

# PARKS & RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM FIVE-YEAR MASTER PLAN 2023 - 2028





# Parks & Recreation Comprehensive System Five-Year Master Plan 2023 – 2028

## **City Officials**

Richard Strick, Mayor  
Christi McElhaney, Clerk-Treasurer

## **City Council**

District 1 - Charles Chapman  
District 2 - Paul Pike  
District 3 - Todd Johnson  
District 4 - David Funk  
District 5 - Joe Blomeke  
At Large - P.J. Felton  
At Large - Seth Marshall

## **Huntington Parks & Recreation Department**

Steven Yoder, Superintendent  
Megan Thompson, Parks Program Director

634 Webster Street, Huntington, IN 46750  
Phone: 260.358.2323

Prepared By:



Landscape Architects & Urban Designers  
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# Section 1: Parks Department, Facilities & Accessibility

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## HUNTINGTON PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The City of Huntington has a long tradition of meeting the leisure and recreation needs of its residents. The Huntington Parks and Recreation Department oversees and manages eleven parks with approximately 187 acres of open space and provides recreation programs and events that serve thousands of people yearly.

### MAYOR

Honorable Richard Strick  
City Hall  
300 Cherry Street  
Huntington, IN 46750

### PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Steven Yoder, Park Superintendent  
City Services Building  
634 Webster Street  
Huntington, IN 46750

### CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

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### CLERK-TREASURER

Christi McElhaney, Clerk-Treasurer  
300 Cherry Street  
Huntington, IN 46750

## INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation services are a tangible representation of the quality of life in any community. Parks are the places we go to connect with nature and one another. Studies show that parks are critical to the vibrancy of a community by creating benefits for citizens to their health, environment, and economic impact. Consequently, a parks and recreation system master plan is a guiding document that seeks to evaluate and strategically plan for the future development of the City's parks and recreation system to ensure the mission and goals of the City are meeting the needs of its citizens. The master plan will help ensure that the City's parks and recreation system continues to be an asset that enhances the quality of life for its residents but also for the overall region.

## DEPARTMENT MISSION AND GOALS

The Huntington Parks and Recreation Department mission is to improve and enhance the quality of life of the citizens of the City of Huntington and Huntington County by connecting its citizens to the best possible parks, recreational facilities, programs, and cultural experiences. The department aspires to accomplish this through the evaluation, connectivity, preservation, and protection of its natural habitats, parks, and greenspace resources. The community treasures its local historical, cultural, and natural resources and seeks to protect and preserve

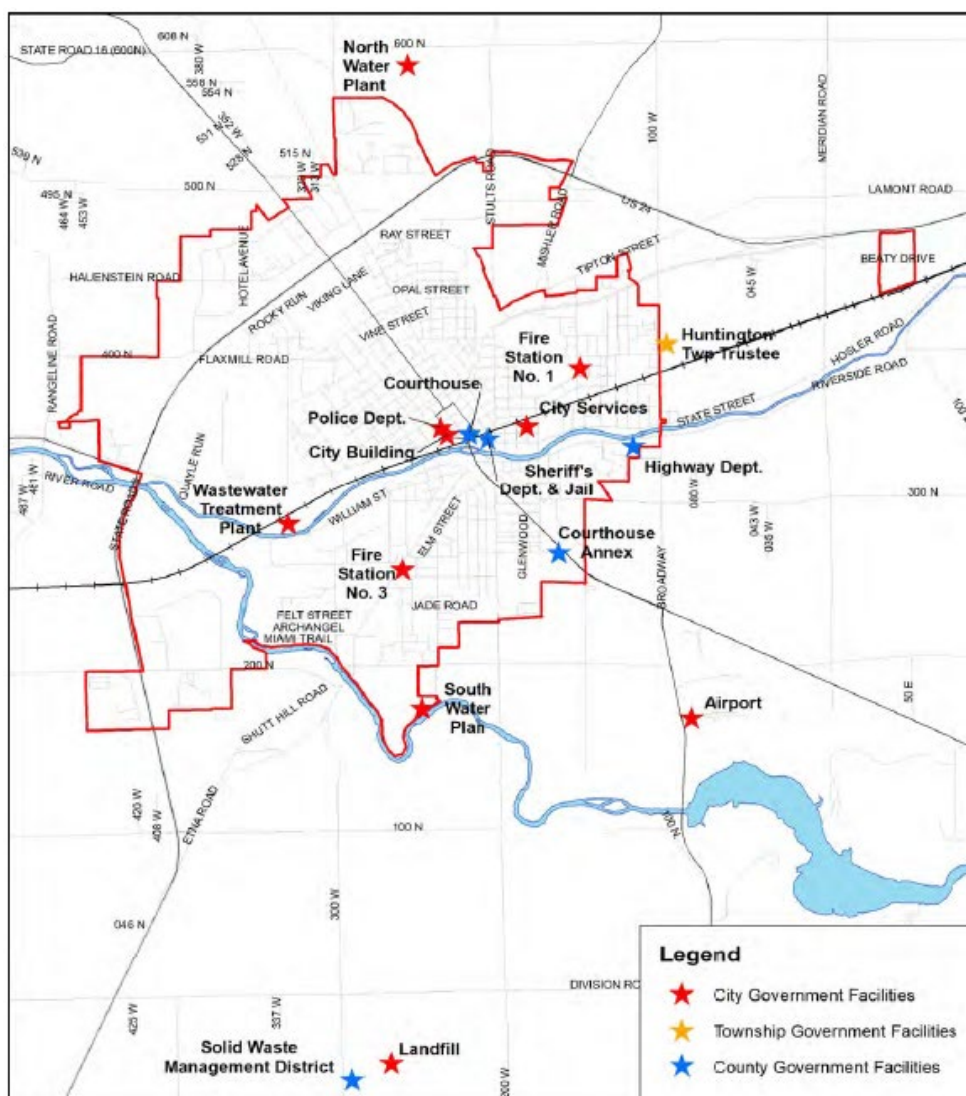
these resources with environmentally sustainable planning and design that recognizes the potential impacts on those resources.

The goal of this Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Five-Year Park System Master Plan is to continue to provide a practical guide for maintaining and growing park facilities and programs that contribute to the quality of life while conserving and protecting Huntington's natural environment.

## PLANNING AREA

The planning area is defined as the Huntington city corporate limits indicated in red on the map below. The city acknowledges they provide services to those outside of these limits.

## AREA PLANNING MAP WITH GOVERNMENT FACILITIES



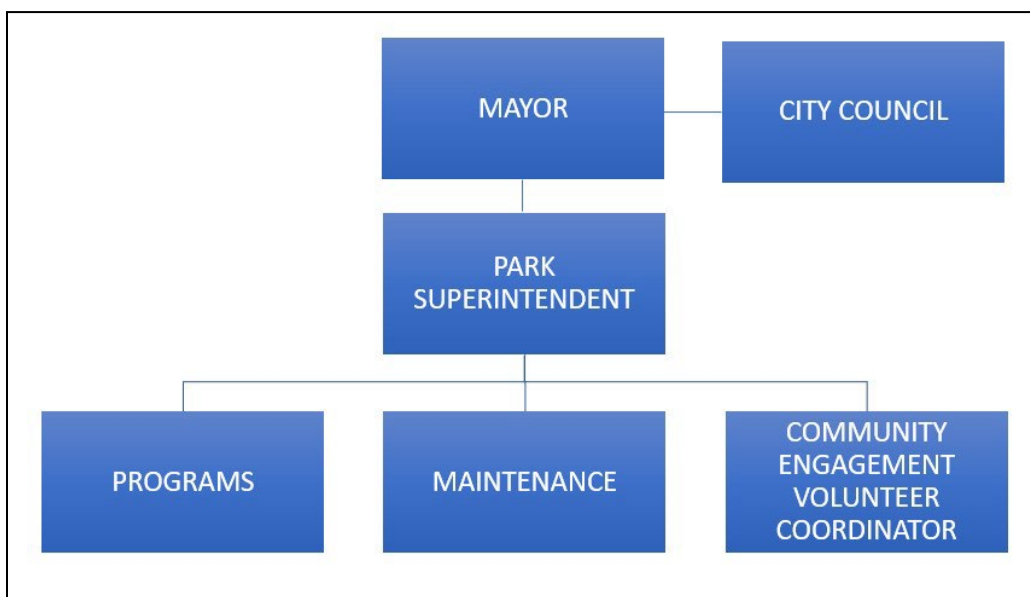
*Credit: City of Huntington Comprehensive Plan 2022 Update*

## ORGANIZATION

### PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Parks and Recreation Department is comprised of eight full-time staff. Seasonal staff are hired as needed to assist with programs and maintenance. Department offices are located at the City Services building at 634 Webster Street.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



### PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT BUDGET

The department tracks their budgets by the following line items. For detailed annual budget information contact the department office.

**1 - Personnel Services**

Personnel Services refers to an expenditure category/expense class for the payment of salaries, wages, and other compensation of permanent, temporary, contractual and casual employees.

**2 - Supplies**

Materials and supplies are expendable items necessary to carry out the work of the department.

**3 - Other Services and Charges**

Fees for professional services and other charges related to specific tasks.

**4 - Capital Outlays**

Listed projects or equipment purchases that are proposed to be completed with funding as indicated if funds are available. Gifts and donations may be pursued to offset costs for project improvements.

## DEPARTMENT PROGRAMS

The department has a diverse range of facilities and recreational programs and events which promote active living, community interaction, and environmental stewardship. The department continues to implement innovative programs to accommodate the interests and participation of the members of the community. These programs have included the following:

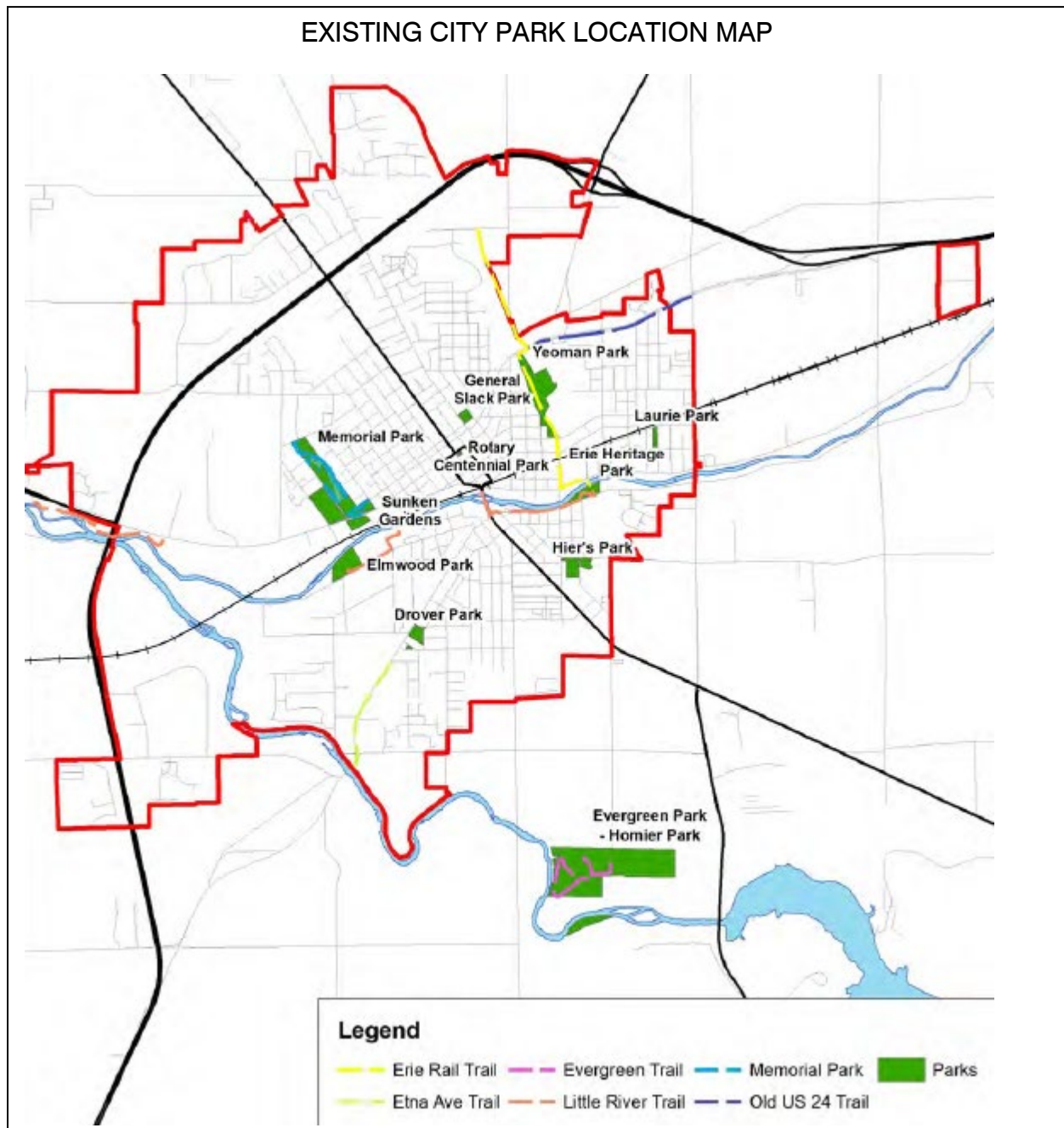
- Pickleball/Tennis
- Soccer
- Softball
- Pump Track
- Walk a Mile Wednesday
- You've Been Caught partnered with Viking Express
- Teacher Appreciation
- Walk the Length of Indiana
- Hot Chocolate at Memorial Park
- Snow Angel Challenge
- 50 Miles in 2 Weeks Challenge
- Leprechaun Traps
- Arbor Day
- Toddler Tuesday(s)
- Let's Get Moving
- Snowman Contest
- Daddy-Daughter Dance
- Mother-Son Dance
- S.P.A.R.K. (Summer Parks and Recreation for Kids)
- National Trails Day
- Family Photos
- Yoga in the Park
- I Spy
- Art at Elmwood
- Big Family Bash
- Touch a Truck
- Butterfly Life Cycle
- Pumpkin Carving Contest
- Movie in the Park
- Howl-O-Ween Dog Park Event
- Fishing Day
- Sunken Gardens Lighting Ceremony
- Santa Letters
- Cake Wars

## EXISTING PARK FACILITIES

The department oversees and manages eleven parks and trails. The park system consists of almost 190 acres of parks and open space. The department also maintains other city amenities and facilities, facilitates recreation programs, events, and assists community partners. The department teams with other municipal departments and coordinates trail planning efforts with the Huntington Area Recreational Trails Association to advocate for trails and pathways.

<b>Acres</b>	<b>Park Facility</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Park Facility</b>
5.3	Drover	1.8	Laurie
10.8	Elmwood	39.7	Memorial
7.1	Erie Heritage	1.5	Sunken Gardens
85.0	Evergreen	0.3	Rotary Centennial
2.1	General Slack	22.3	Yeoman
6.3	Hiers	6.6	Riverside Undeveloped
188.8	Total Acres		





*Credit: Huntington City Comprehensive Plan*

The following site amenities chart provides a summary of park features found at each park location. The department continues to improve and update park facilities on an annual basis. The department maintains other green spaces within the city such as Kiwanis Island. Park descriptions are included with aerial maps showing property boundaries.

## PARK AMENITIES CHART

Location	Ballfield	Bandstand/Buildings	Basketball Courts	Fishing	Soccer Field	Skate Park	Pump Track	Dog Park	Tennis Courts	Disc Golf	Pickleball	Volleyball	Overlooks	Playground	Restrooms	Pavilion & Picnic Area	Sledding Hill	Splash Pad	Walking Trail	Horseshoes	Open space
Drover			1										1	1	Y		1	Y		Y	
Erie			1																		
Elmwood	1		1					1			1		1	1	Y			Y			
Evergreen									9		1	Y	1	1	Y			Y		Y	
General Slack			1										1	1	Y						
Hiers	1	Y											1	1	Y						
Laurie			1										1	1							
Memorial			2	Y				3	18	6*			1	2	Y	Y		Y	12	Y	
Sunken Gardens																				Y	
Yeoman	1			Y	3	1	1	1					1	1	Y			Y		Y	
Riverside (undeveloped 5 acres)																					

\* 3 courts are combination with Tennis

## DROVER PARK

Drover Park is approximately 5.34 acres located on the south side of the city at 1255 Etna Avenue. It features the Terry R. Abbett Splash Park, which is open from Memorial Day to Labor Day.



## ELMWOOD PARK

Elmwood Park is located at 1110 Williams Street and covers 10.6 acres. The site has access to the Little River and accommodates a wide range of outdoor activities from fishing to sports fields and courts to open space, with restrooms and pavilion facilities readily available for family gatherings.



## ERIE HERITAGE PARK

This park is strategically located on the southside banks of the Little River at 968 Riverside Drive. It serves as a trailhead for the Erie Rail Trail, which leads north to Huntington University and Parkview YMCA, and the Little River Trail, which connects with Downtown. The park is approximately 7.1 acres.





## EVERGREEN PARK & ARBORETUM

Evergreen Park is located on 85 acres southeast of the city at 1370 Evergreen Road. The park is the location of the arboretum, which has been planted with over 40 species of Indiana native trees. The arboretum was made possible from grants from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Community & Urban Forestry Assistance. The park also has access to the Wabash River, a one-mile walking trail, pavilion, restrooms and a nine-hole disc golf course. Another nine holes are planned but have not been constructed yet. Additional walking paths, trees, interpretive and educational signage, and outdoor event space are planned in the future.



The city leases the land on the east side of Evergreen Road to Huntington County Baseball (HCB), who operates and maintains Homier Park, which has four fields and provides baseball and softball leagues.

## GENERAL SLACK PARK

This two-acre site is in a neighborhood on the northeast side of the city at 929 Guilford Street. It includes a playground, basketball court, restrooms, picnic pavilion and open lawn.



### HIERS PARK

Located at 547 S. Briant Street on the southeast side, this 6.3-acre site is located adjacent to the Huntington County 4-H Fairgrounds. The park offers a ballfield, playgrounds, restrooms, and open space.



### LAURIE PARK

Located at 524 Swan Street on the east side, this two acre site offers a basketball court, open lawn area, restrooms, and playground.





## MEMORIAL PARK

This community park located at 1200 W. Park Drive is one of the crown jewels of the department. It is the home of various attractions including the Veteran's Memorial, which includes a T-33 Shooting Star jet and a Purple Heart Monument. In addition, there is the Memorial Hills 18-hole disc golf course, sledding hill, flower gardens, fishing, the Elizabeth Smith Friedman Memorial, restrooms, and pavilions.

The Court Sports Complex is also located on the west side of the park. It includes combo courts for three tennis courts/four pickleball courts, three separate pickleball courts, two basketball courts, 12 horseshoe pits, and an accessible ADA-compliant playground. All courts are lighted.



## SUNKEN GARDENS/SHAKESPEARE GARDENS

Sunken Gardens is a part of Memorial Park located at the far southeast corner of the park. This historic garden was originally dedicated to the City in 1924 and is located at the northwest corner of West Park Drive and Dimond Street. The garden was formerly an abandoned quarry. The original design incorporated footbridges, fountains, fieldstone staircases and a horse-shoe shaped pool. Today it is utilized for the department's holiday light display and other community events including weddings. The City continues to seek grants for the restoration of this historic landmark within the community. The department continues to work on water quality and accessibility while being sensitive to the history of the gardens.





### ROTARY CENTENNIAL PARK

This 0.3-acre park was established in 2016 as a joint effort with the Huntington Rotary Club in honor of its 100-year anniversary. It is located on the southeast corner of E. Park Drive and N. Jefferson Street. It features benches, picnic tables, a custom clock and a seasonal fountain, which is transformed into a thirty-foot tree that is decorated with holiday lights.



### YEOMAN PARK

This community park located at 900 Market Street hosts a wide range of amenities including the Hayes-Lemmerz Skate Park, BMX Pump Track, Barks & Rec Dog Park, soccer fields, playground, lighted ball diamond, and restrooms.

Hayes-Lemmerz Skate Park features a variety of skating elements including quarter pipes, fun boxes, slide rails, a half pyramid with ledge, street spine, wedges, fly box, low box, and full pyramid. The city plans to upgrade the skate park in partnership with the Huntington County Boys & Girls Club, Purdue Extension, Youth Services Bureau, and HCCSC. Fundraising is scheduled to start in 2023. The BMX pump track is scheduled for resurfacing.

The Barks and Rec Dog Park is located at the south end of the park near the intersection of E. Market Street and N. Briant Street. Memberships may be purchased at the Parks and Recreation office.



### RIVERSIDE PARK (UNDEVELOPED)

Riverside Park consists of several undeveloped parcels of park land along the banks of the Little River. The department currently maintains these properties and several other properties along State Street that are adjacent to the river.



### TRAILS

The city is dedicated to providing alternative transportation options from surrounding neighborhoods to the downtown core, park amenities, neighborhoods, and businesses throughout the community. Huntington's commitment to trails and greenway connections over the last 15 years has produced a network that is impressive given the limited resources in the fiscal climate. Trails and parks are proven through multiple research studies to increase tourism, land values, and attract new businesses to the community. Promoting pedestrian and bicycle circulation enhances the appeal of the community while preserving natural and cultural assets. The city has partnered with multiple groups to make this network a reality that includes other government entities such as Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT), Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the state's Next Level Trails Program, Huntington County Departments, other municipalities, and Huntington Area Recreation Trails Association (HARTA). These partnerships help to advocate for trails and obtain grants and funding for trail design and construction. Bike routes have also been implemented within the city to facilitate trail linkages. In its Indiana Visionary Trails System, IDNR has identified the Wabash River as part of its Visionary Trails Network. The specific designation is a Potential Visionary Trail within this system.

The former Wabash Railroad Depot at 11 W. State Street was donated to the City by the Schenkel family. The depot was named Schenkel Station and serves as the physical home of HARTA and connects to the Little River Trail. A list of existing trails not located within a park is listed below. An updated trail map is available in the appendix.

- Erie Rail: 2.59 miles (includes Next Level Trail project construction in 2023)
- Etna Avenue: 0.69 miles
- Little River: 1.05 miles
- Old US 24: 1.1 miles
- Lime City: 0.9 mile paved/crushed stone

Bike routes are located throughout the city. Approximate lengths are shown below.



- 
- Route 1: 5 miles
  - Route 2: 4 miles
  - Route 3: 4.5 miles
  - Route 4: 4 miles
  - Route 5: 11 miles (updated)

While natural amenities such as the Wabash River and Little River are huge assets to the city from an aesthetic, visual, recreational and environmental perspective, they also create unique challenges in making trail linkages due to steep topography along the rivers' banks, protection of habitat and vegetation along the rivers, and in construction for bridge crossings while extending trails. In addition, safety along active railroad street crossings is also a consideration for trail routes.

#### OTHER RECREATION PROVIDERS AND PARTNERS

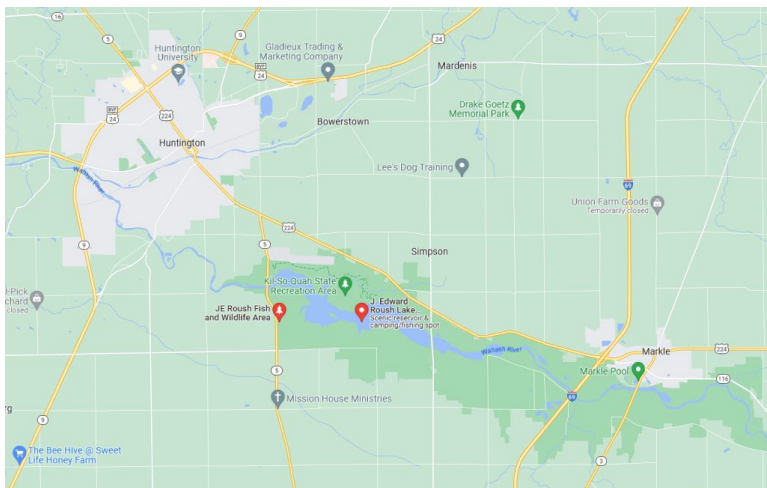
There are multiple partners and providers within the city that supply recreation and programming to citizens at many levels that include the following:

- Parkview Family YMCA: Originally established in 1913, the YMCA is a 57,000 sq. ft. facility that includes a natatorium, gymnasium, fitness center, two racket sport courts, dance studios, and preschool facilities. It is located on the northeast side of the city adjacent to Parkview Huntington Hospital and Crestview Middle School.
- Huntington University:
  - The Merillat Complex is one of the community's premier fitness facilities. with an 86,000 sq. ft. facility that is open to the public and features a large field, 1500-person capacity gymnasium, racquetball courts, weight rooms, exercise lab, aerobic/dance room, King Stadium: eight lane track and soccer field, outdoor Klopfenstein tennis courts, and softball field. It is currently undergoing renovation that will add a third performance gym, update the Platt Arena and create new training and wellness spaces.
  - Thornhill Nature Preserve is a 77-acre private site with a diverse habitat of evergreen and deciduous forests, woodland pond, meadows, and wetlands. Field trips and partnerships with area schools are coordinated to the educational enrichment of students and children throughout the Huntington region.
- Ivy Tech
- Huntington County Boys and Girls Club
- Huntington Catholic School (HCS)
- Huntington County Community School Corporation (HCCSC):
  - Andrews Elementary
  - Flint Springs Elementary & Huntington Preschool
  - Horace Mann Elementary
  - Lincoln Elementary
  - Roanoke Elementary
  - Salamonie Elementary
  - Crestview Middle School
  - Riverview Middle School
  - Huntington North High School
- Police Athletic League (PAL): This 80-acre facility includes five baseball fields, one full size high school football field, four flag football/soccer fields, and a 7,000 square foot event center. It is located on the east side of the city. Baseball leagues are offered including T-Ball, Coach's Pitch, Little League, and Pony League. The United Gymnastics Academy is also found on the PAL site in a 10,000 square foot equipped facility. Tumbling classes are offered for ages 6-18 with competitive recreation level teams.

- J. Edward Roush Lake Fish & Wildlife Area: Total of 8,217 acres including a 900-acre lake (also known as Huntington Lake). This property includes Little Turtle State Recreational Area (SRA) and Kil-So-Quah SRA.

Activities and facilities:

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| - Archery Range                         | - Interpretive Services   |
| - Basketball Courts                     | - Picnic/Shelter House    |
| - Mountain Bike Trail                   | - Playground Equipment    |
| - Boating: Two Ramps                    | - Shooting Range          |
| - Fishing                               | - Sled Dog Trail          |
| - Fishing Pier                          | - Swimming/Beach          |
| - Accessible Fishing Piers              | - Waterskiing             |
| - Hiking Trails                         | - Primitive Camping       |
| - Hunting: Deer, Dove, Turkey, Pheasant | - Youth Tent Areas        |
|   | - Camping: Electric Sites |



*J. Edward Roush Lake and Fish & Wildlife Areas*

- Salamonie Lake: Total of 11,594 acres includes 2,855-acre lake. This property includes Lost Bridge West SRA, Lost Bridge East, Dora-New Holland SRA, Mount Etna SRA and Mount Hope SRA.

Activities and facilities:

- |                              |                                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Amphitheater               | - Picnic/Shelter House               |
| - Basketball Courts          | - Playgrounds                        |
| - Boating/Launch Ramp/Marina | - Snowmobile Trails                  |
| - Horse Bridle Trails        | - Sled Dog Trail                     |
| - Fishing/Ice Fishing        | - Swimming/Beach                     |
| - Fishing Pier               | - Waterskiing                        |
| - Accessible Fishing Piers   | - Primitive Camping: 30 Sites        |
| - Hiking Trails              | - Youth Tent Areas                   |
| - Hunting                    | - Camping: 246 Electric Sites        |
| - Interpretive Services      | - Dumping Stations                   |
| - Nature Center              | - Horsemen's Camp Primitive 38 Sites |

- Town of Markle Fish & Game Club: It is equipped with ball diamonds, basketball and tennis courts, horseshoe pits, pavilion rentals, picnic areas, fishing, a playground, and quarry swimming.
- Pehkokia Woods Preserve: Acquired by Acres Land Trust, this 97-acre parcel is located at 1570 Flaxmill Road on the northwest side of Huntington. The property has hiking trails that wander through rolling upland woods, deep ravines and open grassland areas on the north end of the property.
- Camp Timber Lake (CTL): CTL is located on 15 acres of stocked lakes. The site offers cabins and full service electric or primitive campsites. Activities include boat rentals, swimming beach, hiking trails, playground, and zip line course.
- Tel-Hy Nature Preserve: Located southwest of Huntington, this 54-acre site has almost a nearly one-mile trail. The property was donated to the Acres Land Trust in 1994.
- Victory Noll Acres: Our Lady of Victory Missionary Sisters donated 107 acres of prairie and forest property along W. Park Drive and Hitzfeld Street to Acres Land Trust in 2017. The property is on the top of a bluff overlooking the Wabash River valley.
- Lake Clare Fitness Park: The park is operated by Huntington Township and is located on the east side of the city. The site is an abandoned stone quarry that has filled with water. The Fitness Park operates from spring to late fall. The fitness obstacle course has 20 obstacles built with two levels of difficulty in an oval shape that is over 300 feet in length.
- 18-hole Golf Courses within 20-minute drive:
  - Clear Creek Golf Course, Huntington
  - Maple Grove Golf Course, Huntington
  - Etna Acres Golf Course, Mt. Etna
  - Dogwood Glen Golf Course (9 holes), Warren

#### CULTURAL HISTORICAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The Quayle Vice Presidential Learning Center: The museum is dedicated to the history of all the vice presidents of the United States. It is home to a permanent exhibit on the vice-presidency and rotating exhibits of social, political, and historical interest.
- Historic Forks of the Wabash: The Forks is home to a restored schoolhouse and the Nuck log cabin. The Visitors Center and Museum hold exhibits relating to Wabash & Erie Canal and to the Miami tribe.
- Pulse Opera House: Located in Warren and built in 1884 by Capt. Silas Pulse, the opera house has been restored and is home to various productions of comedies, musicals, and melodramas.
- Huntington County Historical Museum: The museum shares the history of Huntington County from prehistoric, Miami tribe and French Voyageur period, Canal era and pioneer settlement to present day.

- Roanoke Area Heritage Center: Home to local history displays on the Wabash & Erie Canal and the impact of the canals on Huntington. Roanoke was the site of a canal lock.

#### ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility and the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements must be taken into consideration for every program and facility. The department continually strives to achieve accessibility standards in all its program services, facility renovations, and developments.

The City's ADA Coordinator is Ronda Smelser, Human Resources. Her office is located at 300 Cherry Street, Huntington, 46750. Phone: (260) 356-1400 ext. 2004, email: [ronda.smelser@huntington.in.us](mailto:ronda.smelser@huntington.in.us).

The City's ADA public notice and grievance policy procedures can be found on the city's website or by contacting the coordinator, whose contact information is provided above.

## Section 2: Community Profile

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## COMMUNITY PROFILE

Huntington is in northeastern Indiana in Huntington County, approximately 95 miles northeast of Indianapolis and 25 miles southwest of Ft. Wayne. Centrally located within Huntington Township, Huntington serves as the county seat for 12 townships, 6 incorporated towns, and numerous other small communities. Other nearby communities include Bippus, Roanoke, Markle, Andrews, Mt. Etna, Plum Tree and Warren.

Huntington's municipal government is comprised of a Mayor elected to a four-year term and a seven-member City Council. The Parks and Recreation Department is one of many departments within the City and the Park Superintendent reports to the Mayor and City Council.



Huntington was originally called Flint Springs. The town was later renamed for Captain Elias Murray's uncle, Samuel Huntington: lawyer, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Governor of Connecticut. Governor James Whitcomb later provided Huntington's town status on February 16, 1848. In 1850 the population was 594. On September 17, 1873, Huntington had the requisite population of 3,000 to become a fifth-class city. At that time Huntington had eight churches, a three-story brick public school, two parochial schools, 26 major industries, and numerous businesses. Wood and lime were major products. Yearly Heritage Days festivals began in 1963; since 1969 a yearly "Chief of the Flint Springs" is honored for community leadership. The city is celebrating its 175th anniversary in 2023.

## FEATURES

### GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES AND LAND USE

Huntington is located at 40°52'55" North, 85°29'44" West (40.882083, -85.495595). According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 21.8  $\text{km}^2$  (8.4  $\text{mi}^2$ ). 21.6  $\text{km}^2$  (8.4  $\text{mi}^2$ ) of it is land and 0.2  $\text{km}^2$  (0.1  $\text{mi}^2$ ) of it is water. The total area within the city corporate limits is 1.07 percent water.

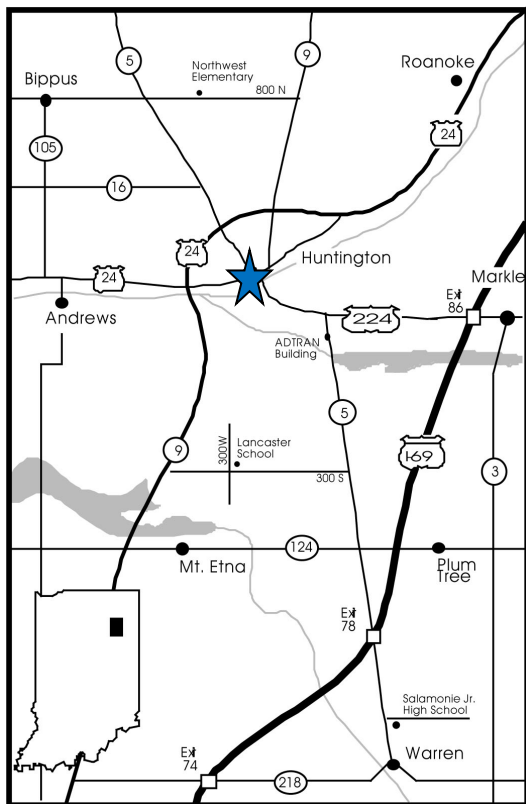
The community area is described in the Indiana Geological Survey as being within the Tipton Till Plain Area. This vast region accounts for most of the land located in the north central portion of the state. Historians describe how glacial meltwaters produced a predominately flat terrain area while conversely carving deep canyons along the Wabash River valley and its

tributaries. Cool ravines remain in some of these modest canyons that exhibit plant life more common in northern forests.

The City of Huntington is fortunate to be located east of the junction of the Wabash River and the Little River. The natural river greenways created by the rivers provide opportunities for trails and recreational opportunities such as canoeing, fishing, wildlife observation and walking. The Little River bisects the city through downtown while the Wabash River skirts the southern edge of city limits. Along the rivers changes can be found in topography from raised overlooks to low floodplains rich in vegetation and wildlife. The Wabash River is the state's second largest tributary, after the Ohio River. It flows from northeastern Indiana across the state, forming the border between Illinois and Indiana south of Terre Haute.

## CLIMATE

Huntington has four well-defined seasons. Precipitation is normally greatest in late spring and early summer. The average annual total rainfall is 39 inches, while the average annual total snowfall is 29 inches.



## TRANSPORTATION

Huntington is connected to other cities by State Roads 5 and 9 (north/south), U.S. Highways 24 and 224 (east/west). Interstate 69 is connected to Huntington southeast of the city via SR 5 and SR 224. I-69 also connects to Indianapolis and points further south and north ultimately connecting to Interstate 80/90 east and west. State Road 24 connects Huntington to Lafayette to the west and to Ft. Wayne and Toledo, Ohio to the east.

Freight rail service is provided via Norfolk Southern, which runs east/west through the city. Huntington Municipal Airport is a city owned public use airport located southeast of downtown. The various transportation corridors do create challenges for the expansion of bicycle and pedestrian corridors across the railroad tracks downtown and the Wabash and Little Rivers.

## SOCIO AND ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

### POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The US Census Bureau estimated the City of Huntington's population in 2020 was 17,022, with the county's population being 36,662. Historically, the overall population has declined 1.4 percent in the last 10 years. It is estimated that the county's population will stay roughly the same or slightly decline by 0.5 percent by 2030 per the Indiana Business Research Center.

	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2030</b>
Huntington County	35,427	36,107	37,123	36,662	35,038*
Huntington (City)	17,068	17,701	17,159	17,022	16,259*

*\*Projected by Indiana Business Research Center*

The 2020 census data reflects that adult age groups are evenly distributed from ages 25-64 while the 5 to 19 age group declined by 9.7 percent. Huntington County Community School Corporation's (HCCSC) enrollment has dropped over the last 10 years by approximately 700 students. This enrollment drop has been impacted by the pandemic and by the recession due to unemployment and a more mobile workforce. Park programs may be impacted as this youth age group declines in size. However, past participants in park programs are numerous. They are strong supporters of the various programs and events offered by the department. As the over 25 age group increases, the need for additional recreation programming opportunities also increases, especially those that are multi-generational. The over 60 age group grew in 2020 by 17.1 percent.

US Census 2020 Huntington County

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>County</i>
under 5 years	5.7%
5 - 17	16.3%
18-24	9.5%
25-44	24.2%
45 - 64	26.7%
65 and older	17.8%

### SNAPSHOT OF CITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Number of Households: 14,928

Median Household Income: \$54,286

Persons by Household: 2.29

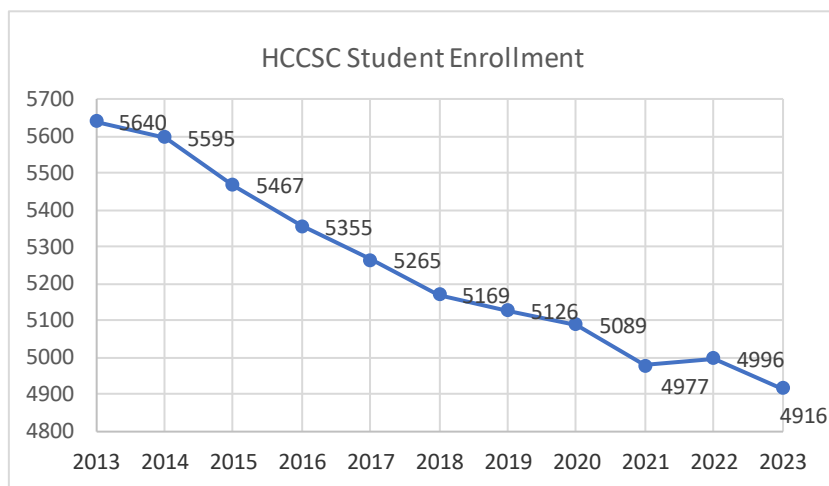
Households Living in Poverty: 9.1%

### EDUCATION

The county census data indicates that over 91 percent of the population has received a high school diploma and over 21 percent have a bachelor's degree. The Huntington County Community School Corporation (HCCSC) is the primary education provider within the planning area. The corporation serves all of Huntington County. It is comprised of seven K-5 elementary schools, one K-8 school, two middle schools and one high school. Huntington North High



School has approximately 1,423 students enrolled in grades 9-12 as of the 2022-23 school year, per the Indiana Department of Education. Average class size is 17 students. Huntington Catholic Schools provides instruction for preschool to eighth grade with approximately 115 students in the 2020-2021 school year according to the Indiana Department of Education.



Indiana Department of Education

#### HCCSC Schools:

- Andrews Elementary
- Crestview Middle School
- Flint Springs Elementary & Huntington Preschool
- Riverview Middle School
- Horace Mann Elementary
- Huntington North High School
- Lincoln Elementary
- Roanoke Elementary
- Salamonie Elementary

Higher-education opportunities are readily available locally and within an hour's drive. Specialized training and vocational training are available for high school students and adults offered through HCCSC and the colleges and universities listed below.

- Ball State University (55 miles)
- Huntington University Local
- Indiana Tech (satellite campus) Local
- Indiana Tech (Ft. Wayne) (30 miles)
- Indiana Wesleyan University (30 miles)
- Ivy Tech Community College (30 miles)
- Manchester University (25 miles)
- Purdue University Ft. Wayne (30 miles)
- Taylor University (40 miles)
- Trine University (65 miles)
- University of St. Francis (30 miles)

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## ECONOMIC BASE

Huntington County's economic base consists of a combination of core industries including agriculture, automotive, food processing, logistics/warehousing/distribution, metal/steel fabrication, orthopedic devices, mineral aggregates, and petroleum refining/distribution. According to the 2020 US Census, the county has a labor force of 28,205 people with 3.3 percent unemployment in February 2023. The average commute time is 22 minutes and approximately 39 percent of county residents were employed outside of the county.

Some of the county's largest employers include:

- Advanced Engineering
- ALH Building Systems
- Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems
- Dean Foods
- Echo Lake Foods
- Ecolab
- General Aluminum
- Gerdau Steel
- Gladieux Energy
- Heartland Aluminum
- Huntington Aluminum
- Huntington County Community School Corporation (HCCSC)
- Huntington University
- Huntington Sheet Metal
- Incipio Devices
- M & S Industrial Metal Fabrication
- NIPAC
- Novae Corporation
- Onward Manufacturing
- Our Sunday Visitor
- Parkview Hospital
- Pathfinder Services
- PHD, Inc.
- Pulley-Kellam, Inc.
- Shuttleworth, Inc.
- Schneider Electric/Square D

## Section 3: Trends In Parks & Recreation

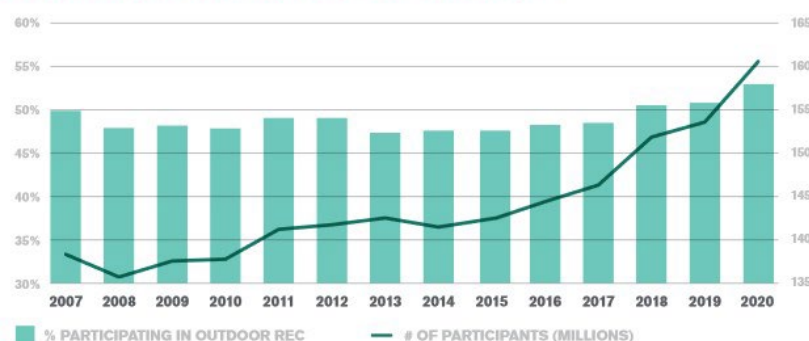
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## NATIONAL

Current trends throughout the United States continue to focus on activities that can incorporate all members of the family, such as growth in fitness walking trails and individual sports, and there is still a major emphasis on health and wellness programs. These have been increasing over the last 20 years and have been amplified by the COVID 19 pandemic.

In 2020, citizens sought outdoor space in unparalleled numbers to exercise and escape their homes. In some instances, communities saw 150 percent increases in park users on trails and open spaces, according to a special report, “Parks and the Pandemic” by the Trust for Public Land in 2021. In some urban communities, park use doubled. In the 2021 “Outdoor Participation Trends Report” by The Outdoor Foundation (TOF), they noted that the pandemic drove 7.1 million more participants to pursue outdoor activity than in 2019. This was the largest one-year increase they had ever recorded. This trend of outdoor park use has continued since the pandemic.

### OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION GROWS AMID COVID-19



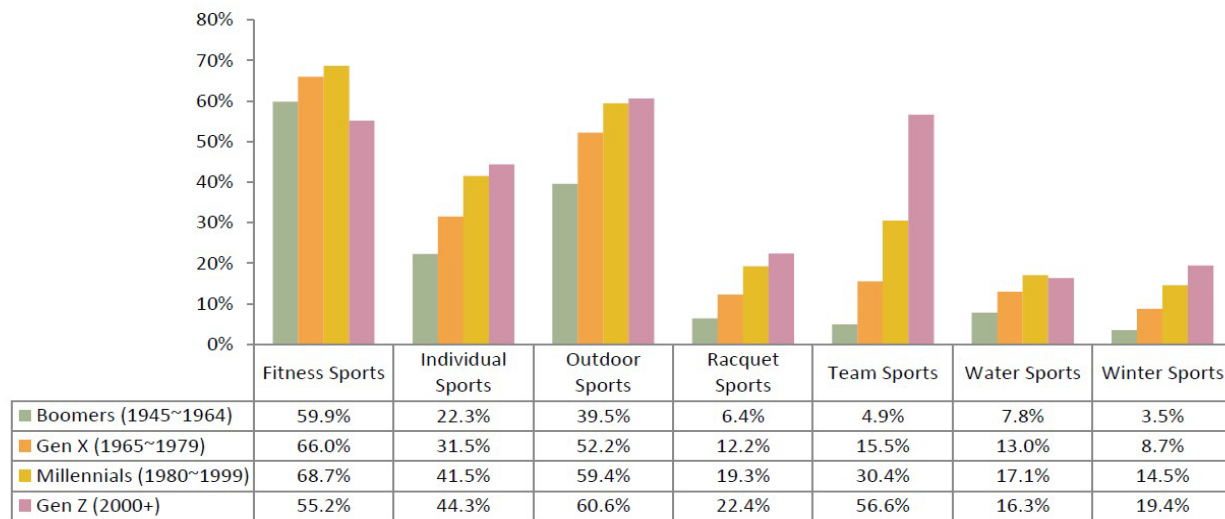
### MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES BY PARTICIPATION RATE

<b>1 RUNNING, JOGGING AND TRAIL RUNNING</b>	21.0% of Americans	63.8 million participants
<b>2 HIKING</b>	19.0% of Americans	57.8 million participants
<b>3 FRESHWATER, SALTWATER AND FLY FISHING</b>	18.0% of Americans	54.7 million participants
<b>4 ROAD BIKING, MOUNTAIN BIKING AND BMX</b>	17.3% of Americans	52.7 million participants
<b>5 CAR, BACKYARD, BACKPACKING AND RV CAMPING</b>	15.8% of Americans	47.9 million participants

In recent years, communities have focused on all aspects of wellness. This is evidenced by the fact that more people are walking, swimming, and exercising today more than ever before. This is also evidenced by the fact that schools, businesses, and hospitals are instituting wellness programs for all ages to encourage lifelong fitness and to reduce health insurance costs.

Walking continues to be the most popular recreation activity enjoyed by approximately 109 million Americans, according to the Sports Fitness & Industry Association (SFIA). Other top activities included running/jogging, swimming, pickleball, triathlon (non-traditional/off-road), triathlon (traditional/road), kayak fishing, and paddle boarding. Trail-related recreation activities according to the 2018 Outdoor Participation Report indicates a positive three-year trend for trail running, running/jogging/hiking, mountain biking, and BMX biking. Running/jogging/hiking was their most popular activity with 55.9 million participants.

### 2020 Participation by Generation



The trend of fitness continues to be confirmed by the Physical Activity Council's (PAC) 2020 Participation Report, which showed a consistent six-year trend of fitness sports participation around 67 percent. Other sport activity groups include the following:

- Outdoor Sports, 50.7%
- Individual Sports, 45.0%
- Team Sports, 23.4%
- Water Sports, 13.6%
- Racquet Sports, 13.0%
- Winter Sports, 8.25%

Racquet sports like pickleball continue to experience unprecedented growth. According to the USA Pickleball Association, pickleball grew by 42 percent from 2019 to 2020 and 620 percent over the last six years. While pickleball is still growing fast, its 4.1 million players are still a fraction of the 21.5 million who play tennis. Another new growing court sport is pop tennis, which is played in a cage. It is estimated by SFIA, that there are over 68 million members of Generation Z (Gen Z) in America (people born between 1997 and 2015), and they've been driving growth in all racquet sports. An impressive 22.4 percent of Gen Z played some form of racquet sports in 2020. Many departments have converted underused tennis courts to pickleball courts. The City of Huntington's Parks and Recreation Department has added pickleball courts at Memorial Park. A critical consideration when determining locations for pickleball courts is the proximity of residences to the courts. Pickleball has a harder plastic ball

that makes a distinctive sound which is much louder than a felt tennis ball. Racquet sports attract participants of all ages.



Walking and bicycling continues to grow in popularity after the pandemic of 2020-21, which creates even more need for connectivity between communities regionally. Regional destination trails are proven to have an even greater economic impact within communities. In Indiana, it is estimated trail visitors spend three to 10 times more than locals on lodging, shopping, and dining at \$3,500 annually per the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

## ESPORTS

One trend that is here to stay is esports. Egaming is a generic term to describe amusement or recreation using a standalone video game or desktop computer with one or more players. The Esportz Network (a global esports/gaming news, and entertainment media company) reported in August 2021, that the global esports economy growth has been underestimated and will exceed \$2.5 billion in 2022. The major gap in projections was the underestimation of growth in the mobile competitive play market. Straits Research was projecting in late summer 2022 that the United States market may reach \$5.74 billion by 2030.

Participants in the study indicated that they benefitted in multiple ways: having fun, socialization, playing together as family with others online: building community, creativity, communication, and increasing cognitive skills.

Esports participants data according to Entertainment Software Association in 2018:

- There are 2.5 billion gamers worldwide.

- Over 166 million adults within the U.S. consider themselves gamers.
- 64% of U.S. households own a gaming device (PC or gaming console).
- There is an average of approximately two gamers per household in U.S.
- 56% of regular gamers play multiplayer titles.
- 83% of gamers often play with another person, both in-person and online.
- Over 84% of teens have access to a gaming console within their home.
- 48% of gamers are females.
- Average play time spent: 13 hours/week.



The National Alliance for Youth Sports Poll indicated that 70 percent of kids stop participating in traditional sports by the age of 13, and 90 percent of teenagers from 12 to 17 year olds participate in playing video games.

The opportunity for park agencies is to provide recreational esports programming to capture children who are unable to participate in other sports by providing places for gamers to gather and compete. Gaming also builds community and can be a multi-generational experience. Many parks' agencies have utilized esports to reach youth. Should they excel, there are esports leagues at the collegiate level which also provide scholarships. Due to this growth, Ball State University announced in August 2021, it is partnering with Harena Data and the Indiana Sports Corporation to establish the Esports Combine. This event will be a virtual showcase where esports candidates from across the world can demonstrate their talents in front of the nation's top recruiters, potentially earning college scholarships for their sports.

Locally, Huntington University's Esports team competed in its inaugural season in 2022 in the National Esports Collegiate Conference (NECC). They also hosted mini camps throughout the year on campus and partnered with Huntington County Community School Corporation to provide esports opportunities within the community.

## STATE TRENDS

From a regional or state perspective, the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2021-2025 reflected many of the same popular national trends. The SCORP was completed prior to the pandemic. Top participation activities included walking, hiking, or jogging as the most popular with camping, hiking, fishing, boating/water skiing/sailing/wakeboarding rounding out the top five. Survey respondents also indicated that they participated in the following top five activities weekly: walking/hiking/jogging, bicycling, fishing, gardening, and swimming. Walking/running/jogging has been the top activity in Indiana for over 25 years and nationally since 1990.



## Activity Trends State of Indiana

	1989	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
1	Picnicking	Hiking, Walking Jogging	Hiking, Walking Jogging	Hiking, Walking Jogging	Hiking, Walking Jogging	Hiking, Walking Jogging	Walking, Running, Jogging
2	Pleasure Driving	Picnicking	Fairs, Festivals	Fairs, Festivals	Camping	Camping	Camping RV Camping
3	Walking	Swimming	Fishing	Swimming SCUBA Snorkeling	Picnicking	Fishing	Hiking Backpacking
4	Swimming	Camping	Camping	Nature Observation, Photography	Fishing	Swimming	Fishing
5	Fishing	Fishing Hunting	Picnicking	Camping	Swimming	Canoeing Kayaking Paddle Sports	Boating Wakeboarding Water Skiing Sailing
6	Bicycling	Bicycling	Swimming SCUBA Snorkeling	Fishing	Boating, Water Skiing, Personal Watercraft	Bicycling	Picnicking, Barbecue/ Cookouts
7	Camping	Boating	Nature Observation, Photography	Picnicking	Golf	Hunting	Gardening Landscaping Yard Work
8	Nature Observation	Nature Observation	Playground Use	Bicycling	Bicycling	Fairs/Festivals Outdoor Concerts	Swimming Snorkeling Diving
9	Motor Boating	Playground Use	Bicycling	Off-road Motorized Vehicle Use	Hunting	Boating Water Skiing Sailing	Bicycling
10	Golf	Off-road Motorized Vehicle Use	Boating, Water Skiing, Personal Watercraft	Boating, Water Skiing, Personal Watercraft	Horseback Riding	Off-road Motorized Use	Golf

Indiana Department of Natural Resources SCORP 2021-25 Table 2.3

Swimming continues to be in the top 10 activities in recreation. Over 27 million Americans over the age of 6 swam for fitness in 2018. This is up from 27.14 million in 2017. Aging pools are often replaced by aquatic centers that offer more than the traditional pool and diving well. Aquatic trends in the parks and recreation industry include zero-depth pool entry, lazy rivers, water slides, natural lighting for indoor facilities, splash pads, large water structures, and larger pool areas that can allow for water polo, water fitness, and synchronized swimming. Splash pads also may be incorporated into the newer aquatic centers, or as an amenity within a community as an alternative to the larger aquatic center facility or pool. Splash pads are usually free to park users versus as a part of an aquatic center, which has a user fee. In the last 10 years, over 65 percent of respondents have added at least one splash pad within their park system. Huntington installed its first splash pad at Drover Park in 2005.

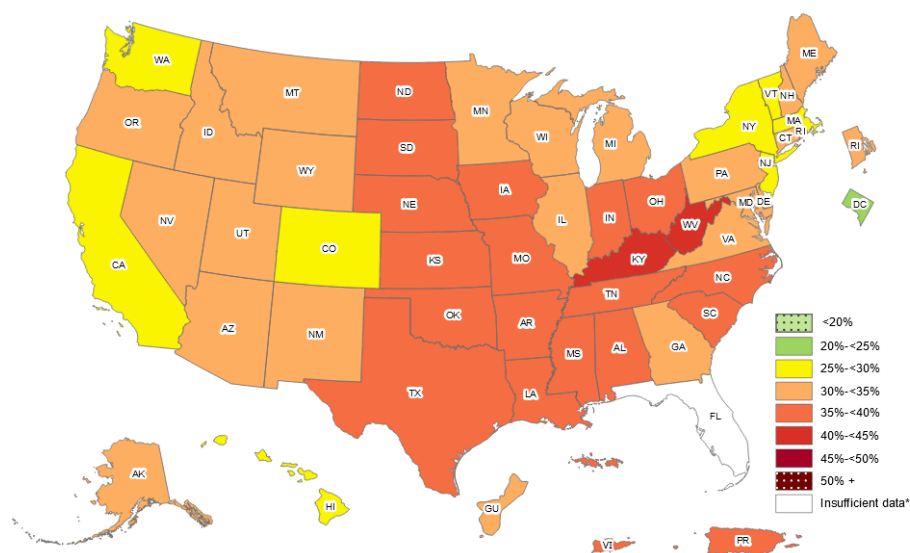
## THE EFFECTS OF RECREATION ON WELLNESS

Recreational opportunities and facilities have a profound effect on the health and wellness of a community. Ideally, through careful planning of green space, parks, facilities, and programs, a community creates an environment that offers multiple opportunities and choices for healthy



lifestyles – opportunities which easily incorporate physical activity into the daily lives of its citizens.

Prevalence of Self-Reported Obesity among U.S. Adults  
By State and Territory, BRFSS, 2021



Statistics released by the Surgeon General indicate that 60 percent of the U.S. population is inactive or underactive; conditions that have fueled the growing epidemic of obesity, diabetes, and related disorders. A growing body of evidence indicates that community design plays a role in fostering or inhibiting an active lifestyle. A few of the elements that have been identified as creating healthy, walkable communities include:

- Safe and accessible sidewalks, crosswalks, and bike paths.
- Transportation alternatives with pedestrian access to buses and transit systems.
- Safe, attractive, and convenient parks and recreation facilities.
- Shopping and services that can be accessed without automobiles.

Availability and accessibility of attractive bike paths, walking paths, exercise facilities and the overall aesthetics of an environment play a role in citizens determining the type and amount of physical activity in which they will engage.

The 2021 Annual Report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirms that inactivity increases with age and is more common among women than men, and among people with lower income and less education. Physical activity also declines dramatically with age during adolescence.

Supporting statistics:

- 60 percent of American adults were sedentary in 2021.
- Only 25 percent of adults and 27 percent of youth (grades 9-12) engage in recommended levels of physical activity.
- Children born today have a lower life expectancy than their parents.

- Indiana is ranked 40<sup>th</sup> in the nation by United Health Foundation in its 2020 *State Health Rankings* report due to the obesity levels of children and adults.

Any age, gender, and economic or cultural group can achieve greater health benefits by increasing physical activity. This public health challenge exists for every community in America. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population of Health Institute (UWPHI) collaborated to create the County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program. This program is intended to help communities identify and implement solutions that make it easier for people to be healthier in their schools, workplaces, and homes. The program ranks almost every county in America. In 2022, Huntington County ranked 39 out of 92 counties in Indiana based on the overall health of the county.

## Section 4: Public Participation

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## CITIZEN INPUT

Community input is an invaluable aspect of the planning process and provides insight into the community that may otherwise go unrealized. It also fosters a sense of ownership and buy-in from the public as they see their input being incorporated. The department has provided a variety of opportunities and formats for the community to participate.

During the development of the plan two methods were utilized to facilitate input: public meetings and questionnaires. Meetings were held with staff, city officials and departments, stakeholders, and the public. Questionnaires were made available to the public.

Throughout the planning process, it was evident that the community is highly supportive of the department as a whole and the critical role that parks plays in the quality of life that citizens enjoy. The pandemic raised public awareness of the quality of parks and services that are provided by the city. More people than ever utilized outdoor spaces and parks to escape from their homes to socialize, exercise and relax. For some residents, they discovered different parks within the community for the first time and for others visiting their favorite park was a part of their daily routine.

All public meetings were advertised in local media outlets including the following: The Herald-Press, social media outlets from the city and the city website.

Consistent themes heard throughout the process included:

- Love our trails – keep connecting with more trails.
- Passionate, responsive park staff.
- Fantastic community partners.
- Diverse facilities and parks.
- Fiscally responsible and great resource.
- Multi-generational activities and programs need more.
- Enhance existing parking facilities and maintenance of existing features.
- Pool: swimming, lap pool and aquatic activities.
- Future indoor venue space for sports and programming.
- Future amphitheater.

## STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS: WINTER 2022

The planning process included meetings with department stakeholders, community leaders, staff, city staff, and citizens. These meetings were held at four different times to allow for attendees' flexibility. Those groups invited included:

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| - Bippus State Bank            | - City Council                 |
| - Boys & Girls Club of America | - College Park Church          |
| - Chamber of Commerce          | - First Church of the Nazarene |
| - City Departments             | - Hope Rising                  |

- 
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| - Huntington Area Recreational Trails Association (HARTA) | - Mayor's Advisory Council on Environmental Stewardship |
| - Huntington County Baseball                              | - Optimist Club   |
| - Huntington County Community Schools                     | - Rotary Club   |
| - Huntington University                                   | - The Well Church                                       |
| - Lions Club  | - Tri Kappa   |
| - Love Rising   | - Parkview YMCA   |

A summary of these meeting notes has been combined from all stakeholder meetings. Thirty-two people attended the stakeholder meetings out of the 63 invitees. All groups were asked the same series of questions related to the Parks and Recreation Department.

1. Strengths of Department, Facilities and Programs

- Park Facilities
- Memorial Park – “gem,” love it
- Drover Park - splash pad
- Evergreen Park – quiet/nature
- Dog Park
- Skate Park – needs upgrades
- Sunken Garden
- Disc golf and they are hands on
- Variety of parks: active and passive use, nature areas, quiet, wildlife
- Green/Open space
- Trails
- Staff provide a high level of maintenance
- Great community partner and resource to other departments
- Parks are accessible
- Inclusive in updates
- Parks are strategically located throughout the city
- Staff are open to new ideas
- Staff are responsive to input and quick to respond
- Longevity of staff
- Passion of staff
- Staff provide many services.
- Social media posts are fantastic.
- For small number of staff and resources they provide excellence in facilitates and programs
- Variety of programs – S.P.A.R.K., Daddy-Daughter Dance, etc.
- Christmas display
- Family events
- Volunteers
- Stormwater management
- Tree planting at dog park

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## 2. Challenges/Concerns for Parks Department: Facilities, Maintenance, Staff, and Programs

- Where to find information and communication
- Vandalism and graffiti
- Limited resources
- Build more community partnerships
- Isolated groups within community each doing their own thing. No coordination
- Beautification – annuals/perennial beds are gone. Parks not as colorful
- Develop partnerships with 4-H, Huntington University Agriculture
- Develop long term communication plan with other community entities
- Students short term
- Public marketing campaign
- Increase user participation
- Senior adult activities
- Build on downtown success. Use park events to bring people downtown and support local businesses
- They need the right equipment for maintenance along the river
- Hiking trail conditions in Memorial Park: mud within park
- Emphasis on recycling and sustainability
- Education of park users on stewardship and environment
- Accessibility
- Aging parks - facility equipment
- Replacing maintenance equipment
- Pet-clean up
- Lack of volunteers
- Park website is unattractive and hard to use
- City website map legibility
- Parks undervalued and underappreciated
- Activate parks along the Wabash River
- River divides the city which makes it difficult to connect trails
- Users are not always taxpayers
- More staff as parks grow
- Lack of programs for teenagers
- Skate Park needs to be revamped
- Community education on sharing the road with cyclists.
- No bike lanes
- Trail user etiquette education
- Better signage: within city to connect trails and parks.
- Erosion control treatments along steep slopes that do not require weekly maintenance

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**3. Big Ideas/Dreams for Parks Department: Facilities, Maintenance, Staff, and Programs**

- Volunteers: grandparents
- Multigenerational activities
- Disc golf
- Signage wayfinding
- Communication - storytelling of parks, programs, events, and history
- Winter activities
- Fishing derby
- Security cameras in parks
- Wi-fi connection in parks
- Resource partners
- Staff training opportunities
- More staff
- Park app for mobile phones
- Add tree canopy in community
- Kayaking
- Water access
- Outdoor event space/amphitheater
- Indoor facility for events, recreation programs, and meetings
- City-wide calendar that shows all community events/programs
- Community pool: lap swim, and zero depth
- Music events/trail stage
- Increase parking at Memorial Park
- Leverage all park department assets
- More Pickleball courts - host tournaments i.e., economic impact
- Trail connections within community and to parks
- Trails along the river - gap to Elmwood Park
- Trail bridge over Wabash River
- Regional trail connections to Ft. Wayne, Wabash, and Roanoke
- Pedestrian trail system connecting schools and sidewalks
- Trails as alternative mode of transportation
- Walking to school
- Trail counters
- Naturalize some lawn areas to lower maintenance costs and increase natural elements of park. Leave some lawn areas at longer mow height. Substitute other plant material for turf.

**PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE JUNE 2022**

A public open house was held on June 14, 2022, at the Huntington Public Library. The attendees participated in conversations and answered questions at various stations throughout the main room. Twelve attendees answered questions at different stations to provide input during the open house. Below are the results.

1. Does Huntington need more trails/connections to parks? Yes: 11, No: 1

2. Does the city adequately maintain existing parks and facilities? Yes: 10, No: 2
3. Does the city need more recreational programming? Yes: 11, No: 0
4. Does the city need more rental facilities such as community rooms or indoor recreation space? Yes: 6, No: 4
5. Tell us your FAVORITE Huntington Parks and Recreation places, amenities, and programs. Note: (#) indicates if program was mentioned more than once.
  - Pickleball (5)
  - Daddy-daughter Dance (2)
  - Softball (2)
  - Baseball
  - Christmas Wreath Lighting Ceremony
  - Dog Events
  - Fall Festival
  - S.P.A.R.K.
  - Santa Letters
  - Vet Memorial at Memorial Park
6. Tell us about your CONCERNS about parks, maintenance, programs, or events.
  - Need more maintenance staff to keep up with growing maintenance of facilities and trails.
  - Add pickleball lines on existing tennis courts at Memorial Park
  - No access to safe sand volleyball courts
  - More pickleball courts at Memorial (3)
  - Add drinking fountains at pickleball/tennis courts (2)
  - Maintain existing courts, mulch beds, etc.
  - Add flowers at Memorial Park
7. Top three programming needs for Huntington's Parks.

Votes    Program

7	Music Events
6	Festivals
6	Sports Tournaments
4	Nature Programs
3	Educational Programs
3	Intramural Adult Sports Leagues
3	Senior Programs
2	Cultural Events
1	Youth Camps
1	Volunteer Training Days
0	Fitness Classes
0	Performing Arts Classes
0	Intramural Youth Sports Leagues



8. Please share with us your BIG IDEA on how to improve or add park amenities, programs, and activities. Note: (#) indicates if idea was mentioned more than once.

- More trails
- Indoor recreation center
- Heritage Days Festival
- Pickleball tournament
- Include more activities for art
- Pickleball courts (5)
- Pool (3)
- Sand volleyball court (3) near new pool
- Amphitheater/Outdoor venue (5)
- Food trucks and things to take friends to
- Some type of central access point for cooling – a fountain
- Better fishing areas for younger kids
- Movie nights
- Do S.P.A.R.K. at two locations for shorter duration
- Nature programming with Indiana Department of Natural Resources collaboration
- Trail bridge across Little River
- Continue Lime City Trail along river into city
- Safe trail crossing:
  - SR 24 and Guilford Street
  - SR 24 and Jefferson Street

9. If you had \$1500 to invest in Huntington's parks and recreation system, how would you spend it?

Total

\$ 9,500	Add or enhance existing facilities and amenities
\$ 4,500	Maintain existing parks and trails
\$ 3,500	Build more trails
\$ 2,000	Add or enhance recreation programs

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE & PRESENTATION OF FIVE-YEAR PARK MASTER PLAN - MARCH 2023

At an open public presentation at the Huntington Public Library on March 20, 2023, the Five-Year Master Plan was shared. The main components of the master plan were discussed, and individuals were invited to review the master plan with key elements of the plan shown on 18 x 24 boards posted around the room. Those in attendance were pleased to see the focus on maintaining and improving existing parks and trails. One attendee mentioned she would still like to see additional pickleball courts added throughout the park system. Other comments included were supportive of expanding the trail network within the city; bringing people back downtown is needed. Many agreed with the concept of activating the riverfront through a future amphitheater, programming events downtown, and adding winter programming.

## CITY COUNCIL PRESENTATION OF FIVE-YEAR PARK MASTER PLAN - APRIL 2023

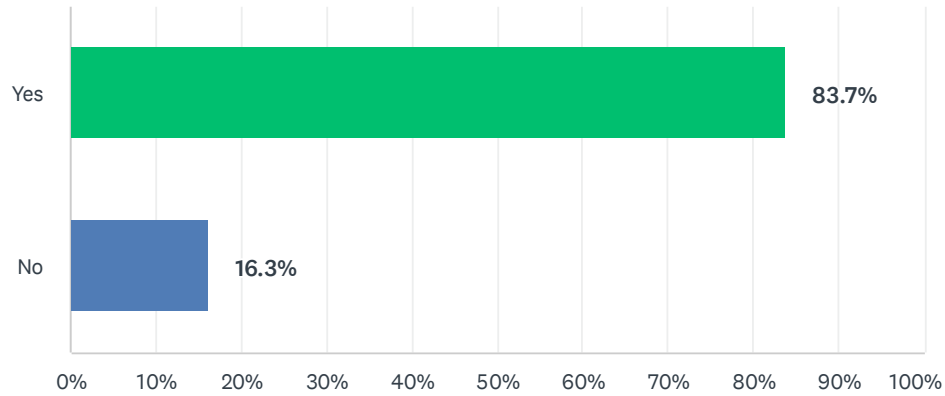
At the April 11, 2023, City Council meeting, the Five-Year Park System Master Plan was presented to City Council members for their input. Key components of the master plan were reviewed and discussed including the action and priority plan. The City Council was supportive of the plan and with the proposed priority and action items.

## QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

The department developed a questionnaire that was distributed online and made available in hard copy form at the park office, the public library and city hall. The questionnaire was available from May 13, 2022, through June 30, 2022. There were 309 participants. The results supported stakeholder input and insights that had been provided. The public expressed general satisfaction with the existing programs and facilities. Focus on continuing to expand the trail network, maintain and improve existing park facilities, increase recreation programs and ideas for new facilities were noted. Detailed questionnaire results follow this page.

# Q1. Overall, does Huntington Parks and Recreation Department meet your expectations based on your experience?

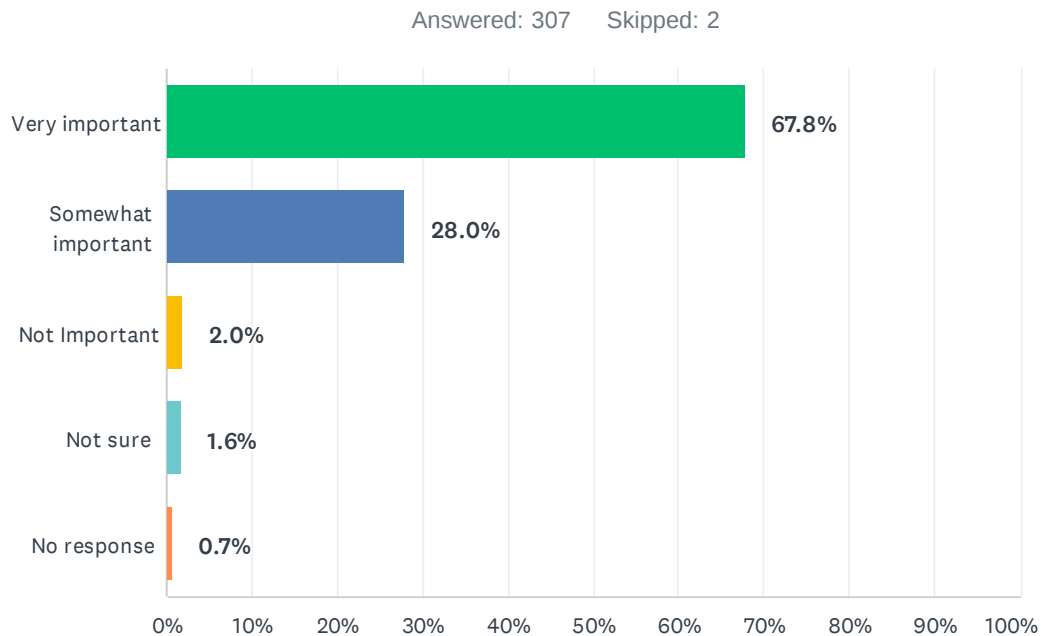
Answered: 307 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	83.7%	257
No	16.3%	50
TOTAL		307

Q2. The following questions relate to priorities for Huntington Parks and Recreation Department. Please select one choice for each question that describes each statement.

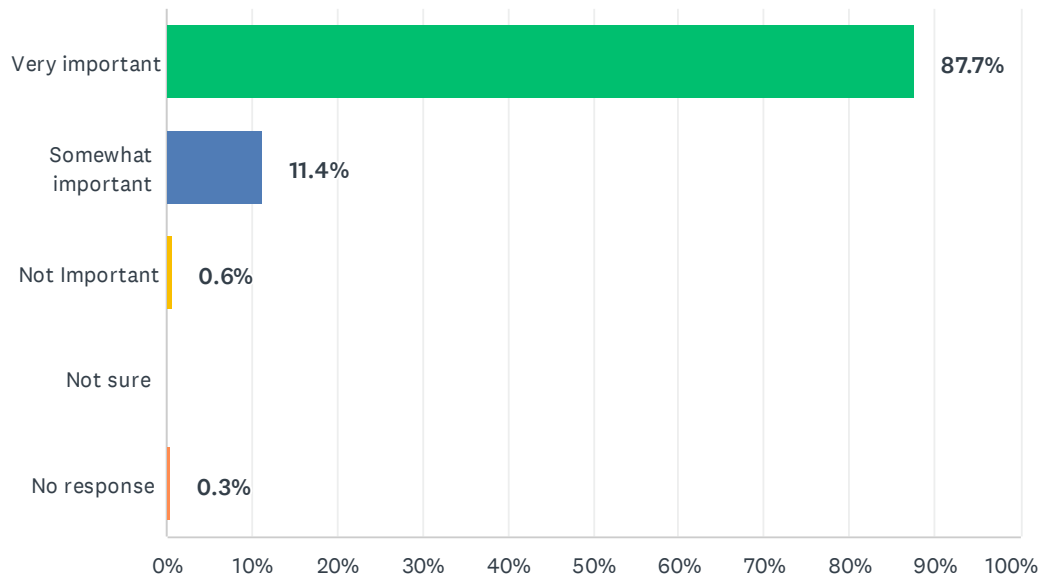
## 2A. Preserve the environment and provide open space



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	67.8%	208
Somewhat important	28.0%	86
Not Important	2.0%	6
Not sure	1.6%	5
No response	0.7%	2
TOTAL		307

## 2B. Operate and maintain city parks and facilities

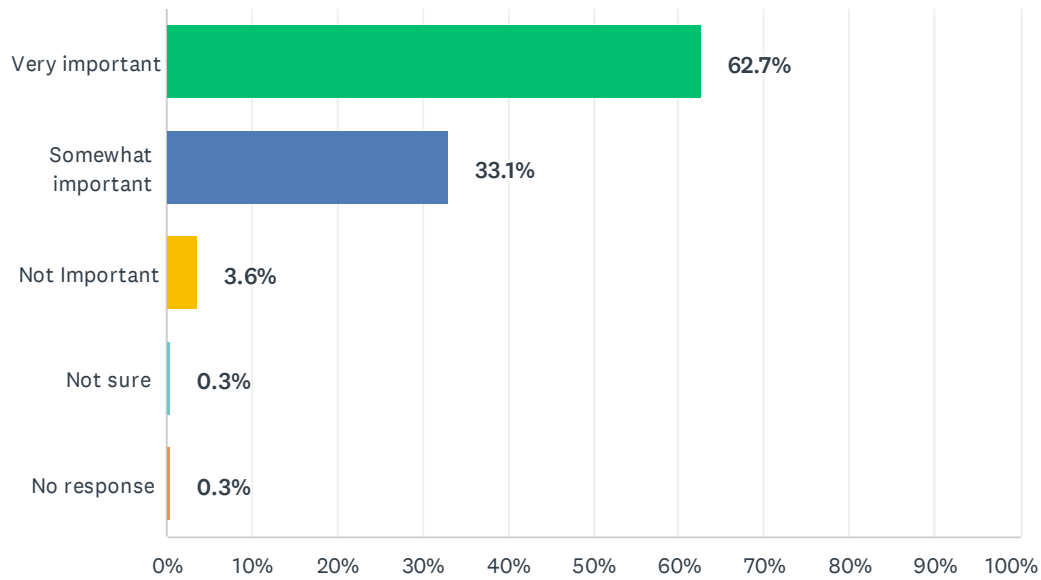
Answered: 308 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	87.7%	270
Somewhat important	11.4%	35
Not Important	0.6%	2
Not sure	0.0%	0
No response	0.3%	1
TOTAL		308

## 2C. Provide places for outdoor programs

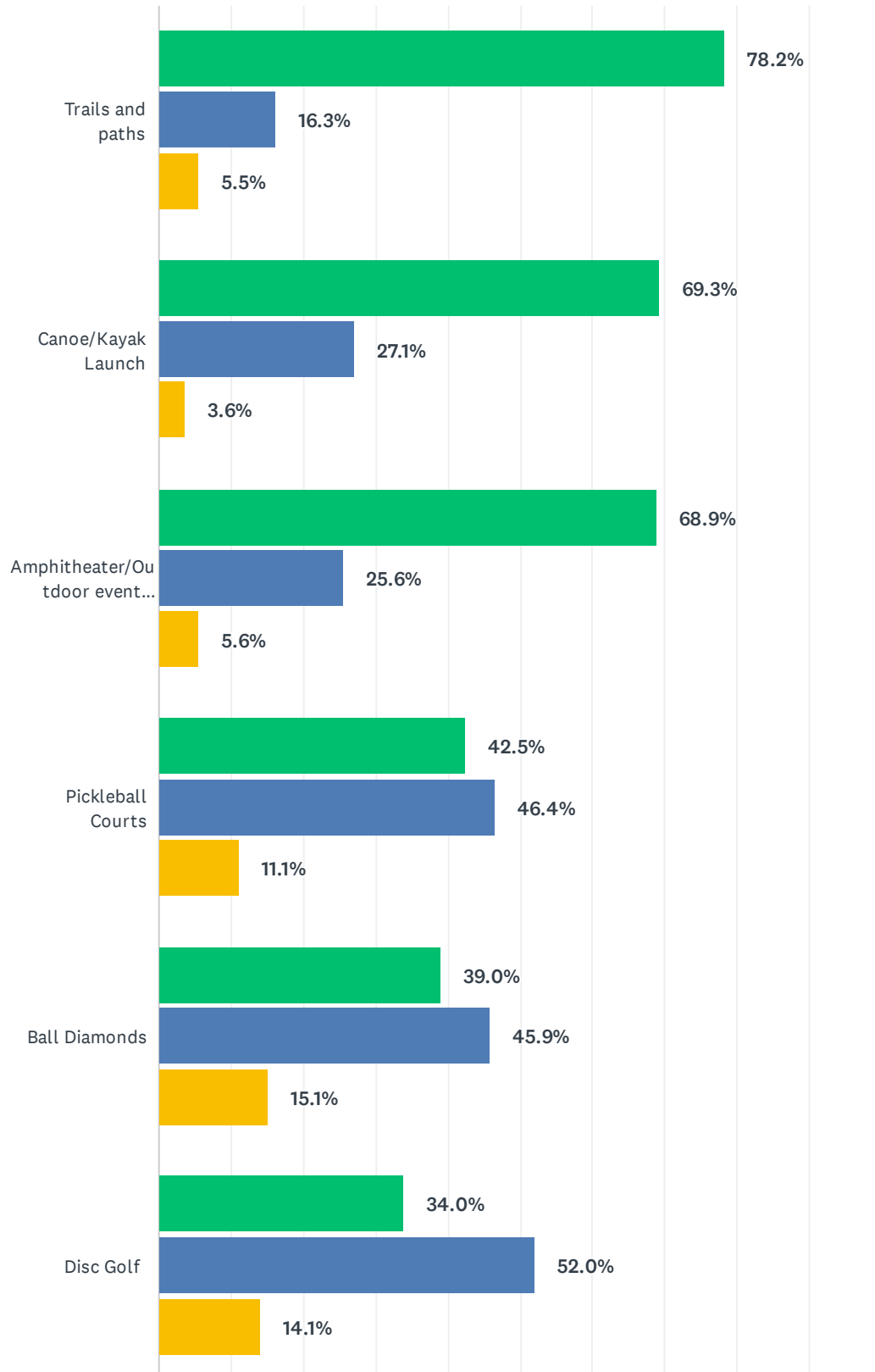
Answered: 308 Skipped: 1

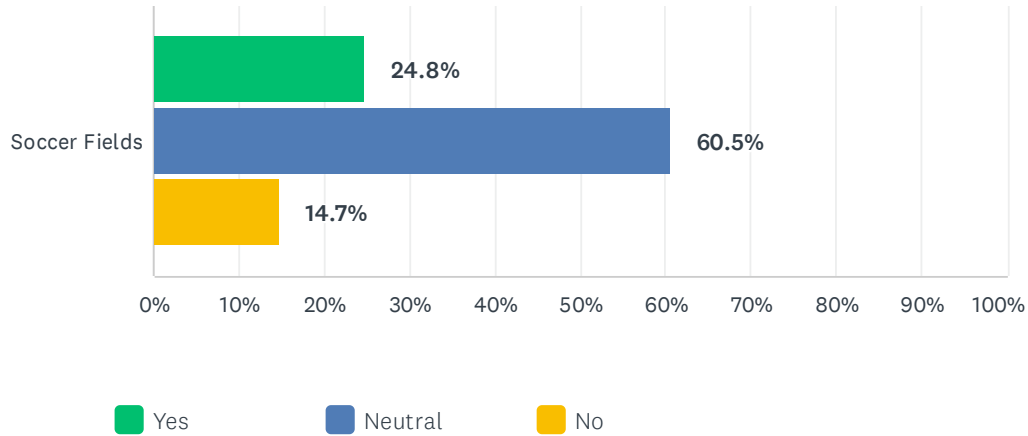


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very important	62.7%	193
Somewhat important	33.1%	102
Not Important	3.6%	11
Not sure	0.3%	1
No response	0.3%	1
TOTAL		308

### Q3. How do you feel about ADDING or IMPROVING the following facilities in the city park system?

Answered: 308 Skipped: 1





	YES	NEUTRAL	NO	TOTAL
Trails and paths	78.2% 240	16.3% 50	5.5% 17	307
Canoe/Kayak Launch	69.3% 212	27.1% 83	3.6% 11	306
Amphitheater/Outdoor event space	68.9% 210	25.6% 78	5.6% 17	305
Pickleball Courts	42.5% 130	46.4% 142	11.1% 34	306
Ball Diamonds	39.0% 119	45.9% 140	15.1% 46	305
Disc Golf	34.0% 104	52.0% 159	14.1% 43	306
Soccer Fields	24.8% 76	60.5% 185	14.7% 45	306

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	pool, skate park	6/30/2022 2:37 PM
2	more places to sit on walks	6/29/2022 9:30 PM
3	Possibly add pickleball lines on the tennis courts, as long as tennis courts are not removed.	6/29/2022 6:02 PM
4	Bigger dog park	6/29/2022 2:43 AM
5	Swimming pool	6/28/2022 11:51 AM
6	Playground for older children-similar to Matter Park in Marion	6/27/2022 9:09 PM
7	Large art pieces such as with welding, highlighting high school and college kids	6/27/2022 8:44 PM
8	Community dog park	6/27/2022 4:35 PM
9	Driver park playground really needs fixed or replaced	6/27/2022 2:21 PM
10	Water park with slides	6/27/2022 2:12 PM
11	We need more kayaking Launches!	6/27/2022 11:38 AM
12	All cities around Huntington have beautiful trails. This lures people to these communities spending money and time in their communities! I like our trails but I've lived here 37 years and very little progress has been made on our trails. Check out Bluffton trails. Peru trails. Trails that go through Denver Indiana and many many others. We need flashing lights at crossroads	6/27/2022 10:53 AM



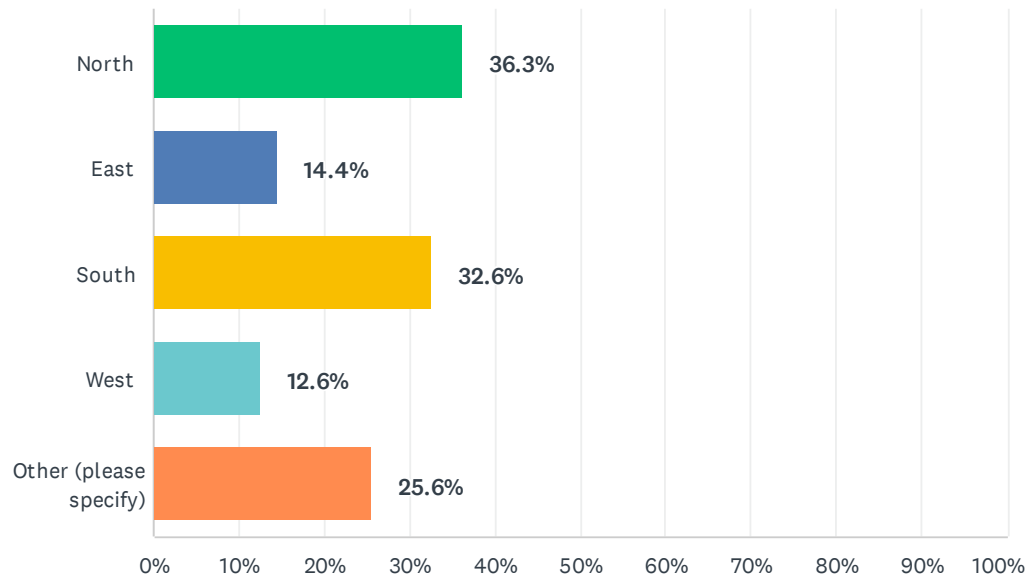
so cars slow down. Hard to cross on 1st street towards the college on trail. Bring our trails to compete other areas and make them safer. Huntington will grow.

13	The parks all have a lot of activities available to do. I would like to see shaded areas to just sit and relax and enjoy nature. Also, more random picnic spots....tables here and there.	6/27/2022 9:27 AM
14	Most definitely need more baseball diamonds. There's way too many teams fighting to reserve 3 diamonds.	6/27/2022 8:19 AM
15	Water bottle filler	6/27/2022 8:17 AM
16	An actual pool	6/17/2022 8:19 PM
17	Foot Golf	6/14/2022 7:03 PM
18	A public POOL!	6/14/2022 6:26 PM
19	More and more pickleball courts	6/14/2022 5:31 PM
20	Pool	6/13/2022 7:06 PM
21	More play area for kids.. bigger play area.	6/12/2022 1:09 PM
22	Opening restrooms year round	6/9/2022 2:18 PM
23	wedding locations	6/9/2022 10:00 AM
24	An outdoor pool!	6/8/2022 10:12 AM
25	Some of the playgrounds definitely need improvement and maintenance!	6/6/2022 4:59 PM
26	Dog park is very important	6/5/2022 4:05 PM
27	Fencing around playground, with limited entrances. This ensures safety of smaller children playing. Not only does it limit them running off, but from someone wondering up to the playground that could cause harm	6/3/2022 10:01 PM
28	Place for dogs to have some water fun	6/3/2022 9:04 PM
29	Complete walking trail beside W Park Dr	6/3/2022 5:56 PM
30	Fenced no lease dog park with a swimming area	6/3/2022 5:01 PM
31	Dog Park	5/31/2022 6:07 PM
32	Some of the playgrounds need updated. I would love to see something larger at the splash park.	5/30/2022 10:39 PM
33	Community pool	5/27/2022 3:48 PM
34	Dog park maybe add gravel on mud	5/26/2022 7:37 PM
35	Community Pool or make Lake Clare swimmable.	5/22/2022 7:55 PM
36	Update/improve the restrooms	5/21/2022 4:24 PM
37	More accessible playground equipment for those with mobile disabilities	5/20/2022 10:23 PM
38	Updating the parks we have would be amazing! Hiers park is completely outdated and general slack is mainly for older kids. It's hard for young kids to play on the equipment because it is mainly climbing equipment. I would love to see that updated. And if we could add like a bigger splash park even if we did have to pay for it it would be an amazing addition to Huntington county.	5/20/2022 1:16 PM
39	Many active older adults play Pickleball, more courts are needed at Memorial Park.	5/19/2022 7:24 PM
40	a building for programs and events	5/19/2022 2:23 PM
41	Slack park needs more for younger kids. 2 swings is about all there is. Park is taken over by teens all afternoon. Constant looping of swings over bar. As I write one is too high to get down and 1 big swing is broken. All the other parks have small child climbing apparatus with slides.	5/19/2022 8:43 AM
42	Swimming pool, the one thing people have been consistently asking about for years.	5/18/2022 11:13 PM

43	More splash pads or a pool	5/18/2022 7:12 PM
44	We need to spend more money on our city. How about cleaning up the city and making sure ordinances around town are being kept. Houses here look like trash or dump sites and nothing being done. Who would want to go to a towns park if houses surrounding the park are seedy lookig?	5/18/2022 2:15 PM
45	I would love to see a public canoe/kayak launch on the Little River.	5/17/2022 10:19 PM
46	Public bathroom closer to playground at Memorial Park instead of top of hill. Especially for grandparents taking grandkids to park	5/17/2022 9:11 PM
47	Play grounds	5/17/2022 8:52 PM
48	Water fountains	5/17/2022 7:07 PM
49	Improve Elmwood	5/17/2022 3:08 PM
50	It would be great to add pickle ball courts. We have many people playing and always fill the 3 courts. Those numbers will increase with school being out.	5/17/2022 2:49 PM
51	Turn tennis courts into Pickleball courts. Add at least 3 courts to Memorial Park.	5/17/2022 2:12 PM
52	Clean the water at sunken gardens so you can see the fish and not black water	5/17/2022 2:04 PM
53	Can you work with HARTA to connect the trails so we have more continuous access?	5/17/2022 1:57 PM

## Q4. Are there any areas of our community that are lacking parks and recreation facilities or opportunities?

Answered: 215 Skipped: 94



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
North	36.3%	78
East	14.4%	31
South	32.6%	70
West	12.6%	27
Other (please specify)	25.6%	55
Total Respondents: 215		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Neutral	6/29/2022 11:29 AM
2	The pal feels like the only thing out east and that's for members	6/27/2022 8:44 PM
3	Each park should have toddler friendly playground equipment	6/27/2022 8:14 PM
4	N/a	6/27/2022 4:35 PM
5	We need another splash pad	6/27/2022 11:58 AM
6	All	6/27/2022 11:54 AM
7	More needs done with the Wabash like places to picnic. Make them handicap accessible, like fishing docs and kayak launches!	6/27/2022 11:38 AM
8	Unknown	6/27/2022 10:54 AM
9	Unsure	6/27/2022 10:36 AM

## Huntington Parks &amp; Recreation Questionnaire 2022

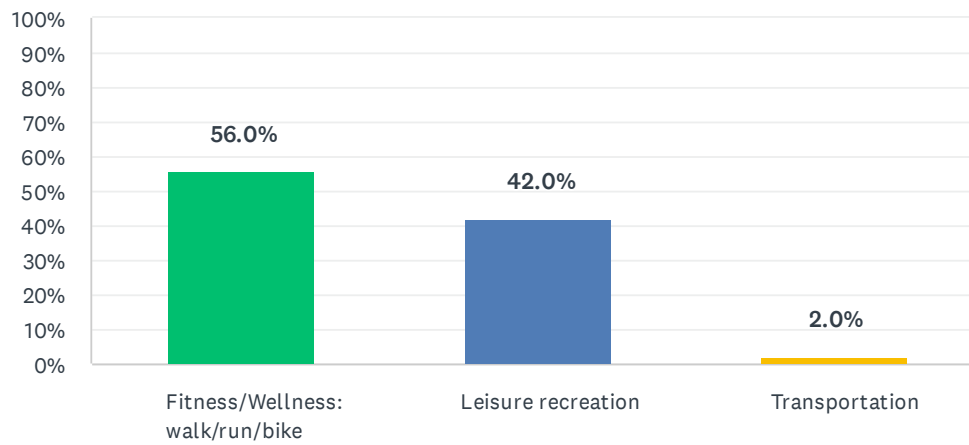
SurveyMonkey

10	Most of Huntington has easy access to a park.	6/27/2022 9:27 AM
11	More trails	6/27/2022 8:52 AM
12	No	6/27/2022 8:07 AM
13	Lots of kid activities provided throughout the community-not much for adults	6/25/2022 12:34 PM
14	clean up the parks we have	6/22/2022 1:27 PM
15	The current parks in Huntington meet the needs of its residents	6/14/2022 7:03 PM
16	The east side could use some type of water activities	6/14/2022 6:26 PM
17	Can't think of anything...	6/10/2022 10:30 PM
18	None	6/9/2022 9:54 PM
19	not sure	6/9/2022 10:00 AM
20	We have two parks within walking distance - which is great. It would be even better if there were dedicated safe routes or trails that connected the parks and other trails.	6/8/2022 5:34 PM
21	It would be nice to have some smaller pocket parks in between the larger parks. It's a 10-15 minute walk to the closest park from our home in the Tree Streets area.	6/7/2022 6:11 PM
22	Not sure	6/4/2022 11:54 PM
23	Djg b b	6/4/2022 1:14 PM
24	West Park Dr. Walking Path	6/3/2022 5:56 PM
25	None that I have observed	6/3/2022 5:02 PM
26	Na	6/3/2022 5:01 PM
27	none	6/3/2022 9:51 AM
28	none	6/2/2022 10:45 AM
29	No	6/1/2022 8:31 PM
30	Not sure	6/1/2022 11:32 AM
31	No	5/31/2022 6:07 PM
32	I don't know	5/30/2022 1:49 PM
33	no	5/30/2022 11:45 AM
34	Not sure	5/28/2022 10:38 AM
35	Good coverage	5/27/2022 1:46 PM
36	n/a don't know	5/25/2022 7:26 PM
37	I think everything is spread evenly based on demand	5/25/2022 3:51 PM
38	No areas seem to be lacking	5/24/2022 9:38 PM
39	I feel like the parks are fairly dispersed	5/20/2022 1:16 PM
40	don't know	5/20/2022 11:04 AM
41	We have enough parks	5/19/2022 4:25 PM
42	the splash pad is WONDERFUL, but the playground is broken in places and I worry about the kids playing on it.	5/19/2022 3:25 PM
43	We have many parks and trails to use. Add to them like nature park items or events	5/19/2022 10:13 AM
44	Slack park	5/19/2022 8:43 AM
45	I think our community does a great job!!reat	5/18/2022 4:14 PM
46	Unknown	5/18/2022 2:11 PM

47	Unsure	5/17/2022 10:19 PM
48	No	5/17/2022 8:25 PM
49	Elmwood is in horrible shape!	5/17/2022 3:08 PM
50	Evergreen Park could have a much bigger/better playground.	5/17/2022 2:52 PM
51	Areas for fishing. Some areas need to be mowed so we can enjoy the fishing from the bank. I think the park's name is Emerald on the South bed oh Huntington.	5/17/2022 2:29 PM
52	Need MORE pickleball courts	5/17/2022 2:27 PM
53	Laurie Park area	5/17/2022 2:21 PM
54	It would be great if we could connect Memorial Park with a bike lane so we can bike out to the trail section at Forks of the Wabash	5/17/2022 1:57 PM
55	None I can think of.	5/17/2022 1:43 PM

## Q5. The main purpose I use Huntington's trail system is for:

Answered: 300 Skipped: 9

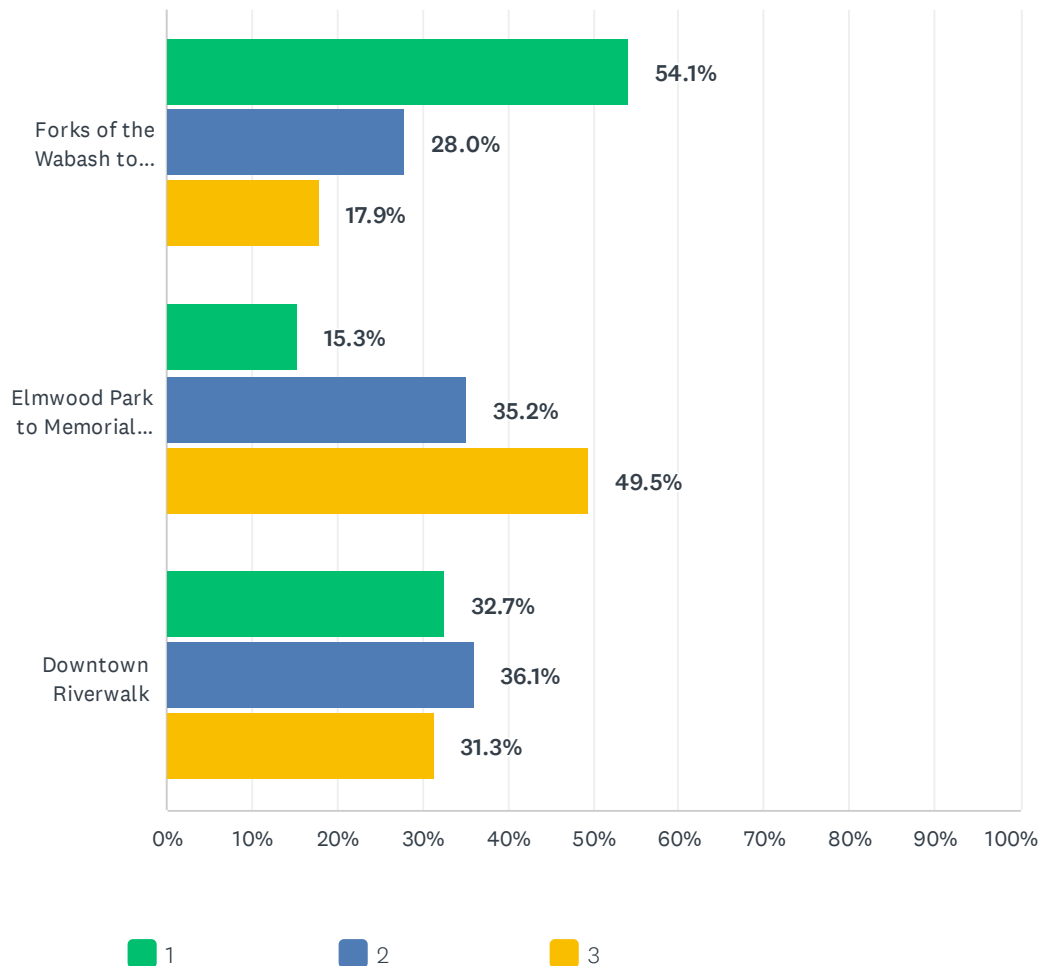


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Fitness/Wellness: walk/run/bike	56.0%	168
Leisure recreation	42.0%	126
Transportation	2.0%	6
TOTAL		300

Q6. The City of Huntington has made a commitment to trails and greenways to make the city a more livable healthy community.

Please rank the priority of these trail routes (1 high to 3 low)

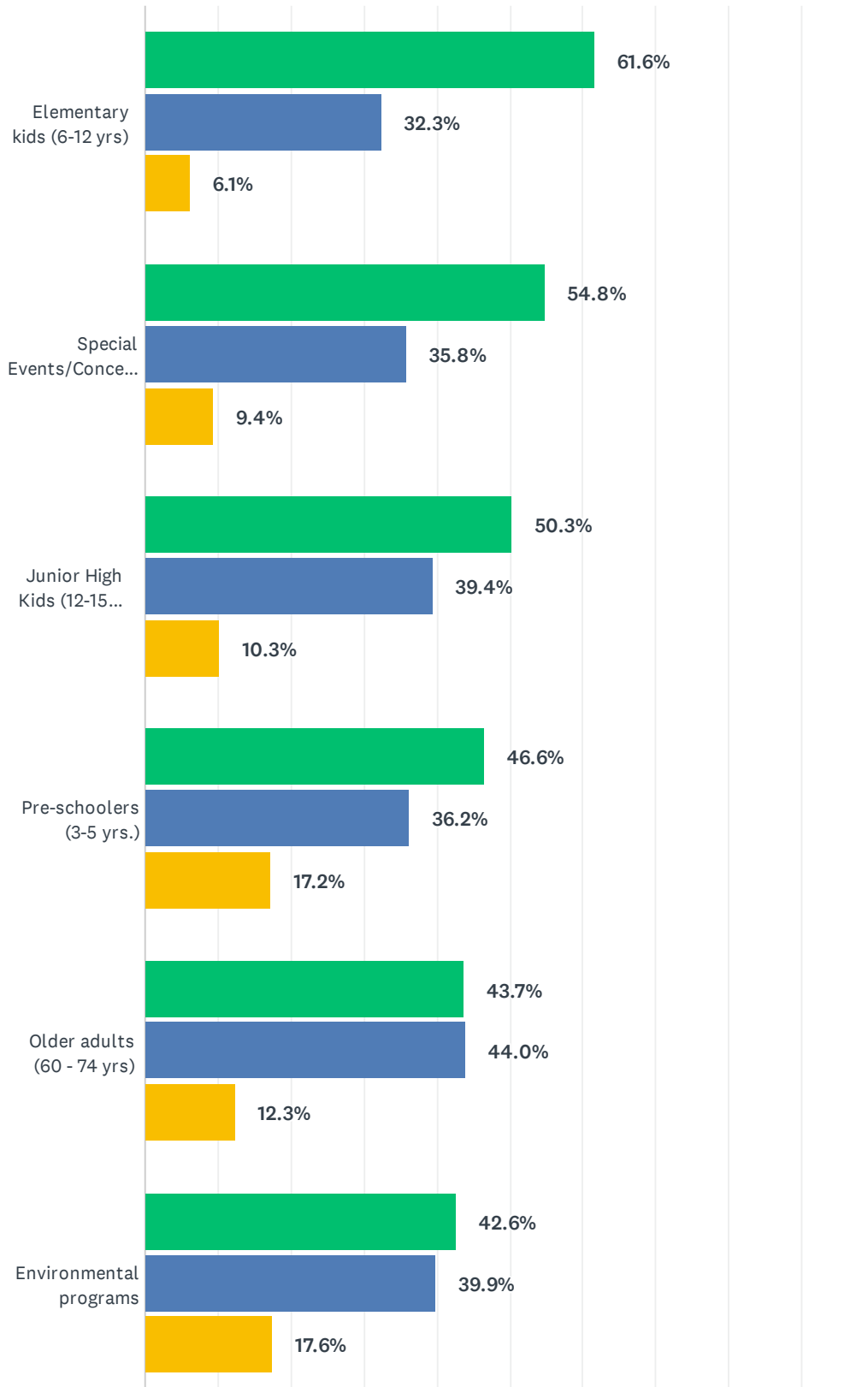
Answered: 296 Skipped: 13



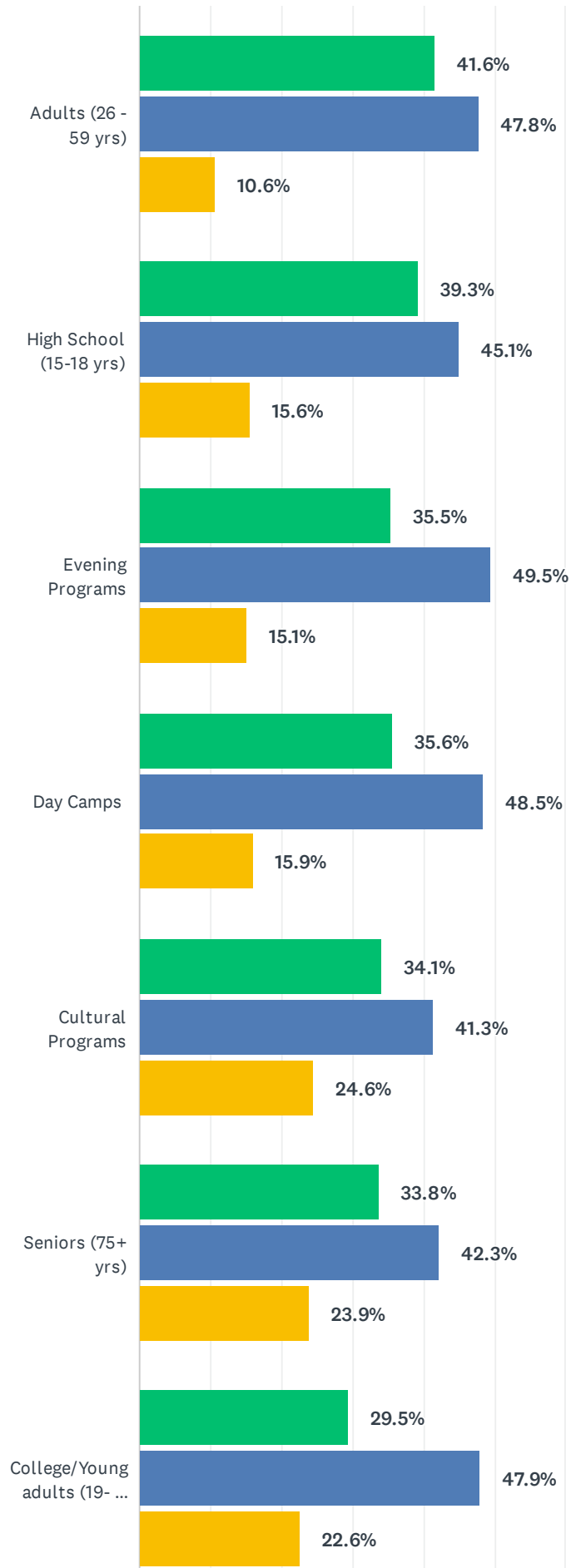
	1	2	3	TOTAL	SCORE
Forks of the Wabash to Memorial Park	54.1% 151	28.0% 78	17.9% 50	279	2.36
Elmwood Park to Memorial Park	15.3% 43	35.2% 99	49.5% 139	281	1.66
Downtown Riverwalk	32.7% 96	36.1% 106	31.3% 92	294	2.01

## Q7. Please indicate the priority of the Huntington Parks & Recreation should give towards the following programs

Answered: 302 Skipped: 7







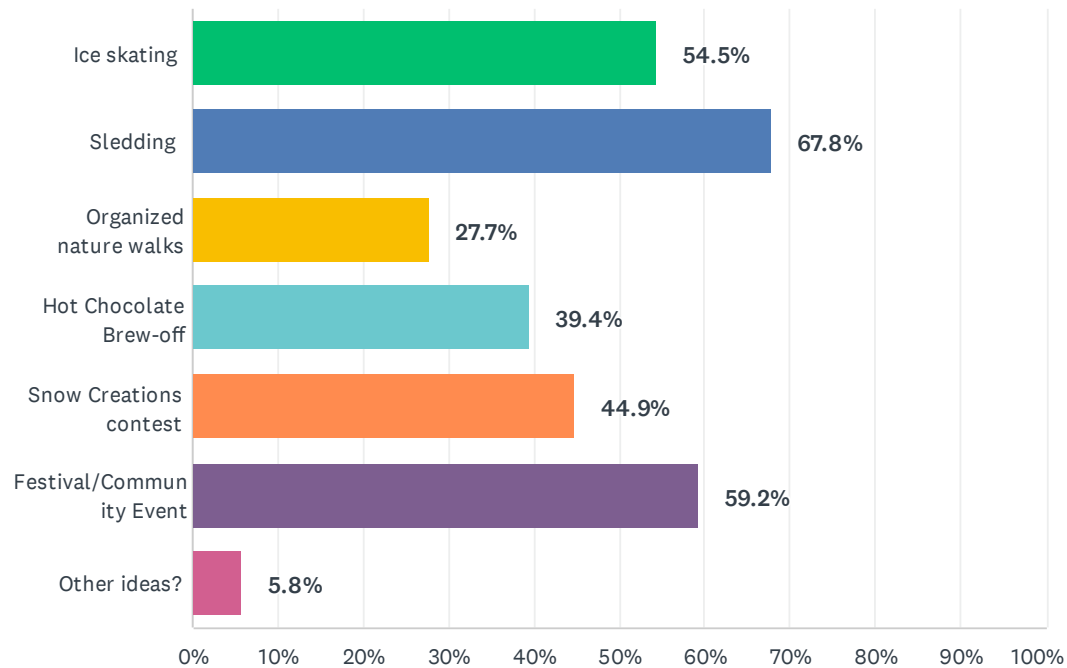


■ High
 ■ Medium
 ■ Low

	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	TOTAL
Elementary kids (6-12 yrs)	61.6% 181	32.3% 95	6.1% 18	294
Special Events/Concerts/Festivals	54.8% 164	35.8% 107	9.4% 28	299
Junior High Kids (12-15 yrs)	50.3% 147	39.4% 115	10.3% 30	292
Pre-schoolers (3-5 yrs.)	46.6% 135	36.2% 105	17.2% 50	290
Older adults (60 - 74 yrs)	43.7% 128	44.0% 129	12.3% 36	293
Environmental programs	42.6% 126	39.9% 118	17.6% 52	296
Adults (26 - 59 yrs)	41.6% 122	47.8% 140	10.6% 31	293
High School (15-18 yrs)	39.3% 116	45.1% 133	15.6% 46	295
Evening Programs	35.5% 106	49.5% 148	15.1% 45	299
Day Camps	35.6% 105	48.5% 143	15.9% 47	295
Cultural Programs	34.1% 100	41.3% 121	24.6% 72	293
Seniors (75+ yrs)	33.8% 99	42.3% 124	23.9% 70	293
College/Young adults (19- 25 yrs)	29.5% 86	47.9% 140	22.6% 66	292

## Q8. What types of winter activities would you like to see provided?

Answered: 292 Skipped: 17



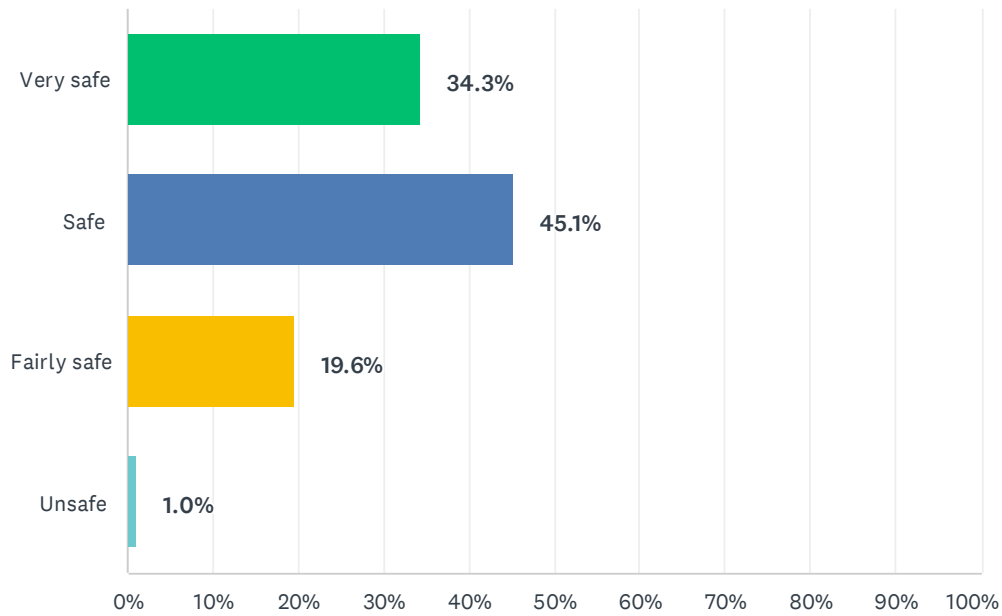
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Ice skating	54.5%	159
Sledding	67.8%	198
Organized nature walks	27.7%	81
Hot Chocolate Brew-off	39.4%	115
Snow Creations contest	44.9%	131
Festival/Community Event	59.2%	173
Other ideas?	5.8%	17
Total Respondents: 292		

#	OTHER IDEAS?	DATE
1	Christmas themed festival	6/27/2022 11:54 AM
2	Polar plung and kayaking on Jan 1st	6/27/2022 11:38 AM
3	Non-religious holiday caroling downtown, learning about other culture's traditions this time of year ampitheater style	6/27/2022 11:22 AM
4	Indoor programs	6/27/2022 11:12 AM
5	Community bonfires	6/27/2022 9:27 AM
6	Snowball fights	6/14/2022 9:36 PM

7	Have a Christmas walk through the parks with different vendors set up!	6/14/2022 7:03 PM
8	Restrooms open	6/9/2022 2:18 PM
9	expanded holiday lights through Memorial Park???	6/9/2022 10:00 AM
10	These sound fun. Ice skating is nice, but I do not like the plastic rink downtown (may not be a Parks program...?) because it leave a bunch of plastic shavings behind.	6/8/2022 5:34 PM
11	When I was younger I feel like the town had a best decorated house contest. I always remember driving around seeing the houses that competed.	5/30/2022 10:39 PM
12	Google "Winter in Valade Park" it's in Detroit. My family went in February and it was fabulous! They had some wonderful things	5/24/2022 9:06 PM
13	Cross country skiing	5/20/2022 10:46 AM
14	Food trucks to lighten ceremony and activities before..	5/19/2022 4:25 PM
15	I would love a downtown Christmas festival. Think "what would stars hollow do?" :)	5/17/2022 8:13 PM
16	Look into the Jingle Jubilee in Wabash. It's amazing.	5/17/2022 3:36 PM
17	Movies and music	5/17/2022 2:44 PM

## Q9. How safe do you feel in Huntington park facilities?

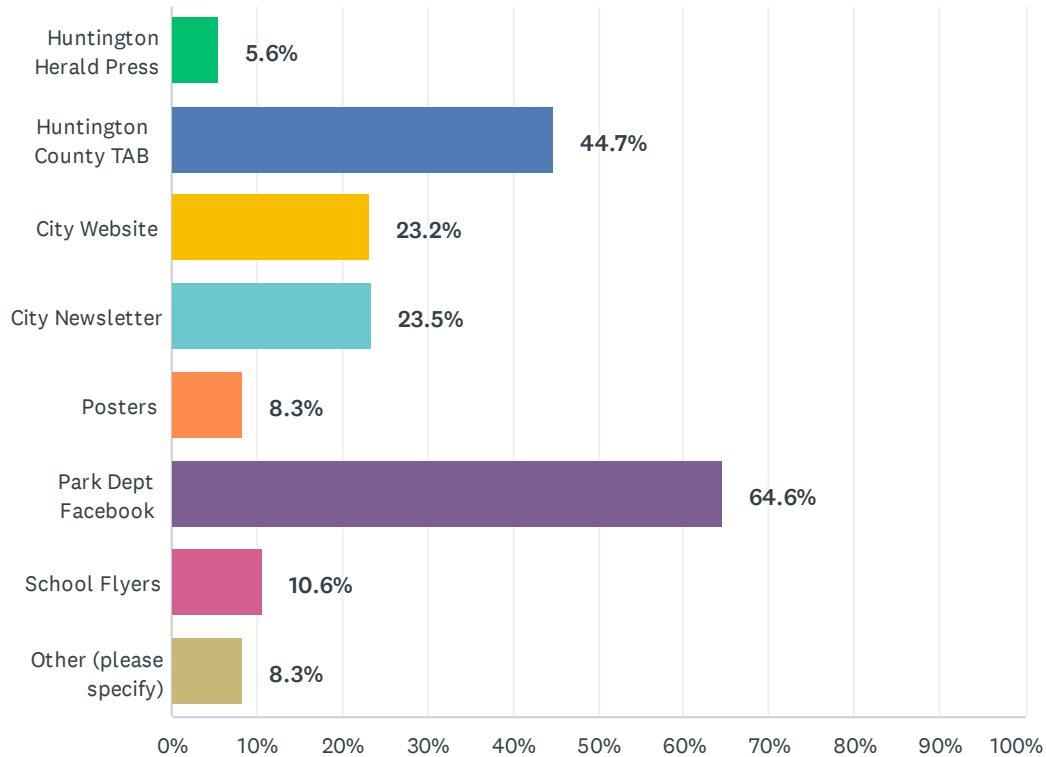
Answered: 306 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very safe	34.3%	105
Safe	45.1%	138
Fairly safe	19.6%	60
Unsafe	1.0%	3
TOTAL		306

## Q10. How are you kept informed of Huntington Parks and Recreation Department activities and programs?

Please check all that apply.



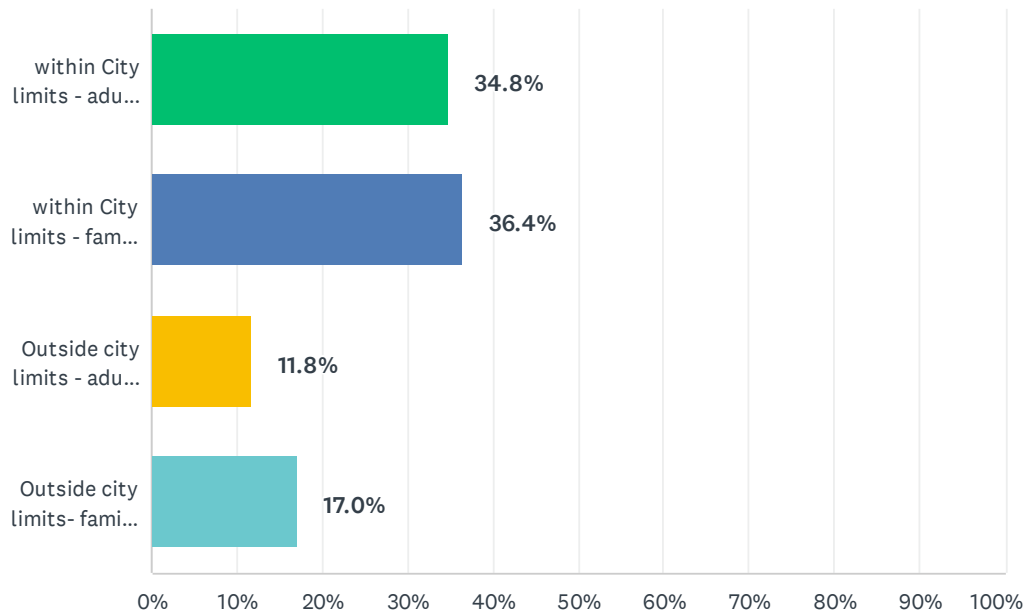
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Huntington Herald Press	5.6%	17
Huntington County TAB	44.7%	135
City Website	23.2%	70
City Newsletter	23.5%	71
Posters	8.3%	25
Park Dept Facebook	64.6%	195
School Flyers	10.6%	32
Other (please specify)	8.3%	25
Total Respondents: 302		

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Facebook	6/30/2022 8:36 AM
2	facebook	6/29/2022 9:30 PM
3	Facebook posts	6/28/2022 11:51 AM

4	I don't	6/27/2022 11:54 AM
5	Library	6/26/2022 9:59 AM
6	Not	6/22/2022 1:27 PM
7	Friends	6/14/2022 9:36 PM
8	None	6/13/2022 7:44 PM
9	need to have a newsletter from park and recreation dept. at least twice a year	6/13/2022 7:59 AM
10	W	6/12/2022 1:09 PM
11	HARTA	6/9/2022 2:18 PM
12	FB	6/7/2022 9:20 AM
13	Facebook	6/6/2022 11:45 AM
14	Social media and the county newsletter email	6/3/2022 10:01 PM
15	Word of mouth	5/31/2022 6:07 PM
16	Friends	5/29/2022 2:49 PM
17	Random word of mouth - it would be nice if activities were publicized for people who aren't on social media.	5/20/2022 11:06 AM
18	Huntington Library	5/19/2022 4:25 PM
19	Emails	5/19/2022 4:21 PM
20	Chamber communications	5/19/2022 2:57 PM
21	Facebook	5/18/2022 11:13 PM
22	Word of mouth	5/17/2022 10:19 PM
23	Friend	5/17/2022 7:50 PM
24	Social Media	5/17/2022 7:33 PM
25	Pickleball web sight	5/17/2022 4:17 PM

## Q11. Where do you live?

Answered: 305   Skipped: 4

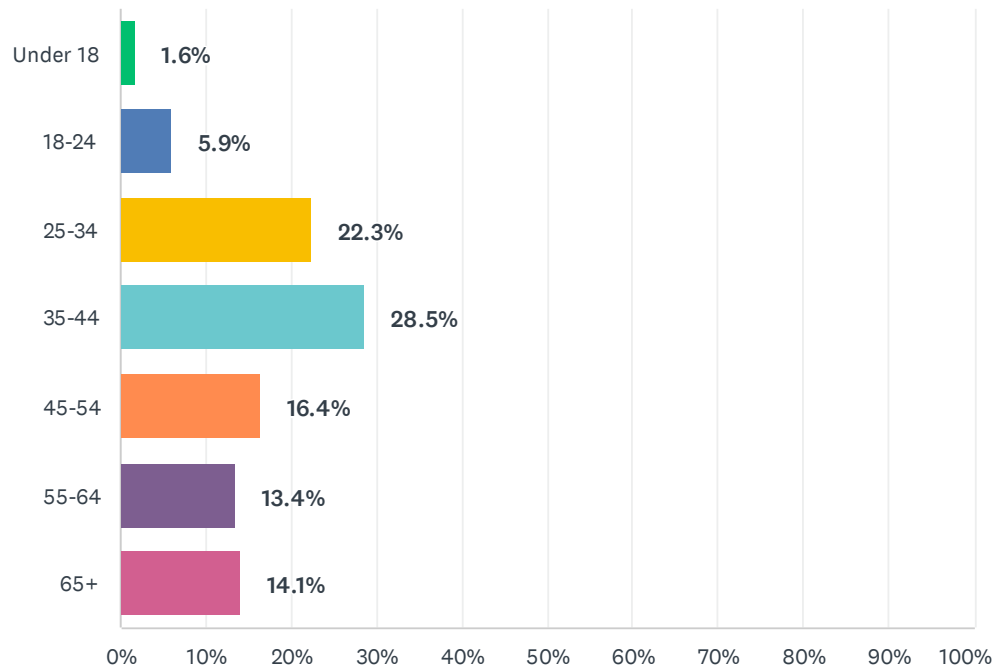


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
within City limits - adult only household	34.8%	106
within City limits - family household	36.4%	111
Outside city limits - adult only household	11.8%	36
Outside city limits - family household	17.0%	52
TOTAL		305



## Q12. Please share with us your age?

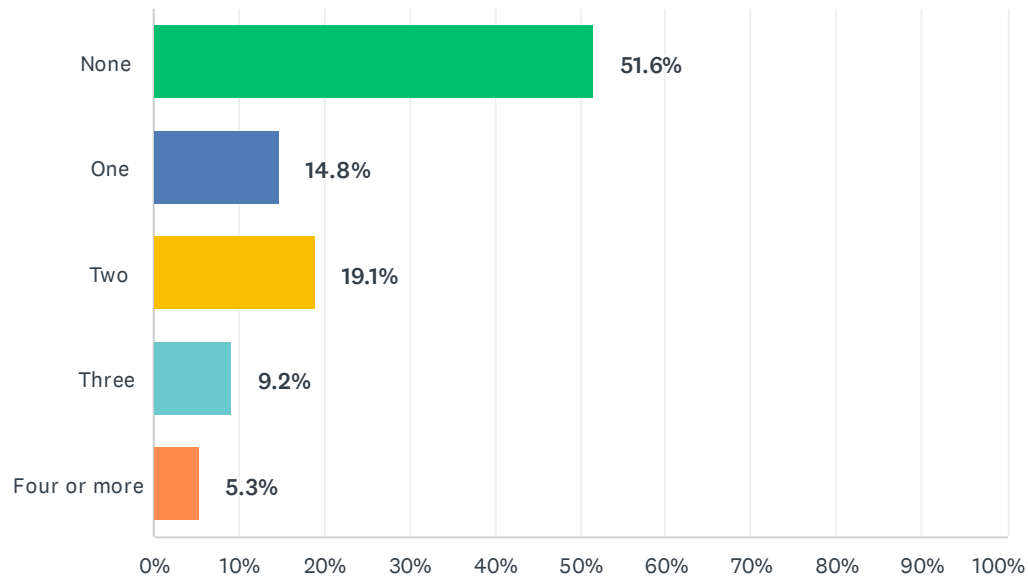
Answered: 305   Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Under 18	1.6%	5
18-24	5.9%	18
25-34	22.3%	68
35-44	28.5%	87
45-54	16.4%	50
55-64	13.4%	41
65+	14.1%	43
Total Respondents: 305		

## Q13. How many children live with you under the age of 18?

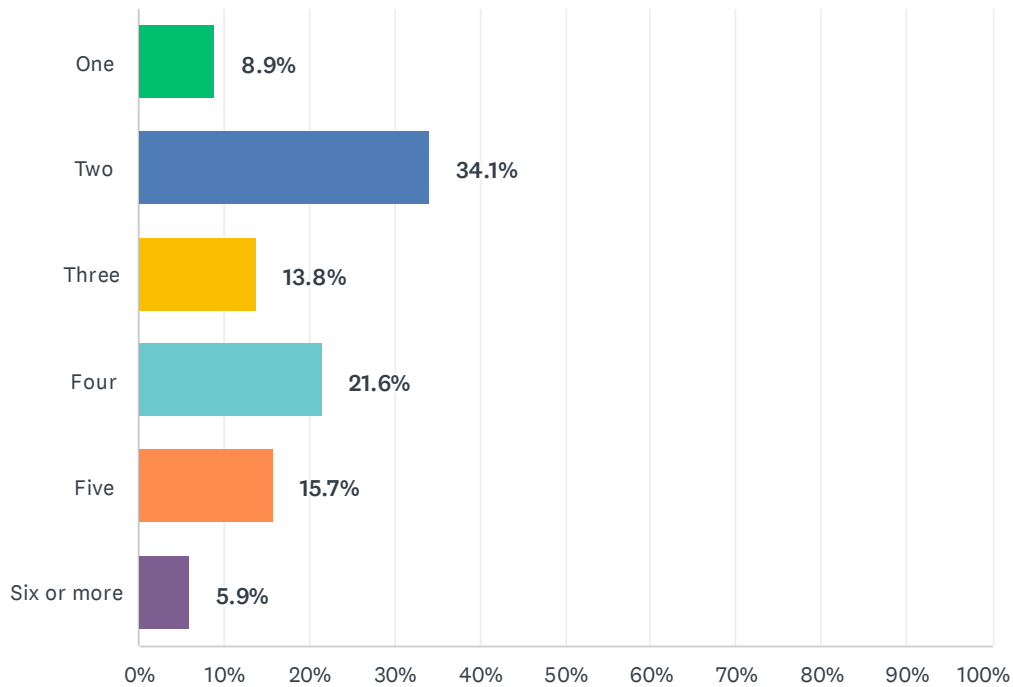
Answered: 304 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
None	51.6%	157
One	14.8%	45
Two	19.1%	58
Three	9.2%	28
Four or more	5.3%	16
TOTAL		304

## Q14. How many people live in your household?

Answered: 305 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
One	8.9%	27
Two	34.1%	104
Three	13.8%	42
Four	21.6%	66
Five	15.7%	48
Six or more	5.9%	18
TOTAL		305

## Q15. Thank you for participating!

Do you have any additional comments or suggestions for us?

Answered: 138 Skipped: 171

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Add sled races and snowball fights for winter	6/30/2022 2:37 PM
2	No	6/30/2022 8:36 AM
3	we need more places to sit on the trails	6/29/2022 9:30 PM
4	Keep up the good work	6/29/2022 2:43 AM
5	Currently there are no swimming options in Huntington. A community pool would be a welcome addition. Next to the splash park would be a great location.	6/28/2022 11:51 AM
6	Would love things more connected and kayak ramps and road signs over the river for safety reasons. In an emergency. People have no idea where their location is	6/27/2022 8:44 PM
7	No	6/27/2022 7:38 PM
8	Love the park dept. The bathrooms at yeoman need your help.	6/27/2022 7:03 PM
9	:) keep up the good work!	6/27/2022 4:35 PM
10	Put up security cameras and trash can on trail.	6/27/2022 1:53 PM
11	Memorial Park - since horse shoe courts aren't used - how about shuffleboard? Rent equipment?	6/27/2022 1:50 PM
12	Overall I think The Parks department as done pretty good job over the years expanding and improving the parks. I would suggest a more routine preventive maintenance and or repairs to some equipment. I have noticed that there supports to slides an other equipment missing bolts or broke free.	6/27/2022 12:38 PM
13	I really feel like we could use another splash pad or some kind of community pool. Families have no where to go to take their kids swimming in town. I Love the idea of having outdoor concerts. I always like to see activities put on for the kids in the community as well. Thank you for trying to make things better!	6/27/2022 11:58 AM
14	Trash needs to be kept picked up!	6/27/2022 11:54 AM
15	Please make adult disabled accessible recreational areas. You're severely lacking in anything actually for those with mobility issues.	6/27/2022 11:38 AM
16	We need a pool community, better parks in E Tipton ST	6/27/2022 11:12 AM
17	Nope! Thank you for your work!	6/27/2022 10:36 AM
18	No	6/27/2022 9:44 AM
19	No	6/27/2022 9:40 AM
20	Nope!	6/27/2022 9:29 AM
21	Thank you for constantly striving to make Huntington an even better place to live!	6/27/2022 9:27 AM
22	Phone tree's or another way to make parents aware of changes/cancellations. Gas is 5\$ per gallon	6/27/2022 9:25 AM
23	No	6/27/2022 9:00 AM
24	Spark is awesome! We also love to use the trails. More trails would be meaningful for our family.	6/27/2022 8:52 AM

25	No	6/27/2022 8:38 AM
26	It would be nice to have a park similar to the "Drake Geotz" park in town. Kids of all ages can enjoy that park as it is built for all ages. Or even a park similar to the one located in wabash designed for wheelchair accessibility, special needs children, and kids of all ages. A city pool would do amazing in our town!! So many people drive to surrounding cities/towns to enjoy a city pool on hot days. More baseball/softball diamonds!!!	6/27/2022 8:19 AM
27	It would be nice to have more water fountains and water bottle fillers	6/27/2022 8:17 AM
28	Keeping our parks clean, are all done very well.	6/26/2022 9:57 AM
29	accessibility including bathrooms and other facilities	6/26/2022 9:53 AM
30	dog parks	6/26/2022 9:49 AM
31	Fix the parks that we have. Elmwood Park, Evergreen Park are both not well taken care of.	6/22/2022 1:27 PM
32	lol	6/20/2022 7:56 PM
33	lol	6/20/2022 5:00 PM
34	Megan deserves a raise for all the hard work she does for the community.	6/17/2022 8:19 PM
35	Make Sunken Gardens become more of an attraction with beautiful landscape plantings and waterfall. add natural rock waterfall in nw corner. It could become a wedding venue. It would attract more visitors to city.	6/15/2022 2:11 PM
36	More pickleball courts!	6/15/2022 1:09 PM
37	N/a	6/14/2022 9:36 PM
38	No	6/14/2022 7:59 PM
39	More pickleball courts would be amazing! They are much needed!	6/14/2022 7:41 PM
40	Your department always does an excel job of providing for the needs of the people of Huntington, Indiana. Thank you!	6/14/2022 7:03 PM
41	Snow tubing would be a fun activity!	6/14/2022 6:26 PM
42	More pickleball and sand volleyball! Currently there is not a safe place to play sand volleyball	6/14/2022 5:31 PM
43	More pickleball courts	6/14/2022 5:28 PM
44	Thanks for this survey and all the city is doing!	6/14/2022 8:51 AM
45	Would like to more walking and bike trails.	6/13/2022 7:44 PM
46	thanks for the online survey. I hope lots of people use this to communicate with you.	6/13/2022 7:59 AM
47	Increase of off road bicycle trails with available connection to other towns.	6/12/2022 7:51 PM
48	No	6/12/2022 7:07 PM
49	Put in a pool!	6/12/2022 3:33 PM
50	Better ground keeping	6/12/2022 1:09 PM
51	No	6/10/2022 10:30 PM
52	Our family love the trails and they are the most important thing to us that the park system provides. We also really love SPARK, the staff are great and our children look forward to it every day.	6/10/2022 6:11 PM
53	For those who use the trails year round the restrooms need to have some sort of system that responsible people can use them if necessary. Please!	6/9/2022 2:18 PM
54	Is there a way we could do more plantings in Sunken Gardens to really make it a showstopper? We could see if we can get support from Community Foundation for funds.	6/9/2022 10:00 AM
55	The SPARK program is such a great service for families in our community. Overall, the parks are well maintained. It's great to see volunteers doing community service to maintain our parks as well. More trees are needed at General Slack, Yeoman and Memorial Park to shade the	6/8/2022 5:34 PM

playground. The equipment gets so hot on summer days and there's often no shady spots. Trees to shade the soccer fields at Yeoman park would also be nice.

56	None	6/8/2022 10:12 AM
57	No	6/8/2022 6:24 AM
58	I would love to see the Parks have a permanent home (like amphitheater) for the Erie Community Band and its various ensembles. Greenwood, Indiana has a nice facility where their community band performs. It wouldn't need to be that fancy but something with cover to provide some shade when it's really hot out would be nice.	6/7/2022 6:11 PM
59	Parks look great since sub-contracting out the mowing.	6/7/2022 11:33 AM
60	We love the mother son event but it's really lacking this past year. You only have the event 1 night (daddy daughter night have several nights) with little activities for a lot of people. Fill them up with Southgate & then expect them to sit. The magician was ok but my boys weren't really interested. We miss the several bouncy houses & activities to do. More then 1 night so it's not so crazy.	6/7/2022 9:20 AM
61	Keep doing what you do, and keep people wanting to go outside.	6/7/2022 12:21 AM
62	There needs to be a path from HU campus to the trail off Gregg street or a sidewalk or bridge on the side of Gregg street so people aren't walking in the road	6/6/2022 11:30 PM
63	The playgrounds definitely need some attention, and shade trees (especially Yeoman and Slack) around them would be very appreciated! Memorial Park is the only playground really worth going to in town. Drover is nice in the summer with the splash park part, but we usually end up going to Geotz Memorial park because there is more to do and it's in the best shape.	6/6/2022 4:59 PM
64	Thanks for keeping trails clean.	6/6/2022 11:45 AM
65	no	6/6/2022 9:34 AM
66	The dog park needs major renovations! The fence between the runs are extremely weak and torn up to where individual have resorted to zip tying it because the parks department hasn't fixed it. My dog has been attacked a couple times due to dogs crawling under the fence and getting to the other side. This is supposed to be a safe space for our dogs to run free and I get so nervous bringing him here unless there is no one else here which is what I have resorted to out of fear and the safety of my dog. This issue needs to be addressed or else I have no intentions of renewing my park pass next year. Also the street lights along the road way at the disc golf course at memorial park have been out for a while making it extremely dark in the evening and nighttime!	6/5/2022 4:05 PM
67	No	6/4/2022 11:54 PM
68	No	6/4/2022 1:14 PM
69	Fencing around the playground areas! We are newer to the area and I was surprised to learn Huntington does not have one playground that is fenced in.	6/3/2022 10:01 PM
70	Would like to see a better covering for the "Merry Christmas" decoration at the Sunken Gardens. The blue tarp looks terrible and remains me of Florida after a hurricane. Possibly some local artist could paint a mural on the tarp or something similar.	6/3/2022 8:37 PM
71	The parks department does a great job in meeting the needs of the community. I am from Warsaw and wish their parks department were this good. Thank you!	6/3/2022 6:39 PM
72	Complete the walking trail along West Park Drive	6/3/2022 5:56 PM
73	Keep up the good work!	6/3/2022 5:02 PM
74	Na	6/3/2022 5:01 PM
75	Would like to see more puppy poo and trash cans along the trails and parks. Love all the new things that are happening. Can't wait to see an outdoor amphitheater that could also show movies.	6/3/2022 9:51 AM
76	No	6/1/2022 11:32 AM
77	Not today	5/31/2022 6:07 PM

## Huntington Parks &amp; Recreation Questionnaire 2022

SurveyMonkey

78	No	5/30/2022 10:39 PM
79	We love the trails and are very grateful for all your hard work!	5/30/2022 1:49 PM
80	Great job overall - great trails	5/27/2022 1:46 PM
81	Educational programs like "Beat the Heat"	5/25/2022 7:26 PM
82	Can we get activities for the dog park added? Possibly agility course items?	5/25/2022 3:51 PM
83	I personally believe you're doing a fine job with the parks, keep up the good work.	5/24/2022 9:38 PM
84	Keep up the great work!	5/24/2022 9:06 PM
85	Would love to see more community gardens and less plain grass spaces.	5/24/2022 2:43 PM
86	Wish there was another softball field set up for fast pitch. Only one is at homier, would be nice for access at a different location.	5/23/2022 9:09 AM
87	We need to find something for teens to do. We have enough trails and bars in Huntington. Maybe work on getting an arcade like crazy pinz or miniature golf,etc.	5/22/2022 7:55 PM
88	Just update the old restrooms & update the old walking paths at the parks that haven't been updated yet.	5/21/2022 4:24 PM
89	Trash cans along the trail by the university	5/21/2022 11:05 AM
90	I think Mr. Mayor Stick is doing great job.	5/20/2022 4:39 PM
91	No , thank you for doing this!	5/20/2022 1:16 PM
92	Would love to see more open spaces on the river front, canoe or raft/tube rentals. Day camps are seriously lacking in the huntington area and a big opportunity for the city. Also would love to see a city pool or swim space.	5/20/2022 11:46 AM
93	I think Huntington parks are very nice and in general maintained well. However, Yeoman Park's play area is very dangerous. Not only is there vulgar graffiti, but we have also found razor blades in the mulch more than once. That park has been permanently crossed off our list. It is so sad that teenagers ruin things for others.	5/20/2022 11:06 AM
94	Nope	5/19/2022 11:55 PM
95	Would love to see a trail connecting HU across bypass to Carlisle and Crown Hill subdivisions.	5/19/2022 7:24 PM
96	Please clean the children's equipment more often..I am offended by how dirty they are..	5/19/2022 4:25 PM
97	We love our parks and use them all regularly, better playground equipment at slack and splashpad would be great and SHADE! we tend to frequent memorial, hiers, and elmwood most often because of the shade.	5/19/2022 3:25 PM
98	I appreciate all that the parks do. Steve and Megan, as well as the crew are great assets!	5/19/2022 2:23 PM
99	Nature playground equipment would be beneficial.	5/19/2022 10:13 AM
100	1	5/19/2022 8:04 AM
101	Why doesn't the park department mow our parks?	5/19/2022 7:54 AM
102	I think a swimming pool would be a big hit. We have no where to go locally.	5/18/2022 11:13 PM
103	I am actively working on a private outfitters and adventure business for downtown Huntington. A strong parks department will be crucial for future success of Huntington	5/18/2022 9:42 PM
104	I think the people who are responsible do a great service to our community	5/18/2022 4:14 PM
105	We love our parks but would love to see them grow! Parks offer so much opportunity for families and the community to come together and participate in activities that promote a healthy mind, body, and spirit. Investing in parks is always money well spent!	5/18/2022 2:34 PM
106	Clean up this town if you want people to come	5/18/2022 2:15 PM
107	Need more pickleball courts	5/18/2022 10:11 AM
108	I often take my teen grandsons to the parks to shoot hoops & play tennis, please maintain the	5/18/2022 6:47 AM



	courts. Elmwood's tennis court need some help. Thanks for all you do!	
109	n/a	5/18/2022 4:38 AM
110	I appreciate the improvements in recent years!	5/17/2022 10:19 PM
111	I was recently at Elmwood Park and the tennis court as well as basketball court are in dire need of upkeep. They do not look like they are taken care of. It would be nice to have those cleaned up.	5/17/2022 9:43 PM
112	We need to retain ball fields rather than turn them into arboretum. Providing off-the-road trails between parks is very important.	5/17/2022 9:04 PM
113	We need an event center ran by the Parks Department	5/17/2022 8:57 PM
114	Keep up the great work!! We do need more pickleball courts at Memorial Park.	5/17/2022 8:55 PM
115	The parks dept does a phenomenal job. Really would like to see more adult only programs in the evenings, but generally very pleased with the dept!	5/17/2022 8:35 PM
116	Convert a tennis court at Memorial Park into multiple Pickleball Courts as more are needed at that location!	5/17/2022 8:12 PM
117	Would like additional pickle ball courts. The East court always holds water	5/17/2022 8:06 PM
118	Pickleball courts at Elmwood perhaps.	5/17/2022 7:50 PM
119	It would be nice to have a water bottle filling station	5/17/2022 7:07 PM
120	Cleaner restrooms at the parks and more of the Christmas lights need to be accessible(the ones in sunken gardens are okay to look at but you can't drive by and see most of them and there's not enough to stroll through). Maybe have a drive through Christmas display at Hiers Park.	5/17/2022 5:40 PM
121	I think we need another dog park on the west end of town somewhere, I also think it needs to be free. Not everyone has a big yard and can't afford a fee	5/17/2022 5:08 PM
122	No	5/17/2022 4:30 PM
123	No	5/17/2022 4:27 PM
124	Please make sure to include Huntington Catholic School when you send home flyers or run programs with the schools 😊	5/17/2022 4:17 PM
125	You do a great job! Thank you!	5/17/2022 3:36 PM
126	More events would be awesome. There are other city parks departments that have events that sound super fun that I wish Huntington would have.	5/17/2022 3:30 PM
127	None	5/17/2022 3:30 PM
128	Never seen Elmwood look so bad! You should be ashamed. Basketball Court, Tennis Court, and Ball Diamond are all in shambles.	5/17/2022 3:08 PM
129	No	5/17/2022 2:54 PM
130	I would love to see the number of pickle ball courts increase	5/17/2022 2:49 PM
131	Again, need MORE pickleball courts at Memorial Park and/or put 4-5 pickleball courts on the YMCA grounds!!!!	5/17/2022 2:27 PM
132	Skate Park has not been a pro-social area for majority of juveniles in Huntington County. Majority of kids before the juvenile court report of first using drugs and getting into fights at this location.	5/17/2022 2:21 PM
133	Convert 1/2 tennis courts into Pickleball courts. Prohibit skateboards and bikes on BBall, tennis and Pball courts at Memorial Park.	5/17/2022 2:12 PM
134	Na	5/17/2022 2:07 PM
135	CLEAN THE WATER AT SUNKEN GARDENS AND ADD MORE PLAY EQUIPMENT AT MEMORIAL PARK ITE BIG ENOUGH FOR IT AND MORE PAVILLIONS TO HAVE GATHERINGS	5/17/2022 2:04 PM

136	Thanks for your hard work! We love the parks and we love biking as a family of 7. Ice skating would also be amazing, it's hard to teach our kids to skate with so few opportunities in town.	5/17/2022 1:57 PM
137	No	5/17/2022 1:51 PM

- END OF QUESTIONNAIRE -

## Section 5: Needs Analysis

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## DETERMINATION OF RECREATIONAL NEEDS

The needs assessment is a critical component of a parks and recreation master plan. A review of the current condition of the Huntington Park's system and recreational opportunities is vital so that the needs and deficiencies can be identified, and an action plan can be prepared to address those needs. It is equally important to look at future opportunities to address recreational trends, the changing needs of residents of Huntington and to incorporate these needs into the action plan.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) former standards were based on 10 acres per 1,000 people and are generally recognized as outdated in today's recreation and open space planning. NRPA suggests an alternative approach, which allows each community to define its own recreation needs based on its own unique blend of social and economic characteristics. The NRPA system approach looks at three important social changes:

- 1) The need to accommodate different cultures.
- 2) The need to include citizen opinion in the process.
- 3) The identification of the wellness movement.

These new guidelines from NRPA specifically look at:

- Environmental Trends: Pollution reduction, disappearing resources such as wetlands and forests, and the greenhouse effect.
- Social Trends: The importance of wellness activities and desire to maintain diverse cultural heritage.
- Economic Trends: Reductions in per capita leisure spending and the increasing cost of maintaining public facilities.
- Demographics Trends: Marriage/divorce rates and growth of urban minorities.

Each community must review the guidelines individually in order to determine the most appropriate range, quantity and quality of recreational facilities, and opportunities within their fiscal limits.

## ASSESSMENT OF RECREATIONAL NEEDS

In Huntington, three methods were used to evaluate current and future parks along with recreational needs. Standard based needs depict what is needed based on a population number. Demand-based needs can be summarized as "what residents want" and represent what is most desired by the residents living in Huntington. Resource-based needs depict what opportunities are available.

Standard Based: This approach uses the standards developed by NRPA in the mid-1990's, which are based on park acreage per 1,000 residents and specific numbers of recreation amenities per number of residents. These standards are then adjusted to determine a target Level of Service (LOS) for the City of Huntington and used to assess the surplus or deficit of park acreage.

Demand Based: This approach uses public surveys, public input meetings, participation rates, and usages to determine how the residents of Huntington use and desire certain types of recreation facilities, park amenities and activities. Information is also used to help determine which land needs to be acquired, what facility provisions are needed, and what programming needs to be provided.

Resource Based: This approach is based on the available resources to provide recreation opportunities such as lakes, creeks, wetlands, open space, reuse of abandoned facilities, etc.

## PARK DEFINITIONS AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Huntington Parks and Recreation Department has chosen to utilize the NRPA standards to develop its own park development and location criteria. NRPA standards used are drawn from the NRPA's Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines. Characteristics specific to Huntington that were considered include: geography, water resources, proximity to parklands managed by others, schools, and current park sites and facilities.

The following is a summary of each park type, location criteria, size, service area, population benchmarks, and typical facilities.

### MINI PARKS

Purpose:

- Address limited recreation and or aesthetic needs
- Serve as a recreational and/or beautification space where acquisition of larger parkland is not possible

Location Criteria:

- NRPA Standard: less than a 1/4-mile service radius

Size Criteria:

- NRPA Standard: 2,500 sq. ft. to 1 acre

Service Area and Population:

- NRPA Standard: former standard was 0.1 - 0.3 park acres per 1,000 population

Facilities and Features:

- Play area for young children
- Benches and small picnic facilities
- Beautification/landscape highlights
- Utilize historic/cultural sites where available

Facilities and Features not included:

- Off-street parking
- Restrooms

Representative Sites:

- Rotary Centennial Park

*Comments: Because of their limited recreation value and associated operational/maintenance issues, mini parks should be developed only as low maintenance beautification areas or small playgrounds for residents when no other space is reasonably available for a neighborhood park.*

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## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

### Purpose:

- Unique site characteristics and features will help create a sense of place.

### Location Criteria:

- NRPA Standard: 1/4-mile to 1/2-mile service radius

### Size Criteria:

- NRPA Standard: 5 acres minimum, 5-10 acres optimal

### Service Area and Population:

- NRPA Standard: 2 park acres per 1,000 population

### Facilities and Features:

- Children's playground
- Hard surface play court
- Open lawn areas
- Picnic/sitting areas
- Security lighting
- Beautification/landscape highlights

### Facilities and Features not included:

- Programmed active recreational activities that would overuse the park

### Representative Sites:

- Drover Park
- Elmwood Park
- General Slack Park
- Laurie Park
- Yeoman Park

## COMMUNITY PARKS

### Purpose:

- Serves a broader purpose than neighborhood parks. The focus is on meeting community-based recreation and gathering needs

### Location Criteria:

- NRPA Standard: serves two or more neighborhood parks, 1/2-mile to 3-mile service radius

### Size Criteria:

- NRPA Standard: acres minimum, 30 - 50 acres optimal

### Service Area and Population:

- NRPA Standard: 3 park acres per 1,000 population

### Facilities and Features:

- Large play structure
- Hard surface play courts
- Informal ball fields
- Open lawn areas
- Picnic/sitting areas, both individual and reservable
- Water play (swimming pool, wading pool, splash pad)
- Walking trails
- Security lighting
- Parking
- Beautification/landscape highlights

### Facilities and Features not Included:

- Extensive programmed adult athletic use

### Representative Sites:

- Memorial Park
- Evergreen Park
- Hiers Park
- Yeoman Park

## NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

Purpose:

- Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, open space, and visual aesthetics

Location Criteria:

- NRPA Standard: none

Size Criteria:

- NRPA Standard: variable

Service Area and Population:

- NRPA Standard: former standard was 0.75 -1 acres per 1,000 population

Facilities and Features:

- Functioning ecosystem
- Wetlands
- Forests/woodlands
- Geologic features
- Protection of rare, threatened, or endangered species
- Wildlife habitat
- Interpretive exhibits
- Trails
- Utilize historic/cultural sites where available

Representative Sites:

- IDNR properties such as J. Edward Roush Lake which are often designated as Regional Parks

## SPECIALITY AREAS

Purpose:

- Park land or facility with a specialized use or purpose

Location Criteria:

- NRPA Standard: none

Size Criteria:

- NRPA Standard: none

Service Area and Population:

- NRPA Standard: none

Facilities and Features:

- Unique or specialized facilities or features to serve purpose

Comments: *Specialty areas typically have specialized maintenance and operation requirements such as a pool/aquatic center.*



**PARK ACREAGE NEEDS**

The following chart identifies the park acreage needs based on Huntington Park's Level of Service (LOS) standards and guidelines.

<b>PARK SITES</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ACREAGE</b>	<b>EXISTING PARK ACREAGE 2023</b>	<b>GUIDELINES FOR 2023 POPULATION (17,036 pop. Est.)</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ACREAGE 2028 POPULATION (16,201 est.) (Based on 1% annual decline)</b>	<b>RECOMMENDED ACREAGE TO FILL GAP FOR PROJECT 2028 POPULATION</b>
<b><u>Mini Park</u></b> Rotary Centennial (0.3)	0.1 acre/1,000 population	0.3 acres	1.7 acres	1.6 acres	1.4 acres
<b><u>Neighborhood Park</u></b> Drover (5.3) Elmwood (10.8) Erie Heritage (7.1) General Slack (2.1) Laurie (1.8)	2 acres/1,000 population	27.1 acres	34 acres	32.4 acres	0
<b><u>Community Park</u></b> Memorial (39.7) Evergreen (85.0) Hiers (6.3) Yeoman (22.3)	3 acres/1,000 population	153.3 acres	51 acres	48 acres	0
<b><u>Regional Park</u></b> IDNR J. Edward Roush Lake/Reservoir	1,000 acres	8,217 acres	-	-	-
<b><u>Specialty Areas</u></b>	varies	110 acres	n/a	n/a	n/a

**Comments:**

The city has access to several IDNR facilities within a 15-minute drive. Future land acquisition strategy should continue to prioritize acquiring lands that are environmentally unique, preservation of open space and land along the corridors of the Wabash and Little Wabash Rivers. In addition, recognizing the wide variety of needs within the park system, land acquisitions should review opportunities for multipurpose venues that can be utilized for a wide variety of services and events such as an amphitheater, indoor recreation or community center, and pool are all typical park facilities that municipalities provide. One essential key to providing special use facilities is to identify operations and long-term maintenance costs associated with a pool and or indoor recreation center along with a feasibility study for user needs and costs.

## BENCHMARKING

As a part of the Parks Department desires to seek improvement for the future, we identified other successful parks departments within the state to identify opportunities and similarities between these cities. The benchmark communities in this plan were selected based on several criteria such as overall size (acreage), county seat (location), park facilities, and population size. The data provided was supplied by the respective park departments and their city websites. The communities selected were Lebanon, Crawfordsville, and Shelbyville.

Other similarities between the four cities include a variety of recreation programming, trails, the city location near a major interstate highway, and higher education partners. While Huntington may have less park acreage than the other communities, its proximity to several Indiana Department of Natural Resources parks provides more recreational opportunities within a 30-minute drive than the other communities listed.

Crawfordsville's park system includes a 122-acre municipal golf course and the General Lew Wallace Study and Museum. Their park system is expanding with a recent donation of 47 acres of land in 2023. Future plans include an update to the existing pool and splash pad area.

- Lebanon is the only community that has two major community parks within a 2-mile radius of 75 percent of the population. Lebanon is the largest in geographic size based on the city corporate limits. Lebanon has the lowest amount of actual park acreage in comparison to the city size.
- Shelbyville's system has more trails and softball/baseball fields: 11 ballfields including a 4-diamond softball complex and soccer field complex, with an NCAA-approved Cross-Country Course.

The chart on the following page provides a quick snapshot of information related to each community and their park system.

## BENCHMARK CITIES &amp; PARK SYSTEMS CHART

	<i>Huntington</i>	<i>Lebanon</i>	<i>Crawfordsville</i>	<i>Shelbyville</i>
Population (2022)	17,015	17,192	16,279	19,710
Park Acres	189	135	312	279
Total Number of Parks	11	6	9	8
Community Parks	2	2	2	2
Neighborhood Parks (4 -15 acres)	5	3	1	4
Mini Parks (0.25 to 3 acres)	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
Specialty Use	0	0	2	0
Undeveloped Park land (acres)	5	19.5	0	19
Trail Miles	8.8**	5.3*	5	10.5
Recreation Center	0	0	26,000 sf	18,000 sf
Active Adults Center/seniors	0	0	0	0
Aquatic Center/Pool	0	Yes	Yes	Yes
Splash Pad	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Softball/Baseball fields (City)	3	2	3	11
Pickleball Courts	7	12	1 (Interior)	4
Dog park	1	1	1	0

\* Maintains 7 miles outside of city limits

\*\* Includes walking trails within Memorial and Evergreen Parks

## SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

Identification of issues is the key to any park and recreation master plan. If the issues facing a park and recreation department can be defined, then they can be prioritized in an orderly manner. The process used in the development of Huntington's Park and Recreation Master Plan attempted to reach as many residents as possible to identify and reach a consensus on the issues. The community is extremely supportive of the renovation and upgrades to the park system.

The key issues identified in the planning process were:

- ♦ Renovation, improvements, and maintenance of existing park facilities
- ♦ Development of new parks and facilities to meet ongoing city growth
- ♦ Trail connections
- ♦ Create recreational programming and activities for families and teenagers
- ♦ Promote healthy and positive lifestyles

## 1. BUDGET

The department continues to monitor operations and expenses to maximize its budget. It is actively pursuing partnerships, sponsorships, and donations to augment and leverage their budget.

The following recommendations are suggested:

- A. Monitor recreational programs and strive to have them be self-supporting as much as feasible.
- B. Strengthen partnerships with local organizations, businesses, and foundations on special projects.

## 2. PARKS AND FACILITIES

Preserving, protecting, and maintaining existing parks and facilities were all key issues identified, as well as continuing to provide new expanded park amenities as funding becomes available.

The following recommendations are suggested:

- A. Develop a maintenance plan for each park for replacement, upkeep, and infrastructure.
- B. Develop a long-term project improvement or development plan for each park.
- C. Identify and review accessibility improvements at each park on a regular basis.
- D. Identify open lawn areas that could be left longer in height to reduce maintenance hours.
- E. Utilize recycled and renewable materials.
- F. Fix drainage issues.
- G. Expand trail system and connect parks and community amenities.
- H. Sunken Gardens' accessibility within the park.
- I. Upgrade pump track and skate park.
- J. Pool feasibility study.
- K. Identify potential amphitheater sites.
- L. Investigate providing public Wi-Fi access at park locations.

## 3. RECREATION PROGRAMS

Additional recreational programs for teenagers and youth were identified by the public as a need. In addition, the growth of residents 18-34 years of age should be monitored to determine if this has an impact on current programming participation. The Parks and Recreation Department should continue to partner with YMCA, Huntington University, Huntington County Community School Corporation (HCCSC) and the Huntington Boys & Girls Club to further expand recreation programming and event options within the community. Huntington Parks and Recreation Department is not investing at this time in infrastructure or equipment pertaining to esports since its partners, Huntington University and HCCSC, provide these opportunities.

The following recommendations are suggested:

- A. Expand private/public partnerships to enhance recreational programs.
- B. Continue outdoor concerts, special events and festivals.
- C. Expand accessible programs.
- D. Winter programming and events.
- E. Expand family and multi-generational programming.
- F. Promote programs for healthy lifestyles and active living.
- G. Identify potential indoor facility rental spaces.

- H. Identify esports opportunities and community partners.

#### 4. TRAILS

Continue to partner with other city departments, HARTA, Huntington County and other communities to further trail connections. Citizens are supportive and eager for more trails.

- A. Extend the Little River trail west to connect to the Lime City Trail and Forks of the Wabash including a bridge over the Little River. This section of the Little River Trail creates the main east/west trail link through the city and to a regional trail network. The bridge crossing will be expensive. Teaming with various agencies such as the United States Army Corps of Engineers, IDNR, INDOT, Next Level Trails, HARTA, Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission, foundations and interested parties will be critical in facilitating this project.
- B. Downtown Riverwalk
- C. Connect Elmwood and Memorial Parks
- D. Trail or bike routes to connect existing parks

## Section 6: Action & Priority Plan

The action plan on the following pages demonstrates a road map for the next five years. The action plan is meant to be flexible to maximize the ability to take advantage of funding opportunities in the future as they become available.

The projects identified are larger improvements or park infrastructure projects as identified by park or city staff and the public.

## 2023-2028 ACTION PLAN PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The following pages reflect the proposed action plan via a matrix for each individual year of the Master Plan. It includes for each action the site or facility, the estimated costs, and possible funding sources.

Some improvements require detailed investigation to determine a preliminary budget. These costs are denoted by the acronym TBD, which means to be determined.

## PRIORITY ACTION PLAN FUTURE PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Year	Facility	Project
2023	Memorial	Stone Race Design
2023	Sunken Gardens	Dredge Pond
2023	General Slack	Parking Lot Construction
2023	General Slack	Install Slide
2023	Hiers	Restroom Renovation
2023	Hiers	Stage ADA and Aesthetic Improvements
2023	Hiers	New Playground
2023	Memorial	Maintenance Building Repairs
2023	Evergreen	Maintenance Building Rehabilitation
2023	Dog Park	New Obstacles
2024	Yeoman	Pump Track Upgrade and Refinish Track
2024	Admin	Pickup Truck Replace P1
2024	Sunken Gardens	Parking
2024	Memorial	Waltonian Gardens Rehabilitation
2024	Yeoman	Skate Park Design & Improvements
2024	Drover	New Playground
2024	Elmwood	Replace Playground
2024	Citywide	Tree Canopy
2024	Riverfront	Input Process
2025	TBD	Amphitheater
2025	Little River Trail	Phase 2
2025	Little River Trail	Phase 4B
2025	All Parks	Security Cameras
2025	Sunken Gardens	ADA improvements
2025	All Parks	Tree Canopy
2025	Stults Road	Trail Addition YMCA/Parkview/Crestview \$180,000 (park portion)
2026	TBD	Community Pool - Plan and Design
2027-28	TBD	Community Pool - Bid/Construction



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## FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

A variety of funding opportunities are available through grants and not-for-profit organizations to assist in the development and planning of programs and facilities. Some of these potential sources are listed below.

### STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS

#### PRESIDENT BENJAMIN HARRISON CONSERVATION TRUST FUND

- Formerly known as The Indiana Heritage Trust, which was established in 1992. This fund ensures that Indiana's rich natural heritage will be preserved and enhanced for present and succeeding generations. The purpose of the Harrison Conservation Trust is to acquire state interests in real property that are examples of outstanding natural resources and habitats or have historical or archaeological significance or provide areas for conservation, recreation, protection, or restoration of native biological diversity within the state of Indiana. The Indiana Heritage Trust buys land from willing sellers to protect Indiana's rich natural heritage for wildlife habitat and recreation.

#### INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (IDNR) - DIVISION OF FORESTRY

- Arbor Day Grant: \$500 - \$1,000 grant. Any activity that assists in promoting Arbor Day.
- Urban Forest Conservation (UFC) Grants: These grants are intended to help communities develop long-term programs to manage their urban forests. Grantees may conduct projects that target program development, planning, and education. Projects funded in the past include activities such as conducting tree inventories; developing tree maintenance and planting plans; writing tree ordinances, conducting programs to train municipal employees and the public; purchase or development of publications, books, and videos; hiring consultants or city foresters, etc. Local municipalities, not-for-profit organizations, and state agencies are eligible to apply for \$2,000 to \$20,000.

#### IDNR DIVISION OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

- Indiana Trails Program: This program replaced the Recreation Trails Program in 2021 funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. It provides funds for trail development including the following:
  - Construction of trails.
  - Acquisition of easements or property for trail development.
  - Development of trailheads and other support facilities.
  - Construction of bridges, boardwalks, motorized and non-motorized trails, and trail related projects.

The program provides 80/20 percent reimbursement/match assistance for eligible projects (\$50,000 to \$250,000 maximum available). The application deadline is March 1.

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- **Next Level Conservation Trust (NLCT):** The NLCT was created in 2022 to preserve and protect important conservation, recreation, and historic areas throughout Indiana. Funds are for the purpose of property acquisition. Property acquired with this fund will become part of the public trust to ensure that the land is protected for future generations of Hoosiers to use and enjoy. The NLCT is designed to encourage local participation, so each project requires \$3.00 of NLCT funds to \$1.00 match. The match could be provided by local governmental, nonprofit or philanthropic organizations; private or corporate donors; or by bargain sale. Funds cannot be used for capital improvements, stewardship, or programming.
  - **Next Level Trails:** This fund is open to local units of government and non-profit organizations. Eligible projects include regional or local trail construction, land acquisition, design and engineering, and trail amenities. Consideration is given to collaboration with other communities; project is a part of a national or multi-state trail system; connections with nature; trail accommodates multiple types of trails uses. Counties deficient in trail miles per capita and providing access to a population not within a five-mile radius are also criteria. The grant requires a minimum 20 percent match. The program provides a minimum of \$200,000 to \$2,000,000 maximum available for a local project per year. Maximum amount may be increased dependent on current budget at the federal level. The application deadline is June 1.

#### INDIANA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND RURAL AFFAIRS (OCRA)

- **Main Street Revitalization Program (MSRP):** MSRP grants are funded with federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The goal of the Main Street Revitalization Program is to encourage communities with eligible populations to focus on long-term community development efforts.

#### INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (INDOT)

- **Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program:** This grant is for the improvement of transportation systems such as trails, sidewalks, and street improvements. Additional activities may include on-road and off-road facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-motorized forms of transportation; developing safe routes for non-drivers; conversion of abandoned railroad corridors for trails; and historic preservation and rehabilitation of historic transportation facilities. Funds 80 percent of construction cost with 20 percent match by applicant.
- **Safe Routes to School Fund (SRTS):** Non-infrastructure activities will be limited to a cost of \$75,000. Infrastructure projects will be limited to a cost of \$250,000. SRTS activities and projects must be programmed in the statewide transportation improvement program to receive federal funds. A school must be within a two-mile radius of the construction improvements project.

**UNITED STATES (U.S.) DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY FACILITY GRANTS**

- This program provides grants to communities with fewer than 20,000 residents to construct and renovate facilities used for public service, health care, recreation, community service, and public safety. Funds are also used to purchase equipment that is needed to operate the facilities. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, municipalities, towns, districts, and tribal government agencies. Areas with the lowest population and income levels receive higher grant considerations. Up to 75 percent of the project costs are covered by the grant. The amount of funding is dependent on the median income and population of the applicant entity.

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

- Public Works Grants is a grant program of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic development Administration. Funds can be used to revitalize, expand and upgrade a community's physical infrastructure to attract a new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment. [www.eda.gov/programs/eda-programs](http://www.eda.gov/programs/eda-programs).
- Economic Adjustment Assistance Program: This program provides technical, planning and infrastructure assistance in distressed economic regions. [www.eda.gov/programs/eda-programs](http://www.eda.gov/programs/eda-programs).

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD) SMALL CITIES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM**

- Grants from this program are used to acquire real estate property for public use, demolish blighted structures, and construct and renovate public service facilities, recreational facilities, and public and private buildings. Funds are also used to support economic development activities, including assisting micro-enterprises. Grants are administered by states to cities and counties with fewer than 50,000 and 200,000 residents respectively. Up to three percent of the grant can be allocated to cover technical assistance and administrative expenses.

**PRIVATE AND NONPROFIT GRANTS****INDIANA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY (INPS)**

- Small grants to promote the appreciation, presentation, conservation, utilization, and scientific study of the flora native to Indiana. INPS seek to educate the public about the values, beauty, diversity, and environmental importance of indigenous species.

**MIRACLE'S GRANTS FOR AMERICA'S CHILDREN**

- Up to \$5 million in grant money is available to schools and parks around the country who want to purchase new playground equipment through Miracle's Grants for America's Children program. Miracle, a playground manufacturer for over 80 years, awards grants for purchase of equipment based on an assessment of the current playground equipment proposal, size of project, and amount of grant funding available.

**KaBOOM!**

- Dr. Pepper Snapple & KaBOOM! offer \$15,000 grants to qualifying U.S.-based organizations to be used toward the purchase of playground equipment that will be built using the KaBOOM! community-build model. These partners also offer \$750 grants to communities who want to make their playgrounds cleaner, safer, and more inviting. In addition, this group offers joint-use grants for communities who partner with schools to open recreation facilities to the public during non-school hours. These grants are solely for the expansion or creation of joint use agreements. There is a rolling deadline for this set of grants.

**SHADE STRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM**

- The American Academy of Dermatology's Shade Structure Grant Program awards grants to public schools and non-profit organizations for installing permanent shade structures for outdoor locations that are not protected from the sun, such as playgrounds. Each grant is valued at up to \$8,000, which includes the structure and installation.

**LEGO CHILDREN'S FUND**

- Lego aims to help local and national non-profit organizations committed to helping children develop their creativity and learning skills through constructive play. It awards quarterly grants with special interest paid to collaborative efforts and in providing matching funds to leverage new dollars into the receiving organization. Typical awards range between \$500-\$5,000.

**LET'S PLAY INITIATIVE**

- Dr. Pepper Snapple Group has made a three-year, \$15 million commitment, as part of KaBOOM!'s "Let's Play Initiative", to help construct and improve playground areas. Municipalities and non-profit organizations with a playground or outdoor recreational space that is currently unsafe for children can apply for construction grants. The Initiative also offers Let's Play Completion Grants, which can be used toward the completion or improvement of an existing playground. This grant program has an ongoing deadline. In addition, there are also opportunities for communities to partner with school districts to apply for Joint Use Grants to open school recreation facilities to the public during non-school hours.

**KIDSGARDENING.ORG**

- The National Gardening Association has sponsored this grant for four years, aiming to support community organizations with child-centered garden programs. Priority is given to programs that have these components: educational focus or curricular/program, integration to reinforce academics, life skills, instruction, (e.g., nutrition, growing one's own food, learning to be responsible) developing environmental stewardship, and encouraging students to make positive choices for themselves and the planet. As the title implies, grants are available to states in the Midwest including Indiana.

**TONY HAWK FOUNDATION SKATEPARK GRANTS**

- Opportunity for charities and state or local agencies to apply for Tony Hawk Foundation Skatepark Grants to facilitate and encourage the design, development, construction, and

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operation of new skatepark facilities, primarily located in low-income communities in the United States. Grant cycles are typically January and July of each year.

## MISCELLANEOUS FUNDING SOURCES

Below are some funding options that may be available to the Huntington Parks and Recreation Department and City Council:

- Tax Incremental Financing
- Cumulative Building Fund
- Private Foundations
- Indiana Committee for the Humanities
- Indiana Arts Committee
- Indiana Department of Aging and Community Services
- Environmental Education Act, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Indiana Federal Property Program
- Indiana Department of Commerce
- Economic Development Administration
- Department of Education
- President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
- The Nature Conservancy
- Acres, Inc.
- The Trust for Public Land
- The Lilly Community Assistance Program
- Fish America Foundation
- Memorial Giving
- Deferred Giving
- Capital Fund Drive Campaign

## FUNDING STRATEGIES

Funding strategies rely on multiple revenue options, not on one or two sources, to make the Parks Department and individual programs more self-supporting. Park agencies across the country are successfully supplementing proceeds with alternate funding sources.

Advertising Sales: This revenue source is selling tasteful and appropriate advertising for park and recreation-related items such as program catalogs, and other visible products or services that are consumable or permanent. This opportunity will expose the advertiser's product, information, or service to many people.

Catering Permits and Services: This is a license to allow caterers to work in the park system on a permit basis for a specific period of time. A set fee or a percentage of food sales is returned to the Parks Department.

Concession Management: Concessions come from retail sales or rentals of soft goods, hard goods, or consumable items. A park department contracts for the service or receives a portion of the gross percentage or a portion of the full revenue dollars, which incorporate a profit after expenses.

Cost Avoidance: Any park department must take the position that it cannot be everything for everyone. The department must be driven by the market/demand and stay with the department's core mission. By altering its role as direct provider, the park department will save money as it decides whether to provide a particular facility or program. Savings could be realized through partnering, outsourcing, or deferring to another provider of a service and/or facility.

Easements: This revenue source is available when any park department allows utility companies, businesses, or individuals to develop an improvement below ground on its property for a set period of time and a set dollar amount, which is received by any park department annually.

Equipment Rental: The revenue source is available when equipment such as tables, chairs, tents, stages, bicycles, skates, roller blades, and other items are rented and used for recreation.

Entertainment Fees: This fee is on ticket sales for major entertainment venues such as concerts, tourneys, special events, or sporting events. This fee is based on the earnings vendors receive from their ticket sales.

Foundation/Gifts: These dollars, raised from tax-exempt, non-profit organizations, are established with private donations to promote specific causes, programs, activities, or issues. They offer a selection of opportunities to fund projects such as capital campaigns, gift catalogs, fund-raisers, endowments, and sales of items.

Greenway Utility: When greenway utilities are established, they are used to finance the acquisition of greenways and greenway/trail development by selling the development rights underground for fiber-optic types of businesses.

Irrevocable Remainder Trusts: These trusts are set up with individuals who desire to leave a portion of their wealth to a park department in a trust fund that allows the fund to grow over time. The department may use a portion of the interest to support specific park and recreation facilities, or programs designated by the trustee.

Land Trust: Many communities have developed land trusts to help secure and fund the cost of acquiring land that needs to be preserved and protected for open space and greenway purposes.

Licensing Rights: This revenue option allows a park department to license its name on all resale items that private or public vendors use when they sell clothing or other items containing the name of the park department. The typical licensing fee is 6 to 10 percent of the cost of the resale item.

Life Estates: This source is available when a person wants to leave his or her property to a park department in exchange for living on the property until his or her death. This revenue source is very popular for wealthy individuals because their estates will otherwise be heavily taxed upon their death and their children might have to sell this property because of probate costs. This

opportunity allows the individual to receive a fair tax deduction annually on the property while leaving a life estate.

Merchandising Sales: This revenue source comes from the public or private sector on resale items from gift shops and stores for either all sales or a set gross percentage.

Naming Rights: Many cities have begun selling the naming rights for new buildings or renovations of existing buildings and parks to cover the associated development cost.

Non-Profit Land Holder: It can be very helpful to have a non-profit land holder to initially accept donations of land intended for open space and parkland. These can serve to facilitate tax benefits to the donors and can help to deal with acquisition timing issues.

Parking Fees: This fee applies to parking at selected destination facilities to help offset capital and operational costs.

Permits (Special-Use Permits): These special permits allow individuals to use specific park property for financial gain. The park department either receives a set amount of money or a percentage of the gross service revenues.

Special Fund-Raisers: Many parks and recreation departments have annual special fundraisers to help cover specific programs and capital projects.

Ticket Sales/Admissions: This revenue source is based on accessing facilities for self-directed activities. These user fees help offset operational costs.

Utility Roundup Programs: Some park and recreation agencies have worked with their local utilities to set up a program that allows a consumer to “round up” the consumer’s actual utility invoice to the nearest dollar, with revenues being dedicated to parks and recreation.

The aforementioned potential funding sources are not intended as an exhaustive list of available sources. In carrying out its responsibilities, the department will continue to research various federal grant-in-aid programs and private sector resources, which could be utilized in the development of park and recreation projects.

## Section 7: Appendix

- Sources
- 2023 City Trails Map



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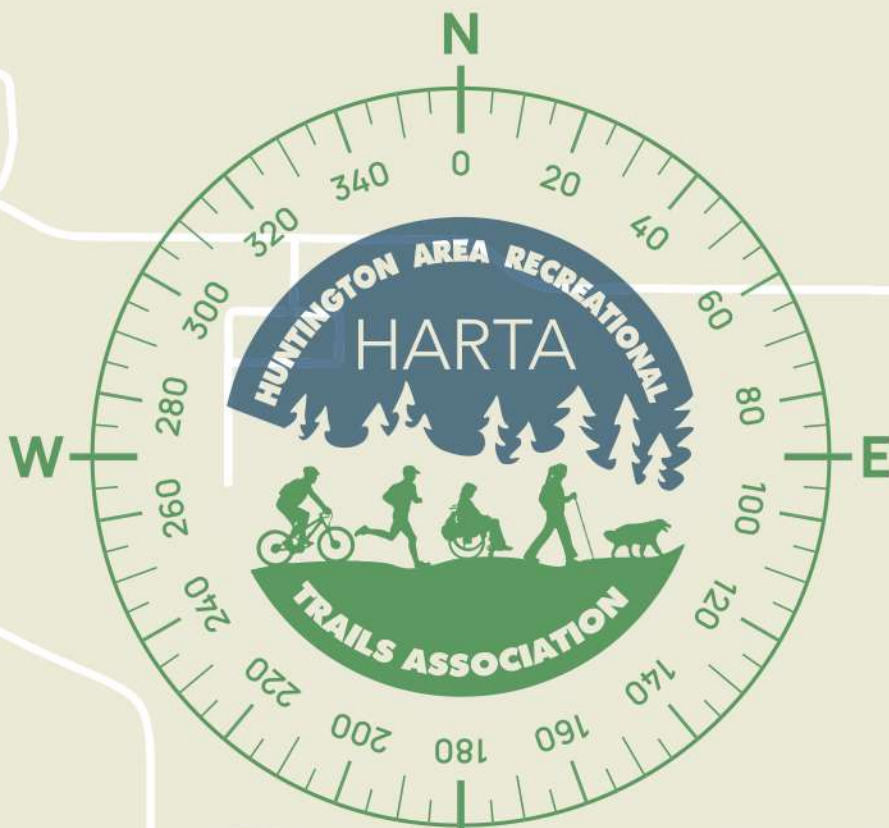
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# City of Huntington



Pehkokia Woods  
ACRES Land Trust

LEGEND

TRAILS

BIKE ROUTE 1  
5 miles

BIKE ROUTE 2  
4 miles

BIKE ROUTE 3  
4.5 miles

BIKE ROUTE 4  
4 miles

BIKE ROUTE 5  
10 miles

COUNTY BIKE ROUTE

2023 TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

PARKS

POINTS OF INTEREST

PUBLIC RESTROOM

PARKING

CANOE LAUNCH

FUTURE TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS

POINTS OF INTEREST

1. HUNTINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

2. HUNTINGTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

3. QUAYLE VICE PRESIDENTIAL LEARNING CENTER

4. HUNTINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

5. VISITORS BUREAU

6. SHEETS WILDLIFE MUSEUM

7. ABBETT SPLASH PARK

8. HUNTINGTON COUNTY 4H FAIRGROUNDS

9. ROTARY CENTENNIAL PARK

SCHENKEL STATION  
11 W. STATE ST.  
Location marked as point of interest on map

AVAILABLE AT SCHENKEL STATION



