

JULY 2023

GARY, INDIANA PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM MASTER PLAN

2023–2027



GARY, INDIANA PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM MASTER PLAN 2023-2027



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Recommended Citation: Moyer, A., Anderson, K., Durkin-Blackburn, C., Elliott, L. VanVlymen, K. & Wolter, S.A. (2023). City of Gary, Indiana: Public parks system master plan. Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands. Indiana University. Bloomington, IN.

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FIGURE 1: Aerial view of downtown Gary, Indiana (<https://nirpc.org/2040-plan/human-economic-resources/>)

INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and Goal of the Plan

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

The City of Gary partnered with the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University to create this Parks and Recreation System Master Plan. A parks and recreation system master plan provides a basis for the level of service and recreational facilities provided, along with development priorities and an implementation strategy. It allows the Department to equitably allocate services and to meet identified deficiencies and shortfalls in the system for the future.

In addition to providing an inventory of the facilities, properties, programs, events, and an analysis of use and demand, the comprehensive plan provides an inventory of facilities, properties, programs, and events, as well as an analysis of use and demand. The comprehensive plan also documents public and stakeholder input obtained throughout the planning process. The synthesis of information, public

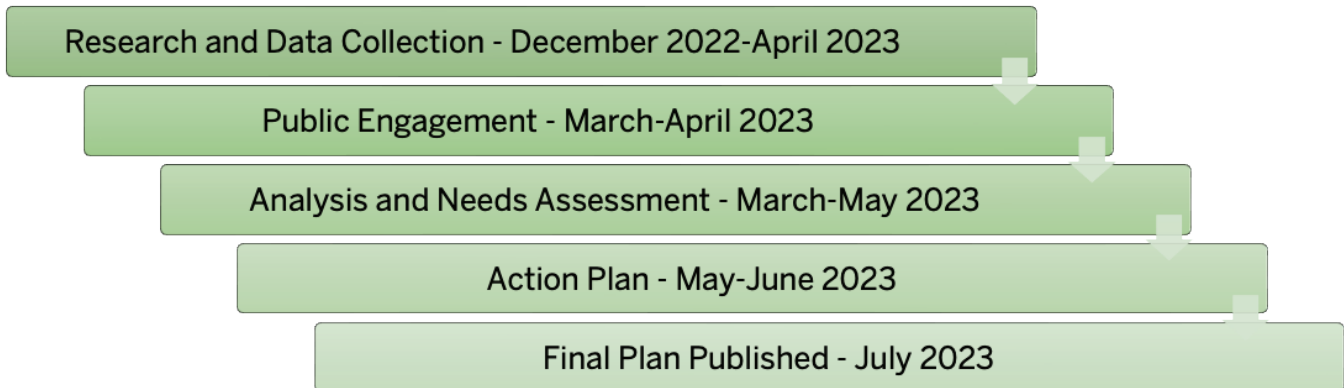
engagement, data, trends, organizational need, and measurable, definable goals and objectives guides the community actions and investment in a rational, systemwide, equitable approach that aligns with community priorities for parks and recreation services. Additionally, completion of a system master plan will also create an avenue for funding opportunities through the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, State Parks, Community Grants, and Trails Division to support the goals that result from the community-driven plan.

The objectives for the Master Plan are to:

- Gain public input for Gary Public Parks Department and Board of Park Commission to use for direction of important policy issues and build wide-spread support of the plan for successful implementation
- Create a published plan that will make Gary eligible for grant and passthrough funding from IDNR-State Parks, Community Grants, and Trails
- Provide an accessibility assessment of park and recreation facilities and programs to determine whether they are encompassing and accessible for all individuals
- Identify barriers to participation and establish priorities for barrier removal

This comprehensive system master plan will guide Gary from 2023 through 2027.

Master Plan Process and Timeline



Public Input

Public involvement is a vital component that can aid in the success of any planning project. The Department of Public Parks and its Board of Park Commissioners sought to use this process to build trust within the community while also developing a plan that outlines a path forward. Public engagement methods included:

- Community Surveys
- Stakeholder Interviews

- Master Plan Website
- Public Comment Sessions

In addition, the plan was presented to the public on Tuesday, July 11, 2023 (virtually) for review, questions, and feedback which was incorporated into the final plan document.

Surveys

The convenience sample survey was conducted in March of 2023. Key findings from the surveys are noted in the figure below:

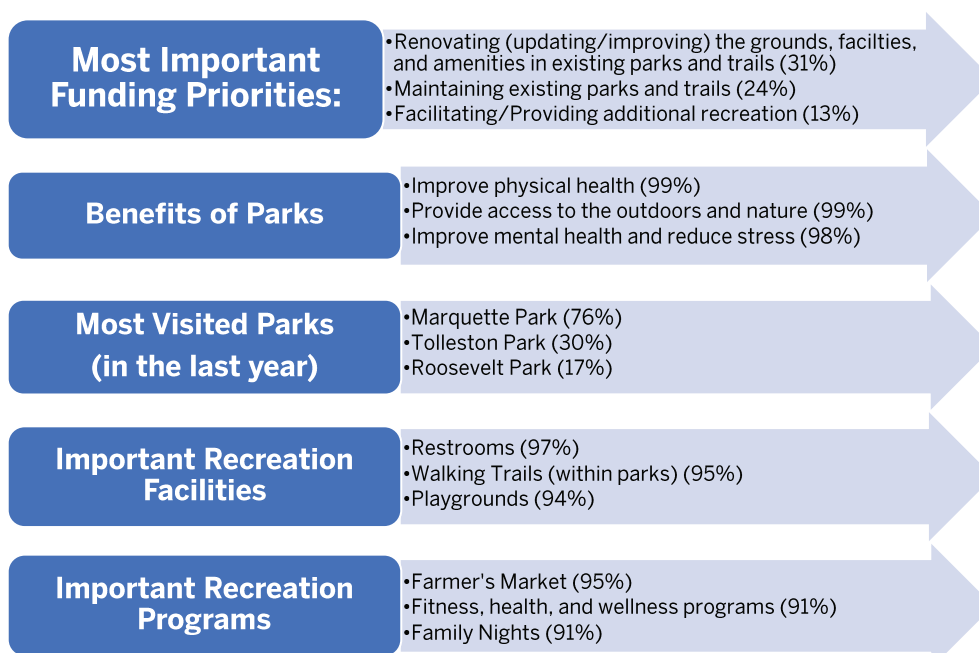


FIGURE 2: Survey Snapshot

Stakeholder Interviews

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

Main themes from stakeholder interviews:

- Maintenance, though understaffed, is well-liked and appreciated
- Decrease in City population is a cause for concern and reflecting in decline of park use
- Park health has a direct impact on public health
- Desire for more specific programming, special events and facility improvements
- Partnerships are valuable to assist in the preservation of active parks
- Park maintenance needs to be the focal point for the city (e.g., litter removal, safety)
- Encourage school partnerships and youth advocacy programs since the youth of Gary are the future stewards of Parks and Public Lands

FIGURE 3: Stakeholder Interviews Snapshot

Project Website

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

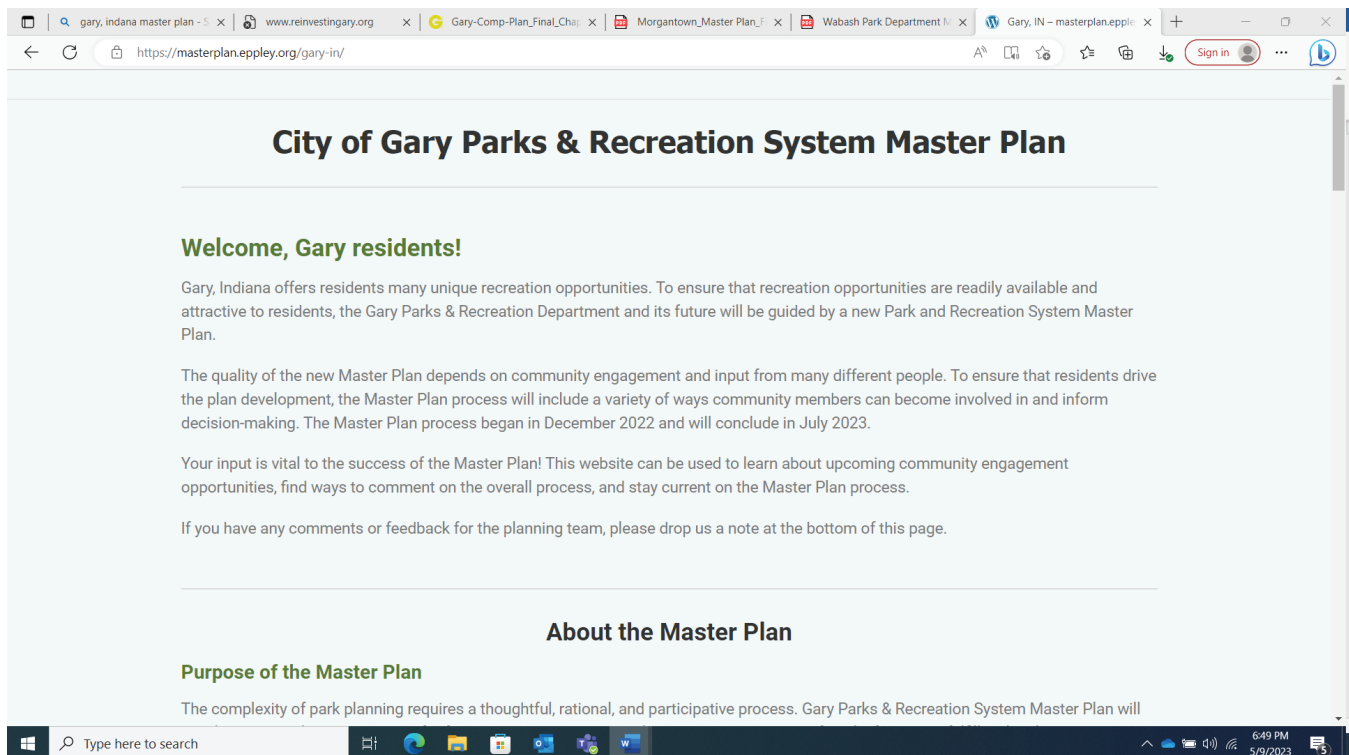


FIGURE 4: Gary Parks & Recreation System Master Plan Website

Moving Forward- 2023-2027

All the data collected throughout the plan development process, including the current state of the parks system and the community, public input, demographics, physical site assessments, and benchmarking were analyzed through a needs assessment that informs the action plan for the next five years.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment compiles the information along with data collected during the initial stages of the planning process to identify a path forward for the agency. This assessment begins with a level of service (LOS) analysis, which summarizes the state of the parks system in Gary using data collected on local facilities comparing it to standardized parks data from national organizations such as the Trust for Public Land and the National Recreation and Parks Association. The LOS analysis is then blended with current conditions and public input to illustrate needs and gaps in the park system. This action plan establishes priorities and goals with anticipated completion timeframes, estimated cost, and potential funding sources for each action item in four theme areas.

Major areas of attention for Gary include:

- Create Prioritization Schedules for Existing Parks/ Projects
- Develop Staffing Plan for Recruitment and Retention
- Provide Parks and Recreational Programming for All

Action Plan

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

Significant action items over the next five years include:

- Complete renovations of the six recognized jewel parks which received ARP funding
- Collaborate with the Redevelopment and other internal departments to develop and enhance connectivity to parks through bike and pedestrian pathways
- Improve accessibility across the park system
- Replace aging equipment and amenities
- Improve stewardship of limited resources
- Define and actively seek partnerships that enhance department capacity
- Create and promote new programming opportunities that contribute to park users' quality of life and offer a sense of safety and security in parks

Background and Context

Planning Area - Gary, Indiana

Gary is located at the southern end of Lake Michigan within Lake County in northwestern Indiana. The city area is a total of 57.21 square miles which is defined by 49.72 square miles of land, 7.49 square miles of water at an elevation of 607 feet. The city is approximately 25 miles from downtown Chicago, Illinois and 152 miles northwest of Indianapolis, Indiana.

Gary is the third largest city in Lake County, as indicated by the 2020 census data, with a population of 69,093. With natural and transportation boundaries, the city is divided into six districts, comprised of 14 neighborhoods (Aetna, Ambridge-Horace Mann, Black Oak, Brunswick, Midtown, Downtown West, Emerson (Downtown Et), Glen Park East/West, Miller, Pulaski, Tolleston, and Westside).

Within a park system inventory of 56 parks, Gary has classified 34 City-owned parks with observable use and maintenance. The planning area focus is on the City's seven Jewel Parks that include Brunswick Park, Glen Ryan Park, Howe Park, Ironwood Park, Marquette Park, Roosevelt Park, Tolleston Park, along with review of 27 other parks that are identified as major community/regional parks, community parks, neighborhood parks, pocket parks, playlots or vacant lots.

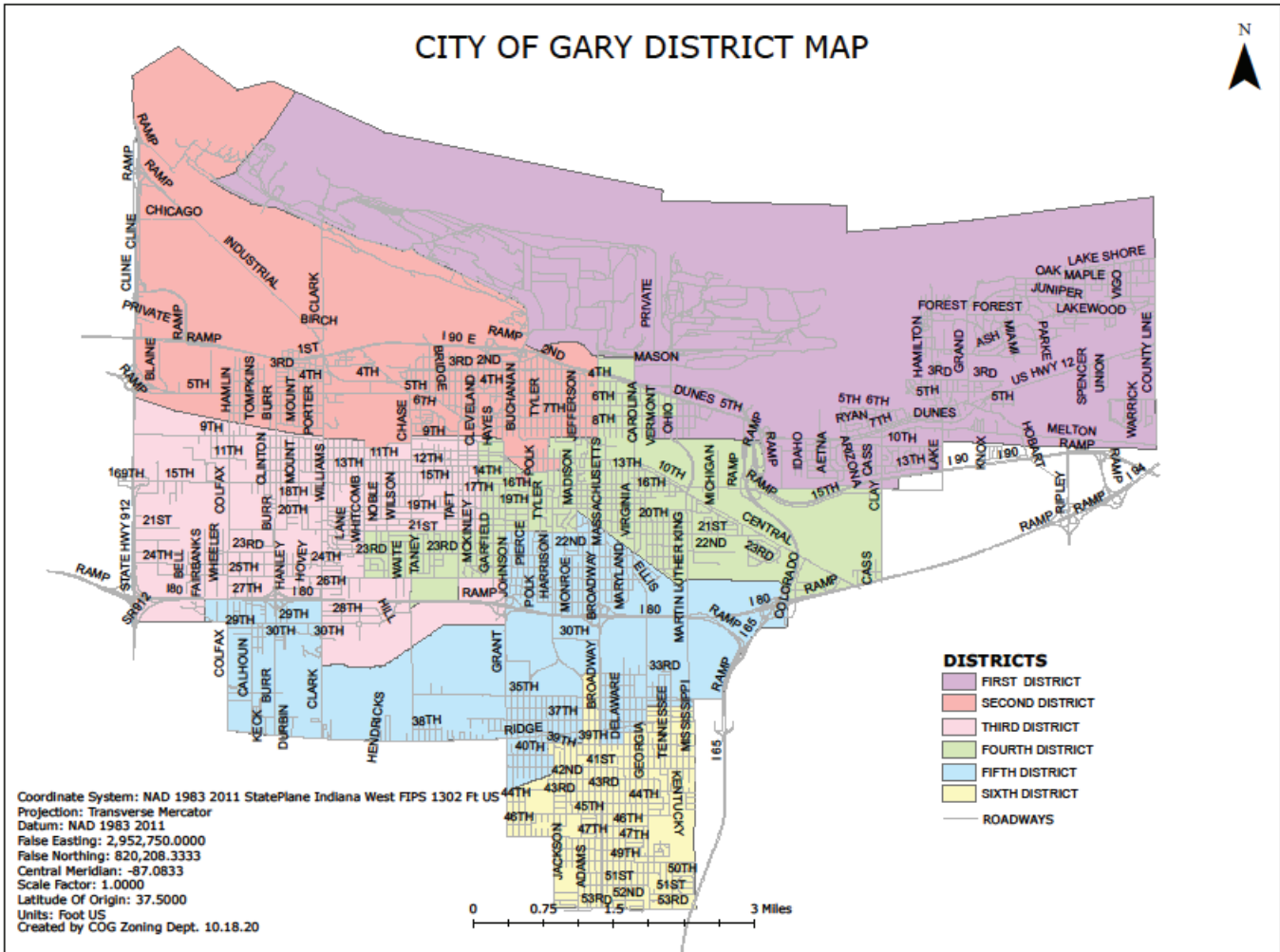


FIGURE 5: City of Gary Districts¹

Natural Features and Landscape

Elevation and Climate

The average elevation of Gary, Indiana is 597 feet above sea level. Gary experiences four seasons, with the warmest lasting 3.7 months and the coldest lasting 3.1 months. The average summer weather is warm, humid, and wet while winter temperatures are freezing with snow and wind. The monthly average high temperatures range from 34°F in January to 83°F in July with normal temperature range from 2°F to 92°F. Gary receives an average annual precipitation of 31 inches of rain and 10.5 inches of snow. Rain falls year-round with the wettest months occurring in May through August while snow falls November to March with the most snow generally occurring in January and February.

Topography and Geology

Lake County is located at the southern end of Lake Michigan and is one of the northwesternmost counties in Indiana within the Northwestern Morainal Natural Region. The City of Gary is located within a region of Lake County that is geological identified as Devonian bedrock which is comprised of carbonaceous shale in the upper part and limestone, dolostone, and shale in the lower part. Gary soils are primarily sand, and the city is characterized by the beaches, dunes, and interdunal wetlands in this Northwestern Indiana region.

Five unconsolidated aquifer systems have been mapped in Lake County. The aquifer systems are the Calumet, the Kankakee, the Lacustrine Plain, the Valparaiso Moraine, and the Valparaiso Outwash Apron. Within Gary there are

¹ Created by City of Gary Zoning Department (2020, October 18).

11 significant water withdrawal facilities registered with DNR that report water use on an annual basis. These facilities are sourced as intake or well facilities (i.e., Indiana American Water Company Incorporated, US Steel Corporation, Turkey Creek Golf Course and Barrington Woods Condo Association) which are used for energy production, public supply, industry, and irrigation.

Areas within Gary are diverse, with a variety of natural features, with its beaches, dunes, interdunal wetlands, oak savannas, prairies, and rivers. The previously dense population has caused impact to the sensitive ecological habitats, with human settlement and commercialization of the area being the highest from the 1930s until a decline beginning in the 1990s. This disturbed natural vegetation in the area, like the paths of the Grand Calumet and Little Calumet Rivers.

The beaches and dunes are a unique aspect of Gary's habitat, with the city owning and operating parks and beaches, adding to their distinctive landscape. Especially within Marquette, Brunswick and Hatcher Parks, with their intact remnants of the dune and swale topography which characterize the lakeshore region of Northwest Indiana of the past.

Watercourses and Lakes

Bedrock aquifer systems extend across Lake County. The Calumet Lacustrine Plain Aquifer covers Lake County. The City of Gary draws and treats drinking water from Lake Michigan: It's 321 miles long with a drainage access from the city's Miller Township. The lake has a surface elevation of 579 feet above sea level with a maximum depth of 923 feet. The water treatment is provided by Indiana American Water at two water filtration plants serving multiple communities in Northwest Indiana, with Gary being one of them along six groundwater wells in Lake Station that serve as back-up sources. Gary has one of Indiana's 15 artesian wells, which evolves naturally from an aquifer used by Black Oak and small farms and is tested regularly. The Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission has developed its four-space parking area with lighting and a small park which included updates to the artesian well, with new piping and ease of access.

Although there have been significant attempts to create drainage in the naturally swampy area of Lake County, it remains an area of swampy conditions and high flood hazard.

The focus of several natural resource damage settlements and ongoing efforts to reduce contamination, the Grand Calumet River originates in east end of Gary at the Grand Calumet Lagoon. It flows east near I-90 to the Indiana Harbor Canal and into Lake Michigan (Nevers, Whitman, and Gerovac, 2000). The west arm of the Little Calumet River also flows through Gary near I-94 toward Lake Michigan. The small streams in the area generally flow parallel to Lake Michigan shoreline and flow south into the Kankakee River or flow north into the Little Calumet River and Lake Michigan (Indiana DNR, 1980). Lake Michigan, one of five great lakes in North America with an average depth of 279 feet, lies at the northern border of Gary.

Forests

Gary does not have any significant forest land in proximity of less than 50-100 miles.

Flora and Fauna

Endangered and Threatened Species

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has identified six endangered species including: one mollusk (SheepNose Mussels), four insects (American Burying Beetle, Rusty Patched Bumble Bee, Karner Blue Butterfly, and Hine's Emerald Dragonfly), and one bird (Piping Plover). In addition, there are also eleven threatened or candidate species including two insects (Monarch Butterfly and Regal Fritillary), three reptiles (Spotted Turtle, Blanding's Turtle and Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake), one bird (Black Rail), two mammals (Little Brown Myotis bat and Northern Long Eared Bat), and three vascular plants (Mend's Milkweed, Dune Thistle, and Eastern Prairie White-Fringed Orchid).

Preserved Natural Areas

Three preserves (Green Heron Pond, Bayless Dune, and Ivanhoe South) are part of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust, a non-profit organization that manages more than 2800 acres of land in northwest Indiana.

GREEN HERON POND

There is no public access to this 14-acre preserve located in a Miller area residential neighborhood. It is a wetland habitat with one larger permanent pond and several, smaller seasonal ponds.

BAYLESS DUNE

A 16.73 acre preserve in the Miller Beach area of Gary with wooded areas and high dunes. This preserve is open to the public and includes a .26-mile trail.

IVANHOE SOUTH PRESERVE

Black oaks alongside permanently wet swales make up the 53-acre preserve. It is open to the public and has a 0.6-mile trail. It is located in west Gary between a residential neighborhood and an industrial area.

There is one nature preserve in Gary that is recognized by the INDR and managed by the Nature Conservancy:

Ivanhoe Dune and Swale

This preserve is located in a residential area on the other side of US 20/W 5th Ave from Ivanhoe South Preserve. Made up of prairie, forest and wetland, the preserve is open to the public.

Two other preserves managed by IDNR Nature Preserves:

- 1. Clark and Pine Nature Preserve** A 40-acre dune and swale preserve, this location is not open to the public and is protected for its natural flora and fauna. It is located on the west side of Clark Road.
- 2. Pine Station Nature Preserve** Located on the east side of Clark Road, opposite Clark, and Pine, this 280-acre preserve is comprised of remnant dune and sand mined dune ridges.

Planning Implications

Gary has diverse outdoor recreation opportunities offered by public and private entities within driving distance. Gary currently has a large inventory of park facilities that have been identified internally as active or inactive for a variety of matters. Surrounding the city's borders are numerous outdoor recreation facilities. Due to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources identification of endangered, threatened, or rare species, new park locations should not be a priority but park reconstruction high on the prioritization list. However, the assessment of park facilities should



FIGURE 6: Green Heron Pond Nature Preserve (photo courtesy of Shirley Heinze Trust)



FIGURE 7: Bayless Dune Nature Preserve (photo courtesy of Shirley Heinze Trust)



FIGURE 8: Ivanhoe South Preserve (photo courtesy of Shirley Heinze Trust)

be mindful of the impact on the natural environment that some City-owned parks with no observable use or maintenance may possess. Gary has an opportunity to protect its existing dunes and wetlands located in proximity to some park facilities while focusing on eco-tourism features and preservation of public access to park spaces.

Historical and Cultural Factors

Historical

The City of Gary, located in Lake County at the southern end of Lake Michigan within northwestern Indiana was founded in 1906 by the chairman of the United States Steel Corporation (US Steel), Elbert Henry Gary, who chose this area to house the world’s largest steel plant during the 20th century. The fast growth of the steel industry gave Gary prosperity. Steel production began in Gary in 1909, and the city was incorporated in the same year. Gary was chosen because of its convenience to midtown along with its source of iron ore and limestone as the major ingredients for steelmaking shipped from Michigan, Minnesota, and the Ohio Valley railroads, which allowed for the import of coal.

Gary’s industrial base aided the rapid growth of the city along with a diverse population. During the 1920s Gary’s population was 29.7% foreign-born from the eastern European countries, and by the 1930s the city’s population exceeded 100,000 making it the fifth largest city in Indiana. US Steel in its growth pioneered the phrase “Safety First” with its job safety programs. The organization also followed the paternalistic relationship model with work and family life intertwined within the company, which did not offer work life balance to their employees.

US Steel established Gary Land Company, which planned and developed what is presently Downtown Gary. Areas not managed or protected by US Steel or Gary Land Company grew arbitrarily with little infrastructure to sustain the growing population.

Gary experienced a significant economic decline in the 1960s with the decline of employment by US Steel from 20,000 to 7,500 within a century, which effected many other businesses, resulting in closures. This industrial devastation and continued loss of population, along with budget deficits have impacted what was once a city with an inventory of more than 50 park facilities.

National Register of Historic Places¹

Thirteen locations within the City of Gary are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This includes 15 buildings and 13 districts (National Park Service, 2023).

TABLE 1: National Register of Historic Places - Buildings in Gary, IN

Property Name	Street & Number
Miller Town Hall	Jct. Miller Ave., Old Hobart Rd., Grand Blvd.
Gary Land Company Building	4th Ave. and Pennsylvania St.
Knights of Columbus Building	333 W. 5th Ave.
Gary Bathing Beach Aquatorium	One Marquette Dr., Marquette Park
Gary Public Schools Memorial Auditorium	700--734 Massachusetts St.
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, School	716 E. 7th Ave.
Bailey, Louis J., Branch Library-Gary International Institute	1501 W. Madison St.
American Sheet and Tin Mill Apartment Building	633 W. 4th Ave.
Polk Street Concrete Cottage Historic District	604-614 Polk St.
Roosevelt, Theodore, High School	730 W. 26th St.
Sablotny, Barney, House	501 W. 47th St.
St. Augustine's Episcopal Church	2425 W. 19th Ave.
Gary Union Station	251 N. Broadway
St. John's Lutheran Church and School	2271 West 10th Ave.
Carolyn Mosby Senior High Rise	650 Jackson St.

¹ National Park Service. (2023). *National Register of Historic Places*. Retrieved May 29, 2023, from <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm>

TABLE 2: National Register of Historic Places - Districts in Gary, IN

Property Name	Street & Number
West Fifth Avenue Apartments Historic District	Roughly 5th Ave. from Taft to Pierce St.
Gary City Center Historic District	Roughly, Broadway from the Chicago, South Shore and South Bend RR tracks to 9th Ave.
Van Buren Terrace Historic District	336-354 Van Buren St.
Jackson-Monroe Terraces Historic District	404-423 Jackson St. and 408-426 Monroe St.
Monroe Terrace Historic District	304-318 Monroe St.
Polk Street Terraces Historic District	404-422 and 437-455 Polk St.
Morningside Historic District	Roughly bounded by E. side of Washington, W. side of Jefferson, W. 47th & W. 48th Sts.
Horace Mann Historic District	Roughly bounded by W. 5th, 8th & 7th Aves., Cleveland & Roosevelt Sts.
Jefferson Street Historic District	Roughly bounded by Washington St., 37th, 35th, Jefferson & Madison Aves.
Lincoln Street Historic District	Roughly bounded by Fillmore & Hayes Sts., 6th & 8th Aves.
Eskilson Historic District	Roughly bounded by W. 3rd Ave. & alleys between Garfield & Hayes Sts., W. 4th Pl. & W. 5th Ave, Cleveland & McKinley St
Combs Addition Historic District	400 & 500 blks. of Rutledge, Ellsworth & 500 blk. of Marshall Sts. between 4th & 6th Aves.
North Gleason Park Community Building	301 West 30th Ave.

Cultural & Man-Made Features

Gary has a rich historical and cultural heritage and is celebrated with festivals and fairs. The Gary Air Show is annual during the summer along with family-friendly activities that include live music and food vendors. The Gary Air Show is returning to the lakefront property of Marquette Park since its last appearance at the property in 2016. The Artisan Fair presented by the Miller Beach Arts & Creative District housed at the Marshal J. Gardner Center for the Arts and at Miller Beach with monthly events, markets and gallery exposes the Miller neighborhood.

Gary Bathing Beach Aquatorium

The Aquatorium is located within the park boundaries of Marquette Park and is listed as a National Historic Landmark which was rescued from demolition by the Chanute Aquatorium Society in 1991.

The city pays homage to its railroad beginnings with statues and an aquatorium in Marquette Park dedicated to Octave Chanute. Chanute was a railroad engineer who flew the world's first aeronautically designed glider from a dune just west of the aquatorium in 1896. Also honored in Mar-

quette Park are the Tuskegee Airmen, whose honorable service in World War II led to the integration of the United States Armed Services.

Marquette Park, originally named "*Lake Front Park*", has a storied past. Long before there was a park at this location it was not only the site of the mouth of the Grand Calumet River, but contained a town laid out first by Joseph Bailly, an early settler in the region. *Indiana City* remained on the maps for many years but never had more than a few shacks on it. The land, a swampy wetland, had to be drained by local contractor Gus Strom after it was given to the City of Gary by United States Steel in 1919 for a park. It was a focal point in the controversy surrounding the annexation of Miller by Gary the year before.

From 1919 until 1932 the park was known as Lake Front Park and the pavilion as Lake Front Park Pavilion. In 1931 W. P. Gleason, the Superintendent of the Gary Steel Works and Superintendent of the Gary Park Department, commissioned Henry Herring of New York to create a bronze statue of Father Pèrre Marquette that was placed at the gateway to the park and renamed Marquette Park with the dedication of the statue in July of 1932.

The bathhouse, now renamed the "Aquatorium", was built in 1921 and as a bathhouse it is a unique structure in the portfolio of its architect, George Washington Maher, who also designed the Pavilion. The Aquatorium is one of two Miller buildings on the *Register* (the other being the Miller Town Hall at Grand Blvd and Miller Ave). For years after it was built it was a focal point of Miller, drawing visitors from all over the region and Illinois on the hot days of summer. Gradually falling into disrepair, it was closed in the 1960s. In the 1990s efforts to restore it were undertaken by The Aquatorium Society. Since then, hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised for its restoration and, in the spring of 1997, the Gary City Council appropriated \$1 million for another phase of its restoration.

As recent as 2010, the west wing of the Aquatorium was refurbished with \$1.5 million earmarked to complete the west wing. The Aquatorium is a unique feature of Marquette Park and offers an information on aeronautics and the City of Gary.

Connectivity

Gary has a sizable number of sidewalks throughout the city that are maintained by the City's Department Public Works. Public Works is responsible for routine maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of streets which includes sidewalks. Throughout the city there are a lot of one-way streets, at-grade crossings of roadways, and rail lines which limit or delay the revitalization of sidewalks. The conditions of sidewalks vary with each neighborhood of the city. The 2019 Gary Comprehensive Plan discusses the implementation of a road diet strategy which 'involves the reconfiguration of existing roadways to reduce vehicular travel lanes to accommodate other transportation uses such as bike lanes, sidewalks, multi-use paths, and off-street parking'. Gary has connectivity from east to west between the dunes and the city with the Marquette Trail expansion with a planned extension more than two miles of abandoned railroad running through Miller Woods.

The Little Calumet River Levee Trail gives outdoor recreational opportunities that extend from Munster to Gary. The extension of this trail, in process, includes the construction of 17 miles offering hiking and the preservation of 550 acres of wetlands. Along with the levee trail the Oak Savannah Trail is a trail system that extends from Griffith to Hobart including a 1.5-mile stretch in Gary from Harrison Street to Mississippi Street.

The Gary Bike and Pedestrian Plan is proposed to the citizens of Gary with six goals to aid mobility through the city

and enhance quality of life. The plan goals include the improvement of safety, mobility and access, community livability and address social equity, health outcomes, household and community prosperity, and support economic development and community revitalization. The internal partnership with Public Parks could extend and opportunity to revitalize streets, sidewalks, and parks to enhance the outdoor recreation experience for its citizens and visitors.

Along with the proposed bike and pedestrian plan, there is a visionary redevelopment to transform Gary's abandoned elevated railroad within the midtown area of the city to connect Marquette Trail from 5th and Chase Street to south of Mason Street with the heart of Gary to span 3.8 miles by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning commission (NIRPC). The Gary ELevate project would offer features and recreational opportunities similar to Highline in New York City, Chicago 606 and Indianapolis' Cultural Trail.

Transportation

US and State Highways

The City of Gary has four major Interstates, I-90 (Indiana Toll Road), I-80, I-94, and I-65 along with access to U.S. Highways US 6, US 12 and US 20, and access to State Road 912.

Railroads

The Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) with the South Shore Line between Millennium Station in downtown Chicago and the South Bend International Airport in South Bend, Indiana.

Airports

The closest commercial airport to Gary is Gary/Chicago International Airport which is a full-service airport and known as Chicago's "third airport." Three additional easily accessible major airports are Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, 51 minutes (est. 47 miles) and Midway International Airport, 49 minutes (est. 37 miles) both to the northwest and Indianapolis International Airport, 2 hours and 23 minutes (est. 158 miles) to the southeast.

Public Transport

There is regularly scheduled public transportation in the city of Gary provided by the Gary Public Transportation Corp (GPTC). GPTC has six regional routes that reach Calumet Township, Crown Point, East Chicago, Griffith, Hammond, Highland, Hobart, Merrillville, and Munster

and five local bus routes operating within the City of Gary limits. GPTC offers a convenient connection with PACE, East Chicago Transit, CTA, and the South Shore Line. The Broadway Metro Express (BMX) buses run every 30 minutes with designated stops along a route that covers Gary to Crown Point and from Crown Point to the South Shore Line. BMX has increased routes with three additional stops at Lake County Government Building, Ada Benjamin Jr. VA Outpatient Clinic, and Purdue Research Park/Ivy Tech Campus, along with the Northern Indiana Commuter Transportation District (NICTD) with the South Shore Line between Millennium Station in downtown Chicago and the South Bend International Airport in South Bend, Indiana.

Trails

The Marquette Trail is 2.1 miles in distance and composed of crushed stone with trail ending points at County Line Rd. and Main St. and Grand Blvd. just south of Ash Place. The trail has plans of a 2-mile extension through Miller Woods. The trail is managed by the Public Parks Department in collaboration with the Friends of Marquette, a non-profit agency that contributes to many aspects of Marquette Park in addition to trail maintenance.

The Gary Green Link Trail is 2 miles and composed of asphalt and concrete with trail ending points at Bridge Street and Broadway & East 4th Ave.

Little Calumet River Levee Trail is 17 miles of asphalt trail that has ending points Monon Trail (Munster) and Martin Luther King Dr (Gary) extending from Cline Avenue to I-65.

Oak Savannah Trail is managed by the Lake County Parks and Recreation. The trail goes from Griffith to Hobart with a section in Gary that extends 1.5 miles from Harrison Street to Mississippi Street.

Gary has an opportunity to extend the Gary Green Link Trail in partnership with Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission to increase trail distance through Gary for 3.8 miles (Gary ELevate project), creating a robust trail network to connect and transform Gary areas.

Social and Economic Factors

Population

Gary is the third largest city in Lake County and the tenth largest city in the state of Indiana. The city experienced a 14% decrease in population from 80,294 in 2010 to 69,093 in 2020, with a 61% decrease within the 50-year period between 1970 and 2020. Lake County's population has remained relatively flat (1-2% growth) during the 30-year period between 1990 and 2020, after falling about 12% between 1970 and 1990. The county population was 498,700 in 2020. Gary is an urban area with a much higher population density (1,389 per square mile) as compared to Indiana (189 per square mile) and the US (94 per square mile).

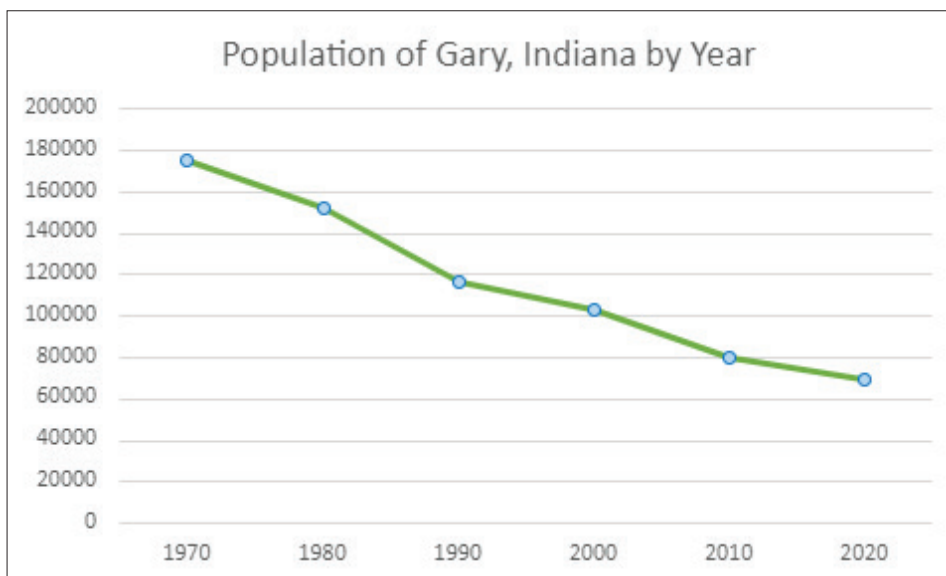


FIGURE 9: Gary Population 1970-2020

Population by Age and Sex

A greater proportion of the population of Gary is under the age of 18 or older than 65 when compared to the state of Indiana and the United States as a whole. Children (under the age of 18) make up 27.2% of the population of Gary, including 7.1% under the age of 5. Meanwhile, older adults (ages 65+) make up 18.6% of the population of Gary. The population of Gary is 54% female, slightly higher than the average 50.5% of Indiana and the US.

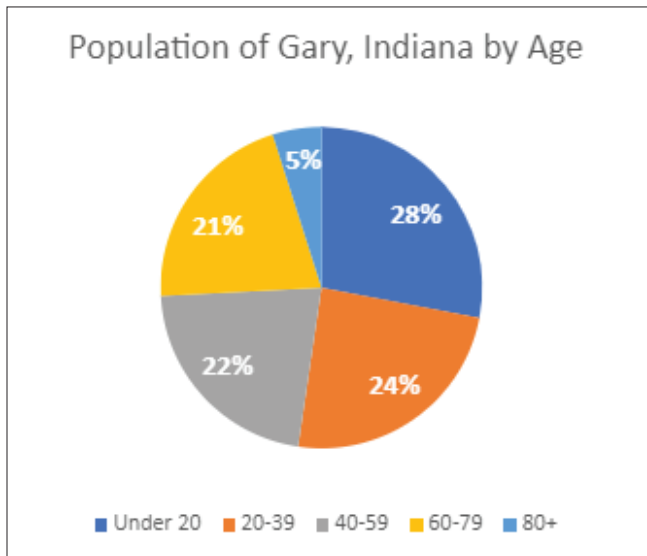


FIGURE 10: Gary Population by Age Distribution

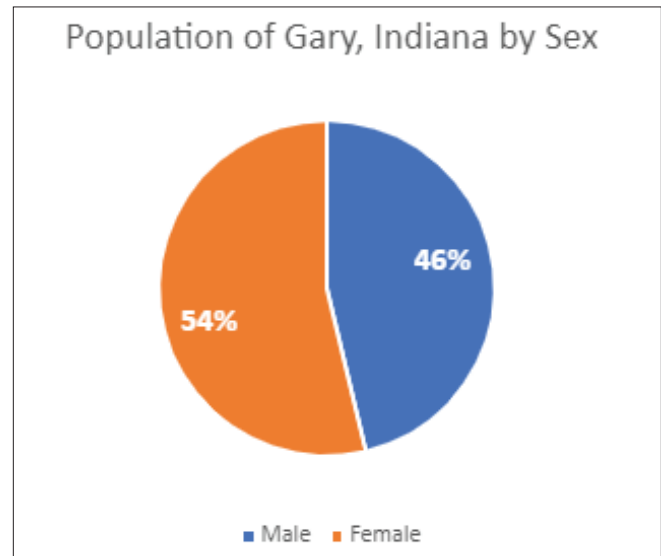


FIGURE 11: Gary Population by Sex

Population by Race and Ethnicity

The population of Gary is primarily Black or African American (78%) which is a much larger proportion of the population as compared to Indiana (10.2%) and the US (13.6%). Those who identify as Hispanic or Latino make up 8.6% of the population; only slightly higher than Indiana (7.7%) and less than half the rate compared to the US as a whole (18.9%).

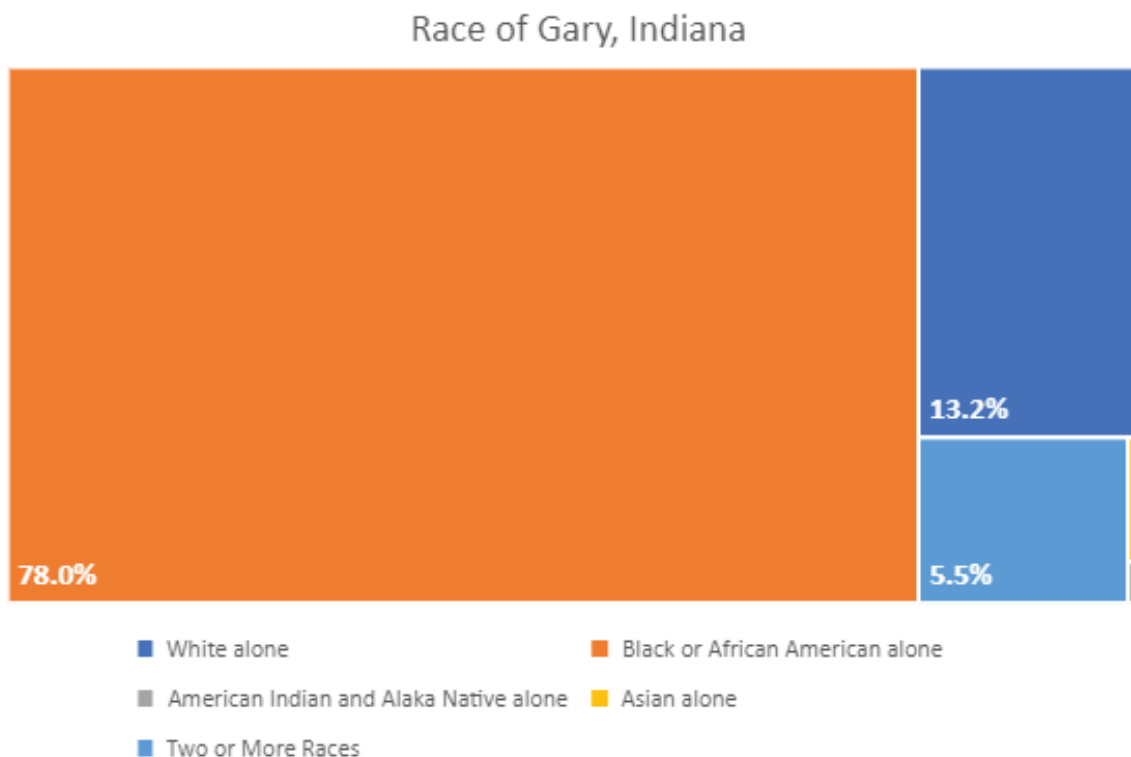


FIGURE 12: Gary Population by Race

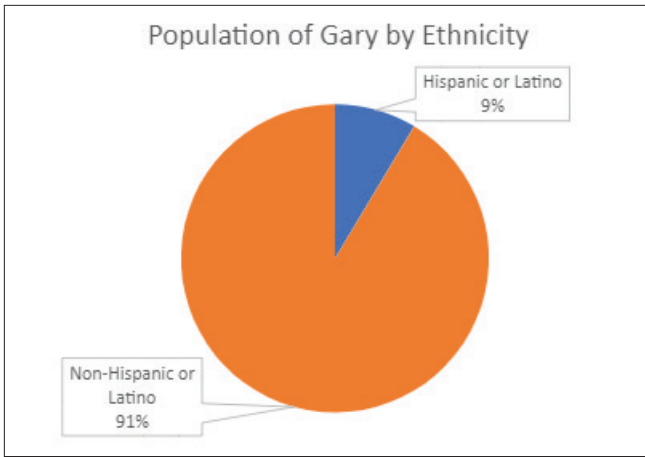


FIGURE 13: Gary Population by Ethnicity

Education

Only a slightly higher percentage of the residents of Gary lack a high school diploma or equivalent (13.9%) when compared to Indiana (10.2%) and the US (11.1%). However, far fewer residents of Gary (14.4%) hold a bachelor's degree (27.8% of Indiana residents and 33.7% of US residents). This lower level of education attainment may be a factor for disparities found in the employment and income figures shown in Figure 7.

TABLE 3: Gary Education Levels

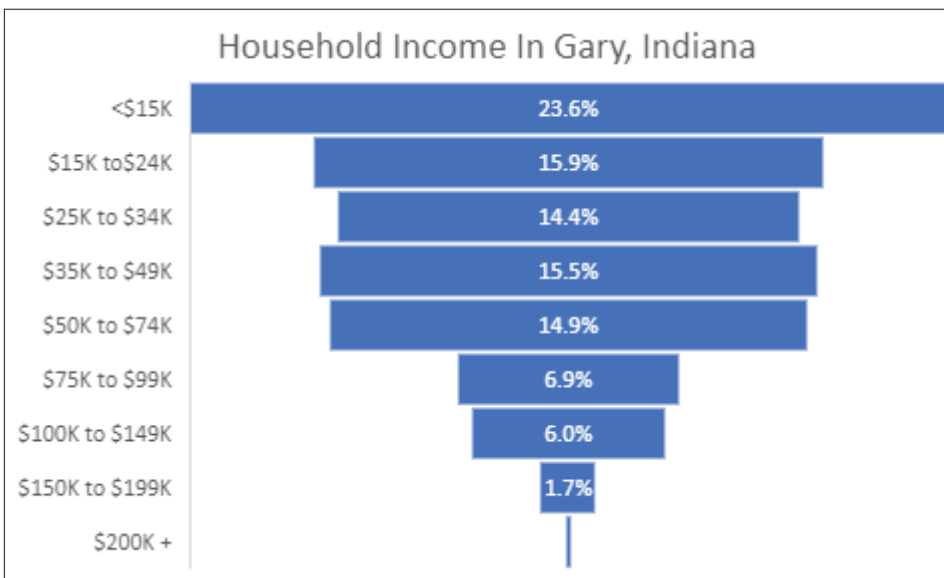
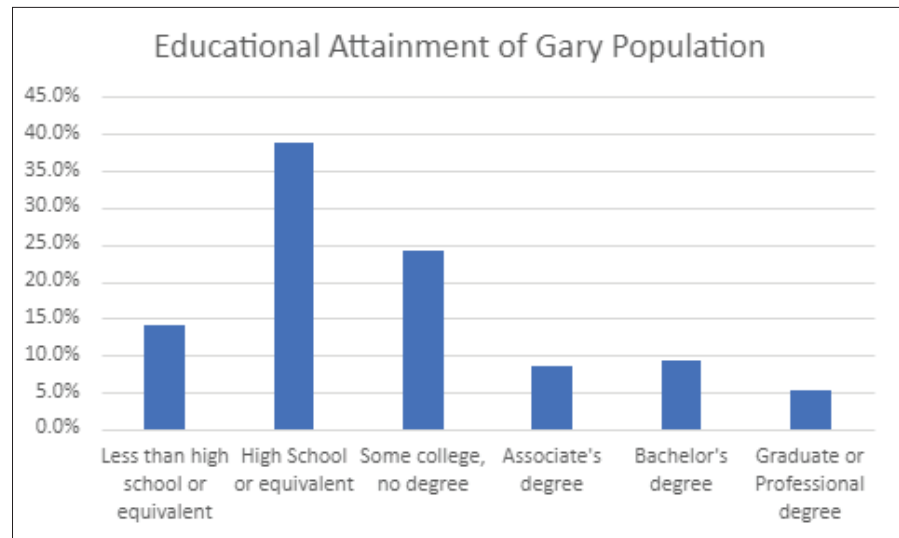


TABLE 4: Household Income in Gary

Economic

The median income for a household in Gary, Indiana is \$37,671 per year as compared to \$61,944 for the state of Indiana and \$69,041 in the US as a whole. The poverty rate is 32% in Gary with 53% of those under the age of 18 and 13% of those over the age of 65 living in poverty. These poverty rates are nearly 3 times higher than Indiana and the US.

Employment Data

As of 2021, ACS estimates about 50% of the population of Gary over the age of 16 was in the labor force with an unemployment rate among those individuals of 13%. Both the proportion of the population that is *not* part of the labor force and the unemployment rate in Gary are significantly higher than those of Indiana and the US. The largest employer in Gary is indicated as US Steel Corporation with the most common field of occupation being service occupations, followed by management, business, science, and arts occupations.

TABLE 5: Hoosiers by the Numbers: Lake County, Indiana - Major Employers²

Franciscan Health Dyer (Dyer)
Franciscan Health Hammond (Hammond)
Community Hospital (Munster)
Alverno Clinical Labs LLC (Hammond)
Franciscan Health Crown Point (Crown Point)
Methodist Hospital Southlake (Merrillville)
Purdue University Northwest (Hammond)
US Steel Corp (Gary)
Wound Ostomy Clinic at St. Catherine Hospital (East Chicago)
Nisource Inc (Merrillville)

Health Data

About 11% of Gary residents do not have health insurance. Among those individuals who carry health insurance, 50% have either Medicare or Medicaid. Keeping in mind that Gary is in Lake County Indiana, the following information is at the county level rather than the city level. Lake County Indiana has an average life expectancy of 79.5 for women and 73.6 for men, similar to that of Indiana and lower than the national average. The percentage of Lake County residents who smoke (25% of women and 28% of men) is slightly higher than the Indiana average and higher than the national average (18% of women and 22% of men). Obesity rates are also higher in Lake County as compared to Indiana and the national averages. 44% of women and 39% of men in Lake County are considered obese as compared to the national averages of 36% of women and 34% of men. Only 47% of women and 51% of men in Lake County get the recommended amount of physical activity per day. These rates are about 3 to 4 percentage points lower than the Indiana average and 6 percentage points lower than the national averages.

A little more than 16% of Gary residents report having a disability. Among those with disabilities, the most common types are independent living difficulty and ambulatory difficulty. It should be noted that the categories of disabilities are not mutually exclusive.

² Hoosiers by the Numbers. (2023). Retrieved June 12, 2023, from https://www.hoosierdata.in.gov/major_employers.asp?arealD=089

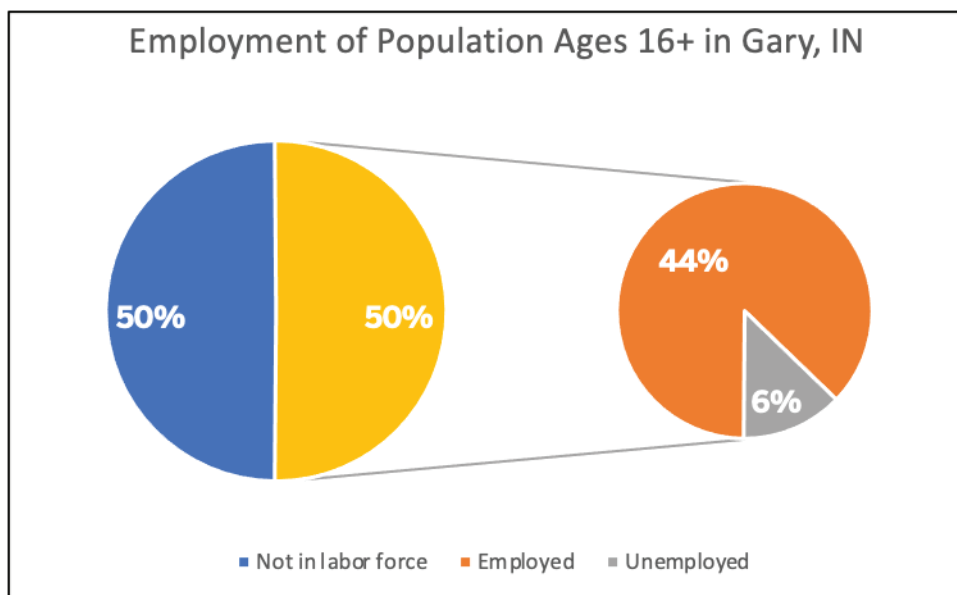


FIGURE 14: Employment in Gary

TABLE 6: Employment by Occupation in Gary

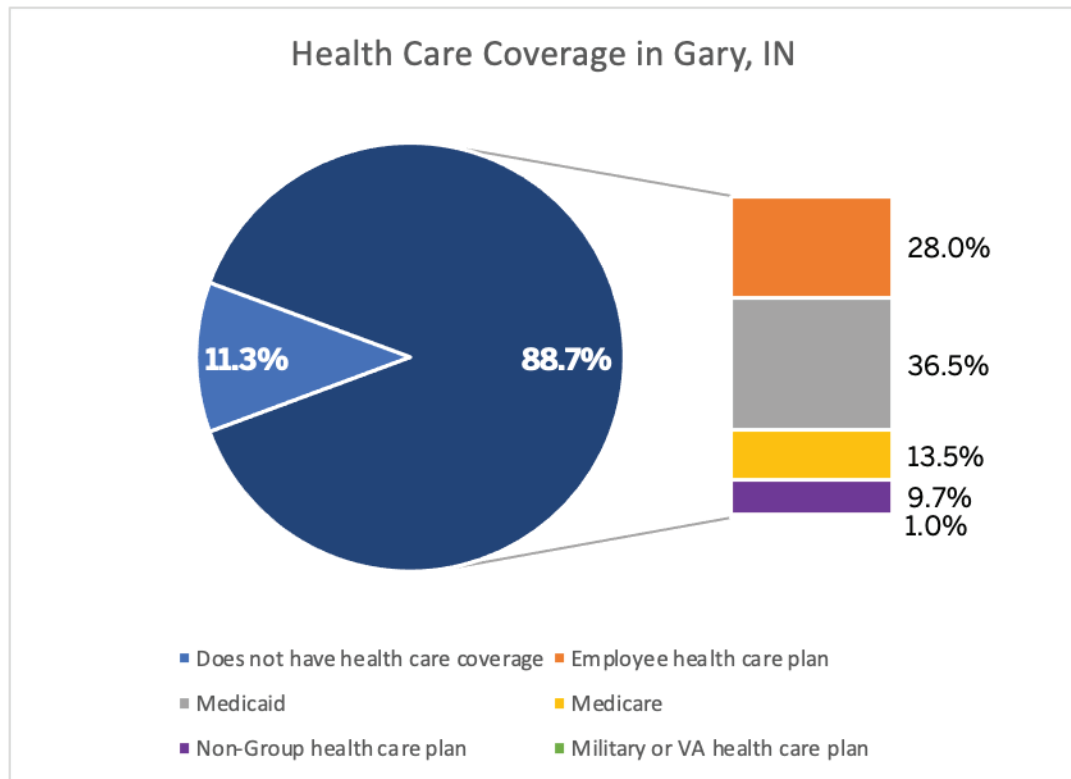
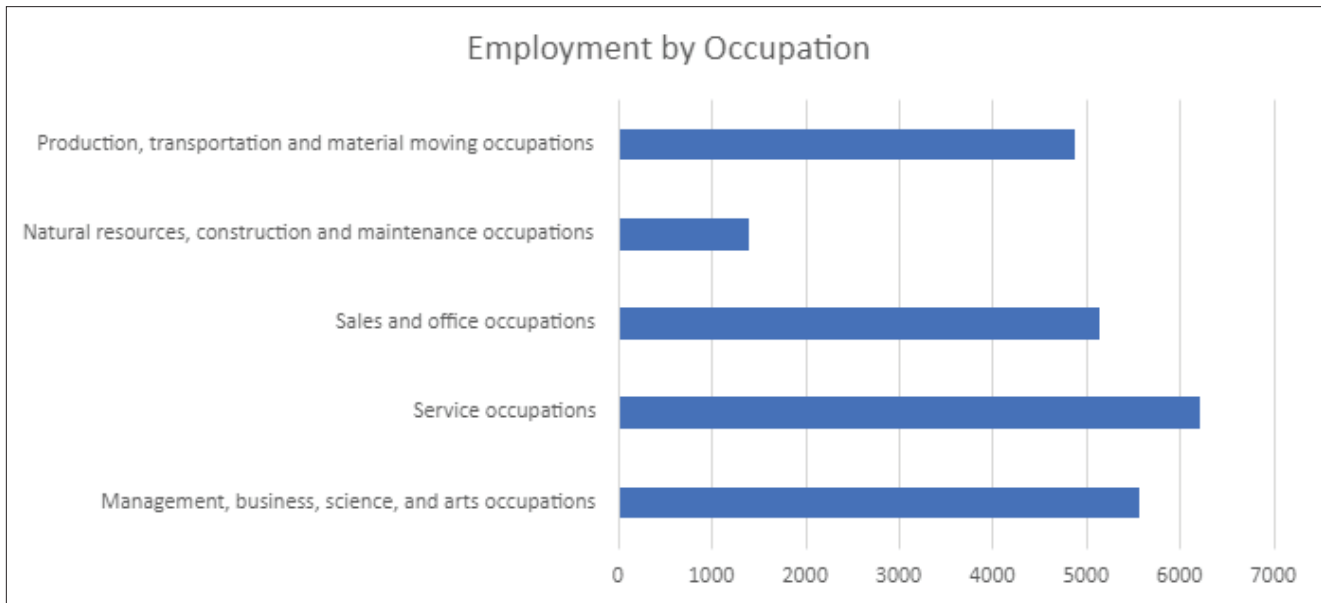
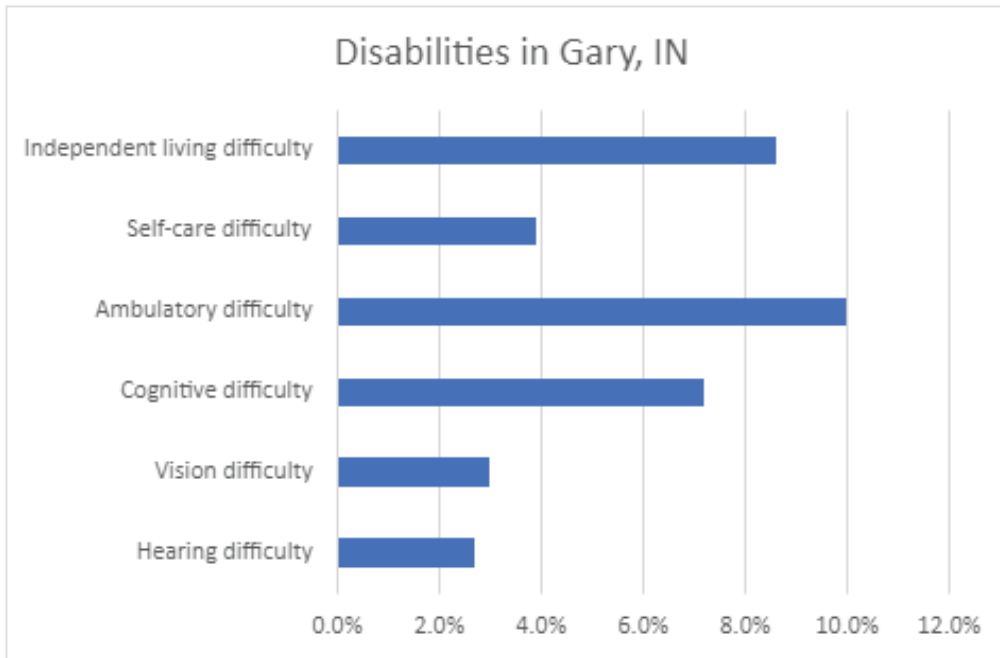


FIGURE 15: Health Care Coverage in Gary

TABLE 7: Disabilities in Gary



Planning Implications

Gary Public Parks is currently reviewing opportunities to provide recreational programming to the public and with staffing capacity community partnerships will have to be a major component in the programming operations and facilitation. The development of new programming opportunities will contribute to citizens' eagerness to have more programs along with opportunities to gather and fellowship within park facilities. Gary has a significantly high number of citizens who do not have health care insurance and it is imperative that the public parks department improvement of access to parks for all citizens to contribute to their quality of life through future programming that is inclusive of all populations.

AGENCY INFORMATION

Vision/Mission/Goals

Public Parks Mission Statement³

Gary Public Parks Department defined their mission in 2009 which states, “It shall be the purpose of the department of public parks to stress the value of recreation, both active and passive, for individual growth and development. We are dedicated to the common cause of assuring that people of all ages and abilities have the opportunity to find the most satisfying use of their leisure time and enjoy an improved quality of life. Consistent with this purpose, every opportunity shall be afforded to plan, procure, develop, and maintain the park and recreational resources.”

Gary Board of Park Commissioners⁴

The Gary Board of Park Commissioners is composed of four members, selected, and appointed by the mayor and no more than two of whom shall be of the same political affiliation composed of the superintendent, and such other personnel as the board may determine. Each new appointment shall be for a four-year term, beginning on January 1 in the year of appointment. The mayor shall appoint a commissioner to fill the vacancy caused by the expiration of a term by February 1 of each year. The mayor shall appoint a commissioner for the remainder of a term when any vacancy occurs on the board. (Code 1989, § 34.132; Ord. No. 5936, 8-22-1983)

³ Gary Venues, Parks and Recreation. (n.d.). Retrieved January 10, 2023, from <https://gary.gov/parks/>

⁴ Gary Municipal Code. (n.d.). Retrieved May 3, 2023, from <https://garycityclerk.com/gary-municipal-code/>

TABLE 8: Gary Board of Park Commissioners

Gary Board of Park Commissioners
Rev. Dwight Gardner, President dwightgar@msn.com Term Expires: Not indicated
Willie “Bill” Cook, Vice-President billcook589@gmail.com wcook@garyhousing.org Term Expires: 10/5/2025
Renee Patterson, Member tobiarenee@gmail.com Term Expires: Not indicated
Alan Harrell, Member alan.harrell@mccolly.com Term Expires: 04/15/2025
Deidre L. Monroe, Attorney dlmttc@aol.com

Organization

The City of Gary Department of Public Parks Superintendent reports directly to the Mayor with operations oversight by the Gary Board of Park Commissioners and fiscal oversight by the Gary City Council. Gary’s Department of Public Parks approved budget for 2023 is \$1,819,701.00. The Department has 17 full-time employees, 38 part-time employees and hires seasonal employees during summer months for grounds, maintenance, event staff, beach patrol staff, and lifeguards.

Department of Public Parks Organizational Chart

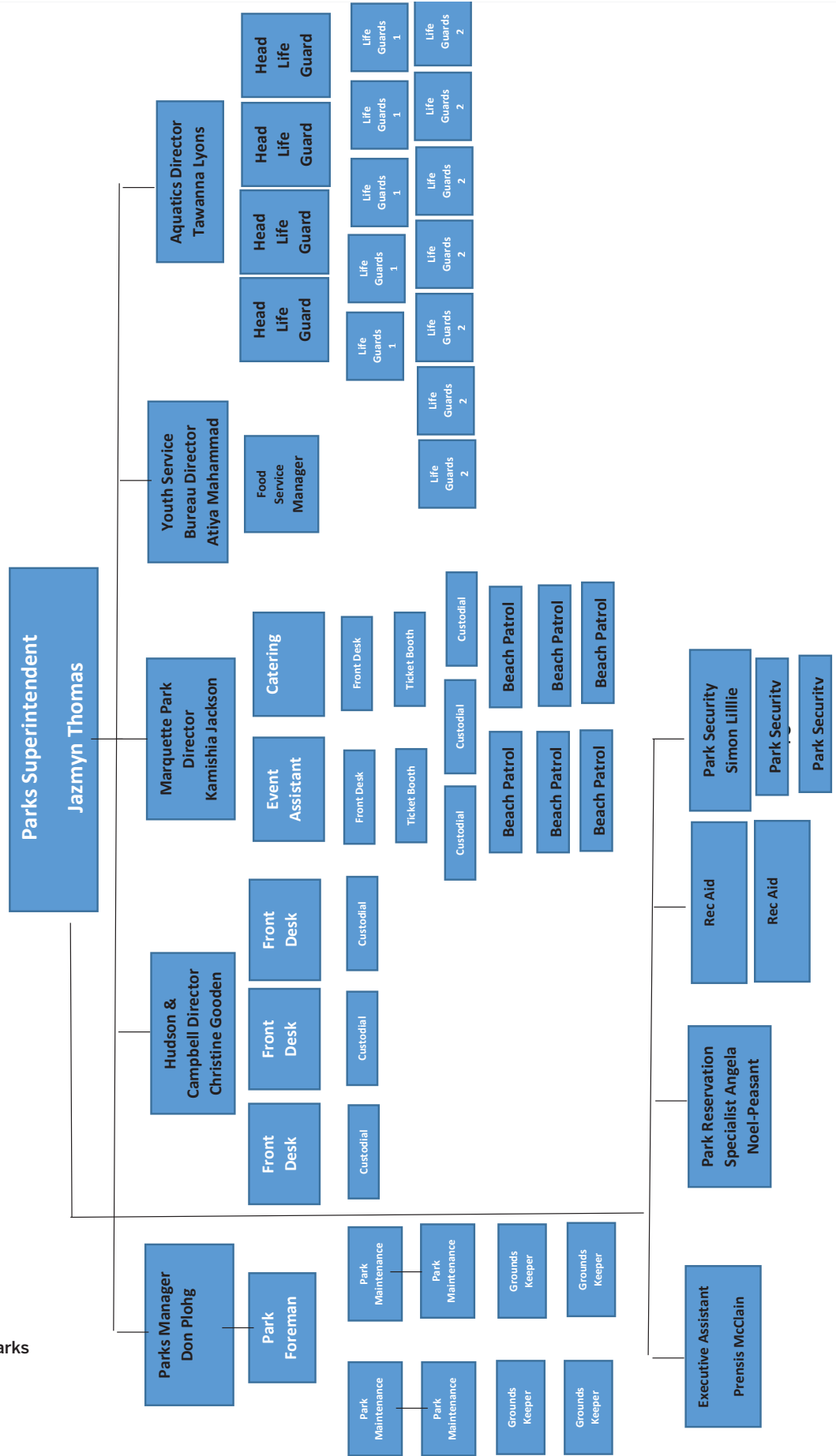


FIGURE 16: Gary Department of Public Parks Organizational Chart

Facilities

Gary owns a total of 56 parks through the city limits with only 34 parks with observable use and maintenance of various sizes and scopes, along with one operable city managed trail. The unmaintained 22 parks are based on locally controlled decisions by necessity. The full inventory of park property is comprised of 746.57 total park acreage, with 479.52 acres with observable use and maintenance and 267.05 acres with no observable use and maintenance.

Condition assessments were conducted on each of the parks by staff from the Eppley Institute in March 2023. These assessments are done to confirm assets and amenities within each location and visually inspect for overall quality, usage, and needed repairs including replacements, or upgrades. These assessments looked at the actual state of the facilities and amenities and did not consider accessibility or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. They were done, however, concurrently with an accessibility assessment, during which assets and amenities were inspected for compliance and recommendations for improvements made. Eppley's assessment of facility, asset, and amenity conditions can be found in this section and accessibility is covered in more detail in the Accessi-

bility Review section.

Many of the park properties included park amenities such as pools, picnic shelters, pavilion buildings, courts (i.e., basketball and or tennis), ball fields, trails/walking paths and playground equipment.

The City of Gary received a portion of American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) funding that was allotted to the Department of Public Parks to renovate and revive some parks with focus on seven of the Jewel Parks. ARP funding is a result of federal legislation as aid in the US in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Funding applied in the amount of \$500K per park was distributed to the seven Jewel Parks. During the site visit in March 2023, RFPs were beginning review for awarding in March. There were some Jewel Park pavilions under construction based on funding from the city's Community Development division. ARP and Community Development, active and upcoming, are indicated in the Condition Assessments section.

System Map

Gary, IN Parks

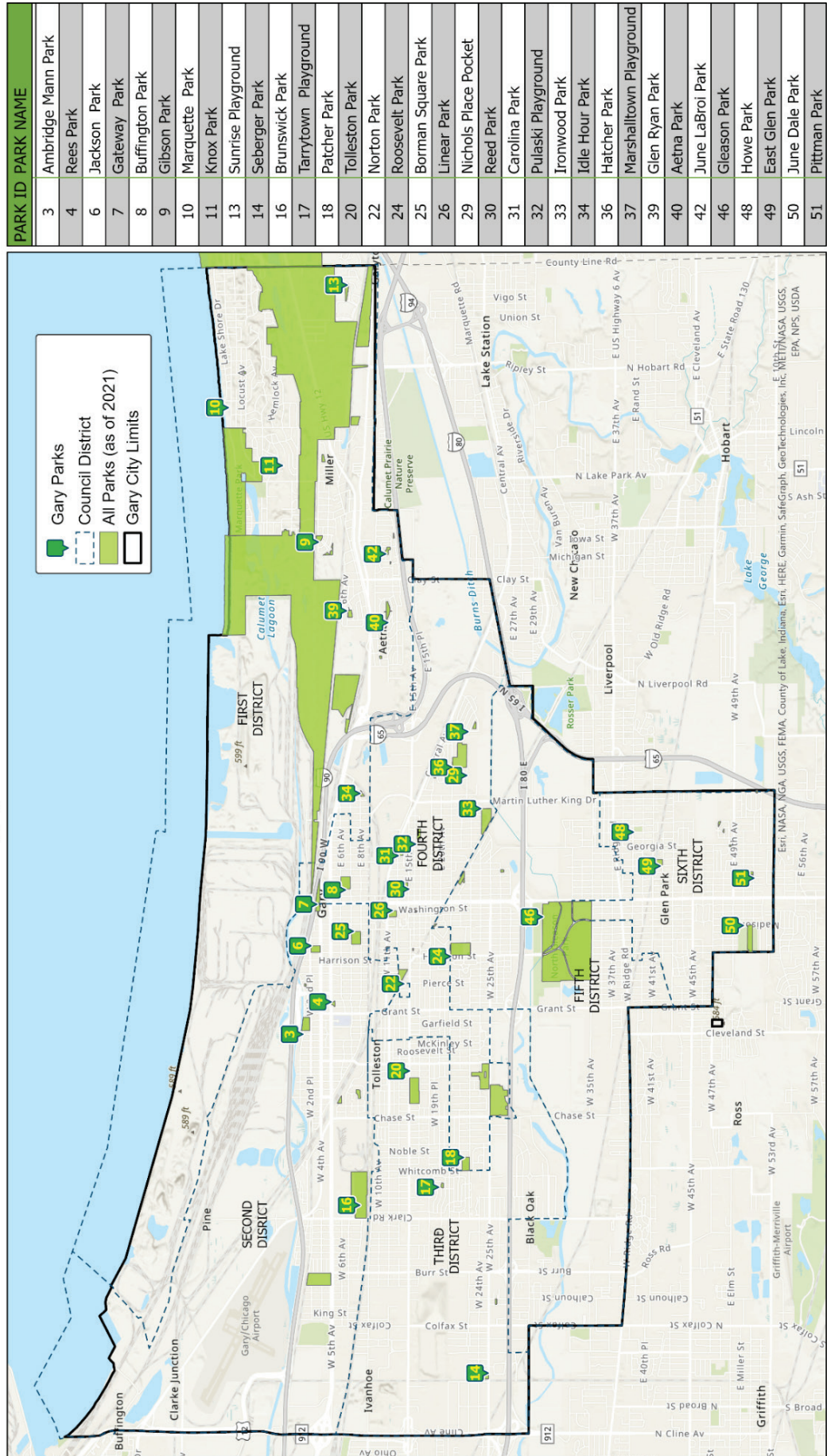


FIGURE 17: System Map of Gary's City-Owned Parks with observable use and maintenance

Parks Condition Assessment Key (reflected in the section below):

Note: ^Indicates a LWCF park as identified by Indiana State Department of Natural Resources (Five parks that are operable parks and one inoperable park). LWCF is the Land and Water Conservation Fund which is a federal program which provides funding for acquisition of land and or development of public land for outdoor recreation. * Indicates a Jewel Park as identified by the City of Gary (7 parks represented by one in each district)



FIGURE 18: Gibson Park Playground

City-Owned Parks in District 1

GIBSON PARK – 301 FLOYD STREET (4.15 ACRES)

The park amenities include:

- Fenced youth baseball field with dugouts
- Fenced tee ball field with dugouts
- Press box with concession area and restrooms
- Bleacher seating areas (2)
- Playgrounds with equipment to accommodate multiple age groups (2)
- Small tot lot play area
- Several benches throughout the park property for rest and/or observation of playground areas

Condition Assessment

Gibson Park is located within the Miller neighborhood, appears to be well-maintained in good condition with minimal weed management needed throughout the property. The park is visible from various points in the neighborhood roads with adequate sidewalk access. The baseball field is well-groomed and was inviting to local dog owners who allowed their dogs off leash. The playground areas are within grassy areas and needed some weed control under the equipment where mowers cannot access. The areas under the playground equipment are accessed by climbing underneath which may pose a safety concern.

Some stakes are protruding out from the playground border which identifies the playground boundary areas. The press box building was not assessed, due to being locked based on the partnership with local group. In consideration of accessibility for persons with disabilities, the parking area within Gibson Park lacks proper identification for accessible parking spaces, including van accessible. Accessible parking spaces are in need of posted signage and would benefit from new ground paint to delineate spaces and access aisles. Concrete sidewalks that allow access to the park are in good condition. The city should ensure that visitors can identify accessible routes and facilities by adding additional directional and informational signage. In addition, Gibson Park would benefit from further review of its surfaces, including concrete pathways and playground surfacing. Surfaces that are both safe and code-compliant will benefit all of Gary's citizens.

General Recommendations:

- Add directional signage from park entrance and parking lot to indicate accessible amenities.
- Level pathways leading to all amenities.
- Install appropriately marked signage to indicate accessible restrooms and other park amenities.
- Add new ground paint to designate and mark accessible parking that is closest to the accessible route.
- Install accessible and code-compliant playground ground surfacing to eliminate changes in level and gaps.



FIGURE 19: Marquette Park Pavilion (2012, Photo credit: Hitchcock Design Group)

^*Marquette Park – 7500 Oak Avenue (176.89 acres)

The park amenities include:

- Pavilion
- Aquatorium (listed on the National Register of Historic Places)
 - Operated by the Society for the Restoration of Gary Bathing Beach Aquatorium and Octave Chanute's Place in History (Society).
- Monument of Father Marquette
- Picnic pavilion
- Picnic shelters (3)
- Bridges and fishing overlook
- Beach
- Special events area
- Concession building
- Playground
- Parking lots
- Accessible kayak launching area at the Lagoon
- Disc golf
- Walking trail
- Interpretive signage
- Accessible beach pathway
- Boat launch area at Lake Street

Condition Assessment

Marquette Park is a lakeshore property located in the Miller neighborhood along Lake Michigan. Marquette Park is an LWCF property and indicated as a Jewel Park within Gary's Department of Public Parks. Marquette is adjacent to the Indiana Dunes ecosystem inhabited by high-value natural resources along with sand dunes, lagoons, upland forests, and wetlands (i.e., classified as pannes). Within the park property there are acres of dune natural areas along with the areas rare habitats are the home to several endangered, threatened, rare plant and wildlife species. The park was constructed in 1865 and was recognized for its potential to extend recreational opportunities by the citizens of Gary and their visitors in 1912. The park was renovated with funding from the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority (RDA) in 2010 to include capital improvements along with additional adherence to ADA code-compliance and to preserve the park's natural features and enhance recreational and educational amenities.

The entry and park are well maintained. The parallel parking at the pavilion is limited and the main parking lot is a bit of a distance from the entrance to the building. The main pavilion building is well managed and clean. The multi-level building with new renovations is fully accessible with elevators to allow all to transition from one level to another, along with open space (i.e., ballroom areas and restrooms). The building is well preserved with its Renaissance style and modern interior features.

As the Aquatorium operation is shared between the city and other local groups and has historical classification, it was only viewed from the outside perimeter, which was clean and functional.

The lot to the left of the Aquatorium is primarily designated to reach the accessible beach pathway which has a blue mat of foam material. The distance from the parking lot to the access point is significantly long, especially for an individual operating a non-electric wheelchair. The mat is a distance to the beachfront but does not extend all the way to access water. The mat had some ripples along the pathway and some portions of the mat were covered with sand. The staff acknowledged that during the beach season the mat is straightened, and sand blown off multiple times per week.

The playground equipment is in good condition with a sand surface. Accessibility to play equipment is limited to pour-and-play surface areas. Rainy conditions during the assessment made drainage issues at the pavement visible, and sidewalk areas near the playground had standing water.

All picnic shelters near the beachfront were sound structures with normal wear and tear. The picnic shelter, closest to the playground area, had mold present on the ceiling.

The picnic pavilion built into the hillside overlooking the beach and lake has a substantial concrete shelter, appearing historic in nature, and in sound condition. Bathrooms were locked and casual trails present around both sides of the pavilion could present a hazard when wet. The parking area has designated accessible parking but no accessible van parking and no ramp to get up the steep hillside to shelter.

The disc golf area was newly installed in a grassy area adjacent to the concession building by the neighborhood associations. There were no visible holes that were accessible, but tees and baskets were in good condition.

The Lake Street boat launch area has a large amount of sand on the shore that is covering the parking lot's drop zone area. At the rear of the Lake Street parking lot is the park maintenance building which houses all the maintenance equipment (i.e., mowers, trucks, skid steer loaders, and other equipment), along with other storage areas and is at capacity with minimal space for staff to have work-space (i.e., desk, chairs, proper heating/cooling elements, equipment wash stations, and operating lavatory).

The concession building was locked, and exterior conditions appear sound and clean within the full area. A few parallel parking spaces are located at the road access in front of the concession building.

Accessible kayak launching deck is a sound structure with parking that offers an accessible route to the launching area.

Walking trail is well-maintained by park maintenance in collaboration with the nonprofit Friends of Marquette Park.

General Recommendations:

- Ensure that shelter grills have clear ground space and be located on an accessible route or trail.
- Provide shelter area picnic tables with accessible seating options.
- Review accessible parking needs at the Concession Building, Aquatorium, and Accessible Kayak Launch to ensure for accessibility code compliance.
- Widen the pathway to provide for additional passing space and ease of access to the accessible kayak launch.
- Review beach access surfacing and consider adding additional means of access to experience the lake water.

Knox Park – 320 N. Knox Street (1.23 acres) – Park Not Photographed

Park amenities include:

- None noted.

Condition Assessment:

- Upon arrival, the location lacks a designated parking area but on-street parking is permissible, although not designed with accessibility in mind. There is no observable park entrance, trailhead, park facilities, or amenities, making Knox Park more consistent with a greenspace or a city-owned park without active public use or maintenance.

General Recommendations:

- Should Knox Park be utilized for programming, it is recommended that the City provide accessible parking, create accessible routes, and design any future structures and amenities with accessibility and code-conformance in mind.

Sunrise Playground – 560 Warrick Street (2.99 acres) – Park Not Photographed

Park amenities include:

- Swingset

Condition Assessment:

Sunrise Playground is located in a residential area within the Miller neighborhood. The entrance to the park is not easily identified, overgrown and being reclaimed by natural vegetation which prohibits entrance. The swing sets are visible from a distance and observed to be broken and no longer stable structures.

General Recommendations:

- Initiate a maintenance plan to allow for public access and use of the park.
- Create accessible routes throughout the park.
- Install directional and identification signage of accessible areas.
- Assess all current amenities for safety of use.
- Create a plan to improve safety of use and replacement and inaccessible amenities.

Idle Hour Park – 800 Mississippi Street (0.70 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Fenced basketball court
- Parking lot
- Playground equipment

Condition Assessment

Idle Hour Park is located in the Emerson neighborhood at the end of Mississippi and 8th Streets, and adjacent to an abandoned property. The park is surrounded by wooded lots on the south and east sides. Some areas of the fencing need maintenance. Graffiti is visible on the basketball court and playground equipment. Grass levels within the park boundary are high and some tree/shrub overgrowth is along the fence line of the basketball court. The parking area is unmarked and there is a sidewalk leading to the playground but does not allow accessibility to the equipment.

General Recommendations:

- Develop maintenance plan to allow for safe public access and use.
- Create code-conforming accessible parking.
- Assure that all pathways to amenities are maintained and clear of obstructions.
- Widen entrance to basketball court to allow for improved access.
- Review play structure for safe and accessible surfacing.
- Install lighting to improve safety.
- Provide accessible seating such as benches.
- Install identification and directional signage to accessible amenities.

**FIGURE 20: Street View of Idle Hour Park
Fenced Basketball Court**





FIGURE 21: Glen Ryan Playground Structure

***Glen Ryan Park – 4320 E. 6th Avenue (1.99 acres)**

The park amenities include:

- Segmented play structure with two sections to accommodate various preferences
- Swing set
- Picnic shelter
- Grills
- Basketball court
- Pavilion
- Open field

Condition Assessment

Glen Ryan Park is located within the Glen Ryan neighborhood with parking along the roadside and indicated as a Jewel Park within Gary’s Department of Public Parks. The park has several amenities that need maintenance and potential replacement.

Playground equipment is in good shape with a little wear and tear and no apparent damage. The playground surface is wood chips, retaining water and very overgrown with grass and weeds. Litter was present throughout the park boundaries during assessment. The picnic shelter is usable but has no seating, and its roof is deteriorated and requires replacement.

There was a previous sand volleyball court which is currently an obsolete feature which the city plans to replace along with the shelter. Future plans are to transition open space to a multi-purpose field. The pavilion has some vegetation overgrowth around the perimeter that needs attention, but inside there is visible renovation and new

paint. Accessibility concerns are present within the kitchen and restrooms. Entrance and exit areas show indentions of depth. Renovation is ongoing along with a final punch list for completion and occupancy approval confirmed.

The basketball court has cracked pavement with weeds growing through, overgrowth in fencing and broken backboards. Based on the city’s recent public requests for proposals, several improvements are currently in progress. A new shelter is being constructed with a concrete pad and electrical upgrades. The basketball court will be resurfaced, and the current shelter will receive roof repairs. In addition to these improvements, it is recommended that the City consider the following.

- Ensure all renovations and new construction meet accessibility code conformance.
- Provide designated accessible parking at both north and south sides of the park.
- Add and repair accessible routes to and from shelter to playground, basketball court and pavilion.
- Add accessible seating options along the accessible route to park amenities.
- Add concrete pads under the grills to allow for access.
- Remove litter throughout the park.
- Add safe and accessible surfacing under the play structures and swing set.
- Provide an accessible water fountain.
- Reconfigure restrooms to ensure that minimum accessibility requirements are met for stall size and dispenser locations.
- Provide code-conforming identification signage at restrooms and throughout park.



FIGURE 22: June LaBroi Park Miniature Statue of Liberty and Playground

June LaBroi Park – 5251 E. 11th Place (1.69 acres)

The park amenities include:

- Miniature Statue of Liberty
- Playground structure
- Jungle-gym
- Two bridge areas

Condition Assessment

The park is located in the Aetna neighborhood, where a miniature Statue of Liberty is visible as a unique landmark. June LaBroi Park contains few recreational amenities relative to its acreage. The playground structure is fading, has multiple areas of concern with loose railings, paint chipping and graffiti that covers portions of the structure. The plastic edging around the playground has some missing sections. The jungle-gym plastic edging has contributed to the containment of overgrowth that in some areas exceeds the height of the structure. The bridge located in the middle of the park

has faded wording and overgrowth through the railing and along the crossing path, along with faded paint. The bridge/climbing structure at the rear of the park is fading; some railings are loose, and overgrowth surrounds the structure. Sidewalks around the park have a concerning amount of cracked concrete throughout the pathway.

General Recommendations:

- Designate and add an accessible route to the playground.
- Provide accessible parking at both the north and south side of the park with code compliant curb cutting to allow for access to the closest accessible route.
- Add new, code-conforming surfacing to the play structures to maximize safety and accessibility.



FIGURE 23: Aerial View of Aetna Park

Aetna Park – 1201 New Jersey Street (3.48 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Covered pavilion
- Ballfield
- Tennis courts (2)
- Basketball court
- Playground with swing set

Condition Assessment

Aetna Park is located within the Aetna neighborhood of District 1. The park demonstrates an overgrown perimeter with encroachment into the fields and amenities. Amenities demonstrate lack of maintenance. Upon remote assessment using aerial viewing, the current condition is consistent with the previous condition assessment of 2009.

General Recommendations:

- Complete a full safety assessment of all current amenities.
- Initiate maintenance and repair needs.
- Work with city ADA Coordinator to develop plan to provide physical and programmatic accessibility for persons with disabilities to all Aetna Park features.
- Initiate accessibility improvements such as accessible parking, accessible routes to all park amenities, and accessible restrooms.



FIGURE 24: Ambridge Mann Park Baseball Field

City-Owned Parks in District 2

Ambridge Mann Park- 1900 W. 2nd Avenue (6.99 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Basketball court
- Baseball fields (2) with dugouts
- Field bleacher seating sections
- Playground structure
- Picnic shelter
- Bench rest seating (3)
- Press box

Condition Assessment

Ambridge Mann Park is located north of the metro tracks at the front entrance of the park and along a segment of the Grand Calumet River at the rear of the park. The park site is full of debris, and there is cracked asphalt throughout the parking lot. Park rules signage at entrance is faded and damaged. The grassy areas around the park and within the fenced ballfield area show signs of mowing, however, there is still a large amount of overgrowth along the fence lines and up through the bleacher seating at both fields. The press box is abandoned with faded paint, graffiti, broken windows and doors that are removed, damaged, or decayed. The basketball court surface is cracked and backboards are shattered. A local neighbor indicated that the

court is used weekly on Sunday afternoons until sundown, even with the broken equipment. The playground and picnic shelter were in functional condition and free of debris. The playground structure is aged and needs some attention but still usable. The picnic shelter is a wooden frame with one picnic table and one broken and unusable picnic table.

General Recommendations:

- Inspect play equipment to ensure that it is stable for continued use.
- Develop long-term plan to replace playground equipment with universal design in mind.
- Repair damaged amenities such as the picnic table, signs, and basketball hoop backboards.
- Repair or close press box for safety and develop plan to repair and re-furbish for safe use.
- Repair court surfaces by filling gaps and cracks or install new court surfaces.
- Clear debris throughout park.
- Add code-conforming accessible parking.
- Create accessible route from parking area to park amenities.
- Provide accessible seating areas.



FIGURE 25: Rees Park Playground

Rees Park – 5th Avenue & Lincoln Street (0.85 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Playground
- Basketball court
- Parking seating

Condition Assessment

Rees Park is located in the downtown area of Gary and surrounded by residential housing along with some fast-food eateries. The park’s parking lot is a grassy area with no defined parking spaces. Litter was present throughout the park the day of the assessment. The playground equipment is usable but demonstrates signs of aging and fading. The play structure surfacing is loose, and some screening material is visible through the mulch. The park seating is not anchored, with some broken seating, and appeared to be relocated under a tree for shading. The basketball court is fenced and usable with some visible wear on the court surface and faded paint.

General Recommendations:

- Create accessible parking near code-conforming curb cuts to access the closet accessible route.
- Review playground equipment surfacing, refurbish loose material, and add accessible pathway to comply with minimum accessibility standards.
- Provide access to picnic area and its features for persons with disabilities.
- Replace or restore basketball court benches.



FIGURE 26: Jackson Park view of playground and basketball courts

^ Jackson Park – 300 Jackson Street (4.41 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Pool building
- Pool
- Jungle gym
- Play structure

- Swing sets (4)
- Youth climbing structure
- Bike/Pedestrian paved path through middle of Park (connector to Gary Green Link)
- Basketball courts (2)
- Black top court area
- Baseball field

Condition Assessment

Jackson Park is a LWCF funded property. The park is within a prime location in the city and connects to the Gary Green Link and a large amount of open, green space. The park is fenced and surrounded by residential housing undergoing a City-sponsored project cleanup with the removal of houses on the Jackson Street side of the park. Parking is on-street and without designated accessible parking. The pool building and pool is closed, yet designed to be accessible with a ramp and handrail into the pool basin. The pool building displays graffiti on each side. Vegetation growth is seen within the pool and along broken sections of the fence. The grass and the Gary Green Link path are well-maintained. The play structure and other play equipment are deteriorating and in need of replacement, along with new, safe surfacing. Both basketball courts have a large amount of overgrowth along fence lines and litter is present. The basketball courts contain bleachers which are missing seating panels, and demonstrate cracking along the surfacing. The courts are usable but need maintenance. The park's black top area has large amounts of cracking and weeds. The baseball field was mowed, and the field is usable but has overgrowth in front of each dugout area.

General Recommendations:

- Create accessible parking. If appropriate, the City should consider converting the blacktop area into a parking area.
- Create accessible routes from parking to park amenities.
- Remove and replace existing bleachers and add wheelchair and companion seating.

***Brunswick Park – 737 Clark Road (50.47 acres)**

The park amenities include:

- Community Center building with multiple rooms/meeting spaces
- Picnic shelters (3)
- Trail
- Play structures (2)
- Ballfields (2)
- Tennis courts (2)



FIGURE 27: Brunswick Park Playground

Condition Assessment

Brunswick Park is identified as a Jewel Park by Gary's Department of Public Parks and located close to an elementary school property with train tracks along the east side of the park with some areas of open space throughout the park boundaries. The Brunswick Park boundaries is the habitat of 33 acres of remnant black oak savanna, dune and swale, and upland forest which has been preserved with trail development. Within the area, five acres are recognized as a wetland mitigation project area with ponds and prairie planting. These natural features have an opportunity to encourage, bring more opportunity and awareness on ecotourism and preservation of these open and public spaces.

Entrance to the park is clear of debris, all areas are mowed, and playground structures are usable. Parking is on-site with the parking lot asphalt and concrete sidewalks cracking with some loose material. The play structures contain plastic edging with some protruding stakes and structures are showing some aging, mainly on the young child structures. Picnic shelters are usable and in need of some wood replacement and review of wooden tables for safety. Fencing around the baseball fields is in stable condition, however, the ball field press box areas and dugouts are inaccessible due to overgrowth. The paved walking trail is usable and clear of debris. The entrance into the community center is aged and presents a moldy smell with large amounts of leaks from the ceiling. The gym floor is missing tile, restrooms are unclean, painting along interior walls is soiled, drinking fountains are inoperable, several meeting rooms are considered inaccessible due to large amounts of storage and debris throughout which acts as a barrier. Electricity within the community center is limited in some hallways due to broken and protruding light fixtures. Brunswick Park contains a walking trail that is currently not accessible due to overgrowth.

Based on review of the City's recent public requests for proposals, several improvements are currently planned or in progress. Roof repairs of the Community Center Building, baseball field refurbishing, Main Building exterior demolition with new electrical, security, signage, painting, windows, and entry doors. The youth playground will be removed, replaced with installation of a new play structure. The main building will receive interior door removal and replace, painting of main corridor, information desk area removal/replacement, ceiling tile upgrades, electrical, ceiling grid-hard ceiling, floors, base boards, HVAC system, plantings near main entrance, and accessible restroom. The kitchen and arts and crafts area will be demolished and refurbished. The outdoor shelters will receive roof repairs.

In addition to the pre-planned improvements, it is recommended that the City consider the following general recommendations:

- Ensure all renovations and new construction meet accessibility code conformance and are carried out with universal access in mind.
- Inspect all amenities for safety and develop a plan to repair or replace.
- Clear park-wide debris.
- Remove existing barriers to restroom.
- Refurbish parking lot and concrete sidewalks to minimize gaps, cracks, and loose materials.
- Add accessible parking. Add fresh ground paint and mark with signage.
- Add concrete pads at the shelter grills and tables to allow clear space for use and relocate along an accessible route with firm and stable surfacing.
- Apply system-wide accessibility recommendations to Brunswick Park.

Borman Square Park – 700 Madison Street (8.61 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Pavilion
- Basketball courts (2)
- Tennis court
- Walk Pathway paved
- Pool
- Wooden benches



FIGURE 28: Borman Square Park Basketball Court

Condition Assessment

Borman Square Park is located within a residential area with an abundance of trees throughout the park's perimeter. The park has a large amount of elevation within the walking areas of the park. The entrance to the parking lot has a significant amount of space with some scattered debris including tree limbs and litter throughout the park boundary. The pavilion is closed to entrance with windows boarded up. At the rear of the pavilion is a fenced-in pool area with overgrowth along the fence line, and the pool is filled with debris. The pool was designed with accessibility in mind and exhibits a ramp into the pool basin and a hand-rail. Sidewalks around the pavilion have visible cracking and litter all along. The basketball court surfaces have visible cracking but, overall, look maintained with backboards and usable nets. The tennis court area has protruding vegetation through the surface cracks and appears unusable. The paved walking path is usable but contains some pavement cracks and gaps and litter along the pathway.

General Recommendations:

- Add required, code-conforming accessible parking.
- Provide an accessible route from parking to all park facilities.
- Patch all hard surface cracks and gaps.
- Remove all debris and litter throughout park.
- Evaluate pavilion for safety and develop a plan for repairs, replacement, or removal.
- Evaluate pool for safety and develop a plan for repairs, replacement, or removal.



FIGURE 29: Seberger Park Picnic Shelter

City-Owned Parks in District 3

Seberger Park – 2500 Bell Street (9.19 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Basketball court
- Skate rink
- Playgrounds (2)
- Picnic shelter
- Park building

Condition Assessment

Seberger Park is located on the west side of Gary along a busy roadway with 6.5 acres of wetlands and forests in the eastern region of the park. The park features accessible routes to all park amenities and had visitors using the basketball court and playground at the time of the site review. The basketball court is in good condition, fenced and usable. The skating rink is in poor condition with a large amount of water retained, surface cracking and is inoperable. The picnic shelter is a stable structure with limited seating and surrounded by permanent grills. The park building has visible damage with exterior graffiti. The two playground areas are in good condition with the only area of attention needed is to add safe surfacing materials.

General Recommendations:

- Provide adequate, code-conforming accessible parking.
- Add concrete pads to shelter grills to allow clear space for use
- Locate shelter grills along an accessible route with firm and stable surfacing.
- Add accessible picnic tables to the shelter area.
- Fill in playground surfacing material to improve accessibility.
- Replace playground equipment and implement universal design.
- Renovate and maintain the ice rink.



FIGURE 30: Tarrytown Playground Aerial View

Tarrytown Playground – 2000 Lane Street (0.74 acres)

The park amenities include:

- Basketball court
- Blacktop area

Condition Assessment

Tarrytown Playground is located in a residential area. Although listed as 2000 Lane Street in the City’s inventory, the park can be located by utilizing the address 2039 Lane Street. The most recent park system master plan indicated that the park was dedicated to the City of Gary by a city employee, Linda Gilmore and a small memorial with a bronze placard can be identified on an aerial photograph. The City’s park inventory indicates the presence of a playground in its name. Upon review of photos dating back to 2019, there is no visible playground structure. The park does contain a fenced basketball court with litter along the perimeter, but the court is in good condition. An adjacent blacktop area has a large amount of surface cracking and weed invasion. There is no identifiable, designated onsite parking.

General Recommendations:

- Repair and maintain basketball court.
- Ensure that the accessible route to the basketball court remains barrier free.
- Develop plan for use of adjacent area.



FIGURE 31: Tolleston Park Pavilion

***Tolleston Park – 1500 Rutledge Street (17.67 acres)**

Park amenities include:

- Pavilion
- Pool
- Basketball courts (5)
- Baseball field
- Playground
- Picnic shelter (2) with grills
- Tennis courts (4)
- Horseshoe pits

Condition Assessment

Tolleston Park is a Land and Water Conservation Fund funded property and identified as a Jewel Park within Gary’s Department of Public Parks. The park was originally constructed in 1926 and rededicated on July 24, 1998. The park has a remarkable aquatic feature in the Tolleston neighborhood within a large park boundary.

The entrance to the park shows asphalt cracking throughout the parking lot. The pavilion is newly renovated with funding by the Community Development division and is operable and awaiting final punch list along with occupancy approval. There are visible improvements to the restrooms, kitchen, and large meeting room. Basketball and tennis courts are usable, although there are areas of surface cracking. The fence lines of the court areas have vegetation overgrowth through the chain link fencing.

The playground equipment is usable and in fair condition.

There is some deterioration visible at the swing sets, with in the smaller playground area, and weed invasion along concrete sidewalks leading to other park amenities. The mulch is at a low level with weed growth visible in the playground surfacing and plastic edging stakes are protruding. Picnic shelters are in good condition and usable with picnic tables and some grills placed in proximity to the shelters. Horseshoe pits are overgrown and inoperable. While the baseball field is mowed, there is visible overgrowth in areas along the fence.

The pool area was last operable in 2019 and appears to have been properly closed. The pool's filtration system received a recent upgrade to a two-filtration system to accommodate both the large and youth pool areas. The pool slide is fading and showing signs of aging.

Several improvements are currently observed as in progress. A new shelter is being constructed with a concrete pad and electrical upgrades. The basketball and tennis courts will be resurfaced and the outdoor shelter will receive roof repairs. In addition to these improvements, it is recommended that the City consider the following.

- Ensure all renovations and new construction meet accessibility code conformance.
- At the pavilion, add an additional fountain to provide two spout heights for accessibility.
- Reconfigure restroom stalls, fixtures, features for

accessibility code compliance.

- Where emergency alarms are present, work with the fire authority to determine if visual alarms are required.
- Reconfigure restroom signage height to ensure accessibility code conformance.
- Reconfigure kitchen countertop height to offer greater access.
- Provide accessible parking at all lots serving the park.
- Remove and replace existing bleachers and identify wheelchair and companion seating.
- Picnic Shelter has set construction with new concrete pad and roofing.
- Add and repair accessible routes to and from picnic shelter to playground, pavilion.
- Add accessible seating options and those on grounds need clear grounds space and accessible routes.
- If grills remain, concrete pads at these features should allow for adequate maneuverability.
- Add playground surfacing to maintain a level, firm, and stable surfacing.
- Consider replacing playground equipment and implementing universal design.



FIGURE 32: Gateway Park

City-Owned Parks in District 4

Gateway Park – 300 Broadway (6.31 acres)

The park amenities include:

- Fountain

Condition Assessment

Gateway Park is located at 4th Avenue and Broadway, adjacent to the historic Gary Land Company building, known as “Gary’s Treasure” built in 1906, and along the Downtown Art & History Fitness Trail. This park is across the street from the Hudson and Campbell Fitness Center on one corner and City Hall on the other corner. The park is located between active railroad tracks, Interstate 53 and E. 4th Avenue.

Gateway Park is in good condition. The fountain was inoperable and drained of water. The seating along the park boundary is in good condition. The sidewalks are clear of debris and follow the Downtown Art & History Fitness Trail.

General Recommendations:

- For safe access to the park, the City should consult with the Department of Transportation to consider the feasibility of adding a pedestrian crosswalk adjacent to the park.
- Repair or replace the public water fountain with an accessible fountain that includes a bottle filling feature.

Buffington Park – 636 Connecticut Street (8.26 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Picnic shelter with grills
- WWII Monument
- Splash pad with storage and restroom buildings
- Walking paths within the park perimeter
- Seating areas with outdoor concrete game tables (3)
- Playground

Condition Assessment

Buffington Park is a large park located adjacent to the Calumet Township Lake County building. The park has trees



FIGURE 33: Buffington Park – WWII Monument with Veterans’ names

throughout the park boundary and appears to be a memorial park based on the WWII monument with veterans names listed on a two-step, brick platform. Some bricks along the platform are broken and/or missing. The platform needs some maintenance with the removal of leaves and litter around the monument platform.

Three stone-carved game tables are located on a circular concrete pad. Game tables are missing the game maps which offer opportunities to play checkers, chess, or backgammon. Some of the table seating surfaces are missing. The picnic shelter has some tables, but the roof has a hole in the middle area of the shelter. The grill racks are damaged.

The playground equipment is deteriorating, and mulching surfacing is minimal with weed invasion within the playground perimeter, making the playground inoperable. The splash pad is damaged with chain link fencing down and overgrowth of vegetation, leaving the splash pad inoperable.

General Recommendations:

- Designate accessible parking and connect to an accessible route.
- Add new accessible playground surfacing.
- Plan for replacement of playground equipment which implements universal design.
- Remove and reinstall concrete within sidewalks and pathways that are damaged.
- Refurbish or install new game tables and provide for an adequate approach and maneuverability.
- Add concrete pads at shelter grills to allow for access.

- Repair shelter roof.
- Add ramp to the WWII monument to allow for ease of access
- Add tactile, descriptive elements into the monument.
- Assess safety and repair or replace the splashpad.
- Repair or renovate the storage building.
- Renovate the restrooms to provide full access.

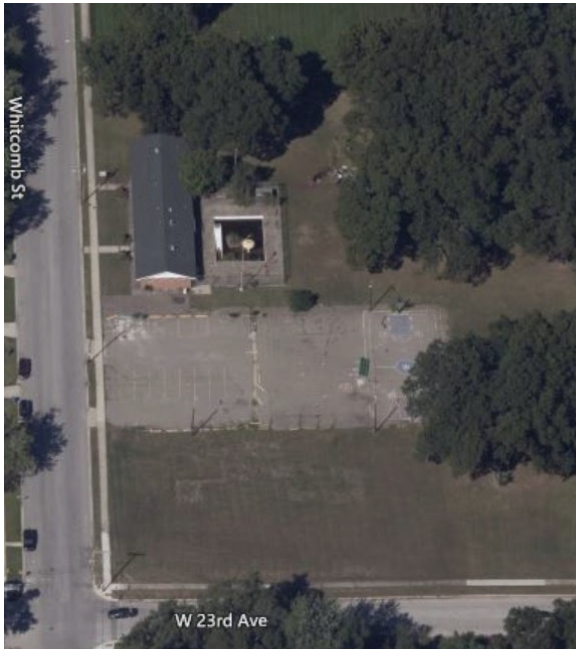


FIGURE 34: Patcher Park Aerial View

Patcher Park – 2300 Whitcomb Street (7.02 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Pavilion
- Portable toilets
- Pool
- Playground
- Basketball court

Condition Assessment

Patcher Park is located at the corner of Whitcomb Street and West 23rd Ave. The aerial/street view of the park show a pavilion with an inoperable pool. The grounds appear to be maintained and mowed. The pavilion has some overgrowth of shrubs at the entrance. The parking lot markings are fading, and some asphalt cracking is present. The basketball court is aging but still usable.

General Recommendations:

- Provide accessible parking.
- Ensure for accessible routes throughout park and to all amenities.
- Add safe and accessible surfacing to play structure.
- Inspect and repair pavilion.
- Repair, renovate or remove pool for safety.



FIGURE 35: Open Space Area at Norton Park

Norton Park – 1300 Pierce Street (5.53 acres)

Park amenities are:

- Green space

Condition Assessment

Norton Park is located near the former Horace N. Norton Elementary School which is permanently closed. The area surrounding the open space is wooded and there are two overgrown play structures which were the elementary school's property adjacent to the open space area.

The open area has been mowed and has litter throughout the property. There are no structural features within the open space (i.e., seating). There is no designated parking.

General Recommendations:

- Maintain litter removal.
- Consider designating this location as a green space.
- Consider implementing programming such as a low-water use, low-maintenance, environmentally friendly, pollinator garden, community maintained garden with donated, raised garden beds or potential removal.



FIGURE 36: Street View of Linear Park

Linear Park – 11th & 13th Ave, West of Washington Street (3.25 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Sitting areas
- Play structure with swing set
- Walking path

Condition Assessment

Linear Park is uniquely placed between 11th and 13th Avenues, and one-half block west of Washington Street. The park layout is linear with geometric shapes and located between apartment complexes. Park conditions are fair and well-maintained with some litter. The seating areas have visible graffiti, play structures are aged, and the swing set is missing seating.

General Recommendations:

- Provide accessible parking.
- Ensure an accessible route is provided to all park amenities.
- Repair and maintain damaged and worn features.



FIGURE 37: Picnic Shelter at Reed Park

Reed Park – 1500 Connecticut Street (4.13 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Pavilion
- Splash pad
- Baseball field
- Swing sets
- Picnic shelter
- Natural play area
- Garden planters
- Locker room building

Condition Assessment

Reed Park (formerly named Washington Park) is located in a residential area and has a natural and environmental atmosphere to the park setting. The park conditions are fair within some sections of the park, while nature has reclaimed the park in other areas with overgrowth, and people have contributed to heavy amounts of litter. The exterior of the pavilion was assessed to have visible damage to the roof and some boarded windows. The pavilion doors are chained, and locked. The locker room building was also assessed from the exterior, and the building appears to be in deteriorating condition. The splash pad has visible cracking in the concrete and is inoperable.

The natural play area is overgrown with vines and weeds which limits access throughout the space. The swing sets are worn and in poor condition with height inconsistencies at the infant and accessible swing areas. The accessible swing is missing a safety strap, and the swing sets' edging are wooden beams. Litter is scattered within the boundaries. The garden plants are overgrown, and the wooden structures they sit in are in poor condition.

The baseball field is usable, but bleacher seating is unusable and unsafe with sharp edges of protruding aluminum. Fencing within the ballfield and along the perimeter of the park near the splash pad has missing sections or have collapsed or out-of-alignment poles. The picnic shelter is a wooden frame with one infant-sized wooden table under the shelter and two logs used for seating. The picnic shelter has some visible damage in areas of the ceiling.

General Recommendations:

- Repair concrete pathways and add extensions for accessible routes to shelters, playground, ballfields, and tennis courts.
- Designate accessible parking.
- Remove and replace existing bleachers and add wheelchair and companion seating.
- Review of playground equipment closest to community center and fill-in of surfacing material.
- Review playground entrance for safety and usability as there are some structural features protruding and surfacing level is unsafe.
- Add concrete pads under shelter grills to allow clear space for use and locate them along an accessible route with firm and stable surfacing.
- Clear areas of litter and vegetation debris.

- Reconstruct and stabilize raised planters.
- Clear debris, replace sprinkler heads and resurface and paint the splash pad.



FIGURE 38: Aerial view of Carolina Park

Carolina Park – 1301-13 Carolina Street (1.98 acres)

The park amenities include:

- Pavilion
- Basketball court
- Playground area

Condition Assessment

Carolina Park is located within a residential area between 13th and 14th Avenues. The park is in poor condition, based on aerial and street photo views. The grounds of the park are mowed, but the pavilion's windows are boarded. The basketball court surfacing is cracked with weed invasion and is unusable. The playground area has a remaining portion of a structure but is unusable for play.

General Recommendations:

- Develop a maintenance plan.
- Conduct a safety inspection.
- Rehabilitate the pavilion, basketball court, and play structure with accessibility in mind.



FIGURE 39: Pulaski Playground with Welcome Signage

Pulaski Playground – 1600 Rhode Island Street (2.49 acres)

The park amenities include:

- Picnic shelter
- Open field

Condition Assessment

Pulaski Playground is located within a cul-de-sac between a neighborhood and abandoned school building. The park welcome sign is in good condition. The sidewalks need maintenance due to weed overgrowth which has caused damage to the concrete pathway leading towards the picnic shelter. The picnic shelter is deteriorated, mainly within the roof area, and litter surrounds the area. The shelter is unusable and unsafe with protruding materials exposed. The open field is mowed but the trees along the border of the open field need pruning and brush needs clearing.

General Recommendations:

- Develop a maintenance plan.
- Conduct a safety inspection.
- Rehabilitate the picnic shelter with accessibility in mind.

****Ironwood Park – 2400 Louisiana Street (13.48 acres)***

Ironwood Park is identified as a Jewel Park within Gary's Department of Public Parks. An accurate condition assessment could not be completed due to current planned remodel of park assets. The park present amenities include:

- Pavilion
- Basketball courts
- Tennis courts
- Baseball field

Condition Assessment

The pavilion is in poor condition and inoperable with plans to begin needed renovation. Exterior of pavilion was freshly painted in an orange color and very visible within the neighborhood. The pavilion signage is deteriorating and needs replacement. At the rear of the pavilion some amenity (i.e., basketball and tennis courts) outlays are visible and in the beginning stages of demolition and construction. The baseball field was not assessed because the pathway to field was identified as a demolition area.

The following improvements were noted to be in progress during the site visit and per review of the City's recent request for proposals.



FIGURE 40: Ironwood Park Pavilion Front Entrance



FIGURE 41: Hatcher Park Pool

Community Center renovations:

- Roof repair
- Exterior repairs and doors
- Cover or wrap all exposed wood
- Repair or replace rotten or compromised wood members
- Remove and replace three (3) steel entry doors with keyed locks
 - Remove and replace three (3) upper vision panels and three (3) lower solid safety panels
 - Add dusk-to-dawn LED lighting
 - Install four (4) GFCI outlets and six (6) new ceiling lights in the existing picnic shelter
- Refurbish basketball courts
- Monument signage
- Resurface or install new asphalt for two (2) basketball courts
- Resurface or install new asphalt for two (2) tennis courts
- Repair outdoor shelter roof

General Recommendations:

- Ensure all construction meets federal and state minimum standards for accessible design.
- The City should consult with the ADA Coordinator upon initiation and the completion of all construction.
- Ensure adequate accessible parking is provided.
- Ensure accessible routes are provided to all park amenities.

Hatcher Park – 2100 Missouri Street (19.63 acres)

The park amenities that remain visible include:

- Pool with accessible ramp
- Pool storage building
- Pavilion

Condition Assessment

Hatcher Park is a LWCF funded property where natural vegetation has reclaimed the park property against the pavilion and within the pool flooring. Hatcher is in the Pulaski neighborhood within the Little Calumet River corridor along the north of wetland with floodplains at the park boundaries' southern region.

The pavilion is in critical condition with boarded windows and doorways. The parking lot to the pavilion has a significant amount of damage with fading lines, large amounts of litter and extensive invasive weed overgrowth at the rear of the lot. The pool is unusable due to overgrowth of trees and shrubs through the flooring of the pool. The fencing around the pool area is down and is surrounded by the orange plastic barrier safety fencing which does not limit access to the pool area or rear of the pavilion.

General Recommendations:

- Allocate accessible parking.
- Mark accessible parking and connect to an accessible route leading to all park amenities.
- Add accessible companion seating to all seating areas.

- Review sidewalks for cracking. Remove and reinstall concrete damaged slab areas or demo and repair full length pathways.
- Review pool and pool area for safety. Develop plan to reinvigorate or remove pool.



FIGURE 42: Entrance to Marshalltown Playground

Marshalltown Playground – 2300 Wisconsin Street (1.07 acres)

The park amenities include:

- Basketball court

Condition Assessment

Marshalltown Playground is located within the Pulaski neighborhood, and its entrance is located between neighboring houses. Park conditions are fair with a large amount of open space. The entrance is overgrown with grass and is not clearly identified as the entrance. The fencing along the perimeter is missing rebar in some areas and is collapsed in other areas. The basketball court is usable with some visible wear and fading paint.

General Recommendations:

- Install park sign.
- Designate and mark accessible parking.
- Ensure that accessible route is provided to the basketball court.
- Repair fencing.
- Repair and maintain the basketball court.



FIGURE 43: Roosevelt Park (Photo credit: John J. Watkins, The Times)⁵

City-Owned Parks in District 5

***Roosevelt Park – 2100 Harrison Street (17.63 acres)**

Park amenities include:

- Pavilion
- Baseball fields (2)
- Softball field
- Pool
- Tennis courts

Condition Assessment

Roosevelt Park is located adjacent to the recently closed Theodore Roosevelt High School. Due to the planned or current remodeling of various park assets, this condition assessment primarily addresses areas that are not under planned or current renovation.

Renovations to the pavilion are visible, and with cleaning and removal of renovation materials (i.e., excess paint containers and organization of storage room(s)) would allow for use of the facility. There is overgrowth along the fence and surface cracking at the tennis court which are unusable and proposed to be refurbished into a roller rink. The softball field shows signs of recent renovation, but the infield is becoming overgrown. Wooden softball field bleacher seating is deteriorating, along with damage to the press box.

⁵ The Times. (March 2, 2023). Jewel Parks Program. Retrieved June 12, 2023, from https://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/gary/jewel-park-program-hopes-to-restore-recreation-areas-in-each-of-garys-6-districts/article_a05aee55-f1b7-572a-acd0-ac93a7cd0f6b.html



FIGURE 44: Street View of Nichols Place Park Basketball Court

Fencing around all fields shows an indication of wear and replacement is needed, with holes and collapsing sections. The baseball field was renovated less than a year ago and is unplayable due to overgrowth and drainage issues on the infield. This field's fencing has vines covering sections which block player and spectator views. Wooden bleachers in this area are also deteriorating. The little league field is in poor condition and unplayable with overgrowth and unlevel grading throughout the playing area.

The pool is unusable due to overgrowth of trees and shrubs through the flooring of the pool. The parking lot has significant overgrowth of weeds protruding through the asphalt, causing cracking throughout the lot and requiring a great amount of maintenance.

Based on observation and the city's recent public requests for proposals, several improvements are currently in progress. Pool area demolition and renovation, fencing and gates replacement, new lighting and power upgrades, new picnic tables, court resurfacing, field and dugout renovations, warning track installation, and outdoor roller rink conversion and installation. In addition to these improvements, it is recommended that the City consider the following.

General Recommendations:

- Designate adequate, code-conforming accessible parking.
- Work with ADA Coordinator to review new construction and renovations for accessibility code compliance.
- Add a second water fountain at the pavilion to provide accessible height spout.
- Reconfigure restroom stalls, fixtures and features to be code compliant.

- Work with local fire authority to review installation of visual emergency alarms.
- Interior pavilion lighting on the wall is protruding and may cause obstruction of walking path for individuals with visual disability.
- Reconfigure restroom identification signage height to ensure code compliance.
- Reconfigure kitchen countertop to code compliance.
- Remove and replace existing bleachers and identify wheelchair and companion seating
- Installation of accessible routes to park amenities.

Nichols Place – 200 Nichols Street (2.91 acres)

The park amenities include:

- Basketball court
- Playground equipment

Condition Assessment

Nichols Place is a park located adjacent to railroad tracks within a residential area that has is being reclaimed by its natural environment. The park is in poor condition with the entrance overgrown and only identifiable at the worn curb cutout. The basketball court is unusable, with hoop netting missing and shattered backboards, making the area unsafe. The playground equipment is worn and inaccessible due to overgrown vegetation, preventing full assessment of the area.

General Recommendations:

- The City should conduct a full safety review of park.

- Develop a maintenance and renovation plan to improve safety and access.
- Designate parking with accessible parking.
- Create accessible routes to park amenities.
- Refurbish basketball court.
- Demolish and install new playset.
- Work with City ADA Coordinator to ensure accessibility and universal design.



FIGURE 45: Photo by: Indiana Landmarks, 2018. North Gleason Pavilion

Gleason Park – 301 W. 30th Avenue (270.57 acres) – Park Not Photographed

Park amenities include:

- Pavilion
- Golf course
- Stadium with tiered seating
- Ball diamond
- Little Calumet River Levee walking trail
- Parking areas

Condition Assessment

Gleason Park is in close proximity to Indiana University Northwest and is surrounded by natural areas including forests and wetlands. The area was once filled with park amenities that have not received maintenance over the past decade. The park once included a golf course which is no longer fully owned by the city and appears inoperable, along with a historic boxing gym. The park is abandoned and appears unsafe for entry. Due to expansive poor conditions upon arrival, this park was assessed through aerial and street view photography.

General Recommendations:

- The City of Gary should conduct a full safety assessment of park assets, develop an immediate safety plan, and determine which assets should be available for safe public use.
- The City should determine if the City will invest in significant funds into maintenance and renovations or consider returning the location to a full green space.
- If the City of Gary pursues a green space approach, adding additional, maintained walking trails with safe, well-lit parking areas would be a beneficial feature for the citizens of Gary.
- Due to the historic nature of the pavilion/boxing gym, the City should consider significant investment in salvaging remaining artifacts and relocating them or renovating this structure to honor a piece of the history of Gary.
- The City should seek additional input from community groups to create an action plan and secure funding for Gleason Park.
- The City should provide accessibility and universal design at the forefront of any planned renovations.



FIGURE 46: Howe Park Pavilion

City-Owned Parks in District 6

^*Howe Park – 3901 Vermont Park (3.28 acres)

The parks amenities include:

- Pavilion
- Tennis courts
- Swing sets (2)
- Storage building

Condition Assessment

Howe Park is an LWCF funded property and identified as a “Jewel Park” within Gary’s Department of Public Parks. Renovations to the pavilion are visible and with cleaning and removal of renovation materials (i.e., excess paint containers and organization of storage room(s)), it would allow for use of the facility.

Towards the east side of the building is fencing with orange plastic safety barriers with some sections torn down. The pavilion is undergoing visible renovation with newer kitchen appliances, flooring throughout (not completed) with tile inventory storage in a locker/restroom area and visible water damage in the main meeting room. The exterior of the pavilion has graffiti with some doorways secured with signage bolted into the exterior wall. The fencing has overgrowth of

vines and trees throughout the chain link. The southside of the pavilion was the previous location of the pool that has been demolished and graded as part of the American Rescue Plan Act project. The park has an open field area in the space between Vermont Street and Kentucky Street. Within the open space are two swing sets which are in poor condition, overgrown, unusable, and unsafe. At the corner of Vermont Street and 40th Ave there is the outlay of previous tennis courts which are unusable and overgrown.

Based on observation and the city’s recent public requests for proposals, several improvements are currently in progress. Interior and exterior community center renovations, including lighting and air conditioning. In addition to these improvements, it is recommended that the City consider the following.

General Recommendations:

- Ensure all renovations and new construction meet safety and accessibility code conformance.
- Repair concrete pathways and add extensions for accessible routes to shelters, playground, ballfields, and tennis courts.
- Designate code-conforming, adequate accessible parking.
- Reconfigure restroom fixtures and features to increase accessibility.
- Work with the local fire authority to review installation of visual emergency alarms.



FIGURE 47: Street View of East Glen Park Playground and Shelter

East Glen Park – 4135-93 Maryland Street (2.76 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Playgrounds (2)
- Picnic shelter
- Baseball diamond
- Dugouts
- Basketball court
- Bleachers

Condition Assessment

East Glen Park is located on both sides of the 4100 block of Maryland Street at a dead-end road. Street parking is available but without accessible parking. Concrete sidewalks around and within the perimeter have cracked along the pathways.

The park grass was mowed, with all other park amenities in poor condition and unusable. The playground structure has protruding metal with sharp edges and natural vegetation is growing through the structures. The basketball court is usable and has a fairly accessible route. The structures have significant wear and tear along with fading. The picnic shelter is not a stable structure with deterioration of

wooden beams and the roof. Picnic grills are not accessible to individuals with disabilities. The ballfield is mowed but overgrowth at the fences and dugouts obscure visibility for players and spectators. The spectator bleachers are unstable and unsafe for use.

- Create code-compliant accessible parking.
- Remove litter throughout the park.
- Add new playground surfacing and create a level, firm, and stable surface. Consider replacement of playground equipment and implement universal design.
- Review cracking segments of pathways and repair concrete.
- Provide accessible picnic grills and install them on an accessible route.
- Provide accessible picnic tables and install them on an accessible route.
- Repair pavilion roof.
- Replace or restore benches with accessible seating and provide companion seating.



FIGURE 48: Aerial View of June Dale Park

June Dale Park – 5000 Madison Street (9.64 acres)

Park amenities include:

- Ball diamond
- Field lighting
- Off street parking

Condition Assessment

June Dale Park is adjacent to an elementary academy and in poor condition. The park amenities are visible from the street and include a ball field with light poles. The ball field is surrounded by old, cracked pavement with no parking signs posted. The former angled parking area contains large trash items and a portable basketball net. Electrical feed was not confirmed to the poles. Although not visible, aerial photos demonstrate two additional outlays of former ballfields that have been row planted with greenery.

General Recommendations:

- Renovate the ball diamond
- Check lighting for safe use and repair as needed.
- Re-pave parking
- Add accessible spectator seating



FIGURE 49: Pittman Park Playground Structure

Pittman Park – 5100 Pennsylvania Street (3.67 acres)

The park amenities include:

- Picnic shelter
- Basketball courts (2)
- Recreation center building
- Playgrounds (one wooden and one plastic structure)
- Open field area

Condition Assessment

Pittman Park is located in an open-space, residential area and has potential to contribute to the residents' recreational needs and quality of life with some maintenance.

The recreation center was not assessed due to the building being boarded up with damage to the windows and roofing. The picnic shelter appears to have been built over the top of the former wading pool and appears to be stable. The area of concern at the picnic shelter is due to the transition from the concrete pad to the wooden flooring. There is only a small access ramp that still presents a level of drop to the transition surface area.

Both the wooden and plastic play structures are outdated, worn and unsafe. Some resting benches at the plastic playground area are uprooted from the concrete footing and broken. The swing set next to the plastic play structure has broken seating and deterioration at the s-hook areas.

The basketball courts are usable only on one side due to boards/hoops missing on the opposite sides. The chain link fencing around the basketball courts is in poor condition with vines growing through sections, and some sections are collapsed and hanging in an unsafe position protruding out onto the sidewalk area. The park has a large quantity of trees that offer good shading but a high level of debris with broken tree limbs.

General Recommendations:

- Add designated accessible parking.
- Create an accessible route from accessible parking to all park amenities.
- Replace play structure surfacing with safe, accessible materials.
- Relocate picnic seating so that it is along an accessible route.
- Repair and maintain all park amenities.
- Assess recreation center for safety and renovation needs.
- Implement renovation plan to rehabilitate the recreation center.



FIGURE 50: Gary's Department of Public Parks - Youth Services Bureau (photo credit: Gary's Youth Services Bureau webpage)

Programming

Gary Department of Public Parks currently offers a limited number of programming opportunities for its citizens. Most of the programming is offered through the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) which is a division within the department of public parks. YSB facilitates an array of programming for youth ages 5 to 24 including afterschool, summer, and prevention services. YSB's programmatic focus for youth include Youth Development, Delinquency Prevention, Employment, Education and Career Development, Safety, Nutrition and Fitness, Emotional and Mental Health, Juvenile Diversion and Restorative Justice, and Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol Prevention. Along with these areas of focus the YSB offers two online learning platforms to assist youth with learning at home via ABC Mouse and IXL.

The Hudson and Campbell Sports and Fitness Center offers recreational programs through a contractual method which allows private entities to rent spaces within the facility to facilitate recreational programming such as youth and adult basketball, fitness classes (i.e., aerobics type classes), boxing, tennis, and racquetball. The renovated facility also offers a spa/sauna area and fitness area filled with a variety of exercise equipment which citizens can obtain a membership to utilize.

Accessibility

The City of Gary department of Human Relations is committed to promoting equal opportunity for all in regards 'to race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry or handicap in employment, education, housing, public services, and accommodations'⁵ and handles all ADA and Title VI grievances.

ADA/Title VI/Grievance Contact Information

Haneefah Khaaliq, Esq.
 City of Gary, Director of Human Relations Commission
 City of Gary, ADA and Title VI Coordinator
 455 Massachusetts Street (Hudson-Campbell Sports Center)
 Gary, IN 46402
 (219) 883-4151-Office
 (219) 743-9745-Cell
 (219) 882-0373-Fax
 hkhaaliq@gary.gov

⁵ Human Relations-City of Gary. (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, 2023, from <https://gary.gov/human-relations/>



FIGURE 51: Hudson and Campbell Sports and Fitness Center - Spa/Sauna/Locker Room Area

Public Notice

The public notice is reflected on the City's webpage and administered by the Department of Human Relations which states the following:

It is against the law to deny employment, housing, education, or public services and accommodation because of a person's race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, or familial status. Since May 19, 1964, the Gary Human Relations Commission has been the local civil rights agency in Northwest Indiana. The anti-discrimination law is enforced by the Gary Human Relations Commission under the City of Gary Civil Rights Ordinance. The agency is also responsible for handling all ADA and Title VI complaints. Connect with us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook!

The Gary Human Relations Commission is located at 455 Massachusetts St., Gary, IN 46402 inside the Hudson-Campbell Sports Center. Contact our offices at 219-883-4151 to schedule an appointment with one of our specialists.

La Comisión de Relaciones Humanas de Gary protege contra la discriminación. Llame al 219-883-4151 o envíenos un correo electrónico para asistencia con el idioma.

In accordance with the requirements of Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the City of Gary, Indiana, will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment: City of Gary, Indiana, does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Title I of the ADA.

Effective Communication: City of Gary, Indiana, will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in City of Gary, Indiana, programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: City of Gary, Indiana, will make all reasonable modifications to policies

and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in City of Gary, Indiana, offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the City of Gary, Indiana, should contact the office of the ADA Coordinator, Haneefah Khaaliq at 219-883-4151, as soon as possible but no later than one week before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the City of Gary, Indiana, to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services or impose an undue financial or administrative burden. Complaints that a program, service, or activity of the City of Gary, Indiana, is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to the ADA Coordinator, Haneefah Khaaliq, at 219-883-4151.

The City of Gary, Indiana, will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

Relay Indiana, a service of Indiana Telephone Relay Access Corporation (InTRAC), is a free service that provides full telecommunications accessibility to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired. Dial 711 or 800-743-3333.

Grievance Procedure

The City of Gary has an internal grievance procedure for all ADA complaints. Complainants are encouraged to file any complaints with the ADA Coordinator by contacting our office (219-883-4151) and setting up an appointment within 30 calendar days after the alleged violation or notice of the violation.

We then document the complaint. The ADA Coordinator then has 30 days from the complaint submission date to establish a meeting to discuss the complaint and determine possible resolutions with the complainant.

Within an additional 30 days, the ADA Coordinator will investigate and respond in writing, and where appropriate,

in a format accessible to the complainant and respondent. The response will explain the legal position of the City of Gary and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint. Upon request, reasonable accommodations will be provided in completing all forms and copies of forms will be provided in alternative formats.

NOTE: All written complaints received by the ADA Coordinator or her designee, appeals to the ADA Coordinator or her designee, and responses from the ADA office are retained by the City of Gary ADA Coordinator for at least three (3) years.

If the ADA Coordinator's determination or her designee does not satisfy or resolve the issue, the complainant or his/her designee may appeal the decision within 30 calendar days after receipt of the determination or response in writing or in a format that is appropriate for the complainant.


Within 30 days of the appeal, the ADA Coordinator or her designee will meet again with the complainant or his/her designee to discuss the appeal and possible solutions and/or any other complaint options.


In the final 30 days after the appeals meeting is held, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing or in an alternative format with a final determination/resolution of the complaint. Again, upon request, reasonable accommodations will be provided in completing all necessary forms.

ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE RESOLUTION

**ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE WITH:
ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ACT of 1968 (As Amended);
SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (As Amended);
AND TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990
(As Amended)**

The CITY OF GARY FORKS DEPARTMENT (Applicant) has read the guidelines for compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (As Amended); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (As Amended); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (As Amended) and will comply with the applicable requirements of these Acts.

SIGNATURE 
APPLICANT PRESIDENT
Dwight Gardner
(President's printed name)

SIGNATURE 
Dennis McLean
(Secretary's printed name)

DATE 6/27/2023

Accessibility Findings and General Recommendations

The Eppley Institute project team conducted an accessibility review of Gary's public parks in March of 2023. The accessibility review identified both specific and systemic barriers which impact park use and program participation by the community. The team reviewed more than twenty park locations within Gary's Department of Public Parks active parks facility inventory. Recommendations for barrier removal and improved access are noted within the needs assessment section for each park.

Throughout the accessibility review, several themes emerged across all parks, within the City of Gary.

1. Universal Design
2. Public Transportation for Access
3. Accessible Parking— most parks provided accessible parking, but spaces often did not fully comply with accessible design standards. Accessible parking spaces lacked access aisles, posted signage, proper sizing for both van and standard accessible parking spaces, demonstrated worn ground paint, and lacked access to a code-conforming accessible route to the park.
4. Accessible Routes and Pathways
5. Restrooms and Water Fountains
6. Programmatic Access
7. Maintenance of Accessible Features
8. General: Signage, Trash receptacles, Lighting, Seating

To address thematic accessibility barriers, the City of Gary would benefit from updating its system-wide, ADA self-evaluation and transition plan. The most recent self-evaluation and transition plan was completed in 2012 and its primary focus was only on ten park facilities. A self-evaluation and transition plan is required for all municipalities under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In addition to updating its self-evaluation and transition plan, accessibility should be included in the planning for all new park construction and renovations. All renovations should adhere to the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and State accessibility building codes. At the writing of this report, the Department of Public Parks has several park facilities that were beginning construction through funding from the American Rescue Plan Act⁶ (ARPA). It is recommended

⁶ American Rescue Plan Act Funding Breakdown-National Association of Counties. (n.d.). Retrieved May 25, 2023, from <https://www.naco.org/resources/featured/american-rescue-plan-act-funding-breakdown#:~:text=The%20%241.9%20trillion%20package%2C%20based%20on%20President%20Biden%E2%80%99s,from%20the%20A-american%20Rescue%20Plan%20Act%20of%202021>.

that Gary ensure that its ADA Coordinator remains in close contact with project designers and contractors to ensure accessibility-specific code compliance is met.

In regard to the accessibility of Gary's park programs, all programs are contracted with third parties. To ensure access for individuals with disabilities, it is recommended that the City work closely with the internal ADA and Title VI Coordinator and other local/public disabilities services agency to ensure all programming is accessible. The goal is to make the experiences provided at every park equitable, regardless of ability. Perhaps most importantly, the City would benefit from engaging the community and disability stakeholders in design, construction, renovations, and programmatic accessibility needs.

Systemwide

- The majority of park facilities have deteriorating or no signage visible to indicate parking location (i.e., park name, address) within the park boundary, park rules or directional signage leading towards park facilities with many being embedded in residential areas.
 - **Recommended Action:** Upgrade all signage within active parks so parks can be clearly identified, park rules and direction of park amenities.
 - **Recommended Action:** Review of all parking lighting at sundown to identify low lighted areas to define a plan to relight the parks to enhance safety.
 - **Recommended Action:** Review all park trash receptacles to identify a plan for replace and new installation of accessible trash receptacles.
 - **Recommended Action:** Apply system-wide accessibility recommendations to all parks.
- All LWCF properties need to be inspected for compliance.
 - **Recommended Action:** Contact IDNR grant administrator to identify site maps on file to determine if obsolete facilities exist within the 6F park property, update site maps and submit to INDR to confirm compliance or establish action plan to gain compliance with the park property that is protected in perpetuity. Recommend review of property deeds to assure LWCF clause are captured to assure protection of the 6F park boundary.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Civic involvement is crucial in planning and decision-making processes to effectively develop and deliver community-centered park and recreation opportunities. The public engagement process that follows was designed to be balanced, open, and collaborative. The leadership of Gary sought to use this process to build trust within the community while also developing a plan that outlines a path forward.

Methods of public engagement include:

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

Stakeholder Interviews

Objective

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

Participants

The Public Parks Department staff assisted in identifying stakeholders as individuals who were associated with the Public Parks Department, or larger Gary community-based on their position, involvement, interest, or identity.

The initial plan was to obtain the stakeholders list from staff, compile the individuals into groups based on their affiliation with the department (e.g., partnerships, rental groups, youth groups, sports, active adult groups, etc.) and host interviews via Zoom with each of the identified groups, with approximately 4-5 individuals per group. The lists were gathered, and groups were identified. Given the project timeline, the Parks Superintendent and the Eppley Institute project team determined that the best approach would be to facilitate in-person stakeholder interviews at the Hudson and Campbell Sports and Fitness Center during the week of the Eppley team's site visits. The two parties confirmed the following dates for each of the identified groups, offered on three consecutive evenings from 5 pm to 7 pm.

Data Collection

Stakeholder interviews were conducted by Eppley Institute staff members for the following dates:

- **Day 1 - Tuesday, March 7** – Active Adult Groups (i.e., Seniors, adults 50 and older)
- **Day 2 - Wednesday, March 8** – Youth Services and Youth Athletic groups (e.g., school-based support groups)
- **Day 3 - Thursday, March 9** – Non-government organizations/specialized groups (i.e., accessible, or inclusive groups)

Stakeholders were interviewed in groups, with attendance of three stakeholders on day one, two attendees on day two (who were City employees), and eight stakeholders on day three, totaling eleven stakeholders interviewed. All interviews were conducted in a structured format using a bespoke questionnaire developed by the Eppley Institute team in conjunction with the city's project team. At the beginning of each group interview, stakeholders were assured that the information and perspectives they share during interviews would not be attributed to them nor identifiable in any reports or deliverables.

Analysis

Extensive written notes were recorded at each interview. After interviews were concluded, segments, or units, in the data were identified; these generally aligned with responses on a per-participant, per-question basis. Then, a process of grouping the open codes was completed to reflect interpretation and meaning and identify themes.

Results

A recurring impression among the stakeholders interviewed was that the City of Gary Parks and Recreation Department staff are attentive and industrious to the best of their ability, though the Department as a whole is underfunded and understaffed. The Department's Park inventory is large, with 34 active park properties, most requiring regular mowing and maintenance by only four full-time maintenance staff members. Several stakeholders expressed challenges in past efforts to go through formal channels to request maintenance or repairs within the parks. The City's process can be complicated and lengthy, so requests tend to take a long time or may get lost in other efforts.

As the City's population continues to decrease, the parks are generally not well-used, therefore citizen stewardship is minimal, and the safety of park users is a concern. With more "eyes on the street," parks, neighborhoods, and streets are safer to use, because if someone is in trouble, neighbors are ready to assist and protect from danger, contributing to making livable places.

Many of the stakeholders communicated a desired focus on the public health benefits of a vibrant park system. Additional funding and staffing of the Parks Department could help support connectivity throughout the city by way of bicycle and pedestrian trails, swimming and water safety programs, summer meal programs, litter removal, and the social cohesion that comes from neighbors being present in public spaces.

Some of the specific programs, events, and facilities that park users would like to see in Gary Parks included many that have been identified by the National Recreation and Park Association as current trends. These include:

- Connectivity across the Region to existing bicycle and pedestrian trail systems
- Repair and maintenance of existing tennis courts, and the addition of pickleball courts
- Volunteer trash collection, recycling, and household hazardous waste collection days at park sites
- Local industry Days of Service
- An outdoor sports venue to include baseball, track & field, football, tennis, basketball, and aquatics, with lights for night programming. This may involve partnerships with outside organizations to assist with management & maintenance of facilities.
- Community center(s) that could be made available for regular programming, rather than a focus on special event rentals.

Stakeholders stated that an investment in Gary Parks & Recreation's marketing efforts (branding, website, social media outlets) would be useful to the community, as a way to distribute information about programs, services, and accessibility consistently and reliably.

Due to the availability of funding, many conveyed that as Gary Parks sets priorities for future improvements, a focus on one district or neighborhood at a time could be a good approach. This would allow the staff to keep up with maintenance and determine use patterns over time, and provide citizens with examples of vibrant, well-maintained

public spaces that can inspire stewardship and action in their own neighborhoods. Creating partnerships with schools and youth organizations to aid in the improvement of neighborhood spaces can provide a sense of pride and help create advocates for parks and public places.

At the time of the Eppley team's site visits and stakeholder interviews, a number of the Jewel Parks around the City were currently or soon to be under construction and renovation with the City's receipt of American Rescue Plan funding. Some stakeholders expressed that consideration must be given to Gary's unique environmental conditions prior to any new construction. Industry was initially drawn to Northwest Indiana because of its abundant natural resources that included clay, timber, and sand. Ultimately, this concentration of industry has led to ongoing pollution, toxic releases, and health risks for citizens. Underground conditions should be carefully surveyed and mitigated as necessary where construction and renovations are taking place.

Despite its extensive history of development for industry, Northwest Indiana remains one of the richest areas in Indiana and in the Great Lakes region for biodiversity. Hundreds of plants, insects, and amphibian species still inhabit the area. While much of the Little Calumet River and Kankakee Marsh have been drained for industry and agriculture, this area is still important habitat for breeding and migrating waterfowl, as well as other wildlife species. Stakeholders said they needed to work with partners to preserve these unique natural areas and habitats, to focus on public health, and to involve the City's youth in stewardship efforts. Some of these potential partners may include:

- The Legacy Foundation (philanthropy and fundraising)
- Medical/Hospital Partners (Methodist, Edgewater, Oak Street Health, Regional Medical)
- The Gary Urban League
- United Way
- Industry (NIPSCO, US Steel)
- Environmental Organizations (IDNR, Dunes Learning Center, Land Trusts, Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society)
- Museums (Field Museum of Chicago, Museum of Science & Industry for STEM programs)
- Universities (IU Northwest, Purdue)

SURVEY

Gary System Master Plan

Survey Methodology Overview

Objective & Overview

The primary objective for the survey was to systematically gather data that would inform recreation and cultural programming and the management, operation, and development of parks, open space, and greenway assets for years to come and to inform an update of the City of Gary Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The survey instrument sought to collect data on a variety of relevant measures, including:

- **Demographics**, including characteristics such as gender, age, and income
- **Outreach**, including current & preferred modes of recreation opportunity information
- **Awareness** of existing sites and spaces
- **Usage & Satisfaction** with community parks and recreation resources
- **Condition assessments**, as perceived by members of the community
- **Barriers & access** to the use of parks and recreation resources
- **Benefits** of parks and recreation resources to community and individual outcomes
- **Importance** of parks, open space, and greenway resources in the community
- **Opinion** about desired park funding budget allocations

Sampling

Convenience sample

To measure public perspective and gather data related to Gary Parks and Recreation facilities, programs, and services, a convenience-based sampling strategy was conducted. City of Gary staff were predominantly responsible for promoting and making available the survey. The survey was predominantly administered online (Qualtrics® software) and shared via html link and QR code. A paper version of the survey was also made available at some locations; surveys collected on paper were scanned, recorded, and combined with online survey responses. Mechanisms for distributing the survey included:

- Posting of notices and provision of paper surveys at Hudson-Campbell Fitness Center and at Gary City Hall
- Survey links posted on the city website, gary.gov, and the city Facebook page
- Master plan project described in the Times of Northwest Indiana newspaper
- Announcement of the survey made at two board meetings (March 14, 2023 and March 28, 2023; these meetings are also shared on the Gary government access channel and the government Roku)
- Survey information distributed to Gary city schools

Data collection dates

The window for data collection via public surveys began on March 20, 2023. Data collection continued until the closing date of April 10, 2023.

At the conclusion of convenience sampling, 208 individuals both (a) responded to the survey and (b) answered at least one substantive question. However, the number of responses to questions varied; as a result, the denominator varied between survey items.

Design & Analysis

The survey was developed in conjunction between the Eppley Institute and stakeholders from the city of Gary. The process began with a draft survey that was reviewed by city officials, with several rounds of feedback that was incorporated into a revised version. This process repeated until the project team determined that the survey would serve its purpose in acquiring public feedback to inform the process of the Gary Parks and Recreation Master Plan update.

The target length of the survey was not to exceed 15 minutes; ultimately its predicted duration was 13 minutes. Data was analyzed for key findings, relying predominantly on relevant descriptive analysis (e.g., counts, distributions, percentages, means). Most of the survey questions were multiple choice in form, with many including an “Other” option where respondents were able to fill in their own responses not listed among the menu of choices. These free-response comments to question prompts were analyzed qualitatively and included in the final analysis.

While the survey targeted residents of Gary, participation was open to anyone with a link so that all stakeholders would feel invited to provide input. Generally, respondents varied in the number of questions answered, sometimes

skipping items; ultimately all responses were included, even if a respondent stopped responding to the survey after answering few questions. While this strategy maximized the number of participants, it also resulted in differ-

ing numbers of responses to individual items. Where percentages of totals are reported, the total value reflects the number of responses to the individual item, rather than the total number of survey responses overall.

Results

Survey Results Summary

Highlights from the survey findings are shown in the table below (Table 9).

TABLE 9: Overview of Gary Parks and Recreation Survey Results

Data category	Findings
Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72% of respondents have lived in Gary for more than 16 years 78% have at least one younger person (less than 20 years old) living in their household 27% have at least one older person (older than 65 years) living in their residence
Outreach Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media is the most common way respondents hear about Parks and Recreation programming (62%) and would prefer to hear about it (77%) Other popular preferred options for communicating information about Gary Parks and Recreation include the city website (59%), and seasonal program guides (59%)
Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 76% of respondents are both aware of, and visit Marquette Park Respondents are least aware of Howe Park (55% unaware), Ironwood Park (45% unaware), and Glen Ryan (43% unaware)
Usage & Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over a third of respondents (37%) reported visiting Marquette Park eleven or more times during the previous year Over the past year, the three parks least visited are Howe Park (7% visited once or more), Ironwood Park (12% visited once or more), and Glen Ryan Park (15% visited once or more)
Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 74% of respondents indicated they had no used Gary Parks and Recreation programming in the past year, with more than half of these respondents saying a major reason why they do not do so is lack of awareness of events and opportunities Of the respondents that do use Gary Parks and Recreation programming, people are most satisfied with public events, picnics, and festivals, with 59% satisfied Respondents are less satisfied with teen programs (29% satisfied), youth summer programs (33% satisfied), and senior programs (34% satisfied)
Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority (66%) of respondents indicated that Marquette Park is in “excellent” or “very good” condition Respondents reported Howe Park (74%) and Roosevelt Park (73%) to be in “poor” or “very poor” condition
Barriers and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The three most common barriers respondents report facing that make park use difficult are inadequate or poorly maintained facilities (65%), safety or wellness concerns (54%), and lack of knowledge about programs (38%) 84% of respondents report their health as “good” or “excellent”
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respondents appreciate the benefits parks can bring to them, their neighborhood, the city, and the environment, with 81% saying they “strongly agree” or “agree” with a provided list of benefits from parks, outdoor spaces, and recreational programming
Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The three facilities seen as important by the highest percentages of respondents using them are restrooms (97%), walking trails in parks (95%), playgrounds (94%) The three programming types indicated by the highest respondents as important for increased availability are Farmers’ Market (95%), family nights (91%), fitness, health, and wellness programs (91%) All facilities and programs listed were seen as important by at least half of the respondents
Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When asked how they would allocate additional parks funding, more than half of comments (55%) were for renovation (31%) and maintenance (24%) of existing parks, grounds, trails, amenities, and facilities

Demographics

The majority (88%) of people responding to the survey invitation live within Gary’s city limits. Respondents are spread throughout the city, with 40% indicating they live on the east side, 38% living on the west side, 13% on the north side, and 10% on the south side. Many have lived in Gary for a significant amount of time; 75% have been in Gary for 11 or more years, and 11% for between 6 and 10 years. 12% of respondents have lived in Gary for between 1 and 5 years, and only 2% have been there less than a year. The average household size for the entire group of respondents is fewer than three people (2.83). The majority (78%) of respondents indicated they had a child younger than 10 years old (30%) or a child or young adult younger than 20 years old (48%) living with them. Additionally, more than a quarter (27%) of respondents indicated there was an older adult of 65 or more years of age living in the residence.

More survey respondents (total n = 113) were female (68%) than male (27%) with 5% preferring not to answer. The two most common racial/ethnic identities of survey respondents (total n = 109) are Black (62%) and white (26%). 6% of respondents indicated being of Hispanic/Latino background while another combined 6% identify as either Native American/Alaskan, Asian, or another unspecified race. For income, 6% of respondents (total n = 103) earn less than \$25,000, 17% between \$25,000 and

\$49,000, 31% between \$50,000 and \$74,999, 14% between \$75,000 and \$99,000, 24% between \$100,000 and \$199,999, and 9% over \$200,000.

A demographic “snapshot” of random sample respondents is provided in Figure 52.

Outreach Feedback

Among the ways respondents currently learn about Gary Parks and Recreation services and programs within the parks, the two most common mechanisms are through social media (62%) or from friends and neighbors (46%) (total n = 114, Table 10). In addition to the outreach options listed in Table 10, some survey respondents selected “other” and indicated they learned of Parks and Recreation services and programs through the mail and at council meetings.

When respondents were asked about their preferences in learning about Gary Parks and Recreation programming and services, the three most popular options were social media (77%), the City of Gary website (59%), and through a seasonal program guide (59%). The majority of survey respondents who selected “other” when answering this question indicated their preference for learning about Parks and Recreation services and programming from mailed flyers, with one respondent suggesting notification by email.

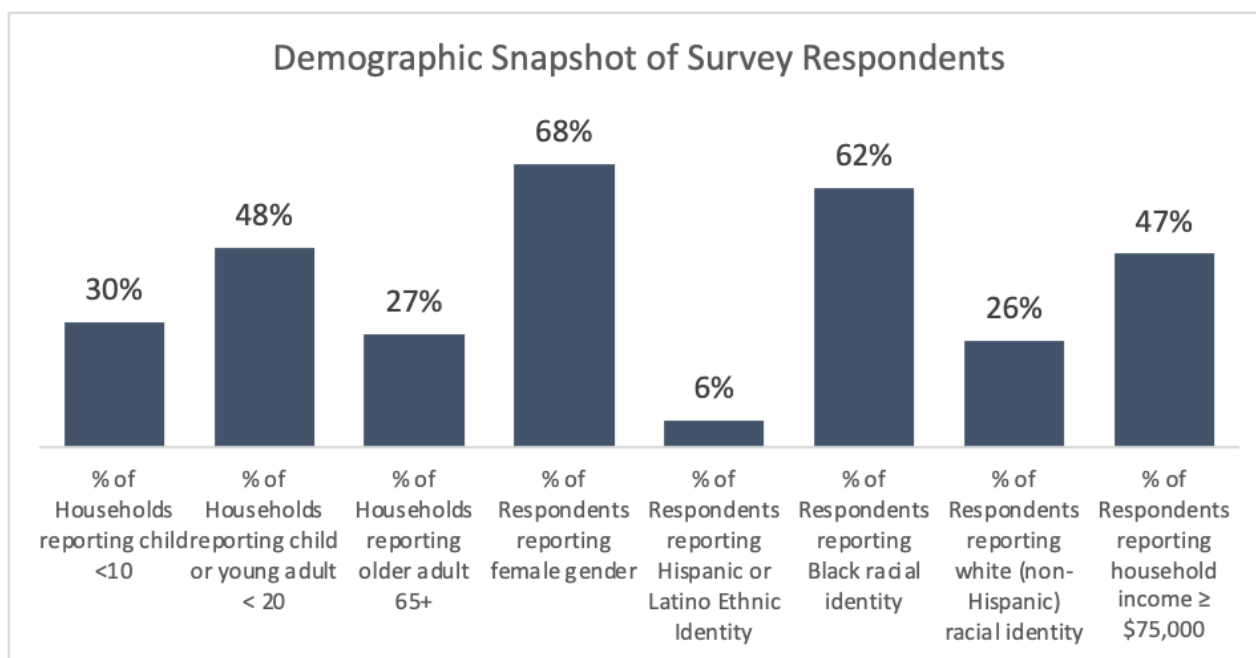


FIGURE 52: Select Demographic Characteristics of Gary System Master Plan Survey Respondents

TABLE 10: Current and Preferred Ways Respondents Learn About Gary Parks and Recreation Services and Programming

	Current	Preferred
n	114	111
Blogs	3%	17%
City of Gary website	20%	59%
Conversations with parks and rec staff	11%	23%
Flyers/posters at parks and rec facilities	17%	50%
From friends and neighbors	46%	32%
Newspaper advertisements	10%	26%
Newspaper articles	20%	29%
Other:	6%	6%
Parks and Rec Department e-mail bulletins	4%	49%
Social media	62%	77%
I do not receive any information	21%	-
Community Meetings	-	36%
Park Board Meetings	-	18%
Radio	-	35%
Seasonal program guide	-	59%
Television	-	30%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue are those options chosen most often by respondents for that column.

Awareness

The park most visited by respondents is Marquette Park, with 76% indicating their household uses this park (total n = 163, Table 11). The second and third most-visited parks are Tolleston Park (30%) and Roosevelt Park (17%). Respondents indicated in some cases they were aware of Gary Parks but that their household does not use them. This was reported most frequently with Brunswick Park (55%), Roosevelt Park (47%), and Tolleston Park (47%). There are three parks, Howe Park (55%), Ironwood Park (45%), and Glen Ryan Park (43%), that respondents frequently reported being unaware of.

TABLE 11: Awareness and Use of Gary Parks

Park	n	My household uses this park	Aware of park but do not use	Unaware park existed
Brunswick Park - 700 Clark Road	163	13%	55%	32%
Glen Ryan Park- 4220 E. 6th Pl.	162	11%	46%	43%
Howe Park- 3901 Vermont St.	162	5%	40%	55%
Ironwood Park- 1119 E. 24th Ave.	159	11%	45%	45%
Marquette Park - 1 North Grand Boulevard	160	76%	18%	6%
Roosevelt Park- 2145 Harrison Street	163	17%	47%	36%
Tolleston Park - 1709 Ellsworth Pl.	162	30%	47%	23%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue are those options chosen most often by respondents for that column.

Usage & Satisfaction

Marquette Park is the most frequently used park, with 27% of respondents indicating someone from their household had visited more than 20 times during the past year (total n = 172, Table 12). The three least frequently visited parks were Howe Park, with 93% of respondents saying their household had not used the park in the last year, Ironwood Park (88% did not use), and Glen Ryan Park (85% did not use).

TABLE 12: Respondent-Indicated Frequency of Visitation of Gary Parks

Park	n	Did not visit	1-5 visits	6-10 visits	11-20 visits	More than 20 visits
Brunswick Park - 700 Clark Road	168	76%	18%	4%	1%	2%
Glen Ryan Park- 4220 E. 6th Pl.	160	85%	11%	3%	1%	1%
Howe Park- 3901 Vermont St.	158	93%	6%	1%	0%	1%
Ironwood Park- 1119 E. 24th Ave.	154	88%	6%	4%	1%	1%
Marquette Park - 1 North Grand Boulevard	172	16%	31%	16%	10%	27%
Roosevelt Park- 2145 Harrison Street	161	75%	15%	4%	1%	6%
Tolleston Park - 1709 Ellsworth Pl.	165	61%	27%	6%	1%	5%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue are those options chosen most often by respondents for that row.

Programs

With regards to programming and services offered by Gary Parks and Recreation, nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) indicated that they did not use the programming and services. When asked about each program or service individually, in all cases more than half of the respondents indicated the reason they did not use these programs or services was that they were unaware they existed (total n = 92, Table 13). Respondents who selected “other” instead of or in addition to the designated options indicated a perceived lack of safety and need for police presence was preventing them from attending events, as well as a lack of advertising of upcoming events.

TABLE 13: Reasons Respondents Do Not Use Parks and Recreation Programming

	Adult programs	Adult sports leagues, clubs	Fitness, health, wellness	Nature, environmental education	Public events, festivals, picnics	Senior or programs	Teen programs	Youth sports	Youth summer programs	Other
n	92	88	88	87	80	84	83	78	80	20
Didn't know it existed	65%	67%	64%	64%	51%	65%	60%	55%	60%	65%
Too far way	4%	2%	5%	6%	4%	1%	0%	1%	0%	5%
Not interested	7%	10%	6%	6%	6%	10%	5%	6%	6%	5%
Dissatisfied with quality	8%	7%	10%	2%	8%	2%	0%	0%	1%	10%
Health reasons	3%	5%	7%	3%	6%	2%	2%	1%	1%	5%
Not relevant to me	9%	7%	2%	9%	5%	12%	31%	31%	29%	10%
Other	4%	2%	7%	9%	20%	7%	1%	5%	3%	0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue are those options chosen most often by respondents for that column.

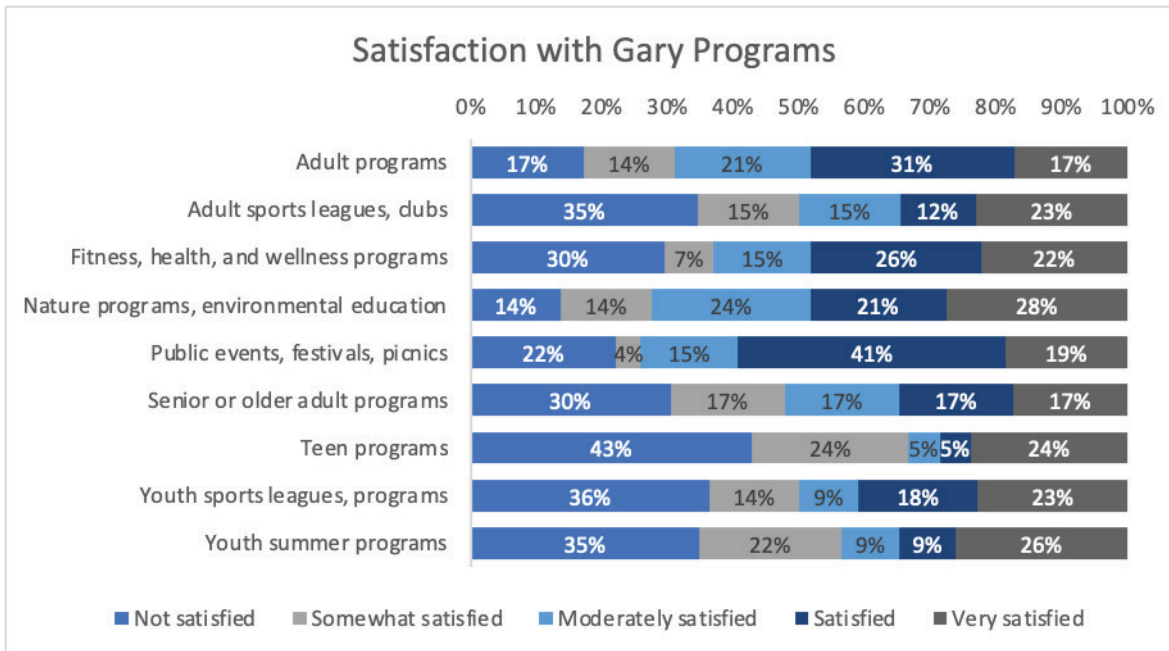


FIGURE 53:RESPONDENT Satisfaction with Parks Programming

The respondents who reported using services and programs offered by Gary Parks and Recreation (26%) were then asked to share their level of satisfaction with these offerings on a scale from “not satisfied” to “very satisfied”. Of the programs offered, respondents were most satisfied with public events, festivals, and picnics, with 59% indicating they were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” (Figure 53). Additionally, 48% of respondents reported being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the following three offerings: adult programs; fitness, health, and wellness programs; and nature programs and environmental education. Programs with greater numbers of respondents indicating dissatisfaction include teen programs (29% satisfied), youth summer programs (33% satisfied) and senior programs (34% satisfied).

Only eight, or 7% (total n = 123) of respondents indicated using their household had used the services provided by the Youth Services Bureau. Of those, one household used ABC Mouse, none used IXI, one used after school tutoring, two attended gardening activities, none attended boxing classes, two participated in nature classes or environmental education, one attended dance and performing arts sessions, two went on field trips, one used youth employment programming, and four attended summer camps. When rating satisfaction with the programming offered by the Youth Services Bureau, each programming type was

evaluated by three or fewer respondents, with all responses being that of “very satisfied,” “satisfied,” or “neutral.”

Survey respondents were asked about increasing parks-related programming in the winter for specific activities, and in each case, the majority of respondents indicated it was important (either “important” or “very important”) to target these programs. Increased funding was said to be important for a winter farmers’ market by 74% of respondents, winter festivals by 73%, organized sledding by 64%, ice skating by 62%, and winter hikes by 55%.

Condition

Survey respondents were asked to evaluate the condition of any parks they had visited on a scale from “very poor” to “excellent” (Total n = 134, Table 14). Because some parks are visited more frequently than others, the number of respondents evaluating each park varied, with a range from 38 for Howe Park to 134 for Marquette Park. Of these parks Marquette Park had the highest percentage of respondents indicating it was in “good” or “excellent” condition. The three parks with the highest respondents indicating the park were in “poor” or “very poor” condition were Howe Park (74%), Roosevelt Park (73%), and Ironwood Park (69%).

TABLE 14: Respondent Opinion of Condition of Gary Parks

Park	n	Very poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Good or Excellent
Brunswick Park - 700 Clark Road	57	32%	35%	25%	7%	2%	9%
Glen Ryan Park- 4220 E. 6th Pl.	46	33%	33%	20%	15%	0%	15%
Howe Park- 3901 Vermont St.	38	37%	37%	13%	5%	8%	13%
Ironwood Park- 1119 E. 24th Ave.	45	33%	36%	20%	11%	0%	11%
Marquette Park - 1 North Grand Boulevard	134	3%	7%	25%	40%	25%	66%
Roosevelt Park- 2145 Harrison Street	56	30%	43%	23%	0%	4%	4%
Tolleston Park - 1709 Ellsworth Pl.	82	24%	33%	33%	6%	4%	10%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue are those options chosen most often by respondents for that column.

Survey respondents were invited to suggest improvements to any parks they indicated were in “fair”, “poor”, or “very poor” condition. The paragraphs below summarize these responses.

Suggestions for Brunswick Park included the addition of playground equipment, swings, a splash pad, walking tracks, and garden beds. Respondents also suggested additional maintenance for Brunswick Park, including regular grass cutting and provision of additional garbage and recycling cans, as well as a renovation of the clubhouse.

For Glen Ryan Park, respondents indicated that keeping the park clean and having grass cut regularly is important to them. It was noted that the park could use more seating and more amenities in general. Safety was a concern noted for many of the respondents, who suggested lighting and added security. Additionally, respondents noted that maintenance to the pavilion, playground equipment and basketball court would be beneficial.

Respondent suggestions for Howe Park included comments on general maintenance of the park, such as regularly cutting the grass and caring for landscaping. Respondents indicated that work could be done to make the building on site more inviting and that the pool area needs to be repaired. Suggestions were also made to introduce more sensory equipment for children and add more organized children’s activities.

With regards to Ironwood Park, respondents indicated that rehabbing the existing basketball and tennis courts would be beneficial. Another suggestion included starting programs

for children’s leagues. Additionally, respondents indicated that they would like to see more trails. Most of all, respondents voiced their concerns for the safety of the general area as well as that of the existing playground equipment.

Respondents indicated that Marquette Park is one of the most used parks and that because of this there needs to be added security, especially at night. A suggestion was made that the park could be closed after dusk. Additionally, respondents indicated the need for more parking, especially near the disc golf course. As indicated for many of the other parks, respondents suggested more garbage cans and active pickup of litter. One respondent would like increased budgeting for maintenance instead of relying on volunteers. Additionally, comments were made about adding more sand or rubber mats to the playground area.

For Roosevelt Park, many respondents indicated that it could benefit from more activities such as swings and a splash pad. Additionally, respondents indicated that the pavilion needs to be renovated and the baseball fields need to be better maintained. Respondents mentioned the need for resurfacing the tennis court and track. Finally, some suggested offering swimming lessons and senior aquatic activities.

Respondents had several suggestions for Tolleston Park, for both general maintenance and renovations. Many respondents mentioned overgrown vegetation and trees. Respondents also indicated that the pavilion often floods and that the walking track and basketball courts need repair. Respondents indicated interest in the water park being repaired for use. Finally, respondents expressed general safety concerns for the park.

Barriers & Access

Survey respondents were asked to indicate from a list which circumstances prevent them from being able to use Gary Parks and Recreation services. They were able to select as many as they felt applied to them. The three most common barriers indicated by respondents are inadequate and poorly maintained facilities (65%), safety or wellness concerns (54%), and lack of knowledge about programs (38%) (Figure 54). Respondents who selected the “other” response typically had more specific suggestions. Some involved safety and maintenance of the parks, such as the need to clean basketball courts and update or repair dangerous playground equipment. Respondents also indicated issues with the park accessibility and lack of free parking near many of the parks.

Because health concerns can also be a barrier in ability to access parks programming, respondents were asked about their own health. In general, respondents reported being in good health, with 84% indicating their health was “good” or “excellent” and 72% reporting that during the past month on three or less days poor physical or mental health prevented them from participating in their normal activities. Most respondents (75%, total n = 110) use a car to travel to their park of choice, while 17% walk, 5% use a bicycle or scooter, and 3% indicated when selecting “other” that they use a combination of these travel methods.

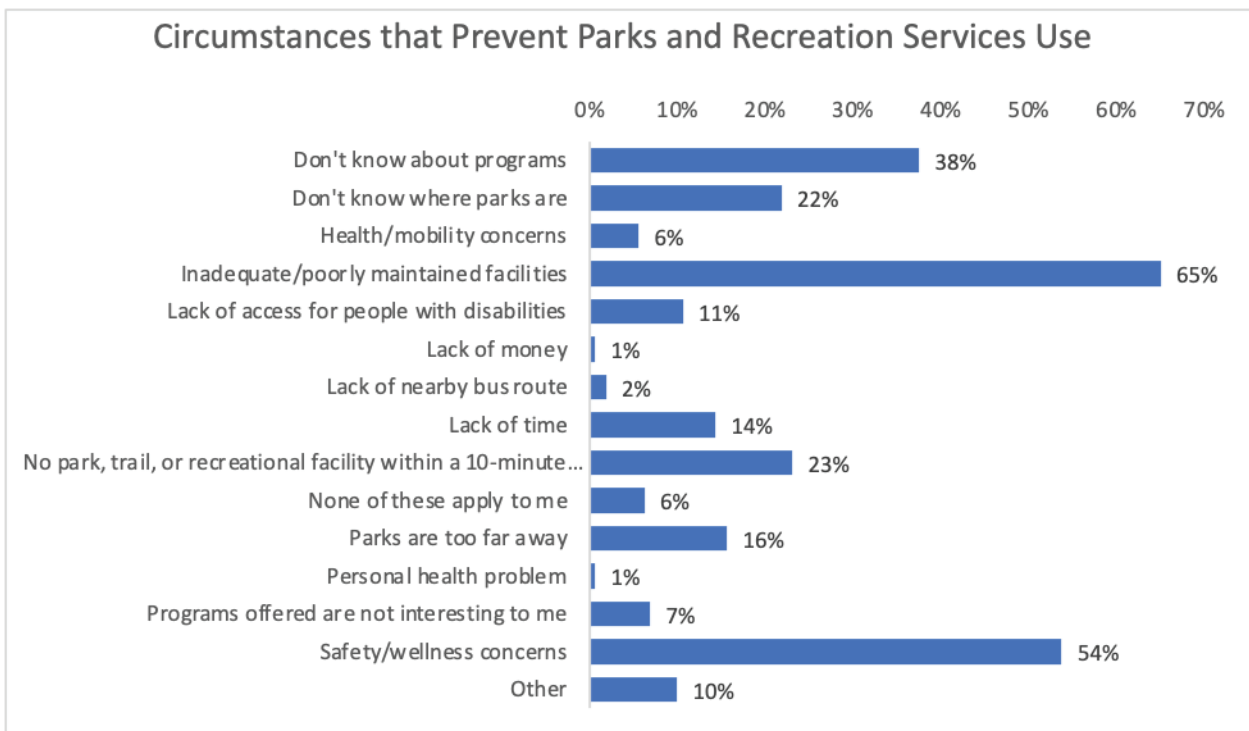


FIGURE 54: Reasons Respondents Indicate They Do Not Use Parks and Recreation Services

Benefits

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a list of benefits that can be generated from parks or Parks and Recreation Programming (total n= 109, Table 15). For each benefit, there was a strong majority of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the statement was in fact a benefit received by parks and/or Parks and Recreation programming. When summed across the “agree” or “strongly agree” categories, in all cases more than 81% of respondents indicated agreement. In addition to the listed benefits, one respondent said that parks and trails help to connect pets and people with nature.

TABLE 15: Respondent Agreement with Benefits Generated

Benefit	n	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	% Agree or Strongly Agree
Enhance community appearance	108	0%	1%	2%	13%	84%	97%
Help attract new residents and businesses	107	0%	1%	3%	19%	78%	97%
Help reduce crime	108	1%	2%	8%	11%	78%	89%
Improve diet and nutrition	106	1%	4%	14%	28%	53%	81%
Improve mental health and reduce stress	109	0%	2%	0%	21%	77%	98%
Improve physical health and fitness	108	0%	1%	0%	26%	73%	99%
Improve social connections	108	0%	1%	6%	40%	53%	93%
Increase opportunities for people of different cultures to interact	107	0%	2%	7%	32%	59%	91%
Increase property values in surrounding area	107	0%	2%	6%	17%	76%	93%
Make Gary a more desirable place to live	107	0%	1%	3%	9%	87%	96%
Strengthen sense of community	109	0%	1%	2%	19%	78%	97%
Preserve open space and the environment	107	0%	3%	3%	20%	75%	95%
Promote tourism in the county	107	0%	3%	8%	27%	62%	89%
Provide access to the outdoors and nature	107	0%	1%	0%	28%	71%	99%
Protect the county's historical attributes	104	0%	3%	13%	23%	62%	85%
Other	13	0%	0%	8%	15%	77%	92%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue are those options chosen most often by respondents for that column.

Importance

Respondents were asked if they had used specific facilities offered by the city of Gary, and if so, how important the facilities were to them. In all cases, more than half of the respondents said that the facility was “important” or “very important” (total n = 114, Table 16). The five facilities seen as important by the highest percentages of respondents using them are restrooms (97%), walking trails in parks (95%), playgrounds (94%), shelter houses (91%), and green spaces or open fields (90%).

TABLE 16: Percent of Respondents Indicating a Facility as “Important” or “Very Important”

Facility	n	% Important or Very Important
Ambridge Mann Pavilion	37	65%
Baseball Fields	54	78%
Basketball Courts	60	83%
Brunswick Community Center	45	80%
Brunswick Pavilion	45	80%
Disc Golf Course	64	63%
Glen Ryan Pavilion	39	67%
Green Space/Open Fields	70	90%
Howe Pavilion	29	62%
Hudson-Campbell Fitness Center	71	86%
Ironwood Pavilion	28	82%
Marquette Park Pavilion	114	85%
Oak Savanna Woodlands	55	82%
Outdoor Skating	66	56%
Playgrounds	96	94%
Pool	81	83%
Restrooms	105	97%
Shelter Houses	87	91%
Softball Fields	75	83%
Tennis Courts	79	75%
Tolleston Pavilion	64	86%
Walking Trails (within parks)	111	95%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue are those options chosen most often by respondents for that column.

Survey respondents were then asked to select the three facilities that they or members of their household used the most in the past year, and which three facilities contributed the most to their personal health. Table 17 lists the top three facilities chosen by respondents for both being most used, and most beneficial to their health. Of note, of the 22 facilities respondents could have selected, the same three appear in each list.

TABLE 17: Top Three Facilities Respondents Indicating as Most Used, and Most Beneficial to Public Health

Top three most used facilities (% of respondents who selected facility in top three)	Top three facilities benefiting health (% of respondents who selected facility in top three)
Marquette Park (73%) Walking trails (41%) Hudson-Campbell Fitness Center (25%)	Walking trails (53%) Marquette Park (37%) Hudson-Campbell Fitness Center (30%)

Respondents were then given a list of facilities and amenities, some of which are provided by the City of Gary, and some of which currently are not. They were asked to indicate how important they felt it was for Gary to increase availability to each facility or amenity. In general, respondents indicated many of these as “important” or “very important” (total n = 128, Table 18). The nine options seen as important by the highest percentages of respondents are restrooms (99%), playgrounds (94%), accessible facilities for people with disabilities (93%), paved trails (93%), picnic tables (92%), pavilions for additional community events (91%), multi-purpose athletic fields (89%), green spaces and open fields (89%), and open-air shelters (89%).

Respondents who selected “other” offered specific suggestions not included in the list provided. An improvement frequently mentioned was providing more trash receptacles and having trash picked up regularly. Respondents also emphasized the importance of improving security at the parks. Two respondents would like Gary Parks and Recreation to create more urban gardens or farms. Playground equipment upgrades as well as paved roads and courts were also suggested. Finally, respondents indicated interest in the addition of pickleball, basketball, and disc golf areas.

TABLE 18: Percentages of Respondents Indicating Facilities and Amenities as Important for Increased Availability

Facility	n	% Important or Very Important
Accessible Facilities (for people with disabilities)	128	93%
Archery Range	120	27%
Athletic Fields (Indoor)	122	85%
Athletic Fields (Multipurpose)	123	89%
Athletic Fields (Soccer)	119	74%
Athletic Fields (Softball/Baseball)	122	81%
Bike Racks	123	84%
Bike Paths	125	86%
Community Gardens	122	84%
Courts (Basketball)	121	82%
Courts (Pickleball)	120	45%
Courts (Tennis)	120	66%
Disc Golf Courses	120	53%
Dog Parks	124	69%
Driving Range (Golf)	121	59%
Environmental/Historical/Educational Displays	121	88%
Equestrian Facilities	117	36%
Fishing Piers/Areas	123	79%
Fitness Equipment (along trails)	120	66%
Green Space/Open Field	119	89%
Golf Courses	119	52%
Habitat- Prairie/meadow	120	75%
Habitat- Forest/woodland	120	78%
Horseshoe Pits	118	35%
Ice Skating (outdoor)	115	53%
Nature Center	118	83%
Pavilions- additional community events	117	91%

Facility	n	% Important or Very Important
Pavilions- technology updates (i.e., Wi-Fi, audio/visual)	116	84%
Picnic Tables and BBQ Grills	119	92%
Playgrounds	118	94%
Pool (Outdoor)	116	72%
Restrooms	121	99%
Roller skating (outdoor)	117	62%
Shelters (open air)	119	89%
Shelters (climate controlled)	119	79%
Splash Pads	118	71%
Technology- based programming (drones, rockets, geocaching, etc.)	119	63%
Trails (Paved)	122	93%
Trails (Natural)	121	88%
Other	20	75%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue are those options chosen most often by respondents for that column.

Additionally, respondents were given a list of programs, some of which are provided by the City of Gary, some of which are not. Similarly to the list of facilities, survey respondents were asked to indicate how important it is to them for Gary to increase availability of this programming. In all cases, at least half of the respondents indicated they felt increasing availability was either “important” or “very important” (total n = 111, Table 19). The six programming types indicated by the highest percentages of respondents as important for increased availability are Farmers’ Market (95%), family nights (91%), fitness, health, and wellness programs (91%), youth sports leagues and programs (90%), festivals and picnics (89%), and accessible programs for people with disabilities (88%). Respondents who selected the “other” option suggested additions of disc golf, yoga classes, and water safety education. Also, residents emphasized increasing children’s programs and increasing community activities for Gary residents.

TABLE 19: Percentages of Respondents Indicating Programming as Important for Increased Availability

Program	n	% Important or Very Important
Accessible programs (for people with disabilities)	111	88%
Adult programs and day trips	109	78%
Adult sports leagues/clubs/programs	108	71%
After school programs	108	86%
Arts programming (indoors)	108	85%
Business courses	107	72%
Carnivals for community	105	68%
Community classes/seminars	105	78%
Community day	105	81%
Concerts	109	84%
Family Nights	108	91%
Farmers' Market	111	95%
Festivals/picnics	109	89%
Fitness, health, and wellness programs	110	91%
Gardening programs	110	85%
Healthy cooking/nutrition programs	108	81%
Movies in the parks	107	74%
Nature programs/environmental education	109	86%
Programs for people with disabilities	109	85%
Programs with your pets	107	50%
Senior or older adult programs	108	82%
Sports programming (indoors)	104	82%
Technology-based programs (drones, rockets, geocaching, etc.)	106	67%
Teen programs	108	87%
Youth sports leagues/programs	108	90%
Youth summer day camps	106	86%
Other	16	88%

Note. Cells highlighted in blue are those options chosen most often by respondents for that column.

Finally, respondents were asked how the Parks Department can best increase use of the trails located at Brunswick Park and Marquette Park. They were permitted to select as many options from a list as they desired, and each of the options were chosen by more than half of the respondents (Figure 55, total n = 117). Renovation and upgrade of trails was selected by 74% of respondents, provision of visual maps by 64%, more information on the Parks website by 56%, and guided tours of the trails by 56%. The “other” option was chosen by 16% of respondents, whose suggestions included increasing safety of trails, adding interpretive and educational signs, adding rentable bikes at the trailhead, and increasing nature programming and knowledge about the trails.

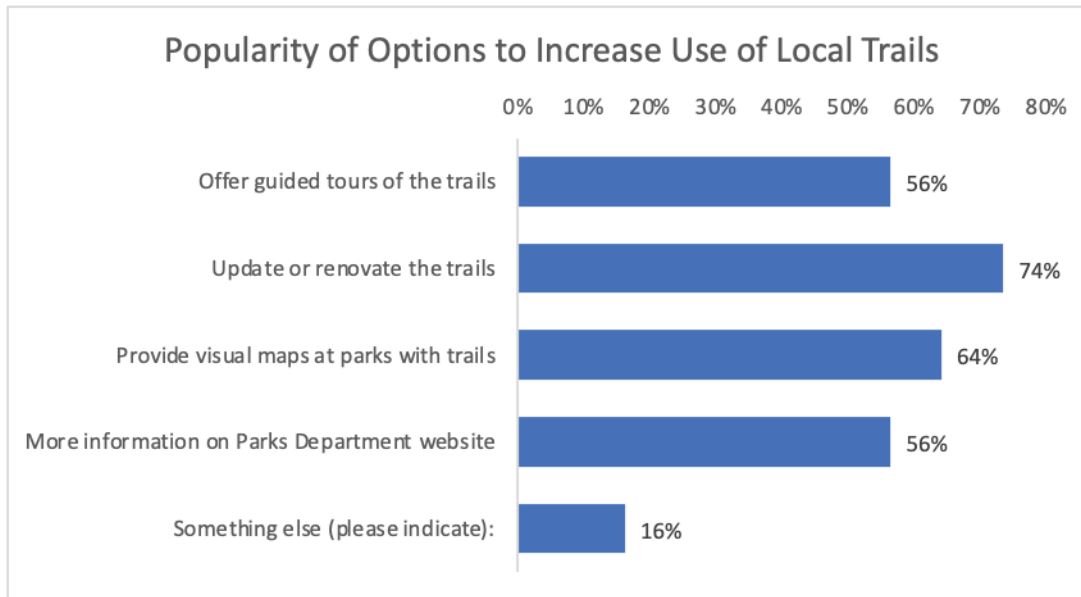


FIGURE 55: Options Selected by Respondents to Increase Use of Trails in Brunswick Park and Marquette Park

Opinion

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how they would choose to allocate hypothetical additional funding in a list of categories related to Parks and Recreation facilities and programming. They were permitted to choose as many categories as they saw fit but required to allow the totals to sum to 100%. Figure 56 below shows the overall averages of allocations made by the respondents. A combined 55% of funding was allocated to renovation of existing grounds, facilities, and amenities (31%) and maintenance of existing parks and trails (24%). A combined 26% of allocation was designated

for providing additional recreational programming (13%), constructing new bicycle/pedestrian trails (8%), and constructing new parks (5%). Finally, a combined 16% of funds were chosen for allocation to conservation efforts (7%), increasing natural areas (6%), and acquiring new land (3%). Respondents who selected “other” offered suggestions to use funding to increase security at parks, to budget for repairing park equipment and to add a community center. Respondents also indicated that providing more recreation programs such as pickleball and yoga would be beneficial.

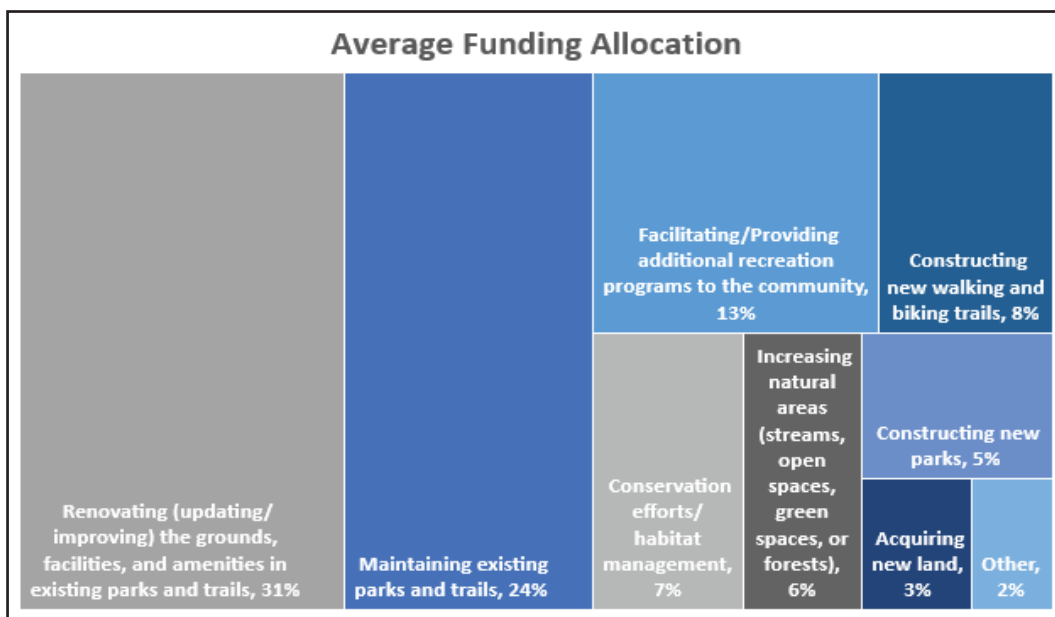


FIGURE 56: Overall Respondent Allocation of Hypothetical Additional Funding for Gary Parks and Recreation

PLANNING WEBSITE

The project team kept the public informed and updated about the Master Plan throughout the process using a website- <https://masterplan.eppley.org/gary-in/>. The website was developed and published in May 2023.

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

- General information about the parks and recreation master planning process.
- A project timeline and information about major milestones.
- Information about the consultant team.
- Information about how to participate in the public engagement process.
- A portal to access the community survey.
- A public comment forum for leaving feedback for the planning team to consider.

The website, including the public comment forum, remained active through the planning process to ensure transparency and allow ample opportunity for community members to leave their feedback. Upon completion of the draft plan, the document was posted on the project website for public review and comment. Ten comments were left as feedback through the website portal:

- Being a part of an American Legion Baseball organization around the region area, with mostly Gary-based athletes. We hold a 16 and 19 & under teams that play around 30 baseball games a summer. Due to funding, we haven't had a home game in a couple of years and have to pay nearby cities in order to PRACTICE on their respective fields. The only available field in Gary is Roosevelt High school baseball fields where the school is closed, and the fields have not been kept up for the last couple of years. Also, it is partly owned by the little league now where the president also does not give us time to use to field. Building a baseball park that can be accessible to our future younger generation as well as our high schoolers is something that would be able to be beneficial to our organization, Gary Public high schools, as well as everybody in the community. Gary is a wonderful place that has had multiple running fields at a time yet hasn't in quite in a while. Bring baseball back to Gary, Indiana is a goal of mine to reach within the next 10 years! I hope this concern gets brought to life and we can move forward with inner city baseball!

City of Gary Parks & Recreation System Master Plan

Welcome, Gary residents!

Gary, Indiana offers residents many unique recreation opportunities. To ensure that recreation opportunities are readily available and attractive to residents, the Gary Parks & Recreation Department and its future will be guided by a new Park and Recreation System Master Plan.

The quality of the new Master Plan depends on community engagement and input from many different people. To ensure that residents drive the plan development, the Master Plan process will include a variety of ways community members can become involved in and inform decision-making. The Master Plan process began in December 2022 and will conclude in July 2023.

Your input is vital to the success of the Master Plan! This website can be used to learn about upcoming community engagement opportunities, find ways to comment on the overall process, and stay current on the Master Plan process.

If you have any comments or feedback for the planning team, please drop us a note at the bottom of this page.

About the Master Plan

Purpose of the Master Plan

The complexity of park planning requires a thoughtful, rational, and participative process. Gary Parks & Recreation System Master Plan will

FIGURE 57: Gary Parks & Recreation System Master Plan Website

- Pittman Square Park needs remodeling badly. Can where Wallace was become a park? Sort of like a Wicker Park in Indiana. My kids love going to the park, but we usually have to go to other parks, but these are my suggestions and also neighborhood park there is a lot right in front of my house on 43rd Ave that a little park could be for the kids in the neighborhood.
- Please partner with NIRPC (Northwest IN Regional Planning Commission) and/or Community Tree and the Arbor Foundation to get trees for free to plant around the city. Engage youth to learn about landscaping via volunteer or paid activities. Engage schools and churches in beautifying the parks connected to or near their properties.
- I would like to see standards applied to this process with each jewel park outfitted with a standard set of amenities such as: shelter with picnic tables, basketball court, pickleball courts, softball field, benches, bench swings, playground that isn't just for toddlers, walking paths and community garden area. Also, Summer Rec programs with the ability to check out equipment. Parks that are not designated as jewel parks should have walking paths, mowed areas, community gardens and benches. Hopefully basketball and/or pickleball courts.
- Representative of Gary Community Partnership, a 501(c)(3) in Gary (www.garycommunitypartnership.com) We adopted Rees Park in 2019 and have faithfully stewarded park improvements and performed issues remediation ever since. It is laudable that the city is working to develop a plan which will support their parks. We know that parks not only beautify spaces, but they also provide an area for social commune and impact the quality of life for residents. While I understand that it is not your direct responsibility to manage the collaboration between community organizations on the ground and the processes within your plan, e.g., robust public engagement period, I would say that as the project

developer and owner, you would have some check and balance to assure quality at these major phase gates identified in the project timeline. One major issue within this city is communication and I would like to understand how this notification was communicated, when it was communicated, and who it was communicated to? All the framework development in the world will be futile if it doesn't represent the intended audience and our organization as do several other nonprofits and community agencies have the pulse of our neighborhoods. I'm not one to just complain and walk away. I'd also like to be included in this process where appropriate, and at a minimum notified when communication is distributed to the community at large. There are others who I am also sure are unaware and unengaged. Thank you again for your time and consideration.

- I am part of the water safety groups in Gary and the Great Lakes Water Safety Consortium. Proper training and equipment along with equipment training is needed. As you may know, this end of the lake has more drownings than any other Great Lake. There is a huge need for proper signage about water safety in the park. I am also a water sports enthusiast and encourage the lake, outside the guarded area, to be swim at your own risk, which it basically is, but allowing swimming all days, all conditions. All of this needs to be organized with water safety experts from the area and the Great Lakes so best practices are taken into account.
- I would like to be made aware of community meetings concerning Gary parks. I remember in the past, the parks were used for Art and Craft shows, I would like that to come back again. Hobart has one, as do many of the other communities.
- I would like more information when the draft plan is announced or available.
- Parks are vitally important public spaces. Where I live, the only walkable park (25 minutes) is Marquette Park, which while lovely, does not accommodate sports. I would very much like to see a park developed in the neighborhood with amenities like a basketball court, tennis court, soccer fields, walking track, etc. Two possible sites are the former Nobel School and former WIRT (both owned by Redevelopment). These are some of the only open, flat spaces left in the Miller neighborhood that could be developed for this type of recreational park. I strongly encouraged the City to portion some of the land for public parks.
- Can someone in the Parks Department please pick up and remove all the branches that were cut this spring? The person who cut all the "evasive" branches told me that a staff member of the Parks Department would

pick them up in May, but they are just laying along the Chanute trail. Please have someone take a look, it would be nice to have them all gone.

Public Presentation

The final plan draft was presented to the public at the Gary Department of Public Parks – Parks Board Commissioner meeting at 10 a.m. Central time and 11 a.m. Eastern time on July 11, 2023. There were 15 individuals present within the meeting chambers along with viewers via the City's Facebook Live outlet. The presentation, conducted by Project Manager Dr. Antoinette Moyer, discussed the master plan timeline, purpose, brief snapshot of survey results, themes captured during stakeholders' interviews, level of service analysis, needs assessment gaps and recommendations and significant items from the action plan. The project website where the draft plan is available for download was discussed and citizens were encouraged to review and offer input by Friday, July 14.

Needs Assessment

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

This needs analysis begins with a level of service (LOS) analysis, which summarizes the state of the parks system in Gary using data collected on facilities offered by Gary's Public Parks Department.

Certain benchmarks were used to determine where Gary's parks system fits within the larger picture of recreation throughout the United States. Both The Trust for Public Land's (TTPL) 2023 Park Serve and National Park and Recreation Agency's (NRPA) 2023 Agency Performance Review include metrics and standards for the number of facilities in relation to the population. NRPA reports data by jurisdiction and by population size served (among many other measures) to reflect that parks and recreation departments serve unique and varied communities. In this analysis, LOS for Gary is compared to NRPA's 50,000 to 99,999 population bracket, where Gary's population (69,093) fits. It is important to note that both TTPL and NRPA recognize that every community is different and has its own needs and wants for recreation services. As such, neither organization attempts to set standards or make recommendations about what a department or community *should* have in their system. They only offer median data for comparison with what other communities actually have.

While analyzing level of service is valuable for providing a quantifiable overview of a park system, it does not qualitatively measure the needs and desires of the community that a particular parks system serves. For this reason, the needs assessment also includes a gap analysis, which blends feedback received through the various methods of public engagement including stakeholder interviews, surveys, and public comment, with what is known about the current state of the parks system and with department goals and priorities to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement. The final step in the master planning process is for the needs assessment to inform the action plan in which the planning team identifies specific actions that help close system gaps and meet community goals.

Level of Service Analysis

Parks and Greenways

Gary's active parks inventory is relative when measured to the current population along with the number of residents per park and park acreage per 1,000 residents in comparison to the national averages. The mileage of greenways/trails at 27 miles based on the national average indicates that the city should consider adding trails. This is currently in review based on data supported by two proposed plans-the city's Gary Bike and Pedestrian Plan and the Gary ELevate project by the Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC) which will revive the abandoned elevated railroad in midtown to a multi-use trail.

During the community engagement phase of the planning process, residents were surveyed and indicated that the most beneficial features/amenities were trails within the parks which aid individuals' positive health outcomes. Respondents expressed high interest in funding allocation within the de-

partment for the renovation and increased maintenance of existing parks and trails.

Often a park system's effectiveness is measured by a standard in the department's ability to offer residents to walk 10 minutes or less to a park or trail. Figure 46 shows the city boundary and the 10-minute walk coverage in proximity to the seven jewel parks (Brunswick, Glen Ryan, Hatcher, Howe, Ironwood, Marquette, Roosevelt and Tolleston). Most areas of Gary amongst the six districts are within 10 minutes of a park. The distance to trails slightly outside the 10-minute walkshed, supports the consideration to add more trails throughout the city boundary to assure connectivity. Marquette Park will add trail mileage based on their federal appropriation funding received in 2021 with a trail extension of 2miles that will offer more recreational opportunities and enhanced connectivity between the dunes and the city.

Table 20 below provides a summary of the current level of service for facilities and amenities with metrics from The Trust for Public Land's 2023 City Park Facts Data and NRPA Park Metrics. These metrics provide national benchmarks against which communities can compare facilities and amenities to similar sized communities. TTPL metrics show the average number of these facilities and amenities per 10,000 residents. NRPA metrics show the number of residents per single facility or amenity. Level of Service (LOS) measurements indicate the facilities provided by the Gary Public Parks Department. Facilities owned by other entities such as business, non-profits, and state and federal agencies are not included in the LOS or metric data. Included in the final column are recommendations for facilities which can be increased, based on metric comparisons combined with resident feedback from the surveys and interviews. The data and recommendations reflect what currently exists without commentary on the condition of each facility or amenity.

TABLE 20: Level of Service for Active Parks and Trails

Level of Service for Gary, Indiana Parks and Trails				
Number of Active Parks in Gary	Current LOS ³	NRPA Benchmark ⁴	NRPA Upper Quartile ⁴	Recommendation
34	2,032 residents per park	2,240 residents per park	3,655 residents per park	No change
Acres of Active Parks in Gary ¹	Current LOS	NRPA Benchmark	NRPA Upper Quartile	Recommendation
476.27 acres	6.89 acres per 1,000 residents	11.2 acres per 1,000 residents	17.3 acres per 1,000 residents	No change
Mileage of Greenways and Trails in Gary ²	Current LOS	NRPA Benchmark	NRPA Upper Quartile	Recommendation
27 miles	0.391 miles per 1,000 residents	19 miles per 1,000 residents	33 miles per 1,000 residents	Consider adding trails

¹ Active Park acreage was provided by the Gary Public Parks Department

² Trail mileage was provided by the Gary Public Parks Department

³ Current LOS is per 1,000 residents and based on a 2020 population estimate of 69,093 from the U.S. Census Bureau's Quick Facts

⁴ NRPA Benchmark was retrieved from the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review and is based on the median and upper quartile for jurisdictions with a population of 50,000 to 99,999 residents.

TABLE 21: Level of Service for Facilities

Level of Service for Facilities						
Facility Type	Gary	LOS (facilities per 10,000 residents) ²	TTPL Median LOS ²	LOS (population per facility) ³	NRPA Park Metrics ³	Recommendation
Arena	0	-	-	n/a	68,208	No change
Athletic Fields		0	1.32	-	-	No change
Youth Soccer	0	-	-	n/a	7,207	
Adult Soccer	0	-	-	n/a	17,741	
Multi-Purpose	0	-	-	n/a	13,244	
Overlay Field	0	-	-	n/a	16,398	
Football Field	0	-	-	n/a	29,374	
Lacrosse Field	0	-	-	n/a	49,348	
Multi-Purpose Synthetic	0	-	-	n/a	34,814	
Ball Diamonds		2.61	1.50	-	-	No change
Youth Baseball	16	-	-	4,318	7,237	
Adult Baseball	1	-	-	69,093	27,566	
Youth Softball	1	-	-	10,424	12,716	
Adult Softball	0	-	-	n/a	17,078	
Basketball Courts	25	3.62	3.85	2,764	8,790	No change
Beaches (miles)	3.5	.51	0.03	-	-	No change
Community Garden (plots)	1	.14	1	69,093	52,906*	Consider adding
Cooling Centers	0	-	-	-	-	
Disc Golf	1	0.15	0.04	-	-	No change
Dog Parks	0	n/a	0.13	n/a	54,119	Consider adding
Fitness Zones	0	n/a	0.02	-	-	Consider adding
Ice Rink (indoor)	0	-	-	n/a	53,224	
Ice Rink (outdoor)	0	-	-	n/a	33,214	
Improved Trails (miles)	27	3.91	0.15	-	-	Additional trails needed
Nature Center	0	-	-	n/a	71,360	Consider adding
Nature Trails (miles)	0	n/a	0.26	-	-	Increase
Performance Amphitheater	0	-	-	n/a	60,495	
Pickleball Courts	0	n/a	0.43	n/a	11,150	Consider adding
Playgrounds	25	3.62	2.86	2,764	3,779	No change
Recreation and Senior Centers		1.74	0.38	-	-	No change
Community Center	10	-	-	6,909	53,331	
Recreation Center (including gyms)	2	-	-	34,547	38,018	
Senior Center	0	-	-	n/a	67,139	
Teen Center	0	-	-	n/a	58,174	
Restrooms	24	3.47	1.46	-	-	No change

Facility Type	Gary	LOS (facilities per 10,000 residents) ²	TTPL Median LOS ²	LOS (population per facility) ³	NRPA Park Metrics ³	Recommendation
Skate Parks	1	0.15	0.07	-	-	No change
Splashpads	2	0.29	0.13	-	-	Consider adding
Swimming Pools		1.16	0.18	-	-	No change
Outdoor Pool	8	-	-	8,637	43,100	
Aquatics center	0	-	-	n/a	60,116	
Tennis Courts	16	2.32	1.60	4,318	5,577	No change
Totlots	0	-	-	n/a	11,641	
Volleyball Courts	0	n/a	0.39	n/a	22,960***	
Walking Loops / Tracks	0	n/a	0.13	-	-	

¹ Includes city facilities obtained through the Public Parks Department

²LOS and TFPL median LOS is per 10,000 residents. TFPL median LOS data was retrieved from the Trust for Public Land's 2023 City Park Facts Data. It was reported in various ratios and standardized to units per 10,000 population

³LOS and NRPA Park Metrics is based on population per facility.

The NRPA Park Metrics were retrieved from the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review and is based on jurisdictions with a population of 50,000 to 99,999 residents.

*per garden rather than per plot

**Aquatics center (indoor)

***multi-use courts (volleyball and basketball)

Gary has a decrease in population at a rate of -0.77% annually, showing an adequate distribution of amenities offered to the citizens based on existing amenities. There are, however, some needs and gaps existing based on national recreational facilities/services trends. While Gary has no fields for soccer, football, synthetic or multi-use fields, there is a large inventory of ball diamonds (i.e., youth/adult baseball or softball fields). The sport of baseball is well recognized throughout Lake County and with the previously large school facilities the facilities were well served. Roosevelt Park has three ballfields on the property that need attention, and the minor league field is under construction with ARP funding.

Basketball and tennis courts are in abundance throughout the six districts, which indicates no change or additional courts are needed. Funding has been allocated to resurfacing the basketball and tennis courts or new asphalt based on ARP funding and four parks are currently scheduled for construction. Pickleball is a trending sport, and the playing line could be added to the renovation of the tennis courts since construction is already scheduled to occur in 2023.

The beach (lakeshore) miles are adequate based on the population served. Gary has one designated community garden that is operated by the parks department at Reed Park and additional garden plots could added to other parks at a minimal cost with community agreements established to gain the citizens support in the maintenance of the spaces. Survey respondents expressed wanting gardening and or farming options within the parks. The addition of community garden plots could aid citizen health through the fellowship it offers and harvest that could come from the space.

Gary has an opportunity to follow through with the goals and objectives in the IDNR SCORP to encourage and assist in participation in outdoor recreation with the consideration of adding a dog park, fitness zone with accessible stamina outdoor multi-use equipment, nature center based on vibrant ecosystems, and splashpads. Gary's active park amenities are well within the national averages for a community of its size in swimming pools and playgrounds.

Recreation Programming

To analyze level of service, NRPA gathers data on agency program offerings across the nation. While the number of each program is not measured, the prevalence of them in each agency is. This LOS analysis looks at the programs that Gary offers and compares that portfolio to the frequency with which those programs are offered in other agencies of similar population.

The City of Gary has several community partners and organizations that offer recreational programming (Table 21) and program specifics for target populations at a large scale then the Public Parks Department is currently able to accommodate based on multiple factors due to current staffing capacity being at the top of the list.

The YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, and other nonprofit agencies offer targeted programs for people with disabilities, seniors, and children, as shown in Table 22. Yet there are still significant gaps in targeted programs for before school, preschool, and daycare for citizens at minimal or no cost within the city.

TABLE 22: Program Offerings

Program Offerings			
Program	Offered by Gary Public Parks	Offered in Gary	% Offering (NRPA Park Metrics) ¹
Team Sports	No*	Yes	86%
Individual Sports	No*	Yes	77%
Fitness Classes	No*	Yes	81%
Health and Wellness Education	No*	Yes	80%
Safety Training	No	No	71%
Aquatics	No	Yes	69%
Trips and Tours	Yes	Yes	61%
Martial Arts	No*	Yes	57%
Cultural Crafts	No	Yes	62%
Themed Special Events	No	Yes	89%
Natural and Cultural History Activities	No	Yes	63%
Performing Arts	No	Yes	62%
Visual Arts	No	Yes	61%
Social Recreation Events	Yes	Yes	88%
Racquet Sports	No*	Yes	71%
Running / Cycling Races	No	Yes	52%
Golf	No	Yes	48%
eSports / eGaming	No	No	23%

¹NRPA Park Metrics were retrieved from the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review and is based programming offered by at least seven in 10 parks and recreation agencies.

*Indicates programming offered through rental agreements and housed at the Hudson and Campbell Sports and Fitness Center

TABLE 23: Targeted Programs for People with Disabilities, Seniors, and Children

Targeted Programs			
Program	Offered by Gary Public Parks	Offered in Gary	% Offering (NRPA Park Metrics) ¹
Programs for People w/ Disabilities	No	Yes	80%
Summer Camp	Yes*	Yes	93%
Senior Specific Program	No	Yes	87%
Teen Specific Programs	Yes*	Yes	77%
STEM Programs	Yes*	Yes	68%
After School Programs	Yes*	Yes	53%
Before School Programs	No	No	21%
Preschool	No	No	44%
Full Daycare	No	No	11%

¹NRPA Park Metrics were retrieved from the 2023 NRPA Agency Performance Review and is based on jurisdictions with a population of 50,000 to 99,999 residents.

*Indicates programming offered by the Youth Services Bureau (YSB) a division within Gary’s Department of Public Parks

Gap Analysis

Equitable Access

Access to recreation facilities and parks for all individuals within the City of Gary is of concern. Gary Public Parks Department has an opportunity with their ARP funded Jewel Parks project to achieve a level of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. With a goal to make parks and their amenities welcoming and usable for all Gary residents to offer safety and ease of use for all residents to encourage physical activity, regardless of individuals age, race, ethnicity, culture, income, ability, or disability. Sixteen percent of Gary residents reported having a disability. with the most common difficulties categorized as independent living difficulty and ambulatory difficulty. Accessibility challenges are present in Gary parks, particularly within the access to pavilion building (i.e., entrances, restrooms, access to kitchen features), playground surfaces, accessible routes from one park amenity to another and signage. (See Accessibility Report for present details). Survey respondents ranked the top three facilities as most used and most beneficial to public health as restrooms (99%), playgrounds (94%), accessible facilities for people with disabilities (93%), and paved trails (93%) which indicate needs and areas for important based on the perception from the community.

Gary's large inventory of playgrounds with a variety of surfacing types is highly ranked by survey respondents. Making play surfacing and accessibility to play on play equipment is recommended. Gary has the potential to enhance the play experience through reviewing and improving playgrounds to implement the practices and structures that are fully universal design. These improvements could be achieved in a phased plan along with seeking grant opportunities to assist in the costly playground structures/equipment pieces. Play is so important for all communities, and especially play that is safe with elements of play (i.e., structures, equipment) for all.

Maintenance and physical conditions of parks is a concern for citizens with survey respondents and stakeholders expressing the need for attention to the groundskeeping and landscape of all parks. The collaborative efforts by the city's General Services, Park Maintenance, and Contractual Mowers currently only captures a portion of the full maintenance needs by the park system. Citizens and visitors must have clear and clean access to parks, along with public transportation access to all parks which can enhance opportunities for diverse number of individuals to continue or begin recreating with the City's park system. The current conditions of overgrowth and litter throughout parks negatively affects

their experience. The department can enhance park maintenance best practices through increasing personnel beyond the four current maintenance staff. These fundamental changes in operations would offer better park services and sustainability of park amenities including park aesthetics (i.e., grass, landscaping, etc.).

Park inventory categorized as active vs inactive parks throughout the six districts of the park department should help to establish park prioritization and create a system to define criteria to assist in the determination of active vs inactive. This can follow up on criteria that allow for identification of Jewel Parks established in the 2009 Master Plan. The plan identified the jewel parks based on their geographic location, condition, amenities (e.g., such as pavilions or pools). Review of these criteria with revision to the city's park locations through the geographical information system (GIS) should take place to accurately capture their location (i.e., physical address). Inactive parks may then be assessed and considered for community gardens or to create a natural landscape which requires little to no maintenance that contributes to environmentally friendly aesthetics (e.g., areas that could potentially assist in storm water management based on their geographical location in the City). Any inactive park that cannot be preserved should then transfer to the Redevelopment Department to allow the property to return to the City's tax records for potential tax revenue generation.

Another consideration to enhance equitable access is the creation of accessible programming for people with disabilities. Eighty-eight percent of survey respondents indicated the availability of this specific programming area is important. With such a high ranking, this is an area of potential programming to provide and improve the level of experiences in Gary parks for individuals with disabilities and their families. Attention to these areas of equitable access gives Gary an opportunity to improve the overall park experience for all park users.

Trails and Greenways

Gary is achieving a level of service comparable to national averages for trail miles and yet still has opportunity to enhance its trail mileage and connectivity through trail network based on the city's size of 57.18 square miles with 49.87 square miles of land and 7.31 square miles of water. During the public engagement phase of planning constituents gave voice and priority to needed current trail improvements (i.e., trails located at or near Brunswick and Marquette), more trail information, trail safety, and nature programming along trails. (See Survey Section for complete details). Gary has

some areas throughout all six districts that could enhance the park and outdoor recreation experience through trail enhancement and development with collaboration between Public Parks and Redevelopment Departments. Based on the proposed Bike and Pedestrian Plan there are segments of the plan which could be achieved to aide equitable access throughout the city and great recreational benefits along with the proposed Gary ELevate project to transform elevated abandoned railways to recreational trails.

Economic Impact

Based on data from the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) it confirms the impact that park and recreation departments have on individuals through the amenities and programming provided to their community and surrounding communities. The economic impact can be visible through the health and wellness, equity, and conservation park and recreation departments can enhance and contribute to a city's prosperity. While events like the Gary Air Show, along with a variety of special events within Marquette Park, capture visitors from near and far, there is more opportunity for the Public Parks Department to draw tourism from beyond the city limits. Survey respondents expressed that more public events, festivals, and picnics are important as is winter specific programming like farmers' markets (74%), winter festivals (73%), organized sledging (64%), ice skating (62%) and winter hikes (55%).

Unique programming of this type could enhance participation from community members along with encouraging visitors to Gary to attend and generate revenue for the parks and local businesses both directly or indirectly. With the current construction of Jewel Park facilities and amenities there is an opportunity to increase promotion of these renovated facilities with the introduction of some new programming while increasing awareness, attendance all the while improving their potential economic impact.

Asset Management

The public engagement phase of the planning process captures a continuous concern for existing park facility maintenance from the public. Survey respondents were given an opportunity to allocate a hypothetical additional funding amongst a list of categories related to parks and recreation facilities and programming. The top three categories which citizens want funding allocated are 31% renovating (updating/improving) the grounds, facilities, and amenities in existing parks and trails, 24% to maintaining existing parks and trails and 13% to facilitating/providing

additional recreation programs to the community. The park inventory of the Gary Public Parks Department exceeds the national average of parks needed for its population size. With the active parks current conditions measuring from a fair to poor level due to overgrowth and low level of staffing, the renovation and upgrading of existing parks is a priority which would be enhanced through the development of an asset management plan.

In park and recreation departments with budgetary constraints--which include almost all park and recreation agencies--it is critical to prioritize which assets receive routine preventative maintenance, repairs to maintain basic usability, or are removed from active service, retired, or discarded altogether. Construction of a wide variety of parks, open space, recreation facilities, and trails is often done without understanding the total cost of operation (TCO) over the asset's life span. A TCO approach begins with a fundamental requirement that when constructing a new asset, the operational, preventive, and cyclic maintenance, as well as renovation costs are calculated and a reasonable method to fund these costs identified. Without a systematic process to plan for and prioritize the ongoing maintenance of assets, an agency risks the misallocation of resources where less vital assets deplete money and labor while more critical assets fall into disrepair, or a failure of an asset which may have significant impacts on park operations or even the safety of staff and visitors.

At its most basic level, asset management planning includes operations and maintenance planning. Critical to managing park operations and maintenance is the development of written and defined standards and levels of service. Operations and maintenance standards define and describe how a park asset (shelter, trail, etc.) is to be cared for. By developing a set of standards, a consistent and regular operation and maintenance plan for park assets can then be created in a systematic fashion.

In developing an operations and maintenance implementation blueprint, it is critical to determine the assets at each park and recreation facility, their expected level of usage, the tasks necessary to operate and maintain each asset, and an expected frequency and time standard for each maintenance task. The result is a functional and flexible model that not only allows facility management to plan for and track periodic maintenance, but also allows for an accurate estimation of the staffing levels needed for operation on an annual basis. Accurate projections of staffing levels and costs are essential for the construction of an annual budget and to ensure that each facility can operate at the desired level of service.

The Operation Standards model contains the following components:

Recommended Service Standard- The recommended task for operations and periodic maintenance of an asset.

Frequency- The number of times per Frequency Unit the standard should be completed.

Frequency Unit- The periodic time frame for completing the standard.

Times per Year- The number of times the Frequency Unit occurs in a year.

Service Performance Rate- Calculates the total time required to complete the standard based on the number of items or units to be maintained.

Time- The time expected to complete the standard once

Unit- The measure of units to be maintained

Unit Description- The specific unit being maintained

Site Specific Units Maintained- The quantity of assets, amenities, or items to be maintained.

Total Labor Hours- The total number of hours expected to be required to complete the standard on an annual basis. Calculated as $(\text{Site Specific Units Maintained} \times \text{Frequency} \times \text{Times per Year} \times \text{Time})$

An example section of an operations and maintenance model can be seen in Table 23. The table contains the recommended service standards and a best estimate for the time required to fulfill various operations. This type of model is inclusive of standards necessary for the normal operation of park and trail assets and may help Gary determine appropriate levels of staffing, paid or volunteer, for the Public Parks Department. The model is exclusive of supplies such as mulch, paint, or gravel, because cost and volume needed for these materials may vary greatly from year to year but should be included in the annual operating budget.

TABLE 24: Example operations and maintenance plan

Recommended Service Standard	Frequency	Frequency Unit	Times per Year	Service Performance Rate			Site Specific Units Maintained	Total Labor Hours
				Time	Unit	Unit Description		
Building Maintenance (Park Office, Maintenance shed)								
Internal painting 4-7 years	1.00	4 years	0.25	20.00	1.00	Time	1.00	5.00
Touch up painting	1.00	Year	1.00	8.00	1.00	Year	1.00	8.00
General building repair including plumbing/electrical	1.00	Month	12.00	2.00	1.00	Year	1.00	24.00
Interior Cleaning, regular (not post-event)	1.00	Month	52.00	2.00	1.00	Time	1.00	104.00
Exterior Cleaning	1.00	Week	52.00	1.00	1.00	Time	1.00	52.00
Filter changing- A/C, water systems	2.00	Year	1.00	2.00	1.00	Time	1.00	4.00
Building Inspection (Roof, Structure)	1.00	Year	1.00	8.00	1.00	Time	1.00	8.00
Deck Cleaning	2.00	Year	1.00	2.00	1.00	Time	1.00	4.00
Total								209.00

Gary Public Parks Department does not currently operate by their own internally developed operations and maintenance plan. The development of an asset management plan, including operations and maintenance could assist the department in achieving and gaining control based on the public concerns with the current status of most active parks. This type of planning should be implemented across an entire park system to achieve preservation and conservation of assets, define and control annual costs long term, especially based on labor and funding, to improve efficacy of allocations. Asset management planning would give the department the ability to address staffing and budgetary constraints within its operating system.

Communication

Survey respondents offered insight on how they gain knowledge of Gary Public Parks programs and services. Residents indicated that they preferred increases in information from the City website (20% current vs. 59% preferred), social media (62% current vs. 77% preferred), flyers and posters (15% current vs. 50% preferred), email bulletins (4% current vs 49% preferred), newspaper articles (20% current vs. 29% preferred) and a seasonal program guide (none current vs. 59% preferred) and considerably less from friends and neighbors (46% current vs. 32% preferred) with social media being the most preferred way to receive information. Also, in the survey responses citizens indicated reasons they do not use parks and recreation programming includes lack of information and awareness that such programming even exists (i.e., adult programs; fitness, health, wellness; public events, festivals, picnics, nature, environmental education). Stakeholders interviewed also discussed a gap in awareness of opportunities through programs and services offered by the department and that communication can be improved overall.

Gary Public Parks Department's webpage could serve as a primary conduit of communication but lacks details on all park facilities and amenities within each park. Along with an inconsistency of the department's name, which is expressed on municipal code documents as Gary Public Parks Department, however, the webpage shows two different names including Gary Venues, Parks, and Recreation and Gary Parks, Recreation, and Aquatics. The About Us section of the webpage only captures the Park Board agendas and minutes and lacks information on the history and background of the department. This section could offer citizens or potential visitors awareness of the Past, Present and Future Vision of the department. It can provide insight into program areas, link to an online program registration

and facility reservation platform and show the community partners who host events and programs in the parks. A well maintained and managed webpage has the potential to inform and encourage citizens and potential visitors how to participate in and support the department's mission, vision, and facilities.

In our digital era, social media and email are the most feasible approach to assure citizens and visitors are informed of programs and services quickly. However, the department should also commit to a low-cost method to inform the community of upcoming programs and services via print media (seasonal program guides, newsletters) possibly on a biannual basis which will require advanced planning by staff. All forms of electronic communication will need to be 508 compliant to assure accessibility to people with disabilities.

In addition, Gary Parks may want to invest in providing brochures, flyers, signage, displays, and park facilities and trail maps to enhance the knowledge and awareness of programs and services along with their accessible features, present or planned.

Park and Recreation Providers and Partners

Gary Public Parks Department currently has some Jewel Parks under construction and other active parks that have areas that need maintenance attention due to being overgrown. There are several entities within the city and county that offer recreational programs and services to the citizens of Gary. Some of the public and private entities offer recreational programming via rental agreements with the Hudson and Campbell Sports and Fitness Center with its many amenities (i.e., basketball and tennis courts, racquetball, boxing area, aerobics room, etc.). Other groups use facilities for sports and can assist in the maintenance of ball fields at Gibson and Roosevelt Park.

The stakeholders interviewed discussed potential partnership with an array of recreational, sports and cultural programs and events and public input indicated a desire for more partnerships to increase programming, Gary Public Parks should continue to pursue partnership opportunities to bolster recreation opportunities in areas where it does not have capacity or expertise to create additional programs. Potential partners mentioned by stakeholders include:

- The Legacy Foundation (works with the Friends of Marquette Park group to assist in philanthropic & fundraising efforts)

- Medical/Hospital Partners (Methodist, Edgewater, Oak Street Health, Regional Medical)
- Gary Urban League (Attempting to revitalize Block Clubs)
- United Way
- Industry (NIPSCO, US Steel)
- Environmental Organizations (IDNR, Dunes Learning Center, Land Trusts, Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society)
- Museums (Field Museum of Chicago, Museum of Science & Industry for STEM programs)
- Universities (IU Northwest, Purdue)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following goals shape the strategic Action Plan which Gary intends to follow over the next five years and beyond.

Goal #1-Create Prioritization Schedules for Existing Parks/Projects: Gary's focus and commitment should first be to complete the current jewel park construction of six parks based on ARP funding. One area of focus will be

the collaboration between the Bike and Pedestrian Plan to ensure connectability for the residents to and through the parks, along with resource management to assure plans are set forth to direct towards maintenance and improvement of active parks and expansion of trail network.

Goal #2- Develop Staffing Plan for Recruitment and Retention: Residents of Gary expressed a sincere and extreme appreciation for the park maintenance staff. There was a repeated expression that more staff is needed to assist in the park maintenance and the facilitation of recreational programming opportunities. The identification of staffing needs can be defined based on the prioritization schedules developed to create ownership and accountability in all positions and additions needed.

Goal #3- Provide Parks and Recreational Programming for All: Gary residents desire renovation and maintenance of existing parks along with a presence of recreational programming that is offered by the Public Parks Department. This comes along with the rebranding of the Public Parks Department in the development of awareness offered to the residents by offering focus groups. This will ensure residents are heard and their needs are reflected through the development of new programming along with the focus of the department's mission and vision statements.

ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan establishes priorities and goals for the planning period of 2023-2027 for the Gary Public Parks Department with anticipated completion timeframes, estimated cost, and potential funding sources for each action item.

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

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

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

- **Operating Fund:** Public Parks Department annual budget from tax appropriations, fees, and rental income
- **Capital Budget:** Annual budget for capital expenditures
- **General Obligation Bond:** Bond issued to raised funds for a specific project and paid back over a certain length of time
- **Donation:** Gifts from private sources
- **Grant:** Grant funding applied for through various public, private, or non-profit sources such as Indiana Trails Program (ITP), Next Level Trails (NLT), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA), and others as identified

Goal #1: Create Prioritization Schedules for Existing Parks/Projects

Objectives:

- Confirm the completion of the six jewel park renovations funded by ARP funding and update park amenities records.
- Address aging infrastructure through the development of a capital improvement budget.

- Address littering issues through the re-introduction of community cleaning days inviting the surrounding park neighborhoods to have their voice heard while assisting in the return of cleanliness to the parks. Assure that all parks have similar features that fit the park size (e.g., color scheme for new trash receptacles at each park to keep Gary Parks clean).
- Define parks inventory with GIS coordinates to assure all parks can be located by the public. Along with the installation of consistent park signage throughout the park system, to provide uniqueness to each park district.
- Capture a full inventory of park amenities to determine replacement or removal of aging equipment (e.g., playground equipment, playground surfacing, resurfacing of basketball and or ten court, etc.) and identify unique play structures that capture the history of the district such as themed playgrounds.
- Assess current lighting and security on trails and in parks to identify a plan to alleviate safety concerns.
- Improve general park aesthetics (i.e., creation of detailed plans for operations to manage periodic maintenance and operations and asset management).
- Improve ADA accessibility of existing parks and facilities for compliance and to assure parks are welcoming to all (e.g., pavilion restrooms, accessible parking accommodations, etc.).
- Incorporate a marketing plan, technology, and software system to improve internal and external communication, staff recruitment, development/training, scheduling, reservations, rental, registration, etc. (i.e., define a new Gary Public Parks motto like Gary Parks Transformed or Experience Gary Parks).
- Continue to collaborate with IDNR LWCF Grant Administrator to create a timeline to review, inspect and define compliance of existing LWCF parks so new LWCF projects can be submitted.
- Reinstate the Adopt-A-Program program to assist in the rejuvenation of parks and identify potential partnerships/event sponsors.
- Locate open space areas for new trails and or trail connectivity within/through parks, especially within parks that have reverted to their natural environment. Another key component is to identify ecotourism opportunities through outdoor learning and natural viewing areas that can be developed throughout the park system. Especially within natural areas featured

within parks like Brunswick and Marquette with their quality dune and swale areas.

- Develop a park amenity safety review plan to protect citizens in parks while limiting liability and risk with routine inspection.
- Create a best practice pricing model with annual review.

- Define supplementary funding sources (e.g., donations, grants, sponsorships, fees, and or naming right to pavilions/playgrounds).
- Seek additional consulting services to help redevelop inoperable park areas and help identify factors to determine if parcels need to be returned to the city's property inventory.

TABLE 25: Create Prioritization Schedules for Existing Parks/Projects action table

Strategy	Timeline	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source(s)
Complete ARP funded renovations to six Jewel Parks	Underway	\$500,000 per Jewel Park	ARP Funding
Develop new department website/ linked pages along with update of park location in collaboration with City's GIS Coordinator	Immediate	Staff Time	Operating Budget
Create marketing plan with new park department branding	Immediate	Staff Time	Operating Budget
Create operations and maintenance plan	Immediate	Staff Time	Operating Budget
Demolish damaged shelter (i.e., Pulaski Park)	Immediate	\$1,000	Operating budget
Continue adding accessible picnic tables at shelters throughout the system	Ongoing	\$1,250 per table	Operating budget
Remove existing play structures that have exceeded lifecycle	Ongoing	\$2,500 per structure	Operating budget
Install new Universal Designed Playgrounds with Poured-In-Place surfacing (i.e., replacement of at least 2-3 playgrounds per year)	Ongoing	Avg. of \$100K-\$500K per playground ranging in size	Grant, Operating Budget
Review all parks for ADA compliance	Short-term	\$2,000	Operating budget
Create accessible parking, including van parking spaces with proper signage at each park	Short-term	\$10,000	Operating budget
Create accessible routes between parking and amenities throughout the system	Short-term	\$10,000	Operating budget, grant funding
Replace bleachers at renovated ballfields (i.e., 4 row bleachers)	Short-term	\$3,884.00 – \$6,262.00	Operating Budget/ Donation
Identify park security initiative	Mid-term	Staff Time	Operating Budget
Construct large shelter with concrete pad (i.e., Pulaski Park)	Mid-Term	\$50,000	Grant, Operating Budget
Regrade, pave and strip parking lots at all parks	Mid-term	\$150,000 per park	Operating Budget
Add directional and informational signage to all parks	Mid-term	\$2,000-\$5,000 per park	Operating Budget/ Donation

Goal #2: Develop Staffing Plan for Recruitment and Retention

Objectives:

- Hire 2-4 FTE positions with new position titles of District Manager responsible for assisting the Park Superintendent with daily operations and programming development.
- Identify five .5 FTE positions to assist with programmatic facilitation and maintenance.
- Create Volunteer management plan.
- Enhancement of parks, amenities, programs, and services may be considered necessary to increase staffing levels which may necessitate new positions.

TABLE 26: Develop Staffing Plan for Recruitment and Retention action table

Strategy	Timeline	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source(s)
Identify hiring budget to enhance staff capacity	Immediate	Staff Time	Operating Budget
Identify staff training and professional development needs	Immediate	Staff Time	Operating Budget
Hire at least one 1 FTE per year	Short-term	\$42,985/annually	Operating Budget
Hire at least 2 additional .5 FTEs per year	Short-term	\$20,000/annually per FTE	Operating Budget

Goal #3: Provide Parks and Recreation Programming for All

Objectives:

- Utilize the LOS analysis to determine programming needs (farmer’s markets, community/family-based events while incorporating national park planning and agency trends).
- Extend Marquette Park special event programming with a goal to offer similar programs within Jewel Parks (e.g., specialized cooking classes that are cultural-based, youth-based and or whole family targeted, etc.).
- Collaborate with the Redevelopment Department based on the proposed Bike and Pedestrian Plan to assist in the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles through connectivity development and program implementation.
- Develop direct involvement of the public to assist in future planning efforts (i.e., focus groups, etc.)
- Invest in customer satisfaction with the addition of support amenities to existing parks (i.e., shading areas, security enhancements, lighting, resting areas, signage, etc.)
- Work with local environmentalists to identify nature programming opportunities that can be captured in each park district (e.g., conversion of Hatcher Park to a natural science center with its proximity to Little Calumet River corridor with access to wetland and floodplains, etc.).
- Partner with local veterans’ associations to assist in the enhancement of Buffington Park with its WWII monument. Implement a walking loop with universally designed fitness stations to offer a distinct experience to all citizens with emphasis on veterans with the content throughout the park with tactile map and interpretative signage to capture local veterans’ stories along the pathway.
- Routinely analyze program participation and facility usage with appropriate data collection through program/service evaluations to determine program/service increase, removal, or adjustments as needed.
- Identify spaces within current park inventory to convert to multi-sport complexes that will engage Gary youth to play and will aid as a revenue generator in sports tourism.
- Address and identify specific programming needs for seniors (health education, pickleball, arts) youth (outreach, before and or after school care, technological based programming) and special populations (adaptive recreation program/services).
- Enhance outdoor recreation opportunities like implementation of the highly trending sport of pickleball as identified in multiple Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP).

TABLE 27: Provide Parks and Recreation Programming for All action table

Strategy	Timeline	Estimated Cost	Potential Funding Source(s)
Explore partnerships to provide additional programming	Ongoing	Staff Time	Operating Budget
Development cultural-based and special population focused programming	Short-term	Staff Time	Operation, Grant, Donation
Install a Mobility Mat for accessible Beach Access and Dune Crossing at Marquette Park (min. 5 feet in width)	Short-term	\$2,219 per 50-foot	Grant, Operating Budget
Identify parks to install raised garden beds	Mid-term	avg. of \$1,600 per garden bed	Grant, Operating Budget
Install tactile/interpretative signage at Buffington Park	Mid-term	\$1,000-\$5,000 pending dimensions/quantity	Operating Budget/ Donation

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APPENDIX A- STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Stakeholder Meetings

Objective

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

Participants

The Public Parks Department staff assisted in identifying stakeholders as individuals who were:

1. associated with the Public Parks Department, or
2. larger Gary community-based in their position, involvement, interest, or identity.

The initial plan was to obtain the stakeholders list from staff, compile the individuals into groups based on their affiliation with the department (e.g., partnerships, rental groups, youth groups, sports, active adult groups, etc.) and host interviews via Zoom with each of the identified groups, with 4-5 individuals per group. The lists were gathered, and groups were identified. Given the project timeline, the Parks Superintendent and the Epley Institute project team determined that the best approach would be to facilitate in-person stakeholder interviews at the Hudson and Campbell Sports and Fitness Center during the week of the Epley team's site visits. The two parties confirmed the following dates for each of the identified groups, offered on three consecutive evenings from 5pm-7pm.

Data Collection

Stakeholder interviews were conducted by Epley Institute staff members for the following dates:

- **Day 1 - Tuesday, March 7** – Active Adult Groups (i.e., Seniors, adults 50 and older)
- **Day 2 - Wednesday, March 8** – Youth Services and Youth Athletic groups (e.g., school-based support groups)
- **Day 3 - Thursday, March 9** – Non-government organizations/specialized groups (i.e., accessible, or inclusive groups)

Stakeholders were interviewed in groups, with attendance of three stakeholders on day one, two attendees on day two (who were City employees), and eight stakeholders on day three, totaling eleven stakeholders interviewed. All interviews were conducted in a structured format using a bespoke questionnaire developed by the Epley Institute team in conjunction with the city's project team. At the beginning of each group interview, stakeholders were assured that the information and perspectives they share during interviews would not be attributed to them nor identifiable in any reports or deliverables.

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

1. What are your impressions of Gary Parks as a whole? (programmatically, facilities, and administratively)
2. What are your opinions about the Department's programs? Quality? Overall Program mix and Quantity? Cost?
3. What are your opinions on the quality of the parks and recreation facilities provided by the Department and why.
4. In what ways do you think the Parks and Recreation Department can improve the community's health overall?
5. Are there partnerships with health agencies that could be beneficial?
6. Are there other partnership opportunities- for programming, facilities, or funding, for example- you are aware of that would benefit Gary Parks (public, private, Not-for-profit)?
7. Are there specific programs, events, or facilities that you think could improve the quality of life for Gary's community members? (Mention cities/ towns outside – i.e., Merrillville, Hobart, etc.)
8. Should the city focus more on maintaining current parks and facilities or on building new parks and facilities? Why?
9. If YOU were in charge of Gary Parks, what would you do differently? What would you make sure to do that's the same?

Analysis

Extensive written notes were recorded at each interview. After interviews were concluded, segments, or units, in the data were identified; these generally aligned with responses on a per-participant, per-question basis. Then, a process of grouping the open codes was completed to reflect interpretation and meaning and ultimately identify themes.

Gary stakeholder interview attendees with affiliation (when known):

The following were identified by the Gary Public Parks Department as key stakeholders and participated in group interviews.

Tuesday, March 7, 5pm-7pm in Hudson and Campbell Board Room

Carol Smith, Friends of Marquette
Sandy O'Brien
Cre Sprouse, Citizen

Wednesday, March 8, 5pm-7pm in Hudson and Campbell Board Room

No attendees

Thursday, March 9, 5pm-7pm in Hudson and Campbell Board Room

Cassandra Cannon, Brunswick Network/United Urban
Harry Kuttner, The Wetlands Initiative
Drew Hunt, US Forest Service
Joel Perez, The Nature Conservancy
Paul Botts, The Wetlands Initiative
Tyrell Anderson, Decay Devils
Mario Longoni, Field Museum
Nathaniel George, Citizen

Public Plan Presentation

The final plan draft was presented to the public at the Gary Department of Public Parks – Parks Board Commissioner meeting at 10 a.m. Central time and 11 a.m. Eastern time on July 11, 2023. There were 15 individuals present within the meeting chambers along with viewers via the City's Facebook Live outlet. The presentation, conducted by Project Manager Dr. Antoinette Moyer, discussed the master plan timeline, purpose, brief snapshot of survey results, themes captured during stakeholders' interviews, level of service analysis, needs assessment gaps, and recommendations and significant items from the action plan. The project

website where the draft plan is available for download was discussed and citizens were encouraged to review and offer input by Friday, July 14.

Five questions were asked at the presentation:

Q.: Will there be a safety/security plan within the master plan?

A: An actual safety/security plan was not within the scope of work for this project. However, this area of concern is identified within the action plan section of the master plan, based on survey responses with citizens' concern of safety.

Q.: Parks have lacked appropriate signage to assist with the enforcing of park rules and regulations, so park visitors can understand the park's dos and don'ts.

A: Signage is discussed within the action plan section of the master plan to encourage and increase, so park visitors do understand park rules and regulations. Also, the City currently has a signage package in the works along with the Jewel Park renovations project.

Q: How can the maintenance of the parks be adhered to and provide more involvement/buy-in from the youth through the Gary school system? This could ensure that the youth understand and buy into the importance of the maintenance and upkeep of the parks.

A: The master plan focuses on the youth involvement as a focus group within the programmatic development to enhance recreational opportunities, but not within the maintenance and operations buy-in. We can add that as an area of discussion.

Q: How do you create or increase opportunities for interaction in parks (i.e., you have to address parking issues)?

A: Parking is identified within the park inventory accessibility assessment section of the master plan to offer the City insight on compliance through accessible routes and parking lots.

Q: Ask does the public have until Friday, July 14, 2023, to continue to comment on the master plan draft.

A: Yes, Friday, July 14, 2023, is the deadline for comments.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Gary Parks and Recreation

Master Plan Survey

The City of Gary Parks & Recreation Department would like your input to help determine parks and recreation priorities for its new five-year master plan. This survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and is scheduled to remain open until Monday, April 10, 2023.

The results of this survey will be used to guide the Parks and Recreation Department in the management, operation, and development of park assets for years to come.

Your participation is valued and appreciated!

This master planning process is being conducted by the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University.

1. Do you live within the Gary city limits?

- Yes
- No

2. If you selected "Yes" to #1 above, which area of Gary do you live in?

- North side
- South side
- East side
- West side
- I'm not sure

3. If you selected "Yes" to #1 above, how long have you lived in Gary?

Less than one year

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16 or more years

4. Including yourself, please select how many people are in your household according to the following age groups?

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

5. From the following list of Gary parks, please identify how often you or a member of your household used each park over the past year.

	Did not visit	1-5 visits	6-10 visits	11-20 visits	More than 20 visits
Brunswick Park - 700 Clark Road	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glen Ryan Park - 4220 E. 6th Pl.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Howe Park - 3901 Vermont St.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ironwood Park - 1119 E. 24th Ave.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marquette Park - 1 North Grand Boulevard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Roosevelt Park - 2145 Harrison Street	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tolleston Park - 1709 Ellsworth Pl.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. For any parks that you and members of your household have not used, please indicate whether or not you were aware the park existed.

	Aware of park but do not use	Unaware park existed	My household uses this park
Brunswick Park - 700 Clark Road	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Glen Ryan Park - 4220 E. 6th Pl.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Howe Park - 3901 Ver- mont St.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ironwood Park - 1119 E. 24th Ave.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Marquette Park - 1 North Grand Boulevard	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Roosevelt Park - 2145 Harrison Street	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tolleston Park - 1709 Ellsworth Pl.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Please check any of the following circumstances that prevent you from using parks or attending programs within parks as often as you would like.

- Lack of time
- Parks are too far away
- Health/mobility concerns
- Safety/wellness concerns
- Inadequate/poorly maintained facilities
- Don't know where parks are
- Lack of access for people with disabilities
- Lack of money
- Don't know about programs
- Lack of nearby bus route
- No park, trail, or recreational facility within a 10-minute walk from my house
- Personal health problem
- Programs offered are not interesting to me
- Other (please list): _____
- None of these apply to me

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

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	Didn't use/ Don't Know
Brunswick Park	○	○	○	○	○	○
Glen Ryan Park	○	○	○	○	○	○
Howe Park	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ironwood Park	○	○	○	○	○	○
Marquette Park	○	○	○	○	○	○
Roosevelt Park	○	○	○	○	○	○
Tolleston Park	○	○	○	○	○	○

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

	How can the Park or Greenway be improved to better meet your satisfaction?
Brunswick Park	
Glen Ryan Park	
Howe Park	
Ironwood Park	
Marquette Park	
Roosevelt Park	
Tolleston Park	

10. Please indicate if you or members of your household have used any of the recreation facilities offered by the City of Gary listed below in the past year. If you or members of your household have used a facility in the past year, please indicate how important the facility is to your family's recreational needs.

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Did Not Use
a. Ambridge Mann Pavilion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Baseball Fields	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Basketball Courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Brunswick Community Center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Brunswick Pavilion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Disc Golf Course	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Glen Ryan Pavilion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Green Space/Fields	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Howe Pavilion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Hudson-Campbell Fitness Center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Ironwood Pavilion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Marquette Park Pavilion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Oak Savanna Woodlands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Outdoor Skating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. Playgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. Pool	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
q. Restrooms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
r. Shelter Houses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
s. Softball Fields	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
t. Tennis Courts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
u. Tolleston Pavilion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
v. Walking Trails (within parks)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Which THREE facilities from the previous question (Question 10) have you or members of your household used the most during the past year?

Most: _____ (enter a – v)

2nd Most: _____ (enter a – v)

3rd Most: _____ (enter a – v)

12. From the list in Question 10, which THREE facilities contribute the most to your health?

Most: _____ (enter a – v)

2nd Most: _____ (enter a – v)

3rd Most: _____ (enter a – v)

13. Below is a list of recreation FACILITIES and AMENITIES. Some of the resources are currently provided by the City of Gary; others are not. Please rate how important you it is to YOU for Gary to INCREASE availability to the facilities and amenities listed below.

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Accessible Facilities (for people with disabilities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Archery Range	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Athletic Fields (Indoor)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Athletic Fields (Multipurpose)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Athletic Fields (Soccer)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Athletic Fields (Softball/Baseball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bike Racks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bike Paths	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Gardens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courts (Basketball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courts (Pickleball)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Courts (Tennis)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disc Golf Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog Parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Driving Range (Golf)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental/Historical/Educational Displays	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equestrian Facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fishing Piers/Areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fitness Equipment (along trails)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Green Space/Open Field	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Golf Courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Habitat- Prairie/meadow	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Habitat- Forest/woodland	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Horseshoe Pits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ice Skating (outdoor)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nature Center	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pavilions- additional community events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pavilions- technology updates (i.e, wifi, audio/visual)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Picnic Tables and BBQ Grills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Playgrounds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pool (Outdoor)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restrooms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Roller skating (outdoor)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shelters (open air)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Shelters (climate controlled)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Splash Pads	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology- based programming (drones, rockets, geocaching, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trails (Paved)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trails (Natural)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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

- Yes
- No

u selected "Yes" to Question 14, for each program listed below that you have used in the past year, please rate your level of satisfaction.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not satisfied
Adult programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adult sports leagues, clubs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fitness, health, and wellness programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nature programs, environmental education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public events, festivals, picnics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior or older adult programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teen programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth sports leagues, programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth summer programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. If you HAVE NOT used the following sports or recreation programs in the past year, please indicate why not.

	Didn't know it existed	Too far way	Not interested	Dissatisfied with quality	Too expensive	Health reasons	Not relevant to me	Other
Adult programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adult sports leagues/clubs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fitness, health, and wellness programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nature programs, environmental education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public events/ festivals/ picnics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior or older adult programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teen programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth sports leagues/ programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth summer programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify):	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Below is a list of sports and recreation PROGRAMS. Some are currently provided by the City of Gary; others are not. Please rate how important it is for YOU that Gary INCREASE availability to the programs listed below.

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Accessible programs (for people with disabilities)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adult programs and day trips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Adult sports leagues/clubs/programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After school programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Arts programming (indoors)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carnivals for community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community classes/seminars	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concerts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family Nights	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Farmers' Market	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Festivals/picnics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fitness, health, and wellness programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gardening programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Healthy cooking/nutrition programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Movies in the parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nature programs/environmental education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programs for people with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programs with your pets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Senior or older adult programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports programming (indoors)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology-based programs (drones, rockets, geocaching, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teen programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth sports leagues/programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth summer day camps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. The City of Gary Parks Department is interested in increasing use of local trails. What can the Parks Department do to best increase use of the local trails at Brunswick Park and Marquette Park? Select all that apply.

- Offer guided tours of the trails
- Update or renovate the trails
- Provide visual maps at parks with trails
- More information on Parks Department website
- Something else (please indicate): _____

19. In the past year, have you or a member of your family used any of the services provided by the Youth Services Bureau?

- Yes
- No

20. If you selected “Yes” to Question 19, which of the following services provided by the Youth Services Bureau have you or a member of your family used in the past year? Select all that apply.

- ABC Mouse
- IXI
- After school tutoring
- Gardening activities
- Boxing classes
- Nature/environmental education
- Dance and performing arts
- Field trips
- Youth employment programming
- Summer camps

21. For those services you had used in the past year (indicated in Question 20), how satisfied are you with the following services provided by the Youth Services Bureau?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
ABC Mouse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IXI	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After school tutoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gardening activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boxing classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nature/environmental education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dance and performing arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Field trips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth employment programming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summer camps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. If the city were to increase parks-related programming during the winter, how important would YOU rate the following potential programs?

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Ice skating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organized sledding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Winter farmer's market	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Winter hikes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Winter festivals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. In general, if additional funding were available for the City of Gary to fund parks and trails, how would you allocate the funding among the competing categories below?

Enter as much or as little as you wish, but please make your total allocation equal 100%.

- Maintaining existing parks and trails : _____
- Renovating the grounds, facilities, and amenities in existing parks and trails : _____
- Facilitating/Providing additional recreation programs to the community : _____
- Acquiring new land : _____
- Increasing natural areas (streams, open spaces, green spaces, or forests) : _____
- Constructing new walking and biking trails : _____
- Constructing new parks : _____
- Conservation efforts/habitat management : _____
- Other (Please describe.) : _____
- Total : _____

24. Please select all of the ways that you CURRENTLY learn about Gary Parks & Recreation services and programs within the parks.

- City of Gary website
- From friends and neighbors
- Flyers/posters at parks and rec facilities
- Conversations with parks and rec staff
- Social media
- Newspaper articles
- Blogs
- Parks and Rec Department e-mail bulletins
- Newspaper advertisements
- Other: _____
- I do not receive any information

25. Please select all of the ways that you WOULD PREFER to learn about Gary Parks & Recreation services and programs within the parks.

- City of Gary website
- From friends and neighbors
- Conversations with parks and rec staff
- Park Board Meetings
- Community Meetings
- Flyers/posters at parks and rec facilities
- Social media
- Newspaper articles
- Blogs
- Parks and Rec Department e-mail bulletins
- Newspaper advertisements
- Seasonal program guide
- Radio
- Television
- Other: _____

18. The City of Gary Parks Department is interested in increasing use of local trails. What can the Parks Department do to best increase use of the local trails at Brunswick Park and Marquette Park? Select all that apply.

- Offer guided tours of the trails
- Update or renovate the trails
- Provide visual maps at parks with trails
- More information on Parks Department website
- Something else (please indicate): _____

19. In the past year, have you or a member of your family used any of the services provided by the Youth Services Bureau?

- Yes
- No

20. If you selected “Yes” to Question 19, which of the following services provided by the Youth Services Bureau have you or a member of your family used in the past year? Select all that apply.

- ABC Mouse
- IXI
- After school tutoring
- Gardening activities
- Boxing classes
- Nature/environmental education
- Dance and performing arts
- Field trips
- Youth employment programming
- Summer camps

21. For those services you had used in the past year (indicated in Question 20), how satisfied are you with the following services provided by the Youth Services Bureau?

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
ABC Mouse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
IXI	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After school tutoring	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gardening activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Boxing classes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nature/environmental education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dance and performing arts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Field trips	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Youth employment programming	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summer camps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. If the city were to increase parks-related programming during the winter, how important would YOU rate the following potential programs?

	Very Important	Important	Moderately Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Ice skating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organized sledding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Winter farmer's market	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Winter hikes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Winter festivals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. In general, if additional funding were available for the City of Gary to fund parks and trails, how would you allocate the funding among the competing categories below?

Enter as much or as little as you wish, but please make your total allocation equal 100%.

- Maintaining existing parks and trails : _____
- Renovating the grounds, facilities, and amenities in existing parks and trails : _____
- Facilitating/Providing additional recreation programs to the community : _____
- Acquiring new land : _____
- Increasing natural areas (streams, open spaces, green spaces, or forests) : _____
- Constructing new walking and biking trails : _____
- Constructing new parks : _____
- Conservation efforts/habitat management : _____
- Other (Please describe.) : _____
- Total : _____

24. Please select all of the ways that you CURRENTLY learn about Gary Parks & Recreation services and programs within the parks.

- City of Gary website
- From friends and neighbors
- Flyers/posters at parks and rec facilities
- Conversations with parks and rec staff
- Social media
- Newspaper articles
- Blogs
- Parks and Rec Department e-mail bulletins
- Newspaper advertisements
- Other: _____
- I do not receive any information

25. Please select all of the ways that you WOULD PREFER to learn about Gary Parks & Recreation services and programs within the parks.

- City of Gary website
- From friends and neighbors
- Conversations with parks and rec staff
- Park Board Meetings
- Community Meetings
- Flyers/posters at parks and rec facilities
- Social media
- Newspaper articles
- Blogs
- Parks and Rec Department e-mail bulletins
- Newspaper advertisements
- Seasonal program guide
- Radio
- Television
- Other: _____

26. The following are some of the benefits that you, members of your household, or the community in general may receive from parks, trails, recreation facilities, programs, and services. For each potential benefit, please indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Enhance community appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help attract new residents and businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help reduce crime	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve diet and nutrition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve mental health and reduce stress	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve physical health and fitness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improve social connections	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase opportunities for people of different cultures to interact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase property values in surrounding area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Make Gary a more desirable place to live	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strengthen sense of community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Preserve open space and the environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote tourism in the county	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide access to the outdoors and nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protect the county's historical attributes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

27. How do you usually travel in order to visit the park facilities you visit the most?

- Bicycle, scooter, or non-motorized wheeled device
- Car or other personal motorized vehicle
- Public transport (e.g., bus)
- Walk
- Other: _____

28. Would you say that in general your health is:

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

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

- 0-3 days
- 4-7 days
- 8-14 days
- 15-21 days
- 22-30 days

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

30. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to answer

31. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic Latino or Spanish origin: _____
- Prefer not to answer

32. What is your race? (Select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Some Other Race: _____
- Prefer not to answer

33. What is your household income?

- Under \$25,000
- \$25,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-\$99,999
- \$100,00-\$199,999
- \$200,000 or more

Conclusion

Thank you for completing this survey for the City of Gary's Park System Master Plan. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used by Gary to help plan for a successful future for our community.

APPENDIX B - ADA GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE



Accessibility Statement:

For anyone who needs an accommodation, please contact the Common Council Office at (219) 881-1315 and/or the Office of the ADA Coordinator at (219) 883-4151. Relay Indiana, a service of Indiana Telephone Relay Access Corporation (InTRAC), is a free service of telecommunications accessibility to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech impaired. Dial 711 or, (800) 743-3333.

Grievance Procedure:

The City of Gary has an internal grievance procedure for all ADA complaints. Complainants are encouraged to file any complaints with the ADA Coordinator by contacting our office (219-883-4151) and setting up an appointment within 30 calendar days after the alleged violation or notice of the violation.

We then document the complaint. The ADA Coordinator then has 30 days from the complaint submission date to establish a meeting to discuss the complaint and determine possible resolutions with the complainant.

Within an additional 30 days, the ADA Coordinator will investigate and respond in writing, and where appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant and respondent. The response will explain the legal position of the City of Gary and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint. Upon request, reasonable accommodations will be provided in completing all forms and copies of forms will be provided in alternative formats.

NOTE: All written complaints received by the ADA Coordinator or her designee, appeals to the ADA Coordinator or her designee, and responses from the ADA office are retained by the City of Gary ADA Coordinator for at least three (3) years.

If the ADA Coordinator's determination or her designee does not satisfy or resolve the issue, the complainant or his/her designee may appeal the decision within 30 calendar days after receipt of the determination or response in writing or in a format that is appropriate for the complainant.

Within 30 days of the appeal, the ADA Coordinator or her designee will meet again with the complainant or his/her designee to discuss the appeal and possible solutions and/or any other complaint options.

In the final 30 days after the appeals meeting is held, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing or in an alternative format with a final determination/resolution of the complaint. Again, upon request, reasonable accommodations will be provided in completing all necessary forms.

Haneefah Khaaliq, Esq.

City of Gary, Director of Human Relations Commission
City of Gary, ADA and Title VI Coordinator
455 Massachusetts Street (Hudson-Campbell Sports Center)
Gary, IN 46402
(219) 883-4151-Office
(219) 743-9745-Cell
(219) 882-0373-Fax
hkhaaliq@gary.gov

APPENDIX C – MASTER PLAN ADOPTION RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION NO: _____
AS AMENDED: _____
CERTIFICATION DATE: _____
CERTIFIED BY: _____
FAVORABLE: _____
UNFAVORABLE: _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF GARY ADOPTING A MASTER PLAN UPDATE FOR THE GARY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

WHEREAS, the Board of Park Commissioners (Board) is the governing board for the parks located in the Municipal City of Gary, Lake County, State of Indiana;

WHEREAS, the Board owns, operates and manages various parks and facilities located in the City of Gary.

WHEREAS, the Board entered into a Contractual Agreement with the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands to prepare a Master Plan Update for the Gary Parks;

WHEREAS, the last Master Plan Update that is in the possession of the Board was completed in 2009;

WHEREAS, the Eppley Institute completed and forwarded a draft of its Master Plan Update to the Gary Parks on or about July 17, 2023;

WHEREAS, the Board voted to accept the Master Plan Update on July 25, 2023 after careful consideration of all of the above;

WHEREAS, the Eppley Institute completed and forwarded the final copy of its Master Plan Update to the Gary Parks on or about July 31, 2023;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Park Board of Commissioners has reviewed this resolution and held a public hearing, allowing public comment on the Master Plan Update;

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Park Board of Commissioners, City of Gary, Indiana,

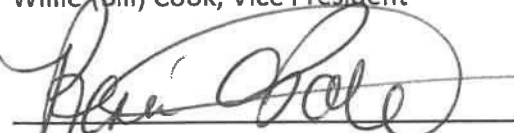
on this 22 day of August 2023.



Rev. Dwight Gardner, President



Willie (Bill) Cook, Vice President



Rene Patterson, Board Member



Alan Harrell, Board Member

SPONSORED BY: Jazmyn Thomas, Director, Parks, Recreation and Facilities

PREPARED BY: Atty. Deidre L. Monroe, Board Attorney