

# TOWN OF WHITELAND PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN



## Welcome to the Public Meeting!

- Please sign-in
- Visit each of the four stations to learn about the planning process and plan organization.
- Do you have any feedback or comments on the Plan? Leave us a comment card in the box next to the sign-in sheet.





# WHY PLAN FOR PARKS?

The Town of Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the Town’s first five-year parks and recreation master plan. The purpose of the Plan is to establish a blueprint for parks, trails, and open space in the Town of Whiteland that is backed by and belongs to the community. Since the Town is a “blank slate” for parks and recreation, it is critical that it establishes a framework to help guide future facility and service development. This will ensure safe, convenient connections to quality parks and open space for all current and future residents.

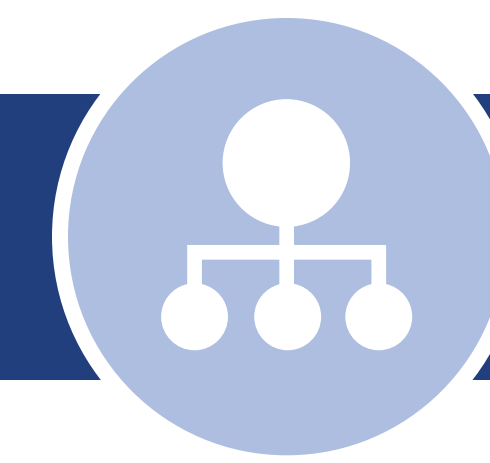
The intent of the Plan is to provide a clear sense of direction for Whiteland’s parks and recreation system through a series of priority goals and objectives and a strategic action plan, or “to-do” list. The plan will use a combination of the Town’s existing conditions and community engagement opportunities to inform the creation of strategies that prioritize current and future parks and recreation needs in Whiteland. The recommendations set forth in this document will allow Town of Whiteland officials, community stakeholders, and residents to work together in building a park and recreation system that protects the Town’s natural assets, meets recreational needs, and celebrates its sense of community.



# PLANNING PROCESS



- ORIENTATION + PROGRAMMING**
  - Project organization and scheduling
  - Identification of key stakeholders
  - Gathering of all relevant documents.
- RESEARCH + ANALYSIS**
  - Needs assessment
  - Inventory of existing facilities, amenities, and programs
  - Community Profile
  - Benchmarking
  - Trends
- FINDINGS + VISIONING**
  - Analysis of key issues, ideas and themes
  - Feedback from staff, key stakeholders, and the community
- PLANNING STRATEGIES**
  - Summary of findings
  - Short and long term strategies
  - Recommendations and action plan
- PLAN ADOPTION**
  - Review of the final plan with the staff, key stakeholders, and the community



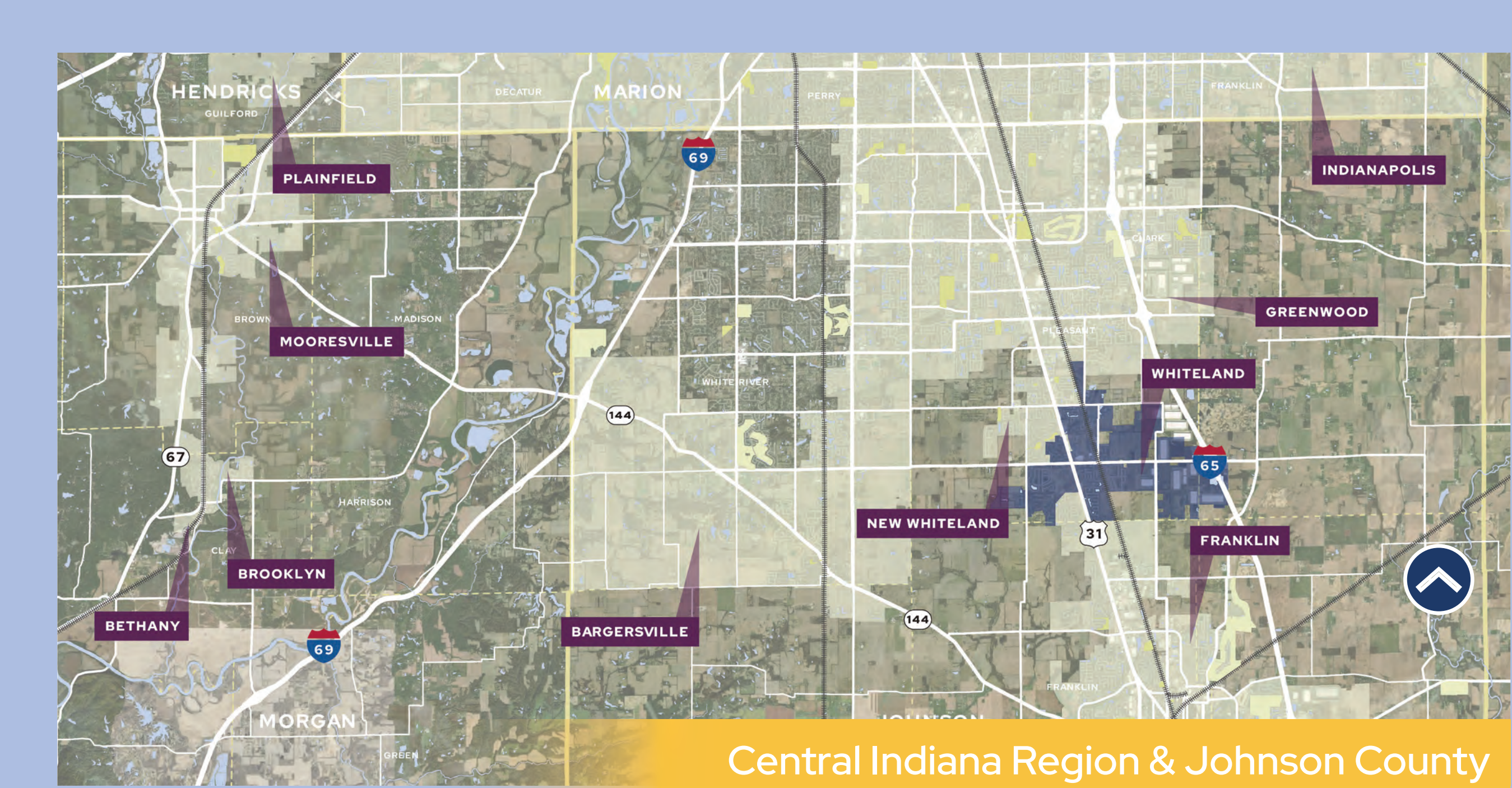
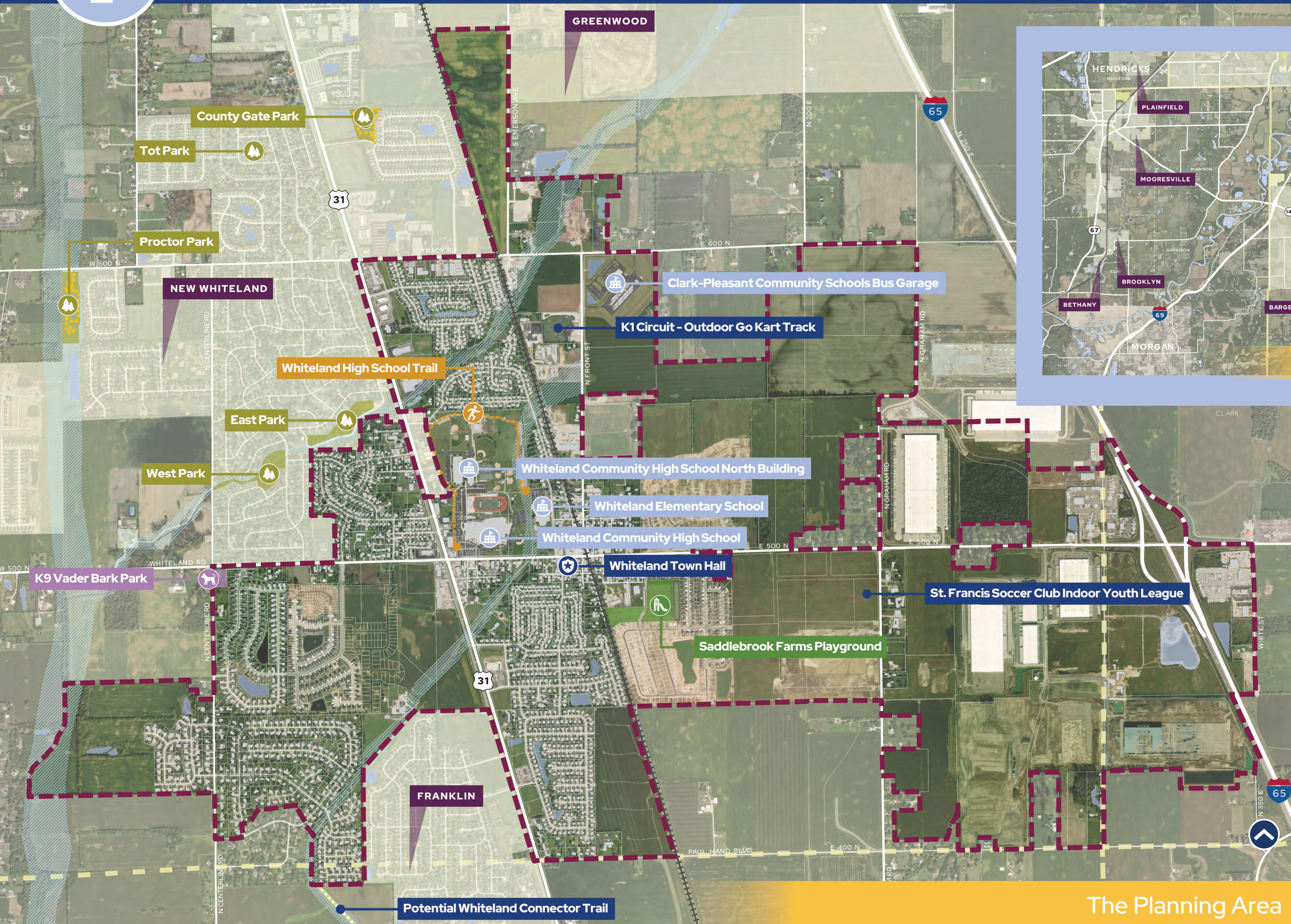
# HOW IS THE PLAN ORGANIZED?

- CHAPTER ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION**
- CHAPTER TWO**  
**COMMUNITY PROFILE**
- CHAPTER THREE**  
**PARKS & OPEN SPACE SYSTEM**
- CHAPTER FOUR**  
**NEEDS ANALYSIS**
- CHAPTER FIVE**  
**PRIORITIES & STRATEGIC ACTIONS**
- CHAPTER SIX**  
**FUNDING SOURCES**
- CHAPTER SEVEN**  
**EVALUATION**





# INTRODUCTION



Central Indiana Region & Johnson County

## Introductory Snapshot

- The planning area encompasses the incorporated area of the Town of Whiteland
- The Whiteland Parks and Recreation Department was established in 1988
- Whiteland currently has only one park, the K9 Vader Bark Park
- The Whiteland Parks Board was created in 2024
- Whiteland currently has only one trail, the Whiteland Community High School Trail
- The Whiteland Parks Board consists of 4 governing members.

The Planning Area





# COMMUNITY PROFILE

The community profile is a comprehensive snapshot of the Town of Whiteland, built from several key elements that help determine the characteristics of the community and what kinds of parks facilities, amenities, and recreation programming it needs in the future.



## DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographics encompasses the social and economic factors of the people living in Whiteland, including information such as age, population growth, income, housing, and employment. These factors are used to develop an understanding of the recreation issues facing the community.



## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The natural environment encompasses the natural features of Whiteland in terms of its current uses and future potential. It includes items such as topography and geology, soils, hydrology, woodlands, wildlife, invasive species, and impacts to current park properties and town-owned lands.



## MANMADE, HISTORICAL & CULTURAL

The manmade, historical, and cultural features of Whiteland impact the parks system today and in the future. These features include transportation, historical sites, education facilities, cultural growth, and public art.

### Demographics Snapshot

**median age of 36.3 years**



Whiteland has a greater middle-aged population than Johnson County and the state of Indiana and has aged since 2000.

**85.5% of homes are owner-occupied**



The number of homeowners in the Whiteland is increasing.

**10.3% population rise since 2010**



Whiteland is growing faster than Johnson County, with a 10.3% population rise since 2010 compared to that of Johnson County at 3.7%.

**current vacancy rate of 2%**



Whiteland's vacancy rate of 2% is significantly lower than that of Johnson County at 8% and the state of Indiana at 11.3%.

**median income of \$88,411**



There are more middle-class households in Whiteland compared to the state of Indiana and Johnson County.

**unemployment rate of 2.40%**



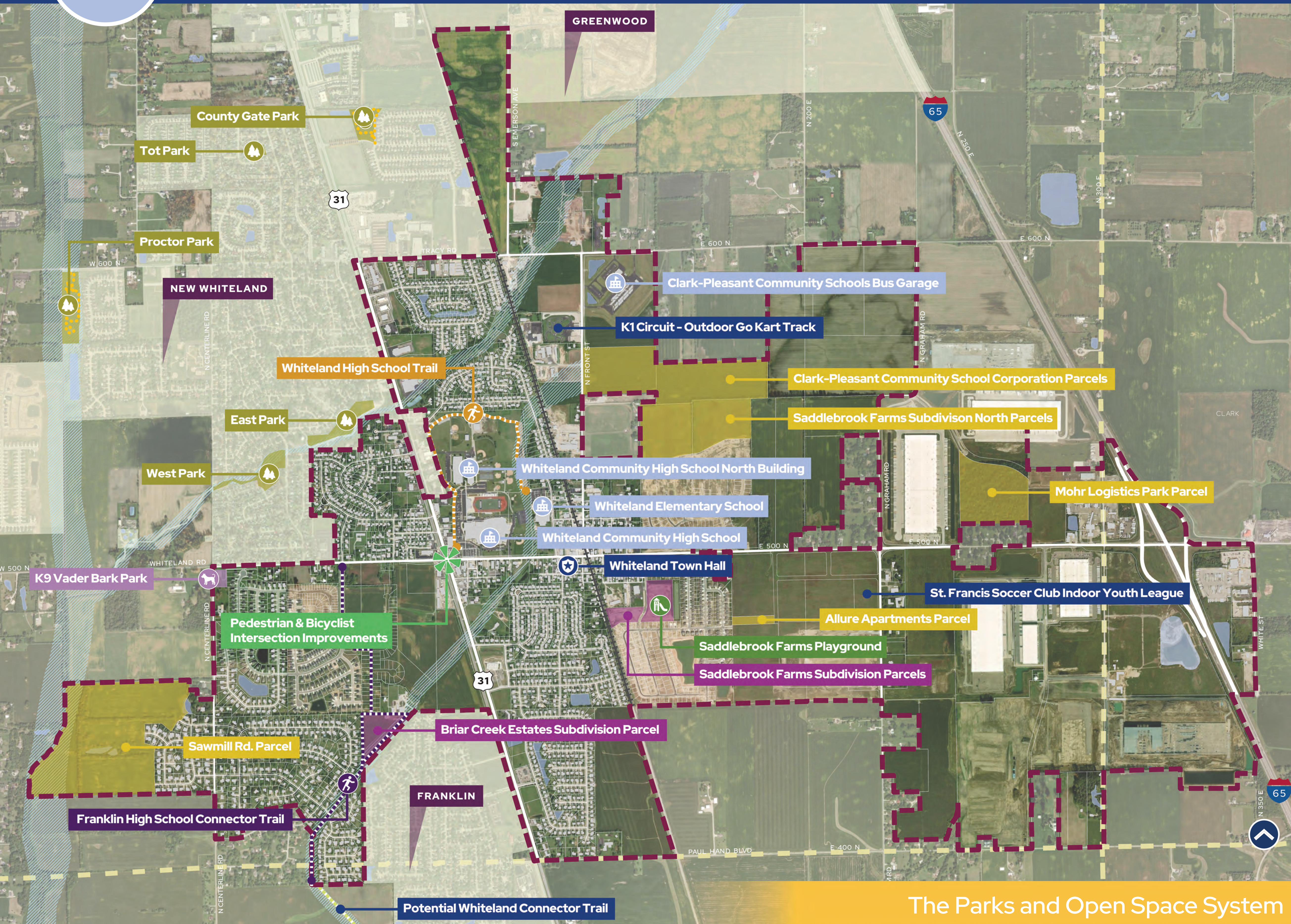
Whiteland's unemployment rate is lower than that of Johnson County and the state of Indiana.







# THE PARKS & OPEN SPACE SYSTEM




The Parks and Open Space System

The Town of Whiteland parks and open space system is significantly limited. While Whiteland has the potential to offer quality parks and open space, it has fallen behind its neighbors, forcing residents to go beyond Whiteland to meet their recreation needs.

Financial limitations have prevented the Town from adding additional park properties, which has been part of the Town's comprehensive plan for the past several years. To grow their parks and open space system, the Town has chosen to expand public amenities with support from developers with incremental investments from the town.

To best support the needs of residents, and to develop a better understanding of how current, future, and potential properties contribute to the overall parks and open space system in Whiteland, the inventory of parks and open space has been defined as follows:

 **Current Park Properties**  
These are park properties that are owned and operated by the Town of Whiteland.

 **Trails**  
These are trails that are located within Whiteland. Trails may be owned and operated by the Town of Whiteland or other providers.

 **Potential Trails**  
These are potential trails that could be constructed in the future to expand connectivity within and beyond Whiteland using drainage and utility easements and existing sidewalks.

 **Town-Owned Properties**  
These are properties that are owned by the Town and not formally designated as park space but have been earmarked by the Town for future parks and recreation development.

 **Potential Park Properties**  
These are properties that are not owned by the Town but is future land that could be utilized for parks and open space.





# THE PARKS & OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

**K9 Vader Bark Park**



**Whiteland High School Trail**



**Franklin High School Connector Trail**



**Saddlebrook Farms Parcels**



**Brair Creek Estates Parcel**



**Allure Apartments Parcel**



**Saddlebrook Farms North Parcels**



**Clark-Pleasant School Corp. Parcels**



**Sawmill Rd. Parcel**



**Mohr Logistics Park Parcel**

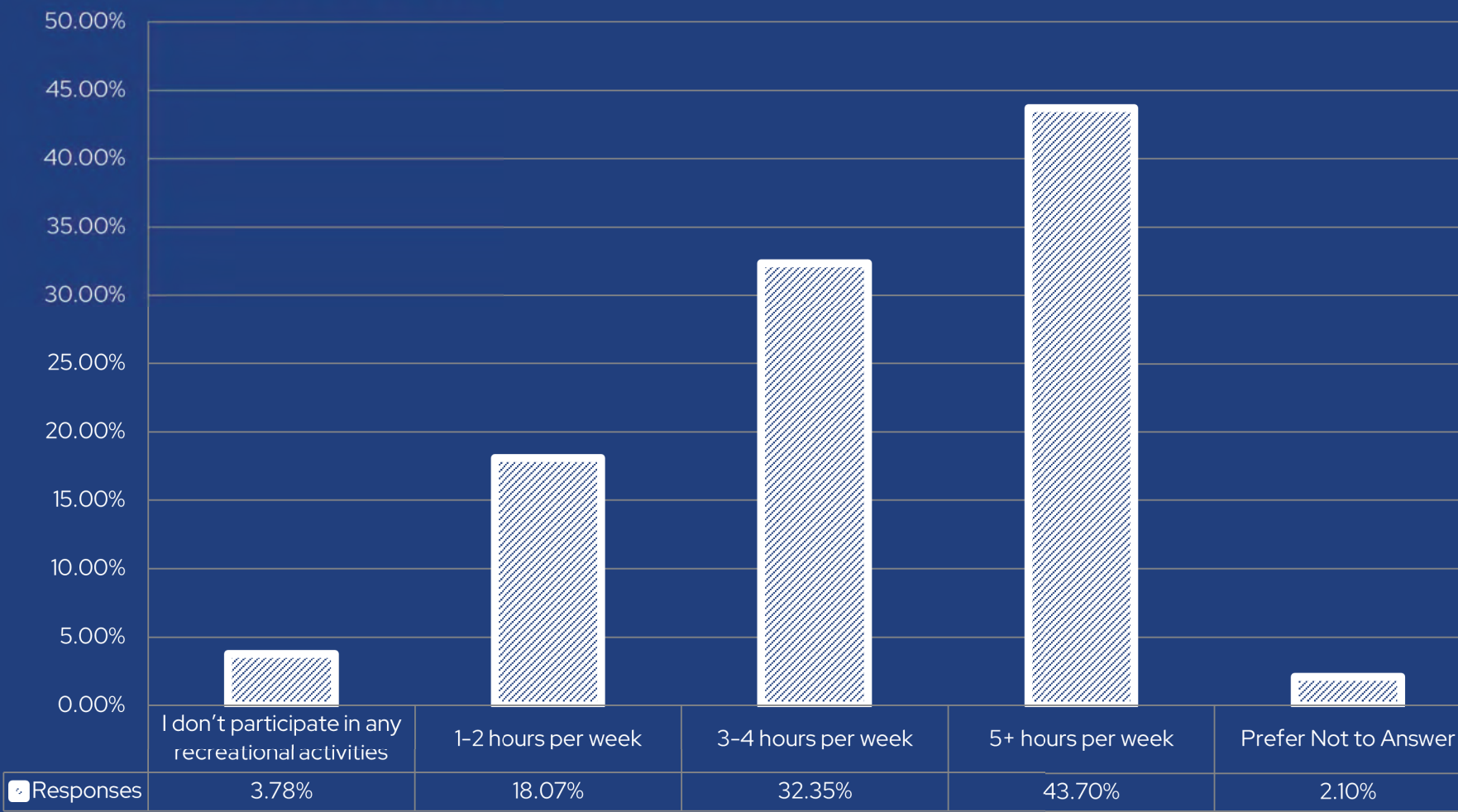




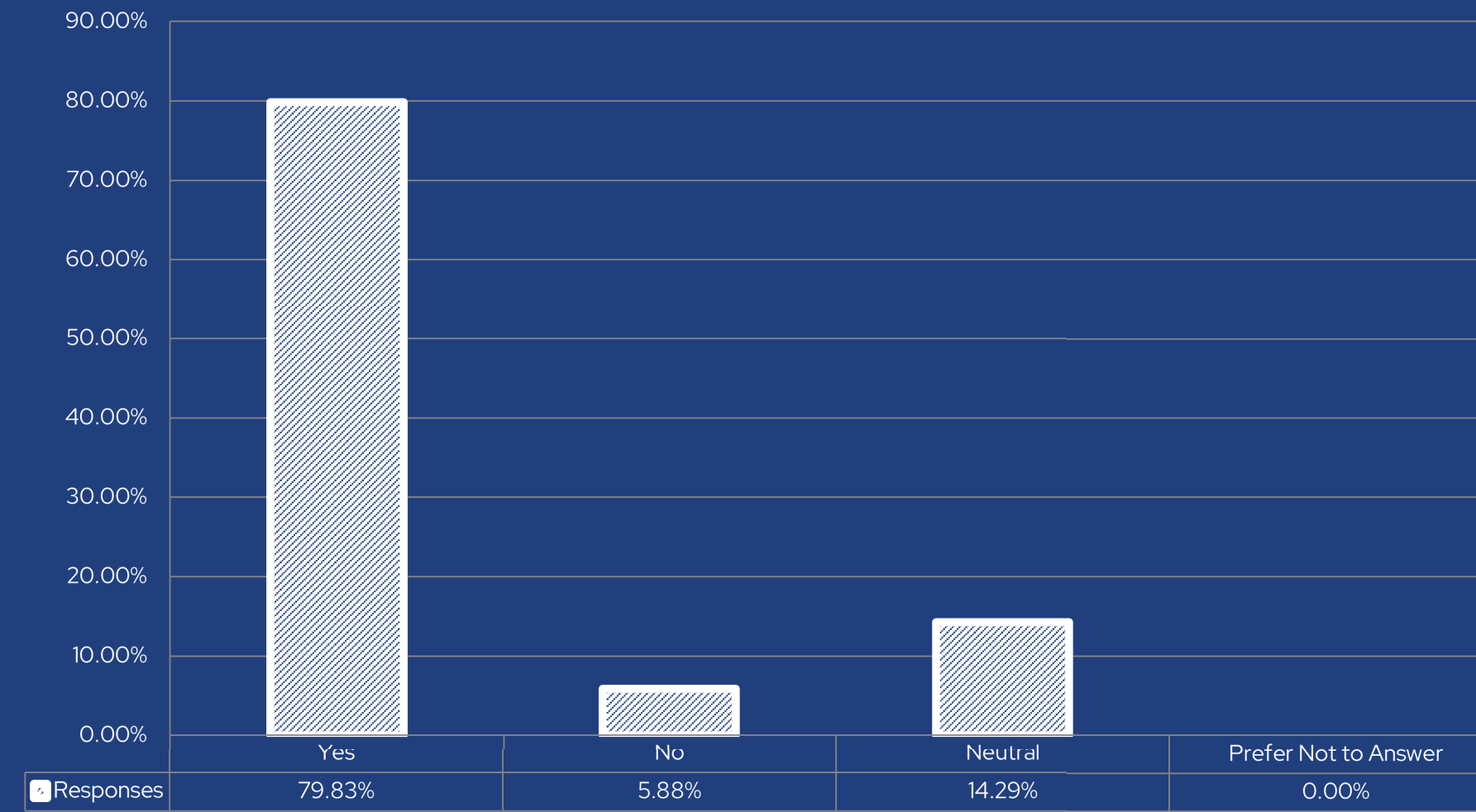


# NEEDS ANALYSIS

APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK DO YOU SPEND ON OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES?



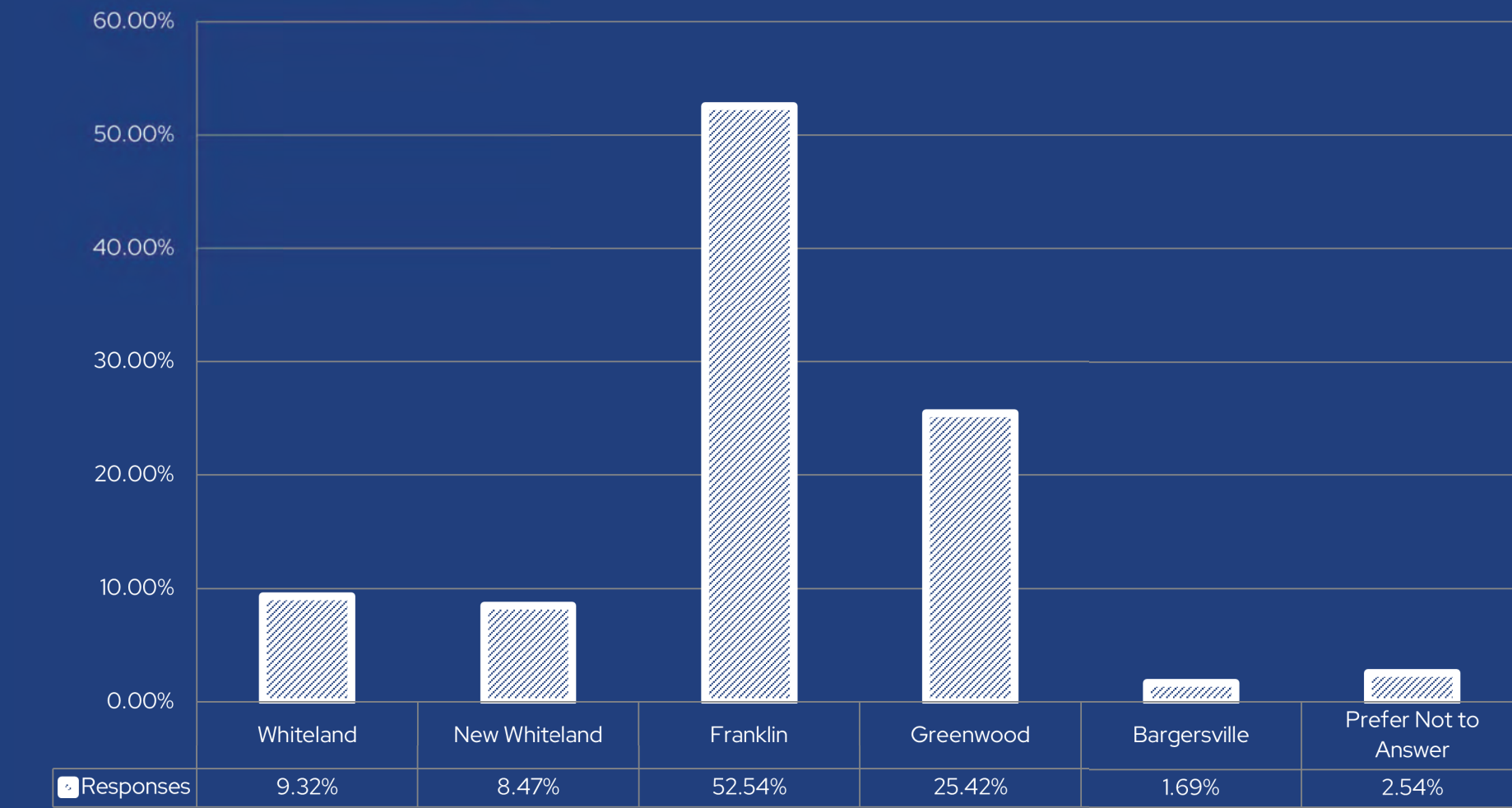
IN YOUR OPINION, IS IT IMPORTANT TO YOU TO HAVE A PARK WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF YOUR HOME?



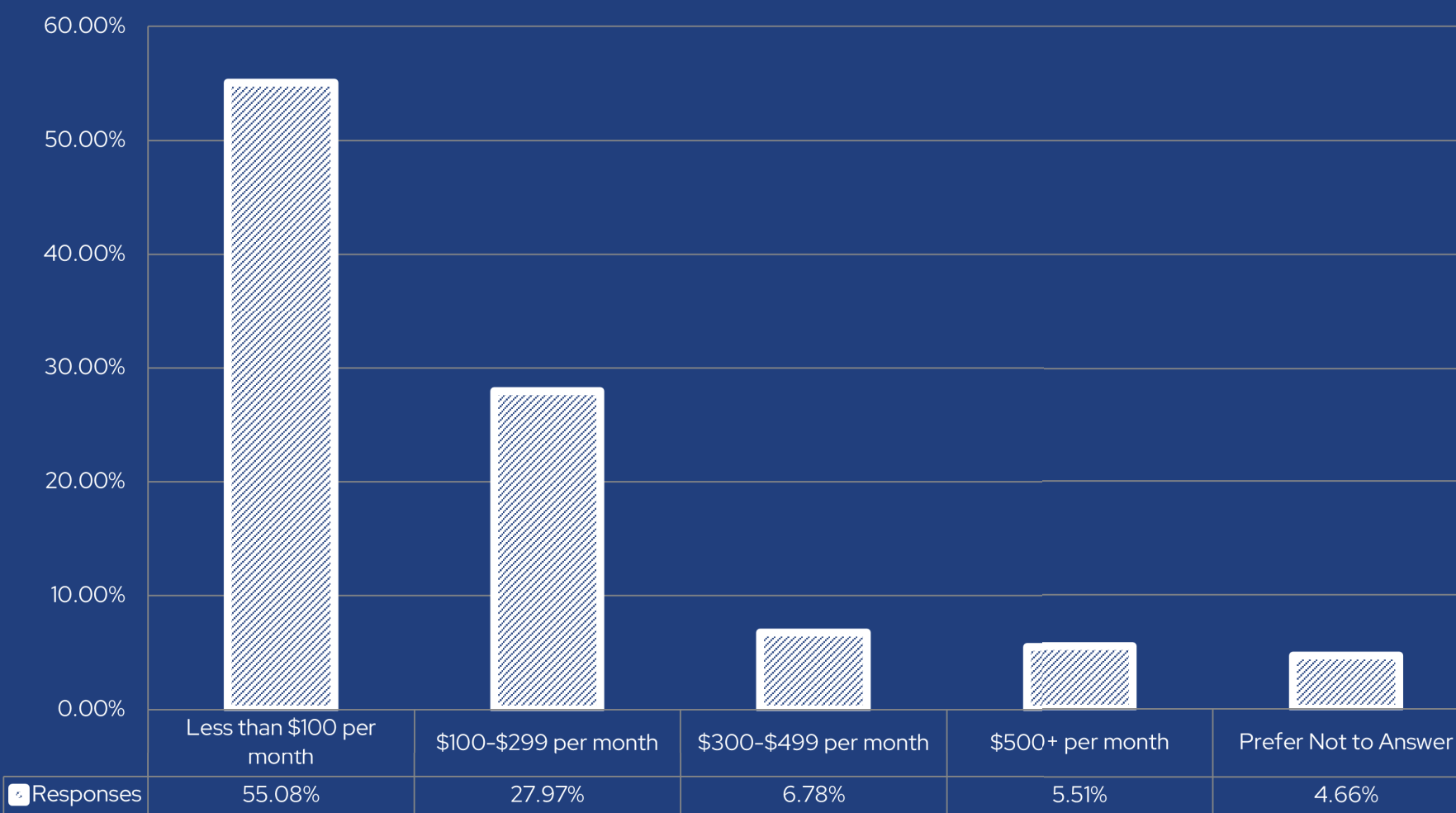
**52.54%**  
visited

The City of Franklin's parks and recreation facilities and amenities were visited most often in Johnson County by respondents.

WHERE DO YOU VISIT PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MOST OFTEN IN JOHNSON COUNTY?



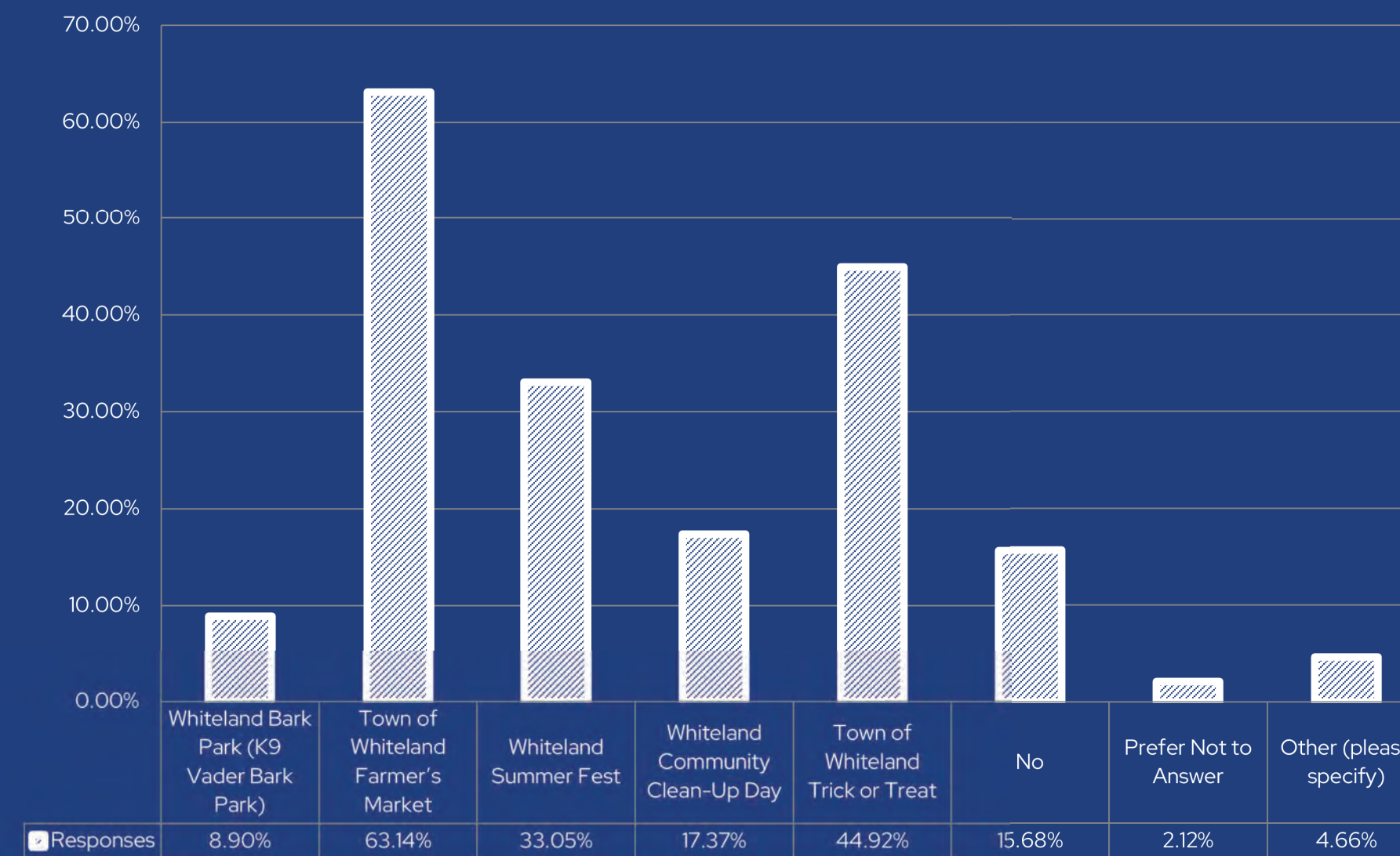
APPROXIMATELY HOW MUCH MONEY DO YOU SPEND PER MONTH ON RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES?



**63.14%**  
visited

The Whiteland Farmer's Market is one of the most popular programs amongst respondents that is currently offered by the Town of Whiteland.

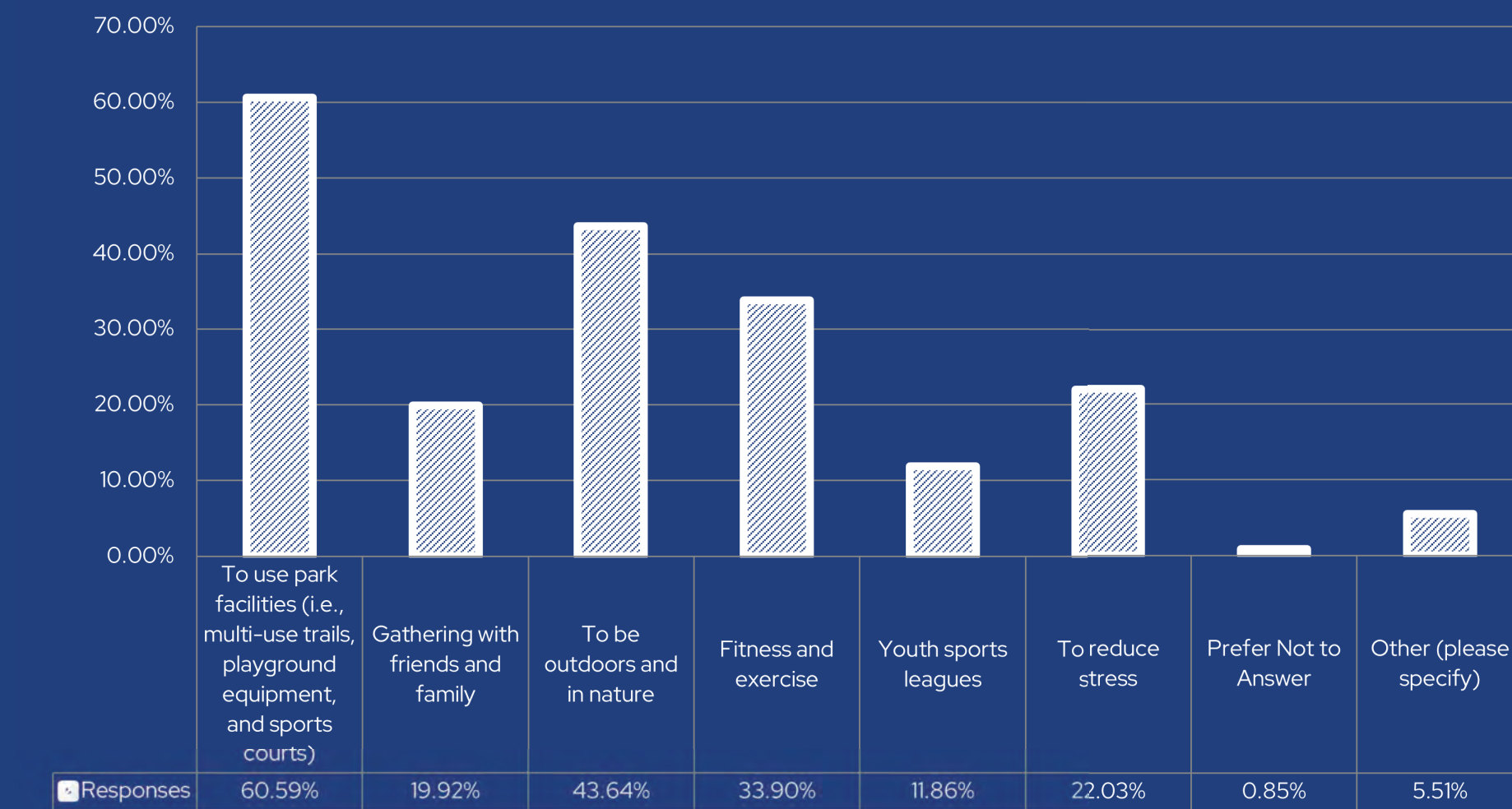
HAVE YOU OR ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD VISITED PARK FACILITIES OR PARTICIPATED IN COMMUNITY EVENTS OFFERED BY THE TOWN OF WHITELAND IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?



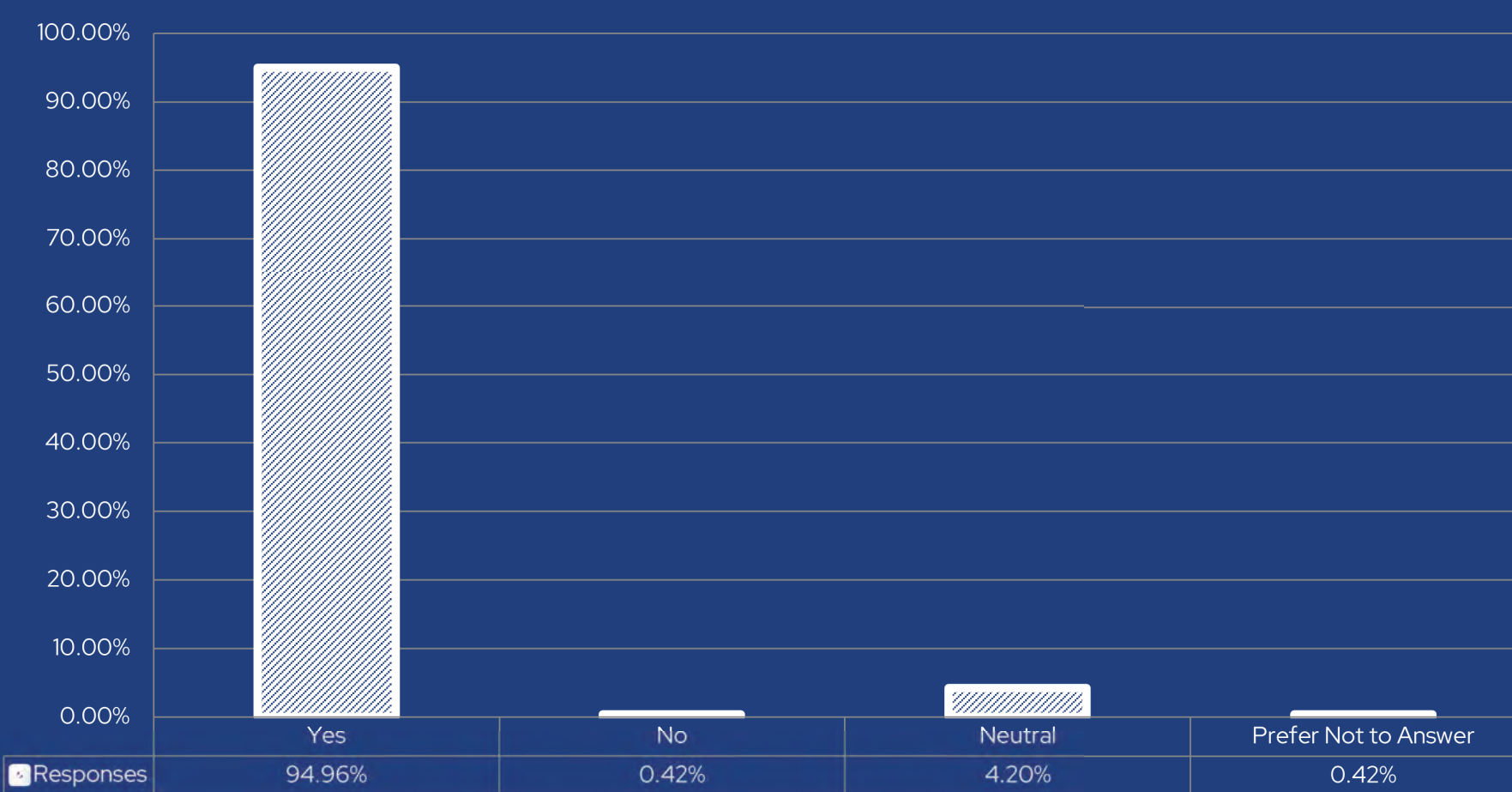
**60.59%**  
agreed

The primary motivation for visiting parks and open space in Johnson County for most respondents was to use park facilities.

WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR VISITING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE IN JOHNSON COUNTY?



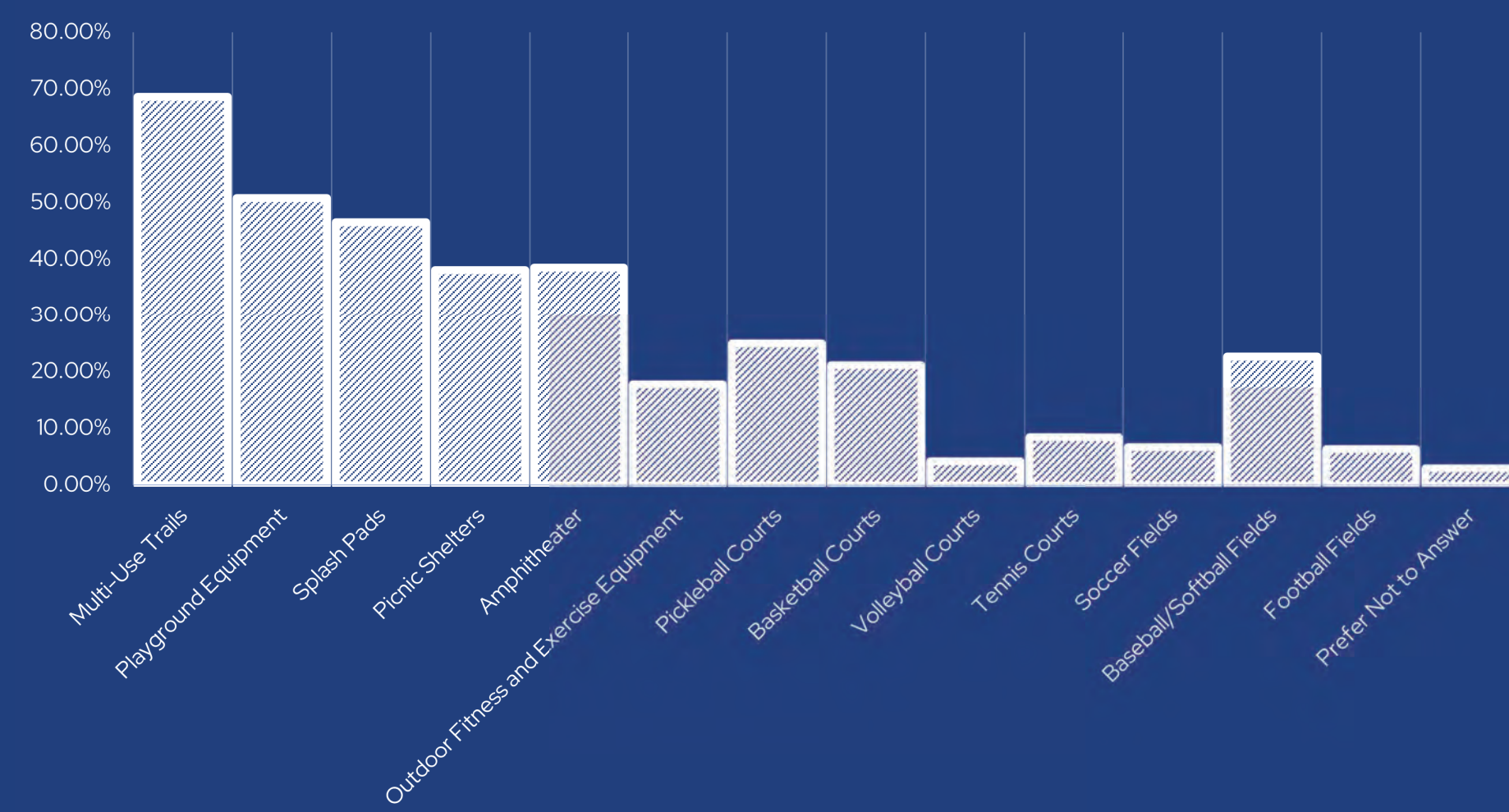
IN YOUR OPINION, ARE PARK AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IMPORTANT TO YOUR PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING?



**43.64%**  
agreed

The primary motivation for visiting parks and open space in Johnson County was to be outdoors and in nature.

WHICH FACILITIES DO YOU USE WHEN VISITING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE IN JOHNSON COUNTY?

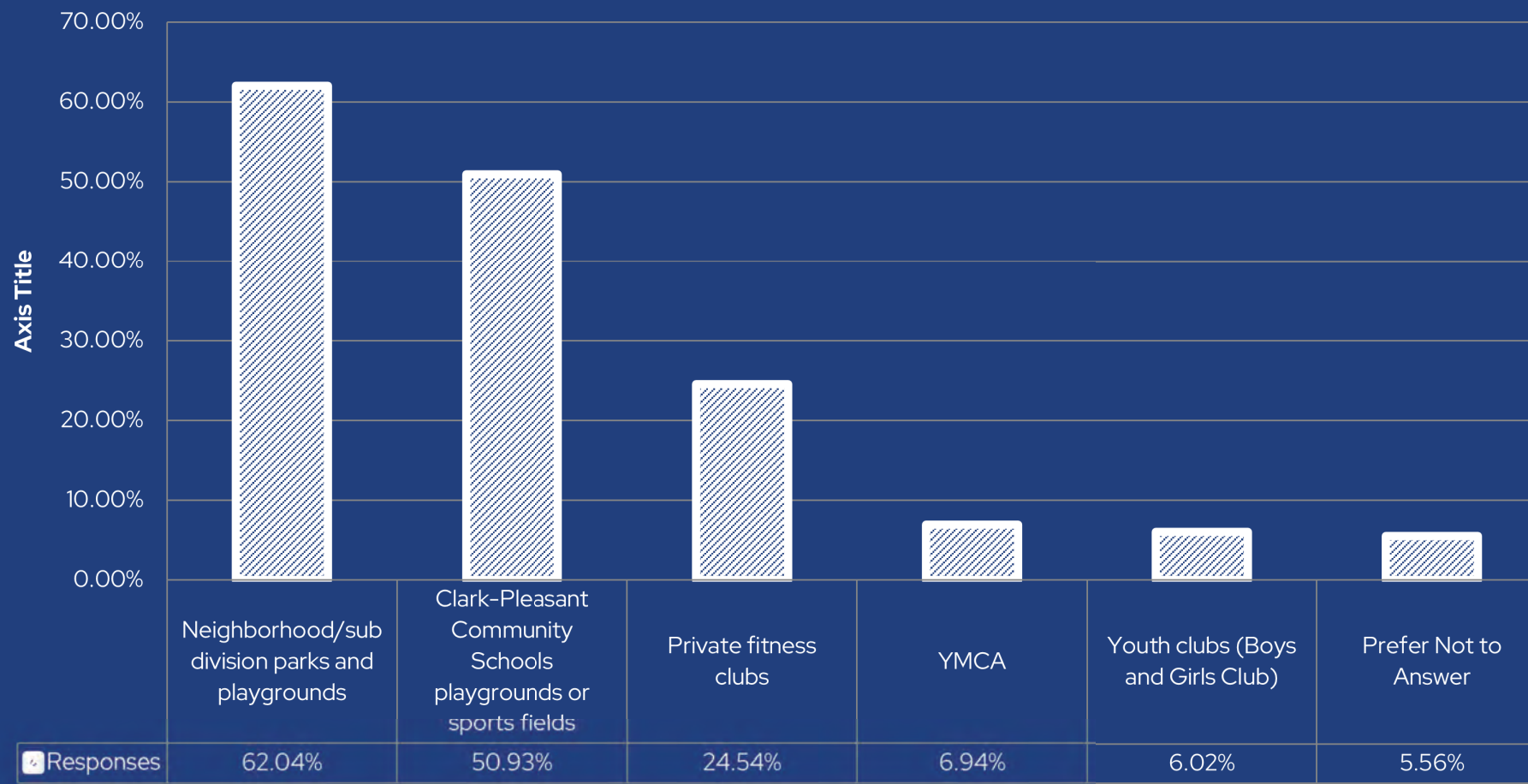




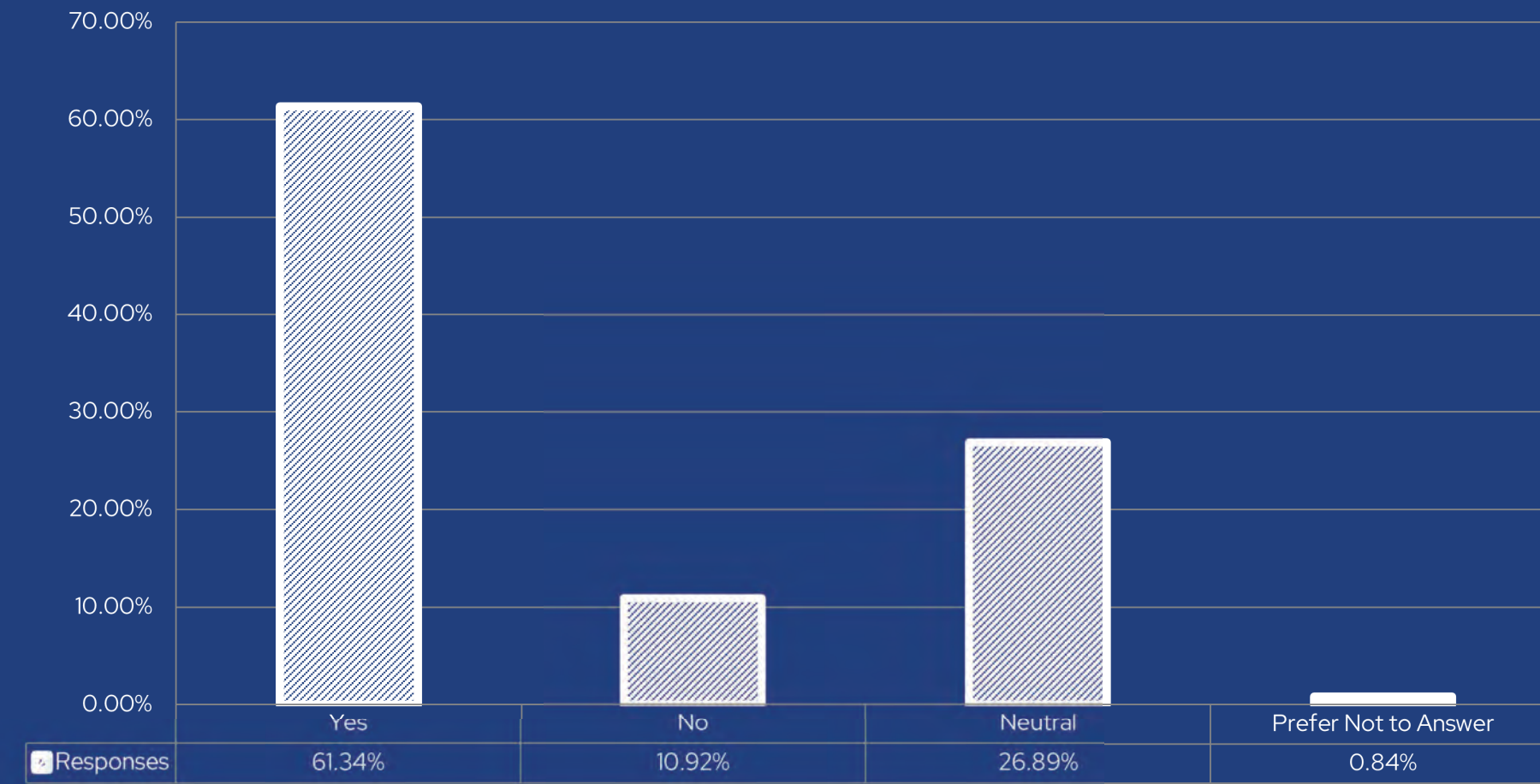


# NEEDS ANALYSIS

IN THE PAST YEAR, WHICH FACILITIES PROVIDED BY OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE YOU AND/OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD VISITED?



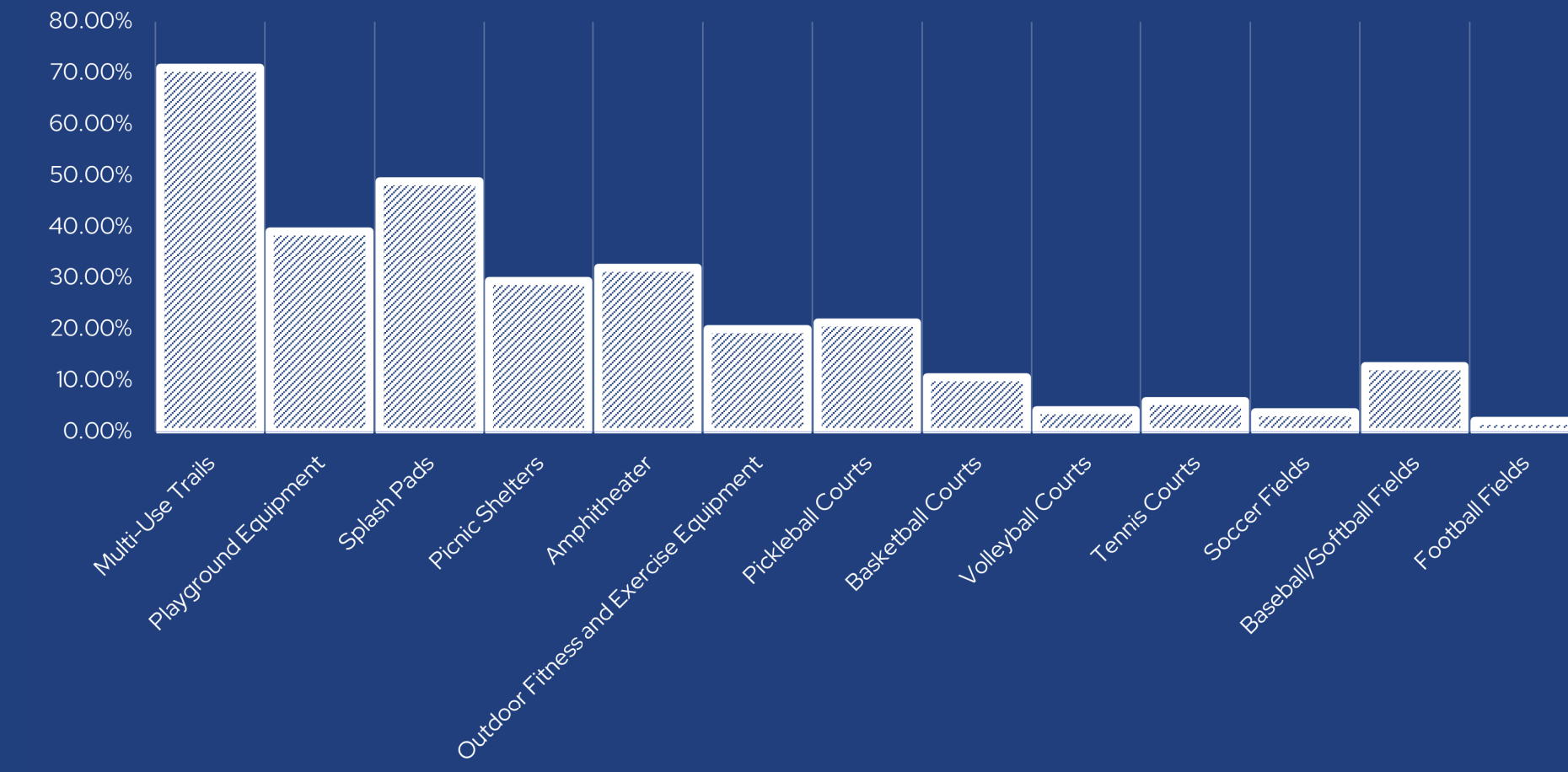
IN YOUR OPINION, DOES THE TOWN OF WHITELAND NEED MORE RENTAL FACILITIES, SUCH AS SHELTERS, COURTS, AND COMMUNITY ROOMS?



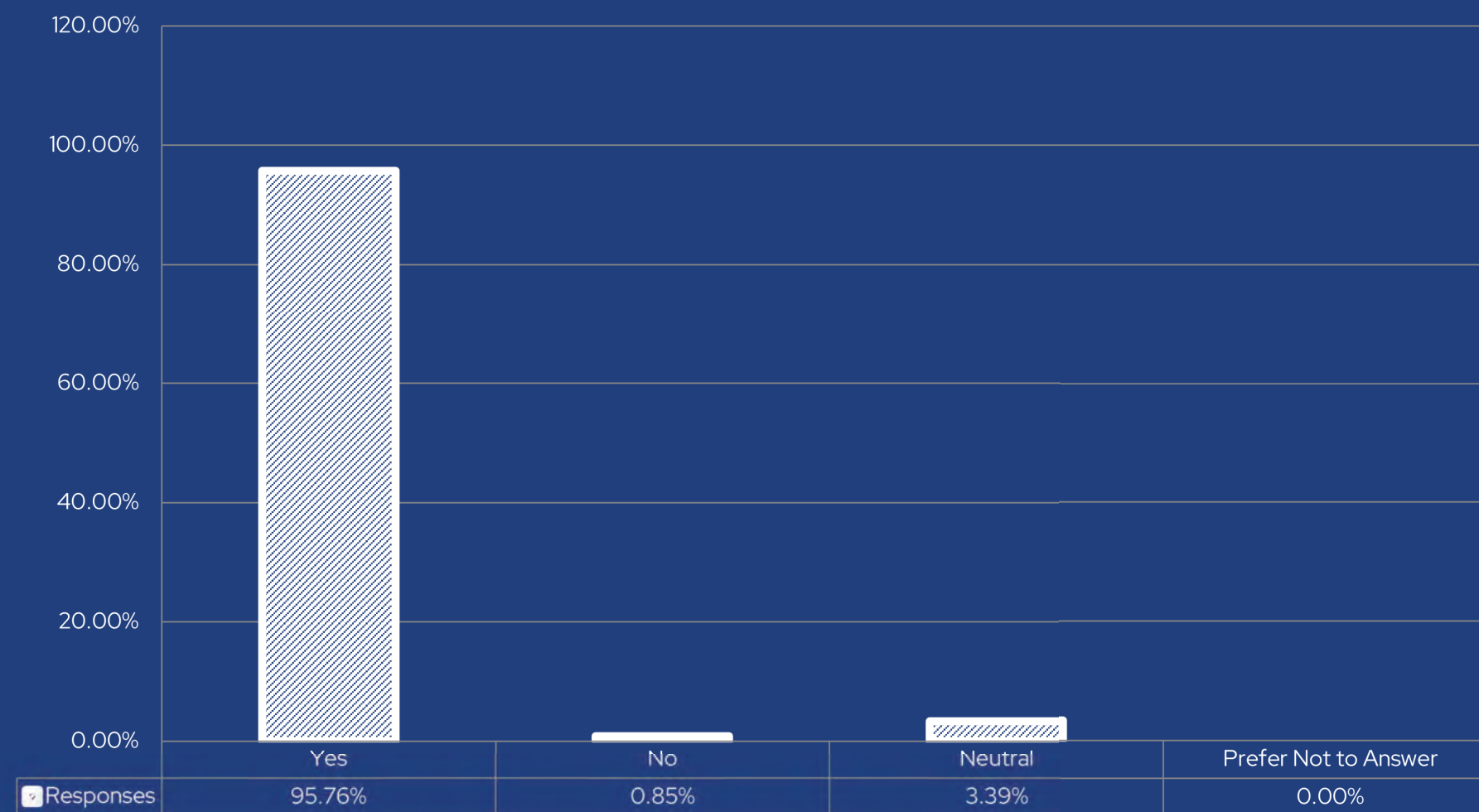
**95.76%**  
said yes

The Town of Whiteland needs more parks and open space

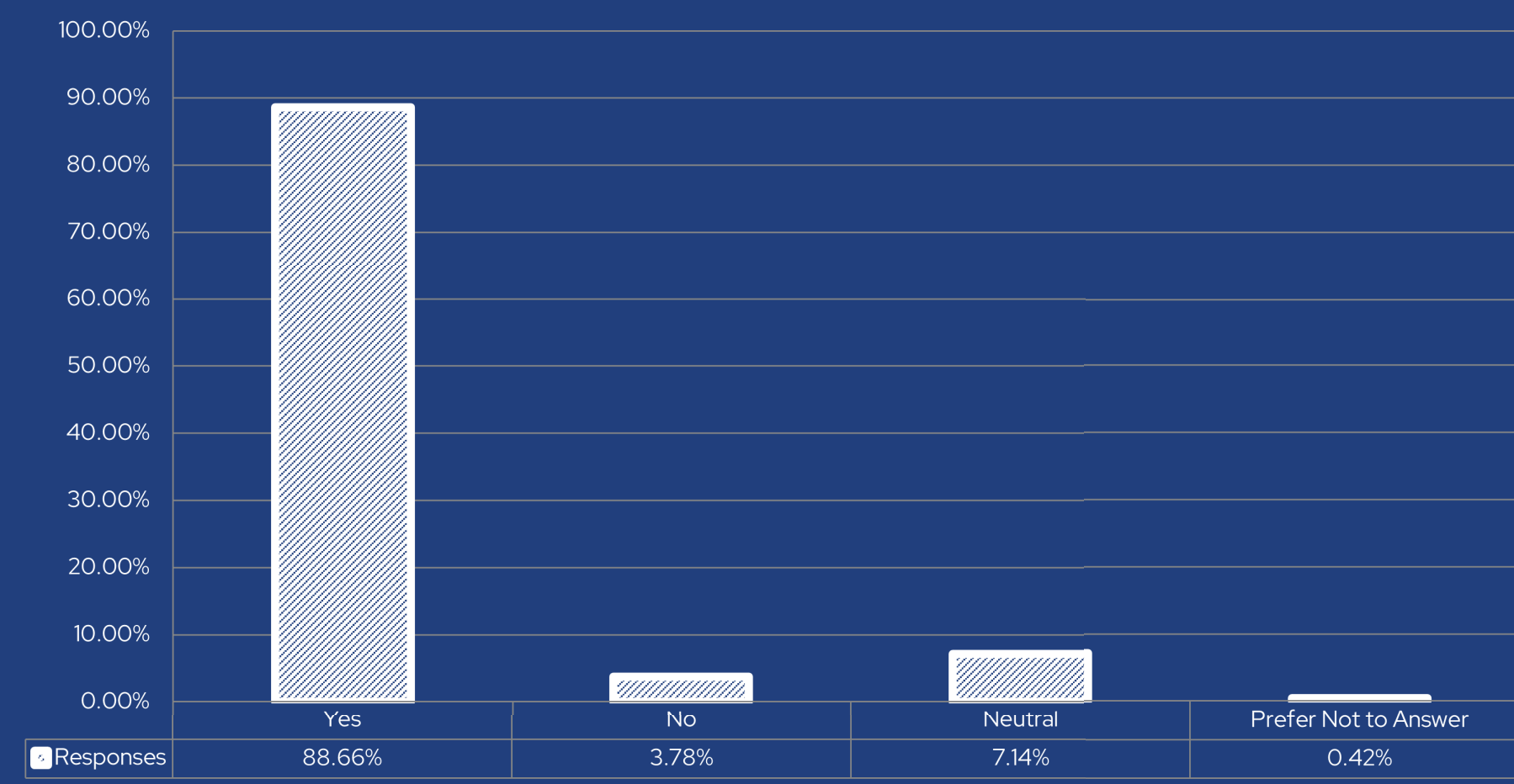
IF YOU HAD TO PICK THREE FACILITY ADDITIONS FOR THE TOWN OF WHITELAND'S PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE?



IN YOUR OPINION, DOES THE TOWN OF WHITELAND NEED MORE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE?



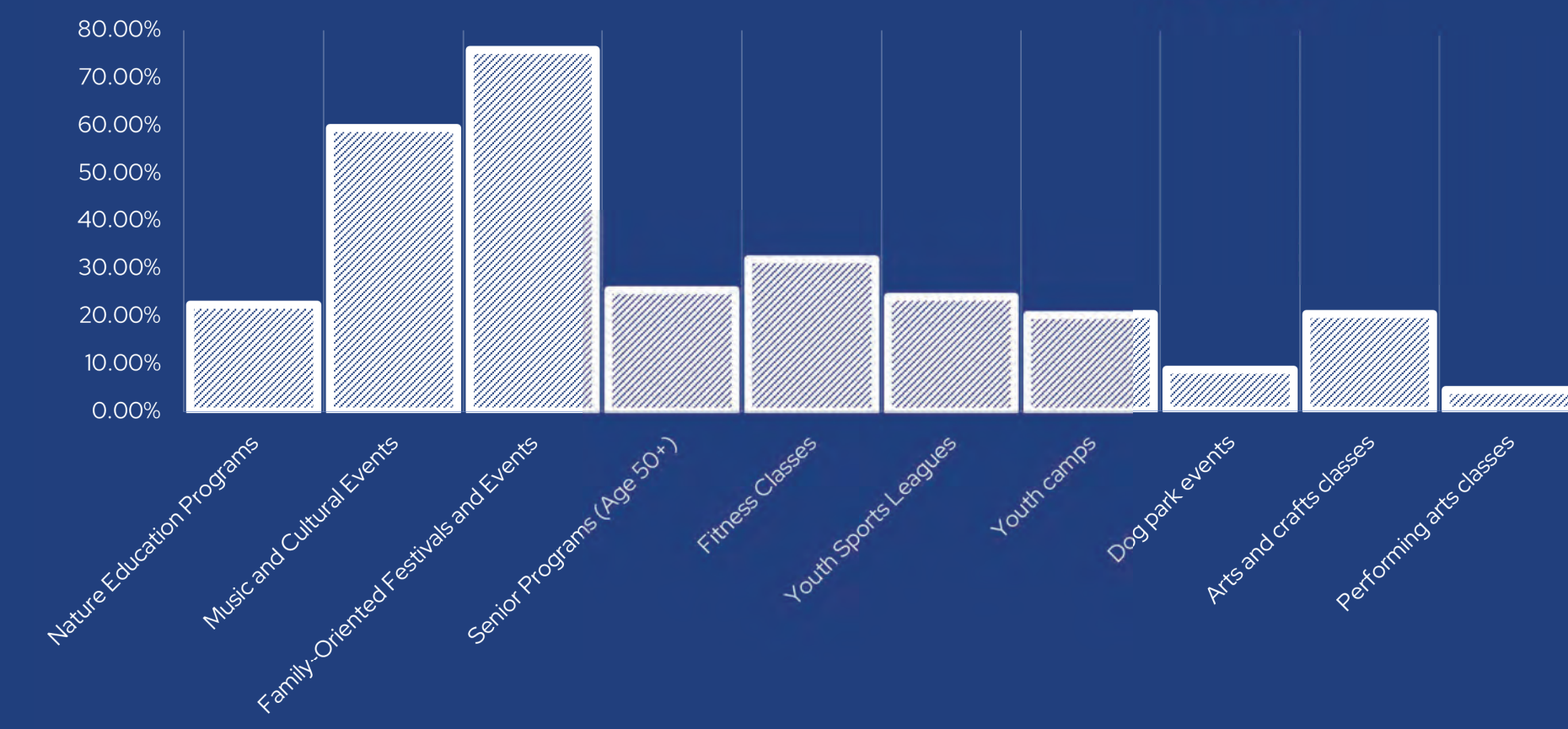
IN YOUR OPINION, DOES THE TOWN OF WHITELAND NEED MORE BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES, SUCH AS SIDEWALKS AND MULTI-USE TRAILS?



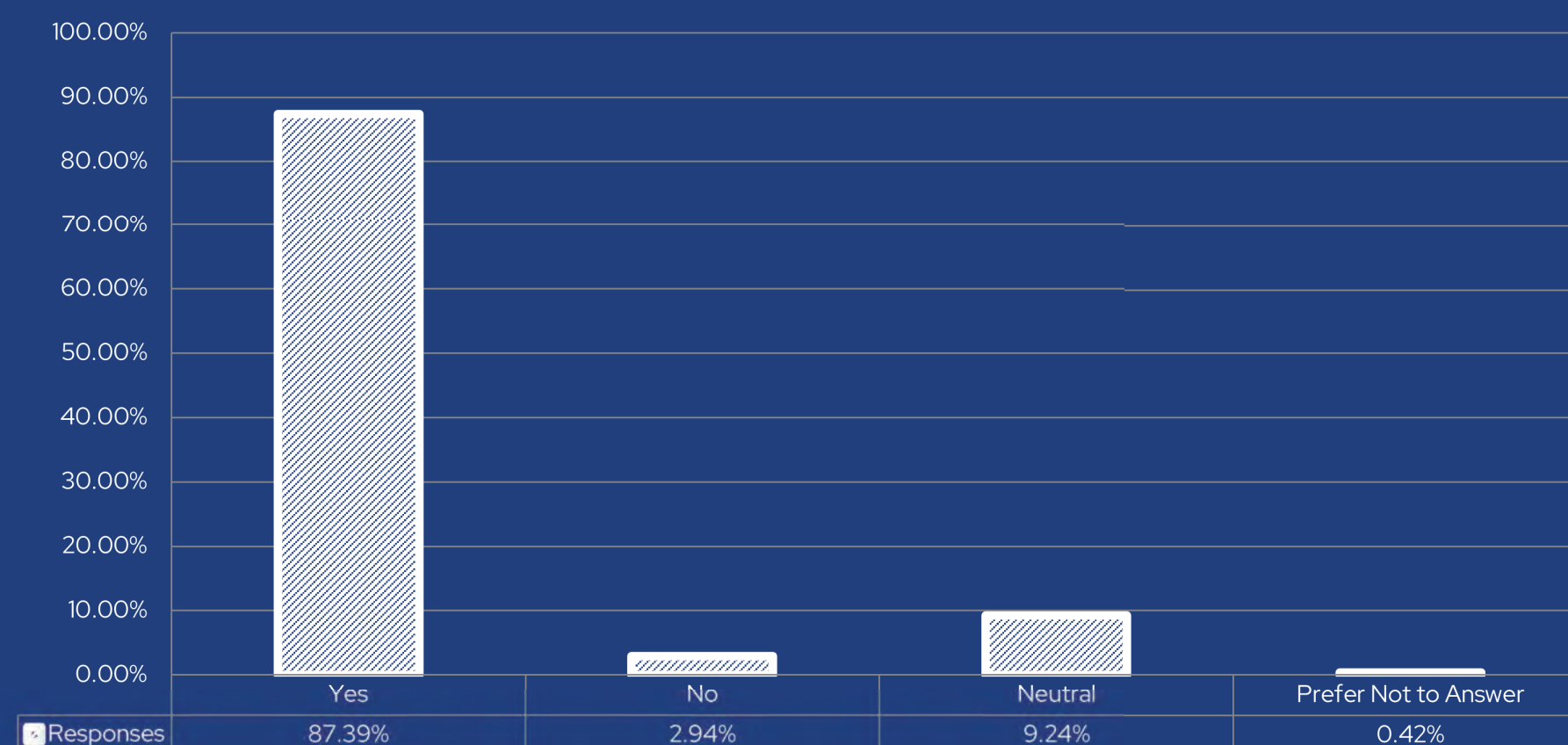
**87.39%**  
said yes

The Town of Whiteland needs more recreational program options, such as sports, fitness, outdoor recreation, aquatics, or arts programs.

IF YOU HAD TO PICK THREE RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING ADDITIONS FOR THE TOWN OF WHITELAND'S PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WHAT WOULD YOU CHOOSE?



IN YOUR OPINION, DOES THE TOWN OF WHITELAND NEED MORE RECREATIONAL PROGRAM OPTIONS, SUCH AS SPORTS, FITNESS, OUTDOOR RECREATION, AQUATICS, OR ARTS PROGRAMS?



HOW MUCH WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PAY AS A SMALL, ONE-TIME FEE (RENTAL OR MEMBERSHIP TO JOIN A RECREATION PROGRAM) PER PERSON?



**88.66%**  
said yes

The Town of Whiteland needs more bike and pedestrian facilities.



**82.56%**  
would pay a fee

Most respondents are willing to pay a one-time fee of \$6-\$10 to participate in recreation programs.





# PRIORITIES & STRATEGIC ACTIONS



## Did You Know?

### Goals



The goals provided in this Plan describe the desired outcomes, or ultimate destinations that Whiteland aims to reach.

### Strategies



The strategies provided in this Plan provide a high-level roadmap of actions that define the "how" of the goal to be achieved.

### Action Steps



The action steps provided in this Plan are the measurable, tactical actions that should be taken to implement the strategy.

## Parks & Recreation Department

### Goal #1

Foster the continued growth of the Parks and Recreation Department by strengthening its organizational framework to ensure long-term sustainability and operational excellence while promoting community values and delivering high-quality parks, trails, and recreation programs that create a meaningful and lasting impact.

<p><b>1.1 Establish a Staffing Structure.</b></p> <p>Establish a staffing structure led by a Parks Superintendent to meet future operations and maintenance demands and ensure that all park facilities, amenities, and recreation programs run smoothly.</p> <p><b>Priority Strategy</b></p>	<p><b>1.3 Educate Our Staff.</b></p> <p>Train future staff to promote a welcoming environment for all through effective and clear communication methods, disability awareness, family outreach, and continuous learning opportunities.</p>
<p><b>1.2 Create a Preventative Maintenance (PM) Plan.</b></p> <p>Create a Preventative Maintenance (PM) Plan with regularly scheduled maintenance routines to ensure that future park facilities and amenities are safe and enjoyable for visitors, prevent advanced damage and high costs, and extend the life of parks and recreation assets.</p>	<p><b>1.4 Build Our Community.</b></p> <p>Engage neighboring communities, including The Town of New Whiteland, the Town of Bargersville, and the cities of Greenwood and Franklin, in open conversations to develop a comprehensive understanding of lessons learned and methodologies to foster a Parks and Recreation Department that supports a safe, high-quality, and inclusive parks and recreation system.</p> <p><b>Priority Strategy</b></p>

## Community Engagement

**Priority Goal**

### Goal #3

Bridge long-term parks and recreation planning with the real-life impacts on residents through a vibrant public engagement environment where the public feels safe, welcome, and respected.

<p><b>3.1 Be Honest and Transparent.</b></p> <p>Boost community trust and confidence in the management of public resources by informing the public about where the parks and recreation system is currently and where it plans to be in the future.</p> <p><b>Priority Strategy</b></p>	<p><b>3.4 Promote Accessibility.</b></p> <p>Prioritize safety, inclusivity, and accessibility in our parks, trails, and open spaces by eliminating physical and perceived barriers to use and promoting engagement by vulnerable and underserved populations in our community.</p>
<p><b>3.2 Expand our Program Offerings.</b></p> <p>Engage the community through a variety of parks and recreation program opportunities that are relevant and accessible to encourage participation by diverse groups of people.</p>	<p><b>3.5 Encourage Park Stewardship.</b></p> <p>Support a community-centric parks and recreation system that meets the current and future needs of the public by actively involving residents in the planning and development of parks, trails, and open space.</p>
<p><b>3.3 Create Connections.</b></p> <p>Improve the parks and recreation experience by partnering with like-minded local entities that are having positive impacts on the Whiteland community.</p>	

## System Building Blocks

### Goal #2

Build a strong parks and recreation system with various properties, facilities, and amenities to get people actively using our parks, trails, and open spaces and to attract visitors from surrounding communities.

<p><b>2.1 Plan for a Flagship Community Park.</b></p> <p>Plan for a centrally located community park that serves as a hub for a wide range of active and passive recreation activities, such as sports, social gatherings, and outdoor adventures, that cater to a diverse range of people of all ages and abilities.</p> <p><b>Priority Strategy</b></p>	<p><b>2.3 Expand our Facilities &amp; Amenities.</b></p> <p>Identify key properties for parks and recreation development through the lens of best use for recreation programming and community-desired facilities and amenities, such as multi-use trails, playground equipment, splash pads, picnic shelters, amphitheaters, outdoor fitness equipment, and sports courts and fields.</p>
<p><b>2.2 Plan for a Well-Connected Trail System.</b></p> <p>Plan for trail connections that improve connectivity to community destinations, close gaps in the regional trail network, and provide community-to-community connections that foster active transportation opportunities.</p>	<p><b>2.4 Protect our Natural Resources.</b></p> <p>Collaborate with private landowners to protect and maintain our natural resources to conserve biodiversity and promote healthy ecosystems.</p>

## Funding & Budgeting

### Goal #4

Establish stable, local funding mechanisms informed by the goals and strategies of the Plan that support park operations and maintenance and explore alternative funding opportunities for future investment.

<p><b>4.1 Use Local Funding Sources.</b></p> <p>Identify local funding sources beyond monies allocated during the annual budget process through the Town's General Fund, including non-reverting funds from revenue generating activities, legislative and ballot initiatives, development impacts fees, and legacy gifts.</p>	<p><b>4.4 Seek Alternative Funding Sources.</b></p> <p>Explore alternative funding avenues, including grants, sponsorships, endowments and public-private partnerships, to expand the operational budget capacity and provide opportunities for new parks and recreation infrastructure.</p> <p><b>Priority Strategy</b></p>
<p><b>4.2 Manage Our Assets</b></p> <p>Manage and track long-term strategies for the acquisition and development of park properties, facilities, and amenities to ensure meaningful investment decisions and set expectations for fiscal health.</p>	<p><b>4.5 Manage Grant Lifecycles.</b></p> <p>Seek a grant administrator to identify, research, and prepare effective grants focused on parks and recreation projects where the Town of Whiteland is well-positioned to achieve a positive outcome.</p>
<p><b>4.3 Incorporate Cost Recovery.</b></p> <p>Support long-term financial stability through cost recovery, where park facilities, programs, and services are available to the public at a small, one-time fee to help parks recover costs, reduce reliance on taxpayer funding, and continue to provide high-quality programming and amenities.</p>	<p><b>4.6 Be Self-Sufficient.</b></p> <p>Aim for operational self-sufficiency through program fees, sponsorships, and strategic cost-recovery projects that are backed by the community at large.</p>





# PRIORITIES & STRATEGIC ACTIONS



## Did You Know?

### Goals



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### Strategies



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### Action Steps



The action steps provided in this Plan are the measurable, tactical actions that should be taken to implement the strategy.

## Goal #1: Parks & Recreation Department



THE ACTION	CATEGORY	LIFESPAN	COST	FUNDING STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
1.1.1 Appoint a parks superintendent qualified by training and experience to manage and oversee park operations and maintenance, manage the parks budget, engage with residents, community groups, and stakeholders, and ensure compliance with park policies and procedures.	Management + Operations	Years 0-2	\$45,000 - \$90,000	Municipal Funds	Parks Board
1.1.2 Develop a hiring plan that supports full-time and seasonal staff in an efficient, responsible, and reliable manner to cover the needs of all parks, trails and open spaces. Ensure staff meet the standards and qualifications needed to adequately perform the duties required by these positions.	Management + Operations	Years 2-3	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
1.1.3 Engage with volunteer organizations in the Whiteland community to fulfill needs not met by current staff capacity.	Management + Operations	Years 0-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
1.2.1 Utilize staff and experience from other town departments in the infancy of the parks department to fill specific operations and maintenance needs as the parks department grows.	Management + Operations	Years 0-5	varies	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
1.3.1/ 1.4.1 Based on the experience level of future staff, establish a mentorship program for parks and recreation professionals to share information about best practices and lessons learned.	Management + Operations	Years 2-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
1.3.2 Join a national parks and recreation program, such as the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), to foster a professional development mindset.	Management + Operations	Years 0-5	\$500 + per membership	Municipal Funds	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent

## Goal #2: System Building Blocks



THE ACTION	CATEGORY	LIFESPAN	COST	FUNDING STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
2.1.1 Plan for a flagship community park that prioritizes the inclusion of facilities and amenities identified as being the most important by the public during the Plan survey process, including multi-use trails, a splash pad, and playground equipment.	Facilities	Years 1-5	\$30,000 - \$50,000 (study only)	Municipal Funds + Commercial Funds	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
2.1.2 Evaluate sites for a flagship community park identified by the Parks Board and the public, including the Saddlebrook Farms Subdivision parcels, the Saddlebrook Farms North Subdivision parcels, the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation parcels, and the Sawmill Rd. parcel.	Facilities	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
2.2.1 Prepare a Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan to establish a roadmap for future active transportation infrastructure.	Facilities	Years 1-5	\$50,000 - \$80,000	Municipal Funds + Commercial Funds	Parks Board / Town Council / Future Parks Superintendent
2.2.2 Revise the existing ordinance requiring sidewalks and shared-use paths to be incorporated as part of new development and roadway construction projects to set enforceable standards for pedestrian and bicyclist infrastructure.	Management + Operations	Years 1-2	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Town Council
2.2.3 Continue collaborating with surrounding communities, including New Whiteland, Franklin, and Greenwood, to ensure bike and pedestrian connections to other communities.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
2.2.4 Improve pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity and safety at the intersection of Whiteland Road and US 31.	Facilities	Years 3-5	N/A	\$1,000,000 +	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent / INDOT
2.2.5 Evaluate the potential for the Franklin High School Connector Trail, utilizing the Briar Creek Estates subdivision parcel for a trail loop.	Facilities	Years 3-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent

## Goal #2: System Building Blocks

THE ACTION	CATEGORY	LIFESPAN	COST	FUNDING STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
2.3.1 Reimagine the town-owned properties that have been dedicated for parks and open space and sell developer "scraps" to generate funds for future parks and recreation development.	Management + Operations	Years 1-2	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
2.3.2 Conduct a feasibility study for a destination indoor/outdoor multi-purpose facility catering towards family-oriented activities as a regional development anchor that attracts visitors statewide and stimulates the local economy.	Facilities	Years 1-5	\$30,000 - \$50,000	Municipal Funds + Commercial Funds	Parks Board / Town Council / Future Parks Superintendent
2.3.3 Provide park facilities and amenities, such as picnic shelters, for rental for private events including reunions, weddings, and birthday parties.	Facilities	Years 1-5	\$20,000 - \$30,000	Municipal Funds + Commercial Funds + Private Funds	Parks Board / Town Council / Future Parks Superintendent
2.3.4 Carry forward an open format of communication between the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation (CPCS) and the Whiteland parks and recreation system to expand parks and recreation opportunities.	Management + Operations & Recreation Programming	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent / Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation (CPCS)
2.3.5 Form strategic public-private partnerships with organizations like the St. Francis Soccer Club, who established a soccer complex in the Patch Development Whiteland Building 2 for youth soccer.	Management + Operations & Recreation Programming	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent / Allied Organizations
2.4.1 Partner with regional land trusts to help protect undeveloped properties from development through fee simple or conservation easement, including the Morh Logistics Parcel noted in the site inventory.	Management + Operations	1-5 Years	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent / Allied Organizations

## Goal #3: Community Engagement



THE ACTION	CATEGORY	LIFESPAN	COST	FUNDING STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
3.1.1 Publish relevant financial and operational documents on the Town of Whiteland website, including contact information, service area maps, board overview, current agency budget, code of ethics/conduct, conflict of interest policy, and financial transaction reports.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Town Treasurer
3.2.1 Continue to advertise existing community events on various social media platforms (ex., Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), including the Town of Whiteland Farmer's Market, Whiteland Summer Fest, Whiteland Community Clean-Up Day, and the Town of Whiteland Trick or Treat.	Recreation Programming	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Parks Focus Groups
3.2.2 Expand current program offerings to include additional options identified as being the most important by the public during the Plan survey process, including family-oriented festivals and events, music and cultural events, fitness classes, and nature education programs.	Recreation Programming	Years 1-5	\$5,000+	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Parks Board / Parks Focus Groups / Allied Organizations
3.3.1 Partner with local organizations including the Johnson County Public Library, Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation (CPCS), parent-teacher organizations, youth sports leagues, senior centers, aging councils, and neighborhood groups.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Allied Organizations
3.4.1 Diversify the types of communication channels offered to engage with and receive information about the parks and recreation system, including the Town of Whiteland website, social media (ex., Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), e-newsletters, program brochures and guides, and the local newspaper.	Management + Operations	Years 1-2	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Parks Focus Groups / Allied Organizations
3.4.2 Provide multi-lingual services including translation and interpretation services and printed materials, to support growing ethnic populations in Whiteland.	Management + Operations	Years 1-2	\$50 - \$175/hour	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Town of Whiteland







# PRIORITIES & STRATEGIC ACTIONS



## Did You Know?

### Goals



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### Strategies



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### Action Steps



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## Goal #3: Community Engagement

Priority Action Step

THE ACTION	CATEGORY	LIFESPAN	COST	FUNDING STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
3.5.1 Schedule annual community surveys to gather public input on parks and recreation performance.	Management + Operations	Years 3-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
3.5.2 Establish small (3-5 members) focus groups to champion the development of future park facilities and amenities, such as those for parks, multi-use trails, and recreation programming.	Recreation Programming	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent

## Goal #4: Funding & Budgeting

Priority Action Step

THE ACTION	CATEGORY	LIFESPAN	COST	FUNDING STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
4.1.1 Reinforce the benefits of parks and recreation in conversations with local legislative members to garner additional support for parks.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
4.1.2 Advocate for clear and appropriate funding strategies within the general fund that fairly denote funding channels for each department in the Town of Whiteland legislative system.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent / Town Manager
4.1.3 Redirect funds from existing TIF districts in the Town of Whiteland to serve capital improvements projects for parks and recreation.	Management + Operations	Years 1-2	N/A	N/A	Parks Board/ Town Council
4.1.4 / 4.6.1 Establish a new, non-reverting park fund under the General Provisions to collect revenue generated by or collected for parks and recreation to keep funds available for development to use for expenses and improvements from year to year.	Management + Operations	Years 1-2	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Town Council
4.1.5 Explore ballot measures, such as General Obligation Bonds (GO) to allow the Town to borrow money through a municipal bond backed by the credit of the issuing jurisdiction and paid for through taxes on residents to fund parks and recreation infrastructure.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board/ Town Council
4.1.6 Establish development impact fees on new construction based on the cost, type, and size of the development to finance future parks and recreation infrastructure.	Management + Operations	Years 1-2	N/A	N/A	Parks Board/ Town Council
4.2.1 Establish a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to guide future investment in parks and recreation infrastructure.	Management + Operations	Years 3-5	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Municipal Funds	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
4.3.1 / 4.6.1 Prepare a Cost Recovery Model to determine the appropriate amount of user, program, and rental fees to assess for park facilities, programs, and services.	Management + Operations	Years 3-5	\$5,000 - \$10,000	Municipal Funds	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
4.3.3 Consider sponsorships for park naming rights or signage at local community vents at multiple levels to leverage relationships with local businesses and organizations.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent
4.4.1 / 4.6.1 Establish public-private partnerships with for profit and no-profit community organizations to support investment in park properties, facilities and amenities and host community festivals and events.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
4.4.2 / 4.5.1 Identify priority government, corporation, and foundation grant and endowment programs and apply for funding for physical improvement projects and recreation programming.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator

## Goal #4: Funding & Budgeting

Priority Action Step

THE ACTION	CATEGORY	LIFESPAN	COST	FUNDING STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
4.4.3 Investigate potential build-operate-transfer (BOT) mechanisms to fund landmark projects in the Town of Whiteland, such as destination indoor/outdoor multi-purpose facility.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
4.4.4 Support the establishment of a parks foundation for the Town of Whiteland to focus on grant acquisition, donation management, and fundraising events.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
4.4.5 Determine which aspects of parks and recreation maintenance and operations can and should be reliably outsourced to private companies without losing quality or community support.	Management + Operations	Years 3-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
4.4.5 Evaluate potential recreation opportunities through public-sector leasing. For examples, refer to Chapter 6 : Funding Sources.	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board / Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
4.4.7 Allocate future budget to supporting memberships in professional parks and recreation organizations, such as the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).	Management + Operations	Years 1-5	N/A	N/A	Parks Board/ Town Council





# FUNDING SOURCES

## Municipal Funding

### General Fund

Parks and recreation departments largely rely on general funds to pay for most expenses. The general fund comes primarily from property taxes allocated to the department through the annual budget process, is largely influenced by local politics, financial status, and the engagement of residents in the budgeting process.

### Non-Reverting Funds

Non-reverting funds are special accounts created to capture revenues received by parks and recreation departments outside of general funds for the purpose of maintaining, operating, and developing new park facilities and amenities. They allow the remaining balance from these fees at the end of the year to roll over to the next fiscal year.

### Development Impact Fees

Development Impact Fees are one-time charges imposed by local governments on new development to help recover growth-related infrastructure and public service costs. Funds collected by these fees can be used to pay for off-site services, such as parks.

### General Obligation (GO) Bonds

General obligation (GO) bonds are municipal bonds that allow local governments to borrow money to fund parks without being tied to project revenue. GO bonds are backed by the credit and taxing power of the issuing jurisdiction and rely on the investor's trust that the municipality can repay the interest and principal on the debt through taxes.

### Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF relies on the future increase in property tax revenue in a specific geographic area, known as a TIF district, to fund public projects. When new development occurs and property values increase, the property taxes generated from this increment can be collected and used to pay for public improvements.

### Special Taxes / Assessments

Special taxes and assessments are those that are imposed on property owners in a specific geographic area to fund the development, improvement, or maintenance of parks and recreation facilities and amenities. These taxes allow local governments to engage in long-term planning with monies specifically set aside for parks and recreation.

## Commercial Funding

### Land & Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) helps renovate and develop outdoor recreation sites and facilities. It provides grants up to 50% of the cost for the acquisition and/or development of outdoor recreation sites and facilities and requires a local match.

### Private Grants

Private grant funds, offered by philanthropic organizations such as corporations, foundations, and individual donors, can offer funding opportunities for parks and recreation projects. These grants are often focused on causes aligned with the organization's values.

### Public/Private Partnerships

Public/Private Partnerships (PPPs) are partnerships between parks and recreation agencies and private entities. These partnerships benefit local governments by helping them raise funds to operate and maintain park assets. A few types of public/private partnerships include outsourcing, public-sector leasing, and leaseback from the private sector.

### Cost Recovery

Cost recovery involves charging fees for programming, facilities, or services to offset operational expenses, allowing agencies to recoup costs, improve financial stability, and expand their offerings. A transparent and consistent cost recovery policy allows agencies to broaden taxpayer investment in parks.

## Private Funds

### Philanthropic Funding

Private funding, provided by "friends of the park" groups, conservancies, foundations, crowdfunding, and other park advocacy organizations, is received through donations and sponsorships and is primarily used for capital improvements, specialty programming or facilities, and advocacy on behalf of the parks system.

## The Future of Funding

### Funding in Whiteland

Whiteland recognizes the importance of bonding and other funding mechanisms to build, operate, and maintain future park facilities and amenities. While funding can take many forms, funding for Whiteland will likely require a combination of municipal, commercial, and private funding strategies to achieve financial stability.





# EVALUATION

## Sample Staffing Structure



## Plan Implementation

### Quarterly Action Steps Review

As the the Town of Whiteland moves to complete the action steps listed in this Plan, the Parks Board and the future Park Superintendent should meet once every quarter to review completed, in-progress, and planned next steps. These meetings should evaluate the success, both internal and external, of completed steps and take note of potential future complications or tactics.

### Capital Improvements Review

At least once a year, the Parks and Recreation Department and the Parks Board should meet to review past, current, and planned capital improvements. These meetings should strategize on potential future capital improvements, with time dedicated to prioritizing and discussing potential feasibility studies to be carried out for future projects.

### Staff Roundtables

As the Parks and Recreation Department grows, staff roundtables should be held monthly to address maintenance concerns, develop a shared understanding of each team member's priorities and tasks, check-in with managers and supervisors, and troubleshoot any issues to ensure that the team workflow runs smoothly.

### Community Feedback Survey

A yearly community input survey should be conducted within the first month of each year to get a better understanding of how Whiteland residents are using their parks and recreation system. This should include opportunities to provide feedback on frequently used amenities, preferred recreation programs, and future improvements, as well as any comments or concerns regarding existing conditions at park facilities.

### Annual Review

An annual review of the Master Plan allows for plan changes as new trends, challenges, and opportunities emerge. This annual review allows phasing updates for larger capital improvement projects while tackling system-wide changes that impact the Town of Whiteland.