



**Parks and Recreation Master Plan
2010-2014**

ADOPTED BY RESOLUTION
December 8, 2009

Prepared by:



MIG, Inc.

815 SW 2nd Avenue, Suite 200

Portland, Oregon 97204

503.297.1005

www.migcom.com

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

PROJECT STAFF

Mark Westermeier, Director
Michael Klitzing, Assistant Director

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Colleen Broderick*	Audrey Kostrzewa
Lindsay Dudeck*	Todd Snyder
Deb Grisham	Mark Westermeier
Michael Klitzing	

MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Kurt Brodbeck	Judith F. Hagan
Bill Carrier	Nick Kestner
Ron Carter	Joan Ketterman
Patricia Chester	Mo Merhoff
Steve Dillon	Steve Pittman
Sue Finkham	Jim Rosensteele

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Patricia Chester	Judith F. Hagan
Susannah H. Dillon	Joan B. Ketterman
Daniel T. Dutcher	Joe Miller
James L. Engledow	Timothy Tolson
Tricia Hackett	

*Previous members



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Carmel Clay is well known for its high quality of life and excellent park system. In continuing to support community livability, Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation (CCPR) has updated its Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This Plan addresses key changes in the community and park system since the last plan was adopted in 2001. Population growth, changing recreation trends, the development of new parks and facilities, and the initiation of hundreds of new programs have increased and modified the

demand for parks, facilities and recreation services. These changes also have created a need for a new set of directions and strategies for managing the park and recreation system.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is to identify current and future community needs based on changing trends in recreation and new patterns for recreation participation. It updates the park classification system, establishes guidelines for park planning and development, and recommends strategies for developing future parks and recreation services. This Plan represents Carmel Clay's renewed commitment to providing a quality park and recreation system for the City of Carmel and Clay Township. It will provide strategic guidance for Carmel Clay through the year 2013.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation was an integral part of the planning process. To develop a solid foundation for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the planning process included a comprehensive approach for soliciting public input and engaging as many residents as possible. Many different forums were available for residents to note their preferences, desires and vision for the park system. These included a recreation survey, adult and youth questionnaire, stakeholder interviews and community focus group meetings. To help guide direction and focus of the Plan, two community-led advisory committees met periodically throughout the planning process. This outreach helped ensure that the Plan reflects and responds to the desires and needs of the Carmel Clay community.

EXISTING RESOURCES

To assist in identifying community needs for park land, five park classifications were developed to define current levels of service and determine park land standards. In Carmel Clay, signature parks, community parks, local parks, and greenways allow residents to engage in various leisure pursuits—from playing on playgrounds to enjoying the scenic and peaceful outdoors.

Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation (CCPR) currently provides 504.8 acres of parkland at 15 sites. These parks serve approximately 84,000 residents within the planning area, based on a 2008 population estimate. As illustrated in the table below, more than half of the Department's park acreage is provided in

two signature parks: Central Park and West Park. These two parks contain state-of-the-art facilities, protected natural resources, and unique attractions that attract people throughout the entire community and beyond. CCPR’s signature parks are supported by five large community parks, five smaller local parks, as well as the White and Monon Greenway, which provide popular trail-related recreation opportunities in Carmel Clay.

Park Land by Classification
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation

Park Land Type	# of Sites	Acreage	% of Park System
Signature Parks	2	277.6	55%
Community Parks	5	156.5	31%
Local Parks	5	31	6.1%
Special Use Areas	1	17.1	3.4%
Greenways	2	22.6	4.5%
TOTAL	15	504.8	100%

Note: These calculations have been refined from the data presented in previous reports.

Based on its total park acreage, CCPR currently provides six acres of park land per 1,000 residents. This level of service is strong, but lower than many comparable communities. Fortunately, other providers in Carmel Clay provide additional parks and facilities to help meet park needs. These include Hamilton County, Carmel Clay Schools, the Dads’ Club, many Homeowners’ Associations, and various other providers.

Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation is also responsible for the development and maintenance of a variety of recreation facilities. These include indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and other park amenities. In addition, CCPR offers a range of programs and events to serve a variety of residents. Specific programs target seniors, adults, teens, youth, and preschool/toddlers, and families.

COMMUNITY NEEDS

A key component of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the community needs assessment (CNA). The needs assessment combines public feedback, an understanding of recreation trends, and a technical analysis of park access to calculate park standards and needs based on a proposed level of service for the park system. Community needs provide a basis for system-wide recommendations, including the potential acquisition and development of new park sites, the renovation of existing parks, and potential partnerships with other service providers.

Public input suggests that Carmel Clay is an active community with a high interest in the outdoors. Most residents appreciate the benefits provided by CCPR parks and recreation services, and they value the role that parks and recreation play in improving their quality of life.

Key findings from the needs assessment suggest that the following types of parks are needed to improve recreation facility access:

- Close-to-home parks, ideally within ½ to one-mile of most residents;
- Medium-to-large parks of sufficient size to meet a variety of facility needs, with green spaces and natural areas;
- Trail corridors and greenways;
- Special use areas, such as another sports complex to meet projected sport field needs;
- Riverfront parks, which are desired for resource protection, river access, and recreation opportunities; and
- Natural areas/conservation areas to protect significant natural resources in the planning area.

Meeting these needs will require an enhanced level of service. However, CCPR cannot meet all of these needs alone. Other providers, including the City of Carmel, the Dads' Club, and Homeowners' Associations may be better poised to provide trails, sport facilities, and close-to-home recreation opportunities such as those found in neighborhood parks. By collaborating with other providers, CCPR will help create a well-rounded park system for residents in Carmel Clay.



The Parks and Recreation Master Plan proposes that CCPR strive to raise its park land holdings from 6.0 to 7.0 acres/1,000 residents. Based on this target, approximately 254 acres will be needed to serve an estimated 96,728 residents in 2013. Chapter 5 discusses options in detail for achieving this goal and meeting community needs. These new parks will help meet identified facility needs for:

- Water play facilities (e.g., spray grounds, splash parks);
- Winter recreation facilities (e.g., sledding hills, outdoor ice rinks);
- Alternative sport facilities (e.g., skate spots, disc golf);
- Water access facilities (e.g., viewpoints, boat launches, waterfront trails, fishing access, boat rentals, etc.); and
- Dog parks.

These new parks and facilities will help meet programming needs for special events, environmental and outdoor programming, sports (especially for adults and seniors) and volunteer opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The community's vision for the park system ultimately determines the role that CCPR should play in meeting community needs for parks and recreation. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes refined mission and vision statements to reflect its niche in providing park and recreation services. The

plan also provides policy directions to define how CCPR can achieve this vision.

To enhance and improve parks, facilities, partnerships, and customer service, Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation should focus on implementing recommendations in four core areas:

- ***Serving underserved areas:*** This Plan recommends the acquisition and development of five new community parks in Carmel Clay, along with the development and/or extension of two trail corridors. These are presented on the proposed system map in Chapter 5.
- ***Enhancing recreation opportunities:*** The vision for the park system includes a variety of recreation opportunities, supported by well-maintained amenities and innovative facilities. The Plan provides strategies for improving ADA accessibility, connectivity, parking, park identity, and sustainability. Plus, it provides design and development guidelines for new community parks.
- ***Strengthening partnerships:*** Many recreation providers are working independently and collectively to meet recreation needs in Carmel Clay. CCPR should continue to strengthen relationships with other providers. Specific strategies are identified to continue or initiate partnerships for park and facility development and the provision of recreation programs and special events.
- ***Focusing on customer service:*** CCPR should continue to stay focused on meeting community needs through enhanced customer service. This includes the development of a communication and marketing plan to help increase public awareness and use of parks, recreation resources, programs and services. It also includes the development of a prioritized list of capital and non-capital projects, based on the prioritization criteria noted in this Plan.

Carmel Clay is a unique community with a wealth of resources and residents who clearly value the role that parks and recreation play in improving community livability and the quality of life. Many public and private groups alike are committed to providing outstanding recreation facilities and services to meet community needs. Within this context, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides a firm set of directions for CCPR to provide vibrant parks, exceptional programs, and high-quality recreation services. This Plan provides strategic directions so that CCPR can forge its own path into the future.

This Plan creates a new vision and conveys it to the community, so that citizens, key stakeholders, partners, and staff can work together to improve their community through people, parks and programs. Once this plan is adopted, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will become a valuable tool for enhancing life for all residents in Carmel Clay.

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1. INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 2005, Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation (CCPR) began updating its Park and Recreation Master Plan to identify its park, facility, and programming needs. The purpose of the revised Plan is to update the park inventory, identify community recreation preferences, and recommend strategies for improving the park system and meeting community recreation needs. Based on the foundation set in the 2001 Plan, this document provides strategic guidance for Carmel Clay through the year 2013.

This Plan creates a vision for a sustainable system of parks, recreation facilities, natural areas, and trails as integral elements of a livable community. It addresses the recreation needs of residents community-wide, by incorporating their views and preferences into the planning process. The planning process combined a technical resource analysis with an assessment of community preferences and priorities. Based on that analysis, this Plan proposes specific standards and guidelines for acquiring, developing and protecting quality parks, natural areas, recreation facilities and trails. Most importantly, this Plan provides Carmel Clay with a roadmap and directions to develop the park and recreation system that will lead this community into the future.

1.1 PLANNING CONTEXT AND GOALS

In 1991, the City of Carmel and Clay Township of Hamilton County jointly created the Carmel/Clay Board of Parks and Recreation (Park Board) to provide quality recreation programs and to acquire, preserve, and maintain open lands and parks. Through the Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation Department, the Park Board carries out its responsibilities to the Carmel Clay community. Since its inception, CCPR has focused mainly on protecting open space and providing passive recreation opportunities. However, recent and current additions include larger parks that provide a broader range of recreation opportunities, including more diverse recreation programming.

In 18 years, the Carmel Clay park system has grown to support 15 parks with over 500 acres of open space, amenities and facilities that offer a tremendous range of recreation experiences. Perhaps the best and most visible examples of this park system are two signature parks: Central Park and West Park. Beautifully designed and landscaped, these parks contain state-of-the-art facilities, protected natural resources, and unique attractions that draw people from throughout the entire community and beyond. Both were heralded in the 2008 issue of *Landscape Architecture* because of their customized and innovative designs. The park system also includes several community parks, local parks, special use areas, and greenways that support activities such as picnicking, playing on playgrounds, splashing at spray parks, walking or biking on trails, playing sports, fishing, and enjoying the outdoors.

In addition to these prominent park attractions, Carmel Clay has expanded its program offerings. The recently-opened Monon Center is home to a variety of classes and activities, ranging from swimming lessons to dance and fitness classes to adult sport leagues and arts and crafts. In the fall of 2006, CCPR also began managing the Extended School Enrichment program for Carmel Clay Schools, providing before and after school childcare at 11 elementary school sites. These changes helped the Department grow from 20 staff to nearly 600 staff, now serving thousands of residents of all ages and interests.

The growth and development of Carmel Clay's park and recreation system has continued in recent years, changing the course for CCPR and the direction of this master planning effort. As the Department looks into the future, the vision for park service is quite different than it was just four years ago. This Park and Recreation Master Plan will define a new vision and convey it to the community, so that citizens, Park Board members and staff together feel empowered to make strategic decisions to improve their community through people, parks, and programs. The Plan also examines the role that CCPR plays in achieving this vision, so that the Department can effectively identify its niche in meeting community needs.

Carmel Clay is a unique community with a wealth of resources and residents who clearly value the role that parks and recreation play in improving community livability and the quality of life. Many public and private groups alike are committed to providing outstanding recreation facilities and services to meet community needs. Within this context, Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation needs a roadmap to navigate its own course in providing vibrant parks, exceptional programs, and high-quality services. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides strategic direction so that CCPR can forge its own path into the future.

1.2 PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for developing the Park and Recreation Master Plan included three major phases. Figure 1 illustrates the planning process, which is described below.

- **Phase I: Where Are We Now?** To provide a foundation for the Park & Recreation Master Plan, Phase I included a park system analysis to assess current resources. In this phase, CCPR parks and facilities were inventoried, mapped, and evaluated to document their condition. Park classifications, standards, and operations were assessed to see where updates were needed. Phase I findings are presented in Chapters 2 and 3.
- **Phase II: Where Do We Want to Be?** In Phase II, Carmel Clay residents were engaged in the planning process. Adult and youth surveys and questionnaires, focus group meetings, stakeholder interviews, and a public visioning workshop were held to solicit feedback about the recreation preferences and needs in the community. This outreach was combined with a GIS analysis of park

service (including access to playgrounds, sport courts, and picnic facilities), as well as a level of service analysis of parks and facilities by type. Key findings were used to determine park standards, facility guidelines, and recreation needs now and in the future. Park, facility, and programming needs are documented in Appendix A.

- **Phase III: How Do We Get There?** Once needs were identified, Phase III involved developing a plan to express the community’s vision for parks and recreation and to provide direction for park acquisition and development. This phase also resulted in the development of strategies to strengthen partnerships to meet community needs, as noted in Chapter 5 and 6.

Figure 1:
Planning Process



1.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To create a plan that reflects the recreation preferences, needs, and values of Carmel Clay residents, the planning process included multiple forums for community outreach. These public involvement activities included a variety of efforts to engage as many people as possible. Community input was solicited through the following public involvement activities:

- Recreation survey (adult and youth)
- Community questionnaire (adult and youth)
- Stakeholder interviews
- Adult focus group meetings
- Youth focus group meetings
- Technical Advisory Committee meeting
- Master Plan Advisory Committee meeting
- User questionnaire (adult heads of household)



Approximately 1,100 people participated in the planning process. This level of participation helps ensure that the Plan reflects and responds to the desires and needs of the Carmel Clay community. The results of the public participation process are provided in Appendixes A and B.

1.4 PLAN ORGANIZATION

This plan is organized into four chapters and four appendices. For reference, each section is described below.

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** describes the purpose of the Plan, the context for the planning effort, the planning process, public involvement efforts, and the organization of this report.
- **Chapter 2: Park System and Community Profile** provides information about the Park Board, outlines CCPR's organizational and funding structures, delineates the planning area, and presents characteristics and demographics of the Carmel Clay community.
- **Chapter 3: Existing Resources** presents the park classification system, summarizes the park and facility inventory, and provides an overview of recreation programming. It notes the resources of the Parks & Recreation Department, as well as the parks and recreation facilities provided by others in Carmel Clay.
- **Chapter 4: Park and Facility Needs** summarizes the results of the public involvement outreach efforts, discusses important trends in recreation, and identifies park, recreation facility, and program needs.

- **Chapter 5: Recommendations** presents the mission and vision that will guide the planning effort over the next five years. The chapter provides recommendations for serving underserved areas, enhancing recreation opportunities, strengthening partnerships, and improving customer service.
- **Chapter 6: Priorities and Action Schedule** presents the timeline for implementing the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Appendices include the following:

- **Appendix A: Community Needs Assessment** includes a detailed report of the public input process used to develop this Plan.
- **Appendix B: Community Needs Assessment Validation** includes the summary of a survey conducted in October 2009 to validate the public input process used to develop this Plan.
- **Appendix C: Organization Chart** of Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation.
- **Appendix D: Park and Recreation Facility Inventory** includes a full inventory of parks and recreation facilities provided by Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation.
- **Appendix E: Carmel Clay Parks** provides an evaluation of each CCPR park and identifies future improvement opportunities.
- **Appendix F: Homeowners Association Recreation Amenities** includes a full inventory of recreation amenities provided by Carmel Clay Homeowners Associations.
- **Appendix G: Other Recreation Providers** notes several other providers, in addition to CCPR, who offer recreation programming and special events in Carmel Clay.
- **Appendix H: Rehabilitation Act Compliance Form** confirming compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- **Appendix I: Park Design and Development Guidelines** provides a set of guidelines for proposed park development, including park design, appropriate amenities, accessibility, safety, maintenance, and sustainability.
- **Appendix J: Public Presentation of Master Plan** provides a summary of methods used to present the Master Plan to the public, including a copy of the PowerPoint presentation made at a public meeting held on November 24, 2009.

- **Appendix K: Park Board Resolution of Adoption** includes the resolution adopted by the Park Board on December 8, 2009.



2. PARK SYSTEM AND COMMUNITY PROFILE



PARK SYSTEM AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Park Board was originally established in August 1991 through an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the City of Carmel and Clay Township, last amended February 2005. A distinct political subdivision under Indiana law, the Park Board serves as the policy-setting body and fiduciary guardian for CCPR, through which it acquires, preserves, and maintains open lands and parks and provides quality recreation programs.

2.1 PARK BOARD

The Park Board is comprised of nine appointed members based on their interest in and knowledge of parks and recreation. The Mayor and Township Trustee each appoint four members to staggered, four-year terms. The Carmel Clay School Board self-appoints one of its members to a one-year term.

The current Park Board members are:

- James L. Engledow, President
13851 Riverwood Way
Carmel, IN 46032
Appointing Authority: Township Trustee
Term Expiration: December 31, 2012

- Joe Miller, Vice President
13607 Thistlewood Dr. E.
Carmel, IN 46032
Appointing Authority: Mayor
Term Expiration: December 31, 2011

- Judith F. Hagan, Treasurer
10946 Spring Mill Lane
Carmel, IN 46032
Appointing Authority: Township Trustee
Term Expiration: December 31, 2011

- Daniel T. Dutcher, Secretary
11583 Sutton Place Drive
Carmel, IN 46032
Appointing Authority: Township Trustee
Term Expiration: December 31, 2009

- Patricia Chester
5041 Deer Ridge Court
Carmel, IN 46033
Appointing Authority: Mayor
Term Expiration: December 31, 2010

- Susannah H. Dillon
507 Cornwall Court
Carmel, IN 46032
Appointing Authority: Township Trustee
Term Expiration: December 31, 2010

- Tricia Hackett
12432 Glendurgan Drive
Carmel, IN 46032
Appointing Authority: Carmel Clay School Board
Term Expiration: June 30, 2010

- Joan B. Ketterman
3413 Eden Hollow Place
Carmel, IN 46033
Appointing Authority: Mayor
Term Expiration: December 31, 2010

- Timothy Tolson
110 Shosone Drive
Carmel, IN 46032
Appointing Authority: Mayor
Term Expiration: December 31, 2009

2.2 DEPARTMENT

From a humble beginning in 1991, CCPR has quickly become one of the premier park and recreation systems within the state and a significant employer in the Carmel Clay community. As of 2009, CCPR had 68 full-time employees and up to 500 part-time and seasonal employees (representing 132 full-time equivalent positions).

The Department is led by a senior management team consisting of an executive team and four division managers. An organization chart is provided in Appendix C.

- *Mailing Address:* 1411 E. 116th Street
Carmel, IN 46032

- *Phone:* (317) 848-7275

- *Website:* www.carmelclayparks.com

Administration

Under the leadership of the Director of Parks and Recreation, administration is responsible for managing the Carmel Clay park and recreation system and supporting its operating divisions in accordance with the Park Board's vision and mandates. Based out of the Administrative Office, 1411 E. 116th Street, Carmel, Indiana 46032, the executive team includes the Director, Assistant Director, and two administrative areas: Human Resources and Marketing.

- Mark Westermeier
Director of Park & Recreation
Hired: February 14, 2004

- Michael W. Klitzing, CPRP
Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation
Hired: July 13, 2004

- Human Resources Manager
Hired: September 4, 2007

- Lindsay Labas
Marketing Manager
Hired: August 27, 2007

Business Services Division

The business services division is based out of the Administrative Office and is responsible for CCPR's accounting and record keeping functions.

- Audrey Kostrzewa
Business Services Division Manager
Hired: April 4, 2005



Extended School Enrichment Division

Since the 2006/07 school year, the Extended School Enrichment (ESE) division has managed Carmel Clay Schools' before and after school program in each of the school district's 11 elementary schools. ESE also assumed responsibility for CCPR's existing summer and holiday camps in 2006. With its popular, year-round offerings, ESE has quickly become the community's premier provider of childcare during non-school hours. ESE management is based out of The Monon Center, 1235 Central Park Drive East, Carmel, IN 46032.

- Ben Johnson
Extended School Enrichment Division Manager
Hired: June 9, 2006

Monon Center Division

The Monon Center opened on May 26, 2007, and has quickly become a central gathering place for the community and the undisputed crown jewel of the Carmel Clay park system. A true intergenerational facility, this 146,225 square foot community recreation center includes indoor and outdoor aquatic centers, a fitness center, 3-court gymnasium, program and meeting rooms and a banquet facility. Operation of The Monon Center, as well as the provision of recreational programs and services for the community, is administered through the Monon Center division.



- Kate Schneider, CPRP
Monon Center Division Manager
Hired: November 8, 2006 (promoted to current position June 28, 2008)

Park Operations and Planning Division

The park operations and planning division manages, improves, and maintains all parks and facilities within the Carmel Clay park system and is based out of the Maintenance Office, 1427 E. 116th Street, Carmel, IN 46032.

- Terry Myers
Park Operations & Planning Division Manager
Hired: March 19, 2007 (promoted to current position November 17, 2007)

2.3 VISION STATEMENT

The Carmel/Clay Board of Parks and Recreation envisions an accessible system of vibrant parks, diverse recreation facilities, sustainable park resources, and engaging recreation programs that contribute to healthy individuals and families, an active and tightly-knit community, a thriving economy, and a high quality of life in the City of Carmel and Clay Township.

2.4 MISSION STATEMENT

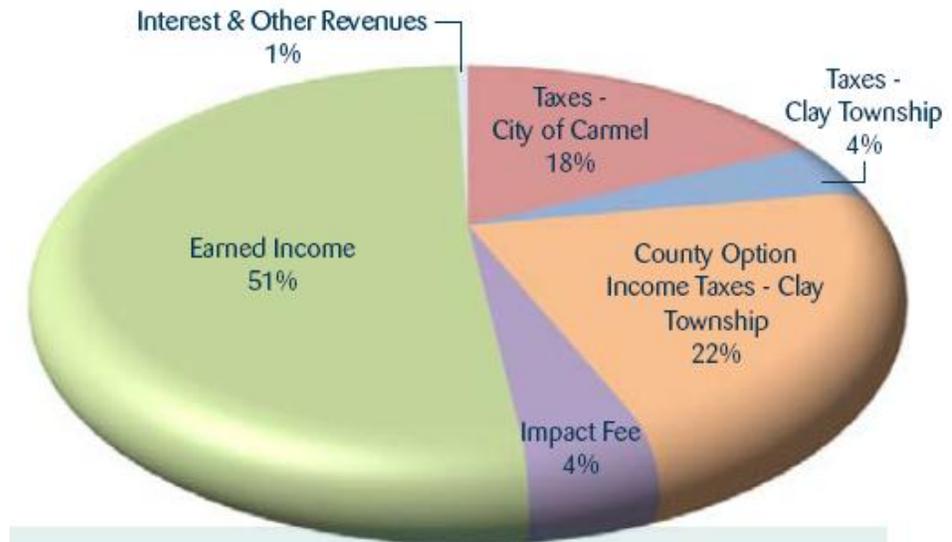
The mission of Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation is to strengthen our community and serve residents through the acquisition, development, and management of high-quality, innovative parks and facilities for recreation, preservation, and programming.

2.5 FUNDING SOURCES

CCPR is among the most financially sound municipal park systems in the country. In assessing the 2008 consolidated budget, 51% of all revenue received was from earned income (e.g. pass sales, registration fees, rentals, sponsorships and other use fees). Taxes and County Option Income Taxes (COIT) each represented 22% of total revenues with Park Impact Fees contributing an additional 4%.

Most communities rely significantly on property taxes to fund the development and operation of park systems. CCPR's ability to generate earned income is critical in creating a sustainable park system.

Figure 2:
2008 CCPR Funding Sources



The Park Board has a variety of funding sources available to develop and sustain the Carmel Clay park and recreation system. Following is a summary of six operating and/or capital funds managed by the Park Board and CCPR:

General Fund (101)

The General Fund is used for the maintenance of all parks and greenways owned or managed by the Park Board and the general administration of the Carmel Clay park system. It is funded with tax dollars received from the City of Carmel and Clay Township split proportionately based on assessed valuation. In 2008, the City contributed 80.08% of the funding with the Township responsible for the remaining 19.92%. Due to careful fiscal management of the budget, CCPR returned \$90,256 of unused 2008 tax dollars to its Fiscal Bodies at the conclusion of the year.

Table 1:
General Fund (101)
2008 Financial Statement

<u>REVENUES</u>	
Property Taxes-Clay Township	\$476,780
Property Taxes-City of Carmel	\$1,916,692
Total Revenues	\$2,393,472
<u>OTHER FINANCIAL SOURCES</u>	
Previous Year Encumbrances	\$180,297
Total Revenues and Other	\$2,573,770
<u>Financing Sources</u>	
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
Personal Services	\$1,450,349
Supplies	\$121,336
Other Services and Charges	\$730,248
Capital Outlay	\$149,767
Year-End Encumbrances	\$31,814
Total Expenditures	\$2,483,513
Unused Funds Returned to Fiscal Bodies	\$90,256
<p><i>Budget Authority:</i> Recommended by Park Board and approved by Common Council and Township Board; Park Board has authority to make line transfers within classifications; transfers between classifications require approval of Fiscal Bodies</p> <p><i>Fiscal Agent:</i> Clerk-Treasurer, City of Carmel</p>	

Capital Fund (103)

The Capital Fund is a non-reverting fund that may be used for any capital projects within the park system, including the purchase of park land. It has been funded predominately with tax dollars from the City of Carmel and Clay Township split proportionately based on assessed valuation at the time of funding. The last year Fund-103 received new tax dollars was 2006; interest income has been the only source of new dollars since 2007. Appropriated dollars not used by the end of the year of appropriation remain in the fund.

Table 2:
Capital Fund (103)
2008 Financial Statement

REVENUES	
Interest & Other Revenues	\$18,966
Total Revenues	\$18,966
OTHER FINANCIAL SOURCES	
Cash Reserves as of 1/1/08	\$980,132
Total Revenues and Other Financing Sources	\$999,099
EXPENDITURES	
Capital Outlay	\$24,855
Fund Transfer to Fund-104	\$650,000
Total Expenditures	\$674,855
Cash Reserves as of 12/31/08	\$324,244
<p><i>Budget Authority:</i> Recommended by Park Board and approved by Common Council and Township Board; Park Board has authority to make line transfers within classifications; transfers between classifications require approval of Fiscal Bodies <i>Fiscal Agent:</i> Clerk-Treasurer, City of Carmel</p>	

Program Fund (104)

The Program Fund is a non-reverting fund to which all revenues and expenses attributable to the operation of Extended School Enrichment and the Monon Center are posted. Revenues and expenses for each division are tracked within separate sub-funds.

Table 3:
ESE Division Sub-Fund (1046)
2008 Financial Statement

REVENUES	
Earned Income	\$2,524,807
Total Revenues	\$2,524,807
OTHER FINANCIAL SOURCES	
Cash Reserves as of 1/1/08	\$293,302
Total Revenues and Other Financing Sources	\$2,818,109
EXPENDITURES	
Personal Services	\$1,854,753
Supplies	\$181,380
Other Services and Charges	\$376,107
Capital Outlay	\$30,569
Total Expenditures	\$2,442,809
Cash Reserves as of 12/31/08	\$375,300
<i>2008 Cost Recovery: 103%</i>	
<i>Historical Cost Recovery: 108%</i>	
<i>Budget Authority: Approved by Park Board</i>	
<i>Fiscal Agent: Clerk-Treasurer, City of Carmel</i>	

Table 4:
 Monon Center Division Sub-Fund (1047)
 2008 Financial Statement

<u>REVENUES</u>	
Earned Income	\$3,028,252
Interest and Other Revenues ¹	\$6,237
Total Revenues	\$3,034,489
<u>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES</u>	
Cash Reserves as of 1/1/08 ²	\$523,641
Fund Transfer from Fund-103 Parks Capital Fund	\$650,000
Total Revenues and Other Financing Sources	\$4,208,130
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
Personal Services	\$2,408,958
Supplies	\$415,895
Other Services and Charges	\$1,202,456
Capital Outlay	\$19,011
Year-End Encumbrances ³	\$50,000
Total Expenditures	\$4,096,320
Unexpended Funds as of 12/31/08⁴	\$111,810
¹ Represents net of unassigned interest and other revenue (\$28,353.61) and unassigned expenses (\$21,117.00) ² Monon Center cash reserves include balances from retired sub-funds 1041-1045 used prior to opening of facility ³ Encumbered \$30,000 for business plan and \$20,000 for accounting services as directed by Finance Committee ⁴ Year-end cash reserves to be transferred to Fund-103 Parks Capital Fund per City & Township resolutions	
<i>2008 Cost Recovery: 74%</i> <i>Historical Cost Recovery: 86%</i> <i>Budget Authority: Approved by Park Board</i> <i>Fiscal Agent: Clerk-Treasurer, City of Carmel</i>	

Park Impact Fee Fund (106)

The Park Impact Fee Fund is a non-reverting fund that may be used for park capital projects in the following parks specifically identified within the 2004 Zone Improvement Plan (ZIP): West Park, Founders Park, Hazel Landing Park, and Cherry Tree Park. At the time a residential building permit is issued, the City of Carmel’s Department of Community Services collects the Park Impact Fee of \$1,261 for each new residential dwelling unit within the Impact Zone, which coincides with the boundaries of Clay Township. As required by State law, the ZIP will be reviewed and updated in 2009.

Table 5:
Park Impact Fee Fund (106)
2008 Financial Statement

REVENUES	
Impact Fee	\$459,249
Interest & Other Revenues	\$18,966
Total Revenues	\$482,709
OTHER FINANCIAL SOURCES	
Cash Reserves as of 1/1/08	\$2,293,996
Total Revenues and Other Financing Sources	\$2,776,705
EXPENDITURES	
Capital Outlay	\$2,317,387
Total Expenditures	\$2,317,387
Cash Reserves as of 12/31/08	\$459,318
<i>Budget Authority: Approved by Park Board</i>	
<i>Fiscal Agent: Clerk-Treasurer, City of Carmel</i>	

Gift Fund (853)

The Gift Fund is a non-reverting fund with revenues coming from gifts, donations, sponsorships and grants given to CCPR. The person or entity giving funds often restricts its use for specific projects or purposes and most existing dollars in this fund are restricted. The Gift Fund may be used to fund operating and/or capital projects, depending on any applicable restrictions.

Table 6:
Gift Fund (853)
2008 Financial Statement

REVENUES	
Earned Income	\$1,684
Interest & Other Revenues	\$8,178
Total Revenues	\$9,862
OTHER FINANCIAL SOURCES	
Cash Reserves as of 1/1/08	\$440,724
Total Revenues and Other Financing Sources	\$450,587
EXPENDITURES	
Other Services and Charges	\$116,130
Total Expenditures	\$116,130
Cash Reserves as of 12/31/08	\$334,457
<i>Budget Authority: Approved by Park Board</i>	
<i>Fiscal Agent: Clerk-Treasurer, City of Carmel</i>	

COIT Capital Fund (1215)

The COIT Capital Fund is a non-reverting fund with revenues coming from the County Option Income Tax (COIT) distribution attributable to the Central Park Bond. Per the February 2005 amendment to the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the City and Township, these COIT funds are to be spent solely on park capital projects. The use of COIT for operating expenses is not prohibited by State law. With approval from the City Council and Township Board, this restriction can be amended at any time to permit the use of COIT for both capital and operating expenses.

Table 7:
COIT Capital Fund (1215)
2008 Financial Statement

<u>REVENUES</u>	
County Option Income Taxes-Clay Township	\$2,350,574
Total Revenues	\$2,350,574
<u>OTHER FINANCIAL SOURCES</u>	
Cash Reserves as of 1/1/08	\$1,449,131
Total Revenues and Other Financing Sources	\$3,799,705
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
Capital Outlay	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$0
Cash Reserves as of 12/31/08	\$3,799,705
<i>Budget Authority: Recommended by Park Board and approved by Township Board</i>	
<i>Fiscal Agent: Trustee, Clay Township</i>	

Issuance of Bonds

The Park Board may also issue bonds in the name of the City or the Township to acquire land for parks or finance improvements, as set forth in the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement. After the Park Board holds a public hearing to disclose the purposes for which the bond issue is proposed, the amount of the proposed bond, and all other pertinent data, it must obtain an ordinance from the City Council and a resolution from the Township Board approving the bond issue. To raise money to pay for the bonds, the City Council and Township Board may levy a special property tax in one special taxing district on the entire township.

2.6 REGIONAL CONTEXT

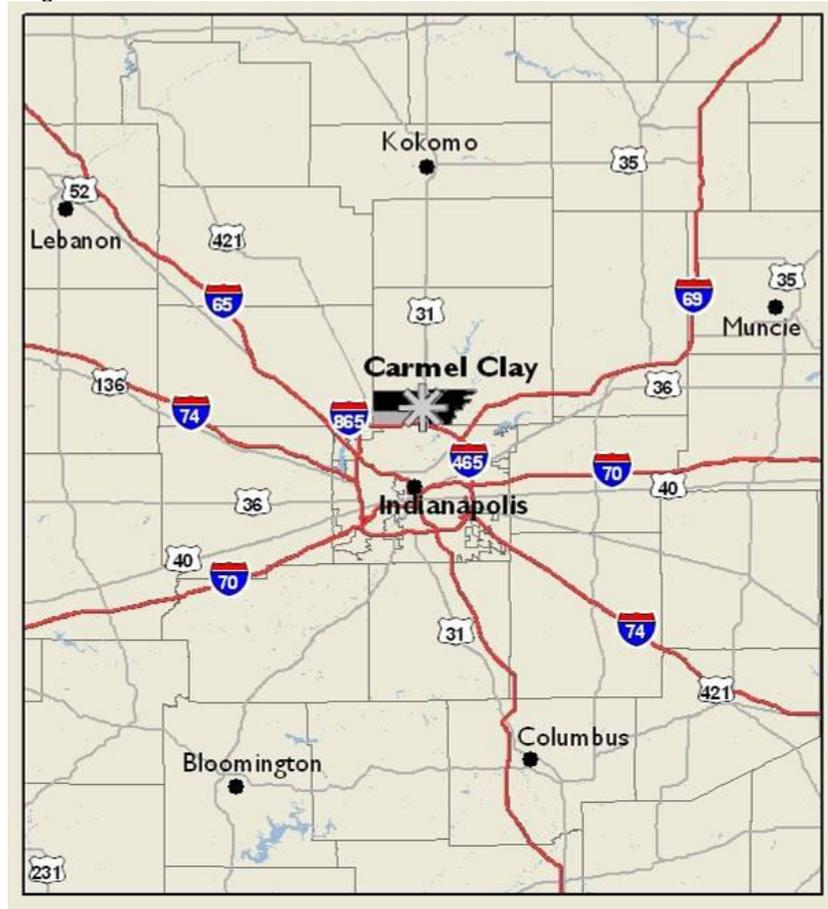
The City of Carmel and Clay Township are located in central Indiana, in the southwestern corner of Hamilton County. Carmel has grown to encapsulate the majority of Clay Township. The unincorporated areas are concentrated in the southwest and south central portions of the Township.

Carmel and Clay Township are bounded by the White River to the east. To the south, both jurisdictions extend south to 96th Street or approximately Interstate 465 and are directly linked to the Indianapolis metropolitan area by US Highway 31/Meridian Street and Keystone Parkway. Residents of both incorporated and unincorporated portions of Clay Township benefit from easy access to major roads and amenities throughout the Indianapolis metropolitan area.

2.7 PLANNING AREA

The primary planning area includes all areas within the boundaries of the City of Carmel and unincorporated Clay Township. The combination of the City of Carmel and Clay Township will be referred to as Carmel Clay in this report unless otherwise noted.

Figure 3
Regional Context



2.8 NATURAL RESOURCES

The natural resources in the Carmel Clay area are important for a number of reasons. A community's topography/terrain, water features (rivers and streams), and natural open space affect the potential for development. While lands containing natural resources may be considered environmentally sensitive and have limited development potential, they are often conducive to both active and passive park and recreation uses. Aside from providing park and recreation opportunities, the protection of natural resource areas can have a number of other benefits, such as protecting unique landforms, maintaining habitat, and preserving riparian and vegetative cover.

The following natural features and landscapes exist within the service and planning area of CCPR and this Plan:

- ***River, Floodplains and Riparian Areas:*** The most significant environmental feature in the planning area is the White River and its associated floodplain and riparian areas. Situated on the eastern boundary of the planning area, the river provides an opportunity for people to connect to the environment. The floodplain area of White River is fairly extensive along its western bank. In certain segments this floodplain reaches nearly one-half mile from the centerline of the river and provides for the most extensive expanse of undeveloped and natural landscape in Carmel Clay. Other streams and creeks traverse the planning area eventually draining into the White River. While Cool Creek has been predominantly urbanized, its most basic floodway has been preserved as a natural amenity. Williams Creek, west of Meridian Street, is another environmental corridor that has large segments still undeveloped.
- ***Wetlands:*** Another environmental feature associated with waterways that exists in the planning area is wetlands. Several wetlands designated on the National Wetland Inventory Maps exist within Carmel Clay.
- ***Woodlands:*** A study conducted by the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) for U.S. 31 indicates that less than 10% of Hamilton County remains as woodlands. Very few original woodland areas have survived in Carmel Clay. Most of these woodland concentrations occur along the White River or other streams and tributaries such as Cool Creek or Williams Creek.
- ***Groundwater:*** Ground water is a significantly important feature in Carmel Clay as the water supply system for residents comes from this source. The groundwater sources are found in the sand and gravel aquifer system of the West Fork of the White River valley. Groundwater is available at depths of 50 - 400 feet in the glacial drift with wells yielding several hundred gallons per minute. The City of Carmel has designated areas around these wells as "wellhead protection areas" to help protect the quality of the available drinking water.

2.9 CLIMATE

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

The warmest month in Carmel Clay is July with average high and low temperatures of 85° and 64° Fahrenheit. The coldest month is January with average high and low temperatures of 34° and 17° Fahrenheit. Overall, the climate of Carmel Clay is similar to that of the rest of Indiana with relatively cold winters and hot, humid summers.

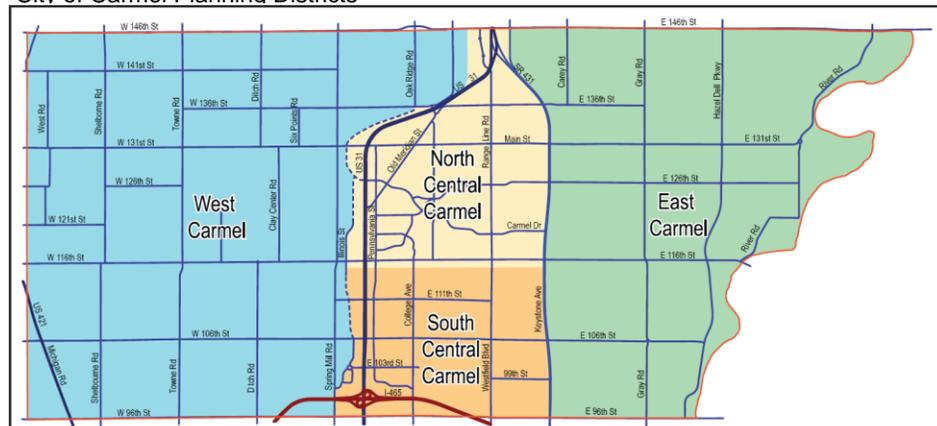
2.10 COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Historically, the City of Carmel and Clay Township was a homogeneous area consisting of farms, rural residential, estate homes, small town residential and small town downtown commercial development. The construction of I-465 (1960's) and S.R. 431/Keystone (1960's), and significant upgrades to U.S. 31 (1970's) in Clay Township all led to an evolution of many types of development in the Carmel Clay community.

Today the Carmel Clay community has an urbanizing core, an employment corridor, significant redevelopment sites, many styles of residential development and multiple commercial areas. The evolution of the community has also resulted in distinguishable planning districts.

To facilitate more effective planning, the City of Carmel recognizes the uniqueness of four districts; East Carmel, North Central Carmel, South Central Carmel and West Carmel (see illustration below). The district boundaries were determined by evaluating development form, physical boundaries, and public input during the development of the City's Carmel Consolidated Comprehensive (C3) Plan 2009.

Figure 4
City of Carmel Planning Districts



East Carmel Characteristics

East Carmel is unique compared to the other three districts because it typifies suburbia with curvilinear streets, dominantly single-family homes, and a small number of employment or commercial developments. More specifically, the district contains a large number of neighborhoods with custom-built homes and has very little integrated commercial development. Aside from the commercial corridor along East 96th Street (the south boundary), there are two existing integrated commercial areas within this district: Brookshire Village Shoppes and Hazel Dell Corner. A third is planned within the Legacy Town Center at 146th Street and River Road. There are also three commerce centers along 146th Street just outside of Carmel, Bridgewater Shoppes, Cool Creek Commons, and Noble West.

East Carmel has a variety of recreational amenities including ten municipal and county parks and an evolving river greenway. It also has three golf courses. The Carmel Dads' Club owns and operates Mark Badger Memorial Sports Park, and maintains a partnership with Carmel Schools to help meet community recreation needs.

The White River aquifer in East Carmel has provided the community with an abundance of high quality water resources; which has been effectively tapped by Carmel's water utility to serve the public need. Much of East Carmel falls within the aquifer and wellhead protection areas, designed to ensure the safety and quality of this public resource. Public and private decision making must give due consideration to this important resource.

The presence of quarry and aggregate mining operations along the White River creates the need to balance the legitimate needs of the nearby residents and the quarry as a supplier of material used for local construction.

North Central Carmel Characteristics

North Central Carmel is clearly unique in comparison to the other districts, in that it is an urbanizing core. Although there are areas of suburban development, the district has evolved toward a more walkable vibrant downtown environment with significant mixed-use vitality, including Carmel City Center, the Arts and Design District, and the Old Meridian District.



No longer are the tallest structures two stories and suburban in character. Numerous four-story or higher buildings have been built or are in the process of being built in this district. Many new buildings are also being built to the front property line, further evolving the pedestrian character of the area.

North Central Carmel has two parks, the Monon Greenway, and one golf course; which is expected to be redeveloped in the near future (the Gramercy traditional neighborhood development). It is bordered by two dominant street corridors, U.S. 31 and Keystone Parkway, which contribute to and support the growth and vitality of this area.

The North Central Carmel district contains multiple suburban style commercial retail areas including: Merchants' Square, Clay Terrace, Kroger Plaza, and the Center.

The district also includes a wide mix of residential developments including historic residential, suburban residential, estate homes, townhouses, flats, apartments, and condominiums.

The district has significant employment areas, including a high concentration of office and health care development. The U.S. 31 Corridor and the Carmel Science and Technology Park are the main focus of employment-type development, but many other small office buildings are distributed throughout North Central Carmel. Carmel St. Vincent Hospital and Clarian North/Riley Hospital have acted to energize health care as a major industry and employer in the U.S. 31 corridor.

North Central Carmel is also home to several educational uses. The Carmel High School and Freshman Center campus along with Carmel Elementary and Carmel Clay Public Library are major educational resources along East Main Street. In addition, Clay Township's Community Life and Learning Center, operated by IUPUI and IvyTech, provides higher education opportunities in the former Carmel Clay Public Library Building. The district also contains a Middle School, private secondary school and regional facility for special needs.

South Central Carmel Characteristics

Much of South Central Carmel's uniqueness from the other districts comes from the significant number of 1950 through 1970's style residential development and the Home Place village. The district also has intermingled areas of large-lot residential, including the homes abutting Woodland Country Club. A limited number of apartments and condominiums also exist.

The north boundary (i.e. 116th Street corridor) and areas surrounding Central Park serve as a transition from the urbanizing North Central Carmel district to quality single family residential areas. Limited bicycle and pedestrian facilities exist in this area to connect people to the amenities in North Central Carmel.

The south and west boundary includes employment areas along the I-465, U.S. 31, and 96th Street corridor. Similarly, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are lacking to convey people to these destinations.

South Central Carmel has several parks including the Monon Center, Central Park, Monon Greenway and Lenape Trace. There are two golf courses, Sunrise Golf Course and Woodland Country Club.

Despite significant park and public amenities in this area, pedestrian mobility is limited, making it difficult for people to connect with the amenities and jobs by means other than the automobile.

South Central Carmel has two strong street corridors, Westfield Boulevard and College Avenue, which provide good north/south connectivity for vehicles. Regional north/south connectivity is also provided with U.S. 31 and Keystone Parkway. Convenient east/west connectivity is limited to 106th Street and 116th Street. While not direct, 96th Street also provides connectivity between U.S. 31 and Keystone Parkway.



The South Central Carmel district has one commercial district, Home Place, and some additional pockets of commercial development along the 96th Street Corridor. Additionally, the Nora 86th Street corridor and Keystone Crossing area provide commercial amenities to South Central Carmel.

A growing restaurant and service area at U.S. 31 and 96th Street offers residents and workers in this area further options for shopping and dining.

West Carmel Characteristics

West Carmel remains unique as an area with many rural characteristics even after the development of many suburban residential subdivisions. Historically, West Carmel was dominantly horse farms, estate homes, agricultural land, and open space. The district is still distinguished from the East Carmel district by significantly lower density residential and substantial estate homes which act to maintain open space character.

This area has a strong sense of place established from its origin as a region for estate homes and horse farms. Pride of place and rural living have characterized the values of many of the districts residents; however, as the area continues to develop, there has been more emphasis on quality infrastructure, recreational amenities (e.g. parks and trails) and ball fields (e.g. Dads' Club facilities on 126th and on Shelborne).

Although West Carmel is a larger geographic area than the other districts, it has a lower density per acre. The population in West Carmel is served by two significant public parks and two golf courses. It also is the home to one of the most well known traditional neighborhood developments in the Midwest, the Village of West Clay.

West Carmel contains the most substantial number of undeveloped acres and has the least developed road network. West Carmel continues to rely more heavily on the original county road network partly due to low density development. As this area has been annexed into Carmel, the road system has been upgraded from two-lane county roads to two lane boulevards with multi-use paths and roundabouts at major street intersections. As the infrastructure has been improved, residents have emphasized the need for continued investment in pedestrian facilities, for improved mobility, and for health benefits.

Regional mobility is provided by two north-south highway corridors, U.S. 421 and U.S. 31. 116th Street and 146th Street function as cross-county connectors, linking I-65 to I-69, thus linking Carmel, Zionsville, and Fishers.

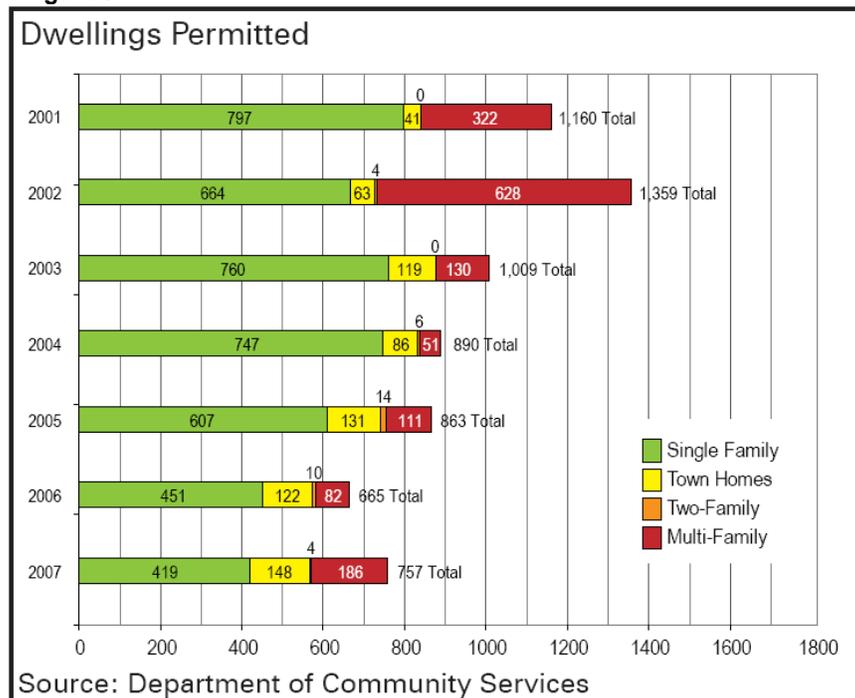
The West Carmel district currently has two commercial areas, Michigan Road corridor which serves as a community and regional destination, and the Village of West Clay, which functions as a local serving neighborhood commercial node. Additionally, the Town of Zionsville, 86th Street corridor and new commercial development along 146th Street near U.S. 31 are also recognized for providing commercial amenities to West Carmel residents.

2.11 DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

The number of new dwelling units in the planning area has generally been dropping every year since 2002. This trend likely reflects multiple factors including: a regional slow down in the economy, stricter regulations and review process, and a transition from greenfield development toward redevelopment. However, 2007 resulted in an increase from 2006, mostly due to a surge in multi-family dwelling units.

The rate and types of development can impact the availability and/or demand for new park land and the amount of Park Impact Fees collected.

Figure 5



2.12 LAND USE

Land use plays an important role in the location, distribution, and availability of park and recreational facilities. In terms of recreation planning, residential areas need parks to fulfill the day-to-day recreation needs of community residents. Higher density residential areas may have different recreation needs from lower density areas. Commercial and industrial areas typically do not generate as much need for parks and recreation facilities. However, there may be specific park and facility needs in commercial and industrial areas, depending on the types of development and the City's goals for these areas.

Current residential growth is concentrated in the western and eastern areas of Clay Township. Dense, Class A office growth is in the central portion of the planning area concentrated along US 31/Meridian. Higher density residential and retail is most concentrated in the central portion of the planning area between Meridian and Keystone.

Table 8 summarizes land use information associated with each parcel according to Hamilton County GIS data. Over half of the planning area is single family residential while just over one percent of is multi-family residential. Approximately eight percent of the planning area is commercial and 12 percent is industrial or agricultural. Over one-fifth of the planning area is vacant or un-platted. Just over seven percent is park, recreation, or open space.

Table 8
Amount and Percent of Land by Designated Use

Type of Use	Acres	Percent
Single Family Residential	13,168.53	53.7%
Multi-Family Residential	330.71	1.3%
Office	651.20	2.7%
Retail	1,279.75	5.2%
Industrial	598.02	2.4%
Agricultural	2,291.26	9.3%
Park/Open Space	1,794.43	7.3%
Vacant	4,398.85	17.9%
Unplatted	855.01	3.5%
Total	29,309.08	100%

Source: Hamilton County GIS, Parcel Shapefile, 2006.

2.13 HOUSING

As of the 2000 census, there were 23,516 housing units in the Carmel Clay planning area. Of these, 97 percent were occupied. Nearly 85 percent of household units were owner occupied, with the remaining 15 percent renter occupied. Of the State's 92 percent of units that are occupied, 71 percent were owner occupied and 29 percent were renter occupied. As previously noted, Carmel Clay has experienced rapid growth in recent years. In the past five years, housing construction has continued at a steady pace and many additional units have been completed and occupied.

2.14 COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

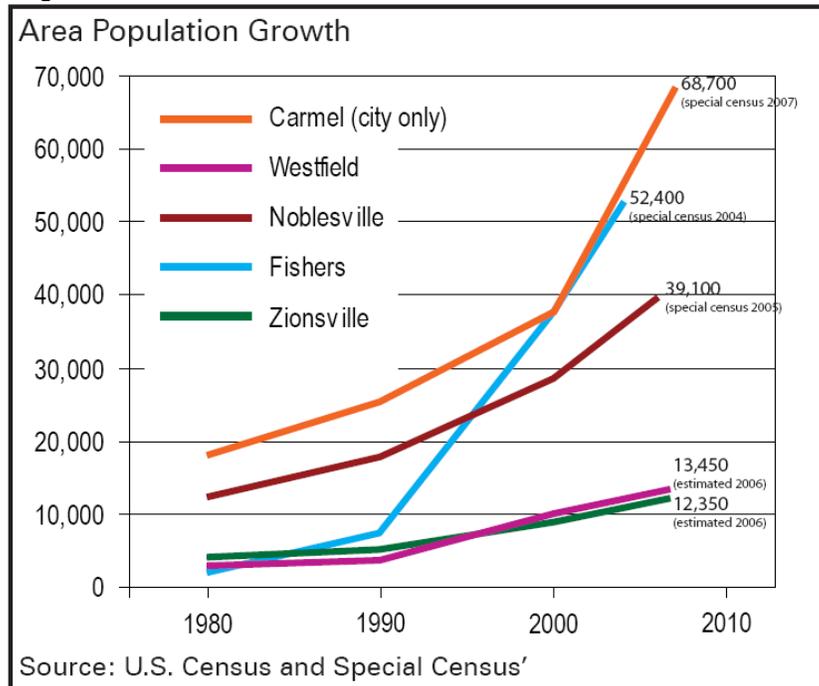
Demographic characteristics can influence recreational interests and level of participation. Factors such as age and income can significantly affect an individual's ability to pursue and participate in recreational activities. To a lesser extent, employment, education and ethnicity also play a role.

The following demographic information relates to the City of Carmel, the surrounding communities and the State of Indiana. All census information was gathered by the Indiana State Library and all non-census information was prepared by the City of Carmel's Department of Community Services. The data presented in this section is dated due to the lack of current data available in 2009 and due to the limit on jurisdiction reporting (e.g. township data).

Population Growth

The City of Carmel has undergone tremendous growth in the last twenty-five-year period. The population has increased from 18,300 residents in 1980 to 68,700 in 2007.

Figure 6



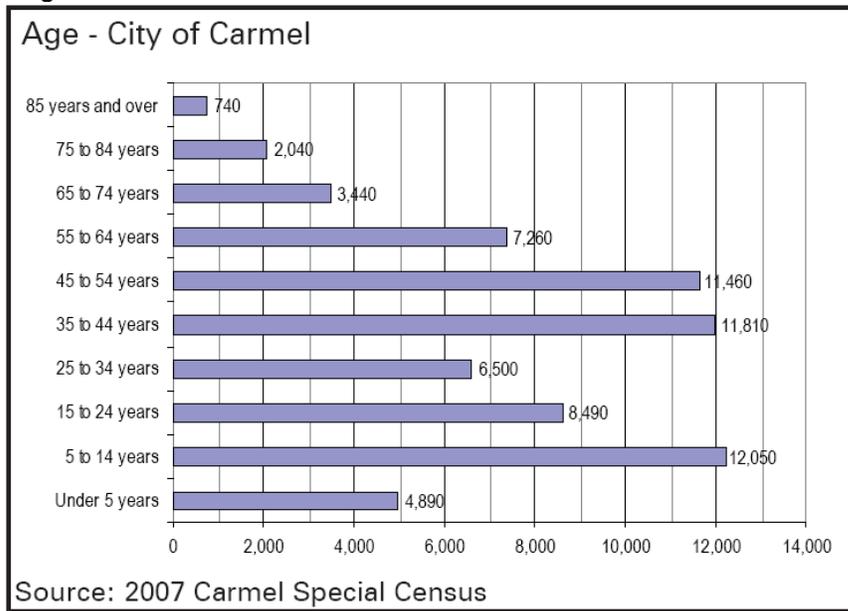
Age Segmentation

The age distribution of a population can indicate the type of recreation opportunities that are most needed. In general, youth tend to participate in recreation activities more frequently than any other age group. More youth tend to participate in active and competitive activities, such as basketball, baseball, and soccer. Although trends indicate an increase in more active recreation among older adults, participation in competitive recreation often decreases among the older populations.

Younger adults (ages 18-35) also participate in active recreation and typically form the core of adult competitive sports. Older adults (ages 35-65) typically have less time to devote to recreational activities, and may benefit from drop

The population distribution for the City of Carmel for the year 2007 is shown below. The largest segment of the City's population is the 5 to 14 (school age) year old range. The 35 to 44 year old range ranks second with 45-54 age segment ranking third.

Figure 7

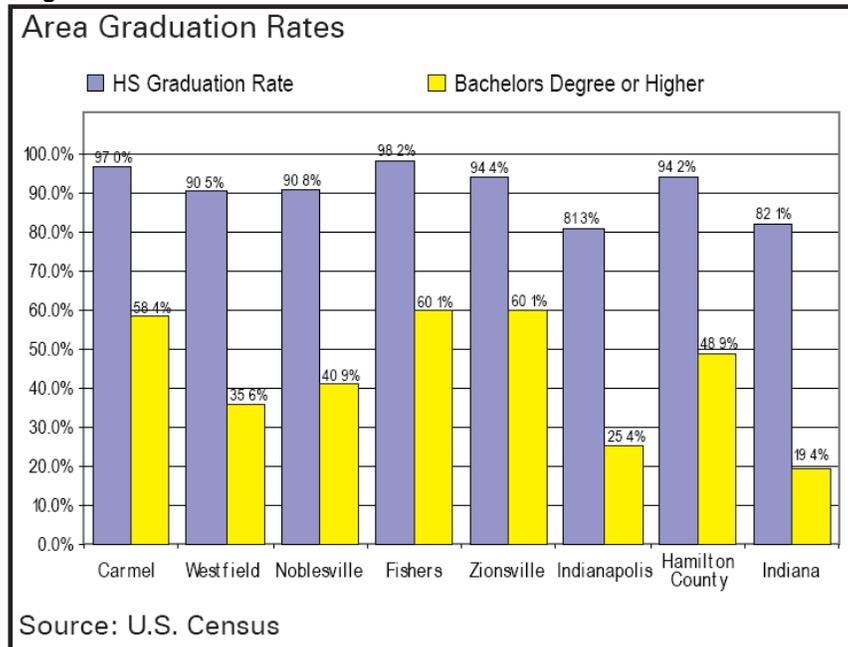


Education

An individual’s level of education can affect his or her recreation participation for several reasons. Lower education levels are generally associated with lower levels of income, which may mean less income available to spend on recreation activities, particularly high-cost activities like golf and road cycling. Lower education levels can lead to lack of participation in diverse activities due to lack of interest and exposure. In addition, education levels can impact Department marketing and outreach efforts, because these should be geared toward audience interests and education levels.

Carmel has a higher high school graduation rate than the State of Indiana (97.0% compared to 82.1%) and Hamilton County (94.2%) but a lower rate than Fishers, Indiana (98.2%). The percentage of adults with Bachelor’s degrees or higher in Carmel is 58.4% compared to the State of Indiana’s rate of 19.4%. The rate for both categories exceeds the rates for Indianapolis, Westfield, Noblesville, and Hamilton County.

Figure 8



Employment

Overall, Carmel Clay’s employment distribution shows a larger proportion of management and professional jobs than the rest of the state. The planning area also has a lower percentage of service and manual labor workers. Nearly 85 percent of Carmel Clay’s employment is in management and professional or sales and office, compared to the statewide percentage of 54 percent. The proportion of Carmel Clay residents in service jobs is nearly half of the state average. The higher level of management and professional employment is consistent with the educational attainment and income patterns of the community. Table 9 compares this data.

Table 9
Occupation Types, 2000
Selected Geographic Areas

Occupation Type	Clay Township Percentage	State of Indiana Percentage
Management and Professional	56.9%	28.7%
Sales and Office	27.5%	25.3%
Service	7.7%	14.2%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	4.3%	21.4%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance	3.5%	10.0%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	0.1%	0.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

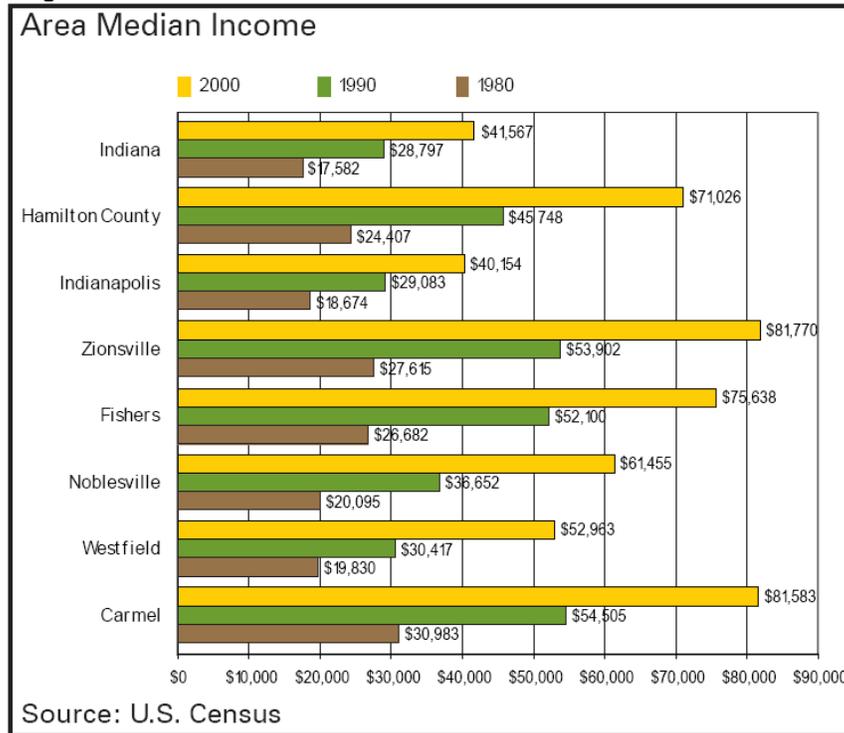
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Income

Income levels also provide important information for recreation planning. In general, people with higher incomes tend to be more active and have more discretionary income available for recreation. Due to financial constraints, lower-income communities may face limitations in recreation planning and programming. In addition, such communities may need to evaluate whether their pricing policies and scholarship programs make recreation activities reasonably accessible.

The median income divides the income distribution into two equal groups, one having incomes above the median, and other having incomes below the median. Carmel’s median household income has increased by 50% from 1990 to 2000, an increase of \$27,000. The state’s median household income increased by 44% during the same period, while Hamilton County’s median household income increased by 55%.

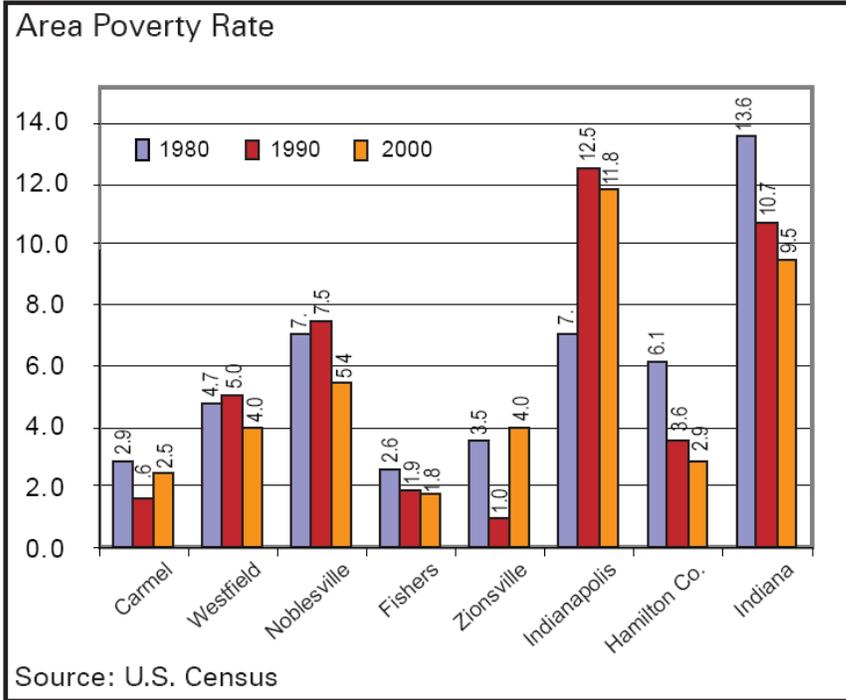
Figure 9



Poverty Rate

The poverty rate for Carmel in 2000 was 2.5% compared to 2.9% for Hamilton County and 9.5% for the State of Indiana. In comparison to the surrounding communities, Carmel has the second lowest poverty rate behind Fishers (1.8%).

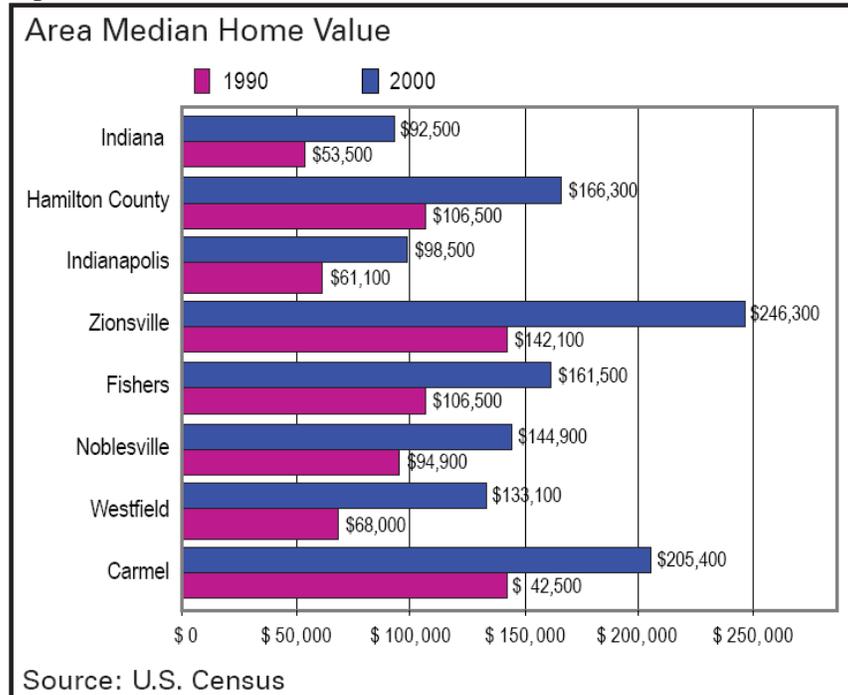
Figure 10



Median Home Value

The median home value divides the total data into two equal parts: one-half of the home values fall below the median and one-half of the values exceed the median. Carmel's median home value was \$205,400 for 2000. Zionsville was the only surrounding community with a higher value in 2000 (\$246,300). Carmel's median home value exceeded the State's median value by \$112,900. When comparing the percent increase in median home values, the City of Carmel falls behind all of the surrounding areas. Carmel's median home value increase from 1990 to 2000 was 44.1%. During that same time period, Noblesville increased 52.7%, Fishers increased 51.6%, Westfield increased 95.7%, Zionsville increased 73.3%, Hamilton County increased 56.2% and the State of Indiana increased 72.9%. However, Carmel's median home value is still above other cities.

Figure 11



Ethnicity

Carmel Clay’s ethnic composition is predominantly White with rather small Asian, Black or African American, and American Indian/Alaska Native populations. While the State of Indiana is also largely White, the planning area is somewhat less diverse than Indiana as a whole. While the percentage of the Carmel Clay population that is Black or African American is much smaller than the State average, Carmel Clay has four times the proportion of Asian residents than the state average.

Ethnicity can be important from a recreation participation standpoint, because higher participation levels in some types of recreational activities are associated with certain ethnic groups. This could increase the demand for certain types of facilities. Table 10 compares the ethnic composition of Carmel Clay to the State of Indiana.

Table 10
Ethnic Composition, 2000
Selected Geographic Areas

Ethnicity	Clay Township Percentage	State of Indiana Percentage
White	93.0%	87.5%
Asian	4.0%	1.0%
Black or African American	1.5%	8.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.1%	0.3%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.4%	1.6%
Two or more races	1.0%	1.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

In addition to the data shown in Table 10, 1.5 percent of Carmel Clay residents identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic, which is less than half of the State of Indiana percentage of 3.5 percent.

2.15 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population growth in a community typically occurs through two means: 1) annexation and 2) in-migration/infill. The City of Carmel is experiencing both types of population growth, and, therefore, continues to expand its boundaries. The boundaries of Clay Township are fixed by State law and do not have the ability to expand. Within both jurisdictions, subdivisions are in various states of completion and growing. As these units are occupied, the population will continue to rise.

Projections indicate that the planning area population will more than double by 2025, reaching a total of 158,319 residents. This population growth will require additional parks and recreation facilities to meet growing needs. Table 11 shows current and projected populations for Carmel Clay.

Table 11
Population Projections
Clay Township as a Percent of Hamilton County

Year	County Projections	Township as Percent of County	Clay Township Projections
2000	182,740	35.41%	64,709
2005	246,626	37.75%	78,390
2010	298,642	40.00%	119,457
2015	338,285	40.08%	135,585
2020	369,260	40.14%	148,221
2025	394,025	40.18%	158,319

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Population estimates program, 2000 census, Carmel Clay Comprehensive Plan, Indiana Business Research Center County Population Projections



3. EXISTING RESOURCES



EXISTING RESOURCES

The ideal park system is made up of a variety of parks, providing diverse recreation and open space opportunities. In Carmel Clay, signature parks, community parks, local parks, and greenways allow residents to engage in various leisure pursuits - from playing on playgrounds to enjoying the scenic and peaceful outdoors. This chapter notes the parks and facilities that provide these recreation experiences. It presents a refined classification system, summarizes the park and facility inventories, and describes how recreation programs are provided in the Carmel Clay planning area.

3.1 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes a refined park classification system to facilitate future planning. These park classifications are used throughout the Plan to define current levels of service and determine park land needs. Five park types are defined below:

- **Signature Parks:** Signature parks provide access to unique recreation features, natural areas, and facilities that attract visitors from the entire community and beyond. Signature parks often accommodate small and large group activities and have infrastructure to support group picnics, community gatherings, special events, and festivals. As community attractions, signature parks can enhance the economic vitality and identity of the entire region. These parks may include significant natural areas and wetlands, trails and pathways, gardens and arboretums, ponds and other water features. They add unique facilities, such as destination or thematic playgrounds, recreation centers, aquatic centers, sledding hills, mazes, viewing knolls, skateparks and other interesting elements. Signature parks are typically 100+ acres in size. Central Park and West Park are examples of signature parks.

- **Community Parks:** Community parks provide diverse recreation opportunities to serve the Carmel Clay community. These include active and passive recreation, as well as self-directed and organized recreation opportunities for individuals, families and small groups. Community parks often include facilities that promote outdoor recreation and activities such as walking and biking, picnicking, playing sports, playing on playgrounds, and fishing. These sites also include natural areas, emphasizing public access to important natural features. Since community parks may attract people from a wide geographic area, support facilities are required, such as parking and restrooms. Community parks are approximately 15-50 acres in size. Lawrence W. Inlow Park and River Heritage Park are examples of community parks.

- **Local Parks:** Local parks are smaller parks that provide green space in the community. Depending on their size, these sites may also provide basic recreation amenities for nearby residents, such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, open lawn areas, sport courts, gazebos, benches, and pathways. Local parks are designed primarily for passive, non-supervised, informal recreation activities. Their size generally ranges from 2-10 acres, with larger parks supporting more green space and small group or family gatherings. Local parks typically serve nearby residents, but may or may not serve a specific neighborhood. Carey Grove Park and Prairie Meadow Park are examples of local parks.
- **Special Use Areas:** Special use areas are stand-alone recreation sites or miscellaneous park lands designed to support a unique or specialized use. A special use area may include a facility such as sports field complex, community center, garden, historic site, plaza, or other specialized facility. However, these sites typically do not combine several facilities (as in a community or signature park). The size and service area for special use areas will vary with the intended use of the site. Flowing Well Park is an example of a special use area.
- **Greenways:** Greenways include natural and built corridors that typically support trail-oriented activities, such as walking, jogging, biking, skating, etc. Greenways function as linear parks by linking features together and providing green buffers. Greenways may be located along abandoned railroad lines, transportation or utility rights-of-way, riparian corridors, or elongated natural areas defined topographical changes. Greenways and linear parks may be of various lengths and widths, and these corridors typically support facilities such as viewing areas, picnic tables, and trailheads. Greenways and trails between key destinations can help create more tightly-knit communities, provide opportunities for non-motorized transportation, and link to the regional trail system. The Monon and White River Greenways are examples of greenways.

In addition to the park types noted above, several public and private providers offer mini parks, local parks, sports field complexes, golf courses, gardens, and natural areas in Carmel Clay. Map 1 illustrates all of these recreation resources, which are incorporated into the park system analysis.

Map 1: Existing Parks & Facilities



3.2 EXISTING PARK LAND

CCPR currently provides 504.8 acres of parkland at 15 sites. The sites range in size from 2.9 acres (Lenape Trace Park) to 158.4 acres (Central Park). Together, these parks serve an estimated 84,033 residents within the planning area, based on a 2008 population estimate. Table 12 summarizes Carmel Clay's inventory by park type. The full inventory is presented in Appendix D. Appendix E contains a site-by-site park description of all CCPR parks.

As illustrated in Table 12, more than half (55%) of the Department's park acreage is provided in two signature parks: Central Park and West Park. CCPR also provides significant acres of community parks, but fewer acres of local parks, special uses areas, and greenways.

Table 12
Park Land by Classification
Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation

Park Land Type	# of Sites	Acreage	% of Park System
Signature Parks	2	277.6	55%
Community Parks	5	156.5	31%
Local Parks	5	31	6.1%
Special Use Areas	1	17.1	3.4%
Greenways	2	22.6	4.5%
TOTAL	15	504.8	100%

Note: These calculations have been refined from the data presented in previous reports.

Existing Level of Service

To help determine if residents are well served by the existing park system, park acreage can be analyzed in terms of level of service. Level of service (LOS) is a measure of the minimum amount of land needed to provide all of the recreation opportunities desired in a community.

The existing level of service for park land is the ratio of the current park acreage to the current population. It is expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 residents. As noted in Table 13, CCPR provides an existing level of service of six acres per 1,000 residents overall. CCPR provides few local parks, special use areas, and stand-alone natural areas for this community, while excelling in the provision of signature parks. Generally speaking, CCPR leaves the business of providing neighborhood parks to Homeowners' Associations, sport complexes to the Dads' Club, golf courses to a number of private providers and the City, and natural areas and other special use sites to Hamilton County.

Table 13
Existing Level of Service by Park Type

Carmel Clay Planning Area

Park Land Type	Existing Level of Service (Acres/1,000)
Signature Parks	3.3
Community Parks	1.9
Local Parks	0.4
Special Use Areas	0.2
Greenways	0.3
TOTAL	6.0

Parks Provided by Others

Within the planning area, many other providers manage extensive park acreage, which supplements CCPR acreage and enhances the park system. These other jurisdictions are the primary providers for local parks, special use facilities, gardens, and golf courses—categories where CCPR’s level of service is low or non-existent. The resources owned and managed by other providers are described below.

Hamilton County

Hamilton County owns approximately 278 acres of park land at three sites in or near the planning area:

- **Coxhall Gardens:** Coxhall Gardens is a 125-acre site located in West Carmel. Some of the unique features of this site include twin 90-foot bell towers, a music pavilion, and a lake. The site also includes a formal garden courtyard (Campbells Crossing), restroom facility, and trails. Future plans for the site include a museum, conservatory, greenhouse, and children’s garden.
- **Cool Creek Park:** This 90-acre park is located approximately one mile north of Clay Township, along US 31. This park provides picnic shelters, a music pavilion, softball diamonds, soccer fields, a basketball court, and four miles of wooded trails. The park is also home for the Cool Creek Nature Center.
- **River Road Park:** River Road Park is a 63-acre site on the White River, near Prairie View Golf Course and the River Road Sport Fields. The park includes paved trails, a river outlook, natural areas, and soft ball and soccer fields. The park also features a unique playground and interpretive center.

Carmel Clay Schools

The Carmel Clay School Corporation provides 11 elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school within the planning area. These schools are important resources for open play and recreation facilities in Carmel Clay, such as playgrounds, sport courts, sports fields, and gymnasiums. While school facilities are not available to community members during school hours, schools continue to be a significant provider of recreation resources. The school district works in conjunction with several recreation providers, such as the Dads' Club, to schedule their facilities and help meet community needs. As a result, school sites function as local and community parks for many residents.

Dads' Club

The Carmel Dads' Club is a non-profit organization that provides youth sports to over 11,000 youth in Clay Township. In addition to using school facilities, the Dads' Club owns and/or manages several sport field complexes in the planning area. These seven sites provide the majority of sport fields in Carmel Clay:

- Claybourne Fields
- Hermann Fields
- Shelbourne Fields
- Hartman Field
- Badger Field
- River Road Fields
- Gray Road Fields

Homeowners' Associations

Carmel Clay has nearly 400 Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) in various housing developments and apartment complexes throughout the City and Township. While not all HOAs have park-like areas or recreation facilities, many include swimming pools, sport courts, playgrounds, perimeter trails, and other park features in residential developments. These various recreational amenities make an extensive contribution to the park and recreational opportunities available to residents of the Carmel Clay area. HOAs are considered to be the primary providers of neighborhood parks in Carmel Clay. An inventory of HOA recreational amenities is included in Appendix F.

Other Providers

Carmel Clay has a number of other recreation resources in addition to the ones noted above. For example, the Nature Conservancy manages the 22-acre Bitternut Woods Preserve along Williams Creek. Bitternut Woods supports bottomland forest, where enormous oaks and sycamores emerge into a second growth forest. The preserve is open to the public, though there are no trails. In addition, six golf clubs and one country club in the planning area provide recreation opportunities for golf enthusiasts, as well as green space in the

community. There are many private clubs with recreation facilities in Carmel Clay, as well as residences with their own private facilities (e.g., pools and tennis courts). All of these facilities help serve residents in Carmel Clay.

3.3 EXISTING FACILITIES

Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation is responsible for the development and maintenance of a variety of recreation facilities within its parks. These include indoor and outdoor recreation facilities and other park amenities. As with park land, other providers add a significant number of facilities in the planning area. The numbers of sport fields, sport courts, playgrounds and picnic areas for all providers are summarized in Table 14.

As noted in the table, most sport fields are provided by the Dads' Club. The school district provides most outdoor sports courts and a majority of the public playgrounds. Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) also provide a significant number of playgrounds. Although HOA facilities may not necessarily be open to the public, the fact these facilities is available impacts demand for public playgrounds. CCPR's niche is found in providing a wider variety of facilities that support diverse recreation opportunities. Presented in Appendix D (inventory) and Appendix E (park descriptions), these facilities include:

- Winter recreation facilities
- Water-play facilities
- Amphitheater
- Skate park
- Pathways
- Fishing areas
- Multi-purpose recreation center



Table 14
Existing Sport Fields by Provider
Carmel Clay Planning Area

Recreation Facility	CCPR	School District	Dads' Club	HOA	County	Total
Sport Fields						
Baseball/Softball Fields	3	12	11	5	---	31
Soccer Fields	1	---	23	1	---	25
Other Sport Fields (Football, Rugby, Lacrosse)	---	3	14	---	---	17
Sport Courts						
Gymnasium	1*	18	---	---	---	19
Basketball Courts- Outdoor	2	8	---	12	---	22
Tennis Courts	---	37	---	50	---	87
Volleyball Courts	2	---	---	---	---	2
Recreation Amenities						
Playgrounds	6	11	---	25	1	43
Picnic Shelters	14	---	---	14	2**	30

*This gymnasium includes three full-sized courts.

**The two County picnic shelters are located in Cool Creek Park.

Opened in May 2007, The Monon Center at Central Park is a perfect example of the integrated park and specialized facilities that CCPR provides. This facility features a fitness center, indoor aquatics center, gymnasium, indoor track, meeting rooms, and an outdoor aqua park. By offering many unique recreation opportunities, this state-of-the-art facility quickly has become a major attraction in the community.

3.4 RECREATION PROGRAMMING

Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation has initiated significant changes in their recreation programming in the last few years. In the fall of 2006, CCPR became the new provider of the Extended School Enrichment (ESE) Program at 11 elementary school sites. This program is designed as a fulltime option for before and after school childcare to accommodate a parent/guardian's workday. The program includes creative, recreational and physical activities, as well as enrichment and homework opportunities for children in kindergarten through fifth grade. Combined with the opening of the Monon Center, this program has greatly increased the scope and breadth of CCPR recreation programming in the last few years.

Populations Served

CCPR's programs and events serve a variety of residents. While the majority of programs focus on youth and adults, specific programs target seniors, adults, teens, youth, and preschool/toddlers, and families. Some adaptive recreation is available for special needs children as well, although accommodations are provided for all age groups. Examples of activities for each group include:

- **Parent/Child:** Special events, sports classes, bowling leagues, Tech Tykes workshops, Kindermusik, movement classes, toddler open gym.
- **Family:** Family nights, movie nights, special activities (Construction Zone, Family Bingo, Back-to-School Party), family campout, family fishing derby.
- **Preschool/Toddler:** Aquatics, sports clinics, classes (dance, music, art, languages, safety, science and exploration), summer camps, and Wild Wednesdays (theme-oriented drop-in programs).
- **Youth:** Aquatics, sport camps and clinics, classes (dance, music, art, drama, languages, safety, science and exploration), Thrilling Thursdays (theme-oriented drop-in programs), summer day camps, enrichment camps, Skyhawks Sport Camps, Hershey's Track & Field, Extended School Enrichment.
- **Tweens and Teens:** Aquatics, sport camps and clinics, classes (dance, music, art), safe sitter, summer day camps, enrichment camps, Skyhawks Sport Camps, Hershey's Track & Field, teen parties, youth trips.
- **Adult:** Fitness, sports and athletics, health and wellness, arts and crafts, dance, life-long learning, clubs (chess, books, crafts, cards).
- **Seniors:** Socials (movies, ice cream socials, bingo), clubs (cards, books, crafts, coffee group), fitness, health and wellness.
- **Special Needs:** Aquatics, summer camps (e.g., Alternative Minds for kids with autism), sport readiness, art, dance. The Department has on staff a fulltime Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, who is responsible for coordinating inclusion programs for individuals with disabilities for ESE, as well as all of CCPR recreation programs.



Program Service Areas

Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation provides recreation programming in eight service areas. These are noted below, with examples of the types of programs provided:

- **Aquatics:** Open swim, water fitness classes, swim lessons (private and group), lifeguard training, special events (water polo tournament, movies, special activities, etc.).
- **Arts & Crafts:** Drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, jewelry design, accessories, stamping, scrapbooking, slimy art, cartoons, pottery, sensational art, artistic expression (Moody Places and Happy Faces).
- **Life-long Learning and Enrichment:** Languages (Japanese, Spanish, Sign), science and technology (Tech Tykes workshops, astronomy and space exploration, animals, ecology, aquatic environments, transportation, construction and building, dinosaurs), cooking, chess, bridge, magic, outdoor survival and safety, creative writing, book club, home repair, auto mechanics, wine-making, public speaking, CPR Certification, organization, computers, dog obedience, wellness.
- **Summer Camps:** Preschool Palace, Outdoor Explorers, Vacation Station, Success on Stage, All about Art, Alternative Minds, Skyhawks Sports, Science of Summer, IMPACT teen program.
- **Youth Sports and Fitness:** Bowling, fencing, inline skating, triathlon training, Sporties for Shorties (toddler sports), golf, tae kwon do, soccer, cheerleading, Skyhawks Sport Camps, Hershey's Track & Field, Pitch, Hit & Run.
- **Adult Athletics and Fitness:** Leagues (volleyball, kickball, basketball, ultimate Frisbee, wiffleball, bowling), tournaments, clinics (golf, tae kwon do, fencing, inline skating, women's football), fitness (cycling, circuit training, express workout, cardio, boot camp, strength training, pilates, yoga) dance classes (ballet, hip-hop, dance workout, salsa, zumba, jazzercise).
- **Special Events:** Tour de Carmel, concerts and movies in the park/pool, Shakespeare in the Park, summer events, Fishing Derby, Candy Cane Hunt, Fall Spooktacular, Night Egg Hunt, Touch a Truck, Family Camp Out.
- **Extended School Enrichment:** Before and after school care, care during school breaks, holidays, conference days. Specific programs are tailored to meet site needs.

Program Format

Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation offers programs in a variety of formats. These include special classes and workshops, field trips/tours, sport leagues, sport clinic and camps, sport competitions and tournaments, youth camps, drop-in activities, registered special events and unregistered special events. The Monon Center also offers KidZone Childcare while parents work out. There are also birthday party packages and opportunities for facility rentals to host other programs.

Program Registration

There are five options for registering for CCPR's recreation programs: in person, by mail, by phone, by fax, or on-line. There are separate registration forms for the following programs, which are available on-line or in the facilities:

- Pass Registration
- Program Registration
- ESE and Summer Camp Series

Program Fees

Separate fee structures are used for Monon Center entry, recreation programming, and ESE. To enter The Monon Center, a visitor must purchase one of the following:

- **Annual Pass:** Like a membership, an annual pass offers unlimited, full access during designated hours to the outdoor aqua park, indoor aquatic center, fitness center, locker rooms, indoor track, and gymnasium. Fees vary for adults, youth, seniors, and households.
- **Monthly Pass:** Like the annual pass, but payable monthly via electronic funds transfer from the user's bank account or credit card.
- **Value Pass:** A value pass provides unlimited access to designated area(s) for ten visits.
- **Daily Pass:** A daily pass provides unlimited access to designated area(s) for one visit.
- **Summer-only Aquatics Pass.** This pass allows access to the outdoor aqua park and indoor aquatic center from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.
- **Recreation Registration:** Many recreation programs are held in The Monon Center. No separate entry fee is required.

In addition, The Monon Center allows free access to the elevated walking/running track for all Clay Township residents on Monday-Friday, before 5:00 p.m. During other times, individuals must have a Annual Pass, Monthly Pass, Value Pass, or Daily Pass to use the track. The cost of all passes varies by age (youth, adult, seniors). Children ages 2 and under are admitted

free. Lockers at The Monon Center are free, although a limited number can be reserved for a monthly fee. For recreation programming, fees are set based on the duration and content of the course.

Fees for the Extended School Enrichment Program are based on different policies than recreation fees. In an effort to make participation more economical for families, program fees were reduced from the rates in effect before CCPR became the primary provider. In addition, Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation offers partial to full scholarships to ensure a family's financial means is not a barrier to participation. Daily drop-in, weekly and monthly rates are available.

Program Marketing

Carmel Clay programs are marketed through targeted tools and efforts. CCPR describes its parks, programs, and services on an attractive and well organized, informational website: www.carmelclayparks.com. Programs and services are also promoted through a seasonal program guide distributed three times per year. An e-guide, and various documents (applications, registration forms, reserve/rental forms, brochures, codes, etc.) are available online for ease of access.



The Extended School Enrichment Program is marketed through new parent information meetings, new program promotional materials, and registration forms. Information is available through CCPR and Carmel Clay Schools, as well as at each individual site.

Other Program Providers

Despite the increased role that Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation plays in providing programming, other providers still play a critical role in the planning area as well. Appendix G notes several other providers who play a significant role in providing recreation programming and special events in Carmel Clay. These include providers in the following areas:

- Youth programs;
- Nature/environmental programs;
- Cultural opportunities;
- Special events;
- The arts;
- Aquatics;
- Sports;
- Senior programming; and
- Volunteer coordination and other associations.

3.5 Accessibility and Universal Design

As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, accessibility is taken into consideration for every program and facility offered by CCPR. The Department continually strives to achieve accessibility through the use of universal design principles in the development and renovations of its parks and facilities. An assessment of each park, including ADA compliance, is provided in Appendix E. Existing facilities are in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. (See Appendix H)

People of all individuals and abilities are encouraged and welcome to participate in all CCPR programs. Reasonable accommodations are provided to all program participants, upon request. Adaptive programs are also offered that target all ages and are designed to meet the leisure needs and interests of people with disabilities and special needs. Inclusion services and adaptive programs are managed by a fulltime Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist. Instructor to participant ratios for adaptive programs are appropriate to accommodate the needs of the participants.

Statement of Accessibility

Following is the Statement of Accessibility printed in the seasonal program guide and on the Department's website:

Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation believes that all individuals should be provided leisure opportunities that allow for performances at their highest levels. If you or a family member has special needs and would like to participate in our programs or use one of our facilities, we will be happy to make reasonable accommodations to meet your needs. Please indicate on the registration form if any accommodations are needed for successful inclusion in a program according to the American with Disabilities Act and will be in contact with you to discuss those requests.

ADA Compliance Coordinators

The ADA requires that local governments with over 50 employees designate at least one individual to act as the ADA compliance coordinator for the governmental unit. As a best management practice, CCPR has designated its own ADA Coordinators:

- Michael Klitzing, CPRP, Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation
- Tess Pinter, CTRS, Recreation Manager
- Brooke Taflinger, CTRS, Inclusion Supervisor

Any person(s) who have complaints, grievances or comments relating to accessibility may contact an ADA compliance coordinator at:

- Phone: (317) 848-7275
- TTY: (317) 843-3877
- Email: [first initial + last name]@carmelclayparks.com (e.g. mklitzing@carmelclayparks.com)



4. PARK AND FACILITY NEEDS



PARK AND FACILITY NEEDS

A critical component in the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the community needs assessment (CNA). The needs assessment identifies the need for parks and recreation facilities in Carmel Clay in quantifiable terms. It combines public feedback, an understanding of recreation trends, and a technical analysis of park access to determine the level of service for parks and facilities.

Community needs provide a basis for system-wide recommendations, including the potential acquisition and development of new park sites, the renovation of existing parks, and potential partnerships with other service providers. This chapter provides key findings from the public involvement process, a recreation trends analysis, and the results of the community needs assessment.

4.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS

To create a master plan that reflects the recreation preferences, needs, and values of Carmel Clay residents, the planning process included multiple forums for community outreach. These public involvement activities included a variety of efforts to engage as many residents as possible. Community input was solicited through the following community involvement activities:

- Recreation survey (adult and youth);
- Community questionnaire (adult and youth);
- Stakeholder interviews;
- Adult focus group meetings;
- Youth focus group meetings;
- Technical Advisory Committee meetings;
- Master Plan Advisory Committee meetings;
- Public forum; and
- Sport provider questionnaire.

Key Findings

Significant findings identified during the public involvement activities are bulleted on the next several pages. A detailed report of findings is provided in Appendix A. These findings help determine the community's demand for parks, facilities, and programs.

Parks

- Carmel Clay is an active community with a high interest in the outdoors. Carmel Clay residents of all ages use parks, and nearly all residents consider parks, recreation, and open space to be important to their quality of life.

- Adult survey respondents indicated that medium-size parks are most needed. Participants noted that parks should be developed as destination venues.
- Several focus group respondents indicated that local parks are less frequently used than community and regional-scale parks.
- Respondents in a variety of public involvement activities noted that parks should be geographically distributed for equal access. Funding for capital improvements and park development should be dispersed to sites throughout the park system.
- The current geographic distribution of parks and facilities limits access to recreation in Carmel Clay. Many areas are underserved, and park and facility development has been overly concentrated in certain areas (central and east) or specific parks (Central Park).
- Many residents noted that basic recreation opportunities should be available within walking distance from home.
- The river corridor is important to many respondents. Parks that provide river access and waterfront recreation are desired.
- Natural areas and greenways are important for both preservation and recreation. Trail-related recreation in these areas can provide opportunities for exercise and being part of nature.
- Respondents indicated that there is a need for more parks and natural areas, particularly in areas of high-density development.

Facilities

- Recreation facilities are needed to serve all ages groups, especially teens and seniors. Teens need hangouts, such as skate parks, game rooms, cafes, and clubs.
- There is a demand for more sport facilities. Generally speaking, respondents believe that CCPR should be more involved in providing sport fields and venues, such as indoor sport and tournament facilities. However, residents do not want sport fields at every park.
- Respondents noted a need for many types of recreation facilities, such as winter facilities (ice rink, sledding hill, toboggan run), picnic shelters (group and family areas), sport fields (tournament and practice venues), alternative sport facilities (rock climbing wall, skatepark) river access (viewpoint, boat launches, fishing access, waterfront trails, boat rentals), and dog parks.
- In the recreation survey, nearly half of adults indicated that a nature center is the most needed recreational facility in Carmel Clay.
- ADA accessibility improvements are needed at several sites to increase facility use for all people.



Connectivity (Park Access via Trails)

- Although trails and pathways are planned through the City of Carmel's Alternative Transportation Plan (as part of the Thoroughfare Plan), many residents still noted a

need for enhanced connectivity in the planning area. Respondents want to see more linkages between parks and other key destinations in the community.

- Many respondents noted a need for more sidewalks, off-street pathways, and bike lanes in the city/township to support non-motorized transportation and park accessibility.
- Trails should be maintained and better supported by amenities to promote user safety and trail visibility. Desired amenities included bike racks, benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, directional signage, distance markers, lighting, etc.
- Local and regional connectivity is important to respondents. Similar to the Monon Greenway, an east/west corridor is desired.
- Youth and adults want more trails. A demand for trails was noted in all public involvement activities.
- Almost all adult survey respondents anticipate using multi-purpose trails at the new Central Park facility, with 92% of survey respondents reporting that they would use these trails at least once per year.
- Fifty percent of adults said that their favorite activities are trail related. Two of the top four activities that adults would most like to do are trail-related as well.
- According to survey respondents, the most important reasons for trail development in Carmel and Clay Township are for exercise, recreation, and non-motorized transportation.
- Carmel Clay survey respondents feel that off-street paved trails are the most-needed. Since youth have fewer transportation options than adults, a lack of trails hinders their ability to walk or bicycle to parks.

Programs

- Programming and activities should be increased for teens, seniors, and families.
- Affordable programming is important to many respondents, and low cost programming/scholarships should be available. Youth noted that they desire opportunities to attend free social events.
- Respondents felt that CCPR can collaborate or partner with schools, public sector agencies, businesses, non-profits, and other organizations to provide a wider variety of facilities and programs.
- In terms of specific programs, participants perceived a need for organized and alternative sports, special events, environmental education, and after school programs.

Recreation Benefits

- Participants identified a number of important benefits offered by parks and recreation, such as improving health and wellness, bringing residents together/building community, promoting economic development, and helping preserve the natural environment.

- Youth development is an important benefit recognized by many respondents. Youth need places to play, opportunities to participate in sports (team-building), chances to develop new skills and healthy lifestyle choices, and places to hang out and socialize.
- Some respondents noted that high-quality parks, facilities, and recreation programming add to property values and can attract business and tourism.
- According to survey respondents, the top three benefits provided by parks include: opportunities to enjoy nature and the outdoors, improvements to health and wellness, and protection of the natural environment.
- In the youth survey, nearly one-third of respondents indicated that parks are great places to hang out and have fun.

Recreation Participation/Preferred Activities

- Survey respondents most frequently participate in the following activities: computer use, walking for pleasure, fitness/aerobic activities, and bicycling for pleasure. On average, residents participated in each of these activities at least once a week.
- Five of the 10 most popular activities in Carmel Clay are trail-related.
- Seven of the 10 most popular activities include some form of exercise, such as walking, jogging, biking, swimming, weight training, and aerobics.
- Tennis, basketball, soccer, baseball, and golf are the most popular sports in Carmel Clay. All appeared in the top 20 activities and were played more than once per month on average.
- Comparing the Carmel Clay participation average to other communities surveyed by MIG reveals that computers, exercise/aerobics, and organized sports are more popular in Carmel Clay than in other communities.
- Biking, walking, attending concerts, and swimming were the top four activities that adult and youth survey respondents would most like to do if they had unlimited time and resources. Nature walks and golf ranked fifth and sixth.
- Concerts ranked 3rd among activities residents would like to do most, but it currently ranks 15th among activities that participants do most often. There appears to be a strong unmet demand for concert attendance in Carmel Clay. This need will be addressed by the new Performing Arts Center being constructed by the City of Carmel.

Other Issues

- Publicity and marketing can be improved to promote healthy lifestyles and to increase knowledge of what opportunities are available.
- According to survey responses, a majority of adults (71.3%) are satisfied with park and facility maintenance.

4.2 TRENDS IN RECREATION

Recreation participation can be influenced by local, regional, state, or even national trends. Recreation and planning trends are noted here because of their influence on recreation participation, community desires for recreation, and park and facility needs in Carmel Clay. These trends were compiled from a variety of resources, including:

- National Sporting Goods Association (2007);
- Hoosiers on the Move: The Indiana State Trails, Greenways, and Bikeways Plan (July 2006); and
- 2006-2010 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).



Trends in Park and Recreation

- **Health and Wellness:** According to SCORP data, Indiana was ranked 8th nationally for obesity, 13th for adult diabetes, and 20th for hypertension in 2006. Over 60% of Hoosiers are considered overweight or obese. Recreation providers are prime players in the fight against disabling conditions that could cost individuals and taxpayers millions to treat. By providing opportunities to improve health and wellness, recreation providers play an important role in the long-term economy of their communities.
- **Sedentary Lifestyle:** Many residents statewide do not spend enough time exercising. According to the 2006 State Trails Plan, over 25% of Hoosiers reported no physical activity in the month before they were surveyed. Not even half (46%) engaged in what is considered to be a sufficient amount of exercise. Although Carmel Clay residents are more active than most, the top reported recreation activity in the community is computer use.
- **Walkable Communities:** According to the Indiana State Trails Plan, nearly 60% of state residents were involved in trail walking in 2004. In the Midwest Region, more than 80% participated in walking for pleasure. The amount of time and number of people participating in walking has continued to increase nationally, regionally, and statewide. This increase has created a growing desire to improve community connectivity by providing trails that link key destinations. It has also created a need to make parks and recreation facilities more accessible to pedestrians.
- **Trail Use:** Walking, biking, hiking, jogging, mountain biking, and many other kinds of trail activities are popular throughout Indiana. Beside the traditional forms of trail use, popular summer activities include day hiking, ATV riding, and horseback riding. Winter trail recreation opportunities, such as snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling, are also popular. Promoting walking, biking, and other forms of non-motorized transportation will also support the

health and wellness of residents in Carmel Clay, while reducing traffic congestion.

- **Age:** A large number of youth ages 17 and under in Carmel Clay are creating an increased demand for age-appropriate facilities and programs. Additionally, Carmel Clay has a slightly higher median age than Hamilton County and the State of Indiana. National trends suggest that populations are aging nationwide. Since aging baby boomers are remaining active longer, more facilities, programs, and services are needed to provide recreation opportunities for older adults and seniors.
- **Current Economic Climate:** The national economic slowdown is affecting many areas, contributing to wage freezes, unaffordable housing, increasing poverty, and a lack of disposable income. While Carmel Clay may not experience the huge downturn affecting other communities, the current economic climate may affect the community's growth rate and ability to fund capital projects. It also may generate more close-to-home travel and interest in low-cost or free recreation activities, such as playing in parks.
- **Economic Disparity:** Nationally, the gap between those that "have" resources and those that "have not" is widening. Contributing factors include unaffordable housing, cost of living increases, and the increasing rate of divorce, along with the growing number of households led by single parents. Carmel Clay supports a higher per capita income than Hamilton County and the State, yet focus group participants noted that program affordability is a concern for many people. A lack of disposable income can affect public access to recreation activities, in terms of costs, transportation, and program scheduling.
- **Busy Lifestyles:** According to results from the recreation survey, many Carmel Clay residents lack time to use parks or attend recreation programs. Because of other commitments, adults increasingly prefer informal, self-directed activities over structured programs. Drop-in and short-format activities are a better fit for busy lifestyles, both for adults and youth. Most residents prefer close-to-home recreation opportunities that respond to their busy lifestyles.
- **Accessibility and Universal Design:** According to SCORP data, more than 13% of Indiana residents ages 21-64 reported having a disability. The State's aging population creates an additional need to consider challenges associated with balance, mobility, hearing, vision loss, and a greater propensity of injury. The benefits of universal design extend to many demographic groups. Effective planning that includes universal design will pave the way for individuals of all ages and abilities to be actively involved in indoor and outdoor recreation.
- **Programs:** As older people are participating in leisure activities longer, programming trends favor providing multi-generational programs and facilities, so that youth, teens, adults, and seniors can recreate together. The notion that "families who play together stay

together” has been important in providing recreation programming. Since the family unit has been changing, recreation programs and services are finding new ways to incorporate all types of families.

- **Community Development:** Parks and recreation facilities are increasingly valued for their role as catalysts in economic and community development. Animated public spaces, natural open space, waterfront access, and special events serve as magnets for residents and out-of-town visitors. The desire expressed by various focus groups for destination parks and facilities reflects the role that the provision of parks and recreation can have in Carmel Clay.



- **Environmental Awareness:** Awareness of a need to protect and preserve our natural environment has been increasing since the 1960's. Sustainability is often an integral component of all recreation policies and practices, including park design, open space maintenance and management, operations and programming. Many Carmel Clay parks incorporate natural areas, and sustainable land use policies can enhance best management practices.

- **Funding:** Given shrinking federal, state, and local revenue, many park and recreation agencies are running their operations in a more business-like fashion and looking for new, creative sources of funding to continue to provide quality parks, programs and services. Cost recovery is an important component of facility and program management.

- **Partnerships:** The growing use of partnerships has been a response to shrinking resources and increased competition for available recreation funding. Partnership agreements for joint land use can also be effective in providing recreation amenities in areas where land acquisition is difficult. Enhanced relationships with current and potential partners should be explored, including incorporated municipalities, school districts, non-profit agencies, business, grassroots organizations, religious organizations, and individuals.

4.3 PARK AND FACILITY NEEDS

In February 2008, a draft Community Needs Assessment (CNA) was completed and presented to the Master Planning Advisory Committee (MPAC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for refinement. This CNA document presented the methods, data, and trends used to analyze community needs, along with the findings from the analysis. The assessment was based on a review park and facility access. Feedback to this document was crucial in defining the role that Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation will play in relation to other providers in meeting community needs.

The recreation needs noted here are based on a significant refinement of the findings presented in the draft Needs Assessment. Many of the needs that were identified in the CNA were determined to be within the jurisdiction of other

providers. Consequently, this chapter notes recreation needs community-wide, while focusing on the needs to be met by CCPR. The standards proposed in this Plan are based on park and facility needs to be met by Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation alone. These standards do not take into account the land required to meet all recreation needs community-wide.

Methodology

Community needs for parks and recreation were analyzed using the following methods:

- **Identifying Existing Resources:** Existing park and recreation amenities in the community were identified and mapped, including those provided by Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation (CCPR), Carmel Clay Schools, Hamilton County, local Homeowners' Associations, and the Carmel Dads' Club.
- **Evaluating Recreation Demand:** The community's demand for recreation opportunities was evaluated, including public preferences for parks and facilities, recreation participation, and applicable trends in the provision of recreation services.
- **Analyzing Park and Facility Access:** A GIS analysis of park and facility access was performed to identify gaps in service. Specifically, the analysis considered the geographic distribution of park land, playgrounds, picnic shelters, sport courts, and trails for all providers in Carmel Clay. Service coverage was based on park access via the transportation network (roadways, bikeways, walkways) within a 1-mile travel distance of parks and facilities.
- **Evaluating Level of Service (LOS):** The LOS provided by CCPR for park land and facilities was compared to the LOS in five benchmark communities: Bloomington, IN; Dublin, OH; Henderson, NV; Scottsdale, AZ; and Westerville, OH. Many of these cities are nationally accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and are Gold Medal winners. Comparison to these outstanding communities helps determine where Carmel Clay is above and below the norm.
- **Determining Sport Field Demand:** Using the 2003 Dads' Club Strategic Plan, along with sports participation data, a sport fields adequacy assessment was undertaken to determine guidelines for meeting sport fields needs. Since CCPR is a minor player in the provision of sport fields, the Department will continue to supplement the resources provided by others, where this strategy fits with other planning efforts.
- **Calculating Need Based on Proposed Standards:** The 2008 Community Needs Assessment used the above methods to propose park standards and determine current and future recreational amenity needs. These standards and needs have been refined to carry forward into the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Key Findings

The Needs Assessment analysis identified a need for enhanced access to basic recreation amenities, other recreation facilities, sport fields and trails in Carmel Clay. CCPR will not be able to meet all of these needs alone. In many cases, other providers are better positioned to address identified needs for specific types of facilities. In some cases, CCPR can help meet needs through partnerships and facility development, if other jurisdictions are open to this arrangement.

Basic Recreation Amenities

The Carmel Clay park system was evaluated in terms of its ability to provide close-to-home recreation opportunities for all residents. Residents clearly desire playgrounds, sport courts (outdoor basketball, tennis, volleyball), and small picnic shelters within one mile of most users. [For reference, many jurisdictions strive to provide basic recreation amenities within ½ mile of most residents, as this distance is considered to be the maximum walking and/or biking distance that people will travel to reach local parks. Likewise, a one-mile travel distance suggests that many people will rely on motorized transportation to reach parks.] CCPR has a much lower level of service than the five benchmark communities for basic recreation amenities. As noted in Chapter 3, HOAs and schools provide most of the existing facilities.



The access analysis identified several service area gaps in the provision of nearby recreation amenities. In part, this reflects the fact that several HOA open space areas provide pools but not playgrounds, or playgrounds but not tennis courts. While CCPR is not in the business of providing neighborhood parks to meet needs for close-to-home recreation opportunities, these needs can be taken into account in the development of new parks in underserved areas.

Other Recreation Facilities

Community needs for other types of recreation facilities were also identified for the Carmel Clay park system. This niche is where CCPR is strongest in meeting community demand. However, public involvement efforts and the facility analysis suggest that a variety of facilities are still needed, beyond what Carmel Clay currently provides. These include:

- Water play facilities (e.g., spray grounds, splash parks);
- Winter recreation facilities (e.g., sledding hills, outdoor ice rinks);
- Alternative sport facilities (e.g., skate spots, disc golf);
- Water access facilities (e.g., viewpoints; boat launches, waterfront trails, fishing access, boat rentals, etc.); and
- Dog parks.

Sport Fields

Currently, CCPR is not a major provider of sport facilities, with only three sport fields and a gymnasium in their inventory. However, there is a high level of participation in youth sport leagues in Carmel Clay, creating a strong demand for more sport fields. Although sport fields are typically provided by schools and the Dads' Club, there are opportunities for CCPR to increase their level of service for sports fields to help meet community needs, promote health and wellness, and provide a level of service equal to other communities. For example, the planned development of lacrosse fields at Founder's Park supplements the other fields provided in Carmel Clay.

Trails

Trail needs loom large in Carmel Clay. It is estimated that nearly two million people already use the Monon Trail each year. According to public involvement results, trail-related activities are the most popular recreation activities in terms of frequency of use. Additionally, respondents indicated a great need for more trails for enhanced connectivity, park access, recreation, and non-motorized transportation.

The high demand for trails means that more trails are needed to provide a higher level of service. Based on findings in the needs assessment analysis, there are several opportunity areas for the development of new trails. These include:

- A greenway corridor along Cool Creek, extending from Meadowlark Park (This is under construction and is projected to open in the fall of 2009); A connection between schools, parks, and sport complexes in west Carmel;
- A east-west path linking the Monon Trail and Central Park to west Carmel; and
- The connection and extension of the White River Trail and Greenway to parks and sport facilities in southeast Carmel.

Currently, the City of Carmel is responsible for building multi-purpose, offroad pathways. Trails and pathways are planned through the City of Carmel's Alternative Transportation Plan, as part of the adopted Thoroughfare Plan. However, CCPR can facilitate trail development and use by providing the following:

- Trail and greenway extensions along the White River;
- Trail heads, signage, kiosks, boardwalks, and amenities in parks and greenways;
- Accessible trails linking all facilities within parks;
- Loop trails and perimeter trails within parks, including a mix of hard and soft surfaced trails for nature interpretation, jogging, biking, walking, and dog walking; and

- Linear facilities to augment trail use and play. In addition to par course apparatus for people of all abilities, this may include new linear play features that are designed to minimize stationary play.

Park Land

The Community Needs Assessment identified a number of park and facility needs in Carmel Clay. In order to provide the recreation facilities and opportunities that the community desires, the following types of parks are needed:

- Close-to-home parks, ideally with ½ to one-mile of most residents;
- Medium-to-large parks of sufficient size to meet a variety of facility needs, with natural green spaces and natural areas;
- Trail corridors and greenways;
- Special use areas, such as another sports complex to meet projected sport field needs;
- Riverfront parks, which are desired for resource protection, river access, and recreation opportunities; and
- Natural areas/conservation areas to protect significant natural resources in the planning area.

In some cases, the needs identified above are beyond the niche of what CCPR typically provides. Consequently, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan include parks standards developed specifically for the Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation Department. Refer to Chapter 5 for further recommendations on developing partnerships for addressing system-side needs.



Park Standards and Needs

Although Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation provides a lower level of service than other benchmark communities, CCPR fills a different niche than other parks departments. Because of the role played by other providers in Carmel and Clay Township, CCPR is not a major provider of close-to-home recreation facilities, sports fields, or trails.

Consequently, park needs are based on providing geographically dispersed, medium-to-large parks and greenways that provide unique and diverse facilities. When combined with the resources provided by others, CCPR will help create a well-rounded park system for residents in Carmel Clay.

With the maturing of the community and park system, Carmel Clay should explore opportunities to increase its land holdings while there is still some undeveloped property available. Table 15 identifies a proposed guideline for CCPR, based on conservatively raising CCPR's park land holdings from 6.0 to 7.0 acres/1,000 residents. While this proposed target is still well below the average for comparable communities, these other agencies take on a larger role

in the provision of neighborhood parks, special use areas, and natural areas and/or greenways.

To achieve this proposed target, CCPR would need to acquire additional park land:

- **Current Need:** A total of 84 acres of park land are needed currently.
- **Future Need:** Approximately 175 acres are needed to serve an estimated 96,728 residents in 2013. As noted in the Needs Assessment Report, these acreage needs, are based on adding community-scale parks and greenways to meet identified community demands for enhanced recreation opportunities.

While opportunities should be pursued to increase the total acres of park land to enhance recreational opportunities within the community, the minimum level of service should remain 6.0 acres/1,000 residents. Chapter 5 discusses options in detail for acquiring more park land.

Table 15
Summary of Park LOS, Standards, and Proposed Targets
Carmel Clay Planning Area

Park Type	Historical NRPA Standards	Average LOS for Comparable Agencies*	Carmel Clay Existing LOS**	Carmel Clay # of Existing Parks	Carmel Clay # of Existing Acres	Proposed Target
Signature Parks	N/A	N/A	3.3	2	277.6	2.85
Community Parks	8.0	5.7	1.9	5	156.5	3.15
Local Parks***	2.0	2.9	0.4	5	31.0	0.3
Special Use Areas	N/A	1.2	0.2	1	17.1	0.2
Greenways	N/A	7.1	0.3	2	22.6	0.5
TOTAL	10.0	16.9	6.0	15	504.8	7.0

* Comparable agencies include the Cities of Bloomington, IN; Dublin, OH; Henderson, NV; Scottsdale, AZ; and Westerville, OH. For the Cities of Henderson and Westerville, Community park data includes school parks.

** The CCPR existing LOS is based on a 2008 estimate of 84,033 residents, as noted in the 2008 Clay Township Demographics Profile Report

*** This category includes neighborhood parks in the historic NRPA standard and in the existing LOS for comparable communities.

4.4 PROGRAM NEEDS

Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation currently provides a wide variety of programs for diverse demographic groups. As CCPR expands into many new areas of programming, it is important to 1) identify CCPR’s niche among other providers; and 2) determine core program areas.

CCPR’s programming niche should be evaluated in the context of the types of programs provided by other organizations in Carmel Clay. Appendix G lists those providers, with a brief explanation of the groups and ages served and the

types of services provided. Based on this list and noted strengths within CCPR, key findings of the program analysis suggest that there are several demographic groups and program areas that could be expanded in Carmel Clay.

Target Populations

Despite the opening of The Monon Center and the variety of programs supported by other providers, there still is a need to improve service for the following underserved groups in the Carmel Clay community:

- **Older Adults/Seniors:** There are few recreational opportunities for older adults and seniors in Carmel Clay. CCPR provides fewer options for seniors than for other age groups. Results of the community survey indicated that seniors are the top demographic group in Carmel Clay in need of more or better recreation activities. CCPR should evaluate senior programs that are currently offered to see which have the highest demand. It also would be valuable to survey seniors currently taking advantage of CCPR's programming to see if they can identify other particular areas of interest and need.
- **Youth/Teens:** There are a variety of services for youth and teens in the planning area, particularly in sports. CCPR supplements the programs offered by other providers by meeting youth needs for summer camps, after school programs, and a variety of noncompetitive classes. Results of the community survey suggest youth desire increased opportunities for outdoor/environmental programs (hiking, canoeing, nature programs, etc.) and special events (dances, concerts, and festivals). CCPR should consider expanding programs in these areas. Additional special events, tournaments, and social activities geared toward teens may help meet this need.
- **Adults:** Community survey findings suggest that adults desire greater opportunities for programming in three areas: 1) special events; 2) outdoor/environmental programs (hiking, canoeing, nature programs); and 3) general interest classes. CCPR should consider increasing programming in these areas to meet adult needs.
- **Low-income Residents:** Although Carmel Clay community has a higher than average per capita income, public involvement findings still noted a need to provide some free and subsidized programming for residents in need. Given the economic decline since this research was completed, CCPR should investigate further to determine if the needs of low-income residents are being met. A scholarship program and subsidized transportation/transit options (or even shuttles from identified areas in town to some special events) may increase recreation opportunities for low-income residents, seniors, and teens.

CCPR should also consider program affordability in setting prices for classes and special events. According to results in the community survey, most survey respondents (80%) felt that recreation programs and services should be funded through some combination of user fees and tax dollars. The most popular combination, selected by one third

of respondents, is for charging user fees to cover 50% of program expenses and subsidizing the rest. Needs to increase program cost recovery rates should be balanced with efforts to serve low-income residents.

Program Service Areas

An evaluation of the programs provided by CCPR and other providers noted needs in the following service areas. In some cases, other providers may be better poised to meet these programming needs in the future. For this reason, the following discussion includes ways in which CCPR can play a role in these service areas.

- **Sports:** Sports are a very popular in Carmel Clay. There are a number of organizations that provide recreational and competitive sports activities with a primary focus on youth, such as the Carmel Dads' Club. CCPR is a strong provider of adult sport programming. While there appear to be adequate athletic programs for youth and active adults, there may be some need for sport programming for older adults and seniors. CCPR could consider ways to meet adult and senior sport needs, for example, by providing badminton and pickleball or other low-impact events.
- **Cultural Arts and Special Events:** Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation and other providers offer several specialized programs for cultural arts. However, there are opportunities to expand, particularly in the area of special events and community festivals. While the City of Carmel is building a Performing Arts Center, CCPR could offer concerts in the park, movies in the park, and community festivals, which were the types of cultural programs most widely desired by survey respondents.
- **Environmental Programming:** Hamilton County provides fairly extensive nature programming in the planning area. For example, River Road Park has amenities and facilities to support outdoor programming, such as paved trails to explore wetlands and prairies and an interpretive building designed to educate about Native American life. Additionally, the County hosts a variety of programs at the Cool Creek Nature Center, just north of the planning area, and the County is re-designing the Coxhall Gardens into a children's garden, conservatory, and gardens with belltowers, reflecting pools, and a museum. Results of the community survey indicate that both youth and adults in Carmel Clay desire additional opportunities for nature programs. In fact, a nature center was one of the top desired facilities in Carmel Clay. CCPR should explore ways to address this demand, while not duplicating County offerings. These may include providing self-directed interpretive programming, which can be facilitated by interpretive signage, trail guides, kiosks, demonstration gardens, etc.
- **Outdoor Programming:** CCPR offers outdoor events, such as a family campout and fishing derby. However, there is an expressed need for increased outdoor and trail-related programming. CCPR should

consider needs for active outdoor opportunities, which can be met through challenge courses, non-motorized boating/water safety classes, mountain biking and/or cross-country skiing clubs, hiking and walking groups, geocaching competitions, etc. Trails, viewpoints, and nature centers can support a variety of passive programming as well, such as wildlife watching/bird watching groups.

- **Volunteerism:** Being involved in the community is important to Carmel Clay residents. Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation encourages school, civic and religious organizations, scouts, seniors, and park neighbors to help at special events and in parks, trails and greenways. In addition, an independent website, *Carmel CAN!* coordinates local community volunteers. Through this initiative, citizens looking for volunteer opportunities are matched up with those organizations that are in need of volunteers.



Communities are recognizing that many people volunteer during their leisure time. For this reason, many recreation departments support volunteerism as a program service area. CCPR should investigate opportunities to expand and better market volunteer opportunities. This includes identifying volunteer opportunities that would appeal particularly to seniors and teens, but also for youth, adults, and families. Since residents expressed a desire to spend more time outdoors, outdoor projects for volunteers may be needed. One way to market volunteerism is by advocating the benefits of being a volunteer. For example, through volunteerism, community members can:

- Be physically active;
- Meet people;
- Learn something new;
- Invest in community pride;
- Promote environmental and resource stewardship;
- Create healthy, happy childhoods for children;
- Support a social cause or interest;
- Leave a legacy;
- Memorialize or honor a loved one;
- Make Carmel Clay a safer place; and
- Give a tax deductible gift to the community.

For Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, increased volunteerism will expand resources for maintenance, environmental restoration, and recreation programs. In a time of increased competitiveness for funding, volunteers greatly benefit the community by augmenting the work of park and programming staff.

Registration Tracking

Given the significant increase in program participation in the last few years, CCPR needs to improve program tracking. This includes tracking program attendance and cancellation rates to identify trends, demand, and needs for programming. Because of high cancellation rates noted early in the planning process, participation should be tracked by age and service area, with separate data for Extended School Enrichment (by school), Monon Center drop-in use (by facility area), and other recreation programs (by program area). This information will help CCPR determine:

- The types and numbers of programs that are needed;
- Preferred program times, locations, and formats;
- The sufficiency of current marketing efforts; and/or
- The need for programs, without duplicating efforts of other program providers.



5. RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan presents recommendations to enhance Carmel Clay’s park and recreation system. These recommendations were developed from the findings of the Community Needs Assessment and are based on public input. They include policies and strategies that bridge the gap between where the community is now and where it wants to be. For this reason, this chapter provides a description of the community’s vision for the park system, along with a revised mission and policy directions to define the role that the Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation Department will play in achieving this vision. The chapter includes recommended actions for CCPR to address the community’s needs for parks, facilities, partnerships, and customer service.

5.1 VISION FOR THE PARK SYSTEM

Since adoption of the 2001-2005 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, CCPR has operated with a different mission and vision. De facto operations suggest that the Department is now moving in a new direction. This section reviews the previous charge for the Department as CCPR refines its current mission/vision statements. In addition, it presents the revised core values and vision for the plan.

Previous Charge

The vision and mission for CCPR from the 2001-2005 Parks and Recreation Master Plan are indicative of an organization in its early stages of development. The vision is short-sighted and time-limited, noting many tasks which the Department has undertaken and completed.

The **vision** of Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation was to physically connect every school to a park; to fully develop Central Park, West Park, Founders Park and Hazel Landing Park; to create a “community gathering facility” to support program expansion and community wellness; and to acquire additional park land in the western portion of the township by 2006.

The **mission** of Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation was to acquire, develop and program safe park lands and facilities for recreation and preservation purposes. The objective was to enhance the neighborhoods of the City and Township, build a sense of community and positive image, and encourage citizens to view Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation as a valued investment in their daily lives.

CCPR has moved beyond these early ambitions to become a major player in parks and recreation. The Department measures itself by high standards and benchmarks, comparing itself to CAPRA-certified, Gold Medal communities. When developing parks, CCPR has created award-winning places and spaces, which have been recognized with four ASLA awards, an Innovative Architecture and Design Award, a Building of America Award, a Public Works Merit Award, and numerous Indiana Park & Recreation Association awards. When building a “community gathering facility,” CCPR built The

Monon Center, an extraordinary multi-purpose recreation and aquatic center that serves thousands of residents. When acquiring park land, the Department has aimed for expansive tracts of natural resources with outstanding recreation potential. Clearly, it is time for CCPR to update its vision and mission to reflect these current standards, values and goals.

Core Values

Core values are the shared beliefs and qualities treasured by Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation and the community. These values guide the provision of recreation services. Based on comments from Department staff and community members, the following core values emerged in the planning process:

- **Health and Wellness:** We support community wellness by promoting active, healthy, and engaged residents and families, including people of all ages and skill levels.
- **Accessibility:** We provide geographically, socially, physically, and economically accessible parks, facilities, and programs to serve as many people as possible with high-quality park and recreation opportunities.
- **Community:** We foster an integrated, tightly-knit community, as well as a strong sense of community identity and pride.
- **Sustainability:** We strive to create an efficient park and recreation system that serves as a legacy for future generations by supporting stewardship of the built and natural environment.
- **Customer Service:** We will serve our customers with the highest quality parks, facilities, and programs we can offer, by investing in our staff as a valued resource, honoring community members through excellent service, and maintaining our commitment to working with others to meet community needs.
- **Quality of Life:** We value our quality of life, health and well-being, and the role that parks, recreation and green space play in creating a healthy economy and livable community.
- **Excellence:** We value innovative parks, facilities, and programs that provide enriching and inspiring opportunities for indoor and outdoor play, recreation, and leisure.

These core values provide the foundation for recommendations in this Plan. These values are embodied throughout the policies, strategies, and actions proposed for CCPR to meet community recreation needs.

Master Plan Vision

The core values shared by the community help create a vision of the community's preferred future. This vision illustrates a picture of success for the community served by parks and recreation opportunities. Through the public involvement process, the following vision emerged:

We envision an accessible system of vibrant community parks, diverse recreation facilities, sustainable park resources, and engaging recreation programs that contribute to healthy individuals and families, an active and tightly-knit community, a thriving economy, and a high quality of life in the City of Carmel and Clay Township.

5.2 MISSION AND DIRECTIONS

To achieve the vision set forth in this plan, Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation must refine its mission in providing parks, facilities, and recreation services. The mission and corresponding strategic directions are critical for carrying out Plan recommendations, and for defining and clarifying the work of the Carmel Clay Park & Recreation Department.

Mission

The mission statement describes the approach staff will take in conducting the business of providing park and recreation services to residents of Carmel Clay. Based on the guidance of the plan's vision and core values, the following mission is proposed:

The mission of Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation is to strengthen our community and serve residents through the acquisition, development, and management of high-quality, innovative parks and facilities for recreation, preservation, and programming.

A critical difference in this mission is the positioning of CCPR as a community provider. It is no longer the Department's objective to enhance neighborhoods, as much as it is to distinguish itself through the provision of larger-scale attractions with a community-wide draw. In other words, CCPR is not in the business of meeting close-to-home recreation needs. This critical change in direction leaves a gap in park service that Homeowners' Associations and private facilities are expected to fill.



Strategic Directions

Based on public input and the current mission and vision of Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation, ten strategic directions were identified for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. These directions will help CCPR achieve the community's vision for parks and recreation.

- Acquire, preserve, develop, and maintain parks, natural areas, and greenways to enhance Carmel Clay, build a sense of community, preserve open space, and encourage citizens to recognize parks and recreation as a valued investment in their daily lives.
- Develop appropriate parks more fully to support a variety of recreational experiences, creating enriching, enjoyable escapes through recreation, fitness and nature.

- Include a variety of facilities to provide diverse opportunities for outdoor recreation, including active and passive activities, organized and self-directed experiences, and year-round (winter and summer) options.
- Acquire additional park land in the western portion of the township to provide a geographically accessible and balanced park system.
- Recognize the White River as an important and unique resource that contributes to the environmental quality, community identity, and recreation opportunities offered in Carmel Clay, including a potential for water access, fishing, and boating.
- Evaluate all potential opportunities for park acquisition and land conservation (especially in high-value resource areas) in order to increase CCPR's park level of service to be more in line with identified benchmark communities.
- Support increased trail use in Carmel Clay by providing trail-related recreation opportunities in existing parks, extending trail development in the White River Greenway, facilitating connectivity to City and regional trails, and promoting trail programming and events.
- Provide quality recreation programs and special events that foster community gatherings and social interaction, provide opportunities for life-long learning, promote personal health and community wellness, and enhance community livability.
- Provide inclusive, innovative, quality recreation services that reflect community pride as well as the distinctiveness and excellence of Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation.
- Promote community cohesion by remaining open to partnerships with other providers, seeking innovative solutions to serve underserved or un-served areas, and coordinating with others to fill future gaps in service.

5.3 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the strategic directions noted above, Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation should focus on implementing recommendations in four core areas:

- Serving underserved areas;
- Enhancing recreation opportunities;
- Strengthening partnerships; and
- Focusing on customer service.

Serving Underserved Areas

The needs assessment analysis identified a number of areas in Carmel Clay that are not served by parks or are inadequately served. The Department should target these areas in its efforts to meet community park and recreation

needs. Recommendations for meeting these needs include future park acquisition and development, as noted below.

Proposed Park System

The ideal park system is made up of a variety of park types that provide an array of recreation opportunities and experiences, ranging from small-scale, close-to-home recreation opportunities to large-scale signature attractions that draw people from around the region. It includes inviting, attractive, well maintained facilities that help create people-friendly spaces and places in the



community. This system includes unique and interesting events and programs that appeal to residents and draw people into parks. Moreover, it incorporates trails and pathways that make these parks, facilities, and programs accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users.

While working independently, a variety of providers in Carmel Clay collectively provide this type of park system. Although other providers play a significant role in the provision of parks, this section specifically notes actions that CCPR can take to enhance opportunities for the community.

This Plan recommends the acquisition and development of five new parks in Carmel Clay. Map 2 illustrates the conceptual location of these proposed park sites, as well as trail expansion areas. Important notes about the map include:

- Colored asterisks show the general location for proposed parks. The exact locations of park sites will be determined later in the development of Department plans. Actual park locations will be influenced by land availability, acquisition costs, property ownership, and property availability at the time of acquisition.
- Proposed park sites and trails are coded with a letter and number (such as P-3). The numbers are for reference only, and are included on the system map and with recommendations for each site in this chapter.
- The proposed trails on this map reflect the proposed system in the City of Carmel's Alternative Transportation Plan, which is part of the City's adopted Thoroughfare Plan in its Comprehensive Plan.

Proposed Acquisition and Development

The proposed park sites include five community parks to broaden recreation opportunities. CCPR should acquire 15-50 acre parcels, depending on planned development, land availability and natural resources in those areas. In Chapter 4, a goal of 3.15 acres/1,000 residents was proposed for community parks. In order to achieve this proposed level of service, CCPR needs to acquire approximately 150 acres for new community parks. This is envisioned as two larger parks in Northwest and Northeast Carmel Clay, and three smaller

parks in targeted areas. All five will be a mix of developed park facilities and natural areas:

- ***P-1 Northwest Carmel Clay:*** As illustrated on the map, the western half of the planning area is underserved by park land, particularly in comparison to the variety of parks and recreation opportunities in eastern Carmel Clay. In addition, the Needs Assessment analysis found a need in Northwest Carmel Clay for a playground, picnic shelter, or other recreation amenities. This Plan recommends the acquisition and development of a large community park in northwest Carmel Clay to address these deficiencies. Ideally, this site would supplement facilities provided at the nearby Dads' Club Claybourne Fields and Hermann Fields and, in the long term, link to those sites via trails.
- ***P-2 North Carmel Clay:*** A new community park is recommended in north Carmel Clay, west of Smoky Row Elementary School, to increase opportunities in that area. According to Needs Assessment findings, this area currently lacks nearby access to a playground and sport courts. While HOAs may help meet these specific needs when this area is fully developed, a community park would provide additional recreation opportunities in this underserved area. To distinguish itself from basic HOA amenities, CCPR should consider a destination playground, spray park, and other interesting amenities to draw users from the community.
- ***P-3 Northeast Carmel Clay:*** CCPR should pursue an opportunity to acquire expansive acreage for a community park along the White River. This site should be tied to the White River Greenway to enhance connectivity to other sites along the river. According to Needs Assessment findings, this area currently lacks nearby access to a playground, sport court, and picnic shelter. This park should be designed and developed in conjunction with a master planned community in this area.
- ***P-4 Southeast Carmel Clay:*** The Needs Assessment findings suggest that this area lacks access to a playground, sport court, picnic shelter, and other amenities. One option for meeting needs in this underserved area is to acquire land that has been set aside as a nature conservancy. Depending on site constraints, a community-focused nature park is recommended, with interpretive trails, linear playground, small-group shelter and appropriate amenities to support nature interpretation and programming.
- ***P-5 South-central Carmel Clay:*** This Plan recommends that CCPR acquire and develop Slime Lake and adjacent land to enhance recreation opportunities in this area. Site development should be linked to the Monon Trail. Recreation needs in this area in part depend on CCPR's decision to renew its lease on Pleasant Grove Park. If that lease is retained for the long term, Slime Lake could be developed as a special use site, focusing on providing water access, nature interpretation and trails. If the lease is not renewed, this area

[insert Map 2: Proposed Parks System]

will need more basic recreation amenities to meet nearby needs, such as a playground and sport courts.

The needs assessment analysis further suggested that Southwest Carmel Clay is underserved in terms of CCPR acreage and facilities. However, there is little demand for additional parks/facilities in this area, because of the number of nearby opportunities, such as three golf courses, Towne Meadow Elementary School, Bitternut Woods Preserve, West Park, and Coxhall Gardens. Large lot sizes and, in some cases, private swimming pools and tennis courts also provide green space and recreation opportunities for residents. For this reason, no parks are recommended for the southwest portion of Carmel Clay.

Proposed Trail Development

As illustrated on Map 2, this Plan includes short-term recommendations for trail development, based on the proposed trail system noted in the City of Carmel's Alternative Transportation Plan. This includes:

- **Cool Creek North Greenway:** A greenway corridor and trail along Cool Creek is currently under development. This trail will extend from Meadowlark Park across the Monon Trail, northeast to the planning area boundary. Ideally, this trail will be extended by Hamilton County to Cool Creek Park, linking residents to this important regional resource.
- **White River Greenway:** All missing segments of the White River Greenway should be completed. This Plan recommends extending this trail where feasible, eventually connecting to the proposed parks in northeast and southeast Carmel Clay (P-2 and P-3).



The two trails noted above, both in riparian corridors, can help enhance greenway acreage in Carmel Clay. Assuming that an average 50-foot corridor can be acquired to provide 4.75 miles of new trails then approximately 25 acres of new greenways are needed to support this development. This greenway acquisition will help CCPR raise its greenway level of service to 0.5 acres/1,000 residents.

In addition to the proposed trails/greenways noted above, this Plan recommends that CCPR support the City's potential east-west corridor as noted in the Alternative Transportation Plan:

- **East/West Trail:** This dedicated trail segment runs between Ditch Road and Pennsylvania Avenue, with an improved pedestrian crossing at Meridian, at what would be approximately 122nd Avenue.

Public involvement findings and recreation trends suggest that CCPR may want to pursue a more aggressive and active stance on trail development in the future. Currently, trail development lies within the purview of City Transportation enhancements. (See *Strengthening Partnerships*.)

Enhancing Recreation Opportunities

The vision for the park system includes a variety of recreation opportunities, supported by well-maintained amenities and innovative facilities. CCPR is well-positioned to help meet these needs through new park development and the renovation of existing parks to enhance recreation opportunities. These recommendations are noted below.

Renovation of Existing Parks

As part of the master planning process, a 2006 park evaluation was undertaken to assess the current state of CCPR parks. Overall, Carmel Clay parks were noted to be in good condition with well-maintained sites and facilities. However, the park tour documented deficiencies in some parks, as well as opportunities for improvements. These are noted in Appendix E by site.

The evaluation helped identify several system-wide issues, which present opportunities for improvements:

- **ADA Accessibility:** Carmel Clay strives to provide accessible recreation opportunities. At some sites, however, ADA accessibility could be improved. When renovating parks, CCPR should consider providing an accessible path of travel through each site, linking all amenities; providing accessible picnic tables, water fountains, benches, and restrooms in all parks where appropriate; and providing accessible playground with appropriate transition ramps and safety surfacing. This Plan recommends the development of an ADA Transition Plan to identify and facilitate these improvements.
- **Connectivity:** Connectivity at several sites could be enhanced by improving crosswalks, providing linkages to nearby paths and sidewalks, adding perimeter pathways in parks, and considering access from nearby neighborhoods, bus routes, and bike paths.
- **Parking:** Since many residents in Carmel Clay do not have access to basic recreation amenities within walking or biking distance (1/2 mile), CCPR should ensure that adequate parking is provided at all sites. The Department should retain a long-term interest in working with the City to provide access to parks for alternative transportation to alleviate parking demand.
- **Park Identity:** All parks should have consistent site signage to identify parks as CCPR sites.
- **Sustainability and Stewardship:** Site master renovations will create opportunities to integrate native plants, bioswales, improved stormwater management, green design and other sustainable elements into the park system. CCPR should pursue opportunities for sustainable development at all sites where feasible.



- **Site Development:** A few sites in the park system are undeveloped or underdeveloped (awaiting the final phases of site development as planned). CCPR should consider it a priority to develop sites such as Founder’s Park, to provide a wider variety of opportunities for the park system. CCPR should create a new site master plan for Cherry Tree Park prior to development.

New Park Development

All new park sites (and Cherry Tree Park) will need new site master plans prior to development to promote cohesive, sustainable, quality design and ensure that plans are consistent with community needs. As a policy, the master planning process should include nearby neighbors, youth, special interest groups, and potential volunteers for stewardship and maintenance. The master planning process should consider unique facilities that could provide new recreation opportunities in Carmel Clay.

New parks should be developed according to the design and development guidelines presented in Appendix I. These guidelines include the general considerations for park design, amenities, accessibility, safety, maintenance, and sustainability. They also include specific considerations for the proposed community parks in this Plan, including:

- **Size:** Minimum recommended size and typical park size.
- **Site Selection:** Criteria, such as location and access, to consider when selecting sites for park development.
- **Amenities to Provide:** Elements that should be provided in every park within this classification.
- **Amenities to Consider:** Elements that should be considered during the master planning and design process.
- **Amenities to Avoid:** Elements that are not compatible with the park classification.

Prior to acquisition, potential parks should be evaluated to ensure that sites have the capacity to meet the design and development guidelines. Design and development guidelines can be applied in all master planning processes to ensure that all new and redeveloped parks have the recommended amenities and facilities to meet community needs.

These guidelines are not intended to apply a cookie-cutter approach to park planning and design. All parks and open space should be developed according to the unique needs of nearby residents and site characteristics. For example, site master plans should take into account environmental features (e.g., topography, tree cover, water features, drainage, and vegetation) and neighborhood characteristics (e.g., population density, household prices, yard size, and the amount of hardscape/pavement in the area).

Strengthening Partnerships

As noted throughout this Plan, many recreation providers are working independently and collectively to meet recreation needs in Carmel Clay. This section notes ways in which CCPR can strengthen relationships with other providers.

Partnership Development

CCPR has initiated partnerships with various providers in the community, and been open to establishing relationships with other providers as well. Through the timeframe of this plan and into the future, CCPR should look strategically at the use of partnerships to help meet community needs. Arrangements should be formalized when necessary. Recommendations for the development of partnerships include the following.

- Nurture partnership relationships to encourage formal and equitable partnership agreements with public, non-profit and private agencies to help meet community needs.
- Foster and seek partnership with other public, non-profit, private and community agencies to align with CCPR's vision and mission.
- Assign staff to coordinate partnership efforts.
- Adopt partnership policies that focus on equitable collaborative/joint relationships. Cultivate partnerships that support the Department's mission while leveraging community resources and reducing duplications.
- Establish partnership policies to address the following:
 - Articulation of mutually-agreed upon priorities, well-defined costs and benefits for all partners involved, as well as the benefits to the community.
 - Determination of the decision-making authority, such as the level or type of approval required by each partner.
 - Management and procedures for regular review of partnership agreements, including the determination of key joint decision points, mitigation measures if any partners fail to meet their obligations and types of exit strategies.
- Administer, execute and monitor partnership agreements. Manage and regularly assess outcomes and cost-benefits of partnership agreements.

Park and Facility Collaboration

As a primary provider of parks in Carmel Clay, CCPR should continue to foster collaboration between providers to meet community park and facility needs. These efforts may include the following:

- Strengthen partnerships with the public and private sectors to enhance recreation facility access and efficiency.

- Promote a walkable community with an interconnected system of sidewalks, trails, and pathways. Link parks, schools, sport field complexes, neighborhoods, and key commercial and civic destinations with trails to support alternative transportation and exercise.
- Work with developers, schools, HOAs and other providers to ensure that basic recreation amenities are provided within walking or biking distance (1/4 to 1/2 mile) of most users.
- Maintain partnerships with the Carmel Clay Schools to improve access to school facilities, such as classrooms, gyms and aquatic or sports facilities.



- Consider partnering with the Dads' Club for the co-development of playgrounds, sport courts, and sport fields at Dads' Club sites to improve recreation opportunities for siblings, families, and nearby neighbors.
 - Discuss sport fields needs with the Dads' Club and other sport providers to determine if proposed community parks can help meet some unmet needs. As per CCPR's niche, consider unique sport needs first, such as lacrosse fields, ice rinks, rugby fields, and Ultimate Frisbee fields.
- Expand partnerships with local sports groups to provide field maintenance or preparation.
- Coordinate with the Nature Conservancy for the joint preservation of additional greenways and natural areas in Carmel Clay for nature programming and interpretive trails.
- Collaborate with the Indiana Wildlife Federation to assess habitat and native plant preservation and integration in CCPR parks.
- Coordinate with various nature organizations to incorporate interpretive signage into all CCPR parks.
- Continue partnerships with Carmel-Clay Schools to develop specific facilities at school sites and to provide school-age programming (Extended School Enrichment).
- Assess water launch opportunities provided by others to determine if the proposed new community parks are appropriate watercraft put-in and/or take-out points.
- Partner with public, private, and non-profit sectors to satisfy community needs for facilities with high construction and/or operational costs.
- Partner with the private sector to provide concessionaire services and ancillary amenities in community and signature parks and facilities, such as restaurants, teahouses, coffee shops, gift shops, bike rental stores, boat rentals, etc.

Programming Collaboration

As indicated in the park and facility analysis, there are a number of opportunities for Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation to collaborate with other providers for recreation programming. CCPR should consider the following:

- Facilitate partnerships to maximize programming efficiency and opportunities for residents.
- Continue to seek sponsorship opportunities for businesses to sponsor and support community events, including Extended School Enrichment, ESE Summer Camp Series, Arbor Day, Monon Center events, and other special events and programs.
- Seek business and corporate partners to endow scholarships for programming.
- Seek partners to improve senior services. Potential partners may be found through local health care services, the Carmel Police Department, PrimeLife Enrichment, Inc., and other providers. As part of this effort, discuss the growing needs of older adults, active seniors, and seniors with specific health, fitness, and service needs.
- Serve as a community clearinghouse for program information, collaborating with sports organizations and other providers.
- Consider coordinating with the Dads' Club, Hamilton County, and Carmel-Clay Schools to pursue joint strategic planning for sports programs and facilities, including field needs for practices, games, and tournaments.
- Work with the Hamilton County Visitor's Bureau and interested sports organizations to discuss ways to co-host sports tournaments as a type of expanded special events programming.
- Discuss opportunities to promote community gardening, such as at school sites for education and HOA open space areas for recreation. Community gardening is growing trend in recreation, which may include developing and maintaining vegetable gardens, orchards, flower gardens, and other specialty gardens.
- Work with Carmel CAN, youth groups, senior groups, and other special interest groups to encourage volunteer activities in parks. Develop a program for volunteer coordination of procedures, liability and conduct conformity, recruitment, training and recognition. Allow for the day-to-day efficient volunteer program management to occur at the facility or department level, depending on its size.
- Expand partnerships with the Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, and Indiana Wildlife Federation to promote joint programming, marketing/ registration and increased environmental program service delivery in an effort to effectively serve a larger audience.



Focusing on Customer Service

Given the recent expansion of Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation services, CCPR should continue to stay focused on meeting community needs through enhanced customer service. A number of the opportunities for partnerships or collaborative efforts noted above are directed towards improved recreation services for all residents. Additional opportunities for improving customer service are noted below.

Service Niche

Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation has changed dramatically through the timeframe for developing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. As CCPR continues to grow, the Department will need to continuously review and refine its service niche. This niche will be modified and defined, in part, as CCPR formalizes its relationship with other providers.

The Community Needs Assessment, completed in February, identified a number of recreation facility needs, which may be best met by other providers. As noted earlier in the Plan, these include:

- **Basic recreation amenities (close-to-home):** Homeowners' Associations and Carmel Clay Schools;
- **Alternative transportation/trails:** City of Carmel
- **Sport fields and facilities:** Carmel Clay Schools, Dads' Club and other organized sport providers;
- **Regional facilities:** Hamilton County Parks & Recreation.

Although CCPR does not want to duplicate the role or services of other providers, public feedback and needs assessment findings indicated that existing providers are not meeting all needs in these areas. The hesitation to jump into these service areas is understandable. However, additional action is warranted given residents' demands for recreation services. To help meet these needs, this Plan recommends the following roles for CCPR:

- **Facilitator:** In the short term, CCPR should take a leadership role in creating a recreation providers forum to bring different providers to the table to discuss community recreation needs. Topics for discussion may include:
 - Providing close-to-home recreation opportunities: How can providers work together to ensure that most residents have access to basic recreation amenities within ½ to ¼ mile from home?
 - Enhancing connectivity: How can developers, HOAs, CCPR, the City, Dads' Club, and regional trail providers work together to link trails and create opportunities to walk or bike between parks, schools, sport fields, and existing trails?
 - Adult/senior programming: How can providers integrate multi-generational programs or enhance services for active

seniors and older adults? What recreation and social services are needed for less active older adults and seniors?

- **Facility Provider:** In the long term, CCPR can begin formulating and implementing plans to collaborate with other providers in meeting needs. Similar to the playground partnership between CCPR and Carmel Clay Schools, this may include developing play features/equipment at Dads' Club or HOA sites, where land (but not a facility) exists. It may include the joint development of sport fields as CCPR sites, such as proposed at Founder's Park.
- **Program Provider:** In the long term, CCPR can also consider expanding its role in providing programs and special events. Similar to the ESE program that CCPR offers in local schools, CCPR may be able to meet other programming needs by offering opportunities in parks and facilities provided by others. One example is a Kidmobile (mobile recreation program) that can travel to various schools, HOA parks, and community parks to provide summer programs to youth around Carmel Clay. Just as CCPR provides signature parks, the Department should look for opportunities to provide signature festivals and special events to unite community members and foster community identity.

These recommendations do not suggest that CCPR should assume maintenance responsibilities or ownership of HOA recreation areas, which would not fit with the vision and recommendations of this Plan. It does not suggest that CCPR should develop sport fields exclusively for Dads' Club use. However, it does suggest that all providers in the community should align themselves more closely to develop best management practices in providing park and recreation services. It also recommends strongly that CCPR take a more active role in establishing these connections.

CCPR should consider facilitating this type of dialogue in the first 1-2 years after plan adoption, developing a joint action plan for implementation in 3-5 years. Because of their resources, Carmel Clay could become a national model in this regard.

Marketing

Having grown so rapidly in recent years, the Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation Department not only needs to define its niche, but then create a plan to market themselves to the community. A communication and marketing plan would help increase public awareness and use of parks, recreation resources, programs and services. This marketing plan should include the following components:

- **Branding:** Develop a "brand" for the Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation Department based on the vision and mission of this Plan. Develop a department identity and logo that illustrates and clarifies the Department's role in the community.
- **Positioning:** Develop positioning statements that reinforce the brand and use them in all communications.

- **Promoting benefits:** Promote the benefits of parks and recreation to expand park constituency. Increase the community’s awareness of the personal, social, economic, and environmental benefits that parks and recreation provide.
- **Identifying target audiences:** Identify existing user groups as well as target groups who have been overlooked in previous advertising and outreach efforts.
- **Reaching target audiences:** Recognize that different methods of communication are suitable for different audiences. In addition to e-newsletters and customized registration programs, consider the use of park and community banners, email alerts to prior registrants when similar courses are offered, fold-out color maps of the park system, brochures noting volunteer opportunities, electronic media, such as social networking sites, etc. In addition to broad-based public outreach, identify strategies to market through existing community meeting places, such as churches, clubs and local organizations, and at existing events and activities.
- **Communicating with the media:** Develop strategies to strengthen relationships with all local media, including regular issuance of press releases.



Community Priorities

All recommendations within this Plan will assist in creating the park system envisioned by Carmel Clay residents. To enhance services in the Carmel Clay community, CCPR should develop a project list or action plan based on these recommendations. This list of capital and non-capital improvements should be prioritized based on community priorities and available funding. The comments obtained during public outreach for this Plan helps determine general community priorities and preferences. Using this feedback, prioritization criteria have been developed to help identify priority projects to implement when funding is available. These criteria are noted below:

- **Serves underserved areas:** Projects that fulfill the need for parks and facilities in underserved areas should be considered as high priorities. This especially includes parks in west and north Carmel Clay. In terms of timing, CCPR should evaluate opportunities to acquire land in targeted areas before the opportunity is lost to do so.
- **Expands recreation opportunities:** Priority should be given to projects that expand recreation opportunities and provide innovative, distinctive resources not provided by others.
- **Improves park access:** Projects that improve park connectivity and accessibility for all users, including various ages, skill levels, mobility, and transportation modes (pedestrian, bike, auto, bus) should be considered high priority projects. This includes developing trails and acquiring corridors that tie to the regional trail system.

- **Enhances partnerships:** Projects that create new partnerships or strengthen existing partnerships (i.e., their ability to forge cost sharing, joint development, or programming collaborations) should be considered as high priorities.
- **Promotes sustainability:** Projects that sustain existing resources, improve maintenance efficiency, preserve or restore natural areas, support environmental education and interpretation, or otherwise promote environmental sustainability should be given high priority.
- **Strengthens the community:** Lastly, proposed projects should be prioritized based on their ability to strengthen community identity, foster interaction between citizens, and promote community livability. For example, projects that support community events or state-of-the-art facilities with a community draw should be ranked high in priority.

By applying these criteria, CCPR can make decisions about which projects to move forward first in alignment with the community values and visions as set forth in the Plan. These criteria can be used to rank projects as Priority I, Priority II, or Priority III. Any project meeting several of these criteria should be considered a Priority I project.

Depending on funding availability, a timeline for project implementation can be developed. At any time, projects may be re-prioritized to take advantage of unanticipated funding opportunities. Projects that have the potential to be funded through grants, donations, partner contributions, or other existing funding sources should receive higher priority than projects without other identified funding opportunities.



6. PRIORITIES AND ACTION SCHEDULE

PRIORITY AND ACTION SCHEDULE

This Plan creates a vision for a sustainable system of parks, recreation facilities, natural areas, and trails as integral elements of a livable community. It addresses the recreation needs of residents community-wide, by incorporating their views and preferences into the planning process. The planning process combined a technical resource analysis with an assessment of community preferences and priorities. Based on that analysis, this chapter presents an action plan to develop the park and recreation system that will lead this community into the future.

Because this Plan cannot with 100% certainty predict the future, it may be necessary for the Park Board to periodically revise and modify the following action plan based on new opportunities or circumstances.

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)
2009	Park Board adopts Plan, including new vision and mission statements	N/A	N/A
2009	Develop marketing plan for park system, including standards for consistent park signage	\$17,000	Program
2009	Set aside for park system capital maintenance sinking fund	\$1,500,000	COIT Capital
2009	Develop and launch new website	\$75,000	COIT Capital
2009	Complete commissioning of indoor aquatic center in Monon Center	\$50,000	COIT Capital
2009	Install enhanced lighting in front of Monon Center East	\$100,000	COIT Capital
2009	Reconfigure control points in Monon Center	\$90,000	COIT Capital
2009	Design new playground and shelter(s) for Central Park	\$350,000	COIT Capital
2009	Construct new parking lot in Central Park to support new playground and shelter(s)	\$250,000	COIT Capital

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)
2010	Capital repairs to Inlow Park structures	\$100,000	Capital
2010	Develop Partnership Policy for Park Board approval	N/A	N/A
2010	Develop ADA Transition Plan	\$25,000	General, COIT Capital
2010	Develop Design and Development Policy for Park Board approval	N/A	N/A
2010	Set aside for park system capital maintenance sinking fund	\$1,500,000	COIT Capital
2010	Founders Park Phase II construction	\$1,900,000	Park Impact Fee, COIT Capital
2010	Hazel Landing Phase II construction	\$750,000	Park Impact Fee, COIT Capital, Grants
2010	Construct new playground and shelter(s) for Central Park	\$1,500,000	COIT Capital
2010	Repair Flowing Well pagoda and seal parking lot	\$75,000	Capital
2010/ 2011	Install security cameras at Monon trailheads	\$125,000	Capital
2011	Set aside for park system capital maintenance sinking fund	\$1,500,000	COIT Capital
2011	Construct Monon Center Lifeguard building in Central Park	\$500,000	COIT Capital
2011	Construct Interurban trail and bridge in Central Park	\$350,000	COIT Capital, Grants
2011	Refresh and pave Monon Greenway	\$400,000	Capital, COIT Capital
2011 / 2012	Develop updated master plan for West Park	\$125,000	Park Impact Fee

Year	Action	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)
2012	Set aside for park system capital maintenance sinking fund	\$1,500,000	COIT Capital
2012 / 2013	Purchase of new park land in northwest Carmel	up to \$5,000,000	Park Impact Fee, COIT Capital, Grants, Donations
2013	Set aside for park system capital maintenance sinking fund	\$1,500,000	COIT Capital
2013/ 2014	West Park construction per updated master plan	\$3,500,00	Park Impact Fee, COIT Capital, Grants, Donations
2014	Set aside for park system capital maintenance sinking fund	\$1,500,000	COIT Capital
2014	Master planning and development of Cherry Tree Park	\$750,000	Park Impact Fee, COIT Capital, Grants, Donations
2014	Purchase of new park land in northeast Carmel	up to \$5,000,000	Park Impact Fee, COIT Capital, Grants, Donations
2014	Hazel Landing Phase III construction	\$1,250,000	Park Impact Fee, COIT Capital, Grants, Donations



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APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT



**APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY NEEDS
ASSESSMENT VALIDATION**



APPENDIX C: ORGANIZATION CHART



**APPENDIX D: PARK AND RECREATION
FACILITY INVENTORY**



APPENDIX E: CARMEL CLAY PARKS



**APPENDIX F: HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
RECREATION AMENITIES**



**APPENDIX G: OTHER RECREATION
PROVIDERS**



**APPENDIX H: REHABILITATION ACT
COMPLIANCE FORM**



**APPENDIX I: PARK DESIGN AND
DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**



**APPENDIX J: PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF
MASTER PLAN**



**APPENDIX K: PARK BOARD RESOLUTION
OF ADOPTION**