

## **CROOKED CREEK GREENWAY**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Crooked Creek corridor is located in the northwest portion of Indianapolis in an area that is characterized by a mixture of commercial, office, and residential developments. Although this part of Indianapolis is relatively mature in its development, there are several areas where new commercial development is planned or already under construction. The corridor begins just south of 1-465 in a business park and ends where the creek joins with the White River at Lake Sullivan, just south of 38th Street. The upper reaches of the Crooked Creek corridor flow by public facilities such as Crooked Creek Elementary School, Juan Soloman Park, and Fox Hill Manor Park; and all these facilities can provide direct access to the northern two-thirds of the greenway corridor. Additional access is possible from several streets, including 86th Street, 64th Street, and Kessler Boulevard. The southern third of Crooked Creek flows primarily through moderate- to low-density residential areas until the creek passes under 38th Street. The character of the surrounding land uses changes south of 38th Street as the creek flows by two private educational institutions- Marian College and the Tudor Hall School. The creek ends at Riverside Park, which includes the Major Taylor Velodrome and Lake Sullivan.

Trail development within this corridor has occurred only at Juan Solomon/Crooked Creek Community Park. During the public input process of the Greenways Master Plan Update community interest was expressed in using the old inter-urban line as a greenway corridor connecting the Crooked Creek neighborhoods to the Central Canal Greenway trail and the Indianapolis Museum of Art. This concept is included in the 1994 greenway corridor plan for Crooked Creek. Another idea involves using the old Toll House on Michigan Road as the location for a trailhead. Support for using 56<sup>th</sup> Street as an east-west on-road trail connector was also expressed. The Crooked Creek Community Council (C-4) has developed a plan for pedestrian/bicycle linkages throughout the community (see Appendix) which should be used in determining future greenway development.

### **MASTER PLAN UPDATE RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **2001 to 2006**

1. Assist in preparation and implementation of the C-4 community access plan to identify bike routes and alternative means of access from neighborhoods to community facilities and greenways.

#### **2007-2012**

1. Prepare a comprehensive project report for greenway development and include the investigation of the potential of using the former interurban line as a greenway and using the Toll House on Michigan Road as a trailhead.

### **1994 Public Vision Statements**

Since the Crooked Creek corridor is surrounded by a variety of land uses, each land use has implications for the potential functions the corridor can serve. The visions for this corridor are intended to enhance the existing natural conditions as well as create links to other corridors and to public facilities within the Crooked Creek corridor.

The greenway corridor along Crooked Creek could incorporate private development for recreational uses such as the lake at the "Pyramids" at the northern end of the corridor. This area could be used for boating and biking and hiking trails that lead to residential developments in the vicinity. The paths would provide opportunities for people to walk to work and enjoy lunch-time exercise. The Crooked Creek trail could provide transportation alternatives to nearby residents. The trail could be used for biking and hiking to commercial establishments along 86th Street, local parks, schools, and the Humane Society building. A number of parks could be linked to nearby neighborhoods by this trail, including Juan Solomon Park, Fox Hill Manor Park, and the small neighborhood park near Westchester Estates. Several schools could be linked with the trail, providing the opportunity for educational experiences and access to other public facilities. A trail could be developed along the old inter-urban line, which is located west of Michigan Road. The inter-urban trail could provide access's to the Indianapolis Museum of Art. An additional recommendation calls for the expansion of recreational activities at Lake Sullivan, at the south end of the corridor.

In addition to providing another transportation option for students of Crooked Creek Elementary School, Westlane Middle School, Tudor Hall School, Brebeuf Preparatory School, and Marian College, the corridor also encourages the opportunity for educational pursuits. A wetland associated with Crooked Creek south of Brebeuf Preparatory School could be monitored and restored by students. This effort could be part of an environmental education center established at the school. At the south end of the corridor, another environmental education center could be established in cooperation with Tudor Hall School and Marian College.

To emphasize an environmental philosophy, most of Crooked Creek corridor is proposed for conservation uses only. Several areas where there are relatively large stands of woodlands are proposed for either development of a local park or preservation as they are for use as wildlife/plant refuges. Some locations along Crooked Creek were identified as requiring restoration, such as the erosion problems south of 79th Street. In addition to natural resources, historic resources should be preserved including an old bridge that crosses the creek at 39th Street and the historic Michigan Road Toll House.

High e-coli levels of bacteria have been monitored on the Crooked Creek corridor. In addition, the former refinery on 86<sup>th</sup> Street presents possible threats to water quality in

the corridor as disposition of this facility is explored. A 1993 study by students of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at IUPUI recommended that a watershed master plan be adopted for the corridor. The study recommends measures such as stream protection programs, watershed-based storm water management planning, floodplain restrictions, and stream buffer requirements.