

CRAWFORD PARK MASTER PLAN

Visioning for Future Improvements to Crawford Park



City of Mishawaka

April 2020





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PROJECT PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The City of Mishawaka (City) commissioned preparation of the Crawford Park Master Plan to fulfill their desire for long-term redevelopment of Crawford Park. The completed Master Plan evaluates current features and potential impacts to the Park, addresses the need for new facilities, and identifies both short-term and phased long-term capital improvements.

The master planning process evaluated the functional layout of the Park, connectivity of its uses, compatibility with adjacent land uses, vehicular and pedestrian accessibility, maintenance, and user safety and security. It also investigated how it could better adapt to meet current and future recreation programs and the demands of special events. The Crawford Park Connector Sewer project, which was being planned and engineered concurrently with the Master Plan, was also evaluated to address how its construction and continued maintenance could occur while minimizing potential impacts to existing key park facilities and resources.

The master planning process commenced with a visioning session with City representatives. From their input a list of desired improvements, and park features to be preserved, altered or removed was developed. This identified items such as relocation of the Park's restroom facility, relationship of the Park and its improvements to Shiojiri Gardens, evaluation of existing trees and vegetation, revegetation, and the Park's interface with Saint Joseph River including potential continuation of bank stabilization. The visioning session also addressed desired improvements to the Park's playground, sports courts, leisure and gathering areas, and development of new nature areas within the Park.



Existing Maintenance Drive/Pedestrian Access along River



Existing Mature Vegetation



Existing Riverwalk at North End of Park



Existing Lawn Open Space along Niles Avenue



Park Location Map



Existing Splash Pad and Picnic Area



Existing Basketball Courts



SITE INVENTORY / ANALYSIS

METHODOLOGY

A general Inventory / Analysis of the Project site was conducted. This included examination of existing park features and their general condition, and geophysical characteristics such as general soil characteristics, slopes and topography, trees and other vegetation, drainage and hydrology, including evidence of flooding and ground disturbance, visible utilities and infrastructure serving the Park, road and walkways, and potential new points of access, natural or ecological features, cultural resources, surrounding land uses and their relationship to the Project and key views and view sheds.

FINDINGS

General Soil Characteristics, Slopes and Topography, Drainage and Hydrology

Crawford Park is located east of downtown Mishawaka along the Saint Joseph River, which forms its west border. The 100-year flood elevation is at elevation 700. Average water elevation is assumed to be 693. Existing drainage within the majority of the park drains via overland flow to the St. Joseph River adjacent. The existing north parking lot is collected by storm sewer. Recent large flood events have impacted the riverbank as well as adjacent park improvements. Erosion has occurred at the bank and existing WPA walls have deteriorated.

The main soil type within the lower lying portions of the project site are Abscota loamy sand, 0 to 2 percent slopes, occasionally flooded. These areas face some limitations for construction due to flooding, depth to saturated zones, and frost action. The remainder of the site in more upland areas along Mishawaka Avenue and Niles Avenue are Urban land-Tyner complex soils which do not indicate any limitations.

Topography through much of the low lying areas is rather flat, with moderate slopes reaching towards Mishawaka and Niles Avenues.

The Crawford Park Sewer Project is underway and will address deficiencies within a portion of the City sewer system. The project will traverse the park and require city maintenance access.

Visible Utilities and Infrastructure

Overhead electrical lines feed park improvements and site lighting. Existing festival lighting and power south of the north parking lot are no longer utilized. An existing transformer is located near the splash pad. Splash pad controls are currently housed in a vault and are anticipated to be relocated. Sewer utilities run both north/south and east/west through the park. New sewer structures are being added as part of ongoing Sewer Project and existing facilities are being upgraded with lining.

Roads and Walkways, Points of Access

Vehicular access to the park currently occurs from Niles Avenue to the north parking lot and from Merrifield Avenue to the southwest parking lot. Maintenance vehicles utilize an asphalt access road connecting to the Riverwalk and the existing restroom building (to be demolished as part of Sewer Project). Potential new access points should consider alignment and spacing of adjacent intersections and driveways to provide adequate separation and sight lines.

Trees and Other Natural/Ecological Features

A variety of trees exist within the project site including mature groves of sycamores and catalpa along with ash, maples, evergreens, bald cyprus, and various ornamental trees providing seasonal interest. Condition of trees within the park vary. Trees impacted by the Sewer project and those immediately adjacent to that project area will be removed during that work. Park development should consider protection of mature, quality trees and a revegetation plan focused on appropriate species and diversity for areas impacted by construction.

Other natural features include the adjacent St. Joseph River which provides opportunity for recreation, habitat development, wildlife viewing and education. Access to the River is also provided in the adjacent Merrifield Park with a small boat launch and fishing pier.

Cultural Resources and Surrounding Land Uses

The Park is bordered on the north by Merrifield Avenue, Niles Avenue on the east and Homewood Avenue to the south. Shiojiri Garden is located at the southeast quadrant of the intersection of Niles and Mishawaka Avenues and is directly adjacent to the current active zone of Crawford Park. This cultural destination is utilized for botanical garden viewing and select small events and ceremonies.

Merrifield Park is a popular destination to the north of Mishawaka Avenue and provides compatible active uses such as fishing, picnicking, a swimming pool, and skating rink. It shares similar vegetation, riverine habitat and views, and character as Crawford Park.

The south edge of the Park is bordered by a residential alley (Homewood Avenue) and residences. The eastern edge of the Park is also bordered by single family residential on the east side of Niles Avenue.

Key Viewsheds

Crawford park holds large appeal due to the viewsheds of the adjacent St. Joseph River. The Mishawaka Avenue bridge, reconstructed within the last 10 years, provides architectural interest to the area.



Existing Native Vegetation



Terminus of Access Drive

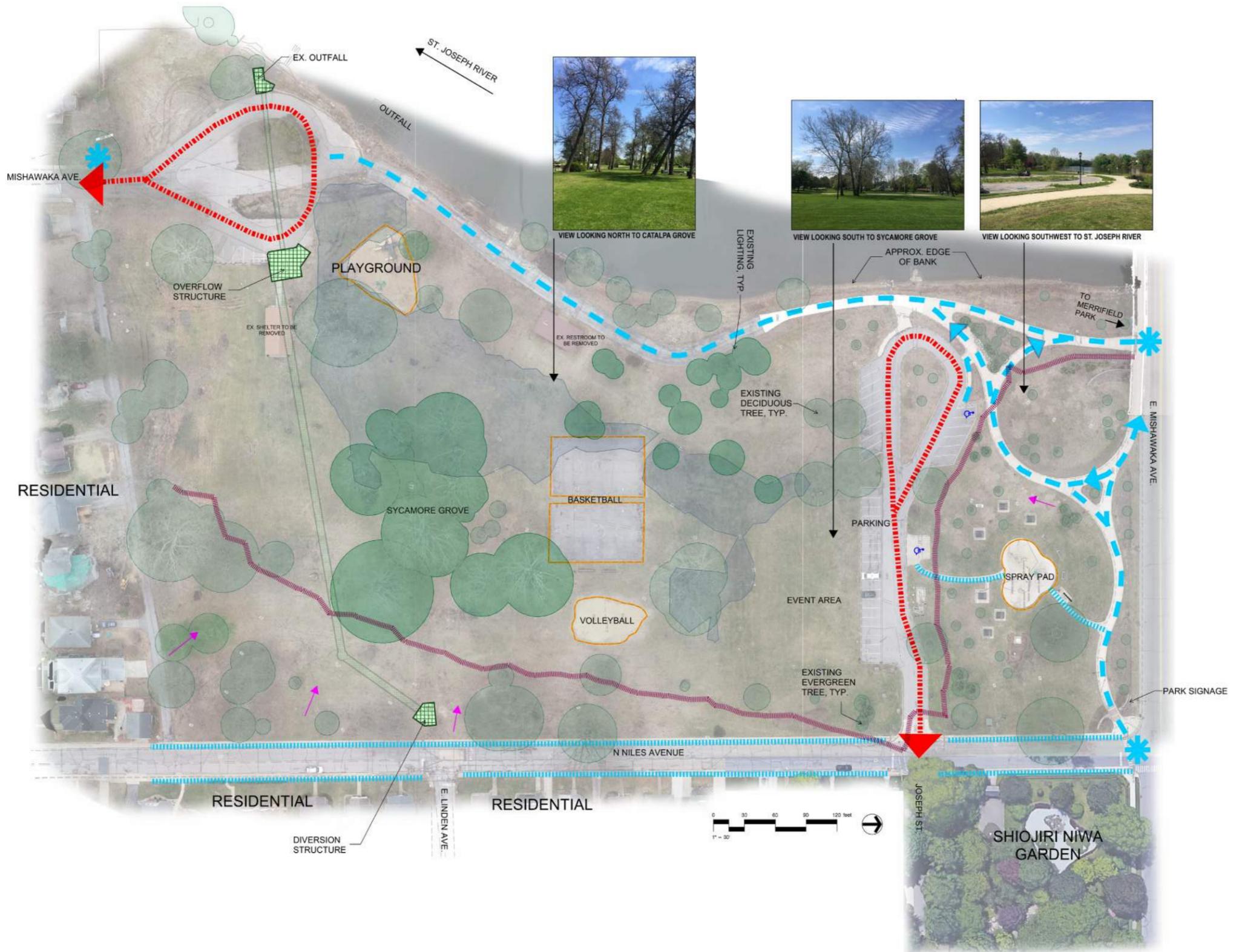


Existing Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Facilities



SITE INVENTORY / ANALYSIS

Legend	
	ACCESSIBLE PARKING
	ACTIVE USE AMENITY
	GENERAL DIRECTION OF OVERLAND FLOW
	PEDESTRIAN ENTRY
	100 YEAR FLOOD ELEVATION
	PRIMARY PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
	SECONDARY PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION
	SIGNIFICANT TREE
	UTILITY REQUIRING VEHICULAR ACCESS
	VEHICULAR CIRCULATION
	LOW ELEVATION AREA





PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN PROGRAMMING

The **Preliminary Master Plan** was a synthesis of the City’s initial program for park improvements and findings of the site inventory and analysis. The following were addressed on this plan:

IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL INAPPROPRIATE AND UNDESIRE USES

Uses were identified for removal due to age of improvements, condition, and/or level of use. These included sand volleyball, basketball courts, and the play structure at south end of park. Additionally, the existing (former) restroom facility, picnic pavilion, and select trees will be removed as part of the Connector Sewer Project.

DESIGNATION OF THREE GENERAL “USE ZONES” WITHIN THE PARK

ACTIVE Zone

The smaller area generally north of the drive now occupied by the existing Spray Pad will remain “active”.

- a. Locate a new restroom facility located in the northeast corner of the Park that will especially serve the active area and Shiojiri Niwa Garden.
 - Assume 2,450 SFT for restroom, storage and spray pad mechanicals.
 - Illustrate linkage among nearby use areas.
 - Address crossing at the intersection of Niles Avenue and the Park entrance drive.
 - Facility will be modeled from the new facility at Merrifield Park.
- b. Provide one new Picnic Pavilion.
 - Size to be 24 x 36 and configured to match new pavilions at Merrifield Park with an approximate capacity of 30-40, four-table arrangements.
 - Locate shelter to serve the active area, southeast of the bridge, which takes advantage of key views to the River.
- c. Provide a new smaller playground to serve the active area.
- d. Review potential for reconstruction of half-basketball court near active area.

PASSIVE Zone

The larger area of the Park located generally south of the entrance drive / parking lot will become “passive and educational” in use.

- a. Transform a portion of the passive area of the Park (south) into a new natural area and habitat.
 - Existing low areas may support a water garden feature.
 - Area to be educational in nature with interpretive features.
 - Define the area with a “Dark Sky” lighted perimeter walkway.

- b. New Multi-Purpose Building to house annual summer camp.
 - Preferred location is at the south end of the Park above the 100-year flood elevation (Elev. 700)
 - Per City direction, size of building to be approximately 10,000 SFT.
 - Provide 30-parking spaces with adjoining level turf area for overflow parking.
 - Provide convenient vehicular drop-off/pick-up.
- c. Provide at least one new Picnic Pavilion.
 - Size to be approximately 24 x 36.
 - This will serve the greater extent of the passive area and somewhat close to the Multi-Purpose Building.
- d. Play Structures:
 - Remove current play structure in the south end of the Park.
 - Evaluate alternatives for the old ice-skating area along the south border of the Park. Consider “natural playscape”.
- e. Coordinate the above with the Sewer Connector Project.

RIVERINE Zone

- a. Riverbank:
 - Desired to reclaim park land that was lost due to river erosion.
 - Extend IDNR-accepted bank protection feature along the entire interface with the River. Once established, this will help deter movement of geese into the park. Note a portion of this work will be completed as part of the Sewer Project.
 - Provide one or more new platforms for bank fishing.
- b. Riverwalk:
 - Extend new concrete Riverwalk to match existing width from current termination point southward to the south border of the Park.
 - Develop new monument sign similar to the north end of Merrifield Park.
 - Coordinate its alignment with the Sewer Connector Project.
 - Consider LED Dark Sky friendly lighting (minimize glare, light trespass, and sky glow) to replace old City standard fixtures along the river front and elsewhere. Spacing to meet or exceed current light levels. Fixtures should be in context with pedestrian scale.



PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN PROGRAMMING

PARK VEGETATION

- Protect and maintain large sycamore grove, catalpa grove, other key specimens and healthy acceptable tree species.
- Consider addition of select native trees along the bank to frame key views and provide habitat.
- Remove unhealthy, damaged or otherwise inappropriate species.
- Avoid large concealing shrubs and high maintenance plantings.
- Consider integrating more diverse tree species throughout the Park.
- Consider requirements for developing an arboretum as suggested by Mr. Crawford.
- Maintain or embellish key areas requiring vegetative buffers such as along Mishawaka Ave. and along Homewood Ave.

SITE FURNISHINGS

- Replace worn and damaged benches and trash receptacles affected by spray-pad over spray.
- Evaluate locations for additional bike racks throughout the park.

UTILITY ACCESS

- Four areas of utility access must be accommodated.
 - Sanitary facility at SW corner of park will remain. The existing outfall at this location is being removed as part of Sewer project. Vehicular access is required to manholes at concrete structure.
 - New outfall has been added slightly north of the existing outfall. Engineering requested this outfall be buffered with planting. Limited maintenance access is anticipated.
 - Upstream of the new outfall, a new large overflow structure will be approximately 6" above grade and requires at-grade vehicular access.
 - At the intersection of Niles and Linden, a new diversion structure will separate flow between existing sewer facility and a new pipe network, merging at the overflow structure. The diversion structure will be approximately 6" above grade and vehicular access is required for maintenance access.
- Other utility considerations include:
 - Removal of previous festival lighting and power.
 - Modifications for installation of new restroom building and spray pad control relocation.
 - New utility services for multi-purpose building.
 - Preservation of existing storm sewer facilities at north parking lot and bisecting the park site.



Existing Playground to be Removed



Existing Shelter to be Removed and Mature Trees



Bank Restoration Example at Merrifield Park



Current Bank Condition



Condition of Existing Splash Pad



Typical Roadway Condition on Niles Avenue



PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN

The Preliminary Master Plan was developed based on the City's initial criteria. It featured the Active Zone at the north end and extending just to the south of the existing parking and looped drive. A two-restroom comfort station is proposed between the existing spray pad and Shirojiri Garden to serve both uses. A new Picnic shelter is positioned in the northwest corner to take advantage of elevated and panoramic views of the bridge and river. New playground spaces are proposed south of the existing parking lot with fence for separation.

The Riverine Zone would extend the Riverwalk, provide restoration riverbank improvements, and fishing pier. Due to presence of outfalls, utilities, and parking proximity, kayak launching will remain only at existing Merrifield launch.

The remainder of the park comprises the Passive/Educational Zone. The unique sycamore and catalpa tree groves will be preserved, new picnic shelters added, and two water garden features developed with respect to the existing and future sewer networks within the park. A new multi-purpose building is proposed with elevated observation deck to host summer camps. Additional parking is provided at the south end of the park. City utility/maintenance vehicles require access via a 'controlled' looped drive configuration that would also serve as a pedestrian extension of the Riverwalk.

Following development of this preliminary plan, the Active Zone was further discussed in regards to program adjacencies, condition of existing amenities, amenities present at the adjacent Merrifield Park, and potential needs of the surrounding neighborhood.





REVISED PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN

The Revised Preliminary Master Plan addresses additional City input and modifies several key aspects of the plan. The current spray pad equipment is frequently used, but becoming outdated. By replacing the system, it provides an opportunity to provide greater flexibility and convenience to users by combining the playground and water play area, while incorporating the proposed nature theme of the park and providing unique play facilities.

The incorporation of a Neighborhood Lawn allows open space for adjacent residents and other park users to have flexible open space for gathering and recreation. A unique swing feature is incorporated at the central picnic shelter.

With the newly renovated facilities at Merrifield Park available for camps, the multi-use building was eliminated in favor of a large shelter with smaller parking lot.

Boardwalks traverse the two larger water garden features to encourage exploration of the park's unique features. A third water garden feature is shown at the southwest corner of the park in lieu of parking. Vehicular access from Merrifield Avenue is restricted to utility and maintenance vehicles only for improved safety and security.





REVISED PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN

The Revised Preliminary Master Plan includes redevelopment of the existing spray pad to incorporate both water play and playground elements within the Active area of the park.

This combined space features nature theme play equipment, interactive water play, and unique vantage points created by re-grading of the existing slope presenting opportunities for incorporation of a bank slide and a nest overlook. These character images are representative of the desired water play and playground elements.





PUBLIC INPUT MEETING



CITY OF MISHAWAKA

DAVID A. WOOD, MAYOR

MISHAWAKA PARKS AND RECREATION

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

To discuss proposed Crawford Park Master Plan

When: Wednesday October 28th, 2019 @ 6:30pm

Where: Castle Manor @ Merrifield Park

October 11th, 2019

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Mayor Wood and the City of Mishawaka Parks and Recreation Board cordially invites you to attend a neighborhood meeting to discuss potential improvements to Crawford Park. A brief presentation will be given at 6:30pm, but the primary intent is just to receive your input on a draft master improvement plan for the park that has been created by local design firm DLZ. Castle Manor will be open until 8:00pm, so feel free to arrive at any point based on your schedule. A draft of this concept plan has been attached for your review and use. This plan is also available on the City's website at www.mishawaka.in.gov. just click on the icon. Key components of the draft master plan include:

- Establishing a unique identity for the park unlike any other in the City. Thematically creating a "Nature Park" that would include man made constructed wetlands.
- Moves major park elements like play equipment out of the floodplain.
- Creates an active play area that would include nature themed equipment and a water element for smaller children in the area of the current splashpad. The playground will feature inclusive components for children of any ability.
- Establishes a neighborhood lawn area for open play and special events like a movie or concert.
- The design reflects the location of required combined sewer separation improvements that recently started construction.
- Build a new restroom building adjacent to the play area that would also be convenient for visitors to the Shiojiri Niwa Japanese Garden across the street.
- Build three new picnic shelters/pavilions to meet increased demand. One adjacent to the play area, one in the center of the park, and one adjacent to Niles Avenue. Provide a small off-street parking lot at Niles Avenue south of the intersection of Linden Avenue to better meet the parking requirements for the proposed activities.
- Adds multiple sidewalks and board walks in the park to improve handicapped accessibility to equipment/restrooms

Given the cost of improvements, implementation will likely occur in phases as funding is available. We appreciate your input! This plan is only a draft that we expect to change based on the input we receive. If you are not able to attend, but would like to provide input, please send written comments via mail or e-mail to:

Phil Blasko, Park Superintendent
City of Mishawaka, Park and Recreation Department
904 N. Main St.
Mishawaka, IN 46545
E-mail pblasko@mishawaka.in.gov

Battell Center • 904 North Main Street • Mishawaka IN • 46545
Mishawaka Parks and Recreation Phone: (574) 258-1664

The City held a public input meeting at Merrifield Park to obtain feedback from residents on the proposed improvements. The City presented preliminary plans and perspective graphics along with information on the current sewer project within the park.

Those present were generally supportive of improvements to the Park and had the following summarized suggestions and comments:

- Basketball is heavily used and would like to continue use in some form.
- Concerns relating to Niles Avenue include inadequate parking within park especially during weddings at Shiojiri and other events, on-street parking, blocking of travel lanes, and driver speed.
- Would prefer not to have parking lot at southeast corner of park for aesthetic reasons.
- Parking at southwest corner of park and other concealed areas have current safety and security concerns. Park Patrol has responded to deter in past. Security cameras were suggested.
- Would like to know how this project will address the current drainage issues in the park.
- Mosquitos are a concern. City provided a handout from Indiana Wetlands Conservation Plan regarding healthy wetlands, and discussed potential for park to become a healthier ecosystem with more native plants and less open lawn. Bat and martin houses were suggested as well.
- Safety of wetlands (rain/water garden) areas was discussed as well as concerns of long term success of these amenities, especially during drought.
- Residents would like to see case examples of success of these amenities in proximity to a residential area and in similar urban environment.
- Residents inquired about property valuation and impact on property taxes with park improvements.
- Splash pad is heavily used by small children and would like use to remain.
- Game board tables were suggested as additional amenity.

- Volleyball is utilized. Will this remain?
- Concerns were voiced over current open lawn space versus amount of proposed open space.
- Geese are an ongoing issue.
- Litter is a current concern. Suggestions included recycling and dog waste dispensers.
- Suggested volunteers may be able to help maintain banks and debris collection.
- Tree preservation is important to maintain the character of the park.
- Discussed location of restroom building, which is limited in potential location primarily due floodplain elevations.
- Mishawaka High School Garden Club members spoke in favor of project and would like to help with plant production and maintenance.
- Parks and Recreations noted potential for future educational programs related to nature and the new improvements.
- City indicated Park improvements will be funded with TIF dollars with any improvements to be phased, possibly starting in 2021.



FINAL MASTER PLAN

Following the Public Input Meeting, the City requested revisions to the plan. These revisions included addition of on-street parking to alleviate parking concerns, raised intersections at Joseph Street and Linden Avenue to address traffic speed concerns and enhance pedestrian safety, addition of new half-court basketball facilities, delineation of a future utility corridor, and elimination of the new parking lot and shelter at the south end of the park. The perspective graphics on the following pages reflect the final master plan concept.





BIRD'S EYE VIEW





NEIGHBORHOOD LAWN BIRD'S EYE VIEW





HALF-COURT BASKETBALL PERSPECTIVE





NEIGHBORHOOD LAWN PERSPECTIVE





NATURE PLAY PERSPECTIVE





NATURE PLAY PERSPECTIVE





FISHING PIER/RIVER OVERLOOK PERSPECTIVE





FISHING PIER/RIVER OVERLOOK PERSPECTIVE NIGHT VIEW





WATER GARDEN/BOARDWALK FEATURE PERSPECTIVE





PICNIC AREA PERSPECTIVE

