



## *Chapter 3*

### **III - MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The management of Highland parks and recreation activities and facilities is the responsibility of the Town of Highland Parks and Recreation Department. The Parks and Recreation Department was established in 1947 as a separate department within the municipality. The Department was reorganized in December of 1966 to conform to the 1965 Indiana Parks and Recreation law which governs its operation.

#### **1. Park Board**

The Department has six Board Members. Four members are appointed by the Town Council, one appointed by the Highland School Board, and one member is a member of the Lake County Library Board. The Town Council also has a non-voting Liaison member on the Park Board.

##### **a. Park Board Duties**

The State enabling legislation sets out the Park Board's duties and responsibilities for cities and towns. The Section 10 of the State statute (IC 36-10-3-10), as amended, sets the powers and duties of the Park Boards in the following manner:

Section 10: (a) The board shall:

1. Exercise general supervision of and make rules for the department;
2. Establish rules governing the use of the park and recreation facilities by the public;
3. Provide police protection for its property and activities, either by requesting assistance from state, municipal, or county police authorities, or by having specified employees deputized as police officers; the deputized employees, however, are not eligible for police pension benefits or other emoluments of police officers;
4. Appoint the necessary administrative officers of the department and fix their duties;
5. Establish standards and qualifications for the appointment of all personnel and approve their appointments without regard to politics;
6. Make recommendations and an annual report to the executive and fiscal body of the unit concerning the operation of the board and the status of park and recreation programs in the district;
7. Prepare and submit an annual budget in the same manner as other executive departments of the unit; and
8. Appoint a member of the board to serve on another kind of board or commission, whenever a statute allows a park or recreation board to do this.

(b) In a municipality, the board shall fix the compensation of officers and personnel appointed under subsections (a) (4) and (a) (5), subject to IC 36-4-7-5 and IC 36-4-7-6.  
*As added by Acts 1981, P.L.309, SEC.110.*

## **b. Board Powers**

The Section 11 of the State statute (IC 36-10-3-11) sets the Board's power as follows;

Section 11: (a) The Board may:

1. Enter into contracts and leases for facilities and services;
2. Contract with persons for joint use of facilities for the operation of park and recreation programs and related services;
3. Contract with another board, a unit, or a school corporation for the use of park and recreation facilities or services, and a township or school corporation may contract with the board for the use of park and recreation facilities or services;
4. Acquire and dispose of real and personal property, either within or outside Indiana;
5. Exercise the power of eminent domain under statutes available to municipalities;
6. Sell, lease, or enter into a royalty contract for the natural or mineral resources of land that it owns, the money received to be deposited in a nonreverting capital fund of the board;
7. Engage in self-supporting activities as prescribed by section 22 of this chapter;
8. Contract for special and temporary services and for professional assistance;
9. Delegate authority to perform ministerial acts in all cases except where final action of the board is necessary;
10. Prepare, publish, and distribute reports and other materials relating to activities authorized by this chapter;
11. Sue and be sued collectively by its legal name, as the "Highland Park and Recreation Board", with service of process being had upon the president of the board, but costs may not be taxed against the board or its members in any action;
12. Invoke any legal, equitable, or special remedy for the enforcement of this chapter, a park or recreation ordinance, or the board's own action taken under either; and
13. Release and transfer, by resolution, a part of the area over which it has jurisdiction for park and recreational purposes to park authorities of another unit for park and recreational purposes upon petition of the park or recreation board of the acquiring unit.

(b) The board may also lease any buildings or grounds belonging to the unit and located within a park to a person for a period not to exceed fifty (50) years. The lease may authorize the lessee to provide upon the premises educational, research, veterinary, or other proper facilities for the exhibition of wild or domestic animals in wildlife parks, dining facilities, swimming facilities, golf courses, skating facilities, dancing facilities, amusement rides generally found in amusement parks, or other recreational facilities. A lease may be made for more than one (1) year only to the highest and best bidder, after notice that the lease will be made has been given by publication in accordance with IC 5-3-1.

(c) Notwithstanding subsection (b), the board may lease buildings or grounds belonging to the unit for a period of more than one (1) year without soliciting the highest and best bidder or providing notice under IC 5-3-1 if:

1. The buildings or grounds are leased to an Indiana nonprofit corporation;
2. The buildings or grounds are operated as a public golf course; and
3. The golf course remains subject to rules and regulations promulgated by the board.  
*As added by Acts 1981, P.L.309, SEC.110. Amended by Acts 1981, P.L.320, SEC.6; P.L.228-1986, SEC.1; P.L.35-1990, SEC.72; P.L.328-1995, SEC.1.*

## **2. Parks and Recreation Department**

### **a. Mission Statement**

The Highland Park and Recreation Department has the following mission for the next five years:

*"To enrich the lives of the community by providing programs, leisure services and beautiful parks for all to enjoy and find a sense of well-being"*

This mission was developed by the staff in a workshop session. In addition to above mission, the staff developed the following core values for its operation:

- Enhance quality of life
- Give our residents a safe environment
- Engage all age groups to respect our parks

**b. Staffing**

The Parks and Recreation Department is managed by a professionally accredited Superintendent and the staff under his direction. The Superintendent has the full responsibility for the daily operation of the department and implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, scheduling, and operation of the department. The powers and duties of the Superintendent are enumerated by the Section 14 of the State statute.

Sec. 14. Under the direction of the board, the superintendent shall:

1. Propose annually a plan for the operation of the department;
  2. Administer the plan as approved by the board;
  3. Supervise the general administration of the department;
  4. Keep the records of the department and preserve all papers and documents of the department;
  5. Recommend persons for appointment as assistants if the board determines there is a need;
  6. Appoint the employees of the department, subject to the approval of the board, according to the standards and qualifications fixed by the board and without regard to political affiliation;
  7. Prepare and present to the board an annual report; and
  8. Perform other duties that the board directs.
- As added by Acts 1981, P.L.309, SEC.110.*

Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department has seventeen full time, year round employees on staff, including the Superintendent. The Department is comprised of (2) two Divisions, Recreation and Parks. Open positions at the time of this plan included one (1) park laborer. The Department hires additional seasonal staff as required to carry out different maintenance and recreational programs during growing season.

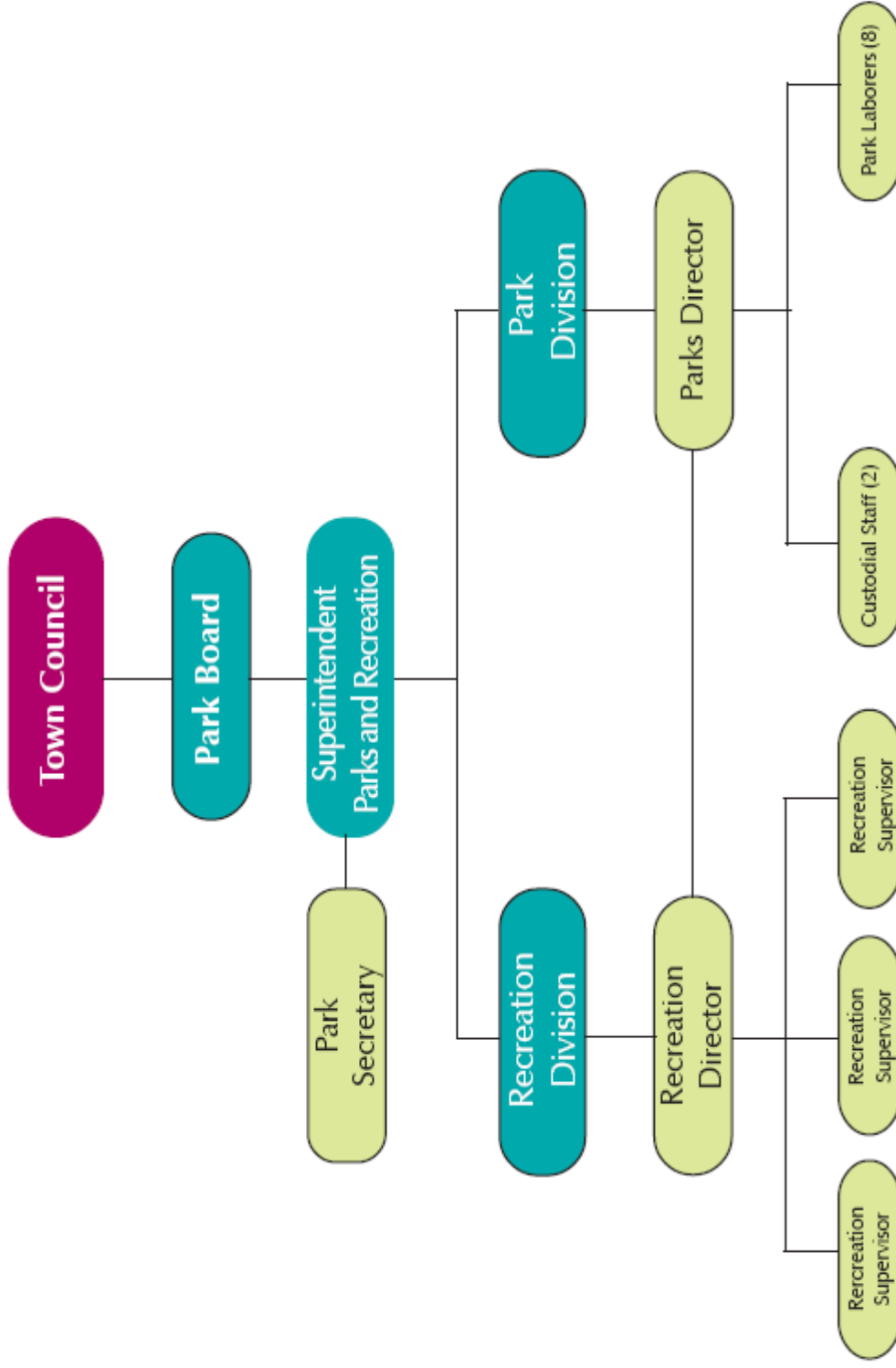
The Parks Division is responsible for upkeep and maintenance of all facilities with the assistance of two (2) custodial staff and eight (8) laborers as directed by the superintendent. Recreation Division operations are performed under the direction of the Director with the assistance of three (3) Recreational Supervisors. The maintenance staff also performs other tasks related to special events, festivals, and maintenance of several boulevards in town. The staff to park acreage ratio for the Department has remained constant of about 15.1 acres per full time staff for the last five years. The ratio for only maintenance staff is more than 32 acres per maintenance staff. This ratio is relatively high for an urbanized park department as many smaller parks and older facilities typically require more maintenance than larger, more natural parks. The maintenance staff also maintains other sites which are not park sites but do require considerable time.

The Park Board and the Town Council has long recognized the deficiencies that exist in provision of services. The Board has recently taken steps to address some of these deficiencies. The most important effort is the completion of a master plan for renovation and expansion of the Lincoln Center. If this plan is implemented, the results will address sever shortages in recreational programming and other leisure services in the town.

In light of the expansion of the Lincoln Center and potential for relocation of the Sharp Athletic Complex to a new site, minor modifications to the 2009 plan or the organization structure may be required in the next five years. If such modifications are necessary, the staff will obtain Park Board approval and will notify Department of Natural Resources of all such changes. The staff is also expected to review the master plan on an annual basis, and evaluate implementation of different tasks and accomplishments. In the event of any major changes, such revisions will be reported to the Park Board.

The following chart represents the proposed organizational structure for the Highland Parks & Recreation Department. Under this organization, provisions are made to expand the department while maintaining a robust operation.

Parks and Recreation Department Organizational Chart



**c. Accomplishment**

The Town of Highland Parks and Recreation Department has completed many of the recommendations proposed and approved in the previous master plan despite challenges in funding and financial difficulties of the town due to tax collection issues. Major accomplishments since 2004 are presented in the following Table 13 for the years 2004-2008.

**Table 13 - 2004-2008 Accomplishments**

Facility	Accomplishment	Year
Brantwood	New soccer field	2008
	Removed tennis courts for new parking lot.	2006
	Added two (2) t-ball fields	2008
Homestead	Added minor "B" ball field	2006
	Removed two (2) north fields due to levee	2006
	Installed ADA compliant pathway to playground	2005
	Added Army Corp Levee trail	2006
	New backstop on Hilltop Field	2008
Lakeside	Installed ADA compliant pathway to playground	2005
Lincoln Center	Installed ADA compliant pathway to playground	2005
	Completed facility master plan	2008
Erie Lackawanna Trail	Installed benches and trees	ongoing
Little Turtle	Installed ADA compliant pathway to playground	2005
	Reconstructed and enlarged gazebo	2007
	New concession & restroom facility	2007
	New interior walking paths	2007
Main Square	New paths	2007
	New street lighting	2007
	New street tree replacement program (2 per year)	ongoing

Facility	Accomplishment	Year
Markley	New major baseball field	2004
	New storage facility/score box	2004
	New minor "A" fences and lighting	2005
	Relocated minor "B" ball field and added new fencing	2007
	Removed basketball court for expanded parking area	2007
	New drinking fountain	2008
	Installed ADA compliant pathway to playground	2005
	Added new softball field	2006
	Replaced playground equipment/made ADA compliant (north P.G.)	2008
	Upgraded concession stand and bathroom facility	2007
Meadows	New concrete pad for picnic shelter	2008
	New roof for maintenance shop	2006
	Installed ADA compliant pathway to playground	2005
	Added perimeter split-rail fence	2008
Sharp Athletic Complex	Relamped lighting (ongoing every three (3) years)	2007
	Acquired approx. 1.5 acres for expansion	2007
Sheppard	Installed ADA compliant pathway to playground	2005
	Installed soccer storage facility	2004
	Added new youth soccer fields	2004
	Installed perimeter walking path	2005
White Oak Estates	Installed sidewalks	2007
	Installed new playground ADA compliant playground	2007
	Installed trees	ongoing
	Installed benches	ongoing

#### d. Recreation Programs

The Highland Parks and Recreation Department provides an abundance of programs, activities, classes, events and leagues. The Department has been offering recreation services and programs for more than forty two years through its Recreation Division. The Division is staffed by a dedicated group of recreation professionals who have a good understanding of the programs offered. They provide a wide range of services and programs that changes seasonally or annually and support different age groups or a variety of interests. Most of the programs offered are financed by user fees while some programs are free or partially subsidized by the Department. The Department also offers limited number of programs related to health, wellness, cultural and arts programs.

The Arsh Group facilitated a staff group workshop to discuss needs and objectives for the programs and services and maintenance. This session was important for the Consulting Team to gain a good understanding on how facilities and program services are managed. The workshop also aimed to determine the quality of delivery of services, barriers to overcome, and internal readiness of the Department to change and adapt to market forces and needs of the community. As a result of this workshop, several issues emerged that need to be addressed in the future. Perhaps the most important issue relates to the staff understanding of the core programs of the Division. The programs being managed generally fall into thirteen traditional core categories of services by the Recreation Division. The programs, however tend to be manager and or sponsor based as opposed to need based.

According to public input the Consultant Team has received, key issues that have emerged are the need for health and fitness services and the needs of the elderly. In the focus discussions with the Recreation Division, the staff agreed to establish a goal to be more comprehensive in its approach and commit to stronger marketing and evaluation of effectiveness of different programs.

The general perception expressed by staff is that the Lincoln Center, the only recreation facilities in the town, is run down and requires constant maintenance. The structural deficiencies are also reducing the ability of the staff to provide additional programs or improve delivery of the existing programs. In some cases, lack of resources, reduces ability to address the needs. This appears to also contribute to inconsistency in services being delivered making it difficult to determine effectiveness and quality of delivery. Overall, however, staff expressed a need for additional space. These and other emerged issues have framed the recommended strategies in this plan for the next five years.

Table 14 list the different programs and the primary beneficiaries of these programs currently offered in the town.

**Table 14 – Recreational Programming**

Program	Pre-School 3-5 yrs	Elementary 6-10 yrs	Mid. School 11-14 yrs	High School 15-18 yrs	College Age	Adults	Families	Senior
<b>1 Arts/Crafts</b>								
Basket Classes								
Rendering With Colored Pencils								
Beginning Knitting								
<b>2 Dance and Exercise</b>								
Ballroom Dancing								
Senior Citizen Dance								
Creative Movement								
Ballet/Tap/ Jazz								
Daddy/ Daughter Dance								
Live Band Dance								
Middle School Dances								
Water Aerobics								
Soft Aerobics								
Aerobics Hi-low								
Senior Low Impact Aerobics 50+								
Yoga/Pilates & Intro to Vinyasa								
Yoga/Abs & Intro to Vinyasa								
Morning Exercise								
Zen Meditation (Health & Fitness)								
Belly Dancing								
Boot Camp Blast								

Program	Pre-School 3-5 yrs	Elementary 6-10 yrs	Mid. School 11-14 yrs	High School 15-18 yrs	College Age	Adults	Families	Senior
<b>3 Self Defense</b>								
Hapkido/Self Defense Class								
<b>4 Health Topics</b>								
Health Check								
Women's Wellness								
Blood Drives								
<b>5 Youth Gymnastics</b>								
Parent & Tot Tumbling								
Pre-School								
School Age Class								
<b>6 Preschool/Kids Stuff</b>								
Wiggles & Giggles								
Tots of Fun								
Pre-School Program								
Stroller Rides								
<b>7 Music</b>								
Guitar Lessons								
<b>8 Performing Arts</b>								
Highland Community Band								
Gazebo Concert Series								
Annual Play								
<b>9 Sports</b>								
Men's 30 & Over Basketball League								
Men's Open Basketball League								
Kick ball League								
Kick ball Tournament								
Summer Adult Softball Leagues								
Women's Volleyball League								
Co-Rec Volleyball Leagues								
Fall Open-Table Tennis Tournament								
Highland Table Tennis Center								
Table Tennis Events								
Youth Advanced Basketball League								
Biddy Basketball								
Middle School Boys Basketball								
High School Boys Basketball								

Program	Pre-School 3-5 yrs	Elementary 6-10 yrs	Mid. School 11-14 yrs	High School 15-18 yrs	College Age	Adults	Families	Senior
NFL/Gatorade Punt, Pass & Kick								
Youth Karate								
Youth Flag Football								
<b>10  Sports Camps</b>								
Junior Bulls Basketball Camp								
Chicago Bulls Train Academy Camp								
White Sox Baseball Camp								
Mother/Son Bowling								
Biddy Bowling								
<b>11  Special Events</b>								
CRSI Carnival								
Fall Arts & Craft Show								
Halloween Fun Night								
Limo Scavenger Hunt								
Children's Book Fair								
Chamber of Commerce Fall Festival								
Come to the Pumpkin Patch								
Pumpkin Plod Road Race & Fun Walk								
Kids Turkey Coloring Contest								
Spring Band Concert								
Spring Arts & Crafts Show								
Park Pride Day								
Kid's Fishing Contest								
Father/Son Olympics								
Movies In The Park								
Neighborhood Block Parties								
Health Fair								
Great America Tickets								
Flea Market w/ Cards & Comic Show								
Indoor Flea Market								
(Street)Farmers Market								
Walking Events								
Summer Concert Series								
Midwest Zest Fest								
Pinwood Derby								
Big Wheel Derby								

Program	Pre-School 3-5 yrs	Elementary 6-10 yrs	Mid. School 11-14 yrs	High School 15-18 yrs	College Age	Adults	Families	Senior
<b>12 Holiday Events &amp; Festivals</b>								
Breakfast With The Easter Bunny								
Egg Hunt Night								
Egg Hunt Day								
Preschooler's Egg Hunt								
Santa's March								
Tree Lighting Ceremony								
Christmas (Holiday )Decoration Contest								
Phone Calls From Santas								
Community Band Holiday Concerts								
Christmas Arts & Craft Show								
Twelfth Night Marks End of Fest. of Lts								
New Years Eve Fireworks								
Kiwanis Jack-O-Lantern Festival								
<b>13 Highland Council of Community Events</b>								
18th Century Re-Enactment								
Highway of Flags Mem. Day Services								
F.O.P. Memorial Service								
Police Appreciation Week								
Household Hazardous Waste Day								
Rotary Corn Roast								
Community Events 4th of July Festival								

**e. Financial Resources**

One aspect of the master planning process is an evaluation of past expenditures and trends for available resources. Such a review will allow adequate preparation for future projects and provision of leisure services. Financial assessment will also identify where additional resources will need to be allocated for the next five years. It will further permit planning for services and activities, particularly those identified as priority needs. The Highland Parks and Recreation Department budget consists of four categories. These categories are:

## Personnel Salaries

Funds within this category cover all salaries and wages of full time, seasonal and part time employees.

## Supplies

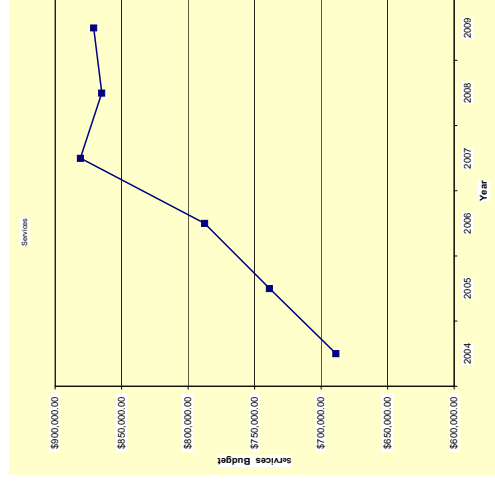
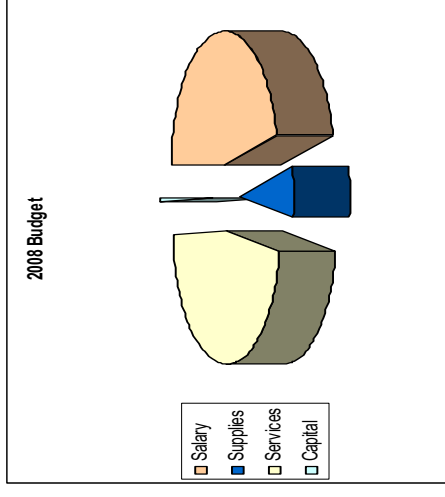
These funds are primarily used for materials, goods or services in support of general operation of department or programs. They are typically consumed within the budget year.

## Services /Charges

This budget category covers funds that normally pay for services required by the department staff and others or outside fees and charges for such services. The funds are typically appropriated by the Council but a portion of it comes from fees and charges associated with the programs, services, or facility rentals.

## Capital Outlays

Funds within this category typically cover the cost of items such as land, buildings and equipments and other assets.



**Table 15 - Highland Park Budget History**

Year	Salaries	Supplies	Services	Capital	Total
2004	\$ 778,021.00	\$ 109,500.00	\$ 688,900.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 1,586,421.00
2005	\$ 778,021.00	\$ 109,500.00	\$ 738,900.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 1,636,421.00
2006	\$ 805,000.00	\$ 116,800.00	\$ 787,600.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 1,719,400.00
2007	\$ 836,500.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 881,020.00	\$ -	\$ 1,837,520.00
2008	\$ 852,000.00	\$ 115,000.00	\$ 865,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,832,000.00
2009	\$ 865,000.00	\$ 122,000.00	\$ 871,000.00	\$ -	\$ 1,858,000.00

Table 15 shows the Highland Parks Department budget for the last five years. It also includes the current 2009 budget as approved by the Town Council. Accordingly the salary portion of the budget comprises about 45% of the total budget. Similarly services are funded at about the same level around 45% while the remaining budget is used for supplies and other ancillary needs. As a whole the Department's budget has increased over the last six years by a small amount, but it should be noted the majority of the increase is in the services line item. This category of funds includes funds and fees that are raised by the Department through its programming activities, charges and tax revenues. A concerning item in the budget is the level of funding for the capital expenditures. As can be noted very little funds were invested on capital items.

The review of the previous years' budget is typically a good indication for the future. The Town of Highland, however, has traditionally used bond funding to complete most of its capital improvements. In fact the town plans to use bond funds to improve the Lincoln Center at an estimated cost of more ten million dollars. A regional comparison with other communities shows that Highland's overall investment per capita is remains to be slightly above average at about \$ 78.91 per person

#### **f. Maintenance**

In 2008, the Highland Parks and Recreation Department employed ten full time maintenance staff, one position however remained vacant. Two serve as the custodial workers, while the other eight are park laborers. All maintenance staff are responsible for the maintenance of the all the parks. The maintenance staff also maintain several other non park, open space facilities that town owns as well as removing the fallen trees in the public right of ways. The department further has part time and seasonal staffs that are normally filled during the summer season to assist in the upkeep and maintenance. In 2008, the number of part time staff was eighteen.

The park maintenance level has emerged as a major issue in public meetings and by the stakeholders. As the parks and facilities grow older, the conditions of facilities deteriorate and require additional maintenance or replacement. The maintenance staff level has typically stayed the same despite additional parks and additional burden by new trails construction in town. Additional facilities in different parks and constant use of these facilities require further upkeep and intervention by the park staff for the play fields.

In the staff workshop discussion, the staff seems to be very much aware of the needs and its challenges. The maintenance staff was as much concerned about the conditions of the parks and the needs of facilities. Safety, conditions of trails, and aesthetic issues were raised by the staff as concerns. As a whole the maintenance staff identified two issues that need attention. First the maintenance staff felt that the Park Department should embrace more sustainable practices in its management of the grounds as it could reduce the work load for the department. Second the staff felt that severe weather conditions and flooding in recent years are creating more challenges to the staff capacity because of the need for removals of the fallen trees and the additional maintenance required in different parks.

**Table 16 - Maintenance Program**

Tasks	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Spring clean-up												
General park inspections												
Playground inspections												
Playground safety surfacing												
Grass mowing												
Trash pickup												
Restroom maintenance												
Trail inspections												
Lake weed mitigation												
Tree trimming												
Exterior painting/staining												
Roof repairs/replacement												
Ball diamond maintenance												
Ball diamond aeration/seeding/fertilizing												
Equipment maintenance/overhaul												
Picnic table repair/painting												
Trash can repair/painting												
Tree/stump removal												
Snow removal												
Holiday decorations/flags												
Building maintenance/Paint/Clean up												
Community Events/Set up												

Primary  Secondary 

### 3. PARK FACILITIES

The Highland Parks Department has a total of twenty-three parks and two trail systems. The NRPA Classification System for parks and recreation facilities classifies parks according to their size, purpose, and population that they serve. Different types of parks are identified in the following section. The existing parks and other facilities are identified in the following Existing Conditions Maps.

### **a. Community Parks**

Community parks offer opportunities for both active and passive activities, such as athletic complexes, swimming pools, walking trails, picnic areas, and nature viewing areas. They also tend to be larger in size (typically more than 20 acres.) The Highland Parks and Recreation Department maintains eight parks that can be considered a community park.

- 81<sup>st</sup>/Liable 24.7 acres
- Homestead 21.8 acres
- Lincoln Center 11.1 acres
- Main Square 5.9 acres
- Markley 7.4 acres
- Meadows 16.7 acres
- Sharp Athletic Complex 17.5 acres
- Sheppard 14.6 acres

### **b. Neighborhood Parks**

Neighborhood parks offer active and passive recreational facilities for all age groups within walking distance to neighborhood residents. The neighborhood parks are typically more than five acres in size and may have field games, court games, picnicking, and playgrounds. The Town of Highland has seven parks that can be classified as neighborhood parks. These parks are:

- Brantwood 5.7 acres
- Island (undeveloped) 17.0 acres
- Little Turtle 11.2 acres
- Northwood 2.2 acres
- Orchard 3.5 acres
- Toth (undeveloped) 5.0 acres
- White Oak Estates 2.7 acres

**Table 17 - Facility Inventory**

Park	Average	Baseball Diamond - Lights	Baseball Diamond	Basketball Courts - Lights	Basketball Courts	Benches	Boat/Canoe Access	Concession	Drinking Fountain	Fishing Access	Football	Garden	Gazebo	Horseshoe/Shuffleboard	Lodge/Meetings Rooms	Parking Lots	Park Sign	Picnic Shelters	Picnic Tables	Playground Areas	Restrooms	Rollerblade	Soccer Fields	Softball Diamond - Lights	Softball Diamond	Tennis Courts - Lights	Tennis Courts	Volleyball	Walking Trail - Paved	Walking Trail - Unpaved	Bike Trail								
		1	5.7				1	1		1									1		1	1		1															
2	0.1																1			1																			
3	0.8					3											1			1												1							
4	21.8	2	4		1	3		1	2						1	2	1	1		2	1							1											
5	17.0																																						
6	1.0				1	4											1			1																			
7	2.5				1												2			2						1													
8	0.8										2																												
9	11.1				6			1							1	2	2			2	1				3														
10	11.2				1	1											1			2														1					
11	5.9				1	1		1	1			1	1				1			1	1																		
12	7.4	2	1		1	1		1	1			1				1	1	1		1	1							1						1					
13	16.7			1		1		1	2	1						3	1	1		3	1				1	2	2	1	1										
14	0.7																																						
15	2.2				1	1			1					1						1					1														
16	3.5		2		1	1		1									1			1								1											
17	0.5				1	1			1								1			1																			
18	17.5							1	1							1	3				1															1			
19	14.6			1				1	2			1			1	2	1	1		1	1							1	1										
20	0.3																			1																			
21	5.0																																						
22	24.7																																					1	
23	2.7					1											1																					1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>173.7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>		

### **c. Block Parks**

Block Parks are small, protected areas and spaces in residential areas for young children, families, and the elderly. These parks typically range in size from a lot to two acres and are equipped with playgrounds, picnic areas, and shelters, with other facilities as space and need dictates. The Town of Highland maintains eight block parks. These parks are:

- Fletcher 0.1 acres
- Grand 0.8 acres
- Jaycee 1.0 acres
- Lakeside 2.5 acres
- Lakeside Outlet (undeveloped) 0.8 acres
- Meadows Outlet 0.7 acres
- Pettit 0.5 acres
- Terrace 0.3 acres

### **c. Trails**

Trails are off-road transportation corridors designed for recreation and non-motorized transportation. Regional trail systems connect and unite various points in a town, and often connect to other surrounding municipalities. The Town of Highland is home to two trails, discussed in detail below.

- **Erie-Lackawanna Trail**

This trail occupies the former Erie-Lackawanna rail corridor. The mainline of the trail follows this abandoned rail corridor northwest to LaPorte Ave., then proceeds north along a NIPSCO right-of-way, terminating at the Little Calumet River. In addition to this mainline, the Erie-Lackawanna Trail also includes three connecting spur routes along Grand Ave., LaPorte Ave., and Jewitt St. This 12'-wide paved regional trail is a major attraction for Highland residents. The entire Erie-Lackawanna Trail network in Highland measures approximately 4 miles. The trail connects to Griffith, Schererville, and Merrillville to the south. Future plans include expanding the trail north into Wicker Park and connecting it with the Hammond section of the trail. The Erie-Lackawanna Trail is accessible from four Highland parks: Grand, Little Turtle, Main Square, and Markley.

- **Little Calumet Trail**

The newest regional trail to be developed in Highland, the 2.3-mile, 8'-wide gravel trail is found along the Little Calumet River. Built by the Army Corps of Engineers in conjunction with the Little Calumet River levee project, the trail is now maintained by the Highland Parks Department. Currently, the trail runs from Kennedy Avenue (west) to Cline Ave. (east.) The trail is expected to be extended westward as the Army Corps continues to complete its levee project.

The Little Calumet Trail is accessible from three Highland parks: 81<sup>st</sup>/Liable, Homestead, and Sharp Athletic Complex.

- d. **Schools**

In addition to the town parks, the School Town of Highland and three private institutions that offer open space and recreational facilities to Highland residents. The School Town of Highland provides indoor and outdoor recreational facilities primarily for use by the enrolled students. However, many facilities are available for use by organized groups or the general public on an arranged basis.

There are also four private schools in town: Highland Christian, Our Lady of Grace, Calvary Christian and Calumet Baptist. These schools also have indoor & outdoor recreational facilities.

- e. **Other Open Spaces**

The Town of Highland enjoys several other large open spaces in town, providing a diverse array of recreational opportunities.

- **Wicker Memorial Park**

One of the oldest park facilities in the Region, this historic township park is one of the most popular parks in the area. The 203-acre facility is home to an 18-hole golf course with driving range, playgrounds, splash pad & ice skating, sand volleyball, and several picnic areas.

- **Hoosier Prairie**

The Hoosier Prairie is a 680+-acre preserve which stretches through three towns. Approximately 102 acres are located in Highland, with the remainder located in Griffith and Schererville. The state-owned Prairie is the last relatively untouched patch of natural prairie in Indiana. Within this prairie, numerous species of flora and fauna are found. The Prairie serves as a living laboratory to study biology, botany, and the natural history in Indiana.

- **Little Calumet River Basin Development Commission (LCRBDC) Natural Area**

This 151-acre nature preserve is located along Cline Avenue, south of the Little Calumet River. This petrified wood marshland is visible from Cline Ave. and is accessible via the Little Calumet Trail. No amenities are located on-site, as the site is preserved mainly for flood control purposes.

- **Highway of Flags Servicemen’s Memorial**

This corner plaza at the southeast corner of Ridge Rd. & Indianapolis Blvd. has flags from the eight states in which US 41 (“Highway of Flags”) passes. Although the site is not owned by Highland, the plaza is maintained by the Highland Parks Department.