



COMMUNITY INPUT

1.1 OVERVIEW

In order to establish a better understanding of the current state of the Town's parks and recreational offerings and to help determine the needs and priorities for the future, the planning process will incorporate a variety of input from the community. The key avenues include:

1.1.1 SUBJECTIVE INPUT

- Series of stakeholder interviews and focus group discussions
- Two open public forums
- Staff feedback
- Online community survey
- Web-based feedback through www.envisionITparks.com

1.1.2 OBJECTIVE INPUT

- Statistically-valid survey

The report summarizes and highlights the key findings from the community input processes undertaken, which included multiple focus groups and an open public forum.

1.2 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

The consultant team conducted stakeholder focus groups and interviews in November 2017. Stakeholder focus groups and interviews provide a foundation for identifying department issues and key themes along with understanding key areas of relevance to be further explored through the statistically-valid community survey.

The consultant team developed a facilitation guide that included a series of questions that spurred conversation with a deeper dive through follow up questions as appropriate. Indian Trail staff identified the stakeholders and user groups that included local business owners/managers as well as town staff.

1.2.1 SUMMARY

After speaking with stakeholders and interest groups, it is clear that there is a lot of "ownership" for the Town of Indian Trail parks system. There are many organizations that collaborate to make the park system what it is today. It will be important for the parks and recreation master plan to identify all the existing and potential partnerships/collaborations and provide guidance as to a structure that will streamline the parks system's oversight.



As evidenced by on-site observations and personal communication, the Indian Trail park system provides high-quality recreation facilities to residents. One park in particular, Crooked Creek Park, is a community icon and is treated as a signature park. With a diverse mix of parks, it will be important to develop a strategy moving forward that will address underutilized spaces as well as undeveloped land,

acquired land, and potential donated land to ensure the equitable distribution of community amenities.



The following sections summarize the questions and answers from the interviews and focus group sessions. At the beginning of each discussion, participants were told that their individual responses would not be attributed to them specifically in order to allow for more freedom and comfort in providing constructive feedback. To that end, the responses from participants are listed in summary form. The most common or shared responses are listed first, and each list proceeds in descending order of frequency of answers.

Note: It is important to recognize that the input is a reflection of the responses provided by the attendees and not a consultant recommendation or a statement of fact. Thus, what one respondent might consider to be a strength might very well be an area for improvement for another.

1.2.2 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Strengths of the Town of Indian Trail Parks & Recreation System

1. Crooked Creek Park
2. Special events
3. Passionate staff
4. Parks

Opportunities for the Town of Indian Trail Parks & Recreation System

1. Increase the connectivity and walkability between parks
2. More nature/wilderness programs and amenities
3. New/unique special events
4. Increase youth engagement
5. Provide water access and offer water based programs
6. Indoor Recreation Facilities (e.g., Community Center, Nature Center)

Top Priorities pertaining to the Parks System

1. Create more awareness through community engagement
2. Provide more program offerings
3. Develop unused/undeveloped land
4. Community Recreation Center

1.2.3 FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEW SUMMARY OF RESPONSES BY QUESTION

WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS OF THE TOWN OF INDIAN TRAIL PARKS SYSTEM THAT WE NEED TO BUILD ON FOR THE PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN? WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT INDIAN TRAIL'S PARKS?

- Crooked Creek is a wonderful park and a great community asset
- We use Crooked Creek a lot
- Crooked Creek park used a lot for summer camp martial arts
 - Used to go to Town of Mathews earlier
- Love the concerts in the park (4x / year in 2017) and growing them in 2018 (7x / year in 2018) on Thursday nights
- Enjoy the parades in town as well
- Trunk or Treat Halloween event was great
- Passionate staff and very enthusiastic about what they do
- Staff is a great strength
- Maintenance and operations is well done and they do a great job managing the crowd and the kids
- Lots of activities to do and staff keeps adding new things every year
- Great increase in programming and variety of offerings
- Do a good job with the programming given the relative newness of the Department
- Programs target a very wide range of audiences
- Appreciate that they have started developing parks and trails
- Started to develop sports fields which is great - used to visit the sports fields in Matthews earlier
- Done a great job with building community and relationships by having the parks
- Variety of facilities and offerings
- Chestnut Square (tree house playground)
- Parks are unique and draw people in from other places because of that
- Communications between Sheriff's office and Town Parks and Rec. office has improved significantly
 - Staff has helped enhance relationships and communicated safety and security reasons proactively
- People feel safe and we have done a good job with signage etc. to encourage people to report safety issues



WHAT ARE SOME OPPORTUNITIES THAT INDIAN TRAIL SHOULD FOCUS ON MOVING FORWARD?

- Walkability is really important and would like neighborhoods to be connected by walking / biking
 - Don't want to have to get in a car to get to a park
- Squirrel Lake Park in Matthews has a great feel in the woods, connected to the Greenway etc. and would love to have a park like that in Indian Trail
- Make Indian Trail a destination
 - Biking and cycling could help make Indian Trail a destination
- Would like more trails and wilderness areas at Chestnut Square
- Hiking and biking opportunities - outdoor opportunities
- Nature Tours
- Specialty events similar to Matthews Alive or other unique special events
 - What types of events can Indian Trail be known for?
 - Ethnic Festival / Cultural Festival would be great similar to what was offered in Detroit during summers
 - International Festivals would be popular
 - Celebrating different cultures through food, music etc.
 - Could also combine with sporting events - e.g. Soccer Tournament around international festival
- Special Events - e.g. Yoga Day / Pet Parade etc. to help bring people together
 - More Multicultural Programs and Events
- Would love to see more Food Trucks at the parks and events
- Water based programming - fishing
- Greater opportunities for water access or water-based amenities even if they man-made
- Youth engagement
- Need more teen focused programs to keep them out of trouble
- Provide opportunities to train and hire teens to help with the various staffing needs in the Town / Department
- Need a downtown - forward thinking approach required
- Bring families and all demographics together
- Need a unique draw to bring people to town
- Lack of awareness about the system
 - Lot of people still don't know that Crooked Creek Park even exists
 - Would be nice to move more events to Crooked Creek to grow the community's exposure to it - e.g. Family Fun Day / Fireworks etc.
 - People go to Carolina Courts and ask to rent the Tennis Courts but don't realize that the Town owns them
- Need to create a dedicated volunteer base for events support and a good way to create / identify qualified volunteers
- Program times for school age children are during working hours and not convenient for users
- Department is understaffed with staff all wearing multiple hats and need some additional dedicated staffing e.g. Park Ranger
- Take care of what we have so far and build on what we do
- Improve Crooked Creek overall
 - Gates at Crooked Creek need to be manually opened and closed - still shows a farm gate from a user standpoint
 - Have a makeshift camera system due to cost savings measures during the design process
 - Trespassing issues require fencing etc. at Crooked Creek Park

- Need to communicate to Council the hazards of the old safety system



- People feel safe and we have done a good job with signage etc. to encourage people to report safety issues
 - Provide wayfinding signage throughout every park/facility
 - People post on Facebook etc. about suspicious issues versus calling in
 - Could look to expand into technology and use GPS locations / mile markers etc.
- Expand partnerships - with the Schools or the Library
- Communicate to Council the need to do the project right at the beginning versus retrofitting things
- Evaluate providing recreation program offerings through external providers e.g. YMCA etc. and the Town could focus on special events
- Balance the need to provide community offerings e.g. facilities with ensuring it doesn't attract trouble and cause public safety issues
- More therapeutic recreation programs and offerings
 - Miracle League Field and universally accessible playground at Crooked Creek Park is very helpful
- Explore photography opportunities (nature, wedding, sports etc.) to leverage the scenic beauty in Indian Trail
- Birthday parties at the parks
- Bocce Ball
- Homeschool P.E. Programs
- Become the Health and Wellness provider
- Larger zip line for adults too

WHAT IS YOUR ONE TOP PRIORITY THAT THE MASTER PLAN SHOULD ADDRESS?

- Creating more awareness about what we offer because if people don't know what you do then they won't show up
- Engage the community
- Provide more program offerings and then create more awareness
 - Safety and education based programming
- Need to develop unused land / spaces to provide opportunities for community use
 - e.g. Indian Trail Athletic Association
- Multiuse, multigenerational recreation facility - centralized recreation center with an indoor swimming pool / aquatic center etc.
- Nature Center -> field trip destination and educational type facility for kids
- Build a nature center in partnership with the Boy Scouts and offer opportunities for school kids to have recreation opportunities -> create a downtown area and move the Boy Scouts out of the Downtown area
- Tying the community together to create more walkable and bike riding areas
- Create a visual focal point / community gathering point / Downtown in Indian Trail
- More staffing
- Ensure there is organizational readiness before you start implementing the plan
- Educate people that if they need amenities there is a cost that is associated with it
- Cycling - road / BMX / mountain biking etc. opportunities
- Bring more dog lovers to Indian Trail
- Thunder dome

1.3 PUBLIC FORUM #1

In November 2017, the consultant team hosted an open public forum designed to further engage community residents. The intent of the public forum was to introduce the Master Planning process, share initial findings and provide residents an opportunity to offer feedback on the current system and their vision for the future. Approximately 20 participants, representing a variety of interests, were present at the public forum. Feedback was captured through ‘dot voting’ on communication boards, open-response flip-charts, and interaction with town staff and the planning team.

1.3.1 COMMUNICATION BOARDS

One key approach for soliciting feedback from attendees of the public forum was the use of communication boards for ‘dot voting’. A set of five dot stickers were provided at both stations, which allowed participants to vote on facilities and programs that are most important to their households. Each station featured a board for voting that offered a variety of suggestions with sample images for context, as well as the opportunity for write-in responses to be included in the voting. The following reveals the results for both areas of interest, including images of the actual voting boards used in the public forum, superimposed with results from the dot-voting exercise.



FACILITIES

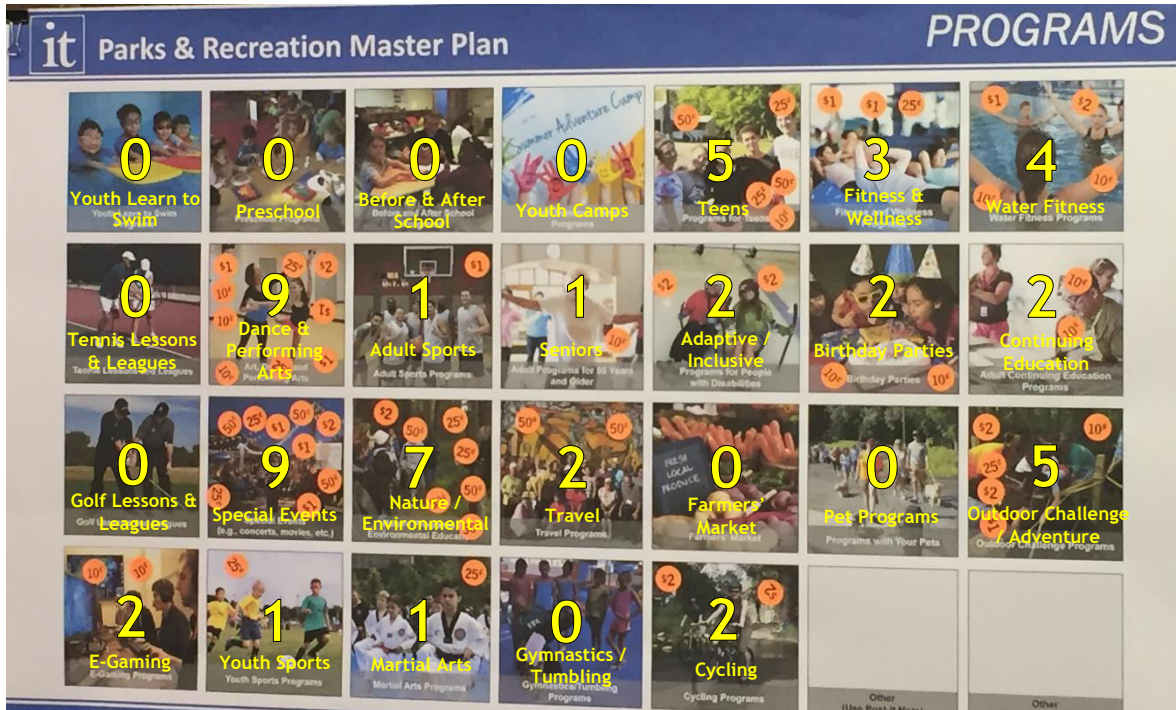
Public forum participants indicated the facilities most important to their households were: Art Center/Gallery Space (12), Walking, Biking, & Fitness Trails (9), Greenspace & Natural Areas (9), Community Owned Farm Space (9), and Community Parks (5).





PROGRAMS

Program areas receiving the most votes by attendees were: Dance & Performing Arts (9), Special Events (9), Nature/Environmental (7), Teens (5), Outdoor Challenge/Adventure (5).



1.3.2 OPEN-RESPONSE FLIP-CHARTS

Another method for collecting feedback from attendees was the use of flip charts. Residents were prompted with a topic (e.g., strengths of the Indian Trail Parks System) and asked to provide feedback. Below is a summary of those responses.

Strengths:

- Parks/Greenspace & family-friendly
- Diverse uses/affordable
- Operating Hours
- Special events are well-loved
- Attracts people to Town
- Open space and land acquisition
- Staff creativity in adding/engaging users
- Great athletic facilities
- Emphasis on accessibility

Opportunities:

- Connectivity and walkability
- Center hub for Indian Trail
- More youth activities - keep kids out of trouble
- Multi-generational, family-focused indoor and outdoor gathering spaces
- Outdoor performing arts space
- More natural areas, fishing ponds, bike trails, etc.
- Make IT a destination
- Connectivity and educational opportunities/history of I.T.
- Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality and educational aspects for kids
- Family-friendly brand, something for everyone
- Multi-cultural/Festivals
- Develop underdeveloped spaces owned by the Town
- More opportunities for artists
- Educational institutions and partnerships with parks and rec
- Activate “dead” spaces through arts

Top Priority:

- Mountain biking trails/hiking trails - escape rooms
- Connectivity
- Ways to engage kids with nature
- Build Miracle League Field and others as planned
- More musical events (Union County Symphony)
- Indoor and Outdoor family areas at Crooked Creek Park
- Multi-purpose gym
- Multi-cultural arts and events while retaining IT's history and heritage
- Outdoor pool/aquatics
- More access on West side of Indian Trail
- More opportunities for artists and gallery and parks
- Stay sports centric/Tennis center and clubhouse (revenue opportunities)
- Create something unique
- Washing stations near sand activities
- Arts in the community
- Multi-day event/Arts & sports and education
- Indoor recreation space and walkability
- Partnership and advocacy and community engagement
- Forward thinking and innovation
- Be more well-rounded in offerings
- Programming space

