

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Strategic Plan – 2019
Implementation Status Report

February 11, 2020

Carmel • Clay
Parks & Recreation

NATIONAL GOLD MEDAL WINNER
AND ACCREDITED AGENCY



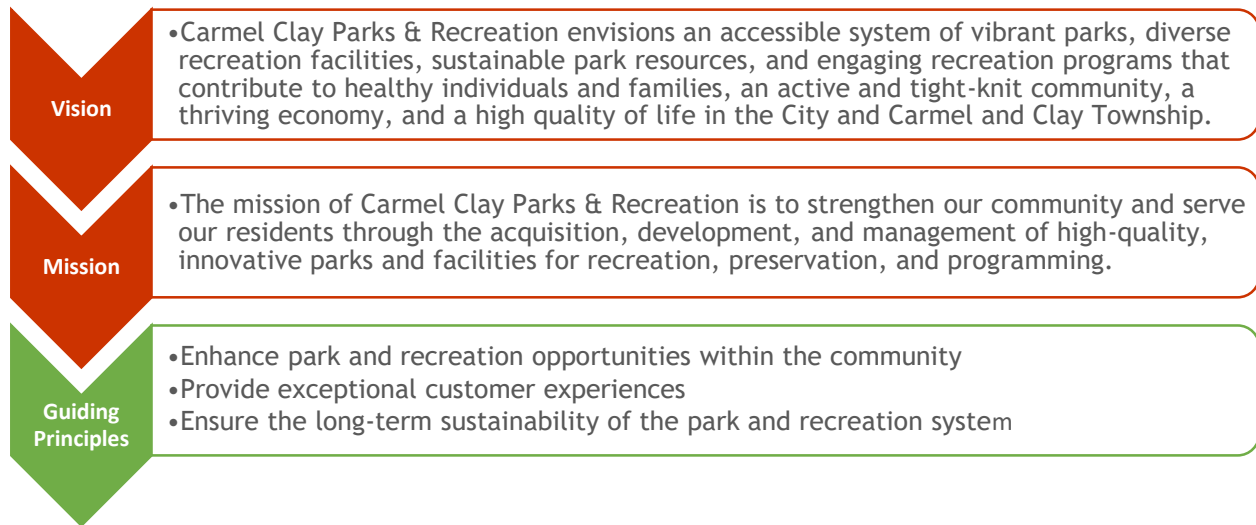
2015-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2015-2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan was approved by the Carmel/Clay Board of Parks and Recreation (Park Board) on March 10, 2015 to guide the future development and management of Carmel Clay Parks & Recreation (CCPR). The key recommendations, tactics to implement, and target years are identified within CCPR's Strategic Plan, which is a component of and incorporated within the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

This report summarizes the current progress in implementing the Strategic Plan as of December 31, 2019. Inquiries about this document should be directed to Kurtis Baumgartner, Chief Operating Officer, at 317.573.5238 or kbaumgartner@carmelclayparks.com.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOUNDATIONAL FRAMEWORK

The following outlines the foundational framework for CCPR including vision, mission and guiding principles:



THE BIG ROCKS | TOP 5 PRIORITIES

1. Achieve at least 80% cost recovery on operating budgets for entire park and recreation system.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Cost Recovery ¹	85%	84%	84%	84%	84%

¹ Total earned income divided by total operating expenditures from Funds 101, 108, 109 & 110

2. Enhance West Park, incorporating undeveloped areas.

2015	Kicked off development of new master plan for West Park in August
2016	Park Board approved West Park Master Plan on 12/13/2016
2017	Engaged SmithGroupJJR and Williams Architects to develop construction documents for West Park-The Groves project; authorized removal of hazardous trees within The Groves; finalizing construction documents to go out to bid in January 2018 with for an anticipate substantial completion in April 2019
2018	Construction of new program pavilion, playground, and supporting open space within The Groves underway with anticipated completion in April 2019
2019	New program pavilion, playground, and open space with The Groves constructed and utilized for summer camp and recreation program opportunities

3. Invest 3-4% of asset value annually to fund current and future capital repairs and replacements.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Expenditures	\$802,945	\$1,039,369	\$2,706,084	\$4,788,991	\$2,204,371
Reserves ¹	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$2,233,502	\$2,193,854	\$3,267,396
Total	\$2,302,945	\$2,539,369	\$4,939,586	\$6,982,845	\$5,471,767
% of Asset Value ²	2.7%	3.0%	5.8%	8.3%	6.5%

¹ Total reserves available at year end for future capital repairs

² Percentage based on \$84,593,145 asset value of park improvements identified in 2015-2020 Zone Improvement Plan

4. Expand White River Greenway to more fully engage neighbors and provide connections to surrounding communities.

2015	Continued negotiations to and completed due diligence for purchase of 5.12 acres from the family of Matilda Haverstick
2016	Closed on acquisition of Matilda Haverstick property, which allows for future connection of existing greenway to property owned by Conner Prairie
2017	Participated in stakeholder interviews for Conner Prairie's new master plan, providing opportunity to discuss expanding greenway north on Conner Prairie property and possibility of pedestrian bridge between Conner Prairie and Carmel; involved in discussions for White Review Vision Plan that includes partners from Indianapolis and throughout Hamilton County
2018	Continued participation with partners from Indianapolis and throughout Hamilton County on White River Vision Plan
2019	Continued participation with partners from Indianapolis and throughout Hamilton County on White River Vision Plan; Purchased approximately 13.55 acres of land along White River for future trailhead and restroom amenities

5. Acquire parkland in underserved portion of northwest Carmel.

Status	No funds available to acquire property, unless funds redirected from West Park; continue to work with the City of Carmel Department of Community Services to monitor land availability in target area
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STRATEGIC PLAN | PARCS 5-YEAR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. **PARKS:** Provide diverse, attractive, and inspiring parks and greenways that enhance quality of life and economic vitality of the community.

- 1.1. Expand White River Greenway to more fully engage neighbors and provide connections to surrounding communities. (*Big Rock #4*)

- 1.1.1. Property acquired and easements secured to extend trail from 96th to 146th Street. (Ongoing)

- Acquired 5.12 acres in 2016 providing linkage between north terminus of existing trail and property owned by Conner Prairie that extends to 146th Street
- Preliminary meetings with Conner Prairie in 2017 to discuss potential easement for extension of trail north to 146th Street
- Participated in preliminary meetings for White River Vision Plan
- Continued participation by Parks Director in White River Vision Plan
- Purchased approximately 13.55 acres of land along White River for future trailhead and restroom amenities

- 1.1.2. Plan for greenway linkage to Fishers developed. (Ongoing)

- City Engineering took lead in 2017 on plans for bridge linking 106th Street trail to Fishers with bridge between Hazel Landing Park and Fisher’s Heritage Park
- Discussions initiated with Conner Prairie in 2017 on potential bridge over White River
- Participated in preliminary meetings for White River Regional Master Plan
- Continued participation by Parks Director as it pertains to the White River Regional Master Plan
- City Engineering engaged in pursuit of grant funding for bridge that would span White River and link Hazel Landing Park to Fisher’s Heritage Park
- SJCA completed a feasibility study to extend the existing White River Greenway from its current northern terminus (across from Tall Timber Run) to 146th Street. The study also identified the cost of a trail that crosses the White River and connects into Fishers’ trail network

- 1.2. Acquire parkland in underserved portion of northwest Carmel. (*Big Rock #5*)

- 1.2.1. Continue working with City of Carmel, Department of Community Services, to identify potential land in target area. (Ongoing)

- Coordination with DOCS ongoing

- 1.2.2. At least 25 acres of contiguous property acquired. (2019)

- Identified list of potential properties acreage that could potentially be acquired during the 2020-2024 planning period

- 1.3. Explore partnerships with Hamilton County Parks & Recreation, Nature Conservancy, Central Indiana Land Trust, or similar organizations to preserve disappearing natural areas within the community.
 - 1.3.1. Maintain communication with potential partners to identify preservation opportunities. (Ongoing)
 - Communication with potential partners ongoing
 - Park Board passed Resolution G-2016-001 in support of the Mounds Greenway, a proposed multijurisdictional trail along the White River envisioned to stretch from Indianapolis to Anderson; the proposed project is spearheaded by the Hoosier Environmental Council and could help CCPR expand the White River Greenway, which would be incorporated within the larger Mounds Greenway project
 - Discussions initiated with Conner Prairie in 2017 on their development plans on west side of river
 - Participated in preliminary meetings for White River Regional Master Plan
 - Cooperative biological assessment effort with University High School to determine quality of biological resources in shared preservation corridor with West Park
 - Participated in meeting with USFWS, DNR, IDEM, IWF and the White River Alliance to discuss refining our statewide conservation messages to the public
 - Contributing partner in development of Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) for Hamilton County. This is a partnership focused on taking management action and providing free public education/resources in the fight against invasive species that threaten sustainability of natural areas.
 - 1.4. Identify appropriate use for undeveloped Cherry Tree Park.
 - 1.4.1. Best use for park determined. (2016)
 - Completed in 2017; consensus of Park Board is to land bank property, providing maximum flexibility for future use
2. AMENITIES: Develop and maintain high quality, cost-effective recreation facilities and amenities to address underserved needs of community.
 - 2.1. Enhance West Park, incorporating undeveloped areas. (*Big Rock #2*)
 - 2.1.1. Updated master plan developed for West Park. (2015)
 - Completed in 2016; adopted by Park Board on 12/13/2016
 - 2.1.2. Phased implementation of updated master plan. (2016-2019)
 - Schematic plans and construction documents completed in 2017 for West Park-The Groves Project in preparation for construction beginning in February 2018
 - Construction of new program pavilion, playground, and supporting open space within The Groves underway with anticipated completion in April 2019

- New program pavilion, playground, and open space with The Groves finalized in May of 2019 and began utilization of space for summer camp and recreation program opportunities

2.2. Expand trail networks within parks and greenways.

2.2.1. Locations for new trails within existing parks identified. (2016)

- New trails identified for West Park within 2016 master plan; portions of new trail network to be included in the West Park-The Groves Project
- Continued participation by Parks Director in White River Vision Plan, which will include expansion goal of expanding White River Greenway
- Hamilton County Tourism is funding study to help coordinate existing and pending planning efforts of CCPR, the City of Carmel, and Connor Prairie (amongst others) along White River between 116th Street and 146th street to develop a unified brand for this section of the river.

2.2.2. Trails constructed. (2017-2019)

- New trail connections constructed in 2016 as part of Central Park West Commons project
- Midtown Plaza was recently completed in July 2019 and Monon Boulevard is under construction and expected to be completed in Spring 2020.
- Central Park trailhead (trail support amenity) construction began in the fall of 2019 with anticipated completion expected by the end of February, 2020.

2.3. Develop dog parks on east and west side of community.

2.3.1. Locations for dog parks identified. (2016)

- No funds available to acquire property for future dog park sites, unless redirected from other projects; continue to monitor for potential sites
- Evaluated West Park in 2016 as potential location for west side dog park, but minimal support based on public input during master planning process
- Began expansion of Central Park dog park for anticipated opening in 2018
- Completed expansion of Central Park Dog Park by approximately 1 acre
 - Allowed membership to increase to over 600 dogs
- Additional lighting added to expand usable hours of park
- Secondary controlled access point beginning construction in early 2019 to increase park operation availability during times of inclement weather and necessary field rotations to allow the turf to rest
- Secondary entrance point completed allowing access directly into expansion area.
- Addition of agility equipment in expanded mulch area in 2019.

2.3.2. Dog park on east side of community constructed. (2018)

- Waiting for funding to develop new master plans for east side parks to assess interest in and feasibility of building a dog park in an existing park location

2.3.3. Dog park on west side of community constructed. (2017)

- Anticipated construction in West Park prior to 2016 master plan; excluded dog park in current construction plans for West Park-The Groves Project based on lack of strong public support during master planning process
- 2.4. Conduct feasibility study for west side recreation center.
- 2.4.1. Feasibility study completed. (2019)
- Data collected while compiling 2020-2024 Parks and Recreation Master Plan suggests that West side recreation center is currently not feasible due to high probability of hindering MCC's ability to achieve cost recovery
3. **RECREATION SERVICES:** Provide inclusive, innovative, and distinctive recreation programs aligned with core competencies.
- 3.1. Develop outdoor recreation and environmental education programs into core services.
- 3.1.1. At least four sessions offered per season. (Ongoing)
- Winter/Spring 2015: 12 different programs (15 total sessions)
 - Summer 2015: 21 different program (24 total sessions)
 - Fall 2015: 11 different program (13 total sessions)
 - Winter/Spring 2016: 9 different programs (14 total sessions)
 - Summer 2016: 27 different program (30 total sessions)
 - Fall 2016: 8 different programs (12 total sessions)
 - Winter/Spring 2017: 8 different programs (25 total sessions)
 - Summer 2017: 23 different programs (40 total sessions)
 - Fall 2017: 17 different programs (29 total sessions)
 - Winter/Spring 2018: 14 different programs (24 total sessions)
 - Summer 2018: 14 different programs (46 total sessions)
 - Fall 2018: 21 different programs (34 total sessions)
 - Winter/Spring 2019: 22 different programs (40 total sessions)
 - Summer 2019: 33 different programs (43 total sessions)
 - Fall 2019: 29 different programs (34 total sessions)
- 3.1.2. Contributes at least 5% of total recreation program revenue annually for Monon Community Center. (2017-2019)
- 2015: 4.6%
 - 2016: 5.0%
 - 2017: 5.0%
 - 2018: 5.7%
 - 2019: 7.1% (Less focus on revenue growth with creation of Naturalist position and coordination with Parks & Natural Resources to offer more free programs to the public.)
- 3.2. Increase program offerings for underserved populations.
- 3.2.1. Establish fitness reimbursement program for active seniors age 65 and above (2015)
- Implemented SilverSneakers in 2015

- Implemented Silver&Fit in 2017
 - Implemented Optum (UnitedHealth Care) in 2019
- 3.2.2. Annual net increase of 5% in number senior memberships from previous year. (2015-2019)
 - 2015: 83.8% increase
 - 2016: 44.6% increase
 - 2017: 39.5% increase
 - 2018: 26.9% increase
 - 2019: 27.5% increase
- 3.2.3. Increase total number of adults age 55 and above served through memberships and program registrations by 50%. (2019)
 - Unable to report on this metric; no report available in Active (computer software) that tracks participation rates by age of member or program participant
- 3.2.4. Complete ADA Transition Plan. (2015)
 - Completed in 2015; adopted by Park Board on 11/10/2015
- 3.2.5. Provide annual inclusions training to all ESE and MCC staff. (Ongoing)
 - Training provided at least annually to ESE and MCC staff
- 3.3. Explore partnership opportunities to provide signature community events that highlight the park and recreation system.
 - 3.3.1. Maintain communication with potential partners to identify opportunities for new or existing events. (Ongoing)
 - Reevaluated goal and decided to de-emphasize department-led community events based on number of events offered by City and other entities within the community and the limited capacity of parks and facilities to support large events
- 4. CONTROLS: Manage the park and recreation system through measurable outcomes.
 - 4.1. Achieve at least 80% cost recovery on operating budgets for entire park and recreation system. (Big Rock #1)
 - 4.1.1. Minimum 100% cost recovery each year for Extended School Enrichment. (Ongoing)
 - 2015: 114%
 - 2016: 110%
 - 2017: 112%
 - 2018: 111%
 - 2019: 106%
 - 4.1.2. Minimum 100% cost recovery each year for Monon Community Center. (Ongoing)
 - 2015: 110%
 - 2016: 105%

- 2017: 105%
- 2018: 109%
- 2019: 111%

4.1.3. Monon Community Center membership rates reviewed annually. (Ongoing)

- Rates reviewed annually and approved by Park Board as part of budget process

4.2. Attain at least 90% customer satisfaction rates for all parks, amenities, and recreation services.

4.2.1. Standard met on ESE parent/guardian survey administered each semester. (Ongoing)

- ESE administers a Commitment to Success survey measuring nine different performance areas, such as providing a caring atmosphere and providing a safe environment, which are viewed by management as the most critical metrics for the program
- Based on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), ESE has obtained overall average of 4+ for twenty consecutive surveys (10 consecutive school years)
- Caring Environment (ratings of 4 or above)
 - Spring 2015: 89%
 - Fall 2015: 89%
 - Spring 2016: 91%
 - Fall 2016: 91%
 - Spring 2017: 93%
 - Fall 2017: 87%
 - Spring 2018: 89%
 - Fall 2018: 89%
 - Spring 2019: 89%
 - Fall 2019: 89%
- Safe Environment (ratings of 4 or above)
 - Spring 2015: 94%
 - Fall 2015: 94%
 - Spring 2016: 93%
 - Fall 2016: 95%
 - Spring 2017: 95%
 - Fall 2017: 92%
 - Spring 2018: 94%
 - Fall 2018: 91%
 - Spring 2019: 93%
 - Fall 2019: 92%

4.2.2. Standard met on MCC membership survey administered annually. (Ongoing)

- In lieu of an annual survey of all members, focus surveys are conducted twice per year to provide valuable information to management to address specific issues
- January 2015: MCC Member Survey
 - 96% satisfaction

- June 2015: Facility Usage Survey
 - Provided information to access use patterns, new equipment preferences, and reason for selecting MCC
- January 2016: Dog Park Survey (facility managed by MCC)
 - 98% satisfaction
- June 2016: Pickleball Participant Survey
 - Provided information to understand preferences of participants and other interests
- March 2017: Dog Park Survey
 - 87% satisfaction with overall membership, although park cleanliness, turf quality, membership value, incident resolution, customer service, amenities, lighting, and hours of operation ratings all exceeded 90%
 - Anticipate overall satisfaction increasing with expansion of dog park in 2018, allowing more members and increased socialization; results of survey sparked management to explore expansion of dog park
- October 2017: Kidzone Survey
 - Provided information on Kidzone usage
- Winter 2018: Community Interest and Opinion Survey
 - Conducted by PROS Consulting as part of the updated Recreation Program Plan
 - 90% satisfaction for respondents who have participated in a CCPR program
- Fall 2019: Group Fitness Survey
 - Provided information on class format popularity, preferred instructor characteristics and ability to meet customer needs.
- Winter 2019: Member Survey
 - Gaged public interest in potential member acquisition and retention strategies to guide direction in 2020.

4.2.3. Standard met on Community Survey administered every 5 years. (2019)

- Standard met; 90% satisfaction for respondents to Community Interest and Opinion Survey conducted in Winter 2018

4.3. Serve at least 40% of residents through programs and services.

4.3.1. Standard met on Community Survey administered every 5 years. (2019)

- Standard met; 43% of respondents to Community Interest and Opinion Survey conducted in Winter 2018 participated in CCPR program in last 12 months

4.4. Provide at least 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

4.4.1. Standard met including parkland maintained by CCPR, City of Carmel, and Hamilton County Parks & Recreation within Clay Township. (Ongoing)

Provider	Acres
CCPR	534.84
City of Carmel	164.00
Hamilton County Parks	180.99
Total	879.83

Estimated current population: 97,297

- Acres of parkland per 1,000 residents: 9.04
 - 13.85 acres per 1,000 when include Carmel Clay School grounds and Dad’s Club properties

4.5. Maintain national accreditation through CAPRA.

4.5.1. Annual reports submitted to CAPRA. (Ongoing)

- Reports submitted annually in compliance with CAPRA requirements

4.5.2. Self-assessment report and reaccreditation visit completed. (2019)

- Reaccreditation received September 23, 2019
 - Note - CCPR achieved 100% score by meeting all 151 standards

5. **SUSTAINABILITY:** Ensure the long-term sustainability of the park and recreation system for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

5.1. Invest 3-4% of asset value annually to fund current and future capital repairs and replacements. (*Big Rock #3*)

5.1.1. Total annual expenditures for capital maintenance plus new money set aside for future capital maintenance equals at least 3% of asset value of constructed facilities and amenities identified in current Zone Improvement Plan. (Ongoing)

- See metrics reported above for Big Rock #3

5.2. Develop and implement a comprehensive customer service program aligned with the culture and values of the park and recreation system.

5.2.1. Program developed and implemented. (2015-2016)

- Completed overhaul of Member Services Associate and Waterpark Members Services on-boarding and training program
- Completed overhaul of Member Services Supervisor on-boarding and training program
- Launched HappiFeet mobile app in 2016 to make easier for public to report issues; once have more history with app in 2017, will use input gathered to help enhance customer service training
- Created employee training videos to assist with development of Member Services Staff (2017)
- Corporate restructure of Monon Community Center
 - Divided Member Service and Recreation sub-divisions so that a bigger focus can be placed on member retention and customer service
- Creation of Member Acquisition and Retention Plan (2019)
 - Establishing a direction for staff to assist in retaining members longer

5.3. Continue implementation of natural resource management plans developed for every park.

5.3.1. Progress reports completed annually and reviewed by management. (Ongoing)

- New Park Maintenance Director hired in January 2016
- Progress report for 2016, 2017, and 2018 received and reviewed by management
 - Woodland Management: Hazard tree mitigation efforts focused on the heavily used Monon Greenway trail corridor and Central Park
 - Prairie Management: Continued maintenance techniques to allow regeneration and habitat sustainability. Conversion of multiple turf locations to native grass and flowers in 2018.
 - Open Water: Managed through agreements with aquatics experts. Continued with stocking fish at Meadowlark and West Parks in cooperation with Indiana Department of Natural Resources.
 - Weed Management: Ongoing monitoring, planning, and treatment continues to take place. Aggressively managed multiple restoration plots with new tactics for removal and replacement.
- New Natural Resources Coordinator hired in April 2018
 - GIS/GPS tools introduced in 2018 enhanced record keeping and data driven management of natural resources
 - Per NRM Plans - volunteer impact increased to aid in weed mitigation and restoration implementation
 - Inaugural Bio Blitz conducted at West Park to establish baseline for long-term biological monitoring program
- Habitat development, monitoring programs and management expanded in 2019
 - GIS/GPS continues refinement as a field collection tool

- Entire Central Park property mapped with ecological restoration contractor
- Invasive species contracts completed at Flowing Well and established at Founders Park
- New 4 acre native prairie planted at West Park as part of new development.
- Floodway restoration project completed with final year of monitoring successfully reaching target goal of 75% survival for DNR permit.
- PNR division expanded our data to include soil sample baseline analysis at major natural area sites throughout the park system, through our inaugural summer internship program. Understanding soil conditions is a foundational piece of data that land managers must consider when determining how to create, manage, and sustain quality native vegetation.

5.4. Increase opportunities for volunteers within the park and recreation system.

5.4.1. Annual increase of 500 volunteer hours from previous year with at least 5,500 total volunteer hours in 2019. (2015-2019)

- Volunteer Coordination position vacant for most of 2016 and program restructured with new coordinator for park maintenance projects hired in September 2016; HR assumed recruitment of recreation volunteers in November 2016
- 2015: 5,771 hours
- 2016: 3,012 hours
- 2017: 2,345 hours
 - An overall reduction of hours has occurred due to elimination of event programming and the resulting reduction in event volunteers
- 2018: 2,734 hours
 - Percent of total volunteer hours focused on park stewardship rose from 35% in 2017 to 53% in 2018
 - 16 community organizations completed park stewardship volunteer projects in 2018, up from 12 in 2017
 - Initiation of Adopt-a-Park program implemented in 2018 to engage community members
- 2019: 2,703 hours

5.5. Enhance earned income by pursuing grants, donations, and sponsorships.

5.5.1. At least one LWCF grant secured. (2019)

5.5.2. Development Manager hired. (2017)

- Deferred while Parks Foundation continues to formulate plans to become resource for securing donations and sponsorships, in cooperation with Department
- Department to work with City's consultant in 2018 to identify grant opportunities

5.5.3. Annual funding secured equals at least 5 times Development Manager's annual compensation after first full year. (2018)

5.5.4. Annual funding secured equals at least 7 times Development Manager's annual compensation after second full year. (2019)

5.5.5. Annual funding secured equals at least 10 times Development Manager's annual compensation beginning the third full year and thereafter. (after 2019)

