



SMALL TOWN Fill-In-The-Blank (FITB) 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan Template INSTRUCTIONS

NOTE: This template was created by IDNR staff for **In-House** use **ONLY** by **Indiana communities of 7,000 population or less** as measured by the most recent US Census data. The purpose of this plan template is to provide a low-cost/no-cost internal planning alternative to the smallest Indiana communities that otherwise cannot afford to conduct strategic park planning. All previous versions of this template are null, void, and will not be accepted.

In order to obtain IDNR plan approval and eligibility to apply for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants **all** communities with a population greater than 7,000 will be required to complete a normal, long-format 5-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan to the standards outlined in the latest version of the "IDNR Planning Guidelines for 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plans". A community of less than 7,000 population is welcome to complete a long-form plan instead of using this template if they so choose.

Template Instructions for Indiana communities of LESS THAN 7,000 POPULATION:

- Fill in each blank of the plan.
- Use the most recent data available from reliable sources (some suggestions have been provided on the form).
- Cite your sources in a few words at the end of your data, if possible (Example: "www.statsindiana.edu").
- Submit your draft electronically via email, or contact IDNR (see below) for alternatives.
- If you wish to submit a completed master plan template or have questions about using this template or the parks and recreation master planning process, please contact:
Greg Beilfuss, Chief Planner
IDNR State Parks, Community Grants and Trails
402 W. Washington St., RM W271
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2782
317-232-4071
gbeilfuss@dnr.IN.gov
Fax: 317-233-4648
IDNR Park Planning Webpage: <https://www.in.gov/dnr/state-parks/recreation/planning/park-planning-information-and-guidelines/>

If your community is not interested in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant eligibility, then there are no due dates, and your plan may be submitted for review year-round.

For those Communities that wish to become LWCF eligible in a given grant year:

- **First Draft Due Date: November 15** of the year before you wish to receive eligibility to apply for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants. (6 months before the final draft due date.)
- **Final Draft Due Date: April 15** of the year you wish to receive eligibility to apply for LWCF grants. Please submit hard copies of the park board resolution adopting the plan, and the ABA/ADA/Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504 Accessibility Compliance form, both with original signatures either with your final plan draft submission or soon after IDNR review (and hopefully acceptance) of your plan.
- Early submissions of either draft or final draft plan templates are acceptable and encouraged. Late submissions will be treated as early submissions for the FOLLOWING grant year.

Once your plan is approved, your community will be eligible to apply for LWCF grants for five years. The LWCF eligibility “clock” starts on January 1 of the year following the year of IDNR review and acceptance (we credit you for the year in which the plan is under review). For example, a final plan, reviewed and accepted by IDNR on July 1, 2020, will expire on January 1, 2026.

This fill-in-the-blank 5-year parks and recreation master plan template was created in response to the expressed needs of the smallest communities in Indiana. Many of these communities operate their parks and recreation facilities with a great deal of enthusiasm and hard work, very small budgets, very few (if any) paid staff, and much community and volunteer support. The intent of this template is to encourage park planning by those communities that would otherwise not be able to afford the time, effort, and expense of creating a park plan.

Sample Plan Outline (IDNR Small Town FITB Plan Template):

- 1) **Community Information**
 - a) Community Name, Mailing Address, etc.
- 2) **Plan Author Information**

- a) Author's Name, Address, etc.
- 3) Park Board Information**
 - a) Park Board Statutory Compliance info
 - b) Park Board President's Name, Address, etc.
 - c) Park Board Vice President's Name, Address, etc.
 - d) Park Board Secretary's Name, Address, etc.
 - e) Park Board Member's Name, Address, etc.
 - f) Park Board Member's Name, Address, etc.
 - g) Park Board Ex-Officio Member's Name, Address, etc. (if this position exists)
- 4) Park Department Paid Staff (if these positions exist)**
 - a) Short Job Description, Name, Address, etc.
 - b) Short Job Description, Name, Address, etc.
 - c) Repeat as needed
- 5) Definition of Planning Area**
- 6) Natural Features and Landscape**
 - a) Natural Features
 - b) How they affect local parks
- 7) Man-Made, Historical and Cultural**
 - a) Man-Made, Historical and Cultural Features
 - b) How they affect local parks
- 8) Social and Economic Factors**
 - a) Demographics
 - b) Economics/Income
 - c) How they affect local parks
- 9) Park Department Information and Facility Inventory**
 - a) Name of Park, Address, No# of Acres, Amenities, etc.
 - b) Repeat (a) as needed to describe entire park system
 - c) Park Dept. Budget
 - i) This year, last year, the year before that
 - ii) Budget sources
 - iii) How budget is affecting parks
 - d) Other Non-Community-owned Park and Recreation Providers
 - i) List of other providers, especially those who cooperate or partner with Community's Park Dept.
- 10) Accessibility and Universal Design**
 - a) Current Park Amenities that are accessible
 - b) Current Park Amenities that are NOT accessible
 - c) Accessibility information for the public – Methods
 - d) Accessibility question/grievance contact person
 - e) ADA/ABA/Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504 Accessibility Compliance Sign-off sheet
- 11) Public Participation**
 - a) Public Meeting
 - i) Time, Date, Location, No# of members of the public present, Synopsis of Comments

- b) Survey or Group/Individual Interview Information
 - i) Time, Date, Location, # of surveys sent out, or # of interviews conducted, # of members of the public surveyed/interviewed, Synopsis of Comments

12)Needs Analysis

- a) Total Acres of local parks and recreation land
- b) Community's total population
- c) Top 5 most commonly expressed park and rec. needs and desires from public participation
- d) Top 5 most commonly expressed park and rec. needs and desires from park board and staff
- e) "Dream Amenity"
 - i) Name, short description, possible location
 - ii) Rough guess cost estimation
- f) Community Map showing location of parks

13)Priorities and Action Plan Schedule

- a) Top ten combined public and board expressed needs (In List form)
- b) Fill In Blank Action Plan Table

14)Final Public Presentation of the Plan

- a) Time, Date, Location, No# of members of the public present, Synopsis of Comments

15)Park Board Resolution adopting the Plan (hard copy with original signatures)

Glossary of Planning Terms:

- **Accessible** – Term used to describe facilities, programs, services, and/or activities that allow access and usability for people with all types of disabilities (not just wheelchair access). Also used to describe a site, building, facility, or portion of these amenities that complies with the minimum requirements of the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). [See ABA/ADA/Rehab. Act below]
- **Action Plan Schedule** – The portion of a master plan that takes the needs information from the needs analysis and turns it into priorities and schedules them into a list or table by date of potential completion.
- **Architectural Barriers Act / Americans with Disabilities Act / Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)** – These laws are the primary pieces of Federal legislation about accessibility. They extend access beyond architecture to include programs and employment. The ADA states that: "...no qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of services, programs, or activities of a public entity, or be subjected to discrimination by any such entity." These Acts require specific actions from local governments including a self-evaluation of all their policies, facilities, programs, and

services (including parks and recreation). IDNR has adopted the use of the accessibility compliance sign-off sheet that each park board applying for plan review and approval must read, understand, and sign as a legal document; to ensure local planner awareness of these laws. A copy of the ABA/ADA/Section 504 form and the guidelines are available for download from the IDNR planning website: <https://www.in.gov/dnr/state-parks/recreation/planning/park-planning-information-and-guidelines/> under the “Relevant Documents” pull-down menu in the center of the page.

- **Ex-Officio Board Member** – Voting member of a park board; appointed by the community’s library board or school board.
- **Final Public Presentation of the Plan** – This is where the public is provided one last chance to provide feedback and comment on the draft plan prior to its official adoption by the park board. This also allows planners to double-check the accuracy of their public input results, needs analysis, and priorities with the public. This is commonly done with either a final public meeting to review the plan draft, or with a public comment period where copies of the plan are placed in strategic locations around the community for a specified length of time and comments are accepted in multiple formats (such as in writing, by telephone to the park department/city clerk, and/or via the internet). A synopsis of all final comments is added to the final draft of the plan.
- **LWCF; Land and Water Conservation Fund** - a Federal parks and recreation grant program administered in Indiana by the IDNR Division of State Parks, Community Grants and Trails grant staff.
- **Master Plan** – A strategic planning document (projected out for the next five years), created by a community for a specific portion of their government structure, such as a park department. A 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan covers all portions of a park system, programs, services, and activities for an entire community.
- **Needs Analysis** – This is the portion of the park and recreation master plan where all the data collected up to that point (including the public participation, social and demographic data, park department information, etc.) is then analyzed to determine the most needed and publicly desired future park programs and facilities to develop over the next five years.
- **Park Board Resolution Adopting the Plan** – This is a document required by IDNR in hard copy with original signatures. This is the official legal document that the park board uses to “adopt” or accept the final draft of the plan as their strategic guide for the next five years.
- **Planning Area** – Generally, this is the area located within the jurisdictional boundaries (town or city limits) or taxing district of the park board or community government. Fringe areas should also be considered. These are service areas of your park system which lie just outside the jurisdictional area but contain users who live outside the community (and therefore don’t pay taxes to it). It is acceptable and encouraged for planners to consider and write in whatever applicable planning area boundaries apply to your unique

community. Consider what your 'real-life' service area is, not just where you draw your tax base from. EXAMPLE: "Anytown has a planning area that extends two miles in diameter from the Town's center and includes some rural residents who regularly use the Town's park and recreation facilities."

- **Poverty Level** - An income-based measurement of poverty as determined by one of two different Federal sources. There are two different Federal measurements of poverty; one under the Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS), and one under the U.S. Census. As an example, the 2022 HHS poverty guideline for a family of four is \$27,750 per year. The U.S. Census poverty threshold for the same family of four in 2021 is \$27,949. A family of four people living at or below that income level in 2021-2022 by either standard was considered 'living in poverty'.
- **Public Participation** – A give and take process where a community asks their citizens what they want from the future of their park system and also shares information about the current status of the park system in return. This process of public meetings and surveys or interviews is important as a means of gathering public input and determining public support for future park programs or projects. Public participation is also key to finding out what your users (and non-users) in your community like, don't like (and what they want to change) in your park system, programs and services. The opinions, needs, and desires expressed by the public are used as one of the vital components in the needs assessment portion of the parks and recreation master plan.
- **TIF; Tax Increment Financing** – A method of funding redevelopment in a community in Indiana (and elsewhere). In brief, TIF allows a government entity to use increased tax revenues created by redevelopment to pay for the capital improvements needed to redevelop a portion of the community. This is sometimes used to finance redevelopment of parks and recreation facilities.
- **Universal Design** – A design theory with seven principles. Accessibility is not the same thing as Universal Design. Universal Design is actually a different way of designing things so that they can be used by everyone. The difference between ADA compliance and Universal Design is minimal accessibility versus inclusion. ADA requires at least minimal accessibility, while Universal Design intends to make a facility appealing and usable to all people, regardless of ability or circumstances. Contact the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University for current literature describing universal design concepts and methods:

The Center for Universal Design

College of Design, North Carolina State University, Campus Box 8613

Raleigh, NC 27695-8613, Phone: 919-515-3082

Fax: 919-515-8951, Info Line: 800-647-6777

https://projects.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/about_ud/udprinciples.htm