

The Trust for Public Land

# Indianapolis, Indiana Study

*March 29, 2002*



Conserving Land  
for People

# About the Trust for Public Land

The Trust for Public Land conserves land for people to improve the quality of life in our communities and protect our natural and historic resources. Founded in 1972, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) works in 45 states to protect land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, playgrounds, greenways, recreation areas, historic buildings, archaeological sites, and wilderness areas. Nationwide, TPL has protected more than 1.5 million acres with a fair-market value of more than \$2 billion.

TPL's experts in the law, finance, real estate, fundraising, government, and public relations, work nationwide to help citizens and government agencies identify lands they wish to see protected and then help them accomplish their land protection goals.

To help public agencies or land trusts acquire land, TPL also assists local communities in identifying and securing public financing. TPL's public finance program offers technical assistance to elected officials, public agencies, and community groups to design, pass, and implement public funding measures that reflect popular priorities.

# Acknowledgements

The idea for this report began in the summer of 2000 when the Trust for Public Land and leadership from the Indianapolis community began a dialogue about how to deliver more parks and natural resources to the people of Indianapolis. Joseph Wynns, Director for Indianapolis Parks and Recreation, formed part of that discussion. Joe's vision for his city's parks and open spaces set the wheels in motion; it helped funnel the energies that convinced the mayor of the need for a new approach to parks in Indy.

Mayor Peterson had been recently elected to office and understood that as the city continued to grow, spaces and places for youth would need to be safeguarded and possibly created. His commitment to service youth through parks programs, within the context of a safe environment, opened the prospect of adding more parks to the existing inventory.

Soon thereafter, the mayor asked TPL to help formulate strategies that would address some of these questions. TPL began its work during the early summer of 2001 by setting to the task of researching the current status of parks, the existing funding mechanisms, and influential parties to promote the parks agenda.

The community of park advocates ranging from local officials to members of the various local advocacy groups voluntarily gave their time to offer insights about Indy's parks and the future growth of the system. Councilperson, Bob Cochrum specifically provided as input the open space needs of his district and work in seeing those met. All these individuals and organizations are truly parks and open space advocates committed to the continuance of a high quality of life for all Indianapolis.

# Table of Contents

- i. Cover Page
- ii. Acknowledgements Page
- iii. Table of Contents
  
- I. Introduction
  
- II. Findings and Recommendations
  
- III. Indianapolis Parks System Analysis
  
- IV. Stakeholder Analysis
  - A. Methodology and diversity of interviews
  - B. Key issues discussed
  
- V. Public Finance Analysis
  - A. Introduction
  - B. Fiscal Overview
  - C. Public Opinion Survey Results
  - D. Revenue Options
  - E. Conservation Finance Best Practices
  
- VI. Implementation Strategy
  - A. Creating a Funding Quilt

## **Appendices**

- A. Overview of Government and the Economy of Indianapolis
- B. Federal and State Funding Sources
- C. Parks and Open Space Financing Options
- D. Land Conservation Funding Elections in Major US Cities

# I. Introduction

## City Overview

The consolidated City of Indianapolis-Marion County is located in the geographical center of Indiana, as well as being the business and cultural center of the state. The 402 square miles of the city make it the eighth largest city in the nation in terms of land area and, with a population of over 860,000, the twelfth most populous city. It was founded as the state capital of Indiana in 1821 and officially became so in 1825.

In 1970, the governments of the city and of Marion County were unified and their form of service delivery consolidated, forming Unigov, and thereby extending the city's boundaries to generally coincide with the county. However, three cities (Beech Grove, Lawrence, and Southport) and the town of Speedway were not annexed into the consolidated City of Indianapolis. In addition, the school districts are independent, as are the six Independent Municipal Corporations, including the Capital Improvement Board, Health and Hospital Corporation, Indianapolis Airport Authority, Indianapolis-Marion County Library, Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation, and Indianapolis-Marion County Building Authority.

The offices of the county auditor, coroner, prosecutor, sheriff, surveyor, recorder, treasurer, and clerk of the circuit court (county clerk) are written into the state constitution and cannot be eliminated unless the constitution is amended. Thus, when Unigov was formed, Marion County government did not fade away, and the County still exists as a separate entity. The Unigov Act changed the jurisdictions of the Indianapolis Police and Fire Departments very little.

Seven other counties border Marion County: Hamilton, Hancock, Shelby, Johnson, Morgan, Hendricks, and Boone. Please see Appendix A for a more detailed summary of the governmental structure and the economy of Indianapolis-Marion County.



## TPL'S Work in Indianapolis

The Trust for Public Land has undertaken a comprehensive analysis to explore strategies for the protection of land as parks and open space in Indianapolis-Marion County. The Trust for Public Land and Joseph Wynns, Director for Indianapolis Parks and Recreation, began a conversation in June of 2000 about ways in which TPL could help the city address its needs for new parks and

greenspace. Newly elected Mayor Bart Peterson had indicated interest in two issues for parks: youth programming and more land acquisition for new parks. Environmental and park advocates were urgently pressing the new administration to implement the Indianapolis-Marion County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan (1999), which identified 72 new park sites.

Research by both Indy Parks and Recreation and TPL had shown the city to be below average on park space availability for its residents. According to the City's own plan, "Indianapolis ranks in the middle third of comparison cities in provision of regional park acreage . . ." and, ". . . in the provision of community parkland, Indianapolis finds itself in last place in the same comparison group of cities." TPL research confirmed this and also showed Indianapolis significantly behind other cities in the amount it invests in parks, spending only \$35 per resident, compared to an average of \$103 per resident spent by comparable cities, Cincinnati, Detroit, Minneapolis, Portland and St. Louis.

In preparation for its work, TPL met with the Lilly Endowment, Sierra Club, Indianapolis Parks Foundation, and other city staff to help understand key issues, and to develop a scope of work for assessing funding opportunities and new-land acquisition for parks and greenspace. Indy Parks and Recreation staff also arranged for an evening meeting with neighborhood and park advocates from around the city. Advocates identified four key issues:

- The city's need to keep up with *fast-growing development* in townships where parks and recreation facilities do not currently exist.
- The existence of strong *public interest in parks* and natural resource protection for both growth management and environmental education purposes.
- A perceived *lack of revenues* to meet funding needs for new and existing parks.
- The *need for a partnership framework* within which public agencies and the growing number of local foundations, advisory boards, and "friends of" groups could work together.

As the second-fastest growing metropolitan area in the nation, Indianapolis-Marion County's comprehensive plans, parks and recreation plans, and land/water use management reports are consistent in naming parks as a growth management tool that can meet public needs and assure a quality of life that will enrich the community. The challenge for the city appears to be in understanding how to blend parks with other key city needs—water quality, community development, and protection of key natural areas—in order to build a stronger constituency for parks and find new opportunities for funding them. TPL has found that those cities doing the most for and with their parks are those which have re-positioned public parks as a strategic investment tool for community, ecological, and economic development.

TPL proposed a three-pronged approach to assist Indy Parks and Recreation in completing a strategic plan for creating new parks: stakeholder analysis, public finance analysis, and an implementation strategy.

## **Stakeholder Analysis**

TPL proposed to identify and meet with up to ten different stakeholder groups to discuss the issues of open space resource protection, identify where and what kind of support exists for parks, and understand how partnerships might be formed to strengthen city efforts to build its park system. One challenge TPL identified was for the city to understand the breadth of support

for parks beyond the few park advocates currently working with the city, and how a larger constituency might help build a stronger program.

### **Public Finance Analysis**

TPL proposed a review of local, state, and federal programs with the goal of developing specific recommendations for local funding as well as state and federal leveraging opportunities. Also included in the analysis was a public opinion survey to determine support for new parks and parks financing. It has become increasingly common for local governments to commission such surveys, which TPL often conducts, to ensure that government program and spending priorities reflect the preference of citizens.

### **Implementation Strategy**

Combining public interest, leadership, and tools for funding, TPL proposed to create a strategy for a feasible program for Indy Parks and Recreation. The strategy is based on the funding opportunities identified, the targeted interests of residents, and their willingness to raise the profile of, and commitment to, parks and recreation resources.

In April, 2001, TPL signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Indianapolis to complete its feasibility analysis. This report provides the results of TPL's outreach and analysis for Indy Parks and Recreation; it makes recommendations for the city regarding creating and leveraging funding opportunities, generating public support for specific park investments, and implementing a strong plan for guiding those investments.

## II. Findings and Recommendations

The work conducted by the Trust for Public Land's research, interviews, and fiscal analysis, has led to the following findings and recommendations.

### Findings

1. **SOUND PLANNING** - During the past decade, both the city of Indianapolis and the Indy Parks and Recreation Department have produced significant plans that outline the future vision for expanding the city's parks and open space. Because these plans have been updated regularly, the city requires no further parks and open space planning. However, the plans do not have implementation strategies for each land acquisition priority, including costs, timelines and funding options. The absence of these strategies has resulted in Indy's slow and sporadic rate of land acquisition for unmet parks and open space needs.
2. **STRATEGIC CONNECTIONS** – Parks and open space are integral to the quality of life in a community. An untapped opportunity in the city of Indianapolis is to strategically connect parks and open space to other important community issues so that land acquisition can be achieved while realizing other key city goals. For example, in Indianapolis, there is strong public interest in water quality. Other communities have successfully linked parks to the solution of water quality and supply, and stormwater and flood management problems.
3. **CITIZEN SUPPORT** – Citizens hold preserving land for parks and open space as a top priority and are willing to pay for it. In addition, Indianapolis voters care deeply about limiting growth and development and about the quality of air and water today and for future generations.
4. **FUNDING** - Indianapolis' investment in parks is substantially lower than that of other cities it deems comparable - Cincinnati, Detroit, Minneapolis, Portland and St. Louis. In the past two years Indianapolis-Marion County has invested approximately \$250,000 toward land acquisition with little progress in meeting its acquisition goals, as pointed out in the 2001 Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan Update. During this same time period, comparable cities have raised hundreds of millions of dollars for new parks and recreation facilities. The final city budget for 2002 does not provide any funding for parks and open space land acquisition.
5. **LEADERSHIP** – In the city of Indianapolis, TPL found that there is a need for more cohesive leadership around parks and open space issues. In other communities, strong mayoral leadership has brought private and public sector leaders to the table to set a unified, citywide public parks and open space agenda.

## Recommendations

**RECOMMENDATION 1** – Develop implementation strategies for each land acquisition priority in the Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan and the 2001 Update.

The city’s planning efforts call for clearly defined next steps. Implementation costs, timelines and funding options need to be developed in order to execute each parks and open space priority in Indianapolis. Cities like \_\_\_\_\_, have this level of detail in their plans assisting the Parks and Recreation Department’s in attaining the community’s input regarding specific properties to protect, setting priorities for acquisition of identified properties, and gaining support to fund those acquisitions.

In addition, it informs the community about the total estimated funding need for land acquisition and when those funds are needed. Then fundraising goals and deadlines can be established. This is critical information for a successful land acquisition program.

**RECOMMENDATION 2** – Create a marketing program to achieve broadly-based community understanding and support for parks and open spaces as integral to Indy’s quality of life.

The city has a sound parks and open space plan developed with public input. Polling results show strong public support for parks and open space. A critical next step is to assist the citizens in turning their general support for parks and open space into solid political support for funding and implementing their parks and open space plan. This can be done through a program, which educates the public about the benefits of parks and open space (such as managing growth and protecting water quality) and through public events, which draw attention to and promote parks and open space as integral to Indy’s quality of life. With more visibility and awareness comes more support for public and private funding. Cities such as Austin, San Antonio and St. Louis, among others, have led such successful marketing programs which generated public support resulting in over \$160,000,000 in new public funding for parks, trails and open space over the past two years.

**RECOMMENDATION 3** – Create a “funding quilt” with a reliable substantial local funding source that can be leveraged to attract federal, state and private funding.

Indianapolis has the opportunity to create a ‘funding quilt’, with local funding as the base, to implement its priorities and take advantage of growing public interest in land conservation. A significant and reliable source of local funding will provide the matching funds required by state and federal and private funding sources. Based on TPL’s work in other cities, local success stories around the country have been led by committed local funding sources that have attracted additional sources.

TPL’s polling work in Indianapolis identified strong local voters support to spend local tax dollars to expand and preserve natural lands in Indianapolis. a) Seventy-seven

percent of voters in Indianapolis support an increase in the Parks and Recreation Department's budget for land conservation of between 16 – 33 percent. b) An overwhelming 82% of voters say they are willing to pay \$6 more a year in taxes to accomplish the goal of expanding parklands and protecting natural resources. c) Seventy-one percent are willing to pay \$12 more a year.

Given the public's interest in open space and parkland preservation in Indianapolis, the following strategies should be pursued on a short, medium, and long-term basis to produce a local funding base:

Short-Term Action: Indianapolis should reallocate budgetary revenue for open space acquisition within the General Fund and/or Cumulative Fund so that a greater portion of the city's total budget is dedicated to park and open space acquisition to meet immediate and pressing needs.

Mid-Term Action: Indianapolis should create a dedicated fund, either through a General Obligation Bond, dedicating a portion of the County Option Income Tax, and/or allocating some of the funding for storm water/sewer upgrading to acquiring and preserving strategic watershed property.

Long-Term Action: Indianapolis should leverage the success of its short and mid-term actions to convince the state legislature to provide more tools and incentives for land acquisition to local units of government; and to work in partnership with the growing number of federal land conservation programs.

**RECOMMENDATION 4** –Unify Indianapolis' parks and open space agenda through strong Mayoral leadership and create a "Blue Ribbon Commission" to lead and energize the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and the 2001 Update.

In the City of Indianapolis, TPL found that there is no cohesive leadership around parks and open space issues – that park friends groups, advocacy organizations and funders are frequently working at cross-purposes with each other. These independent efforts need to be re-aligned and coordinated by a common mission and priorities. TPL's experience throughout the nation shows that Mayoral leadership, working together and setting the tone with the private sector, is essential in the successful completion of parks and open space goals. Mayors have the greatest potential to lead parks and open space initiatives, not only because of the power of a mayor's office, but also because the policy and budget making for the city's community, ecological and economic development reside in that office.

In Indianapolis, the Mayor has the opportunity to tap into the city's private sector and appoint a "Blue Ribbon Commission" to lead the implementation of the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan. The outcomes from this Commission's work are threefold: a) reframe parks as a growth management and investment tool for Indianapolis, b) create and manage a marketing campaign for parks that will solidify public support and attract new public and private funding, and c) raise private funds to match the public funding sources.

**RECOMMENDATION 5** – Use parks and open space as a strategic investment tool to achieve other city priorities.

In cities such as St. Louis, Houston and Louisville, the public and private leadership has a broad interpretation of the scope of issues comprising the health and well being of their cities. Strategies and programs for improved public health, new businesses generation, job creation, and strong neighborhoods, have been incorporated into long term funding and development of programs for open space. The opposite also occurs – health and economic development funding and programs incorporate funding for parks and open space. The key is that multiple public benefits are generated by each limited public dollar spent.

In Indianapolis, too, the Mayor has an unrealized opportunity to link public parks and open space - highly valued by Indy residents - as a strategic investment tool to achieve other community, ecological, and economic development needs. Understanding how parks and open space protection helps to achieve other city goals, such as attracting new businesses, providing affordable housing and revitalizing neighborhoods, can and should be used to leverage financial resources from other city programs, and how investment in parks and open space benefits those programs.

Indianapolis' recent Canal Redevelopment linked the city's housing needs to one of its restored natural resources and attracted financial investment to leverage this multi-faceted effort as a successful economic development enterprise. Indy needs to build upon this example and develop a new approach integrating parks and open space into city policy and decision-making. One upcoming opportunity is the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) initiative where the city will be faced with a major long-term expenditure and the need to protect the city's watershed. Using land protection as a storm water management tool would benefit Indianapolis by safeguarding its drinking, refurbishing the city's aquifer, and reducing the threat of flooding in the city.

In New York City, the city estimated that to filter water from its smallest watershed would represent spending between \$6 to \$8 billion in the construction of a filtering facility and an additional \$300 million/annum in operating expenses. New York City chose to tend over its water supply in a more cost efficient manner by acquiring lands along the watershed on a willing-seller basis. As a policy item Indianapolis and its coffers would be best served by directing portions of the funding from the CSO initiative specifically to the acquisition of open space for watershed protection.

# III. Indianapolis Park System Analysis

## Primary Challenges



The greatest challenge facing the consolidated Indianapolis-Marion County's, Indy Parks system is the relatively small amount of parkland available to meet the recreation needs of its residents. According to benchmarking data collected by Indy Parks, Indianapolis has only 7.5 acres of parkland per 1000 residents while comparable cities have on average 12.9 acres. It is also significantly behind other cities in the amount it invests in parks, spending only \$35 per resident, compared to an average of \$103 per resident spent by other comparable cities.<sup>1</sup> Indianapolis considers Cincinnati, Columbus, Detroit, Minneapolis, Portland, San Francisco, and St. Louis to be comparable in size, demographics, or location. The result is an overall dearth of parkland and park funding. The city is now faced with two primary park investment challenges:

- The need to protect land, shape future growth, and invest in outlying townships where rapid land development is leading to a dramatic loss of remaining open space and a lack of recreational opportunities for the growing population.
- The need to develop additional parkland in Center Township (with Perry and Washington following) to attract and shape reinvestment and to provide recreational opportunities for township residents. Center Township has the greatest population density and the highest concentration of households in need of public recreation resources, including households with the lowest income, largest families, and highest percent of the population under 18 years of age.

## Park System Evaluation

The following evaluation of the Indy Parks system is based on data compiled in the Indianapolis-Marion County Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (1999) — “Pathways to the Future”, — which was analyzed to determine whether Indy Parks’ system of parkland and facilities are:

- Sufficient to meet demand
- Balanced in terms of park types and uses

---

<sup>1</sup> These figures are based on budgeting data collected by TPL, but only using data from the cities that Indianapolis has chosen to benchmark itself against.

- Responsive to current social, recreational, and economic needs
- Accessible to all residents
- Protective of the environmental assets of the community
- Well maintained and funded

### **Sufficient to Meet Demand**

According to multiple studies, including resident focus groups and surveys; land use, neighborhood and strategic plans; and benchmarking data from other cities, Indianapolis' current supply of parkland and recreational facilities does not meet current demand. There is general agreement among all sources that Indianapolis must expand its park system, protect more land, create more recreational opportunities in close-to-home parks, and establish more greenways if it is to meet the current and future demands of its residents. In the Indianapolis 1999 Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, 72 properties were identified as potential acquisitions for parkland, and to date only one has been acquired, which reinforces that the demand for parks and open space is unmet.

In a 1998 citizen survey, 50 percent of respondents said they are not using parks as often as they would like, and only 63 percent of respondents said they had visited a park facility in the previous year, compared with 86 percent of respondents in Portland, Oregon.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, 47 percent of respondents said they do not have any parks in their immediate neighborhood.

In order to measure the gap between supply and demand, Indy Parks compared the amount of park acreage per 1000 residents in Marion County, and a breakdown of acreage by regional, community, and neighborhood parks, to those of seven other comparable cities. Based on this analysis, Indy Parks is below average in terms of its regional park acreage and miles of trails and significantly below average in terms of its community park acreage.

Indy Parks' goal is to eventually be among the top third of comparable cities in its supply of parks and recreational facilities. Based on that goal, in 1999 Indy Parks adopted new standards for the amount of park acreage needed. The latest Comprehensive Plan update (2001) further recommends that standards increase to 17.3 acres of parkland per 1000 persons, and additionally that a standard requirement of a park within one mile of each residential development is established. These standards point to the gap between goals and existing conditions, and emphasize the need to implement the parkland acquisition goals. The following chart shows the gap between its current park acreage and the recently adopted standards.

---

<sup>2</sup> "City of Portland Service Efforts and Accomplishments: 1999-00, Tenth Annual Report on City Government Performance," Office of the City Auditor, Portland, Oregon, December 2000.

---

## Park Acreage p/1000 Residents

---

	Definition	Current	Indy Park Standard <sup>3</sup>
Regional	Over 75 acres	5.18	10
Community	25–100 acres	1.04	6.0
Neighborhood	5–25 acres	1.3	1.3
Trail (in miles)		.07	.15

---

### Balance of Park Types and Uses

It is clear from the above chart that the greatest need in terms of park types is community parks. The county currently has 1.04 acres per 1000 residents, but needs 17.3 acres per 1000 residents in order to meet its latest standard. Indy Parks defines a community park as being approximately 25–100 acres in size, with a variety of recreational facilities that meet the needs of several neighborhoods and with a service radius of one half to three miles.

The second greatest need is for additional trails and greenways. Citizen surveys showed that the number one recreational activity was walking or hiking, with 66 percent saying they walk or hike often or sometimes. Greenway trails were rated as one of the most important features of the park system, with 83 percent of respondents saying they are very important or somewhat important. Yet Indy Parks currently has half the miles of trails it needs in order to be in the top third of comparable cities.

### Responsive to Current Social, Recreational, and Economic Needs

Indianapolis is not currently using parks as a redevelopment or growth management strategy. In terms of redevelopment, the city needs to take advantage of brownfields and fallow properties in Center Township to create new inner-city parks that will both meet the need for additional recreational opportunities and spur private reinvestment in the central city.

The Environment, Parks, and Open Space Committee working on the Comprehensive Plan Update of 2001 looked into issues of clean water, clean air, trees and woodlands, brownfields, parks and greenways, open space and environment considerations, and developed standards and recommendations for those. However, parks and greenways, open space and environment were further classified as “clean city” issues and ... “The committee decided that “clean city” issues were outside the scope of the Comprehensive plan and thus did not develop goals, recommendations or standards for these issues.”<sup>4</sup> By not setting goals and recommendations for parks, greenways, open space, and pollution, the recently updated plan misses the opportunity to strategically link those issues. Furthermore, it overlooks the opportunity to strategically link all these issues and create a stronger investment tool for the city that can be used to leverage additional funding.

For example, in St. Louis, Houston and Louisville the collective leadership has a broad interpretation of the scope of issues comprising the health and well being of their cities. Public

---

<sup>3</sup> IndyPark’s standard is based on the average park acreage per 1000 residents of the top third of comparable cities: Cincinnati, Columbus, Detroit, Minneapolis, Portland, San Francisco and St. Louis.

<sup>4</sup> Indianapolis-Marion County Comprehensive Plan Update 2001, Environment Parks Open Space

health, new business generation, job creation, innovative housing opportunities, strong neighborhoods, air and water quality, economic development, the built environment and infrastructure, arts and culture, are all part of the fabric of community. A successful example closer to home is found in the Canal Redevelopment, which created new housing units along a natural resource and leveraged the effort as an economic development enterprise.

Indianapolis also needs to use land protection in surrounding townships as a strategy to shape and direct future growth, protect remaining undeveloped land, and provide recreational opportunities for the rapidly growing population in outlying townships. Although Marion County's total population has increased only six percent since 1980, population in outlying townships has increased as much as 30–80 percent, with an accompanying 32 percent loss of open space. Therefore, much of the growth in outlying counties is due more to existing residents moving out of developed townships than it is to new residents moving into the county. The city needs to be deliberate and strategic in using its parks and recreation resources to attract and retain residents in the center city and curb the land loss in the suburbs.

According to the 1999 Comprehensive Park Plan and the 2001 Comprehensive Plan update, Indianapolis still makes new park financing decisions on the assumption that using land for parks means losing land for economic development. Studies repeatedly point to the economic development benefits of investing in parks, such as increased property valuations, private development, and increased tourism. Indianapolis needs a new framework for understanding the role of parks in shaping and growing the city.

### **Accessible to All Residents**

In order to be accessible to all residents, park resources need to be disbursed equitably throughout the community. By identifying townships with significantly fewer park resources, Indy Parks can better direct future investment. The townships in greatest need of additional park resources are Perry, Washington, and Center.

Perry Township has the fewest acres of parkland per resident, with only 2.8 acres for every 100 residents. This township is experiencing some of the most rapid development in the county and has lost much of its vacant land.

Washington Township is the second most developed township in the county, after Center Township, but it has only 3.7 acres of parkland for every 1000 residents, well below the average in the county of 12.4.

Center Township has the greatest population density and the highest concentration of households in need of public recreation resources, including households with the lowest income, largest families, and highest percent of the population under 18 years of age. Although Center Township has more acres of parkland per resident than five of the nine townships (9.2 acres per 100 residents) and a greater proportion of recreation facilities than other townships, approximately 28 percent of its local parkland is golf course, which serves a small percent of the township's population. Considering the demographics, Center continues to have insufficient park and recreational resources. The 1992 Indy Parks plan identified a new potential park site in every township except Center. Even Pike, which has 50 percent of the parkland in the county, had four new park sites proposed. It is unclear why Center is the only township with no new park sites proposed. Completion timelines, cost estimates, action steps nor funding sources were identified for the acquisition of these sites.

## Protective of Environmental Assets of the Community

Marion County is losing open space at a disturbing rate, as the local government has not acted to protect lands from rapid development and has encouraged the loss of agricultural lands to development by rezoning them for non-farm use. Between 1993 and 1997, vacant land, defined as rural open space with relatively few artificial structures, decreased from 61,721 to 46,846 acres, a total loss of 14,875 acres, mostly from Perry, Decatur, and Franklin Townships.

Indy Parks' 1992 Comprehensive Plan recommended 72 new park sites for acquisition. By 2001, only one had been acquired and 29 of them had been at least partially developed by the private sector. In the 1999 Comprehensive Park Plan no sites were targeted for parks and only \$250,000 were allocated for existing facilities and site improvements, no new park acquisition. In the 2002 Proposed Budget, only \$4,000 have been identified for land acquisition and possibly \$50,000 reallocated toward the purchase of a specific property.

## Well Maintained and Funded

Although there is not a direct link between spending and the quality of a park system, without adequate investment, park resources will not be sufficient to meet demand, and maintenance levels will deteriorate over time. Indianapolis is significantly behind other cities in the amount it invests in parks (capital and operating), spending only \$35 per resident, compared to an average of \$103 per resident spent by cities it considers comparable. Average expenditure per resident for the 54 cities from which TPL has collected data is \$79, which is 56 percent higher than Indianapolis' spending level.

CITY	FISCAL YEAR 2000
Cincinnati	\$142
Detroit	69
Minneapolis	144
Portland	101
St. Louis	60
Indianapolis	35

From "Inside City Parks", TPL's Adjusted Expenditures (combines operating and capital budgets, but excludes zoos, stadiums, museums and aquariums)

Based on citizen surveys, maintenance of existing park facilities has remained relatively high, in part due to private investment and despite the very low levels of public spending. Although this may indicate a high level of efficiency, it also indicates that longer-term maintenance is being neglected.

Although Indianapolis' low level of investment in parks has not led to obvious maintenance problems, it has led to a lack of sufficient parkland. Despite the fact that new park acquisition and development is listed as a priority throughout the 1999 Comprehensive Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, the Capital Improvement Plan outlined at the end of the document does not appear to assign any capital investment to new acquisition or development. Instead, all capital investment is directed at existing facilities and site improvements. The 2001 Comprehensive

Plan update recommends the need to develop funding mechanisms to acquire parks and greenways, but only allocated \$4,000 to park acquisition in the 2002 Proposed Budget.

## **Conclusion**

If Indianapolis begins to address the challenge of providing parks and recreation opportunities to all of its citizens, citizens who said during focus groups that “parks define quality of life,” it will need to increase capital investment, direct resources to creating new parks and recreational facilities, and protect dwindling open space.

Particularly critical is the need for additional community parks and an interconnected trail system throughout the city. Although all of the townships are in need of additional parkland, Perry and Washington Townships have the greatest need for increased park acreage and recreational facilities. New park investment is also needed in Center Township in order to bring reinvestment back to the central city and to meet the needs of the many low-income families living there.

# IV. Stakeholder Analysis

## General Description and Methodology

The consultant team conducted in-depth telephone and in-person interviews with 33 individuals who represented a cross-section of Indianapolis parks and open space leadership and stakeholders from the private and public sectors. The purpose of the stakeholder interviews was to explore in greater depth the issues lightly alluded to in the random survey conducted with the general public.

The general consensus of the interviewees was that the city's park and recreation system has many notable strong points but that overall it is deficient and needs strengthening. Specifically:

- A number of respondents pointed to the turnarounds of Holliday and Garfield Parks, the tremendous triumph of the citywide greenway program, and the exciting revitalization of the Central Canal Redevelopment just north of downtown as particular recent successes.
- Of concern, however, is the fact that, in spite of the City's nationally recognized planning capabilities, there seems to be a breakdown when it comes to new park implementation. Virtually none of the almost-100 projected parkland acquisitions since 1992 actually occurred.
- Interviewees also indicated that the park dialogue is overly focused on recreation, and that the issue of parks in Indianapolis is much more far-reaching than simply "fun and games"—i.e. sports fields. They felt the park system should be designed to serve a full spectrum of goals: conservation, growth management, waterway protection, and economic development, as well as recreation.

## Outstanding Challenges

There was not unanimity in explaining a single underlying cause of the park system's inadequacy; rather there appears to be an interlocking set of impediments. From the many issues cited, the consultant team constructed seven broad categories:

### Need for leadership

Leadership is the number one requirement, alluded to in many different ways, and its lack is a historical artifact from previous administrations. Some respondents felt that the business and nonprofit communities have been waiting for leadership from the politicians; others felt that the opposite was the case. Closely tied to the issue of a leadership vacuum is the unwillingness to discuss ways to boost more public money for parks. Several interviewees lamented that any talk of raising taxes is "political suicide."

One interviewee speculated that the lack of indigenous park leadership might stem from what he



called the city's "brain drain"—the loss of young people to out-of-state college towns, from which they do not return. He wondered if this contributed to a weaker sense of civic connection in Indianapolis, as opinion leaders are often non-native newcomers who did not grow up knowing the city's parks in their youth.

### **Lack of continuity within the Parks and Recreation Department**

Beyond stressing the need for citywide leadership, many respondents noted the turnover of park leadership, with five different agency directors between 1990 and 2001. The turmoil has prevented the department from developing a consistent vision, much less a consistent program. It also means that the department has a weakened institutional memory. Moreover, because of the period of extensive outsourcing during the Goldsmith administration, private contractors have significant chunks of information while the department itself is relatively "knowledge poor." It is important that the department be empowered, adequately funded, and given a role in citywide planning.

### **Realization that parks are much more than simply ballfields**

As one man said, "Too many folks here think that any old cornfield can be turned into a park." Most Indianapolis do not understand that creating a successful park requires careful analysis, much community input, excellent design, and regular maintenance and upkeep. With the city's relatively flat topography and no specific vision of an interconnected park system, there is a sense that one available parcel is interchangeable with any other. Thus there is no outcry when a particular open space parcel is lost to development. If it's perceived as just a ballfield, "another cornfield can be found." However, if future park parcels are identified through a comprehensive process that takes into account conservation, connectivity, access, neighborhood need, cultural importance, and other values that are *specific* to a site, then parcels are less likely to be lost to the whims of the political process.

### **Parks as potential nodes for surrounding development**

There is a growing understanding that parks can be the building blocks of new neighborhoods and the resuscitators of older communities. Unfortunately, there appears to be a deep-seated feeling in city government that every acre of parkland is an acre taken off the tax roll. In contrast, most other cities recognize that parkland is attractive, desirable infrastructure, which raises the value (and the taxable value) of surrounding and nearby properties, more than compensating for the tax money lost from the parkland itself.

### **Need for a political connection**

Many of the stakeholders pointed out that, despite Indianapolis' strong anti-tax stance, constituencies working on programs for schools, libraries, and the arts have all been successful in engineering political collaborations to fund their programs—including multimillion-dollar bond issues for libraries and schools, and powerful partnerships between the government and the arts community. Parks advocates need to hammer out a shared agenda with potentially supportive constituencies, rather than operating as independent entities. The city administration could help nurture this shared agenda.

## **Need to link advocates for parks with advocates for greenways**

There is a critical need to build a bridge between park advocates and those working to create greenways throughout the city. The greenways movement is perceived as extremely successful, with millions annually using the Monon Trail, the Fall Creek Trail, the Canal Trail, and others. Among reasons for its success are its ability to create corridors quite inexpensively on land already owned by other public agencies, and its ability to leverage funds from federal and state transportation budgets. The marriage of greenways and parks would be ideal (and the greenways program is technically within the parks program), but currently the political and financial connections rarely occur.

## **Need for mechanisms to assure and encourage public participation**

Despite the existence of a four-member, mayoral-appointed departmental Park Board which meets regularly to assist the director in setting policy and making decisions, the City needs to do much more to involve the public in evaluating existing parks, identifying park needs, and planning the acquisition and design of new parks. Moreover, the city needs to bring together the multiple constituencies interested in parks for recreation, conservation, water preservation, economic development, and growth management, as well as those interested in greenways.

Indianapolis is by no means without active park, greenway, and open space advocates. Among other groups, there are the Indianapolis Parks Foundation; the Indianapolis Greenways Foundation; the Sierra Club; the local chapters of the National Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy; Eagle Creek Park Foundation; Friends of Holliday Park; Friends of Garfield Park; Partners of Parks; Marion County Alliance of Neighborhood Associations; Hoosier Environmental Council; Save the White River; Saving St. Mauer; Indianapolis Road Runners Association; Central Indiana Land Trust; Indianapolis Downtown Association; and Keep Indianapolis Beautiful.

Unfortunately, while many of these groups do excellent work on the specific parks or issues they have selected for themselves, the sum of the outcome seems less than the individual efforts expended. There is not a unified citywide pro-parks defense and advocacy movement as in cities such as Chicago, San Francisco, Boston, and Atlanta. Thus, there is frustration from both the public and private sector, with so much work and concern often being canceled out by the lack of an overreaching vision.

We believe that the solution to this problem is the establishment of a new blue ribbon committee that would report to the mayor. The Committee should be composed of two complementary groups of persons: (1) several of the long-time park advocates who have the technical and historical knowledge about the city's parks; and (2) several prominent local leaders who have experience in the give-and-take of the coalition process, and who can help assure a unified citywide agenda for parks.

Without making specific recommendations, the former group might consist of persons like:

Cindy Porteous,	Indianapolis Parks Foundation
Tom Olsen,	Indianapolis Greenways Foundation
Tom Hiatt,	Friends of Holliday Park
Cathy Burton,	Marion County Alliance of Neighborhood Associations

Greg Cafouros,	Indianapolis Parks Foundation
Sandy Miles,	Sierra Club
Mark Dewart,	Sierra Club
Greg Lindsey,	Center for Urban Policy and the Environment
R. M. Van Frank,	National Audubon Society

The latter group might consist of persons like:

Jim Morris, formerly with Indianapolis Water Co.

Chuck Preston, Lilly Endowment

Tom Bruns, formerly with Indianapolis Water Co.

Greg Silver, Mayor's Greenways Committee

Tamara Zahn, Indianapolis Downtown Association

Jim Maguire, former chief of staff for the governor.

Susan Hanafee, former vice president, Indianapolis Power and Light

Reed Williamson, Canal Stakeholders

Mark Boyce, C.P. Morgan

Jay Height, Shepherd Community Church

David Retherford, attorney

Lee Alig, Mansur Co.

Greg Fennig, Keep Indianapolis Beautiful

# V. Public Finance Analysis

## Introduction

This section represents the core of the report and gives a thorough overview of the range of local funding options for land conservation in Indianapolis-Marion County (the City). There are three main categories of funding options presented, including discretionary annual funding sources, dedicated funding sources, and debt financing. Although local funding must be at the foundation of any successful effort in Indianapolis-Marion County, it is also important for local leaders to be aware of state and federal funding programs that complement local (and private) funds and help complete the “funding quilt” that distinguishes effective conservation efforts. These programs are outlined in Appendix B.

The report also includes the findings from a public opinion survey conducted among registered voters in Indianapolis during November, 2001. This survey is intended to assess voter attitudes about land conservation and other issues facing Indianapolis-Marion County, as well as how they feel about spending money for land conservation and their priorities for such a program.

The report also looks at successful land conservation programs from comparable locations around the country in order to provide a context for Indianapolis in its efforts. Finally, the report includes action-oriented recommendations for Indianapolis-Marion County.

### 1999 Tax Burdens for A Family of Four\*

City	\$50,000 Income		\$75,000 Income		\$100,000 Income	
	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%
Philadelphia, PA	6,218	12.4	9,235	12.3	12,021	12
New York, NY	5,522	11	9,557	12.7	13,422	13.4
Milwaukee, WI	5,265	10.5	8,264	11	10,990	11
Baltimore, MD	5,144	10.3	8,142	10.9	10,977	11
Boston, MA	5,056	10.1	8,087	10.8	10,805	10.8
Detroit, MI	4,849	9.7	7,621	10.2	10,187	10.2
Minneapolis, MN	4,680	9.4	7,944	10.6	11,007	11
Washington, DC	4,650	9.3	7,901	10.5	10,937	10.9
Salt Lake City, UT	4,546	9.1	7,224	9.6	9,591	9.6
Columbus, OH	4,438	8.9	7,274	9.7	10,076	10.1
Charlotte, NC	4,288	8.6	7,029	9.4	9,763	9.8
Atlanta, GA	4,283	8.6	7,276	9.7	9,920	9.9
Chicago, IL	4,279	8.6	6,748	9	8,894	8.9
Kansas City, MO	4,077	8.2	6,451	7.9	8,656	8.7
Los Angeles, CA	3,968	7.9	7,269	9.7	10,626	10.6
Seattle, WA	3,729	7.5	5,657	7.5	7,124	7.1
Phoenix, AZ	3,703	7.4	5,916	7.9	8,068	8.1
<b>Indianapolis, IN</b>	<b>3,610</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>5,593</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>7,403</b>	<b>7.4</b>
Denver, CO	3,253	6.5	5,210	6.9	6,954	7
Houston, TX	2,812	5.6	4,374	5.8	5,628	5.6

Note: Study only looks at the tax burden in the most populous city in each state; therefore, large cities that rank second or third in their state's population, like Dallas or San Francisco, are not compared in the study. Study includes only personal income, property, sales and automobile taxes.

\* Latest year for which data is available.

SOURCE: *Tax Rates & Tax Burdens in the District of Columbia, a Nationwide Comparison*, issued July 2000

## Fiscal Overview

### Fiscal Profile

Although the primary purpose of this section of the report is to provide insight into potential revenue options that Indianapolis may consider for financing acquisition of parks and open space, it is also important to assess whether the City's fiscal health is strong enough to consider allocating money for open space. Although there are a number of challenges facing Indianapolis—notably public safety and the impact of statewide tax restructuring—the underlying fiscal health of Indianapolis is solid.

With its AAA bond rating and low tax rates, Indianapolis is considered by many to be one of the most fiscally conservative big cities in the country. According to the study *Tax Rates & Tax Burdens in the District of Columbia, a Nationwide Comparison*, issued in July, 2000, Indianapolis has one of the lowest tax burdens of any major city in the country. Although this has been the case for many years and is likely to continue to be, Indianapolis and Marion County will have some challenges in the years ahead. Public safety and the combined sewer overflow (“CSO”) problem are the items most likely to require increased expenditures. However, the Center City development and the United Airlines project may also put additional pressure on the budget.

## Property Tax

The primary and most well-known source of revenue for the city and the county is the property tax. The FY 2002 budget for the city projects total revenues of \$525 million, with approximately \$171.6 million in revenue from property taxes. In addition, property taxes separately fund schools and libraries,<sup>5</sup> which are independent from the city and county.

Local governments—counties, townships, cities and towns, school corporations, library districts, and other special districts—set tax levies in Indiana subject to state tax control rules. The control rules state that civil government general-fund taxes may rise by five percent per year, unless the average increase in assessed value for the most recent three years exceeds five percent. In that case, levies can rise by the three-year average percent increase to a maximum of ten percent. Reassessment years are excluded from the average percent increase calculation. Debt service levies are not limited, though the State Board of Tax Commissioners has the authority to approve or reject local bond issues.

## Property Tax Rates

There are 61 separate tax rates levied on property owners in Indianapolis-Marion County, depending upon where they live. While all taxpayers residing in Indianapolis-Marion County pay the same rates for state, county, and welfare taxes, they pay different rates for schools, city services (generally fire and police), and libraries.

Prior to fiscal year 2002, property in Indianapolis was assessed at one-third of its “true market value.” Beginning in fiscal 2002, the State Board of Tax Commissioners has required that assessed values be brought up to true market values. As such, assessed values will grow by 300 percent, while tax rates will fall by two-thirds.

For purposes of illustration, the component tax rates for a resident of Center Township in Indianapolis are included in the accompanying table. According to the Marion County Auditor, for 2000, a taxpayer in Center Township would pay \$12.672 per

### Indianapolis (Center) 2000 Tax Rates

	Rate	Percent
Schools	5.9811	47.20%
City	3.9129	30.88%
County	1.8514	14.61%
Libraries	0.3465	2.73%
Welfare	0.3448	2.72%
Township	0.2253	1.78%
State	0.0100	0.08%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.6720</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

<sup>5</sup> In December, 1998, the Indiana State Supreme Court ruled the 1995 real property assessment manual unconstitutional (*State Board of Tax Commissioners v. Town of St. John*) and that Indiana’s true tax value assessment system must consider market value. Thus, beginning in 2002, the State Board of Tax Commissioners has instructed all counties to assess real and personal property at true market value.

\$100 of assessed property value.<sup>6</sup> This is the highest tax rate in the Unigov; residents of Pike paid the lowest at \$9.752/\$100. Of the total Indianapolis Center rate, roughly 1.5 percent or .1871/\$100 goes toward the consolidated park system (.0171 is for park debt service).

As illustrated in the accompanying table, property tax rates in Marion County are higher than rates in neighboring counties. However, the assessed values in Marion County continue to grow at a slower rate than surrounding counties, as illustrated in the next section.

### Property Tax Base

Marion County's tax base grew more slowly than any of its neighboring counties between 1996 and 2000, according to the state's Department of Local Government Finance. In contrast to fast-growing neighbors Hendricks and Hamilton counties, which ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> among the state's 92 counties, Marion County placed 49<sup>th</sup> with assessed property valuation growing 12 percent over that four-year period, lagging the state average.

As mentioned earlier, property in Marion County, and across Indiana, will be undergoing a reassessment as a result of an Indiana Supreme Court ruling declaring previous property assessment rules unconstitutional. At the time of the report's writing, there is a legislative effort underway to revamp the property tax structure, which will mitigate the anticipated spikes in property values, and hence property taxes, that were likely due for reassessment.

### Comparative Property Tax Rates Net of State Property Tax Credits

County	Average Net Rate*
Marion County	9.2031
Hamilton County	7.6472
Hancock County	6.8881
Shelby County	6.1544
Johnson County	7.1985
Morgan County	6.3361
Hendricks County	8.1131
Boone County	7.8525
Indiana Average	8.6955

### Growth in Assessed Value

1996 - 2000

Rank	County	Pct. Change
2	Hendricks	44.90%
4	Hamilton	35.80%
6	Johnson	28.30%
14	Boone	22.00%
15	Morgan	21.90%
27	Shelby	18.10%
	Avg. for State	14.80%
49	Marion	12.00%

<sup>6</sup> Note: all taxable property (real and personal) was assessed at 33.33 percent of "equalized" 1985 values in 2000.

## Revenues and Expenditures

The City's 2002 budget increases spending from \$520.9 million in 2001 to \$525.8 million, an increase of less than one percent. The Parks and Recreation budget increased 2.9 percent, from \$29.1 million to \$29.97 million. Parks and Recreation spending is 5.7 percent of the City's total budget.

### 2002 Proposed Budget City of Indianapolis

Revenues	Amount (\$)	Percentage
Property Taxes	171,564,508	32.6%
Intergovernmental Revenue*	132,963,221	25.3%
Fees and Charges for Services	107,921,158	20.5%
County Option Income Tax	52,557,041	10.0%
Other Taxes	30,287,338	5.8%
From Fund Balance	12,682,106	2.4%
Licenses and Permits	8,738,234	1.7%
Interest and Other Revenues	5,130,699	1.0%
Fines and Penalties	3,930,474	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$525,774,779</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Expenditures	Amount (\$)	Percentage
Public Safety	221,453,149	42.1%
Public Works	158,920,321	30.2%
Urban and Economic Developm	45,624,462	8.7%
Debt Service	42,426,049	8.1%
Parks and Recreation	29,974,386	5.7%
General Government	27,376,412	5.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$525,774,779</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

\* Includes Federal and State Grants

Indianapolis and Marion County depend on three primary local tax revenue options—the property tax, the income tax, and the motor vehicle excise tax—in addition to state and federal revenues, fees, and services. In the budget forecast for 2002, property taxes account for 67.4 percent of total tax revenue for the City, and the City's share of the County Option Income Tax comprises 22.1 percent. Clearly, these two taxes are the major pillars of the City's tax structure.

### Tax Revenue 2002 Proposed Budget City of Indianapolis

Taxes	Amount (\$)	Percentage
Property	171,564,508	67.4%
County Option Income Tax	56,240,000	22.1%
Wheel Tax	8,000,000	3.1%
Other Taxes	18,604,379	7.3%
<b>Total taxes</b>	<b>\$254,408,887</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

The underlying property tax rate for the 2002 budget, reflecting the new “true” market reassessment, is \$1.2496, which translates to \$3.7488 under the old assessment system. This reflects a reduction of \$.0182 from the 2001 rate of \$3.7670.

**Composition of Total City Tax Rate**  
2002 Budget

<b>Indianapolis</b>	Rate	Percent
Fire Special Services	0.3687	29.51 percent
Fire Pension	0.0592	4.74 percent
Police Special Service	0.4133	33.07 percent
Police Pension	0.0592	4.74 percent
Solid Waste Collection	0.0862	6.90 percent
Redevelopment	0.0022	0.18 percent
Consolidated County	0.0767	6.14 percent
Flood Control	0.0000	0.00 percent
Park General	0.0575	4.60 percent
Cumulative Capital Development	0.0468	3.75 percent
Debt Service Sinking Funds	0.0798	6.39 percent
Maintenance Operations	0.0000	0.00 percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.2496</b>	<b>100.00 percent</b>

## Debt Burden

Due to the broad-based economy and its conservative debt and fiscal policies, the City has maintained an AAA bond rating, one of the few big cities to achieve this. The AAA rating enables the City to borrow money to fund a variety of projects at lower interest rates, translating into fewer burdens on the taxpayers. Maintaining this rating is a priority for the City as, according to the mayor's press release of September 7, 2001, a downgrade of a single level would cost \$1 million a year for projects such as fixing raw sewage overflows.

### Debt Statistics for Indianapolis

<b>Bond Rating:</b>	AAA
<b>Direct Net Debt</b> (Property Tax backed)	\$324,518,503
<b>Debt of Overlapping Entities</b>	\$709,635,148
<b>Overall Net Debt</b>	\$1,034,153,651
<b>Market Value of Real Property</b>	\$20,117,166,579
<b>Overall Net Debt as a Percent of Full Market Property Value</b>	5.14%

Source: Final Long Term Control Report; April 30, 2001

State law does not limit property tax levies for debt service, although the State Board of Tax Commissioners can approve or reject local bond issues. There is, however, a limit on indebtedness built into the Indiana Constitution. According to Article 13, "no political or municipal corporation in the state shall ever become indebted, in any manner or for any purpose, to an amount, in the aggregate, exceeding two per centum on the value of the taxable property within such corporation." According to the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of December 31, 2000, neither the City nor any of its component entities is anywhere close to this limit<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> The Debt Statistics Chart above combines all of the direct debt of the City from all of its component entities (Civil City, Redevelopment District, Sanitary District, Flood Control District, Public Safety Communications District, Metropolitan Thoroughfare District, and Park District), in addition to all of the City's indirect debt. Each district has its own debt limit, however, so the figures in the chart above represent an amalgamation of seven different districts, none of which is at all close to its constitutional limit.

## Major Fiscal Issues

### State Tax Restructuring

Several years ago, state courts mandated a complete overhaul of the property assessment system in Indiana. Such a move would likely cause significant changes in property taxes for many taxpayers. State policymakers are working to craft a legislative remedy that will blunt the impact of this proposed reassessment. A leading proposal currently before a legislative conference committee increases the state sales tax by one percent.

### Public Safety

According to Mayor Peterson's budget presentation of August 6, 2001, "Our biggest fiscal challenge . . . is still the police and fire taxing districts. Despite the pension relief bills, the existing IPD and IFD taxing districts are still irreparably broken because of the crushing burden of long-term police and fire pension costs and a flagging tax base."

When the state of Indiana took over the pension fund for police officers and firemen who retired after 1977, cities and towns were left to struggle to pay the pensions of those who retired before 1977. The city controller reports that the biggest "blip" in retiree pensions is occurring right now. While controversial, the City has dealt with this shortfall in a unique way by imposing a one-time, one-year indirect tax (Payment in Lieu of Taxes, or PILOT) on the Indianapolis International Airport and the Capital Improvement Board, which owns Conseco Fieldhouse.

A long-term fix is critical, not only for Indianapolis, but also for cities and towns across Indiana. The problem will resolve itself eventually, but these obligations can be municipal "budget busters" in the near term. Localities are looking to the state for assistance, and several bills are being considered by the Indiana General Assembly to provide state funds to assist these cities. If no state relief is available, Indianapolis will be forced to come up with the funding.

However, the mayor's 2002 budget provides funding for 50 additional community police officers and enhanced community outreach efforts, as well as for upgrading police and fire gear, including the first payment for a new police helicopter, firefighter breathing apparatus, dive team equipment, and other gear crucial to firefighter safety. We assume that public safety will remain a priority in the future.

Mayor Peterson has proposed as a future option extending the public safety tax that only currently applies to the traditional "city center" of Indianapolis to the boundaries of Indianapolis-Marion County. In order to broaden the tax base for public safety to suburban residents of Indianapolis-Marion County with little if any tax increase, such a proposal would necessitate the state assuming the costs of welfare services.

### Combined Sewer Overflow

Because the Indianapolis sewer system and the system to catch excess stormwater are combined, there are more than 130 locations where they overflow during heavy rain. Even though diluted, raw sewage flows out of the sewers and onto the ground or into creeks and streams. These are called combined sewer overflows ("CSO"s).

While many infrastructure improvements have been made, the expensive sewer and stormwater drainage repairs and upgrades have not yet been fully tackled. Numerous studies have been completed and plans proposed. The consensus is that it will cost Indianapolis citizens and

businesses between \$840 million and \$1.3 billion to complete necessary rebuilding and to meet federal EPA guidelines. Two ordinances to improve water quality and capture more runoff passed the Indianapolis/Marion County City-County Council in May, 2001.

Councillor Mary Moriarty-Adams' ordinance, introduced on behalf of the mayor, calls for a monthly increase in the sewer user fee of \$1.94 to fund the first phase of the plan, including some upgrades to the city's treatment plants and other construction, design, and engineering work. This ordinance raises \$184 million dollars over the next five years, and future increases would then be considered. (Over the next ten to 20 years, the sewer user fee could rise to \$25–30 per month as additional work phases are added.<sup>8</sup>) Indianapolis' fees would be lower than other midwestern cities that face CSO problems. These fees would be applied to both residential and business owners. Mayor Peterson signed the ordinance on June 6, 2001.

Councillor Beulah Coughenour introduced her long-standing proposal to create a Storm Water Drainage Utility. Several midwestern states have stormwater utilities. Through the Storm Water Drainage Utility, residents and businesses will be charged approximately \$1.25 per month. The proposal also passed the City-County Council in May, 2001, and was signed by Mayor Peterson on June 6, 2001.

### United Airlines Project

The City entered into an agreement to lease a portion of land located at the airport for a major aircraft maintenance and overhaul center for United Airlines, Inc. The lease, which extends over a 25-year term, requires the City to make annual payments equal to the debt service requirements on bonds issued to fund the project.

United agreed to provide certain economic development incentives for the benefit of the city. It committed to spend \$800 million in equipping the facility by the end of 2001 and to employ 6,300 people by the end of 2004.

As of mid-August, the airline was \$266 million short of fulfilling its promise. While expressing sympathy for the nation's struggling airlines, city officials say they and state officials will require United to pay an estimated \$33 million in penalties, of which roughly \$14 million will go to the City. The City still owes more than \$150 million on the bonds it sold to pay for the project.<sup>9</sup> The City anticipates reaping a significant windfall from the United Airlines project, and will plow the money back into economic development projects.

### Circle Center Project

The City's debt profile is unique, as more than half of the overall debt is composed of tax increment financing (TIF) revenue bonds backed not by a direct pledge of the City, but by a "moral obligation" pledge if TIF revenues are not sufficient. The majority of this debt was used to fund the Circle Center Mall, a major retail project, which is the anchor of the downtown redevelopment program. According to Moody's Investment Service, the "moral obligation debt will remain self-supporting in the near term. This self-supporting debt will become increasingly difficult to sustain given the reliance of future growth to meet the ascending debt service requirements of the moral obligation debt. This may be a source of future fiscal pressure if the City chooses to appropriate funds to cover any potential shortfall of TIF revenues to meet debt

---

<sup>8</sup> Improving Our Streams in the City of Indianapolis —A Report on Options for Controlling Combined Sewer Overflows.

<sup>9</sup> *Indianapolis Star*, October 5, 2001.

service requirements.”

## Public Opinion Survey Results

In order to assist the City of Indianapolis with its efforts to assess how to create a program for funding land conservation, the Trust for Public Land commissioned the Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group to conduct a scientific survey of Indianapolis voters. The primary goals of the public opinion survey were to establish what priority voters attributed to land conservation in Indianapolis (compared with other issues), what land conservation purposes they found most compelling, and their willingness to have public dollars fund land conservation. The survey was conducted in mid-December, 2001. A summary from Fred Yang follows.

The results of the mid-December survey for the Trust for Public Land provide very positive news about voters’ attitudes toward open space and parkland preservation in Indianapolis. Protecting the environment is an important priority for voters and their support for expanding open space in Indianapolis is extensive; so much so that a sizeable number of voters are “very willing” to pay more in taxes to expand parklands and protect natural lands.

**The Environment, and issues of growth and development, are very important to voters in Indianapolis.**

- **The environment is at the top of voters’ issue agenda.** Voters care a lot about the air and water quality in Indianapolis. A 54 percent majority of Indianapolis’ voters say it is extremely important for the City to protect air

and water quality [c153–154]. The ranking of this issue is only slightly preceded by priorities that we expect to emerge to the top—improving the public schools (60 percent saying this is extremely important [c147–148]), and boosting economic development (55 percent saying this is extremely important [145–146]). It is very encouraging that voters care as strongly as they do about protecting their environment.

- **Indianapolis voters care deeply about limiting growth and development.** By more than a three-to-one margin, 70 percent of voters believe there should be protection against overdevelopment. They are concerned that once natural lands are developed, they are gone forever [165].

**There is strong support to spend local tax dollars to expand parklands and preserve natural lands in Indianapolis.**

**More than three in four voters favor using public funds to expand parklands and preserve natural lands.** A solid 77 percent of voters in Indianapolis favor spending one percent of the City’s budget to expand parklands and protect

natural lands that would improve water and air quality, protect wildlife habitat, and reduce stormwater runoff. Even when we ask people whether they favor or oppose spending public funds for open space and parkland preservation [Q10a], without telling them the benefits of doing so, a substantial 71 percent majority is in favor of doing so and a slim 20 percent minority is not [Q3b].

- **People are willing pay higher taxes to expand parklands and protect natural lands.** An overwhelming 82 percent of voters say they are willing to pay \$6 more a year in taxes to accomplish this goal, with 54 percent saying they are “very willing” [Q9a]. Moreover, 71 percent of voters say they are willing to pay \$12 more a year in taxes to protect natural lands

[Q9b].

**Voters care deeply about the quality of air and water today and protecting the environment for**

- **Voters' top reasons for preserving natural lands: protecting drinking water sources and improving the quality of air and water in Indianapolis.** Voters have

very favorable reactions to using existing public funds to preserve natural lands for these purposes. 93 percent of voters favor using public funds to protect lands that protect drinking water, with nearly seven in ten favoring this strongly. 94 percent favor using public funds to protect lands along the White River to improve water quality, with 64 percent favoring this strongly [Q8].

- The most convincing reason to support spending public funds for open space and parkland preservation in Indianapolis is to have clean water to drink. 87 percent consider this to be a convincing reason—with 63 percent saying it is a very convincing reason. Additionally, voters are concerned about the future of Indianapolis' environment [c236]. **Voters want their children and grandchildren to be able to enjoy the beautiful landscape and diversity of wildlife they have today.** 86 percent of voters say that this particular point is a convincing reason to support spending public funds for open space and parkland preservation in Indianapolis, with 64 percent saying it is a very convincing reason [c241].

*From December 15 to 16, 2001, the Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group conducted a telephone survey for the Trust for Public Land among a representative sample of 409 voters in Indianapolis. The statistical margin of error for a survey with this sample size is  $\pm 4.9$  percent and higher for specific subgroups.*

## Revenue Options for Open Space

As part of the process of revising its Comprehensive Plan, the leaders of Indianapolis-Marion County convened a committee on the Environment, Parks and Open Space to study the relationship between the environment and the current and future development of the city. In August, 2001, this committee issued a report, which concluded that there is currently not an adequate funding mechanism for the acquisition of parks and open space. The following excerpt from the Committee's goals illustrates this conclusion.

**Goal 8: To provide all Marion County residents, whether in established or developing neighborhoods, a variety of convenient parks and greenways and to protect existing parks and greenways from encroachment.**

**Sub-goal (b): To develop a reliable funding mechanism for the acquisition of parks and greenways.**

As this committee discovered through its work on the update to the Comprehensive Plan, the absence of a funding mechanism is a major challenge facing Indianapolis-Marion County in its effort to increase land for parks and open space. This finding fits squarely with the Trust for Public Land's work in communities across the country. TPL has found that the presence of a reliable (and hopefully dedicated) *local* funding source is the foundation of any successful land conservation program. Hundreds of local governments, large and small, have established dedicated funding sources for land conservation in recent years, with nearly 200 in 2001 alone. The vast majority of these local governments rely upon property tax, sales tax, or general obligation bonds as their dedicated funding source, although a few have used the income tax or real estate transfer tax. See Appendix D.

Although dedicated funding is the most common, most effective, and most reliable method of financing a land conservation program, some local governments have made multiyear commitments to fund land conservation programs through discretionary allocations of budgetary funds (either operating or capital). Such efforts are undertaken for one of several reasons: 1) as an initial step in funding land acquisition; 2) if political circumstances preclude creating a dedicated fund; and 3) if the state legal framework does not provide local governments with a dedicated revenue option for land conservation.

### The Funding Quilt

Using their own funding source as a base, successful local land acquisition programs are then able to leverage a broad range of funding sources—state, federal, and private—and to combine them into a so-called “funding quilt.” These other sources of funds serve as incentives or supplements, the primary responsibility rests with the local government.

### Categories of Financing Options

This section outlines three types of potential local funding sources available to Indianapolis-Marion County: 1) discretionary annual financing; 2) creation of dedicated funding streams; and 3) debt financing. One of the dedicated funding streams cited is a developer impact fee.

Although discussed here, they are more of a regulatory technique and should be seen as augmenting other funding streams, not replacing them. Appendix B discusses federal and state programs in more detail.

#### Discretionary Annual Financing

Parks and open space acquisition can be financed through several discretionary annual financing options including:

- 1) Reallocating or increasing the property tax
- 2) Reallocating or increasing the County Option Income Tax
- 3) Reallocating a portion of the Cumulative Capital Development Fund (COIT)

#### Dedicated Funding Options

As noted above, local governments typically have a number of potential ways to establish dedicated funding streams for land conservation. Indianapolis' alternatives in this area are extremely limited and do not include dedicated property taxes or sales taxes (there is no local sales tax in Indiana, nor are we proposing one). Expanding these tools by revamping the state legal framework should be strongly considered and will be discussed later in the report. At present, the potential dedicated funding options for Indianapolis-Marion County include:

- 1) Dedicated stormwater/sewer fees
- 2) Tax increment financing
- 3) Dedicated impact fees

#### Debt Finance Options (Bonds)

Debt financing option include:

- 1) General obligation bonds
- 2) Revenue bonds

## Discretionary Annual Financing

### 1) Reallocation or Increase in Property Tax

The property tax is the simplest and most straightforward means of generating dollars for land acquisition. Reallocating existing funds puts land acquisition in direct conflict with other programs, while tax increases may be politically difficult in tight fiscal times and in light of on going (court-ordered statewide) property reassessments that could yield significant changes in people's tax bills.

Conversely, Indianapolis has cut tax rates several times in recent years and has ample room under the tax limits allowed by the state, even though its taxes outpace neighboring counties. As of 2000, the state tax margin was 24 percent higher than Indianapolis-Marion County's tax levy.

If Indianapolis-Marion County were to look to the property tax as a revenue source, it has a robust property tax base and the ability to generate significant revenues with modest costs to

#### Estimated Cost of Property Tax Increase Marion County

Gross Rate Increase (per \$100 AV)	2002 Assessed Value**	Annual Revenue	Cost/Year/ \$100K House*
0.0100	\$28,382,776,000	\$2,838,278	\$8.00
0.0250	\$28,382,776,000	\$7,095,694	\$20.00
0.0500	\$28,382,776,000	\$14,191,388	\$40.00

\* Less Property Tax Replacement Credits of 20%

\*\* Source: 2002 Proposed Budget

taxpayers. Based on its 2002 assessed valuation, Indianapolis-Marion County can increase its gross rate \$0.025 per \$100 of assessed value and raise \$7.1 million, at a cost of \$20 for the owner of a typical \$100,000 house. In TPL's experience, exceeding \$20 per household is generally not advised for most local funding mechanisms.

### 2) County Option Income Tax

Marion County is one of 85 of Indiana's 92 counties to impose a local income tax. There are three different types of income tax available to Indiana counties; Marion County has adopted the County Option Income Tax ("COIT"). Local income tax revenue is collected by Indiana's Department of Revenue and distributed back to the adopting counties.

In Indianapolis, the original intent of the COIT was to fund various public safety projects and services. The current tax rate is 0.7 percent of earned income and has not increased since 1990. The COIT rate may only be raised by 0.1 percent increments per year, to a maximum rate of one percent. Unlike the surrounding counties, Indianapolis-Marion County does not charge the maximum income tax rate.

### Comparison of Income Tax Rates with Surrounding Counties

County	Rate	Sales Tax
Marion County	0.0700	COIT
Hamilton County	1.0000	COIT
Hancock County	1.0000	CAGIT*
Shelby County	1.0000	CAGIT
Johnson County	1.0000	CAGIT
Morgan County	1.0000	CAGIT
Hendricks County	1.0000	CAGIT
Boone County	1.0000	COIT

Source: FY 2000 Indiana Legislative Services Agency, Handbook of Taxes, Revenues and Appropriations

\* CAGIT, the County Adjusted Gross Income Tax, is an alternative form of income tax available to Indiana Counties. A county may only adopt either COIT or CAGIT, not both.

Under the local option income tax, taxable income is the same as it is for state income tax. To administer and monitor the income tax, a COIT Council is established. The COIT Council is a combination of the fiscal bodies of the county and the cities and towns within the county. Votes on the COIT council are distributed based on shares in total county population, with the county's votes based on population in unincorporated areas. In Marion County, the City-County Council is the dominant body in the COIT Council. Distributions are made to all of the civil taxing units, but not to school corporations. There are no restrictions on the allocation of COIT revenues.

Some nonresidents pay county income taxes. People who work in a county with an income tax, but live in a county without an income tax, pay COIT at one-quarter of the resident rate. Since most counties have an income tax, few nonresidents are taxed. Out-of-state residents who work in an adopting county do pay nonresident rates, however.

Before the COIT is distributed to the local units of government, \$2.75 million is used to fund the Metropolitan Emergency Communications Agency as well as the Homestead Replacement Credit.<sup>10</sup> The balance is then apportioned among each of the townships and the remainder is divided between city and county.

According to Marion County's 2002 Proposed Budget, the COIT will generate approximately \$124 million, with roughly \$56.2 million going to the city, \$34.8 million to the county, and the rest to the townships and for other uses. It is estimated that a 0.1

#### Estimated Revenue from Income Tax Increase Indianapolis-Marion County

Income Tax Increase	Estimated Additional Revenue per Annum	
	City	County
0.01%	\$10 million	\$5 million
0.02%	\$20 million	\$10 million
0.03%	\$30 million	\$15 million

Source: Revenue numbers are based on past division of revenues and estimates by Indianapolis Controller's Office

<sup>10</sup> The COIT Council can, if it chooses, devote COIT revenue to reduce homeowner property taxes by increasing the homestead credit. The homestead credit is a state funded program that reduces homeowner property taxes by ten percent. COIT counties can increase this rate by a maximum of eight percentage points up to 18 percent. Revenue to reduce property taxes is taken "off the top," with remaining revenue distributed to local units.

percent increase in this tax would generate approximately \$10 million for the City and \$5 million for the County per annum.<sup>11</sup>

As the chart above illustrates, the amount of revenue that can be generated by increasing the income tax is sizable. Other budget priorities may necessitate using a portion of this revenue for alternative purposes. However, it would be desirable to carve out a portion of the COIT increase and dedicate it to parks and open space acquisition on an ongoing discretionary basis, or, preferably, to a dedicated parks and open space fund.

### 3) Cumulative Capital Development Fund

An alternative funding source for open space acquisition is to commit more of the City's Cumulative Capital Development Fund for that purpose.

The County and the City share revenues to the Cumulative Capital Development Fund and use the money to finance countywide infrastructure improvements. In the proposed 2002 budget, the City will receive \$11.266 million from the Cumulative Capital fund. Public Safety receives \$5.4 million, Parks and Recreation receives \$3.7 million, and the Department of Administration's Fleet Services (motor pool) \$859,000. Of the Parks Department's allocation, just \$4,000 went to land acquisition, although according to officials in the Controller's office, the final budget did not include any funding for land acquisition. However, the Parks and Recreation Department is likely to reallocate \$50,000 to acquire a parcel of land. This fund is financed by property taxes, which are assessed at the maximum rate allowed by the State; thus, *the City or County cannot raise the specific tax rate allocated to this fund.*

In addition, the City could potentially bundle various open space acquisition projects together, issue bonds, and commit a portion of the City's Cumulative Capital Development Fund revenues as repayment. Typically, projects are funded on a pay-as-you-go basis, but bonding against future Cumulative Fund revenues would enable more immediate protection of open space.

---

<sup>11</sup> Source: Estimate of City Controller's Office.

## Dedicated Funding Options

While discretionary financing methods offer some immediate tools to allocate money annually for land conservation, they do not provide the certainty to ensure steady progress. As mentioned above, Indianapolis has few alternatives in this section. The following funding sources could be dedicated to provide certainty that money, even small amounts, will be available over the long term to finance land acquisition.

### 1) Stormwater/Sewer Funding

Over the next two decades the City will be required to fix its combined sewage overflow (“CSO”) problem. To do this, it will incur capital costs between \$840 million and \$1.3 billion—by far the largest environmental cost facing Indianapolis. Operation and maintenance costs over a 20-year period could add another \$110 million to \$160 million, depending on the final alternatives selected.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, according to Indianapolis’ Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan and Water Quality Improvement Report, “an integrated, watershed-wide effort is necessary to achieve the ultimate water quality goals in Indianapolis.” Thus, it makes sense to link open space land acquisition to this project and to use some of the funding specifically to acquire and preserve strategic watershed property.

As of today, Indianapolis has passed a modest sewer-fee increase to provide funding for the project; however, more will be needed. It may be beneficial to dedicate a portion of this money specifically to acquisition of open space for watershed protection.

Councillor Mary Moriarty-Adams introduced an ordinance, on behalf of the mayor, calling for a monthly increase in the sewer user fee of \$1.94 to fund a five-year engineering and capital improvement plan. This ordinance will raise \$184 million over the next five years. At a cost of \$1 per month, it is possible to raise between \$16 and \$18 million annually through a stormwater utility fee.

### 2) Tax Increment Financing

When a Tax Increment Financing (“TIF”) plan is adopted, the assessed valuation of real property within the designated redevelopment area is frozen. Improvements are typically financed through the issuance of tax-exempt bonds. Taxes are paid on the property at the pre-improvement or base level (i.e. frozen valuation) while improvements to the area are made, new businesses are attracted, and property values rise. The resulting increase in tax revenues (i.e., the increment) due to redevelopment is used to meet debt service on issued bonds. Once the bonds have been paid off, the taxes collected from the allocation area are distributed to the remaining taxing districts. By investing in a designated area, the TIF technique has aptly been described as a means of borrowing against the speculative gain that a project should generate.

Permitted in some form by a large majority of states, tax increments are being used for a variety of purposes, including acquiring property to be resold at reduced prices and on-site improvements such as utilities, lights, repaving streets, and restoring neighborhood parks. Authorities and techniques vary from state to state.

---

<sup>12</sup> Improving Our Streams in the City of Indianapolis —A Report on Options for Controlling Combined Sewer Overflows.

As of December 31, 2000, Indianapolis had \$408 million of TIF bonds outstanding. All of these are Redevelopment District bonds, except for \$2.8 million in bonds issued by the Indy Parks Department for the development of the Whispering Hills Municipal Golf Course.

Recent research and fiscal impact analysis has shown that parks and open space contributed to increasing property values in surrounding areas. The exact magnitude of this effect cannot be easily generalized because of the substantial variation in size, usage, and design of parklands in the studies. It is suggested that a positive impact of 20 percent on property values abutting or fronting park area is a reasonable starting point. If the park is large, well maintained, attractive, and its use is mainly passive, that figure is probably low. If it is small and embraces some active use, it is likely high.<sup>13</sup>

### 3) Impact Fees<sup>14</sup>

Impact fees are one-time charges that developers must pay to the local government in order to undertake their projects. The revenue from the impact fee finances public goods and services associated with the project, but which the developer typically would not provide. Water and sewer lines, streets and bridges, and parks and recreational facilities are typical impact-fee-funded projects. The fees help ensure that new development does not strain public services and facilities.

In the case of parks and open space, impact fees are one way to protect land as part of the regulatory process. Either the developer makes a land donation that meets the local government's priorities or a payment in-lieu is made. Developers often prefer to donate land for parks and open space, although this is typically less preferable to governments.

Local governments that are concerned about raising taxes may consider impact fees as a means to shift the cost of paying for land conservation off the taxpayers' shoulders. Impact fees are an appropriate way, but only one way, to augment other public funding for land conservation; they cannot be relied upon alone. Acquisition is strictly linked to development; there may be many other situations where the local government wants to drive its conservation priorities separate from development.

Impact fees are often criticized for deterring development because of added costs as well as increasing new housing costs, thereby decreasing affordable housing and resulting in inter-jurisdictional competition. They are often opposed politically by the development community.

Although the fees have their proponents and detractors, more and more states are adopting impact-fee-enabling legislation—a total of 19 since 1987, when only Arizona, California, and New Jersey had such statutes.

The types of state statutes authorizing the impact fee vary considerably, from very specific, comprehensive, and restrictive (Texas and Illinois) to very brief and general, with considerable latitude provided to the local government (New Jersey and Indiana). While Texas, for example, outlines the actual calculation of impact fees, California and Colorado's fees are governed only by reference to a general statute. Other statutory requirements include a limitation on the size of service areas, whether interest or financing costs of bonds or loans may be included in the fee

---

<sup>13</sup> See *The Impact of Parks and Open Space on Property Values and the Property Tax Base*. John L. Crompton, National Recreation and Park Association.

<sup>14</sup> "Increasing Public Investment in Parks and Open Space. Local Parks, Local Financing—Volume 1." Kim Hopper, The Trust for Public Land, 1998.

calculations, and the required useful life for capital improvements and facilities. Typically, impact fee legislation calls for the use of a citizens advisory committee and outlines accounting requirements and time limits for expenditures. Some statutes address the concerns about affordable housing and employment.

What do these impact fees pay for? In Colorado cities, developers pay about \$10,000 per lot in impact fees for infrastructure. In Carlsbad, California, developers must set aside 800 square feet of library space for every 1,000 people moving into town. And in Raleigh, North Carolina, known as the “park with a city in it,” all residential developers pay impact fees, which help finance greenways and other parks. Given North Carolina’s tight rein on local taxing, Raleigh first had to receive special legislative permission to impose the fees. They won that authority in 1985, and by 1987 they had a dedicated parks and open space impact-fee structure in place.

In fact, impact fees are a common tool used by local governments to help pay for the acquisition, construction, and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities near new residential, commercial, and industrial developments. In the community of Olathe, outside of Kansas City, impact fees helped finance six neighborhood parks through a \$200 park excise fee on new homes and a square-foot charge for industrial and commercial development. The fee is generating about \$500,000 a year.

In 1991, the State of Indiana enacted an impact-fee statute that allows local counties and towns to collect impact fees to pay for, defray, or mitigate the capital costs and improvements to infrastructure necessitated to serve the proposed new development. Capital improvements are limited to: 1) a sanitary sewer system or wastewater treatment facility, 2) a park or recreational facility, 3) a road or a bridge, 4) a flood control facility, 5) a water treatment facility. The statute provides a framework that local units of government must follow if they wish to adopt an impact fee.

## Debt Financed Land Acquisition

### Pay-as-You-Go Versus Long-Term Borrowing

Both discretionary annual revenues and dedicated revenues represent pay-as-you-go approaches, with the government spending revenues from general appropriations or a dedicated funding source. Pay-as-you-go means year-by-year accountability and no borrowing costs. It also means relatively small annual revenues that can be too small to pay for land acquisition when opportunities present themselves. Discretionary annual funding can be difficult to sustain as the politics and leadership of a community change over time.

Borrowing presents its own set of opportunities and obstacles. One opportunity is that it can provide a community with the revenue and flexibility it needs up-front to fund large-scale parks and open space projects, the cost of which is less today than it will be tomorrow, often substantially less. Bonds are typically paid off over twenty to thirty years with low, tax-exempt interest rates. The obstacle is that finance charges are part of the package and present the challenge of convincing constituents of the merits of incurring debt. This is especially relevant in light of Indianapolis' recent refinancing history. Often, the two techniques are combined by bonding pay-as-you-go funds in order to bring in more up-front cash.

#### 1) General Obligation Bonds

##### Background

Despite the City's AAA bond rating, recent past policies regarding debt—extending bond maturities and principal payments far into the future—have generally reduced the political will to issue general obligation debt to the City. However, due to the quickly disappearing open space in Indianapolis, funding a large pool of capital for acquisition of open space could be highly beneficial and cheaper for the City in the long run.

### Gross Direct Debt to Assessed Value, General Government Expenditures and per Capita

City of Indianapolis					
Year	2000	1999	1998	1995	1991
Civil City	3,475	4,445	5,695	9,095	12,946
Redevelopment District	34,291	32,519	31,236	27,693	3,645
Sanitary District	107,105	116,580	125,290	150,425	112,704
Public Safety Communications	15,000	15,000	-	-	-
Flood Control District	37,395	38,935	38,935	40,781	34,416
Metropolitan Thoroughfare District	85,245	87,195	89,530	95,055	53,635
Park District	29,535	29,535	30,350	32,045	11,791
<b>Totals</b>	<b>312,046</b>	<b>324,209</b>	<b>321,036</b>	<b>355,094</b>	<b>229,137</b>
Assessed Value (County wide)	9,211,484	9,104,157	8,855,890	7,460,584	6,823,776
Gross Direct Debt to Assessed Value	0.034	0.036	0.036	0.048	0.034
General Government Expenditures	635,663	735,534	651,501	679,883	490,107
Gross Direct Debt to Gen. Gov. Exp.	0.49	0.44	0.49	0.52	0.47
Population (County wide)	860,454	810,946	812,662	806,848	799,097
Gross Direct Debt per Capita	0.36	0.40	0.40	0.44	0.29

The chart above illustrates the debt and financial ratios of the City of Indianapolis. However, the chart above only lists the direct debt of the City, not the City’s “moral obligation” debt, consisting of just over \$400 million of TIF financing. A moral obligation is not a legal guaranty, but a credit support mechanism that is not legally binding. Under the moral obligation mechanism, the City-County Council is requested to appropriate funds to replenish reserve accounts, should they be depleted due to insufficient TIF revenues. The City-County Council is not required to do so. The largest project, responsible for the majority of the TIF debt, is the Circle Centre Mall Project.

Moody’s Investors Service, in a report in August, 2001, says, “The City’s moderate debt levels, which include \$435 million of tax increment financing backed by the City’s moral obligation pledge, are expected to be manageable given the steady growth exhibited in both the City’s general economy as well as the TIF areas’ tax bases.”

### Revenue-Raising Capacity of a General Obligation Bond

A general obligation bond in Indianapolis-Marion County would provide the means to raise a significant amount of money up front to protect land for parks and open space that might not be available years down the road. As shown in the accompanying table, in Indianapolis-Marion County, a \$10-million general obligation bond issued for 20 years at 5.5 percent interest (based on a tax base of \$28.4 billion) would represent a tax increase of \$0.0029 per \$100 of assessed property value and cost the owner of a home valued at \$100,000 approximately \$2.36. Based on the Trust for Public Land’s work around the country with communities seeking to protect open space, voters are generally willing to spend between \$10 and \$20 to protect open space. In Indianapolis-Marion County, this would represent a \$45 to \$90 million bond.

### Bond Financing Costs

#### Indianapolis

20-year Bond Issues at 5.5% Interest Rate

Taxable Property Value = \$28.4 billion

Bond Issue Size	Annual Debt Svce	Tax Increase Required (per \$100 AV)	Cost/Year/ \$100K House*
10,000,000	\$836,793	0.0029	\$2.36
25,000,000	\$2,091,983	0.0074	\$5.90
50,000,000	\$4,183,967	0.0147	\$11.79

\* Less Property Tax Replacement Credits of 20%

## 2) Revenue Bonds

Revenue bonds are paid from the proceeds of a tax levied for the use of a specific project or from the proceeds of fees charged to those who use the facility that the bonds financed. Revenue bonds have their own set of advantages and disadvantages. First, these bonds are typically not constrained by debt ceilings like general obligation bonds. In addition, this mechanism adds great flexibility to the types of revenue streams that can be used to finance the debt since the government is not obligated to repay the debt if the identified revenue stream does not flow as predicted. On the downside, revenue bonds are typically more expensive to repay than general

obligation bonds, incurring a higher interest cost due to an increased credit risk for the bondholder.

Each revenue stream presents its own legal and financial challenges, and any decision on the feasibility of a revenue stream to bond against will require careful consultation with bond counsel, financial advisors, and underwriters. Types of revenue streams that may be eligible are:

- 1) Cumulative Fund revenues
- 2) Income tax revenues
- 3) Impact fee revenues
- 4) Stormwater/sewer revenues
- 5) TIF district revenues (TIF bonds are revenue bonds)

## Conservation Finance Best Practices

Indianapolis is not unique in trying to meet the challenges of paying for land conservation. The Trust for Public Land has worked with local and state leaders across the country to help finance their goals for land conservation. Through this work, TPL has developed a short list of best practices that serve as the critical context for any successful local land conservation effort. While local governments can achieve some success in the absence of these best practices, they will be seriously hamstrung in those efforts.

In the case of land conservation in Indiana, few if any of the best practices outlined here are present. There is no substantial state investment of funds, and no significant incentives, save the small grants awarded through the Indiana Heritage Trust license plate program. Beyond general obligation bonds, there are no dedicated funding options at the local level and no opportunity for voters to participate in the process. There are no tax credits offered for land conservation donations, and there is no state Purchase Development Rights program. In short, Indianapolis and all local governments need more tools to be effective in land conservation.

### 1. Substantial State Investment

The foundation of an effective land conservation program is strong fiscal commitment by the state government through a stable revenue source. A substantial state investment fosters program development and long-term vision. Some existing state programs rely on a single revenue stream, while others use a combination of dedicated revenue sources.

Revenue Stream Examples	
General obligation bonds	California, Rhode Island
Sales tax	Missouri, New Jersey
Lottery income	Colorado, Minnesota
Real estate transfer tax and fees	Florida, Massachusetts
General fund appropriations	Washington, Arizona

Other common state revenue sources include license plate revenues, hunting and fishing license fees, hotel/motel tax, cigarette tax, state income tax, and oil and gas revenue.

### 2. Enable Local Financing

Federal and state funds often cannot meet conservation needs alone. Communities are looking for local financing options to fill the gap. State-enabling legislation establishes local governments as partners in protecting open space resources.

#### Common local financing options:

- Property tax
- Income tax
- Local option sales tax
- General obligation bonds
- Special assessment districts
- Impact fees

### **3. State Incentives for Local Conservation**

State incentives for local action strengthen partnerships between state and local governments. Incentives, often in the form of matching grants and low-interest loans, encourage local governments and nonprofit conservation organizations to develop programs and create financing mechanisms to leverage state funds.

### **4. Purchase of Development Rights**

Purchase of development rights (PDR) is an effective device for permanent open space and farmland protection. Under a PDR program, landowners place easements on their property in exchange for payment. A PDR program helps maximize conservation dollars and allows for continued private land ownership.

### **5. Public-Private Partnerships**

A partnership that joins private desires and public goals to protect natural resources encourages private, nonprofit actions that foster open space preservation. Public-private partnerships broaden the base of support for land conservation goals and leverage scarce conservation resources.

### **6. Conservation Tax Credits**

State laws can provide income or other tax credits to private landowners who donate land or easements to public or private, nonprofit entities for conservation purposes. Tax incentive programs offer a strong supplement to other open space funding programs by encouraging private, voluntary land conservation. Particularly when combined with existing federal and state charitable deductions, conservation tax credits may make conservation a more attractive option for landowners than development. Tax credits can be targeted to state-specific objectives such as wetlands or farmland protection. In 2000 alone, South Carolina, Colorado, and California enacted new tax credits for conservation.

# VI. Implementation Strategy

## Creating a Funding Quilt

The fundamental concept underlying the recommendations is that to be successful Indianapolis must create a funding quilt, with significant, reliable local funds as the basis of its efforts. Indianapolis cannot rely solely on funding from other levels of government. A review of state and federal funding programs in Appendix B shows that these programs typically require a 50 percent local match.

In brief, a funding quilt is that combination of funding sources that allow a place to finance its land conservation goals. The essential component of a funding quilt is a substantial, dependable local funding source, which can be leveraged by other funding sources — state, federal and private. The key component is the local funding source, which is often a prerequisite to receiving outside funding. Local funding is also the only source that the local government has control over.

In the short term, reallocating budgetary funds may suffice, but over time, a dedicated funding stream—either a general obligation bond or possibly an income tax or stormwater utility fee—must be created. Over the long term, Indianapolis-Marion County could improve its conservation efforts, and those of all other local governments in the state, by helping create new tools for conservation in Indiana.

### 1. Short-Term Action: Reallocate Budgetary Funds

- a. *Indianapolis should allocate budgetary revenues for open space acquisition.* This would provide leverage for the City with federal, state, and private programs.
  - i. *General Fund.* Spending general fund revenues is the simplest, quickest, and easiest route to allocate public funds for parks and open space acquisition.
  - ii. *Cumulative Fund.* Parks and Recreation will get \$3,736,000 from this fund for maintenance, greenways, and resource development. More could be dedicated to parks and open space acquisition.

### 2. Medium-Term Action: Create a Dedicated Fund

- a. *General obligation bond.* The City has the debt capacity to issue debt for open space, either through a G.O. pledge or a more limited pledge of Cumulative Fund revenues.
- b. *Dedicate a portion of COIT.* The City can raise a significant amount of money for a variety of purposes with the County Option Income Tax. Currently, the tax rate is only 0.7 percent and is able to be raised to 1.0 percent. Indianapolis should dedicate a portion of this increase for open space.

- c. *Stormwater/Sewer Funding.* It is beneficial to link open space land acquisition to this project and to dedicate some of the funding specifically to acquire and preserve strategic watershed property.

### **3. Long-Term Action: New Tools**

The most obvious conclusion to draw from investigating the best land conservation practices around the country is that Indianapolis has a limited array of tools at its disposal—there are very few arrows in the quiver.

In Appendix B, we list numerous programs around the country as examples of conservation programs that have been completed since 1995. Although Indianapolis can achieve small but significant progress in protecting parks and open space in the short run, it is vital that more tools be added for a meaningful long-term land conservation program. The cooperation of the state legislature is essential in this regard.

#### *a. State Matching Program*

In the long term, we believe Indianapolis needs to work closely with state legislators to empower land conservation programs at the local level. Ideally, the state would create incentives, in the form of matching grants and/or low-interest loans, to encourage local governments and nonprofit conservation organizations to develop programs and create financing mechanisms to leverage state funds, or expand existing program such as Hometown Indiana. This is a highly effective way to motivate local governments to act.

#### *b. Local Option Tax*

A local option income tax or sales tax would enable local communities to decide whether they want to invest in preserving open space in their communities.

Sales and use taxes are the cornerstone of the state-local revenue system in virtually every region of the country. It is the second largest source of income for state and local governments and typically the most popular tax among voters. The success of local parks and open space sales tax set-aside measures reflects this relative popularity: communities from Nevada to Missouri to Colorado have all taken advantage of state sales tax, enabling legislation to raise millions of dollars for parks, open space, and recreational facilities.

The median sales tax rate nationwide is five percent; local sales tax rates vary from one half to five percent. Although states take by far a larger share of sales tax revenues, nearly 7,000 local governments impose additional sales taxes. The authority to impose local option sales taxes varies from state to state and region to region; few states in the mid-Atlantic region and New England have given local governments the authority, while other regions tend to give large, urban counties and cities the option.

Still other states are expanding sales tax authority to communities large and small, specifically to address the need for parks and open space. The 1995 Missouri state-enabling legislation gave counties and municipalities the ability to levy a half-cent sales tax for parks and stormwater control, provided voters agree. In the city of Arnold, voters did just that, passing a six-year sales tax. By bonding against the income, an estimated \$4 million will be generated for local park acquisition, stormwater control, and recreational facilities.

Most states that give local governments sales tax authority also impose limits on that authority. Not so in Colorado, however, where cities, counties, park districts, and towns have no state-imposed caps, provided that voters approve. While there have been defeats, many Colorado communities have taken advantage of this flexibility, winning voter approval for the financing of open space preservation and park and recreational facilities.

Overall, sales taxes offer local communities several advantages as a parks and open space funding tool. First, they are relatively easy to collect. Most local governments piggyback their portion of the tax onto the state tax and the total sum is collected at the register. Reporting costs are also fairly low. And although revenues fluctuate with economy, a small percentage can usually generate substantial revenues for everything from park maintenance to recreational improvements to open space acquisition.

*c. Parks and Recreation Special District*

Indianapolis and Marion County should consider, in consultation with state legislators, the creation of a Parks and Recreation Municipal Corporation, separate and distinct from the City and County. Around the country, special-assessment districts have become increasingly popular. These districts are self-financing legal entities that have the ability to raise a predictable stream of money, such as taxes, user fees, or bonds, directly from the people who benefit from the services; many of these districts are for parks and recreation.

The use of these special-assessment districts to help pay for parks has a long history in California. It began decades ago when the state passed legislation authorizing the creation of park assessment districts with voter approval. In 1934, the East Bay Regional Park District was created with a nickel-per-\$100 value property assessment. The district now owns and operates 53 parks and 78,000 acres and has an operating budget of over \$60 million.

Also in California, a broad-based coalition of environmentalists and community leaders recently led a campaign to create a park district with the same boundaries as Los Angeles County. In 1992, voters approved the establishment of the district and the assessment of a property tax. The \$540 million raised from the assessment was used for a variety of parks and park-related funding, including acquisition, park safety, beach restoration, gang-prevention facilities for at-risk youth, tree planting, and recreational enhancements. With funds running low, voters approved an additional \$319-million assessment, passing the Safe Neighborhood Parks Act in November, 1996.

The popularity of special park districts has spread beyond California; today, hundreds of districts exist in about two-dozen states. Joining Los Angeles on the list of large cities with park districts are Chicago and Minneapolis, whose park boards have the distinction of being publicly elected.

*d. Private Philanthropy*

Private and corporate philanthropy are generally motivated by strong leadership, planning, and commitment to action. Typically foundations are interested in playing a role in helping communities frame the issues around land conservation, study best practices, solicit community input, and craft an implementation strategy for moving forward.

A partnership between the Hall Foundation in Kansas City and a team of planners and consultants led the work on the first steps of a regional greenway master plan. MetroGreen is a proposed 1000-mile interconnected system of public and private open spaces, greenways, and trails designed to link seven counties in the Kansas City metropolitan area. The Hall Foundation grant was key in providing the support for a visioning and public participation exercise focus on how to pay for the development of MetroGreen.

The Knight Foundation in Miami, Florida, provided \$2.5 million recently when they and the local community reached consensus on a plan for the Miami River greenway. The plan protects the river corridor for public access, provides an impetus for neighborhood-based revitalization plans, and protects the marine-based economy that the river supports. The funding will support additional planning, outreach, engineering, concept plans for the trails and bridges, and capital funding for trail construction.

TPL is working with the Woodruff Foundation on the Chattahoochee River greenway, and with the Blank Foundation on a land conservation program for meeting parks and open space needs within, and just outside, the fast-growing city of Atlanta. Both funders are providing capital dollars for land acquisition in a way that is ‘incentivizing’ public funders in a partnership that enables community vision to be realized more quickly with expanded resources.

This funding follows the work of a high-level public/private partnership that reached consensus on a plan of action based on links between recreation, tourism, and the river’s water-quality protection. This private funding leveraged additional local, state, and federal funding for the project, realizing nearly \$150 million for the project thus far.

The Packard Foundation in California has also provided support for getting started with land conservation planning as well as for capital funding for land acquisition— with public matching funds—in a later stage of greenprinting for efforts primarily in California.

# Appendix A: Overview of the Government and the Economy of Indianapolis

## Government

Indianapolis and Marion County have been consolidated under a unified governmental structure since January 1, 1970. This structure, known as Unigov, combines city and county legislatures and provides a single countywide chief executive, the mayor.

Mayor's Office	
Name	Position
Bart Peterson	Mayor
Michael B. O'Connor	Chief Deputy Mayor/Chief of Staff
Jane A. Henegar	Deputy Mayor for Public Policy
Carolyn M. Coleman	Deputy Mayor for Neighborhoods

The public school system, the police department, and the fire department are not consolidated. Several other county offices are not merged—for example, the assessor, auditor, clerk, coroner, prosecutor, recorder, sheriff, surveyor, and treasurer—because they are provided under the Indiana Constitution. Also, the incorporated cities of Beech Grove, Lawrence, and Southport, and the town of Speedway are left out of the consolidation, but are allowed to vote for the chief executive, the countywide councilors, and their own city officials.

The City-County Council consists of 29 members who serve as the legislative branch for the City of Indianapolis and Marion County. Twenty-five members are elected by the voters in their district and four at-large members are elected by the voters of the entire county. Each member serves a four-year term.

Indianapolis-Marion County City-County Council			
All Positions are Four Year Terms			
Reelection in 2003			
Name	District	Party	Comment
John Bainbridge	8	Republican	
Elwood Black	6	Democrat	
Dr. Philip Borst	25	Republican	Majority Leader
Rozelle Boyd	11	Democrat	Minority Leader
James Bradford	7	Republican	
Maggie Brents	16	Democrat	
Bob Cockrum	19	Republican	
Lonnell "King Ro" Conley	At Large	Democrat	
Curtis Coonrod	5	Republican	
Beulah Coughenour	24	Republican	
William Douglas	10	Democrat	
William Dowden	4	Republican	Majority Whip
Ron Gibson	At Large	Democrat	
Monroe Gray, Jr.	9	Democrat	
Karen Celestino Horseman	At Large	Democrat	
Harvey Knox	17	Democrat	
Lance Langsford	13	Republican	
Robert Massie	20	Republican	
Lynn McWhirter	18	Republican	
Mary Moriarty Adams	15	Democrat	
Jackie Nytes	22	Democrat	
Joanne Sanders	At Large	Democrat	
Scott Schneider	3	Republican	
Dr. Beurt Servaas	2	Republican	President
Frank T. Short	21	Democrat	
David Smith	23	Republican	
Bill Soards	1	Republican	
Steve Talley	14	Democrat	
Jody Tilford	12	Republican	

## Parks Department

Indianapolis Parks and Recreation provides leadership and direction for enhancing the quality of life for Indianapolis and Marion County residents by providing parks and recreation resources and services that: provide and/or facilitate quality recreation and leisure opportunities; encourage and support natural and cultural resource stewardship and environmental education; include safe, clean, and well-maintained park facilities for the community's use and enjoyment; promote and facilitate mutually beneficial countywide partnerships.

### Indy Parks Board Members

Joseph Wynns, Director  
 Diana Wilson Hall  
 William Stinson  
 Sheriee Shanklin  
 Alan C. Wiseman

The department is organized into Administration, Recreation and Leisure Services, Golf Division, Support Services Division, and Greenway Division.

## Economy

Indianapolis is one of the most populous cities in the world not located on a navigable waterway; however, the city is a hub of road, rail, and air transportation. In fact, Indianapolis epitomizes the state logo, "Crossroads of America," with more intersecting segments of interstate highway than any other metropolitan area.

### Employment By Place of Work

	Marion County		Indiana	
	Employment	Percent	Employment	Percent
Totals by Place of Work	709,582	100.00%	3,645,725	100.00%
Non-farm	708,947	99.90%	3,565,550	97.80%
Private	631,870	89.00%	3,143,695	86.20%
Manufacturing	83,829	11.80%	702,595	19.30%
Retail	119,368	16.80%	653,326	17.90%
Services	230,111	32.40%	975,567	26.80%
Transportation, Public Utilities	48,980	6.90%	173,818	4.80%
Other Private	149,582	21.10%	638,389	17.50%
Government	77,077	10.90%	421,855	11.60%

Source: US Census 2000

This infrastructure and the business climate make Indianapolis a popular place for business. Among the major national and international companies located in Indianapolis are Eli Lilly & Co., Anthem Insurance, Conesco, Clarian Health, Escient, Bank One Indianapolis, Allison Transmission, United Airlines, Mays Chemical, Allison Engine Co., Simon Property Group, Indianapolis Motor Speedway Corporation, Federal Express, American Trans Air, and Navistar International Transportation. The largest employers in the Indianapolis Metropolitan Statistical Area are listed below.

### Major Employers in Indianapolis MSA

Local Government	57,400
State Government	28,200
Federal Government	16,700
Clarian Health	10,000
Eli Lilly and Company	10,000
Marsh Supermarkets/Village Pantry	7,000
St. Vincent Hospitals	6,000
Kroger Supermarkets	5,400
IUPUI	5,250
Community Hospitals	5,000
Allison Transmissions/GMC	5,000
Allison Engine Company	4,300
Bank One	3,810
Delphi Energy	3,550

Source: Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce

There are a number of signs that Indianapolis' economic health is strong. The Indianapolis International Airport in 2000—the last year for which statistics are available—routed 7.7 million passengers, both domestic and international, through its gates. The airport is served by 22 commercial passenger airlines with an average of 357.2 daily departures to an average of 45 nonstop destinations. Additionally, the airport handled 1,284,930 tons of mail and freight in 2000. To meet increasing demand, the Indianapolis International Airport will construct a new midfield terminal.

Diversity and steady growth have long been the hallmarks of the Indianapolis economy and have been the foundation of Indy's strong performance during the last five years. Indianapolis can boast of diverse strengths in the manufacturing, distribution, retail, and service sectors. This economic diversity keeps Indy away from the boom and bust cycles experienced by many U.S. cities. By all accounts, Indianapolis is friendly to business and hostile to red tape.

- In June, 2001, *Employment Review* magazine again named Indianapolis one of "America's Best Places to Live and Work."
- Indianapolis is one of the top spots for entrepreneurs. According to a 1999 study by Cognetics, a Massachusetts research firm, Indianapolis ranked fifth overall for entrepreneurs among the nation's top 50 metro areas, up from eighth in 1998. Indianapolis was the only northern city ranked in the top ten.

## Appendix B: Federal and State Funding Sources

### Federal Funding Sources

There are a number of federal programs that provide funds for state and local land and water conservation, trails, recreational programs, and stormwater and flood control. Most require a state/local match. Eligibility varies depending on the nature of the local project. The federal programs highlighted here primarily provide funds to local governments (through the states) or to landowners.

#### Land and Water Conservation Fund—Stateside

Created in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is the largest source of federal money for park, wildlife, and open space land acquisition. The program's funding comes primarily from offshore oil and gas drilling receipts, with an authorized expenditure of \$900 million each year. Under the act, a portion of the money is intended to go to federal land purchases and a portion to the states as matching grants for local park projects.

With the exception of a one-time increase in LWCF appropriations to the fully authorized level of \$900 million in fiscal year 1998, Congress generally has appropriated only a fraction of the amount authorized. In addition, between 1995 and 1998, no funds were provided for the state and local grant portion of the program, which provides up to 50 percent of the cost of the project, with the balance of the funds paid by states or municipalities.

In October, 2000, federal funding for land conservation received a significant boost when President Clinton signed the FY 2001 Interior Appropriations Bill. This bill included \$450 million for federal LWCF, \$90 million for state and local grants, and \$30 million for the Urban Parks and Recreation Restoration program. Perhaps most importantly, it included an ongoing funding guarantee dedicating \$12 billion in conservation funding during the next five years.

Cities, counties, state agencies, and school districts are eligible for Land and Water Conservation Fund monies. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a matching assistance program that provides grants for 50 percent of the cost for the acquisition, renovation, and/or development of outdoor recreation sites and facilities. Funds are provided through the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, but the program is administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Outdoor Recreation.

Since the program began, Indiana has received approximately \$72 million in federal funds. The allocation is usually divided between Department of Natural Resources projects and local government park projects depending on funding levels. Over \$35 million has been provided to local agencies through the program. More than 30,000 acres of land have been acquired in Indiana with Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance. The Parks and Recreation Board must have a current five-year master plan for parks and recreation on file, approved at the Division of Outdoor Recreation.

Local funding sources used to match the federal assistance may be derived from appropriations, tax levies, bond issues, force account labor, gifts, and donations of land, cash, labor, materials, and equipment. Other federal funding sources cannot be used as the local share of a project, except revenue sharing, Community Development Act funds, and Farmers Home Administration loans.

Grant applications may consist of land acquisition and/or facility construction or renovation for local public parks. New parks or additions to existing parks may be funded. The land acquisition or development may not be started until final approval is received from the federal government. All land to be developed must be controlled by the park board through direct ownership.

**Eligible Types of Projects:**

- Acquisition of parks or natural areas
- Picnic areas
- Sports and playfields, such as playgrounds, ballfields, court game facilities, and golf courses
- Water-oriented facilities for boating and swimming, and access to lakes, rivers, and streams
- Natural areas and interpretive facilities
- Linear greenway parks and trails
- Campgrounds
- Fishing and hunting areas
- Winter sports facilities
- Amphitheaters and bandstands
- Parks adjacent to schools for mutual use
- Outdoor natural-habitat zoo facilities
- Roads, restrooms, utilities, park maintenance buildings
- Nature centers

**Ineligible Types of Projects:**

- Indoor recreation areas and facilities, except sheltered ice rinks and swimming pools in northern Indiana
- Historic preservation projects
- Museums
- Professional sports and arts facilities
- Housing, including lodges, cabins, and employee residences
- Mobile recreation units
- Amusement parks
- Facilities for exclusive use, as for schools and sports leagues
- Costs for administration, operation, and maintenance; legal and court fees; and land acquisition surveys and appraisals

Since the Land and Water Conservation Fund is a reimbursing program, the project sponsor does not receive the grant funds at the time an application is approved. The sponsor must have the local matching funds (50% of the project cost) available prior to application. The sponsoring Parks and Recreation Board is reimbursed 50 percent of the actual costs of the approved project.

A billing procedure enables the participant to request the federal share of the cost incurred throughout the grant term.

Grant application packets are available in the spring from the Division of Outdoor Recreation for agencies eligible to participate. Grant applications may be submitted between March 1 – June 1 to be considered for funding in the next fiscal year. A point rating system is used to determine which projects will be funded when more applications are received than funds are available. Project sponsors are notified in the fall regarding the status of funding for their projects. Those projects that rate high enough for funding are forwarded to the National Park Service for final approval.

## **Recreational Trails Program**

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (also known as ISTEA, or “ice tea”) has provided an important source of federal funds—specifically transportation enhancements—for various parks and recreation projects. Between 1991 and 1997, \$2.6 billion went to projects such as bicycle and pedestrian facilities and the conversion of abandoned rail corridors into greenways and multiuse trails.

In 1998, Congress reauthorized ISTEA and renamed it TEA-21—the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century. Under this six-year extension, the transportation enhancements program received an important vote of confidence in the form of a 40 percent increase in funding, averaging about \$630 million per year. Through this program, the Recreational Trails Program provides funds to the State to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized trail uses. Examples of trail use include hiking, biking, inline skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, all-terrain vehicle riding, and snowmobiling.

Each state administers its own program, typically through a state resource or parks agency, and develops its own procedures to solicit and select local projects for funding. Each state also has a State Recreational Trail Advisory Committee to assist with the program. In some states, the committee selects the projects, while in others the committee is advisory only.<sup>15</sup>

Funding of \$50 million was allocated annually from 2000 through 2003. Funds may be used for maintenance and restoration of existing trails, construction of new trails, and acquisition of easements or property for trails. Project amounts vary by state, but most range in value from \$2,000 to \$50,000. Typically, payment for the project is reimbursed to the local government.

The local program is administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources through its Division of Outdoor Recreation. All units of government and agencies incorporated as nonprofit corporations are eligible to participate.

At the time of application the project sponsor must have at least 20 percent of the total project cost available. The local share may include tax sources, bond issues, community development funds, Farmers Home Administration Loans, or force account contributions. The donated value of cash, labor, equipment and materials may also be used.

---

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of Transportation; Federal Highway Administration; Recreational Trails Program brochure; [www.fhwa.gov/environment](http://www.fhwa.gov/environment).

The project sponsor will not receive a cash grant at the time of project approval. Instead, the sponsor must pay the bills and then be reimbursed for up to 80 percent of the expenses incurred for the project, according to the terms of the project agreement. In most cases, reimbursement is not permitted for work that takes place prior to project approval.

The Indiana Recreational Trails Program will provide 80 percent matching funds and reimbursing assistance for eligible projects. Applicants may request grant amounts ranging from a minimum of \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$150,000.

RTP funds may be used for:

- 1) maintenance and restoration of existing trails
- 2) development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages
- 3) purchase and lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment
- 4) construction of new trails (with restrictions for new trails on federal lands)
- 5) acquisition of easements or property for trails
- 6) operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection related to trails (limited to five percent of State's funds)

Projects will be eligible if they provide public access to trails. Eligible facilities include: trails, stream and river access sites, bridges, boardwalks, crossings, signage, equestrian facilities, sanitary facilities, and other support facilities.

RTP funds may not be used for:

- 7) property condemnation (eminent domain)
- 8) constructing new trails for motorized use on national forest or Bureau of Land Management lands unless the project is consistent with resource management plans
- 9) facilitating motorized access on otherwise nonmotorized trails

Since the funds are intended for recreational trails, they may not be used to improve roads for general passenger-vehicle use or to provide shoulders or sidewalks along roads.

### **Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR)**

Enacted in 1978, UPARR is an urban complement to the Land and Water Conservation Fund. UPARR's purpose is to provide direct federal assistance to urban localities for the rehabilitation of recreational facilities while encouraging the continuing operation and maintenance of recreational programs.

### **North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants (NAWCA)**

NAWCA provides funding for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, an international program to protect the continent's wetlands and increase migratory bird populations. NAWCA authorizes up to \$30 million annually in small grants (up to \$50,000) and standard grants (up to \$1 million) for the funding of wetlands conservation projects. Habitat

acquired or restored with small grant funds can be owned or managed by any federal, state, or nonprofit organization involved in land management. Some grants require a one-to-one match, although many require a two-to-one match.

### **Pittman-Robertson Act**

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, popularly known as the Pittman-Robertson Act, provides funding for the selection, restoration, rehabilitation, and improvement of wildlife habitat, wildlife management research, and the distribution of information produced by the projects. The program is a cost-reimbursement program, where the state applies for reimbursement through federal aid for up to 75 percent of the project's expenses. The state must provide at least 25 percent of the project costs from non-federal sources.<sup>16</sup>

### **Wetlands Reserve Program**

Congress authorized and amended the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) under the Farm Bill in 1996 as a means of addressing the loss of wetlands nationwide. The program is administered through the Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. This program offers landowners three options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and restoration cost-share agreements of a minimum ten-year duration. In order for a property to be eligible for a WRP grant, the landowner must have owned the land for at least one year (unless the land was inherited or the landowner can prove the land was not purchased for enrollment into the program), and the land must be restorable and suitable for wildlife benefits. The landowner continues to control access to the land and may lease the land for recreational activities.

The amount of funding available in a given fiscal year depends on the amount of acres Congress permits to be enrolled in the program. The funding level is dependent on the value of the land. A per-acre value is assigned in each state. To date, appropriations have supported the enrollment of 774,076 acres into the Wetlands Reserve Program. This program is administered through the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

### **Flood Mitigation Assistance Program**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program provides funding assistance to states and communities for implementing measures to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insurable under the National Flood Insurance Program. FMA, a pre-disaster grant program, was created as part of the National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994.

### **Safe Drinking Water Act and Other Programs**

The State is authorized to use some of its Safe Drinking Water Act Revolving Fund monies (up to 15 percent) for land acquisition. This is voluntary, however, and most states don't do this.

---

<sup>16</sup> "Keeping Our Commitment: Preserving Land in the Chesapeake Watershed," A Report by the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Trust for Public Land; 2000.

## **Community Development Block Grants**

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development provides federal funds to states to be allocated to local governments. One of the three national objectives must be met as follows: benefit to low- and moderate-income individuals; removal or prevention of slum or blight conditions; resolution of an urgent need created by a severe natural or other disaster. These funds may be used for a wide variety of activities, including water improvements, the enhancement of civic design, and economic, community, and housing development needs.

## State Funding Sources

### The Indiana Heritage Trust Program

Of the 32 states that currently have an environmental license plate program, Indiana's Heritage Trust Program is among the most successful. It began in 1993, and since then over 375,000 plates have been sold, generating over \$9 million. Although the Heritage Trust Program is not the sole source of revenue for land acquisition in the state (the Department of Natural Resources does receive a separate allocation for land acquisition from state general fund appropriations), this successful program is playing a vital role in protecting threatened state lands.

The purpose of the Indiana Heritage Trust Program is to acquire real property or interests in real property that are examples of outstanding natural features and habitats; have historical and archeological significance; and provide areas for conservation, recreation, and the restoration of native biological diversity. The program is designed to acquire, preserve, and enhance property for new and existing state parks, state forests, nature preserves, fish and wildlife areas, wetlands, trails, and river corridors.

From 1994 through March 1997, approximately \$12 million was deposited in the fund that is generated by the program. License-plate sales contributed \$6.3 million. The DNR administers the fund, and money in the fund at the end of a state fiscal year does not revert to the state general fund or any other fund.

The following are the accounts within the Heritage Trust Fund: (1) State parks account, (2) State forests account, (3) Nature preserves account, (4) Fish and wildlife account, (5) Outdoor recreation/historic sites account, (6) Stewardship account, and (7) Discretionary account.

Five percent of the money appropriated to the Heritage Trust Fund is allotted to the stewardship account. After the allotment to the stewardship account, 10 percent of the remaining balance, or 9.5 percent of the total, is allotted to each of the five Heritage Trust division accounts (discretionary account not included here). The remaining 47.5 percent of the total is allotted to the discretionary account. Money in accounts, other than the stewardship account, is used for land acquisition and related expenses, such as the costs of surveying, title insurance, environmental assessments, hydraulic engineering studies, appraisals, project development, and legal services.

Money in the stewardship account may be used only for: (1) maintaining Heritage Trust property, (2) removing structures and debris, (3) preparing and preserving sites, (4) returning the property to its natural state. Not more than ten percent of the money in the account may be used for the promotion of the Heritage Trust Program.

For every \$3 spent from the discretionary account, at least \$1 in matching money or value must be provided from non-state sources. Non-state funding sources include land or property value donations, federal funds and private or nonprofit contributions. The Heritage Trust Program generated \$3.5 million in non-state funding from 1994–1997.

The Indiana Heritage Trust Project Committee and the Indiana Heritage Trust Committee oversee the operations of the Heritage Trust Program. The project committee consists of 16 members; six are directors of the following DNR divisions: fish and wildlife, forestry, nature preserves, state parks and reservoirs, outdoor recreation, and state museums and historic sites.

The public or DNR representatives propose projects for consideration. The project committee considers property from willing sellers only. Based on its fact-finding, the project committee may recommend the purchase of property or interest in property to the Indiana Heritage Trust Committee.

By law, the DNR can purchase or assist in the purchase of ownership in fee simple a conservation easement, a lease, or ownership of management rights. If the DNR purchases a conservation easement, the owner of the property is responsible for taxes, unless the owner is tax exempt.

From the inception of the Heritage Trust Program through May 1998, the Heritage Trust has purchased and protected 17,740 acres. As of June 10, 1998, \$9,396,175 has been raised from the sale and renewal of 375,847 environmental license plates. In 1997, 85,479 plates were purchased, generating \$2,136,975 for the Indiana Heritage Trust.

### **Urban Forest Conservation Grants**

The Urban Forest Conservation (UFC) grants are intended to help communities develop long-term programs to manage their urban forests. Grantees may conduct any project that helps to improve and protect trees and other associated natural resources in urban areas. Community projects that target program development, planning, and education are emphasized. Projects funded in the past include conducting tree inventories; developing tree maintenance and planting plans; writing tree ordinances; conducting programs to train municipal employees and the public; purchase or development of publications, books, and videos; hiring consultants or city foresters. Certified Tree Cities may spend up to 20 percent of the grant funds on demonstration tree-planting projects. Local municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and state agencies are eligible to apply for \$2,000 to \$20,000.

### **Arbor Day Grant Program**

Arbor Day grants can be used to fund any type of activity that helps promote Arbor Day and the planting and care of urban trees. Arbor Day is the last Friday in April, but any event in March, April, or May is eligible. Examples of activities are Arbor Day celebrations and events, educational workshops, public awareness campaigns, printing and distribution of printed materials. State agencies, local municipalities, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for \$500 or \$1,000 grants.

### **Tree Steward Program Grants**

The Tree Steward Program is an educational training program, which can be conducted in any county in Indiana. A county sponsor such as a city or county government, conservation group, or the county extension office can conduct the program. The program involves six training sessions of three hours each, which cover a variety of tree care and planting topics. After completion, attendees receive a Tree Steward Certificate and are encouraged to volunteer in their communities to assist with urban forestry projects. Grants of \$500 or \$1,000 are available to assist sponsors in starting countywide Tree Steward programs. Grant funds can be used to hire speakers and purchase supplies, equipment, and handouts.

## **Hometown Indiana Grant Program**

The Hometown Indiana Program is a state matching assistance program that provides grants for 50 percent of the costs for the acquisition and/or development of recreation sites and facilities. To be eligible for the parks and recreation part of the Hometown Indiana Grant Program you must be a Municipal Corporation as defined by Indiana Code and have an up-to-date five-year parks and recreation master plan or a comprehensive plan which includes parks and recreation, and meet the same criteria as a parks and recreation master plan. Both parks and recreation and comprehensive plans must be approved by the Division of Outdoor Recreation before grant applications are approved.

Since Hometown Indiana is a reimbursing program, the project sponsor does not receive the grant funds at the time an application is approved. The sponsor must have the local matching 50 percent of the project cost available prior to application. The project sponsor is reimbursed 50 percent of the actual cost of the project. The Hometown Indiana billing procedures enable the participant to request the state share of costs incurred throughout the grant term.

State funds must be matched with at least 50 percent of the total project cost from the local sponsor. The local match may consist of: budget appropriation; bond issues; loans; private donations of equipment, materials, land, labor, and cash; and force account contributions of equipment and labor.

Grant applications may consist of land acquisition and/or facility construction or renovation. Both indoor and outdoor recreation facilities are eligible for Hometown Indiana Program funding assistance. All facilities must be designed for universal access and the agencies facilities, programs, and activities must be open to the public without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability.

Eligible development includes: natural areas, interpretive facilities, linear greenways and trails, sports and playfields, recreation centers, nature centers, camping, and support facilities. The Division of Outdoor Recreation has guidelines for preparing master plans, submitting grant applications, and administering projects.

## Appendix C: Parks and Open Space Financing Options

Location	Revenue Option	Revenue Generating Potential	Implementation Process	Comments
Indianapolis	Allocating General Fund Dollars for Park and Open Space	As of 2000, the legally available taxing margin was 24% above the levy then in effect, and the difference has grown even greater since then. This gives the City great financing flexibility with its property tax.	Approval of park and open space acquisition funding would take place as part of the annual budget process.	<p><b>Pro:</b> Spending general-fund revenues is the simplest, quickest, and easiest route to allocate public funds for parks and open space acquisition.</p> <p><b>Con:</b> General fund appropriations only last for one year and must be approved annually by the City-County Council. These appropriations will necessarily compete with other priorities and may make land acquisition strategies difficult to plan.</p>
Indianapolis	Cumulative Capital Development Fund	Parks and Recreation will get \$3,736,000 from this fund for maintenance, greenways, and resource development, according to the 2002 budget. The total amount of revenue accruing to the Cumulative Fund in 2002 is \$11,266,190.	Could take place as part of the annual budget process.	<p><b>Pro:</b> This fund is relatively easy to tap and is already being used for park projects.</p> <p><b>Pro:</b> The City could potentially bundle various open space acquisition projects together, issue bonds, and commit a portion of the City's Cumulative Capital Development Fund revenues as repayment.</p> <p><b>Con:</b> The City cannot raise this specific tax rate, which is limited by state law. Thus, parks and open space acquisition would compete for Cumulative Funds with other priorities.</p>

COIT Council (dominated by City-County Council)	County Option Income Tax (COIT) increase	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Estimated Revenue from COIT Increase</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Tax Increase</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Additional City</th> <th style="text-align: right;">Revenue/Year County</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">0.01 percent</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$10 million</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$5 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">0.02 percent</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$20 million</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$10 million</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">0.03 percent</td> <td style="text-align: center;">\$30 million</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$15 million</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Tax Increase	Additional City	Revenue/Year County	0.01 percent	\$10 million	\$5 million	0.02 percent	\$20 million	\$10 million	0.03 percent	\$30 million	\$15 million	COIT Council must approve a rate increase. Tax can increase at most 0.01 percent per year to a maximum of one percent.	<p><b>Pro:</b> Large source of revenue. A portion could be dedicated to open space acquisition and the rest used for other budget priorities.</p> <p><b>Con:</b> May be politically difficult. However, surrounding counties all charge income taxes at the maximum of one percent.</p>
Tax Increase	Additional City	Revenue/Year County														
0.01 percent	\$10 million	\$5 million														
0.02 percent	\$20 million	\$10 million														
0.03 percent	\$30 million	\$15 million														
Indianapolis	Impact fees	In 1991, the State of Indiana enacted an impact-fee statute that allows local counties and towns to collect impact fees to pay for, defray, or mitigate the capital costs and improvements to infrastructure necessitated to serve the proposed new development. Capital improvements are limited to: 1) a sanitary sewer system or wastewater treatment facility, 2) a park or recreational facility, 3) a road or a bridge, 4) a flood control facility, 5) a water treatment facility. The statute provides a framework that local units of government must follow if they wish to adopt an impact fee.	The City-County Council can approve the establishment of an impact fee.	<p><b>Pro:</b> Provides a revenue source that enables the City to maintain its current level of parks and open space acreage per capita, with more impact-fee revenue coming in as the county continues to grow.</p> <p><b>Pro:</b> Has the ability to generate significant revenue for parks and open space over the long term, depending on the amount and coverage.</p> <p><b>Con:</b> The fee would only be paid on new development, resulting in a narrow revenue base and potentially creating opposition. An impact fee creates an “us vs. them” dynamic in the county and could discourage development in the county.</p> <p><b>Con:</b> Establishing an impact fee in Indianapolis would likely be controversial.</p>												

Indianapolis	Stormwater/sewer system funding	Stormwater and sewer projects will incur capital costs between \$840 million and \$1.3 billion—by far the largest environmental cost Indianapolis faces. Operation and maintenance costs over a 20-year period could add another \$110 million to \$160 million, depending on the final alternatives selected. Indianapolis has passed a modest sewer-fee increase to provide funding for the project; however, more will be needed. It may be beneficial to dedicate a portion of this money to acquisition of open space for watershed protection, which could assist with reducing the amount of stormwater runoff and decrease the cost of the infrastructure handling it.	A variety of ways have been proposed to finance the stormwater and sewer projects, including user fees, creation of a stormwater drainage utility, and many others, and this report does not discuss them. However, since watershed acquisition is necessary to achieve the ultimate water quality goals in Indianapolis, it is advisable to dedicate money for watershed acquisition and protection.	<p><b>Pro:</b> Ultimately, the funding source is not driven by open space priorities, but watershed acquisition is a key component of water quality protection and should be funded regardless of the ultimate funding mechanism.</p> <p><b>Con:</b> As open space and watershed acquisition is not the driver of this source of revenue, funding land acquisition could potentially get lost in the discussion or funds could be diverted for other uses.</p>																
Indianapolis	Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	By investing in a designated area, the TIF technique has aptly been described as a means of borrowing against the speculative gain of a project. As of December 31, 2000, Indianapolis had \$408 million of TIF bonds outstanding. All of these are Redevelopment District bonds, except for \$2.8 million in bonds issued by the Park District for the development of the Whispering Hills Municipal Golf Course.	Must be approved by City-County Council ordinance.	<p><b>Pro:</b> Technique is most likely to be successful if the park is large, well maintained, attractive, and its use is mainly passive. The City has a lot of experience with TIF bond issues.</p> <p><b>Con:</b> The exact magnitude of the effect of parks and open space can't be predicted with certainty. If a park is small and embraces some active use, it may not increase property values by a large degree.</p>																
Indianapolis	General Obligation Bonds	<table border="1" data-bbox="590 953 1184 1105"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th><b>Annual</b></th> <th><b>Tax Increase</b></th> <th><b>Annual Cost for</b></th> </tr> <tr> <th><b>Bond Issue</b></th> <th><b>Debt Service</b></th> <th><b>Required</b></th> <th><b>\$100,000 House</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>\$10 million</td> <td>\$836,793</td> <td>0.0029</td> <td>\$2.36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>\$25 million</td> <td>\$2.09m</td> <td>0.0074</td> <td>\$5.90</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The debt service figures for the proposed bond issue above are based upon a general obligation bond issued for 20 years at 5.5 percent interest. This rate is only used for illustration. The City and its financial advisors, bond counsel and underwriters would establish the actual terms of any bond issue.</p>		<b>Annual</b>	<b>Tax Increase</b>	<b>Annual Cost for</b>	<b>Bond Issue</b>	<b>Debt Service</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>\$100,000 House</b>	\$10 million	\$836,793	0.0029	\$2.36	\$25 million	\$2.09m	0.0074	\$5.90	The City-County Council may authorize borrowing, which is typically done through the Indianapolis Local Public Improvement Bond Bank.	<p><b>Pro:</b> Bonds raise substantial amounts of money, enabling the City to make important acquisitions while land remains available. Costs would be spread out over a long time horizon and are borne by both current and future beneficiaries.</p> <p><b>Con:</b> Bonds can increase costs due to interest charges tacked on to the cost of the project. Also, there may be competition for bonds among local programs in need of financing.</p>
	<b>Annual</b>	<b>Tax Increase</b>	<b>Annual Cost for</b>																	
<b>Bond Issue</b>	<b>Debt Service</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>\$100,000 House</b>																	
\$10 million	\$836,793	0.0029	\$2.36																	
\$25 million	\$2.09m	0.0074	\$5.90																	

## Appendix D: Land Conservation Funding Elections in Major U.S. Cities

### *Land Conservation Funding Elections in Major U.S. Cities*

<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Financing Technique</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Funds Committed</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Houston	TX	Acquisition and construction of parks	General obligation bond	11/6/2001	\$80m	70/30
Jacksonville	FL	Land acquisition Recreation	1/2 cent sales tax increase for 10 years for land acquisitio	9/5/2000	\$50m	57/43
San Francisco	CA	Acquire and maintain green space, gardens, recreation	.25 mill (\$1/\$1000 assessed value) property tax increase for 30 years	3/17/2000	\$150m	74/26
Atlanta	GA	Purchase green space and public plazas	Dedicate portion of bond issue	11/7/2000	\$27m	75/25
Seattle	WA	Open space and park acquisition	.355 mill property tax increase for 8 years	11/7/2000	\$26m	56/44
San Antonio	TX	Watershed acquisition and protection	1/8 cent sales tax increase	5/6/2000	\$65m	56/44
St. Louis	MO	Establish regional park district and fund water quality improvement, open space preservation & recreation	New 1/10 cent retailers' occupation tax	11/7/2000	\$71.1m	77/23
Austin	TX	Open space and park acquisition	Dedicate portion of a bond issue	11/7/2000	\$13.4m	65/35
Austin	TX	Open space acquisition	Bond issue		\$35m	60/40
Austin	TX	Drinking water protection land acquisition	Bond issue		\$9m	57/43
Phoenix	AZ	Open space acquisition	1/10 cent sales tax increase	9/7/1999	\$256m	80/20
Scottsdale	AZ	Park acquisition	Bond issue	9/11/1999	\$200m	77/23
Columbus	OH	Parks and recreation	Bond issue	11/2/1999	\$59m	68/32
Los Angeles	CA	Park improvement/open space acquisition	Bond issue	11/1992	\$540m	64/36
		Park improvement/open space acquisition	Bond issue	11/1996	\$319m	
Miami/Dade Co	FL	Park improvement/land acquisition	Bond issue	11/5/1996	\$200m	67/33