



THE RENEWAL OF HISTORIC REA PARK

AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE

Rationale

Clubhouse Feasibility Study

Park Master Plan

Friends of Rea Park, Inc.

Indiana Landmarks, Inc.

Terre Haute Parks Department

Sanders & Associates, Inc. Architects



April 18, 2019

Updated Version – Clubhouse Option C

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Rationale
Friends of Rea Park, Inc.

Introduction

In 2014 the Terre Haute City Parks Board and Friends of Rea Park, Inc. agreed to partner to improve the facilities and programs at historic Rea Park. In 2016, architectural drawings and cost estimates for a restored Rea Park clubhouse were presented to the parks board.

This report proposes a total revitalization of Rea Park. It includes project rationale, a clubhouse feasibility study, and park master plan.

During our research, we learned ...

- The economic vitality of Vigo County depends upon having a healthy and mentally-fit workforce.
- The restoration of Rea Park can greatly benefit Terre Haute residents, young and old alike. It has the potential to promote and maintain healthy living of our fellow citizens through life-long sports and activities.
- The cost of Rea Park's restoration is reasonable when compared to other projects being considered by local government.
- Rea Park is located in a strategic location, near the busiest part of town. Establishing new partnerships between businesses, local schools, healthcare providers, Regional Hospital, Westminster Village and Rea Park should be explored. Investment in this project by private companies, individuals, state and local governmental units should be encouraged.
- Despite having excellent schools, an ideal geographic location, and modern infrastructure, the health of Vigo County residents has fallen to a new low, so low that it may be THE ONE FACTOR that is keeping new business and industry from relocating to our community. In 2016, Vigo County ranked 91st out of 92 Indiana counties in obesity, tobacco use, alcohol use, and drug use. As of March 2019, our county had fallen in state health rankings for eight consecutive years, from 58th to 83rd out of 92 Indiana counties. In the fall of 2018, Terre Haute was named "the least healthy city in Indiana" by a MSNBC Wall Street Journal national study.

This proposal recommends city government ...

- Restore the historic clubhouse into an all inclusive activity/social center, replace the tennis courts, add pickle ball facilities, modernize the driving range into a golf academy, establish a running/walking trail around the park, and develop a park space for picnickers with playground equipment for families to enjoy.
- Seek vendors who will operate businesses within the park, sharing a percentage of their profits with the city, which would be reinvested into Rea Park. These might include a restaurant/catering vendor to locate in a newly renovated clubhouse; a company to fully develop the driving range into a golf academy; and the establishment of a racket sports/fitness/health education center on the property. These businesses have the potential to add thousands of dollars of revenue each year for the city, while having a significant impact on the local economy and the health of all living in Vigo County.

Rea Park is a treasure. Long ago it was one of Terre Haute's shining stars. Lit up at night, patrons could see the grand clubhouse while driving along South Seventh Street. This plan provides a roadmap for its renewal, and a pathway to "relighting the glow" on our city's south side.

Friends of Rea Park Belief Statements

- 1. Friends of Rea Park, Inc. believes the city of Terre Haute is obligated to honor the vision of park donors Geraldine and William S. Rea. The guidelines set forth in the contractual agreement it signed with the Rea Family in 1922 should be followed.***

William S. Rea was a prominent Terre Haute grocer and retailer who died in 1919. He left the substantial sum of \$100,000, \$1.5 million in 2016 dollars, to establish a public park on the south side of Terre Haute.

One hundred and sixty acres of prime farm land were purchased by the Rea estate to be used for the golf course and other park features. The Rea family estate and the city of Terre Haute signed an agreement in 1922 formally establishing William S. Rea Park. On September 10, 1925, the park was deeded to the city. At the dedication ceremony that evening, Mayor Davis declared Rea Park to be “the finest municipal golf course in the nation.”

By the end of 1925, an 18-hole golf course, a magnificent clubhouse, and several tennis courts had been constructed.

An agreement between the city of Terre Haute and the William Rea estate was signed in 1922. It calls for the city to forever retain the name of the park as William S. Rea Park, and forever maintain and beautify its' grounds.

Friends of Rea Park, Inc. believes the potential of Rea Park to serve the citizens of Terre Haute is not being fully realized. Today the park's clubhouse and tennis facilities sit in disarray. The historic clubhouse has seen routine maintenance deferred so often, it has fallen into a state of decay. Tennis courts are old and outdated, and are nearly in unusable condition.

In 2015, the city parks board approved the addition of a new roof on the clubhouse at the cost of over \$30,000. This is an indication the city parks board is serious about wanting to preserve the historic clubhouse and grounds.

While a section describing the renewal of Rea Park exists in the Terre Haute Parks Department's current master plan, the Friends of Rea Park, Inc. study is the first detailed, site-specific plan written for the park since it was created in the 1920s.

2. *Friends of Rea Park, Inc. sees a revitalized Rea Park increasing civic pride while preserving our culture, our past traditions, and our heritage.*

On April 19, 2017, Rea Park's application to be placed on Indiana's register of historic places was approved by the Indiana Historic Preservation Board. Rea Park's application was also approved by the U.S. Department of Interior in 2017, with the park district being placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Friends of Rea Park, Inc. has supported the effort to place the park on historic state and federal registers from its inception. Our intent has always been to "relight the glow" of Rea Park's historic clubhouse and grounds. It is, and will always remain, a beloved Terre Haute landmark.

Being listed on both state and national registers is recognition that Rea Park is a place of significance. People think highly of the national register. It is a recognition factor that organizations can use to obtain needed resources, whether they come in the form of a grant from a foundation, governmental agency, or business; or a donation from a private individual.

Placement on the federal register sends a message to our community. In rehabilitating Rea Park, we are restoring a piece of Terre Haute's historic fabric. Our history, our customs and our traditions will be in better hands given this designation. We think future generations may look back years from now and thank us for preserving this wonderful park.

Rea Park's application was funded by the Terre Haute City Parks Board and guided by the local office of Indiana Landmarks, Inc.

3. *Friends of Rea Park, Inc. believes the city of Terre Haute should upgrade existing properties that hold potential before building new venues of similar purpose.*

Rea Park is one of Terre Haute's oldest parks. It sits in a state of serious decline.

Before city government considers spending funds on other locations that offer equivalent or similar services, it seems reasonable the repair and significant upgrading of Rea Park take precedence over any new recreational projects.

4. *Friends of Rea Park, Inc. believes the culture of Terre Haute must be changed. Improving the health of our citizens should be a top priority of city and county governments.*

Poor report. Terre Haute's location is ideal, sitting between Chicago, St. Louis, and Indianapolis. Our city is fortunate to have an outstanding infrastructure system with railroads, national and interstate highways, and world-class technology and electric power grids within its boundaries.

Terre Haute's population fell from 72,000 in 1960 to 60,800 in 2015. This is a loss of over 11,000 people, or roughly 16 percent of our populace. Over this same period, major employers including Stran Steel, Anaconda, J.I. Case and Pfizer have left Terre Haute and Vigo County, taking with them hundreds of high-paying, family-supporting jobs.

Like many Midwestern cities, Terre Haute's economy has struggled in recent years. Vigo County statistics show adult unemployment, the percentage of children living in poverty, the percentage of children living in a single parent home, and the percentage of residents living in poverty all stand significantly above Indiana state averages.

Companies seeking to relocate to an area look for healthy workers. They seek a population that has the work skills needed to compete in a world-wide economy.

Terre Haute is fortunate to have a good system of K-12 public schools, an outstanding community college in Ivy Tech, a well-respected four-year institution in Indiana State University, and one of our country's highest rated, most-respected engineering schools in Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. They do an excellent job of giving students the skills needed to succeed in today's workforce. These educational organizations are some of our community's greatest assets.

Yet, while positive, these factors have not been enough to attract new business and industry to our area. It may be that to attract outside interest in Terre Haute, an effort must begin to increase the health of those living in our county.

Current data. County Health Rankings is a web site that compiles local, state and federal statistical data. Using various methods, each year County Health Rankings assigns a health ranking to every state and county in the United States.

Vigo County's rankings are displayed in the table on the following page. This table shows Vigo County has a very unhealthy population, one that ranks close to the bottom in nearly every measured category. More important, one should note the trend for Vigo County is downward.

On the other hand, Hoosier communities that are seeing population and economic growth - such as the Indianapolis, Evansville, Bloomington, Lafayette, and Ft. Wayne metropolitan areas - all have higher state health rankings. In 2019, nearby Monroe County was ranked 19th, and Tippecanoe County 24th. This seems to indicate the economic growth of a metropolitan area may be strongly linked to the overall health of its citizenry.

VIGO COUNTY HEALTH RANKINGS
2011 thru 2019

Out of 92 Indiana Counties – Our Ranking Has Dropped Significantly Over a Nine-Year Span

Category	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
OVERALL HEALTH OUTCOMES	58	59	65	65	68	75	74	81	83
Length of Life Premature Death	59	56	67	67	70	73	72	67	70
Quality of Life Poor or Fair Health, Poor Physical Condition, Poor Mental Health, and Low Birth Weight, etc.	67	62	57	62	60	76	76	87	87
HEALTH FACTORS	75	61	72	72	74	86	81	79	82
Health Behavior Adult Smoking, Adult Obesity, Food Environment Index, Physical Inactivity, Access to Exercise Opportunities, Excessive Drinking, Alcohol-Impaired Driving Deaths, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Teen Births, etc.	77	49	60	61	57	91	87	83	79
Physical Environment Air Pollution, Drinking Water Violations, Severe Housing Problems, and Commutes to Work, etc.	38	61	66	74	75	88	71	74	34
Socio-Economic Factors Educational Level, Unemployment, Income Inequality, Children Living in Poverty, Children Living in a Single Parent Home, and Violent Crime, etc.	75	74	74	80	82	85	82	75	82
Clinical Care Uninsured, Primary Care Physicians, Dentists, Mental Health Providers, Preventable Hospital Stays, and Diabetic Monitoring, etc.	28	18	47	53	47	41	36	45	77

Vigo County health rankings have dropped significantly over the past nine years. In the two major categories of health outcomes and health factors, Vigo County now rates in the bottom 12 percent of Indiana’s 92 counties (83rd and 82nd).

In every health category Vigo County’s state ranking is lower in 2019 than it was in 2011, except one – Physical Environment. In some cases, the drop has been significant. These data support the realization that the overall health status of citizens in Vigo County is getting worse, not better. When it comes to drinking, smoking, alcohol use, and drug use, in 2016, our county ranked above only one other county in Indiana. Ninety counties ranked ahead of Vigo County at that time.

The health rankings of the state of Indiana from 2011 are displayed in the table on the following page. The data show our state consistently ranks near or in the bottom 20% of all 50 states.

Vigo County has one of the poorest health rankings within a state that has one of the lowest health rankings in the U.S. This cannot be good news for those trying to persuade new businesses to relocate to our county.

HEALTH RANKINGS – UNITED STATES
 Indiana Versus the 50 States
 America’s Health Rankings (United Health Foundation)

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Rank	42 nd	39 th	39 th	39 th	39 th	41 st	38 th	41 st

What can be done? The decline in Vigo County’s health rankings coincides with major reductions in funding allocated for recreational facilities and activities in our city’s budget. Terre Haute’s park department budget, in 2019 dollars, has been cut nearly in half of what it was in 2008.

What once was a full-time position, the superintendent of city parks is now a part-time position due to the consolidation of cemetery and parks department supervision responsibilities.

Friends of Rea Park, Inc. believes city and county governments must take note of these poor rankings. If local governments want to raise the level of health in Vigo County, if they want our community to grow and prosper, they must begin to focus their efforts toward improving the health of all living in Vigo County.

They need to begin investing in recreation infrastructure and health programming. This is true for the youth of our community, and those who are aging. Many of our seniors are seeking facilities having the equipment and programs needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle. We must make them available.

A good start for the City of Terre Haute might be to replace tax monies that have been cut from past park and recreation budgets. Seeking grant funds from public and private foundations, soliciting donations from private donors, and encouraging private investment in public projects are excellent ways to support local health initiatives. A return to employing a full-time parks superintendent would enhance these efforts.

Abraham Lincoln said, “Government should do what people cannot do on their own or by individual effort.” It is clear Vigo County residents cannot provide major recreational facilities and programs on their own. Most do not have the resources available to them to join private clubs. Instead, they depend upon local government to improve their lives through collective means. The leadership of governing bodies such as the Terre Haute City Council, the Vigo County Council, Vigo County School Board, and Vigo County Health Board must begin to see health and wellness as an important part of our county’s growth agenda.

Change needed. Our culture and priorities must change. We must place the health of our citizens first. The rehabilitation of historic Rea Park is as much an economic development initiative as it is one of health and wellness.

If we want growing companies to look at Terre Haute, we must change our health habits. Modern organizations look for healthy cities and towns whose people are physically fit and mentally work ready.

Economic development is much like a three-legged stool. Using this analogy, the first leg consists of workforce readiness skills and attributes, and the institutions that develop them. The second leg represents a community's strategic location, physical infrastructure and fiscal means. The third and last leg, the one that seems to be missing in Vigo County, could represent the health and wellness of its populace. If one of the stool's legs is wobbly or missing, the stool becomes unstable.

Our community needs to create an economic development plan that has all three legs functioning equally. A strategy to improve Vigo County's health and fitness should be a priority of this plan.

- 5. *Friends of Rea Park, Inc. believes mutually beneficial relationships between the park and the Terre Haute community should be established. They have the potential to significantly impact the health and well-being of all living in Vigo County. They have the potential to help Rea Park improve its' financial bottom line.***

Rea Park has two advantages that could help it become a great asset for both city and county residents.

First, it is a park, not a golf course. Rea Park is a large tract of land - 160 acres - with tennis courts, a driving range, and a historic clubhouse of nearly 12 thousand square feet. The clubhouse can be renovated into a park activity center for significantly less money than a new building of the same size and quality. The park's venues beg to be upgraded into revenue-making businesses that can improve Rea Park's financial bottom line.

Second, the best attribute may be Rea Park's location. It sits next to the largest consumer base in west central Indiana. The busy Honey Creek Square area off of Interstate 70 and U.S. Highway 41 South swells each day with shoppers and employees.

On the west side adjoining park property stands Terre Haute South High School, with nearly two thousand students. Sarah Scott and Honey Creek middle schools, and Fuqua Elementary School lie nearer Rea Park than Deming Park. Terre Haute's second largest medical provider, Terre Haute Regional Hospital, and Westminster Village, the largest retirement center in the Wabash Valley, are located directly across the street. Many of our county's major hotels, restaurants, and retail stores are within a half-mile radius of the park.

We encourage members of our parks board to consider the possibilities Rea Park presents to our community. Can we use Rea Park to increase the number of Vigo County residents wanting to live an active, healthy lifestyle? Can we form partnerships that will result in opportunities for our

students to learn more about the benefits of personal fitness and well being? What programs could be offered at Rea Park that would impact people of all ages? In general, how can we maximize this wonderful gift that Mr. and Mrs. Rea have given our community?

To answer these questions, Friends of Rea Park, Inc. suggests ...

Terre Haute Regional Hospital could use the park as a base to share its expertise. The hospital might use park facilities to conduct health education programs or forums. It could use park facilities to assist patients in overcoming cardiac and orthopedic challenges. Experiences could be developed for people of all ages – children through adults – that would integrate Rea Park’s tennis, golf, pickle ball, walking, and running facilities with health education. Should a fitness or tennis center ever be established at the park, the hospital could play a major role in its operation.

The **Vigo County School Corporation** could have the most to gain. The VCSC has been hosting events for school-age athletes at the park since it opened in the 1920s. Golf, tennis, cross country matches, and physical education classes are regularly conducted on Rea Park grounds. There is no doubt students would benefit from restored and updated facilities, those on varsity teams, as well as those participating in intramural or summertime programs.

The VCSC is considering renovating or constructing a new high school on the present site of Terre Haute South. How can Rea Park assist the school district in making this transition? Is there a possibility for sharing sports facilities as the park and school sit directly across South Seventh Street from each other? Could this be a way to avoid duplication of facilities and services, saving taxpayers money?

A newly renovated clubhouse would be an inviting place for students to gather, and for the school to conduct extra-curricular activities. Internship experiences, such as working in the clubhouse food and beverage service, or as part of the grounds crew, could be developed for high school pupils.

Non-profit organizations conduct fundraising events each year at Rea Park. Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised over the years for good causes. Most use the golf course, but not the clubhouse due to its deteriorating, aging condition. Would additional business come to Rea Park if the clubhouse were renovated? Updating the historic clubhouse remains the top priority, as it may well have the biggest impact on park services.

Our parks board should consider engaging the park’s neighbors asking them how Rea Park can best meet their needs, as well as the types of facilities and programs they would like to see developed.

6. *Friends of Rea Park, Inc. believes the investment to rehabilitate Rea Park is minimal compared to other community projects now being considered. It has the potential for maximum returns, helping to improve the health of people of all ages.*

The total cost to renew Rea Park, including the historic clubhouse and grounds, is in the four to six million dollar range. This is a reasonable investment when compared to other community projects now being considered by city and county governments.

- \$60 million for a renovated Hulman Center
- \$65 million for a new county jail
- \$10 million for a new city police station
- \$10 million+ for a new school aquatic center in Voorhees Park.

Of these, only the aquatic center emphasizes health and wellness. None are comprised of recreational facilities that would offer open, year-round access to the public and to persons of all ages.

As for Rea Park, there has been no significant investment in the historic clubhouse for over 35 years. The tennis courts were resurfaced in 2004, but are now in dire need of upgrading after 15 years.

Friends of Rea Park, Inc. suggests the city of Terre Haute consider the Rea Park rehabilitation project an effort to promote healthy living for people residing in the Terre Haute area. New facilities and services suggested in this study could have a dramatic impact on our community, from both health and economic development perspectives. The project could be done in stages, lessening the impact on yearly budgets.

7. *Friends of Rea Park, Inc. suggests new revenue streams should be developed at the park that will move it toward self-sustainability.*

Friends of Rea Park, Inc. sees great potential in Rea Park. While the golf course remains in good condition, other areas of the park need to be developed. The following are ideas that need to be considered:

Food and beverage. Once the historic 1925 clubhouse is rehabilitated, it can serve the park as an activity/social center as originally envisioned in 1922 by Mrs. Rea and city leaders. A private vendor could operate this business, with a percentage of the profits going to the city. Operations could be year round. A local vendor who is successful and well regarded would be the best candidate. The clubhouse could host all kinds of social and civic groups, especially non-profit organizations using the golf course to conduct fundraising activities.

Weddings and social events requiring a small space could be promoted. Food and beverage services could be made available to golf, tennis, pickle ball, jogging, and family park patrons, or any other group visiting the park. Holiday parties could be conducted at the clubhouse as well.

At the present time, Rea Park does not serve hot food.

Tennis/pickle ball center. A new racquet sports facility at Rea Park could be built on the southwest end of the facility. The current location is in a wet area, with water often permeating through the courts after a good rain.

Rather than building new courts for open, recreational play, Friends of Rea Park, Inc. suggests a new “center” could be built on Rea Park property. It could be designed much like the tennis center located in Evansville, IN’s Wesselman Park. This center would serve patrons of all ages, promoting the games of tennis and pickle ball as life-long sports. It would encourage a steady stream of players using Rea Park’s courts in future years, as well being able to host regional and state competitions.

A new racquet center could double as a place for Terre Haute South High School to stage its matches, with the Terre Haute Tennis Association and local pickle ball players conducting their competitions on park premises as well. Summertime programs could be developed that would encourage students from nearby Sarah Scott, Honey Creek, Fuqua, and Dixie Bee schools to take up these games.

Much like the golf course, a fee schedule for the use of tennis and pickle ball facilities would support the maintenance of court areas, keeping them in playable condition. Tennis professionals now using park facilities for free would be asked to pay a facility usage fee. Management of the tennis center could be contracted out to a private vender much like the food and beverage service would in a renovated Rea Park clubhouse, with a percentage going to the parks department and Rea Park.

The Terre Haute Parks Board may want to consider granting a long-term contract to any private investor who would assist in the building of a new tennis center on the Rea Park property.

Healthplex/fitness center. Friends of Rea Park, Inc. believes a great deal of expertise surrounds Rea Park. Terre Haute South High School, Terre Haute Regional Hospital, Westminster Village, and businesses in the Honey Creek Square area are located nearby. The possibility of a partnership being created among these organizations should be studied. Discussion centering around a fitness facility being built on Rea Park property near or in conjunction with a new tennis and pickle ball center should be undertaken.

Could Terre Haute Regional Hospital, given their expertise in health and wellness, share their knowledge with park patrons, Terre Haute South students, and seniors living in Westminster? With proper facilities on hand at a Rea Park facility, training and fitness programs could be developed at all levels for all ages. Even individuals in outpatient rehabilitation programs at THRH might benefit from such an arrangement. A business much like the Healthplex facility located in Indianapolis could be established on Rea Park property.

Facilities at Rea Park, the kind discussed in this proposal, could be used to help deliver these new programs. If properly developed, programs such as these would be a win-win situation for all involved.

Golf academy learning center. The driving range facility at Rea is located at the northwest end of the park. It is a minimal facility. A large tee box, small sand trap, and flag pins are all that comprise the range.

Rea Park golf course is an expensive facility to operate and maintain. It is important programs that teach aspects of the game of golf be developed so a continuous stream of golfers can be maintained over time. A golf academy could be planned and built on the driving range site at Rea Park. New golf academy amenities might include:

- Concrete driving pads with mats for year-round use.
- Covered hitting areas that could be used in off season periods.
- An indoor facility with one or two golf simulators.
- An outdoor short game area featuring a new practice green and bunkers. This could be located at the north end of the current range for use with beginners through advanced players.

Academy staff would be committed to making golf more accessible and affordable. They would serve young children through seniors. The academy could be open year round, ensuring golfers throughout the city always have a place to gather, practice and play.

Instructional programs for students at Terre Haute South and other nearby schools could be conducted during school hours and outside of the regular school day. Instructional activities offered by the Indiana Golf Association and others could be based at Rea Park. Other activities at this facility might include golf exhibitions, repairing clubs, and fitting golfers for new golf equipment. An effort could be made to employ teens from Terre Haute South High School or work-study students from Indiana State University at the golf learning center.

The Terre Haute Parks Board might want to consider granting a long-term contract to any private investor who would be willing to establish a golf learning center or golf academy on Rea Park property. A percentage of the profits could be shared with the parks department's Rea Park account.

Family park area. Newspaper articles from the Terre Haute Tribune and Terre Haute Star written around the time Rea Park was originally being planned and developed demonstrate Mr. and Mrs. Rea's vision was that of a park, not just a golf course.

Non-golf activity areas such as picnic areas, tennis courts, ball fields and the possibility of a swimming pool were all mentioned by park founders as amenities that might be added to Rea Park in later years. The historic clubhouse was built not as a domain exclusive to golfers, but as an activity center for all park patrons. While some of these facilities were not developed in Rea Park's early years, the idea that they could be built still exists today.

Park patrons could use a dedicated space to picnic or gather for other activities. A playground, splash pad and picnic shelter are just a few features that could be included in this area. This new venue in Rea Park would encourage citizens to visit, even if they are not golfing or playing tennis. Relaxing in a park-like setting, having lunch at the clubhouse, and enjoying the view of golfers and tennis players at work on their games would be possible for those who just want to enjoy a public park setting on the south side of Terre Haute.

Perimeter walking trail. The Terre Haute Parks Department is home to one of the finest trail systems in the state of Indiana. These trails have been of great benefit to those living in Vigo County who enjoy biking, hiking, walking and running.

Rea Park is home to Terre Haute South High School's cross-country team, which hosts several running events each year. West Vigo students also use Rea Park during the cross country season, as well as runners from Sarah Scott and Honey Creek middle schools.

Developing a perimeter trail around Rea Park would be beneficial to both students and the general public. The layout of this trail will make it possible to connect Rea Park to the city's existing trail system.

8. *Friends of Rea Park, Inc. believes private investment in Rea Park should be encouraged.*

In today's fiscal environment, it is not unusual for city governments to seek out private investment in some form to assist in providing services or building new facilities. Municipal budgets around the country are tightening. Tax revenues are falling due to tax freezes or outright tax elimination.

In Terre Haute, the city budget has been the focus of numerous newspaper articles and TV news reports. Our budget deficit dilemma has been a constant headline in the media, and a source of much public debate.

At Rea Park, no long-term, public-private agreements exist. It is managed and supervised by city employees. Facilities are underutilized. Maximum potential of the park is not being realized.

Friends of Rea Park, Inc. encourages city government to take advantage of the location and size of Rea Park. Agreements with individuals and/or businesses that want to partner with the city should be encouraged. Expertise can be cultivated and shared, the result being Rea Park patrons will enjoy a higher grade of service and facilities.

An example of this may be contracting the food and beverage service for Rea Park where no service now exists. An operator could be asked to fully develop the driving range into a golf learning academy. Private investors could be asked to invest in a tennis center and/or fitness center on park property. Public/private partnerships have worked in other cities, they can work in Terre Haute.

Bringing programs and facilities to park patrons that promote a healthy life style is what our city should focus on. Ways to assist city government in eliminating our fiscal deficits, while enhancing park services and facilities, merits further investigation. If city government cannot afford to go it alone, they should consider asking the private sector for assistance.

Clubhouse Feasibility Study
Sanders and Associates, Inc. Architects
(Completed Spring 2017)

A. Park History

William S. Rea Park is located at 3500 South 7th Street, and is bordered by Davis Avenue to the north, Royse Drive to the south, and an old railroad spur to the east.

It occupies 160 acres, which contains an 18-hole, par 72 golf course that plays 6,482 yards from the back tee boxes. The course rating is 69.8 and has a slope rating of 113. Rea Park also has a practice green, driving range, caretaker house, maintenance facilities, cart barn, and a large clubhouse, along with nine tennis courts.

The course was designed by Lawrence Sheridan, a prominent landscape architect of the early 1900s. It opened for play in 1922 when the first nine holes were completed. The second nine was opened in September of 1925.

Terre Haute native William S. Rea, who died in 1919, left \$100,000 in his will to purchase land to develop Terre Haute's first municipal golf course. His widow, Geraldine, would donate an additional \$60,000 to construct a clubhouse. The Mediterranean-style clubhouse, designed by local architecture firm Johnson, Miller, Miller and Yeager, opened in September 1925. This amount is equal to a \$2.3 million gift in 2017 dollars.

Tennis courts were eventually added to the park in the late 1920s. Today's courts lie in the same area as the original courts. Patrons have never paid fees to use the tennis courts.



Aerial View of Rea Park

B. Existing Operations.

The City of Terre Haute operates two golf facilities, Rea Park and Hulman Links, each of which is an 18-hole course with a driving range and practice greens, as well as clubhouse facilities. The courses occupy a total of 360 acres, or roughly 36 percent of the 1,000+ acres maintained by the Terre Haute Parks Department. Rea Park golf professional David Kennedy estimated about 25,000 rounds of golf were played at Rea Park and approximately 20,000 rounds at Hulman Links in 2014. However, the actual number of rounds played are not recorded by Rea Park personnel.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the conditions of the William S. Rea Park clubhouse building, and explore options for improvements to the clubhouse, golf course, tennis facilities, and accessory uses.

The clubhouse has suffered significant deterioration over the years, which prompted the creation of Friends of Rea Park, Inc., a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that is encouraging the city to revitalize the park’s grounds and historic clubhouse. This study focuses on the clubhouse, but also examines Rea Park as a whole for master planning purposes.

Both Rea Park and Hulman Links are operated under the direction of the Terre Haute Parks Department. However, at the time of this study, the City of Terre Haute had distributed a formal request for proposals (RFP) regarding the operations and maintenance of Hulman Links and Rea Park.

Both properties face financial challenges. Over the past 12 years, Rea Park had a revenue stream of \$5,918,100 and total expenditures of \$7,045,400, for a net loss of \$1,127,300. The average loss during this time was around \$94,000 per year.

Terre Haute Parks Department – Golf Course Revenue and Expenditures
Rea Park and Hulman Links - 2009 thru 2016

Thousands of Dollars													
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total
Rea Park													
Revenue	504.6	551.3	536.3	511.1	471.3	474.0	483.1	558.7	525.1	435.9	452.9	413.8	5918.1
Expense	544.0	555.4	677.0	600.5	658.6	549.8	577.4	536.3	568.9	571.3	583.5	622.7	7045.4
Diff	39.4	4.1	140.7	89.4	187.3	75.8	94.3	22.4	43.8	135.4	130.6	208.9	1127.3
Hulman Links Golf Course													
Revenue	469.5	495.0	613.8	556.6	549.9	536.9	469.9	440.6	387.5	413.6	437.4	497.4	5868.1
Expense	694.5	624.7	909.0	874.4	930.0	866.9	764.9	854.3	795.4	788.5	803.5	840.9	9747.0
Diff	225.0	129.7	295.2	317.8	380.1	330.0	295.0	413.7	407.9	374.9	366.1	343.5	3878.8
Total													
Revenue	974.1	1046.3	1150.1	1067.7	1021.2	1010.9	953.0	999.30	912.6	849.5	890.3	911.2	11786.2
Expense	1238.5	1180.1	1586.1	1474.9	1588.6	1416.7	1342.3	1390.6	1364.3	1359.8	1387.0	1463.6	16792.5
Diff	264.4	133.8	436.0	407.2	567.4	405.8	389.3	391.3	451.7	510.3	496.7	552.4	5006.3

Data Courtesy of the Terre Haute Parks Department

In 2013, Rea Park was awarded a \$1,100,000 settlement from Dupont Corporation. This large award was the result of a chemical spray killing several trees on the Rea Park golf course property. When this windfall is included, the Rea Park operation has largely been a “break even” proposition for the city since 2005.

There are some concerns, however. Rea Park’s golf revenues have fallen the last four years by nearly 25 percent, from \$560,000 in 2012 to \$414,000 in 2016. And, after remaining steady for several years, expenses jumped significantly in 2016. Rea Park lost more money in 2016 than in the previous 11 years due to record expenses.

The cost of course labor, allowing tennis courts to be used by the public at no charge, no major marketing efforts, a lack of public/private partnerships being formed, free golf give-a-ways, and poor facility conditions may all have contributed to declining revenue.

At Rea Park, many park assets are not being utilized, assets that if properly managed could possibly place the park into the black on a regular basis.

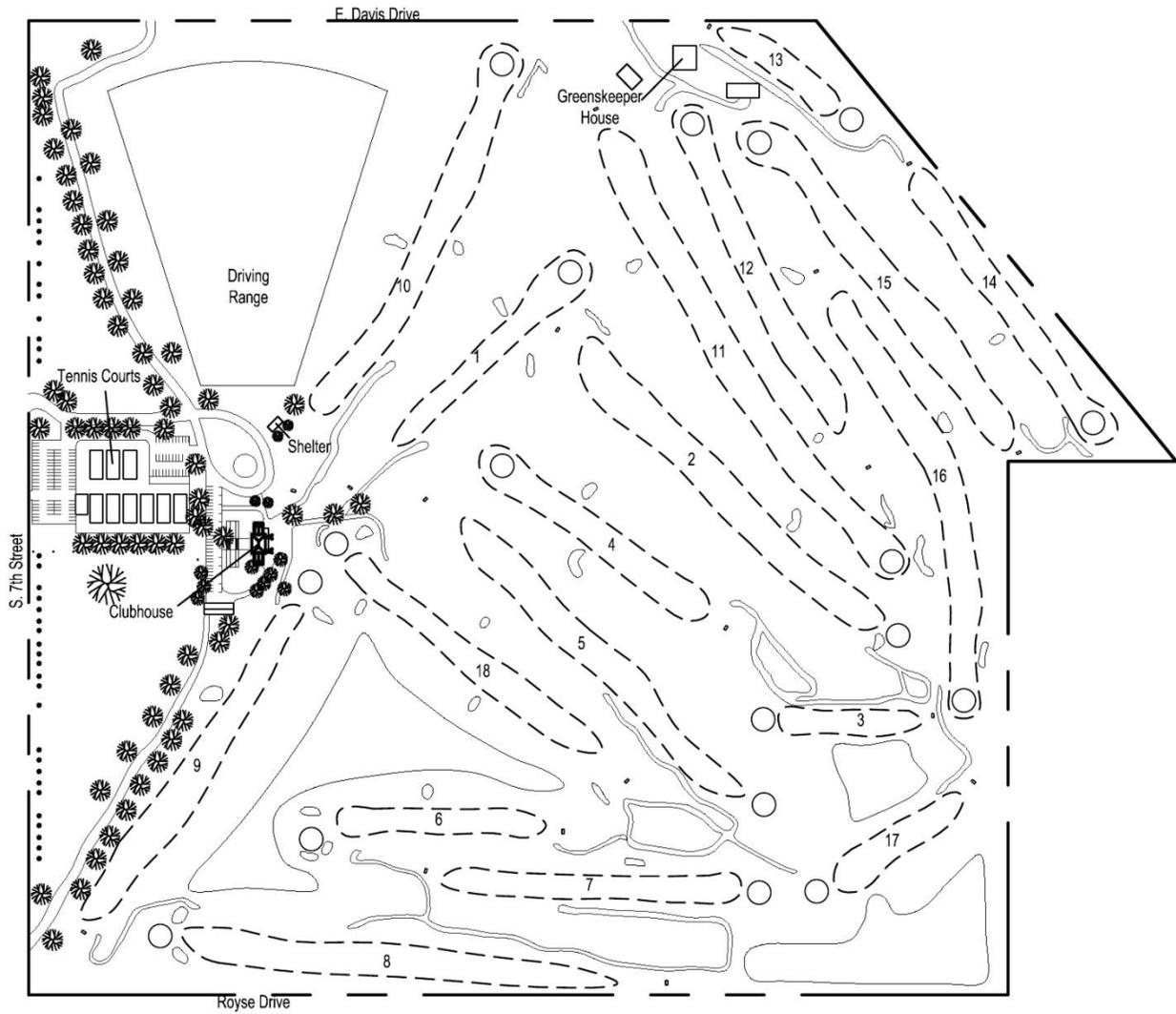
The good news is local golfers are willing to share in the costs of supporting Hulman Links and Rea Park. Over the past 12 years, revenue for the two courses, which comes from golfing fees and operations, totaled \$11,786,000. The average yearly revenue is about one million dollars. Of the total dollars needed to operate Hulman Links and Rea Park, golf revenue supported about 70 percent of the budget. Money from the parks department budget or other city line item paid for remaining expenses.

Some may call it a fee, but what golfers in Terre Haute are paying is a “voluntary” tax. If you want to play golf at our public course, you pay a fee or tax. A million dollars in voluntary taxes each year to play golf is proof that in Vigo County, the public has a significant interest in the game.

Rates for golf at Rea Park for the 2016 season were:

	<u>18 Holes</u>	<u>9 Holes</u>		
<u>Daily Fees</u>				
Monday-Friday	\$20.95	\$10.95		
Weekend/Holiday	\$23.95	\$13.95		
Junior/College/Senior/City/County	\$16.95	\$8.95		
<u>Carts</u>				
Monday-Friday	\$13	\$9		
Weekend/Holiday	\$20	\$10		
<u>Season Passes</u>				
Family	\$1,600	Adult	\$750	
College	\$300	Junior	\$200	

C. Map of Rea Park (Existing):



EXISTING SITE PLAN

D. Goals and Considerations

Although Rea Park is a popular golf course with the community, it has not been a breakeven operation.

The clubhouse needs major improvements, as well as the tennis courts and other support facilities. The course itself is in good condition, which stands to reason that other factors are impacting the golf experience at Rea Park.

Revenue generating potential from physical improvements, such as banquet facilities, driving range, and tennis courts could help make the park financially independent.

Goals for the Rea Park master plan, in priority rank, are:

- #1 Renovation of the Historic Clubhouse
- #2 Restoration or Relocation of the Tennis Court Facility
- #3 Improvements to the Driving Range
- #4 Bike/Walking Trail Development
- #5 Develop Family Park Area
- #6 Golf Course Enhancements

These priorities are opportunities to improve Rea Park not just for golfers, but for the general public, while increasing the income potential and financial stability of the park.

Once these goals have the public's support and confirmation, Friends of Rea Park, Inc. will develop and implement a fundraising plan.

In May of 2018, the Terre Haute City County passed a resolution in support of the Rea Park renewal project. The resolution says city government will ...

- Become familiar with the Rea Park Renewal Study
- Make recommendations to strengthen the study
- Join with Friends of Rea Park, Inc. to identify final park plans
- Assign a park board member and city parks administration representative to sit on an advisory board
- Actively participate/cooperate in marketing efforts
- Approve all necessary documents and/or agreements setting forth the use of any privately used funds for the improvement of the park

In August of 2018, a working agreement was signed between the TH City Parks Department, The TH City Parks Board, and Friends of Rea Park, Inc. with respect to fundraising and marketing efforts.

E. Rehabilitating the Historic 1925 Clubhouse

The clubhouse facility was constructed in 1925 and has undergone minor renovations and additions in its 90+ years of operation. The structure is built on an earthen pedestal, enhancing its stately Mediterranean style of white stucco, large columns, and red tile roof. It consists of a main hall/lounge, pro shop, office, and kitchen area on the main level, with restrooms, Hall of Fame room, storage areas, and mechanical room on the lower level. The west terrace has a basement-type area beneath it with an unexcavated dirt floor.

Renovations between 1984 and 1986 included an addition to the northeast corner of the building for the expansion of the pro shop and the enclosing of the east balcony area. An irrigation system for the course and a cart barn were also constructed during this time. A series of modifications over time have made their mark on the building, significantly changing the character and functionality of the historic building.

A complete renovation of the clubhouse is necessary in order to address the following problems and concerns.



East Side of the Clubhouse

Exterior. The stucco exterior finish needs repaired and repainted. Many of the large windows are single-pane, metal units that are original to the building. Other window openings have been in-filled with glass block or vinyl replacement windows. Some windows have been removed entirely.

Existing doors are storefront replacements that do not resemble the original wooden French doors. Side doors are metal replacements that show much wear. Some of the doorways have been in-filled with solid material.

A new asphalt shingle roof (3rd layer) was put on the building in 2015, over an existing asphalt shingle roof that was installed in the 1980s. The original building had a red clay tile roof, which was removed in the 1960s for the installation of an asphalt shingle roof. Some of the gutters and downspouts do not drain water properly and contribute to the water intrusion problem on the lower level.

The west side concrete terrace is deteriorating rapidly; temporary structural shoring has been placed in the unexcavated space below, and is a major safety concern. Cast railings and limestone balustrades have been removed or covered up along the entire perimeter of the building. Many of the exterior concrete stairways are unsafe or in poor condition, some of which have been closed off or removed.



Windows Blocked Shut



Deteriorating Steps on the East Side



Clubhouse Westside

HVAC. There is no central air conditioning in the building. The pro shop, office, and kitchen areas use window air conditioning units. Two gas, forced air furnaces are 29 years old (1987) and are the primary source of heat for the building. Wood burning fireplaces are no longer used, but the chimneys and dampers are still in place in the main hall and pro shop.

The original metal ductwork with coordinating supply and return grilles are still used for the delivery of warm air. The addition has two electric baseboard heaters connected to a thermostat. The enclosed balcony does not have a supplemental heat source.



Furnace



Pro Shop Window A/C

Electrical service. Two, single-phase, electrical services are located on the south side of the building, each providing 400 amps with a separate meter base. A new transformer with a single service to the building would be preferable, as well as the relocation of the above ground power lines to underground. Some of the wiring has been updated in the building, but any remaining knob and tube wiring needs to be replaced. Existing electrical panel boxes show evidence of water damage. Exterior feature lighting has been removed and the remaining exterior lights are in disrepair. Most of the original interior lighting fixtures have been changed, but are of poor quality, not working, or do not keep in character with the original décor of the building.

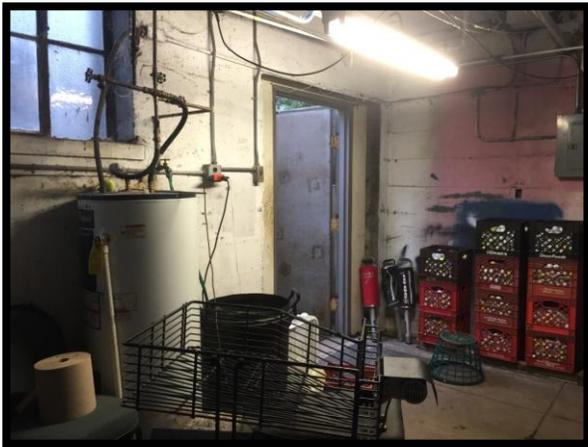


Outside Electrical Boxes



Inside Fuse Box

Plumbing. The main water line into the building is a 1" service. The 50 gallon gas water heater is 12 years old (2004). Men's and women's restrooms have two stalls each, even though there is space for additional stalls. Restrooms used to have showers, and formerly served as locker rooms. The facility lacks a utility mop sink and frost-proof exterior hose bibs. The majority of the water supply lines are galvanized metal. The drain lines are cast iron, both of which need to be replaced. A 1" gas supply services the building.



Water Heater



Outside Water Lines

Energy efficiency. The age of the building indicates that there is no insulation in the walls. Four to six inches of loose insulation was added in the attic space in the 1960s. The large expanses of single-pane windows and storefront doors are not energy efficient. No insulation is evident in the lower level of the building. The furnace is too old to meet Energy Star efficiency requirements. Incandescent bulbs are the primary lighting source for the building, which could be replaced with CFLs or LEDs to improve energy efficiency.



Main Hall Windows



Water Damages in Main Hall Ceiling

Structure. The building is primarily masonry, consisting of clay tile block with a plaster finish on the main level, with poured-in-place concrete walls on the lower level, sitting on a concrete foundation. The floors are concrete over a clay tile bed. In the lower level, portions of the clay tile bed have failed and have left holes in the ceiling, compromising the floor/ceiling structure.

The hip-style roof is wood framed and originally was covered in red clay tiles. Water damage has occurred in various areas on the ceiling, and some of the wood structure will need to be reinforced. One beam on the ceiling shows evidence of being repaired.

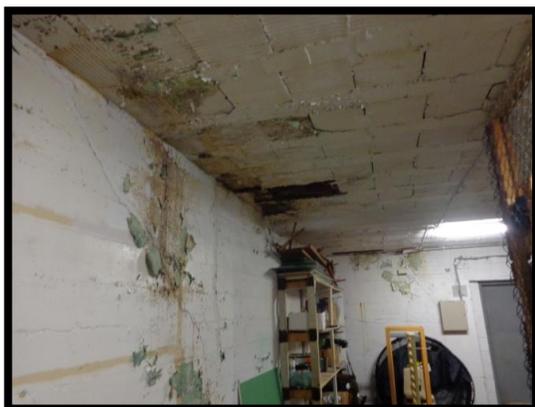
The west terrace concrete structure has been compromised through water intrusion and will need to be rebuilt. Steel lintels above exterior doors and windows are rusting and will need repainted, but a majority of them will need replaced due to significant deterioration. The addition uses a large steel beam to bridge the opening from the existing building into the pro shop area. The addition is mainly wood frame construction with a concrete floor and brick wainscot.



Deteriorating Westside Terrace



Water Damage Under Westside Terrace



Water Damage in Basement Storage Room



Cracking in Basement Walls & Ceilings

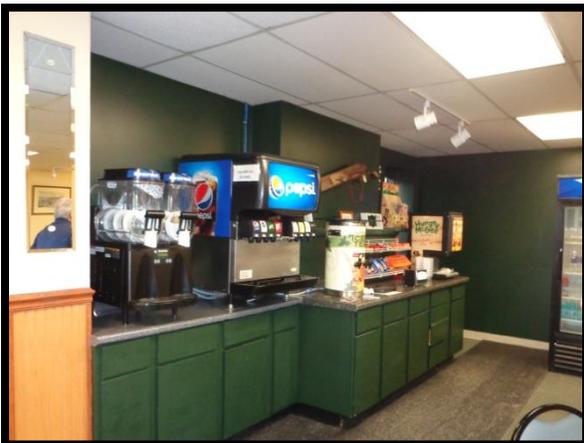
Interior. Carpet has been installed over the original terrazzo floor in the main hall, and other main level areas. The lower level has vinyl tile or concrete in most areas, with carpet in the Hall of Fame room. Rooms have been modified over the years, including infilling windows and doorways. The south wing of the building has painted wood paneling installed over the existing plaster walls. A dropped ceiling system with 2x4 acoustic tiles is installed in the main level north and south wings, along with the lower level Hall of Fame Room and restrooms. The ceilings in the lower level north and south wings are exposed clay tile that was once painted and now has evidence of peeling and mold/fungus/mildew. Original chandeliers hang in the main hall, but most of the rest of the lighting is not original to the building. The main hall limestone fireplace is in relatively good condition; however the other remaining fireplaces have been covered up or removed. Water infiltration into the lower level is a concern. Both north and south wings have standing water after any measureable rainfall, and most of the exterior facing basement walls have visible efflorescence. The unexcavated space beneath the west terrace has serious water penetration problems, indicated by the stalactite formations on the ceiling.



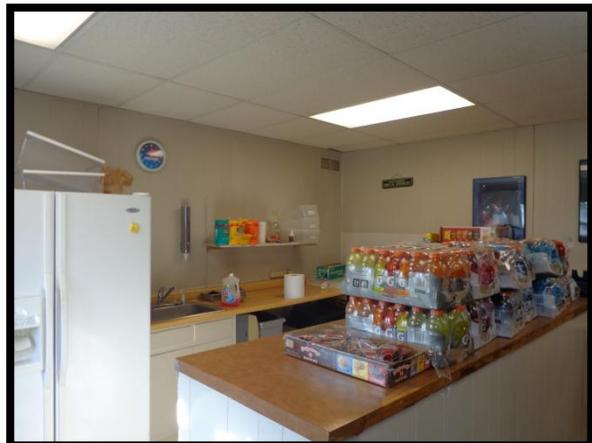
Main Hall with Fireplace



Basement Meeting Room



Pro Shop Snack Stand



Storage Area in Office

Miscellaneous. Two ice machines are located in the lower level utility room. The low voltage wiring panels for the phone, cable, and internet are also mounted in the utility room. The security alarm panel is located in the lower level storage room. The Pro Shop uses a P.O.S. (point of sale) computerized system for handling course fees. Smoke detectors are located in each room, which then report to the security system in the event of a fire, however there are no lighted "Exit" signs, nor any emergency lighting in case of power failure. The existing office is located in the south wing of the building, accessed through the kitchen area, and does not have any exterior windows or doors.

Accommodations have not been made to meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards. Currently, wheelchair bound visitors cannot access the clubhouse as there are no ramps available to either level of the building, only staircases. A handicap restroom is also needed.



Ice Machines



Utility Room



Golf Equipment Storage in Basement



Office Area

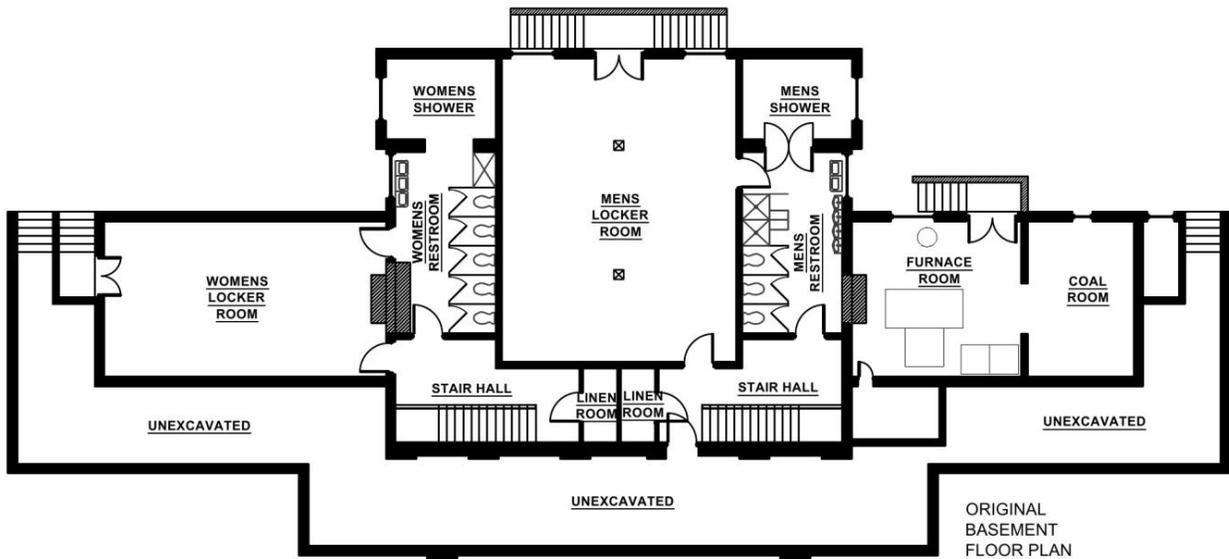
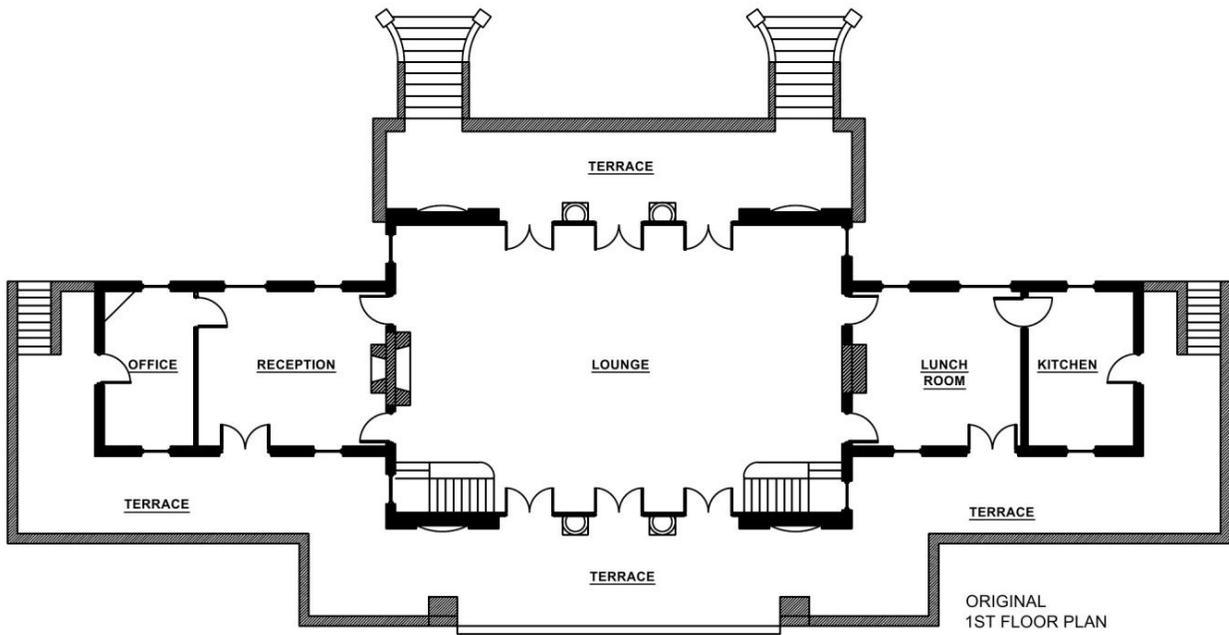
F. Building Program

A building program has been developed to identify the space needs and functions of the clubhouse facility. Plans and elevations of the existing building, and the original building have been included in this report.

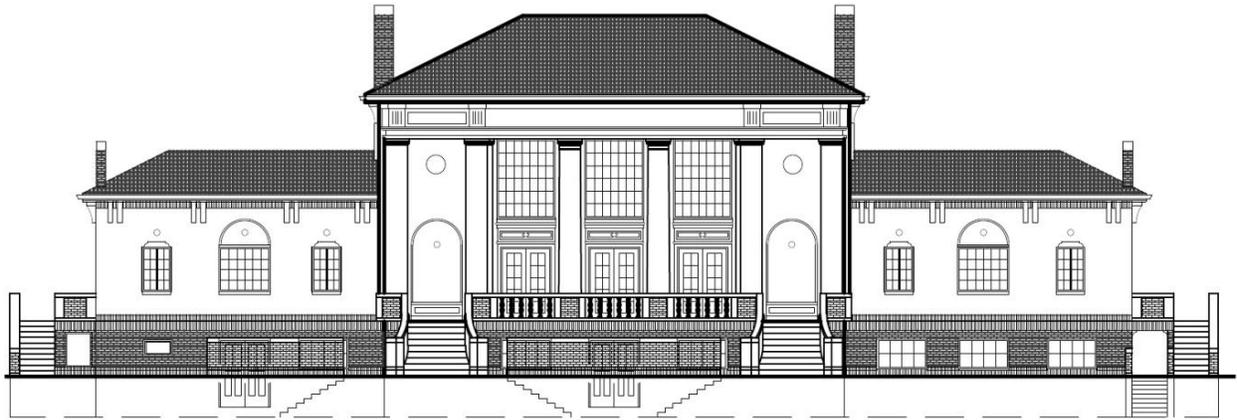
- Pro Shop
- Administration
- Dining/Banquet Space
- Food & Beverage Prep
- Support Space (restrooms, storage, etc.)
- Mechanical

At present the clubhouse is mainly used to house the pro shop and provide restroom access. Hot food and bar service is not provided, nor is the main hall rented out for events other than a few golf outings during the golf season. These issues limit the ability for the clubhouse to generate much needed revenue. They are addressed in renovation options that follow.

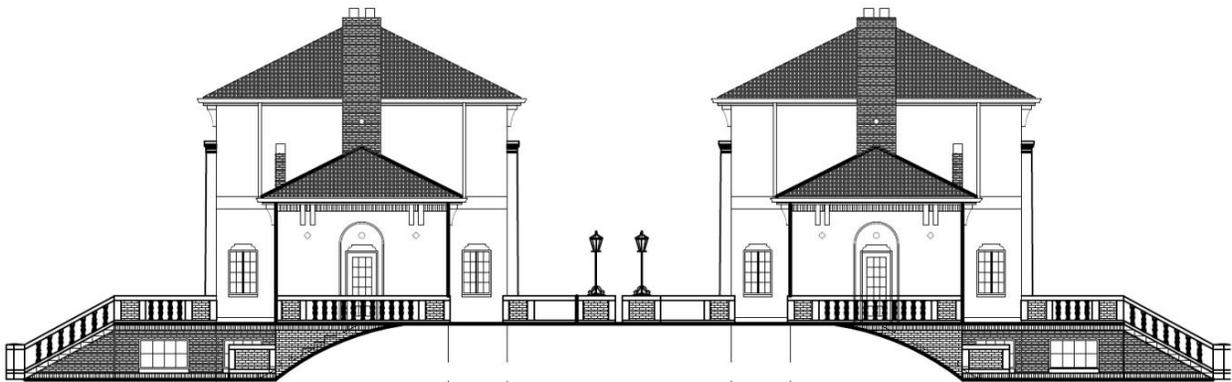
Original Clubhouse Floor Plans and Elevations (1924):



ORIGINAL FLOOR PLANS
10,440 SQFT

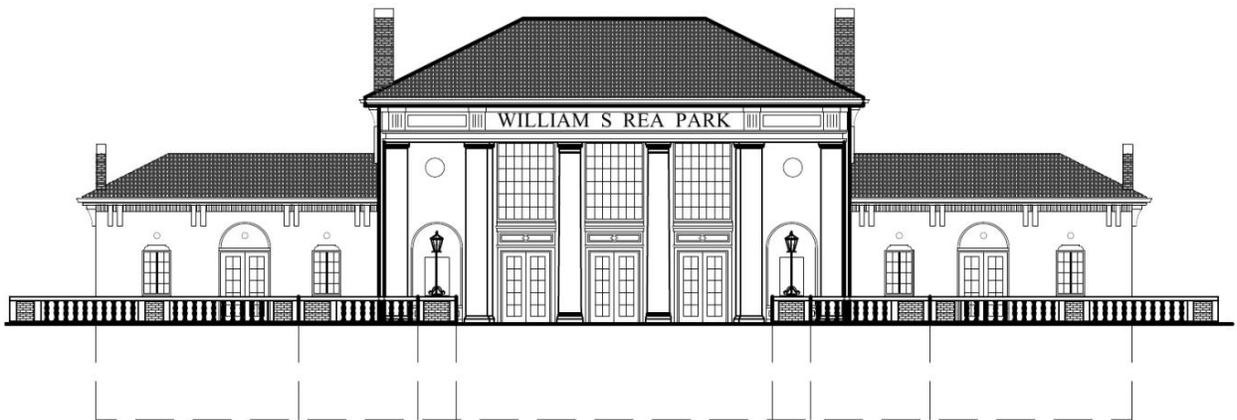


ORIGINAL EAST ELEVATION



ORIGINAL NORTH ELEVATION

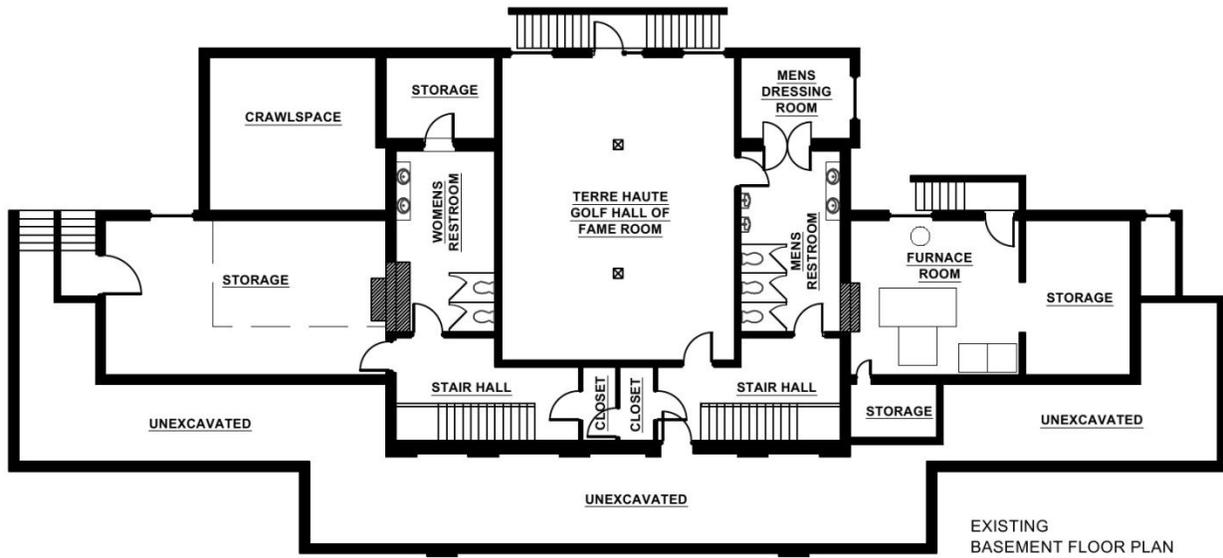
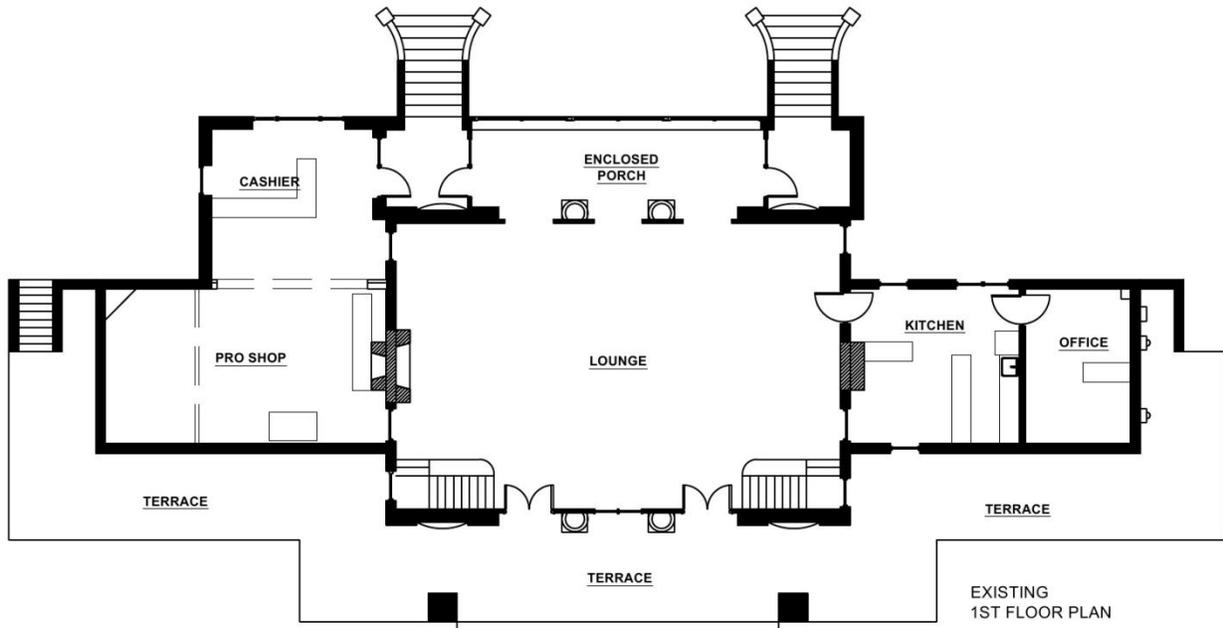
ORIGINAL SOUTH ELEVATION



ORIGINAL WEST ELEVATION

ORIGINAL ELEVATIONS

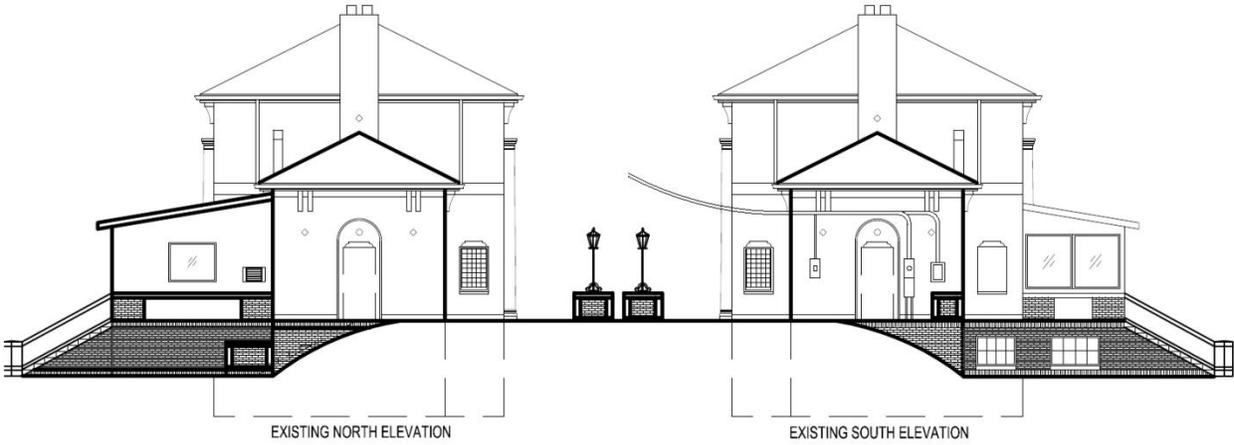
Existing Clubhouse Floor Plans and Elevations (2016):



EXISTING FLOOR PLANS
11,065 SQFT



EXISTING EAST ELEVATION



EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION

EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION



EXISTING WEST ELEVATION

EXISTING ELEVATIONS

Clubhouse Renovation Options. After considering programs that would likely be conducted at Rea Park, as well as the physical condition of the historic 1925 clubhouse, four main options were developed for the total renovation of the building.

Members of the Terre Haute Park Board decided in April 2017 that OPTION C offered the greatest potential. Because of this, only Option C is shown in this updated version of the Rea Park clubhouse study. It includes all anticipated costs associated with the project, including construction and architectural/engineering fees, and restaurant equipment.

Option C includes the relocation of golf cart storage to an underground parking area underneath the west terrace of the building. The west terrace is non-repairable, therefore it will need to be removed and replaced, at which time the lower level can be modified and improved to accommodate golf cart storage. Little evidence of this new space would be visible on the outside of the building, and removing the existing cart barn would be an improvement to the site.

A new handicap accessible ramp on the east side of the building was included in Option C to meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards. Option C does not call for the installation of an elevator in the building.

A new geothermal heat pump system is proposed for the upgrades to the HVAC system. Geothermal systems are energy efficient, do not require an outside condenser unit such as a typical air conditioning system, and there is enough space on the property to locate the underground pipes used for heat transfer.

Rea Park has been placed on Indiana's list of historic landmarks and the U.S. Department of Interior's Register of Historic Places. While Option C proposes an addition to the existing envelope of the building, the local office of Indiana Landmarks has indicated Option C would be permissible if the addition were built so the architectural integrity of the original building would be maintained.

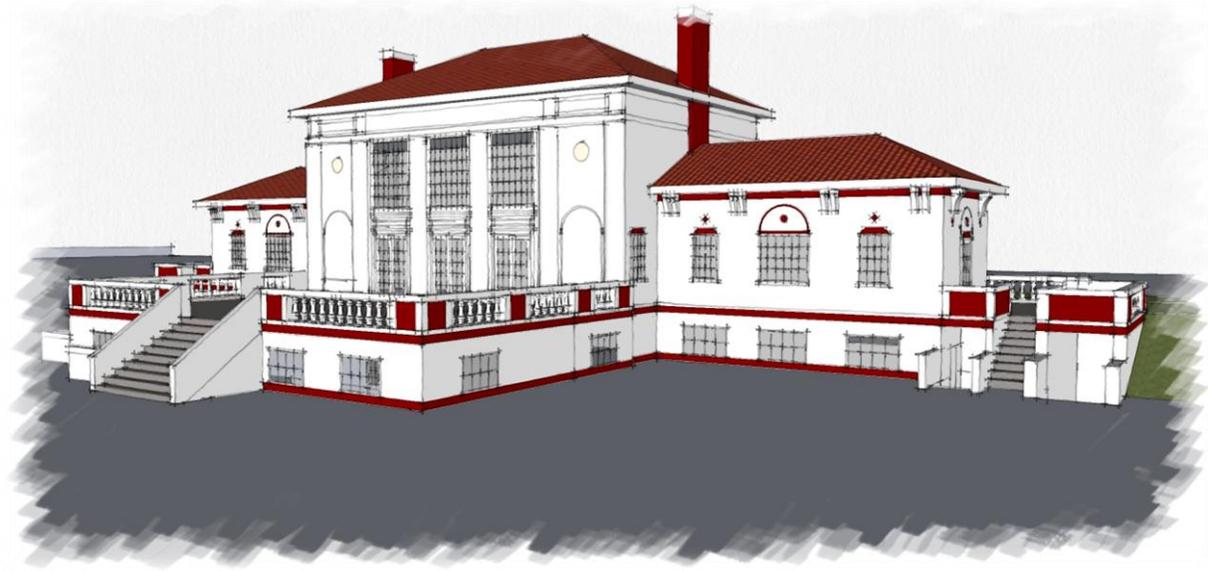
Costs and plan elevations for Option C are:

Renovation Financial Estimate for Option C (as of May 2016):

	OPTION C <i>Expanded Terrace</i> <i>11,445 sqft</i>
Roof	\$35,000 - \$70,000
Exterior	\$185,000 - \$210,000
HVAC	\$80,000 - \$95,000
Electrical	\$80,000 - \$95,000
Plumbing	\$80,000 - \$95,000
Interior	\$295,000 - \$320,000
Cart Storage /Terrace	\$300,000 - \$385,000
Demo	\$25,000 - \$35,000
Misc.	\$120,000 - \$145,000
TOTAL	\$1,200,000 - \$1,450,000

Option C Seating Capacity:

	OPTION C <i>Expanded Terrace</i>
Banquet	65-75
Meeting	50-55
Bar	6-8
Outside	30-40
TOTAL	151 - 178



Option C Details:

Expanded Terrace (11,445 SQFT)

Costs: (2016) \$1,200,000 - \$1,450,000; (2019 update) Now estimated at \$1,800,000

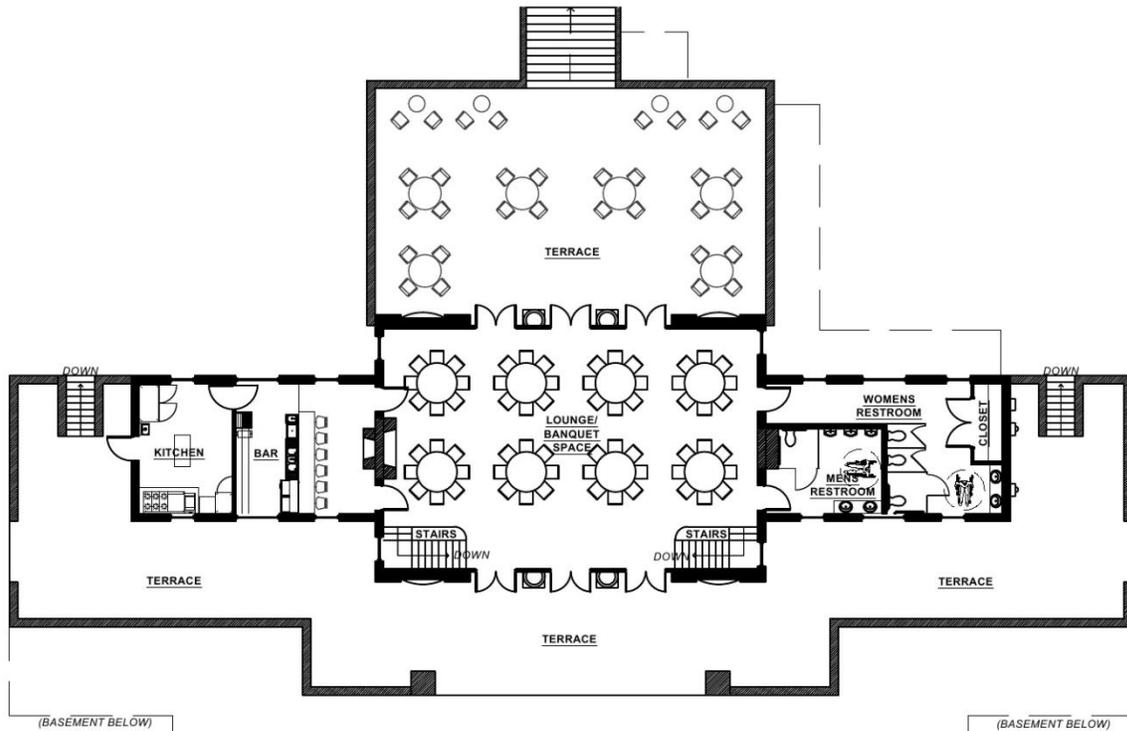
Option C would remove the existing pro shop addition and enclosed balcony on the east side of the building. A large outdoor terrace would then be constructed with pro shop space underneath.

The main level would have banquet space with a new set of men's and women's restrooms located in the south wing. Kitchen and bar service would be located in the north wing.

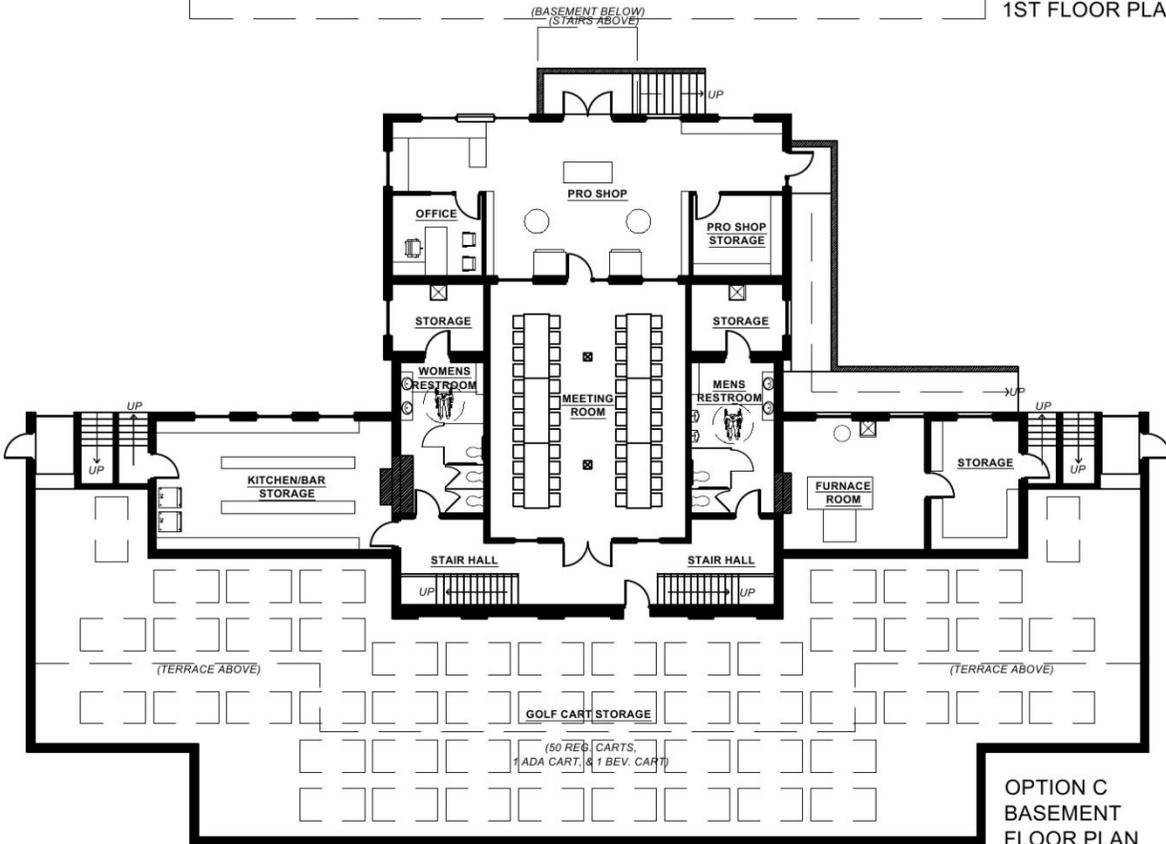
The lower level would include a large meeting space with renovated restrooms and added plumbing fixtures. The area under the outdoor terrace would house the pro shop, office, and pro shop storage.

Kitchen/bar storage would be located in the lower north wing of the building, and the mechanical space and storage within the south wing.

The u-shaped cart storage would be located under the rebuilt west terrace with access doors facing the golf course.



OPTION C
1ST FLOOR PLAN



OPTION C
BASEMENT
FLOOR PLAN

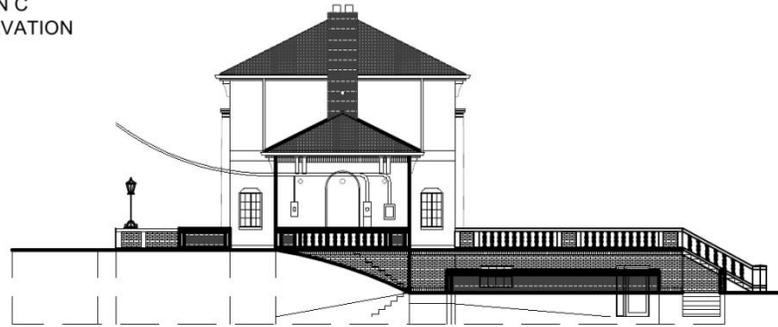
OPTION C - EXPANDED TERRACE
11,445 SQFT



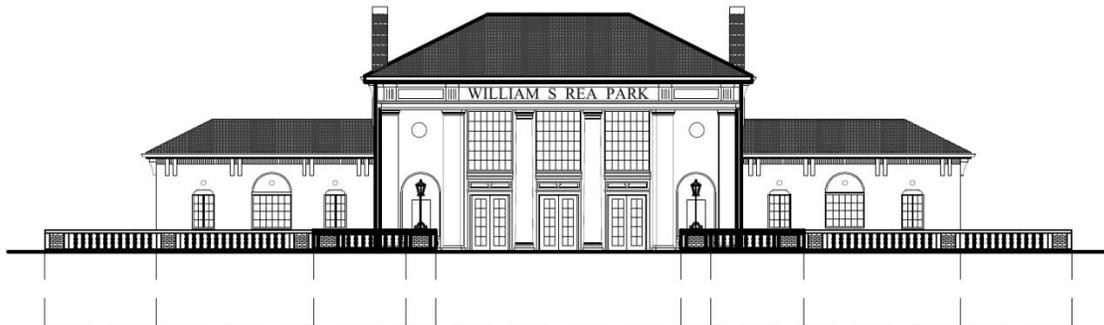
OPTION C
EAST ELEVATION



OPTION C
NORTH ELEVATION



OPTION C
SOUTH ELEVATION



OPTION C
WEST ELEVATION
OPTION C - EXPANDED TERRACE
11,445 SQFT

Park Master Plan
Sanders and Associates, Inc. Architects
(Completed Spring 2017)

A. Rehabilitating/Upgrading Existing Park Grounds

Driving range. The existing driving range at Rea Park is located on the north side of the property, adjacent to the entry drive, and is approximately 300 yards in length. Currently the range has a four foot high chain link fence around the perimeter with a few flags within the range indicating the drive lengths. There are no stalls in place on the tee off space, no mats on a concrete pad for use in inclement weather, nor is there any shelter covering the tee boxes. About 20 to 30 individuals can use the driving range at one time. At this time there is no driving range membership available in the Rea Park fee schedule.

Driving range renovation options include:

Option A - Upgrade the Existing Range

A moveable one-story covered structure could be purchased and used over the existing tee off space. Or, a permanent shelter could be built to protect the tee area from the elements, while also increasing the amount of usable driving range time for golfers. Sidewalks/ramps providing ADA accessibility to the range should be added as well. Constructing small greens or and fairway lanes in the range would provide additional practice challenges, potentially drawing in more users.

Option B - Add a Golf Teaching (Golf Academy) Facility

A one-story covered structure could be constructed on the north end of the existing driving range for private rental. Having a separate facility for golf professionals to teach golfers, or for small groups to practice, would produce income without adding significant cost. They would still be using the same range area, just a separate tee space. The shelter could provide the flexibility to operate year-round by including operable garage doors and radiant heaters. Range lights and shelter lights could also be added, further increasing the income generating potential of the driving range. A short-game practice area with a green and bunkers could be added.



L to R: Practice chipping green and practice tee on driving range



Cart storage barn. The existing cart barn is a wood frame post-frame structure with tan metal siding. It was constructed in the 1980s to store golf carts and serve as a maintenance area. It currently houses about 50 electric carts which are leased and maintained by a third party service.

The cart barn is located south of the clubhouse, directly in the middle of a former south access drive to the property. The building is aesthetically incompatible with the clubhouse and should be removed.

Each of the clubhouse renovation options – A through D - provides a golf cart storage area with the intent that the existing cart barn will be demolished when improvements are complete.

The new storage area will accommodate 50 carts, as well as a food and beverage cart and an adaptive cart for use of disabled players.

Maintenance facilities. Main park maintenance facilities are located in the northeast corner of the park, adjacent to the greens superintendent's house. It consists of two pole barns.

Rea Park employs approximately 25-30 people each season, who operate the various pieces of equipment owned by the park.

The Caretaker house is a 1,320 square foot, two story bungalow with white vinyl siding and a green asphalt roof that was built in the 1920s. The current course superintendent resides in the house as part of the position's compensation package.

Maintenance facility renovation options include:

Although the maintenance facilities appear to be fair condition, our master plan takes into consideration that the time for the metal maintenance buildings to be replaced is fast approaching, and will need to be done some time in the not-so-distant future.

The greens superintendent's house is showing its age, and is also in need of renovation at some time in the future. However, the city could easily adjust the compensation of the greens superintendent to reflect a caretaker's house on the property will no longer be provided.



L to R: Maintenance Barn and Park Superintendent House

Cart paths, course shelters, and restrooms. The cart paths at Rea Park are mostly paved, but the park lacks a continuous circuit of pavement around the course. It requires golfers to drive on the course where the paths are incomplete, which increases ground maintenance tasks.

Two small shelters are available at Rea Park for golfers, located near holes 14 and 5. Additional shelters might be beneficial throughout the course as they provide protection from stormy weather.

A large picnic-type shelter, which is used as a base of operations for golf outings, sits adjacent to the driving range and practice green. This location is not ideal, as it is not very close to the clubhouse and starting tees. A smaller shelter might be constructed nearer the clubhouse near the 10th tee to provide protection for golfers starting play.

Although restrooms are available in the clubhouse, only one on-site restroom is available near hole number three teeing area and number 16 green. A port-a-pot is placed each year near #11 tee. A new restroom facility could be installed to replace the temporary portable toilet.



L to R: Bathroom Near #16 Green and Park Shelter Used for Outings



Tennis courts. There are nine tennis courts on the western edge of Rea Park, along with a small building that contains restrooms and a small shed for ticket sales and concessions. A 10-foot-tall chain link fence surrounds the courts. Several sets of bleachers and picnic tables are on-site for spectators. The very first courts were constructed in the late 1920s using a clay pavement system, which was then covered over with asphalt sometime in the 1950s. Today the courts sit in poor condition, having severe issues with cracking and water ponding. The trees that were planted for shade on the south side of the courts have grown to be very large, and contribute a great deal of debris onto the playing surfaces. They need to be trimmed or removed.



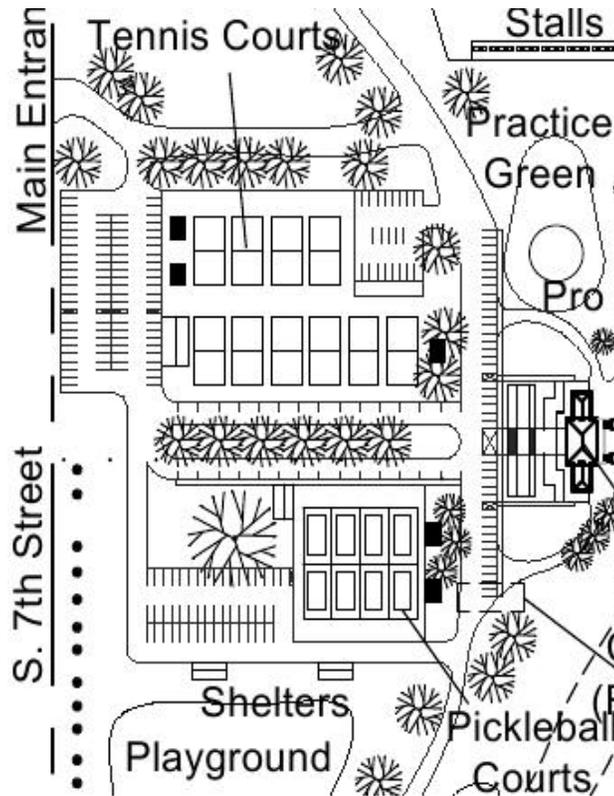
Tennis court area renovation options include:

Option A - Renovate the Existing Tennis Court Area

The three most northern tennis courts are good candidates for rehabilitation; however the other six courts would need to be evaluated further to determine if resurfacing or replacement is the best solution.

An additional court would need to be constructed in order to provide the 10 needed courts to host large tournaments. Eight new pickle ball courts would be constructed south of the existing tennis courts, with additional parking and a shelter area.

The existing restroom building would remain, but it would require repairs be made as well as some cosmetic upgrades, such as new paint and floor epoxy.

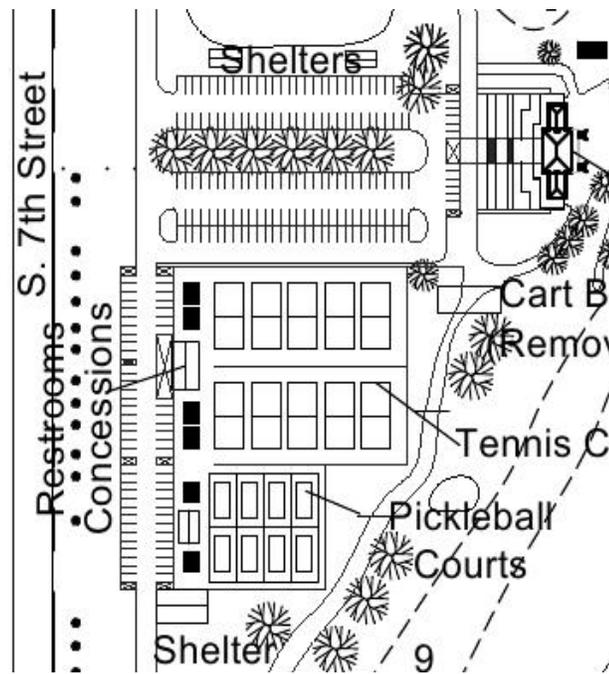


Option A – Renovate Existing Court Area

Option B – Moving the Tennis Court Area to the Southwest End of the Park, Build New

Ten new courts and eight new pickle ball courts would be constructed on the south end of the park.

A minimal view of this option would be to build a new restroom facility and concession stand, along with new parking areas. New fencing, lighting, and spectator seating would also be included in this option. A grander vision of this option would be to create a tennis learning center, with racquet courts and a fitness center on site. Private investment would be required to develop this option.



Option B – Moving the Tennis Court Area to the Southwest Corner of the Park

Option C – Build New Tennis Courts Off-Site

There has been talk of the City of Terre Haute developing a sports complex on riverfront land near the recently constructed VCSC Aquatic Center in Voorhees Park. With county government planning to construct a new jail in this area, the option of building sports fields near the river may no longer be popular, or viable.

A storied history of tennis being played at Rea Park exists, and that the tennis court complex at Rea should remain on park grounds.

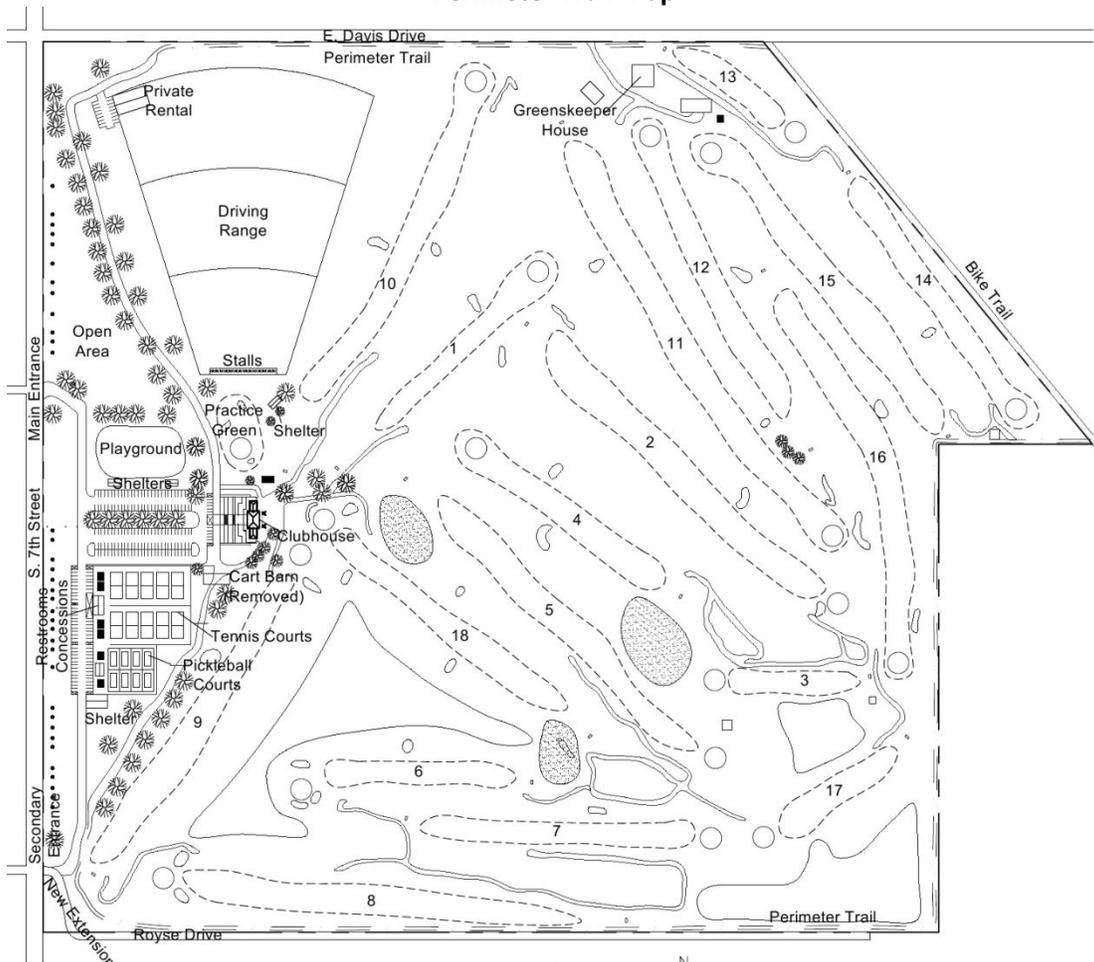
Rea Park's location sits in an ideal location, next to Honey Creek Square and established restaurants and hotels on Terre Haute's south side. Terre Haute Regional Hospital and Westminster Village are adjacent neighbors. Nearly 40 percent of our county's high school students go to school directly across the street from Rea Park. Mutually beneficial partnerships among these park stakeholders could be established to promote healthy living and the benefits of participating in life-long sports such as golf and tennis.

The Rea Park property can be developed into one of Indiana's most unique and historic venues.

Perimeter trails. At the present time, no “official” trails exist at Rea Park, though the master plan for the Terre Haute Parks Trail System indicates future trails and bike paths intersecting the park remain a possibility. Terre Haute South High School currently uses the park for cross country team practice.

A complete trail around Rea Park would provide a two-mile loop which could serve both visitors and the neighboring community. The old railroad spur that runs along the eastern edge of the park is slated for development into a bike trail as part of a “Rails to Trails” program. This connection can bring visitors from other areas of the city or county, which could then connect to the perimeter trail around Rea Park.

Perimeter Trail Map



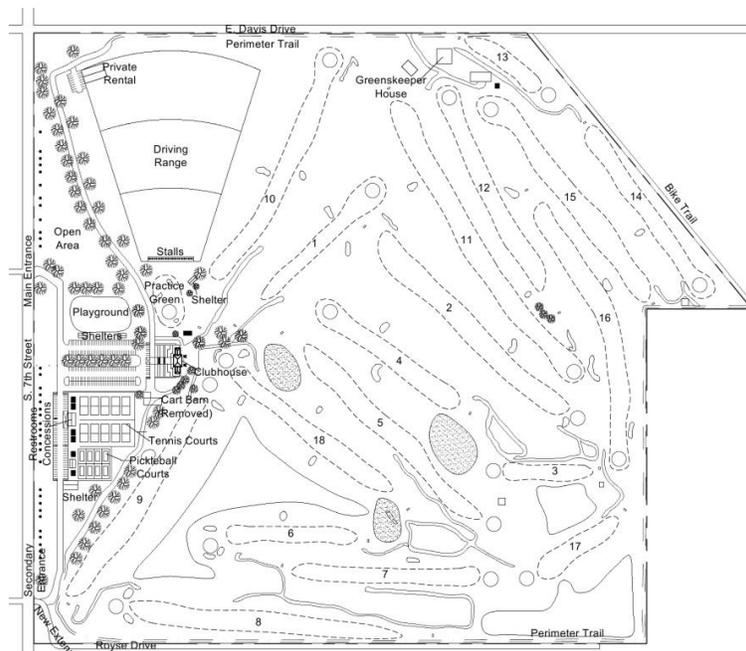
Entering and exiting the park. Due to there being three different access roads to the park, and multiple activity venues, establishing a new central entrance to the park might keep the number of parking areas to a minimum. It is estimated 150 to 175 parking spaces are needed to accommodate events held at the park.

At the present time. Parking is limited near the Rea Park clubhouse, with most golfers having to parallel park on the circle drive near the practice green. This situation is not ideal, as the drive was meant to act as a drop off point. Parking cars along the practice green can also prove to be hazardous for golfers and park patrons.

Another 45 or so parking spaces are available directly to the west of the clubhouse. Two other parking lots, both located near the tennis courts, can hold up to 100 parked cars. During golf and tennis tournaments, and other park events, patrons will sometimes parallel park on the grass along the north entry drive.

New main entrance. This study proposes a new option for park entry and exit. A “main boulevard” could be built leading to the clubhouse from Seventh Street, having one central entrance at the streetlight. Existing north and south drives would be removed, or kept with their gates marked “for personnel use only”. The tennis court entrance off Seventh Street would be closed, with additional parking spaces added to the parking lot adjacent to the tennis courts. The drive around the practice green would be removed, allowing for a larger practice area.

Royse Drive that borders the southern property line of the park, has potential to be redirected through the southwest corner of Rea Park in order to exit onto Seventh Street at the stoplight intersection across from Regional Hospital. If this road improvement is made, the south drive could become a new secondary entry point into the park.



Suggested golf course improvements. The course at Rea Park is historic, being nearly 100 years old. It is one of the first public 18-hole courses in Indiana. At the time of its dedication in 1925, Rea Park was declared by then Mayor Davis as “one of the finest municipal golf courses in the country.”

This study does not focus on the golf course. The condition of the course is one of the better attributes of Rea Park. There are, however, a few course improvements that could be made if funding were to become available over time:

- Add a shelter near the #1 and #10 tees to facilitate golf events and the starting of players.
- Replace the temporary port-a-pot with a new restroom building near the #15 green and #13 tee.
- Add several trees for safety on #12 tee (between hole 11 and hole 12).
- Extend the existing cart paths into a full-length system so the golf course can operate carts on wet or rainy days, year round.
- Renovate course ponds - those near #18 tee, #6 tee and #4 tee - so they can retain water.
- Relocate or build a new scoreboard near the new shelter; or a new, smaller scoreboard could be made and placed in the area next to the starting tee and #18 green.
- Create a pitch and putt area near the driving range and historic practice green by removing the road around the practice green.
- Explore options for a short-game course (3 holes, small distances) for children or practice area to be located in the open space north of the driving range.
- Evaluate the feasibility of a foot golf course (soccer ball kicked into a hole) to be somehow integrated into the park.
- Add par-3 tees to each hole with a separate scorecard for super-senior golfers to enjoy.



L to R: Historic Practice Putting Green and #8 Hole Green

Other golf courses located in Vigo County. The following courses are located in Vigo County and offer Vigo County golfers other options to play the game.

Hulman Links Golf Course (Private), located at 990 North Chamberlain Street, opened in 1978, and is an 18-hole, par 72 course that plays 7,225 yards from the back tees. It was designed by David Arthur Gill, ASGCA, and the course rating is 74.9 with a slope rating of 144.

The property for Hulman Links and some of funds to build the course were donated by Terre Haute native Tony Hulman. Private donations were collected to help construct the clubhouse in 1983. The clubhouse features a restaurant, lounge, banquet facility and pro shop. In 2014, approximately 20,000 rounds of golf were played at Hulman Links.

There is a distinct difference between the Hulman Links property and Rea Park. Hulman is a golf-only facility. Rea Park is a multi-activity city park.

Country Club of Terre Haute (Private), located at 57 Allendale, originally opened in 1898 on the site of the old Phoenix Country Club on east Hwy 40. The club's current location was established in the 1920s. The existing golf course, an 18-hole, par 71 layout designed by noted golf architect William Diddle, opened for play in the spring of 1925, a few months before Rea Park's clubhouse and full 18-holes were open for public play.

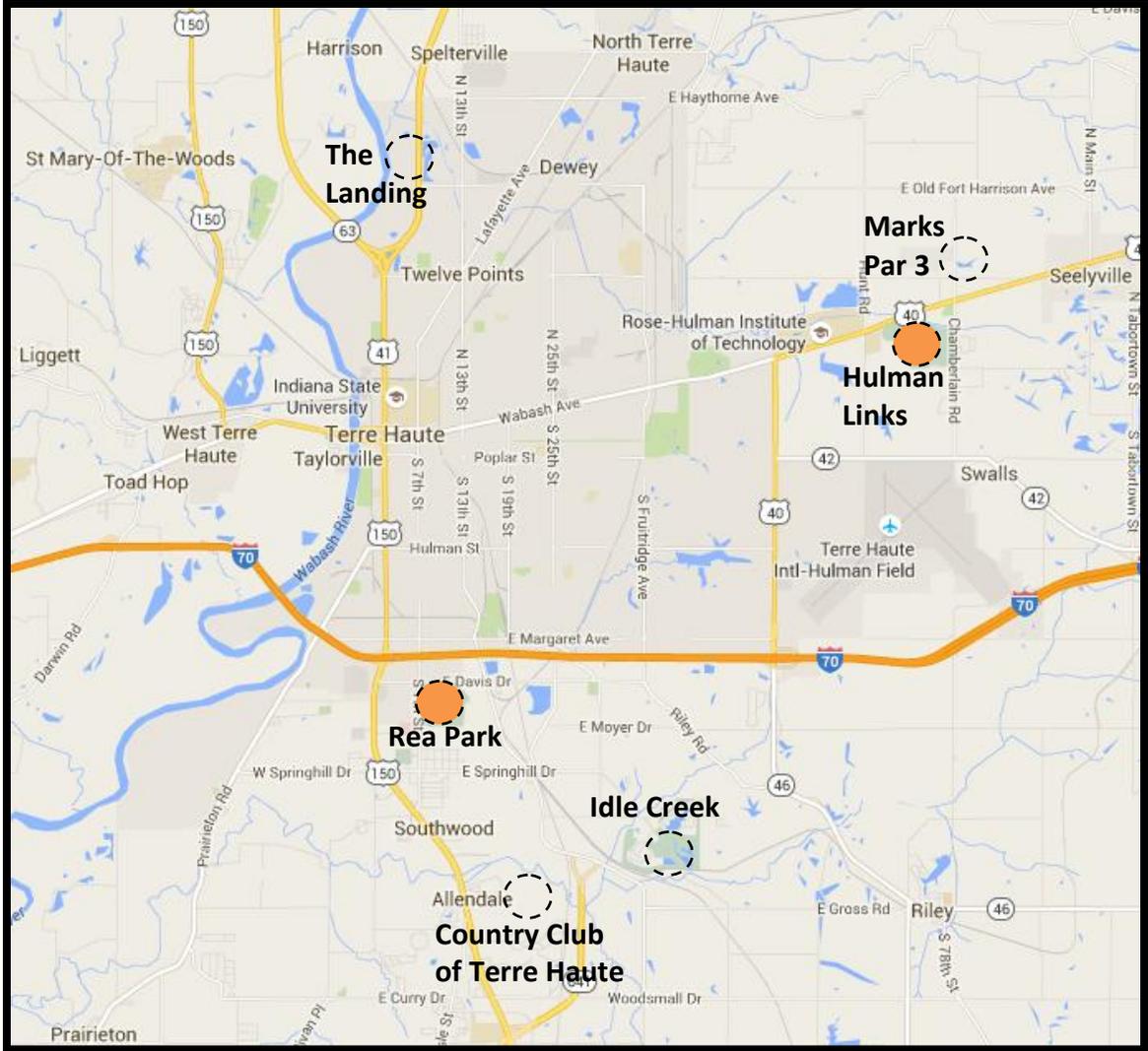
A driving range, practice green and pro shop are located on site. The Country Club features a restaurant and banquet facilities, too, along with a bar, tennis courts, and outdoor pool. Membership is available but not required to use the facilities, as members can invite guests to play four times a year.

Idle Creek Golf Course (Semi-Private), located at 5353 Ryanne Marie Lane, opened in 1996, and is an 18-hole, par-71 course that plays 6,100 yards from the back tee boxes. It was designed by Rick Jenkins and Jack Keidel as part of a 300-lot "golf community" subdivision. The course features a restaurant, bar, banquet facilities and pro shop.

The Landing at Fort Harrison (Semi-Private), located at 3350 North 4th Street, opened in 1925, and is a 9-hole, par-36 course that plays 3,100 yards from the back tee boxes. It can, however, be played as an 18-hole, par-72 course, with 6,300 yards of play when played twice.

The course features a restaurant, bar, banquet center, spa, outdoor pool, bowling alley, and pro shop. Formerly owned by the Fraternal Order of the Elks, the course and facilities were sold to a private entity and reopened as The Landing at Fort Harrison, a no-membership, open to the public country club.

Mark's Par Three (Private-Open to the Public), located at 2401 Chamberlain Road, opened in 1964, and is an 18-hole, par 3 course situated on 64 acres. Rates are reasonable for beginning players.



LEGEND

-  Terre Haute Municipal Golf Courses
-  Other Golf Courses and Facilities

Summary comments. After thorough review of the facilities at William S. Rea Park, it is apparent the clubhouse is in most need of repair, followed by the tennis courts and other park amenities.

All four of the original proposed clubhouse renovation options have merit, but most likely the choice will be made based on the funds made available for the project. For example, a donor might stipulate the original features of the clubhouse be restored, and any non-original modifications be removed, such as the 1980s pro shop addition. Or, the city might recognize the income potential of having a banquet/restaurant facility with a full bar and kitchen, and want to invest in an option that maximizes revenue streams. Either way, there is no right or wrong solution, as long as improvements are made to save the historic clubhouse first.

At this time, the city parks department and parks board prefer Option C.

Improving the tennis facilities at Rea Park is an important aspect of the park's master plan, since the courts have been a part of the park for almost as long as the golf course. Upgrades to the driving range would benefit golfers, while generating income for Rea Park's golf operations. Developing Rea Park's other amenities, such as a bike/walking trail or a small picnic area, are important to serving the greater community of Terre Haute.

Unlike the rest of the park, the historic golf course at Rea Park remains in good condition. However certain improvements can be made to enhance the golfing experience, making it more likely for players to return to the course.

Rea Park's master plan priorities are, in rank order ...

1. Rehabilitate the historic 1925 clubhouse, making it an activity/social center for the park
2. Upgrade the tennis court facility (possibly adding a fitness center)
3. Improve the driving range (possibly into a golf academy)
4. Develop plans for a bike/walking trail and small park-like family area, including a small splash park that could turn into a skating rink area during the winter.
5. Make noted golf course enhancements as time and money permit

APPENDICES

A. List of Contributors

City of Terre Haute

Duke Bennett, Mayor; Pat Martin, City Planner

Terre Haute Parks Board

Gordy Bryan, Board President
Nancy Cummins, Board Member
John Wright, Board Member
Bobby Moore, Board Member

Terre Haute Parks Department

Eddie Bird, Superintendent; Tina Bauer, Assistant Superintendent; Greg Towne, Golf Director;
David Kennedy, Rea Park Golf Professional

Friends of Rea Park, Inc.

Officers: Michael L. Harding, Ph.D., M.P.A.; President; Mr. William V. Verdeyen, Vice President; Mr. William Olah, J.D.; Secretary; and Mr. Earl O. Elliott, C.P.A., Treasurer
Steering Committee: Bob Arnett, George Azar, Kathy Berlin, Chris Bilyeu, Bill Burdine, Jim Cook, Ralph Dale, Ron Danielson, Dan Hopkins, Tom and Sharon Horrall, Jeannie Ji, Jim Jenkins, Dallas Kelsey, Art Miley, Pat Mozley, Pat Ralston, Bernard Ridens, Paul Stanley, Liz Torrence, Milt Van Reed, Ken Wooden, Scott Williams, Phillip Wade, and Bob Wright

Ball State University Archives – Carol Street

Indiana Landmarks - Tommy Kleckner

Indiana State Parks - Jodi Heaston

Indiana State University Master of Public Administration Program – Nathan Myers

Indiana State University Womens Golf Team - Greg Towne

Tabco, Inc. - Kris Bilyeu

Terre Haute Tribune Star - Mark Bennett, David Hughes

Terre Haute Visitors and Convention Bureau – David Patterson

Terre Haute Golf Association - Tom Jones

Terre Haute Women's Golf Association - Eileen Mann

Terre Haute South High School - Principal Tammy Rowshandle & Asst Principal Steven Joseph

Terre Haute Tomorrow - Brian Miller

The Oakley Foundation

Wabash Valley Community Foundation - Beth Tevlin

Sanders & Associates Inc. – Architects Dan Sanders & Graduate Architect Amanda Jukes

Wabash Valley Tennis Club & Terre Haute Junior Tennis Association - Kris Bilyeu

WTHI – TV - Jon Swaner

Vigo County Public Library - Matt Bird

Sycamore Club - Jim Bell

B. Photographs of Existing Conditions at Rea Park

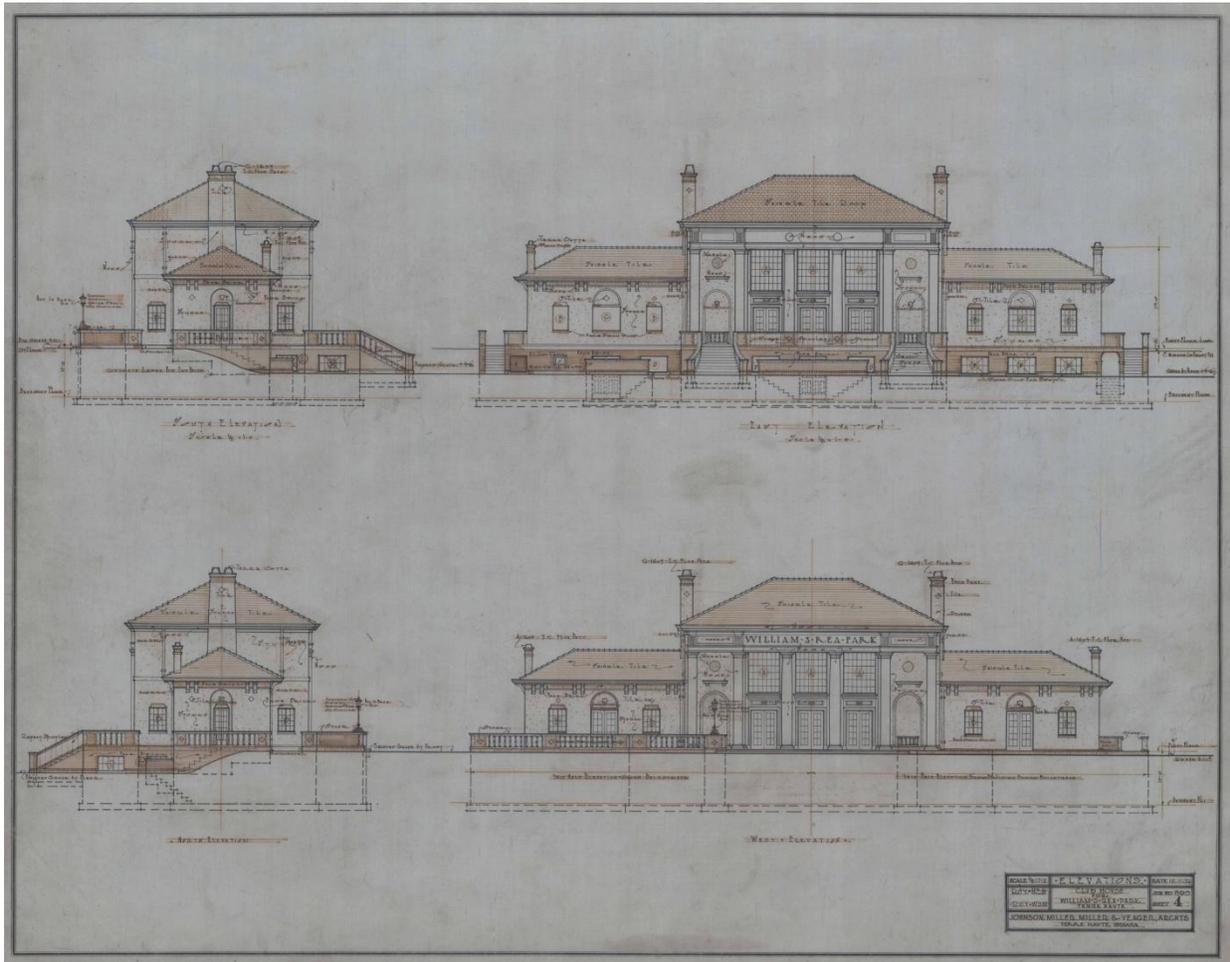


L to R: Westside entrance of clubhouse and tarnished historic tablets



L to R: South side of clubhouse, Mrs. Rea's damaged portrait, crumbling east side stairway

C. Historic 1924 Clubhouse Elevation Drawings



D. Historic Clubhouse Photographs



L to R: Clubhouse under construction and shortly after completion in September 1925



L to R: Clubhouse in 1929 and in 1974



Clubhouse main hall interior in late 1920s

E. Rea Park Deed, 1922

29 **Rea Park Deed** **230** **8741**

THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH: That United States Trust Company of Terre Haute, Indiana, Trustee of Vigo County in the State of Indiana, conveys and quit claims unto the City of Terre Haute, of said County and State, for the sum of (\$1.00) and for the further considerations and upon conditions hereafter set forth, expressed and declared the following described real estate, situate in Vigo County in the State of Indiana, to-wit: -

The southwest quarter of Section Three (3), Township Eleven (11) north, of range (9) west, excepting, however, the right of way of the Evansville, and Indianapolis (Evansville, Indianapolis and Terre Haute) Railroad across the northeast corner thereof and all that part of said southwest quarter lying north and east of said railroad right of way, leaving 158 acres more or less of said southwest quarter hereby conveyed. Also, all that part of the following described tract of land, which lies south and west of said railroad right of way, to wit:

The west half of thirty-nine (39) acres off the north end and of eighty-five (85) acres in the southeast quarter of said Section Three, Township and Range aforesaid, said 85 acres being all that part of said southeast quarter of said section, township and range aforesaid that lies west of the Wabash and Erie Canal and making in all one hundred sixty (160) acres more or less hereby conveyed.

This conveyance is made pursuant to the powers conferred upon and vested in the grantor by Item Nine of the last will and testament of William S. Rea, deceased. The lands and premises herein conveyed have been purchased by the grantor as and for a site within the corporate limits of said City of Terre Haute, Indiana, for a public park, pursuant to and in conformity with said item of said will, are hereby conveyed to said City as a site for a public park. This conveyance is made in consideration of the agreement of said city to establish, beautify, and forever maintain a public park upon the said site and to name and forever maintain the same as "William S. Rea Park", and upon the express condition subsequent that should said City for any reason decline the gift of said lands and premises or refuse to establish, beautify and maintain said park named "William S. Rea Park", then and in any such case the lands and premises herein conveyed shall forthwith go to vest in and become the property and right of the Rose Polytechnic Institute at Terre Haute, Indiana, all as contemplated by said item of said will.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the said United States Trust Company of Terre Haute, Trustee, as aforesaid, has caused this instrument to be executed in its name and behalf by its President and its corporate seal to be hereunto affixed, attested by its Secretary this 23rd day of August A.D., 1922.

UNITED STATES TRUST COMPANY OF
TERRE HAUTE, TRUSTEE

BY John T. Beasley, President

ATTEST:

William K. Hamilton, Secretary

STATE OF INDIANA)
 :
COUNTY OF VIGO) **SS**

Personally appeared before me, the undersigned, a notary public within and for said County and State, John T. Beasley and William K. Hamilton, President and Secretary, respectively of United States Trust Company of Terre Haute, the corporation with executed the annexed and foregoing instrument as Trustee, personally well known to me to be such President and Secretary, and severally acknowledge the execution thereof as their free act and deed and as the free act and deed of said United States Trust Company of Terre Haute, Trustee as aforesaid.

WITNESS my hand and notarial seal this 23rd day of August, A.D., 1922

Ray H. Briggs
Notary Public

F. Historic Terre Haute Tribune, Terre Haute Star, Saturday Spectator Newspaper Articles

The Terre Haute Saturday Spectator

About Town Column

August 29, 1925

Beautiful New Clubhouse at Rea Park Will Probably Be Opened to Public on September 8

The date has not been officially set, but in all probability the formal opening and dedication of the splendid new clubhouse at Rea Park, a gift to the city from Mrs. Geraldine A. Rea, widow of the late William S. Rea, donor of Rea Park, will be announced for September 8.

Today there is being shipped from Brooklyn, N.Y. two beautiful bronze tablets, purchased by the Terre Haute park board, which are at once to be placed in the clubhouse and which in years to come will tell those who gather there for the pleasures of the wonderful golf course that the joys of the hour are due to the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Rea.

Full plans for the dedication of the new clubhouse are not yet complete. The program for the opening day is being left entirely to the wishes of Mrs. Rea, who, with the extreme modesty characteristic of her entire life, has said that she wishes the opening to be without ostentation. She has expressed a wish that the dedication of the new clubhouse be an occasion for a gathering of rich and poor alike and that all be made so welcome that there will be no mistaking her aim for a pleasure round for all people.

Under direction of John T. Beasley

This expression from Mrs. Rea will do away with former tentative plans to have a dinner at the house, which should be invited the members of the park board and a few friends of the giver of the clubhouse and the wide acres surrounding it.

One thing incident to the dedication has been decided upon, however, and that is whatever dedicatory program is carried out will be under the direction of John T. Beasley, warm friend and advisor of Mrs. Rea, and an equally close friend of her late husband.

Coincidental to the dedication of the spacious clubhouse, the additional nine holes of the golf course are to be officially thrown open for play. The opening of this part of the golf course will give to Terre Haute one of the very best golf grounds to be found anywhere.

An attempt was made some time ago to open the second nine holes, but it was found that too much confusion resulted about the, at that time, unfinished clubhouse. People were so eager to see the clubhouse that the work was greatly interfered with and, at the request of Mrs. Rea, the new half of the course was closed until such time as the clubhouse should be finished, dedicated, and turned over to the city as a playground.

For the last two weeks, a large number of teams have been employed at the grounds north and west of the new clubhouse making roads, driveways and parking drives. Later in the fall, the park board contemplates setting out a large number of fine trees.

The park board had hoped to do a number of things it has not done before the formal opening of the clubhouse, but as they cannot be accomplished until next spring, work will progress until cold weather comes and what is not done will have to await the arrival of spring.

Mrs. Rea, however, has purchased a great deal of the furnishings of the clubhouse, and she says the buying of them has been a real pleasure to her. She has selected all of the porch furniture, as well as considerable of the inside furnishings. Some things which Mrs. Rea wished could be secured at this time, and she will therefore permit them to go over until the grounds are opened for play next year.

The bronze tablets to be installed in the Rea clubhouse are said to be very beautiful. There is one for Mr. Rea and another for Mrs. Rea. Each is four and a half feet high and thirty inches wide. That for Mr. Rea is inscribed as follows:

Whose forethought and generosity in giving this park to the city marked him
as one of the city's foremost citizens and benefactors
In grateful recognition
this tablet is placed here
by
The Board of Park Commissioners
Terre Haute, Indiana
To the Memory of
WILLIAM S. REA
A.D. 1925

Mrs. Rea's tablet was inscribed with:

For the gentle woman whose generous gift of the
club house constitutes the crowning act in the work
started by her late husband, these words are inscribed on this plate of bronze:
"Love for home town, heart beating true,
What will not woman, gentle woman do?"
This beautiful clubhouse erected by
Geraldine A. Rea
Widow of William S. Rea
A.D. 1925

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Presented to the City of Terre Haute
through its Board of Park Commissioners
which in appreciation has placed this tablet here

Terre Haute Tribune Newspaper
September 11, 1925
By Jack Hannah, Reporter

Rea Golf Links Formally Given to Terre Haute Eighteen-Hole Course Becomes Official Property of City During Impressive Ceremonies at Park; Mrs. Rea Drives First

Brief but impressive ceremonies marked the dedication yesterday afternoon of memorial of Terre Haute's most beloved citizens that will live through the ages. On Wednesday night, a banquet at which city officials and citizens had gathered, the William S. Rea Park became the official property of the city of Terre Haute when the deed was formally presented by Mrs. Rea and acknowledgement of the gift was made by Mayor Davis. But yesterday the golf course and the beautiful clubhouse was formally delivered to the citizens of Terre Haute for their enjoyment.

Sense value to city

After the first ball had been driven from the tee by Mrs. Rea, a number of foursomes followed and when darkness settled over the course to such an extent that it was no longer possible to follow the ball in its flight, the golf enthusiasts left the course with a keener sense of what Rea Park actually means to the life of the city and with a deeper appreciation of the public spirited donors who had made such a park possible. It was indeed a day in the civic life of Terre Haute that will be long remembered and should mark a new epoch in the recreational life of the city.

During the entire afternoon, this beautiful clubhouse was open for inspection and throngs of Terre Haute citizens journeyed through various rooms and added their tributes to the numerous others that have been paid. At 6 o'clock the assembly was called to order by Mayor Ora Davis, who spoke briefly of the pleasure derived from this occasion and what it meant to the city of Terre Haute. He then introduced John T. Beasley, a close friend of the Rea Family, who made the short dedicatory address.

Praises Mr. Rea's life

Mr. Beasley paid high compliment to the life of W.S. Rea and spoke of him as a quiet, unobtrusive man of business who did not allow his business cares to overshadow his great public spirit and his overwhelming desire to do something that might stand for the good of humanity throughout the ages yet to come. He spoke of how, at his death, Mr. Rea had left the sum of \$100,000 on deposit at the Citizens Trust Company for the purpose of establishing a park in Terre Haute on the condition that the city accept the gift, establish the park, beautify it and forever retain it as the William S. Rea Park.

Mr. Beasley then stressed the fact that it was no easy matter to carry out the provisions of the gift. After the present site had finally been selected and purchased, he spoke of the difficulty that the city administration faced in obtaining sufficient funds to carry out the work of beautifying the park as they had agreed to do in their acceptance.

"These matters," Mr. Beasley said, "were brought before Mrs. Geraldine Rea, who held the same great public spirit that her husband had held, and in her quiet and beautiful way, she expressed a

determination to build a clubhouse. This magnificent structure, the finest of its kind in the state, that we are here today dedicating, is the result of that gift.”

Recommends golf

“While this park will be made the center of other recreational activities in the next few years, there is nothing finer than the great game of golf. It provides plenty of physical exercise, has its broadening influence and cements friendship in such a manner as nothing else can. I believe that the average American citizen – that is the one who works at all – works too hard and nothing offers greater inducement to the business man to get out in the open air and forget the worries of business affairs than do golf courses. This course is one of the most beautiful in the state, even the country, and is something of which Terre Haute may well be proud.

Mr. Beasley also addressed the fact that while Terre Haute may have gained a reputation of not being all that it ought to be, this fact came largely because the people of Terre Haute had not yet realized the many things they possessed of which they might well be proud. He cited a number of these, including various institutions of learning and benevolent institutions, the Memorial Stadium and last, but by no means least, the Rea Park golf course.

Bronze tablets unveiled

At the conclusion of Mr. Beasley’s address, the beautiful bronze tablets at the west entrance to the clubhouse were unveiled and the course officially opened. After Mrs. Rea had driven the first ball down the middle of the fairway for a considerable distance in spite of the fact it was the first time she had ever swung a golf club, two scheduled foursomes took their places on the tee. Playing in the first group were Mayor Ora Davis, John T. Beasley, Wood Posey and Fred Heintz. This foursome was followed by Bill Kendall, Phoenix club professional; Emerson Staup, Deming club professional; Paul Wood, Fort Harrison club professional; and Bobby Hess, amateur champion. While these foursomes were followed from the tee by several others, none of them were able to complete the 18 holes of play before darkness had settled over the course.

Course one of the best

As pointed out by Mr. Beasley yesterday in his short talk, Rea Park is now undoubtedly ready to take its place as one of the best, if not the best, municipal courses in the state. While the fairways are rolling, they are not too rolling to make play especially hazardous and are kept in excellent condition. The fairways on the new nine holes are already in good shape for play and will get better as they are used. Under the watchful care of Ray Clark, constructionist at the course, the greens are in the very best of shape and cannot be equaled on any course in the country. During the last few months, Clark has spent untiring efforts in getting the course in shape and his efforts have been rewarded. Seldom does a municipal course develop so rapidly as has Rea Park.

Play over the 18 holes will be open to the general public today with a charge of 50 cents. If the nine only nine holes are played the cost will remain the same as it has always been. The player may go the first nine holes and then, if he chooses to complete the course, obtain tickets at the 10th green, which is near the clubhouse, to finish the course. In the professional’s play yesterday, Bill Kendall turned in a count of

36, one under par for the first nine holes, and that is sufficient evidence that the course is in good condition.

Terre Haute Star Newspaper
Thursday, September 10, 1925

Banquet Opens New Clubhouse at Rea Course: Hundred Leading Citizens Attend Affair in Handsome Structure – Beasley and Mayor Speak, Speeches Laud Mrs. Rea.

With Mrs. W.S. Rea the donor as the guest of honor, the Terre Haute board of park commissioners officially opened the new Rea Park clubhouse with a dinner party in the beautiful structure last evening. More than 100 of the city's citizens, including Mayor Ora D. Davis and members of the park board, paid unstinted tribute to Mrs. Rea in an impressive program that succeeded a perfectly appointed five-course banquet.

Beasley gives address

Wood Posey, president of the park board, presided at the dinner, and John T. Beasley, attorney and president of the United States Trust Company, made the principal addresses. Chief among the other speakers were Mayor Davis, with the principal feature of the ceremonies being the reading of two resolutions: one from Mrs. Rea approving the clubhouse and formally giving the building to the city, the other a resolution from the park board. George Schaal, representing a group of Rea Park golfers, also presented Mrs. Rea with a silver loving cup.

Resolution lauds donor

The resolution prepared by the park board and offered to Mrs. Rea follows:

At a meeting of the board of park commissioners of Terre Haute held at the new William S. Rea Park clubhouse, in the City of Terre Haute, Ind., September 9, 1925, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:

Whereas, Geraldine A. Rea, prompted by a noble quality of mind and heart, has erected and presented to our city this beautiful clubhouse for the use of our people, we, the board of park commissioners have assembled here tonight, together with many leading citizens, to pay our respects, and to show our gratitude to Geraldine A. Rea, and by words to express to her our heartfelt thanks and great appreciation, and,

Whereas, Geraldine A. Rea, in the dedication of this clubhouse, has the privilege of knowing that her name is now indelibly written in the history of this city, with that of her late husband, William S. Rea, the donor of this beautiful park and golf course, and that together they stand as true benefactors of this community, and,

Whereas, This board recognizes in said act of Geraldine A. Rea, not only a generous gift to this community, but a far reaching event that will be noted by people from different parts of our country.

Therefore, Be It Resolved: That we, the board of park commissioners, accept this most liberal gift for the use of our people, and that our secretary be instructed to transmit a copy of this resolution to Geraldine A. Rea and cause a copy to be spread on the records of this board.

The Board of Park Commissioners, Wood Posey, President

Dedicate course today

The formal dedication of the complete 18-hole golf course purchased with funds left by Mrs. Rea's husband, W.S. Rea, and the clubhouse was held at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Mayor Davis introduced Mr. Beasley, who also made a dedication speech. "The complete and overwhelming pleasure that would otherwise be mine on this occasion," Mr. Beasley said, in opening his last evening, "is marred by a sense of incompetence. The occasion is a unique one, not only in the history of Terre Haute, but in the history of any city in a commonwealth."

"Fifty years ago there came to this city a man from a neighboring town in a sister state. Unheralded and unknown, he cast his lot here, lived here, and died here. Now his life and achievements are part of the woof and warp of the history of Terre Haute. Modest and unassuming and practical, he achieved and achieved greatly."

Reads portion of will

"By attending to his own business and doing that well, he was far from being unheralded and known at the time of his death. He made a will and among its estimable things which I wish to call attention to are phrases 8 and 9."

"In these phrases he gave to the United States Trust Company the sum of \$100,000 to be used for the purchase of a site in Terre Haute for a public park. The conditions involving the city's acceptance included the fact that the city should establish, beautify, and forever maintain the land as William S. Rea park.

"For three years the trustees studied, investigated, considered and analyzed plans for a fulfillment of the obligation. These terms were quite explicit and those of us who knew him well realized what was in his mind."

Disliked drone

"Mr. Rea hated a drone, but he loved the people, who did the best they could under whatever conditions existed. His belief was that of a real and true philanthropist, to leave money for the benefit of those who had earned a right to enjoy it. Yes, Mr. Rea was ambitious, but his ambitions were of the kind that make better men, the kind that enrich and ennoble society. It was his sincere wish to help those who helped themselves, to give his fellow citizens an opportunity to enjoy themselves."

"I believe that Mr. Rea realized, as did Herbert Spencer, and other English philosophers who studied the

people of this country, that a recreational life was as necessary to our people as a commercial one. In accordance with this, an option was secured to the land now comprising the park – 160 acres of land located at the very doors of this city.”

Points out advantages

It was at this point that Mr. Beasley pointed out the advantages of the park, its already amazing popularity and usefulness, and how it will be a constant source of pride and pleasure for generations to come. Then, after touching upon the value of golf, he continued: “But this is not all of our story. Side by side with Mr. Rea was a helpmate worthy of the name. To Mrs. Rea was left a goodly sum to do with as she pleased. Knowing what the community needed and what was in her husband’s heart, she carried on from where her noble husband was forced to stop.”

“To complete the beauty of her husband’s gift with a clubhouse appropriate in beauty, Mrs. Rea, seated at my side, made possible this creation, a thing of beauty and something to be proud of forever.”

Communications read

With hearty applause ringing in the room, Mr. Beasley continued his address by reading a ‘letter of appreciation and pleasure’ from Robert D. Heintz of Washington, D.C., formerly from Terre Haute and also several other communications. More enthusiastic applause was forthcoming when Mr. Beasley read Mrs. Rea’s resolution, approving the clubhouse.

Mr. Posey, in response to Mr. Beasley, read the resolution of the park board, accepting the gift, which was unanimously adopted by the members. “I wish to publicly express the thanks of every citizen in Terre Haute to Mrs. Rea,” began Mayor Davis as the next speaker. “The late William S. Rea as a great benefactor and his park in a few years will be one of the greatest in the country. Mrs. Rea stands alone as one who has done more than any other women in the United States as a benefactor to a city, for our wonderful park couldn’t have been fully complete without her gift of a clubhouse. The park board did not have the funds to create a building and it would have been years before it would have been able.”

Thanks to Mrs. Rea

“I am supremely happy to see Mrs. Rea can watch other people enjoying her gift, and Mrs. Rea, to you I want to extend my deepest and sincerest thanks.” Mr. Posey then read the two tablets which are to be unveiled today in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Rea and requested a moment’s silence in silent tribute to the memory of Mr. Rea.

E.R. Knecht, mayor of Shelbyville, IL, who is a brother of Mrs. Rea, was introduced and in a few words paid tribute to his sister and her city. Mrs. Rea herself was the next called upon by Mr. Posey, for any expression. Very simply, she arose and said, “All I can say is that it gives me great pleasure to be here and that I hope people will get as much pleasure from the clubhouse as I have in giving it.”

Other speakers introduced

Then came Mr. Posey's speech of resignation, and, at the conclusion, he introduced Mrs. Omer Mewhinney, Mrs. R. B. White, I.H. Waterman, Herman Prox, and J.O. Engleman, superintendent of the Terre Haute public schools, all of whom expressed the appreciation of the guests and the city for Mrs. Rea's gift. Three cheers were given for Mrs. Rea at the closing, the cheering being led by Homer Williams and Ben Pfister.

"On the Banks of the Wabash" was sung by the guests under the directorship of Bill Condon and Mrs. J.B. Pfister, proceeded the dinner. Appropriate music was furnished during the meal and afterwards for dancing by Harry G. McDaniel and his orchestra.

G. Recent Newspaper Articles Concerning the Revitalization of Rea Park

Terre Haute Tribune Star Newspaper

Monday, March 6, 2017

David Hughes, Reporter

'Friends' hope to give Rea Park facelift over the coming

A 1970 graduate of Honey Creek High School, Mike Harding maintained fond memories of playing golf at Rea Park when his career in the coal business led him to a life in Evansville for 35 years.

Now 64 and retired, he's been back living in Terre Haute since November 2014. But Harding is not pleased with the modern-day look of Rea Park, particularly the clubhouse.

"I looked at the clubhouse [during a 2013 visit] and oh my gosh, it's really in bad shape," he recalled. As previously reported in the Tribune-Star, Harding and longtime golf buddies Bill Olah, Dan Sanders, Bill Verdeyen, and Earl Elliott formed a non-profit organization known as Friends of Rea Park Inc. Their goal is to turn Rea Park — all 160 acres — into a popular gathering place for more activities than golf. For example, they envision wedding receptions, dances, parties and meetings if a banquet center is built there. "Over the last three years, we have been working toward some plans, not just for the Rea Park clubhouse, but for Rea Park," Harding explained.

He said two possible plans for park renovations and four possible designs for clubhouse renovations exist. The Rea Park Clubhouse Feasibility Study and the Rea Park Master Plans should be ready for review by the Terre Haute Parks Board at its March or April meeting. If one of the new designs is approved, a terrace would be built onto the back of the clubhouse. "There is the possibility of fully developing this," Harding noted. "We may not do it all at once. It may have to come in pieces."

Eddie Bird, superintendent of the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Department, agreed that it won't happen all at once. "Since this all started, it's kind of become more of an overall master plan for the whole Rea Park," Bird said. "The building would be the No. 1 item. Then down the road, say for Phase II or Phase III, we would try to fix up the park, which I was kind of for because we don't really have a park on the south side. I mean, it's called Rea Park, but it's a golf course."

"I keep telling Mike, the main thing is the building for right now. The first step has to be the building. And then we're looking at maybe adding a trail around the property — a jogging trail, walking trail, biking trail. And then we're also looking at maybe moving the tennis courts to one end of the park and then adding some picnic shelters and maybe a playground and maybe later on even a splash pad."

Harding estimated the cost of all renovations at between \$3.5 million and \$5 million. "We're either going to raise it or we're going to work with the city," Harding said. "I think the public would like the re-design of the building ... to make it useful. It would be an activities center for the park." Bird, who would love to see a full kitchen and restaurant added to the park clubhouse, said it all comes down to how much money can be raised through the Friends of Rea Park.

The next meeting of the Terre Haute Parks Board will be March 15. History shows that Terre Haute grocery magnate William S. Rea left \$100,000 in his will to build the park in 1919, which would be nearly \$1.4 million in today's dollars. His widow, Geraldine Rea, donated an additional \$60,000 in 1925 to build

a clubhouse. Local architectural firm Johnson, Miller, Miller and Yeager designed a clubhouse of the Mediterranean style.

“At the time, the population of Terre Haute and the population of Evansville were about the same,” Harding said. “Terre Haute was a pretty prosperous place in the 1920s.” He mentioned that the whole park has not been renovated for almost 100 years, but now there’s a chance for new pickle ball courts and a driving range. “The park is almost 100 years old, and it needs to be renovated, but it’s an easy fix,” Harding insisted. “It has the potential to impact all kinds of people.”

One reason he wants that impact is the health of Wabash Valley citizens. Harding recently found a study online that ranked Vigo County as one of the unhealthiest counties in Indiana in 2016. He wants to change that. “We need to begin to change our culture here,” he said.

For more information on the efforts to improve Rea Park, visit www.friendsofreapark.com or the “Friends of Rea Park Inc.” Facebook page.

Terre Haute Tribune Star Newspaper
Sunday, February 22, 2015
Mark Bennett, Reporter

Relighting the glow: Rea clubhouse target of preservation effort

The glow was its trademark. As a kid, riding in the family car down South Seventh Street in the evening, Mike Harding saw it as they passed by countless times, like thousands of other Terre Hauteans. "Rea Park's clubhouse used to be lit up at night. You could see it from Seventh," recalled Harding. "There was a lot of community pride about Rea Park."

Now 62 years old, Harding holds a sentimental attachment to the facility. The 1970 medalist at the local sectional, Harding played Rea as a high schooler. He got job there at age 14 and kept it through his college years at Indiana State University, watering the greens at night. Harding moved to Evansville in 1980, working as a mine engineer and then an administrator for the Pike County schools.

Harding returned to his hometown in 2013 and played the course and found its condition to be "better than ever." When he walked through the stately, white clubhouse, though, Harding was "taken aback" by the worn state of the historic building. He moved back to Terre Haute last year, enlisted the support of Scott Williams of the Wabash Valley Foundation and Tommy Kleckner of Indiana Landmarks. They shared ideas and concerns with Eddie Bird, the Terre Haute city parks superintendent, and helped then form the Friends of Rea Park.

The grassroots group earn nonprofit 501(c)(3) status last week, thanks to Friends member and local attorney Bill Olah, Harding said. The Friends' ranks include others, just like Harding, with fond memories of playing golf or tennis at Rea. "The older you get, you start thinking, 'What can I do to help and leave a legacy?'" Harding explained, "just like Mr. and Mrs. Rea."

The Friends hope to raise funds to renovate the clubhouse, repair the aging tennis courts and get the entire 160-acre park placed on the National Register of Historic Places. And restore the glow. Time has taken a visible toll on the building.

"We hope to get it back to that point, where it's a respected part of the city's parks system," said Kleckner, director of the Indiana Landmarks western regional office in Terre Haute. Kleckner aims to see Rea Park added to the National Register of Historic Places by late 2016. His office is working on the nomination process for Rea. It deserves the distinction for several reasons, including its age, architecture, landscape and connection to the Rea family. "We don't see public buildings built like that anymore," Kleckner said.

It's a Terre Haute icon. "Even if it's someone born and raised here who never visited it, it's still one of those identifiable landmarks of this community to them," Kleckner said. "Something needs to be done." The park and clubhouse mark their 90th birthday this year. The course opened Aug. 1, 1925, thanks to a \$100,000 trust left in the will of William S. Rea, who died in 1919, to turn the 160 acres on the city's south side into a park, with an 18-hole golf course. On Sept. 10, 1925, the city dedicated the clubhouse, funded by an additional \$60,000 donation from Rea's widow, Geraldine. She donated the extra money when the city administration struggled to raise funds to carry out her late husband's wishes.

As the master of ceremonies at that 1925 ceremony, Rea family friend John T. Beasley, put it, Geraldine Rea “in her quiet and beautiful way ... expressed a determination to build a clubhouse,” according to a Terre Haute Tribune report. “This magnificent structure, the finest of its kind in the state, that we are dedicating today, is the result of that gift.”

And, “that was quite a gift,” Harding said last week. Indeed, her \$60,000 donation would be worth \$811,666 in 2015 dollars. Her husband’s contribution of \$100,000 would equal \$1.37 million today. Those gifts allowed the city to hire the local architectural firm Johnson, Miller, Miller and Yeager — prolific in the early 20th century — to design a clubhouse as a “high-style example of Mediterranean style,” as Kleckner described it. The structure is surrounded by a course landscaped by prominent Indiana architect Lawrence Sheridan.

“Despite its conditional issues, it looks like something you could see sitting in a village along the Mediterranean [Sea],” Kleckner said. Its conditional issues are significant. They threaten the clubhouse’s chances of marking its 100th birthday, or perhaps even its 91st.

“Something needs to be done right away,” Bird said. Roof leaks caused a hole in the ceiling of the main pro shop room, an otherwise impressive, high-ceiling space where golfers and tennis players gather before and after playing. Damage from water leaks is visible not only in the ceiling tiles but also in the upper walls, floors, and in the basement, where rooms once used for parties, lockers and storage sit mostly idle. The foundation shows the effects of drainage problems. The first-floor and basement rooms need refurbished, said Dave Kennedy, the golf pro at Rea.

“It’s a big building that right now is really only using one room, and it’s just a waste,” Kennedy said. “Obviously, it was a great building back in the day,” he added, “and that’s what Mike’s and the Friends of Rea Park’s vision is — to bring it back.”

Redesign, repurpose. Its revival will require an investment. Bird said a local construction firm estimated the repairs would top \$320,000. The cost to repair the roof would involve \$20,000 for materials alone, he added. Bird shared his concerns about the roof with the Terre Haute Parks and Recreation Board at its meeting last week. Board members, in agreement with Bird, decided that before pursuing a full roof repair, a structural engineer should determine whether the building itself is salvageable.

Bird wants such an inspection to also make sure the clubhouse is safe to use in the meantime. Rea’s golf season begins March 1. “I think it’s just been neglected for so many years,” Bird said. “It just needs a lot of work right now.” A plaque in the clubhouse marks renovations to the course done in 1984-86. Harding patterned Friends of Rea Park, Inc. on a similar group in Evansville that generated funds to restore that community’s historic Bosse Field. The Friends of Rea Park hope to draw funding support from private foundations, government entities, grants (thanks to the group’s nonprofit status), and individual donors. A renovation of the clubhouse could top \$1 million, Harding said, emphasizing that’s a “wild guess.” The tennis courts, added to the park years after the golf course opened, need vast repairs, as well.

The park is worth the investment and effort, Harding contends. Its grounds have been toured by countless golfers, tennis players, cross country runners and casual walkers through nine decades. The names of those visitors include baseball great Tommy John, basketball legend John Wooden and LPGA pioneer Patty Berg, among others.

“That’s a beautiful building out there. If an architect got a hold of it, they could really redesign and repurpose it,” Harding said, rattling off a list of functions the clubhouse could house beyond golf and tennis events. “I think it could be something the whole community could use and have pride in. “It was once a grand old building,” he added, “and it can be brought back.”

F. Cost of William S. Rea Park Renewal Projects (2019)

Activity	Anticipated Cost
Clubhouse/Activity Center	\$1.8 Million
Tennis/Pickle Ball Facility	\$2.0 Million
Driving Range/Golf Academy	\$500,000
Play Park	\$250,000
Water Park	?
Trail Around Park	?
Parking Lot Resurface and Roads	?
Healthplex/Fitness/Health Education Center	?