JULY 2022

MONROE COUNTY PARKS *and* RECREATION SYSTEM MASTER PLAN *2023–2028*

Monroe County
Parks & Recreation

ppley
Institute for Parks and Public Lands
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR
RURAL ENGAGEMENT

MONROE COUNTY, INDIANA
PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM MASTER PLAN
2023-2028

Monroe County Parks & Recreation

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and Goal of the Plan

Master planning is a complex process involving thorough data collection, robust public engagement, and thoughtful analysis to create a periodic roadmap that sets goals and establishes priorities, then outlines a specific set of actions that the park department and community will undertake to meet those goals and priorities.

Monroe County Parks & Recreation (MCPR) contracted with the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University to help create a system master plan. Eppley and MCPR last collaborated in 2018 for the Monroe County Parks & Recreation Master Plan project. A parks and recreation system master plan provides the standards for level of service and facilities in the county, along with development priorities and an implementation strategy. It allows the Department to equitably allocate services and to meet identified deficiencies and shortfalls in the system for the future.

In addition to providing an inventory of the facilities, properties, programs, events, and an analysis of use and demand, the comprehensive plan solicits and documents extensive public and stakeholder input obtained throughout the planning process. The synthesis of information, public engagement, data, trends, organizational need, and measurable, definable goals and objectives guides the community actions and investment in a rational, systemwide, equitable approach that aligns with community priorities for parks and recreation services. Additionally, completion of a system master plan will also create an avenue for funding opportunities through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Outdoor Recreation (IDNR-OR) to support the goals that result from the community-driven plan.

The objectives for the Master Plan under are to:

- Gain public input for MCPR to use for direction of important policy issues and to build wide-spread support of the plan for successful implementation
- Create a published plan that will make MCPR eligible for grant and passthrough funding from IDNR-OR
- Provide an accessibility assessment of park and recreation facilities and programs to determine whether or not they are encompassing and accessible for all individuals
- Identify barriers to participation and establish priorities for barrier removal

This comprehensive system master plan will guide the Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department from 2023 through 2027.

Master Plan Process and Timeline

Research and Data Collection- October- December 2021

Public Engagement- October 2021- January 2022

Analysis and Needs Assessment- January-April 2022

Action Plan- March-May 2022

Final Plan Published- June 2022
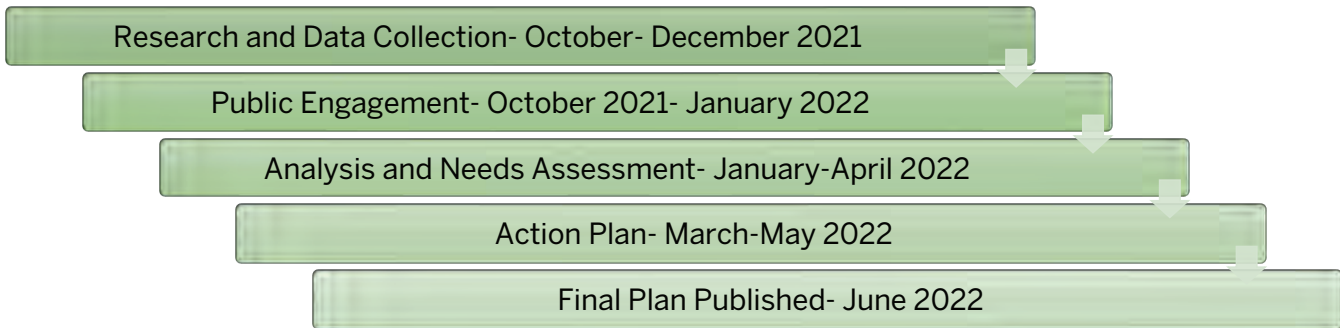
Public Input

Public involvement is critical to the success of any planning project. The Department and Park Board sought to use this process to build trust within the community while also developing a plan that outlines a path forward. Methods of public engagement included:

- Community Surveys
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Master Plan Website
- Public Comment Sessions

In addition, the plan was presented to the public at the Park Board Meeting on May 18, 2022 for review, questions, and feedback which was incorporated into the final plan document.

Surveys

Two surveys were conducted from November 2021 to January 2022. A random sample survey was mailed to 3,500 households in Monroe County and a convenience survey open to anyone was offered. Key findings from the surveys are noted here:

FIGURE 1: Survey says...

Survey says...
(the top responses)

Most Important Funding Priorities

1. Maintaining Existing Parks and Trails | 2023-28
2. **Conservation Efforts/Habitat Management | 2023-28**
3. Renovating Existing Parks and Trails | 2023-28

Benefits of Parks

1. Improve Physical Health and Fitness | 2023-28
2. Improve Mental Health and Reduce Stress | 2023-28
3. Provide Access to the Outdoors and Nature | 2023-28

Recreation Programs to Add or Increase

1. Farmers' Market | 2023-28
2. Public Events/Festivals/Picnics | 2023-28
3. Nature Programs | 2023-28

Recreation Facilities to Add or Increase

1. Restrooms | 2023-28
2. Natural Trails | 2023-28
3. Paved Trails | 2023-28

Key Consistent high rank in both plans | **New high rank in 2023-28 plan**

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were conducted to gain feedback about issues important to the planning process. Interviewees were representatives of key groups of constituencies including park users, youth sports organizations, schools, local government, and many others identified by the department. All interviewees and their affiliations are identified in Appendix A.

Main themes from stakeholder interviews:

1. Positive overall impressions of the department and park system

2. Need to improve communications and brand identity

3. Need to improve access and equity

4. Additional programming

5. Improve KAC

6. Indoor facility

7. Maintain current parks and grow trails network

Project Website

Progress of the plan development was documented through a project website containing general information, a project timeline, updates, and a comment section for public feedback and questions.

FIGURE 3: Project website

TABLE 1: Benchmarking key facts

Community	Service Area Population	Population per square mile	Median Income (dollars)	Median Age (years)	Total Number of Parks	Acres per 1000 Residents	Trail Miles per 1000 residents	Operating Budget per Capita
Monroe County	139,718	354	$49,839	29.5	4	3.6	.14	$11.35
Bloomington	85,981	3,472.0	$37,077	24	30	26.4	.30	$114.14
Ingham County	284,900	512.5	$54,395	32.4	3	4.2	.10	$10.38
Elkhart County	207,047	447.0	$57,021	35.9	10	6.3	.17	$11.37
LaPorte County	112,417	187.9	$53,658	41.1	5	5.2	.16	$4.97
St. Joseph County	272,912	596.1	$52,769	36.9	8	4.8	.12	$8.92
Vigo County	106,153	263.2	$45,230	36.4	10	25.4	.43	$16.86

Benchmarking

Benchmarking compares communities and park departments that are similar to Monroe County in population and department size to develop a picture of what might exist in typical department. In most cases, the benchmark communities are counties but this benchmarking comparison also includes the City of Bloomington because of its facility and program offerings to give a complete picture of recreation opportunities available to Monroe County residents. Other communities included were:

- Vigo County, Indiana
- Elkhart County, Indiana
- St. Joseph County, Indiana
- LaPorte County, Indiana
- Ingham County, Michigan

Key facts about each community and department can be found in Table 1.

Moving Forward- 2023-2028

All of the data collected throughout the plan development process including the current state of the parks system and the community, public input, demographics, physi-

cal site assessments, and benchmarking were analyzed through a needs assessment that informs the action plan for the next five years.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment brings together the information and data gathered through earlier stages of the planning process to identify a path forward for the agency. This assessment begins with a level of service (LOS) analysis, which summarizes the state of the parks system in Monroe County using data collected on facilities and programming offered both by MCPR and the City of Bloomington and comparing it to standardized parks data from national organizations such as the Trust for Public Land and the National Recreation and Parks Association. The LOS analysis is then blended with current conditions and public input to illustrate needs and gaps in the park system.

Major areas of attention for MCPR include:
- Improving accessibility and equity
- Renovating the Karst Athletic Complex
- Continue expanding trails network
- Improving communications and marketing
- Controlling invasive species

FIGURE 4: Karst Farm Greenway Trailhead

Action Plan

The final step in the planning process is the action plan. The action plan takes the recommendations created in the needs assessment and turns them into a detailed set of priorities intended to be undertaken within the planning period and beyond. The action plan spells out what is realistic within the time frame and does not necessarily include every recommendation from the needs analysis, balancing priorities with available funding, staffing, and overall capacity of the department.

This action plan establishes priorities and goals with anticipated completion timeframes, estimated cost, and potential funding sources for each action item.

Timeframes are as follows:

- Ongoing
- Immediate: less than 1 year
- Short-term: 1-2 years
- Mid-term: 3-7 years
- Long-term: more than 7 years

Possible funding sources include:

- County General Fund
- Non-Reverting Funds
- General Obligation Bonds
- Donations
- Grants
- Public-Private Ventures

One of the most pressing, yet challenging needs for the department is renovation of the Karst Athletic Complex. Given the scope and resources needed, a comprehensive overhaul is not expected to be completed within this planning period and is considered 'long-term' but will be started and is informed by the Karst Athletic Complex Improvement Committee (KAC-IC). The KAC-IC was formed in 2021 to provide advice and recommendations, suggest improvement priorities, and discuss and identify funding opportunities.

Other priorities include accessibility improvements throughout the system, a new playground installed at Karst Farm Park, a new restroom and utility upgrades at Flatwoods Park, and remediation of the fishing pond at Will Detmer Park among the many action items. A complete list of priorities can be found in the Action Plan.

FIGURE 5: Karst Athletic Complex

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Planning Area- Monroe County, IN

Monroe County is located in south-central Indiana. The county is comprised of eleven townships: Bean Blossom, Benton, Bloomington, Clear Creek, Indiana Creek, Perry, Polk, Richland, Salt Creek, Van Buren, and Washington. Monroe County Parks & Recreation primarily targets areas of the county outside of the City of Bloomington, which has its own Parks and Recreation department, for service.

Natural Features and Landscape

Elevation and Climate

The average elevation of Monroe County is 760 feet above sea level. In Monroe County, the summers are long, warm, humid, and wet; the winters are short, cool to cold and occasionally snowy. Over the course of the year, the temperature typically varies from 22°F in January to 85°F in August

and is rarely below 4°F or above 93°F. The average annual precipitation is about 47 inches, which is spread relatively evenly throughout the year with some concentration of rainstorms in the spring. The average snowfall is 17 inches per year (Weatherspark, 2022)

Topography and Geology

Monroe County is comprised of three main geological regions. The northern and eastern parts of the county are part of the Norman Upland and are characterized by steep rocky hills, deep hollows, and narrow ridges. The central part of the county is in the Mitchell Plain, typically rolling hills with an abundance of karst topography with sinkholes a very common feature. The western and southwestern portions of the county are in the Crawford Upland with the highest elevations in the county and distinguished by many caves, some of which are open to the public for exploration.

The bedrock is made up of limestone and shale, typically covered by heavy red clay. The limestone industry has long and historic roots in the county and the region and quarries Salem, Paoli, St. Genevieve, and high-calcium limestone that produce aggregate, agricultural, and building stone. (Hartke and Gray, 1989)

Watercourses and Lakes

The county lies within the watershed of the White River and lies between its two forks. Griffy and Bean Blossom Creek drain to the West Fork of the White River toward the northwest while Jackson Creek, Clear Creek, Indian Creek, and Salt Creek drain southward to the East Fork.

Reservoirs built on Bean Blossom Creek, Griffy Creek, and Salt Creek have created Lake Lemon, Lake Griffy, and Monroe Lake respectively. Lake Griffy was the first of these Lakes built as a water source for the city of Bloomington in 1924. It was replaced by Lake Lemon in 1953 and Monroe Lake was constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1963. Monroe Lake is the largest lake in the State of Indiana. All three lakes offer boating, fishing, and swimming,

Forests

Forests in Monroe County are generally classified as mesic floodplain, mesic upland, and dry mesic upland forests. Hardwood timber production is prevalent in state, federal, and privately owned timberlands.

Morgan-Monroe State Forest encompasses portions of Washington and Benton Townships in the northern part of the county. The Forest is used for hunting, hiking, camping, and timber harvesting. The was settled at one time but attempts at farming were abandoned due to poor soil and some settlement remnants can still be found throughout the forest.

The Hoosier National Forest is headquartered in Bedford, includes land in Polk and Salt Creek Townships, and extends throughout south-central Indiana. The Forest is used for an array of recreational opportunities including hiking and equestrian trails, camping, hunting, and fishing. Hardin Ridge Recreation also offers a boat launch and beach on Monroe Lake. The 13,000-acre Charles C. Deam Wilderness Area, part of the Forest, is in the southeastern part of Monroe County and adjoining counties.

Flora and Fauna

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has identified five endangered plants and twenty-three endangered animal species within the county. In addition, four plants and twenty-nine animals are listed by the state as threatened, rare, or of special concern (Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 2020). Many of the animal species are associated with caves, such as the Indiana bat and several invertebrates and insects.

Preserved Natural Areas

There are four locations in Monroe County which have been designated as dedicated nature preserves by agreements between the landowners and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), All of these preserves enjoy full protection under Indiana law.

The Cedar Bluffs Nature Preserve

Located 2.5 miles northwest of Harrodsburg. It encompasses 23 acres and follows the 75-foot high limestone bluff, which extends along Clear Creek. Cedar Bluffs is owned and managed by the Indiana Chapter of the Nature Conservancy.

Scout Ridge Nature Preserve

Located in the Morgan-Monroe State Forest. This preserve is owned and managed by IDNR and encompasses 15 acres of hardwood forest on a ridge that is a relic of Illinoisan glaciations.

Griffy Lake Nature Preserve

Contains 240 acres of mesic and dry mesic upland and ravine forest communities located on scenic rolling topography including over 200 species of herbaceous plants. Griffy Lake is owned by the City of Bloomington.

Bean Blossom Bottoms State Nature Preserve

Located in the northwestern part of the county, the preserve protects a heron rookery, floodplain forest, and wetland areas along Bean Blossom Creek. It is part of a 700-acre complex that includes U. S. Fish and Wildlife land, and private land owned or protected by easements obtained by the Sycamore Land Trust.

Sycamore Land Trust (SLT) has become a major conser-vator of land in Monroe County and throughout southern Indiana in recent years. SLT has obtained conservation easements and acquired land to be preserved as open space. Most are open to the public in several parts of the county, including[1]:

Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve and Environmental Education Trail

The exceptional habitat at this wetland preserve provides a home for the endangered Indiana bat, Kirtland's snake, and other threatened species. A boardwalk trail provides access to diverse wetland habitat and an eagle nest. It has been designated a state Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society and a Wetland of Distinction by the Society of Wetland Scientists.

The Cedars Preserve

The Cedars Preserve takes its name from the 20-acre stand of eastern red cedars dominating the hill at the center of the property. The large blocks of limestone visible from the trail on the neighboring private property and a small wooden shed are the last remnants of a limestone quarry that closed in the 1960s.

This nature preserve has experienced a significant increase in visitation over the past year. Sensitive natural areas at this preserve have been adversely impacted by the increased number of hikers. As of May 2021, the preserve is now closed to the public access to allow the land time to rest and recover.

Ghurye Arboretum

The Ghurye Arboretum is a 1.4-acre property, nestled in the Marlin Hills neighborhood on Bloomington's far north side. A mowed trail, with a sampling of 70 trees and shrubs native to Indiana, loops through a demonstration arboretum at this neighborhood preserve.

Lake Lemon Woods

Beautiful woods and winding trails on a steep hillside north of Lake Lemon. Visitors can also enjoy outdoor recreation activities such as birding, hiking, wildlife observation, and nature photography. An environmental education element is coming soon.

Porter West Preserve

Located along the south edge of the woods, Porter Wrest Preserve is notable for sinkholes, a historic cem-

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1 Sycamore Land Trust. Acquired from https://sycamorelandtrust.org/explore/

FIGURE 6: Beanblossom Bottoms Nature Preserve (photo courtesy of Sycamore Land Trust)

etery, and a robust display of spring wildflowers. There is a mowed trail for access to the cemetery and wildlife ponds as well as a loop trail in the woods with access to a mature forest.

Powell Preserve

Temporarily closed, due to erosion, Powell Preserve consists of forested hills, bottomland woods and a native prairie planting, all bordering Beanblossom Creek. The closure is anticipated to last approximately one year to restore the streambank and improve the safety of the area.

Scarlet Oak Woods

Named for the scarlet oak trees it consists of, this preserve protects a lovely open hardwood forest along a ridge. A creek runs through the eastern part of the valley.

Amy Weingartner Branigin Peninsula Preserve

A hilly, hardwood forest surrounded by Lake Monroe, which is designated an "Important Bird Area" by the National Audubon Society. There is a trail at the preserve that is frequently used by visitors, even more so through the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of this, the trail is now closed on weekends and holidays to ensure preservation of the habitat.

Planning Implications

As illustrated in Figure 7, Monroe County has an abundance of hiking, camping, and other outdoor recreation opportunities offered by a variety of public and private entities. It is not necessary for MCPR to create additional nature-based recreation facilities but may wish to identify properties that can be acquired for conservation and potential future development purposes.

Nature-based programming is an area in which MCPR both excels and has opportunities for enhancement. MCPR offers nature-based, environmental programs for community members of all ages. These programs include but are not limited to guided hikes, workshops, and special events. These programs are very popular and receive high ratings from attendees.

Invasive species are one of the greatest threats to the forests and wetlands of Monroe County and are prevalent throughout the park system. Invasive species should be tracked and removed when possible and measures taken

to replace them with native plants. Invasive species management had not previously been prioritized throughout the system but recent examinations have made clear the threat posed by mustard garlic, Callery pear trees, multiflora rose and other invasives. An Invasive Species and Wildlife Management Plan to better identify the scope and prevalence of invasives at each property, establish goals and priorities for management, labor and equipment requirements and costs for the system is underway and will be completed in 2022. Early efforts at invasive species control include volunteer events to plant native species at Flatwoods Park, Will Detmer Park, and Karst Farm Park.

The Department also benefits from partnerships with other organizations, including volunteers, that expand programs and work to maintain and reduce the invasive species in the county such as with Monroe County - Identify and Reduce Invasive Species (MC-IRIS). MC-IRIS offers programs and challenges aimed at reducing the environmental and economic impact of invasive species in the county. This strong partnership with MC-IRIS is an excellent, low cost, way to get community members outside, participating in healthy leisure-time activity, while also improving the environmental health of MCPR land and parks. MC-IRIS has assisted MCPR with surveys to help property owners identify and control invasive species and holds "Weed Wrangle" volunteer events at Karst Farm Park, Jackson Creek Park and long the Limestone Greenway to remove invasive species.

MCPR does not currently have park facilities on the east, south, or north sides of the county where Monroe Lake and Lake Lemon are located and Bloomington Parks and Recreation facilities are, naturally, clustered in and around the city in the center of the county (Figure 8). Extending the trails system in the county to the lakes would provide an extraordinary recreation network and fill recreation gaps in the east side of the county, though this would be a long-range goal. The recent completion of the first portion of the Limestone Greenway moves the county's trail system closer to Monroe Lake and further extensions should be explored.

FIGURE 7: Distance to recreation opportunities in Monroe County
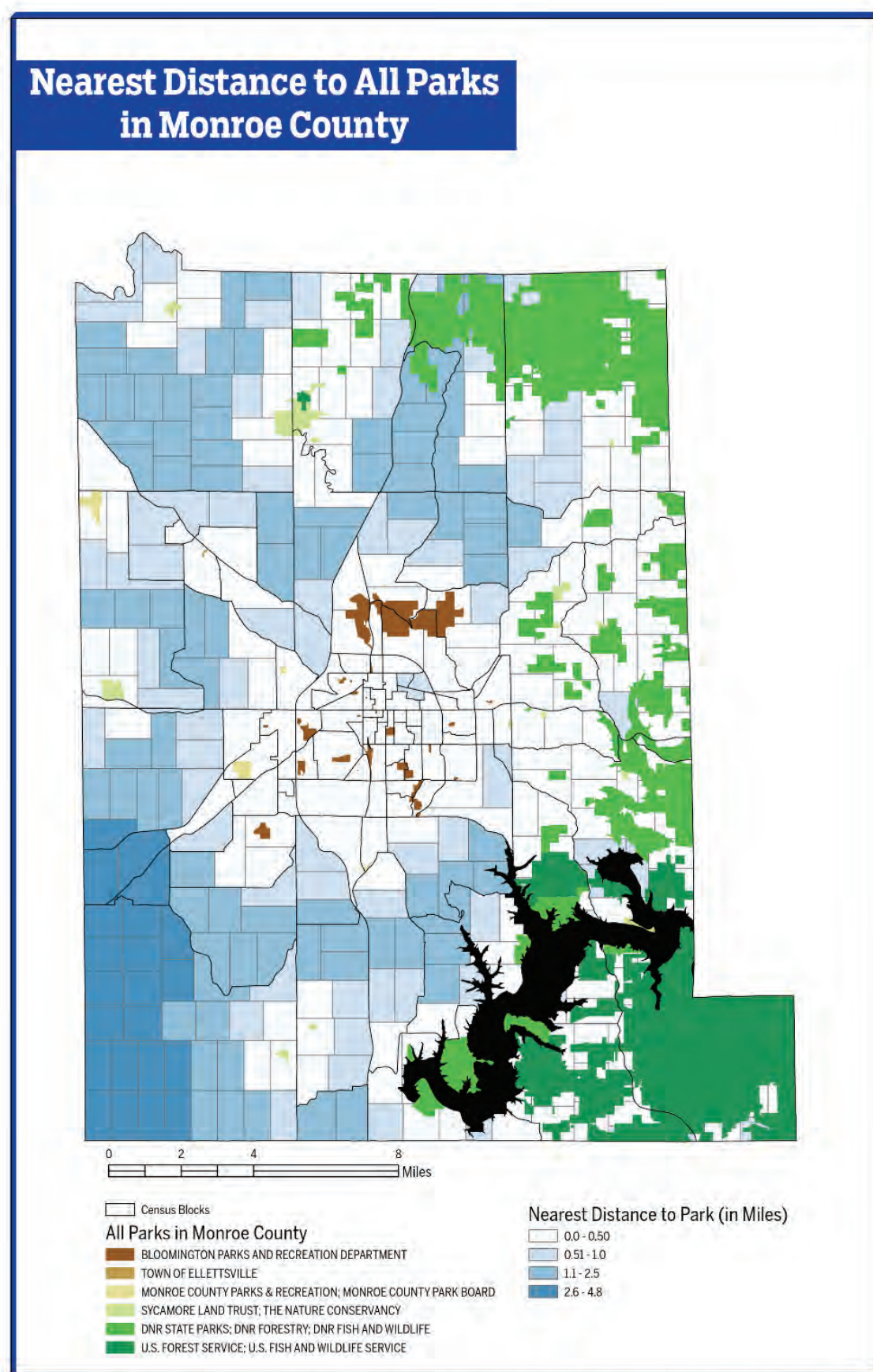
Nearest Distance to All Parks in Monroe County

0 2 4 8 Miles

Census Blocks

All Parks in Monroe County

- BLOOMINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
- TOWN OF ELLETTSVILLE
- MONROE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION; MONROE COUNTY PARK BOARD
- SYCAMORE LAND TRUST; THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
- DNR STATE PARKS; DNR FORESTRY; DNR FISH AND WILDLIFE
- U.S. FOREST SERVICE; U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Nearest Distance to Park (in Miles)

- 0.0 - 0.50
- 0.51 - 1.0
- 1.1 - 2.5
- 2.6 - 4.8

Sources: US Census Bureau, Geography Division, 2019 Census Block Groups; Managed_Lands_IDNR_IN.SHP: Managed Lands in Indiana (Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1:24,000, Polygon Shapefile), 20200327

Nearest Distance to Local Parks in Monroe County

0 2 4 8 Miles

Census Blocks

Local Parks in Monroe County
- BLOOMINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
- TOWN OF ELLETTSVILLE
- MONROE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION; MONROE COUNTY PARK BOARD

Nearest Distance to Park (in Miles)
- 0.0 - 0.50
- 0.51 - 1.0
- 1.1 - 2.5
- 2.6 - 5.0
- 5.1 - 8.0
- 8.1 - 12.2
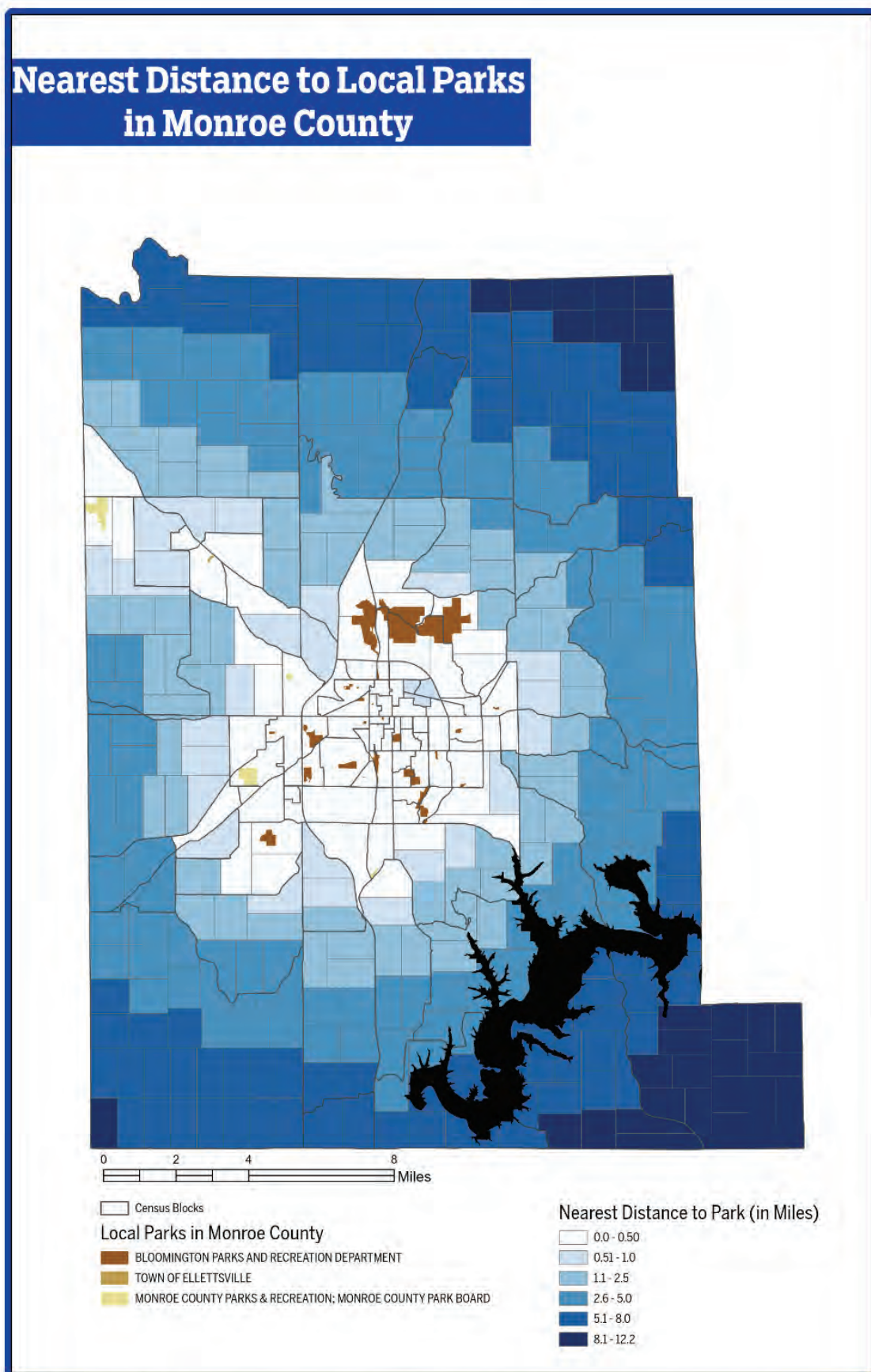
Sources: US Census Bureau, Geography Division, 2019 Census Block Groups; Managed_Lands_IDNR_IN.SHP: Managed Lands in Indiana (Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1:24,000, Polygon Shapefile), 20200327

Historical and Cultural Factors

Historical[2][3]

Monroe County was established by an act of the Indiana General Assembly on April 10, 1818. Monroe County was named after James Monroe, the fifth president of the United States. The City of Bloomington is the county seat for Monroe County and was chartered in 1820 with the specific charge of being the home of the Indiana State Seminary, now Indiana University.

Indiana and Monroe County, it should be noted, have a history that began long before White settlement in the area. The area now known as the state of Indiana is the ancestral land of several native groups still in existence today. As settlers began to expand to the West, Native American tribes were forced to leave their homelands and/or sign their land over to the government via treaties. From 1805 to 1846, the majority of the tribes within the Miami, Potawatomi, and Delaware nations, and the Shawnee people were forced to leave Indiana and relocate to Kansas, Oklahoma, Michigan, and several other states. Below is a list of a tribes and tribal members that have been documented by Western historians as having ties to the land in Indiana.

- Myaamiaki (The Miami People): Miami
- Bodwéwadmik (Keepers of the Fire): Potawatomi
- Lënape (The Original People), Delaware
- Saawanwa (People of the South), Shawnee:
- Waayaahtanwa (Place of the Curved Channel): Wea
- Peeyankišia (Those who Separate): Plankashaw
- Kiwigapaw (He Stands About): Kickapoo
- Muskuta (Little Prairie People): Mascouten
- Inoca (Uncertain): Illinois Confederacy
- Hocagra or Ho-Chunk (Big Fish/Great Voice): Winnebago
- Odawa (Traders): Ottawa
- Asakiwaki (Yellow Earths): Sauk; & Meskwahkihaki (Red Earths): Fox
- Wendat (One Language): Wyandot

Today, many Native American people, tribes, and communities in Indiana are working to regain their land rights,

sovereignty, language, and cultures. Tribes with headquarters, communities, and members living in Indiana include: Miami Nation of Indiana; Potawatomi (Pokagon Band, Forest County Band, Hannahville Community, Nottawaseppi Huron Band, Prairie Band); Shawnee; Wea Indian Tribe of Indiana; Eel River Tribe of Indiana; Kickapoo; Osage nation; Chickasaw; Cherokee; Ho-chunk; Cree; Ojibwe/Anishinaabe; and more.

Monroe County is on land that is the ancestral homeland of the Miami, Delaware, Shawnee, Wyandot, Pottawatomi, Piankeshaw, Wea, and Kickapoo people. These groups called what is now Monroe County their home at various points in the history of territorial expansion and statehood development. Historical accounts document that the territory that became known as "Monroe County" was (and is) the homeland and hunting grounds of the Delaware, Piankeshaw, and Miami people. Though many historical documents state specific tribes' geographic location within Indiana, it should be noted that the tribes' own historical accounts may differ from accounts written by western perspectives and that neither of these accounts (western or tribal) is more "true" or "accurate" than the other.

Settlers first came to Monroe County for salt deposits, wood, and freshwater springs. Land was not obtained from native peoples in one single event. Indiana was previously divided into several "Indian boundaries" that separated western settlements and different tribes. The "old Indiana boundary" is described as having extended, "near Gosport in a southeasterly direction, leaving the country on section 26, Benton township…" and divided, "…two important Indian cessions." (Bowen & Co., 1914) The land that was south of this division was included in part of "Harrison's Purchase," which was obtained from Native Americans via the Treaty of Fort Wayne in 1809. Land above this treaty line was part of the "New Purchase" and was attained from Native peoples through the Treaty of St. Mary's, Ohio, 1818. Monroe County was organized prior to final treaties put in effect and did not include all of the land that is found in present day Monroe County.

The general public was not able to purchase land that was gained through the treaties mentioned above until late 1816. Land entries were made primarily by settlers and were within what is now known as the civil townships of Clear Creek, Indian Creek, Van Buren, Richland, Bloomington, and Bean Blossom. Several more townships were added in the following years as Monroe County grew and obtained more land.

2 Provided by Monroe County Historical Society Museum and Genealogy Library

3 B.F. Bowen & Co. (1914). History of Lawrence, and Monroe Counties, Indiana: Their People, Industries, and Situations. B.F. Bowen & Co. Indianapolis, IN.

FIGURE 9: Limestone Quarry in Monroe County, 1907 (photo courtesy of Indiana University)

By the 1830's, a large part of the forest had been depleted for industry, fuel, housing, and farmland. The first limestone quarry was located in Stinesville, in northwestern Monroe County, in 1827. The limestone industry was, and is still, a significant economic force in the county and the region. Monroe County limestone has been used in the construction of the Pentagon Building, National Cathedral in Washington D.C. and for the New York Empire State Building. Many of Indiana University's buildings are also constructed from local limestone. The Showers Furniture Company, founded in 1856, was at its peak, the world's largest manufacturer of furniture. Bloomington, the county seat, was the home to a major RCA television plant, earning the city the nickname "Television Capital of the World."

Cultural

Monroe County and more specifically, the City of Bloomington, has much to choose from when looking for cultural experiences and attractions. Monroe County is home to the internationally known Tibetan and Mongolian Cultural Center that is occasionally visited by the Dalai Lama. Bloomington hosts unique cultural events such as the Lotus Festival of World Music and Arts, the 4th Street Festival of Arts, and the Taste of Bloomington festival. Bloomington has also been

frequently recognized for its vast array of restaurants and cuisine offerings.

Indiana University is perhaps the central cultural and economic driving force in Monroe County. With almost 50,000

FIGURE 10: Lotus World Music & Arts Festival (photo courtesy of Lotus Education & Arts Foundation)

FIGURE 11: County Poor Farm, 1952-Site of Karst Farm Park (photo courtesy of Indiana University)

students and faculty from around the world, the University offers a wide array of cultural and recreational events including numerous concerts, operas, ballet, Broadway shows, plays, stage productions, and films, through the internationally ranked Jacobs Schools of Music, the IU Auditorium, and various other academic departments and institutions. IU Athletics offers 24 teams in various sports competing at the highest athletic levels. The University is also home to several museums and art exhibits, and the country's largest college intramural event, the Little 500 bike race.

Transportation

Several state highways cross the county including IN 37 from north to south, and IN 45 and 46 from east to west. IN 48 begins in Bloomington and travels west into neighboring Greene County. In 2015, Interstate 69 was expanded to span from Evansville to Bloomington and in 2018, the highway was further extended into Morgan County to the north, following the path of IN 37. Construction is currently underway to finish the extension of the highway to Indianapolis. Monroe County is serviced by the commuter Monroe County Airport and nationally and internationally by the Indianapolis International Airport, approximately 45 minutes to the north. There is currently no passenger rail service or long-distance bus service. Though Monroe County has a long history of rail service, the only active railway is the Indiana Railroad, which branches to a few

industrial facilities, carrying freight. Many abandoned railways have been or are in the process of being converted to pedestrian trails.

Planning Implications

As with nature-based recreation facilities, county and area residents have an enormous variety of cultural and entertainment events to choose from. MCPRs focus should be on providing moderately priced or free opportunities for county residents which are easier to access than these types of events in downtown Bloomington or on the Indiana University campus such as hosting outdoor concerts and similar other events, particularly at Karst Farm Parks and Flatwoods Park with their large open areas.

Within MCPR's public parks there is reason to believe that park land was used by Indigenous peoples. Exact locations, and findings should not be disclosed in this document due to legal regulations prohibiting the sharing of archeologic sites and as an effort to protect them from potential destruction. Post 1930, many of MCPR areas were farmed and owned by early settlers of Monroe County.

Opportunities exist for MCPR to work more closely with tribal nations and communities in an effort to work together towards a shared goal of protecting and conserving historical and cultural resources and to offer more interpretative programs to educate the public on the region's history.

Population (2010-2019)

Monroe County: 137974 (2010), 140196 (2011), 141311 (2012), 141934 (2013), 143462 (2014), 144257 (2015), 145496 (2016), 146986 (2017), 146917 (2018), 148431 (2019)

Bloomington: 80405 (2010), 81574 (2011), 82215 (2012), 82543 (2013), 83460 (2014), 83793 (2015), 84465 (2016), 85551 (2017), 86522 (2018), 86630 (2019)
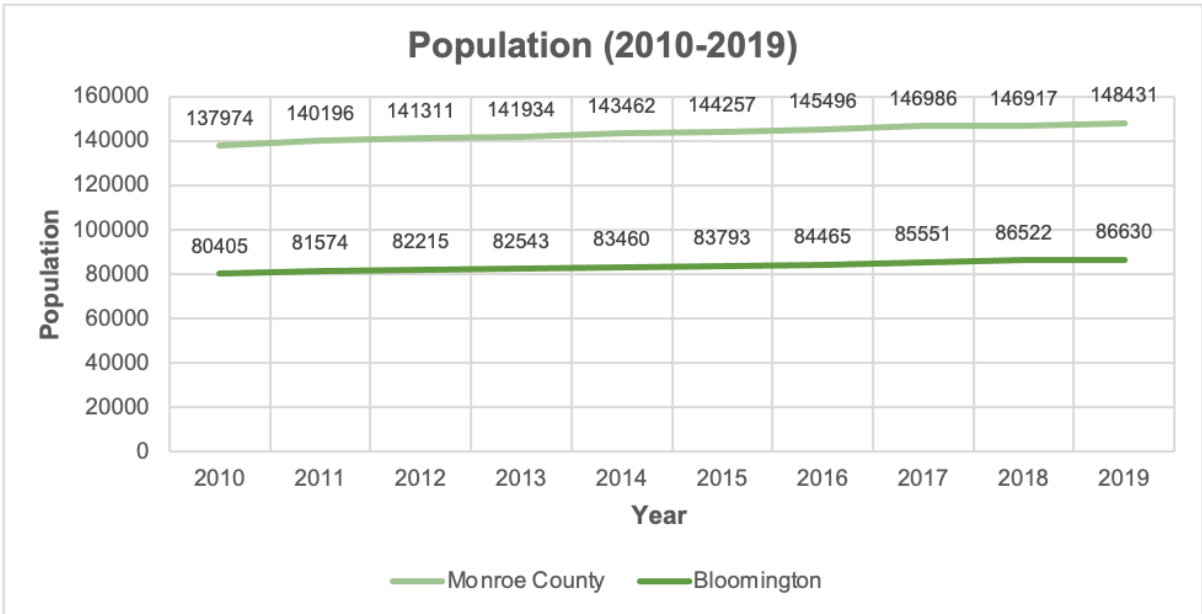
Social and Economic Factors

Population

Monroe County is one of the most rapidly growing counties in Indiana. The population was 101,000 in 1982 and is now close to 150,000.

Bloomington is the dominant incorporated location within Monroe County. The City holds the majority of the county's population along with most of the county's major employers, shopping, arts, entertainment, and educational and cultural activities. The population of Bloomington and of the county is increased by approximately 40,000 Indiana University students during the standard school year. Because more of the population is concentrated in and around Bloomington, demographic comparisons between the City of Bloomington and Monroe County at large are included. Because all 2020 U.S. Census data has not yet been released, demographics data included here was taken from the 2019 American Community Survey, the most recent complete population data set available. It should be noted, however, that the U.S. Census Bureau estimates Monroe County's population as of July 1, 2020 as 138,719 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). This figure will be used in other places in this planning document for the most up-to-date calculations based on population only.

The population of Monroe County in 2019 stands at an estimated 148,431, making it the 12th most populous county in the state of Indiana. The change in population can be attributed to 829 people leaving due to domestic migration, 656 people entering, due to international migration, and 205 natural increases in births (minus deaths) (StatsIndiana, 2021). The county continues to steadily grow at an average annual rate of .90%. Bloomington's growth rate has been very similar at .84% annual average since 2010.

Monroe County contains two other incorporated towns-Ellettsville and Stinesville. Ellettsville, similar to both Monroe County and Bloomington, has been growing at .64%,

TABLE 3: Monroe County Incorporated Cities and Towns

	Population	
City or Town	2019 Census	2010 Census
Bloomington	86,630	80,405
Ellettsville	6,642	6,378
Stinesville	213	198

annually. Stinesville has seen very little population change for many decades.

There is a definite shift in the age distribution in Monroe County from 2010 to 2019 with older age groups comprising a larger portion of the population. The median age of Monroe County residents in 2019 was 29.5, up from 27.5 in 2010. The racial makeup of the county is a large majority Caucasian at 86%, with Asians at 8.3 %, Black or African American at 3.3%, and Hispanic or Latino at 3.6% (American Community Survey, 2019).

The population of Bloomington, as can be expected because of the presence of Indiana University, is younger and more diverse than the county as a whole. Bloomington's median age is 23.7 years old, six years younger than the county's median. The percent of Caucasians in the City is 83% (ACS, 2019), making the presence of Asians, Hispanic/Latinos, and Black or African Americans is slightly higher than in the county. Male to female ratio in both the County and the City are very similar with a slightly higher proportion of females within the city.

TABLE 4: Monroe County Age Distribution

Age (Monroe County, 2019 v 2010)

	Under 5 years	5 - 9 years	10 - 14 years	15 - 19 years	20 - 24 years	25 - 34 years	35 - 44 years	45 - 54 years	55 - 59 years	60 - 64 years	65 - 74 years	75 - 84 years	85 years +
2019	4.60%	4.50%	4.00%	13.10%	16.90%	13.40%	10.60%	9.40%	5.00%	5.20%	7.80%	3.60%	1.90%
2010	4.70%	4.50%	4.60%	11.30%	20.60%	14.30%	10.40%	10.90%	4.60%	4.30%	5.10%	3.40%	1.40%
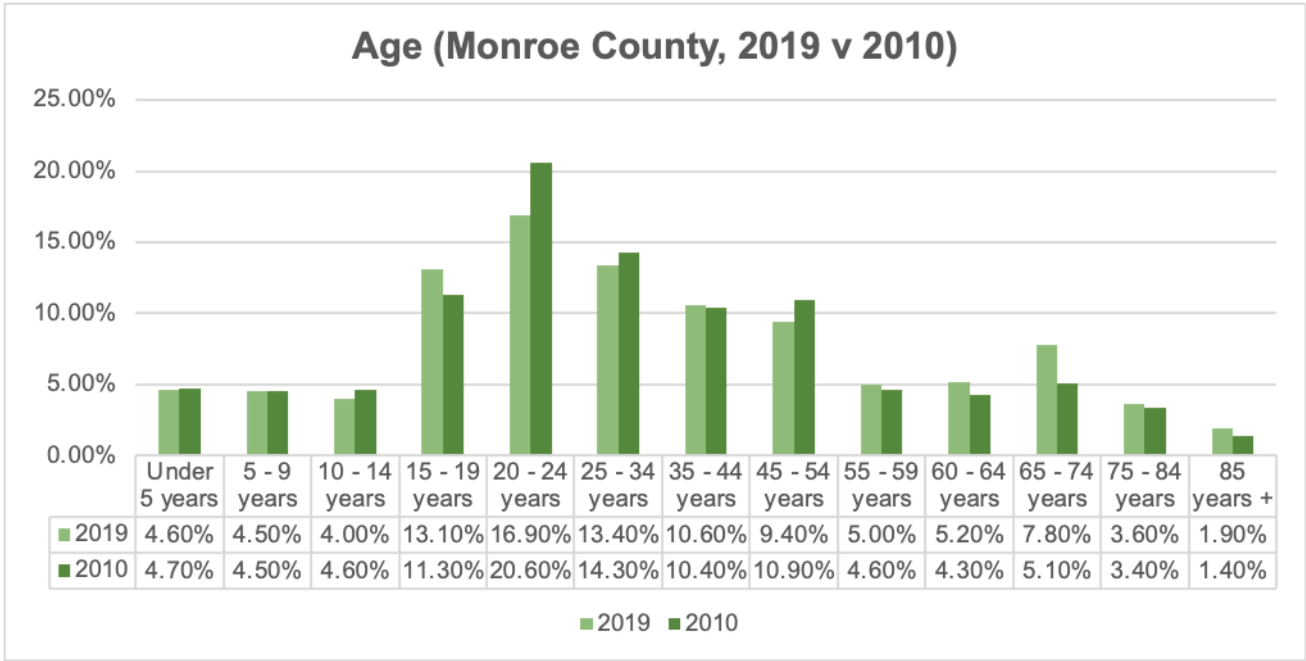
TABLE 5: Bloomington, IN Age Distribution

Age (Bloomington, 2019 v 2010)

	Under 5 years	5 - 9 years	10 - 14 years	15 - 19 years	20 - 24 years	25 - 34 years	35 - 44 years	45 - 54 years	55 - 59 years	60 - 64 years	65 - 74 years	75 - 84 years	85 years +
2019	3.40%	3.60%	3.30%	18.90%	24.80%	14.50%	9.80%	7.20%	2.70%	1.70%	5.50%	2.60%	1.90%
2010	3.70%	3.10%	2.80%	15.30%	31.00%	14.40%	8.10%	8.10%	2.70%	2.90%	3.80%	2.60%	1.40%
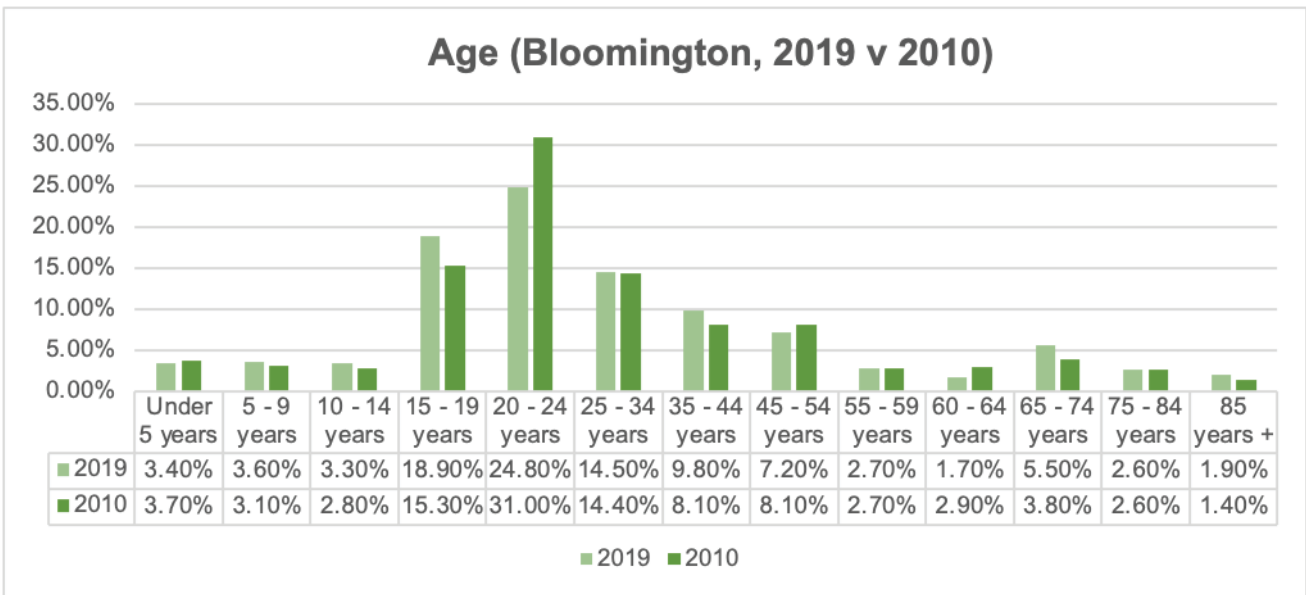
TABLE 6: Monroe County and Bloomington Race

Race, 2019

	White (Non-Hispanic or Latino)	Hispanic or Latino	Black or African American	American Indian and Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	Two or more races
Monroe County	86.00%	3.60%	3.30%	0.90%	8.30%	0.00%	2.80%
Bloomington	82.90%	5.00%	3.30%	0.10%	10.80%	0.00%	2.60%

■ Monroe County   ■ Bloomington
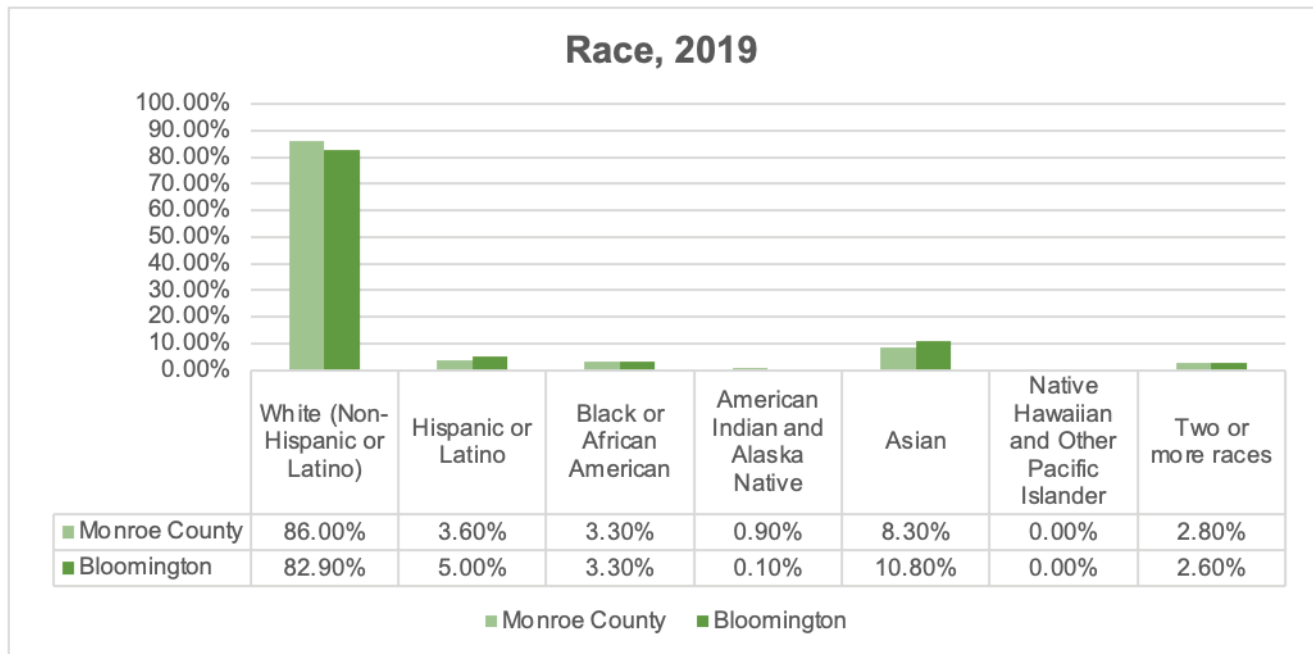
TABLE 7: Monroe County and Bloomington Gender

Gender, 2019

	Male	Female
Monroe County	49.90%	50.10%
Bloomington	49.00%	51.00%

■ Male   ■ Female
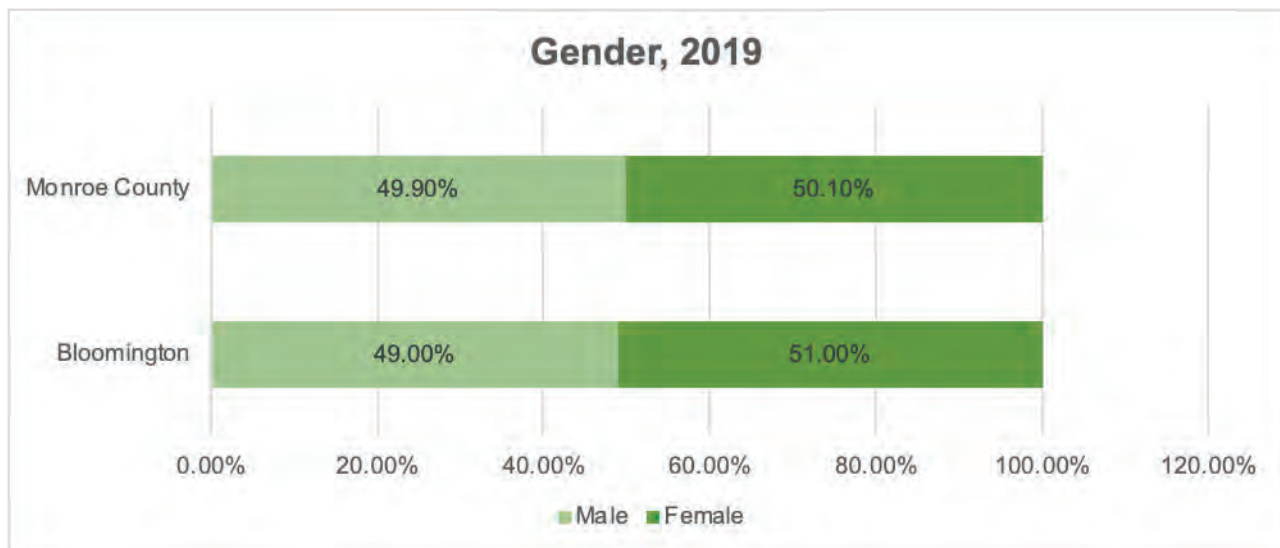
Education

Monroe County residents are highly educated with 46.2% of individuals over the age of 25 holding at least a bachelor's degree. This is almost double the state average of 26.9% of the population holding at least a bachelor's degree. In addition, over 22% of the county population has a graduate or professional degree. This is a clear reflection of the presence of Indiana University in the county and its large number of highly educated employees. An additional 24.7% of Monroe County residents have attained an associate degree or have attended at least some college. 95.3% of residents have graduated from high school, well above the state average of 87.2%.

TABLE 8: Monroe County Education Levels

Monroe County Education Levels, 2019

	Less than 9th grade	9th to 12th grade, no diploma	High school graduate (includes equivalency)	Some college, no degree	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree
%	2.2%	5.5%	22.7%	17.7%	6.7%	22.90%	22.2%
#	1,031	2,986	20,670	15,357	5,461	20,000	19,100
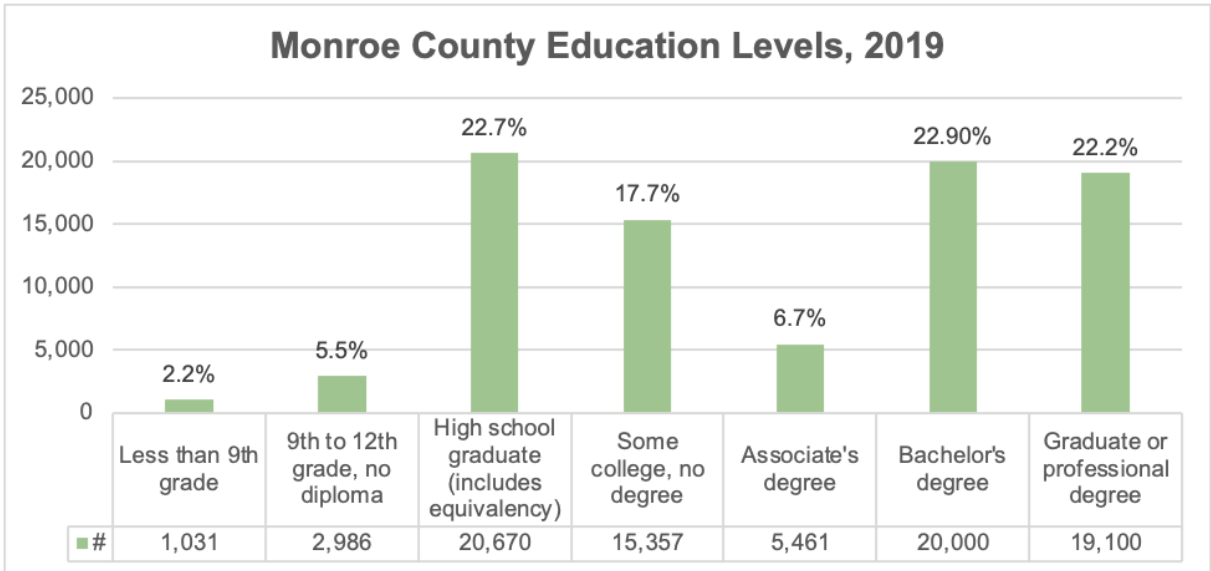
Economic

The median income for Monroe County residents in 2019 was $52,453, while median income for the state of Indiana in the same year was $57,603. Currently, 21% of Monroe County's population lives under the poverty level, while only 12% of Indiana's residents live below the poverty line (ACS, 2019). While the income and poverty levels for the county are incongruent with the high education levels and income statistics, it can again be attributed to Indiana University and the large number of students who claim Monroe County as home but who have no or little income while they are attending school.

TABLE 9: Monroe County Household Income

Monroe County Household Income, 2019

Income	Percent of Households
Less than $10,000	9.60%
$10,000 to $14,999	5.30%
$15,000 to $24,999	11.70%
$25,000 to $34,999	7.70%
$35,000 to $49,999	12.00%
$50,000 to $74,999	17.00%
$75,000 to $99,999	12.40%
$100,000 to $149,999	13.60%
$150,000 to $199,999	5.10%
$200,000 or more	5.60%
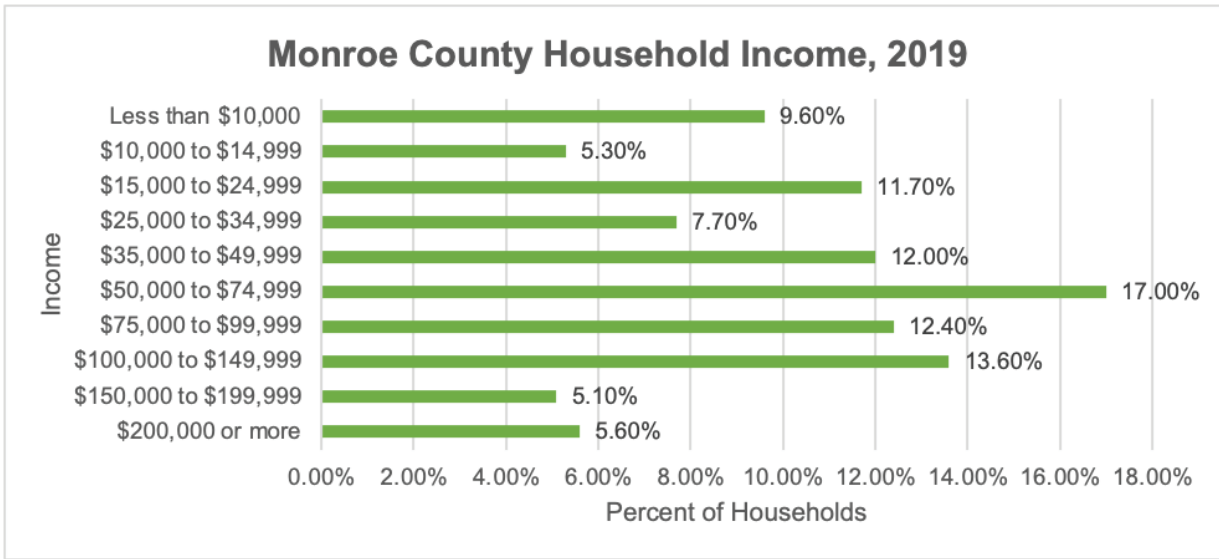
TABLE 10: Monroe County Employers

Monroe County's Largest Employers[4]	
Employer	**# of Employees**
Indiana University- Bloomington	10,000
Cook Group	3,300
IU Health	2,246
Monroe County Community School Corp.	1,882
Baxter Healthcare Pharmaceuticals	1,100

Employment Data

As can be expected with the presence of Indiana University, Monroe County's largest employment sector is educational services and health care. As of Fall 2019, 61.7% of the County's population over the age of 16 was employed. The county's largest employer, Indiana University's Bloomington campus, currently employs around 10,000 people[3].

The Cook Group, a manufacturer of medical devices is the second major employer in the county with 3,300 employees. Indiana University Health, the region's main healthcare provider, comes in third with 2,246 employed individuals.

3 Indiana University Faculty & Staff Resources Accessed through https://www.indiana.edu/faculty-staff/index.html

4 Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce. Accessed through https://web.chamberbloomington.org/business_center/major_employers.aspx

TABLE 11: Monroe County Employment by Sector

Monroe County Employment By Sector, 2019

	Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	Construction	Manufacturing	Retail and Wholesale trade	Transportation, warehousing, utilities	Information	Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	Professional, scientific, and management, administrative	Edcational services, health care, social assistance	Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food and other services :	Public administration
■ Series1	428	2,178	6,573	5,940	1,078	1,087	1,957	2,367	15,605	2,569	3,342

Health Data

As the population for Monroe County continues to increase, the need for more public health employees intensifies. Health Education staff in the county partner with other organizations to provide education, do outreach, and research health issues. In 2020, aside from responding to and educating the public about the COVID-19 pandemic, health officials also provided Harm Reduction Programs to prevent injuries and reduce the transmission of communicable diseases such as HIV and Hepatitis C. Other preventative programs offered by the county are the Baby & Me Tobacco Free program as well as the Sharps in the Park safe sharp disposal program.

Monroe County has seen a significant increase in drug overdose deaths during 2020 as compared to 2019. This could be due to a variety of factors, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as social isolation or using alone. Because of this increase, the Monroe County Health Department applied for and received grants for naloxone to provide to participants, first responders, and community residents.

Almost 10% of county residents to not have health insurance, about 20% are smokers, and the life expectancy is 80 years. All are consistent, without notable differences, to the nation's rates. Even though 46% of the population lives within 0.5 miles of a park (compared to the national median of 18%), almost 25% of adult residents report having no leisure-time physical activity. The county reports about 17% of adult residents are in poor or fair general health, as compared to 19% statewide (U.S.News & World Report, 2022).

About 12% of Monroe County males report having a disability, as compared to 10.7% of females. This makes up about 11.4% of the total population of the county (ACS, 2019)

TABLE 12: Monroe County Disability

Disability By Type

	Hearing Difficulty	Vision Difficulty	Cognitive Difficulty	Ambulatory Difficulty	Self-Care Difficulty	Independent Living Difficulty
#	5,661	1,960	6,663	7,201	2,877	5,119
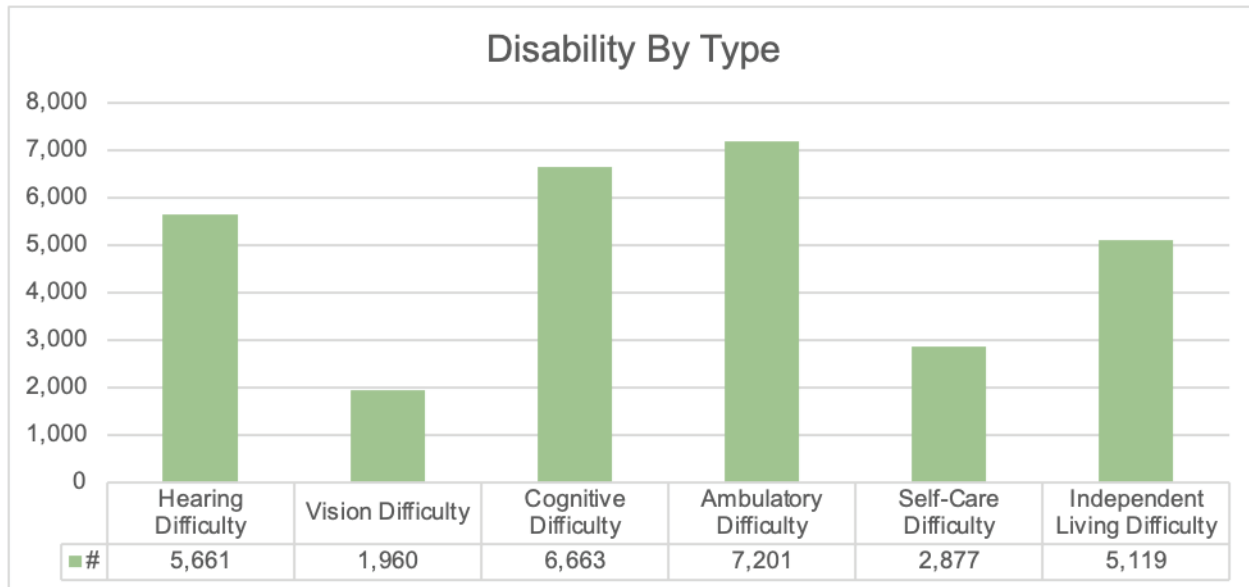
Planning Implications

Both Monroe County and the City of Bloomington continue to grow steadily. Monroe County's population, though, continues to age. In addition, the presence of a large number of students, a transient population by nature in both residence and interests, complicates the nature of recreation programming and highlights the need to be flexible and attentive to recreation trends.

Monroe County's population is also somewhat older than the City of Bloomington so programs and social events for seniors must continue to be a priority for MCPR. Monroe County's percentage of children under the age of 15 is also slightly higher than that of Bloomington's, which puts them in a unique position to offer intergenerational programming with their youth and older adults. Research shows that by purposefully bring together people of different generations in ongoing, mutually beneficial, and planned activities, participants forge meaningful connections and both individuals and communities benefit (DeVore, Winchell, & Rowe, 2016).

Monroe County Parks and Recreation also offers programming for the younger generation that targets schools and youth groups, including after school programs and summer day camps at affordable prices. Scholarships are offered for these programs but are not guaranteed. This is an opportunity to further develop an income/need-based scholarship program so that all those in need can participate and receive these crucial services.

Despite the presence of a highly educated workforce, many county residents live below to poverty line. Lower income families and students may have difficulty accessing MCPR parks outside the city due to lack of transportation or expense. In order to reach out to these groups, MCPR offers many free, and low cost, activities available to residents and many activities attractive to young adults and families. MCPR also offers adult trips for older residents by may need to increase this type of programming due to the aging of the population.

Due to the higher number of people living with ambulatory and cognitive difficulties, it would behoove MCPR to assess and improve the accessibility of their public spaces. Level and paved trails as well as accessible playgrounds and well-placed signage are all good places to start ensure equal and equitable access for individuals living with a disability and compliance with the Americans for Disabilities Act.

AGENCY INFORMATION

Vision/Mission/Goals

The Monroe County Parks and Recreation Department exists to provide high quality parks, recreation, and educational programs, to promote appreciation of environmental and cultural resources, and to preserve green space. Monroe County remains committed to making our facilities and services available to anyone, regardless of resident status, ability to pay, or physical/mental ability.

Board

The Park Board is a seven-member board which manages the county park system on behalf of the Commissioners, sets policy, approves claim expenditures, and proposes departmental budgets. The Park Board members are appointed by Commissioners (1 appointment), Council (2 appointments), Board of Judges (2 appointments), Mayor of Bloomington (1 appointment), and the Extension Agent as an ex-officio voting member.

Current Park Board members include:

TABLE 13: Monroe County Park Board

Park Board Members	Term Expires	Appointed by
Evelyn Harrell, President	January 2025	County Council
Joe Goss, Vice-President	January 2026	Monroe Circuit Court
Amy Thompson, Secretary	Ex Officio	By Virtue of Office
Dr. Carolyn VandeWiele	January 2024	Monroe Circuit Court
Kevin Dogan, J.D.	January 2023	County Council
Phil Cornwell	January 2023	County Commissioners
Carol Walter	January 2024	Mayor of Bloomington

Department Organization

The Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department is organized into three divisions- Administrative, Recreation, and Parks.

Recreation Division

The Recreation Division comprises one naturalist, two recreation directors, and seasonal hourly employees. The seasonal hourly employees are employed as day camp counselors, after school instructors, coaches, referees, special event assistants, and facility supervisors.

The division is responsible for planning, promoting, implementing, and evaluating recreational programs for youth, adult/seniors, environmental education, special events, and athletics. The Recreation Director-Athletics is responsible for athletic programming and athletic facility rentals and management. The Recreation Director-Community is responsible for youth & adult programing and for the Karst Dog Park facility management. The Naturalist is responsible for the department's volunteers and environmental programming. The division is supervised by the Assistant Director.

Administrative Division

The Administrative Division is comprised of an Director, an Assistant Director, a financial manager, and an office manager. Responsibilities include accounts receivable, accounts payable, communication, board/committee operations, grantsmanship, policy proposal, personnel, budget preparation, purchasing, planning, donor solicitations, social media/website management, and general operation of the department.

The division is responsible for the operations/logistics of:

- All parks, facilities & recreational programs
- Monroe County Parks and Recreation Board
- Monroe County Parks and Recreation Foundation Board
- Monroe County Access to Recreation Advisory Committee/Endowment

- Online rental & program registration
- Customer's financial information security/staying within PCI Compliance mcparksandrec.org website

The division is responsible for communication with:

- General public
- Monroe County Commissioners
- Monroe County Council
- Federal/state/local governmental offices
- Private foundations & donors
- Media & Staff

MCPR Staff Structure

(See Figure 12)

Park Division

The Park Division comprises one park superintendent, one assistant park superintendent, four maintenance technicians, three park caretakers and seasonal hourly employees.

The division is responsible for developing and maintaining county parks including:

- Risk management
- Athletic field management
- Splash pad, shelter house, restroom, playground, and dog park facility operations
- Landscaping, grounds and facility maintenance
- Construction projects
- Snow removal Facility cleaning
- Facility repairs
- Equipment fabrication
- Equipment maintenance

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART OF

MONROE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION

2021
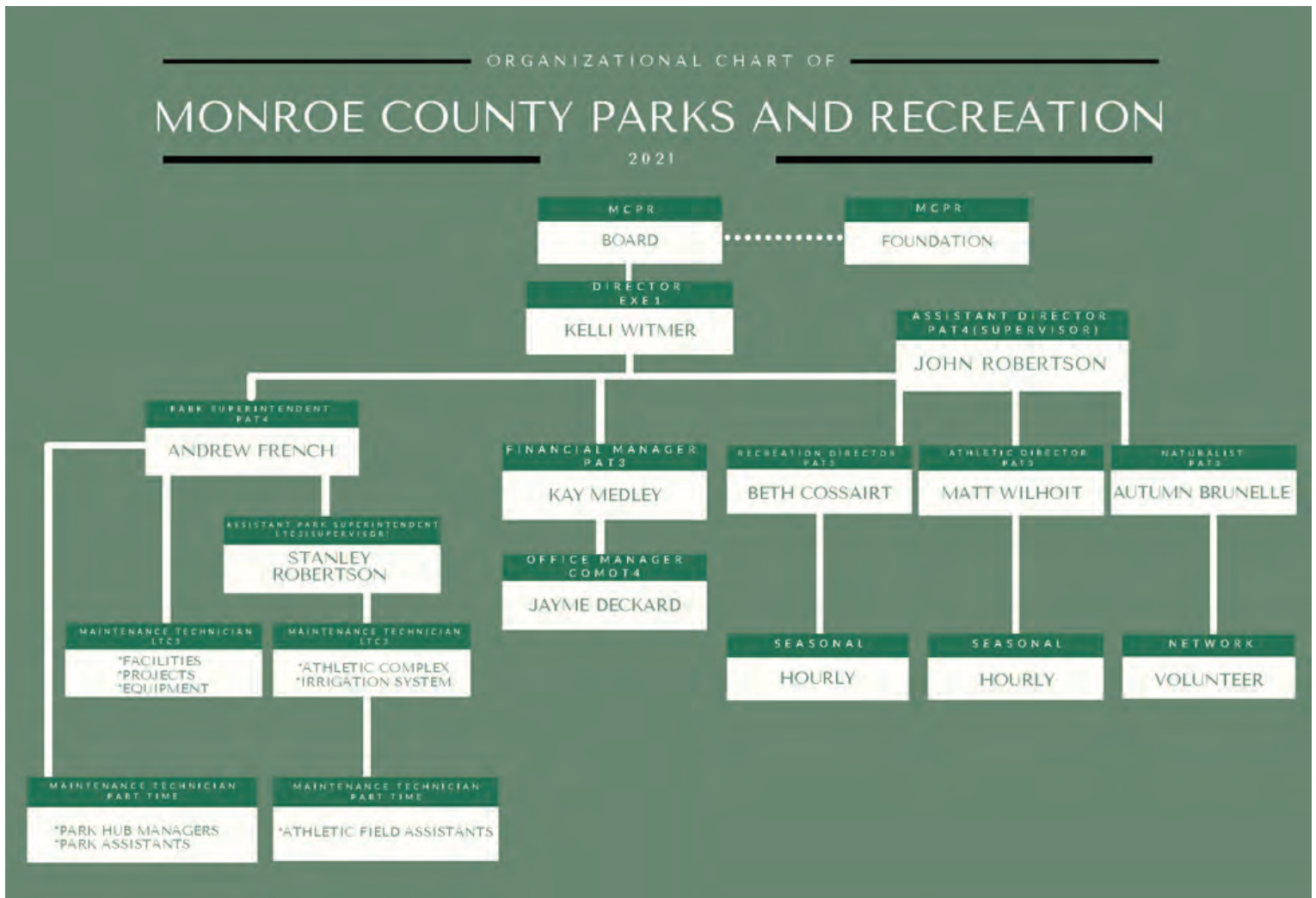
Progress Since the Previous Plan

Since the adoption of the 2018-2022 master plan, the department has continued to improve operations and departmental capacity. Staff and the Park Board have worked to review and revise all Department policies, including the development of a policy library. A marketing plan has been developed with important steps including the creation of seasonal program guides for mail distribution and upgrades to the department website including consolidation of several sites and pages into a more user-friendly form and a complete set of park maps already completed. The department's ADA contact and complaint procedure has also been added to the website for easier access.

Program improvements include the facilitation of more youth sports tournaments, more organized walks and runs in the county's growing greenway and trail network, more bike tours throughout the county, and an increase in invasive species education and volunteer eradication programs.

Progress at individual facilities is noted in the next section

Monroe County Parks & Greenways

45

37

69

Will Detmer Park

Karst Farm Greenway

Flatwoods Park

Ellettsville

Stinesville

46

Bloomington

46

48

Karst Farm
Park

Limestone
Greenway

Jackson
Creek Park

Smithville-Sanders

Harrodsburg

45

69

37

446
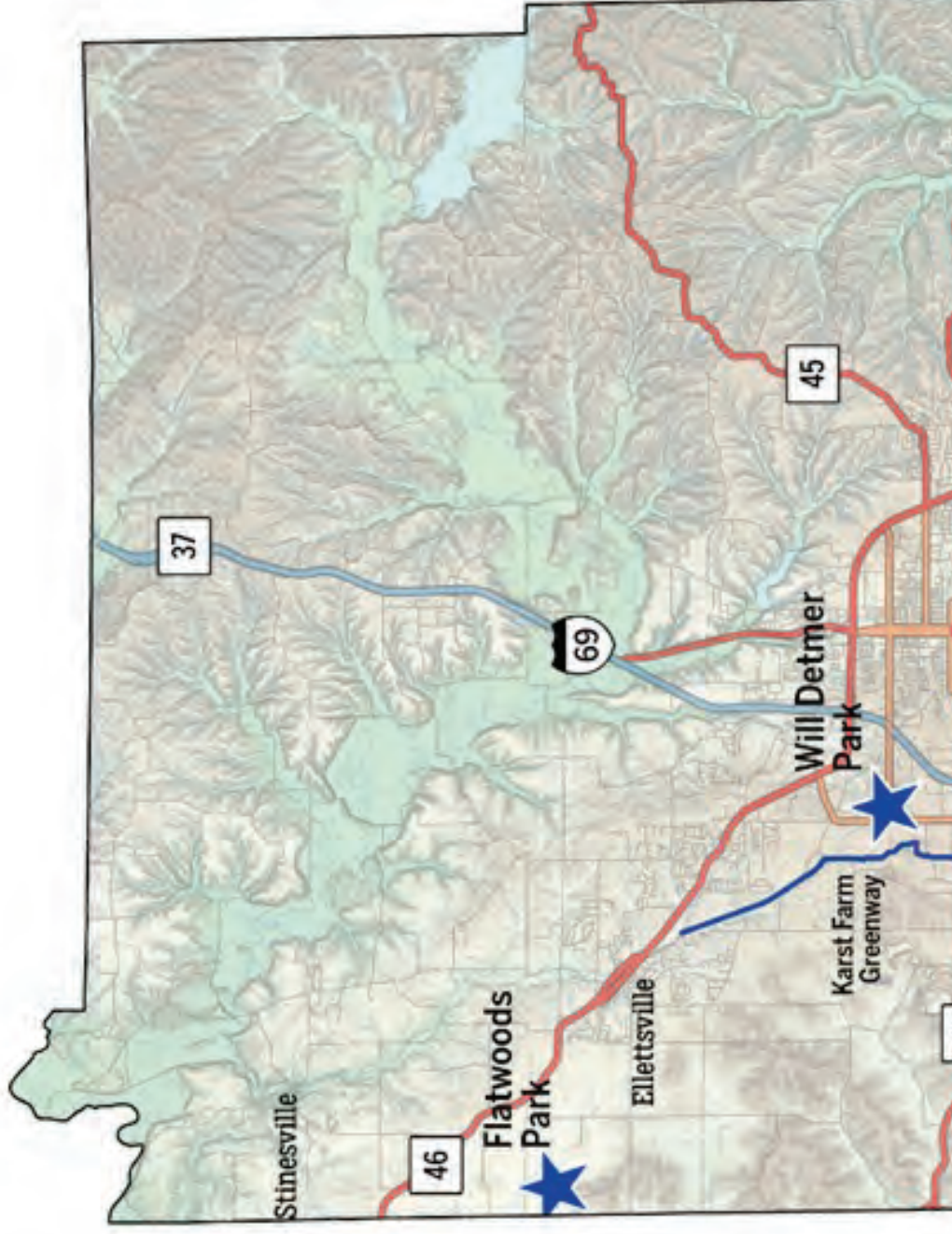
★ Monroe County Parks Locations

— Monroe County Greenways

0   2   4   8
Miles

Facilities

Parks

Five parks and two greenways owned or managed by Monroe County Parks and Recreation. Locations, details, and amenities are included along with general condition assessments of each site and progress made at each site since the 2018-2022 master plan.

Condition assessments were conducted at each site by the Eppley Institute in October and November of 2021. These assessments are done to confirm assets and amenities within each facility and visually inspect for overall quality, usage, and needed repairs, replacements, or upgrades. These assessments were done concurrently with an accessibility assessment, during which assets and amenities at each facility were inspected for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and recommendations for improvements were made. Eppley's assessment of facility, asset, and amenity conditions can be found here and in more detail in the Accessibility Review.

Karst Farm Park

2450 South Endwright Road
Bloomington, IN 47403 | 120 acres

Karst Farm Park was the first county park to be established. The park was created in 1969 after the county closed its poor farm, Monroe County Infirmary, and converted the property to park use. The relevance of the park name refers to the karst topography and farm referring to the property's history as the County Poor Farm. Many cultural events have been staged at Karst Farm Park over the years and it is a popular venue for these types of activities.

This park offers classic views of the karst topography of southern Indiana, with clearly visible sinkholes. No caves are exposed in the park, though water backs up in cave entrances very near the park during times of heavy rainfall. The presence of sinkholes limits construction and other activities because water sometimes fills the depressions. Karst offers programs to educate the public about geology, caves, and water quality. It is rated as one of the area's most attractive parks and features a splashpad, accessible playground, smaller playgrounds, dog park, and athletic fields. There are walking trails that encompass the arboretum and extend into natural, forested sections of the park.

Park Amenities:

- Karst Greenway trailhead
- Karst Playscape playground and musical playground
- Three (3) additional playgrounds
- Splash Pad
- Karst Farm Athletic Complex

  - Over 25 acres
  - Six (6) full-sized lighted athletic fields
  - Six (6) full-sized non-lighted athletic fields
  - Receives over 3,000 hours of annual use for teams, leagues, tournaments, and special events
- Seven (7) open-sided regular shelters
- Open-sided small shelter
- Open-sided group/large shelter
- Climate controlled/full kitchen building
- Karst Dog Park (1.5 acre & .5 acre enclosures)
- Members: 120 families

- Dog Park trail (6 laps = 1 mile, stone)
- Paved trail (4.5 laps = 1 mile, asphalt)
- Nature trail (grass & crushed limestone)
- Cardio trail (2.5 laps = 1 mile, crushed limestone)
- Small nature pond (.125 acre)
- Duckworth Pond (3 acres)
- Arboretum & Naturalized areas
- Eighteen (18) hole disc golf course (one of only three courses in Monroe County)
- Sand volleyball court
- Basketball court
- Caretaker house
- Restroom buildings & thirteen (13) drinking fountains
- Maintenance and storage buildings
- Over 750 parking spaces, asphalt & gravel surface

Condition Assessment

Most of the park is in good condition. The Splash Pad is in excellent shape as is the adjacent fully accessible playground. Restrooms are generally in good condition and clean though accessibility issues exist, as they do throughout the park. Gravel trails are in good condition, though woodland trails can become muddy and difficult to walk. The disc golf course turf, baskets, and tees are also in good condition but may become muddy.

Many parking areas are gravel, overgrown with grass in places, or with potholes and could be resurfaced. Gravel areas within the Dog Park are uneven and rutted and need to be leveled for safety. The area used for lacrosse known as "the bowl" is uneven and muddy. Much of the playground equipment is becoming old and in poor repair, though replacement of the playground near Shelters 1 and 2 is underway. All shelters are generally in good condition. The Commons Building (Shelter 6) is in fair condition and aging. The concourse area around the Commons has uneven concrete that may need replacement. Many accessibility deficiencies (detailed in the Accessibility Report) exist in and around the Commons building.

A defining feature of and the one that most Monroe County residents identify with Karst Farm Park is the athletic fields at the Karst Athletic Complex (KAC). The fields are heavily used and the drainage, irrigation and stadium lighting have not been updated since their original con-struction. The soil may not be optimal and drainage is poor, causing excessive saturation that often leaves the field unplayable. Accessible routes are needs to each field as well.

Progress Since the Previous Plan

Significant progress has been made and changes under-taken at Karst Farm Park since the last master plan was adopted. The Playscape playground has received new equipment with surfacing replaced, musical playground instruments have been replaced, and new handrails in-stalled to ramps and bridges. The Splash Pad has received new surfacing and improved signage. The Commons area is being upgraded with a new roof and gutters on the build-ing. The playground adjacent to Shelters 1 and 2 has been completely renovated with new ADA compliant play equip-ment and surfacing. Other improvements throughout the park include the installation of a wi-fi hotspot, a weather station, flagpole lighting, new landscaping' replacement of aging grills, and new directional signage.

Modernizing the KAC is a priority for MCPR, though given the scope of needed renovations funding is a significant challenge . Recent efforts have focused on upgrading and maintaining the quality of the turf on the athletic fields. The Karst Athletic Complex Improvement Committee (KAC-IC) was created in 2021 to provide advice and rec-ommendations to the Monroe County Parks & Recreation Board, suggest improvement priorities, and discuss and identify funding opportunities.

The following individuals serve on the KAC-IC because of their expertise in a particular field, interest in the subject, and willingness to participate in productive, positive dialogue.

- Penny Githens, Monroe County Commissioner
- Geoff McKim, Monroe County Council Member
- Mike Grubb, Cutters Soccer Board President
- Sofia McDowell, Cutters Soccer Board Member
- Pete Nelson, Visit Bloomington & Lacrosse Community
- Kevin Dogan, Monroe County Parks & Recreation Board Member
- Kelli Witmer, Monroe County Parks & Recreation Director
- John Robertson, Monroe County Parks & Recreation Assistant Director

Karst Farm Park

SOUTH ENDWRIGHT ROAD

KARST FARM GREENWAY

W WENDY'S WAY

WEST HANKS CROSSING

Grandview Elementary School

NATURE TRAIL

KARST FARM GREENWAY

DUCK POND

825

850

875

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

S-8

S-9A

S-9B

S-10

SOUTH ENDWRIGHT ROAD

WEST AIRPORT ROAD

CARDIO TRAIL

825
850

S-1
S-2
S-3
S-4
S-5
S-6
S-7

5

Basketball
Bathroom
Dog park
Playground
Shelter
Splash pad
Volleyball court
Disc Golf Baskets

SCALE

0   250   500
FEET

0   50   100
METERS

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET

Map provided by

INDIANA GEOLOGICAL
& WATER SURVEY
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

WEST A...

...NGER RO...

FIGURE 13: Will Detmer Park fishing pond

Will Detmer Park

4140 West Vernal Pike
Bloomington, IN 47404 | 18 acres

Will Detmer Park is the newest park in the Monroe County Park system. It was used as farmland for generations and is frequented by gardening programs. The park is well drained and lies above limestone bedrock and derived soils. There is a spring bordering the property to the west that flows north to Stoute's Creek as well as a paved trail that loops around a half-acre pond and picnic area. Many large trees, especially Black Walnut and Pecan, are found along the fence lines and scattered throughout the park. Will Detmer Park also has a shelter, playground, basketball court, and bike repair station in addition to fenced garden plots and raised beds that are available for the public to rent.

Park Amenities:

- 2nd Karst Greenway trail head – connected to greenway in 2015
- Bicycle rack and bicycle tool station
- Playground
- Open shelter
- Basketball court
- Restroom building
- Maintenance barn
- Asphalt walking trail (loop "A" 5 laps = 1mile, loop "B" 6 laps =1 mile, A + B 3 laps = 1 mile)
- Pond with fishing pier (0.5 acre) & observation area
- Community gardens: deer fence, two garden sheds, vegetable cleaning area, & resting area
- Wooded area
- Forty-six (46) asphalt parking spaces

Condition Assessment

As the newest park, facilities at Detmer Park including the playground; shelter, picnic tables, and grills; basketball court; restrooms; paved walking path; fishing pond, and parking lot are in good condition overall, though some improvements could be made for accessibility and directional signage is lacking.

Progress Since the Previous Plan

The Community Garden was partially renovated with the plot grid modified to allow for better rotation of in-use plots; orchard trees have been added; some accessibility issues have been addressed including removal of barriers on the path to the fishing pond and replacement of the bulletin board and signage.

FIGURE 14: Flatwoods Park Shelter 1

Flatwoods Park

9499 West Flatwoods Road
Gosport, IN 47433 | 197 acres

The name of Flatwoods Park derives from the local name for the area, which was formed by glaciers 10,000 years ago. The blocked water drained into the White River, which eventually drained via McCormick's Creek and caused the collapse of the cave that became the canyon in the state park. The deposited sediment, layers of clay and sand, accumulated to depths of 70 feet and the water table is very high, precluding many possible uses of the land at Flatwoods. The park has an artesian well and several springs. A seven-mile paved loop serves as a multi-use, interpretive trail, which uses the theme of water to explain the geology, formation, and history of the park land. The old fields are used by butterflies, nesting grassland birds, and other species that use early successional areas. Many birdwatchers visit the park to seek out the flora and fauna. The intermittent streams are used for water quality studies and a weather station, sundial, and windmill are also used for educational field trips and special event days.

Park Amenities:

- Two (2) playgrounds
- 400' x 400' Drone Zone
- Open group shelter with fireplace pit
- Open shelters
- Restroom building (pit toilets) & two (2) drinking fountains
- Two (2) Basketball courts
- Interpretive trail (1.76 laps = 1 mile, concrete)
- Windmill
- Giant sundial
- Weather station
- Hummingbird/butterfly garden
- Wildflower area & wildflower trail
- Grass trail
- Wetlands & wooded areas
- Intermittent streams, head waters for McCormick's Creek
- (85) asphalt parking spaces

Condition Assessment

The park contains many amenities, most of which are in good condition including all shelters, picnic tables, and grills and the fire pit in Shelter 1; basketball courts; parking areas; paved and boardwalk trails and paths; and interpretive displays throughout the park. Most trails and paths are mowed grass and can be difficult to walk when wet and muddy. The Drone Zone field is in fair condition but lacks an adequate route to it and signage. The basketball courts also have no direct route. The playgrounds and surfacing have been replaced and are in excellent condition.

Most of the improvements that should be made are accessibility related and are detailed in the Accessibility Report. The restroom, utilities, and drinking fountains are being replaced with upgraded, ADA compliant facilities to be completed in the summer of 2022.

Progress Since the Previous Plan

Since the previous plan, the large open field was converted to the "Drone Zone" for drone flying; the butterfly garden was replaced with new, native plants; playgrounds and surfacing have been replaced; bulletin boards were replaced, and additional directional signage has been installed.

Will Detmer Park

Garden Plots

Pier

TROUT CREEK

875

850

850

850

850

850

850

850

850

825

875
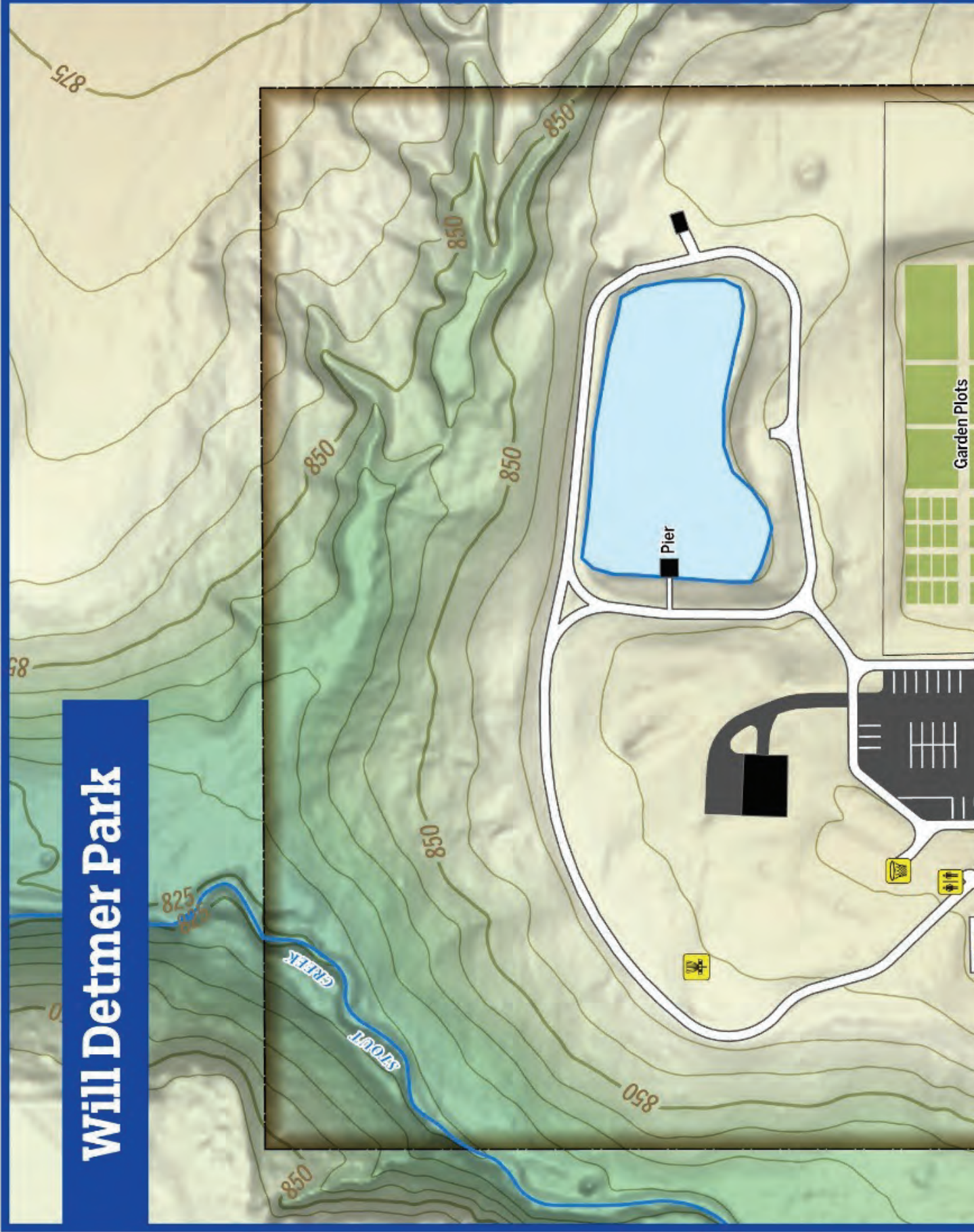
W VERNAL PIKE

W VERNAL PIKE

875
875

Garden Plot

Compost Bin

Shed

Wash Area

Raised Beds

Garden Plot

875

875

875

850

Bathroom

Playground

Shelter

Basketball

Disc Golf Baskets

SCALE

0   100   200

FEET

0   25   50

METERS

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET

Map provided by

INDIANA GEOLOGICAL & WATER SURVEY

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Flatwoods Park

FLATWOODS ROAD

EAST LOOP TRAIL

McCORMICKS CREEK

INTERPRETIVE

TRAIL

Drone Zone

WEST LOOP COUNTY LINE TRAIL

WEST LOOP COUNTY LINE TRAIL

COUNTY LINE ROAD

P

725

SOUTH LOOP TRAIL

SOUTH LOOP TRAIL

WEST REEVES ROAD

COUNTY LINE ROAD

Basketball
Bathroom
Playground
Shelter
Parking

SCALE

FEET
0   250   500

METERS
0   50   100

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET

Map provided by

INDIANA GEOLOGICAL
& WATER SURVEY
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

41

Jackson Creek Park

5970 South Rogers Street
Bloomington, IN 47401- 17 acres

Jackson Creek Park is located along Jackson Creek, which is part of the watershed draining the west side of Bloomington. Because it is located in a floodplain, there are limits to construction and some uses of the property. It contains a small playground, shelter, half basketball court, and a small trail, which runs along the edge of Jackson Creek. Part of the park preserves the riparian corridor to improve water quality.

Park Amenities:

- Two (2) playground areas
- Open shelter
- Half basketball court
- Nature trail
- Wooded area
- Open space
- Jackson Creek
- Twelve (12) asphalt parking spaces

Condition Assessment

This small park is in fair condition overall. The shelter and trail next to the creek are in good condition. The playground equipment is aging and showing wear and damage but is slated to be replaced. The parking lot is aging and could be repaved. Routes from the parking lot and between amenities are substandard but are also slated to be resurfaced.

Progress Since the Previous Plan

Since the previous plan, the fitness equipment located in the middle of the park has been removed and will not be replaced and the basketball goal was repaired. Efforts are ongoing to improve trails and routes for accessibility.

Ferguson Nature Park

1000 East Will Sowders Road, Bloomington, In 47404

The property is owned by the Monroe County Parks and Recreation Foundation. Ferguson Nature Park, at the confluence or Muddy Fork and Bean Blossom Creek, is currently used for crop production. Proceeds benefit the MCPR Foundation. Generous wooded riparian buffers are preserved to protect water quality in the creeks. Indiana bats have been found in similar wooded areas in the watershed nearby. The area is prone to flooding, which limits uses and construction on this property.

The 48.64-acre facility is only open to the public for guided nature hikes and educational programs. Containing riparian and wooded areas, the site is undeveloped with the exception of 29 acres set aside for crops.

Greenways

Limestone Greenway

The Limestone Greenway, the County's newest trail, was completed in the summer of 2019. The fully paved trail runs south from the City of Bloomington's Church Lane trailhead for 1.7 miles to the site known as the 'mitigation property,' a parcel acquired by the county from the State of Indiana as part of construction of Interstate 69, on South Victor Pike. The Limestone Greenway project was partially funded through the Department of Natural Resources' Recreational Trails Program grant (RT15-004) awarded to Monroe County Government/ Parks and Recreation in 2015.

Condition Assessment

Thanks to the recent construction of the trail, the surface and amenities are in excellent shape. Road crossings are clearly marked. No southern trailhead, however, exists where the trail ends at the mitigation property. MCPR plans to extend the Limestone Greenway and add a trailhead at this location.

Progress Since the Previous Plan

At the publication of the 2018-2022 plan, construction of the Limestone Greenway had not started. Since then, the current phase of the Greenway from the connection to Clear Creek Trail to the mitigation property has been completed. Phase 2 of the Greenway is in the planning stages with corridors identified leading south from the mitigation property.

Karst Farm Greenway

The Karst Farm Greenway is a fully paved trail that begins at Monroe County Parks and Recreation's Karst Farm Park and extends 4.5 miles north. Construction is currently underway to extend the greenway from the Loesch Road Trailhead to the Town of Ellettsville. The extension was partially funded through the Department of Natural Resources' Next Level trails grant (NLT 01-09)

awarded to Monroe County Government/Parks and Recreation in 2019. Upon completion, the greenway will stretch over 7 miles. A longer-range goal is to further extend the Greenway to the RBBCSC school campus then to Flatwoods Park and connect with a trail planned by Owen County that will create a regional trail with major trailheads at McCormick's Creek Elementary School and McCormick's Creek State Park, terminating in the town of Spencer.

Condition Assessment

The trail surface and amenities continue to be in good con-dition and no changes have been made.

Progress Since the Previous Plan

MCPR began construction of the Karst Farm Greenway extension from the Loesch Road Trailhead to Ellettsville in 2021. As of the time of this plan document, the extension is approximately 80% complete with the final section com-pleted in the summer of 2022.

Programming

Monroe County Parks & Recreation offers an array of programs to educate and entertain Monroe County residents including:

Virtual Rec Center:

A virtual collection of resources to ensure that the Monroe County community maintains active and healthy lives. The Virtual Rec Center provides links to video tutorials, crafts, fitness, games, and activities for all ages.

Youth Programs:

MCPR hosts Summer Day Camp at Karst Farm Park for ages 5-12, after-school programming for grades K-6, bike rodeos, Flatwoods Picnic, Will Detmer Park Picnic, and a variety of family events.

Adult Programs:

Adult programs, hosted by MCPR, include soccer leagues at Karst Athletic Complex, Special Olympics, trips, Senior

Jackson Creek Park

PHYLLIS STREET

CHARLES STREET

CATHERINE STREET

650

675

Playground

Shelter

P Parking

SCALE

FEET
0   100   200

METERS
0   25   50

CONTOUR INTERVAL 5 FEET

Map provided by

INDIANA GEOLOGICAL & WATER SURVEY
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

700

679

37

CREEK

STATE ROAD

OLD STATE

JACKSON

SOUTH

675

650

625

ROGERS STREET

P

45
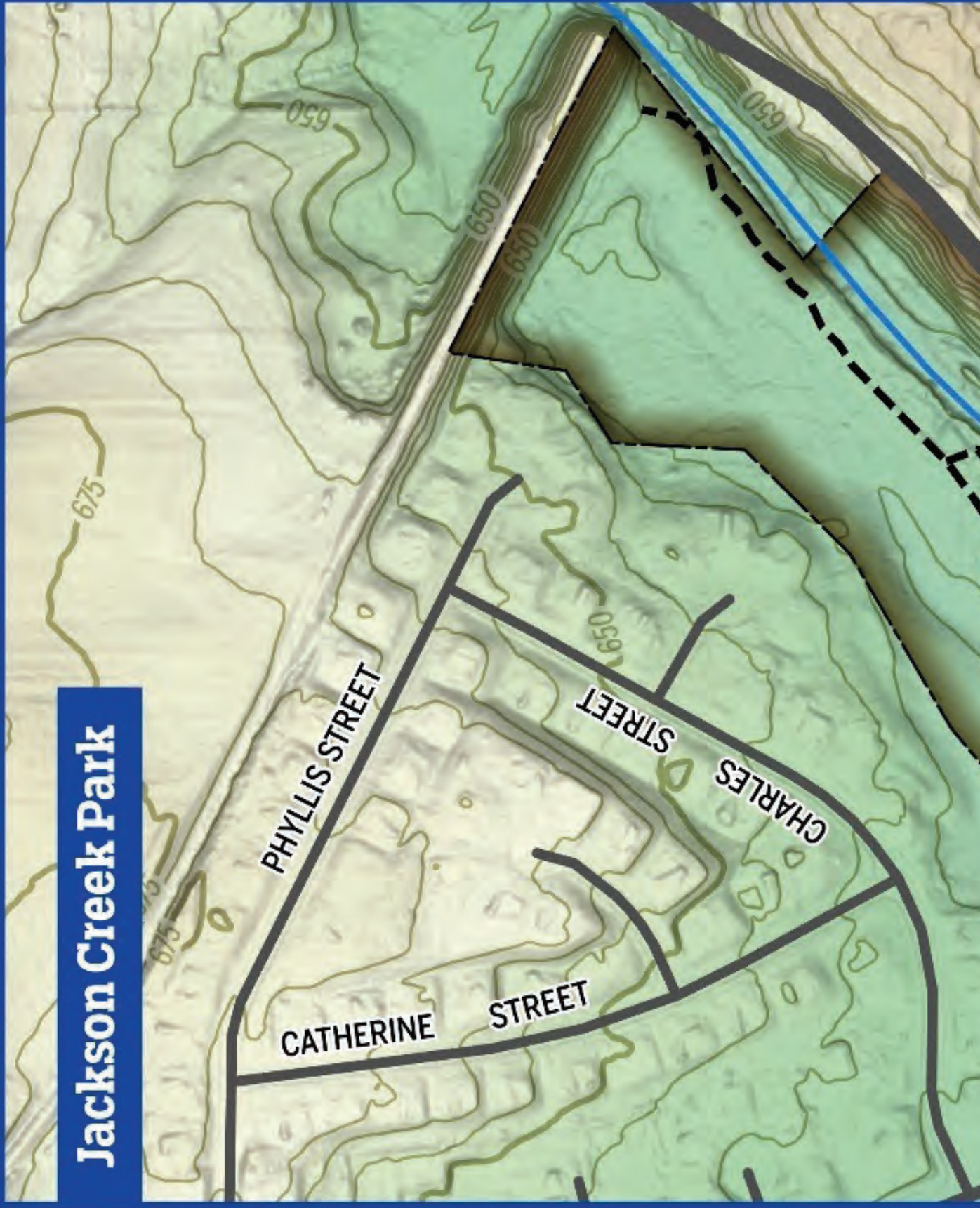
Games, fitness class at the Unionville Senior Center, Senior Day at the Monroe County Fair and special events.

Environmental Education:

Monroe County Parks and Recreation offers a variety of environmental programs for community members including guided nature hikes, teacher workshops for project WILD, WET and Learning Tree, public classes and workshops including Hoosier River Watch, and environmental education at local schools from pre-school to college and day camp.

Partner Programming:

Monroe County has many user groups that offer programming not otherwise offered by the department. Monroe County Youth Soccer (Cutters Academy/Cutters Travel), Indiana Youth Soccer Association, Monroe County adult soccer Leagues, Adult and Youth Ultimate Leagues, Indiana University women's and men's club soccer, Indiana University Ultimate Club, college club lacrosse, high school & middle school club Lacrosse, Lighthouse Christian Academy High School Soccer, and Koosiers Futbol Club all utilize playing fields at Karst.

Monroe County Youth Soccer is the Department's most significant partner for leagues, camps, tournaments, and training for youth in Monroe County and across the region.

Another partner of significance is the Hoosier Hills Food Bank, which uses the community garden area at Will Detmer Park to grow crops for their pantry operations. Opportunities may exist to further the partnership with this organization to offer gardening and healthy cooking programs.

Other recreation providers that offer programming that both compete with and complement MCPR programming include Bloomington Parks and Recreation, Boys and Girls Club, Girls Inc., Monroe County YMCA, Indiana University, churches, athletic leagues, MCCSC, RBBCSC, and theatre/art groups. In order to preserve resources, MCPR should continue its strategy of filling gaps in programming not offered by competing and, in most cases, better known recreation providers.

ACCESSIBILITY REPORT

ADA Coordinator

John Robertson is designated as the MCPR Department ADA coordinator. The ADA coordinator is required to continually check for ADA compliance in current and future facilities and recreation programs.

Priorities and Goals

It is the Park Board's standard practice and policy not only to comply with the Americans with Disability Act, but to go above and beyond the requirements when possible.

The Park Board and MCPR will continue to be local advocates for accessibility and universal design. The term "Universal Design" was coined by the architect Ronald L. Mace to describe the concept of designing all products and the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or circumstance.

Many action items for improving accessibility established in the previous master plan were accomplished. Items that remain and will be top priorities in the current plan include resurfacing of playground areas and establishment of accessible paths that link parking with recreation areas.

In addition, an accessibility review of all MCPR facilities was done by the Eppley Institute. The recommendations made in this report are the basis for MCPR's ADA Transition Plan.

- Major goals for improving accessibility in the next five years include:
- Design and build better and more access paths to park facilities.
- Upgrade all playground surfaces to either engineered wood fiber or SMARTE/equivalent.
- Continue to evaluate existing facilities and make accessibility and safety improvements when needed.
- Ensure adequate accessible parking at all facilities.

Grievance Procedure

Monroe County Parks & Recreation follows Monroe County Government's procedure for accessibility grievances and complaints. This policy states:

"All complaints about Monroe County's compliance in its programs and services with handicapped accessibility requirements should be addressed to the Monroe County Attorney, Courthouse, Room 220, Bloomington, Indiana 47404. The Monroe County Attorney shall meet with the complainant and attempt to resolve the complaint. Should the Monroe County Attorney be unable to satisfactorily resolve the grievance, the complainant may present the grievance in writing to the Board of Commissioners for their consideration and decision. The Board of Commissioners will conduct a hearing and render its decision at the next regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners."

Any questions about the grievance or complaint may be directed to the Monroe County Parks & Recreation ADA Coordinator:

John Robertson, Assistant Director and ADA Coordinator
Monroe County Parks & Recreation
501 N. Morton St, Suite 100
Bloomington, IN 47404
812-349-2804

Scholarships

To ensure full accessibility to programs and facilities across socioeconomic boundaries, Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department and the MCPR Foundation offer full or partial recreational program scholarships for Monroe County residents. The Federal Office of Management and Budget's 150% of poverty level guidelines are used for determining scholarship eligibility.

A limited number of scholarships are available for the Karst Day Camp, After School Program, Karst Dog Park, Senior/adult programs, and the Will Detmer Garden plots & raised garden beds

Scholarships for youth soccer are available through the Cutters Soccer Club at:

director@cutterssoccer.org
Office (812) 333-8010
cutterssoccer.org

Accessibility Compliance resolution goes here

Accessibility Evaluation and Recommendations

Eppley Institute staff conducted a complete accessibility evaluation of all parks and trails in the Monroe County system. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess, in detail, each feature of a facility for deficiencies in compliance with American with Disabilities Act requirements and recommend corrective actions that will bring Monroe County Parks & Recreation into compliance as legally required and make other improvements to ensure that all park users are fully able to enjoy the recreation opportunities offered by MCPR. Below is a summary of the assessment with major recommendations for accessibility improvements at each MCPR facility.

Karst Farm Park

Karst Farm Park is a large, complex park with many elements and challenges with respect to accessibility. Many of the issues at the park could be corrected easily but there are also several critical elements to address.

Parking & Arrival

There are several parking areas at Karst Farm Park, all of which have at least minor and some critical accessibility concerns including insufficient signage designating accessible spaces, lack of van parking spaces, sections of steep sloping, gravel lots that are not accessible, and lack of accessible routes from the lots to park facilities and amenities.

- **Recommendation #1:** Improve accessible parking area by adding van accessible parking in each lot

- **Recommendation #2:** Improve accessible parking area by adding signage to each accessible parking space.

- **Recommendation #3:** Add signage with directions to accessible features such as the paved trail and restrooms.

- **Recommendation #4:** Pave or resurface all parking lots.

- **Recommendation #5:** Add or improve routes from parking lots to fields, shelters, and other park facilities to improve surface, correct slope, and add handrails where appropriate.

Orientation, Wayfinding & Signage

Orientation and directional signage exists in the park but could be improved by adding direction to accessible features within the park. Park maps are available from the department's website or office but not on site.

- **Recommendation #1:** Provide clear directional signage indicating accessible facilities (restrooms, trails, etc.).

- **Recommendation #2:** Provide a park map showing the location of all accessible amenities.

Activities and Facilities

Athletic fields are the most prominent and among the most heavily used facilities at Karst Farm Park, but fields do not have accessible routes to any of them or accessible seat-ing for players or spectators.

All shelters have accessible routes leading to them. While a sufficient number of picnic tables are accessible (20% of tables or at least 2 per area), they are typically arranged without sufficient clear space (36 inches) for access, and many are chained together and not moveable. Some shelters have food bars that protrude and obstruct table access. Grills do not have sufficient clear space (48 inches) around them.

The Commons Building, otherwise known as Shelter 6, is an indoor facility with meeting space and a kitchen. The meeting area has minor issues including light switches, outlets, thermostat control, and a fire extinguisher mounted too high for accessible reach; a wall cabinet that creates a protruding object with insufficient clear space underneath; and window shutter closures too high and of inappropriate design. The kitchen stove is not accessible with control knobs on the top and not reachable. The refrigerator, cabinets, and sink are accessible.

Trails throughout the park are paved or gravel and accessible, though accessible routes directly to many facilities and amenities are lacking. Woodland trails are of natural surface and not fully accessible. The Karst Farm Greenway runs through the park to its southern terminus.

The Splash Pad is fully accessible.

The Playscape playground adjacent to the Splash Pad is universally accessible. The playground between shelters 3, 4, and 5 has no accessible equipment and poor surfacing while the playground at Shelters 1 and 2 is undergoing reconstruction and will be fully accessible when complete.

FIGURE 15: Disc golf tee box

The Dog Park has two sections, one for large dogs, and one for small dogs. The rules sign is faded and needs to be replaced. Gates are opened with a key fob or a code, but the pad is not as visible as it should be. The gates are not self-closing. Gravel on pathways, pad, and under shelter structures is too loose to be accessible. The bulletin boards have no accessible route to them.

Disc Golf course has no accessible holes, including tees and basket pads with sufficient clear space and no accessible routes.

The Endwright Field is in a heavily sloped "bowl" with no route to access.

Picnic tables, benches, and grills are scattered throughout the park, but few have accessible routes to them or sufficient clear space around them.

- **Recommendation #1:** Add accessible routes to all Athletic fields, disc golf course, lacrosse field, and bulletin boards.
- **Recommendation #2:** Re-organize shelters to make picnic table accessible and add surfacing to create sufficient clear space around grills.
- **Recommendation #3:** Remodel Commons building interior to make lower all light switches, outlets, fire extinguishers, and controls to accessible height,

replace stove with accessible stove, replace window shutter latches with slide locks at appropriate height.

- **Recommendation #4:** Add required accessible playground equipment and replace wood chip and sand playground surfacing with unitary or another appropriate surface.
- **Recommendation #5:** Replace and add tactile signage to Dog Park and other facilities.
- **Recommendation #6:** Replace gravel on dog park and other non-paved paths to appropriate gauge (3/4 minus, compacted gravel)
- **Recommendation #7:** Replace Dog Park gates with self-closing gates requiring no more than 5 lbs. of pressure to open.
- **Recommendation #8:** Add paved or gravel pads around disc golf tees and baskets and routes to at least 50% of holes.
- **Recommendation #9:** Create or designate a level playing field for lacrosse and other non-soccer activities.
- **Recommendation #10:** Add routes and clear space around picnic tables, benches, and grills throughout the park.

FIGURE 16: Grills and picnic tables

Amenities & Site Features

All restrooms are designated as accessible, but all have at least minor issues to address. The restroom adjacent to athletic fields 3 and 4 has a critical issue with toilets be-ing placed in the middle of the stall, too far from grab bars. Other issues in all restrooms include soap dispensers, mir-rors, sharps containers, changing tables, clothing hooks, and electrical outlets being too high; water pipes under sinks not properly wrapped; improper handles and latch-es on restroom stall doors; automated sinks that do not stay on long enough; faded, missing or inadequate tactile signage; and level changes at doorways that may cause difficulty for mobility devices.

All water fountains are of accessible height with proper knee clearance but many do not have adequate clear space or surfacing around them. Many informational bul-letin boards do not have accessible routes or sufficient clear space around them. Well water pumps do not have accessible routes or sufficient clear space. Many waste receptacles do not have sufficient clear space around them. Pet waste stations are of an appropriate height. Newly installed hand sanitizer are of an appropriate height.

- **Recommendation #1:** Correct restroom toilets by moving closer to side wall and grab bar or moving wall closer to toilet.
- **Recommendation #2:** Repair pavement and add additional surfacing around drinking fountains, water pumps, and waste receptacles to create sufficient clear space.
- **Recommendation #3:** Lower restroom amenities such as soap dispensers, mirrors, sharps containers, changing tables, clothing hooks, and electrical outlets to appropriate height.
- **Recommendation #4:** Wrap all pipes under sink with adequate insulation.
- **Recommendation #5:** Replace all restroom stall handles with D-loop style handles.
- **Recommendation #6:** Address slopes and level changes at restroom doorways.
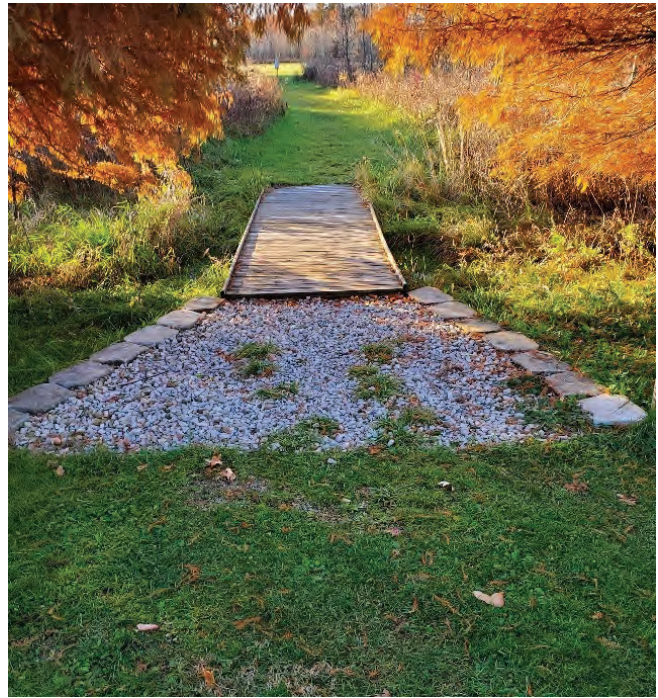
FIGURE 17: Route to Drone Zone

Flatwoods Park

There are several critical issues to be addressed at Flat-woods Park including adding accessible routes, sufficient clear space around interpretive elements and amenities, and appropriate signage.

Parking & Arrival

The single parking lot is located at the end of the public driveway and immediately adjacent to the core section of the park containing the shelters, playgrounds, basketball courts, and amenities. The lot contains 86 spaces, 4 of which are designated as accessible. None of those 4 spac-es are van accessible. Only two of the accessible spots have signage indicating them as accessible parking.

- **Recommendation #1.:** Improve accessible parking area by adding van accessible parking
- **Recommendation #2:** Improve accessible parking area by adding signage to each accessible parking space.
- **Recommendation #3:** Add signage with directions to accessible features such as the paved trail and restrooms.

Orientation, Wayfinding & Signage

Little orientation or directional signage exists in the park. There is no park map displayed or bulletin board for information at the site. Accessible features, other than the two marked parking spaces, are not indicated with any signage. Trails are marked at junctions by wooden posts with colored arrows pointing in the directions of the various trails but with no map or trail names displayed, this system is confusing. Park maps are available from the department's website or office but not on site.

- **Recommendation #1:** Provide clear directional signage indicating trail paths.
- **Recommendation #2:** Provide a park map showing the location of all accessible amenities.

Activities and Facilities

Most hiking trails at the park are mowed grass and not accessible. A single trail is paved and accessible, though interpretive features along the trail are mostly not accessible and two bridges along the trail could provide difficulty for mobility devices. There is no route to the basketball courts. There is no accessible route to the Drone Zone nor is there any accessible seating or participation area. Picnic shelters are accessible, though the accompanying grills do not have sufficient clear space around them. There are enough accessible picnic tables at each shelter though they are arranged in such a way that there is no path to access many of them and some are chained together and not moveable. The large fire pit in Shelter 1 is of an accessible height and with sufficient clear space around it. Playground equipment is not accessible and playground surfacing is not accessible.

- **Recommendation #1:** Add and level surfacing for sufficient clear space around interpretive elements on trails.
- **Recommendation #2-** Repair level changes and uneven surfacing on bridges on paved trail.
- **Recommendation #3:** Create accessible routes to basketball courts and Drone Zone
- **Recommendation #4:** Re-organize shelters to make picnic table accessible and add surfacing to create sufficient clear space around grills.
- **Recommendation #5:** Add required accessible playground equipment.

- **Recommendation #6:** Replace wood chip playground surfacing with unitary or another appropriate surface.

Amenities & Site Features

The restroom is a basic vault toilet that is not marked or designated as accessible. The routes to the restroom doors are of sufficient width and slope. A new restroom is planned. Drinking fountains are of proper height. The fountain near the parking lot does not have sufficient clear space. The fountain next to the restroom has sufficient clear space but the pavement is cracked and not level. The dog waste station is too tall.

- **Recommendation #1:** Ensure new restroom is fully accessible.
- **Recommendation #2:** Repair pavement and add additional surfacing around drinking fountains to create sufficient clear space.
- **Recommendation #3:** Lower dog waste station to accessible height.

Interpretation & Education

Interpretive signage exists at various locations along trails, adjacent to display items such as a windmill, sundial, wetland areas, and other natural features. The signs are all located several feet off the trail with steep slopes covered in large gauge gravel to access them and no clear space around them. These signs are not accessible by a mobility device. They also have no tactile surface for the visually impaired to read them.

Several signs on the path around the playground area are "Storywalk" stations. These locations are accessible by mobility devices, but the displays are behind glass with no tactile or audio element.

- **Recommendation #1:** Replace all interpretive signage along trails with larger print and tactile features.
- **Recommendation #2:** Provide a stable, level gravel or paved surface to each sign.
- **Recommendation #3:** Add tactile and/or audio features to Storywalk displays.

Will Detmer Park

Will Detmer Park is the newest park in the MCPR system and the most accessible. No critical issues exist but there are minor items to address.

Parking & Arrival

The parking area is centrally located and in good condition, though faded paint makes it difficult to determine individual parking spaces. There are 46 parking spaces, eight of which are accessible, all with signage. Two of the accessible spaces are designated for van parking. A paved multi-purpose path runs along Vernal Pike with a connection into the park. The connecting path continues into the park and provides access to the playground and restrooms.

- **Recommendation #1:** Re-stripe parking lot for better visibility.

Orientation, Wayfinding & Signage

Little orientation or directional signage exists in the park. There is no park map displayed or bulletin board for information at the site. Accessible features, other than the marked parking spaces, and restrooms are not indicated with any signage. Park maps are available from the department's website or office but not on site.

- **Recommendation #1:** Provide clear directional signage throughout the park.
- **Recommendation #2:** Provide a park map showing the location of all accessible amenities.

Activities and Facilities

The park trails are paved and accessible. The basketball courts are fully accessible. Picnic shelters are accessible, though four of the five accompanying grills do not have sufficient clear space around them. There are enough accessible picnic tables at each shelter though they are arranged in such a way that there is no path to access many of them. Food bars within the shelter also obstruct table access. The playground is fully accessible with appropriate equipment and unitary surfacing. The pond has an accessible viewing/fishing area with a paved path. The path has handrails on both sides but is too steep. There are accessible picnic tables with accompanying grills scattered throughout the park but they do not have accessible routes to them or sufficient clear space around them. The community garden has an accessible path through the area to the tool shed and compost bins. The garden has

garden boxes of accessible height, but the surrounding surface is degraded and there is no path directly to the tool shed and produce cleaning station.

- **Recommendation #1:** Re-organize shelters to make picnic table accessible and add surfacing to create sufficient clear space around grills.
- **Recommendation #2:** Add accessible routes to some picnic tables and appropriate surfacing around those tables and accompanying grills to provide sufficient clear space.
- **Recommendation #3:** Resurface garden box area and provide a route to the tool shed and produce cleaning station.

Amenities & Site Features

The restrooms are fully accessible. The routes to the restroom doors are of sufficient width and slope. Drinking fountains are of proper height with adequate knee clearance. The pet waste stations are of appropriate height.

- **No recommendations**

Jackson Creek Park

Jackson Creek Park has several critical accessibility needs to address, including accessible routes, playgrounds, and surfacing.

Parking & Arrival

The parking area contains 12 spaces, one of which is designated as accessible, but none are designated for van parking. Faded paint makes it difficult to determine individual parking spaces. There are no accessible routes into the park from the parking lot or surrounding streets.

- **Recommendation #1:** Add accessible routes from parking lot to park features.
- **Recommendation #2:** Re-stripe parking lot for better visibility.

Orientation, Wayfinding & Signage

Little orientation or directional signage exists in the park. There is no park map displayed or bulletin board for information at the site. Accessible features, other than the marked parking space, are not indicated with any signage.

Park maps are available from the department's website or office but not on site.

- **Recommendation #1:** Provide clear directional signage throughout the park.
- **Recommendation #2:** Provide a park map showing the location of all accessible amenities.

Activities and Facilities

The park trail surface is not accessible. There is a basketball hoop in the parking lot, accessible unless cars are blocking the hoop. The picnic shelter does not have an accessible route to it and the accompanying grill does not have sufficient clear space around it. There are two accessible picnic tables at the shelter, though they are arranged in such a way that there is no clear path to access them. There is a playground with two play structures. Neither playground structure has accessible features or surfacing and there is no accessible route to either.

- **Recommendation #1-** Add accessible routes to the shelter, playground, and exercise equipment.
- **Recommendation #2-** Re-organize shelters to make picnic table accessible and add surfacing to create sufficient clear space around grills.
- **Recommendation #3:** Resurface the walking trail and path from the parking lot to the shelter with an appropriate material.

Amenities & Site Features

No restrooms or drinking fountains are provided at the park.

Karst Farm Greenway

There are no critical accessibility issues to be addressed along the greenway. There are, however, several recommendations for improvements to make the trail more accessible including:

Parking & Arrival

There is a van accessible parking spot at the Loesch Road trailhead. There is accessible parking at Karst Farm Park but not adjacent to the trailhead. Parking spaces near this trailhead are either gravel or paved but not constructed and marked as accessible. There is no additional parking along the trail route between the two terminal trailheads.

- **Recommendation #1:** Add accessible parking in the paved spaces adjacent to the Karst Farm Park trailhead.
- **Recommendation #2:** Add accessible parking to at least one additional location along the trail route.

Orientation, Wayfinding & Signage

There is little in the way of signage along the route. The Loesch Road trailhead has a road sign but no route map. The mid-point plaza and Karst Farm Park trailhead have route maps but no other orientation signage. There is no other orientation signage along the route.

- **Recommendation #1:** Add a trail map at the Loesch Road trailhead.
- **Recommendation #2:** Provide directional signage indicating the location of accessible features such as drinking fountains and seating areas.

Amenities & Site Features

The stone features at the Karst Farm trailhead and plaza are not accessible for seating, being either too high or too rough for transfer from a mobility device. There are no benches along the route. All drinking fountains along the trail are accessible with appropriate clear space surrounding. There is a restroom adjacent to the Karst Farm Park Trailhead. An assessment of that restroom is included in the Karst Farm Park report.

- **Recommendation #1:** Add accessible seating to the locations with stone features.
- **Recommendation #2:** Add accessible benches along the route.

Limestone Greenway

There are no critical accessibility issues to be addressed along the greenway. The following recommendations are suggested for improved access to the Limestone Greenway for visitors with disabilities.

Parking & Arrival

There is no parking for the Limestone Greenway. Parking is located at the City of Bloomington's Clear Creek Trail trailhead, which contains accessible parking spots.

Orientation, Wayfinding & Signage

There is little in the way of signage along the route. There are trail maps at the rest areas but no other signage identifying the greenway.

- **Recommendation #1:** Provide directional signage indicating the location of accessible features such as seating areas.
- **Recommendation #2:** Provide accessible parking with an accessible route to the trail at the Sheriff's Substation
- **Recommendation #3:** Provide an accessible trailhead with amenities at the Mitigation Property.

Amenities & Site Features

Seating and signage along the greenway are fully accessible. No recommendations for improvements.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic involvement is crucially important in planning and decision-making processes to effectively develop and deliver community-centered park and recreation opportunities. The public engagement process that follows was designed to be balanced, open, and collaborative. The leadership of Monroe County Department of Parks & Recreation, under the direction of the county Park Board, sought to use this process to build trust within the community while also developing a plan that outlines a path forward. Methods of public engagement include:

- Stakeholder Interviews
- Community Survey
- Master Plan Website
- Public Comment Sessions

Stakeholder Interviews

Objective

The primary objective for the stakeholder interviews was to gather diverse perspectives about the park system from individuals who represent a wide range institutional affiliations.

Participants

Stakeholders were defined as individuals who were (1) associated with either the Parks & Recreation Department or (2) larger Monroe County community because of their position, involvement, interest, or identity. These included park system partners that use or rent space frequently (e.g., local soccer club, disc golf club), Monroe County residents who frequently use the park spaces or engage in programming, and community organization leaders (i.e., related to the arts, food justice, accessibility). The stakeholders of a community generally hold diverse perspectives and institutional affiliations and are interviewed to obtain a sense of opinion among core constituents.

Monroe County stakeholders were identified by the Parks & Recreation Department consulting with the Eppley Institute project team. The initial goal was to recruit approximately 30 stakeholders from outside of the Department to partici-

pate in the stakeholder interviews. Ultimately, 29 individuals participated in a series of six interviews, held both online (via Zoom conference call) and in person at Karst Farm Park. All participants are recorded in Appendix A.

Data Collection

Stakeholder interviews were conducted November and December 2021 by Eppley Institute staff members. Stakeholders were interviewed in small groups between 2 and 8 individuals in size and were facilitated in one-hour time slots. The limited group size is intended to give stakeholders an opportunity to speak more freely in semi-private conversations in contrast to what is possible in a large-group or public sessions.

All interviews were conducted in a structured format using a bespoke questionnaire developed by the Eppley Institute team in conjunction with the county's project team. At the beginning of each group interview, stakeholders will be assured that the information and perspectives they share during interviews will not be attributed to them nor identifiable in any reports or deliverables.

Questions ranged from open-ended questions to very specific inquiries. The questions included:

1. What are your impressions of Monroe County Parks? What words would you use to describe the Monroe County Parks system as a whole (programmatically, facilities, and administratively)?

2. What are your opinions about the Department's programs? Quality? Overall program mix and quantity? Cost?

3. What are your opinions on the quality of the parks and recreation facilities provided by the Department and why?

4. In what ways do you think the Parks and Recreation Department can improve the community's overall health and wellness?

5. Are there partnerships with health agencies that could be beneficial for the community?

6. Are there other partnership opportunities- for programming, facilities, or funding, for example- you are aware of that would benefit Monroe County Parks (public, private, Not-for-profit)?

7. Are there specific programs, events, or facilities that you think could improve the quality of life for Monroe County's community members? (Mention towns outside Bloomington-Unionville, Stinesville, Smithville, Harrodsburg, etc.)

8. Should the county focus more on maintaining current parks and facilities or on building new parks and facilities? Why?

9. If YOU were in charge of Monroe County Parks, what would you do differently? What would you make sure to do that's the same?

Analysis

Extensive written notes were recorded at each interview. After interviews were concluded, a heuristic approach of identifying segments, or units, in the data begun. Across the six interviews, more than 400 units of data were identified. Following this, units were categorized into codes. Then, a process of grouping the open codes was completed to reflect interpretation and meaning and ultimately identify themes.

Results

Positive park system impressions. Overall, participants in the stakeholder interviews viewed the Monroe County Parks & Recreation system positively, both in terms of general impressions as well as with respect to programs, facilities, and personnel. Participants expressed being happy with the park system and appreciative of generally well-cared for parks that house several amenities.

Communication of park system offerings & brand identity are areas of weakness. Recurring comments in several interviews referenced a need for better marketing and communication. Developing an intentional marketing plan or "profile" of the county park system was also identified as an opportunity so that it would feel more cohesive, proactive, and personal—i.e., representative of Monroe County's distinctive culture. The website was also identified as an area for improvement; several respondents indicated that they struggled to find current programs and/or their pricing on the website and usually went to other sources, such as Facebook, for information. Suggestions for consistent mailers and flyers at relevant community locations (e.g., library), were shared.

Park system perceptions are often driven by opinions of and interactions with specific personnel and leadership. Many participants were quick to identify and compliment park system staff, who they perceived to be of high value to MCPR, by name. In contrast, when participants expressed criticism with specific issues (i.e., facility management), this was often attributed to individuals in either positions of power or staff in that work area (i.e., facilities). The identification of this theme supports a general idea that the park system is intrinsically linked to the people who represent it. Still, some participants expressed concern about the county parks system's ability to develop and act on long-term vision.

Increase transportation accessibility and spatial-temporal equity to parks. While participants were very complimentary of the parks system, many acknowledged that the county park system is very inaccessible to community members without automobile transportation. Suggestions to combat this were improving bus transportation and/or providing shuttles during some programs to transport members of the public to and from various county park sites. Similarly, many participants shared that park sites are spatially clustered in the western part of the County, and that residents in other areas (e.g., southern Monroe County communities) would benefit from more easily accessible park space. Additionally, for residents with conflicting work schedules, having increased or 24/7 access to spaces may improve park use or program participation (e.g., community garden).

New and cross-sectional programs can augment popular existing programming. Stakeholder interview participants were highly complimentary of current program offerings, both youth and adult, such as day camp, youth and adult soccer, and the community garden. Given this popularity, continued growth in programs should be sought, as resources allow. Suggestions for new or expanded programming areas included winter programs (e.g., astronomy), special events (e.g., 5K, invasive species removal), programs that center children (e.g., Kids Fair, petting zoo), nature programming (e.g., composting, skill development in natural resources) and new sports (e.g., rock climbing, mountain biking, disk golf). Notably, many participants identified areas for collaboration with other social services, such as addressing issues of food justice and accessibility with local food pantries or other community resources, serving the unhoused, or improving youth literacy or academic goals through partnerships with local schools. Finally, while many participants indicated that programs were affordable, others expressed concerns of affordability for low-income families or households with multiple children.

Improve and grow network of existing facilities. Many participants regarded park system facilities favorability, particularly the trails system. Karst Farm Park (and its facilities) was frequently mentioned favorably. Participants also remarked on the consistently strong upkeep of park grounds and condition of clean restrooms, as well as general contentment with existing facilities (e.g., dog park, splashpad).

However, two areas of improvement that would require substantial resources and planning were also identified. The first was the lack of a large indoor space within the park system that could be used as a youth gathering space, adult meeting space, or for physical activities/housing sports programming during cold or inclement weather (i.e., indoor soccer). This area of feedback arose in several interviews and was shared by many stakeholders. The second area of improvement was the athletic fields at Karst Farm; several participants indicated the fields' inability to consistently sustain the use of organizations, particularly Cutters Soccer. It was shared that the fields were in an un-desirable condition due to longstanding drainage issues.

Partner with other popular and visible Monroe County organizations. Participants identified a wide range of po-tential partners from a programming and/or sponsorship perspective. It was hoped that these organizations could contribute to the park system's vision and new endeavors. Organizations identified may include Indiana University, IvyTech, IU Health, local hospitals and public health insti-tutions, prominent businesses (e.g., Cook Medical, Catal-ent, Boston Scientific), relevant nonprofits (e.g., Sycamore Land Trust, Audubon), community organizations (e.g., Pantry 279, LIFEDesigns, the Humane Society) and rele-vant organizations that operate with or within park spaces (e.g., Cutters Soccer, gardening groups). Finally, the City of Bloomington was frequently identified as a partner given its parallel park system and robust resources.

Focus on maintenance now, while directing growth to-ward future vision. Participants were nearly split with re-spect to whether the county parks system should seek to

grow and expand its network of sites or prioritize maintaining and upgrading existing sites. Most participants were aware that given tight financial resources of government institutions like the county parks system, trade-offs are often required. Notably, however, among those who promoted growth and green space acquisition, many did so while acknowledging the financial implication of converting these spaces to parks. These individuals sometimes suggested that given the rising property values and finite nature of open spaces, land be acquired but not necessarily developed/maintained until resources allow. Spatial recommendations for growth included the east, south, and north parts of the county. Another frequently supported idea that arose in several interviews was further building out and connecting the county's trail network.

Surveys

Community surveys were utilized to gauge public opinion and learn more about residents' interests and beliefs about the current recreation and park system in Monroe County. The surveys were created by Eppley and validated through review by the project team, including Department staff.

Two surveys were used to engage the public. The first, launched in November 2021, was a "convenience" or non-random sample survey. This survey was made available to all who wanted to take it. The survey link was offered on the Monroe County Parks & Recreation website, social media page, in a newspaper article about the master plan in the Bloomington Herald-Times, and the project planning website. This survey closed on January 4, 2022.

The second survey is a statistically valid, or random sample, survey, mailed to 3500 households randomly chosen from a list of all residential addresses in the county. This survey launched in early January and closed on January 31, 2022. Selected households were mailed a postcard with an invitation to take the survey via a QR code or a direct link to an online survey administered through Qualtrics.

Both surveys had paper copies with postage paid return envelopes available for those who do not wish to take the survey online. The complete survey methodology and instrument can be found in Appendix A.

Survey Methodology Overview

Objectives

The primary objective for the survey was to systematically gather data on public opinion, interests, and perceptions regarding the current recreation and park system in Monroe County. While a summary of the survey methodology is described below, a detailed description is available in the Appendix A.

Sampling

The survey featured two sampling strategies, convenience, and random sampling, to ensure that some survey responses remain representative of the targeted Monroe County population while also allowing any member of the public to access the survey and provide feedback. The triangulation of data from the two survey sampling methods, stakeholder interviews, and public comments gives decision makers in the city and the Department sufficient and strong data to confidently gauge the needs and desires of Monroe County residents.

The random sample population was defined as all individuals with a residence in Monroe County, Indiana; this data was provided by the county Surveyor's Department and included 54,359 residential addresses. Households included in the random sample were recruited via a mailed postcard with a link to the survey (Appendix A, Figure 33). Data collection ultimately occurred in two waves (3,500 residences in December 2021 & 4,000 residences in January 2022). After the conclusion of these two waves of random sampling, 239 responses were collected, which is best represented by a response rate of 4.3% and corresponds with a ±6.3% margin of error.

Design & Analysis

The survey was designed to take 15 minutes to complete. Data was analyzed for key findings, relying on relevant descriptive analysis (e.g., counts, distributions, percentages, means). Results summarized in this report are at times broken out by sampling strategy (e.g., convenience, random, and all), and sometimes combined and/or omitted where substantively relevant. Free-response comments to some question prompts were analyzed among the random sample.

Survey Results

Overview

Highlights from the random (statistically valid) survey are summarized on the following page (Figure 23) and placed in comparison with results from the last Monroe County Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2018-2022). Notably, trends across the two time periods demonstrate consistency across time. For example, "Maintaining Existing Parks and Trails" and "Renovating Existing Parks and Trails" remained in the "Top 3 Most Important Funding Priorities." The only change in this metric was the new relative rank of "Conservation Efforts/Habitat Management," which displaced "Constructing New Trails." Key context for this change is that the Karst Farm Greenway was new to the system at the time of the last system master plan survey, and the Limestone Greenway was not yet complete (summer 2019).

The "Top 5 Benefits of Parks" has remained consistent over time. Among the "Top 5 Recreation Programs to Add or Increase," "Farmers' Markets," "Public Events/Festivals/Picnics," "Programs for People with Disabilities," and "Nature Programs" (e.g., Bug Fest), all remain popular. "Fitness, Health, and Wellness Programs" are a new addition to this "Top 5" list. Similarly, "Restrooms," "Natural Trails," "Paved Trails," and "Shelters," remain among the "Top 5 Recreation Facilities to Add or Increase;" these are rounded out by the new inclusion of "Forest/Woodland Habitat."

Demographics

Overall, 1,208 surveys were collected under both sampling strategies, although 135 individuals initiated the survey but did not complete a single substantive question, resulting in 1,073 included responses. The random sampling approach collected 239 usable responses, whereas the convenience sampling approach collected 834 usable responses. All respondents recruited randomly were Monroe County residents, 95% of the convenience sampling responses were Monroe County residents. Additionally, approximately half of respondents reported living in Bloomington City limits (53%), and comparable rates were identified across sampling strategies (convenience, 53%; random, 51%).

Overall, residents were generally longtime residents of the county; 56% reported having lived in the area for 16 or more years, 12% reported residency of 11-15 years, 15% reported residency of 6-10 years, 14% reported residency of 1-5 years, and only 3% reported less than one year of residency in the township (total n = 1,021). Comparable rates between sampling strategies were also identified on this metric, e.g., 55% of the of the convenience sample respondents reported 16+ years of county residency, whereas 58% of the random sample reported 16+ years of county residency. Overall, 3.7% of respondents (n = 39) reported being a full-time student at either Indiana University or Ivy Tech; this differed slightly by sampling strategy (convenience, 3.2%; random, 5.6%).

Survey says...
(the top responses)

Most Important Funding Priorities

1 Maintaining Existing Parks and Trails | **2023-28**
Maintaining Existing Parks and Trails | **2018-22**

2 **Conservation Efforts/Habitat Management** | **2023-28**
Renovating Existing Parks and Trails | **2018-22**

3 Renovating Existing Parks and Trails | **2023-28**
Constructing New Trails | **2018-22**

Benefits of Parks

1 Improve Physical Health and Fitness | **2023-28**
Enhance Community Appearance | **2018-22**

2 Improve Mental Health and Reduce Stress | **2023-28**
Provide Access to Nature | **2018-22**

3 Provide Access to the Outdoors and Nature | **2023-28**
Improve Mental Health and Reduce Stress | **2018-22**

4 Preserve Open Space and the Environment | **2023-28**
Improve Physical Health and Fitness | **2018-22**

5 Enhance Community Appearance | **2023-28**
Preserve Open Space and the Environment | **2018-22**

Recreation Programs to Add or Increase

1 Farmers' Market | **2023-28**
Farmers' Market | **2018-22**

2 Public Events/Festivals/Picnics | **2023-28**
Concerts, Movies, etc. | **2018-22**

3 Nature Programs | **2023-28**
Public Events/Festivals/Picnics | **2018-22**

4 Programs for People with Disabilities | **2023-28**
Programs for People with Disabilities | **2018-22**

5 **Fitness, Health, and Wellness Programs** | **2023-28**
Nature Programs | **2018-22**

Recreation Facilities to Add or Increase

1 Restrooms | **2023-28**
Restrooms | **2018-22**

2 Natural Trails | **2023-28**
Natural Trails | **2018-22**

3 Paved Trails | **2023-28**
Paved Trails | **2018-22**

4 Shelters (open air) | **2023-28**
Shelters | **2018-22**

5 **Forest/Woodland Habitat** | **2023-28**
Playgrounds | **2018-22**

Key   Consistent high rank in both plans
New high rank in 2023-28 plan

FIGURE 18: Survey Summary (2018-22 & 2023-28 Plans)

TABLE 14: Survey participants by Township

	Convenience		Random		All	
Township	n	%	n	%	n	%
Bean Blossom	28	4%	9	4%	37	4%
Benton	18	2%	6	3%	24	2%
Bloomington	256	33%	63	26%	319	31%
Clear Creek	36	5%	10	4%	46	5%
Indian Creek	3	0%	3	1%	6	1%
Perry	197	25%	70	29%	267	26%
Polk	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Richland	64	8%	24	10%	88	9%
Salt Creek	8	1%	3	1%	11	1%
Van Buren	91	12%	23	10%	114	11%
Washington	10	1%	5	2%	15	1%
I'm not sure	64	8%	22	9%	86	8%
Total	**776**	**100%**	**238**	**100%**	**1014**	**100%**

Across both sampling groups, the average reported household size was 2.8 individuals, and the median household size of 2.0 (n = 1,057). By household income, 6% reported a household income under $25,000, 13% reported a household income between $25,000-$49,999, 20% reported a household income between $50,000-74,999, 19% reported a household income between $75,000-99,999, 33% reported a household income between $100,000-$199,999, and 10% reported a household income exceeding $200,000 (total n = 641). By township, more than half of respondents lived in either Bloomington (31%) or Perry (26%) townships; however, these rates differed between the random and convenience samples (Table 14).

13 outlines a snapshot of all survey respondents by demographic characteristics and sampling strategy. Among all respondents, approximately one of eight respondents indicated that there was at least one young child in their household (i.e., younger than 10 years old, n = 131); conversely 35% of households reported any child or young adult in their household (i.e., 19 years old or younger, n = 365). Slightly less than a quarter (22%, n = 236) reported at least one adult 65 years old or older. More than half of survey respondents indicating gender identity were female (57%), 42% were male, and 1% were non-binary (total n = 717). Of respondents indicating their racial identity (n = 627), most respondents identified as white (98%), and fewer than 2% identified as American Indian or Alaska Native (1%), Asian (1%), Black or African American (1%), Hispanic (2%) or some other race (0.6%).
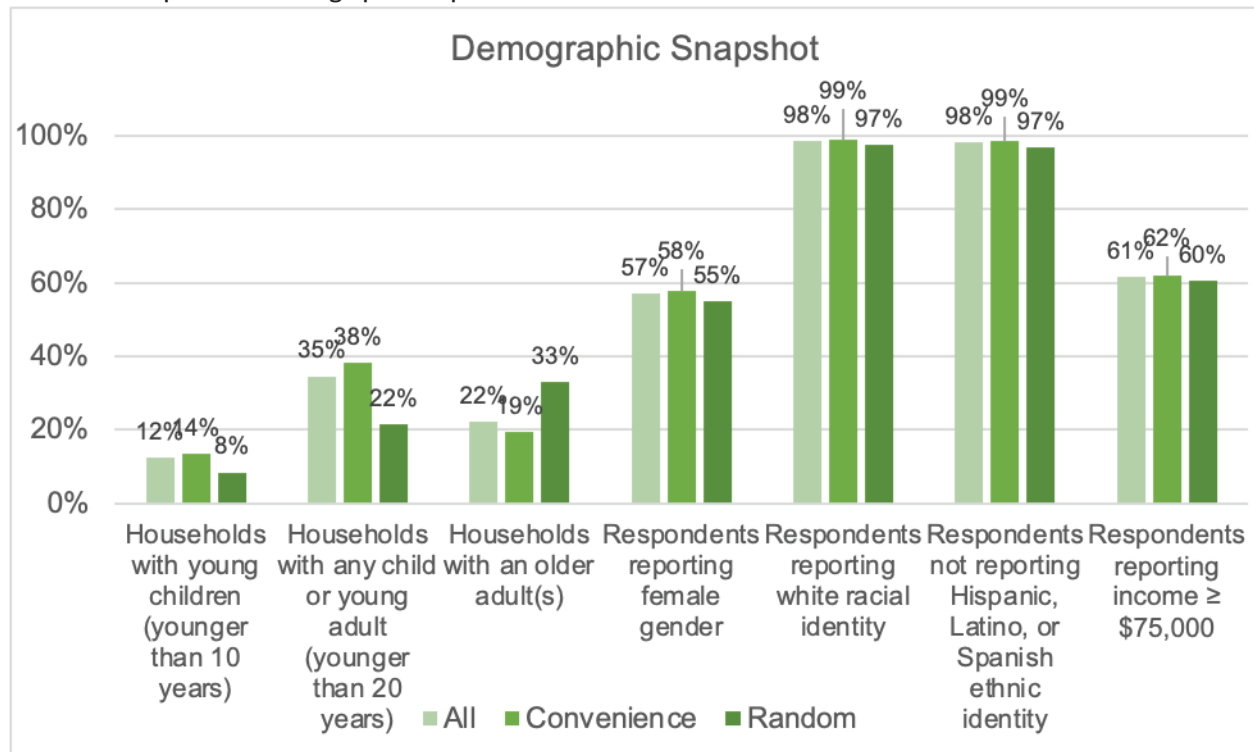
However, there were demographic differences between the sampling strategies; notably a higher percentage of convenience sampling respondents reported having a child or young adult in the household (38%) than the random sample (22%). Similarly, a lower percentage of convenience sampling respondents reported having an adult 65 years or older (19%) than the random sample (33%).

Awareness

Generally, respondents to the convenience survey were more likely to be aware that Monroe County Parks & Recreation and Bloomington Parks and Recreation were separate entities and operate separate facilities and programs (73%, n = 607 of 831) than those recruited via random sample (53%, n = 126 of 238, Figure 20).

In terms of current ways respondents learn about recreation opportunities in Monroe County, the Department's Website (31% random, 45% all) and Friends and Neighbors (38% random, 48% all) were the top two mechanisms (Table 15). While the website remained among the top three mechanisms when prompted to respond with their preferred modes of information (33% random, 44% all), Social Media (33% random, 49% all) and a Seasonal Program Guide (43% random, 44% all) represent the top two factors.

FIGURE 20: Awareness of Separate City & County Entities 9
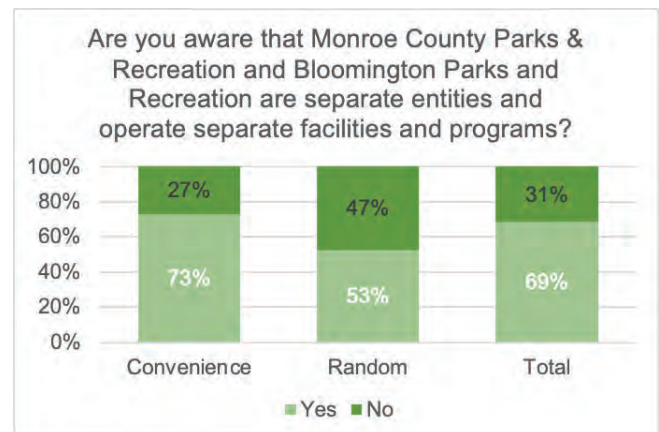
Note. Convenience n = 831; random n = 238; total n = 1,069.

TABLE 15: Current & Preferred Ways Respondents would like to learn about the Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department's services and programs

	Current		Preferred	
	Random	**All**	**Random**	**All**
Total Respondents (n)	239	827	239	788
Monroe County Parks & Recreation website	**31%**	**45%**	**33%**	**44%**
From friends and neighbors	**38%**	**48%**	19%	24%
Flyers/Posters at parks and rec facilities	21%	25%	15%	21%
Conversations with parks and rec staff	5%	8%	6%	8%
Social Media	23%	**41%**	**33%**	**49%**
Newspaper Articles	**23%**	26%	18%	24%
Blogs	1%	1%	2%	2%
Parks and Rec Department e-mail bulletins	12%	16%	24%	30%
Seasonal program guide	-	-	**43%**	**44%**
Radio	-	-	15%	16%
Television	-	-	5%	6%
Newspaper Advertisements	12%	13%	10%	11%
Other	3%	3%	3%	2%
I do not receive any information	20%	13%	-	-

Note. Cells highlighted in blue indicate those in approximately the top 25% of values for that column.

Usage

Among the random sample respondents, the most-frequently used park or greenspace was Karst Farm Park; 50% (n = 124 of 246) of this group reported at least one visit to this space in the past year (Figure 21). While park space use aligned somewhat between the two sampling groups, there were several cases in which the usage percentage differed by more than 10%. These are indicated below and illustrated in full in Appendix A (Table 47). These differences illustrate that the convenience sample respondents are more frequent park users, particularly at Karst Farm Park, than the random sample (which is more representative of the typical Monroe County resident).

- Karst Farm Park, more than 20 visits: 4% random sample, 32% convenience sample
- Karst Farm Park, did not visit – aware of park but did not use: 38% random sample, 19% convenience sample
- Flatwoods Park, did not visit, did not know park existed: 56% random sample, 38% convenience sample
- Will Detmer Park, did not visit – aware of park but did not use: 32% random sample, 48% convenience sample
- Will Detmer Park, did not visit, did not know park existed: 52% random sample, 32% convenience sample

Park & Greenway Use, among random sample

Site	More than 20 visits	11-20 visits	6-10 visits	1-5 visits	Did not visit - aware of park but did not use	Did not visit - did not know park existed
Limestone Greenway (n = 237)	1%	3%	3%	16%	19%	49%
Karst Farm Greenway (n = 235)	3%	4%	3%	18%	34%	38%
Jackson Creek Park (n = 244)	1%	3%	3%	20%	36%	39%
Will Detmer Park (n = 241)	2%	12%		32%	52%	
Flatwoods Park (n = 234)	1%	12%		29%	56%	
Karst Farm Park (n = 246)	4%	4%	5%	37%	38%	12%

Legend:
- More than 20 visits
- 11-20 visits
- 6-10 visits
- 1-5 visits
- Did not visit - aware of park but did not use
- Did not visit - did not know park existed

- Jackson Creek Park, did not visit – aware of park but did not use: 36% random sample, 46% convenience sample

- Jackson Creek Park, did not visit, did not know park existed: 39% random sample, 26% convenience sample

- Karst Farm Greenway, did not visit, did not know park existed: 38% random sample, 21% convenience sample

Respondents were also asked about their top-three most frequently used park facilities. Across all three groups, "Trails Within Parks" was reported most frequently as a top-3 facility of frequent use; "Playgrounds" were also a top-three facility (total n = 802, Table). Among the random survey respondents, "Trails (Limestone Greenway)" were frequently used (33%); whereas "Athletic/Soccer/Lacrosse Fields" were frequently used among the convenience sample respondents (35%). These results indicate that the convenience sample reflects the voices of those who use those field spaces frequently, but perhaps under-represent park trail users.

With respect to recreation program and services provided by Monroe County Parks and Recreation, while nearly 40% of convenience sample respondents indicated participation, less than 20% of the random sample indicated participation (Figure 22).

TABLE 16: Percentage of Respondents indicating Facility or Amenity in their "Top 3"

	Convenience	Random	All
Total Respondents (n)	637	165	802
Athletic/Soccer/Lacrosse Fields	**35%**	9%	**30%**
Basketball Courts	7%	3%	6%
Community Gardens	4%	7%	5%
Disc Golf Course	19%	6%	17%
Dog Park	18%	15%	17%
Fishing Pond	1%	4%	2%
Green Space/Open Fields	22%	25%	23%
Playgrounds	**30%**	**34%**	**30%**
Shelters (climate controlled)	3%	5%	3%
Shelters (open air)	20%	15%	19%
Splash Pad	16%	12%	15%
Trails (within parks)	**49%**	**65%**	**52%**
Trails (Limestone Greenway)	26%	**33%**	27%
Trails (Karst Greenway)	29%	28%	29%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue indicate those in approximately the top 25% of values for that column.

FIGURE 22: Program and Service Participation

Have you or other members of your household participated in any recreation programs and services provided by Monroe County Parks & Recreation during the past year?

Total (n = 875): Yes 34%, No 66%
Random (n = 211): Yes 17%, No 83%
Convenience (n = 664): Yes 39%, No 61%
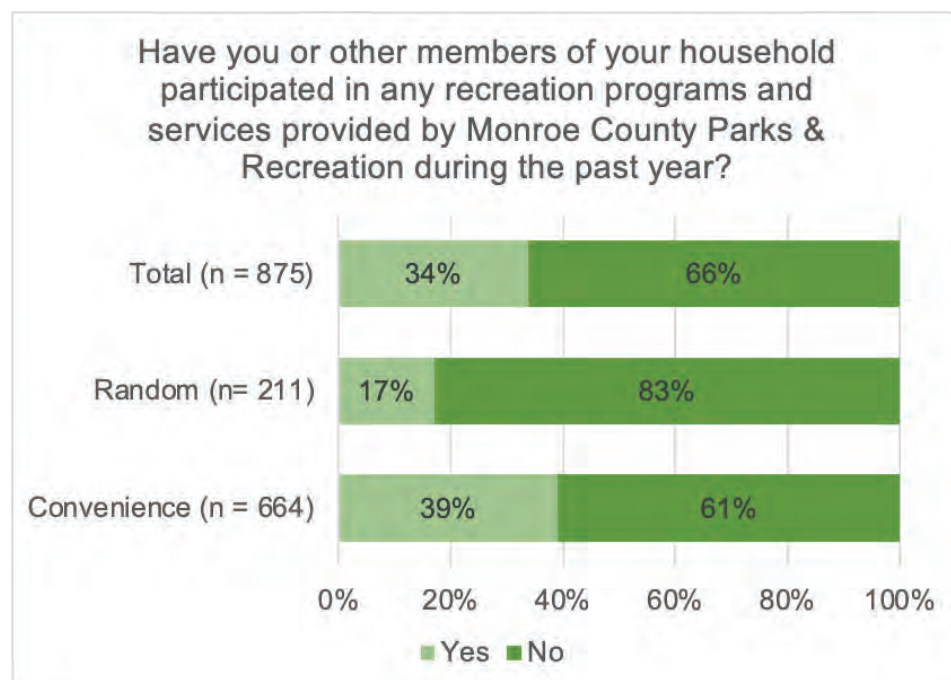
TABLE 17: Barriers to Park System Use

Barrier	Convenience	Random	All
Total Respondents (n)	474	160	634
Not enough time	64%	56%	62%
My neighborhood does not have a park, recreation facility, or trail within a 10-minute walk	35%	34%	35%
Personal safety concern - the walk to the park or trail is not safe due to traffic or roadways	16%	15%	16%
Personal safety concern - the park or trail is not safe	14%	16%	15%
Programs that the Department offers do not interest me	10%	13%	11%
Personal health problem	9%	11%	9%
Other	7%	11%	9%
Not enough money	7%	7%	7%
Inadequate or poorly maintained facilities	7%	3%	6%
The Department's programs, parks, or facilities are not accessible to people with disabilities	1%	2%	2%

Barriers

When presented a list of potential barriers that prevent them or their family members from using Parks and Recreation services, lack of time and distance to a park space/recreation facility/and trail were the top two factors (Table 17). Notably—and counterintuitively—respondents to the convenience survey, who generally reported more frequent county park space use, indicated higher rates of reported barriers in contrast to the random sample group. Among random sample respondents, other barriers reported highlighted COVID-19 as the primary reason for not using the parks/attending programs. Users also identified the Usability or Surface of Paths/Trails (e.g., paving and connectivity), Cost of Offerings, and Accessibility (both for those with disabilities and those who wish to learn new skills) as barriers.

TABLE 18: Perceived Benefits

Reported Benefit	% Agree	% Strongly Agree	% All Agreement
Enhance community appearance	37%	47%	**84%**
Help attract new residents and businesses	**43%**	31%	**74%**
Help reduce crime	26%	25%	**51%**
Improve diet and nutrition	36%	25%	**61%**
Improve mental health and reduce stress	35%	**54%**	**89%**
Improve physical health and fitness	32%	**57%**	**90%**
Improve social connections	**42%**	32%	**74%**
Increase opportunities for people of different cultures to interact	**40%**	29%	**69%**
Increase property values in surrounding area	38%	31%	**68%**
Make Monroe County a more desirable place to live	33%	51%	**84%**
Strengthen sense of community	**39%**	36%	**75%**
Preserve open space and the environment	29%	**56%**	**84%**
Promote tourism in the county	38%	22%	**60%**
Provide access to the outdoors and nature	28%	**61%**	**89%**
Protect the county's historical attributes	36%	27%	**62%**

Note. Cells highlighted in blue indicate those in approximately the top 25% of values for that column. Percentage values reflect min n = 775, max n=784 (varies by item).

Perceived Benefits

Another series of survey items sought respondents' level of agreement regarding a series of proposed benefits that they, or a member of their household, receive from parks, trails, recreation facilities, programs, and services. Notably, there was a high level of agreement for many of the proposed benefits (responding either "Agree" or "Strongly Agree"). To further differentiate associations, an analysis of just those eliciting a "Strongly Agree" response was conducted, although these mirrored overall results, as indicated by blue highlighting that shows the greatest values in each column (Table 18). Half of the most highly related benefits related to Preservation of Natural Resources - preserving open space and the environment (84%) or Pro-

viding Access to the Outdoors and Nature (89%), while the other half were related to Health and Wellness Dimensions - improving mental health and reducing stress (89%) and Improving Physical Health and Fitness (90%).

Respondents were also asked about the facilities that they perceive contributed the most to their health. Across the sampling groups, "Trails Within Parks" was the most frequently selected, health-promoting facility, i.e., it was ranked most frequently among "Top Three" facilities for health. Otherwise, the facilities that most benefited respondents' health differed by group.

TABLE 19: Health-Promoting Facilities, % of Respondents Selecting Facility in their "Top Three"

	Convenience	Random	All
Total (n)	**624**	**157**	**781**
Athletic/Soccer/Lacrosse Fields	34%	8%	29%
Basketball Courts	8%	4%	7%
Community Gardens	6%	11%	7%
Disc Golf Course	20%	6%	17%
Dog Park	16%	11%	15%
Fishing Pond	1%	4%	1%
Green Space/Open Fields	26%	31%	27%
Playgrounds	23%	21%	23%
Shelters (climate controlled)	2%	4%	2%
Shelters (open air)	12%	10%	11%
Splash Pad	9%	6%	8%
Trails (within parks)	56%	70%	59%
Trails (Limestone Greenway)	28%	36%	30%
Trails (Karst Greenway)	34%	31%	33%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue indicate those in approximately the top 25% of values for that column.

Importance of Increased Availability

Respondents provided substantial feedback regarding the importance increasing availability of current facilities and programs; Trails and Restrooms were among the most frequently selected (≥70%, Table 20). However, these were followed by Habitat-Forest/Woodland (64%), Shelters-Open Air (63%), Habitat-Prairie-Meadow (59%), and Playgrounds (56%), this detail is provided in Appendix A, Table 48. Among random sample respondents who identified other facilities and amenities for increased availability, users indicated the need for more Handicap Accessibility and the need for Multi-Use and Connecting Trails (e.g., ability to cross country ski, connecting trails to state parks or other trails in town). Additionally, users request more

Playground and Leisure Spaces (green spaces, seating/benches/common areas, preserves), along with more Indoor/Outdoor Recreation Facilities (e.g., skate parks, pickleball courts, dog park).

When asked to indicate the importance of increasing the availability of a series of programs, Farmers' Markets, Public Events/Festivals/Picnics, and programs for people with disabilities were frequently selected (≥50%, 20). Random sample respondents also indicated interest in increasing the availability of programing for families with children and for seniors/retirees. A full list of all program areas by % indicating importance is provided in Appendix A, Table 49.

TABLE 20: Frequently selected "Top 3" Facilities & Amenities and Programs

Facilities & Amenities	Programs
1. Restrooms (79%)	1. Farmers' Market (63%)
2. Trails, natural (79%)	2. Programs for people with disabilities (50%)
3. Trails, paved (72%)	3. Public Events/Festivals/Picnics (50%)

Note. Percentage values reflect min n = 722, max n=769 (varies by item).

TABLE 21: Park and Greenway Ratings

	Karst Farm Park	Flatwoods Park	Will Detmer Park	Jackson Creek Park	Karst Farm Greenway	Limestone Greenway
All (n)	738	242	217	286	404	319
Very Poor	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Poor	5%	1%	0%	2%	1%	1%
Fair	13%	15%	14%	15%	7%	7%
Good	40%	51%	53%	58%	44%	35%
Excellent	42%	32%	31%	24%	47%	57%
Random (n)	125	34	37	53	61	66
Very Poor	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Poor	2%	0%	0%	4%	2%	0%
Fair	7%	18%	8%	15%	5%	8%
Good	44%	53%	59%	55%	44%	38%
Excellent	46%	26%	32%	26%	49%	55%

Satisfaction

With respect to satisfaction with Monroe County Parks & Recreation parks and greenways, users were generally highly satisfied. More than 4 out of 5 respondents indicated that each was either "Good" or "Excellent" (20). Among the evaluated parks and greenways, Karst Farm Park, Karst Farm Greenway, and the Limestone Greenway had more than 40% of the random sample and total sample rating them as "Excellent."

Among random sample respondents who provided additional detail regarding their "Fair" or lower ratings, at Karst Farm Park, responses addressed the need for better maintenance and cleaning, improved sports fields, improvements to better the children's use of the space (e.g., fencing to restrict movement, updated swing sets). At Flatwoods Park, these respondents also highlighted needs for better maintenance and cleaning, in addition to feedback regarding expanded or multi-use paths/trails. Jackson

Creek Park respondents indicate a clear need for additional and diversified playground equipment, along with improvements and maintenance to facilities. With respect to Karst Farm Greenway, respondents indicated a desire for an elongated path, with improved trailhead parking and trail signage, and the Limestone Greenway users indicated a desire for increased trailhead amenities (e.g., lighting in trailhead parking, flushing toilets). There were few comments (and subsequently, themes) in free-response comments regarding Will Detmer Park among users who rated the park "Fair" or poorer.

Satisfaction among respondents who have participated in a Monroe County Parks & Recreation program was also evaluated. Given this criterion (reported participation), the most frequently reported program to attend was "Public Events, Festivals, Picnics" (n = 144), followed by "Youth Sports Leagues, Programs" (n = 127), and "Adult Sports

Satisfaction with Programs, all respondents
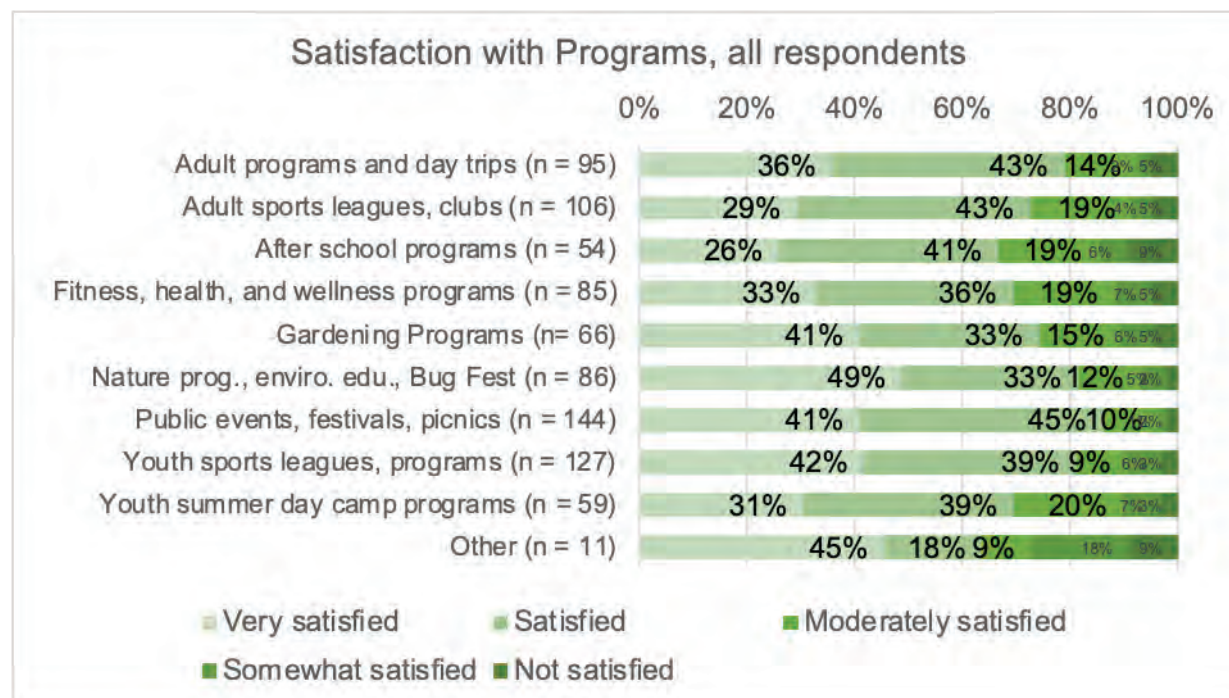
Leagues, Clubs" (n = 106). Generally, these participants were respondents to the convenience survey; 91% of all reported participation was among that sampling group. Figure 23 outlines reported satisfaction levels and demonstrates that those programs with the highest satisfaction (≥80%, %Very Satisfied + Satisfied) were "Nature Programs, Environmental Education, Bug Fest", "Public Events, Festivals, Picnics," and "Youth Sports Leagues, Programs." Among random sample respondents, the COVID-19 pandemic was the most frequent explanation for why they did not participate in recreation programming in the past year; this was followed by personal restrictions (e.g., time, transportation), and availability/accessibility of programming. For further detail regarding explanations for why respondents had not used sports or recreation programs, see Appendix A, Table 50.

Opinion

Finally, survey respondents were posed with the question: "If additional funding were available for Monroe County to fund parks and trails, how would you allocate the funding among competing categories?" Respondents were asked to ensure that their total allocation equaled 100%. On average, the typical respondent wished to allocate approximately 40% of their budget to (a) Maintaining Existing Parks and Trails (25%) and (b) Renovating the Grounds/Infrastructure in existing parks and trails (19%, total n = 840, Figure 24). Whereas results were generally similar across the two sampling strategies, there were three areas in which allocations differed by more ±3%. These included:

- Maintaining Existing Parks and Trails (27% random sample, 24% convenience sample)
- Renovating the Grounds/Infrastructure in existing parks and trails (16% random sample, 20% convenience sample)
- Conservation Efforts/Habitat Management (16% random sample, 11% convenience sample)

FIGURE 24: Funding Allocation Opinions
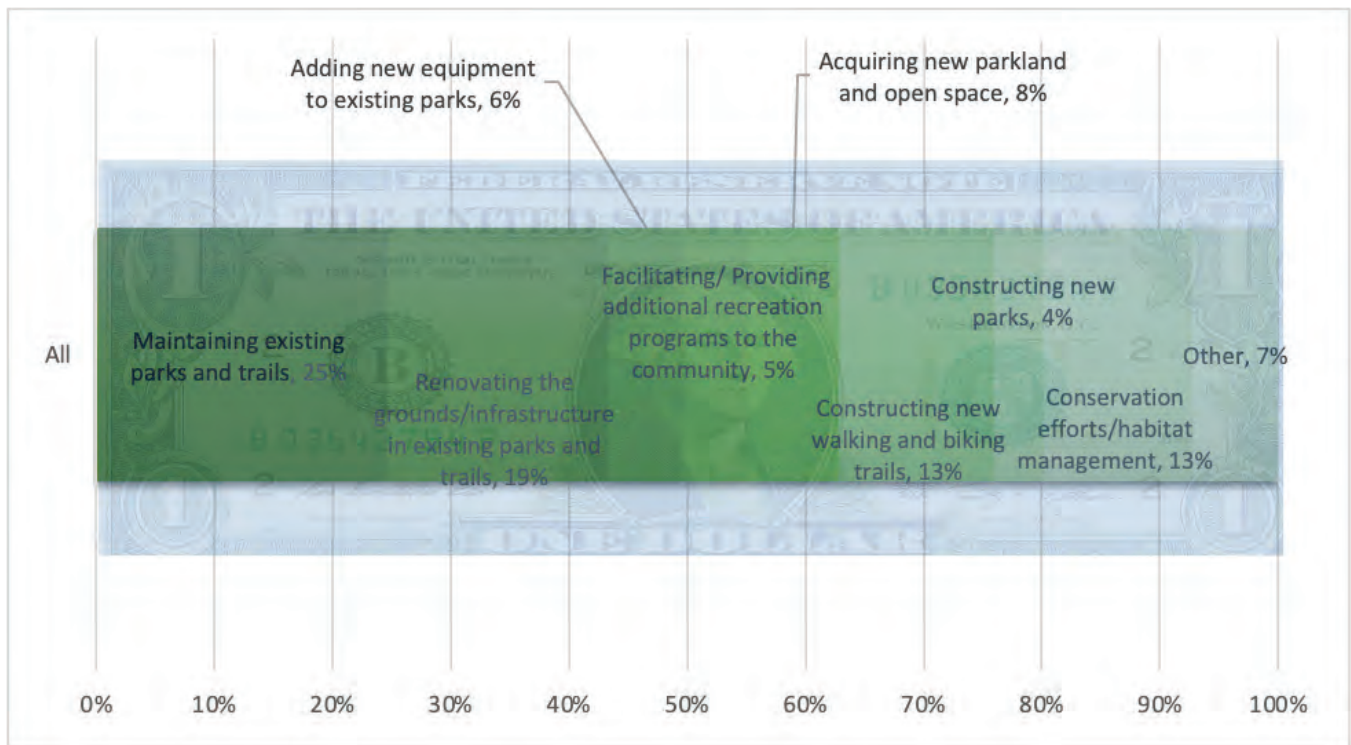
Open-ended responses among the random sample include Funding Support for Sports Facilities (e.g., pickleball courts, golf, swimming, hockey) and Nature Programming. Users also requested a variety of specialty interests (e.g., indoor dog park, establishing senior citizen center, investment in carbon neutral maintenance).

Planning Website

The project team kept the public informed and updated about the Master Plan throughout the process using a website- http://monroemasterplan.com/ The website was developed and published in October 2021.

From the time of launch and throughout the project, the site contains:

- General information about the parks and recreation master planning process.
- A project timeline and information about major milestones.
- Information about the consultant team.

- Information about how to participate in the public engagement process.
- A portal to access the community survey.
- A public comment forum for leaving feedback for the MCPR planning team to consider.

The website, including the public comment forum, remained active through the planning process to ensure transparency and allow ample opportunity for community members to leave their feedback.

Public Comment

As part of the engagement process, the draft plan was presented to the public at a Park Board meeting on May 18, 2022. Questions asked and comments made during the presentation can be found in Appendix A.

BENCHMARKING ANALYSIS

Benchmarking is a vital process that allows organizations to compare their assets, programs, policies, and other criteria to those of peer organizations. Such comparisons are often used by agencies to evaluate themselves and, ultimately, plan better for growth and improvement. While benchmarking is a direct comparison, it is not meant to judge that any community "should" have the same assets and program offerings as other communities. Each community is unique, with different demographic, economic, geographic, and social situations so priority should be given to the needs and desires of each community's population in parks and recreation system master planning. Benchmarking creates an aggregate picture of the recreation system throughout the comparison service areas and may uncover opportunities not previously realized by the planning community.

In this analysis, initial criteria were selected by the master planning team in conjunction with the Monroe County Park & Recreation Department. MCPR operates in a service area with a city containing a large university and a strong municipal parks department. MCPR also operates, in partnership with a community organization, a large competitive athletic program. Comparison agencies sought also have a large university, competitive athletic program, or were of a similar sized population as Monroe County.

Using these criteria, eight peer agencies were selected for comparison and were contacted to complete a survey of approximately 45 questions. The following six park and recreation departments were included in the final analysis:

- Bloomington (Indiana) Parks and Recreation
- Elkhart County (Indiana) Parks
- Ingham County (Michigan) Parks
- LaPorte County (Indiana) Parks
- St. Joseph County (Indiana) Parks
- Vigo County (Indiana) Parks & Recreation

It should be noted that the City of Bloomington was a priority for comparison because of its location within Monroe County; strong, nationally recognized competitive sports facilities and programs; and program and facility offerings that both compliment and cooperate with MCPR. All other participating agencies are County level agencies. Each of these counties also have medium to large sized cities within their borders that have their own parks and recreation departments.

Within the City of Bloomington, the Indiana University student population drives average age down, as can be expected, and lowers average income numbers because many students have no income. Bloomington Parks and Recreation (BPR) is a well-funded, multiple time NRPA National Gold Medal winning agency with a very robust park system. Because of these differences and because MCPR specifically included BPR to illustrate the total park and recreation system that exists within the County, care is taken not to directly compare BPR to the other agencies or communities in the benchmarking analysis. It should also be remembered that the total recreation system in each county represented in this analysis is larger than illustrated through the benchmarking data. This analysis compares county departments to each other.

To ensure consistent comparison across communities, basic demographic data from the 2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates were used. While complete decennial census data is preferable, a complete set of demographic data for the most recent (2020) census had not yet been released as of the publishing of this document. Land area figures were taken from the 2020 Census Quick facts. Data from Bloomington was retrieved from their current master plan while data for the remaining agencies was provided through the surveys.

In the analysis below, Monroe County can be compared to each individual agency and also to the descriptive statistics of the comparison group. Specifically, we calculated the mean ("average") and the median ("middle"), when applicable. In instances where the collective data roughly follows a normal distribution, the average of the data points best represents the selected criterion. However, in the case of outliers—that is, when individual figures do not fit normally with the rest of the given data—the median provides a better snapshot, as it represents the midpoint of the sample. Due to the disparate level of service and facilities between Bloomington and typical county level departments and because Bloomington demographic data is already part of the total Monroe County data, Bloomington data is included in the tables for illustration but is not included in mean or median calculations.

Data collection was completed between January and February of 2022. Data is only as accurate or complete as the information provided by each agency and, despite our best attempts to standardize data, agencies may report certain figures differently or not at all.

TABLE 22: Population and Demographic Characteristics of Peer Cities

County	State	University	Service Area Population	Land Area (in square miles)	Population per square mile	Median Income (dollars)	Median Age (years)
Monroe County	Indiana	Indiana University	139,718	394.51	354	$49,839	29.5
Bloomington*	IN	Indiana University	85,981	23.16	3,472.0	$37,077	24
Ingham County	MI	Michigan State University	284,900	555.90	512.5	$54,395	32.4
Elkhart County	IN	IU South Bend	207,047	463.20	447.0	$57,021	35.9
LaPorte County	IN	Purdue NW	112,417	598.30	187.9	$53,658	41.1
St. Joseph County	IN	University of Notre Dame	272,912	457.80	596.1	$52,769	36.9
Vigo County	IN	Indiana State University	106,153	403.30	263.2	$45,230	36.4
Benchmark Mean (Average)			187,191.2	478.8	393.5	52,152.0	35.4
Benchmark Median (Middle)			149,804.1	468.3	328.3	52,460.5	36.7

*Bloomington data not included in mean or median calculations

Selected peer counties all have a major state university or subsequent satellite campus located in them. Despite this similarity, Monroe County has a lower-than-average median age than all in the peer group with the exception of the city of Bloomington for example, whose median age of 24 is well below the benchmark average of 34.45.

Population ranges from 106,153 in Vigo County to 284,900 in Ingham County. Monroe County is below the peer group average and median. All peer counties are similar in size (land area) with Monroe being the smallest at 394.5 and LaPorte the largest at 598.3

Monroe County's median income of $49k is just slightly below the benchmark average of $52k and consistent with all other county level peer agencies which range from $45,230 to $57,021.

TABLE 23: Baseline Characteristics of Peer Agencies

County	Total Number of Parks	Residents per Park	Total Acres Managed by Agency	Total Acres of Developed Parks	Total Acres of Open Space	Acres per 1000 Residents	Total Paved Trail Miles	Total Unpaved Trail Miles	Trail Miles per 1000 residents
MCPR	4	35,823	504	426	78	3.6	10	9.4	.14
Bloomington*	30	2,866	2270			26.4	14.6	20.4	.30
Ingham County	3	94,967	1200			4.2	1.5	26	.10
Elkhart County	10	20,705	1300	1168	132	6.3	10	26	.17
LaPorte County	5	22,483	581			5.2	5	13	.16
St. Joseph County	8	34,114	1300	1181	119	4.8	3.75	30	.12
Vigo County	10	10,615	2700	585	2115	25.4	.34	46	.43
Benchmark Mean (Average)	6.7	36451.2	1264.2	840.0	611.0	6.7	5.1	25.1	0.16
Benchmark Median (Middle)	8.0		1300.0	1168.0	132.0	5.0	7.5	26.0	0.15

*Bloomington data not included in mean or median calculations

MCPR has fewer parks than all but Ingham County and fewer overall acres of managed park land and open space, park acres per resident, total miles of trails, and trails per resident than all other peer agencies. When combined with the City of Bloomington, however, the total recreation assets compare very favorably and give resident a high level of recreation services.

The number of parks in the system ranges from 3 in Ingham County to 10 in Elkhart and Vigo Counties. The number of acres managed also varies widely from 504 in Monroe County to 2700 in Vigo County. Vigo is the outlier in acres managed per population at 25.4 while all other agencies hover close to the median of 5.0. Monroe is the lowest in both total acres at 504 and acres per 10,000 residents at 3.6.

The total miles of trails and trails per 10,000 residents also vary widely from 18 miles of trails in LaPorte County to over 46 miles in Vigo, though almost all of Vigo's trails are unpaved. Ingham County offers the fewest miles of trails per population with .1 miles per 10,000 while Vigo offer the most at .43 miles per 10,000 residents. Monroe is very near the mean (.16) and median (.15) with .14 miles of trails per 10,000 residents.

MCPR has the second smallest operating budget among the peer group with just over $1.5 million. This is mainly in line with population and department size among the group. LaPorte has the smallest budget at $559 thousand while Ingham has the largest at $2.9 million.

A more precise way to view operating budgets is to examine budget per capita, or the amount of money available to operate the department per resident. This view adjusts for the disparity in population among the peer group when it is to be expected that more populated communities generally have a larger budget. Vigo County, with the smallest population, tops the peer group in per capita budget at $16.86 per resident. LaPorte, with the smallest budget and second smallest population, also spends the least per resident at $4.97. The remaining peers are grouped closely to the mean ($10.64) and the median ($10.87). There are many factors at play in agency budgeting including the number and size of facilities maintained, fluctuations in funding sources, and complementary and competing recreation opportunities offered by other providers such as city governments and private and non-profit entities. As such, budget examinations should not necessarily be viewed as an agency's or community's commitment or ability to provide services as much as a reflection of the uniqueness and needs of each community.

TABLE 24: Review of Peer Agencies' Budgets

County	Total Operating Budget	Operating Budget per Capita	Percent of Budget from Fees and Charges	Percent of Budget from Taxes	Tax Cost per Capita	Percent of Budget from All Other Sources	Average Capital Budget (last five years)
MCPR	$1,587,091	$11.35	15%	85%	$9.66	0%	$40,200
Bloomington*	9,814,470	$114.14		73%	$83.32	5%	
Ingham County	2,957,411	$10.38	32%	2%	$.2	25%	750,000
Elkhart County	2,356,006	$11.37	5%	92%	$10.47	3%	50,000
LaPorte County	559,078	$4.97	16.5%			0	425,000
St. Joseph County	2,436,087	$8.92	22%	78%	$6.96	0	0
Vigo County	1,789,995	$16.86	12.30%	86.80%	$14.63	.88%	430,000
Benchmark Mean (Average)	$1,947,611.3	$10.64	17%	69%	$8.4	5%	$282,533.3
Benchmark Median (Middle)	$2,073,000.5	$10.87	$0.2	$0.9	$9.7	$0.0	$237,500.0

*Bloomington data not included in mean or median calculations

Capital budgets vary greatly among the peer agencies from St. Joseph County having no defined capital budget to Ingham County's $750,000. This is not surprising considering capital budgets reflect major investments in facilities and not regular operations and may be reflective of currently planned projects.

As with operating budget, employees per capita is a more accurate view of agency staffing though it is less precise than budget per capita and is more reflective of the number, size, and complexity of facilities and programming offered by the department. Ingham County has the lowest ratio of full-time employees to population at one per 20,350 residents and also has the fewest number of parks

TABLE 25: Staffing Levels of Peer Agencies

County	Number of Full-Time Employees	Number of Part-Time Employees	Population per Full-Time Employee	Volunteer Hours
MCPR	13	35	5589	3000
Bloomington*	55		1563	7103
Ingham County	14		20,350	115
Elkhart County	27	16	7,668	1200
LaPorte County	7	9	16,059	150
St. Joseph County	25	11	10,916	2500
Vigo County	12	25	8,846	4500
Benchmark Mean (Average)	18.3	20.8	11571.3	1910.8
Benchmark Median (Middle)	19.5	16	9881	1850

*Bloomington data not included in mean or median calculations

TABLE 26: Outdoor Athletic and Recreation Facilities

County	Basketball courts (outdoor)	Pickleball (outdoor)	Tennis (outdoor lighted)	Tennis (outdoor unlighted)	Volleyball (outdoor)	Courts per 10,000	Diamond Fields (baseball/softball)	Rectangular Fields (football/soccer)	Fields per 10,000	Disc Golf Courses	Other
MCPR	4.5	0	0	0	1	.61	0	12	.86	1	
Bloomington*	26	6	22		7	6.3	16	2	1.8	1	Skate Park, Mountain Bike Park, Golf Course
Ingham County	2	0	0	0	16	.63	2	0	.07	1	
Elkhart County	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
LaPorte County	0	0	0	0	4	.35	0	0	0	1	
St. Joseph County	0	0	0	0	8	.29	0	0	0	1	
Vigo County	3	0	1	0	0	.37	2	1	.28	0	Mountain Bike Park
Benchmark Mean (Average)	1.9	0.2	0.2	0.0	4.8	0.4	0.7	2.3	0.2	0.8	
Benchmark Median (Middle)	1	0	0	0	2.5	0.4	0	0.5	0	1	

*Bloomington data not included in mean or median calculations

in the peer group. Monroe County, with 1 full-time employee per 5,589 residents, has the highest ratio of full-time employees to population.

The number of annual volunteer hours varies widely from 115 in Ingham County to 4,500 in Vigo County. Monroe is behind only Vigo in volunteer hours with 3,000 per year.

Monroe has a broader range of outdoor facilities compare to the peer group. It has the most outdoor basketball courts (6.5), and athletic fields (12). Ingham County and Vigo County are the only other agencies with basketball courts, none report having any pickleball courts, and only Elkhart County and Vigo have rectangle fields with only one each.

No county agency reported having tennis courts and only Ingham reported a single diamond (baseball/softball) field. Volleyball and disc golf are much more popular among the peer group. Ingham has by far the most volleyball courts with 16 while St. Joseph County has eight, LaPorte County four, and Monroe one. All agencies except Vigo report having a disc golf course, though Vigo has a mountain bike park, which none of the other agencies report having.

Only two agencies in the peer group reported operating any indoor recreation facilities or community center. LaPorte County has three indoor facilities totaling 3,000 square feet and St. Joseph County also has three but with much more space with over 23,000 square feet. Other Buildings among the peer group are history related or can be rented for events.

TABLE 27: Buildings and Facilities

County	Indoor Recreation Facility(#)	Indoor Recreation Facility (Sq. Ft.)	Indoor Recreation Space per 10,000	Community Center	Senior Center	Other Facility	
MCPR	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Bloomington*	1	98,000	11,529	3	0	1	Ice arena
Ingham County	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Elkhart County	0	0	0	0	0	2	1-room schoolhouse, historical museum
LaPorte County	3	3,000	273	0	0	0	
St. Joseph County	3	23,296	856	0	0	2	Log cabin, sugar house
Vigo County	0	0	0	0	0	23	Log Barn, 22 log 1800s structures
Benchmark Mean (Average)	1.2	5259.2	281	0.0	0.0	4.3	
Benchmark Median (Middle)	0.5	0	0	0	0	1.0	

*Bloomington data not included in mean or median calculations

TABLE 28: Aquatic Facilities

County	Outdoor Pools	Indoor Pools	Pools per 10,000	Splash Pad/ Spray Parks	Splash Pad/Spray Parks per 10,000
MCPR	0	0	0	1	.071
Bloomington	2	0	.22	1	.11
Ingham County	0	0	0	1	.035
Elkhart County	0	0	0	0	0
LaPorte County	0	0	0	0	0
St. Joseph County	0	0	0	0	0
Vigo County	0	0	0	0	0
Benchmark Mean (Average)	0	0	0	0.33	0.02
Benchmark Median (Middle)	0	0	0	0	0

*Bloomington data not included in mean or median calculations

TABLE 29: Other Facilities

County	Community Gardens	Park Shelters	Playgrounds	Playgrounds per 10,000	Dog Parks	Outdoor Fitness Stations	Permanent Stage/ Amphitheater	Mobile Stage
MCPR	1 (73 plots)	15	7	.57	1	0	0	0
Bloomington	3	28	26	3.02	2	0	2	1
Ingham County	2	17	6	.21	1	0	1	0
Elkhart County	0	17	4	.19	0	0	0	0
LaPorte County	0	9	8	.71	4	6	0	0
St. Joseph County	0	22	6	.21	0	0	1	0
Vigo County	0	11	12	1.13	0	2	1	0
Benchmark Mean (Average)	0.5	15.2	7.3	0.5	1.0	1.3	0.5	0.0
Benchmark Median (Middle)	0	16	7	0.39	0.5	0	0.5	0

*Bloomington data not included in mean or median calculations

Very few aquatic facilities exist among the peer group. No county agencies in the peer group own or manage either indoor or outdoor pools. Only Monroe and Ingham Counties report having a Splash Pad.

Only Monroe County and Ingham County report community gardens among the group. All agencies report park shelters and playgrounds, in most cases a significant number considering the sizes of the departments and total facilities available. Shelters range from nine in LaPorte to 22 in St. Joseph County. Monroe County falls very close to the mean (15.2) and median (16) with 15 shelters. The number of playgrounds ranges from four in Elkhart County to 12 in Vigo County. Monroe is also very close to the mean (7.3) and median (7) here with seven playgrounds.

Three agencies report dog parks with LaPorte having and Monroe and Ingham one each. Only LaPorte and Vigo have outdoor fitness stations. Ingham, St. Joseph, and Vigo Counties have a single permanent stage or amphitheater and none of the peer group has a mobile stage.

Programs

Program offerings provide many core recreation services as well as potentially generating revenue for the agency. This analysis looks at program offerings in two different ways-total offerings and offerings targeted for special groups or vulnerable populations, reporting whether or not they offer a particular program and not the quantity of each.

Monroe County is the only agency among the peer group that reports offering team sports (adult soccer) or individual sports (disc golf). Fitness, safety, crafts, themed events, and natural, cultural, or historical programs are offered almost universally. Elkhart and Vigo Counties are the only to offer visual arts and only Vigo offers safety related programming. No agency in the peer group offers aquatics, martial arts, or performing arts. Ingham County reports no program offerings.

Recreation and activities for potentially vulnerable populations are invaluable for the well-being of a community. These include programs for disabled persons, seniors, and youth that may not be available elsewhere in the community. Many communities also often depend on the Parks and Recreation Department to provide needed services such as various child care options benefitting working parents accessed through recreation programming including

TABLE 30: Program Offerings

County	Team Sports	Individual Sports	Fitness Classes	Health and Wellness Education	Safety Training	Aquatics	Trips and Tours	Martial Arts	Cultural Crafts	Themed Special Events	Natural, Cultural, Historical	Performing Arts	Visual Arts
MCPR	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N
Bloomington	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Ingham County	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N
Elkhart County	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
LaPorte County	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	N
St. Joseph County	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N
Vigo County	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y

before and after-school programs, summer camps, and direct child care.

Almost every agency reports offering programs for people with disabilities, seniors, and youth. Ingham County is the only exception as they offer no regular programming of any kind, though they do have summer camps. LaPorte is the only agency not offering summer camps. Monroe and St. Joseph both offer after school programs. Elkhart, St. Joseph, and LaPorte Counties report offering a preschool program. None of the peer group reports before school programs or full daycare.

TABLE 31: Program Offerings for Special Groups

County	Programs foe People w/ Disabilities	Summer Camp	Senior Specific Program	Teen Specific Programs	After School Programs	Before School Programs	Preschool	Full Daycare
MCPR	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
Bloomington	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Ingham County	N	Y	N	N	N	N	N	N
Elkhart County	Y	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	N
LaPorte County	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	N
St. Joseph County	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N
Vigo County	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	N

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

One of the most important and meaningful parts of the master planning process is the needs assessment. The needs assessment brings together the information and data gathered through earlier stages of the planning process including background information on the community and department, public feedback from the public and standardized parks data from national organizations to identify a path forward for the agency.

This needs analysis begins with a level of service (LOS) analysis, which summarizes the state of the parks system in Monroe County using data collected on facilities and programming offered both by MCPR and the City of Bloomington. It is important to consider Bloomington Parks and Recreation (BPR) because it offers a high level of parks, recreation facilities, and programs that are readily available to Monroe County residents, making their inclusion critical to drawing an accurate picture of the state of recreation in Monroe County. BPR did not participate directly in this planning process so data on their facilities and programs was obtained from their current master plan, website, program guides, and other readily available sources.

Certain benchmarks were used to determine where Monroe County's recreation system fits within the larger picture of recreation throughout the United States. Both The Trust for Public Land's (TTPL) 2021 ParkScore and National Park and Recreation Agency's (NRPA) 2021 Agency Performance Review include metrics and standards for the number of facilities in relation to the population.[5][6] NRPA reports data by jurisdiction and by population size served (among many other measures) to reflect that parks and recreation departments serve unique and varied communities.[7] In this analysis, LOS for the county is compared to NRPA's 100,000 to 250,000 population bracket, where Monroe County's total population, including Bloomington, fits. It is important to note that both TTPL and NRPA recognize that every community is different and has its own needs and wants for recreation services. As such,

neither organization attempts to set standards or make recommendations about what a department or community should have in their system. They only offer median data for comparison with what other communities actually have. Throughout the LOS analysis, both MCPR offerings and MCPR plus BPR offerings are viewed separately to give an accurate picture of these comparisons for both the department and the total public recreation system in Monroe County.

While analyzing level of service is valuable for providing a quantifiable overview of a park system, it does not qualitatively measure the needs and desires of the community that a particular parks system serves. For this reason, the needs assessment also includes an issues analysis, which blends public feedback obtained through the many methods of engagement including stakeholder interviews, surveys, and public comment, with what is known about the current state of the parks system and with department goals and priorities to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. Looking ahead, Monroe County had been showing a slow trend of growth that reversed beginning in 2020 and 2021 when the county population decreased. There is no reason to believe the population contraction will continue long term, therefore, recommendations about additions to the park system are made on the basis of current levels of service and issues and not on projected population changes. The final step in the master planning process is for the needs assessment to inform the action plan in which the planning team identifies specific actions that help close system gaps and meet community goals.

Parks and Greenways

Monroe County Parks Department operates five park properties which cover approximately 504 acres of land and two greenways. Ferguson Nature Park is not generally open to the public and has no facilities or amenities so is not included in the level of service analysis here. The current level of service for park land being provided in Monroe County is 16.2 acres per 1,000 residents, including the parks within the city of Bloomington. (Table 32). This is well ahead of the median of 8.9 acres per 1,000 residents for the population size in the county as identified by the

5 The Trust for Public Land. "ParkScore: 2021." Accessed March 25, 2022. https://www.tpl.org/2021-city-park-facts
6 National Park and Recreation Association. 2018 NRPA Agency Performance Review: Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks. Ashburn: National Park and Recreation Association, 2021.
7 Ibid.

TABLE 32: Level of Service for Parks and Trails

Level of Service for Parks and Trails					
Unit	**Number (MCPR only)**	**Number (w/ City)[12]**	**Current LOS (per 1,000 residents)[3]**	**NRPA Benchmark**	**Recommendation**
# of Parks	4	34	4,109	3,104	1 additional park
Unit	Acres (MCPR only)	Acres (w/ City)	Current LOS (per 1,000 residents)	NRPA Benchmark (per 1,000 residents)	Recommendation
Acres of Parks	**504**	**2774**	**16.2**	**8.9**	**100 additional acres**
Unit	**Mileage (MCPR only)**	**Mileage (w/ City)**	**Current LOS (per 1,000 residents)**	**NRPA Benchmark (miles)**	**Recommendation**
Greenways and Trails	19.4	54.4	0..38	26	5 additional miles

1 Park acreage for the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department was obtained through their 2022-2026 Master Plan
2 Trail mileage for the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department was obtained through their 2022-2026 Master Plan
3 Current LOS is per 1,000 residents and based on a 2020 population estimate of 139,718 from the U.S. Census Bureau's Quick Facts

NRPA.[8] MCPR alone provides 3.6 acres of park land per 1,000 residents.

MCPR currently has 10 miles of paved greenways and another 9.4 miles of unpaved park trails. Together with the city of Bloomington, the county currently has 54.4 miles of trails. According to the NRPA, the average community the population of Monroe County has 26 miles of trails, putting the county as a whole ahead of the median. The level of service for greenways being provided by MCPR is .14 miles per 1,000 residents increasing to .38 miles per 1,000 residents when combined with Bloomington. (Table 32). MCPR is currently adding more miles of greenways to the system with the expansion of the Karst Farm Greenway

8   National Park and Recreation Association. 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review: Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks. Ashburn: National Park and Recreation Association, 2021.

and plans to expand the Limestone Greenway so these robust numbers will only increase in the near future.

Overall, residents view the Monroe County Parks & Recreation system positively, both in terms of general impressions of the system and individual parks and with respect to programs, facilities, and personnel. Participants expressed being happy with the park system and appreciative of generally well-cared for parks that house several amenities.

Karst Farm Park is the most heavily used and well known of all MCPR facilities. 70% of survey respondents (random sample and convenience surveys combined indicated using the park at least once during the previous year and only

6% said they weren't aware of the park. No other facility was reported as being used at least once by more than 41% of survey respondents, that being Karst Farm Greenway with its southern terminus in the park. The second most used park was Jackson Creek Park with only 30% of survey respondents indicating they use the park at least once. Only 20% report using Will Detmer Park, 22% using Flatwoods Park, 34% using the Limestone Greenway, and 41% using the Karst Farm Greenway.

Those who do use MCPR parks and greenways are generally happy with their condition and with the department itself. Stakeholders noted the professionalism and dedication of MCPR staff repeatedly and reported having a better impression of the department because of their interactions with staff members.

Very few survey respondents report their impressions of the condition of MCPR parks as 'Poor' or "Very Poor". Karst Farm Park was rated as "Poor" or "Very Poor" in 6% of surveys, more than double the next highest park (Jackson Creek, 3%). Only 1% of surveys reported Flatwoods Park, and the two Greenways as "Poor" or "Very Poor" while no one rated Will Detmer Park in that condition. The vast majority rated all parks in either "Good" or "Excellent" condition with Karst Farm Park receiving that rating from the lowest number of respondents with 82%.

Other parks and the greenways were not as well known as Karst Farm Park. indicating an opportunity for improvement in promotion and communication about the department and its services. The Karst Farm Greenway had the highest level of awareness after Karst Farm Park itself, though 26% (compared to 6% for the park) said they were not aware it existed despite bisecting the park. This was confirmed by stakeholders who were interviewed with many noting that they did not understand MCPR's brand identity and had trouble navigating the website (mcparksandrec.org/wp/) to find what they needed. The lack of identity becomes more evident when survey respondents were asked whether they were aware that MCPR and Bloomington Parks and Recreation were separate entities operating separate facilities and programs. Only 54% of random sample survey respondents said they were aware the two entities were separate. This is actually a significant decrease from the 2018 plan when 61% said they were aware. Other specific suggestions from stakeholders included developing a marketing plan

and consistent mailers and flyers to disseminate information about programs and events.

Both MCPR and stakeholders have increased their awareness of and attention to parks as not just recreation spaces but critical natural spaces as well. The department has increased its efforts to identify and control invasive species in the parks, collaborating with MC-IRIS as previously noted to organize volunteer invasive removal events. The department is also beginning to develop an Invasive Species and Wildlife Management Plan. County residents are increasingly attentive to the importance of management of the natural environment. When asked about the benefits of a healthy park system, 89% survey respondents identified providing access to the outdoors and nature while 84% agreed that preserving open space and the environment was a benefit- two of the top four benefits recognized. Conservation efforts and habitat management were identified as a high priority for funding behind only maintaining existing parks and trails and increased since the previous planning period. Forest and Woodland Habitat was rated as the third most important facility or amenity to increase, only behind trails and restrooms, with 64% saying it was important. was also one of the top five facilities identified to increase, achieving a new high rank since the 2018 plan. Close behind in importance was Prairie/Meadow Habitat with 59% saying it was important. Both habitats actually outranked all active or athletic facilities for their importance to increase.

Both stakeholders and MCPR recognize gaps in the park system on the east and south sides of the county. While there are large outdoor recreation facilities at Monroe Lake and Lake Lemon, the Hoosier National Forest, and Morgan-Monroe State Forest, there are no "traditional" park offerings with playgrounds, ballfields, or even trails in a significant portion of the eastern or southern areas of the county. Even parks operated by Bloomington Parks and Recreation on the eastern and southern sides of the city are largely small parks embedded within neighborhoods and not readily accessible by county or city residents outside of those neighborhoods.

The trail network is also being expanded with extensions of the Karst Farm Greenway and Limestone Greenway either underway or in the planning stages (See map). Stakeholders were happy with the state of the trail network and indi-
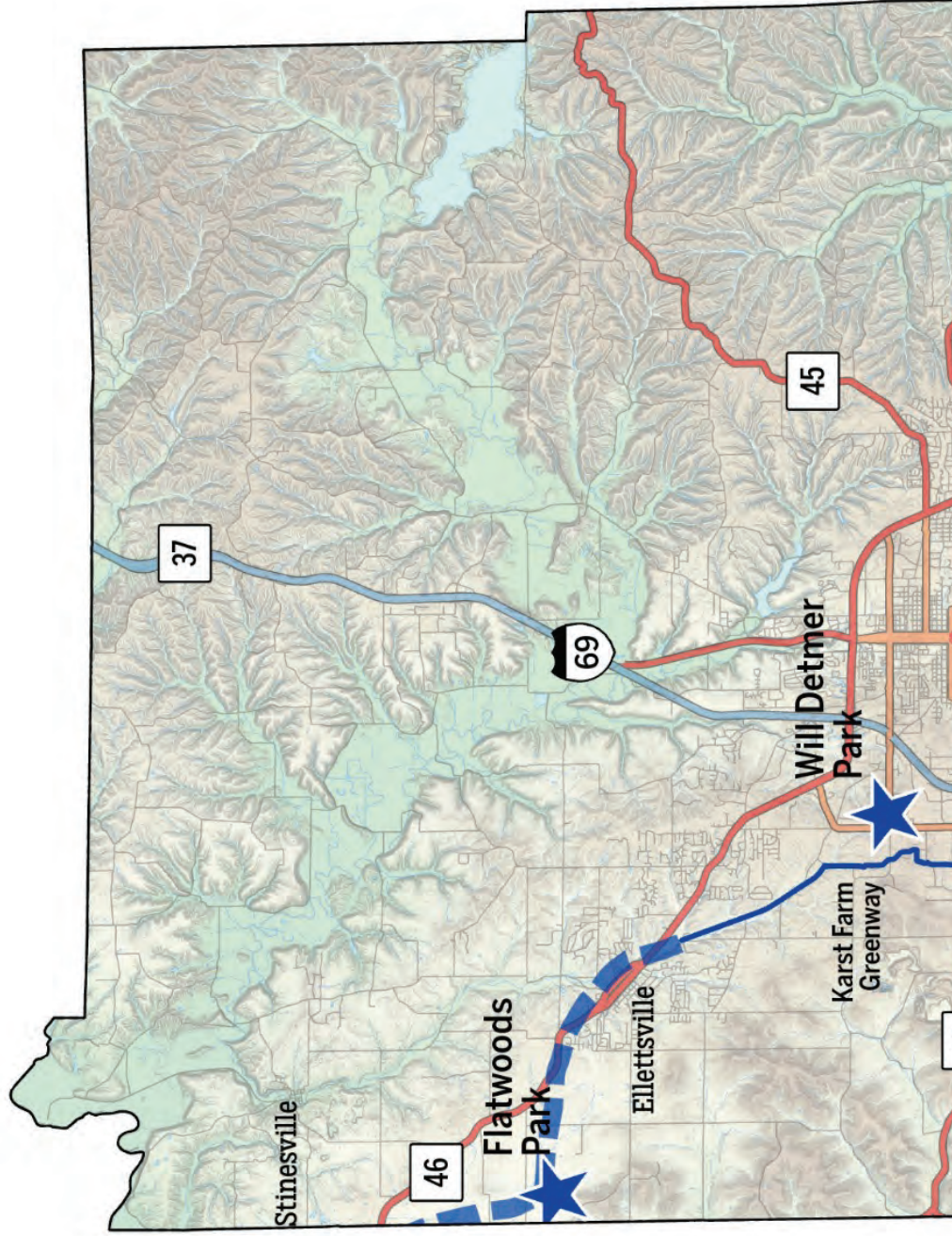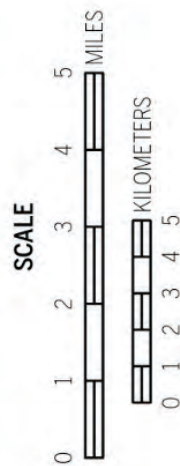
FIGURE 25: Karst Farm Greenway

cate that trails are a highly desired part of the system. 52% of survey respondents reported using the county's trails, which were rated as the most positive contributors to health. In fact, when asked which recreation facilities they wanted added or increased, natural trails and paved trails were second and third choices in the survey, just behind restrooms, preferences all consistent from the 2018 plan.

Despite the continued recognition of these gaps in the park system, stakeholders, including those interviewed and those surveyed understood the limited budget and resources of the department and said that maintaining current parks and trails was more important than adding new facilities. This was ranked as the most important funding priority among survey takers, just as it was in the previous planning period. Some stakeholders also indicated support for purchasing additional property as suitable sites are available with an eye toward future but not necessarily current expansion of the park system. They felt that it would be prudent to have the land in the parks department portfolio both while it is still affordable and to protect it from development. Overall public feedback on this issue indicates a very targeted approach toward expansion of the system with new trails as high priorities with a renewed emphasis on natural and environmental management while additional expansion of parks is not generally viewed as necessary.

Monroe County Parks & Proposed Greenways

Bloomington

46

48

45

69

Karst Farm
Park

Limestone
Greenway

Jackson
Creek Park

Smithville-Sanders

Harrodsburg

37

446

Monroe County Parks
Locations

★ Monroe County Greenways
— Open
■ Proposed extentions
— Trail easement

SCALE

0   1   2   3   4   5   MILES
0   1   2   3   4   5   KILOMETERS

Map provided by

INDIANA GEOLOGICAL
& WATER SURVEY
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Recreation Facilities

Table 33 below provides a summary of the current level of service for facilities with metrics from The Trust for Public Land's 2021 City Park Facts Data.[9][10] Level of service data is shown for both MCPR alone and MCPR combined with the City of Bloomington. Most, but not all, are athletic facilities. Other than soccer fields (athletic fields), athletic facilities are well provided by the City of Bloomington, therefore, not a particular focus for MCPR.

MCPR facilities by themselves fall below the TTPL level of median in almost all categories except for community garden plots and the disc golf course. All of the facilities measured here are also offered by the City of Bloomington and are not all needed by MCPR or, indeed, valued by County

residents outside of the City. Even, when combining facilities with the extensive offerings by the City, Monroe County as a whole falls below the TTPL median in many facility measures. Only basketball hoops (4.65 Vs. 3.30), community garden plots (22.66 vs. 2.20), disc golf (.14 vs. .04), golf courses (.11 vs. .07), skate parks (.14 vs. .06), splashpads (.14 vs. .13), and volleyball courts (.58 vs. .34) exceed the median and only community plots exceed the median by more than a small margin. These measures, again, are only a comparison to a median and not a standard that the county's recreation system is expected to meet most facilities that are shy of the median are very close. In addition, Bloomington offers unique facilities not included in the table such as an ice rink, a theater, amphitheaters, and a mobile stage, all of which enhance quality of life for all county residents. When considering feedback received from the public, county residents are generally quite satisfied with the amount of recreation facilities available.

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9 National Park and Recreation Association. 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review: Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks. Ashburn: National Park and Recreation Association, 2021.

10 Center for City Park Excellence, The Trust for Public Land. "Recreation and Park Amenities Data 2021 City Park Facts." Accessed March 25, 2022. https://www.tpl.org/2021-city-park-facts

TABLE 33: Level of Service for Facilities

Level of Service for Facilities (including City of Bloomington)						
Facility Type	Qty	Qty w/ City1	LOS2	LOS w/ City	TTPL Median LOS2	Recommendation
Athletic Fields	12	14	0.86	1.01	2.43	Refurbish all fields
Ball Diamonds	0	16	0.0	1.15	1.60	No Change
Basketball Hoops	13	65	1.22	4.65	3.30	No Change
Community Gardens	1 (64 plots)	4 (315 plots)	4.60	22.66	2.20	No Change
Disc Golf	1	2	0.07	0.14	0.04	No Change
Dog Parks	1	3	0.07	0.21	0.13	No Change
Golf Courses (18 holes)	0	1.5	0.0	0.11	0.07	No Change
Pickleball Courts	1	7	0.07	0.50	.35	No Change
Playgrounds	9	34	0.65	2.45	2.80	No Change
Recreation and Senior Centers	0	1	0.0	0.07	.4	Consider adding
Skate Parks	0	2	0.0	0.14	0.06	No Change
Splashpads	1	2	0.07	0.14	0.13	No Change
Swimming Pools	0	2	0.07	0.14	0.19	No Change
Tennis Courts	0	22	0.0	1.58	1.70	No Change
Volleyball Nets	1	8	0.07	.58	.34	No Change

¹ Includes City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation facilities obtained through the 2021-2026 City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department Master Plan

² LOS and TFPL median LOS is per 10,000 residents. TTPL median LOS data was retrieved from the Trust for Public Land's 2017 City Park Facts Data. It was reported in various ratios and standardized to units per 10,000 population

The condition of most facilities and amenities was perceived to be good by stakeholders and survey respondents. As with parks in general, the level of satisfaction with facilities and amenities was quite high among stakeholders. Even with a high level of satisfaction, improvements can still be made. Specific items across the park system mentioned multiple times in both surveys and interviews include replacing playground equipment, repairing parking areas, improving restrooms, and proper rotation of community garden plots. Notable exceptions to the quality of park facilities include accessibility issues, discussed earlier in the Accessibility Assessment, and the Karst Farm Park athletic fields.

One of the most important and impactful areas for improvement within the system is the athletic fields at Karst Farm Park, known as the Karst Athletic Complex (KAC). The athletic fields are one of the most heavily used facilities in the MCPR system. 30% of survey respondents reported the fields being in their top three facilities in usage, trail-ing only trails (52%). It has long been well known that the fields are in substandard condition with surface and drain-age problems that can cause the fields to be unplayable at times. Stakeholders, including the department's largest external partner, Cutters Soccer Club, expressed concern with the condition of the fields and a strong desire for im-provement. Since the soccer facility is the largest in the south-central Indiana area and draws many people in to use them for tournaments and camps, they are a draw that impacts county economics as well and should be a high priority for refurbishment.

The necessary renovations are, however, extensive in scope and massive in cost. Table 34 recaps the needed items and estimated costs. Funding a facility overhaul of this scope will pose a significant challenge. Possible fund-ing sources under assessment by the Karst Athletic Com-plex Improvement Committee (KAC-IC) include donations, sponsorships and naming rights, a bond issue, or the proj-ect or portions of it may be appropriate for a Public-Private partnership given the significant impact of the KAC to the local economy.

Trails are the most used facilities in the MCPR inventory. Beyond trails, the most popular facilities throughout the system include playgrounds (30% reported as being in the top three of their most used), athletic fields (30%), green space/open fields (23%), and shelters (19%). The Splash Pad, disc golf course, and dog park- all at Karst Farm Park- were also ranked high in usage.

TABLE 34: KAC renovations

ITEM	ESTIMATED COST
Fields 1 & 2 (Subtotal)	**$592,000.00**
Drainage & Irrigation	$372,000.00
Retrofit LED Lighting	$220,000.00
Fields 3 & 4 (Subtotal)	**$583,000.00**
Drainage & Irrigation	$363,000.00
Retrofit LED Lighting	$220,000.00
Fields 6 & 7 (Subtotal)	**$588,000.00**
Drainage & Irrigation	$368,000.00
Retrofit LED Lighting	$220,000.00
Field 8 (Subtotal)	**$415,000.00**
Drainage & Irrigation	$215,000.00
New Electrical Service	$5,000.00
New Lighting System	$195,000.00
Fields 9-12 New Light Installation (Subtotal)	**$626,200.00**
New Electrical Service	$21,200.00
Fields 9 & 10 New Lighting System	$335,000.00
Fields 9 & 10 New Lighting System	$270,000.00
Fields 9-12 Natural Turf (Subtotal)	**$1,414,000.00**
Fields 9 & 10 Drainage & Irrigation	$732,000.00
Fields 11 & 12 Drainage & Irrigation	$682,000.00
Fields 9- 12 Synthetic Turf (Subtotal)	**$3,976,000.00**
Fields 9 & 10	$2,020,000.00
Fields 11 & 12	$1,945,000.00
Fence on southside	$11,000.00
Soccer Goal Replacement (Remaining Total)	**$94,300.00**
Goal Replacement (remaining)	$94,300.00
Total	**$7,758,500.00**

When asked which facilities and amenities were important to add or increase, park trails and restrooms were at the top of the list with 79% indicating a desire to increase them. Open air shelters were next at 63%, followed by playgrounds (56%), picnic tables (49%), and an outdoor pool (43%). When looking at the county's LOS for many of these items, it can be seen that some of the items at the top of the list indeed fall short of medians. Playgrounds (34 in the county including Bloomington), pools (2 outdoor both owned by BPR), nature center (0 in the county), athletic fields (14 in the county), and indoor recreation facilities (1, owned by Bloomington) are highly desired items that are underserved throughout the county and should be considered for addition or expansion to meet demand. Basketball courts, dog parks, community gardens, and splash pads are popular facilities which match or exceed the median. Shelters and picnic tables are not measured by either TTPL or NRPA but are both popular and highly desired and should be considered for increase.

While overall, well received and considered by the community to be in good conditions, opportunities exist to improve or add facilities that are desired and demanded by county residents. Accessibility at MCPR parks is a concern of stakeholders and should be a priority for equitable access. Two areas of high demand but significant expense include adding an indoor recreation facility and refurbish-ing or rebuilding the Karst Farm Park athletic fields. The City of Bloomington operates one indoor facility, though it is very large at 98,000 square feet and adequately serves the needs of county resident, lessening the importance for MCPR to add this facility. The athletic fields, however, are heavily used and add to the local economy, but can be hazardous, which should place them near the top of the priority list.

Recreation Programming

The Monroe County Parks Department offers a variety of popular programs to the community. These include environmental education, soccer, lacrosse, and disc golf, summer camps, day trips, and themed events such as the Fall Festival and Bug Fest. To analyze level of service. the NRPA gathers data on agency program offerings across the nation. While the number of each program is not measured, the prevalence of them in each agency is. This LOS analysis looks at the programs that MCPR offers and compares that portfolio to the frequency with which those programs are offered in other agencies.

According to NRPA (Table 35), of the programs that MCPR offers, 93% of agencies offer themed special events, 91% offer team sports, 88% offer fitness classes, 82% offer individual sports, 80% offer natural, cultural, and historical programs, and 67% offer trips and tours. and 81% offer social recreation events..[11] Bloomington Parks and Recreation offers all of these types of activities. On the whole, the Parks Department's programming appears to be on par with other park and recreation agencies of similar jurisdictions and the county's total portfolio of programs, including BPR, is fairly comprehensive and meeting demand.

While satisfaction with the quality of programs was high, only 34% of survey respondents said they used MCPR programs. This is down from 42% noted in the previous plan. When asked why they did not use programs, the top two responses across almost all programs by a wide margin were, "Didn't know it existed" and, "Not interested," indicating, as noted in the parks and greenways analysis, an opportunity to improve marketing and communications about department offerings, though there is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic hindered program attendance just as it increased attendance at parks and other outdoor areas.

Stakeholders reported the highest marks for MCPR's nature and environmental programs with 82% saying they were "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied." Youth sports leagues were rated at 81% being "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied." Of all the program areas, after school programs received the lowest level of satisfaction, but still with 67% saying they were "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied."

While the quality of programs is highly regarded, the quantity and breadth of program offerings is an area of opportunity. It is true that Monroe County, when combined with Bloomington, sees a comprehensive set of programs, however many programs offered by the city are in locations not readily accessible by county residents, particularly those in rural areas, or can be cost prohibitive. For example, stakeholders and survey respondents alike have a desire for a county operated Farmers' Market. This particular service was rated in the survey as the top program they would like to see added, just as it was in the 2018 plan. In fact, 63% of those surveyed indicated they would like a Farmers' Market. The City of Bloomington has a very popular Market, but it is located in the heart of downtown where access and

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11   National Park and Recreation Association. 2021 NRPA Agency Performance Review: Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks. Ashburn: National Park and Recreation Association, 2021.

TABLE 35: Program Offerings

Program Offerings				
Program	Offered by MCPR	Offered (w City)	% Offering (NRPA Park Metrics)	Recommendation
Team Sports	Y	Y	91%	No change
Individual Sports	Y	Y	82%	No change
Fitness Classes	Y	Y	88%	No change
Health and Wellness Education	N	Y	89%	Consider increasing classes or programs
Safety Training	N	Y	81%	Consider increasing classes or programs
Aquatics	N	Y	80%	No change
Trips and Tours	Y	Y	67%	No change
Martial Arts	N	Y	68%	No change
Cultural Crafts	Y	Y	79%	No change
Themed Special Events	Y	Y	93%	No change
Natural, Cultural, Historical	Y	Y	80%	Consider increasing historical programs
Performing Arts	N	Y	73%	Consider adding events
Visual Arts	N	Y	78%	No change

parking are serious challenges. MCPR has large park areas that could easily accommodate a Farmers' Market that provides fresh produce to county residents.

Stakeholders identified a host of potential programs that may be well received as opportunities allow to add or expand them including in increase in special events such as concerts, movies in the park, and festivals; more fitness, health, and wellness programs; more programs for people with disabilities; more nature programs (composting, gardening, invasive species control); an increase in after-school programs and summer day camps; and new programs and sports including mountain biking and rock climbing.

Parks and recreation departments are also responsible for offering programming for populations with different needs than traditional sports or 'active' recreation. These populations are often vulnerable due to disabilities or socioeconomic status and look to the parks department to provide services not easily obtained elsewhere.

Table 36 shows targeted programming offered by MCPR, BPR, and the % of agencies in the population bracket with Monroe County offering these programs nationwide. Fairly high percentages of agencies with population jurisdictions similar to that of Monroe County offered summer camps (89% offered this), specific senior programs (86%), programs for people with disabilities (83%), specific teen pro-

TABLE 36: Targeted Programs for People with Disabilities, Seniors, and Children

Targeted Programs				
Program	Offered by MCPR	Offered by City	% Offering (NRPA Park Metrics)	Recommendation
Programs for People w/ Disabilities	Y	Y	83%	Consider ways to improve offerings
Summer Camp	Y	Y	89%	Consider expanding
Senior Specific Program	Y	Y	86%	No change
Teen Specific Programs	Y	Y	71%	No change
After School Programs	Y	N	63%	Consider expanding
Before School Programs	N	N	20%	Consider adding programs
Preschool	N	N	39%	No change
Full Daycare	N	N	6%	No change

grams (71%), and after school programs (63%) Of much lower prevalence and not offered by either MCPD or BPD are before school programs (20%), preschool (39%), and full daycare (6%). These programs, however, require a significant commitment of resources and expertise that are not available to many park and recreation departments.

MCPR does offer some programs for people with disabilities, however, this is an area of opportunity with 50% of survey respondents saying that increasing these programs were important, ranking behind only Farmers' Markets in importance and significant increase from the 2018 plan. MCPR also offers summer day camps and after-school programs, providing important enrichment opportunities for children while assisting working parents who may have difficulty. Public feedback also suggests increasing these programs with 42% of survey respondents saying summer camps were important to increase and 34% saying after-school programs should be increased. This was confirmed by similar suggestions from interviewees. Also suggested were further collaborations with social service agencies to provide or increase programs and services including local food pantries and other agencies to address food justice and libraries and schools to increase literacy programs. Given the level poverty and socioeconomic challenges in Monroe County, particularly outside the City of Bloomington, MCPR should consider seeking out these

collaborations and expanding the programs as desired by the community.

Equitable Access

Of growing importance is providing and increasing access to recreation facilities for all county residents. Stakeholders identified accessibility issues as particular problems and increasing programs for people with disabilities as among the highest priorities. Also, while survey and interview participants were very complimentary of the parks system, many acknowledged that county parks systems are inaccessible to community members without automobile transportation due to their somewhat remote locations and clustering on the west side of the county. This is particularly poignant for potential participants in youth soccer and other programming like summer camps that take place only at Karst Farm Park. Virtually all soccer programs in the county take place at that location and lack of transportation can exclude many from participating. Suggestions to combat this include improving bus transportation and/or providing shuttles during some programs to transport members of the public to and from various county park sites and programs. Finally, while many participants indicated that programs were affordable, others expressed concerns of affordability for low-income families or households with multiple children. Additional fund-

FIGURE 26: Percentage of county residents with a disability and proximity to a park

Percentage with Disability in Monroe County by Census Tract

0 2 4 8 Miles

Local Parks in Monroe County
- BLOOMINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
- TOWN OF ELLETTSVILLE
- MONROE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION; MONROE COUNTY PARK BOARD

Percentage with Disability
- 1.4 - 2.5
- 2.5 - 9.1
- 9.1 - 13.4
- 13.4 - 15.4
- 15.4 - 18.8

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; US Census Bureau, Geography Division, 2019 Census Block Groups; Managed_Lands_IDNR_IN.SHP: Managed Lands in Indiana (Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1:24,000, Polygon Shapefile), 20200327;

Population with Disability in Monroe County by Census Tract

Local Parks in Monroe County
- BLOOMINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
- TOWN OF ELLETTSVILLE
- MONROE COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION; MONROE COUNTY PARK BOARD

Population with Disability
- 0 - 3000
- 3000 - 4000
- 4000 - 5000
- 5000 - 6000
- 6000 - 6768

0   2   4   8   Miles

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; US Census Bureau, Geography Division, 2019 Census Block Groups; Managed_Lands_IDNR_IN.SHP: Managed Lands in Indiana (Indiana Department of Natural Resources, 1:24,000, Polygon ShapeNle), 20200327.

ing may be sought to provide scholarships or program fees restructured to relieve the burden on low-income families.

The Accessibility Assessment also identified some improvements to facilities which are of immediate concern or easy in nature to resolve. Suggestions included accessible routes to the athletic fields, the addition of accessible parking near the Karst Farm Park Nature Trail and at Field 3, accessible parking at Ferguson Nature Park, compliance with stall doors in restrooms, especially at the Karst Farm Park Commons Building, attention to the toilet centerline at the Karst Farm Park soccer restroom, insulating pipes in lavatories, adding full length mirrors to restrooms, moving the orientation signage at Flatwoods Park to an accessible pathway and adjusting its height, and making 50% of the holes on the disc golf course accessible. A full list of accessibility recommendations can be seen in the Accessibility Report.

Access to the parks themselves for disabled residents is also an issue to be addressed. Figure 26 shows the percentage of disabled residents in each census tract in the county and all MCPR and BPR parks. Figure 27 shows the number of disabled residents in each census tract with all MCPR and BPR parks. By both measures, disabled residents are more likely to live in the outer reaches of the county where no parks exist, with the exception of Flatwoods Park to the west of Ellettsville. Adding facilities to these areas or, as suggested in stakeholder interviews, improving transportation access from these areas to parks would greatly improve access equity for Monroe County's disabled population.

Park and Recreation Providers and Partners

The Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department is not the only entity which provides park and recreation facilities and programs in the County. Bloomington Parks and Recreation, as has been discussed at length, offers programs that supplement MCPR's park and program offerings. Given limitations on resources, MCPR should strategically seek opportunities to expand programming in ways that complement and do no overlap or compete with existing programming offerings throughout the county. Collaborations with local service agencies and other governmental bodies can increase and improve programming with minimum cost. Stakeholders place a high priority of partnering with these agencies and entities to increase the recreation portfolio in the county. This level of health-related programming could be very beneficial to rural parts of the

county, which may have to travel long distances to access like programming that tends to be concentrated in Bloomington. There are a variety of other groups which also help to fill the programming role. Some of these organizations are listed below. Many of these groups partner with Monroe County Parks Department to better meet the needs of residents.

Indiana University

Indiana University is a significant presence in Bloomington and Monroe County with a student population of over 42,000 students and approximately 10,000 faculty and staff. IU offers a number of recreational facilities and programs that are directed to its students, staff, and faculty as well as cultural and social events open to the public. Student Recreational Sports Center, Garrett Fieldhouse, Counsilman/Billingsley Aquatic Center, Royer Pool, Outdoor Pool, Tennis Center, Woodlawn Fields, Outdoor Tennis Courts, Recreational Sports Field Complex, and Evan Williams Field. Several IU organizations (i.e., IU Men's Club Soccer, IU Women's Club Soccer, IU Men's Soccer Day Camp, IU Men's Lacrosse, IU Ultimate, IU Law – holds an annual soccer event in October, and IU Korean Soccer Club Team) use Karst Park for sports.

Town of Ellettsville

The Town of Ellettsville has a Parks and Recreation Board which operates six properties: Campbell's Park, Wishing Well Site Woodland Park, Marcy Jane Lewis Park, Memorial Park, the Old Town Hall Building and the recently constructed Heritage Trail. Wishing Well Site Woodland Park is a 20-acre property of primarily undisturbed habitat. Campbell's Park is a 1-acre property with three shelters and a playground. Marcy Jane Lewis Park is adjacent to Campbell's Park and has one large shelter, a basketball court, and three ball diamonds operated jointly with Richland Bean Blossom Youth Sports. Memorial Park is the smallest park at 0.16 acres and boasts military armaments and benches for sitting. The Heritage Trail is a half-mile trail located through the center of town. MCPR is collaborating with the Town to extend the Karst Farm Greenway from the Loesch Road trailhead to connect with the Heritage Trail, then eventually to Flatwoods Park.

YMCA

The Monroe County YMCA operates three facilities: Northwest Y Branch, Southeast Y Branch, and the Gymnastics Center. Combined, these facilities offer indoor pools, hot tubs, a wellness center, childcare, group exercise, gymnastics, an indoor track, outdoor track and trail, and racquet-

ball courts. Programs are available to youth and adults on a year-round basis. The Northwest Y is located outside of Bloomington a short distance from Will Detmer Park and may be a potential partner and was identified by stakeholders as such) for aquatic and other programs, reducing any pressure on MCPR to construct a pool.

Schools: Monroe County Community School Corporation (MCCSC) and Richland Bean-Blossom Community School Corporation (RBBSC)

The public school systems in Monroe County administer many sports fields and playgrounds designed for students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Programs include officially sanctioned Indiana High School Athletic Association sports like football, baseball, softball, and soccer. Additionally, Bloomington school sports programs, specifically Bloomington Middle School Lacrosse, Bloomington High School Lacrosse, and Bloomington Home School Soccer teams all use the Karst Farm Park facilities for their operations.

Youth Outreach Groups: Boys and Girls Club, Girls Inc.

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Bloomington is an organization that serves children aged 6-18 with after-school programs and events during school holidays and breaks. This organization has three facilities in Monroe County. Two of these facilities, Lincoln Street and Crestmont, are located in Bloomington and the other is in Ellettsville. Programs provided include art, cooking, archery, and camps. Girls Inc. strives "to meet the needs of the girls in our community through exciting, research-driven programming, sound mentoring, and our supportive, all-girl environment." Girls Inc. operates a facility on W. Eighth Street that features a gym. This organization offers after-school programs, sports, and day camps to members that make use of this facility.

Other

There are many independent clubs, non-profit and privately operated, that organize sporting events utilizing Department facilities, Karst Farm Park in particular, and those of other recreation providers throughout Monroe County. Some popular clubs include:

- Cutters Soccer Club: Cutters Soccer Club operates community and competitive (travel) soccer for youth.

- Bloomington Disc Golf Club Runs disc golf leagues and tournaments at disc golf courses around the region, including Karst Farm Park.

- Bloomington Soccer: Operates indoor soccer leagues, tournaments, and camps for youth and adults at Bloomington's Twin Lakes Recreation Center.

- Bloomington Junior League Baseball (BJLBA): Offers organized baseball leagues for youth ages 5-12. It also hosts various tournaments, clinics, and umpire training using Bloomington's Winslow Sports Park baseball fields.

- Bloomington Ultimate: An adult Ultimate (disc) league which uses the Karst Farm Park sports fields and Bloomington's Olcott Park.

- Bloomington Blades: Youth hockey association operating recreational and competitive level hockey at Bloomington's Frank Southern Ice Center.

Additional clubs offering various recreation opportunities include Bloomington Adult Sports Club, Bloomington Bicycle Club, Bloomington Fencing Club, Indiana Swim Club, and others.

There are also private and non-profit facilities that provide recreation services:

- Endwright Center: Located in Ellettsville and operated by the Area 10 Agency on Aging, the Endwright Center offers health and fitness, arts, and other programming for seniors.

- Danny Smith Memorial Park: This privately owned facility offers youth and adult softball and baseball leagues and tournaments.

As can be seen, there is no lack of recreation and sports opportunities for Monroe County residents. The challenge, then, is ensuring these opportunities are truly affordable and available for all. Stakeholders felt that even though some partnerships with these entities exist- Cutters Soccer Club, most notably, and many others already utilize MCPR facilities, more beneficial partnerships could be developed, specifically with the YMCA, and the Boys and Girls Club. Stakeholders also felt additional partnerships could be explored with Indiana University, Ivy Tech, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, local fitness centers, IU Health, and Monroe County Health Department. Developing these partnerships could assist with funding for new trails or programming events taking place at Monroe County Parks.

ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan establishes priorities and goals for the planning period of 2023-2028 for the Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department with anticipated completion timeframes, estimated cost, and potential funding sources for each action item. The Action Plan tables are organized as such:

- System-wide
- Karst Farm Park
- Karst Athletic Complex
- Flatwoods Park
- Will Detmer Park
- Jackson Creek Park
- Limestone Greenway
- Karst Farm Greenway
- Building Department Capacity
- Future Items

An implementation timeframe is provided for each solution. These timeframes are intended to help the Park Board transition from the planning process to implementing its action plan, recognizing that funding, staff, and other factors will likely impact the proposed timeframes. As such, the Park Board should review the strategic action plan and update timeframes and action items on an annual basis. The timeframes are as follows:

- Ongoing
- Immediate: less than 1 year
- Short-term: 1-2 years
- Mid-term: 3-7 years
- Long-term: more than 7 years

A variety of funding options exist for carrying out needed repairs, renovations, upgrades, and additions to MCPR parks and greenways. Theses funding options include:

- **County General (CG):** The Monroe County Council appropriates funds generated by tax revenue to the various county departments into their respective County General accounts. All funds remaining in each department's CG fund at the end of the fiscal year will revert back to the Monroe County Treasurer's CG account.
- **Non-Reverting (NR):** Non-reverting funds are generated from program and rental fees, grants, and donations. If funds remain in a department's non-reverting account at the end of the fiscal year, these funds do not revert to the Monroe County Treasurer's CG account but remain in their respective accounts.
- **General Obligation Bond (Bond):** Bond issued to raised funds for a specific project and paid back over a certain length of time.
- **Donation:** Gifts from private sources.
- **Grant:** Grant funding applied for through various public, private, or non-profit sources.
- **Public-Private Venture**: Partnerships or collaborations with private businesses or organizations to achieve large scale projects that may beyond the capacity of either party alone.

System-wide

Noted here are improvements that apply across the MCPR system, not specific to any single park.

TABLE 37: System-wide action plan table

Action Item	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Create Invasive Species and Wildlife Management Plan	Immediate	Staff time	CG
Plant native trees & plants	Ongoing	$5,000 to $10,000 per year	CG, NR, Donation, Grant
Update interpretative/historical/cultural park signs	Short-term	$3,000	CG, NR, Donation, Grant
Add or replace parking blocks with concrete blocks	Ongoing	$6,000 per year	CG, NR
Add or replace picnic tables, grills and benches	Ongoing	$15,000 per year	CG, NR
Renovate playgrounds with ADA equipment and surfacing	Long-term	$400,000	CG, NR, Bond, Donation
Obtain land for a park on the east side of Monroe County	Long-Term	Donation and/or grant	Donation, Grant

Karst Farm Park

Karst Farm Park is the largest, most complex, and most visited park in the MCPR system. Action items identified here do not include needed renovations at the Karst Athletic Complex, with the exception of ongoing improvements to athletic field turf. Action items for KAC are detailed in the following table.

Karst Athletic Complex (KAC)

The Karst Athletic Complex has a significant need for renovation on a large scale. Most of these improvements are long-term but may be undertaken sooner if funding sources are determined. The KAC-IC is currently working to identify these funding sources.

TABLE 38: Karst Farm Park action plan table

Action Item	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Improve KAC natural turf quality	Ongoing	$75,000 yearly	CG, NR
Renovate Commons/shelter #6 area	Immediate	$15,000	CG, NR
Increase asphalt ADA parking spaces and access routes	Short-Term	$30,000	CG, NR, Bond
Correct drainage problem and improve ADA access within the Dog Park	Short-Term	$15,000	CG, NR, Donation
Install asphalt & drainage for parking lot between the Dog Park and basketball court	Long Term	$60,000	CG, NR, Bond
Replace Splash Pad shade cloth with solid roof	Mid-Term	$10,000	CG, NR, Donation
Renovate KFP sign base and area at Endwright Rd. and Airport Rd. intersection	Short-Term	$3,000	CG, NR
Replace maintenance building roof	Long-Term	$45,000	CG, NR, Bond
Replace caretaker's roof/gutters/soffit and install metal siding	Mid-Term	$40,000	CG, NR, Bond
Add ADA spectator viewing area west of field #11 and east of field #5	Mid-Term	$15,000	CG, NR
Add concession trailer electrical hook-up south of field #2.	Mid-Term	$2,000	CG, NR
Construct top lot parking lot and ADA path to Splash Pad	Long-Term	$30,000	CG, NR, Bond
Renovate chemical storage shed	Short-Term	$1,000	CG, NR
Redesign, rename, and install historical wall (AKA Patriotic Corner)	Mid-Term	$15,000	CG, NR, Donation, Grant
Repair and add lighting throughout the park	Ongoing	$2,000	CG, NR
Replace playground equipment and surface near field #3	Long-Term	$50,000	CG, NR, Bond, Donation
Replace shelter #5 Playground & Surface	Long-Term	$50,000	CG, NR, Bond, Donation

TABLE 39: KAC action plan table

Action Item	Time Frame	Estimated Cost (BRCJ 2020)	Funding Source
Fields 1 & 2 drainage and irrigation	Long-Term	$372,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 1 & 2 retrofit LED lighting	Long-Term	$220,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 3 & 4 drainage and irrigation	Long-Term	$363,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 3 & 4 retrofit LED lighting	Long-Term	$220,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 6 & 7 drainage and irrigation	Long-Term	$368,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 6 & 7 retrofit LED lighting	Long-Term	$220,000	Public-Private Venture Donation, Grant
Field 8 drainage and irrigation	Long-Term	$215,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Field 8 new electrical service	Long-Term	$5,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Field 8 new lighting system	Long-Term	$195,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 9-12 new electrical service	Long-Term	$21,200	Public-Private Venture Donation, Grant
Fields 9 & 10 new lighting system	Long-Term	$335,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 11 & 12 new lighting system	Long-Term	$270,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 9 & 10 drainage and irrigation	Long-Term	$732,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 11 & 12 drainage and irrigation	Long-Term	$682,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 9 & 10 synthetic turf installation	Long-Term	$2,020,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fields 11 & 12 synthetic turf installation	Long-Term	$1,945,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Fence on southside	Long-Term	$11,000	Public-Private Venture, Donation, Grant
Soccer goal replacement	Ongoing	$94,300	CG, NR, Bond, Donation

Flatwoods Park

Located on the western edge of Monroe County, Flatwoods Park has few pressing needs other than planned accessibility upgrades.

Will Detmer Park

Will Detmer is the newest park in the MCPR inventory and is in good condition with few needs. The park is also home to all of MPCR's community gardens.

TABLE 40: Flatwoods Park action plan table

Action Item	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
New ADA restroom building w/septic system or sewer hook-up, flushing toilets and running water with ADA compliant access routes and utilities	Immediate	$250,000	Bond
Remove existing restroom structure	Immediate	Included in cost to add restroom	Bond
Add electricity to maintenance garage	Immediate	Included in cost to add restroom	Bond
Add 1 to 2 drinking fountains and remove drinking fountains from obsolete locations.	Immediate	Included in cost to add restroom	Bond
Construct small gravel parking lot and shade shelter	Long-Term	$35,000	CG, NR, Bond, Donation, Grant
Construct Grass field with backstop	Long-Term	$25,000	CG, NR, Bond, Donation, Grant
Improve and add accessible interior park trails and routes	Ongoing and Long-Term	N/A	CG, NR, Bond, Donation, Grant

TABLE 41: Will Detmer Park action plan table

Action Item	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Add ADA swing set and surface	Mid-term	$30,000	CG, NR, Bond, Donation
Replace garden shade cloth with solid roof	Mid-Term	$5,000	CG, NR
Increase the quantity of raised beds and rental plots	Mid-Term	$2,000	CG, NR, Donation, Grant
Pond remediation and improve fishing opportunities	Ongoing	$1,000	CG, NR, Donation, Grant

Jackson Creek Park

Jackson Creek Park is the smallest MCPR park and is in need of upgrades to the playground, routes between amenities, and accessibility.

Limestone Greenway

The first phase of Limestone Greenway was recently completed. Action items are related to planning and construction of the next phase.

TABLE 42: Jackson Creek Park action plan table

Action Item	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Replace & relocate playground with a small unit & surface	Mid-Term	$50,000	NR, Bond, Donation
Add ADA path from shelter to new playground and neighborhood easement	Mid-Term	$10,000	CG, NR, Donation
Investigate - obtain neighborhood easement for park use	Short-Term	N/A	CG, NR, Donation
Add picnic area	Short-Term	$2,000	CG, NR, Donation
Improve trails and access routes	Ongoing	$500 per year	CG, NR
Engineered wood chips for playground surface	Ongoing	$1,000 per year	CG, NR

TABLE 43: Limestone Greenway action plan table

Action Item	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Add Substation ADA trail head amenities: parking lot, ramp, toilet tank, and shade structure	Long-Term	N/A	Bond, Donation, Grant
Add Mitigation/Victor Pike ADA trail head amenities: parking lot, access routes, picnic area, primitive toilet, shade structure, and foot/bike bridge	Long-Term	N/A	Bond, Donation, Grant
Expand trail and incorporate trail loops	Long-Term	N/A	Bond, Donation, Grant
Obtain additional park land near/adjacent to the Limestone Greenway	Long-Term	N/A	Bond, Donation, Grant

Karst Farm Greenway

Karst Farm Greenway has few needs other than the addition of amenities. Extension of the trail to Ellettsville is underway with a future extension to Flatwoods Park and a connection with potential Owen County trails in the preliminary planning stages.

Building Departmental Capacity

These action items are intended to build the operations, programming, and marketing capacity of the department as well as improve financial health and seek partnerships and collaborations.

TABLE 44: Karst Farm Greenway action plan table

Action Item	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Expand trail to RBBCSC/Flatwoods Park/ Ellettsville Town Hall/Owen County	Long-Term	N/A	Bond, Donation, Grant
Increase trail amenities including additional parking and portable restrooms	Long-Term	N/A	Bond, Donation, Grant

TABLE 45: Department action plan table

Action Item	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Continue developing the department marketing and increase digital marketing initiatives	Ongoing	Staff time	CG
Identify community partners to assist in the promotion of department facilities and services	Ongoing	Staff Time	CG
Identify sponsorship opportunities within department programs and facilities	Ongoing	Staff Time	CG
Identify methods to continue building community relations to increase depart. awareness	Ongoing	Staff Time	CG
Merge MCPR website content on to Monroe County website platform	Immediate	Staff Time	CG
Develop GIS-based, interactive maps of the greenways and park system	Immediate	Staff Time	CG
Recruit volunteers to assist with invasive species removal from wooded and meadow areas	Ongoing	Staff Time	CG
Facilitate new athletic programs & tournaments at Karst Athletic Complex	Immediate	Staff Time	CG
Facilitate events on County greenways that emphasize the connectivity of the county wide trail network	Short-Term	Staff Time	CG, NR
Create virtual experiences on greenways and in the park system utilizing Outerspatial	Immediate	Staff Time	CG
Continue offering new recreation programs by identifying current trends & program gaps within the community	Ongoing	Staff Time	CG

Future Items

Items in this section are long range improvements that are not expected to be accomplished withing the scope of this planning period but are important to note as priorities for MCPR and may be undertaken if funding becomes available.

TABLE 46: Future items table

Action Item	Time Frame	Estimated Cost	Funding Source
Add Karst Farm Park shelter structure near field #3	Long-Term	N/A	CG, NR, Bond, Donation
Construct Karst Farm Park restroom/shade shelter NW of Duckworth Pond	Long-Term	N/A	Bond, Donation
Construct pond and tent camping at Flatwoods Park	Long-Term	N/A	Bond, Donation, Grant
Identify opportunities to increase Greenway/Trail connectivity	Long-Term	Staff Time	CG

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APPENDIX A- STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder Meetings

Methodology:

Stakeholders were defined as individuals who were (1) associated with either the Parks & Recreation Department or (2) larger Monroe County community because of their position, involvement, interest, or identity. These included park system partners that use or rent space frequently (e.g., local soccer club, disk golf club), Monroe County residents who frequently use the park spaces or engage in programming, and community organization leaders (i.e., related to the arts, food justice, accessibility). The stakeholders of a community generally hold diverse perspectives and institutional affiliations and are interviewed to obtain a sense of opinion among core constituents.

Monroe County stakeholders were identified by the Parks & Recreation Department consulting with the Eppley Institute project team. The initial goal was to recruit approximately 30 stakeholders from outside of the Department to participate in the stakeholder interviews. Ultimately, 29 individuals participated in a series of six interviews, held both online (via Zoom conference call) and in person at Karst Farm Park.

Stakeholder interviews were conducted November and December 2021 by Eppley staff members. Stakeholders were interviewed in small groups between 2 and 8 individuals in size and were facilitated in one-hour time slots. The limited group size is intended to give stakeholders an opportunity to speak more freely in semi-private conversations in contrast to what is possible in a large-group or public sessions.

All interviews were conducted in a structured format using a bespoke questionnaire developed by the Eppley Institute team in conjunction with the county's project team. At the beginning of each group interview, stakeholders will be assured that the information and perspectives they share during interviews will not be attributed to them nor identifiable in any reports or deliverables.

Extensive written notes were recorded at each interview. After interviews were concluded, a heuristic approach of identifying segments, or units, in the data begun. In accor-

dance with Merriam and Tisdell (2015), units should be able to stand on their own and could be either very small (a word or phrase) or large (several pages) in size. Across the six interviews, more than 400 units of data were identified. Following this, units were categorized into codes based on an inductive approach which labeled units of data based on their heuristic content. Then, a process of grouping the open codes, i.e., axial coding, was completed to reflect interpretation and meaning and ultimately identify themes.

Discussion questions:

1. What are your impressions of Monroe County Parks? What words would you use to describe the Monroe County Parks system as a whole (programmatically, facilities, and administratively)?

2. What are your opinions about the Department's programs? Quality? Overall program mix and quantity? Cost?

3. What are your opinions on the quality of the parks and recreation facilities provided by the Department and why?

4. In what ways do you think the Parks and Recreation Department can improve the community's overall health and wellness?

5. Are there partnerships with health agencies that could be beneficial for the community?

6. Are there other partnership opportunities- for programming, facilities, or funding, for example- you are aware of that would benefit Monroe County Parks (public, private, Not-for-profit)?

7. Are there specific programs, events, or facilities that you think could improve the quality of life for Monroe County's community members? (Mention towns outside Bloomington- Unionville, Stinesville, Smithville, Harrodsburg, etc.)

8. Should the county focus more on maintaining current parks and facilities or on building new parks and facilities? Why?

9. If YOU were in charge of Monroe County Parks, what would you do differently? What would you make sure to do that's the same?

Monroe County stakeholder interview attendees with affiliation (when known):

Monday, November 8- 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

Ashley Peroni

Christopher Baker

Sara Dillon

Todd Ronchetti (Ultimate Club)

Cheryl Munson (Zoom)

Stanley Robertson (Zoom)

Molly Turner-King (Zoom)

Tuesday, November 9- 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

Emily Miles

Jennifer French (Karst Farm Dog Park user)

Lisa Champelli (Monroe County Library)

Pete Nelson (Visit Bloomington, athletics)

Wednesday, November 10- 6:00 p.m. at Karst Farm Park Commons

Troy Vegeler (Cutters Soccer Club)

Michael Grubb (Cutters Soccer Club)

Amy Brier (Indiana Limestone Symposium)

Tim Roualet (Community garden user)

Michelle Burns (Cutters Soccer Club)

Becky Haverstick (Indiana Master Naturalist)

Pamela Hensler (Indiana Master Naturalist)

Monday, November 15- 7:00 p.m. via Zoom

Matt Emmert

Ellen Jacquart (MC-IRIS)

Steve Cotters (Park user, soccer)

Amy Thompson (Purdue Extension)

Kris Campbell (Area 10 Agency)

Andrea Megnin (Lacrosse Club)

Jared Payne

Tuesday, November 16- 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

Robin Walker (Life Designs)

Chris Hosler (Monroe County Public Library)

Sally Tran (Life Designs)

David Rupp (Indigo Birding Nature Tours)

Wednesday, December 16- 6:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kelsey Thetonia (Monroe County Highway Department)

Lauren Volpp (Plant Truck Project)

Public Plan Presentation

The Monroe County Parks & Recreation System Master Plan was presented to the public by Eppley Institute Project Manager Layne Elliott at the Monroe County Park Board meeting on May 18, 2022. The presentation took place in Room 100B of the Showers Building at 501 N. Morton St, Bloomington and via Zoom at 3:30 p.m. ET. The meeting was attended by the following:

Joe Goss	Kay Medley
Amy Thompson	Andy French
Carol Walter	Autumn Brunelle
Dr. Carolyn VandeWiele	John Robertson
Phil Cornwell	Cheryl Munson
Penny Githens	
Beth Cossairt	

Questions asked and answers given by the planning team included:

- **Was a determination made on an appropriate level of staffing during the benchmarking analysis?**
  - **Answer:** Not specifically. Benchmarking looks at the averages in similar communities but is not intended to make recommendations. Appropriate staffing is dependent on each site and system. Operations planning would be a more appropriate process for determining that than master planning.

- **When will the plan be published?**
  - **Answer:** After feedback from this meeting, any final changes and edits will be made and it is anticipated that the plan will be adopted by the Park Board in June, then submitted to IDNR.

- **Is the plan required to be reviewed by IDNR before the Park Board adopts it?**
  - **Answer:** Review is not required but is available if requested.

The draft plan document was also made available on the project website- **http://monroemasterplan.com** and meeting attendees were informed that they were welcome to download the document and make additional comments though the Contact Us page of the website until Monday, May 23, 2022.

Survey

Detailed Description of Survey Methods

Objective

The primary objective for the survey was to systematically gather data on public opinion, interests, and perceptions regarding the current recreation and park system in Monroe County.

Methodology

Sampling Strategies and Data Collection

The survey featured two sampling strategies, convenience and random sampling. There are benefits of both. The two-sampling method strategy ensured that some survey responses remain representative of the targeted Monroe County population (random sampling) and allow for any member of the public to access and take a second version of survey (convenience sampling). This latter group, those included in the convenience sample, is expected to represent some of the most engaged, frequent-park space users. However, responses from the convenience sample were generally analyzed separately from those in the probability-based random sample.

Random Sample

The population of the survey utilizing a random sampling strategy was defined as all individuals with a primary residence in the study area (i.e., Monroe County). The sampling frame (i.e., source of population information from which the sample will be drawn) consisted of all residential addresses, including those in multi-unit dwellings, in the study area. This data was provided by the Monroe County Surveyor's Department, GIS Division. This dataset included in 54,359 residential addresses.

Households included in the random sample were recruited via a mailed postcard stating they have been randomly selected to participate (Figure 28). The postcard contained both a QR code and URL that the recipient should follow to complete the survey. The postcard also included instructions for requesting a paper survey in case the recipient did not have internet access.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that the 2019 population of Monroe County, Indiana, was 148,431 (estimate), and the number aged 18 years or older (i.e., the survey population) is estimated to be 125,235, or 84.4% of the total population. We sought to yield findings that are generalizable to the entire study population with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, which would require a sample size of 383.[12]. Ultimately, after two waves of random sampling, 239 responses were collected, which is best represented by a response rate of 4.3% and corresponds with a ±6.3% margin of error.

It should be noted that the rate of return resulted in a margin of error of 6.3%. While short of the ideal margin of error of 5% or less, the triangulation of data from the two surveys, stakeholder interviews, and public comments gives decision makers in the city and the Department sufficient and strong data to confidently gauge the needs and desires of Monroe County residents.

Data collection ultimately occurred in two waves. Wave 1 data collection occurred December 2, 2021-December 29, 2021. Survey invitation postcards were distributed to 3,500 Monroe County residences, randomly chosen via random number generator. Each postcard featured a unique identifier code to ensure that codes were not shared. Respondents completing the web-based survey were prompted to enter the unique identifier as one of the first questions.

However, due to an unanticipated issue with the online survey platform, approximately half of Wave 1 postcard recipients received an inactive code. Some of these were able to continue with the survey without using their unique code, but there was no mechanism through which the research team could tie their responses to a recruited, residential address. Due to this, the responses of these individuals (n = 37) were instead grouped with convenience sampling survey responses. Those that completed the survey with functioning codes (n = 72) were maintained in the "random sampling" data. The low response rate necessitated a second round of random sampling data collection. This second wave was conducted January 18-February 2, 2022. A total 4,000 residences were randomly selected and recruited in this second wave. Ultimately, across the two waves of random sampling data collection, 239/7,500

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12   The confidence interval is sometimes referred to as the margin of error and represents the range of values within which the true population is estimated to lie. Confidence level helps estimate the probability that the true population would fall within the confidence interval. Generally, researchers aim to be 95% certain that the true population would answer between +/-5 percentage points of each survey result.

surveys (3.2%) were completed and able to be linked to a functioning code. However, due to Wave 1 technological issues, a more representative response rate is represented by Wave 2 (4.3%, or 171/4,000).

Convenience Sample

In addition to the probability-based sampling strategy, a convenience-based sampling strategy was conducted with a parallel survey made available to all Monroe County residents. Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department was predominantly responsible for promoting and making available the convenience survey to interested participants. Mechanism for distributing this version of the survey included:

- Parks & Recreation Department – distributed at their office, 501 N. Morton St., Bloomington, IN.
- Social Media – The department posted the link to relevant community Facebook groups and encouraged survey participation.
- County Website – The department posted the link on their website and encouraged survey participation.
- Planning Website – The Eppley Institute posted the link on the project's planning website and encouraged survey participation.
- Word of mouth.

The survey was administered online via a Qualtrics survey and predominantly shared via html link as well as QR code, where applicable. If requested on the website, a paper survey was made available.

Survey Instrument

The target length of the survey is not to exceed 15 minutes to complete. The survey instrument sought to collect data on a variety of measures relevant to park system master planning, including:

- **Demographics**, particularly stakeholder relationship to Monroe County/the city, age, and income
- A**wareness** of the community park and recreation resources, including current & preferred modes of recreation opportunity information
- **Usage** of the existing sites

- **Barriers** to the use of parks and recreation resources
- **Perceived Benefits** of parks and recreation resources to public health outcomes, environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, and social sustainability
- **Importance** of having certain parks and recreation resources in the community
- **Satisfaction** with community parks and recreation resources, particularly the existing site
- **Opinion** about desired park funding budget allocations
- **Trends Over Time**

Analysis

Initial analysis of the data included evaluation of the random sample survey response rate. Data was then analyzed for key findings, relying on relevant descriptive analysis (e.g., counts, distributions, percentages, means).

Generally, respondents varied in the number of questions answered, sometimes skipping items. If a respondent completed at least one substantive question beyond the introductory questions at the beginning of the survey instrument (i.e., collecting unique identifier), their responses were included. However, this strategy, while maximizing the number of participants, also results in differing numbers of responses to individual items (e.g., 1,018 total responses to one item, vs. 1,047 items to a subsequent item). Where percentages of totals are reported, the total value reflects the number of responses to the individual item, rather than the total number of survey responses overall (n = 1,073). On demographic items in which respondents selected "prefer not to say," these individuals were excluded from analysis. Additionally, items which allowed for multiple selection feature percentages that sum to a total value greater than 100%.

Results summarized in this report are at times broken out by sampling strategy (e.g., convenience, random, and all), and sometimes combined and/or omitted where substantively relevant. For example, we expect that the results of the convenience sample survey regarding usage, importance, and satisfaction, may best reflect active and frequent county park system users and so this data was separated in results. However, the results of the "aware-

ness" items, which evaluate how respondents would like to hear about the county park system, may be particularly relevant among the random sample if the county is seeking to grow its park system user group among current non-users. To that end, free-response comments to "Other: _____" prompts were analyzed only among the random sample, as qualitative open-ended feedback such as this has already been collected via another, non-random data collection strategy—stakeholder interviews.

FIGURE 28: Survey recruitment postcard, for mailed survey (random sample)

TABLE 47: Visitation by Site

	Karst Farm Park	Flatwoods Park	Will Detmer Park	Jackson Creek Park	Karst Farm Greenway	Limestone Greenway
All (n)	**1082**	**1018**	**1047**	**1055**	**1049**	**1025**
More than 20 visits	25%	1%	1%	2%	8%	8%
11-20 visits	8%	1%	1%	2%	4%	4%
6-10 visits	8%	2%	2%	4%	6%	5%
1-5 visits	29%	18%	16%	22%	23%	17%
Did not visit - aware of park but did not use	24%	32%	40%	40%	32%	23%
Did not visit - did not know park existed	6%	45%	39%	31%	26%	43%
Convenience (n)	**835**	**850**	**882**	**898**	**892**	**832**
More than 20 visits	32%	1%	1%	2%	9%	7%
11-20 visits	9%	2%	1%	2%	4%	5%
6-10 visits	9%	2%	2%	3%	7%	5%
1-5 visits	27%	19%	16%	20%	23%	16%
Did not visit - aware of park but did not use	19%	38%	48%	46%	37%	28%
Did not visit - did not know park existed	4%	38%	32%	26%	21%	39%
Random (n)	**246**	**234**	**241**	**244**	**235**	**237**
More than 20 visits	4%	0%	0%	1%	3%	9%
11-20 visits	4%	0%	0%	1%	4%	3%
6-10 visits	5%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%
1-5 visits	37%	12%	12%	20%	18%	16%
Did not visit - aware of park but did not use	38%	29%	32%	36%	34%	19%
Did not visit - did not know park existed	12%	56%	52%	39%	38%	49%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue indicate those in which the absolute value of the difference between the convenience sample and random sample was greater than or equal to 10.

TABLE 48: Perceived Importance of Facilities and Amenities

Facility or Amenity	% Indicating Importance		
	Random	Convenience	All
Athletic Fields (Artificial turf)	35%	9%	27%
Athletic Fields (Grass turf)	48%	18%	39%
Athletic Fields (Indoor)	38%	13%	31%
Athletic Fields (Lacrosse)	16%	6%	13%
Athletic Fields (Multipurpose)	44%	18%	36%
Athletic Fields (Soccer)	45%	15%	36%
Athletic Fields (Softball/Baseball)	27%	13%	23%
Community Gardens	38%	31%	36%
Courts (Basketball)	30%	16%	26%
Courts (Pickleball)	26%	18%	23%
Courts (Tennis)	26%	14%	23%
Disc Golf Courses	33%	10%	26%
Dog Parks	44%	32%	41%
Environmental/Historical/Educational Displays	42%	37%	40%
Equestrian Facilities	12%	7%	10%
Fitness Equipment (along trails)	26%	18%	23%
Golf Courses	16%	10%	15%
Habitat- Prairie/Meadow	63%	51%	59%
Habitat- Forest/Woodland	66%	58%	64%
Horseshoe Pits	10%	6%	9%
Nature Center	43%	40%	42%
Picnic Tables and BBQ Grills	54%	37%	49%
Playgrounds	62%	43%	56%
Pool (outdoor)	47%	34%	43%
Restrooms	85%	66%	79%
Shelters (open air)	68%	49%	63%
Shelters (climate controlled)	34%	22%	30%
Shooting/Gun Range	19%	17%	19%
Splash Pads	45%	30%	40%
Tech Programs (drones, rockets, geocaching, etc.)	15%	9%	14%
Trails (paved)	78%	57%	72%
Trails (natural)	84%	67%	79%
Other	6%	7%	6%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue indicate those in approximately the top 25% of values for that column. Percentage values reflect random (n = 239), convenience (min n = 536, max n=614), and total (min n = 775, max n = 853), i.e., varies by item.

TABLE 49: Perceived Importance of Programs

Program	% Indicating Importance		
	Random	Convenience	All
Adult Programs and Day Trips	18%	29%	26%
Adult Sports Leagues/Clubs/Programs	15%	37%	30%
After School Programs	24%	39%	34%
Concerts, Movies, etc.	28%	47%	41%
Public Events/Festivals/Picnics	38%	56%	50%
Farmers' Market	55%	66%	63%
Fitness, Health, and Wellness Programs	37%	53%	48%
Gardening Programs	33%	44%	40%
Healthy Cooking/Nutrition Programs	26%	39%	35%
Nature Programs/Environmental Education/Bug Fest	38%	50%	46%
Programs for People with Disabilities	41%	55%	50%
Programs with your Pets	21%	34%	30%
Tech Programs (drones, rockets, geocaching, etc.)	11%	16%	14%
Youth Sports Leagues/Programs	30%	53%	46%
Youth Summer Day Camps	31%	47%	42%
Other	4%	2%	3%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue indicate those in approximately the top 25% of values for that column. Percentage values reflect random (n = 239), convenience (min n = 483, max n=530), and total (min n = 722, max n = 769), i.e., varies by item.

TABLE 50: Non-participation reasons

	Adult programs and day trips	Adult sports leagues, clubs	After school programs	Fitness, health, & wellness programs	Gardening Programs	Nature programs, env. edu, Bug Fest	Public events, festivals, picnics	Youth sports leagues, programs	Youth summer day camp programs	Other
All	**506**	**497**	**502**	**493**	**488**	**476**	**435**	**476**	**477**	**73**
Didn't know it existed	38%	22%	12%	34%	36%	48%	41%	10%	10%	21%
Dissatisfied with quality	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Not relevant to me (e.g., no children)	12%	9%	44%	6%	9%	7%	7%	48%	47%	29%
Not interested	36%	53%	37%	40%	42%	34%	31%	33%	34%	37%
Too far way	2%	3%	2%	4%	5%	3%	4%	3%	1%	4%
Too expensive	2%	3%	2%	5%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	3%
Health reasons	9%	10%	3%	10%	6%	7%	14%	4%	4%	7%

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Random	157	156	157	153	156	148	135	153	151	29
Didn't know it existed	37%	20%	11%	28%	37%	51%	40%	5%	6%	10%
Dissatisfied with quality	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Not relevant to me	13%	10%	52%	9%	13%	9%	8%	58%	56%	34%
Not interested	34%	51%	31%	39%	35%	24%	28%	28%	31%	45%
Too far way	1%	3%	2%	5%	4%	4%	4%	3%	1%	0%
Too expensive	4%	3%	1%	6%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%
Health reasons	11%	12%	3%	12%	10%	11%	18%	3%	5%	10%

Convenience	349	341	345	340	332	328	300	323	326	44
Didn't know it existed	39%	23%	13%	37%	36%	46%	41%	12%	12%	27%
Dissatisfied with quality	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Not relevant to me	11%	9%	41%	5%	8%	6%	6%	43%	43%	25%
Not interested	37%	54%	40%	40%	46%	39%	33%	35%	36%	32%
Too far way	3%	2%	2%	4%	6%	3%	5%	2%	2%	7%
Too expensive	2%	2%	2%	4%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	5%
Health reasons	8%	9%	3%	9%	4%	5%	13%	5%	4%	5%

Survey Instrument

Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department Master Plan Survey

The Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department (MCPR) would like your input to help determine parks and recreation priorities for its new five-year master plan. This survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete. To participate in the survey, please answer the questions that follow and return ALL pages in the accompanying pre-paid envelope. If you prefer to take the survey online, please type http://go.iu.edu/MCPRRS into your web browser. When prompted, type in the 4-digit verification code.

The results of this survey will be used to guide the Parks & Recreation Department in the management, operation, and development of park assets for years to come. Your participation is valued and appreciated!

Please return this survey by December 1, 2021. If you have any questions about the survey, please contact the Eppley Institute at (812) 855-3095 or Eppley@indiana.edu

1. Are you a resident of or do you live in Monroe County?

❑ Yes ❑ No

2. If yes, which Monroe County township do you live in?

❑ Bean Blossom ❑ Polk

❑ Benton ❑ Richland

❑ Bloomington ❑ Salt Creek

❑ Clear Creek ❑ Van Buren

❑ Indian Creek ❑ Washington

❑ Perry ❑ I'm not sure

3. Do you live inside Bloomington city limits?

❑ Yes ❑ I'm not sure

❑ No

4. How long have you lived in Monroe County?

❑ Not applicable ❑ 6-10 years

❑ Less than one year ❑ 11-15 years

❑ 1-5 years ❑ 16 or more years

5. Are you a full-time Indiana University or Ivy Tech student?

❑ No student

❑ Yes, full-time Indiana University ❑ Yes, full-time Ivy Tech student

6. Counting yourself, how many people in your household are in each age range? (Please write the NUMBER of people in your household in each range; please DO NOT enter a checkmark)

_____Under age 5 _____Ages 35-44
_____Ages 5-9 _____Ages 45-54
_____Ages 10-14 _____Ages 55-64
_____Ages 15-19 _____Ages 65-74
_____Ages 20-24 _____Ages 75+
_____Ages 25-34

7. Are you aware that Monroe County Parks & Recreation and Bloomington Parks and Recreation are separate entities and operate separate facilities and programs?

❑ Yes ❑ No

8. From the following list of Monroe County parks,

please identify how often you or a member of your household visited each park over the past year. For any parks that you and members of your household have not used, please indicate whether or not you were aware the park existed.

Name of Park	How often have you or a member of your household used each park over the past year				If you did not use a park or trail, please indicate below if you were aware of it. Please circle your response.	
	1 – 5 visits	6 – 10 visits	11 – 20 visits	More than 20 visits	Aware of park but do not use	Unaware park existed
Karst Farm Park- 2450 S. Endwright Rd.	O	O	O	O	Aware – Do not use	Unaware it existed
Flatwoods Park- 9499 W. Flatwoods Rd. (West of Ellettsville)	O	O	O	O	Aware – Do not use	Unaware it existed
Will Detmer Park- 4140 W. Vernal Pike (Near intersection of Vernal Pike and Curry Pike)	O	O	O	O	Aware – Do not use	Unaware it existed
Jackson Creek Park- 5940 S. Rogers St. (Near intersection of S. Rogers St and S. Walnut St.)	O	O	O	O	Aware – Do not use	Unaware it existed
Karst Farm Greenway- Between Karst Farm park and N. Loesch Rd. Trailhead	O	O	O	O	Aware – Do not use	Unaware it existed
Limestone Greenway- Between Church Lane trailhead to INDOT mitigation property on S. Victor Pike	O	O	O	O	Aware – Do not use	Unaware it existed

9. From the following list of Monroe County parks, please rate the condition of each of the parks that you and members of your household have used during the past year.

Name of Park	How would you rate the condition of the park?					
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Didn't use/Don't Know
Karst Farm Park	5	4	3	2	1	O
Flatwoods Park	5	4	3	2	1	O
Will Detmer Park	5	4	3	2	1	O
Jackson Creek Park	5	4	3	2	1	O
Karst Farm Greenway	5	4	3	2	1	O
Limestone Greenway	5	4	3	2	1	O

10. For any park or trail you rated "Fair" or lower in question 9, please describe how you would improve the park/trail.

Name of Park or Greenway rating 'Fair' or lower	How can the Park or Greenway be improved to better meet your satisfaction?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

11. Please indicate if you or members of your household have used any of the recreation facilities offered by Monroe County Parks & Recreation listed below in the past year. Please indicate how important the facility is to your family's recreational needs.

	Name of Facility	Do you or members of your household use this facility?		How Important is it to YOU to have the following facility in Monroe County?				
		Yes	No	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a	Athletic /Soccer/Lacrosse Fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
b	Basketball Courts	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
c	Community Gardens	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
d	Disc Golf Course	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
e	Dog Park	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
f	Drone Zone	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
g	Fishing Pond	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
h	Green Space/Open Fields	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
i	Playgrounds	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
j	Shelters (open air)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
k	Shelters (climate controlled)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
l	Splash Pad	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
m	Trails (within parks)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
n	Trails (Karst Farm Greenway	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
o	Trails (Limestone Greenway)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1
p	Volleyball Court (sand)	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1

12. Which THREE facilities from Question #11 have you or members of your household used the most during the past year?

Most: _____ (enter a – m)

2nd Most: _____ (enter a – m)

3rd Most: _____ (enter a – m)

13. From the list in Question #11, which THREE facilities contribute the most to your health and wellness?

Most: _____ (enter a – m)

2nd Most: _____ (enter a – m)

3rd Most: _____ (enter a – m)

14. Below is a list of recreation <u>FACILITIES</u> and <u>AMENITIES</u>. Some are currently provided by Monroe County Parks & Recreation; others are not. Please rate how important it is for <u>YOU</u> that MCPR <u>INCREASE</u> availability to the facilities and amenities listed below.

	Name of Facility or Amenity	How Important is it to <u>YOU </u>to have the following in Monroe County?				
		Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
a	Athletic Fields (Artificial Turf)	5	4	3	2	1
b	Athletic Fields (Grass Turf)	5	4	3	2	1
c	Athletic Fields (Indoor)	5	4	3	2	1
d	Athletic Fields (Lacrosse)	5	4	3	2	1
e	Athletic Fields (Multipurpose)	5	4	3	2	1
f	Athletic Fields (Soccer)	5	4	3	2	1
g	Athletic Fields (Softball/Baseball)	5	4	3	2	1
h	Community Gardens	5	4	3	2	1
i	Courts (Basketball)	5	4	3	2	1
j	Courts (Pickleball)	5	4	3	2	1
k	Courts (Tennis)	5	4	3	2	1
l	Disc Golf Courses	5	4	3	2	1
m	Dog Parks	5	4	3	2	1
n	Environmental/Historical/Educational Displays	5	4	3	2	1
o	Equestrian Facilities	5	4	3	2	1
p	Fitness Equipment (Along Trails)	5	4	3	2	1
q	Fishing Ponds	5	4	3	2	1
r	Golf Courses	5	4	3	2	1
s	Habitat- Prairie/meadow	5	4	3	2	1
t	Habitat- Forest/woodland	5	4	3	2	1
u	Horseshoe Pits	5	4	3	2	1
v	Picnic Tables & BBQ Grills	5	4	3	2	1
w	Playgrounds	5	4	3	2	1
x	Pool (Outdoor)	5	4	3	2	1
y	Restrooms	5	4	3	2	1
z	Shelters (Open Air)	5	4	3	2	1
aa	Shelters (Climate Controlled Bldg.)	5	4	3	2	1
bb	Shooting/Gun Range	5	4	3	2	1
cc	Splash Pad	5	4	3	2	1
dd	Technology-based programming (drones, rockets, geocaching, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
ee	Trails (Paved)	5	4	3	2	1
ff	Trails (Natural)	5	4	3	2	1
gg	Other (Please list.) _____	5	4	3	2	1

15. Which THREE facilities from Question #14 are the most important to you?

Most: _____ (enter a – aa)   3rd Most: _____ (enter a – aa)

2nd Most: _____ (enter a – aa)

16. Please indicate if YOU or any member of your HOUSEHOLD have used the sports or recreation programs provided by Monroe County Parks & Recreation listed below. For each program that you use, please rate your level of satisfaction.

Type of Program	Have you ever used these programs?		How satisfied are you with the quality of this sports or recreation program?					
	Yes	No	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Not applicable
a Adult programs and day trips	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
b Adult sports leagues, clubs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
c After-school programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
d Fitness, health, and wellness programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
e Gardening programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
f Nature programs, environmental education, Bug Fest	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
g Public events, outdoor movies, picnics, festivals	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
h Youth sports leagues and programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
i Youth summer day camp programs	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1	n/a
j Other (please specify): _____	Yes	No	5	4	3	2	1	n/a

17. **If you DO NOT use the sports or recreation programs listed in Question 16, please indicate why not.**

	Type of Program	What is the main reason you do not use these programs?						
		Didn't know it existed	Too far away	Not interested	Dissatisfied with quality	Too expensive	Health reasons	Not relevant to me (e.g., No children)
a	Adult programs and day trips	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
b	Adult sports leagues and clubs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
c	After school programs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
d	Fitness, health, and wellness programs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
e	Gardening programs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
f	Nature programs, environmental education, Bug Fest	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
g	Public events, festivals, picnics	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
h	Youth sports leagues and programs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
i	Youth summer day camp programs	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
j	Other (please specify): _____	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

18. Below is a list of sports and recreation PROGRAMS. Some are currently provided by Monroe County Parks & Recreation; others are not. Please rate how important it is for YOU that the MCPR INCREASE availability to the programs listed below.

Type of Program	How Important is it to YOU to have this program in Monroe County?				
	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
A. Adult programs and day trips	5	4	3	2	1
B. Adult sports leagues/clubs/programs	5	4	3	2	1
C. After-school programs	5	4	3	2	1
D. Concerts, movies, etc.	5	4	3	2	1
E. Public events/festivals/picnics	5	4	3	2	1
F. Farmers' Market	5	4	3	2	1
G. Fitness, health, and wellness programs	5	4	3	2	1
H. Gardening programs	5	4	3	2	1
I. Healthy cooking/nutrition programs	5	4	3	2	1
J. Nature programs/ environmental education	5	4	3	2	1
K. Programs for people with disabilities	5	4	3	2	1
L. Programs with your pets	5	4	3	2	1
M. Technology-based programming (drones, rockets, geocaching, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
N. Youth sports leagues/programs	5	4	3	2	1
O. Youth summer day camp programs	5	4	3	2	1
P. Other (please specify): _____	5	4	3	2	1

19. Which THREE programs from Question #18 are the most important to you?

Most: _____ (enter a – p)

2nd Most: _____ (enter a – p)

3rd Most: _____ (enter a – p)

20. If additional funding were available for Monroe County Parks & Recreation to fund parks and trails, how would you allocate the funding among the competing categories below? Enter as much or as little as you wish for each, but please make your total allocation equal 100%.

Category	Allocation
Maintaining existing parks and trails	%
Renovating (updating/improving) the grounds/infrastructure in existing parks and trails	%
Adding new equipment to existing parks	%
Facilitating/Providing additional recreation programs to the community	%
Acquiring new parkland and open space	%
Constructing new walking and biking trails	%
Constructing new parks	%
Conservation efforts/habitat management	%
Other (Please describe.)	%
TOTAL (should equal 100%)	%

21. Please select ALL of the ways that you CURRENTLY learn about the Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department's services and programs within the parks.

❏ Monroe County Parks and Recreation website

❏ Newspaper articles

❏ From friends and neighbors

❏ Blogs

❏ Flyers/posters at parks and rec facilities

❏ Social Media

❏ Conversations with parks and rec staff

❏ Newspaper advertisements

❏ Parks and Rec Department e-mail bulletins

❏ Other:_____

❏ Direct mailings

❏ I do not receive any information

22. Please select the ways you <u>WOULD PREFER</u> to learn about the Monroe County Parks and Recreation Department's services and programs within the parks. You may select more than one answer.

❑ Monroe County Parks and Recreation website

❑ Blogs

❑ From friends and neighbors

❑ Social Media

❑ Flyers/posters at parks and rec facilities

❑ Newspaper advertisements

❑ Conversations with parks and rec staff

❑ Seasonal program guide

❑ Parks and Rec Department e-mail bulletins

❑ Radio

❑ Direct mailings

❑ Television

❑ Newspaper articles

❑ Other:_____

23. The following are some of the benefits that you, members of your household, or the community in general may receive from parks, trails, recreation facilities, programs, and services. For each item below, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that it is a benefit of parks and rec facilities and program.

	Benefits	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a	Enhance community appearance	5	4	3	2	1
b	Help attract new residents and businesses	5	4	3	2	1
c	Help reduce crime	5	4	3	2	1
d	Improve diet and nutrition	5	4	3	2	1
e	Improve mental health and reduce stress	5	4	3	2	1
f	Improve physical health and fitness	5	4	3	2	1
g	Improve social connections	5	4	3	2	1
h	Increase opportunities for people of different cultures to interact	5	4	3	2	1
i	Increase property values in surrounding area	5	4	3	2	1
j	Make Monroe County a more desirable place to live	5	4	3	2	1
k	Strengthen sense of community	5	4	3	2	1
l	Preserve natural areas and the environment	5	4	3	2	1
m	Promote tourism in the county	5	4	3	2	1
n	Provide access to the outdoors and nature	5	4	3	2	1
o	Protect the county's historical attributes	5	4	3	2	1
p	Other (Please describe.)_____	5	4	3	2	1

24. From Question #23, which THREE benefits are the most important to you or members of your household?

Most: _____ (enter a – p)

2nd Most: _____ (enter a – p)

3rd Most: _____ (enter a – p)

25. Please check any of the following circumstances that prevent you from using parks or attending programs within parks as often as you would like. You may select more than one.

❑ Lack of time

❑ Health/mobility concerns

❑ Lack of access

❑ Parks are too far away

❑ Don't know where parks are

❑ Don't know about programs

❑ Lack of nearby bus route

❑ Other (please list):
_____
_____
_____

26. In general, how would you describe your health:

❑ Excellent

❑ Good

❑ Fair

❑ Poor

27. During the past 30 days, approximately how many days did your poor physical or mental health keep you from doing your usual activities, such as self-care, work, or recreation?

❑ 0-3 days

❑ 4-7 days

❑ 8-14 days

❑ 15-21 days

❑ 22-30 days

28. There are some circumstances in life that make it easy for us to be healthy, and other circumstances that make it more difficult to be healthy. Please indicate which of the following circumstances prevent you or members of your household from using parks and recreation services. Check all that apply.

❑ My neighborhood does not have a park, recreation facility, or trail within a 10-minute walk

❑ Not enough time

❑ Not enough money

❑ Personal safety concern – the walk to the park or trail is not safe due to traffic or roadways

❑ Personal safety concern – the park or trail is not safe

❑ The Department's programs, parks, or facilities are not accessible to people with disabilities

❑ Personal health problem

❑ Inadequate or poorly maintained facilities

❑ Programs that the Department offers do not interest me

❑ Other: _____

The final three questions are optional. Your answers will be used to help us learn more about our park users, community members, and to help us create more equitable and inclusive offerings.

29. What is your gender?

❑ Female

❑ Male

❑ Non-binary

❑ Prefer not to answer

30. What is your race and/or ethnicity? (Check all that apply) On the line after each, you may write in specific nationalities, tribal affiliation, or ethnic origin(s) if you choose (not required). Ex.- German, Shawnee, Navajo, Egyptian, Cuban, Korean, etc.

❑ American Indian and Alaskan Native: ___ _____ _____

❑ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: _____ _____

❑ Asian: _____ _____ _____

❑ White: _____ _____ _____

❑ Black or African American: _____ _____ _____

❑ Some Other Race: _____ _____ _____

❑ Hispanic or Latino: _____

❑ Prefer not to answer

What is your yearly household income?

❑ Under $25,000

❑ $25,000-$49,999

❑ $50,000-$74,999

❑ $75,000-$99,999

❑ $100,000-$199,999

❑ $200,000 or more

Conclusion

Thank you for completing this survey for Monroe County Parks & Recreation Department's Master Plan. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used by Monroe County to help plan for a successful future for our community.