

Connersville, Indiana

5-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan

2016 To 2020

**A Comprehensive Master Plan by the Connersville Park Board
And the Connersville Parks and Recreation Department**

Connersville Parks and Recreation Department

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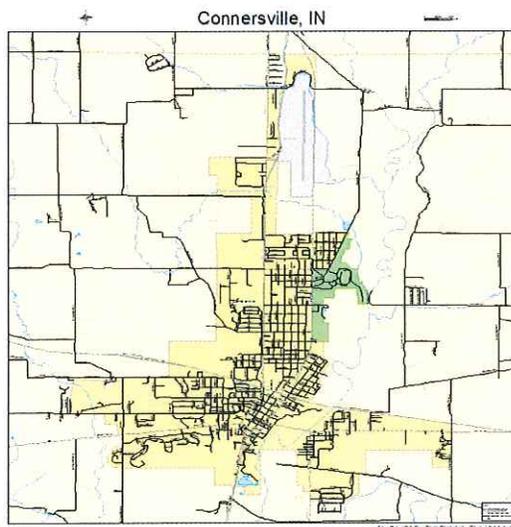
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Introduction

The Connersville Parks and Recreation Department 5-Year Master Plan 2016-2020 has been approved by the Connersville Parks and Recreation Director, Jessica Faw, with the collaboration provided by Connersville Parks and Recreations Sports & Recreation Director, Darrell Drew, and the Connersville Parks and Recreation Board. Other agencies that provided research assistance include the Connersville City Grants Department and the Fayette County Foundation. The final draft of the plan was completed on April 8, 2016 and was approved by the Connersville Parks and Recreation Departments Board on April 11, 2016.

Definition of the Planning Area

The Connersville Parks and Recreation Departments (CPRD) planning area is the same as its service area, which encompasses 143.5 acres of park property within the city limits of Connersville, Indiana. The 143.5 acres is divided among eight public parks. Connersville is the county seat of Fayette County, which is located in the southeast quadrant of the state. Current population estimates provided by the 2014 U.S. Census indicate the total population of Fayette County is 23,468, with the City of Connersville's current population being around 13,032 people. While a city department, CPRD programs influence all these citizens, as well as non-residents. Currently the approximate 10,436 county residents do not financially support CPRD through tax payments. Connersville City and County Councils have agreed this year to begin quarterly meetings to bring the two entities closer together. A better balance of budget could be discussed at these joint meetings. A map of Connersville is shown below.



Goals of the Plan

The CPRD aims to achieve three primary goals from its master plan: to regroup, to determine expansion projects, and to apply for applicable grant funding. The foremost goal of the CPRD master plan for the next five years is to restore cohesive planning tactics among the CPRD, other city entities, and the citizens of Connersville. This is a prime opportunity to regroup after the 12-year lapse of an existing park board and master plan. To that end, secondary goals of this objective include collecting current data in regard to the condition and use of existing parks and amenities and to collect data for the improvement of those facilities. In essence, we need to evaluate with what our citizenry is satisfied and what needs improvement. From that point, our master plan will allow us to prioritize those projects and

develop a timeline for their completion. Subsequently, the master plan will help to provide guidance and structure for CPRD staff, and will serve as a catalyst for public support CPRD projects. Second, the CPRD aims to align citizen wants with funding opportunities to consider expansion projects. Our new park director, new mayor, new city council, and soon to be new county council, present us with an excellent opportunity to consider the possibility of expanding our park system. These fresh faces bring with them a fresh perspective on what is possible for Connersville and the belief that perhaps what has always been isn't necessarily what is best. Our newly elected officials believe in the economic value of improved quality of life, and therefore understand the outstanding asset that is our park system. Based on resident feedback, the CPRD and City can form an efficient partnership to develop new park amenities if not completely new parks.

Finally, the CPRD expects to use its 5-year master plan to become eligible to apply for applicable grants to achieve the aforementioned goals.

The Park Board/Department

The City of Connersville supported a Park Board from 1999-2004 until it was dissolved in 2004 under the advisement of then mayor Max Ellison. Mayor Ellison felt it necessary to dissolve the Park Board because politics had begun to overshadow the true mission of the park board.

Since that time, attitudes have changed in regard to a Park Board, especially under the guidance of newly elected City officials and the current park director. The Park Board was re-established unanimously by Connersville City Council on February 1, 2016 under ordinance 6285, which is included as **Appendix 1, Park Board Ordinance 6285**. Per ordinance 6285, the CPRD Park Board will have four members appointed by the mayor and two ex officio members, one appointed from the school board and the other from the library. Members will be selected based on their demonstration of knowledge and interest in parks and recreation. At this time, board members will not be compensated outside of per diem for necessary travel to trainings and other functions.

Appointments for CPRD Board Members were announced on March 29, 2016. Board members are:

Sharon McQueen
831 North Grand Avenue
Connersville, Indiana 47331
765-692-0368
smcqueen831@gmail.com
One (1) year appointment
Appointed by the Mayor

Jeffery L. Cooley
923 Ranch Road
Connersville, Indiana 47331
765-309-7055
jcooley@fayette.k12.in.us
Two (2) year appointment
Appointed by the Mayor

David E. Young

801 Morning Glory Lane
 Connersville, Indiana 47331
 765-748-5519
 wonderyoung0045@aol.com
 Three (3) year appointment
 Appointed by the Mayor

Jennifer E. Barrett
 718 Ranch Road
 Connersville, Indiana 47331
 859-492-9472
 jenbarrett74@gmail.com
 Four (4) year appointment
 Appointed by the Mayor

Tom Powers
 408 W. 15th Street
 Connersville, Indiana 47331
 765-265-3580
 tandv1@gmail.com
 Four (4) year appointment
 Appointed by Fayette County School Board

ADD LAST PERSON

Because the CPRD Park Board has only been re-established for a short time, the current park director developed the following general goals of the Board. The Board will discuss, edit, and approve these goals in the coming months.

- To provide guidance to the CPRD staff
- To provide ideas for financial support and fundraising opportunities
- To garner support and awareness for CPRD initiatives
- To help bolster volunteers and volunteer groups
- To evaluate and prioritize CPRD current and proposed initiatives

CPRD Staff:

Employee	Hire Date	Job Title	Full /Part Time
Jessica Faw	8/4/2014	Superintendent	Full Time
Darrell Drew	9/13/2010	Sports & Recreation Director	Full Time
Erica Murray	1/20/2016	Secretary	Full Time
Brackie Bryd	4/9/2001	Maintenance	Part Time
Ken Solomon	5/3/1978	Maintenance	Full Time
Clarence Colgate	3/29/1986	Maintenance	Full Time
Jeremy Browning	6/4/2007	Custodian	Part Time
Loretta Smith	3/20/2008	Office Support	Part Time
Colleen Hamilton	5/20/2013	Office Support	Part Time
Sharon Kline	11/14/2011	Office Support	Part Time

CPRD hires approximately 50 to 60 seasonal workers during the summer months to work at the pool, our summer discovery program and outside maintenance on the sports fields and park grounds.

CPRD Budget is attached as **Appendix 2, 2016 CPRD Budget**. The current mission of the CPRD is "to provide the entire community with the highest quality Park and Recreation services, delivered in a professional and friendly manner." General goals of CPRD, before evaluation from the new Board, are to:

- Evaluate current facilities and improve/repair as necessary (including ADA Requirements)
- Find uses for unused park buildings
- Expand programming for kids and seniors
- Expand trail system
- Relocate current baseball fields
- General maintenance and upkeep of the park system

CPRD maintains and supervises 143.5 acres of public park property that is divided among eight parks. Following is a brief summary of each park.

Roberts Park:

- Address: 2900 North Park Road, Connersville, Indiana 47331
- Acreage : 66
- Amenities: Pool, Basketball Courts, Restrooms, Shelters, Tennis Courts, Volleyball, Picnic Areas, Playgrounds, Horseshoe pits, Open Play, Horse track & Amphitheatre, Horse Barns and Buildings.

Ohio Valley Soccer Complex:

- Address: Veterans Memorial Drive, Connersville, Indiana 47331
- Acreage: 20
- Amenities: Restrooms, Soccer fields, playground, picnic areas and open play.

John Conner Nature Preserve:

- Address: 240 Eastern Avenue, Connersville, Indiana 47331
- Acreage: 22
- Amenities: Shelters, Fishing, Trails, Picnic area and open play.

2nd Street Park

- Address: South 2nd Street, Connersville, Indiana 47331
- Acreage: .5
- Amenities: Basketball, Picnic areas, playground and open play.

Industrial Park

- Address: 701 West Mount Street, Connersville, Indiana 47331
- Acreage: 4
- Amenities: Basketball, Picnic Areas, Restrooms, Playgrounds, Softball field and open play.

Offuts Park:

- Address: 3200 North Virginia Avenue, Connersville, Indiana 47331
- Acreage: 9

- Amenities: Basketball, Playground, Open Play and picnic areas

Sports Complex:

- Address: 300 East 6th Street, Connersville, Indiana 47331
- Acreage: 18
- Amenities: Restrooms, Shelters, Picnic Areas, Playground, Softball & Baseball fields and open play.

Frazer Park:

- Address: 901 Meyer Avenue, Connersville, Indiana 47331
- Acreage: 4
- Amenities: Picnic Areas, playground and open play

CPRD offers numerous programs in addition to providing space for other organizations to host programs. Following is a list of all programming.

CPRD General Programming

Horse barn stall rentals
 Summer Discovery Day Camp
 Halloween Party
 Easter Egg Hunt
 Santa in the Park
 Swim Lessons
 Family Aquatic Center
 Pool parties

CPRD Kids Programming

Basketball
 Kickball
 Soccer
 T-ball
 Softball
 Indoor Soccer
 Archery

CPRD Adult Programming

Soccer
 Coed softball
 Church league basketball
 Men's league basketball
 Kickball
 Volleyball
 Pickleball
 Church League softball
 Dodgeball
 Senior walking program

CPRD Collaborative Programming

Relay for Life
 Fayette County Free Fair
 Hope Pregnancy fund Raiser
 Garden Club
 Lion's Club Rodeo
 Lion's Club Car Show
 Gleaners Food Bank
 Chamber Dinner Fundraiser
 High School Band Fundraiser
 Fayette Regional Hospital Events
 Economic Development Event
 Bluegrass music
 Chamber 5K Run
 Optimist 5k Run
 Stant Christmas Party
 Howden Roots Christmas Party
 Eagles Christmas Party
 Harness Racing
 High School Football preview
 New teacher luncheon
 Head Start Programs
 Community Christian Basketball Games
 Community Christian Archery
 Cast Swim Team
 Little Library
 Fayette County Cancer Society Luncheon
 Pink Pajama Party for Fayette County Cancer
 Voting for two Precincts
 Elders Luncheon
 Job Fairs
 Veterans Luncheon

Natural Features and Landscape

According to the 2010 census, the county has a total area of 215.16 square miles (557.3 km²), of which 215.01 square miles (556.9 km²) (or 99.93%) is land and 0.15 square miles (0.39 km²) (or 0.07%) is water. The county is located in the northern portion of the Whitewater River Valley running south and southeasterly from Wayne County to Cincinnati, Ohio to the Ohio River. The West Fork of the Whitewater River running north to south through the center of the county. Restricted public access to the river has limited parks and trails to be developed along the banks. CPRD is working on a Trail Master Plan to link existing community parks to the river through a trail system. The public access to the river will expand the activity of canoe, kayaking, and sport fishing. A trail system will link existing parks in the county, managed by the Audubon Society and a conservation club, to Roberts Park and the proposed sports complex. The county is part of the Eastern (U.S.) Broadleaf Forest biome dominated by deciduous trees including over 175 native species of oak. CPRD works in partnership with the Fayette County Master Gardeners to plant native trees and plants. A broad inventory of trees will be created by 2018 to help create a budget for trimming, replacing, and planting trees.

Connersville Parks & Recreation	Rivers Edge	Roberts Park	2nd St Park	Industrial Park	Offutts Park	Soccer Complex	Nickel Plate Trail
Prairie	✓						
Organic renewable natural resources		✓					
Renewable natural resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
River	✓	✓					
Wetlands	✓	✓					
Woodlands	✓	✓					

Resource

http://www.in.gov/dnr/water/files/whitewat_basinsums.pdf

Man-Made, Historical and Cultural

Beginning of Connersville: Source: Connersville Chamber of Commerce

A man named John Conner who made his living by trading with the Indians decided to move his trading post to a place where the Indians had a right to come. Conner followed the trails the Indians had made when they were going through this part of the country to get to their hunting grounds. This trail led him to the west fork of the Whitewater Valley River. When John Conner made his camp near the banks of the Whitewater River, he was the first white man to settle in what is now the city of Connersville. This was around the year 1808. Conner laid out the town of Connersville in 1813.

Beginning of Fayette County

A law was passed in 1818, which set up the boundary lines for a new county in Indiana. This county was named Fayette County. Connersville was chosen as the county seat. The first courthouse was started in 1819 and finished in 1822. It was forty square feet and two stories high. It cost \$1,262. It was on the same ground as our present courthouse, which was built in 1890. Except for the two rooms that have

been added on the west side, and for the fact that some of the trimming has been taken off, it is the same courthouse.

The White Water Canal

The Whitewater Canal was started in 1836; it helped Connersville prosper because it provided a way of shipping products quickly. Soon, Connersville became an important and vital stop along the Whitewater Canal. Mules or horses walked along the bank of the canal on a path that was called the towpath. They pulled, or towed, the boats along with ropes fastened to the boats. Some of the products carried on canal boats were: flour, eggs, apples, bacon, cracklings, lard, and hog bristles.

Eventually railroads began spreading across these parts of the country. In 1863 a railroad company bought the canal company and tracks were laid along the towpath.

Connersville grew to be very large. Since our state capital at Indianapolis was not as old as Connersville, the sheriff of Indianapolis used the jail here until their jail was built. Couples wanting to get married had to come to get their marriage licenses at our courthouse because they did not have a courthouse in Indianapolis.

Connersville became known as a "furniture and buggy town" because there were several factories making these products. As the automobile or horseless carriage appeared on the scene, the buggy and wagon were pushed aside. Several different lines of automobiles were made here, such as: the Central, the Ansted, the Lexington, the McFarlan, the Cord, the Auburn, and the Empire.

For many of the more than 200 automobiles built in Indiana, Connersville was an important parts supplier. Auto pioneers from all over the Mid-West visited Connersville's Auto Industrial Park. There they could purchase bodies, springs, tops, enclosures, lamps, interior upholstery and leather trim, engine castings and many small parts.

The first car to be built in Connersville was the Central, built in the Central Manufacturing Plant on West Seventh Street. Unfortunately, the car was lost when the plant burned in 1905. The Kelsey Cycle Car, the Howard and the Ansted were produced in Connersville for a very short period of time.

The Lexington Motor Company moved to Connersville from Lexington, Kentucky, and manufactured automobiles until 1928. The company was also active in automobile racing and in 1919 and 1924, won the Pikes Peak Hill Climb, bringing home the beautiful Penrose Trophy, which is kept at the local Fayette County Historical Museum.

The McFarlan was the outgrowth of the MCFarlan Carriage Company, which turned to automobile manufacturing in 1909. The company turned out very fine automobiles for the next 18 years. The company was active in automobile racing as well as building fire engines, hook and ladder machines, ambulances, police cars and hearses. In 1922 the company built a special #154 Town Car for a man in Chicago; it was gold plated and cost \$25,000.

In 1927 and 1928, Errett Lobban Cord purchased the Ansted Engine Company, the Lexington Motor Car Company and the Central Manufacturing Company. The Central was already manufacturing bodies for his Auburns, and in 1929 he began to move part of his production line to Connersville. By March 1932, the factory had 2500 employees and was turning out 222 Auburns a day. All final production was centered in Connersville by 1934. Known as "The Birthplace of the Cord" the first Cord rolled off the line

and out 18th Street for a test drive up Western Avenue in the fall of 1936, the first of 3000 Cords built in Connersville until production ceased in August 1937.

Nearly all the parts needed to make an automobile were made right here in Connersville. That distinction earned the town the title of "Little Detroit". The following details the various companies that made Connersville a thriving industrial town.

The Connersville Furniture Company

The Connersville Furniture Company was organized in 1882, at Illinois and Mount Street in a 6 story building. Their first president was Francis M. Roots, one of the first blower company founders. The product at first consisted of black walnut bedroom suites. A good portion of the factory's first power was taken from the Whitewater canal on the bank of which the building was located. The building across Illinois Avenue was built in 1892.

Their "Life-Long Furniture" was shipped to all parts of the United States, Canada, and Mexico and they maintained sample rooms in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the furniture market of the world.

Edward V. Hawkins was president for many years. He also spent many years on the local school board, serving as its president for a time. He and his wife presented to the city the 3 1/2 acre Hawkins Playground at Eighteenth and Eastern now the site of the Maplewood grade school.

The Connersville Furniture Company built furniture for John Wannamaker and Marshal Field for many years then during 1925 had contracts for radio cabinets from 12 distributing firms. April 6, 1927 Raymond S. Springer was named receiver for the Connersville Furniture Company.

January 3, 1929 McQuay Norris bought the west building and from June 20, 1928 until August 5, 1931 the east, or original building, housed the Connersville Cabinet Company. November 30, 1932 the Connersville Casket Company started on the second floor of the east building. December 30, 1933 McQuay Norris bought the east building and used it for over 25 years selling it to Roots Connersville Blower several years ago to house their pattern shop.

Munk and Roberts Furniture Company

The Valley Furniture Association was founded by Newkirk and Munk. In 1874 James Roberts purchased Mr. Newkirk's interest. Their five-story building was erected at 1500 Western Avenue in 1883. The next building, a four story, was erected just north of the first in 1878. The Rex buggy Company purchased the 15th and Western buildings in 1898. Mr. Roberts is well known to Connersville residents for his gift of Roberts Park to the City.

Western Hosiery Mills

The Western Hosiery Mills was established in 1873 on south Eastern Avenue. Their building became the site of Connersville Ice Company and today is a part of the Louis Joseph Risch Company.

Indiana Furniture Company

William Newkirk formed the Indiana Furniture Company at South first and Eastern Avenue in 1874, where he built sideboards and chiffoniers exclusively. The building went to the Krell Auto Grand Piano Company in 1908.

The Connersville Buggy Company

The Connersville Buggy Company was organized at Eastern and Charles Streets in 1883. Buggies were their chief product through 1912. As the horseless carriage began to challenge the buggy business

during this time, the firm began to look for automotive contracts. In 1926 the building was sold to the Connersville Iron & Metal Company. The frame building on the corner lot was torn down in 1932. The remaining block building on the south side today is CarQuest at 810 Eastern Avenue.

Triumph Lock and Safe Company

The Triumph Safe and Lock Company built safes at the southeast corner of 18th and Columbia from 1905 until 1913. During 1913 through 1915, the company was known as the Connersville Fireproof Safe Company. In 1915, the Hoosier foundry took over the buildings.

McCombs and Sons

George McCombs, and his son Cecil, started McCombs and Son in 1906 across the street from their present location at 210 West 6th Street. Their original product was metal parts for Rex Buggy Company. Their product today is sheet metal parts for industrial plants and assembly lines.

Krell Auto Grand Piano Company

Pianos were built in the old Indian Furniture Company Buildings from 1908 until 1915. On October 16, 1919, Rex took over the buildings as the Fayette Paint and Trim, also using the buildings to house their trailer assembly and later air conditioner and refrigerator assembly.

Connersville Casket Company

Ray Lamberson started the Connersville Casket Company on November 30, 1932, on the second floor of the East Connersville Furniture Company building and during the next year occupied the ground, second and third floors. The company bought the Carter Leather factory at Sixteenth and Kentucky Avenue on May 25, 1934, and through the years the firm has made several additions to the plant. The firm's caskets are distributed throughout the United States and Canada.

National Metal Products Company

Ben Johnson opened shop at 419 East 10th Street on December 27, 1933. Several additions were made to this plant during the mid Thirties. Their products through the years were been casket hardware with national distribution. In 1959 they expanded to the old Lexington Service building at Tenth and Eastern Avenue. During 1962 they built a new plant just west of the original at Tenth and Fayette Street.

Steel Kitchen Corporation

The Steel Kitchens Corporation started in Waukegan, Illinois in 1928 and after several years out grew the Illinois plant. The firm, headed by Sam and Ira Block, purchased the Indiana Lamp Company building at 2000 Illinois Avenue on September 18, 1933. Steel Kitchen Cabinets built by this company were sold throughout hardware and furniture stores. On July 1, 1942, the firm announced a new SKC Aircraft Division and had contracts for Aircraft War planes. By October 5, 1943, they were making parts for a new Navy Scout observation plane and on November 26, 1943, received an Army "A" Force Award with the addition of orders for Cargo planes parts.

Mac Machine and Metals

Paul McCombs and Eugene Krepp started Mac Machine on January 31, 1951 at 128 Nickel Avenue. They make tools dies, jigs, and fixtures and are still in business.

Design and Manufacturing Corporation

D & M, headed by Sam Regenstrief, bought from AVCO on January 1, 1959, their dishwasher, sink and cabinet business. Their office at 2600 Illinois was in the Indiana Lamp building with a stamping and

assembly in the Central Manufacturing building. The old Anstead Engineering building was the scene of their enameling process. Among the firms for whom D & M built products were Sears, Kelvinator, Preway, Modern Maid, Gaffers and Sattler, Frigidaire and Welbuilt.

Connersville Mirror Works

The Connersville Mirror Works was organized by J.L. Heineman in 1894, at 1008 Grand Avenue and moved to the Charles Street buildings in 1907. Today the plant is on East 9th Street and sells and replaces auto glass and building glass.

ROOTS Blower Company

Roots Blowers & Compressors, Dresser, Inc. is the longest continuously run manufacture of rotary positive displacement blowers in the United States. In 1854, Francis and Philander Roots, woolen mill owners in Connersville stumbled upon the principles that drive rotary positive displacement concept.

Francis and Philander, attempts to improve efficiency in their mills power system failed as the wood lobe impellers water wheel warped and jammed when put to use. In the course of investigating the problem on dry land, one of the brothers turned a shaft and rotated the pair of impellers. The impellers produced a large wind force blowing off his brother's hat. At that point the brothers decided that they had a better blower than water wheel. Thus, the ROOTS blower concept and ROOTS Blower Company was created.

History of Robert's Park

Connersville's largest park is Robert's park, and it boasts a rich history. Colonel James Roberts was born in Franklin County. As a young man he came to Connersville before the Civil War and entered the retail hardware business. In 1874 he purchased the Newkirk interests in a local furniture factory, and for the next 25 years was a partner in the Munk and Roberts Furniture Company. Roberts moved to Indianapolis in 1900. Remembering his old business home, and desiring to show his appreciation and affection for the city of Connersville, he donated \$8,000 to the City to purchase eight acres in the then Shipley Grove area two miles north of town. The City named the area Roberts Park and dedicated it to the idea of a free fair. Fayette County has now hosted a free fair at Roberts Park for 114 years, the oldest free fair in the state.

Stant USA Corpotaion

Stant USA Corporation was founded in 1898 by George Stant, which at the time was known as George Stant Machine Works. Stant got their start making piano tuning pins and became the country's leading precision pin producer. After World War I, Stant began designing and manufacturing automotive parts. Since then Stant has continued to develop unique, innovative products throughout its rich history. Stant USA Corpotaion is currently a leader in manufacturing vapor and fluid control components. They currently have 5 operating facilities around the world and continue to grow every year.

Rex/Philco/Ford

Rex Buggy Company was started in 1898; they produced Rex and Yale buggies for many years. In 1916 the company became Rex Manufacturing; they manufactured tops and enclosures for automobiles. A little over ten years later, the company began producing cabinets for mechanical refrigerators. By 1947, Rex Manufacturing was owned by Philco and continued making refrigerators until Philco became a subsidiary of the Ford Motor Company in 1963. The Ford Motor Company began producing automotive coils and by 1976 refrigerator production ended and Ford concentrated solely on the automobile industry and produced climate control products until the plant closed in 2007. The Ford Motor

Company plant in Connersville once employed as many as 3,600 workers and was the county's largest employer until it closed its doors September 2007.

Fayette County Free Fair

The Fayette County Free Fair is the largest and most attended festival that Roberts Park has every year. The city and Fayette County Fair Board work together every year to create an agreement that works for all involved, this agreement includes fees that the CPRD charges the Fair Board. Although the fees are small and the cost to the CPRD is quite great, it is a wonderful event that helps market our city and county in a positive manner.

Imagine Performing Arts

Imagine Performing Arts are a local theatre group that performs throughout the area. They also offer workshops, which will be included in the activities at CPRD Summer Discovery program. The CPRD has also worked with IPA providing a building for them to host their performances in.

Social and Economic Factors

According to the 2014 US Census Quick Facts, Fayette County had 23,468 residents.

- 49.5% Male, 50.5% Female
- Median Age: 41.5
- 96. % White, 1.6% Black or African American, .2% American Indian, .3% Asian, .9% Hispanic, 1% Two or more races
- 26% children in poverty
- 2.3% of population speaks a language other than English at home
- 2010 US Census Bureau listed Fayette County with 24,277 people (3.4% decrease)
- 112.9 persons per square mile- According to 2014 US Census Quick Facts

Economics in Fayette County

- The Indiana Department of Workforce Development released its February unemployment figures for Indiana counties Monday, March 28, 2016, which show more than a half-percent increase in unemployment within Fayette County between January and February, despite the county falling in the county rankings for unemployment. Fayette County had a 7.3 percent unemployment rate for February, which ranked its 11th-highest in the state — up one spot from January — and put it over 7 percent unemployment for the first time in roughly a year the county has seen such an unemployment rate.
- Median household income in 2014 \$37,391 - 2014 US Census Quick Facts
- Families below poverty level: 23%- 2014 US Census Quick Facts
- Largest non-agricultural employment area Healthcare, Social Assistance jobs 22.9 % of all jobs
- Largest employer: Manufacturing accounts for 18.4 of all jobs
- Largest Hoosier County employment area: Residential CRF a Healthcare provider is the #1 employer in Fayette County- According to Fayette County EDG
- 17.8 % of Fayette County residents are uninsured- According to 2010-2014 American Community Survey
- Fayette County is 215.01 square miles- According to 2014 US Census Quick Facts

Housing-- According to 2014 US Census Quick Facts

- Average household size: 2.48
- 10,816 total housing units

- 10.8% of all units are vacant
- Homeownership rate 72%

Education- According to USA Counties in Profile

- 80.1% of population High school graduate or higher
- 10.1% Bachelor's degree or higher

In summary, Fayette is a relatively small, rural county. Most of its residents have not attained education higher than a high school diploma. In addition, most citizens are used to a rural way of life. The Park can take advantage of this because our residents consider outdoors a main area of recreation; they are not accustomed to or necessarily seeking out things like indoor laser tag or a shopping mall to spend their weekend. While it may seem like a downside to have residents with little expendable income and a city with not that many entertainment choices, it can be used as an advantage for the park. However, the CPRD should keep economics in mind and keep fees low to avoid pricing out its population.

Accessibility and Universal Design

“The CPRD makes it a part of our goal to provide reasonable modification under the law for people with disabilities to all of our programs, activities, and services. We strive to provide access for people with physical and mental disabilities. Information on our commitment to accessibility is available at all of our facilities, online, and at City Hall.”

In July 2014 Connersville collaborated with Strand Associates to complete an ADA Transition plan, which is included as **Appendix 3, ADA Plan**. City Board of Public Works Member Ron Coldiron served for three years as the City's ADA coordinator, but stepped down in December 2015. Connersville Mayor Harold Gordon is currently reviewing applicants for this position and should make an appointment in the near future. However, CPRD Director Jessica Faw is always available to address complaints or concerns during park hours. The CPRD strives to maintain and update all its facilities to make them accessible to all people, and abides by ADA guidelines when building any new facilities.

The self-evaluation indicated that all CPRD properties require some type of ADA modification. The Aquatic Center estimated repairs total \$17,350 and range in expense from \$50 lock repairs to the most expensive lowering of countertops in the clubhouse, which was estimated at \$10,000. The current Babe Ruth Complex was the most costly totaling over \$82,000 in repairs. Most of the expense to this facility was adding bleachers to areas and repairing driveways to make them more stable. This is one reason the CPRD aims to relocate its baseball complex, which will be discussed more, later in this plan. Industrial Park repairs totaled \$9,120 and mostly included updating restroom fixtures, with the most costly repair being adding a handicapped parking space to the lot. The current Soccer Complex repairs totaled \$42,200, with \$10,000 of that toward restrooms and \$27,000 toward the parking lot; a second reason the CPRD aims to relocate baseball to this area and reconfigure the park. Other CPRD facility repairs were: Miller building \$18,190; Amphitheater \$25,000; Kiddie Land Playground \$13,270; Robert's Building \$30,610; Red Cross Building \$5,360; Administration Building \$12,050; Tennis Courts \$24,700; Shelters and Pavilions \$18,080; John Conner Nature Preserve \$137,500 (includes paving a nature trail); Basketball Courts \$9,500; Second Street Park \$45,590 (includes resurfacing entire playground); Offuts Park \$45,500 (includes resurfacing entire playground).

At a total cost of \$536,020 it will be difficult, to say the least, for the CPRD to address all the items identified by the self-evaluation. The CPRD and its Board will evaluate this list and create an action

based on necessity and use. Part of the CPRD action plan will be to relocate our current baseball fields, which will address about \$125,000, almost a fourth, of these items.

Public Participation

Public input and opinion has been gathered in conjunction with requirements for the Connersville Parks Department 5-year master plan. Two public opinion surveys were conducted and two public forums were held.

The first public opinion survey was made available online through Survey Monkey on October 5, 2015. Notice was made available on the Foundation Face Book page, the Connersville Parks and Recreation Department Face Book page, the newspaper, and local TV channel. Printed survey copies were made available at City Hall, the Foundation, the Parks and Recreation office, the Soccer Complex, Fayette County Public Library, and the Fayette County Senior Center. Citizens completed 206 online surveys and 69 printed surveys. Surveys were collected on November 2, 2015 from all locations and compiled. The survey captured demographic, park use, satisfaction, and marketing data. The survey is attached as **Appendix 4, Public Opinion Survey 1**. A spreadsheet of the combined online and paper survey results is attached as **Appendix 5, Public Opinion Survey 1 Results**.

What we learned and questioned from Survey 1:

- Persons aged 25-54 represented about 60% of respondents; persons aged 55-75 or older represented about 40%. We had virtually no response from anyone under the age 25. What does this mean? How can we better reach this market? Did they not receive the survey or why did they choose not to respond? What would this mean for the parks future? Does this group use the park at all?
- The number one write-in response for use of park system was walking. We feel this supports the CPRD priority to expand the City's trail system to give this population more options and for them to help encourage visitors to our trail system.
- 98% of respondents had completed high school or higher education, with 99% employed, retired from employment, or a student. We felt this fully supported our belief that quality of life, like great parks and trails, will bring like-minded residents to our area.
- When asked generally about their satisfaction with CPRD facilities and staff, about 50-75% of responded positively to each question. This let us know that people are mostly happy with what is being provided, so compiling a list of specific needs should not be too difficult.
- Almost 95% of respondents said they visit Robert's Park most often. This made us wonder if we have an awareness issue with our other eight parks. Why are people not going – why is it so overwhelming this one park? How can we make our other parks more attractive and desirable to spend time at? Could we relocate events or programs to other facilities?

On November 9, 2015 a public forum was held at the John Miller Community Building; the meeting was advertised on the Foundation Face Book page, the Connersville Parks and Recreation Department Face Book page, the newspaper, and local TV channel. After conducting a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis the 24 attendees divided into smaller groups to discuss the issue they were most concerned about. Thirteen of the attendees were members of general public; three were Foundation staff; two were park employees; two were volunteers for the park; and four were elected officials, the newly elected mayor, two newly elected city council members, and one re-elected city council member. Those groups consisted of: Events, Safety and Security, Trails, and Pickleball.

Notes from November 9, 2015 Public Forum:

- Events:
 - Plant more trees / take down dead trees
 - Ice Skating in the park
 - Movies in the park
 - Concerts / replace PA system to bring in better artists
 - Farmers Markets
 - July 4 festival
 - Make sure we are advertising outside of Connersville
 - Battle of the bands for teenagers
 - Use park for High School band fundraisers or a talent show
 - Move Christmas festival to Robert's Park / Christmas lights added
 - Halloween pumpkin contest
 - Expand summer discovery program
- Safety and Security
 - Enforce speed limits
 - Open the police building for volunteers to man
 - Park patrols needed, on foot and by car
 - Park staff is not seen as authority figures by teenagers
 - Update and/or add security cameras
 - Implement community service for vandalism, i.e., damage restrooms then you have to clean the restrooms for a month
- Trails
 - More crosswalks with paint on the street
 - Loop all the trails together
 - Old trees need replaced / add trash cans around trees to protect them
 - Identify intermediate pathways and trails
 - Evaluate trees by the river
 - Benches along trails
- Pickleball
 - Need four pickleball courts to have tournaments
 - Move pickball to Offuts park / need to be fenced with four courts
 - Grants and fundraising with USPA
 - Accessibility to indoor courts at night

The second public opinion survey was made available online through Survey Monkey from March 7 - March 20, 2016. Notice was made available on the Foundation Face Book page, the Connersville Parks and Recreation Department Face Book page, the newspaper, and local TV channel. Citizens completed 116 online surveys. Survey responses were downloaded on March 22, 2016 and reviewed. The survey captured some demographic information, but mainly focused on users' satisfaction each park and facility. The survey and its results are attached as **Appendix 6, Public Opinion Survey 2.**

What we learned and questioned from Survey 2:

- This survey represented a much younger population; why did older people not respond this time? Was it because printed surveys were not offered?
- Most people who visit a park come with children; playground maintenance / updates / expansion should be a priority

- Only 30% of respondents were satisfied with the current Babe Ruth Complex. We did not clarify this question with if the respondent actually uses the field, so we wonder if that was a mistake. Still, 70% of people are not satisfied with this facility, supporting CPRD initiative for a new Sports Complex.
- The majority of people stated they were “somewhat satisfied” with most parks; CPRD needs to get specific information as to what people are unhappy with
- 87% of respondents supported moving the Babe Ruth Complex; so even 17% of those who are satisfied with the current facility still see the value in relocating; flooding was cited as the worst problem with the current facility / cited as the park that needs the most help, 31% of responses
- Sports and holiday events were the top programs that citizens use at the parks; this should be the focus of programming / focus on kids and nature
- Kiddie Land was cited as playground that needs the most repairs. However, this playground just had \$8,000 or repairs done in fall 2014. Need to know more specifically what people want at this playground. Is it just the most utilized so it gets the most criticism? Offuts Park was also cited equally high in need of repairs. That neighborhood is hard to tackle; we wonder how many if any respondents are from this area.
- 96% of people responded that they support a trail system, but over 55% have never visited the Nickel Plate trail – another marketing problem? How can we get people more excited about what we’ve accomplished? How can we make them more aware to help us move forward?

On March 28, 2016 the second public forum was held at the Robert’s Building; the meeting was advertised on the Foundation Face Book page, the Connersville Parks and Recreation Department Face Book page, the newspaper, and local TV channel. After a brief welcome, attendees were asked to move to a discussion table of their choice. The discussion tables were determined by CPRD based on feedback from the second public opinion survey. Those tables were: Sports Complex, Trails, Programs, and Capital Improvements. There were 46 attendees at the forum; three Foundation staff; one CPRD staff; four elected officials; two Foundation Board members; three CPRD Board members; and 33 public citizens.

Notes from March 28, 2016 Public Forum:

- Sports Complex
 - Hosting tournaments should be a priority
 - Mayor Gordon received a letter from FEMA stating that it would no longer provide funding to current Babe Ruth park because it is in a floodplain
 - Working toward grant to get as many points as possible
 - Dog park at facility had mixed emotions
 - Suggested a skate park or a Frisbee golf course on perimeter
 - Concerns about current Babe Ruth Complex / will be turned back into fields / discussed benefits of storm sewer separation project and money saved / receptive to it going back to a nature area because of the flooding, can’t be used for anything
 - Soccer area / could also be used for flag football?
 - Could it be used to host other events like concerts? Could alcohol be served?
- Trails
 - History of how the Nickel Plate Trail developed
 - Cost of the rail to trail, 0.74 mile, project
 - What went wrong and what went right
 - Nickel Plate Trail donors

- Mission of the trail: connect trails from community assets to the river
- Unveil Lick Creek Trail phase 1 and phase 2
- Cost of crossing Lick Creek to get to river or following creek to river inlet
- How can a public trail be on someone's property
- Types of trails
- Fundraising
- Friends of the Trail
- Awareness
- Next meeting: bring awareness to the trail
- Programs
 - Movies in the park – classic movies to current movies
 - Green space – community gardens
 - Community center without walls
 - Arts / place to paint
 - Imagine Performing Arts / add children's theater
 - Fitness classes / thai chai and yoga
 - Music in the park, like Rushville, Indiana
 - Community dance
 - Fishing tournaments
 - Ivy Tech day of service
 - Events should rotate at different parks
- Capital Improvements
 - Overall theme: need to create a facilities guide with signage and maps at parks and at frequented destinations in town. Guide should include amenities at each park with restroom and water fountain information. Could be combined with a trail guide / map.
 - Robert's Park
 - Tennis courts need repaired and lights
 - Kiddie Land needs to be re-edged, with the mulch leveled and added, too many puddles are under the equipment and this is an easy fix
 - Can Kiddie Land be re-landscaped to better drain water?
 - Kiddie Land swings need fixed / new and more slides / safety mulch
 - Restrooms should always be open
 - Playground by Park Road should be renovated and fenced in because of busy road
 - Playgrounds are too far apart / should be one area for playgrounds or equipment for more ages in both areas
 - Amphitheater could be used for more things like Battle of the Estates or go carts / sound system is bad so people don't want to use it
 - Robert's Building elevator needs fixed for handicapped
 - Add more shelters and picnic tables
 - Find use for police building
 - Pool restrooms need to be renovated
 - Horseshoe facility added?
 - Pickleball courts
 - Volleyball courts repaired and more added
 - Add more water fountains
 - Smalley's Pond
 - Trail signs replaced

- Add shelter
 - Trim trees on overlooks
 - Improve entrance
 - Parking isn't marked – people don't know where to park
 - Better lighting
 - Trail cameras? Real or fake?
- 2nd Street Park
 - Not maintained
 - Fence for safety – near railroad tracks?
 - Basketball goals repaired
 - Lighting – possibly motion sensor would help with vandalism
- Frazee Park
 - Evaluate for equipment maintenance
 - Install bike rack
 - Add a shelter
 - Define park versus Frazee school property with landscaping or signage
 - Add a water fountain
- Offuts Park
 - This area needs a targeted survey because the residents are so resistant to having this park utilized. What would they comfortable with? They see this park as their backyard, not public property. How can we move forward with this group?

Finally, the public was invited to attend the CPRD Board special session that was held on April 11, 2016 at 7 p.m. at the Miller Building. Electronic invitations were emailed to 566 citizens on April 7, 2016. X number of people attended the meeting: ATTENDANCE NUMBERS

Public comments to the master plan draft were:

ADD COMMENTS

A vote of X-X passed the master plan, which is attached as Appendix 7, Signed Resolution #2016-01: Approval of the CPRD 5-Year Master Plan.

Needs Analysis

The CPRD is preparing this master plan in-house, and will therefore use public input and the expertise of its CPRD staff to determine our needs analysis.

CPRD identified three emerging themes after analyzing all the public input and considering what are realistic, attainable goals. Those themes are park expansion, review of current facilities with maintenance and marketing plans, and program expansion. Overall, CPRD felt the public was telling them, “we like what your doing, give us more and better.” CPRD is ready to meet that challenge, and recognizes its unique opportunity to become perhaps the driving catalyst of economic development in Fayette County.

There is a definite outcry from a large group of citizens who want immediate expansion of CPRD. These citizens support the new Sports Complex, they support more trails, and they support using the parks to market Connersville. A second group, slightly smaller than the first, stated that we need to repair what we have before we build new. This group advocates for funding to be spent on repairing play grounds,

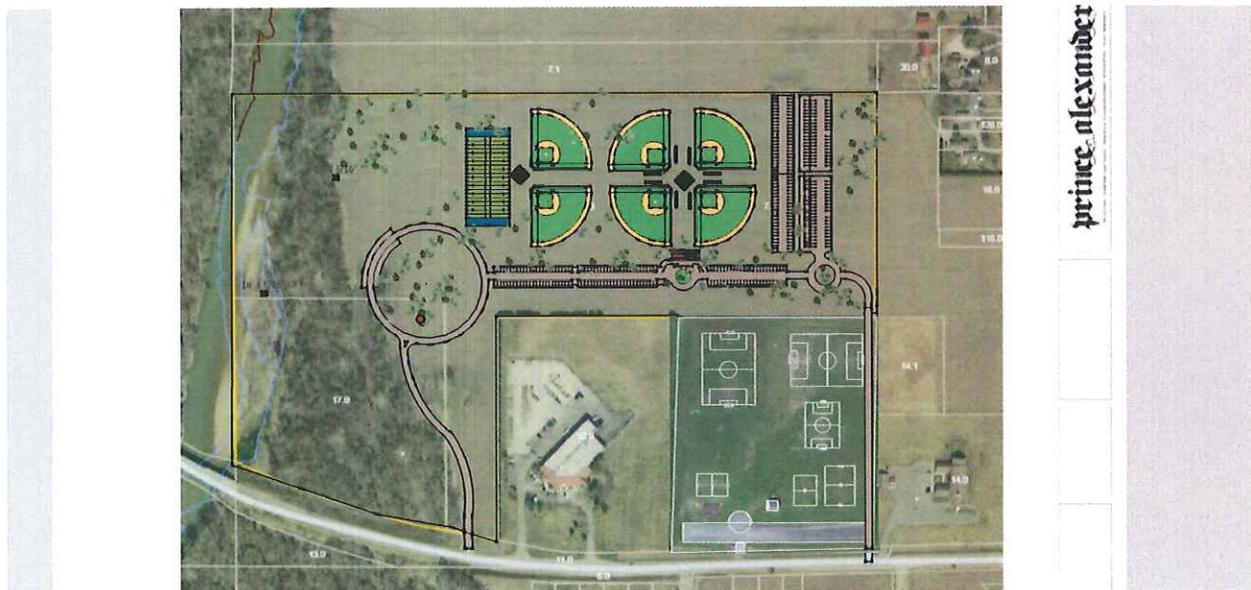
finding uses for unused buildings, landscaping, and repairing buildings. The last and smallest group puts new park programming at the top of the list. This group wants to see more programs offered by the park for all age groups. All the groups seem to agree that there is lack of awareness of our entire park system and better marketing needs to be done. A lot of discussion centered on what would attract visitors to all parks. One solution could be different types of equipment at each park. For example, one park would have all wooden playground equipment, another could have sand boxes, another could have a splash pad, and such is the case in near-by Hamilton County.

CPRD realizes that it can't address all these needs and wants in five years; but, we can get started. CPRD has determined that it is best to address all these areas as much as possible at the same time, rather than completing large expansion projects in lieu of repairing any current facilities or piloting any new programs. CPRD hopes this holistic approach will be effective if correctly planned and prioritized.

New and Existing Facilities Location Map

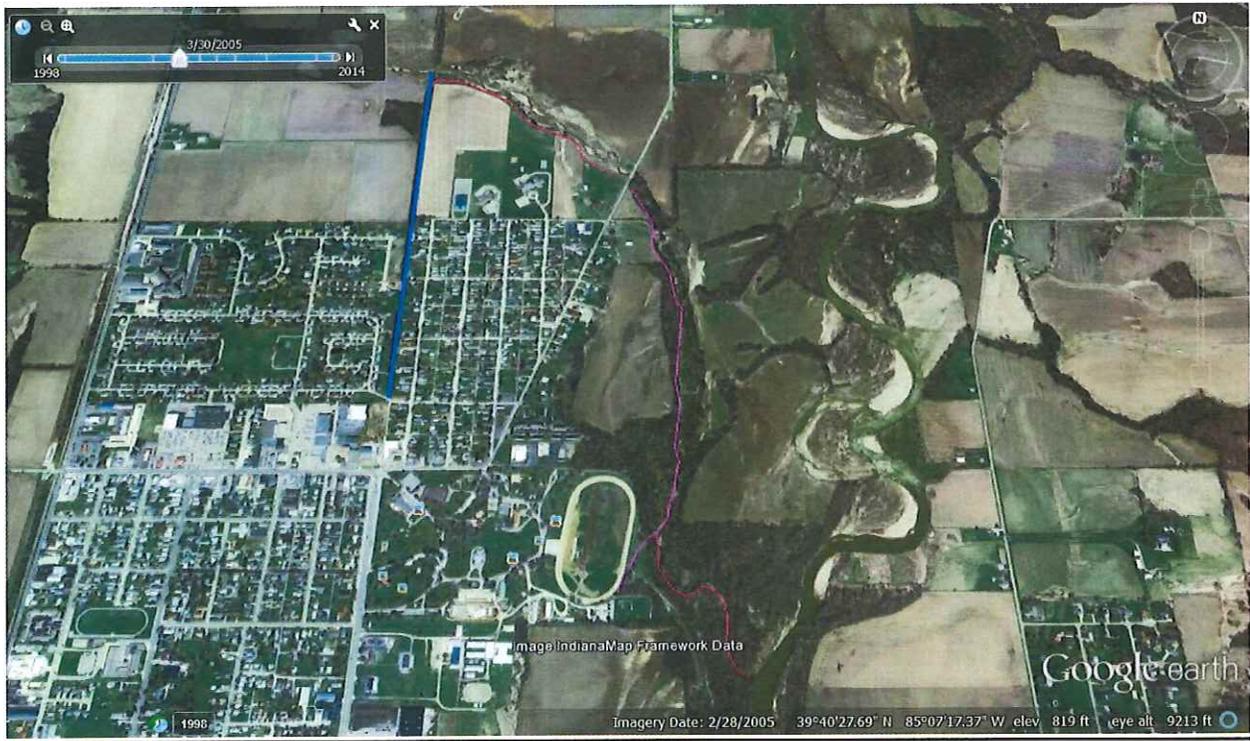
Current Facilities Map; please see **Appendix 8, Current Facilities Maps.**

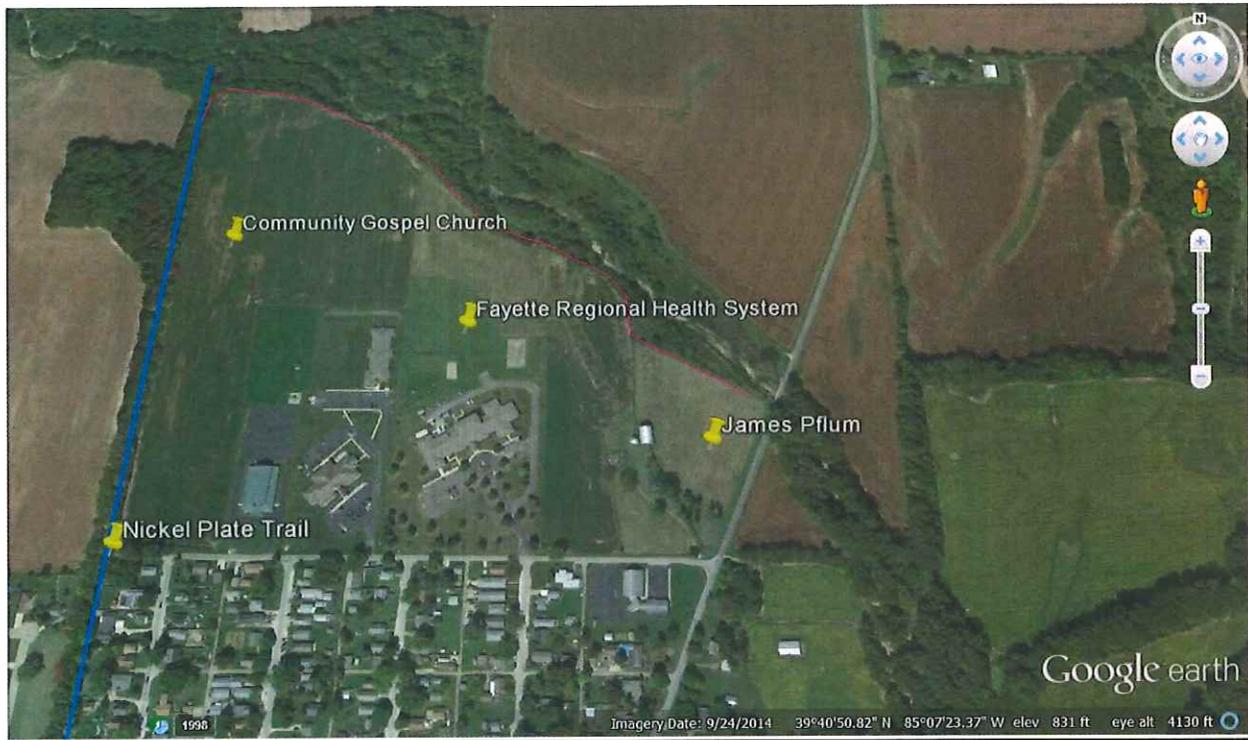
Proposed Sports Complex Maps





Trail System Plan Maps





Priorities and Action Schedule

While the CPRD may have a brand new board, it was actually very simple to set priorities as several major park expansion projects had already been publicly discussed and approved by the City. Public input further supported the direction the CPRD was already considering. In addition, grant deadlines also played a big role in setting our priority schedule.

The new Sports Complex CPRD's first priority is to apply for the LWCF grant by June 1, 2016. While awaiting a decision, CPRD and Foundation staff will be meeting with engineers and landscape architects to prepare a construction plan should funding be approved.

ADD SPORTS COMPLEX ACTION SCHEDULE SIMILAR TO TRAIL PLAN

CPRD's second priority is to continue expanding its trail system. The CPRD continues its work with the BNT to finalize the nature preserve area of the new Sports Complex. Plans for the first canoe launch in the same area are coming together, and the CPRD will soon be clearing trees to move that forward. The next section of the walking trail is in progress, which will extend east from the existing Nickel Plate Trail and travel south along Lick Creek where it will connect with Robert's Park. This section will be a nature trail, but the surface will be compacted enough to ride a bike.

Plans for our trail system include:

History.

The recreational trail system was first envisioned by the community in mid 1980's. The community did not get behind and support the vision and the plan never developed. In the early 2000's a trail map was outlined along the Whitewater River. The outline did not include a Plan and elected officials did not support the concept. In 2015, the Fayette County Foundation, following the Comprehensive Plan

created in 2012 began working to develop a trail system throughout Connersville. The Nickel Plate Trail, rails to trail, was developed and completed from April 2015 – November 2015.

The response from the public was very positive and future trail segments will be added in 2016.

Funding.

The Nickel Plate Trail was estimated to cost over \$200,000 by Butler Farman Seifert. The Fayette County Foundation paid \$64,000 and was successful awarded two rural electric “Round Up” grants. The total project cost \$65,000. The Fayette County Foundation has hired Prince Alexander, architecture firm, to create a trail system outline and plan. The Fayette County Foundation is committed to awarding \$50,000 annually to creating trails. The Foundation is partnership with the Connersville Parks and Recreation Department will apply for grants, host fundraisers, and private donations.

The Plan.

The recreational trail system is included in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan, Fayette County Foundation Strategic Plan, and Park Master Plan. During each plan, the community was able to provide input into the vision of the trail system as it expands. The following objectives are listed:

- Public access to the Whitewater River.
- Trails connect to river and parks.
- Trails will be paved and natural surface.
- Trails will be for pedestrians and cyclist. No motorized vehicles on any trails.
- How many miles...

Phase I – 2016

Goal – connect Nickel Plate Trail to Roberts Park

At the Nickel Plate Trailhead, the trail will become a road path heading east on 32nd Street past Wayne Ave to the alley before Beeson Ave. Head south down the alley to 30th Street. A cross walk will link Roberts Park to the Nickel Plate Trail. Vehicle and bicycle parking will be available in Roberts Park. The Nickel Plate Trail will be XX miles.

Phase II – 2016

Goal – connect Nickel Plate Trail to Whitewater River

At the north end of the Nickel Plate Trail, a natural surface trail will go east along the tree line on the Community Gospel Church property. The trail will continue onto James Pflum’s property connecting to Lick Creek. The 6’ wide footpath will follow Lick Creek to Waterloo Road. A crosswalk will be painted on the two lane road and bollards will be set on both sides of the road to notify pedestrians of the road and vehicles of possible pedestrians. The trail will continue along the Creek – gradually heading south. The Creek flows through County property, 21-06-07-300-.005. The natural trail will cut across through the woods, heading east to the Whitewater River. At the River, signage and steaks will direct pedestrians’ south XX miles, still on county property. Future trails will continue south along the River; but for Phase II the link will stop and direct pedestrians west toward Roberts Park. The Lick Creek Trail will connect to Roberts Park on the north side of the horse track and join the Connersville Utility Company road. The road will take trail goers to the top of the hill into Roberts Park. Signage will connect trail goers back to the Nickel Plate Trailhead.

Phase III – 2017

Goal – create loop from Roberts Park heading south along Whitewater River connecting 24th Street to East County Road 150 North

Phase IV – 2018

Goal – create loop from 24th Street, south along the River, to 20th Street

Phase V – 2018

Goal – create loop along Whitewater River utilizing inventory.

The Nickel Plate Trailhead begins at 32nd and Park Road. The .75 mile asphalt trail is 8’ wide and runs straight north to Lick Creek.

- Started and completed in 2015
- ¾ of the trail is under the canopy of trees
- Benches, trash cans, and dog waste containers are on the trail
- Trail needs to be sealed in 2016 during the heat of the summer
- The trail will be a link to the Lick Creek Trail.

It’s third, and most broad priority, is to address the maintenance and upkeep issues, and to expand programming as identified from the public input. A current facility review and repair plan will be completed and projects prioritized according to cost and need. CPRD plans to pilot several new programs in 2016, including moving the city’s winter celebration from downtown to Robert’s Park and expanding on the events offered. In conjunction, the CPRD will look to address better marketing of its facilities to attract new visitors. The initial plan to address this area will be to fund maps and signage at every park, similar to what can found in larger cities.

Action Plan

Year	Priority Item	Potential Cost	Potential Funding Source
2017-2019	Sports Complex Installation	N/A	LWCF Grant, Fundraising, other grants
2016-2020	Trail System throughout Connersville along White River	N/A	Grants, Fundraising, and Park Budget
2016	Repair cracks and lights at Tennis Courts in Roberts Park	\$2,000	Park Budget
2016	Replace chlorinator at Roberts Park Family Aquatic Center	\$8,500	Endowments and Park Budget
2016	Repair and Paint Playground Equipment at 2nd Street and Roberts Parks	\$1,000	Park Budget
2016	Create Maintenance	-0-	N/A

	plans for all park buildings and equipment		
2017	Add new drinking water fountains in Roberts Park	\$6,000	Park Budget
2018	Install disc golf course at John Conner Nature Preserve or Sports Complex	N/A	Grant, Park Budget
2017	Implement 5-Year Master Review Annually	-0-	N/A
2018	Update park security cameras	\$5,000	Park Budget
2016-2020	Develop and review park activities and programs annually	Cost unknown	Park Budget, Non-Reverting Funds, Sponsors