Thatcher Park Master Plan

INDY PARKS and Recreation

PAUL I. CRIPE, INC.

Master Plan Prepared For The City of Indianapolis
Prepared by Indy Parks and Recreation and Paul I. Cripe Inc.

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Introduction

Thatcher Park is a 21.9-acre park classified as a Community Park. Community Parks are designed to accommodate users of two or more neighborhoods (typically a 3-mile +/- radius). Community parks allow for group activities that are not feasible or desirable at the neighborhood parks level. They are developed to serve both active and passive recreation while preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. The facilities and activities typical of community parks are many, including, community centers, pools or aquatic centers, play courts and fields, passive recreation such as trails, picnic areas, natural areas like streams and woodlands, and parking facilities. It is important to remember that this is a partial listing and it should not inhibit creativity or innovation in the master planning process.

History

Thatcher Park was named for A. J. Thatcher in 1966. Thatcher had served as superintendent of the recreation division and was appointed director of parks by the mayor from 1956-1963. In the early 1970's the existing Thatcher Community Center, located at Grande Avenue and Cossell Road, was in the way of expanding needs of Allison Transmission. As a result efforts were made to relocate Thatcher Park nearby. In 1974, the award-wining A.J. Thatcher (Thatcher Family Center "TFC") building and park was opened on 21.9 acres at 4649 West Vermont Street. The new center offered sports fields, parking, a full gym, activity room, office space and a unique indoor deep, diving/instructional pool with large overhead doors that opened out onto a paved patio making it available year round.

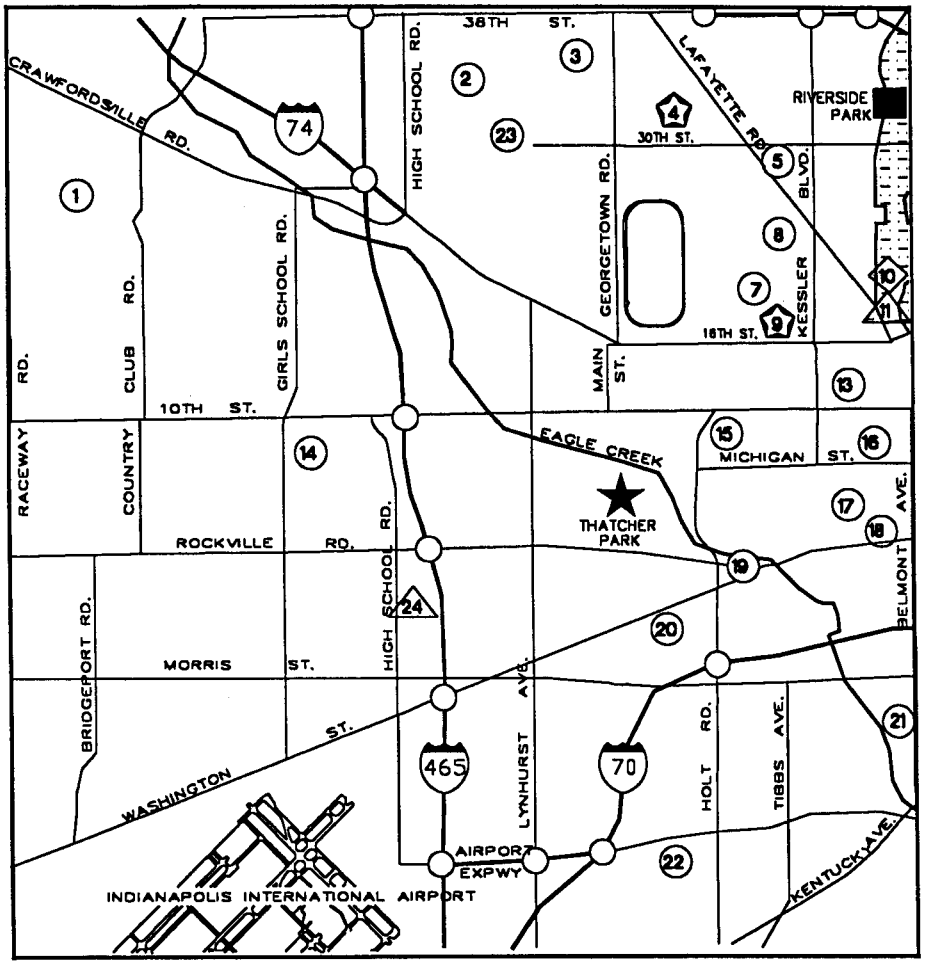
Programming has changed over the years at Thatcher. At various times there were Little League baseball, junior football, soccer and other outdoor activities. Indoor uses included classes, instructional courses, indoor sports and the swimming pool offering both open recreational time and exercise programs such as water aerobics and lifesaving. Scuba and kayak clubs have been the most recent users of the pool on a regular basis as rental customers. T.F.C. also hosted very active senior citizens programming including dances and pitch-in dinners, sewing circles and ceramics in the recent past.

At present, Thatcher Park is situated in the center of the Garden City Community. It has a community center with classroom space, basketball court, pool, and concession area, football field, accessible playground, 2 softball diamonds, 1 baseball diamond, and two shelters.

Master Plan Purpose

The goal of this plan is to provide for the future growth and development of Thatcher Park while responding to the needs of the primary users, Indy Parks, and the City of Indianapolis.

Recognizing the benefits of planning, the neighborhood and Indy Parks have developed this master plan as a guideline for future development of Thatcher Park. It is based on social and demographic research, physical characteristics of the park, public meetings, and planning policies of Indy Parks. This plan should be continuously monitored and updated to reflect the changing needs of those it is intended to serve.



WAYNE TOWNSHIP PARKS

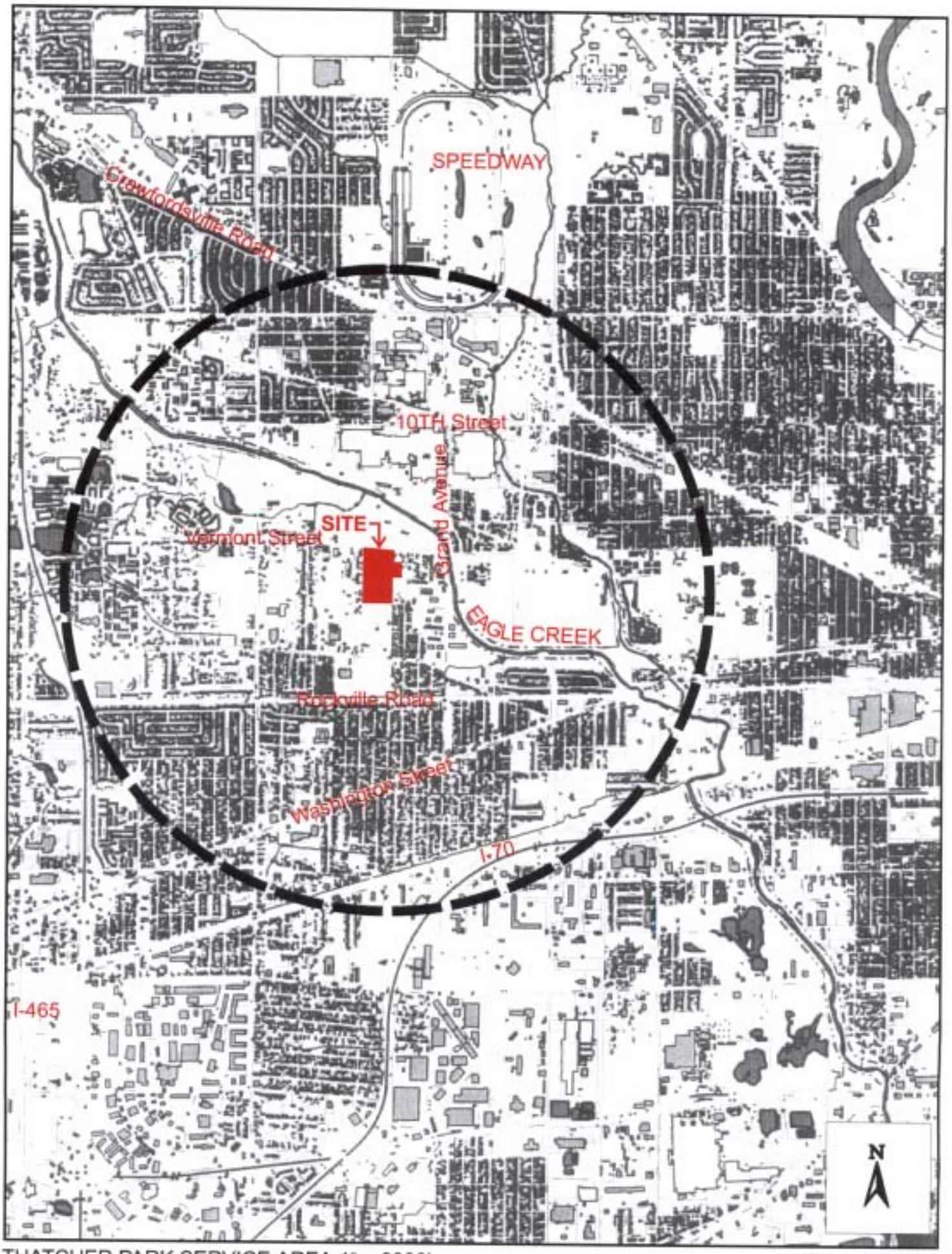
Legend

1. ROBEY PARK
2. FACULTY DRIVE PARK
3. BOWMAN PARK
4. PATRICIA PARK
5. MORELAND PARK
7. 21st & TIBBS PARK
8. CENTENNIAL & GROFF PARK
9. CENTENNIAL & 20th PARK
10. MEMORIAL GROVE
11. MUNICIPAL GARDENS
13. DENVER PARK
14. CHAPEL HILL PARK
15. OLIN PARK
16. HAUGHVILLE PARK
17. MAX BAHR PARK
18. HAWTHORNE PARK
19. RIDENOUR PARK
20. CHRISTINA OAKS PARK
21. ROSS-CLAYPOOL PARK
22. STOUT FIELD PARK
23. GUSTAFSON PARK
24. KRANNERT PARK

- THATCHER PARK
- REGIONAL PARK
- COMMUNITY PARK
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- MINI-PARK
- MONUMENT/ MEMORIAL

INDIANAPOLIS PARKS AND RECREATION – INDIANAPOLIS, MARION COUNTY, INDIANA DECEMBER 9, 1999

EXHIBIT 1



THATCHER PARK SERVICE AREA 1" = 3000'

EXHIBIT 2

SITE MAP 1" = 200'

EXHIBIT 3

Demographics

The demographic information for this report is useful in understanding the composition of potential users of Thatcher Park. It is important to understand that demographic research is part of the master plan process and should not be relied upon solely for dictating activities for the Master Plan of the park. A summary of the information follows and Table 1 illustrates a compilation of existing data.

Population

Overall population in the Thatcher Park service area has declined at a rate of –3.86% based on information from the 1980 and 1990 census data obtained from I.P.L.(see Table 1). This population trend is typical of inner city locations. Population decrease may indicate a decrease in demand for parks space and uses.

According to the 1990 census, the 40-49 year age group is the largest population group in the community. Once again, it is difficult to construct true meaning from these statistics, however, the largest group of potential users of Thatcher Park are between the ages of 30-60 years. There may be a need to focus recreational opportunities for this group in the future while maintaining uses for other ages.

TABLE 1

	1.00 Mile Radius	**3.00 Mile Radius**	**5.00 Mile Radius**
Population			
2003 Projection	7,091	84,824	195,963
1998 Estimate	7,313	87,305	197,688
1990 Census	7,443	89,371	195,248
1980 Census	7,843	92,964	196,601
Growth 1980 – 1990	-5.11%	-3.86%	-0.69%
1998 Estimated Population by Race	7,313	87,305	197,688
White	89.25%	79.59%	71,59%
Black	9.27%	18.19%	26.18%
Asian & Pacific Islander	071%	1.23%	1.38%
Hispanic	1.04%	1.65%	1.59%
Other Races	0.77%	0.99%	0.85%
Occupied Units	3,062	35,725	79,888
Owner Occupied	61.89%	55.09%	50.44%
Renter Occupied	38.11%	44.91%	49.65%
1990 Average Persons per HH	2.42	2.47	2.38
1998 Estimated Population by Sex	7,313	87,305	197,688

Male	48.25%	48.24%	48.35%
Female	51.75%	51.76^	51.65%
1998 Estimated Population by Age	7,313	87,305	197,688
Under 5 years	7.90%	7.98%	7.55%
5 to 9 years	7.58%	7.46%	7.18%
10 to 14 years	6.96%	6.94%	6.60%
15 to 17 years	3.94%	4.09%	3.92%
18 to 20 years	4.11%	3.95%	3.80%
21 to 24 years	4.98%	5.07%	5.61%
25 to 19 years	7.98%	8.40%	9.11%
30 to 34 years	8.46%	8.47%	8.72%
35 to 39 years	8.54%	8.36%	8.50%
40 to 49 years	14.49%	13.72%	14.05%
50 to 59 years	8.98%	8.73%	8.81%
60 to 64 years	3.34%	3.66%	3.61%
65 to 69 years	3.07%	3.62%	3.50%
70 to 74 years	3.10%	3.33%	3.20%
75+ years	6.57%	6.22%	5.84%
Median Age	33.88	33.61	33.57
Average Age	35.44	35.47	35.47
1998 Estimated Female Population by Age	3,784	45,192	102,096
Under 5 years	7.59%	7.58%	7.20%
5 to 9 years	7.17%	7.08%	6.85%
10 to 14 years	6.45%	6.48%	6.25%
15 to 17 years	3.85%	3.80%	3.77%
18 to 20 years	4.14%	3.96%	3.75%
21 to 24 years	4.80%	4.93%	5.51%
25 to 19 years	7.76%	8.00%	8.67%
30 to 34 years	8.23%	8.22%	8.44%
35 to 39 years	3.47%	8.21%	8.27%
40 to 49 years	13.76%	13.21%	13.59%
50 to 59 years	8.93%	9.03%	8.96%
60 to 64 years	3.36%	3.89%	3.82%
65 to 69 years	3.43%	3.85%	3.70%
70 to 74 years	3.54%	3.76%	3.61%
75+ years	8.53%	8.01%	7.59%
Female Median Age	35.00	34.97	34.74
Female Average Age	37.01	37.10	36.97

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Public input for this plan was conveyed through a variety of media and resources. The majority of public comments, however, were gathered through two public workshops. The end result of the first workshop was a list of issues detailing potential opportunities and constraints as well as recommendations for future growth of Thatcher Park. (see the following lists) The second workshop produced a conceptual master plan for community input and consensus building. Below is a bullet point listing of key concerns of the Thatcher Park community.

Thatcher Park Strengths:

- **Location in relation to users**
- **Room for expansion**
- **Strong community involvement/Neighborhood support**
- **Basketball Court(Gym)/Basketball League**
- **Pool**
- **Not overdeveloped**
- **Golf and Softball association**

To summarize the strengths, the community felt good about the location of Thatcher Park in relation to its users. The park is centrally located and has opportunities for expanding the community center and other outdoor amenities. When asked to describe the best characteristics of Thatcher Park the community asserted that "we like the park (Thatcher Park) because it is serene". The community further praised the park for not being "overdeveloped".

Many respondents were positive about the basketball court and associated leagues and felt there was adequate room for spectators. The community also was positive about the range and variety of activities which are available to park users. Activities receiving support were football, golf, rugby, basketball, softball, swimming pool, and little league baseball.

With community input noted, the master plan provides an appropriate mix of passive and active recreation for all ages and interest groups in the community.

Thatcher Park Weaknesses:

- **Limited bus service**
- **Lack of sidewalks for children**
- **Indoor space is limited/ more space is required**
- **Building is not aesthetically pleasing**
- **Existing indoor meeting room space is not flexible for potential uses**
- **Kitchen is inadequate**
- **Inability to serve non profit groups**

To summarize, the community stated that Thatcher Park would enhance its park service through increased pedestrian links between Thatcher and the surrounding residential areas, schools, and greenways. The deficient or nonexistent pedestrian connections of Thatcher Park to the local schools, greenways, golf course, and Eagle Creek were identified as critical areas needing attention. It is important to note that these off-site issues are critical to the internal growth and operation of Thatcher Park and should be considered as part of a broader planning scope.

Concern for the community center's ability to adequately serve group functions was also expressed. It was the general consensus that the existing center requires more office space, meeting rooms, and kitchen space for non-profit organizations to function. Final planning should meet the needs of the users through total number of rooms and square footage adjustment. In addition to proposed expansion, there is need for functional redesign to incorporate a central concession area in the Community Center.

As far as appearance of the park, opinions varied in range. Most opinions asserted that Thatcher Park represented what they believed a park should look like. However, they also felt that Thatcher Park could use some aesthetic enhancements throughout the park, at the entrance, and at the front door of the community center.

Existing Conditions

(See Existing Conditions Exhibit 4)

Community Center:
The community center is an approximately 23,237-sq/ft building located near the center of the site. The building contains a pool, classroom space, and basketball court. The exterior of the building is functional but there is some desire for visual improvements to the building and landscape.

Parking/Drive:
Access to the community center and parking areas is from Vermont Street. The asphalt is cracked and in poor condition with standing water in many areas.

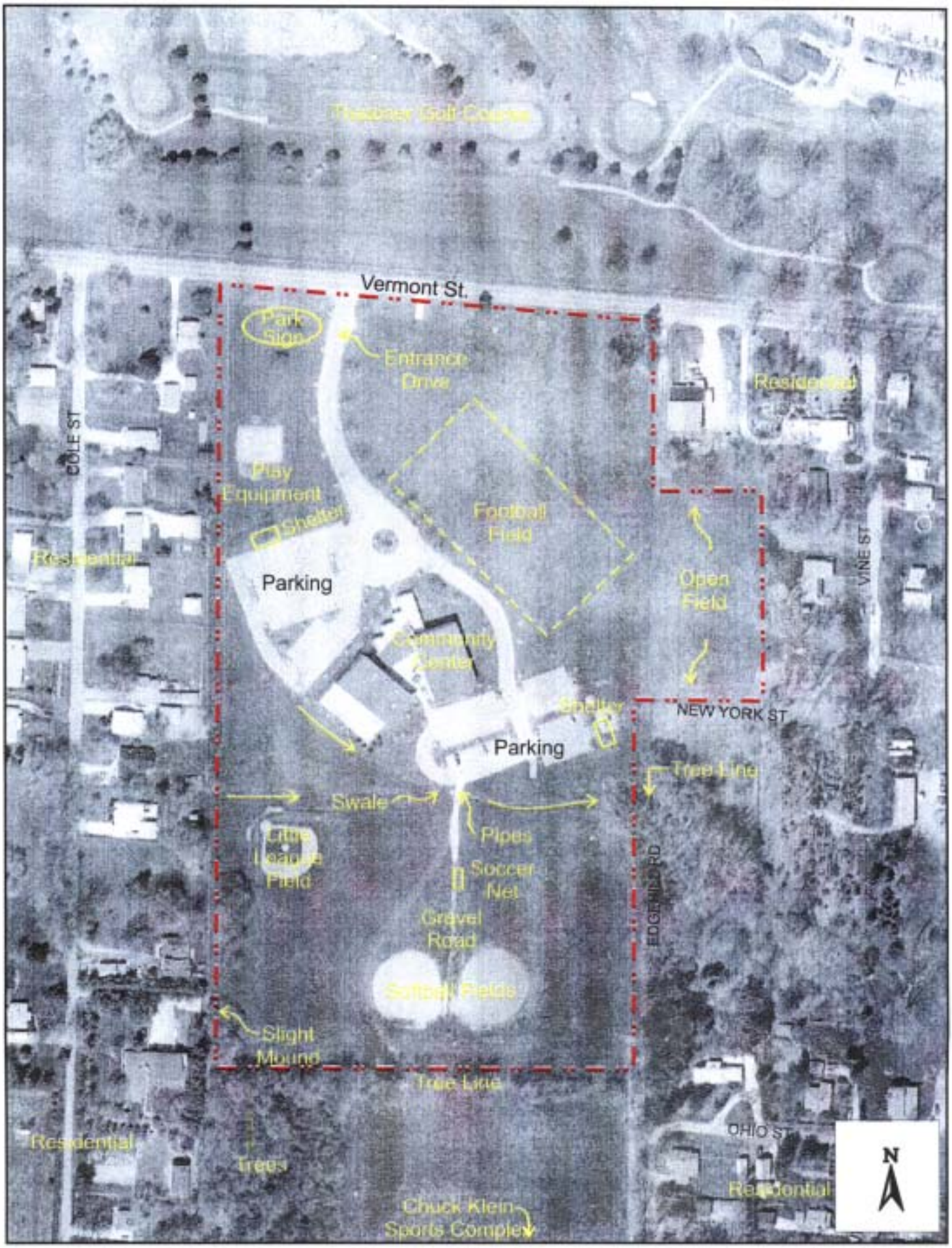
Accessible Playground:
The accessible playground was built in 1998. It is metal with three fiberglass slides. It also incorporates swings and climbing structures.

2 Softball Fields /1 Baseball:
Three softball fields exist on the southern portion of the site. They each have backstop fences and some fencing along the dugout areas, but outfield fencing is absent. There is minimal light around the ball fields.

2 Shelters:
Two new shelters exist on site at the time this document was written. One was built in 1998 and the other in 1999. The shelters are built of metal poles, support structures and roofing. They are designed to discourage birds from nesting in the shelter. One shelter is located near the playground north and west of the parking area. The second shelter is located south and east of the rear parking area for the community center.

Multi-use Field/ Soccer Field/ Rugby Field:
A football field exists near the north and east part of the site. The field is intended for competition play and can easily be used as a competition soccer field. A soccer practice net and partial field exists in the softball field at the south and east quarter of the site.

General Site Description:
Open turf areas generally characterize the site. Honeylocust trees line the entrance drive, and the building is surrounded by plantings. A tree line exists along the south site property line, and there is a stand of trees in the southwest corner. Some trees exist along the east and west property lines. A swale runs east and west across the site with two corrugated metal pipes carrying the drainage underneath a gravel service road south of the community center parking.



EXISTING CONDITIONS MAP 1" = 200'

EXHIBIT 4

MASTER PLAN

What is Master Planning?

Master Planning is the beginning of a detailed and rewarding design process that will lead your community into the final phases of construction. In order to understand how your plan will become reality it is important to understand the complexities of the planning process. Master Planning may be defined as *"The in-depth study and analysis of both regional and local/site specific factors impacting the evolution of a design process intended to accomplish pre-determined program needs of all facility users as they relate to the development of the program goal".* To summarize, it is a process involving many agencies where information is gathered and synthesized into a desired product to meet the program goals.

Thatcher Park's master planning was an example of this design process. Background information was gathered to increase our knowledge of the park and its surroundings. Examples of background information gathered were topography, zoning, utilities, structures, interviews, and direct observation. These data compiled provided a general description and understanding of the site conditions. The second step was to analyze the information and look for opportunities and constraints. The community created a list of potential program options during the analysis phase of this project. We then moved forward to complete the master plan through idea synthesis, constructive feedback, evaluation and continued brainstorming. The end result is this master plan which responds to the needs of Thatcher Park, the surrounding community, Indy Parks, the city of Indianapolis, and the site opportunities and constraints.

What is the next step?

The following master plan is a comprehensive set of goals based on research, community, interaction, and the current development standards of Indy Parks and the City of Indianapolis. The plan may be best described as a collection of individual projects. Some of these individual projects could require further site investigation to determine development feasibility, scope of work, and additional constraints. In keeping with the goal of this plan it may become apparent that some of the elements listed in the following pages have a greater development priority than others. It also should be noted that many agencies would be involved in the continuing evolution of Thatcher Park. For each piece of this plan to be successful it first must meet administrative approval from those governing parks and recreation activities. It must also be feasible in terms of site constraints and availability of funds. For this reason, the proposed time lines of each master plan element are subject to change.

Some elements of this plan are currently provided, (see existing conditions plan), whereas others are proposed as future development (See master plan exhibit 4).

Master Plan Elements

Pedestrian Links:
4,900 linear feet of pedestrian trails are proposed to connect uses within Thatcher Park to the larger Indianapolis Greenway's network and surrounding community. A two-phase 8' wide trail is proposed as internal circulation for the park (see phase I, II cost estimates below). The loop should circle the park in a curvilinear pattern near the property line boundaries. It may provide opportunities for further connections to city sidewalks at both the northwest and northeast corners of the site. A third connection is proposed at the south and east corner of the site near Edgehill Road. Internally the trail should connect existing and proposed park uses to enhance function and variety of space. This trail network will connect the surrounding community greenways such as Thatcher Golf Course, Eagle Creek Park Greenway, and nearby schools to Thatcher Park.

Proposed time for completing Phase I trail: *1-2 years*
Proposed time for completing Phase II trail: *3-5 years.*

Phase I Gravel Trail Estimate: 1200 tons of gravel@ $15.00 per ton =$18,000
Phase II Asphalt Estimate: 4800 sq/yds @$5 per sq/yd=$24,000

Community Vegetable Garden:
A 60' x 35' community vegetable garden should be laid out south of the parking lot and south of the drainage swale. It is proposed that the community and Thatcher Park create a strategy for maintaining the garden. One idea is to assign plots to those interested in gardening so that they may care for and maintain their individual areas. To that end, a water spigot is proposed adjacent to and for use at the garden if the need for it is verified.

Proposed time for establishing the community garden: *1-2 years*

Vegetation and Plant Buffers:
Plant buffering and screening is proposed along the west and east property lines. Buffering will add to the attractiveness of the park while creating a sense of enclosure for park users. Appropriate plant material should be selected for screening. It is proposed that evergreen trees, evergreen shrubs, and densely branched deciduous trees be planted. Additional plantings are proposed along the park trail to create passive spaces and to frame or enhance views.

Proposed time to complete plantings: *8-10 years*

Comprehensive Landscape Plant Material Only Estimate: $200,000

Community Center:
It is proposed that the community center front facade be improved to create a permanent "front door" appearance and to add space to recreational facilities. A courtyard space with seating, landscaping, and gathering areas is proposed to create a visible front door for the community center and to enhance visibility from the street. When funding is in place, the community center could be expanded to accommodate a second basketball court, weight room, kitchen and classroom spaces. A detail study and renovation plan of the building will need to be completed to evaluate the development potentials and associated costs.

Proposed time for completing Landscape: *1-2 years*
Proposed time to install pavers: *5-8 years*

Front Entrance Landscape Plants Estimate: $6,000
Front Entrance Paver Estimate 2,000 sq ft: $12,000

Water Feature:
A water feature is proposed to promote recreational opportunities and interest as well as to add an aesthetic appeal. The water feature may be a spray jet element in a shallow "sitting pool" for creative play or may be a passive fountain for the garden. If a passive garden fountain is selected, it should be located near the front entrance of the community center as part of the courtyard.

Proposed time to complete the water feature: *2-3 years*

Water Feature Estimate: $16,000-$25,000

Pool:
Space is proposed in this master plan so that an outdoor-aquatic center may be added to the south side of the community center where funding is available. The space is adjacent to the existing concrete slab south of the community center and would accommodate approximately 3,500 s.f. of zero depth pool space.

Proposed time for completing the aquatic center: *9-10 years.*

Outdoor Aquatic Center Estimate: $385,000

Wetlands:
A wetland planting area is proposed near the existing drainage swale, south of the community center. It is sited to function with existing topographic features and to provide an educational outdoor classroom experience. The wetland area should not retain standing water and it should consist of plants typical of low lying wet soil areas. The proposed plants should be a combination of trees and smaller plants. The proposed park trail should create a circulation pattern that allows visible access to all of the plant material without interfering with movement of those passing through the site.

Proposed time of completion 3-5 years.

Wetlands Plant Material Estimate: $10,000

Parking Lot:
The parking lot should be improved to create positive drainage in areas where standing water is damaging the asphalt surface. Additional proposed improvements are milling and resurfacing the drive and parking areas. Parking and drive lanes are critical to park appearance and user comfort. Lighting should be installed to promote comfort and visibility. Landscape improvements should be located to enhance visibility and screen unwanted views.

Proposed time of completion 1-2 years.

Milling and Surfacing Estimate:	9,600 sq/yds@ $5.00 sq/yd= $48,000
Drainage Improvements:	$20,000
Lighting Improvements:	$10,000

Outdoor Senior Activities Area:
A proposed outdoor senior activity area is proposed in the yard adjacent to the community center north and east of the building. The space may include activities such as shuffleboard, outdoor checkerboard tables, boccie courts, croquet, horseshoes, or any other such creative space.

Proposed time to complete the senior amenities space 1-2 years.

Senior Amenities Space Estimate $15,000

Signs:
Signs are proposed for the park entrance and appropriate pedestrian entrance links.

It is proposed that signs should be installed after completion of the park trail. Proposed time 1-2 years.

Signs Estimate: $2,000

Garden:
A garden is proposed along the southwest corner of the site next to the park trail. This space will provide an opportunity for community members to volunteer by maintaining the garden. Proposed plant material for this garden includes annuals, perennials, small shrubs and grasses and a few ornamental trees. The garden may include a water feature in the form of small fountain or stream. It also may include benches or similar seating areas along its borders.

Proposed time of completing the Garden: 5-7 years.

Garden Estimate: $12,000

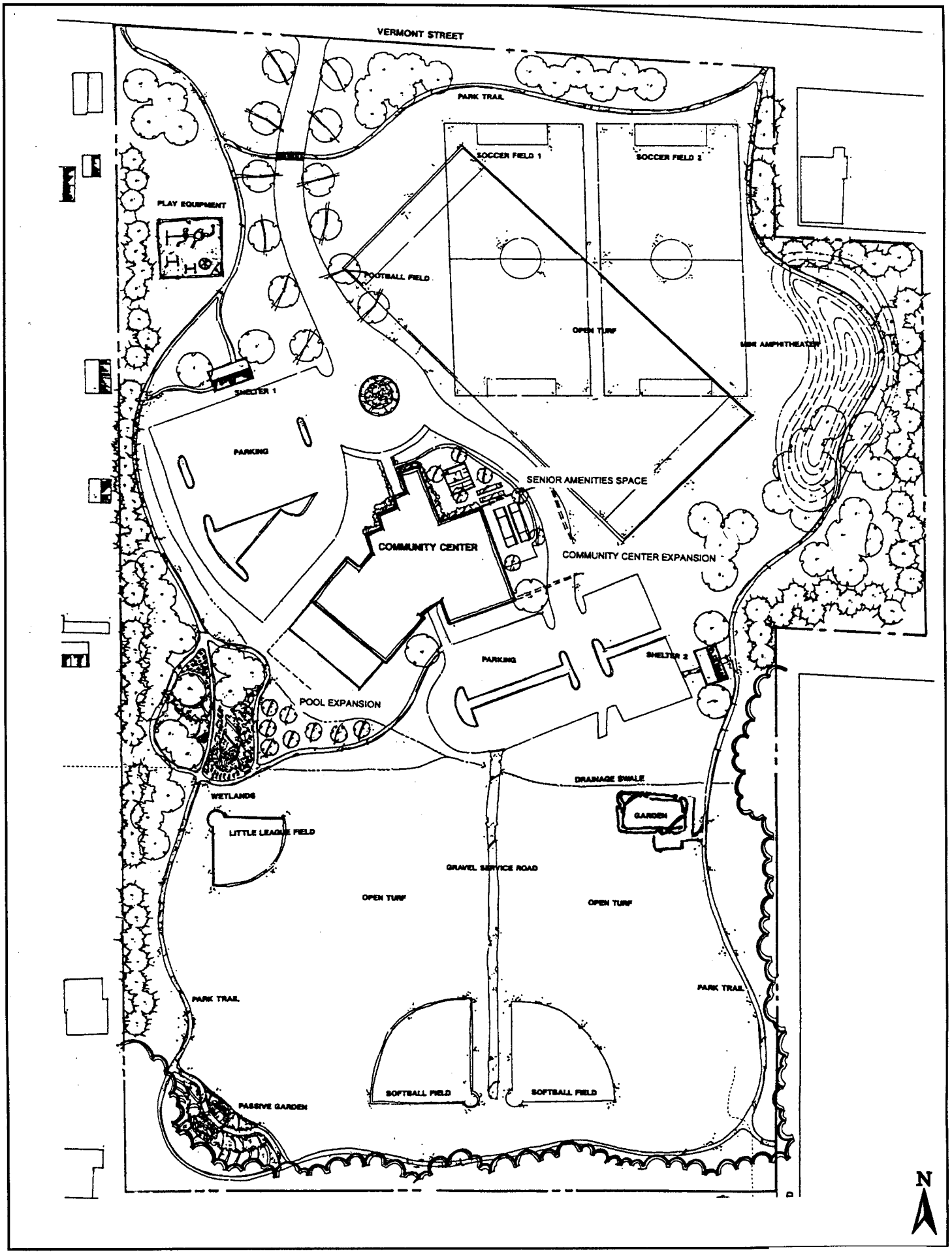
Amphitheater
An amphitheater is proposed along the east side of the existing football field. It should serve as a functional seating area, screen, and environmental art or aesthetic space. Seating is proposed along the elevated mound and performance space should be in the football field. The amphitheater could serve as a screen for the east side of the park as well as to enhance the bird-watching space.

Proposed time for completing the amphitheater: 8-10 years.

Earth Mound Cost Estimate: 3,000 cu/yds@ $8.00/yd= $24,000
Fine Grade and Seeding: 2,800 sq/yd@ $3.00 sq/yd=$8,400

Soccer Fields:
Space is proposed in this plan to accommodate two soccer fields placed on and near the existing football field, north of the entrance drive.

Proposed time for completion: 1-2 years.



THATCHER PARK MASTER PLAN

EXHIBIT 5

Thatcher Park Master Plan

EXHIBIT 6