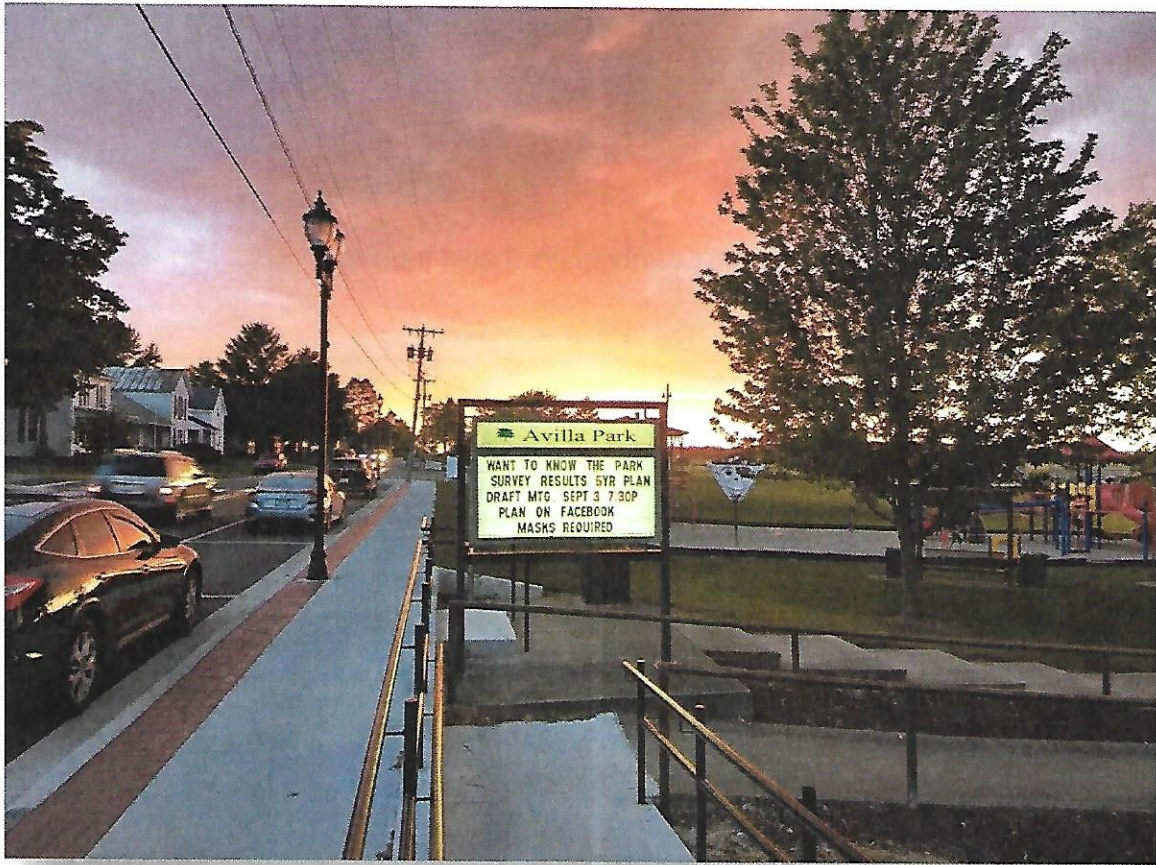


Avilla, Indiana, 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan: 2022-2026



Community Information

Community Name: Avilla, Indiana
Community Home County: Noble County
Mailing Address of Parks Department:

Avilla Parks Board
108 South Main Street
Avilla, IN 46710

Phone Number: 260.897.2781
Fax Number: 260.897.2605

Year Plan Created: 2020



Figure 1. Avilla is located in Noble County in northeast Indiana.

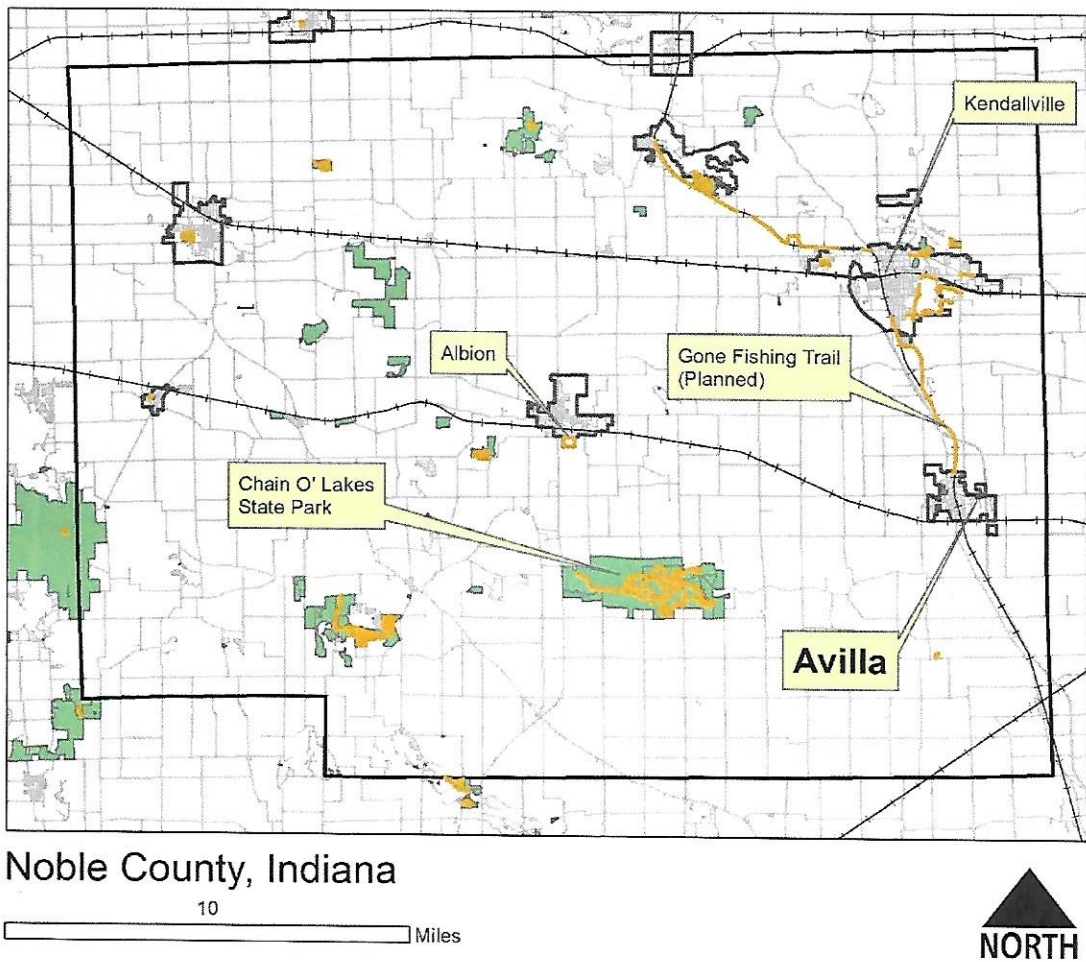


Figure 2. Noble County showing the location of Avilla, neighboring communities, regional recreational opportunities (green), and regional trails (orange).

Plan Author Information

Name: Christopher Baas & Jeremy Merrill
Address: 21384 Tooley Court, Noblesville, Indiana 46202
Phone number: 317.460.4183
E-mail: rcbaas@bsu.edu, jmerrill3@bsu.edu

Parks Board Information

Parks Board President's Name: Jessica Balyeat
Parks Board President's Term Expiration: 12/31/2021
Parks Board President's political party affiliation: Republican
Address: Town of Avilla, 108 South Main Street, Avilla, IN 46710
Phone Number: 260-897-2781
E-mail (if available): Jessica_balyeat@rocketmail.com

Parks Board Vice-President's Name: Nathan Hicks
Parks Board Vice-President's Term Expiration: 12/31/ 2022
Parks Board Vice-President's political party affiliation: Republican
Address: Town of Avilla, 108 South Main Street, Avilla, IN 46710
Phone Number: 260-897-2781
E-mail (if available): nate@hicksteamrealestate.com

Parks Board Secretary's Name: Ann Freeman
Parks Board Secretary's Term Expiration: 12/31/2020
Parks Board Secretary's political party affiliation: Republican
Address: Town of Avilla, 108 South Main Street, Avilla, IN 46710
Phone Number: 260-897-2781
E-mail (if available): antobort@gmail.com

Parks Board Member's Name: Megan Kline
Parks Board Member's Term Expiration: 12/31/2023
Parks Board Member's political party affiliation: Democrat/Nonaffiliated
Address: Town of Avilla, 108 South Main Street, Avilla, IN 46710
Phone Number: 260-897-2781
E-mail (if available): kline.megan81@gmail.com

List the paid staff of the Parks Department

Job Title: Part-time General Parks Grounds Laborer
Name: Roger Carmichael
Address: Town of Avilla, 108 South Main Street, Avilla, IN 46710
Phone Number: 260-897-2781
E-mail (if available): Unavailable

Job Title: Part-time General Parks Maintenance Laborer

Name: Howard Eicher

Address: Town of Avilla, 108 South Main Street, Avilla, IN 46710

Phone Number: 260-897-2781

E-mail (if available): Unavailable

Definition of Planning Area:

The Avilla 5-year planning area includes the town limits plus a 0.25 mile radius (Figure 5). It is defined to include the analysis of natural features that exist both in and beyond the town boundaries that potentially affect park policy, planning, and design decisions (i.e. streams, wetlands, and woodlands). The parks department serves the Avilla community and includes residents from the surrounding township, especially young people participating in the town's recreational sports leagues.

Natural Features of the Avilla Landscape

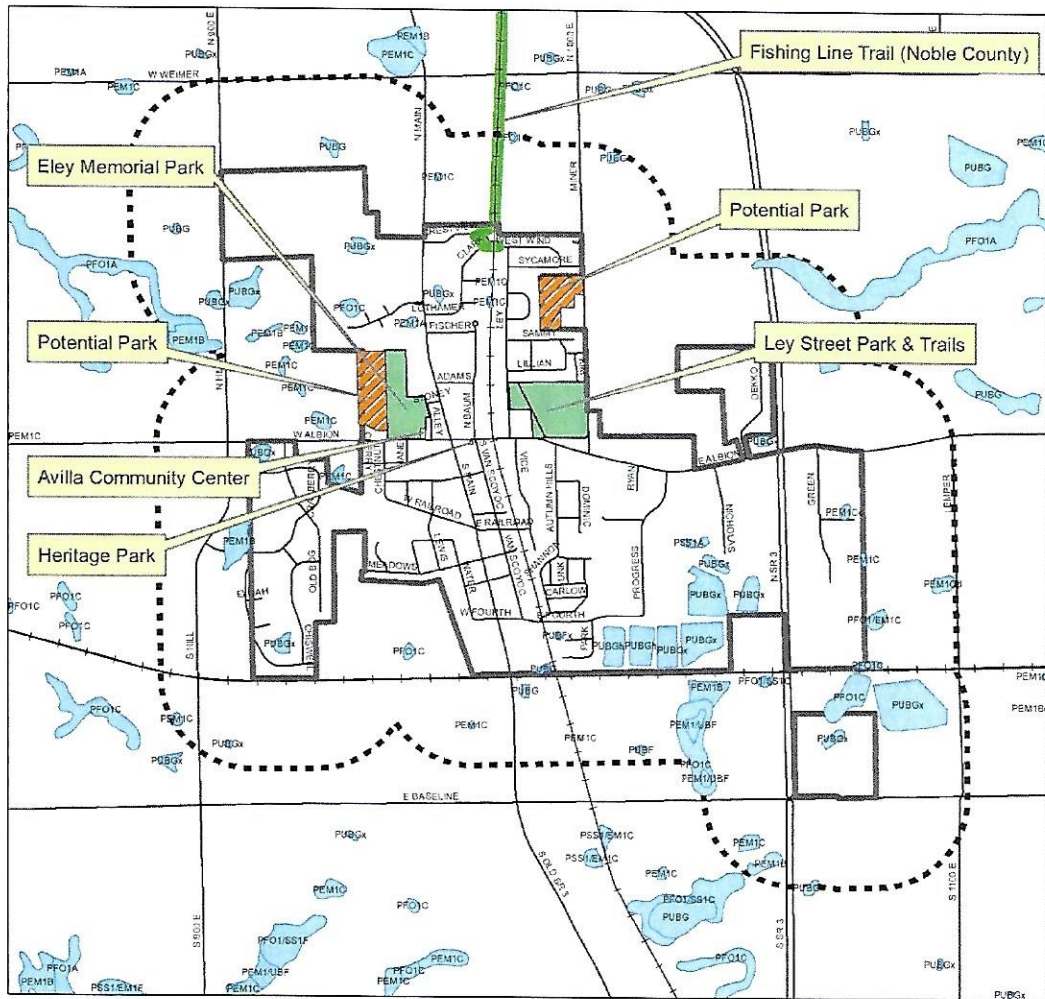
Ecoregion. Avilla lies in the Northern Lakes Natural Region characterized by the presence of glacial lakes, a variety of wetland features (fens, bogs, marshes), and a mixture of both Beech-Maple and Oak-Hickory forest communities (Homoya et al. 1985).

Soils. Avilla is located entirely in the Morely-Blount soil association described as "well drained to somewhat poorly drained, nearly level to moderately sloping, deep soils" on uplands (USDA 1977:6). This association is well-suited for growing crops due to its high moisture content, but it is susceptible to erosion.

Lakes, Streams, and Wetlands. The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) has identified and mapped 61 wetlands totaling 125 acres within the study area (Figure 3). The wetlands are categorized as Freshwater Emergent, Freshwater Forested/Shrub, and Freshwater Pond. Thirty-five of the wetlands are natural. Twenty-six wetlands appear to be manmade, including several subdivision retention/detention ponds and larger industrial wetland basins constructed southeast of the town center.

Avilla contains two prominent streams. Yarde Ditch flows east from the east-central part of the town, and an unnamed stream runs south along the town's west boundary. Sycamore Creek runs along the northeastern sections of the study area.

None of the wetlands or major streams are within current or planned Avilla parks.



Avilla 5-Year Plan: Town Boundary, Plan Study Area, Wetlands

Legend

- Wetlands (National Wetland Inventory)
- Avilla Town Boundaries
- Avilla Study Area

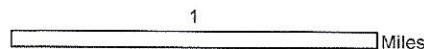


Figure 3. Wetland locations in Avilla and the study area.

Woodlands. The study area contains approximately 184 acres of forest at 54 locations (Figure 4). Significant woodlands in Avilla parks are limited to Ley Park, which contains a 20-acre forest. Presettlement woodland communities would have represented a Beech-Maple association characterized by flat and moist glacial soils dominated by Sugar Maple and American Beech, but also containing oaks, ash, and a large variety of canopy and understory species (Jackson 2003). Current Avilla forests represent “second growth” woodlands characterized by younger native trees and an understory often of invasive species (i.e. bush honeysuckle). While these forests lack the diversity of presettlement communities, they are essential habitat for native urban wildlife, and provide valued recreational settings for Avilla residents.

Avilla Man-made, Historical, and Cultural Resources

Man-made Features. The Town of Avilla is organized around two primary crossroads: State Road 8/Albion Street runs east and west, and Old State Road 3/Main Street runs north and south. The active CSX Railroad runs east and west along the town's southern border, and an abandoned Conrail Railroad line runs north and south through the middle of town. The town is surrounded by agricultural fields.

Avilla's town center contains government and commercial buildings. Historic and new residential areas are primarily located north and south of Albion Street. An industrial section of the town lies southeast of the town center and extends south to the CSX Railroad. The town has expanded east to (New) State Road 3 in the form of commercial businesses and restaurants.

Built features are important to Avilla. Current parks are located east to west along Albion Street. Future parks, and sidewalk and trail connections to existing parks, need to recognize current residential growth trends to the north and west. In addition, the town is attempting to redevelop its business district. Policy makers need to account for how current and future parks and trails can support local businesses.

Historical and Cultural Resources. The *Noble County Interim Report* identified several contributing and notable sites that include houses, churches, commercial buildings, and schools. Most of these resources date to the late nineteenth and early 20th century (Historic Landmarks 1986). The parks board supports the preservation of Avilla's historic resources, and actively works with Restore Avilla. Restore Avilla is a revitalization group dedicated to the restoration and preservation of downtown Avilla. They recently developed Heritage Park, and the group is currently collaborating with Avilla Parks Department to fund and construct a new dog park in Ley Street Park. Restore Avilla is also targeting the vacant lots in the city center for improvement.

The annual Avilla Freedom Festival takes place in June and is the community's largest cultural event. It is managed by a board of directors. The festival includes a parade, concert, and vendors. Many of the events take place in and near Eley Memorial Park.

Ley Street Park, including several trails, is adjacent to the Avilla (Noble County) Library. The library shares its parking lot and restrooms with the park. The parks board is currently working with the library to partner in the development and delivery of public programs.

These cultural examples provided demonstrate a strong relationship between Avilla Parks Department and other community organizations. The Avilla Parks Board desires to continue to expand these relationships. As good faith examples of cooperation for this 5-year planning window, the board desires to continue current efforts to construct a dog park, to participate in the revitalization of the downtown, to partner with the library on shared programs, and to expand and improve facilities for the Freedom Festival.

Avilla Social and Economic Factors (from Stats America)

Total community Population (2018 Estimate): 2,204

Community member's median age: 37.2 (approximately 23% of the population is between the ages of 0 and 17 years)

Percentage of community living at or below poverty level: 6.4

Percentage of community under the age of 5: 7.3

Percentage of community over the age of 65: 19.6

Percentage of community members with a disability: 13 (2014 Noble County, <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/EC/EC-811-W.pdf>)

Breakdown of community by race:

- % White: 97.8
- % Black or African American: 0
- % Hispanic or Latino (of any Race): 1.8
- % American Indian and Alaska Native: 0
- % Asian: 0.3
- % Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: 0
- % Some Other Race: 0
- % Two or more Races: 1.9

Median household income: \$52,143

Most current unemployment figure: Noble County 5.7% (August 2020, <https://www.stats.indiana.edu/maptools/laus.asp>).

Avilla's Largest Employers:

Kautex/Textron: Automotive Production

Presence Sacred Heart Home: Independent and Assisted Living

Accel International: Manufacturing

Busche Performance Group: Machining

Victor Reinz: Automotive Production

Avilla Parks seeks to provide facilities and programs that meet the needs of all its citizens, employers, and organizations. A vibrant parks system as part of an affordable and livable community makes Avilla inviting to new businesses and employees. The board especially seeks partnerships with local employers to fund park programs and provide expansion that directly affects their business and employee wellness.

Parks Department Information and Facility Inventory

Avilla has four park properties totaling 31.78 acres.

Heritage Park

Location: Near intersection of Albion & Van Scoyoc Streets

Acres: 0.5

Heritage is a commercial center pocket park featuring a central fountain and seating.

Ley Street Park and Trails

Location: 104 Ley Street

Acres: 18.78

Ley is a woodland park with mulched trails and a flower meadow. The parking is shared with Avilla Library.

Avilla Community Center

Location: 116 W. Albion Street

Acres: 0.25

The former Avilla Library, the community center has been expanded to host park programs and monthly meetings. The space is available for rent.

Eley Memorial Park

Location: 116 W. Albion Street

Acres: 12.7

Eley Memorial is Avilla's main park. It contains a variety of recreational amenities including tennis courts, playgrounds, picnic shelters, horseshoe pits, basketball courts, and a gazebo. The park contains three recreation-league baseball fields supported by a concession stand, restrooms, and batting cages. A maintenance building is located in the park.

Avilla Parks Budget

The past three annual budgets have been:

- 2020 Budget: \$80,600
- 2019 Budget: \$65,200
- 2018 Budget: \$62,700

The major source of Avilla's park budget is tax-based appropriations by the Avilla Town Council. The budget increases demonstrate the town's commitment to maintaining existing parks. Approximately one-quarter of the 2020 budget funds part-time employees, one-quarter funds capital improvements (i.e. maintenance machinery), and half funds are allocated to park maintenance, children's programs, and general supplies.

Nearby Community Recreation Facilities:

Avilla Elementary School
Fishing Line Trail (Noble Trails, Inc.)
Chain O' Lakes State Park
Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation

Accessibility and Universal Design

Currently, park programs are held at accessible locations. Alternative methods for delivery can be accommodated when requested (i.e. hearing or visually impaired). Most facilities are easily accessible and include accessible routes (i.e. parking stalls, signage, curb cuts, ramps), restrooms (Community Center, Avilla Library, ballfields), and recreational facilities (picnic shelters, playground equipment, tennis and basketball courts, etc.). The park board will consistently monitor and maintain accessible routes as park facilities are added or changed (i.e. the 50" minimum width sidewalk, walkway, or path with a firm and stable surface meeting ASTM 1951-99).

Some recreational facilities require modifications or replacement. In Eley Memorial Park accessible routes (i.e. parking stalls, signage, and surfaces) need to be clearly identified or created for all the ballfields, the basketball court, the west playground, and the horseshoe pits. Both playgrounds need an accessible surface that also meets fall zone safety standards. At Ley Street Park, the trails (or a section of trails) need to be designed with an accessible grade and surface.

The park board uses the Town of Avilla web page to notify the public about ADA's nondiscriminatory requirements, and accessible facilities, programs, and services (<http://avilla-in.org/americans-with-disabilities-act/>). The Avilla Town Manager is the public contact for questions, comments, or issues with accessibility in the park system, programs, or activities:

Bill Ley, Avilla Town Manager
Address: Town of Avilla, 108 South Main Street, Avilla, IN 46710
Phone Number: 260-897-2781
E-mail (if available): bley@townofavilla.com

Public Participation

The Avilla Parks Board sought public input from a public meeting and a survey.

Public meeting information. A public input meeting was held at the Avilla Community Center at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday August 6, 2020. The meeting was advertised on the Town's website, the Parks Board's Facebook page, and on the Community Center's street sign. No members of the public attended. Avilla Parks Board meetings are rarely attended by the public, and we believe that many factors may have contributed to lack of

participation: a public survey had already allowed residents to provide input, COVID-19 limited participation, and the meeting took place on a school night during the first week of the school year.

Survey Information. A survey/questionnaire was used to collect public input for the plan. The survey was made available to Avilla residents through two different formats. A paper version of the survey was mailed to 1,100 Avilla households with their late June 2020 utility bill. An electronic version of the same survey was advertised and made available to 330 Avilla Parks and Recreation Facebook followers through a link to Qualtrics Survey Software. A total of 210 surveys were collected, and they were tabulated in August.

Avilla Parks Questionnaire Summary. Most respondents have lived in Avilla for 10+ years and reported they believe parks are Very Important to the overall quality of life in Avilla. Most respondents indicated that they use the parks from 1 to 2 times a month.

The top three primary reasons people use the park as reported by respondents were:

- Enjoy the outdoors and Nature: (n=111)
- Family Activities: (n=101)
- Walk and Bike for Exercise: (n= 88)

Respondents reported that the general upkeep and maintenance of Avilla Parks is seen as Good and that while paved trails are Very Important, connecting Avilla to a regional trail system is Moderately Important. When asked about specific potential additions to Avilla Parks, respondents indicated that the Skate Park and additional baseball diamond are Not at All Important, yet additional playground equipment is Moderately Important. Respondents were Somewhat Likely to rent the pavilion or community center.

The top five activities reported by respondents were:

- Nature Walks (n=106)
- Fairs and Festivals (n=91)
- Swimming (n=89)
- Walking for Pleasure (n=85)
- Playground visit/play (n=85)

Regarding upgrading, maintaining and expanding the Avilla park system, respondents indicated that the top three preferences were:

- Upgrading existing parks (n=116)
- Maintaining existing parks and facilities (n=88)

Avilla, Indiana, 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan: 2022-2026

- Acquiring natural areas (n=74)

When respondents were given the choice, the top four desired additional programs for Avilla Parks were:

- Aquatic Programs (n=122) splash pad
- Special Events (n=120)
- Outdoor/Environmental Programs (n=61)
- Fitness Classes (n=57)

At the conclusion of the questionnaire, respondents were given the chance to write any additional comments. Two repeated topics were--making a connection between the Cranberry Run neighborhood with the rest of the community, and the desire for a splash pad in Avilla.

Needs Analysis and Level of Service

Avilla total acres of local parks and recreation land: 31.78 Acres

Avilla total population by the most recent US Census: 2,204 people

Current Avilla parks acres per person: 0.014

Avilla Level of Service (LOS). The Indiana State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2021-2025 (SCORP) identifies Level of Service (LOS) guidelines for publicly owned park systems. The State of Indiana LOS guidelines for local publicly-owned parks is 20 acres per 1,000 people (.02 acres per person; SCORP 2019:36). Avilla, with a 2018 estimated population of 2,204, should provide a LOS of 44.08 acres. Currently, Avilla is 12.3 acres deficient in park acreage.

The top five most common needs or desires expressed by the public:

1. Trails
2. Splash Pad
3. Fair and Festivals
4. Playgrounds
5. Upgrading existing parks

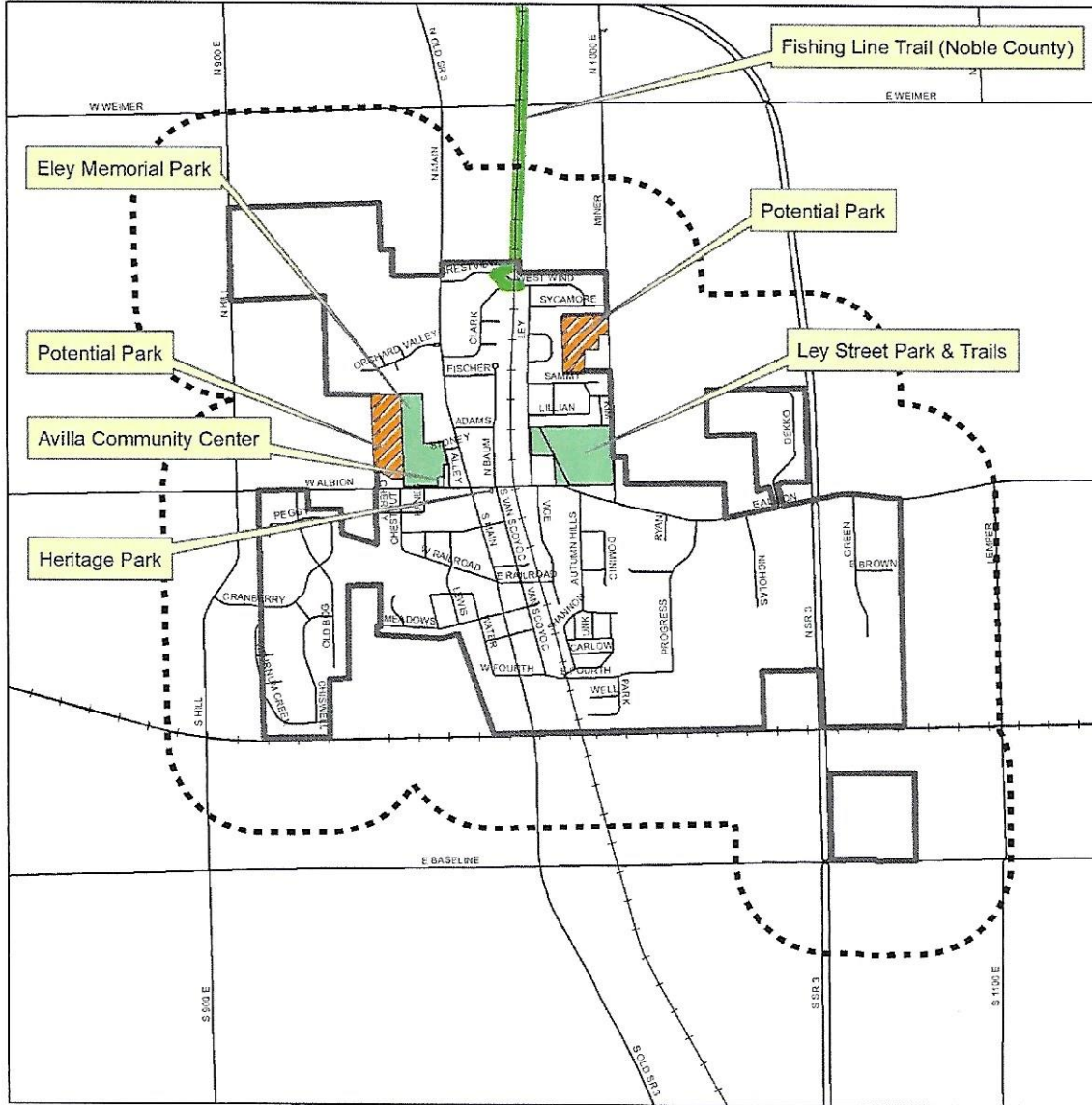
The top five most common needs or desires as listed by the Parks Board are:

1. Expanding park acreage
2. Constructing a new splash pad and skateboard park
3. Upgrading facilities in existing parks
4. Expanding festival space at Eley Memorial Park
5. Paving trails at Ley Street Park

Avilla, Indiana, 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan: 2022-2026



Dream project to create in the next ten years: A splash pad at Eley Memorial at an estimated cost of \$300,000-\$400,000.

Community Map With Park Locations:



Avilla 5-Year Plan: Town Boundary and Plan Study Area

Legend

-  Avilla Town Boundaries
-  Avilla Study Area

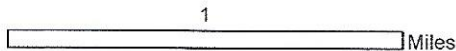


Figure 5: Avilla 5-Year Plan.

Priorities and Action Plan Schedule

Public and park board priorities:

1. Construct a splash pad, 2 baseball fields, a skateboard park, and a Frisbee golf course
2. Design and Construct Bark Park at Ley Street Park
3. Festival Space Development at Eley Memorial Park
4. New park property acquisition (approximately 25 acres total at two locations)
5. Pave approximately one-half-mile of walking trails at Ley Street Park
6. Improve and expand park programs
7. Upgrade park facilities and landscape (ADA, water fountains, trees, flowerbeds, grasslands, and forests)
8. Advocate connection of Cranberry Acres to town sidewalks and parks (approx. 1,000 linear feet)
9. Strategize connections to Fishing Line Trail
10. Mural painting at Heritage Parks

Avilla, Indiana, 5-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan: 2022-2026

Avilla Plan 2022-2026

Budget Year	Priority Item	Lead Entities	Potential Cost	Potential Funding Source
2021+	Planning and preparation for grant funding and construction projects	APB, TOA	\$0	APB
2022-2026	Upgrade Parks and Landscape (ADA, fountains, trees, flowerbeds, turf, grasslands, and forests)	APB, TOA	\$3,000 per year	APB, TOA, UFG
2022-2026	Improve and expand park programs	APB, RA, APL	\$1,000 per year	APB, APL
2022-2026	New park property acquisition (approximately 25 acres total at two locations)	APB, TOA	Donation of Town-owned Property. Private owned property purchase TBD.	TOA
2022-2026	Advocate connection of Cranberry Acres to town sidewalks and parks (approx. 1,000 linear feet).	APB	\$0	TOA
2022	Festival Space Development at Eley Memorial Park	APB, TOA	\$75,000	TOA
2022-23	Mural painting at Heritage Park	APB, RA	\$1,000	RA
2022	Design and Construct Bark Park at Ley Street Park	RA, APB	\$40,000	RA
2023	Pave walking trails at Ley Street Park (approx. a half-mile total)	APB, TOA	\$75,000	RTP, NT
2022 and 2023	Construct splash pad, 2 baseball fields, a skateboard park, and a Frisbee golf course	APB, TOA	\$500,000	LWCF
2022-2026	Strategize connections to Fishing Line Trail	APB, TOA, NT	\$500,000	RTP, NT

- APB Avilla Park Board
- TOA Town of Avilla
- APL Avilla (Noble County) Public Library
- NT Noble Trails
- RA Restore Avilla
- RTP Recreational Trails Program
- LWCF Land and Water Conservation Fund
- UFG Urban Forestry Assistance Grant

Public Presentation of the Plan

The draft plan was presented publically at the September 3, 2020 Avilla Parks Board monthly meeting (at the Avilla Community Center). No members of the public attended. The plan was also posted to the park board's Facebook beginning on October 12, 2020 requesting input from the public. Aside from several "thumbs up," no comments were provided.

Works Cited

Historic Landmarks. 1986. *Noble County: Interim Report*. Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory, Indiana.

Homoya, Michael A., D. Brian Abrell, James R. Aldrich and Thomas W. Post. 1985. The Natural Regions of Indiana. *Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science* 94:245-268.

Jackson, Marion. 2003. *101 Trees of Indiana*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

SCORP. 2019. *Indiana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2021-2025*. Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Outdoor Recreation.

Stats America. 2020. *Profiles for Avilla, IN*. <http://www.statsamerica.org/town/> (viewed 9.24.2020).

USDA. 1977. *Soil Survey of Noble County*. United States Department of Agriculture.

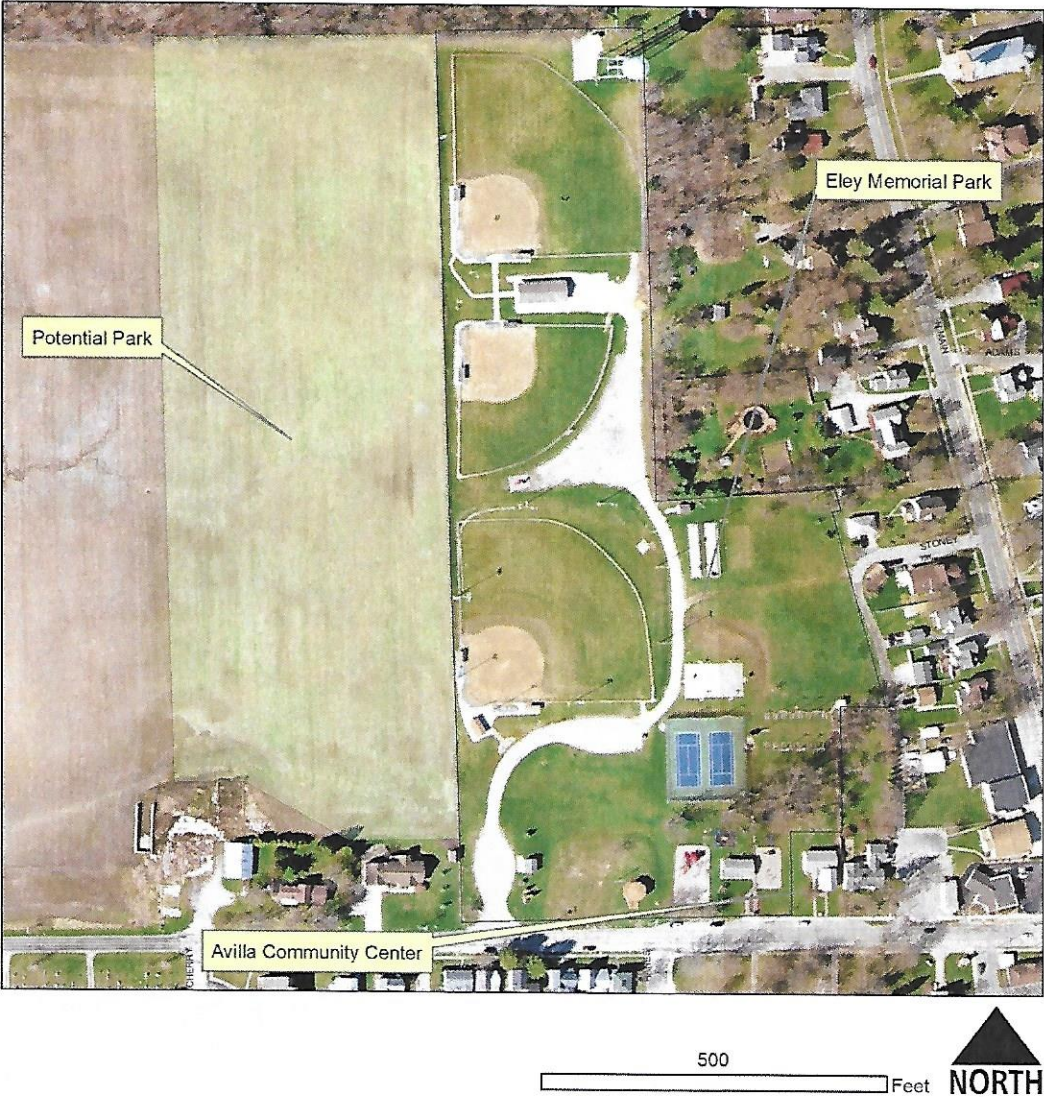


Figure 6. Aerial photograph of current parks (Eley Memorial, Avilla Community Center) and a site identified as a potential future Avilla park.

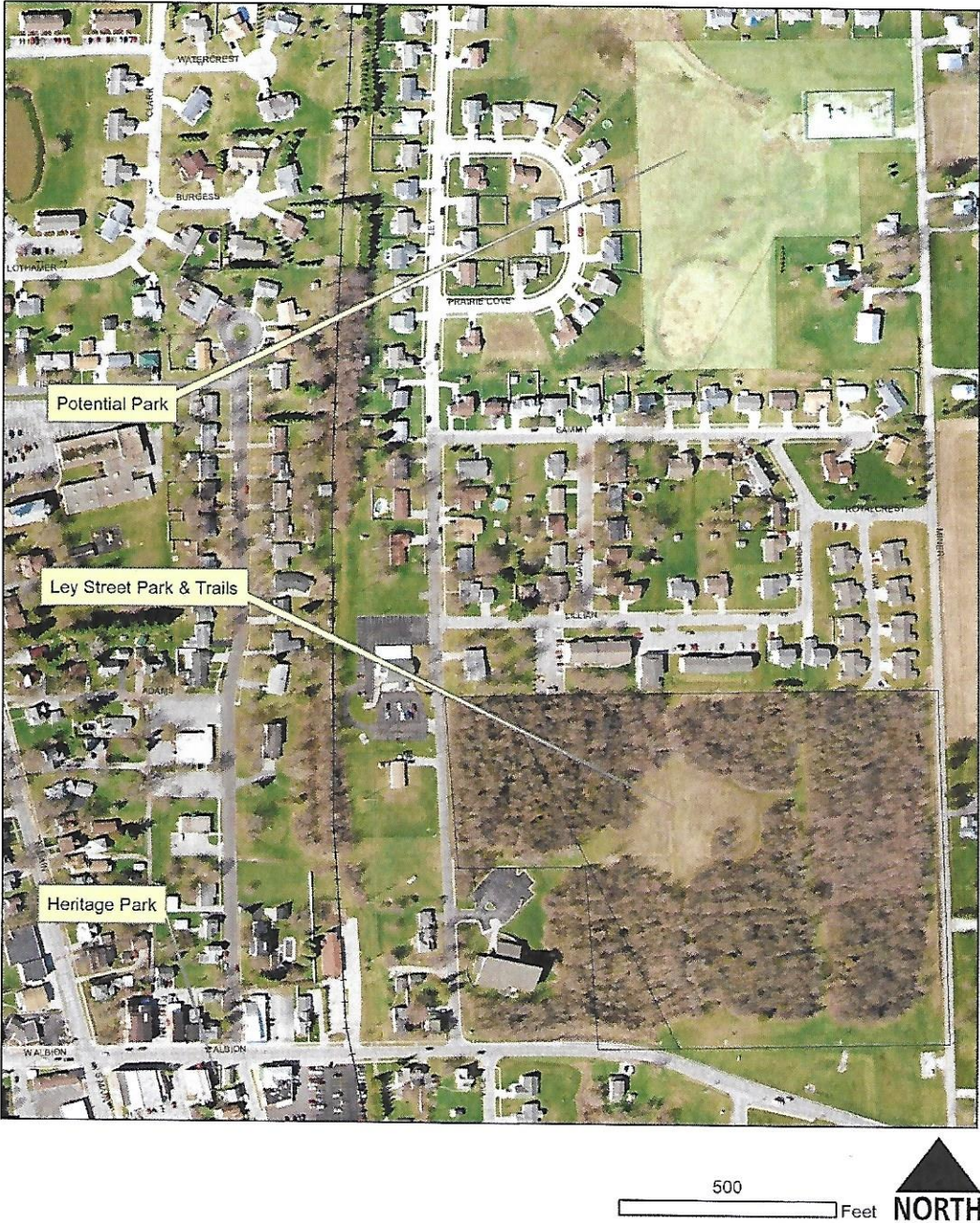


Figure 7. Aerial photograph of current parks (Ley Street Park and Trails, Heritage) and a site identified as a potential future Avilla park.

**NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION UNDER
THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND
SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973**

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

Employment: The Town of Avilla does not discriminate on the basis of disability in its hiring or employment practices and complies with all regulations promulgated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Title I ADA.

Effective Communication: The Town of Avilla will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in the Town of Avilla programs, services, and activities, including qualified sign language interpreters, documents in Braille, and other ways of making information and communications accessible to people who have speech, hearing, or vision impairments.

Modifications to Policies and Procedures: The Town of Avilla 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. For example, individuals with service animals are welcomed in the Town of Avilla’s offices, even where pets are generally prohibited.

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communications, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the Town of Avilla should contact the office of Bill Ley, Town Manager, PO Box 49, Avilla, Indiana 46710 or by calling 260-897-2781, as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

The ADA does not require the Town of Avilla 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 Avilla is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Bill Ley, ADA Coordinator.

The Town of Avilla will not place a surcharge on a particular individual with a disability or any group of individuals with disabilities to cover the cost of providing auxiliary aids/services or reasonable modifications of policy, such as retrieving items from locations that are open to the public but are not accessible to persons who use wheelchairs.

**ASSURANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE WITH:
ARCHITECTURAL BARRIERS ACT of 1968 (As Amended);
SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (As Amended);
AND TITLE II OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990 (As Amended)**

The Avilla Park and Recreation Board has read the guidelines for compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (As Amended); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (As Amended); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (As Amended) and will comply with the applicable requirements of these Acts.

SIGNATURE 
Avilla Park and Recreation Board PRESIDENT

PRINTED JESSICA BALYEAT

SIGNATURE 
Avilla Park and Recreation, Secretary

PRINTED Ann Freeman
Avilla Park and Recreation, Secretary

DATE 1/7/2021

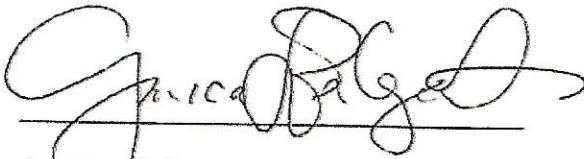
WHEREAS, the Avilla Park and Recreation Board is aware of the parks and recreation needs of the residents of Avilla Indiana, and

WHEREAS, the Board realizes the importance of sound planning in order to meet the needs of its citizens,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE AVILLA, PARK AND RECREATION BOARD, by unanimous delcaration, does adopt the Park and Recreation Master Plan as its official plan for the next five years, for the growth and development of parks and recreational opportunities in Indiana.

Passed and signed this 7 day of January, 2021

ATTEST:



Jessica Balyeat

Avilla, Indiana Park Board President



~~Seth Tipton and/or Chad Rayle~~

Avilla, Indiana Town Attorney