



## MARION PARKS

## 2020-2024 MASTER PARK PLAN



**KIESER CONSULTING GROUP, LLC**

*Planning · Environmental Studies · Grants · Water Quality*

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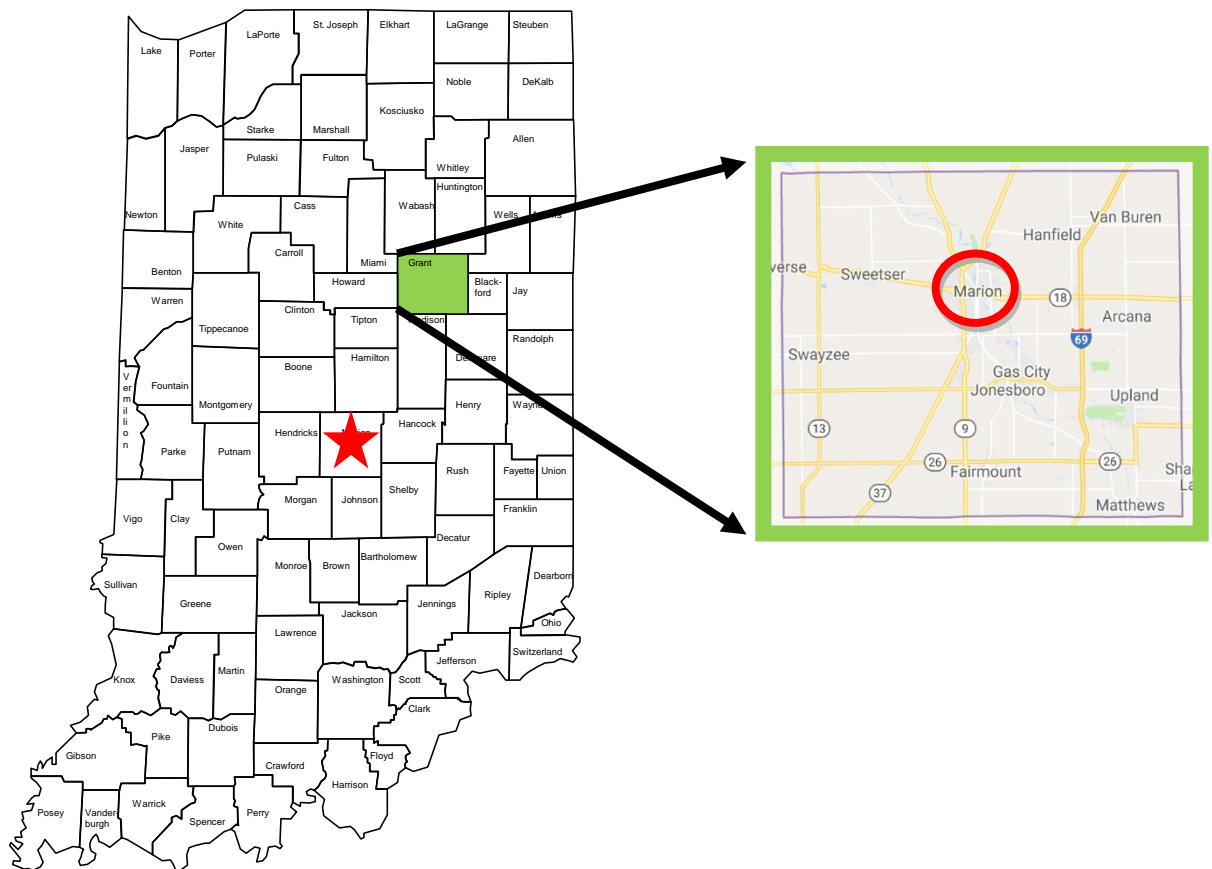




## SECTION 1: PLANNING PROCESS and PARKS PROFILE

### PLANNING AREA

Marion, Indiana located Grant County. The City of Marion under the Street and Maintenance department operates the Parks and Recreation department. For purposes of this study, the planning area includes the corporate limits of Marion and is the same as the parks and recreation department service delivery area. Although opened to anyone who visits the City to enjoy, the establishment and maintenance of the parks is primarily paid for by City taxpayers for their use and enjoyment.





## PLANNING PROCESS

The park planning process involves several information gathering components such as discussions with park department staff, meetings with the steering committee and the public and responses to the public opinion survey. Discussion has been supplemented with information gathering and research.

The following tasks have been employed in developing the five year park and recreation master plan:

- Developing an inventory of existing parks, programs and facilities
- A comparison of Marion's park system with park and recreation standards, and comparable systems
- Establishment of goals and objectives
- Investigation of potential opportunities
- Needs assessment
- Identification and preparation of an implementation strategy and action plan

The findings of these tasks are intended to guide the growth and development of the Marion Parks and Recreation facilities and programs for the next five years.

Of primary importance in the preparation of the Marion 2020-2024 Five-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan was the interaction and discussion with the Marion Parks and Recreation staff, the Park Board, community leaders, public input and analysis of information gathered. This research and discussion with people in the community and the park department staff formed the basis for development of the plan's goals and objectives.

Research consisted of field observation and inventory of existing facilities. Observations included a variety of accessibility concerns as well as concerns regarding conditions of existing equipment and facilities. To gain a better understanding of recent growth in Marion and the community profile, a variety of statistics and reports were reviewed including the 2018 US Census American Community Survey statistics, local ordinances and available business and chamber of commerce information.



## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Marion Parks and Recreation department is to enhance the quality of life and community pride by providing and maintaining safe, accessible, affordable parks, recreational programs and facilities.

## GOALS

**The Marion Parks and Recreation Board and Department shall be guided by the following principles:**

- Provide a balanced park and recreation system available to all segments of the community, serving varying geographical differences, regardless of ability. Individuals and groups should be able to use and be encouraged to use all programs and facilities.
- Provide a park, recreation and open space system that is efficient to administer and maintain.
- Cooperate with other municipalities, state and federal agencies, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector in fulfilling the recreational and open space needs of the urban area, where possible, in conformance with standards adopted in the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Establish a process for continuing communication and cooperation between service providers to ensure delivery of effective and efficient services.
- Develop and maintain a plan that assists the city and county in obtaining funds for sound capital improvements, maintenance and operational support.
- Utilize available resources to implement the plan, including impact fees as a source of funding for capital projects directly attributable to new development. Other sources to be pursued include federal and state funding, trust funds, dedicated taxes, local improvement districts, donations, and user fees.
- Consider alternatives in governmental structure and funding for providing park and recreation services, including the creation of special-purpose districts, such as a park and recreation district or a metropolitan park district.
- Give special consideration to archaeological resources, unique sites, water quality and habitat protection, and views and vistas when acquiring or otherwise protecting open space/parklands and recreational facilities.
- Give special attention to new and existing school sites to accommodate neighborhood recreation needs, including evening and weekend recreational opportunities, through shared resources, acquisitions, site redesign, and enhancements.
- Incorporate historically significant sites into the park, recreation and open space system for the promotion of tourism and major regional and cultural events.
- Provide additional programs and recreational opportunities for seniors.
- Coordinate with other community facilities and programs.



## PARK BOARD

The Park Board consists of five members that are appointed to four year terms by the mayor. The Park Board is responsible for establishing policy and direction for the park staff. The board submits a report annually to the common council detailing activities from the previous year.

The Marion Parks and Recreation staff consists of six permanent employees. This is supplemented with part time help with responsibilities including maintenance, and directing specific programs. The full time staff is listed herein.

The current Board is comprised of community leaders and meets at the Marion Municipal Building.

### *Park Board:*

Board Member	Title	Term
Kyle Beal	President	4/2022
Alan Beck	Vice President	4/2020
Kellie Street	Secretary	1/2020
William Moore		5/2020
Jim Brunner	City's Liason	

## PARK STAFF

The Park Director position was eliminated because the Street Dept. and Parks Dept. employees were combined into one department called City Wide Maintenance by previous administration. Instead of having two directors, one for parks and one for streets, Mayor Jess Alumbaugh decided to have James Loftis oversee parks and streets and eliminated the park director's job.

### *Park Staff:*

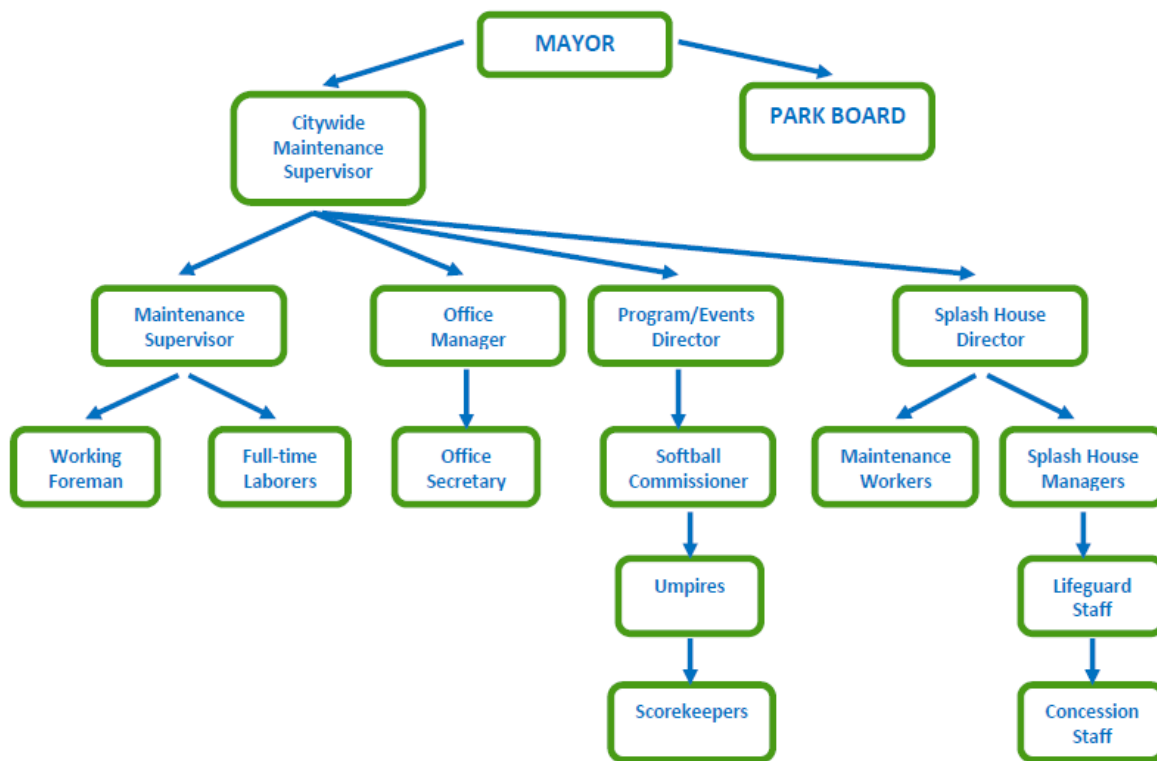
Staff	Title
James Loftis	Citywide Street/Maintenance Dept. (Acting Director)
Julia Glessner	Maintenance & Operations
Taylere McCoy	Maintenance & Operations
Julie Fauser	Program & Events Director
Andy Davis	Splash House Director
Rose Cadena	Office Manager



### Park Budget

2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
\$612,940	\$TBD	\$TBD	\$TBD	\$TBD

### Organizational Chart



### General Information

#### Address:

Marion Municipal Building  
301 S Branson St  
Marion, IN 46952

#### Meetings:

1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month

#### Office Hours:

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Monday – Friday

#### Phone Number:

Parks and Recreation Department Office #765-382-3761



## EXISTING PARK FACILITIES

### *Park History*

When Martin Boots and David Branson each donated 30 acres of land in 1831 for the site of Marion, they chose a location on the left bank of the swift, scenic river which the Miami Indians had named "Mississinewa," meaning "laughing waters".

Before any land had been set aside for use as a park in Marion, the banks of the Mississinewa River were a favorite spot for recreation and rest among the early settlers of the area. Phillip Matter donated 30 acres of land to Marion in 1892, along the Mississinewa, which later would serve as a park for Marion. This donation began what would become a park system for Marion. Also in 1892, the first park commissioners were elected according to a newly passed ordinance, and those first commissioners included Phillip Matter.

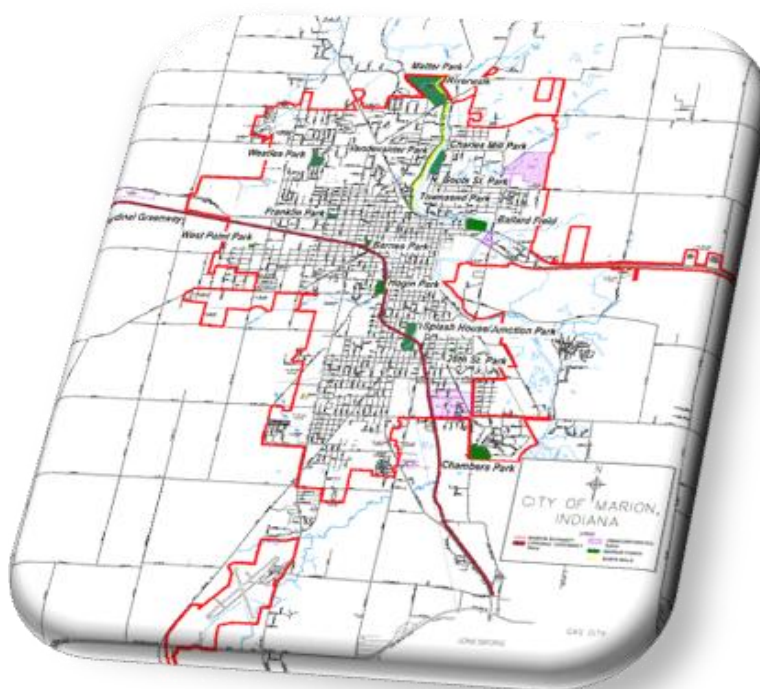
Charles Mill Park was established along the Mississinewa River with the gift of land from the Charles family in the early 1920's. History shows other smaller parks developed along the River through the years contributing to a history rich with the presence of the Mississinewa River.

It was during the 1940's that the park system moved forward with Superintendent Willard Chambers. Additional parks were obtained into the department as residents gifted land throughout the city, particularly in neighborhoods, to develop parks throughout Marion. Matter Park continues to be the oldest, largest and most used park in the city.

Chambers Park was sold to Chambers Park Apartments Veteran Housing LP, developer for a veteran's housing project in 2015.

### *Marion Parks*

The Marion Park system consists of 13 different properties. These range in size from the 110 acre Matter Park and the 25 acre Splash House to the 1 acre West Point Park. Each of the individual parks are discussed in greater detail in this chapter.

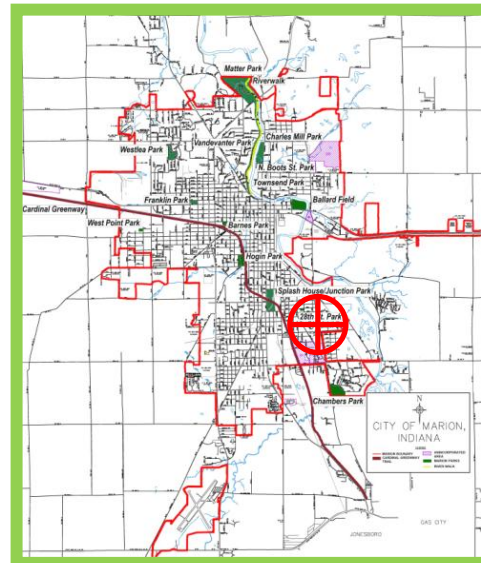




## 28<sup>th</sup> STREET PARK



### 28<sup>th</sup> & Terrace Street



### Profile

This community park offers over an acre of green space with a playground and basketball court, just walking distance from a grocery store and eatery.

- 1.1 acres
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 9:00 PM

### Facilities Inventory

- Playground
- Basketball Court

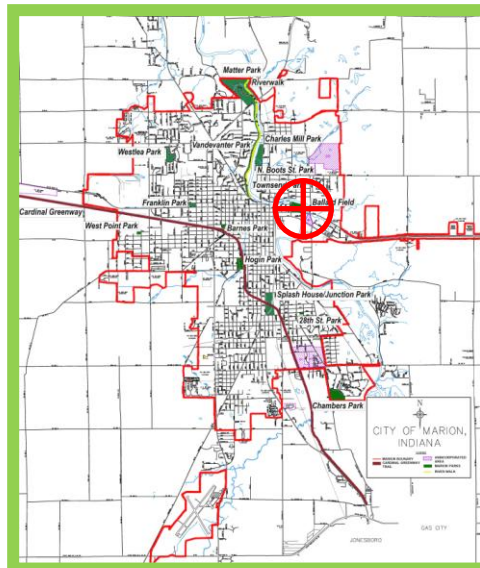




## BALLARD FIELD SOCCER COMPLEX



State Road 18 & Pennsylvania Street



### Profile

This 19-acre public green space includes three soccer fields, additional practice field space, and a concession stand and restrooms for special events. Lighting is available for scheduled games.

- 19 acres
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 11:00 PM

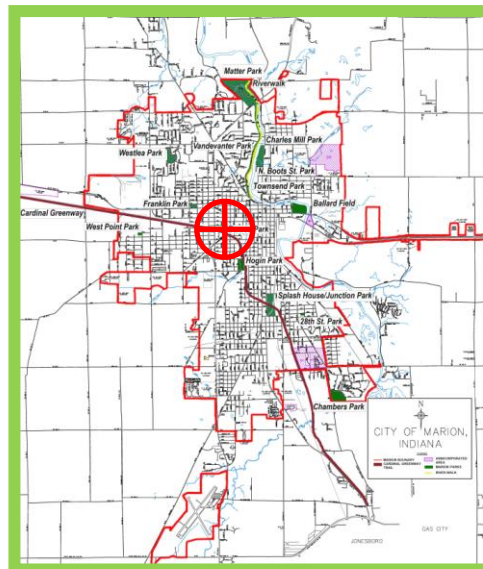
### Facilities Inventory

- Soccer Fields (3)
- Restrooms
- Concession Stand





## BARNES PARK



6<sup>th</sup> & E Street

### Profile

Barnes Park is a two-acre park located within the Garfield Neighborhood Association which has recently took initiative to work with the City of Marion, Hands of Hope, and volunteers to improve the park in efforts to provide a safer, more inviting, clean, and nurturing environment. The public green space offers a shelter, new and improved playground equipment, a mini free library, and more.

- 2 acres
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 9:00 PM

### Facilities Inventory

- Playgrounds (2)
- Picnic Area and Shelter

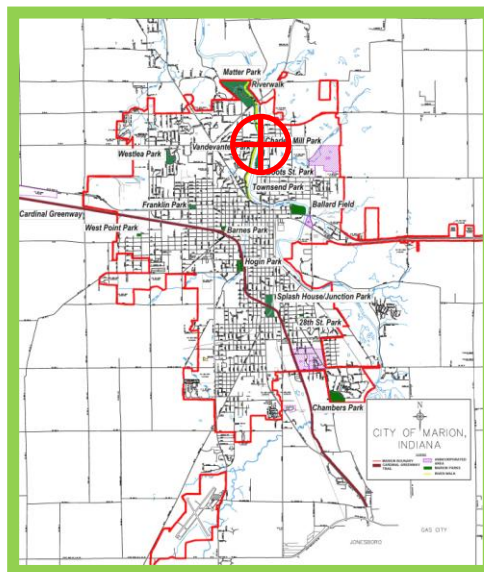




## CHARLES MILL PARK



North Washington Street & Charles Street



### Profile

This park is made up of three acres of public green space with two shelters, a basketball court, walking path with benches and a boat ramp. The park is adjacent to the historic Mill Restaurant which sits at the dam. The area is also an ideal spot for wade fishing.

- 3 acres
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 9:00 PM

### Facilities Inventory

- Picnic Area and Shelter (2)
- Basketball Court
- Walking Path (1 mile)
- Boat ramp
- Benches

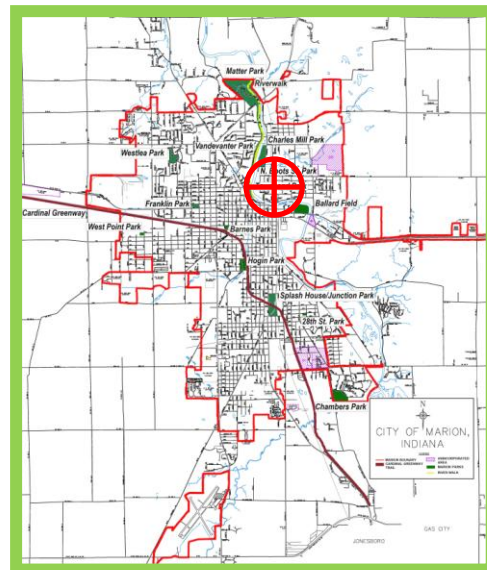




## CLIFFORD TOWNSEND PARK



Spencer Avenue & Nebraska Street



### Profile

This park is over an acre of public green space with a shelter, playground and deck overlooking the Mississinewa River. The Mississinewa Riverwalk runs through the park.

- 1.4 acres
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 9:00 PM

### Facilities Inventory

- Picnic Area and Shelter
- Multi-Use Path (1/2 mile)
- Restroom
- Playground

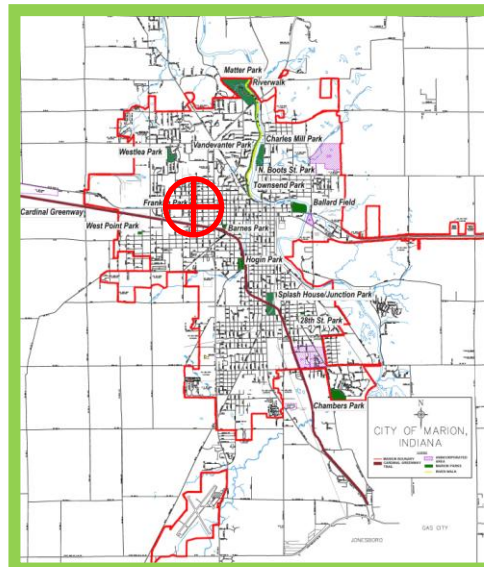




## FRANKLIN PARK



West 2<sup>nd</sup> & Butler Street



### Profile

This quaint park offers one acre of public green space with a playground.

- 1 acre
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 9:00 PM

### Facilities Inventory

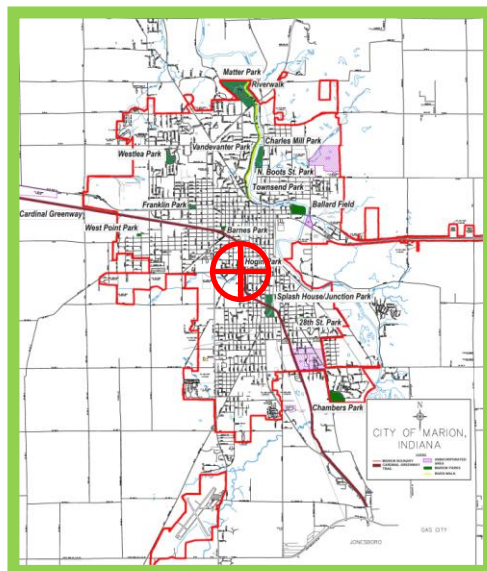
- Playground



## HOGIN PARK



14<sup>th</sup> Street & Valley Avenue



### Profile

This park is made up of an airy nine acres featuring pergolas, benches, walking path, and multiple seating areas with grilling stations. The Cardinal Greenway (for biking, walking, skating) runs adjacent to Hogin Park.

- 9 acres
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 9:00 PM

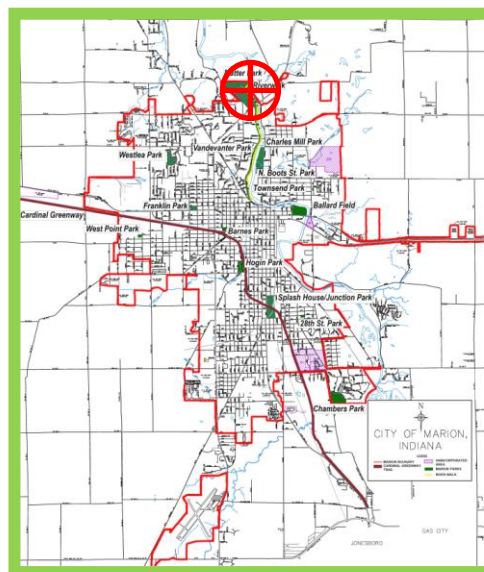
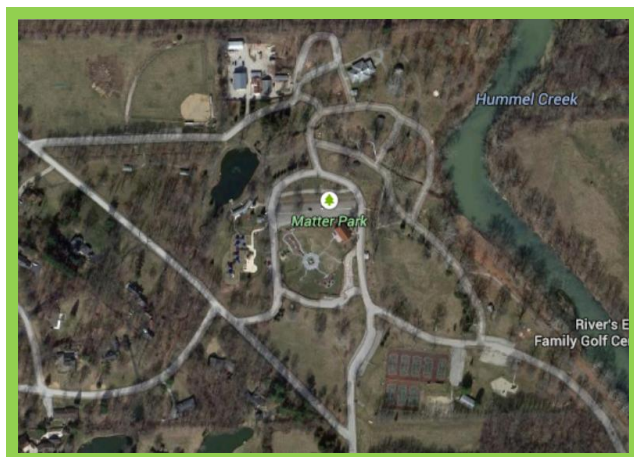
### Facilities Inventory

- Picnic Area and Shelter
- Walking Trail
- Sculptured Art





## MATTER PARK



River & Quarry Road

### Profile

The vast 110 acres of public land consists of the pristine Gardens of Matter Park, a special needs playground, additional playground, several shelters throughout the park, a bandshell, tennis courts, disc golf course, sand volleyball courts, baseball diamond, pickleball courts and a catch & release fishing pond. The Freedom Memorial honoring our nation's military is located in Matter Park near the bandshell.

- 110 acres
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 11:00 PM

### Facilities Inventory

- Playgrounds (2)
- Picnic Area and Shelter (8)
- Tennis Courts (5), Pickleball (6)
- Sand Volleyball Courts (2)
- Baseball/Softball Field
- Disc Golf
- Bandshell
- Event Building
- Restrooms (4)

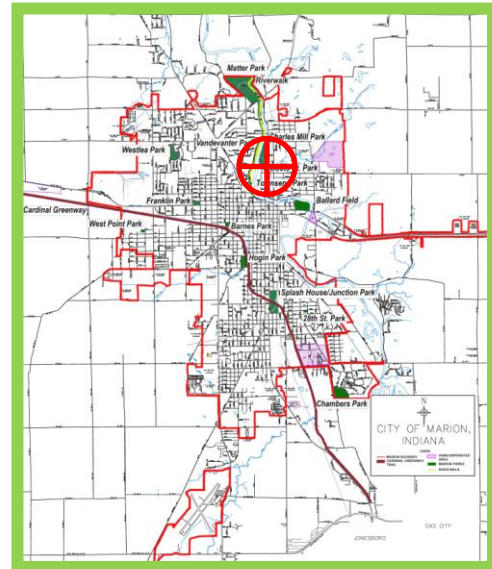




## NORTH BOOTS STREET PARK



### Massey & Boots Street



### Profile

This three-acre park offers a shelter, playground, and walking path near the Mississinewa River connecting to Charles Mill Park.

- 3 acres
- Hours: 7:00 AM –9:00 PM

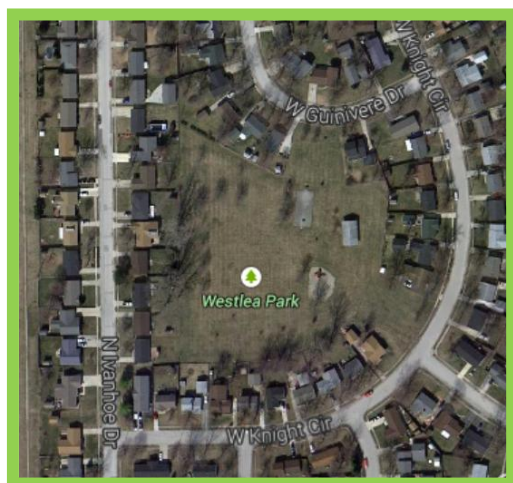
### Facilities Inventory

- Picnic Area and Shelter

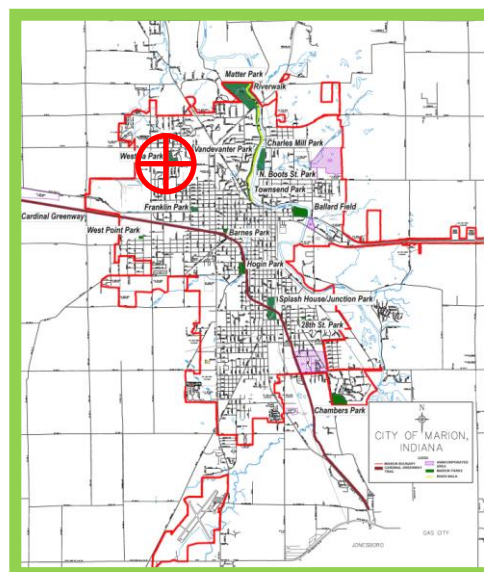




## WESTLEA PARK



Knight Circle & Braewick Drive



### Profile

This northwestern Marion park offers a spacious five acres of public green space with a playground, shelter, and basketball court.

- 5 acres
- Hours: 7:00 AM –9:00 PM

### Facilities Inventory

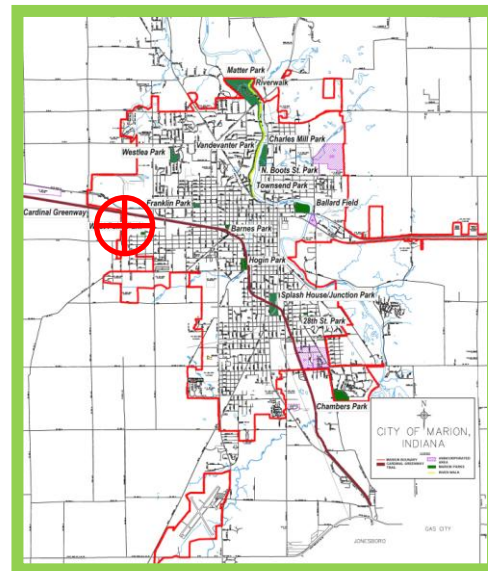
- Playground
- Picnic Area and Shelter
- Basketball Court



## WESTPOINT PARK



7<sup>th</sup> Street & Michigan Avenue



### Profile

This neighborhood park has a playground on one acre of land.

- 1 acre
- Hours: 7:00 AM –9:00 PM

### Facilities Inventory

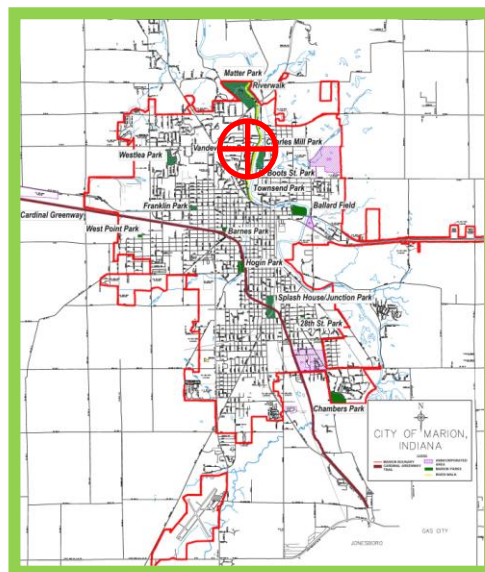
- Playground
- Picnic Area and Shelter



## WILLIS VAN DEVANTER PARK



Highland Avenue & River Road



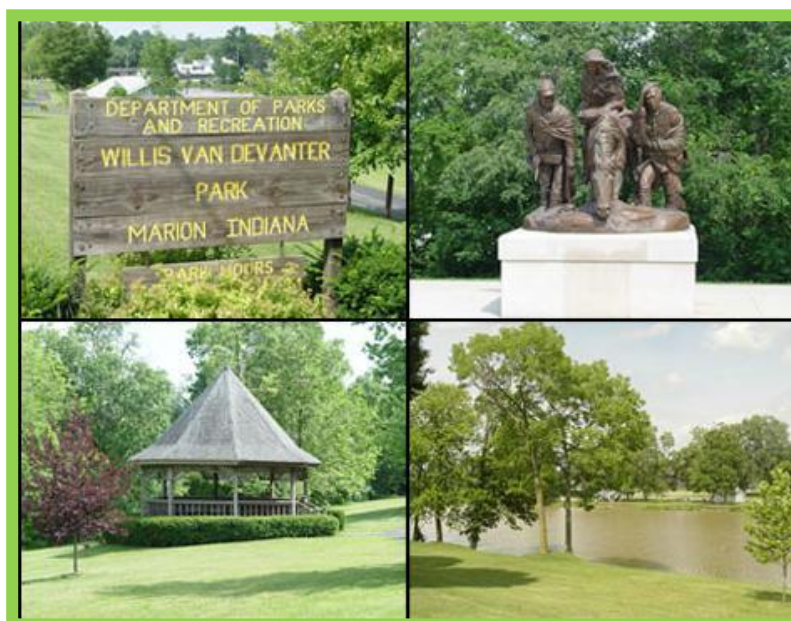
### Profile

This park offers five acres of public green space with a shelter, walking path and gazebo on the Mississinewa River and along the Mississinewa Riverwalk. The park is close to an ideal fishing spot near the dam.

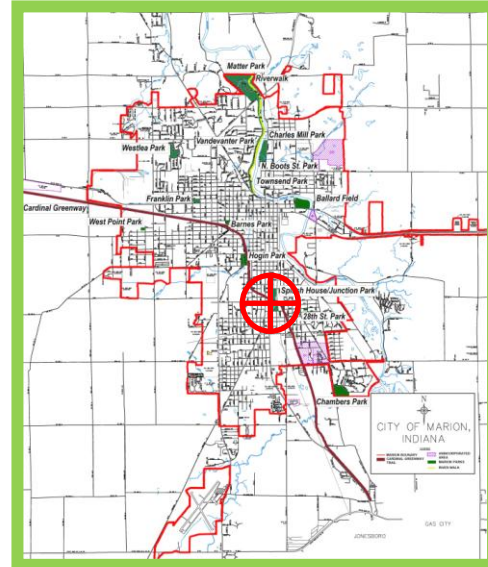
- 5 acres
- Hours: 7:00 AM –9:00 PM

### Facilities Inventory

- Picnic Area and Shelter
- Multi-Use Path (1 mile)
- Gazebo
- Walking path
- Benches



## SPLASH HOUSE



2601 South Adams Street

### Profile

Our family friendly water park offers endless fun for all ages. Attractions include a lazy river, two racer slides, a big flush slide, children's play area, and a wave pool. There are two concession stands and plenty of seating for guests. The Splash House has plenty of helpful staff including lifeguards.

- 25 acres
- Hours: Varied
- Open May – September
- Admission Fees

### Facilities Inventory

- Wave Pool
- Water slides
- Lazy River
- Bucket Dump
- Concession Stands
- Restrooms
- Sandbox



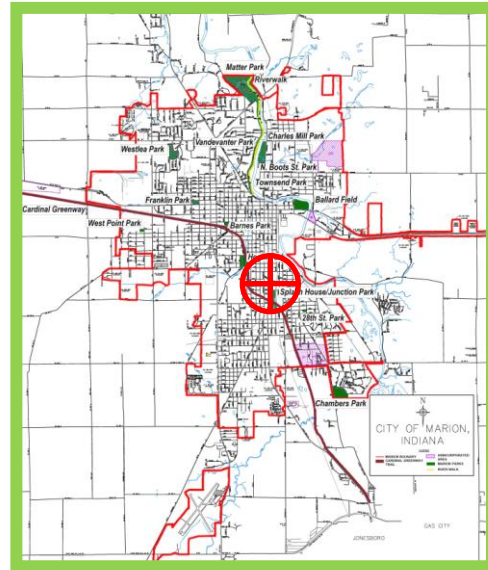




## SKATE PARK



2431 South Adams Street



### Profile

Marion's skate park is just a block north of the Splash House and Cardinal Greenway, inviting extreme sports skaters of all levels to enjoy the smooth surface and various ramps for skate tricks.

- 1 acre
- Hours: Dawn to dusk

### Facilities Inventory

- Skateboard Park





## PROGRAMS/EVENTS

Marion's Parks and Recreation department provides a range of recreational programming. The programs offered are tailored to specific interests and segments of the community. Continuous attempts are being made to provide programming for changing interests and to attract new people. Lack of interest and participation has been a problem when trying to reach out to new groups. It is also challenging to find people willing to lead programs, officiate games, and coach. Information for the adult and youth programs offered follows. The Marion Parks and Recreation department's policy is to provide facilities for outside organizations and user groups to provide programs and recreation opportunities for their needs.

### Adult Summer Slowpitch Softball League

The Summer Softball Program is typically the Department's largest program. Games are played on weekday evenings at Matter Park from May through August. The leagues offered are Men's slowpitch and Co-Ed slowpitch.

### Adult Fall Slowpitch Softball League

The Marion Parks and Recreation Department offers a Fall Slowpitch Softball League. The league starts in September and ends in October.

### Lazy River Walking/Surfing/SplashABILITY

Splash House is the water park in Marion. The park boasts having the highest surf-able wave in Indiana with the very popular wave pool. The park sponsors the Lazy River Walking program which is open for all ages, but primarily is aimed toward seniors.

There is also surfing after hours in the wave pool. It is offered a few times a week. Formerly there was an instructional class, but there is no longer an instructor, so for now all they offer is open surf.

Two years ago, the parks department started an event called SplashABILITY. It is an evening designed for special needs clients and their families and caregivers. They reduce the strength of the waves, lower the music, and have volunteers available to help as needed. It's open to the public. Carey Services partners with the parks to promote the event. Other organizations help by making donations to cover admission costs and concessions for some guests.

### Daddy/Daughter Dance

The annual Daddy, Daughter Dance takes place in the Garden House in the month of April. It's an evening where Fathers and Daughters can share a special time together dressing up, dancing, and enjoying an unforgettable night.



### **Christmas City Walkway of Lights**

Over two and a half million holiday lights illuminate the Mississinewa Riverwalk from late November to the end of December each year. As patrons "follow the snowflakes" along the display path, they are treated to a wide variety of larger than life illuminated displays, many of which are animated to provide realistic movement.

Without a doubt, this light display is a monumental attraction for Marion as thousands of people come from the mid-west as well as other parts of the United States to enjoy this yearly event. The Holiday Gift Shoppe is located in Matter Park (Shelter#3) and is filled with many holiday gifts. It is open the Evening of the Christmas Parade which is always the Saturday before Thanksgiving through December 31<sup>st</sup>. The Walkway of Lights annual fundraisers are always in the month of December in the Garden House. These programs include the Breakfast with Santa and Family Night. These events have cookie decorating, s'mores by the fire pit, trolley rides through the park, ornament decorating, Santa's reindeers and pictures with Santa.

### **Other Programs**

- Earth Day at Matter Park
- July 3<sup>rd</sup> Fireworks
- Screen on the Green Movie Nights

### **EVENTS THAT THE PARKS PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO:**

#### **Softball Tournaments**

Rented the fields at Matter Park for a number of softball tournaments.

#### **Corporate Challenge**

The Grant County Family YMCA along with Marion General Hospital sponsors this competition in Matter Park for businesses and organizations in the county. Held on two weekends, the purpose is to increase employee health and fitness, build employee pride and dedication to develop community spirit.

#### **Sports Hotline Tennis Tournament**

The tournament for the Sports Hotline Tennis League is held at the Matter Park tennis courts in August of each year. Awards and a family picnic are held following the tournament.

#### **National Guard Fun Run/Walk**

A fun run/walk organized by the National Guard. This is held at various times during the year.



### **Scout Badge Program**

The parks act as the host to scout troops that come each summer to do some aquatic training for their merit badges at the Splash House.

### **Walk of Remembrance**

A Memorial Garden in Matter Park was established as a memorial to those lives, which were lost through miscarriage, stillbirth, tubal pregnancy or sudden infant death syndrome. The Walk of Remembrance is held each fall at this Memorial Garden.

### **Tennis Camps**

Youth League lessons and camps are available for all levels of student players. Tennis camps are offered spring through summer months. This program is through the tennis CTA and the instructors are local High School and College coaches. Women and Men Tennis leagues play the months of June through September

### **Go Fish Indiana**

Go Fish Indiana is an Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) sport fishing education program designed to teach people about fishing. The IDNR does provide fishing poles for families to use during the Go Fish Indiana event. Marion Utilities, the Marion Parks Department and the IDNR partnered together to provide this workshop.

### **Ultimate Frisbee Tournament**

The Frisbee Team from Indiana Wesleyan University utilizes Matter Park and Ballard Field for their Ultimate Frisbee Tournament. These events are held in the fall and spring and attract college teams from around the region.

### **Family Easter Egg Hunt**

The annual Million Egg Hunt hosted by New Life Community Church for children ages 2-12 and Special Needs Kids. Free Giveaways-Bikes, Easter baskets and more.

### **Runs and Walks in Matter Park**

Throughout the entire year there are many different Run/Walks in Matter Park. The Freedom Run, Ramie's Run, Autism Walk, MPO Fun Walk, Cancer Service Fun Run-5K and The Jingle Bell Run/Walk.

### **Great American Car Show**

The Great American Car show is open to any vehicles with approximately 100 awards. It is held in beautiful shady Matter Park in NW Marion along the Mississinewa Riverwalk. They have adult games, 50's music and food vendors.

### **Soccer Tournaments**

Local schools and the Pal Club have soccer tournaments at Ballard Field with kids of all ages.



### Other Events

- Kroozin National Car Show
- YMCA Summer Day Camp
- Marion General Hospital Easter Egg Hunt
- Indiana Archery State Tournament
- Carey Services Duck Race Fundraiser
- CASA Fundraiser

### OTHER RECREATIONAL

#### Indiana Wesleyan University

Indiana Wesleyan University is a private evangelical Christian university that is committed to liberal arts and professional education. Over 3,000 students live and learn in state-of-the-art residence halls and academic facilities on IWU's residential campus in Marion, Indiana.

Its many facilities include an outdoor athletic complex consisting of baseball field, soccer field, softball field, Sutter Tennis Facility (12 courts), outdoor track. IWU also has an indoor recreation and wellness center as well as 2,000 seat sports arena in which basketball and volleyball are played. They also field a NAIA football team.

#### Grant County

There are no county parks in Grant County although they do maintain a county fairgrounds complex in the City of Marion. The towns of Fairmount, Gas City and Jonesboro each have a park area some offering athletic facilities.

#### State

There are no state parks or recreational areas in Grant County. The nearest parks are Ouabache State Park which is 14 miles to the northeast of Marion and Mounds State Park in Anderson 30 to the south. There are two reservoirs as well, Salamonie Reservoir which is 15 miles to the north and Mississinewa Reservoir which is 15 miles to the northeast of Marion.





## **OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES**

### **YMCA**

The YMCA of Grant County has a full facility in downtown Marion. This facility offers a variety of sports and fitness programs, day care, a pool, day camp as well as many other programs and activities.

### **Marion Boys and Girls Club of Grant County**

The Boys and Girls Club sponsors supervised activities in their new facility located at 3402 South Meridian Street in Marion. Activities include: tutoring, boys and girls basketball leagues, tackle football league, computer lab, teen dances, and judo classes.

### **Marion Police Athletic League**

They offer spring and summer coaches pitch baseball for boys and girls. Soccer outdoors and indoors will be offered in the fall and winter.

### **Three Way Recreation**

Offering coaches pitch, Little League, Babe Ruth, football, soccer, basketball, pompoms and softball for ages 7-16.

## **TRAILS**

### **Cardinal Greenway**

The Cardinal Greenway is the longest rail-trail in Indiana and spans 62 miles from Marion through Muncie to Richmond in East Central Indiana. It joins the Sweetser Switch Trail.

### **Sweetser Switch Trail**

The Sweetser Switch Trail is the ideal place for walking, running, bicycling, roller blading and horseback riding. A paved and stoned trail stretches for one mile with beautiful landscaping, benches, shelters, and tables for picnics. It is located due west of Marion in Sweetser, IN.

### **Upland Greenways**

Currently has the Detamore trailhead, a paved trail on 8th street, a wood chip trail to the Taylor University cross-country course, a circle trail around the lake near the Lions Club, and other one to three mile walking routes around town. It is located southeast of Marion in Upland, IN.

### **Mississinewa Riverwalk**

Scenic path that follows the Mississinewa River and stretches for 2.25 miles. The walkway begins at Washington Street bridge and 1st Street, and extends through Matter Park, providing a trail system for recreation and physical fitness.



## **CAMPGROUNDS**

### **Green Acres Campground**

Open year round. 30 Sites with water and electricity. Featuring in-ground swimming pool, fish pond, horseshoe pitch, large campfire pit, firewood, shuffleboard courts, and dump stations.

### **Hidden Lake Resort**

Sites with water & electricity, 47 primitive sites. Fishing, swimming, six-acre lake, pedal boats, kayaks, pontoons, camp store, two playgrounds, sand volleyball, horseshoe pits, and recreation hall with arcade. Featuring RV repair shop and RV store.

### **Mar Brook Campground**

Sites with water, electricity and sewage. Pull through sites, river fishing, fishing lake, hiking trails, swimming pool, bingo, recreation building, arcade, snack bar, 2 playgrounds, horseshoes, basketball, volleyball, miniature golf, laundry, grocery and camping supplies, and dump stations.

### **Sports Lake Campground**

Primitive, modern and deluxe accommodations. Offers woods, stocked 11-acre lake, in-ground swimming pool, bath house, miniature golf, arcade, playground, boat rental, basketball court, and dump station.

## **GOLFING**

### **Arbor Trace Golf Club**

Privately owned and operated 18-hole public-private course.

### **Elks Country Club**

Privately owned and operated 18 hole golf course, and restaurant.

### **Meshingomesia Golf and Social Club**

Privately owned and operated 18 hole golf course and club.

### **Rivers Edge Family Golf Center**

Driving range, miniature golf, batting cages and picnic areas.

### **Walnut Creek/Club Run Golf Courses**

36-hole complex including a covered range and a short game learning center.

## MISC.

### Walnut Creek Archery

Indoor archery range, outdoor 3-D target course.

### Canoe Launch

Open all year; located in downtown Marion provides access to the Mississinewa River. Relax and enjoy scenic canoeing along the river.







## SECTION 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE

### COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION and HISTORY

The Battle of the Mississinewa was fought in December 1812, just north of the current city of Marion, as an expeditionary force sent by William Henry Harrison against the Miami villages. Today, the battle is reenacted every fall by residents of Grant County and many re-enactors and enthusiasts from throughout the United States and Canada during the annual "Mississinewa 1812" festival, the largest War of 1812 reenactment in the United States.

#### Founding

When Martin Boots and David Branson each donated 30 acres of land in 1831 for the site of Marion, they chose a location on the left bank of the swift, scenic river which the Miami Indians had named "Mississinewa," meaning "laughing waters." So rapid had been the tide of settlement that it followed by only 19 years the Battle of Mississinewa, 7 miles downstream, where U.S. troops and Indians had fought a bloody, pre-dawn encounter in 1812.

With the formation of Grant County in 1831, Marion was established as the county seat and its future was assured. The river provided water supply, power, and drainage and it bequeathed a natural beauty as it flowed at the base of hills that marched away on either side. Along with at least 36 other communities in the U.S., Marion was named for the Revolutionary War General Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox" of South Carolina.

#### Gas Boom and Growth

Marion grew slowly for more than 50 years as an agricultural trading center supported by a sprinkling of small farm- and forest-related industries. Indians were a common sight as they wandered in from Indiana's last reservation, with its Indian school, Baptist church and cemetery, 8 miles away.

In the 1880s, fields of natural gas were discovered across much of east-central Indiana, and Grant County began to grow at a dizzying pace. Gas City and Matthews were carved out of raw farmland and launched as speculative boom towns, each absorbing existing tiny villages. They attracted several thousand residents before the gas failed and most industries left. As late as the 1940s, Matthews resembled a Western ghost town, before it attracted eleven glass factories and seduced the professional baseball team away from Indianapolis. Grant County's only covered bridge remains there as a link to the past. However, the gas boom left its legacy. A few industries remained, particularly glass manufacturers.



### **National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers**

On July 23, 1888, with increasing membership amongst the six National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS) National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, Congress established the seventh of ten National Homes in Grant County, Indiana to be known as the Marion Branch. Congress allotted an appropriation of \$200,000, while Grant County residents provided a natural gas supply for the heating and lighting of this new facility. Marion was selected as a site for the new branch due to the availability of natural gas and the political activities of Colonel George W. Steele, Sr, the 11th Congressional Representative from 1880 to 1890.

The Marion Branch Historic District is located at the intersection of 38th Street and Lincoln Boulevard, approximately 2½ miles southeast of the city center of Marion. The boundaries are 38th Street on the north, the railroad right of way on the east, the Mississinewa River on the southeast, Volunteers of America Chambers Park on the south and southeast, and Lincoln Boulevard to the west. The 212-acre site is roughly square in form with diagonal boundary lines on the southeast and the southwest eliminating those corners of the square.

### **Mid 20th Century Industrial Development**

Marion's prosperity plateaued between the end of the gas boom, just prior to World War I, when the gas boom ended, and 1955, when General Motors located a stamping and tool plant there. A new era launched overnight, raising the sights of local residents who migrated to the city in unprecedented numbers with thoughts of a vastly expanded community potential. Except for bedroom communities near metropolitan centers, Marion's growth during the 1950s exceeded all but one Indiana city with populations of 10,000-100,000.

### **Marion Today**

One of Marion's more notable architectural landmarks is the extensive Marion High School campus, which includes an impressive 1,468 seat community auditorium. This is where the Marion Philharmonic Orchestra, the Marion Civic Theatre, and the Mississinewa Valley Community Band provide musical and dramatic entertainment for Marion's numerous arts patrons. There is also the Community School of the Arts.

The eight-time state basketball champions, Marion Giants, play in the 7,500 seat Bill Green Athletic Arena. The city operates a 2.75-mile Riverwalk from downtown to Matter Park, and there is a YMCA Memorial Coliseum to honor war veterans. This was the previous home of the Giants, which was built after their first State Basketball Title in 1926.



A publicly owned mansion, the Hostess House, is used for social functions, and Marion General Hospital has been nationally accredited for approximately a half-century. Marion General was recently named a Magnet hospital. Fewer than 5% of all hospitals earn this honor.

Marion is organized around a strong mayor/city council form of government. The Street and Maintenance department which oversees the Parks department answers to the Mayor and the Parks Board.

## **NATURAL FEATURES AND LANDSCAPE**

### **Natural & Environmental Features**

Outdoor recreation, in general, relies heavily upon the natural and environmental features of an area. The characteristics of these features significantly affect the prevalent forms of recreation most likely to occur in any one area. Regions with extended winters, for instance, will typically develop more winter-oriented recreational facilities than regions with warmer climates. To the extent that park systems tend to be resource based, Marion offers a balanced climate with diverse natural resources giving the Parks and Recreation Department a substantial recreation reserve with which to work.

### **Climate**

Grant County is cold in the winter, but very hot and humid in the summer. Winter precipitation and frequent snow result in a good accumulation of soil moisture by spring and minimized drought during the summer on most soils. The total annual precipitation is 36.38 inches. Of this, 22.7 inches (62) usually falls from April through September. The growing season for most crops falls within this period.

The average seasonal snowfall is about 25 inches. The greatest snow depth at any one time during the period of 1951 to 1974 was 11 inches. On the average, 17 days of the year have at least 1 inch of snow on the ground. The number of such days varies greatly from year to year.

The sun shines 70 percent of the time possible in summer and 40 percent in winter. The prevailing wind is from the southwest. Average wind speed is highest in the spring at 12 miles per hour.

### **Physiography**

Glaciation has played a major role in the information of the topography of Grant County. Ice flowed across Indiana from the northeast, acting as an erosional agent that altered the landscape.



The glacial material in Grant County was deposited over sedimentary rocks of Silurian and Ordovician age. Bedrock of Silurian age is exposed in the areas along the Mississinewa River north of Marion and in stone quarries in the western part of the county. Siltstone interbedded with limestone underlies the terraces in areas along the Mississinewa River north of Marion.

The average elevation in Grant County is about 845 feet above sea level. The highest elevation near Upland is approximately 950 feet mean sea level. The lowest is 740 feet, in the area where the Mississinewa River leaves the county, north of Jalapa.

### Natural Resources

One of the most dramatic episodes in the history of Grant County was the discovery and extravagant consumption of gas and oil from 1890 to nearly 1910. New Industrial expansion occurred almost overnight when free fuel, free land and free water was offered to induce companies to locate in Marion, Gas City and other places in Grant County. When the gas and oil were exhausted, the boom ended.

The only major mineral resource being recovered currently is rock and stone, being quarried in isolated places in both the northwest and southeast portions of the county.

### Surface Waters and Drainage

Water resources represent both a key resource and a key problem in Marion and Grant County. The impervious soil causes drainage problems especially during times of heavy rainfall. Both water and sediment are carried by streams, creeks and other drainage channels. The sediment represents a loss of soil. It also reduces the volume of lakes, ponds and other reservoirs which hold or store water. Farming practices which reduce sediment loss are needed and should be practiced.

The Mississinewa River enters the county near the southeast corner and flows northwest past Matthews, Gas City, Jonesboro and Marion before leaving the county. Its tributaries are Jenmile, Car, Boats, Deet, Back, Barren, Walnut, Lugar, Massey, Hummel and Metocinah Creeks. The first five of these creeks drain most of the areas west of the Mississinewa River and the rest drain the central and eastern parts of the county.

Marion's water resources have not always been recognized as recreational resources in the past, but these important waterways also hold recreational opportunity for the city. The recent development along the Mississinewa River gives the city a recreational connection that had been lacking before. The river provides vast opportunities for greenways and recreational corridors.





The Mississinewa River is in need of major repair in the area of the dam but the current administration does not have plans or monetary means to make these permanent adjustments to control the water flow. The parks effected are Matter Park, Boots Street Park and Charles Mill Park. Any future programming involving the river from the standpoint of the Parks Department has been put on hold due to the flooding and erosion issues.

The City is working with the Soil on Conservation Department as well as the IDNR to get a grant to review the need for the dam as it exists today. This would include the removal of the concrete and mechanical portion of the dam. The City currently spends around \$24,000 dollars each year to keep the mechanical portion of the dam clean from debris.

### **Flood Plains**

A river flows ordinarily through the stream channel that has been formed over centuries of time. The channel carries the normal flow of the stream, but during periods of high runoff, the excess water spreads across the alley floor until it can slowly drain back into the channel. Streams in Grant County that are subject to regular overflow include the Mississinewa River, Boots Creek, Logan Creek, Deer Creek and Hummel Creek. Smaller streams also flood briefly during heavy storms, but the total area of flood plains involved is small along them.

Matter Park takes the brunt of the flooding several times a year. In December of 2013 the Walkway of Lights annual Christmas display and festival had to be shut down as the main road into the park was totally flooded. Generally flooding prevents portions of the River Walkway and shelters to be used for several days at a stretch.

The City of Marion will always have some sort of flooding issues. The maps portray the flooding in the city as being much worse than it actually is, but according to FEMA's mapping that is available to us a large amount of the City and most of the park is at risk of flooding during a 1% annual chance flood event. The City is currently following FEMA/DNR guidelines to limit development in the floodway to help reduce any additional flood risk going forward. Matter Park and Charles Mill Park are the parks deal with the most flooding each year.

### **Vegetation and Wildlife**

Prior to human settlement, Marion was primarily covered by a climax deciduous forest. The settlement, farming and urbanization brought habitat destruction and the loss of forest and wetlands.

Today, few substantially forested areas remain within the city and county. Forested areas in existing parks grew mainly through succession of abandoned fields and previously logged forests. Some large specimens of non-commercial tree species still exist within the Mississinewa



flood plain. Wildlife is typical for central Indiana with occasional deer in upland and lowland forests as well as the smaller mammals occurring in lowland forest and upland woods.

The last of the impact will more than likely last until the ash trees are decimated. The Emerald Ash Borer is host specific, which means that only the Green Ash (*Fraxinus Pennsylvania*) trees are susceptible, and has the potential to wipe out all of the Green Ash, as the Dutch Elm disease did to all the American Elm (*Ulmus Americana*) trees. Planting of a Green Ash tree is not recommended if it is close to a given area, or expected within the next two years. Existing Ash trees currently hosting this pest can have tree injections (such as Arbor Jet) applied to slow or stop the demise of the Ash trees. Soil saturations can also be performed to try and mitigate the problems associated with this pest.

The City gets alerts and bulletins from IDNR and the CUF program as it pertains to the Ash Borer and other pests and diseases. The IDNR has in the past set bait traps to ascertain the level of the Ash Borer infestation level. The City did not receive any feedback on the outcome of the bait trap trial however, it was more a County wide trial then Municipality specific testing.

The City is not part of the West Central Indiana Cooperative Weed Management Area.



## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

### Commerce

Marion is minutes away from larger cities like Indianapolis, Fort Wayne and Dayton, and within a half-day's drive to over 20 metropolitan markets. This places Marion in a favorable position for economic development.

The previous closing of several industrial and manufacturing operations resulted in a drop in population, leaving an abundance of vacant and available business properties. There are a number of areas throughout the city that provide neighborhood level businesses and goods. Several of these neighborhood hubs and corner stores are at 50% occupancy or difficult to sell/lease. There are several commercial areas including the bypass, portions of SR18, and areas surrounding different mixed use developments and Downtown.

The 1980's and 1990's saw a mass-exodus of manufacturing and industry. At the same time, other Marion industries began to come under the control of nation-wide corporations, resulting in once-dominant manufacturers having a lower prevalence in the Marion economy.

From 2010 on, Marion has seen a continuation of this trend. The 2018 American Community Survey data lists the Service sector as the highest employer displacing Manufacturing from the 2010 Census data. Although the unemployment rate has fallen from 8.2% in 2010 to 4.8% in 2018 the fact that the Service sector is now the biggest segment of employment typically means that the wages are lower.

With the population decline from the 1970's to now and the number of houses that have been demolished and the population trends of rural cities as a whole across Indiana, Marion will never be completely "built out" and has sufficient room for housing growth.

The Parks Department represents quality of life for the area residents as well as economic developments for the future. The Parks Department has always been successful with partnering with other key organizations in the community as a means to offer programs and activities and continues to do so. The YMCA and Marion General Hospital use several parks in the system for their annual Corporate Challenge which is a fund raising event for the YMCA. Local businesses and organizations in our community compete in a variety of sporting competitions that foster competition, health and well being in a friendly environment. The local Boys and Girls club host several events in the parks as well as some volunteer activities involving cleanup. One of the local universities, Indiana Wesleyan University, organizes city wide cleanup projects as a way to introduce the freshmen class to Marion. There are also a number of festivals and events the Parks Department assists with bleachers, portable stages and picnic tables throughout the year.



## Population

The size and growth of a community is an important factor in developing a park and recreation master plan. As a community grows, so too does the need for additional community facilities.

The City of Marion's population has declined steadily since the 1970's when the city had its highest population at almost 40,000 people. The percent of decline from the 1970's to the 1980's was far below the state average rate of growth (10.2%). Between 1990 and 2000, the City showed its smallest decrease of only 3.9%. The period between 2000 and 2010 showed an increase in decline of 4.4%. The estimated population for 2018 (American Community Survey) shows yet another decrease in population of around 6.5%.

From the City's peak population of 39,607 in the '70's the City has declined in population by 11,489 people or lost almost a third (29.0%) of its population.

### Historic Population City of Marion

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2018*
<b>Population</b>	39,607	35,874	32,618	31,320	29,948	28,118
<b>Change</b>		-3,733	-3,256	-1,298	-1,372	-1,830
<b>% +/-</b>		-9.4%	-9.1%	-3.9%	-4.4%	-6.5%

- According to the 2018 US Census American Community Survey\*, Marion was estimated to have 28,118 residents.
  - 45.7% Male, 54.3% Female
  - Median Age: 35.5
  - 78.9% White; 15.2% Black or African American; 0.1% American Indian; 1.2% Asian; 6.3% Hispanic or Latino; 1.1% Some other race
  - 18.0% of population over 5 years of age had a disability

### Economics (2018 U.S. Census American Community Survey data)

- Unemployment rate is 4.8%
- Median household income in 2018 (dollars): \$33,006
- Families below poverty level: 21.3%
- Largest non-agricultural employment area in Marion: Service; Second largest: Manufacturing

### Housing (2018 U.S. Census American Community Survey data)

- Average household size in Marion: 2.53
- 13,258 total housing units



- 17.4% of all units are vacant
- 55.5% are owners; 44.5% are renters

#### **Education** (2018 U.S. Census American Community Survey data)

- 83.9% of population High school graduate or higher
- 13.9% Bachelor's degree or higher

#### **Socio-economic Summary** (2018 U.S. Census American Community Survey data)

- Marion has a higher % of people living in poverty than the state average of 9.9%.
- Marion has a lower than average level of education of HS graduates and a lower than average for Bachelor's degree than the state average of 88.6% and 25.9%.
- Marion has about the same level of racial diversity as the state averages.
- The median age is lower than the state average of 37.6.
- The unemployment rate in Marion is higher than the statewide average of 3.5%.





## MAN-MADE, HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES

Beyond the choice of recreation type, the physical impact of activities on the land affect where recreation can and should occur. Natural features, for the most part, can be altered to make the land more suitable for a specific use. Man-made influences, such as transportation, add new dimensions to the planning spectrum and, in some cases, are more important than natural features when planning for recreation.

The Mississinewa River has had an impact on this community from the early 1800's until the present time, and continues this impact on a different scale. The early settlers actually shied away from homesteading this area as the river was navigable only part of the year. But in 1825 Martin Boots poled down the Mississinewa River from Randolph County and became the first settler in this region.

After many costly attempts, train service was finally a reality in 1867. The automobile industry had an impact on the railroad lines and the dependency Marion had on this mode of transportation. The years following 1909 saw a decline in use, due to the automobile.

The influence of the railroads is still felt today throughout the city. The Mississinewa River has not lost its attraction for the residents of Marion as it continues to be a popular boating and canoeing location. The Mississinewa Battle of 1812, fought along the riverbanks in the northern part of the city, continues to be an important influence in terms of a recognizable festival and battle re-enactment held every fall along the river.

The influence of the river and railroads is still realized today as the Parks Department has the potential to enhance its system along these areas. Already in place along three miles of the river is the River Walkway, located in three of the city parks. While a great asset for many years, it is lacking in any amenities such as small shops, restaurants and canoe, boat and kayak rentals. As the planning area for this department is parkland, the future is unlimited as possible developers are sought to fill this need.

### Transportation

The speed of transportation connects the world of the 2000's into one global unit where parcels can be delivered overnight to any place in the world. Within the United State this speed is transformed into a complex circulation network covering the land, air and sea. The visible physical attributes of this circulation system affect the location of recreational facilities both by determining the geographical distribution of the population and by setting limits on the types of recreation that are compatible with transportation generated noise.

The City spends \$850,000 dollars on streets per year and around \$50,000 dollars on sidewalks for ADA compliancy per year.



The majority of the traffic signals across the highways have pedestrian traffic signals. There are safe crossing points on State Road 18 at Spencer Avenue, State Road 9 on Adams Street and Washington Street and on State Road 15 at Nebraska Street.

### **Automobile**

As the prime mode of individual transportation, the automobile's tremendous impact on American culture compels planners to include it as a major consideration in most planning efforts. Both federal and state highways serve Grant County. Interstate 69 and US 35 transverse the county. State Highways 4,5,9,13,15,18,22,26 and 37 serve the various communities. The county designates county highways, which serve the functional needs of the system. Local roads, however, make up the bulk of highway mileage in the county. There were 821.64 miles of unincorporated local roads in 1987. Within the City of Marion, a classification system provides a basis for system planning, which can be strategically tied into the county system.

### **Airports**

Airports serve recreational as well as transportation resources. Marion Municipal Airport represents the major public air service in Grant County. The airport offers two development options. First, availability of aircraft service, through either some commuter service or local housing for corporate aircraft is important second, the airport offers a focus of business development along the Marion/Indianapolis corridor. Careful planning of business development in support of the airport can offer a development option for local economic growth. The Indiana State Airport Plan classifies Marion Airport as a general transportation airport.

### **Railroads**

Although rail service has in the past been an essential service for development, little if any new services will be added in the near future. With proposed abandonments, including that of CSX from Marion to Richmond, the county needs to retain through various possible approaches as much available service as possible. However, railroads have played a role in recreational planning in the past. As railroad use continues to decline and railroad companies reduce rail traffic or consolidate lines, abandoned railway corridors hold vast opportunities for recreation both locally and regionally. The railroad corridors left behind have become a great recreational opportunity for development, as was the case with the CSX segment. A portion of this abandoned railroad within Marion and Grant County is a pedestrian greenway.



## Trails

Bike trails within Marion exist along the Mississinewa River linking Matter Park with Townsend Park along with the Cardinal Greenway that is separated from the adjacent roadway. The trail is shared by cyclists and pedestrians which overlooks at points of interest along the corridor.

The Cardinal Greenway is the longest trail of its kind in Indiana and creates a unique opportunity for Marion to link its recreational facilities to other communities within the region. The City is currently working on connecting the Cardinal Greenway to the Marion Riverwalk through two separate OCRA grants. The proposed path would run from the Washington Street Bridge south to 9<sup>th</sup> Street then proceed west along 9<sup>th</sup> to Boots Street, then south on Boots to 10<sup>th</sup> Street, then along 10<sup>th</sup> Street to the Cardinal Greenway. The two grants we are pursuing would cover the portion from 9<sup>th</sup> and Washington Street to the Greenway as well as the portion from 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to 5<sup>th</sup> Street along Washington Street.

## Historic/Cultural

Christmas City U.S.A. is a local non-profit organization promoting the Christmas season in Marion and Grant County. They proudly organize and sponsor the Annual Christmas Parade each year the Saturday before Thanksgiving to kick off the Holiday season.

It all began in 1965 when the organization had a vision to expand the holiday season beyond the traditional cards and private parties. Directors wanted to foster human relations among residents of all ages and public relations toward nonresidents. In 1970, Christmas City and the Chamber of Commerce joined forces to promote a new look for the city. Postcards, bumper stickers, billboards were designed to establish the city as Christmas City U.S.A. The name was even trademarked to preserve the city's identity.

The City of Marion has various attractions and holds a variety of festivals and activities throughout the year.

- *1st Fridays Downtown*
- *Walkway of Lights*
- *Easter Pageant*
- *Hostess House*
- *Marion Classic bike race*
- *"Christmas City USA"*
- *James Dean's birthplace connection & festival*
- *Quilters Hall of Fame*

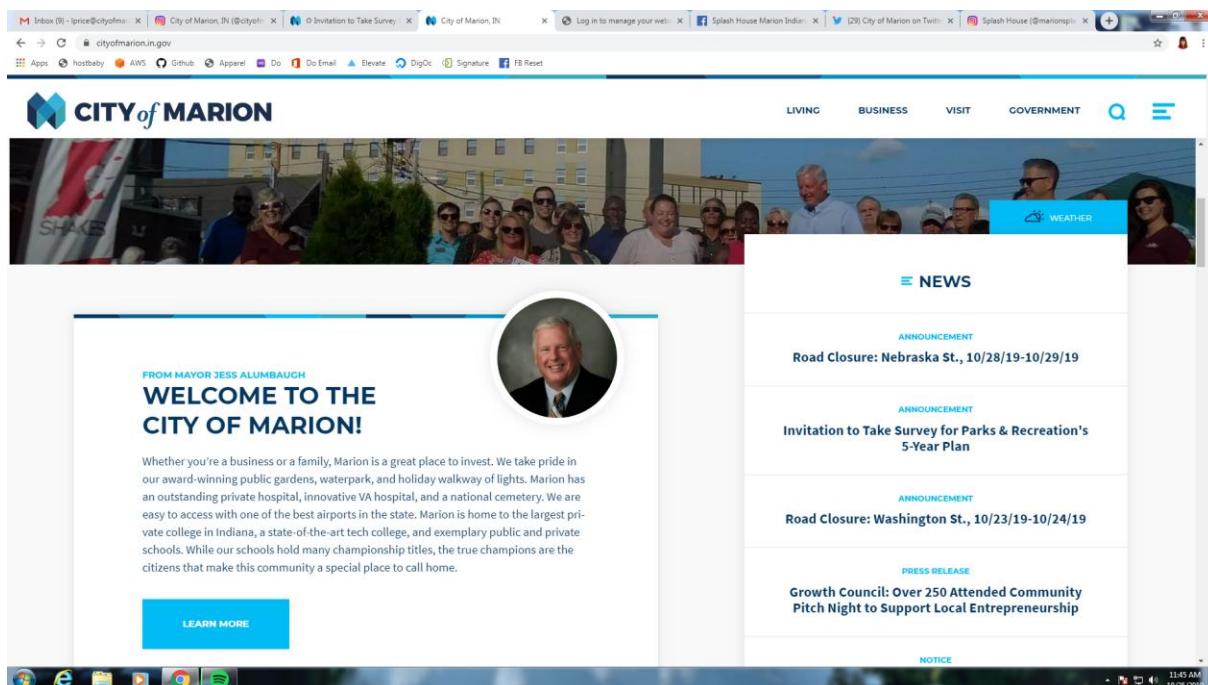


## SECTION 3: PUBLIC INPUT

Public input used the methods of public meetings, survey and questionnaires.

### Survey

A survey (via SurveyMonkey) was made available to the general public of Marion. The survey link was made available via website and social media platforms for the City and the Parks and Recreation department (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and through placement at various public buildings. The survey started on October 24, 2019 and ran for 3 weeks. A total of 88 surveys were completed.



The survey and results can be found in **Appendix A**.



## Public Meetings

Kieser Consulting Group conducted two public meetings asking citizens to express their opinions on the need for park and recreation facilities and programs. The public meetings were advertised on the City's website as well as through the social media platforms for both the City and the Parks and Recreation department. It was also posted at the City Hall as well as the Community Building.

On January 13, 2020 the first of two public meetings was held at 6:00 PM in the Garden House at Matter Park. There were twenty-five (25) people in attendance. The meeting began with an overview of the planning process, the state of the current park system and an overview of the programming. The second part of the meeting was group session in which input from the public asking for their opinion on several subjects pertaining to the existing facilities and programs to their suggestions and input for the future of the park facilities and programs.

The second public meeting to discuss the Final Plan was scheduled to be held on April 2, but due to the COVID-19 situation it was cancelled. Instead the Final Plan was put on the City's website as well as their social media platforms for comments. The comment period ran from April 6 through April 13. Comments that were received can be found in Appendix B.

The agendas and sign-in sheets can be found in **Appendix B**.





## SECTION 4: ACCESSIBILITY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

### Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) took effect January 26, 1992 and is aimed at protecting the rights of people with disabilities. The passage of ADA guarantees that access to recreation and play settings is now a civil right for all Americans.

According to the summary of the ADA (Public Law 101-336), the act "...prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by private entities in places of public accommodation, requires that all new places of public accommodation and commercial facilities be designed and constructed so as to be readily accessible and usable by persons with disabilities..."

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 is not affected by ADA and still prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap for any programs offered by a recipient of federal funds. Any program, activity or service that is offered to the public must be accessible to disabled individuals.

### Impact of ADA on Facilities Design

An equally important aspect of developing a quality park system lies in how well it serves the needs of the disabled. More now than ever before, we have a responsibility (morally as well as legally) to provide a reasonable level of accessibility for individuals with varying levels of ability.

To help ensure that this in fact happens, Congress enacted The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 that provides for equal access to all users of public (and private) facilities and programs. Although still largely untested, the basic intent of the act is clear; reasonable equal access opportunities must be provided to those with disabilities.

There are no requirements within the ADA which mandate any special requirements relative to the size of any particular type of park and recreation facility. The act does, however, mandate that park areas and facilities be reasonably accessible and usable to all populations. The extent to which compliance with the act will impact the size or configuration of a particular facility is likely to be inconsequential in terms of a particular facility size. It may, however, dictate some changes to specific design guidelines in response to the act. In July 1994, the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, Recreation Access Advisory Committee published the *Recommendations for Accessibility Guidelines: Recreational Facilities and Outdoor Developed Areas*, which provide detailed guidelines for all types of park and recreational facilities. It is recommended that each park planning agency incorporate these and subsequent guidelines and legal standards in the final determination of spatial and facility design guidelines for all units of the park, recreation and open space



system. These accessibility guidelines are further complimented by the materials available on the concept of universal access.

### Existing Facilities and Required Improvements

These new accessibility requirements have led to many questions on how efforts made to make recreational facilities accessible can be balanced with the natural landscape of parks, greenways and nature areas. The ADA accessibility requirements apply to public accommodations, commercial facilities and state and local government entities. If you own, operate or lease a recreational facility, it is important to determine how your facility and programs must meet the requirements.

Parks fall under Section II of the ADA which deals with public services. Access to facilities as well as programs is required. The ADA requires that:

- Newly constructed buildings and facilities must be readily accessible.
- Renovations or alteration of existing buildings and facilities must be readily accessible.
- Barriers to accessibility in existing buildings and facilities must be removed when it is “readily achievable”.

A structure is readily accessible if it meets the *ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities*.

**New Construction:** The ADA requires that new facilities which are built for first occupancy after January 26, 1993, must be readily accessible to persons with disabilities. Design and construction is considered to occur after January 26, 1993, if a completed application for a building permit is filled after January 26, 1992.

To comply with the ADA, park and recreation agencies will need to adopt a consistent and thoroughly documented approach to the planning, design and management of areas and facilities within their system.

**Alterations to Existing Buildings:** The ADA requires that if a building or facility is altered after January 26, 1992, the renovations must be readily accessible to individuals with disabilities. An “alteration” means a change to a building or facility that affects the usability of the building. Alterations include remodeling, renovation, rehabilitation, restoration, reconstruction and changes or arrangements in structural elements or in any reconfiguration of walls or partitions.

In addition to making the alteration accessible, access to a primary function in the building such as a telephone, restroom or drinking fountains serving the area must be made accessible to individuals with disabilities.



Currently, all government entities including park agencies are required to comply regardless of their funding sources.

Some minimum requirements include, but are not limited to:

- One accessible route from site access point, such as a parking lot, to the primary accessible entrance must be provided. A ramp with a slope of no greater than 1:6 for a length of no greater than two feet may be used as part of this route. Otherwise, a slope of maximum 1:12 is allowed.
- One accessible public entrance must be provided.
- If toilets are provided, then one accessible unisex toilet facility must be provided along the accessible route.
- Only the publicly used spaces on the level of the accessible entrance must be made accessible.
- Any displays and written information should be located where they can be seen by a seated individual and should provide information accessible to the blind.

**Removal of Barriers:** The ADA requires all public accommodations, programs and facilities of state and local governments must remove architectural and communication barriers. An architectural barrier is a physical barrier to access, including steps, narrow doors, sidewalks, texture changes in the floor and placement of signs and furniture. A communication barrier is one that is an integral part of the physical structure of the facility such as telephones mounted too high, the absence of Braille markings on elevators and signage, and alarms that only give an audible signal.

In many cases, the removal of architectural and communication barriers is not that difficult. The park district should create an overall policy plan for the removal of barriers in a prioritized schedule. Persons with disabilities within the park district should be invited to register their comments and preferences as part of the prioritization.

Making curb cuts in the sidewalks, installing grab bars in restrooms, widening entrances, creating accessible parking spaces, installing a paper cup dispenser at an existing drinking fountain and removing high pile carpet are some simple ways access can be achieved.

**Outdoor Recreational Facilities:** The special Programs and Populations Branch of the National Park Service working in conjunction with the United States Forest Service has published a very clear, concise document outlining the methods that local park districts can use to comply with the ADA in outdoor recreational facilities. An excellent resource, "Design Guide for Accessible Outdoor Recreation" prepared by the USPS with SPPB, contains specific guidelines for creating accessible campgrounds, restroom facilities, picnic areas, trails, equestrian centers, docks, piers and other outdoor recreational areas. The underlying concept of the National Park Service is



that any outdoor recreational facility should be accessible consistently with the level of development existing at the facility.

The guide states, "...this guide establishes a framework of direction for new and retrofitted recreation sites and facilities requiring that all recreation visitors should have the opportunity to participate in programs and services to the highest level of access feasible for persons with disabilities when compared to that offered other visitors."

Highly developed sites with parking lots, restrooms, structures for public gatherings and recreational facilities such as swimming pools, tennis courts and basketball courts should have highly developed routes for accessibility. On the other end of the spectrum, fragile natural areas with limited development and limited recreational facilities should have the minimum of accessible routes to the site.

The accessibility level should be consistent with the development level of any facility owned, operated, leased or managed by the park district. It deals with the main components that should be accessible in all areas such as travel to and from selected activities. This document is listed in the resource section and can provide clear guidance to park district officials struggling with methods to make their recreational trail system, recreational facilities and public programs for people with disabilities.

**Services and Programs:** The ADA requires that all public entities must operate each service, program or activity so it is accessible to persons with disabilities. If the park district offers a program or an activity that is in a building that is not accessible, the district must:

- Remove the barrier to access in the facility.
- Shift the location to an accessible site.
- Provide the service in some alternative method like outreach program in different facilities.
- Construct a new facility for park district programs.

### Timeframe for Compliance

Sections of the ADA became effective at different times. New construction completed after January 26, 1993, must comply with accessibility standards; alterations made after January 26, 1992, must meet the accessibility standards; and barriers must be removed by January 26, 1995.

Since the development of guidelines pertaining to park and recreation access and use are in process as of the time of this requirement relative to the size of any particular



type of park or recreation facility. The act does, however, mandate that all areas and facilities be accessible and usable. The guidelines were recently updated in 2012. The new ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities are available on the Internet at <http://www.ada.gov/regs2010/2010ADAStandards/2010ADAstandards.htm>.

## **Marion Master Park Plan ADA Goals**

As part of the 2014 Marion Master Park Plan, all of the park facilities were evaluated and recommendations were made to improve the accessibility for handicapped individuals to the parks. Here is a list of the ADA goals for all of the parks in the Marion park system. The Marion Parks Department had made plans to make improvements each year on a park by park basis.

The City of Marion regrets falling behind on the issue of the ADA Master plan for the parks within the City. This has been due largely to funding and lack of personnel within the Parks Department.

While all of the following ADA projects listed below are important to the citizens of Marion, the items in the ADA Action Plan are to be accomplished in two phases over the next 5 years.

## **BARNES**

### *Picnic Area*

- Need accessible surfacing leading to the picnic table area.
- Need knee space under the tabletop 24" deep (minimum).
- Need knee space 30" wide (minimum).
- Need tables to have at least one side or end that is accessible by wheelchairs.

### *Playground Area*

- Need an accessible path of travel from an accessible entry to each different play activity provided in the play area.

## **CHARLES MILL**

### *Parking Lot*

- Need a warning sign, 17"x 22" minimum with a 1" minimum high letters, posted at each street entry to the parking lot or adjacent to each reserved space giving information regarding vehicles towed for unauthorized use of reserved spaces.
- Need detectable warnings where a walk adjoins or crosses a traffic lane and is not protected by a curb, railing, or similar barrier.
- Detectable warnings are truncated domes.

### *Play Equipment*

- Need accessible path of travel into the playground area.





- Need an accessible route of travel from an accessibility entry to each different play activity provided in the play area.
- Need the surface of the route to be firm and stable.
- The portion of the accessible route within 8' of play equipment should be firm; resilient safety surfacing that meets CPSC safety requirements.

#### *Picnic Area*

- Needs accessible surfacing leading to the picnic table area.
- Tables to have at least one side or end that is accessible by wheelchairs.
- Need accessible surfacing leading to the grill or firepit.
- Clear, level space in front of the grill should be 30" x 48" (minimum).

### **28<sup>TH</sup> ST.**

#### *Parking Lot*

- Need an adequate number of designated parking stalls.
- Need signs designating reserved spaces.

#### *Games and Sports Area*

- Need an accessible pathway leading to the game or sports area.

#### *Play Equipment*

- Need an accessible route of travel from an accessible entry to each different play activity provided in the play area.
- The portion of the accessible route within 8' of play equipment should be firm; resilient safety surfacing that meets CPSC requirements.

#### *Signage*

- The International Symbol of Accessibility should identify accessible facilities and entrances.

### **NORTH BOOTS ST.**

#### *Picnic Area*

- Need accessible surfacing leading from the walking path to the shelter area.

### **TOWNSEND**

#### *Parking Lot*

- Reserved space should be outlined or painted in blue and should be marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility in a contrasting color.
- Need signs to designate one of every eight (but at least one) accessible stall as "Van Accessible."
- Need a warning sign, 17"x 22" (minimum) with 1" minimum high letters, posted at each street entry to the parking lot or adjacent to each reserved space that gives information regarding vehicles towed for unauthorized use of reserved spaces.



- Need wheelchair access provided to an accessible route to the building entrance without going behind other parked cars.
- Need an adjacent access aisle on the passenger side of the parking stall (two stalls may share an access aisle located between them).

#### *Playground Area*

- Need an accessible path of travel provided into the play area.
- Need an accessible path of travel provided to the play area.
- The portion of the accessible route within 8' of play equipment should be a firm, resilient safety surfacing that meets CPSC requirements.
- Surface level changes should be W' maximum (1/2" change acceptable with a beveled slope of 1:2 maximum).
- A transfer platform should be provided onto the structure from an accessible route
- At least one of each type of play activity provided on the structure should be accessible.
- Need an accessible path of travel provided into the play area.
- Need an accessible route of travel from an accessible entry to each different play activity provided in the play area.
- The portion of the accessible route within 8' of play equipment should be firm; resilient safety surfacing that meets CPSC requirements.

#### *Picnic Area*

- Need accessible surfacing leading to the picnic table area.

#### *Games and Sports Area*

- Needs an accessible pathway leading the game or sports area.

#### *Signage*

- Accessible facilities and entrances should be identified by the International Symbol of Accessibility.

### **FRANKLIN**

#### *Playground Area*

- An accessible path of travel should be provided into the play area.
- An accessible route of travel should be provided from an accessible entry to each different play activity provided in the play area.

### **HOGIN**

#### *Playground Area*

- Need an accessible route of travel from an accessible entry to each different play activity provided in the play area.
- The portion of the accessible route within 8' of play equipment should be firm; resilient safety surfacing that meets CPSC requirements.



## VAN DEVANTER

### *Parking Area*

- Need an adequate number of designated parking stalls.
- Need signs designating one of every eight (but at least one) accessible stall as "Van Accessible".
- Need a warning sign 17"x 22" minimum with 1" minimum high letters, posted at each street entry to the parking lot or adjacent to each reserved space giving information regarding vehicles towed for unauthorized use of reserved spaces.
- Designated spaces should be the spaces closest to an accessible entrance to the building or site.
- Length of each ramp should be 30' maximum (40' maximum, if slope is between 1: 16 and 1:29).
- Handrails with continuous gripping surfaces should be provided on both sides of ramps that have a rise greater than 6" or run longer than 72".
- A 12" wide grooved border should be provided on the sidewalk surface and should extend the full width and depth of the curb ramp. Grooves should be approximately "on center."
- Ramp should be located or protected to prevent obstruction by park vehicles.
- A detectable warning extending the full width and length of the walking surface of the curb ramp should be approximately on center.
- A detectable warning extending the full width and length of the walking surface of the curb ramp should be provided (not including flared side).

### *Picnic Area*

- Need accessible surfacing leading to the picnic table area.
- Need accessible surfacing leading to the grill or firepit.

## WESTLEA

### *Picnic Area*

- Tables should have at least one side or end that is accessible by wheelchairs.
- Need accessible surfacing leading to the picnic table area.

### *Playground Area*

- Need an accessible path of travel provided into play area.
- Need an accessible route of travel from an accessible entry to each different play activity provided in the play area.
- The portion of the accessible route within 8' of play equipment should be firm; resilient safety surfacing that meets CPSC requirements.

### *Games and Sports Area*

- Need an accessible pathway leading to the basketball courts.



## MATTER

### *Parking Area*

- Need reflector sign (20 sq. inch minimum) identifying each space as accessible.
- Need international symbol of accessibility on sign or pavement.
- Need to designate one "van accessible" space.
- Need warning sign posted at each park entry or adjacent to each reserved space regarding towing of vehicles for unauthorized use of spaces.
- Need accessible route to reserved spaces.
- Need adjacent access aisle on the passenger side of the parking stall. (60" minimum for cars, 96" minimum for vans).

### *Ballfield Parking Area*

- Need accessible parking for ball fields and shelter #6 and #7
- Need accessible pathway to ball field bleacher area.
- Need accessible crosswalk from pull off parking across park drive to Shelter #6 and #7.
- Need required signage at parking spaces and crosswalk.

### *Shelter #1*

- Need accessible parking.
- Need accessible pathway from parking.

### *Shelter #2*

- Exterior stairway to shelter needs indicator stripe of contrasting color at nosing.
- Handrails need to extend past end of stair and parallel to ground surface for 12" minimum.
- Need accessible path from parking to stairway.
- Portable restroom adjacent to shelter is not accessible.

### *Shelter #3*

- Need handicap parking at shelter and adjacent ball field.
- Need accessible fishing area at fishing pond.

### *Shelter #4*

- Need accessible parking.
- Need accessible pathway from parking.

### *Shelter #5*

- Need accessible parking.
- Need railing at doorway ramp.

### *Shelter #6*

- Pave area around grill and connect with pavement at shelter floor.
- Need accessible parking.

### *Shelter #7*

- Need accessible pathway to shelter.
- Need accessible parking.



### *Tennis Courts*

- Width of gate opening should be 32" or allow access at service gate.

### *Bandshell*

- Add railing at stairs.

### *Signage*

- Need international symbol of accessibility at all shelter identification signs for shelters that are accessible.
- Need symbol of accessibility on park entry sign, if accessible facilities are provided.

## **ADA Action Plan**

### **Phase I**

<b>Charles Mill</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Add signage for ADA Parking Only with Signage for enforcement.	\$425
<b>28<sup>th</sup> St.</b>	
Add signage for ADA Parking Only and designate spaces on the parking surface.	\$850
<b>Townsend</b>	
Add signage for ADA Parking Only with Signage for enforcement and designate spaces on the parking surface. Placing a van accessible space.	\$950
<b>Van Devanter</b>	
Add signage for ADA Parking Only with Signage for enforcement and designate spaces on the parking surface. Placing a van accessible space.	\$950
<b>Matter</b>	
Add signage for ADA Parking Only with Signage for enforcement and designate spaces on the parking surface. Placing a van accessible space.	\$1,250

### **Phase II**

<b>Barnes</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>
Accessible path of travel from accessible entry to different play activity provided in the park area.	\$1,000
<b>Charles Mill</b>	
Accessible path of travel from accessible entry to different play activity provided in the park area.	\$800
Accessible surface leading to the picnic table area.	\$600
<b>28<sup>th</sup> St.</b>	
Accessible path of travel from accessible entry to different play activity provided in the park area.	\$1,000
<b>North Boots St.</b>	
Accessible path of travel from accessible entry to different play activity provided in the park area.	\$2,000
<b>Hogin</b>	
Accessible surface leading to the picnic table and grill area.	\$600





## Phase II

Van Devanter	Estimated Cost
Accessible surface leading to the picnic table area.	\$800
Westlea	
Accessible surface leading to the picnic table area.	\$800
Matter	
Accessible surface leading to the shelter.	\$1,000

## General Goals

In addition to the goals for ADA improvements in the parks, the Marion Park Department has these overall goals for ADA which are ongoing:

- Perform annual ADA compliance evaluations.
- Provide additional programs focused on special needs users.
- Improve universal design guidelines in all park facilities.

## Compliance Information

ADA information is posted at the Parks Department Office located in the Marion Municipal Building, 301 South Branson St., Marion, IN 46952.

Grievance procedure is as follows:

1. Grievance letter goes to Parks Board.
2. Parks Board refers to Streets and Maintenance Director for action.
3. Streets and Maintenance Director takes action.
4. Streets and Maintenance Director takes a) administrative action b) maintenance action c) design and construction of corrective actions.
5. Correction results are given to Streets and Maintenance Director for action and updates.

## ADA Compliance Officer

Mike Graft, Head of Engineering  
Phone # 765-661-1534





## SECTION 5: NEEDS ANALYSIS

### NATIONAL STANDARDS

The Indiana Division of Outdoor Recreation has suggested facility development standards for Indiana which have been developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association, 1983 edition.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recognizes the importance of establishing and using park and recreation standards as:

- A national expression of minimum acceptable facilities for the citizens of urban and rural communities.
- A guideline to determine land requirements for various kinds of park and recreation areas and facilities.
- A basis for relating recreational needs to spatial analysis within a community-wide system of parks and open space areas.
- One of the major structuring elements that can be used to guide and assist regional development.
- A means to justify the need for parks and open space within the overall land-use pattern of a region or community.

The purpose of these guidelines is to present park and recreation space standards that are applicable nationwide for planning, acquisition, and development of park, recreation, and open space lands, primarily at the community level. These standards should be viewed as a guide. They address minimum, not maximum, goals to be achieved. The standards are interpreted according to the particular situation to which they are applied and specific local needs. A variety of standards have been developed by professional and trade associations which are used throughout the country. The standard derived from early studies of park acreages located within metropolitan areas was the expression of acres of park land per unit of population. Over time, the figure of 10 acres per 1,000 population came to be the commonly accepted standard used by a majority of communities. Other standards adopted include the "percent of area" approach, needs determined by user characteristics and participation projections, and area use based on the carrying capacity of the land. The fact that some of the standards have changed substantially is not an indication of their obsolescence. Changes are a measure of the growing awareness and understanding of both participant and resource (land, water, etc.) limitations. Parks are for people. Park, recreation, and planning professionals must integrate the art and science of park management in order to balance such park and open space resource values as water supply, air quality.



Marion Parks has a total park acreage of 175 acres. The national standard calls for 10 acres per 1,000 in population. With a current population of 28,118 that would require Marion Parks to have approximately 300 acres of open space parkland. An extra 125 acres would be needed to satisfy this requirement.

### COMPARABLE PARK SYSTEMS

	Marion	Schererville	Michigan City
<b>Population (2018)</b>	<b>28,118</b>	28,501	31,118
<b>No. of parks</b>	<b>13</b>	27	30
<b><i>Nat'l Standard Park Acreage</i></b>			
System Acreage	175	212	675
need per 1,000 population	300	300	310
(+/-) need	-125	-88	+365
<b><i>Park Amenities</i></b>			
Community/Sr. Center	1	1	3
Playground	10	20	17
Picnic Shelters	17	16	25
Restrooms	6	8	15
Basketball court	3	3	13
Soccer/Football	3	12	11
Baseball/Softball	1	10	17
Tennis court	5	10	2
Pickleball	6		
Swimming Pools			
Volleyball	2	2	
Trails (# of parks)	4	3	11
Splash Park	1		2
Skate Park	1	1	2
Golf Courses			2



The Marion Parks and Recreation cooperates with the school system and many of the public facilities in the county in sharing their opportunities for recreation. The most current population for Marion is 28,118. The table below shows how the Marion Park system as it compares to the Standards set by the National Recreation and Parks Association:

Activity/Facility	# of units per population	Service Radius	# of units per Marion Parks	# of units +/- per population
<b>Basketball</b>	1 per 5,000	1/4 to 1/2 mile	3	-3
<b>Tennis</b>	1 per 2,000	1/4 to 1/2 mile	5	-10
<b>Volleyball</b>	1 per 5,000	1/4 to 1/2 mile	2	-4
<b>Baseball/Softball</b>	1 per 5,000	1/4 to 1/2 mile	1	-5
<b>Pickleball</b>	NA	NA	6	NA
<b>Football</b>	1 per 20,000	15-20 minutes travel	0	-1
<b>Soccer</b>	1 per 10,000	1-2 miles travel	3	OK
<b>Golf</b>				
Driving Range	1 per 50,000	30 minutes travel	1	OK
9-Hole	1 per 25,000	1/2 to 1 hour travel	1	OK
18-Hole	1 per 50,000	1/2 to 1 hour travel	5	+4
<b>Swimming Pools</b>	1 per 20,000	15-30 minutes travel	0	-1







## SECTION 6: PLAN AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The preliminary goals and objectives first relied on the review and assessment of the inventory, public opinion survey, meetings with park staff, and comparison to other communities. The study committee (Park Board) and the City of Marion's various department staff reviewed each goal and objective. These were modified to more accurately reflect current needs and budgetary options.

The public was able to view and comment on the Action Plan via the Plan which was posted to the City's website and social media outlets. The goals and objectives in tandem with the needs and available resources have formed the basis of the Action Plan. The intent of the following Action Plan is to serve as a road map and general guide for the Marion Parks and Recreation Park Board and Street Department to complete their capital improvements annual progress.

### ACTION PLAN

#### AMENITIES

SYSTEMWIDE	Estimated Cost	Timeline
Planting of Trees	\$1,000	2020-24
ADA Compliance	\$10,000	2020-24
Office & Field Interns	\$3,000	2020-24
Partnerships with Other Organizations	\$2,000	2020-24
Playground Equipment (4)	\$50,000 (per)	2020-24

MAINTENANCE	Estimated Cost	Timeline
Riding Lawn Mower (3)	\$11,000	2022
3/4 Ton Pickup Truck	\$30,000	2022
1 Ton Dump Truck	\$30,000	2022
18' Flat Bed Trailer	\$3,500	2023
Front-end Loader	\$50,000	2024

NEW FEATURES	Estimated Cost	Timeline
Wiggly Dog Park	\$400,000	2021
Splash Pad	\$300,000	2024

TRAILS & GREENWAYS	Estimated Cost	Timeline
Riverwalk Extension	\$500,000	2022
Ballard Field Nature Walk	TBD	2024
Riverwalk (widening for bike lane)	\$60,000	2024



<b>28th ST.</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Benches (2)	\$1,200	2021

<b>BALLARD FIELD</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Scoreboard	\$7,500	2021
Bleachers	\$1,500	2021
Benches (2)	\$1,200	
Shelter	\$25,000	2023
Parking Lot Paving	\$40,000	2024

<b>BARNES</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Benches (2)	\$1,200	2021
Picnic Tables (2)	\$1,400	2022

<b>CHARLES MILL</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Bleachers	\$1,500	2022
Benches (2)	\$1,200	

<b>FRANKLIN</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Picnic Tables (2)	\$1,400	2021
Playground	\$30,000	2023

<b>HOGIN</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Basketball Court (resealing, repairs)	\$10,000	2024

<b>MATTER PARK</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Bridge	\$40,000	2021
Friendship Corner (resurface)	\$15,000	2022
Restroom (new)	\$25,000	2024
Playground Equipment	\$75,000	2024
Shelter #5 Improvements (restroom, insulation, flooring)	\$64,000	2024
Softball Field	\$4,800	2024
Concession Stand	\$80,000	2024

<b>NORTH BOOTS ST.</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Picnic Tables (2)	\$1,400	2021
Benches (2)	\$1,200	2021



<b>SPLASH HOUSE</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Engineering Inspections	\$125,000	2020-24
Restrooms (updating)	\$40,000	2021
Cabanas (upgrade)	TBD	2021
Wave Pool (painting)	\$30,000	2021
Parking Lots (repaving, sealing)	\$25,000	2022
Sand Filters	\$25,000	2022
Pumps (replacement)	\$30,000	2022
Lockers	TBD	2023
Concrete work	\$25,000	2024

<b>VAN DEVANTER</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Picnic Tables (2)	\$1,400	2022
Shelter (roof repairs)	\$7,000	2024

<b>WESTLEA</b>	<b>Estimated Cost</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Picnic Tables (2)	\$1,400	2022
Benches (2)	\$1,200	2022

## **ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS**

<b>PARK PROGRAMS/EVENTS</b>
Scout Badge Program
Special Needs Swim
Surfing
Lazy River Walking
Screen on the Green Movie Nights
Softball Programs
Earth Day
Daddy/Daughter Dance
Walkway of Lights Family Night

Although more activities were requested in the Citizen Survey, the Park Board and City officials decided that it would not be possible to hire additional personnel to oversee any new programming due to budgetary constraints. They will instead concentrate on existing programs.

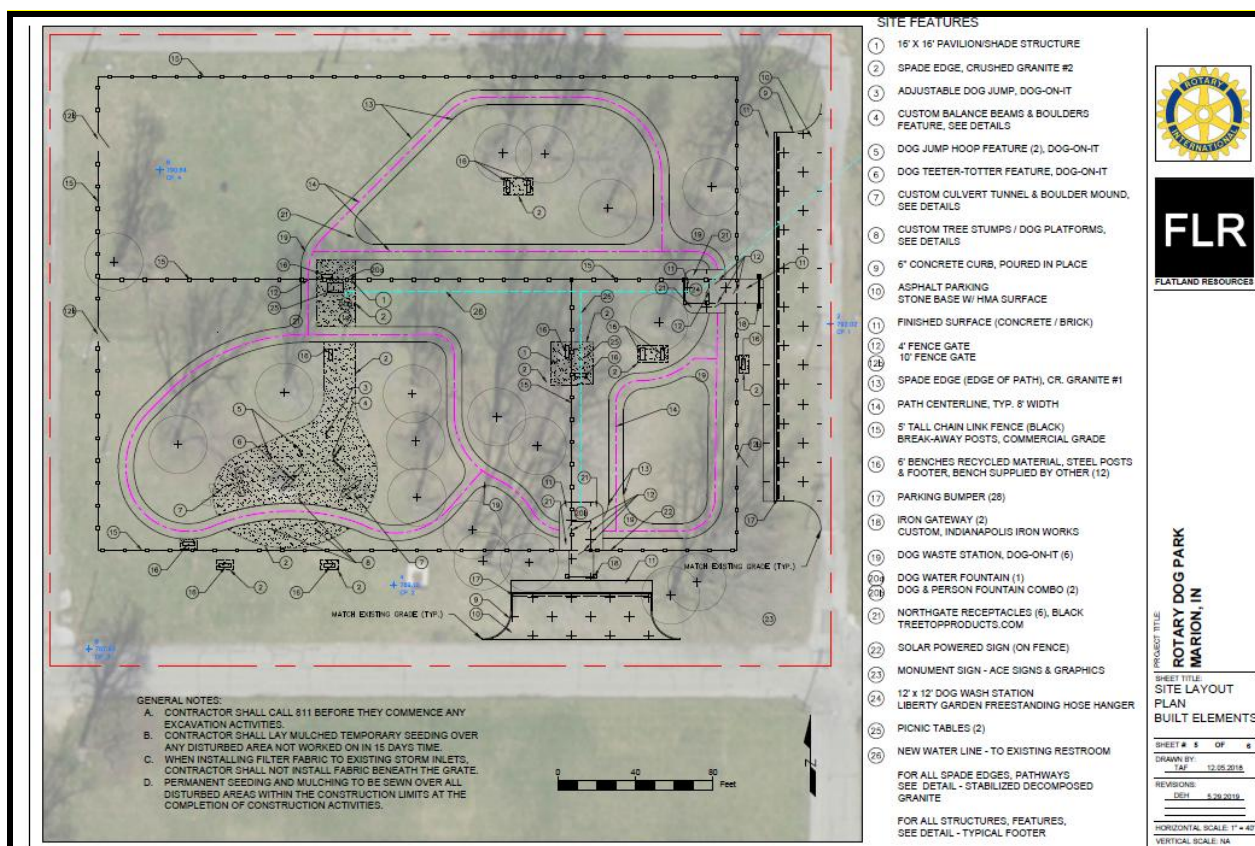
The most requested activity was to bring back the Concerts in the Park series. Unfortunately, the decision was to terminate this program due to completion from neighboring Gas City's concerts which are partially privately funded, have a better venue and draw attendees from Marion as well. They are discussing bring back a somewhat smaller and different concert series in the future.



## FUTURE PROJECTS

### Wiggly Dog Park

The completion of the Wiggly Dog Park, which will be located just east of the downtown area, is set for 2020-21. This amenity has been on the community wish list for a long time and will be built through a partnership with the Marion Rotary Club.

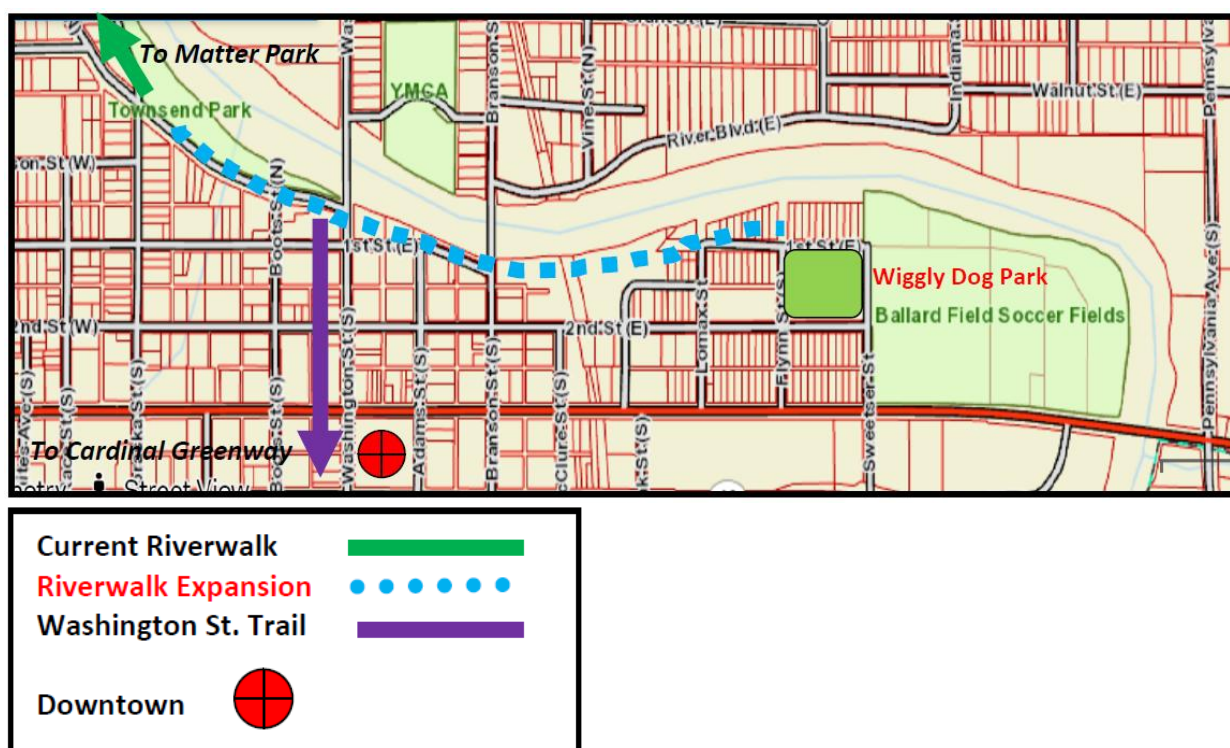




## Riverwalk Extension

The Riverwalk will be extended to continue east along the river into Ballard Field, connecting this centralized park with Matter Park. The vehicular connection should be improved along 2nd Street from Adams Street into the Ballard Field area. This will also link to the new Wiggly Dog Park and eventually the new Washington St. Trail will link the Riverwalk to the Cardinal Greenway. This will allow people to connect from the north of Marion to the south of Marion by railway. The projected timeline is for a 2022 completion.

The City is currently working on the funding for the Washington St. Trail and hopes to start construction in 2021.



## Splash Pad

A splash pad has long been on the wish list for the community. Planning for the splash pad will begin in 2021 and construction is forecast for 2024. It has been determined that it should be located in the north of Marion since the Splash House is located in the south of Marion. This would give each area of the City a water feature.







## SECTION 7: FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### FUNDING

The Marion Parks must also consider how these improvements are to be funded. There are many ways to fund improvements and the Park Board will need to investigate all avenues for financing future projects and programs.

Here is a list of funding possibilities:

- Municipal bonds
- Sales taxes
- Development impact fees/land donation requirements
- User and entrance fees
- Creative partnerships (with private and public entities)
- Grants (Federal, State, Foundation, Non-profit, etc.)
- Donations
  - In-kind, service, and products
  - Bequests
  - Tax write-offs
  - Corporate donations

There are various programs which directly benefit Park and Recreation Boards in Indiana. This listing contains federal, state and local funding programs and resources. We have included a list of possible funding sources:



## Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

### **What is the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant program?**

Participation in outdoor recreation activities is expanding so rapidly that park agencies often face a real financial burden in attempting to provide enough facilities to keep up with the demand. The Land and Water Conservation Fund was passed by Congress in 1965 to assist eligible governmental units in the provision of new park areas.

The LWCF is a matching assistance program that provides grants for 50% of the cost for the acquisition and/or development of outdoor recreation sites and facilities. Since the program began, Indiana has received approximately \$75 million in federal funds. The allocation usually is divided between Department of Natural Resources' projects and local government park projects depending on funding levels. Over \$36 million has been provided to local agencies through the program. More than 30,000 acres of land have been acquired in Indiana with Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance for public outdoor recreation use and conservation.

### **Where are funds from?**

The main source of funding for the LWCF grants comes from federal offshore oil lease revenues.

### **How is funding received?**

Since the LWCF is a reimbursing program, the project sponsor does not receive the grant funds at the time of application approval. The sponsor must have the local matching 50% of the project cost available prior to the application. The sponsoring park and recreation board is reimbursed 50% of the actual costs of the approved project. In order to receive the money reserved for the project, a billing must be submitted to your grant coordinator that enables the participants to request the federal share of the cost incurred throughout the grant term.

**What are local sources of funding?** Local funding sources used to match the federal assistance may be derived from appropriations, tax levies, bond issues, force account labor, gifts, and donations of land, cash, labor, materials, and equipment. Other federal funding sources cannot be used as the local share of a project, except revenue sharing, Community Development Act funds, and Farmers Home Administration loans.

### **Grant funding amounts.**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund applicants may request amounts ranging from a minimum of \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$200,000. If any changes are made to the manual/application, they will be posted by March 1. Applications are available online or upon request from the Division of Outdoor Recreation. The application is required to be submitted or post-marked by June 1.

### **Who is eligible?**

Only park and recreation boards established under Indiana law are eligible. The park and recreation board must also have a current 5-year master plan for parks and recreation on file, approved at the Division of Outdoor Recreation.

### **Who administers the program?**

Funds are provided through the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, but the program is administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources' Division of Outdoor Recreation.

### **What types of projects may be funded?**

Grant applications may consist of land acquisition and/or facility construction or renovation for local public parks for outdoor recreation. New parks or additions to existing parks may be funded.

The land acquisition or development may not be started until final approval is received from the Federal



Government. All land to be developed must be controlled by the park board through direct ownership.

Examples of types of projects include:

- Acquiring park or natural area
- Picnic areas
- Sports and playfields, such as playgrounds, ballfields, court facilities, and golf courses
- Water oriented facilities for boating, swimming, and access to lakes, rivers, and streams
- Natural areas and interpretive facilities
- Campgrounds
- Fishing and hunting areas
- Winter sports facilities
- Amphitheaters and bandstands
- Parks adjacent to schools for mutual use
- Outdoor natural habitat zoo facilities
- Roads, restrooms, utilities, park maintenance buildings
- Nature Centers

All facilities should be universally designed for persons with disabilities, and the Park board's facilities, programs and activities must be open to the public without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national, origin, age or handicap.

#### **How do I apply?**

The LWCF manual online serves as the guidelines and application. Please use this document to complete your application. The appendix has all the forms needed to apply.

If you want to know more about the LWCF grant or want to discuss potential projects, contact:

State & Community Outdoor Recreation Planning Section  
Division of Outdoor Recreation  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
402 West Washington Street, Room 271  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2782  
(317) 232-4070  
fax (317) 233-4648



## Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

### What is the Recreational Trails grant program?

The Recreational Trails Program is a matching assistance program that provides funding for the acquisition and/or development of multi-use recreational trail projects. Both motorized and non-motorized projects may qualify for assistance. The assistance program is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

### Where are funds from?

The RTP funding represents a portion of the revenue received by the Federal Highway Trust Fund from the federal motor fuel excise tax paid by users of off-road recreational vehicles such as snowmobiles, off-road motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, and off-road light trucks. These monies are made available from Indiana's share of funds from the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21).

### How is funding received?

The project sponsor will not receive a cash grant at the time of project approval. Instead, the sponsor must pay the bills and then be reimbursed for a maximum of 80% of the expenses incurred for the project according to the terms of the project agreement. In most cases, reimbursement is not permitted for work that takes place prior to project approval.

### What are local sources of funding?

At the time of application the project sponsor must have at least 20% of the total project cost available. The local share may include tax sources, bond issues, Community Development Funds, Farmers Home Administration Loans, or force account contributions. The donated value of land, cash, labor, equipment, and materials may also be used.

### Grant funding amounts.

The Indiana RTP will provide 80% matching reimbursement assistance for eligible projects. Applicants may request grant amounts ranging from a minimum of \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$150,000. Applications are available online or from the Division of Outdoor Recreation. If any changes are made to the manual/application they will be posted by February 1. Applications are due back in our office by May 1.

### Who is eligible?

All units of government and agencies incorporated as not-for-profit corporations are eligible to participate.

### Who administers the program?

The Governor of Indiana has designated the Indiana Department of Natural Resources through its Division of Outdoor Recreation to administer the program.

### What types of projects may be funded?

Projects will be eligible if they provide public access to trails. Funds from RTP can be used for:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside, trailhead facilities, and trail linkages
- Purchase and/or lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment
- Construction of new trails with the restrictions for new trails on Federal lands
- Acquisition of easement or property for trails
- Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails (limited to 5% of State's funds)
- Providing stream and river access sites
- Construction of bridges, boardwalks and crossings



- Signage
- Construction of equestrian facilities
- Building of sanitary facilities and other support facilities (e.g., water fountains, shelter, etc.)

All facilities should be universally designed to accommodate all people. Facilities, programs and activities funded through this program must be open to the public without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national, origin, age or handicap.

**How do I apply?**

The RTP manual online serves as the guidelines and application. Please use this document to complete your application. The appendix has all the forms needed to apply.

If you want to know more about the RTP grant or want to discuss potential projects, contact:

Division of Outdoor Recreation  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
402 West Washington Street, Room 271  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2782  
(317) 232-4070  
fax (317) 233-4648



## NextLevel Trails

**Eligible Applicants:** Local units of government or 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. One application per applicant per round. If awarded, the applicant will enter into a State Grant Agreement and must take responsibility for all aspects of the project through completion. Applicants acting in a fiscal pass-through capacity only are not eligible. Additionally, the applicant must fulfill at least one of the following roles:

- Own (or acquire) the trail corridor
- Manage and maintain the trail once developed
- Oversee and manage trail construction through completion

**Eligible Projects:** All non-motorized trail types are eligible, but consideration will be given to multi-use trail types. All surface types are eligible and should meet contextual needs. All trails must be open to the public.

**Eligible Costs:** Trail construction (including upgrading surface type), land acquisition, design and engineering, and basic trail amenities. All eligible costs must occur within contract period.

**Match Requirement:** All grant requests require a minimum 20% match. Consideration will be given to projects exceeding 20%.

**Eligible Match:** Monetary contributions, land value, and in-kind donations of materials and labor.

**Project Evaluation:** Eligible projects will be evaluated by the Next Level Trails rating committee staffed by multiple State agencies. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

**Preference given to:**

- Projects that connect multiple cities, towns or counties.
- Projects that further the completion of the State Visionary Trail System (*regionally significant projects only*).
- Projects that connect schools, parks, neighborhoods, commercial centers or local attractions (*locally significant projects only*).
- Projects that connect or extend existing trails.
- Projects that maximize partnerships.
- Projects that are part of an existing regional, local, or comprehensive plan.
- Projects on an accelerated timeline.

**Consideration given to:**

- Projects offered in collaboration with another Next Level Trails applicant.
- Projects that are a part of a national or multi-state trail system (*regionally significant projects only*).
- Projects that connect trail users to nature (*locally significant projects only*).
- Projects in counties considered deficient in trail miles per capita (*locally significant projects only*).
- Projects that provide access to a population not currently within a 5-mile radius of a trail.
- Projects that develop the most miles of trail.
- Projects that accommodate multiple types of trail uses.
- Statewide distribution of NLT funds.
- Projects that exceed the minimum 20% match requirement.





**Project Timeline:** Grant recipients sign a contract with DNR, and projects are expected to be completed within a 4-year contract period. Preference will be given to projects on an accelerated timeline. Grant recipients will be awarded funds upfront based on major project milestones, including design and engineering, land acquisition and construction.

**Grant Rounds:** NLT funds will be awarded in three rounds until all funds have been allocated. The first and second rounds were concluded in 2019. The next round will be in 2020.

#### Grant Amounts

	Regionally Significant Projects	Locally Significant Projects
<b>Total Allocated</b>	\$70 million	\$20 million
<b>Grant Round 1</b>	\$19,844,839 awarded	\$5,067,881 awarded
<b>Grant Round 2</b>	Up to \$25 million available	Up to \$5 million available
<b>Grant Round 3</b>	TBD	TBD
<b>Minimum Request</b>	\$250,000	\$200,000
<b>Maximum Request</b>	\$5 million per applicant	\$2 million per applicant

If you want to know more about the NextLevel Trails grant or want to discuss potential projects, contact:

Division of Outdoor Recreation  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
402 West Washington Street, Room 271  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2782  
(317) 232-4070  
fax (317) 233-4648



## Shooting Range Program (SR)

### **What is the Indiana Shooting Range grant program?**

The Department of Natural Resources Shooting Range grant program is an assistance program for the development of rifle, handgun, shotgun, and archery facilities. The main objectives of this program are to provide the citizens of Indiana with additional and safer places to fire their guns, and train hunter education students.

### **Where are funds from?**

Funding for the Department of Natural Resources Shooting Range grant program comes from the Federal Aid to Wildlife Restoration Program which is commonly called the Pittman Robertson (P-R) Program, and from a federal excise tax on rifles, shotguns, handguns, ammunition and archery equipment. Funds are apportioned to state fish

and wildlife agencies based on the number of hunting license holders and each state's size in relation to the other states. Because of the need for local shooting opportunities in Indiana, the Division of Fish and Wildlife has made some of these funds available to local units of government and not-for-profit corporations for shooting range development.

### **How is funding received?**

The project sponsor will not receive a cash grant at the time of project approval. Instead, the sponsor must pay the bills and be reimbursed for a maximum of 75% of the expenses incurred for the project according to the terms of the project agreement.

### **What are local sources of funding?**

At the time of the application the project sponsor must have at least 25% of the total project cost available. The local share may include tax levies, bond issues, or force account contributions. The donated value of cash, labor, equipment and materials may also be used. Other sources of federal funding may not be used as a local match.

### **Grant funding amounts.**

The Shooting Range program will provide 75% matching reimbursing assistance for eligible projects. Applicants may request a minimum of \$10,000 with no maximum grant amount. Applications for this program are available from June 1 to September 1. The applications are available upon request and are due and/or post marked by September 1

### **Who is eligible?**

All units of government and agencies incorporated as not-for-profit corporations open to the public at least 20 hours per month will be eligible to participate.

### **Who administers the program?**

At the local level, the Division of Outdoor Recreation administers the program through the Division of Fish and Wildlife. At the federal level, it is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

### **What types of projects may be funded?**

Land acquisition is not eligible for reimbursement, nor will it be permitted for use as the local match. Development on leased property is permitted if the lease endures for the expected life of the facilities to be built, and provides for adequate public access. The grant applicant must agree to keep the project site in use as a public shooting range for the life of the facility.

Projects will be eligible for funding if they develop rifle, handgun, shotgun firing, or archery opportunities for public use. All facilities should be universally designed to accommodate all people. Facilities, programs and activities funded through this program must be open to the public without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national, origin, age or handicap.



### How do I apply?

The Shooting Range manual serves as the guidelines and application. Please use this document to complete your application. The appendix has all the forms needed to apply. If you want to know more about the Shooting Range grant or to receive the application/guidelines, contact...

State & Community Outdoor Recreation Planning Section  
 Division of Outdoor Recreation  
 Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
 402 West Washington Street, Room 271  
 Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2782  
 (317) 232-4070  
 fax (317) 233-4648

### SUMMARY OF ALL IDNR OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT PROGRAMS

Grant Program	Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)	Shooting Range
	Applications may include land acquisition and/or development, maintenance, and ethics education of multi-use trails.	Applications may consist of land acquisition and/or outdoor recreation facility construction or renovation.	Application may consist of development (not purchase) of rifle, handgun, shotgun, and archery opportunities.
<b>Funding Source</b>	Federal	Federal	Federal
<b>% Match</b>	80/20	50/50	75/25
<b>Min/Max Amount</b>	\$10,000-150,000	\$10,000-200,000	\$10,000-No Cap
<b>Grant Rounds</b>	Applications due by May 1	Applications due by June 1	Applications due by December 31
<b>Eligibility</b>	Units of Governments and 501(c)(3) not-for-profits	Park Board & 5-Year Park and Recreation Master Plan	Units of Governments and Not-for-profit corporations
<b>Funds Available</b>	Approx. \$1,000,000	Estimated \$500,000	Varies



## Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Public Facilities Program (PFP)

The goal of the program is to encourage communities with eligible populations to focus on long-term community development. Eligible applicants can apply for grant funding up to \$500,000. To be competitive, projects must demonstrate the following:

- The area to be served has a substantial low- and moderate-income population (51% or greater) or is designated a slum or blighted area by local resolution;
- The particular project addresses the long-term planning and development efforts of the community;
- The funds granted will have a significant impact on the overall project;
- The community has demonstrated a strong commitment to the project; and
- The project is ready to proceed upon grant award and will be completed within 18 months after grant award.

To be eligible for CFF assistance, projects must meet the following minimum requirements:

- The lead applicant must be a non-entitlement city, county or incorporated town that possesses the legal capacity to carry out the proposed program.
- The lead applicant may apply on behalf of a 501c3 not-for-profit organization for an eligible project, provided that the organization can document its not-for-profit status with the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, the Indiana Department of Revenue, and the Indiana Secretary of State.
- The proposed project must meet a national objective and be an eligible activity under the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Act. In general, the project must either:
  - benefit an area or clientele whose population is at least 51% low- and moderate-income, or
  - aid in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight.

At least 10% of the total project budget must be provided by the applicant. This local match must be in the form of cash or debt provided by the applicant or a third party. Other state or federal grant funds will not be considered as a part of the local match.

For more information, contact:

Indiana Office of Rural Affairs  
Community Development Block Grant Program  
One North Capitol, Suite 600  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204  
(317) 232-1703, (800) 824-2476



## Transportation Enhancements Program

Transportation enhancements (TE) are transportation-related activities that are designed to strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, and environmental aspects of the Nation's intermodal transportation system. The transportation enhancements program provides for the implementation of a variety of non-traditional projects, with examples ranging from the restoration of historic transportation facilities, to bike and pedestrian facilities, to landscaping and scenic beautification, and to the mitigation of water pollution from highway runoff.

TEA-21 expands the definition of transportation enhancements from 10 to specifically include 12 activities. The list of qualifying TE activities provided in 23 U.S.C. 101(a)(35) of TEA-21 is intended to be exclusive, not illustrative. That is, only those activities listed therein are eligible as TE activities. They are listed below:

1. Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles
2. Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists
3. Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites
4. Scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities)
5. Landscaping and other scenic beautification
6. Historic preservation
7. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals)
8. Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian or bicycle trails)
9. Control and removal of outdoor advertising
10. Archaeological planning and research
11. Environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff or reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity
12. Establishment of transportation museums

For more information, please contact the TE Program Coordinator or call (317) 232-5496, if you have any additional questions or comments about INDOT's Transportation Enhancements Program.



## Forest Management Cost Share Programs

The **Forest Improvement Program (FIP)** is concerned with the supply of wood products. The **Forest Stewardship Incentive Program (SIP)** is to encourage Stewardship for privately owned woodlands. The **Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** is intended to remove erodible land from row crop production. Maximum refund rates range up to 50% of your cost as approved by a district forester. All programs require that you follow a plan approved by a district forester and that you participate for at least 10 years.

To inquire about these programs, contact the Farm Services Agency Office or Natural Resources Conservation Service Office in the county where your land is located, or your [District Forester](#). If your land qualifies, a district forester will assess your needs, suggest a program and management strategy, provide guidelines and determine your maximum refundable cost.

### What Can Be Cost Shared?

Practices covered under these programs include:

- Timber Stand Improvement
- Tree Planting,
- Critical Area Stabilization
- Certain Fencing and some Wildlife Practices

Component parts for which you may be reimbursed include:

- Plantation Site Preparation
- [Nursery Stock](#)
- Planting of Trees
- Weed Control
- Cull Tree Removal
- Crop Tree Release
- Pre-commercial Thinning
- Pruning
- Vine Control
- Site Preparation for Natural Regeneration

### Tree Planting

If you plant trees for windbreaks, reforestation, future timber harvest or erosion control you may qualify for cost share assistance. For qualified land owners, FIP and SIP may refund up to 50% of planting costs. The CRP offers a 50% refund for initial costs and an annual crop rental fee for the required 10-year duration of the program. Under SIP at least 1 acre of trees must be planted, while FIP requires at least 10 acres.

For all programs, refundable cost limits are determined by a district forester or personnel from the [Farm Service Agency office](#). For any tree planting contact a [professional forester](#) for technical advice.

### Timber Stand Improvement

Timber Stand Improvement, or TSI, focuses on the future supply of wood products. Generally, trees grow faster and straighter if they are grown as a crop. This requires vine control, weed tree removal, thinning, site preparation for natural regeneration, and pruning. Your woods will also be more productive and profitable.

Under SIP and FIP you may be refunded up to 50% of the cost for TSI. You are also required to do TSI on at least 10 acres.





### **Critical Area Planting**

Critical areas include forest roads or other areas with erosion problems. If you plant trees, legumes or grasses to stabilize these you may be eligible for a 50% refund.

The [Natural Resource Conservation Service](#) has the technical responsibility for this practice. Your [district forester](#) can provide information on erosion control, logging roads and skid trails.

### **Implementation**

To participate in a cost-share program you can either do the work yourself or hire a [consultant forester](#). If you do the work you should follow the directions of your district forester.

If a consultant is hired, be aware that the maximum allowable financial assistance will not change. You will be paid 50% of the cost approved by the district forester or the [Farm Service Agency](#). If a consultant charges more than this, your refund will not increase.

For your own protection, verify the actual project cost before starting. Upon completion, the landowner, not the FSA office, must pay the consultant. You will be reimbursed by the FSA upon receipt of your bill.

You may wish to receive financial help for several forestry projects or for a project which will cost more than the maximum allowable refund. If so, ask about Long Term Agreements.

If you have any forest management questions or need technical assistance help is available from:

- [Consultant Foresters](#)
- Your [District Forester](#)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)  
<http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/>
- Farm Service Agency  
<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/default.asp>



### **Indiana Heritage Trust**

Established in 1992, the trust program has been developed to acquire real property that is an example of outstanding natural features and habitats, has historical and/or archaeological significance and provides areas for conservation, recreation and the restoration of native biological diversity. Money from this program is acquired from legislative appropriations, as well as, from donations through the purchase of the environmental license plates.

For more information, call 317-233-1002

### **Indiana Natural Resources Foundation**

The Indiana Natural Resources Foundation was established in 1990 and exists to accept gifts of money or property on behalf of the public. These gifts support the work of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to:

- Create and protect habitat,
- Acquire land for state parks, nature preserves and other properties,
- Enforce the laws that keep our wildlife healthy

For more information, please contact:

Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
IDNR Executive Offices  
402 W. Washington Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Phone (317) 233-1002



## Lake and River Enhancement Program

The Division of Fish & Wildlife's Lake and River Enhancement Program (LARE) goal is to ensure the continued viability of public-access lakes and streams by utilizing a watershed approach to reduce non-point source sediment and nutrient pollution of Indiana's and adjacent states' surface waters to a level that meets or surpasses state water quality standards.

**To accomplish this goal, the LARE Program provides technical and financial assistance for qualifying projects.**

**Approved grant funding may be used for one or more of the following purposes:**

1. Investigations to determine what problems are affecting a lake/lakes or a stream segment.
2. Evaluation of identified problems and effective action recommendations to resolve those problems.
3. Cost-sharing with land users in a watershed above upstream from a project lake or stream for installation or application of sediment and nutrient reducing practices on their land.
4. Matching federal funds for qualifying projects.
5. Watershed management plan development.
6. Feasibility studies to define appropriate lake and stream remediation measures.
7. Engineering designs and construction of remedial measures.
8. Water monitoring of public lakes.

### **Contact information:**

#### **Lake and River Enhancement Section**

Division of Fish and Wildlife  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
402 W. Washington Street, W-273  
Indianapolis, IN 46204  
Phone: 317-233-1484





# **APPENDIX A:**

## **PARK SURVEY and QUESTIONNAIRES**







## Marion Park Survey Results

*There were a total of 88 respondents.*

1) How often do you or member of your household visit Marion parks and/or recreation facilities?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
At least once a week	18.0%	16
A few times a month	38.2%	34
At least once a month	21.3%	19
Less than once a month	14.6%	13
At least once a year	4.5%	4
Rarely ever	3.4%	3

2) If you do not use Marion parks and/or recreation facilities, what are the reasons?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Parks/facilities are too busy	9.4%	6
Parks/facilities do not have the amenities I want	25.0%	16
Parks/facilities are too far from home/work	14.1%	9
I utilize private recreational facilities	18.8%	12
Other	28.1%	18

3) Have you visited City parks and/or recreation facilities more or less often in the past 12 months than in the year prior?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More	35.2%	31
Less	19.3%	17
About the same	45.5%	40

4) If you visited more often, what is the reason?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Save money, staying closer to home	12.7%	9
Better informed about parks amenities, events, etc.	26.8%	19
Facilities are better maintained	25.4%	18
Trying to lead a healthier lifestyle	23.9%	17
Other	11.3%	8



5) What Parks and Recreation-operated facilities/amenities do you visit the most often?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Neighborhood parks	22.3%	39
Picnic areas/shelters	11.4%	20
Walking/hiking/biking trails	29.1%	51
Athletic fields/courts	5.1%	9
Open spaces	12.0%	21
Splash House	6.3%	11
Skate park	0.6%	1
Disc golf	5.1%	9
Adult/Youth classes	1.1%	2
Other	6.9%	12

6) In what recreational activities do you participate when you visit City parks?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Sit/relax	18.3%	50
Hike/walk/bike/run	22.7%	62
Picnic	9.9%	27
Playground	16.8%	46
Athletic event	4.8%	13
Special event/festival	16.8%	46
Play with dog	8.8%	24
Other	1.8%	5

7) How important to you are each of the following benefits provided by Parks and Recreation?					
Answer Options	Most Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important
Enjoyment of open space/nature	29	47	10	0	2
Physical activity/health	18	46	19	3	2
Social interaction	7	24	35	18	3
Beauty and aesthetics of the City	29	45	10	3	1
Preservation and management of open space/nature	34	38	10	4	1
Maintenance of parks	47	39	1	0	1
Family friendly activities	35	33	13	4	3



8) How satisfied are you with the overall quality of Marion Parks and Recreation programs and facilities?					
Answer Options	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Parks	19	47	15	6	1
Trails	12	38	27	7	2
Facilities	8	36	19	18	5
Open spaces/natural areas	18	53	13	2	1
Programs and activities offered	12	32	31	11	2
Reasonableness of fees charged for facilities/activities/events	23	31	26	5	2

9) Would you recommend a Marion Parks and Recreation program/activity to friends?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	93.2%	82
No	6.8%	6



## #10 What activities/programs would you like to see offered that are not currently offered?

*8 each*

- concerts in the park

*6 each*

- activities for kids

*3 each*

- cleaner bathrooms
- nature education program
- adult sports programs
- dog park
- activities for adults
- splash pad

*2 each*

- kids sports programs
- pool
- more festivals
- gardening classes
- upgrade playgrounds
- clean up program
- summer programs
- softball fields
- basketball courts
- park in south Marion
- mountain biking trails
- miniature golf
- trail w/ exercises
- go karts
- canoeing, boating
- ice skating/hockey
- indoor play area
- upgrade shelters
- more bike trails
- more movies
- more walking trails
- more playgrounds
- yoga



## Marion Park Survey Comparison

### ***1) How often do you or member of your household visit Marion parks and/or recreation facilities?***

**2014**

A few times a month	35.2%
---------------------	-------

**2019**

A few times a month	38.2%
---------------------	-------

### ***2) If you do not use Marion parks and/or recreation facilities, what are the reasons?***

**2014**

Parks/facilities do not have the amenities I want	24.4%
---------------------------------------------------	-------

**2019**

Parks/facilities do not have the amenities I want	25.0%
---------------------------------------------------	-------

### ***3) Have you visited City parks and/or recreation facilities more or less often in the past 12 months than in the year prior?***

**2014**

More	38.0%
------	-------

**2019**

About the same	45.5%
----------------	-------

### ***4) If you visited more often, what is the reason?***

**2014**

Trying to be healthier	34.5%
------------------------	-------

**2019**

Better informed about parks amenities, events, etc.	26.8%
-----------------------------------------------------	-------

### ***5) What Parks and Recreation-operated facilities/amenities do you visit the most often?***

**2014**

Hiking/biking trails	19.3%
----------------------	-------

**2019**

Walking/hiking/biking trails	29.1%
------------------------------	-------



**6) In what recreational activities do you participate when you visit City parks?**

**2014**

Hike/walk/bike/run	25.0%
--------------------	-------

**2019**

Hike/walk/bike/run	22.7%
--------------------	-------

**7) How important to you are each of the following benefits provided by Parks and Recreation?**

**2014**

Maintenance of parks	40	19
----------------------	----	----

**2019**

Maintenance of parks	47	39
----------------------	----	----

**8) How satisfied are you with the overall quality of Marion Parks and Recreation programs and facilities?**

**2014**

Parks	13	28
-------	----	----

**2019**

Open spaces/natural areas	18	53
---------------------------	----	----

**9) Would you recommend a Marion Parks and Recreation program/activity to friends?**

**2014**

Yes	77.0%
-----	-------

**2019**

Yes	93.2%
-----	-------





## Marion Park Survey Summary

A survey (via SurveyMonkey) was made available to the general public of Marion. The survey link was made available via website and social media platforms for the City and the Parks and Recreation department (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) and through placement at various public buildings. The survey started on October 24, 2019 and ran for 3 weeks. A total of 88 surveys were completed.

These questions were the same that were asked in the 2014 Citizen Survey.

### Park Visitation

The survey asked how often and why people visited the parks. When asked how often they visited park properties the answer was the same in 2014 as it was in 2019 which was a few times per month. The reason for people visiting the parks was to lead a healthier lifestyle in 2014, but in 2019 it was driven by the fact that they have better information about the parks and activities. When asked if they didn't use the park facilities the reason was the same, because the parks did not have the amenities they wanted.

### Amenities/Activities

When asked which amenities they use the most the answer was the same for each survey period, trails for walking/hiking/biking. That followed suit with what type of recreational activity they most participated in which was to walk/hike/run/bike.

### Parks Overall

When asked about their overall satisfaction with the park system, people responded that the park space was the best quality about the parks in Marion. They resoundingly would recommend the Marion parks to family and friends with a rating of 93% in the 2019 survey which was up from 77% in 2014. The most important item to park visitors was the upkeep and maintenance of the parks.

### Top Amenities/Activities Requested (times mentioned):

#### Activities (8)

- Concerts in the park (*cancelled in 2019*)

#### Activities (6)

- Activities for kids

#### Activities (3 each)

- Nature education program
- Adult sports programs
- Activities for adults

#### Amenities (3 each)

- Dog park
- Splash pad
- Cleaner bathrooms



## Marion Park Board Survey

### Questions for Park Board Members City of Marion, Indiana

1. What are your long-range goals for the Park Board and Department?
2. Should programs of the Parks Department be increased or expanded? If yes, identify.
3. Should new programs be developed? If yes, explain.
4. Is the Department able to meet its current and projected financial obligations?
5. Do city residents believe their tax dollars are wisely utilized and allocated?
6. What are the highest priority capital improvements needed by the Department?  
(examples: trails, community center, sports complex, playground equipment, restrooms)
7. Should the Department acquire more land?  
If yes, do you have suggested locations or areas for expansion?
8. Would city residents support increases in park fees?
9. Would city residents support a tax increase for capital improvements for parks?
10. Is the Department maximizing its relationship with other governmental and private agencies?  
(e.g., city, township, county, school district, college)
11. What is the public's image of the Department?
12. What are the greatest challenges facing the Department in the next 5 years?



## Marion Park Board Summary

### Goals

When asked about long range goals, the responses ranged from sustaining the current park system and making only improvements as necessary on deteriorating facilities to adding new trails, a dog park and more basketball courts. When asked should the parks department acquire more land it was a definite no.

### Amenities

*Capital improvements wanted for the next 5 years were as such:*

- New basketball courts(2)
- Maintenance on restrooms(3), shelters(3), Splash House(2), Riverwalk
- Well to water Ballard Field

### Programming/Activities

Programming for the parks, either expanding current programs and/or adding new programs, was determined to be a resounding no from the board members. It seemed as if the concern is on physical park amenities for now given budgetary and employee constraints.

### Financial

The some of the Board felt that there was enough money for the department to maintain at the current level of service while others did not think the level of funding was sufficient. If they thought the public felt their tax dollars were being well spent the consensus was generally yes, but they could improve. When asked would the community support increased park fees and taxes for funding the parks it was a resounding no on both. The financial situation was also the top concern when asked what the biggest challenge would be for the parks in the future. Most felt that budget constraints and lack of funding will hamper any efforts for improvements and even for general maintenance of existing facilities/programs.

### Image/Community Relationships

Most felt that the parks have a good image in the community. Partnerships within the community were seen to be a strength of the parks department, but could use improvement.



## Marion Community Leaders Survey

### Questions for Community Leaders City of Marion, Indiana

1. Do you believe the existing facilities/programs meet the needs of all age groups?
2. Should existing facilities/programs be increased? If yes, identify which in particular:
3. Should new facilities/programs be added? If yes, identify which in particular:
4. How can the Parks Department best serve the recreation needs of the residents within its boundaries?
5. Do you believe Parks Department facilities are properly maintained?
6. Do you believe the Parks Department wisely allocates the city's tax dollars?
7. Would city residents support an increase in taxes or fees for?
  - *Increased land acquisition?*
  - *Park improvements, e.g., new restrooms, boat ramp, bikeways, playground equipment, accessibility, etc.?*
  - *New or expanded programs?*
8. What is the public's image of the Parks?
9. What are some long-range goals you recommend that the Park Board consider?
10. Any additional thoughts....



## Marion Community Leaders Summary

### Goals

- Improving neighborhood parks.
- Planting more trees.
- Improving maintenance.
- Summer programs.
- Lighting and security cameras.
- More and updated playground equipment.
- Improve basketball courts at 14<sup>th</sup> St. Park.
- Swimming pool.

### Amenities

When asked if the existing park facilities should be increased or added to the responses were centered on lack of parks in central and south Marion, accessibility for the elderly and youth and safety. When asked if the current facilities met the needs of all age groups the response was split between yes and no.

*Here were the responses:*

- Yes, central Marion doesn't have any parks other than Splash House and skate park.
- Center city and south Marion have no parks.
- Yes, I would like to see more money into the softball field.
- Safety along the trail.
- The senior citizens and youth have no accessibility to parks.
- No, we have a great selection of opportunities already.

### Programming/Activities

When asked if the existing park programs should be increased or added to the responses were mixed. Some were concerned with maintaining and promoting the current programs, others were supportive to add and/or bring back programs that had been cancelled, while others thought the current programming was sufficient. When asked if the current programming met the needs of all age groups the response was split between yes and no.

*Here were the responses:*

- More and better advertising of existing programs.
- Bring back concerts in the park.
- Several people wondered whether the parks department could resume summer programs at some of the neighborhood parks. We used to have programs for things such as craft-making, local history and such. Perhaps this could be a cooperative effort between the city, the school system, 4-H, master gardeners and other organizations.
- Programs for families.



- Add programs for children and seniors.
- No, we have a great selection of opportunities already.

### **Needs**

When asked if the parks are serving the needs of the community it varied from adding more programs and amenities, better maintenance and safety, focusing on the needs of the handicapped and smaller children to they are satisfying the needs of the community.

### **Image**

When asked about the public's image of the parks the resounding answer was Matter Park had a positive image, but the rest of the parks were suffering and needed improvements.

### **Maintenance**

When asked if the parks were properly maintained, the response was generally yes. Some of the consensus was that Matter Park in fact was the only park being properly maintained. Others could use improvement in the area of maintenance.

### **Financial**

When asked if they thought the parks department was using the tax dollars wisely, the general consensus was yes, although Matter Park seemed to be the focus of the dollars spent. One thought was to take better advantage of grants and fundraising efforts.

When asked if residents would support tax increases to fund capital and programming improvements, the results were a definite no for any new land acquisitions, split for any new facility amenities and no for new programming.





## **APPENDIX B**

# **PUBLIC MEETINGS**





## **Marion 5-Year Master Park Plan Public Meeting**

**Monday January 13, 2020  
6:00 PM**

### **Agenda:**

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Overview of Park Planning
- 3) Marion's Park Plan
- 4) Needs Discussion
- 5) Public Comment
- 6) Next Steps



## Marion 5-Year Master Park Plan Public Meeting

Monday January 13, 2020  
6:00 PM

### Sign-In:

#### Name

1. Ruthann Mary Triangle Neighborhood Garden Club
2. Sandy McGrath Garden Club of Marion
3. Shelby
4. DAVID GAULT DANAGRAULT Bricker Heights
5. STEVE Wright - walkway of lights
6. Tim Moorhead Walkway of LIGHTS / RIVERSIDE FCU
7. Don David Moore - Park Board Member
8. Agnes
9. JULIE FAUSER
10. Rose Cadena
11. Kellie Shen - Park Board Member
12. Deborah Cain - city council
13. Duane Church
14. Tammy Philburn - Harry Cramer N.A. vicepres. dent
15. Chris Mayer

↓ (over)

16. Kayle Johnson
17. James Toft
18. Randy Hiett
19. Jess Alumbaugh - Mayor
20. Greg Smart
21. Andrew Maciejewski
22. JLO Benoit - PARK BOARD MEMBER
23. Brad Luzadder City Council
24. Ron Louca City Council
25. Jim Brunner City Council - Park BO



## FINAL PUBLIC MEETING

### CANCELLED

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Indiana Governor Holcomb issued a moratorium on public gatherings of more than 10 people. The IDNR revised its requirements for the final plan presentation to the general public. Instead of holding a public meeting, the City made the final Plan available on its website and social media platforms.

Comments can be found below:

**TBD**