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Park Inventory & Analysis

Noblesville 5 Year Master Plan

PARKS ASSESSMENTS

OVERVIEW

The assessment of the Noblesville Parks System was comprehensive and evaluated recreation facilities at three different levels:

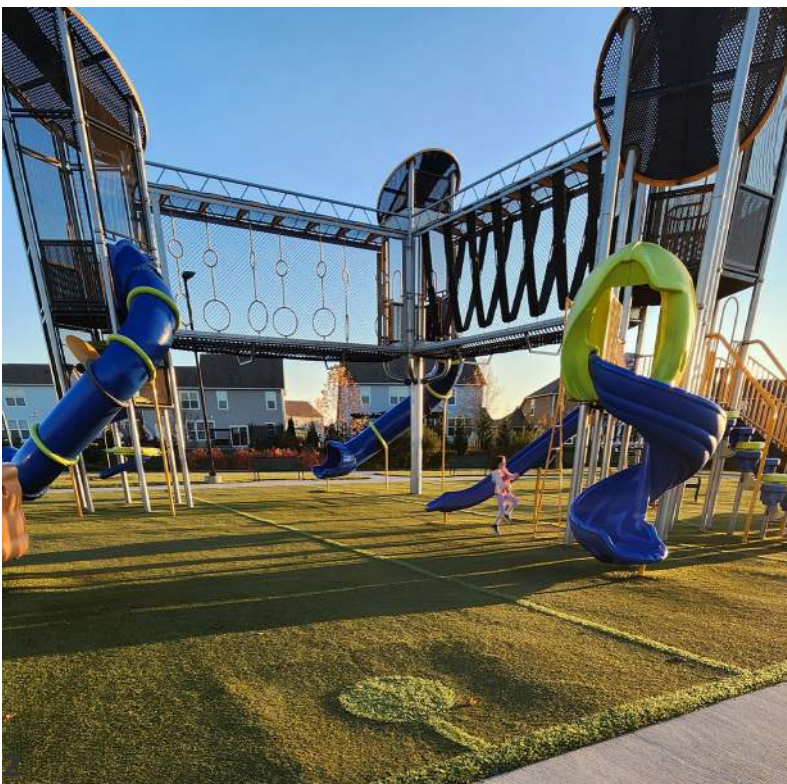
1. Individual recreation facilities, courts, fields, and apparatus
2. Individual park sites
3. The park system as a whole

INDIVIDUAL RECREATION FACILITIES

Each park was visited to document the quantity (inventory) and quality (analysis) of individual recreation elements, such as play equipment, ball fields, and pavements. Various industry standards are used to determine the quality of the facilities, including ADA accessibility regulations, campus and playground safety standards (CPTED and CPSI), and INPAWS list of native and invasive species. Other observations that are less official/measurable include general wear and tear and level of maintenance provided by Parks staff.

INDIVIDUAL PARK SITES

Each park is evaluated from a design standpoint to ensure the acreage dedicated to recreation is well utilized, well maintained, safe, and inviting to the community. The relationship of facilities to one another is critical to an effective design. Typically, a small park wants to be dedicated to either active recreation facilities (athletic fields, courts, or large playgrounds), or passive recreation (naturalized plantings, trail system, etc.). Larger parks can support both active and passive recreation facilities because ample space allows for transitions between different types of recreation. Effective transitions include forested areas, berms, natural features, and buildings.





PARK SYSTEM

The park system was evaluated for its overall effectiveness of serving the community. This assessment includes pedestrian connectivity between parks, equal distribution of parks and their amenities throughout the community, and consistency of overall character and maintenance among all park sites.

The rating of individual facilities is based on national and local standards of quality and adapted to fit Noblesville needs. This rating system is consistent with the trail surface rating used in 2020 for the Noblesville Alternative Transportation Plan (NAT).

RATING	ISSUES	GENERAL CONDITION/CHARACTER
10	None	No issues, New Construction
9	None	No issues, well maintained
8	None	No issues, some wear and tear/showing age
7	Aesthetic	No safety concerns, refresh/renovation needed in the next 1-2 years
6	Aesthetic	No safety concerns, refresh/renovation needed ASAP
5	Regulations	No safety concerns; does not meet latest ADA requirements/INPAWS guidelines
4	Regulations/safety	Minor safety concerns present due to age/maintenance issues. Facility does not meet latest ADA requirements/playground safety guidelines/ some invasive species present. Short term correction can be provided with increased maintenance. Renovation/replacement should be scheduled ASAP
3	Regulations/safety	Several safety issues present; No ADA compliance available. Apparatus/ element should be taken off-line until renovations/replacement can be provided
2	Regulations/safety	Entire recreation apparatus/element is considered dangerous. Removal should be prioritized even if replacement is not possible
1	Regulation/safety	Entire recreation apparatus/element is dangerous and poses a threat to users, as well as the surrounding area. Restrict use of the element and cordon off the surrounding area to ensure failure does not cause harm. Removal needs to take place ASAP.

Assessments of facilities should be completed on an annual basis and following large storm events to ensure damage and safety hazards are quickly mitigated. Evaluations should include not only recreation facilities, but also support elements, such as parking, signage, vegetation, and infrastructure. Trails are an important part of the health of the park system to ensure access between sites is provided. Updates to parks and facilities should maintain/ incorporate system standards, including colors, products, and signage, so each park is recognized as part of the Noblesville Parks system.



JAMES A. DILLON PARK

ADDRESS: 6001 Edenshall Lane
 SIZE: 77.5 acres
 DESIGNATION: Community Park
 SEASONS OF USE: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
 LEVEL OF USE: Moderate/Heavy for certain seasons



INVENTORY

ANALYSIS

First Impression										
Visual Aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Branding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main Entrance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Vegetation quality, quantity, and variety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Accessibility & Safety										
ADA Compliance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Internal Wayfinding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ease of Access from Main Road	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety/Security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Structures										
Restrooms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pavilion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Shelter 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Multi-Use Facility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Site Amenities										
Disc Golf	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Playground (2-5 + 5-12)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Skate Park	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Splash Pad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Multi-purpose Fields (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Walking Trails	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grills (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Picnic Tables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Drinking Fountains (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dog Waste Supplies and Signs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bike Racks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Benches along trail @ multipurpose fields	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Parking Lots	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



OVERVIEW

With its balance of naturalized plantings, mown event lawns, and recreation fields, James A. Dillon Park provides a setting that is inviting to all. The overarching design keeps vehicular movement to the edges, allowing pedestrians access to all park amenities without significant interaction with cars. Long sight lines along trails provide a sense of security, while small berms with native plantings and heavy edge plantings limit views of adjacent highways, parking areas, and private residences.

INVENTORY

Dillon Park is divided into three sections:

The eastern portion offers a programmable events space served by a large parking lot. A large pavilion provides seating, grilling, drinking water, and overhead shelter. This pavilion is centered on the events lawn and features higher-end materials, including pavers and stone columns, to create a very welcoming and upscale space for outdoor events. Moveable ADA-accessible picnic tables provide ample seating options under the pavilion for large events. An asphalt path defines the edge of the lawn and provides access to the back 9 baskets of the disc golf course. Naturally planted berms provide screening and noise deterrent of 146th Street located south of the park. The design of this eastern section saved several existing shade trees, maintaining stability and maturity within the space. Benches and litter receptacles line the trail, allowing for a variety of ages and ability levels to enjoy the park

Restrooms are located between the east and central sections of the park, with quick access to the parking lot for the convenience of the maximum number of people.

The central area of Dillon Park features a walking path, retention pond, and the first 9 disc golf baskets. This area provides a strong physical and visual connection within the park, as well as adjacent neighborhoods. The detention pond has a narrow ribbon of native plantings around its edge but is mostly surrounded by open lawn dappled with young shade trees. Access down to the water is available at select locations but not intended for swimming.





JAMES A. DILLON PARK (cont.)

Protected by mature shade and understory trees, Kirkendall Creek divides the central and western sections of the park. This feature provides a necessary separation between different uses in the park while adding a remarkable feature to the park. A footbridge crosses the creek and access down to the water is available in several locations.

The west edge of the park is dedicated to active recreation and provides a skate park, large playground, splashpad, pavilion, concessions/restroom buildings, and open athletic fields for football and soccer. Two parking lots serve this section Dillon Park but do not connect, allowing for the free flow of pedestrians without encountering vehicles. Small retention ponds flank the west edge, providing separation between the park and the adjacent Kroger shopping center.





ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, Dillon Park is a jewel within the Noblesville Parks system, offering recreation options for all demographics, abilities and interests. The park is extremely well maintained, with only specific areas of concern, as detailed below.

Wayfinding

One area of concern is the ease of finding Dillon Park for new visitors. From a vehicle, Dillon Park has three access points; two of which are from neighborhood streets. Wayfinding signs along I46th, Cherry Tree and Hazeldell would make accessing this park much easier, especially for first time visitors. Providing wayfinding within the park would also be helpful to ensure users have full knowledge of all site amenities.

Maintenance

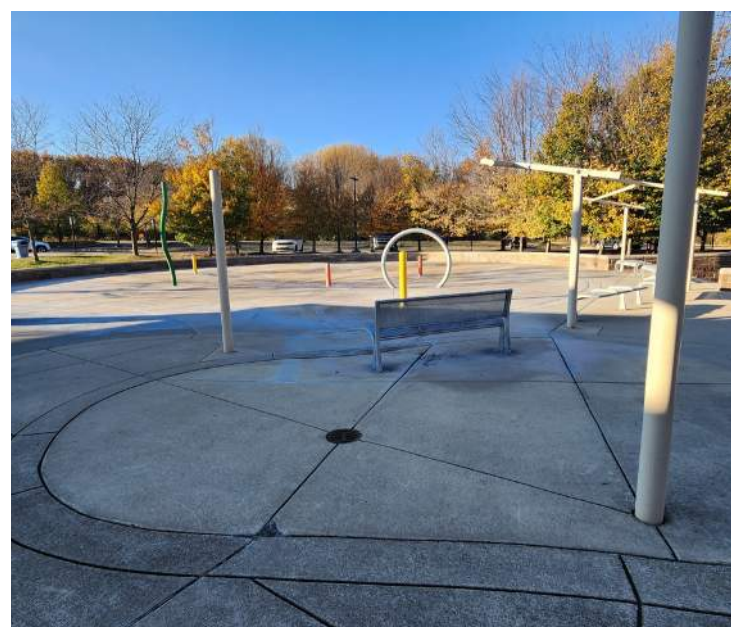
While many areas of the park are naturalized, there is still a significant amount of lawn that needs to be mown. Alternative ground covers, such as low mow turf, low prairie, or lilyturf should be considered in areas where there is little foot traffic, but a lawn type look is still wanted.

The east parking lot contains permeable pavers that have not been regularly cleaned. These should be cleaned and vacuumed, then #11 or #12 stone added to the joints to re-establish the permeable nature of the system. Restriping of all of the parking areas is needed.

ADA Accessibility/Safety

Most of the elements in the park are accessible, but with a few small changes, accessibility could be enhanced. Adding a paved area adjacent to benches allows someone in a wheelchair the opportunity to stop and rest without being on the main path. Adding a paved path to the creek or pond edge would provide equal access to water. Ensure cracked or broken pavement is repaired to avoid trip hazards and accessibility issues.

The playground contains two specific accessibility considerations. Firstly, the stairs at the playground do not have a handrail to assist park users that have limited mobility or sight issues. This should be added in at least one location. Secondly, the bike racks at the playgrounds are located too close to the building and too close to one another for proper and efficient use. The layout of these racks should be reconfigured to ease of use.



JAMES A. DILLON PARK (cont.)

Heavily-used Amenities

Having park features that are extremely popular is a great problem for a department to have to address. Within the park, the trails, playground, splash pad, and skate park are all very well used.

The asphalt trails are the main connection through the park, and are used by walkers, bikers, and skaters alike. They are starting to show some cracking and unravelling on the surface (top) course of pavement. The edges of the trail on inside curve are starting to deteriorate. These conditions will continue to expand, creating tripping hazards and ADA issues in the next few years. Resurfacing the trail with a new surface layer of asphalt should be provided in the next 118-24 months. If these conditions go unattended, the cracking and unravelling will begin to affect the base layer and stone sub base. Once this happens, more extensive (and expensive) repairs will be required.

The playground is well maintained but is showing signs of age, from both wear and tear, as well as antiquated equipment. Play equipment has become much more versatile over the past decade with new and exciting apparatus and increased play value. As a destination park, the playground should be upgraded to reflect updated features and design. To minimize daily



maintenance, a poured in place surface should be included as part of the playground renovations. At a minimum, solid surfacing should be used under swings and slide landings.

Splash pads require significant maintenance due to the constant presence of water, which can be very caustic to pavements, equipment, and furnishings. Similar to playgrounds, splash pad equipment has evolved, providing better play value and excitement. Updating and reinvesting in this area is a wise investment for the parks department to ensure this area of Noblesville has access to quality recreation amenities.

The skate park was specifically designed to withstand the abuse inflicted by skate boards. Maintenance of surfacing is required to ensure a safe and quality facility, including the concrete between the building and fenced skate area, as well as the surfacing of the skate park ramps and slopes.



Federal Hills Commons

ADDRESS: 175 Logan Street

SIZE: 6.5 acres

DESIGNATION: Destination Park

SEASONS OF USE: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

LEVEL OF USE: Heavy - Targeted Events



INVENTORY

ANALYSIS

First Impression

Visual Aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Branding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main Entrance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Vegetation quality, quantity, and variety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Accessibility & Safety

ADA Compliance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Internal Wayfinding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ease of Access from Main Road	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety/Security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Structures

Restrooms (Green Room & Parking Garage)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Performance Stage w/ Greenroom	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Indoor Banquet Facilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Shelter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Charters of Freedom Display										

Site Amenities

Event Plaza	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Event Lawn/Open Green Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Playground	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Walking Trails	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Picnic Tables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Drinking Fountain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bike Racks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Benches	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Parking Lots	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



OVERVIEW

This destination park has been a significant economic driver for downtown Noblesville. In addition to large attendance at events, this park was one of the main catalysts for expanding downtown across White River. This area has become a substantial mixed-use area with commercial, offices, and residential amenities. The impact of Federal Hill Commons and the programs hosted there are twofold. As well as supporting this new area of downtown Noblesville, it provides a gateway into historic Noblesville for visitors coming from the west along SR 32 and the north on SR 19.

INVENTORY

While Federal Hill Commons is designed to host events, there are also amenities to support daily park users. The stage is the main focal point of the park and serves an important purpose. Though the park is set into the hillside of SR 32, the retaining walls and natural topography around the stage reduce the visual and audible impact this major thoroughfare has on the park. Musical instruments set into the back wall of the stage provide entertainment during a typical day and carry the theme of the park. The stage can accommodate large semi-truck staging and ADA access.

The old bank building has been converted into a multi-use building, providing a greenroom, restrooms, a meeting room and office space to support the park. The old drive-thru lanes have been fenced off from cars to create an outdoor events space and ensure safe crossing of pedestrians between the building and the events lawn.

The events lawn is dappled with existing trees. While this does block a few views of the stage, these trees provide much needed shade. The perimeter walk is wide enough to accommodate large crowds, as well as vendor booths and food trucks for other non-performance events. A playground supports daily use by families living or visiting the mixed-use development and a small parking lot doubles as an ice rink during the holiday seasons. A drop-off zone creates easy access to lawn seating for those that are less mobile, as well as access to the main entrance of the apartment complex.



Federal Hills Commons (cont.)

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Federal Hill Commons is well programmed and well maintained. There is minimal wear and tear of the lawn areas despite the large crowds using this area. The purpose-built portions of the site are very congruent in design and aesthetic, and this unified vision highlights the one portion of the site that could benefit most from some updates - The Green Room. While the functions of this facility fit very well, it is apparent this was not part of the original vision for the park. Removing unneeded pavement could provide a barrier between parking and outdoor event space, as well as create the option for gardens and additional program space. The remaining asphalt is in need of resurfacing, full depth repair (in places), and restriping. Also, the plantings do not match the rest of this park and should be updated for a unified vision. Roses and dusty miller do not complement the native grasses and forbs used in other parts of the park.

The playground needs to be rethought. The playground surface is currently resilient tiles. The gaps between tiles are rolling up, creating gaps and trip hazards. The equipment and artificial turf surfacing are in good condition and unique to the parks system. However, the play ground does not take advantage of the site character, including the elevation change/hillside and new demographics of residents living nearby. Enlarging the playground and adding in apparatus for different age groups could expand the daily



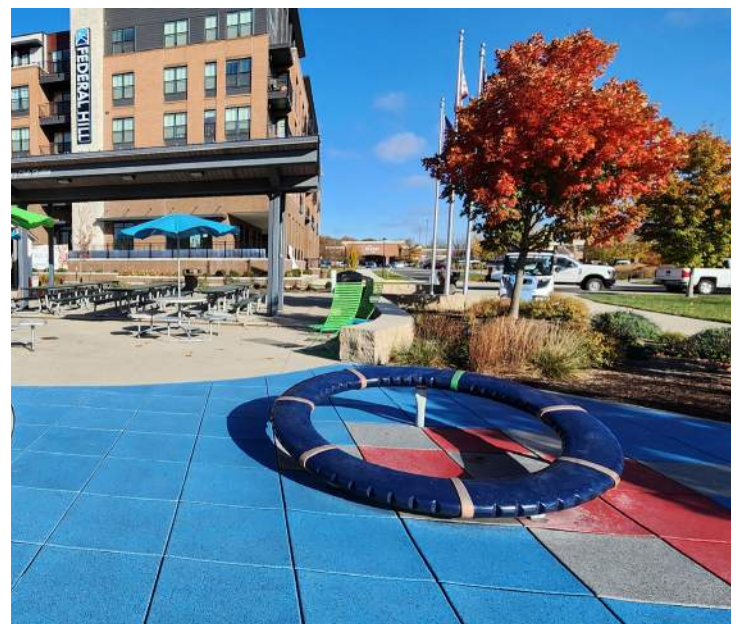


recreation opportunity for this park. New surfacing should be poured-in-place to minimize maintenance and withstand the heavy use of this facility.

Pedestrian access to the park is extremely limited due to the heavily travelled roads surrounding Federal Hill Commons, including SR 32, SR 19 and Logan Street. The tunnel under the Nickel Plate Rail line has greatly improved the connection into Forest Park. This could be improved by transitioning Nixon Street into a pedestrian trail/shared use road. For large events, the amount of parking in Forest Park and downtown is still limited. A long term agreement with Riverview Hospital should be obtained to utilize and improve the parking lot south of SR 32 and east of the main hospital. A pedestrian bridge over the highway would provide a safe pedestrian crossing for large events, as well as a significant gateway into downtown Noblesville.

With the increased number of residents, taking away parking, even temporarily, can create challenges. The small parking lot on the west side of the park is used for farmer's markets in the summer and an ice rink during the cold months. While these events are still valid, they may need to find a new home to ensure the parks department is a good neighbor. Utilizing a grass pave system along the north walk within the park could maintain the green space, while expanding pedestrian circulation around tables and tents set up during large events.

Being surrounded by heavily travelled roads offers a great opportunity to quickly communicate with thousands of residents, as well as those travelling through. Installing a large digital sign identifying upcoming events for Federal Hill Commons, the parks system, and the City as a whole can get a lot of views. The design of this sign needs to reflect the character of the park.



Riverwalk Depot

ADDRESS: 181 North 8th Street

SIZE: 0.15 acres

DESIGNATION: Pocket Park

SEASONS OF USE: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

LEVEL OF USE: Moderate



INVENTORY

ANALYSIS

First Impression

Visual Aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Branding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main Entrance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Vegetation quality, quantity, and variety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Accessibility & Safety

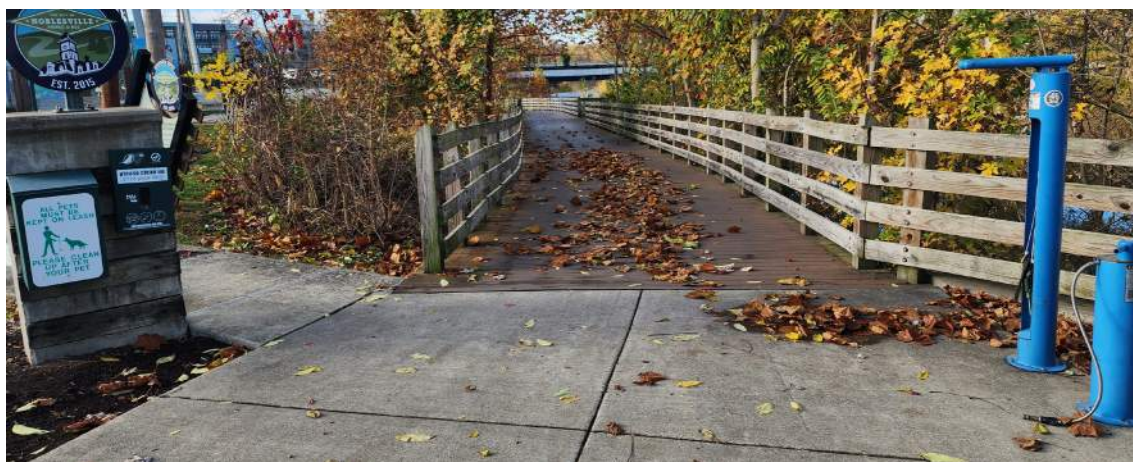
ADA Compliance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Internal Wayfinding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ease of Access from Main Road	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety/Security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Structures

Shelter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Public Art	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Site Amenities

Walking Trails	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Open Green Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bike Repair Station	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bench	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



OVERVIEW

Riverwalk Depot Park is an artistic node along the White River Greenway trail and serves as an excellent gateway into historic downtown Noblesville, as well as a trailhead when continuing south along the trail towards Southside Park. This pocket park provides orientation for the user's location along the trail, as well as the history and character of Noblesville.

INVENTORY

There are several amenities at the park, including shaded benches, a bike repair station, dog waste stations, a library book kiosk, and wayfinding. These functional elements are supported by artistic panels, historic pavements, and sculpture. This park is attempting to screen an electrical substation, which is challenging given its proximity. Unless you are accessing or using the trail, this park is difficult to visit, as there is no designated parking, but there is ample parking in downtown Noblesville.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This trailhead/gateway is a nice surprise when traversing the trail system in Noblesville. It is an excellent use of land that is surrounded by infrastructure and inadequate in size to support a typical commercial development. However, accessing this pocket park and trail system from the downtown area is not intuitive and uncomfortable because of the lack of signage and surroundings. There is an uncertainty if one should be in this area.

The design of the park is simplistic. Several artistic elements add strong character to the space, but the park as a whole lacks continuity. Instead there are individual elements placed within the space and connected with a walk. The intent to communicate the history of Noblesville and the Nickel Plate Railroad is well founded in this space, but an updated master plan could strengthen its intent and become a much more welcoming trailhead and connection of trails, Forest Park, Federal Hill Commons, and historic downtown Noblesville.

The confluence of the White River Greenway and Nickel Plate Trail occurs at this park. There is a lot of clutter and clashing of elements in this space, including signs, bike repair stations, and a dog waste station. This area has become extremely crowded and confusing, especially to someone not familiar with the trail system. Simplifying this area, reducing current signage to just trail wayfinding signage, and spreading out/relocating site amenities could make this intersection less confusing and congested during busy trail use.



Finch Creek Park

ADDRESS: 16233 Boden Road
 SIZE: 200 acres
 DESIGNATION: Community Park
 SEASONS OF USE: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
 LEVEL OF USE: Moderate



INVENTORY

ANALYSIS

First Impression

Visual Aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Branding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main Entrance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Vegetation quality, quantity, and variety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Accessibility & Safety

ADA Compliance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Internal Wayfinding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ease of Access from Main Road	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety/Security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Structures

Restrooms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pavilion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Shelter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Site Amenities

Splash Pad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Playground	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pickleball Court (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Basketball Court	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Events Lawn/Open Green Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Walking Trails	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Picnic Tables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Drinking Fountain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dog Waste Supplies and Signs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bike Racks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Benches	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Public Art	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Parking Lot	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



OVERVIEW

As the newest and largest of the parks within the Noblesville system, Finch Creek Park serves the quickly growing east side. Active recreation courts, family amenities, and a field house developed through a private/public partnership have been provided in the 200 acres, but continuous planning efforts will further develop the property to include naturalized areas, walking trails, ball diamonds, farm areas, a dog park, and many other passive and programmed spaces.

INVENTORY

The amenities currently available at Finch Creek Park include a destination playground, splash pad, shelter house with a fireplace, locker rooms/restrooms, pickleball courts, a full size basketball court and walking trails. Parking is available to support all these exterior elements, with the playground/splashpad/shelter house being well screened with tall, planted berms. These berms make a nice background for these uses, as well as keep children from running out into the lot.

The four pickleball courts are well used despite starting to show signs of cracking at the seams. The basketball court is more apparent of crack maintenance as there is no court surfacing. Fencing is provided around the pickleball courts, but not around the basketball court. This may create an issue with basketballs going into the parking lot. The various courts share a restroom building that also serves as a trailhead for the walking paths connecting to the numerous surrounding neighborhoods. There is adequate space left to expand this court area with more pickleball, basketball, or some other amenity that may come into favor in the future.

The playground is a destination play area. The equipment is designed for ages 2-12, but all ages can be found using this amenity. The fully accessible play area uses synthetic turf, which requires maintenance on the seams. A shade structure, benches and a restroom allow families to spend extra time at the park while keeping safe from heat and sun.

The splash pad provides sprays that are flush with grade, allowing this area to serve as an outdoor plaza in support of the picnic shelter. Activation bollards limit water usage when the water is turned on. The four benches surrounding the splash area are not holding up well with constant water spray and the finish is either damaged or calcium has built up on these furnishings.



Finch Creek Park (cont.)

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, Finch Creek Park is well maintained and well used. The current amenities are grouped to allow park visitors to easily go between different areas, but adequate open space has been maintained for expansion. This open space is being mown. Consideration of a low mow turf, prairie, or some other ground cover should be considered to minimize mowing. Given how far removed this park is from other park locations, as well as how large this park will become, increases in maintenance storage should be assessed with each phase of construction to ensure the maintenance remains excellent and achievable.

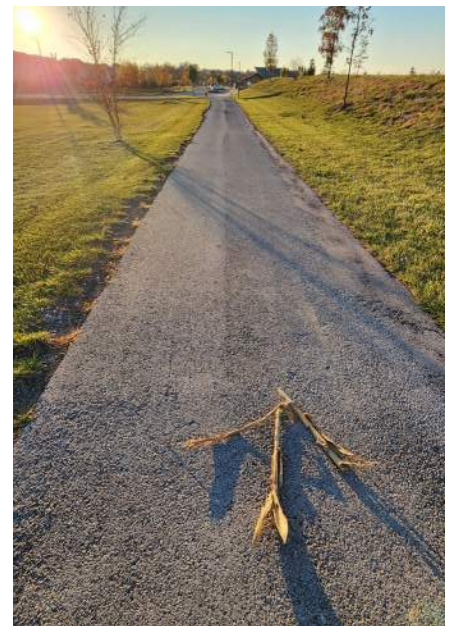
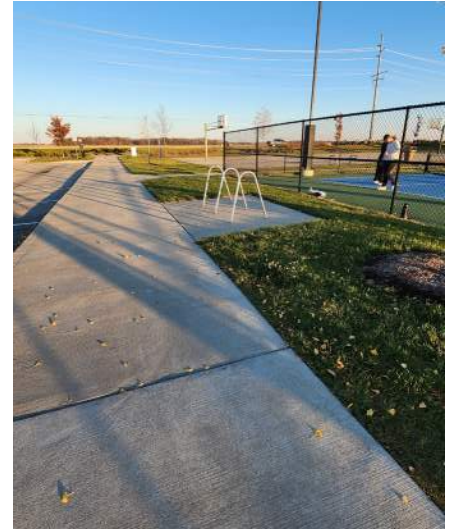
Ample walkways and interior wayfinding signs allow for easy navigation of the park. These will become more critical as future phases are built and use of this interior signage should be continued/expanded. The walkway system currently has some dead-end paths leading to future development. These paths should be extended to the nearest neighborhood to encourage local residents to walk into the park rather than driving.

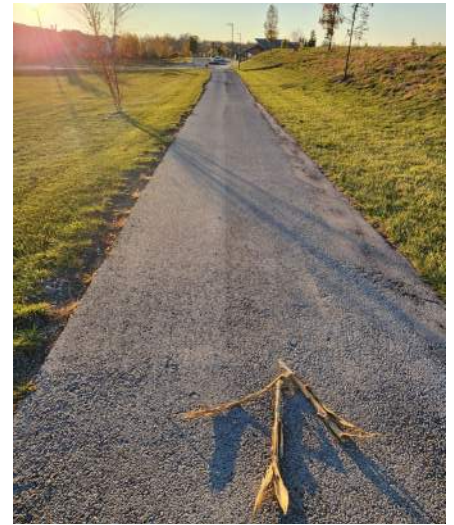
The playground overall is well maintained. The repairs to the synthetic turf seams are not well done and appear as mistakes corrected with a bandage. While it is not an accessibility issue, it is easy for those with limited mobility to catch their shoes on the seamed material. The seams should be repaired using turf that matches in color and height.

The benches at the splash pad should be repaired/cleaned or replaced. These are not welcoming to use, especially when the sprays are not turned on. An alternative product should be found that can withstand the chemical spray.

The basketball and pickleball court cracking need to be repaired within the next 6 months. The seams have opened into horizontal structural cracks due to using smaller/lighter rollers during construction and not getting adequate compaction at the seams. The gap is wide enough to allow water to infiltrate down to the subsurface and undermine the pavement. An 18" trench should be milled down to the base. The base should be recompact and new binder and topcoat applied. The asphalt mix should have a higher amount of liquid binder used as part of the mix, and good compaction is needed. Underdrains along the perimeter could be installed to ensure the water running off the berm is not getting under the pavement.

The lawn areas of the park are well maintained. While some amount of open lawn is appreciated for lawn games and flex space, it is also balanced by the presence of a prairie environment. The plantings on the berm are a short prairie mix and have had some success, but they are a little sparse given how long they have been in place. There is a diverse number of species and the number of weeds/invasives is limited. There are several foot paths across the berm, creating erosion and compaction issues. Drilling in additional prairie seed could help infill some of the bare areas. Once established, this would help minimize the weeds and encourage people to walk around the berm. Temporary fencing would be needed after drilling to keep people off the berm to let the seed establish.







Forest Park

ADDRESS: 701 Cicero Road

SIZE: 150 acres

DESIGNATION: Community Park

SEASONS OF USE: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

LEVEL OF USE: Heavy



INVENTORY

ANALYSIS

First Impression

Visual Aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Branding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main Entrance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Vegetation quality, quantity, and variety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Accessibility & Safety

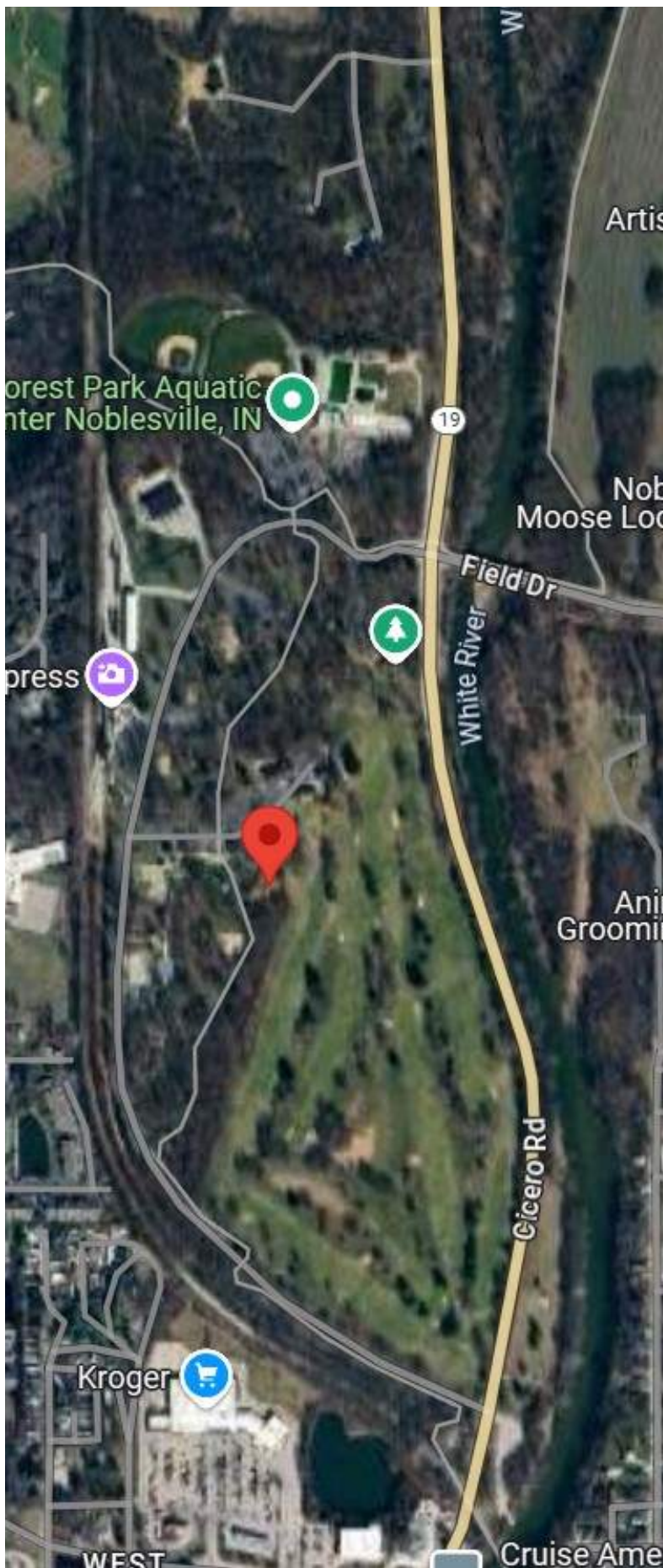
ADA Compliance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Internal Wayfinding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ease of Access from Main Road	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety/Security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Structures

Restrooms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Train Station	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Maintenance Building	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Concession Stand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Shelter (7)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Indoor Banquet Facility (2 buildings, 3 total rooms)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Aquatics Facility	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Site Amenities

Golf Course	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mini-Golf Course	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Skate Park	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Playgrounds (3)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Carousel	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Events Lawn/Open Green Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pickleball Court (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Basketball Court	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tennis Court (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Baseball Field (2)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sand Volleyball Court (4)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pool	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Walking Trails	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Picnic Tables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Drinking Fountain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dog Waste Supplies and Signs (Multiple)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bike Racks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Benches	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Parking Lot	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10



OVERVIEW

Purchased in 1925, Forest Park offers the most diverse recreation experience within the Noblesville Parks system. The 12,000 trees planted when the park was established 100 years ago now provides a mature urban forest. This provides Forest Park with great passive recreation opportunities, while providing a significant number of fields, courts, play areas and other unique active recreation opportunities.

Many features of the early park experience remain today, including the carousel, the Shelter House, Hobbs Station serving the Nickel Plate Railroad, and the stone gateway entrance sign. While these elements have received restoration and updates, they have remained true to their form and use. Many early uses, such as swimming and golf, also remain popular activities at Forest Park, but these have been updated to meet the current expectations of park users.

This 150-acre park is the second largest in the parks system. Because of its close proximity to downtown, pedestrian access into the park is very easy with the White River Greenway trail, including a pedestrian bridge spanning SR 19 and the White River. This allows Forest Park to be integral to experiencing the rich history of Noblesville.





INVENTORY

In general, the active recreation facilities are well distributed throughout the park and are interwoven in and among the mature tree canopy. This approach has maintained the original vision of the park as a natural amenity to serve all residents of Noblesville. The White River Greenway winds through Forest Park, connecting downtown Noblesville, through Forest Park, along the White River, and ending at Potters Bridge. Benches, small gardens, and interpretive signage support the trail experience. Additional walks provide connections to the various courts and play amenities, providing accessible routes among most park elements. This trail is the main spine of the pedestrian experience and had limited conflict with vehicular circulation routes.

Vehicular access is primarily contained with one main drive that connects the park from north to south. More than 200 angled parking spaces are provided along this main drive. The drive remains on the west edge of the park until it turns east towards the north entrance. With the exception of a few shelters, baseball fields, and the aquatics complex, the drive does not interfere with pedestrian connectivity among park elements.

Park lighting matches the historic nature of the park, but the light quality is ineffective. This creates a sense of insecurity during a summer evening or a short winter day. Shelters have lighting on the underside of the roof and alternative lighting styles are used for Hobbs Station and the putt-putt golf course. Overhead cobra lights supplement light levels in a few areas, such as the golf course parking lot and the trail crossing at the Parks Office Building. The use of different light styles may increase visibility, but distract from the historic character of the park.

Active recreation within Forest Park includes a skate park, pickleball, tennis, sand volleyball, baseball, and basketball. The skate park, tennis, pickleball and volleyball are within the same area. Each of these amenities is of a different age with the tennis courts being the oldest and the pickleball appearing to be the newest.

Court Areas

The two asphalt tennis courts have cracks coming through the coated surfacing; however, both courts are still in playable condition. Striping has been added to accommodate 4 pickleball courts when tennis is not being played. The perimeter fence provides gated access out to the parking lot, which allows for an accessible route into the courts. Between the courts and parking spots are picnic tables, litter receptacles and wooden posts to keep cars from parking beyond the pavement. The area is covered with compacted soil, which is very functional but dates the facility.

The skate park is directly adjacent to the tennis court with an 8-foot tall fence between the two areas. It appears the space for the skate park is a reuse of old tennis courts. The visibility and noise of the skate park could be distracting when playing tennis. The ramps and grinding rails are in good condition and were in use during the site visit.

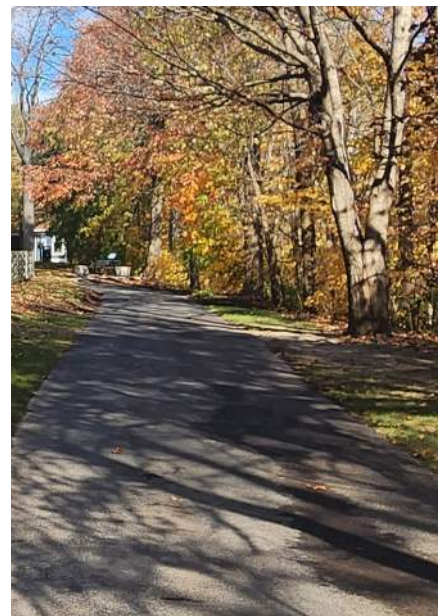
The pickleball courts are a recent addition and have good sidewalk access to nearby parking. The two courts are nestled between the skate park and nearby tree canopy and have an east/west orientation. Ideally, these courts are oriented north/south.

Sand volleyball offers two lit courts along the White River Greenway, as well as individual courts near shelter houses 2 and 3. The sand and nets are well maintained at all three locations.

A full sized basketball court is located next to the putt-putt golf course and playground. This asphalt surfacing is cracked and the striping for the court is no longer visible. The hoops are in good condition, but the height is not adjustable.

Restrooms

There are three stand-alone restroom buildings in the park, as well as restrooms available in the Parks Office and The Lodge. The restroom located near the tennis court is a new block structure with a mural painted on the trail side. The facilities are clean and well maintained. The second restroom supports the playground, putt-putt golf, and carousel area. This is a newer wood frame building that compliments the historic architecture of the carousel and is well maintained. The third restroom building is located near shelter House 3. This is an older wood frame building. The facility is still clean but dated. The restroom buildings are evenly distributed through the park and serve multiple amenities, including the White River Greenway.





Golf

This 9-hole course is along the eastern edge of Forest Park and offers a good buffer to the sites and noise of SR 19 from the rest of the park amenities. The mature tree canopy along the edges and in pockets along the fairways provide a challenge, but the lack of water hazards makes this a player friendly course. The course is well maintained.

The clubhouse and proshop provide an outdoor terrace with moveable seating, parking, a holding area for golf clubs, and direct access onto the course without having to go through the clubhouse. There is a significant elevation change between the plaza and first hole. Both a ramp and stairs are provided, but the ramp does not meet ADA requirements. The front door of the clubhouse faces away from the parking lot, but instead focuses on the drop to the north. As someone walking up from the parking lot, this feels a little unwelcoming and confusion. The maintenance building for the golf course is very close to the clubhouse and also adds to the first impression of this amenity.

Shelters and Pavilions

There are many options for shelters and pavilions within Forest Park. These are equally spaced throughout the park and share support facilities, including parking and restrooms. All of the shelters are ADA accessible and provide trash cans, charcoal grills and picnic tables. The structures are simple in form and range in size from 20' x 40' to 40' x 80'. Ample seating and parking is available to support each shelter.

Two pavilions are available near the center of the park in support of the carousel and putt-putt golf. The Anderson Shelter is an octagonal open air structure with a two tier roof and cupola. The design resembles the carousel building. This amenity is supported by lawn games including bocce ball and corn hole. Sidewalks connect back to the pickleball courts, basketball courts and parking.

Carousel (seasonal)

The carousel was not open at the time of the site visit. The location is the center of the park and has a lot of historic significance. The use of the carousel is limited to a few hours on the weekend and is regularly shut down for repairs. The colorful horses and bench seats compliment the bright structure under the wooden roof.





Putt-putt Golf

Tom Thumb Golf provides 18 holes of accessible golf. The holes themselves are nicely maintained with artificial turf and planters to hold annuals during the summer months. The hole numbers are on light poles, providing ample visibility for night time play. The entire area is surrounded with an ornamental fence that fits with the historical character of the park. The areas in between the holes is covered with river gravel, making this whole area feel very desolate and cold. Maintaining lawn and shrubs in an area of high foot traffic is time consuming, but the choice of gravel makes this very unique facility look cheap and uninviting.



Hobbs Station

The Nickel Plate trail station and the activities associated with this amenity make Forest Park a very strong destination. Train rides and pedal rides utilize the rails to create unique and themed experiences for all age groups. The train station itself is very well done with a themed playground, character rich architecture and benches, and amenities to accommodate passengers waiting for their adventure.

Wayfinding Signage

Directional signage can be found at key intersections within the park along the main drive. The shelters and buildings also have character appropriate name signs. This makes it convenient and easy to navigate the park when you are in a car. Along the trail, there are markers for gardens or tree identification, but there are not wayfinding signs pointing pedestrians to various destinations along the trail or clarification of what direction to go to remain on the main trail loop.



Playgrounds

There are two playgrounds serving Forest Park. The main playground is located near the parks office building and carousel. This amenity is relatively new and utilizes synthetic turf surfacing, large composite play structures, support ground structures, and swings to meet ADA and safety compliance. Exercise equipment and bench swings are provided for adult interaction and enjoyment. The equipment is age based for 2-5 and 5-12 years. The play theme uses woodland forms and color appropriately, working well with mature shade canopy surrounding this area.

The second play area is more dated and supports shelters 2 and 3. This play area combines older equipment with some new



elements. The space net and swings combine with with climbing wall and spiral slide for a more simplified yet fun experience. The surfacing is fibar mulch with has been well maintained. Picnic tables are provided around the area, but ADA compliance is not met due to a lack of access walks and ground mounted play elements.

The Lodge

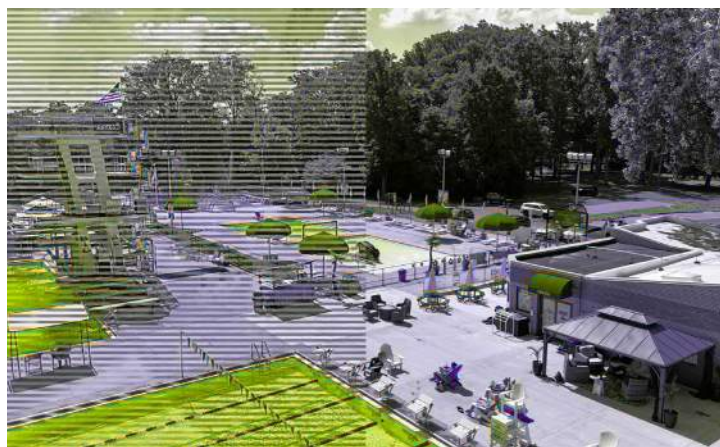
Overlooking the Forest Park golf course is one of the original structures in the park. The Lodge maintains its historic feel but renovations to the structure utilize updated materials for longevity. The open floor plan on the upper level provides a flex space for various events, rentals, and activities. The lower level houses supplies and maintenance equipment for the park. A wrap around deck provides outdoor seating and a beautiful view of the back holes of the course, mature tree canopy in the park, and the White River Corridor paralleling SR 19. A small parking lot serves this facility providing ADA compliant access.

Aquatics

The aquatics facility at Forest Park was not open at the time of the site visit, but the scale of the facility indicates its ability to serve the population of Noblesville very well. The 25-meter pool has starting blocks, a winding slide, and a climbing wall allowing it to accommodate competitions, as well as daily fun swimming, programs, and events. A spacious deck accommodates large umbrellas and colorful chairs. The diving well, baby pool, and deck area support different age groups and interests, as well as swim competition staging. Locker rooms, restrooms, and a concession stand are housed in one building, which can also accommodate score keepers during swim meets. Support facilities such as the deck, picnic tables, and basketball courts support the aquatics area to provide a day long experience.

Baseball

One Babe Ruth and one Pony League baseball field anchor the north end of the park. These lit fields utilize the same parking lot as aquatics, but the access-controlled complex provides restrooms, concessions, and press boxes. This complex is bordered by mature forest to the north, the Nickel Plate Railroad to the west, the aquatics center to the east and Forest Park to the south. The unique outfield configuration of the eastern field maximized the depth, but is just shy of the preferred 300' outfield distance along the base lines. The Pony League field provides the appropriate outfield dimensions, but the space between the spectator seating and home run ball area of the Babe Ruth field is limited. Both fields are well maintained



ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, Forest Park is a wonderful historic part of Noblesville, offering outstanding play and recreation experiences and a strong connection to the natural environment. This park is a significant component to the success of the Noblesville Parks system. The forms, materiality, and arrangement of the amenities represents the character and historical integrity of the park. Many of these amenities have been updated and all are well maintained. However, there are elements that could be added throughout to improve the user experience without taking away from the historic character.

Overall Park Improvements

- Develop an updated master plan for the park to incorporate new elements, improve vehicular circulation, and provide comprehensive relationships between various facilities.
- Remove dead trees and limbs to ensure a safe environment
- Resurface and restripe all drives, asphalt walking paths, and parking areas
- Upgrade historic light fixtures to LED technology. The color used for the retrofit should be on the warmer side (2700 kelvin) to be closer to the historic feel of incandescent bulbs, while providing the energy efficiency and clean light render that is possible with this kind of update. The poles should all be painted a consistent finish and color.

Renovate/upgrade/enlarge maintenance facility. Consider if this land is more valuable as park land and a new site is needed for the maintenance garage.

Court Area

- Provide a mesh screen along the fence between the tennis court and skate park.
- Supplement the stone or pave the area between the tennis courts/skate park and parking
- Improve the paved walk from the parking lot to the gate for the skate park
- Provide a paved walk/accessible route from the tennis/pickleball courts to the restroom building. Avoid harming existing tree root zones.
- Resurface tennis and basketball courts. Confirm if two tennis courts are still needed in the system or if one of these should be converted into a more popular use.

Restrooms

- Replace the oldest restroom building with a new facility to support the north side of the park.
- Sign the restroom for visibility from nearby amenities
- Ensure good ADA access to all restroom buildings from as many amenities as possible.

Golf

- Replace golf course shelters
- Replace cart path





- Created an ADA accessible path/ramp down to the first tee
- Update plantings in the parking lot and around the club house to reflect the character of the park
- Reconfigure the building to make the front door visible from the parking lot.
- Renovate and enhance the outdoor plaza with additional amenities

Shelter and Pavilions

- Add a top end large pavilion/event space to support large, higher end events.
- Ensure pavers are no more than ¼" lip from the concrete pad to avoid trip hazards
- Update shelter signs to be more in line with park department standards
- Ensure at least one shelter of each size provides ADA access to all amenities, including 1 or more grill stations, drinking fountain, and litter receptacles. Ideally all amenities at all shelters are ADA accessible.

Carousel

- Consider making one of the doors that encloses the carousel transparent glass. Add lighting so everyone can see the carousel even when it is not in use.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of the carousel to determine the more cost effective approach to long term repairs

Putt Putt Golf

- Replace the stone mulch with plants to create a more inviting setting
- Widen sidewalk and add staging areas for groups at each hole

Wayfinding Signage

- Add internal wayfinding along the trail to direct trail users to amenities along the path
- Include markings for trail users that are trying to remain on the White River Greenway.

Playgrounds

- Upgrade older play grounds to be consistent with the newer play areas within the park system. Consider alternate and custom play elements that blend well with the natural character of the park.
- Replace mulch with a more maintenance friendly surface, at a minimum under slides and swings
- Provide a walk from the shelters to the play area to provide an ADA compliant route

Pool and Water Park

- Replace the pool to meet current maintenance and competition requirements
- Replace all pavement that is cracked or heaved



Hague Road Nature Haven

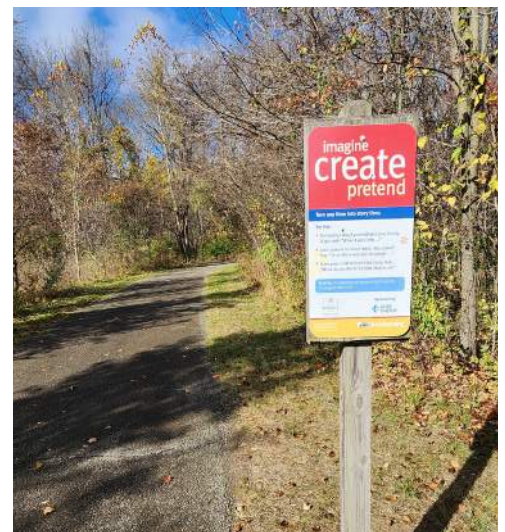
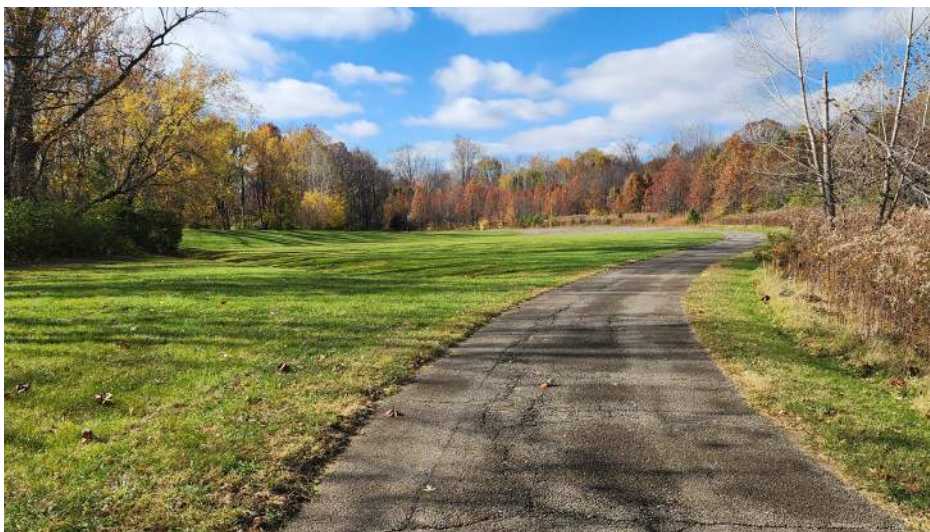
ADDRESS: SR 38 and Hague Road
 SIZE: 43 acres
 DESIGNATION: Regional Park
 SEASONS OF USE: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter
 LEVEL OF USE: Rare

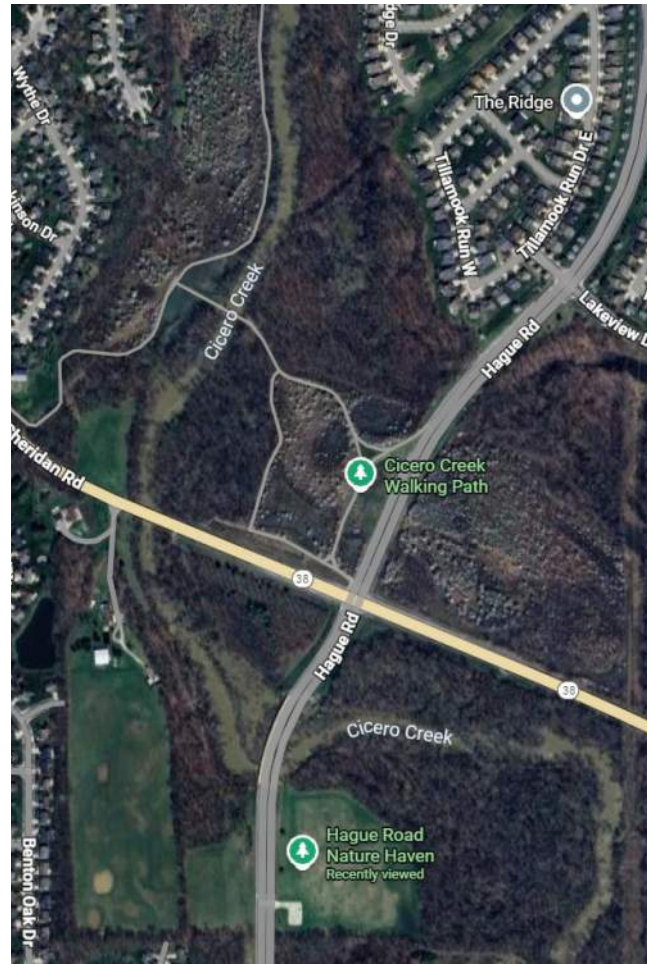


INVENTORY

ANALYSIS

First Impression										
Visual Aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Branding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main Entrance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Vegetation quality, quantity, and variety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Accessibility & Safety										
ADA Compliance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Internal Wayfinding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ease of Access from Main Road	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety/Security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Structures										
Bridge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Site Amenities										
Walking Trails	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Open Green Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dog Waste Supplies and Signs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10





OVERVIEW

This hidden gem of a nature park is as beautiful as it is difficult to access. The reserve is a combination of properties owned by the City of Noblesville and land dedications from Ridge Homeowners and Whitcomb Ridge Property Homeowners associations. Access into the park is available only along walking trails from surrounding neighborhoods. While this may make accessing the park difficult for non-residents, this also makes this park quiet, natural and protected.

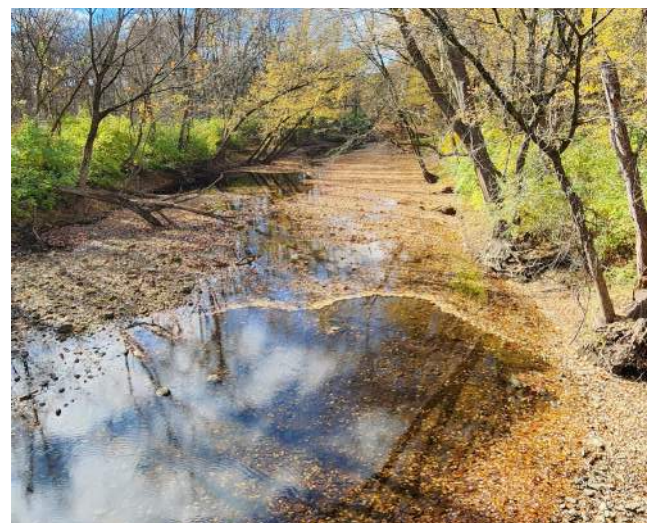
INVENTORY

The City owns three of the four parcels surrounding the intersection of SR 38 and Hague Road. These naturalized parcels provide asphalt trails (northwest parcel) through vegetated areas within the Cicero Creek water shed. A newly paved parking lot serves the southeast parcel. While many neighborhoods connect to these parcels, gaining access between the three parcels requires pedestrians to cross the busy vehicular routes. Sidewalks and signalized crossings are only provided at one location. A wooden footbridge crosses Cicero Creek to gain access to additional trails. Other amenities include library cabinets, interpretive signage, and bird houses. The vegetation is established; however, there are significant areas of invasive species, including honeysuckle and pear trees. The southernmost portion of the trail runs parallel to SR 38/Sheridan Road. The vegetation becomes more sparse in this location and the heavy vehicular traffic is more apparent along this edge.



ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the park is very pleasant, but gaining access to all three parcels is unsafe due to a lack of connectivity. Ideally, tunnels under SR 38 and Hague Road would be provided between parcels to create a safe connection for pedestrians and wildlife. Invasive species of pear trees should be removed and supplemented with native tree and understory plantings. The activities along the trail are well maintained. Use by a wider range of ability level is limited due to the lack of benches, drinking fountains or restrooms. Natural benches, such as logs, could reduce the risk of flood damage and maintain a very natural environment. Signage related to sustainable efforts and reforestation could increase the education value of what is already provided. Community clean-up days to keep invasive species out of the park could assist with ongoing efforts, as well as educate the community about what should not be planted within their neighborhoods. Limiting development within this park ensures this area remains passive and protect the fragile ecosystems around within the Cicero Creek watershed.





Seminary Park

ADDRESS: 350 South 10th Street

SIZE: 1.5 acres

DESIGNATION: Neighborhood Park

SEASONS OF USE: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

LEVEL OF USE: Light



INVENTORY

ANALYSIS

First Impression

Visual Aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Branding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main Entrance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Vegetation quality, quantity, and variety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Accessibility & Safety

ADA Compliance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Internal Wayfinding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ease of Access from Main Road	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety/Security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

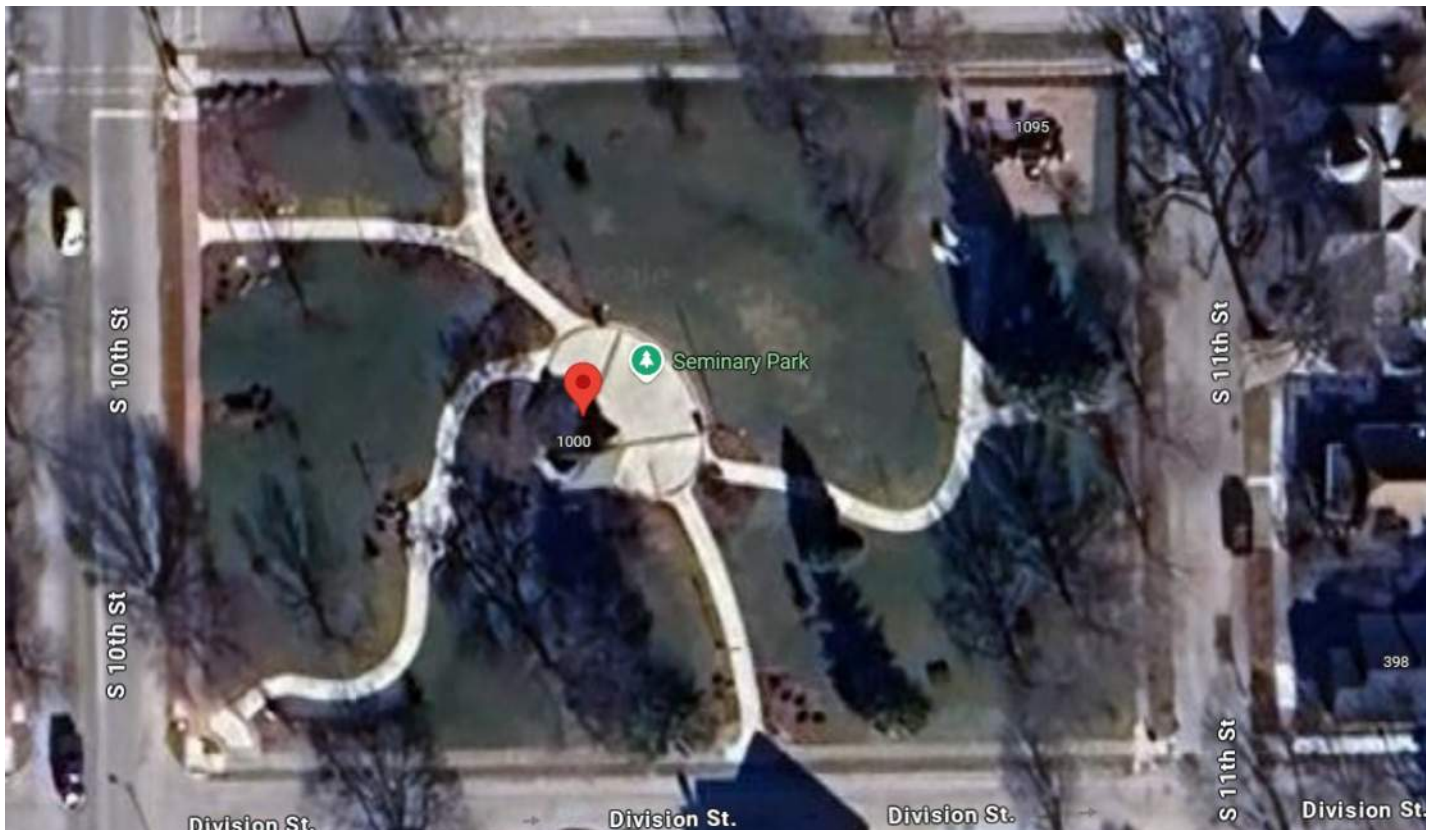
Structures

Gazebo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Site Amenities

Playground	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Walking Trails	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Events Lawn/Open Green Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Picnic Tables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Drinking Fountains	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dog Waste Supplies and Signs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Benches	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10





OVERVIEW

While Seminary Park is not the oldest park within the Noblesville system, it has true historical significance for the city. The parcel was home to Noblesville's first school house and the perimeter of the park maintains that historic placemaking through the many historic homes, churches, stone retaining walls, and mature shade trees. Serpentine walks lined with acorn light fixtures lead to the central gazebo; the center of the park. This focal point has historical detailing and the adjacent pavements utilize historic pavers that are unique to downtown Noblesville.

INVENTORY

The design of this park is very traditional and pairs well with the surrounding neighborhoods. Elevation changes across the park emphasize the gazebo at the center of the park, allowing those sitting in the gazebo a good view of the park. The fencing, benches, and lights reinforce the historic nature of the park, but other furnishings distract from the overall character. Perennial gardens around the gazebo and along the walking paths are nicely maintained and balanced with evergreen and native shrubs. Native trees provide shade throughout the park with a variety of species. In addition to the traditional acorn light fixtures used throughout downtown, catenary lights have been added around the gazebo to increase safety and enhance the general ambiance.

The playground is scaled correctly for a park of this size, though the overall play experience should be evaluated for safety and ADA accessibility. There are small amounts of wear on the metal elements and there are no ground play elements that are needed in new playgrounds to meet ADA compliance. The surfacing is fiber mulch and has been well maintained. The fence keeps children from running into the street and defines the corner of the park.

The dog waste station is filled with bags; however, is not accessible because it is placed in a planting bed. The library book kiosk contains books to borrow and is well-used, but the height and location of this should be checked for ADA compliance.



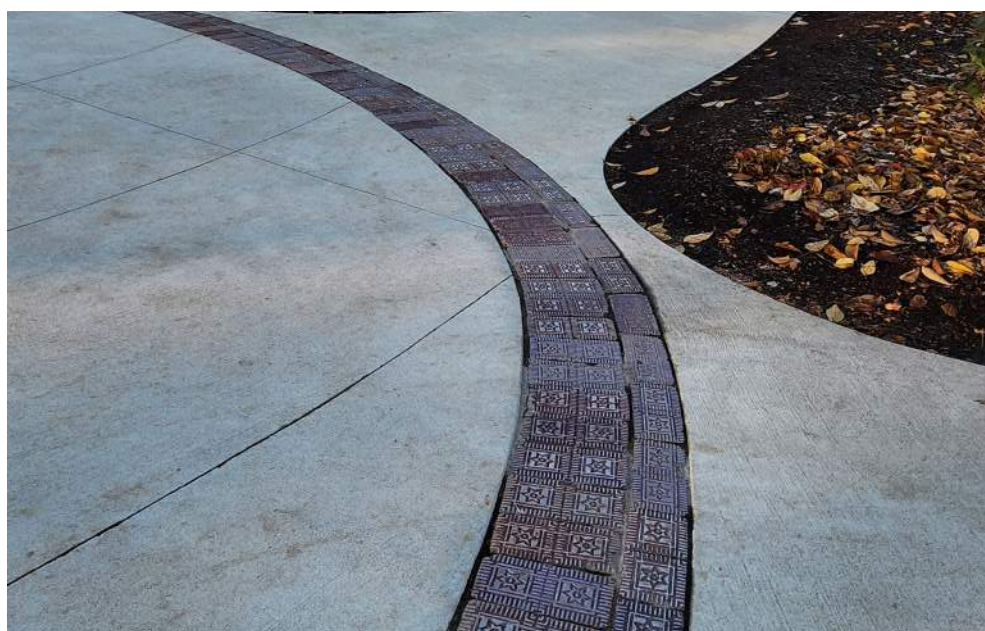
ANALYSIS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, this park is well maintained and very inviting. A few modifications to this park could make this more compliant and reinforce the character of the area more completely.

- Use litter receptacles that have a more historic design/ This could match the receptacle used within the downtown square.
- Provide historic tables and chairs within the gazebo in place of the picnic tables.
- Infill #12 stone in larger joints of the pavers, such as where they are corded around a curved condition.
- Add ground elements to the playground to bring this up to ADA compliance. If a larger playground renovation takes place, consider utilizing the hillside to expand the play value. Install poured in place surfacing for the whole playground or, at a minimum, at high use areas.
- Incorporate elements that represent the history of the site or neighborhood, such as relics from the school. These items should be intentionally incorporated into the site to avoid appearing as if they have been "plopped" into the landscape.

Similar to other parks, there is a lot of lawn to mow. However, in keeping with the historic character of design, lawn would have been a very typical ground cover. If opportunity to make larger areas of liriopie or other masses of ground cover, that could reduce weekly mowing maintenance.

Ensure all elements meet accessibility requirements. The book kiosk and the dog waste station need to be relocated and adjusted to a maximum height of 34" and a reach between 10"-24" from the pavement.







Southside Park

ADDRESS: 396 Washington Street

SIZE: 3 acres

DESIGNATION: Neighborhood Park

SEASONS OF USE: Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter

LEVEL OF USE: Light



INVENTORY

ANALYSIS

First Impression

Visual Aesthetics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Branding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Main Entrance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Vegetation quality, quantity, and variety	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Accessibility & Safety

ADA Compliance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Internal Wayfinding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ease of Access from Main Road	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Safety/Security	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Structures

Shelter	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Site Amenities

Playground	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Open Green Space	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Multi-purpose Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Basketball Court	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Baseball/Softball Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Water Fountain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Benches	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Parking Lot	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10





OVERVIEW

As the name suggests, Southside Park is in a quiet neighborhood south of the downtown square along historic Pleasant Street. This 3-acre park encompasses a full city block surrounded by residential properties on both all sides. The City of Noblesville owns most of the empty lots adjacent to this park, allowing for great flexibility in its expansion and potential updates.

INVENTORY

Southside Park provides active recreation facilities, including softball, basketball courts, a playground, and a shelter. While many of the amenities can accommodate park users in wheel chairs or with limited mobility, accessing these amenities from the public ROW is not available. Though generally maintained, the park contains several individual amenities that have aged beyond their level of service to meet the expectations of recreation facilities in Noblesville.

- The asphalt basketball court allows for full court play and is supported with benches and parking. The surface is cracked and despite crackfill and seal coating the surface, seams have opened. This can be indicative of poor drainage in the subbase
- The ball field has a well-maintained infield and fencing along the base lines. The open outfield allows for flexible use of the open lawn. A 2' wide gap in the fence provides access into the fields along the base lines.
- The playground, while small and dated, provides a lot of play opportunities with swings, slides, climbers, and ground mounted elements. The fiber mulch surface is well maintained under the slides and swings and is maintained with a wood edge.
- The 10' x 20' wooden shelter provides a few non ADA picnic tables, a grill, and a drinking fountain. This element is well placed in close proximity to the parking and equidistant between the playground and basketball courts.
- The edge of the park is defined by a wide variety of native trees and shrubs. A small berm separates the edge of the play lawn from playground and shelter.



ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This park and surrounding neighborhood should be reenvisioned with significant public engagement to identify the right program to benefit an underserved area of Noblesville. The current acreage, in addition to the adjacent city-owned properties, could create a larger destination park. What can be built on these parcels is limited because of past flooding. Significant residential development along the new Pleasant Street Corridor makes this an excellent option for programs that could serve a quickly densifying area of Noblesville. Some opportunities may include community gardens, dog park, destination/universally accessible playground, and outdoor courts (pickleball and basketball). The existing tree canopy should be maintained as much as possible following a comprehensive tree assessment to ensure longevity and viability of the urban canopy. Consideration should be given to closing 4th Street to create a larger tract of land for park development. Improvements beyond the park boundaries would greatly benefit this neighborhood.



GENERAL SYSTEM COMMENTS

WAYFINDING

Along main roads that provide access to or are within a quarter mile of a park entrance, a simple wayfinding sign should be used. This sign can be universal but use an arrow to indicate where someone would turn to access a nearby park. Wayfinding signage along trails is also important. The new trail along Pleasant Street connects the Nickel Plate Trail to the White River Greenway and, once complete, will connect to the Midland Trace Trail. Ensuring a comprehensive signage program along these trails will be imperative to the community navigating these trails effectively.

SUSTAINABILITY

Becoming a more sustainable department can be a great marketing message to the community. The benefits are numerous, but if the end result doesn't ultimately save you time, resources, or dollars, it can be difficult to convince the decision makers that the changes are worth the investment.

There are some initiatives that can help reduce maintenance; therefore, reduce gas usage expenses) carbon emissions (pollution), and time in the field (resources).

LAWN ALTERNATIVES

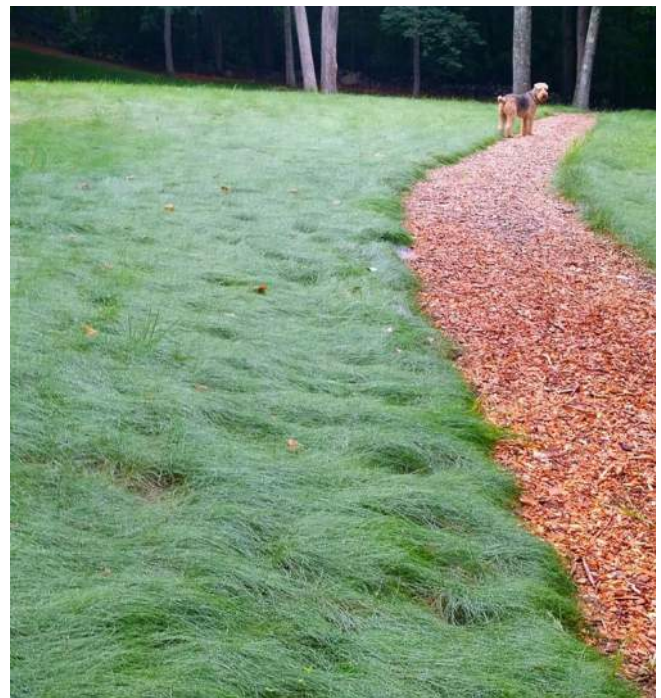
The amount of mown lawn within the park system is extensive. According to logs, it takes **x number of hours by x number of staff using x number of mowers** to get everything mown each week. Open lawns are an important amenity for the park system, but there are parts of each park that could be seeded using an alternative ground cover.

Low mow turf is a short fescue mix that grows to +/-6" tall and stops. It can be mown but is intended to be used in areas where open lawns are not needed for recreation needs, "the back 40", or as a transition between mown lawn and native plantings.

There are a variety of groundcovers that can spread into large areas and are tolerant of foot traffic. Environmental conditions should be considered to determine the right kind of ground cover. Some examples include No Mo Liriope (non-native), Barren Strawberry, and Carex spp. In addition to these examples, low stature prairie seed is a great mix for poor soil and is a combination of native grasses and forbs. All these groundcovers are more expensive than seeded lawn and require a certain amount of maintenance to get established. However,



Directional Arrow Example



No Mow Lawn Seed Mix, Photo Credit: Prairie Nursery



Barren Strawberry, Photo Credit: GrowNative.org



Carex Spp (Sedge), Photo Credit: GardeningKnowHow.com



once this time and expense has been provided, the result is a very low maintenance area that requires limited time and expense. One issue related to alternate ground covers is the education of the community. There is a certain expectation that parks are manicured. This is appropriate in some areas, but not all. Signage explaining the benefits of certain ground covers can help with this process.

NATIVE SPECIES

For the most part, the parks system is a fantastic resource for Noblesville for quality and native urban tree canopy. Only in rare instances are invasive species present. All effort should be made to remove any invasive species from the parks system, including pear trees (mostly found in naturalized areas).

Plantings found in older parking lots do not match the character of the parks department. Roses and non-native perennials are out of place and should be replaced with ornamental grasses and native species.

PARKING LOTS

Establish an annual budget to upkeep parking lots throughout the system. This schedule should allow the parks department to mill and resurface, provide full depth asphalt repair in select locations, seal coat and stripe all parking lots and drives over a 5-7 cycle. Some areas will require more regular



PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

One of the main requests that came from the public engagement input is the desire for additional trails. Some of the strongest connections to be made within a community is connecting all of your parks with trails and extend regional trails to connect to other regional trails. Noblesville has done an excellent job at making these connections. With the completion of Pleasant Street corridor, the only parks not connected to the rest of the system are Seminary Park and Federal Hill Commons. The completion of Pleasant Street provides pedestrian corridors between the Nickel Plate Trail, Midland Trace Trail and White River Greenway Trail. These off-road trails combined with trails provided along 146th Street, Boden Avenue, and Hague Road connects all other parks within the system, as well as several other recreation amenities operated by other groups.

Trail connections to Seminary Park and Federal Hill Commons should be studied. Both parks have their different challenges to get these trail connections. Seminary Park has ample sidewalk connections, but trails encourage bike and scooter use. Being within the downtown fabric, Federal Hill Commons is encompassed by two highways and a major arterial street. The new underpass of the Nickel Plain rail line at Nixon Street should offer significant benefits in connecting to Forest Park. The number of people accessing Federal Hill Commons for events justifies having trail connections that do not have to interact with SR 32 or SR 19. Pedestrian bridges or tunnels should be evaluated under both of these highways.

Providing the next layer of trail development in Noblesville has been a top priority based on public input. Trail connections to and between schools, as well as between commercial districts and residential neighborhoods are the next layer of development. Removing difficult road crossings and connections to and between more regional trail systems using natural and off-road corridors also create a more diverse trail network.

