

2006 Riverwood Park Master Plan



2006 Riverwood Park Master Plan

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| Mr. William H. Stinson | |

Department of Parks and Recreation:

Joseph Wynns, Director

Project Coordination:

Donald A. Colvin Jr., Administrator, Resource Development

Michael Krosschell, Principal Park Planner

Andre Denman, Principal Park Planner

Benjamin Jackson, Senior Park Planner

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INTRODUCTION

Located at 7201 Crittenden Avenue., Riverwood Park is designated as a Neighborhood Park and open space for the Ravenswood neighborhood and surrounding community. The land formerly served as an Elementary school in the IPS Washington Township Schools system. Riverwood Park, acquired in 2004, as a land lease from Washington Township Schools, is made up of 12.0 acres, and serves the residents of Indianapolis' White River and Ravenswood neighborhoods.

The 2004 Indianapolis-Marion County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan defines neighborhood parks by stating that: “Neighborhood Parks remain the basic unit of the park system and serve as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. They should be developed for both active and passive recreation activities geared specifically for those living in the service area. Accommodating a wide variety of age and user groups, including children, adults, senior citizens, and special populations, is important. Creating a sense of place by bringing together the unique character of the site with that of the neighborhood is vital to successful design.”.

HISTORY

Washington Township Schools closed the elementary in 1995. Since then the facility has served as a storage facility. Flooding of this section of the White River is a nearly annual event and many of the surrounding parcels find themselves holding water. DPW uses the parking lot as a staging area for flood relief, providing residents with sandbags, bottled water and other supplies. In 2004 Washington Township Schools agreed to lease the land and building to Indy Parks in a 99 year lease to serve as a recreational facility for the neighborhood.



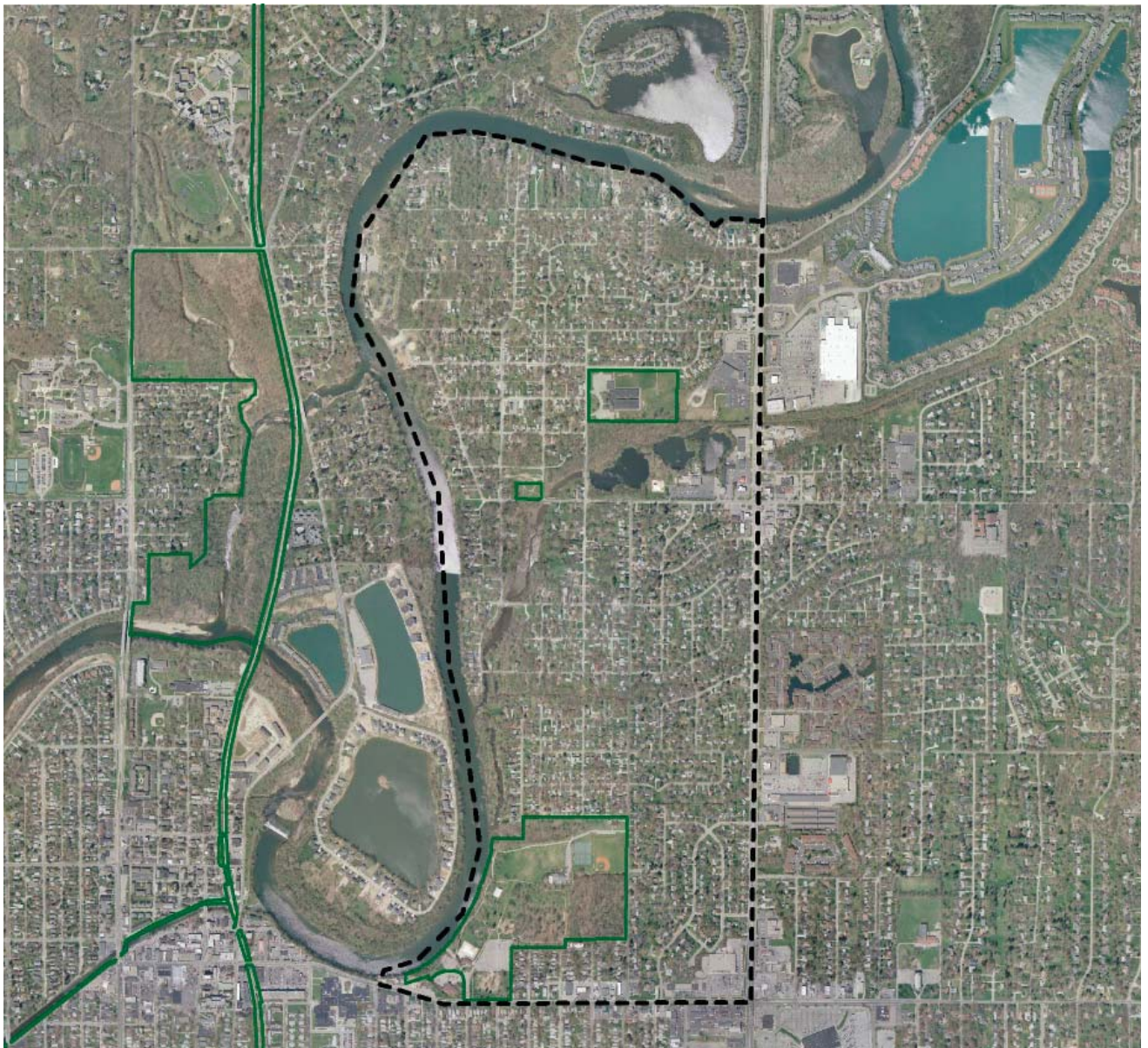
Northwest Corner of Riverwood Park

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SERVICE AREA

Riverwood Park is one of three parks in the Ravenswood neighborhood. It should be considered as the complementing active park to the nature area at Stamm Park. These parks serve the residents of the area bounded by Keystone Avenue, Bailey Creek and White River. There are approximately 800 homes in this area. Residents south of 71st Street may also be drawn to use Broad Ripple Park, 1/2 mile to the south.

Both pedestrians and those in vehicles can easily access Riverwood Park via parking and vehicular access from the west on Crittenden Avenue, or by foot on the north side of the park.



Ravenswood Park Demographic Service Area

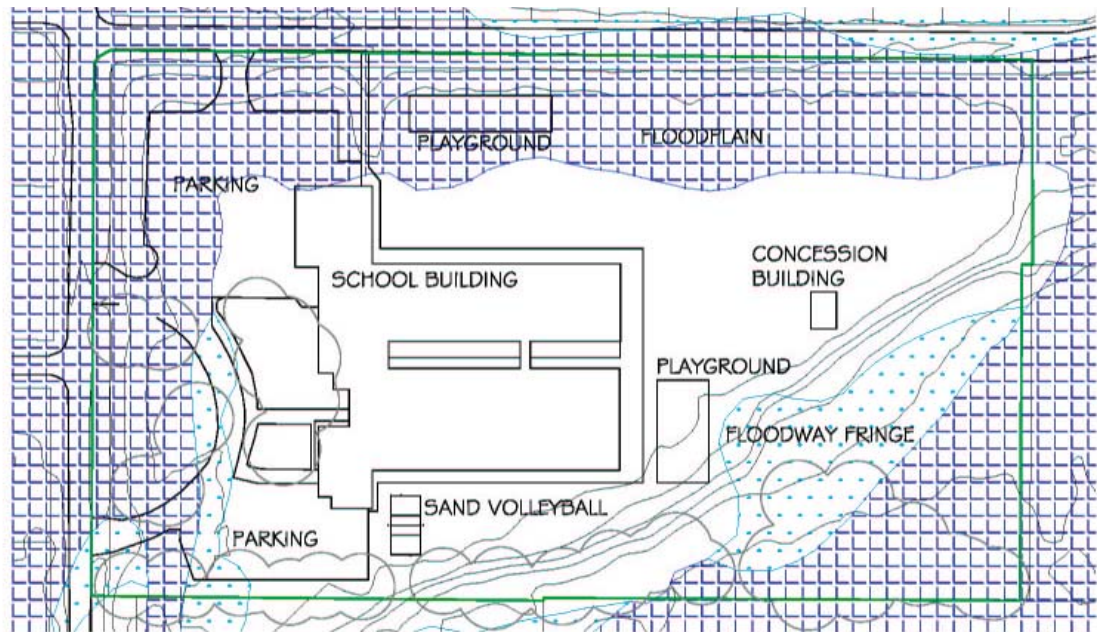
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EXISTING CONDITONS

The park itself is approximately 12.0 acres and is mostly flat open lawn, however it does slope steeply down at the southeastern corner. Haynes Avenue forms the northern border of the park, while it is bordered on the west by Crittendon Ave. The southern and eastern borders are shared with the local Knights of Columbus.



Riverwood park looking south.



PRODUCED BY:
DEPT. OF PARKS
AND RECREATION,
PLANNING SECTION

RIVERWOOD PARK
DRAWN: 9.29.05

EXISTING
CONDITIONS



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Currently, the old White River School building dominates the western half of the site. The building's potential for conversion into a community center or gym is very limited. Structurally, the building's layout would be impractical for recreational use and very awkward for security. The existing school gym is too small for a full size basketball court, and the two pronged corridor halls would make it difficult for the park manager to have full visibility from a central location. Also, the roof of the building is failing, asbestos tile and insulation is prolific within the building and the gym is infested with black mold.



The old School Front



The old Gynasium



The typical condition of the interior of the old school building circa September 2005

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The site overall is fairly flat and the grade is currently high enough above the surrounding area that it remains above water during annual flooding events that plague this part of the city. For this reason, DPW uses the parking lot as a staging area for flood relief efforts.



East side of the park along
Crittenden



Existing basketball
courts in disrepair

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Two old playground areas currently exist with out-dated steel and aluminum play equipment. None of the equipment meets current federal safety codes and no safety surface exists below the equipment.



Existing playground equipment.

A small concession building exists on the East side of the park that used to service the ball fields there. This building is in very poor condition.



The old concession building.

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DEMOGRAPHICS

Riverwood Park's service area is best described by Census Tract 3206.00. This tract includes the area described on Page 5 as the Park's Service Area. The population of this Tract is compared to Washington Township and Marion County statistics.

| 2000 Census Data | | Service Area | Washington Township | Marion County | Service Area | Washington Township | Marion County |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Race | Total | 2,889 | 132,927 | 860,454 | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| | One Race | 2,851 | 130,701 | 846,335 | 98.68% | 98.33% | 98.36% |
| | Two Race | 38 | 2,226 | 14,119 | 1.32% | 1.67% | 1.64% |
| | White | 2,750 | 90,627 | 606,502 | 95.19% | 68.18% | 70.49% |
| | Black | 40 | 35,840 | 207,964 | 1.38% | 26.96% | 24.17% |
| | Hispanic | 24 | 4,183 | 33,290 | 0.83% | 3.15% | 3.87% |
| | Ai Alask | 11 | 741 | 2,181 | 0.38% | 0.56% | 0.25% |
| | Asian | 25 | 1,913 | 12,325 | 0.87% | 1.44% | 1.43% |
| | HawaPi | 1 | 45 | 365 | 0.03% | 0.03% | 0.04% |
| | | | | | | | |
| Age | Total | 2,889 | 132,927 | 860,454 | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| | Under Age 5 | 170 | 7,873 | 63,640 | 7.17% | 5.92% | 7.40% |
| | Age 5-19 | 494 | 23,429 | 181,069 | 17.34% | 17.63% | 21.04% |
| | Age 20-59 | 1,796 | 78,519 | 490,785 | 59.58% | 59.07% | 57.04% |
| | Age 60-84 | 399 | 20,748 | 113,447 | 14.34% | 15.61% | 13.18% |
| | Age 85 and above | 30 | 2,358 | 11,513 | 1.56% | 1.77% | 1.34% |
| | | | | | | | |
| Housing Units | Total | 1,345 | 65,117 | 387,183 | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| | Occupied | 1,288 | 59,606 | 352,164 | 95.76% | 91.54% | 90.96% |
| | Vacant | 57 | 5,511 | 35,019 | 4.24% | 8.46% | 9.04% |
| | Owner Occupied | 1,052 | 33,721 | 208,957 | 81.68% | 56.57% | 59.34% |
| | Renter Occupied | 236 | 25,885 | 143,207 | 18.32% | 43.43% | 40.66% |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Gender | Total | 2,889 | 132,927 | 860,454 | 100.00% | 100.00% | 100.00% |
| | Males | 1,469 | 63,138 | 415,998 | 50.85% | 47.50% | 48.35% |
| | Females | 1,420 | 69,789 | 444,456 | 49.15% | 52.50% | 51.65% |

Statistics of note are a much higher percentage of white residents, and a conversely lower percentage of black residents than the county averages. Age distributions within the resident population are similar to the Township and County figures. The percentages of Occupied Houses and Owner Occupied housing units are both much higher than the Township and County statistics.

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The design of the neighborhoods and communities that make up Indianapolis wouldn't be successful without good communication. An integral part of the park master planning process are the public meetings held with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) staff, neighbors, neighborhood organization leaders and special interest groups. Without this critical external communication, Indy Parks would not be successful in serving park users.

In developing the Riverwood Park Master Plan, Indy Parks conducted two meetings with the general public. The following are the minutes from these two meetings.



A typical Public meeting. Unfortunately no pictures were taken for the Riverwood park meetings so this photo will serve as a stand in.

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Meeting Minutes

Date: 06/28/05 7:00 PM
Project: White River School Park Master Plan
Location: Glendale Christian Church, 1788 Haynes Avenue
Reported By: Michael Krosschell

MEETING MINUTES:

1. Mr. Michael Krosschell, Principal Park Planner, opened the meeting at 6:30 PM. He explained to the audience the purpose for a Master Plan, the process of writing one and what the Master Plan will contain. He described White River School Park's (WRSP) role in the Indy Parks system as a Neighborhood Park as defined in the 2004 Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
2. He described how in 2004 Indy Parks leased the property from the Washington Township School Board, for a term of 99 years. This lease shifted responsibility for all site features, including the school building to Indy Parks. He then reviewed the existing conditions at WRSP. The property contains a boarded up school building, two run-down playgrounds, a basketball court, parking lots and a backstop. It is largely flat, sloping down in the southeast corner. Only the center of the site is above the 500-year floodplain.
3. Mr. Krosschell review with the audience photographs of the site, and then solicited suggestions from attendees for features they would like to see included in the park. Below is a table containing all of the elements listed.

| Desirable Outdoor Features | Suggestions for the Building |
|--|--|
| Renovate/Replace Basketball Court | Remove entire structure to free up space for ballfields |
| Horseshoe Pits | Remove classroom wings and renovate building core |
| Replace Playground | Remove entire structure and replace with modern Recreation Center, including gymnasium |
| Install Tennis Court | Remove entire structure and replace with small Family Center |
| Walking Trails (gravel) | |
| SprayGround | It was noted that it may be less expensive to construct a new building than to renovate a 51year old building |
| Trees, shaded areas | It was emphasized that residents of the neighborhood are most interested in a facility that offers constructive activities for youth after school hours and on weekends. |
| Shaded benches | |
| Naturalized Areas | |
| Versatile Ballfields | |
| Picnic Shelter | |
| It was noted that in times of flooding, the property is used as staging ground for DPW sandbagging and Red Cross operations. Displaced residents also park vehicles on the property, the highest ground in the neighborhood. | |
| Covered Shelter House, for weddings/photos | |
| Restroom Facilities | |

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4. Another discussion followed about the Park's name. Attendees were informed that the decision ultimately lies with the Board of the Department of Parks and Recreation. Mr. Krosschell solicited suggestions for consideration, a list of which follow.

Suggested Park Names

White River School Park

School Park

River School Park

Beaver Park

Haynes Park

Ravenswood Park

Liberty Park

Feeney Park

Feeney River Heights Park

Mr. Krosschell shared that Indy Parks staff would further research and study these suggestions and the site. In several months, a second meeting will be advertised at which time staff will present back to the public one or two draft plans for the park. At that time, suggestions, comments and questions will be welcomed.

Approximately 40 people attended the meeting, including representatives from Ravenswood Area, Greater Allisonville Community Council, and other organizations.



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Meeting Minutes

Date: 09/29/05 7:00 PM

Project: White River School Park Master Plan

Location: Glendale Christian Church, 1788 Haynes Avenue

Reported By: Ben Jackson

MEETING MINUTES:

1. Mr. Don Colvin, Resource Development Administrator for Indy Parks, opened the meeting at 6:30 PM. He reviewed the steps taken to get to the current point of this project, and bit about the behind the scenes developments. He also reviewed for the audience the purpose of the master plan and how it can help in fund raising and developing the park.
2. Ben Jackson, Senior Park Planner then reviewed the most desired elements from the last meeting, existing site conditions, and presented the two different plan options developed by planning.
3. The most significant difference in the two plans presented was to keep a portion of the old school building and renovate it into a recreation center or to demolish it and start over with a brand new center. While many residents expressed nostalgia for the old school building the overwhelming choice by those in attendance was to demolish the building and create a new Center. Also of notable concern was to create and maintain as much of a "nature" feel on the park as possible. Bearing this in mind it became important to keep noisy and active elements as far away from the wooded area to the South as possible. The attendants also expressed the desire that if the building would not be removed soon, they would like to see a shelter, playground, trees and path developed in the meantime. Mr. Colvin said that this would be possible. The other important element to keep in mind is that DPW be able to continue to carry out flood relief from the site.
4. Next, discussion moved to possibilities for fund raising and volunteer efforts to move the project along. Mr. Colvin discussed at length how Indy Parks and the Parks Foundation have partnered many times with local groups to develop park elements. More discussion followed about the approval and adoption process the finished master plan would go through.
5. Lastly discussion turned to the name of the park. The overall majority desired that the park be named Feeney Park after the former principal of the school who had a large and positive impact on the community and was well liked by virtually everyone.
6. Mr. Colvin then told the public that the preferred plan would be refined to accommodate this meeting's comments and then written into a final master plan draft which would be provided to the neighborhood. There was not a request for a third meeting.

Approximately 25 people attended the meeting, including representatives from Ravenswood Area, Greater Allisonville Community Council, and other organizations.

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The following is a letter from the Ravenswood/ White River Neighborhood Association to Indy Parks Formally requestiong the Park be named "Riverwood Park".



September 14, 2006

Mr. Don Colvin
Indy Parks and Recreation
200 E. Washington Street
1830 City County Building
Indianapolis, IN 46204

RE: Name for park located at Crittenden Ave & Haynes Ave

Dear Mr. Colvin:

After discussion with the members of our neighborhood association board and many of the members of our community, we would like to submit Riverwood as the name chosen for the park located at the old White River Elementary School on the corner of Crittenden Ave & Haynes Ave.

We do not believe that Feeney would be an appropriate name, as Mr. Feeney never lived in this community. Therefore, we oppose naming the park after him. In addition, we believe that the name Ravenswood Park would be inappropriate. We are now very proud of the area that we live in and near, however, for many years Ravenswood has not been held in the highest of regards. With scandals such as the notorious Tuffy Mitchell dying at the Landings, along with the racketeering and gangster activity, many who live in the adjacent neighborhoods of Ralston Heights, Terrace Beach, and Ravenswood feel that naming the park Riverwood for the river and wooded area that we hold dear, is so much more appropriate.

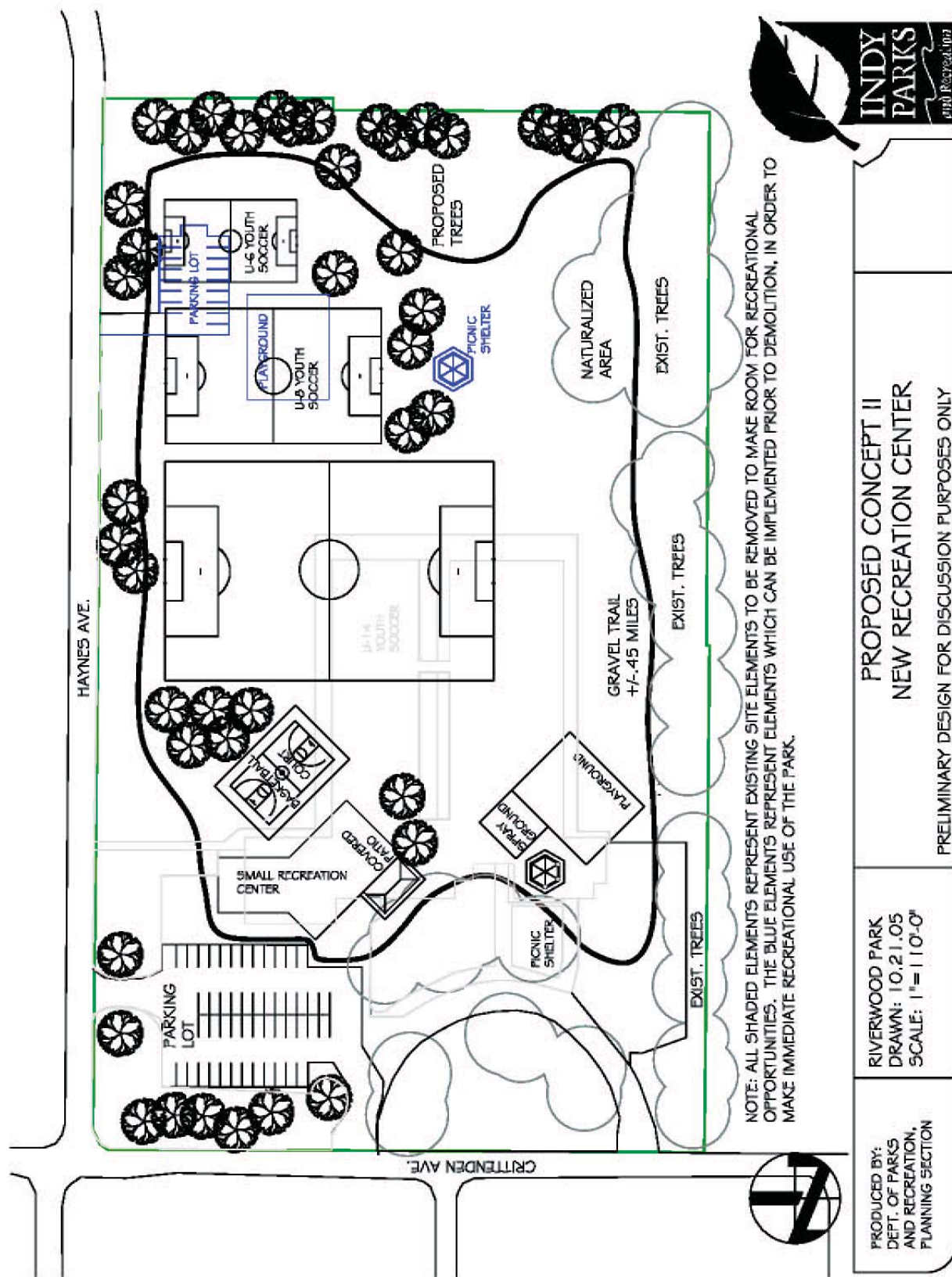
So on behalf of the Ravenswood/White River Neighborhood Association we ask that you would submit the name Riverwood Park as our choice of names.

We look forward to your attending our next association meeting on Monday, October 2nd at 7:00 pm. Please feel free to contact Suze Stamm or me if you have any questions or need any further information.

Sincerely,

Marsha Miller
Secretary/Treasurer
Ravenswood/White River Neighborhood Association

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MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

Situated in the midst of a well established residential area, Riverwood Park provides a much needed recreational opportunity. Passive recreational features such as the picnic shelter and walking paths allow the public to experience the beauty of this park. Active features like the playground and ball fields allow for vibrant and energetic activities for kids.

Two concepts have been developed for this park. The two concepts depend on the findings of an engineering study recommending salvaging or demolishing the existing school building. Concept 1 would retain part of the school and renovate it as a community center. Concept 2 would involve the demolition of the building and open up the site to develop an all-new community center and allows a much more flexible layout. At any rate, addressing the school building will probably be more than 5 years in the future and amenities need to be supplied in the more immediate future. Concept 2 shows the installation of temporary facilities including a parking lot, playground and hexagon shelter. These facilities would later be relocated after the school building was removed. As stated in the minutes from the second public meeting, Concept number 2 is the community's preferred concept.

The following list of park amenities has been developed from public input and staff experience, recommendations and expertise.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Two concepts exist as to how a community center could be realized at Riverwood Park. As mentioned above, an engineer's analysis of the existing building will determine the feasibility of renovating a portion of the school building into a center. If renovation is cost prohibitive, then the location of a new facility has been identified.

FENCING AND SIGNAGE

The park currently has no identifying parks signage. The standard signage identifying the park's name and rules is recommended on the east side by the entrance.

PARK BENCHES

Benches, 5 or 6 at the most, could be located at strategic locations along the walking trail, where there are notable natural features or pleasant views.

PARKING LOT

For both safety and accessibility reasons, several parking spaces should be provided at the park. These have been located off of Crittenden. The existing parking lot could be cut down and salvaged. They should have a direct connection to the park's interior paths to maintain universal accessibility.

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PICNIC SHELTER

A small shelter would be a great asset for the park. This would allow all-weather enjoyment of the space, as well as increased programming opportunities. This structure should be small and on a concrete surface, with only a couple of tables. Another possibility for shelter would be to add a covered patio of the south side of the new Community Center.

WALKING PATHS

To allow pedestrians' access into and through the park, a small network of crushed stone paths should be constructed. With minor regrading of the site, these can be made universally accessible with a pleasant curvilinear layout, and connecting the playground, sports fields, spray park, and shelters.

NATURALIZED PLANTINGS

The existing vegetation in Riverwood Park consists entirely of mown lawn and some older trees. The central area of the park should remain lawn to provide for continued use as Soccer fields. Both Concepts call for more tree plantings and possibly some localized shrub beds and foundation plantings. Lastly, planting around the park signage would provide an opportunity for perennials and low shrubs.

SPRAY GROUNDS

Spray grounds are a much desired feature in our neighborhood parks. They are less expensive than a full swimming pool, and provide a very high play value for local children. Spray Grounds don't contain standing water and only function when users are present to activate the sprays. The spray clocks run on a ten minute cycle then shut off automatically. No Parks' staff lifeguard is needed to run the Sprays.

BASKETBALL COURT

This is another feature much desired in most of Indy Parks. A court in this park would likely receive considerable use by the surrounding neighborhoods. The location of the Basketball court in the proposed concepts keeps a respectful distance from neighbors, shelter, and playground.

SOCCER FIELDS

The site has plenty of flat open space which would be perfect for a soccer field layout. Concept 2 allows for a second youth sized soccer field. Also, a north/ south alignment is preferred due to sun angles.

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ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is written to serve as a guideline for improvements within the park. It is not meant as a strict schedule, but should help guide Indy Parks in developing its Capital Improvements Program. The timeline portion of the Action Plan is meant to help prioritize a schedule of improvements.

For each element of this plan to be successful, it must first meet administrative approval within Indy Parks. It must also prove feasible in terms of site constraints and availability of funds. For this reason, the proposed timeline and estimated cost of each action plan element is subject to change.

| IMPROVEMENT | ESTIMATED COST | 1st-3rd Year | 4th-8th Year |
|-----------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Community Center | \$ 2,000,000 | | |
| Signage and Fencing | \$ 6,000 | | |
| Playground Equipment | \$ 30,000 | | |
| Spray Park | \$ 60,000 | | |
| Basketball Court | \$ 15,000 | | |
| Soccer Fields | \$ 3,000 | | |
| Naturalized Plantings | \$ 5,000 | | |
| Parking Lot | \$ 12,000 | | |
| Walking Paths | \$ 8,000 | | |
| Picnic Shelter | \$ 16,000 | | |
| Park Benches | \$ 3,000 | | |

CONCLUSION

As the Master Planning process is completed, the community begins to look ahead to implementing specific park improvements spelled out in the plan. Indy Parks and Recreation is committed to bringing these plans into reality, and fortunately there is local and national funding available. The opportunities listed in the Appendix are just a few examples of resources available for park development. It is important to remember to coordinate all requests to the groups listed on the following pages with Indy Parks Planning, Partnership & Grant staff members. Any parks question should be addressed to 327-PARK.

The processes undertaken to develop this master plan involved a variety of people with diverse interests and concerns. Their involvement in the process has helped to insure that the recreational needs of the neighborhood are satisfied.

This master plan should be frequently reviewed and periodically updated, so that Indy Parks can continue to be responsive to the community surrounding Riverwood Park.

APPENDIX

Funding Opportunities

Appendix II

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MASTER PLAN FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Park Advisory Councils - “Friends Of” groups

Park advisory councils represent one opportunity for participation by community members. These are volunteer citizens who come together to assist the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) with managing a park’s development. The Northwestway Park Advisory Council has assisted DPR in recent years with input about a disc golf course, a playground and trail improvements. Advisory Councils who wish to fund raise to advance park improvements can utilize the Indianapolis Parks Foundation to administer these funds.

Some Advisory Councils have taken the step of registering as 501(c)(3), non-profit organizations, whose mission is to benefit the park. These “Friends Of” groups have been instrumental in raising awareness, funds and the standards for their parks. The Friends of Holliday Park has recently raised \$3.8 million to construct the Holliday Park Nature Center. The Eagle Creek Park Foundation is in the midst of an ambitious \$10 million program to improve Eagle Creek Park. The Friends of Garfield Park have raised more than \$1 million to fund a maintenance endowment for the sunken gardens.

Granting Opportunities

DPR in 2000 assigned a staff person as Grants Coordinator for the Department. These duties include identifying, researching, applying for and administering grants for capitol improvements and programs in Indianapolis Parks. Recent grants have funded the Summer Lunch Program and improvements to Talbott & 29th Street Park. DPR is happy to assist community members who wish to apply for a grant to benefit a park. There are a great number of grants available to make parks better places to recreate. If you have a project you wish to seek a grant for, or know of a grant that could benefit a particular park, call 327-7050 and ask for information about grants.

Indianapolis Parks Foundation

The Indianapolis Park Foundation is a charitable organization that was created in 1991 to increase recreational opportunities in Indianapolis through contributions from our community. The Parks Foundation has been a vocal advocate for DPR and has provided more than \$4 million in capital improvements, and nearly \$1 million for parks programs. The Parks Foundation’s vision is that parks in Indianapolis will be quality spaces for all citizens to enjoy and that adequate financial resources will be available to support park projects, programs, maintenance and capital needs. To fulfill this vision, the Indianapolis Parks Foundation is currently initiating an aggressive fund raising campaign to strengthen its support of DPR. More information can be found at www.indyparksfoundation.org.

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (KIB) is a local non-profit organization that works to secure private donations for the benefit of local organizations, such as DPR. Founded in 1976 and renamed in 1997, KIB has been especially effective in establishing volunteer tree plantings in many Indianapolis Parks. KIB’s organizational abilities have helped both private companies and neighborhood organizations to hold successful volunteer planting events, building a sense of ownership and unity with in a community. More information can be found at www.kibi.org

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MASTER PLAN FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The LWCF was established by Congress in 1965 to promote quality outdoor recreation opportunities in the United States. In the 30 years since its creation, LWCF has been responsible for the acquisition of nearly seven million acres of parkland and open space and the development of more than 37,000 parks and recreation projects. This grant must be applied for by a governmental agency, such as DPR and it requires a 50% percent funding match. Specific grant award levels vary by year. For more information visit www.ncrc.nps.gov/PROGRAMS/LWCF/index.html

UPARR Program

The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program was established in November 1978 by to provide matching grants and technical assistance to economically distressed urban communities. The purpose of the program is to provide direct Federal assistance to urban localities for rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities. The law also encourages systematic local planning and commitment to continuing operation and maintenance of recreation programs, sites, and facilities. DPR has recently completed improvements at Willard Park, assisted in part by a \$500,000 UPARR grant, and is now implementing a grant for Martin Luther King Park pool renovations. More information can be found at www.nps.gov/pub_aff/uparr/grants/index.html.

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The following is a letter from the HCO architects stating their analysis of the existing school building on the Riverwood Park site.

Place holder for Letter

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The following is the Concept 1 plan presented to at the second public meeting. While concept two was the public's preferred plan. This alternate was kept as a back-up plan pending the feasibility analysis of a third party regarding renovating versus demolishing the school building.

