



Town of Griffith, Indiana 5-year Park and Recreation Master Plan

2022-2026

**A Comprehensive Master Plan by the Griffith Park Board and the Griffith Parks
and Recreation Department**

Griffith Parks and Recreation

111 N. Broad St

Griffith, IN 46319

219-922-3078

griffithparks@griffith.in.gov

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Definition of the Planning Area

The planning area for the Town of Griffith Parks and Recreation Department (“GPRD”) will focus on municipal boundaries of the Town. With the enhancements to the parks and trail system, along with events and festivals, the town expects to retain current residents and businesses; and attract new residents and businesses to the area. Our downtown was below 60% occupancy less than 10 years ago and is 100% occupancy today. Adding a new park on the north end of town will help that sector attract residents and hopefully fill vacant business properties. Griffith just moved from Calumet Township to North Township that offers ride services that will only enhance the traffic to town businesses and activities. All of the parks’ primary users are within a 5-block radius of each park, with a few exceptions:

- The bike path attracts many neighboring towns as a result of the expanding connections along the bike path. Plans are in motion to repave the Trail; and reroute the trail between Broad St. and Main Street to expand space between business and the trail. This will allow those businesses to attract trail travelers to the back of their business. Potential for outdoor dining will be an opportunity to current and future business owners.
- South Park is home to Griffith Youth Soccer and Pop Warner Youth Football which brings competing teams and families from neighboring Northwest Indiana towns. New structures were constructed in the past 2 years. A storage facility for Pop Warner, and concession/pavilion for Soccer. South Park also has a soft surface ADA compliant playground, restrooms and pavilion for rentals.
- Central Park has many festivals and attractions drawing in visitors from outside of its boundaries. This park has a pavilion for rentals, restrooms; and the county’s largest handicap friendly playground.
- Griffith Youth Baseball hosts tournaments at Central Park. The past 5 years we have added a new storage facility with small pavilion, fixed and painted the fencing, refreshed concession stands and fixed drainage issue.
- Friday Central Market and Blues Festival are hosted at Central Park and draw visitors from around the region and as far away as Chicago.
- Griffith Girls Softball host tournaments attracting many outside visitors. New scoreboards were installed along with relocating field lighting poles outside of the fence line. The large lightpoles were once huge outfield obstacles and hazards.
- At Cheever Park, the new handball courts host tournaments drawing players from across the Midwest and as far away as New York, and the new pickleball courts have been said to be the best in the county attracting players from Illinois and neighboring counties. The softball field was recently upgraded in part from a grant from the Legacy Foundation and a second grant from Unilever, Inc. The north end of the park has restrooms and a pavilion for rent.
- Woodland park is adding a reading them Story Walk expecting visitors from neighboring towns.

Goals of the Plan

After many discussions, the GPRD and the Park Board have agreed on the following goals for the 5-Year Parks and Recreation Plan:

- Gather feedback and input from the citizens of Griffith and report those findings in an accurate manner. Collaborate with the Town Council, Imagine Griffith and the residents to ensure that common goals are achieved.
- Use national recreational standards, combined with a careful needs analysis to create new priorities and revise current priorities for parks and recreation in the town.

- Create a plan that is dynamic and provides pertinent, useful information and guidance for the next five years in Griffith.
- Present the plan and gain acceptance within the Griffith community.
- Submit the Master Plan to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources Division of Outdoor Recreation, adhering to the required timeframe.
- Receive approval from the IDNR for eligibility for application for Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant programs.
- Use this plan as a springboard to apply for all applicable grants.
- Create a recreation committee to address the needs for youth sports, expand participation and oversee potential new leagues with our new features, such as pickleball and handball.

The Park Board/Department

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Griffith Parks and Recreation Department is: “To provide a superior recreation and park experience to all members of the Griffith community, creating a better quality of life, access to the outdoors, and opportunity for play of all kinds for all ages and activities.”

Vision Statement

“Our beautiful, well-maintained parks and recreational facilities, children’s playgrounds, walkable bike trails and landscaped streets are decorated with seasonal and public art. These open spaces and public venues provide attractive platforms for a variety of popular outdoor festivals, markets, cultural events, youth sports, child’s play, and facilitated community programs, offering conversational and social opportunities for everyone that is a part of or visiting our neighborhood.”

The Park Board

The Park Board was first created in accordance to the requirements of Indiana Code 36-10-3. Griffith has a four bipartisan member Board that serves staggered four year terms; plus one member appointed by the Griffith School Board. The current Griffith Park Board is as follows:

Tim Diamond, President
Term End Date: 12/31/2022

Dan Perez, Vice President
Term End Date: 12/31/2025

Susan Hoese, Treasurer
Term End Date: 12/31/2024

Tony Terzarial, Secretary
Term End Date: 12/31/2023

John Volkmann, School Board Liaison

The Park Department

Park Office

Phone: 219-922-3078.

Website: <https://www.griffith.in.gov/parksrec>

Email: griffithparks@griffith.in.gov

Staff

Park Supervisor: Rich Powell

Hired: 2021

Other Positions

The Griffith Parks and Recreation Department also employs six (6) year-round part-time employees and approximately four (4) seasonal part-time employees each year.

Volunteers

Imagine Griffith is an organization comprised of volunteers with a wide range of abilities. This group initiates many volunteer filled activities including, but not limited to, neighborhood cleanup day consisting of approximately 200 volunteers who spend 4-6 hours spring cleaning the parks and walkways during mid-May.

Facility Inventory

Griffith has an inventory of eleven (11) parks and one (1) bike trail, ranging in size from ¼ acre to 15 acres (approximately 42.3 acres of total park land).

- **Central Park**

Central Park is centrally located in town on Broad and Pine Streets. The park is 15 acres in size and is very accessible. Central Park is the crown jewel of the Park System. The nature of the park is multi-use and is very family-oriented. A war memorial is located on the southeast corner of the park. A number of benches are located throughout the park. Some of the benches were purchased in memory of loved ones. Memorial bricks also line some of the park's walkways. A major construction project took place in 2002 which included the building of a new pavilion and the reshaping of land around the northeast corner for better drainage. The playground area in the southern section of the park was redone in 2016 with state-of-the-art ADA equipment and a soft pour-in-place surface. It is a major attraction for the community, including children with disabilities and special needs. Two sand volleyball courts lie on the northern section; and are transformed into an ice rink in the winter. Central bathroom facilities are located just west of the new park pavilion. The northwest and west central portions of the park are dedicated to three youth baseball fields. These fields include a little league field with basic dugouts and stands. The next field is also little league sized and is on the north central part of the park. It has lights and a combination concession stand, press box, newly remodeled storage building and a score keeper area. Bleachers are available for onlookers. These fields are maintained by the Griffith Little League. A third ball field is located on the northwest corner of the park. It is an adult sized field with lights, combination concession stand, press box and storage building. There are dugouts, and the field is entirely fenced in. In between the two little league fields is a tree memorial area. On the southwest corner of the site is an attractive landscaped area with more benches.

- **South Park**

South Park is located west of Broad Street, south of Avenue D, and is 8.4 acres in size. The north two-thirds of the site is owned by the Town and includes a paved parking lot, Pavilion, an ADA-compliant soft surface

playground, basketball courts, horseshoe pits and restrooms. The middle area is home to Griffith Pop Warner youth football, and the spacious south end is home to Griffith Youth Soccer. In 2019, a new storage building was installed for Pop Warner and a storage/concession/shelter was built for youth soccer.

- **Tot Park**

Tot Park is situated on 3.6 acres of land along the east side of Indiana Street from Miller to Lake Streets, adjacent to the Senior Center. The playground, shelter and basketball court are open to the public.

- **Cheever Park**

Cheever Park covers 6.7 acres. This park is adjacent to Wadsworth Elementary School, bordered by Pine St. on the north, the backyards of homes on Elm Street on the south, Elmer Street on the east, and Wadsworth Elementary School on the west. This park has four (4) newly refurbished handball courts that are now US Handball Association quality and host annual tournaments that attract players from around the country. The old worn tennis courts have been replaced with four (4) pickleball courts and a futsal court; both receiving a great deal of play in their inaugural year. A baseball field open to the public exists on the northwest corner of the property. The field was rehabbed in 2021 with help from Unilever funds and volunteer labor along with a grant from the Legacy Foundation. A pavilion is available for rental and the park has a public restroom facility and drinking fountains.

- **39th Street Park**

This quaint park covers .25 acres located at the intersection of Elmer and 39th Lane. It has recently upgraded playground equipment to serve nearby children.

- **Woodland Park**

The total acreage of this park is 4.6 acres. This park is bordered by Pine Street on the north, vacant property on the south, Heather Court on the west, and the backyards of homes on Rueth Drive on the east. A small parking lot is located on the north side of the park. A playground area is present on the property and has recently been upgraded with greatly-improved drainage and Expression swings donated by Griffith Tri Kappa.

- **Panther Park**

A 1/4 acre lot adjacent to the bike path just off of Columbia Avenue is a small patch of land that received donation funds from the Legacy Foundation and Griffith Rotary to construct an outdoor fitness park. The park now has four (4) exercise stations enhancing the fitness experience along the bike trail.

- **Franklin Fields**

A 2.75 acre lot has two (2) softball fields in the center of Town, Broad Street and Lake St., home to Girls Youth Softball Spring and fall leagues.

- **Franklin Playground**

A small fenced in playground adopted by the Parks Department when Franklin School in Griffith Boulevard closed. Parks will continue to maintain the playground until the property is sold.

- **Franklin Courts**

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A ¼ acre corner lot on Broad St. and Miller which consists of two fences on legendary basketball courts known throughout the Region as the “Griffith Courts”.

- **Fire Fighter’s Park**

A new ½ acre park on Indiana Street just north of Ridge Road adjacent to Fire Station 3, is the newest park built in 2018/2019. There are news articles that date back to 1972 regarding efforts to build a park in the north end of town. Matching funds from LWCF paved the way to build restrooms, a pavilion and sidewalks to accent the fire fighter themed playground that is ADA compliant with a soft pour-in-place surface.

- **Bike Trail**

The Erie Lackawanna Trail runs approximately two miles from 45th Street south to Colfax. This path provides a place for people to walk, bike, run and dog walk. New signage with welcome signs, mile markers, street name crossings and directional signs were installed in 2019/2020.

Current Programs

Griffith Parks and Recreation has turned over programs to other entities in Town. The Town now has a YMCA with an activity director and other staff to run youth and adult activities. The partnership between the YMCA and Griffith Parks is strong creating great outdoor activities in the parks such as Yoga in the Park.

The parks are also utilized for Town events, including Friday night Central Market, NWI Symphony, movies, Park Full of Art, Boy Scout Fall Harvest Festival and campout, and Oktoberfest. All of these events currently occur at Central Park due to it being the center point of Town with a high quality pavilion, restrooms and play area. The events are all great community togetherness events bringing awareness to park amenities and attraction to park use and pavilion rentals. The new pickleball courts have been labeled the best in the county. Every nice-weather morning players from throughout the county, neighboring counties and Illinois, come to play pickleball at Cheever Park. An app has been developed to help manage the overflow of players utilizing this once unused space.

The handball courts host two (2) tournaments a year with players coming from as far away as New York.

Budget

The Griffith Parks Department is issued an annual appropriation. Due to the budget amount, the GPD does a very good job of spending their budget very judiciously. Property tax caps have and will continue to have an effect on the budget. Donations are also received from individuals and organizations which help to service our local parks.

The Griffith Parks and Recreation Department appropriated budget for the past 5 years is listed below:

Year	Appropriated Budget
2017	\$276,166
2018	\$295,624
2019	\$306,747
2020	\$302,044
2021	\$335,543

Natural Features and Landscape

Geology/Soils

Griffith has soil variations in the surrounding areas of the town. The southwest section of town has nature preserves including wetland, prairie grasses and a butterfly preserve. The Northern tip of the town now has a large wetland area that was once a par 3 golf course. The south and west sections of town were once sand dunes before housing development grew in these areas. Soil has not been a big issue with park construction or maintenance. The bike trail has a couple areas that get saturated creating mowing challenges from time to time, however we intend to address this in the next 2 years when the trail is repaved. There are town owned properties that could potentially be park featured properties. There is a flood plain along Colfax near 43rd street that has no plans for housing, but could be ideal soil for a community garden with a pocket playground. There is also a plot of town owned land along broad street adjacent to the Cady Ditch that has potential for park activity.

Forest Resources

Griffith enjoys the presence of many different types of trees and with many of them being very mature trees, some parts of our parks benefit from the abundance of shade. Griffith Parks could benefit from the addition of young trees and shrub plantings. 2019/2020, NIPSCO cut down many trees along the bike trail due to the pipeline is now inspected by drone and no trees are allowed within 30 feet of the pipeline. A new plan is in the works to implement a pollination plan along the bike trail. NIPSCO is in favor of such a plan and is helping in the planning of the potential project. The pollination plan would add native plants to the 2 mile Griffith section of the Erie Lakawanna Trail. The Town would benefit from a Tree Commission to create a tree inventory and define and document our Tree Canopy. Members of Imagine Griffith may develop a subcommittee to address this need. The Master Gardeners and Parks continue to review areas to add new trees. NIRPC and other entities offer tree trees annually. Our biggest challenge is the high maintenance of adding too many trees at one time.

Water Resources

There are not many water resources in Griffith.

- The Cady Marsh Ditch runs east to west in the northern part of town. The Cady Marsh Ditch is a waterway that flows from east to west. The Cady Marsh Ditch helps in mitigating water from the north side of town. After a damaging flood in 2006, The Army Corp of Engineers has built an underground water mitigation tunnel that has its entrance in the ditch. Flood walls were built on each side of the ditch helping with the mitigation of water.
- Hoosier Prairie State Nature Preserve covers east and southeast of Griffith Town limits.
- The Calumet River borders the north side of Town.

Man-made, Historical and Cultural <refresh>

Transportation Links

Griffith sits in an area that consists of many major roadways. I-80/94 borders the Town on the north side. Cline Avenue runs north and south along the western edge of Town. Colfax borders the Town on the east side. Main Street is one of the most used roads that runs through the south side going east and west. The Griffith/Merrillville airport is a hub for private pilots and the Lake County Sheriff's Department. The airport is in the southeast side of Town. A newly developed Aviation Committee will look to expand use of the airport. Griffith joins North Township 1/1/22, thus now has access to a dial a ride program for township residents.

Industry in Griffith

Griffith remains a blue collar community made up of light to moderate size industry that continues to become more technical in nature as we attempt to attract more business to the community. With a small airport and industrial park, we continue to look for opportunities to attract a more highly technical and sophisticated business environment. Downtown Griffith has blossomed the past five years with the addition of eclectic businesses including an award-winning coffee shop, gourmet popcorn, pool hall, music store, micro breweries, deli, hair stylists and restaurants. A revitalized bowling alley and YMCA have made the downtown area an attractive place for residents and visitors. The revitalized downtown was rated 3rd best downtown in the NWI Times survey and featured in Crain's Business article, "How to Revitalize a Downtown". The Town council is focusing on the North end of town to attached new businesses to the many open properties. Restaurant Depot is the most recent large scale businesses added in 2021 to the North end of town.

Culture in Griffith

Arts

Griffith has been and continues to be a supporter of the artistic community. Every July and September the Park plays host to the Park Full of Art Festival and the Boy Scout annual Fall Harvest Festival. There is also a "Town Gardener" group as part of Imagine Griffith who create a new art theme each year and display the art throughout the Town. This same group plans flowers at park sign entrances and in 40 planters that border Broad Street.

Music

The Town of Griffith hosts many different types of musical acts throughout the year. Central Market is an event held every Friday May through September in Central Park. The event has crafters and food vendors line the walkway, and local craft beer and wine under the pavilion with musical bands for entertainment. The Town also hosts a four (4) day music festival, Rock and Rail, on the Labor Day weekend. Five blocks down Broad Street are blocked off for this major event. The BBQ Blues Fest around the July 4th weekend hosts popular blues bands, Symphony in the park fills Central Park the first Saturday of August, and Octoberfest closes out the festival season with German polka bands.

Historical Society

The Griffith Historical Society, founded in 1983, was empowered by a Griffith Town Council Resolution to preserve the history of the Town of Griffith. At that time, ownership and operation of the Depot Museum, saved from demolition two years earlier, was given to the Society by joint action of the Council and the Community Spirit Organization. In 1994, the Griffith Historical Society purchased the land adjacent to the Depot to create an Historical Park in tribute to Griffith's railroading past. The Griffith Historical Park was formally dedicated in May, 1995. The Park and Museum are open on Sundays, June through August, and for special tours.

Festivals

During the year the Town of Griffith hosts and event named Rock'N'Rails. This event features bands of many types of music as well as food and merchandise vendors. Octoberfest is held in Central Park consisting of food, beverage and music. Rockepelli has relocated their full day music event to Griffith's Central Park.

Social and Economic Factors

The recent census data does not match the experience within Griffith. Downtown business growth has moved from 60% occupancy to 100% occupancy. Homes are in high demand as they sell above asking price within

days of being on the market. Covid has created a wide range of work from home opportunities creating more traffic for local businesses during normal M-F work hours. Central and South park already have Public WiFi. Tot park will be added with new renovations; creating opportunity for more park use for the telecommuters.

(From the 2020 US Census)

Data gathered from: www.census.gov

Census 2000 Demographic Profile Highlights:

Population	
Population estimates, July 1, 2019, (V2019)	16,060
Population estimates base, April 1, 2010, (V2019)	16,919
Population, percent change - April 1, 2010 (estimates base) to July 1, 2019, (V2019)	-5.1%
Population, Census, April 1, 2020	16,528
Population, Census, April 1, 2010	16,893
Age and Sex	
Persons under 5 years, percent	7.5%
Persons under 18 years, percent	19.9%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	14.2%
Female persons, percent	48.5%
Race and Hispanic Origin	
White alone, percent	71.3%
Black or African American alone, percent(a)	15.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent(a)	0.1%
Asian alone, percent(a)	1.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent(a)	0.0%
Two or More Races, percent	4.0%
Hispanic or Latino, percent(b)	15.6%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	65.7%
Population Characteristics	
Veterans, 2015-2019	874
Foreign born persons, percent, 2015-2019	3.2%

Housing	
Housing units, July 1, 2019, (V2019)	X
Owner-occupied housing unit rate, 2015-2019	70.1%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units, 2015-2019	\$141,700
Median selected monthly owner costs -with a mortgage, 2015-2019	\$1,241
Median selected monthly owner costs -without a mortgage, 2015-2019	\$427
Median gross rent, 2015-2019	\$919
Building permits, 2020	X
Families & Living Arrangements	
Households, 2015-2019	6,630
Persons per household, 2015-2019	2.45
Living in same house 1 year ago, percent of persons age 1 year+, 2015-2019	86.0%
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years+, 2015-2019	8.2%
Computer and Internet Use	
Households with a computer, percent, 2015-2019	91.9%
Households with a broadband Internet subscription, percent, 2015-2019	87.4%
Education	
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2015-2019	95.2%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2015-2019	20.7%
Health	
With a disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2015-2019	8.3%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	6.1%
Economy	
In civilian labor force, total, percent of population age 16 years+, 2015-2019	68.4%
In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2015-2019	64.8%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2012 (\$1,000)(c)	21,212
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2012 (\$1,000)(c)	D
Total manufacturers shipments, 2012 (\$1,000)(c)	D
Total retail sales, 2012 (\$1,000)(c)	115,731
Total retail sales per capita, 2012(c)	\$6,919
Transportation	
Mean travel time to work (minutes), workers age 16 years+,	29.9

2015-2019	
Income & Poverty	
Median household income (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019	\$65,534
Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2019 dollars), 2015-2019	\$31,016
Persons in poverty, percent	7.0%
BUSINESSES	
Businesses	
Total employer establishments, 2019	X
Total employment, 2019	X
Total annual payroll, 2019 (\$1,000)	X
Total employment, percent change, 2018-2019	X
Total nonemployer establishments, 2018	X
All firms, 2012	1,383
Men-owned firms, 2012	760
Women-owned firms, 2012	451
Minority-owned firms, 2012	342
Nonminority-owned firms, 2012	998
Veteran-owned firms, 2012	82
Nonveteran-owned firms, 2012	1,194
GEOGRAPHY	
Geography	
Population per square mile, 2010	2,184.6
Land area in square miles, 2010	7.73
FIPS Code	1830042

Accessibility and Universal Design

Statement of Accessibility for Griffith Parks and Recreation

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), the Town of Griffith will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs, or activities.

Employment

The Town does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all federal and state law requirements.

Effective Communication

The Town will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in Town programs, services, and activities.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures

The Town will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all of its programs, services, and activities.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the Town, should contact the office of the program, service or activity coordinator as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the Town to take any action that would fundamentally alter the nature of its programs or services, or impose an undue financial or administrative burden.

Complaints that a program, service, or activity of the Town of Griffith is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to:

Steve McDermott
111 N. Broad St.
Griffith, IN 46319
219-924-7500

Current Accessibility

Griffith has accessible walkways, and picnic shelters. Sidewalks and walk ways have decayed over the years and are in need of repair/replacement.

New parks amenities, such as Central park playground, South Park Playground and Fire Fighters parks all have soft surface ADA compliance and equipment for those with disabilities. Fire Fighters also has parking with handicap van accessible parking. Broken sidewalks and walk ways have been repaired at Central Park.

Cheever pickleball courts are wheelchair accessible and have been a welcome addition to wheelchair players.

Proposed Accessibility

A recent 2021 bond issue will address sidewalk issues throughout the Town over the next three (3) years addressing ADA needs on 5' wide sidewalks and curb intersections.

Designs are in process for renovations to Tot park that will include ADA access to all features, including van accessible wheelchair parking. The features will be connected allowing for a smooth transitional path from one feature to the next.

Cheever park also has design plans to modify the walking path for ADA compliance and parking with handicap stall. Central Park is adding artistic fencing surrounding the park to enhance cosmetics and safety. Additional ADA friendly walkways are being added for wheelchairs and walkers to travel freely and safely to all areas of the park.

Enhancement to the parks will be publicized via Town newsletter, e newsletter, social media and website.

Public Participation

The Griffith Park Board recognizes our mission of service provision to this community. The best way for us to provide service to the community is to ask what their needs, opinions, and preferences are, and to apply that information to all of our future planning. For this Master Plan, we used various methods of public input:

Public Meeting

The Griffith Park Board holds meeting open to the public the 2nd Monday of every month. The Board provides updates on park-related activity, and Town residents have an opportunity to voice any concerns related to the parks or bike path. The meeting is open to the public to provide input on park improvements.

Neighborhood Spotlight (NS) was a grant program from the Legacy Foundation to build a Quality of Life plan for the enhancement of Lake County towns. NS had a strategic committee that started with interviews of 200-300 residents to create a SWOT analysis. This followed by creating four task forces to address a QOLP. Task forces of Parks Infrastructure; Communication; Business Development; and Marketing. The President of the Park Board is leading the Parks Infrastructure Task Force to ensure all initiatives are moving together in the same direction. This program ended, however the initiatives created in the QOLP were carried on by Imagine Griffith, a volunteer group focused on enhancing the town.

Imagine Griffith meets monthly and has a representative from the Park Board as a member of the group. This Board liaison provides Imagine Griffith Updates at each Park board meeting.

Park Assessment Survey

The Griffith Park Board created an electronic survey for distribution throughout the community. This method was accomplished by including the survey link in with the monthly water bills, e-newsletter, and Facebook. The survey contained 19 questions which covered current park(s) being utilized, how often parks are being utilized, types of activities, pavilion rentals, future spending, recommended types of improvements, ages of people using the parks, and how long those citizens have lived in Griffith. (Survey is attached at the end of this document). The survey was open July through September 2021 with 245 responses. See Attachment A for results and comments from the survey.

Needs Analysis

Since the Griffith Park Board is developing this Master Plan in-house, we are using a simplified issue analysis method of performing the required needs analysis. This analysis tallied results from both methods of public input (Survey/QOLP) and the Park Board to identify common themes from those methods, and condensed those themes into underlying action items. The action items were placed in a priority order based on financial and staffing constraints, then turned into a coherent priority and action plan. A third party planning and engineering firm will be engaged to help define costs and create Requests for Information (RFI) documents where necessary. The firm will focus on defining exact requirements and costs for each of the assessments items table below. For larger projects requiring contractors, the firm will create and distribute Request for Information (RFI) to ensure each project is properly quoted.

The Park Board also envisions a need for a sports/recreation board to oversee all youth sports leagues and potential for other recreation activities such as pickleball leagues/tournaments, handball events, coed sport leagues . If the goal is to dramatically enhance the facilities, we need to ensure consistent management of the leagues and facilities.

Staffing is also a concern as we expand the parks the maintenance increases. Staffing shortages may lead to outsourcing some tasks so parks are continually maintained at a high level.

Board Assessment

A special meeting of the Park Board in September of 2020 consisted of a site-to-site visit of each park to assess needs to enhance and optimize each property. The Planning and Engineering firm will help define scope and cost of the assessment needs enhancement list. The assessment is as follow:

Central Park	Woodlawn Park	Cheever Park	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portable Ice rink liner with boards in volleyball court • Drainage for volleyball courts • Repave memorial path • Install stage • Redo baseball fields and concession • Fence • Extend pavilion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft surface playground • Bathrooms • Drinking fountain • Story Walk • Repave lot • Little Library • Clear brush out of woods • Walking path through woods • Pavilion • Art work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint/replace softball fence • Repave walking path (widen a path to pavilion) • Repave dugouts • Replace pavilion with roof without crossbeams • Surveillance cameras • Drinking fountain near pickleball • Lighting for pickleball and handball • Repave sidewalk • Parking Lots • Lights • Move futsal 	
	Panther Park		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking fountain • Benches • Additional equipment • Apply soft surface 		
Tot Park	South Park	39th Ln Park	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft surface • Repave basketball court • Horseshoe pits • Pavilion power • Replace pavilion w/ larger space and restroom • New playground • Parking • Skate pad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove Horseshoe pit • Brick façade at pavilion to match other buildings in park • Expand camera system • Enhance/replace restrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New equipment • Green space 	
		New Parks/TBD	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad/Cady Ditch • 43rd/Wheeler • S. Arborgast/Erie Lakawana • Dog Park • Community Garden • Splash Pad 	
Fire Fighters Park	Bike Trail	Franklin Fields	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorial • Landscaping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking fountain • Parking lot paving • Trail paving • Bike fix stations • Pollination plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical upgrades • Lighting upgrades • Sidewalks • Concession building renovations 	

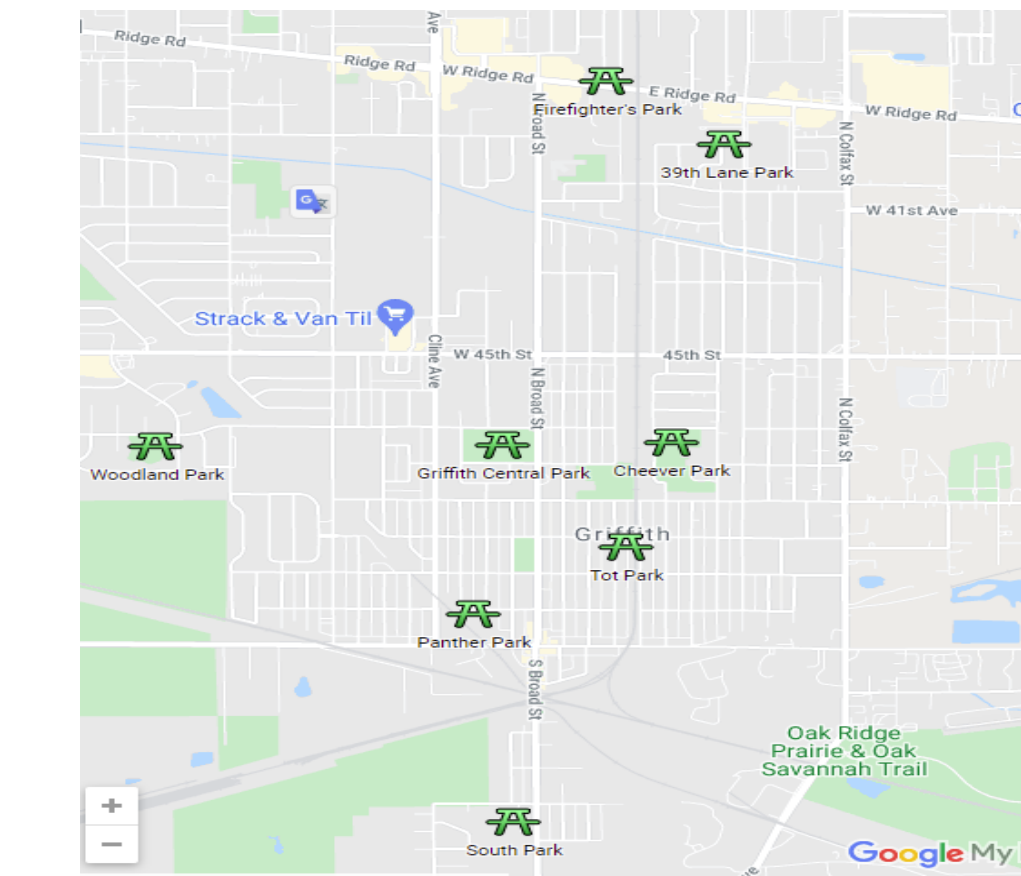
Public Survey

The 2021 Park Survey provided great feedback from the community. The demographics of the survey showed over half the participants have lived in Griffith for over 20 years. The majority were also 35 years or older. Key feature interest was splash pad, reading areas, walking paths, restrooms, and a skate park. The survey results were a close match and consistent with the Board assessment of each park. See attached survey summary for details.

Over 300 comments were included in the survey. Many complimenting the quality and activity in the parks; and others with wish items and areas of concern.

The results of the survey were presented at the December, 2021 Park Board Meeting.

[New/Existing Facilities Location Map](#)



[Priorities and Action Schedule](#)

Comparing the board park site visit assessment with the public survey we see common themes on needs and wants within our park system. Setting the priorities for the enhancement assessment list will be conducted by the Park Board. Priorities will be a balance of requests and grading from our survey, balanced with cost and level of maintenance. With limited staff, we look for enhancements that are high interest/need and low ongoing labor needs and operational maintenance cost. The Park Board has engaged with an engineering firm to build assessments and designs for all parks. The Park Board will execute in priority order.

[Transition into the New Plan](#)

During the transition into this plan, the Griffith Park Department will concentrate on developing solid designs for each area of enhancement, document budgetary costs for each, and develop a budget to maintain the enhancements. The parks department and board have completed a very successful 2016-2021 master plan. See attached (B) checklist of projects completed if the previous master plan.

Funding Foundation

- Municipal bonds
- Pavilion fees
- T-Mobile tower lease at Cheever Park
- Grants (DNR, Federal, State, Foundation, Non-profit, etc.)
- Legacy Foundation Grants
- Property maintenance
- Vacant properties who receive code violations are subject to lawn maintenance feeds at \$75/hr.

Fundraising will be critical; each of the action plan elements depends on having adequate available funds to create it. The residents of Griffith have provided input into what they want from the Parks and Recreation Department for the next 5 years; now it is time to figure out a way to pay for it. Most grants have some variety of 'match', which requires that the grant recipient provide a required percentage of the total cost of the grant funded project. As an example, the Land and Water Conservation Fund provides a 50% reimbursement of the costs of approved projects, which means that Griffith must raise or allocate in advance the needed funds for the projects we wish to build under this or any grant. With the bond issue, these grants are now obtainable. 50/50 grants combined with the bond funds will help us stretch the bond funds to make more improvements. The Legacy Foundation has been a great grant resource for smaller projects in the \$5,000-\$25,000 range.

Park enhancements will need to be reviewed carefully to ensure they don't take on too much operational cost. The town Tax levy for parks is limited and has little room to take on additional maintenance. Opportunities to spend capital dollars to eliminate operational expense will be favorable.

Public Presentation of Plan

The Master Plan will be presented at a Parks & Recreation Board meeting in March 2022 and be posted on the Town website for the duration of the plan. The presentation at the public forum of the Board meeting will consist of diagrams of each park with notes of proposed program and facility improvements. The Parks Board describes the physical enhancements as well as any programs being proposed for use of the enhanced facilities.

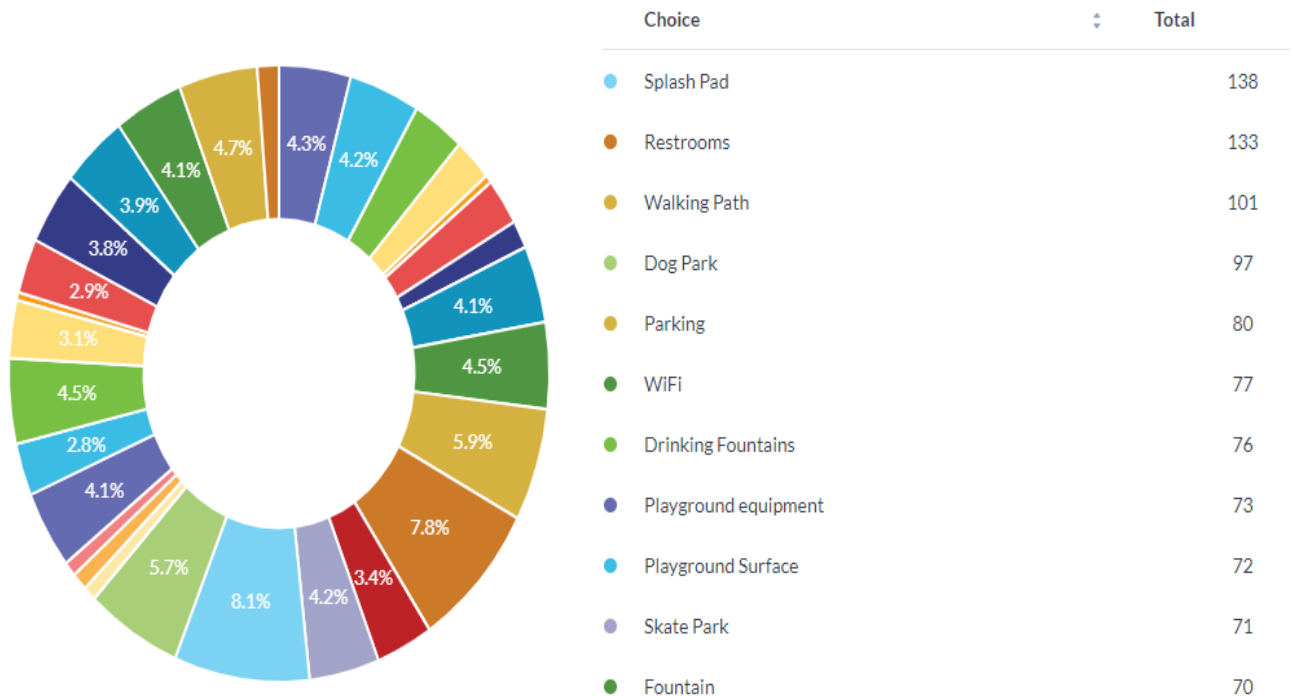
Board Resolution Adoption Plan

Board Resolution and Adoption executed 04/11/2022

Attachments

- (A) 2021 Park Survey results
- (B) Previous 5 year master plan assessment checklist.

Attachment A – 2021 Park Survey Top 10 Areas of Interest



Attachment B – Previous Master Plan Checklist

<p>Central Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Blacktop around ball fields ● Repair/replace ball field fences ● Drain tile at baseball fields. ● Volleyball drainage ● Drinking fountain repair ● Playground soft surface ● Additional benches ● Trash can replacements ● Water mister feature ● Babe Ruth Scoreboard repair/replacement ● Additional picnic tables ● Portable Ice rink liner with boards in volleyball court 	<p>Woodlawn Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Benches ● Soft surface Playground ● Bathrooms ● Drinking fountain ● Replace some playground equipment ● Frisbee golf ● Repave lot ● Fix Storm water drainage <hr/> <p>Panther Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mural on building wall ● Fitness Equipment ● Park Sign ● Picnic Table ● Remove large Cotton wood ● Drinking fountain ● Benches ● Additional equipment 	<p>Cheever park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paint/replace softball fence ● Repave walking path (widen a path to pavilion) ● Repave dugouts ● Replace pavilion with roof without crossbeams ● Remove kiddy park fence ● Repair handball wall ● Replace Tennis courts with Pickleball ● Repave handball court ● Replace tennis court fence ● Benches ● Skate Park ● Relocate playground
<p>Tot Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communication station ● New playground equipment ● Soft surface ● Repave basketball court ● Benches ● Horseshoe pits ● Pavilion Power 	<p>South Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pop warner lights ● Concession/storage/restroom/ building ● Playground lighting ● Benches 	<p>39th Ln Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Landscape sign ● Relocate equipment ● Bench ● Replace strap swings ● Stain table
<p>Firefighters Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Playground ● Parking spots ● Pavilion ● Restrooms ● Drinking Fountain ● Memorial 	<p>Bike Trail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Benches ● Trees ● Drinking fountain ● Parking lot paving ● Dog Park 	<p>Franklin Fields</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Irrigation System ● Electrical upgrades ● Lighting Upgrades ● Move Field lights outside of fence ● Replace Scoreboards