

**Rhodius Park
Master Plan**

1997

MISSION STATEMENT
WEST INDIANAPOLIS MAGNET PARK
(includes Rhodius Park and programming at IPS Schools #46, #47 and #49)

The mission of West Indianapolis Magnet Park is to generate significant leisure opportunities for West Indianapolis neighborhoods and the community of businesses, schools and churches. West Indianapolis Magnet Park cluster is unique in that it includes a family center and three IPS schools, along with a pool, baseball fields, tennis courts, playground and picnic area, and a beautiful expanse of green space. West Indianapolis Magnet Park is a major public gathering place for positive recreation experiences and serves as a cornerstone of the community. It initiates and monitors collaborative efforts of all West Indianapolis community organizations to ensure a safe park environment and to match amenities and services with community needs and expectations. Our key to success is positive and interactive resource management to maximize park usage and assure customer satisfaction.

Rhodium Park, located at 1001 South Belmont Avenue in western Indianapolis, provides 33 acres of varied terrain, excellent views of the downtown skyline and opportunities for a variety of recreation pursuits.

Rhodium Park is classified as a magnet park. Magnet parks are designed as major public gathering places for positive recreation experiences for people of all ages and various interests. The magnet parks typically feature a major facility such as a recreation center, swimming pool or ice rink. They also include active recreation facilities such as play courts and fields, and passive recreation facilities such as trails and picnic areas, and natural features such of woodlands and streams.

The goal of this plan is to guide future development of Rhodium Park in a way that protects the site while responding to the recreation needs of the surrounding community.

The plan is divided into two major parts. The first part will be an analysis of the site and the park's service area and will include history, current conditions, and specific concerns and opportunities. The second part of the plan will be recommendations for future development of the site.

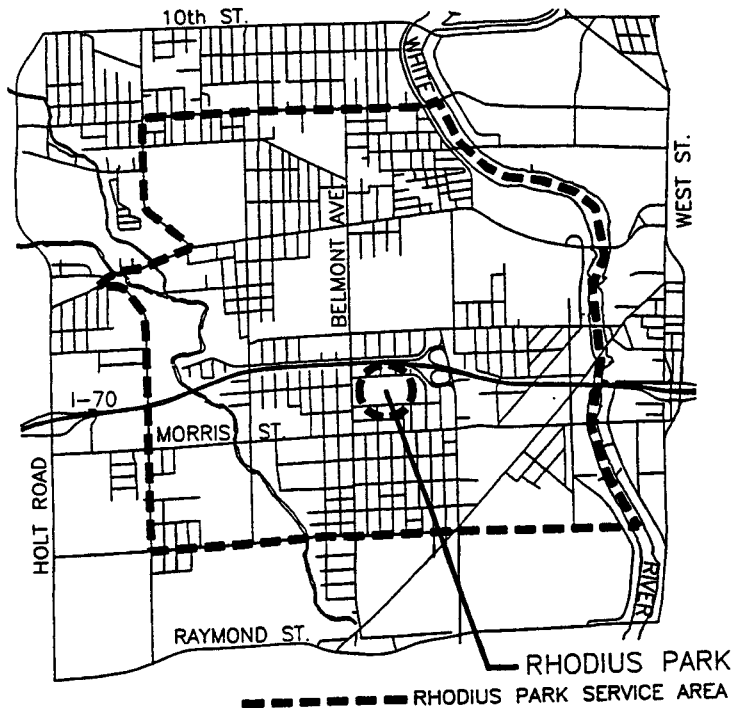
HISTORY

The majority of the land which became Rhodium Park was purchased by the Board of Park Commissioners in 1913 and 1914, the final parcel being added in October 1917. The funds for the acquisition came from the bequest of George Rhodium in his last will and testament.

Rhodium, a local businessman, was the son of German immigrants. After his father's death, Rhodium's mother, Maria, opened a number of restaurants and was best known for building the Circle Park Hotel. According to a history of Assumption parish, Mrs. Rhodium was "considered one of the city's best business women and had accumulated substantial downtown real estate." She sent George to the University of Notre Dame, but he did not graduate. "He could not settle down, associated with women of ill repute, and was declared insane in 1907" He died two years later, but he may have redeemed himself by bequeathing \$191,500 worth of property for beautification of Indianapolis parks. His bequest read, "I recommend that it be done with the end of giving breathing space to the poor element of our city. This being my native city and the city where my mother lived and we both loved it and wished only for its good."

In 1919 survey work was done for the construction of a community center in the park as well as the addition of a swimming pool and athletic field. By 1929 the park contained the community building, 2 baseball diamonds, 3 tennis courts, a football field and a swimming pool. By 1949 a softball diamond, soccer field and eight horseshoe courts had been added to the park.

The park's greatest change in recent years is the 1991 construction of William Penn School #49 on five acres on the eastern end of the park. A community room and office was built in the building for the use of Indy Parks. Indy Parks also has the use of the gym and stage in non-school hours.



SERVICE AREA

Most users of Rhodius Park are likely to live in the area bounded by White River to the east, Minnesota Street to the south, Tibbs Avenue to the west and Michigan Street to the north. The total population the area, 17,508 persons (1990 Census data), reflects both the large size of the user area and density of the area's housing.

Use of park facilities is affected by the age of the likely users. Persons under 18 years old use parks more frequently than the general population. Retirement age persons are less likely to use parks than the general population. The population of the Rhodius Park user area is

29% under the age of 18 and 10% aged 65 and older. This compares to the county's overall population of 25% under the age of 18 and 12% aged 65 and older. This would indicate a slightly higher need for park facilities in this part of the city.

Rhodius Park does not, and should not be expected to, satisfy all of the recreation demand for the area. The area is also served by six smaller, neighborhood parks: Ross-Claypool Park, McCarty Triangle, Indianola Park, Hawthorne Park, Stringtown Park and Max Bahr Park. Additionally, Indy Parks runs recreation programs in 3 area schools: #46, #47 and #49.

Private recreation facilities also provide for the leisure needs of the area. Most of the non-park recreation facilities in the area are offered by community centers (Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center, Hawthorne Social Service Center) and schools (Schools #46, 47, 50, 67 and All Saints Catholic School).

Demand for recreation facilities is based on guidelines provided by the National Recreation and Park Association. These are guidelines only and should be modified to meet the specific needs of individual locales. However they give an indication of how an area is being served.

Following is a chart that shows the recreation facilities available in the Rhodius Park service area and compares them to the guidelines for demand. For most types of facilities, this area is well served. It also appears that the area is over-served by basketball courts and underserved by tennis courts. The unique social history of Indianapolis would suggest that this is probably not true. Instead, the area is probably adequately served with tennis courts and probably somewhat underserved by basketball courts.

Recreation Supply and Demand in the Rhodius Park Service Area						
	Rhodius Park	Other area parks	Schools	Private facilities	Demand	Surplus/Deficit
Basketball courts-indoor	1		5	2	3.5	11.5
Basketball courts-outdoor	1	4	2			
Tennis courts	4		2		9	-3
Volleyball courts	1	2	3	1	3.5	3.5
Baseball fields	4	4			3.5	4.5
Softball fields	1	1	2		3.5	.5
Football fields	1	1	1		1	2
Soccer fields	1				2	-1
Swimming pools	1				1	0
Playgrounds	3	5	2		7	3
Picnic shelters	2	1			3.5	-.5
Recreation centers	1				0.35	0.65

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Old Rhodius Park Recreation Center. The original Rhodius Park Recreation Center was a stucco building constructed in the 1920's in a somewhat Spanish style. Shallow slope hip roofs on the north and south flanked a lower flat roof over the gymnasium. The primary space was the gymnasium which had smaller activity rooms and offices to both sides.

Despite a \$200,000 partial renovation in the mid-1980's, the building continued to deteriorate. A Building Condition Review was conducted in 1992 by a local engineering firm. That study found that the cost to bring the building into satisfactory condition was \$665,753.00. The major items needing attention were:

Repair stucco	\$76,000
Paint exterior	5,000
Replace windows as needed	15,000
Replace doors as needed	17,000
Reroof sloped portions of roof	12,000
Repair soffits, eaves and gutters	11,000
Repair floors as needed	27,000
Repair and repaint plaster and drywall	32,000
Repair damaged ceilings	23,500
Bring building up to the Americans with Disabilities Act standards	27,500

Many smaller items were also identified as needing work.

Due to safety concerns the building was closed in the spring of 1996 following the completion of the Junior basketball league's schedule. Several weeks later a portion of the parapet wall crashed to the sidewalk below. Demolition of the building commenced in January of 1997.

New Rhodius Recreation Center. The new Rhodius Recreation Center is located in the southeast corner of School #49. When William Penn School #49 was built in 1991 on the east end of Rhodius Park, an agreement was made between IPS and Indy Parks for Indy Parks to have use of the gymnasium and stage during non-school hours and for an office and community room to built for the use of Indy Parks and its programs and patrons. The lease between Indy Parks and IPS has a 99 year span.

The gym contains a basketball court that is regulation high school width, although somewhat short on length. Side goals allow the court to be divided in half to accommodate more than one game at a time. Adjustable basketball goals were added in fall of 1996 to accommodate a wider age range of basketball players. The gym is used for the junior basketball program, open gym and is rented out to other groups for basketball.

The stage is used for special events such as talent shows and dances as well as cheerleading classes.

The 26' by 40' community room can accommodate 65 persons at chairs and tables or 100 persons in chairs. It contains a closet kitchenette and vending machines. The community room is used for classes and community meetings (including WINC, the West Indianapolis Neighborhood Congress) and is frequently rented out for parties and reunions. Although usage varies seasonally, the community room is usually in use three to four nights a week plus weekends.

The entire center is regularly rented out by a neighborhood church for its youth program and is used in the summer for the GATHER day camp.

The Indy Parks portion of the building has its own entrance. However the entrance is unmarked by signs, so from the outside it does not have its own identity and appears to be another school entrance.

At public meetings held during the park planning process, the concern was expressed that the community room seemed too much like a schoolroom and thus was not attractive to youngsters who had already spent all day in school or who did not like school.

Playground/other outdoor facilities at School #49. On the north side of the school are a variety of recreation facilities built by the school for student's use, but are also available at other times for the use of the community. They include three pieces of play equipment (two swingsets and a climber), a basketball court and games painted on a 90' by 125' asphalt surface. The basketball goals were installed at a lower the regulation height. This has drawn large numbers of users to the court to practice slam-dunking. This has resulted in the destruction of the goals.

Playground on hill. The playground on the hill includes ten pieces of play equipment (three swingsets, a whirl, 2 spring animals, a climber, a rocket slide, a buck-about, and a sandbox). The playground does not have safety surfacing under the equipment. Some pieces do not meet the latest safety standards and should be removed and replaced.

Cascella playground/shelter. The John Cascella playground was built in 1994. The playground was funded by radio station WFBQ, Indianapolis Public Schools and Indianapolis Parks Foundation and was built by Indy Parks. It was named for John Cascella, a noted local musician. It contains a modular play structure, 5-seat swingset and a double-seat spring animal shaped like a dinosaur. The modular unit is handicapped accessible and contains 16 play functions, including 4 slides.

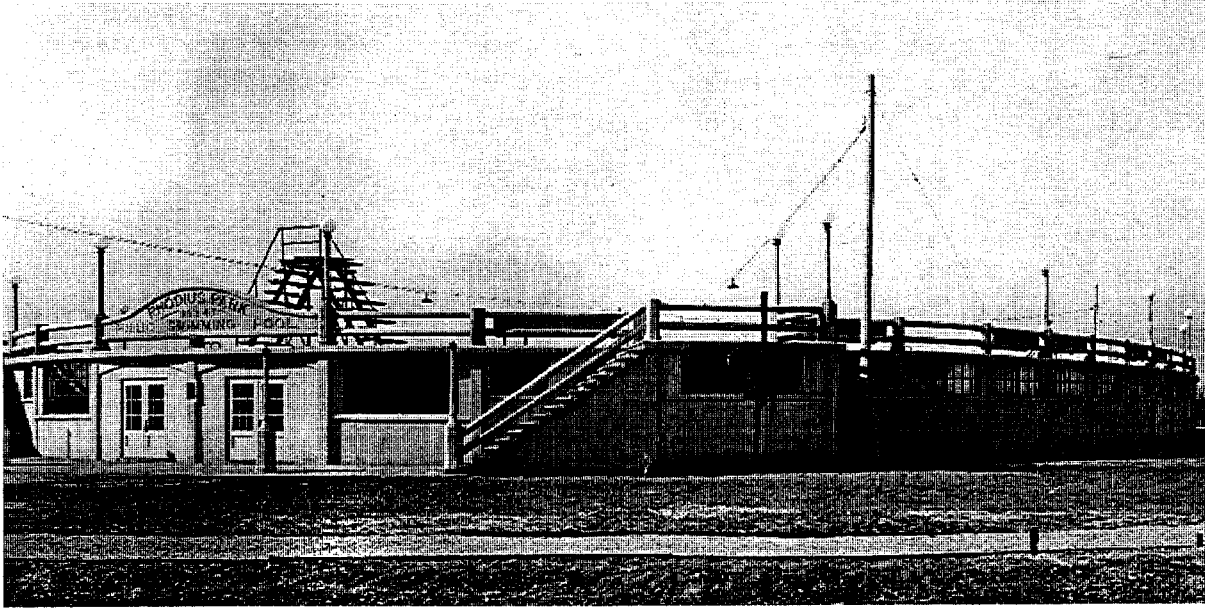
A 12' by 20' picnic shelter was built adjacent to the playground at the time the playground was built. It contains handicapped accessible tables and grills. The shelter is seldom used for picnicking and is too small to rent for reunions and other events. The shelter's main usage is for parent's supervising their children on the playground. Both the playground and the shelter are heavily used by classes from School #49.

Little league fields. Rhodius Park is the home of the Carnine Little League. The League maintains five fields: a large field (diamond #3) for ages 13 to 18, two medium sized fields (diamonds #1 and #2) for ages 9 - 12 and two small fields (diamonds #4 and #5) for ages 4 to 8. Drainage is poor on the two small fields. All the diamonds are unlit.

When the Little League is using the park, it generates a great deal of traffic and a large demand for parking. The streets around the park become lined with cars. This can cause problems for nearby residents. Much of the parking occurs along Wilkins Street. Once parked, Little Leaguers and the adults with them must negotiate the steep slope down to the diamonds. No stairs exist to ease the climb.

The League also operates a concession building. In 1996 the League, with help from National Starch and Chemical, Lilly Technology Center, Kenneth Smock Associates, Prairie Concrete and Indy Parks, built a 30' by 60' picnic shelter. This shelter serves the league well by being centrally located. However because it is not located near a street or parking area, persons have started driving through the park to reach the shelter causing turf damage, rutting and erosion. A combination football and soccer field is located between the tennis courts and the pool along Wyoming Street.

Pool. Rhodius Park has had a pool since the 1920's. The current pool dates from 1971; a new liner was installed in 1996. The 12,148 square foot pool accommodates approximately 350 swimmers. Average attendance is 13,000 annually. Adjacent to the main pool are a wading pool and a spray pool. The pools and the bathhouse are in relatively good condition. The pool area lacks many of the items that are popular in newer aquatic centers. These items include grassy sunning areas, large umbrellas or other shade devices and deck furniture. The spray pool is a simple spray rather than the complex waterplay units available elsewhere.



Rhodius Park Public Swimming Pool, established 1924

Tennis courts. The four tennis courts are cracked and in need of resurfacing. They are used by the general public and by the National Junior Tennis League. However the courts are rarely used to capacity.

Sidewalks. Sidewalks line the park's west and south boundaries. A walk also sweeps along the curve of the hill top and is intersected by a pair of walks entering the park from the southwest corner. Most of the walks are made of asphalt and are in need of repair.

Trees. Trees of various species, sizes and ages are scattered throughout the park. Many trees are large specimens of desirable species such as Littleleaf Linden, Sugar Maple, Scarlet Oak and several varieties of Spruce. However there are many large Mulberries and Elms which are not as desirable and should eventually be replaced. New planting have occurred in the southwest corner, near the Cascella playground and around the new school building. The north edge and the central parts of the park have very few trees. Shrubbery near the pool tends to be overgrown and in need of rejuvenation. A neighborhood sponsored perennial bed has been planted in the southwest corner of the park.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

As a part of this master planning process, two public workshops were held to gather the concerns and wishes of the community. Items were listed and then rated. Among the items rated most highly were a picnic shelter on the upper part of the park, restrooms, and a community room or hall with kitchen facilities. Among the items that rated especially low were a skateboard area, grills and water fountains.

MASTER PLAN

Rhodus Recreation Center. The recreation center entrance should have exterior wall signs erected to clearly identify the center and differentiate it from the school entrances. The interior finishes of the community room should be modified to appear less spartan and institutional.

To accommodate larger functions a meeting hall is proposed as an addition to the existing recreation center. This addition should serve 125 to 150 persons and contain kitchen and storage space. A space of 1650 to 2400 square feet should accommodate such a facility. Restrooms with exterior access could also be provided. By adding on to the existing center, the addition could be monitored with existing staff. Although the meeting hall would be attached to School #49, it should be architecturally distinct from the main building.

If it is not possible to build an addition to the existing Center, an alternative is proposed. The existing bathhouse could be demolished and a new bathhouse built in the southeast corner of the pool area. The new bathhouse could contain the proposed meeting hall space. Moving the bathhouse to this location would provide a better connection to the parking lot. If the meeting hall was built with the bathhouse, it should be architecturally distinct and should be able to function independently.

Playground/other facilities at school. The play equipment at the school should be examined for compliance with safety standards. If found to be unsafe, they should be upgraded. Basketball goals should be replaced at regulation height.

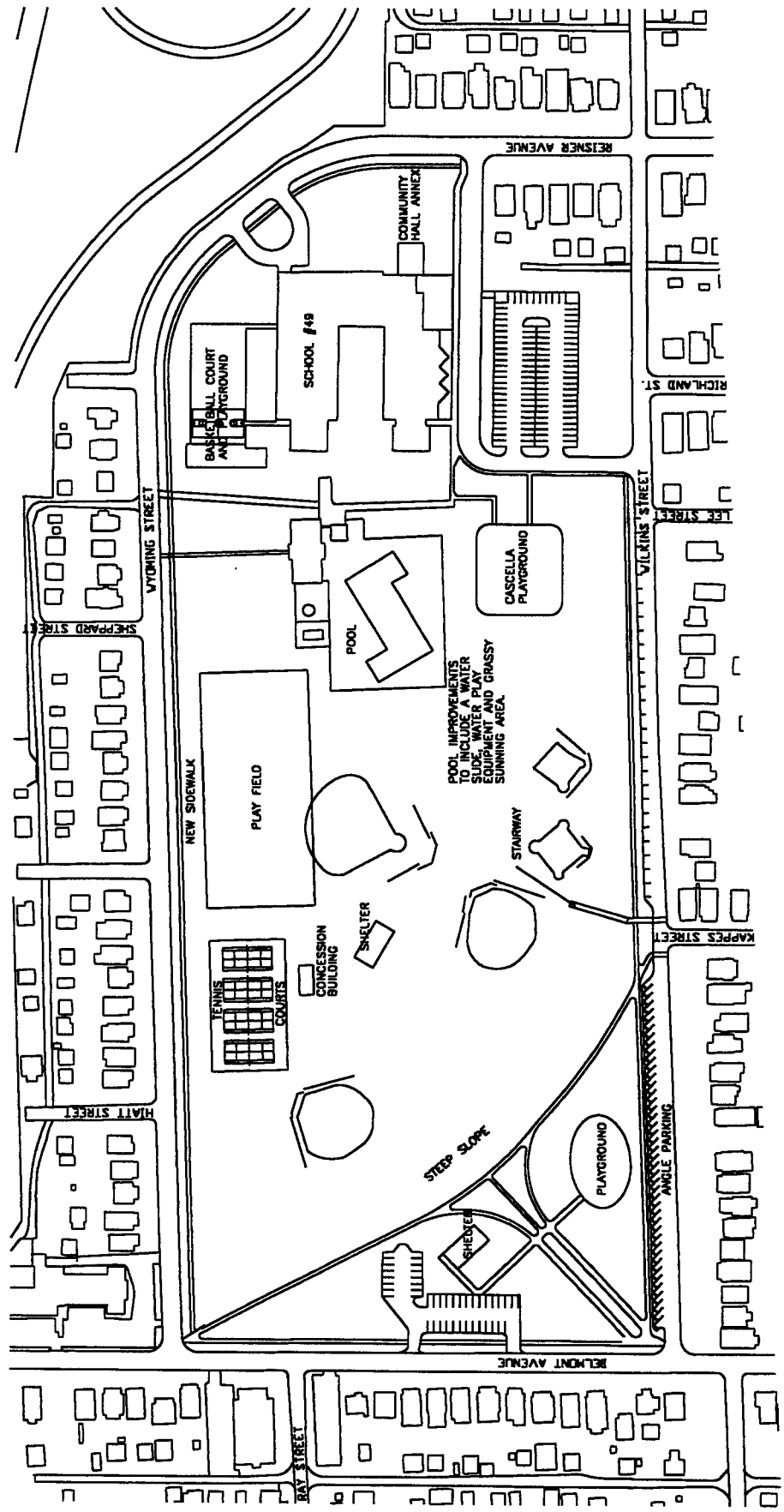
Playground on hill. This playground should be rejuvenated by removing and replacing all the worn out and outmoded equipment. Two of the swingsets should be moved to provide for adequate safety zones. All equipment should have safety surfacing applied within their safety zones.

Cascella playground/shelter. No new improvements are proposed for the Cascella playground. Ongoing maintenance should be observed.

Little league fields. Drainage on all fields should be improved, particularly diamonds #4 and #5. These two diamonds are also recommended to be lit. These are the only two diamonds that are proposed to be lit. The lighting should be directed on the fields only and should not shine into neighboring homes.

To help alleviate the parking problems, angle parking is recommended along the western block of Wilkins Street. Angle parking along the eastern blocks of Wilkins Street is not recommended due to the narrower width of the street. A stairway from Wilkins Street down to the ball diamond is recommended.

Providing a water line to the Carnine picnic shelter is recommended. The vehicle track back to the shelter should be regraded and reseeded to repair the damage done to the area. A drive back to that may need to be gated for exclusive use of the Little League.

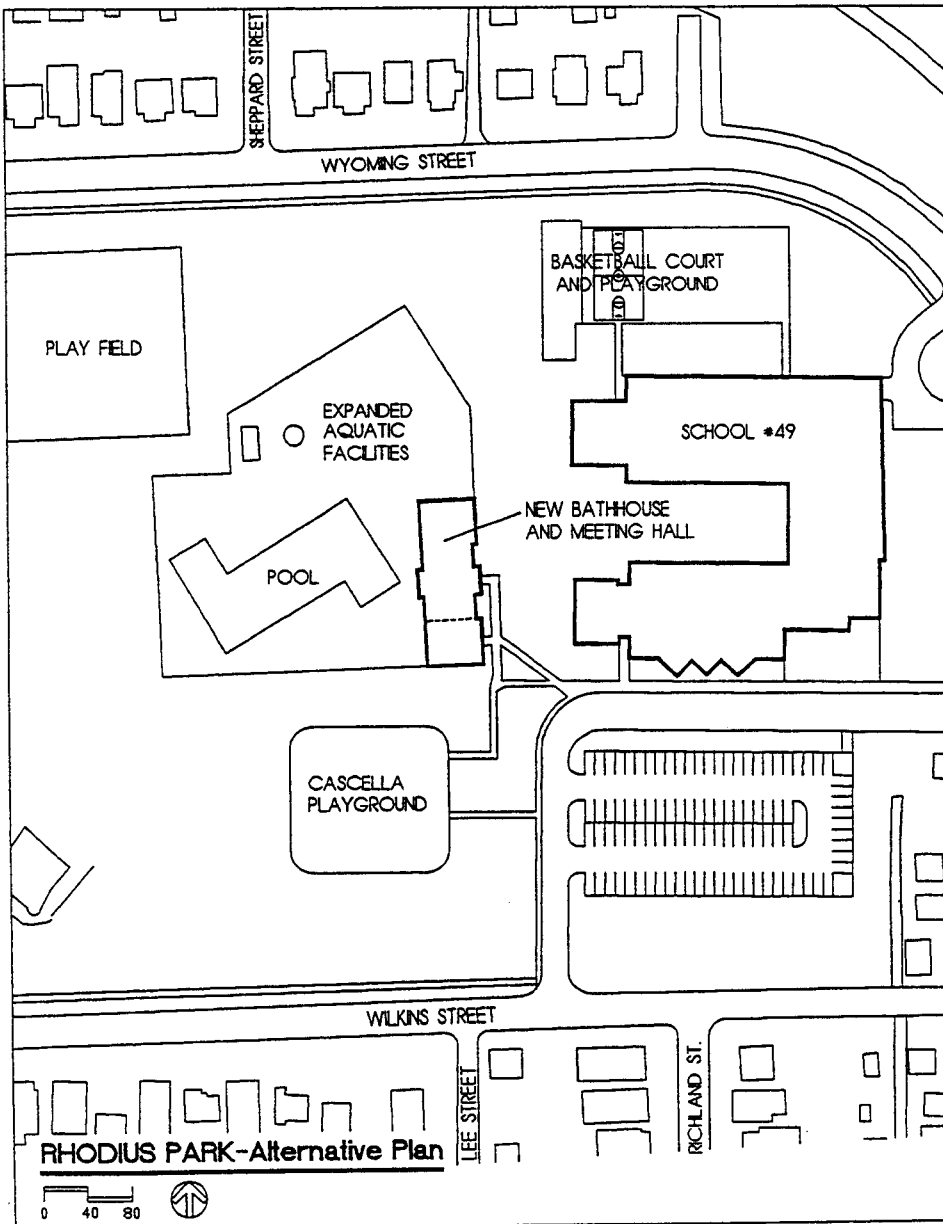


A restroom addition to the concession building would provide a much needed service to the park.

Pool. To broaden the appeal of the Rhodius pool, additional amenities are recommended. These amenities include a water slide and waterplay equipment similar to that installed at Brookside and Krannert Parks. Enclosure of a grassy sunning area is also recommended.

Tennis courts. The tennis courts should be repaired. Reducing the number of courts and moving them elsewhere in the park was considered as part of the master planning process. However the advantages gained by relocating the courts do not appear to be worth the expense.

Sidewalks. Existing walks should be retained and repaired as needed. Additional walks should be built along the park's north and east edges. Construction of these walks will



complete a full loop of the park. The walks should be built back from the edge of pavement to provide for a tree lawn.

Trees. A joint neighborhood and Indy Parks tree planting project for Rhodius Park was begun in the fall of 1996. Ultimately the goal of this project will be to renew the park's urban forest. The project started with planting trees along Wyoming Street and Belmont Avenue and on top of the hill in the park's southwest corner. Additional tree plantings should provide shade in the park's uses areas as well as providing some

buffering between the use areas. The new plantings should also start to replace the mulberries and elms along Wilkins Street.

Overall lighting in the park should be improved.

Many persons, both citizens and park professionals, worked together to ensure that Rhodius Park will satisfy many of the recreation needs of the West Indianapolis community. So that Rhodius Park may continue to be responsive to the needs of its users, this master plan should be frequently reviewed and periodically updated.

GENERAL RESOLUTION NO. 69, 1997

BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONSOLIDATED CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE
CONSOLIDATED CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS THAT:

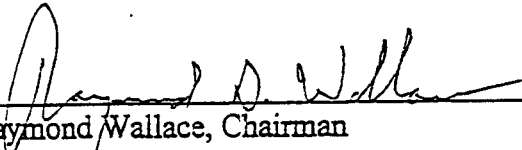
calling for **APPROVAL OF PARK MASTER PLAN**

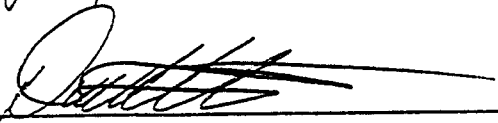
**THE DEPARTMENT SEEKS APPROVAL TO APPROVE THE MASTER PLAN
FOR RHODIUS PARK. THIS PLAN WILL BE USED TO GUIDE FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARK. THE PLAN PROVIDES FOR ADDITIONAL
TRAILS AND A PICNIC SHELTER, PLAYGROUND RESTORATION AND
EXPANSION OF THE EXISTING RECREATION CENTER.**

The form of which is to be approved by the Department Attorney, be and is hereby
APPROVED.


FURTHER, RESOLVED, that the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation is
hereby authorized and directed to execute such agreement for and in behalf of the Department.

BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONSOLIDATED CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS

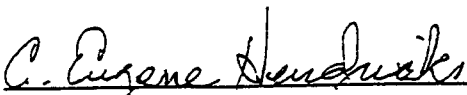

Raymond Wallace, Chairman


Diana Wilson Hall


Assistant Corporation Counsel


Nekole Hulitt, Secretary

R. Anthony Prather


C. Eugene Hendricks

5/15/97
Date

Vacant

METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA

Resolution No. 97-CPS-R-004

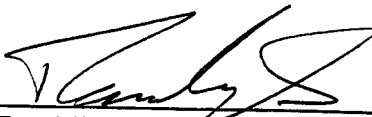
RESOLUTION 97-CPS-R-004 Amending a segment of the Comprehensive or Master Plan of Marion County, Indiana -- New Master Plan for Rhodius Park located at 601 S. Belmont Avenue. The Master Plan addresses recreation developments including walking paths, picnicking and playground facilities, community meeting hall and other park improvements.

BE IT RESOLVED, that, pursuant to I.C. 36-7-4, the Metropolitan Development Commission of Marion County, Indiana, hereby amends the COMPREHENSIVE OR MASTER PLAN OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA, by the adoption of the Rhodius Park Master Plan, which is hereto, and incorporated herein by reference as an AMENDMENT TO THE COMPREHENSIVE OR MASTER PLAN OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Metropolitan Development Commission is directed to certify copies of the RESOLUTION 97-CPS-R-004, 1997 AMENDING THE COMPREHENSIVE OR MASTER PLAN OF MARION COUNTY, INDIANA, RHODIUS PARK MASTER PLAN.

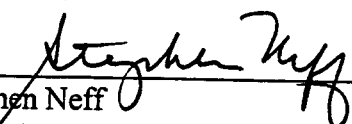
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Director of the Department of the Metropolitan Development is directed to mail or deliver certified copies of this RESOLUTION 97-CPS-R-004, 1997, to legislative authorities of all incorporated cities and towns in Marion County, Indiana, the Mayor of the City of Indianapolis, the City-County Council of Indianapolis and Marion County, and Board of Commissioners of Marion County, Indiana. The Director shall also file one (1) copy of the resolution in the office of the Recorder of Marion County, Indiana.

Date: JUL 02 1997



Presiding Officer
Metropolitan Development
Commission

APPROVED AS TO LEGAL FORM AND
LEGAL ADEQUACY THIS 19 DAY
OF JUNE, 1997.



Stephen Neff
Assistant Corporation Counsel

RHODIUS PARK MASTER PLAN
MARCH 1997

BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Diana Wilson Hall
C. Eugene Hendricks
R. Anthony Prather
Raymond Wallace

INDIANAPOLIS PARKS AND RECREATION

Raymond Wallace, Director
Joseph Wynns, Deputy Director

Keith Holdsworth, Senior Park Planner
Elaine Dillahunt, Magnet Park Manager
Leslie Clark, Magnet Park Administrator
Donald Colvin, Principal Park Planner
Suzanne Snapp, Activity Specialist