

ADOPTED 06.03.2026

TOWN OF **WHITELAND**
PARKS & RECREATION
MASTER PLAN



**WHITELAND PARK AND RECREATION BOARD
RESOLUTION 2026-01**

**A RESOLUTION FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE WHITELAND PARK AND
RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Whiteland Park and Recreation Board is aware of the parks and recreation needs of the residents of Whiteland, Indiana, and

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE WHITELAND PARK AND RECREATION BOARD, does hereby adopt the Town of Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan prepared by Context Design and dated April 15, 2026, attached hereto, as its official Parks & Recreation Master Plan for the next five years, for the growth and development of parks and recreational opportunities in Whiteland, Indiana.

ADOPTED by the Park and Recreation Board of the Town of Whiteland, Indiana, on the 3rd day of June, 2026.

TOWN OF WHITELAND, INDIANA, PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

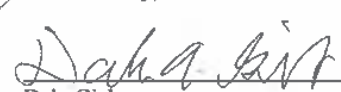
Voting In Favor



Megan Cain, President



Joshua Henry, Vice President



Dale Gick

Shane Stidham

Voting Opposed

Megan Cain, President

Joshua Henry, Vice President

Dale Gick

Shane Stidham

Attest:



Jenny Roberts, Clerk-Treasurer
Makayla Mich. Deputy

Resolution 2026-01

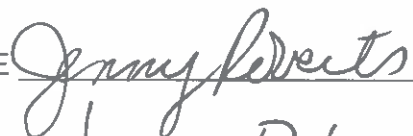
Page 1 of 1

**ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE WITH:
ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ACT of 1968 (As Amended);
SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (As Amended);
AND TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990
(As Amended)**

The Whiteland Dept. of Park & Recreation (Applicant) has read the guidelines for compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (As Amended); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (As Amended); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (As Amended) and will comply with the applicable requirements of these Acts.

SIGNATURE 
APPLICANT PRESIDENT

Megan E. Cain
(President's printed name)

SIGNATURE 
Jenny Roberts
(Secretary's printed name)

DATE 4-1-26

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Acknowledgments

This plan wouldn't have been possible without the contributions of the Whiteland Town Manager, the Whiteland Parks Board, and the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee. The following individuals played a role in the development of this plan.

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

Megan Cain, President, Whiteland Parks Board

Joshua Henry, Vice President, Whiteland Parks Board

Dale Gick, Commonwealth Engineers

Shane Stidham, Founder, Indiana Astros

Dr. Tim Edsell, Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation

Carmen Young, Town Manager

WHITELAND PARKS BOARD

Megan Cain, President, Whiteland Parks Board

Joshua Henry, Vice President, Whiteland Parks Board

Dale Gick, Commonwealth Engineers

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WHITELAND TOWN MANAGER

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Table of Contents

Reserved for Adoption Resolution	2	Needs Analysis	93
Reserved for Accessibility Compliance	3	Community Engagement	94
Acknowledgments	5	Existing & Emerging Trends	122
Table of Contents	6	Maintenance Needs/Cost Analysis	130
Introduction.....	9	Priorities & Strategic Actions	135
Plan Purpose	10	A Vision for Progress	136
Plan Goals	11	Parks & Recreation Department	138
Why Plan for Parks?	12	System Building Blocks	139
System Context	14	Community Engagement	140
Parks Board	16	Funding & Budgeting	141
Ordinance Documentation	19	Action Steps	142
Ongoing Partnerships	20	Funding Sources	153
Supporting Plans	21	Overview	154
Community Profile	25	Municipal Funds	155
Demographics	26	Commercial Funds	159
Housing	29	Private Funds	163
Workforce & Economy	33	The Future of Funding	164
Existing & Future Land Use	38	Evaluation	169
Natural Environment	40	Plan Implementation	170
Manmade, Historical & Cultural Features	44	Plan Evaluation	173
Parks and Open Space System	55	Appendices	175
Parks and Open Space System	56	Appendix A: Master Plan Committee	176
Community Benchmarking	78	Appendix B: Public Survey	214
Accessibility	84	Appendix C: Mobile Display	232
Recreation Programming	86	Appendix D: Public Meeting #1	236
Other Recreation Providers	87	Appendix E: Public Meeting #2	248
		Appendix F: ADA Self-Evaluation	268
		Appendix G: Department Evaluation	273



Let's build our parks and recreation system!

As Whiteland continues to grow, it's critical that the community continues on the right path to support the quality of life of current and future residents.



Introduction

1



Plan Purpose

With the City of Greenwood to the north and the City of Franklin to the south, the family-friendly community of Whiteland offers all the benefits of small-town living within proximity to city amenities.

The Town of Whiteland, Indiana is part of the Central Indiana region. Located in north/central Johnson County just 19 miles south of the city of Indianapolis, Whiteland is home to a close-knit community of individuals with a collective vision of maintaining a small-town feel. Whiteland is regionally connected by I-65 to the east and US 31, which bisects the town and serves as its primary thoroughfare.

The Town is primarily residential, with new single-family homes under construction to support the warehouse and logistics hub expansion along I-65. Limited shopping, restaurants, and medical facilities are clustered in the heart of Whiteland along US 31 adjacent to Whiteland High School to support daily use.

As it continues to grow, it's critical that the community continues on the right path to support the quality of life of current and future residents.

PURPOSE

Parks and recreation play a vital role in enhancing community quality of life and can help build a strong sense of place. While Whiteland residents are supported by a variety of services and amenities in their community, the Town lacks the parks and open spaces necessary to help attract and retain residents. Moving forward, it is imperative that the Town of Whiteland invests in park and recreation opportunities, such as parks, trails, and programming, to support its growing community.

The 2026 Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the Town's first 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 utilizes 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.



Plan Goals

The Town of Whiteland recognizes the important role parks and recreation play in enhancing community quality of life for current and future residents. To complement the 2025 Whiteland Comprehensive Plan, the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan seeks to build upon Whiteland's small-town character and strong sense of community by working towards the following goals.



Goal #1 Parks and Recreation Department

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.



Goal #2 System Building Blocks

Establish a framework for a strong parks and recreation system with various properties, facilities, and amenities to get residents excited about actively using our future parks, trails, and open spaces and to attract visitors from surrounding communities



Goal #3 Community Engagement

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.



Goal #4 Funding & Budgeting

Identify, evaluate, and prioritize stable, local funding mechanisms informed by the goals and strategies of the plan that support future park operations and maintenance and explore long-term and immediate funding opportunities for future investment

Why Plan for Parks?

Parks play a crucial role in the social, economic and physical health of communities. Epidemics and financial turbulence showed just how important parks are for people of all ages and abilities, with communities across the nation experiencing a sharp increase in the demand for low-cost outdoor recreation.



Source: Town of Whiteland.

The benefits of parks and open space transcend individual impacts, with transformative improvements to community health and wellbeing, local economies, and the environment.

BENEFITS TO HEALTH & WELLBEING

People living in Indiana face a variety of health challenges that impede their ability to achieve quality of life, including high obesity rates, poor dietary choices and a lack of physical activity, chronic disease, substance abuse, environmental factors such as poor air quality and food insecurity, and poor mental health. In 2023, a Forbes Advisor study found the State of Indiana to be the tenth highest state with the least healthy population due to factors such as disease risk and prevalence, substance abuse, lifestyle habits, and health outlook¹.

In addition to providing places for people to connect and gather outdoors, parks and open space help combat these challenges by supporting healthy, active lifestyles. According to the City Parks Alliance in their 2019 publication *A Smart Investment for America's Health*, "Safe, close-to-home parks increase the amount of physical activity people engage in, which significantly reduces rates of obesity, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease²." Furthermore, "Research shows that time in parks can decrease

levels of stress and anxiety by 50 percent and reduces attention deficits in children comparable to the effects of medication²." Well-designed communities with safe, convenient parks for people to participate in walking, biking, and other physical activities make it easier to improve individual and community-level health outcomes.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

As cities and towns grow across America, more municipalities are turning to parks and open spaces to boost their local economies. According to the Trust for Public Land (TPL) in their 2024 publication *Parks Investment and Economic Vitality*, "Cities that invest in parks and open spaces attract a diverse workforce and, in turn, businesses, employment opportunities, and visionary real estate development that contribute to improved quality of life in cities³." In fact, "Local public park and recreation agencies in the United States generate more than \$201 billion in economic activity and support almost 1.1 million jobs that boosted labor income by more than \$63 billion



Parks and open space help combat challenges to health and wellbeing by supporting healthy, active lifestyles. Source: Town of Whiteland.

from their operations and capital spending in 2021³.” In addition, more people are choosing to live closer to parks, boosting property values and adding to the tax base of the local government. According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in their 2024 *Engagement with Parks Report*, “6 in 7 (86%) of U.S. residents say proximity to park and recreation facilities is important when choosing a place to live⁴.” Because people are placing a higher value on parks, properties located closer to parks and open spaces exhibit consistently higher property values than those located further away.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Parks are more than just spaces for socialization and physical activity; they also provide a variety of environmental benefits, including stormwater management, improved air quality, and habitat for wildlife. Green infrastructure in parks and open space,

such as rain gardens, porous pavement, vegetated swales, naturalized infiltration basins, and streambank restoration, help reduce runoff and prevent flooding by managing stormwater onsite. In addition, trees and other vegetation can help improve air quality by reducing air pollution, either by removing pollutants or reducing air temperatures.

While parks offer ways for people to reconnect with nature, they also provide critical habitat for a vast variety of plants, animals, and insect species and support biodiversity. As cities and towns grow, wildlife is being pushed out of their habitats to support human infrastructure. Species that require preserved habitat, such as endangered or threatened animals, rely on parks to provide food, shelter, and breeding grounds. Restoring and connecting natural habitats, such as forests, prairies, and wetlands, through parks and open space is essential to protecting and maintaining our natural resources.



Source: Town of Whiteland.

System Context

CENTRAL INDIANA REGION & JOHNSON COUNTY

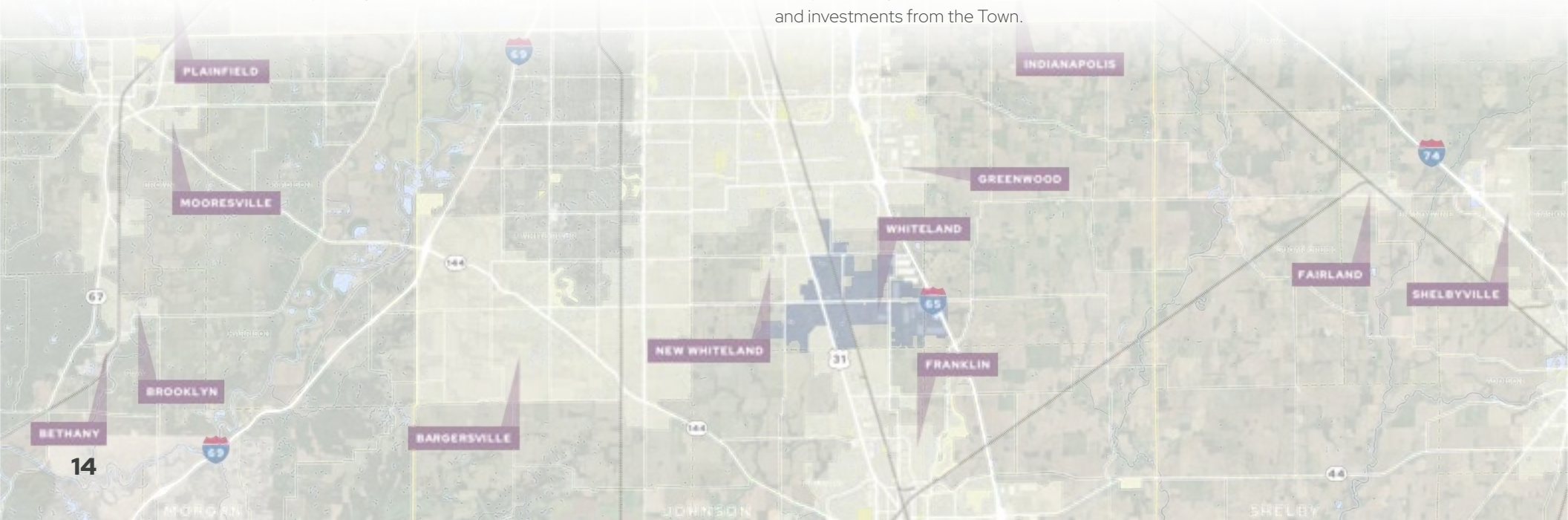
The Town of Whiteland, Indiana is part of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Area, a region made up of ten counties, including Boone, Brown, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Marion, Morgan, Putnam, and Shelby counties. The Indianapolis Metropolitan Area boasts more than 1.6 million residents, with cities including Indianapolis, Fishers, Carmel, Lawrence, and Greenwood, to name a few.

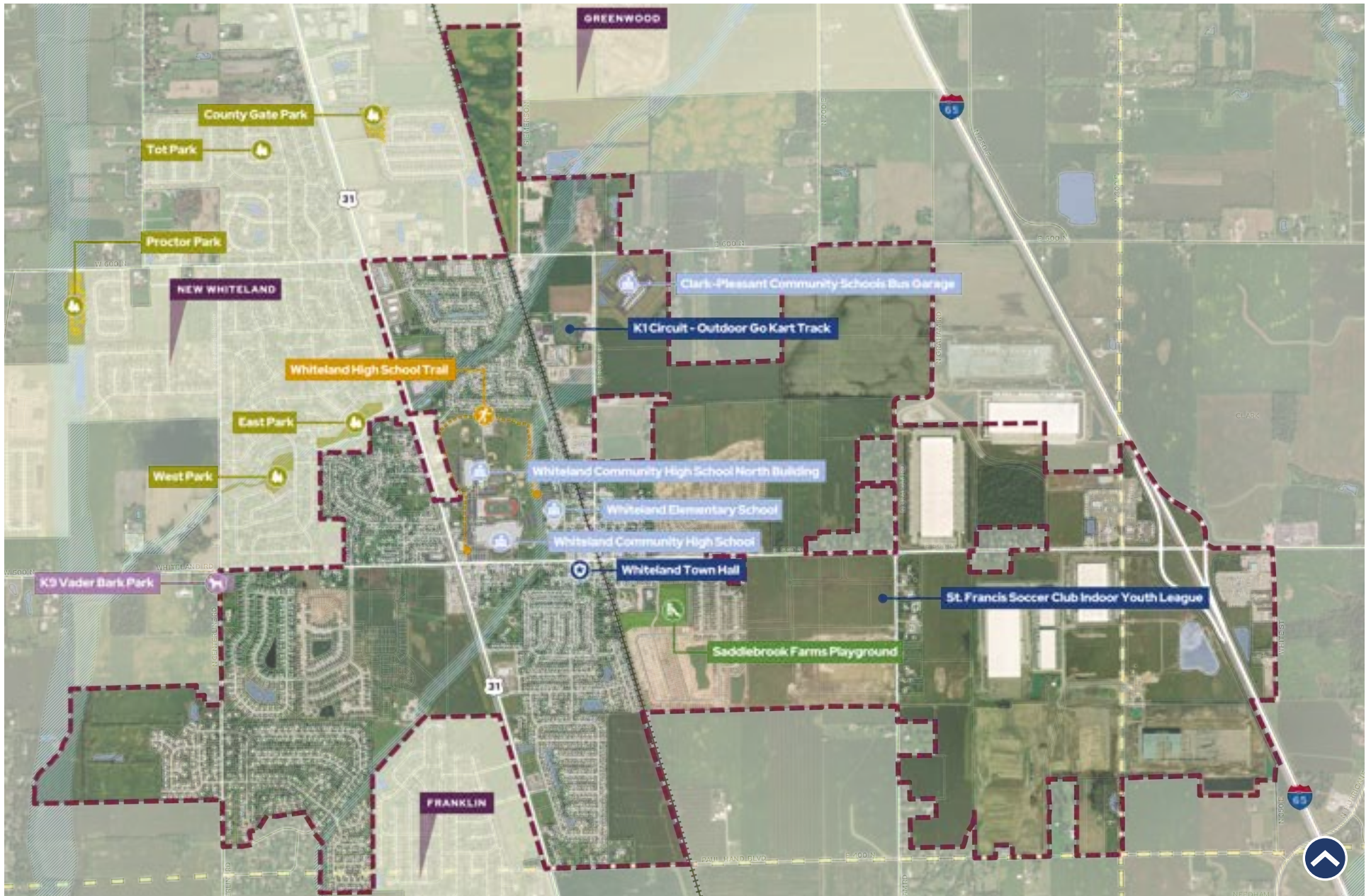
The Town of Whiteland is in Johnson County, home to other cities and towns including Bargersville, Edinburgh, Franklin, Greenwood, New Whiteland, Princes Lakes, and Trafalgar. Interstate 65, US 31, and Indiana State Roads 135 and 37 connect Johnson County to Indianapolis to the north, and Bloomington and Columbus to the south. According to Aspire Johnson County, the Economic Development and Chamber Alliance, Johnson County has more than 1,200 acres of parks and open space and more than 164 walkable trails that connect communities and neighborhoods. These spaces are operated and maintained by Parks and Recreation departments in Bargersville, Edinburgh, Franklin, Greenwood, New Whiteland, and Johnson County at large⁵.

DEFINITION OF THE PLANNING AREA

The Planning Area encompasses the service area of the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Board, which is the incorporated area of the Town of Whiteland. It includes Pleasant Township and some parts of Franklin and Clark Townships. The Town is bordered by the Town of Whiteland and the City of Greenwood to the north and the City of Franklin to the south. Whiteland currently has only one park, the K9 Vader Bark Park (formerly known as the Whiteland Bark Park) and one trail, the Whiteland Community High School trail owned and maintained by the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation.

Due to the lack of parks, trails, and recreation facilities in Whiteland, residents have turned to the nearby cities of Greenwood and Franklin to meet their recreational needs. While adding parks and trails has been in the Town's comprehensive plans for the past several years, the expenses associated with these facilities have been too high to be supported by available resources. However, after years of investing in public safety improvements, the Town is looking to improve community quality of life by investing in its parks and open space system with support from developers and investments from the Town.



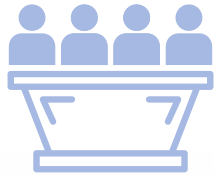


The Planning Area

The Town of Whiteland, Indiana



The Whiteland Parks and Recreation Department was established in 1988



The Whiteland Parks Board was created in 2024



The Whiteland Parks Board consists of 4 governing members.

Parks Board

The Town of Whiteland Parks and Recreation Department was established per IC 36-10-3-1 in 1988. The Department is governed by the Parks Board, also established in 1988. Though these ordinances officially established the department in 1988, it was largely inactive until 2020 when its first public park, the K9 Vader Bark Park, opened to the public. The same can be said for its Park Board, which was created in 2024 to establish policies, goals and objectives to help guide the development of park facilities, amenities, and programs in Whiteland.

The Board members were appointed in 2024. The Board consists of four (4) governing members appointed by the President of the Town Council, which serve staggered four-year terms of office, providing no more than two members of the Board shall be affiliated with the same political party (Ord. 88-11, passed 10-10-88).

Upon the establishment of the Board, the term of the members initially appointed shall be one, two, three and four years respectively. Thereafter as a term expires each new appointment shall be for a four-year term. All terms shall expire on the first Monday in January, but an appointee shall continue in the office until his successor is appointed. The current Town of Whiteland Parks Board is:

- Megan Cain – President (1/1/2025-12/31/2026)
- Joshua Henry – Vice President (1/1/2026-12/31/2029)
- Dale Gick (Term: 1/1/2025-12/31/2027)
- Shane Stidham (7/2/2025-12/31/2028)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Town of Whiteland Parks and Recreation Board meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 6pm at the Whiteland Town Hall at 549 E Main St, Whiteland, IN 46184. The role of the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Board is to help establish policies, goals and objectives to determine what kind of facilities and programming make sense for future parks and recreation opportunities in Whiteland. In addition to providing amenities for Whiteland residents, the Board seeks to use parks and recreation to help boost the economy and drive resident retention.

As a newly formed parks board, Board members went through a Park Board Coaching and Training session led by the consultant in March 2025 to help explore their responsibilities and opportunities for parks and recreation in Whiteland. As part of this training session, the Board participated in a survey to help define their collective vision and goals for the future. Based on this survey, the Board has set the following goals:

- Support long-term strategic planning initiatives to establish a vibrant and well-connected parks, trails, and open space system that meets the needs of the community.
- Prioritize safety, inclusivity, and accessibility in our parks, trails, and open spaces so that people of all ages, income, and ability feel welcome and supported.



The Whiteland Parks and Recreation Board seeks to use parks and recreation to help boost the economy and drive resident retention. Source: Context Design.

- Lay the foundations for the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Department to become a fully-functioning, well-staffed entity that operates and maintains the Town’s parks, trails, and open spaces on a daily basis and provides a positive recreation experience for all.
- Strengthen community engagement and promote transparency to ensure that our parks, trails, and open spaces are meeting the diverse needs of the community.
- Maintain stable, local funding streams for maintenance and operations and seek alternative funding opportunities for the development of parks, trails, and open spaces to support a successful and growing parks and recreation system.

FUNDING

Like most parks and recreation departments, Whiteland Parks and Recreation is funded primarily through the Town’s general fund. Revenue from

the general fund comes from property taxes assessed by the Town. The Whiteland Town Council is responsible for allocating the funds to Town functions, including parks and recreation, during the annual budget process. The following table shows the past four years of budget for parks and recreation in Whiteland:

Whiteland Parks and Recreation Budget	
YEAR	BUDGET
2022	\$10,000
2023	\$10,000
2024	\$40,000
2025	\$1,000

In 2001, the Town developed a special non-reverting park fund under the General Provisions, established pursuant to IC 36-10-3-14. Per regulations, distributions from the non-reverting operating park fund may be made without appropriation; provided such distribution shall be made on approved claims allowed and signed by the President and the Clerk-Treasurer of the Town Council.



Source: Town of Whiteland.



Source: Context Design.



The tornado that swept through Whiteland in March 2023 put funding for parks and recreation on hold. Source: Daily Journal / Devon Foster.

Following the creation of a non-reverting park fund, the Parks and Recreation Fund was established per the following stipulations and provisions (Ord. 01-2, passed 1-8-01):

- The revenue paid into the Parks and Recreation Fund shall be restricted to funds received by the town from Ameritech pursuant to Ameritech's lease of tower space.
- Expenditures from the Parks and Recreation Fund shall be limited to the town's park and recreation expenses.
- The Parks and Recreation Fund shall be non-reverting at each year end and shall continue into existence and until terminated by a subsequent ordinance.

- In the event the Parks and Recreation Fund is terminated, any remaining balance in the Parks and Recreation Fund shall be paid to the town's general fund.

The fund has remained inactive since the expiration of Ameritech's lease in 2019 .

It is important to note that while parks and recreation have been high on the list of the Town's priorities for several years, the tornado that swept through Whiteland in March 2023 put funding for parks and recreation on hold. Roughly 130 properties were damaged in the tornado, which was declared a federal disaster by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Today, the community is well on the road to recovery and looking to prioritize parks and recreation to create amenities for residents. A more detailed overview of the impacts of the tornado can be found in Chapter 2: Community Profile.

Ordinance Documentation

ORDINANCE #88-3: DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHMENT

ORDINANCE #88- 3

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A
DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND RECREATION
FOR THE TOWN OF WHITELAND, INDIANA

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the Town of Whiteland desires to establish a Park and Recreation Department as provided by Indiana Code 36-10-3-3.

THEREFORE, be it ordained by the Board of Trustees, Town of Whiteland, Indiana:

Section 1. That there should be and hereby is established and created a Department of Parks and Recreation.

Section 2: That any ordinance or resolution, or part thereof, conflicting with the provisions of this ordinance, are hereby repealed insofar as they may affect this ordinance.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, TOWN OF WHITELAND, INDIANA, ON THE 22 DAY OF FEB, 1988.


ROBERT HALL, President


KATHY SMITH


BILL BURCHETT

ATTEST:


JANE DAVIS
WHITELAND CLERK/TREASURER

ORDINANCE #88-11: BOARD ESTABLISHMENT

ORDINANCE NO. 88- 11

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND ADDING TO ORDINANCE #88-3, PROVIDING FOR RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION, AND ACTIVITIES IN ANY SUCH PARK.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES THAT:

PARK AND RECREATION

PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

1. CREATION: The Park and Recreation Board of the Town of Whiteland is hereby established pursuant to Indiana Code 36-10-3-1 et. seq. and any and all amendments thereto.

2. MEMBERSHIP: The Park and Recreation Board shall be composed of four (4) members to be appointed by the Executive of the Town of Whiteland, providing that no more than two (2) members of said Board shall be affiliated with the same political party.

3. TERM OF OFFICE: Upon establishment of the board, the term of the members initially appointed shall be one (1), two (2), three (3), and four (4) years respectively. Thereafter as a term expires, each new appointment shall be for a four (4) year term. All terms shall expire on the first Monday in January, but an appointee shall continue in office until his successor is appointed.

4. POWERS: The Town is hereby adopting the Park and Recreation Law as defined in the Indiana Code titles 20 and 36 and incorporate said laws and all amendments thereto by reference.

NON REVERTING PARK FUND

1. CREATION: A special Non-Reverting Operating Park Fund is hereby established, pursuant to I.C. 19-7-4-25.

2. USE OF FUND: Distributions from the Non-Reverting Operating Park fund may be made without appropriation; provided, however, that such distribution shall be made on approved claims allowed and signed by the President and the Clerk-Treasurer of the Board of Trustees.

PARK REGULATIONS

1. INJURY TO PROPERTY: It shall be unlawful for any person to write on, cut, mutilate, deface, damage, remove or destroy in any manner any property, real or personal, owned and operated by the Town and located upon or in any park or playground.

2. INJURY TO PLANTS: It shall be unlawful for any person who is not an employee of the Town, or who is not authorized to do so by the Town Board, to pull, pluck, break, trample, climb into, remove, injure, mutilate, or destroy any plant, tree or vegetation owned or maintained by the Town or located on any property owned or controlled by the Town.

3. DISCHARGING FIREARMS: It shall be unlawful for any person, unless

Ongoing Partnerships

In the face of limited resources, partnerships with like-minded partners and allies at community-based organizations are key to helping parks and recreation programs meet the current and future demands of residents for quality parks and open space. Common partnerships that can help parks and recreation agencies “fill the gaps” in revenue, critical needs, and programming include the following:

- Education facilities, such as area schools, colleges, and universities
- Medical facilities, such as hospitals and wellness centers
- Local businesses
- Non-profit organizations

In exchange for the donation of in-kind (non-cash) resources from parks and recreation agencies (such as the use of park facilities and amenities), these partnerships commonly yield the donation of partner supplies and volunteer time. In some cases, partnerships may result in additional capital resources for the department, either through the direct donation of funds, land, or equipment.

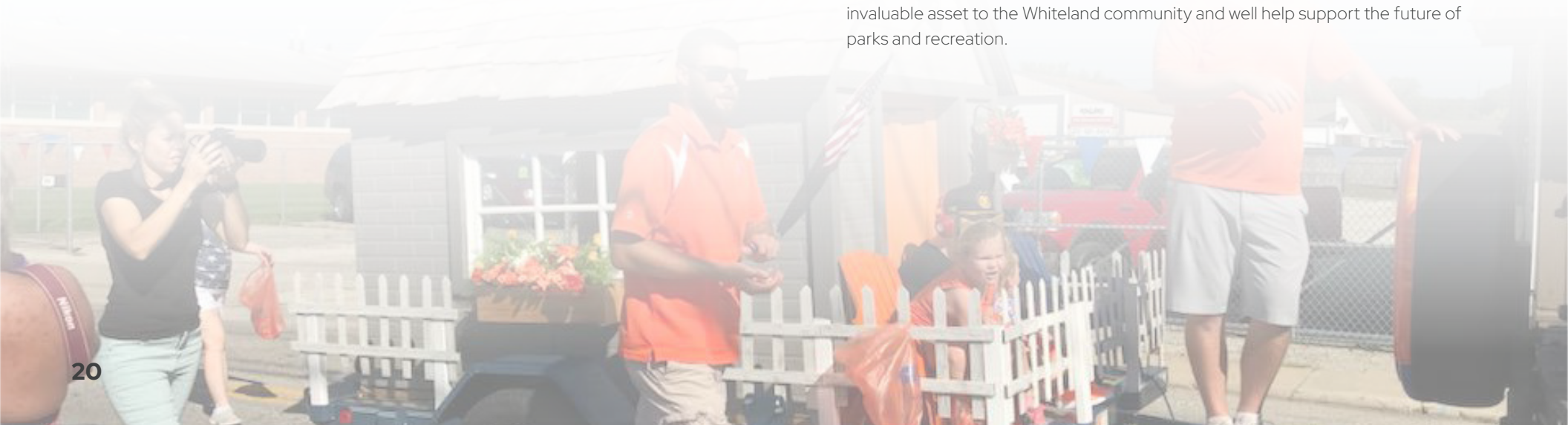
Whiteland’s community events rely on financial support from local sponsors to help minimize costs and provide the best possible experience for participants.

A few sponsors of past community events, such as the Whiteland Summer Fest and Community Clean-Up Days, include the following:

- Bailey and Wood Mortgage Lender
- Mohr Logistics Park
- Best Way
- Patch Development
- Johnson Memorial Health

In addition to community organizations, volunteers and advocacy groups can provide increased visibility and support for parks and recreation agencies. Volunteers, individuals that donate their time to advocating for parks and open space through programming, operation, and maintenance opportunities, are essential to protecting parks and recreation facilities and amenities for both current and future generations.

In the past, community events such as the Gleaners Mobile Food Pantry and the Greater Whiteland Community Day have relied on volunteers to help mobilize and operate programs that help make these events a success. These volunteers are an invaluable asset to the Whiteland community and will help support the future of parks and recreation.



Supporting Plans

The 2026 Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the Town of Whiteland's first parks and recreation master plan. In addition to the 2025 Indiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), past planning efforts in the Town of Whiteland and Johnson County provide documentation that supports and influences the development of parks and recreation in Whiteland.

2025 INDIANA STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (SCORP)

The *2025 Indiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*, prepared by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), is an information resource that supports local, regional, and state-level parks and recreation planning. The plan quantifies and analyzes the state's outdoor recreation resources for the social, environmental health, and economic benefit of citizens statewide⁶. The goals of the SCORP are to:

- Provide a quantitative and qualitative analysis of outdoor recreation supply and demand statewide⁶.
- Improve the provision of outdoor recreation to all users⁶.
- Quality Indiana for National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) state-side grants⁶.
- Set statewide priorities for funding of grants through LWCF, the Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and any other applicable funds available at State or federal levels⁶.

Three surveys were conducted during the planning process: an Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey, a Trail User Survey, and a Local Park and Recreation Provider Survey. The Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey asked the public about their outdoor recreation activities and frequency of use, while the Trail User Survey asked the public about how they use trails. The Local Park and Recreation Provider Survey asked parks and recreation professionals and non-profit local outdoor recreation providers about their challenges, issues,

and solutions. The results of these surveys were analyzed for emerging themes and trends to create a needs assessment that incorporates the needs and preferences of Indiana's parks and recreation facilities users and professionals statewide⁶.

Benchmarking of the supply of outdoor recreation acreage in Indiana using the National Recreation and Parks Association Guidelines for Public Park Acreage and Indiana's LOS Guidelines for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space, shows a deficit of local acres of public outdoor recreation land by county and region and a surplus of total public outdoor recreation land statewide. There is an inequity of distribution of public outdoor recreation acreage statewide, with the southern portion of the state having more counties that meet the total LOS guidelines than those in the northern portion of the state. A total of 14 critical counties were identified by the SCORP, including Johnson County. Critical counties are those that don't have the recommended supply of outdoor recreation acres of 55 acres per 1,000 population or greater and have a population-growth rate higher than the 2014 to 2018 estimated Indiana statewide population growth rate of 1.44%⁶.

In addition to its other functions, the SCORP serves as an update to the 2016 Indiana Trails Plan. This section of the SCORP explores new trends, issues, and successes relating to trails in Indiana and provides a progress report on the goals, strategies, and advancements of the 2016 Indiana Trails Plan. The Visionary Trail System described in the Plan includes existing and proposed trail corridors that form a network of trails throughout Indiana. This trail system includes two types of trails, including Visionary and Potential Visionary Trails. Both types of trails are based on input from stakeholders on existing, desired, and current trail projects. Overall, the Plan notes an increasing demand for trails that is not being met by current supply⁶.

2011 WHITELAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The *2011 Whiteland Comprehensive Plan* is a policy document that helps guide the implementation of the town's vision for the future. Parks and recreation were identified as a "building block" to providing for the quality of life desired

by residents of the Town of Whiteland. The plan determined that the needs for park and recreation space could be met through a combination of public and private means, including the establishment of three parks proposed for Town of Whiteland and partnerships with community organizations, such as Clark-Pleasant Community Schools and major residential subdivisions⁷.

Of the three parks proposed for the Town of Whiteland, two would be community parks meeting the criteria for community parks established in the plan, while the third park should be an athletic complex with a variety of soccer fields, baseball and softball diamonds, and basketball courts. In addition to parks and recreation, pedestrian connectivity was identified as a major challenge facing the community. Per the plan, 5–6' sidewalks and a multi-use path connecting future community parks and the town center should be considered to enhance the pedestrian experience⁷.

WHITELAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The 2025 *Whiteland Comprehensive Plan* provides a guide for community leaders and staff to reference when making decisions about future land use, transportation, and utilities⁸. The plan includes a section dedicated to parks and recreation, where a series of goals backed by public participation were identified to help guide the future of parks and recreation in Whiteland, including:

- Increase the amount of active and passive park space available to the Whiteland community⁸.
- Develop a destination sports facility to support local programs and serve as an economic development tool attracting spending to the community⁸.
- Collaborate with regional partners to promote and implement regionally impactful trail connections that connect residents to parks and destinations throughout the region⁸.

JOHNSON COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION 5-YEAR PARKS MASTER PLAN 2020-2025

The *Johnson County Parks and Recreation 5-Year Master Plan 2020–2025* provides a framework to help influence and guide the development of existing and future parks in Johnson County⁹. While the plan doesn't specifically address

parks and recreation needs in Whiteland, it provides county-level guidance that can help the Town expand its offerings in the future, including the need for:

- Enhanced pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity between parks and open space and communities in Johnson County⁹
- Additional cultural and community-based programs and events⁹
- Additional recreation programming⁹
- Expanded marketing strategies to increase public awareness of park and recreation program offerings⁹

JOHNSON COUNTY TRAILS MASTER PLAN

The 2019 *Johnson County Trails Master Plan* is intended to help improve safety and access for non-motorized forms of transportation. The plan serves as a guide for future development and design of future pedestrian and bicyclist facilities in Johnson County. Of the plan's nine overarching goals for the master plan, the primary goal was to create connections between the communities of Bargersville, Edinburgh, Franklin, Greenwood, New Whiteland, Ninevah, Trafalgar, White River Township, and Whiteland within Johnson County¹⁰.

ADA TRANSITION PLAN

The Town is currently working with Crossroad Engineers to create an ADA Transition Plan as part of its Community Crossings project and asset management work. The ADA Transition Plan is needed for future Community Crossings Matching Grant (CCMG) eligibility and will serve as a guide for the Town to use in making improvements to ensure accessibility to its public facilities. Informed by self-evaluation and public participation, the Plan will detail a transition plan with methods to remove physical barriers, a timeline for proposed modifications, and responsible officials. Questions regarding the ADA Transition Plan and its progress should be directed to the Town's Building Commissioner/ADA Coordinator Billy Patrick.

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3. The Trust for Public Land & HR&A Advisors. (2024). A Research Report on Park Investment and Economic Vitality. https://www.tpl.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/TPL-Park-Investment-and-Economic-Vitality-in-Cities-09_19_24.pdf.
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Community Profile

2



Demographics

POPULATION + GENDER

The Town of Whiteland is growing faster than Johnson County

As a whole, Whiteland's population is increasing but is plateauing compared to its growth in the 90s. According to the 2025 Whiteland Comprehensive Plan, there has been a 10.3% population rise since 2010. Compared to Johnson County's 3.7% growth in population, Whiteland is still growing faster than the county average.

According to the ACS 2023 Estimates, Whiteland has slightly more men (50.7%) than women (49.3%), opposite of Indiana overall, with slightly more women (50.7%) than men (49.3%). This difference is due to the younger (0-24 years) age range, with there being slightly more men (54.7%) than women (45.3%). Ages 25 and older have a slightly higher percentage of women, which is more in line with regional and national trends.

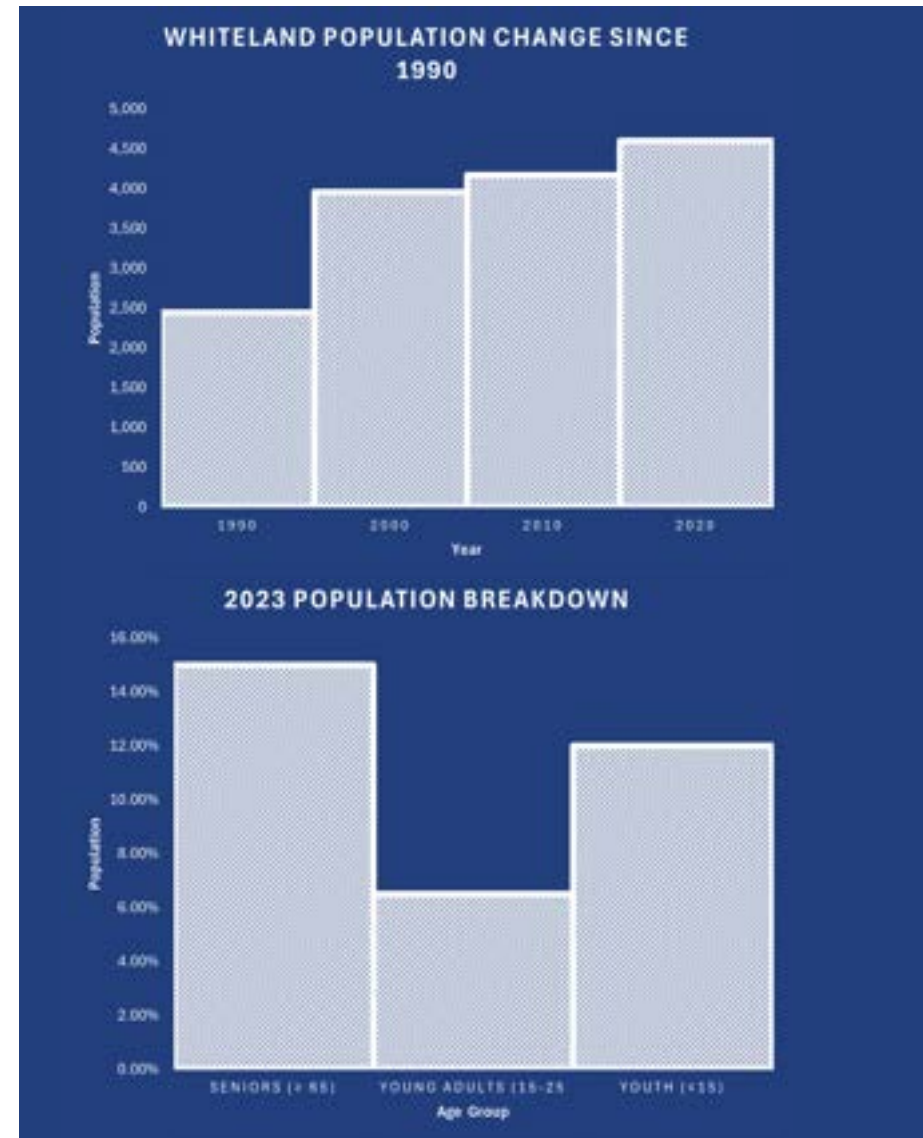
Why it matters

This growth dictates the need for a Parks and Recreation Department that can accommodate the diverse needs of the town's current and future population. While the slowing rate of growth can point to an eventual peak of growth, it could also indicate a stabilizing population. **Slower growth will allow the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Department to establish a foothold in the community.** The younger population's slightly larger male dominance may impact some gendered sports enrollments, but is likely negligible.

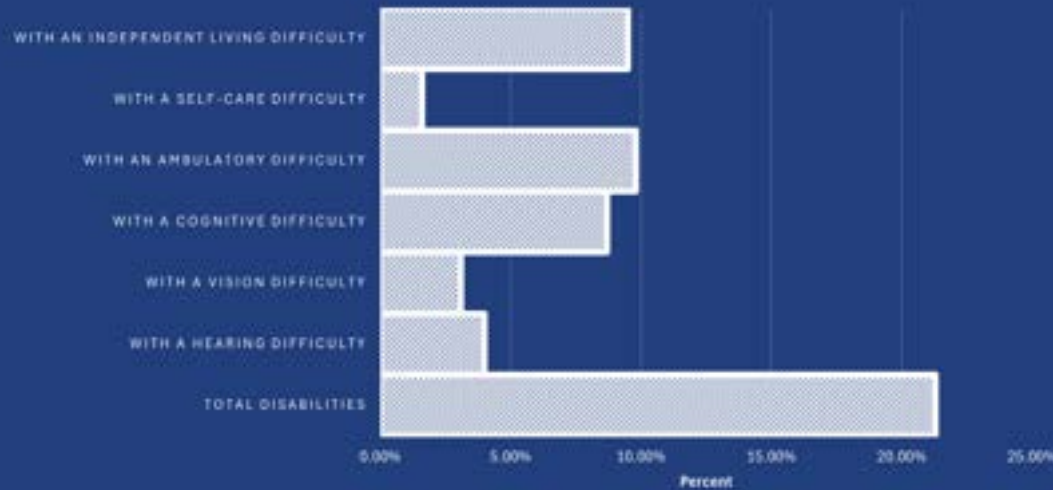
AGE

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

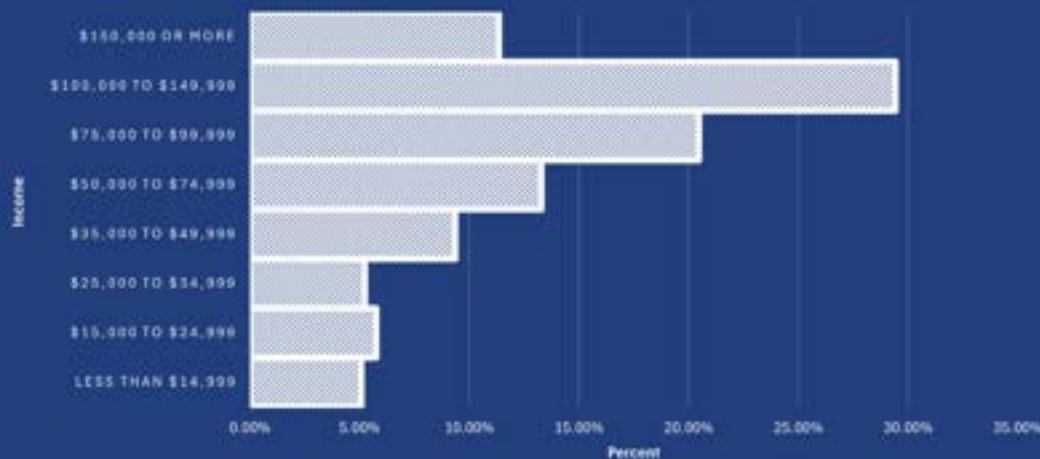
Whiteland's young (≤ 15) and young adult (15-24) population percentage is significantly smaller than Johnson County and Indiana, while the senior (≥ 65) population percentage is in line with that of Johnson County and Indiana. This signals a larger middle-aged population in Whiteland compared to Johnson County. Since the 2000 Census, Whiteland's young and young adult population has shrunk considerably, with the young adult population percentage shrinking from 10.2% to 6.6% and the young percentage shrinking from 29.6% to 12%. The senior and middle-aged population ratios have grown as a result. This can also be seen through the median age of the Town, which is 36.3 years in 2024 estimates versus 37.7 years in 2000.



2023 TOTAL DISABILITY PERCENTAGE BY TYPE



HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2023 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)



Why it matters

While Whiteland's population has aged significantly since 2000, the senior population is as dense as Johnson County and Indiana at large. This means that the middle-aged population is larger than the surrounding areas. In the future, recreation programs should be designed that take these statistics into account, with offerings geared toward adults and seniors. **However, recreation facilities and programs are a significant draw for young families, and investment into these amenities can encourage younger generations to live, work, and play in Whiteland.**

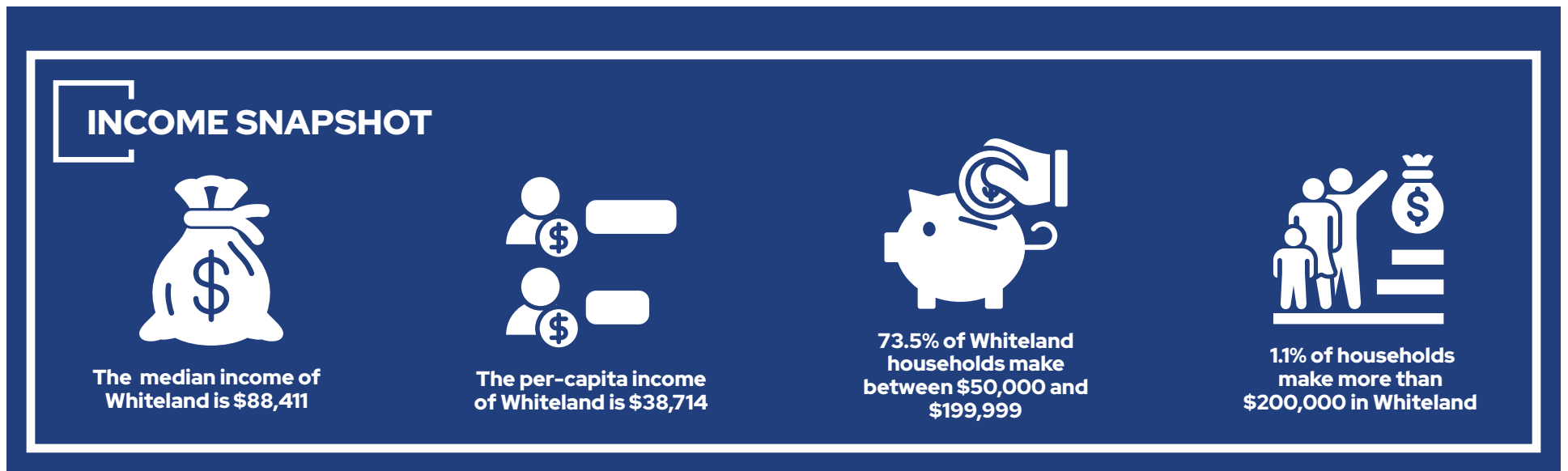
DISABILITY STATUS

The Town of Whiteland has a higher concentration of people living with disabilities than Johnson County and Indiana

Compared to the Indiana and Johnson County percentages (13.8% & 11.3%, respectively), Whiteland has a higher concentration of people living with disabilities (21.3%). The three primary differences, when broken down by disability type, are people with cognitive, ambulatory, and independent living difficulties.

Why it matters

Offering high quality parks and open spaces that serve these communities is of high importance. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance is a priority and necessary by law, but **this larger population indicates that additional recreation programming and facilities that are designed with those living with disabilities in mind would benefit the community.**



INCOME

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

In the 2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates, it is projected that the median income of Whiteland is \$88,411, while the per-capita income is \$38,714. Indiana's (\$70,051) and Johnson County's (\$87,227) median income are less than that of Whiteland's, while Johnson County's (\$42,884) per-capita income is slightly larger than that of Whiteland's. This suggests a smaller workforce and a larger population of non-workers/dependents living in Whiteland compared to Johnson County. The discrepancy seen between per-capita income and median income has to do with metrics. Per capita income measures the mean, or average, income across all citizens (including people within households that do not work), while median household income measures the middle

income, dividing the households into equal groups; one group that earns more than the median and one group that earns less. This discrepancy indicates that there is a significant number of non-worker household members. These members may include children, stay-at-home parents, elderly non-working family members, and other living situations.

73.5% of Whiteland households make between \$50,000 and \$199,999, while Johnson County and Indiana households are only 62.2% and 56.9%, respectively. This large gap comes partly from 1.1% of households making more than \$200,000 in Whiteland

(vs 11.5% & 7.6% in Johnson County & Indiana). In addition, Whiteland's percentage of households making less than \$49,000 is 25.5%, significantly less than Indiana's 35.5%.

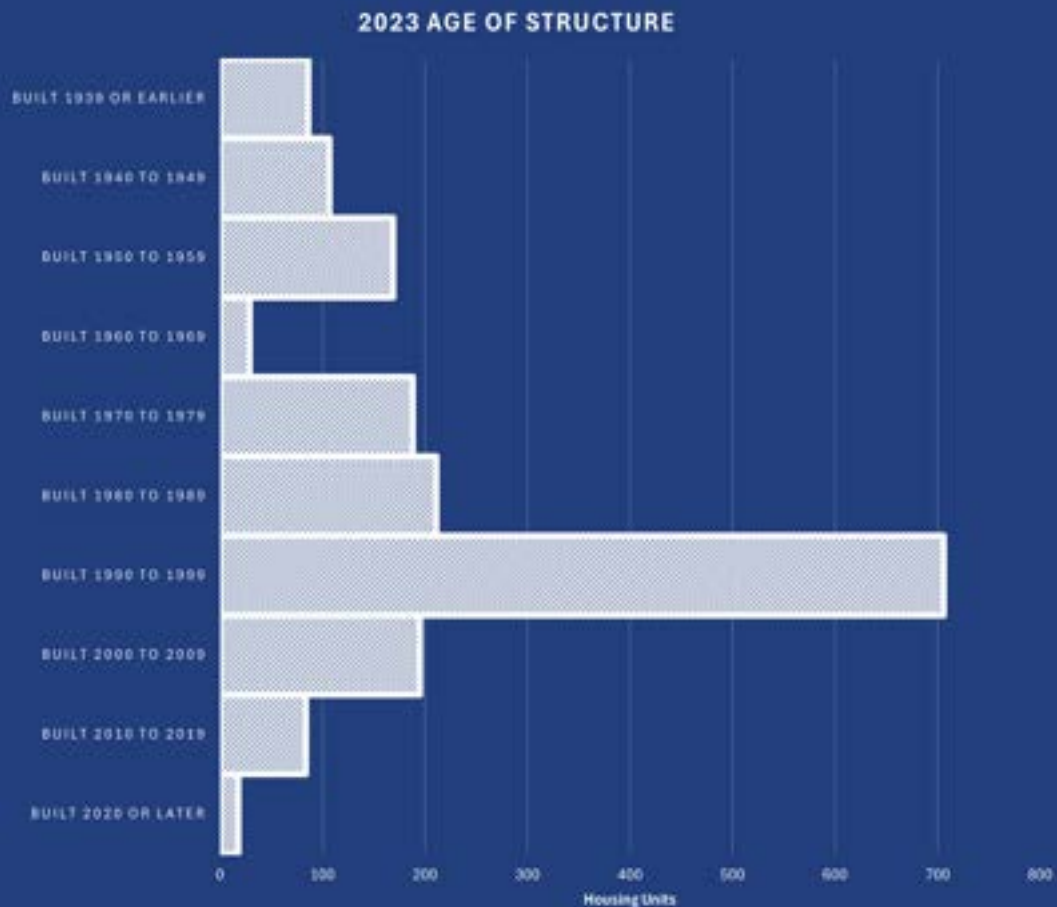
In addition to these statistics, it can be helpful to examine ALICE Data. According to ALICE, "ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and represents the growing number of families who are unable to afford the basics of housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, and technology." When using this metric, 27% of Whiteland residents are below the ALICE Threshold, making it tied for the second lowest rate in Johnson County. For comparison, the highest ALICE Rate belongs to Amity CDP with 55% and Indiana's overall ALICE Rate of 38%.

Why it matters

Whiteland's strong middle class indicates a possible avenue for future funding through strategic events, programs, or park fees. Establishing fair pricing for programs and facilities such as day camps and dog parks can provide funding for the maintenance and operation of parks, open spaces, and amenities system wide.

It is important to design parks and programming with thought toward those living under the poverty line, as limited financial assets prevent travel and limit disposable income used for recreation. Though Whiteland's ALICE population is smaller than that of surrounding areas, this group should be considered when pricing, **possibly by using sliding-scale payment methods or scholarship opportunities.**

Housing



AGE AND VALUE

The Town of Whiteland's housing stock is newer than Indiana's average and less valuable than that of the surrounding county.

More than 80% of the current housing stock in Whiteland was built after 1970, indicating general compliance with modern building codes. ACS 5-Year estimates of housing cost indicate a median house value of \$189,200, less than Indiana's \$201,600 and Johnson County's \$260,400.

Why it matters

Though Whiteland's average housing value is lower than Johnson County's, the average housing age is nearly identical to that of Johnson County's. The structure age is newer than state averages, making Whiteland appealing for starter homes and families otherwise priced out of Johnson County.

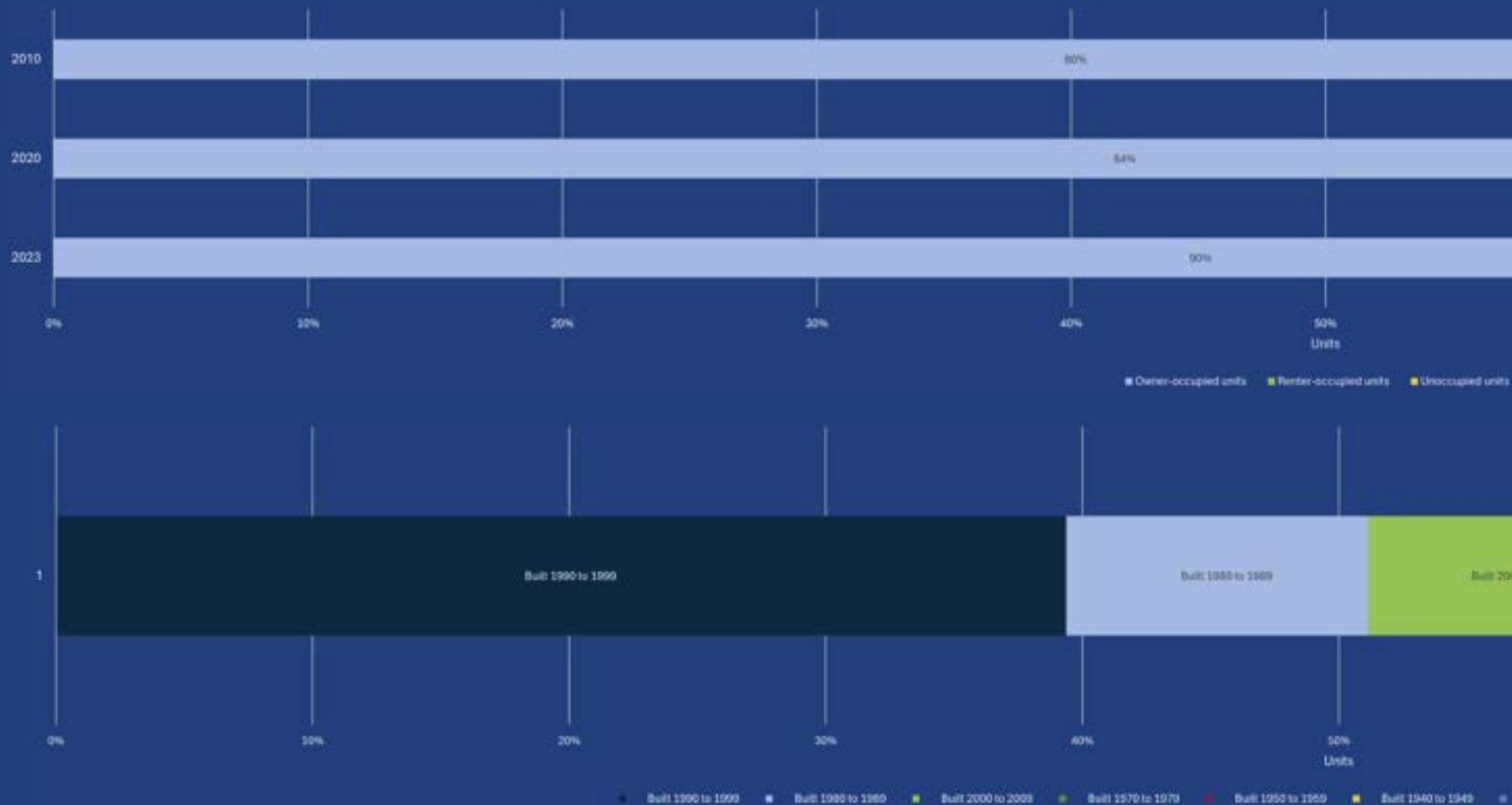
NUMBER OF UNITS AND HOUSING TENURE

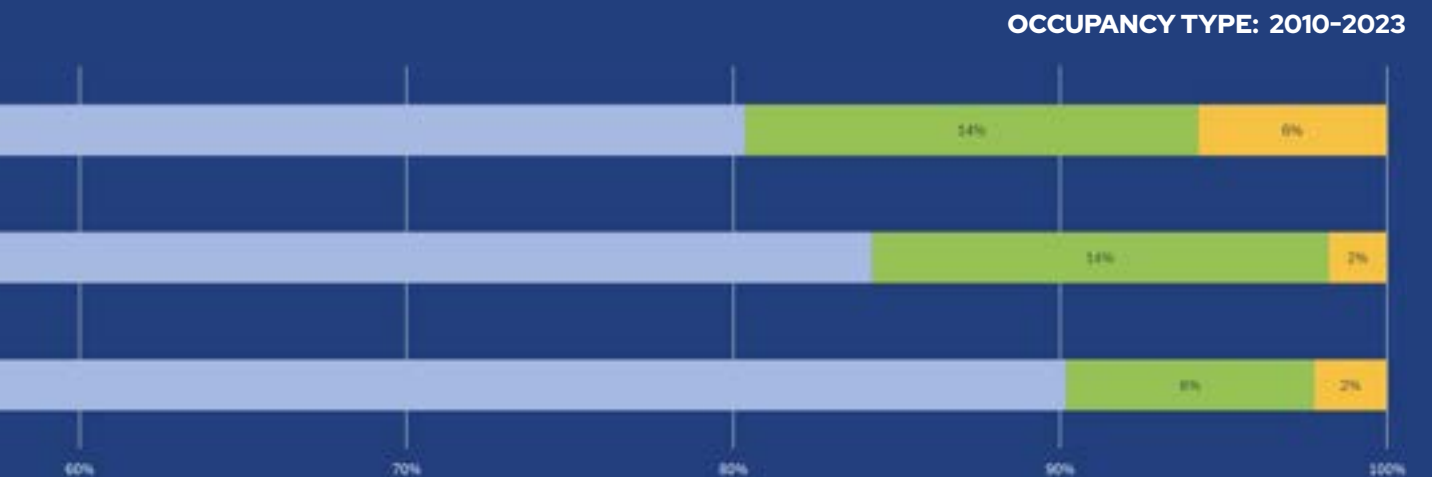
The number of homeowners in the Town of Whiteland is increasing, and vacancies remain lower than county and state averages.

The current vacancy rate in Whiteland of 2% (with a margin of error of ± 3.1) is significantly lower than that of Johnson County (8%) and Indiana (11.3%). This rate can increase housing costs and indicate housing shortages. While a low vacancy rate can drive rent and home prices up, a high rate can indicate population decline. Other factors such as short-term rentals and renovations/construction can impact this rate.

However, according to the *2025 Whiteland Comprehensive Plan*, the ACS 5-Year estimates on this metric may be inaccurate. Because of this, data such as total housing units were omitted from this discussion, and ratios were used in their place, which generally agree with 2020 and 2010 census numbers. (Continued on page 32)

HOUSING SNAPSHOT





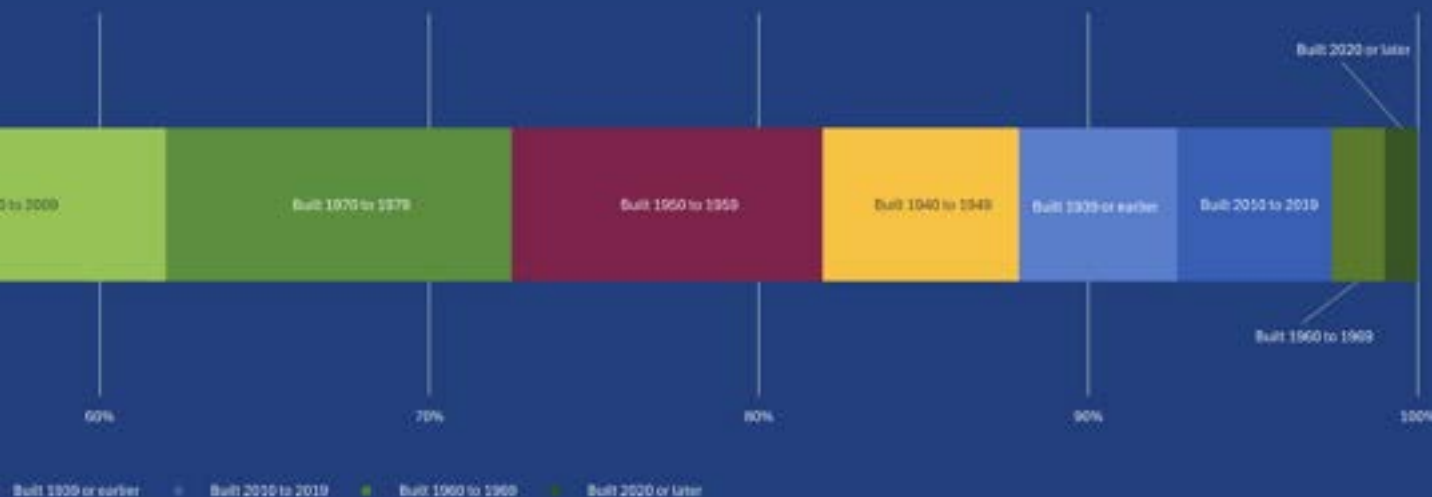
More than 80% of the current housing stock in Whiteland was built after 1970



The current vacancy rate in Whiteland of 2%



85.5% of homes in Whiteland are owner-occupied





W New single-family ranch at the Saddlebrook Farms North Subdivision in Whiteland. Source: D.R. Horton.



W New two-story single-family home at the Briar Creek Estates Subdivision in Whiteland. Source: Ryan Homes.

(Continued from page 29)

Regarding number of housing units, the Plan states that, “According to the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, Whiteland had 1,632 total housing units, a decrease of 39 units (10.8%) since 2010. These ACS numbers are unlikely to be accurate, as the Builders Association of Greater Indianapolis (BAGI) reports 262 new housing permits were issued from 2020 to 2022, which would equate to a 13.3% increase in units since 2010. Additionally, there are 2,159 residential utility accounts in Whiteland as of September 2024, further suggesting ACS housing estimates are low. Of the town’s housing units, 85.5% are owner-occupied, 12.0% are renter-occupied, and 2.5% are vacant. The number of vacant housing units within Whiteland decreased by 28 units (33%) between 2010 and 2020,” (2025 Whiteland Comprehensive Plan).

Why it matters

Homeowner rates have increased while renter rates have decreased. This correlates with new construction being primarily single-family subdivisions.

Whiteland’s low vacancy rate can indicate that housing prices are high, which may be a barrier for those looking to live in Whiteland, such as young families and people living on fixed incomes. Due to the influx of housing permits, it can be assumed that, while these ratios are staying the same, the amount of single-family housing is increasing overall. As the population rate of change slows, the vacancy rate may stabilize. **Parks provide free or budget-friendly recreation and programming that may be essential for community health and wellness, especially for the new families brought in by rapid development.**

Workforce & Economy

AGE

The Town of Whiteland's workforce is mostly middle aged.

Young adults, teens, and seniors are experiencing a higher unemployment rate than that of older generations in Whiteland. There is also a significant portion of people aged 30 to 44 that are not in the labor force, possibly being stay-at-home parents or unable to work due to medical conditions or other factors.

Why it matters

Sectors that are experiencing higher unemployment are groups that could benefit from jobs in parks and recreation. As parks and recreation opportunities in Whiteland grow, **these age groups should be considered for seasonal staffing positions to help facilitate programming and maintain parks and open space.**

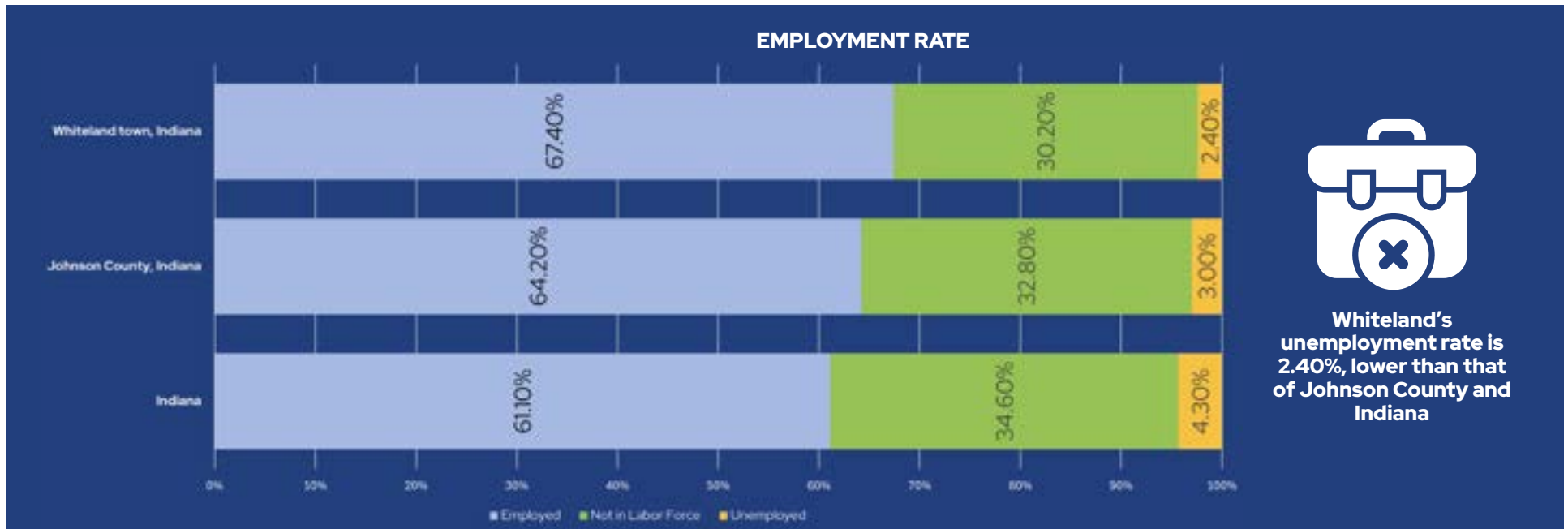
EDUCATION

Education level impacts poverty status, and The Town of Whiteland is slightly less educated than Johnson County and Indiana.

Though Whiteland's poverty level is lower than that of Johnson County and Indiana, the poverty that is experienced by residents is closely linked to education level, with most people experiencing poverty having a high-school education or less.

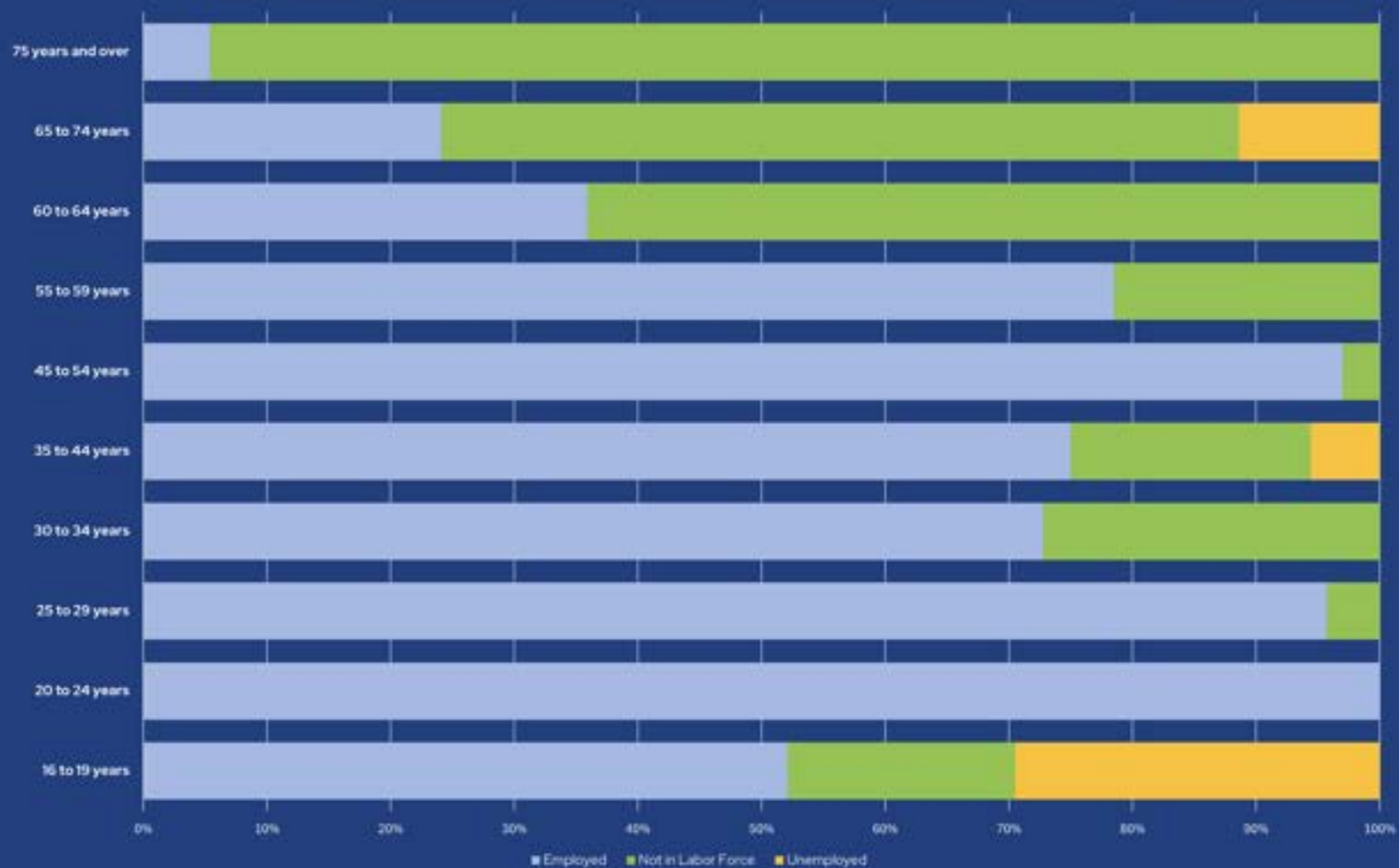
Why it matters

Lack of education can be both a cause and consequence of poverty. Individuals who don't have access to quality education may not acquire the skills necessary to find employment, leading to a cycle of poverty where they are unable to make ends meet and improve their standard of living. (Continued on page 37)

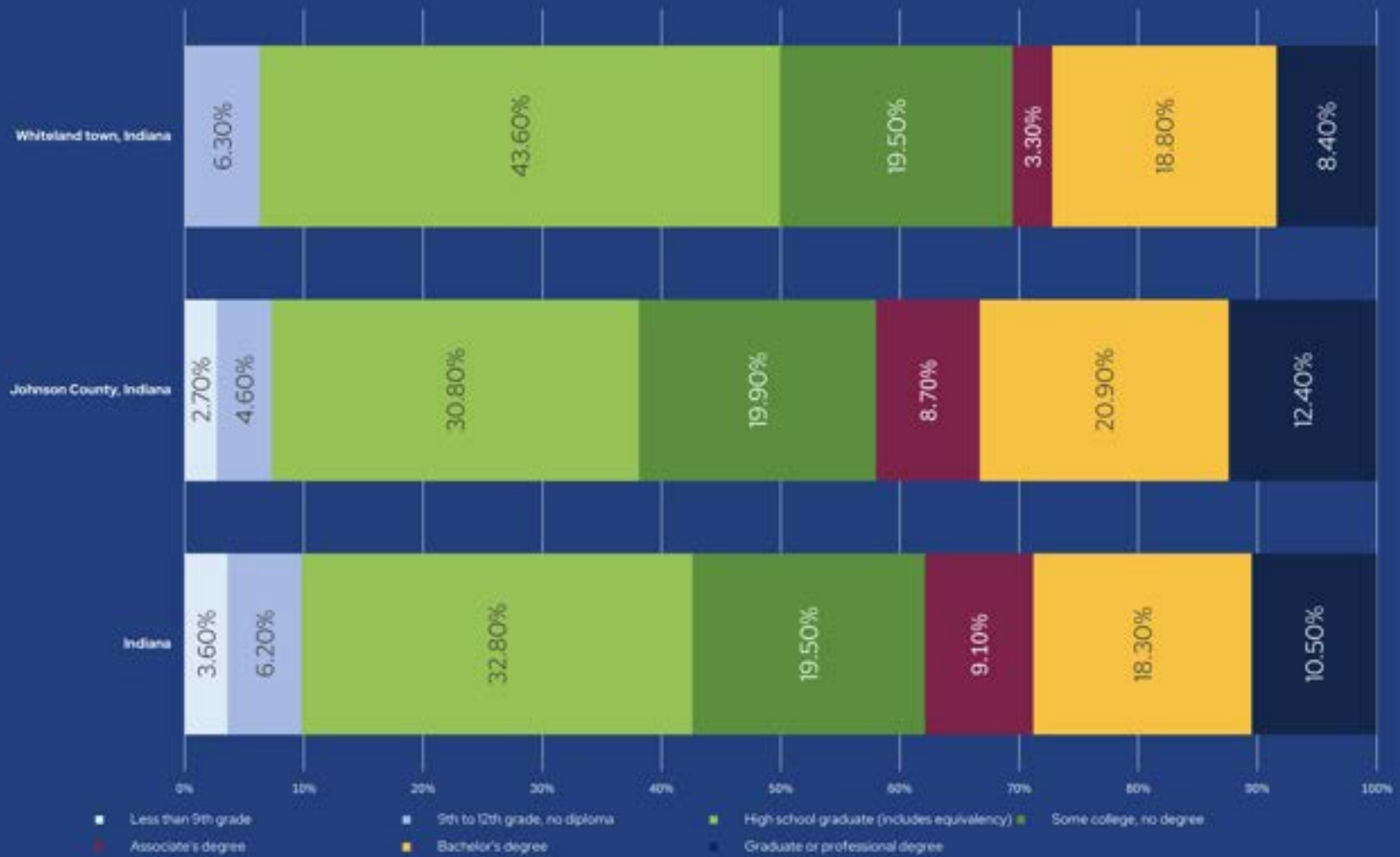


WORKFORCE & ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

WHITELAND EMPLOYMENT BY AGE

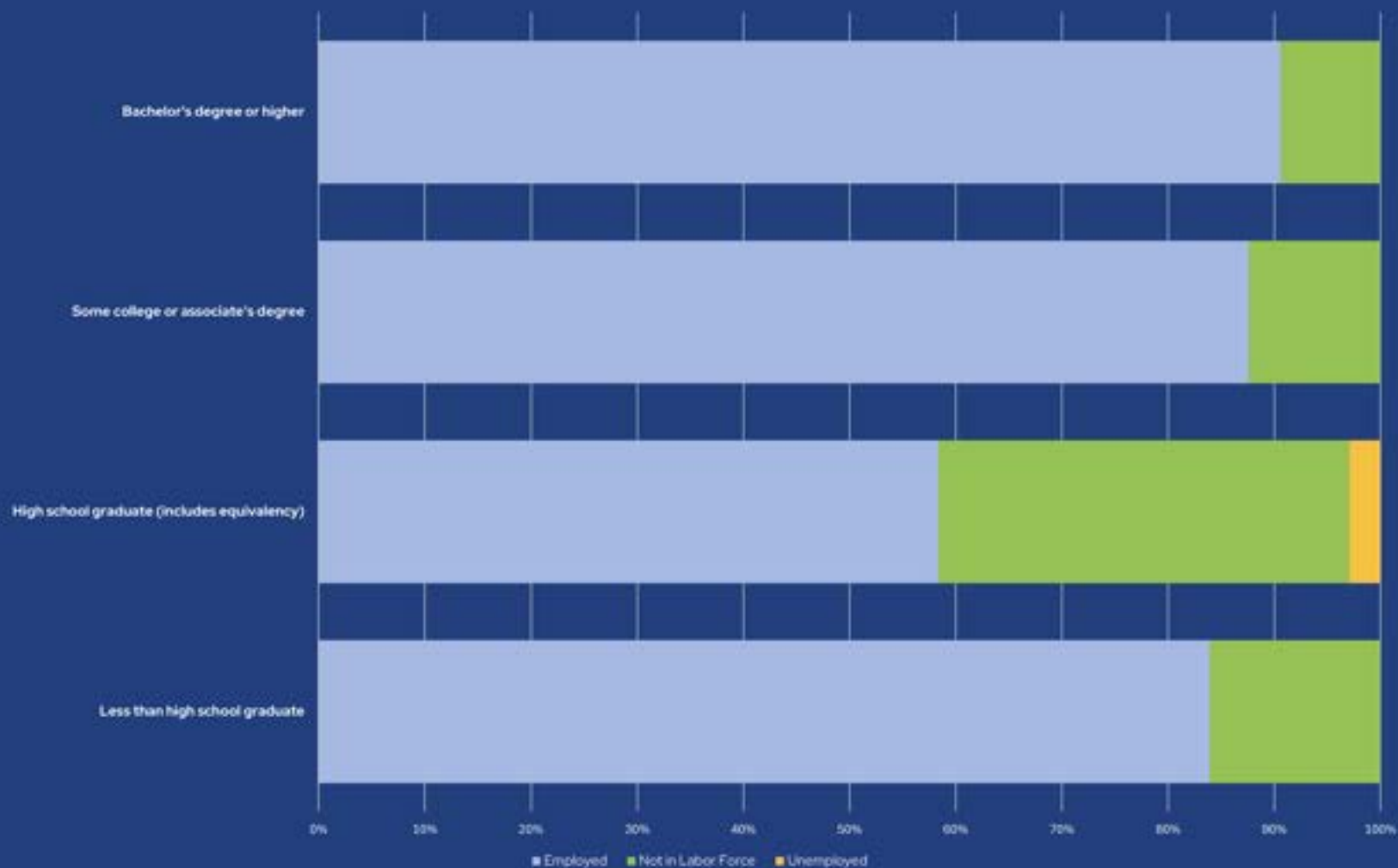


EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT LEVEL FOR POPULATION 25 YEARS AND OVER



WORKFORCE & ECONOMY SNAPSHOT

WHITELAND EMPLOYMENT BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT





17.60%

Whiteland's largest workforce subset includes management, business, and financial occupations



14.53%

Whiteland's second largest workforce subset includes office and administrative support

2023 WHITELAND INDUSTRIES SUMMARY

Management, business, science, and arts occupations

Management, business, and financial occupations

Education, legal, community service, arts, and media occupations

11.42%

Computer, engineering, and science occupations

3.89%

Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations

3.11%

17.60%

Sales and office occupations

Office and administrative support occupations

14.53%

Sales and related occupations

5.13%

Service occupations

Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations

6.18%

Food preparation and serving related occupations

4.51%

Personal care and service occupations

4.08%

Protective service occupations

2.60%

Healthcare support occupations

1.75%

Production, transportation, and material moving occupations

Transportation occupations

5.05%

Material moving occupations

4.04%

Production occupations

3.61%

Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations

Construction and extraction occupations

6.45%

Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations

6.06%

(Continued from page 33)

Investments in park facilities and education programming can foster education in all age groups. **By providing opportunities for informal experiential outdoor learning through STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math) programming, Whiteland Parks and Recreation can aid the development of critical social and academic skills on an individual level that support the educational achievements of the wider community.**

LABOR FORCE

The Town of Whiteland's labor force is primarily in management, business, science, and arts occupations, and unemployment is lower than Johnson County and Indiana.

Whiteland's largest workforce subset includes management, business, and financial occupations, with its second largest subset including office and administrative support. It should be noted that this projection comes from ACS 5-year estimates with large margins of error. The recent development of the Mohr Industrial Park near I-65 may have an impact on workforce ratios.

Why it matters

A majority of Whiteland's workforce does not lie in a service occupation, possibly meaning that more families have a traditional two-day weekend. This can be important when scheduling recreation programs. Further, the lower percentage of non-workers may mean child-care services, such as summer day camps, may be especially appealing to families with two parents working outside the home. **Due to the changing landscape of Whiteland's workforce, public engagement is essential in lieu of census data.**

WORKFORCE AND ECONOMY SUMMARY

Workforce trends, educational attainment, and the broader economic climate influence the planning and development of future park facilities, amenities, and recreation programs in Whiteland. As parks and recreation improvements are being considered, these factors should be carefully evaluated to address community challenges and reduce their impact. Hosting career fairs, offering test preparation workshops, and providing adult continuing education opportunities can help strengthen educational outcomes, while maintaining accessible open spaces and low- or no-cost recreation programming can support residents experiencing economic hardship.

Existing & Future Land Use



LAND USE

Currently, Whiteland is predominantly industrial and residential.

Most of the current land use by area is devoted to residential land use, followed by industrial land use; there is far less commercial, mixed use, institutional, and agricultural land uses in Whiteland. Much of the industrial land use area is clustered adjacent to I-65, while residential and commercial land use is mostly located along primary Town thoroughfares, including US 31 and Whiteland Rd. The K-9 Vader Bark Park and town-owned parcels earmarked for future parks and open space are located near residential areas.

In the future, Whiteland will focus less on warehouse development and more on the town center and US 31.

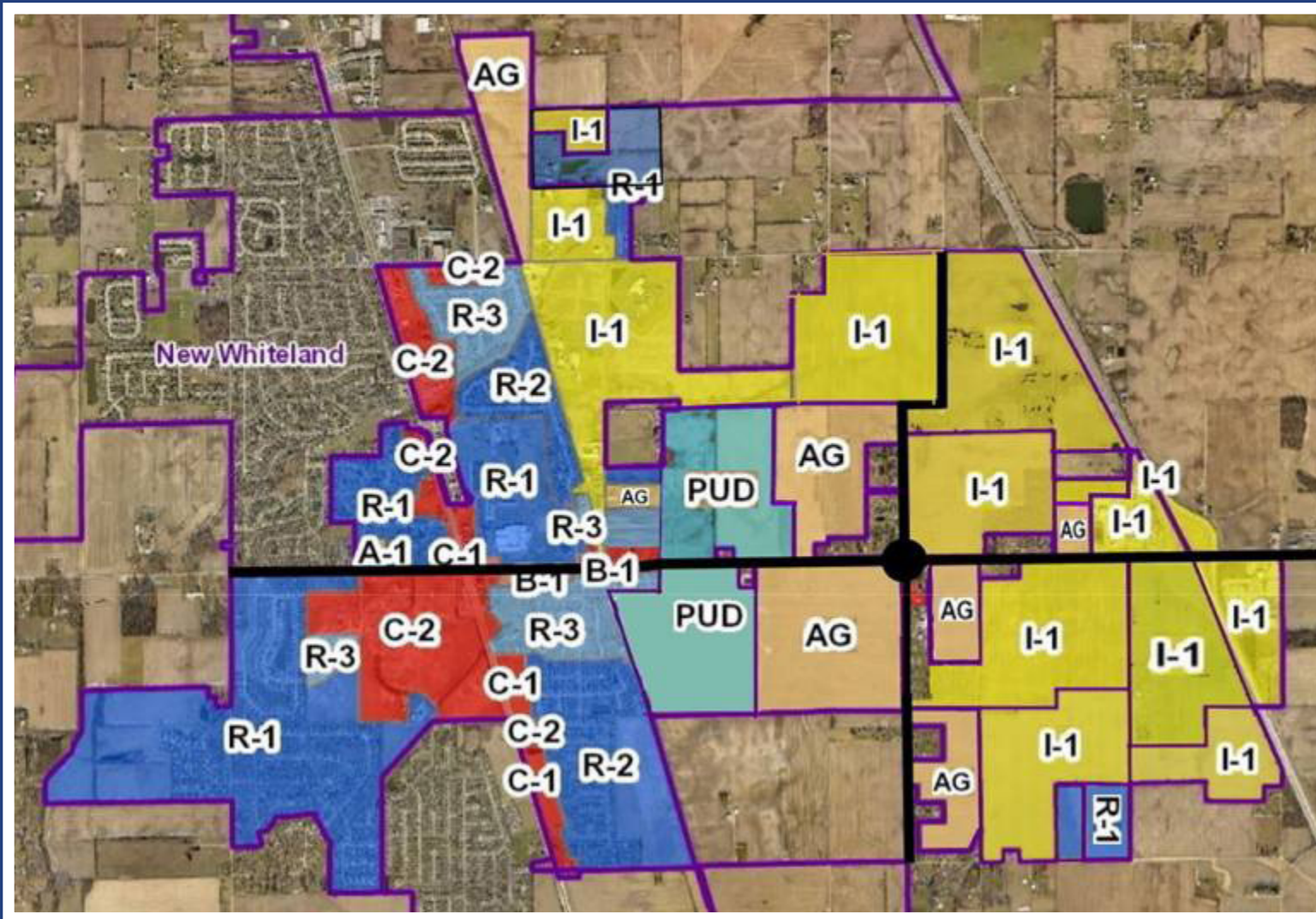
According to the *2025 Whiteland Comprehensive Plan*, participants in the planning process wanted more parks and open spaces, restaurants and entertainment, downtown reinvestment, and more retail and shopping opportunities. They expressed a desire to not create any additional industrial or warehouse development in Whiteland. The *2025 Whiteland Comprehensive Plan* focuses specifically on downtown revitalization, with goal three of the plan being "Create an active town center along Main Street."

Why it matters

Whiteland's land-use trajectory aligns with future investment in parks and open spaces. Whiteland residents noted a need for parks, and the re-investment in infrastructure along US 31 and Main Street will strengthen the downtown core, facilitating the possibility for park infrastructure along Main Street.



Re-investment in infrastructure along US 31 and Main Street will strengthen the downtown core. Source: Google Earth.



Whiteland Zoning Map. Refer to the Town of Whiteland Code of Ordinances, Chapter 156 for full zoning descriptions.
Source: Town of Whiteland.

Natural Environment

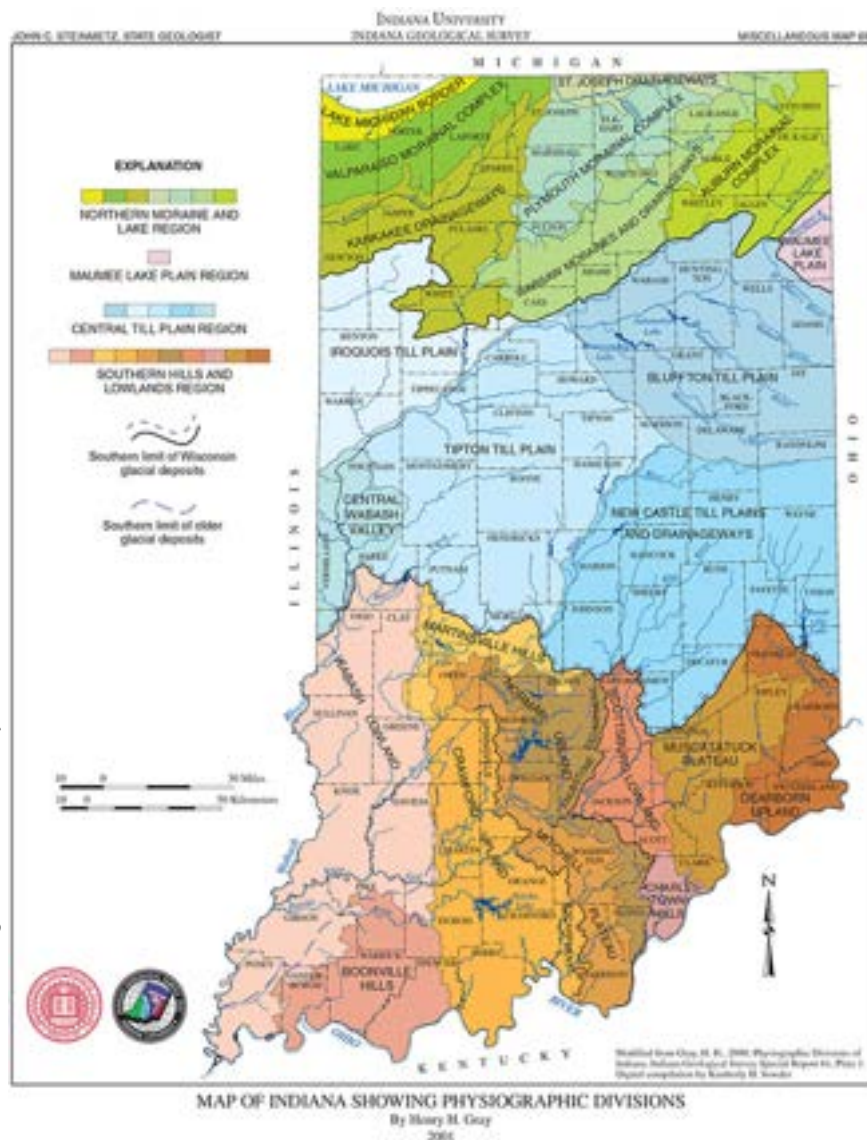
TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The topography of Whiteland is relatively flat with a gentle slope at an average elevation of 794 feet above sea level. Changes in elevation occur primarily along hydrological elements, such as creeks and ditches.

According to the 2000 *Indiana Geological Survey Special Report* by Henry Gray, Whiteland is part of the New Castle Till Plains and Drainageways, the largest physiographic region located in the Central Till Plain. The region is characterized by the sediment deposits of the Wisconsin glacier, which moved through Indiana approximately 20,000 years ago. These sediments, known as glacial till, include a mixture of sand and gravel deposits, silt, lake clays, and alluvial materials¹. According to the 1976 environmental study *Environmental Geologic Maps for Land Use Evaluations in Johnson County, Indiana* by John R. Hill, the sediments cover nearly all of Johnson County in a thickness ranging from 0-300 feet².

Beneath these glacial deposits is the Youngs Creek Watershed, which is included in the larger watershed of the Driftwood River and the East Fork of the White River. According to the 2003 publication *The Youngs Creek Watershed: A Plan for the Future* prepared by the Youngs Creek Advisory Group, the Youngs Creek Watershed, contained entirely by Johnson County, includes eight sub watersheds and spans approximately 79,500 acres, or 24 square miles. The watershed includes three different bedrock geology groups, including the Mucatauck Group, New Albany Shale, and the Borden Group³.

The majority of Whiteland is in the New Albany Shale Aquifer System, an extremely limited ground-water resource that is present along the northwest to southeast trending band of Johnson County. According to the 2005 publication *Bedrock Aquifer Systems of Johnson County, Indiana* by Randal D. Maier, the New Albany Shale Aquifer System, "consists mostly of brownish-black carbon-rich shale, greenish-gray shale, and minor amounts of dolomite and dolomitic quartz sandstone⁴." The shale is rich in organic materials and reaches a maximum thickness of 120 feet, increasing in thickness as it flows southwest beneath younger rock formations. Depth to bedrock is approximately 25-130 feet, with completed well depths ranging from 55 to 140 feet. The system is largely regarded as a poor ground water resource, with permeability of shale materials considered low⁴.





Source: NRCS - USDA

SOILS

There are a vast variety of soil types within the Town of Whiteland, each with its own specific set of properties. Due to the large number of soil types, this Plan classifies these soils into a series of soil associations, described by the USDA as a group of soils that are closely related geographically and occur in a characteristic pattern. Whiteland's soils can be classified into eight major soil associations, including Crosby-Brookston, Crosby-Miami, Genesee-Shoals-Ross, Rensselaer-Whitaker, Ockley-Fox, Genesee-Eel, Fox-Ockley-Nineveh, and Miami-Hennepin⁴.

- Crosby-Brookston – Poorly drained to somewhat poorly drained soil, with a seasonal high watertable between 0.5 to 2.0 feet and is in depressions or rises on uplands. Slopes are between 0 to 2 percent. The native vegetation is water tolerant grasses and hardwoods (USDA).
- Crosby-Miami – Well drained to somewhat poorly drained soil, with a seasonal high watertable between 0.5 to 3.5 feet and rises on till plains. Slopes are between 2 and 4 percent. The native vegetation is hardwoods (USDA).
- Genesee-Shoals-Ross – Well drained to somewhat poorly drained soil, with a seasonal high watertable between 0.5 to 6.0 feet and is on floodplains. Slopes are between 0 to 2 percent, and the native vegetation is hardwoods (USDA).
- Rensselaer-Whitaker – Very poorly drained to somewhat poorly drained soil, with a seasonal high watertable between 0.5 to 3.0 feet and is in depressions or on terraces. Slopes are 0 to 2 percent, and the native vegetation is water tolerant grasses and hardwoods (USDA).
- Ockley-Fox – Well drained soil, with a watertable at a depth greater than 40 inches and is on terraces. Slopes are 0 to 2 percent, and the native vegetation is hardwoods (USDA).
- Genesee-Eel – Well drained to moderately well drained soil, with a seasonal high watertable at 1.5 to 6 feet and is on floodplains. Slopes are 0 to 2 percent, and the native vegetation is hardwoods (USDA).
- Fox-Ockley-Nineveh – Well drained soil, with a watertable at a depth greater than 40 inches and is on terraces. Slopes are 0 to 2 percent, and the native vegetation is hardwoods (USDA).
- Miami-Hennepin – Well-drained soil, with a watertable at a depth greater than 40 inches and is on sideslopes on uplands. Slopes are 25 to 50 percent, and the native vegetation is hardwoods (USDA).



HYDROLOGY

The majority of Whiteland is in the Brewers/Canary Ditches sub watershed, which makes up an area of 13.5 square miles. The northeast corner of the Town is in the Grassy Creek-Youngs Creek sub watershed, which makes up an area of 15.3 square miles. There are two primary waterways that run through Whiteland including East Grassy Creek and Brewer Ditch. These waters drain into Youngs Creek, which flows along the northwest portion of the Youngs Creek Watershed to the southeast, where it meets Sugar Creek and drains into the Driftwood River⁴.

According to the EPA's How's My Waterway tool, which was designed to provide information about the condition of local waters based on data provided by the state, federal, tribal, and local agencies, the condition of Grassy Creek and Brewer Ditch are impaired and unknown, respectively. These ratings are a function of the conditions of intended use, including aquatic life, fish and shellfish consumption, and swimming and boating⁵.

- Grassy Creek – Grassy Creek was assessed good for aquatic life, unknown for fish and shellfish consumption, and impaired for swimming and boating. Issues identified in Grassy Creek include bacteria and other microbes (pathogens) that could cause disease. Pathogen contamination results from the inappropriate disposal of human or animal waste that enters the water from faulty septic systems, sewage discharges, farm and feedlot and manure runoff, boat discharges, and pet waste⁵.
- Brewer Ditch – Brewer Ditch was assessed unknown for aquatic life, fish and shellfish consumption, and swimming and boating.

Floodplains in Whiteland run along East Grassy Creek and Brewer Ditch. These floodplains are relatively narrow and pose very low risk to flooding adjacent development.

WOODLANDS

While most of Whiteland's natural vegetation has diminished since the early 1900s to make way for development and agriculture, some small pockets of hardwood forest remain, particularly along

East Grassy Creek, which cuts along the northwest corner of town, and along Whiteland Road heading east towards I-65. According to the USDA's 1998 publication *Indiana's Forests in 1998* by Schmidt, Hansen, and Solomakos, the most common forest type in northern Indiana, which includes the Young's Creek Watershed, is the maple-beech association. The maple-beech association is commonly found on rolling uplands and steep slopes and is characterized by a dense tree canopy⁶.

A vast variety of native tree species can be found in Whiteland's woodland areas, including White Oak, Black Oak, Southern Red Oak, American Elm, Tulip Tree, Sugar Maple, Beech, Maple, Ash, Elm, Cottonwood, Sycamore, Black Locust, Persimmon, and Sassafras, to name a few.

The biggest threats to woodlands in Whiteland are deforestation for agriculture and urban uses, diseases such as oak wilt and dutch elm disease, and insects including the Emerald Ash Borer. As Whiteland continues to grow, it is critical that it takes the necessary steps to protect its forests through tools such as zoning and land use regulation, land acquisition, and natural areas ordinances

WILDLIFE

Since Whiteland is largely agricultural in nature, there are few natural areas that provide critical habitat for native wildlife. As more animal species are being pushed out of their homes and into urban areas, Whiteland residents are seeing an abundance of "backyard creatures," such as chipmunks, cottontail rabbits, coyotes, fox squirrels, gray fox, gray squirrels, groundhogs (woodchucks), Indiana bats, opossum, raccoons, striped skunks, and white-tailed deer. The Endangered, Threatened and Rare Species List for Johnson County, prepared by the IDNR, includes a variety of mollusk, insect, arachnida, amphibian, reptile, bird, and mammal species that are in danger of going extinct because of human activity, such as destruction of habitat. A few of these species include Kirtland's Snake, the Woodland Box Turtle, the Common Nighthawk, the Least Bittern, the Barn Owl, the Silver-Haired Bat, the Badger, and the Pygmy Shrew⁷. As Whiteland looks to expand its parks and recreation offerings in the future, it should consider ways to protect and provide habitat for these species.

INVASIVE SPECIES

Common invasive species found throughout Johnson County, including Whiteland, pose a significant threat to local ecosystems. According to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), “Invasive species are plants, animals, and diseases that are not native to the area in question and have or are likely to cause environmental, human health, or financial harm⁸.” Invasive species disrupt the natural balance of habitats by outcompeting native species for food, shelter, and other resources. They are of particular concern when it comes to native species on the endangered, threatened, and rare species list who are already facing challenges when it comes to population decline. Invasive species have the potential to cause long-lasting damage to health and the economy, spreading diseases that can harm humans, animals, and plants and impacting the industries we rely on for food and other resources. A few of the most common invasive species found in Whiteland include Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*), Tree-of-Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire), and Spotted Lanterfly (*Lycorma delicatula*).

In the future, the Town of Whiteland should establish an *Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP)* to address the spread of invasive species. The plan should address, at a minimum, prevention, early detection and response, control and management, and restoration and be consistent with the recommendations of the National Invasive Species Council (NISC).

PROPERTY IMPACTS

Current park properties and town-owned lands, including the K9 Vader Bark Park, the Whiteland High School Trail, and the Saddlebrook Farms Subdivision Parcels, are largely composed of chemically treated lawns and have minimal vegetation and few trees. The only maintenance these sites receive consists of spring and summer lawn care, including mowing and chemical treatments. The Briar Creek Estates Subdivision Parcel is the only property with some ecological diversity; however, its value as a source of food and habitat for native species is greatly diminished by the overwhelming presence of invasive species. The parcel is largely occupied by a naturally occurring meadow and successional woodland dominated by invasive species such as Marestalk (*Conyza canadensis*), Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), White Mulberry (*Morus alba*), and Bradford Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*). The only maintenance this parcel currently receives is yearly bush hogging to manage overgrown vegetation and control woody growth. Successful restoration of this area will require a multi-year approach that incorporates Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies to mechanically and chemically remove these species, followed by re-seeding and ongoing monitoring to ensure the successful establishment of native plants.

Generally, all current park properties and town-owned lands are situated on Crosby and Brookston soils, both of which are poorly drained. As future park improvements are planned, consideration should be given to soil conditions and potential stormwater mitigation strategies. For more site-specific descriptions of natural conditions for each park parcel, reference Chapter 3: Parks and Open Space System.



Source: (Bottom) Mammal Society, (Middle) NPS, (Top) Ohio Herp Atlas.

Manmade, Historical & Cultural Features

Johnson County, located just south of the geographical center of Indiana, includes an area of 320 square miles, or 211,206 acres of land. It was previously part of a larger tract of land known as Delaware County, named for the Delaware Indians.



The Delaware (Lenape) Indians lived in small villages with multiple large, extended family groups known as clans. They used the land primarily for hunting, gathering, and agricultural purposes, alternating between summer villages and winter hunting camps along riverside sites to allow for better communication and the intertribal exchange of goods⁹.

European Americans arrived in the area in the early 1800s. Early interactions between the Native Americans and white settlers were rarely peaceful, with disputes over land leading to fighting between the two sides. In 1818, white colonists took control of the area in a series of six separate treaties known as the Treaty of St. Mary's. These treaties, signed by the Native Wyandot, Seneca, Shawnee, Ottawa, Wyandot, Potawatomi, Wea, Delaware, and Miami nations, ceded large portions of land in the middle of Indiana to the U.S. government in exchange for other land, lump sum payments, and annuity payments. With the signing of the treaties, the Native American population in the area was entirely displaced by white settlers¹⁰.

The development of Johnson County was largely spurred by the Whetzel Trace, an east-west trail cut in 1818 by Jacob Whetzel and his son, Cyrus. The trail, which began near Laurel on the Whitewater River and ended near Waverly and the bluffs of the White River, was cut in a relatively straight line and was used by white settlers traveling from the east and south as an early "highway."

If the trail still existed today, it would have connected through Whiteland¹¹.

Johnson County was formed as a county in 1823 and named for John Johnson, a Justice of the Indiana Supreme Court¹². The county is bounded by Marion County to the north, Bartholomew and Brown Counties to the south, Shelby County to the east, and Morgan County to the west. The county seat is Franklin, located just south of Whiteland and 20 miles south of the city of Indianapolis.

Whiteland is in north/central Johnson County and is considered part of the Indianapolis Metropolitan Area. The Town is accessible by major access roads including I-65 at exit 95 and US 31, running from Indianapolis to Columbus. Nearby cities include Greenwood to the north and Franklin to the south.

Whiteland, first referred to as the Tracy and Trout neighborhoods, was incorporated as a town on May 3, 1886. However, the town began to grow as early as 1853, with the town's first small country store opening in 1858 and the post office opening in 1861¹³. According to the publication *From Needmore to Prosperity: Hoosier Place Names in Folklore and History* by Ronald Baker, the Town was named for the local family of the first postmaster, Joel B. White¹⁴. The Town's first plat, laid out in 1863 by J.B. White, Jacob Varner, Thomas and Gorge Walker and Amazon Boone, included 40 lots, with the addition of six lots following in July of the same year¹³.



Source: (Bottom) Indiana Historical Bureau, (Top) OER Commons.

Since its inception, Whiteland's population has grown to include a total of 4,599 residents in 2020 per the United States Decennial Census. This growth can be attributed to several factors, including the Town's proximity to Marion County, the presence of high-volume thoroughfares, including US Highway 31 and Interstate 65, and the fact that it has a substantial supply of groundwater and land that is suitable for construction.

TRANSPORTATION

Whiteland's roadway network makes up the bulk of its transportation system. US 31, classified as a principal (primary) arterial roadway, borders the western edge of town and serves as a major north-south connector for local and regional needs. I-65, bordering the eastern edge of town, connects Whiteland to the cities of Indianapolis, Columbus, Louisville, and beyond. In addition to improving traffic flow and accessibility in and around Whiteland, I-65 attracts commercial, residential, and industrial development, creating job opportunities and encouraging economic growth.

Whiteland Road serves as the primary east-west connector between US 31 and I-65. The I-65 and Whiteland Road interchange serves as a major entry point for the community, increasing its importance. Other east-west connections include Tracy Road bordering the northern edge of Town and Paul Hand Road bordering the southern edge of Town. Out-of-town commuters and locals alike use these primary thoroughfares for daily travel, with other local roads throughout the community providing access to residential developments.

ACCESS Johnson County Public Transit, a public transportation service serving Johnson County, has six routes that operate six days a week. The system operates 8 buses and 18 paratransit vehicles with regular fares of \$1.00. For trip requests, riders must call ACCESS for curb-to-curb, shared ride service. Routes include the US 31 Zip Connector, the Greenwood West Zip Connector, the Greenwood East Zip Connector, the Franklin West Zip Connector, and the Franklin East Zip Connector. The US 31 Zip Connector, which connects Greenwood to Franklin, runs through Whiteland along US

31, with stops in Whiteland including Clearwater Blvd at the Johnson County Public Library¹⁵.

Whiteland is served by the Louisville and Indiana Railroad (LIRC), which runs parallel to US 31 from Indianapolis to Louisville. The LIRC, formed in 1994, connects to other major railroads including CSX, NS, INRD, and PAL and serves a variety of major companies and an inland port facility. According to Anacostia Rail Holdings, who owns the LIRC, the railroad handles agriculture/grain, fertilizer, waste material, polymers, chemicals, building materials, lumber, pulp/paper, food grade products, beverages, steel, scrap (metal and paper), and aggregates/minerals¹⁶.

Active transportation opportunities are extremely limited in Whiteland. There are no sidewalks along US 31, Tracy Rd, or Paul Hand Blvd. Sidewalk connectivity exists along Whiteland Rd from US 31 to the eastern edge of the Saddlebrook community on the north and south sides of the street. While the Town has made strides over the past several years in requiring bike and pedestrian infrastructure to be incorporated in new residential and industrial developments as they arise, these paths occur in short stretches and do not connect to an overall larger system.

Continued population growth and industrial expansion over the past several years have resulted in higher volumes of traffic on east-west roads through Whiteland, creating congestion issues during peak travel times and limiting the flow of traffic. In planning for future roadway improvements, Whiteland should consider solutions that integrate multi-modal enhancements for pedestrians and bicyclists and public transportation access with more stops in and around Whiteland to make it easier for people to move through Town.



Source: Town of Whiteland.



HISTORICAL SITES

According to Indiana State Historic Architectural and Archaeological Research Database (SHAARD), which includes data from the Indiana Historic Sites and Structure Inventory (IHSSI) County Survey Program, the Indiana Cemetery and Burial Ground Registry, Historic Bridge inventory, resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places, resources listed the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures, and historic theaters in Indiana, there are 7 historic sites in Whiteland listed with a rating from IHSSI as contributing and notable. Contributing structures are not individually eligible for listing on the National Historic Register, while notable structures may be eligible for listing on the National Historic Register with additional research. These locations are located along Main Street and Front Street near the railroad tracks and include the following:

- The Grove Baptist Church – 70 West St, Notable
- HeavenEarth Church (formerly the Whiteland Methodist Episcopal Church) – 209 Main Street, Notable
- 4 Private Residences, Contributing

In addition to these properties, Whiteland is home to a significant Indiana Automotive Landmark, the Whiteland Raceway Park, and a roadside attraction, the Garden of Gas Station Signs.

Whiteland Raceway Park

According to Indiana Landmarks, Whiteland Raceway Park, today known as K1 Circuit Whiteland, is one of the oldest go-kart tracks in America. Established in 1960, the park hosts recreational and competitive karting events that help fuel the spirit of motorized sports in Indiana. Over its many years of operation, the park has played host to big-name drivers, including Indianapolis 500 winner Johnnie Parsons and other drivers such as John Andretti, Lyn St. James, and Tony Stewart¹⁷.

When go-karting rose to popularity in the 1950s, Don Hohlt and William Lutz decided to build a park to complement their other business, the Whiteland Barn. The original track, which included an oval joined to a road course, opened on May 8, 1960. The challenging track was extremely popular with karters, with race events scheduled for Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays to accommodate the large number of competitors. In



addition to recreation and race events, the track was used by Midwest Kart manufacturers and engine builders as a test track for their new products. The track quickly became a first-class facility, attracting karters nationwide, and receiving the status of a World Karting Association Master Track¹⁸.

In the early 1980s, the popularity of karting began to decline, and the track fell into disrepair. The park passed through the hands of several owners until it was purchased by sportscaster Gary Lee in 1988, who shifted the focus of the track to recreational karting. The facility was sold again in 2007 to Mike Swails. By 2019, Swails was struggling to maintain the track at a high level. That year, he received an offer from a trucking company who wanted to convert the property into a heavy equipment

storage area, but Swails wanted to see the historic raceway continue as a karting venue. Instead, the track was purchased by Andy O-Gara and his wife, former race car driver Sarah Fisher, and their longtime business partners Wink and Libba Hartman. The group made several infrastructure improvements that led to the track's re-opening in April 2019¹⁷.

On July 10, 2022, Indiana Automotive, an affinity group of Indiana Landmarks, and the Indiana Racing Memorial Association (IRMA) dedicated a historic marker commemorating the Whiteland Raceway Park¹⁶. Today, this Indiana Automotive Landmark is owned and managed by K1 Speed, a chain of kart racing centers that use electric go-karts that can reach speeds of up to 45 mph.



Thrills A Plenty!
Spills Galore
GO-KART
RACING
WHITELAND RACEWAY

Located ¼ mile north of Whiteland
 Racing Every Wednesday & Saturday
 Qualifications 7:00 Racing 8:15
 Bring this coupon for ½ Price
 Admission on Wednesday, May 27






The Garden of Gas Station Signs, a roadside attraction privately owned and operated by Alan Ray Whitaker, is a notable community landmark. Source: Interesting Ideas.

Garden of Gas Station Signs

The Garden of Gas Station Signs, a roadside attraction privately owned and operated by automotive sign collector Alan Ray Whitaker, is a notable community landmark. The garden, located at 637-667 Brewer St, includes an array of more than 50 historic gas station signs in the side yard of Whitaker's garage celebrating America's rich automotive culture. This quirky display includes a 1964 Roto-Sphere sign salvaged from Lexington Kentucky's Catalina Motel, which features sixteen aluminum spikes outlined in neon mounted on a ball that spins in three directions. Of the 234 Roto-Spheres produced, only 20 remain, and only 4 of those are fully operational, including Whiteland's¹⁸.

EDUCATION FACILITIES

Whiteland is home to the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation, which is headquartered in Whiteland and serves the communities of Whiteland and New Whiteland and small portions of Greenwood and Franklin. Schools in Whiteland include Whiteland Elementary and Whiteland Community High School.

Whiteland Elementary School, located at 120 Center St, serves children in kindergarten through 5th grade. Whiteland Community High School (WCHS), located at 300 E Main St adjacent to Whiteland Elementary School, serves students from 9th grade to 12th grade. In 2024, WCHS was named in

the U.S. News and World Report Best High Schools Rankings, where schools are ranked on their performance in state-required tests, graduation, and how well they prepare students for college¹⁹. According to the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation, WCHS boasted a 92.61% graduation rate in 2023, and over 5,000 total college credits are earned annually by its graduates. The school's rigorous academics are complemented by its C-9 career center, which offers 27 career and technical programs to students²⁰.

In November 2023, WCHS broke ground on a \$235 million dollar expansion to keep pace with its rapidly growing student population. According to Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation, the expansion includes a new natatorium, a fieldhouse with multiple courts and an indoor track, a new weight room, a wrestling area, and new tennis courts. The natatorium, which is currently under construction and is expected to be completed in 2026, will include a 10-lane, 50-meter pool designed to support the growing swimming program in Whiteland. The pool will accommodate larger swim meets, such as high school sectionals and championship-level club meets and is expected to attract students and high-level athletes to Whiteland. Future phases of the expansion are expected to include upgrades to the football stadium, baseball, and soccer fields²¹.

Source: (Bottom & Top) Interesting Ideas, (Middle) Catalina Motel/ Alan Whitaker.





Whiteland Community High School is currently undergoing a \$235 million dollar expansion. Source: Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation.

Future partnerships between parks and recreation and the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation are essential to providing the community with equitable access to recreation facilities and open spaces. According to the National Recreation and Park Association in their 2021 Park Pulse Survey regarding park and recreation partnerships with schools, more than 3 in 5 U.S. adults and 73% of parents say that access to their local school playgrounds, sports fields, and other outdoor open spaces when not in use during school hours or by school-sponsored activities is important²². To make efficient use of public resources, strengthen community connections, and foster healthier lifestyles, shared-use policies and agreements between the Town and the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation should be considered to provide public access to school recreation facilities in a safe and responsible manner.

CULTURAL GROWTH

The Town of Whiteland is embracing and celebrating its rapidly diversifying population. Minority populations in Whiteland have grown over the past several years, largely represented by members of the Punjabi community. Student diversity in the Clark-Pleasant Community School District is indicative of these growth patterns. According to the Daily Journal, minority communities, including Punjabi students who make up the largest group of English Language Learners in the school

district, now represent 37% of the overall student population²³. Today, the Clark-Pleasant Community School District is the most diverse in Johnson County. Programs offered by the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation, including youth initiatives and cultural programs, aim to accommodate people from different backgrounds and break down barriers to allow students to develop an understanding of one another and build a common ground.

PUBLIC ART

The Town of Whiteland received its first piece of public art in 2017 as part of the Johnson County Community Foundations “Color the County” program, which was established in 2016 to celebrate the Foundations 25th anniversary. According to the Indy Arts Council, “Each year, at least two murals are designed and created by local artists for towns in Johnson County.” Each mural usually has a community paint day for locals to participate in using a “paint-by-number” system created by the artist. The Whiteland mural “Draw Your Heart Out” created by Bargersville artist Dave Windisch, is located on the east wall of a local business and features a red heart with yellow rays drawn by a red pencil²⁴.

In 2022, a second mural by Indianapolis artist Carl Leck was painted on the side of a Jiffy Lube along US 31 south of Tracy



Source: Whiteland Warriors Swim Club.



Rd. The mural, referred to as “Gummy Bears,” was inspired by Leck’s visit to Wolf Cave at McCormick’s Creek State Park. The mural features family of gummy bears emerging from a cave using a painting technique known as trompe’ l’oeil (optical illusion) that makes it appear in 3D²⁵.

A third mural, the “Whiteland Wonders” mural by Stampede Murals, was completed in 2024. The mural, located on the side of the Nire Event Center along E Main St., features some of Whiteland’s most notable people, including basketball player Brad Edwards, the Whiteland Raceway go-karts, Bob Glidden’s car, and Otto Lewis, a long-term resident who served in the military police and held several titles in Whiteland. It also includes the high school logo, the state flower, corn, and the Bailey and Wood logo and mascot.

2023 WHITELAND TORNADO

The 2023 Whiteland tornado damaged roughly 130 properties²⁶. Johnson County’s Long Term Recovery Group, in partnership with Indiana VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)²⁷ assisted roughly 200 families with housing, food, construction costs, and other needs²⁶. As of April of 2024, there were still 10 cases remaining. While FEMA covered 75% of costs for cleanup and debris management, Whiteland is still working to fully recover several more structures, including those at the sewer plant and Town garage. Although the Town has largely recovered financially from the disaster, staff remain stretched thin due to ongoing rehabilitation efforts, and maintenance at parks and town-owned properties has lagged as a result.

PROPERTY IMPACTS

Manmade park facilities and amenities, such as sidewalks, shelters, site furnishings, and wayfinding signage, are lacking at current park properties and town-owned lands, including the Whiteland High School Trail and the Briar Creek Estates Subdivision Parcels.

The K9 Vader Bark Park, located at the southeast corner of Centerline and Whiteland Road., includes a gazebo and some

seating opportunities. However, its gravel parking lot and sidewalk connections are inaccessible. ADA guidelines require firm, stable, and slip resistant surfaces; gravel surfaces can be difficult or impossible for people using assistive mobility devices to navigate.

The Saddlebrook Farms Subdivision Parcels, located in the Saddlebrook Farms subdivision adjacent to Town Hall, include a playground, an asphalt parking area, and concrete sidewalk connectivity. While the asphalt parking area and concrete sidewalks are in good condition, the parking area lacks ADA-compliant spaces. In addition, the playground design doesn’t accommodate children with sensory or developmental disabilities, limiting participation and excluding many families. The playground surface material is wood chips, which are unstable and non-navigable for children using wheelchairs, walkers, or other assistive mobility devices. No ramps, accessible platforms, or transfer stations are present, preventing children who cannot climb independently from accessing play structures. Playground improvements are needed to make it usable by all.

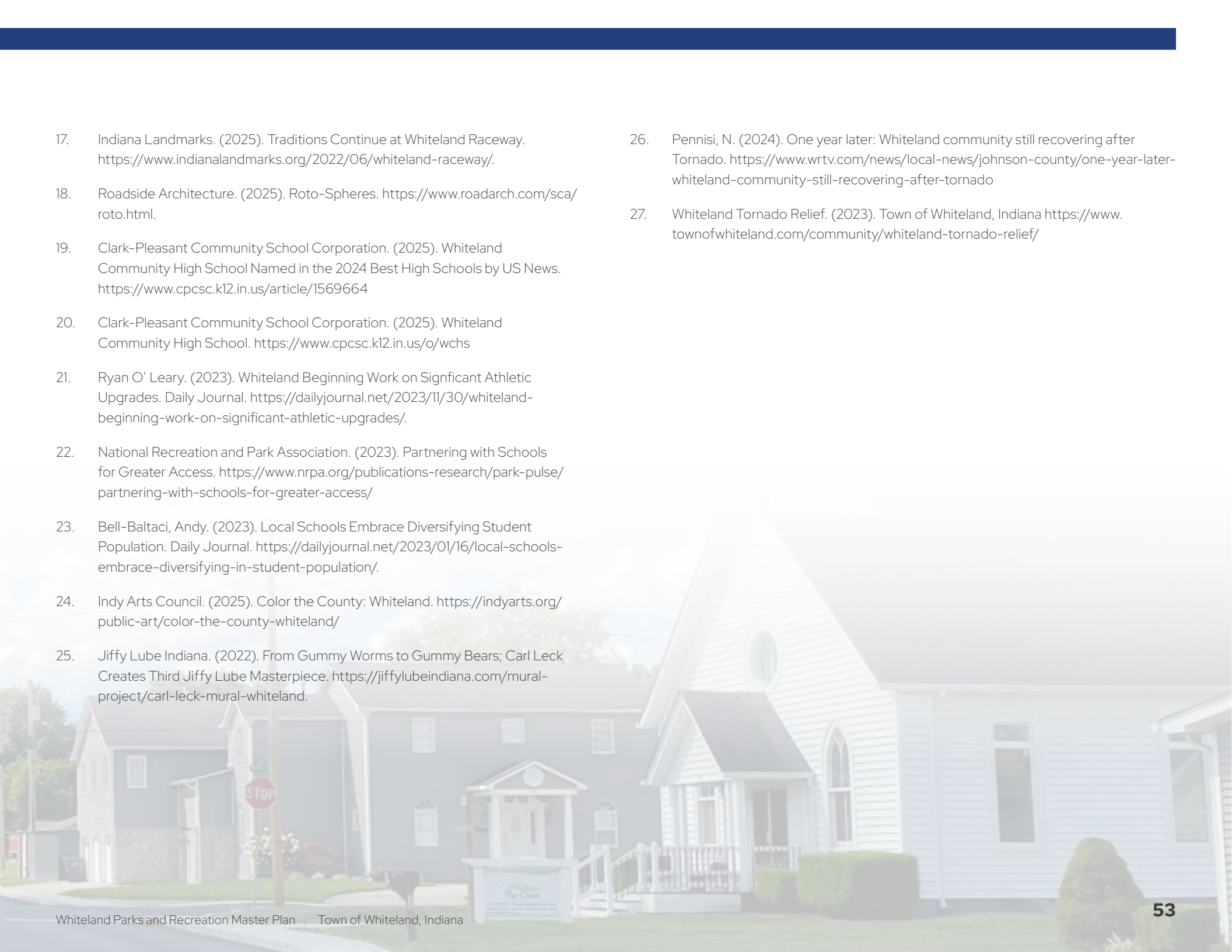
Whiteland Parks and Recreation, as a part of this Master Plan and the Town’s ADA Transition Plan, will prioritize updating existing parks and town-owned properties to meet accessibility standards. For more site-specific descriptions of man-made conditions for each park parcel, reference Chapter 3: Parks and Open Space System.



Source: The Whiteland Wonders Mural / Joythe Stampede.

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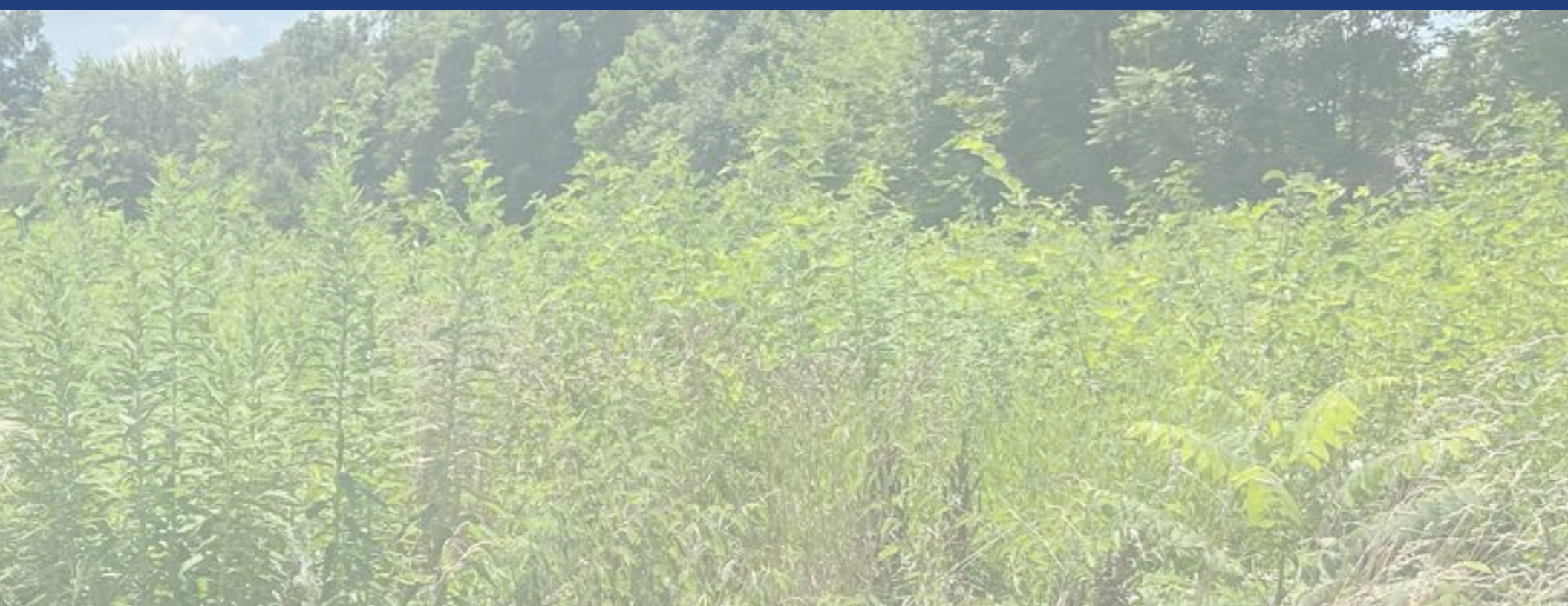
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Parks and Open Space System

3



Parks and Open Space System

The Town of Whiteland parks and open space system is significantly limited. The Town's only park, the K-9 Vader Bark Park, opened in December 2020. It's only trail, the Whiteland High School Trail, is owned and operated by the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation and opened in 2017. 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.

As part of this effort, the Town has received donations of land from developers that, while not formally designated as park space, have been earmarked by the Town for future parks and recreation development. In addition to these properties, the Town has identified several additional parcels that have not been dedicated to the Town but is future land that could be utilized for parks and open space.

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
- Trails
- Potential Trails
- Town-Owned Properties
- Potential Park Properties

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM



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.



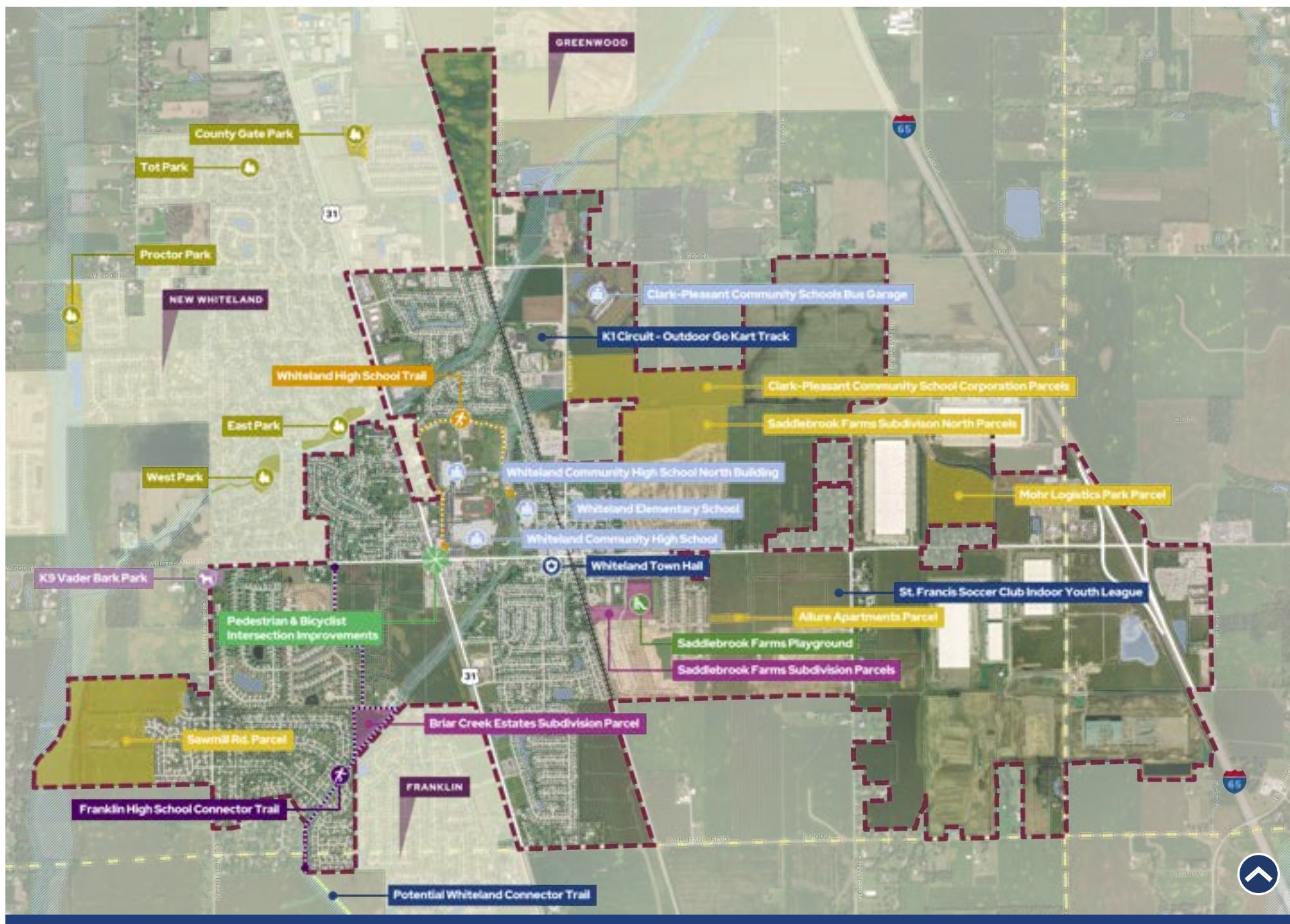
Town-Owned Properties

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.





K9 Vader Bark Park

FACILITY GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE CODE	41-05-28-022-010.000.028
ADDRESS	Whiteland Rd & Sawmill Rd, Whiteland, IN 46184
SIZE	1.5 Acres
TYPE	Park/Recreation Area
DESIGNATION	Municipal
SEASONAL USE	Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
LEVEL OF USE	Moderate for certain seasons

SITE AMENITIES

Picnic and Playground Areas

- ✓ Picnic Area
- Playground

Athletic Areas

- ✓ Disc Golf
- ✓ Dog Park
- Skateboard Park
- Baseball/Softball Fields
- Soccer Fields
- Football Fields
- Basketball Courts
- Tennis Courts

Trails

- ✓ Trails

Water

- Pool
- Splash Pad or Other Water Feature
- Pond, Lake, River, or Creek with Public Access

Other Facilities

- Campground
- Public Golf Course
- Public Shooting/Archery Range
- Winter Activities

ADA COMPLIANCE

- ✗ Approaches & Entrances
Not Compliant
- Restrooms
Not Applicable
- ✗ Parking
Not Compliant

- Play Areas
Not Applicable
- Sports Courts/Facilities
Not Applicable
- Water Amenity Areas
Not Applicable

SITE DESCRIPTION

The K-9 Vader Bark Park, opened in December 2020, is the town's first public park. The park is located at the southeast corner of Centerline and Whiteland Roads. The park was constructed on land donated to the town by Arbor Homes in 2017.

Named after a local police dog, K-9 Vader, the 3,500-sf bark park contains several amenities inside a perimeter fence, including challenge equipment made from repurposed utility items, a bench, and a dog waste station. In addition to the bark park, the park contains a gravel parking lot adjacent to an Eagle Project with a dedication plaque and 10 flag poles, a neighborhood sidewalk connection, a little free library, and a small, raised gazebo with integrated seating.

Town employees completed the drainage work and constructed the fence, challenge equipment, and parking lot. The gazebo was part of the donation from Arbor Homes. The site offers minimal landscape features and comfort for visitors. Only the gazebo provides shade; no trees provide relief from the sun. The site lacks trees, shrubs, and perennial plantings, and the surface is mostly gravel and maintained lawn.

The Town offers an Annual Membership Pass to the Bark Park for a one-year period. The passes cost \$20 and include a collar tag for each dog. While membership passes are required to use the park, the fence is unlocked, and access is not regulated.

Access to the site is not ADA compliant. The gravel parking lot contains two access drives, no markings, and a gravel walk to the dog park fence.



Source: Context Design.

There is no accessible route to the gazebo. The park contains name signage but no information or rule signage, which was removed from the fence at time of site visit. The gazebo and fence conditions are fair.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WHITELAND TAKE?

Based on existing conditions, site improvements should include a new asphalt parking lot, an accessible sidewalk with an ADA-compliant pedestrian ramp, signage, seating and waste receptacle upgrades, and dog agility equipment upgrades. These improvements are listed in the park-specific action steps in Chapter 5: Strategic Actions.



W Gazebo and little free library at K9 Vader Bark Park. Source: Context Design.



W Eagle Project at the entrance to K9 Vader Bark Park. Source: Context Design.

Whiteland High School Trail

FACILITY GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE CODE	N/A
ADDRESS	Whiteland Rd., Whiteland, IN 46184
SIZE	1.75 Miles
TYPE	Trail
DESIGNATION	Township
SEASONAL USE	Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
LEVEL OF USE	Moderate for certain seasons

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Whiteland High School Trail, which opened in 2018, is the Town's first public trail. The trail is owned and operated by the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation and was designed to provide school groups with a place to practice and offer the community a safe place to exercise in the evenings.

The 1.5-mile trail encircles the Whiteland High School North Building and athletic fields. The 9-foot-wide asphalt trail has no trail-specific markers, though there is signage supporting the high school functions of the property. No tree cover exists along the northern portion of the trail, and lawn maintenance needs improvement. There is no connection to adjacent athletics facilities, though the trail does connect to the adjacent neighborhood.

Accessibility is of concern in several areas of the trail as pavement has been cut for utility work, though the general condition and slope of the trail is adequate. There are several areas where the trail is flush with parking or adjacent roads that need a curb or bollard to separate pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Use of detectable warning surfaces is inconsistent across the trail, and there is no dedicated parking available.

To the south, the trail connects Whiteland High School with Main Street. The school is currently under construction, so most of the trail is inaccessible. This portion of the trail has adequate shade coverage with healthy, mature trees

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WHITELAND TAKE?

Based on existing conditions, site improvements should include ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps and crosswalks at all street crossing locations, trail lighting and wayfinding signage, asphalt repair and regrading in frequently flooded areas, and a post curb at flush conditions. These improvements are listed in the park-specific action steps in Chapter 5: Strategic Actions.

SITE AMENITIES

Picnic and Playground Areas

- Picnic Area
- Playground

Athletic Areas

- Disc Golf
- Dog Park
- Skateboard Park
- ✓ Baseball/Softball Fields
- ✓ Soccer Fields
- ✓ Football Fields
- Basketball Courts
- ✓ Tennis Courts

Trails

- ✓ Trails

Water

- Pool
- Splash Pad or Other Water Feature
- Pond, Lake, River, or Creek with Public Access

Other Facilities

- Campground
- Public Golf Course
- Public Shooting/Archery Range
- Winter Activities

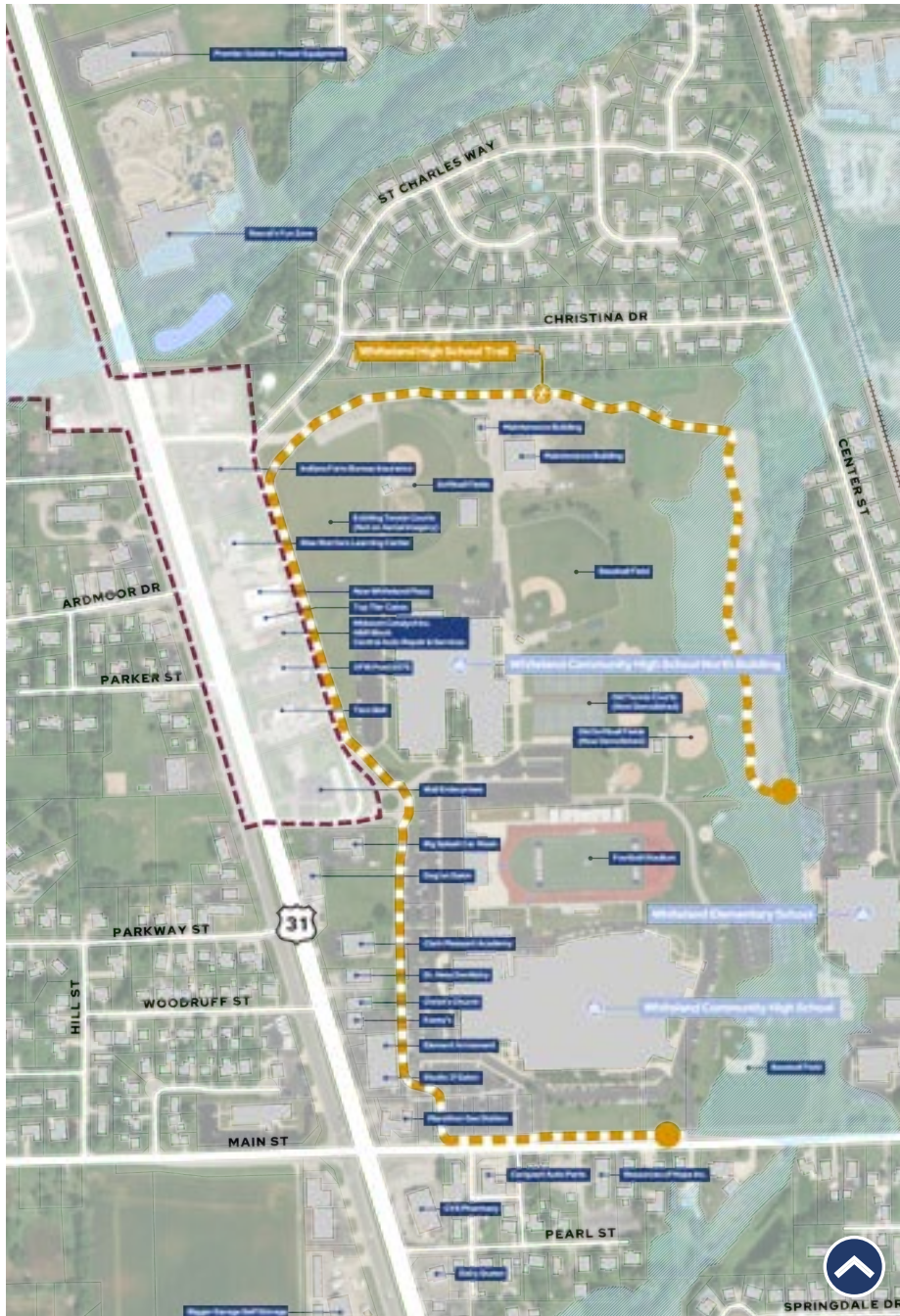
ADA COMPLIANCE

- ✗ Approaches & Entrances
Not Compliant
- Restrooms
Not Applicable
- ✗ Parking
Not Compliant

- Play Areas
Not Applicable
- Sports Courts/Facilities
Not Applicable
- Water Amenity Areas
Not Applicable



Source: (Bottom, Middle, Top) Context Design.



W View of the trail along the WCHS North Building, including the only sign present along the trail. Source: Context Design.



W View of the south portion of the trail along the WCHS main building. Source: Context Design.

Franklin High School Connector Trail

FACILITY GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE CODE	N/A
ADDRESS	Whiteland Rd., Whiteland, IN 46184
SIZE	Approximately 1.6 Miles
TYPE	Trail
DESIGNATION	Township
SEASONAL USE	Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
LEVEL OF USE	Moderate for certain seasons

SITE AMENITIES

Picnic and Playground Areas

Picnic Area
Playground

Athletic Areas

Disc Golf
Dog Park
Skateboard Park
Baseball/Softball Fields
Soccer Fields
Football Fields
Basketball Courts
Tennis Courts

Trails

Trails

Water

Pool
Splash Pad or Other Water Feature
Pond, Lake, River, or Creek with Public Access

Other Facilities

Campground
Public Golf Course
Public Shooting/Archery Range
Winter Activities

ADA COMPLIANCE

Approaches & Entrances
Not Compliant
Restrooms
Not Applicable
Parking
Not Compliant

Play Areas
Not Applicable
Sports Courts/Facilities
Not Applicable
Water Amenity Areas
Not Applicable

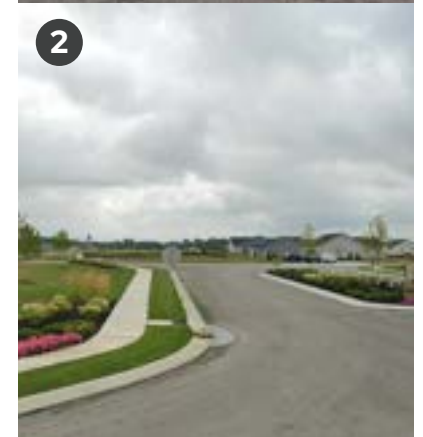
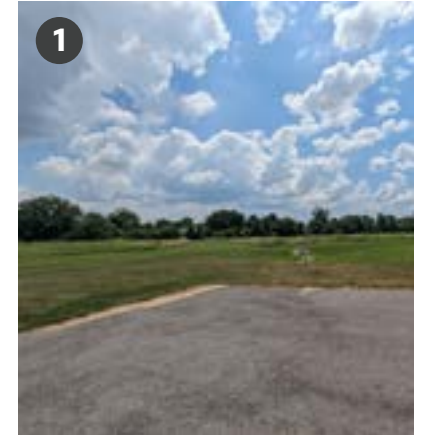
SITE DESCRIPTION

The Franklin High School Connector Trail is a potential multi-use trail. The trail would run within utility easements and along Brewer Ditch from the southern boundary of the Park Forest neighborhood along N Centerline Rd. to Whiteland Rd. The trail could include a loop through the naturalized Briar Creek Estates subdivision parcel currently owned by the Town of Whiteland.

The trail from the Park Forest neighborhood to the Briar Creek Estates subdivision parcel would require a new asphalt path, while the trail from the Briar Creek Estates subdivision parcel to Whiteland Rd. would use existing concrete sidewalks in the Briar Creek neighborhood. To the south of the Park Forest neighborhood, the trail could connect to the potential Whiteland Connector Trail that is proposed to extend from Franklin High School to the Park Forest neighborhood.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WHITELAND TAKE?

The Franklin High School Connector Trail has the potential to provide both local and regional connectivity. While the placement of the trail may be a challenge in some locations, a study to evaluate the potential for the trail is recommended. This action step (2.2.5) is listed under Goal #2: System Building Blocks in Chapter 5: Strategic Actions



Source: (Bottom) Google Earth, (Top) Context Design.

Source: Google Earth.



W View of Brewer Ditch looking north from Samuel Dr., including a Whiteland Utilities service station. Source: Google Earth.



W View of Brewer Ditch looking south from Samuel Dr. The banks of the ditch are steep. Source: Context Design.

Saddlebrook Farms Subdivision Parcels



FACILITY GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE CODE	41-05-27-021-101.000-028, "102.000-028
ADDRESS	Elm St, Whiteland, IN 46184
SIZE	8.014 Acres, 3.821 Acres
TYPE	Other (Town-Owned Greenspace & Playground)
DESIGNATION	Municipal
SEASONAL USE	Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
LEVEL OF USE	Moderate for certain seasons

SITE AMENITIES

Picnic and Playground Areas

- ✓ Picnic Area
- ✓ Playground

Athletic Areas

- Disc Golf
- Dog Park
- Skateboard Park
- Baseball/Softball Fields
- Soccer Fields
- Football Fields
- Basketball Courts
- Tennis Courts

Trails

- ✓ Trails

Water

- Pool
- Splash Pad or Other Water Feature
- Pond, Lake, River, or Creek with Public Access

Other Facilities

- Campground
- Public Golf Course
- Public Shooting/Archery Range
- Winter Activities

ADA COMPLIANCE

- ✓ Approaches & Entrances Compliant
- Restrooms Not Applicable
- ✗ Parking Not Compliant

- ✗ Play Areas Not Compliant
- Sports Courts/Facilities Not Applicable
- Water Amenity Areas Not Applicable

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Saddlebrook Farms Subdivision parcels are located on land dedicated to the town by D.R. Horton, the developer of the community. Saddlebrook Farms is a single-family home community with two story floor plans up to 3,388 sf, 5 bedrooms, and 2-3 car garages. The neighborhood is home to a diverse population of growing families. The playground is tucked behind the entrance drive to the neighborhood on the northwest corner of the property along Hobbs Dr.

The site contains two separate parcels: an east parcel with a playground, and a west parcel of open space. On the east parcel, the playground contains a main structure with two slides and other play features, two bays of swings with two belt swings and two toddler swings, and two benches. While there is a ramp leading from the sidewalk to the playground, the safety surfacing is not engineered hardwood and is therefore not ADA Compliant. The playground is surrounded by open lawn space with accessible sidewalk connections to the surrounding Saddlebrook subdivision. There are no dedicated plantings on the site, and the existing lawn is in poor condition. A pond with a fountain is located along the eastern boundary of the parcel, while the Whiteland Fire Department is located along the western boundary of the parcel across Hobbs Dr.

The west parcel includes open lawn enclosed by two berms with new buffer plantings. There are no amenities on the site. While there are 52 parking spaces available, there is no ADA-compliant parking.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WHITELAND TAKE?

Based on existing conditions, site improvements at the playground should include new engineered wood fiber mulch or playground safety surfacing, ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps, ADA parking striping and signage, a shade sail, and wayfinding signage, seating, and waste receptacle upgrades. These improvements are listed in the park-specific action steps in Chapter 5: Strategic Actions.

In addition to playground improvements, the Saddlebrook Farms Subdivision parcels should be considered in the evaluation for a future flagship community park. A study to evaluate this potential is listed as action step 2.1.2 under Goal #2: System Building Blocks in Chapter 5: Strategic Actions.



Source: (Bottom, Top) Context Design.



W The lawn on the east portion of the parcel is in poor condition. Source: Context Design.



W The lawn on the west parcel is enclosed by two berms. Context Design.

Briar Creek Estates Subdivision Parcel

FACILITY GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE CODE	45-05-28-042-011.001-028
ADDRESS	US 31, Whiteland, IN 46184
SIZE	10.296 Acres
TYPE	Other (Town-Owned Greenspace)
DESIGNATION	Municipal
SEASONAL USE	N/A
LEVEL OF USE	N/A

SITE AMENITIES	
Picnic and Playground Areas	Trails
Picnic Area	Trails
Playground	Water
Athletic Areas	Pool
Disc Golf	Splash Pad or Other Water Feature
Dog Park	Pond, Lake, River, or Creek with Public Access
Skateboard Park	Other Facilities
Baseball/Softball Fields	Campground
Soccer Fields	Public Golf Course
Football Fields	Public Shooting/Archery Range
Basketball Courts	Winter Activities
Tennis Courts	
ADA COMPLIANCE	
X Approaches & Entrances	Play Areas
Not Compliant	Not Applicable
Restrooms	Sports Courts/Facilities
Not Applicable	Not Applicable
X Parking	Water Amenity Areas
Not Compliant	Not Applicable

SITE DESCRIPTION

The Briar Creek Estates Subdivision Parcel is located on land dedicated to the town by Ryan Homes, the developer of the community. Briar Creek Ranches is a single-family home community with two-story floor plans up to 3,000 sf, 4+ bedrooms, and 2+ car garages. The neighborhood is home to a diverse population of growing families. The parcel is located in the southeast corner of the neighborhood adjacent to the Town of Whiteland Sewer Department at the terminus of McNair Rd.

A communications tower is located along the northern border of the site. The Whiteland Water Tower is located just north of the site adjacent to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The site includes a water retention area with several warning signs stating, "Deep Water: Unsafe to Enter." However, there is no water present on site. The only parking available on site is an asphalt pull-off with a roll-curb.

As discussed in Chapter 2: Community Profile, the parcel is largely occupied by a naturally occurring meadow and successional woodland dominated by invasive species such as Marehail (*Conyza canadensis*), Japanese Honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), White Mulberry (*Morus alba*), and Bradford Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*). The only maintenance this parcel currently receives is yearly bush hogging to manage overgrown vegetation and control woody growth.



Source: Context Design.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WHITELAND TAKE?

The Briar Creek Estates Subdivision Parcel could be a great amenity for the potential Franklin High School Connector Trail identified earlier in this chapter. Since the site is already naturalized with meadow plantings, it would provide an idyllic setting for a loop trail. A study to evaluate the potential for the trail is listed as action step 2.2.5 under Goal #2: System Building Blocks in Chapter 5: Strategic Actions.

As discussed in Chapter 2: Community Profile, successful restoration of the meadow and successional woodland will require a multi-year approach. This approach should incorporate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies to mechanically and chemically remove these species, followed by re-seeding and ongoing monitoring to ensure the successful establishment of native plants.



W View of the asphalt pull-off area adjacent to the site. Source: Context Design.



W The site includes a water retention area with signage. Source: Context Design.

Allure Apartments Parcel



FACILITY GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE CODE	45-05-27-011-006.000-028
ADDRESS	Gateway Dr., Whiteland, IN 46184
SIZE	2.5 Acres
TYPE	Other (Greenspace not currently owned by the Town)
DESIGNATION	N/A
SEASONAL USE	N/A
LEVEL OF USE	N/A

SITE AMENITIES

Picnic and Playground Areas

- Picnic Area
- Playground

Athletic Areas

- Disc Golf
- Dog Park
- Skateboard Park
- Baseball/Softball Fields
- Soccer Fields
- Football Fields
- Basketball Courts
- Tennis Courts

Trails

- Trails

Water

- Pool
- Splash Pad or Other Water Feature
- Pond, Lake, River, or Creek with Public Access

Other Facilities

- Campground
- Public Golf Course
- Public Shooting/Archery Range
- Winter Activities

ADA COMPLIANCE

- Approaches & Entrances
Not Applicable
- Restrooms
Not Applicable
- Parking
Not Applicable

- Play Areas
Not Applicable
- Sports Courts/Facilities
Not Applicable
- Water Amenity Areas
Not Applicable

SITE DESCRIPTION

While this parcel is currently owned by Patch Whiteland LLC and has not been dedicated to the Town, the Department is considering it as future land that could be utilized for parks.

The site, accessible through the Saddlebrook Farms subdivision, is overgrown with vegetation and is located at the terminus of Gateway Dr. The new Patch Development apartments are located just north of the parcel. Industrial park facilities are visible in the distance to the east.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WHITELAND TAKE?

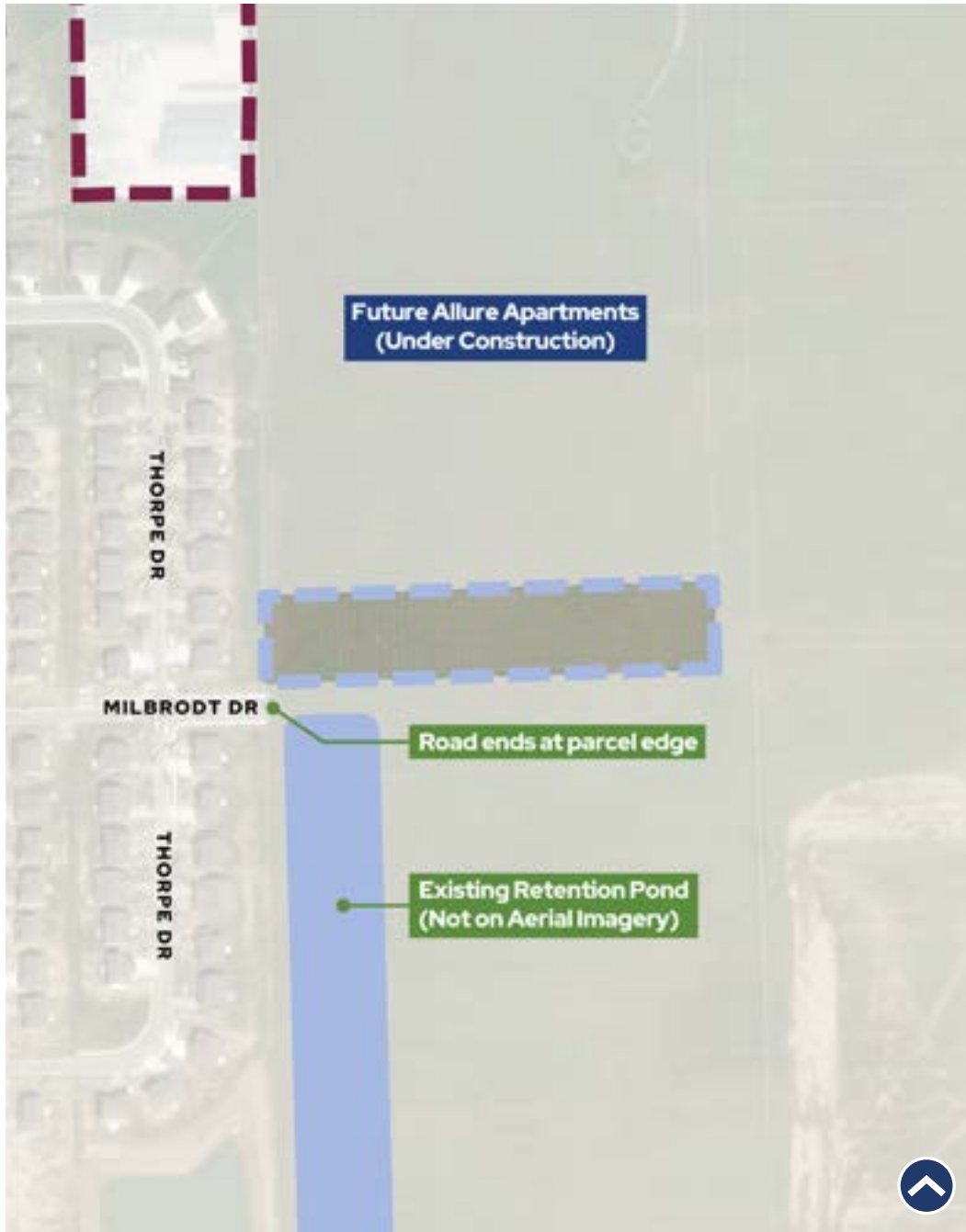
Given the small size and location of the Allure Apartments parcel, it is recommended that Whiteland not pursue this as future land that could be utilized for parks and open space.



Source: Context Design.



Source: Context Design.



W View of the overgrown vegetation looking east.
Source: Context Design.



W View of the overgrown vegetation looking south.
Source: Context Design.

Saddlebrook Farms North Subdivision Parcels

FACILITY GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE CODE	41-05-22-042-029.000-048, *030.000-048
ADDRESS	Whiteland Rd., Whiteland, IN 46184
SIZE	33.59 Acres, 35.68 Acres
TYPE	Other (Greenspace not currently owned by the Town)
DESIGNATION	N/A
SEASONAL USE	N/A
LEVEL OF USE	N/A

SITE AMENITIES

Picnic and Playground Areas

Picnic Area
Playground

Athletic Areas

Disc Golf
Dog Park
Skateboard Park
Baseball/Softball Fields
Soccer Fields
Football Fields
Basketball Courts
Tennis Courts

Trails

Trails

Water

Pool
Splash Pad or Other Water Feature
Pond, Lake, River, or Creek with Public Access

Other Facilities

Campground
Public Golf Course
Public Shooting/Archery Range
Winter Activities

ADA COMPLIANCE

Approaches & Entrances
Not Applicable
Restrooms
Not Applicable
Parking
Not Applicable

Play Areas
Not Applicable
Sports Courts/Facilities
Not Applicable
Water Amenity Areas
Not Applicable

SITE DESCRIPTION

While these parcels are currently owned by D.R. Horton - Indiana LLC D/B/A Westport Homes, and has not been dedicated to the Town, the Department is considering it as future land that could be utilized for parks. The site, accessible through the Saddlebrook Farms North subdivision, is undeveloped and is located north of the subdivision, which is under construction.

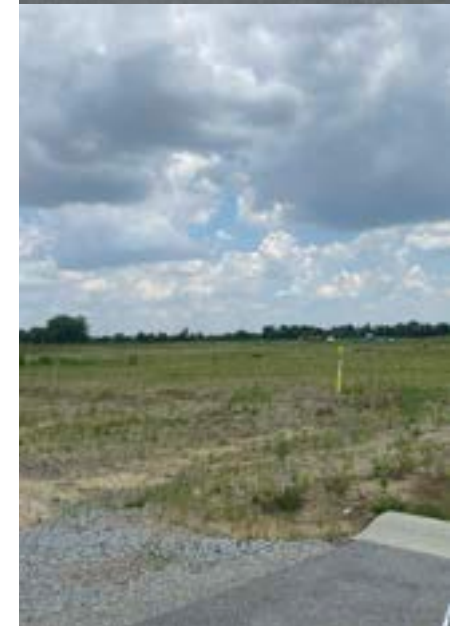
The Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation parcels, also being considered for potential park properties, are located adjacent to the Saddlebrook Farms North Subdivision parcels along the northern boundaries of the two sites.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WHITELAND TAKE?

Given the significant size of the Saddlebrook Farms North Subdivision parcels and their location adjacent to the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation parcels, the Saddlebrook Farms Subdivision parcels should be considered in the evaluation for a future flagship community park. A study to evaluate this potential is listed as action step 2.1.2 under Goal #2: System Building Blocks in Chapter 5: Strategic Actions.



Source: Google Earth.



Source: (Bottom, Top) Context Design.



W View looking north from the terminus of Miller Dr.
Source: Context Design.



W View from Main St. looking towards the parcels.
Source: Context Design.



Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation Parcels

FACILITY GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE CODE	41-05-22-024-005.000-028, *013-003.000-028
ADDRESS	N 125 E, Whiteland, IN 46184
SIZE	25.58 Acres, 32.76 Acres
TYPE	Other (Greenspace not currently owned by the Town)
DESIGNATION	N/A
SEASONAL USE	N/A
LEVEL OF USE	N/A

SITE AMENITIES

Picnic and Playground Areas

Picnic Area
Playground

Athletic Areas

Disc Golf
Dog Park
Skateboard Park
Baseball/Softball Fields
Soccer Fields
Football Fields
Basketball Courts
Tennis Courts

Trails

Trails

Water

Pool
Splash Pad or Other Water Feature
Pond, Lake, River, or Creek with Public Access

Other Facilities

Campground
Public Golf Course
Public Shooting/Archery Range
Winter Activities

ADA COMPLIANCE

Approaches & Entrances
Not Applicable
Restrooms
Not Applicable
Parking
Not Applicable

Play Areas
Not Applicable
Sports Courts/Facilities
Not Applicable
Water Amenity Areas
Not Applicable

SITE DESCRIPTION

While these parcels are currently owned by the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation and have not been dedicated to the Town, the Department is considering them as future land that could be utilized for parks. The parcels, located just south of the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation Bus Garage and east of the K1 Circuit - Outdoor Go Kart Track, are accessible from Front Street. The parcels are undeveloped and are currently being used as farmland.

The Saddlebrook Farms North Subdivision parcels, also being considered for potential park properties, are located adjacent to the

Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation parcels along the southern boundary of the east parcel.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WHITELAND TAKE?

Given the significant size of the Saddlebrook Farms North Subdivision parcels and their location adjacent to the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation parcels, the Saddlebrook Farms Subdivision parcels should be considered in the evaluation for a future flagship community park. A study to evaluate this potential is listed as action step 2.1.2 under Goal #2: System Building Blocks in Chapter 5: Strategic Actions.



Source: Google Earth.



W View of the parcels along Front St. looking north towards the bus garage. Source: Google Earth.



W View of the parcels along Front St. looking south adjacent to the K1 Circuit. Source: Google Earth.

Sawmill Rd. Parcel

FACILITY GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE CODE	41-05-29-042-021.001-028
ADDRESS	410 S. Sawmill Rd., Whiteland, IN 46184
SIZE	94.299 Acres
TYPE	Other (Greenspace not currently owned by the Town)
DESIGNATION	N/A
SEASONAL USE	N/A
LEVEL OF USE	N/A

SITE AMENITIES

Picnic and Playground Areas

Picnic Area
Playground

Athletic Areas

Disc Golf
Dog Park
Skateboard Park
Baseball/Softball Fields
Soccer Fields
Football Fields
Basketball Courts
Tennis Courts

Trails

Trails

Water

Pool
Splash Pad or Other Water Feature
Pond, Lake, River, or Creek with Public Access

Other Facilities

Campground
Public Golf Course
Public Shooting/Archery Range
Winter Activities

ADA COMPLIANCE

Approaches & Entrances
Not Applicable
Restrooms
Not Applicable
Parking
Not Applicable

Play Areas
Not Applicable
Sports Courts/Facilities
Not Applicable
Water Amenity Areas
Not Applicable

SITE DESCRIPTION

While this parcel is currently owned by the Home Farm LLC and has not been dedicated to the Town, the Department is considering it as future land that could be utilized for parks. The parcel, located just west of the Brunnemer Ridge neighborhood, is accessible through the Brunnemer Ridge neighborhood using Meadow Ln. or Brunnemer Ridge Dr. The parcel is undeveloped and is currently being used as farmland.

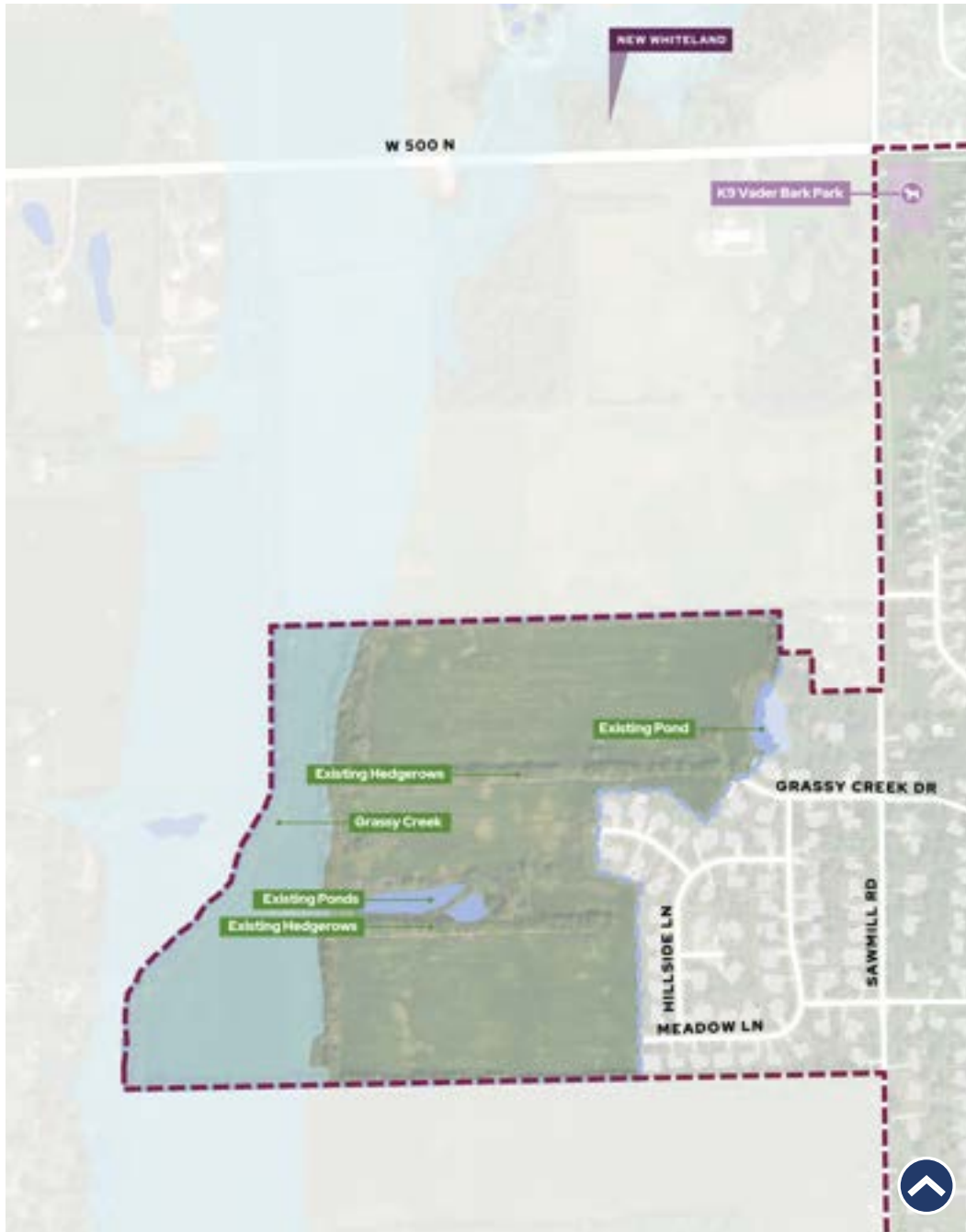
The K-9 Vader Bark Park is located northeast of the parcel along Whiteland Rd. The parcel has good connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods, including Brunnemer Ridge and Park Forest.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WHITELAND TAKE?

Given the significant size of the Sawmill Rd. parcel and its connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods, the parcel should be considered in the evaluation of a future flagship community park. However, consideration should be given to access issues for the public through the Brunnemer Ridge neighborhood. A study to evaluate this potential is listed as action step 2.1.2 under Goal #2: System Building Blocks in Chapter 5: Strategic Actions.



Source: Google Earth.



W View of the parcel from the terminus of Meadow Ln. looking west. Source: Google Earth.



W View of the parcel from the terminus of Meadow Ln. looking northwest. Source: Google Earth.

Mohr Logistics Park Parcel



FACILITY GENERAL INFORMATION

SITE CODE	41-05-23-043-009.000-028
ADDRESS	Bob Glidden Rd., Whiteland, IN 46184
SIZE	29.036 Acres
TYPE	Other (Greenspace not currently owned by the Town)
DESIGNATION	N/A
SEASONAL USE	N/A
LEVEL OF USE	N/A

SITE AMENITIES

Picnic and Playground Areas

Picnic Area
Playground

Athletic Areas

Disc Golf
Dog Park
Skateboard Park
Baseball/Softball Fields
Soccer Fields
Football Fields
Basketball Courts
Tennis Courts

Trails

Trails

Water

Pool
Splash Pad or Other Water Feature
Pond, Lake, River, or Creek with Public Access

Other Facilities

Campground
Public Golf Course
Public Shooting/Archery Range
Winter Activities

ADA COMPLIANCE

Approaches & Entrances
Not Applicable
Restrooms
Not Applicable
Parking
Not Applicable

Play Areas
Not Applicable
Sports Courts/Facilities
Not Applicable
Water Amenity Areas
Not Applicable

SITE DESCRIPTION

While this parcel is currently owned by Mohr Whiteland, LLC and has not been dedicated to the Town, the Department is considering it as future land that could be utilized for parks.

The site, accessible through the Mohr Logistics Park via Bob Glidden Rd., contains one of Whiteland's last remaining pockets of hardwood forest. The forest is composed of a variety of native plant species that provide critical habitat for wildlife. While there are no formal trails at this property, there are several informal "game" trails visible from the street.

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WHITELAND TAKE?

The Mohr Logistics Park Parcel is extremely important from an ecological standpoint. To this end, Whiteland should partner with a

conservation land trust to help protect it from development. This action step (2.4.1) is listed under Goal #2: System Building Blocks in Chapter 5: Strategic Actions.

A conservation land trust protects private or public land through fee simple and conservation easements. Through fee simple, the trust owns and manages the land that is donated or sold, while a conservation easement allows a landowner and a trust to enter into an agreement to permanently limit the use of an area to protect conservation values. Lands protected by conservation land trusts generally allow activities like hiking, camping, and bird watching, but depend on the specific terms of the conservation agreement. The Central Indiana Land Trust, Inc. is one example of a regional land trust.



Source: Context Design.



W View looking south into the hardwood forest.
Source: Context Design.



W View looking west towards industrial facilities.
Source: Context Design.

Community Benchmarking

Benchmarking helps determine the current and future demand for parks and recreation facilities and programs by assessing how well the parks and recreation system is meeting resident needs.

Results help direct actions moving forward, and how resources should be prioritized to make those improvements. This Plan uses a combination of Level-of-Service analysis and NRPA Park Metrics to evaluate the Town's existing parks and recreation system.

LEVEL-OF-SERVICE (LOS)

1983 NRPA Guidelines

Assessing the current supply of outdoor recreation acreage is one way of determining whether a community is meeting residents' outdoor recreation needs. The parks and recreation facilities database managed by the DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation, which relies on self-reported local government data, internet research, and data reporting from local five-year parks and recreation master plans, tracks the supply of these resources. This data can be used to compare the current amount of locally available public outdoor recreation acreage with state and national guidelines to provide a basis for strategic parks and recreation planning.

The NRPA guidelines for public park acreage use the park classification system defined by the NRPA in a 1983 publication by Drs. James D. Mertes and James R. Hall. The park classification system provides recommended acreages for parks on a population-ratio basis. These basic level-of-service guidelines include the following the classifications of Mini-Park, Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional/Metropolitan Park, Regional Park Preserve, and Linear Park, Special-Use Area, or Conservancy Area¹.

Mini-Park

Mini-Parks have a service area of less than a quarter-mile radius, and approximately a quarter-to half-acre per 1,000 people¹.

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood Parks have a service area between a quarter mile and half-mile radius, with population up to 5,000. They have 15 or more acres, equaling 1.0 to 2.0 acres per 1,000 people¹.

Community Park

Community Parks have a service area with a 1- to 2-mile radius and typically include several neighborhoods. They have 25 or more acres, equaling 5.0 to 8.0 acres per 1,000 people¹.

Regional/Metropolitan Park

Regional/Metropolitan Parks have a service area of one-hours driving time and typically include several communities. They have 200 or more acres, equaling 5.0 to 10.0 acres per 1,000 people¹.

Regional Park Preserve

Regional Park Preserves have a service area of one-hours driving time and typically include several communities. They have 1,000 or more acres, with the number of acres per 1,000 people varying widely depending on the property available. 80% of Regional Park Preserve land would be reserved for natural resource management and conservation, while 20% would be reserved for recreational development¹.

Linear Park, Special-Use Area, or Conservancy Area

No guidelines were set forth in the document¹.

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

In the mid-1990s, a new means of determining a minimum amount of parks and recreation acreage was developed, known as the Level of Service (LOS) process. This process considers the local demand for recreation, the existing inventory of parks and recreation facilities, and the preferences of community residents. Indiana's LOS guidelines divide the current supply of recreation acreage into three categories:

Local (County, Township, City or Town) Recreation Acres

This includes land owned by municipal, township and county governments, as well as privately owned land that is open for public recreation use¹.

State/Federal Recreation Acres

This includes land owned by state or federal governments, as well as some non-profit sites that are open for public recreation use¹.

Total (Statewide) Recreation Acres

This includes all statewide public recreation land that is owned by all of the entities listed in the local recreation acres and state/federal recreation acres categories¹.

Based on these categories, the State has established a set of LOS guidelines for publicly owned parks and recreation space in terms of acres per 1,000 people. Developed with a statewide focus, these guidelines, used in the 2021-2025 SCORP recommendations, include the following:

- Local LOS – 20 acres per 1,000 people, or 0.02 acres per person¹.
- State/Federal LOS – 35 acres per 1,000 people, or 0.035 acres per person¹.
- Total (Statewide) LOS – 55 acres per 1,000 people, or 0.055 acres per person¹.



Source: Indiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2021-2025.

2021-2025 SCORP Recommendations

NAME	2020 POPULATION (PER THE 2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS)	RECOMMENDED ACRES; LOCAL 20 ACRES PER 1,000 PEOPLE	SUM OF TOTAL ACRES	DIFFERENCE
Town of Whiteland	4,599	91.98 Acres	1.5 Acres	-90.48 Acres
Town of New Whiteland	5,550	111 Acres	35.55 Acres	-75.45 Acres
Town of Bargersville	9,560	191.20 Acres	40 Acres	-151.2 Acres
City of Greenwood	63,830	1,276.60 Acres	393.79 Acres	-882.81 Acres
City of Franklin	25,313	506.26 Acres	223 Acres	-283.26 Acres

Town of Whiteland

To determine if the Town of Whiteland has an adequate supply of parks and recreation space, this Plan uses a combination of the 1983 NRPA guidelines and the 2021-2025 SCORP recommendations to assess their existing parks and recreation system. Based on these guidelines, the following conclusions can be made:

The Town of Whiteland has a deficit of locally owned public outdoor recreation areas.

Using the 2020 population of the Town of Whiteland (per the 2020 Decennial Census) and the 2021-2025 SCORP Local LOS recommended acreage of 20 acres per 1,000 residents, the Town of Whiteland should have at least 91.98 acres of locally owned public outdoor recreation areas. Currently, Whiteland's parks and recreation system has a total of 1.5 acres of parkland, and a deficit of 90.48 acres.

In comparison, the Town of New Whiteland, located to the northeast, has 35.5 acres of parkland, with a deficit of 75.45 acres, while the Town of Bargersville, located to the east, has a total of 40 acres of parkland and a deficit of 151.20 acres. The City of Greenwood, located to the north, has a total of 393.79 acres of parkland and a deficit of 882.81 acres, while the City of Franklin, located to the south, has a total of 223 acres of parkland and a deficit of 282.26 acres.

At the county level, Johnson County was identified as a "critical county," as it doesn't have the recommended supply of outdoor-recreation acres of 55 acres per 1,000 population or greater and has a population-growth rate higher than

the 2014 to 2018 estimated Indiana statewide population growth rate of 1.44%. Based on the Total (Statewide) LOS of 55 acres per 1,000 people, or 0.055 acres per person, Johnson County has a total of 6,010.38 acres and a deficit of 2,582.00 acres. Based on these recommendations, Whiteland residents live in a park desert – an area with a lack of public outdoor recreation areas. Living in a park desert can have a variety of negative health, social, and economic impacts, including:

Health Impacts

Parks and open space are key players in addressing the public health crisis. In fact, according to Dr. Howard Frumkin, Senior Vice President at the Trust for Public Land Former Dean of the University of Washington School of Public Health, "If we had a medicine that delivered as many benefits as parks, we would all be taking it. Parks deliver cardiovascular benefits, fight loneliness, combat osteoporosis, counter stress anxiety, and more. And they do all those things without adverse side effects and at minimal cost²." In communities lacking an adequate supply of parks and open space, reduced physical activity can contribute to mental health concerns and chronic illness, such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

Social Impacts

Parks are gathering spaces that catalyze social cohesion and provide a place for residents to interact with others in a natural environment. According to the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health in their

2019 publication *The Relationship between Social Cohesion and Urban Green Space: An Avenue for Health Promotion* by Viniece Jennings and Omoshalewa Bamkole, "Social cohesion, a key construct used to characterize the social environment, has been defined in many ways, yet it often refers to interpersonal dynamics and/or collective efforts that may be used to assess quality of life. Social cohesion can also involve feelings of trust, belonging, acceptance, and connectedness which often relate to positive social interactions³." In the absence of social cohesion, residents may experience a decline in interpersonal relationships and a perceived lack of community support.

Economic Impacts

Parks offer a variety of economic benefits, ranging from increased property values and tax revenues to a boost in tourism spending and business attraction and retention. According to the 2020 NRPA Park Pulse Poll *The Economic Benefits Found in Park and Recreation Investments*, "94 percent of adults responding to the March 2020 NRPA Park Pulse poll expressed support for their local government investing in infrastructure improvements that promote economic activity in their community⁴." Without parks and open space, the Town of Whiteland is missing out on the opportunity to improve their local economy and spur future development.

The Town of Whiteland has a deficit in all classifications of parks as defined by the 1993 NRPA guidelines, including Mini-Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Regional/Metropolitan Parks.

The Town of Whiteland's only park, the K-9 Vader Bark Park, falls under the Neighborhood Park classification and is a total of 1.5 acres. This leaves a deficit of 3.2 to 7.7 acres. Since the Town has only one park, its parks and recreation system is naturally deficient in the other park classification categories.

Over the next five years, the Town of Whiteland has a projected population growth of over 50%. As the demand for local parks and recreation grows, it is essential that the Town of Whiteland expands its parks and recreation facilities and program offerings to serve current and future residents.

NRPA PARK METRICS

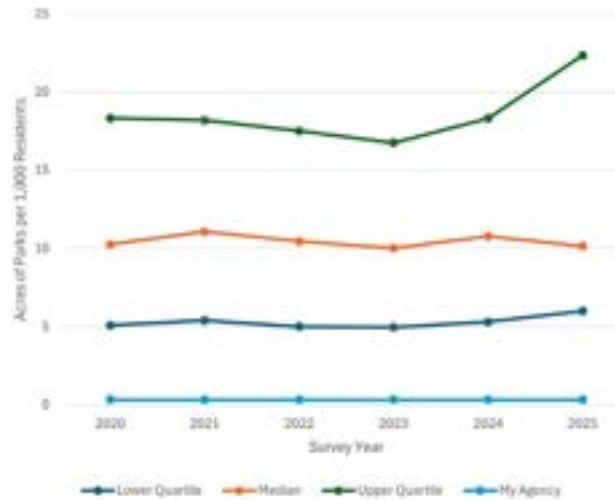
To get a better understanding of how Whiteland's current parks and recreation system stacks up against peer agencies, the Town completed the Agency Performance Survey in NRPA Park Metrics. The NRPA Park Metrics is a comprehensive source of benchmarks and insights designed to help parks and recreation agencies manage and plan their operating resources and capital facilities⁵.

1983 NRPA Classifications						
CLASSIFICATION	GUIDELINE	SERVICE AREA	RECOMMENDED ACRES	TOTAL NUMBER OF PARKS	SUM OF TOTAL ACRES	DIFFERENCE
Mini-Park	0.25 to 0.50 acres per 1,000 people	Less than a ¼ mile radius	1.15 to 2.29 Acres	0	1.15 to 2.29 Acres	-1.15 to -2.29 Acres
Neighborhood Park	1.0 to 2.0 acres per 1,000 people	¼ to ½ mile radius	4.60 to 9.20 Acres	1	1.5 Acres	-3.2 to -7.7 Acres
Community Park	5.0 to 8.0 acres per 1,000 people	1-to-2-mile areas	22.96 to 36.79 Acres	0	22.96 to 36.79 Acres	-22.96 to -36.79 Acres
Regional/Metropolitan Park	5.0 to 10.0 acres per 1,000 people	1 hour drive	22.96 to 45.99 Acres	0	22.96 to 45.99 Acres	-22.96 to -45.99 Acres

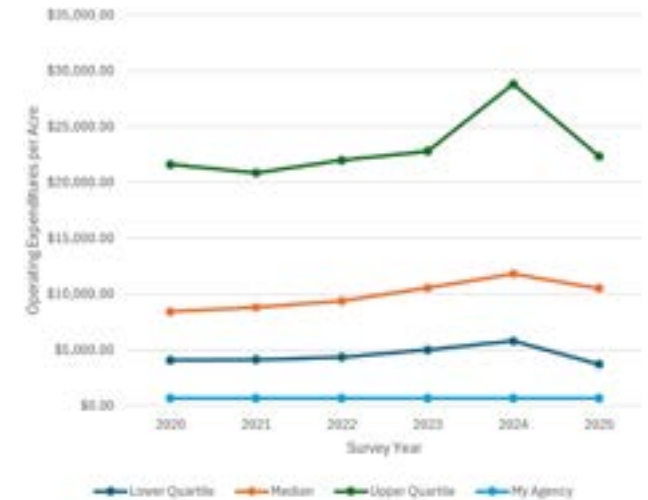


Source: Context Design.

ACRES OF PARK PER 1,000 RESIDENTS



OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER ACRE OF PARKLAND

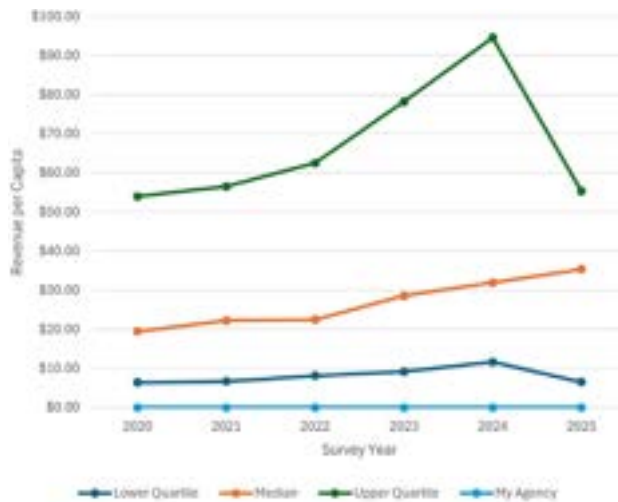


The survey asks parks and recreation agencies nationwide to self-report data related to nine key areas of parks and recreation, including jurisdiction information, capital budget, operating budget, personnel, agency responsibilities, workload, facilities, activities and policies⁵. Survey results are displayed in the Agency Performance Dashboard, which rates the agency's overall performance compared to that of other reporting parks and recreation agencies for the years 2020-2025 in five categories: Acres of Parks per 1,000 Residents, Operating Expenditures per Acre of Parkland, Operating Expenditures Per Capita, Revenue per Capita, and Total Revenue to Total Operating Expenditures. The total number of responses for years 2020-2024 in all categories falls within the range of 339 - 592 respondents, while the total number of responses for 2025 ranges between 31 - 43 respondents. The results of this survey found the found that Whiteland falls well below the industry standard of respondents.

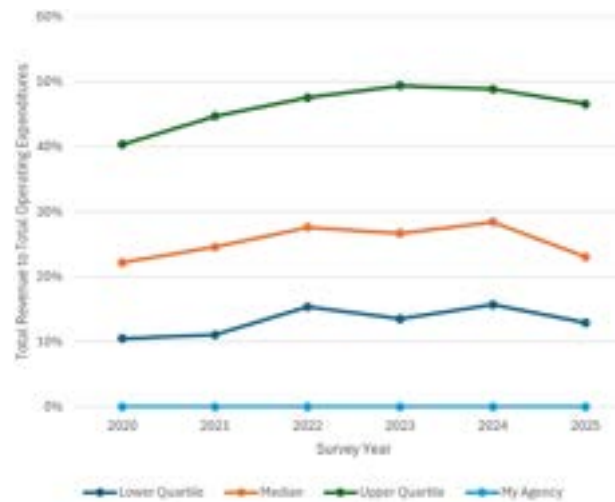
Acres of Park per 1,000 Residents

In 2025, the industry standard performance of respondents in acres of parks per 1,000 residents was 10 parks. Parks and recreation agencies in the upper quartile of respondents had 22 parks per 1,000 residents, while agencies in the lower quartile of respondents had 6 parks per 1,000 residents. In comparison, Whiteland has 0 parks.

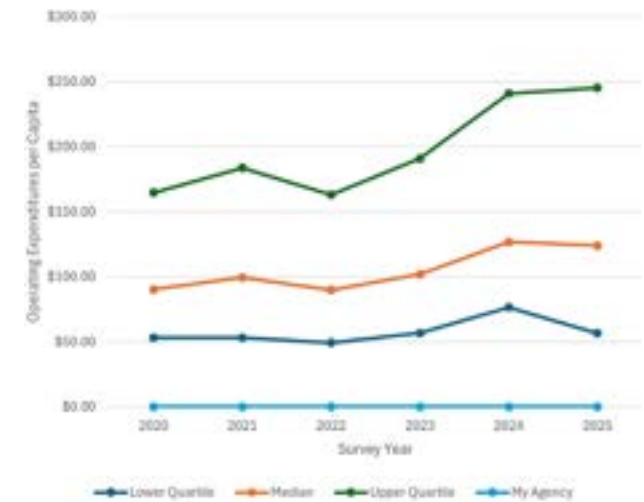
REVENUE PER CAPITA



TOTAL REVENUE TO TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES



OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA



Operating Expenditures per Acre of Parkland

In 2025, the industry standard performance of respondents in operating expenditures per acre of parkland was \$10,513. Parks and recreation agencies in the upper quartile respondents spent \$22,344 per acre of parkland, while agencies in the lower quartile of respondents spent \$3,728 per acre of parkland. In comparison, Whiteland spent \$667 per acre of parkland.

Operating Expenditures per Capita

Operating expenditures per capita measures a parks and recreation agency's average operational costs in comparison to the total population it serves. In 2025, the industry standard performance of respondents in operating expenditures per capita was \$123.97. Parks and recreation agencies in the upper quartile of respondents spent \$245.28 per person, while agencies in the lower quartile of respondents spent \$56.64 per person. In comparison, Whiteland spent \$0.22 per person.

Revenue per Capita

Revenue per capita measures the amount of revenue generated by a parks and recreation agency in comparison to the population it serves. In 2025, the

industry standard performance of respondents in operating expenditures per capita was \$35.30 per capita. Parks and recreation agencies in the upper quartile of respondents earned \$55.28 per person, while agencies in the lower quartile of respondents earned \$6.48 per person. Whiteland had no data for comparison in 2025.

Total Revenue to Total Operating Expenditures

Total revenue to total operating expenditures, otherwise known as the operating expense ratio (OER), measures the operating efficiency of a parks and recreation agency by comparing its total revenue to its total operating expenses. In general, a lower OER represents a higher level of operating efficiency and more profitability, while a higher OER represents a lower level of operating efficiency and less profitability. In 2025, the industry standard performance of respondents in OER was 23.06%. Parks and recreation agencies in the upper quartile of respondents had an OER of 46.54%, while agencies in the lower quartile of respondents had an OER of 23.06%. Whiteland had no data for comparison in 2025.

Based on these metrics, it's clear that the Town of Whiteland has a long way to go to meet industry standards for parks and recreation.

Accessibility

ADA COORDINATOR

Per the US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, "Title II of the ADA requires state/local governments to give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all of their programs, services, and activities. State/local governments can't deny people with disabilities the chance to participate or make them participate in different programs than available to others⁶." An ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Coordinator, required when a public entity has 50 or more employees, "Is responsible for coordinating the efforts of the government entity to comply with Title II and investigating any complains that the entity has violated Title II⁶."

Since the Town of Whiteland has only 31 full-time employees, it is not required to have an ADA Coordinator. However, per Resolution 2013-05, passed 9-9-13 and Resolution 2016-01, passed 4-11-16, the ADA/Section 504 Coordinator for the Town of Whiteland shall be the Town Manager, or such other employee designated by the town manager. The ADA Coordinator for the Town of Whiteland is:

Billy Patrick

Building Commissioner/ADA Coordinator
549 Main Street
Whiteland, Indiana 46184-1552
Phone: (317) 535-5531
bpatrick@whiteland.in.gov

ADA PUBLIC NOTICE⁶

In accordance with the requirements of title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Town of Whiteland will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: The Town of Whiteland does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations

promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under title I of the ADA.

Effective Communication: The Town of Whiteland will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in The Town of Whiteland's programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The Town of Whiteland will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in the Town of Whiteland offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the Town of Whiteland, should contact the office of Billy Patrick, Building Commissioner/ADA Coordinator, 549 Main Street, Whiteland, Indiana 46184, 317-535-5531 or bpatrick@whiteland.in.gov as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the Town of Whiteland to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a program, service, or activity of the Town of Whiteland is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Billy Patrick, Building Commissioner/ADA Coordinator, 549 Main Street, Whiteland, Indiana 46184, 317-535-5531 or bpatrick@whiteland.in.gov

The Town of Whiteland will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items

from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

TOWN OF WHITELAND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT⁶

This Grievance Procedure is established to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"). It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of services, activities, programs, or benefits by the Town of Whiteland. The Town's Personnel Policy governs employment-related complaints of disability discrimination.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, phone number of complainant and location, date, and description of the problem. Alternative means of filing complaints, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities upon request.

The complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 60 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

Billy Patrick

Building Commissioner/ADA Coordinator
549 Main Street
Whiteland, Indiana 46184-1552
Phone: (317) 535-5531
bpatrick@whiteland.in.gov

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, Billy Patrick or his designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, Billy Patrick or his designee will respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as large print, Braille, or audio tape. The response will explain the position of the Town of Whiteland and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint.

If the response by Billy Patrick or his designee does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision within 15 calendar days after receipt of the response to Carmen Young, Town Manager, or her designee.

Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the appeal, Carmen Young, Town Manager, or her designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days after the meeting, the Carmen Young, Town Manager or her designee will respond in writing, and, where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, with a final resolution of the complaint.

All written complaints received by Billy Patrick or his designee, appeals to Carmen Young, Town Manager, or her designee, and responses from these two offices will be retained by the Town of Whiteland for at least three years.

ADA TRANSITION PLAN

An ADA Transition Plan is a self-evaluation of existing facilities to determine if improvements are needed to ensure equal opportunity and program accessibility. According to the ADA National Network, which provides information, guidance, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act, an ADA Transition Plan includes a list of the physical barriers that limit the accessibility of programs, facilities, and services, methods to removing the barriers and making them accessible, a schedule for completing the work, and the name of the officials that are responsible for the plans implementation⁷. The Town is currently working with Crossroad Engineers to create an ADA Transition Plan as part of its Community Crossings project and asset management work.

CURRENT ACCESSIBILITY

Current accessibility for all parks, open spaces, and trails in the Whiteland parks and open space system can be found in the Parks and Open Space System section of this Plan.

Recreation Programming



Source: (Bottom) Town of Whiteland, (Top) Whiteland Police Department.

While the Town of Whiteland doesn't offer formal recreation programming through its Parks and Recreation Department, it hosts several community events throughout the year that are well attended by both residents and visitors.

WHITELAND COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Whiteland Farmers Market

The Whiteland Farmers Market operates on Tuesdays from June to August from 5:30PM to 7:30PM at the Johnson County Public Library – Clark Pleasant Branch at 350 Clearwater Blvd. The purpose of the Whiteland Farmers Market is to provide consumers with a venue to purchase locally grown and produced foods, plants, art, and handcrafted items, as well as a place for non-profit groups to educate and fundraise. Their vision is to provide a local marketplace for food-inspired growers, producers, and businesses that can prosper, while offering the community the experience of locally grown food and handcrafted items.

Whiteland Summer Fest

Whiteland Summer Fest is an annual summer event hosted by the Town in July at 141 S. State St. in the Saddlebrook Farms subdivision. The event includes live music, local food vendors, kids' activities, and a firework show.

Community Clean Up Day

Whiteland hosts community clean-up days on several

occasions throughout the year to collect yard waste, general household waste, office waste, construction and demolition debris, electronics, and household appliances.

Town of Whiteland Trick or Treat

The Town of Whiteland Trunk or Treat is a free, family-friendly event hosted at the Whiteland Town Hall. Town representatives, the Whiteland Fire Department, and the Whiteland Police Department (including K9 Riggs) are present at the event to hand out candy and greet visitors.

Town of Whiteland Santa Parade

The Town of Whiteland Santa Parade is organized by the Whiteland Fire Department. The parade, which begins and ends at the Fire Station, features Santa riding with Whiteland Firefighters on a firetruck. The event is typically held in mid-December and includes pictures with Santa and a Marketplace with vendors selling holiday merchandise.

Greater Whiteland Community Easter Egg Hunt

While the event hasn't been held since 2019, the Town of Whiteland has previously hosted an annual Easter Egg Hunt at the Whiteland Community High School football stadium. The first annual easter egg hunt, hosted in April 2018, included an easter egg hunt, food, music, face painting, and pictures with the Easter Bunny.

Other Recreation Providers

Due to the lack of parks and open spaces in Whiteland, most residents seek opportunities provided by other municipalities and outside organizations to meet their parks and recreation needs.



Source: (Bottom) Indy's Child, (Top) City of Greenwood.

Whiteland has the potential to expand its recreational offerings by developing new facilities and diverse programs throughout the community. Neighboring municipalities with well-established recreation initiatives can help serve as valuable case studies, providing insight into how Whiteland may start to shape its own recreational agenda.

PEER COMMUNITIES

City of Greenwood Parks and Recreation

The City of Greenwood, located just 5 miles north of Whiteland, has a robust parks and recreation system. Its Parks and Recreation Department manages 17 parks, more than 50 miles of trailways, the Greenwood Community Center, the Greenwood Fieldhouse, Freedom Springs Aquatic Park, and the Greenwood Park Amphitheater. The Department hosts a variety of community events throughout the year, including Breakfast with the Bunny, Freedom Fest, Monster Mash, Halloween Parade, KiD CiTY Christmas, and Breakfast with Santa. In addition to these offerings, the Department offers a variety of sports leagues, fitness classes, and programs for toddlers, school-aged youth, and adults⁸.

One of its most popular offerings, the Greenwood Sports Park, is a 40-acre development located along I-65 at the Worthsville Road interchange. The park, which opened in September 2024, offers multiple youth baseball and

softball fields, a playground, multi-use field, walking trails, and a splash pad. The park is a hotspot for youth baseball and softball teams from Indiana and beyond⁹.

Freedom Springs Aquatic Park, located at 850 W. Stop 18 Rd., is a premier aquatics destination in Indianapolis. The outdoor water park, which operates from Memorial Day through Labor Day, includes a variety of thrilling features such as water slides, a lazy river, a toddler splash pad, a lap pool, and diving boards. In addition to these amenities, the center offers swim and other fitness programs and community events throughout the summer season, such as adult-only nights and the Puppy POOLooza event, where dogs get their own special day to enjoy the water. Users can purchase a season pass at the individual and household levels, or a day pass for admission¹⁰.

City of Franklin Parks and Recreation

The City of Franklin, located just 6 miles south of Whiteland, features 12 parks, historic greenway trails, the Franklin Family Aquatic Center, the Palmer Park Community Center, the Blue Heron Disc Golf Course, the Cultural Arts and Recreation Center, and the Active Adult Center. The Franklin Parks and Recreation Department hosts a variety of recreation programs throughout the year, including the Easter Egg Hunt, Cruisin' the Amp, Firecracker Festival, Franklin Fall Festival, Community Art Show, Halloween Town, Eclipse Festival, Family Movie Series, and Breakfast with Santa¹¹.



Source: Kephart Park / Indy's Child

The Franklin Cultural Arts and Recreation Center, located at 396 Branigin Blvd., is one of the Department's most popular facilities. The 30,000-sf center includes an indoor walking track, basketball courts, racquetball courts, a fitness center with a variety of cardiovascular equipment, and a 35-foot, indoor climbing wall. In addition to these features, the center offers space for dance/theater, creative arts, preschool programs, exercise, and condition. The facility offers annual facility and fitness membership fees at the individual and family levels, as well as daily guest passes¹².

The Franklin Family Aquatic Center, located at 390 Branigin Blvd., is located adjacent to the Cultural Arts and Recreation Center. The Center offers a variety of features, include the Family Fun Zone with a zero-depth entry pool and a large play structure for toddlers. For older children, the Olympic-sized swimming pool, diving well, and 190-foot water slide offer hours of entertainment. The Center offers a Splash Card that is good for 10 visits, pool passes at the individual and family levels, and daily admission. It also offers Free Thursday Family Swim from 4pm to 6pm on select Thursdays throughout the summer season¹³.

Town of Bargersville Parks and Recreation

Located just seven miles southwest of Whiteland, the Town of Bargersville offers five parks, a small Community Center, and over 8 miles of trails. Bargersville hosts events throughout the year, maintaining constant seasonal interest, including Christmas Lighting and Holiday Market, Community Easter Egg Hunt, Farmers Market, Summer Concert Series, the Harvest Moon Festival, and Trunk or Treat¹¹. These seasonal events help build Bargersville's population and economic growth year-round¹⁴.

Kephart Park, located at CR 144 and Saddle Club Road, opened to much fanfare in 2023. The park, which spans over 18 acres, includes a wide range of facilities and amenities, including the Umbarger Family Playground,, the Skillman Splash Pad, the Duke Homes Pickleball Courts, picnic shelters, and a variety of walking trails¹⁵.

Town of New Whiteland Parks and Recreation

The Town of New Whiteland Parks and Recreation Department manages five parks, including the Grassy Creek Disc Golf Course. The 18-hole course, which attracts

players of all skill levels, is one of only four disc golf courses in Johnson County. It traverses East and West Park and winds through hilly, wooded areas and along Grassy Creek¹⁶.

Another population park destination in New Whiteland is Proctor Park, which features a “catch and release” pond, picnic shelters, playground areas, and a variety of monuments and memorials honoring Veterans, those currently serving in the Armed Services, and Hometown Heros. The Walk of Freedom, located near the front of the park, honors military heroes, while the Pathway of Honor, located near the back of the park, honors police, fire, and emergency responders¹⁶.

OTHER RECREATION PROVIDERS

Other recreation providers in and around Whiteland include:

- Neighborhood and subdivision parks and playgrounds
- Clark-Pleasant Community Schools playgrounds or sports fields
- Private fitness clubs outside Whiteland, such as Warehouse Gym, Crunch Fitness, LA Fitness, 148 Wellness, Anytime Fitness, and Sweat Shop and Fitness Studio.
- Youth Clubs, such as the Boys and Girls Club, SCSA Eleven Youth Soccer Club, the St. Francis Soccer Club, Whiteland Youth Football League, Whiteland Youth Baseball, Whiteland Youth Cheerleading, and the Warriors Swim Club.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR WHITELAND?

Maintaining seasonal recreational opportunities is essential to curating community identity, support local businesses, and enhance the Town’s overall quality. In the future, the Town of Whiteland can incorporate similar facilities and recreation programs to broaden community outreach and increase participation across all demographics.



Source: (Bottom) SCSA Eleven Youth Soccer Club, (Middle) Whiteland Warriors Swim Club, (Top) The Sweat Shop Fitness.

CHAPTER CITATIONS

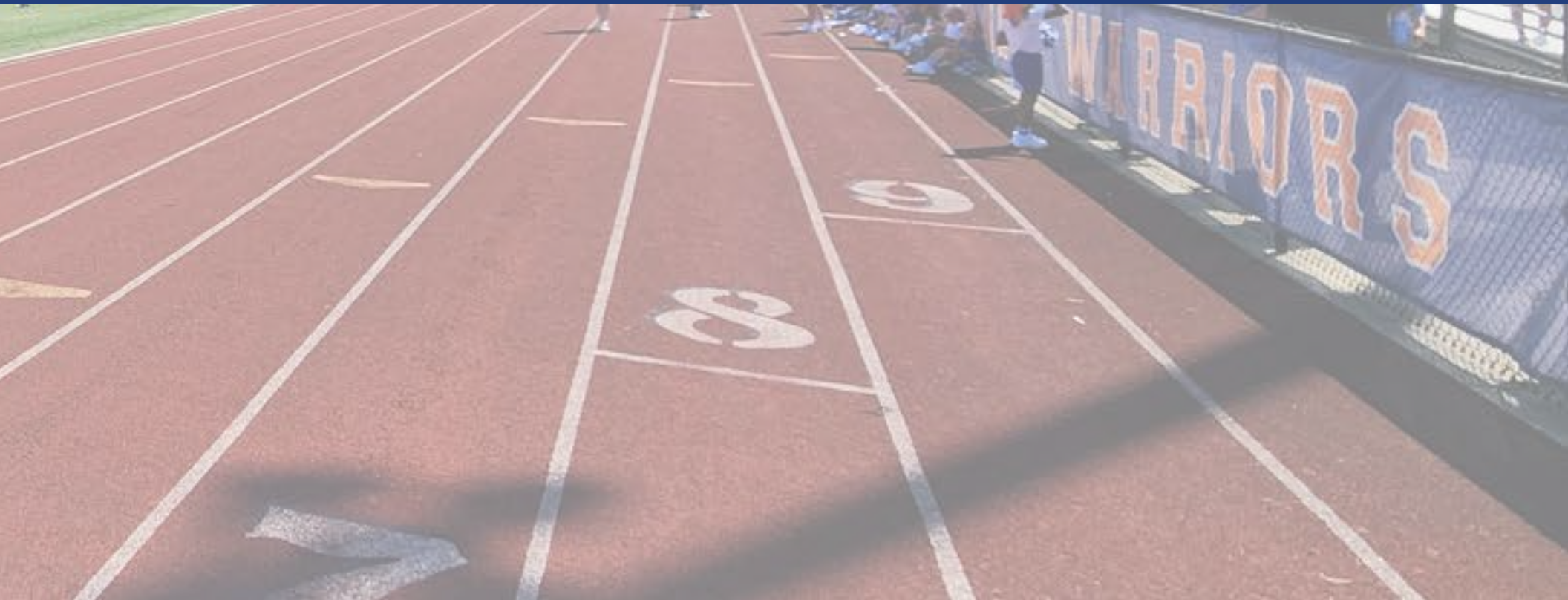
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Needs Analysis

4



Community Engagement

As the primary users of Town's parks and recreation system, feedback from community members is essential to planning for the future of parks and open spaces in Whiteland. Community outreach for the Plan was conducted in a variety of ways, including a public input survey, a mobile display for community pop-up events, two public meetings, the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee, and the Whiteland Parks Board Survey.

PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

The Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan public input survey ran for a period of five weeks from Friday, July 11th, 2025, to Friday, August 15th, 2025. The survey, which can be found in the Appendix, included 22 questions to gauge users' preferences for the future of parks and recreation in Whiteland over the next five years. The survey was formatted to be completed online via a QR code or web link printed on physical materials and on social media. The survey was promoted virtually on the Town of Whiteland Facebook and Instagram pages and in-person using survey cards and candy incentives at community pop-up events.

In addition to these efforts, Whiteland Town Manager Carmen Young was interviewed by WRTV Indianapolis to spread the word about the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and the public survey. The article, published Thursday, August 7th, 2025, includes information about the purpose of the Plan and the type of feedback the project team is looking for to help guide the future of parks and recreation in Whiteland.

These efforts garnered a total of 238 responses, with a 100% completion rate. Most respondents spent approximately 5 minutes taking the survey, with few questions skipped in the process. In total, 83.61% of respondents are residents of Whiteland, while 13.87% lived outside of Whiteland, and 2.52% preferred not to answer.

Respondents who live outside of Whiteland but still participated in the survey live in Indianapolis, Franklin, Bargersville, New Whiteland, Center Grove, Trafalgar, Needham, Greenwood, and Southport.

Overall, results of the survey suggest a significant desire for more parks and recreation opportunities in Whiteland, with an emphasis on family-oriented facilities and programs.

Most respondents spend 5+ hours per week on outdoor recreation.

When asked approximately how many hours per week they spend on outdoor recreation activities, most respondents (43.70%) spend 5+ hours per week on outdoor recreation activities, followed by 32.35% of respondents spending 3-4 hours, and 18.07% spending 1-2 hours. A smaller group (3.78%) does not participate in recreational activities, and 5 preferred not to answer.

Most respondents spend less than \$100 per month on recreational activities.

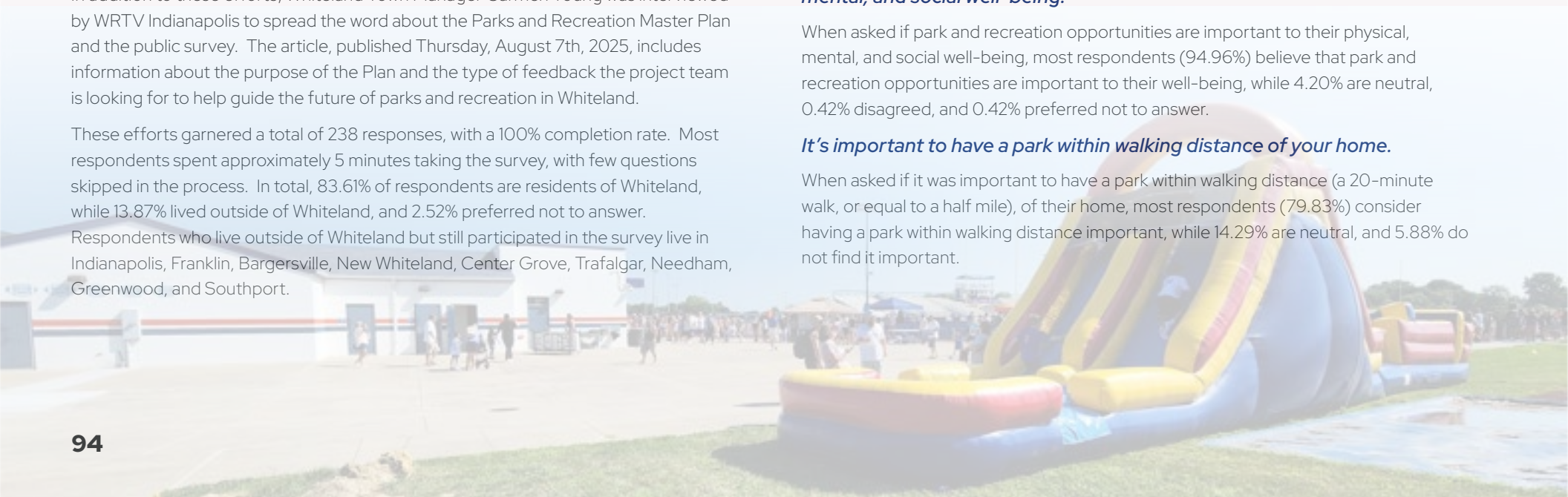
When asked approximately how much money they spend per month on recreation activities, most respondents (55.08%) spend less than \$100 per month on recreation activities, followed by 27.97% spending \$100-\$299, 6.78% spending \$300-\$499, and 5.51% spending \$500 or more. A small group (4.66%) preferred not to answer.

Parks and recreation opportunities are important to respondents' physical, mental, and social well-being.

When asked if park and recreation opportunities are important to their physical, mental, and social well-being, most respondents (94.96%) believe that park and recreation opportunities are important to their well-being, while 4.20% are neutral, 0.42% disagreed, and 0.42% preferred not to answer.

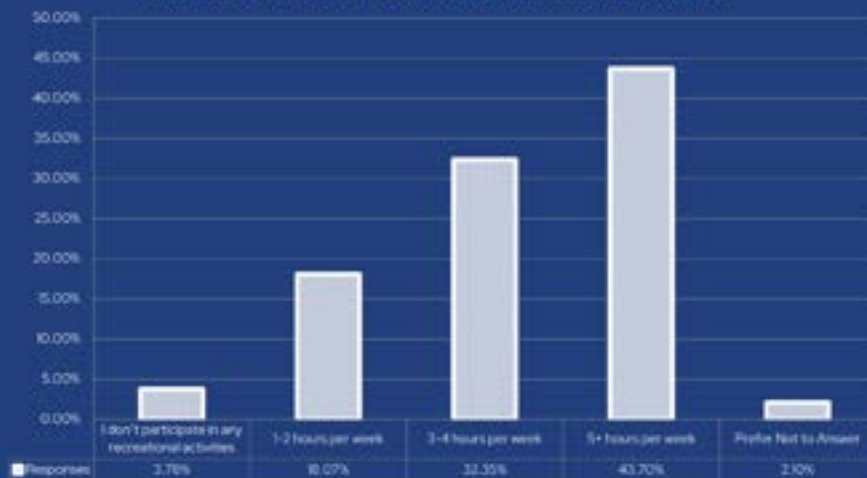
It's important to have a park within walking distance of your home.

When asked if it was important to have a park within walking distance (a 20-minute walk, or equal to a half mile), of their home, most respondents (79.83%) consider having a park within walking distance important, while 14.29% are neutral, and 5.88% do not find it important.

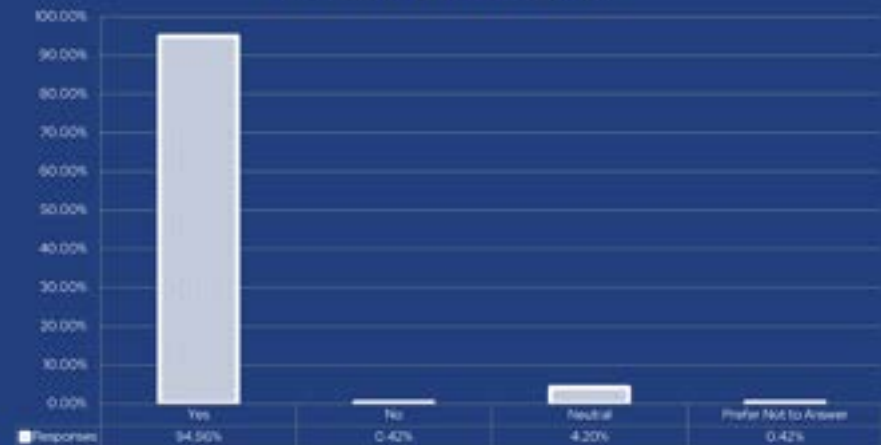


PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY SNAPSHOT

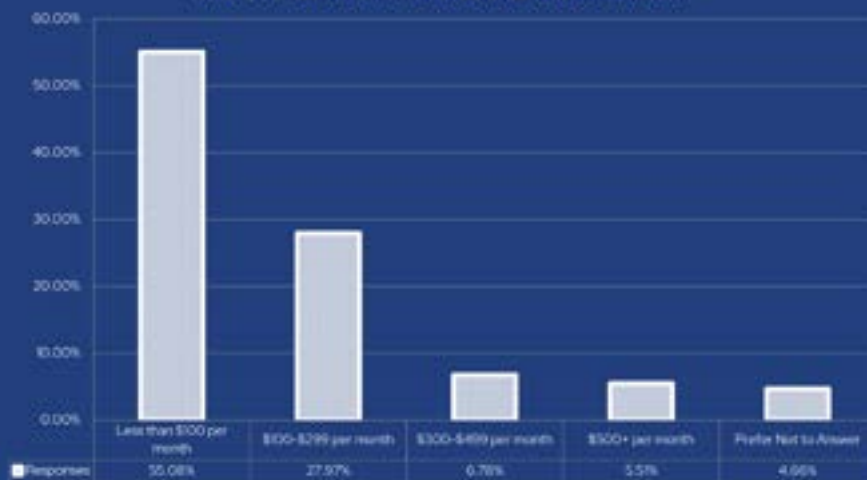
APPROXIMATELY HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK DO YOU SPEND ON OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES?



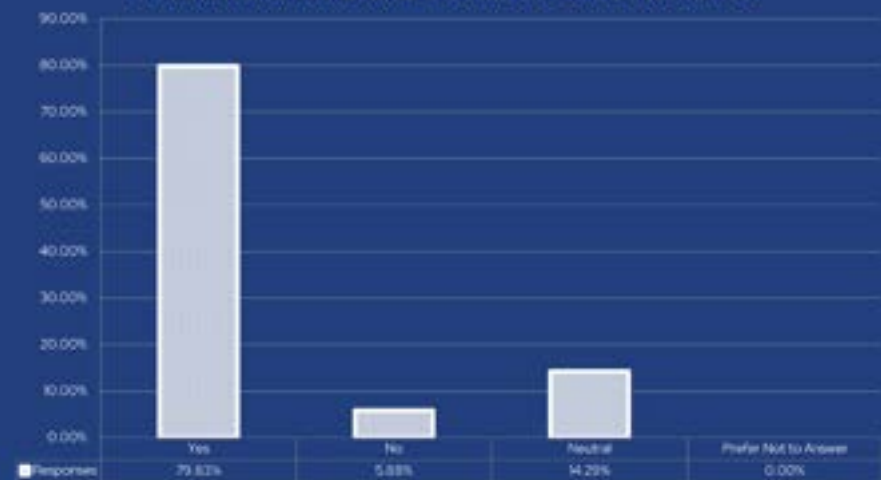
IN YOUR OPINION, ARE PARK AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IMPORTANT TO YOUR PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING?



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



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



Most respondents prefer driving to parks and recreation facilities in Whiteland.

When asked how they do or would travel to parks and recreation facilities in Whiteland, most respondents (50.63%) prefer traveling to parks by car, followed by 32.49% who prefer walking, 14.35% who prefer bicycling, and 2.53% who preferred not to answer.

Most respondents visit parks weekly.

When asked how often they visit parks and open space in Johnson County, most respondents indicated that they visit parks weekly (43.04%), followed by monthly (24.47%), and a few times a year (21.94%). Daily visits are less common (7.17%), and a small number never visit (2.53%) or preferred not to answer (0.84%).

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

When asked if they and/or anyone in their household has visited park facilities or participated in community events offered by the Town of Whiteland in the past 12 months, the most well-attended event was the Town of Whiteland Farmer's Market (63.14%) followed by the Trick or Treat event (44.92%), and Summer Fest (33.05%). A notable 15.68% of respondents reported no participation in any community events offered by the Town of Whiteland in the past 12 months.

The City of Franklin's parks and recreation offerings are the most frequently used by respondents in Johnson County.

When asked where they visit parks and open space most often in Johnson County, most respondents indicated that the City of Franklin is their most visited park location (52.54%), followed by the City of Greenwood (25.42%), Whiteland (9.32%), and New Whiteland (8.47%). A small number of respondents preferred not to answer (2.54%) or chose the Town of Bargersville (1.69%).

Most respondents are visiting parks and open space to use park facilities.

When asked what their primary motivation was for visiting parks and open space in Johnson County, most respondents indicated that their primary motivation was using park facilities (60.59%), followed by being outdoors and in nature (43.64%) and for fitness/exercise (33.90%). Other motivations included stress reduction (22.03%), social gatherings (19.92%), youth sports (19.92%) and a few selecting "other" (5.51%) or preferring not to answer (0.85%). Other activities indicated by respondents include swimming and walking the dog.

Take the Survey!



**52.54%
visited**

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



**60.59%
agreed**

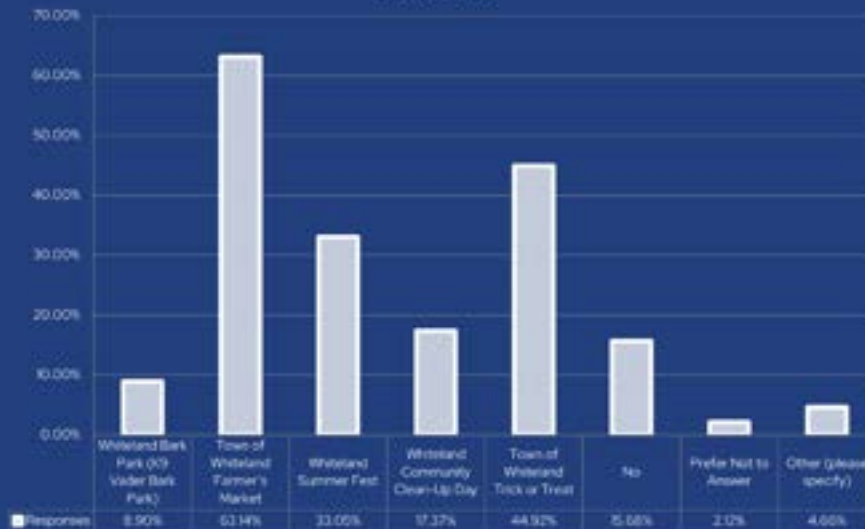
The primary motivation for visiting parks and open space in Johnson County for most respondents was to use park facilities.



**43.64%
agreed**

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

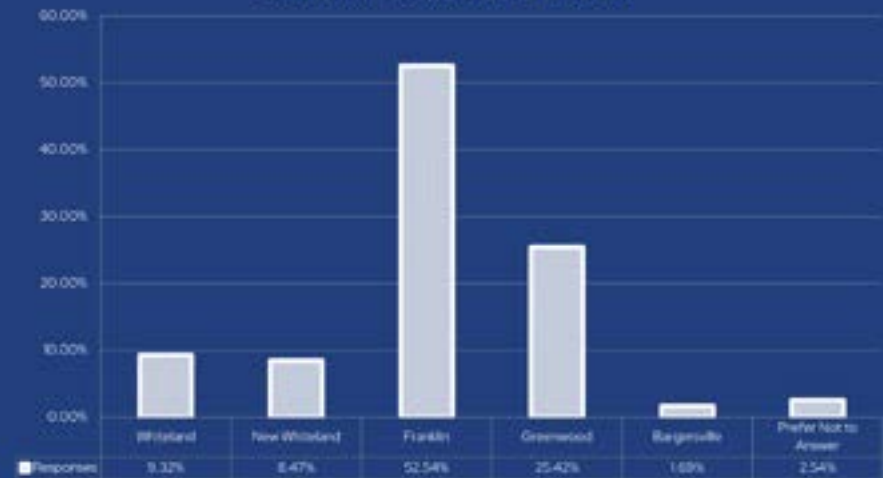
HAVE YOU OR ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD VISITED PARK FACILITIES OR PARTICIPATED IN COMMUNITY EVENTS OFFERED BY THE TOWN OF WHITELAND IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS?



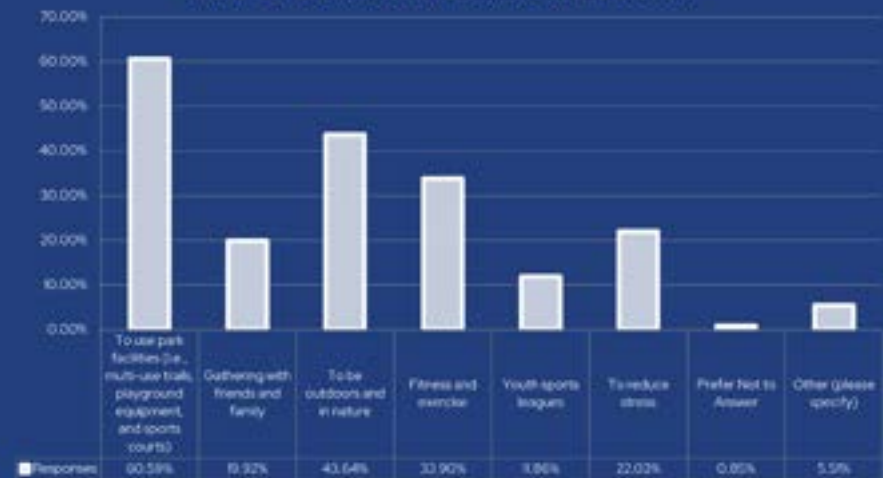
63.14%
visited

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

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

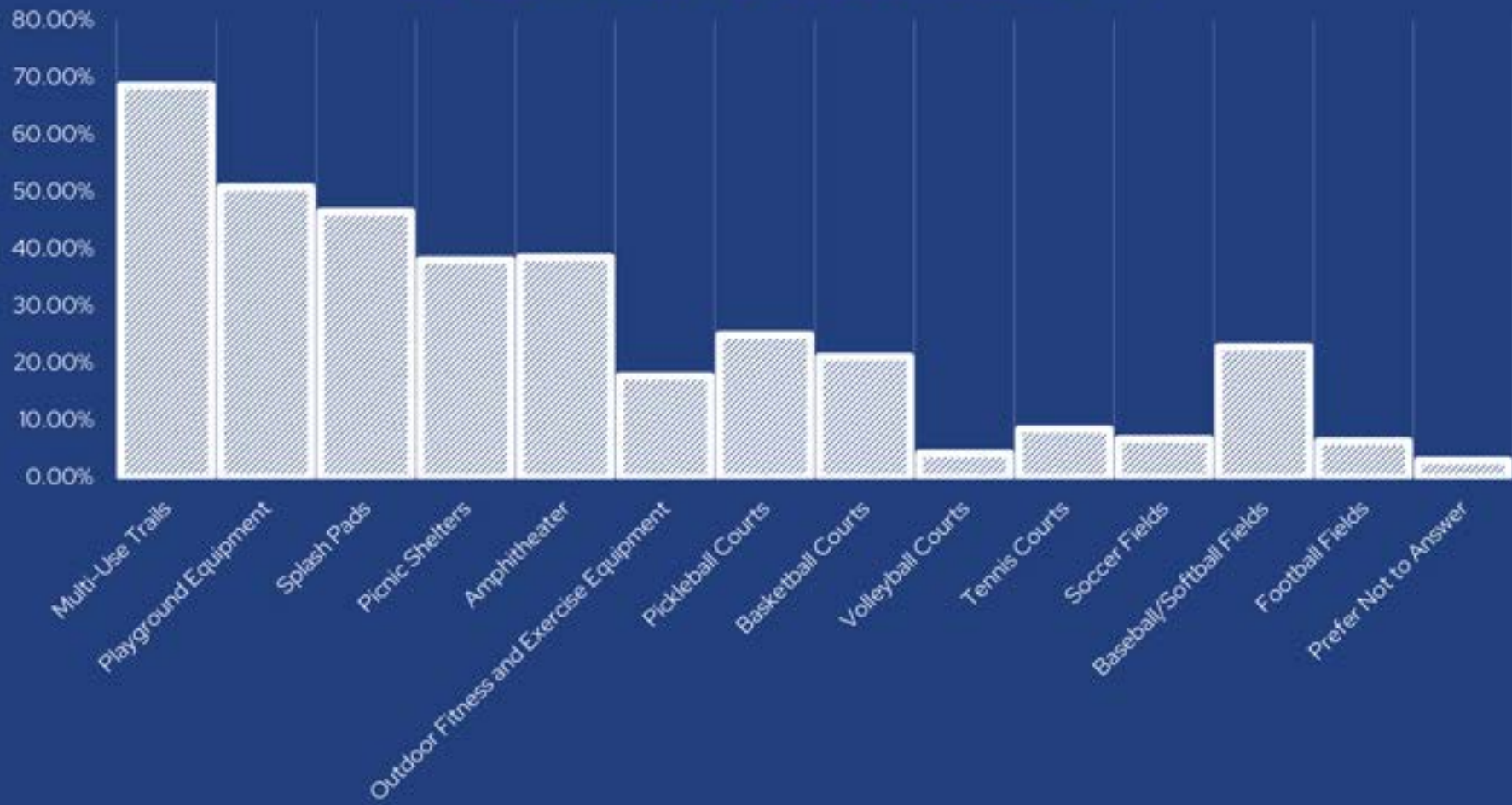


WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY MOTIVATION FOR VISITING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE IN JOHNSON COUNTY?

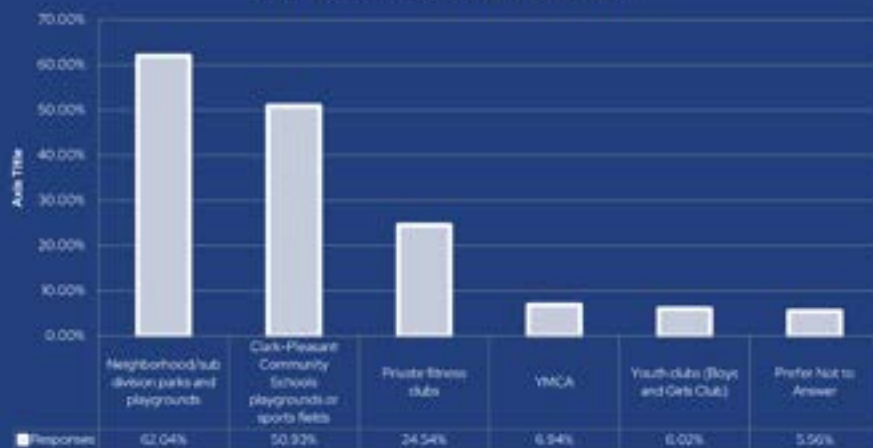


PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY SNAPSHOT

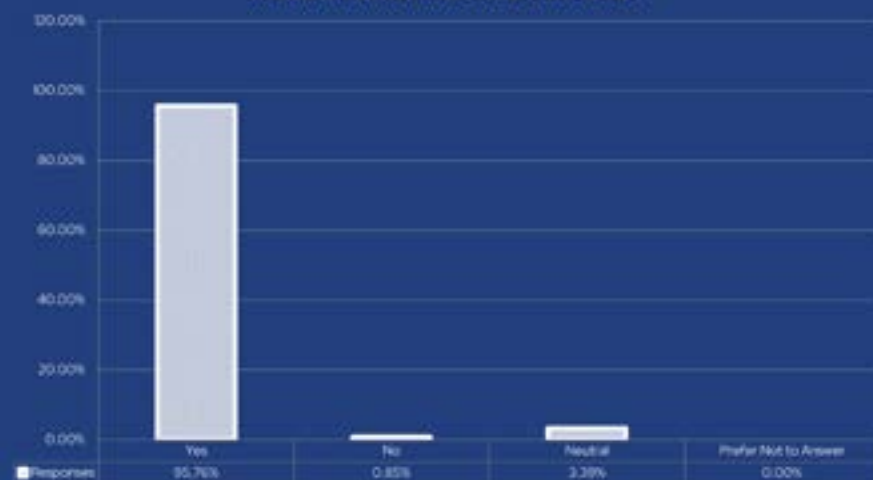
WHICH FACILITIES DO YOU USE WHEN VISITING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE IN JOHNSON COUNTY?



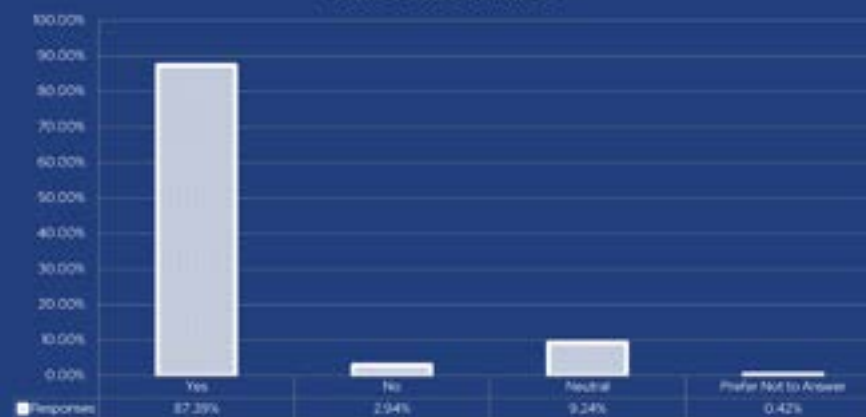
IN THE PAST YEAR, WHICH FACILITIES PROVIDED BY OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE YOU AND/OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD VISITED?



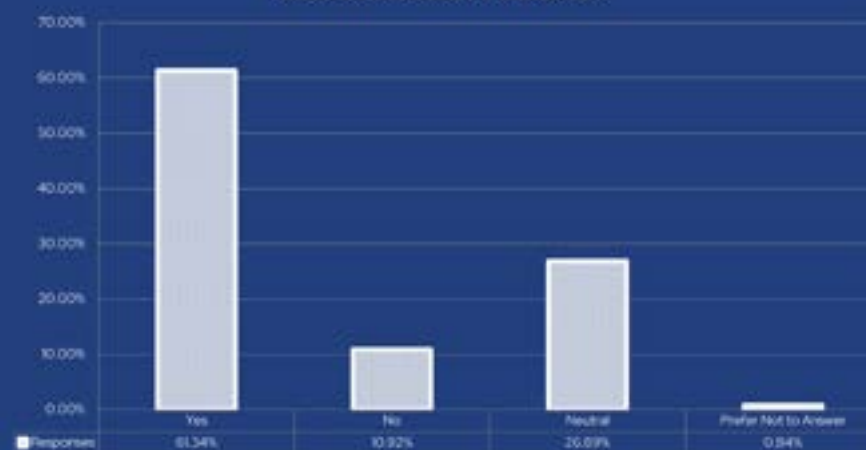
IN YOUR OPINION, DOES THE TOWN OF WHITELAND NEED MORE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE?



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



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



Of all the facilities offered by parks and recreation agencies in Johnson County, most respondents preferred multi-use trails.

When asked which facilities they use when visiting parks and open space in Johnson County, the most used park facilities include multi-use trails (68.64%), followed by playground equipment (50.85%), and splash pads (46.61%). Other facilities like an amphitheater, picnic shelters, and pickleball courts are also popular, while tennis courts, soccer fields, and volleyball courts are less frequently used.

Of the facilities offered by outside organizations, most respondents preferred neighborhood/subdivision parks and playgrounds.

When asked which facilities provided by outside organizations, they and/or members of their household have visited over the past year, the most visited facilities include neighborhood/subdivision parks and playgrounds (62.04%), followed by Clark-Pleasant Community Schools facilities (50.93%). Visits to private fitness clubs (24.54%) and the YMCA (6.94%) were less frequent, with a few visiting youth clubs (13) or preferring not to answer.

The Town of Whiteland needs more parks and open space.

When asked if the Town of Whiteland needs more parks and open space, most respondents (95.76%) believe the Town of Whiteland needs more parks and open space, while 3.39% are neutral, and 0.85% disagree.

The Town of Whiteland needs more recreation programs options.

When asked if the Town of Whiteland needs more recreation program options, such as sports, fitness, outdoor recreation, aquatics, or arts programs, most respondents (87.39%) believe it needs more recreational program options, while 9.24% are neutral, 2.94% disagree, and 0.42% preferred not to answer.

The Town of Whiteland needs more rental facilities.

When asked if the Town of Whiteland needs more rental facilities, such as shelters, courts, and community rooms, most respondents (61.34%) agree that it needs more rental facilities, while 26.89% are neutral, 10.92% disagree, and 0.84% preferred not to answer.

The Town of Whiteland needs more bike and pedestrian facilities.

When asked if the Town of Whiteland needs more bike and pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks and multi-use trails, most respondents (88.66%) agreed that it needs more bike and pedestrian facilities, while 7.14% are neutral, 3.78% disagreed, and 0.42% preferred not to answer.

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

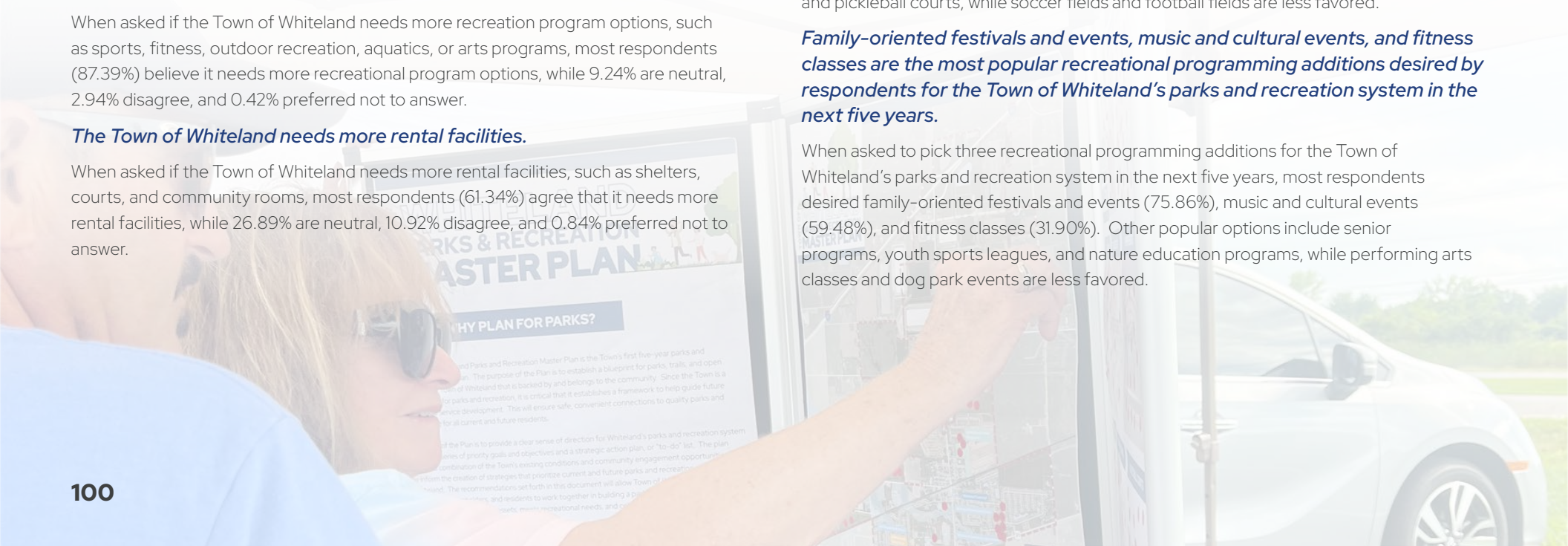
When asked if they would be willing to pay a small, one-time fee (rental or a membership to join a recreation program) to participate in these programs, and, if so, how much they would be willing to pay per person, most respondents were willing to pay a fee of \$6-\$10 (20.85%), followed by \$21+ (20%), \$16-\$20 (14.47%), \$1-\$5 (14.04%) and \$11-\$15 (13.19%). Some respondents (11.06%) are unwilling to pay, while 6.38% preferred not to answer.

Multi-use trails, splash pads, and playground equipment are the most popular facility additions desired by respondents for the Town of Whiteland's parks and recreation system in the next five years.

When asked to pick three facility additions for the Town of Whiteland's parks and recreation system in the next five years, respondents indicated that the preferred facility additions are multi-use trails (71.06%), splash pads (48.94%), and playground equipment (39.15%). Other popular choices include an amphitheater, picnic shelters, and pickleball courts, while soccer fields and football fields are less favored.

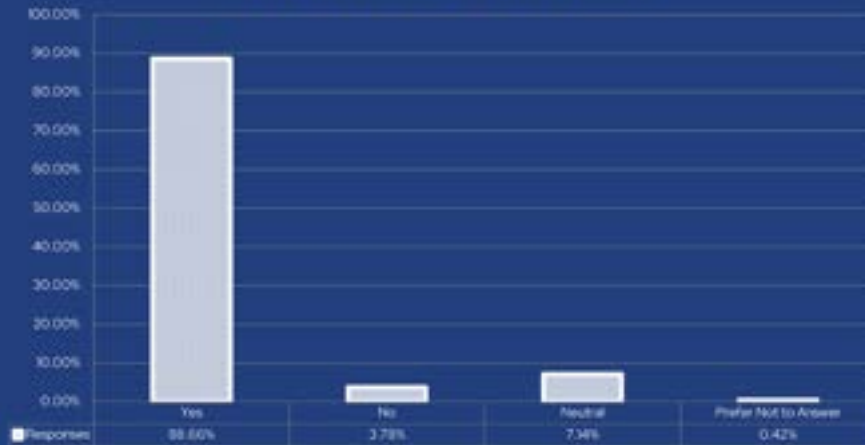
Family-oriented festivals and events, music and cultural events, and fitness classes are the most popular recreational programming additions desired by respondents for the Town of Whiteland's parks and recreation system in the next five years.

When asked to pick three recreational programming additions for the Town of Whiteland's parks and recreation system in the next five years, most respondents desired family-oriented festivals and events (75.86%), music and cultural events (59.48%), and fitness classes (31.90%). Other popular options include senior programs, youth sports leagues, and nature education programs, while performing arts classes and dog park events are less favored.



PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY SNAPSHOT

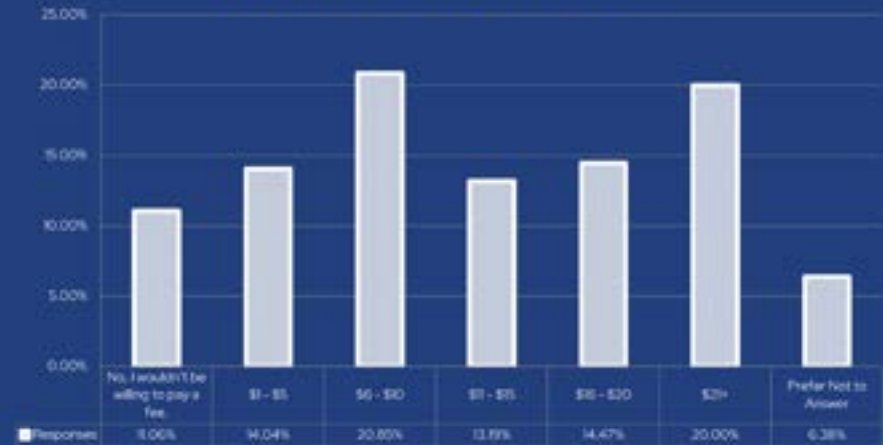
IN YOUR OPINION, DOES THE TOWN OF WHITELAND NEED MORE BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES, SUCH AS SIDEWALKS AND MULTI-USE TRAILS?



88.66%
said yes

The Town of Whiteland needs more bike and pedestrian facilities.

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

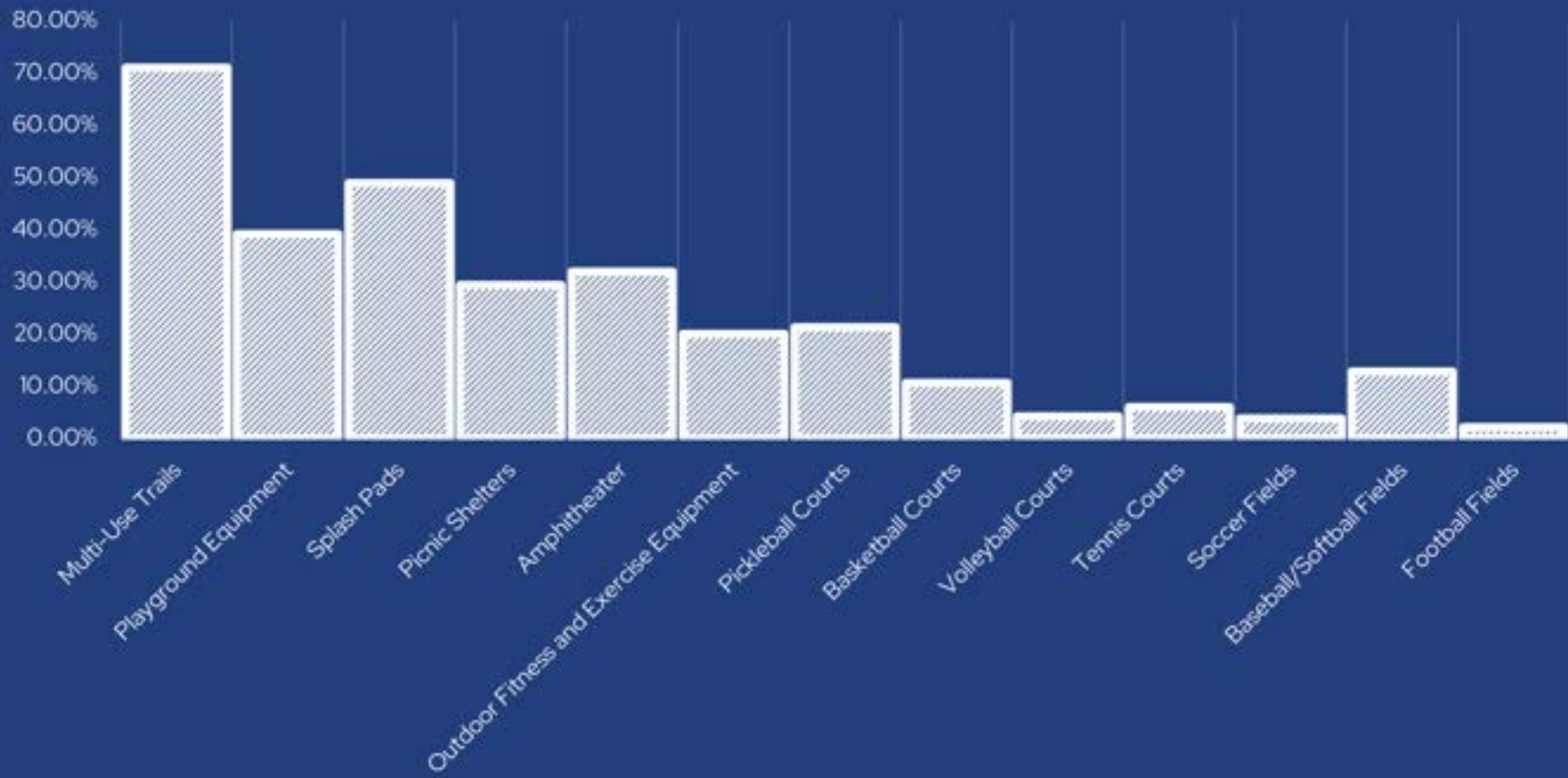


82.56%
would pay a fee

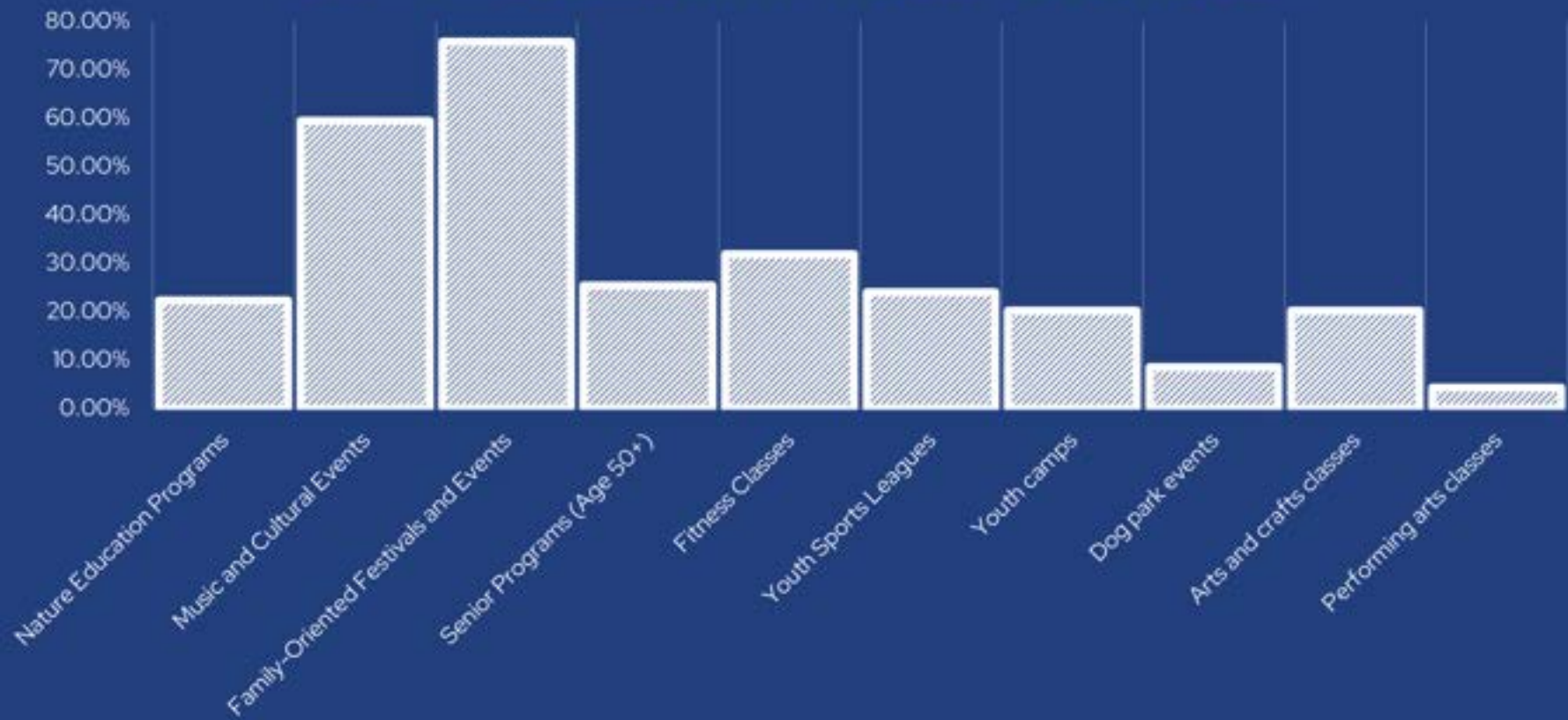
Most respondents are willing to pay a one-time fee of \$6-\$10 to participate in recreation programs.

PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY SNAPSHOT

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?



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?





COMMUNITY POP-UP EVENTS

A Mobile Display was created for Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee members and the consultant team to use at community pop-up events to provide an overview of the purpose of the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan and to gather feedback from the community to help guide the future of parks in Whiteland. In addition to the Mobile Display boards, survey cards and candy incentives were provided to encourage participants to take the survey. The Mobile Display included three (3) display boards with the following information:

- Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Overview – This board includes information about why Whiteland is planning for parks, and what's included in the planning process.
- Existing Parks and Recreation System Map – This board includes a map of Whiteland with the existing parks and recreation facilities identified on the map. Participants are asked to use the dots provided to identify where they recreate by marking locations on the map.

- Tell Us! – This board asks participants to use the dots provided to tell us which types of recreation facilities they'd like to see in Whiteland. Participants should use the post-it notes provided to let us know about additional facilities they'd like to see.

While results from the mobile display boards were cumulative for all events, photographs were taken following each community pop-up event to inform the project team of feedback for each event. Users were asked to photograph the boards following the pop-up event to record participant response and return the mobile display to the Whiteland Town Hall after each use.

The Mobile Display was used by the Committee members at the Whiteland Youth Baseball Movie Under the Stars and Whiteland Elementary Registration and the consultant team at the Whiteland Youth Football Jamboree and the Whiteland Farmers Market. Below are a few highlights of the community pop-up events.

- The lack of parks and recreation facilities, amenities, and programs has Whiteland residents visiting outside communities to meet their recreation needs, with very few participants indicating that they currently recreate in Whiteland.

- The most popular types of recreation facilities preferred by participants in Whiteland include splash pads (16.98%), followed by soccer fields (15.47%), multi-use trails (13.21%), nature exploration (12.07%) and playground equipment (11.32%).
- While some participants liked the idea of basketball courts (7.55%) and outdoor fitness equipment (7.17%) in Whiteland, few liked the idea of an amphitheater (6.42%) and pickleball courts (5.28%).
- Picnic shelters were the least preferred type of recreation facilities in Whiteland (4.53%).

Whiteland Youth Baseball Movie Under the Stars

This event was held on Friday, July 11th, 2025, at the Whiteland Youth Baseball Fields. The cost of the event was \$4 per person, with all money raised funding complex improvements. The movie began at 9:20 PM, with fireworks to follow. Food trucks and concessions were available on site. Roughly 15 community members participated in the discussion with members of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee, and most of the participants participated in baseball.

During the event, participants noted that they recreated at informal sports fields in Whiteland, including those at E 600 N and 5489 N Cord 125 E. When asked what type of recreation facilities they would like to see in Whiteland, participants responded that they would most like to see splash pads (8 votes), followed by nature exploration and multi-use trails (3 votes), playground equipment (2 votes), and picnic shelters, basketball courts, and outdoor fitness (1 vote). An amphitheater, pickleball courts, and soccer fields received no votes from participants at this event. Other recreation facilities participants would like to see include baseball and softball fields.

Whiteland Elementary Registration

Whiteland Elementary Registration was held on Monday, July 28th, 2025, at the Whiteland Elementary School from 5:00–6:30PM. Of all the events where the mobile display was used, this was the most well-attended, with over 200 votes and roughly 100 community members participating. During the event, participants noted that they recreated in their neighborhoods, at Whiteland Community High School, at Whiteland Elementary School, and the Saddlebrook Farms subdivision playground. When asked what type of recreation facilities they would like to see in Whiteland, participants responded that they would most like to see soccer fields (41 votes), followed by splash pads (29 votes), multi-use trails (26 votes), playground equipment (25 votes), nature exploration (23 votes), outdoor fitness (18 votes), basketball courts (16 votes), an amphitheater (16 votes), pickleball courts (13 votes), and picnic shelters (9 votes). Other recreation facilities, programs, and amenities participants would like to see include baseball and



Source: (Bottom, Top) Whiteland Youth Baseball.



Source: Context Design.

softball fields, cricket fields, a kid's construction/building facility, collaborative outdoor art, e-sports competitions, and a maker space with 3D printers, laser cutters, and classes.

Whiteland Youth Football Jamboree

The Whiteland Youth Football Jamboree was held on Saturday, August 9th, 2025, at the Whiteland High School Football Stadium from 10:00AM – 1:00PM. The Jamboree provided an opportunity for the Whiteland Youth Football team to get their official team photos and enjoy a fun, pre-season game. Concessions and a dunk tank were available on site. The event was well attended by team members and families, but only around 10 community members participated in The Mobile Display. During the event, participants noted that they recreate in their neighborhoods, at Whiteland Community High School, and at Whiteland Elementary School. When asked what type of recreation facilities they would like to see in Whiteland, participants responded that they would most like to see multi-use trails and nature exploration (4 votes), followed by basketball courts (3 votes), picnic shelters and a splash pad (2 votes), and playground equipment (1 vote). Outdoor fitness, pickleball courts, and soccer fields received no votes at this event.

Whiteland Farmers Market

The Whiteland Farmers Market was held on Tuesday, July 12th, 2025, at the Johnson County Public Library Clark-Pleasant Branch from 5:30-7:30PM. During the event, participants noted that they created in their neighborhoods, at K9 Vader Bark Park, and in areas outside of Town. All Farmers Market vendors were given access to the survey and about 15 community members talked with the planning team, though only around 8 members participated in voting.

When asked what type of recreation facilities they would like to see in Whiteland, participants responded that they would most like to see a splash pad (6 votes), followed by multi-use trails, nature exploration, and playground equipment (2 votes), and pickleball courts and an amphitheater (1 vote). Basketball courts, soccer fields, picnic shelters, and outdoor fitness received no votes at this event. Other recreation facilities, programs, and amenities participants would like to see include a Farmer's Market pavilion, safe walking paths across US 31, a bigger, better bark park, clear wayfinding signage, and more focus on amenities for neighborhoods.



Source: Context Design.



PUBLIC MEETING #1

The first public meeting was held on Wednesday, October 1st, 2025, at the Whiteland Town Hall from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. The meeting was held as part of a regular park board meeting, which occurs on the first Wednesday of every month, and was also available to the public virtually using Zoom. In advance of the meeting, several methods of advertising were used to actively invite members of the community to the meeting, including Instagram advertisements on September 12th, 22nd, and 26th, Facebook advertisements on September 12th, 22nd, and 26th, and October 1st, an article in the Local News Digital on September 18th, and an article in the Daily Journal on September 19th. Three members of the public attended the meeting, as well as a reporter from the Daily Journal, three parks board members, the Town Manager, and State Representative Michelle Davis.

Prior to opening the floor to the public meeting, the board ran through an approval of minutes, voucher packet information, financial reports, and old business. Maria Wainscott (Context Design) gave an overview of the past two meetings with the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee and introduced the

Parks Board and public meeting attendees to the purpose of and exercises for tonight's meeting.

The public meeting was held in an open house format and included three stations to provide feedback on what the Whiteland community finds most important for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, where future improvements should occur, and how the community could fund a park. Attendees were asked to leave a comment card with any additional comments at the sign-in table.

Station #1: What Do You Find Most Important?

Using the input gathered from the public and community stakeholders, Master Plan Committee members, existing conditions, benchmarking, and trend research, a series of goals were defined that focus efforts around four main themes: Parks and Recreation Department, System Building Blocks, Community Engagement, and Funding & Budgeting. To expand Whiteland's park and recreation opportunities, the Town must dedicate its resources to improvement areas that have the greatest impact. Prioritization provides decision makers with general recommendations on where to begin.

At “Station #1: What Do You Find Most Important?” participants were asked to use dots to vote on which goal they think is the most important for the Plan to achieve. Results were as follows:

- (3 Votes) System Building Blocks
- (2 Votes) Parks and Recreation Department
- (2 Votes) Community Engagement
- (1 Vote) Funding & Budgeting

After voting on the goal they thought was most important, participants were asked to vote on which strategy is the highest priority for each of the four goal statements. Results were as follows:

Goal #1: Parks and Recreation Department

- (6 Votes) Build Our Community
- (2 Votes) Establish a Staffing Structure
- (2 Votes) Educate Our Staff
- (1 Vote) Create a Preventative Maintenance (PM) Plan

Goal #2: System Building Blocks

- (4 Votes) Create a Flagship Community Park
- (2 Votes) Plan for a Well-Connected Trail System
- (2 Vote) Expand Our Facilities & Amenities
- (1 Vote) Protect Our Natural Resources

Goal #3: Community Engagement

- (3 Votes) Be Honest and Transparent
- (2 Votes) Expand Our Program Offerings
- (2 Votes) Create Connections
- (1 Vote) Promote Accessibility
- (0 Votes) Encourage Park Stewardship



Source: Context Design.



Source: Context-Design.



Source: Context Design.

Goal #4: Funding & Budgeting

- (5 Votes) Seek Alternative Funding Sources
- (1 Vote) Use Local Funding Sources
- (1 Vote) Manage Our Assets
- (0 Votes) Incorporate Cost Recovery
- (0 Votes) Manage Grant Lifecycles
- (0 Votes) Be Self-Sufficient

Station #2: Where Should Future Improvements Occur?

Specific, actionable steps are essential to implementing the goals and strategies of the Plan. Action steps fall into one of three categories: facilities, recreation programming, and management and operations. At "Station 2: Where Should Future Improvements Occur?" participants were asked to help identify locations for future parks and recreation improvements, such as new parks, trails, or other recreation facilities, and what type of improvements should be made. Locations and

improvements identified during this exercise include:

- Landmark Park – Consider the parcel at 410 S Sawmill Rd. behind the Brunnemer Ridge neighborhood for a future landmark park. The 94.30-acre parcel is currently owned by Home Farms, LLC.
- Landmark Park – Consider the two parcels at N 125 E behind the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation bus garage for a future landmark park and sports complex. The first parcel is 25.58 acres, while the second parcel is 32.76 acres. Both parcels are currently owned by the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation.
- Multi-Use Trail – Consider establishing a multi-use trail in the utility and riparian corridor easements from the Park Forest neighborhood along N Centerline Rd. to Whiteland Rd. Utilize the parcel currently owned by the Town of Whiteland behind the Briar Creek Estates Subdivision to expand the trail and provide additional amenities.

- Provide Shade Trees – Provide shade trees along the existing pedestrian path in the Saddlebrook Farms subdivision.
- Establish a Partnership – From strategic public-private partnerships with organizations like the St. Francis Soccer Club, who established a 5-field soccer complex in the Patch Development Whiteland Building 2 for youth soccer. The complex hosts approximately 500 attendees every weekend for youth soccer games.

Station 3: Let's Fund a Park!

When it comes to parks and recreation, funding is often “the elephant in the room.” Annual operating budgets are used to satisfy the fiscal needs of parks and recreation agencies, including operations and maintenance needs, programming, and capital improvements. While funding for parks and recreation agencies comes from a variety of sources, in the average agency, 63% of funding comes from the general fund tax support, while 20% comes from earned revenue, such as facility entrance fees, memberships, and low-cost recreation programs. While parks can be funded by grants, they nearly all require a match. These matches can be in the form of local support from the general fund, fundraising, volunteer days, and property donations.

At “Station 3: Let's Fund a Park!” participants were asked to pretend that a parks and recreation department has received a \$1,000,000 grant from a private agency. Since the pretend grant requires a 1:1 match, participants were asked how the agency should raise \$1,000,000 to match the grant.

As part of this exercise, a board describing how much parks and recreation facilities really cost was provided to give participants a better understanding of the financial impact of these improvements. Costs of a landmark park, aquatic park, neighborhood park, paved multi-use trails, and a small recreation center were provided, as well as costs of individual facilities, such as playgrounds, splash pads, an amphitheater, pickleball courts, basketball courts, and picnic shelters. Results of this exercise were as follows:

- Most participants (46.67%) voted that the bulk of the funding should come from fundraising opportunities.
- Some participants (33.33%) voted that a portion of the funding should come from property donations.
- Few participants (20%) voted that a small portion of the funding should come from the general fund tax support.
- No participants voted that any funding should come from volunteer days.



Source: (Bottom, Top) Whiteland Youth Baseball.



PUBLIC MEETING #2

The second and final public meeting for the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan was held on Thursday, March 27th, 2026, at the Whiteland Town Hall from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. In advance of the meeting, several methods of advertising were used to actively invite members of the community to the meeting, including Facebook and Instagram advertisements on March 18th, 25th, and 26th and articles in the Daily Journal on March 13th and 25th. Five members of the public attended the meeting, as well as a reporter from the Daily Journal, one parks board member, and the Town Manager. The purpose of the meeting was to share the results of the parks and recreation master planning efforts with the Whiteland community. The meeting focused on sharing the findings of the Plan and invited suggestions from the public on additional considerations.

Maria Wainscott (Context Design) and Jesse Lindenfeld (Context Design) introduced the meeting by providing an overview of the planning process and Plan organization. Following this presentation, the public meeting was held in an open house format and included four stations for attendees to visit, including Station 1: Planning Process and

Organization, Introduction, and Community Profile, Station 2: The Parks and Open Space System and Needs Analysis, Station 3: Priorities and Strategic Actions, and Station 4: Funding and Evaluation. Attendees were asked to leave a comment card with any additional comments at the sign-in table.

Station 1: Planning Process and Organization, Introduction, and Community Profile

Station 1: Planning Process and Organization, Introduction, and Community Profile included the following: (a) a description of why the Town of Whiteland is planning for parks, the planning process, and how the plan is organized; (b) an introductory snapshot to the planning area, which encompasses the incorporated area of the Town of Whiteland; and (c) An overview of the community profile.

The Town of Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the Town's first five-year parks and recreation master plan. Its purpose is to establish a blueprint for parks, trails, and open space in the Town 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. The

Source: Daily Journal / Leeann Doerflein.

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 planning process takes place over five phases, including orientation and programming, research and analysis, findings and visioning, planning strategies, and plan adoption.

Components of each phase include:

- **Orientation and Programming.** This phase includes project organization and scheduling, identification of key stakeholders, and gathering of all relevant documents.
- **Research and Analysis.** This phase includes the needs assessment, in inventory of existing facilities, amenities, and programs, the community profile, benchmarking, and trends.
- **Findings and Visioning.** This phase includes an analysis of key issues, ideas and themes and feedback from staff, key stakeholders, and the community.
- **Planning Strategies.** This phase includes a summary of findings, short and long-term strategies, and recommendations and action plan.
- **Plan Adoption.** This phase includes a review of the final plan with the staff, key stakeholders, and the community.

The Master Plan is organized into seven chapters, including Chapter 1: Introduction, Chapter 2: Community Profile, Chapter 3: Parks and Open Space System, Chapter 4: Needs Analysis, Chapter 5: Priorities and Strategic Actions, Chapter 6: Funding Sources, and Chapter 7: Evaluation.

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. Components of the community profile include demographics, the natural environment, and manmade, historical, and cultural features.

- **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.
- **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.



Source: (Bottom) Context Design, (Top) Daily Journal / Leeann Doerflein.

- **Manmade, Historical, and Cultural Features.** 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.

Station 2: The Parks and Open Space System and Needs Analysis

Station 2: The Parks and Open Space System included the following: (a) an overview of Whiteland's parks and open space system; and (b) an overview of the needs analysis, which was largely based on community engagement. 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. 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. The inventory of the parks and open space system has been divided into five categories: current park properties, trails, potential trails, town-owned properties, and potential park properties.

- **Current Park Properties.** Current park properties are parks that are owned and operated by the Town of Whiteland.
- **Trails.** Trails are those that are located within Whiteland and may be owned and operated by the Town or other providers.
- **Potential Trails.** Potential trails are those 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.** Town-owned properties are properties that are owned by the Town and have not formally been designed as park space but have been earmarked by the Town for future parks and recreation development.
- **Potential Park Properties.** Potential park properties are not owned by the Town but could be utilized for parks and open space in the future.

As primary users of the Town's parks and open space system, feedback from community members is essential to planning for the future of parks and open space in Whiteland. Community outreach for the Plan was conducted in a variety of ways, including a public input survey, a mobile display for community pop-up events, two public meetings, the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee, and the Whiteland Parks Board survey.

Station 3: Priorities and Strategic Actions

Station 3: Priorities and Strategic Actions included an overview of the components designed to facilitate active implementation and management of the Plan, including goals, strategies, and action steps.

- **Goals.** The goals provided in this Plan describe the desired outcomes, or ultimate destinations that Whiteland aims to reach.
- **Strategies.** The strategies provide a high-level roadmap of actions that define the "how" of the goal to be achieved.
- **Action Steps.** The action steps are the measurable, tactical actions that should be taken to implement the strategy.

The goals of the Plan fall into four categories, including parks and recreation department, system building blocks, community engagement, and funding and budgeting.

Station 4: Funding and Evaluation

Station 4: Funding and Evaluation including the following: (a) an overview of potential funding sources to implement the Plan's goals, strategies, and action steps, including municipal funds, commercial funds, and private funds; and (b) an overview of Plan evaluation, including the sample staffing structure and plan implementation. The Town 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.

Plan evaluation efforts hold the Whiteland Parks Department accountable for achieving the goals, strategies, and actions steps outlined in the Plan. The Plan must be evaluated at the end of each fiscal year to consider progress made, available, funding, and new or changing needs.

Community Feedback

During the meeting, attendees were invited to ask questions and provide feedback on the Plan. Feedback included:

- **Adapt to Funding Opportunities.** The Plan should be flexible to adapt to potential funding opportunities from private citizens and organizations. One member of the public suggested funding for an ice rink

- **Preserve Our Natural Resources.** Since most of Whiteland’s natural vegetation has been removed to make way for development and agriculture, it is critical that remaining woodland and other naturalized open spaces are preserved for natural habitat and passive recreation opportunities.
- **Make the Most of Potential Park Properties.** Potential park properties, including the Saddlebrook Farms North Subdivision Parcels, could become a flagship community park that attracts residents and visitors alike.
- **Use Cost Recovery.** Cost recovery allows agencies to charge fees for programming, facilities, or services to offset operational expenses, allowing agencies to recoup costs, improve financial stability, and expand their offerings. Look to precedent parks and open spaces in Johnson County and beyond, such as Freedom Springs in Greenwood and Grand Park in Westfield.
- **Advocate for Parks and Open Space.** When asked how to advocate for parks and open space and keep the momentum of the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan, it was suggested that participants attend town-sponsored events, public meetings, and town council and parks board meetings to share their thoughts. Attendees were also recommended to participate in public surveys.
- **Make Public Surveys Available to All.** To attract visitors outside of Whiteland, attendees suggested making the public surveys available to all. It was explained that the surveys are available to all, but participants are asked to indicate their town of residence.

Additional Online Feedback

Several community members who could not attend the final public meeting shared comments on Facebook requesting materials including the draft Plan, meeting minutes, and presentation boards. These materials were subsequently made available to the public on the Town of Whiteland website under the Parks and Recreation Department section. Additional public comments include:

- **Proposed Dog Park.** One member of the public proposed a dog park at the Saddlebrook Farms parcels adjacent to Town Hall and the Fire Station. This participant suggested separate fenced in areas for large and small dogs with benches for seating.



Source: (Bottom, Top) Daily Journal / Leeann Doerflein.

Draft Strategies

Place a vote in the "Yes" box if you think the strategy **FULFILLS** the goal criteria. Place a vote in the "No" box if you think the strategy **DOES NOT FULFILL** the goal criteria. Please provide additional feedback on a post-it note if you think an additional strategy should be considered.

WHITELAND PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Goal #1 Parks and Recreation Department

Establish a successful parks and recreation department with a strong organizational system that is capable of and committed to promoting community values and delivering high-quality parks, trails, and open spaces and recreation programming to the public.

STRATEGIES

Yes	No	
☐	☐	ESTABLISH A STAFFING STRUCTURE 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.
☐	☐	CREATE A PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE (PM) PLAN 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.
☐	☐	EDUCATE OUR STAFF Train future staff to promote a welcoming environment for all through effective and clear communication methods, disability awareness, family outreach, and continuous learning opportunities.

Feedback

Do you think a strategy is missing from the goal statement? Please provide additional feedback on a post-it note.

Draft Strategies

Place a vote in the "Yes" box if you think the strategy **FULFILLS** the goal criteria. Place a vote in the "No" box if you think the strategy **DOES NOT FULFILL** the goal criteria. Please provide additional feedback on a post-it note if you think an additional strategy should be considered.

WHITELAND PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Goal #2 System Building Blocks

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.

STRATEGIES

Yes	No	
☐	☐	CREATE A FLAGSHIP COMMUNITY PARK 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.
☐	☐	ESTABLISH A WELL-CONNECTED TRAIL SYSTEM Plan for trail connections that improve connectivity to community destinations, close gaps in the regional trail network, and provide community-for-community connections that foster active transportation opportunities.
☐	☐	EXPAND OUR FACILITIES AND AMENITIES 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.
☐	☐	PROTECT OUR NATURAL RESOURCES Collaborate with private landowners to protect and maintain our natural resources to conserve biodiversity and promote healthy ecosystems.

Feedback

Do you think a strategy is missing from the goal statement? Please provide additional feedback on a post-it note.

WHITELAND PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

In addition to the online public survey, community pop-up events, and the public meetings, the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee was established to help guide the direction of the Plan. Members of the Master Plan Committee help set a series of priority goals to inform a strategic action plan, or "to-do" list, that is backed by the Town's existing conditions and community input. These goals were used to help inform the creation of strategies and action steps that prioritize current and future park and recreation needs in Whiteland. Members of the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee include:

- Megan Cain
- Josh Henry
- Dale Gick
- Shane Stidham
- Dr. Tim Edsell

Committee Meeting #1

The first Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee Meeting was held on Tuesday, August 19th, 2025, at 1:00 PM at the Whiteland Town Hall. Dr. Tim Edsell, Dale Gick, and Whiteland Town Manager Carmen Young were present in person for the meeting, while Josh Henry and Shane Stidham attended the meeting virtually.

The meeting agenda included introductions, an overview of the Plan purpose, the role of the Committee, an overview of the draft goals and strategies, who this Plan will benefit, group exercises, and next steps. Group exercises included goal prioritization, draft strategies, and outcomes.

Goal Prioritization

Based on feedback from the Parks Board Survey (completed in May 2025) and preliminary results from the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey (July 11-August 15, 2025), a series of draft goals and strategies were pulled together by the consultant for review by the Committee. These draft goals and strategies are intended to provide a clear sense of direction for Whiteland's parks and recreation system. During the goal prioritization exercise, Committee members were asked to use the goal prioritization categories of rank, lifespan, capacity, and needs to determine what goals are the most important and urgent.

- Rank – Does this goal rank high in importance for Whiteland?
- Lifespan – Is this goal achievable over the lifespan of the Plan?
- Capacity – Is this goal achievable with Whiteland's current capacity?
- Needs – Does this goal meet current and future needs?

Using the criteria provided, Committee members were asked to place a green or red dot in the corresponding blue box, with green being most representative of the criteria provided and red being least representative of the criteria provided.

Draft Strategies

During the Draft Strategies exercise, Committee members were asked if the listed strategies meet the goal criteria for each of the Plan goals, placing a vote in the "yes" box if they think the strategy fulfills the goal criteria and placing a vote in the "note" box if they think the strategy does not fulfill the goal criteria. Committee members were asked to provide additional feedback if they think a strategy is missing from the goal statement.

Outcomes

During the Outcomes exercise, Committee members were asked what the best outcome for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan would be as related to the Whiteland Community. Committee feedback was as follows:

Active Plan

Committee members want a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that stays off the shelf and includes goals, strategies and action steps that are clear, achievable, and have built-in accountability.

Flexible Plan

Committee members want a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that is flexible and dynamic to ensure that it remains relevant to future conditions.

Funding Resources

Committee members want a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that provides multiple resources for future funding to support future improvements.

Community-Driven

Committee members want a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that is community-driven and reflective of the current and future wants and needs of residents.

Synopsis

Feedback from the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee consisted of rewording goals and strategies and including some additional strategies to clarify the goals. Funding was a “hot button” issue for the Committee, who was concerned with obtaining the funding needed to support future park facilities and recreation programming in the community.

Committee Meeting #2

The second Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee Meeting was held virtually on Friday, September 19th, 2025, at 1:00 PM on Microsoft Teams.

Dr. Tim Edsell, Whiteland Town Manager Carmen Young, and Shane Stidham attended the meeting. The meeting agenda included a recap of the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee Meeting #1, a review of the goals and strategies and survey results, group exercises, and next steps. Group exercises included, “What Steps Should We Take?” and “Let’s Fund a Park!”

Review – Survey Results

A brief overview of the public survey results was presented to the Committee. These efforts garnered a total of 238 responses, with a 100% completion rate. Most respondents spent approximately 5 minutes taking the survey, with few questions skipped in the process. In total, 83.61% of respondents are residents of Whiteland, while 13.87% lived outside of Whiteland, and 2.52% preferred not to answer. Respondents who live outside of Whiteland but still participated in the survey live in Indianapolis, Franklin, Bargersville, New Whiteland, Center Grove, Trafalgar, Needham, Greenwood, and Southport. Overall, results of the survey suggest a significant desire for more parks and recreation opportunities in Whiteland, with an emphasis on family-oriented facilities and programs.

What Steps Should We Take?

Using the input gathered from the public and community stakeholders, Master Plan Committee members, existing conditions, benchmarking, and trend research, a series of goals were defined that focus efforts around four common themes:

- Parks & Recreation Department
- System Building Blocks
- Community Engagement
- Funding & Budgeting

These goals focus on the specific topics identified as challenges, opportunities, and needs during the

Draft Strategies

Place a vote in the "Yes" box if you think the strategy **FULLFILLS** the goal criteria. Place a vote in the "No" box if you think the strategy **DOES NOT FULLFILL** the goal criteria. Please provide additional feedback on a post-it note if you think an additional strategy should be considered.

Goal #3

Funding & Budgeting

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

STRATEGIES

Yes

No

USE LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

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, and development impact fees.

MANAGE OUR ASSETS

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.

INCORPORATE COST-RECOVERY

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.

SEEK ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES

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.

Feedback

Do you think a strategy is missing from the goal statement? Please provide additional feedback on a post-it note.

Draft Strategies

Place a vote in the "Yes" box if you think the strategy **FULLFILLS** the goal criteria. Place a vote in the "No" box if you think the strategy **DOES NOT FULLFILL** the goal criteria. Please provide additional feedback on a post-it note if you think an additional strategy should be considered.

Goal #4

Community Engagement

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.

STRATEGIES

Yes

No

BE HONEST AND TRANSPARENT

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.

EXPAND OUR PROGRAM OFFERINGS

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.

CREATE CONNECTIONS

Improve the parks and recreation experience by partnering with like-minded local organizations that are having positive impacts on the Whiteland community.

PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY

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.

ENCOURAGE PARK STEWARDSHIP

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.

Feedback

Do you think a strategy is missing from the goal statement? Please provide additional feedback on a post-it note.

Source: Context Design.

Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan | Town of Whiteland, Indiana

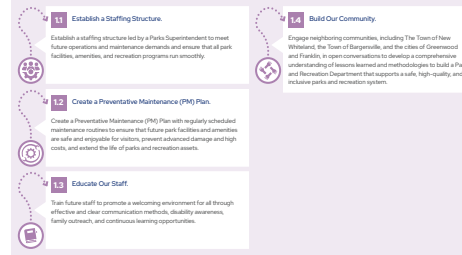
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The Whiteland Parks & Recreation Master Plan Committee Meeting #2 included an exercise called “What Steps Should We Take?” in which Committee members were asked for their ideas of potential action steps/recommendations for the Plan for each of the goals, including Parks & Recreation Department, System Building Blocks, Community Engagement, and Funding & Budgeting.

GOALS + STRATEGIES

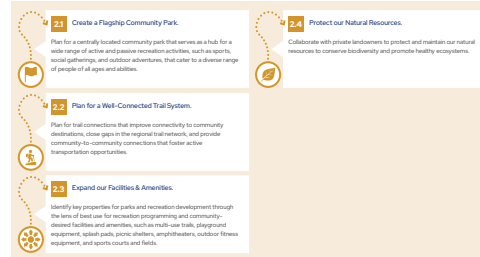
Parks & Recreation Department

Goal #1
Establish a successful parks and recreation department with a strong organizational system that is capable of and committed to promoting community values and delivering high-quality parks, trails, and open spaces and recreation programming to the public.



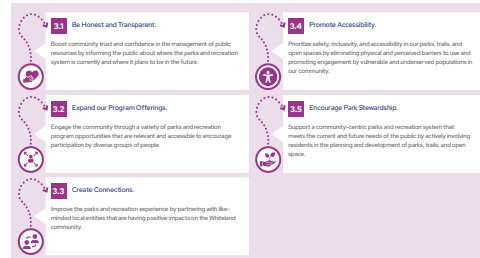
System Building Blocks

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.



Community Engagement

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.



community engagement process. While each of these goals is important on their own, they collectively represent a vision for the future of parks and recreation in Whiteland. These goals are intended to be flexible and serve as a check point for each of the strategies. The strategies serve as a high-level roadmap of actions that define the “how” of the goal to be achieved. These strategies offer solutions to target specific areas of the goal to help with future growth. Our next steps are to determine the action steps. Action steps are measurable, tactical actions that should be taken to implement the strategy.

During the “What Steps Should We Take?” group exercise, Committee members were asked for their ideas of potential action steps/recommendations for the Plan for each of the goals. The list of action steps/recommendations confirmed by or added during this exercise are included in the Priorities and Strategic Actions chapter of this Plan.

Let’s Fund a Park!

During the “Let’s Fund a Park!” group exercise, Committee members were asked to identify ways in which the Town of Whiteland could raise money for a 1:1 match for a grant. While parks can be founded by grants, they nearly all require a match. These matches can be in the form of local support from the general fund, fundraising, volunteer days, and property donations. Based on the idea that the Town of Whiteland has received a \$1,000,000 grant from a private agency to build a park, how should the Town raise \$1,000,000 to match the grant? Committee members responded with the following ideas:

- Only 10% of funds for the match should come from the general fund tax support.
- The largest percentage (50–60%) of funds for the match should come from fundraising opportunities, such as adopting a brick.
- A small percentage (10%–20%) of funds for the match should come from property
- A moderate percentage (20–30%) of funds should come from volunteer days.

WHITELAND PARKS BOARD

Feedback from the Whiteland Parks Board helped inform the goals, strategies, and action steps set forth in this Plan. As a newly formed Parks Board, members explored their responsibilities, opportunities, and vision for the future of parks and recreation in Whiteland to collectively be of the greatest service to Whiteland residents. The Whiteland Parks Board survey, which opened on Tuesday, May 20th, 2025, asked board members a series of questions on what they’d like to accomplish and where they see the Whiteland parks and recreation system in the future. Key points that came out of the survey process include:

- Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Create a parks and recreation master plan to help guide the future of parks in Whiteland.
- Flagship Community Park – Plan for a flagship community park to provide residents and visitors with the facilities, amenities, and recreation programs they desire.

Let's Fund a Park!

How Do We Fund a Park?

While parks can be founded by grants, they nearly **ALL** require a match. These matches can be in the form of local support from the general fund, fundraising, volunteer days, and property donations.

While funding for parks and recreation agencies comes from a variety of sources, in the average agency, **63% of funding comes from the general fund tax support, while 20% comes from earned revenue, such as facility entrance fees, memberships, and low-cost recreation programs.**

Imagine the Town of Whiteland has received a \$1,000,000 grant from a private agency to build a park. However, the grant requires a 1:1 match from the Town. *How should the Town raise the \$1,000,000 to match the grant?*



**General Fund
Tax Support**



**Fundraising
(i.e., adopt a brick)**



**Volunteer
Days**



**Property
Donations**

- Identification of Key Properties – Identify key properties for future parks and recreation development to improve community quality of life.
- Improve Connectivity – Plan for pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity between neighborhoods, parks, and open space to provide active transportation opportunities in Whiteland.
- Plan for Funding – Identify funding strategies and resources to help guide budgeting and capital improvements for future parks and recreation facilities, amenities, and programs.
- Engage Our Community – Plan for in-person and virtual public engagement opportunities, such as community events and online surveys, to connect with the Whiteland community at-large.
- Staff a Parks and Recreation Department – Support a fully-operational parks and recreation department with staff to oversee all parks and recreation facilities and programming in Whiteland.
- Find Community Partners – Establish partnerships with local organizations, such as the Clark-Pleasant Community School District, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), youth sports leagues, neighborhood groups, and aging councils.
- Cost Recovery – Evaluate opportunities for cost recovery, such as rental facilities and recreation programs, to support daily operations and maintenance costs and fund future capital improvements.
- Communicate with Neighboring Parks and Recreation Agencies – Reach out to neighboring parks and recreation agencies, such as the cities of Franklin and Greenwood, to get a better understanding of how they built their parks and recreation departments, and how they plan to move forward in the future.

COMMON THEMES

While responses from the public input survey, community pop-up events, the public meetings, the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee, and the Whiteland Parks Board Survey were analyzed separately, a few common themes emerged across the responses.

Whiteland needs more parks and open space.

The Town needs more parks and open space to improve community quality of life and support residents' physical, mental, and social wellbeing. A well-staffed parks and

recreation department is essential to achieving this and ensuring that daily operations and maintenance needs are met and run smoothly.

Whiteland needs a flagship community park with community-identified facilities and amenities.

The Town would benefit from the creation of a centrally located flagship community park to provide users with the facilities, amenities, and programs they desire. Facilities such as splash pads, multi-use paths, and playground equipment should be strongly considered in any future development that may occur.

Whiteland needs more active transportation opportunities.

The Town needs facilities and amenities that support active transportation opportunities, such as walking and biking, to improve connectivity.

Whiteland needs additional recreation programming opportunities

While residents enjoy the Town's current events, such as the Whiteland Farmer's Market, Trick or Treating at Town Hall, and Summer Fest, they are looking to the Town to expand its recreation program offerings with additional family-oriented festivals and events, music and cultural events, and fitness classes.

Whiteland should protect its natural resources.

Many Whiteland residents indicated a need for nature exploration. Protecting the Town's natural resources will play a key role in providing spaces and places for residents to explore while offering vital habitat for wildlife.

Residents are willing to spend money on parks and recreation.

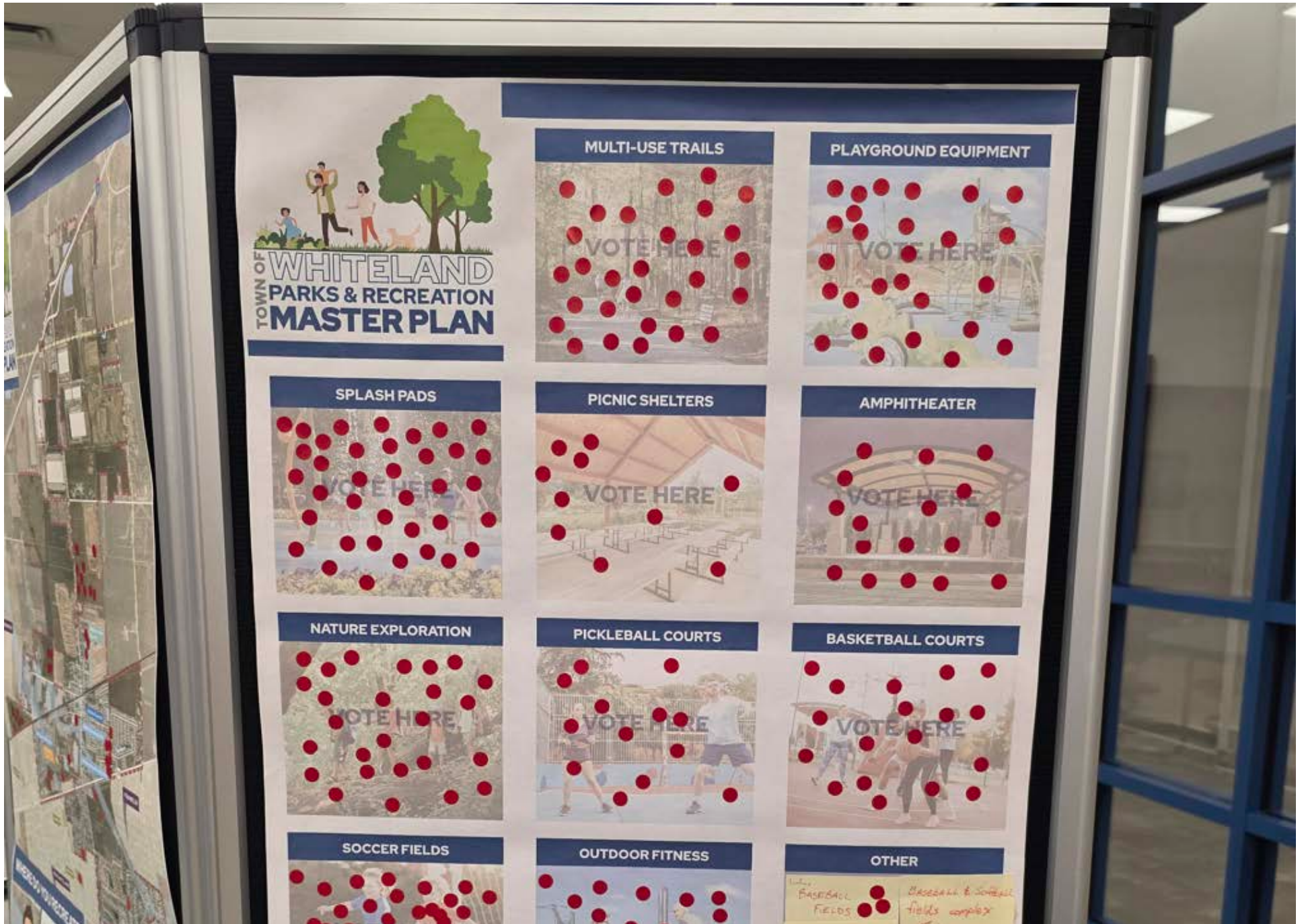
Whiteland residents are willing to spend money to support the facilities, amenities, and programs they desire. This willingness supports cost recovery, where facility rentals and recreation programs charge fees for use to help with revenue generation.

Whiteland needs alternative funding opportunities to support operations, maintenance, and capital improvement projects.

Exploring funding opportunities will be crucial to building a successful Parks and Recreation Department that can support daily operations and maintenance needs and fund future capital improvements.

Whiteland should offer public engagement opportunities that foster a positive environment and support the future of parks and recreation.

The Town should establish a public engagement environment where all residents, regardless of age, race, or ability, feel welcome to participate in the future of parks and recreation in Whiteland.



Existing & Emerging Trends

Analysis of existing and emerging trends found in parks and recreation agencies at national and regional levels reveal “industry norms” that can be used to inform decision-making and priorities for future investment for local agencies, including the Town of Whiteland.

The trends discussed in this section offer insights into the status of parks and open spaces in Whiteland relative to other government agencies nationwide by investigating how parks and recreation are being prioritized.

SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS

The increasing rate of severe weather events across the country is causing parks departments to plan and budget for “single event disasters and the long-term impacts of climate change¹.” According to the NRPA when discussing the top trends in parks and recreation in 2025, climate change is not relegated to the coasts. Events like excessive rainfall, drought, prolonged heat, air pollution, and wildfires can happen anywhere, and effects can be far-reaching. As seen from the Canadian Wildfires of 2023 and the Palisades Fire of 2025, visibility and air quality was impacted in large areas of the country¹.

The Town of Whiteland is no stranger to the impacts of severe weather events. On March 31, 2023, the Town took a direct hit from the severe weather and tornadoes that swept through Central Indiana. The southern portion of the Town sustained the greatest amount of damage from the EF-3 Tornado that touched down east of Whiteland Road, flattening numerous businesses and homes in its wake. In addition to downed powerlines and blocked roadways, approximately 130 properties were damaged in the storms, leaving many without homes and in need of emergency assistance².

In response to climate change, parks departments are prioritizing resiliency when planning future park facilities and expanding or renovating existing assets. These efforts impact material choice, design and engineering considerations, and placement of new parks to ensure that park infrastructure is flood resistant and can withstand extreme weather conditions. At the operational level, programming changes that account for the impacts of rising temperatures and severe weather events, such as flexible recreation programs with weather contingency plans to ensure the safety of participants, are gaining popularity.

Regarding emergency preparedness, the recent rise in severe weather events is making the role that parks and recreation agencies play more important than ever. In fact, according to the 2025 NRPA publication *Emergency Preparedness and Response in Parks and Recreation*, “Most park and recreation agencies (85%) are highly involved with preparing for and responding to natural disasters – particularly those related to severe weather³.” While parks and recreation professionals may not be the first to come to mind when it comes to first responders, partnerships with other government departments and local area risk management agencies to address weather emergencies are helping parks and recreation departments plan for emergency response and support their communities in their times of greatest need³.

FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Due to limited funding opportunities, parks and recreation departments nationwide are facing financial constraints. Local governments are making tough decisions when it comes to budgeting for public services, and often, parks and recreation programs get the short end of the stick.

Local governments receive most of their funding from property and sales tax, which they use to support their parks and recreation departments. According to the NRPA in their 2020 report *Park and Recreation Agency-Foundation Relationships: Partnering for the Future*, "The majority of the nation's more than 10,000 parks and recreation agencies rely on taxpayer support and generated revenue (e.g., registration fees, sponsorships and concessions) as their primary funding sources⁴." In fact, according to the 2025 *NPRA Agency Performance Review*, on average, 63% of available funds come from general fund tax support and appropriations and 20% come from earned revenue. The remaining 17% of funding on average comes from special taxes and levies which are approved by voters, operating grants from public agencies, and sponsorships including in-kind donations or private operating grants/donations⁵.

As a result, parks and recreation agencies are particularly susceptible to economic downturns, which contribute to "park closures, program cancellations, employee layoffs and furloughs, and significant stress on park staff and resources⁶." As a recent example, these effects were experienced by many communities throughout the pandemic, which radically reduced the tax-related funding sources of parks due to massive economic disruptions. These types of unforeseen challenges underscore the need for proactive and strategic decision-making with respect to park and recreation finances, investments, and budgeting.

While the methodology and goals for generating revenue can differ between park agencies, trends show that parks departments are turning to sustainable investment models to ensure that parks and open spaces stay accessible and operational in challenging fiscal environments. Alternative funding sources at the public, commercial, and private levels should be considered to support ongoing operations and maintenance needs and future capital improvements. These types of investment models prioritize lessening reliance on authorities or general fund tax support as a main source of funding. Examples of sustainable investment models include:

- **User Fees** – Low-cost recreation programs and facility entrance and/or rental fees can serve as an important source of funding to cover regular maintenance and operations costs and program supplies.



Source: Adobe Stock.



- **Non-Resident Fees** – For non-residents whose tax dollars do not support the Town, low-cost non-resident fees for parks and recreation programs and facilities can help close the financial gap.
- **Public/Private Partnerships** – Partnerships with local companies and community organizations can offer additional investment opportunities for parks and recreation agencies looking to expand their offerings. These partnerships foster strong relationships with community stakeholders and enable the Department to make improvements without spending its own resources.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Public parks and open spaces are linked to the health and well-being of people within communities, with access and proximity to parks and open spaces having been identified as a significant contributing factor to overall community health⁷. According to the 2023 Trust for Public Land report *The Power of Parks to Promote Public Health: A Special Report*, only a quarter of American adults are currently meeting

the US. Department of Health and Human Services Guidance of getting 150 minutes of moderate exercise and two days of muscle strengthening per week⁸. Parks and open spaces offer an ideal venue for physical activity, with exposure to and interaction with parks enabling visitors to improve health outcomes and combat chronic conditions such as high blood pressure and obesity.

In addition to physical health improvements, research has shown that parks and natural areas reduce stress, anxiety, and depression in visitors. According to the NRPA in their factsheet *Parks and Improved Mental Health and Quality of Life*, it was found that, “People living more than 1 kilometer away from a green space have nearly 50 percent higher odds of experiencing stress than those living less than 300 meters from a green space. Respondents who do not report stress have more than 50 percent higher odds of visiting a green space at least a few days a week than those reporting stress. Results have also showed that the more often respondents visited green spaces, the less stress they experienced⁹.”



Beyond park facilities, recreation programming can encourage healthful habits through group-based fitness activities that involve exercise. These programs help bring people together and motivate them to achieve their fitness goals in a supportive, no-stress group setting.

ENHANCED SAFETY MEASURES

Physical and perceived safety are major priorities for park visitors, and parks and recreation departments are investing in enhanced safety measures to foster a welcoming environment, inspire more usage, and encourage healthier and more energetic communities. Overall, park visitors, particularly women, are more likely to use parks and open spaces if they feel safe and secure in their surroundings. In the 2024 publication *A Study on the Impact of Public Parks on Community Health* by Ojonugwa Emmanuel, it was found that, “Women are often more inclined to engage in outdoor activities in a community that has a positive reputation for safety¹⁰.”

While proximity to parks is important, without proper management, parks and green spaces can become a “dis-amenity” to communities and seen as unsafe. People are more inclined to visit parks with a law enforcement

presence and safety amenities, such as good lighting, clear sightlines, video surveillance, a comprehensive wayfinding signage system, and facilities that are functional and well-maintained.

Environmental design plays a crucial role in the safety and perceived safety of parks and open spaces. According to the International Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Association, this multi-disciplinary approach uses design to “reduce victimization, deter offender decisions that precede criminal acts, and build a sense of community among inhabitants¹¹.” While intricate security systems and devoted personnel may not be possible for smaller parks departments, the use of smart design decisions can reduce the impact of crime on public spaces.





CHANGING AND EVOLVING INTERESTS

Outdoor recreation is becoming increasingly popular amongst Hoosiers. In fact, it has a bigger impact on Indiana's economy than that of any other Midwest state, ranking 12th nationwide in 2023 for total value added from outdoor recreation activities¹². That same year, an estimated \$15.7 billion was generated by people participating in outdoor activities, accounting for 3.2% of Indiana's GDP and 3.2% of the state's total employment with 105,078 jobs¹².

There are two different categories of outdoor recreation, including consumptive resource-based activities and non-consumptive resource-based activities. Consumptive resource-based activities are those that use a natural resource, making it unavailable for future use. These may include activities such as hunting and trapping, fishing, and foraging. Nonconsumptive resource-based activities involve observing or appreciating natural resources without depleting them. These may include activities such as birdwatching, camping, swimming, and nature photography. Since 2023, the interest in nonconsumptive natural-resource-based recreation has grown, while the demand for consumptive resource-based activities, while still popular, is decreasing¹³.

Hoosiers are seeking more active transportation opportunities, such as walking and biking. According to the Indiana Department of Transportation's (INDOT) *Active Transportation Plan and Survey*, which includes more than 2,500 responses from participants statewide, respondents were very interested in trail usage and development¹⁴. Compared to the 1989 SCORP survey listing "Pleasure Driving" as a number two interest statewide, today's Hoosiers are looking for active transportation options. Active transportation relies on infrastructure such as paths, sidewalks, and trails, to be successful. Walking, running, and jogging continue to be the most popular activity statewide, and INDOT's plan confirms a growing change of interest in modes of transportation.

AGING POPULATION

According to 2023 ACS and 2000 Census Data, the population of Whiteland is aging. There are far fewer children and young adults under 15 and far more people over the age of 55. This correlates with age trends for Indiana at large, with the median age rising from 36.4 in 2010 to 37.7 in 2017 estimates, according to the SCORP. For Whiteland, the aging population is likely due to an influx of middle-aged workers as well as slower population growth, as well as general improvements in healthcare and elder health.

Across the country, senior (65+) participation in outdoor recreation has grown by 7.4%, according to the *2025 Outdoor Participation Trends Report*, with Core (regular) participation increasing by 4.2%. This participation has doubled over the past decade, "driven by health and lifestyle factors¹⁵." Seniors looking to stay physically and mentally fit



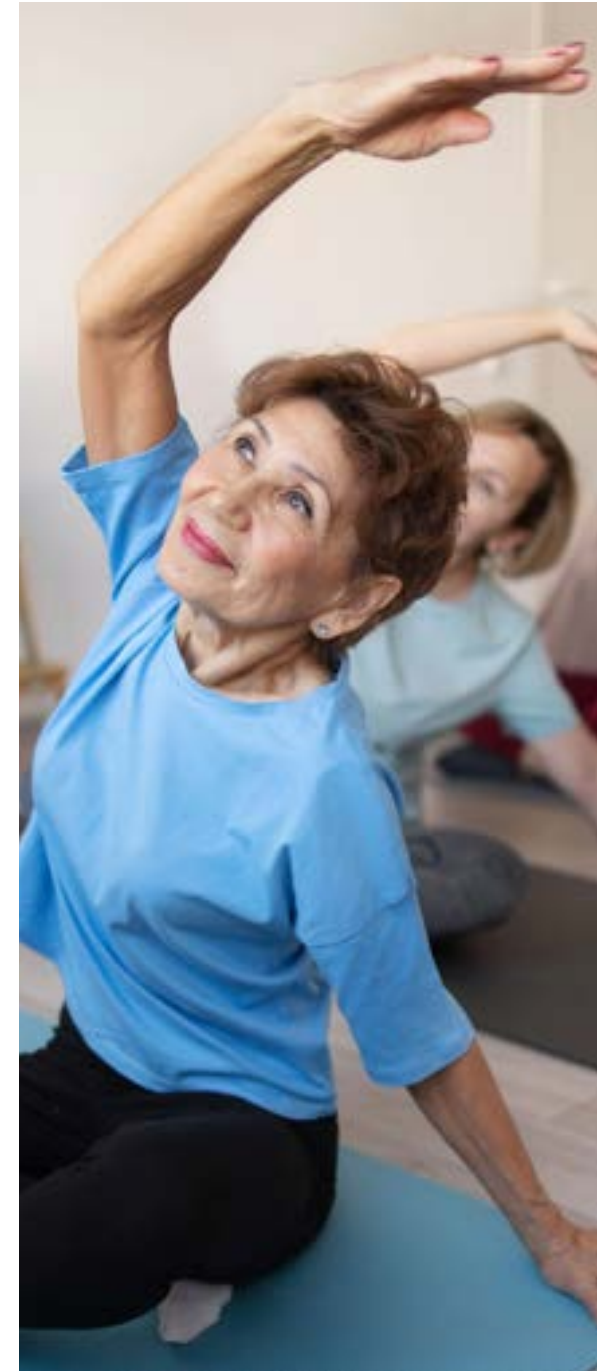
are looking to community parks and open spaces for opportunities to engage in outdoor activities. In fact, a 2023 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Pulse Poll found that, “Ninety-two percent of U.S. adults look to their local park and recreation agency to provide activities and opportunities to older adults in their community¹⁶.” Low-impact activities favored by older adults include walking and hiking, birdwatching and nature observation, water-based activities such as aerobics and swimming, and educational opportunities such as classes and workshops.

One of the most popular outdoor activities for seniors is pickleball, which is America’s fastest growing sport. Pickleball, which gained popularity over the course of the pandemic, is a cross between tennis, badminton, and ping-pong and can be played as a singles or doubles game. It is considered a low-impact way to be physically active, and while it takes some coordination to play, it isn’t difficult to learn and is easier on the joints. The 2022 Sports & Fitness Industry Report found that, “more than half (52%) of core players – those who play eight or more times a year – are 55 or older, and almost a third (32.7%) are 65-plus¹⁷.”

NEED FOR SOCIAL SERVICES

The pandemic exacerbated many existing societal issues, such as food insecurity, social and community engagement, employment, education, and health care access. While the acute effects are gone, the chronic effects are still impactful. These issues are often amplified in rural regions where, “resource deserts abound in view of the rural-urban disparities in resource and service availability¹⁸.”

When it comes to social services, parks and recreation agencies play a crucial role in providing facilities, amenities, and programming that promote community cohesion, encourage education and cultural exchange, and promote physical and mental health. Through shared experiences, such as community programs and events, parks help bring people from different backgrounds, cultures, and walks of life together. These structured opportunities help foster a sense of belonging and connectedness.



Source: (Bottom) Professional Physical Therapy, (Middle) Cerebral Palsy Resource, (Top) Canuck Place Children's Hospice.



Source: Good Earth Plants.

NEED FOR INCLUSIVE AMENITIES AND PROGRAMS

The need for inclusive and adaptive services is growing, particularly in Whiteland, where the larger-than-average disabled population is making this trend even more pertinent. Therapeutic Recreation (TR) programs, such as inclusive athletics, aquatics, and recreation programming, are keys to success for a community. According to the National Council for Therapeutic Recreation Certification (NCTRC), "Recreational Therapy, also known as therapeutic recreation, is a systematic process that utilizes recreation and other activity-based interventions to address the assessed needs of individuals with illnesses and/or disabling conditions, as a means to psychological health, recovery, and well-being¹⁹."

When it comes to developing future facilities and programs, parks and recreation agencies nationwide are taking a more holistic approach. These agencies have a shared goal of getting residents active and engaged with their communities. Parks play an important role in establishing a more inclusive environment by providing places for people of all ages and abilities to take advantage of facilities and program offerings. New amenities are adaptive and accessible by people from different backgrounds and incorporate reasonable accommodations for those with disabilities.

SOCIAL EQUITY

In recent years, there has been an increased understanding of the importance of parks and recreation spaces to engage with social and environmental justice issues, including those found in the planning, distribution, use, and access of parks and open spaces. According to the Prevention Institute, "Park equity is the fair and just distribution of parks and green spaces, such that all communities have access to these health-promoting resources²⁰." To



this end, parks and recreation agencies are seeking to establish a proactive, strategic framework that aims to close the gaps in access by distributing and investing in park resources in a way that engages their diverse community members.

Equity-based planning efforts investigate historical allocations of park resources to understand which communities are or have been under-invested in and meet the evolving needs of community members. Research finds that these planning efforts provide practical information for communities that help address the impacts of unfair patterns of under-investment and create more accessible public spaces. Using parks as a champion for equity and inclusion can be conducted in many ways, including:

- Collecting measurable data to gauge the physical benefits of parks to the overall health and wellbeing of users²¹;
- Engaging the community through groups, meetings and partnerships with local organizations to get a better understanding of what's important²¹; and

- Conducting an inventory of the quantity, quality, and location of parks and their amenities²¹;

These characteristics provide valuable insights into the current performance of parks and recreation agencies when it comes to social equity and helps identify opportunities for improvement.



Maintenance Needs/Cost Analysis

Capital improvements, including new parks, trails, and recreation facilities, are at the forefront of most community members' minds when it comes to what is needed in the Town of Whiteland. However, with capital improvements comes significant, long-term operations and maintenance commitments that must be followed to keep parks and their facilities safe and usable by all. After all, adding upgrades isn't a one-time expense; it creates ongoing responsibilities, and failure to maintain these facilities can lead to accelerated deterioration and higher rehabilitation costs over time.

According to the 2025 NRPA Report for Whiteland, parks and recreation agencies in the upper quartile of respondents spent around \$22,000 per acre of parkland while agencies in the lower quartile spent around \$2,700 per acre of parkland. In comparison, Whiteland spent just \$667 per acre of parkland. This gap in the upper and lower quartiles may be attributed to communities with amenity-heavy parks systems with lots of maintenance, such as public pools or large trail systems.

In general, it costs more for operations and maintenance in small cities of less than 250,000²², likely due to economies of scale. 54% of the expenses that encompass operations and maintenance are personnel costs, while 38% is devoted to operation costs. Capital costs not included in capital improvement plans and other costs account for 6% and 2% of costs, respectively²².

The calculations on the next page assume Whiteland's expenses to be on the lower end of the range given by the NRPA. Personnel and operation costs are separated for a property-by-property estimate, including a total personnel estimate based off the total acreage of Whiteland's parks and the length of the Whiteland High School Trail.

It is important to note that these calculations assume a relatively equal number of amenities will exist on each site, something that is not true today as the Briar Creek Subdivision Parcel has no amenities. It is also important to note that these numbers can shift depending on the type of development that occurs onsite. If the Briar Creek Subdivision Parcel becomes a low-impact prairie conservation area, the cost would be drastically lower than that of a playground. In general, the costs outlined on the following page likely represent the realities of bringing a system that has had sparse maintenance into good shape.



Source: Town of Whiteland

COST ANALYSIS: SYSTEM-WIDE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE (O&M) COSTS

- Total system acreage (23.6 acres) @ \$4,000 per acre = **\$94,400**
- Total trail length (1.75 mi) @ \$700 per mile²³ = **\$1,225**
- Total System-Wide O&M Costs = **\$95,625**



This number includes all costs **BESIDES** capital improvements that Whiteland Parks and Recreation can expect to see in a year.

COST ANALYSIS: STAFFING VS. OPERATIONS VS. MISC COSTS

- According to the NRPA, personnel accounts for 54% of O&M costs.
- 54% of \$95,625 = **\$51,637.50**
- According to the NRPA, -perations account for 38% of O&M costs.
- 38% of \$95,625 = **\$36,337.50**

OPERATIONS COSTS PER ACRE OF PARK-OWNED PROPERTY

- $\$36,337.50 / 23.6 \text{ acres} =$ **\$1,539.70 per acre**
- According to the NRPA, unplanned capital costs and miscellaneous expenses account for 8% of O&M costs. 8% of \$95,625 = **\$7,650.00**



This number can be useful for determining maintenance obligations with potential park properties

COST ANALYSIS: K9 VADER BARK PARK

- 1.5 acres = **\$2,310**
- Due to the specialized equipment in the dog park, assume that **\$7,650.00** of miscellaneous expenses will go to the K9 Vader Bark Park

COST ANALYSIS: WHITELAND HIGH SCHOOL TRAIL

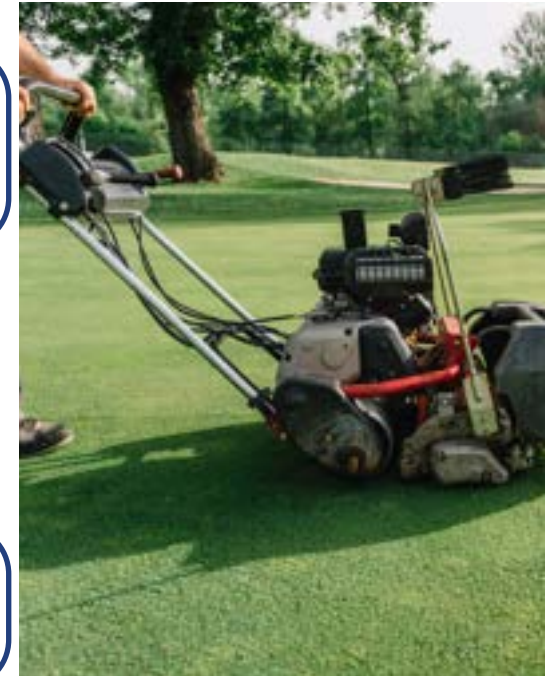
- Total trail length (1.75 mi) @ \$700 per mile = **\$1,225**

COST ANALYSIS: SADDLEBROOK FARMS

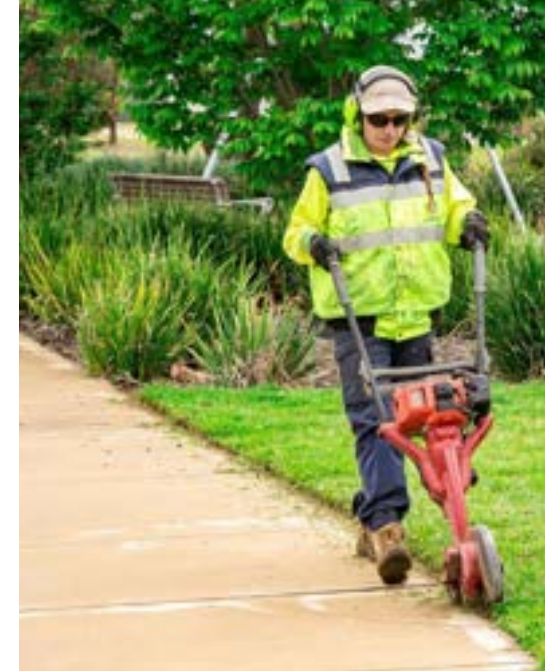
- 11.8 acres = **\$18,170**

COST ANALYSIS: BRIAR CREEK (ASSUMING DEVELOPED INTO PARK)

10.3 acres = **\$15,860**



Source: Adobe Stock



Source: Shepertown City Council

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Priorities & Strategic Actions

5

Grassy Cree

A Vision for Progress

The Town of Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan establishes a framework to help guide investment in parks and recreation facilities, amenities, and programming over the next five years. The intent of the Plan is to provide a clear sense of direction for Whiteland's parks and recreation system through a series of combined goals and strategies and a strategic action plan, or "to-do" list. Achieving the goals and strategies set forth in this plan will require focus and accountability. To this end, the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan serves to facilitate active implementation and management through the following:

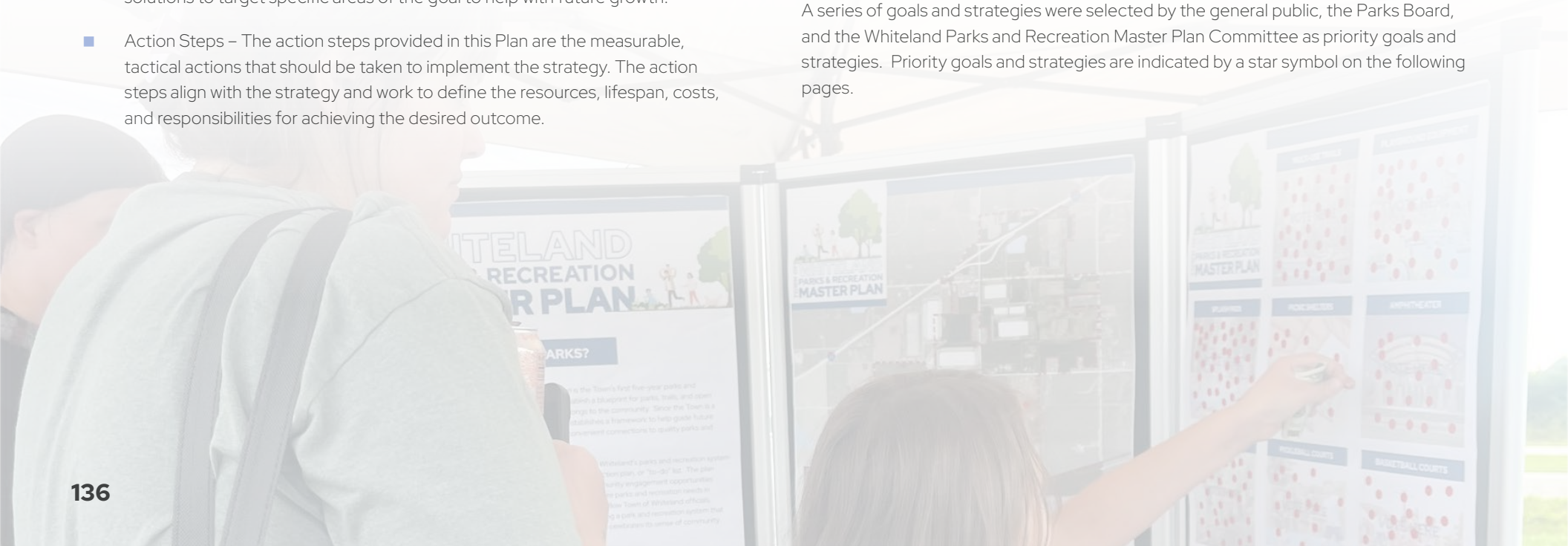
- **Goals** – The goals provided in this Plan describe the desired outcomes, or ultimate destinations that Whiteland aims to reach. These goals are intended to help the Town be well-positioned to make strategic investments in parks and recreation over the next five years.
- **Strategies** – The strategies provided in this Plan provide a high-level roadmap of actions that define the "how" of the goal to be achieved. These strategies offer solutions to target specific areas of the goal to help with future growth.
- **Action Steps** – The action steps provided in this Plan are the measurable, tactical actions that should be taken to implement the strategy. The action steps align with the strategy and work to define the resources, lifespan, costs, and responsibilities for achieving the desired outcome.

Using the input gathered from the public and community stakeholders, Master Plan Committee members, existing conditions, benchmarking, and trend research, a series of goals were defined that focus efforts around four common themes:

- Parks and Recreation Department
- System Building Blocks
- Community Engagement
- Funding & Budgeting

These goals focus on the topics identified as specific challenges, opportunities, and needs during the community engagement process. While each of these goals is important on their own, they collectively represent a vision for the future of parks and recreation in Whiteland. These goals are intended to be flexible and serve as a check point for each of the strategies listed herein.

A series of goals and strategies were selected by the general public, the Parks Board, and the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee as priority goals and strategies. Priority goals and strategies are indicated by a star symbol on the following pages.





Source: Town of Whiteland.

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.



1.1 Establish a Staffing Structure.

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.



1.2 Create a Preventative Maintenance (PM) Plan.

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.



1.3 Educate Our Staff.

Train future staff to promote a welcoming environment for all through effective and clear communication methods, disability awareness, family outreach, and continuous learning opportunities.



1.4 Build Our Community.

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.



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.



2.1 Plan for a Flagship Community Park.

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.



2.2 Plan for a Well-Connected Trail System.

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.



2.3 Expand our Facilities & Amenities.

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.



2.4 Protect our Natural Resources.

Collaborate with private landowners to protect and maintain our natural resources to conserve biodiversity and promote healthy ecosystems.

Community Engagement

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.



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.



4.1 Use Local Funding Sources.

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.



4.2 Manage Our Assets

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.



4.3 Incorporate Cost Recovery.

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.



4.4 Seek Alternative Funding Sources.

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.

 **Priority Strategy**



4.5 Manage Grant Lifecycles.

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.



4.6 Be Self-Sufficient.

Aim for operational self-sufficiency through program fees, sponsorships, and strategic cost-recovery projects that are backed by the community at large.

Action Steps

For the Town of Whiteland's Parks and Recreation Master Plan to be a success, it needs a realistic action plan rooted in the Plan's goals and strategies that is achievable using projected future funding and partnership resources. The action steps listed in this Plan are prioritized for achievement over the next five years.

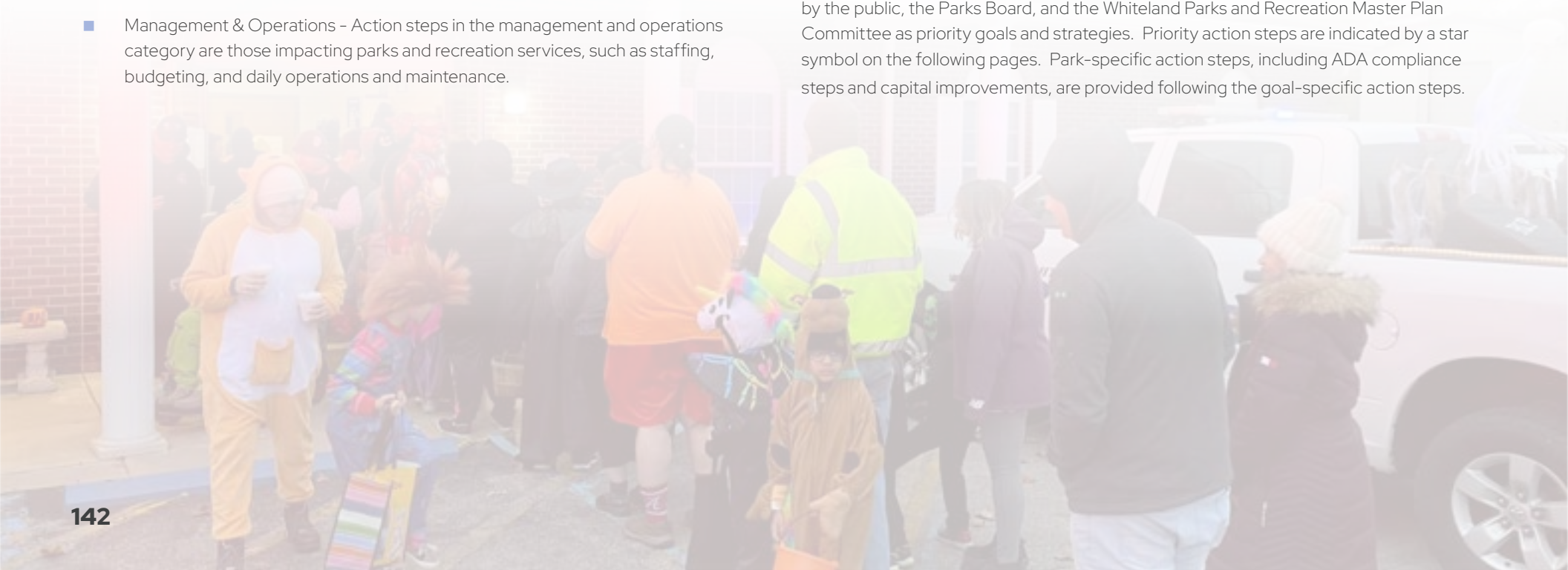
Action steps fall into one of three categories: facilities, recreation programming, and management and operations.

- Facilities - Action steps in the facilities category include additions or improvements to parks and open space, multi-use trails, and special use facilities such as community centers and youth sports complexes.
- Recreation Programming - Action steps in the recreation programming category include additions or improvements to recreation programs, such as family-oriented festivals and events, music and cultural events, fitness classes, and nature education programs.
- Management & Operations - Action steps in the management and operations category are those impacting parks and recreation services, such as staffing, budgeting, and daily operations and maintenance.

Each action step includes the following information:

- The Action
- Category
- Lifespan
- Cost
- Funding Strategies, including a combination of local funding sources and other funding sources such as grants and public-private partnerships
- Responsibility (who's responsible for completing this task?)

Action steps are numbered with the corresponding goal and strategy. They are organized into the following tables by goal. A series of action steps were selected by the public, the Parks Board, and the Whiteland Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee as priority goals and strategies. Priority action steps are indicated by a star symbol on the following pages. Park-specific action steps, including ADA compliance steps and capital improvements, are provided following the goal-specific action steps.



Goal #1: Parks & Recreation Department



Priority Action Step

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 reinforceable 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



Priority Action Step

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 (CPSC)
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 (CPCSC), 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

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

Goal #4: Funding & Budgeting



Priority Action Step

THE ACTION		CATEGORY	LIFESPAN	COST	FUNDING STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
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

Park Specific Action Steps

IMPROVEMENT TYPE	THE ACTION	PARK	LIFESPAN	COST	FUNDING STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
ADA	Pave the existing gravel lot with asphalt and provide an accessible sidewalk with an ADA-compliant pedestrian ramp to the dog park and gazebo. Connect to the sidewalk along the northern boundary of the Briar Creek Villas subdivision.	K9 Vader Bark Park	Years 1-5	\$45,000 - \$55,000	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
Capital Improvement	Upgrade the existing dog park challenge equipment with new dog agility equipment and provide enhanced site furnishings, including seating, wayfinding signage, and waste receptacle upgrades.	K9 Vader Bark Park	Years 1-5	\$15,000 - \$25,000	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
Capital Improvement	Plant trees throughout the park, including in fenced dog areas and along pathways, to provide shade and comfort for visitors. Incorporate shrubs and perennials at the park entrance to improve aesthetics and welcome visitors to the park.	K9 Vader Bark Park	Years 1-5	\$0 - \$10,000 (Donation?)	Municipal Funds + Private Funds +	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
ADA	Install ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps and crosswalks at all street crossing locations. Repair asphalt and regrade the trail in frequently flooded areas. Install a post curb at flush conditions.	Whiteland High School Trail	Years 1-5	\$40,000 - \$50,000	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator/ Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation
Capital Improvement	Install trail lighting in poorly-lit areas along the eastern half of the trail and provide consistent wayfinding signage throughout.	Whiteland High School Trail	Years 1-5	\$260,000	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator/ Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation

Park Specific Action Steps

IMPROVEMENT TYPE	THE ACTION	PARK	LIFESPAN	COST	FUNDING STRATEGY	RESPONSIBILITY
ADA	Install new engineered wood fiber mulch or playground safety surfacing at the playground. Provide ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps from the parking lot, and strip and sign existing parking spaces for ADA compliance.	Saddlebrook Farms Playground	Years 1-5	\$20,000 - \$40,000	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
ADA	Install universally accessible playground equipment with ramps, accessible platforms, and transfer stations to make it usable by all.	Saddlebrook Farms Playground	Years 1-10	\$100,000 - \$150,000	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
Capital Improvement	Provide enhanced playground amenities, including a shade sail, wayfinding signage, seating, and waste receptacle upgrades.	Saddlebrook Farms Playground	Years 1-5	\$10,000 - \$20,000	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
Capital Improvement	Provide shade trees along the existing pedestrian pathway and at the playground.	Saddlebrook Farms Playground	Years 1-5	\$0 - \$10,000 (Donation?)	Municipal Funds + Private Funds +	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
Capital Improvement	Restore the naturally occurring meadow and successional woodland areas using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies to mechanically and chemically remove these species, followed by re-seeding and ongoing monitoring to ensure the successful establishment of native plants.	Briar Creek Estates Subdivision Parcel	Years 1-5	\$10,000 - \$20,000	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator
Capital Improvement	Install paved loop trail around the naturally occurring meadow. Include concrete pads for site furnishings, such as benches and waste receptacles.	Briar Creek Estates Subdivision Parcel	Years 1-10	\$20,000 - \$30,000	Municipal Funds + Private Funds	Future Parks Superintendent / Future Grant Administrator



Funding Sources

6



Overview

When it comes to parks and recreation, funding and budgeting is often seen as “the elephant in the room.” Annual operating budgets are used to satisfy the fiscal needs of parks and recreation agencies, including operations and maintenance needs, programming, and capital improvements. While the demand for parks is higher than ever, parks and recreation departments nationwide are facing steep budget cuts that are having a detrimental impact on their abilities to provide quality parks and open spaces for their communities.

Since the pandemic, while some cities invested more in their parks systems, much of that funding was capital spending supplemented by federal pandemic relief programs, including the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. While grants and funding programs support the development of new parks, limited municipal budgets and a lack of sustained funding for ongoing maintenance and operations are forcing parks to delay long-term care needs.

Legislative actions, including the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), provide much-needed maintenance for facilities and infrastructure in national parks, forests, wildlife refuges, recreation areas, and Tribal schools through the Legacy Restoration Fund (LRF), authorizing up to \$1.6 billion annually for five years to fund deferred maintenance needs in these areas. In addition, the fund provides permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) at \$900 million annually to fund recreation projects on public lands, protect watersheds and wildlife and preserve

ecosystem benefits for local communities. However, the LRF is set to expire at the end of September, and while the LWCF was permanently authorized, it does not guarantee that the \$900 million put into the LWCF account each year will be spent on conservation, resulting in funding shortages¹.

When it comes to annual budgets, parks and recreation departments are the first to see cuts. Compared to public services like education, law enforcement, and emergency services, parks are often perceived by the public as being “non-essential.” Furthermore, there is a common misconception that parks are “self-sufficient,” relying on charitable donations and user fees alone to operate and fund capital improvements. Unfortunately, this statement couldn’t be further from the truth.

According to the 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review, while funding for parks and recreation agencies comes from a variety of sources, in the average agency, 63% of funding comes from the general fund tax support, while 20% comes from earned revenue, such as facility entrance fees, memberships, and low-cost recreation programs². In an era where parks and recreation departments are expected to do more with less, park leaders are turning to alternative funding strategies to deliver high quality parks and recreation offerings to their communities. Successful implementation of the Plan’s goals, strategies, and action steps will require the use of various funding mechanisms, including municipal funds, commercial funds, and private funds.

In the average agency, 63% of funding comes from the general fund tax support, while 20% comes from earned revenue.

Municipal Funds

Municipal funds, or local funds, are essential to supporting a successful park and recreation system. They are the primary funding source for daily operations and maintenance needs, recreation programming, and future capital improvements. Municipal funding strategies include general funds, non-reverting funds, development impact fees, bonds, TIFs, and special taxes/assessments.



\$ General Fund

Parks and recreation departments often rely on general funds to pay for most capital, operating, and programming expenses. The general fund, which 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. Stiff competition for funding between parks and recreation agencies and other public services, such as education, law enforcement, and emergency services, has resulted in smaller budgets for communities nationwide over the past several years, including Whiteland.

According to the City Parks Alliance, "Parks and recreation departments are often the first to have their budgets slashed and the last to see them increased³." To ensure consistent, stable funding for parks and recreation, parks agencies should establish a strong, organized network of park advocates and partnerships with nonprofits at the local and regional levels.

\$ Non-Reverting Funds

Non-reverting funds are special accounts created to capture revenues received by parks and recreation departments outside of general funds from tax revenues, such as cost recovery fees, for the purpose of maintaining, operating, or developing new park facilities and amenities. Non-reverting funds allow the remaining balance from these fees at the end of the year to roll over to the next fiscal year. These funds must be created by special ordinance and can only be terminated by another ordinance.





\$ 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 roadways, schools, and parks. When it comes to parks, development impact fees require new developments to pay for their proportionate share of the capital costs of new park and recreation infrastructure necessary to serve the needs of the community⁴.

Development impact fees are typically determined through negotiations for developer contributions and can be calculated in two ways: the inductive method, and the deductive method. The inductive method uses the capacity of a facility to calculate the cost of expanding infrastructure as new development takes place, while the deductive method calculates specific costs derived from the additional demand that population growth and/or new development will place on existing infrastructure systems based on the amount and type of development. Both methods require the issuing jurisdiction to conduct a “rational nexus” test to demonstrate that the amount of the impact fee is equivalent to the new infrastructure provided by the fee⁴.

While development impact fees can be beneficial, the direct costs of establishing a legally sound fee can be a burden for some communities. The complex technical analysis required to establish a fee requires resources that many local governments don’t offer or have access to. Further, the ongoing administration needed to collect, monitor, and maintain these fees can take a toll on municipalities already strapped for funds. Despite these considerations, development impact fees remain a great resource for communities to recover costs and fund future parks and recreation projects.





Bonds

Bonds are a type of debt issued by local governments to raise large amounts of money upfront to fund large projects. These debts are repaid over a fixed term by tax revenues or monies from the general fund. There are two different types of municipal bonds that can be issued by local governments to fund public parks: general obligation (GO) bonds and revenue bonds.



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. Rather than collateral, 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 and will repay the interest and principal on the debt through taxes on residents. There are two different types of GO bonds, including limited tax general obligation (LTGO) bonds and unlimited tax general obligation (UTGO) bonds.

Limited Tax General Obligation (LTGO) Bonds

According to the Municipal Research and Services Center of Washington (MRSC), LTGO bonds, or non-voted debt, are issued via a vote of the legislative body and do not require approval by voters. Since voters aren't asked to approve a tax increase to pay for the principal and interest, existing revenue sources from the general fund must be pledged to pay for the debt on the LTGO bond⁵.

Unlimited Tax General Obligation (UTGO) Bonds

UTGO bonds, or voted debt, can only be used for capital improvements and require approval from at least 60% of voters, with a voter turnout equal to at least 40% of those who voted in the most recent general election. Per the MRSC, "When the voters are being asked to approve the issuance of these bonds, they are simultaneously asked to approve an excess levy which raises their property taxes to cover the debt service payments⁵."

Revenue Bonds

Revenue bonds are issued to fund projects for any undertaking that is self-supporting. Payments for revenue bonds come from user fees generated by the facility that is being built and are collected by the local government. Since revenue bonds aren't backed by the credit and taxing power of the local government, they are often seen as less secure, with higher interest rates than those of general obligation bonds⁵.

While revenue bonds are rarely used for parks and are typically reserved for projects that generate their own revenue streams, such as storm and wastewater systems, they may be used in cases where a park project has a specific revenue-generating component, such as a community recreation center. Before considering a revenue bond, parks and recreation agencies should conduct a feasibility study to determine if the project can generate enough revenue to cover both operating costs and bond debt⁵.



Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

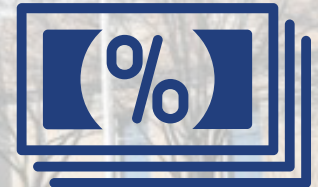
Tax increment financing (TIF) can be used by local governments to fund facility and infrastructure improvements, such as parks. According to the Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), TIF relies on the future increase in property tax revenue in a specific geographic area, known as a TIF district, to fund public projects. TIF is used in areas with potential for growth or redevelopment that wouldn't be possible without public assistance. In a TIF district, property tax values are frozen at the time of establishment, setting the base assessed value. When new development occurs and property values increase, resulting in the incremental assessed value, the property taxes generated from this increment can be collected and used by local governments to pay for public improvements⁶.

The City of Westfield, IN is using a TIF district to pay for its Grand Park Sports Campus, a 400+ acre youth sports complex with 31 multi-purpose fields, 26 diamonds, and a 377,000-square-foot Events Center with 3 full-size synthetic fields, office space, and a full-serve restaurant bar. In addition to youth sports, Grand Park is home to the Indianapolis Colts Training Camp, the Pacers Athletic Center, Wright's 360, and Pro X Athlete Development. The complex, which opened in 2014, was billed as an economic development tool to help the city diversify its tax base. According to the Indianapolis Business Journal (IBJ), "The TIF district encompassing Grand Park – The Grand Junction Economic Development Area – covers 2,200 acres, and since Grand Park opened, developers have constructed projects there valued at more than \$105 million, according to the city⁷."

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. Examples of special taxes and assessments include tourism taxes, food and beverage taxes, and improvement districts.

Special taxes were particularly effective in the development of Lebanon's Farmers Bank Fieldhouse, a 200,000-square-foot athletic facility in Lebanon, IN that offers youth sports amenities including 8 basketball courts, 12 pickleball courts, 1 turf field, and pitching and hitting tunnels. The fieldhouse anchors the Hickory Junction campus, which also includes a residential community with luxury apartments. According to the Youth Sports Business Report, the \$25 million Youth Sports Complex, which will be financed over 25 years by property taxes, innkeepers' taxes, and food and beverage taxes, serves as a model for sustainable municipal sports facility investment in Indiana. Today, the facility, which opened in 2024, attracts an estimated 60,000 monthly visitors⁸.



Commercial Funds

Commercial funding mechanisms offer alternative funding streams to help close the funding gap between annual operating budgets and the needs of parks and recreation agencies to create and maintain park facilities. While there are a vast variety of commercial funding opportunities, a few include grants, public/private partnerships (PPPs), and cost recovery.



Grants

Park grants are one-time financial awards given to support parks and recreation improvements without the need for repayment. Grants are offered at the federal and state levels and by private entities.



State and Federal Grants

Federal Grants for local parks and recreation projects, administered through state grant agencies, include the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program. The only grant program currently offered by the State of Indiana is the Indiana Trails Program (ITP).

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), administered by the National Park Service, is intended to help renovate and develop outdoor recreation sites and facilities to promote statewide recreation planning. According to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), "The LWCF is a matching assistance program that provides grants up to 50% of the cost for the acquisition and/or development of outdoor recreation sites and facilities". LWCF grants require local match sources, which may be a combination of appropriations, bond issues, force account labor, and donations of land, cash, labor, materials, or equipment. Other federal funding sources cannot be used to pay for the local share of the project.

Grant applications can be used to fund land acquisition and facility construction or renovation at existing parks, as well as new parks on land controlled by the park board through direct ownership. To be eligible for an LWCF grant, applicants must have a local park and recreation board, a current local Park and Recreation Master Plan, and matching funds at the time of application. Grant applications were not accepted during the writing of this Plan⁹.



Grants

Park grants are one-time financial awards given to support parks and recreation improvements without the need for repayment. Grants are offered at the federal and state levels and by private entities.



Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program

According to the National Park Service (NPS), the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) is a national grant program that provides funding to expand park and recreation opportunities in rural and urban communities that lack access to nearby recreation areas where the population is greater than 25,000 residents. The program, managed by the NPS and funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), offers a dollar-for-dollar match of up to 50% of all project costs payable using local match sources. The next round of the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grants (OLRP) was paused during the writing of this Plan¹⁰.

Indiana Trails Program (ITP)

The Indiana Trails Program (ITP) is a biennium grant program that is intended to help support the development of trails throughout the state of Indiana. The program, which uses state funds to connect users to outdoor recreation opportunities through active transportation corridors, can be used to fund projects that can be completed within four years. Projects can provide public access to trails through the construction of trails, bridges, and boardwalk crossings, the development of trailheads and trail amenities, and the acquisition of easement or property for trails.

While the program provides up to 80% reimbursement for projects, up to the maximum grant award amount, applicants must have at least 20% of the total project cost available at the time of application. Local governments and not-for-profit organizations with a commitment to providing public outdoor recreation opportunities are eligible to apply. The next ITP application round will be in the spring of 2028¹¹.

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, which are typically more flexible than state and federal grants and have less bureaucratic requirements, are often focused on causes aligned with the organization's values. A few organizations with private grant opportunities available during the writing of this Plan include:

- The Lilly Endowment Inc.
- Johnson County Community Foundation (JCCF) Annual Grants Program
- Republic Bank Grants – Republic Bank Grants by the Republic Bank Foundation Inc.



Public/Private Partnerships (PPPs)

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.



Outsourcing

Outsourcing low-skilled maintenance and operations activities to private companies, such as mowing, snow removal, and concessions, is one way for public agencies to manage and operate specific services. Private agencies are often capable of offering labor cost savings to parks and recreation departments, freeing salaries and saving staff time for other services¹².

Public-Sector Leasing

Public-sector leasing allows parks and recreation agencies to leverage their land to stimulate private investment. In this model, the private agency funds the creation of/improvements to park facilities in exchange for gross revenues for a fixed period, a portion of which is shared with the department¹².

One example of public-sector leasing is Go Ape, a zipline and treetop adventure company which works with public parks across the country. GoApe pays 100% of the investment and requires no money from its public partners. A portion of each ticket sale goes directly back to its public park partners. A GoApe "Treetop Adventure" is located on the west side of Indianapolis inside Eagle Creek Park.

Leaseback From the Private Sector

Leaseback from the Private Sector in parks and recreation typically falls under one of two methods: build-operate-transfer (BOT) or build and transfer (BT). BOT, used to finance large infrastructure projects developed through private-public partnerships, relies on a private partner to finance, design, construct, and operate a park or park improvements, with the goal of earning a profit. After that time, the park is returned to the parks and recreation department¹².

BT also relies on a private partner to finance, design, and construct a park or park improvements, but the partner's responsibility ends with the construction of the facility. While both methods require the public agency to lease the facility for a set period, the BOT method requires the partner to maintain and renovate the facility for the duration of the lease, which is appealing for many communities¹².



\$ Cost Recovery

Cost Recovery policies are being used by parks and recreation agencies across the country to help establish appropriate fees in exchange for services provided. 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 to maximize their value and promote stewardship.

To evaluate cost recovery, agencies must evaluate the full cost of services provided, including the direct costs of service and a proportionate share of the indirect costs of service. Direct costs of service include the labor, services, and supplies required to complete the activity, while indirect costs of service include the maintenance, management, and oversight associated with the activity. A cost recovery percentage is used to calculate the full cost of services, with recovery tiers ranging from 0% for facilities and services that are provided entirely for community benefit, to 100% for facilities and services that are exclusively for individual benefit.

While cost recovery models allow for parks and recreation departments to generate annual revenue from fees, they can impede access to those experiencing poverty or lacking expendable income. These factors should be considered prior to establishing fees.

Private Funds



\$ A Philanthropic Approach to Funding

Private funds take a philanthropic approach to fill gaps in public 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. While it is most common in urban environments where park groups are well-established, private funding is expanding to more rural communities where endowments, trust funds, and legacy gifts are being established.

While private sources can be part of the funding solution, they shouldn’t be considered a stable source of funding. According to Resources for the Future’s senior fellow and director of the Climate Risks and Resilience Program, private funding has some drawbacks that can impact the financial longevity of parks departments, including the “free rider” problem, uncertain funding patterns, crowding out, fundraising costs, and inequalities¹³.

- “Free Rider” Problem – The “free rider” problem occurs when people rely on donors to pay for parks and recreation expense and contribute nothing themselves¹³.
- Uncertain Funding Patterns – Private funding is unpredictable. Donors may choose to donate for some years, and not others. In park systems relying primarily on private funding for their annual budgets, this means that park administrators may not have enough funds to cover operations and maintenance needs each year¹³.
- Crowding Out – Crowding out is like the “free rider” problem. In crowding out, municipal funding decreases out of expectation that the private source will cover park expenses¹³.
- Fundraising Costs – Fundraising is expensive. No matter which way you look at it, it takes money to raise money, and expenses spent on fundraising activities takes money away from park facilities and services¹³.
- Inequalities – Since private donors often give sizable contributions, they have a significant say in what get funded. In some cases, this can result in greater disparities between parks in wealthy neighborhoods versus parks in areas facing poverty¹³.

The Future of Funding

How Should Whiteland Move Forward?

Over the past several years, the Town's annual budget for parks and recreation has varied between \$1,000 and \$40,000. The Town 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, including municipal funds, commercial funds, and private funds, funding for Whiteland will likely require a combination of these funding strategies to achieve financial stability. While this Plan provides information on a variety of funding resources, it is not all-encompassing and is intended as a starting point. As Whiteland's parks and recreation system continues to grow, it is essential that it explores additional funding resources within the region. Parks become an integral mechanism for the recruitment and development of new community members, strengthening the local economy and social fabric of the Town of Whiteland.



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Evaluation

7



Plan Implementation

This Plan serves as a adaptive toolkit for the newly formed parks board to use moving forward as an interface between the Parks and Recreation Department and the community it serves.

Evaluation of Action Steps

When evaluating the completion of action steps, it is essential to measure progress using standardized metrics that are easily transferable across plans. As the population in Whiteland continues to grow, metrics become essential in identifying underserved areas, untapped markets, and superfluous services.

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. It is important to complete these reviews more than once per fiscal year due to an ever-changing economic, social, and political climate. These quarterly meetings provide a format to “tweak” action steps to best fit Whiteland’s trajectory, though formal plan amendments should take place in accordance with the policies and procedures of IDNR.

Similar to the goals of a performance review one would complete for their job, the goal of these quarterly reviews is to be a format for being responsive to the current needs of the community these parks serve, taking into account both the successes and failures of the department.

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. This review should focus on the progress of current projects and funding status, with input from the future Parks Foundation. A Capital Improvements Review differs from the Action Steps Review as it focuses on project specifics rather than system-wide concerns.

Quarterly Action Steps Review Example Format*

■ Department Introduction

- * Commendable achievements
- * Program participation
- * Park openings, dedications, or groundbreakings
- * Special event overview
- * Employee achievements

■ Project Progress

- * Construction updates
- * Master plan updates & changes
- * Grant, funding, & acquisition updates
- * New programming & marketing updates

■ Department Data

- * Revenue Summary
- * Memberships, program participation, & rental information
- * Comparative summary from previous year quarter

■ Maintenance & service concerns

- * Park condition concerns
- * Emergent service trends & concerns
- * Safety concerns

■ Next Action Steps

■ Questions & Comments

**Full template located in the Appendix*

Capital Improvements Review Example Format*

- **Overview of completed capital projects**
 - * Community feedback
 - * Major Maintenance concerns (Minor concerns should be reported in quarterly review)
- **Overview of current capital projects**
 - * Project introduction
 - * Project schedule & status
 - * Project issues or concerns
 - * Next steps
- **Overview of future capital projects**
 - * Feasibility Study coordination
 - * Review of selected design firms, contractors, architects, recreation specialists, etc.
 - * Future project prioritization
- **Next Action Steps**
- **Questions & Comments**

**Full template located in the Appendix*

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. This review is separate from feasibility studies, however, and should focus more on the mechanisms for the funding, construction, and maintenance of capital improvements.

In addition to planning and discussing new projects, successes, failures, and lessons learned from current and past projects should also be shared. Maintenance, programming, and safety concerns should be discussed in an open format, with designation of parks and town facilities to address these concerns.

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. The meetings should be held by the Future Parks Superintendent and include team members from each division, including Planning and Finance, Operations, Recreation, and Social Communications.

Plan Updates

Based on the previously described reviews, the future Parks Superintendent should familiarize themselves with the Master Plan action steps after each review, marking off completed goals and action steps and making necessary adjustments as discussed in these reviews. This Plan should be updated regularly and kept on the Town's website for public viewing.

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. This feedback will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to adjust any improvements or actions moving forward.

Maintenance Review Example Format*

- **Current Maintenance Concerns**
 - * Major maintenance concerns (immediate action required)
 - * Minor maintenance concerns
- **Current Tasks**
 - * High-level tasks for each division
- **Management Check-In**
- **Questions & Comments**

**Full template located in the Appendix*

Staffing Structure Example

The structure shown below can act as a “roadmap” as the Parks and Recreation Department grows. It must remain flexible to the needs of Whiteland, and unforeseen circumstances can impact how this structure acts. As the Department evolves, this chart should be updated with the names and contact information of employees, Park Board members, and the Parks Superintendent. It should be made available to the public for viewing.



Plan Evaluation

The action plan should be re-evaluated at the end of each fiscal year, considering progress made, available funding, and new or changing needs.

Annual Review

Utilizing the previously mentioned quarterly, annual, and ongoing reviews, 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. This ability to pivot quickly based on current socio-economic, political, and ecological conditions will serve Whiteland and allow the Parks and Recreation Department to provide high-quality, pertinent, and custom-fit solutions for the community.

With this in mind, it is also understood that large-scale changes, growths, or setbacks could change the priorities of the Master Plan. When this occurs, it is essential to document these changes and remain eligible for grants and funding by making a formal plan amendment. This amendment must be submitted to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Outdoor Recreation.

Formal Amendments

Per the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), formal Plan amendments are only required if they involve projects proposed in grant applications requiring a five-year master plan. Projects not originally included in the Plan should be added by a plan amendment. Policies and procedures for submitting plan amendments are outlined by the DNR on their website at <https://www.in.gov/dnr/state-parks/recreation/planning/park-planning-information-and-guidelines/>.



Source: The Whiteland Wonders Mural / Joythe Stampede.

