

TOWN OF BRISTOL

2020-2024 PARKS MASTER PLAN



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Bristol 2020-2024 Parks Master Plan would not have been possible without the guidance, direction, and input from Bristol residents, the Bristol Park Board, and Town Staff.

PARK BOARD MEMBERS:

- **Scott Dreamer, President**
- **Linda Powell, Vice President**
- **Mikel Ropp, Member**
- **Chris Garner, Member**
- **RoseMary McDaniel, Secretary**



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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Town of Bristol has many assets and features that makes it an attractive place for individuals, families, and businesses to call home. The town is positioned off the St. Joseph River that enhances the community’s quality of life with picturesque views and recreational opportunities. Throughout the year, residents can enjoy the several community parks, town events and festivals and discover all that Bristol has to offer. The town also is home to many manufacturing industries that contributes to economic development opportunities in Elkhart County. These quality of life assets and features will continue to play a vital role in attracting and retaining residents and businesses. More people are valuing and choosing to live in a community that supports a lifestyle and quality of life that appeals to them rather than the type of jobs available in that area. Although the Town of Bristol does have many assets and features that can appeal to prospective residents and businesses, it is imperative that the Town look to enhance these assets to a higher quality and build those desirable recreational amenities that people value to make Bristol a more attractive place to live, work, and play.

PURPOSE

As the Town looks to grow and define its community image, it is imperative that a detailed review of the Town's parks and recreational facilities be done to establish a comprehensive view of the opportunities and challenges the community needs to offer a high quality hometown for its residents. The Bristol Park Board understood the need to update their five-year parks master plan to reflect the current conditions and community's aspirations. Under the advisement of the Town of Bristol, the Bristol Park Board reached out to the Michiana Area Council of Governments (MACOG) to guide them through the planning process to update their parks master plan as they help the Town develop their first comprehensive plan.

These plans will prioritize the community needs, gauge their vision and aspirations and serve as a guide to the Town to ensure new amenities, facilities, and programs supports the interests and needs of the community. The Parks Master Plan should be used to guide the Town of Bristol to plan and program for high-quality parks and recreational services. The plan analyzes the Town's

existing conditions that includes social and economic factors, natural and cultural features, historical assets, and other elements that affect the usage and needs of Bristol Parks. Public engagement was key throughout the process and provided guidance on how they currently use the parks and future aspirations to use the parks. Chapter 5 outlines our community engagement efforts and results of the public input survey.



DEFINITION OF PLANNING AREA

The Town of Bristol is one of five towns located in Elkhart County, Indiana. The land area of Bristol includes approximately 4 square miles in Washington Township. . Bristol parks and outdoor recreational lands make up approximately 161 acres of the town's land area. The planning area consists of the Bristol Town limits and a 10-mile radius to include Washington Township and parts of York Township, and Edwardsburg, Michigan. Nearby cities include Elkhart, Goshen, Nappanee, Warsaw, Plymouth, Mishawaka, South Bend, and Edwardsburg, Michigan. Nearby towns include Middlebury, Wakarusa, Millersburg, New Paris Syracuse, Winona Lake, Bremen, Bourbon, LaPaz, Lakeville, Osceola, and Roseland.



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The Town of Bristol Public Works Department is responsible for the maintenance of the parks and recreational facilities in Bristol. The Public Works Department has one full-time town employee that oversees and maintains the Town's parks and recreational facilities. The Town has allocated approximately \$164,000 for operation and maintenance of the parks since 2015. Revenue sources include property taxes and park rentals.

BRISTOL PARKS BOARD

The Bristol Parks Board provides oversight and direction to the Bristol Public Works Department on the care of the parks and recreational facilities. The Board's mission is to develop parks that are friendly to our residents and those who work to incentivize to bring their families to live in Bristol. Promote active living lifestyles. Enhance our natural beauty of our parks and best features. Have accessible parks to all individuals. The Board typically meets the third Tuesday of every month. The Board is consisted of four members that are appointed by the Town of Bristol Town Council. Members serve for four years with members rotating out once a year.



PARK BOARD MEMBERS:

- Scott Dreamer, President
- Linda Powell, Vice President
- Mikel Ropp, Member
- Chris Garner, Member
- Rosemary McDaniel, Secretary

SUPPORTING PLANS & ORGANIZATIONS

- **Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan** – The Town is currently going through the planning process with MACOG to develop their first comprehensive plan. The existing condition information collected for this plan are reflective in the Parks Master Plan that pertain to social and economic factors, the inventory of natural, cultural, and historic features. Additionally, public participation activities occurred congruently with the development of the Parks Master Plan, refer to Chapter 5 that provides details on the outreach methods. The comprehensive plan will serve as a viable resource to guide the Town on land development decisions over the next 10 years.



- **Elkhart County Vibrant Communities** – The Vibrant Communities initiative was set in 2016 that seeks to strengthen Elkhart County’s communities by building quality places, raising up local champions, and fostering an environment of innovation, creativity, and partnerships. The Action Agenda was created through a series of community engagement events that identified and prioritized projects, policies, and programs for each of the Elkhart County’s communities.
- **MACOG Active Transportation Plan** – MACOG prepared a regional active transportation plan in 2016 that identified community needs and strategies to improve the walking and bicycling experience in Elkhart, Kosciusko, Marshall, and St. Joseph Counties. This plan serves as part of the Michiana on the Move: 2045 Transportation Plan and builds on the support of its local municipalities.
- **Bristol on the River** – Bristol on the River serves as the Town’s Main Street Organization that seeks to revitalize and enhance Bristol’s downtown. Bristol on the River is part of the Indiana Main Street Program. This community organization also seeks to preserve and sustain the social, cultural, economic, and historic values of its downtown.
- **Bristol Alumni Association** – The Bristol Alumni Association is an organization that consists of alumni of the former Bristol High School, which is now home to the Elkhart County Historical Museum. The association is dedicated to preserving and celebrating the memories, events, people, and the school building. This historical landmark has served as a vital asset to the Bristol community and Elkhart County. The Association has held fundraising campaigns to financial support the repairs and restoration of Elkhart County recreational facilities.
- **Elkhart County Parks Department** – The Elkhart County Parks Department maintains four community-scale parks, several small-scale parks, and 36 miles of walking and bicycling trails. One of the community-scale parks is located in Bristol known as the Bonneyville Mill County Park. While maintained by the County, this amenity serves as a viable asset to the Bristol community drawing thousands of visitors from around the world each year. The County seeks to enhance the quality of life, while preserving the cultural, historical, and natural resources, and provide educational and recreational opportunities to its residents and visitors.



- **Elkhart County Community Foundation** – The Elkhart County Community Foundation strives to support nonprofits and community endeavors that improves the quality of life of Elkhart County’s communities, businesses, and residents. This is accomplished through their holdings of \$295 million in assets and over 350 endowment funds, and awarding over \$25 million in grants and scholarships to hundreds of county nonprofit organizations and students. The Community Foundation and the Elkhart County and Convention Visitors Bureau partnered to create the Vibrant Communities Initiative in 2016.
- **Elkhart County Historical Society** – The Elkhart County Historical Society (ECHS) is a nonprofit organization and partners with the Elkhart County Parks Department to help maintain the Elkhart County Historical Museum. ECHS is based in Bristol and is located in the Museum. ECHS operates as a public trust that collects, preserve, and share artifacts, documents, and images that highlights Elkhart County’s culture and history.
- **Elkhart County Genealogical Society** – The Elkhart County Genealogical Society is a non-profit organization that also finds its home in the Elkhart County Historical Museum. This group of dedicated volunteers seeks to further interest in genealogy in the Michiana area, contributes to the preservation of genealogical and historical records, strives for accuracy in research through careful documentation, and publishes a quarterly journal containing records of the area and other genealogical information of importance to society members. They also assist visitors to the Museum with research.



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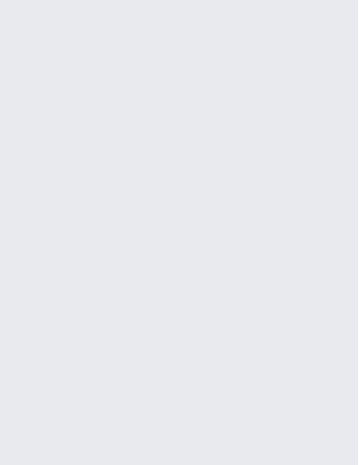
Chapter 2: Existing Conditions

CONTEXT

The landscape of Elkhart County, Indiana was formed over 12,000 years ago following the last ice glacier melt. This melt caused Elkhart County to have a flat, slowly draining marshes and swampy conditions. According to the Physiographic Division of the Indiana Geological Survey of Indiana University, Elkhart County resides in the Northern Moraine and Lake Region, and is primarily within the St. Joseph River Basin. The River Basin drains into Lake Michigan and ultimately into the Atlantic Ocean.

NATURAL FEATURES & LANDSCAPE

SOILS – The Town of Bristol is comprised of 2,648 acres of land. According to the National Cooperative Soil Survey for Elkhart County, majority of the soil classification in the Town of Bristol is the Bristol loamy sand (BtxA, BtxB, and BtxC), which consists of 26.5 percent of the land acreage. These soils primarily consume the areas in Bristol surrounding the Raber Golf Course and north of the St. Joseph River surrounding Division Street and are considered highly permeable soils with a low water table. The majority of soils in other areas in Bristol have the Urban land-Mishawaka soil (lands include downtown and the industrial businesses off State Road 15), Gilford sandy loam soil (lands surrounding the Raber Golf Course), and Mishawaka sandy loam soil (lands include the



southern portion of town limits). In terms of soil qualities to support development, the majority of the soil types surrounding the St. Joseph River and the southwest portions of the town limits are considered moderately poor to very poor and will require adequate soil amendments. The soil qualities of the lands south of downtown and around State Road 15 are considered to have little limitations to no limitations and will favorably support development. However, upon adequate soil testing, certain soils in these areas may require minor amendments to support development.



WATER RESOURCES – The major water resource in the Town of Bristol is the St. Joseph River. The St. Joseph River traverses from Michigan, enters Elkhart County near the Town of Bristol, through the northern portion of Elkhart County, and flows into Lake Michigan. Other water resources include the Little Elkhart River and Menges Ditch. The Little Elkhart River flows east to west through Bristol on the north side of Vistula Street/State Road 120 into the St. Joseph River. Menges Ditch starts near the Industrial Park on Earthway Boulevard and runs west through Elkhart County and eventually flows into the St. Joseph River.

The terrain in Bristol varies in topography that is divided by the St. Joseph River. Areas south of the river sit on a bluff above the St. Joseph River. Areas of the town that are north of the river are on lower land and experience frequent flooding during heavy rainfalls. In particular, Hermance Park frequently floods.

The 2018 flooding in February severely damaged the park pavilion. Majority of the pavilion was underwater and necessitated for replacement of the refrigerator, stove, tables, chairs and other interior items. The Town lost substantial revenue from rentals of the pavilion and was forced to cancel the Summer Program. The Town does plan and is noted in the Action Program, to conduct a feasibility study of all the parks that experience frequent flooding to determine the level of impacts, the best use of the parks, and ways to mitigate flooding impacts.

CLIMATE – The climate of Bristol, like other communities in northern Indiana, can drastically change within a season. The annual average rainfall in Bristol is approximately 39 inches. This may bring high humidity levels in the summer and frequent rainfalls throughout the spring and fall seasons. The average high temperature in the summer is 83 degrees Fahrenheit with July typically being the hottest month. The average low temperature in the winter is 17 degrees Fahrenheit with January being the coldest month. The first freeze typically occurs in the beginning of October and the last freeze typically occurs at the beginning of May.

INVASIVE SPECIES – The Town of Bristol has not seen major issues with invasive species and are monitored by the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District.

MAN-MADE, HISTORICAL & CULTURAL FEATURES

HISTORIC SITES

- The Town of Bristol has one historic home listed on the National Register of Historical Places. This home is known as the **Solomon Fowler Mansion**, located at 1105 W. Vistula Street, Bristol Indiana. It is considered as the best remaining example of Italianate architecture.
- **The St. John of the Cross Episcopal Church** is listed on the National Register of Historical Places and is located at 601 E. Vistula Street, Bristol, Indiana.
- **Memorial Park** features a historical marker detailing a court case involving the Underground Railroad and is one of the locations on the Indiana Historical Markers tour, as well as a plaque honoring a long-time resident and former teacher of the Bristol High School, Tommy Thompson.
- **Indiana Heritage Cathcart Cemetery** – The Cathcart Cemetery is another historical site in Bristol as it contains the graves of Bristol’s early pioneers, the Cathcart’s and the Nicholson’s. They served as soldiers in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812.
- **Bristol-Washington Township School** – The Bristol Washington Township School, also commonly known as the “Bristol High School,” is listed on the National Register of Historical Places. The former Bristol High School was active in the early and mid-20th Century. It is the now location for the Elkhart County Historic Museum.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- **Bristol Public Library** – The Bristol Public Library is located in downtown Bristol off State Road 120/Vistula Street. The library serves residents living in Washington Township in Elkhart County. The library has over 41,000 volumes in rotation and features wireless internet, computer labs, audio books, and movies. The library offers many learning programs for children of all ages that includes a book club, an arts and crafts group, and a writer’s group. The library also has a meeting room for organizations to host events.



Indiana Heritage
Cathcart Cemetery



- **Elkhart County Historic Museum & Genealogical Library** – The Historic Museum is located in downtown Bristol and was the former location for the Bristol High School. The Museum is free to the public that sees over 6,000 visitors annually, and offers publications, research opportunities, learning programs, and exhibits that feature over 30,000 artifacts and over 100,000 documents highlighting over 20,000 years of Elkhart County’s history. The Historic Museum is also one of the many locations along the Elkhart County Heritage Trail in Elkhart County that features a quilt garden. Garden designs change annually and resemble a quilt-theme patch.
- **Bristol Opera House** – This historic opera house has been running for over 100 years and located in downtown Bristol. The Elkhart Civic Theatre owns and maintains the Opera House and features year-round productions that include dramas, comedy skits, musicals, and special performances. The Opera House’s seating capacity is 300.



FESTIVALS & EVENTS

- **Bristol Homecoming** – Bristol Homecoming is a three-day community event held in July in Congdon Park and is known as one of the longest running festivals in Indiana, since 1883. Features include a parade, carnival rides, food, arts and crafts, nomination of a Homecoming Queen and the Persons of the Year Award, pie-throwing contest, and concludes with a firework display over the St. Joseph River. This event annually draws 7,000 to 10,000 attendees.
- **Halloween Party** – The Town of Bristol hosts a Halloween party that sees nearly 5,000 attendees annually. Features include a haunted house and haunted hayrides, a costume contest, candy giveaway, food, and music.
- **Tree Light Ceremony** – This is a newer event that has seen over 150 community residents. The lighting ceremony occurs at the Bristol Fire Department located at the corner of Washington Street and Elkhart Street. Additional features include meeting Santa Claus, writing letters to Santa Claus, performance from the Elkhart High School Choir, arts and crafts.
- **Santa Claus Lane** – Santa Claus Lane began in December 2019 with Christmas decorations along Elkhart Street in downtown Bristol to encourage holiday spirit and pride in the community. Decorations included lollipops on street lamp posts and snowflakes in the street trees.



OTHER RECREATIONAL AMENITIES



- **Bonneyville Mill County Park** – Bonneyville Mill County Park is one of the County’s premier parks and regional tourist attraction that draws thousands of users from all over the world to the Bristol community a year. Bonneyville Mill County Park is located 3-miles outside of downtown Bristol off County Road 131. The Elkhart County Parks Department maintains the 222-acre park that features rolling hills, woodlands, open space meadows, and marshes. The Park also features the historic water powered grist mill used in the 1800s. The mill is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is Indiana’s oldest operating grist mill producing stone-ground flour. The Mill is part of the heritage tourism of Elkhart County and the Quilt Garden Tour that has tremendous economic impacts to communities in Elkhart County. The Park also features seven miles of hiking trails and six miles of mountain bike trails that caters to different skill levels. Bonneyville Mill County Park is a state designated wildlife viewing area. Winter enthusiasts can enjoy cross-country skiing at Bonneyville that has a challenging terrain and picturesque views making Bonneyville Mill County Park one of the most popular cross-country ski areas in the region. The Park also features seven park shelters of varying capacities from 35 to 150.
- **Bristol Little League** – Known as Bristol’s “Field of Dreams,” the property has five ballfields used for t-ball, minor and major league youth baseball, softball, and major league senior baseball. The property includes about 25 acres and is located off County Road 27.
- **Bristol Elementary School Playground** – Bristol Elementary is located off Indiana Avenue near the Raber Golf Course in Bristol. The elementary school is part of the Elkhart Community School District. Although there is no formal joint-use agreement, the School has agreed to allow the playground be open for public use after school hours to provide additional recreational opportunities for Bristol residents.
- **Open Door Center** – The Open Door Center features the Bristol Teen Club and Senior Assistance and is located in the Bristol Methodist Church. These services are sponsored by the church that provides a space for teens and seniors to hang out and socialize, play games, and staff to help students complete their homework. The Club is open after school hours and during the summer months.
- **Lieber Nature Preserve** – Lieber Nature Preserve, also known as Pipewort Pond is a state-protected nature preserve located off County Road 23 in Bristol. The Preserve features a cranberry

bog, wildlife viewing, and a variety of Indiana’s endangered and threatened plant species. The Preserve also features a nature study and a 1.5-mile hiking trail that loops around the native prairie habitat. The preserve is open for public use. Lieber Nature Preserve is an attractive site to view herons, ducks, and shorebirds.

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC FACTORS

POPULATION

Determining a community’s population trend can present the Town of Bristol the direction of necessary services and real estate demand based on a growing or declining population.

In addition to the Decennial Census and American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates, the U.S. Census provides annual population estimates through their Population Estimates Program (PEP) that better reflects past trends and leads to a more accurate estimate than the ACS 5-year population estimate. Therefore, the PEP estimate was only used to provide a better snapshot of Bristol’s trend in population, and the 2017 ACS 5-year estimate was used for all other analyses in the existing condition elements.

Between 1990 and 2000, the Town of Bristol had a 22 percent growth in population. Between 2000 and 2010, Bristol experienced a 15.9 percent growth in the total population of the Town. Between 2010 and 2018, Bristol’s population steadily increased by five percent. In addition, the Washington Township and Elkhart County continued to increase in population. From 2010 to 2018, the Washington Township’s population increased by four percent and Elkhart County’s population increased by four percent (see Table A.1).

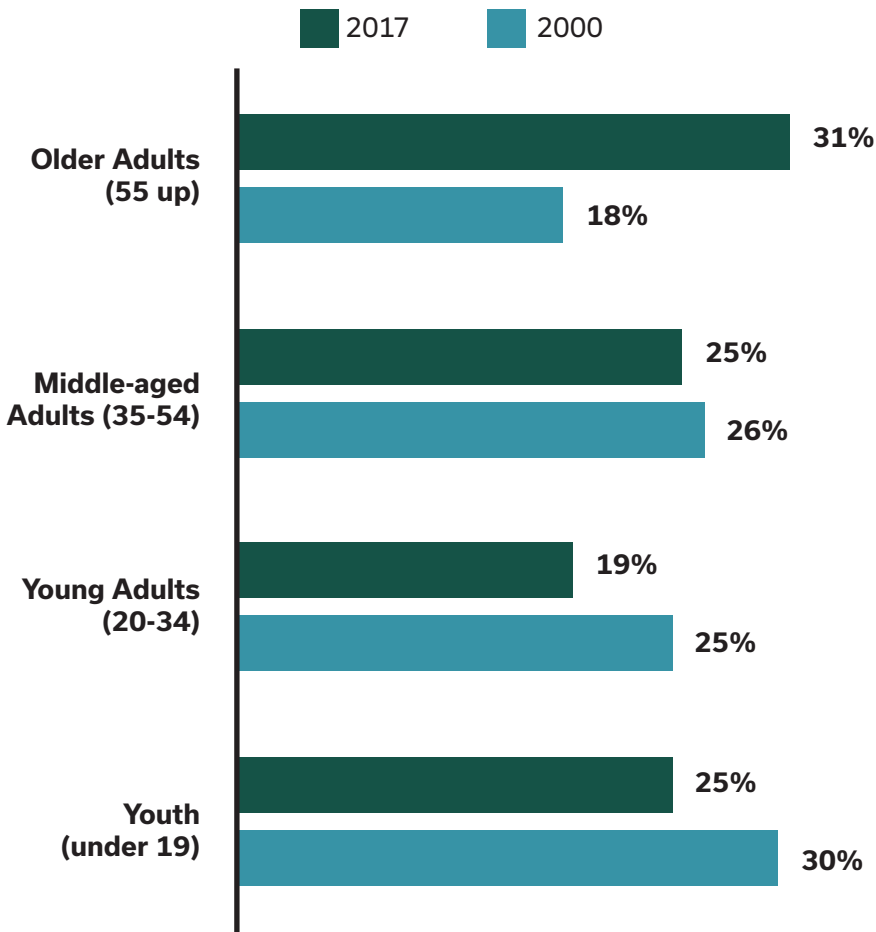
Table A.1: Population Trend

	Decennial Census			Annual Estimates							
	1990	2000	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bristol	1,133	1,382	1,602	1,610	1,619	1,631	1,645	1,661	1,668	1,678	1,686
Washington Township	5,136	7,019	6,945	7,004	6,996	6,988	7,012	7,064	7,108	7,214	7,269
Elkhart County	156,198	182,791	197,559	198,267	198,980	200,231	201,476	203,024	203,652	204,310	205,560

Population Projection – Looking at the Town’s population trend over the last 7 years, as shown in Table A.1, the population has been slowly increasing at a rate of about 11 people annually. If the Town continues at this growth rate, by 2020 the population will increase by 25 people (1,711 total population) and by 2030 the population will increase by 133 people (1,819 total population). A higher growth rate may occur in which case the Town’s population could reach 1,822 residents by 2020 and 2,042 residents by 2030.

The Town does have a lot of strengths and community assets that could influence a higher, steadier population growth. In addition, the Town’s location makes it an excellent bedroom community for residents who want to live in a charming small town yet close to larger municipalities. With a continued growth in population, it is imperative the Town plan for this growth and ensure its parks and recreational facilities are of high quality.

AGE DISTRIBUTION



Age and Sex – The success of parks can be based on several factors including the amount of users attracted each year, the quality of places, and how inclusive park facilities are. In updating the 5-year Park Master Plan, it is imperative for the Town to consider the age and disability status of participants. The median age in Bristol has increased since 2000 (31.2 years) to 2017 (42.5) by 36.2 percent. Like Bristol, Elkhart County and the Washington Township’s median age has increased during this time, but at much subtler rates.

Trends show that Bristol’s population is getting older, which could be a sign of its tight-knit community – people want to stay in the area as they age. Looking at different age cohorts, there was a significant 146.8 percent increase in the age group of 60 to 64-year-olds from 2000 to 2017, and a

130.7 percent increase in the 65 to 74-year-old category. During the same years, the child population 5 to 9-year-olds also increased by 46.7 percent, along with the population 15 to 19-year-olds by 13.5 percent. The overall population has moved fairly constantly upward, even while building back up from a small dip estimated in 2016. Adults ages 45 to 59-years-old have increased by 65.5 percent from 2000-2017, along with individuals 75 to 84-years whose numbers increased by 76.3 percent, and 85-year-olds and above with a 90 percent incline. Declining is the population of young- and middle-aged-adults, and kids under 5 years (down -23.2 percent since 2000).



Race & Ethnicity – The Town of Bristol, Washington Township, as well as Elkhart County’s population has been classified as predominately White over the last decade. Bristol’s African American population, though, saw a small incline from 2010 to 2017, while its Asian population decreased very minimally. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander and American Indian and Alaska Native populations remained virtually the same from 2010 to 2017 (the only change being a decline to 0.0 percent from 0.7 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native populations since 2010; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders are unknown to Bristol at this point).

On average, Elkhart’s demographics, while similar to Bristol’s, do have a higher percentage of individuals classified as Black or African American or reporting as “Some other race” from years 2000 to 2017. Bristol’s White population (to date) is 91.5 percent while Elkhart County’s is 87.6 percent, and Bristol’s Black and African American population is 3 percent while Elkhart County’s is 5.5 percent.

The Hispanic population in Bristol represents approximately 8 percent of the community residents that had a 23 percent increase between 2000 and 2017.

Disability – Bristol has 14.2 percent of its population classified as disabled (higher rate than Washington Township and Elkhart County), and of those classified as disabled, 4.8 percent are 65 years or older.

Poverty – Bristol’s poverty rate (based on population for whom poverty status is determined) increased from 5.9 percent in 2000 to 10.2 percent in 2012 and again to 15.1 percent in 2017. Of the 15.1 percent, children under the age of 18 had the highest percentage increase at 28.1 percent. Bristol’s poverty rate is higher than both Washington Township’s (10.4 percent) Elkhart County’s (13.8 percent) but near the state’s which is 14.6 percent.

**THE HISPANIC
POPULATION
REPRESENTS
~8% OF THE
RESIDENTS
LIVING IN
BRISTOL WITH A
23% INCREASE
BETWEEN
2000 AND 2017**

The poverty rate of Hispanics or Latinos in Bristol Town is significantly lower than Elkhart County (24.4 percent) and state (25.6 percent) at 7.7 percent.

Educational Attainment – The Educational Attainment Rate in a community can help the Town of Bristol and Elkhart County identify the need for workforce development programs and guide industry opportunities. Additionally, the attainment rate can give an idea of the characteristics of the Town’s workforce and should be examined with the types of industries and jobs the Town is trying to attract and retain.

From 2000 to 2017, the percent of high school graduates has decreased minimally by 1.6 percent. Bristol holds the highest percentage of individuals who are high school graduates or higher at 89.3 percent. The Township shows estimated potential to approach the state average (24.6 percent) for bachelor’s degree or higher in 2017, with a projected 22.9 percent. Both the statistics for high school graduates and bachelor-degree holders are higher in Washington Township than in Elkhart County as a whole.

Bristol has the highest percentages of individuals ages 25 years and older with some college experience or an associate’s degree (24.7 percent) in comparison to the Township and county.



HOUSING

As Bristol experiences changes in demographics and growth, be it in population or jobs, ensuring Bristol has adequate supply of housing for all types of residents will be crucial in maintaining Bristol's quality of life. The Town of Bristol will have to consider where new housing should locate, while maintaining a proper balance with current development, and how to preserve and maintain the existing housing stock. Housing is linked to other elements like population (identifying changes in households and establishing their needs), land use (evaluate its fiscal impacts to develop on undeveloped lands or infill on underutilized lands), and community facilities (does the neighborhood have access to the Town's utility system and assets).

Housing Types – According to the 2017 ACS 5-year estimates, the majority of units (79.3 percent) are single-family detached. Less than two (2) percent of housing is single-family attached, majority of these homes likely reflecting condominiums. 3.4 percent of Bristol's housing stock is multi-family housing with three or four units. The Town does have approximately seven (7) percent with 10 or more units.

Occupancy Rates & Tenure – The percentage of occupied housing units in Bristol decreased from 96.4 percent in 2000 to 82.5 percent in 2010 but increased again by 2.3 percent in 2017. Similarly, occupancy trends in Elkhart County reflect the Town's, decreasing from 94.8 percent in 2000 to 90.3 percent in 2010 with a slight increase (1.4 percent) in 2017.



The vacancy rate in the Town of Bristol increased 4.7 percent between 2000 (3.6 percent) and 2017 (15.2 percent). Vacancy rates in the Washington Township area increased approximately 4.7 percent from 6.7 percent in 2000 to 11.4 percent in 2017.

The percentage of owner-occupied housing units increased 7 percent from 57.9 percent in 2000 to 65.1 percent in 2017. Alternatively, the percentage of renter-occupied housing units decreased 7.2 percent from 42.1 percent in 2000 to 34.9 percent in 2017. The Washington Township has seen an opposite trend in its housing tenure with a decrease by 4.1 percent in the percentage of owner-occupied housing units and a 4.1 percent increase in renter-occupied housing units.

Homeowner vacancy rates in Bristol increased by 1.5 percent from 1.3 percent in 2000 to 2.7 percent 2010. The rental vacancy rate increased substantially by 25.2 percent from 3.4 percent in 2000 to 28.6 percent in 2010. However, in 2017, the Town was recorded have a 14.7 percent vacancy rate for both renters and 7.5 percent homeowners.

Average Household Size & Households by Type – The average household size in Bristol has declined only slightly since 2000. The Town’s average household size was 2.56 in 2000 and declined to 2.47 in 2017. This is lower than the national average (2.64) and state average (2.55). According to the 2017 ACS 5-year estimates, approximately 64 percent of occupied housing units are occupied by one (1) or two (2) people (31.6 percent 1-person and 32.6 percent 2-person). The number of non-family households grew over 7 percent from 31.7 percent in 2000 to 38.8 percent in 2017. The percentage of families with children decreased by 4 percent from 29.6 percent in 2000 to 25.6 percent in 2016. The percentage of families with no children, however, increased by four (4) percent from 70.4 percent in 2000 to 74.4 percent in 2017.

Household Income – Household Income is an indicator of economic health in an area or population, and is the total income of all persons living in a household over the age of 15. Although the majority of households in Bristol earn less than \$50,000, the share of earnings in the same cohort has been increasing since 2000. Households earning between \$50,000 and \$99,999 in the Town have steadily been declining but there was a slight upturn for households in the Washington Township between 2000 and 2017. The share of households earning between \$100,000 and \$199,999 increased notably in Bristol, the Washington Township, and Elkhart County. Similarly, households earning \$200,000 or more increased by nearly two (2) percent in Bristol between 2000 and 2017, and increased by over three (3) percent in the Washington Township.

Median Household Income is a factor that helps in determining an area’s quality of life and shows the stability of a real estate market. Bristol’s median household income grew only one percent from \$46,136 in 2000 to \$46,368 in 2017 (after 2000 this value plummeted to \$42,875 in 2010). The Washington Township grew 39 percent from \$48,141 in 2000 to \$66,683 in 2017. The Township’s median household income is higher than Elkhart County’s (\$52,449) and the state (\$52,182).

Drops in income can be a potential cause for a rise in the poverty rate. Bristol’s poverty rate increased by over nine (9) percent from 5.9 percent in 2000 to 15.1 percent in 2017. This is higher than Washington Township’s (10.4 percent) and Elkhart County’s (13.8 percent).

Housing Costs – The cost of housing in Bristol is rising. The median home value for owner-occupied housing units in Bristol in 2017 was estimated at \$139,400, up 16.8 percent since 2000. The median home value in the Washington Township in 2017 was estimated at \$154,000, up 8.5 percent since 2000. The median home value in Bristol is higher than Elkhart County’s (\$130,800) and the State’s (\$130,200), but lower than the National median value (\$193,500).

Owner and Renter Housing Costs – Majority of homeowners (26.9 percent) pay monthly mortgages between \$1,000 and \$1,499, with the median mortgage payment at \$856. Only 8.6 percent of homeowners in Bristol pay over \$1,500 for their monthly mortgage. Most rent payments are between \$500 and \$799. The median monthly housing cost for renters is \$718.

Most home mortgage payments for homeowners (21.6 percent) in the Washington Township are between \$1,000 and \$1,499 and 19.6 percent of homeowners pay between \$500 and \$799. 14.9 percent of homeowners in the Washington Township pay over \$1,500 for their monthly mortgage. Most renters in the Township (58.3 percent) pay between \$500 and \$799.

Housing Affordability – In order to determine housing affordability in Bristol, we need to consider the percentage breakdown of household income. If costs exceed 30 percent of income, households are considered cost-burden. In 2017, approximately 31 percent of households in Bristol are considered housing cost-burden. In the Washington Township, 16.2 percent of households and 5.4 percent of households are considered housing cost-burden. Likely barriers in Bristol include the lack of affordable housing options such as starter homes.



EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Major Industries – According to the US Census Bureau, the top three (3) industry sectors over the last six years have consistently been educational services, and health care and social assistance; manufacturing; and retail trade. In 2017, forty-three (43.3) percent of total job sectors were manufacturing with nineteen (19.1) percent being educational services, and health care and social assistance; and nine (9.1) percent being retail trade. This is comparable to Elkhart County as the three (3) top industry sectors over the last six years have also consistently been the same as Bristol's. In 2017 in Elkhart County, thirty-seven (36.5) percent of total job sectors were manufacturing, seventeen (17.3) percent were educational services, and healthcare and social assistance; and over ten (10.5) percent were retail trade. The County's arts and entertainment sector only make up eight (7.9) percent.

Largest Employers

- **Robert Weed Corporation**
- **Utilimaster**
- **Fabric Services**
- **Satellite Industries**
- **Monogram Foods**
- **Hi-Tec Housing, Inc.**

Labor Force – Labor force refers to the number of persons actively employed and those unemployed who are looking for employment. The last 17 years has shown a growth for Bristol's labor force. Over that time, the labor force grew from 758 persons to 869 persons, an increase of 14.6 percent. This growth is likely supported by the slow population increase Bristol has seen over the same period. This is different from the trend for the Washington Township, which saw less than 0.1 percent increase in its labor force from 2000 to 2017. Elkhart County's labor force grew 3.7 percent between 2000 and 2017. All in all Bristol's labor force is growing at a higher level than both the county and greater Warsaw area.

Unemployment – Bristol's unemployment rate has remained lower than that of the state's unemployment rate between 2000 and 2017. Between 2000 and 2010, the unemployment rate decreased to 4.4 percent in 2000 to 4.6 in 2010. Despite the high increase, this remained lower than the state's 6.1 percent rate. Between 2010 and 2017, the unemployment rate decreased to five (4.6) percent to 4.4 percent and remained lower than the state's rates. The Washington Township's average was five (5.4) percent in 2017.

Net Assessed Value – Examining Bristol’s net assessed value can give an indication of the construction activity in Bristol, which correlates to the Town’s budget for capital expenditures, and the Town’s demand for residential, commercial and industrial uses. The Town’s assessed value has increased approximately 16 percent from \$137 million in 2012 to \$159 million in 2019. Elkhart also saw a 16.6 percent increase from 2016 to 2019, with a respective \$8 billion and \$9 billion.

Per Capita Income – Bristol’s per capita income level can measure the access to high-quality living-wage jobs for resident’s ability to have a higher disposable income after paying bills. This gauges the health of the local economy to support local businesses. Bristol’s per capita income increased 13 percent from \$20,373 in 2000 to \$22,935 in 2010 and experienced an 18 percent growth to \$27,031 in 2017. The Town’s Per Capita Income is higher than Elkhart County’s (\$23,817) and very close to the State’s (\$27,305).

Jobs to Household Ratio – The jobs to household ratio gauge the distribution of employment opportunities and workforce (those actively employed) population across a geographic area. A ratio between 1.0 and 1.5 indicates a community has approximately an equal balance of jobs and housing. A ratio of less than 1.0 indicates a community has more housing than jobs; whereas, a ratio greater than 1.5 indicates a community has more jobs than housing.



3



Chapter 3: Parks & Recreation Facilities

HERMANCE PARK

Located on 2.5 acres off the St. Joseph River, north of Vistula Street, Hermance Park is known as the “River & Pavilion Park.” Hermance Park was the Town’s first park in 1959 and was donated by the then Bristol Conservation Park. This park offers a non-smoking pavilion with two handicap accessible restrooms, and a fully equipped kitchen that can be rented out for events such as wedding receptions and family reunions. Approximately up to 150 people can be accommodated in the pavilion. Other amenities include a modern playground equipment, picnic facilities, a fishing pier, and a canoe/kayak/boat launch site. The Town held the Summer Children’s Program at Hermance Park that runs for six weeks during the summer.

A disadvantage of this location is the park is located in a lowland and experiences frequent flooding during heavy rainfalls. The Town currently does not have floodplain management systems or remediation in place in the event of a flood at the parks. This causes limited access to the playground equipment and parking lot. The Town is pursuing to conduct a feasibility study of Hermance Park to evaluate the park experience and needs. Several amenities need upgrading or replaced to enhance the experience at the park. The wooden picnic tables are old and



stained and need replacing. The park needs additional lighting to remove safety concerns during the evening hours. The parking lot is small and is not able to adequately serve the users accessing the canoe launch.

The 2018 flooding in February severely damaged the park pavilion. Majority of the pavilion was underwater and necessitated for replacement of the refrigerator, stove, tables, chairs and other interior items. The Town lost substantial revenue from rentals of the pavilion and was forced to cancel the Summer Program.

Although there are handicap accessible restrooms at Hermance Park, there are several barriers limiting the access for those with a handicap or disability. There are no sidewalks from the parking lot to the playground equipment and there are no accommodations to make the canoe/kayak launch handicap accessible. The Town needs to install ADA approved signage and provide ADA compliant picnic tables. Lastly, the groundcover for the playground area needs to be upgraded to ADA approved material.

Park address: 300 E. Vistula Street.

HERMANCE PARK BOAT LAUNCH



The Hermance Park Boat Launch is a 1,755 square foot concrete launch site with two ramps located on the St. Joseph River at the end of Apollo Street. Ramps are accessible to launch a canoe, kayak, and small boats and enjoy a 25-mile paddle trip of scenic views to the City of South Bend, and an additional 48 miles through Michigan to Lake Michigan. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) owns the Canoe/Kayak Launch. The Town would like to see the ramp enhanced to accommodate those with disabilities. Apollo Street is partially an asphalt road and turns to gravel at the drive entrance to the parking lot. The parking lot is a small-unpaved lot with benches positioned along the river for park users to enjoy the scenic views of the river and watch the wildlife.

There are several aspects of the Hermance Park Boat Launch the Town would like to see improved to improve the user's experience. First, the parking area is small and inadequate to serve the volume of users wanting to access the launch. Second, although the Town installed signage to direct users in docking their canoes, an on-site traffic control plan needs to be implemented to mitigate the pinch points at the entrance/exit of the access site and park where Apollo Street meets Vistula Street.

CUMMINS PARK



Located on 3.5 acres, behind the Elkhart County Historical Museum, Cummins Park is known as the “Sports & Splash Pad Park.” Cummins Park is the second town park built in 1976 and named after long-time resident and former Bristol Fire Chief, Cloyce Cummins. Known as the “Sports Park” for its inclusion of two tennis courts and a full size basketball court. Cummins Park also features a 0.2 asphalt walking trail that loops around the park. A splash pad complete with six sprayers and is open to the public from 9 am to 9 pm between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend. A swing set was installed in 2014 and signage noting the park rules. An historical feature remain in Cummins Park known as the Indiana Heritage Cathcart Cemetery. This historical cemetery contain the graves of two of Bristol’s early pioneers, the Cathcart’s and the Nicholson’s, who also served in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. The Park has portable handicapped accessible restrooms.



Several improvements are needed to enhance the experience of park users. Improvements include offering better views of the river, adding more picnic tables, and repairing the basketball and tennis courts surfaces. ADA improvements include adding an accessible playground equipment, surface material underneath playground equipment, and adding paved pathways from the parking lot to the pavilion, splash pad, and other park amenities.

Park address: 400 W. Vistula Street.

CONGDON PARK



Located on 5 acres north of the St. Joseph River off North Division Street, Congdon Park is known as the “Family & Events Park.” Congdon Park was the third Town park built in 1987, named after the long-time Congdon family. Congdon Park is the largest Town Park and home to the popular Bristol Homecoming Festival held in July. Additional town events include the Pay-It-Forward, Second Chance Dog Rescue, Movies in the Park, car shows, and others.

Users can take advantage of the park’s open space to enjoy scenic views from all angles of the Park of the St. Joseph River. Congdon Park features a wooden bandshell-style gazebo capable of hosting wedding and other family parties that holds up to 50 people and cost \$50 reserve. Congdon Park is open to the public. The gazebo contains several electrical outlets. Near the Park’s entrance there are three electrical outlet centers for live performances. Congdon Park also features a 0.25-mile asphalt trail that loops around the

park's perimeter to take advantage of the river frontage, as well as a pedestrian access point off Division Street with a wooden stairwell. There are pet waste containers and lampposts along the trail as well. There are two modern playground equipment including the Karsyn Bell pirate ship, park benches, picnic tables, park usage signage, and a wooden platform fishing pier to fish in the St. Joseph River.

There are several aspects of the Park that need to improve. The wooden stairwell pedestrian access point off Division Street needs upgrading to be ADA compliant. Additional ADA upgrades include paved pathways to the playground equipment and back entrance of the pavilion. Additionally, make upgrades to the surface material underneath the playground equipment. The Town would like to see a small public access on the river that could be a canoe/kayak launch. This part of the community sits in a lowland and can experience flooding during heavy rainfalls.

Park address: 200 N. Division Street.

MEMORIAL PARK

Located at the busiest intersection in downtown of West Vistula Street and State Road 15, this 0.28-acre urban park is the Town's fourth and smallest park. Known as the "Community Events Park" for being the designated location for many of the Town's events and special community presentations. Amenities include an electronic messaging sign, a gazebo with a swing, benches, walkways, and a water fountain. The park received its name to honor long-time residents of Bristol. One honoree is a teacher at the former Bristol High School, Tommy Thompson. Another historical feature is the commemorative plaque (part of the Indiana Historical Markers tour) regarding a court case of an Underground Railroad incident in Bristol.



There are several disadvantages with Memorial Park as there is no public parking available in the immediate vicinity. There are no restrooms or picnic tables. Signs need to be updated to comply with ADA standards.

Park address: 81 E. Vistula Street.

RABER GOLF COURSE

Raber Golf Course is a Town-owned public golf course that offers 150 acres of three 9-hole courses of varying greens and fairway conditions. The Raber Golf Course property was designed by John Raber and opened in 1967. Raber Golf Course features a clubhouse, pro shop, open shelter with picnic tables, and a corporate meeting room. The pro shop features a selection of clothing, shoes, bags, clubs, and accessories. The facility also has practice putting greens. There are no tee-times and the course offers nice greens and fairways that are great for beginner golfers.

Golf Course Address: 1417 W. Vistula Street.

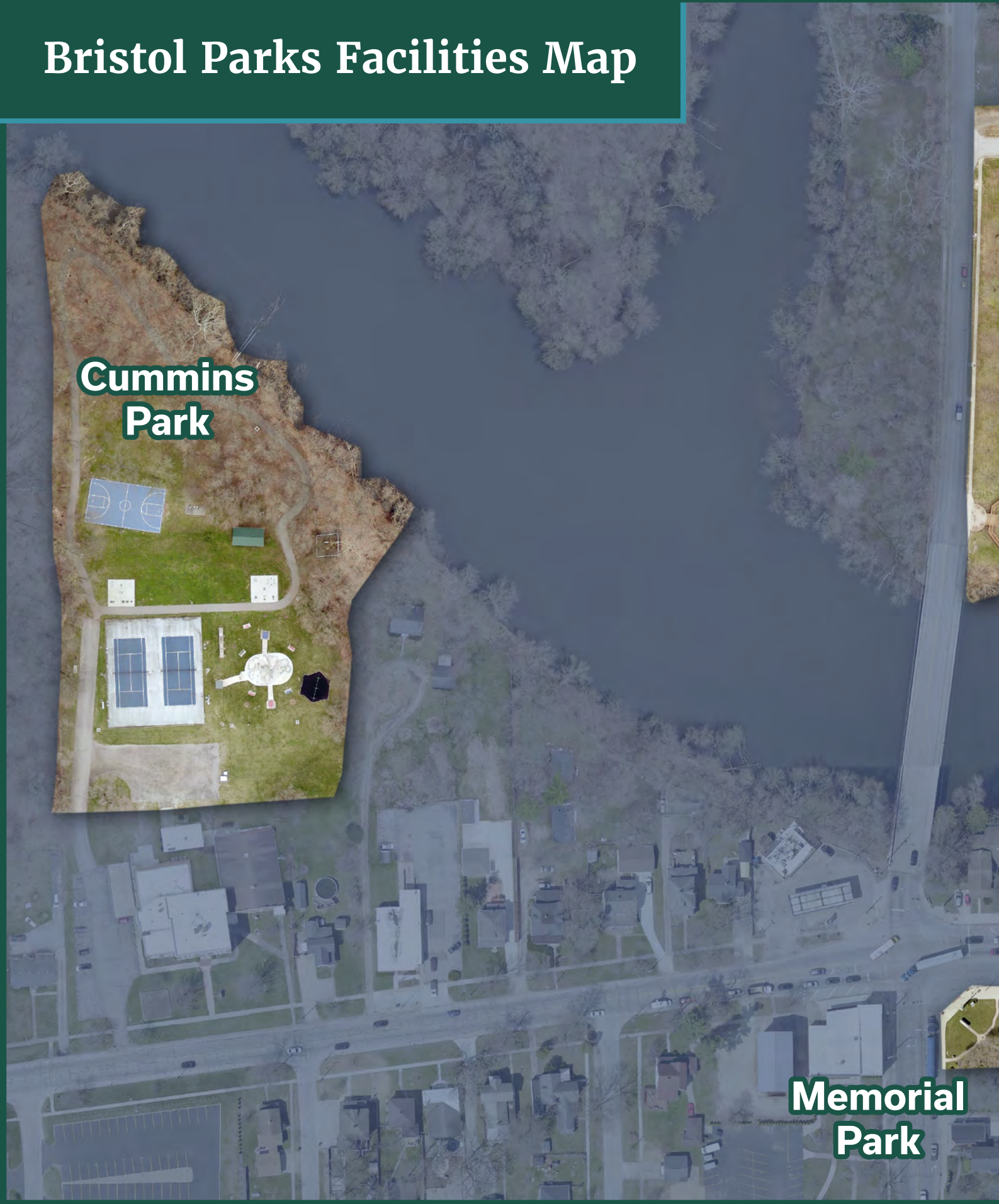
LIEBER NATURE PRESERVE

Lieber Nature Preserve, also known as “Pipewort Pond Nature Preserve,” is a 135-acre state-protected nature preserve located off County Road 23 north of downtown Bristol and the Indiana Toll Road. The Preserve features a cranberry bog, wildlife viewing, broadwalk, and a variety of Indiana’s endangered and threatened plant species. The Preserve also features a nature study and a 1.5-mile hiking trail that loops around the native prairie habitat. The preserve is open for public use. The Indiana Division of Nature Preserves of IDNR owns the Nature Preserve.

Lieber Nature Preserve address: 51737 County Road 23, Bristol, Indiana.



Bristol Parks Facilities Map



**Cummins
Park**

**Memorial
Park**



**Congdon
Park**

**Hermance
Boat Launch**

**Hermance
Park**

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Chapter 4: ADA Compliance & Accessibility

ADA AND DISABILITY OVERVIEW

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H. W. Bush. This law is an attempt to achieve inclusion in society for individuals with disabilities. It does this by codifying requirements that create the conditions to permit all individuals with a disability have equal access to all parts of society. The ADA differs from the individual state discrimination laws in that it has a more sweeping range and applies retroactively to existing facilities.

In conjunction with updating the 2020-2024 Park Master Plan, the Town of Bristol Town Manager will work with the regional ADA coordinator, Zach Dripps, with the Michiana Council of Governments to create an ADA Transition Plan that outlines guidelines to review and improve non-compliant public spaces.

The Town of Bristol complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibits discrimination in the provision of services, programs or facilities to individuals with disabilities.

BRISTOL PARKS SYSTEM ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW

During the preparation of this plan, MACOG and the Town Manager conducted an accessibility review of the Bristol Parks and Recreation facilities. The Town of Bristol strives to provide barrier-free and inclusive parks and recreation facilities as much as possible. It is a Town goal to make every effort possible to remove and/or upgrade non-compliant amenities and structures to improve and expand Bristol's parks and recreation facilities. The Town currently does not have an ADA Transition Plan but plans to adopt an ADA Transition Plan following the update of the Bristol Parks Master Plan.

Majority of Bristol Parks need to be improved to mitigate accessibility barriers and comply with the current ADA standards. It is a Town goal to integrate improvements in the planning of future public facilities and infrastructure systems and ensure public capital projects meet ADA requirements. Other ADA improvements should also be prioritized and implemented as funding becomes available. A detailed review of the accessibility of Bristol Parks is provided below.

HERMANCE PARK



Although there are handicap accessible restrooms at Hermance Park, there are several barriers limiting the access for those with a handicap or disability. There are no sidewalks from the parking lot to the playground equipment, which makes it difficult for those handicapped or disabled to navigate the natural terrain. The Town should install ADA approved signage and provide ADA compliant picnic tables. Lastly, the groundcover for the playground should also be upgraded to ADA approved material.



HERMANCE PARK BOAT LAUNCH

The Hermance Park Boat Launch is a 1,755 square foot concrete launch site with two ramps, installed by IDNR. These ramps are suitable for the launching of canoes, kayaks, and small boats. The Town would like to work with IDNR to enhance these launches to be ADA accessible for canoes and kayaks.



CUMMINS PARK

There are no pathways from the parking lot to the pavilion, splash pad, and the jungle gym. It is the Town's goal to upgrade playground equipment and the surface material underneath the equipment to be ADA accessible.



CONGDON PARK

Although Congdon Park does feature a paved walking trail that loops around the park, there needs to be paved pathways to the backside entrance of the pavilion and the playground equipment. The wooden stairwell off Division Street needs to be upgraded to support ADA needs. Additional ADA upgrades include adding ADA accessible playground equipment, surface material that is ADA compliant underneath the playground equipment.



MEMORIAL PARK

There are paved walkways through Memorial Park that provide access from the sidewalks. As the Town considers enhancing Memorial Park, the Town could install ADA compliant seating, restrooms, and signage.

BRISTOL ADA CONTACT

The Town Manager of the Town of Bristol, Micheal Mitchell, currently serves as the point of contact to address the public's concerns or questions in regards to ADA accessibility. The public can contact him by phone: 574-848-4853 or email: townmanager@bristolindiana.net. The Town shares ADA information on the Town's and Bristol Parks' Facebook pages and ADA signs are posted at all of the parks.

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Chapter 5: Public Participation



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement throughout the process is key to understand the needs and aspirations of Bristol residents. This builds trust, accountability, a sense of community pride, and establishes a lasting relationship between the Town and its community residents. Plan implementation is successful when a project or initiative is well supported by the community. The Parks Master Plan was guided by the Bristol Park Board who acted as the plan's Steering Committee. The planning process was built on the foundation of community engagement. This was essential for the Steering Committee to engage the community to develop an understanding on what the community thought were the key challenges, deficiencies and needs, and their aspirations for a high-quality park system. This was accomplished through multiple facets that sought input from key stakeholders including Town officials and staff, Park Board members, Bristol residents, and business owners and their employees. The methods of outreach to garner public input included stakeholder interviews, an online survey, small group roundtable discussions, and public open houses.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MACOG held monthly Steering Committee meetings to guide the committee through the five-step planning process, detailed below, and report on the progress of the Plan development. Community engagement was a vital component in the planning process that gave valuable feedback and guidance to the Park Board on their grand vision for their Bristol parks and recreational amenities.

1. Establish a Community Vision and Core Values
2. Analyze Existing Conditions & Community Needs
3. Develop Action Strategies
4. Prepare Plan Document and Review
5. Adopt the final Plan



STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

MACOG held a kickoff Steering Committee meeting in November 2019 to determine a project scope of work, deliverables, and outlined a community engagement strategy of the methods to use to engage the community. The committee identified the need to conduct interviews with key technical stakeholders such as Park Board members and Town staff to collect existing condition information on park facilities, improvements that were done to the park facilities in the last five years, and their thoughts on the needs and challenges of Bristol Parks. Stakeholders were interviewed by phone in December 2019 and January 2020.



PUBLIC INPUT SURVEY

The Town of Bristol decided to create a public input survey to engage the community on their use of Bristol parks system, enhancements they would like to see implemented, and how the Town of Bristol Parks Board should focus its priorities over the next five years. The survey was available online and paper copy starting January 13 through end of February 2020. The paper version was distributed at the Town Hall, the Bristol Public Library, and at the local Community Food Pantry.

The Town used a variety of methods to promote the survey in order to maximize the input, including:

1. MACOG published two-week long advertisement on Facebook targeted for residents around Bristol.
2. The Town of Bristol and the Bristol Parks Board posted on Facebook encouraging followers to take the survey.
3. MACOG used the U.S. Postal Every Direct-Door-to-Door Mailing (EDDM) option to mail a postcard to every household in Bristol, including with a P.O. Box, promoting the survey.
4. The Town of Bristol and MACOG appear on the Horizonte Radio program, a Latino Radio & Online station in Elkhart County, to promote the survey (in Spanish).
5. The Bristol Opera House, during a show on February 21, 2020, promoted the survey on their program.
6. Flyers were distributed and displayed at local businesses in downtown.
7. Local employers, like Robert Weed Corporation and ChemTech, posted a notice of the survey in their breakrooms and/or emailed the survey to their employees.

There were 250 surveys completed from online (184) and paper (66) versions, representing approximately 20 percent of the Bristol population. Utilizing Facebook, in particular the Facebook advertisement, was the method that generated the highest response rate, with the EDDM being the second highest response rate.

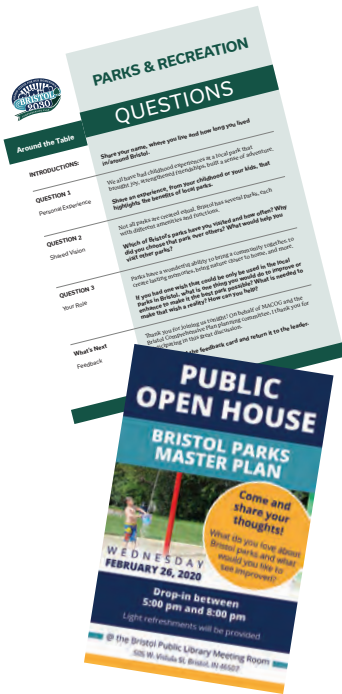
250 people completed **THE SURVEY** THAT IS **20% OF BRISTOL'S** POPULATION

66
PAPER
SUBMISSIONS

184
ONLINE
RESPONSES

Below are the highlights of the public's response to the survey. A full summary of the survey results is in the Appendix.

- Of the four Bristol Parks, **Congdon Park is the most visited park by participants with 73 percent.** Cummins Park was the second highest visited park by participants with 50 percent.
- The majority of participants indicated they visit Bristol Parks “a few times a year.”
- **Cummins Park received the highest park rating with 74 percent of participants indicated this park was either outstanding or very good.** Congdon park was the second highest rated park with 52 percent of participants indicated this park was either outstanding or very good.
- **Hermance Park; however, was indicated by participants as the one that needed the most improvement with 29 percent.** Memorial Park was the second highest park needing the most improvement with 22 percent.
- When asked if participants would **take advantage of the river if they had improved access, 65 percent stated yes** and 23 percent said they were unsure. Only 12 percent said no.
- The number one feature participants would like to see as the means for **improved access to the river was an enhanced canoe/kayak launch with 57 percent.** The next highest feature was a pedestrian bridge across the river with 52 percent.



SMALL GROUP ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

The Steering Committee wanted to enhance public engagement through organizing small group discussions throughout the community. MACOG suggested developing a series of questions that can be used at existing community meetings, events, or gatherings that could inspire discussion and exchanges of ideas. These discussions will be organized through January and February 2020, with the first participants focusing on local faith-based organizations and the Bristol Elementary to engage the youth.

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

MACOG and the Bristol Park Board held a public open house on February 26, 2020 between 5 PM and 8 PM at the Bristol Public Library to receive community input about Bristol parks and desires for new and improved amenities. Notices of the open house were advertised on the Town of Bristol and Bristol Parks Facebook pages, flyers were posted at downtown businesses, as well as broadcasted on the Horizonte Radio Program. The Town Manager and MACOG were featured on the radio program in effort to engage and encourage participation from the Latino community who represent approximately 8 percent of Bristol residents, not including the Latino community who commute to Bristol for work. A translator also attended the open house to provide translation service for limited English speaking participants. There were 26 attendees of the open house, most of the attendees being Bristol residents with three participants who live or work outside of Bristol in Elkhart County but have interest in visiting Bristol parks. There were six stations for participants to provide their input. The first four stations were dedicated to a Bristol Park that asked attendees to write down new amenities they would like to see added to the park and existing park features that need to improve/enhance.

COMMON NEW AMENITIES & PARK IMPROVEMENTS:

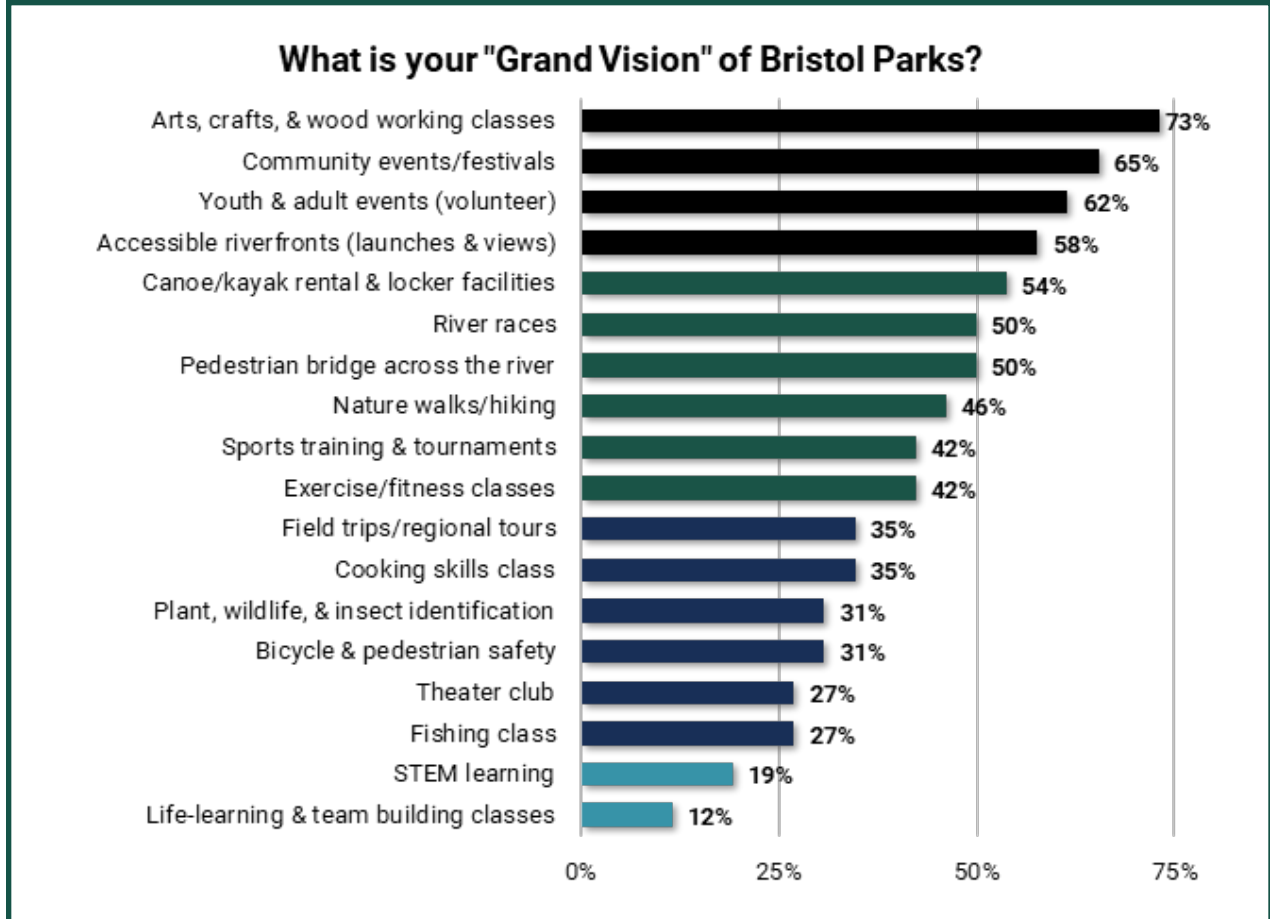
NEW AMENITIES:

- Bee or bird garden
- Environmental education such as wetlands, bird habitats, insects
- Movie in the Park
- Music on the River
- Permanent restroom facilities
- Expansion of playground equipment

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PARK FEATURES:

- Increase river access with canoe/kayak launches
- Removal of overgrown vegetation
- Addition of pickleball
- Landscaping and decorative lighting
- ADA accessible equipment and playgrounds

The fifth station used feedback frames for participants to indicate their support for potentially new park programs and activities. Participants were asked to slide one token per 18 slots – programs and activities. The proposed programs and activities were identified from the Park Board members and the community’s response to a public input survey question that asked what type of programs they would like to see Bristol Parks provide for the community. Participants were asked to drop one token per slot and could vote for their support for as many of the 18 programs or activities as they wished. The chart below summarizes the public’s support for the new programs or activities they would like to see Bristol Parks provide.



The top four programs or activities the 26 participants would like to see Bristol Parks provide were:

- **Arts, crafts, and wood working classes (73%),**
- **Community events/festivals (65%),**
- **Youth and adult events-volunteer opportunities (62%)**
- **Accessible riverfronts-launches and views (58%)**

The sixth station supported the Bristol 2030 Comprehensive Plan that had participants indicate what they would like to see in Bristol in 2030. Participants wrote down one thing they would like to see in Bristol as the “WOW” and one thing that is preventing it from happening today as the “NOW.” Below are the common themes participants stated as their “WOW” and “NOW.”

COMMON THEMES:

- **Variety of quality restaurants or sit down establishments (coffee shop/bakery) in Town/downtown – 5 people**
- **Vibrant “Main Street” & Decorate for Holidays – 3 people**
- **Event center – 2 people**
- **Food trucks in Town or Parks – 2 people**
- **All other responses were (bike trail, SR 15/Vistula intersection, access to river from Main Street, update fire hydrants, Redbox, pharmacy, and a general store) – 7 people**

PUBLIC COMMENT OF FINAL DRAFT PLAN

The Bristol community had another opportunity to provide their input on the draft 2020-2024 Bristol Parks Master Plan during the beginning of April 2020. A public comment period was issued on April 3, 2020, to April 14, 2020, to seek their input on the draft Plan and proposed action strategies. The Bristol Park Board solicited public input utilizing Facebook for residents to post their comments. Posts were advertised on the Bristol Parks, Town of Bristol, the local news Bristol Sun, Bristol on the River, and the Elkhart Civic Theatre Facebook Pages. Additionally, an online comment form was available for residents to submit their comments. We received five comments: two were submitted from the online comment form, one over the phone, and two on the Bristol on the River Facebook Page. See Appendix for the summary of the public’s comments.

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Chapter 6: Needs Analysis



MACOG and the Bristol Park Board used several methods to understand the Town’s major issues to provide adequate parks and recreational amenities to its residents. The first method used the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics to provide a general insight of national standards in comparison to the Town of Bristol. This included evaluating the level of service of acreage for outdoor recreational use and parklands in the Town’s service area. The acreage LOS evaluates the total amount of recreational lands Bristol has to serve its current and projected populations measured in acres per 1,000 residents. This level of analysis is regarded as the most utilized standard given the ease of measurement.

ACREAGE & PARKLANDS LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

According to the 2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review, the Town of Bristol should have approximately 10 acres of land for outdoor recreation use per 1,000 residents and one park for every 2,181 residents served. The Town of Bristol’s population in 2018 was 1,686 residents (2018 Census Annual Population Estimate) and the population for the service area, which includes

Washington Township, in 2018, was 7,269 residents (8,955 total). According to the population projections provided in the Town's 2030 Comprehensive Plan, the Town's population is projected to grow to 1,819 residents and 7,436 residents in Washington Township (9,255 total). Using 2019 aerial photography and Elkhart County parcel records, the Town's four parks and public golf course totals approximately 161 acres of land for recreational use. There is an additional 382 acres of recreational lands provided in the service area that includes:

- 222-acre Bonneyville Mill County Park
- 25-acre Bristol Little League Field
- 135-acre Lieber Nature Preserve

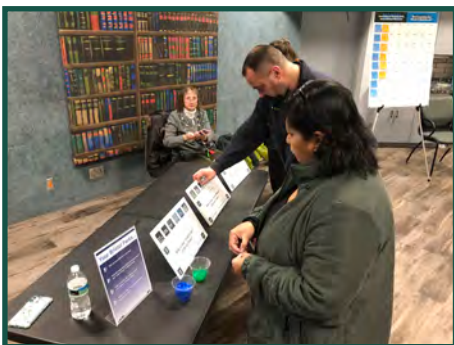
Using the NRPA Acreage and Park LOS standards, the Town would need approximately 92 acres of land for outdoor recreation use and four to five parks in the service area based on their current and projected population. The Town of Bristol has adequate amount of acreage for outdoor recreational use with 543 acres of recreational land and six parklands in the service area.

NRPA Park Metrics suggests park agencies should also have an annual operating expenditure per capita of \$78.69, have a revenue to operating expenditure of 27 percent, and eight full-time employees per 10,000 residents.



PARKS & PROGRAMMING NEEDS ANALYSIS

Additional needs analysis was conducted utilizing a summary of the Park Board's identification of improvements needed and the public's responses from the survey and public open house. During the development of the plan, MACOG held several meetings with the Park Board to identify the areas of Bristol Parks needing improvements. The kickoff meeting to the planning process had the Board identify their aspirations for Bristol Parks and identify what is preventing that from being a reality. The common items mentioned was to get the summer program active again and conduct a feasibility study to repurpose Hermance Park to accommodate it frequently flooding. A second meeting was held to identify what the Park Board thought were the major challenges for their park and recreation system and the goals to address those challenges. This accomplished in a "round robin" style that each Park Board member stated major challenges and goals. MACOG recorded their responses using a large sticky pad and identified the common themes.





This analysis then summarized the community’s responses from the survey and open house. Specific summaries of these events and the challenges and goals of the community are provided in the community engagement section, with the survey results located in the Appendix. MACOG organized the community’s input by park and program, and identified the common themes. Then condensed the themes from the Park Board and the community into one table. MACOG held a third meeting with the Park Board to review and prioritize the comprehensive list of needs into a priority action program. Each Park Board member was given 10 dots and placed one dot per need to note their priority action list. The results were tallied and organized by the needs receiving the most dots. The Park Board held a working group meeting to once more review the priority actions and condensed the actions into an action program.

THE TOP PRIORITY NEEDS INCLUDE:

- **Make the river more accessible at the parks**
- **Create a new position with the Town of Bristol to oversee the management of Bristol Parks**
- **Continue to upgrade park and recreational facilities and amenities to be ADA accessible for all user needs**
- **Evaluate the best use of the parks that experience frequent flooding and mitigate the impacts**
- **Restructure the Bristol Summer Program**



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Chapter 7: Action Program

It is the mission of the Bristol Park Board to create a park and recreational system that is accessible to all residents, supports active living lifestyles, and is attractive to draw new families and individuals to call Bristol home. Providing a high quality park system will enhance Bristol's quality of life and vibrancy, and show why Bristol is more than a working community but is a high-quality hometown.

This chapter provides the framework for realizing Bristol's grand vision of their park and recreational system with specific recommendations addressing the community's challenges and programmatic and event enhancements. Recommendations were identified from the public input survey, the public open house, and the Steering Committee-Park Board meetings. Concluding this chapter is the priority action schedule to guide the Park Board over the next five years in implementing the action strategies and acquiring funding from applicable sources.

CUMMINS PARK

PROPOSED AMENITIES & IMPROVEMENTS

- Resurface the basketball and tennis courts
- Add pickleball courts
- Create a surfaced parking lot
- Expand the splash pad features and concrete base
- Install shade sails over seating areas
- Install a new climbing wall
- Organize fitness and aerobic classes such as yoga, cardio drumming, and pilates
- Continue to upgrade park and recreational facilities and amenities to be ADA accessible for all user needs
- Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmer's market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and music performances
- Establish a regular landscaping maintenance program that evaluates tree removal, removal of overgrown brush, and replanting of landscapes, where appropriate
- Install new landscaping, seating, lighting, art and decorations, informational boards, and permanent restroom facilities
- Install an in-ground sprinkler system
- Assess the riverbank to provide access to the St. Joseph River for a canoe/kayak launch

CONGDON PARK

PROPOSED AMENITIES & IMPROVEMENTS

- Improve the electrical system to better accommodate performances during the Homecoming Festival
- Expand the playground equipment to be accessible for toddler-aged children and ADA
- Replace the steps and fishing platform
- Upgrade the pavilion and steps
- Explore the feasibility to add a disc golf course
- Continue to upgrade park and recreational facilities and amenities to be ADA accessible for all user needs
- Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmer's market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and music performances
- Establish a regular landscaping maintenance program that evaluates tree removal, removal of overgrown brush, and replanting of landscapes, where appropriate
- Install new landscaping, seating, lighting, art and decorations, informational boards, and permanent restroom facilities
- Install an in-ground sprinkler system
- Assess the riverbank to provide access to the St. Joseph River for a canoe/kayak launch

HERMANCE PARK

PROPOSED AMENITIES & IMPROVEMENTS

- Conduct a multi-year plan development to study the best use for the park space
- Remove the playground equipment
- Enhance the fishing pier area
- Upgrade the pavilion
- Create a center to support a canoe/kayak rental system and locker facilities
- Continue to upgrade park and recreational facilities and amenities to be ADA accessible for all user needs
- Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmer's market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and music performances
- Establish a regular landscaping maintenance program that evaluates tree removal, removal of overgrown brush, and replanting of landscapes, where appropriate
- Install new landscaping, seating, lighting, art and decorations, informational boards, and permanent restroom facilities
- Assess the riverbank to provide access to the St. Joseph River for a canoe/kayak launch

MEMORIAL PARK

PROPOSED AMENITIES & IMPROVEMENTS

- Expand and improve the park by acquiring the contiguous properties to the alleyway
- Install new landscaping, decorative lighting, and seating
- Continue to upgrade park and recreational facilities and amenities to be ADA accessible for all user needs
- Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmer's market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and music performances

PRIORITY ACTION SCHEDULE

The following is the Priority Action Schedule that lists the priority action strategies from the list of recommendations that the Bristol Park Board will first focus implementing to begin achieving their grand vision of Bristol’s parks and recreational system.

Town of Bristol Parks & Recreation Priority Action Schedule			
Action Strategy	Estimated Costs	Timeframe	Responsible Entity
Cummins Park			
Add pickleball courts	\$87,000	2020	Park Board
Congdon Park			
Improve the electrical system to better accommodate for festivals and events	\$1,000	2020	Park Board
Expand the playground equipment to be accessible for toddler-aged children	\$12,000	2020	Park Board
Upgrade the pavilion	\$20,000	2024	Park Board
Replace the wooden stairwell and fishing platform	\$50,000	2024	Park Board
Hermance Park			
Removal of playground equipment	N/A	2020	Park Board
Conduct a multi-year plan development to study the best use for the park space	TBD	2023	IDNR, Town Council, Park Board, & Town Manager
Upgrade the pavilion	\$20,000	2024	Park Board

Town of Bristol Parks & Recreation Priority Action Schedule

Action Strategy	Estimated Costs	Timeframe	Responsible Entity
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Memorial Park

Coordinate with the property owner to purchase the adjoining parcels to expand and enhance Memorial Park	\$20,000	2021	Park Board
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General Park System Improvements

Assess the riverbank at all parks to improve and provide access to the St. Joseph River for canoe/kayak launches	\$50,000	2021	Park Board & Town Manager
Create a Town Parks Manager position	\$65,000	2022	Town Council, Park Board, & Town Manager
Enhance the communication and promotion of parks using informational boards, Facebook, publications, and word of mouth	\$5,000	2022	Park Board
Organize various events and festivals that may include art shows, craft fairs, a farmer's market, food trucks, movies-in-the-park, and music performances	Minimal	2022	Park Board
Install new landscaping, seating, lighting, art and decorations, informational boards, and permanent restroom facilities	TBD	2023	Park Board
Establish a landscape maintenance program that evaluates tree removal, removal of overgrown brush, and replantings	\$10,000	2023	Park Board & Town Manager
Evaluate the best use of the parks that experience frequent flooding and mitigate the impacts	TBD	2024	Park Board & Town Manager

IMPLEMENTATION & FUNDING

In order for the Town of Bristol to realize their grand vision of their park and recreational system, implementation will require coordination between the Town, Park Board, community leaders, regional organizations, and advocacy groups. Additionally, monitoring and tracking the progress of the Plan will show measurable results in making the vision a reality. This section outlines the implementation tools and potential funding sources to carry out the Priority Action Schedule.

NON-REVERTING CAPITAL FUNDS

Non-reverting capital funds can be created by the Town to assist with property acquisition or for specific capital improvements. These funds are provided by sale of properties, equipment, or special user fees established by the Park Board.

NON-REVERTING OPERATIONAL FUNDS

Non-reverting operational funds can be used for appropriations done by the Park Board for operational expenditures. These funds are provided from program and event fees, sale of merchandise, user and rental fees.

PARKS DONATION ACCOUNT

The Donation Account was created by the Park Board to accept public donations that specifically funds park improvements.

GRANT PROGRAMS

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (IDNR) LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF)

The LWCF is a state match grant that provides 50 percent of the costs for land acquisition to expand park property, and/or development of parks and recreational facilities upon project approval.

IDNR RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP)

The RTP is an 80 percent state funds/20 percent local match grant used for the development of multi-use trails up to \$200,000.

IDNR LAKES & RIVERS ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM (LARE)

This is a grant opportunity used to protect and enhance aquatic habitats for fish and wildlife while allowing publicly accessible waterways to be used for recreational and other use.

IDNR DIVISION OF FORESTRY

The Indiana Division of Forestry provides grants for community and urban forestry programs. This can be used to inventory the Town's trees, develop asset management plans, and tree plantings. Grants can range from \$2,000 to \$20,000 and require either cash or in-kind contributions, or equal combination.

INDIANA OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AND RURAL AFFAIRS (OCRA) – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS (CDBG)

OCRA oversees the allocation of federal CDBG funds for community development projects including the planning and construction of public facilities and Main Street revitalization. Under the Public Facilities Program, a community can apply for up to a grant award of \$500,000 and requires a local match of 10 percent of the total project cost.

OCRA QUICK IMPACT PLACEBASED (QUIP) GRANT

QUIP is designed to fund small-scale projects that make a quick community enhancement and transformation of underutilized spaces to spark community conversation and creativity. This grant encourages the establishment and strengthening of partnerships between the Town, residents, community groups and organizations, and businesses. Grants requests must be between \$2,500 and \$5,000, and have a local match of either cash, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both.

INDIANA HOUSING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (IHCDA) PATRONICITY CREATING PLACES GRANT

The Creating Places grant is a crowdsourcing funding mechanism that communities can apply and submit a project campaign that seeks public donations. IHCDA will match the dollars raised for successful campaigns up to \$50,000.

INDIANA NATIVE PLANT & WILDFLOWER SOCIETY (IN PAWS)

IN PAWS offers grants to communities that promote the appreciation, preservation, conservation, utilization, and studies of Indiana's native flora. Additional considerations go to communities that educate its residents on the values and environmental importance of indigenous vegetation.

ELKHART COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The Elkhart County Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization that seeks to financially support quality of life, public art, and other community development projects for Elkhart County communities. The Bristol Park Board has received support from the Community Foundation for improvements at Cummins Park for installation of the fitness equipment.

LILLY ENDOWMENT

The Lilly Endowment is a nonprofit organization that financially supports community facilities and programs that advance a municipality's economic development and quality of life opportunities.

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Appendix

The Bristol Park Board kicked off the planning process in October 2019, built on the foundation of community engagement that guided the identification of the major challenges and recommendations. This was accomplished through multiple facets that sought input from key stakeholders including Town officials and staff, Park Board members, Bristol residents, and business owners and their employees.

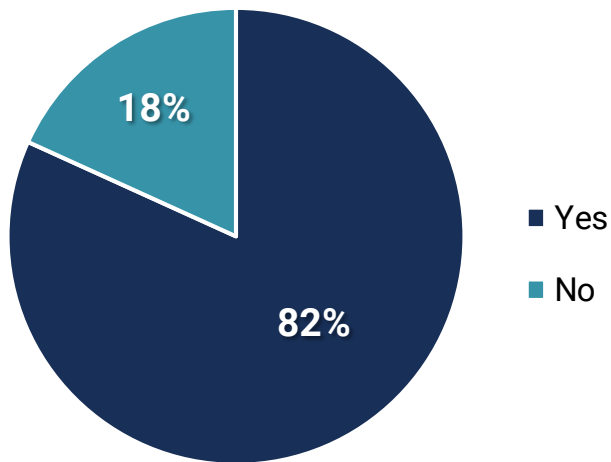
One of the forms of community engagement utilized was a public input survey. Approximately 250 residents responded and provided valuable feedback on their grand vision of their hometown and park system! The public had an opportunity to complete the survey from January 13, 2020 to February 29, 2020 and was available online and as a paper format. The following series of pages are the results to each of the survey questions.

Additional engagement was done using social media. The Bristol community had another opportunity to review and comment on the draft Plan between April 3, 2020 and April 14, 2020. Residents were able to submit their comments using an online comment form or post their comments on Facebook on the Bristol Parks, Town of Bristol, Bristol on the River, the Bristol Sun, or the Elkhart Civic Theatre Facebook Pages. We received five public comments and summary is provided following the public input survey results.

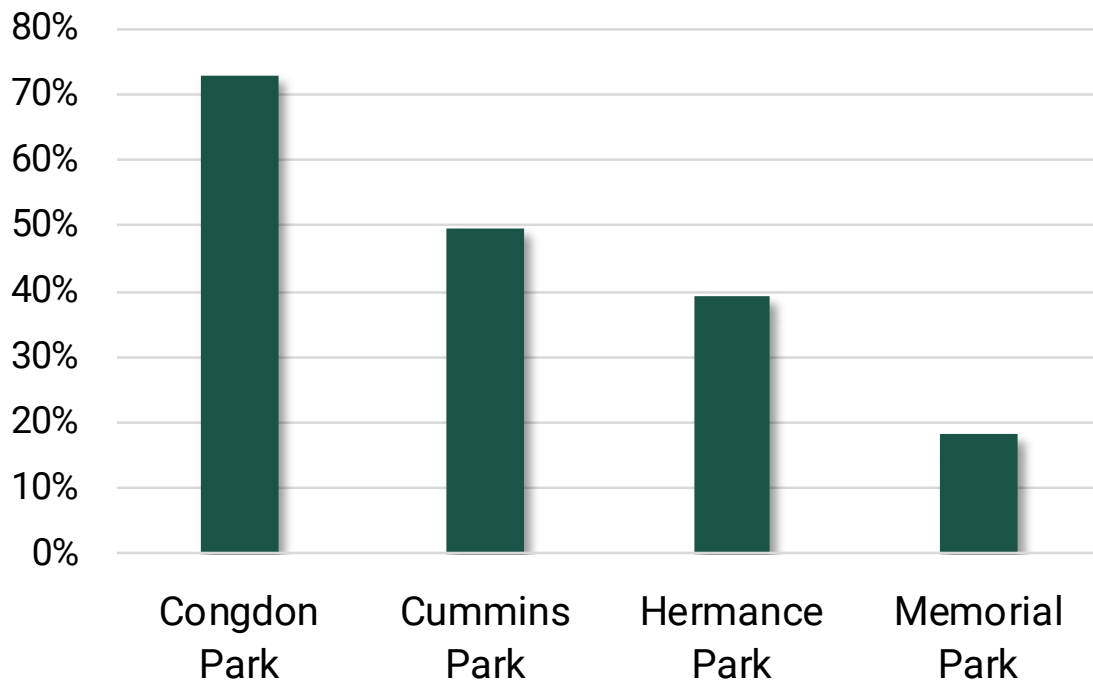


Public Input Survey Summary

1. Do you visit at least one of the Town of Bristol's Parks?



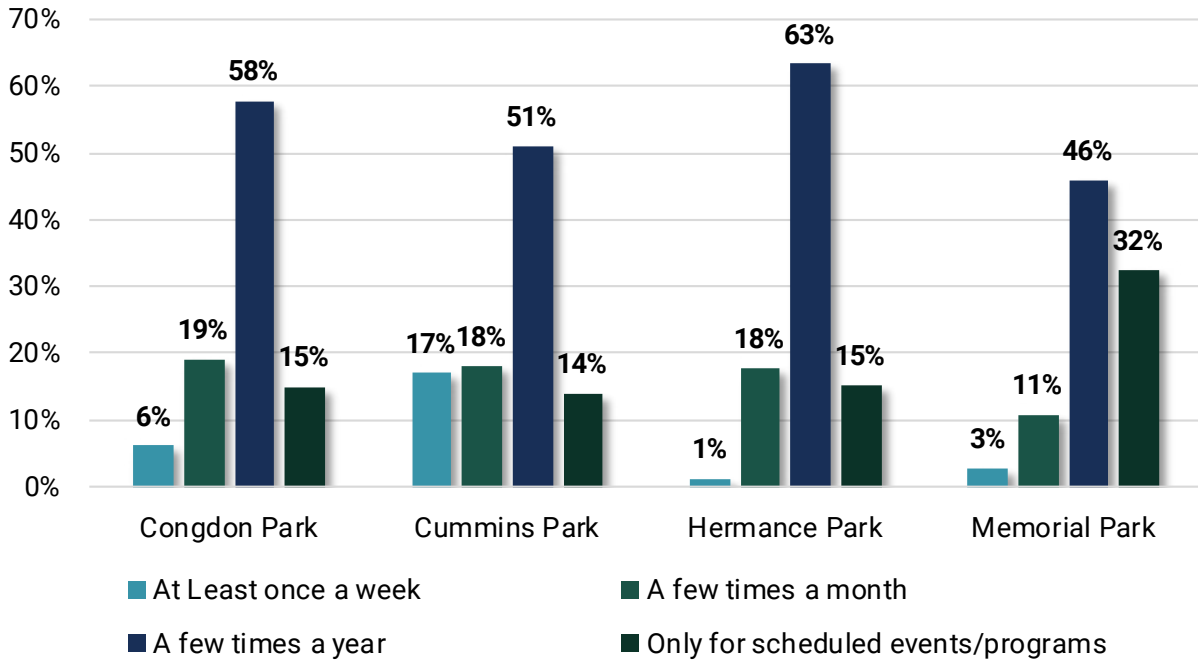
2. Which parks do you visit?



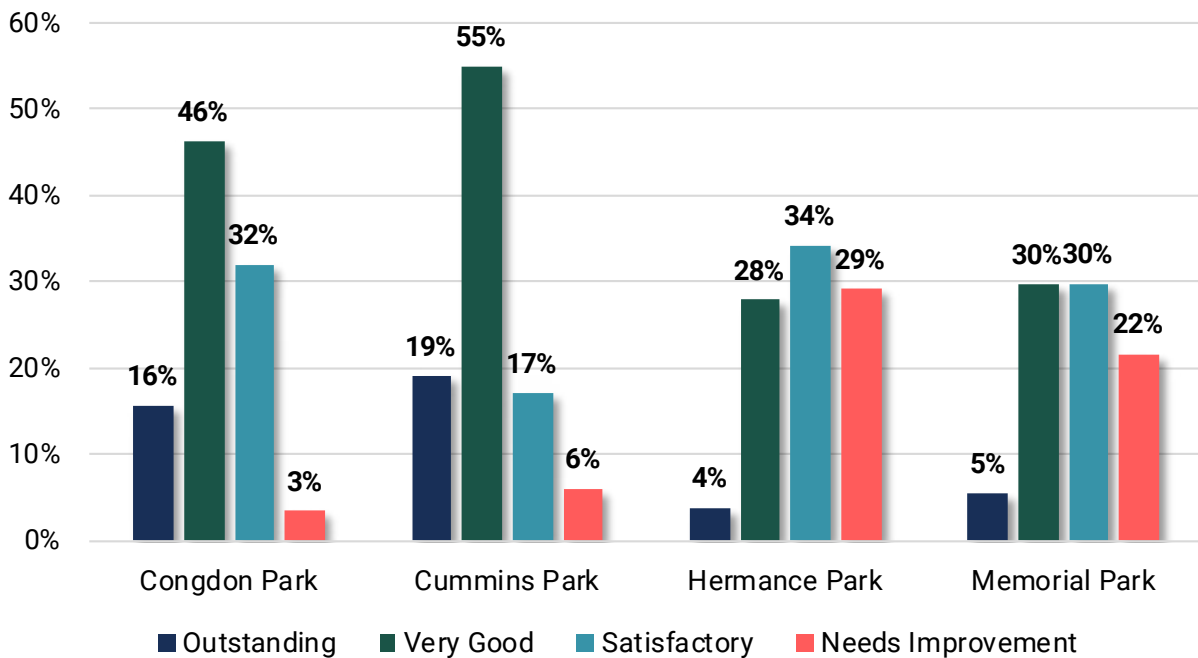


Public Input Survey

2a. Visit Frequency



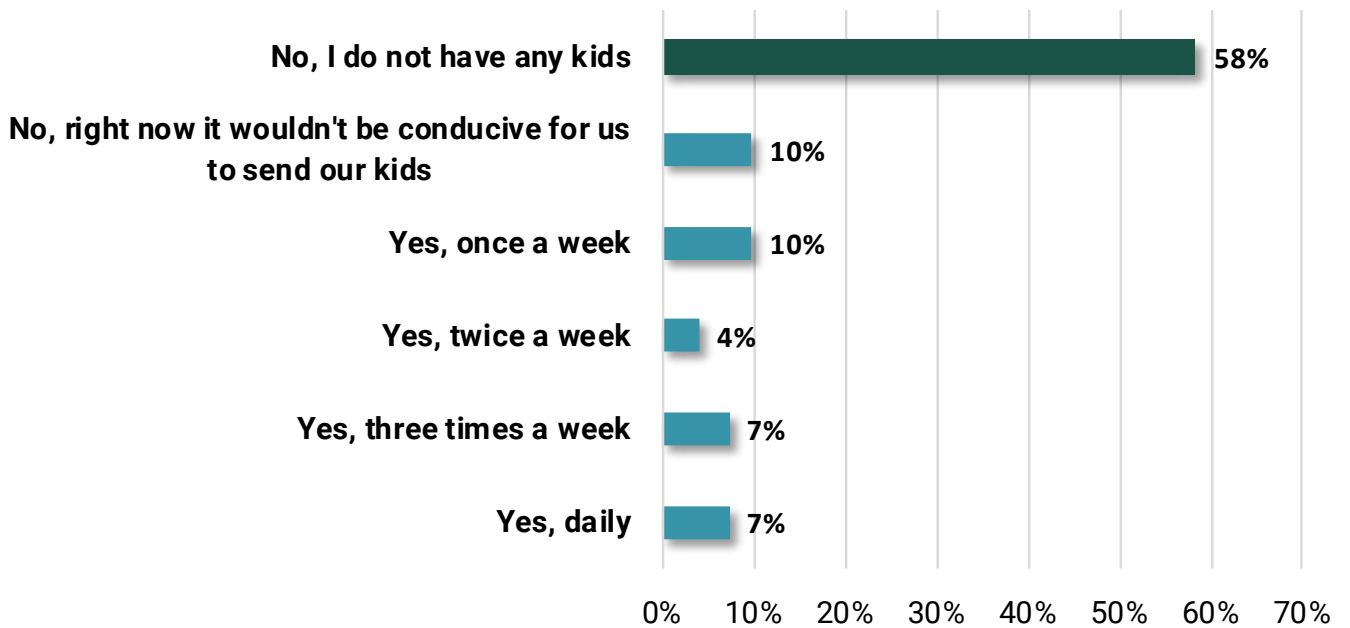
2b. Park Rating



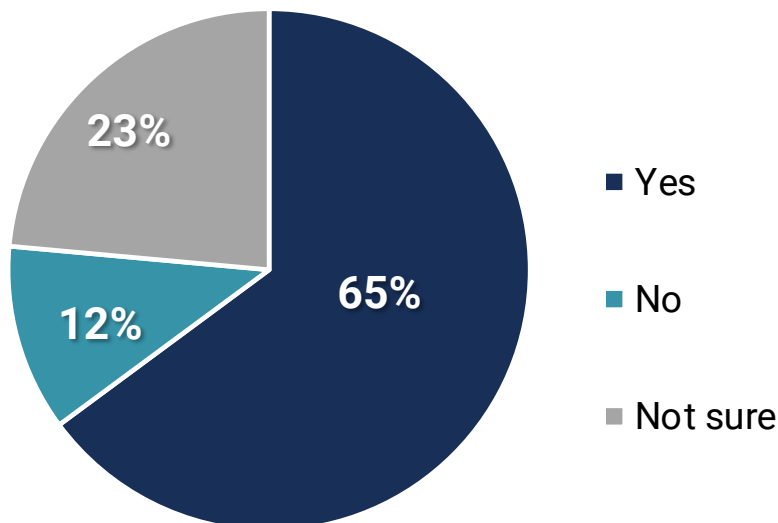


Public Input Survey

3. If the Town had a summer program, would you send your kids and how frequently would you want activities programed?



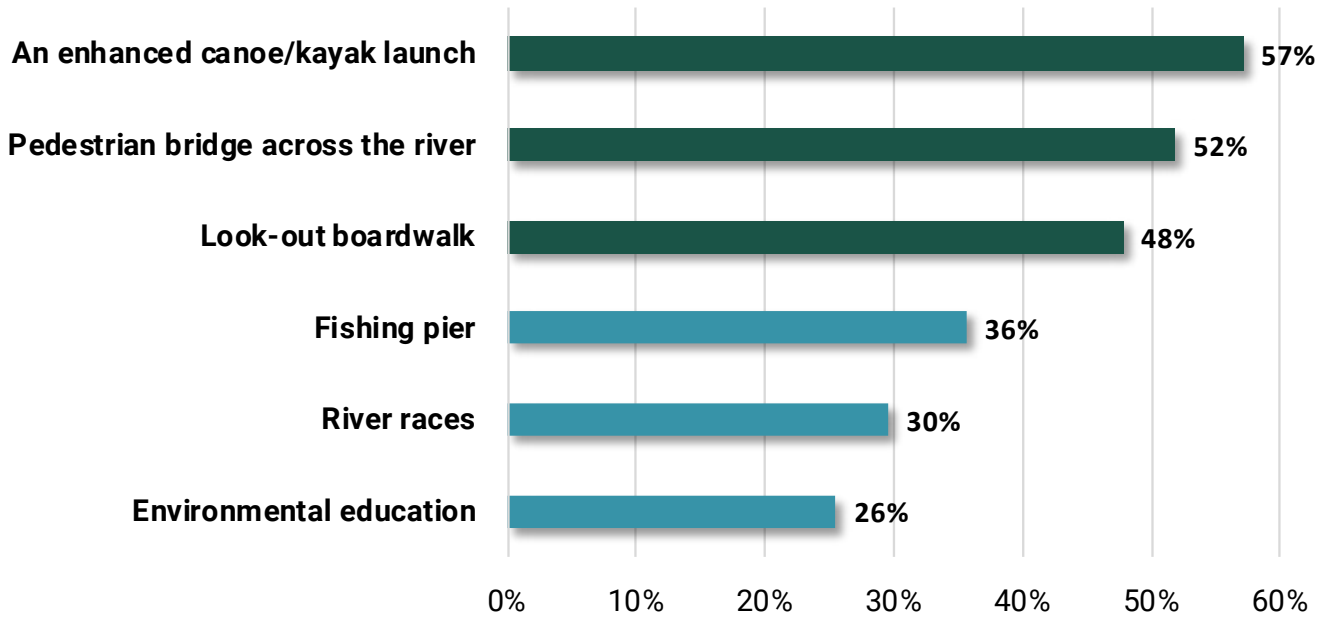
4. Would you take advantage of the river if there was improved access?



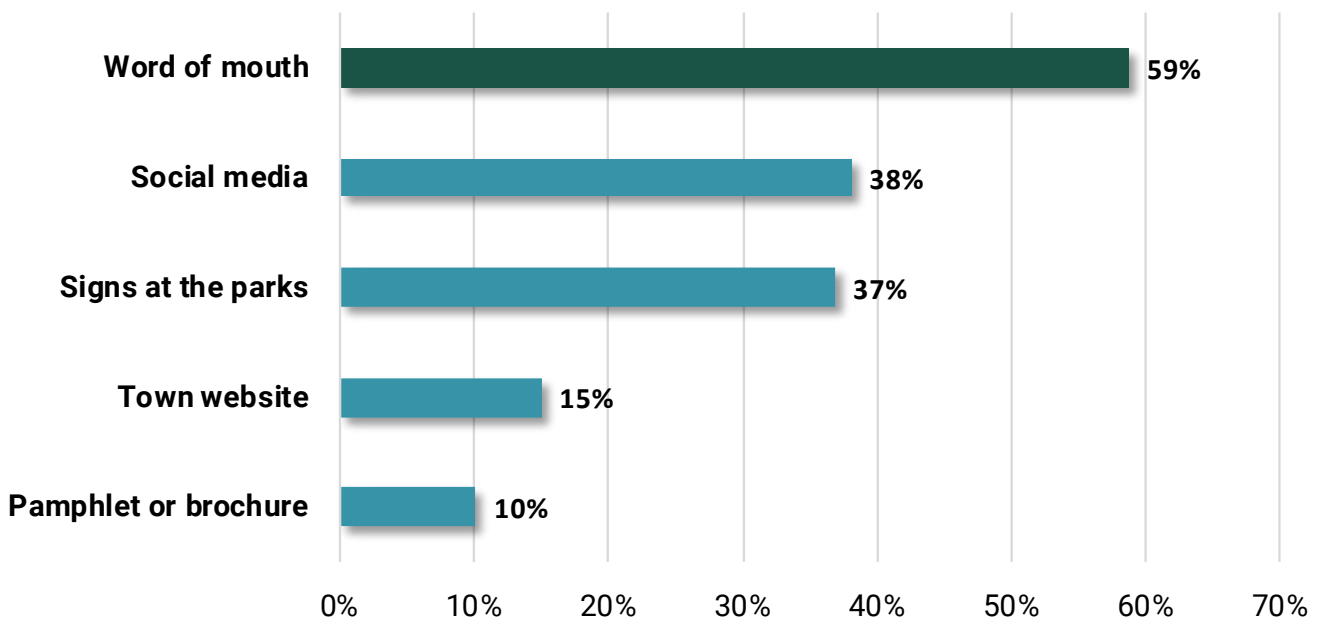


Public Input Survey

5. What features would you like to see the Town provide to enjoy the river?



6. How do you get your information about the parks?

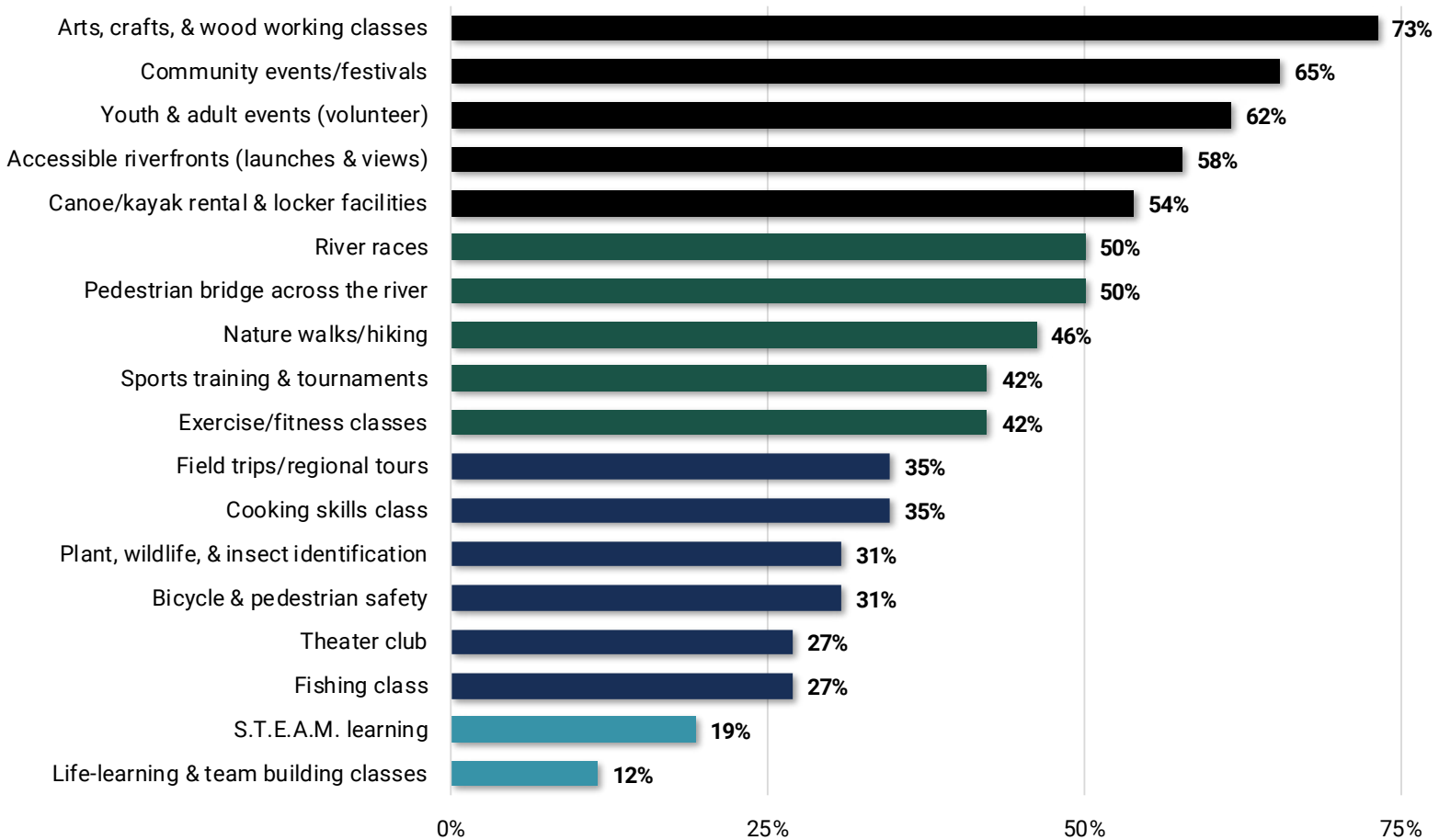




Public Open House - Feedback Frame

What is your “Grand Vision” of Bristol Parks?

Support for Summer Program - Activities



2020-2024 Bristol Parks Master Plan Public Comments

Date	Submitted by	Public Comments	MACOG/Bristol Park Board Response
4/7/2020	Eloise Gaugler, Resident, Submitted over the phone	<p>Recommended a text correction in reference to a historic home mentioned on page 10. She is the homeowner of the site and wanted to clarify that their home is not historic but could see how that would be confusing because we are so close to the St. John's church, which is on the National Register. On the Register, the church is noted to have a home on the property as historic. She clarified that at one point in time the church used to have a home next to theirs but it was torn down a number of years ago to extend their parking lot.</p> <p>She recommended that the reference of the Melbourn/ Milburn House be removed.</p> <p>She also wanted us to verify the address of the Church, is it the referenced 611 or 601 E. Vistula Street?</p>	Removed the reference and verified the church address is 601 E. Vistula St. Bristol, IN 46507
4/8/2020	Liz Wojtysiak, Submitted on the Bristol on the River Facebook page	Why is pickleball being pushed?	Linda Powell from the Bristol Park Board replied by stating that Pickleball is becoming the hottest up and coming sport. Very family oriented and the seniors love it. Everyone from about 5 years old to 80 years old can play.

2020-2024 Bristol Parks Master Plan Public Comments

Date	Submitted by	Public Comments	MACOG/Bristol Park Board Response
4/8/2020	Jeffrey Juilerat, Submitted on the Bristol on the River Facebook page	Wasteful spending.	
4/9/2020	Anonymous resident, Submitted on the online comment form	Poorly developed plan. Who plays Pickleball and why the infatuation with spending so much on it? Wasteful spending.	Submittal requested that no response was needed.
4/9/2020	Anonymous resident, Submitted on the online comment form	<p>It's comforting to read that they recognize the value of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Quilt Gardens (Heritage trail, etc. 2) The Vibrant Communities is recognized as a supporting & vital piece going forward as they work to improve quality of place & build public support going forward (Huge news for this tiny town, IMO as a long time citizen) I owe a lot of thanks to everyone involved. And will work in whatever way to include more voices & faces in town to experience all of Elkhart County & Bristol's growing vitality & vibrancy. The park board's interested in the health of our shared community spaces & citizens is a noble endeavor and I believe that this plan is workable & I'm eager to share, enjoy & protect our community parks and services. We citizens of Bristol have wonderful parks, and now to know that they're only going to get better. Thank you. 	Submittal requested that no response was needed.

**TOWN OF
BRISTOL**

**2020-2024
PARKS
MASTER
PLAN**

