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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In March 2020, the City of Lawrence kicked off a 10-month planning process to update their parks and recreational master plan. The primary goal of the 2020 City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to ensure the city's recreational system meets the quality of life, health, and accessibility needs of its residents and visitors, as well as ensuring the city is planning and prioritizing its resources and improvements in an effective manner. This purpose is complementary to the mission of the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department that also focuses on improving quality of life through:

- Providing quality parks and recreation experiences;
- Being good stewards of the open space, natural resources, and parkland; and
- Providing quality facilities and programs for parks and recreation users and consumers.

The following chapter is intended to outline the purpose and benefits of park planning. It outlines park facilities, defines the planning area as the city boundary, and discusses both the operations and organizational structures of the parks and recreation board, department, and community partners.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN?

The creation of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan is intended to serve as a guiding document that will reflect the community's future goals for both its park facilities and recreational needs. The 2020 City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Master Plan analyzes the current inventory of park facilities within the community and evaluates both their condition and effective usage. Future projects and facility maintenance can then be prioritized accordingly, with responsible parties, outlined action steps, and very clearly identified funding sources.

Additionally, having an updated parks and recreation master plan gives the community the ability to apply for funding from state agencies. This funding often comes in the form of grants, giving the community a significant (if temporary) boost in their spending capacity. This gives communities the ability to pursue projects normally outside of their means.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION?

Parks and recreation facilities are low-cost community amenities that help define a community's identity, facilitate community health, and act as a positive economic catalyst for nearby properties. As a direct connection with the natural environment, park and recreation facilities provide a break from the indoor environment.

Long-term health benefits have also been proven to stem from the usage of recreation facilities. Examples of these health benefits include: reduced risk of obesity, lower stress levels, improved interpersonal relationships, improved mental health, and the formation of beneficial health and wellness habits.

Parks and recreation are one of the primary engagers of children and youth, both in leisure time and structured sports programs. A facilitator of social interaction, park programs offer an opportunity for youth to fully engage themselves with others and enjoy recreational activities without worry or restraint. The formation of competitions and leagues also offer adult users a healthy outlet for rivalries with friends, family, and colleagues.

Well-maintained park and recreation facilities have a measured impact on surrounding properties, often increasing home values by several percent with a noted increase in desirability by prospective buyers. Neighborhoods with notable and high-amenity park facilities are often formed into districts focused on the parks, with funding often set aside to invest in this identity.

Finally, parks are economic drivers. A report from the National Recreation and Parks Association in 2017 found that US parks contribute \$166 billion in economic activity, with the Indiana figure being \$1.08 billion. These figures do not include the economic benefits resulting from improved health and wellness, visitor spending, and community image. In a 2019 area development survey, 80% of corporate executives rated quality of life features as an important factor when choosing a location for a headquarters, factory, or other company facility.

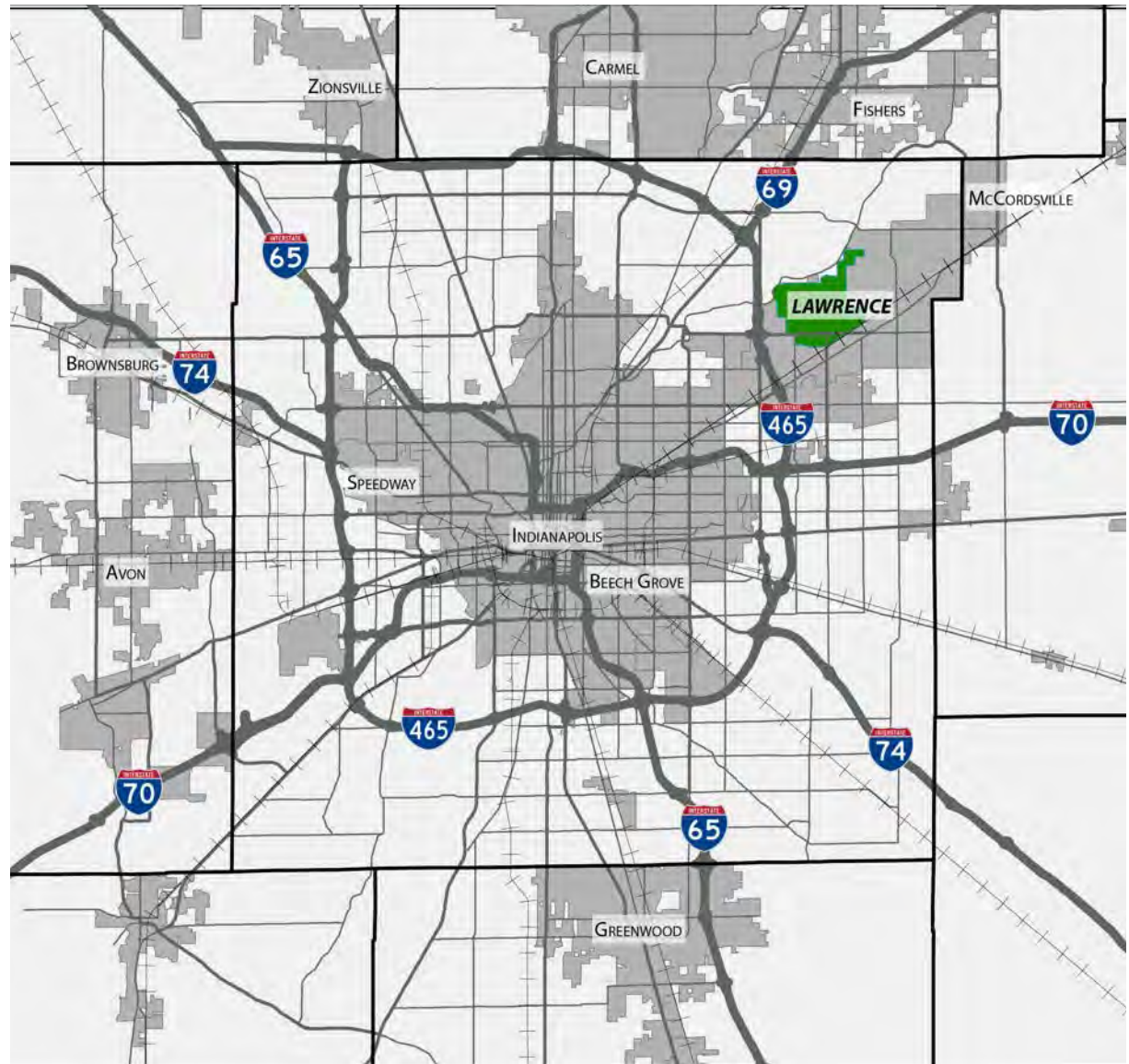


WHERE IS THE CITY OF LAWRENCE LOCATED?

The City of Lawrence is an independent municipality located in the northeast of Marion County, Indiana. Surrounded on all sides by Marion County with the exception of its eastern border with McCordsville, the city is boxed in with communities on all sides. Dominated primarily by built-out urban subdivisions and the large woodland that is Fort Harrison State Park, only a small portion of Lawrence's southeast remains as undeveloped farmland.

The relatively affluent City of Fishers is located to the northwest, with the City of Indianapolis sharing a border both to the west and south. To the east, the City of McCordsville remains largely undeveloped, leaving much of the land east of Lawrence comprised of small farming communities and expansive farmland.

In terms of transportation, the city is fairly accessible with Interstate 465 running north/south along the west portion of the city limits. There are two interchange ramps; one located at East 56th Street and one located at US 36/Pendleton Pike. US 36 runs diagonally through the city, making connectivity from Indianapolis and McCordsville easy. Furthermore, Interstate 70 is located just south of Lawrence, which provides a direction to the eastern portion of the state and connects to Interstate 65 in Indianapolis.



SYSTEM OVERVIEW

270	TOTAL ACRES OF PARKLAND
1.5	ACRES OF WATER
5.5	ACRES PER 1000 RESIDENTS
10	CITY-OWNED PARK LOCATIONS
56	SPORT FACILITIES
8	TRAIL MILES
8	PLAYGROUNDS
5	PARTNER PROGRAMS
1	STATE PARK
1	CITY-OWNED COMMUNITY CENTER

WHAT DOES PARKS AND RECREATION LOOK LIKE IN LAWRENCE?

The City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department manages and maintains 270 acres of parkland through the city. Each parks and recreational facility serves its own unique purpose and offers users different amenities. While some facilities may only offer passive recreational opportunities such as open space, other facilities provide active recreational opportunities such as sports fields or designated hiking trails. Most of the total acreage is spread across 10 park facilities including:

- Explorer Park
- Richardt (Soccer) Park
- Lawrence Community Park
- Alexander Park (Charney)
- Eugene Burns Park
- Lee Road Park
- Bragdon Wetlands Park
- Louis J. Jenn Memorial Park
- Oaklandon Play Park
- Veterans Park

In addition to parkland, the parks and recreation department manages and maintains 7.9 miles of trail connections. Furthermore, a key component to the regional park system is Fort Harrison State Park and Fall Creek Park. While not owned or operated by the city, the state park offers 1,700 acres of additional parks and open space.

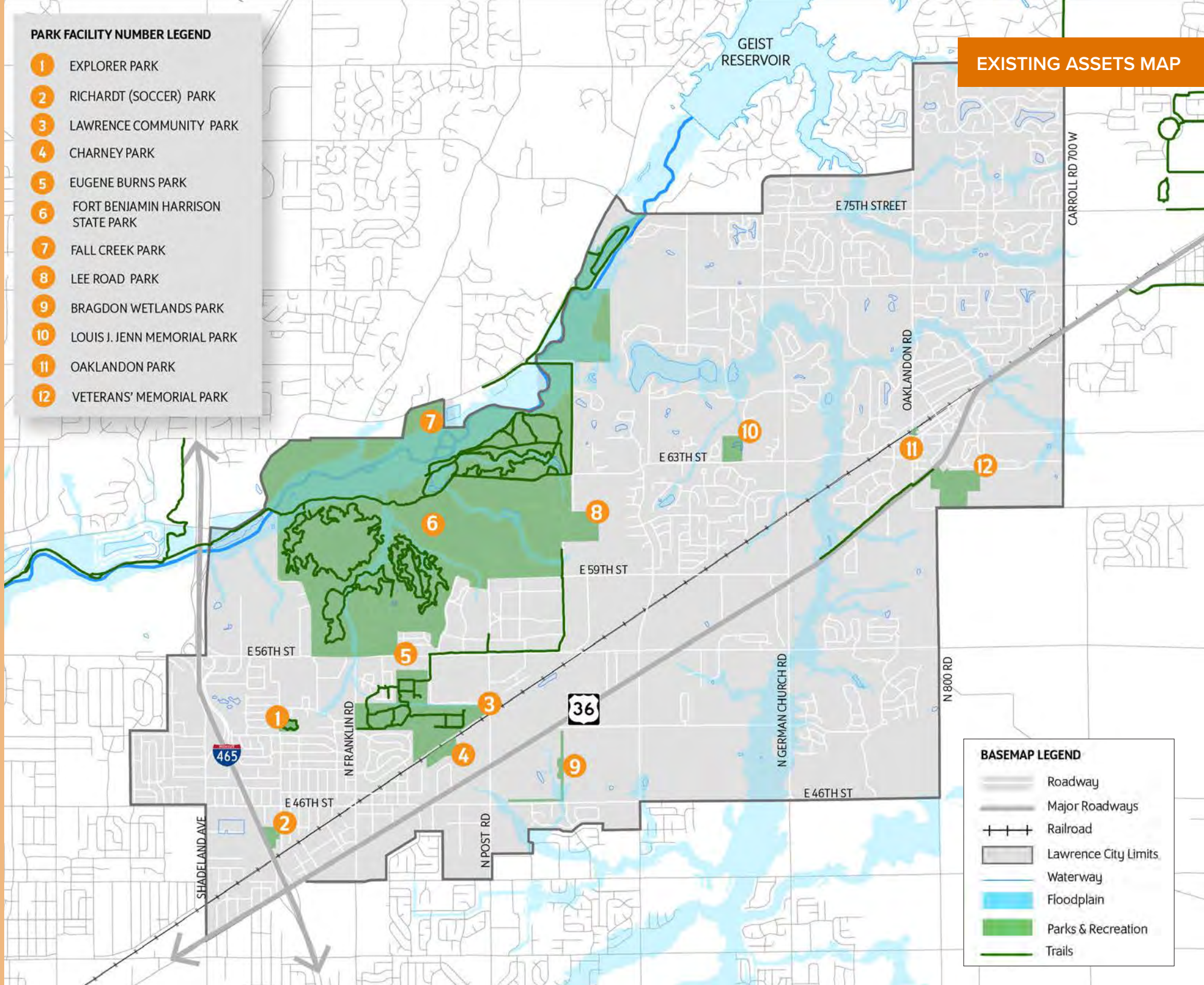
Department of Parks and Recreation

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PARK FACILITY NUMBER LEGEND

- 1 EXPLORER PARK
- 2 RICHARDT (SOCCER) PARK
- 3 LAWRENCE COMMUNITY PARK
- 4 CHARNEY PARK
- 5 EUGENE BURNS PARK
- 6 FORT BENJAMIN HARRISON STATE PARK
- 7 FALL CREEK PARK
- 8 LEE ROAD PARK
- 9 BRAGDON WETLANDS PARK
- 10 LOUIS J. JENN MEMORIAL PARK
- 11 OAKLANDON PARK
- 12 VETERANS' MEMORIAL PARK

EXISTING ASSETS MAP



BASEMAP LEGEND

- Roadway
- Major Roadways
- Railroad
- Lawrence City Limits
- Waterway
- Floodplain
- Parks & Recreation
- Trails

PARKS BOARD HISTORY

Initially established in 1950 by the soon-to-be Mayor Morris Settles (1960-1983), the first Lawrence Parks Board comprised five mayoral appointees selected to serve four-year terms within the community. This board would help establish the future policy and direction of the Parks and Recreation Department, as well as oversee and manage all active park facilities in Lawrence. As an added stipulation, one of the five appointees must always come from the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township to effectively represent the youth and school sports interests of the community.

An interesting point to note, the City of Lawrence did not officially exist at the time of the parks board's creation. The residents of Lawrence voted in 1929 to officially convert their village into the Town of Lawrence. In 1953, residents began discussing the possible incorporation of the town into the City of Lawrence (occurring in 1960).

The first action of this new parks board was to lease 20 acres of land from the US Department of the Army on North Franklin Road that would later become Lawrence Community Park. This first park would grow to become a city center and play an instrumental role in defining the city's reputation as a sports-focused community. Today, Lawrence Community Park contains 134 acres (including the adjacent Soccer Complex and Skate Park) and is one of 11 actively managed parks within the community.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Parks Board

Under the provisions of the Indiana Code (IC) 36-10-3 GENERAL PARK AND RECREATION LAW, state legislation outlines the needed ordinance and basic organizational structure of a newly created municipal parks and recreation department. Department organization includes a parks and recreation board with a minimum of four members, a superintendent, and any supporting personnel that the board determines is necessary to carry out their responsibilities.

Board members are appointed to four-year terms by the city executive (in this case the mayor of Lawrence) based upon their interest and knowledge of parks and recreation, but are limited to a maximum of two members from any political party. In theory, this is done to prevent political abuse of the system and ensure a variety of viewpoints on the board.

In addition, one to two additional board positions can be created and reserved for appointees selected by the local governing school body and/or library district. Board appointees continue to serve after their four-year term until their successor is appointed.

The state statute (I.C. 36-10-3) establishes the executive department of public parks in Second-Class cities/towns and provides that the Park & Recreation Board shall have exclusive government, management, and control of all park and recreation areas within the city/town, subject only to the laws of the state.

The board duties are outlined under SECTION 10 and are as follows:
The board shall:

1. Exercise general supervision of and make rules for the department;
2. Establish rules governing the use of the park and recreation facilities by the public;
3. Provide police protection for its property and activities, either by requesting assistance from state, municipal, or county police authorities, or by having specified employees deputized as police officers; the deputized employees however, are not eligible for police pension benefits or other emoluments of police officers;
4. Appoint the necessary administrative officers of the department and fix their duties;
5. Establish standards and qualifications for the appointment of all personnel and approve their appointments without regard to politics;
6. Make recommendations and an annual report to the executive and fiscal body of the unit concerning the operation of the board and the status of the park and recreation programs in the district;
7. Prepare and submit an annual budget in the same manner as other executive departments of the unit; and
8. Appoint a member of the board to serve on another kind of board or commission, whenever a statute allows a park or recreation board to do this.

In a municipality, the board shall fix the compensation of officers and personnel appointed under subsections (a)(4) and (a)(5), subject to IC 36-4-7-5 and IC 36-4-7-6. Also under SECTION 11 the powers of the board are outlined as follows:

The board may:

1. enter into contracts and leases for facilities and services;
2. contract with persons for joint use of facilities for the operation of park and recreation programs and related services;
3. contract with another board, a unit, or a school corporation for the use of park and recreation facilities or services, and a township or school corporation may contract with the board for the use of park and recreation facilities or services;
4. acquire and dispose of real and personal property, either within or outside Indiana;
5. exercise the power of eminent domain under statutes available to municipalities;
6. sell, lease, or enter into a royalty contract for the natural or mineral resources of land that it owns, the money received to be deposited in a non-reverting capital fund of the board;
7. engage in self-supporting activities as prescribed by section 22 of this chapter;
8. contract for special and temporary services and professional assistance;
9. delegate authority to perform ministerial acts in all cases except where final action of the board is necessary;
10. prepare, publish, and distribute reports and other materials relating to activities authorized by this chapter;
11. sue and be sued collectively by its legal name, as the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Board, with the service of process being had upon the president of the board, but costs may not be taxed against the board or its members in any action;

12. invoke any legal, equitable, or special remedy for the enforcement of this chapter, a park or recreation ordinance, or the board's own action taken under either; and
13. release and transfer, by resolution, a part of the area over which it has jurisdiction for park and recreational purposes to park authorities of another unit for park and recreational purposes upon petition of the park and recreation board of the acquiring unit.

The board may also lease any buildings or grounds belonging to the unit and located within a park to a person for a period not to exceed 25-years. The lease may authorize the lessee to provide upon the premises educational, research, veterinary, or other proper facilities for the exhibition of wild or domestic animals in wildlife parks, dining facilities, a bathhouse, skating facilities, dancing facilities, or amusement rides generally found in amusement parks. A lease may be made for more than one year only to the highest and best bidder, after notice that the lease will be made has been given by publication in accordance with IC 5-3-1.

In Lawrence, the parks and recreation board meets the second Wednesday of every month from 5:30 – 6:30 PM at the Lawrence Government Center. This board is responsible for setting policy and giving direction to the parks department. The board and parks department oversees 10 parks, 56 recreational sports facilities, and 7.9 miles of trails, with an operating budget of approximately \$1.53 million.

At the time this plan was prepared, the parks and recreation board comprised five individuals including:

- Jeff Vest- Board President
- Karen Taylor- Board Member
- Helen Taylor- Board Member
- Tom Burns- Board Member
- Wendy Muston- School Board Member

Parks and Recreation Department

The City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department comprises 10 full-time staff members, 2 part-time staff members, and 4 seasonal workers that all work to ensure the city's green space, sport facilities, playgrounds, and rental spaces are continuously maintained and improved. The department is managed by the director of parks and recreation who is responsible for overseeing the three other department divisions; administrative, maintenance, and recreation.

Administrative

The unseen hand behind the curtain, the administrative division organizes department efforts from the department office, manages funds and resources, and coordinates the other department divisions. This division is the one the public communicates with by email or phone when contacting the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation.

Maintenance

Maintenance is the largest and most active division both in terms of active field personnel and operations. Responsible for the general upkeep of the grounds and landscaping, repair and replacement of park amenities, and cleanup of park litter, maintenance personnel are often the most publicly visible of the three divisions.

Recreation

As the department does not manage any park programs itself, the Recreation Division primarily coordinates with community partners to provide park programming to Lawrence residents. This includes creating and enforcing contracts, collecting user fees, and acting as a liaison to the various community groups.

Mayor Steve Collier

Board of Parks and Recreation

Jeff Vest (R) - 12/31/2021
Karen Taylor (D) - 12/31/2020
Helen Taylor (R) - 12/31/2023
Tom Burns (D) - 12/31/2022
Amy Norman (NA) - By Appointment

Director of Parks and Recreation

Eric Martin

Maintenance Director

Ron Gee

Administrative Assistant

Dina Gee

Recreation Coordinator

Bob Conner

Maintenance Assistant

Ron Taylor, Scott Johnson, Mitch Martin, and
Nick Conner

Recreation Assistant

Sharon Francis

Seasonal & Part-time Laborer

4 open positions

D = Democrat
R = Republican

Key Community Partners

Currently, the City of Lawrence does not actively manage or organize the use of municipal park facilities. Community sports organizations are largely third-party groups that coordinate with the City of Lawrence, but operate independently of any city oversight. In the past, these groups have independently negotiated contracts with the Parks and Recreation Department regarding their use of park facilities and what, if any, fees and responsibilities they would owe to the department.

Some of the main organization partners are as follows:

Baseball

- Lawrence Lions Youth Baseball and Softball
- Fall Creek Little League
- Oaklandon Youth Organization
- Lawrence Park Baseball

Basketball

- Lawrence Township Boys Basketball League

Cheerleading

- Lawrence Youth Sports

Lacrosse

- Lawrence Lacrosse Club
- Youth America

Football

- Lawrence Township Football League

Karate

- Pyramid Karate

Soccer

- LSC/FC Pride Recreational Soccer League

Softball

- Lawrence North High School

Fiscal Capacity

Funding for parks and recreation comes from a variety of sources including tax support, sponsorships, earned and generated revenues, and grants. It is important for the parks department to diversify their funding to increase its flexibility to respond to the community's current and future needs.

For the last three years, approximately 87% of the parks and recreation budget has come from the general fund, meaning the remaining 13 percent of the budget comes from funds received through program partnership agreements and concession stands that are entered into a non-reverting fund. In 2020, the city had partnership agreements with 5 organizations. These agreements allow the organization to utilize the park facilities for various activities and/or events. A typical agreement ranges from \$5,000-\$10,000, depending on the activity and frequency of usage.

At the time this plan was completed, the City of Lawrence had proposed the 2021 budget, which reflected a 5.4% decrease.

CITY OF LAWRENCE PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET COMPARISON

Category	2018	2019	2020	2021 Proposed
General Fund	1,110,145	1,377,995	1,631,705	1,527,768
Non-reverting Fund	269,819	205,382	215, 579	219,184
Total:	1,379,964	1,583,377	1,847,284	1,746,952



RECENT EFFORTS

At the time this plan was completed, the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department was making a concerted effort to reorganize their internal structure and improve the resident usability of their park facilities. As the parks board has achieved its goal of making Lawrence a center of sports activity in the Marion County region, a renewed focus has been made on improving the access and usability of park facilities for all residents, not just those involved in youth sports.

For the past five years, efforts by the parks and recreation department has been focused on the upkeep and maintenance of existing facilities, with Bragdon Wetlands Park being the last addition to the parks department, added in 2014. Park grounds and sports fields were maintained, aging playground equipment was replaced, and programming partnerships were made to keep Lawrence a regional center for youth sports.

While not the controlling party, the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department has been highly involved and supportive of the upcoming Fort Ben Cultural Campus. The result of the successful collaboration with the Arts for Lawrence organization and the City of Lawrence, the \$5.85-million-dollar project is being funded by a grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. and is envisioned as purpose-built art and music center for community residents. Construction of the facility is expected to be complete in January of 2023 as the five-stage building process wraps up. The completed site will include the existing Sterrett Center and Theater at the Fort, the moved Visual Arts Center, and the newly constructed musical swings, artist walk, outdoor amphitheater, and swing/art display structure.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The 2020 City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Master Plan is organized into the following sections:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter is intended to outline the purpose of parks and recreation master planning, provide an overview of the parks and recreation system, and describe the roles and responsibilities of the parks board and department.

Chapter 2: Community Profile

This chapter serves as an inventory and analysis of the existing conditions within the City of Lawrence. It is intended to provide readers an overview of the socio-demographic makeup while providing an inventory of the natural and built environment.

Chapter 3: Existing Parks and Recreation Inventory

This chapter outlines the supply of park facilities. It takes a detailed review of each park facilities to describe the physical characteristics of the facility, amenities that are offered, and condition of accessibility to each facility.

Chapter 4: Needs Analysis

This chapter will highlight the systems strength's, weakness, opportunities, and threats while recognizing how the Lawrence parks and recreational system compares to state and national standards.

Chapter 5: Setting the Stage for the Future (Vision and Goals)

This chapter sets the stage for the entire master plan by summarizing the public engagement, identifying the vision and goals for the parks department and also the parks and recreation system.

Chapter 6: The Action Plan

This chapter describes the specific project and program recommendations for the City of Lawrence. To assist in implementation, this chapter will identify responsible parties, prioritize each strategy, and explore funding opportunities.







CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY PROFILE

An existing conditions report, or community profile, is intended to answer the question, “Where are we now?” It is an inventory of what the community has to offer in terms of people, places, and physical characteristics. In some instances, the inventory will include past, present, and future projects to help identify trends and inform the project team of any challenges the community may be facing. The findings of this chapter, along with the public engagement, serve as the foundation for the vision, goals, and recommendations that follow.

DEMOGRAPHICS

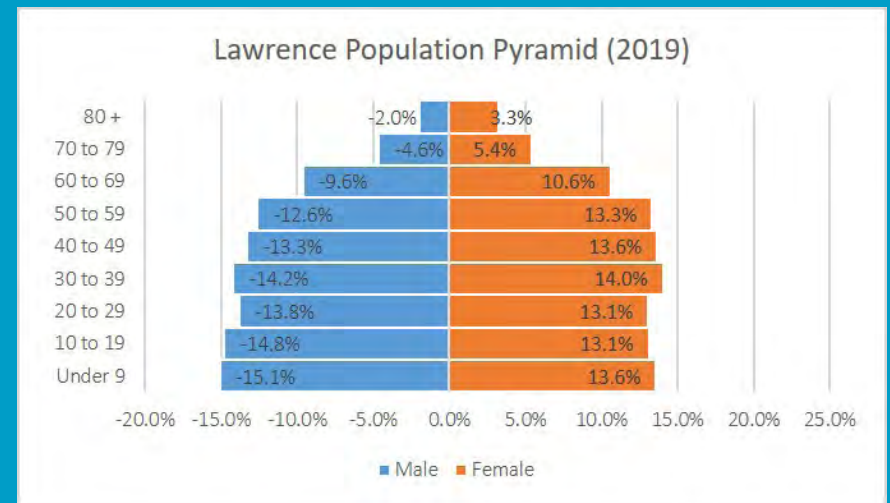
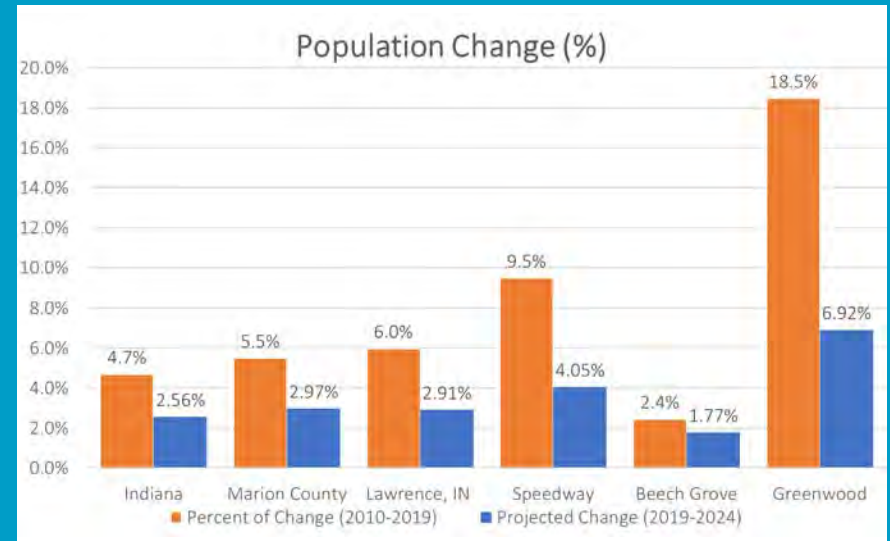
An analysis of Lawrence demographic and socioeconomic data was completed to establish an understanding of the community’s characteristics, growth patterns, and economic trends. For the purpose of comparing Lawrence to its peer communities, the project team reviewed data from the City of Beech Grove, City of Greenwood, City of Speedway, Marion County, and the state of Indiana. Unless otherwise noted, all data was obtained through the US Census Bureau.

Population

The City of Lawrence reached a total (estimated) population of 48,751 residents in 2019, a steady increase from its 2010 population of 46,001. These figures represent a 6% increase over the course of nine years, which is roughly equal to the growth rate for Marion County, but about half that of the state of Indiana. The local population is split relatively evenly between male (47.4%) and female (52.6%) groups. These growth rates are expected to remain steady over the upcoming five-year period.

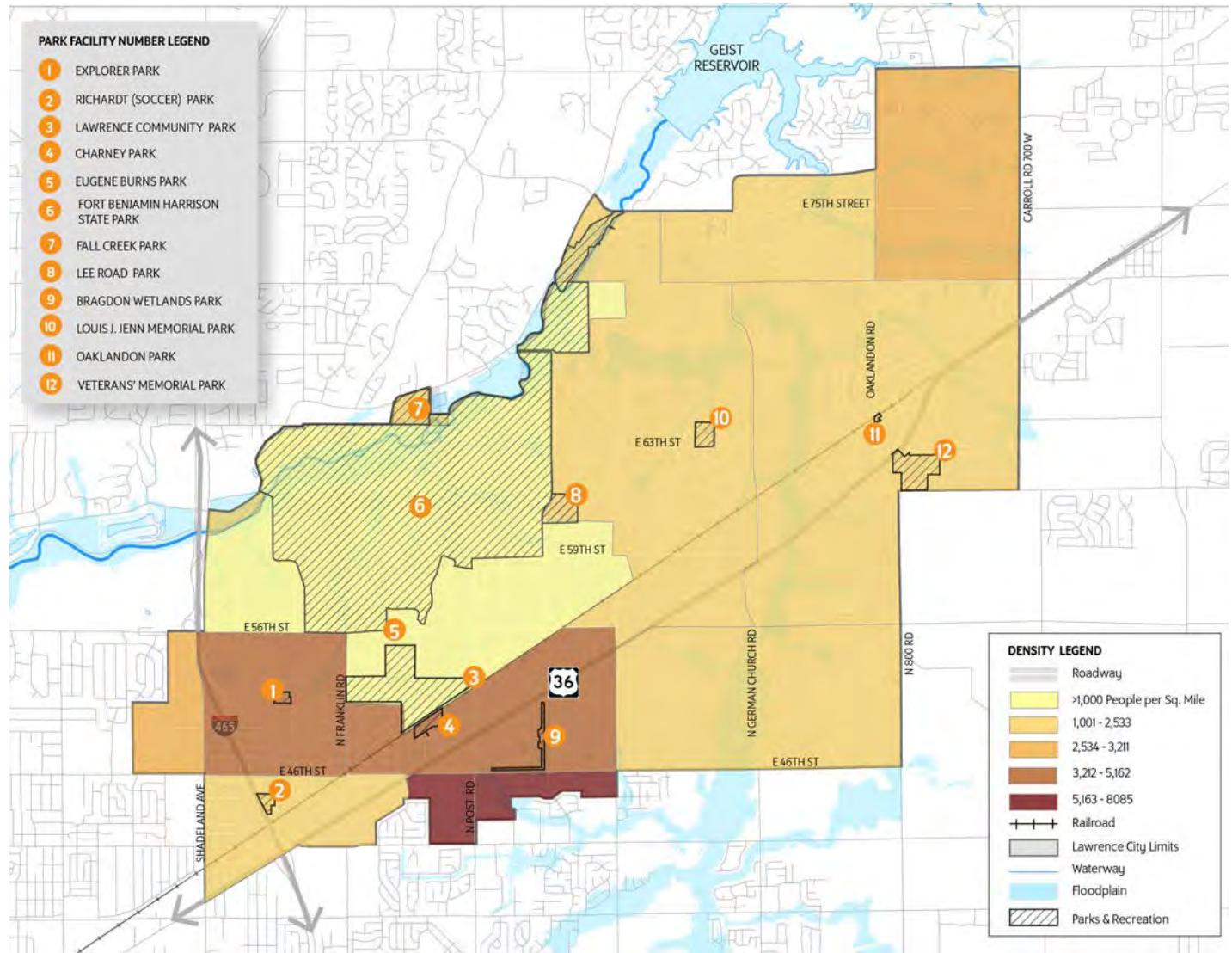
Median Age

The median age of the City of Lawrence was 36.2 as of 2019, slightly older than the 34.2 median age in 2010. Overall, the City of Lawrence has seen a small drop in all age groups across the board, with the exception of a small increase in those between the ages of 55 and 74. This falls in line with surrounding communities, which have on average also seen a one-to two-year increase in their median age between 2010 and 2019. Both the City of Lawrence and Marion County as a whole remain younger on average when compared to the state of Indiana, whose median age reached 38.4 in 2019.



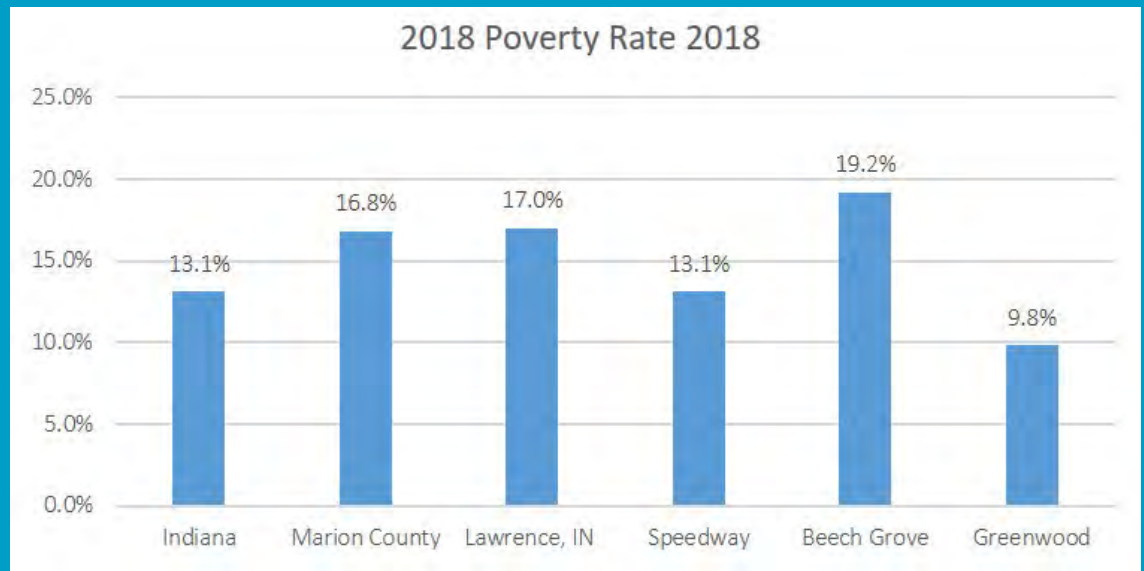
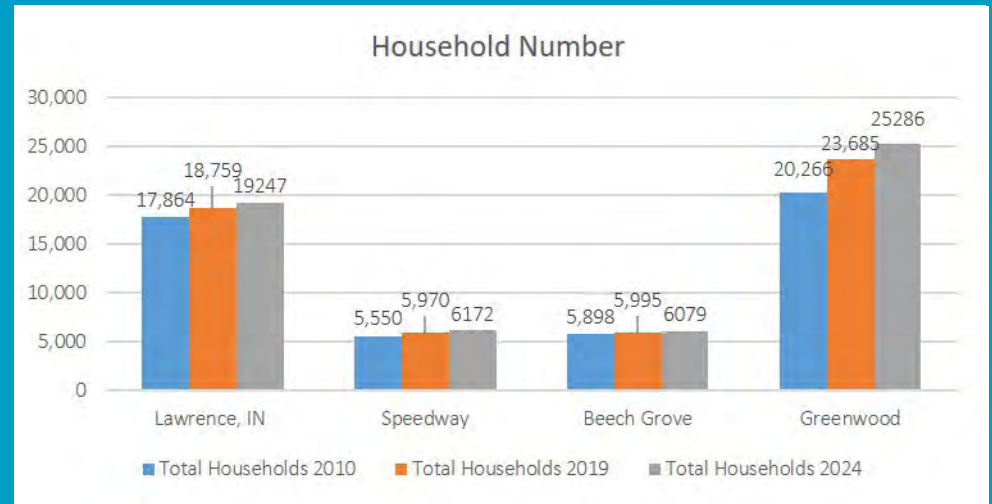
Densely Populated Areas

The population density map shows the geographical characteristics of the city's population. The most densely developed areas are in the southwest part of the city near I-465 and Pendleton Pike, and spreads east along 42nd Street where a number of multifamily residential developments are present. These areas tend to have higher proportions of racial and ethnic minorities. Areas immediately around Pendleton Pike tend to have lower population densities, because land uses in these neighborhoods are primarily employment-based.



Households

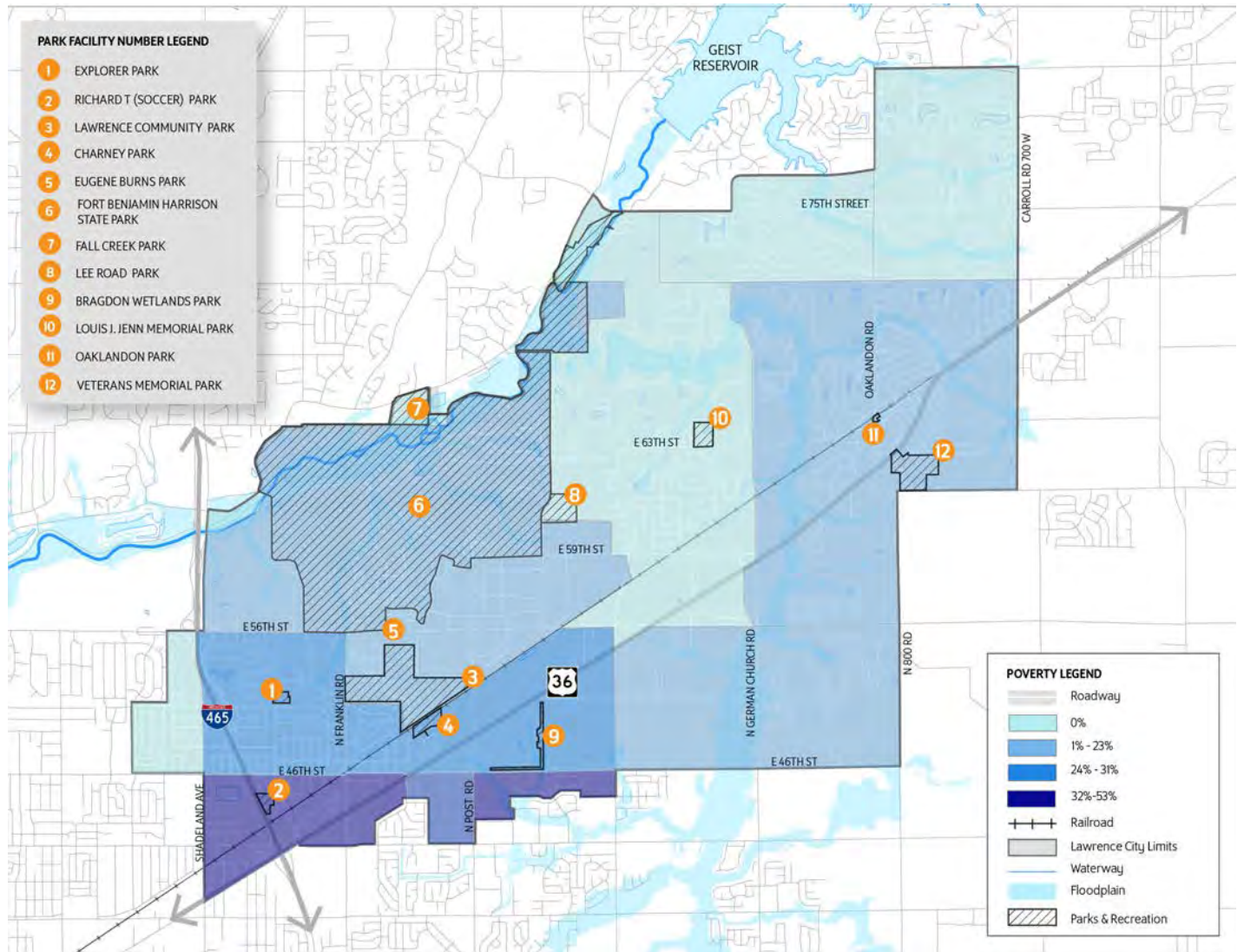
The City of Lawrence was host to 18,759 households in 2019, with an average household size of 2.58 residents. This is after an increase of 895 households (5%) since 2010. While similar to the number of households in the City of Greenwood (25,286), the City of Lawrence held nearly three times the number of households of Beech Grove (5,995) and Speedway (5,970). The City of Lawrence also held the highest average household size, with a 2019 value higher than both Marion County (2.44) and the state of Indiana (2.52).



Household Income

In 2019, the median household income for the City of Lawrence was \$54,032, with a 10.1% increase expected to come over the next 5-years heading into 2024 (\$60,107). This closely resembles the state of Indiana's median household income at \$55,380 in 2019, with an expected increase of 11.2% (\$62,354) heading into 2024. While growing at a slower rate than other communities, the City of Lawrence locally remains the second-highest earner, surpassed only by the City of Greenwood at \$63,572 in 2010.

In spite of its position as the second-highest earning community in the region, in 2018 the City of Lawrence also had the second-highest percent of households below the poverty line, with 17% of households falling below this standard. This places the City of Lawrence just before the City of Beech Grove for highest level of poverty, which sits at 19.2%. This is near, but still above, the average of Marion County (16.8%), and well above the average for the state of Indiana (13.1%).



Within the City of Lawrence, households below the poverty line are concentrated in the community's more dense western and southern communities. This highlights a service gap where residents with limited movement or access are unable to use parks scattered throughout the community. A "recreation desert" can also be seen in the community's southeast, where households face mild levels of poverty but are forced to travel significant distances before accessing any recreational amenities.

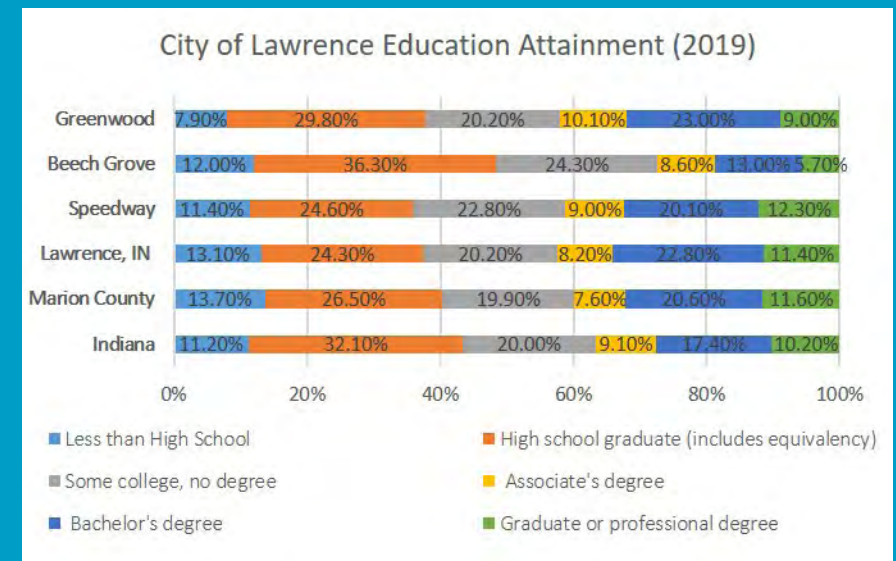
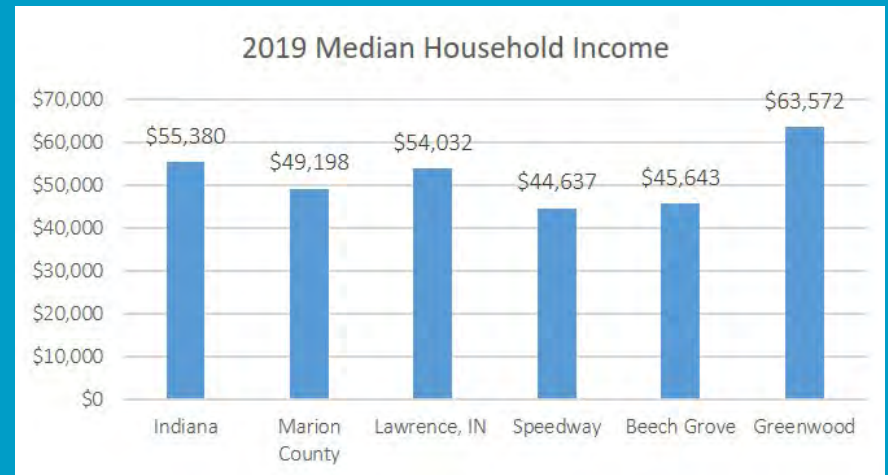
Educational Attainment

Educational attainment is a good predictor of the economic and fiscal prospects for a community. In 2019, the City of Lawrence was consistent with nearby communities, Marion County, and the state in the level of its residents' education. While some minor differences exist, overall, no one level of education defines the City of Lawrence. Education levels in the City of Lawrence can be broken down into groups, including; less than high school (13.1%), high school or equivalent (24.3%), some college (20.2%), associates degree (8.2%), bachelor's degree (22.8%), and graduate degree (11.4%).

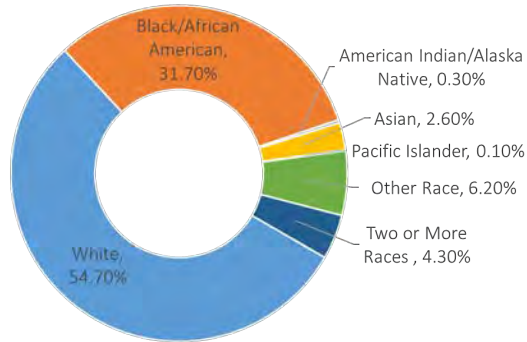
The City of Lawrence is served by the Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township, with approximately 15,700 actively enrolled students. These students are spread over 21 schools within the district and had a total graduating class of over 1,100 in 2020. In terms of higher level education, the Lawrence community is serviced by three local institutions, including the Ivy Tech CC Lawrence Campus, the Calvary Chapel Bible College, and a local branch of Franklin University.

Race and Ethnicity

In 2010, the City of Lawrence had a similar population breakdown as surrounding Marion County. A Caucasian population (63.2%) made up the largest group in the city, with the African American population coming up as the next largest group with 25.8% of the total population. The remaining 11% was broken up across the other groups, including the Native populations (0.4%), Asian population (1.4%), Pacific Islander population (0.1%), those of Two or More races (4.3%), and other races (3.5%). Of these groups, roughly 11.2% identified as being Hispanic. While closely reflecting Marion County, the City of Lawrence has a much higher percentage of African American residents (25.8%) than other communities, double the state average (9.1%), much larger than the City of Speedway (16.7%), and many times higher than the cities of Beech Grove (3.2%) and Greenwood (1.7%).



2019 Lawrence Race and Ethnicity

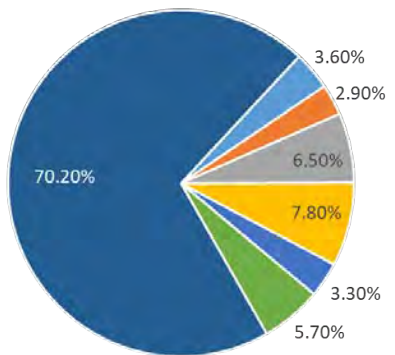


Leading into 2019, the City of Lawrence continued to see population growth similar to other nearby communities, but was undergoing a gradual shift in its population makeup. Evidence of this shift can be seen with a sharp drop in the Caucasian population from 63.2% in 2010 to 54.7% in 2019. This drop can be attributed, in part, to the growth of other population segments in the community, including; African American populations (31.7%), Native populations (0.3%), Asian populations (2.6%), Pacific Islander populations (0.1%), “Other Race” populations (6.2%), and those of Two or More Races (4.3%). The population identifying as Hispanic had a minor increase in size to 12.5%.

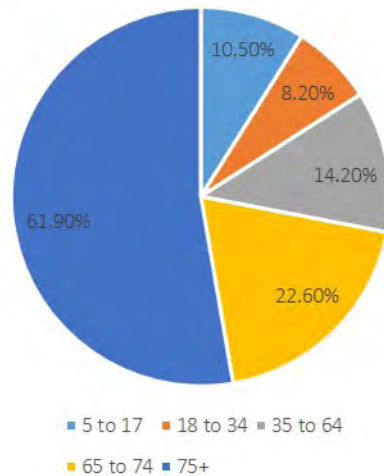
Populations with Disabilities

As classified by the American Disabilities Act (ADA), some Lawrence residents possess some form of disability that may limit their ability to access or utilize park facilities. These may arise from issues in health, advancing age, or lifetime events/exposure. While no officially defined list of disabilities exists, as any circumstance that impedes daily life can be considered a disability, a general umbrella of categories have arisen to cover most cases. Within the Lawrence population, these (non-exclusively) include difficulty with hearing (3.9%), vision (2.5%), cognitive functions (5.5%), ambulatory/hearing (7.6%), self-care (2.7%), and independent living (6.0%).

Breakdown by Disability



Disability by Age



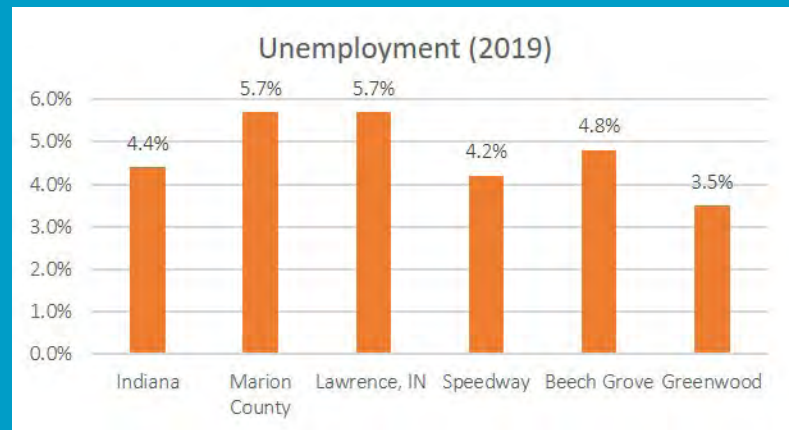
General patterns have shown that the number of Lawrence residents with some form of disability increases exponentially with age, with those above the age of 75 constituting half of all disability cases. Moving backward, this number can be seen to drop significantly among younger age groups. Those between the age of 65 to 74 claim 22.6% of cases, 35 to 64 claim 14.2% of cases, 18 to 34 claiming 8.2% of cases, 5 to 17 claiming 10.5% of cases, and none of those below the age of 5 claiming any form of disability. Some overlap exists where residents may possess more than one type of disability, especially among older groups.

ECONOMICS

Employment

As of 2019, the majority of working residents aged 16+ in the City of Lawrence work in the service industry (47.3%), followed by retail trade (10.6%), manufacturing (10.1%), and construction (8.4%). Manufacturing and construction are of particular note, as they are industries that bring capital into and grow the local economy, rather than simply recirculate like the service and retail industries.

Unemployment is a minor, but still present issue within the City of Lawrence, with 5.7% of the population being unemployed and searching for work in 2019. While this falls in line with Marion County (5.7%), the City of Lawrence has a higher unemployment rate than most of the surrounding communities. Ideal unemployment should vary between 3.5-4.5%, so as to account for workers between jobs, changes within the industry (such as automation), and availability of a workforce. Unemployment rates greater than this begin to see financial strains put on households, and an oversaturated job market where competition is high. Unemployment rates lower than this place strain on businesses as they financially compete over a shrinking labor force, raising their costs and slowing their growth.

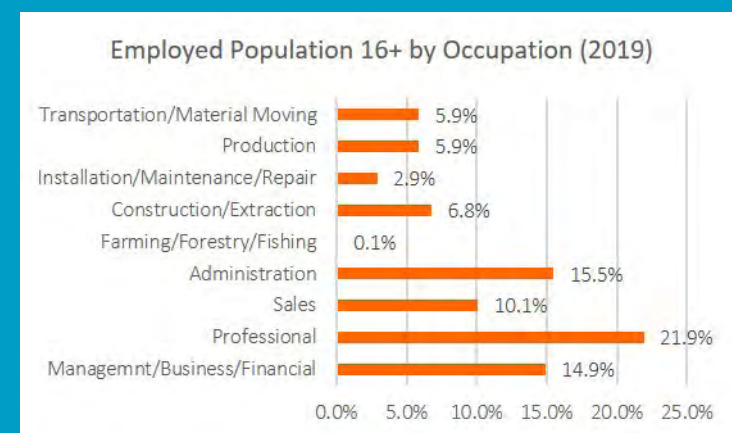


Occupational

The majority (62.4%) of the City of Lawrence 2019 working resident occupations fall under a White Collar designation, including: business and financial management (14.9%), professionals (21.9%), sales (10.1%), and administration (15.5%). The remaining occupations are split under Services at 16%, and Blue Collar (21.6%) occupations, which include: farming (0.1%), construction (6.8%), maintenance (2.9%), production (5.9%), and transportation (5.9%). This means that many City of Lawrence residents work in an office or retail environment, with skill sets geared toward working with people.

Major Employers (over 100 employees)

- Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS).
- Ivy Tech State College, Lawrence Branch
- City of Lawrence Administration
- Phoenix Data Corporation
- Metropolitan School District of Lawrence Township
- Resilient Minds LLC



KEY CONCLUSIONS

The City of Lawrence exhibits many contrasts in terms of its residents' income, health, and quality of life. While specific areas are subject to higher levels of poverty, their relative density will aid the effectiveness of any actions undertaken by the City to improve their quality of life. This is demonstrated in the following elements:

- **Lawrence continues to grow at a slow but steady pace, with an overall aging population.** This means the community will have to take steps to support a greater demand on healthcare services, address issues on park accessibility for older residents, and potential shifts in community housing needs.
- **While most Lawrence residents live in the community's southwest, this area also contains the highest levels of poverty. At times, this rate exceeds 40% of the local resident population.** To ensure equitable access to park facilities and provide a catalyst to property values, park and trail improvement efforts should have a focus in this area.
- **Lawrence is the second-highest earner of its surrounding communities, but also carries the second-highest level of poverty.** This indicates a wide disparity in resident wealth, and could lead to social tensions and feelings of resentment among residents if not addressed with care.
- **Community parks are generally located in areas of higher population density.** Increased resident access means that programs and activities based out of these parks have a greater reach within the community, and can be much more effective at building a strong sense of community identity.
- **Lawrence is a diverse community and is projected to continue to diversify in the coming future.** A diverse community where thoughts and opinions can be exchanged without fear or doubt leads to a much more open public dialogue where ideas can be judged on merit rather than individual circumstance.



THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Reviewing natural features such as open space, wetlands, floodplains, and wildlife habitats is an important component to planning due to the opportunities and challenges they provide. The following sections outline the natural features and landscape characteristics of Lawrence.

Natural Features and Landscape

The city is located on the edge of a major stream (Fall Creek), the drainage pattern for which slopes predominately to the southwest. The natural features map shows the city's location relative to Fall Creek and to other features of the natural environment. Given their limited use due to regular flooding, floodplains often make excellent facilities for parks and recreational activities. Their location next to water sources help provide a dense variety in plant and animal life for users to experience, and the limited installed infrastructure can cheaply be repaired and replaced in the case of flood damage. When developed correctly, floodplains can become a unique and distinct community space for residents to utilize.

Open Spaces

Open spaces provide both a relief from dense urban environments and a means of preserving beautiful natural spaces for public use. Often low cost in maintenance, open spaces can be a welcome break from rigid city grids and can often form the foundation of a community's identity. Fall Creek is a major waterway and open air corridor that runs through Lawrence and connects both Hamilton and Marion counties. An existing multimodal pathway, the Fall Creek Greenway has been constructed throughout the corridor, connecting to Fort Benjamin Harrison State Park, and by extension, to downtown Indianapolis via the Monon Greenway. Indian Creek, which flows north and joins Fall Creek near E 71st Street, is also a significant open space corridor.

Wetlands

The main location for wetlands within the city can be found in Fort Harrison State Park; these are classified as Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland habitats. Sections of Indian Creek south of 56th Street have been similarly classified. Established in 2014, Bragdon Wetlands Park is a wetland adjacent to commercial businesses west of Post Road. Named after the Bragdon family for its contributions to the Lawrence community, the wetland was equipped with a walkway and viewing platform to allow visitors to experience but not disturb the isolated ecosystem.

Wildlife Habitats

Fall Creek serves as a significant wildlife habitat and corridor, with deer, coyotes, and other fauna being observed. Indian Creek provides another corridor accommodating wildlife movements.

Unique Geographic Features

Unusually, the City has a state park within its boundaries, occupying about one-eighth of the city's total area. The city formerly housed a US Army Post, Fort Benjamin Harrison, which was closed as part of the 1991 Base Realignment and Closure Commission. The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) was subsequently established, with Lawrence serving as its central office, continuing its role as the largest employer within the city.

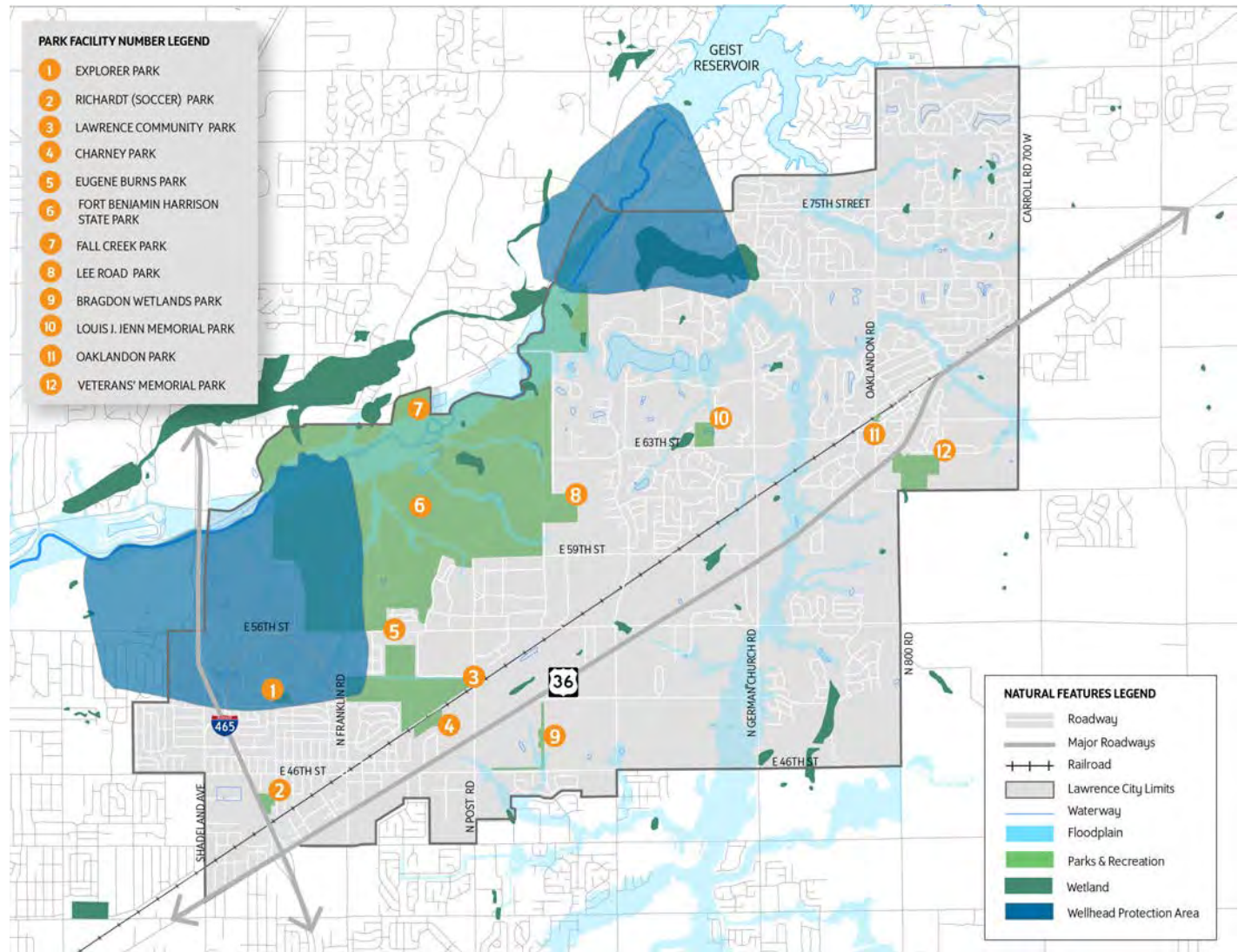
Topography and Geographic Features

As noted above, topography generally slopes southwest and is most varied in the areas along Fall Creek. The total elevation change from the northeast to the southwest boundaries is about 175 feet, signifying an average slope of about 0.3%.



Groundwater Features

There are two areas denoted on the map that are wellhead protection areas, roughly centered along Fall Creek. Indian Lake, a small (~50-acre) pond, resides on private property in the northern area of the city. Other than some small ponds in the state park and a few stormwater detention basins, there are no other significant surface water bodies; however, a significant reservoir, Geist Reservoir, resides shortly to the northeast.



THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

There are several components that make up the built environment including land use or the type of activity occurring on a property, transportation or how people are moving or accessing an area, and the associated architectural styles or characteristics. Often times, these components work together to create a community identity or sense of place. The following section provides a brief overview of the transportation system, current land use pattern, and the historic / cultural features of Lawrence.

Motorized Transportation

The city's western boundary is intersected by I-465, the Central Indiana beltway, which connects to all of the other interstate highways in the region (I-65, I-69, I-70, and I-74). US Highway 36, known locally as Pendleton Pike, serves as a central roadway "spine" for the community, and runs directly to downtown Indianapolis via Massachusetts Avenue and northeast to McCordsville and Fortville in Hancock County.

Roadway Classification

To better organize and manage our extensive roadway network, the United States Federal Highway Administration created the Functional Highway Classification system. Developed to better group the various roads and highways based on the character of the service they are intended to provide and to aid the allocation of federal funds, this system is made up of seven distinct categories ranging across a spectrum of accessibility-vs-mobility. In practice, this allows a standard traveler to move through several road systems, accessing higher mobility roads for the bulk of the distance before transitioning to roads with higher access and arriving at their destination. Five of these categories can be found within the City of Lawrence:

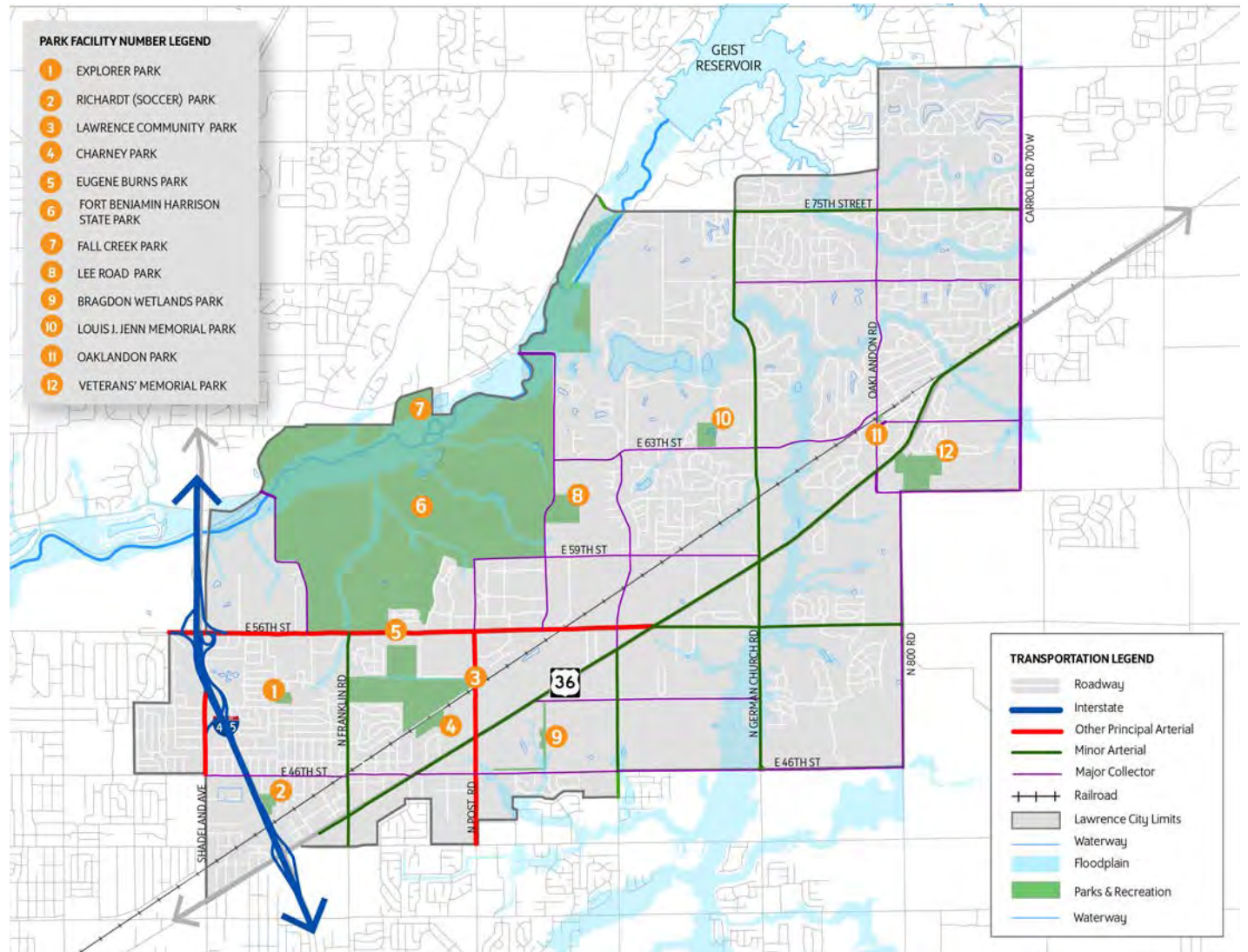
- **Interstate-** Offering the highest level of mobility in the system, interstate roads are characterized by long, uninterrupted traffic flows and very few points to enter or exit the system. Primarily utilized for traveling great distances across or between states, the City of Lawrence only has one road with this classification within its boundaries. Interstate 465 passes through the community's western boundary, offering two access points onto the larger regional network.

- **Other Principal Arterial-** Offering a high degree of mobility within and between metropolitan areas, the Other Principal Arterial class is the one most commonly found to provide high mobility for urban areas. A key element of this class is that adjoining land uses (any kind of property) can have direct access to the road, rather than limited access through a designated interchange. Within the community, portions of 56th Street, North Post Road, and Shadeland Avenue fall into this category.
- **Minor Arterial-** Typically for trips within a community of a moderate length, Minor Arterials serve district geographic areas, are typically spaced at regular intervals, and are used to move around a community rather than across it. Road speeds are usually adjusted based upon the number of access points and the density of the built environment. Several roads within the southern and eastern sides of the community have this classification, most having branched off in some way from the Other Principal Arterial roadways toward the southwest. Examples of this include State Road 36, North German Church Road, and 75th Street.
- **Major Collector-** Providing lower mobility but much higher access, Major Collector roads serve a dual purpose depending on the environment used. In urban settings, they typically act as a transition roadway, collecting and funneling traffic from local roads into Arterial roads. In rural settings they act as the main cross-county systems and are very similar to Minor Collectors, distinguished only by the segments' length and number of access points. This classification is the second most common in the Lawrence community, and include 46th Street, Lee Road, 59th Street, and 63rd Street. This road type becomes more common as you move toward the eastside of the community and away from the more developed urban core.
- **Local Collector-** Providing the lowest level of mobility but highest level of access, Local Collectors are by far the most numerous within any community. This system provides the direct road access to most homes and neighborhoods, often with safety measures in place to protect pedestrians and cyclists who can often be found on these roadways.



Nonmotorized Transportation

Currently, the City of Lawrence does not have an existing urban trail or bike system in place for residents. While the community is served by an extensive sidewalk network preserved and built up over time, as well as limited trails developed along short lengths of roadwork, segments of this system can be fragmented and lack the true mobility that a dedicated trail system offers. The Fall Creek Greenway Trail does connect to the community's northwest, but stops at the border and has access blocked by the Fort Harrison State Park. The neighboring communities of Carmel, Fishers, and Indianapolis all have extensive trail networks that offer a connection opportunity to any future trails within the City of Lawrence.



Land use

- Residential land uses predominate throughout the City, generally west of Post Road and north of 56th Street. There are some substantial undeveloped areas in the southeastern area of the city; still, the city appears to be approaching buildout.
- Most current residential areas are internally well-served with sidewalks or other pedestrian infrastructure. A notable exception is the Briarwood and Briarcreek Mobile Home Park at Mitthoeffer Drive south of 56th Street.

Historic Features

- The former Fort Benjamin Harrison now houses a historic district, the Fort Benjamin Harrison Historic District, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. The district encompasses 100 contributing buildings, one contributing site (Parade Grounds), and three contributing structures (Water Tower, Kent Avenue Bridge, Bandstand). It includes one and two-story Colonial Revival-style brick buildings that were part of the original fort complex.
- Historic districts notwithstanding, there are multiple large buildings remaining in Lawrence following the closure of Fort Benjamin Harrison, including the DFAS Major General Emmett J. Bean Finance Center, which includes 1.6 million square feet of office space on its roughly 75-acre site in Central Lawrence. Other buildings have been converted to residential and office uses, and new development in the City Center duplicates the aesthetic character of the former fort.

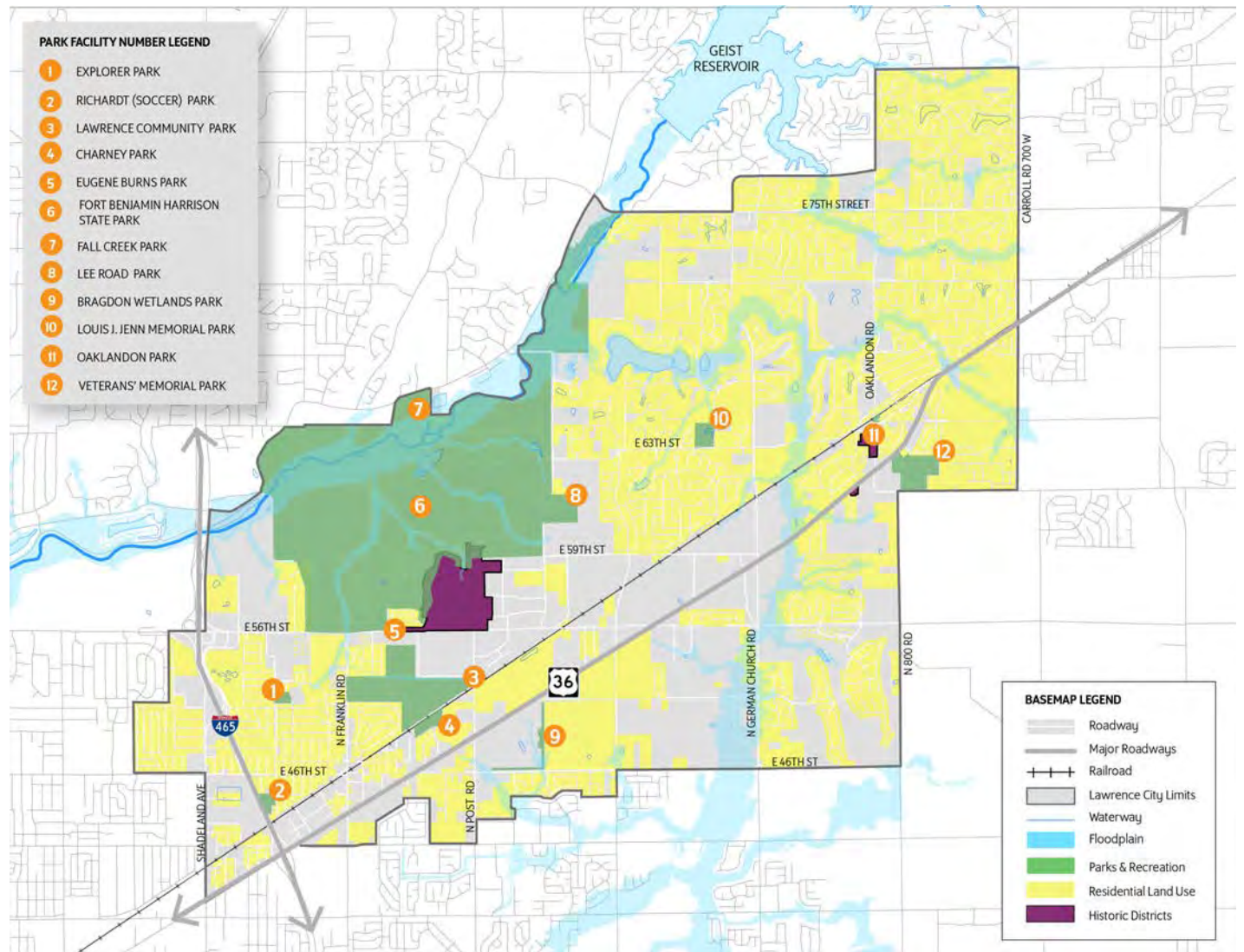


Cultural Features

The City of Lawrence utilizes local park facilities (as well as Fort Harrison State Park) to host annual community events to engage residents, celebrate holidays, and build up a sense of community identity. Below is a list of some of the more well-known events supported by the city.

List of Events/Programs:

1. 4th Fest
2. A Lawrence Christmas
3. Arts for Lawrence
4. BBQ and Blues
5. Community Safety Day
6. Fort Ben Farmer's Market
7. Freedom 5K
8. Fridays at the Fort
9. Lagers in Lawrence
10. Spring Fling
11. Summer Art Camp
12. Winterfest







CHAPTER 3

PARK INVENTORY

OUR SYSTEM

The goal for this chapter is to complete an inventory of the existing parks, infrastructure and amenities for the purpose of identifying necessary, and desirable, improvements for each facility. It is important to note that the park inventory does not specify specific recommendations; this detail will come later in Chapter 6.

In June 2020, the project team conducted site visits to each park facility to document the existing assets, review their condition, and evaluate if the existing infrastructure met the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. There are several components that make up Lawrence's parks and recreation system including locally owned park facilities, trails or multi-use paths, and state parkland. For the purpose of the 2020 City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the system components are defined as follows:

Parks Facilities

Park facilities are properties that are owned and/or operated by the City of Lawrence. These properties range in size and service area including neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, and special use parks. Each of these park classifications are described in the following section.

Trails

The trail system in Lawrence is relatively small and still developing. Most of the existing trail infrastructure acts as internal park amenities rather than a multimodal local or regional connection. While the city does have some connections underway, the system proposed later is an ambitious extension. These proposed connections will be described further in Chapter 6.

State Park

While Fort Harrison State Park is not owned or operated by Lawrence, it is important to note its existence within the City of Lawrence. The 1,700-acre park features walking and jogging trails, picnic sites, fishing access to Fall Creek, and two national historic districts.

What does the inventory entail?

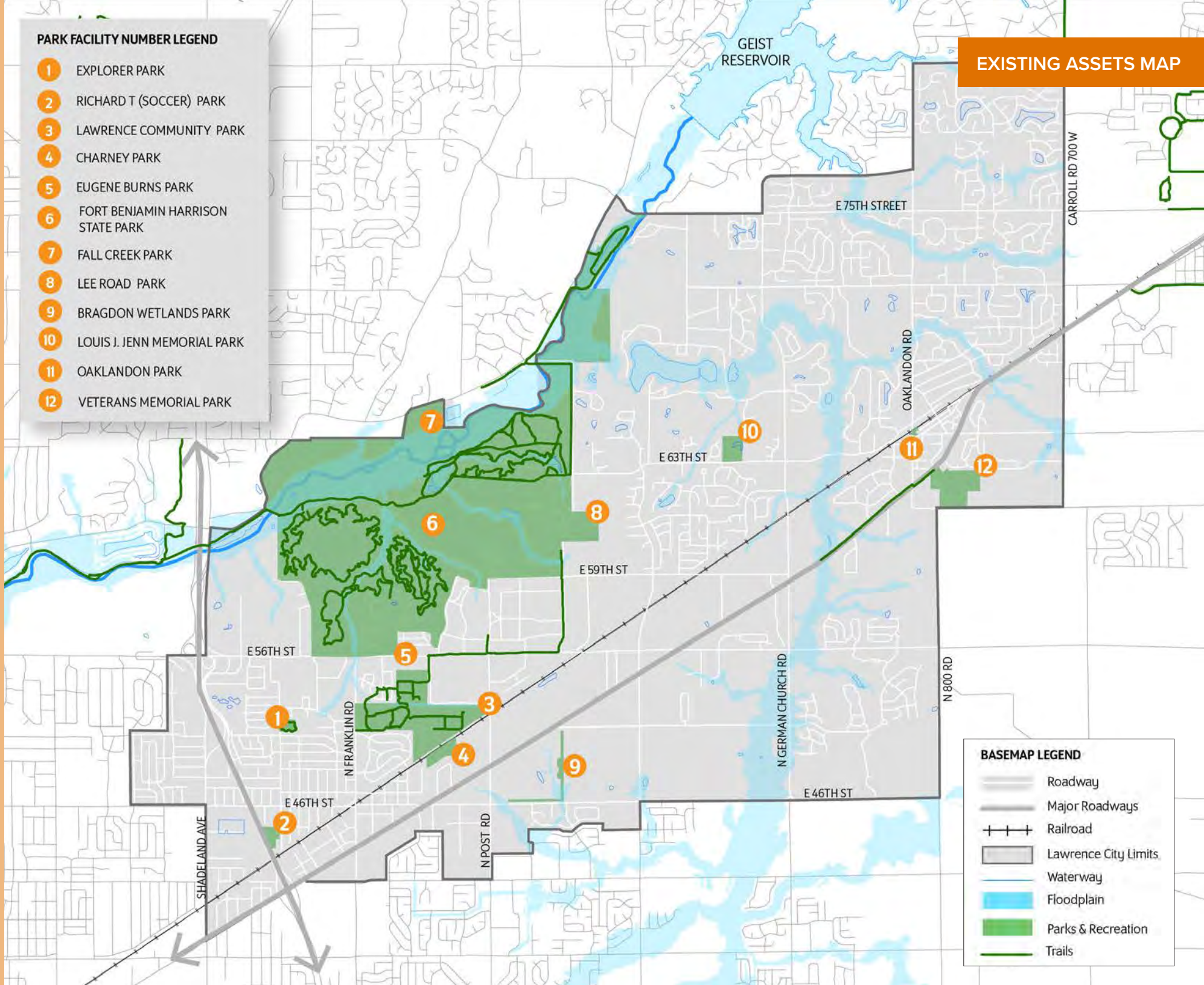
The following list of park facilities consists of all the inventory and assets that are currently under the purview of the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation. In total, the department services and maintains over 2,200 acres of parkland spread over ten parks throughout the community. The inventory and analysis includes seven key components:

1. Overview – Offers a brief description of the facility by highlighting its key features or characteristics and outlining the history of the park.
2. Summary of Facts – Identifies the address, acreage, park classification, and any known programs offered. It is important to note that the City does not directly manage the various programs operating within their parks. Instead, a series of contracted third-party partnerships provide park programming to residents with limited oversight from the department. This allows the department to minimize operational costs while maintaining a high degree of flexibility in terms of programs offered to residents.
3. Inventory of Amenities – Provides a list of available assets ranging from pedestrian paths, benches, and playgrounds to sports fields and concession structures.
4. Concerns – Outlines any initial concerns that were revealed during the site visits. This could be anything from drainage issues to inadequate parking conditions.
5. ADA Compliance – Identifies whether or not the existing infrastructure meets ADA standards from a high-level analysis.
6. Character Photos – Used to illustrate the character of the park facility; a few site photos are included.
7. Park Map – Serving as an illustrative version of the inventory list, the park map highlights where each amenity is located within the property.

PARK FACILITY NUMBER LEGEND

- 1 EXPLORER PARK
- 2 RICHARD T (SOCCER) PARK
- 3 LAWRENCE COMMUNITY PARK
- 4 CHARNEY PARK
- 5 EUGENE BURNS PARK
- 6 FORT BENJAMIN HARRISON STATE PARK
- 7 FALL CREEK PARK
- 8 LEE ROAD PARK
- 9 BRAGDON WETLANDS PARK
- 10 LOUIS J. JENN MEMORIAL PARK
- 11 OAKLANDON PARK
- 12 VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

EXISTING ASSETS MAP



BASEMAP LEGEND

- Roadway
- Major Roadways
- Railroad
- Lawrence City Limits
- Waterway
- Floodplain
- Parks & Recreation
- Trails

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Within the summary of facts section, the *2021 City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Master Plan* assigns a park classification to each facility. This classification will serve two purposes. First, it will be used to define the character, intended users, and level of service of the facility. Then, it will be used in the methodology for benchmarking in Chapter 4. The four park classifications include: neighborhood, community, regional, and special use.



NEIGHBORHOOD



COMMUNITY



REGIONAL



SPECIAL USE



Park Classification Description	Service Area	Acreage	Primary users	Primary mode of access
<p>The smallest and most accessible park, a Neighborhood Park is one primarily used by its surrounding community and seen as a local neighborhood amenity. There are few, if any, sports facilities and its primary users are children interacting with the playgrounds or adults enjoying the open space or trails. Given its small scale and limited facilities, neighborhood parks can typically host only a few dozen users at any one time comfortably, and have very limited, if any, on-site parking.</p>	1/2 mile	<10 acres	Surrounding residents	Pedestrian
<p>The most common type of park in Lawrence, Community Parks are moderate scale facilities often created to facilitate some form of intended use, typically focused around some form of organized activity. Due to their size, they are often located outside of dense, urban neighborhoods and more along the borders between communities and along major traffic arteries. This allows for easier accessibility by users as they can arrive by vehicle, utilize nearby sidewalks, or bike facility connections.</p>	>2 miles	10-25 acres	Local residents, sports organizations	Vehicular and/or pedestrian
<p>The largest park classification, Regional Parks are recreation on a large scale, serving entire leagues and major sports events. These facilities are generally developed to provide a service to users from both within Lawrence as well as surrounding communities, generating recreational tourism and drawing in visitors and funds that otherwise would not enter the community.</p>	3+ miles	25+ acres	Local residents and regional commuters	Vehicular
<p>As some park and recreation facilities are difficult to classify due to their character, the Special Use category covers those with a unique nature that fulfill a special role within the community such as conservation, historic preservation, and/or rental space. While all park facilities are envisioned for recreation, Special Use facilities may have a dual role or even make recreation a secondary priority.</p>	Dependent on use	Varies	Dependent on use	Varies



ACCESSIBILITY

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

While Lawrence is close to both the national and state average in terms of the proportion of residents with some form of disability, two age groups exceed this by a substantial margin: those between the ages of 5 to 17 and those aged 75 and above. The causes of this may be outside the realms of the plan, but the Lawrence community (and by extension the Department of Parks and Recreation) can take steps to see that residents with a disability have the opportunity to remain active members of the community.

How does it apply to Lawrence Parks and Recreation?

In regards to the City of Lawrence and the Department of Parks and Recreation, Title 2 of the act regarding state and local government is most relevant. Title 2 requires that state and local governments give people with disabilities an equal opportunity to benefit from all their programs, services, and activities. This would include all park programs and facilities managed by the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation.

To ensure that park facilities remain accessible to all Lawrence residents, modifications to existing facilities are necessary. As stated in Chapter 2 of the Guide to ADA Standards (2011), any additions or modifications to existing facilities would require all affected elements of the park to be brought up to acceptable ADA standards. This allows communities like Lawrence to make updates in phases as funding and resources become available. Modifications can be broken into two overarching categories; improvements to accessibility and improvements to the facilities themselves.

- Improvements in accessibility are projects aimed at providing residents equal access to park facilities, from their method of arrival, to circulation within the park, to being able to physically access the various amenities within the facility.
- Improvements to park facilities are often more costly, as they can mean the complete replacement of existing facilities or an extensive period of remodeling and retrofit. For example, playground equipment in the past was often surrounded by mulch due to its affordability and its ability to provide adequate fall protection but to meet current ADA standards, a pour-in-place plastic surfacing or similar material would be required to provide a surface that not only protects users from injuries due to falls, but also to allow access to those in wheelchairs or with limited mobility.





How does the City of Lawrence ensure its parks facilities are accessible to all?

As the identified coordinator, Eric Martin acts to help direct the City of Lawrence (and by extension the Department of Parks and Recreation) to comply with Title 2 of the American Disabilities Act.

- Eric Martin
- Title: Director of Parks and Recreation
- Phone: (317) 549-4815
- Email: emartin@cityoflawrence.org

Furthermore, information regarding the American with Disabilities Act and the non-discrimination requirements/protections it offers is posted for public viewing at the Sterrett Center and the Lawrence Community Center, located at 8950 Otis Avenue and 5301 North Franklin Road, respectively. This is done to ensure that all visitors understand their rights, and that they are entitled to reasonable accommodation in following the policies and procedures of the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation.

The current grievance procedures for ADA complaints are as follows:

1. Please submit a letter outlining specified grievance to the Parks Board
2. Parks Board will review the grievance(s) and refer to Parks Director for action
3. Parks Director will pursue action as deemed necessary. Action can be classified as:
 - Administrative
 - Maintenance
 - Design and Construction
 - No Action
4. Results of corrective action are submitted to the Parks Board for evaluation





EXPLORER PARK

Surrounded by residential neighborhoods, Explorer Park is a small neighborhood park with playground equipment, walking trails, and open green space. While the park does have dedicated parking facilities, it is on a small scale and limits the number of visitors the park can host.



ADDRESS	5205 Richardt Ave.
PARK TYPE	Neighborhood Park
ACREAGE	5.2
PROGRAMS	N/A

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Picnic area and shelter Internal loop trail; asphalted, lighted Landscaped structure and benches Parking Fencing Restrooms	Restriping of parking spaces Signage in poor condition	<input type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures



NUMBER LEGEND

- 1. Park Entrance
- 2. On-Site Parking
- 3. Restroom Facilities
- 4. Walking Trail
- 5. Children's Playground
- 6. Pavilion
- 7. Open Space



OAKLANDON PARK

The smallest park managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation, Oaklandon Play Park is dedicated entirely to its playground equipment and is one of three Lawrence parks to operate without dedicated sports fields. Entirely enclosed by fencing, the park has more recently had its older (wooden) playground replaced with a more modern set due to ADA guidelines and safety concerns.



ADDRESS	11828 E. 65th St.
PARK TYPE	Neighborhood Park
ACREAGE	1
PROGRAMS	N/A

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Playground Picnic area and shelter Restrooms Parking	Restriping of parking lot Lack of signage informing accessibility of the park.	<input type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures



- NUMBER LEGEND**
- 1. Park Boundary Fence (wooden)
 - 2. Pavilion
 - 3. On-Site Parking
 - 4. Park Entrance
 - 5. Restroom Facility
 - 6. Open Space
 - 7. Water Tower
 - 8. Children's Playground

OAKLANDON PARK SITE MAP



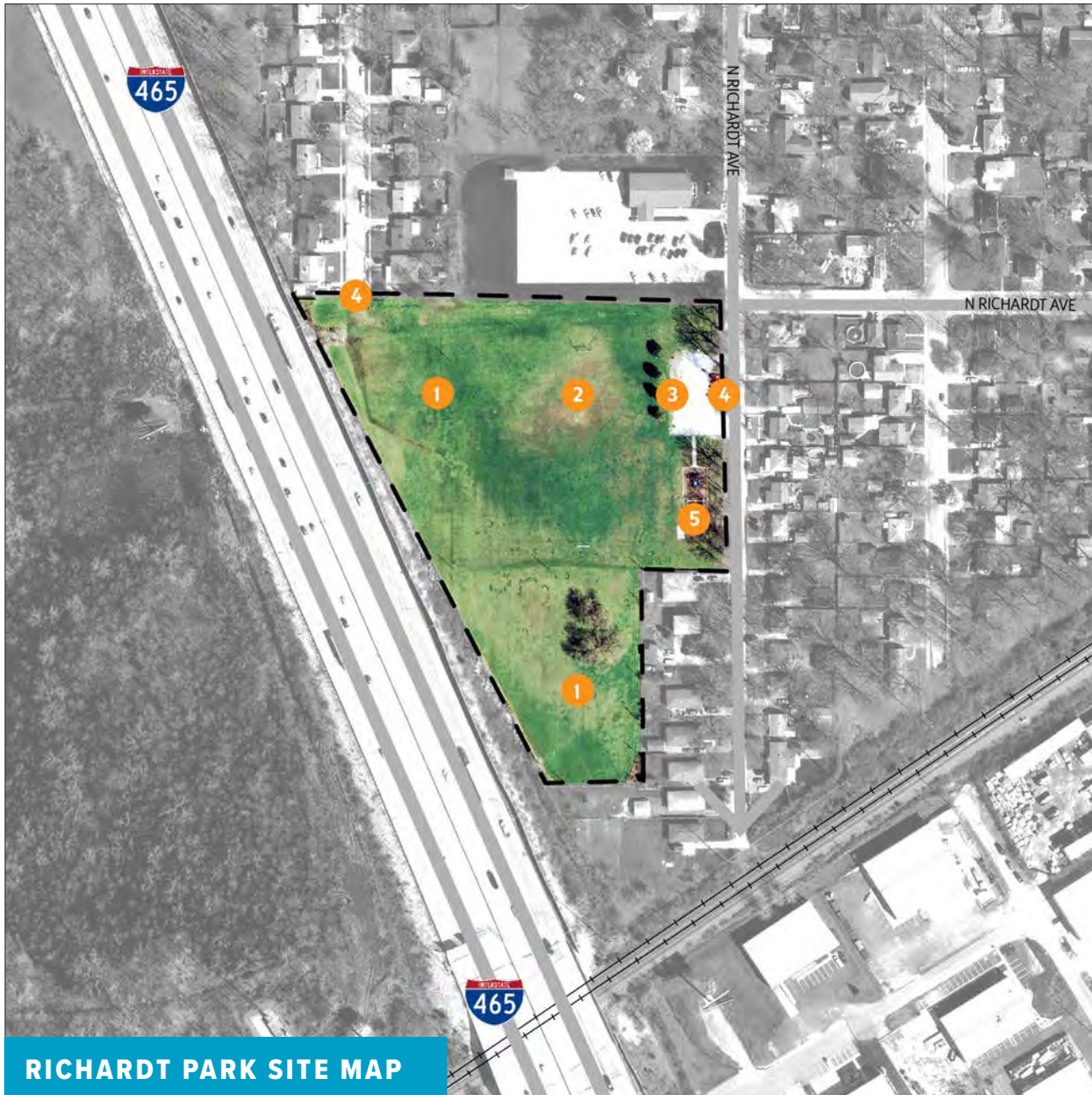
RICHARDT (SOCCER) PARK

On the western edge of the community, Soccer Park is a less-developed park in terms of facilities and equipment. Primarily consisting of open space, the park is surrounded by dense neighborhoods and sits adjacent to Interstate 465.



ADDRESS	4510 N. Richardt St.
PARK TYPE	Neighborhood Park
ACREAGE	7
PROGRAMS	FC Pride Soccer Club

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Playground Open green space Multi-use field Parking	Lack of signage informing accessibility of the park. Parking lot is gravel.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures



NUMBER LEGEND

- 1. Open Space
- 2. Multi-Use Field
- 3. On-Site Parking
- 4. Park Entrance
- 5. Children's Playground



ALEXANDER PARK

Positioned between residential neighborhoods and an active rail line, Alexander Park (also called Charney Park) is a hidden gem within the Lawrence community. Due to the surrounding residences and thick tree cover, the entrance to the park is easy to miss. While separated by the rail line, the park also abuts Lawrence’s largest park, Lawrence Community Park.

ADDRESS	4902 Charney Ave.
PARK TYPE	Community Park
ACREAGE	12
PROGRAMS	Adult Softball League

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Playground Picnic area and shelter Two Softball fields Bleachers Restrooms Concessions Parking	Some damage to shelter landscaping is evident. GPS does not lead to entrance.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures





NUMBER LEGEND

- 1. Park Entrance
- 2. On-Site Parking
- 3. Open Space
- 4. Softball Fields
- 5. Children's Playground
- 6. Concessions/Restrooms



EUGENE BURNS PARK

Primarily a football sports facility, Eugene Burns Park is located adjacent to Fort Harrison State Park and is just north of Lawrence Community Park. The park has a rather unique entrance, limiting traffic flow to one direction but presenting a tree lined boulevard to arriving visitors.



ADDRESS	5602 Glenn Road
PARK TYPE	Community Park
ACREAGE	12.8
PROGRAMS	Youth football league and overflow space for soccer

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Three football fields Three scorers towers with storage Picnic area and shelter Restrooms Concessions Parking	Parking lot needs resurfacing/repainting Entry ramp to pavilion is blocked by AC unit	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures



NUMBER LEGEND

- 1. Park Entrance
- 2. On-Site Parking
- 3. Concession/Restroom
- 4. Football Fields

**EUGENE BURNS PARK
SITE MAP**



LOUIS J. JENN MEMORIAL PARK

The only city-owned park with dedicated dog facilities (Waggin' Tails Bark Park), this unique facility is gated with limited hours of operation, has its own enclosed pond, and has a for-rent event space. The fenced-in dog area has a security lock and requires a membership fee of \$40 from residents for use. This facility has no other form of access other than motor vehicle.

ADDRESS	10450 E. 63rd St.
PARK TYPE	Community Park
ACREAGE	14.2
PROGRAMS	N/A

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Playground Waggin' Tails Dog Park Open green space Rental Space - community center Nature areas Pond	Parking lot requires resurfacing. Pathway from parking has eroded. Park pavilion, playground, and pond have no connection. Lack of signage informing accessibility of the park	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures





NUMBER LEGEND

- 1. Park Entrance
- 2. Waggin Tails Bark Park (Fenced Dog Park)
- 3. Open Space
- 4. On-Site Parking
- 5. Pond
- 6. Rental Space/Restrooms
- 7. Children's Playground



LEE ROAD PARK

Located along the eastern border of Fort Harrison State Park near the center of the community, Lee Road Park has until now served primarily as a baseball/softball facility for minor leagues and the nearby Fall Creek Valley Middle School. The park does not have any residential neighborhoods nearby and requires most users to arrive by vehicle.



ADDRESS	6200 Lee Rd.
PARK TYPE	Regional
ACREAGE	28
PROGRAMS	Fall Creek Softball and Baseball Leagues

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Playground Picnic area Concessions/restroom Trail network Five softball fields Three Little League baseball fields One baseball field	Parking lot needs resurfacing/ restriping Automobile entry only; no pedestrian entry Lack of signage informing accessibility of the park. No accessible path from parking to park features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures



NUMBER LEGEND

- 1. Park Entrance
- 2. On-Site Parking
- 3. Children's Playground
- 4. Picnic Area, Concessions, and Restrooms
- 5. Baseball/Softball Fields

LEE ROAD PARK SITE MAP



VETERANS' PARK

A recent addition to the parks system, Veterans Park has served as a regional sports facility in providing additional fields for the various sports groups within the City of Lawrence. Due to its presence on the eastern edge of the community, access to Veterans Park is largely limited to those able to drive. Recent efforts by the parks department have included the addition of another playground, with further improvements expected in the future.

ADDRESS	12150 E. 62nd St.
PARK TYPE	Regional
ACREAGE	41
PROGRAMS	OYO Baseball and Softball Leagues

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Playground Picnic area and shelter Trail/walking paths; asphalt and limestone Thirteen baseball/softball fields Concessions and restroom parking	Striping of parking lot Visibility of low-contrast ground sign Park boundary is uncertain; blends into surrounding properties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures



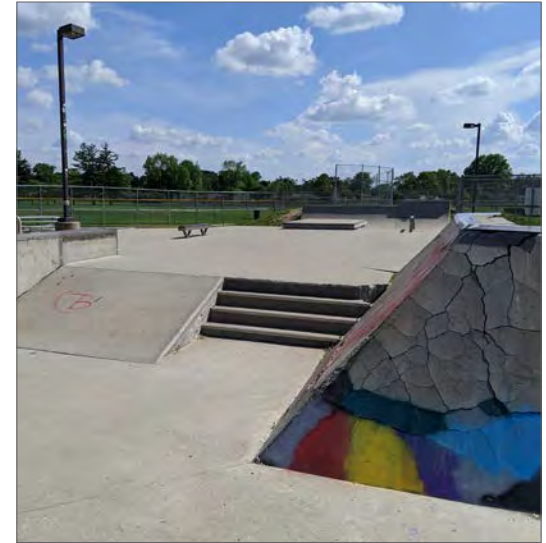


- NUMBER LEGEND**
- 1. Park Entrance
 - 2. Pavilion
 - 3. Baseball/Softball Fields
 - 4. On-site Parking
 - 5. Retention Pond
 - 6. Concession/Restroom Facility
 - 7. Open Space



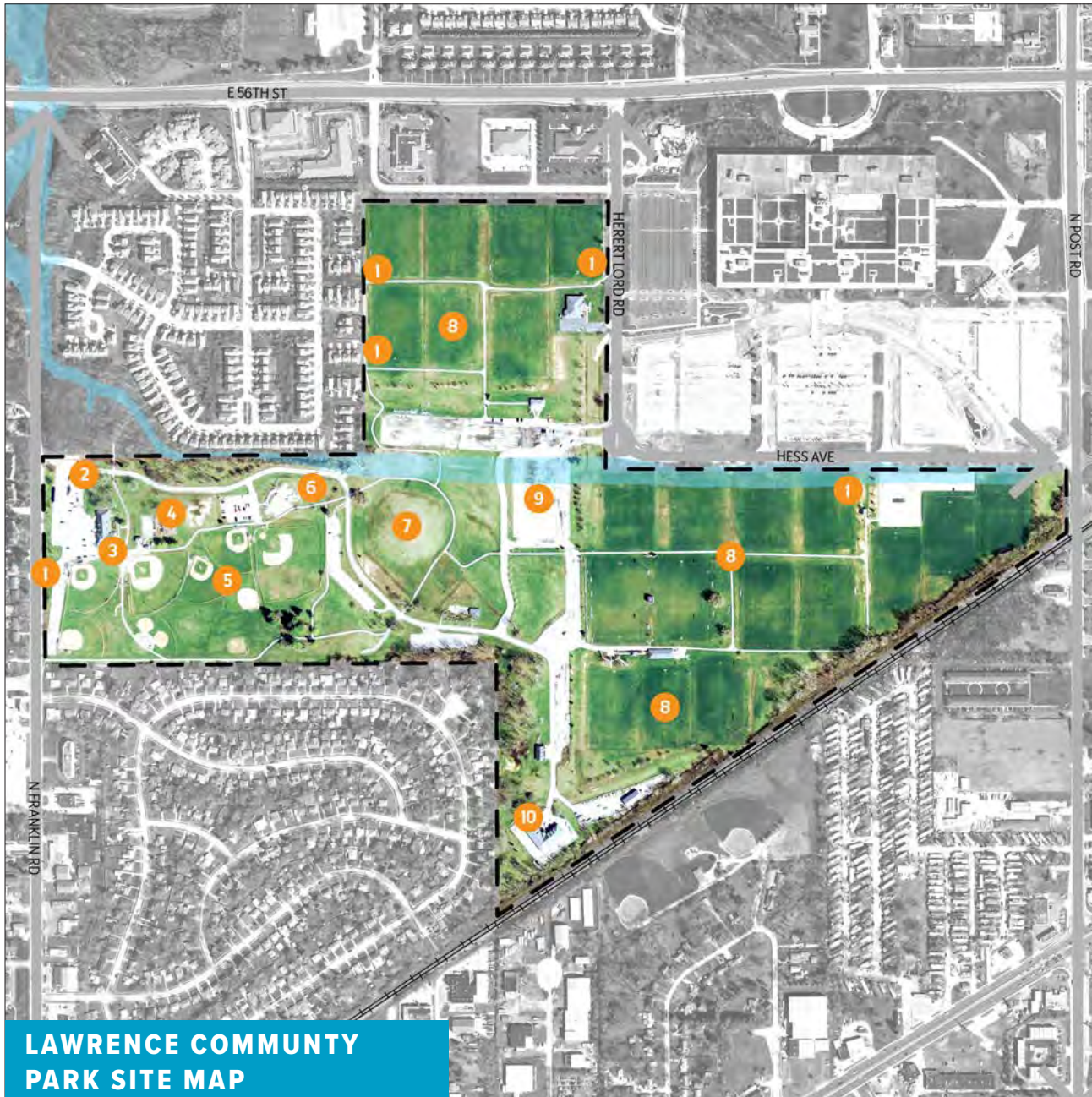
LAWRENCE COMMUNITY PARK

The first park established by the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation, Lawrence Community Park is the beating heart of the Lawrence community. Originally leased as a small property from the US Army Core of Engineers, Lawrence Community Park is now a regional sports center with 18 soccer fields and 10 baseball and softball fields.



ADDRESS	5301 N. Franklin Road
PARK TYPE	Regional
ACREAGE	134
PROGRAMS	Soccer Club Leagues

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Playgrounds Ten baseball/softball fields Community center, park division of recreation offices Eighteen soccer fields Two concession and restroom facilities Paved paths between fields Bleachers Parks Department Building Parking	Conditions of parking lots Signage is close to ground, and not very visible to passing motorists. Only one restroom facility located on the west side of the park.	<input type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures



NUMBER LEGEND

- 1. Park Entrance
- 2. Picnic Space
- 3. Rental Hall, Concessions, Restrooms
- 4. Children's Playground
- 5. Baseball Fields
- 6. Skate Park
- 7. Open Space
- 8. Soccer Fields
- 9. On-Site Parking
- 10. Parks and Recreation Department Office



BRAGDON WETLANDS PARK

Established in 2014 on the site of the former Pendleton Pike Drive-in, Bragdon Wetlands Park is an undeveloped 12-acre public park and nature reserve. It is named after the local Bragdon family for their long history in the City of Lawrence. While currently undeveloped, Bragdon Wetlands Park offers a rare natural retreat in the heart of the city and a future opportunity to create a north-south connection between 52nd Street and 46th Street.

ADDRESS	9351 Pendleton Pike
PARK TYPE	Special Use
ACREAGE	12
PROGRAMS	N/A

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Linear park Wetlands Open space	No real access point	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures





NUMBER LEGEND

1. Woodland



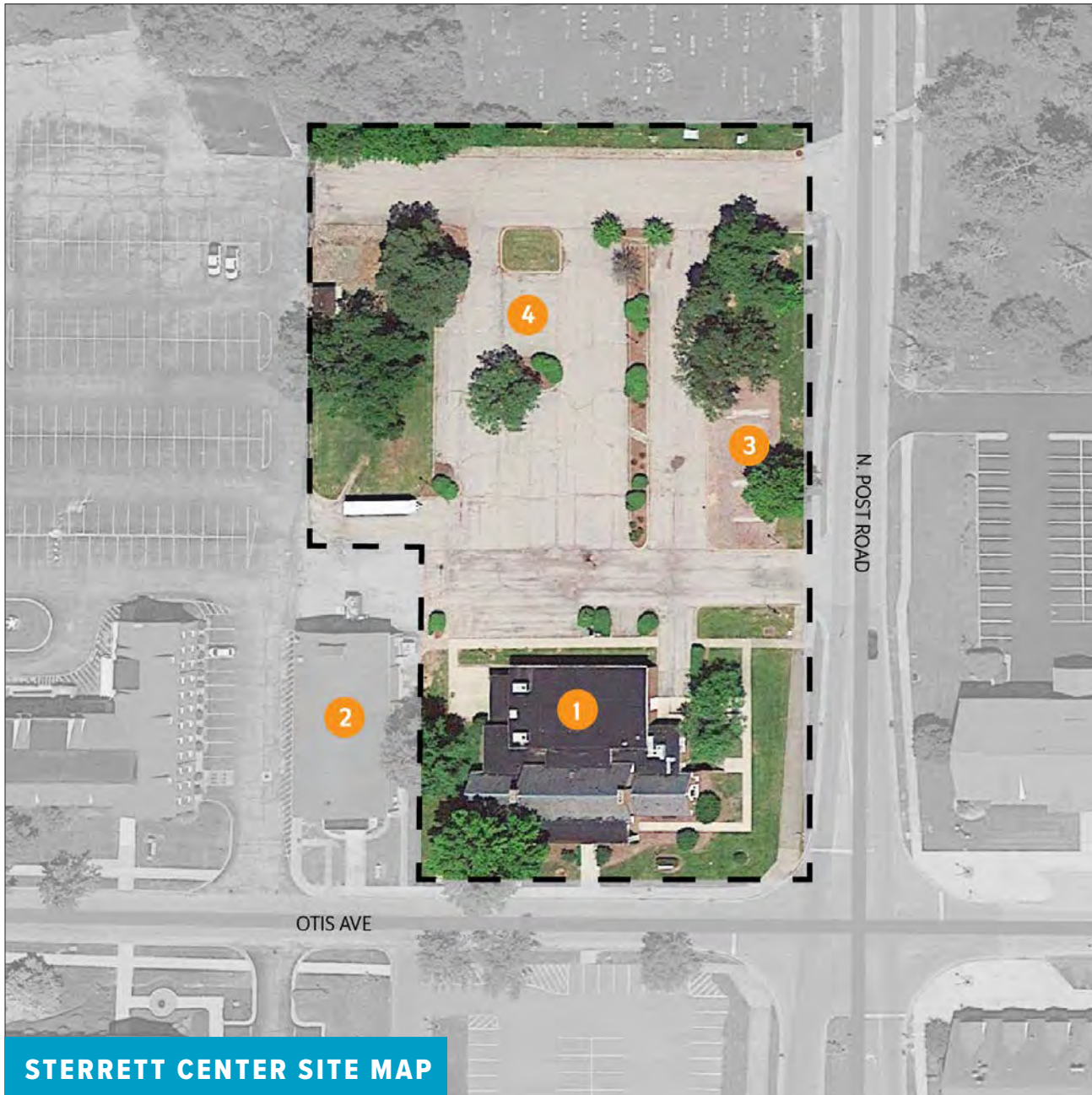
STERRETT CENTER

A rental venue operated by the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation, Sterrett Center is a popular destination for meetings, community events, birthdays, and weddings. At the time this plan was completed, phased construction of the Fort Ben Cultural Campus continues on Sterrett Center property.



ADDRESS	8950 Otis Ave.
PARK TYPE	Special Use
ACREAGE	2.8
PROGRAMS	N/A

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
Community Rental Space Musical Swings Proposed Fort Ben Cultural Campus	None, city just recently invested \$250,000 in improvements to update painting, flooring, lighting, and new furniture.	<input type="checkbox"/> Entryway <input type="checkbox"/> Parking (Marked) <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Signage <input type="checkbox"/> Paved Walkways <input type="checkbox"/> Restroom <input type="checkbox"/> Playground Equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Playground Surfacing <input type="checkbox"/> Sports Facilities <input type="checkbox"/> Open Air Structures



NUMBER LEGEND

- 1. Community Center
- 2. Theater at the Fort
- 3. Musical Swings
- 4. Proposed Fort Ben Cultural Campus

STERRETT CENTER SITE MAP



FORT HARRISON STATE PARK

A state-owned and operated park, Fort Harrison is an enormous amenity for both the Lawrence community and surrounding area. Originally the site of the Fort Harrison Army Base, the facility saw declining use as reorganizations within the military and changing priorities led to a drop in its value. Eventually, the Army labeled it as a surplus property, parceling it out to the City of Lawrence and eventually converting it over into its current use.

ADDRESS	6000 N Post Road
PARK TYPE	Special Use
ACREAGE	1,700
PROGRAMS	Farmers Market, Fort Harrison State Park Reenactment, Merit Badge Sundays, Family Learn to Fish, Summer Concert Series, Fort Ben BBQ & Blues Fest, Cowboy Bob & Wrangler Gail Bark Walk, Fort Harrison Halloween Bash, Return to the '40's Dinner & Dance

AMENITIES AVAILABLE	CONCERNS	ADA ACCESSIBILITY <i>X - Does not meet standards</i>
The Fort Golf Resort (Inn) The Garrison Conference Center Eighteen-hole golf course Internal trail network Equestrian trails Horse rentals; stables on-site	<i>Because this is a state-owned facility, this was not completed as part of this analysis.</i>	<i>Because this is a state-owned facility, this was not completed as part of this analysis.</i>



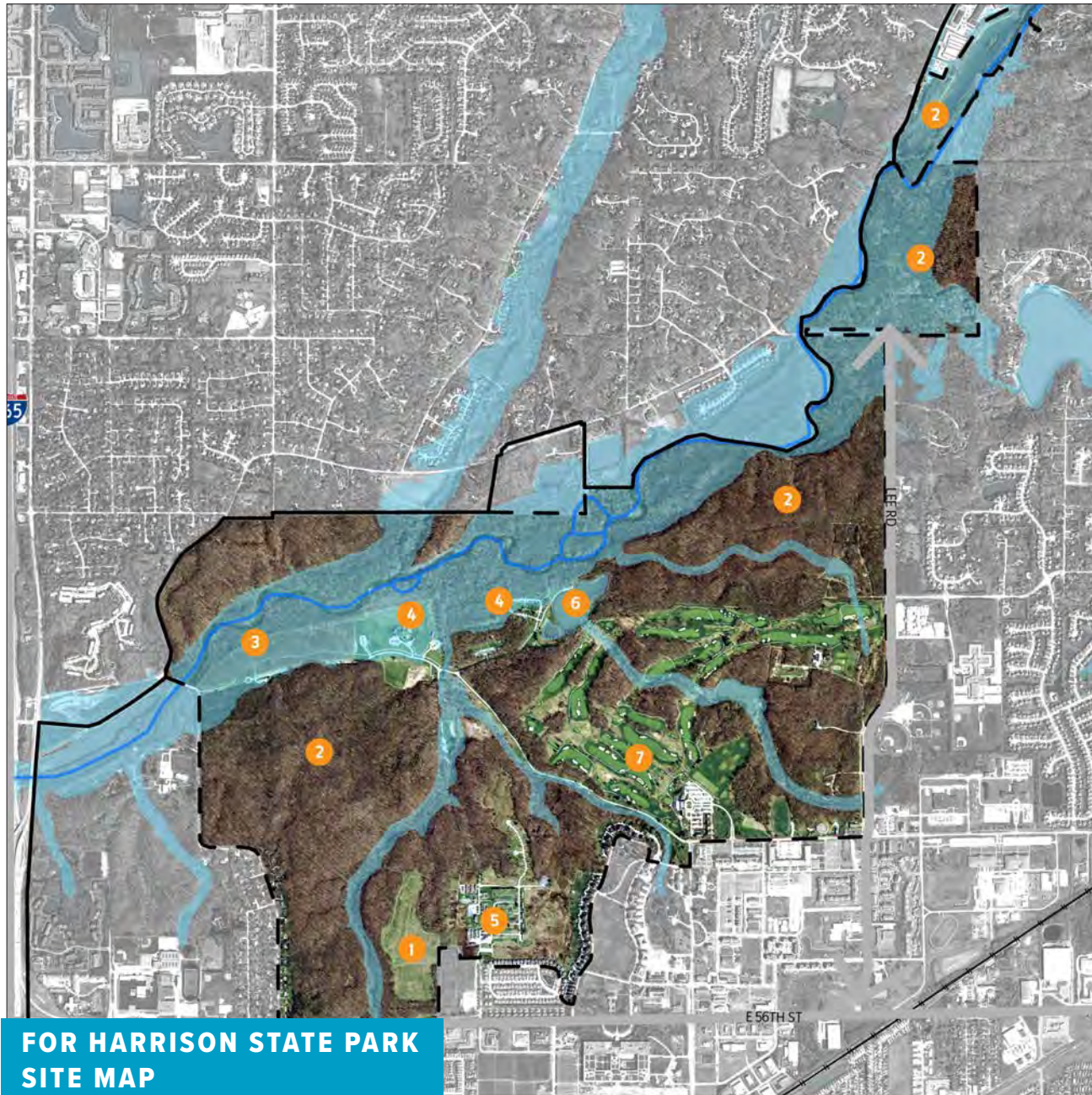
Source: Visit Indiana



Source: Indiana University



Source: Visit Indiana



**FOR HARRISON STATE PARK
SITE MAP**

NUMBER LEGEND

- 1. Running/Track Trail
- 2. Woodland
- 3. Harrison Trace Trail
- 4. Restroom Facility
- 5. Hoosier Trail Rides at Fort Harrison State Park
- 6. Delaware Lake
- 7. Golf Course





CHAPTER 4

Needs Analysis

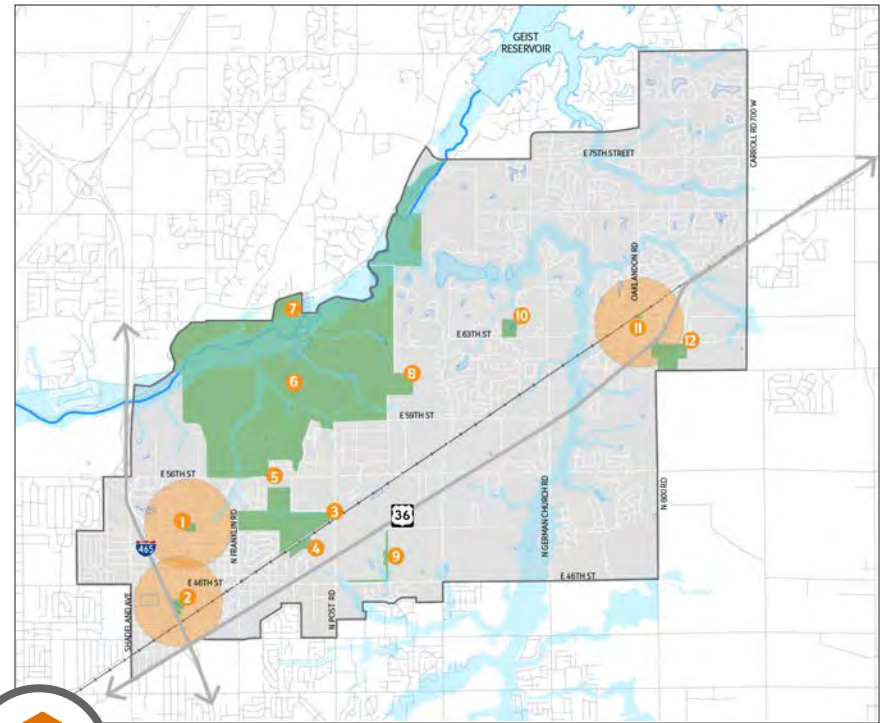
LEVEL OF SERVICE

By classifying each park facility, identifying the area they serve, and quantifying the amount of parkland they provide to residents, this analysis can start to illustrate where gaps exist in the city's ability to provide adequate parks and recreation services to all. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), the basic definition of level of service (LOS) is expressed as an allocation mechanism for the delivery of park and recreation facilities throughout a community. By adopting LOS standards, a community in essence says that all residents, regardless if they pay taxes or use the park and recreation facilities, have equal opportunity to share in the basic services in the standards.

In Chapter 3, each park facility was assigned one of the following classifications; neighborhood, community, regional, or special use. The following park classification descriptions identify a typical service area for each category, such as:

- Neighborhood Parks – ½ mile service area
- Community Parks – 2 mile service area
- Regional Parks – 3+ mile service area
- Special Use – Dependent on use

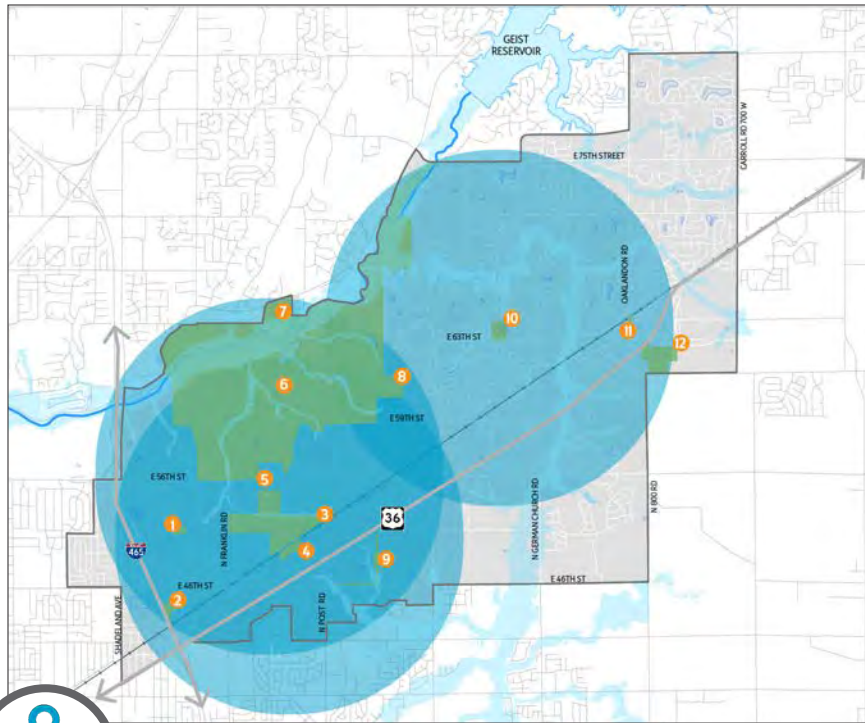
By applying service area buffers around each park facility, the project team was able to understand what parts of the city were underserved. The following section offer a brief explanation by park type.



Neighborhood Parks - 1/2 mile service area

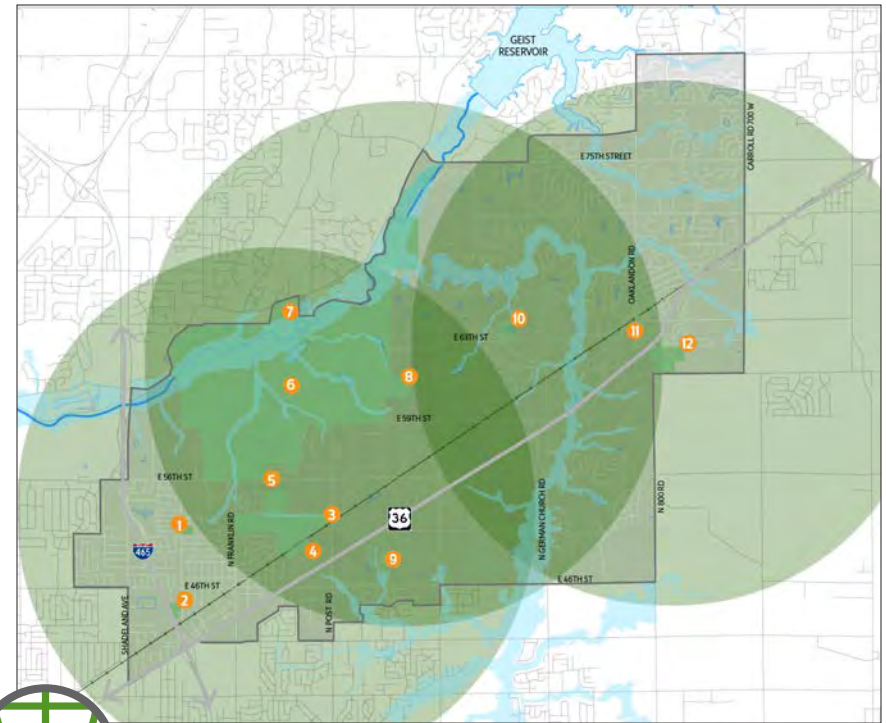
By definition, there are three neighborhood parks within the City of Lawrence including Explorer Park, Richardt Park, and Oaklandon Park. The orange buffers around the park locations represent a ½-mile radius from the center of each park. The map above reveals that much of the Lawrence community is significantly underserved in this park category.





Community Parks - 2 mile service area

By definition, there are three community parks within the City of Lawrence including Alexander Park, Eugene Burns Park, and Louis J. Jenn Memorial Park. The **blue buffers** around the park locations represent a 2-mile radius from the center of each park. The map above reveals that most of the Lawrence community is well served by this park category. The largest underserved areas are the northeast corner and southeast corner of the city.



Regional Parks - 3+ mile service area

By definition, there are three regional parks within the City of Lawrence including Community Park, Veterans Park, and Lee Road Park. The **green buffers** around the park locations represent a 3-mile radius from the center of each park. Overall, Lawrence is well served by regional park facilities. The only portion of the city not served is the very tip of the northeast corners of the city, just east of Geist Reservoir.



HOW DOES THE PARK SYSTEM COMPARE TO LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL STANDARDS?

The process of benchmarking can help inform the community on what specific strengths and challenges exist with the parks systems or from an operations perspective. This section uses two sources for comparison. The first source comprises several communities within and around Marion County, excluding Indianapolis itself. The second source uses data from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

Local Comparisons

The following section is a more localized benchmarking comparison with communities in the area surrounding the City of Lawrence. These are communities identified as those that face similar conditions in both their own character and their surrounding environment. The following comparison communities are included: Speedway, Beech Grove, and Greenwood. It is important to note that these are the same communities that were used for comparison in the existing conditions analysis found in Chapter 2.

Town of Speedway and City of Beech Grove

While both communities have a much smaller population and less parkland, the Town of Speedway and City of Beech Grove were chosen as comparison communities for three reasons. Similar to Lawrence, both communities are independent from the unified government of Indianapolis-Marion County, have direct access to Interstate 465, and have a unique community asset that draws visitors into their community.

Overall, while the City of Lawrence may fall below the national average as put forward by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), it does match the character of other surrounding communities. While smaller, the communities of Speedway and Beech Grove would have roughly the same number of parks and acreage of parkland if proportionally scaled up based on resident population.

City of Greenwood

Located south of Indianapolis in Johnson County, the City of Greenwood boasts the highest population and most managed parks of all the comparison communities. Possessing access to both US 31 and Interstate 65, the city is made up of sprawling neighborhoods with commercial strips around the major roadways. Unlike the other communities, the City of Greenwood is outside of the Indianapolis city core.

While Greenwood has a slightly larger population than Lawrence, it maintains the same amount of park acreage as Lawrence despite having a larger resident population and a greater number of individual park facilities. This same amount of acreage divided among more parks means that Greenwood parks are much more localized and are designed to serve the immediate community rather than the greater region.

Regional Comparisons

Using data collected in the NRPA Agency Performance Review, a comparison can be made between the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department and park agencies across the Midwest. While Lawrence is generally dwarfed in both the park facilities and staffing of other park agencies, these numbers are a bit skewed due to the presence of park agencies in larger communities, such as the cities of Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and Chicago. The table below reveals that Lawrence has over 4,500 residents per park; this is much higher compared to other Midwest communities with an average of 1,500 residents per park. This points to the fact that Lawrence is experiencing a gap in their supply and demand. In terms of trails, Lawrence has about half of the amount that other Midwest communities have. This could be directly related to Lawrence staff capacity and budget.

National Comparison

Also pulled from the NRPA Agency Performance Review was data regarding parks and agencies from across the nation. Even when compared to these national averages, the Lawrence parks and recreation system and department typically falls short in every category. While some leeway can be given in staffing due to the management style of park facilities, the City of Lawrence is falling behind.

	Lawrence	Speedway	Beech Grove	Greenwood
Population	48,751	12,193	14,937	59,458
Total Area	20.25 sq mi	4.76 sq mi	4.47 sq mi	27.91 sq mi
Median Age	36.2	36.9	38.4	36.9
Household Income	\$ 54,032	\$ 44,637	\$ 45,643	\$ 63,572
# of Parks	10	2	5	14
Park Acres	270.8	27.2	72	271
Acres per 1000	5.5	2.23	4.82	4.56
Trails	7.9	1.25	0	20
Staff	12	2	5	15
Staff per 10,000	2.5	1.64	3.35	2.52

	Lawrence	NRPA Standard	
Residents per park	4875.1	2281	Residents
Acres per 1,000 residents	5.5	9.9	Acres
Miles of Trails	7.9	11	Miles
Staffing	12	41.9	Full time staff
Staffing per 10,000 residents	2.5	8.1	Full time staff

KEY FINDINGS

Park Acreage

Lawrence's parks acreage is roughly proportional to levels found in comparison Central Indiana communities, but falls behind in total park acreage at the regional and national levels, according to NRPA standards. Furthermore, according to the 2021-2025 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), communities should have 20 acres of public parkland per 1,000 residents. By this guideline, Lawrence should have roughly 975 acres of public parks and recreational space. Currently, Lawrence has 270 acres or 5.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

The facilities shortage is most acute when it comes to neighborhood parks. Fortunately, many of the larger community parks have neighborhood-oriented facilities, but the resulting access is still unequal, particularly for the northeastern and southeastern portions of the city. The City of Indianapolis maintains some parks near Lawrence's southern boundary, which helps somewhat with local shortages in that area, but these parks are barely within walking distance for Lawrence residents.

Some allowances for these findings can be made for the immediate accessibility of the Fort Benjamin Harrison State Park. Certainly, the availability of such a large outdoor recreational center partially compensates for the lack of facilities elsewhere. It should be remembered, however, that Fort Ben imposes an entry fee, and is situated such that the primary activities within the park are best accessed by car. Despite being a significant regional asset, Fort Ben contributes little to the local issue of neighborhood park access.

ADA Accessibility

The City has implemented many projects to keep parks properties consistent with ADA standards. Not every area within each park can be considered accessible, but that is not the standard, and parks generally have accommodations; Chapter 3 details these facilities on a park-by-park basis, as well as identifies specific needs.

Still, there is room for improvement, with most facilities having some accessibility needs identified. While spread over a wide range, most of these issues revolve around access to sports facilities, playground areas, parking lots, and walking paths. Issues pertaining to parking lots can generally be subsumed under a larger category of maintenance, as in many cases pavement conditions do not allow for clearly identifying handicapped parking spaces.

Department Staffing

The City of Lawrence has significantly fewer parks and recreation staff than the averages outlined by the NRPA report or any of its surrounding neighbors. However, most programming is outsourced to third parties, primarily sports leagues, so in-house staff for programs has not historically been required. This outsourcing has impacted the department's capacity to manage and maintain park facilities, however, with responsibilities for maintenance of sports fields being ambiguous. Programming using this methodology is primarily restricted to youth sports, although a significant initiative is underway with Arts for Lawrence to institute non-sports programming. Increasing program offerings may well require Lawrence to expand its parks and recreation staffing levels.

Department Funding

The annual budget for the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation is largely the same as surrounding communities, even when proportionately scaled to match their larger/smaller populations. However, this budget (Lawrence) is still well below the national average as outlined by the NRPA. The parks budget is derived from general revenues from the City, as well as from proceeds from its programming contracts.

Diversification of funding sources can help ensure stable future funding flows for the parks and recreation system. Possibilities for expanding revenue streams include the following:

- User fees from park admissions and events;
- City of Indianapolis parks revenue sources (sales tax); and
- Dedicated funds for capital projects from local sources, such as tax increment financing

Undoubtedly, general revenues from the city will continue to be the major funding source for the parks department. Accordingly, a clear communications channel with the Lawrence City Council and mayor's office is needed to ensure that the need for funding is known and agreed-upon.

Given this context, it is revealing (and not encouraging) that the proposed 2021 budget for the parks and recreation system exhibits a cur of more than 5% from 2020.



OVERALL SYSTEM EVALUATION

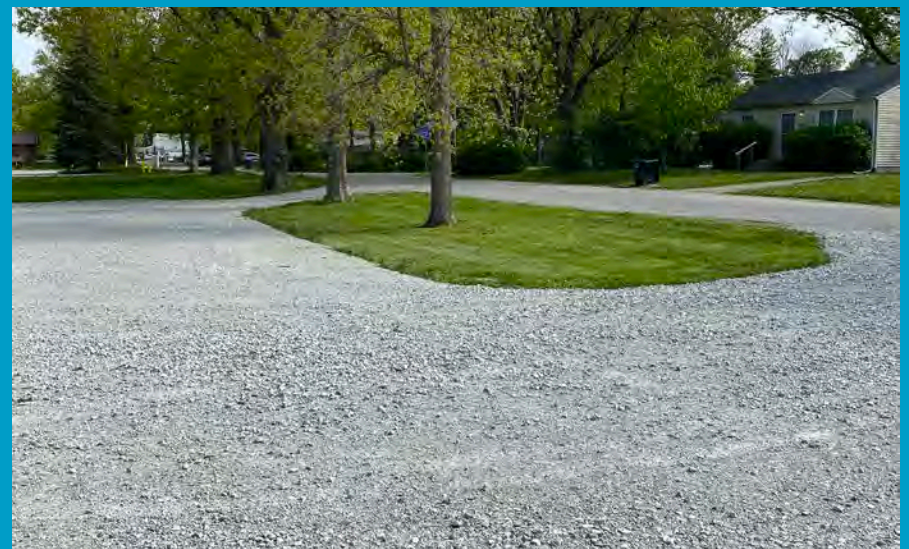
This is an overall evaluation of the program operated and maintained by the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation. The section uses a “SWOT”, or “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats” framework for conducting the evaluation, which in turn is based on whether factors are internal (Strengths, Weaknesses) or external (Opportunities, Threats) to the parks department, and whether factors are positive (Strengths, Opportunities) or negative (Weaknesses, Threats).

Strengths.

- The city is known regionally for the quality of its sports facilities, and many of the sports league participants come from outside of the city.
- The parks department owns a significant amount of park property in older, densely developed neighborhoods and with high accessibility to demand.
- There are several large Regional and Community parks that contribute significantly to the overall parks acreage within the city.

Weaknesses.

- The historic emphasis for programming has been on youth sports, which represents a rather narrow segment of the overall recreational demand.
- The city has fewer parks facilities and acreage than national averages (NRPA).
- Outside parties handle most parks programming, which results in less direct control and more uncertainty over maintenance funding.
- There are improvements needed to ensure ADA compliance.
- There is no water feature at any of the parks.
- The geographic distribution of parks facilities doesn't fully cover the northeastern and southeastern parts of the city.

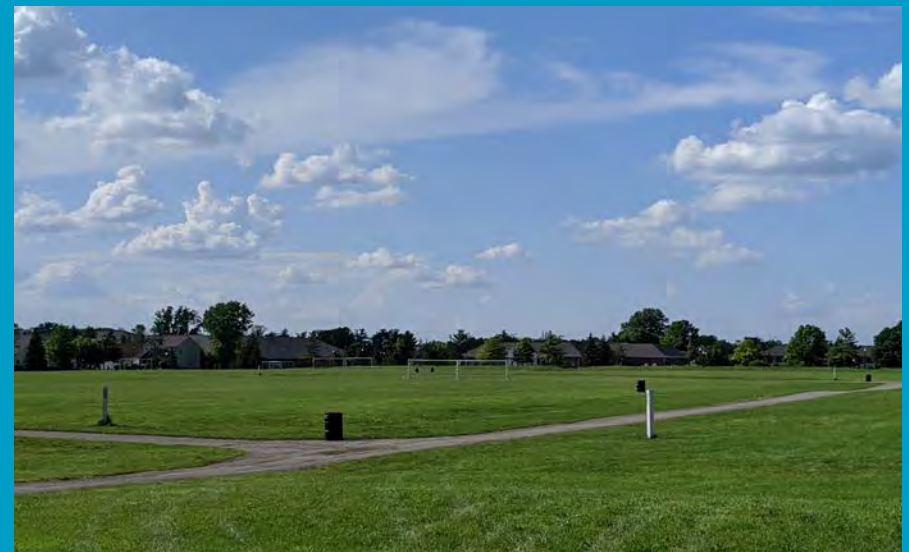


Opportunities.

- There are several countywide and regional initiatives calling for the expansion of a bicycle and pedestrian system; recommendations from these projects would significantly improve access to all park facilities. Furthermore, surrounding communities (Indianapolis, Carmel, McCordsville, and Fishers) have robust trail networks that run to the border of Lawrence and could connect the community into a regional system.
- A regional bus rapid transit (BRT) project, the Purple Line, is planned to enter the city at Post Road and terminate near the city center. Significant resources for improving bicycle and pedestrian access around planned station locations could help with local parks access as well.
- The City of Lawrence has a well-earned reputation as a quality residential location within Marion County and Central Indiana. Quality of life issues resonate with a large proportion of the population.
- The presence of the large Fort Benjamin Harrison State Park provides significant opportunities for cooperative programming, as well as spin-off recreational and economic activities resulting from out-of-town visitors.

Threats.

- Some park facilities require auto transit to reach. Furthermore, as Lawrence expands as a regional center for youth sports, it becomes tempting to design park layouts around automotive visitors rather than the needs of Lawrence residents.
- As parks are not critical infrastructure to a city, parks are constantly fighting to grow or just keep their budget. Also, diversification of funding sources is needed.
- Like many cities, Lawrence shows a spatial sorting of people by race, ethnicity, and income, with most of the lower-income, minority households in the southwestern part of the city. Parks and recreation programming needs may therefore differ by geographic area.







CHAPTER 5

Setting The Stage

CHAPTER 5 – SETTING THE STAGE

This chapter outlines the principles behind the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including the most general statement for desired outcomes (the Vision Statement), and proceeding with increasing levels of detail through the development of goals and objectives. These principles include historic elements that had been listed in prior versions of the Plan, as well as new components arising from emerging challenges that the city is now facing. These principles are listed below; following afterward is a description of the stakeholder and public engagement methods used in developing them.

Vision Statement

A vision statement helps to outline the desired future for the City of Lawrence, and how the parks and recreation system fits into it. Vision statements are not required elements of plans, and prior parks and recreation plans did not have a vision statement; however, vision statements are useful where multiple agencies and parties need to coordinate to achieve necessary outcomes. Because there are multiple interests with a stake in the city's parks and recreation system, it was decided that the current plan would propose a vision statement.

The parks, recreation, and open space system of the City of Lawrence will: Enhance the quality of life, health, and wellness of the community's residents.

1. Have a positive economic impact on the community and support economic development.
2. Strengthen the community's image and sense of place.
3. Protect and manage the community's sensitive environmental resources.

Mission Statement

While a vision statement specifies outcomes to be jointly achieved by multiple parties, a mission statement outlines the role of the parks and recreation department in achieving those outcomes. The Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department has a mission statement that has guided it for several decades; the version below is a reorganized version of this statement.

The mission of the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department is to:

- Improve the quality of life of the citizens of Lawrence by providing a quality parks and recreation experience;
- Manage the open space, natural resource, and parkland assets of the community; and
- Provide high-quality facilities and programs for parks and recreation users and consumers.



Goals and Objectives

To work efficiently with outside departments and parties, clear goals are needed to keep the department and its partners working together toward a common cause. These goals are broad statements meant to be continually worked toward and are designed to be guiding principles for the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation.

As the following goals are more operational guidelines, they are distinctly different from any previously mentioned objectives and strategies. Where objectives are clearly achievable tasks with identified strategies being the means to accomplish them, goals serve a more directional role.

The goals outlined in this document primarily originated in the previous 2010-2014 Lawrence Parks and Recreation Master Plan. From here, established goals were refined and updated based upon their progress since the last plan, before being reviewed by the study review committee for the 2020 City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Upon approval, these goals were incorporated into the current planning document:

1. Efficiently administer and maintain the community's park, recreation and open space system.
 - Cooperate with other municipalities, state and federal agencies, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector in fulfilling the recreational and open space needs of the urban area, where possible, in conformance with standards adopted in the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - Develop a philanthropic board to accept donations of lands and monetary gifts to advance the conservation.
 - Utilize available resources to implement the plan, including impact fees as a source of funding for capital projects directly attributable to new development. Other sources to be pursued include federal and state funding, trust funds, dedicated taxes, local improvement districts, donations, and user fees.
2. Ensure the connectivity of the parks, recreation, and open space system to residents.
3. Provide a balanced park and recreation system available to all segments of the community, serving varying geographical differences, regardless of ability. Individuals and groups should be able to use and be encouraged to use all programs and facilities.
 - Give special consideration to archaeological resources, unique sites, water quality and habitat protection, and views and vistas when acquiring or otherwise protecting open space/parklands and recreational facilities.
 - Give special attention to new and existing school sites to accommodate neighborhood recreation needs, including evening and weekend recreational opportunities, through shared resources, acquisitions, site redesign, and enhancements.
 - Incorporate historically significant sites into the parks, recreation, and open space system for the promotion of tourism and major regional and cultural events.
 - Provide additional programs and recreational opportunities for seniors.
4. Ensure the quality and pertinence of facilities, amenities, and infrastructure to the needs of community and neighborhood residents.
5. Provide, either directly or with partners, programming that encompasses the needs and desires of the city's residents.
 - Coordinate with the Lawrence MSD, YMCA, and Indiana DNR.
 - Establish a process for continuing communication and cooperation among service providers to ensure delivery of effective and efficient services. Develop and maintain a plan that assists the city in obtaining funds for sound capital improvements, maintenance, and operational support.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

To ensure that the priorities of both the Parks Department and the Parks Master Plan reflect the needs of community residents, public feedback is critical to the planning process. Community support built during the planning stage can carry over into the implementation phase, building momentum and a sense of community ownership along residents involved.

Public Participation

Public input was garnered primarily using two tools: a web survey that asked respondents about the Lawrence parks and recreation system and a virtual open house that showed draft strategies, projects, and other materials. The survey was conducted early in the process for responses to have maximum effect; the virtual open house was conducted later in the process to allow visitors to see draft outcomes at an early stage of development.

Summary of Public Survey:

A public survey using the “SurveyMonkey” web service was opened to park users from both the Lawrence community and the greater Marion County. To maximize representation by underserved demographics within the city, special outreach efforts were extended to inner-city religious organizations to more effectively disseminate the survey. Attempts to contact the following Lawrence congregations were made for this purpose:

- Bells Chapel Church of God
- Broadway Baptist Church
- Cricket Hill Southern Baptist Church
- Lawrence Church of God
- Lawrence Full Gospel Tabernacle
- Lawrence United Methodist Church
- St. Lawrence Roman Catholic Church
- Zion Hope Independent Baptist Church

The survey was active from August 1st through September 22nd of 2020, with a total of 286 respondents. Responders were a mix of residents from the City of Lawrence, Lawrence Township, Marion County, and surrounding counties, with the overwhelming majority (74%) being locals. Surprisingly, over half (54%) of survey responders were between 30-50 years of age with an additional 32% being in the age range of 50-70 years old. Combined with the fact that 83% of households did not have anyone active in local sports programs, this data demonstrates a very active adult user population despite park programs tailored for adults being much more limited. Questions ranged from the likes and dislikes of the current park system, to opinions on the organizational structure and effectiveness of the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department itself. Formatting of these questions were broken down into multiple choice and short answer responses, depending on the nature of the question asked and its expected answer.

“I would like to see more parks designed for strolling in nature, but not rustic. Something manicured and tasteful with lots of greenery and benches for sitting, fountains. More like what NYC has or in England.”

While covering a wide range of perspectives, the thoughts and feedback provided by community residents can be summarized into the goals and statements found below:

Parks Department

Few responses focused any attention on the Parks Department itself, as most comments addressed the programs or facilities physically located at the parks. However, one recurring topic was the difficulty and transparency of communication with the department. Either due to limited capacity due to the number of staff or the current organization system in place, survey respondents stated they could not communicate quickly with the parks department, and that the website was not meeting their needs. Primary resident complaints:

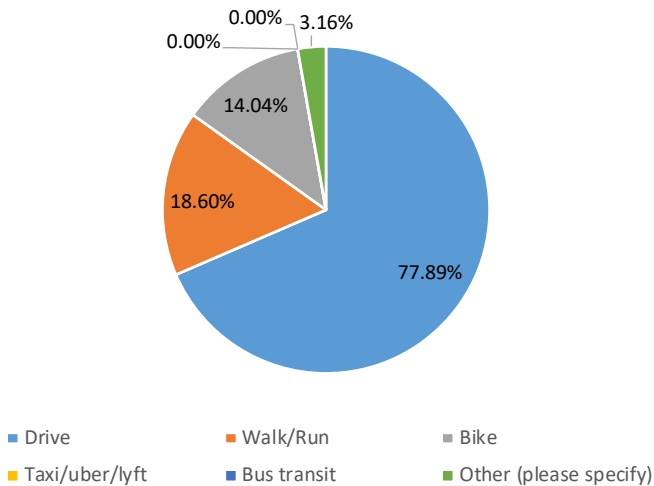
A lack of an ‘active’ and speedy communication method with department staff.

- When trying to communicate with the Department of Parks and Recreation, residents raised the issue that they had no rapid method of communication outside of email. This has led to issues in reporting park maintenance issues, requesting facility rentals, and enforcing said rentals.

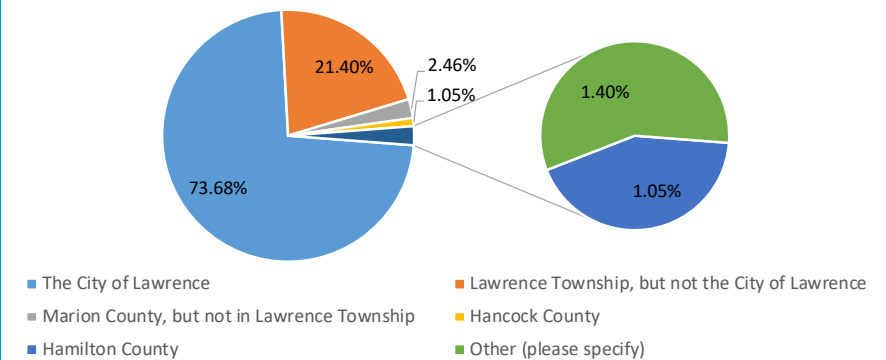
Rental facilities and the request process for said facilities are difficult for users.

- Common complaints were that some rental facilities were not listed on the current department website, rental prices were prohibitive for resident use, and there is no clear method of enforcement for rentals.

How did you travel to the parks that you visit the most?



Which area are you a resident of?



Park Facilities

While many residents expressed satisfaction with the level of maintenance and cleaning undertaken at local parks, a notable number of respondents emphasized a desire to improve park facilities both within the individual parks and in the system as a whole. Comments often referred to the more comprehensive trail networks found in communities to the north like Fishers and Carmel, as well as the more unique playground equipment found at their parks. A handful of responders expressed regret at the loss of the wooden pirate ship play equipment at the Oaklandon Play Park and its replacement with what they viewed as more ‘standard’ equipment.

Requested improvements:

- A tennis/pickleball court
- A splash pad or similar recreational water feature (free to use)
- Creative park playgrounds
- A comprehensive trail system to expand walking and biking conditions
- Beautification of parks with trees, shrubs, and floral plantings

Park Programs

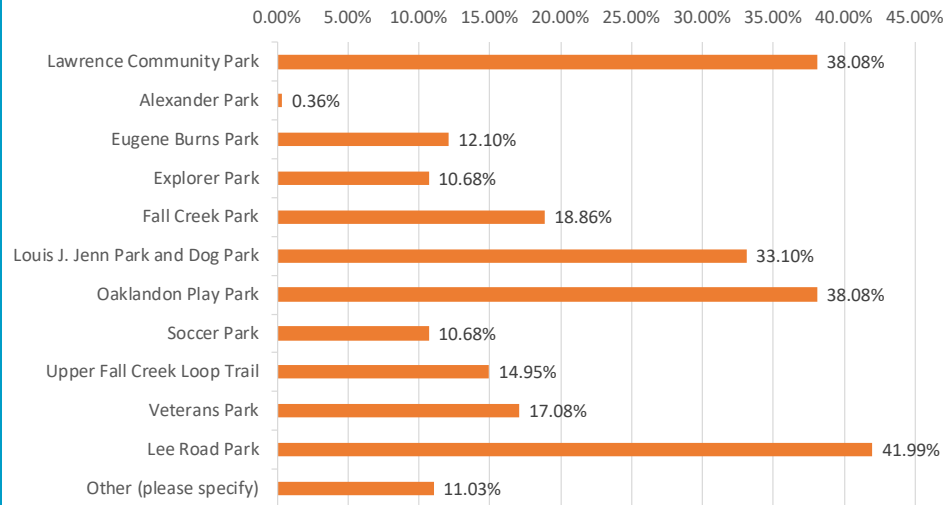
Most of the current park programming is in the form of youth sports programs, and resident comments reflected this. In sharp contrast, 83 percent of survey responders did not have anyone in their household involved in youth sports programs, and instead utilized park programs and systems for their own enjoyment.

Most of park events are organized and run by third-party providers, with the Lawrence Parks Department assuming the role of facility manager and partner. This allows Lawrence to minimize their own facility costs, retaining some level of oversight while allowing residents to create and manage their own events and programs.

Examples of requested programs include:

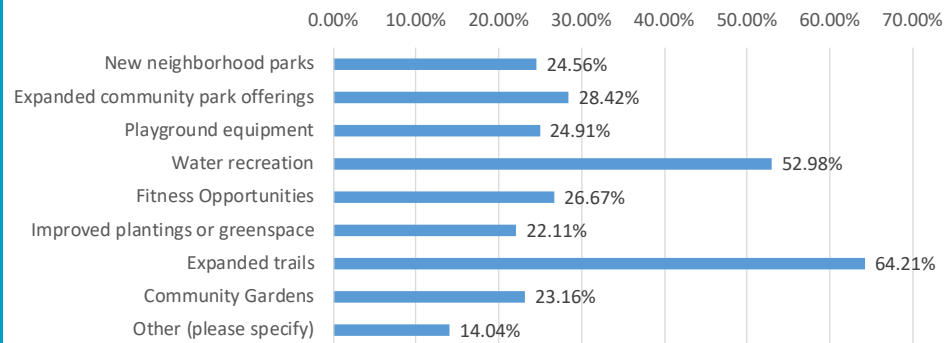
- Yoga/Meditation at the Park
- Cooking Classes
- Arts in the Park
- Community Events
- Concerts
- Festivals
- Movie Night at the Park

What are the closest parks to you, regardless of whether you go there or not. Please check up to three parks.



“I would love to have a walking path on Oaklandon Road to the Oaklandon Park. It’s very dangerous to walk right now, and I would love an opportunity to be a little more green and walk to the park. It would help me utilize that park more.”

What kinds of facilities should the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department focus on over the upcoming five years? (Please select up to three)

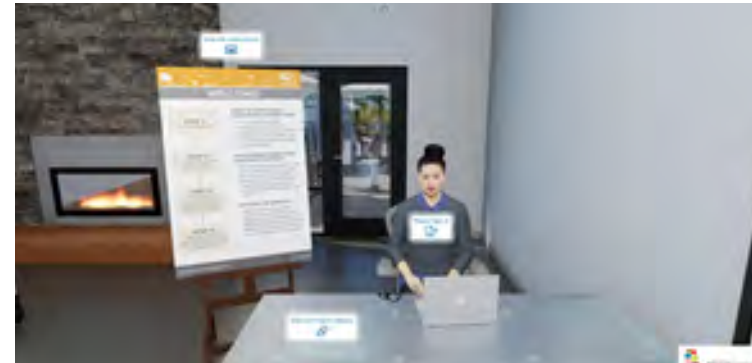


“We are excited to try out the new equipment in Explorer Park, but we tend to visit parks outside Lawrence more frequently because they have water features like splash pads and better playgrounds. We do like the paved path at Lawrence Park.”

Summary of Public Engagement Meeting (Virtual Space)

Normally, in-person public engagement meetings are conducted as part of a planning process, and allow for interplay among project leaders and participants on all elements of plan development, from the establishment of goals and objectives to the identification of individual strategies and projects. As this planning process was conducted during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, recommended social isolation strategies and mandatory caps on the number of participants at public gatherings made in-person meetings impractical. Accordingly, the project group made use of web-based options to conduct public engagement meetings in a virtual meeting space. As with the survey (above), attempts at contacting inner-city religious organizations were made to help disseminate information about the virtual open house.

To accomplish this, a virtual open house was hosted using a program called Seekbeak, a virtual online meeting space where attendees can navigate a generated meeting space to learn about the current status of the project, review collected materials, comment on proposed projects, and leave feedback to both direct and influence the final plan. The space opened on October 22, 2020, and was left open through November 9, 2020, and had over 360 site visits. Visitors to the space would be able to view seven separate boards displayed within the space, three of which provided introductory and background information and four others which requested feedback on various topics and questions.





Mayor Steve Collier lent his presence to the virtual public meeting. His welcoming statement can be viewed below at:

Video Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsK6e1vT7i8>



Study Review Committee

In addition to opportunities for comments by the general public, a 14-member study review committee was formed to provide more detailed ideas and feedback. This committee met (through Zoom) four times throughout the life of the planning process, directing American Structurepoint consultants to areas of key community concern and helping to review document drafts and interim deliverables.

Study review committee members were invited to participate during the initial kickoff of the planning process, and they were identified by their role in the community, office held, or relevant experience in the community. In this way, experienced persons were readily available both for identifying issues within the community and for reviewing the planning document in a timely manner.

Committee Members

Aletha Dunston
Brad Klopfenstein
Dan Kurowski
Grant Nesbit
Jenny Sera
Joe Murphy

Judy Byron
Kevin Dungee
Michael Desanto
Shawn Denney
Sherron Freeman
Trace Yates

KEY FINDINGS

When reviewing data and public responses collected from the survey and virtual meeting, common areas of overlap began to emerge. These ranged from requests for specific improvements that residents would like to see to overall priorities that the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation should pursue. Thoughts and ideas that were repeatedly brought up and shared by multiple Lawrence residents were identified and sorted based upon the character of the request. Types of requests and requested actions can be found below:

Identified Projects

Projects specifically requested to be implemented within the Lawrence community parks:

- Tennis and/or Pickleball Court
- Community Splash Pad
- New park facility in northeastern Lawrence
- Installation of 'unique' playground equipment
- Installation of ADA compliant, inclusive, playground equipment

Desires for the Community

Elements that residents would like to see implemented throughout the community, both within and outside of park facilities:

- Improve overall access and connection of pedestrian walkways
- Installation of dedicated biking infrastructure on roadways
- Establishment of a fully connected trail system, with a 56th Street connection called out specifically

Safety Issues

Issues and concerns that residents had identified as safety issues within the community:

- Intersection and crossing improvements
- Bike lane safety
- Pedestrian protection along Oaklondon Road

Park Maintenance

Key areas of maintenance identified by residents as currently lacking or in need of improvements:

- More frequent maintenance of park open spaces; the lawn of Lawrence Community Park was mentioned specifically.
- Beautification of park facilities to include landscaping, hedging, and flora (flowers)
- Organized cleanup of park litter (by parks department or third-party volunteers)
- Improvement of clear/rapid communication with department staff

Lawrence Community Park received special attention during the planning process. Two concepts were developed to test ideas regarding the possible future development of the park. These concepts are listed below:

Test Concept A

A test concept generated during the planning process to explore what a moderate redesign of Lawrence Community Park could look like. This was done to generate discussion points and gain a general understanding of potential cost estimates.

Concept A generally focuses on a new layout for local sports fields, with centralized concessions, paved walkways, and a slight increase in the total number of parking spaces.



Test Concept B

A test concept generated during the planning process to explore what an extensive redesign of Lawrence Community Park could look like. This was done to generate discussion points and gain a general understanding of potential cost estimates.

Concept B puts less focus on sports fields and greater emphasis on other park amenities. This results in one less sports field than concept A, but in return, provides for the redevelopment of the local basketball courts, the installation of a new pickleball court, and a full update of the exiting playground with new equipment.







CHAPTER 6

The Action Plan

This chapter outlines the actionable strategies that are the culmination of the planning process. They are arranged by the goals listed in Chapter 5. Where appropriate, responsible parties and tentative funding costs for implementation are identified. Some initiatives are intended for citywide implementation and are intended to target the overall community, while others are for specific park facilities, infrastructure improvements, or park programming.

PARKS DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Strategies that fall under this type of recommendation are generally regarding department maintenance, operations, and administration. Community residents are unlikely to notice or take a strong interest in these, as they are largely internal issues for the department.



Top 3 initiatives to prioritize per category*



Communications strategy

The parks department would benefit from developing a clear communications strategy that includes the following elements:

Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
 Branding	Update all park signs and logos to be more uniform, or share characteristics, so as to better emphasize their affiliation with the City of Lawrence and help build upon community identity.	Capital Project	Parks Department
Wayfinding Signage	Update/install internal park signage to help support internal wayfinding and individual park branding.	Capital Project	Parks Department
 Gateway Signage	Establish and update clearly visible entry signage to community parks to build community identity and increase visitors.	Capital Project	Parks Department
Website	Upgrade the current Parks and Recreation website to offer more background information on the various parks and better facilitate communication between the general public and the department.	Operating	City of Lawrence
Naming Conventions	Unification of Lawrence Community Park, Lawrence Soccer Complex, and Lawrence Skate Park all under the jurisdiction of Lawrence Community Park. Converted park facilities will be regarded as Lawrence Community Park amenities.	Operating	Parks Department



Department Organization

When compared with its contemporaries, the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation operates with a much smaller level of staff.



Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Dedicated Outreach	Creation/modification of a dedicated position to proactively seek out partners in the community to help provide park programming.	Capacity Building	Parks Department
Standardize Facility Contracts	Creation of contract templates to help standardize and streamline partnerships with the Parks Department regarding park facility usage and programming.	Operating	Parks Department
Community Portal	Modification of Parks Department website to better illustrate available facility rentals and 'live chat' with park personnel.	Operating	City of Lawrence
Active Enforcement	Development of active enforcement measures for department personnel to ensure facility rentals are honored/respected by other park users.	Operating	City of Lawrence

Department Funding

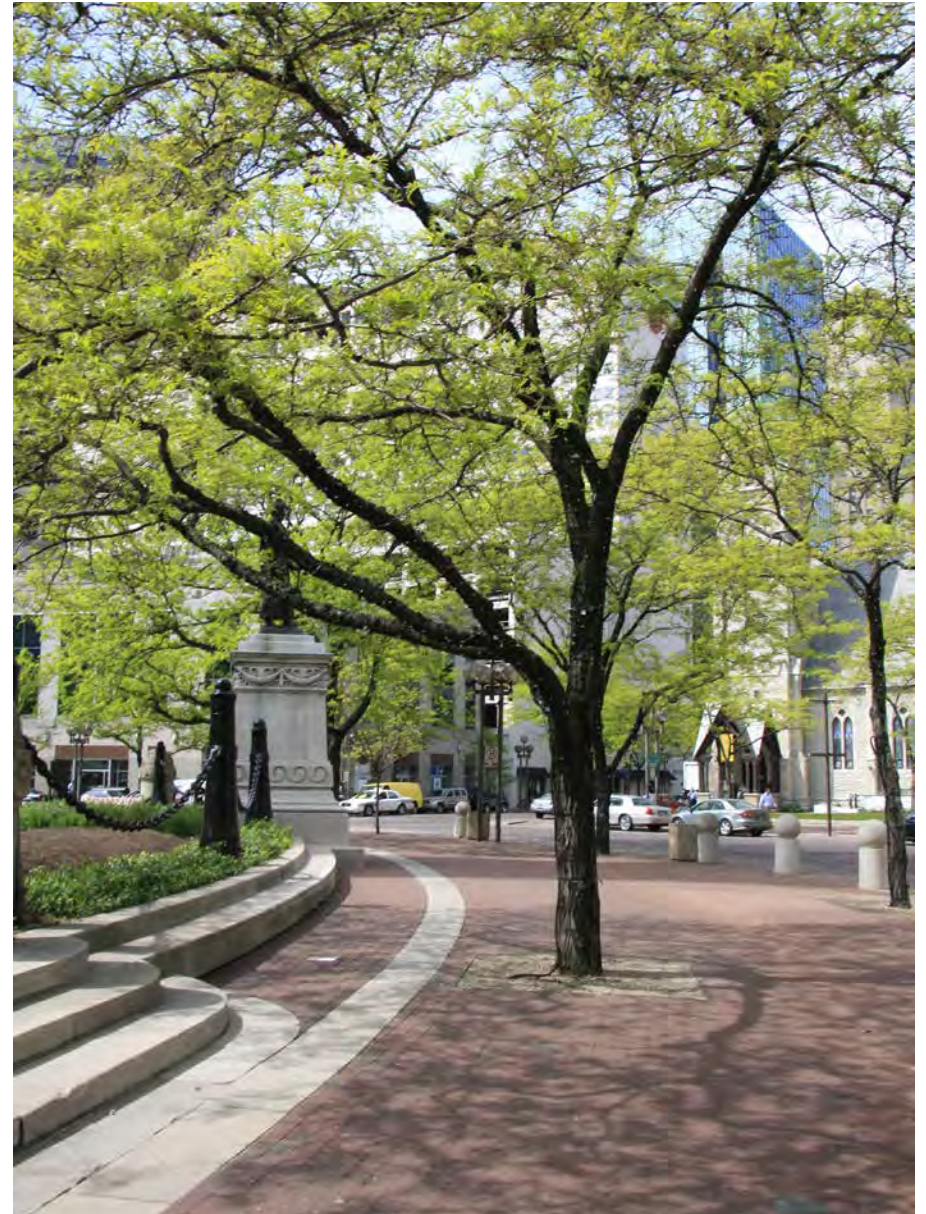
To gain financial flexibility and become less dependent on the Lawrence general budget, the department will seek out additional sources of funding and revenue whenever possible.

Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Park Impact Fees	Establish park impact fees on new construction in the underdeveloped southeast corner of Lawrence to help offset any future expenses in establishing new park facilities.	Operating	City of Lawrence, Parks Department
Standardize Park User Fees	Multiple third-party groups rely on Lawrence sports facilities to operate, and collection of a standardized user fee will aid in covering the cost of facility maintenance.	Operating	Parks Department
Recoup Food and Beverage Tax	Carry out negotiations with Marion County to receive a proportional share of the food and beverage tax collected from within the Lawrence community for local park maintenance.	Partnership	City of Lawrence, Parks Department

SYSTEMWIDE CONNECTIVITY:

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND NATURE

To provide connections with surrounding communities and offer residents an alternative means of transit, the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department should install or complete regional bike and pedestrian networks whenever possible.



Biking Infrastructure

A large number of residents stated in the public survey a desire to see biking infrastructure installed within the community, both for recreation as well as transit.




Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Bike Lanes	Establish protected bike lanes throughout the community based upon recommendations in the 2015 Central Indiana Regional Bikeways Plan.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
IndyGo Purple Line	Partner with IndyGo in constructing the Purple Bus Line in 2021, improving bikeway and trail facilities and connections along the proposed route.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Community Bike Racks	Install bike racks along key corridors, at businesses, and in popular community spaces to help facilitate biking transit.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Maintenance Stations	Install bike maintenance stations along major trails and in parks to aid bike maintenance.	Capital Project	Parks Department

Pedestrian Trails

Establishment of dedicated trails and multi-use pathways identified in the Indianapolis 2020 Regional MPO Pedestrian Plan and recommended by residents through the planning process along major road corridors and waterways to encourage resident movement and recreation.

Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Pendleton Pike	Collaborate with the Indiana Department of Transportation to implement protected pathways along Pendleton Pike, the most active Lawrence traffic artery, to safely facilitate pedestrian movement and crossings.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
56th Street	Improve upon the existing multi-use trail along north 56th Street with beautification, traffic buffers, and wayfinding/branding measures.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
56th Street/ Purple Line	Trail connection improvement at the 56th Street and North Post Road intersection for connection to the proposed Purple Line.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
52nd Street/ High School Trail	Explore the feasibility of a trail connection from Lawrence Community Park, along 52nd Street to Explorer Park, and along North Richardt Avenue to 56th Street.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Lee Road	Expansion and improvement of multi-use pathway along Lee Road to facilitate movement between the Fishers community and the Lee Road Park facility, specifically between 71st and 59th Street.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence

Pedestrian Trails

Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Oaklandon Road	Installation of buffering and wayfinding improvements along with traffic-calming measures on Oaklandon Road to facilitate safe resident movement to and from park facilities.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
 Sunnyside Road	Explore the feasibility of creating a multi-use trail along Sunnyside Road to both connect to potential future park facilities as well as improve circulation within northeast Lawrence.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Indian Creek	Begin acquisition and installation of Indian Creek Trail in southeast Lawrence, opening opportunities for development and regional connection.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Inter-Park Connections	Establish trail connections with all community parks within one system to provide an extensive circulation network within the community, providing residents with access to all parks.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Lawrence Community Park Redesign	Redesign of an internal trail within Lawrence Community Park to efficiently connect the east and west ends of the park.	Capital Project	Parks Department

Resident Safety

When asked, park users overwhelmingly stated they desired more pedestrian safety measure throughout the community.



Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Crosswalks	Install dedicated crosswalks and pedestrian safety measures at key intersections in the community to facilitate movement.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Buffering	Install landscaped turf or physical barrier buffering when installing new bike or pedestrian infrastructure, or when modifying existing systems for resident safety.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Police Engagement	Partner with local police to encourage officers to walk/bike through Lawrence Community Park and engage with residents.	Partnership	Parks Department
Lighting	Install additional lighting within community parks to increase visibility and safety, specifically in Lawrence Community Park.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Emergency Light Boxes	Install emergency light boxes within community parks to increase resident safety and improve police response times.	Capital Project	Parks Department

General Cost Estimates

The following are a few tables containing cost estimates from the 2015 Central Indiana Regional Bikeways Plan. These are average and estimated costs based on the 2015 Plan meant for general rule-of-thumb reference, and should not be taken as project specific costs.

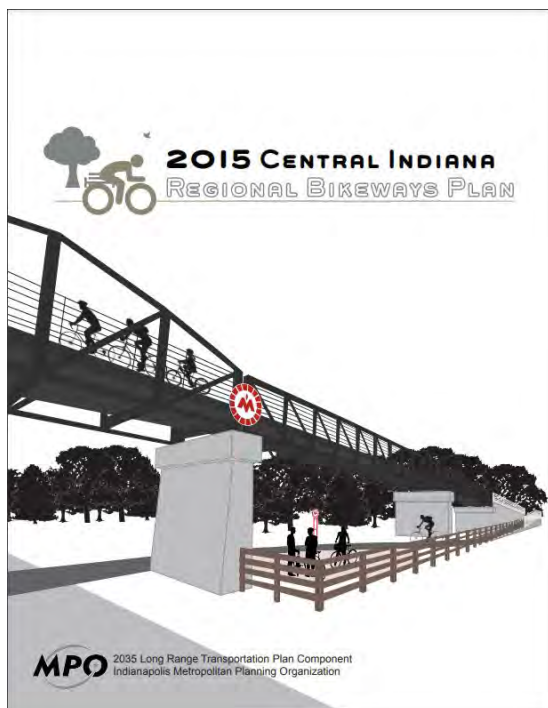


Table 8.1 Detail of Unit Costs for Asphalt Trails (2015 dollars)

Cost Item	Unit	Price per unit
Land Acquisition	acre	\$50,000.00
Preliminary Engineering	lump sum	10% of Const.
Construction		
Clearing and grubbing	acre	\$11,250.00
Grading	linear foot	\$22.66
6" Compacted Aggregate Base No. 53	ton	\$29.54
Compacted Aggregate Base No. 73 (1' shoulders)	ton	\$45.00
2" HMA Intermediate Course (Type C)	ton	\$81.15
1.25" HMA Surface Course (Type C)	ton	\$104.02
Seeding/mulching	square yard	\$1.05
Asphalt Seal Coat	square yard	\$1.67
Signage	Each	\$300.00
Mobilization and Demobilization	lump sum	5% of Const.
Construction Inspection	lump sum	10% of Const.
Bridges and Retaining Walls	lump sum	\$400,000.00
Contingency	lump sum	10% of total

Table 8.2 YOE Cost Projections for Asphalt Trails (per mile)

Trails & Side Paths Width	Base Year (2015 dollars)	2016 to 2026 (2021 dollars)	2026 to 2035 (2033 dollars)
12' Wide	\$1,515,379	\$1,843,229	\$2,374,590
10' Wide	\$1,435,761	\$1,746,385	\$2,249,830
8' wide	\$1,370,665	\$1,667,206	\$2,147,825

Table 8.3 YOE Cost Projections for Bike Lanes (per mile)

Bike Lanes Street Type	Base Year (2015 dollars)	2016 to 2026 (2021 dollars)	2026 to 2035 (2033 dollars)
Two-Way	\$500,000	\$608,174	\$783,497
One-Way	\$350,000	\$425,722	\$548,448

PROVIDING PARKS AND RECREATION FOR ALL: INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Strategies under this recommendation are focused on ensuring that all park facilities are accessible to resident users and that parks are brought up to ADA compliance.



ADA Accessibility

To ensure accessibility to all users, Lawrence park facilities should be brought up to ADA compliance whenever possible.

Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Playground Surfacing	Ensure that all playground surfacing is ADA compliant and does not prevent any residents from using park facilities.	Maintenance	Parks Department
Designated Signage	Install proper descriptive signage within park facilities to inform users of a park's accessibility, the location of accessible parking, and where to find further information regarding park accessibility.	Capital Project	Parks Department
Parking Paint	Repaint parking lines at all park facilities to ensure that all driving lanes and parking spaces are clearly defined.	Maintenance	City of Lawrence
Accessible Parking	Ensure that all parking facilities at community parks have an adequate number of accessible spaces based upon the standards set forth by the US Department of Justice in the American Disabilities Act (ADA).	Maintenance	Parks Department
Connecting Pathways	Extend all internal pathways within community park facilities to connect all park amenities with a paved and accessible pathway.	Capital Project	Parks Department

Equity

Given the age of some park facilities, steps should be taken when possible to update and modify park facilities to make sure all amenities can be accessed by resident users.

Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Sensory Equipment	Include sensory playground equipment when playgrounds are either installed or updated.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Accessible Infrastructure	Connect all public infrastructure with accessible pathways and clearly visible features.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Amenities	All park amenities should include features so as to be accessible to all users, including but not limited to: public seating, water fountains, restrooms, waste disposal bins, shading structures, and concession services.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence Parks Department

Level of Service (LOS)

Identified gaps in the level of service provided by the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation should be filled when possible or reduced with additional resident mobility and accessibility.

Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Single Park System	Pursue the installation of trails, bike lanes, and walkways within the community to connect all park facilities and improve resident access to said facilities.	Capital Project	Parks Department
New Park Facilities	To fill gaps in the park service provided to residents by Neighborhood and Community Parks, the establishment of new park facilities should be explored in the community's northeast and southeast.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
Sunnyside Road Park	Establish a new park facility along Sunnyside Road on city-owned property to supply park amenities to the underserved northeast community.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence
52nd or 46th Street Park	Establish a new park facility in the undeveloped areas of southeast Lawrence along Mitthoeffer Road, preemptively servicing any future community development and providing park facilities to underserved residents.	Capital Project	City of Lawrence

PARK FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following initiatives are broken down by individual parks based upon their existing amenities, ADA accessibility, location, and special interests. Identified elements are listed either due to not meeting design standards or for having the potential to increase park usability.





Alexander Park (Charney)

Established in 1952, Alexander Park primarily serves local softball and baseball teams. Located at 4902 Charney Ave., Alexander Park can be easily overlooked with a single entrance and a nearly hidden drive.

Amenities

- Repair landscaping features

Playground Equipment

- NA

Accessory Structures

- Replace entryway signage
- Create entry boulevard

Recreational Facilities

- NA

Infrastructure

- Pave pathways and connections to amenities
- Pave parking surfacing
- Paint parking lines
- Designate accessible spaces (ADA compliant)





Bragdon Wetlands Park

Turned over to the City of Lawrence in 2014 by the Monarch Beverage Company, this 12-acre park is an undeveloped wetland preserve consisting primarily of open space with connections to both 52nd Street and 46th Street.

Amenities

- Public seating
- Waste bins
- Water fountains- pet

Playground Equipment

- NA

Accessory Structures

- Trailhead
- Shade shelter

Recreational Facilities

- NA

Infrastructure

- Boardwalk connection
- North/South trail connection

Special Interest

- Consider feasibility of original park design, as well as alternative development designs
- Apply to have the park name and boundary illustrated on mainstream mapping services



**BRADGON WETLANDS PARK
SITE MAP**



Eugene Burns Park

Established in 2001, Eugene Burns Park is a 12.8-acre park facility in central Lawrence characterized primarily by its football facilities and location adjacent to both Lawrence Community Park and the Fort Harrison State Park.

Amenities

- Restrooms (more accessible)
- Water Fountains
- Solid surface viewing platforms

Playground Equipment

- NA

Accessory Structures

- Shaded sideline shelters

Recreational Facilities

- NA

Infrastructure

- Paved pathways to sports fields
- Pedestrian crossing for drainage ditches



**EUGENE BURNS PARK
SITE MAP**



Explorer Park

Established in 1950, Explorer Park is a 5.2-acre park surrounded by neighborhoods in central Lawrence.

Amenities

- Water fountains
- Additional public seating

Playground Equipment

- ADA-compliant equipment (sensory)

Accessory Structures

- Install more noticeable park signage
- Restroom facilities

Recreational Facilities

- Splash pad/water feature

Infrastructure

- Designated accessible parking
- Parking restriping
- Direct pathway from parking to park





Lawrence Community Park

Established in 1950, Lawrence Community Park is the largest and most visited park under the purview of the Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation, and boasting the largest size, extensive parking facilities, multiple entrances, an internal trail network, and a central location within the community.

Amenities

- Gateway beautification
- Additional public seating
- Increase lighting for safety and night use
- Installation of police safety boxes

Playground Equipment

- Install additional playground along eastern entryway
- Install ADA-compliant swing (Suzie swing)

Accessory Structures

- Internal soccer field shelter
- Construct pavilion w/restroom facilities along eastern edge

Recreational Facilities

- Install dedicated pool complex (splash pad, community pool, slides, lazy river)
- East entrance trail head
- Convert old basketball court into pickleball/tennis court
- Redevelopment of baseball complex

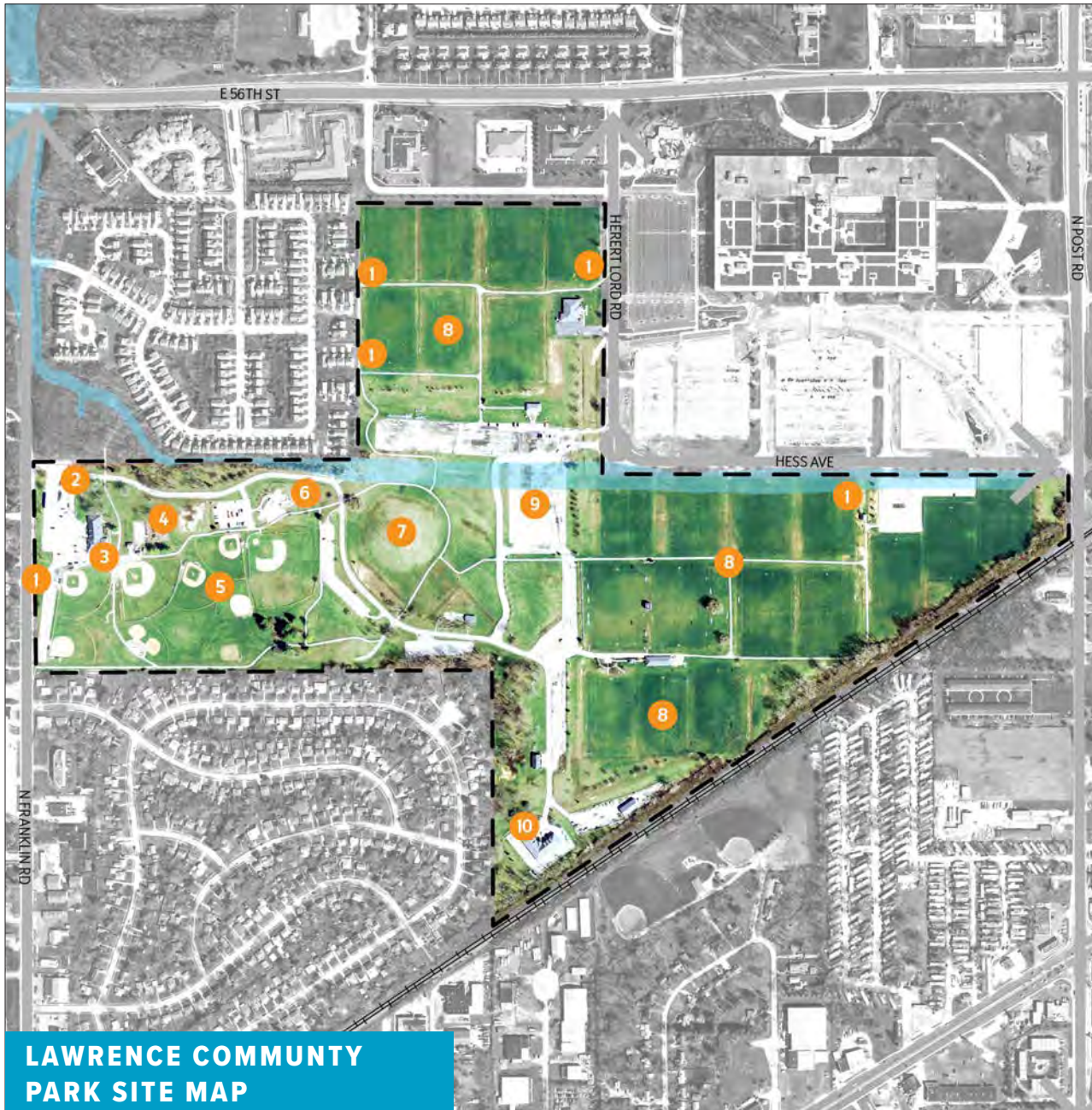
Infrastructure

- Redesign of internal trail system (connect east and west)
- Eastern entry gateway
- Consolidate parking into centralized lots
- Landscaping along internal trail network
- Increased lighting

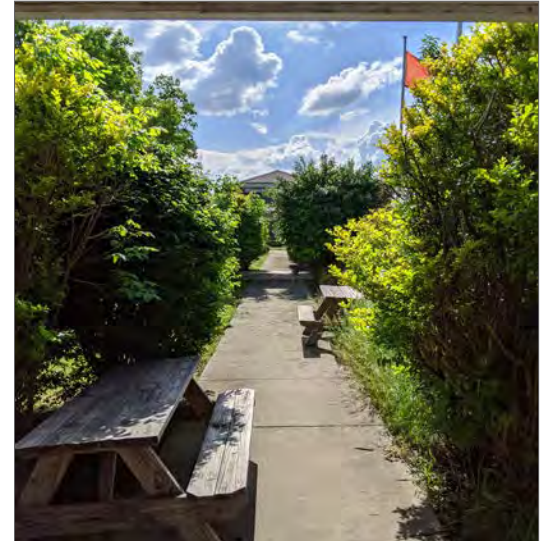
Special Interest

- Explore benefits of full park facility redesign
- Consolidation of parks (skate park, soccer complex)
- Request park facility name and boundary to be displayed on mainstream mapping services
- Utilize Lawrence Community Park mound for sledding, hilltop shelter, and/or elevated viewing platform
- Police station connection/partnership

*NOTE: Park concepts for future development were developed, and are show on page 89**



**LAWRENCE COMMUNITY
PARK SITE MAP**



Lee Road Park

Established in 1971, Lee Road Park is a 28-acre facility in central Lawrence characterized by its many sports fields and the Fall Creek Softball & Baseball league.

Amenities

- NA

Playground Equipment

- Implement an additional playground

Accessory Structures

- Connect internal pavilion to trail system

Recreational Facilities

- Eliminate and replace excess baseball fields at Lee Road Park
- Install pickleball/tennis courts
- Connect sports fields to internal trail network
- Dedicated connection to Fall Creek Middle School
- Restripe of parking lots
- Renew signage for accessible parking
- Improve accessibility of restrooms
- Additional restroom facility
- Install a 1.5-mile multi-use trail along park perimeter
- Construct a dedicated central plaza within proposed sports facilities

Special Interest

- Explore full redesign of Lee Road Park facility



Louis J. Jenn Memorial Park

Established in 1997, Louis J. Jenn Memorial Park is a 14.2-acre facility in central Lawrence. The park is characterized by an enclosed rental facility, live pond, and Waggin' Tails Bark Park, the only department-managed enclosed dog park.

Amenities

- Additional playground facility within open space at park entry
- Secondary dog park to separate large/small dogs

Playground Equipment

- ADA-approved equipment
- Secondary playground near front entry to park

Accessory Structures

- Entryway display for park hours
- Instructional plaque for dog park membership
- Waterfront viewing platform

Recreational Facilities

- Access point for playground

Infrastructure

- Pedestrian access and walkway to rear section of park
- Install walking trail around the park's front boundary and woodland
- Modification and repair of rear parking lot
- Restripe parking lines
- Resurfacing of drive and pedestrian pathways
- Explore trail connections with surrounding neighborhoods

Infrastructure

- Remove or reduce the dog park membership fee for residents



Oaklandon Play Park

Established in 1978, Oaklandon Play Park is a 0.8-acre park facility focused primarily on its playground equipment in a heavily residential area. It includes the iconic Oaklandon water tower and has recently had its playground replaced with more modern equipment, to the mixed feelings of residents.

Amenities

- Update restroom facilities

Playground Equipment

- Pursue more “exotic” playground equipment similar to prior installation
- Sensory equipment
- ADA-accessible swings (Suzie swing)

Accessory Structures

- Replace park entry signage to increase visibility

Recreational Facilities

- NA

Infrastructure

- Secondary pedestrian entryway in rear of park
- Replacement/repair of park perimeter fencing
- Increase pedestrian safety features and markings along Oaklandon Road
- Increased lighting

Special Interest

- Apply to illustrate the park boundary on mainstream mapping services



Richardt Park (Soccer Park)

Established in 1980, Richardt Park is a 7-acre park facility in southwest Lawrence surrounded by neighborhoods adjacent to Interstate 465.

Amenities

- Additional public seating
- Public water fountains

Playground Equipment

- NA

Accessory Structures

- Install restroom facilities
- Install pavilion/shade structure

Recreational Facilities

- Explore additional/replacement sports facilities for recreation
- Implement internal walking path around park perimeter

Infrastructure

- Paved parking
- Designated accessible parking spaces

Special Interest

- Apply to illustrate the park boundary on mainstream mapping services





Veterans Park

Established in 1994, Veterans' Park is a 41.4-acre park based primarily around baseball/softball facilities in eastern Lawrence.

Amenities

- Landscaping screen around park boundary
- Additional public seating around playgrounds and sports facilities
- Shaded dining area at intersections of sports fields

Playground Equipment

- Update northwest playground equipment

Accessory Structures

- Additional restroom facility
- Central concession stand/plaza
- Install gateway signage to Pendleton Pike entrance

Recreational Facilities

- Explore feasibility of water features (splash pad, fountains)

Infrastructure

- Additional parking adjacent to southeast playground
- New roadway to connect proposed parking
- Pave surfacing around sports facilities to improve accessibility
- Expand internal trail network to improve circulation around park facility
- Trail/pathway connection to surrounding neighborhoods to ease access

Special Interest

- Explore redesign of park facility



ACTIVATE PUBLIC SPACE THROUGH PROGRAMMING

To keep residents active and engaged within their community, the following initiatives mobilize residents to help both maintain and activate public spaces.



Citizen Engagement

Given the Department of Parks and Recreation's preference for utilizing third-party partnerships for park programming over direct management, engaging residents in the maintenance and expansion of park facilities is the next logical step.



Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Adopt-A-Park	The Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation will institute a park adoption program where residents/businesses can “adopt” a community park, where members take initiative in park cleanup or can help install new facilities.	Operations	City of Lawrence, Parks Department
Park Plantings	Engage residents in an annual planting event within Lawrence park facilities, planting various trees and flora to beautify park facilities.	Maintenance	Parks Department
Arts In Lawrence	Utilize the upcoming Fort Ben Cultural Campus to provide art programming and events to residents	Operations	Parks Department



Park Programming

Building on the current system of partnerships, expand current park programming to better fit the wishes of resident users.



Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
Programming Kickoff	Create a dedicated line of communication where residents can propose their own programming for parks, and receive direction and aid from the department.	Operations	Parks Board
Standardize Partnerships	Provide a clear template outline that is publicly available on how potential partners may work with the Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department and what such a relationship would involve.	Operations	Parks Board
Ballot Box	Establish a means (whether physical or virtual) where residents can directly request specific park programming and evaluate the effectiveness of implemented programs.	Partnership	Parks Board, City of Lawrence

Park Programming Requested

Throughout the park planning process, specific programs and events were requested by Lawrence park users for their parks. Specifically, adult park users pointed out the lack of park programming for adult residents. Possible opportunity for implementation in the upcoming Fort Ben Cultural Campus.

Initiatives	Description	Investment Type	Identified Responsible Parties
 Meditation/Yoga In the Park	The Lawrence Department of Parks and Recreation will contact local fitness providers within the community to explore the possibility of providing yoga lessons within park facilities. Initial expenses will be shared or covered by the department and will be gradually shifted depending on popularity.	Operations	Parks Department
 Cooking Classes	Hosted in the upcoming Fort Harrison Cultural Center, the department will partner with local chefs and instructors in providing basic and specialized cooking lessons. If successful, the program can be expanded to include online formatting.	Operations	Parks Department
Community Events	Begin establishing annual community events both for the quality of life of residents, as well as enforce the branding of the Lawrence community.	Partnership	Parks Board, City of Lawrence
Winter Festivities	Build upon the permanent installation of the Lawrence Ice Rink, creating an annual winter festival for the holiday season.	Operations	Parks Board, City of Lawrence
 League Merger	Help facilitate the merger of Lawrence Lions Baseball and Softball with Fall Creek Baseball and Softball into one combined league.	Operations	Parks Department





Appendix

Auxiliary Materials

APPENDIX

ADA/ABA Accessibility Sign-Off Sheet

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Intended as a confirmation of responsibilities by a Parks Department, the ADA/ABA Accessibility Sign-Off Sheet ensures that park entities applying for grant monies understand that any projects they wish to carry out must meet accessibility requirements and must bring any modified facilities up to an acceptable standard.

Parks Department 2021 Proposed Budget

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Prepared on August 28th of 2020, the proposed budget for the City of Lawrence includes a dedicated section within the General Fund for the Parks Department. This budget was further refined and adopted on October 21st of 2020.

Results from Seekbeak Virtual Public Meeting Space

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Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, alternative means of public engagement were needed to involve Lawrence residents in the park planning process. Seekbeak is a 3rd party program utilized by consultant American Structurepoint to create a virtual space where users can move about a digital room and view meeting materials. The space was open October 11th, 2020 through November 8th of 2020.

Results from Lawrence Parks Master Plan Online Public Survey

157

Results from the online public survey used to collect public feedback on the current condition of Lawrence parks and possible projects/programs to implement.

ADA Self Evaluation Questions: Park-by-Park Review

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Park-by-Park evaluations carried out by American Structurepoint personnel at the beginning of the park planning process.

