

A STARTING PLACE

The Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation is the primary parks agency for the more than 860,000 residents of Marion County, Indiana. The Department's roots are within the pre-1969 boundaries of the City of Indianapolis. Since that time, the Department's jurisdiction has grown to the boundaries of the county. This encompasses the entire range of possible parks and communities. These include intensely urban plazas, small parks in declining urban neighborhoods, parks in middle-class suburban subdivisions and larger natural parks on the rural fringes of the county.

Because of the steady outward growth of Marion County's population, Indy Parks is challenged to balance the needs of the historic city parks with the needs of populations in the other eight townships. Half of this task is in operating, maintaining and adding to the capacity of established city parks. The counterpart to this is Indy Parks' challenge to offer services and programs in the outlying areas of the county. There are noticeably fewer parks and built facilities in these areas, requiring Indy Parks' staff to employ creative strategies and partnerships to ensure delivery of park and recreation services to all of Marion County's residents.

The 2009 Indianapolis-Marion County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan describes the present state and future vision for recreation opportunities in Marion County, Indiana. This plan also summarizes the progress and accomplishments of the previous comprehensive plan, dated 2004. 96% of the 2004 Plan's actions were completed and documented. 4% of the actions were at least begun, and should be completed in the 2009 Plan.

The existing county-wide park and recreation facilities, natural and cultural features, demographics and universal accessibility conditions are identified to provide a starting point for future planning. Through a process of citizen participation and survey, Indy Parks has also identified and prioritized the recreational needs of the community, enabling them to identify trends, directions and opportunities for the park system. The changing demographics of the city and county necessitate timely reevaluations of the present and future recreational needs of the county.

PLAN PURPOSE

This Plan documents the current status of Marion County Parks and Open Spaces. It also develops a blueprint for the creation and preservation of open spaces, recreation facilities and parks that:

- Reflects community values, goals and priorities.
- Identifies creative alternative methods to achieve these goals.
- Integrates easily into:
 - the formation of City policies,
 - the selection, implementation and coordination of City projects; and
 - the development of complementary and cooperative efforts by citizens and the City.
- Takes into account the role of recreation spaces, activities, programs, and facilities in the social and economic development of the city.
- Creates an immediate and progressive strategy to meet recreation needs for at least five years.
- Creates a unified, community-based vision for recreation activities, services and providers.
- Endeavors to create a stronger sense of community by developing partnerships between stakeholders to fulfill the recreation needs of the county.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

A comprehensive plan is a valuable tool for Indy Parks to identify the direction for present and future recreation activities within Marion County. The plan will establish a framework for sensible development of park and recreation services. Having a comprehensive plan is not only beneficial for Park Board members and recreation planners, but it also gives the community a clear sense of Indy Parks' direction.

Indy Parks partners with its sister agency, the Department of Metropolitan Development in its writing of the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Park staff participate in both internal and public meetings throughout the drafting of the plan. The recommendations regarding treatment of greenways and land acquisition in this plan mirror those in the Land Use Plan.

A comprehensive plan for Indy Parks provides the foundation that will guide the Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation as well as citizen part-

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ners. It recognizes the role of Indy Parks as a *partner* in fulfilling the recreation needs of the citizens of the county. As a part of delivering services, Indy Parks partners with a great many other provider organizations. These include faith-based groups, schools, private recreation centers, YMCAs, and other social service organizations.

PLAN COMPONENTS

The components of Indy Parks' Comprehensive Plan will include:

- Public Participation
- Information gathering
 - park system organization
 - inventory of park facilities
 - inventory of natural resources
 - inventory of cultural resources
 - national recreation standards
 - future needs and trends
- Universal Access Evaluation
- Needs analysis
- Priorities & Action Schedule
- Evaluation of the Plan



THE RECREATION EXPERIENCE

The primary focus of Indy Parks is to improve the quality of life by meeting the leisure needs of a diverse urban and suburban population. An understanding of “recreation” is needed because of the diverse nature of leisure and recreation.

Leisure time is that discretionary time that is not consumed by work, school, eating or sleeping. Indy Parks joins a wide array of leisure service providers such as local professional sports teams, zoos and museums, the Arts, libraries, church groups, school groups, neighborhood youth sports organizations and others, in an attempt to satisfy the public's leisure needs.

Leisure needs can be classified into two general categories: Passive and Active.

Passive leisure activities include a drive through a park, a walk along a shoreline, watching children participate in a sport or activity, observing sports activities, visiting a historic city, or reading a book on a park bench. The pleasure is enhanced when the park is well maintained, safe from crime and accessible to the user. Tall green trees, running streams and other greenspace provide a natural and relaxing break from the built environment. It is a place where wildlife can be viewed and appreciated. *Passive* leisure activities in the outdoors are refreshing and enjoyable.

Active leisure activities include participating in a sports league, attending a day camp, going for a jog, playing basketball, mountain biking or learning to swim at a local pool. These are opportunities to develop a healthy lifestyle, enhance fitness and socialize with others. Offering meaningful, high quality, *Active* leisure activities can be a deterrent to crime and extend the life of Marion County residents.

Public, private, and commercial providers of recreation services exist as part of the leisure and entertainment industry; the largest industry in the United States.

BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

The benefits of parks and recreation to society, the community, and local government are significant. While some view parks and recreation as trivial or unnecessary, research conducted since the 1930s proves otherwise. In fact, research has shown the small investments in park and recreation areas, programs, services and facilities are invaluable to a community. The impacts: economic, environmental, community, health and wellness, and others; help to create a healthy, vibrant place in which humans live.

The entire community benefits when investments in local parks and recreation are made. Parks and recreation also have a positive effect on corporate relocation, reduced crime, and community spirit. Some of the benefits of parks and recreation to the City of Indianapolis follow.

Health & Fitness Benefits

Significant benefits are attributable to provision of local parks and recreation. Encouraging physical activity and quiet activities has significant positive impacts on individuals and the community. With minor publicly funded investment, local government officials can positively affect the health and fitness of the community in the following ways:

- Physical activity appears to relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety and improve mood.
- The physically fit person is less prone to injury and is less likely to experience depression.
- Positive and enjoyable recreation experiences can decrease stress and psychological tensions.
- Each additional mile walked or run by a sedentary person would give him or her an extra twenty-one (21) minutes of life.
- Outdoor adventure activities for people with limited physical ability gives participants feelings of success and improved feelings of confidence.
- Physically active older people typically benefit from lower blood pressure, increased muscle strength, joint flexibility and lower total cholesterol levels than do less active people.
- According to the Gallup Poll for American Health, Americans who exercised regularly were two and one-half (2 1/2) times more likely to report that they were happy than Americans who did not exercise at all.

- A water aerobics program two (2) times a week for sixteen (16) weeks significantly reduced diastolic blood pressure, body fat, and body weight in elder community residents. (*The Benefits of Parks and Recreation – a Catalogue, 1992*)

Environmental Benefits

The preservation of the natural resources, most often found in local parks, results in environmental benefits to a community. Yet the far-reaching benefits to the environment of this small public investment are often underestimated. Preservation of an area's topography, wooded areas and historically important areas can often create the fabric of a high quality life for the community. Benefits of parks and recreation to a local community include the following environmental positives:

- Greenways limit and control air pollution.
- Green space is essential for recharging our aquifers.
- Greenways prevent pollution of surface and ground waters.
- Greenways maintain wildlife habitats and natural systems.
- Trees and vegetation help reduce noise and dust and absorb pollutants.
- One (1) shade tree may save the energy cost equivalent of four (4) air conditioners operating all day.
- According to a 1995 issue of *Money* magazine, Americans rank clean air and clean water number one (1) and number two (2) when choosing qualities for "the Best Place To Live."
- Open space enhances our quality of life including recreation, education, aesthetic and spiritual enrichment.



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Economic Benefits

The economic benefits of parks, recreation and open space include those benefits associated with promotion of tourism, increased property values, attraction of business and industry, and reinvestment in property. Specifically research has found the following benefits to providing local parks and recreation:

- A 2003 study by IUPUI's Center for Urban Policy and the Environment found that homes in an Indianapolis greenway corridor benefit from \$3,731 in added value. Another model found that the value added to homes near the Monon Trail is \$13,059.
- In the neighborhood of Cox Arboretum, in Dayton, Ohio, the proximity of the park and arboretum accounted for an estimated five percent (5%) of the average residential selling price of homes.
- Increases in property values result in increased tax values. Park and open space investments often pay for themselves in a short period of time, due in part to increased property tax revenues from higher values of nearby property.
- A study of the impacts of greenbelts on neighborhood property values in Boulder, Colorado, revealed the aggregate property value for one (1) neighborhood was approximately \$5.4 million greater than if there had been no greenbelt. This resulted in \$500,000 additional potential property tax revenue annually.
- Quality of life is increasingly cited as a major factor in corporate location decisions. In 1996, Ernst & Young's Kenneth Leventhal noted recreation opportunities as the second most important quality of life location criteria. Labor factors, business costs and geographic factors were other considerations.

Community Benefits

Parks and recreation impact the community. It has positive effects on crime reduction, brings people together, and creates a sense of identity and ownership in the community. It puts human beings in contact with each other, bringing out the need for social interaction and the benefits of mutual sharing. As communities plan for the future it has become clear that the quality of life is defined by many aspects of community life. Included in the aspects of quality of life are issues such as safety, education, affordability,

employment opportunities, and, of course, leisure offerings. Indy Parks adds a sense of community to Indianapolis by providing many of the recreation and leisure resources that are so highly valued by the community. Benefits in this area include:

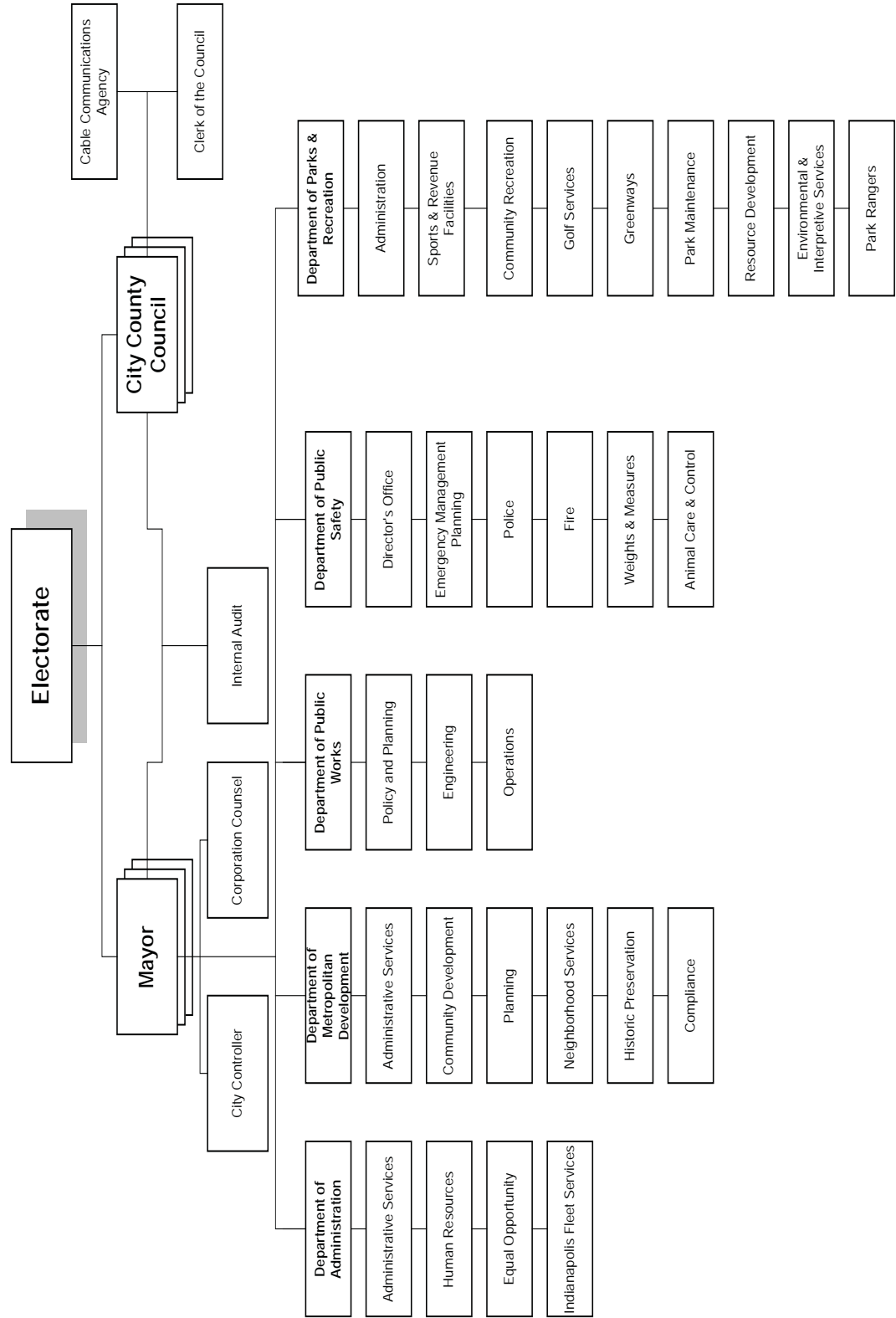
- Cincinnati, Ohio initiated the Late Evening Recreation Programs in 1993. During the initial thirteen week period, the number of juvenile criminal incidents dropped 24% from 491 to 373. Cost per person to provide this recreation service was \$4.56. (*Beyond Fun and Games, 1994*)
- Individuals learn new skills and develop new interests in parks and recreation.
- The opportunity to develop partnerships, combine resources, and meet social needs is provided.
- Civic pride in building a stronger community is created.
- Providing opportunities for families to connect and facilitating the ability to expand intergenerational programs.
- Youth show improved academic performance and adults and businesses realize increased productivity when a sense of community is created at local places and activities.
- Participants of all ages live healthier, longer lives, have reduced stress levels, and gain increased self-esteem and confidence when interacting in recreation activities.
- According to the February 1997 issue of *Urban Land*, in surveys conducted by American Lives, Inc. and Inter-Communication, Inc., the following stages in consumer preferences in community features and designs were noted. Twenty-one (21) out of thirty-nine (39) items listed related to park and recreation items.

It has become clear to society at large that the benefit of providing adequate park, recreation and open space areas is significant. With over a 100 year history in the American City, parks have become an integral part of our society and community expectations.

PLANNING PROCESS

The development of the comprehensive park, recreation, and open space plan was divided into a three-part process: information gathering, draft plan development and final plan preparation.

City of Indianapolis **2004 Annual Budget**
Organization Chart



Introduction

By utilizing existing staff resources, and previous plans, Indy Parks inventoried and analyzed the park and recreation needs of the community.

The planning process also utilized previous Indy Parks planning efforts including the 1999 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, the 2002 Indianapolis Greenways Plan, Capital Improvement Plans and Strategic Planning done by City's Directors and Park's Senior management. These plans served as a foundation of already existing data and plans that needed review and 'winnowing,' not redevelopment.

Information Gathering

In this phase, the project team actively sought information and background on issues and identified needs facing the Indianapolis Park and Recreation system. Included in this phase were data collection from the public via questionnaire surveys, meetings, and electronic communications. A review of existing plans, discussions with current staff as well as investigations of capital improvement plans were completed in order to define a planning area, identify overall park and recreation needs, and evaluate existing service quality and overall community opinion for Indy Parks. An early draft of the Plan was transmitted to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources for technical review on January 15, 2009. This first draft of the plan was in reality an outline and status report of Indy Parks progress to date.

Draft Plan Development

The second phase of the planning process was the further development of the draft comprehensive plan. This draft was reviewed for technical accuracy by staff and City officials prior to its release to the public. After modification, a public comment draft plan was released via Indy Parks' website and recreation centers and to public officials for review. Dates and times for subsequent public meetings were coordinated with release of the draft comprehensive park, recreation and open space plan.

Final Plan Preparation

Briefings to various city Boards and officials, and finally, the adoption of the Plan the Indianapolis Parks and Recreation Board were completed for this final

phase of comprehensive plan development. Subsequently, the adopted draft was transmitted to INDNR for their approval, and then printed. A final level of approval was obtained from the Metropolitan Development Commission, to attach the plan as an appendix to the County's Land Use Plan.

CURRENT DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION ORGANIZATION

Today, the Department of Parks and Recreation oversees recreational facilities and provides leisure time activities throughout Marion County, Indiana. The Department enforces all city ordinances and state laws pertaining to parks and recreational facilities. It has the power to levy general property taxes to acquire, operate and maintain park and recreation facilities, and it also has the power to issue general obligation bonds for the same purposes. Its budget is reviewed and approved by the Mayor and the City-County Council.

A five-member board, administered by a director, oversees department policies, reviews its annual budget, and approves all contracts. The Park Board consists of the Director of the Department, who is appointed by the Mayor, two members appointed by the Mayor, and two members appointed by the City-County Council. The four members serve a renewable one-year term. The Director of the Department serves as the chair of the Board of Parks and Recreation.

As of March, 2009 the Board members and their term expirations are:

Stuart Lowry, Chair, Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation

	Term Expires
Dr. Jacqueline S. Greenwood	12-31-09
Ms. Diana Wilson Hall	12-31-09
Mr. Joseph E. Mayes	12-31-09
Mr. Michael R. Tywman	12-31-09

The board may be contacted at:
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(Addresses/phone numbers are available upon request)

Department of Parks and Recreation Budget

The Department of Parks and Recreation budget has fluctuated significantly over the past 5 years, however, grant monies contributed to the department's success in revitalizing neighborhood parks, extending greenways trails, and offering programs to the community. Detailed budget figures are included in the Identified Needs section. Additional land parcels were received through land donations and funded acquisitions. The parks system received other parcels for conversion to parks or as leverage for the acquisition of more land elsewhere for larger-size parks. Based on annual park user surveys and facility records, in 2008, the park system provided program services to 1,965,021 citizens; had a general park attendance over 5 million, and Greenways use was at 2.2 million users. The system's capacity met a significant service demand and will continue to be challenged as more opportunities for relaxation, fitness, and recreation occur in relation to disposable time available.

The restructuring of the state's property tax, competition for grant dollars, and slowing economy reduced funding to the parks system enabled the Department to better use existing capacity and add capacity. The momentum gained during the recent period will, of course, need to be maintained in future periods to accomplish extensive renovation of aging facilities and continue a high rate of programming. Additionally, as community development continues, a greater need may become evident for more facilities tailored to local needs. The parks system will pursue its success in acquiring grants or corporate partners for these types of needs.



Park Board Goals

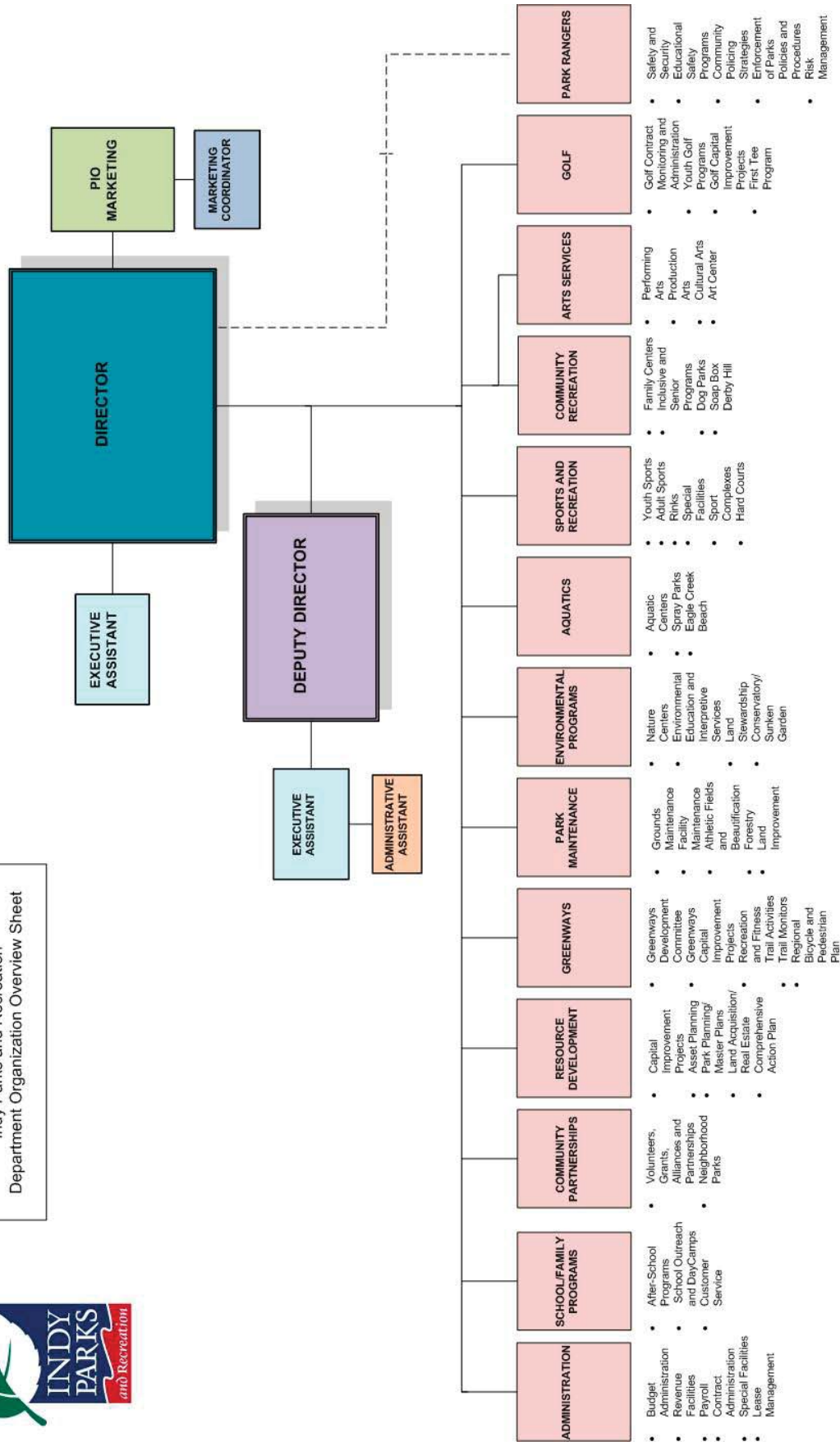
The goals of the Parks Board, as described in Section 241-204 of the establishing ordinance are as follows:

- (1) To review all budgets prepared by the department and recommend to the city-county council any revisions the board feels desirable;
- (2) To hold any hearings to be held following public notice and make findings and determinations required by applicable law;
- (3) To approve the award and amendment of contracts let by the department for the purchase or lease of capital equipment or other property where the contract is required to be bid under IC 5-22;
- (4) To approve the award and amendment of public construction contracts let by the department which are required to be bid under IC 36-1-12;
- (5) To approve the acquisition of and leases for real estate by the department;
- (6) To approve the employment of persons engaged by the department by contract to render professional or consulting services;
- (7) To establish a cumulative building and sinking fund pursuant to IC 36-10-4-36;
- (8) To approve the disposal of property by the department as specified in IC 36-1-11, excluding leases of real property, pursuant to IC 36-1-11, for the siting of cellular, digital personal communications systems, or other wireless communications systems towers and related equipment; and
- (9) In addition, the board shall have the powers granted to the Board of Parks and Recreation of a consolidated city by IC 36-10-4, by ordinance or by the mayor.

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2009
Indy Parks and Recreation
Department Organization Overview Sheet



Department Organization

The nine divisions of the Department of Parks and Recreation are briefly described below.

ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

Administration provides departmental level leadership, management, and oversight of the business operating elements. The Administration Division includes a variety of functions essential to the organization including finance, marketing and public relations, public policy, grants, alliances and partnerships, and a variety of other special projects. This division facilitates and coordinates the implementation of cross-divisional activities.

COMMUNITY RECREATION DIVISION

The Community Recreation Division provides recreational services and opportunities to Marion County residents. Community Recreation's core areas include community centers, neighborhood parks, arts services, day camps, and after-school, therapeutic, and senior programs.

SPORTS AND SPECIAL REVENUE FACILITIES DIVISION

This division provides both sports programs and special facilities combined with educational opportunities for volunteers, coaches and staff. Some of the facilities include indoor and outdoor aquatic centers, sports courts and fields, ice rinks, velodrome, skate park, and BMX track.

GOLF DIVISION

The Golf Division provides golf opportunities for people of all ages and physical ability throughout the Indianapolis community. This division manages municipal courses as well as plans and oversees capital improvements at each course. It manages course operating contracts, service contracts, and course management contracts.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND INTERPRETIVE SERVICES DIVISION

The Environmental and Interpretive Services Division provides environmental education and interpretive programs to the community through nature centers and the Hub Naturalist program.

PARK RANGERS DIVISION

The Park Rangers Division implements education

safety programs, develops community policing strategies, and is responsible for enforcement of city ordinances, parks policies and procedures. Rangers have merged with Indianapolis Metro Police Department within Public Safety.

PARK MAINTENANCE DIVISION

The Park Maintenance Division maintains Indy Parks' facilities and parks. Operating elements include beautification, forestry (includes city's street trees), grounds and facility maintenance, land improvement, natural resources, and land stewardship.

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Resource Development steers the direction of the Department through resource planning, capital asset development and sustainable strategic tactics. In addition to the planning tasks, this division is also responsible for land acquisition and real estate management.

GREENWAYS DIVISION

The Greenways Division manages, improves and maintains the 58.9 mile greenways system within Marion County to provide recreational and fitness opportunities; promote open space conservation; link neighborhoods together, with other parks and other community assets; and provide environmental education for the public concerning the greenways system.



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Department Goals

The goals of the department are drawn from the director's strategic planning with the mayor and from park's senior manager retreats in 2008-2009. Future Indy Parks Strategic Plans will focus on these recommended strategic goals:

1. Experiences - Provide and communicate recreation and learning opportunities that create an environment of health and fitness, environmental responsibility, creativity, diversity, and fun.
2. Infrastructure - Provide a park system that is safe, well maintained, and accessible. Provide state-of-the-art facilities by assessing, prioritizing and upgrading existing capital assets.
3. Financial-Establish fiscal responsibility and transparency in managing the budget.
4. People-Create an environment that inspires, empowers, recognizes and values an engaged work force.

