



# Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2023-2027





## **PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank the many citizens, staff and community groups who provided extensive community input for the development of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The efforts of this community will continue to ensure the success of the Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department.

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## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### CHAPTER ONE — EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Town of Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department (“Department”) is committed to provide high quality parks and recreation facilities and recreation programs that serve the Whitestown community. To build on this legacy, the Town desired a *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (“Master Plan”) to establish a long-term plan focusing on sustainability and maximizing resources while providing an appropriate level/balance of facilities and amenities throughout the community. The Master Plan builds off the adopted 2018 Master Plan and creates a new “road map” for the Department to follow for the next five years.

The Department builds and maintains the parks in the Whitestown Park system, which is comprised of approximately 111-acres. The Department is dedicated to connecting parks and people, by providing environmentally friendly outdoor recreation opportunities for citizens of Whitestown and surrounding communities, while striving to build a greener, healthier community for the children of tomorrow. The Department has five parks and number of interesting and fun events throughout the year to bring the community together. Several the parks have shelter rentals for birthday parties, graduations and more.

The Town of Whitestown is the fastest growing community in the State of Indiana since 2009, and has an exceptionally low median age of 34.7, which is the lowest in Boone County and well below the State of Indiana median age of 38.1. This population is considered post-college and is likely representative of young families moving to the area. This was also observed in our community engagement surveys (e.g., statistically valid and online surveys) that over half of the population has lived in Whitestown for 5 year or less and half of the population is under the age of 35.

The Master Plan sought community input to identify and confirm the Department’s vision and expectations for the future of the park and recreation system. Community input was received via focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, a statistically valid needs analysis survey, and an online survey, as well as feedback from the community during an open public meeting. The information gathered from the community engagement process was combined with technical research to produce the final Master Plan.





## 1.2 MASTER PLAN GOALS

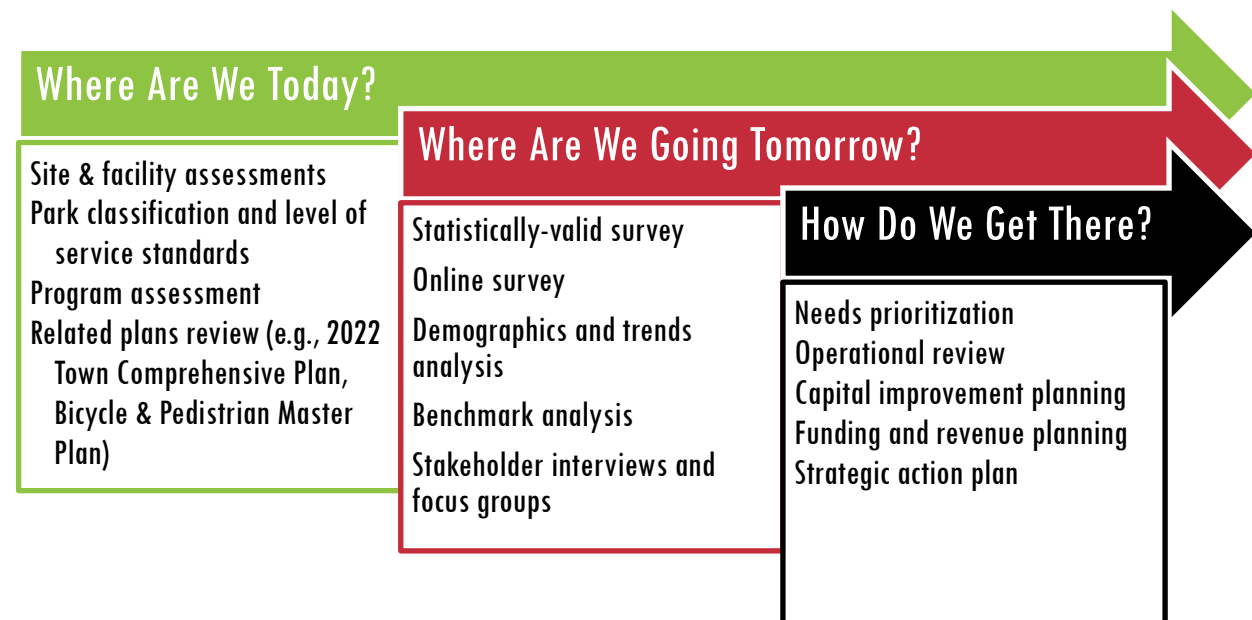
The Master Plan includes a system-wide assessment and evaluation of existing parks and recreational facilities in conjunction with the development of a comprehensive plan that identifies current and future needs as related to parks and recreation facilities. The Master Plan will establish a prioritized framework for future development or redevelopment of the Town's parks and recreation system over the next five years. The Master Plan is a resource to develop policies and guidelines related to location, use, resource allocation, and level of service that will provide direction to Town staff and the Town Council.

The goals of the Master Plan include:

- **Engage the community**, leadership, and stakeholders through innovative public input means to build a shared vision for parks, recreation, facilities, and trails in Whitestown for the next five to ten years.
- **Utilize a wide variety of data sources and best practices** to predict trends and patterns of use and how to address unmet needs in the Town of Whitestown.
- **Determine unique Level of Service Standards** to develop appropriate actions regarding parks, recreation, facilities, and trails that reflects the Town's strong commitment in providing high quality recreational activities for the community.
- **Shape financial and operational preparedness** through innovative and "next" practices to achieve the strategic objectives and recommended actions.
- **Develop a dynamic and realistic strategic action plan** that creates a road map to ensure long-term success and financial sustainability for the Town's parks, recreation programs and open spaces, as well as action steps to support the family-oriented community and businesses that call Whitestown home.

## 1.3 PROJECT PROCESS

The Master Plan followed a process of data collection, public input, on-the-ground study, assessment of existing conditions, market research, and open dialogue with local leadership and key stakeholders. The project process followed a planning path, as illustrated below:





## 1.4 CURRENT PARKS MAP & DEFINITION OF PLANNING AREA

[illegible]





#### 1.4.1 WHITESTOWN INVENTORY

Current Whitestown inventory by park name, address, park classification and size are detailed below:

Name	Address	Classification	Acres
<b>Panther Park</b>	300 S. Buck	Neighborhood Park	7
<b>Anson Acres</b>	4671 Anson Blvd	Neighborhood Park	15
<b>Main Street Park</b>	4286 S. Main Street	Community Park	11
<b>Gateway Park</b>	6150 Gateway East Dr	Community Pak	17
<b>Big 4 Linear Trail</b>	215 E. Pierce St	Special Use	1.2
<b>Giles Park</b>	4285 S. Main Street	Undeveloped	5
<b>Jackson Run</b>	2500	Undeveloped	55
		<b>Total Park Acres</b>	<b>111.2</b>
Other Service Providers			
Name	Address	Classification	Acres
<b>Lions Park</b>	107 N Main Street	Community	11



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 1.5 CONCURRENT PLANNING

#### 1.5.1 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2022

While this Master Plan was ongoing, the Town of Whitestown also completed a Town Comprehensive Plan 2022 that was adopted in August 2022. The primary purpose of a comprehensive plan is to articulate the broader vision of the community and establish guiding principles and policies for future growth and development. Indiana Code states that a comprehensive plan should promote the public health, safety, morals, convenience, order, and the general welfare for the sake of efficiency and economy in the process of development. A comprehensive plan does not focus on the needs and desires of one property owner, business, or neighborhood. This Plan is intended to be broad in nature to provide community leaders with the flexibility to implement the community-wide vision, goals, and strategies while responding to changing community conditions that are likely to occur over the life of the Plan.

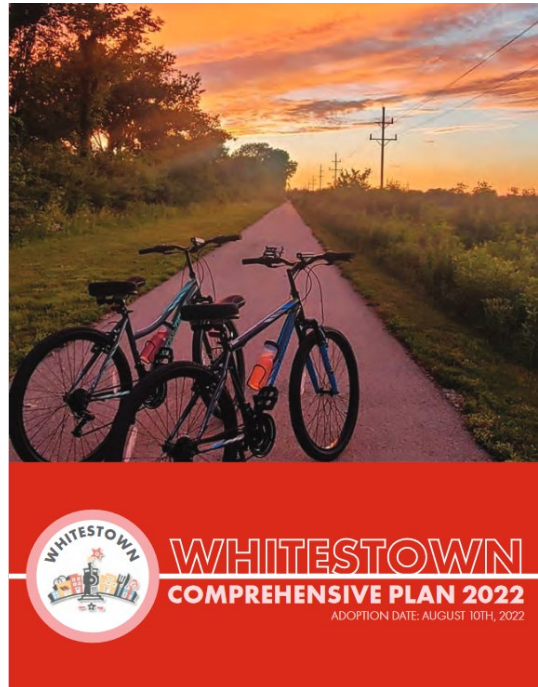
The 2022 Whitestown Comprehensive Plan Update will serve as the guiding document that town officials, decision makers, developers, and residents can reference as development and reinvestment occurs within Whitestown. This Plan is intended to be a flexible document and broad in nature so the Town can respond to changes or unforeseen circumstances. The ideas that will guide Whitestown into the future have been divided into five topic-focused Plan Elements that include:

- Land Use
- Transportation & Circulation
- Municipal Services
- Parks, Open Space, & Recreation
- Economic Development

#### PARKS, OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PRIORITIES

Protecting Whitestown's environmental and open space resources can enhance quality-of-life. As new development occurs, environmentally sensitive areas should be protected and maintained. These areas can be used for recreation and education in addition to supporting a healthier community. The components to meet the community's needs include:

- Maintaining existing natural areas and water bodies.
- Preserving important environmental features and areas.
- Protecting groundwater and surface water quality in addition to air quality.
- Preserving natural drainage areas, including the 100-year floodplain.
- Encouraging environmentally sensitive practices.
- Maintaining, enhancing, and expanding existing park and recreation facilities.





## PARKS AND RECREATION GUIDING POLICIES

- Support efforts to make trails accessible, reliable, safe, convenient, and attractive to minimize environmental impacts.
- Preserve natural areas to provide habitats for plants and animals and improve local quality-of-life.
- Require best management practices when development is within or near an environmentally sensitive feature.
- Focus equally on maintaining existing parks and actively acquiring strategic park facilities.
- Strive to develop park amenities that generate community pride, regional excitement, and revenue (user fees).

## PARK AND RECREATION PRIORITIES

Since the current Master Plan will be replaced soon, this comprehensive plan update does not summarize those plan goals. Instead, the following summary of needs and priorities is provided to identify common themes between the current plan and the intent of the Master Plan currently in development. The following list should be considered preliminary recommendations which are subject to revision with the adoption of the 2023 Master Plan.

- Develop greenways to support Whitestown's goal to be the most walkable and bikeable town in the state of Indiana.
- Partner with youth sports organizations to expand the number of youth sports fields available in the greater Whitestown area.
- Upgrade existing parks with facilities to meet the needs of the growing community.
- Strategically add or expand parks to meet short- and long-term recreational needs.
- Provide park facilities both north and south of Interstate 65.
- Provide natural and passive recreation facilities.
- Provide staffing to support parks facilities and programming

## 1.6 WHITESTOWN TOWN COUNCIL / PARK BOARD

The Parks Board for Whitestown was restructured under Ordinance 2017-03 on February 8, 2017. The Parks Board membership was previously compromised under IC 36-10-3-4 but the Town Council determined that it was in the best interest of Whitestown and the Whitestown Parks Department to restructure and reorganize the Parks Board with membership under IC 36-10-5-2. The Town Council members serve as ex officio members of the Parks Board. The restructured Parks Board has and maintains all authority and responsibility over the operation and maintenance of the Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department.

Current Park Board members include the following individuals:

- Clinton Bohm, Town Council President — District 2
- Susan Austin, Town Council Vice President — District 1
- Eric Miller, Council Member — District 3
- Jeffrey Wishek, Council Member — District 4
- Eric Nichols, Council Member — District 5

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 1.7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

As with any quality comprehensive planning process, the community was highly involved throughout the development of the Master Plan through stakeholder and focus group meetings. A total of 499 residents participated in the online and the statistically valid survey, as well as over 40 participants in the focus group and key stakeholder interviews. A public forum was held August 2022 that included participation by those in attendance at the Town Municipal Complex and through Facebook Live, 6 residents in-person and 26 residents through Facebook Live. These engagement opportunities with the community helped prioritize and identify the issues that need to be addressed in the Master Plan and to support the key recommendations that need implemented over the next five years. Also, the Town also posted all technical reports to its website throughout the entirety of the project.

# 355

Statistically Valid  
Survey Participants

# 144

Online Survey  
Participants

# 9

Key Stakeholder  
Meetings

# 6

Focus Groups



[whitestown.in.gov/parks-master-plan](http://whitestown.in.gov/parks-master-plan)







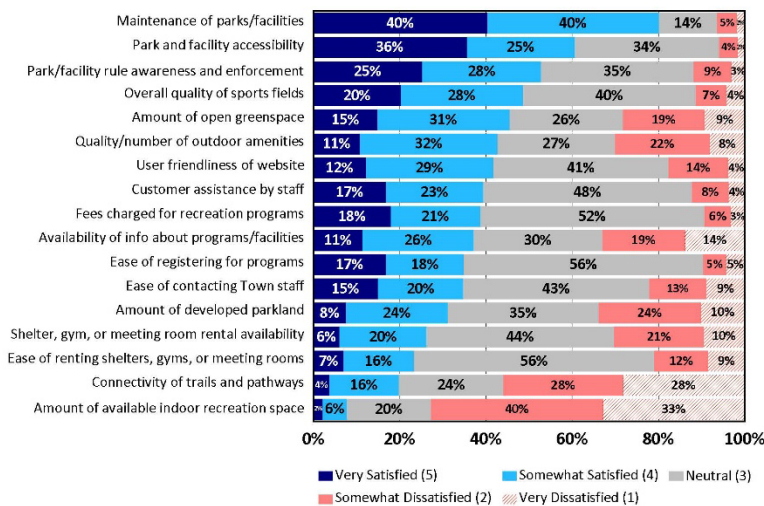
### 1.7.1 SATISFACTION WITH PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

Eighty percent (80%) of respondents, who had an opinion, were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the maintenance of parks/facilities. Other services in which respondents were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” include: parks and facility accessibility (61%), park/facility rule awareness and enforcement (53%), overall quality of sports fields (49%), and amount of open greenspace (46%).

Based on the sum of their top three choices, the parks and recreation services that respondents indicated should receive the most attention from the Town over the next five years were: 1) connectivity of trails and pathways, 2) availability of information about programs/facilities, and 3) amount of available indoor recreation space.

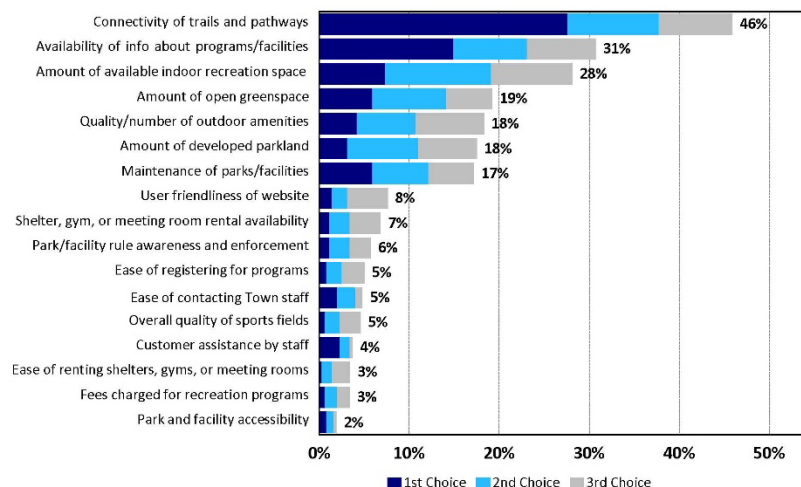
## Q12. Satisfaction With the Following Parks and Recreation Services

by percentage of respondents (excluding “don’t know”)



## Q13. Parks and Recreation Services That Should Receive the Most Attention from Whitestown Over the Next 5 Years

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices





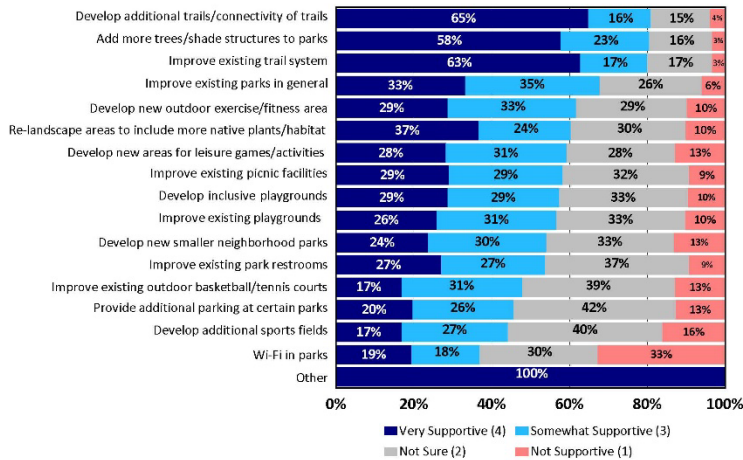
## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 1.7.2 LEVEL OF SUPPORT

Eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents indicated they are “very supportive” or “somewhat supportive” of the Town developing additional trails/connectivity of trails to improve the parks and recreation system. Other actions that respondents support include: adding more trees/shade structures to parks (81%), improving the existing trail system (80%), improving existing parks in general (68%), developing new outdoor exercise/fitness area (62%), and re-landscaping areas to include more native plants/habitat (60%).

#### Q19. Level of Support for Each of the Following Actions the Town Could Take to Improve the Parks and Recreation System

by percentage of respondents

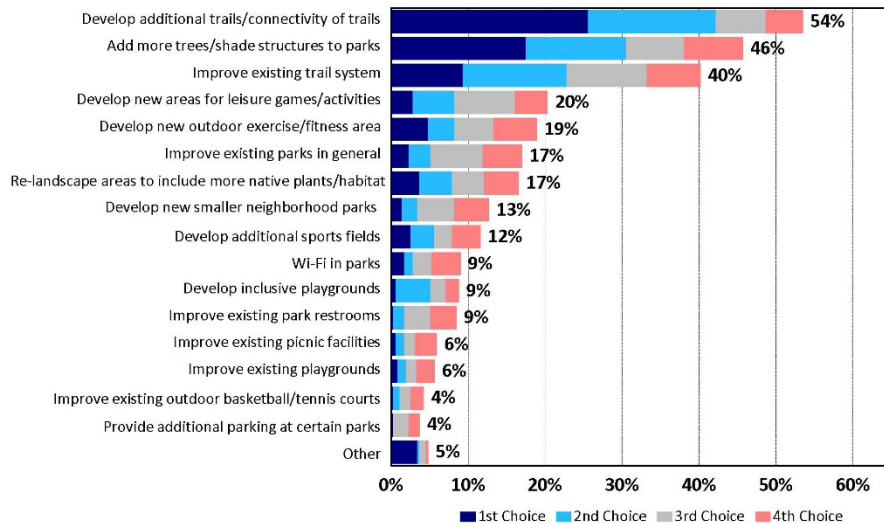


### 1.7.3 WILLINGNESS TO FUND

Based on the sum their top four choices, the actions that respondents would be most willing to fund are: 1) developing additional trails/connectivity of trails, 2) adding more trees/shade structures to parks, 3) improving the existing trail system, and 4) developing new areas for leisure games/activities.

#### Q20. Improvements That Households Are Most Willing to Fund

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices





#### 1.7.4 PRIORITIES FOR FACILITY INVESTMENTS

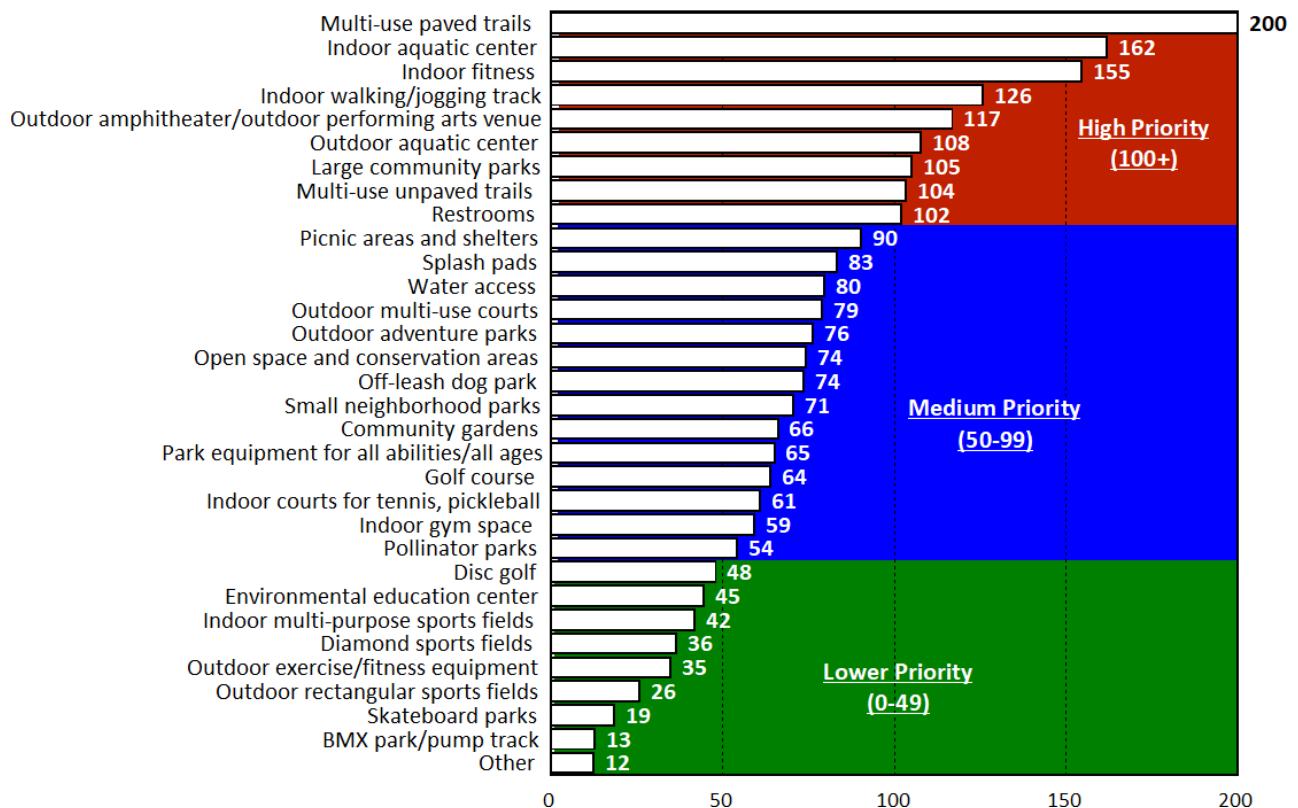
The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on parks, trails, recreational facilities, and services. The PIR equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facility. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 2 of this report.]

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following nine facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Multi-use paved trails (PIR=200)
- Indoor aquatic center (PIR=162)
- Indoor fitness (PIR=155)
- Indoor walking/jogging track (PIR=126)
- Outdoor amphitheater/outdoor performing arts venue (PIR=117)
- Outdoor aquatic center (PIR=108)
- Large community parks (PIR=105)
- Multi-use unpaved trails (PIR=104)
- Restrooms (PIR=102)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 32 facilities that were assessed on the survey.

### Top Priorities for Investment for Facilities Based on the Priority Investment Rating



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

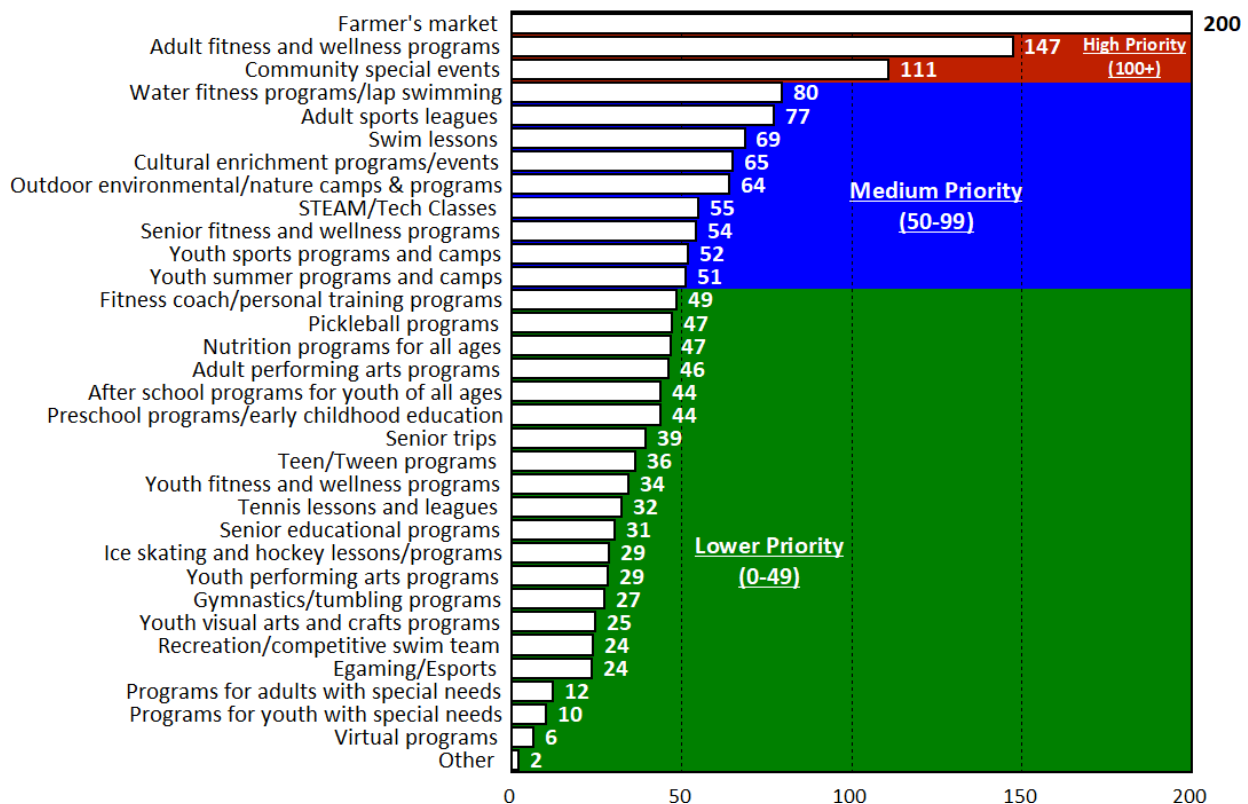
### 1.7.5 PRIORITIES FOR PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

Based on the priority investment rating (PIR), which was described briefly on page vi of this Executive Summary and is described in more detail in Section 2 of this report, the following three programs were rated as “high priorities” for investment:

- Farmer’s market (PIR=200)
- Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=147)
- Community special events (PIR=111)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating (PIR) for each of the 33 programs that were rated.

### Top Priorities for Investment for Programs Based on the Priority Investment Rating





## 1.8 VISION, MISSION, AND TAGLINE

The following outlines the foundational framework for the Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department including vision, mission, and Tag Line. A vision presents how the Town of Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department desires to be viewed in the future and the mission states how it will be implemented.

### Vision

- To cultivate a safe, welcoming, and active community for our residents.

### Mission

- To enhance the lives of residents by creating experiences for all.

### Tagline

- Experiences for All

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 1.9 ISSUES AND THEMES

Based on community feedback, stakeholder input, technical analysis, and the priority rankings outlined within this Master Plan, the following issues and themes were developed to enhance the park and recreation system and position it to best serve the current and future needs of the Whitestown community:

- Expansion of the park and trail system. Add more parkland and trails to keep up with town development, increase connectivity and accessibility.
- Secure the right type of parkland, in the correct location as development continues.
- Take-care of what we already own through appropriate levels of staffing and lifecycle replacement of amenities. Currently, park usage is impacting the amount of time and costs to maintain parks to the level of expectation from residents.
- Ensure Whitestown still has a “small town charm” while growing and adding a community event space with an amphitheater to bring the community together for concerts and special events.
- A signature park to host large special events.
- Need for indoor recreation space to provide year-round programming.
- Activate the parks through additional programming.
- Need additional funding for lifecycle replacements.







## 1.10 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1.10.1 INITIATIVE #1: WELL MAINTAINED AND SAFE PARK LANDS AND TRAILS

<b>Parks, Trails &amp; Facilities Action Plan</b>	
<b>Short-Term Strategies (1-2 years)</b>	
Work with the Town Planning Department to identify potential parcels of property to acquire for preservation and future parks in growth areas to keep park deserts from increasing (two neighborhood parks and one community park).	
Assess opportunities to add pocket parks to the community, such as along the Big 4 Trail.	
Develop a tree replacement program and identify locations where "next generation " trees should be planted, then apply for Tree City USA designation.	
Master Plan for Jackson Run Park - and consider passive use with outdoor education.	
Develop a concept for a Dog Park.	
Develop a strategy to incorporate indoor recreation space into the system and partner with organizations for use of their space until the Town can develop its own facility.	
<b>Mid-Term Strategies (3-5 years)</b>	
Create a concept design for neighborhood park #1 with development and operational cost estimates to identify funding for construction.	
Install shade structures and plant next generation trees.	
Develop a master plan for Giles Park - determine the potential future of the barn.	
Create a concept design for neighborhood park #2 with development and operational cost estimates to identify funding for construction.	
Develop strategy to increase beautification efforts in high traffic areas of the park system (e.g., entrances, downtown Big 4 Trailhead).	
Improve trails in parks and create greater connectivity throughout Town jurisdiction.	
<b>Long-Term Strategies (6+ years)</b>	
Improve the Big Four Trailhead in Downtown.	
Incorporate new unique public gathering spaces for a few to a few thousand people in the system.	
Create a concept design for community park #1 with development and operational cost estimates to identify funding for construction.	
<b>Ongoing Strategies</b>	
Feasibility study for all new indoor spaces to identify costs and outcomes with the facility program driven by the program priority investment rating.	
Continue to seek opportunities to expand the trail system and connect additional neighborhoods to trail system per the 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.	
Update official Town documents and level of service as the parks, trails and facilities are developed.	
Incorporate an environmental analysis as part of each new park master plan, ensure development incorporates environmental best practices, and document practices in maintenance management plan.	

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Continue to increase access to outdoor activities in nature.

### 1.10.2 INITIATIVE#2 ENHANCE EVENTS, SERVICES AND EXPERIENCES

<b>Programs &amp; Events Action Plan</b>
<b>Short-Term Strategies (1-2 years)</b>
Survey the public for time of day and day of week most convenient for programming to be offered and develop programming to meet these needs.
Enhance quality of events and expand activities within the Independence Day Celebration and Farmers Market.
Research registration software to prepare for the development of programming and the means to process participation and fees.
Develop a program plan that identifies park locations, target markets, financial commitments, and desired outcomes from programs and services developed.
<b>Mid-Term Strategies (3-5 years)</b>
Utilize findings in statistically valid survey to expand on <u>an additional (2)</u> program offerings (Health/Wellness, Adult Fitness, Youth Programs, Senior Programs, Outdoor Education and Summer Camps).
Increase teen programming.
Develop additional special events focused on Whitestown cultural heritage, family friendly, youth, and in the interests of people, ages 21-40 and ages 65+.
<b>Long-Term Strategies (6+ years)</b>
Utilize findings in statistically valid survey to expand on <u>an additional (2)</u> program offerings (Health/Wellness, Adult Fitness, Youth Programs, Senior Programs, Outdoor Education and Summer Camps).
Assess feasibility of building/acquiring indoor recreation space for expanding programming.
<b>Ongoing Strategies</b>
Conduct program feedback through participation surveys and intercept surveys to enhance existing programs/events and develop new with the customer in mind.
Evaluate programs and events incorporating customer satisfaction surveys to determine needed improvements or retirement using the evaluation cycle matrix.



### 1.10.3 INITIATIVE #3: HIGH PERFORMING OPERATIONS AND STAFF MANAGEMENT

<b>Operations &amp; Staffing Action Plan</b>	
<b>Short-Term (1-2 years)</b>	
Identify the appropriate size and location to replace the existing maintenance facility (Lifecycle replacement).	
Work with Public Works to implement a computerized maintenance management software, such as CityWorks (CMMS) for collecting and analyzing the Department operations.	
Establish policies for revenue generation, program pricing, and partnerships.	
Work with HR To build the necessary annual staff training calendar and onboarding checklist for new fulltime and seasonal hires.	
Design a formal volunteer program, policy and include opportunities in maintenance (landscape beds, playground mulch, etc.)	
Develop maintenance standards by level and assign levels and tasks to various locations within the park system.	
Develop a personnel plan to ensure staffing levels match the growth of the system.	
Develop a lifecycle replacement schedule for all assets installed in the park system, including infrastructure.	
Develop a maintenance plan incorporating best practices in operations (CMMS guide, policies impacting park maintenance, maintenance standards, use of volunteers, personnel plan, lifecycle replacement, etc.)	
<b>Mid-Term Strategies (3-5 years)</b>	
Develop a lifecycle replacement schedule for all assets installed in the park system, including infrastructure.	
Update existing maintenance facility grounds to potentially develop a pocket park along the Big 4 Trail.	
Update the community wide survey to determine level of improvement and any additional needs that may evolve from the growth of the Town.	
Develop a succession plan with growth opportunities and professional development tracts by key positions.	
<b>Long-Term Strategies (6+ years)</b>	
N/A	
<b>Ongoing Strategies</b>	
Building documentation (specific topics/sections) and incorporate into the framework of a maintenance management plan.	
Annually review policies and procedures and update according to needs and changes in operation (CAPRA Requirement).	
Continue to use equity mapping to identify amenities most appropriate location raising the level of service to meet the growing demand.	
Encourage Department staff to invest in community and self-development through volunteering on boards and committees.	

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 1.10.4 INITIATIVE #4: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

<b>Marketing &amp; Branding Action Plan</b>
<b>Short-Term (1-2 years)</b>
Invest resources in digital marketing to meet the residents where they are.
Establish the process to calculate and measure your marketing ROI (Return on Investment).
Develop Social Media Campaigns and content to increase community knowledge of offerings - featured park, featured event, featured project, featured employee, campaigns/contests etc.
Develop a branded template for staff to use as print materials in marketing all department activities.
Develop a process for the development of marketing and communication content along with avenues to increase the reach.
Develop park branding and entrance standards for easy identification.
<b>Mid-Term Strategies (3-5 years)</b>
Develop a department marketing plan specific to parks and recreation and complimentary of the Town's efforts.
Conduct training for staff to identify opportunities to tell the Departments story while working in the field - sharing images with brief details to an employee that will fully develop the message and post.
Establish points of interest in the parks (E.g., murals, natural vistas, or 3d art) in which people take selfies and they post it on social media increasing reach) and promote the locations.
<b>Long-Term Strategies (6+ years)</b>
Educate the community on the developed park maintenance and program quality standards through social media and demonstrating the staff living the mission.
<b>Ongoing Strategies</b>
Continue to look for new ways to increase parks and recreation marketing to increase knowledge of offerings and expand reach.
Leverage relationships with partners to enhance marketing efforts through cross-promotion that include defined measurable outcomes.
Ensure consistent branding Department-wide.
More emphasis on telling the story of the Department, the work you do, and the impact you have on the community.

### 1.10.5 INITIATIVE #5: ENHANCE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

<b>Funding Action Plan</b>
<b>Short-Term (1-2 years)</b>
Identify and allocate funding for CIP Critical Projects - trail paving for Panther and Gateway Parks.



Identify funding sources to acquire land for neighborhood park #1.
Utilize the sponsorship guide for opportunities to strengthen events and expand programming, include attendance figures in material.
Develop a formalized volunteer program to maximize resources and contain costs.
Work with the Park Foundation to expand giving opportunities to include a Community Foundation of Boone County fund for comfortable public giving.
<b>Mid-Term Strategies (3-5 years)</b>
Work with the Town & Clerk/Treasurer to incorporate capital funding sources into strategies for new park and facility development.
Identify funding strategy to develop neighborhood park #1 and proceed with budgeting.
Identify funding sources to acquire land for neighborhood park #2.
Update the 2019 Zone Improvement Plan for the Recreation Impact Fees in 2023.
Identify funding sources to acquire land for community park #1.
Incorporate additional user fees as the Department expands programming.
<b>Long-Term Strategies (6+ years)</b>
Develop funding strategy to develop neighborhood park #2 and proceed with budgeting.
Identify funding strategy to develop community park #1 and proceed with budgeting.
Identify franchise and license funding sources to explore and implement.
<b>Ongoing Strategies</b>
Develop a communication plan to educate the public during construction and the benefits/successes of new park uses and routinely communicate.
Utilize the sponsorship guide for opportunities to strengthen events and expand programming, include attendance figures in material.
Continue to develop partnerships that collaborate to provide services to the community.
Continue to monitor grant opportunities and determine the cost benefit when considering application.



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 1.11 CONCLUSION

The Town of Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department does an excellent job serving the Whitestown community as evident by the feedback received from the community throughout the master plan, as well as the high level of use the existing parks receive.

As with any quality comprehensive planning process, the community was highly involved throughout the development of the Master Plan through stakeholder and focus group meetings. A total of 499 residents participated in the online and the statistically valid survey, as well as over 40 participants in the focus group and key stakeholder interviews. A public forum was held August 2022 that included participation by those in attendance at the Town Municipal Complex and through Facebook Live, 6 residents in-person and 26 residents through Facebook Live. These engagement opportunities with the community helped prioritize and identify the issues that need to be addressed in the Master Plan and to support the key recommendations that need implemented over the next five years.

As Whitestown experiences an abundance of growth in the demographic segment of residents ages 34 and under, it necessitates the Department continue to serve the needs of youth and families through the types of amenities offered at parks and through expanded programming. Also, with the amount of development taking place within the Town, the parks system must secure park land in underserved areas to keep up with the growth. The types of park land should match the needs identified in this Master Plan, which includes the addition of two (2) neighborhood parks and one (1) community park with appropriate recreation amenities.

This Master Plan establishes recommendations for Whitestown to achieve the vision the community has for the park and recreation system. The key is to ensure there are appropriate maintenance staffing levels to properly maintain the assets as the park system expands. It is important to bring all existing assets to their full lifecycle.

Whitestown must find the balance between the existing outdoor parks and recreation amenities, while ensuring residents have opportunities for year-round activities and facilities, which may include additional indoor recreation space. The Master Plan is a living document with many moving components that must be achieved simultaneously to ensure Whitestown builds upon its legacy over the next five years of providing a comprehensive mix of high quality, programs, facilities, and services that contribute to Whitestown's quality of life.





## CHAPTER TWO — WHITESTOWN PROFILE

### 2.1 PLANNING AREA

#### 2.1.1 MANMADE, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL FEATURES

Portions of the following section were taken from the Town of Whitestown's *2022 Comprehensive Master Plan*.

##### EARLY HISTORY

Indiana became a state in 1816. Two years later, the U.S. Government made an agreement, known as the “New Purchase Treaty,” with the Miami Indians. The agreement made way for many new Indiana counties, including Boone County, to be formed. The treaty opened the land to speculators and settlers in 1820. The first land purchase within the area that would later become Boone County was in September 1822.

In 1828, the state authorized construction of Michigan Road from Indianapolis to Lake Michigan. Passing through the eastern part of Boone County, just east of Zionsville, the road became one of the most-traveled highways in the state. In 1829, legislation was passed to formally organize a new county northwest of Indianapolis. The new county, named in honor of legendary frontiersman Daniel Boone, was officially established on April 1, 1830, with a population of 622.

Jamestown was expected to be the county seat, but state law required all county seats to be within two miles of the center of their counties, so in 1831, Lebanon became the county seat.

Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, railroads and canals competed for state funding. By 1849, just a little over 100 miles of track had been laid in the state, but in the 1850s there was an explosion of growth. In fact, by 1860, a remarkable 2,100 miles of Indiana railroad was in use! Boone County, situated between Indianapolis and Lafayette, was a beneficiary of this expansion.

As the track routes were developed, the railroad determined to position a station along the tracks about every 8-10 miles. Accordingly, when the tracks were laid through Boone County in 1851, the Whitestown station was built on the land of Abram Neese in Section 19, approximately nine miles southeast of Lebanon on the rail line from Indianapolis to Lafayette. Several nearby Towns were formed along the same rail line, including Zionsville and Thorntown. The first train, The Lafayette and Indianapolis, passed through Whitestown on December 16, 1852.

Whitestown was initially called New Germantown. As efforts were made to secure a post office, it was discovered that Indiana already had a town with that name in Wayne County. So, in 1852, the Town's name was changed to Whitestown to secure a post office. This was apparently in honor of U.S. Senator Albert Smith White, who served two terms in the United States House of Representatives (1837-1838 and 1861-1863), and one term in the U.S. Senate (1839-1845). In 1845, he returned to Indiana where, among other roles, he served as president of the Indianapolis and Lafayette Railroad, whose trains ran through Whitestown. He re-entered politics in 1860 and was once again elected to the U.S. House of Representatives (1861-1863). Mr. White famously served on the Select Committee on Emancipation and Colonization during the Lincoln administration. After his term in the House, he was appointed by President Lincoln to serve on a three-man commission formed to judge claims from citizens made against the government regarding attacks made by Native Americans. Thereafter he was named a judge for the U.S. District Court for Indiana where he served until his death in 1864. Senator White is buried in Greenbush Cemetery in Lafayette.

##### INCORPORATION

In September 1946, a petition for the incorporation of the Town of Whitestown was entered into the minutes of the Board of Commissioners of Boone County. The petition was signed by more than one-third of the resident real estate owners and legal voters within a 121.57-acre description of the boundary of the proposed Town limits. It asked that an election be ordered to determine whether or not the Town should be incorporated.

During the October 1946 meeting of the Board, Clyde O. Laughner stated under oath that he posted copies of a notice of intent to present a petition for incorporation at the October Board meeting at three locations: McMakin Printing Office, Loren Pipes' filling station, and Carl Livengood's Hardware Store. Mr. Laughner filed a survey and map of the proposed incorporated area and a census of the resident population of the area.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The Board, satisfied with the proof of notice and that more than one-third of the residents had signed the petition, ordered that an election be held at Clarence Pipes' Skating Rink between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on October 26, 1946. This election apparently did not take place.

In the minutes of the February 1947 Board meeting, the election was rescheduled for the same hours on March 1, 1947, with the statement that "the restraining order heretofore issued by the Boone Circuit Court of the State of Indiana restraining and enjoining this Board from proceeding further in this matter has been dissolved and that the petitioners in that action have been denied an injunction to restrain this Board from assuming or exercising any further jurisdiction of this matter." No further information about this restraining order was found in the Commissioners' records.

During the March 3, 1947, Board meeting, Richard Adney, Attorney of Incorporation of the Town of Whitestown, filed the election returns, inspector oaths, affidavits, and lists of voter names with the Boone County Auditor. These were approved by the Board and the following statement appears in their record: "And the Board now hereby declares, orders, adjudges that the territory referred to in the petition be incorporated as a Town under the laws of the State of Indiana, by the corporate name of the Town of Whitestown, Indiana."

A special census taken in 1948 set the Town's initial population at 499 (Lebanon Reporter, July 4, 1976). The 1950 U.S. Census indicated the Whitestown population to be 550. Ten years later, it reached its highest recorded 20th-century population at 613 residents.

### SCHOOLS

In 1852, the state legislature established that local entities would administer the schools. As a result, in those days, townships, towns and cities each built and maintained independent schools for their children. Over 100 years later, the School Corporation Reorganization Act (1959) initiated a statewide dramatic change in the structure of Indiana schools. In the next ten years, the number of school corporations in Indiana dropped from 900 to 400. At a public meeting in May 1963, Worth Township residents voted 5:1 to join with the newly organized Lebanon Community School Corporation (a consolidation of Center Township and Lebanon City Schools) in lieu of a liaison with Zionsville schools. Perry Township followed suit a month later. Soon thereafter, Zionsville, Eagle Township, and Union Township joined to form a new school district of their own. After graduating its final senior class that spring, Whitestown High School was closed, and students joined Lebanon schools the following year.

Today, Whitestown has a great working relationship with the public and private schools that serve the community, including the Lebanon Community School Corporation, Zionsville Community Schools, and Traders Point Christian School. The Town strives to be responsive to the needs of each school and school district.

Both the Lebanon Community School Corporation and Zionsville Community Schools have future plans for expansion that may impact Whitestown. The Lebanon Community School Corporation has need for a K-5 elementary school and has land reserved for a future middle school. Zionsville Community Schools own a 32-acre parcel off Main Street in Whitestown that is reserved for an instructional building. They have a need for an additional elementary school.

### ANNEXATIONS

When Whitestown was incorporated in 1947, the boundary included approximately 122 acres (0.19 square miles). The next fifty years showed very little geographical growth as the Town boundary by 1998 had only increased to 175 acres (0.27 square miles) — an annual growth rate of less than 0.75%.

The next ten years would show remarkable growth in Whitestown, both in population and land area.

Bolstered by the BCU purchase and the development of the Anson PUD, annexations enlarged the Town boundary to nearly 6,760 acres by 2008 — over 44% per year during that period.

As a result of several annexations since that time, Whitestown's boundary now encompasses over 14 square miles, or 8,973 acres according to the 2020 U.S. Census Gazetteer Files. Since the previous Comprehensive Plan in 2015, Whitestown's density (persons per square mile) has increased from 282.7 to 726.0 in 2020.



## THE BIG 4 TRAIL

The Big 4 multi-use trail, formerly known as the Farm Heritage Trail, includes a 2.4-mile section through Whitestown along the former Big 4 rail bed. Ultimately, it will be part of a larger, 60+ mile regional trail network connecting The Cultural Trail in Downtown Indianapolis to Prophetstown State Park just north of Lafayette, Indiana. A 10-mile segment from the west side of Lebanon to the north side of Thorntown at Sugar Creek is open for use, and the trail extends south through Whitestown and the Legacy Core.

In addition to serving as a recreational amenity, the Big 4 Trail will foster economic development in the community. It attracts both residents and visitors to the Legacy Core to shop, dine, and enjoy recreational activities, and serves as the backbone for an extensive network of planned trails throughout Whitestown. Collectively, these trails will greatly impact the Legacy Core and all of Whitestown in a number of ways including:

- Improved pedestrian/bicycle access creating a safe environment for visitors to the Legacy Core area as well as other parts of town.
- A network of recreational trails to promote health and fitness among community residents.
- An alternative means of transportation to school or work to help reduce pollution in the community.
- A holistic network of destinations connecting diverse areas of town including the Legacy Core, athletic fields, proposed and existing parks, school playgrounds, neighborhoods, churches, and shopping/retail areas.
- Trailhead(s) in the Legacy Core providing safe access to the Big 4 Trail and the local trail network. These trailhead(s) could include amenities such as a Bark Park, nature/wetland park, parking, and equestrian facilities

## CONTEXT

Whitestown is the fastest growing communities in Indiana. Along I-65 to the west, agricultural areas are being replaced with big box industrial/ distribution centers, as well as a new regional Little League baseball facility and other mixed-use development at the former Wrecks site. Whitestown is the home of the Little League Central Region headquarters. In 2021, a new complex opened, including the Central Region Headquarters administration building, a gift shop, and a Little League field with stadium seating, bleachers, a press box, and lights. The complex hosts both the Little League Softball Central Region and the Great Lakes and Midwest Region tournaments. It should be noted that this facility is not for use by Town of Whitestown residents. Also, many of the Town's shelter rentals are residents of Zionsville, as the price to rent is less expensive.

To the east towards Zionsville, traditional subdivisions are being developed, along with mixed use and multi-family developments of varying densities. The rapid pace of development offers several significant challenges to the development of parks and recreation in the community. These include:

- **Connectivity to Parks** - Growth is occurring in pockets throughout the community. Within these pockets, there is strong connectivity with sidewalks, but there are gaps in connectivity between developments. A key focus for the town is working with developers to fill these gaps or developing town infrastructure to accomplish this. This issue is addressed in more detail in the 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- **Proximity to Parks** — The Town's goal is to provide 8.1 acres per 1,000 residents. Currently, the Town is providing 5.61 acres per 1,000 residents, which means there is a need for an additional 28 acres of parkland. There are gaps to the north and southwest portions of Town. The Parks Department is working with the Planning Department to overlay park service area/level of service to identify parcels for potential land acquisition that is developable.
- **I-65 Barrier** — I-65 presents a significant barrier to community connectivity. The Town is encouraging multiple steps to connect residents north and south of the interchange. The Parks Department needs to ensure there is consistency with the Planning Department and Public Works to work through solutions for the barrier.



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

- **Walking/Bicycling Culture** — In the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Whitestown outlines a vision to increasingly become a community where people park their car when they get home from work and walk/bike to evening activities. More on this strategy is included in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- **Gaps in Recreation Needs** — Whitestown enacted park impact fees to provide funding for new park facilities required by growth, which were recently updated in 2019. While that has allowed the community to keep pace with many needs (miles of trails, proximity to parks), some more expensive needs that were heard during the community engagement process in the spring and summer of 2022 have not been met to date. Most notably, residents are interested in indoor recreation and year-round programming opportunities.

### 2.1.2 NATURAL FEATURES AND LANDSCAPE

Whitestown lies in the Eastern Corn Belt Plains in the Loamy, High Lime Till Plains ecoregion. This region is primarily a rolling plain with local end moraines. The soils typically have better natural drainage and are naturally more fertile. Originally beech forests and elm-ash swamp forests were common but today corn, soybean and livestock production are widespread. Isolated woodland patches are more common than large stands of forests. Woodland patches are isolated by agriculture fields.

Previously, Whitestown was mostly known as an agriculture community. However rapid population growth has brought new development into Whitestown transitioning this community into a less agriculturally centered community and more of a suburban community. The availability of agriculture land in Whitestown provides an opportunity for future development and open space. As agricultural fields are acquired, the Town needs to identify areas of open space that should be develop, preserved, or re-vegetated.

Several small waterways lie within the planning area. Some of these include Jackson Run, Whitelick Creek, and Fishback Creek. These waterways have likely been impacted by agricultural practices and runoff affecting water quality. Most of these waterways are inaccessible to the public for recreational use. These resources provide Whitestown with an opportunity to create natural recreation area for the community in a mostly flat and agriculturally dominated area. Future development along these corridors should minimize impacts to waterways by implementing low-impact development strategies and using best management practices.

There are few, if any, compelling natural features for active recreation within the planning area. Eagle Creek Reservoir is about 10 miles to the south; Morse Reservoir is about 15 miles to the northeast. Sugar Creek lies about 14 miles north of town. Similarly, there are no significant hills, quarries, or other such features that typically attract park users. It is also difficult to imagine using the small waterways within the planning area for recreational uses other than greenways, as water quality is likely impaired by surrounding land use.

Currently, the Town does not have any parkland along these existing waterways, but has undeveloped parkland along Jackson Run. Reviewing Whitestown's Tree Canopy through Tree Equity Score ([treeequityscore.org](http://treeequityscore.org)), the Town has a score of 41. The Tree Equity Score is a metric that helps communities assess how well they are delivering equitable tree canopy cover to all residents. The score combines measures of tree canopy cover need and priority for trees in urban neighborhoods. It is derived from tree canopy cover, climate, demographic and socioeconomic data. Current canopy cover of the Town 18% according the report. It is highly recommended that the Town establish a tree addition/replacement schedule in existing and future parks, as this was identified as a major need from residents during the public engagement, specifically Main Street Park.

### CLIMATE

Indiana is a temperate state with strongly marked seasons. The state's weather is heavily influenced by the Gulf of Mexico, but is often influenced by Canadian weather systems as well. Autumn is generally considered the most pleasant season, with cool but mild temperatures, low humidity and clear skies. Summer is often hot and humid. Winter is cold. Spring and summer see frequent rainfall. Severe weather comes in the form of tornados and thunderstorms.

The warmest month in Whitestown is July with average high and low temperatures of 85° and 64° Fahrenheit. The coldest month is January with average high and low temperatures of 34° and 19° Fahrenheit. Overall, the climate of Whitestown is similar to that of the rest of Indiana with relatively cold winters and hot, humid summers (*Information pulled October 2022*).



Weather can serve as an uncontrollable factor in various facets of Whitestown's park operations. Heavier than average snow during the winter may result in increased costs for staffing (e.g., park maintenance overtime) and supplies (e.g., salt and ice melt). An unseasonably cool or wet summer could negatively impact turf conditions at the Town's busiest parks (e.g., Main Street and Panther). Severe winds or flooding could cause damage to park amenities, such as the splashpad at Main Street Park, requiring basic to significant repairs or replacement. For these reasons, it remains critical for the Department to maintain rainy day reserves to cover potential weather-related budget shortfalls or capital maintenance needs.

Recognizing that climate change is gaining national and international attention, as well as recent Indiana hot summers, it is important to prepare Whitestown's park system to address current and future weather patterns.

The Trust for Public Land's Climate-Smart Cities program has laid out four objectives for parks as multi-benefit climate solutions:

- **Cool:** Shady green spaces reduce the "heat island" effect to protect people from heat waves and reduce summer energy use
- **Absorb:** Water-smart parks, playgrounds and streetscapes absorb rainfall, reduce flooding and recharge drinking water supplies, while saving energy for water management
- **Protect:** Strategically placed and managed parks and natural lands buffer cities from rising seas, coastal storms, inland flooding and wildfires
- **Connect:** Trails, greenways and park systems provide carbon-free transportation options and link residents to popular destinations and to one another

Whitestown is mindful of including these solutions as part of future park design in site master plans.

### 2.1.3 OTHER PLANNING INFLUENCES

Whitestown is the fastest growing community in Indiana. As such, action is needed in the short term to preserve natural areas for parks and open space. The Town is taking several steps to accomplish this. These steps include:

- **Open Space Set Aside** — The Town's 2022 Comprehensive Plan established recommendations to protect open space and natural resources. Specifically, the recommendations include:
  - Provide park facilities both north and south of Interstate 65.
  - Provide natural and passive recreation facilities.
- **Greenways Along Riparian Corridors** — The Town adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan in 2018. This plan includes the goal of developing greenways along riparian corridors. This will be established as a formal amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, which will require developers to set aside land for these greenways or incorporate them into development.

Moving forward, the Town must be proactive in securing land for designated parkland as residential units are added as this additional population will continue to increase use at the existing parks. This will be a key element in adding to the quality of life of residents into the future.



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 2.1.4 GOVERNANCE

The Parks Board for Whitestown was restructured under Ordinance 2017-03 on February 8, 2017. The Parks Board membership was previously compromised under IC 36-10-3-4 but the Town Council determined that it was in the best interest of Whitestown and the Whitestown Parks Department to restructure and reorganize the Parks Board with membership under IC 36-10-5-2. The Town Council members serve as ex officio members of the Parks Board. The restructured Parks Board has and maintains all authority and responsibility over the operation and maintenance of the Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department.

Current City Council / Park Board members include the following individuals:

- Clinton Bohm, Town Council President — District 2
- Susan Austin, Town Council Vice President — District 1
- Eric Miller, Council Member — District 3
- Jeffrey Wishek, Council Member — District 4
- Eric Nichols, Council Member — District 5

### 2.1.5 TOWN DEPARTMENTS

The Town of Whitestown has the following government administration positions and Departments:

- Town Council
- Clerk's Office
- Departments
  - Building Department
  - Code Enforcement
  - Development Services
  - Fire Department
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Planning
  - Police
  - Public Relations
  - Public Works
  - Street
  - Town Administration
  - Utilities

## 2.2 ECONOMIC TRENDS

### TOTAL WORKFORCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Total Workforce and Unemployment According to 2016-2020 ACS estimates, of Whitestown's population 16 years and older, 83.7% were in the labor force in 2020. Compared to Indiana (63.7%) Whitestown's rate of participation in the labor force is significantly higher as a percentage of total population. The employed civilian labor force in Whitestown was 4,808 people.

### COMMUTING & PLACE OF WORK

Slightly more than 85% of Boone County's workers used a private vehicle (either by driving alone or carpooling) while traveling to work. The mean travel time to work was approximately 26 minutes. The percentage of county residents working from home was 11.7%, a percentage that is now certainly higher as a result the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Hoosiers by the Numbers (2019 tax year), 74% of Boone County's workforce also lives in the county, with 26% of the workforce commuting into the county. Of that 26% total, 20.7% of the workers are commuting from the five adjacent counties



(Marion, Hamilton, Hendricks, Clinton and Montgomery counties) to work in Boone County. The top three counties include Marion County (8.4%), Hamilton County (4.7%), and Hendricks County (3.8%). Comparatively, those same five counties only comprised 15.8% of Boone County's workforce in 2009, and 18.9% of the workforce in 2014.

## INDUSTRIES & OCCUPATIONS

As a percentage of Whitestown's employed population, the three largest employment sectors for 2020 were educational services, healthcare and social assistance (28.6%); followed by professional, scientific, and management/administrative services (18.6%); and manufacturing (14.6%). The top three occupations in 2020 were management, business, science and arts occupations (65.7%); followed by sales and office occupations (14.3%); and production, transportation and material moving occupations (9.7%). These three occupations totaled nearly 90% of the occupations held by residents in Whitestown.

## 2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

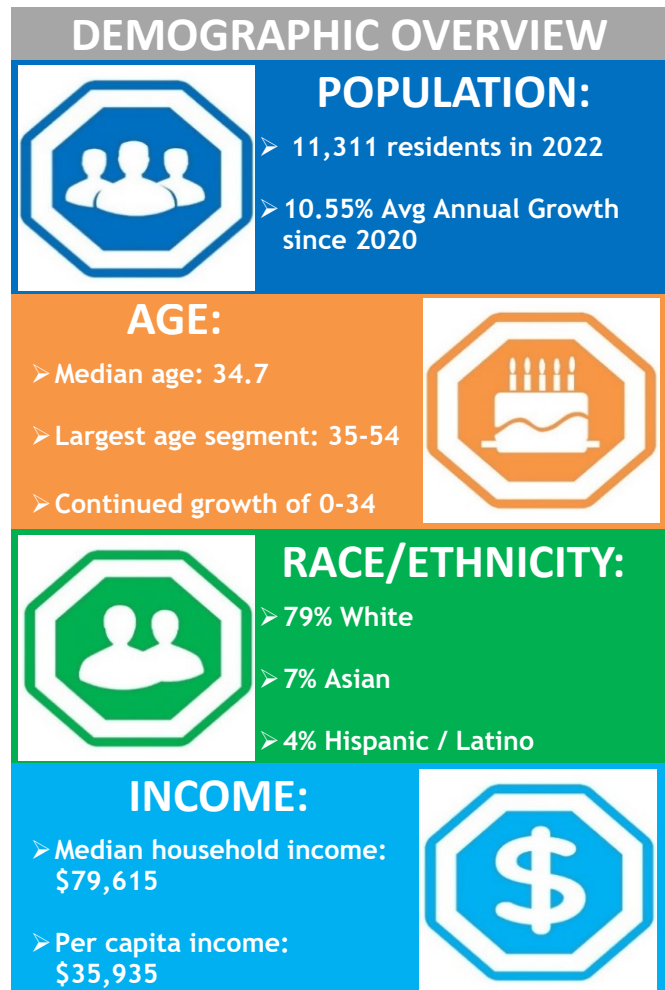
A key component of the Master Plan is a Demographic & Recreation Trends Analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to provide the Department of Parks and Recreation ("Department") insight into the general makeup of the population they serve and identify market trends in recreation. It also helps quantify the market in and around the Town of Whitestown and assists in providing a better understanding of the types of parks, facilities, and programs / services that are most appropriate to satisfy the needs of residents.

This analysis is two-fold — it aims to answer the who and the what. First, it assesses the demographic characteristics and population projections of Town residents to understand who the Department serves. Secondly, recreational trends are examined on a national and local level to understand what the population served wants to do. Findings from this analysis establish a fundamental understanding that provide a basis for prioritizing the community need for parks, trails, facilities, and recreation programs.

### 2.3.1 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The Demographic Analysis describes the population within the Town of Whitestown, Indiana. This assessment is reflective of the Towns' total population and its key characteristics such as age segments, race, ethnicity, and income levels. It is important to note that future projections are based on historical patterns and unforeseen circumstances during and/or after the time of the analysis could have a significant bearing on the validity of the projected figures.

The infographic to the right provides an overview of the Town's populace based on current estimates of the 2022 population. A further analysis of each of these demographic characteristics (population, age segments, race, ethnicity, and income) can be found on the following pages.



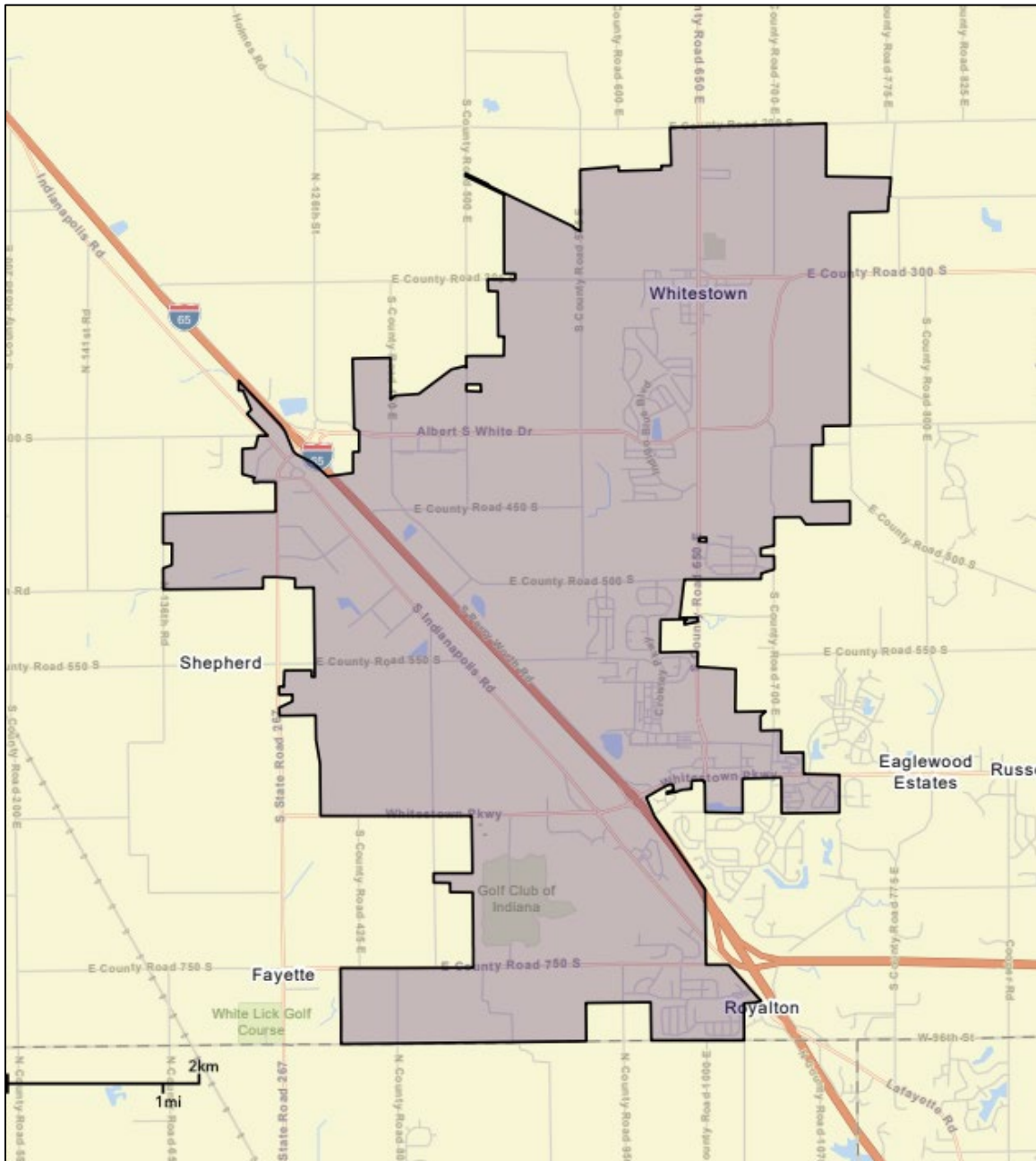
## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

## METHODOLOGY

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in July 2022 and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2020 Census. ESRI then estimates the current population (2022) as well as a 5-year projection (2027). PROS then utilized straight line linear regression to forecast demographic characteristics for 10 and 15-year projections (2032 and 2037).

## DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS BOUNDARY

The Town boundaries shown below were utilized for the demographic analysis.





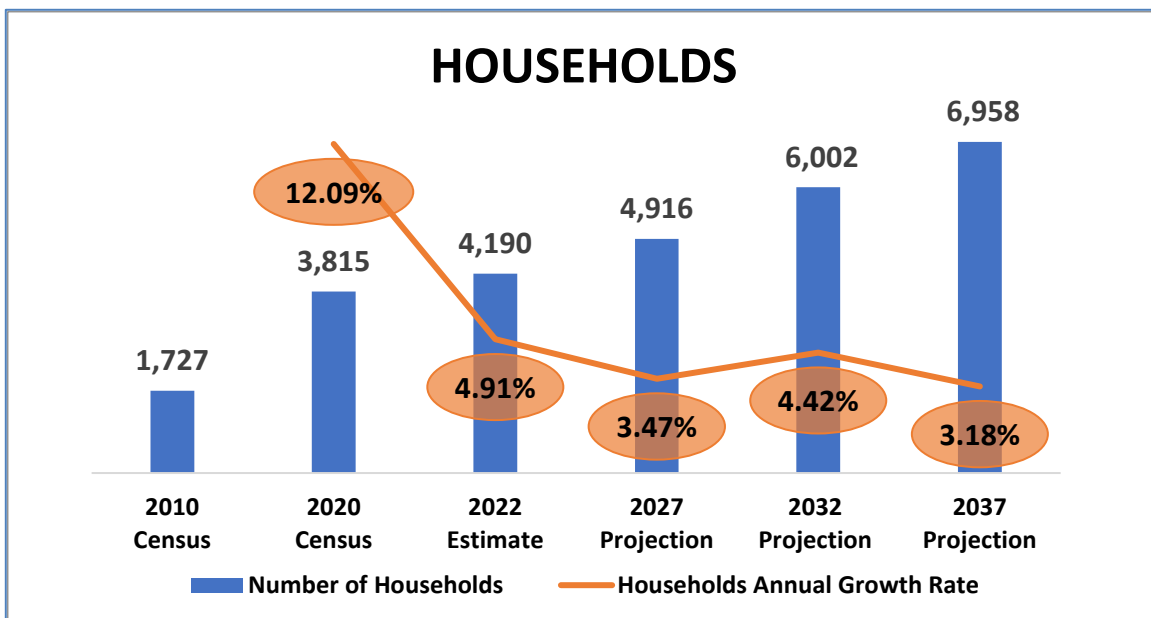
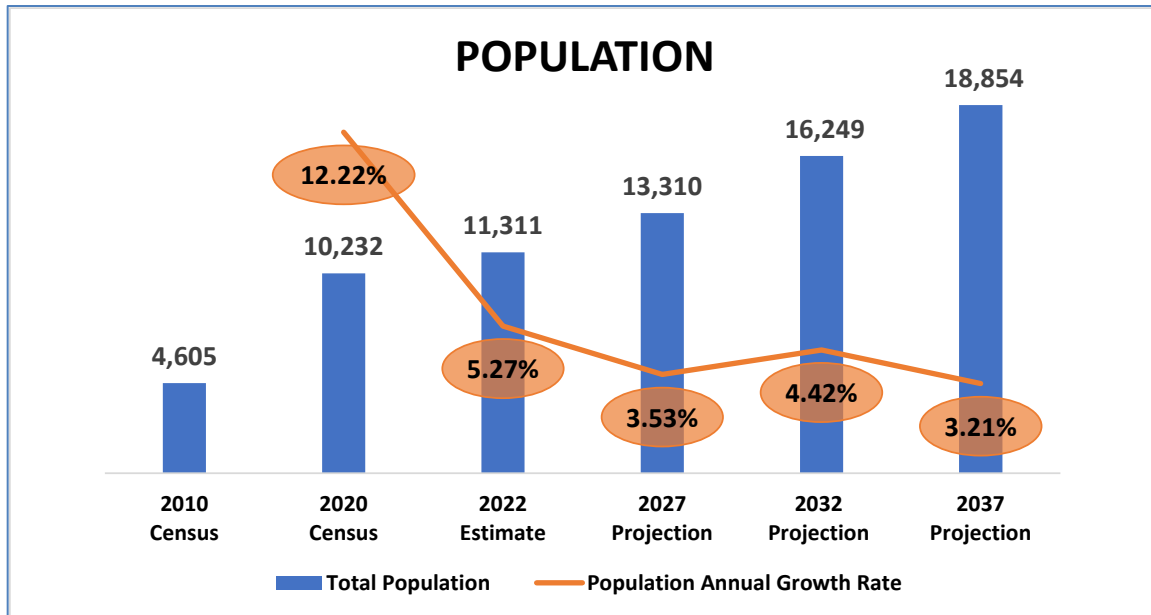


## TOWN POPULACE

### POPULATION

The Town's population more than doubled between 2010 (4,605) and 2020 (10,232) Census. This rapid growth has continued in the years since, with a yearly growth rate since 2020 (5.27%) over seven times higher than the national average (.74%), making it the fastest growing municipality in Indiana. Like the population, the total number of households also experienced a large increase, growing 143% since the 2010 Census, which is 11.88% annually (national average = 0.76% annual growth).

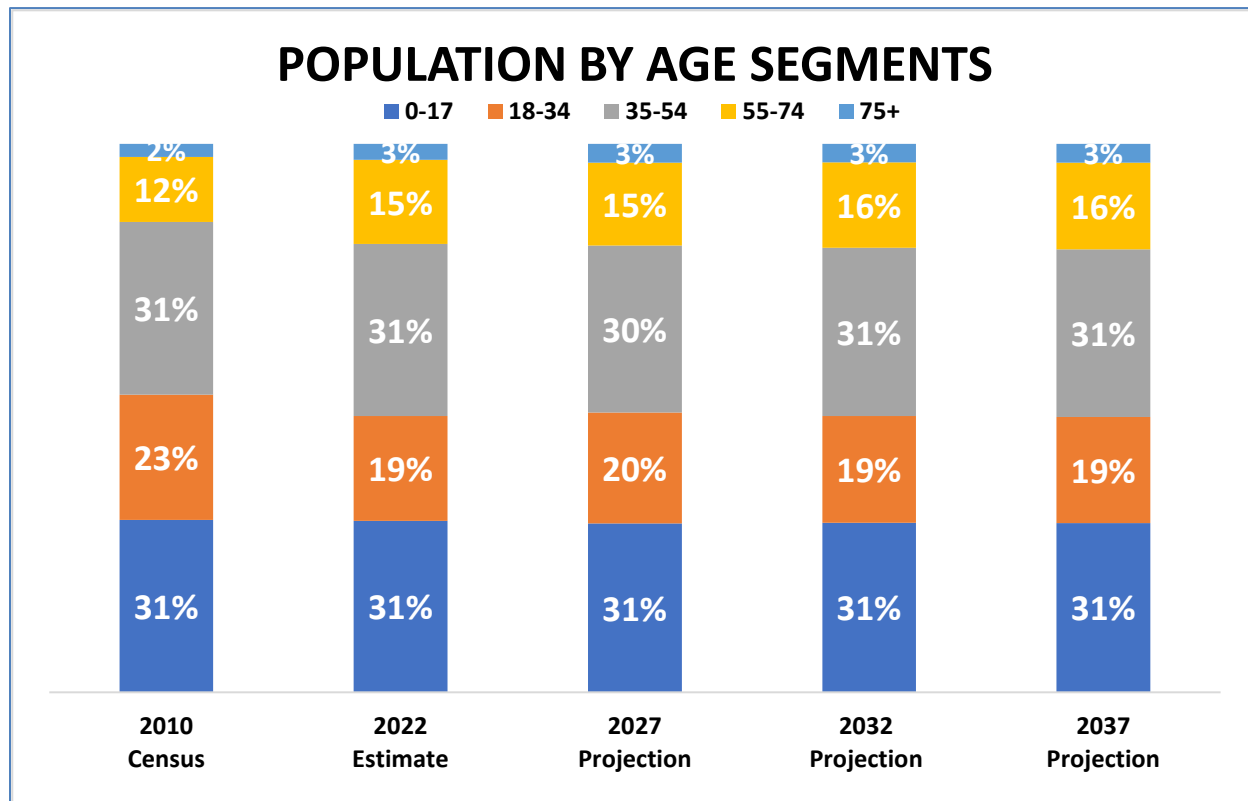
Currently, the population is estimated at 11,311 individuals living within 4,190 households. The projections show above average growth for the foreseeable future. By 2037, the Town's population is projected to be at 18,854 residents living within 6,958 households.



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### AGE SEGMENTATION

Evaluating the Town's age segmentation, Whitestown exhibits a young population, with half of its residents being under the age of 35. The Town's current median age is estimated at 34.7 years old, over 4 years below the U.S. median age (38.8 years old). That gap is projected to widen as the Town's median age is projected to drop (projected at 34.4 years old in 2027) in the next five years while the National median age will continue to rise (projected 38.9 in 2027).



### RACE AND ETHNICITY

#### DEFINITIONS

The minimum categories for data on race and ethnicity for Federal statistics, program administrative reporting, and civil rights compliance reporting are defined as below. The Census 2020 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 2010 Census and earlier censuses; therefore, caution must be used when interpreting changes in the racial composition of the US population over time. The latest (Census 2020) definitions and nomenclature are used within this analysis.

- **American Indian or Alaska Native:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.
- **Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.
- **Hispanic or Latino:** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race.
- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.
- **White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.



Census states that the race and ethnicity categories generally reflect social definitions in the U.S. and are not an attempt to define race and ethnicity biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. We recognize that the race and ethnicity categories include racial, ethnic, and national origins and sociocultural groups.”

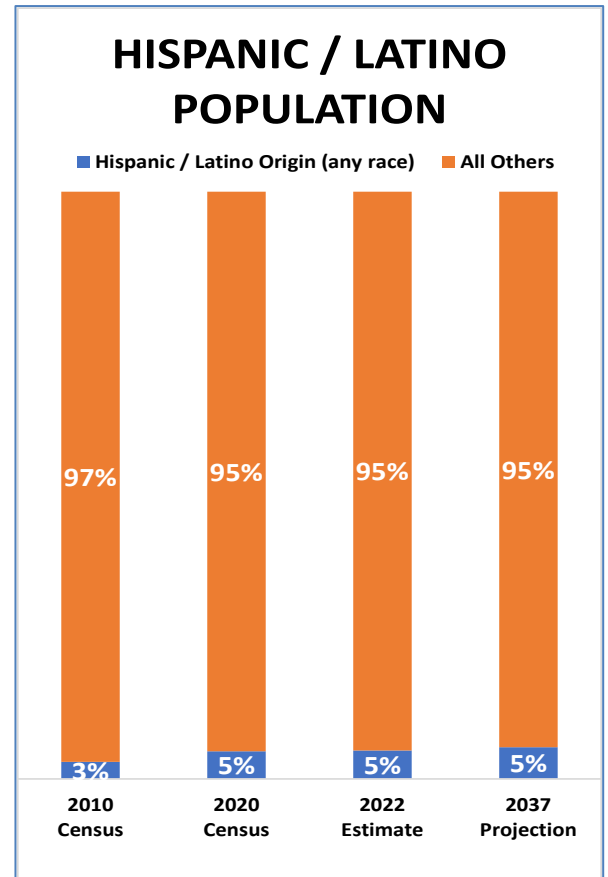
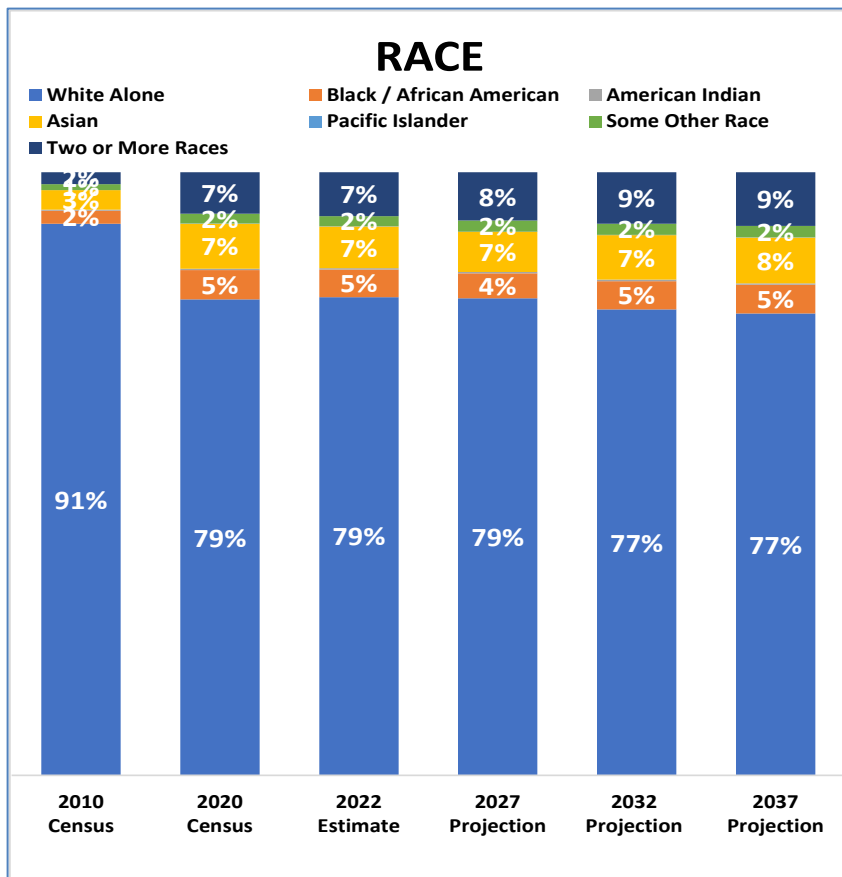
*Please Note: The Census Bureau states that the race and ethnicity categories generally reflect social definitions in the U.S. and are not an attempt to define race and ethnicity biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. We recognize that the race and ethnicity categories include racial, ethnic, and national origins and sociocultural groups. They define Race as a person’s self-identification with one or more of the following social groups: White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, some other race, or a combination of these. Ethnicity is defined as whether a person is of Hispanic / Latino origin or not. For this reason, the Hispanic / Latino ethnicity is viewed separate from race throughout this demographic analysis.*

#### RACE AND ETHNICITY

Analyzing race, the Town’s current population is predominantly White, although it has diversified substantially in the last 12 years. The 2022 estimate shows that 79% of the population falls into the White Alone category, down from 91% in the 2010 Census. Asian (7%) and Two or More Races (7%) represent the Town’s largest minority groups, with both groups projected to grow in the next 15 years.

The Town’s population was also assessed based on Hispanic/Latino ethnicity, which by the Census Bureau definition is viewed independently from race. It is important to note that individuals who are Hispanic/Latino in ethnicity can also identify with any racial categories identified above.

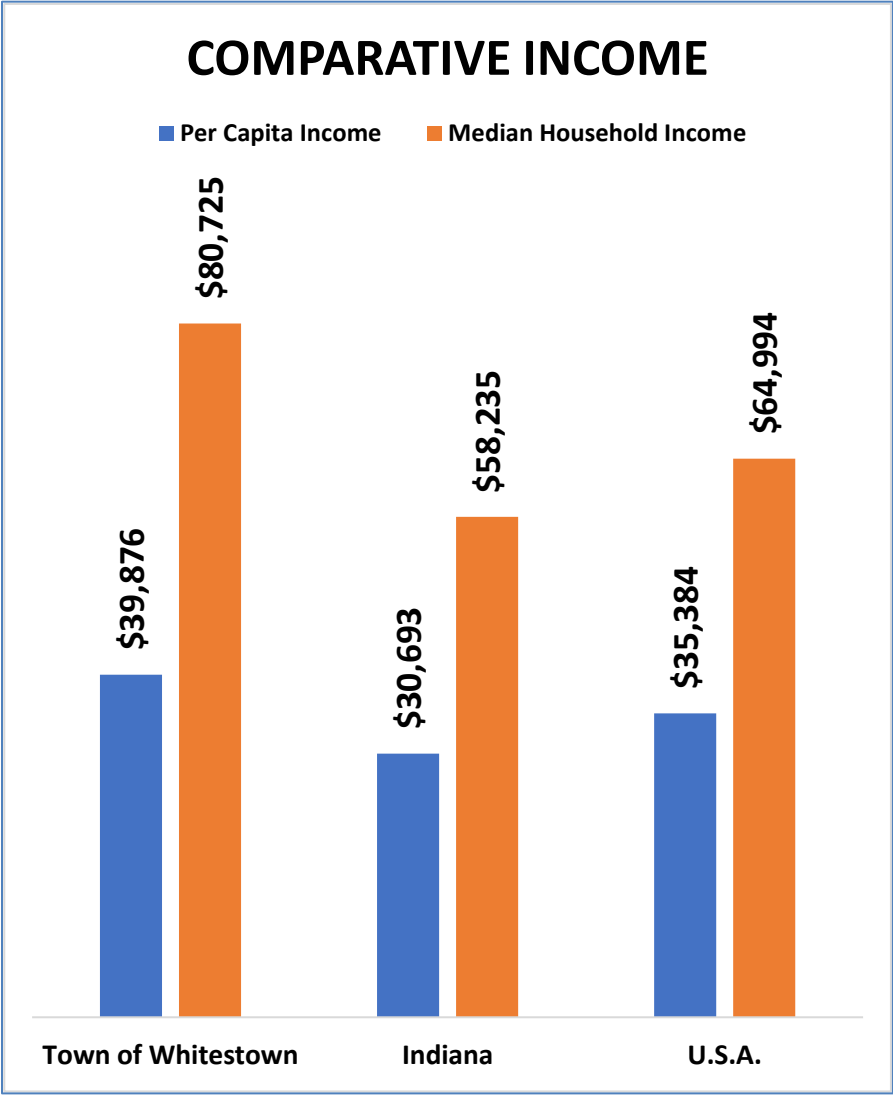
Based on the current 2022 estimate, people of Hispanic/ Latino origin represent approximately 5% of the Town’s population, which is substantially below the national average (19% Hispanic/Latino). While the Hispanic/ Latino population has increased slightly since the 2010 census, it is projected to remain at 5% through 2037.



PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

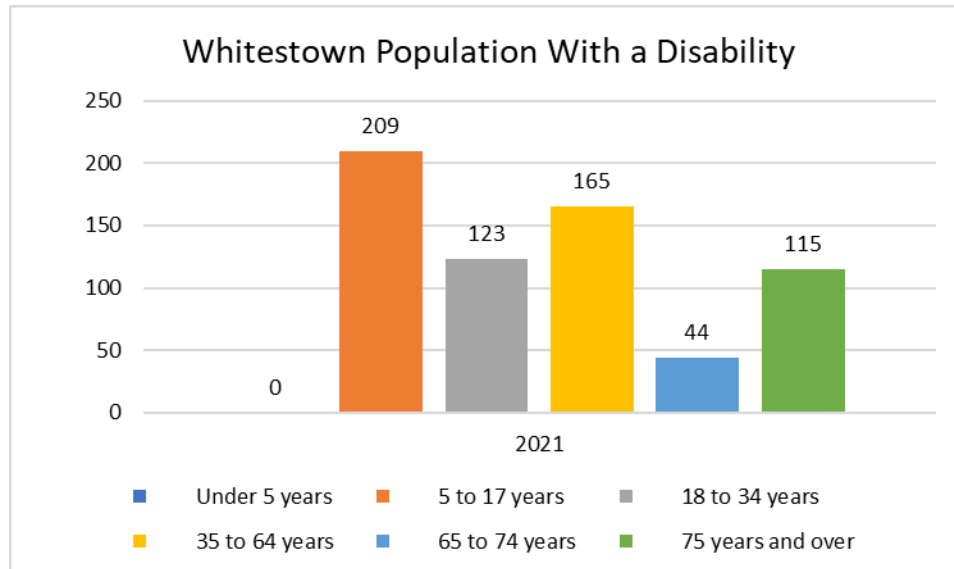
As seen below, the Towns’ per capita income (\$39,876) and median household income (\$80,725) are both substantially higher than the state and national averages. The per capita income is that earned by an individual while the median household income is based on the total income of everyone over the age of 16 living under the same roof. These above average income characteristics should be taken into consideration when Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department is pricing out programs and calculating cost recovery goals.





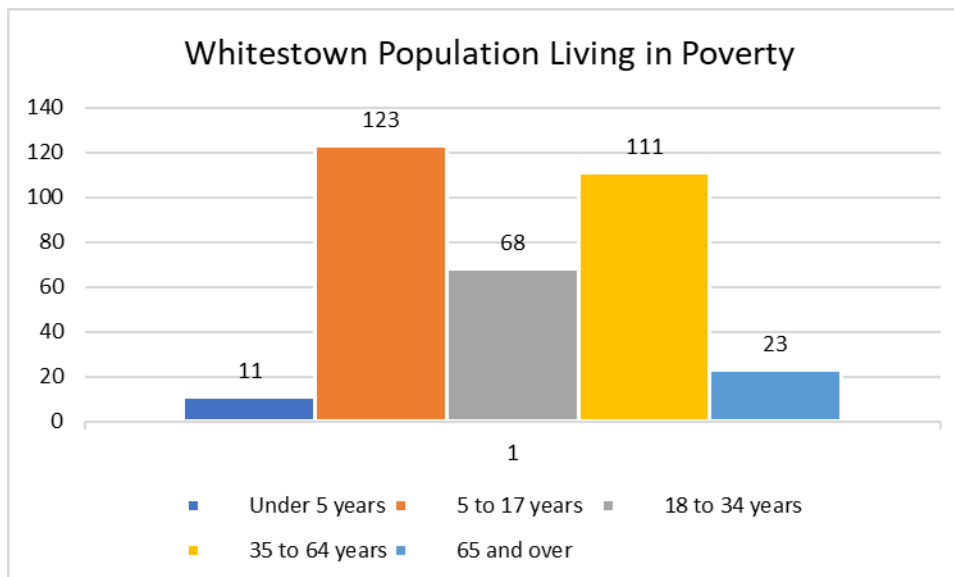
## DISABILITY

Based on the United States Census, 6.9% of the population has been identified with a disability. The table below shows the estimated number of residents with a disability by age segment. The Town must comply with ADA as new facilities are constructed and renovation of older amenities/facilities in parks.



## POVERTY

Based on the United States Census, 3.6% of the population has been living in poverty. The table below shows the estimated number of residents living below the poverty level by age segment. The Town should consider those less fortunate when setting prices for events, programs, and amenities and consider adopting a scholarship program.





## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

The table below is a summary of the Town's demographic figures. These figures are then compared to the state and U.S. populations for perspective on a regional and national scale.

2022 Demographic Comparison		Town of Whitestown	Indiana	USA
Population	Annual Growth Rate (2020-2022)	5.27%	0.51%	0.74%
	Projected Annual Growth Rate (2022-2037)	4.45%	0.49%	0.70%
Households	Annual Growth Rate (2020-2022)	4.91%	0.55%	0.76%
	Average Household Size	2.70	2.51	2.58
Age Segment Distribution	Ages 0-17	31%	22%	22%
	Ages 18-34	19%	23%	23%
	Ages 35-54	31%	25%	25%
	Ages 55-74	15%	23%	23%
	Ages 75+	3%	7%	7%
Race Distribution	White Alone	79.3%	81.0%	69.2%
	Black Alone	4.6%	9.8%	13.0%
	American Indian	0.2%	0.3%	1.0%
	Asian	6.9%	2.8%	5.9%
	Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
	Two or More Races	7.3%	2.7%	3.6%
Hispanic/ Latino Population	Hispanic / Latino Origin (any race)	4.9%	7.6%	18.9%
	All Others	95.1%	92.4%	81.1%
Income Characteristics	Per Capita Income	\$39,876	\$30,693	\$35,384
	Median Household Income	\$80,725	\$58,235	\$64,994



## DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

- The Town's recent **population annual growth rate** (5.27%) is significantly higher than the U.S.'s (0.74%) annual growth rate.
- The Town's **household annual growth rate** (17.91%) is substantially higher than the national average (0.76%).
- When assessing **age segments**, the Town exhibits a much younger population than the national age segment distribution.
- The Town's **racial distribution** is notably less diverse than the national population distribution, with a much greater White Alone population percentage.
- Whitestown's percentage of **Hispanic/Latino population** (4.9%) is well below the national average (18.9%).
- The Town's **per capita income** (\$39,876) and **median house income** (\$80,725) are both higher than state (\$30,693 & \$58,235) and national (\$35,384 & \$64,994) averages.

## DEMOGRAPHIC IMPLICATIONS

While it is important not to generalize recreation needs and priorities based solely on demographics, the analysis suggests some potential implications for the town.

- With the population exploding in the last twelve years there is an increased need for additional facilities, amenities, and programs. With the projected continued population growth, the Department must begin planning additions now to ensure that offerings are ready for the next generation.
- The Town's young population indicates a need to focus on young adults and young families. Adding more athletic fields or family orientated parks and programs would be beneficial to this segment that may attract other young families to settle down in Whitestown. It is important to still plan improvements for the older population as well as current residents age and look for ways to remain active.
- The Town's above average income characteristics suggest potential disposable income. The Parks and Recreation Department should be mindful of this when pricing out programs and events.
- The Town should ensure its growing and diversifying population is reflected in its offerings, marketing/communications, and public outreach.

## 2.4 RECREATIONAL TRENDS ANALYSIS

The Trends Analysis provides an understanding of national, regional, and local recreational trends as well recreational interest by age segments. Trends data used for this analysis was obtained from Sports & Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA), National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI). All trend data is based on current and/or historical participation rates, statistically valid survey results, or NRPA Park Metrics.

### 2.4.1 LOCAL SPORT AND LEISURE MARKET POTENTIAL

The following charts show sport and leisure market potential data for Whitestown residents, as provided by ESRI. Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service within the defined service areas. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident will participate in certain activities when compared to the U.S. national average. The national average is 100; therefore, numbers below 100 would represent lower than average participation rates, and numbers above 100 would represent higher than average participation rates. The service area is compared to the national average in four (4) categories — general sports, fitness, outdoor activity, and commercial recreation.

It should be noted that MPI metrics are only one data point used to help determine community trends; thus, programmatic decisions should not be based solely on MPI metrics.

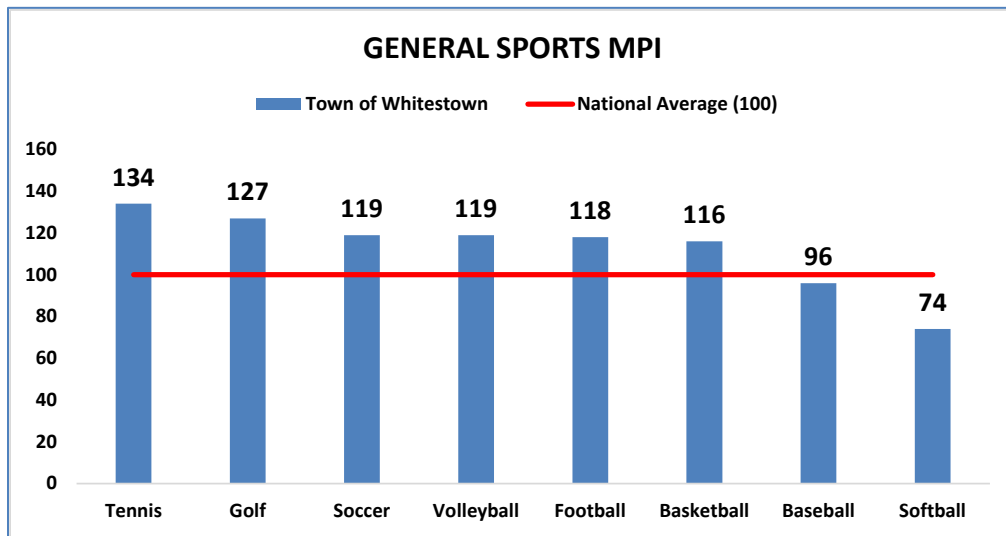
## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Overall, when analyzing the Town's MPIs, the data demonstrates well above average market potential index (MPI) numbers. Of the 46 activities whose MPI scores were tracked for this analysis, 42 had an MPI of 100 or above. These overall above average MPI scores show that the Town's residents have a rather strong participation presence when it comes to recreational offerings, especially pertaining to fitness and outdoor activities. This becomes significant when the Parks and recreation Department considers starting up new programs or building new facilities, giving them a strong tool to estimate resident attendance and participation.

The following charts compare MPI scores for all 46 sport and leisure activities that are prevalent for residents within the Town. The activities are categorized by activity type and listed in descending order, from highest to lowest MPI score. High index numbers (100+) are significant because they demonstrate that there is a greater likelihood that residents within the service areas will actively participate in those offerings provided by the Department.

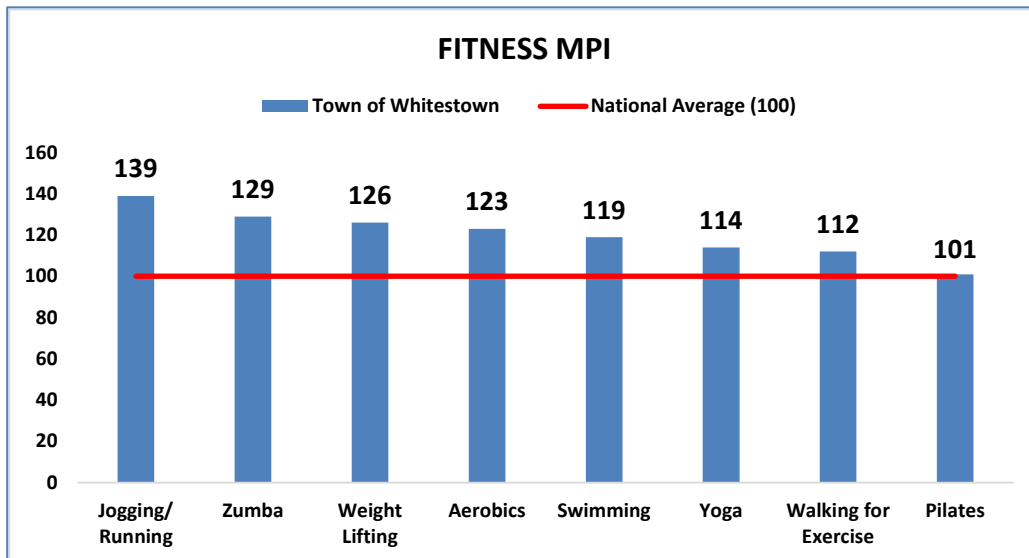
### GENERAL SPORTS MARKET POTENTIAL

The General Sports category shows all activities besides Baseball (96) and Softball (74) scoring above the national average. The top four general sports regarding MPI were Tennis (134), Golf (127), Soccer and Volleyball (119 each).



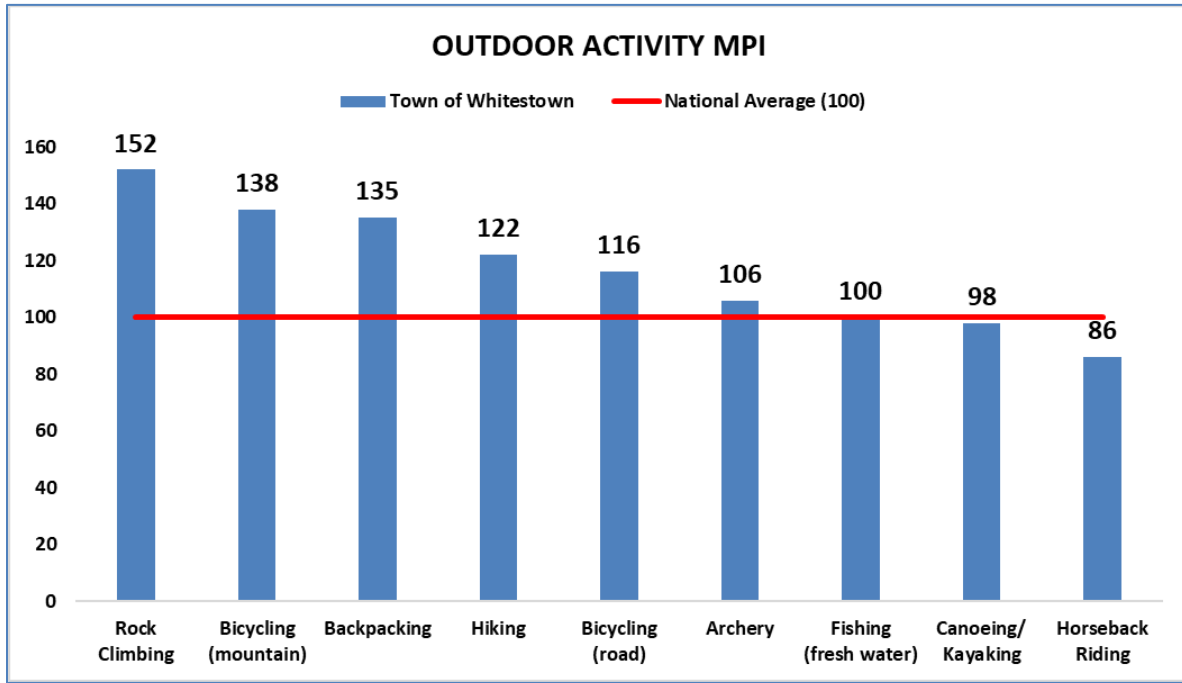
### FITNESS MARKET POTENTIAL

Assessing MPI scores for the Fitness Activity category reveals that residents are more likely to participate in all listed programs/activities when compared to the national average. Most notably in Jogging/ Running (139), Zumba (129) and Weightlifting (126).



### OUTDOOR ACTIVITY MARKET POTENTIAL

The Outdoor Activity MPI chart provides more evidence of the active nature of Town residents. Rock Climbing (152), Mountain Biking (138), and Backpacking (135) are the top three outdoor activities based on MPI with Canoeing/Kayaking (98) and Horseback Riding being the only two activities that came in below the national average.

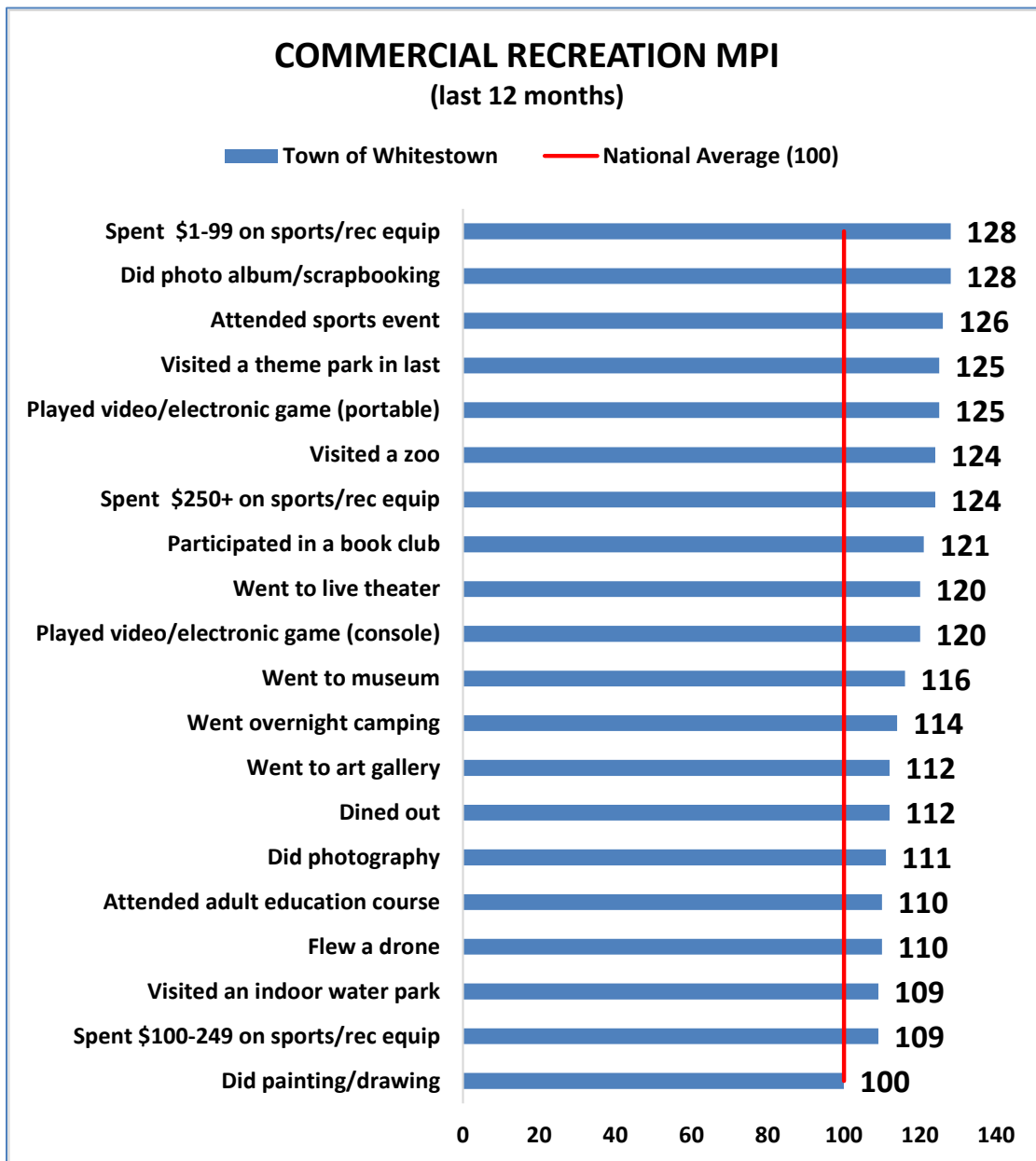


## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### COMMERCIAL RECREATION MARKET POTENTIAL

The Commercial Recreation category shows all activities having MPI scores at or above the national average with the highest scores going to Spent \$1-99 on sports/rec equipment (128), Did photo album/scrapbooking (128), and Attended sports event (126). Other notable MPI scores that pertain to potential parks and recreation programs and/or facilities include Participated in a book club (121), Went to live theater (120), Played console video/electronic game (120), Did photography (111), Attended adult education course (110), and Visited an indoor water park (109).

This information as it shows how residents spend their dollars for entertainment, and how it relates to recreation programming. It has value for Departments that manage recreation or community centers (e.g., art/drawing classes, visitation to water parks, extended adult programming, etc.) and potential new programs.



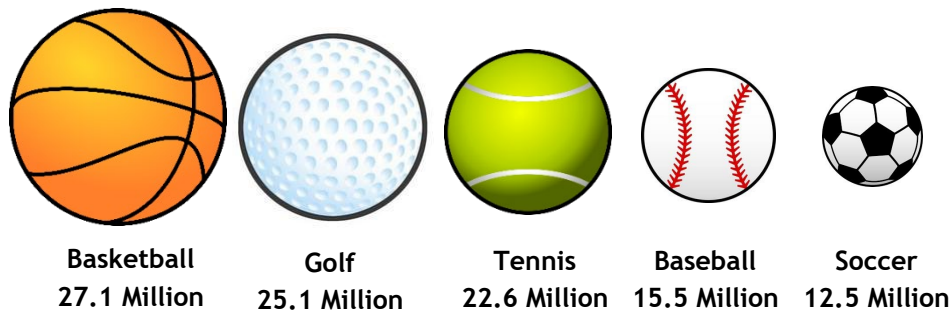


## 2.5 NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL SPORTS

### 2.5.1 PARTICIPATION LEVELS

The top sports most heavily participated in the United States were Basketball (27.1 million), Golf (25.1 million), and Tennis (22.6 million) which have participation figures well in excess of the other activities within the general sports category. Baseball (15.5 million), and Outdoor Soccer (12.5 million) round out the top five.

The popularity of Basketball, Golf, and Tennis can be attributed to the ability to compete with relatively small number of participants, this coupled with an ability to be played outdoors and/or properly distanced helps explain their popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Basketball's overall success can also be attributed to the limited amount of equipment needed to participate and the limited space requirements necessary, which make basketball the only traditional sport that can be played at the majority of American dwellings as a drive-way pickup game. Golf continues to benefit from its wide age segment appeal and is considered a life-long sport. In addition, target type game venues or Golf Entertainment Venues have increased drastically (72.3%) as a 5-year trend, using Golf Entertainment (e.g., Top Golf) as a new alternative to breathe life back into the game of golf.



#### FIVE-YEAR TREND

Since 2016, Pickleball (71.2%), Golf- Entertainment Venues (51.3%), and Tennis (25.1%) have shown the largest increase in participation. Similarly, Boxing for Fitness (21.4%) and Competition (20.7%) have also experienced significant growth. Based on the five-year trend from 2016-2021, the sports that are most rapidly declining in participation include Ultimate Frisbee (-40.4%), Roller Hockey (-26.1%), Volleyball (Sand/Beach) (-23.8%), Squash (-23.5%), Slow Pitch Softball (-21.9%), and Gymnastics (-20.7%).

#### ONE-YEAR TREND

The most recent year shares some similarities with the five-year trends; with Pickleball (14.8%) and Boxing for Competition (7.3%) experiencing some of the greatest increases in participation this past year. The greatest one-year increases also include Fast Pitch Softball (15.3%), Gymnastics (10.9%), and Court Volleyball (8.1%). Basketball (-2.2%), Flag Football (-1.6%), Indoor Soccer (-0.6%) and Baseball (-0.5%) have shown a five-year trend increase, but a one-year trend decrease. This is likely a direct result of coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, other team sports such as Ultimate Frisbee (-5.8%), Slow Pitch Softball (-5.4%), Roller Hockey (-5%), Racquetball (-4.8%) and Beach/Sand Volleyball (-3.1%), also had significant decreases in participation over the last year.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### CORE VS. CASUAL TRENDS IN GENERAL SPORTS

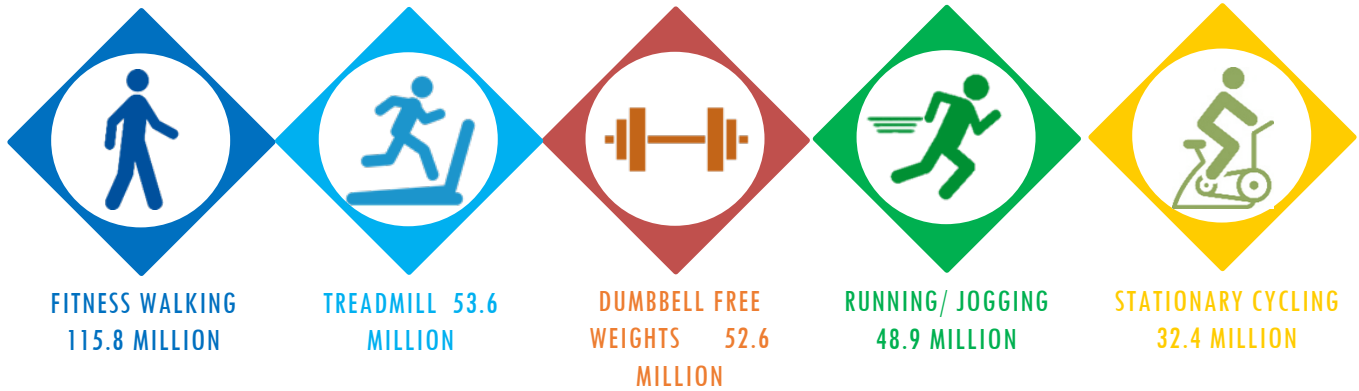
Highly participated in sports, such as Basketball, Baseball, and Slow Pitch Softball generally have a larger core participant base (participate 13+ times per year) than casual participant base (participate 1-12 times per year). Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, most activities showed a decrease in their percentage of core participants. However, there were significant increases in the percentage of casual participation for Court Volleyball, Pickleball, Fast Pitch Softball, Gymnastics and Lacrosse in the past year.

National Participatory Trends - General Sports					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2016	2020	2021	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Basketball	22,343	27,753	27,135	21.4%	-2.2%
Golf (9 or 18-Hole Course)	23,815	24,804	25,111	5.4%	1.2%
Tennis	18,079	21,642	22,617	25.1%	4.5%
Baseball	14,760	15,731	15,587	5.6%	-0.9%
Soccer (Outdoor)	11,932	12,444	12,556	5.2%	0.9%
Golf (Entertainment Venue)	8,173	12,057	12,362	51.3%	2.5%
Softball (Slow Pitch)	7,690	6,349	6,008	-21.9%	-5.4%
Football (Flag)	6,173	7,001	6,889	11.6%	-1.6%
Volleyball (Court)	6,216	5,410	5,849	-5.9%	8.1%
Badminton	7,354	5,862	6,061	-17.6%	3.4%
Soccer (Indoor)	5,117	5,440	5,408	5.7%	-0.6%
Football (Touch)	5,686	4,846	4,884	-14.1%	0.8%
Football (Tackle)	5,481	5,054	5,228	-4.6%	3.4%
Gymnastics	5,381	3,848	4,268	-20.7%	10.9%
Volleyball (Sand/Beach)	5,489	4,320	4,184	-23.8%	-3.1%
Track and Field	4,116	3,636	3,587	-12.9%	-1.3%
Cheerleading	4,029	3,308	3,465	-14.0%	4.7%
Pickleball	2,815	4,199	4,819	71.2%	14.8%
Racquetball	3,579	3,426	3,260	-8.9%	-4.8%
Ice Hockey	2,697	2,270	2,306	-14.5%	1.6%
Ultimate Frisbee	3,673	2,325	2,190	-40.4%	-5.8%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	2,467	1,811	2,088	-15.4%	15.3%
Lacrosse	2,090	1,884	1,892	-9.5%	0.4%
Wrestling	1,922	1,931	1,937	0.8%	0.3%
Roller Hockey	1,929	1,500	1,425	-26.1%	-5.0%
Boxing for Competition	1,210	1,361	1,460	20.7%	7.3%
Rugby	1,550	1,242	1,238	-20.1%	-0.3%
Squash	1,549	1,163	1,185	-23.5%	1.9%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
<b>Legend:</b>	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	

## 2.5.2 NATIONAL TRENDS IN GENERAL FITNESS

### PARTICIPATION LEVELS

Overall, national participatory trends in fitness have experienced strong growth in recent years. Many of these activities have become popular due to an increased interest among Americans to improve their health and enhance quality of life by engaging in an active lifestyle. The most popular general fitness activities in 2021 also were those that could be done at home or in a virtual class environment. The activities with the most participation were Fitness Walking (115.8 million), Treadmill (53.6 million), Free Weights (52.6 million), Running/Jogging (48.9 million), and Yoga (34.3 million).



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### FIVE-YEAR TREND

Over the last five years (2016-2021), the activities growing at the highest rate are Trail Running (45.9%), Yoga (30.8%), Dance, Step & Choreographed Exercise (13.3%), and Pilates Training (9.6%). Over the same time frame, the activities that have undergone the biggest decline include: Group Stationary Cycling (-33.5%), Traditional Triathlon (26.4%), Cardio Kickboxing (-26.1%), Cross-Training Style Workout (-24.4%) and Non-Traditional Triathlons (-23.5%).

### ONE-YEAR TREND

In the last year, activities with the largest gains in participation were those that can be done alone at home or socially distanced outdoors. The top increases were in Treadmill (7.6%), Cross-Training Style Workouts (6.4%) Trail Running (5.6%), Yoga (4.7%), and Stair Climbing (4.7%). In the same span, the activities that had the largest decline in participation were those that would generally take more time and investment. The greatest drops were seen in Traditional Triathlon (-5.3%), Aerobics (-5.1%), Non-Traditional Triathlons (-4.3%), and Cardio Kickboxing (-3.7%).

### CORE VS. CASUAL TRENDS IN GENERAL FITNESS

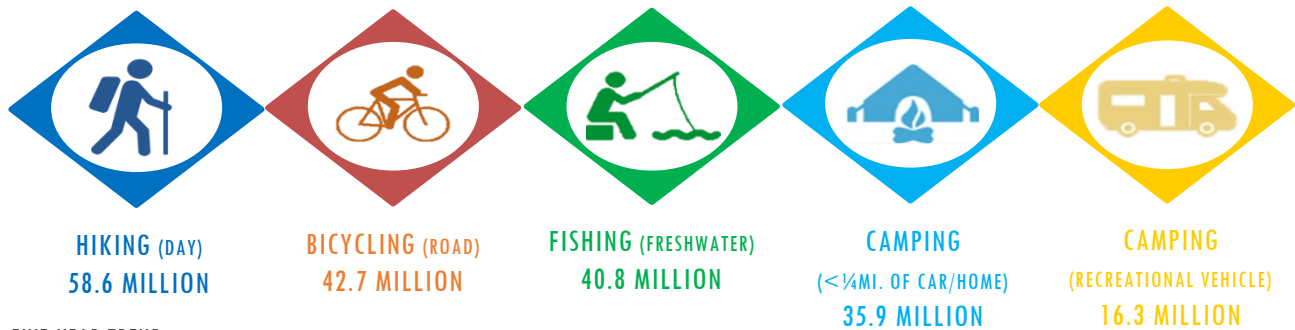
The most participated in fitness activities all had increases in their casual users base (participating 1-49 times per year) over the last year. These fitness activities include: Fitness Walking, Free Weights, Running/Jogging, Treadmills, Yoga, and Recumbent/Upright Stationary Cycling.

National Participatory Trends - General Fitness					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2016	2020	2021	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Fitness Walking	107,895	114,044	115,814	7.3%	1.6%
Treadmill	51,872	49,832	53,627	3.4%	7.6%
Free Weights (Dumbbells/Hand Weights)	51,513	53,256	52,636	2.2%	-1.2%
Running/Jogging	47,384	50,652	48,977	3.4%	-3.3%
Stationary Cycling (Recumbent/Upright)	36,118	31,287	32,453	-10.1%	3.7%
Weight/Resistant Machines	35,768	30,651	30,577	-14.5%	-0.2%
Elliptical Motion Trainer	32,218	27,920	27,618	-14.3%	-1.1%
Yoga	26,268	32,808	34,347	30.8%	4.7%
Free Weights (Barbells)	26,473	28,790	28,243	6.7%	-1.9%
Dance, Step, & Choreographed Exercise	21,839	25,160	24,752	13.3%	-1.6%
Bodyweight Exercise	25,110	22,845	22,629	-9.9%	-0.9%
Aerobics (High Impact/Intensity Training HIIT)	10,575	10,954	10,400	-1.7%	-5.1%
Stair Climbing Machine	15,079	11,261	11,786	-21.8%	4.7%
Cross-Training Style Workout	12,914	9,179	9,764	-24.4%	6.4%
Trail Running	8,582	11,854	12,520	45.9%	5.6%
Stationary Cycling (Group)	8,937	6,054	5,939	-33.5%	-1.9%
Pilates Training	8,893	9,905	9,745	9.6%	-1.6%
Cardio Kickboxing	6,899	5,295	5,099	-26.1%	-3.7%
Boot Camp Style Cross-Training	6,583	4,969	5,169	-21.5%	4.0%
Martial Arts	5,745	6,064	6,186	7.7%	2.0%
Boxing for Fitness	5,175	5,230	5,237	1.2%	0.1%
Tai Chi	3,706	3,300	3,393	-8.4%	2.8%
Barre	3,329	3,579	3,659	9.9%	2.2%
Triathlon (Traditional/Road)	2,374	1,846	1,748	-26.4%	-5.3%
Triathlon (Non-Traditional/Off Road)	1,705	1,363	1,304	-23.5%	-4.3%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	

## 2.5.3 NATIONAL TRENDS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

### PARTICIPATION LEVELS

Results from the SFIA report demonstrate strong growth in participation regarding outdoor/adventure recreation activities. Much like the general fitness activities, these activities encourage an active lifestyle, can be performed individually or with proper social distancing in a group, and are not as limited by time constraints. In 2021, the most popular activities, in terms of total participants, from the outdoor/adventure recreation category include: Day Hiking (58.6 million), Road Bicycling (42.7 million), Freshwater Fishing (40.8 million), Camping within ¼ mile of Vehicle/Home (35.9 million), and Recreational Vehicle Camping (16.3 million).



### FIVE-YEAR TREND

From 2016-2021, Day Hiking (39.3%), Camping within ¼ mile of Vehicle/Home (36.0%), Skateboarding (35.8%), Birdwatching (27.8%), BMX Bicycling (24.4%), and Fly Fishing (15.5%) have undergone the largest increases in participation. The five-year trend also shows activities such as Adventure Racing (-39.1%), Traditional Climbing (-14.9%), In-Line Roller Skating (-8.2%), Archery (-7.1%), and to be the only activities with decreases in participation.

### ONE-YEAR TREND

The one-year trend shows almost all activities declining in participation from the previous year. The growing activities being Indoor Climbing (2.7%), Day Hiking (1.5%), Archery (1.3%), In-Line Roller Skating (1.0%), Boulder Climbing (0.5%), and over the last year, the activities that underwent the biggest decreases in participation were Recreational Vehicle Camping (-8.2%) and Adventure Racing (-7.1%).

### CORE VS. CASUAL TRENDS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

Most outdoor activities have experienced participation growth in the last five- years. Although this a positive trend, it should be noted that all outdoor activities participation, besides adventure racing, consist primarily of casual users.

National Participatory Trends - Outdoor / Adventure Recreation					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2016	2020	2021	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Hiking (Day)	42,128	57,808	58,697	39.3%	1.5%
Bicycling (Road)	38,365	44,471	42,775	11.5%	-3.8%
Fishing (Freshwater)	38,121	42,556	40,853	7.2%	-4.0%
Camping (< 1/4 Mile of Vehicle/Home)	26,467	36,082	35,985	36.0%	-0.3%
Camping (Recreational Vehicle)	15,855	17,825	16,371	3.3%	-8.2%
Fishing (Saltwater)	12,266	14,527	13,790	12.4%	-5.1%
Birdwatching (>1/4 mile of Vehicle/Home)	11,589	15,228	14,815	27.8%	-2.7%
Backpacking Overnight	10,151	10,746	10,306	1.5%	-4.1%
Bicycling (Mountain)	8,615	8,998	8,693	0.9%	-3.4%
Archery	7,903	7,249	7,342	-7.1%	1.3%
Fishing (Fly)	6,456	7,753	7,458	15.5%	-3.8%
Skateboarding	6,442	8,872	8,747	35.8%	-1.4%
Climbing (Indoor)	-	5,535	5,684	N/A	2.7%
Roller Skating, In-Line	5,381	4,892	4,940	-8.2%	1.0%
Bicycling (BMX)	3,104	3,880	3,861	24.4%	-0.5%
Climbing (Traditional/Ice/Mountaineering)	2,790	2,456	2,374	-14.9%	-3.3%
Climbing (Sport/Boulder)	-	2,290	2,301	N/A	0.5%
Adventure Racing	2,999	1,966	1,826	-39.1%	-7.1%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
<b>Legend:</b> <span>Large Increase (greater than 25%)</span> <span>Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)</span> <span>Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)</span> <span>Large Decrease (less than -25%)</span>					

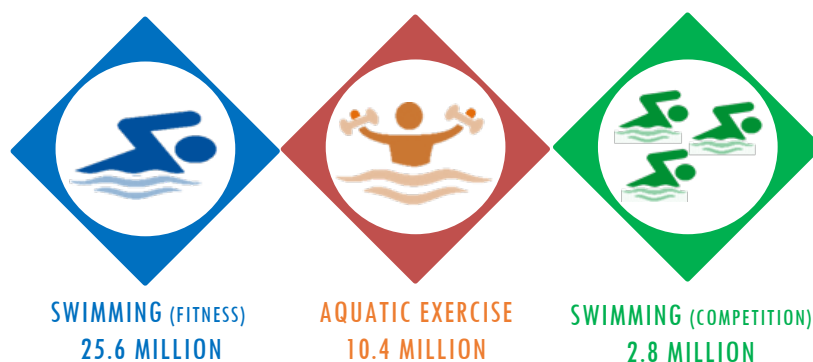


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### 2.5.4 NATIONAL TRENDS IN AQUATICS

#### PARTICIPATION LEVELS

Swimming is deemed as a lifetime activity, which is most likely why it continues to have such strong participation. In 2021, Fitness Swimming remained the overall leader in participation (25.6 million) amongst aquatic activities, even though most, if not all, aquatic facilities were forced to close at some point due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



#### FIVE-YEAR TREND

Assessing the five-year trend, no activity has experienced an increase from 2016-2021, most likely due to the accessibility of facilities during Covid-19. While Fitness Swimming and Aquatic Exercise underwent a slight decline, dropping -3.7% and -1.7% respectively, Competitive Swimming suffered a -16.2% decline in participation.

#### ONE-YEAR TREND

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is seen here as most aquatic facilities were forced to shut down for some part of the year. This caused decreases to Aquatic Exercise (-5.1%) having the largest decline, followed by Fitness Swimming (-0.2%). Participation in Competitive swimming increased by 8%.

#### CORE VS. CASUAL TRENDS IN AQUATICS

Only Aquatic Exercise has undergone an increase in casual participation (1-49 times per year) over the last five years, however, they have all seem a drop in core participation (50+ times per year) in the same time frame. This was happening before the COVID-19 pandemic, and the large decreases in all participation over the last year have furthered this trend.

National Participatory Trends - Aquatics					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2016	2020	2021	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Swimming (Fitness)	26,601	25,666	25,620	-3.7%	-0.2%
Aquatic Exercise	10,575	10,954	10,400	-1.7%	-5.1%
Swimming (Competition)	3,369	2,615	2,824	-16.2%	8.0%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
Legend:	Large Increase (greater than 25%)	Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)	Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)	Large Decrease (less than -25%)	

## 2.5.5 NATIONAL TRENDS IN WATER SPORTS / ACTIVITIES

### PARTICIPATION LEVEL

The most popular water sports / activities based on total participants in 2020 were Recreational Kayaking (13.3 million), Canoeing (9.2 million), and Snorkeling (7.3 million). It should be noted that water activity participation tends to vary based on regional, seasonal, and environmental factors. A region with more water access and a warmer climate is more likely to have a higher participation rate in water activities than a region that has a long winter season or limited water access. Therefore, when assessing trends in water sports and activities, it is important to understand that fluctuations may be the result of environmental barriers which can greatly influence water activity participation.



### FIVE-YEAR TREND

Over the last five years, Recreational Kayaking (33.3%), Surfing (24%), and Stand-Up Paddling (16.1%) were the fastest growing water activities. White Water Kayaking (1.4%) was the only other activity with an increase in participation. From 2016-2021, activities declining in participation most rapidly were Boardsailing/Windsurfing (-25.3%), Scuba Diving (-20.4%), Water Skiing (-17.4%), Sea Kayaking (-17.2%) Snorkeling (-16.1%), and Sailing (-15.4%).

### ONE-YEAR TREND

Recreational Kayaking (2.7%) and Stand-Up Paddling (1.7%) were the activities to grow both over 5 years and in the last one year. Activities which experienced the largest decreases in participation in the most recent year include Surfing (-8.9%), Snorkeling (-5.3%), Scuba Diving (-4.3%), and Canoeing (-4.1%).

### CORE VS. CASUAL TRENDS IN WATER SPORTS/ACTIVITIES

As mentioned previously, regional, seasonal, and environmental limiting factors may influence the participation rate of water sport and activities. These factors may also explain why all water-based activities have drastically more casual participants than core participants, since frequencies of activities may be constrained by uncontrollable factors. These high causal user numbers are likely why a majority of water sports/activities have experienced decreases in participation in recent years.

National Participatory Trends - Water Sports / Activities					
Activity	Participation Levels			% Change	
	2016	2020	2021	5-Year Trend	1-Year Trend
Kayaking (Recreational)	10,017	13,002	13,351	33.3%	2.7%
Canoeing	10,046	9,595	9,199	-8.4%	-4.1%
Snorkeling	8,717	7,729	7,316	-16.1%	-5.3%
Jet Skiing	5,783	4,900	5,062	-12.5%	3.3%
Sailing	4,095	3,486	3,463	-15.4%	-0.7%
Stand-Up Paddling	3,220	3,675	3,739	16.1%	1.7%
Rafting	3,428	3,474	3,383	-1.3%	-2.6%
Water Skiing	3,700	3,050	3,058	-17.4%	0.3%
Surfing	2,793	3,800	3,463	24.0%	-8.9%
Wakeboarding	2,912	2,754	2,674	-8.2%	-2.9%
Scuba Diving	3,111	2,588	2,476	-20.4%	-4.3%
Kayaking (Sea/Touring)	3,124	2,508	2,587	-17.2%	3.1%
Kayaking (White Water)	2,552	2,605	2,587	1.4%	-0.7%
Boardsailing/Windsurfing	1,737	1,268	1,297	-25.3%	2.3%
NOTE: Participation figures are in 000's for the US population ages 6 and over					
<b>Legend:</b> <span>Large Increase (greater than 25%)</span> <span>Moderate Increase (0% to 25%)</span> <span>Moderate Decrease (0% to -25%)</span> <span>Large Decrease (less than -25%)</span>					

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 2.6 ACCESSIBILITY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

#### 2.6.1 TOWN OF WHITESTOWN EXISTING POLICY

To ensure program accessibility for people with disability in the community, the Town of Whitestown has developed a Transition Plan, which is to be considered good practice. Effective communication is essential to address all the complaints or concerns of all individuals.

Whitestown has an ADA Transition Plan that was completed in May 2022. This plan establishes an ADA coordinator, outlines the grievance procedure, specifies Whitestown's self-evaluation/commitment and specifies ADA standards/ guidelines.

A full copy of the ADA Transition Plan can be found here: <https://whitestown.in.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Whitestown-Final-ADA-Transition-Plan.pdf>

The Town is committed to making all public spaces, such as park, sidewalks, curb ramps, public areas and Town-owned facilities accessible, as well as special event programs to all residents including those with disabilities. This will be accomplished through the following programs:

- All new construction, reconstruction, road construction or alterations, including federal projects under the control and/or inspection of the Town of Whitestown will be in compliance with ADA.
- Buildings and municipal-owned structures will be brought into compliance as funds are available. Specific complaints will be prioritized.

Regarding Filing a complaint for either the ADA Transition Plan or the Town's Town VI, see below:

While a Complainant may preliminarily submit his or her complaint by online form submission, mail, facsimile, or email to the Title VI Coordinator, a signed, original copy of the complaint must be mailed to the Title VI Coordinator to officially begin the complaint process. Any person with a disability may request to file his or her complaint using an alternative format. The Town of Whitestown does not require a Complainant to use the Town of Whitestown complaint form when submitting his or her complaint.

Direct all complaints of discrimination pursuant to the ADA Transition Plan or Title VI to:

Becca Thomas  
Whitestown Dept of Public Works  
6210 Veterans Dr  
Whitestown, IN 46075  
317-732-4531  
[bthomas@whitestown.in.gov](mailto:bthomas@whitestown.in.gov)

#### 2.6.2 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND ADA PUBLIC NOTICE

The Town of Whitestown is committed to ensuring that community involvement and outreach is done in a respectful and appropriate manner that will allow for diverse involvement. Public meetings, programs and activities will provide equitable opportunities for participation. The Town of Whitestown hosts meetings monthly and those meetings are open to the public. Any meetings that are open to the public are published on the Town of Whitestown website's main page. All of the Town of Whitestown's public meetings are held in locations accessible to individuals with disabilities. Upon request, translators can be provided free of charge to those individuals with limited English proficiency. Auxiliary aids are also available upon request. Requests must be made within forty-eight (48) hours in advance. Also, the Town of Whitestown publishes on its website various meeting agendas, meeting minutes, notices, events and news. Some departments within the Town of Whitestown utilize signage, media and social media websites as another avenue to communicate with the Community.

A full listing of parks and amenities/facilities within the park system that are ADA Accessible is located on the parks and recreation department's page for each park listing: <https://whitestown.in.gov/community/parks-and-recreation/>



### 2.6.3 PARK SYSTEM IN COMPLIANCE AND NON-COMPLIANCE

As part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Parks Department facilities were inventoried and assessed. However, no evaluation of ADA compliance of facilities was completed as part of this plan. In May 2022, the Town completed a full ADA Transition Plan that did evaluate Parks Department facilities. The following issues were observed during the review of the existing park system and should have further evaluation completed and can be found in the 2022 ADA Transition Plan.

#### ANSON ACRES

For this study parking, general door opening widths and bathrooms were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. The water fountain is located to the backside of the facility and there are seating areas under the roof covered area. See below for items in non-compliance with ADA requirements.

##### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- Aisle widths are below the minimum requirements of 96"

#### GATEWAY PARK

For this study parking and curb ramps were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. See below for items in non-compliance with ADA requirements.

##### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- None.

#### MAIN STREET PARK

For this study parking, general door opening widths and bathrooms were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. Bathrooms located on both sides of facility all identical in size. See below for items in non-compliance with ADA requirements.

##### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- Curb ramp running slope exceeds maximum 8.33%
- Aisle width below minimum requirements of 96"

#### PANTHER PARK

For this study parking, general door opening widths and bathrooms were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. 3 bathrooms are available at the park all being identical to one another. See below for items in non-compliance with ADA requirements.

##### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- Towel/Dryer out of compliance in all 3 bathrooms
- Aisle width out of compliance in parking lot

#### PARK DEPARTMENT FIELD SHOP

For this study parking, bathrooms and general door opening widths were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. The bathroom door is located on the East side of the building. Listed below, and highlighted in tables below, are the items mentioned that do not meet the ADA requirements.

##### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- Urinal height exceeds maximum ADA requirement of 17"
- Counter/Sink height exceeds maximum ADA requirement of 34"
- No designated ADA parking available

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### BIG 4 TRAIL PARKING

For this study parking and curb ramps were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. See below for items in non-compliance with ADA requirements.

#### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- Aisle width below minimum requirements of 96"

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

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

SIGNATURE


DocuSigned by:  
  
08754971817F34FA

APPLICANT PRESIDENT

Clinton Bohm

(President's printed name)

SIGNATURE

 Matthew Summer

(Secretary's printed name)

DATE 10/20/2022



## 2.7 BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

### 2.7.1 METHODOLOGY

PROS Consulting with assistance from Town staff identified operating metrics to benchmark the Parks and Recreation Department against comparable parks and recreation agencies. The goal of this analysis is to evaluate how the Department is positioned among peer agencies. The benchmark assessment is organized into specific categories based on peer agency responses to targeted questions that lend an encompassing view of each system's operating metrics as compared to Whitestown.

Information used in this analysis was obtained directly from each participating benchmark agency, when available, and supplemental data was collected from agency / municipality websites, Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports (CAFR), and information available through the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Park Metrics Database. Due to differences in how each system collects, maintains, and reports data, variances may exist. These variations can impact the per capita and percentage allocations, and the overall comparison must be viewed with this in mind. The benchmark data collection for all systems was completed between March-July (2022), and it is possible that information in this report may have changed since the original collection date. The information sought was a combination of operating metrics that factor budgets, staffing levels, and inventories. In some instances, the information was not tracked or not available.

The table below lists each benchmark agency in the study. These agencies were selected due to demographic and/or organizational characteristics similar to Whitestown, including a CAPRA accredited agency and two that have won Gold Medals. Note: CAPRA stands for Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. Agencies that receive this accreditation either meet, or exceed, standards maintained by park and recreation leaders in programming, facilities, and experiences they provide their communities.

For all agencies examined, Whitestown represents the benchmark's second lowest total population (11,093), and population density (717 residents per sq. mi.) while being third in jurisdiction size (15.48 sq. mi.).



Agency	County	Population	Jurisdiction Size (Sq. Mi.)	Population per Sq. Mi.	CAPRA Accredited	Gold Medal Winner
Whitestown Parks & Recreation	IN	11,093	15.48	717	No	No
Brownsburg Parks	IN	30,068	16.35	1,839	No	No
Channahon Park District	IL	16,242	45.00	361	No	Yes
Danville Parks & Recreation	IN	10,758	8.75	1,229	No	No
Durango Parks & Recreation	CO	19,223	8.75	2,197	Yes	Yes



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 2.7.2 BENCHMARK COMPARISON

#### PARK ACRES

The following table provides a general overview of each system's park acreage. While Whitestown ranks fourth out of the five benchmarked agencies in total acres per 1,000 residents at 13.42, they are still above the NPRA median for agencies serving under 20k residents of 12.9. They were tied for fourth in total park sites (4) and were last in total developed acres (48).

Agency	Population	Total Number of Parks	Total Developed Acres	Total Developed Acres per 1,000 Residents	Total Acres Owned or Managed	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents
Channahon Park District	16,242	20	523.00	32.20	552	33.99
Durango Parks & Recreation	19,223	33	347.13	18.06	357	18.58
Danville Parks & Recreation	10,758	4	100.00	9.30	165	15.38
Whitestown Parks & Recreation	11,093	4	48.00	4.33	149	13.42
Brownsburg Parks	30,068	7	113.82	3.79	322	10.71
NPRA Median 2022 = 12.9 Acres per 1,000 Residents						

#### TRAIL MILES

The information below reveals the service levels for dedicated trails within each system. By comparing total trail mileage to the population of the service area, the level of service provided to the community can be determined which is expressed as trail miles for every 1,000 residents. Whitestown represents the benchmark's second to last agency in both trail metrics, which were total trail miles (4.38), and trail miles per 1,000 residents (.39, which is in line with the national best practice for trail miles of .25-.5 trail miles per 1,000 residents). The community wide Statistically Valid survey indicates a desire from respondents for additional trails as multi-use paved trails are rated as the top priority for investment. The planned expansion on The Big Four Trail is expected to help address this opportunity.

Agency	Population	Total Trail Miles	Trail Miles per 1,000 Residents
Durango Parks & Recreation	19,223	116.70	6.07
Danville Parks & Recreation	10,758	12.00	1.12
Brownsburg Parks	30,068	24.00	0.80
Whitestown Parks & Recreation	11,093	4.38	0.39
Channahon Park District	16,242	3.00	0.18
Best Practice = 0.25-0.5 Trail Miles 1,000 Residents			



## STAFFING AND VOLUNTEERS

This section compares staffing levels for each system by comparing full-time equivalents (FTEs) to total populations. Total FTEs per 10,000 residents is a key performance metric that assesses how well each system is equipped, in terms of human resources, to serve its jurisdiction. Only two of the agencies in this benchmark are above the NPRA Median for agencies serving less than 20k residents of 11.8 FTEs per 10,000 residents (Channahon and Durango).

Whitestown ranks last with 6.3 FTEs per 10,000 residents. They were lowest in total volunteers (10) and total time worked by volunteers annually (40).

Agency	Population	Total Volunteers (annually)	Total time worked by volunteers (annually)	Avg. Hours per Volunteer	Total Full Time Employees	Total Part-Time &/or Seasonal Employees	Total FTEs	FTEs per 10,000 Residents
Channahon Park District	16,242	238	3,000	12.61	19	128	70	43.1
Durango Parks & Recreation	19,223	273	7,949	29.12			37	19.2
Brownsburg Parks	30,068	178	874	4.91	17	102	33	11.1
Danville Parks & Recreation	10,758	20	150	7.50	7	48	7	6.5
Whitestown Parks & Recreation	11,093	10	40	4.00	7	-	7	6.3
NPRA Median 2022 = 11.8 FTEs per 10,000 Residents								

## PARK MAINTENANCE STAFFING

The following chart looks at staffing attributed to Park Maintenance comparing agencies based on total acreage managed per FTEs dedicated to park maintenance. While Whitestown manages the lowest amount of acreage (149) of the benchmarked agencies, they manage third highest number of acres per FTE (74.46).

Agency	Population	Total acres owned or managed by the system	Total FTEs dedicated to park maintenance	Acres managed per FTE
Channahon Park District	16,242	552	5	110.40
Danville Parks & Recreation	10,758	165	2	82.71
Whitestown Parks & Recreation	11,093	149	2	74.46
Brownsburg Parks	30,068	322	8	38.56
Durango Parks & Recreation	19,223	357	23	15.53

Benchmark Average= 64.33 Acres Managed per FTE

Note: Breakdown of Full time and Part-Time Employees was not available for Channahon Park District

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### OPERATING EXPENSE PER CAPITA

Dividing the annual operational budget by each service area's population allows for a comparison of how much each agency is spending per resident. The two Gold Medal winning agencies (Durango and Channahon) in this benchmark have substantially higher budgets than the other three agencies. Whitestown ranks the highest of those three in Operating Expense per Resident (\$181.16) which is well above the NRPA Median for Agencies Serving less than 20k residents of \$117.36 per resident.

Agency	Population	Total Operating Expense	Operating Expense per Resident
Durango Parks & Recreation	19,223	\$ 10,206,302	\$ 530.94
Channahon Park District	16,242	\$ 8,296,319	\$ 510.79
Whitestown Parks & Recreation	11,093	\$ 2,009,600	\$ 181.16
Brownsburg Parks	30,068	\$ 3,219,961	\$ 107.09
Danville Parks & Recreation	10,758	\$ 475,000	\$ 44.15
NRPA Median 2022 = \$117.36 per capita Operating Expense			

### REVENUE PER CAPITA

By comparing each agency's annual non-tax revenue to the population, the annual revenue generated on a per resident basis can be determined. Whitestown's \$7.57 of revenue generated (per resident) is by far the lowest benchmarked agencies and substantially below the NRPA Median for Agencies Serving less than 20k residents of \$34.55.

Agency	Population	Total Non-Tax Revenue 2021	Revenue per Resident
Channahon Park District	16,242	\$ 3,575,111	\$ 220.12
Durango Parks & Recreation	19,223	\$ 2,468,237	\$ 128.40
Brownsburg Parks	30,068	\$ 1,918,523	\$ 63.81
Danville Parks & Recreation	10,758	\$ 425,000	\$ 39.51
Whitestown Parks & Recreation	11,093	\$ 84,000	\$ 7.57
NRPA Median 2022 = \$34.55 Revenue per Capita			



### COST RECOVERY

This portion assesses cost recovery for each agency by dividing their Total Non-Tax Revenue by their Total Operating Expense. This shows each agencies Operational Cost Recovery percentage. Whitestown ranked last of the benchmarked agencies at 4% cost recovery, well behind Durango (24%), who was second to last, and the NRPA Median for Agencies serving less than 20k Residents of 25%.

Agency	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Total Operating Expense	Operational Cost Recovery
Danville Parks & Recreation	\$ 425,000	\$ 475,000	89%
Brownsburg Parks	\$ 1,918,523	\$ 3,219,961	60%
Channahon Park District	\$ 3,575,111	\$ 8,296,319	43%
Durango Parks & Recreation	\$ 2,468,237	\$ 10,206,302	24%
Whitestown Parks & Recreation	\$ 84,000	\$ 2,009,600	4%
NRPA Median 2022 = 25% Cost Recovery			

### CIP SUMMARY

Due to the volatility of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budgets and availability of funding from year to year, the table below reveals the last two years of budgets, and the previous two years of actual investment. These figures were then utilized to show the average annual capital investment for each agency. Of the benchmarked agencies, Whitestown (\$698,638 annual average) ranked second to last in average annual CIP and was well below the NRPA Median for Agencies Serving less than 20k Residents of \$1M.

Agency	CIP Actual 2018	CIP Actual 2019	CIP Actual 2020	CIP Budget 2021	CIP BUDGET 2022	Avg. Annual CIP
Channahon Park District	\$ 1,304,418	\$ 2,726,990	\$ 596,570	\$ 3,765,116	\$ 2,043,320	\$ 2,087,283
Brownsburg Parks	\$ 1,122,755	\$ 780,093	\$ 899,895	\$ 2,316,196	\$ 779,900	\$ 1,179,768
Whitestown Parks & Recreation	\$ 1,113,805	\$ 358,342	\$ 256,062	\$ 776,700	\$ 988,280	\$ 698,638
Danville Parks & Recreation	\$ 150,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 225,000	\$ 175,000
NRPA Median 2022= \$1.0M 5 yr AVG CIP Spending (2022)						

Note: CIP Budgets were not available for Durango

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### MARKETING AS PERCENTAGE OF OPERATIONS

The table below describes the marketing budget for each agency and compares it to the agencies operational budgets for 2022 to show what percentage of the operating expenses are dedicated to marketing. Compared to its peers, Whitestown ranks last for percentage of operations spent on marketing (0.51%), while also ranking well below the recommended best practice for total marketing expense as percentage of the total operating budget (3+%). This directly impacts program participation and seen in the Statistically Valid Survey results where “Not aware of parks or trails locations” was the top barrier to participation chosen by 37% of all respondents.

Agency	Marketing Budget (2022)	Operational Budget (2022)	Marketing as % of Operations
Danville Parks & Recreation	\$ 10,000	\$ 475,000	2.11%
Brownsburg Parks	\$ 31,500	\$ 3,219,961	0.98%
Channahon Park District	\$ 46,675	\$ 8,296,319	0.56%
Whitestown Parks & Recreation	\$ 10,200	\$ 2,009,600	0.51%
Best Practice = 3+% of Total Operating Budget			

Note: Marketing Budgets were not available for Durango

### 2.7.3 SUMMARY OF BENCHMARK FINDINGS

The agencies selected for the benchmark were both peer agencies from Indiana, and nationally recognized systems from around the US. Benchmark information was gathered from Danville and Brownsburg, Indiana (requests for data were also made to Edwardsville and Lebanon but information was never received). Data was also collected from the nationally recognized agencies of Channahon Park District in Illinois (Gold Medal winner 1995) and Durango, Colorado (Gold Medal winner 2012, CAPRA accredited 2015 & 2020). This allowed Whitestown to both benchmark itself against like sized agencies from their own region, and to set aspirational goals by comparing itself with top performing departments from across the country.

The benchmark comparison gives Whitestown, a new department in a rapidly growing area, another tool to utilize as they continue to identify their own standards and goals. The benchmark study does show some limitations and opportunities for Whitestown, especially in regard to revenue generation and staffing.

Overall, the benchmark analysis reveals that Whitestown is a growing system with the opportunity to be comparable to some of the “best practice” systems across the US. The Master Plan’s recommendations will use this data and help establish strategic goals to pursue along with key performance indicators (KPIs) that will tracked and measured over time as the Department continues to pursue excellence in all aspects of its operations.



## CHAPTER THREE - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### 3.1 KEY LEADER AND FOCUS GROUPS

As part of the Master Plan, key stakeholder interviews were conducted the week of February 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 with the Town Council, Parks Foundation, Director of Public Works, Director of Development Services, and Clerk Treasurer to provide a foundation for identifying community issues and key themes, as well as general information from the Town leadership on the Parks and Recreation Department. These interviews were completed by phone or virtually via Zoom and lasted approximately 30 minutes each.

Also, six focus groups with the public and Town of Whitestown staff on March 9<sup>th</sup> (virtual via Zoom) and March 10<sup>th</sup> (in person, at the Town's Municipal Complex) were conducted to learn more from residents in the community. The interviews provided valuable insight and will assist in the development of question topics that will be beneficial for creating the statistically valid community survey, as well as theme development that will frame the vision for the Master Plan.

A facilitation guide was developed that included a series of questions that spurred conversation and follow up questions were asked when appropriate. Invited stakeholders were identified by the Town of Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department (Department) staff, elected officials, and approximately 40 members of the community divided into six focus groups from the following entities:

- Town Council Members
- Town Clerk Treasurer
- Town Director of Development Services
- Town Budget Director
- Town Director of Public Works
- Town Economic Development Director
- Parks and Recreation Staff Members
- Whitestown Parks Foundation
- Boone County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Town Planner
- Parks Maintenance Staff
- Lebanon Schools
- Whitestown Public Relations
- Pulte Homes
- Isiah 117 House.
- Deputy Clerk
- Director of Building Inspections
- Whitestown Event Staff

After speaking with the stakeholders and special interest groups, it was apparent the pride the community has in the Department, their enjoyment of many different types of special events, as well as the park experiences at Main Street Park, Anson Park, Gateway Park, Big Four Trail, and Panther Park. The quality of the special events and maintenance of parks were key themes that resonated during the interviews. Also, ensuring parkland acquisition and recreation facilities/amenities keep up with the increase in development and population growth.

#### 3.1.1 INTERVIEW SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

##### VISION FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

Residents in the Town of Whitestown love the parks and the quality-of-life attributes they provide to the community. Residents really enjoy the variety and type of special events including the Farmers Market, Viking Fest, and Summer Concert Series, which are all very well attended. As the Town continues to grow exponentially, it will be paramount that more parkland and trails are secured for new housing developments. Also, additional ADA accessibility is desired at existing and future parks to make parks available to all residents in the community. Everyone enjoys Main Street Park, Panther Park and Anson Park and the favorable type of new parkland should match these standards. All three parks provide different types of park experiences and residents envision future park developments to include more natural open space and green space. As the system expands, it will be important to find a balance of active and passive recreation.

Regarding connectivity, a better-connected trail system linking to Lebanon and Zionsville through the Big Four Trail is a vision for the future along with spine trails to new housing developments.



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

A visionary project for residents is a large signature park to host special events and large gatherings. Additional pickleball courts, the addition of an aquatic park, indoor program space and sports fields provided to Town residents were also mentioned by stakeholders as future projects.

### RESIDENTS VALUE THE MOST

Residents value the current events that bring the entire community together. Also, Main Street Park is highly regarded by residents. The playground, pickleball court, basketball courts are always fully occupied by players.

While residents want additional trails, the Big Four Trail is an amenity enjoyed by the community and they would like to see the linkages to Zionsville and Lebanon completed.

### CHALLENGES FACING THE DEPARTMENT

Securing green space, trails and additional parkland needs to be a top priority as the Town continues to grow with new housing developments and more infrastructure.

Other challenges facing the Department include maintaining existing parks and amenities to ensure they are safe and reach their lifecycle use. Also, ensuring staffing levels are met while the Department grows was communicated from those interviewed.

### KEY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES NOT OFFERED OR EXISTING PROGRAMS THAT NEED IMPROVEMENT

Programs residents would like to see added to the system include an introductory class on pickleball, as well as a pickleball league. Regarding programming for youth, residents would like to have a week-long camp during the spring, summer, and fall breaks. Also, STEM programs and nature programming were suggested as positive program additions. For teens, residents would like to see a skate park. New and innovative special events should be considered to broaden the appeal to all residents and options could include cultural and art events.

For communication by the park system to the community, consider new ways to let residents know what programs and events are being offered in ways outside of social media, such as an information board at Meijer or other retail outlets, as well as email communications.

### RECREATION FACILITIES AND PARK AMENITIES NEEDED

An indoor program space that would allow all four seasons of programs was a predominant suggestion by residents. Also, a signature park with an amphitheater would be heavily used by residents and would be a great place to host many special events the Department offers.

ADA accessibility at all the parks is a must and should include accessible restrooms. For teens, residents would like to see a skate park or pump track, as well as various type of sports fields for practice, team play and competition. Also, while the Town already has a spray ground, the addition of an aquatic park and pool was mentioned interviewees.

Outdoor fitness amenities at Main Street and Panther Park were other types of amenities that was brought up by stakeholders and in focus groups. Other types of parks and amenities mentioned included community gardens, sand volleyball courts, large shelters, and the addition of a dog park in the system that would be heavily used by residents.

### AREAS OF THE SYSTEM THAT NEED MORE FOCUS

Areas that could use more focus include adding trails and connectivity to new housing developments, business and restaurants and the addition of more parks, tree planting, ADA Accessibility at existing parks, and adding more programs outside of the existing special events. Maintaining what the Town already owns was mentioned by many residents.

Also, a balance of active and passive park spaces is important since residents want to ensure that new parks are not “over developed” with amenities yet should include dedicated green space.

### TOP PRIORITIES

Each participant was asked what their top priority is for outcomes from the master plan. These priorities are listed below:



- **Expansion of the park and trail system.** Add more parkland and trails to keep up with town development, increase connectivity and accessibility.
- **Secure the right type of parkland, in the correct location** as development continues. **You can only acquire parkland one time.**
- **A signature park** to host large special events.
- **Complete the development of the Wrecks junkyard site** and ensure there are amenities for all members of the community.
- **A Park with a disc golf course.**
- **Ensure Whitestown still has a “small town vibe”** while growing and adding a community event space with an amphitheater to bring the community together for concerts and special events.
- **An outdoor pool.**
- **Enhanced programming** outside of special events.
- **The addition of a dog park.**
- **A zoo** that would be an attraction in the community.
- **More trees** and plantings in parks.
- **Off-leash area for dogs.**
- **Community gardens**, native Indiana plants and fruit trees.
- **Exciting point of interest amenities** in parks.
- **A park along the Big Four Trail.**
- **Additional natural landscaping.**
- **An amenity that connects the community** and brings residents together.
- **More diversity in park types.**
- **Maintenance of all parks** so they look great for many years.
- **Additional pickleball courts and playgrounds.**
- **Energize downtown** main street so it becomes the focal point for special events.
- **Shelters** that bring families and people together.

### 3.2 PUBLIC MEETING

A public forum was held August 17, 2022, that included participation by those in attendance at the Town Municipal Complex and through Facebook Live, 6 residents in-person, Town Council members, and 26 residents through Facebook Live. The forum began with a brief presentation explaining the master plan process, initial findings, and next steps. Live polling was also completed through Mentimeter, a live polling software that displays polling results in-real time and allows residents to rank or make general comments on the Town’s parks system based on questions. The results of these polling questions are included in the **Appendix**.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 3.3 STATISTICALLY-VALID NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

#### 3.3.1 OVERVIEW

ETC Institute conducted a Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment for the Town of Whitestown during the spring of 2022, April 25<sup>th</sup> to June 13<sup>th</sup>. The purpose of the survey was to help determine priorities for the community as part of a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This is the first survey that ETC Institute has administered for Whitestown.

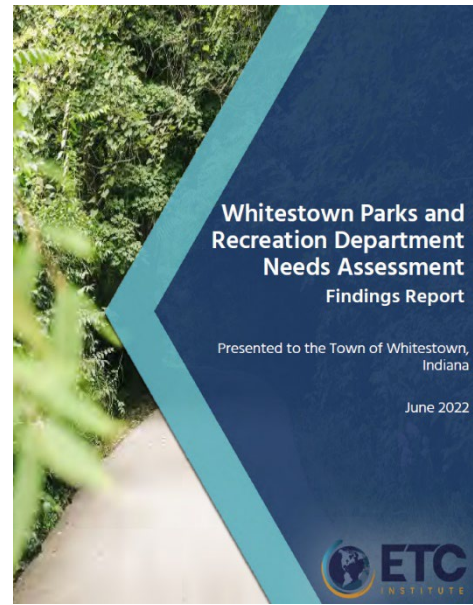
#### 3.3.2 METHODOLOGY

The seven-page survey, cover letter and postage-paid return envelope were mailed to a random sample of households in Whitestown. The cover letter explained the purpose of the survey and encouraged residents to either return their survey by mail or complete the survey online. Ten days after the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute sent emails and text messages to the households that received the survey to encourage participation. The emails and texts contained a link to the online version of the survey to make it easy for residents to complete the survey.

The goal was to obtain completed surveys from at least 350 residents. This goal was met, with a total of 355 households completing the survey. The results for the sample of 355 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision rate of at least +/- 5.2%. This report contains the following:

- An executive summary of the methodology for administering the survey and major findings
- Charts showing the overall results of the survey
- Priority Investment Rating (PIR) that identifies priorities for facilities and programs
- Benchmarking analysis comparing Whitestown's results to national results
- Tabular data showing the overall results for all questions on the survey
- A copy of the survey instrument

The percentage of "don't know" responses has been excluded from many of the graphs shown in this report to facilitate valid comparisons of the results from Whitestown with the results from other communities where ETC Institute has conducted a needs assessment survey. Since the number of "don't know" responses often reflect the utilization and awareness of services, the percentage of "don't know" responses have been provided in the tabular data section of this report. When the "don't know" responses have been excluded, the text of this report will indicate that the responses have been excluded with the phrase "who had an opinion." The full results of the survey can be found in the Appendix. The following pages summarize its findings.



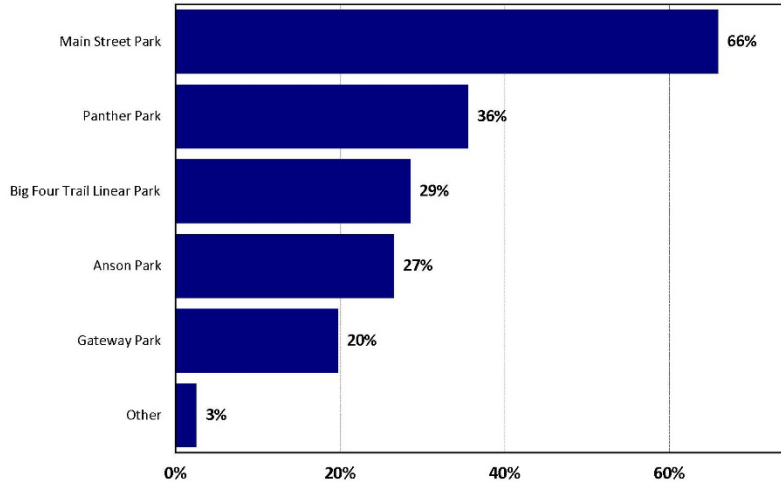


### 3.3.3 USAGE/RATINGS OF PARKS AND FACILITIES

Sixty-six percent (66%) of households surveyed indicated they have used Main Street Park during the past 12 months; 36% have used Panther Park, 29% have used Big Four Trail Linear Park, 27% have used Anson Park, and 20% have used Gateway Park during the past 12 months.

#### Q1[1]. Usage of the Following Whitestown Parks/Facilities During the Past 12 Months

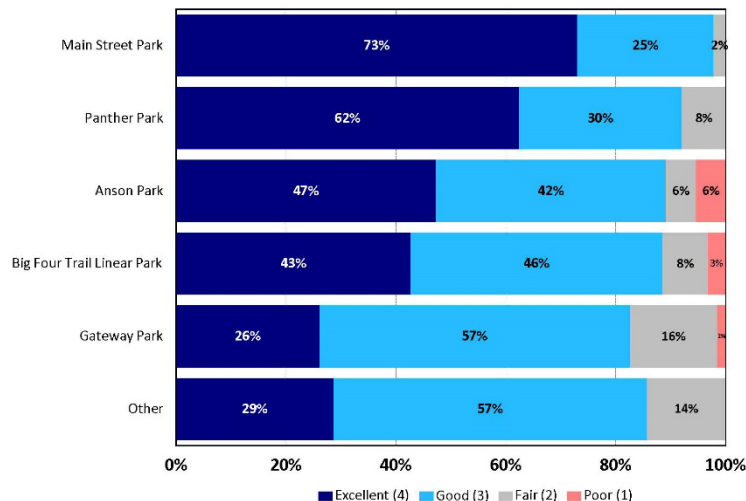
by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



When asked to rate the condition of the Town parks they have used, 98% who had an opinion rated Main Street Park as “excellent” or “good;” 92% rated Panther Park as “excellent” or “good;” and 89% rated Anson Park as “excellent” or “good.”

#### Q1[2]. Ratings of the Condition of the Following Parks/Facilities

by percentage of households that used the park/facility (excluding “not provided”)



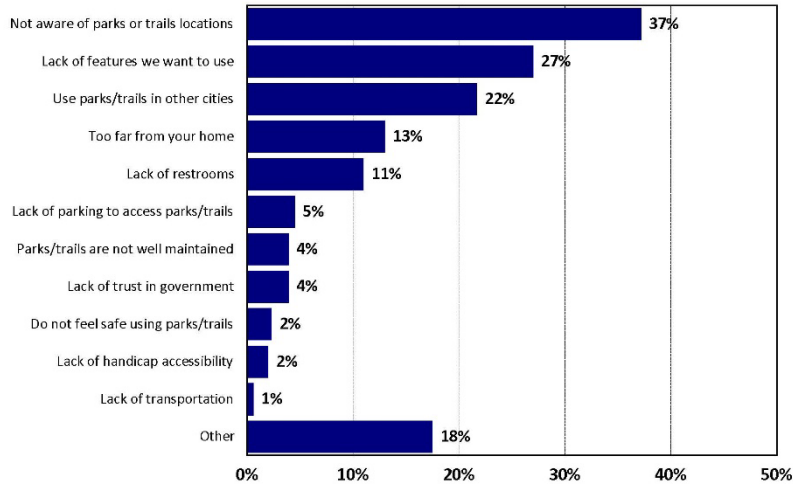
## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 3.3.4 REASON PREVENTING USAGE OF PARKS OR RECREATION FACILITIES

Thirty-seven percent (37%) of households surveyed indicated they have not used parks or recreation facilities more often during the past two years because they are not aware of the locations of parks or trails. Other reasons preventing more frequent usage include: lack of features respondents want to use (27%), usage of parks/trails in other cities (22%), park/facility is too far from home (13%), and lack of restrooms (11%).

#### Q2. Reasons Preventing Households From Using Parks or Recreation Facilities More Often During the Past Two Years

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)

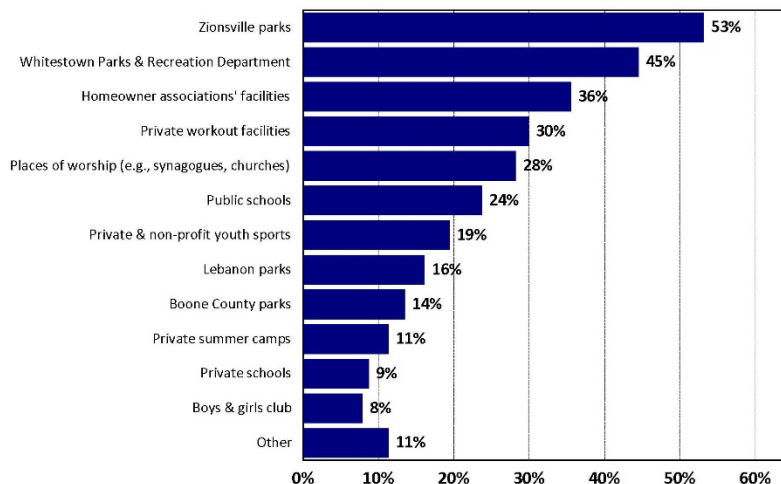


### 3.3.5 ORGANIZATIONS USED FOR RECREATION/SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Fifty-three percent (53%) of households surveyed indicated they have used Zionsville parks for recreation and sports activities during the last two years. Other organizations used include: Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department (45%), Homeowner associations' facilities (36%), private workout facilities (30%), places of worship (28%), and public schools (24%).

#### Q3. Organizations That Households Have Used for Recreation and Sports Activities During the Last Two Years

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



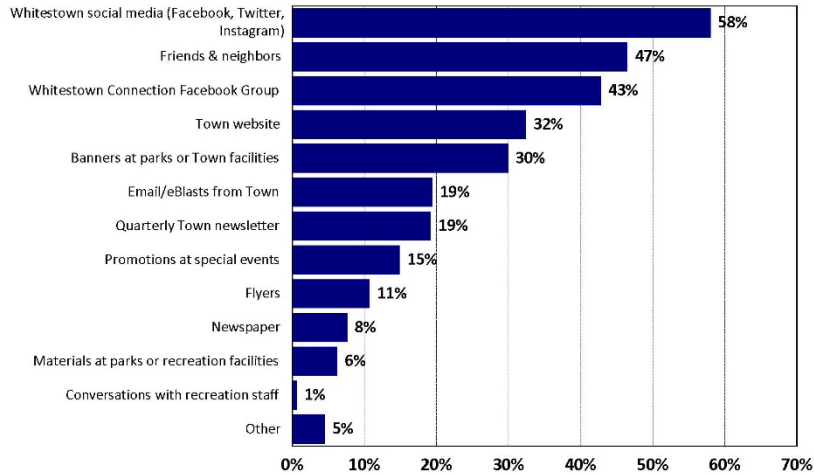


### 3.3.6 SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT RECREATION PROGRAMS/EVENTS

Fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents indicated they learn about parks and recreation programs and events through Whitestown social media. Other sources of information include: friends and neighbors (47%), Whitestown Connection Facebook Group (43%), the Town website (32%), and banners at parks or Town facilities (30%).

#### Q4. Ways Respondents Learn About Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department's Programs and Events

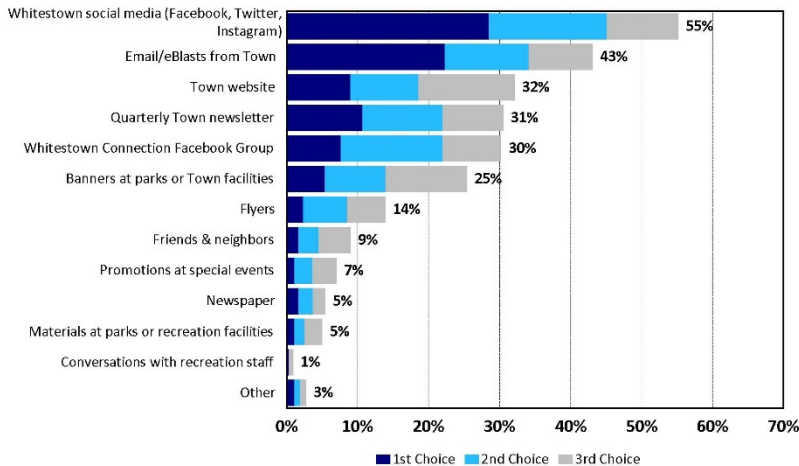
by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



Based on the sum of their top three choices, the methods of communication most preferred by respondents were: 1) Whitestown social media, 2) email/eBlasts, and 3) the Town website.

#### Q5. Methods of Communication Respondents Most Prefer the Town to Use to Communicate About Parks and Recreation Programs and Events

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices





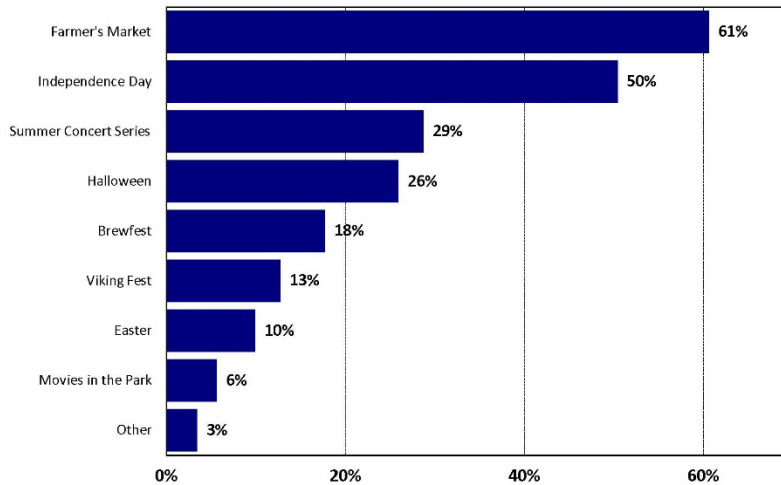
## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 3.3.7 PARTICIPATION IN/RATINGS OF TOWN EVENTS

Sixty-one percent (61%) of respondents indicated their household participated in the Farmer's Market during the past 12 months. Other events in which households participated include: Independence Day (50%), Summer Concert Series (29%), Halloween (26%), and Brewfest (18%).

#### Q6[1]. Participation in the Following Whitestown Events During the Past 12 Months

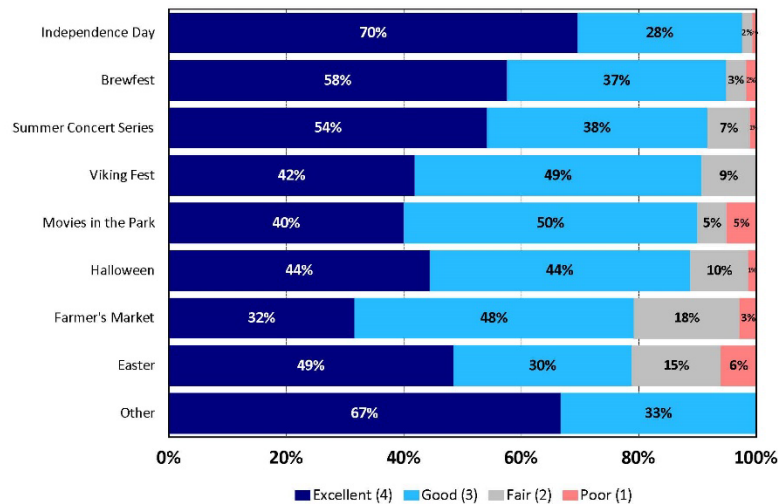
by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)



When asked about the condition of the event sites, nearly all (98%) who had an opinion rated the Independence Day site as “excellent” or “good;” 95% rated the Brewfest site as “excellent” or “good,” and 92% rated the condition of the site for the Summer Concert Series as “excellent” or “good.”

#### Q6[2]. Ratings of the Condition of the Following Event Sites

by percentage of households that participated in the event (excluding “not provided”)



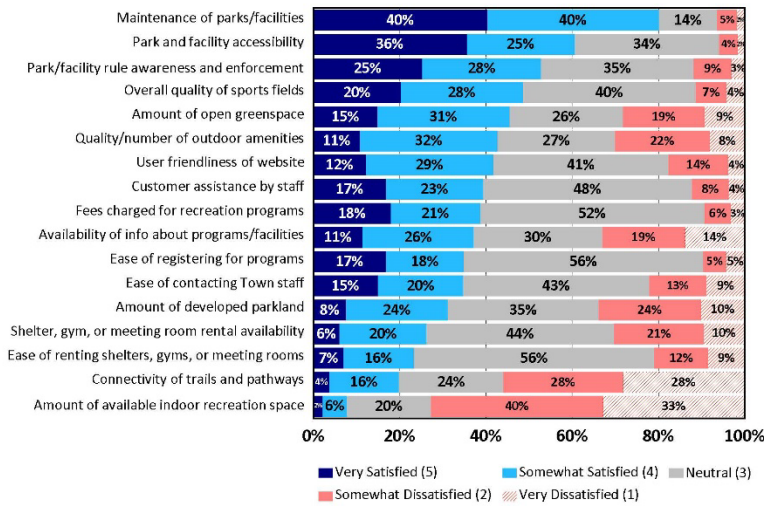


### 3.3.8 SATISFACTION WITH PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES

Eighty percent (80%) of respondents, who had an opinion, were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the maintenance of parks/facilities. Other services in which respondents were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” include: parks and facility accessibility (61%), park/facility rule awareness and enforcement (53%), overall quality of sports fields (49%), and amount of open greenspace (46%).

#### Q12. Satisfaction With the Following Parks and Recreation Services

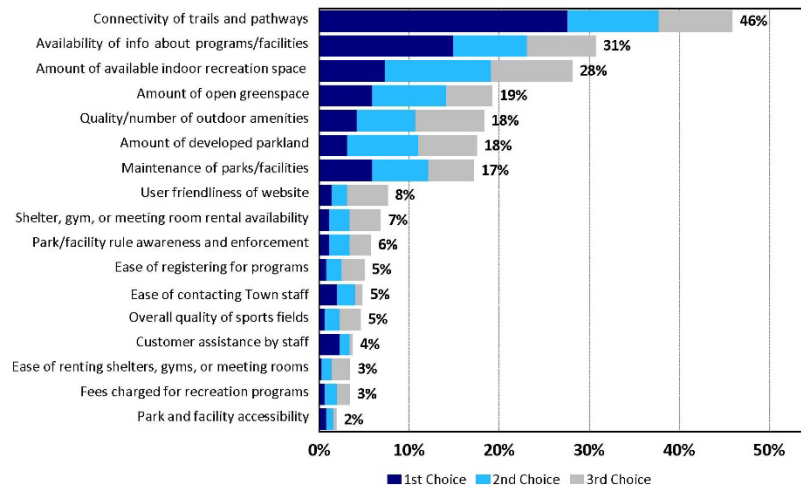
by percentage of respondents (excluding “don’t know”)



Based on the sum of their top three choices, the parks and recreation services that respondents indicated should receive the most attention from the Town over the next five years were: 1) connectivity of trails and pathways, 2) availability of information about programs/facilities, and 3) amount of available indoor recreation space.

#### Q13. Parks and Recreation Services That Should Receive the Most Attention from Whitestown Over the Next 5 Years

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top three choices



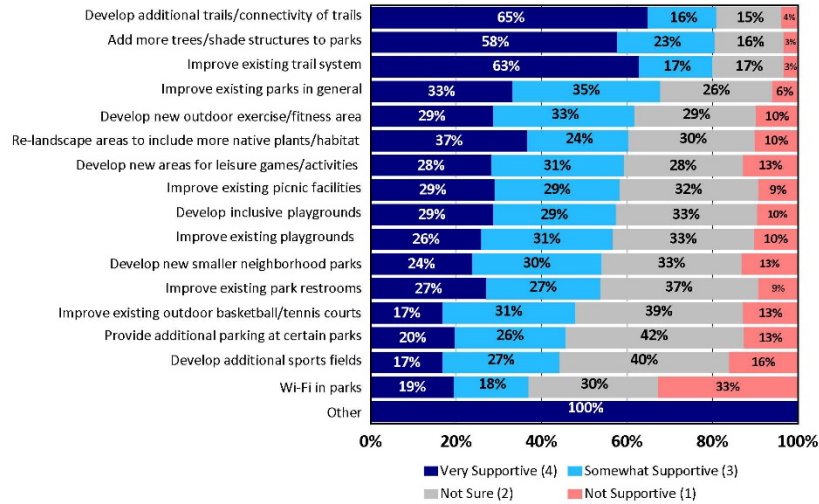
## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 3.3.9 SUPPORT AND FUNDING FOR PARKS AND RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS

Eighty-one percent (81%) of respondents indicated they are “very supportive” or “somewhat supportive” of the Town developing additional trails/connectivity of trails as a way to improve the parks and recreation system. Other actions that respondents support include: adding more trees/shade structures to parks (81%), improving the existing trail system (80%), improving existing parks in general (68%), developing new outdoor exercise/fitness area (62%), and re-landscaping areas to include more native plants/habitat (60%).

#### Q19. Level of Support for Each of the Following Actions the Town Could Take to Improve the Parks and Recreation System

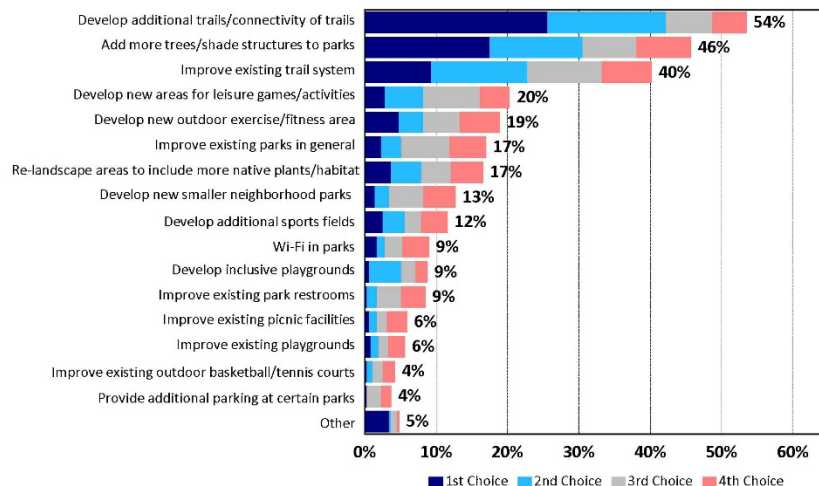
by percentage of respondents



Based on the sum their top four choices, the actions that respondents would be most willing to fund are: 1) developing additional trails/connectivity of trails, 2) adding more trees/shade structures to parks, 3) improving the existing trail system, and 4) developing new areas for leisure games/activities.

#### Q20. Improvements That Households Are Most Willing to Fund

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices

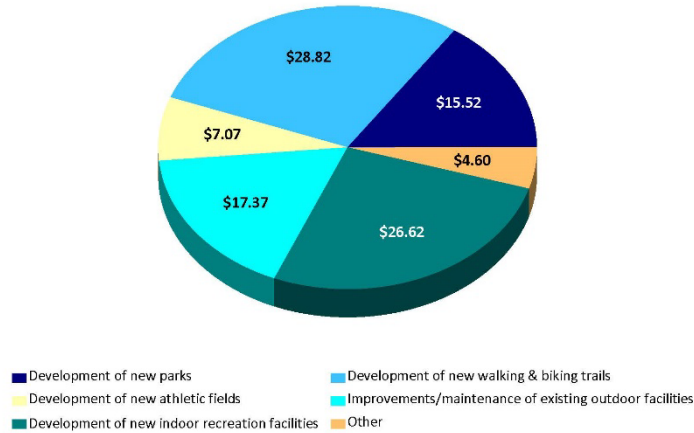




When respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 among various improvements, the funds were distributed in the following ways: development of new parks (\$15.52), development of new walking and biking trails (\$28.82), development of new athletic fields (\$7.07), improvements/maintenance of existing outdoor facilities (\$17.37), development of new indoor recreation facilities (\$26.62), and other improvements (\$4.60).

### Q18. How Respondents Would Allocate \$100 Among the Following Categories

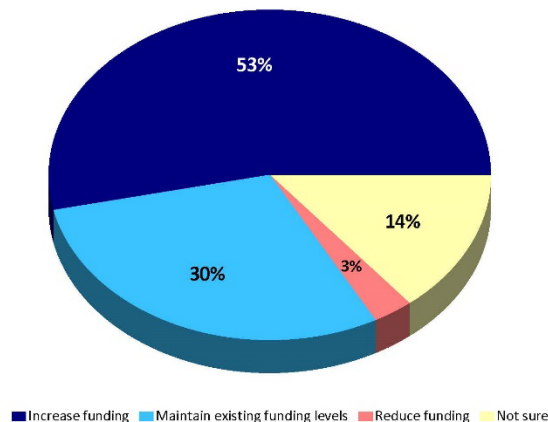
by amount of funds allocated



Respondents were also asked how they would want the Town to fund future parks, recreation, trails and open space needs. More than half (53%) who had an opinion indicated they would want the Town to increase funding; 30% want to maintain existing funding levels, 3% want to reduce funding, and 14% were not sure.

### Q16. How Respondents Would Want Whitestown to Fund Future Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Needs

by percentage of respondents (excluding "not provided")



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 3.3.10 FACILITY NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

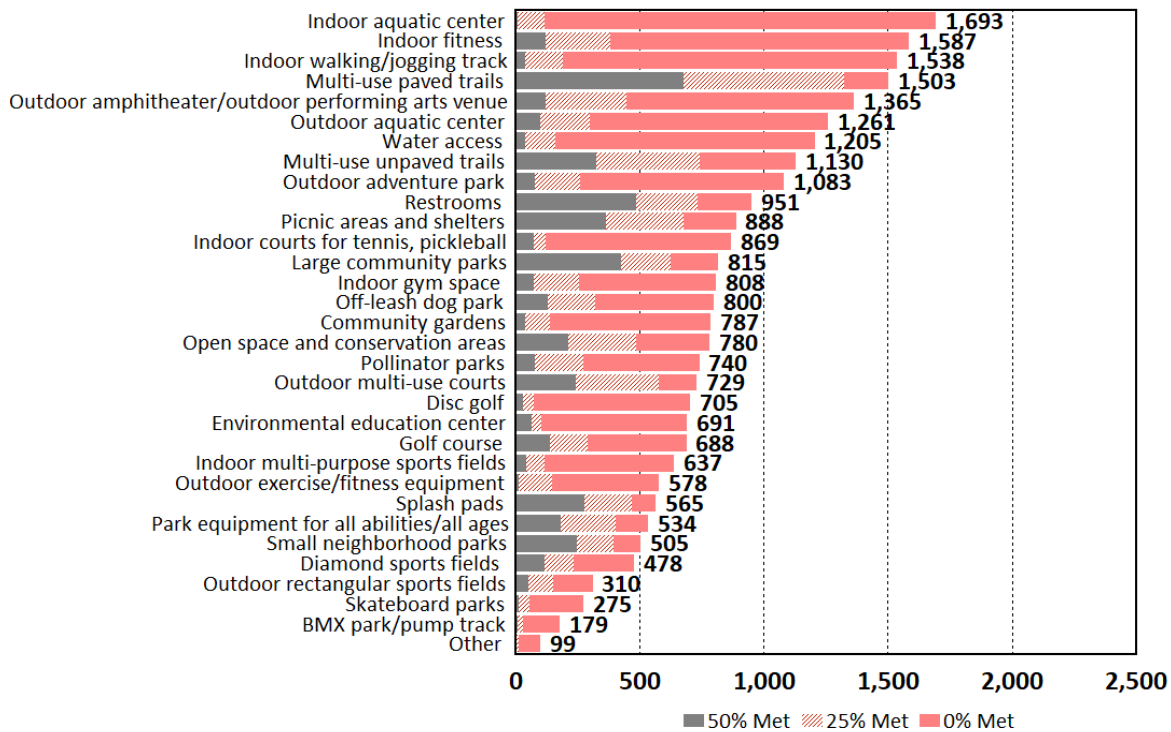
Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 32 parks and recreation facilities and rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various facilities.

The five parks and recreation facilities with the highest percentage of households that indicated a need for the facility were: multi-use paved trails (70%), indoor aquatic center (55%), indoor fitness (54%), restrooms (52%), and indoor walking/jogging track (51%). When ETC Institute analyzed the needs in the community, these same five facilities had a need that affected more than 1,600 households.

ETC Institute estimates a total of 1,693 households in the Town of Whitestown that have a need, have unmet needs for an indoor aquatic center. The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 32 facilities that were assessed is shown below.

### Q8[3]. Estimated Number of Households in Whitestown Whose Needs for Facilities Are Being Partly Met or Not Met

by number of households based on 3,191 households in Whitestown



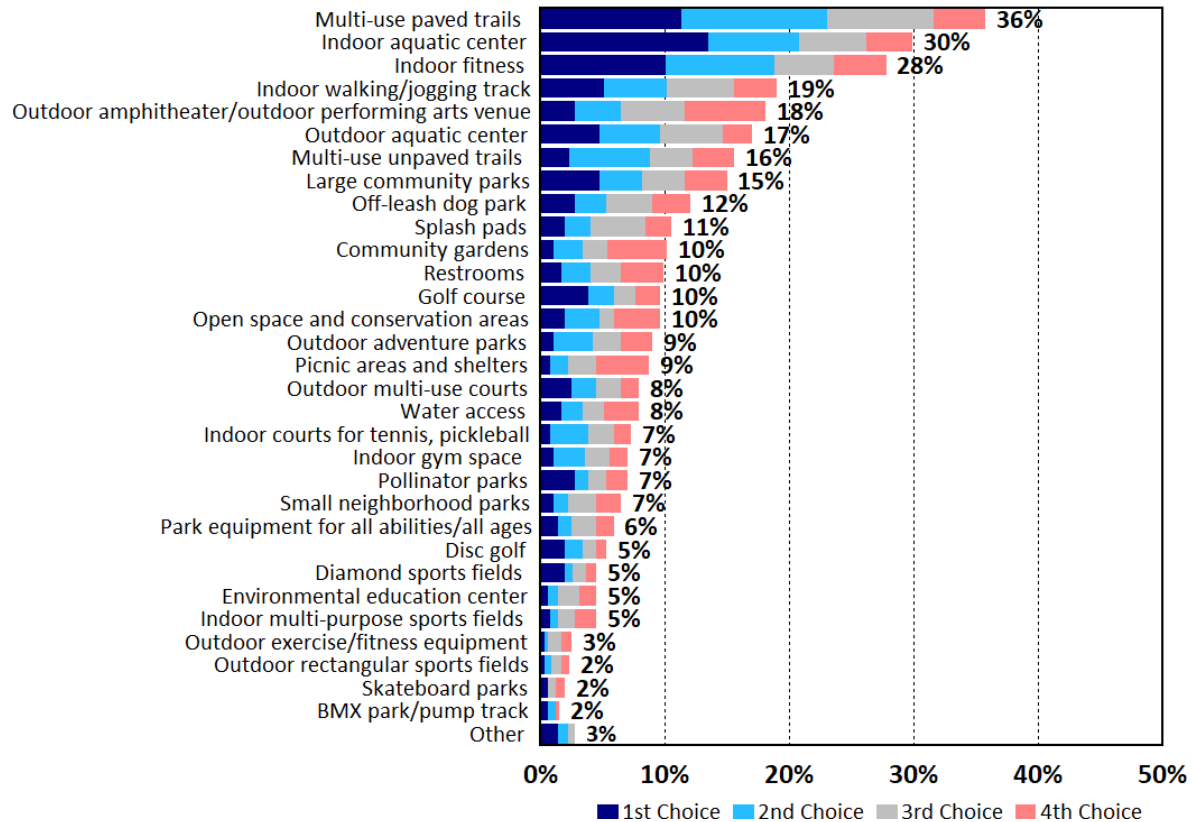


### 3.3.11 FACILITY IMPORTANCE

In addition to assessing the needs for each facility, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, the most important facilities to residents were: multi-use paved trails (36%), indoor aquatic center (30%), indoor fitness (28%), and indoor walking/jogging track (19%). The percentage of residents who selected each facility as one of their top four choices is shown in the chart below.

## Q9. Facilities That Are Most Important to Households

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices





## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 3.3.12 PRIORITIES FOR FACILITY INVESTMENTS

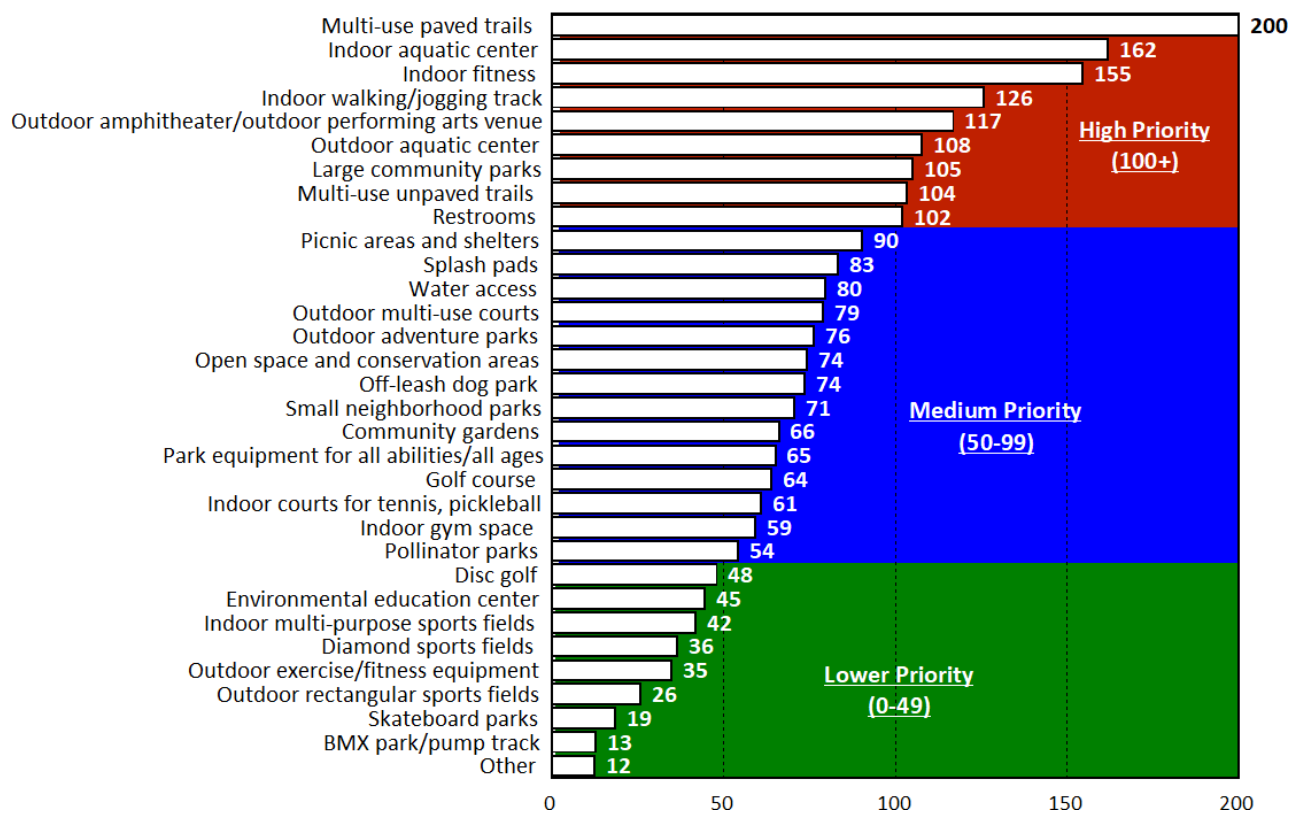
The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on parks, trails, recreational facilities, and services. The PIR equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facility. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 2 of this report.]

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following nine facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Multi-use paved trails (PIR=200)
- Indoor aquatic center (PIR=162)
- Indoor fitness (PIR=155)
- Indoor walking/jogging track (PIR=126)
- Outdoor amphitheater/outdoor performing arts venue (PIR=117)
- Outdoor aquatic center (PIR=108)
- Large community parks (PIR=105)
- Multi-use unpaved trails (PIR=104)
- Restrooms (PIR=102)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 32 facilities that were assessed on the survey.

### Top Priorities for Investment for Facilities Based on the Priority Investment Rating





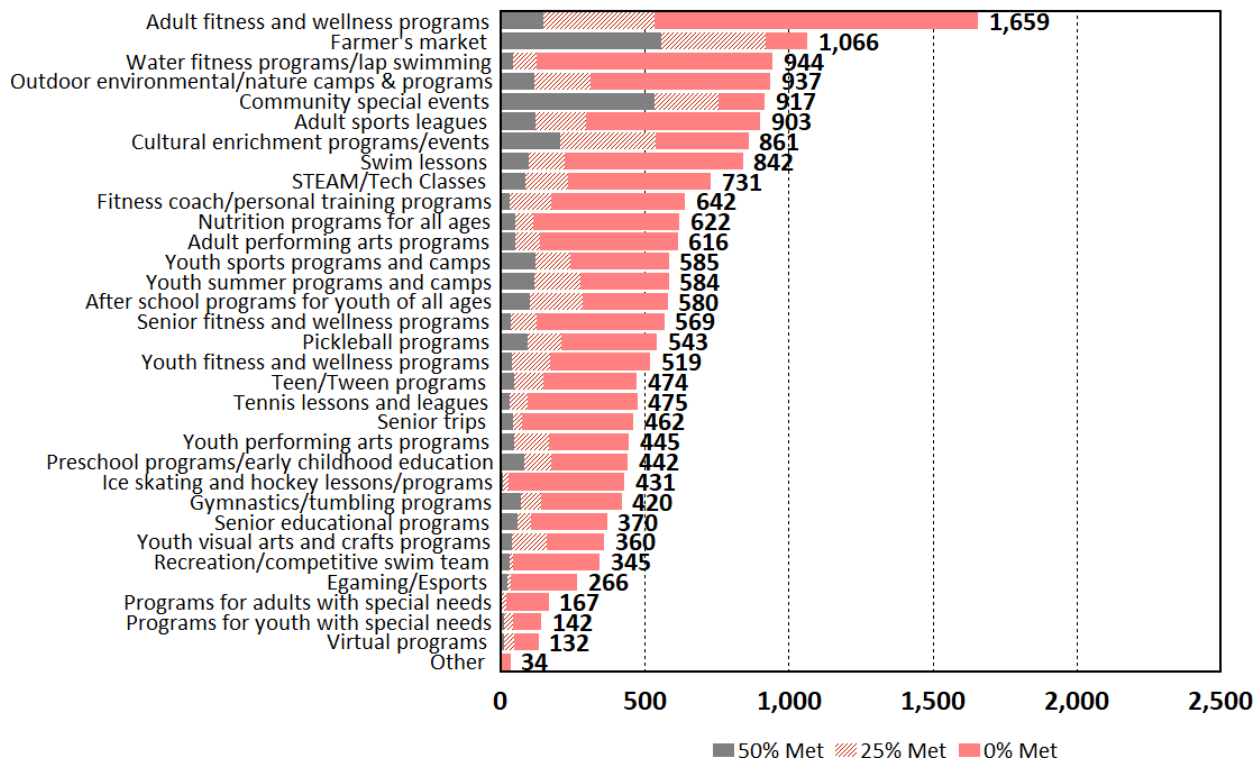
### 3.3.13 PROGRAMMING NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

Respondents were also asked to identify if their household had a need for 33 parks and recreation programs and rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had “unmet” needs for each program.

The three programs with the highest percentage of households that had needs were: Farmer’s market (71%), adult fitness and wellness programs (54%), and community special events (45%). When ETC Institute analyzed the needs in the community, all three of these programs had a need that affected more than 1,400 households. ETC Institute estimates a total of 1,659 households in Whitestown that have a need, have unmet needs for adult fitness and wellness programs. The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 33 programs that were assessed is shown below.

## Q10[3]. Estimated Number of Households in Whitestown Whose Needs for Programs Are Being Partly Met or Not Met

by number of households based on 3,191 households in Whitestown



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

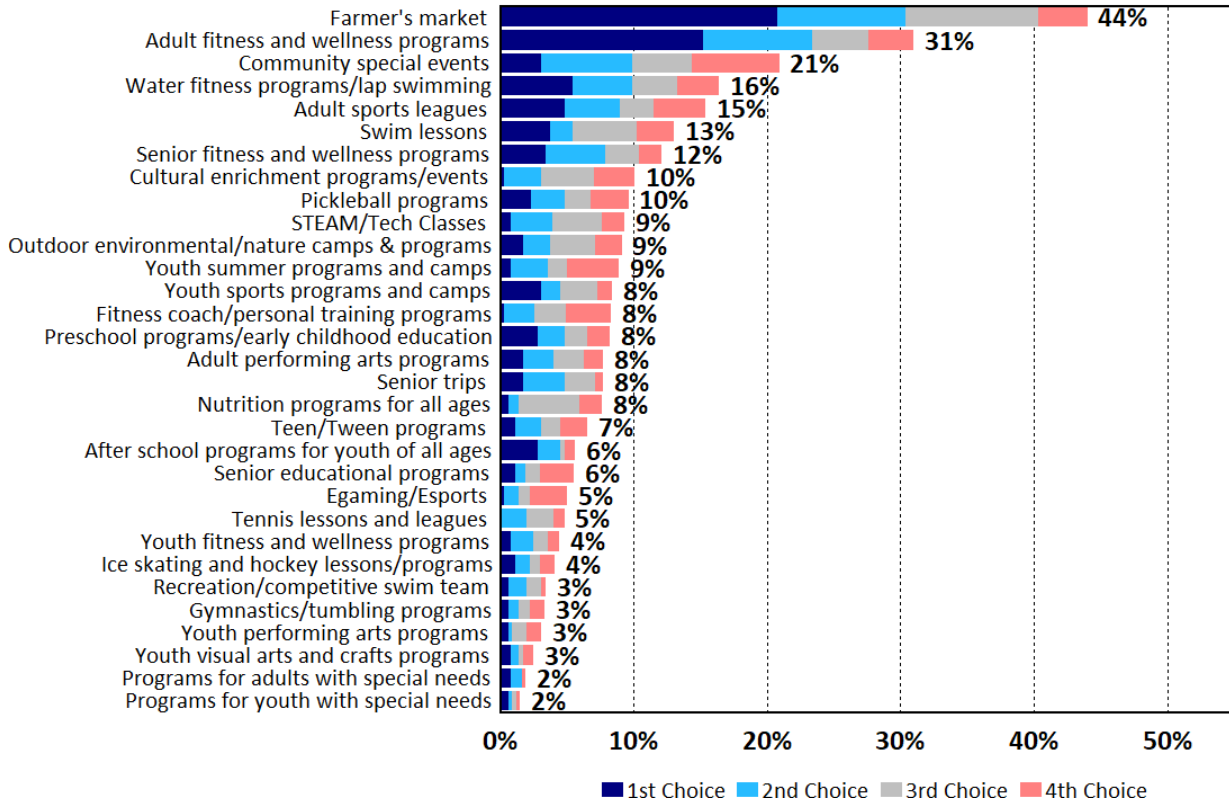
### 3.3.14 PROGRAM IMPORTANCE

In addition to assessing the needs for each program, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents place on each. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, the most important programs to residents were: Farmer's market (44%), adult fitness and wellness programs (31%), community special events (21%), and water fitness programs/lap swimming (16%).

The percentage of residents who selected each program as one of their top four choices is shown in the chart below.

### Q11. Programs That Are Most Important to Households

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices





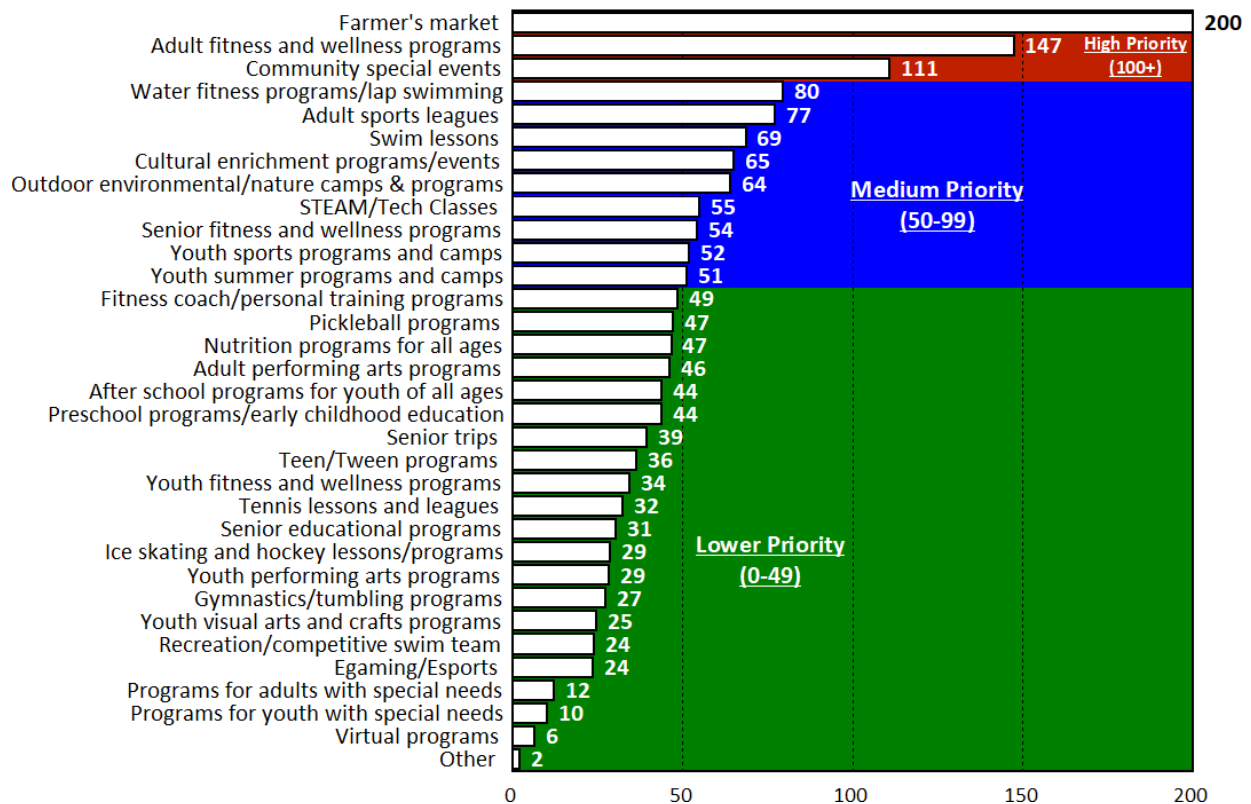
### 3.3.15 PRIORITIES FOR PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

Based on the priority investment rating (PIR), which was described briefly on page vi of this Executive Summary and is described in more detail in Section 2 of this report, the following three programs were rated as “high priorities” for investment:

- Farmer’s market (PIR=200)
- Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=147)
- Community special events (PIR=111)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating (PIR) for each of the 33 programs that were rated.

## Top Priorities for Investment for Programs Based on the Priority Investment Rating



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 3.3.16 RECOMMENDATIONS

When analyzing the facilities and programs offered by the Town of Whitestown, multi-use paved trails, indoor aquatic center, Farmer's market, and adult fitness and wellness programs were the items for which the highest number of residents had a need. Focusing on these items would provide the greatest benefit for the largest number of residents in Whitestown.

Making certain the Town's availability of facilities and programs encompasses the greatest number of households ensures funding is appropriately allocated to give the community the greatest benefit possible. To ensure that Whitestown continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community, ETC Institute recommends that the Town sustain and/or improve the performance in areas that were identified as "high priorities" by the Priority Investment Rating (PIR). The facilities and programs with the highest PIR ratings are listed below.

- Facility Priorities
  - Multi-use paved trails (PIR=200)
  - Indoor aquatic center (PIR=162)
  - Indoor fitness (PIR=155)
  - Indoor walking/jogging track (PIR=126)
  - Outdoor amphitheater/outdoor performing arts venue (PIR=117)
  - Outdoor aquatic center (PIR=108)
  - Large community parks (PIR=105)
  - Multi-use unpaved trails (PIR=104)
  - Restrooms (PIR=102)
- Programming Priorities
  - Farmer's market (PIR=200)
  - Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=147)
  - Community special events (PIR=111)



### 3.4 ONLINE SURVEY



The Whitestown Parks & Recreation Department had both a Statistically Valid Survey (distributed by ETC Institute) and an Online Community Survey (powered by SurveyMonkey) conducted to better prioritize community needs. The Online Community Survey mirrored the ETC Statistically Valid Survey allowing those who were not randomly selected to partake in the Statistically Valid Survey a chance to participate in the community engagement process and give their input. The survey was administered from June 13<sup>th</sup> to July 22<sup>nd</sup>.



ETC Institute administered the Statistically Valid Survey to residents of Whitestown. The survey, cover letter and postage-paid return envelope were mailed to a random sample of households, looking to match the demographics of the town. The cover letter explained the purpose of the survey and encouraged residents to either return their survey by mail or complete the survey online.

Ten days after the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute sent emails to the households that received the survey to encourage participation. The emails contained a link to the online version of the survey to make it easy for residents to complete the survey. To prevent people who were not residents of Whitestown from participating, everyone who completed the survey online was required to enter their home address prior to submitting the survey. ETC Institute then matched the addresses that were entered online with the addresses that were originally selected for the random sample. If the address from a survey completed online did not match one of the addresses selected for the sample, the online survey was not counted.

The Online Community Survey mirrored the questions from the ETC Statistically Valid Survey allowing those who weren't randomly selected to partake in the Statistically Valid Survey a chance to participate in the community engagement process and give their input.

 <b><u>Statistically Valid Survey</u></b>	 <b><u>Online Community Survey</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 355 households (Goal of 350)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 144 responses</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Precision rate of at least +/- 5.2%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No procession rate or level of confidence due there being no selection criteria for respondents</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents were able to return the survey by mail, by phone, or online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asked same questions as statistically valid survey</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only scientific and defensible method to understand community needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides further insight on community expectations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translation services available in multiple languages including Spanish</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available in English</li> </ul>



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Overall, the findings from the Online Community Survey are fairly similar to the Statistically Valid Survey results, with some noted exceptions. Below are some of the key takeaways from both the surveys.

The following sections present a side-by-side comparison of survey results. All areas of congruence (in terms of order or response percentage range) are shaded in each table:

**green identifies responses over 5% higher than statistically valid survey**



white indicates a score within 5% of the statistically valid survey

**orange identifies responses over 5% below the statistically valid survey**

### 3.4.1 KEY SURVEY COMPARISONS



#### PARK/FACILITY USAGE

The three most visited parks were the same for both surveys. The higher percentages of park usage for the Online Community Survey indicates a higher number of current park users participating in that survey when compared to the Statistically Valid version.

 <b>Statistically Valid Survey</b>	 <b>Online Community Survey</b>
1. Main Street Park (66%)	1. Main Street Park (87%)
2. Panther Park (36%)	2. Panther Park (49%)
3. Big Four Trail Linear Park (29%)	3. Big Four Trail Linear Park (30%)
4. Anson Park (27%)	4. Gateway Park (26%)
5. Gateway Park (20%)	5. Anson Park (25%)

#### USAGE BARRIERS

The five most common barriers to usage were the same in both surveys with higher percentages seen in the Online Community Survey.



 <b>Statistically Valid Survey</b>	 <b>Online Community Survey</b>
1. Not aware of parks or trails locations (37%)	1. Not aware of parks or trails locations (48%)
2. Lack of features we want to use (27%)	2. Lack of features we want to use (44%)
3. Use parks/trails in other cities (22%)	3. Use parks/trails in other cities (38%)
4. Too far from home (13%)	4. Too far from home (20%)
5. Lack of restrooms (11%)	5. Lack of restrooms (15%)



## ORGANIZATIONS USED FOR RECREATION



The top four organizations used for recreation were the same on both surveys. The only differences in top five rankings between the two surveys were:

- Places of worship ranked 7<sup>th</sup> on the Online Community Survey (29%)
- Private & non-profit youth sports ranked 7<sup>th</sup> on the Statistically Valid Survey (19%)

 <b><u>Statistically Valid Survey</u></b>	 <b><u>Online Community Survey</u></b>
1. Zionsville parks (53%)	1. Zionsville Parks (75%)
2. Whitestown Parks & Recreation Department (45%)	2. Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department (57%)
3. Homeowner associations' facilities (36%)	3. Homeowner associations' facilities (40%)
4. Private workout facilities (30%)	4. Private workout facilities (38%)
5. Places of worship (28%)	5. Private & non-profit youth sports (32%)



## CURRENT MARKETING

Respondents from both surveys indicated Whitestown social media was the most frequent way they learn about Department programs. All told, four of the top five responses were the same in both surveys, just in slightly different orders. While Email/eBlasts from Town ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the Online Community Survey, it was 6<sup>th</sup> in the Statistically Valid version at a much lower percentage (19%)

 <b><u>Statistically Valid Survey</u></b>	 <b><u>Online Community Survey</u></b>
1. Whitestown social media (58%)	1. Whitestown social media (77%)
2. Friends & neighbors (47%)	2. Whitestown Connection Facebook Group (65%)
3. Whitestown Connection Facebook Group (43%)	3. Town website (37%)
4. Town website (32%)	4. Friends & neighbors (30%)
5. Banners at parks or Town facilities (30%)	5. Email/eBlasts from Town (28%)

## EVENT PARTICIPATION

The top four responses were the same on both surveys, with the participation rate being much higher across the board in the Online Community Survey. This again is an indication of Online Survey Participants being made up of a larger percentage of current users of the system.



 <b><u>Statistically Valid Survey</u></b>	 <b><u>Online Community Survey</u></b>
1. Farmer's Market (61%)	1. Farmer's Market (80%)
2. Independence Day (50%)	2. Independence Day (64%)
3. Summer Concert Series (29%)	3. Summer Concert Series (46%)
4. Halloween (26%)	4. Halloween (38%)
5. Brewfest (18%)	5. Viking Fest (25%)

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### EVENT QUALITY



Overall, the responses regarding event quality were quite high on both surveys, however, there were some notable differences in the rankings. *(The percentages shown are a combination of “Excellent” and “Good” responses.)*

- Brewfest ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Statistically Valid Survey and last in the Online Community Survey (72%)
- Viking Fest ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the Statistically Valid Survey, but 6<sup>th</sup> in the Online Community Survey at a substantially lower rating (76%).
- Movies in the Park was the most participated in event on both surveys but ranked second to last in event quality on both surveys (80% Statistically Valid, 74% Online Community).

 <b>Statistically Valid Survey</b>	 <b>Online Community Survey</b>
1. Independence Day (98%)	1. Movies in the Park (100%)
2. Brewfest (95%)	2. Independence Day (98%)
3. Summer Concert Series (92%)	3. Summer Concert Series (94%)
4. Viking Fest (91%)	4. Halloween (93%)
5. Movies in the Park (90%)	5. Easter (91%)



### EVENT PARTICIPATION BARRIERS

The top five responses are similar in both surveys, with the Online Community Survey having much higher percentages.

 <b>Statistically Valid Survey</b>	 <b>Online Community Survey</b>
1. I don't know what is offered (32%)	1. I don't know what is offered (40%)
2. Too busy/not interested (25%)	2. Too busy/not interested (32%)
3. Program times are not convenient (9%)	3. Use programs of other agencies (20%)
4. Lack of quality events (5%)	4. Program times are not convenient (19%)
5. Lack of programs (5%)	5. Lack of quality events (16%)



### FACILITY/AMENITY NEED

Four of the top five responses show up in both surveys, with Multi-use paved trails and Indoor aquatic center being #1 and #2 in both the Statistically Valid and Online Community versions. The percentages of “need” was substantially higher on the Online Community Survey with 18 of the 31 listed facilities/amenities being listed as a need by more than half of respondents, compared to only 5 out of 31 on the Statistically Valid version.

 <b>Statistically Valid Survey</b>	 <b>Online Community Survey</b>
1. Multi-use paved trails (70%)	1. Multi-use paved trails (90%)
2. Indoor aquatic center (55%)	2. Indoor aquatic center (85%)
3. Indoor fitness (54%)	3. Large community parks (82%)
4. Restrooms (52%)	4. Restrooms (81%)
5. Indoor walking/jogging track (51%)	5. Indoor fitness (76%)



### PROGRAM NEEDS

Adult fitness and wellness programs were the most selected program type not currently offered by the department on both surveys. We again see much higher percentages across the board from the Online Community Survey, with 8 of the 32 listed programs being selected by over half of respondents, compared to only 2 of 32 by the Statistically Valid Survey respondents.

 <b>Statistically Valid Survey</b>	 <b>Online Community Survey</b>
1. Farmer's Market (71%)	1. Farmer's Market (91%)
2. Adult fitness and wellness programs (54%)	2. Community special events (77%)
3. Community special events (45%)	3. Adult fitness and wellness programs (74%)
4. Outdoor environmental/nature camps & programs (31%)	4. Water fitness programs/lap swimming (58%)
5. Adult sports leagues (30%)	5. Swim lessons (56%)

### MOST ATTENTION OVER NEXT 5 YEARS



Four of the top five responses were the same on both surveys, just in completely different orders. The Online Community Survey Respondents had substantially more interest in addressing both Quality number of outdoor amenities and the Amount of available indoor recreation space

 <b>Statistically Valid Survey</b>	 <b>Online Community Survey</b>
1. Connectivity of trails and pathways (46%)	1. Quality number of outdoor amenities (55%)
2. Availability of info about programs/facilities (31%)	2. Amount of available indoor recreation space (53%)
3. Amount of available indoor recreation space (28%)	3. Connectivity of trails and pathways (46%)
4. Amount of open greenspace (19%)	4. Maintenance of parks/facilities (33%)
5. Quality number of outdoor amenities (18%)	5. Availability of info about programs/facilities (32%)

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### MOST WILLING TO FUND IMPROVEMENTS



The five improvements respondents were most willing to fund were the same on both surveys.

 <b><u>Statistically Valid Survey</u></b>	 <b><u>Online Community Survey</u></b>
1. Develop additional trails/connectivity of trails (54%)	1. Develop additional trails/connectivity of trails (66%)
2. Add more trees/shade structures to parks (46%)	2. Add more trees/shade structures to parks (58%)
3. Improve existing trail system (40%)	3. Improve existing trail system (41%)
4. Develop new areas for leisure games/activities (20%)	4. Develop new areas for leisure games/activities (37%)
5. Develop new outdoor exercise/fitness area (19%)	5. Develop new outdoor exercise/fitness area (36%)

### 3.4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS COMPARISON



#### DEMOGRAPHICS - GENDER

Females were overrepresented in the Online Survey when compared to the Statistically Valid Survey.

	 <b><u>Statistically Valid Survey</u></b>	 <b><u>Online Community Survey</u></b>
Male	48%	24%
Female	51%	75%
Non-binary/Prefer to self-describe	1%	1%

#### AGE OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



This chart identifies a remarkable similarity in the representation of ages between the two surveys.

	 <b><u>Statistically Valid Survey</u></b>	 <b><u>Online Community Survey</u></b>
0-17 years	30%	32%
18-34 years	20%	23%
35-54 years	30%	30%
55-74 years	17%	14%
75+ years	3%	1%





### YEARS LIVED IN WHITESTOWN

There is an overrepresentation of “new” Town of Whitestown Residents (5 years or less) and an underrepresentation of those who have lived there for 11-15 years in the Online Survey when compared to the Statistically Valid version.

	 <b>Statistically Valid Survey</b>	 <b>Online Community Survey</b>
5 years or less	47%	59%
6-10 years	24%	27%
11-15 years	16%	6%
16-20 years	6%	5%
21-30 years	2%	1%
31+ years	5%	2%

### RACE/ETHNICITY (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

There was an overrepresentation of “White” respondents of the online survey compared to the Statistically Valid version and Town demographics. The online survey also had zero respondents who identified as “Black or African American”.



	 <b>Statistically Valid Survey</b>	 <b>Online Community Survey</b>
White	80%	91%
Asian or Asian Indian	9%	7%
Hispanic, Spanish, Latino/a/x	6%	3%
Black or African American	6%	0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1%	0%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1%	0%
Other	1%	0%



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The online survey responses indicate a substantial over representation of more affluent households and much lower representation of low-income households compared to the Statistically Valid Survey.

	 <b>Statistically Valid Survey</b>	 <b>Online Community Survey</b>
Under \$30k	12%	2%
\$30k to \$59,999	15%	4%
\$60k to \$99,999	22%	25%
\$100k to \$129,999	28%	26%
\$130k+	19%	43%

### 3.4.3 FINDINGS

After analyzing the data collected from both surveys there are several key findings that rose to the surface:

- The higher percentages of usage/participation shown in the Online Survey can be attributed to the fact that the Online Survey is generally taken by current, engaged users of the park/facility/system etc., while the random selection of the statistically-valid survey means a higher likelihood of non-users giving their feedback and is a better representation of the community as a whole.
- The Online Survey showed substantial overrepresentation in white, female participants, who have lived in Whitestown for less than 5 years and have an annual household income of over \$130,000 a year when compared to the Statistically Valid Survey.
- Lack of awareness and features were the top two barriers to participation in both surveys, indicating a need for added amenities and increased and/or better marketing practices.
- Responses in both surveys indicated residents are Zionsville Parks more than Whitestown Parks.
- Both surveys indicate that in general, the community believes the Department put-on high-quality events.
- Farmer's Market was the most participated in event by respondents of both surveys. However, it ranked second to last on the Statistically Valid Survey and last on the Online Community Survey in terms of event quality.
- The fact that there were no Black or African American respondents to the Online Community Survey should be noted as it could indicate an opportunity to better reach this growing and historically underserved demographic.



## CHAPTER FOUR — PARKS, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS

### 4.1 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS AND DESIGN PRINCIPLES

#### 4.1.1 INTRODUCTION

In developing design principles for parks, it is important that each park be programmed, planned, and designed to meet the needs of its service area and classification within the overall park and recreation system. Every park, regardless of type, needs to have an established set of outcomes. Park planners/designers design to those outcomes, including operational and maintenance costs associated with the design outcomes.

Each park classification category serves a specific purpose, and the features and facilities in the park must be designed for the number of age segments the park is intended to serve, the desired length of stay deemed appropriate, and the uses it has been assigned. Recreation needs and services require different design standards based on the age segments that make up the community that will be using the park. A varying number of age segments will be accommodated with the park program depending on the classification of the park. The age segments used for this purpose are broken into the following sets and subsets:

- Ages 0-17
  - Ages 0-5
  - Ages 6-12
  - Ages 13-17
- Ages 18-34
  - Ages 18-24
  - Ages 25-34
- Ages 35-54
  - Ages 35-44
  - Ages 45-54
- Ages 55-74
  - Ages 55-64
  - Ages 65-74
- Ages 76+

#### 4.1.2 DEFINITIONS

**Land Usage:** The percentage of space identified for active or passive use within a park. A park master plan should follow land usage guidelines.

- **Active Use:** An area that requires more intensive development to support the desired recreation activities. Spaces are designed specifically to encourage people to congregate and interact with each other. Active areas include built amenities, such as playgrounds, splash pads, sports courts or fields, community centers, program pavilions, swimming pools, rentable shelters, and similar amenities. Active may also be used in reference to a program or activity that requires a more vigorous physical effort to participate, such as playing sports, swimming, working out, skating, etc.
- **Passive Use:** An area that has minimal to no development, usually for the purpose of providing non-programmed open space and/or preserving or restoring natural habitat. Areas that are developed are designed to promote casual and frequently self-directed activities, such as hiking, fishing, bird watching, wildlife viewing, picnicking, kite-flying, Frisbee, or similar generally unstructured activities. Built amenities may include trails, boardwalks, fishing piers, benches, picnic tables, grass meadows, etc. Passive may also be used in reference to a program or activity that requires minimal physical exertion to participate, such as attending an arts and crafts class, continuing education program, etc.

**Park/Facility Classifications:** Includes Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park (Currently, Whitestown does not have any parks under this classification), Special Use Park/Facility, Trails, and Undeveloped/Open Space.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

**Signature Facility/Amenity:** This is an enhanced facility or amenity which is viewed by community as deserving of special recognition due to its design, location, function, natural resources, etc. A signature facility/amenity is frequently synonymous with the park from the general public's perspective. A signature facility/amenity may also be a revenue facility. Examples include a community center, waterpark, destination playground, or similar facilities, amenities, or natural features.

**Site Features:** The specific types of facilities and amenities included within a park. Site features include such elements as a community center, playground, splashpads, picnic shelters, restrooms, game courts, trails, open meadows, nature preserves, etc. These types of amenities are categorized as lead or support amenities. Community demographics and needs should be considered when identifying site features for a park.

**Revenue Facilities:** These include facilities that charge a fee to use in the form of an admission fee, player fee, team fee, or permit fee. These could include pools, golf courses, tennis courts, recreation centers, sport field complexes, concession facilities, hospitality centers, reservable shelters, outdoor or indoor theatre space, and special event spaces.

**User Experiences:** The type of intentional recreation experiences a user has available to them when visiting a park. A park master plan should incorporate user experience recommendations based on the following types of experiences:

- **Leader-Directed Experiences:** An experience received from a facility, amenity, or service where participant involvement is directed by a leader and supervision is required for participation. These experiences, usually provided through an organized class, often promote skill development or learning, but may be for recreational purposes only. Leader-directed experiences typically require advance registration and include a user fee to participate. Examples include day camps, learn-to-swim programs, environmental education classes, sports leagues, etc. Certain types of special events, such as concerts, 5K fun runs/walks, or similar events that rely on the performance or significant coordination of someone to occur are also considered leader-directed experiences.
- **Self-Directed Experience:** An experience received from a facility, amenity or service that provides opportunities for individuals or groups to participate independently and at their own pace. Supervision, when provided, is primarily to promote safety or regulate attendance. A user fee may or may not be charged, depending on the setting. Advance registration is often not required. Examples include playground or splashpad usage, picnicking, disc golf, nature walks, walking a dog, etc. General use of a community center, such as using fitness equipment, using the gym or indoor aquatic during open times, or walking the track, are also considered self-directed experiences.

### 4.1.3 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

#### NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

A neighborhood park should be 3-10 acres; however, some neighborhood parks are determined by use and facilities offered and not by size alone. The service radius for a neighborhood park is one half mile or six blocks. Neighborhood parks should have safe pedestrian access for surrounding residents; parking may or may not be included but if included accounts for less than ten cars and provides for ADA access. Neighborhood parks serve the recreational and social focus of the adjoining neighborhoods and contribute to a distinct neighborhood identity. Currently, Panther Park and Anson Acres are classified as neighborhood park within Whitestown's inventory.

- Size of park: 2 to 10 acres (usable area measured). Preferred size is eight acres.
- Service radius: 0.5-mile radius.
- Site selection: On a local or collector street. If near an arterial street, provide natural or artificial barrier. Where possible, next to a school. Encourage location to link subdivisions and linked by trails to other parks.
- Length of stay: One-hour experience or less.
- Site features: One signature amenity (e.g., playground, splashpad, sport court, gazebo); no restrooms unless necessary for a signature amenity; may include one non-programmed sports field; playgrounds for ages 2-5 and 5-12 with some



shaded elements; no reservable shelters; loop trails; one type of sport court; no non-producing/unused amenities; benches, small picnic shelter(s) next to play areas. Amenities are ADA compliant. Wifi and security cameras are installed.

- Landscape design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience. Customized to demographics of neighborhood; safety design meets established Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) standards; integrated color scheme throughout. Also, must meet Town of Whitestown's Planning and Zoning Standards.
- Revenue facilities: None.
- Land usage: 85% active/15% passive.
- User experiences: Typically, self-directed, but a signature amenity may be included which provides opportunities for leader-directed programs.
- Maintenance standards: Dependent on-site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Signage: Directional signage and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience.
- Parking: Design should include widened on-street parking area adjacent to park, when feasible. Goal is to maximize usable park space. As necessary, provide 5-10 spaces within park including accessible parking spaces. Traffic calming devices encouraged next to park.
- Lighting: Security only. Lighting on all night for security.
- Naming: Consistent with the agency's naming policy for naming of parks, such as being named after a prominent or historic person, event, or natural landmark.

## COMMUNITY PARK

Community parks provide diverse recreation opportunities to serve the residents of Whitestown. These include active and passive recreation, as well as self-directed and organized recreation opportunities for individuals, families, and small groups. Community Parks often include facilities that promote outdoor recreation and activities such as walking and biking, picnicking, playing sports, playing on playgrounds, and fishing. These sites also include natural areas, emphasizing public access to important natural features. Since community parks may attract people from a wide geographic area, support facilities are required, such as parking and restrooms. Self-directed recreation activities such as meditation, quiet reflection, and wildlife watching also take place at community parks.

Community parks generally range from 10 to 100 acres depending on the surrounding community. Community parks serve a larger area — radius of one to three miles — and contain more recreation amenities than a neighborhood park. Currently, Whitestown Community Parks include Main Street Park and Gateway Park.

- Size of park: 10 to 100 acres, but ideally 20 to 40 acres.
- Service radius: One-to-three-mile radius.
- Site selection: On two collector streets minimum and preferably one arterial street. If near arterial street, provide natural or artificial barrier. Minimal number of residences abutting site. Preference for adjacent or nearby proximity with school or other municipal use. Encourage trail linkage to other parks.
- Length of stay: Two to three hours experience.
- Site features: Four signature amenities at a minimum: (e.g., trails, sports fields, large shelters/ pavilions, community playground for ages 2-5 and 5-12 with some shaded elements, recreation center, pool or family aquatic center, sports courts, water feature); public restrooms with drinking fountains, ample parking, and security lighting. Amenities are ADA compliant. Multi-purpose fields are appropriate in this type of park. Wifi and security cameras are installed.

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- Landscape design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience. Enhanced landscaping at park entrances and throughout park. Also, must meet Town of Whitestown's Planning and Zoning Standards.
- Revenue facilities: One or more (e.g., picnic shelters, program pavilion, dog park).
- Land usage: 65% active and 35% passive.
- User experiences: Mostly self-directed experiences but may have opportunities for leader-directed programs based on available site features and community demand.
- Maintenance standards: Dependent on-site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Signage: Directional signage and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience. May include kiosks in easily identified areas of the facility.
- Parking: Sufficient to support the amenities; occupies no more than 10% of the park. Design should include widened on-street parking area adjacent to park. Goal is to maximize usable park space. Traffic calming devices encouraged within and next to the park.
- Lighting: Security lighting and lighting appropriate for signature amenities.
- Naming: Consistent with the agency's naming policy for naming of parks, such as being named after a prominent or historic person, event, or natural landmark.
- Other: Strong appeal to surrounding neighborhoods; integrated color scheme throughout the park; partnerships developed with support groups, schools, and other organizations; loop trail connectivity; linked to trail or recreation facility; safety design meets established CPTED standards.

### REGIONAL PARK

Regional parks provide access to unique recreation features, natural areas, and facilities that attract visitors from the entire community and beyond. Regional parks often accommodate small and large group activities and have infrastructure to support group picnics. As community attractions, Regional Parks can enhance the economic vitality and identity of the entire region. These parks may include significant natural areas and wetlands, trails and pathways, gardens and arboretums, ponds, and other water features. They add unique facilities, such as destination or thematic playgrounds, community centers, aquatic centers, sledding hills, mazes, viewing knolls, skateparks, and other interesting elements.

Regional parks can and should promote tourism and economic development. Regional parks can enhance the economic vitality and identity of the entire region. Regional parks are typically 100 or more acres in size. Currently, Whitestown does not have any parks designated as a Regional Park.

- Size of park: 100+ acres.
- Service radius: Three miles or greater radius.
- Site selection: Prefer location which can preserve natural resources on-site such as wetlands, streams, and other geographic features or sites with significant cultural or historic features. Significantly large parcel of land. Access from public roads capable of handling anticipated traffic.
- Length of stay: All day experience.
- Site features: 10 to 12 amenities to create a signature facility (e.g., community center, waterpark, lake, destination playground, 3+ reservable picnic shelters, outdoor adventure amenities, gardens, trails, and specialty facilities); public restrooms with drinking fountains, concessions, restaurant, ample parking, special event site. Wifi and security cameras are installed.



- Landscape design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience. Enhanced landscaping at park entrances and throughout park. Also, must meet Town of Whitestown's Planning and Zoning Standards.
- Revenue facilities: More than two; park designed to produce revenue to help offset operational costs.
- Land usage: Up to 50% active/50% passive.
- User experiences: Significant mix of leader-directed and self-directed experiences. More than four recreation experiences per age segment with at least four core programs provided.
- Maintenance standards: Dependent on-site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Signage: Directional signage and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience, may include kiosks in easily identified areas of the facility.
- Parking: Sufficient for all amenities. Traffic calming devices encouraged within and next to park.
- Lighting: Security lighting and lighting appropriate for signature amenities.
- Naming: Consistent with the agency's naming policy for naming of parks, such as being named after a prominent or historic person, event, or natural landmark.
- Other: Safety design may meet CPTED safety standards; integrated color scheme throughout the park; linked to major trails systems, public transportation available, concessions, food and retail sales available, dedicated site managers on duty.

### SPECIAL USE PARK

Special use parks are those spaces that do not fall within a typical park classification. A major difference between a special use park and other parks is that they usually serve a single purpose whereas other park classifications are designed to offer multiple recreation opportunities. It is possible for a special use facility to be located inside another park.

Special use parks generally contain one facility or amenity that falls into the following categories:

**Historic/Cultural/Social Sites** — Unique local resources offering historical, educational, and cultural opportunities. Examples include memorials, historic downtown areas, commercial zones, arboretums, display gardens, and amphitheaters. Frequently these are in community or regional parks.

**Golf Courses** — 9- and 18-hole complexes with ancillary facilities such as club houses, driving ranges, program space and learning centers. These facilities are highly maintained and support a wide age level of males and females. Programs are targeted for daily use play, tournaments, leagues, clinics, and special events. Operational costs come from daily play, season pass holders, concessions, driving range fees, earned income opportunities, and sale of pro shop items.

**Indoor Recreation Facilities** — specialized or single purpose facilities. Examples include community centers, senior centers, performing arts facilities, and community theaters. Frequently these are in community or regional parks.

**Outdoor Recreation Facilities** — Examples include aquatic parks, disk golf, skateboard, BMX, and dog parks, which may be in a park.

Currently, Whitestown has the Big 4 Linear Trail trailhead that fall under the Special Use Park designation.

- Size of park: Depends upon facilities and activities included. The diverse character of these parks makes it difficult to apply acreage standards.
- Service radius: Depends upon facilities and activities included. Typically serves special user groups while a few serve the entire population.



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- Site selection: Given the variety of potential uses, no specific standards are defined for site selection. As with all park types, the site itself should be located where it is appropriate for its use.
- Length of stay: Varies by facility.
- Site Features: Varies by facility. Wifi and security cameras are installed.
- Revenue facilities: Due to nature of certain facilities, revenue may be required for construction and/or annual maintenance. This should be determined at a policy level before the facility is planned and constructed.
- Land usage: Varies by facility.
- User experiences: Varies by facility.
- Maintenance standards: Dependent on site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Signage: Directional signage and facility/amenity regulations to enhance user experience.
- Parking: On-street or off-street parking is provided as appropriate for facility.
- Lighting: Security lighting and lighting appropriate for facility.
- Landscape design: Appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience. Also, must meet Town of Whitestown's Planning and Zoning Standards.
- Naming: Consistent with the agency's naming policy for naming of parks, such as being named after a prominent or historic person, event, or natural landmark.
- Other: Integrated color scheme throughout the park; safety design meets established CPTED standards.

### UNDEVELOPED PARKS/OPEN SPACE

Undeveloped parks/open space are undeveloped but may include natural or paved trails. Grasslands under power line corridors are one example and creek areas are another. Undeveloped parks/open space contain natural resources that can be managed for recreation and natural resource conservation values such as a desire to protect wildlife habitat, water quality, and endangered species. Nature preserves/open space also can provide opportunities for nature-based, self-directed, low-impact recreational opportunities such as walking and nature viewing. These lands consist of:

- Individual sites exhibiting natural resources.
- Lands that are unsuitable for development but offer natural resource potential.
- Parcels with steep slopes and natural vegetation, drainage ways and ravines, surface water management areas (man-made ponding areas), and utility easements.
- Protected lands, such as wetlands/lowlands and shorelines along waterways, lakes, and ponds.

The intent of nature preserves/open space is to enhance the livability and character of a community by preserving as many of its natural amenities as possible. Integration of the human element with that of the natural environment that surrounds them enhances the overall experience. Whitestown has two undeveloped park properties that include Giles Park and Jackson Run. Amenities: May include paved or natural trails, wildlife viewing areas, mountain biking, disc golf, nature interpretation, and education facilities.

- Maintenance standards: Demand-based maintenance with available funding. Biological management practices observed.
- Lighting: None.
- Signage: Interpretive kiosks as deemed appropriate.



- Landscape design: Generally, none. Some areas may include landscaping, such as entryways or around buildings. In these situations, sustainable design is appropriate.

### GREENWAYS/TRAILS

Greenways/trails include natural and built corridors that typically support trail-oriented activities, such as walking, jogging, biking, skating, etc. Greenways/trails function as linear parks by linking features together and providing green buffers. Greenways/trails may be located along abandoned railroad lines, transportation or utility rights-of-way, riparian corridors, or elongated natural areas. Greenways/trails and linear parks may be of various lengths and widths, and these corridors typically support facilities such as viewing areas, benches, and trailheads. Greenways/trails between key destinations can help create more tightly-knit communities, provide opportunities for non-motorized transportation, and link to the regional trail system. The Big 4 Linear Trail is an example of greenways/trails. All standards must meet the current Town of Whitestown Thoroughfare Plan 2020.

- Size: Typically, unencumbered land at least 30-feet wide. It may include a trail to support walk, bike, run, and sometimes equestrian type activities. Usually, an urban trail is at minimum 10-feet wide to support pedestrian and bicycle uses. Trails incorporate signage to designate where a user is located and where the trails connect in the community.
- Site selection: Located consistent with approved Town Comprehensive Plan and/or Thoroughfare Plan 2020.
- Amenities: Parking and restrooms at major trailheads. May include pocket parks/public plazas along the trail.
- Maintenance standards: Dependent on site features, landscape design, and park visitation.
- Lighting: Security lighting at trailheads is preferred. Lighting in urbanized areas or entertainment districts as appropriate.
- Signage: Mileage markers at half mile intervals. Interpretive kiosks as deemed appropriate.
- Landscape design: Coordinated planting scheme in urban areas. Limited or no landscape planting in open space areas with a preference for maintaining natural areas as a buffer to neighbors. Also, must meet Town of Whitestown's Planning and Zoning Standards.
- Other: Connectivity to parks or other community attractions and facilities is desirable

## 4.2 LAND ACQUISITION CRITERIA

The following criteria for land acquisition should be considered by the Department to help the Town acquire needed park land for the future. This allows the Department to buy land based on a set criterion versus because an opportunity came along:

1. The proposed land supports an unmet need in the community and is located in an underserved area of the community for that classification of park.
2. The land is adjacent to an existing park or trail and will provide greater access for the community to enjoy the resource.
3. The land supports a recreation facility need in the community such as a recreation center, aquatic center, sports complex which are important to the residents or an unmet need.
4. The land supports a connectivity route for an existing or future trail extension.
5. The land is adjacent to a school where the value can be maximized by the school and the Department for needed programs.
6. The land supports an environmentally endangered area in the Town and needs to be protected.
7. The land is identified as a heritage site or building of the Town and should be preserved.
8. The land is a natural and unique piece of property with high conservation value and should be preserved.
9. The land is donated and it meets one of the top eight criteria listed.

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### 4.3 ACCESSIBILITY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN

#### 4.3.1 TOWN OF WHITESTOWN EXISTING POLICY

To ensure program accessibility for people with disability in the community, the Town of Whitestown has developed a Transition Plan, which is to be considered good practice. Effective communication is essential to address all the complaints or concerns of all individuals.

Whitestown has an ADA Transition Plan that was completed in May 2022. This plan establishes an ADA coordinator, outlines the grievance procedure, specifies Whitestown's self-evaluation/commitment and specifies ADA standards/ guidelines.

A full copy of the ADA Transition Plan can be found here:

<https://whitestown.in.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Whitestown-Final-ADA-Transition-Plan.pdf>

To keep the lines of communication open, and thereby ensure effective communication between all parties, the Town of Whitestown has appointed the following person as the ADA Coordinator:

Becca Thomas  
Whitestown Dept of Public Works  
6210 Veterans Dr  
Whitestown, IN 46075  
317-732-4531  
bthomas@whitestown.in.gov

The Town is committed to making sidewalks, curb ramps, public areas and Town-owned facilities accessible to all pedestrians including those with disabilities. This will be accomplished through the following programs:

- All new construction, reconstruction, road construction or alterations, including federal projects under the control and/or inspection of the Town of Whitestown will be in compliance with ADA.
- Buildings and municipal-owned structures will be brought into compliance as funds are available. Specific complaints will be prioritized.

#### 4.3.2 PARK SYSTEM

As part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Parks Department facilities were inventoried and assessed. However, no evaluation of ADA compliance of facilities were completed as part of this plan. In May 2022, the Town completed a full ADA Transition Plan that did evaluate Parks Department facilities. The following issues were observed during the review of the existing park system and should have further evaluation completed and can be found in the 2022 ADA Transition Plan.

#### ANSON ACRES

For this study parking, general door opening widths and bathrooms were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. The water fountain is located to the backside of the facility and there are seating areas under the roof covered area. See below for items in non-compliance with ADA requirements.

##### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- Aisle widths are below the minimum requirements of 96"

#### GATEWAY PARK

For this study parking and curb ramps were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. See below for items in non-compliance with ADA requirements.

##### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- No designated ADA parking available



### MAIN STREET PARK

For this study parking, general door opening widths and bathrooms were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. Bathrooms located on both sides of facility all identical in size. See below for items in non-compliance with ADA requirements.

#### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- Curb ramp running slope exceeds maximum 8.33%
- Aisle width below minimum requirements of 96"

### PANTHER PARK

For this study parking, general door opening widths and bathrooms were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. 3 bathrooms are available at the park all being identical to one another. See below for items in non-compliance with ADA requirements.

#### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- Towel/Dryer out of compliance in all 3 bathrooms
- Aisle width out of compliance in parking lot

### PARK DEPARTMENT FIELD SHOP

For this study parking, bathrooms and general door opening widths were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. The bathroom door is located on the East side of the building. Listed below, and highlighted in tables below, are the items mentioned that do not meet the ADA requirements.

#### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- Urinal height exceeds maximum ADA requirement of 17"
- Counter/Sink height exceeds maximum ADA requirement of 34"
- No designated ADA parking available

### BIG 4 TRAIL PARKING

For this study parking and curb ramps were measured and compared to the required ADA standards. See below for items in non-compliance with ADA requirements.

#### ADA Non-Compliant Issues

- Aisle width below minimum requirements of 96"

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 4.4 PARKS ASSESSMENT

As part of Master Plan, a park assessment of the entire Whitestown park system was completed. The full Assessment is in the **Appendix**. The following pages outline the methodology and general findings.

#### 4.4.1 INTRODUCTION

Park properties and facilities are the physical backbone of a parks and recreation system. They support and facilitate programming and user experiences while creating access to recreational opportunities. It is paramount that these properties and facilities be well maintained, meet current standards, and accommodate the highest and best use. Periodic assessment of their physical condition is critical to Whitestown's ability to budget and implement priority repairs and improvements in an organized and timely manner.

As part of the *Master Plan*, Whitestown desired an inventory and comparison of existing facilities/programs. As part of that item, a park assessment was conducted for each park. Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department staff and the Consultant Team visited 8 parks and facilities over a one-day period on May 24, 2022. At each location, the Consultant Team asked staff questions, toured the site, inventoried and assessed the overall conditions, and took photos.



It should be noted that the Whitestown Park operations staff consists of two (2) full-time members that oversee the park properties, which is under best-practices for a department that oversees 111 acres of parkland, of which 51.2 acres are developed and 4.38 miles of trail. While the existing staff do an outstanding job in upkeep, the park system is short 1.5 fulltime staff equivalents to keep the current park system at the maintenance level the Town and its residents expect. The lack of staff is exacerbated by the heavy use of each park in the system. Also, as the system expands and adds more developed parkland and amenities, additional staff will be required.

#### 4.4.2 METHODOLOGY

The site assessment form used to document each site visit included the following items/categories:

- Design and usage
- First impressions
- Access and visibility
- Site structures/amenities
- Site furnishings
- General landscape/hardscape
- Overall condition
- Any identified corrective actions needed
- Any planned capital improvements
- Strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities



Park conditions were rated using a differential scale of excellent, good, fair, or poor. The table below provides the condition descriptions utilized in this analysis.

Scale of Conditions	
Assessment Finding	General Description
Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park/amenities are in excellent condition with <b>little or no maintenance problems</b> noted.</li> <li>Park/amenities <b>do not have any major design issues</b> that contribute to diminished use or maintenance.</li> </ul>
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park/amenities are in good condition and feature <b>only minor maintenance problems</b>.</li> <li>Generally, most maintenance issues with these park/amenities appear to be the result of age and/or heavy use but <b>do not significantly affect usability</b>.</li> <li>Park/amenities may only have <b>minor design issues</b> that contribute to diminished use or maintenance (i.e., drainage, structural, utilities, etc.).</li> </ul>
Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park/amenities are in fair condition and indicate <b>ongoing maintenance problems</b>.</li> <li>Generally, most maintenance issues with these park/amenities appear to be the result of age and heavy use <b>resulting in some loss of usability</b>.</li> <li>Some maintenance issues may be <b>compounded over time</b> due to <b>deferred maintenance</b> because of budget and/or resource limitations.</li> </ul>
Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park/amenities are in poor condition and <b>clearly show ongoing maintenance problems</b> that ultimately may result in <b>suspended use</b> for repair/replacement.</li> <li>Maintenance issues with these park/amenities are the result of age and heavy use, and generally are compounded over time due to <b>chronic deferred maintenance</b> because of budget and/or resource limitations resulting in <b>significant loss of usability</b>.</li> <li>Park/amenities may feature <b>major design or safety issues</b> that contribute to diminished use or maintenance (i.e., drainage, structural, utilities, etc.).</li> </ul>





## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The following sites were assessed:

- Anson Acres Park
- Big Four Trail
- Gateway Park
- Giles Undeveloped Property
- Jackson Run Undeveloped Property
- Main Street Park
- Whitestown Park Maintenance Facility
- Panther Park

### 4.4.3 SYSTEM SUMMARY

#### STRENGTHS

- The park system has a great diversity in park types, as well as diverse park experiences that vary from the activity at Main Street Park to the special events at Anson Acres Park.
- The system facilitates access to the natural environment well.
- Small parks and large parks within the system; offers many different user experiences.
- Big Four Trail is a great asset and when completion of the extension to Zionsville, it will be even more heavily used.
- Many amenities in the system have been recently updated (e.g., Main Street and Panther Parks) and Gateway Park is adding a new playground and restroom.

#### CHALLENGES

- Community use of parks, especially Main Street and Panther Park, is high and increases the amount of maintenance.
- There are amenities within the system that are aging rapidly and repeatedly in need of repair due to a growing population and a limited number and acreage of parks.
- Maintenance and landscaping are limited in some parks, which is due to staff shortage, as the system is managed by two (2) fulltime staff members.

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Continue to develop access to nature. Currently, the Department does not offer nature education programs.
- Plant additional trees in existing parks to increase shade, as this is a priority of residents.
- Increase natural programs that are supported by the appropriate parks.
- Increase the trail system and connect the parks to the trail system.
- Create a park infrastructure/site furnishings replacement plan/cycle, as many new amenities have been added to the system over the last three (3) years.
- Develop maintenance plans to correct landscaping deficiencies.
- Expand parks (where applicable).
- Master plan undeveloped properties, specifically Jackson Run and the Giles property.
- Spread out unique amenities to less used parks (e.g., splash pads).
- Increase branding on signs and beautify park entrances.
- Add amenities that support community wants and needs.
- Utilize the improvements at existing parks (e.g., Gateway Park) as a strategy to alleviate pressure on other parks in the short term until new larger parks can be developed.



## 4.5 LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

### 4.5.1 OVERVIEW

Level of Service (LOS) standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population that support investment decisions related to parks, facilities, and amenities. LOS standards are updated over time as industry trends and community demographics change.

The park system was evaluated using a combination of resources. These resources included market trends, demographic data, community and stakeholder input, the statistically valid community survey, and general observations. The existing level of service was based on analysis of Whitestown park system and other service providers in the Town (e.g., Lions Club). This information allowed standards to be customized to Whitestown.

It is important to note that these LOS standards should be viewed as a guide. The standards are to be coupled with conventional wisdom and judgment related to the situation and needs of the community. By applying these standards to the population of Whitestown, gaps or surpluses in park and facility types are revealed.

### 4.5.2 PER CAPITA “GAPS”

According to the LOS, there are multiple needs to be met to properly serve the Whitestown community today and in the future. The existing level of service meets and exceeds best practices and recommended service levels for many items; however, there are several areas that do not meet recommended standards. Although Whitestown meets the standards for total park acres, there is a deficit for neighborhood and community park types, as well total miles of trails.

For outdoor amenities, Whitestown shows a shortage in ball fields, tennis courts, pickleball courts, playgrounds, dog parks, skate parks, and an outdoor pool. In terms of indoor space, Whitestown has a shortage of approximately 18,000 square feet of indoor recreation space and 6,000 of indoor aquatic space.

The standards that follow are based upon population figures for 2021 and 2026, the latest estimates available at the time of analysis.

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The Level of Service Standard helps to determine community unmet needs based on the Community Survey, NRPA National Standards, best practices in the Midwest area in communities of similar size and nature.

Item	Town of Whitestown	Whitestown Lions Club	Total Inventory	Service Level Based on Current Population			Recommended Service Levels for Study Area			Assessment	Additional Need		Projects	Total	Assessment	Additional Need		
PARKLAND																		
Neighborhood Parks	22.0		22.0	1.98	acres per	1,000	3.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	11	Acres	-	-	Need Exists	14	Acres	
Community Parks	28.0	11.0	39.0	3.52	acres per	1,000	5.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	16	Acres	-	-	Need Exists	21	Acres	
Special Use Parks/Facilities	1.2		1.2	0.11	acres per	1,000	0.10	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acres	-	-	Need Exists	0	Acres	
Total Developed Park Acres	51.2	11.0	62.2	5.61	acres per	1,000	8.10	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	28	Acres	-	-	Need Exists	36	Acres	
Undeveloped Parks	60.0		60.0	5.41	acres per	1,000	0.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acres	-	-	Meets Standard	-	Acres	
Total Park Acres	111.2	11.0	122.2	11.02	acres per	1,000	8.10	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acres	-	-	Meets Standard	-	Acres	
TRAILS																		
Trails	4.38	-	4.38	0.39	miles per	1,000	0.65	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	2.83	Miles	Big 4 Trail Extension (Nov. 2023)		1.55	Need Exists	1.93	Miles
OUTDOOR FACILITIES																		
Shelters/Pavilions	6	1	7	1	site per	1,585	1	site per	4,000	Meets Standard	-	Sites	-	-	Meets Standard	-	Sites	
Rectangular Fields (Football, Soccer, Multipurpose)	2	-	2	1	field per	5,547	1	field per	2,500	Need Exists	2	Fields	-	-	Need Exists	3	Fields	
Ball Diamonds (Baseball and Softball)	-	3	3	1	field per	3,698	1	field per	2,500	Need Exists	1	Fields	-	-	Need Exists	2	Fields	
Basketball Courts	4	1	5	1	court per	2,219	1	court per	2,500	Meets Standard	-	Courts	-	-	Meets Standard	-	Courts	
Tennis Courts	2	-	2	1	court per	5,547	1	court per	4,000	Need Exists	1	Courts	-	-	Need Exists	1	Courts	
Pickleball Courts	1	-	1	1	court per	11,093	1	court per	6,000	Need Exists	1	Courts	-	-	Need Exists	1	Courts	
Sand Volleyball Courts	-	1	1	1	court per	11,093	1	court per	12,000	Meets Standard	-	Courts	-	-	Need Exists	0	Courts	
Playgrounds	3	1	4	1	site per	2,773	1	site per	2,000	Need Exists	2	Sites	-	-	Need Exists	2	Sites	
Dog Parks	-	-	-	1	site per	-	1	site per	20,000	Need Exists	1	Sites	-	-	Need Exists	1	Sites	
Skate Park	-	-	-	1	site per	-	1	site per	40,000	Need Exists	0	Sites	-	-	Need Exists	0	Sites	
Splashpad	1	-	1	1	site per	11,093	1	site per	20,000	Meets Standard	-	Sites	-	-	Meets Standard	-	Sites	
Outdoor Pool			-	1	site per	-	1	site per	20,000	Need Exists	1	Sites	-	-	Need Exists	1	Sites	
INDOOR FACILITIES																		
Indoor Recreation/Gymnasium (Sq. Ft.)	-	-	-	-	SF per	person	1.50	SF per	person	Need Exists	16,640	Sq. Ft.	-	-	Need Exists	18,144	Sq. Ft.	
Indoor Aquatics (Sq. Ft.)	-	-	-	-	SF per	person	0.50	SF per	person	Need Exists	5,547	Sq. Ft.	-	-	Need Exists	6,048	Sq. Ft.	

2021 Estimated Population	11,093
2026 Estimated Population	12,096

Notes:

- Population is based on Whitestown Town limits
- The Whitestown Lions Club owns Lions Club Park
- The Town of Whitestown also provides and maintains 15 miles of sidewalks.



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## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 4.6 GIS MAPPING

Service area maps and standards assist Whitestown in assessing where services are offered, how equitable the service distribution and delivery is across the Whitestone service area, and how effective the service is as it compares to the demographic densities. In addition, looking at guidelines with reference to population enables Whitestown to assess gaps in services, where facilities are needed, or where an area is over saturated. This allows the Whitestown Town management to make appropriate capital improvement decisions based upon need for a system as a whole and the ramifications those decisions may have on a specific area.

It should be noted that the area in the Northwest boundaries of the Town near Anson Acres Park and west and east of I-65 has an abundance of industrial/warehouses where parkland is not attainable. The Town's Planning Department's focus has been on acquiring developable parkland near the many new residential developments.

The maps contain several circles, which represent the recommended per capita LOS found on the previous page. The circles' size varies dependent upon the quantity of a given amenity (or acre type) located at one site and the surrounding population density. The bigger the circle, the more people a given amenity or park acre serves and vice versa. Additionally, some circles are shaded a different color which represents the "owner" of that amenity or acre type. There is a legend in the bottom left-hand corner of each map depicting the various owners included in the equity mapping process. The areas of overlapping circles represent adequate service, or duplicated service, and the areas with no shading represents the areas not served by a given amenity or park acre type.

#### 4.6.1 MAPS

Service area maps were created for:

- All Parks Location
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Special Use Parks
- Undeveloped Open Space
- Ball diamonds
- Basketball courts
- Pickleball courts
- Playgrounds
- Recreational fields
- Sand volleyball courts
- Shelters
- Splashpads
- Tennis courts
- Trails

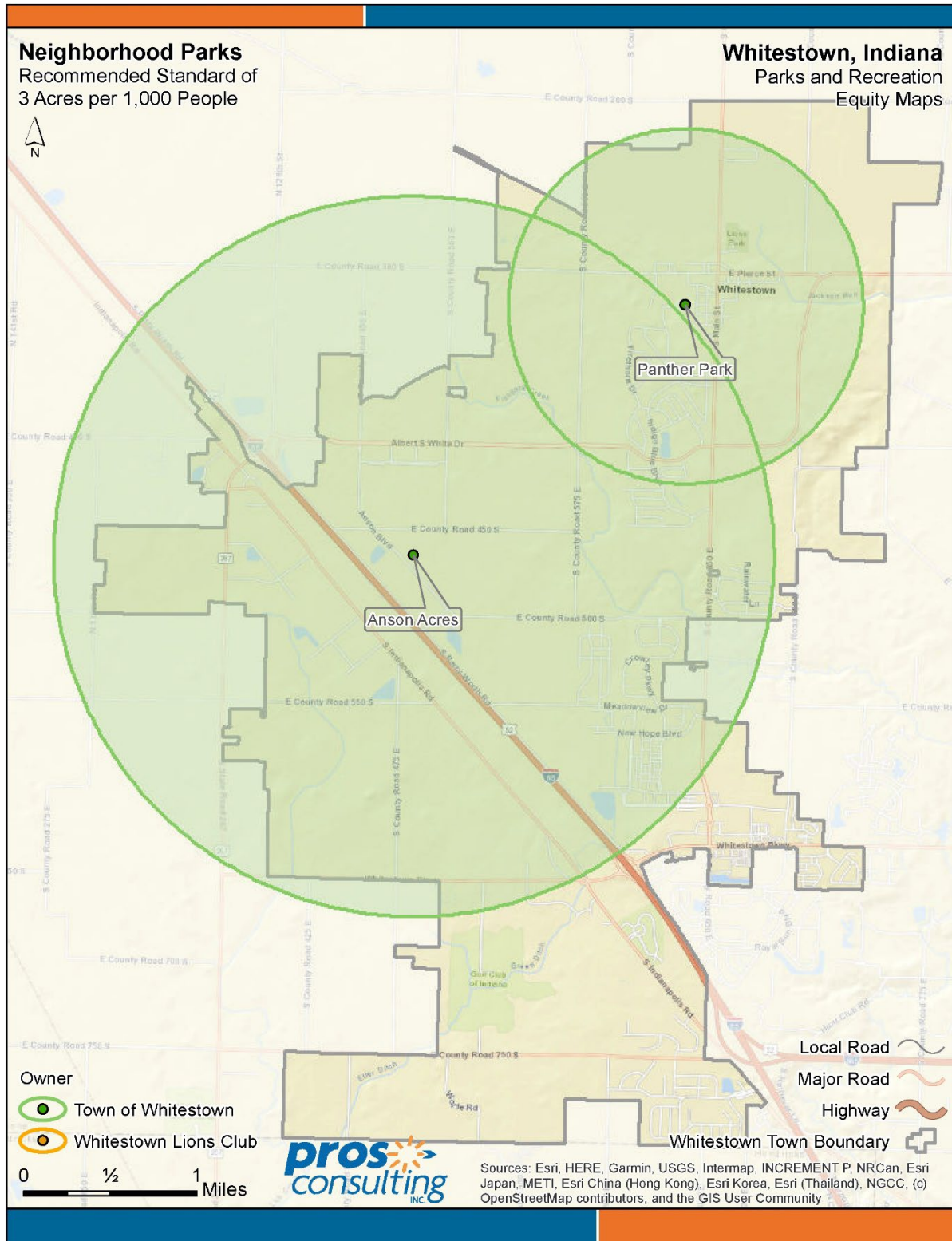






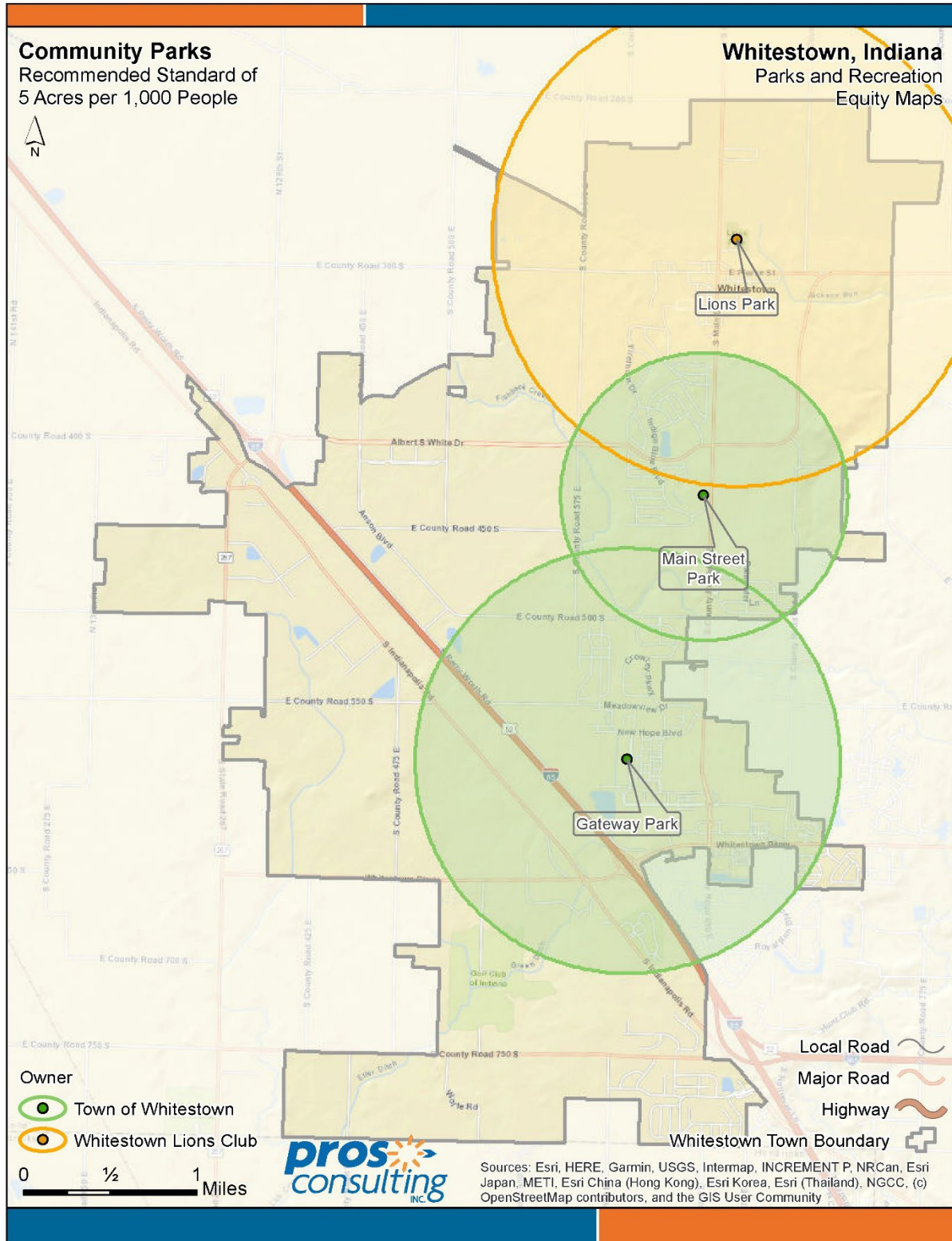


## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS



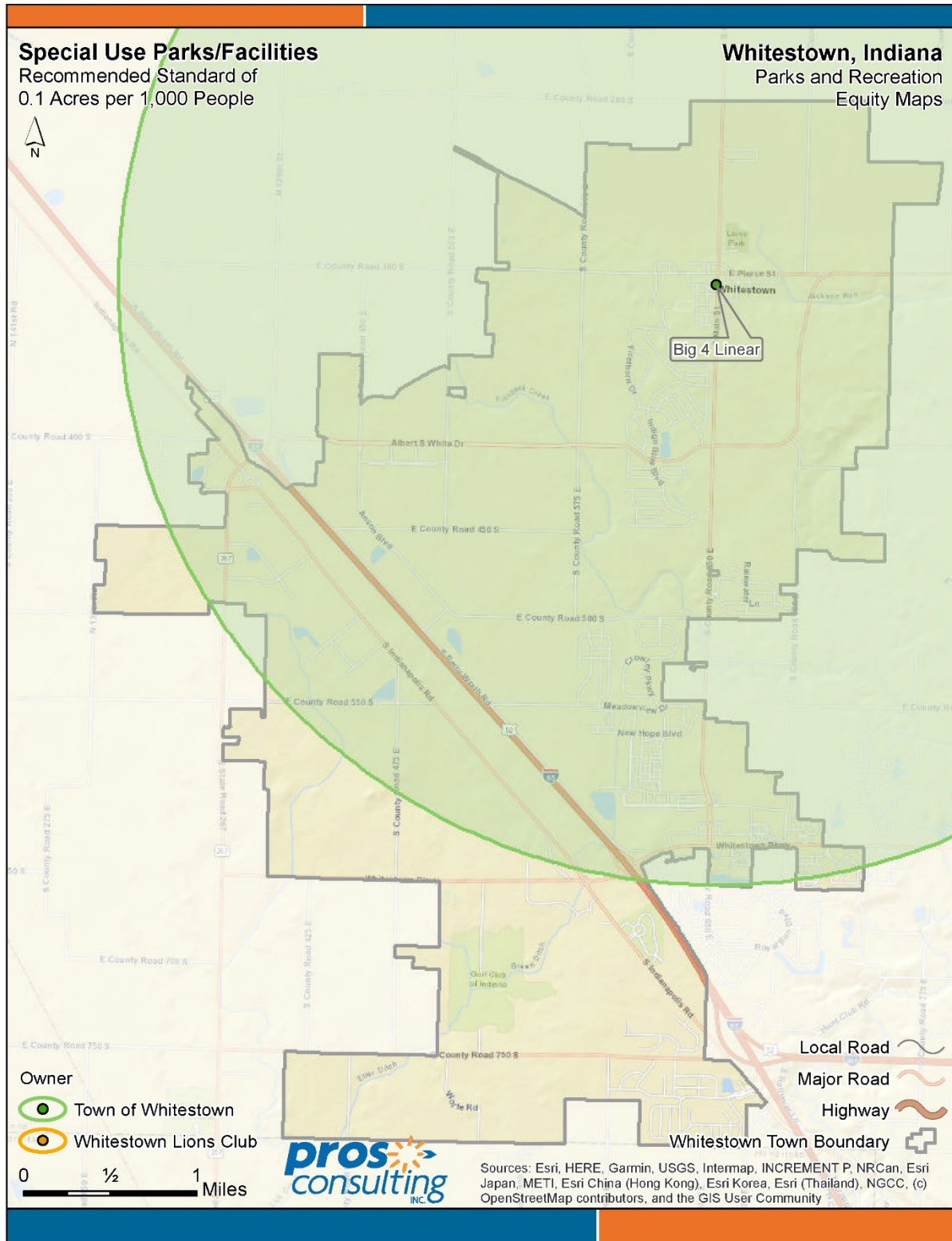
## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### COMMUNITY PARKS





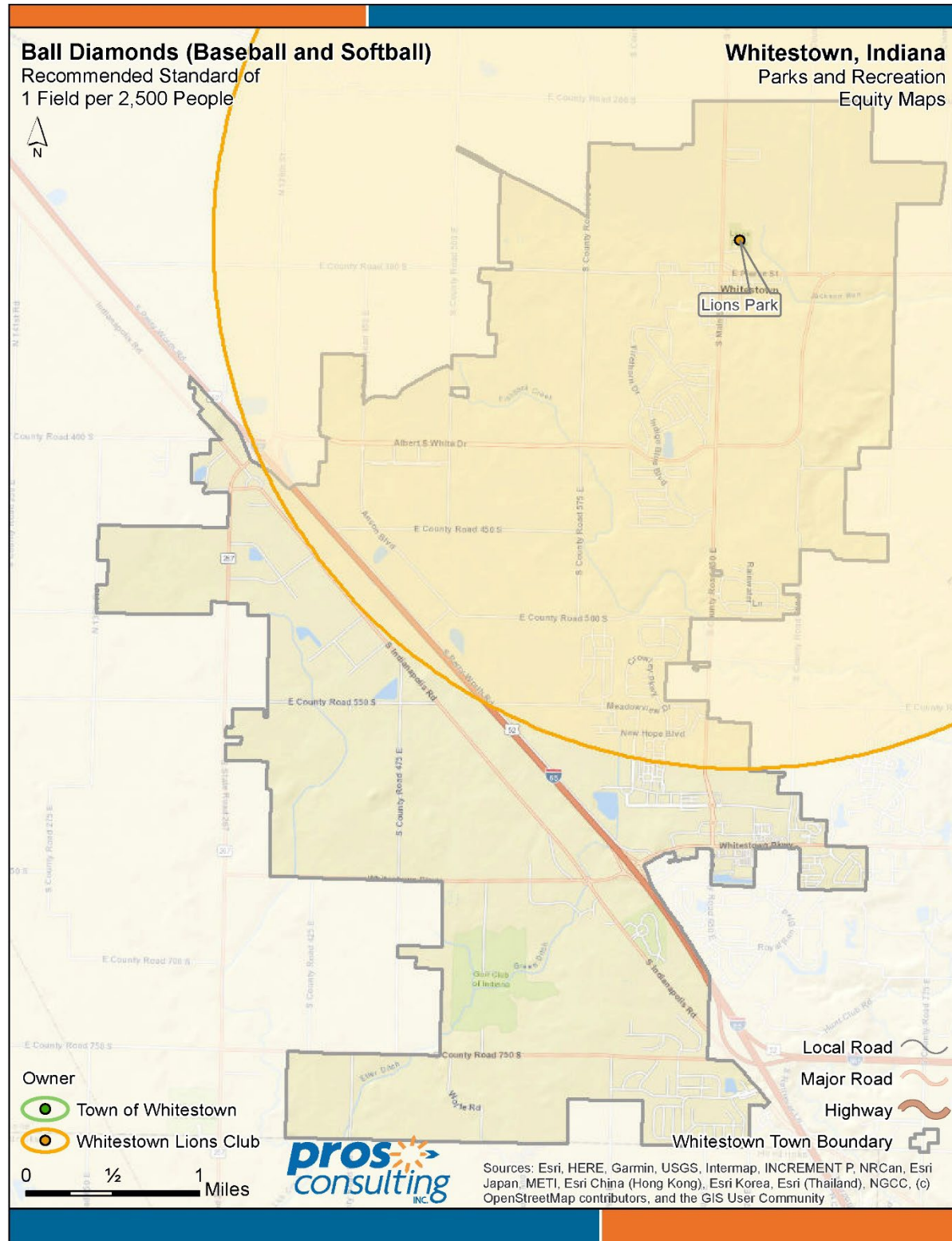
## SPECIAL USE PARKS







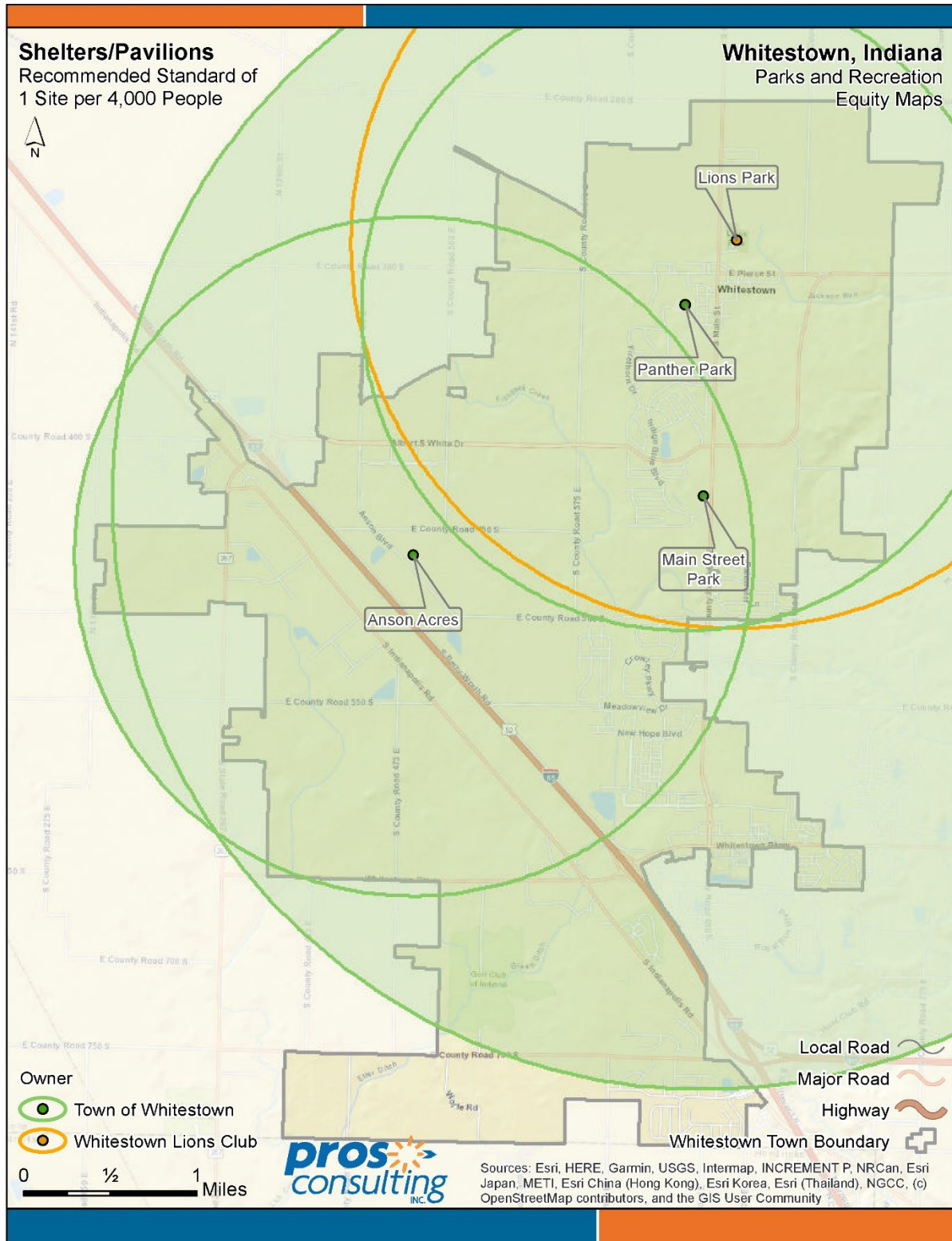
## BALL DIAMONDS







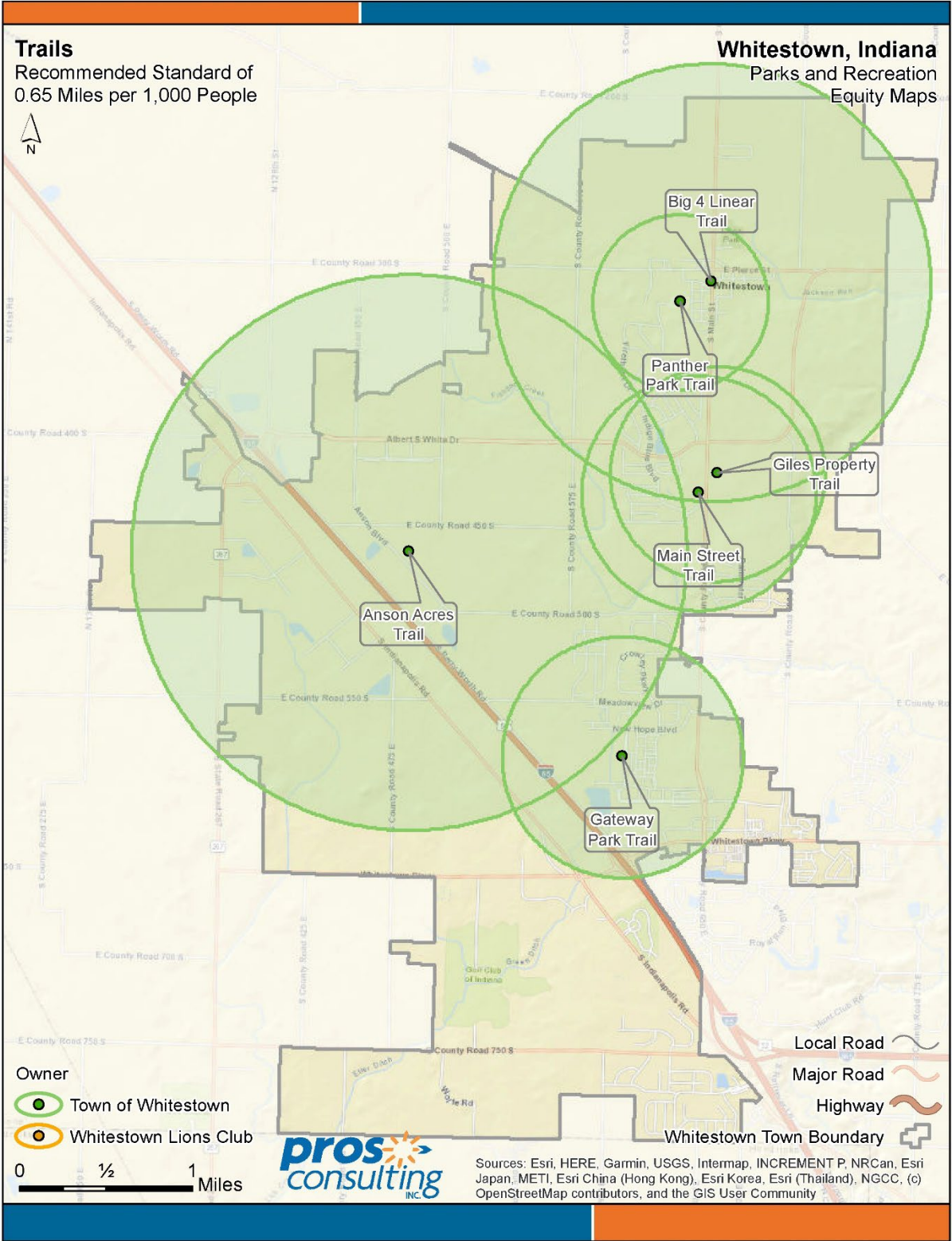
## SHELTERS/PAVILIONS



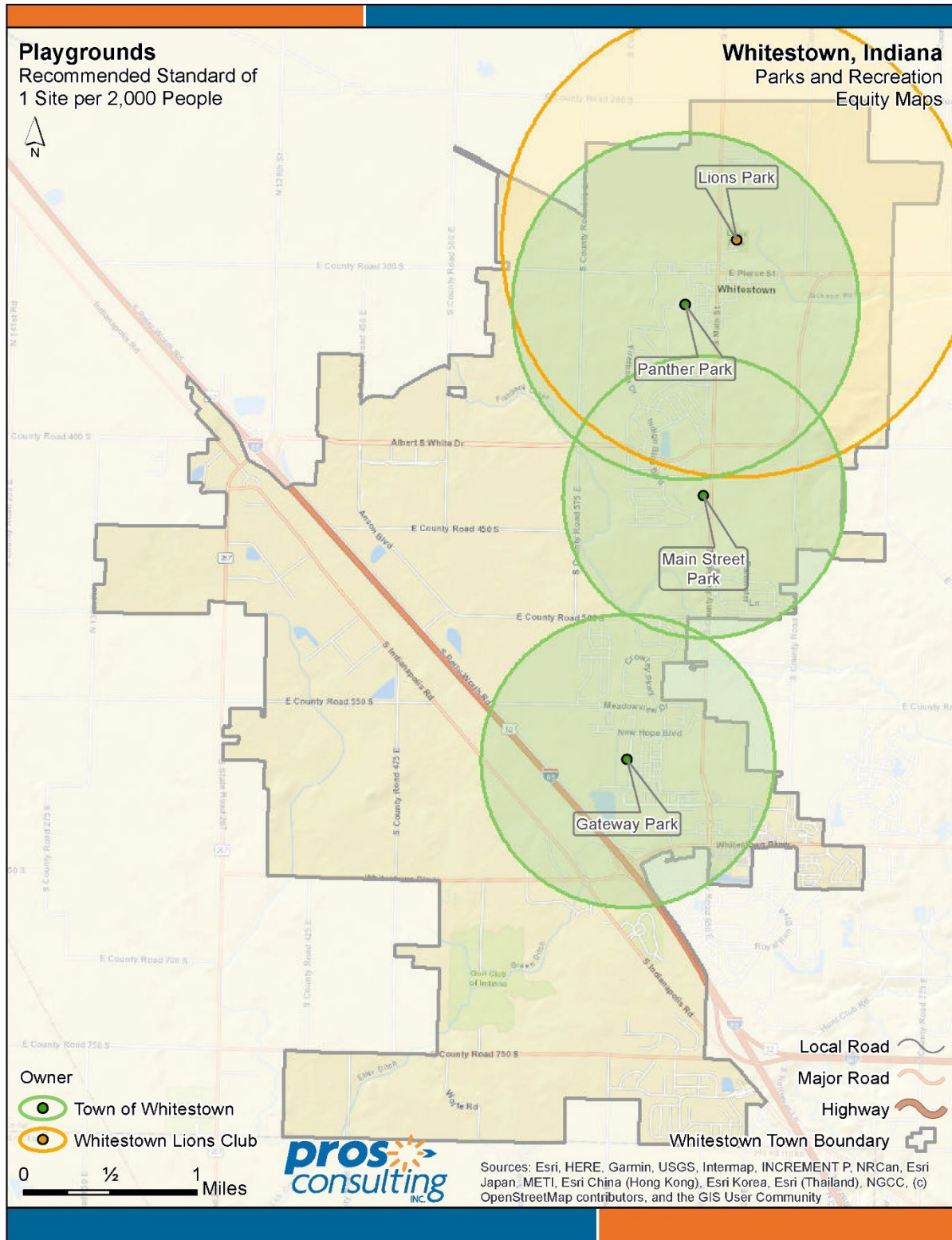


PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

TRAILS



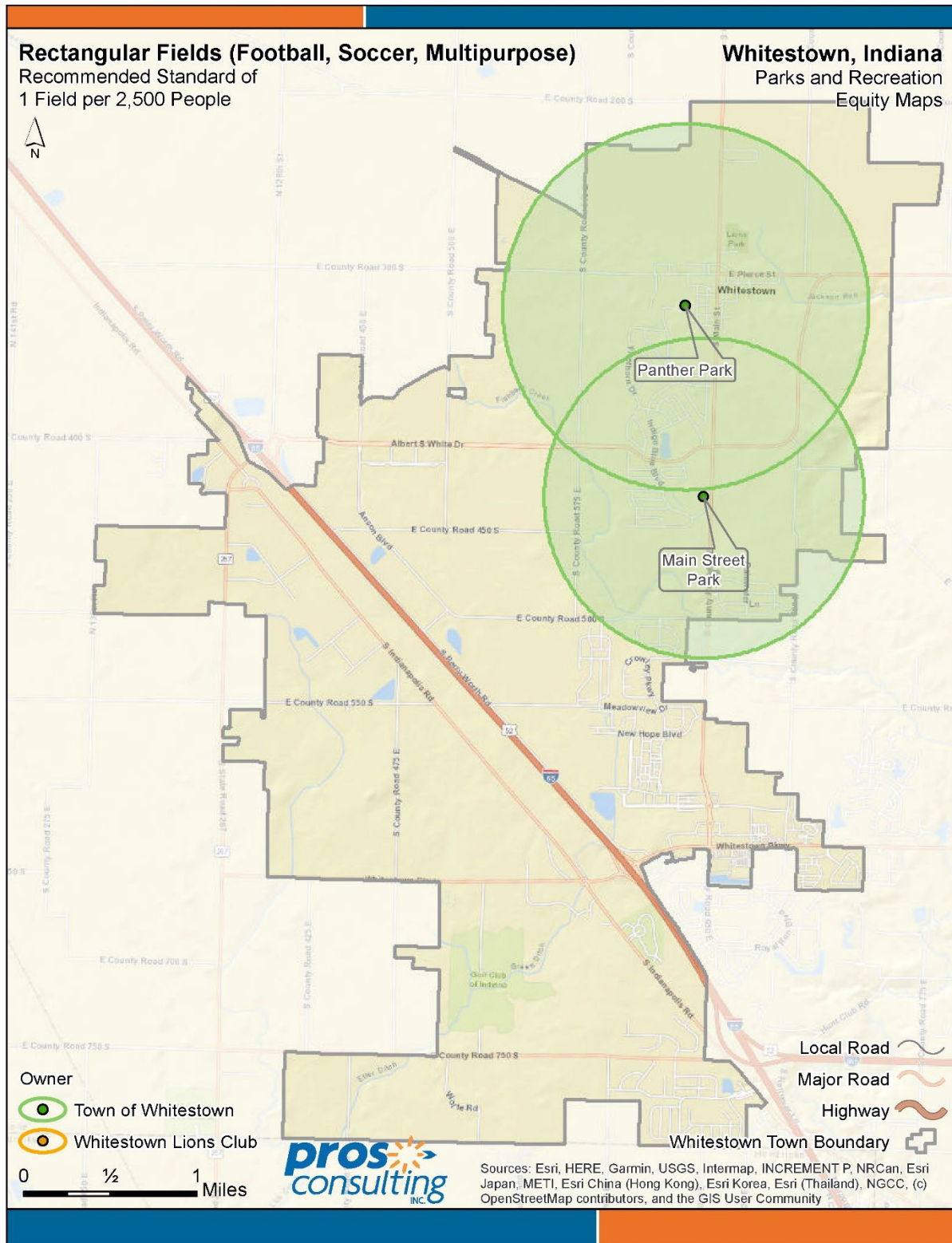
## PLAYGROUNDS



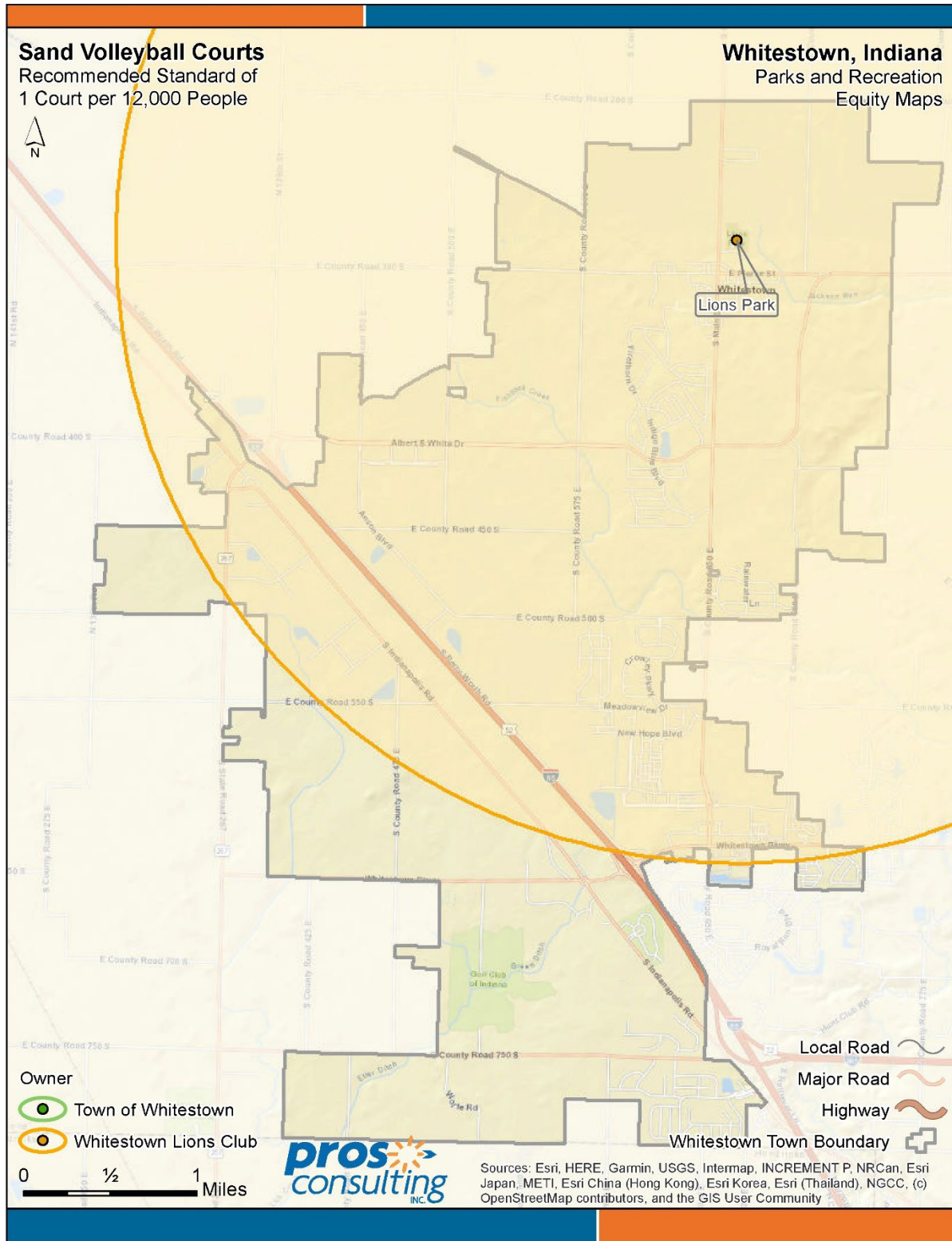


## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### RECTANGULAR MULTI-PURPOSE FIELD



## SAND VOLLEYBALL COURTS



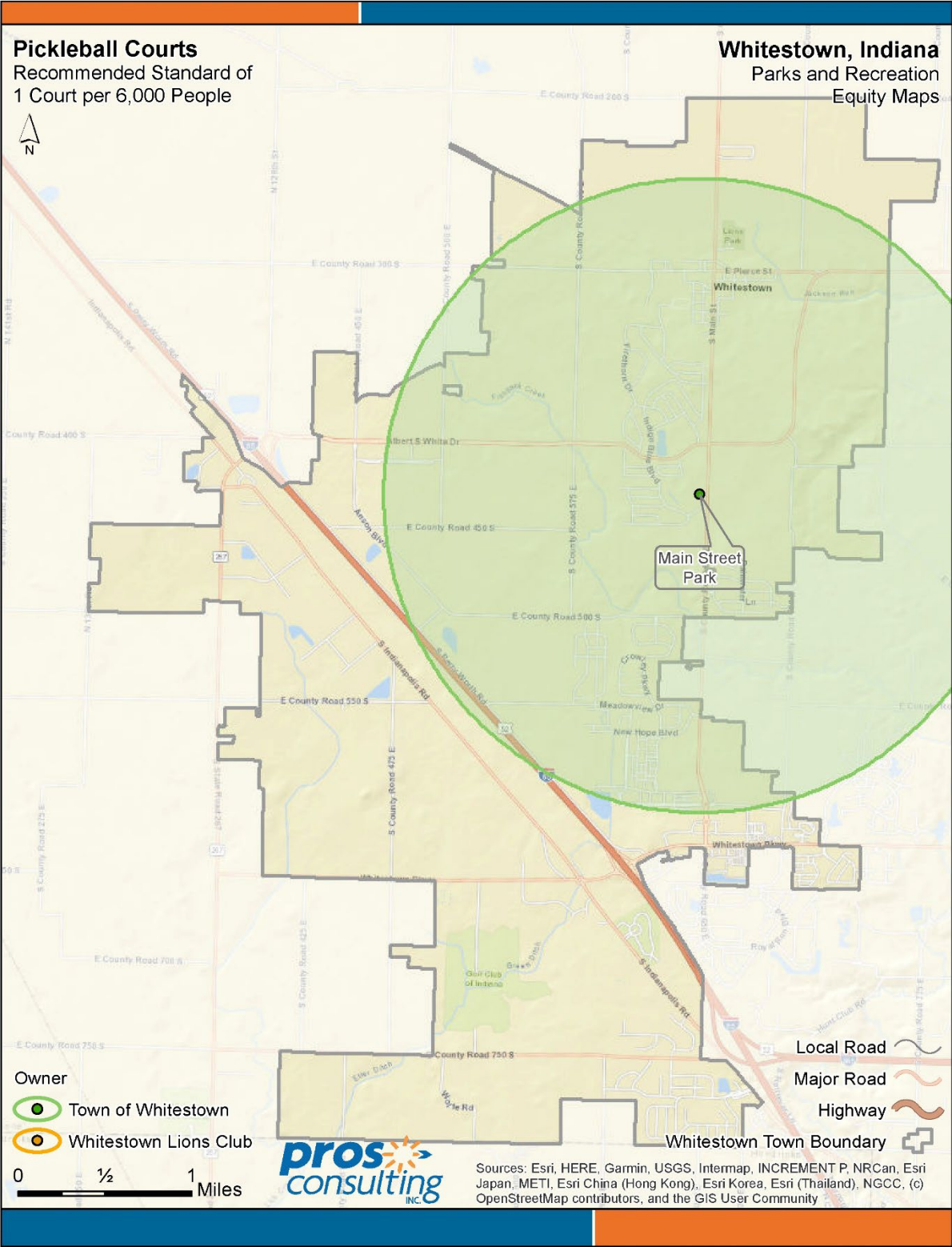






PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

PICKLEBALL COURTS





## 4.7 EVENT ASSESSMENT

### 4.7.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the Town of Whitestown's ("Town") Parks and Recreation Master Plan ("Plan"), PROS Consulting performed an assessment of the events offered by the Town's Parks and Recreation Department ("Department"). The assessment offers an in-depth perspective of event offerings to help identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities. The assessment also assists in identifying core events, event gaps within the community, key system-wide issues, areas of improvement, future events, and possible expansion of programs and services to benefit residents and visitors.

The consulting team based these event findings and comments from a review of information provided by the Department including Event descriptions, financial data, website content, and discussions with staff.

### 4.7.2 FRAMEWORK

The 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan identifies the Department mission statement as "connecting parks and people, by providing environmentally friendly outdoor recreation opportunities for citizens of Whitestown and surrounding communities. We strive to build a greener, healthier community for the children of tomorrow." To help achieve this mission the Department manages five parks with over 111 acres, six shelters/pavilions, four basketball courts, three playgrounds, two tennis courts, a pickleball court, a splashpad, and over four miles of trails.



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 4.7.3 EVENT ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Below are some overall observations from the Event assessment sheet analysis:

- The **Event descriptions** are succinct and ensure that the key benefits and goals of each Core Event Area are effectively communicated to the public.
- There is a community need for both enhancements to the existing event offerings, and **expanded recreational programming**, most noticeably in fitness/wellness and youth-based activities.
- **Age segment distribution** is fairly aligned with the community's current population with opportunities for more all-age events, as well as specific events geared towards teens. As the town continues to grow, age segmentation needs to be monitored annually to ensure Event distribution continues to match Whitestown's demographics.
- **Event lifecycles:** 60% of all Events currently fall within the "beginning" stages (introduction, take-off, and growth), with only 20% of programs being listed as "mature" (recommended distribution of 40%). This indicates a Department growing with the Town, and it can be expected that there will be a heavier mix of beginning stage programs/events to keep up with the rapid rise in population. A complete description of Lifecycle Stages can be found in **Section 4.7.6**.
- The Town's **volunteer network** is small and needs to be expanded substantially.
- From a **marketing and promotions** standpoint, the staff utilizes a variety of marketing methods including their website, flyers/brochures, direct mail, marquees signs, in-facility signage, QR codes, and various social media channels as a part of the marketing mix. The Department would benefit from identifying Return on Investment (ROI) for all marketing initiatives.
- **Social media** usage could be enhanced with a goal of posting multiple times a day across different platforms. A full assessment of current social media usage, trends, and recommendations can be found in **Section 4.7.9**.
- Currently, **customer feedback** methods are limited. It is highly recommended that the Department begins incorporating user feedback, on a more consistent basis, as a key performance measure that can be tracked over time. Specifically, pre-Event evaluation (what are users expecting from/hoping to receive from Event), post customer surveys, and focus groups are strong feedback tools to be used moving forward.





#### 4.7.4 CORE EVENTS

To help achieve the Department's goal, it is important to identify Core Event Areas based on current and future needs to create a sense of focus around specific Event areas of greatest importance to the community. Public recreation is challenged by the premise of being all things to all people. The philosophy of the Core events is to assist staff, policy makers, and the public to focus on what is most important to the community. Event areas are considered as Core if they meet a majority of the following criteria:

- The Event area has been provided for a long period of time (over 4-5 years) and/or is expected by the community.
- The Event area consumes a relatively large portion (5% or more) of the agency's overall budget.
- The Event area is offered 3-4 seasons per year.
- The Event area has wide demographic appeal.
- There is a tiered level of skill development available within the Event area's offerings.
- There is full-time staff responsible for the Event area.
- There are facilities designed specifically to support the Event area.
- The agency controls a significant percentage (20% or more) of the local market.

#### EXISTING CORE EVENT AREAS












In discussions with the Department staff, the consulting team identified 5 Core Event Areas currently being offered.



These existing Core events Areas provide a generally well-rounded and diverse array of opportunities for the community. Department staff should evaluate Core events Areas and the individual events within them on an annual basis, to ensure offerings are relevant to evolving demographics and trends in the local community.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### CORE EVENT AREA DESCRIPTIONS, GOALS, & EXAMPLE EVENTS

<div>Community Events</div>	  	<p><b>Description:</b> Social events available to the entire community for all ages.</p> <p><b>Goals:</b> Provide fun entertainment at a gathering place that brings together families, neighbors, businesses, and organizations. Focused on inclusive low to no cost activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independence Day Celebration</li> <li>• Hops and Hounds</li> <li>• Summer Concert Series</li> </ul>
<div>Health &amp; Wellness Events</div>	 	<p><b>Description:</b> Fitness and wellness activities and education to promote healthy lifestyles for all ages.</p> <p><b>Goals:</b> Provide activities for all ages to have measurable positive impact on physical and mental health for the community. Utilize and increase awareness of local organizations and businesses that promote a healthy lifestyle.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Battle of the Badges 5k</li> <li>• Farmers Market</li> </ul>
<div>Holidays/ Seasonal Events</div>	  	<p><b>Description:</b> Activities and education to promote celebration during the holiday seasons.</p> <p><b>Goals:</b> Provide fun activities during the holiday seasons that are low or no cost. Celebrate the holiday seasons with the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Easter Egg Hunt</li> <li>• Halloween Trick or treat Trail</li> <li>• Santas Workshop</li> </ul>
<div>Kid-Focused Events</div>	  	<p><b>Description:</b> Fun and creative events to promote family time and focus on kid interests.</p> <p><b>Goals:</b> Provide events focused on the extensive young children and family population. Offer entertainment that adults will also enjoy with their families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Movies in the Park</li> <li>• Superheroes/Princesses in the Park</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: These events are ever changing with trends.</i></p>



Special Events



**Description:** Niche events to promote the gathering of those individuals with the purpose of celebrating what they enjoy together.

**Goals:** Provide a unique experience to those who live in the community and attract external participation from new individuals outside of the county. Achieve full cost recovery and collect a profit to apply to other events hosted that are provided for free for the community while propelling business exposure.

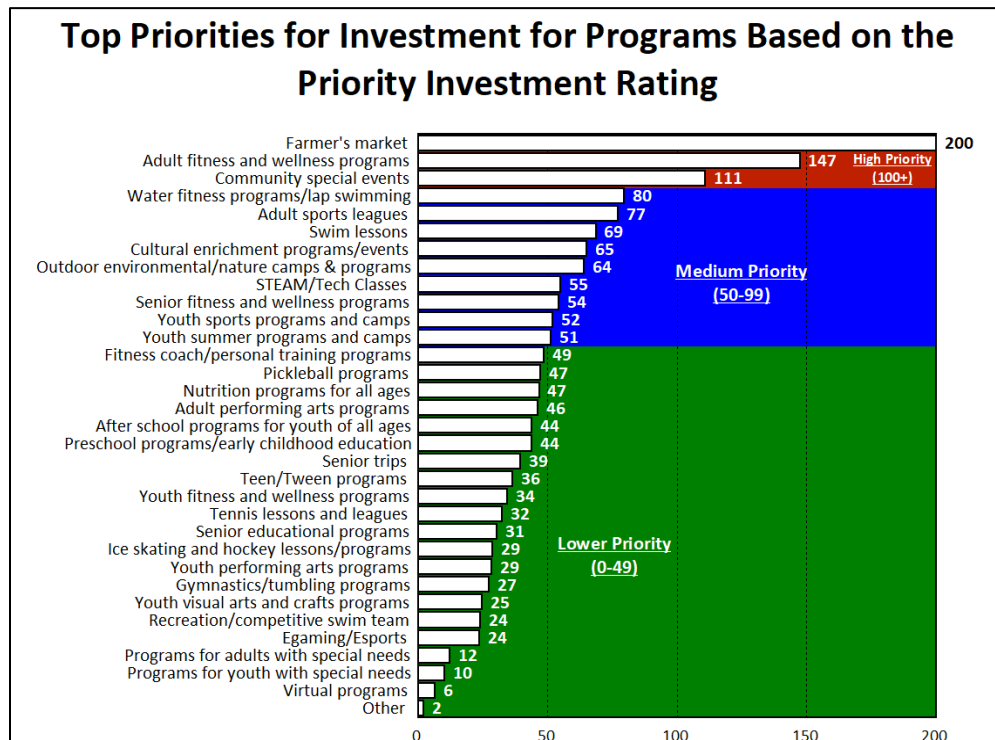
- Viking Festival
- Whitestown Brewfest

### POTENTIAL NEW EVENT/PROGRAM AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department should explore both better utilizing existing Core Event Areas and expanding its recreational offerings by adding additional Core Program Areas. This will assist the Department in fulfilling existing unmet needs and community priorities. Based on the results from the Statistically Valid Community Survey, there is a high priority for investment for Farmer's markets, Adult fitness and wellness programs and Community special events according to the Priority Investment Ratings (PIR).

PIR was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on Parks and Recreation investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs:

- (1) the importance that households place on each facility/amenity/Event and
- (2) how many households have unmet needs for the facility/amenity/Event.

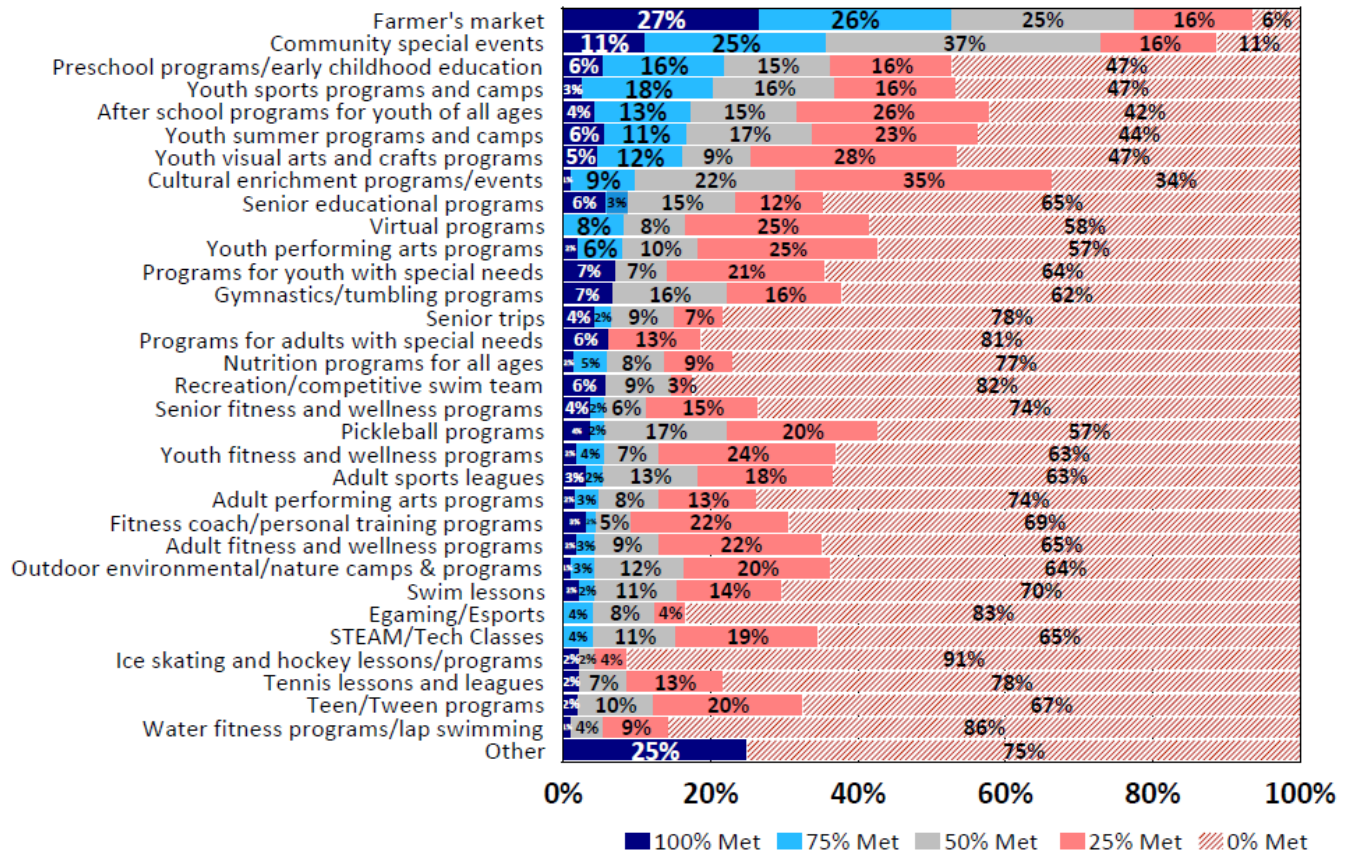


## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

The consultant team also notes that the survey results showed an abnormally large number of programs in which residents feel their needs are not currently.

### How Well Programs in Whitestown Meet the Needs of Households

by percentage of households that have a need for programs



Based on this data, there is both a need for enhancements to the existing event offerings, and expanded recreational programming, most noticeably in fitness/wellness and youth-based activities.

#### 4.7.5 AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS

An Age Segment Analysis was completed by Core Event Area, to review the age segments served by different Event areas and identify any gaps in segments served. It is recommended that staff perform an Age Segment Analysis by individual Events to further understand and tailor future offerings to community needs.

The table below depicts each Core Event Area and the most prominent age segments they serve. Recognizing that many Core Event Areas serve multiple age segments, Primary (noted with a 'P') and Secondary (noted with an 'S') markets are identified.

The Department offers has strong coverage of most age segments throughout their Core Event Areas, especially regarding Adults and Seniors, with an opportunity for additional Teen based and All Ages offerings.

AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS						
Core Program Area	Preschool (5 and Under)	Elementary (6-12)	Teens (13-17)	Adult (18+)	Senior (55+)	All Ages Programs
Community Events				P	P	S
Health & Wellness Events		S	S	P	P	
Holiday/Seasonal Events	P	P		S	S	
Kid-Focused Events	P	P		S	S	
Special Events	S	S	S	P	P	

Staff should continue to monitor demographic shifts and Event offerings to ensure that the needs of each age group are being met. It is best practice to establish a plan including what age segment to target, establish the message, which marketing method(s) to use, create the social media campaign, and determine what to measure for success before allocating resources towards a particular effort.





## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 4.7.6 EVENT LIFECYCLE

The Event Lifecycle Analysis involved reviewing each Event offered by the Department to determine the stage of growth or decline for each. This provides a way of informing strategic decisions about the overall mix of Events managed by the agency to ensure that an appropriate number of Events are “fresh” and that relatively few Events, if any, need to be discontinued. This analysis is not based on strict quantitative data, but rather on staff members’ knowledge of their Event areas. The following table shows the percentage distribution of the various lifecycle categories of the Department’s Events. These percentages were obtained by comparing the number of Events in each individual stage with the total number of Events listed by staff members.

Lifecycle Stage	Description	Actual Program Distribution		Recommended Distribution
<b>Introduction</b>	New program; modest participation	13%	<b>60%</b>	50-60% total
<b>Take-Off</b>	Rapid participation growth	13%		
<b>Growth</b>	Moderate, but consistent population growth	33%	<b>20%</b>	40% total
<b>Mature</b>	Slow participation growth	20%		
<b>Saturation</b>	Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition	20%	<b>20%</b>	0-10% total
<b>Decline</b>	Decline participation	0%		

The Lifecycle Analysis shows three out of five Events falling within the beginning stages (Introduction, Take-Off, & Growth). Eventually, these Events will begin to move into the Mature stage, so an emphasis on continued rejuvenation of existing Events and adding new Events is key for sustained success, especially in such a rapidly growing community.

According to staff 20% of all Event offerings currently fall into the Mature Stage. With 33% of Events being in the Growth Stage we can expect many of those programs to grow into the Mature stage, which is the backbone stage of a program portfolio. While it is generally recommended to have roughly 40% of Events within this category in order to achieve a stable foundation, it is expected that that number could remain lower for Whitestown due to the many new programs/events that will need to be added to keep up with the demands of a growing population, thus affecting lifecycle distribution.

Additionally, 20% of Events are currently identified as Saturated or Declining (0-10% Recommended Distribution). It is a natural progression for programs and/or events to eventually evolve into saturation and decline stages. However, if they reach these stages rapidly, it could be an indication that the quality of the program and/or event does not meet expectations, or there is not as much of a demand for the offering. As Events enter the Decline stage, they must be closely reviewed and evaluated for repositioning or elimination. When this occurs, the Department should modify these Events to begin a new lifecycle within the Introductory stage or replace the existing Events with new Events based upon community needs and trends.

Staff should complete an Event Lifecycle Analysis annually and ensure that the percentage distribution closely aligns with desired performance. The Department could also include annual performance measures for each Core Event Area to track participation growth, customer retention, and percentage of new Events as an incentive for innovation and alignment with community trends.

#### 4.7.7 EVENT CLASSIFICATION

Conducting a classification of services analysis informs how each Event serves the overall organizational mission, the goals, and objectives of each Core Event Area, and how the Event should be funded regarding tax dollars and/or user fees and charges. An Event's classification can help determine the most appropriate management, funding, and marketing strategies.

Event classifications are based on the degree to which the Event provides a public benefit versus a private benefit. Public benefit can be described as everyone receiving the same level of benefit with equal access, whereas private benefit can be described as the user receiving exclusive benefit above what a general taxpayer receives for their personal benefit.

For this exercise, the Department used a classification method based on three categories: Essential Services, Important Services, and Value-Added Services. Where an Event or service is classified depends upon alignment with the organizational mission, how the public perceives an Event, legal mandates, financial sustainability, personal benefit, competition in the marketplace, and access by participants. The following graphic describes each of the three Event classifications.



##### Value Added Services

Department May Provide; with additional resources, it adds value to community, it supports Core & Important Services, it is supported by community, it generates income, has an individual benefit, can be supported by user fees, it enhances community, and requires little to no subsidy.

##### Important Services

Department Should Provide; if it expands & enhances core services, is broadly supported & used, has conditional public support, there is an economic / social / environmental outcome to the community, has community importance, and needs moderate subsidy.

##### Essential Services

Department Must Provide; if it protects assets & infrastructure, is expected, and supported, is a sound investment of public funds, is a broad public benefit, there is a negative impact if not provided, is part of the mission, and needs significant subsidy to complete.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

With assistance from staff, all recreation Events offered by the Department were classified into three categories. The results presented in the following table represent the current classification of recreation Event services. Events should be assigned ranges for cost recovery goals within those overall categories.

Program Classification			
Factors	Essential	Important	Value-Added
Public interest; Legal Mandate; Mission Alignment	High public expectation	High public expectation	High individual and interest group expectation
Financial Sustainability	Free, nominal or fee tailored to public needs, Requires public funding	Fees cover some direct costs, Requires a balance of public funding and a cost recovery target	Fees cover most direct and indirect costs, Some public funding as appropriate
Benefits (health, safety, protection of assets, etc.)	Substantial public benefit (negative consequence if not provided)	Public and individual benefit	Primarily individual benefit
Competition in the Market	Limited or no alternative providers	Alternative providers unable to meet demand or need	Alternative providers readily available
Access	Open access by all	Open access Limited access to specific users	Limited access to specific users
Best Practice Cost Recovery Goal*	0 - 50%	50% - 75%	75% - 100%+
Program Distribution	42%	33%	25%

### COST-OF-SERVICE & COST RECOVERY

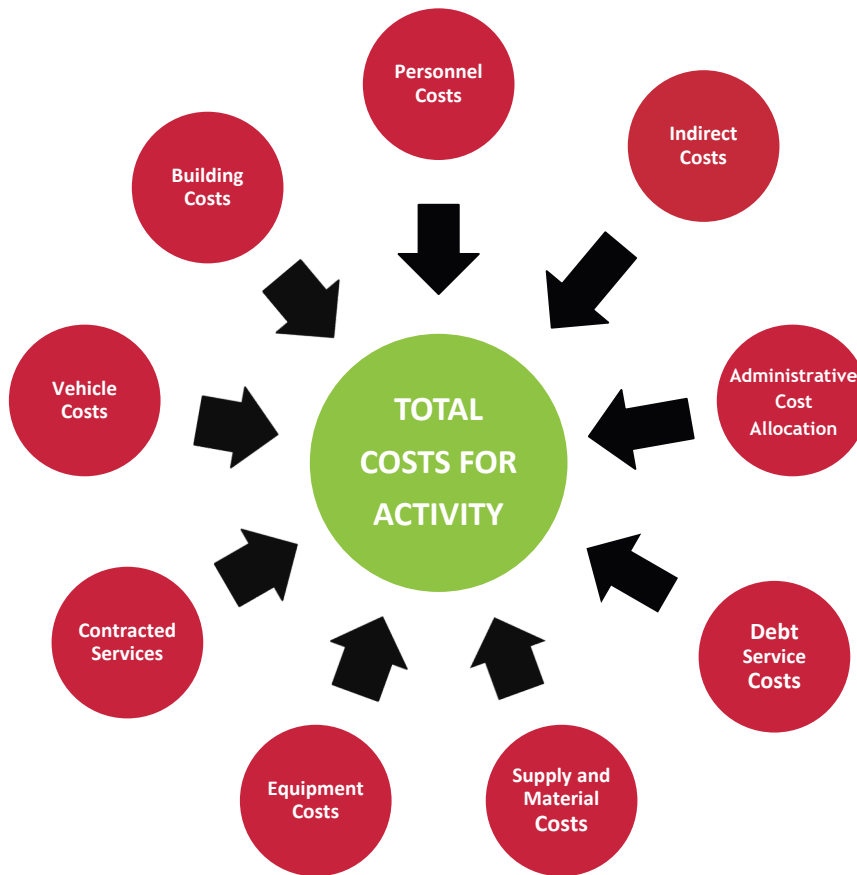
Cost recovery targets should at least be identified for each Core Event Area, and for specific Events or events when realistic. The previously identified Core Event Areas would serve as an effective breakdown for tracking cost recovery metrics including administrative costs. Theoretically, staff should review how Events are grouped for similar cost recovery and subsidy goals to determine if current practices still meet management outcomes.

Determining cost recovery performance and using it to make informed pricing decisions involves a three-step process:

1. Classify all Events and services based on the public or private benefit they provide (as completed in the previous section).
2. Conduct a Cost-of-Service Analysis to calculate the full cost of each Event.
3. Establish a cost recovery percentage, through Department policy, for each Event or Event type based on the outcomes of the previous two steps and adjust Event prices accordingly.

### UNDERSTANDING THE FULL COST-OF-SERVICE

To develop specific cost recovery targets, full cost of accounting needs to be created on each class or Event that accurately calculates direct and indirect costs. Cost recovery goals are established once these numbers are in place, and the Department's Event staff should be trained on this process. A Cost-of-Service Analysis should be conducted on each Event, or Event type, that accurately calculates direct (i.e., Event-specific) and indirect (i.e., comprehensive, including administrative overhead) costs. Completing a Cost-of-Service Analysis not only helps determine the true and full cost of offering a Event, but it also provides information that can be used to price Events based upon accurate delivery costs. The figure below illustrates the common types of costs that must be accounted for in a Cost-of-Service Analysis.



The methodology for determining the total Cost-of-Service involves calculating the total cost for the activity, Event, or service, then calculating the total revenue earned for that activity. Costs (and revenue) can also be derived on a per unit basis. Event or activity units may include:

- Number of participants
- Number of tasks performed
- Number of consumable units
- Number of service calls
- Number of events
- Required time for offering Event/service

Agencies use Cost-of-Service Analysis to determine what financial resources are required to provide specific Events at specific levels of service. Results are used to determine and track cost recovery as well as to benchmark different Events provided by the Department between one another. Cost recovery goals are established once Cost-of-Service totals have been calculated. Event staff should be trained on the process of conducting a Cost-of-Service Analysis and the process should be undertaken on a regular basis.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

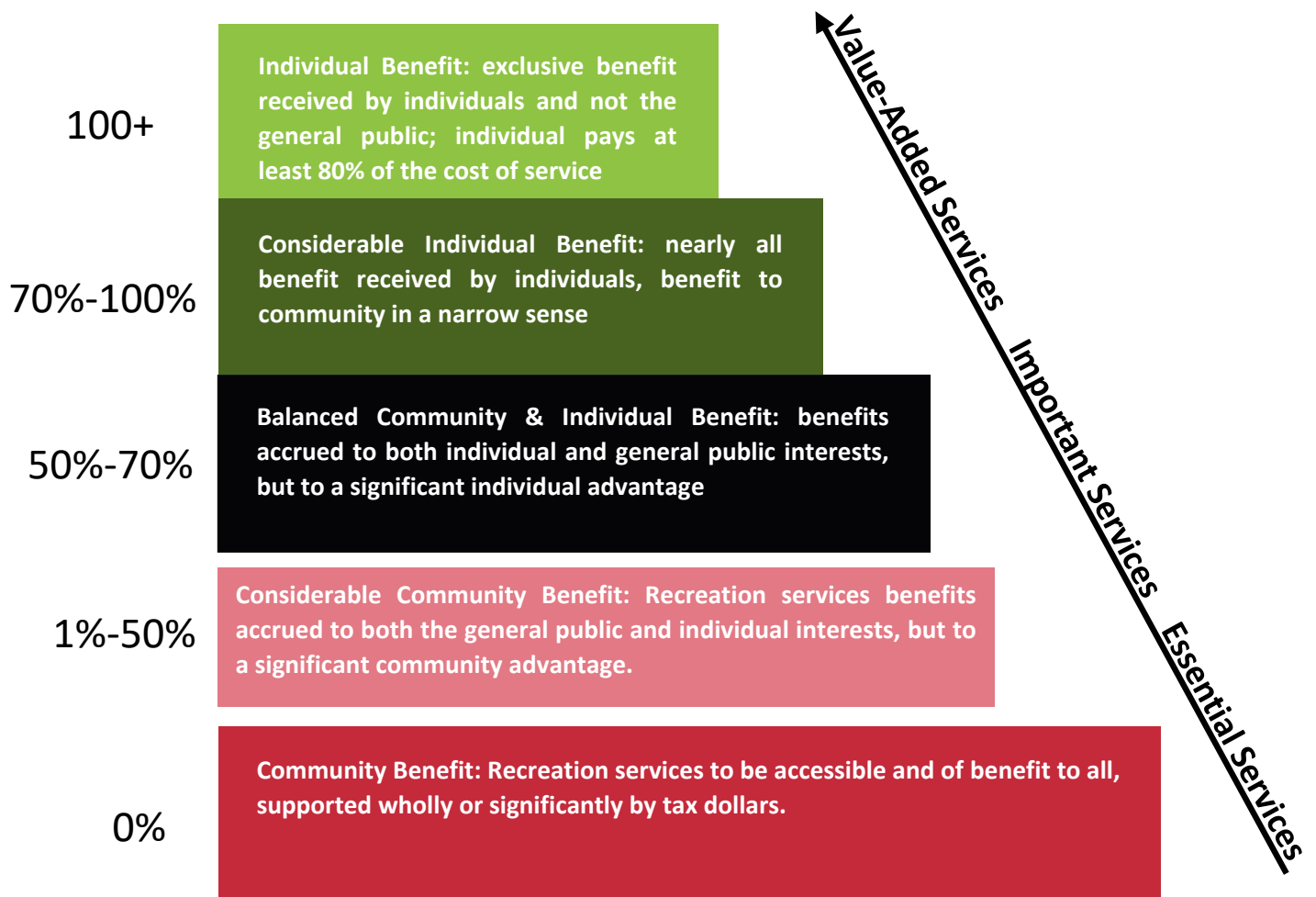
### CURRENT COST RECOVERY

The Department does not currently implement a universal Cost Recovery Philosophy and uses general cost recovery principles sparingly. The following best practices should assist staff in developing a general cost recovery philosophy that can be implemented Department wide.

### COST RECOVERY BEST PRACTICES

Cost recovery targets should reflect the degree to which an Event provides a public versus individual good. Events providing public benefits (i.e., Essential Events) should be subsidized more by the Department; Events providing individual benefits (i.e., Value-Added Events) should seek to recover costs and/or generate revenue for other services. To help plan and implement cost recovery policies, the consulting team has developed the following definitions to help classify specific Events within Event areas.

- **Essential Events** category are critical to achieving the organizational mission and providing community-wide benefits and therefore, generally receive priority for tax-dollar subsidization.
- **Important or Value-Added** Event classifications generally represent Events that receive lower priority for subsidization.
  - **Important** Events contribute to the organizational mission but are not essential to it; therefore, cost recovery for these Events should be high (i.e., at least 80% overall).
  - **Value-Added** Events are not critical to the mission and should be prevented from drawing upon limited public funding, so overall cost recovery for these Events should be near or more than 100%.



#### 4.7.8 EVENT STRATEGY RECOMMENDATIONS

In general, the Department Event staff should continue the cycle of evaluating Events on both individual merit as well as the Event mix. This can be completed at one time on an annual basis, or in batches at key seasonal points of the year, if each Event is checked once per year. The following tools and strategies can help facilitate this evaluation process:

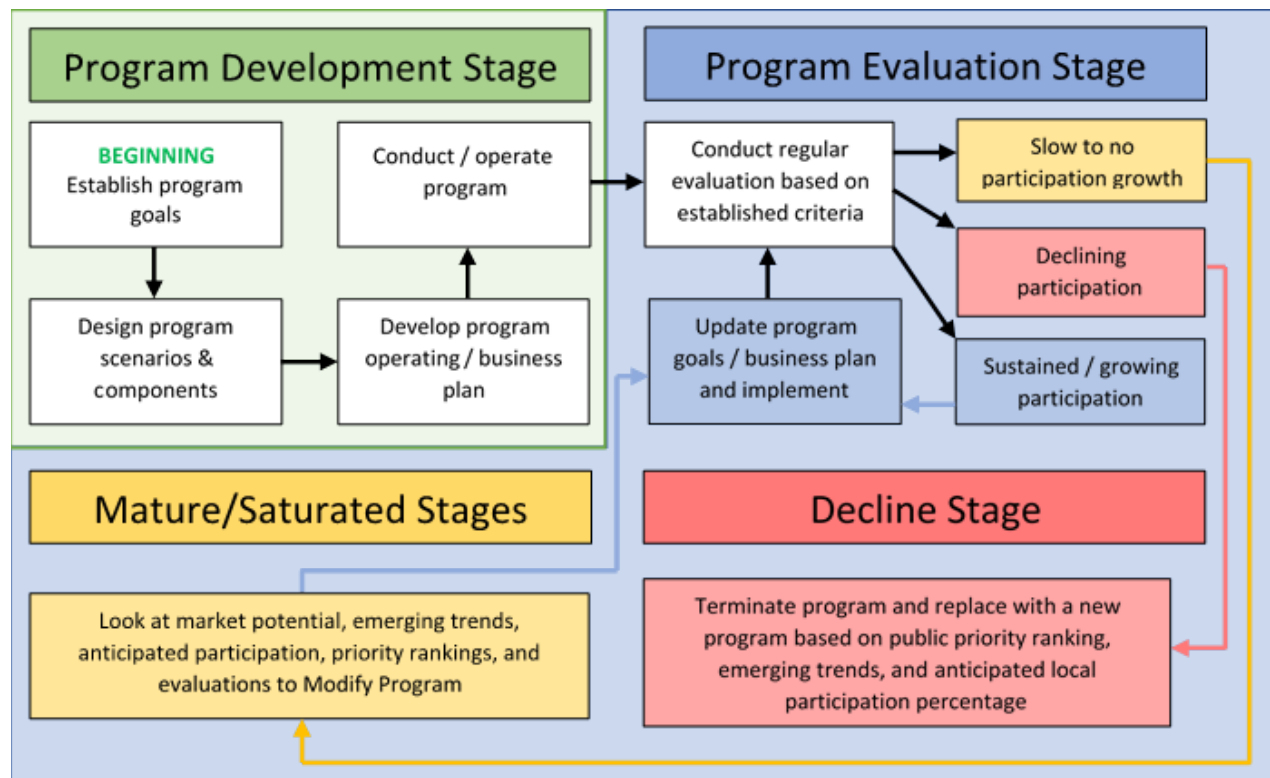
##### MINI BUSINESS PLANS

The consulting team recommends that Mini Business Plans (2-3 pages) for each Core Event Area be updated on a yearly basis. These plans should evaluate the Core Event Area based on meeting the outcomes desired for participants, cost recovery, percentage of the market and business controls, Cost- of-Service, pricing strategy for the next year, and marketing strategies that are to be implemented. If developed regularly and consistently, they can be effective tools for budget construction and justification processes in addition to marketing and communication tools.

##### EVENT EVALUATION CYCLE (WITH LIFECYCLE STAGES)

Using the Age Segment and Lifecycle analysis and other established criteria, Event staff should evaluate Events on an annual basis to determine Event mix. This can be incorporated into the Event Operating/Business Plan process. A diagram of the Event evaluation cycle and Event lifecycle is Shown above. During the Beginning Stages, Event staff should establish Event goals, design Event scenarios and components, and develop the Event operating/business plan. Regular Event evaluations will help determine the future of an Event.

If participation levels are still growing, continue to provide the Event. When participation growth is slowing (or non-existent) or competition increases, staff should look at modifying the Event to re-energize the customers to participate. When Event participation is consistently declining, staff should terminate the Event and replace it with a new Event based on the public's priority ranking and/or in activity areas that are trending nationally/regionally/locally, while taking into consideration the anticipated local participation percentage.



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 4.7.9 MARKETING, VOLUNTEERS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

#### CURRENT RECREATION MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Department's current marketing utilizes several communication methods to connect with residents including the Town's website, flyers/brochures, email blasts, press releases through Public Relations, marquee signs, in-facility signage, and various social media channels.

Effective communication strategies require striking an appropriate balance between the content with the volume of messaging while utilizing the "right" methods of delivery. The Department has a broad distribution of delivery methods for promoting Events. It is imperative to assess marketing methods annually to ensure the community remains informed of Department priorities, projects, and offerings.

A recommended next step for the Department would be to create and implement a formal Marketing Plan to build upon and integrate current marketing methods while directly coordinating with organization priorities. The plan should also provide specific guidance as to how the Department's identity and brand is to be consistently portrayed across the multiple methods and deliverables used for communication.





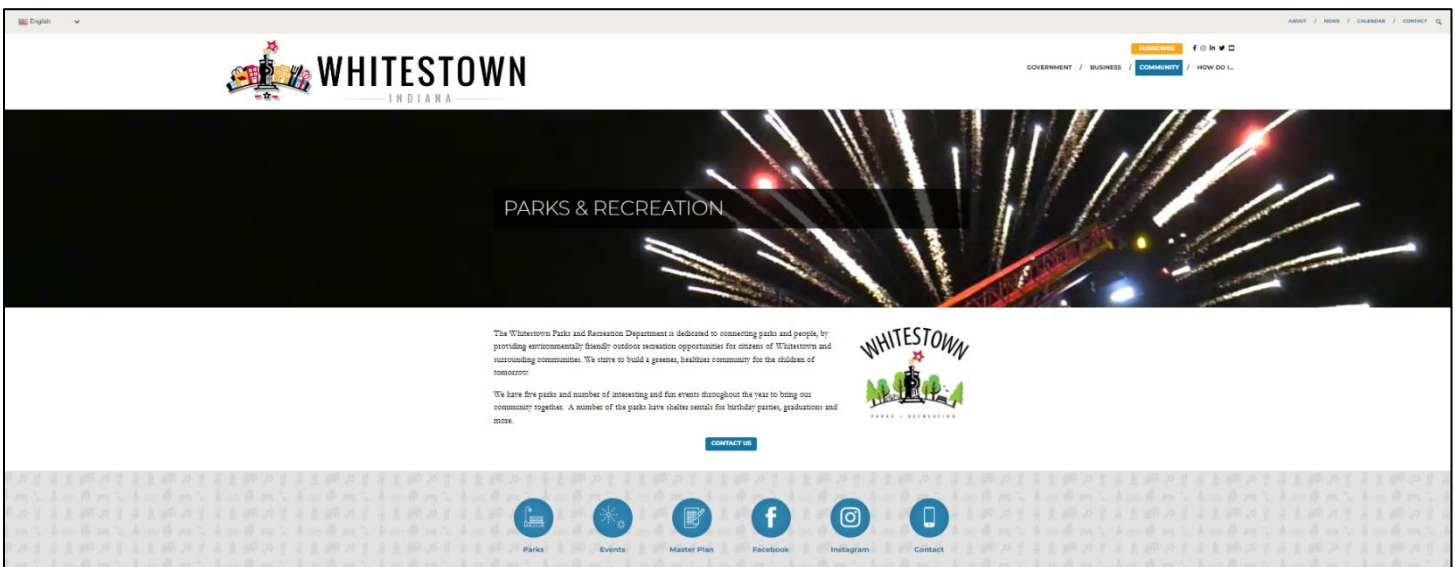


## WEBSITE

The Department's website (<https://whitestown.in.gov/community/parks-and-recreation/>) has a great new look which makes it visually appealing and easy to navigate. Links are found in the middle of the page for Parks, Events, the Master Plan site, Facebook and Instagram pages, and a Contact page which allows users to communicate with the Town directly and easily.

The top left corner of the page has an option to directly translate the site into six different languages (English, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish), showing a commitment to making the website more inclusive and accessible. With that in mind, here are some additional website-based resources available to assist with this inclusionary practice:

- Incorporate the National Recreation and Park Association's Equity Guide in all verbal, visual and written communication on the website and beyond (<https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/equity/equity-language-guide/>).
- A full list of website accessibility basics can be found at <https://www.usability.gov/what-and-why/accessibility.html>.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

The Town of Whitestown utilizes Web 3.0 technology through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and TikTok. Here is a quick analysis of the Department by each platform. All numbers are as of August 18, 2022.



### FACEBOOK

- 4,124 followers
- Posts just about every day, posting multiple times on many days
- Used to promote Events and activities and share Department news and updates
- Recommendations for Facebook content include short videos, blog posts and curated content.

### TWITTER

- 506 followers
- No posts since March 17<sup>th</sup>, with most posts being holiday themed.
- Recommendations for Twitter content include news, blog posts, and threads.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### INSTAGRAM

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- 1,305 followers
- Multiple posts per week
- Lots of original posts
- Low engagement on posts
- Recommendations for Instagram include infographics, step-by-step photo guides and GIFS.

### YOUTUBE (TOWN OF WHITESTOWN)

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- 436 Subscribers
- 744 videos posted and live streamed (most viewed: Whitestown Metropolitan Police Department Lip Sync Challenge 35,000 Views)
- Many Parks and Recreation related posts, mostly promoting parks and events, which are all very well done and produced. These should be promoted more via other platforms to promote the work the Department is doing and the impact they are having on the community.
- Recommendations for YouTube include videos sharing stories of the park and the good you do in the community.

### LINKEDIN (TOWN OF WHITESTOWN INDIANA)

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- 202 Followers
- 17 employees
- Posts every 1-2 months, with content mostly tied to promoting job opportunities and introducing new employees,
- Recommendations for LinkedIn include professional content, examples of your organizational culture, company news and job opportunities.

### TIKTOK

---

- 12 Followers
- 1st video posted May 25th 2021
- Most Recent Post July 6th 2021
- 5 videos posted (most viewed: TDS Summer concert series with Jai Baker 3 856 Views from June 6th , 2021)
- Recommendations for TikTok include showing behind the scenes looks at employees and Events and participating in or creating trends and challenges.

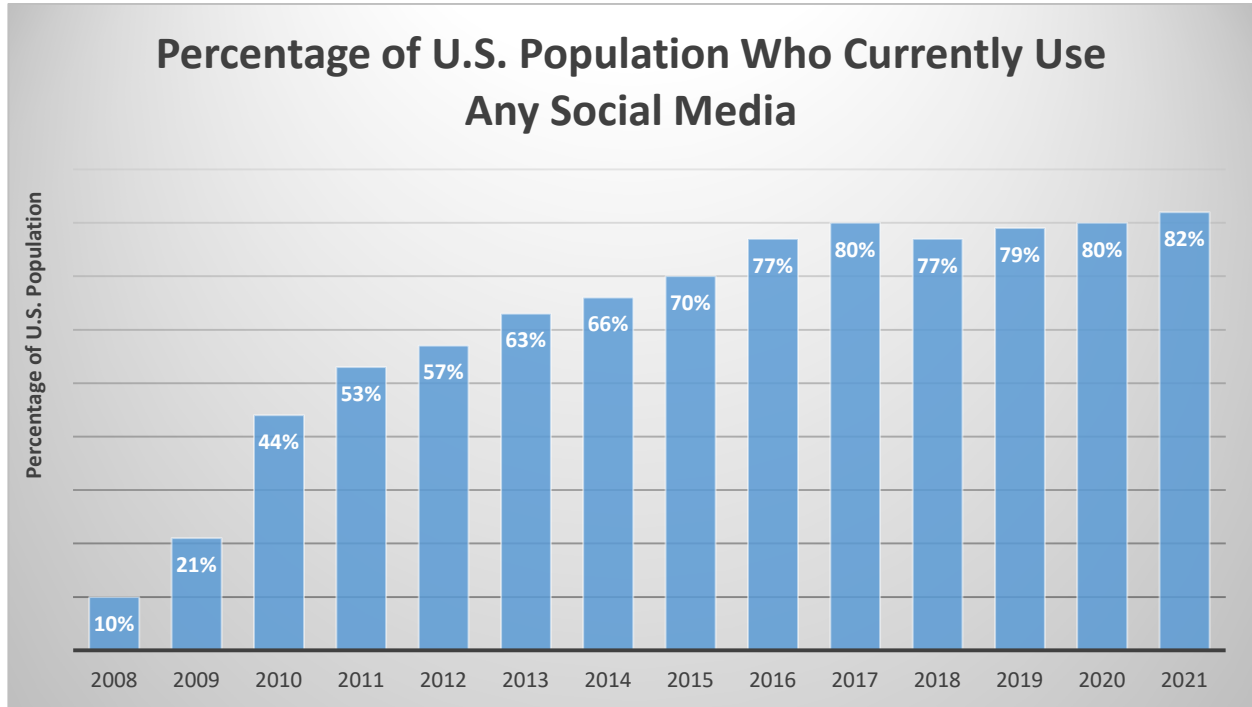
The key to successful implementation of a social network is to move the participants from awareness to action and creating greater user engagement. This could be done by:

- The Parks and Recreation YouTube videos are very well done and should be promoted among other social media and marketing platforms as they do a great job of showing what that the Department does and why it matters.
- Allow controlled 'user generated content' by encouraging users to send in their pictures from special events or Events.
- Leverage the website to obtain customer feedback for Events, parks and facilities and customer service.
- Conduct annual website strategy workshop with the staff to identify ways and means that the website can support the Town's Social Media Trends.
- Better engage on LinkedIn to promote your organizational culture and employment opportunities.
- Early utilization of TikTok showed promise as posts were fun and original. It is recommended to re-engage on the platform as it is an opportunity to reach a different audience and engage staff in Department messaging.



## SOCIAL MEDIA USERS

Over the last decade, social media has become one of the Country's fastest growing trends. With only ten percent of the country using social media in 2008; today, an estimated eighty-two percent of the U.S. population is currently using some form of social media. With such a large percentage of the population using these online media platforms in their daily lives, it becomes essential for the Town to take advantage of these marketing opportunities. Social media can be a useful and affordable tool to reach current and potentially new system users. Such platforms as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, TikTok, Twitter, or LinkedIn are extremely popular with not only today's youth but also young and middle-aged adults.

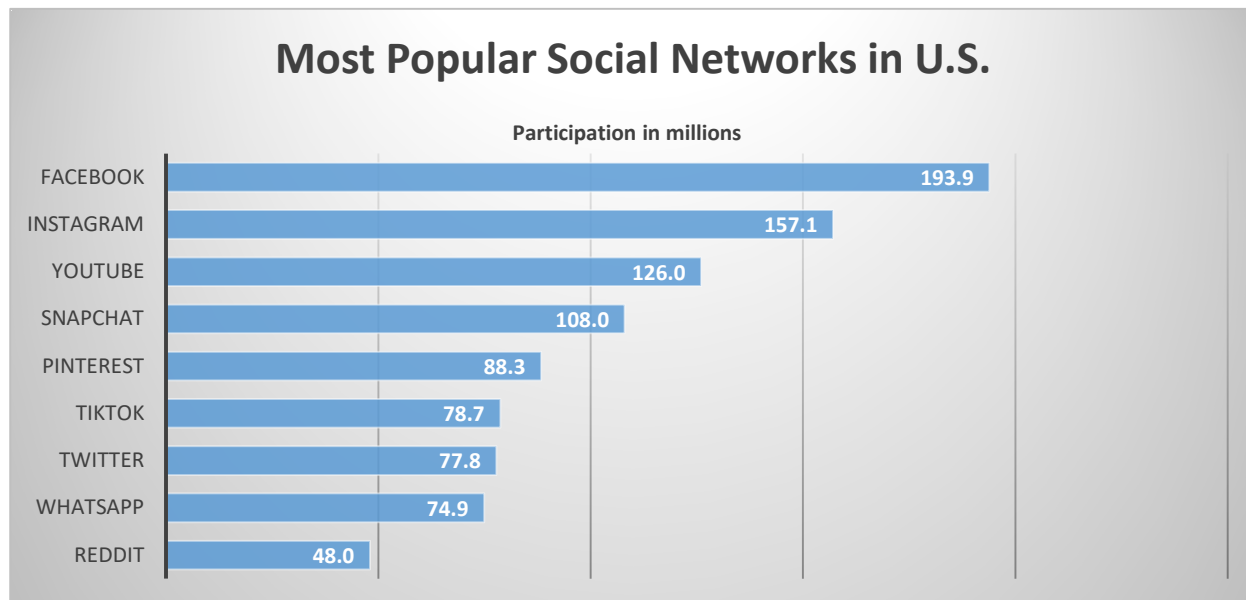


Source: <https://www.statista.com>

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

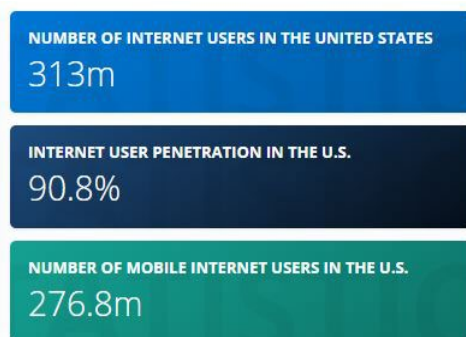
Below is a chart that depicts the most frequently used social media sites throughout the world. As of October 2021, Facebook stands out as the most heavily trafficked social media platform, with an estimated 2.9 billion visitors per month. YouTube is second with 2.3 billion visitors per month. TikTok has the highest growth rate at 85.3% in 2021.



Source: [www. https://www.statista.com](https://www.statista.com)

### MEDIUMS USED TO ACCESS THE INTERNET

The neighboring image is taken directly from Statista.com and depicts the number of internet users in the United States, internet penetration in the U.S., and the number of mobile internet users in the U.S. Less than 10% of surveyed adults state they did not use the internet in 2021.



Source: [www.statista.com/topics/2237/internet-usage-in-the-united-states/](https://www.statista.com/topics/2237/internet-usage-in-the-united-states/)



## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

- Create a Department marketing plan including the components and strategies identified in this report.
- Establish priority segments to target in terms of new event/service development and communication tactics.
- Establish and review regularly performance measures for marketing; performance measures can be tracked through customer surveys as well as some web-based metrics.
- Leverage relationships with partners to enhance marketing efforts through cross-promotion that include defined measurable outcomes.

## 4.7. VOLUNTEER AND PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

Today's realities require most public parks and recreation departments to seek productive and meaningful partnerships with both community organizations and individuals to deliver quality and seamless services to their residents. These relationships should be mutually beneficial to each party to better meet overall community needs and expand the positive impact of the agency's mission. Effective partnerships and meaningful volunteerism are key strategy areas for the Department to meet the needs of the community in the years to come.



## RECREATION EVENT PARTNERSHIPS

The Department currently works with several different types of partners throughout the community. These partnerships support facilitation and sponsorship of event offerings. As with tracking of volunteer hours, tracking partnerships helps show leadership how well staff can leverage resources. In many instances, partnerships are inequitable to the public agency and do not produce reasonable shared benefits between parties. It is not suggested that the Whitestown's existing partnerships are inequitable; rather, in general many parks and recreation agencies' partnerships tend to be inequitable.

The following recommended policies will promote fairness and equity within the existing and future partnerships while helping staff to manage against potential internal and external conflicts. Certain partnership principles must be adopted by the Department for existing and future partnerships to work effectively. These partnership principles are as follows:

- All partnerships require a working agreement with measurable outcomes and will be evaluated on a regular basis. This should include reports to the agency on the performance and outcomes of the partnership including an annual review to determine renewal potential.
- All partnerships should track costs associated with the partnership investment to demonstrate the shared level of equity.
- All partnerships should maintain a culture that focuses on collaborative planning on a regular basis, regular communications, and annual reporting on performance and outcomes to determine renewal potential and opportunities to strengthen the partnership.

Additional partnerships can be pursued and developed with other public entities such as neighboring towns/cities, colleges, state or federal agencies, non-for-profit organizations, as well as with private or for-profit organizations. There are recommended standard policies and practices that will apply to any partnership, and those that are unique to relationships with private, for-profit entities.

## VOLUNTEER AND PARTNERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS

The consulting team recommends the following regarding volunteers and partnerships:

**Establish formal Volunteer and Partnership Policies and Agreements** — Following the best practice listed in the previous section, continue to monitor and update established volunteer and partner policies and agreements which are tailored to the different types of volunteers and partnerships the Department encounters. Additionally, begin tracking volunteer metrics more consistently, including individual volunteers used annually and volunteer hours donated annually. Lastly, begin identifying measurable outcomes for each partnership and track these metrics.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 4.7.11 CONCLUSION

The consultant team has highlighted a few important recommendations from the report. These recommendations may change with any shifts in demographics, Department structure, and community and Department priorities.

- **Core Event/Program Areas:** The Department will need to continue evaluating Core Event Areas, and the possible incorporation of additional Core Program Areas as priorities shift and the community demographics evolve. Align Core Event/Program Areas with the community needs from the statistically valid survey results. The Department staff should evaluate Core Event/Program Areas and the individual activities within, ideally on an annual basis, to ensure offerings remain aligned with community needs.
- **Age Segments:** Current offerings show an opportunity for more “All Age” and teen specific offerings. Continue to monitor Town demographics as the high growth rate makes it difficult to make accurate demographic projections. The goal should be for the Department to develop content that ensures ample recreational opportunities for all age segments within the community.
- **Event Lifecycle Analysis:** The Department should complete this analysis on an annual basis and ensure that the percentage distribution closely aligns with the desired performance. Furthermore, the Department could include annual performance measures for each core Event/Program area to track participation growth, customer retention, and percentage of new Events/Programs as an incentive for innovation and alignment with community trends.
- **Marketing Plan:** The Department should develop a formal Marketing Plan to ensure target markets and age segmentations are being reached through appropriate marketing platforms. Social Media should be utilized at a higher level to share the Department’s story and help the community understand the importance of the work you do.
- **Volunteer and Partnership:** Management of both partnerships and volunteers is important to continue to assist with meeting the needs of the community. The Department should know the cost of providing this service and compare it to the outcomes being achieved. This will help demonstrate leveraging resources and ensure that the outcomes match the effort.
- **Expanded Recreational Programming:** There is a community need for both enhancements to the existing event offerings, and expanded recreational programming, most noticeably in fitness/wellness and youth-based activities.







## 4.8 FACILITY / AMENITY PRIORITY RANKINGS

The purpose of the Facility/Amenity and Program Priority Rankings is to provide a prioritized list of facility/amenity and program needs for the community served by the Town of Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department. Quantitative data was used from the statistically valid community survey, which asked residents to list unmet needs and rank their importance. A weighted scoring system is used to determine the priorities for Whitestown's facilities/amenities and programs:

Data Source	Component	Weighting
Quantitative Data	<b>Unmet Needs Reported by the Community Survey</b> – This is used as a factor from the total number of households stating whether they have a need for a facility/amenity and the extent to which their need for facilities/amenities has been met. Survey participants were asked to identify this for 31 different facilities/amenities and 32 program areas.	50%
	<b>Importance Rankings Reported by the Community Survey</b> – This is used as a factor from the importance allocated to a facility/amenity by the community. Each respondent was asked to identify the top four most important 32 facilities/amenities and 26 program areas.	50%



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 4.8.1 PRIORITIES FOR FACILITY INVESTMENTS

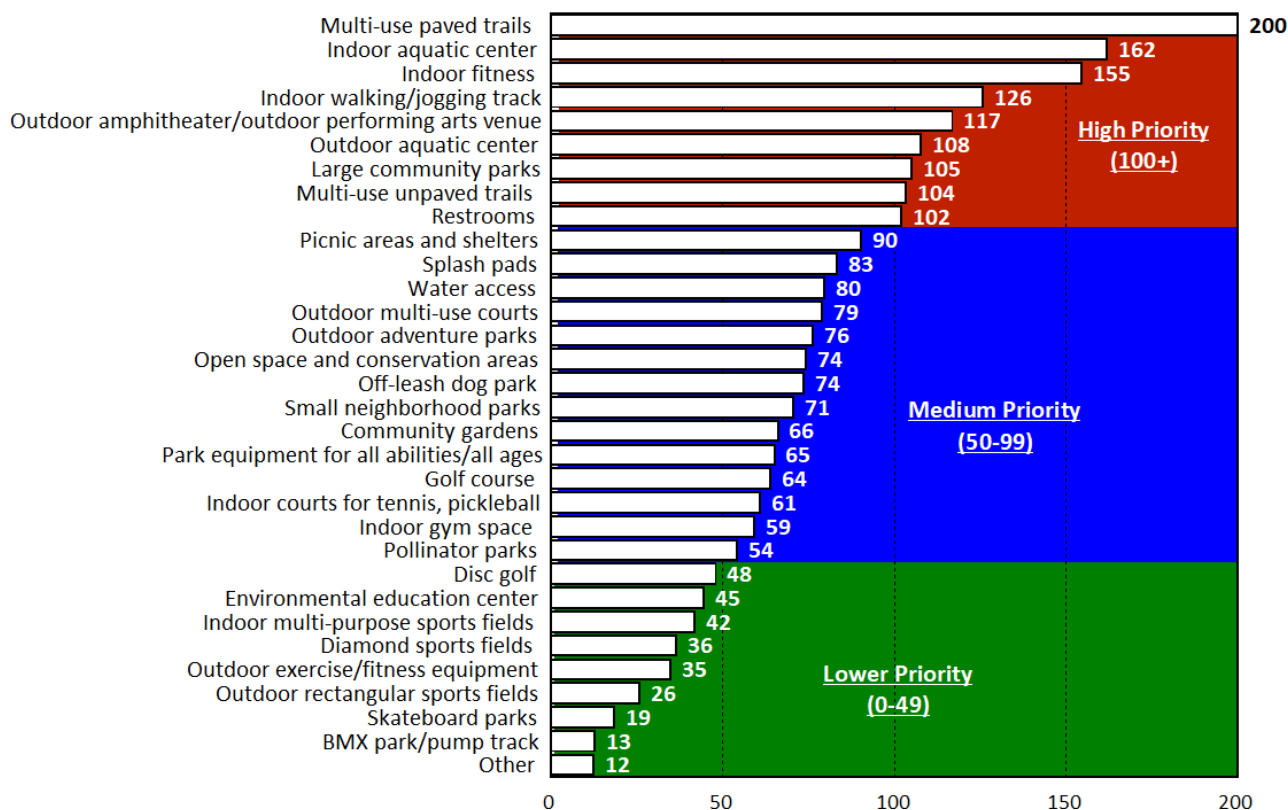
The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on parks, trails, recreational facilities, and services. The PIR equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facility. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 2 of this report.]

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following nine facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Multi-use paved trails (PIR=200)
- Indoor aquatic center (PIR=162)
- Indoor fitness (PIR=155)
- Indoor walking/jogging track (PIR=126)
- Outdoor amphitheater/outdoor performing arts venue (PIR=117)
- Outdoor aquatic center (PIR=108)
- Large community parks (PIR=105)
- Multi-use unpaved trails (PIR=104)
- Restrooms (PIR=102)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 32 facilities that were assessed on the survey.

### Top Priorities for Investment for Facilities Based on the Priority Investment Rating





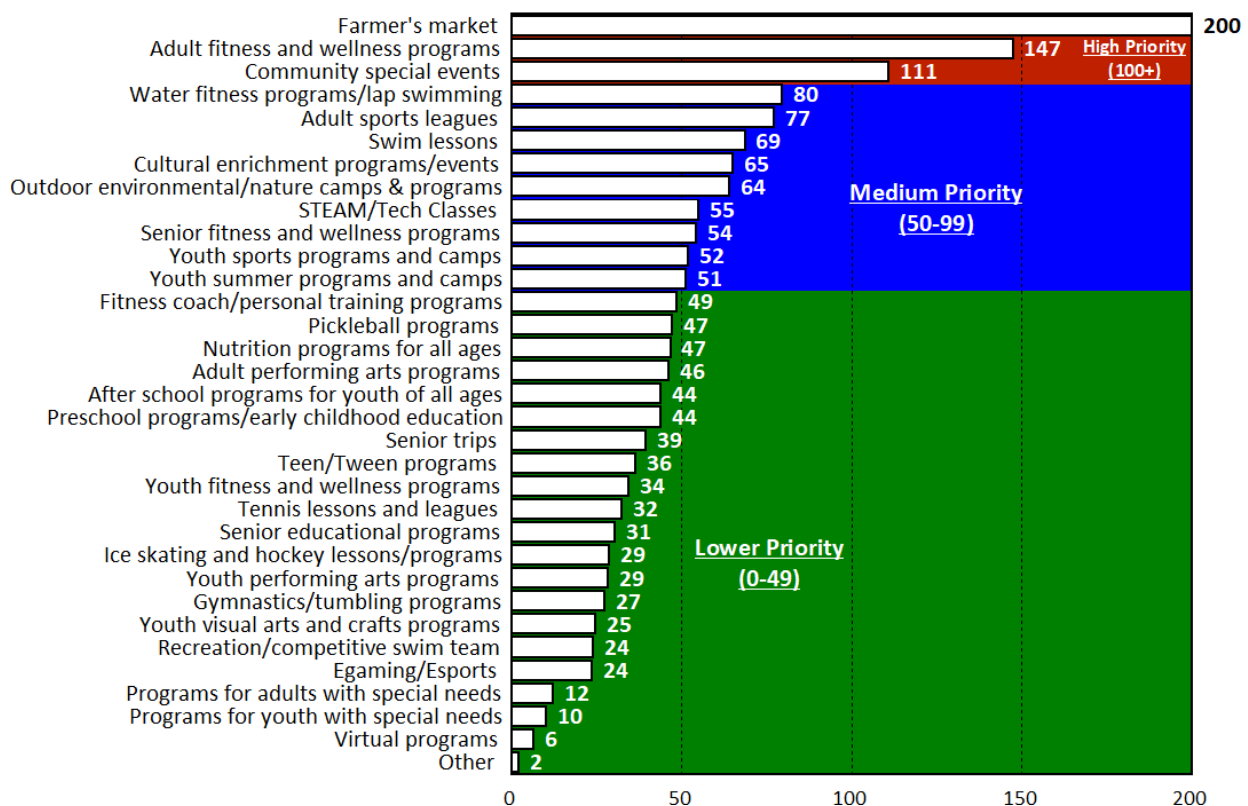
#### 4.8.2 PRIORITIES FOR PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

Based on the priority investment rating (PIR), which was described briefly on page vi of this Executive Summary and is described in more detail in Section 2 of this report, the following three programs were rated as “high priorities” for investment:

- Farmer’s market (PIR=200)
- Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=147)
- Community special events (PIR=111)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating (PIR) for each of the 33 programs that were rated.

### Top Priorities for Investment for Programs Based on the Priority Investment Rating



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 4.9 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Based on the findings of the Park and Facility Assessment, as well as the current 5-year Capital Plan for the Department, estimates for probable costs for park improvements were developed. Costs developed are based on local and regional historical cost data.

Improvements were organized into a three-tier plan, identifying improvements as one of the following categories:

#### 4.9.1 CRITICAL/SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE

Prioritized spending within existing budget targets and focuses on deferred maintenance and lifecycle replacement of assets and amenities within the existing parks system. The intention of the alternative is to refocus and make the most of existing resources with the primary goal being for the Town to maintain high quality services.

CRITICAL PROJECTS (Priority to Address)					5-Year Allocation				
Location	Facility / Amenity / Infrastructure	Project	Estimated Total Project Cost	Source of Need	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Panther Park	Paved Trail	Lifecycle replacement - Resurface existing inter-park Trail.	\$200,000	Site Assessments/Lifecycle Replacement	\$200,000.00				
Gateway Park	Paved Trail	Lifecycle replacement - Resurface existing inter-park Trail.	100,000	Site Assessments/Lifecycle Replacement			\$100,000.00		
Sub Total			\$300,000		\$200,000	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$0

#### 4.9.2 EXPANDED SERVICES ALTERNATIVE

Extra services or capital improvement that should be undertaken when additional funding is available. This includes strategically enhancing and renovating existing parks and facilities to better meet the park and recreational needs of residents that would require additional operational or capital funding.

SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS (Improving What We Have)					5-Year Allocation				
Location	Facility / Amenity / Infrastructure	Project	Estimated Total Project Cost	Source of Need	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Gateway Park	Amenities	Restroom & Shelter	500,000	Stakeholders/ LOS		\$500,000			
Giles Park	Event Center	Programs/ Rental Space	2,000,000	Stakeholders			\$2,000,000.00		
Total			\$2,500,000		\$0	\$500,000	\$2,000,000	\$0	\$0
Projects already planned and funding allocated									



#### 4.9.3 VISIONARY ALTERNATIVE

Represents the complete set of services and facilities desired by the community. It is fiscally unconstrained but can help provide policy guidance by illustrating the ultimate goals of the parks and recreation system and by providing a long-range look to address future needs and deficiencies.

Visionary Alternatives address complete renovations of aging parks and facilities and the development of new parks and facilities. Funding for visionary projects would be derived from partnerships, private investments, and new tax dollars.

VISIONARY PROJECTS (Developing New Opportunities)					5-Year Allocation					6-10-Year Allocation				
Location	Facility / Amenity / Infrastructure	Project	Estimated Total Project Cost	Source of Need	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Big 4 Trail	Paved Trail	Expand Current Trail (Already planned and funding allocated)	\$2,300,000.00	Stakeholders/Site Assessments/IDNR Visionary Trail	\$2,300,000.00									
Land Acquisition	Neighborhood Park #1	Purchase land for neighborhood park in Town's Park Deserts. (3-10 Acres @ \$24K/acre)	\$240,000.00	LOS/Equity Mapping		\$240,000								
Neighborhood Park #1	Park Site Design	Site Conceptual / Master Plan	\$30,000.00	Management / Cost Containment			\$30,000							
Neighborhood Park #1	Amenities for Neighborhood Park #1	Inclusive playground & shelter	\$260,000.00	Stakeholders Input/LOS					\$260,000.00					
Land Acquisition	Neighborhood Park #2	Create a neighborhood Park in one of our Town's Park Deserts. (3-10 Acres @ \$26K/acre)	\$260,000.00	LOS/Equity Mapping					\$260,000.00					
Neighborhood Park #2	Park Site Design	Site Conceptual / Master Plan	\$35,000.00	Management / Cost Containment						\$35,000.00				
Neighborhood Park #2	Amenities for Neighborhood Park #2, Continue meeting LOS Standards	Playground, Shelter.	\$250,000.00	Stakeholders Input/LOS							\$250,000.00			
Land Acquisition	Community Park	Acquire land to complete our second Community Park. (30-100 Acres @ \$28K/acre)	\$840,000.00	LOS/Equity Mapping						\$840,000.00				
Community Park #2	Park Site Design	Site Conceptual / Master Plan	\$90,000.00	Management / Cost Containment							\$90,000			
Community Park #2	Amenities for Community Park #2, Continue meeting LOS Standards	To be determined, but could include Playground, Pickleball, Tennis Court, Skate Park, Dog Park, Rectangular Fields, Ball	\$910,000.00	Stakeholders Input/LOS									\$910,000	
Total			\$5,215,000		\$2,300,000	\$240,000	\$30,000	\$0	\$520,000	\$875,000	\$340,000	\$0	\$910,000	\$0
Projects already planned and funding allocated														

#### 4.9.4 SUMMARY

The Town of Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department has historically done a great job of maintaining its assets as well as adding visionary projects desired by residents into the system. The Department will need to continue to invest in the system to consider the extensive growth of the Town, while also maintaining current assets. The Department will need take all appropriate measures to extend the life of existing assets to mitigate the impact of the deferred Capital Reinvestment projects. Capital repairs or replacements required to ensure the safety of residents or employees will always be prioritized.

Some critical funding decisions will need to be made by community leaders that will have a significant impact on both the current planning period and long-term future of the park system. While the capital funding sources anticipated during the current 5-year planning period remain significant, there are identified projects in this plan expected to be unfunded. New funding options must be considered and implemented during this planning period to avoid a capital funding deficit in the future.

Parks & Recreation 2022-2031 CIP												
Project Category	Estimated Total Project Cost	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	NOTES
Critical	\$ 300,000	\$ 200,000	\$ -	\$ 100,000	\$ -	\$ -						
Sustainable	\$ 2,500,000	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ 2,000,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Visionary	\$ 3,435,000	\$ 520,000	\$ 240,000	\$ 30,000	\$ -	\$ 520,000	\$ 875,000	\$ 340,000	\$ -	\$ 910,000	\$ -	
Total	\$ 6,235,000	\$ 720,000	\$ 740,000	\$ 2,130,000	\$ -	\$ 520,000	\$ 875,000	\$ 340,000	\$ -	\$ 910,000	\$ -	

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### CHAPTER FIVE — FUNDING STRATEGIES AND OPERATIONAL REVIEW

#### 5.1 FUNDING STRATEGIES

##### 5.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation agencies are the only municipal department where the public chooses to spend their disposable income. This has contributed to systems across the United States optimizing revenue generation options to support when limited tax dollars are available. These systems no longer rely on taxes as their sole revenue option but have developed new sources of revenue options to help support capital and operational needs.

Whitestown is the fastest growing community in the State of Indiana. Subsequently, there are people moving to the Town from communities all over the United States. Many of which come from communities with more established parks and recreation systems. The community is asking for more quality-of-life amenities to be developed, delivering a standard that more closely aligns with communities they have moved from to Whitestown. Financially, the Town has prepared by establishing recreation impact fees and food and beverage tax.

The consulting team has developed the funding strategies as an option to support the capital and operational needs of the service area. Many of these funding sources may not be approved by the Town or currently do not meet the requirements to implement. This list is also valuable as a reference should circumstances change and the needs align with a potential funding source. The Department has currently created funding, however, can still be re-evaluated or explored further as the Town and Department evolve.

The following sources are financial options that the Town currently implements and alternative sources to consider in supporting the recommendations outlined in the Plan. This list is intended to serve as a resource to fit a variety of projects, operational needs, or partner-specific initiatives as well as provide inspiration in considering other strategies beyond these suggestions.

Whitestown Funding Sources Used or Currently Using					
External Funding Sources	Capital Funding Sources	User Fees	Grants	Taxes	Franchise/Licenses
Corporate Sponsorship	Recreation Impact Fees	Ticket Sales/Admissions	Land & Water Conservation Fund	Property Taxes	Advertising Sales
Partnerships		Reservations	Recreational Trail Program	Tax Incremental Financing	Inter-Local Agreements
Foundations/Gifts		Equipment Rental	Next Level Trails	Food & Beverage Tax	
Volunteerism			Nonprofit Foundation Grants IPRA Foundation Scholarships		

##### 5.1.2 EXTERNAL FUNDING SOURCES

###### PARTNERSHIPS

The Town currently implements this funding source as a strategy. Partnerships are joint development funding sources or operational funding sources between two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit and a governmental entity, or a private business and a governmental entity. Two partners jointly develop revenue producing park and recreation facilities and share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management, based on the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

**Implication for Whitestown:** Continue to build upon existing partnerships and develop specific policies to manage public, private, and non-profit partnerships differently. The implementation feasibility for this funding source is high and it can be used for operations or capital.



## CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

This revenue-funding source allows corporations to invest in the development or enhancement of new or existing facilities in park systems. Sponsorships are also used for programs and events.

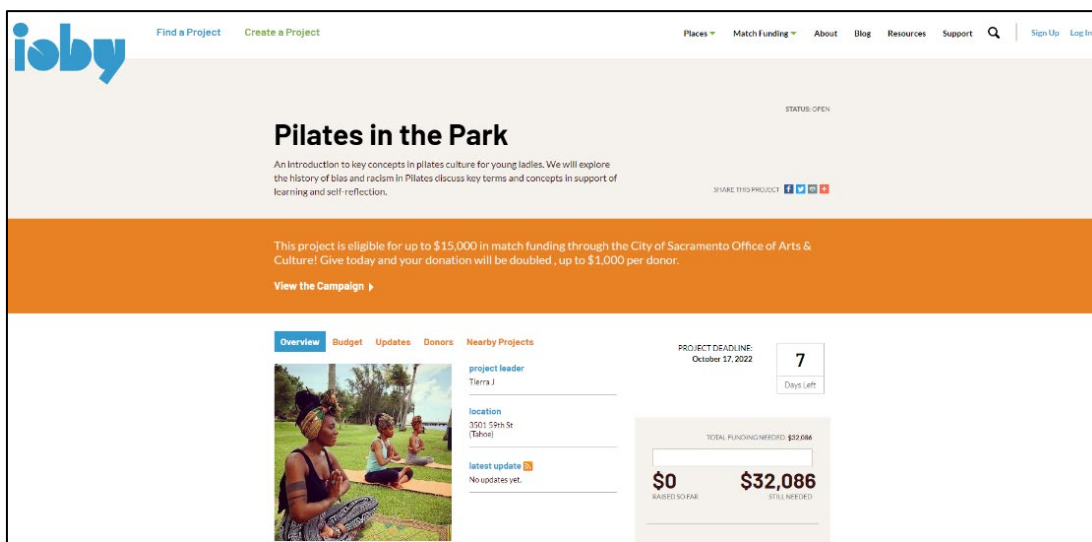
**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town should continue to use this funding source and make it more robust. Desoto Texas does a great job with corporate sponsorship and have developed a packet that helps potential sponsors know the number of people and potential impressions as a return in investment. It is important to have a corporate sponsorship agreement that protects both parties and identifies the terms, including for breach and termination. It would be ideal complemented by the Whitestown Parks Foundation supporting the Department's needs in delivering on the mission. This funding source can be used for operations or capital.



## CROWDFUNDING

This is a web-based source which aggregates funds from a group of people who are willing to support a specific project, be it program related or facility related. Some sites that successfully do that are [www.kickstarter.org](http://www.kickstarter.org), [www.indiegogo.com](http://www.indiegogo.com) and [www.mightycause.com](http://www.mightycause.com) etc. This funding strategy is an opportunity for the Town to explore and is best used for individual projects that serve a special interest group. IOBY, which stands for In Our Backyard ([www.ioby.org](http://www.ioby.org)), is a regional Crowdfunding platform operating in New York, Detroit, Pittsburgh etc. that crowdfunds for community based programmatic or capital needs.

**Implication for Whitestown:** It would need to be run through Whitestown Parks Foundation that supports the Department's needs. The estimated revenues are most likely under \$100,000 though this could encourage matching donations from corporate partners too. The implementation feasibility for this funding source is high but so is the risk. Raising funds short of the goals could also impact resident's perception of government. This funding source can be used for operations or capital.



## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### CONSERVANCIES

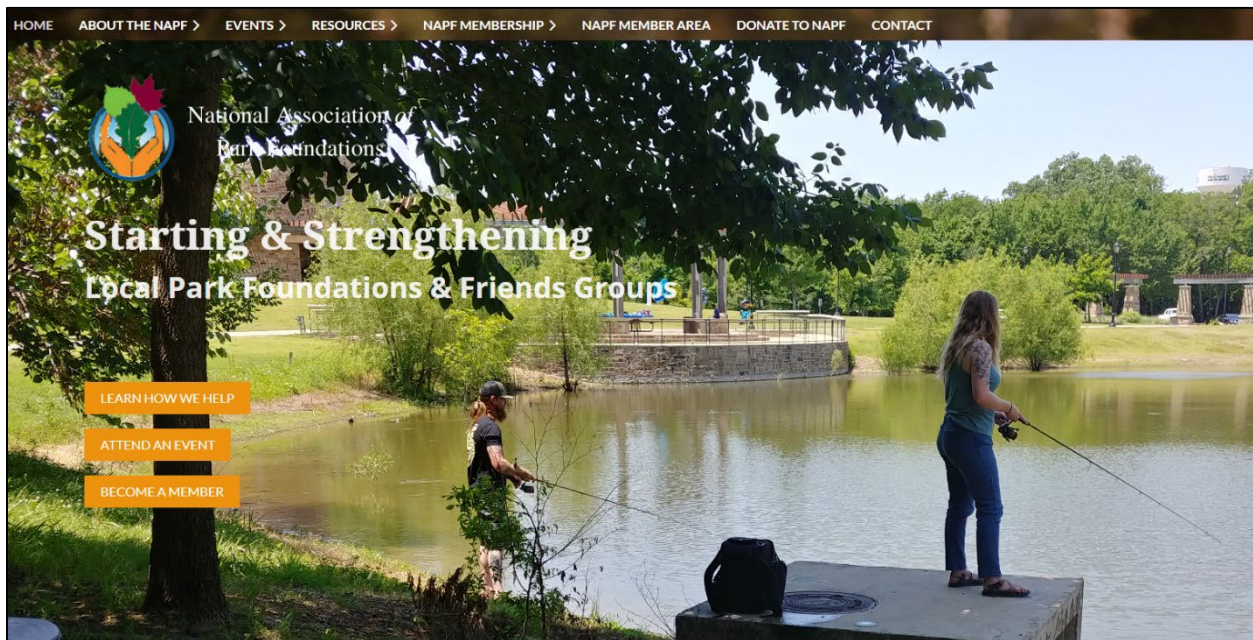
These are organized fundraising and operational groups who raise money for individual signature parks and or attractions such as zoo's, regional parks. There are over two thousand conservancies in the United States now.

**Implication for Whitestown:** Currently, the Town does not have a need for a conservancy, making the implementation feasibility for this funding source is low. Should the Town begin conversations about a regional or destination park with revenue goals, this could be a viable option. This funding source can be used for operations or capital.

### FOUNDATIONS/GIFTS

The Town currently implements this funding strategy, when opportunities are available. It is not a consistent or reliable source of funding. These dollars are raised from tax-exempt, non-profit organizations established with private donations in promotion of specific causes, activities, or issues. They offer a variety of means to fund capital projects, including capital campaigns, gifts catalogs, fundraisers, endowments, sales of items, etc. This funding source can be used for capital costs.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town has an established Whitestown Parks Foundation, dedicated to helping the Department accomplish its mission through fundraising and financing capital projects and services. This was an important step in creating a sustainable park system, considering the Town's growth rate. If not already a member, the Foundation should consider becoming a member of the National Association of Park Foundations (<https://www.the-napf.org/>) to leverage resources from the Association to accomplish goals.





## PRIVATE DONATIONS

Private Donations may also be received in the form of funds, land, facilities, recreation equipment, art or in-kind services. Donations from local and regional businesses as sponsors for events or facilities should be pursued.

**Implication for Whitestown:** Actively seeking donations can become time consuming and would eventually require an employee to oversee. The implementation feasibility for this funding source is low. This funding source can be used for capital. If considering for capital projects, a capital campaign should be developed and a team of members with a history of philanthropy should be established or a professional contracted to do the fundraising.

## FRIENDS GROUPS

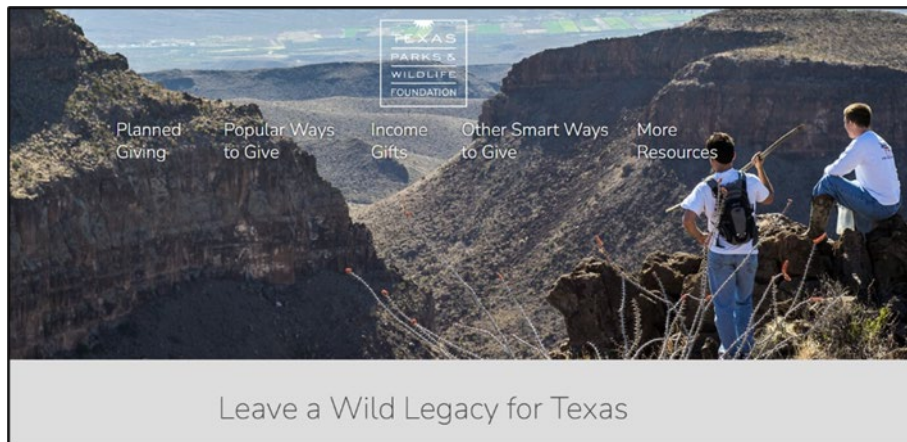
These groups are formed to raise money typically for a single focus purpose that could include a park facility or program that will better the community as a whole and their special interest. The value is in the form of time, labor, funding and/or capital. These groups are formed to raise money typically for a single focus purpose that could include a park facility or program that will better the community as a whole and their special interest.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility for this funding source is medium. These groups require a person with availability in time for the commitment. In many instances these are initiated by the public and a desire to preserve a park, specific amenity, or the cultural heritage of place. The Town should remain open to evaluating these opportunities on a case-by-case basis. This funding source can be used for operations or capital.

## TRUSTS

These trusts are set up with individuals who typically have more than a million dollars in wealth. The legacy gift programs allow individuals to leave a portion of their wealth to support specific park and recreation facilities or programs in the Town. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Association, the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) and others annually encourage their supporters to consider such an option.

**Implication for Whitestown:** This requires the presence of high-net-worth individuals. This is an opportunity for the Foundation to explore with a contract consultant. Individuals can bequeath a portion of their wealth in the form of stocks or options to the Department through the Foundation. This funding source can be used for operations or capital. The implementation feasibility for this funding source is medium for the Foundation.





## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### VOLUNTEERISM

The revenue source is an indirect revenue source in that persons donate time to assist the organization in providing a product or service on an hourly basis. This reduces the organization's cost in providing the service plus it builds advocacy into the system.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town currently implements this as a component to the overall funding strategy. Volunteer programs are available through the Department. The goal should be to increase volunteer hours to reach 3-5% of total staff hours needed to operate the system. The value of volunteer hours is currently at \$28.54 in Indiana. This is a form of cost containment, to stretch budget dollars farther. This funding source can be used for operations. The implementation feasibility for this funding source is high for the Town.

### SPECIAL FUNDRAISERS

Many parks and recreation agencies have special fundraisers on an annual basis to help cover specific programs and capital projects. A well-planned social media campaign will help to keep the event relevant during the planning stages. Involving the public in the planning stages will help to increase the reach along with raising funds.

**Implication for Whitestown:** Currently, the Foundation hosts fundraisers for the Department events. It requires a cost/benefit analysis on the staff time required versus the return on investment (ROI). Ideally, the Parks Foundation would conduct an annual fundraiser to help generate the maximum revenue in one large event e.g., the Parks Alliance of Indianapolis organizes an annual Mayor's Lunch for Parks supported by the entire community. The implementation feasibility for this funding source is medium.



### 5.1.3 CAPITAL FUNDING SOURCES

#### BUILD OPERATE TRANSFER (BOT)

Indiana Code 5-23, or the Build-Operate-Transfer statute, makes it easier for municipalities and local government entities to enter into public-private-partnerships to develop projects in their communities. In the BOT framework, a third-party delegate to a private sector entity to design and build infrastructure and to operate and maintain these facilities for a certain period. During this period, the private party has the responsibility to procure the financing for the project. The facility will then be transferred to the public administration at the end of the agreement. This has been utilized by school districts predominantly for decades. Recreation facilities are more recently leveraging this funding source.



**Implications for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility for this funding source is high, with the implementation risk being low for the Town. This funding source can only be used for capital. As the Town grows the parks system commensurate with the Town, this funding source can assist with new facilities.

#### CAPITAL FEES

Capital fees are added to the cost of revenue producing facilities such as golf courses, pools, recreation centers, hospitality centers and sports complexes and are lifted off after the improvement is paid off. The Town currently does not operate any special facilities. However, the Town should remain open to this as an opportunity where charges for admissions can help cover capital expenses.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town should monitor for changing circumstances that could make this funding source more favorable. This could be part of an overall funding strategy for large asset development within the park system. The implementation feasibility for this funding source is high for the Town.

#### DEDICATION/DEVELOPMENT/ REDEVELOPMENT FEES

These fees are assessed for the development of residential properties with the proceeds to be used for parks and recreation purposes, such as open space acquisitions, community park site development, neighborhood park development, regional park acquisition and development, etc. Additionally, redevelopment fees are attained from the property tax increase that comes from the development of trails, signature parks and destination facilities. (e.g., Atlanta / Charlotte)

**Implications for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility for this funding source is high, with the implementation risk being medium for the Town. The Town should monitor for changing circumstances that could make this funding source more favorable for parks and recreation purposes.

#### DEVELOPMENT FEES/RECREATION IMPACT FEES

These fees are assessed for the development of residential properties with the proceeds to be used for parks and recreation purposes, such as land acquisitions and park site development.

**Implication for Whitestown:** Wisely, the Town implements this funding source. The considerable amount of growth the past ten years created the need to implement this in order to help grow the park system commensurate with the Town population.

#### CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND

The Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund (CCPF) takes critical steps to addressing many challenges laid bare by the pandemic, especially in rural America and low- and moderate-income communities, helping to ensure that all communities have access to the high-quality, modern infrastructure needed to thrive, including internet access.

**Implications for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility for this funding source is high. The Town should identify projects that increase public gathering and tourism and apply for funding.

#### CORONAVIRUS STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS

The American Rescue Plan provides \$350 billion in emergency funding for eligible state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to respond to the COVID-19 emergency and bring back jobs.

**Implications for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility for this funding source is high for the Town. The Town should move quickly to identify projects and apply for funding.

#### 5.1.4 USER FEES

##### RECREATION SERVICE FEES

This is a dedicated user fee, which can be established by a local ordinance or other government procedures for the purpose of constructing and maintaining recreation facilities. The fee can apply to all organized activities, which require a reservation of some type or other purposes, as defined by the local government. Examples of such activities include adult basketball, volleyball, tennis, and softball leagues, youth baseball, soccer, football and softball leagues, and special interest classes.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

**Implication for Whitestown:** Currently the Department does not implement recreation service fees. The Town should monitor changing circumstances that may make this a viable option for funding a facility.

### FEES AND CHARGES

Quality-of-life services do not always have fees and charges to participate. However, there is a perception of quality that comes with fees and charges, where the expectation is lower, when something is free. The potential outcome of revenue generation helps to create a sustainable park system.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility for user fees is high, as many have come to expect additional fees for quality-of-life services. Currently, the Department does not implement regular programming, but does implement fees for shelter rental (exclusive use). The Town should monitor for fees and charges and increase accordingly with increased costs in doing business.

### TICKET SALES / ADMISSIONS

This revenue source is for accessing facilities for self-directed activities such as pools, ice skating rinks, ballparks, and entertainment facilities. This is also used for special events as well. These user fees help off-set operational costs.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town has implemented this funding source before for events. The implementation feasibility for this funding source is high for an event or facility that is in demand.

### PERMITS (SPECIAL USE PERMITS)

These special permits allow individuals to use specific park property for financial gain. The Town either receives a set amount of money or a percentage of the gross revenue that is being provided.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility for this funding source is high, with the implementation risk being low for the Town. The Town should monitor use of the parks and where challenges arise, this could be a component to the solution.

### RESERVATIONS

This revenue source comes from the right to reserve specific public property for a set amount of time. The reservation rates are usually set and apply to meeting rooms for weddings, reunions and outings or other types of facilities for special activities.

**Implication for Whitestown:** Reservations are already in place at all park shelters at Main Street Park, Anson Acres Park and Panther Park. There is an opportunity to reevaluate rental pricing based on the market, the quality of the experience and differential pricing using prime time / non-prime time, weekday / weekend rates etc. As more shelters are developed, shelters with the most desirable amenities in proximity should be priced higher.

### EQUIPMENT RENTAL

This revenue source is available on the rental of equipment such as tables, chairs, tents, stages, bicycles, roller blades, kayaks, boats etc. that are used for recreation purposes.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town implements this funding source by renting out the stage. The Town should continue to incorporate this funding source, wherever appropriate.

### 5.1.5 GRANTS

Grants can be a great funding source as part of a greater overall funding strategy for capital projects and some for specific services. For most grants are seen as, an opportunity of free money, increased credibility of fiscal stewardship, increased access to valuable data, and the ability to point to past grants awarded in future applications.

**Implications for Whitestown:** The Town and Department have been awarded several grants in the past. It is important for the staff to understand each grant's requirements. In many instances, municipalities look at the pros and cons of each individual grant to understand the cost-benefit ratio. Consider the following to determine an application's potential level of success:

- The overall time commitment





- Level of competition
- How well the project or service meets the application requirements
- Opportunity to renew the grant or will the Town fund long-term
- What are the reporting requirements and length of time to continue, if a service

The following grants include a mixture of sources that have been used by the Town in the past (highlighted in blue) which could be applied for again or new opportunities worth considering in the improvements planned for the park system:

Grant Opportunities	Funding Description
Land & Water Conservation Fund	Up to 50 percent reimbursement for outdoor recreation projects. Indiana reviews LWCF grant applications and submits recommended projects to the National Park Service for final approval.
Recreational Trail Program	For development of urban trail linkages, trail head and trailside facilities; maintenance of existing trails; restoration of trail areas damaged by usage; improving access for people with disabilities; acquisition of easements and property; development and construction of new trails; purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment; environment and safety education programs related to trails.
Next Level Trails	Next Level Trails (NLT) is designed to incentivize collaborative efforts to accelerate trail connections. The DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation will administer the program in conjunction with the Indiana Department of Transportation.
Local Nonprofit Foundation Grants	These nonprofit foundations raise money through community foundations for parks and help support local park foundations on a local and regional level.
Partnership Enhancement Monetary Grant Program	Partnership Enhancement Monetary Grant Program, administered by the National Tree Trust. Matching grants are available on a 50/50 cost share basis. Funds are available for projects which promote public awareness in support of tree planting, maintenance, management, protection and cultivation of trees in rural, community and urban settings. These are small grants ranging from \$500 to \$20,000.
Community and Urban Forestry Assistance (CUF-A) Grant	The objective of this funding opportunity is to inventory, plan, evaluate, educate, and plant trees. The only allowable costs for this grant program include the cost of (1) tree inventories, (2) management plans and ordinance updates, (3) purchase of trees, (4) planting trees, and (5) urban forestry educational programming, publications, signage, etc. to encourage comprehensive urban forest management and better public understanding of urban forestry topics.
Historic Preservation Fund	DHPA receives funding under the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. The HPF Program helps to promote historic preservation and archaeology in Indiana.
NRPA Grant & Funding Resources	The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) periodically posts information about grant and fundraising opportunities that are available for park and recreation agencies. Grant opportunities are posted in areas of conservation, environmental/habitat, programming, social issue initiatives, Art and facility/amenity development.
CDBG Funding	Funding received in accordance with the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Programs national objectives as established by the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development. Funding may be applied to such programs as Infrastructure Improvements, Public Facility and Park Improvements, Human Service Enhancements, Lead-Based Paint Education and Reduction, Housing Education Assistance, and Economic Development and Anti-poverty strategies.
IPRA Foundation Scholarships	Professional Development Scholarships, Leisure Studies Grants, and Scholarships. Up to \$500 for registration to conferences, schools and workshops. Predominantly for small Towns that typically do not have funds for professional development.
Land Trust	Many systems have developed land trusts to help secure and fund the cost for acquiring land that needs to be preserved and protected for greenway purposes. This could be a good source to look to for acquisition of future lands.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 5.1.6 TAX FUNDING SOURCES

#### PROPERTY TAXES

Ad valorem taxes on real property currently implemented by the Town.

#### LEASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS BELOW THE GROUND ALONG TRAILS

Lease land for fiber optics, utilities alongside of trails to support operations trails.

**Implication for Whitestown:** As the Town adds trails to the system including connectivity trails, opportunities may develop. The Town should look at these on a case-by-case basis. Should this funding source materialize, the Town should develop a policy to direct Town officials and staff.

#### HOTEL/MOTEL (TRANSIENT) TAX

Tax based on gross receipts from charges and meal services, which may be used to build and operate sports fields, regional parks, golf courses, tennis complexes, and other special park and recreation facilities.

**Implication for Whitestown:** Should destination parks or destination facilities be developed by the Town this could be a funding source worth implementing. The Town should monitor changing circumstances to determine the feasibility.

#### SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT/BENEFIT DISTRICT

Taxing districts established to provide funds for certain types of improvements that benefit a specific group of affected properties. Improvements may include landscaping, the erection of fountains, and acquisition of art, and supplemental services for improvement and promotion, including recreation and cultural enhancements.

**Implication for Whitestown:** This should be monitored for changing circumstances to implement if needed or of community benefit to develop a special district.

#### SALES TAX

This existing revenue source has been highly successful in funding the park system in Chesterfield, MO. This tax is extremely popular in high traffic tourism type cities and with county and state parks.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility for this funding source is low, with the implementation risk being high for the Town. It may be worth exploring the level of support for an increase to fund the park system that residents asked the Town to build from the survey results. This would require voter approval and would be an opportunity to be citizen led, if desired.

#### FOOD AND BEVERAGE TAX

The tax is usually associated with convention and tourism bureaus. However, since parks and recreation agencies manage many of the tourism attractions, they receive a portion of this funding source for operational or capital expenses.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town has implemented this funding source. This has been the most widely accepted tax in the state of Indiana, especially when funds are to be used for quality of life. It is minimal impact to each individual, since it is only prepared foods and beverages at one percent (1%) of the gross purchase. In addition, communities have benefited significantly when restaurants are adjacent to interstates with travelers from out of Town stopping to eat, thus contributing to the parks and recreation system. The current ordinance gives the Town the ability to use these funds for reducing property tax, economic development purposes, for Town facilities (building, renovating, maintaining, and operating), and parks and recreation purposes.

#### PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (PID)/ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (EID)

New developments can establish a Public Improvement District (PID) when authorized by the Town Council and legally set up according to state law. This taxing district provides funds especially for the operation and maintenance of public amenities such as parks and major boulevards.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town Has implemented this in the past. The Town should continue to monitor opportunities to use this funding source, as growth continues.



### CUMULATIVE BUILDING FUND (IC 6-1.1-41)

A Cumulative Building Fund may be established by the Board to provide money for building, remodeling, and repair of park and recreation facilities, or for the purchase of land for park and recreation purposes. This requires approval from the fiscal unit of the Town (Town Council).

**Implication for Whitestown:** Since this is an increase in the tax assessment on homes, the implementation feasibility for this funding source is low, with the implementation risk being high for the Town.

### 5.1.7 FRANCHISES AND LICENSES

#### CATERING PERMITS & SERVICES

This is a license to allow caterers to work in the park system on a permit basis with a set fee or a percentage of food sales returning to the Town. Currently, there is no fee or permit process for rentals to use an outside caterer.

**Implication for Whitestown:** This is one that would benefit the Town with the development of a banquet hall or conference facility. The Town should consider including this as a funding source if the park system evolves to include a large rental facility.

#### POURING RIGHTS

Some private soft drink companies execute agreements with organizations for exclusive pouring rights within their facilities. A portion of the gross sales goes back to the organization.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town does not currently implement this funding strategy. The Town should be mindful of this opportunity when the time comes to build recreational facilities.

#### CONCESSION MANAGEMENT

This funding source is from retail sales or rentals of soft goods, hard goods, or consumable items. There may be opportunities where the Town could either contract for the service and receive a set amount of the gross percentage or the full revenue dollars that incorporates a profit after expenses.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility becomes higher for the Town and may be worth considering when indoor recreation spaces are created.

#### PRIVATE CONCESSIONAIRES

Private concessionaires are used for contracted classes and golf course operations. Research for other areas of operations is periodically researched for viability. This funding source is a contract with a private business to provide and operate desirable recreational activities financed, constructed, and operated by the private sector, with additional compensation paid to the organization.

**Implication for Whitestown:** Private concessionaires can manage facilities for smaller departments that are trying to contain costs. These opportunities should keep in mind that businesses exist to make a profit. If there is an anti-profit preference, this can impede contract negotiations and deter businesses from entering into agreements. If there is a focus on the service and need for affordability, then a partnership should be established instead.

#### GREENWAY UTILITY

Greenway utilities are used to finance acquisition of greenways and development of the greenways by selling the development rights underground for the fiber optic types of businesses.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility exists for the Town as connectivity will be increasing as the community grows. As the Town develops trails, this may be an opportunity to create additional revenue.

#### NAMING RIGHTS

Many municipalities have turned to selling the naming rights for new buildings or renovation of existing buildings and parks for the development cost associated with the improvement.

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**Implication for Whitestown:** This funding strategy is an opportunity for the Town to explore implementation feasibility and expansion. Possibilities for naming rights exist with park improvements and new parks being developed.

### LAND LEASES

This includes options where developers / agencies lease space from town-owned land through a subordinate lease that pays out a set dollar amount plus a percentage of gross dollars for recreation enhancements. These could include a golf course, marina, restaurants, driving ranges, sports complexes, equestrian facilities, recreation centers and ice arenas.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The implementation feasibility for this funding source is medium for the Town. Town should continue to monitor changing circumstances that could make this funding source and option.

### LEASEBACKS

Leasebacks are instances whereby a private individual or company builds a community center or sports complex and the revenue earned comes back to pay the development costs

**Implication for Whitestown:** Town should continue to monitor changing circumstances that could make this funding source an option.

### EASEMENTS

This revenue source is available when the Town allows utility companies, businesses, or individuals to develop some type of an improvement above ground or below ground on their property for a set period of time and a set dollar amount to be received by the Town on an annual basis.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town may have easements that have been provided for utilities and landowners. The Town can be open to these as any new requests for easements are made with the Town. Town should continue to monitor changing circumstances that could make this funding source and option.

### ADVERTISING SALES

Advertising is implemented in sports score boards and being considered for expanding to the Recreation Guide and other areas of operations. This revenue source is for the sale of tasteful and appropriate advertising on park and recreation related items such as print materials, on scoreboards, dasher boards and other visible products or services that are consumable or permanent and exposes the product or service to many people.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town already implements this funding source. The Town should be mindful of the potential perception of over-commercialization of the park system and ensure all advertisements are tasteful and appropriately balanced with the natural setting of a park.

### INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS

Contractual relationships entered between two or more local units of government and/or between a local unit of government and a non-profit organization for the joint usage/development of sports fields, regional parks, or other facilities.

**Implication for Whitestown:** The Town currently has interlocal agreements. The Department has an agreement with the Boone County Convention and Visitors Bureau.



## 5.2 OPERATIONAL REVIEW

### 5.2.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the Master Plan, an analysis of operations, staffing and maintenance for the Department was completed. This began with a workshop with administration staff to obtain context and insights from the employees' perspective.

The objective is to analyze and provide guidance on current practices, future organization and staffing needs, improved operational efficiencies, policy development, technology improvements and marketing/communication opportunities. This will help position the Department better to enhance internal operations and successfully implement the Master Plan.

### 5.2.2 DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

Operations include multiple different management areas where the Department either takes on a support role or a lead role. An example of where the Department has a support role would be HR Management, Purchasing, as well as overall policy management. The Town has a Human Resources (HR) Department to manage this aspect of services and the Parks and Recreation Department supports the HR Department. Department operations require a proactive approach to managing assets and developing services for residents. Operational areas of management include:

- Administrative management
- Capital project management
- Communications management
- Concession management
- Contract management
- Document management
- Land use management
- Facility management
- Emergency management
- Environmental management
- Equipment management
- Event management
- Financial management
- Human resource management
- Information technology management
- Maintenance management
- Marketing & brand management
- Operations management
- Partnership management
- Planning management
- Project management
- Recreation program management
- Resource management
- Risk management
- Stakeholder management

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

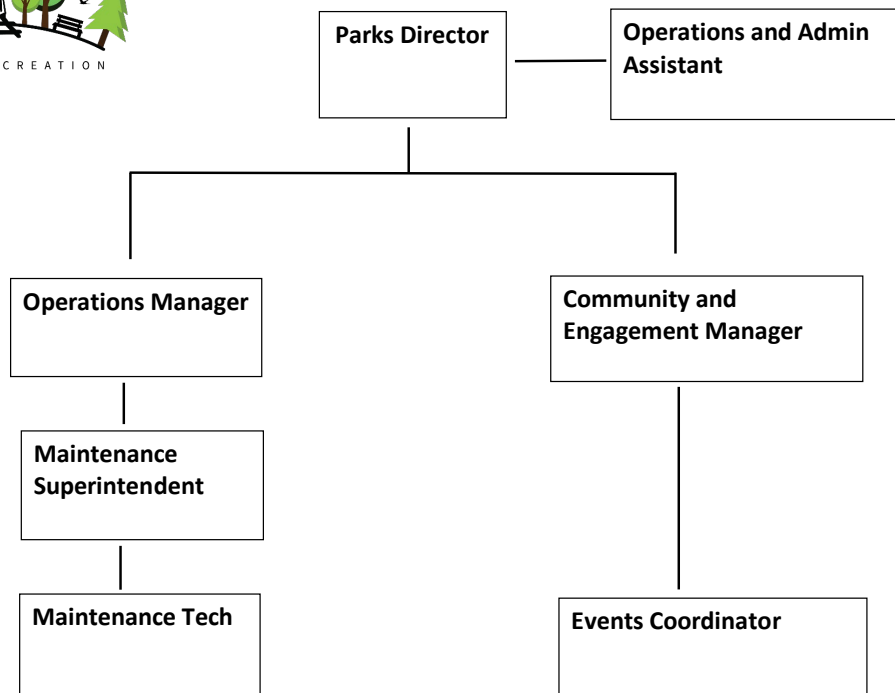
### 5.2.3 CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure of an agency can impact efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. Functional organizational structure is the best approach for the service industry. This is true for public parks and recreation agencies, as it builds structure in each major function/service provided. At the time of this analysis, the Department proposed a change in the organizational structure to increase efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. This structure was evaluated for streamlining service delivery.

Below is the current Department organizational structure.



### Whitestown Park and Recreation Organizational Chart



The following outlines the major functions by each employee.

#### **Director**

- Administration
- Events
- Projects
- Trainings
- Staffing support





### **Parks Operations Manager:**

- Project Management
- Admin
- Events
- Professional Development
- Park Maintenance
- Park Inspections
- Staffing support

### **Community Engagement Manager**

- Events
- Sponsorship/Partnership Management
- Social Media/Marketing Management
- Admin
- Budget Development & Management
- Volunteer Management

### **Operations / Admin Assistant**

- Social Media
- Rentals
- Purchasing/invoices
- Events
- Administration support

### **Event Coordinator**

- Admin
- Events
- Marketing

### **Maintenance Techs**

- General Park Maintenance
- Horticulture
- Events
- Aquatics
- Snow Removal
- Trail Maintenance
- Special Projects
- Administrative
- Mowing

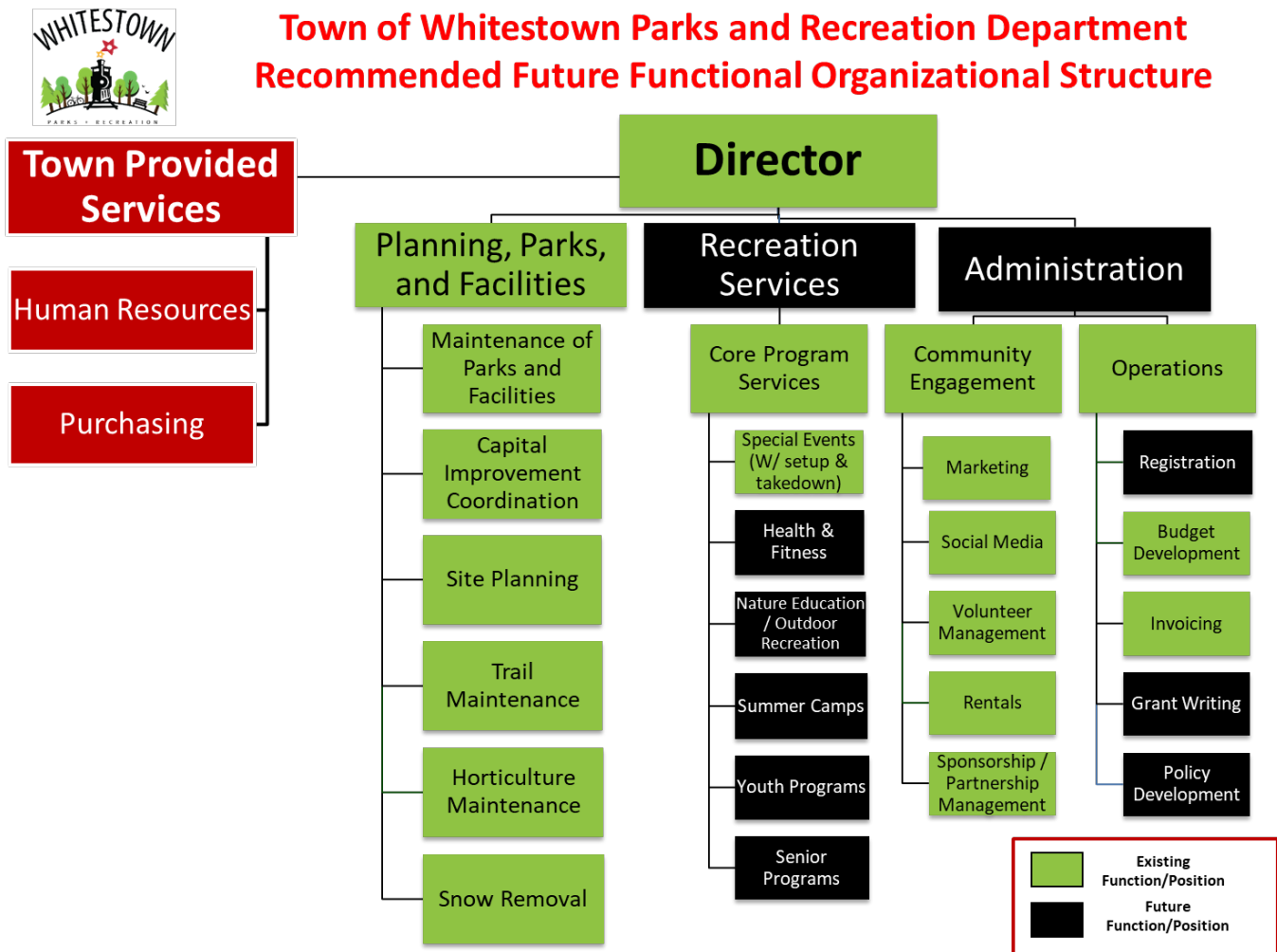
## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 5.2.4 RECOMMENDED FUTURE FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Department's functional organizational structure will identify communication channels and reporting channels, streamline task completion, address organizational needs, serve as a foundation to support organizational growth, optimizing spheres of management, and justify staffing requirements. The organizational structure for the Department is separated by the following major functions:

- Administration
- Recreation Services
- Planning, Parks, and Facilities

The following sections provide a visual aid of the Department and Division structures within the department currently and the proposed structures for the upcoming five years. The functional organizational structure also depicts existing functions, as well as future functions.



### 5.2.5 CONCLUSION

The proposed restructuring services will streamline service delivery. The functional structure will help the Department adapt services over time to continue meeting resident's needs. The realities of COVID-19, as well as the significant increase in population of the Town of Whitestown have increased resident's need, use, and expectation of parks and recreation services. In addition, the increased cost of doing business creates a need for increased revenue generation.



## CHAPTER SIX — ACTION PLAN

Based on community feedback, stakeholder input, technical analysis, and the priority rankings outlined within this Master Plan, the following key initiatives and recommendations were developed to enhance the park and recreation system and position it to best serve the current and future needs of the community.

### 6.1.1 INITIATIVE #1: WELL MAINTAINED AND SAFE PARK LANDS AND TRAILS

<b>Parks, Trails &amp; Facilities Action Plan</b>
<b>Short-Term Strategies (1-2 years)</b>
Work with the Town Planning Department to identify potential parcels of property to acquire for preservation and future parks in growth areas to keep park deserts from increasing (two neighborhood parks and one community park).
Assess opportunities to add pocket parks to the community, such as along the Big 4 Trail.
Develop a tree replacement program and identify locations where "next generation " trees should be planted, then apply for Tree City USA designation.
Master Plan for Jackson Run Park - and consider passive use with outdoor education.
Develop a concept for a Dog Park.
Develop a strategy to incorporate indoor recreation space into the system and partner with organizations for use of their space until the Town can develop its own facility.
<b>Mid-Term Strategies (3-5 years)</b>
Create a concept design for neighborhood park #1 with development and operational cost estimates to identify funding for construction.
Install shade structures and plant next generation trees.
Develop a master plan for Giles Park - determine the potential future of the barn.
Create a concept design for neighborhood park #2 with development and operational cost estimates to identify funding for construction.
Develop strategy to increase beautification efforts in high traffic areas of the park system ((e.g., entrances, downtown Big 4 Trailhead).
Improve trails in parks and create greater connectivity throughout Town jurisdiction.
<b>Long-Term Strategies (6+ years)</b>
Improve the Big Four Trailhead in Downtown.
Incorporate new unique public gathering spaces for a few to a few thousand people in the system.
Create a concept design for community park #1 with development and operational cost estimates to identify funding for construction.
<b>Ongoing Strategies</b>
Feasibility study for all new indoor spaces to identify costs and outcomes with the facility program driven by the program priority investment rating.
Continue to seek opportunities to expand the trail system and connect additional neighborhoods to trail system per the 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

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Update official Town documents and level of service as the parks, trails and facilities are developed.
Incorporate an environmental analysis as part of each new park master plan, ensure development incorporates environmental best practices, and document practices in maintenance management plan.
Continue to increase access to outdoor activities in nature.

### 6.1.2 INITIATIVE#2 ENHANCE EVENTS, SERVICES AND EXPERIENCES

<b>Programs &amp; Events Action Plan</b>
<b>Short-Term Strategies (1-2 years)</b>
Survey the public for time of day and day of week most convenient for programming to be offered and develop programming to meet these needs.
Enhance quality of events and expand activities within the Independence Day Celebration and Farmers Market.
Research registration software to prepare for the development of programming and the means to process participation and fees.
Develop a program plan that identifies park locations, target markets, financial commitments, and desired outcomes from programs and services developed.
<b>Mid-Term Strategies (3-5 years)</b>
Utilize findings in statistically valid survey to expand on <u>an additional (2)</u> program offerings (Health/Wellness, Adult Fitness, Youth Programs, Senior Programs, Outdoor Education and Summer Camps).
Increase teen programming.
Develop additional special events focused on Whitestown cultural heritage, family friendly, youth, and in the interests of people, ages 21-40 and ages 65+.
<b>Long-Term Strategies (6+ years)</b>
Utilize findings in statistically valid survey to expand on <u>an additional (2)</u> program offerings (Health/Wellness, Adult Fitness, Youth Programs, Senior Programs, Outdoor Education and Summer Camps).
Assess feasibility of building/acquiring indoor recreation space for expanding programming.
<b>Ongoing Strategies</b>
Conduct program feedback through participation surveys and intercept surveys to enhance existing programs/events and develop new with the customer in mind.
Evaluate programs and events incorporating customer satisfaction surveys to determine needed improvements or retirement using the evaluation cycle matrix.



### 6.1.3 INITIATIVE #3: HIGH PERFORMING OPERATIONS AND STAFF MANAGEMENT

<b>Operations &amp; Staffing Action Plan</b>
<b>Short-Term (1-2 years)</b>
Identify the appropriate size and location to replace the existing maintenance facility (Lifecycle replacement).
Work with Public Works to implement a computerized maintenance management software, such as CityWorks (CMMS) for collecting and analyzing the Department operations.
Establish policies for revenue generation, program pricing, and partnerships.
Work with HR To build the necessary annual staff training calendar and onboarding checklist for new fulltime and seasonal hires.
Design a formal volunteer program, policy and include opportunities in maintenance (landscape beds, playground mulch, etc.)
Develop maintenance standards by level and assign levels and tasks to various locations within the park system.
Develop a personnel plan to ensure staffing levels match the growth of the system.
Develop a lifecycle replacement schedule for all assets installed in the park system, including infrastructure.
Develop a maintenance plan incorporating best practices in operations (CMMS guide, policies impacting park maintenance, maintenance standards, use of volunteers, personnel plan, lifecycle replacement, etc.)
<b>Mid-Term Strategies (3-5 years)</b>
Develop a lifecycle replacement schedule for all assets installed in the park system, including infrastructure.
Update existing maintenance facility grounds to potentially develop a pocket park along the Big 4 Trail.
Update the community wide survey to determine level of improvement and any additional needs that may evolve from the growth of the Town.
Develop a succession plan with growth opportunities and professional development tracts by key positions.
<b>Long-Term Strategies (6+ years)</b>
N/A
<b>Ongoing Strategies</b>
Building documentation (specific topics/sections) and incorporate into the framework of a maintenance management plan.
Annually review policies and procedures and update according to needs and changes in operation (CAPRA Requirement).
Continue to use equity mapping to identify amenities most appropriate location raising the level of service to meet the growing demand.
Encourage Department staff to invest in community and self-development through volunteering on boards and committees.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### 6.1.4 INITIATIVE #4: EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

<b>Marketing &amp; Branding Action Plan</b>
<b>Short-Term (1-2 years)</b>
Invest resources in digital marketing to meet the residents where they are.
Establish the process to calculate and measure your marketing ROI (Return on Investment).
Develop Social Media Campaigns and content to increase community knowledge of offerings - featured park, featured event, featured project, featured employee, campaigns/contests etc.
Develop a branded template for staff to use as print materials in marketing all department activities.
Develop a process for the development of marketing and communication content along with avenues to increase the reach.
Develop park branding and entrance standards for easy identification.
<b>Mid-Term Strategies (3-5 years)</b>
Develop a department marketing plan specific to parks and recreation and complimentary of the Town's efforts.
Conduct training for staff to identify opportunities to tell the Departments story while working in the field - sharing images with brief details to an employee that will fully develop the message and post.
Establish points of interest in the parks (E.g., murals, natural vistas, or 3d art) in which people take selfies and they post it on social media increasing reach) and promote the locations.
<b>Long-Term Strategies (6+ years)</b>
Educate the community on the developed park maintenance and program quality standards through social media and demonstrating the staff living the mission.
<b>Ongoing Strategies</b>
Continue to look for new ways to increase parks and recreation marketing to increase knowledge of offerings and expand reach.
Leverage relationships with partners to enhance marketing efforts through cross-promotion that include defined measurable outcomes.
Ensure consistent branding Department-wide.
More emphasis on telling the story of the Department, the work you do, and the impact you have on the community.

### 6.1.5 INITIATIVE #5: ENHANCE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

<b>Funding Action Plan</b>
<b>Short-Term (1-2 years)</b>
Identify and allocate funding for CIP Critical Projects - trail paving for Panther and Gateway Parks.





Identify funding sources to acquire land for neighborhood park #1.
Utilize the sponsorship guide for opportunities to strengthen events and expand programming, include attendance figures in material.
Develop a formalized volunteer program to maximize resources and contain costs.
Work with the Park Foundation to expand giving opportunities to include a Community Foundation of Boone County fund for comfortable public giving.
<b>Mid-Term Strategies (3-5 years)</b>
Work with the Town & Clerk/Treasurer to incorporate capital funding sources into strategies for new park and facility development.
Identify funding strategy to develop neighborhood park #1 and proceed with budgeting.
Identify funding sources to acquire land for neighborhood park #2.
Update the 2019 Zone Improvement Plan for the Recreation Impact Fees in 2023.
Identify funding sources to acquire land for community park #1.
Incorporate additional user fees as the Department expands programming.
<b>Long-Term Strategies (6+ years)</b>
Develop funding strategy to develop neighborhood park #2 and proceed with budgeting.
Identify funding strategy to develop community park #1 and proceed with budgeting.
Identify franchise and license funding sources to explore and implement.
<b>Ongoing Strategies</b>
Develop a communication plan to educate the public during construction and the benefits/successes of new park uses and routinely communicate.
Utilize the sponsorship guide for opportunities to strengthen events and expand programming, include attendance figures in material.
Continue to develop partnerships that collaborate to provide services to the community.
Continue to monitor grant opportunities and determine the cost benefit when considering application.

## PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

### CHAPTER SEVEN - CONCLUSION

The Town of Whitestown Parks and Recreation Department does an excellent job serving the Whitestown community as evident by the feedback received from the community throughout the master plan, as well as the high level of use the existing parks receive.

As with any quality comprehensive planning process, the community was highly involved throughout the development of the Master Plan through stakeholder and focus group meetings. A total of 499 residents participated in the online and the statistically valid survey, as well as over 40 participants in the focus group and key stakeholder interviews. A public forum was held August 2022 that included participation by those in attendance at the Town Municipal Complex and through Facebook Live, 6 residents in-person and 26 residents through Facebook Live. These engagement opportunities with the community helped prioritize and identify the issues that need to be addressed in the Master Plan and to support the key recommendations that need implemented over the next five years.

As Whitestown experiences an abundance of growth in the demographic segment of residents ages 34 and under, it necessitates the Department continue to serve the needs of youth and families through the types of amenities offered at parks and through expanded programming. Also, with the amount of development taking place within the Town, the parks system must secure park land in underserved areas to keep up with the growth. The types of park land should match the needs identified in this Master Plan, which includes the addition of two (2) neighborhood parks and one (1) community park with appropriate recreation amenities.

This Master Plan establishes recommendations for Whitestown to achieve the vision the community has for the park and recreation system. The key is to ensure there are appropriate maintenance staffing levels to properly maintain the assets as the park system expands. It is important to bring all existing assets to their full lifecycle.

Whitestown must find the balance between the existing outdoor parks and recreation amenities, while ensuring residents have opportunities for year-round activities and facilities, which may include additional indoor recreation space. The Master Plan is a living document with many moving components that must be achieved simultaneously to ensure Whitestown builds upon its legacy over the next five years of providing a comprehensive mix of high quality, programs, facilities, and services that contribute to Whitestown's quality of life.

