



GREENCASTLE
Parks & Recreation

FIVE YEAR
MASTER PLAN

Public Presentation
Wednesday, February 21st at 6:00pm

INTRODUCTIONS



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AGENDA

- What is a park and recreation master plan?
- Park Inventory Summary
- Public Input Summary
- Analysis Summary
- Plan Recommendations
- Public Comment



PUBLIC COMMENT

Please write down your comments and/or questions you have on the comment cards provided and give to **Catherine Puckett**.

We will address comments/questions at the end of the presentation.

WHAT IS A PARKS &
RECREATION MASTER PLAN?

WRITTEN FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE
ACTION THAT ACTS AS A GUIDE FOR
SENSIBLE FACILITY, PROGRAM AND
SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

REASONS FOR CREATING A MASTER PLAN

- Improve funding opportunities
- Receive community input and feedback opportunities
- Ensure public wants the facilities that are developed
- Share information about programming and facilities with the public
- Give a clear sense of direction for moving forward over the next five years

PLAN METHODOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT



Phase 1

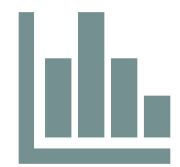
Inventory & Data Collection

APRIL 2023 TO DECEMBER 2023



Phase 2

Research & Analysis



Phase 3

Results & Recommendations

JANUARY 2024 TO NOW

PARK INVENTORY SUMMARY

An inventory of existing parks, facilities and trails are taken to understand what facilities you currently have and what condition those facilities are in. Then the inventory is further examined in comparison to national trends.

9 Parks

127.5 acres of parkland

8.8 miles of trails

1 outdoor pool

1 splash pad

5 playgrounds

6 pickleball courts

3 tennis courts

4 basketball courts

14 soccer fields

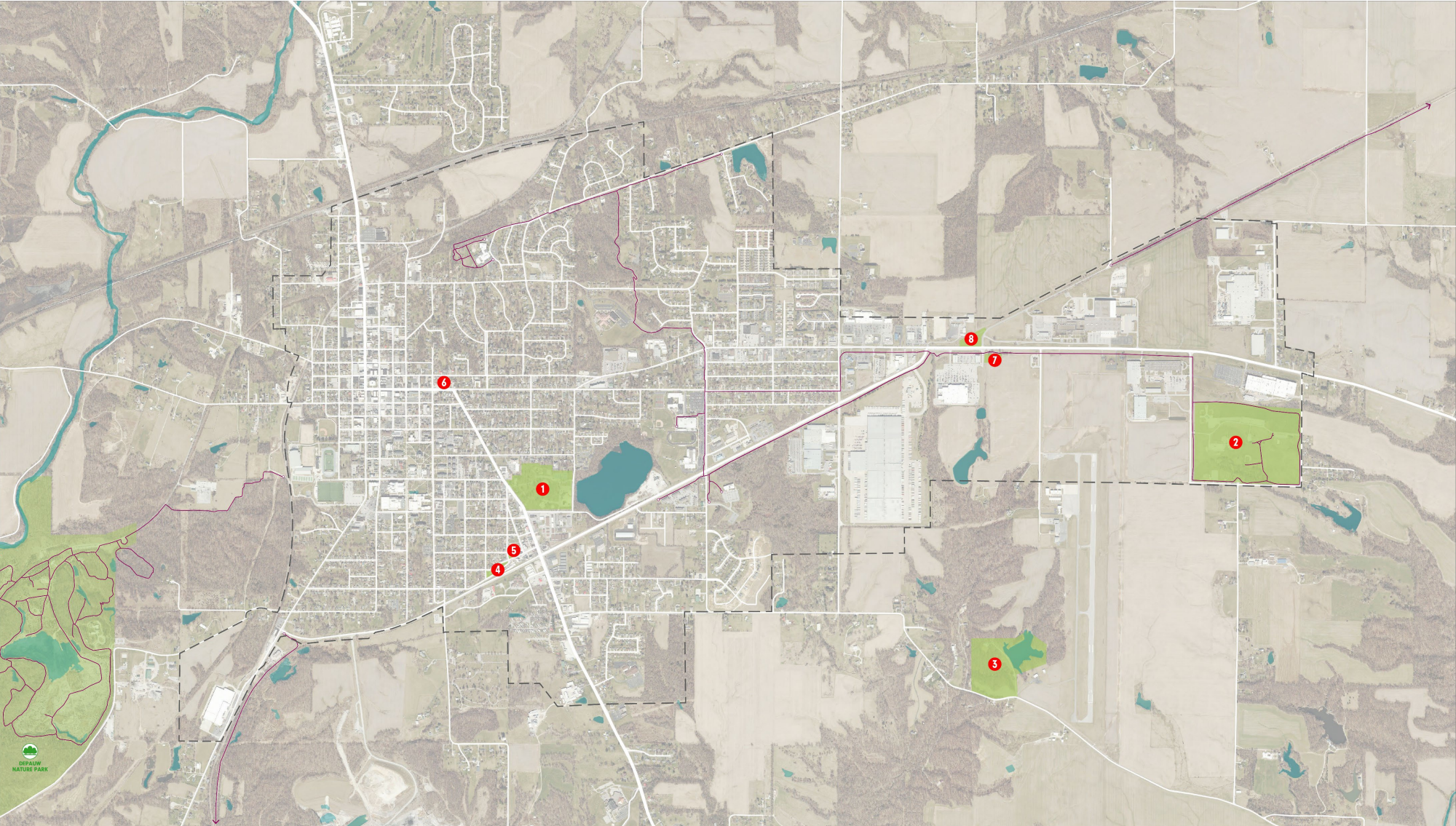
4 baseball diamonds

5 softball diamonds

1 skatepark

1 dog park

PARK SYSTEM



- 1. Robe-Ann Park
- 2. Big Walnut Sports Park
- 3. Jaycee Park
- 4. Maple Berry Park
- 5. Micaela Cancilla Park
- 6. Mary Rogers Field Park
- 7. Ballard Family Park
- 8. Vandalia Trailhead
- 9. People Pathways



PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

Public input was sought out through a variety of methods during the planning process.

These methods included a public survey, a stakeholder group interview, and a previous public meeting. This public meeting is also a method for public input that will be included in the plan.

STAKEHOLDER GROUP INTERVIEW



- A group stakeholder interview was held on **May 10th, 2023**, at Ivy Tech.
- There were a total of **11** in attendance .
- Stakeholders represented various individuals and groups in the community that have personal involvement in the parks including Friends of the Parks, Greencastle School District, People Pathways, Putnam Parks and Pathways, Greencastle Civic League, Putnam Pickleball Players, youth soccer, and city officials.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Strengths

- Existing trail system
- Existing parks such Robe-Ann Park and Big Walnut Sports Park
- Even though Greencastle is a smaller community, there are many opportunities for residents with the current facilities and programming
- Relationship to DePauw Nature Park
- Great collaboration between the parks and recreation department and other groups/organizations
- Cooperation between Greencastle Community Schools and the parks and recreation department

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Opportunities for Improvement

- Better communication of parks and recreation offerings to the community. Ensuring that information is getting out to community through different means of media
- Greater awareness of the health impact of parks
- Maintenance of existing trail facilities
- Filling in gaps to the trail system
- Providing access to school facilities such as rooms for programming and recreation facilities such as the track
- Ensuring programming is equitable

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM STAKEHOLDERS

Dreams

- Becoming a destination for parks and recreation events and tournaments
- More diversified and accessible programming at current facilities
- Adding another park on the north side of Greencastle
- Indoor aquatic center
- Indoor pickleball facilities

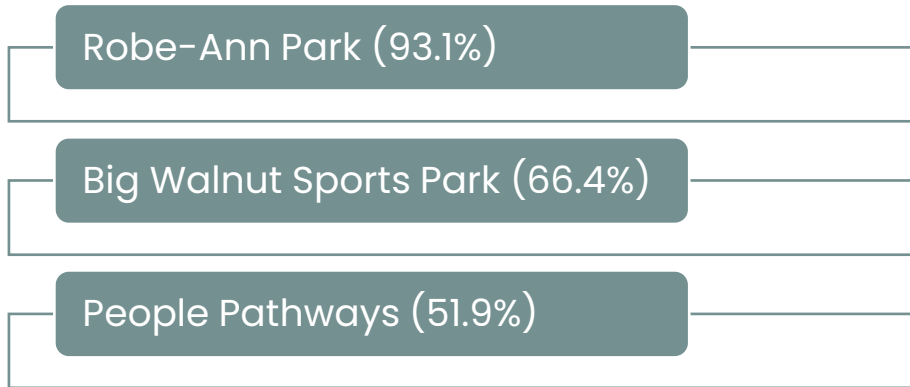
Barriers

- There are specific properties that are a barrier to filling gaps in the existing trail system
- Staffing resources are limited to initiate and execute new programming opportunities and it is hard to engage volunteers

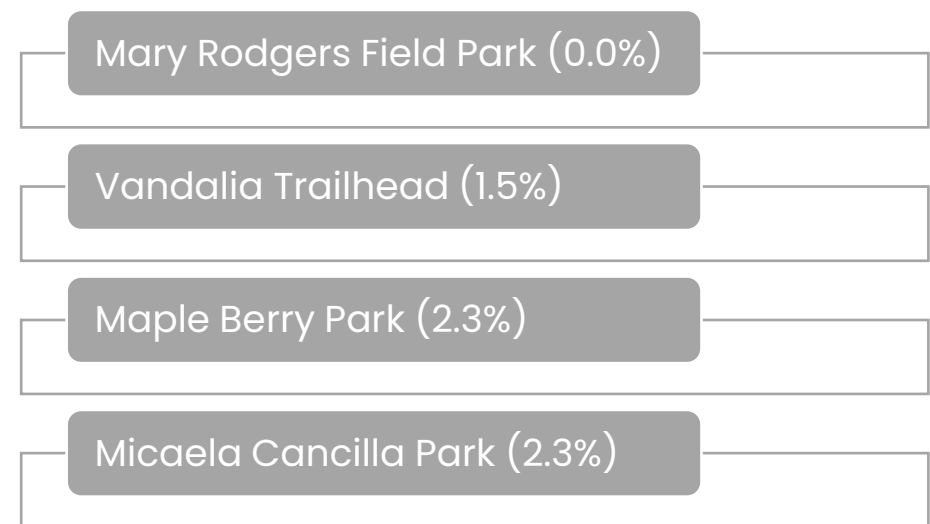
PUBLIC SURVEY

- A survey with 20 questions was developed and distributed online. A total of **132 responses** were received.
- The survey was open **4 months** from April 6th, 2023, to August 7th, 2023.

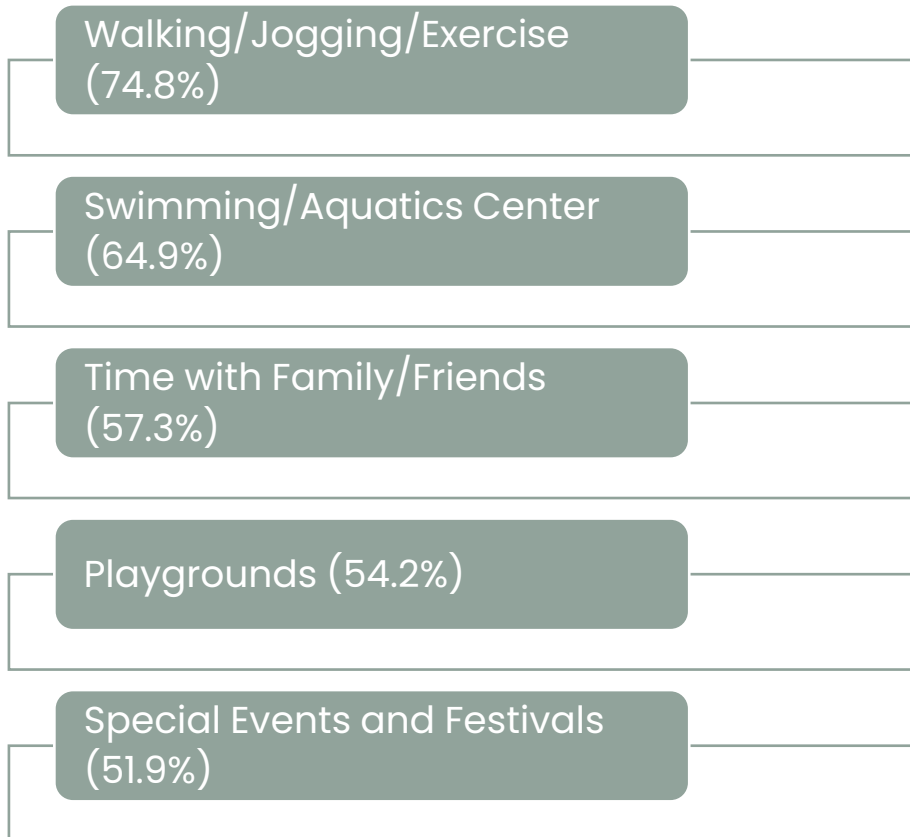
TOP 3 MOST USED PARK FACILITIES



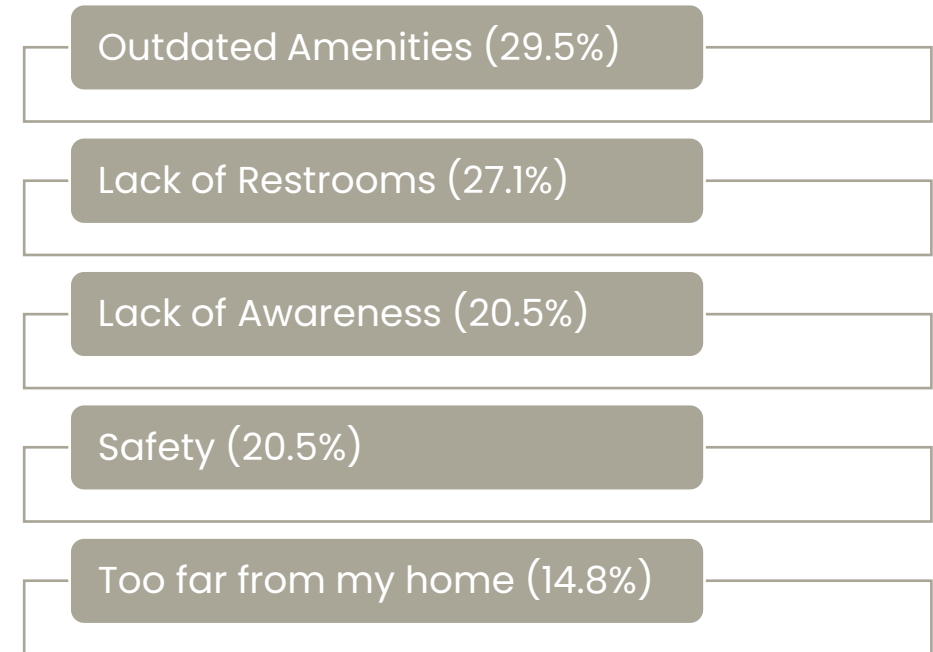
LEAST USED PARK FACILITIES



TOP 5 MOST POPULAR ACTIVITIES



TOP REASONS FOR NOT USING CITY PARKS



FACILITY RATING: PLAYGROUNDS

Fair Condition (46.2%)

- Most respondents considered the play equipment to be in fair condition.
- A few respondents thought conditions were improving and others wanted to see new, updated equipment.

FACILITY RATING: SPORTS FACILITIES

Good Condition (46.2%)

- Most respondents considered the sports facilities to be in good condition.
- A few respondents wanted additional pickleball amenities such as wind screens and shade. Other respondents wanted other sports facilities such as volleyball and football.

FACILITY RATING: RESTROOMS

Poor Condition (47.0%)

- Most respondents considered the restrooms to be in poor condition.
- A few respondents stated Robe-Ann Park's restrooms were in poor condition. These restrooms have since been renovated.

TOP 5 PROGRAMMING NEEDS

Community events (56.9%)

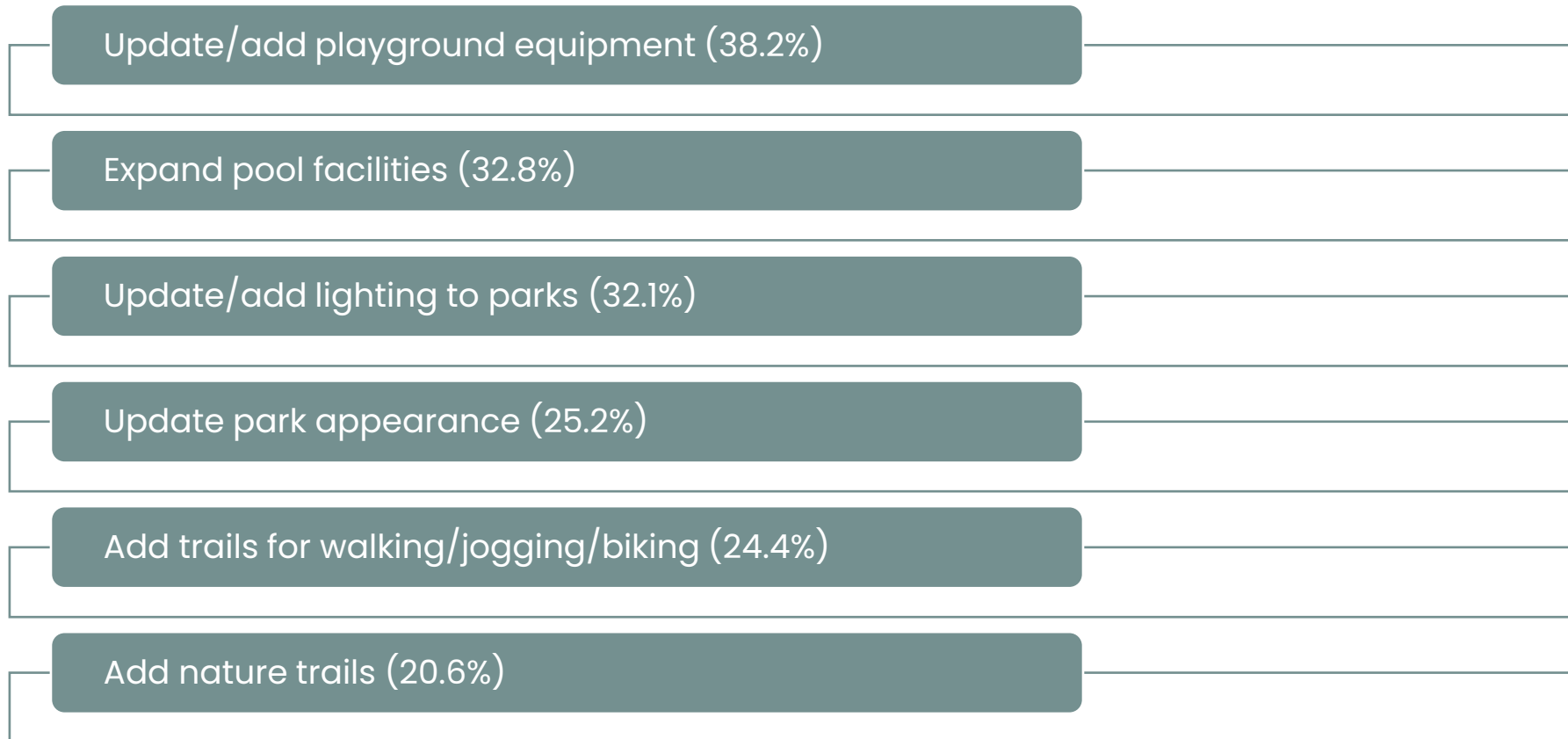
Indoor recreation opportunities (45.4%)

Fitness classes (44.6%)

Swimming lessons, aquatic programs
(40.8%)

Nature programs/environmental
education (40.8%)

TOP DESIRED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS



PUBLIC MEETING # 1



- A public meeting was held on **May 24th, 2023**, at Ivy Tech.
- There were a total of **12 members of the public** in attendance.
- Participants had an opportunity to discuss what they enjoyed about Greencastle Parks and Recreation offerings and what they would like to see in the future.

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM PUBLIC MEETING #1

Strengths

- Robe-Ann Park
- Big Walnut Sports Park
- Emerald Palace Playground
- Pool and splash pad
- Open fields for adults
- Existing trees for shade
- Bike and walking paths
- DePauw Nature Park & DePauw University

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM PUBLIC MEETING #1

Northside of Greencastle Lacks Parks & Recreation Services

- The old Emma Jones Elementary School provides an opportunity to address this lack of service area. Attendees thought this was a great possibility and would love for it to become another gem in the community like Robe-Ann Park.

Jaycee Park

- Attendees generally thought this park had been neglected in the past and would like more maintenance of the park
- Attendees want Jaycee Park to be connected to the trail system

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM PUBLIC MEETING # 1

Other desires mentioned:

- Retaining younger people in the community
- Providing recreation opportunities for teens
- Connecting trails to existing parks
- Updating Emerald Palace Playground
- Adding a gaga ball pit to a park
- Adding shade and windbreaking for spectators at Big Walnuts Sports Park
- Adding pet clean-up stations to each park
- Replacing signs on the trails that are missing
- Adding more play equipment such as slides, swings, etc.
- Fencing the little kids' playground at Robe-Ann Park
- More usable open space for pick-up games
- Indoor programming
- Partnering with the schools for more involvement in summer programs
- More community events



NEEDS ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Another aspect of the planning process is to research and review a series of industry recognized parks and recreation trends and benchmarks to establish a baseline for the types of services and facilities which are currently in demand.

DNR

Indiana Department
of Natural Resources



NATIONAL RECREATION
AND PARK ASSOCIATION



TRUST FOR
PUBLIC
LAND

Reviewed publications are from
Indiana Department of Natural
Resources (IDNR), National
Recreation and Park Association
(NRPA), and the Trust for Public
Land (TPL)

YOUR COMMUNITY IS UNIQUE!

It is important to note that the benchmarks reviewed are just an inventory and review of data for comparison. There is **not a “one size fits all”** approach to parks and recreation planning. Each community has **unique** needs, desires and challenges, and future planning should reflect this.

KEY TAKEAWAYS
FROM INDIANA
DNR 2021-2025
STATEWIDE
COMPREHENSIVE
OUTDOOR
RECREATION
PLAN (SCORP)

The top outdoor recreation activity was walking / hiking / jogging / running

Trails have been the topmost popular outdoor recreation activity for Hoosiers since 1995.

The top reasons why respondents participated in outdoor recreation was to be with family and friends, physical health, and mental health.

Greencastle is deficient in park acreage by 70.5 acres as outlined by IDNR SCORP.

- 20 acres per 1,000 residents
- Greencastle has 9,883 resident (2020 US Census)

Putnam County is one of the few counties to meet SCORP recommendations with a surplus of 774.2 acres.

KEY TAKEAWAYS
FROM 2022 NRPA
ENGAGEMENT
WITH PARKS
REPORT AND
2023 NRPA
AGENCY
PERFORMANCE
REVIEW

Top reasons residents visit parks are to be with family and friends, exercise or be physically fit, have a break from day-to-day stress and to be closer to nature.

Agencies serving jurisdictions less than 20,000 in population manages 13.0 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents which equates to 128.5 acres. Greencastle is currently meeting this benchmark with 127.5 acres of parkland.

Agencies serving jurisdictions less than 20,000 in population manage or maintains a median of 4 miles of trail for walking, hiking, running and /or biking in its network. Greencastle has an incredible 8.8 miles of trails!

Greencastle has a surplus in miles of trails and soccer fields.

Greencastle is deficient in playgrounds, multi-purpose fields, recreation centers and community centers.

KEY TAKEAWAYS
FROM TRUST
FOR PUBLIC
LAND 2023 CITY
PARK FACTS &
PARKSCORE

The overall median of parkland per 1,000 residents is 13.1 acres which equates to 129.5 acres. Greencastle is meeting this benchmark at 127.5 acres.

The average percentage of population that is within a walkable distance (1/2-mile radius or a 10-minute walk) to access publicly owned parks is 74%. Approximately 51% of Greencastle's population lives within a 10-minute walk, which is much lower than the national average.

WALKABILITY MAP

There are 3 areas that lack service in the community.

- **Area 1 – Northwest of downtown**

- **Opportunity:** Emma Jones Elementary School property

- **Area 2 – North of Deer Meadow Primary School**

- **Opportunity:** Adding amenities such as exercise nodes and/or storybook signage to the existing People Pathways trail north of school

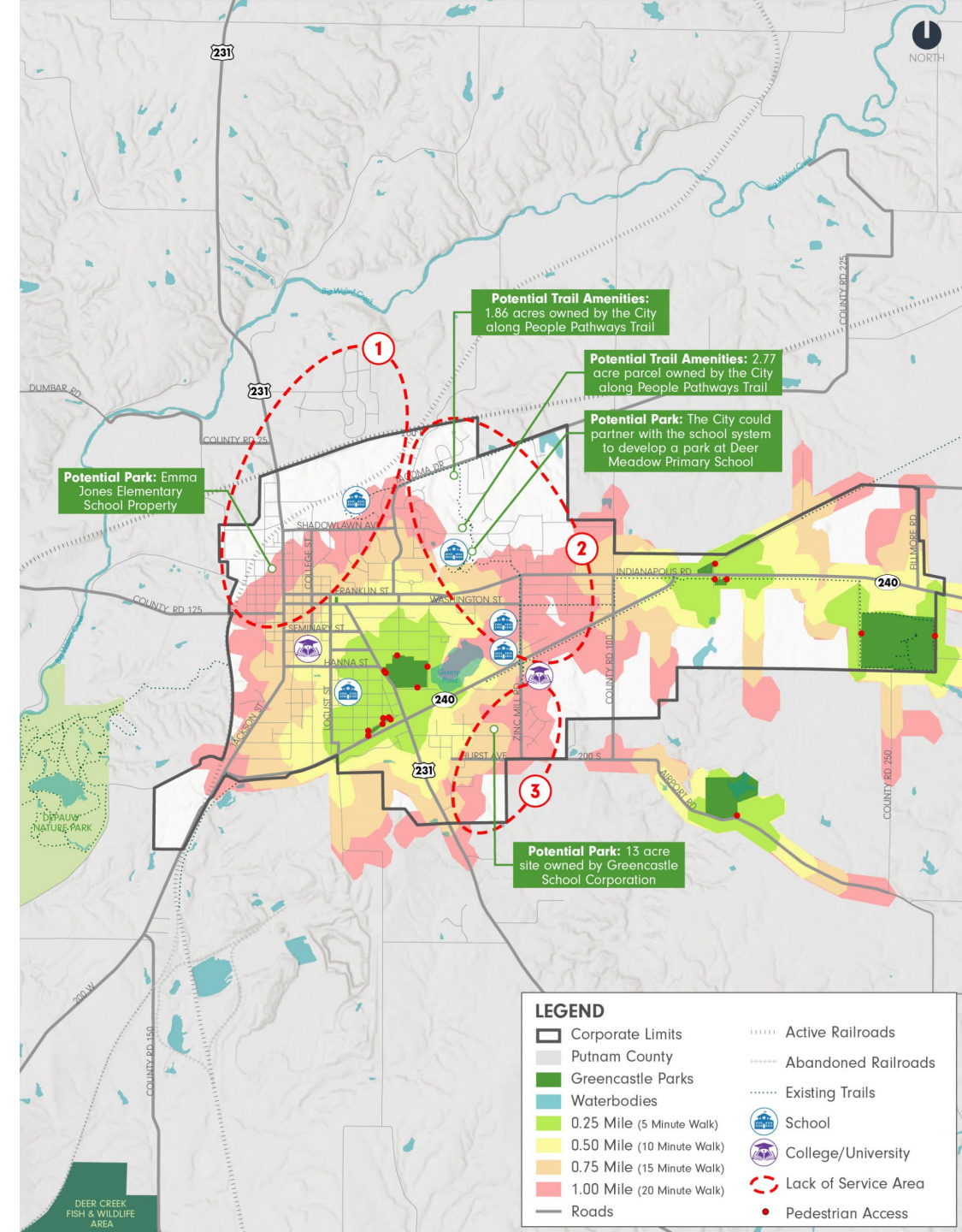
- **Opportunity:** Developing a partnership with schools

- **Area 3 – Near Ivy Tech Campus**

- **Opportunity:** Connect neighborhoods with a trail

- **Opportunity:** Approach Ivy Tech and inquire about an easement or donation of land to the City for a park. The Parks Department has already approached and started this conversation throughout this planning process.

- **Opportunity:** 13-acre site owned by Greencastle School Corporation. Greencastle School Corporation’s future plans for the site were to develop a sports complex but currently funding is not available. It would be recommended that other park amenities such as a playground, walking paths, shade, etc. be added to this project so more park services are added to this lack of service area.



KEY ANALYSIS TAKEAWAYS

Park Acreage + Location

- Greencastle is keeping up with national trends for park acreage, however for Hoosier needs, Greencastle could add an additional 70.5 acres to the park system.
- There are 3 areas within the community that lack service areas and new facilities should be focused in these areas.

Trails + Greenways

- Greencastle is doing an incredible job with their trail network and should continue with the current plans and recommendations established by Putnam Parks and Pathways.

KEY ANALYSIS TAKEAWAYS

Park Facilities

- NRPA analysis noted deficiencies in outdoor facilities including playgrounds and multi-purpose fields. Indoor facilities deficiencies included a community center and recreation center.
- This correlates to what was heard in the public survey. The most desired capital improvement project from the public survey was to update/add playground equipment. The second most needed facility identified by respondents was an indoor fitness center/weight room. Fitness classes and indoor recreation opportunities were the second and third highest listed programming need by respondents.
- Some of these deficits will be addressed with construction of the new Putnam County YMCA.

KEY ANALYSIS TAKEAWAYS

Programming

- Continue to diversify program offerings and ensure programs are accessible to all in the community.
- As identified through out the public input process, more community events, fitness class and indoor recreational programs are desired.

Staffing + Operating Budget

- As Greencastle Parks and Recreation continues to grow and offer additional park acreage, amenities, and programming to the park system, staffing levels and the operating budget should be evaluated to ensure it is adequate to support new needs.



PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the feedback received from this process from the public and park staff, the following priority recommendations have been identified for the next 5+ years for Parks and Recreation in Greencastle.

PLAN GOALS

Increase quality of existing parks and trails

- Update existing facilities/add new facilities at Robe-Ann Park
- Update existing facilities/add new facilities at Jaycee Park
- Increase maintenance of existing trail system infrastructure
- Increase maintenance of existing park facilities
- Update existing restrooms facilities and add new restrooms
- Improve trail wayfinding signage
- Conduct an ADA Evaluation of parks and programs

Better promote park offerings

- Use multiple forms of communication such as social media, newspaper, newsletters, mailings, signs, etc.
- Adding a marquee sign to Robe-Ann Park
- Ensure DePauw students are aware of parks and recreation offerings
- Update trail map
- Adding trail kiosks

PLAN GOALS

Expand services to areas in need

- Acquire part of the Emma Jones Elementary School property for a future park
- Acquire needed properties to extend trail system
- Add acreage from existing City owned properties to the park system in the northeast lack of service area and add trail amenities such as exercise stations and/or storybook trail
- Fill in gaps of existing trail system
- Complete Campus Link Trail Phase 2

Attract and cater to younger populations

- Conduct a teen and young adult survey to identify parks and recreation needs
- Provide spaces and facilities for teens in the park such as a teen hangout space, study areas, climbing facilities, WiFi access, etc.
- Implement programming geared towards teens such as a teen ambassador program, movie nights, game night, etc.

PLAN GOALS

Give existing partnerships a boost

- Establish a reciprocal agreement with the school system and the City of Greencastle, where each can utilize facilities rent free.
- Providing more opportunities for Greencastle School Corporation to be involved in summer programs such as music in the parks.
- Promote the trails

Focus on increasing program offerings

- Partner with groups and/or individuals/volunteers to fill gaps or needs in programming
- Diversify program offerings
- Provide equitable and accessible programs
- Add trail programming
- Add more community events
- Add fitness classes

NEXT STEPS

- Master plan to be adopted by the Park Board
- Master plan to be submitted to Indiana DNR by April 15th

PUBLIC
COMMENT

