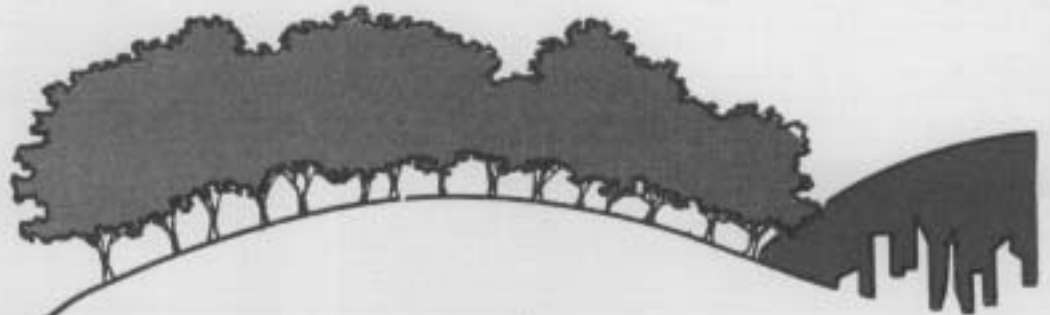
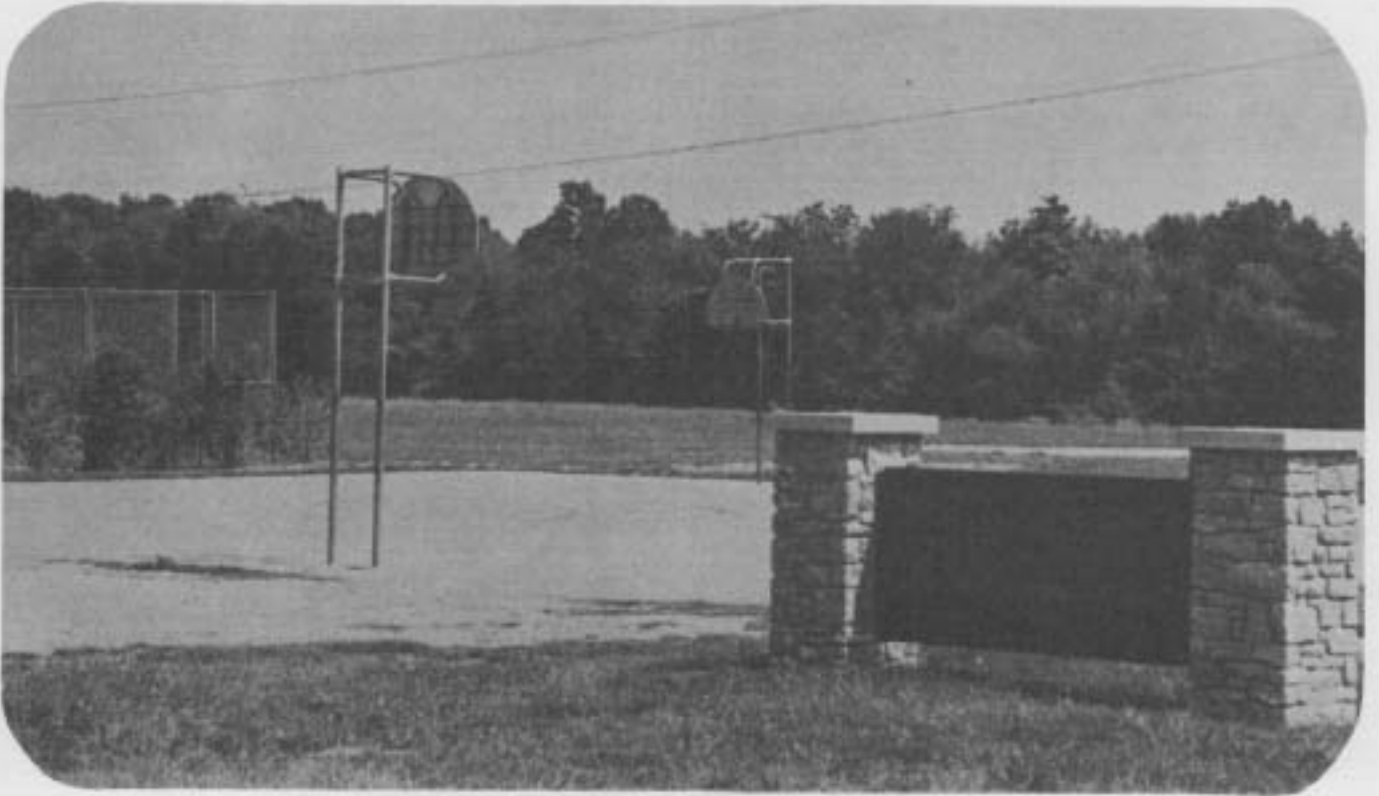


CARSON PARK



A PARK MASTER PLAN



AUGUST 1981

CARSON PARK

A MASTER PLAN GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY ACTION
Indianapolis-Marion County, Indiana

(An Element of "The Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, 1981")

August, 1981

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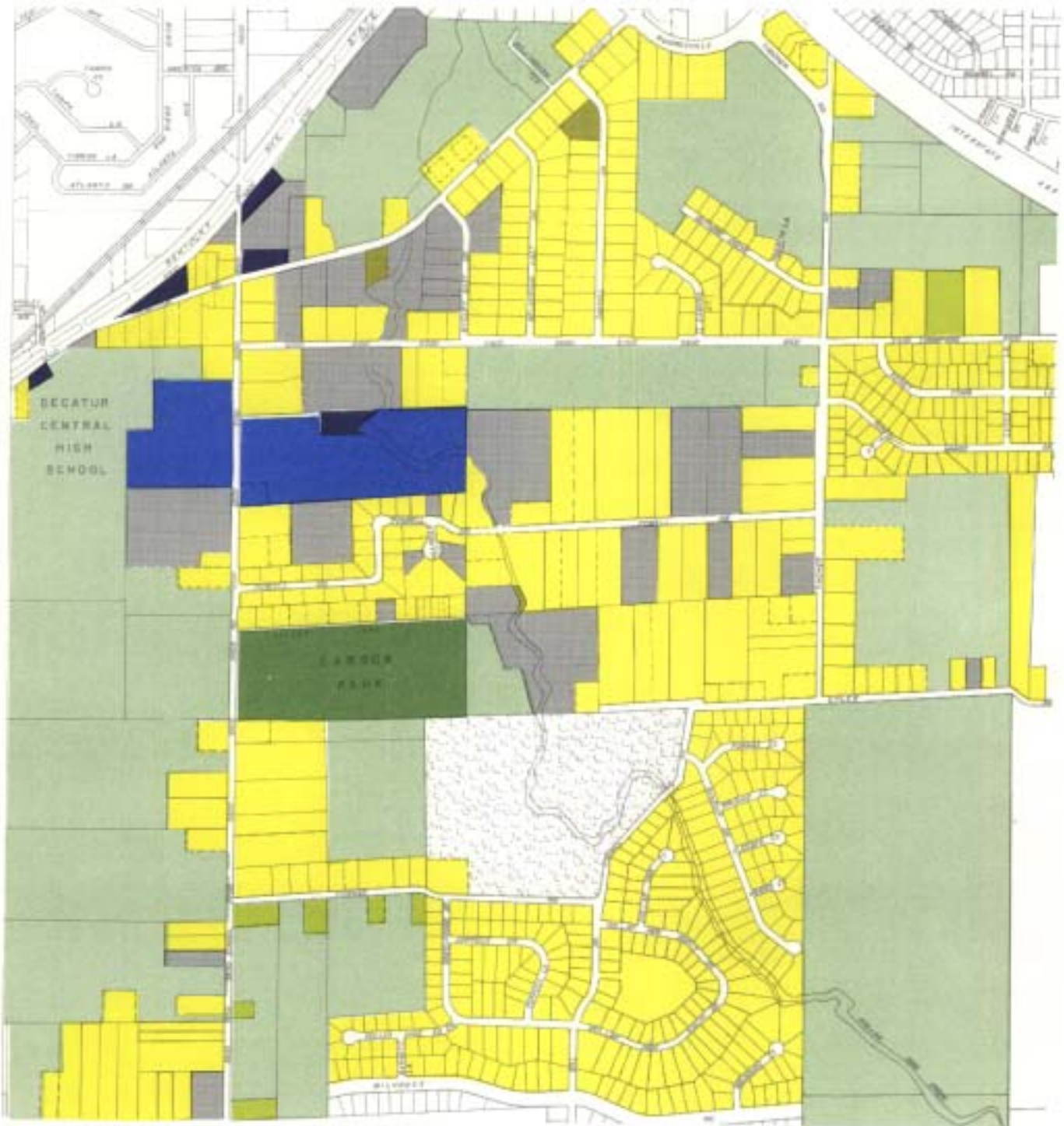
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Initialed: _____ Date: _____

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CARSON PARK

(EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD LAND USE PLAN)

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Residential |  Manufacturing |
|  Agriculture |  Parks |
|  Schools |  Wooded |
| |  Vacant |

Map #2

IDENTIFICATION

LEVI J. CARSON PARK

ADDRESS: 5400 South High School Road
Decatur Township
Park Planning Unit D2

CLASSIFICATION: Neighborhood Park

SIZE: 21.96 acres

PURPOSE:

The purpose of Carson Park is to provide recreation for the entire family and special groups within easy walking and biking distance. The primary function of the park is to provide facilities for all age groups, including preschool, school age (6-16), teens, young adults, mid-age and senior citizens.

CHARACTER:

Intensive use and easy access are characteristics of this park site. Ideally the site should have areas that are level to gently rolling to accommodate intensive use facilities with shaded areas for passive recreation.

DEFINITION:

The neighborhood park is important because of its frequent, close association with a more less homogenous segment of the community. It suggests a more personal link with the local residents which the other classes (except sub-neighborhood) of parks generally lack. The function of the neighborhood park is to provide facilities which serve the every day recreation needs of local residents. Such facilities include active play and sport areas with equipment as well as passive areas. The neighborhood park is often associated with a school to allow better and continuous use of the available park land. In this case, Decatur Junior High School and Central High School lie west of Carson Park across High School Road a distance of approximately 1200 feet.

INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE

A new program for park master planning has been recently developed by the Urban Design Section of the Division of Planning and Zoning, Department of Metropolitan Development for the Department of Parks and Recreation. Subsequently, existing master plans will be updated to be consistent with the latest program and respond to changing service area needs. The updated master plans will reflect the goals and objectives of the Department of Parks and Recreation, citizen input, available funding and physical capabilities of the site.

The Carson Park Master Plan will serve as a guide which outlines both a short and long range development program. Priorities will be established and programmed in stages to allow for implementation as funds become available. To effectively achieve this, an inventory of all existing man-made resources and natural conditions will be undertaken. After this material has been analyzed and community needs have been determined through public meetings, an updated design concept will be developed for Carson Park. Aesthetics, maintenance, economics, conservation of energy and compatible activity programs will receive attention throughout the planning process. The end result will be a master plan which satisfies the needs of the community, Department of Parks and Recreation and the Carson family. The master plan will then be presented to the Board of Parks and Recreation and Metropolitan Development Commission for their approval.

This final document will become part of the 1981 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan developed by the Department of Metropolitan Development, Division of Planning and Zoning.

HISTORY

The land occupied by Carson Park was homesteaded in the early 19th century by the Carson family who came to Indiana from Ohio. The original homestead deed, later destroyed in a fire, was signed by President Monroe. The land was farmed for many years and remained in one-family ownership for over 100 years before it was deeded to the Marion County Board of Commissioners in April of 1964.

Levi J. Carson, for whom the park is named, was married to Areadner L. Carson. They had three children: Ralph DeWitt Carson, Rowena Carson Antrim and Pauline Carson Williams. Levi Carson died on February 17, 1935, with Areadner passing away a few months later on June 26, 1935. Upon their death, the only son, Ralph D. Carson inherited the land. At some later point Ralph Carson moved to California and was a resident of that state when he gave the property to the Marion County Board of Commissioners on the condition that the park property not be used for the manufacture or sale of intoxicating liquors in any form. The deed also stipulated that the park be used for playground and recreational purposes for the enjoyment of all persons regardless of age, race, creed or color.

When the Unigov Act was adopted in 1969, the Carson Park property was transferred to the City. Then in 1979 the property was turned over to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The earliest master plan on file was developed in 1974 and revised in 1979. The most recent update is the one being proposed in this document.

Through the generosity and foresight of the Carson Family, Decatur Township has a neighborhood park which serves some of the leisure needs of those living in the township. As improvements are made to the park and leisure needs are met, Carson Park will become the park envisioned by the Carson Family years ago.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

LOCATION

Carson Park is located at 5400 South High School Road in the southwest portion of Marion County within the borders of Decatur Township. The parcel of land covers 21.96 acres which is bounded on the west by High School Road and on the north by Valley Lane, an unpaved, privately-owned road. Access from High School Road into the park is by way of an unpaved road on the north end of the park which parallels Valley Lane. (See map #2)

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

Traditionally, park planning has been oriented towards resources while ignoring those who actually utilize leisure space and facilities. Evidence of this comes from lack of public support and understanding of the plans. With the current master planning process, a new trend will evolve which focuses in on the users. Planning within natural limitations and social requirements will set the framework for a successful plan.

The purpose of park master planning is to insure the coordinated development of a park site based on the physical resources of the park and identified needs of the community and surrounding neighborhoods. A park master plan is to be used as a general guide for the development of a park. The master plan proposes uses, identifies development concerns and neighborhood leisure needs, and contains sufficient narrative to explain the proposal.

Master plans will vary as to level of detail, but they will all be sufficient to guide development. The exact tasks which will be needed to develop a park master plan may vary, but the following tasks indicate a general procedure.

1. Develop Neighborhood Land Use Map
2. Park Base Maps
3. Develop Design Program
4. Undertake Site Analysis
5. Schedule Public Meetings
6. Undertake Park Analysis
7. Develop Initial Design Concept
8. Develop Final Master Plan

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives are pertinent ingredients to a successfully implemented plan. Goals provide a direction on which the community can focus, whereas objectives become the attainable end product. As community values, needs and priorities change, goals and objectives must be continuously updated to reflect these shifts.

Departmental

As stated in the current Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan for Indianapolis, Indiana, the Department of Parks and Recreation established the following goals:

General Community Leisure System Goal

It shall be a goal of the City of Indianapolis to improve the quality of life of Marion County residents and visitors by providing a full range of leisure opportunities including well tended and safe open spaces, park sites, facilities and a variety of traditional and "new" recreation opportunities.

General Community Environmental Goal

It shall be a goal of the City of Indianapolis to improve the quality of life of Marion County residents and visitors by enhancing through the conservation of our natural environment and enhancement of our man-made environment.

In order to address these goals, several objectives were developed along with specific tasks or strategies. For the purpose of this plan, it is not necessary to go beyond the general goal statements. However, if a more thorough discussion is desired, consult the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

During the master planning process, the objectives and tasks that relate directly to the updating of Carson Park were used as guides for the plan development. Utilization of these guides will ultimately result in a leisure system that has been tailored to the needs of those residing in Marion County.

Design Objectives

As Landscape Architects begin to plan and design recreation space, they must be sensitive to the values of the park users and work closely with them during the design process. People can provide insight into the social factors associated with a particular area and lend support of the design through their active involvement. In turn, planners and designers can make people aware of affect that aesthetics, maintenance and cost can have on the final design.

For the purpose of this plan, four general objectives were developed to address each of these factors.

- . Opportunities should be provided for park users to become actively involved in the design process.
- . Recreation space should be of high visual quality that invites people into the space.
- . Parks should be designed to meet the maintenance capabilities of the agency responsible for performing such services.
- . Park design should respect the available fiscal resources of a community.

COMMUNITY LEISURE NEEDS/ISSUES

During the initial stages of a plan, issues and needs must receive attention. After these components have been identified and analyzed, they form a base from which the plan develops. It was at this point that the citizens were asked to identify current programming and recreational needs. Their recommendations and concerns were considered and utilized throughout the planning process and plan development.

Current Facilities

Facility	Condition
5 Picnic Tablesfair
Playground Equipmentfair
1 Small Swing Set	
1 Small Slide	
1 Large Slide	
5 Saddlemates	
1 Eagle Flight Swing Set	
1 Buck-about	
1 Whirl	
6 Ball Diamondsfair (repair outfield)
5 Basketball Goalsgood
2 Tennis Courtsfair (needs color coding)
Concession Buildinggood
Parking Area (10 cars)poor (unimproved additional spaces needed)
Open Field for Playinggood
Roadfair (needs paving)

Current Programs

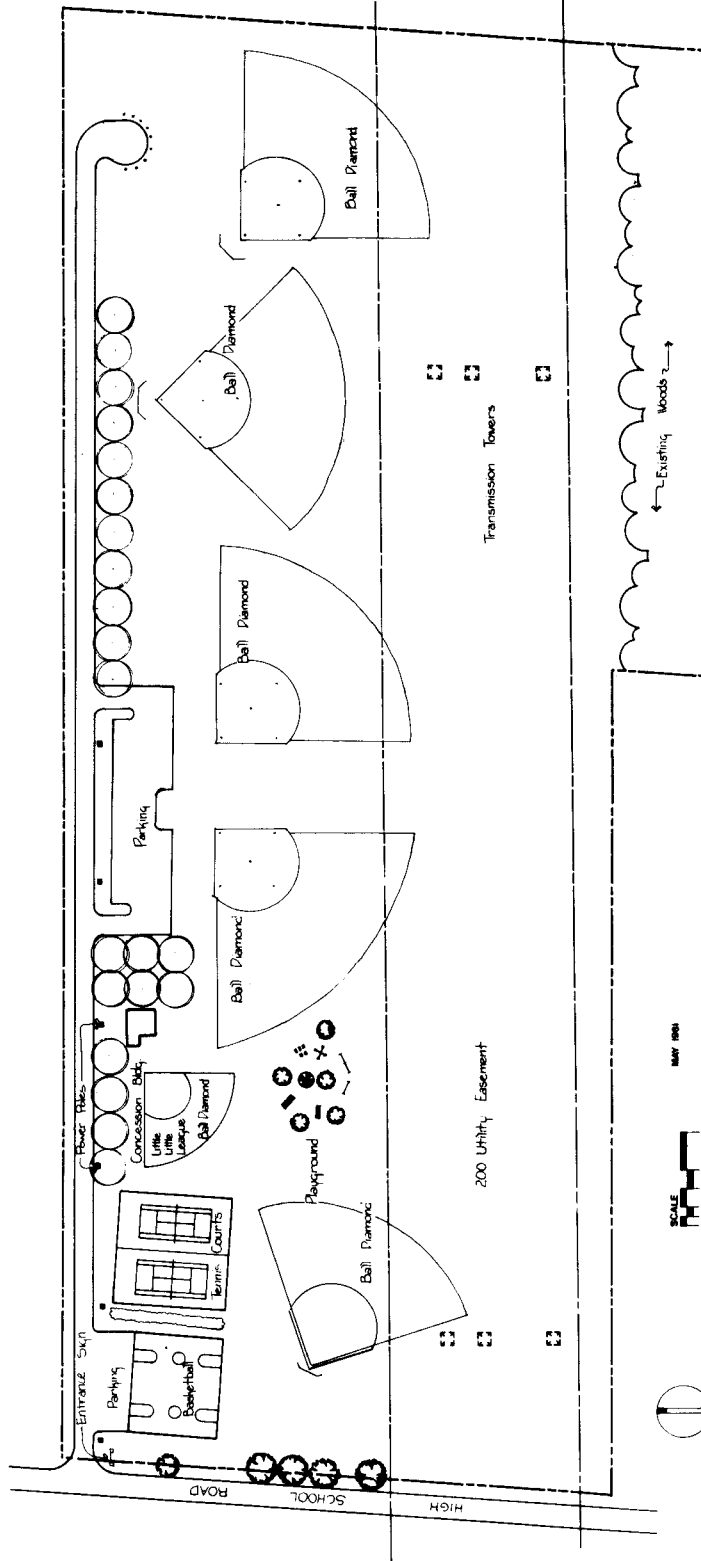
The only organized activity program at Carson Park is that of Little League. This extensive program serves approximately 400 children in the Decatur Township area. In order to accommodate between 20 and 25 teams on 6 diamonds, double-header games are scheduled during half of the week. This program begins in early Spring and runs until the later part of July.

With the strong emphasis on Little League, Carson Park has little to offer those interested in other types of recreation.

Playground equipment as well as tennis and basketball courts provide the necessary facilities for additional active recreation. However, space for passive recreation is limited to 6-7 picnic tables.

In summary, the current focus of programming in Carson Park is an active, organized sports for those between the ages of 9 through 16. Few opportunities exist in the park for citizens wishing to participate in other types of recreation.

Carson Park existing site plan



Map #3

Existing Recreational Needs

The citizens who use Carson Park are an excellent source from which to obtain information concerning recreational needs in the park. Deficiencies in the park were also delineated by an inventory survey undertaken by a private consultant, the Airport Vicinity Plan completed in 1978 by the Department of Metropolitan Development, Division of Planning and Zoning and the master planning Design Team. As a result of information compiled and meetings held, the following list of recreation needs was developed.

- Install a plaque to acknowledge the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Levi J. Carson.
- Add a new entrance sign to improve and upgrade park entrance.
- Install picnic shelters and additional tables to improve picnic facilities.
- Expand existing concession stand to improve service.
- Expand parking areas to solve current problems as well as meet future parking demand.
- Pave existing access road to decrease dust and improve road surface.
- Install bollards to prevent intrusion of cars into the park.
- Upgrade maintenance to include color coding and striping of tennis courts.
- Install lighting at some of the ball fields to extend playing time.
- Install players benches to upgrade playing facilities.
- Increase the number of ball diamonds to satisfy projected enrollment increase in the Little League program.

SITE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

During the initial phases of a design, an inventory of existing conditions must be undertaken. Both natural and man-made resources were surveyed to determine the potentials and constraints of the specific park site. Through analysis, this data will provide information relevant to a successful plan.

Natural Resources

Soils/Drainage

When planning for recreational development, the general soil associations provide sufficient information. Marion County is made up of the following four associations.

- . Crosby-Brookston Association
- . Urban land-Fox Ockley Association
- . Miami-Crosby Association
- . Genessee-Sloan Association

Carson Park itself is composed of the Crosby-Brookston and Miami-Crosby associations. Following is a list of the general characteristics of each association.

<u>Crosby-Brookston</u>	<u>Miami-Crosby</u>
. deep	. deep
. somewhat poorly drained to very poorly drained	. well-drained to somewhat poorly drained
. silty surface texture	. silty surface texture
. formed over glacial till	. formed over glacial till

Overall, Carson Park is moderately suitable for recreational development including camp areas, picnic areas, playgrounds, paths and trails. Problems occurring would be related to the poor drainage and wetness of the soil. These factors would have to be considered if changes or new development are to occur in the park. In the case of ball diamonds where wetness is an important element, additional soil may have to be brought in or some type of drainage system constructed to improve the playing surface.

Topography/Physiography

Marion County lies on a relatively flat plain with low relief which is dissected by numerous rivers, streams and creeks. Carson Park is located on gently undulating upland till plains with slopes between 0 to 6 percent. The southeast portion of the park which is dissected by two drainage ways would be those areas where the steeper slopes would occur.

The flat character of Carson Park creates ponding and wet areas but minimizes erosion problems. By being aware of the influence of these environmental factors, potential problems can be alleviated and money can be saved as future plans are developed.

Climate

Knowledge of the climate in an area is helpful in recreation planning as the weather conditions influences activity participation rates. Marion County has a continental humid climate with a wide variety of weather. The following table outlines general climate data for Marion County.

Temperature Range	-20° to 99°F
Annual Temperature Averages	maximum/minimum
	winter (D-J-F) 61° 10°
	spring (M-A-M) 81° 25°
	summer (J-J-A) 94° 50°
	fall (S-O-N) 82° 27°
Annual Precipitation Averages	total for year 38.7"
	winter (D-J-F) 2.7"
	spring (M-A-M) 3.9"
	summer (J-J-A) 3.6"
	fall (S-O-N) 2.8"
Annual Average Snowfall	20" per year
Wind Direction	predominantly from southwest, except during the winter months when it comes from the northwest

Planning recreation activities to take advantage of compatible weather conditions contribute to a successful program. Activities during the Spring run a greater risk of being rescheduled or canceled due to adverse weather conditions. Snow accumulation in Marion County is at such a level that winter recreation opportunities are limited.

Vegetation

The natural vegetation in Marion County was deciduous forest. Today, only approximately 5% of the county has woodland areas with the larger areas occurring around Eagle Creek Reservoir and Geist Reservoir.

Carson Park itself has very little natural vegetation remaining. The southeast corner and east edge of the property has a small stand of woods with a few specimen trees. With the exception of ball diamonds, game courts and road, the remaining area is in grass with a few widely scattered trees. In an effort to increase the vegetative cover, several trees were planted in 1981. Additional plant material should be planted to improve the appearance of Carson Park and give it a park-like form. Plantings around the ball courts and concession stand could be of a formal nature with the remainder of the park in random plantings to encourage return to a natural environment.

Man-Made Resources

Man-made resources are generally those elements which are difficult, if not impossible, to change. As zoning utility easements, transportation routes and structures are established they become unchangeable items that must be integrated into the master plan design. For this reason they must receive consideration and thorough analysis.

Land Use/Zoning

Carson Park is located in a rural setting. The land surrounding the park on the east, south and west sides is presently used for agricultural purposes. The only development adjacent to the park is that of single-family houses on the northern border. Currently, residential zoning adjoins the park on the north and east sides with agricultural zoning occurring on the south and west sides. (See map #2).

Utilities/Easements

Three easements exist on the Carson Park property. The easement granted to the Indiana Electric Company in 1923 is of major significance. The easement is 200 feet wide and runs parallel to the north/south boundaries of the park. Today the easement is shared by Public Service of Indiana (PSI) and Indiana Power and Light Company (IPALCO). Restrictions within this easement are as follows:

- . No structures or dwellings allowed.
- . No fences over 8 feet allowed.
- . No playground equipment allowed under conductors.

- . Swimming pools are governed by special requirements.
- . No parking allowed under conductors.
- . Roads must cross easement at right angles.
- . Any changes or new development within the easement are subject to approval from both PSI and IPALCO.

The remaining two easements on the Carson Park property are associated with the roads that border the park on the west and north sides. The right-of-way easement along south High School Road extends 25 feet on either side of the center line of the road. The 25 feet wide easement along the north edge of Carson Park is associated with Valley Lane Road.

Utilities within the park are not of any major consequence. A sanitary interceptor lies within close proximity of the park. However, no sanitary sewer service exists inside the park. Water service comes into the site adjacent to High School Road, 47 feet south of the south edge of Valley Lane Road. Electrical service enters the park from High School Road at the south edge of the road.

Circulation

Carson Park has one entrance and one 20 feet wide, unimproved road that runs along and parallel to the north property line with a cul-de-sac at the east terminus. The only designated parking is located north of the basketball goals. See map #3. The ten car capacity in this area does not come close to meeting the parking needs, especially during the Little League season when the park is in high usage. To eliminate parking on the grass and for the sake of safety, additional parking areas need to be developed.

Structures

The only structure within the park is the concession stand. See Map #3 for specific location. The building is 30' x 30' and constructed of concrete block. A 10' expansion to be used for storage is planned for the east side of the structure. Currently, there are two restrooms, however, one of those is being used for storage. The restrooms are open during the hours that concessions are available at the Little League games and kept locked at all other times.

MASTER PLAN

The master plan is graphically presented on page #16 and addresses the concerns of DPR, DMD, the Carson Family and the neighborhood. The plan serves as a guide which can be updated to meet the changing needs of the community. Implementation and development will occur as funds become available.

SIGNAGE/LANDSCAPING

- A plaque honoring the Carson Family is proposed to be placed on the picnic shelter near the tennis courts.

- A new sign has been placed at the entrance to the park in 1981.
- Appropriate landscape material will be installed throughout the park to upgrade and improve the appearance of the park, define the edges of the park and to bring the park down to human scale.
- Earth berms are proposed in an effort to break up the linear orientation of the park.
- Grading is recommended to improve the drainage of the park site.

SERVICE FACILITIES

- Two picnic shelters are proposed placed in the park; one will be located between the tennis courts and playground area and one will be placed at the opposite end of the park near the proposed parking area.
- Citizens in the area have expressed an interest in expanding the concession stand to gain additional space and improve the service.

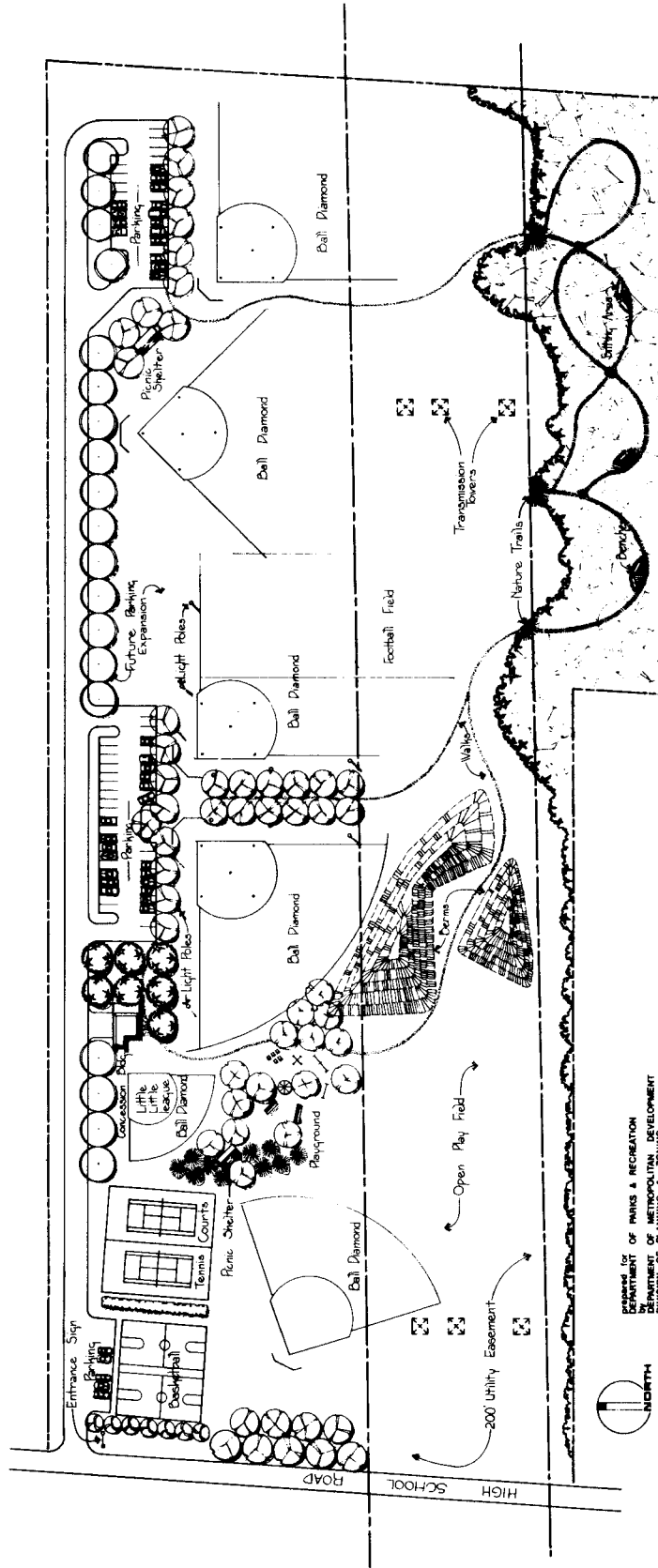
ROADS/PARKING

- Two new parking areas have been proposed to satisfy the parking needs; an area has also been designated for future parkings if the need arises.
- It is recommended that the road into the park be paved.
- Bollards or curbs are proposed for those areas where cars pull onto the grass areas of the park.

SPORTS FACILITIES

- This plan calls for the tennis courts to be striped and color coded.
- Light fixtures are proposed to be placed around two ball fields which are located in the center of the park.
- Players benches are proposed at each of the diamonds.
- The number of ball fields has been increased from four to six in 1981.
- A nature trail and benches are proposed in the southeast wooded area.

CARSON PARK master plan



SEPTEMBER 1960
 THE PREPARATION OF THIS MASTER PLAN WAS FINANCED IN
 PART BY A UNIFIED FEDERAL PLANNING GRANT

PREPARED FOR PARKS & RECREATION
 DEPARTMENT OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT
 DEPARTMENT OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT
 PLANNING & ZONING
 INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

ADOPTED, CASE NO. _____
 BOARD OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONERS

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

BUDGET/FUNDING

As with all governmental agencies, the Department of Parks and Recreation is operating with a tight budget. As budget cuts become more severe, the Department will have to rely on outside funding sources to assist with park development.

Funds from the Community Development Block Grant Program cannot be used due to the fact that Carson Park does not lie within a program target area. Therefore, the majority of improvements will be funded through the Department's yearly budget or a special bond issue.

Other sources of funds in the future might include private donations. The Carson Family has been very generous with two gifts totaling \$25,000. The first \$10,000 gift was used to purchase playground equipment. The remaining \$15,000 was used for the construction of an entrance sign, picnic shelters and backstops for the existing and new ball fields.

Improvements in the future will be made as funds are budgeted and appropriated to projects that satisfy the leisure needs of those living in Decatur Township. If projects in Carson Park continue to be funded over the next few years, the park itself will become more of an asset to the community through its quality environment and recreation opportunities.

DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

Implementation of this plan is more feasible if broken down into individual components. Each of the components are then weighed according to the priorities set by the Design Team. A development schedule is then prepared that includes all of the master plan elements. This schedule serves as a guide that has the flexibility to changes as funds become available or the leisure needs of the people change.

Proposed Schedule

	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Entrance Sign/Plaque	■				
Additional Ballfields	■				
Grading	■				
Concession Expansion		■			
Large Parking Area	■	■			
Shelters	■	■			
Landscaping	■	■	■	■	■
Lights		■			
Bollards or Curbs		■			
Earth Berms		■	■		
Small Parking Area		■	■		
Paved Road		■	■		
Players Benches			■		
Bleachers				■	
Dugouts				■	■
Trails					■

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