



# Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Strategic Plan – 2021  
Implementation Status Report

February 8, 2022

**Carmel • Clay**  
**Parks & Recreation**  
NATIONAL GOLD MEDAL WINNER  
AND ACCREDITED AGENCY





## STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN – IMPLEMENTATION STATUS REPORT

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

### 1.1 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1.1.1 ENHANCE PARK AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY:

- Expand trails, river access, and environmental education along the White River Regional Corridor
  - Complete a regional river corridor site plan
    - 2020 – Continued participation by Executive Director in White River Vision Plan, which will include expansion of White River Greenway.
    - 2021 – The White River Regional Opportunity Initiative (WR-ROI) Partnership was created to prepare a Regional Development Plan to submit for a Regional Economic Acceleration + Development Initiative (READI) grant through the Indiana Economic Development Commission (IEDC). The WR-ROI is inspired by the White River Vision Plan, which details a cohesive regional vision, goals, projects, and programs related to economic development within the White River Region.
  - Ensure cohesion with the White River Vision Plan/Identify partners on both sides of the River
    - 2020 – Continued discussions with Conner Prairie for expansion of the White River Greenway from current northern terminus of trail to 146<sup>th</sup> Street.
    - 2020 – Entered into an agreement with Clay Township for development of a pedestrian bridge across the White River Greenway as part of the Clay Township Impact Program. This project will ultimately connect the Carmel and Fishers trail networks in involves collaboration between CCPR, Clay Township, City of Carmel, Conner Prairie, Hamilton County Parks & Recreation, and the City of Fishers.
    - 2021 – The WR-ROI Partnership, Central Indiana Regional Development Authority within the IndyMPO, consists of three counties: Hamilton, Madison, and Marion; and eight communities: Anderson, Carmel, Fishers, Indianapolis, McCordsville, Noblesville, Westfield, and Zionsville.
  - Develop a dedicated funding strategy for development of the corridor
    - 2021 – The Hamilton County South River District/Conner Prairie Westside Expansion was selected as one of the signature projects for WR-ROI. This potentially positions the White River Education and Ecology Center to receive up to \$7.3 million if WR-ROI is successful in securing READI grant. Hamilton County also committed up to \$1 million for the ecology center if the project receives funds through READI grant.
    - 2021 – Submitted Next Level Trails grant application to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in hopes of securing state funding for the development of the north extension of the trailhead.
  - Develop view sheds along trails for users to enjoy the White River and include picnic areas
    - 2020 – At end of 2019, CCPR secured approximately 13.55 acres of property along Hazel Dell Parkway which will serve as a future trailhead along the White River Corridor; homestead on the property was demolished in 2020 and has been restored to a natural state.
    - 2020 – Focus of River Heritage Park development will be accessible trails and view sheds along the White River.
    - 2021 – Approved professional services agreement with SJCA for the White River Greenway North Extension design development plans. Began working on design concepts for trail overlooks and the anticipated trailhead on CCPR property
    - 2021 – Wellheads at Thomas Marcuccilli Nature Park will receive improvements (funded by Carmel Utilities), which will allow them to serve as Overlooks

- 2021 — Completed an invasive species assessment of CCPR and Conner Prairie property from the current terminus of the White River Greenway to the proposed location of the White River Education and Ecology Center. This data will help identify the best route for the White River Greenway extension.
    - Elevate the brand of all trails throughout the City through enhanced marketing strategies
      - 2020 — As new parks and upgrades to existing parks are being made, CCPR diligently works to educate public on amenities available and how changes positively impact the community via website and social media platforms.
      - 2021 — Improved CCPR website to ensure public can easily navigate park projects and obtain critical information.
    - Work with the City of Carmel to make trail connectivity a priority (10-minute walk to a park)
      - 2020 — Flowing Well Park added two additional access points for foot traffic into park, one from 116<sup>th</sup> St. and one from Gray Road
      - 2020 — Added restrooms to Carey Grove and Flowing Well Parks which will significantly increase the amount of time a patron can spend in the park, also increasing the viability of visitors to walk to the park (don't have to drive in case someone has to use the restroom)
      - 2020 — Township approved new pedestrian bridge over White River which will connect City of Carmel and Fishers
      - 2021 — CCPR met with representatives to review design concepts of future White River pedestrian bridge that will be funded/constructed using the Clay Township Impact Program.
      - 2021 — Kite Realty Group, Buckingham Properties, and the Carmel Redevelopment Commission development “The Corner” requests an easement for a trail connection between an apartment building being constructed as part of the project and the Interurban Trail.
    - Develop loop trails to tie into existing neighborhood parks
      - 2021 — CCPR engaged in discussions with Albany Village, the new subdivision to be constructed on the east side of Shelborne Road across from Bear Creek Park regarding the potential donation of approximately 9 acres with a developed multipurpose trail and native prairie installed by the developer that could serve as part of a larger Bear Creek Greenway.
    - Explore opportunities for trail amenities (watercraft access, off-trail fitness, overlook areas, etc.)
      - 2020 — Focus of River Heritage Park development will be accessible trails, view sheds and overlook areas along the White River.
      - 2020 — Added shuffleboards, spray plaza, table tennis, bocce ball, seating and shade areas along the Monon Greenway from Elm Street to Walnut Street.
      - 2021 — Completed improvements at Carey Grove Park which included fitness equipment around the perimeter of the playground.
      - 2021 — Approved professional services agreement with SJCA for the White River Greenway North Extension design development plans. Began working on design concepts for trail overlooks and the anticipated trailhead on CCPR property.
  - Facilitate implementation of a West Regional Corridor centered on West Park
    - Complete evaluation of the need for additional indoor recreation space at West Park
    - Design/construct amenities to make West Park a Regional Destination Park
      - 2020 — Construction started and anticipated to finish in the Fall of 2021.
      - 2021 — Work continued in 2021, good progress made on connector road and culvert/bridge between the Core and the Groves, parking lot expansion, and splash pad. While park was originally planned to be complete in the Fall of 2021, a bevy of issues resulted in CCPR delaying the anticipated re-opening to Spring of 2022.
    - Establish a west-side steering committee to assist with partnership opportunities for land acquisition



- underserved in the community. CCPR is now focused on growing these core program categories rather than trying to be many things for many people.
- Evaluate and map the programs that are currently being provided for underserved or unserved populations by other local organizations
  - Develop individualized goals for CCPR programming staff to encourage the research, identification, planning, and execution of innovative programs geared towards the identified underserved or unserved populations
    - 2021 — Community Outreach was a goal for our volunteer program to identify new groups for engagement. This included many new outlets and those listed in the next objective illustrate the underserved growth.
    - 2021 — New Inclusion Supervisor hired in September with a broader background in inclusion and diversity. Goals established for creating programs geared around promoting diversity
    - 2021 — Creative Arts category has been retitled Arts & Culture with the goal of creating more culture-based programs with an emphasis on cultural experiences and education
  - Utilize compiled data to formulate program offerings to meet the unmet needs of these populations throughout our Program Areas and Categories
    - 2021 — Volunteer program partnership with Stratford Senior Living engaged our award-winning pollinator partnership program involving seed sorting from seeds collected by volunteers. Seed was transported to the retirement community to make the volunteer project easy for participation and in support of our CCPR mission and values.
    - 2021 — Volunteer program engagement with Midwest Academy for a workday at Flowing Well Park where 39 volunteers gave 2.5 hours removing invasive burning bush, Japanese knotweed, trash, and dismantling 4 visitor created rock dams in Cool Creek. Midwest Academy is an intentional educational community serving students in grades 3-12 with ADD/ADHD, language-based learning differences, high functioning autism, and processing challenges. The school is designed to develop academic achievement, self-acceptance, and personal accountability.
    - 2021 — Engaged in discussions with Janus Developmental Services, Inc. regarding workplace trainings and shadowing opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
  - Expand upon current successful partnerships to reach underserved or unserved populations
    - 2020 — Continued partnership with Carmel Marathon which allows Adaptive participants the ability to compete/participate in the annual Carmel 5K; Continued partnership with Carmel Health & Living Community to implement educational programs for seniors
    - 2021 — Department donated pieces of the former Meadowlark Park play structures to the Lake Lemon Conservancy District (LLCD), helping the equipment find new life and avoid ending up in a landfill. By recycling it for LLCD's use the department also fulfilled a playground need for an underserved population.
    - 2021 — Partnership with Carmel Clay Public Library (CCPL) expanded due to construction at their main facility, and assisted with COVID-19 resources; Continued literacy development program partnership (Story Time Express and Story Walks)
  - Create new partnerships with identified local organizations to fill current and future gaps in service for underserved or unserved populations
    - 2020 — Texas Roadhouse: providing healthy dinners for Adaptive Participants, a priority for many individuals with developmental disabilities; Gordon Holmes/Tom Blessing/Mary Wallace: Educational programs for participants and their families ranging from financial planning to nutrition
    - 2021 — Extended School Enrichment identified a local citizen to begin process of translating key documents in order to provide better customer service to the growing number of participants whose primary language is Spanish; long-term plan is to continue expanding to other languages

- 2021 — Implementation of UserWay accessibility widget to CCPR webpage to assist with visual impairments and language barriers.
    - 2021 — Partnership with AAPR offering free tax preparation services to low-income households.
    - 2021 — Partnership with Hamilton County Health Department, Hamilton County Emergency Management, and Carmel Fire Department to offer COVID-19 vaccination site to the community.
  - Continue to develop and evaluate internal reporting of populations served through CCPR programs and partnerships
    - 2020 — Updated program survey which will allow for better capture of data from participants and better position CCPR to develop new programs and seek out additional partners
    - 2021 — Volunteer program includes program evaluations by participants and records of each projects accomplishments
- Explore opportunities to provide community gardens as part of land-use strategies
  - 2021 — Native food forest planted as part of a grant award that allowed for the planting of 100 native fruit and nut trees at Founders Park. Once the trees mature this stand of trees will provide a diverse range of native food sources for the community to pick and utilize in a sustainable fashion.

### 1.1.2 PROVIDE EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES:

- Reimagine existing parks through effective planning and appropriate updates
  - Update existing park master plans (Hazel Landing, Inlow, Carey Grove, Cherry Tree, Flowing Well, Meadowlark, and River Heritage)
    - 2020 — The Clay Township Impact Program (CTIP) provided CCPR with funds to enhance and update Carey Grove, Flowing Well, West, Meadowlark, Inlow, and River Heritage Parks. Improvements will be made to the following amenities, which varies by park: playgrounds, splashpads, restrooms, bank stabilization, bridges, trails, parking lots, shelters, fishing piers, pickleball courts (new addition)
  - Incorporate consistent design principles for all new parks and the update of existing parks
  - Develop a mini business plan for parks and facilities to ensure site will achieve outcomes desired
  - Continue to upgrade playgrounds in existing parks
    - 2020 — CTIP funds provided to CCPR will allow for playground/splashpad updates at Carey Grove, West, Meadowlark, River Heritage and Inlow Parks
    - 2021 — Playground updates and park improvements completed at Carey Grove Park. West, Meadowlark, River Heritage and Inlow Park improvements underway and expected be completed in the Spring of 2022.
  - Analyze community demographics to ensure park design meets needs of those it intends to serve
    - 2020 — Community input meetings were held to obtain feedback on park improvements at Carey Grove, Flowing Well, and West Parks; Feedback incorporated into final park design
- Create nature preserve experiences throughout the park system
  - Seek a partnership with a not-for-profit to help preserve natural areas along the trails with resource plans
    - 2021 — Adopt A Park program grew from 4 participants to 13 different participant groups ranging from private individuals, corporate businesses, local civic groups, and non-profits to help support long term preservation standards along trails and within park properties
  - Develop an interpretive plan for natural areas in the parks through updated interpretive signage
    - 2020 — Interpretive signage added to Founders Park in Spring 2020 utilizing Rain on Main funds
    - 2020 — Flowing Well interpretive signs are in final stages of production and will be installed in 2021 utilizing CTIP funds
    - 2021 — Flowing Well signs were updated and installed as part of the CTIP project
    - 2020 — Prairie Meadow signage will be implemented in 2021 utilizing Rain on Main funds

- 2021 — Prairie Meadow sign content is developed and awaiting final designs and production
    - 2020 — Meadowlark Park interpretive signage was received as an add-alternate in bids received, evaluating to determine if CTIP funds will be sufficient to cover expense
    - 2021 — Meadowlark Park interpretive signs content is developed and awaiting final designs and production
  - Develop educational content that helps locate and identify key natural resources in CCPR specific parks
    - 2020 — Park Conversations magazine, created in 2019, continues to provide the community with educational content pertinent to CCPR parks and natural resources
    - 2020 — Volunteer Stewardship projects focused on targeted education on fostering sustainable habitats within CCPR properties
    - 2020 — My Park Series which highlights key natural resources and history of CCPR specific parks was created in 2019. Plans to expand upon the program were delayed in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic but will be re-initiated in 2021
    - 2020 — Wildflower Walks will be expanded upon in 2021
    - 2020 — Stewardship focused web presence in development with PNR/Marketing planned for Spring 2021 rollout (educational components are a key focus of each stewardship park activity)
    - 2021 — Stewardship web pages were developed with formatting and added content for 1<sup>st</sup> qtr 2022 live rollout.
    - 2021 — Participant Learning Outcomes (PLO's) were documented as part of each stewardship engagement program and utilized as a baseline standard of information for participants to gain knowledge and understanding of the projects they are participating in and how they contribute to the larger mission, vision, and values of CCPR.
  - Seek National Audubon recognition for habitat and native plant preservation and integration of the park system
  - Develop resource management plans for those parks that are preservation designated
    - 2020 — Converted approximately 8 acres of turf/grass to native prairie at Steckley Property
    - 2021 — Year 2 of strategic invasive species mitigation efforts with contracted support from Park Foundation dollars to focus on Vera Hinshaw Preserve sustainable habitat restoration efforts
    - 2021 — 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual World Habitat Day native tree and shrub planting project at Vera Hinshaw Preserve continuing phased approach to long term restoration efforts
    - 2021 — Woodland Gardens native planting restoration project for Earth Day
- Provide a diverse selection of facilities and amenities to accommodate indoor and outdoor recreational pursuits
  - Consider developing more health-related amenities in parks (loop trails, art, cultural, outdoor fitness equipment)
    - 2020 — Outdoor cardio equipment was incorporated into park design at Carey Grove Park
    - 2021 — Completed City Center mural project in partnership with Carmel High School (CHS) and the City of Carmel; designed by Caroline Hammonds, a student at CHS
    - 2021 — Clay Township and the City of Carmel began improvements to the existing Japanese Garden honoring Carmel's sister city of Kawachinagano, Osaka, Japan. CCPR will assume maintenance responsibilities for the expanded park upon completion
    - 2021 — 6 pickleball courts were incorporated into construction plans for 2 park sites — Meadowlark and Lawrence Inlow Parks — to be completed in 2022.
    - 2021 — Acquired 63-acre parcel, Thomas Marcuccilli "Nature Park" in Northeast Carmel
    - 2021 — Began preliminary conversations with Sports Methodist Medicine regarding an Outdoor Fitness trail loop; Sports Methodist would construct with input from CCPR; CCPR would enter management agreement once complete (trail open for community use)
  - Consider adding additional assets consistent with park master plans in underserved areas

- Develop age segment, facility and program experiences matrix for each park to determine who is being served and who is not
- Balance and expand program and volunteer opportunities throughout the community
  - Create continuous coordination between Recreation, ESE, and Parks divisions to better utilize existing resources and collaborate between divisions to ensure a balance of program offerings is being maintained throughout the Department
    - 2021 — Nature programming gained a new format revolving around 4 core areas that help define areas of focus and responsibility for each division.
    - 2021 — Intra-Division quarterly team building initiatives were achieved to promote communication and awareness of the teams strengths and serve an intent of fostering positive culture across divisions.
    - 2021 — Unique circumstances created opportunities for staff to support other divisions including subbing in during extreme staffing shortages and staff even permanently transitioned full time employment from one division to another taking advantage of various professional growth opportunities.
  - Identify populations/demographics in Carmel, Indiana and Clay Township by geographical area
  - Construct targeted surveys to determine needs/wants by geographical area
  - Ensure that under-utilized parks are represented in program proposal each season
    - 2021 — Nature programs expanded into various CCPR park properties exploring different ecosystems in different areas of the Carmel/Clay community
  - Utilize compiled data to formulate program offerings based on the needs/wants of each geographical community
  - Ensure a balance of Summer Camp Series opportunities by offering diverse programs at multiple locations throughout the Carmel/Clay community
    - 2021 — SCS offered 12 different camp types, ranging from traditional to specialty offerings, at 6 different facilities spanning the Carmel/Clay community
    - 2021 — SCS added 3 new camp types, EnRoute (world travel theme), STEAM team (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics), and Camp Wayback (exploration of historical time periods)
  - Collaborate with CCPR Marketing team to create specialized marketing plans to reach new participants and promote programming at locations outside of the Monon Community Center and Central Park
    - 2020 — Annual recreation survey sent towards latter end of 2020 aimed to begin initial information gathering of data that will be used to assist CCPR in reaching new participants
  - Evaluate current local and nation-wide trends, challenges, and critical health and wellness issues
    - 2021 — Survey data used to help determine fitness trend direction and interest to ensure planned investments support the public's current fitness needs.
    - 2021 — Constant evaluation of COVID-19 climate and impact on daily lives. Continuous change in policies and procedures to help support a safe and healthy place to provide fitness and recreational needs.
  - Develop targeted surveys to Monon Community Center members that will help identify wants/needs regarding new and current fitness and wellness offerings
    - 2020 Survey Results:
      - Member Satisfaction — 86% of members surveyed responded with a 4 or 5 star rating
      - Highest Rated Amenities — 1. Fitness Equipment Provided, 2. Group Fitness Offerings, 3. Value of Facility for the Money, 4. Investments made to Equipment and Facility
    - 2021 Survey Results:
      - Member Satisfaction — 84.1% of members surveyed responded with a 4 or 5 star rating



- Highest Rated Amenities — 1. Fitness Center, 2. Indoor Track, 3. Group Fitness, 4. The Waterpark
  - 2021 — Developed first Waterpark survey sent out to general public.
    - General Satisfaction — 83.4% surveyed responded with a 4 or 5 star rating
    - Highest Rated Reason for Visiting The Waterpark — 1. Location, 2. Amenities, 3. Cleanliness
- Utilize compiled data to develop innovated and effective fitness and wellness program offerings for all age groups focusing specifically on at-risk populations
  - 2021 — Survey data used to help determine fitness trend direction and interest to ensure planned investments support the public’s current fitness needs.
- Ensure fitness and wellness components are integrated into the Extended School Enrichment programs through supplemental enrichment offerings focuses on the needs and current trends surrounding youth demographics
  - 2021 — Daily opportunities for all students to engage in a minimum of 1 hour of physical activity incorporated into ESE programming at all 11 elementary locations
  - 2021 — Addition of ESE staff training in Mindfulness and Mindfulness breaks for all students, led by staff, incorporated into daily schedule at all ESE sites
- Continue to develop volunteers in all aspects of the system through recruitment, training and replacement
  - 2020 — 46 volunteer programs; 1,288 hours (programs/hours impacted by Covid-19 pandemic)
  - 2021 — 52 volunteer programs; 3,494 hours; 878 timesheets (individual participant records)
  - 2021 — participant learning outcomes (PLO’s) were developed to deliver added value to our participants experiences with our department
  - 2021 — Survey Results:
    - Participant Satisfaction — 95% of volunteers surveyed responded with a 4 or 5 start rating
- Teach and train staff on how to work with volunteers to maximize their performance
  - 2021 — Staff and Board engaged with volunteer program in several respects including training and awareness
    - PNR staff received education and training to engage as project leaders and serve in multiple support roles throughout the year for various projects
    - A comprehensive effort was launched to evaluate and restructure the volunteer program based on the principles of Experience Design. Through this process the recruitment, onboarding, training, evaluation, and retention of volunteers received an overhaul. The exact steps taken, and outcomes of this process, were presented to CCPR staff Additional training for staff including a presentation at CCPR All Staff Meeting conducted by Volunteer Coordinator included a thorough synopsis on the Volunteer Experience Design
  - CCPR Board was educated at September board meeting on progress and growth of volunteer program and natural resource engagement programs
- Develop a strong recognition program for volunteers in the system
  - 2020 — Event held in January at Monon Community Center, recognized the accumulative annual contributions from 2019; CCPR recognized its top 20 contributors with an awards banquet and door prizes for all in attendance
  - 2021 - The implementation of NEON CRM at the beginning of the year allowed us to strategically implement and document solicitation of in-kind donations as well as apply for several grants. We raised over \$3,000 in in-kind donations and grant awards brought in over \$10,000. The in-kind contributions were largely utilized as direct deliverables to recognize volunteers with gift certificates, food on projects, and other handouts that focused on a theme of fostering sustainability.
  - 2021 — volunteer spotlights were developed and highlighted through social media, our web page, and through program newsletters

- Continue reinvestments in revenue facilities by adding or replacing amenities
  - Add an additional waterslide to The Waterpark
    - 2021 — Engaged Williams Architects to explore options that expand opportunities for water play that do not increase the need for staffing. Targeted areas include the location of the existing lap pool and kiddie pool area. Also exploring the feasibility of adding additional cabanas
  - Continue to evaluate need to update fitness equipment on a five-year cycle
    - 2020 — Cybex/Strength Circuit was replaced in first quarter of year, which concluded CCPRs previous five-year replacement cycle; 2021 will resume assessment of needs and implementation of new five-year plan
    - 2021 — New dumbbells ordered at end of 2021. No other capital improvements made to fitness due to COVID-19 impact on budgets.
    - 2022 — Treadmill demo occurred in January to collect member feedback and identify potential replacement options.
  - Identify additional revenue generating opportunities at the Monon Community Center
    - 2021 — Continued discussions with Williams Architects on preparation of plans for a new indoor playground in Multipurpose Room-West and improvements to the adjacent Kidzone. Williams is continuing to work with playground manufacturers to explore equipment options
    - 2021 — Engaged in discussions exploring the potential for becoming an Indiana Medicaid Waiver provider facility. Goals for formal cost analysis and proposal to be developed in 2022.
  - Develop an equipment lifecycle replacement program
    - 2021 — Solicited RFPQ's to vendors specializing in Guaranteed Energy Savings Contracts to evaluate mechanical equipment at Monon Community Center/Waterpark and provide possible solutions for consideration
    - 2021 — R&F Capital Replacement Plan created and proposed in Fall 2021 including outline of full Fitness Center replacement schedule.
- Use Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to drive data-driven decisions regarding services and operations
  - Identify maintenance standards for each park maintained by CCPR
    - 2021 — Recurring work orders automatically populate for weekly/monthly/quarterly preventative maintenance items; 2022 priority is updating maintenance management plans
      - Standards were reduced in 2021 to prioritize custodial roles due to lack of part-time staffing
  - Continuously evaluate staff, equipment, and resources needed to achieve community expectations
    - 2020 — Approved 2021 budget begins to ramp up field staff and key management position with PNR, while additional supervisory and technical staff will be requested in subsequent years to effectively manage CCPR resources
    - 2021 — New FT staff hired to fulfill increasing level of service expansion throughout community including Monon corridor
      - Equipment replacement items were tabled to conserve funding due to pandemic; anticipate replacing UTVs in 2022 with thousands of miles reaching maximum lifecycle due to quality preventative maintenance but anticipating an end to that optimism — utilizing equipment replacement plan standards; other heavy equipment is also qualified at end of life
      - Operations budget increases to meet demands of high use facilities and increasing overall sum of restroom facilities to deliver quality levels of service with new assets
  - Continuously manage to maintenance standards and track the unit of cost to achieve the standard
    - 2021 — Preventative maintenance inspections gained additional recurrence with higher level reviews

- Working out measurables to identify rough figures for total operation costs per property with new assets that were completed in 2021 and those that will be completed in 2022 as well as existing assets
  - Evaluate annually the amenities that need to be update in existing parks
    - 2020 – CTIP assisted CCPR in expediting replacement of playgrounds, parking lots, and other infrastructure that had reached end of life.
    - 2020 – CCPR utilizes regular re-occurring park inspections to address operating and capital replacements as needed
    - 2021 – Utilization of quarterly field staff inspections in addition to annual inspections by higher level staff to determine large priorities for capital maintenance updates and improvements
      - Inspections identified need for a large re-investment at Founders Park playground to meet standards as surfacing is completing life cycle on schedule. Parking lot will likely be a large reinvestment as well. Drinking fountain is due for a replacement and fiber expansion has created opportunities for improving security on site.
      - Inspections identified Monon trailhead locations for further updates after receiving several site improvements through kiosk sign project. Next targets will include at a minimum replacing RR doors and adding site security with adequate network connectivity.

### 1.1.3 ENSURE THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM:

- Develop long-term funding plan and implement Lifecycle Asset Management Plan
  - Maintain and update the Asset Management Plan as new assets are incorporated to the system and items are updated
    - 2021 - Asset management plan updated with new asset infrastructure included unit cost data
  - Track capital costs to ensure the dollars allocated in the Asset Management Plan are consistent
  - Update amenities as they reach their end of life
    - 2020 – CTIP assisted CCPR in expediting replacement of playgrounds, parking lots, and other infrastructure that had reached end of life.
  - Establish a dedicated funding source for capital improvements in all parks
    - 2021 – Meeting with Mayor Brainard, City Councilors, Township Board Members, and Park Board met in April to begin identifying viable solutions to address. Based on initial discussions, all parties supported investigating the feasibility of a Special Taxing District Bond issued through the Township. CCPR is working with the Township’s accountant to conduct assessment.
- Continue and expand conservation management practices throughout park system
  - Demonstrate the cost benefit of urban conservation management with elected officials
    - 2021 – September Park Board meeting presentation with PNR staff to illustrate community engagement strategy, growth, and value of hands on stewardship
- Partner with public, private, and non-profit sectors to satisfy community needs for facilities with high construction and/or operating costs
  - Continue to partner with local agencies on joint development of properties
  - Develop feasibility studies and business plans for all new recreation facilities being considered
    - 2021 – PROS Consulting prepared feasibility study for former Orchard Park Elementary School site. Study confirmed that the site could be a viable location for expanding summer and out-of-school camps. Information passed along to Carmel Clay Schools in order to facilitate further conversation on renovations needed in order to move partnership forward
- Expand environmental education and park stewardship programming to increase appreciation for natural resources

- Develop program offerings and opportunities designed around the intent for the Department to gain tangible benefits as a result of the skills obtained by participants
  - 2020 — Continued implementation of Citizen Science and Adopt a Park programs involving water quality assessments, bird monitoring, native and invasive plant monitoring, and park stewardship projects such as planting native trees and shrubs at sites that had invasive species (honeysuckle, etc.) removed
  - 2021 — Adopt A Park programming grew from 4 participants to 13
  - 2021 — Citizen Science programming grew participation to reach a threshold that is now capping participation in certain categories, while also planning for expansion in 2022 with mycology
    - Additional PNR staffing is required to sustain additional growth
- Develop program offerings and opportunity coordination between divisions to create a reciprocal feed of participants between skill-based instruction (fee-based) and application-based instruction (park system benefit)
  - 2020 — Junior Ranger program developed in 2020 but due to Covid-19 pandemic will not be rolled out until 2021.
  - 2021 — Nature programming growth in active participation through Citizen Science and volunteer stewardship has created a need for developing pre-requisite content that participants can enroll in as a fee-based initial skill based learning opportunity and then apply for stewardship enrollment with built in training to CCPR standards
- Strengthen the infrastructure for informal/unstructured, yet educational, opportunities throughout the CCPR park system
  - 2020 — Added tangible educational resources to field staff vehicles for impromptu opportunities to engage visitors when available
  - 2020 — Interpretive signage added to Founders Park in Spring 2020 utilizing Rain on Main funds
  - 2020 — Flowing Well interpretive signs are in final stages of production and will be installed in 2021 utilizing CTIP funds
  - 2020 — Utilized social platforms to assist with community education on random environmental related topics and nature specific events including native trees, plants, winter solstice, migratory birds, clean water act, world soils day, America Recycles day, etc.
  - 2021 — Nature-based programming incorporated into both ESE and SCS programs, including creek stumping, fishing, nature walks, flora/fauna identification, etc.
  - 2021 — Celebration of Earth Day at all ESE locations with educational and environmental awareness curriculum share with all participants
  - 2021 — Staff attempted to gain additional engagement with park visitors through informal interactions in the parks and allowed for impromptu conversations and general awareness of certain stewardship principles and general management priorities such as adverse effects of stacking rocks in Cool Creek and benefits of shoreline stabilization as well as native species benefits
- Achieve 100% cost recovery for Recreation & Facilities Division and Extended School Enrichment Division
  - Tracking of true costs of service needs to continue to be updated annually
  - Continue to seek outside funding of taxes and user fees
- Examine internal and external communication efforts regarding financial operations of system
  - Update the Marketing Plan to educate new residents on available parks and programs provided by CCPR
  - Develop a cost benefit assessment of the use of advertising for programs and the ROI
  - Ensure employees understand the cost-recovery goals and the reasoning
  - Complete a long-term financial plan for the system and share with all employees
- Update or develop business plans for revenue facilities and programs
  - Update business plans to evaluate all aspects of the site to maximize revenues and keep costs in check



- Continue to market the Monon Community Center as a premiere signature facility in the Midwest
- Identify and pursue opportunities to expand earned-income and other funding sources
  - Establish a new dedicated funding source
  - Continue to seek new earned income opportunities
  - Explore a park bond issue or other financing resources
  - Consider a new position to develop earned income opportunities
  - Seek additional opportunities through grants and sponsorships
    - 2021 — The Hamilton County South River District/Conner Prairie Westside Expansion was selected as one of the signature projects for WR-ROI. This potentially positions the White River Education and Ecology Center to receive up to \$7.3 million if WR-ROI is successful in securing READI grant. Hamilton County also committed up to \$1 million for the ecology center if the project receives funds through READI grant.
    - 2021 — Submitted Next Level Trails grant application to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in hopes of securing state funding for the development of the north extension of the trailhead.
- Track unit costs and pricing alternatives for achieving cost-recovery goals
- Seek to develop a corporate partner to provide funding mechanism for fee waivers offered by the department

## 1.2 “FOURWARD” FOCUS

While CCPR should strive to achieve all recommendations outlined within this Master Plan, the following represent the top priorities for the next five years. Achievement of these will require the sustained effort and support of the community, elected officials, Park Board members, and CCPR to accomplish. Successfully implementing these objectives will ensure CCPR remains responsive to the identified needs of the community and positions itself to remain one of the best managed park and recreation systems in the country. The following outlines the key recommendations:

- Carmel White River Regional Corridor
  - River multiuse trail and working with partners to establish a regional system
- West Regional Corridor
  - West Park development and working with partners (e.g., Dads Club, Schools, County, etc.)
  - Northwest side park
- Reimagine Existing Parks
  - Develop new master plans for Carey Grove, Cherry Tree, Flowing Well, Hazel Landing, Meadowlark, and River Heritage Parks
  - Make a significant improvement within each existing park
- Celebrate Nature
  - White River Corridor
  - West Park redevelopment
  - Flowing Well
  - Environmental education and park stewardship programming

Carmel • Clay  
Parks & Recreation