
CITY OF NOBLESVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2026-2030



NOBLESVILLE
INDIANA
PARKS & RECREATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the many citizens, staff and community groups who provided extensive community input for the development of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The efforts of this community will continue to ensure the success of Noblesville Parks and Recreation.

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CHAPTER ONE - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since its establishment, Noblesville Parks and Recreation (“NPRD”) has been a cornerstone of the City’s quality of life, enriching the community through exceptional parks, trails, facilities, and programs that foster connection, wellness, and environmental stewardship. As the City of Noblesville continues to grow and evolve, the Parks and Recreation Department remains dedicated to its role as a steward of public spaces and community experiences, while also recognizing that access to parks and recreation enhances not only physical and mental health but also social cohesion and environmental resilience.



Building on more than nine decades of parkland development and nearly four decades of formal departmental leadership, the 2026–2030 Parks and Recreation Master Plan serves as a visionary roadmap for the next chapter of growth. This master plan guides sustainable development, equitable access, and innovation within the park system, ensuring that Noblesville continues to offer high-quality spaces that promote belonging and community pride for generations to come.

The Department currently manages and maintains more than 875 acres of developed parkland, over 150 acres of natural and undeveloped property, and 18 miles of park trails and greenways, including signature destinations such as Forest Park, Federal Hill Commons, Finch Creek Park, Dillon Park, and two municipal golf courses, Fox Prairie and Forest Park Golf Course. The Department’s facilities support outdoor programming and community events that draw residents and visitors alike. The Department also partners with local organizations, schools, and regional agencies to expand access and leverage shared resources for inclusive programming and environmental conservation.

Recognized for its leadership in community engagement, the Department developed this master plan through an inclusive process that combined public input with technical analysis. Engagement efforts included community surveys, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and public meetings designed to capture diverse perspectives. The resulting plan integrates those insights with demographic, operational, and environmental data to inform decisions about future parkland acquisition, facility development, programming priorities, and financial sustainability.

The Noblesville Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2026–2030 reaffirms the Department’s vision to connect people, parks, and nature, while also preserving the city’s unique character while shaping a more accessible, connected, and resilient park system for the future.

1.2 GOALS OF THE PLAN

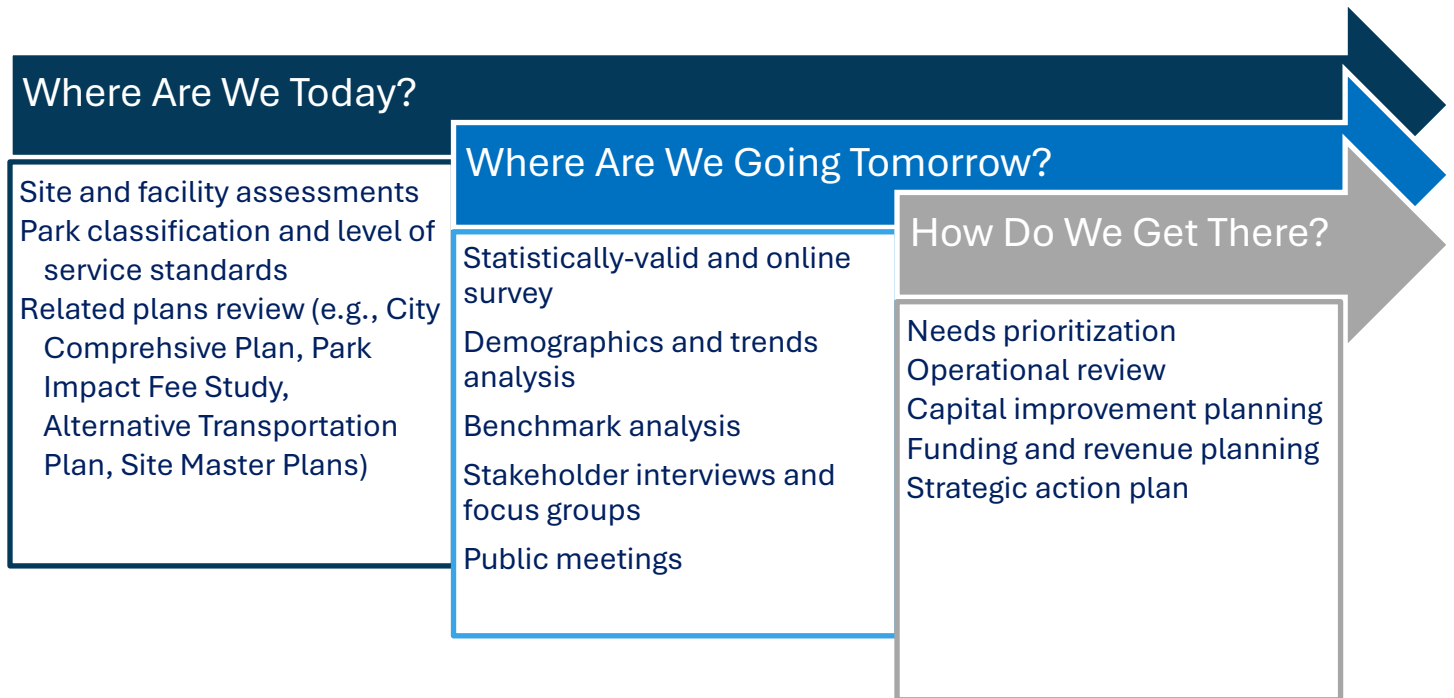
The master plan comprehensively outlines the current and future needs of the community, updates level of service standards, evaluates the financial health of City of Noblesville, and presents a strategic action plan for the next five years. This master plan responds to the dynamic shifts such as population growth, shifting demographics, evolving recreational trends, increased usage of Noblesville parks and facilities since the COVID-19 pandemic, and the numerous new recreation programs that have collectively influenced and redefined the demand for park and recreation services. The goals of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan include:

- **Create a plan that is grounded in inclusivity and accessibility** to ensure the broad interests of the diverse community and stakeholders in Noblesville are heard and can help guide growth and development of parks and recreation sites, facilities, and programs.
- **Outline a strategy for parks, recreation, and greenspaces that are equitable to the entire community** regardless of socioeconomic, cultural, racial, or geographic differences, and provides fair community benefit to all.
- **Utilize a wide variety of data sources and best analytical practices** to predict trends and patterns of use, community impact, and how to address unmet needs in the City of Noblesville.
- **Identify financial funding strategies and organizational excellence** to achieve strategic objectives, identify revenue opportunities, dynamic partnerships, and ensure future operational and maintenance needs are addressed.
- **Develop a dynamic and realistic action plan** that is based on unique levels of service, promotes health and safety, supports active lifestyles, builds community connectivity, and creates a road map to ensure long-term success and financial sustainability for Noblesville's parks, recreation programs, and facilities.



1.3 PROJECT PROCESS

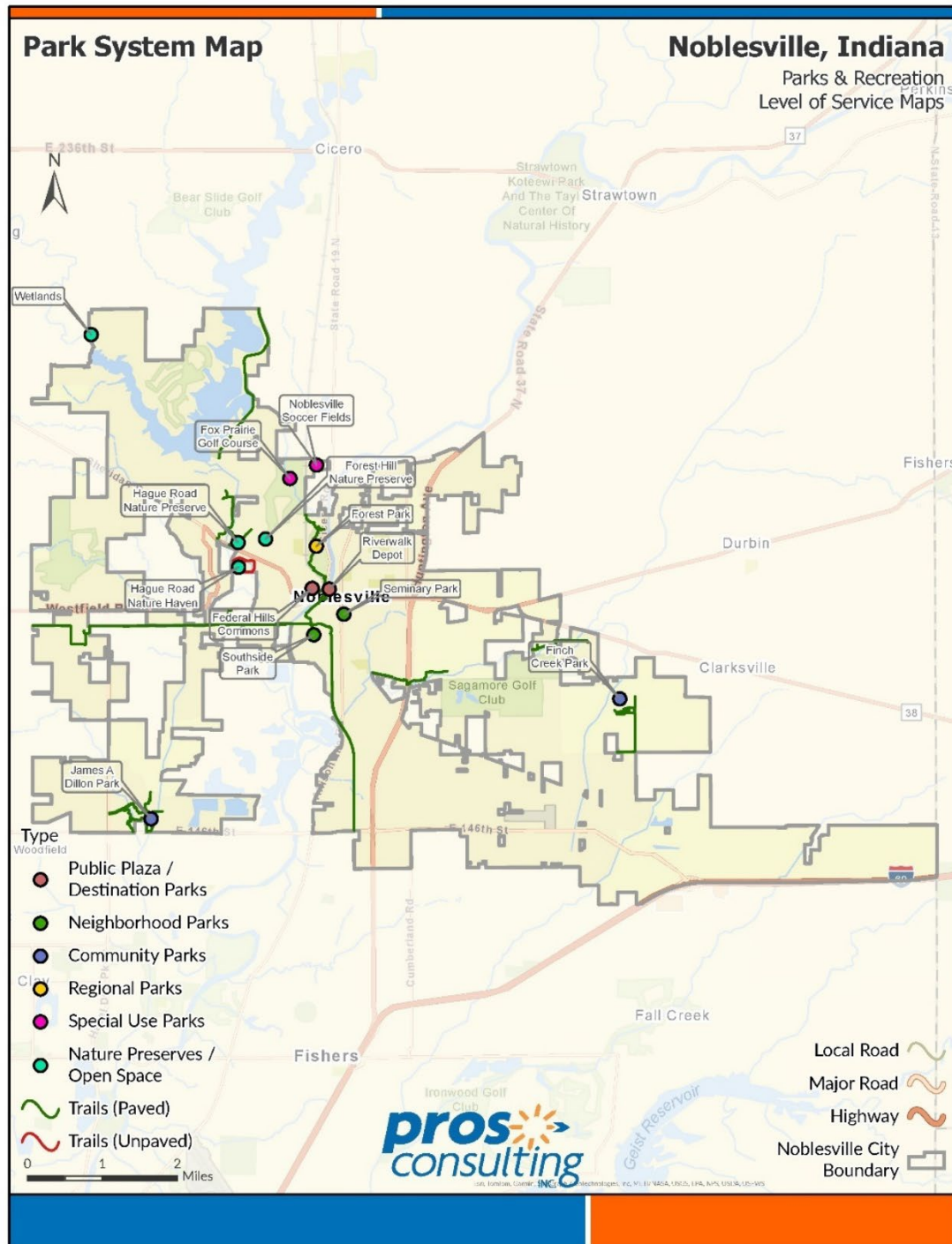
The master plan followed a process of data collection, public input, on-the-ground study, assessment of existing conditions, market research, and open dialogue with local leadership and key stakeholders. The project process followed a planning path, as illustrated below:



1.4 CURRENT PARKS MAP & DEFINITION OF PLANNING AREA

The planning area for this master plan includes all areas within the boundaries of the City of Noblesville.

Map 1 depicts the planning area, park definition/type, and location of Noblesville parks and trails/greenways.



Map 1 - Noblesville Park System Managed by the Department

1.4.1 NOBLESVILLE PARKS INVENTORY

Current Noblesville parks inventory by park name, address, park classification and size are detailed in the table below.

Noblesville Parks Inventory			
Name	Address	Classification	Acres
Riverwalk Depot	181 North 8th Street	Public Plaza/Destination	0.65
Federal Hill Commons	175 Logan Street	Public Plaza/Destination	6.50
Seminary Park	350 South 10th Street	Neighborhood	1.5
Southside Park	396 Washington Street	Neighborhood	3
James A Dillon Park	6001 Edenshall Lane	Community	76.14
Finch Creek Park	16233 Boden Road	Community	194.25
Forest Park	701 Cicero Road	Regional	150.77
Fox Prairie Golf Course	8465 E 196th St, Noblesville, IN 46060	Special Use	220.09
Noblesville Soccer Fields	Fox Prairie and ST RD 19	Special Use	29
Hague Road Nature Preserve	SR 38 and Hague Road	Nature Preserve/Open Space	62.98
Hague Road Nature Haven	SR 38 and Hague Road	Nature Preserve/Open Space	50.63
Forest Hill Nature Preserve	0 Lakeview Dr.	Nature Preserve/Open Space	4.95
Wetlands	329 Poplar Dr.	Nature Preserve/Open Space	9.54
Finch Creek Expansion	1525 E. SR 38th	Undeveloped Parks	29.46
Hyde Park	141st and Brook School Rd.	Undeveloped Parks	154.65
Janus Development	17400 Willow View Rd.	Undeveloped Parks	10.83
Riverfront	0 Division Street	Undeveloped Parks	14
SW Firestone Property	0 Pleasant Street	Undeveloped Parks	7.17
Total Acres:			1,026.11

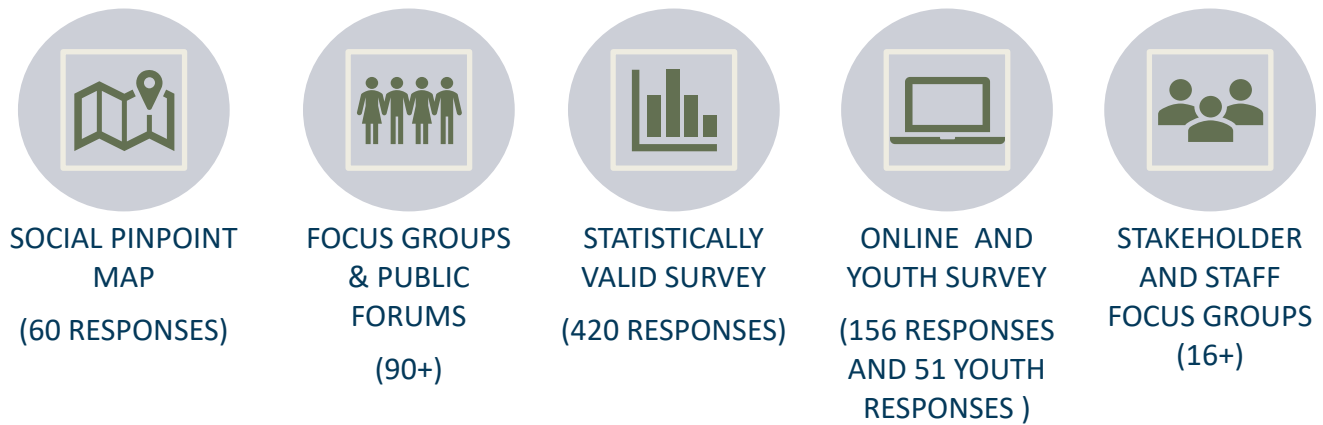
Table 1 - Noblesville Inventory

1.5 PARKS AND RECREATION OVERVIEW



1.6 COMMUNITY DRIVEN PLAN

The master plan is built around key themes that were borne from the Noblesville community throughout the 15-month planning process. Multiple methods were used for the Noblesville community to provide their vision for the next five years. Below summarizes the methods used.



800+ Community Participants

1.7 THEMES FROM THE COMMUNITY



- **High Value on Diverse and Well-Maintained Parks and Amenities**

- Noblesville Parks is highly valued by the community for maintaining clean and well-kept parks.
- Continue to update existing community and neighborhood parks.



- **Trail System Connectivity**

- Trails are seen as vital infrastructure that improve accessibility, safety, and community connection, with strong interest in completing linkages and integrating rest areas and artistic amenities.



- **Nature Based Features**

- Accessible water access to the White River, and other nature-based features to serve wellbeing interests of a growing and diverse Noblesville population.



- **Need for Expanded Indoor Facilities and Outdoor Amenities**

- There is strong demand for a multigenerational community center and indoor recreation space.



- **Sustainable Growth & Existing Infrastructure Improvements**

- Managing population growth while maintaining and expanding parks will require creative funding solutions, strategic land acquisition, and balancing new development with upkeep of existing assets.

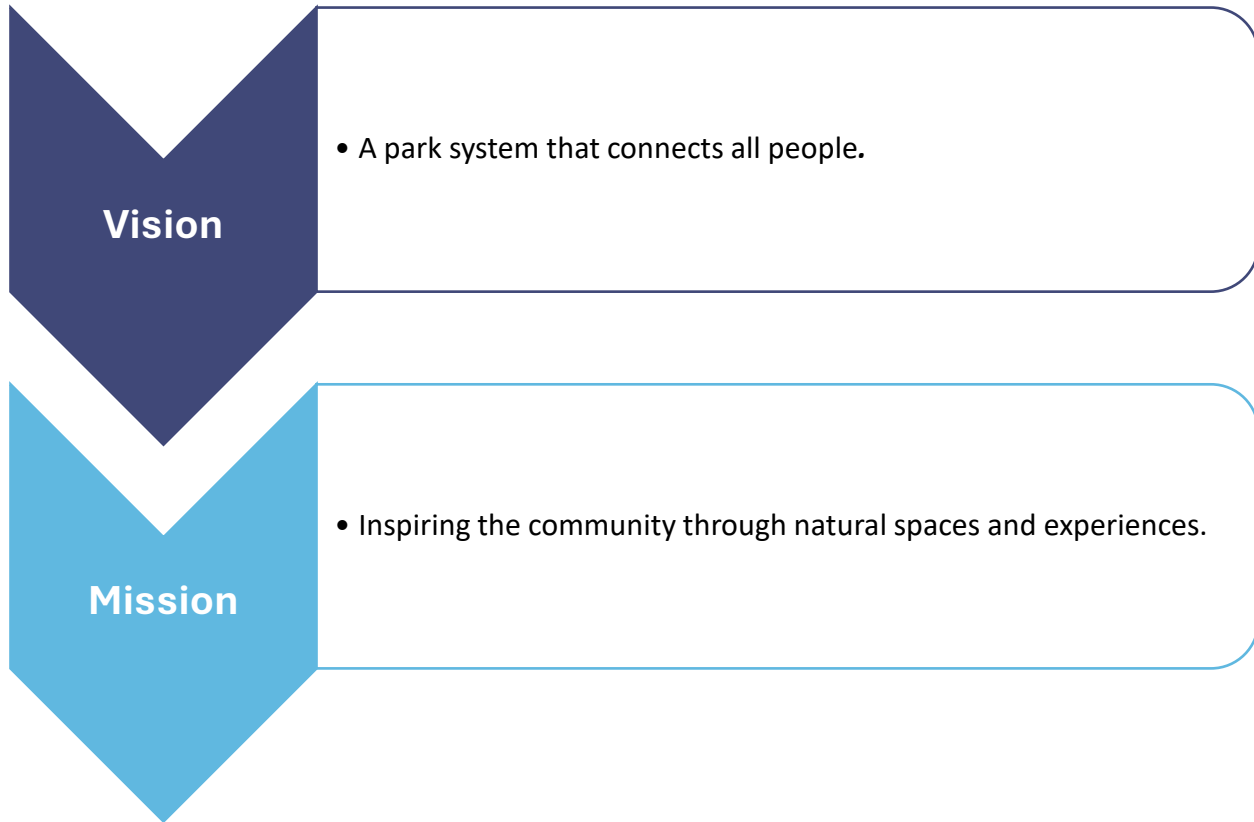


- **Accessibility**

- Emphasize ADA compliance, sensory-friendly amenities, adaptive equipment, and inclusive programming for people of all ages and abilities, with a particular focus on those with special needs.

1.8 VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

The following outlines the foundational framework for NPRD including vision and mission, as well as values shown below:



VALUES

- Connection
- Accessibility & Inclusion
- Sustainability
- Stewardship
- Health & Wellness
- Pride in Place
- Responsiveness & Accountability

1.9 STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

1.9.1 PARK AND FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement a coordinated wayfinding program that improves visibility of parks and trail access points, helps users navigate between parks and facilities that reinforces connectivity across the broader trail network.
- Advance sustainability initiatives that reduce long-term maintenance demands, fuel usage, and operational costs while positioning environmental stewardship as a visible community benefit.
- Reduce mowing intensity and maintenance costs by strategically converting non-programmed lawn areas to low-maintenance turf and alternative groundcovers while preserving high-quality open lawns for recreation.
- Protect and enhance the ecological health and visual character of the parks system by prioritizing native species and removing invasive or incompatible plant materials.
- Preserve parking lot and drive infrastructure and improve user experience by implementing a predictable, lifecycle-based maintenance and reinvestment program.
- Coordinate with planning and engineering departments to prioritize and complete the next layer of trail and pedestrian connections to strengthen access between parks, neighborhoods, schools, commercial areas, and regional trail systems.
- Complete an indoor recreation community center feasibility study to meet the community's high desire for year-round indoor recreation space.
- Continue to reimagine existing parks through effective planning and appropriate updates.
- Continue to review aquatics as a community need, while refreshing the existing aquatic center with new trends in aquatic design.



1.9.2 PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

- Formalize a consistent, department-wide program development framework to ensure offerings align with community priorities and staff capacity.
- Shift from a youth-dominant portfolio toward a more balanced lifespan approach that includes the other age segments.
- Apply a formal program classification and cost recovery model to guide pricing, subsidy decisions, and resource prioritization.
- Implement program lifecycle management principles into recreation programming.
- Improve financial and operational performance of ancillary services while protecting community favorites.
- Strengthen use of performance metrics to guide program, pricing, and staffing decisions.
- Transition from tactical marketing to a strategic, outcomes-driven communications approach.



1.9.3 OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Realign staffing or resource levels with system size, asset complexity, and peer benchmarks to move from reactive to proactive maintenance.
- Address undersized and over-capacity maintenance facilities to improve efficiency, safety, and long-term asset care.
- Transition toward preventive, data-driven maintenance to protect assets and reduce long-term costs.
- Formalize department-specific standards and procedures to improve consistency and prepare for Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation.
- Ensure long-term maintenance implications are considered before new assets are built or acquired.
- Balance system expansion with the Department's ability to maintain quality standards.
- Leverage technology to improve planning, transparency, and decision-making.



1.9.4 FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Enhance Sponsorship & Naming Rights Opportunities - Leverage sponsorships and naming rights while protecting public trust.
- Expand Strategic Partnerships to Offset Operating Costs - Use partnerships to reduce City financial exposure while expanding services and programming.
- Improve Grant Readiness and Match Strategy - Maximize competitiveness for state, federal, and private grants through preparation and alignment.
- Optimize Earned Revenue Without Compromising Access - Refine cost recovery and pricing strategies to strengthen financial performance while maintaining equity.
- Leverage Volunteerism Strategically - Use volunteers to expand capacity and environmental stewardship, not to replace skilled labor.
- Align Funding Decisions with Asset Lifecycle Planning - Ensure funding strategies support the full lifecycle of parks and facilities.
- Align funding sources with capital improvement projects creating dynamic funding strategies that will enhance the park system

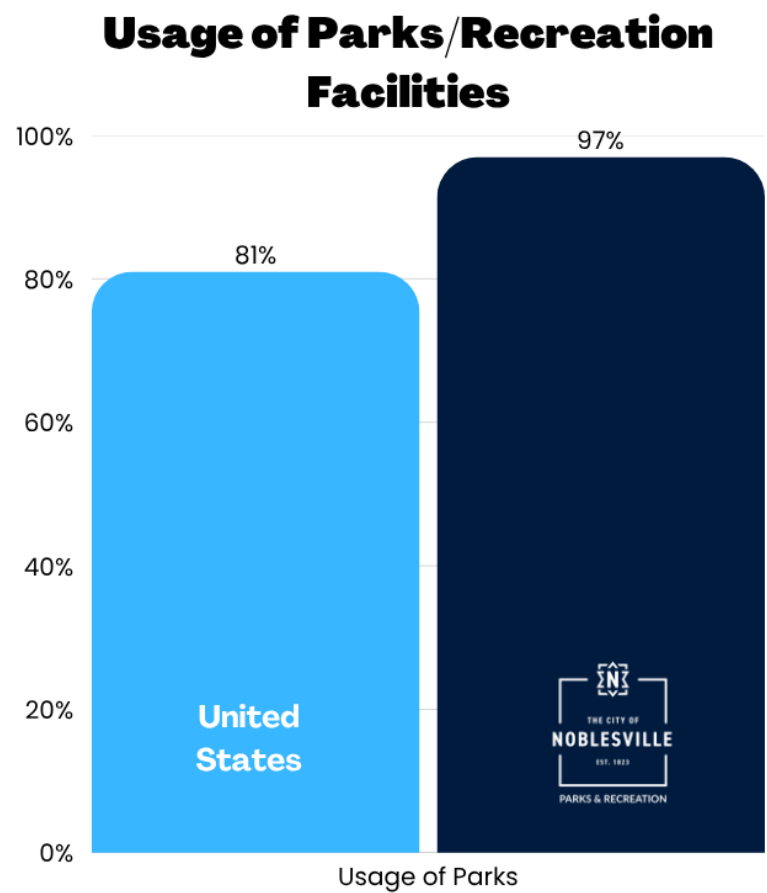


1.10 CONCLUSION

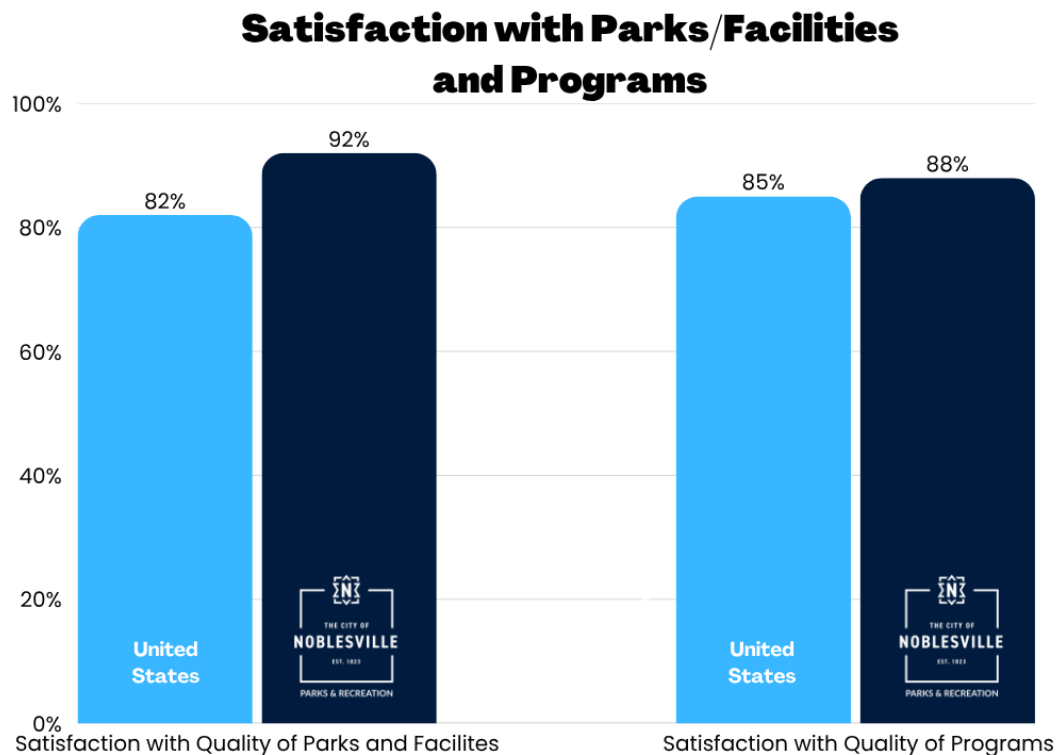
Noblesville Parks delivers consistent maintenance, quality programs and levels of service for residents and visitors. This master plan positions Noblesville Parks and Recreation to continue offering innovative, well-balanced facilities and programs as the City grows over the next five years.

Public engagement consistently praised the quality of maintenance and the accessibility of diverse park experiences, from Forest Park to the Nickel Plate Trail. Signature destinations, such as Dillon Park and Federal Hills Commons Park, are major community assets, and the Department's program portfolio continues to expand to all ages and interests.

Nearly 98% of the Noblesville community use parks and recreation facilities, according to the statistically valid needs assessment survey. As shown in the table below, this level of participation significantly exceeds national benchmark comparisons, demonstrating the community's strong use of these assets.



The Noblesville community takes pride in its parks and programs, as evident in the table below, based on the statistically valid needs assessment survey results with comparison to national benchmarks.



To sustain this high standard, the Department must stay ahead of infrastructure and asset needs, invest in improvements to existing amenities and trails, and maintain equity across the system as the city expands. The Parks and Recreation Department should also add amenities that meet evolving needs, such as year-round indoor space, acquire new land for future parks and trails, and secure additional funding sources to support a “park system of excellence.”

With these actions, Noblesville Parks and Recreation is well-positioned to build on its legacy over the next five years, providing a comprehensive mix of high-quality parks, facilities, programs, and services that elevate quality of life across the City of Noblesville.

