice skate on a frequent basis (25 days or more per year). Within Allen County (excluding Fort Wayne), there would be an additional 229 to 401 frequent skaters. In total, national trends suggest that there could be between 602 and 1,057 frequent ice skaters in Fort Wayne and Allen County. This is the pool of potential participants within the immediate service area for ice skating and figure skating programs offered by the ice arena, assuming participation rates at the national average.

Of the ice skating programs offered at McMillen Ice Arena, most participants fall between the ages of 3 and 17. Staff indicated that in fall 2002, there were 400 participants in the ice skating programs. National participation rates predict approximately 699 frequent ice skating enthusiasts in Fort Wayne and Allen County between the ages of 6 and 17. This suggests that ice skating participation rates in Fort Wayne are below the national average or McMillen Ice Arena is not sufficiently meeting the needs of the potential ice and figure skating market. Staff indicated that it is typically difficult to fill figure skating classes.

Revenue and Expense Analysis

Since its renovation and expansion in the fall of 2000, McMillen Ice Arena has experienced dramatic increases in both revenues and expenditures. Comparing 1999 and 2001 (the first complete years before and after construction), revenue

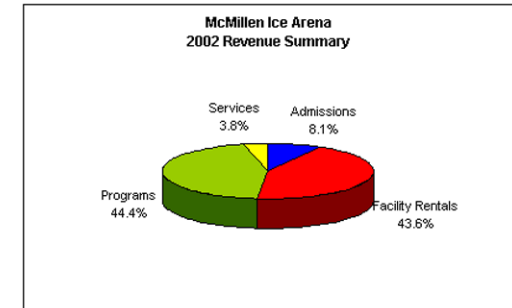
increased by 114.8% and expenses rose by 173.3%. With the new debt service of \$409,623 resulting from the expansion, total expenditures exceeded earned revenue in 2002, resulting in an operating deficit of \$237,139.



Total earned income in 2002 was \$832,986. This represents an increase of \$495,452 (146.8%) over the past five years. Unfortunately, revenue slipped by 3.6% between 2001 and 2002. This was largely due to a 14.4% decline in the amount of program revenue brought in by the ice arena. Additionally, there was a slight decline of 0.4% in concessions revenue and a \$5,706 reduction to revenue due to credit card usage, refunds, and discounts. All other revenue sources realized gains in 2001 from the previous year. The most dramatic increase was in special rental programs, which increased from \$3,217 in 2001 to \$14,268 in 2002.

Nearly half (44.4%) of all earned income at the ice arena comes from programs and related fees. Facility rentals represent the next largest share at 43.6%. Admissions for public skating represented only 8.1% of total revenue, which is on the low side for

a typical municipal facility. Ideally, admission revenues should represent 12% to 17% of total earned income. Additionally, higher participation rates will positively impact sales in concessions and the pro shop.

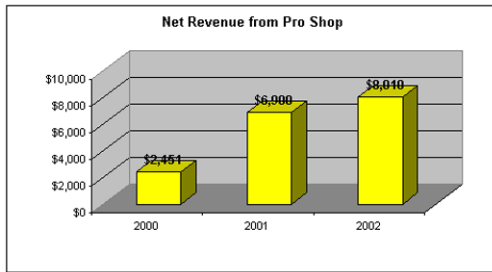


The Board of Park Commissioners entered into a lease agreement with Center Ice, Inc., to operate and manage the 1,310-square-foot pro shop in the ice arena. The one-year contract was executed in March 2000 and provides automatic extensions for up to five years. The contract calls for the pro shop to be open minimally from 4:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on weekends. The Park Board reserves the right to review and approve all goods and services provided, prices and fees, and staff. Center Ice pays a monthly rental fee of \$550. Annually, the operator pays the Board of Park Commissioners a sliding rate on gross sales based on the following sums:

- 1% if gross sales reach \$150,000
- 2% if gross sales reach \$250,000
- 3% if gross sales reach \$350,000

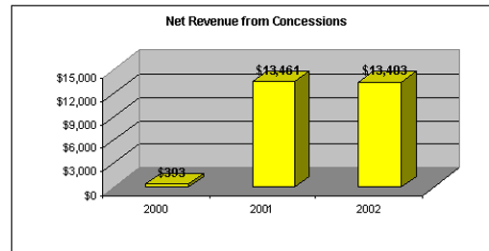
- 4% if gross sales reach \$450,000

Over the three years of the existing contract, revenue has increased by 226.8% from \$2,451 in 2000 up to \$8,010 in 2002. This dramatic increase is largely due to poor sales in 2000 due to the renovation. Dating back to 1998, revenue earned from the pro shop has increased by a more modest 25.9%. Most of the income earned (\$6,600) over each of the past two years was the result of the monthly rental fee. Based on the terms of the contract, the pro shop had gross sales of \$30,000 in 2001 and \$141,000 in 2002.



A three-year contract was awarded to Anthony Wayne Vending Company, Inc., in June 2000, for the operation and management of the ice arena's concession stand and vending machines. The vendor pays the Board of Park Commissioners 7% of gross, after-tax sales of the concession stand and 20% of gross, after-tax sales from the vending machines. The minimum hours of operation are the same as the pro shop. The agreement has an automatic two-year extension clause.

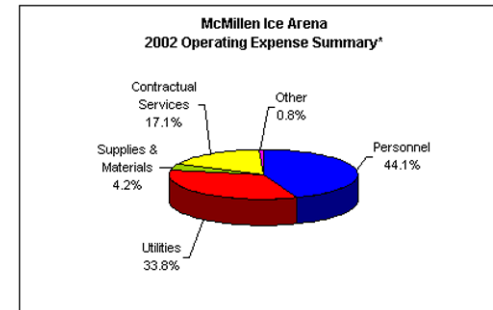
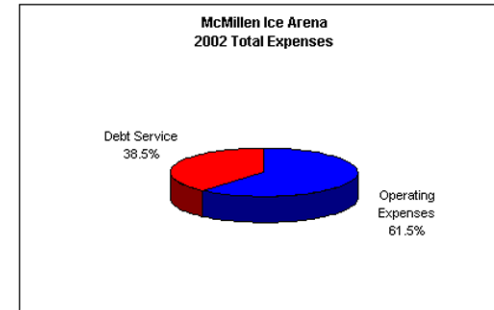
During this contract, revenue has increased more than 34 times from \$393 in 2000 up to \$13,403 in 2002. Between 2001 and 2002, there was a minor decline of 0.4% or \$58 in earned revenue. Given the slumping attendance, this decline was less than expected. In 2002, gross sales totaled \$85,791 for concessions and \$9,290 for vending. The vast majority of the sales for both services (87.6% for concessions and 74.2% for vending) took place in the first and fourth quarters of the year. Prior to entering into the current contract, no concession income was reported for McMillen Ice Arena.



On the expense side, debt service accounted for \$409,623 or 38.5% of the total expenditures in 2002. Prior to 2001 and the recent expansion, there was no debt service for the ice arena. Although it is not unreasonable to expect the ice arena to generate sufficient funds to cover operating and debt service expenses, many parks and recreation departments absorb capital costs for their ice arenas through tax sources.

Other large expenses for the ice arena included personnel and utilities, which are to be expected. Staffing levels appear to

be appropriate in relation to the size of the operation. Utilities were significantly higher than in past years as the result of a roughly 15% increase in natural gas and electricity rates.



Operations Assessment

Pricing Strategies

With the goal of recapturing all operating and debt-service expenses, McMillen Ice Arena uses a variety of effective strategies to establish prices for programs and services. Prime/non-prime and season/off-season rates are used for ice rentals to fill

**McMillen Ice Arena Rates
Effective August 1, 2002**

Public Skating/Single Admission*	\$4.50 – Youth & Adults \$3.50 – Seniors (age 55+)* <i>\$1.00 off for groups of 25 or more</i>
Public Skating/12 Punch Card	\$45.00 – Youth & Adults \$35.00 – Seniors (age 55+)
Rentals	\$2.50 – Skates \$11.00 – Stick & Puck
Ice Rentals/Full Rink	\$210/hour – Prime (weekdays after 4 p.m.; weekends) \$150/hour – Non-Prime (weekdays before 4 p.m.) \$165/hour – Summer (May 1 – Aug. 15; 20 hr. minimum)
Ice Rentals/Studio Ice	\$80/hour
Adult League (9 week season)	\$195/person (excluding IMR/FWYH fees)
Youth League (22 games, no practices included)	\$285/person
Youth League (22 games, 9 practices)	\$345/person
Hockey Initiation (10 week season)	\$105/person (excluding IMR/FWYH fees)
IMR/FWYH Membership Fees	\$35/person
Beginning Figure Lesson	\$15/lesson
Figure Skating Package (45 minute ice session, 30 minute on-ice class with instructor, or 45 minute off-ice class with instructor)	\$7.00/session – 10 sessions or more per week \$7.50/session – 5-9 sessions per week \$8.00/session – 4 session or less per week \$9.00/session – Walk-on
Multipurpose Room Rental	\$10/hour – FWYH or FWISC programs \$25/hour – Public Rate

periods with low demand. Group and individual volume (punch card) discounts are available for public skating times. Ice arena staff routinely benchmark against similar ice arenas in other communities.

There have been no price increases since August 2001. During the previous seasons, prices were increased on average by 22% in 1999/2000, 16% in 2000/2001, and 14% in 2001/2002. Based on the current recession, staff is opposed to raising rates at this time in fear of lowering participation rates and loss of revenue.

The ice arena is initiating a dasher board advertising program in partnership with the Fort Wayne Komets. A revenue-sharing program was established this season for groups charging admission to events. The general policy allows for gate sales up to \$5 per person, with the ice arena receiving between 10% and 15% of gross gate receipts and 10% of gross season pass sales. The high school hockey league is grandfathered from this new policy.

In addition to the existing strategies, the ice arena should consider using prime/non-prime and season/off-season rates for public skating. During the fall and winter months, it may be possible to charge rates \$0.50 to \$1.00 higher during the weekends as opposed to weekdays. With low participation in the summer, discounted rates could be offered as long as the price of admission does not fall below the cost of providing the service. Resident/non-resident rates could also be used to reward individuals residing within city limits for being taxpayers.

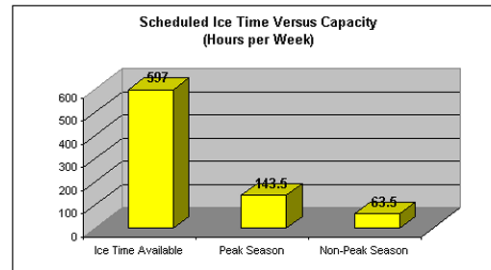
While benchmarking can be a valuable tool in understanding how different ice arenas operate, staff should be cautioned that prices only reflect part of the story. Questions should also be asked about the facility's revenue expectations: is it subsidized or expected to break even? It may also be helpful to receive a copy of recent financial statements to fully compare operating revenues and expenses.

Facility Scheduling

Upon analyzing representative facility schedules from both peak and non-peak weeks, McMillen Ice Arena has significant excess capacity in which additional programs and services could be provided. As would be expected, use of the ice arena dramatically drops during the summer months. The peak season with the highest overall usage falls between October and March. Operating hours for the ice arena are generally from 6:30 a.m. until 11:00 p.m. daily.

Assuming a possible daily operating schedule of 6:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m., there is a total of 597 hours of ice time each week collectively for the three rinks (17 hours per day, seven days, three rinks). Many ice rinks in other communities operate more than 17 hours per day, with rentals extending beyond midnight. During the summer week of July 6 through 12, 2002, only 63.5 hours or 17.8% of the ice time was scheduled for public skating, programs, or facility rentals. For the peak season week of November 18-24, 2002, scheduled activities accounted for 143.5 hours or 40.2% of the potential ice time.

In both the peak and non-peak seasons, ice time is most frequently scheduled during the evenings and weekends as would be expected.



During the summer season, ice arena staff typically run only one rink while using the downtime to perform maintenance on the other surfaces. This is an effective practice that also helps reduce operating costs while the ice is removed for painting and other repairs. Assuming only one rink is actually in operation at all times during the non-peak season, the capacity rate at the ice arena increases to 53.4%.

While unrealistic to schedule 100% of the operating time for activities that generate income, current scheduling practices have resulted in the underutilization of the ice arena. The ice arena should operate minimally at 68% capacity, at least during the peak season. This would allow sufficient time for ice preparation between activities and recognize the difficulty of filling non-prime hours weekdays during traditional office or school hours.

The ice arena offered six sessions or 11.5 hours of public skating sessions per week

during the fall and winter of 2002/2003. During the spring of 2003, skating sessions were offered five times per week for 9.5 hours. This summer, only three public skating sessions are being offered per week totaling six hours. After expanding the facility, additional public skating times were offered but were poorly attended and subsequently canceled.

Based on successful practices at other public facilities, the ice arenas typically offer 10 to 11 public skating sessions with times available on a daily basis. Weekday times tend to be most popular during the late afternoon or early evening. If scheduling permits, multiple times on Fridays and Saturdays can also be successful. Special sessions for teens or family nights with discounted family passes could also be implemented. Upon offering new public skating times, these sessions should be extensively advertised to properly inform the public. Special events or themed nights can also be effective in helping generate interest.

Only two stick and puck sessions were offered during the sample week in November, and three were held in July. One of the sessions in July was designated for teens only. The ice arena should consider offering stick and puck sessions at least three times a week based on successful scheduling practices at other municipal facilities. Some facilities have designated times and sessions for different skill levels or age groups.

Partnerships

McMillen Ice Arena pursues various partnership opportunities to either increase income or reduce costs. Sponsorships are pursued for jerseys to minimize the program cost to participants in the House League. Partnerships are in place with Fort Wayne Youth Hockey and the Fort Wayne Ice Skating Club to provide programs and leagues at the ice arena, minimizing the amount of staff needed. Working with these two clubs, tournaments and competitions that bring in additional revenue are hosted. Volunteers are used to assist with instruction and coaching in the hockey programs. Dasher board advertisements are sold through a partnership with the Fort Wayne Komets.

The ice arena should consider pursuing new partnerships with local schools to fill non-peak times. Opportunities may exist to incorporate ice skating and hockey into physical education programs at the elementary school, middle school, high school, and collegiate levels. Intramural programs may be a viable option. Special fieldtrips are also a potential for younger students.

The local YMCA and Boys and Girls Club may serve as potential partners for joint programming or ice rentals, since neither of these organizations have their own ice facilities. Ice activities could be incorporated into summer camps offered by these organizations either as special, one-time events or ongoing elements of their programs.

Efforts to extend the Lifetime Sports Academy to include ice skating and/or hockey components should be considered. With the close proximity of the Lifetime Sports Academy activities already in McMillen Park, this appears to be a logical progression for the program.

Of the existing partnerships, only youth hockey's relationship is documented in writing. In the future, all partnerships should be documented, along with associated costs and benefits to each partner. Given the financial expectations for the ice arena, no partnerships should be entered into in which the ice arena does not cover the costs of providing the service.

Marketing and Promotions

Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation currently uses a variety of advertising methods to promote the programs and services offered at McMillen Ice Arena. The primary source of information about the ice arena to the general public is the Department's seasonal program brochure, *Fun Times*. This brochure is mailed quarterly to random households within the city. Other advertising sources include individual program brochures distributed at the ice arena, fall rink-specific program brochure directly distributed in the schools, direct mailings to past participants, and billboards on bus shelters.

All of the current promotional outlets are appropriate and should continue to be used. As funding permits, other advertising sources should also be considered. Targeted radio and television commercials

can be effective for promoting special events or sparking demand during non-peak times. Tag lines on radio commercials from the Department's soda provider may be available as a source of free advertising.

Partnerships with local radio or television stations could also be developed around special events for the community. Stations could sponsor a special event by providing free, pre-event advertising and day-of-the-event live coverage. Themed events could center around upcoming holidays, popular culture (ex. Harry Potter, reality TV shows, etc.), or ongoing family events (ex. Family Day every Wednesday at a discounted rate).

To assess customer satisfaction, post-participation surveys are conducted by the marketing division for all programs offered by the ice arena. Phone surveys are also conducted among former hockey participants that do not return. Results from these surveys show that overall, there is a high degree of customer satisfaction for the programs and services provided by the ice arena. The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department should continue to use those instruments for customer feedback. With the recent decline in participation, the ice arena should consider holding some focus groups to fully explore why people are not returning. The secret shopper program currently in place for the pools and theatre should also be extended to the ice arena. An enhanced and more visually appealing website should be developed to make it easy for the public to learn about and register for recreation programs at their convenience.

Customer Service

Currently, there is no customer service plan in place. A plan outlining the appropriate delivery of customer service should be developed and included in the employee policy and procedure manual. The customer service plan should address how to properly address customers, outline procedures for handling customer comments or complaints, and generally illustrate the type of experience customers should have when visiting the ice arena.

One to one and one-half hours of customer service training is provided to all employees on an annual basis. McMillen Ice Arena should provide training on a quarterly, or at least twice per year, basis to reinforce the importance of excellent customer service. Customer service training should also be provided for each new hire.

Since employees sometimes have a tendency to overlook the importance of issues brought forward by immediate supervisors, it is helpful to use an outside person for the periodic training sessions. This can be accomplished by using staff from other divisions (like marketing), working with local colleges, or hiring outside facilitators. A variety of training programs is also available through the National Recreation and Park Association and other resources.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are a valuable tool for Department management and the

Board of Park Commissioners to measure or track the success of programs and services offered at McMillen Ice Arena. Current measurements used by the ice arena track customer satisfaction (post-program surveys), customer retention (phone survey of participants that do not return), and participation levels (enrollment and attendance figures). In addition to the existing instruments, it is recommended that the following performance measures be implemented:

- **Cost per Experience:** Using existing data, the measurement calculates how much it costs the Department to provide a program or service for the average participant. All costs, including direct and indirect, should be included. This information is valuable for effective pricing. This ratio should be calculated for each program and service at least once per year.
- **Cost Recovery:** Upon conclusion of a program or at set times for ongoing services, the total revenue from a program or service should be divided by its associated expenses. This ratio indicates the profit or loss margin for delivery of the program of service. The cost recovery should then be compared to an established subsidy or profit goal.
- **Customer Retention:** Track the percentage of returning participants from previous sessions of the program to receive clues to customer satisfaction. Obviously the higher the retention rate, the better, since it is usually easier (and cheaper) to keep a returning customer versus attracting a new one.
- **Programs Offered versus Held:** Record the number of programs actually offered against the number of programs planned and advertised to the public. Frequent cancellation of programs could indicate that the ice arena is not adequately meeting the needs of the community.
- **Program Capacity:** Track the number of program participants versus the maximum spaces available for a program or service. Programs at low capacity should be reviewed to determine if they need to be changed or eliminated. Programs at maximum capacity may need to be expanded due to demand.
- **Facility Capacity:** Track the actual number of hours that ice time is scheduled for an activity versus the total number of hours the facility is operated.
- **Market Potential:** Using data available from resources like the American Sports Data Superstudy of Sports Participation or National Sporting Goods Association Sports Participation Survey, determine the potential number of participants based on national or regional averages. See the Market Assessment section as an example.
- **Market Share:** Comparing the number of participants versus the market potential, determine the percentage of the potential market that is using the service or program. To effectively measure this, it is important to track at least the ages of participants to compare to the national data. Age segments, if used, need to correspond to the resources used.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The following strengths, or positive issues which fall *within the control of management*, directly impact the success of McMillen Ice Arena:

- The recently renovated and expanded facility has tremendous flexibility with two NHL-size rinks, one studio ice surface, one multipurpose room, concession stand, full-service pro shop, locker rooms, and stadium seating for 1,024 spectators
- Available ice time to expand programs and facility rentals
- Convenient location of ice arena in McMillen Park; proximity of Lifetime Sports Academy in same park increases local exposure among the public
- Pro shop and concession stands located in highly visible areas within the facility
- Multipurpose room provides ability for rentals for non-ice-related activities
- Existing partnerships with Fort Wayne Youth Hockey and the Fort Wayne Ice Skating Club
- Favorable contract with concessionaire provides 7% of gross sales on concession sales and 20% on vending
- Existing programs are well designed for the primary target market (children age 3 to 17)
- Hockey participation rates in Fort Wayne appear to exceed the national average
- Rental rates are well priced and competitive

- Total revenue increased each year from 1998 through 2001; each of these years the ice arena recaptured over 100% of its expenses
- The ice arena has strong programs and facility rentals
- Tremendous success of special program rentals in 2002
- There is an appropriate mix of advertising for the ice arena; opportunities for partnerships with local radio and television stations exist
- Efforts to track customer satisfaction are completed on a routine basis
- A wise mix of pricing strategies is used, although there may be additional opportunities worth pursuing

Weaknesses

The following weaknesses, or negative issues which fall *within the control of management* to varying degrees, negatively impact the success of McMillen Ice Arena:

- Ice skating participation in Fort Wayne is below the national average; due to low participation, figure skating programs do not break even
- Declining participation rates in programs and public skating
- Growth of expenses outpacing revenues over past two years, resulting in an operating deficit in 2002
- New debt service of over \$400,000 for recent renovation and expansion expected to be paid out of operating

revenues; debt service represents 38.5% of total expenses

- Current scheduling practices resulting in significant amounts of excess capacity and lost income potential
- Limited sessions for public skating and stick and puck; minimizes opportunity for earned income from admissions and concessions
- No customer service plan is in place to manage staff
- Lack of perceived safety in McMillen Park

Opportunities

The following opportunities, or potentially positive issues which are *outside the control of management*, impact the potential success of McMillen Ice Arena and should be considered in any decision-making:

- The economy improves, resulting in more discretionary income for individuals and families to spend on ice-related activities
- Interest in ice sports peaks each year between September and March
- The 2006 Winter Olympics, continued success of the Fort Wayne Komets, or heavy national coverage of the Stanley Cup playoffs or international skating competition sparks a renewed interest in ice sports
- The ice arena has minimal competition within the immediate region, providing it to a service area extending beyond Allen County

Threats

The following threats, or potentially negative issues *outside the control of management*, impact the potential success of McMillen Ice Arena and should be considered in any decision-making:

- Perception that participation in ice sports is expensive
- People continue to limit spending due to the real or perceived economic conditions and forecast
- The popularity of hockey or ice skating continues to slump or remain stagnant, resulting in declining participation or limited potential for future growth
- A new ice arena is constructed in Fort Wayne that directly competes with McMillen Ice Arena

Conclusions and Recommendations

McMillen Ice Arena is a quality facility that is well suited to meet the recreational and sports ice needs of the Fort Wayne community. The ice arena is a generally attractive, well-designed facility that incorporates a good color scheme throughout. The pro shop and concession areas are prominently located for high visibility among visitors. The lounge area is an attractive public space that respects its prior history as a warming shelter for the original outdoor ice rink previously located on this site.

Unquestionably, the biggest hurdle facing McMillen Ice Arena is generating sufficient revenue to cover both the operating costs

and \$410,000 annual debt service. Prior to the expansion in 2000, the ice arena was showing profit margins of 14% to 26%. Since the renovation and addition of the debt service obligation, expenditures have greatly exceeded revenue resulting in a recapture rate of 77.8% in 2002 (loss of \$237,139).

McMillen Ice Arena is faced with the challenge of serving sports that, nationally, have witnessed stagnant to declining participation rates in recent years. Hockey participation in Fort Wayne exceeds the national average, although ice skating in general falls below the national norm. Participation numbers at the ice arena were given a significant boost in 2001 thanks to the recent renovation and expansion. The decline in public skating and hockey participation during 2002 is following national trends. Countering these national and local trends presents a significant challenge to staff.

Based on sample schedules from the peak and non-peak seasons, the ice arena has a significant amount of excess capacity that needs to be filled. During the peak season, around 40% of the ice time between 6:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. was scheduled for public skating, programs, rentals, or special events. During the summer months, capacity ranges around 17% if all three sheets of ice are operational. An unscheduled facility cannot generate revenue.

Although past efforts to expand public skating opportunities at the ice arena have been unsuccessful, the number of public times in Fort Wayne is significantly lower

than at many public facilities. These facilities often offer 10 to 11 sessions per week with at least one session per day, as opposed to the three to six sessions offered per week at McMillen Ice Arena. Past failures may be the result of poor time offerings or advertising efforts. Offering teen or family nights, possibly sponsored by a local radio station, may be an effective means of boosting attendance. Family night rates of \$20 to \$30 per family (including skates) can be effective in making skating events more economical and appealing. A reverse pricing method—charging adults less than children—may encourage greater adult participation on regular days.

There also is an opportunity to expand stick and puck drop-in play at the arena. Currently, only two or three sessions are being offered. Additional sessions that cater to targeted age or skill groups could be offered.

While over 40% of the ice arena's revenue comes from rentals, more rentals are needed to fill the excess capacity, especially during non-prime times. Local schools, colleges, daycare centers, and organizations like the YMCA serve as potential customers, either through rentals or catered programs, to fill regular hours between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Additional efforts to promote the ice arena should be pursued. Minimally, 4% of the operating budget should be dedicated to marketing and promotions, and a higher investment is recommended. Pursuing potential media partners, such as a local radio or television station, can be an effective and less expensive way to promote

special events from a weekly family night to a tournament.

The ice arena should be commended for its full-circle approach to marketing. The use of customer satisfaction surveys and phone surveys indicates that staff understand that marketing is more than advertising and promotions. These public input processes should be continued. Staff should consider holding several focus groups, especially for programs that are experiencing declining participation or areas that receive low marks on the surveys.

To help measure the success of McMillen Ice Arena, the performance measures previously identified should be implemented. In addition to existing measurements in place, this information will help management understand the true cost of operations and customer satisfaction levels. The measurements also illustrate whether programs and facilities are being operated at appropriate capacity levels. The information is useful in determining what programs and services are successful and which ones needed adjusted or eliminated.

6.4 Jennings Center and Weisser Park Youth Center

Description of Programs and Services

The Albert G. Jennings Recreation Center and the Weisser Park Youth Center are two neighborhood-based community centers operated by the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department. Both facilities are located in the city's Southeast Planning

District and serve a largely minority population. Programs are primarily targeted to youth and provided at no cost to participants.

Located at 1330 McCulloch Street, Jennings Center provides a variety of after-school activities for youth ages 6 to 18, with both recreation and education focuses. Summer programs are offered at the center, as well as Hanna Homestead Park and Memorial Park. Program offerings include arts and crafts, swimming lessons, kickball/wuffle ball, table games, softball, math enrichment, advanced math, language arts enrichment, work on reading, better reading, practical math/applications, volleyball, movie madness, athletics, and drop-in recreation. During the summer months, Jennings Center serves as a free meal site for the Fort Wayne Community Schools Summer Lunch Program.

Weisser Park Youth Center is located at 802 Eckart Street. The youth center has a strong social services focus, with five essential services that address mathematics, language arts, personal development, community service, and African American heritage. Programs primarily target youth and young adults ages 5 to 23, although most participants are between the ages of 8 and 13. Other services provided at the youth center include homework assistance, computer literacy, and a community feeding program. General recreation offerings include pool, foosball, table tennis, computer games, weight lifting, and cardiovascular machines. Basketball and tennis courts and

a baseball field are located within Weisser Park.

Market Assessment

According to the Programs and Facilities Financial Statements and Attendance Report, 547 people registered for programs at Jennings Center during 2002. While last year's registration was down 347 from the previous year, program registrations at the center were up 56.3% from 1998. Total attendance at Jennings Center for 2002 was 37,342.

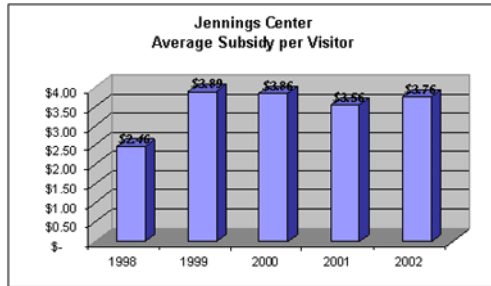
While registration and attendance figures for Weisser Park Youth Center were not provided in the Programs and Facilities Financial Statements and Attendance Report, staff indicated that 177 youth participated in the essential services. Average daily attendance at the youth center is around 250. This does not include youth who attend open gym (hosted at the adjacent elementary school) or play in outdoor sports activities in the adjacent park.

If the target market for both centers is youth residing in the Southeast Planning District, neither facility captures a large market share. Based on the 2000 census, the total population of youth (age 0 to 19) in this district was 17,969. Less than 2% of the district's youth are registered in programs offered at Jennings Center or Weisser Park Youth Center.

Revenue and Expense Analysis

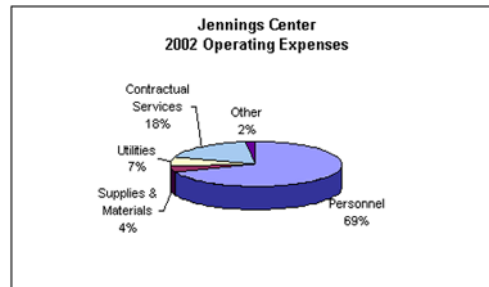
As a provider of free programs, Jennings Center is a heavily subsidized operation.

Over the past five years, the average operating deficit (or subsidy) has been nearly \$124,000. In 2001 and 2002, the subsidy level exceeded \$140,000. Factoring in earned revenue and operating expenses, the average subsidy per visitor in 2002 was \$3.76.



Earned revenue at Jennings Center is negligible, with the primary source coming from room rentals. Only \$1,200 in revenue was generated in 2002. No revenue was earned from programs provided by the center.

Between 1998 and 2002, operating expenses at Jennings Center have increased by 44.8%. The largest increases have occurred in contractual services (386.9% or \$20,206) and supplies and materials (654.8% or \$4,823). Salaries for seasonal staff have more than doubled over the past five years to \$50,467 in 2002. As would be expected for a program-oriented facility, the primary operating expense is related to personnel.



Because no financial statements were provided for Weisser Park Youth Center, the consultant could not conduct a financial analysis for this operation. In the future, the Department should include financial statements and participation information for this facility in its annual Programs and Facilities Financial Statements and Attendance Report.

Operations Assessment

Pricing Strategies

With a philosophy of providing free programs to the community, neither Jennings Center nor Weisser Park Youth Center has pricing strategies for their programs. Given that many participants come from families with lower income levels, staff indicated that the implementation of any program fees would severely impact participation rates.

Facility Scheduling

During the school year, Jennings Center offers after-school youth programming Monday through Friday from 3:30 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. Programming is also

available on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. Over the summer, programming is provided from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at Jennings Center, Memorial Park, and Hanna Homestead Park. The center is available for public rentals daily from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 p.m., except during scheduled program times.

Weisser Park Youth Center provides activities to the public daily from 12:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. The majority of youth programming occurs after 3:30 p.m., after schools have dismissed for the day.

Partnerships

Jennings Center staff indicated that it pursues partnerships, sponsorships, and grants, although the details of these of these partnership arrangements were not defined. Staff indicated that no written partnership agreements currently exist. A public/public partnership currently exists with the Fort Wayne Public Schools for the periodic use of the Lakeside Middle School gymnasium. The local YMCA recently donated used fitness equipment to the center for use by program participants.

Weisser Park Youth Center staff indicated that over 50% of the budget comes from grants and foundation support, although this figure could not be confirmed by the consultants. Staff also indicated that sponsorships and partnerships are pursued, although all partnership arrangements are pursued by Department administration. Written partnership agreements currently exist with Fort Wayne Community Schools and Identity Counts-Fort Wayne Jenbe' Ensemble.

Given the social-services focus of both centers, the following organizations serve as potential community partners to help fund or assist in the delivery of programs at Jennings Center or Weisser Park Youth Center:

- Public/Public: Fort Wayne Community Schools, Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (Afternoons ROCK in Indiana), and Fort Wayne Police Department
- Public/Not-For-Profit: Fort Wayne Park Foundation, Community Harvest Food Bank, Identity Counts-Fort Wayne Jenbe' Ensemble, Stop the Madness, Minority Health Coalition, AIDS Task Force, Ministerial Alliance, YMCA, YWCA, Boys and Girls Club, and community service organizations (e.g., Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, etc.)

Marketing and Promotions

Limited efforts are made by the Department to promote either Jennings Center or Weisser Park Youth Center beyond flyers distributed at park locations and newsletters mailed to past participants. Jennings Center is also promoted in the *Fun Times* seasonal brochure, although Weisser Park Youth Center is not mentioned in the Summer 2003 edition. Beyond these minimal efforts, word of mouth appears to be the primary means of promoting these centers and their programs.

Efforts are made to assess customer satisfaction through post-participation surveys at both Jennings Center and Weisser Park Youth Center. At the youth

center, surveys are provided to parents, youth participants, and instructors of the SBA Academy and related programs. An enhanced and more visually appealing website should be developed to make it easy for the public to learn about and register for recreation programs at their convenience.

Customer Service

Currently, there is no customer service plan in place. A plan outlining the appropriate delivery of customer service should be developed and included in the employee policy and procedure manual. The customer service plan should address how to properly address customers, outline procedures for handling customer comments or complaints, and generally illustrate the type of experience customers should have when visiting the community centers.

Customer service training is provided to all employees internally. Continuing education opportunities are limited to a local conference sponsored by the Allen Superior Court Family Relations Division.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are a valuable tool for Department management and the Board of Park Commissioners to measure or track the success of programs and services offered at its community centers. Current measurements used at both centers include customer satisfaction (post-program surveys) and participation levels (enrollment and attendance). It is recommended that the following performance measures be implemented:

- **Cost per Experience:** This measurement calculates how much it costs the Department to provide a program or service for the average participant. All costs, including direct and indirect, should be included. This ratio should be calculated for each program and service at least once per year. Programs or services that exceed an established ratio should be altered or eliminated to reduce costs.
- **Customer Retention:** Track the percentage of returning participants from previous sessions of the program to gain clues to customer satisfaction. Obviously the higher the retention rate, the better, since it is usually easier (and cheaper) to keep a returning customer versus attracting a new one.
- **Programs Offered versus Held:** Record the number of programs actually offered against the number of programs planned and advertised to the public. Frequent cancellation of programs could indicate that programs offered are not adequately meeting the needs of the community.
- **Program Capacity:** Track the number of program participants versus the maximum spaces available for a program or service. Programs at low capacity should be reviewed to determine if they need to be changed or eliminated. Programs at maximum capacity may need to be expanded due to demand.
- **Facility Capacity:** Track the actual number of hours the center is scheduled for an activity or rental versus the total number of hours the facility is operated.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The following strengths, or positive issues *within the control of management*, directly impact the success of Jennings Center and Weisser Park Youth Center:

- Facilities are located in areas with large minority populations
- Both centers reach out and provide programs to at-risk youth in the community
- After school and summer programs provide a positive, structured, and supervised environment for youth
- Free programs eliminate cost as a barrier to participation

Weaknesses

The following weaknesses, or negative issues *within the control of management* to varying degrees, negatively impact the success of Jennings Center and Weisser Park Youth Center:

- Lack of earned income (beyond minimal rental income) makes facilities solely dependent on tax subsidies and grants
- Lack of attached gymnasium limits ability to enhance sports-related programming or accommodate large indoor events
- Limited promotional efforts to increase awareness of and participation in programs
- Small facilities limit ability to significantly expand current programs
- Higher participant-to-staff ratios minimize

the amount of individualized attention given to participants and have potential to create an unsafe environment

- Insufficient staffing levels to successfully expand programs
- Jennings Center has limited open space for the expansion of facility or addition of outdoor recreation equipment (e.g., playground equipment or basketball courts)
- Limited parking available at Jennings Center
- Insufficient classroom/multipurpose meeting room space at Weisser Park Youth Center for group meetings
- Centers lack access to registration/membership software that will track attendance of participants and maintain vital information on children enrolled in programs in the event of an emergency

Opportunities

The following opportunities, or potentially positive issues *outside the control of management*, impact the potential success of Jennings Center and Weisser Park Youth Center, and should be considered in any decision-making:

- The provision of activities for teens ranked as the second-most important function of the Department based on the community attitude and interest survey
- The provision of activities for toddlers and youth ranked as the fourth-most important function of the Department based on the community attitude and interest survey

Threats

The following threats, or potentially negative issues *outside the control of management*, impact the potential success of Jennings Center and Weisser Park Youth Center, and should be considered in any decision-making:

- Poor economic climate continues, reducing the availability of tax revenues and grants to subsidize operations at the centers

Conclusions and Recommendations

Jennings Center and Weisser Park Youth Center can best be described as local community centers that primarily serve youth residing in the surrounding neighborhoods. The strength of both centers is that they provide positive, after-school and summer programs that address the social, educational, and recreational needs of at-risk youth. Both facilities have a strong social-services orientation, which partially explains the philosophy of providing all programs and most services for free.

While it appears that existing programs are generally well used, the relatively small size of each facility hinders the ability to expand programs or increase participation rates. Both centers have a need for a gymnasium and additional multipurpose meeting space. Jennings Center's lack of open green space severely limits the ability to expand this facility. Given the age and relatively poor condition of Jennings Center, the Department should consider

replacing it with a new facility better designed to meet today's recreational needs. Given its park location and newer age, the Weisser Park Youth Center appears to be better suited for expansion.

The Department should consider implementing user fees to help support operations at the neighborhood centers. While it is acknowledged that both centers serve economically depressed and/or at-risk children, it is unheard of for a city to provide all programs for free. Even a nominal registration fee would help reduce the overall subsidy level, possibly freeing up funding for additional programming staff or materials. The Department should work with the Park Foundation and other sources to ensure partial and full scholarships are available for those families or individuals unable to pay.

The Department should continue efforts to secure earned income to help support programs offered at both centers. In 2003, \$63,000 in grant funds was secured at Weisser Center for the SBA Academy. At Jennings Center, grants were also received for the Afternoon Rocks program (\$8,000) and Job Training (\$5,000).

Both facilities should continue to track all expenses (and revenues when applicable) by program or service area. This information will make it possible to calculate key performance measures, such as the cost per experience. Even if programs are provided for free, staff should complete an activity-based costing sheet to determine a program's estimated delivery cost before it is offered or continued. Programs with costs higher than

the agreed-upon subsidy level should either be revised to lower subsidy levels or cancelled.

Minimal numbers were available for program registrations and facility attendance. Detailed statistics should be tracked for each program and facility. Performance measures should be implemented to monitor participation levels, program capacity, and programs offered versus held. Memberships and

program registration capabilities should be added to each facility to effectively record these statistics. Additionally, tracking software could be used to maintain contact and other vital information for youth participants in the event of an emergency.

Summer 2003 Programs

Outdoor Education		Outdoor Recreation	
Free	Fee-Based	Free	Fee-Based
Sunday Discovery Walks	Birthday Parties	Nature Games	Canoe the Pigeon
Wild Edibles	Intro to Tree ID Workshop	Salomon Farm Volunteers	Primitive Skills
100 Years of Flight	Intro to Flight	Stewards of the Woods	Hurshstown Reservoir
6 th Annual Butterfly Count	Bats: "Shadows of Night"	Kid's Fishing Derby	
Nature Tales and Trails	Owls: Primal Predators		
	Farmin' Fun Camp		
	Outdoor Explorers 2003		
	Arthropod Adventures		
	Terrific Trees		
	Pondering		
	Aartvarks		
	Summer Nature Crafts		

6.5 Outdoor Recreation and Education

Description of Programs and Services

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department provides a variety of opportunities to learn about and enjoy nature through its outdoor recreation and education programs. Outdoor programs fall within the five categories identified below. All outdoor recreation and education programs are in their growth stages and identified as high priorities by staff.

School and Scout Programs

Low-cost programming is available to local schools and scout organizations providing hands-on environmental and historical education in a unique, natural setting that addresses Indiana science proficiencies. Programs are targeted to students and scouts ages 4 to 18. Currently, over 26 school programs are offered. Scouts can participate in over 20 programs to earn badges, as well as any of the school programs.

Public Outdoor Education Programs (Free)

Free programming for families and individuals of all ages provides hands-on environmental and historical education in a unique, natural setting. Programs primarily are targeted to people ages 4 to 85. Weekly programs typically are provided eight months out of the year.

Public Outdoor Education Programs (Fee-Based)

Economically priced programming for families and individuals of all ages provides hands-on environmental and historical education in a unique, natural setting. Programs primarily are targeted to people ages 4 to 85.

Public Outdoor Recreation Programs (Free)

Free recreational activities are available that promote environmental awareness and appreciation and physical fitness in a unique, natural setting. Programs are targeted primarily to people ages 2 to 85.

Public Outdoor Recreation Programs (Fee-Based)

Economically priced recreational activities promote and encourage environmental awareness and appreciation, physical fitness, and the development of lifetime sports and hobbies in outdoor recreation. Programs are targeted primarily to people ages 5 to 85. Typically, two to four trips are offered each year. Services provided at Hurshtown Reservoir also fall under fee-based outdoor recreation programs.

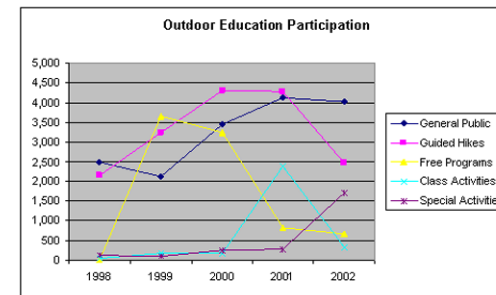
Market Assessment

Outdoor Education

A total of 9,213 people participated in outdoor education programs at Lindenwood Nature Preserve and Salomon Farm during 2002. This number represented a 23% drop from the previous year's attendance. Over the past five

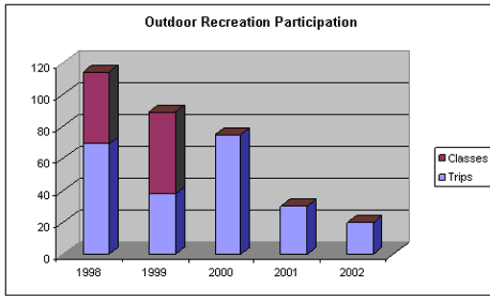
years, attendance ranged from a low of 4,828 in 1998 to a high of 11,906 in 2002.

Attendance patterns for outdoor education vary significantly depending on the year and program category. This suggests a lack of consistency in programs offered year to year. Special activities and general public attendance have generally increased since 1999. Dramatic drops in participation have recently occurred in guided hikes and free programs.



Outdoor Recreation

Participation in outdoor recreation programs has been on a steady decline since 1998. Last year, only 20 people participated in trips offered through outdoor recreation. This figure is down from a high of 75 in 2000. Overall attendance has also declined, with 1999 being the last year outdoor recreation classes are listed.



Need for Environmental Education

According to the 1999 National Environmental Education and Training Foundations/Roper Report, relatively few people are knowledgeable about the environment, especially when it comes to environmental issues that are likely to dominate in the next 15 to 25 years. Of the emerging issues, the report concludes that Americans will need to catch up if they are to understand the coming issues in environmental protection and help play a role in solving the current and emerging problems.

Four environmental issues in the 1999 nationwide survey were rated as very serious by two-thirds or more of the respondents: polluted water (74%), air pollution (69%), freshwater shortages (68%), and cutting of large forests (66%). Population increases and the loss of animal and plant species were each rated as very important by at least one in two respondents.

Concern for the planet's future exists within the country. Over half (56%) of respondents believe that we are headed

for an environmental catastrophe in the not-too-distant future.

While Americans generally view themselves as having a fair amount of knowledge about the environment, this was not substantiated in a test of key environmental issues. Out of 10 questions asked regarding the environment, respondents to the Roper Study answered, on average, only 3.2 questions correctly. The study suggested that environmental education programs, like those offered by the Department, are critical in helping inform people of all ages of environmental issues and provide them with the knowledge base to make a difference in their own behaviors.

Competition

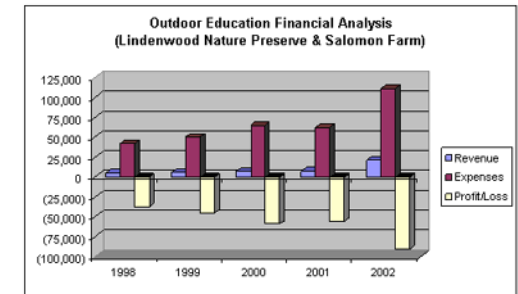
Various providers of outdoor education and recreation exist within the Fort Wayne area and compete with the programs offered by the Department. The primary competitor is the Allen County Parks and Recreation Department, which offers programs at Fox Island and Metea. Location (county parks are located in southern and northern Allen County) and cost (county offers no free programs, charges typically higher rates than city programs, charges admission to parks) should provide the city with a competitive advantage.

Internal sources of competition for environmental education include both the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo and Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory.

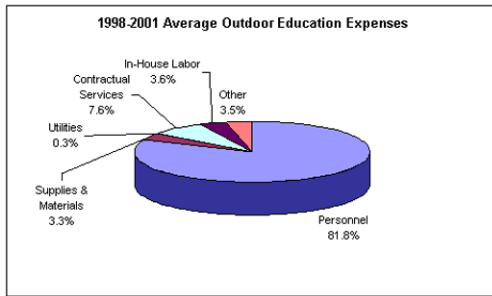
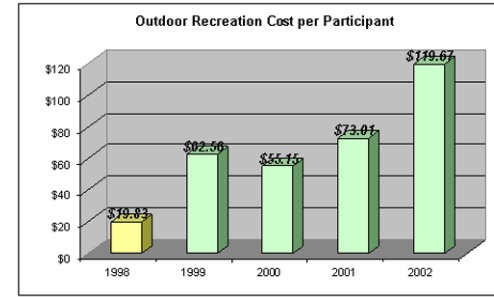
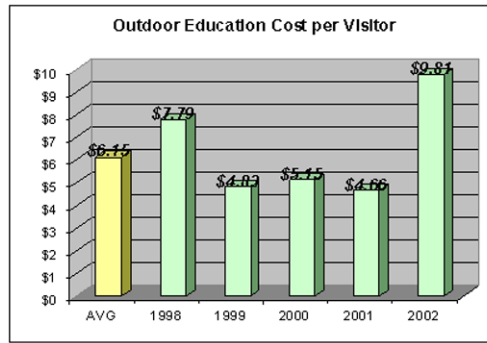
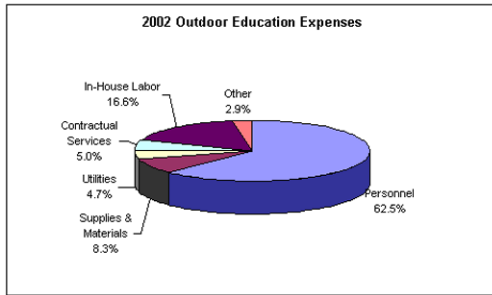
Revenue and Expense Analysis

Outdoor Education

In 2002, outdoor education experienced dramatic increases in both expenses and revenues as a result of the opening of the Salomon Farm learning center. Compared to 1998, expenses in 2002 more than doubled (2.6 times greater) and revenues more than quadrupled (4.3 times greater). Likewise, the operating deficit for outdoor education increased from \$37,610 in 1998 to \$90,334 in 2002. All increases can directly be attributed to Salomon Farm.

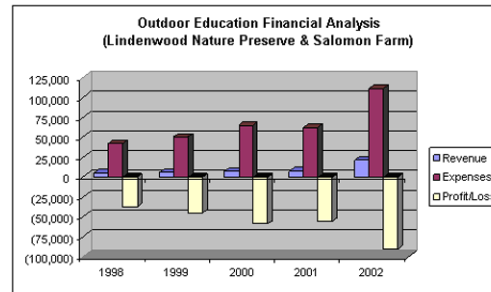


In 2002, personnel expenses comprised 62.5% of all operating expenses. This was down from the previous four-year average (1998-2001) of 81.8%. Compared to previous years, inhouse labor increased by 13% as a result of park crews preparing the Salomon Farm site. Utilities also rose significantly as a result of the new learning center. The distribution of expenses should more closely represent the four-year average in subsequent years.



Recreation

Over the past five years, outdoor recreation has increasingly become a subsidized program for the Department. In 2002, outdoor recreation realized an operating deficit of \$2,393. Due to low participation numbers, revenue generated from programs only offset 13.4% of related expenditures. The cost per participant to run outdoor recreation programs in 2002 was a staggering \$119.67. This represents a nearly \$100 increase per participant since 1998.



Since the addition of Salomon Farm, the cost per visitor (operating deficit divided by attendance) has increased to \$9.81. In comparison, the five-year average (1998-2002) was \$6.45. The lowest subsidy level per visitor was in 2001, with a \$4.66 cost per visitor. The key to reducing the subsidy level for outdoor recreation is to increase visitation while containing costs and/or increasing revenues.

Operations Assessment

Pricing Strategies

Many of the programs offered by outdoor recreation and education are free to the public. For fee-based programs, the following price strategies are employed:

- Family discounts: Many programs are free to adults
- Benchmark competition: Periodically will lower fees to remain competitive
- Differential pricing: Non-resident fees are approximately 20% higher than resident fees

Facility Scheduling

During a nine-week period spanning June 16 through July 17, 2003, the Salomon Farm Learning Center was, on average, scheduled for programs 37.2% of the available facility time. This is assuming an 85-hour-per-week operating schedule (8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday; 12:00 p.m. until 7 p.m. Sunday). Between program use and facility rentals, the Department should strive to have the facility scheduled a minimum of 50% of the time.

Partnerships

Currently, outdoor recreation and education has existing partnerships with Hoosier Releaf, Tri-State Two Cylinder Club, and Acres Land Trust. The program works with volunteers to help maintain both Lindenwood Nature Preserve and Salomon Farm. Grants and foundation support have previously been received from the Indiana Department of Nature Resource, IPALCO, Salomon Trust Fund, Wilson Foundation, and the Park Foundation for Salomon Fund. The Park Foundation also maintains an endowment fund for Lindenwood Nature Preserve.

To enhance participation in outdoor education programs, enhanced partnerships should be developed with both public and private schools in the area. Partnership opportunities for shared programming also exist with 4-H clubs, YMCA, YWCA, Merry Lean Environmental Learning Center, and Purdue Extension Services. Area businesses could be contacted to donate needed supplies and materials. Students and faculty from area universities could be used as a source for program instructors.

In the future, all partnerships should be documented, along with associated costs and benefits to each partner. All partnerships entered into should contribute to the cost recovery expectations established for outdoor recreation and education.

Marketing and Promotions

The primary means of promoting outdoor recreation and education programs to the general public is through the *Fun Times*

seasonal brochure. Other advertising sources include printed materials distributed through the schools (children's brochure), brochures distributed at various park location, and news releases. A program planner is also provided to area teachers to promote available programs for school classes.

To evaluate satisfaction levels, post-participation surveys are provided to teachers and group leaders participating in school and scout programs. A guest book is also maintained at Lindenwood Nature Preserve to track party sizes, frequency of visits, means of learning about the preserve, and general comments or suggestions.

In addition to existing marketing efforts, the Department should provide direct mailings to past participants, youth organizations (i.e., 4-H clubs, scouting organizations, church youth groups, parent-teacher organizations, etc.), and the Home School Network. Paid newspaper or radio advertisements could be run prior to registration deadlines for public classes. An enhanced and more visually appealing website should be developed to make it easy for the public to learn about and register for recreation programs at their convenience.

Customer Service

Currently, there is no customer service plan in place for outdoor recreation and education. A plan outlining the appropriate delivery of customer service should be developed and included in the employee policy and procedure manual. The customer

service plan should identify how to properly communicate with visitors and program participants, outline procedures for handling complaints, and generally illustrate the type of experience participants should have.

Customer service training is provided to all employees on an annual basis. Customer service training should continue to be provided to all new hires and upon the start of the summer season.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are a valuable tool for Department management and the Board of Park Commissioners to track the success of programs and services offered by the Department. Current measurements used for the summer camps include cost per experience (costing form), customer satisfaction (post-participation evaluation surveys), revenue and expenses (annual report), participation levels (minimum versus maximum), and programs offered versus held (registration). In addition to the existing measurements, it is recommended that the following performance measures be implemented:

- **Cost Recovery:** Upon conclusion of a program or at set times for ongoing services, the total revenue from a program or service should be divided by its associated expenses. This ratio indicates the profit or loss margin for delivery of the program of service. The cost recovery should then be compared to an established subsidy or profit goal.
- **Customer Retention:** Track the percentage of returning participants from previous sessions of the program. This

information provides clues to customer satisfaction. Obviously, the higher the retention rate, the better, since it is usually easier (and cheaper) to keep a returning customer opposed to attracting a new one.

- Program Capacity: Track the number of program participants against the maximum spaces available for a program or service. Programs at low capacity should be reviewed to determine if they need to be changed or eliminated. Programs at maximum capacity may need to be expanded due to demand.
- Facility Capacity: Track the actual number of hours a facility, such as the Salomon Farm Learning Center, is scheduled for an activity versus the total number of hours the facility can be operated.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The following strengths, or positive issues *within the control of management*, directly impact the success of outdoor recreation and education:

- Recent opening of Salomon Farm Learning Center
- Locations with unique nature resources and opportunities for educating the public about outdoor recreation and the environment
- Current programs well received based on evaluation of post-participation surveys
- Attendance by the general public and in classes and special events has generally

been on the rise

- While costs significantly increased between 2001 and 2002, a portion of the increase was the result of one-time construction costs related to Salomon Farm
- Ability to develop unique joint programs with other divisions within the Department, including the zoo and conservatory

Weaknesses

The following weaknesses, or negative issues *within the control of management* to varying degrees, directly impact the success of outdoor recreation and education:

- Strong emphasis placed on education programs, which have a lower revenue potential, to the almost exclusion of recreation programs
- Limited offering of public and family-oriented programs; need programs that appeal to seniors or grandparents and grandchildren
- No year-round, after-school programs offered
- Insufficient staff for program development and implementation; with only one part-time staff member dedicated to year-round programs at Lindenwood and Salomon Farm, current staffing levels prevent an increased number or variety of programs
- Limited indoor facility space beyond Salomon Farm Learning Center to support growth and expansion of programs
- Lack of indoor facility or basic modern

amenities at Lindenwood Nature Preserve

- Several old structures at Salomon Farm are in disrepair and need to be stabilized to prevent further deterioration; condition of large barn's foundation is not safe and presents a liability to the Department
- Sporadic participation numbers in free programs and guided trails
- Declining participation in outdoor recreation programs
- Average subsidy per outdoor education visitor more than doubled between 2001 and 2002 to \$9.81

Opportunities

The following opportunities, or potentially positive issues *outside the control of management*, should be considered in any future decision-making:

- Salomon Farm offers the only farm-related camp program in the Fort Wayne community

Threats

The following threats, or potentially negative issues *outside the control of management*, should be considered in any future decision-making:

- Tight budgets prevent schools from taking field trips and participating in Lindenwood Nature Preserve school programs
- Continued economic slowdown erodes discretionary income of Fort Wayne

families, making it difficult to afford for families to afford fee-based programs

Conclusions and Recommendations

Lindenwood Nature Preserve, Salomon Farm, and Hurshtown Reservoir provide three quality locations to offer opportunities for outdoor recreation and education. The addition of a learning center at Salomon Farm provides a nice facility to base outdoor education programs, especially on farm-related topics. The Lindenwood Nature Preserve needs an indoor nature center to become a truly viable, year-round location for outdoor education.

Given the human resources available, the Department offers a good number of outdoor education and recreation programs. A good mix of free and fee-based programs are offered. To expand program offerings, more permanent staff is needed. Ideally, both Lindenwood and Salomon should have a dedicated, full-time staff member dedicated to programming at these sites. This would allow for the development and expansion of programs, including more family and multi-generational programs.

The Department is placing a greater emphasis on the provision of outdoor education programs to the exclusion of outdoor recreation programs. While the societal benefit of education programs is not questioned, there typically is a greater revenue-earning potential for outdoor recreation. The Department should consider offering more outdoor adventure

programs in such sports as canoeing, kayaking, mountain biking, sailing, etc. If promoted and priced effectively, these programs should be able to recapture their operating expenses. More specific outdoor adventure camps, focusing on a specific sport, should also be considered. Additional special events should be provided to promote current and new program offerings. In general, the Department needs to offer more outdoor programs that the public will perceive as fun. Environmental education can easily be integrated within these programs to fulfill the educational mission.

Sporadic participation numbers in outdoor programs suggest a lack of consistency in program offerings. This is likely the result of the small number of staff dedicated to this service. Low participation rates in programs labeled "outdoor recreation" are alarming given the high level of subsidy. These programs should be eliminated if they cannot recapture operating expenses.

Outdoor education and recreation needs to develop a service audience matrix that focuses on program needs by age segment or grade level (e.g., ages 2 to 5, 6 to 8, 9 to 10, 11 to 12, etc. or grades kindergarten through second, third and fourth, etc.). Currently, the program age segments appear too wide to be as effective as they could be. More targeted marketing is needed by age group and type of activity. Class and workshop length should be three hours or less.

Greater effort is needed to create themes for program areas. Examples of appropriate themes include:

- Women in the Outdoors
- Outdoor Adventures
- Teen Explorers
- Outdoor Reality Programs
- Life of a Farmer
- Eco-Trippers

In addition, participants today want shorter programs, workshops, and clinics due to busy personal schedules. As an example, participants often have the daily constraints of a demanding workday followed by traffic congestion. It is understandable that participants want convenience and comfort in the programs they participate in, and is imperative that convenience be considered when developing programs. When program interest falls off, the cause is usually due to program content, length of session, and ease of access.

It appears that the cost of services and subsidy levels are relatively high for some programs and the Department may have to take a hard look at these costs based on the consumptive nature of these activities when the operational needs of the Department are high in other areas. Offering more services is not always the answer. There may be a need to change some programs' focus in the future based on their maturity or decline. Evaluating programs need to focus on effective program measures. These would include where the program is in its lifecycle, customer satisfaction, program capacity levels met, retention of users, costs, and need.

The pricing of services for outdoor recreation and education programs needs to be re-evaluated when looking at direct and indirect costs. Currently, with the total cost of services compared to the actual program prices, the Department is subsidizing programs on average by 87%. Many of these programs would have better self-supporting capabilities based on the community's willingness to pay for them. The best approach to pricing of services is to establish the level of subsidy desired and back the price into it based on a full cost analysis.

6.6 Athletic Programs

Description of Programs & Services

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department offer sports programming in the following three core areas:

Youth Athletics

A variety of lessons, leagues, and tournaments are offered in tennis and basketball for youth ages 3 to 18. Youth sports programs are offered at numerous sites and various days and times throughout the city.

Previous attempts by the Department to provide programming in other sports such as soccer, volleyball, baseball, and football helped cultivate the successful not-for-profit organizations overseeing sports programming in the community. For this reason, the Department has adopted the philosophy of helping facilitate these sports

as opposed to programming in a saturated market.

Adult Athletics

Lessons, leagues, tournaments, and recreational play for adults ages 19 to 60 are provided in tennis, basketball, and volleyball. Adult sports programs are offered at numerous sites and various days and times throughout the city.

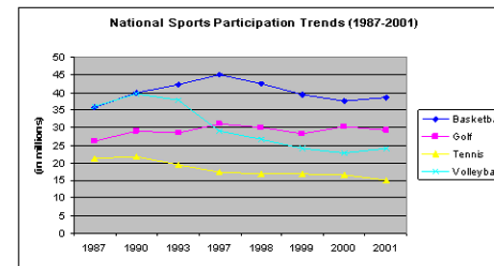
Lifetime Sports Academy

This free program provides children ages 8 to 18 with the opportunity to learn sports that they can enjoy throughout their lifespan. Offered at McMillen Park, the Lifetime Sports Academy provides lessons in golf, tennis, and swimming. Programs are offered from 9:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m. weekdays during June and July. The program is primarily funded by the Park Foundation.

Market Assessment

National Participation Trends

Using the 2002 Superstudy of Sports Participation, the following national participation trends were identified for basketball, golf, tennis, and volleyball. General demographics of sport participants are also identified. Please note that national participation statistics are not collected for children below the age of 6.



- Basketball: Nationally, 15.4% of the population, age 6 and above, play basketball at least once per year. Given the strong tradition of basketball in the state, participation in Indiana exceeds national averages, with 22.4% of Hoosiers playing basketball at least once per year.

Frequent participants, or those playing basketball 52 or more days per year, represent 3.5% of the American population. These are the individuals most likely to participate in a basketball league offered by the Department. Males represent 69.5% of all frequent participants, with 5.0% of males being frequent players. The participation rate among females is only 2.0%. The average age of frequent players is 18.8, reflecting the fact that youth, teens, and young adults represent the majority (81.1%) of all basketball players. These age segments also have the highest participation rates.

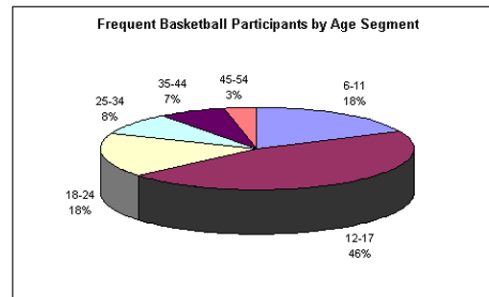
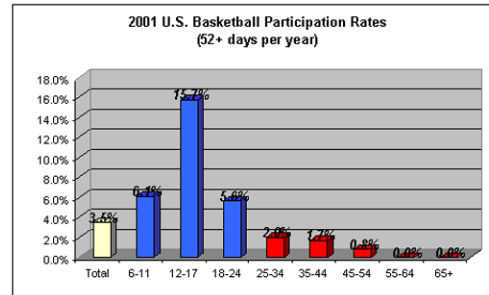
The average household income of frequent participants is \$56,900. Individuals with household incomes between \$25,000 and \$50,000 have the highest participation rates. Generally speaking, those from higher income

families have slightly higher participation rates than those from the lowest income families.

During 2001, basketball experienced both one-year (3.0%) and 14-year (8.2%) increases in participation rates, although the one-year change was statistically insignificant. Despite the overall long-term growth, basketball participation appears to have peaked in 1997. Basketball participation is projected to continue its general upward trend in participation.

The average player (both frequent and infrequent) plays basketball 43.6 days per year. Basketball players, on average, have played the sport 9.1 years. Beginners, or those that have played one or less years, represent 14.5% of all players. Over one-third (33.4%) have played 10 or more years.

Other sports activities that basketball players are most likely to participate in include: swimming (61.1%), bowling (45.2%), bicycling (42.4%), fishing (35.6%), and camping (34.0%). A significant percentage of basketball players also do some form of strength training or conditioning, with 38.8% using strength equipment, 32.2% using free weights, and 28.8% using cardio equipment.



- Golf: Nationally, 11.7% of the population, age 6 and above, play golf at least once per year. Participation in Indiana mirrors national averages, with 11.8% of Hoosiers golfing at least once per year. Frequent participants, or those golfing 25 or more days per year, represent 3.4% of the American population. These individuals are most likely to participate in golf lessons offered by the Department. Males represent 77.1% of all frequent participants, with 5.4% of males being frequent players. The participation rate among females is only 1.5%. The average age of frequent players is 47.7, reflecting the fact that older adults age 45 and above represent over half (59.4%) of all golfers. These age

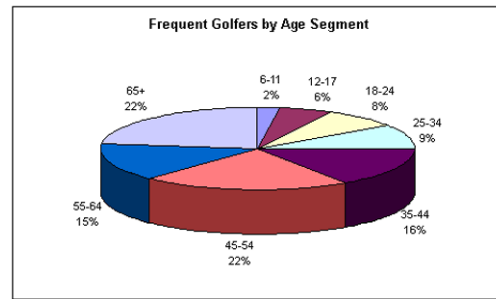
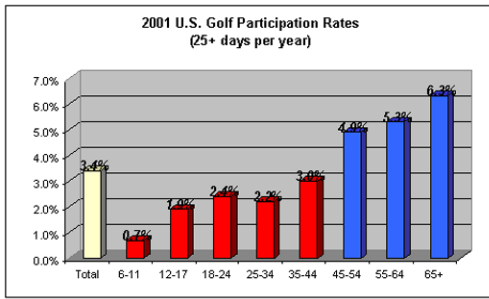
segments also have the highest participation rates.

The average household income of frequent golfers is \$76,700. Individuals with household income between \$25,000 and \$50,000 have the highest participation rates. Participation rates of frequent golfers increase as household income increases.

During 2001, golf experienced a minor one-year decline in participation of 3.2%, although the one-year change was statistically insignificant. Overall, golf has witnessed a 14-year increase of 11.9%. With the aging of baby boomers, participation rates should continue their upward trend in the coming years.

The average player (both frequent and infrequent) plays golf 23.9 days per year. Golfers, on average, have played the sport 13.3 years. Beginners, or those that have played one or less years, represent only 9.4% of all golfers. Nearly half (46.7%) have played 10 or more years.

Other sports activities that golfers are most likely to participate in include: swimming (51.8%), bowling (40.9%), walking (37.0%), fishing (33.3%), and billiards/pool (30.3%). A significant percentage of golfers also do some form of strength training or conditioning, with 39.8% using strength equipment, 37.3% using cardio equipment, and 30.5% using free weights.



- Tennis: Nationally, 6.0% of the population, age 6 and above, play tennis at least once per year. Participation in Indiana exceeds national averages, with 7.3% of Hoosiers playing tennis at least once per year.

Frequent participants, or those playing tennis 25 or more days per year, represent only 1.4% of the American population. These are the individuals most likely to participate in tennis lessons or leagues offered by the Department. Males and females each comprise half of all players and play at rates similar to the national average. The average age of frequent players is 34.6. Teens, young

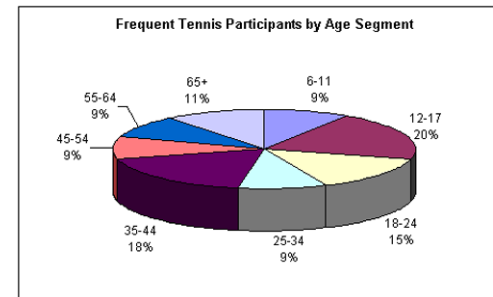
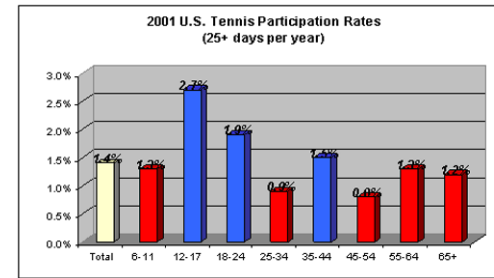
adults, and adults age 35 to 44 comprise the majority of tennis players and have the highest participation rates.

The average household income of frequent participants is \$68,100. Overall, participation rates generally increase with higher household incomes.

During 2001, tennis experienced one-year (9.0%) and 14-year (28.6%) declines in participation. Given the current trends, it is likely that tennis participation will continue its downward spiral in future years.

The average player (both frequent and infrequent) plays tennis 22.2 days per year. Tennis players, on average, have played the sport 10.3 years. Beginners, or those that have played one or less years, represent 18.2% of all participants. Over one third (36.4%) have played 10 or more years.

Other sports activities that tennis players are most likely to participate in include: swimming (71.1%), bowling (49.7%), walking (49.6%), bicycling (47.5%), and billiards/pool (37.9%). A significant percentage of tennis players also do some form of strength training or conditioning, with 47.1% using strength equipment, 46% using cardio equipment, and 37.3% using free weights.



- Volleyball: Nationally, 5.1% of the population, age 6 and above, play volleyball at least once per year. Participation in Indiana exceeds national averages, with 8.9% of Hoosiers playing volleyball at least once per year.

Frequent participants, or those playing volleyball 25 or more days per year, represent only 1.8% of the American population. These are the individuals most likely to participate in volleyball leagues offered by the Department. Females comprise 70.2% of frequent players, with 2.5% of females being frequent players. The participation rate among males is only 1.1%. The average age of frequent players is 20.1, reflecting the fact that the majority of players

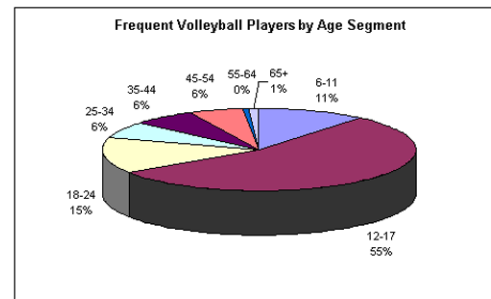
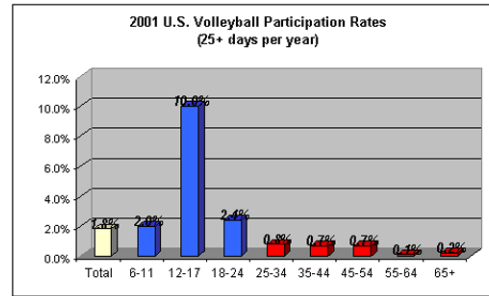
(80%) are under the age of 25. Teens unquestionably have the highest participation rates.

The average household income of frequent participants is \$61,800. Participation rates remain similar regardless of the income level, with the exception of households with incomes under \$15,000. Members of these households have significantly lower participation rates.

During 2001, volleyball experienced a one-year increase of 5.5%. Since 1987, volleyball witnessed a 33% decline. It appears that volleyball participation rates may be stabilizing, although it is too early to detect a definitive trend.

The average player (both frequent and infrequent) plays volleyball 27 days per year. Volleyball players, on average, have played the sport 5.2 years. Beginners, or those that have played one or less years, represent 23% of all participants. Only 16% have played 10 or more years.

Other sports activities that volleyball players are most likely to participate in include: swimming (67.9%), basketball (65.7%), bowling (58.2%), running/jogging (53.6%), and bicycling (49.5%). A significant percentage of volleyball players also do some form of strength training or conditioning, with 47.9% using strength equipment, 43.0% using cardio equipment, and 38.8% using free weights.

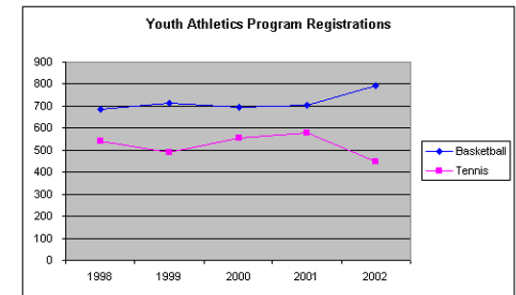


Program Participation Trends

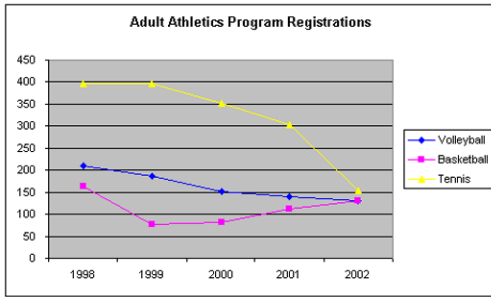
Using registration statistics collected by the Department, the following participation trends were identified for youth athletics, adult athletics, and the Lifetime Sports Academy:

- Youth Athletics: Currently, youth programs are offered only in the sports of basketball and tennis. Over the past five years, basketball registrations have increased by 15.7%, with the majority of this increase occurring in 2002. Prior to 2002, enrollment for basketball programs was consistently about 700 youth. Tennis registrations have decreased by 17.1% over the same five-year period. Like basketball, the majority of the decrease

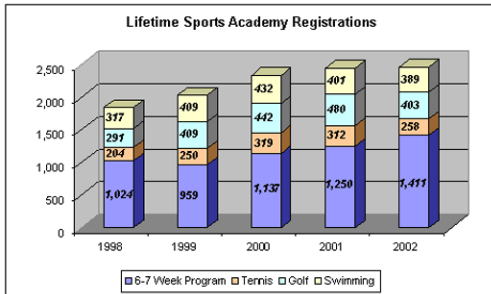
occurred in 2002. Youth athletic programs have also been offered in volleyball, soccer, self-defense, and gymnastics, but subsequently canceled due to low attendance.



- Adult Athletics: Adult programs are currently offered in basketball, tennis, and volleyball. Historically, tennis programs have had the highest registration numbers, although enrollments have dropped by 61.5% over the past five years. Volleyball enrollments have also experienced a downward trend, falling 37.9% since 1998. While basketball registrations are down 19.6% over the five-year period, there has been a steady increase in enrollments since 1999.



- Lifetime Sports Academy:** Total enrollments in the Lifetime Sports Academy have increased each of the past five years. Registration is up 37.8% since 1998. In 2002, a total of 2,461 youth were registered in the free program. A three-year trend of declining registrations in specific sports has been countered by general enrollments in the six- to seven-week program.



Market Potential and Share

Using the 2000 U.S. Census data for Fort Wayne and the 2002 Superstudy of Sports Participation, the following estimates were made regarding market potential within city limits. Since participation rates in

Indiana exceed national averages and athletic programs are open to non-residents, the potential market size probably exceeds the amount reported. The market share should be viewed as the maximum likely amount of the market served by Department programs (national participation statistics are not collected for children below the age of 6).

- Youth Basketball:** There are an estimated 3,889 frequent basketball players between the ages of 6 and 17 residing in the City of Fort Wayne. In 2002, 795 participants were registered in youth athletic programs. It is estimated that the Department currently serves up to 20% of the youth basketball market within the city.

Estimated Youth Basketball Market Size

Age	City Population	Participation Rate	Market Size
6-11	18,685	6.1%	1,140
12-17	17,513	15.7%	2,750
Total	36,198	---	3,889

- Youth Golf:** There are an estimated 464 frequent golfers between the ages of 6 and 17 residing in the City of Fort Wayne. In 2002, 403 participants were registered in the free golf instruction programs offered through the Lifetime Sports Academy. It is estimated that the Department currently serves up to 87% of the youth golf market.

Estimated Youth Golf Market Size

Age	City Population	Participation Rate	Market Size
6-11	18,685	0.7%	131
12-17	17,513	1.9%	333
Total	36,198	---	464

- Youth Swimming:** There are an estimated 23,896 swimmers between the ages of 6 and 17 residing in the City of Fort Wayne. In 2002, 403 participants were registered in free swimming lessons provided through the Lifetime Sports Academy. It is estimated that the Department currently serves up to 2% of the city's youth swimming market through the academy.

Estimated Youth Swimming Market Size

Age	City Population	Participation Rate	Market Size
6-11	18,685	72.4%	13,528
12-17	17,513	59.2%	10,368
Total	36,198	---	69,722

- Youth Tennis:** There are an estimated 716 frequent tennis players between the ages of 6 and 17 residing in the City of Fort Wayne. In 2002, 447 participants were registered in youth tennis programs. It is estimated that the Department currently serves up to 63% of the city's youth tennis market.

In addition to the fee-based program offered by the Department, 258 youth were registered in the free tennis programs offered through the Lifetime Sports Academy. It is estimated that the Department currently serves up to 36% of the city's youth tennis market through the Lifetime Sports Academy. Between the free and fee-based tennis programs, up to 99% of the youth tennis market is served through Department-sponsored programs.

Estimated Youth Tennis Market Size

Age	City Population	Participation Rate	Market Size
6-11	18,685	1.3%	243
12-17	17,513	2.7%	473
Total	36,198	---	716

- Adult Basketball: There are an estimated 2,595 frequent basketball players between the ages of 18 and 54 residing in the City of Fort Wayne. In 2002, 131 participants were registered in adult basketball programs. It is estimated that the Department currently serves up to 5% of the city's adult basketball market.

Estimated Adult Basketball Market Size

Age	City Population	Participation Rate	Market Size
18-24	22,145	5.6%	1,240
25-34	31,504	2.0%	630
35-44	30,766	1.7%	523
45-54	25,240	0.8%	202
Total	109,655	---	6,484

- Adult Tennis: There are an estimated 1,869 frequent tennis players age 18 and above residing in the City of Fort Wayne. In 2002, 153 participants were registered in adult tennis programs. It is estimated that the Department currently serves up to 8% of the city's adult tennis market.

Estimated Adult Tennis Market Size

Age	City Population	Participation Rate	Market Size
18-24	22,145	1.9%	421
25-34	31,504	0.9%	284
35-44	30,766	1.5%	461
45-54	25,240	0.8%	202
55-64	15,012	1.3%	195
65+	25,517	1.2%	306
Total	150,184	---	1,869

- Adult Volleyball: There are an estimated 1,242 frequent volleyball players age 18 and above residing in the City of Fort Wayne. In 2002, 131 participants were registered in adult volleyball programs. It is projected that the Department currently serves up to 11% of the city's adult tennis market.

Estimated Adult Volleyball Market Size

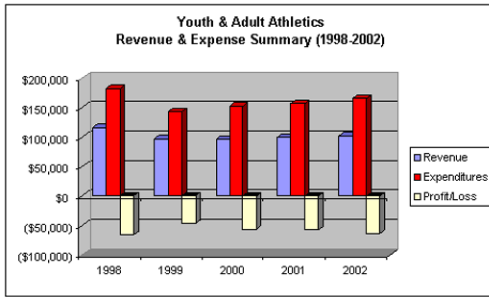
Age	City Population	Participation Rate	Market Size
18-24	22,145	2.4%	531
25-34	31,504	0.8%	252
35-44	30,766	0.7%	215
45-54	25,240	0.7%	177
55-64	15,012	0.1%	15
65+	25,517	0.2%	51
Total	150,184	---	1,242

Competition

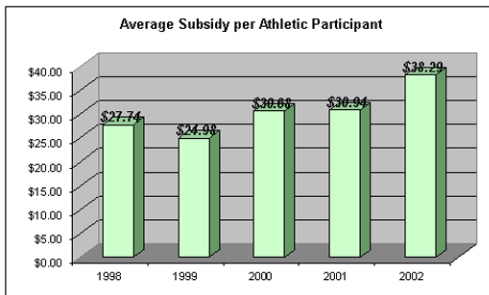
The primary competitors to the youth athletic programs are Spiece and the YMCA. The YMCA and Fairplay Volleyball League serves as the primary competition to the adult athletic programs. There are no comparable programs like the Lifetime Sports Academy offered within the greater Fort Wayne area. To differentiate from the competition, the Department attempts to provide lower-priced programs that provide more sessions per dollar spent. The Department also strives to provide more organized programs than its competition.

Revenue and Expense Analysis

Over the past five years (1998 through 2002), athletic programs have had an average annual operating loss of \$57,942. Over this time period, operating revenues have decreased by 12.0% while operating expenses have declined by 4.0%. On average, athletic programs have recaptured 64.0% of their operating expenses. The recapture rate in 2002 was only 61.7%.

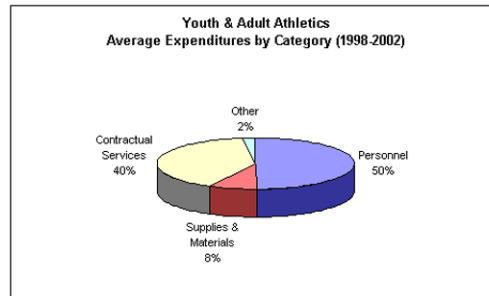


Since 1998, each youth or adult sport participant is subsidized on average by \$30.53. The average subsidy per youth or adult athletic program participant has increased by 38% over this five-year period. The subsidy amount reached a five-year high of \$38.29 last year. Annual reports do not report revenues and expenses by program type (e.g., youth basketball, adult basketball, etc.), so an analysis by program could not be performed. To understand the full delivery cost of programs, these expenses should be itemized and analyzed in subsequent years.



In reviewing athletic expenditures by category, half of the expenses are related to personnel. Contractual services, largely comprised of rental payments for

gymnasium space, represent an additional 40% of costs. Over the past five years, personnel expenses have increased by a modest 2.8%. While contractual services have decreased by 16.5% since 1998, with last year witnessing a one-year increase of 14.9%.



Operations Assessment

Pricing Strategies

For youth athletics, the Department has established an 80% recapture goal of revenues to expenses. The primary pricing strategy used to accomplish this goal is competition pricing. The Department also uses differential pricing based on the residency of participants. Based on 2003 to 2005 financial goals, current pricing strategies have resulted in recapture rates of 67% to 71% since 1999, suggesting that modest price increases should be considered.

Adult athletics has a recapture goal of 175%. The primary pricing strategies used to accomplish this goal are demand-driven and profit-oriented pricing. The Department also uses differential pricing based on the residency of participants.

Based on 2003 to 2005 financial goals, current pricing strategies have resulted in recapture rates of 165% to 173% since 1999, suggesting that current pricing strategies have been effective.

The Lifetime Sports Academy is a fully subsidized program and does not charge participation fees. Pricing strategies do not apply.

Current pricing strategies used by the Department are appropriate for athletic programs and should be continued. To understand the true cost of delivery, the Department should consider adapting its existing program costing form to include all direct and indirect expenses related to the delivery of a program.

The Department should annually benchmark program prices against comparable programs offered by competitors. While the competitor pricing serves to evaluate the going price within the community, it is also important for the Department to price programs to meet established financial goals.

Scheduling

The scheduling of many youth and adult athletic programs is subject to the availability of gymnasium space in the community. Because the Department does not own or operate a facility with a gymnasium, space is rented from Fort Wayne Community Schools, Concordia Theological Seminary, and area private schools.

While this arrangement allows the Department to provide programs at locations throughout the community, it also results in periodic cancellations, relocations, and interruptions due to last-minute scheduling conflicts with the provider. Programs must be scheduled around the availability of gymnasium times, versus providing programs at times that might better maximize participation numbers.

Partnerships

The Department has a written agreement with Fort Wayne Community Schools for the joint use of school and park facilities at low to no cost. This arrangement, most recently updated in 1998, has been in place since 1963. It is recommended that the Department and schools routinely update the agreement every three to five years, with the following additions:

- Rental rates for commonly used spaces, such as gymnasiums, should be explicitly established
- Scheduling priorities for commonly used spaces should be broken out by times to provide ample time for the programming needs of both parties
- Terms should explicitly require that all reservations be documented in writing; once a reservation is made, it may not be canceled or changed unless mutually agreed upon by both parties

The Department seeks sponsorships for the city tennis tournament. Grants have previously been secured to provide

scholarships for the youth basketball league. Foundation support funds nearly all the expenses for the Lifetime Sports Academy.

Marketing and Promotions

The primary means of promoting athletic programs to the public is through the *Fun Times* seasonal brochure. Other advertising sources include printed materials distributed through the schools, news releases, public service announcements, flyers available at various park facilities, and the Department's website. Other marketing efforts include a post-participation survey.

In addition to existing marketing efforts, the Department should provide direct mailings to past participants, youth organizations (i.e., 4-H clubs, scouting organizations, faith-based youth groups, parent-teacher organizations, etc.), and the Home School Network. Paid newspaper or radio advertisements could be run prior to registration deadlines. Focus groups with parents (both of participants and non-participants) could be held to identify program needs. The Department should work with the schools (public and private) to secure more opportunities to promote programs through the schools. An enhanced and more visually appealing website should be developed to make it easy for the public to learn about and register for recreation programs at their convenience.

Customer Service

Currently, there is no customer service plan in place for athletic programs. A plan outlining the appropriate delivery of customer service should be developed and included in the employee policies and procedures manual. The customer service plan should identify how to properly communicate with participants and parents, outline procedures for handling complaints, and generally illustrate the type of experience participants should have while participating in a program.

Customer service training is provided to all employees before the start of each season. Customer service training should continue to be provided.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are a valuable tool for Department management and the Board of Park Commissioners to track the success of programs and services offered by the Department. Current measurements used for athletic programs include customer satisfaction (post-participation evaluation surveys) and participation levels (marketing report). In addition to the existing measurements, it is recommended that the following performance measures be implemented:

- Cost per Experience: Using existing data, the measurement calculates how much it costs the Department to provide a program or service for the average participant. All costs, including direct and indirect, should be included. This information is valuable for effective

pricing. This ratio should be calculated for each program and service at least once per year.

- **Cost Recovery:** Upon conclusion of a program or at set times for ongoing services, the total revenue from a program or service should be divided by its associated expenses. This ratio indicates the profit or loss margin for delivery of the program of service. The cost recovery should then be compared to an established subsidy or profit goal.
- **Customer Retention:** Track the percentage of returning participants from previous sessions of the program. This information provides clues to customer satisfaction, because happy customers usually return. Obviously, the higher the retention rate, the better, since it is usually easier (and cheaper) to keep a returning customer opposed to attracting a new one.
- **Program Capacity:** Track the number of program participants against the maximum spaces available for a program or service. Programs at low capacity should be reviewed to determine if they need to be changed or eliminated. Programs at maximum capacity may need to be expanded due to demand.
- **Market Potential:** Using data available from resources like the American Sports Data Superstudy of Sports Participation or National Sporting Goods Association Sports Participation Survey, determine the potential number of participants based on national or regional averages. See the Market Assessment section as an example.

- **Market Share:** Comparing the number of participants versus the market potential, determine the percentage of the potential market that is utilizing the service or program. To effectively measure this, it is important to track at least the age of participants to compare to the national data. Age segments, if used, need to correspond to the resources used.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The following strengths, or positive issues *within the control of management*, directly impact the success of the athletic programs:

- In recent years, both youth and adult basketball programs offered by the Department have experienced increased participation numbers
- Overall participation in the Lifetime Sports Academy continues to rise, although registrations in single sports area have shown some decline in 2002
- The Department controls a substantial majority of the market in youth golf (up to 87%) and youth tennis (up to 99%); the Department also has substantial penetration in the youth basketball market (up to 20%)
- The 2003 to 2005 financial goals for the Department indicate that adult athletics recaptured 165% to 173% of operating expenses between 1999 and 2001
- Long working partnership with Fort Wayne Public Schools for joint use of facilities; arrangements with Concordia

Theological Seminary and private schools for additional gym space

Weaknesses

The following weaknesses, or negative issues *within the control of management* to varying degrees, directly impact the success of the athletic programs:

- No Department-owned gymnasium space available for programming; programs subject to last-minute cancellations, relocations, or interruptions due to lack of control over gymnasium space
- The limitations on gym space reduce the capacity of the Department to serve significantly more participants
- The current agreement with Fort Wayne Public Schools was last reviewed in 1998 and includes no provisions that establish rental rates, priority scheduling of key facilities by time, or conditions that prevent the last-minute cancellation or changing of scheduled times for programs
- The declining attendance patterns in youth tennis, adult tennis, and adult volleyball programs offered by the Department
- The Department reaches a relatively small portion of the potential market in adult basketball (5%), adult tennis (8%), and adult volleyball (11%)
- Historically, the Department's failure to provide programming in other sports limits the ability to provide programs in different sports markets; soccer, baseball, and softball are already serviced by other organizations

- Overall recapture rate for all youth and adult athletics is only 62%; the average subsidy per participant is \$38.29
- The Department does not distinguish revenues and expenses by essential services (e.g., youth athletics, adult athletics, Lifetime Sports Academy) in the annual Programs and Facilities Financial Statements and Attendance Report; limited performance measures are also provided in this report
- Lack of a permanent, indoor learning center at the golf course in McMillen Park for the Lifetime Sports Academy to use as administrative space and shelter in the event of inclement weather
- Lifetime Sports Academy programs compete with the Department's fee-based programs in tennis and swimming

Opportunities

The following opportunities, or potentially positive issues *outside the control of management*, should be considered in any future decision-making:

- National trends generally show increasing participation numbers in basketball and golf; swimming participation has remained fairly consistent for at least the past four years
- State participation rates meet or exceed national rates in all sports in which the Department offers programs

Threats

The following threats, or potentially negative issues *outside the control of*

management, should be considered in any future decision-making:

- National trends generally show decreasing participation rates in volleyball and tennis
- People continue to limit spending due to the real or perceived economic conditions and forecast

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Department currently provides athletic programming in basketball, volleyball, tennis, golf, and swimming through youth athletics, adult athletics, and the Lifetime Sports Academy. A variety of free and fee-based programs are available for youth in tennis, golf, and swimming.

Historically, the Department has taken the role of providing facilities for other sports to accommodate programs offered by other community organizations. As such, the ability to successfully penetrate the market through expanded programming into soccer, baseball, softball, gymnastics, or youth football is limited. The Department may want to consider providing sports leagues or programming in lacrosse, roller hockey, and adult football, subject to the availability of facilities.

The Lifetime Sports Academy is a popular youth program that has provided the Department with significant positive recognition both locally and nationally. The academy effectively introduces kids to sports that can be enjoyed over their

lifespan. Except for the lack of a permanent administration center near the golf course, the facilities at McMillen Park are well suited for academy programs.

Overall enrollment in the Lifetime Sports Academy continues to rise each year and is up 38% from 1998. While the academy is valuable and should be continued, it should be recognized that its free programs do directly compete against fee-based programs provided by the Department. Academy programs should be structured to introduce youth to sports and provide elementary skills. Advanced skill development should only be offered through the fee-based programs of the Department. In this way, the academy can nurture interest in lifetime sports and serve as a feeder for youth athletics programs. The elimination of direct competition between the two programs will help ensure the continued success of both services.

Except for basketball (youth and adult) and the Lifetime Sports Academy, participation in Department sports programs has generally been on the decline over the past five years. While the declines are partially reflective of national trends, volleyball and tennis participation rates in Fort Wayne have fallen at larger rates. Scheduling changes and availability of space are contributing factors for volleyball. In developing programs, staff should closely review the key participation demographics identified in this report to ensure that programs are targeted to the primary audience.

Lack of Department-owned gymnasium space is a serious factor impacting the

success of athletic programs. While the Department has been effective in securing gymnasium space through local schools, the lack of control over the space results in periodic schedule changes, relocations, and interruptions of programs. Sufficient gymnasium capacity does not exist within the community to significantly expand indoor sport programming.

The Department should consider building at least one, multi-court field house to house youth and adult athletics. In the interim, the Department should routinely update its use agreement with Fort Wayne Public Schools every three to five years. Additionally, the contract should be expanded to include provisions that prohibit changes or the cancellation of a reserved time unless mutually agreed upon by both parties. This would help address the disruptions currently experienced by the Department. The use agreement should also explicitly state rental rates and identify priority-use arrangements of key facilities by day of week and time of day.

The Department faces some competition within the various sports programs offered. In youth sports, the primary competitors are the schools, YMCA, and Speice. The YMCA and Fairplay Volleyball League provide the most direct competition in adult sports.

Currently, the Department controls the majority of the city's youth market in tennis (~99%) and golf (~87%). With approximately 20% of the youth basketball

market enrolled in city programs, the Department also is a significant player in this market as well. The Department is not as dominate in the adult market, reaching only 11% of likely volleyball players, 8% of tennis players, and 5% of basketball players.

The Department has established recapture goals of 80% for youth athletics and 175% for adult athletics. Between 1999 and 2001, the Department reported recapture rates of 67% to 71% in youth athletics and 165% to 173% in adult athletics. Based on the financial information provided to the consultant, actual performance by core program area could not be confirmed.

To assist staff in establishing prices, the Department should revise the current program form to include all related direct and indirect costs to provide the service. This will allow the Department to better reach its cost recovery goals. The Department should also benchmark against its primary competitors at least annually to compare Department fees to the market.

6.7 Pools/Aquatic Facilities

Description of Programs and Services

Aquatic Facilities

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department currently operates four outdoor aquatic facilities throughout the city. All of the pools were most recently renovated before the 1996 season. Each facility is unique in design, user base, fee structure, and program offerings.

Northside Pool

Located near the corner of State and Parnell in the northeast quadrant of the city, this facility is the largest and most-attended aquatic facility operated by the Department. The current capacity of the aquatic facility is approximately 700 patrons. Amenities include the city's only leisure pool with zero-depth entry, interactive water play features, volleyball court, sand playground, grass sunning areas, giant shade umbrellas, and two water slides. A vendor operates a portable concession stand under contract with the Department.

This pool is most popular with families and smaller children. Northside Pool offers an extensive selection of learn-to-swim programs and is popular for private rentals. This pool has the highest admission fees and recaptured 86.6% of its operating expenses in 2002.

McMillen Pool

Located near the corner of Oxford and Hessen Cassel in the southeast quadrant, this facility boasts the city's largest water slide. Other amenities include interactive water spray area, sand basketball court, and giant shade umbrellas. A vendor operates a portable concession stand under contract with the Department.

McMillen Pool is used exclusively weekday mornings and early afternoons for the Lifetime Sports Academy's swimming programs. Due to the social-economic status of the surrounding neighborhoods, the pool is priced slightly less than Northside

Pool. This pool recaptured only 14.4% of its operating expenses in 2002.

Memorial Pool

Located at 2301 Maumee just east of downtown, this facility contains a traditional pool layout with drop slides. The exterior façade of the bathhouse was renovated before the start of the 2003 season with the use of federal grants. A combination spray and dry playground is located within Memorial Park outside the parameter of the pool fence. Free learn-to-swim programs are offered to other park programs (i.e., Jennings Center) and not-for-profit organizations working with children in need (i.e., Salvation Army).

Memorial Pool has the lowest attendance figures of any of the four city pools. Based on the social-economic status of the surrounding neighborhoods and the low attendance, this pool is also priced the lowest. Memorial Pool recaptured less 7.7% of its operating expenses in 2002.

Swinney Pool

Located at 1500 W. Jefferson, just southwest of downtown, this facility contains a traditional pool layout with drop slides. The overall layout of this facility closely mirrors Memorial Pool. Swinney Pool offers a limited learn-to-swim program. Based on its location, this pool has the most diverse user base consisting largely of middle- and high-school-age individuals. This pool recaptured 30.1% of its operating expenses in 2002.

Aquatic Programs

Specific aquatic programs offered by the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department can be classified into the following categories:

Public Swim

Each of the four pools offers open swimming hours for the general public. Exact hours vary depending on the location. Evening swim times are offered at Northside, McMillen, and Swinney Pools. Designated adult-only swim times are offered at Memorial Pool.

Learn-To-Swim

American Red Cross learn-to-swim classes for various ages, skill levels, and abilities are offered at Northside and Swinney Pools. Four sessions are offered during the summer of 2003 with classes available in both the mornings and evenings. A special class session is available for children with emotional and physical disabilities. Classes are designated for preschoolers (age 3-5), toddlers (age 4-5), and children (age 6-15).

Lifetime Sports Academy

This free, seven-week program is designed to teach basic swimming skills to children ages 8 through 18. Offered at McMillen Pool, the Lifetime Sports Academy includes learn-to-swim programs, competitive swim training, and junior lifeguard training. Participants are also eligible to enjoy a free open swim session every Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Pool Rentals

Each of the four pools may be rented after hours for private parties and functions.

Market Assessment

National Participation Trends and Demographics

Using the 2002 Superstudy of Sports Participation, the following national participation trends were identified for swimming. General demographics of sport participants are also identified. Please note that national participation statistics are not collected for children below the age of 6.

Nearly four out of 10 people (37.3%) in the United States, ages 6 and above, swim at least once per year. Swimming in the state of Indiana exceeds the national average, with 43.0% of Hoosiers swimming at least once per year. Nationally, the average swimmer swam 29.9 days during 2001. Of all swimmers that swim at least once per year, 35.6% are under the age of 18. Not surprisingly, youth have the highest participation rates of all swimmers with 72.4% of children age 6 to 11 and 59.2% of teens age 12 to 17 swimming at least once per year. Generally speaking, the older a person, the less likely he/she is to swim.

Frequent swimmers, or those swimming 52 or more days per year, represent 6.2% of the national population. These are the individuals most likely to participate in swimming programs or purchase season passes to pools. Females represent 57.1% of all frequent participants. While the average age of frequent swimmers is 26,

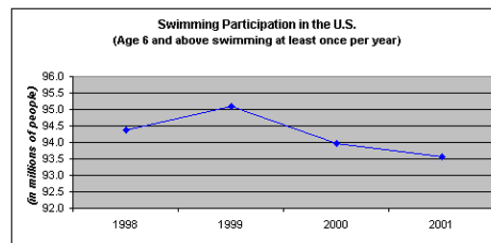
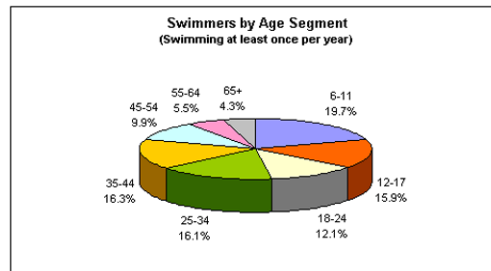
children under the age of 18 swim at the highest participation rates of all age groups (20.5% of kids age 6 through 11 and 11.2% of teens age 12 to 17). Youth comprise 51.6% of all frequent swimmers. The next largest age segment of frequent swimmers is adults age 35 to 44 (12.9%), who likely represent the parents of youth swimmers. The average household income of frequent participants is \$66,500. Generally speaking, the higher the household income, the more likely a person is to be a frequent swimmer.

Participation rates in swimming have remained steady over at least the past four years in which statistics were recorded by the Superstudy of Sports Participation. While there was a reported four-year decline of less than 1% in the total number of swimmers, this change was statistically insignificant. With over 93.5 million Americans swimming at least once during 2001, swimming remains the most popular sport activity in the United States.

Swimming is unquestionably a lifetime sport. Swimmers, on average, have been swimming for 18.5 years. Beginners, or those that have been swimming one year or less, represent only 9.9% of all swimmers. Nearly one-third (28.3%) have been swimming for four to 11 years.

Because of the widespread popularity of swimming in the United States, there is not a particularly strong correlation between swimming and participation in another sport. Other sports that swimmers are most likely to participate in include: walking (45.2%), bicycling (39.3%), bowling (38.1%), camping (36.5%), and fishing (34.6%). The next highest

participation levels involved exercise and strength training, with 30.4% using strength equipment and 30.7% using cardio equipment. Places where these activities occur could be targeted when promoting swim programs.

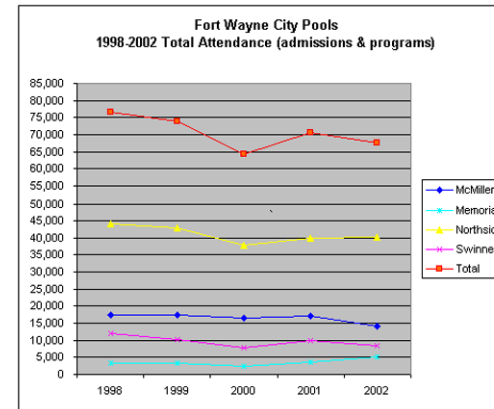


Fort Wayne Participation Trends

Based on participation statistics collected from staff between 1998 and 2002 at the four city pools, the following trends were identified for Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation:

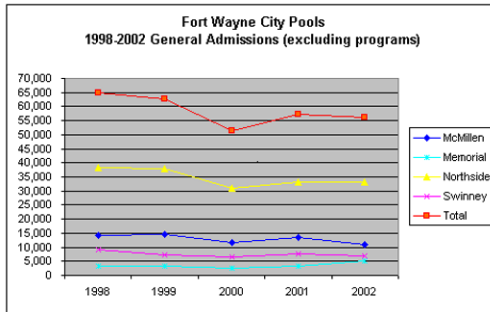
- Total People Served: Including attendance from daily admissions, season passes, group sales, private rentals, and aquatic programs, the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department served 67,717 patrons at the four city pools in

2002. This represents a one-year decline of 3.9% and four-year decline of 11.6%. Attendance at all four pools has generally been on the decline since 1998, an uncharacteristically hot summer. The most notable exception to the attendance trend is Memorial Pool; however, the +50% increase in attendance over the five-year time frame is largely the result of 1,499 free admissions provided to the pool in 2002. When reviewing attendance for outdoor pools, it is important to note that weather plays a significant role in overall visitation. Just as a hot summer draws large numbers to a pool, a cool or rainy season has negative impacts on pool attendance (and revenue) that is next to impossible to overcome.



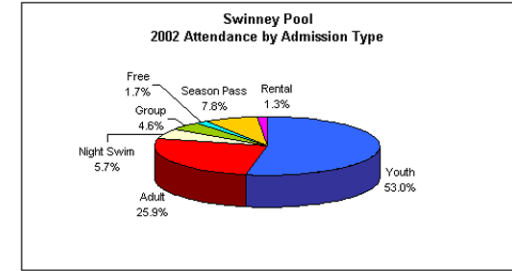
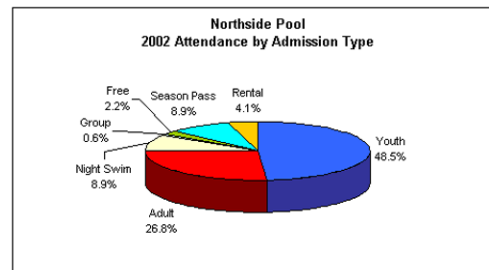
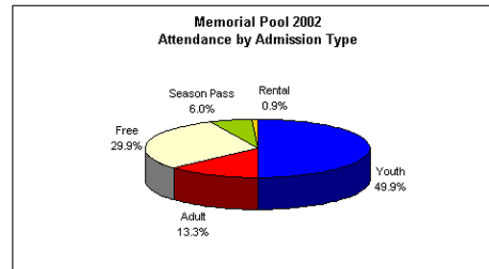
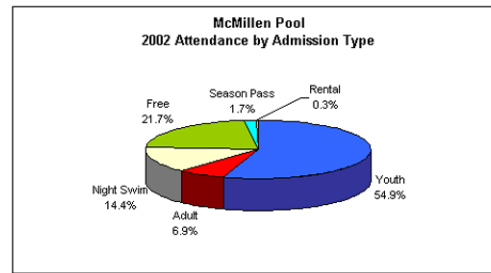
- General Admissions: Excluding attendance from learn-to-swim programs and the Lifetime Sports Academy, attendance from general admissions has closely mirrored overall attendance. During 2002, the city pools served 56,288 patrons through entrance from daily

admissions, season passes, free passes, group sales, and private rentals. This represents a one-year decline of 2.0% and four-year decline of 13.3%. The most popular pool is Northside, which served 33,260 people in 2002. The lowest attended pool in 2002 was Memorial, with only 5,020 patrons using the facility.

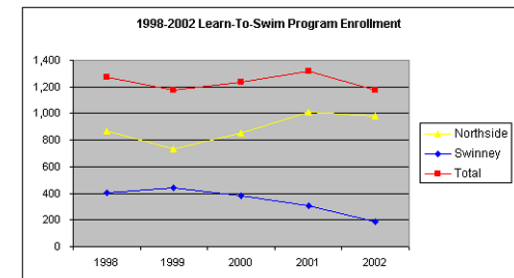


- Means of Entry: In analyzing the admission means of patrons to the four city pools in 2002, half (50.5%) of all entries were from youth daily admissions. Adult daily admissions were the second largest source, accounting for 21.6% of those in attendance. Night swim admissions (8.8%) and entrances by season pass holders (7.1%) rounded up the largest paying segments. Admissions from group sales, private rentals, and volleyball walk-ons were insignificant, accounting collectively for just 3.6% of all entries. Free admission, either to individuals or groups, accounted for 4,745 visitors or 8.4% of all admissions. When reviewing admissions by pool, youth consistently accounted for half of all visitors regardless of the site. Northside and Swinney Pools had the largest percentage (25.9-26.8%) of

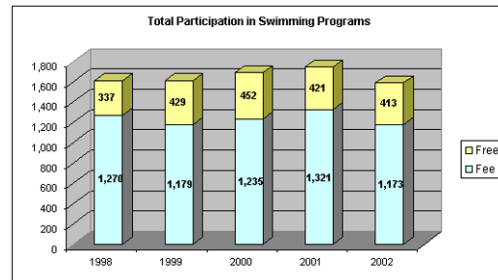
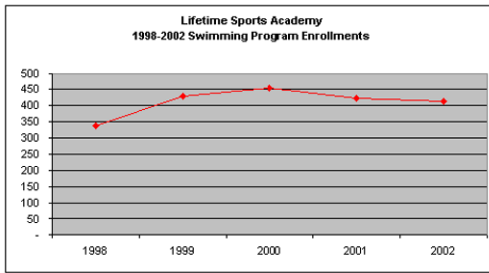
adults in attendance. This would be expected at Northside, especially given its leisure-pool orientation and kid-friendly features. Free admissions were most typically given at Memorial (29.9%) and McMillen (21.7%) Pools.



- Learn-To-Swim Enrollment: Overall, the number of participants in the learn-to-swim program have experienced declined by 11.2% over the past year and 7.6% over the past five years. Despite the overall decline, the total number of program participants at Northside actually increased 13.6% from 1998 to 2002. Program enrollments at Swinney Pool have dropped by 53.1% over the five-year period, and this decline was largely responsible for the overall drop in participation during 2002.



- Lifetime Sports Academy Swimming Enrollment: Since 1998, participation in the various learn-to-swim and competitive swimming programs offered through the Lifetime Sports Academy have remained fairly consistent, with between 413 and 452 enrollees.



Competition

Other providers of pools and aquatic programs within the Fort Wayne community include the YMCA, YWCA, Fort Wayne Community Schools, and other local schools. To some degree, the city pools also compete with private neighborhood pools. Excluding the schools, the other providers are membership-based organizations.

The largest competitor for aquatic programs is the YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne, which has the year-round advantage of operating four indoor pool facilities throughout the community. Programs offered by the YMCA include learn-to-swim, teen and adult lessons, private lessons, water fitness,

scuba, water safety, and private rentals. Use of the YMCA pools and participation in YMCA programs is limited to members. Members are allowed to bring guests, who must pay a daily admission fee (\$5 students, \$8 adults),

but an individual may only be a guest up to three times per year. See following table for YMCA membership rates.

YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne Membership Rates

Swimming Participation Rates

	U.S. Participation Rate	Estimated Fort Wayne Participants	Estimated Allen County Participants	Estimated Total Participants	Aggregate Swimming Days
Total by Population (U.S. Average)	37.3%	69,520	42,728	112,249	3,356,238
Total by Population (IN Average)	43.0%	80,144	49,258	129,402	3,869,121
Total by Median HH Income	44.7%	83,313	51,205	134,518	4,022,087
Age 6-11	72.4%	13,528	8,712	22,240	664,971
Age 12-17	59.2%	10,368	7,460	17,827	533,042
Age 18-24	41.8%	9,257	3,841	13,098	391,619
Age 25-34	42.0%	13,232	6,464	19,695	588,895
Age 35-44	34.6%	10,645	7,699	18,344	548,482
Age 45-54	24.4%	6,159	4,831	10,990	328,594
Age 55-64	21.6%	3,243	2,392	5,634	168,467
Age 65+	12.9%	3,292	1,576	4,868	145,540
Total by Age Segment	---	69,722	42,974	112,696	3,369,610
Male	36.5%	32,735	20,773	53,508	1,599,866
Female	38.0%	36,745	21,903	58,648	1,753,588
Total by Gender	---	69,480	42,676	112,156	3,353,475
Range	---	69,480 - 83,313	42,676 - 51,205	112,156 - 134,518	3,353,475 - 4,022,087
Average	---	74,436	45,768	120,204	3,594,106

Membership Type	Monthly Rate	Annual Rate
Student (up to age 23)	\$18.00	\$216
Adult	\$34.50	\$414
Senior (age 60 and above)	\$29.50	\$354
Family	\$48.00	\$576
Single Parent Family	\$38.00	\$456
Senior Family	\$38.50	\$456

Market Potential and Share

Using Fort Wayne and Allen County populations based on the 2000 U.S. Census and national participation statistics as reported in the 2002 Superstudy of Sports Participation, the following estimates were made regarding market potential in the immediate service area. Sports participation ranges factor in national participation rates based on total population, median household income, age segmentation, and gender, as well as state participation rates (participation statistics are not collected for children below the age of 6).

National and state participation trends suggest that approximately 74,436 Fort Wayne residents ages 6 and above swim at least once per year. Within Allen County (excluding Fort Wayne), there are approximately 45,768 additional swimmers. In total, it is estimated that there are 120,204 swimmers in Fort Wayne and Allen County. Assuming participation rates in Fort Wayne follow national trends, this is the audience of potential swimmers within the immediate service area who would attend one of the four city pools or participate in a

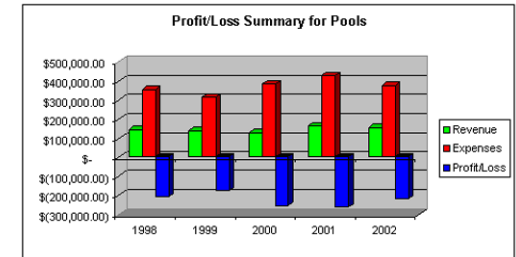
swimming program offered by the city. Based on the national average of 29.9 days of swimming per swimmer, the estimated aggregate total number of days Fort Wayne and Allen County residents swim or participate in aquatic programs during a year is nearly 3.6 million days.

Participants in the swimming programs offered by the Department fall between the ages of 3 and 15. During 2002, there were 1,586 participants in the swimming programs. National participation rates indicate that there are approximately 23,876 frequent swimmers in Fort Wayne between the ages of 6 and 17. While statistics are not available for an exact age-to-age comparison, this suggests that the aquatic programs offered through the city pools in 2002 reached around 7% of the potential audience of youth swimmers within the city limits. The low participation rate in the Department's swimming programs suggests that competitors are the primary source for learn-to-swim programs within the community.

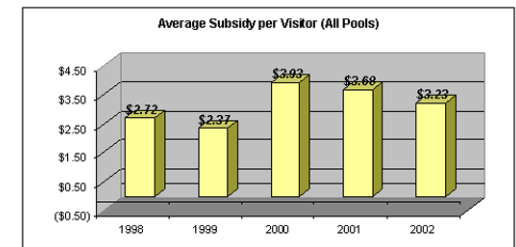
Revenue and Expense Analysis

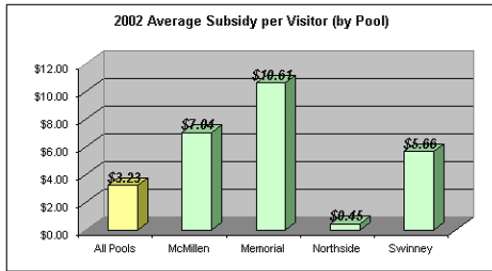
Collectively, the pool operations are a heavily subsidized service of the Department. During fiscal year 2002, the four pools experienced an operating loss of \$218,631. While this represents a four-year increase of 5.0%, the deficit was reduced by \$40,389 from the previous year. Over the past five years, the four pools on average have recaptured 40.4% of their operating costs (recapture rate = total revenue/total expenditures), falling short of the established goal of 50%. Based on similar pool operations throughout the

Great Lakes region, the Department should reasonably expect to recapture 60% to 70% of the operating expenses.

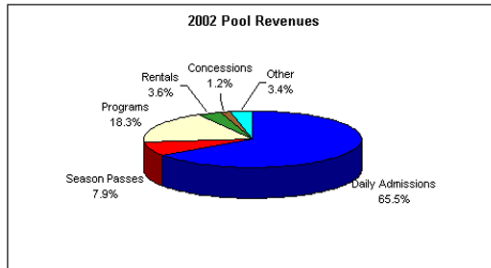


Dividing the operating deficit by total attendance (general admissions, programs, and rentals), it is possible to determine the average subsidy of operating the pools per visitor. Between 1998 and 2002, the average subsidy per visitor was \$3.19. Comparing the subsidy by pool, not surprisingly the highest attended pools had the lowest subsidy levels. Northside Pool comes closest to breaking even, with an average subsidy per visitor of \$0.45. Memorial Pool has consistently had the highest level of subsidy, although the \$10.61 average is down 43.2% from 1998.





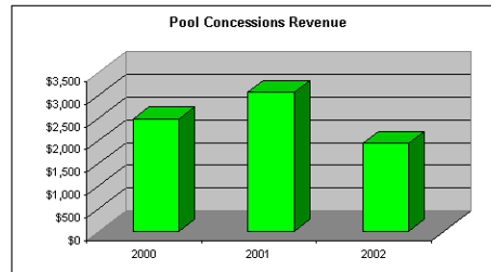
The largest source of revenue for the pools is through daily admissions, which generated \$104,404 during 2002. Youth, adult, night swim, and group admissions together accounted for 65.5% of all revenue earned last season. The next largest revenue source was the learn-to-swim program, which generated \$29,200 in 2002. Concessions revenue last season was only \$1,949, or just 1.2% of total income.



A contract was awarded in 2000 to Anthony Wayne Vending Company, Inc. for the operation and management of concession carts at McMillen, Northside, and Swinney Pools. The vendor pays the Board of Park Commissioners 10% of gross, after-tax

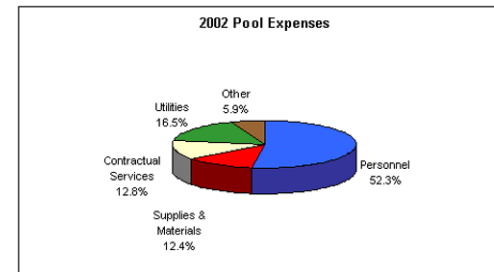
sales at the concession stand. Concessions revenue received by the Department has decreased by 21.5% between 2000 and 2002. There was a minor decline of 0.4% or \$58 in earned revenue from 2001 to 2002.

Based on the contract arrangements, gross sales (excluding sales tax) at Northside Pool in 2002 totaled \$12,049 for an average pre-tax expenditure per visitor (daily admissions, free admissions, season pass entries, and group sales) of \$0.38. McMillen Pool had the highest average pre-tax expenditures at \$0.90 per visitor followed by Swinney Pool at \$0.44. The gross revenue and per visitor expenditures are extremely low and warrant further inspection by the Department. Even with a limited food and beverage offering, pools should expect expenditures of no less than \$1.50 per visitor—approximately the equivalent of one large soda per visitor.



As would be expected, personnel salaries and benefits comprise the majority of all expenses at the pool. During 2002, personnel costs totaled \$197,865, or 52.3% of the total expenses. Since 1998, personnel expenses have actually decreased by 6.9%. Utilities (telephone,

electricity, natural gas, and water/sewer), which represent the second largest expense category, have increased most dramatically over the past five years. Utility expenses in 2002 were \$62,381—a 62.6% increase from 1998. Water and sewer expenses alone increased by 130.9% during this timeframe, primarily to significant jumps at McMillen and Memorial Pools.

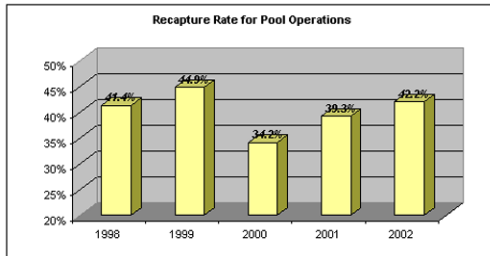


Operations Assessment

Pricing Strategies

The Department has established a financial goal of recapturing 50% of total expenditures at the four pools through earned income. Currently, pool operations have consistently fallen short of this goal, most recently achieving a 42.2% recapture rate in 2002. Of the individual pools, only Northside has exceeded this goal with an average recapture rate of 84.7% over the past five years. Five-year averages at the other pools are: Swinney (31.1%),

McMillen (13.9%), and Memorial (4.1%). With no changes in the current pricing practices, the recapture rate will continue to hover in the mid-to-low 40% range. Given the amenities of the existing pools, the Department should reasonably expect a recapture rate of 60% to 70%, based on best practices for pool operations within the Great Lakes region.



The Department currently uses different pricing strategies for each of the four city pools based on the onsite amenities and ability of residents within the surrounding neighborhoods to pay. Other pricing strategies include prime/non-prime rates (afternoon and evening rates), group discounts (for 25 or more people), age (youth and adult rates), family discounts (season pass), and volume (season passes).

Daily and evening admission prices were raised for 2003 by \$0.25 across the board. Prior to the 2003 adjustment, pool fees were last increased in 2001 by 20% to 25%. Given the recreational value received from a visit to the pools, prices should be further increased by \$1.00 to \$2.00 across the board. The Department may want to

2003 Pool Fees

	McMillen	Memorial	Northside	Swinney
Daily Admissions*				
Youth (Ages 2-17)	\$1.50	\$1.50	\$2.75	\$2.25
Adult (Ages 18+)	\$2.00	\$1.50	\$3.75	\$3.00
Evening Admissions				
Youth (Ages 2-17)	N/A	N/A	\$2.25	\$1.50
Adult (Ages 18+)	N/A	N/A	\$3.25	\$2.25
Season Passes				
Youth	\$25	\$25	\$65	\$30
Adult	\$35	\$25	\$90	\$50
Family				
- Up to 3 members	\$50	\$40	\$165	\$70
- 4 members	\$50	\$40	\$190	\$90
- 5 members	\$50	\$40	\$215	\$110
- Add'l for each member over 5	\$15 ea.	\$15 ea.	\$25 ea.	\$15 ea.
Pool Rentals				
100 or less people	\$110	\$35	\$150	\$90
101 – 250 people	\$150	\$50	\$185	\$125
Add'l for each 100 people over 250	N/A	N/A	\$30	N/A

* Group Discount: \$0.50 for groups of 25 or more with minimum one-week notice.

Visits Needed to Realize Volume Discount from Season Pass

	Youth	Adult	Family**
McMillen	17	18	10
Memorial	17	17	9
Northside	24	24	18
Swinney	14	17	10

** Based on three-member family with one adult and two children per visit

consider phasing in this price increase over a two- to three-year period to minimize public criticism.

Given the high level of subsidy for the pools, the Department should consider implementing a resident/non-resident fee structure in addition to existing strategies. For ease of administering this two-tiered pricing system, the consultant suggests creating a resident identification card that is issued upon proof of residency and renewed annually. The “discounted” resident rate would only be given upon presentation of this ID. A nominal fee could be charged to cover the costs of producing this card.

The current practices of pricing the pools based on amenities offered, relative demand, and ability to pay are logical strategies that should be continued. Even as such, there appears to be some inequity in pricing related to the season passes. The number of visits required to achieve a real discount based on volume varies between pools and categories. Ideally, season passes should be priced to provide a volume discount in no less than 20 to 25 visits based on the current fee structure.

The current price of \$25 to \$30 for learn-to-swim programs is low for this type of program. It is reasonable to charge \$30 to \$40 for this type of program. A fair assessment of facility rentals could not be completed based on the financial data available from the Department. The total expense of providing swim lessons or opening a facility for rentals, including personnel expenses and related materials, should be closely tracked to understand the true cost of delivery. All programs and

rentals should be priced minimally to recover the complete delivery costs.

Facility Scheduling

Northside Pool is open from Memorial Day through Labor Day each year. The other pools are generally operated from June to mid-August while Fort Wayne Public Schools are closed for summer vacation. These schedules are consistent with practices throughout the Midwest. Memorial and Swinney Pools did not open

until classes ended at Fort Wayne Public Schools and will close when school resumes. Northside Pool observes a weekend only schedule. This wise practice helps minimize operating costs during a period when the majority of users (and lifeguards) are unable to use the pools due to school.

Swimming lessons, Lifetime Sports Academy swimming, and/or other aquatic programs are offered during the morning and early evening hours at Northside,

2003 Pool Schedules

	Public Swims	Evening Swims	Programs	Hours/Week
McMillen	<u>Daily</u> 1:30-6:00 p.m. <i>Hrs/Week: 31.5</i>	<u>Tue/Thur</u> 6:30-8:00 p.m. <i>Hrs/Week: 3</i>	<u>Mon/Fri</u> 9:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m. <i>Hrs/Week: 22.5</i>	56
Memorial	<u>Daily</u> 1:30-6:00 p.m. <u>Adult Swims</u> 12:30-1:30 p.m. (Sat/Sun) <i>Hrs/Week: 33.5</i>	<u>Adult Swims</u> 6:00-7:00 p.m. (Mon-Fri) <i>Hrs/Week: 5</i>	<u>Mon-Fri</u> 9:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. <i>Hrs/Week: 17.5</i>	56
Northside	<u>Daily</u> 12:30-5:00 p.m. <i>Hrs/Week: 31.5</i>	<u>Mon-Fri</u> 7:00-9:00 p.m. <i>Hrs/Week: 10</i>	<u>Tue-Fri</u> 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. 5:15-7:00 p.m. <i>Hrs/Week: 21</i>	62.5
Swinney	<u>Daily</u> 12:30-5:00 p.m. <i>Hrs/Week: 31.5</i>	<u>Mon-Fri</u> 7:00-9:00 p.m. <i>Hrs/Week: 10</i>	<u>Tue-Fri</u> 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. 5:15-6:45 p.m. <i>Hrs/Week: 18</i>	59.5
Hours/Week	128	28	79	235

* Evening swim at Swinney Pool only offered June 30 – July 25

Swinney, and McMillen Pools. Public swims are offered at all four pools from lunch-time through early evening. Night swims are offered at Northside, McMillen, and Swinney (July only) Pools. Weekend swim times are offered at all pools. One hour of adult swim time is offered at Memorial Pool seven days a week.

Assuming a potential operating hours of 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 12:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Sunday, there are 87 hours per week that each pool can possibly be scheduled for public swims, programs, and rentals. Excluding rentals, McMillen and Memorial Pools are operating at 64% capacity, Swinney at 68%, and Northside at 72%. Collectively, excluding rentals, the four pools are operating at 68% capacity. Including rentals, ideally the pools should operate between 82% to 85% capacity each week except when school is in session.

Generally speaking, the current scheduling practices at the pools are sound and need not be altered. Based on general attendance trends experienced by the Department and witnessed in other communities, extending public hours would likely result in minimal attendance increases and would have diminishing returns.

More efforts should be made to promote private pool rentals during hours the facilities are not being used. The current operating schedule provides some prime rental times on weekends after 5:00 p.m. Additional rentals could likely be secured on Fridays by changing the evening learn-

to-swim program to Monday through Thursday instead of Tuesday through Friday.

Partnerships

There are currently few partnerships in place at any of the four city pools beyond free use of McMillen Pool for the Department's Lifetime Sports Academy. Partnerships also exist with the Salvation Army and Jennings Center to provide free swimming lessons at Memorial Pool.

The Boys and Girls Club, or similar youth-focused organizations, may serve as potential partners for joint programming or pool rentals, especially if these organizations do not have their own aquatic facilities. Swimming activities could be incorporated into summer camps offered by these organizations either as special, one-time events (pool rental) or as ongoing elements of their programs (joint program). Using the pools for Department camps is also a viable option.

As a host of the Lifetime Sports Academy's aquatic programs, it would be reasonable for the Park Foundation to secure funding to cover operating expenses at McMillen Pool related to this program. Upon reviewing the financial statements, it appears that no income is transferred to the pool for this service.

Limited sponsorships exist beyond a \$1,000 annual sponsorship of the City Swim and Diving Meet. Lincoln Life formerly contributed \$5,000 annually to

sponsor \$0.25-admission one night at McMillen Pool. Once the insurance company discontinued this sponsorship, the event was canceled.

There is some potential to secure sponsorships, especially at Northside Pool. It may be possible to obtain corporate sponsors for various amenities (i.e., water feature, giant umbrella, etc.), especially if funneled through the Park Foundation. This type of sponsorship is typically most successful when using proceeds to purchase new amenities for the public. In return for sponsoring an item, tasteful signage can be placed on or near the feature to recognize the contribution. The cost of signage should be factored into the sponsorship amount.

Of the existing partnerships, no relationship is documented in writing. In the future, all partnerships should be documented, along with associated costs and benefits to each partner. All partnerships entered into should contribute to the cost recovery expectations established by the Department.

Marketing and Promotions

The primary source of promotion for the pools is through the Department's seasonal program brochure, *Fun Times*. This brochure is mailed quarterly to random households within the city. Other advertising sources include individual program brochures available at park sites and a spring aquatic program brochure directly distributed in the schools.

All of the current promotional outlets are appropriate and should continue to be used. Direct mailings to past participants should be used to encourage learn-to-swim enrollments. Direct mailings to youth organizations, churches, and area businesses should be implemented to promote after-hour facility rentals and/or aquatic programs. As funding permits, other advertising sources should also be considered. Targeted radio and television commercials can be effective for promoting special events or sparking demand during non-peak times. Tag lines on radio commercials from the Department's soda provider may be available as a source of free advertising.

Partnerships with local radio or television stations could also be developed around special events for the community. Stations could sponsor special events by providing free, pre-event advertising and day-of-the-event live coverage. Themed events could be centered around upcoming holidays, popular culture (ex. Harry Potter, reality TV shows, etc.), or ongoing family events (ex. Family Day every Wednesday at a discounted rate).

To assess customer satisfaction, post-participation surveys are conducted for learn-to-swim programs offered at the pools. Results from these surveys show that overall, there is a high degree of customer satisfaction for the swim lesson program. Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation should continue to use the instruments for customer feedback. With the recent decline in participation, the Department should consider holding periodic focus groups to

better understand any shifting concerns within the public. The secret shopper program currently in place at the pools should be continued. An enhanced and more visually appealing website should be developed to make it easy for the public to learn about and register for recreation programs at their convenience.

Customer Service

Currently, there is a comprehensive aquatic manual in place at the pools. The manual effectively outlines how to properly address customers, procedures for handling customer comments or complaints, and generally illustrate the type of experience customers should have when visiting the pools.

Customer service training is provided to all employees on an annual basis. Customer service training should be also provided in conjunction with ongoing lifeguard safety training to reinforce the importance of excellent customer service. Customer service training should also be provided for all new hires, even if hired mid-season.

Since employees sometimes have a tendency of overlooking the importance of issues brought forward by immediate supervisors, it is helpful to use outside help for the periodic training sessions. This can be accomplished using staff from other divisions (like marketing), working with local colleges, or hiring outside facilitators. A variety of training programs are also available through the National Recreation and Park Association and other resources.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are a valuable tool for management and the Board of Park Commissioners to measure or track the success of programs and services offered at the city pools. Current measurements used by the Department to track customer satisfaction (post-program surveys), participation levels (enrollment and attendance figures), and revenues versus expenses (financial reports). In addition to the existing instruments, it is recommended that the following performance measures be implemented:

- **Cost per Experience:** Using existing data, the measurement calculates how much it costs the Department to provide a specific program or service for the average participant. All costs, including direct and indirect, should be included. This information is valuable for effective pricing. This ratio should be calculated for each program and service at least once per year.
- **Cost Recovery:** Upon conclusion of a program or at set times for ongoing services, the total revenue from a program or service should be divided by its associated expenses. This ratio or percentage indicates the profit or loss margin for delivery of the program of service. The cost recovery should then be compared to an established subsidy or profit goal.
- **Customer Retention:** Track the percentage of returning participants from previous sessions of the program. This information provides clues to customer satisfaction, because happy customers usually return. Obviously, the higher the

retention rate the better, since it is usually easier (and cheaper) to keep a returning customer versus attracting a new one.

- Programs Offered versus Held: Record the number of programs actually offered against the number of programs planned and advertised to the public. Frequent cancellation of programs could indicate that the pool is not adequately meeting the needs of the community.
- Program Capacity: Track the number of program participants versus the maximum spaces available for a program or service. Programs at low capacity should be reviewed to determine if they need to be changed or eliminated. Programs at maximum capacity may need to be expanded due to demand.
- Facility Capacity: Track the actual number of hours a pool is scheduled for activity versus the total number of hours the facility is able to be operated.
- Market Potential: Using data available from resources like the American Sports Data Superstudy of Sports Participation or National Sporting Goods Association Sports Participation Survey, determine the potential number of participants based on national or regional averages. See Market Assessment as an example.
- Market Share: Comparing the number of participants versus the market potential, determine the percentage of the potential market that is utilizing the service or program. To effectively measure this, it is important to track at least the ages of participants to compare to the national data. Age segments, if used, need to correspond to the resources used.

- Average Food Expenditures: Divide the total gross concession sales by attendance during public swim hours to determine the average amount each visitor spends on concessions.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The following strengths, or positive issues *within the control of management*, directly impact the success of the swimming pools:

- All four pools were renovated in 1996.
- The operating deficit for aquatic operations was reduced by approximately \$40,000 between 2001 and 2002.
- Northside Pool has family aquatic center features such as a leisure pool with zero-depth entrance, interactive water features, slides, sand play areas, large shade umbrellas, and grassy areas for sunbathing.
- Pricing and visitation at Northside Pool allowed for the nearly 87% recapture of operating expenses in 2002. The average subsidy per visitor is only \$0.45, the lowest subsidy level of any pool.
- Northside Pool has a consistent learn-to-swim program.
- Northside and Swinney Pools have strong family participation as represented by approximately one-quarter of visitors being adults.
- Attendance at Memorial Pool has generally increased over the past five years.

Weaknesses

The following weaknesses, or negative issues *within the control of management* to varying degrees, negatively impact the success of the swimming pools:

- Excluding Northside Pool, other facilities are primarily traditional pools with limited features that appeal to families.
- Northside Pool is frequently operated near capacity during afternoon public swim times.
- Attendance at Northside, Swinney, and McMillen Pools has generally been on the decline over the past five years.
- City pools control a very small percentage of the swim lesson market.
- No pools are located in expansion areas of the community.
- No significant features have been added to the pools since the 1996 renovations.
- The location of Memorial, McMillen, and Swinney Pools in lower income neighborhoods limits the ability of nearby residents to pay for services.
- There is a public perception that the Memorial and McMillen Pool neighborhoods are unsafe.
- Annual operating deficits at the pools is \$200,000 to \$250,000. Collectively, the pools are only recapturing on average 40% of operating expenses.
- The average subsidy per pool visitor system-wide is \$3.19. In 2002, the average subsidy per visitor was \$10.61 at Memorial, \$7.04 at McMillen, and \$5.66 at Swinney.

- No permanent concession facilities exist at any pool location. No vending machines are located at any pool location.
- The net income from concessions represents only 1.2% of total revenue. The average pre-tax expenditure per visitor ranges between \$0.32 and \$0.90. Even with a limited concession menu, expenditures should be at least \$1.50.
- Pools are currently being operated at 64% to 72% capacity, but should strive for 82% to 85% capacity.
- Facility rentals represent only 3.6% of total revenue, and more rentals should be pursued.
- Excessive foul language of patrons at Memorial Pool scares away some families.
- There is low learn-to-swim participation at Swinney Pool.
- A lack of indoor facilities limits the Department's ability to provide year-round programming.
- The city controls a relatively small portion of the learn-to-swim market. As a result, swim lessons are primarily sought by residents through providers like the schools and YMCA.

Opportunities

The following opportunities, or potentially positive issues *outside the control of management*, impact the potential success of the swimming pools and should be considered in any future decision-making:

- Nearly one in four Hoosiers swim at least once per year. Swimming participation in Indiana slightly exceeds national trends.

- Swimming remains the most popular sport activity for Americans.

Threats

The following threats, or potentially negative issues *outside the control of management*, impact the potential success of the swimming pools and should be considered in any future decision-making:

- The economy remains sluggish, resulting in shrinking discretionary dollars available for pool visits.
- Utility rates continue their dramatic upward trend, thus increasing operating expenses.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department operates four outdoor swimming pools within the city. While the facilities are well maintained and operated, all but the Northside Pool lack many of the modern leisure pool features that attract families in large numbers. With no significant amenities added since the 1996 renovation, the pools have generally witnessed declining attendance and learn-to-swim participation.

Given its amenities, attendance was highest at Northside Pool with 37,339 visitors in 2002. Swinney Pool, which is popular with teenagers, had the next greatest attendance at 21,164. Attendance was 8,230 at McMillen Pool and 5,020 at Memorial Pool.

Over the past five years, the pools have realized operating deficits between \$200,000 and \$250,000, resulting in a cost recovery rate of 40.4%. Despite the limited amenities at McMillen, Memorial, and Swinney Pools, the pool operations should expect to recover 60% to 70% of their operating expenses.

System-wide, the average subsidy per visitor over this timeframe is \$3.19. As would be expected, the subsidy levels are significantly higher at the lower-attended pools. In 2002, the average subsidy per visitor was \$10.61 at Memorial Pool, \$7.04 at McMillen, and \$5.66 at Swinney. By comparison, Northside Pool had an average subsidy of \$0.45 per visitor in 2002.

Unless significant amenity upgrades are made to the existing pools, the subsidy levels will likely rise in the future as attendance continues to fall. The continued operation of Memorial and McMillen Pools is not logical from a purely financial perspective, although it is recognized that both serve neighborhoods in need of positive recreation alternatives.

Given the demand at Northside Pool, the Department should consider expanding this facility to include a lazy river. This amenity would increase both the appeal and capacity level of the pool, and would warrant an increased admission price for the experience received.

With existing pools limited to older neighborhoods in the city, the Department should explore the feasibility of building one or two indoor or outdoor family aquatic centers closer to the growth areas of the

community. These facilities could be designed to recapture most, if not all, operating expenses. An indoor facility would allow for year-round programming and could be used to enhance existing learn-to-swim programming. The strategic placement of one or more new facilities could also allow for the closure of a non-producing facility.

The Department should closely review its current arrangement for concession services at the pools. Average food and beverage expenditures per visitor at Northside and Swinney Pools, given their attendance, should minimally be \$1.50. More efforts to promote concessions, such as hourly “advertisements” over the public address system or promotional signage placed strategically throughout the facility, should be considered. Minimally, vending machines should be installed. Consumption of beverages and snacks from vending machines can be limited to designated areas within the facility.

More efforts should be undertaken to secure after-hour pool rentals. Currently, rentals only provide less than \$6,000, or 3.6% of all pool revenue. The Department should target scout troops, 4-H clubs, church youth groups, and other youth organizations for pool rentals via direct mailing efforts and community networking.

In addition to existing after-hour birthday parties, the Department should create birthday party packages during public swim hours. The package should provide a set number of entries, reserved, shaded location for one to one and one-half hours within the facility, and meals or snacks from the

concession area. Birthday party packages are extremely popular and can contribute up to 5% of the total revenue based on experiences in similar communities.

Despite recent increases, current admission prices at Northside Pool are under-priced for the value received. Youth admission prices should be in the range of \$3.50, with adult rates \$1.00 above the youth fees. Other pool rates ideally should be raised \$0.50 to \$1.00, although this may not be possible at Memorial and McMillen Pools given the economic realities of these neighborhoods. The Department should consider implementing a resident/non-resident fee structure at all pools.

The season pass structure should be reviewed to ensure greater equity in the effective discounts received. Passes should be priced so that savings are realized after a minimum of 20 to 25 visits. As an alternative to the season pass, the Department could offer a punch card that provides 10 visits for the price of nine daily visits. This would ensure that visitors pay an equitable share of the pool’s operating cost for each visit.

There is some opportunity to expand partnerships with the pool operations, especially at Northside. Sponsorships could be secured for the various pool features, such as the slides or umbrellas. Media partners could be developed to help promote and sponsor special events at the pool, such as a weekly Family Night Swims.

Partnerships should also be explored with local youth organizations and area churches to expand the learn-to-swim program and

facility rentals. The Department should actively pursue camp business—both internally and externally during low-use morning times. With limited programming, Memorial Pool has the capacity to generate rental revenue or admission fees from area camps before public swim times.

The Lifetime Sports Academy swim program is a valuable program that should be continued at McMillen Pool. All costs related to this free aquatic program should be closely tracked. Working with the Park Foundation, corporate and individual sponsors should continue to be solicited to underwrite the full operating cost to the pool for providing this program.

To address safety concerns, especially at Memorial Pool, the Department could implement safety patrols using off-duty police or a security service to initially crack down on safety and language issues. The increased personnel will result in higher operating costs. If patrols are successful, however, this effort may result in increased attendance over time as word spreads among the community about these efforts. With continued reinforcement of rules by pool staff and park management, it may be possible to reduce or eliminate security patrols over time, depending on severity of the situation at the respective sites.

The Department should continue its customer service training at the pool, ensuring that each new or returning seasonal employee. Current performance measure should also continue to be used.



Appendix 7: Program Facility Subsidy Levels (2002)

The following table lists subsidy rates for major program areas and facilities as calculated using revenue and expense from the Department's 2002 Programs and Facilities Financial Statements and Attendance report. This list does not include all programs and services provided by the Department. The table may exclude grant proceeds or other earned income not reported in the financial statements. While

programs and facilities are itemized from highest subsidy level to greatest profit margin (as indicated by negative percentage), this is merely for illustrative purposes and should not be construed as a value judgment. Subsidy levels for swimming pools and golf courses are reported both collectively and by location.

In the future, the Department should closely track all direct and indirect expenses by core program. The Board should establish agreed upon subsidy levels for each core program consistent with the values of the community. With complete financial records, it will be possible to measure the performance of the Department in meeting established revenue goals.

Program/Facility Subsidy Levels (2002)

	Revenue	Expenses	Subsidy Level*
Special Events/Freimann Square	\$300.00	\$52,734.90	99.4%
Jennings Center	\$1,200.41	\$141,586.93	99.2%
Outdoor Recreation	\$371.70	\$2,765.06	86.6%
Diehm Museum	\$1,402.25	\$8,343.67	83.2%
Lindenwood Park/Salomon Farm/Outdoor Ed.	\$20,841.56	\$111,175.95	81.3%
Foellinger Theatre	\$28,620.62	\$90,096.47	68.2%
Community Center	\$75,810.68	\$235,001.99	67.7%
Swimming Pools	\$159,335.85	\$377,966.53	57.8%
- Memorial	\$4,423.19	\$57,689.13	92.3%
- McMillen	\$16,864.33	\$117,209.11	85.6%
- Swinney	\$20,194.71	\$67,007.18	69.9%
- Northside	\$117,853.62	\$136,061.11	13.4%
Botanical Conservatory	\$309,027.12	\$685,978.27	55.0%
Adult/Youth Athletics	\$102,418.45	\$165,861.62	38.3%
Ice Arena	\$832,986.31	\$1,070,125.37	22.2%
Adult/Youth Classes	\$223,290.23	\$282,121.08	20.9%
Pavilions	\$98,299.34	\$120,496.02	18.4%
Ball Diamonds	\$41,014.51	\$49,018.81	16.3%
Children's Zoo/Veldt	\$1,230,597.38	\$1,463,771.08	15.9%
Golf Courses	\$671,349.41	\$745,898.11	10.0%
- McMillen	\$144,624.76	\$214,590.21	32.6%
- Foster	\$278,553.83	\$286,259.96	2.7%
- Shoaff	\$248,170.82	\$245,047.94	-1.3%
Travel	\$266,323.15	\$256,229.55	-3.9%
Franke Day Camp	\$138,422.06	\$126,371.67	-9.5%
Johnny Appleseed Campground	\$72,100.02	\$57,292.27	-25.8%

* Subsidy Level excluding grants or other earned income not reported in Financial Statements; negative percentage represents profit margin

Source: 2002 Programs and Facilities Financial Statements and Attendance



Appendix 8: Public Open House

Summary

The Park Board issued a draft of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan on June 25, 2004, for public comment. On July 21 and July 22, 2004, the Parks and Recreation Department conducted a two-day public open house at the Community Center in downtown Fort Wayne. Department personnel and consultants were on hand from 8:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. to discuss the plan, take comments, and answer questions. Copies of the plan were available along with summaries of the strategies. Comment forms allowed citizens to record comments at the open house or submit them later.

The summary below organizes the citizen comments based on the type of comment made by the citizens who participated in the public open house. The comments range from specific suggestions, questions, and comments to a citizen's long-range vision for the City of Fort Wayne. Comments were

submitted by citizens of the City of Fort Wayne and are not necessarily the recommendations of the comprehensive parks and recreation master planning team or city officials. These comments were used to help guide the planning team in understanding how the plan can best address the key park and recreation facilities and program issues in the city.

Community Center

The plan must make it clear that the Community Center needs to be expanded. The expansion will create new space for programs, and other indoor/outdoor recreational activities. The expansion should also include space for senior activities. The YWCA was suggested as a facility to be purchased and developed into a new Community Center.

Connectivity

It is very important to connect neighborhoods, parks, community facilities, and the

entire City of Fort Wayne with a greenway system. There were a number of comments supporting more trails, including a Rails to Trails system within the city. The Northeast Planning District needs more greenways to help make for a safe, more pedestrian-friendly environment in that portion of the city. River blueways (canoeing, kayaking, etc.) should also be investigated to add another component to the greenway system.

Day Camp

The Franke Day Camp has a strong heritage that needs to be maintained. Summer camps could be subsidized by the Department for low-income families.

Dog Parks

The dog park concept needs to be expanded throughout the city. Kreager Park was identified as a prime location for a dog park. There is a specific need for a dog park in the Northside.

Funding

Partnerships with non-profit organizations, neighborhood associations, and the school systems should be emphasized. This will help with funding as well as maintenance. Greenways are an additional transportation system within the city, and the Street Department could help maintain the greenways. The Department should consider partnering with the schools.

Future Parks

Some citizens thought that park land should be preserved/reserved in soon-to-be developed areas outside of city limits. Others opposed purchasing land in suburbia.

Golf Courses

Foster Golf Course was praised. There were complaints that the Foster Golf Pass could not be used at Shoaff Park and fees are too high. It was suggested that there be a senior golf pass that includes golf carts. Senior citizens need golf carts while playing golf for safety/health reasons. A program should be established to give inexpensive golf lessons to people of all ages. Golf course prices should be more competitive.

Low Income Areas

Parks and swimming pools within low-income areas can have a positive benefit on the neighborhood and should be preserved and enhanced. Summer camps could be subsidized for low-income families.

Lunch Program

An inexpensive daily lunch program or monthly pancake breakfast was suggested.

For social purposes, it was suggested that the Parks Department serve food before or after activities/programs at the Community Center.

Park Amenities

Parks should incorporate water features and flower beds where possible to provide soothing places for people to relax. Limestone drinking fountains should be preserved and maintained. There is a need for additional basketball courts and playgrounds, especially in the Southeast Planning District. Recycling containers should be considered in most parks.

Parking

Parking is needed at the Botanical Conservatory. Foster Park's south entrance parking lot needs to be repaved. The Community Center needs more parking. Overflow parking should be investigated when special events are held within parks. Police or the park police need to help direct traffic to off-site parking and provide safety for pedestrians having to cross busy streets.

Recreational Programs/Leagues/Social Events

Programs should be more focused on neighborhoods. This will help keep kids and families occupied and involved in physical fitness activity. There is a need for more Community Center rooms for special programs, as some classes are cancelled due to scheduling conflicts. Leagues for all ages should be formed for shuffleboard, bingo, monthly book reviews, etc. The formation of these groups will strengthen the Community Center and the entire park system. The food

served within the park system is perceived as poor quality by some.

Safety

Some citizens fear that more trails within and around their neighborhoods connected to parks could increase crime. There was some concern about harassment in a park, and interest in increased police patrols in the parks.

Seniors

The programs at the Community Center should be maintained for senior citizens; however more space is needed for such activities. The "Everyday Exercise" class needs a larger room. The pool table room could be partitioned off to make room for the "Everyday Exercise" class. Change in the programs is needed for senior citizens who want to keep fit.

Specific Park Comments

Comments on specific parks included requests for amenities such as basketball courts, increased safety measures, parking, and trails.

Tourism

The city needs to take advantage of the riverfront property to increase tourism. Ideas ranged from a detailed plan to create a recreation lake out of Swinney Park to capturing cultural tourism using the Old Fort and informational gateways to attract travelers to the parks and other points of interest.

General/Broad Comments

The plan shows that the park lands within the city must be preserved for the current and future citizens of Fort Wayne. The Minnesota and Oregon parks systems are good examples of park systems that might work within the city. One of the top priorities for the park system should be establishing programs for the neighborhoods to keep families active. The image of the city needs to be improved. One way to improve the image is to build on the Indian heritage theme. Another way to improve the image is to increase safety measures within the park system. No plan should go forward without proper funding in place. The plan is ambitious, and it must be to ensure an excellent parks system for many years.

Citizen Comments

The comments listed below are unedited, transcribed directly from the comment sheets submitted at or following the open house on July 21 and July 22, 2004, at the Fort Wayne Community Center. Some of the comment sheets covered more than one subject. Italicized notes in parentheses refer to the topic under which the complete comment is recorded.

Community Center

1. Should make clear that the recommendation is to expand the Community Center concept. Present comments tend to leave a negative opinion about the present center.

2. Need to expand space for programs at Community Center and improve trails for hiking and walking. (*Seniors-1*)
3. Purchase YWCA and develop for Community Center, exercise room, adult pool, children's pool, gym, all with instructions for activities. This system observed in Minnesota and Oregon. (*General/Broad-8*)
4. Mirrors along the north wall of the all-purpose room. It would enhance the atmosphere for the Tuesday night dances. It would be useful for the Alley Kat dance group practices every Thursday.
5. Love the Community Center. Love Monday and Wednesday table tennis. Would like to see free coffee in mornings, it would be popular with everyone.

Connectivity

1. Physical Connectivity—great idea to connect parks via bike and foot paths.
2. Walkway needed around Franke Park/ Zoo along Sherman Boulevard—no sidewalk and berm is overgrown with weeds—dangerous for all those who walk, jog, and bike along Sherman Boulevard at that part, even though speed limit is 25 mph. (*Specific Park Comments-11*)
3. View greenways as not only recreational facilities but also as a transportation system. (*Funding-2*)
4. I think it is very important to upgrade and create new trails.

5. Designated cross-county ski trails in Foster Park. Wider greenway (divided) marked for wheels and walking.
6. We need to be a rail-to-trail greenway. (*Parking-2*)
7. Look forward to an increase in foot and bike paths. (*General/Broad-9*)
8. I am a resident of northeast Fort Wayne. My concern is lack of bicycle trails in the northeast sections of the city. Riders and runners are using heavy traffic roads to pursue their sports. We are not safe! We also lack a public park to enjoy. How about the corner of Laymeyer and Stillhorn for a public park?
9. Connect Kreager Park to the neighborhood. (*Specific Park Comments-9*)
10. 1) Connecting parks through expanded greenway, green areas. 2) Water trails as water permits. (*General/Broad-2*)
11. Agree that use of rivers and trails to connect parks should be looked at. (*General/Broad-6*)
12. Improve rivergreenway! (*General/Broad-15*)
13. 1) Rivergreenway is great, but needs made longer and connected to other areas including Aboite, new river greenways and international airport, maybe run alongside old and new railroad tracks! 2) With Fort Wayne being the second- or third-fattest city in the USA, we need more trails and the new media writing articles about imploring the health issue! (*General/Broad-16*)

Day Camp

1. More summer camps subsidized by Parks for low-income parents. (*Low Income Areas-1*)
2. Do not change Franke Day Camp—Powwows, etc. This is our heritage.

Dog Parks

1. Have a Northside dog park—no one in Northside (almost) using the one by Foster Park (too far).
2. Expand dog park concept to other areas of the city, possibly Kreager Park (east side), where there is already plenty of existing space.

Funding

1. Emphasize partnerships with non-profit local groups as FW Foundation; friends of the parks, etc. as a source of revenue and publicity and support.
2. View greenways as not only recreational facilities but also as a transportation system. Then use street department resources to maintain greenways. (*Connectivity-2*)
3. Use school and park maintenance personnel together to reduce costs. Also, collaboration on use of school land for parks. Higher utilization not much use of school open space in the summer. Sign with maintenance number on all pavilions and restrooms. (*General/Broad-6*)
4. Work with neighborhood association. To keep parks clean and in good repair. (*General/Broad-6*)

5. Have you thought about selling “beer permits” for groups renting park pavilions? (*General/Broad-6*)

Future Parks

1. Adopt a plan to reserve space/acres for park land for the future in the soon-to-be developed areas out side of city limits. If you look at a map of the NE Quadrant—there is no space for parks—it’s all subdivisions. If land had been reserved years ago, we would have space for parks today.
2. Do not purchase expensive land in suburbia. They should have planned ahead. (*General/Broad-6*)

Golf Courses

1. I am very pleased with Fort Wayne parks, especially the golf course. I’ve been a member at Foster many years and very much appreciate the work that is done there. E. F. Day 672-3949
2. Complaint: Could not use Foster Golf Pass at Shoaff Park. Cart fees go to pro, not a good idea. Need a senior golf pass. He has to have a cart. We charge each person \$10 for cart use not a good idea. 78-year-old resident of FWA who loves golf.
3. Inexpensive golf lessons for all age groups, i.e. north side of city. (*Recreational Programs-10*)
4. Raising green fees would be prohibitive. (*Specific Park Comments-9*)
5. Keep golf course prices more competitive. (*General/Broad-2*)

6. Foster Park Golf Course is way too expensive! (*General/Broad-15*)

Low Income Areas

1. Keep the pools open in poor areas, City take a “loss” but better for the children. More summer camps subsidized by Parks for low-income parents. (*Day Camp-1*)
2. Parks that aren’t used much, to sell parts of or allow to become wilderness areas, except in low-income areas where they can be a positive benefit.

Lunch Program

1. Would be nice to have a daily lunch program cheap. (*General/Broad-12*)
2. Provide inexpensive lunches (soup/salad/half sandwiches) for socializing before and after activities. Provide a pancake breakfast monthly at minimal charges. (*Recreational Programs-9*)

Park Amenities

1. Need green space for quiet times. Water features (ponds), trees, flowers a place to relax.
2. Identify and preserve remaining limestone drinking fountains. Sadly, we have been losing these beautiful structures at about 1 to 2 per year. They are replaced by wooden “post type” drinking fountains which are prone to vandalism, and have been backed into and broken by vehicles. The limestone fountains are almost indestructible. Also revive the maintenance position of “Mason” so that the parks numerous limestone buildings and other stone structures are not allowed to deteriorate further.

3. Outside basketball courts—beyond Hesse Anthony and Castle Road. Need basketball facilities. Southeast side of city needs basketball court near Harding Road. Playgrounds are needed as well.
4. Recycling containers for cans in parks (similar to the type in state parks) could help in recycling efforts. (*General/Broad-4*)

Parking

1. Linda Ducksberry – Senior — Botanical Gardens – Ticket on car – car parking cleaned out / 60 to parking lots with coin meters – and allow with handicap spaces. Parking is needed at Botanical Gardens. She has called several times. People have given her the run around. Her telephone number is 482-2483.
2. Larry & Sue Brey 447-3540. We need to be a rail-to-trail greenway. Can we get money from state and federal. Repaving Foster South entrance parking lot—upgrade path. More trails, more areas to park to get on the tree. Tillman Road—compost drive the parking needs paving. Advertising, new brochure, community involvement, yes raise taxes. (*Connectivity-6*)
3. In general Community Center needs more parking for the high days. This is evident by people needing to pay to park at other places. It was said that a car was even towed from the Community Center parking lot in which the senior citizen had to pay a fee of \$100.00 to get his car returned. Out-of-towners have trouble finding outstanding events.

4. Memorial Park. Opening up two acres down by swim house with parking area on Washington. Opening up and parking lot on south side of park down by basketball court. (*Specific Park Comments-5*)
5. Be aware of 7/24 concerns of neighborhoods—those who are by the park all of the time. Try to encourage them to accept overflow parking when there are special events and visitors at the park. Otherwise there will be too much parking area in the park. Ask city police or park police to direct traffic to street parking and provide safety for those people as they cross a busy street (by the park) from the street parking.

Recreational Programs/Leagues/Social Events

1. I came here for table tennis. The room is ideal for table tennis and people are nice to play with. Hope the program continues.
2. Programs are great. Exercise program great, great leader (Boc). Ping pong is great would pay a fee to play, card playing is fun.
3. I like the expanded interest in ping pong at the center. (*General/Broad-6*)
4. More ping pong days please. Glad to pay to get to play more. Great exercise programs too. Bro is great. Love the computers too.
5. Enjoy playing ping pong Mondays and Wednesdays.
6. Priorities should be programs for neighborhoods. Keep kids and families

occupied and involved in a physical fitness activity. (*General/Broad-6*)

7. Need more room. (Classes cancelled or postponed due to lack of space when other classes are booked). New floor in activity room unsatisfactory for dancing and exercise, too sticky. Can't use dance wax. Very little food served, no money. When food is served, poor, cheap quality.
8. Something needs to be done about the dance floor before all the dancers give up and quit coming. The floor is also too sticky for the exercise class and falling is an ever present danger.
9. Item I – Strengthening Community Center. Have weekly BINGO games for adults. Form shuffleboard leagues for each area of city for various age groups. Form monthly book reviews for various age groups (recommendations from Library). Provide dance lessons for high school students (including etiquette and table manners). Provide TEA DANCES (separate and together) for adults and high school students. Provide inexpensive lunches (soup/salad/half sandwiches) for socializing before and after activities. Provide a pancake breakfast monthly (at minimal charges). Provide regular weekly/monthly sing-a-long. Provide exercise programs be-weekly at minimum charge. Provide weekly classes, movie, and travelogues. (*Lunch Program-2*)
10. Item II – Strengthening Fort Wayne Parks. Stimulate craft groups for all students utilizing schools and neighborhood association in each area. Utilize

neighborhood parks for all neighborhood association activities. Have volunteer instrumental music in the parks on Sunday afternoons. Encourage memorials to Fort Wayne Parks Department (i.e. memorial for area gardens). Inexpensive golf lessons for all age groups (i.e. north side of City). Each neighborhood should prioritize their parks "needs" i.e. whether beautifying or child care needs. *(General/Broad-3)*

11. Be nice to have extra tables—willing to pay fee for playing.
12. I enjoy playing ping-pong every Wednesday. I have been playing since last November. There is a great group of people. It is competitive but a lot of fun because we don't care if we win or lose. Please keep this activity going. Thank you very much.
13. Need wildcat baseball to return to Franke Park (as it was in the past) to provide opportunities to neighborhood children. *(General/Broad-4)*
14. Donation to table tennis is ridiculous. We (participants) donated two tables, 6 paddles, balls, and nets. We generated a crowd for this center! *(General/Broad-15)*
15. Table tennis is going real good Monday and Wednesday mornings at the Community Center, with at least 20 people showing up on Wednesday. The problem is more tables, nets, etc. are needed! *(General/Broad-16)*

Safety

1. Crime in and around the park at Vesey Park sensitive about crime in the

neighborhood. Ron Fletcher was contacted. Wants connections to other neighborhoods, not to Franke Park. Concern about having people walking behind the apartments; perception of higher crime with more trails.

2. Security issue: What to do if constantly harassed in a park. What should the victim do? *(General/Broad-6)*
3. Increase patrolling parks for safety.

Seniors

1. Maintain programs at Community Center for elderly. Need to expand space for programs at Community Center and improve trails for hiking and walking. *(Community Center-2)*
2. The "everyday exercise" class for seniors needs a bigger exercise room. The machines are in a large hallway. Perhaps a better space could be found, for example, the pool table room could be partitioned as the three tables are not used as often as the machines. The lobby could be used as there is wasted space there. Please consider a change for seniors wanting to keep fit.

Specific Park Comments

1. This is for Casselwood Park. I received a typewritten letter about 10 years ago saying what kind of asphalt mix would be used to construct a new basketball court at Casselwood Park. The old court was built in the 1960s. Sure, the pole was rusty; and of course young people would hang on the rim. I mentioned this to sixth district councilman Glenn Hines about three to four years ago. As well

as last fall. I know Park Board money must go to other parks also, but Casselwood Park would enjoy a new basketball court.

2. Guard rail needed along bike path over St. Mary's River at Swinney Park. *(General/Broad-8)*
3. McMillan Ice Arena needs to be utilized more hours. Ice sits empty many hours a day. We need morning, afternoon and evening times for skating, not just public. Many skaters drive to Indiana several times a week. Fees secondary, most figure skating parents would pay fees for more ice. Resident/non-resident fees.
4. Franke Park—would like a place to walk in the park versus on the roads. Need a sidewalk from new parking lot to the zoo and toys in Franke Park.
5. Memorial Park. Opening up two acres down by swim house with parking area on Washington. Opening up and parking lot on south side of park down by basketball court. *(Parking-5)*
6. Wonderful Park: Kreager! Keep up the good work in making space for walking and cogitating.
7. Ducks are ruining the ambiance of Lakeside Park. Maybe a dog or two around during the day with employees might persuade the ducks to seek a less human-inhabited area.
8. Entrances to parks need to be enhanced: Foster, McMillen, and Foellinger Theatre. Raising green fees would be prohibitive. People don't go to Jannecke because of lack of parking nearby.

- Connect Kreager Park to the neighborhood. Lake Forest Village may be interested in putting a trail into Kreager Park. (*General/Broad-4; Connectivity-9*)
9. Just jotting down some thoughts regarding our little neighborhood park/Klug Park. My house faces Klug Park (west end of house); I'm at corner of Charlotte and Hubertus. I do thoroughly enjoy my vantage point of being able to enjoy the park, the trees, the children playing, etc. but thought perhaps more attention could be given our little park. Several years back, our then neighborhood association (Frances Slocum) president, unbeknownst and without any input or okay from other officers of the association was asked if some funds (allocated for upkeep/beautification of Klug) could be given to Lakeside Park, the transfer of which funds he did (as said, without okay from other association officers). Of course that's water over the dam, but many of us in the park's vicinity have really resented this. We're wondering why, with the obvious expenditure of tens of thousands of dollars already spent on Lakeside the city's crown jewel, monies from other parks were solicited for Lakeside, obviously causing Klug Park to have forfeited some improvements and/or beautification projects we would otherwise have had. I would very much like to have an official from the Parks Department to make a thorough study of Klug to see what can be done to make our little park a more beautiful and enjoyable place. It's a lovely, quiet little neighborhood! Some suggestions:
 10. 1. Walkway needed around Franke Park/Zoo along Sherman Blvd. – no sidewalk and berm is overgrown w/weeds – dangerous for all those who walk, jog, and bike along Sherman Blvd. at that part, even though speed limit is 25 mph.
2. South of Franke Park/Toel Theatre – where the old drive in theatre used to be – can it be made into a football field? Former football field in Franke Park was eliminated a few years ago with zoo parking expansion. The football field could be used by C.Y.O., P.A.L., etc. Parking in Toel Theatre lot is sufficient. Currently, football goals are put in Lawton Park in fall. Parking is inadequate near the field. (*General/Broad-4; Connectivity-2*)
 11. Does Swinney Park have any recreational areas besides the swimming pool? Is any activity needed there? Years ago there was an amusement park complete with roller coasters, ferris wheel, etc. in Swinney Park; that's a no-no as an attraction like that is not a money maker and soon wears out. (*General/Broad-14*)
 12. There were 2 or 3 concrete docking piers where Headwaters Park now is, and for a short time, sight seeing boat trips were a feature. Our dirty waters do not now entice water trails. The City needs to get going now on their plans and work to clean up our three rivers; we have sinfully abused a rare prize and where the Park Department can help, they should. (*General/Broad-14*)
 13. Lewis Street, at corner of Lewis and Hugh Street, corner could have some flowers at each corner. I think it would bring out the park. It little now, but by spring it will look nice, of next spring at Hanner Street park. Lewis and Hugh at the corners.
 14. I have read the parts of the proposed master plan related to the ice arenas and would like to offer some comments. The first is that we have a great facility. I had not skated for many years until I returned to Fort Wayne a few years ago where I have been able to resume skating on a frequent and regular basis. The second is that I agree with the report's conclusion that that not enough time is available for public skating.

I believe that there are basically two types of skaters - serious skaters and social skaters. There are fewer serious skaters but they use the rinks far more frequently than the more abundant social skaters. I consider myself a serious skater but I only skate during the day sessions on Monday and Wednesday. Evening and weekend sessions are crowded (good for revenues but not for skating), the ice gets chopped up quickly and is not always resurfaced and rink regulations are poorly enforced.

The day sessions are more sparsely attended (great for skating but not for revenue) although my perception is that attendance has increased over the years. However this increase is not a problem, since those who are coming are mindful of others and the traffic is not heavy enough to degrade the quality of the ice. I think there is an opportunity to increase the public use of the rinks during these hours, by extending the frequency and length of these sessions. My thoughts are:

- 1) Offer a "midday" public session at least three days per week, say MWF.
- 2) Let the session run longer than the usual two hours, say from 10:30 AM to 1:30 PM, but preferably at about the same time each day.

The timing and longer session would enable people who work during the day to skate during their lunch hour, as some try to do now.

Congestion will not match that of evening sessions while the longer hours

may enable more to attend. I doubt that very many will skate for the entire three hours and I doubt that ice quality will degrade significantly. Private lessons can still be conducted as they are now without causing problems.

Like all the programs, the availability of such sessions should be well publicized and hopefully would attract a regular following. In any event it should not be too difficult to implement on a trial basis. I also think that such a schedule would help summer turnout. I have to skate several times a week to keep things "oiled" and with the schedule down to once per week I tend to take the summer off.

Tourism

1. My idea for Fort Wayne is a very large plan, but I think it would be a great tourist area to bring people to Fort Wayne, as well as local people taking advantage of it, rather than leaving the city to go to other areas for recreation. I call it Swinney Lake. The first part of my plan involves flooding Swinney Park into a recreation lake. Not just Swinney Park, but the neighborhoods surrounding it on the north side of the Saint Mary's River to W. Main Street (leave W. Main Street) from the W. Main Street Bridge west to Edgerton Street. (Also leave Swinney Pool as part of the recreation area). This whole neighborhood is very old and mostly low-income, run-down housing and rentals. By doing this, it would make Main Street riverfront property, and open to restaurants and shops locating there. There could even

be a boardwalk along Main Street or further. These shops could go from downtown all the way out W. Main Street where there is property available. The north side of W. Main Street from the W. Main Street Bridge is mostly old housing and rental units. I'm not sure how many acres this would encompass but it would be a pretty good size lake where speed boats could be run, skiing, stock it for fishing and swimming if the river could be cleaned up. We use to have a beach at the river years ago. We could probably even host sanctioned speed boat races like we use to have in the river out by IUPUI back in the early 1950s. It would be accessible from Jefferson Street, Main Street or the Edgerton Street area to launch boats and for parking. There could be a casino on the river. This is in an area that is not heavily populated with houses so there should not be a problem with noise. With this plan we could be using the rivers as an asset, as we should be, rather than a liability. The second part of my plan involves widening and making deeper (if needed) the St. Mary's river as far as the Old Fort so the riverboats, speed boats, fishing boats, etc. could travel back and forth between the lake and the Fort. Some being lunch or dinner cruises. The Old Fort would have to be restored and staffed but it would be fun to ride a boat along the area and see the Indians and people of that period along the banks of the river doing what they did in those days. Fighting, working, etc. They could have short scripted plays on the riverbanks. People could get off at the Fort (or

board at the Fort and go to the lake and back) and tour the Fort before boarding the boat and going back to the lake. I also think the houses on the north side of the Fort should be purchased and the property used for a parking lot. Except maybe the brick house and it could be a restaurant/gift shop, etc. I don't think the rivers have been kept up as they should have been over the years so now it will be a major undertaking to get them up to par. This plan involves a rather short area of the rivers to start with, but it could continue to grow from there. I think this would bring revenue into the city to expand the river activities even further. This is only about 6-8 blocks from downtown. Within easy walking distance or shuttle service back and forth. I grew up on the banks of the St. Mary's River just across the Mechanic Street Bridge from Swinney Park and have fond memories of fishing, boating, and just sitting on the banks watching the river. Triers Park was still in operation and I thought that this was just about the best place in the world to grow up. I know this is an expensive project and something that will take several years to complete but I believe it would serve a large group of people both in and out of Fort Wayne. We need to make the rivers a good part of Ft. Wayne life. Thank you for your time and consideration.

2. Expand vision/include others to create a viable magnet for cultural tourism by implementing a modified/updated version of the 1931 Anthony Wayne Parkway connecting Fort Wayne and

Toledo. Begin by working with New Haven to improve signage/"welcome centers" so people do not bypass our parks and cultural attractions via I-469/ Colerain B???

General/Broad Comments and Questions

1. Keep all pools and parks open.
2. Places for Emphasis – 1) Connecting parks thru expanded greenway, (green areas). 2) Water trails (as water permits). 3) Retain Indian themes (for a state named after Indians how can we eliminate their influence?). 4) Keep golf course prices more competitive. 5) Do not privatize services; prices always seem to go up. (*Connectivity-10; Golf Course-5*)
3. Keep up the good work.
4. Suggestions: 1) Walkway needed around Franke Park/Zoo along Sherman Blvd. – no sidewalk and berm is overgrown w/weeds – dangerous for all those who walk, jog, and bike along Sherman Blvd. at that part, even though speed limit is 25 mph. 2) South of Franke Park/Toel Theatre – where the old drive in theatre used to be – can it be made into a football field? Former football field in Franke Park was eliminated a few years ago with zoo parking expansion. The football field could be used by C.Y.O., P.A.L., etc. Parking in Toel Theatre lot is sufficient. (Currently, football goals are put in Lawton Park in fall. Parking is inadequate near the field). 3) Recycling containers for cans in parks (similar to the type in state

parks) could help in recycling efforts. 4) Need wildcat baseball to return to Franke Park (as it was in the past) to provide opportunities to neighborhood children. 5). Is City able to buy old YWCA (Wells Street) pool for year-round swimming opportunities? Thank you for all you do to make our parks so beautiful and family friendly. Karen Lohmuller. (*Park Amenities-4; Recreational Programs-13; Specific Park Comments-10*)

5. I'd like to see the FWPR develop the Northside of St. Mary's River downtown. This could include moving the Old Fort Wayne out to a location commercial enterprise that would enhance the image of Ft. Wayne. Perhaps 4th St. could be made into a pedestrian walkway. Expand the river greenway system. I like the expanded interest in ping pong at the center. (*Recreational Programs-3*)
6. 1) Priorities should be programs for neighborhoods. Keep kids and families occupied and involved in a physical fitness activity. 2) Parks should be cornerstone in keeping inner-city areas desirable and economically thriving. 3) Do not purchase expensive land in suburbia. They should have planned ahead. 4) What does ethnic diversity have to do with park planning? 5) Agree that use of rivers and trails to connect parks should be looked at. 6) Security issue: What to do if constantly harassed in a park. What should the victim do? 7) Is there really a need for more "tournament quality fields?" 8) Work with neighborhood association. To keep parks clean and in good repair. 9) Do we really

need more green spaces? 10) Why not buy YWCA campus to satisfy indoor requirements? 11) Have you thought about selling "beer permits" for groups renting park pavilions? (*Connectivity-11; Funding-4&5; Future Parks-2; Recreational Programs-6; Safety-2*)

7. Are school parks a part of the overall park plan? Such as the Indian Village School area. How popular is the small park in the Waynedale area? It is used but often forgotten. Is the Aboite Park plan part of this plan? How does the county fit in with this plan? They have two parks that are popular and should be working on more—Leo Grabill area for one. Needed is the Park Department's help in water quality. Water users need to do their part. And keep our trees; they are environmentally important.
8. Guard rail needed along bike path over St. Mary's River at Swinney Park. Purchase YWCA and develop for Community Center, exercise room, adult pool, children's pool, gym, all with instructions for activities. This system observed in Minnesota and Oregon. (*Community Center-3; Specific Park Comments-2*)
9. Look forward to an increase in foot and bike paths. Am strongly opposed to combining the county and city parks. (*Connectivity-7*)
10. Rick Hemsoth is super for the city parks. Please support him in every way possible (financial, political, and personal) to let him continue to do the excellent job managing and making the best

possible situation (that he has created) at McMillen and Shoaf Park Golf Courses.

11. Too money conscious. Need people involved. Safety. Lack of park northeast. Responsible parks and rec. for involvement parking downtown.
12. 1) Keep our facilitator in place and stretch and flex. We need more things to work with. 2) Nice to have more space here. 3) Would be nice to have a daily lunch program cheap. (*Lunch Program-1*)
13. Plan does a very good job of addressing the many/and diverse challenges and issues related to the development and maintenance of Fort Wayne's parks. The plan is extremely ambitious, and will meet many challenges and obstacles as it goes forward. But ambitious it must be, and better to "go for it all" than to undershoot. Very pleased to see a strong element of connectivity through pathways, greenways, etc. Agree with plan that no new development should go forward without funding in place. Maintenance/upkeep should also be assured pre-construction.
14. The plan is good as it encompasses about everything and shows that these lands must be kept forever; they are needed for people today and tomorrow; they are not intended to be developed for business or residence.

A city/county park development would be ideal as the city keeps growing out into the county. We cannot make land

and must keep all areas possible and protect them.

Problems like the unauthorized cutting of many trees for a parking lot for the zoo must never be repeated. And the selling of 80 acres of forest that was sold to develop Southtown Mall must never happen; that was years ago and perhaps thinking was not clear. Good judgment must always be used when land is donated for park purposes.

Does Swinney Park have any recreational areas besides the swimming pool? Is any activity needed there? Years ago there was an amusement park complete with roller coasters, ferris wheel, etc. in Swinney Park; that's a no-no as an attraction like that is not a money maker and soon wears out.

There were two or three concrete docking piers where Headwaters Park now is, and for a short time, sight seeing boat trips were a feature. Our dirty waters do not now entice water trails. The city needs to get going now on their plans and work to clean up our three rivers; we have sinfully abused a rare prize and where the Park Department can help, they should.

Glaring areas void of parks, etc. is east of downtown toward New Haven. Most of that area is industrial, yet several neighborhoods exist there and could use recreational areas. Industries and businesses there should also be encouraged to support these needed recreational areas. The Dupont Road area north of the city has thriving stores and shopping activities; those businesses

and community associations there should be encouraged to support these needed recreational areas.

HOORAY! The plan emphasizes the river greenway; it ties everything together.

15. Improve river greenway! Foster Park Golf Course is way too expensive! Donation to table tennis is ridiculous. We (participants) donated two tables, 6 paddles, balls, and nets. We generated a crowd for this center! (*Connectivity-12; Golf Course-6; Recreational Programs-14*)
16. 1) River greenway is great, but needs made longer and connected to other areas including Aboite, new river greenways and international airport, maybe run alongside old and new railroad tracks! 2) With Fort Wayne being the second- or third-fattest city in the USA, we need more trails and the new media writing articles about imploring the health issue! 3) Table tennis is going real good Monday and Wednesday mornings at the Community Center, with at least 20 people showing up on Wednesday. The problem is more tables, nets etc. are needed! (*Connectivity-13; Recreational Programs-15*)
17. I was rather overwhelmed at first by the length and scope of this document. It took me quite a while to understand how to work my way through the documented input, the assessments of parks, programs and services, etc., and the themes and strategies. There is a lot of information buried in this work and I appreciate the time and effort it must have taken to put it all together. I offer

the following comments in regard to what I have assimilated from the plan thus far.

Conserving Historical Parks

While the plan recommends conserving older parks, park building, and facilities the consultants make no mention whatsoever of our historically significant George Kessler Park and Boulevard System.

Recommendations are made to follow the plans created in the Cultural Landscape Reports for three of the parks in that system but there are no recommendations for additional Cultural Landscape Reports for other historically significant parks. Restoring and rehabilitating the park and boulevard system designed by George Kessler deserves a greater focus in the comprehensive plan. (Why is George Kessler's design work not mentioned or included in the history of the parks on the Park's website?)

Balancing Community Needs

Protecting natural resources and cultural heritage properties should not be perceived as competing with the recreational needs of the community. Each contributes in different, yet significant ways to the quality of our lives.

Funding

The plan rightly points out that we must explore new sources of revenue. In their assessment of programs and services the consultants provide a good analysis and comparison of costs and fees.

The creation of a Park District is a good idea. I am willing to pay a few more tax

dollars to maintain and further develop our parks.

At a time when we are trying to encourage businesses to stay or move into the city center I think the creation of a downtown benefit district might prove to discourage those efforts.

Creating a conservancy for our historical parks would help to generate funding for restoring and maintaining our older parks.

I have concerns about aggressively outsourcing business operations. I would hate to see long time, faithful park employees lose jobs as a result of outsourcing. Reorganization and outsourcing should be accomplished over time as employees retire or leave for other reasons.

I also think there is a benefit to have gardening crews assigned to specific parks like Foster Park. Bruce and Lynn work hard and take great pride in keeping the gardens and grounds looking beautiful.

Their care and commitment cannot and should not be easily replaced.

The Park Board recently voted to increase skating fees at McMillan to help cover the cost deficit. The consultants also recommended some creative ways to increase the usage of the facility including the addition of sessions for public skating. My husband would love to skate more often at McMillan and but is limited by the number of sessions scheduled for public skating.

Aquatic/Family Sport Center
Should the YWCA facility be considered/evaluated for use as a family sport center? Perhaps the parks department could partner with the YWCA in some way.

Governance
Rather than appointing short-term special community committees to address issues as they arise I think it would be wiser to form a more permanent group composed of representatives from the neighborhood quadrants, city planning, historic preservation, the greenway, the parks department as well as a professional landscape designer.

Thank You
I offer a special thank you to the consultants, to Dianne Hoover and the park staff, and to the park board for all their hard work in creating a framework for our community to work with and build on. You have helped all of us to think about our parks and park services and how they relate to the quality of our lives. And you have given us an opportunity to participate in the process of creating a plan for the future. We still have a long way to go but if we all work together we can make great things happen.

Other comments not related to plan:

Playground equipment
I was in Chicago recently and the tan and hunter green playground equipment in Grant Park looks wonderful. The new brightly colored playground equipment being installed in our parks may be appropriate for a school ground but in a park I think wood tones and hunter green would be more aesthetically appropriate. **Safety Concerns** Are there plans to replace the fence around the playground at Foster Park?

During times of heavy rains the water flowing in the culvert is very deep. It would not take much for a toddler to wander down that hill and slip into deep water. This is not a good situation and I truly fear for the safety of the children who play there after heavy rains.