



DRAFT

—— Park District of Highland Park ——

GREENPRINT

BUILDING COMMUNITY WELL-BEING

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2036



DRAFT

JUNE 22, 2026

THE
LAKOTA
GROUP.

Dear Highland Park Community,

On behalf of the project team, we are proud to present the Park District of Highland Park's Comprehensive Plan—GreenPrint 2036.

This plan is more than a document—it is a shared vision for the future of our parks, facilities, programs, and community spaces. It serves as a long-term roadmap that establishes a framework for how the Park District will grow, evolve, and operate over the next decade, aligning our investments, priorities, and daily work with the needs of our community.

GreenPrint 2036 reflects where we are today and where we aspire to be tomorrow. It builds upon past successes while responding to emerging trends, shifting community needs, and new opportunities. At its core, the plan is rooted in our mission and values and shaped by a commitment to enhancing quality of life for all who live, work, and recreate in Highland Park.

This plan would not have been possible without you.

Throughout this process, we heard from residents, stakeholders, partners, and staff through workshops, a community-wide survey, community pop-up events, and conversations. Your input guided every step—from identifying priorities and opportunities to shaping recommendations and strategies. The result is a plan that reflects the voices, aspirations, and values of our community.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who participated. Your time, insight, and passion have directly influenced this work and will continue to shape the future of our parks and recreation system for generations to come.

We also recognize the leadership and vision of our Park Board of Commissioners. Their commitment to thoughtful planning, stewardship of public resources, and dedication to community engagement has been instrumental in advancing this effort. Their guidance ensured that this plan remains focused, responsible, and aligned with the long-term interests of our community.

Finally, we are grateful for the collaboration and expertise of our consulting partners—Lakota Group, aQuity, BerryDunn, and Bright Threads Leadership Group. Their work alongside our staff helped bring structure, analysis, and innovation to the planning process, ensuring that this plan is both aspirational and actionable.

GreenPrint 2036 is a living, evolving roadmap. It provides clear direction through guiding themes, priority goals and projects, strategies and recommended actions, while allowing for flexibility as conditions change and new opportunities emerge.

As we move forward, our focus will be on implementation—aligning resources, advancing priority projects and operational goals, and continuing to engage the community as we bring this vision to life.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are shaping a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable future for your parks and our community.

Sincerely,

Brian Romes | Executive Director of Park District of Highland Park



Acknowledgments

Park Commissioners

- *Jennifer Freeman — President (Term Ends: 2027)*
- *Rafael Labrador — Vice President (Term Ends: 2027)*
- *Josie Beck — Commissioner (Term Ends: 2031)*
- *Steve Greenberg — Commissioner (Term Ends: 2031)*
- *Terry Grossberg — Commissioner (Term Ends: 2029)*

Department Heads

- *Brian Romes — Executive Director*
- *Mitch Carr — Deputy Director of Facilities and Operations*
- *Nick Baird — Director of Recreation*
- *Elizabeth Gogola — Director of Communications & Marketing*
- *Laurel Hall — Director of Human Resources and Workforce Development*
- *Mari-Lynn Peters — Director of Finance*
- *Jeff Smith — Director of Planning, Projects, & IT*
- *Dan Voss — Director of Parks*
- *Kari Acevedo — Assistant Director of Recreation*
- *Jessica Soto — Assistant Director of Recreation*
- *Roxanne Hejnowski — Executive Coordinator*

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- *Brian Romes — Executive Director*
- *Amalia Schwartz — Planning Manager*
- *Elizabeth Gogola — Director of Communications & Marketing*
- *Jeff Smith — Director of Planning, Projects, & IT*

Consulting Team

**THE
LAKOTA
GROUP.**

b BerryDunn

 **10 YEARS OF
aQityRESEARCH**

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INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1

MISSION

To enrich community life through healthy leisure pursuits and an appreciation of the natural world.

VALUES

WELCOMING

We welcome everyone, fostering supportive relationships through positive interactions that appreciate the best in others and create a sense of belonging.

CARING

We care about our relationships with others, as well as sustaining and improving our material, financial and natural resources, through best practices that foster trust and ensure long term health, safety, and wellbeing.

EXTRAORDINARY

We aspire to provide extraordinary experiences by thinking creatively, creating personal interactions, and delivering unique services that positively impact lives.





THE HIGHLAND PARK COMMUNITY

Highland Park is a vibrant community of 30,459 residents across 12.22 square miles. It is known for its strong sense of community, diverse population, and a deep commitment to quality of life. The city's demographic composition reflects a mix of families, individuals, and older adults, creating a multigenerational community with a range of recreational needs and priorities.



30,459
RESIDENTS

Population and Households

The community includes 11,808 households, with an average household size reflecting a blend of family households (72.6%) and non-family households (27.4%). Of these, 31.7% of households include children under 18, while 42.7% of households include adults aged 65 and older, illustrating the District's dual focus on youth and adult programming.

Highland Park's population is highly educated and engaged, and the Park District serves as a vital connector, offering spaces and programs that bring residents of all ages together. This mix of younger families and an active aging population underscores the need for a recreation system that balances playgrounds, sports facilities, and family programming with wellness initiatives, passive recreational opportunities, and cultural arts and other niche special interests.

Diversity and Language

While English is the primary language for most households, linguistic diversity is present. Among residents aged 18 to 64, 5.4% speak Spanish at home, and 3.7% speak other Indo-European languages. Programs that incorporate cultural sensitivity and multilingual communication can help the Park District reach and engage these segments effectively.



**SPEAK SPANISH
AT HOME**

Economic Profile

The city exhibits economic stability, with 95.8% of households earning incomes above the poverty line and only 4.2% below. However, pockets of need remain, including residents receiving public assistance (1.2%) and those utilizing SNAP benefits (2.2%). Ensuring equitable access to recreation for all income levels is essential for maintaining inclusivity across the system.

Mobility and Work Patterns

Approximately 62% of employed residents drive alone to work, while a notable 25.2% work from home, a trend that influences park usage during daytime hours. This shift underscores the growing demand for accessible outdoor spaces, walking trails, and flexible programming that supports active lifestyles throughout the day.

Highwood Residents in District 112

The Park District of Highland Park (PDHP) not only serves Highland Park residents but also provides resident rates to Highwood families whose children attend the same North Shore School District 112 (NSSD 112) and the High School District 113 schools as Highland Park families. Highwood is located northeast of Highland Park, is a smaller, denser community with a more diverse population.

Highwood differs from Highland Park in several ways. It features more compact neighborhoods, a greater proportion of renters, and a higher concentration of Hispanic and Latino residents compared to Highland Park. Sixteen percent of households earn below the poverty line. These demographic characteristics influence recreation needs, with Highwood families potentially seeking affordable programs, access to sports fields, and community gathering spaces that celebrate cultural traditions.

Students from Highwood attending NSSD 112 schools frequently participate in Park District activities, making PDHP an essential provider of out-of-school and seasonal programs for this population. The District's role extends beyond recreation, fostering inclusion, supporting cultural exchange, and strengthening regional identity by bridging two unique communities.



WHY THIS MATTERS FOR PARK AND RECREATION PLANNING?

Understanding Highland Park's demographics ensures that the New GreenPrint prioritizes multi-generational programming, accessible facilities, and diverse park amenities. The significant share of older adults highlights the need for wellness, low impact, and special interest recreation opportunities, while the presence of young families underscores demand for playgrounds, sports fields, and family-oriented programs. Economic diversity calls for affordable access and equitable distribution of resources, while language and cultural diversity emphasize the importance of inclusive engagement and program design.

Including Highwood in the GreenPrint planning process continues to address programming, pricing strategies, and outreach methods are equitable and culturally responsive. Understanding Highwood's distinct community profile helps the District provide inclusive spaces, affordable programs, and improved access where needed, ensuring that both Highland Park and Highwood residents benefit from shared park and recreation resources.



THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Highland Park’s recreation facilities, parks, and trails are **more than just places**—they are the **heart of the community**. They provide spaces for families to gather, children to play, athletes to compete, and residents to connect with nature. They contribute to physical and mental well-being, protect the environment, and enhance quality of life.

GreenPrint 2036 isn’t just about projects—it’s about people. It’s about ensuring that our parks and recreation system continues to serve everyone, now and for future generations.

Ten years ago, PDHP launched GreenPrint 2024, a comprehensive parks and recreation master plan that shaped the District’s vision for open spaces, facilities, and programs. Guided by community input and strategic analysis, GreenPrint 2024 set the course for significant improvements that residents enjoy today, from enhanced park amenities to expanded recreation opportunities.

A decade later, the District has reassessed, refined, and reimagined what comes next. GreenPrint 2036 builds upon the success of the previous plan, incorporating new insights, priorities, and emerging needs. The New Plan reflects the community’s current priorities, responds to emerging trends, and ensures that Highland Park’s parks and recreation system continues to thrive for future generations.

Highland Park is not the same community it was when the last GreenPrint plan was developed. While the foundation from the original plan remains strong, the conditions shaping parks, recreation, and community life have evolved in meaningful ways. Updating the plan at this moment ensures the Park District remains aligned with current realities while positioning itself for the future. In addition, the Park District has developed focused plans over time, ranging from site-specific master plans to system-wide initiatives, that have guided important investments and decisions. The New Plan provides an opportunity to revisit those efforts, ensuring they remain relevant, aligned, and coordinated, with key elements either integrated into this Comprehensive Plan or identified to continue as standalone guiding documents.

A changing community

Highland Park’s demographics are shifting, with changes in age distribution, household composition, and community expectations. An aging population is increasing demand for accessible spaces, passive recreation, and wellness-oriented programming, while families and younger residents continue to seek flexible, high-quality recreational experiences. These dynamics require a system that can serve multiple generations in different ways, often simultaneously.

Evolving expectations for parks and recreation

Across the country, park districts are being asked to do more than provide traditional amenities. Parks today, more than ever, support mental and physical health, social connection, environmental education, and community resilience. Residents increasingly value experiences and flexibility, as well as spaces that feel welcoming and adaptable.

New trends shaping the system

Recreation trends continue to shift toward unstructured play, multi-use spaces, nature-based experiences, and year-round programming. At the same time, technology, hybrid work patterns, and changing lifestyles are altering when and how people use parks.

Aging infrastructure and investment decisions

Some of the Park District's facilities and assets are at a point where reinvestment, renovation, or replacement must be considered. With limited resources, the District must make strategic choices about where to invest, how to phase improvements, and how to balance maintenance with new opportunities.

Environmental and long-term resilience

Stewardship of natural resources remains central to Highland Park's identity, but it now comes with new urgency. Climate variability, stormwater management, habitat preservation, and sustainable practices are increasingly important considerations that require updated strategies and coordinated action.

Positioning for what's next

The New GreenPrint is not about starting over. It is about building upon a strong foundation while responding to a changing context. The Plan allows the Park District to align its mission and values with today's needs, anticipate future demands, and continue delivering high-quality parks and recreation experiences that serve the entire community.

The New GreenPrint is designed to be inclusive, forward-thinking, and actionable—grounded in both data and the voices of those who use and cherish the Park District's resources every day. The Plan seeks to address the following desired outcomes:

Actionable Plan

Creates a visionary roadmap for the next 10+ years, supported by actionable priority goals, projects and strategies that are specific, measurable, responsible and responsive to the current and future needs of the community, supporting the District's mission and grounded in organizational values of being welcoming, caring, and extraordinary.

10-Year Investment Roadmap

Prioritizes the District's long range capital investment plan and associated funding strategies that supports current repair, replacement, and development projects with a realistic implementation strategy.

Alignment with Future Community Needs

Conducts outreach with residents, including a statistically valid community-wide survey and robust community engagement. Engages with Community Key Stakeholders such as government partners, affiliates, sponsors, donors, and other local public or private organizations to assess and determine synergistic opportunities that benefit and serve community needs through strategic partnerships that promote efficiency, collaboration, and potential funding opportunities to better serve community needs.

Equitable and Inclusive Service Approach

Evaluates existing facilities, parks, natural areas, and recreational services to ensure the quantity and quality is aligned with identified level of service standards, providing equitable and inclusive services across the community while addressing innovative and forward thinking strategies that address underserved demographic segments and gaps in service, along with responsible cost recovery and financial planning.

Build Public Trust

Build public trust through a transparent Comprehensive Planning process that reinforces the Park District's impact on community well-being, while leading responsibly as stewards of community resources, in effort to enrich community life through healthy leisure pursuits.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Lakota Group organized the planning process into three phases:

1 ENGAGE

2 ANALYZE

3 PLAN &
IMPLEMENT



1 ENGAGE

In the first phase, The Park District worked with Lakota Group and aQuity Research & Insight Inc. to gather input from stakeholders, and the community through survey's, focus groups, pop-up events, and open houses to lay the foundation for action planning.



Community Survey

The Community Survey gathered statistically valid input from Highland Park residents to understand evolving needs, preferences, and satisfaction levels with parks, facilities, and programs. The 2025 survey provided direction on what the community values most, from desired park improvements and recreation offerings to priorities for sustainability and accessibility. Its results help the Park District align upcoming investments and initiatives with the community's highest priorities and expectations. Its value lies in how directly it informs decision-making. The findings are not meant to sit alongside the plan, but to help shape it. As such, the results are embedded into the priorities, strategies, and metrics of the New GreenPrint, ensuring that future investments and actions reflect current community expectations.

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Survey Respondents



In Person Engagement FOCUS GROUPS

The team connected with a wide range of stakeholders through focus group discussions.

- Civic Groups (4)
- Park Board Commissioners (5)
- Transportation Advisory (2)
- Government Partners (6)
- Park Foundation (9)
- New Residents (4)
- Pickleball Committee (5)
- Young Adults (1)
- Athletics / AYSO (5)
- Park District Employees (100+)
- Golf (5)
- Highwood Residents (8)
- Ice Focus Group (12)
- Athletics Focus Group (12)



Additional Engagement Opportunities

POP-UP EVENTS

- Centennial Ice Arena Pop-Up
- Egg Hunt Pop-Up
- Park Fitness Pop-Up
- Danny Cunniff Pop-Up

ONLINE THOUGHT SHARING

www.pdhpgreenprint.com

OPEN HOUSES

- Olson Park Open House (June 2025)
- Community Open House (February 2026)



2 ANALYZE

This phase focuses on reviewing existing plans, data, and community feedback to shape the direction of the Comprehensive Plan, with findings shared at a community meeting.



Previous Park District Planning Documents

The New GreenPrint builds directly on the success of previous planning efforts, including GreenPrint 2024 approved in 2015. The New GreenPrint carries forward core principles from the prior plans while updating priorities to reflect current conditions and future needs. As a comprehensive update, it replaces the original GreenPrint Master Plan and supported by prior planning efforts, establishing a renewed vision and implementation strategy for the next decade. Previous planning efforts include: GreenPrint 2024 (2015 Master Plan), Land Management Plan, Sports Field Master Plan (2019), ADA Transition Plan (2024–25), GreenPath Sustainability Plan (2025), Lakefront Master Plan Update (2020), Beach Management (2021), Park & Site Master Plans, Neighborhood Park Assessments.



Level of Service (LOS) Analysis

The Level of Service (LOS) analysis evaluates how well the Park District of Highland Park's parks, facilities, and amenities are serving today's community. It measures acreage, standards, and distribution so the GreenPrint Comprehensive Plan can align future investments with resident needs and expectations. LOS Types Used in this Report include:

- **Acreage:** *Do we have enough land to support recreation and conservation needs for our population?*
- **PDHP Standards:** *Are PDHP standards for capacity, access, quality, and experience met?*
- **Distribution:** *Are parks located and connected so residents can conveniently access them?*



staff input and historical participation data. Through interviews with staff, a recreation staff survey, and data analysis, the process gathered insights on current recreational use and future needs. The District's registration software provided data regarding historical program offerings and corresponding participation.

Having access to recreational opportunities helps people lead healthier lives and supports the overall well-being of the community. The District's wide range of programs is a major draw for both residents and visitors. As such, the goal of the recreation services assessment is to guide the future delivery of programs and services. This assessment includes the following items: A systematic program analysis, assessment, and evaluation process that will guide staff as they navigate current programming efforts and future needs; identification of program categories, programming gaps, and future program considerations; Guidance in determining the most effective/efficient programs and the delivery of those programs.

Recreation Service Assessment

The Park District of Highland Park, in partnership with Berry, Dunn, McNeil & Parker, LLC (BerryDunn), conducted a recreation program assessment utilizing

The assessment provides insight into the District's individual program areas as well as the program menu as a whole. This districtwide look will help the agency understand overall offerings and participation, trends therein, and therefore, opportunities to serve generations of residents and visitors for years to come.



Park Assessments

The park assessments were developed as a systemwide evaluation tool to understand how well existing park properties are performing today and where targeted improvements are needed. The assessments are grounded in a consistent set of criteria that measure not only what each site offers, but how it functions, how it is experienced, and how it serves the broader community.

Each park site was evaluated using four primary metrics: Capacity, Access, Quality, and Experience. Capacity measures the presence and diversity of core amenities and how well a site supports recreational use. Access evaluates how easily a site can be reached and navigated, including connections to sidewalks, bike infrastructure, parking, and transit. Quality focuses on the condition of amenities, maintenance levels, and the overall physical environment. Experience considers how a space contributes to community life, including comfort, usability, social interaction, and overall sense of place.

For parks, the assessment process built upon previous work completed by the Park District. Existing evaluations were reviewed, validated, and expanded to ensure a comprehensive and consistent systemwide analysis. Additional parks that had not been previously assessed, or where information was incomplete, were incorporated into the process to create a complete inventory and ensure that all park types were evaluated using the same criteria.

Facility Assessments

For facilities, each assessment was developed through an independent evaluation of the building, site, and its ability to support current and future recreation needs. Assessments reflect overall performance and help identify strengths, deficiencies, and opportunities for improvement.

The intent of the facility assessment is not to rank facilities against one another, but to provide a consistent framework for identifying service gaps, prioritizing investments, guiding capital planning decisions, and tracking progress over time.

Sample Park Assessment:





3 PLAN & IMPLEMENT

During this final phase of the planning process, Lakota Group created the 10-year GreenPrint Comprehensive Plan based on the analysis and community engagement completed in the previous project phases. The Project Team established priority projects, operational goals and strategies and an timeline for implementation. Chapter 2 provides an Executive Summary of the New GreenPrint Comprehensive Plan.









EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CHAPTER 2



GUIDING THEMES

The New GreenPrint vision was shaped through a combination of systemwide analysis, technical assessment, and community engagement, ensuring that recommendations are grounded in both data and lived experience. Quantitative tools such as the Level of Service analysis, park and facility assessments, and demographic review helped identify systemwide strengths, gaps, and investment priorities, while statistically valid surveys, stakeholder discussions, focus groups, and pop-up engagement provided insight into how residents experience parks and recreation in their daily lives. Together, these efforts revealed a consistent need to balance stewardship of existing assets with evolving expectations around comfort, flexibility, accessibility, wellness, and community connection.



At its core, this vision is guided by three overarching themes, Stewardship, Well-Being, and Efficiency. These themes provide a unifying framework for decision-making, ensuring that future investments, goals, strategies, and actions are thoughtful, community-centered, and sustainable over time. Together, they define how the Park District will care for its assets, support the health and experience of its residents, and operate in a responsible and effective manner. Three guiding themes emerged consistently through community engagement, stakeholder input, and system analysis.

Stewardship

Responsibly acquire, protect, and maintain parks and open spaces while implementing sustainable and resilient practices. Foster a vibrant community by creating inclusive gathering places, and champion parks and recreation through advocacy, impact, education, partnerships, and policy leadership to enrich community life.

Well-Being

Promote and support essential parks and recreation services that address the social, physical, intellectual, emotional, environmental, economic, and cultural needs of all individuals, regardless of life stage, ability, or income, while providing flexible options that remove barriers to participation.

Efficiency

Ensure fiscal responsibility by seeking opportunities for innovation and collaboration with local units of government, businesses, and other organizations that leverage funding, reduce redundancy, and streamline operations.

These themes are the lens through which the New GreenPrint evaluates priorities, shapes recommendations, and organizes future action.

To bring this vision to life, GreenPrint is structured as a comprehensive plan, integrating both physical investments and operational priorities into a single, coordinated framework.

Capital Investment Plan focuses on the Park District's physical system, guiding long-term investments in parks, facilities, and infrastructure. It outlines a strategic approach to maintaining existing assets, improving key spaces, and developing new opportunities where needed to meet current and future community needs.

Operational Strategic Plan provides an operational roadmap for the organization, aligning day-to-day work with long-term priorities. Grounded in the District's core values of being welcoming, caring, and extraordinary, it focuses on three key areas, customers, team members, and resources.

Together, these two plans form a comprehensive and balanced roadmap. The Capital Plan addresses the outward-facing experience of parks and facilities, while the Strategic Plan strengthens the internal systems and operations that support them.

Aligned, they ensure that investments in physical spaces are supported by the people, programs, and processes needed to sustain them, creating a cohesive, forward-looking approach to delivering exceptional parks and recreation for the Highland Park community.

GREENPRINT

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

This includes long range investment plan that guides maintaining, improving, and developing park district assets such as land, buildings, vehicles, and equipment to meet the current and future needs of the community.

OPERATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

An operational roadmap that guides leaders and align teams in prioritizing operational initiatives that support the day-to-day work.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN



Capital Projects

Capital Projects are investments that support maintaining, improving, and developing current and future Park District assets such as land, buildings, vehicles, and equipment to meet. Capital Projects are categorized and prioritized by a Tier System:

- **Maintenance Projects (Tiers 1 – 3):** Level of investment focused on the essential repair and replacement of existing resources. Tier 1 is any investment where the primary purpose is to correct a safety hazard or is pursuant to a legal contract, ordinance, or law. Tier 2 is any investment in an existing asset that is in critical condition, whereas if not addressed may pose a safety hazard or lead to a larger expense and/or impact on existing services. Tier 3 is any investment for an existing asset that is recommended for replacement due to reaching its useful life.
- **Improvement Projects (Tiers 4):** Level of investment focused on improving existing resources / facilities to better serve the needs of the community. Tier 4 investments improve existing assets that proactively improve service quality.
- **Development Projects (Tier 5-6):** Level of investment focused on developing new resources that meet the current and future needs of the community. Tier 5 investments are new projects that fulfill a current unmet need. Tier 6 investments represent a need that currently does not have funding identified.
- **GreenPrint Priority Projects:** Level of investment focused on capital projects that are specifically prioritized and based on alignment with the Comprehensive Plan's Guiding Themes.

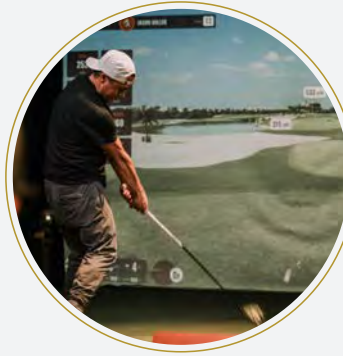
Capital Project Focus Areas

The New GreenPrint organizes future capital priorities into four primary project areas: Outdoor Sports, Indoor Sports, Recreation Facilities, and Park Amenities. This structure aligns with the needs and priorities identified through outreach and engagement and park system assessments. They help distinguish the types of investments the Park District plan to prioritize over the next decade and provide a clear pathway to communicate where resources should be directed.



OUTDOOR SPORTS

Outdoor sports projects include investments in field lighting, turf, drainage, stormwater management, amenities and new or improved multi-use fields, courts, and courses, as well as other site improvements that make outdoor sports more accessible, playable, safe, and sustainable, resilient, adaptable and inclusive to support high community demand.



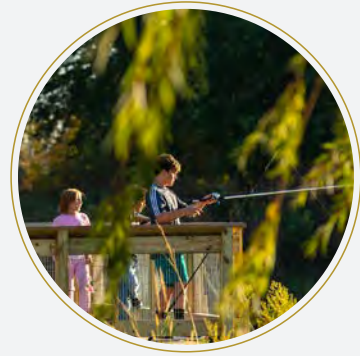
INDOOR SPORTS

Indoor sports address facilities used for practice, training and competition spaces. Project investments include in playing surfaces, amenities, and multi-use training areas that improve access, availability, and increased opportunities for athletes to practice and compete throughout the year.



RECREATION FACILITIES

Recreation facilities include spaces, equipment, and amenities that support a broad range of multi-generational activities beyond sports, including the arts, aquatics, natural areas, fitness, enrichment, and social programming.



PARK AMENITIES

Park amenities address investments in playgrounds, natural areas, beaches, trails, and pavilions that contribute to the overall quality, durability, and variety of recreation and leisure opportunities.

Capital Project Funding

A central component of the New GreenPrint is the distinction between funded and unfunded capital projects. This creates transparency around what is positioned to move forward in the near term and what will require additional effort, resources, or partnerships to become a reality.

- **Funded projects** align with existing funding sources that the Park District can leverage to advance priority projects in the near term.
- **Unfunded projects**, while still important, exceed the District's current funding capacity and require a more deliberate funding strategy to advance. Such projects may require feasibility studies, partnerships, grants, philanthropic support, debt financing, or phased implementation over time.

This distinction reinforces the need for a flexible and strategic approach to capital investment. While the District's overall funding provides a strong foundation to support ongoing capital maintenance, repair and replacement of existing infrastructure, future development projects require a more targeted and layered funding strategy. As project scale and complexity increase, the Park District must rely on a combination of funding tools to advance priorities in a responsible and achievable manner.

FUNDED

1-5 year Capital GreenPrint Priority Projects (2026-2030)

Total 1-5 year GreenPrint
Capital Investment Funding:
\$4,405,000

Total 1-5 year Capital Plan
(maintenance + repair + replace):
\$27,078,249

FUNDED

1-5 year

Capital GreenPrint Priority Projects
(2026-2030)

\$4,405,000

West Ridge Field Lighting | \$500,000 | 2026 - 2028

Sports Field Development Study | \$100,000 | 2026 - 2027

Sunset Valley Golf Simulators Project | \$2,105,000 | 2026 - 2029

Off Ice Training Facility (Centennial) | \$300,000 | 2026 - 2027

Ceramics Studio Project | \$500,000 | 2026 - 2027

Water Park Dev. Study and Planning | \$100,000 | 2029 - 2030

Lakefront Access Development Study | \$50,000 | 2029 - 2030

Splash Pad Study & Development | \$750,000 | 2027 - 2030



01

Outdoor Sports

YEAR 1 - 5

Guiding Theme:

WELL-BEING

Funded Budget:

\$500,000

Implementation
Timeline:

2026 - 2028

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

West Ridge Field Lighting Project

Funding for West Ridge Field Lighting is identified as a priority 5 -year capital investment project linked to the District's Guiding Theme of **Well-being** through outdoor sports facility enhancements. This investment complements recent site improvements at West Ridge Park by adding lights to the newly constructed athletic field that accommodates up to 90 ft. basepaths and multi-sport activities, and is adjacent to the recently constructed West Ridge Community Center. This project will significantly increase seasonal playability and programming opportunities. Expanding usable time responds to the growing demand for seasonal field usage and balanced programming of an existing park open space asset and is aligned with the Park District's Sports Field Master Plan.

The District's investment will support further detail, study and implementation of state-of-the-art lighting fixtures and technology that meet appropriate community lighting standards.



02

Outdoor Sports

YEAR 1 - 5

Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY
STEWARDSHIP**

Funded Budget:

\$100,000

Implementation
Timeline:

2026 - 2027

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Sports Field Development Study

This project is linked to the District's Guiding Themes of **Well-being, Stewardship and Efficiency**. It further evaluates District objectives identified through previous planning efforts, including the Sports Field Master Plan, addressing specific community input and reflecting community demand for future sports field improvements and expansion opportunities. Direct feedback from stakeholders and residents drew particular attention to West Ridge Park and Olson Park. This study represents a long-term investment in expanding outdoor sports field capacity, stewarding park property, strengthening connectivity and usability across the District. Considerations include site improvements such as field drainage, artificial turf, and universal design principles. Potential areas of development include a fully accessible, multi-sport artificial turf field at West Ridge Park and development of a contiguous 20-acre parcel at Olson Park. This plan should also assess and consider indoor sports training options and determine a systematic approach to recommending options for outdoor sports turf.

Illustrative site concepts for Olson Park as well as the West Ridge Master Plan are included in the appendix to demonstrate potential facility layouts and future development opportunities.

03

TRACKMAN
INDOOR GOLF



Indoor Sports

YEAR 1 - 5

Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY**

Funded Budget:

\$2,105,000

Implementation
Timeline:

2026 - 2029

See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5

Sunset Valley Golf Simulators Project

The Sunset Valley Golf Simulator project is linked to the District's Guiding Theme of **Well-being and Efficiency**. It explores the expansion of the existing Clubhouse to accommodate several year round golf simulators. The simulators would not only add value to the current golfers at Sunset Valley during the peak season, but also support year round instruction, skill development, and recreational play for a wide range of users. This project also introduces continued revenue generation while expanding Sunset Valley's role as a year-round golf destination.



04

Indoor Sports

YEAR 1 - 5

Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY
STEWARDSHIP**

Funded Budget:

\$300,000

Currently funded in the 2026 Capital Plan

Implementation
Timeline:

2026 - 2027

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Off Ice Training Facility (Centennial Ice Arena)

This near-term initiative is linked to the District's Guiding themes of **Well-being, Efficiency, and Stewardship** and focuses on the adaptive reuse of the former gymnastics space at Centennial Ice Arena to create a dedicated off-ice training facility. The repurposed space would support conditioning, skills development, and supplemental training for ice users, helping athletes train more effectively year-round. By expanding functionality within the existing building, the project maximizes current assets while enhancing the overall ice program.

In effort to maximize impact and efficient use of this space, the District will create a flexible space that can accommodate a variety of training and recreational functions.



05

Recreation Facilities

YEAR 1 - 5

Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY**

Funded Budget:

\$500,000

Implementation
Timeline:

2026 - 2027

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Ceramics Studio Project

This project is linked to the District's Guiding Theme of **Well-being and Efficiency**. It involves assessing the feasibility of repurposing the Danny Cuniff Field House to accommodate a dedicated ceramics studio that supports classes, workshops, and community arts programming. The studio would expand creative and cultural offerings while providing specialized indoor space for hands-on arts education. The initiative strengthens the connection between recreation, learning, and community expression.



Recreation Facilities

YEAR 1 - 5

Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
STEWARDSHIP**

Funded Budget:

\$100,000

Implementation
Timeline:

2029 - 2030

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Water Park Development Study and Planning

Hidden Creek Aquapark Locker Room: This project is linked to the District's Guiding Themes of **Well-being and Stewardship**. It focuses on renovating or rebuilding the existing locker room facilities at Hidden Creek Aquapark to better support daily operations, programming, and visitor comfort. Improved locker rooms would enhance functionality for families, groups, and seasonal users with a universal design approach in addressing capacity, accessibility, and modern amenity expectations.

Hidden Creek Aquapark Amenities (Party Deck / Splash Pad): This project is linked to the District's Guiding Themes of **Well-being and Stewardship**. It explores enhancements to Hidden Creek Aquapark that expand its appeal and flexibility. New or renovated amenities would create opportunities for new gathering and celebration spaces, update water play opportunities, and include a universal design approach. Together, the improvements would broaden programming options, improve user experience, and strengthen the aquapark's role as a multi-generational recreational asset.

Guiding Theme:

WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY
STEWARDSHIP

Funded Budget:

\$50,000

Implementation
Timeline:

2029 - 2030

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Lakefront Access Development Study

This project is linked to the District's Guiding Themes of **Well-being, Efficiency, and Stewardship**. It further evaluates objectives associated with the District's previous planning efforts in the Lakefront Master Plan and Park Avenue Site Master Plan. It considers improved access at lakefront properties such as connections between Central Park and Park Avenue Boating Facility, as well as connectivity to Rosewood Beach and Millard Beach. Projects respond to long-standing access challenges and reinforce stewardship of our lakefront properties as key community and visitor destinations.

Guiding Theme:

WELL-BEING

Funded Budget:

\$750,000

Implementation
Timeline:

2027 - 2030

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Splash Pad Study & Development

This project is linked to the District's Guiding Theme of **Well-being**. It further evaluates the objectives associated with the District's previous planning effort through the Sunset Woods Site Master Plan which suggested the installation of a splash pad. This amenity would add a family-oriented water play feature that complements existing park amenities. This study should evaluate other parks throughout the District and consider weather Sunset Woods Park is the best fit for this amenity versus development at a different park location. A splash pad would provide inclusive, low-barrier recreation for younger users and families, supporting seasonal use and expanding the park's role as a neighborhood gathering space.

Five Year Capital Plan

Park District of Highland Park
FIVE YEAR CAPITAL REPLACEMENT
Fiscal Years Ending December 31, 2026 - 2030

Description	2026 Budget	2027 Budget	2028 Budget	2029 Budget	2030 Budget
Total Tier 1-3	\$ 8,905,678	\$ 3,201,350	\$ 5,995,130	\$ 3,172,775	\$ 4,772,550
Total Tier 4-5	\$ 776,967	\$ -	\$ 385,000	\$ 97,400	\$ 71,400
5 YEAR CAPITAL TIER 1-5 TOTAL	\$ 9,682,645	\$ 3,201,350	\$ 6,380,130	\$ 3,270,175	\$ 4,843,950

Total Tier 6 \$ 35,543,500

Sub Grouping 1	Category	2026 Budget	2027 Budget	2028 Budget	2029 Budget	2030 Budget
Facilities	Centennial	\$662,750	-\$4,000	\$1,134,500	-\$4,000	\$30,000
	Deer Creek Racquet Club	\$145,220	\$91,500	\$200,000	\$237,500	\$178,000
	Heller Nature Center	\$15,000	\$255,000	\$195,000	\$32,550	\$146,400
	Hidden Creek Aqua Park	\$267,625	\$20,000	\$93,000	\$122,500	\$577,150
	Lot 3 - Club Pickle and Padel	-\$35,000	-\$35,000	-\$35,000	\$70,000	
	Lot 3: Golf Learning Center	\$50,000			\$137,000	\$35,000
	Park Avenue Beach and Boating Facility		\$40,000	\$325,000		
	Park Fitness	\$668,040	\$261,520	\$800,660	\$303,175	\$144,000
	Rosewood Interpretive Center	\$78,750		\$35,350		
	SVGC	\$200,767	\$127,850	\$432,000	\$711,750	\$1,213,750
	West Ridge Center	\$5,896,273				
Facilities Total		\$7,949,425	\$756,870	\$3,180,510	\$1,610,475	\$2,324,300

Totals-District Wide, Technology and Parks	Brown Park	\$15,000	\$667,250	\$50,000		
	Carol Snyder		\$10,000	\$410,000		
	Centennial					
	Central Park		\$4,550	\$8,000	\$362,000	
	D. Cuniff Park	\$211,000	\$76,500			\$384,000
	Devonshire Park	\$194,000				
	District Wide/Annual	\$670,220	\$1,083,200	\$1,100,370	\$1,034,700	\$1,435,300
	Fontana Pasquesi Park			\$297,250		\$54,350
	Founders Park					
	Jens Jensen Park					
	Kennedy Park			\$100,000		
	Knoll Park					
	L. Fink Park	\$210,000	\$217,200			
	Laurel Park/Library					
	Lincoln Park	-\$457,500				
	Millard Park					
	Moraine Park					
	Old Elm Park					\$67,000
	Olson Park				\$10,000	\$500,000
	Port Clinton Park					
	R. D. Deutsch Park					
	Rosewood Beach	\$30,000			\$38,000	
	Rosewood Park					
	Sherwood Park			\$8,000	\$142,000	
	Sunset Woods Park	\$621,000	\$74,100	\$600,000		\$20,000
	Technology	\$104,500	\$78,000	\$162,000	\$73,000	\$59,000
	The Preserve			\$20,000		
	West Ridge Park	\$120,000				
	Woodridge Park	\$15,000	\$233,680	\$444,000		
Totals-District Wide, Technology and Parks Total		\$1,733,220	\$2,444,480	\$3,199,620	\$1,659,700	\$2,519,650

Grand Total	\$9,682,645	\$3,201,350	\$6,380,130	\$3,270,175	\$4,843,950
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FUNDED

5-10 year Capital GreenPrint Priority Projects (2031-2036)

Total 5-10 year GreenPrint
Capital Investment Funding:
\$11,444,300

Total 5-10 year Capital Plan
(maintenance + repair+ replace):
\$24,000,000

FUNDED

5-10 year

Capital GreenPrint Priority Projects
(2026-2030)

\$11,444,300

Sports Field Development Project | \$3,900,000

Water Park Development Project Implementation | \$3,000,000

Administrative Office Leasehold | \$544,300

Administrative Building Development Project | \$4,000,000



09

Outdoor Sports

YEAR 5 - 10

Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY
STEWARDSHIP**

Funded Budget:

\$3,900,000

Implementation
Timeline:

TBD

See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5

Sports Field Development Project

This project would be linked to outcomes of the Sports Field Planning Project in years 1-5. It is linked to the district's Guiding Themes of **Well-being, Efficiency and Stewardship** and reflects broader investment in outdoor sports facilities that support organized play, training, and flexible programming. The focus is on providing adaptable, multi-use spaces that can accommodate a variety of sports and age groups, helping relieve pressure on outdoor fields and improve year-round access to athletic opportunities.

Illustrative site concepts for Olson Park as well as the West Ridge Master Plan are included in the appendix to demonstrate potential facility layouts and future development opportunities.



10

Recreation Facilities

YEAR 5 - 10

Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
STEWARDSHIP**

Funded Budget:

\$3,000,000

Implementation
Timeline:

TBD

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Water Park Development Project Implementation

Hidden Creek Aquapark Locker Room: This project focuses on implementing new or upgraded locker room facilities at Hidden Creek Aquapark to better support daily operations, programming, and visitor comfort. Improved locker room facilities will enhance functionality for families, groups, and seasonal users while addressing capacity, accessibility, and modern amenity expectations.

This project will also factor in the Hidden Creek Development Study and Planning to determine the need and feasibility of adding or updating water park amenities.



YEAR 5 - 10

Guiding Theme:

WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY
STEWARDSHIP

Administration / Operations Support Study and Project

Although not an identified project development area, a long term facility to support administrative and support staff was identified as a need that must be addressed in the next 10 years. This study and project is linked to the District's Guiding Themes of **Well-being, Efficiency and Stewardship**, since the administrative team supports all essential functions of the Park District. This study evaluates two options; continue leasehold for administrative offices and; construction/renovation for new administrative offices.

As part of this effort, the District should also assess and consider options to address long-term storage and facilities that support Natural Areas. Specifically, this study should assess the long term use of the Sunset Woods fieldhouse, Lincoln Park Fieldhouse, and the maintenance garage at The Preserve of Highland Park.

Funded Budget:

\$544,300

Implementation
Timeline:

TBD

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Administrative Office Leasehold

This option explores leasing approximately 10,000 - 12,000 square feet of office space to meet the District's administrative needs. A rental approach provides near-term flexibility, allowing the District to respond to space constraints without significant upfront capital investment. This option would support faster implementation and adaptability as staffing levels, programming, and operational needs evolve.

Funded Budget:

\$4,000,000

Implementation
Timeline:

TBD

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Administrative Building Development Project

This initiative considers the development or acquisition of approximately 10,000 - 12,000 square feet of new office space designed to support long-term administrative and operational functions. A dedicated District-owned facility could improve efficiency, accommodate future growth, and align workspace design with organizational needs. This option represents a long-term investment in operational continuity and a higher ticket item compared to other options.

This option evaluates potential for shared efficiencies with other government bodies or partner agencies or within a multi-tenant facility. A shared approach could improve coordination, reduce costs, and create opportunities for collaboration while still meeting core administrative needs.



UNFUNDED

1-10 year Plan (2026-2036)

Total 1-10 year Unfunded
GreenPrint Capital Investment:
\$NA

UNFUNDED

1-10 year

(2026-2036)

Hidden Creek Aquapark Amenities (Party Deck / Splash Pad)

Park Avenue Beach and Boating Facility Enhancements

Lot 3 Improvements – Cover My Tee

Sports Training Facility (Deer Creek Racquetball Conversion)

Second Sheet of Ice



Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY**

Funded Budget:

\$300,000

Implementation
Timeline:

TBD

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Hidden Creek Aquapark Amenities (Party Deck / Splash Pad)

This initiative explores enhancements to Hidden Creek Aquapark that expand its use, appeal and flexibility through the addition of a party deck and a splash pad. These amenities would create new gathering and celebration spaces, support birthday parties and group rentals, and provide age-inclusive water play opportunities. Together, the improvements would broaden programming options, improve user experience, and strengthen the aquapark's role as a multi-generational recreational asset.

02



Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
STEWARDSHIP**

Funded Budget:

\$NA

Implementation
Timeline:

TBD

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Park Avenue Beach and Boating Facility Enhancements

This project focuses on exterior building and site improvements, and deck repairs at the North Shore Yacht Club to maintain the condition, safety, and usability of the existing facility. The project supports continued access to waterfront recreation while protecting a key asset that serves boating, programming, and community use.

03



Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY**

Funded Budget:

\$NA

Implementation
Timeline:

TBD

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Lot 3 Improvements – Cover My Tee

This project envisions a three-season covered driving range experience at the existing Lot 3 facility, similar in concept to Top tracer-style venues. The improvements would extend the driving range season, enhance the practice experience through technology and shelter, and increase overall use of the site. The initiative builds existing assets while modernizing the facility to meet evolving user expectations.

04



Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY**

Funded Budget:

\$NA

Implementation
Timeline:

TBD

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Sports Training Facility (Deer Creek Racquetball Conversion)

This project seeks to repurpose the existing racquetball courts at the Deer Creek facility into modern indoor sports training space. The high-ceiling interior offers flexibility for a range of training, conditioning, and skill-based programming. This repurposes underutilized space while responding to changing recreation trends and needs.



Guiding Theme:

**WELL-BEING
EFFICIENCY**

Funded Budget:

\$NA

Implementation
Timeline:

TBD

*See Implementation Timeline
exhibit in Section 5*

Second Sheet of Ice

This initiative explores expanding ice capacity to better meet community demand for practices, games, and programming while maintaining flexibility in how that capacity is delivered and managed. In its evaluation of adding an additional sheet of ice at Centennial Ice Arena, the District may consider opportunities to partner with an experienced third-party operator that could assist with planning, building, and management of a new ice facility either on the Centennial campus or at an alternative location.

A partnership-based approach could allow the District to increase access to ice time, improve scheduling flexibility, and support the growth of youth, adult, and instructional programs while mitigating operational and capital risks. By exploring multiple delivery models and potential locations, this initiative positions the District to respond strategically to long-term demand and evolving recreation needs.



FOR YOUR TOMORROW

THEY GAVE THEIR TODAY

OPERATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

The Park District of Highland Park (PDHP) and Bright Threads Leadership Group, worked collaboratively with Park Board Commissioners and Staff to develop the Park District of Highland Park Strategic Plan 2026-2029. The Plan is a component of the greater Comprehensive Plan, GreenPrint, which is a long-term, comprehensive roadmap that lays out a vision and framework for how the District should grow, develop, and operate. It is based on community needs and rooted in the Park District's Mission and Values.

The Strategic Plan aligns with the District's Mission and Values as well as the GreenPrint's Guiding Themes of Stewardship, Well-being and Efficiency. When applied to the District's core operational perspectives of Customer, Team Member and Resources, they create an operational framework that guides leaders and aligns teams with priority goals, strategies and action items that support the day-to-day work of all employees. The Plan evaluates current priorities, emerging needs, gaps in service and future opportunities.

Priority Goals

Priority Goals clarify what is most important for the District to achieve in the coming years to have the biggest impact on achieving on each operational perspective.

1

CUSTOMER - CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Develop and implement innovative customer engagement processes to increase our reach and ensure consistent delivery of extraordinary experiences that foster community connections and enrichment of community life.

2

TEAM MEMBERS - VALUES DRIVEN WORKPLACE

Establish and champion values-driven workforce practices designed to attract and retain top industry talent; empower employees to perform at their highest level; and cultivate a culture of belonging, where all team members' contributions are acknowledged, recognized, and appreciated.

3

RESOURCES - STEWARDSHIP OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Create a comprehensive long-term resource plan for ensuring responsible stewardship, efficient operations, proactive maintenance, and funding for future development.

Strategies

Strategies provide further clarity on what must be done to support each Priority Goal. Each priority goal is supported by three strategies, with a Strategy Focus for each year of the entirety of the Strategic Plan.

2026 - 2027

SHORT TERM

- **Customer Focus - Improve Accessibility**
Enhance and standardize customer accessibility to recreation services, facilities, parks and communications
- **Team Member Focus - Operational Clarity**
Establish systems for district-wide alignment, operational efficiency, and clarity in achieving priority goals
- **Resource Focus - Resource Management**
Maintain planning documents and guidelines that ensure the long-term care and management of existing and future capital assets and natural resources.

2028

MID TERM

- **Customer Focus - Assess Needs**
Create consistent modes for evaluating community needs, assessing gaps in services, and prioritizing future improvements to our services, facilities and parks
- **Team Member Focus - Attract, Empower and Retain Talent**
Build a structured talent lifecycle framework
- **Resource Focus - Capital Funding**
Develop a funding plan to advance unfunded or underfunded capital projects

2029

LONG TERM

- **Customer Focus - Create Loyalty**
Elevate the customer experience and communicate community impact in effort to build loyalty and advocacy
- **Team Member Focus - Culture of Belonging**
Create employee practices that cultivate a culture of belonging, where team members' contributions are acknowledged, recognized, and appreciated
- **Resource Focus - Financial Sustainability**
Prioritize and align capital investments with a long-term funding model



Recommended Action Items

With Priority Goals and supporting strategies established, the district conducted a Action Planning Summit with full time Managers and Supervisors, and front-line professionals. Employees were split into small groups from different departments and with various levels of supervision and responsibility, to ensure a diversity of perspectives was captured. Using the Appreciative Inquiry methodology, leaders identified possible action items (including projects, initiatives, programs, and other ideas) that represented the perspectives of all departments. Next, the groups revisited the established priority goals and strategies, and prioritized which action items would most important, relevant, and achievable, with each item being assigned to a timeframe (short-term, mid-term, or long-term).

These action items then went back to the Department Heads, where further refinement and discussion created an Implementation plan, which established a framework and system for annual prioritization of Recommended Action Items, while also clarifying workflows, workloads, roles, and expectations for the district's annually established work plan. This system includes standards for ongoing reporting, evaluation, and assessment of action items.

Below is a comprehensive list of the district's recommended action items.

PRIORITY GOAL #1: CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGY 1: IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

Enhance and standardize customer accessibility to recreation services, facilities, parks and communications.

- Update Website and social media to ADA Accessibility Compliance.
- Implement approved ADA Transition Plan.
- Formalize Annual Marketing and Communication Plans to address different marketing mixes that address priority services, and diversity in target markets.
- Develop and Implement Universal Design Planning, Programming and Experience Standards.
- Implement a Multilingual Communications Plan.
- Select and implement New Registration Software with intuitive user functionality, modernized convenience capabilities, and AI searchability.
- Enhance website searchability with AI features.

STRATEGY 2: ASSESS NEEDS

Create consistent modes for evaluating community needs, assessing gaps in services, and prioritizing future improvements to our services, facilities and parks.

- Formalize Customer Feedback modes and methods addressing both satisfaction and needs assessment in services and experiences in parks, facilities, marketing, phone etc. (surveys, advisory groups, focus groups, in person, social pinpointing, comment cards, QR codes, etc.)
- Formalize a process for analyzing, assessing, and reporting on customer/community feedback.
- Formalize a process for responding and addressing identified gaps in customer experiences in parks and facilities.
- Formalize a process for responding and addressing identified gaps in customer satisfaction and gaps in recreation services.
- Conduct a recreation services fee analysis.

STRATEGY 3: CREATE LOYALTY:

Elevate the customer experience and communicate community impact in effort to build loyalty and advocacy.

- Create ongoing Customer Experience Standards Training to ensure continuity and consistency between services, facilities and parks.
- Refine, implement, and reinforce clear customer experience standards organization-wide to ensure the Extra-Ordinary experiences.
- Conduct a Customer Experience "Journey Map" Study in effort to identify, evaluate, assess and make recommended improvements on existing customer touch points (marketing, parks, facilities, registration, phone, in person, email, website, apps etc.)
- Create an action plan for improvements on customer touch points from the "Journey Map" Study.
- District-wide integration of services (all-inclusive benefits) and customer retention (reward-based loyalty programs).
- Create Facility and Park Experience Standards Assessments.
- Apply and receive the NRPA Gold Medal Award.

PRIORITY GOAL #2: VALUES DRIVEN WORKPLACE

STRATEGY 1: ATTRACT, EMPOWER AND RETAIN TALENT

Build a structured talent lifecycle framework.

- Continue to improve our onboarding process.
- Conduct an Employee Life Cycle Study in effort to identify, evaluate, assess and make recommended improvements on existing employee touch points (recruitment, onboarding, development, retention, mentorship, succession planning, offboarding etc.)
- Develop and implement an action plan based on suggested improvements from the Employee Life Cycle Study.
- Implement a Training Management System within Paycom that encompasses both compliance training and educational initiatives designed to empower team members.
- Develop a Youth Internship and young professional leadership development program.
- Utilize technological solutions, including artificial intelligence, to enhance efficiency in file and employee database searches, facilitate interdepartmental collaboration, and streamline communication of district-wide updates through platforms such as SharePoint or intranet systems.

STRATEGY 2: CULTURE OF BELONGING

Create employee practices that cultivate a culture of belonging, where team members' contributions are acknowledged, recognized, and appreciated.

- Conduct a comprehensive staffing assessment including workload analysis, organizational structure, job descriptions, job classifications and compensation and benefits for full and part time.
- Develop and implement formal employee feedback methods including an annual engagement survey, district-wide 360 survey, Operation SWOC analysis, stay interviews, exit interviews, etc.
- Continue to embed Strength Finders workshops, tools and resources that help team members give the best of themselves, understand and appreciate the best in others, and collaborate more efficiently.
- Continue to expand a values driven employee recognition program.

- Develop an employee development “pathways” program intended to ensure ongoing personal growth, team cohesion, inter-department collaboration and ongoing support for all staff
- Continue to expand employee engagement activities

STRATEGY 3: OPERATIONAL CLARITY

Establish systems for district-wide alignment, operational efficiency, and clarity in achieving priority goals.

- Create a clear framework and workflow process for evaluating, reporting progress and completion of priority capital projects and operational goals, including alignment with annual budget goals, employee performance goals, and the Annual Work Plan.
- Clarify how we create, train, communicate and access policies and procedures consistently across the district.
- Create and/or expand employee behavior standards, operational norms, and expectations for creating a values driven culture.
- Create a Performance Measurement Program including identification, tracking, reporting and drawing conclusions on Key Performance Measures relative to achieving our vision scripts, priority goals and strategies as well as advocating our impact.
- Distinguished Accreditation Certification.



PRIORITY GOAL #3: STEWARDSHIP OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES

STRATEGY 1: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Prioritize and align capital investments with a long-term funding model.

- Continue to maintain a 10-year long-Term Funding Plan and create transparency and education to staff and community.
- Conduct a cost-of-service assessment to assess true service costs; educate staff and develop a cost recovery strategy based on measurable impacts of each service (return on investment) that leads to informed decisions about pricing, subsidies, operational resource allocation and capital investments, fostering transparency, alignment and efficiency.
- Using the cost-of-service assessment and cost recovery strategy, create a rubric for assessing and prioritizing capital project implementation to ensure projects are evaluated objectively, so funds are invested in initiatives that deliver the greatest impact and align with priority goals.

STRATEGY 2: CAPITAL FUNDING

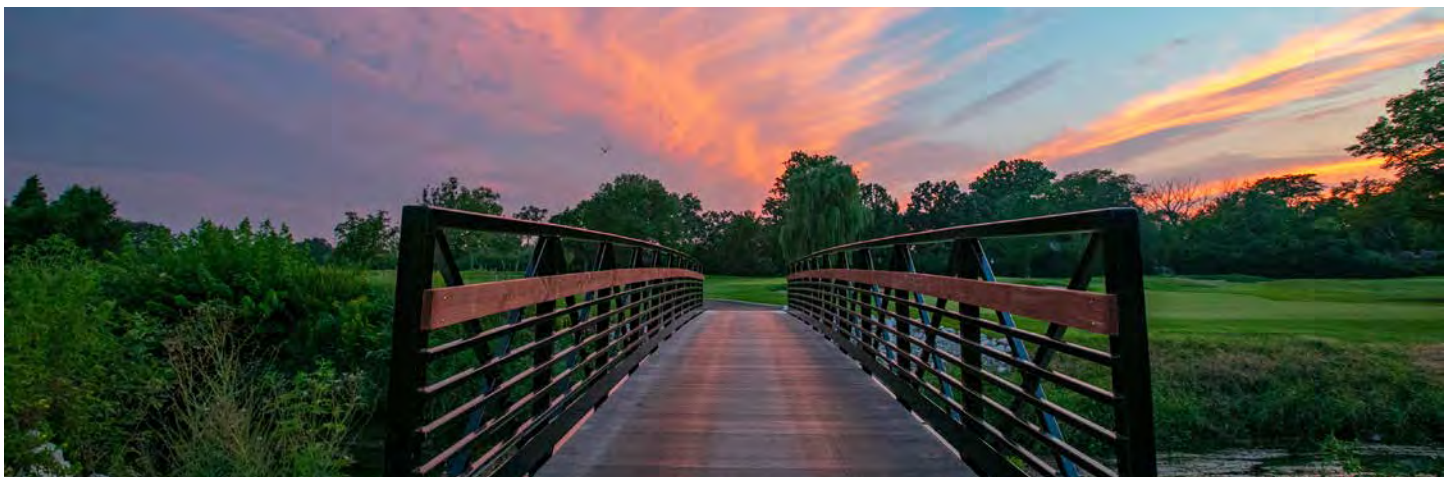
Develop a funding plan to advance unfunded or underfunded capital projects.

- Expand Grant Funding.
- Grow the Parks Foundation's Capital Fundraising Campaigns to support unfunded capital projects that meet community needs.
- Explore Public/Private Partnerships.
- Evaluate Government Partnerships to reduce the duplication of services; leverage financial capabilities and efficient manage resources.

STRATEGY 3: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

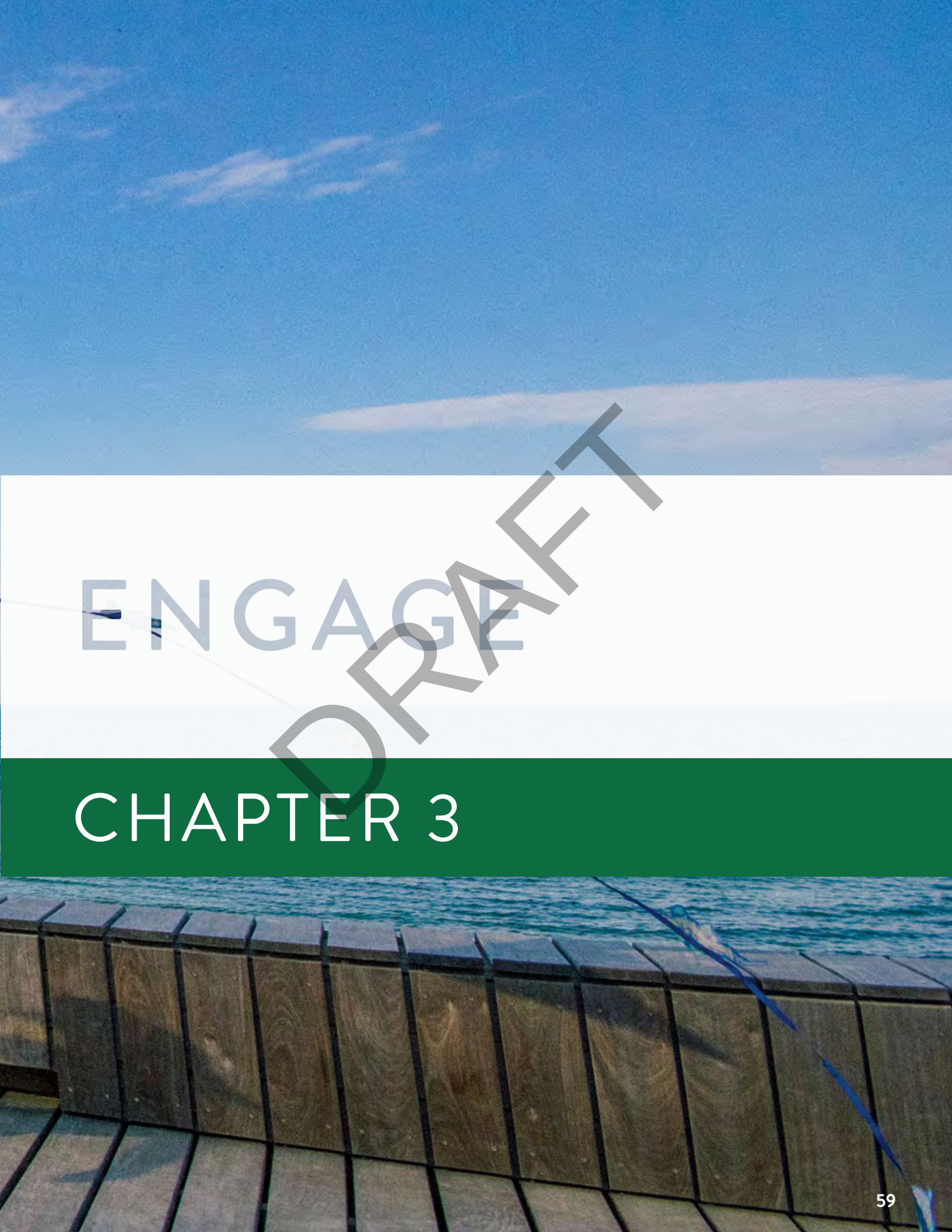
Maintain planning documents and guidelines that ensure the long-term care and management of existing and future capital assets and natural resources.

- Formalize our Capital Asset inventory and lifecycle management to ensure assets are managed from acquisition, maintenance and eventual replacement, reducing emergency repairs, extending asset lifespans, and supporting proactive budgeting for future needs.
- Maintain Facility and Park Assessments and create Facility and Park Inspection reports to assess existing conditions compared to measurable service standards
- Continue to educate and implement the District's Sustainability Plan.
- Continue to evaluate, update and develop Planning Documents that support the maintenance, improvement and development of our natural resources
- Track facility usage in effort to assess impact and inform future decisions.









ENGAGE

CHAPTER 3

The Park District of Highland Park used a layered engagement approach to capture both lived experiences and statistically valid feedback.

- **Statistically Valid Community Survey:** A survey of more than 400 households (n=403) was conducted in spring 2025, ensuring representation across age, geography, and demographics. The same instrument was also offered as an open online survey, extending reach to additional residents who wished to share their input.
- **In-Person Engagement:** Stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and pop-up workshops gathered detailed stories and perspectives. These discussions shaped a number of key themes that highlight opportunities, concerns, and ideas across the community.
- **Cross-Tabulation of Results:** Findings from the statistically valid survey were compared with what was heard in person. This allowed the planning team to see where results align and where they diverge, grounding the GreenPrint recommendations in both quantitative data and lived experiences.



COMMUNITY SURVEY KEY TAKEAWAYS

As part of the planning process, the Park District of Highland Park and aQuity conducted a statistically valid community survey to better understand the needs, preferences, and priorities of residents. A total of 403 households within the Park District boundaries participated in the survey, which was administered between May 20 and June 25, 2025. Invitations were distributed by both email and USPS to a random sample of households served by the District. Respondents were able to complete the survey online, by phone, or by returning a printed questionnaire.



Residents Continue to Hold the PDHP In High Regard, Mostly for its Parks/Outdoor Assets, Programs, and Overall Management

On a 0-10 scale, 86% give the District positive esteem ratings (scores of 6+), including 36% who hold it in the highest regard (scores of 9+). Only 8% give negative scores.

- Its average rating of 7.7 is virtually identical to its 2019 mark (7.6). However, residents are now more familiar with the PDHP, with only 6% who remain unfamiliar overall (down from 12% six years ago).
- Its average score is generally in line with benchmark comparisons from nearby agencies (with a few exceptions).

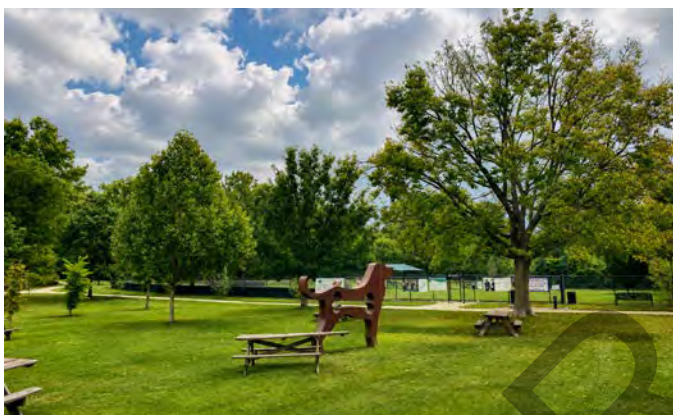
When asked what they like most about the PDHP (in an open-ended format), many give multiple responses/positive comments, most often its parks, playgrounds and trails (mentioned by 45%), especially their care and upkeep, the number and variety, and overall appreciation of having open space nearby.

- Nearly as many (41%) cite various admin/management responses, most often how well the District manages and maintains its properties in general, the friendly staff service. (While 6% appreciate the reasonable fees, twice as many (13%) said PDHP fees/costs are their top dislike.)
- Another 40% cite the programs among the District's top strengths, usually the range of offerings available (25%). About a quarter as many cite the quality of these programs as well (6%).
- PDHP facilities are cited by 25% overall (usually the Rec Center specifically).

Virtually all (88%) feel that their household's interests/lifestyle/background is reflected by the District and all that it offers, with 83%+ of all subgroups agreeing.

Given that 6.8% of one's property taxes goes to the PDHP, 67% think this is at least a good value given all that the District provides, with 32% saying it represents an excellent value.

- Only 15% rate it a poor value, and the remaining 18% rate it an average value.
- The average value rating (6.8) is about the same as in 2019 (6.9 when the District represented a 6% share of taxes) but continues to lag slightly below scores from nearby districts. (Again, PDHP fees are cited as a top dislike by 13%).



Usage and Satisfaction with District Parks and Facilities Likewise Remains Very Strong

As in 2019, virtually all (93%) still report that someone in their household used or visited a PDHP park or facility in the past year. This includes a majority who report going to Sunset Woods Park (73%), the Rec Center (63%), and Rosewood Swimming Beach (58%).

- Other popular destinations (cited by at least 30%) include the Preserve of Highland Park, Danny Cuniff Park, one of the other District beaches, Heller Nature Center, and/or Hidden Creek Aqua Park.
- While many of the most visited PDHP assets tend to be used by nearby residents, several draw from all parts of Highland Park, especially Danny Cuniff Park and most of the District's facilities (Rec Center, Heller Nature Center, Hidden Creek, Centennial Ice Arena, the Boating Center/Yacht Club, and Sunset Valley Golf Course).

Satisfaction with these parks and facilities is very strong, outperforming the overall esteem rating for the District. Each attribute receives an average rating of 8.2 or higher (on a 0-10 scale), with the highest scores going to:

- Safety (8.6 on average; no change over time)
- Cleanliness/upkeep/maintenance (8.5, significantly higher than 8.0 in 2019)
- Accessibility (8.4, up slightly from 8.1).



Needs Assessment Analysis Shows that Most of the Indoor Amenities Garner Only Some Demand and Represent “Gaps”

From a list of seven possible indoor facilities/amenities, those that garner the highest level of demand or interest are:

- Space for fine arts programs (35%, especially among younger and newer residents, those with children, SE region)
- An indoor warm water therapy pool (32%, especially from lower-income households).

Fewer (15% to 22% each) express a need or interest in the next “tier” of possible facilities:

- Rental rooms for private events (22%, usually younger and higher income residents with children)
- Gym space (16%) and/or an indoor sports training facility (15%) – both of which receive high interest from NW residents
- An indoor ice rink (with 15% citing a need, interest or current usage).

Most are seen as less critical “gaps” (given low demand levels), with under half of those interested in each facility feel it is readily available currently. This is especially true for the top two options – a fine arts studio, and a warm water therapy pool (bigger unmet needs).

- The gaps are smaller for those interested in facilities that the PDHP already offers – indoor ice rink, gymnasiums, rental rooms – which may reflect concerns about the availability or condition of these facilities.

None of these represent overwhelming priorities for the PDHP to address or deliver, with fine arts space receiving only 16% of the “#1 priority” rankings (followed closely by a warm water therapy pool at 13%).

- In fact, the most frequent response was “none of these are priorities/needed” (41%, especially among the oldest residents and households without children).



Outdoor Facilities Are More Likely to Meet Demand, Though Some Opportunities Remain

A majority (54%) express a need or interest for an outdoor aquatic park/pool, and for the most part that need is already being met. Nearly a third also express a need or interest in:

- Miniature golf (32%) – mostly met currently
- Water splash pad at a community park (31%) – a top gap or opportunity
- Outdoor fitness stations or court (28%) – likewise a gap.

All other outdoor amenities tested garnered less need or interest, and some (paddle/platform tennis, baseball/softball diamonds) are seen as readily available currently.



Most Residents Report Household Member Participation or Attendance at PDHP Programs/Events in Past Year

Overall, 70% recently took part in a District event or program, with very high overall satisfaction (7.6 average on a 0-10 scale).

- The highest ratings tend to come from older residents (ages 70+) participating in these activities. However, older adults in general and households without children tend to be the least likely to report program participation.

From a needs assessment standpoint, community events generate the greatest demand and are the top priority. While these needs are mostly being met, residents are especially interested in more music events and festivals/family events (e.g., block parties).

Otherwise, adult programs for the 18-54 and 55+ age groups rank next highest in interest, priority, and unmet needs. Aside from pickleball (important to both age groups):

- Younger adults (18-54) seek more team/competitive sports (scheduling is key for working adults).
- Those 55 and older tend to seek more arts and crafts as well as fitness/wellness activities.

Residents Support Most of the Unfunded Capital Projects Tested

Support is strongest (88%, and 76%+ among all subgroups) for completing the stairway from Central Park to Park Avenue Beach. Nearly half (44%) voice “strong” support.

Three other projects receive majority support (at least 2:1 over opponents) and rank close together in terms of priority (after the Central Park/Park Avenue Beach staircase):

- Improvements to Hidden Creek locker rooms, water features, etc. (77% support, mostly from younger/newer adults, upper income households, and those in the NE region)
- Adding inclusive and accessible artificial turf fields at West Ridge Park for youth of all abilities, including those with assistive devices (73%, likewise strongest support from younger adults, higher income residents, and the NE region)
- Adding a splash pad at Sunset park (70%, with a high level of “strong” support at 35%).

Slightly less support (62% to 67%) is given to:

- Improvements at Olson Park including natural and inclusive artificial turf sports fields and other amenities such as bathrooms, improved paths, and shelters (67% mostly from the NE region, but only 19% “strong” support)
- Indoor artificial multi-sport game fields (62%, with as many “strong” opponents as “strong” supporters at 14% each).

Respondents are most divided on whether to replace the gymnastics space at Centennial Ice Arena with a ¼ sheet studio training ice rink (53% support, 47% opposed). In fact, when given an alternative option:

- They instead tend to favor using that space for indoor sports classes and training (39%) over a studio ice skating training rink (15%), more than 2:1. Recent Centennial users are even more likely to feel this way (54% vs. 20%, respectively).
- Overall, 46% have no strong opinion/preference (mostly non-users of this facility).

While resident opinions about the PDHP remain very positive, several improvement opportunities remain



PERCEPTION / IMAGE

- Similar to many park districts, the biggest reason for non-usage or limited usage of the PDHP's parks, facilities and programs is the perception that it is primarily focused on youth and young families. Specifically, adults without children (both the youngest residents and especially empty nesters) feel there is little offered for them.
- Some of this perception may be due to lack of information, or less compelling reasons to seek options for the Park District.
- Know that while most residents get information about programs, facilities etc. on the PDHP website (66%), a majority (53%) also go to City sources such as its website, the Highlander newsletter, etc.
 - Note that non-program participants and households without children are nearly twice as likely to prefer City (non-PDHP) sources for District info, compared to program participants.
 - Frequent and consistent promotion and updates via these City sources (especially the Highlander) should be maintained, with steady emphasis on adult offerings.
- Keep in mind that visitors/users most appreciate how safe they feel at PDHP locations, and how well they are maintained. It is worth reinforcing this messaging when trying to engage and attract non-users.



PROGRAMMING

- As mentioned, adult programs/activities are the biggest unmet needs (both sports and non-sports) for ages 18-54 and 55+.
- A frequent comment is that many of the existing program options for adults are during work hours.
 - Program scheduling ranked as the 2nd biggest dislike overall (after costs/fees).
 - These residents would like to see more evening and weekend activities – not just for adults, but also for some younger youth programs (which require the parent to drop off/pick up or attend).
- Pickleball remains the top suggestion across the board, but younger adults seek other team or competitive activities as well, while those ages 55+ most want arts/crafts options and wellness or fitness options (yoga, stretching, tai chi, group classes).





OUTDOOR AMENITIES / NEEDS

- Knowing that residents are especially happy with the parks and outdoor facilities in general, and those deemed most important (Hidden Creek, miniature golf) are seen as readily available (along with paddle/platform tennis and ball fields).
- That said, a number of outdoor improvements generate strong support, especially:
 - The Central Park to Park Avenue Beach stairway
 - A splash pad at Sunset Park (echoing support for water features at a neighborhood park, with Sunset being heavily used)
 - Inclusive and accessible fields at West Ridge Park allowing all abilities to participate in sports activities.



INDOOR AMENITIES / NEEDS

- The indoor facilities tested generated a lower sense of priority, due to lower levels of demand for each.
- That said, a few opportunities are worth considering/pursuing:
 - Locker room and water feature improvements at Hidden Creek (strong support at a popular, valued facility)
 - Additional space for fine arts programming and studios – which appeals mostly to younger adults but also nearly one in four of those without children and who have not participated in programs recently
 - An indoor warm water therapy pool.
- For the former gymnastics space at Centennial, residents are more likely to favor an indoor sports training facility (broader demand for multiple sports/activities) than an additional ice rink for private skating lessons and training, or hockey clinics.
 - Regardless, either decision from the District and Park Board will need to be carefully reasoned and explained to the most interested parties (e.g., ice/hockey groups and broader sports communities).





IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT KEY TAKEAWAYS

Accessibility

The current registration system is seen as favoring those with flexible schedules, digital literacy, and financial resources, creating unintentional barriers for many families. Highwood residents, who are part of the school community but live outside the Park District's tax base, face cost-related access barriers and limited program availability. Stakeholders emphasized the continued need for equity to continue being intentionally embedded across all stages of program design, from pricing structures and registration formats to geographic distribution of services. Residents want accessibility to extend beyond ADA standards to include sensory, cognitive, emotional, and physical dimensions that address the full range of user needs. Parks and trails are sometimes disconnected or feel difficult to access, especially for older adults, children, and residents with disabilities. Improved communication was also framed as essential to equity, ensuring that everyone, not just long-time residents, benefit from available programs and amenities.

Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities

Skaters and families routinely travel to other towns to access practice and training time, resulting in a loss of both local talent and community spending. Poor outdoor sports field conditions, especially flooding and mud at Olson Park, lead to regular cancellations and unsafe play environments. Parents and coaches worry that inadequate facilities are pushing families to seek out other towns with better infrastructure and year-round training options. The removal of indoor training areas has left families without needed practice space. Participants called for year-round, multi-sport training spaces to support both emerging sports and legacy programs like baseball and soccer. Residents expressed excitement about the new Club Pickle & Padel facility, advocating for community-oriented programming and equitable use policies.



Flexibility and Variety

The time between 3:00 and 5:00 PM remains one of the hardest to cover for working families, creating a need for flexible, enriching after-school options. Parents expressed interest in short-format, drop-off, and sensory-friendly programs, especially for households with children of different ages or needs. Many families face logistical challenges coordinating pickups and drop-offs for programs located at different sites or with overlapping schedules. With school transportation changes reducing bus availability, more families are depending on Park District-provided transit, which is seen as helpful but inconsistent. The lack of before- and after-care programs impacts working parents, leaving a gap in support during critical hours of the day. Families with toddlers and young children asked for expanded programming outside of 9-to-5 hours, including weekend, evening, and late afternoon options. Many participants expressed interest in flexible formats like short sessions, trial packs, and seasonal drop-ins to reduce commitment barriers and encourage new participation.

Adult Recreation

Residents across age groups want programs that align with their actual schedules, life stages, and interests. Adults requested more enrichment-oriented offerings such as DIY workshops, cultural classes, guided walks, and social events like wine or bourbon tastings. Natural destinations like Rosewood Beach, Heller, and The Preserve were frequently mentioned as ideal settings for casual, seasonal events like bonfires, concerts, and group hikes. Residents emphasized that programs should foster joy, connection, and belonging, not just provide structured activities, with a focus on flexibility, inclusivity, and community-building. Current adult programming is limited for working parents, caregivers, and residents with nontraditional schedules. Residents strongly support adding afternoon and evening classes for cycling, yoga, strength training, and other fitness programs. Aquatics users want expanded lap swim hours, more evening family swim time, and accessible adult swim lessons that better align with daily routines. There is growing demand for wellness-based programming, including guided recovery, mobility and stretching classes, meditation, and nutrition education.



Community-wide Collaboration

Civic leaders expressed continued coordination between the Park District's GreenPrint process and the City's Comprehensive Plan. Opportunities for joint planning to improve efficiencies and shared visions for public spaces and community wellness. Suggestions included cross-agency planning summits, unified dashboards, and collaborative grant applications to support shared goals. Many residents are unaware of the Parks Foundation of Highland Park and its purpose, or role in supporting Park District initiatives. Opportunities exist to grow visibility, partnerships, and year-round fundraising, suggesting that there is untapped potential for the Foundation to support GreenPrint priorities through targeted campaigns, legacy giving, and donor recognition programs. Participants pointed to successful models in peer communities where foundations play a more visible and strategic role in funding park improvements and community programming. Residents across demographics expressed a desire for opportunities to volunteer and contribute to the care of parks and programs. New residents saw volunteering as a way to build relationships and integrate into the community; parents wanted ways for children to help too. Participants enjoy structured, family-friendly, and accessible pathways to get involved in park cleanups, events, and stewardship efforts.

Sustainability and Stewardship

Residents expressed strong emotional ties to Highland Park's natural areas and want to see those spaces protected and maintained with care. Concerns around shoreline erosion, seasonal flooding, and maintained trails signaled a need for more visible management. Families suggested hands-on ways to engage the public in sustainability efforts, including intergenerational trail clean-ups and conservation events. There is an appetite for educational programming that promotes understanding of ravines, native plantings, and broader environmental stewardship.



STAFF ANALYSIS KEY TAKEAWAYS

District staff participated in several focus groups and an evaluation using a SWOC framework (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges). Summarized results are as follows:

Strengths

- **Strong Staff Culture and Leadership** - Nearly every department highlighted the dedication, expertise, and adaptability of their staff as a core strength. For example, Park Fitness, Athletics, and Aquatics all referenced “extraordinary staff culture,” “operational leadership,” and “qualified staff” as drivers of program quality and community trust. This is reinforced by high staff retention in key areas (e.g., Early Childhood, Youth Enrichment, and Camp), which supports consistent service delivery and positive relationships with patrons.
- **Quality Facilities and Programming** - Departments such as Aquatics, Athletics, and Centennial Ice Arena emphasized the high quality of their facilities (e.g., “clean and welcoming beach,” “high quality sheet of ice,” “modernized fitness floor”) and the breadth of programming offered. This is echoed in the Recreation and Golf Learning Center, where the variety and innovation in programs (STREAM, mini golf, Toptracer technology) are seen as differentiators that attract and retain participants.
- **Community Engagement and Relationships** - Multiple departments (e.g., Heller Nature Center, Marketing, Parks and Natural Areas) noted strong community ties, positive feedback from residents, and successful partnerships as strengths. Examples include “loyalty and retention of core participants,” “community buy-in of ordinances,” and “deepened community ties” through events and outreach.



Weaknesses

- **Space and Facility Constraints** - A recurring theme is the lack of adequate space—both for programs and staff. Athletics, Rentals, and Centennial Ice Arena all mention “lack of field space,” “not enough rental space,” and “limited space for cheer team/skating school.” This limits the ability to expand offerings, accommodate demand, and provide optimal experiences.
- **Staffing Shortages and Retention Challenges** - Departments such as Park Fitness, Rentals, and Centennial Ice Arena cite “staffing shortages,” and “retaining high quality staff,” as ongoing issues. These challenges are compounded by seasonal fluctuations, pay equity concerns, and the need for specialized skills, which can impact morale and service quality.
- **Aging Infrastructure and Deferred Maintenance** - Facilities, Parks and Natural Areas, and IT all reference “aging infrastructure,” “deferred maintenance,” and “deteriorating buildings/trails” as weaknesses. This creates operational inefficiencies, and increased costs, making it harder to keep up with community expectations and regulatory requirements.
- **Unclear or Inconsistent Processes and Communication** - Several departments (e.g., HR and Risk, Registration, Planning) point to a need for improved procedures and documentation, clarifying roles and responsibilities and clear communication to promote efficiency and staff satisfaction. This can synergize efforts, create new opportunities, and improve both internal and external satisfaction.

Opportunities

- **Expanding Partnerships and Collaborations** - Many departments see value in building new partnerships—with schools, local businesses, and other agencies—to expand programming, share resources, and reach new audiences. For example, Athletics aims to “establish relationships with local schools,” while Heller Nature Center and Recreation seek to “build connections with senior centers and libraries” and “engage with new audiences such as scout troops and sports teams.”
- **Launching New Programs and Services** - Innovation in programming is a common opportunity. Departments are exploring new formats (e.g., “mini-sessions,” “Try-It weeks”), expanding into underrepresented areas (e.g., “female athletics,” “inclusive and sensory-friendly design”), and leveraging feedback to pilot offerings that meet evolving community needs.
- **Leveraging Technology and Digital Engagement** - IT, Marketing, and Registration highlight the potential of technology upgrades—such as moving to SharePoint, implementing AI chatbots, and enhancing digital marketing—to improve efficiency, engagement, and service delivery. These initiatives can help modernize operations and provide better data for decision-making.

- **Facility Enhancements and Modernization** - Departments such as Park Fitness, Golf Learning Center, and Facilities are planning or advocating for facility upgrades (e.g., “warm water pool addition,” “mini golf redesign,” “capital equipment replacement plan”) to meet current and future needs, improve accessibility, and enhance the member experience.

Challenges

- **Funding Limitations and Rising Costs** - Budget constraints are a universal challenge. Departments cite “funding limitations,” “rising costs,” and “inflation” as barriers to maintaining and improving facilities, staffing, and programming. This is particularly acute for capital projects and long-term maintenance.
- **Climate Impacts and Environmental Sustainability** - Parks and Natural Areas, Facilities, and Planning all reference “climate impacts,” “floodplain/floodway challenges,” and “environmental sustainability” as significant concerns. These issues affect maintenance, capital planning, and the ability to deliver reliable services.
- **Increasing Operational Complexity** - As the District grows and diversifies, operational complexity increases. Departments note “growing and evolving community expectations,” “operational limits without burnout,” and “competing and changing priorities” as ongoing challenges. Balancing innovation with day-to-day demands requires careful planning and resource allocation.
- **Community Expectations and Change Management** - Departments such as Marketing, Planning, and Recreation highlight the challenge of meeting “high community expectations,” managing change, and maintaining transparency and accountability. This includes adapting to demographic shifts, responding to feedback, and maintaining trust through effective communication and engagement.

SWOC SUMMARY

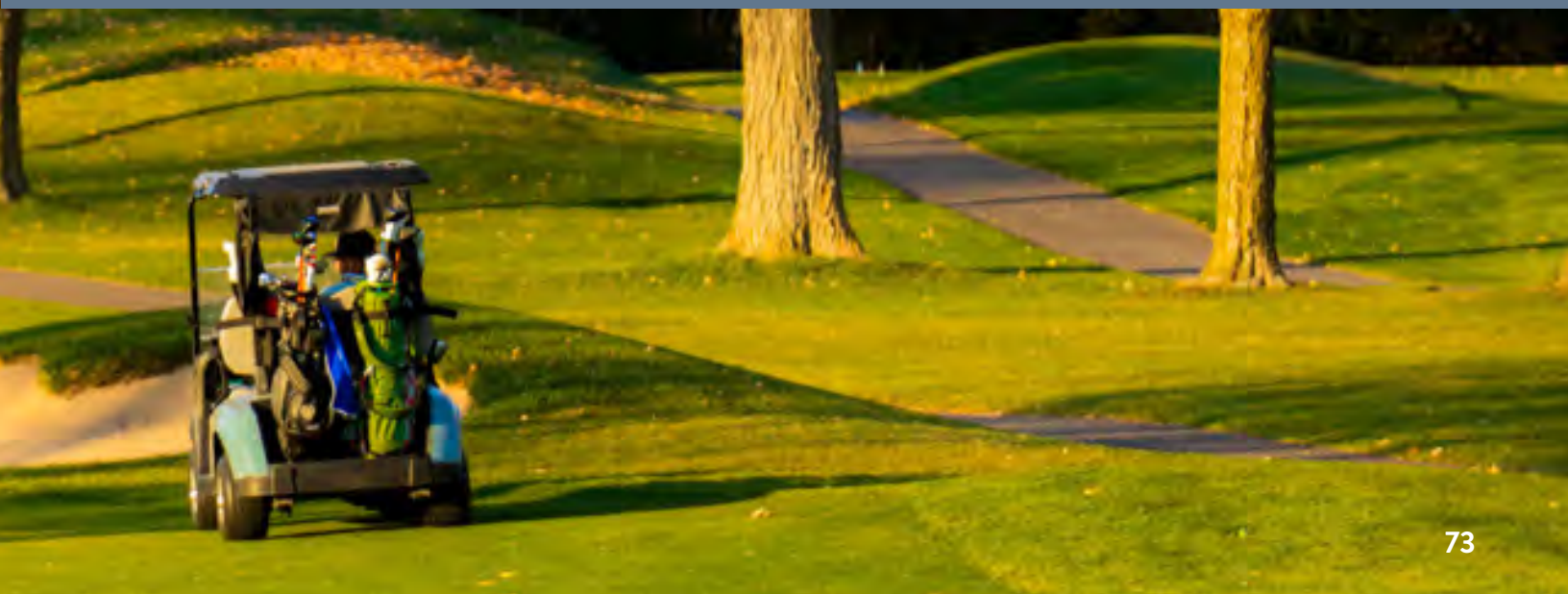
The SWOC analysis across all departments reveals a District that is proud of its staff, programming, and community relationships, but is also grappling with space, staffing, and infrastructure challenges. There is a strong appetite for innovation and partnership, but these ambitions are tempered by financial, environmental, and operational realities. Addressing these interconnected themes will require coordinated efforts, strategic investment, and ongoing dialogue with both staff and the community.



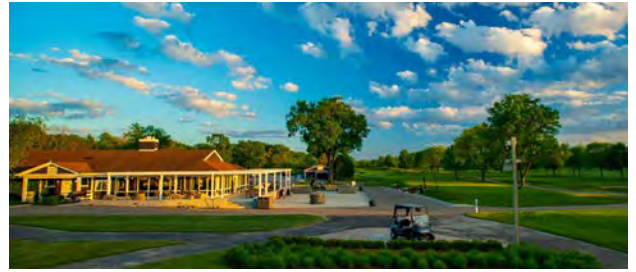


ANALYZE

CHAPTER 4



PREVIOUS PLANNING DOCUMENTS KEY TAKEAWAYS



GreenPrint 2024

GreenPrint 2024 established a comprehensive vision for how Highland Park's parks, facilities, and programs should evolve over a decade. It prioritized reinvestment in aging infrastructure, better park access and equity across neighborhoods, environmental stewardship, and modernization of key community facilities. The plan served as a roadmap for phasing capital projects, such as Sunset Valley Golf Club improvements, the Recreation Center renovation, The Preserve of Highland Park, Centennial Ice Arena upgrades, and the new West Ridge Community Center, ensuring that the District's investments reflected community priorities and long-term sustainability. The majority of the initiatives proposed in the GreenPrint 2024 Master Plan were implemented over the last decade. At the same time, the plan was developed in a different context and does not fully address emerging priorities. Evolving expectations around inclusion, flexibility, and changing recreation trends, along with a greater emphasis on system performance, connectivity, and operational alignment, highlight the need for an updated framework.

Land Management Plan

The Land Management Plan provides a framework for the long-term stewardship, maintenance, and ecological management of Park District lands and natural resources. The plan focuses on balancing active recreation needs with environmental sustainability by guiding practices related to stormwater management, natural area management, standardization of park amenities, and connectivity. It also reinforces the importance of aligning maintenance operations with the Park District's broader goals for efficiency, resource management, and user experience. As environmental conditions, maintenance practices, and community expectations continue to evolve, the principles of the Land Management Plan remain highly relevant. Moving forward, its recommendations should continue to inform day-to-day operations and long-term capital decisions. The plan should remain a living operational document that can adapt over time. Opportunities to strengthen trail connections and improve access throughout the park system should continue to be explored as part of this ongoing effort.



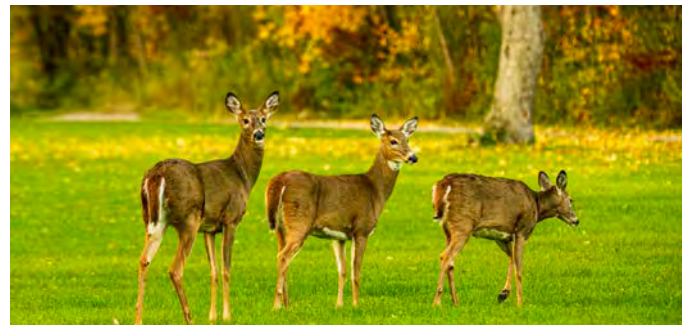


Sports Field Master Plan (2019)

The Sports Field Master Plan provides a system-wide assessment of sport fields and recommended improvements to meet sport programming demand, reduce maintenance challenges, and improve field quality. The plan identifies the primary objectives to focus on turf conditions, players/spectator amenities, and flexibility. The plan's outcome was a scenario approach to be a tool for the Park District to respond to needs based on demand, funding, and available land in an effort to improve reliability and quality of the athletic experience across the District. The plan evaluated every athletic field site in the District, highlighting Larry Fink Park, Danny Cuniff Park, Sunset Woods Park and West Ridge Park as priority locations for upgrades due to their existing infrastructure (i.e. parking capacity, lights) and high capacity for programming. The plan recommends operational and low scale capital improvements to improve three main focus areas within the existing athletic infrastructure. The plan considers other scenarios to meet its the three focus objectives such as introducing synthetic turf and acquiring property. The Sports Field Master Plan has informed impactful improvements to athletic fields such as the Fox Field at Larry Fink Park which addressed drainage with a synthetic turf field, player and spectator amenities, as well as improving the flexibility to serve multiple age groups at the field. Though, while the three primary objectives identified in the plan remain relevant, through the GreenPrint planning process, new athletic needs surfaced including the need for expanded indoor recreation capacity. The plan also did not fully account for broader system considerations such as equity, distribution, and long-term capital prioritization. Moving forward, the core recommendations of the Sports Field Master Plan are carried forward and integrated into the New GreenPrint, rather than maintained as a standalone plan. This includes advancing a strategy for indoor recreation at multiple scales, improving drainage at District fields, and continuing to optimize field layouts for flexible, multi-sport use. These priorities will be evaluated alongside Level of Service findings, community demand, and funding considerations to ensure they are implemented in a coordinated and equitable manner across the system.

ADA Transition Plan (2024–25)

The ADA Transition Plan provides a comprehensive assessment of accessibility across the park system, identifying barriers and establishing a prioritized framework for improvements. As a compliance-driven document, it outlines the actions required to ensure the Park District meets accessibility standards and continues to improve equitable access to parks and facilities. In addition to evaluating physical accessibility, the plan includes an assessment of District programs, services, and policies to ensure compliance with ADA requirements and promote equitable access across all aspects of Park District operations. A district-wide audit was completed in 2024 and Public meetings in 2024 helped highlight high-priority sites such as Sunset Woods, Danny Cuniff, and the Recreation Center of Highland Park, where upgrades to routes, restrooms, and play areas are most needed. The plan outlines a phased schedule with cost estimates for corrective actions and integrates universal design principles into future capital projects, ensuring that accessibility improvements become a standard feature of every renovation and new development across the District. Because accessibility is a fundamental requirement, the recommendations of the ADA Transition Plan should inform standalone ADA priority projects as well as contribute to all capital projects and system improvements. The plan will continue to be updated to serve as a technical reference, while its priorities are implemented through the Capital Plan and ongoing reinvestment efforts.



GreenPath Sustainability Plan (2025)

The GreenPath Sustainability Plan defines measurable goals to reduce the District's environmental footprint, improve energy and water efficiency, minimize waste, and foster a culture of sustainability in daily operations. It positions Highland Park as a regional leader in sustainable park management, guiding future design, purchasing, and maintenance practices toward long-term ecological health. GreenPath is intended to evolve over time and should remain a standalone document. Its principles are to be reflected in capital planning and operational decisions, ensuring sustainability is consistently considered as part of long-term investment and system management.



Lakefront Master Plan Update (2020)

The Lakefront Master Plan Update reaffirmed the lakefront as Highland Park's signature natural and recreational asset. It proposed site-specific upgrades, including improved trails, signage, erosion control, and restored access points, across Rosewood, Moraine, Millard, and Park Avenue. The plan's overarching goal was to preserve natural character while improving safety, resilience, and public enjoyment, positioning the lakefront as both an ecological corridor and a community gathering destination. Given the dynamic nature of the lakefront, including ongoing shoreline change and climate-related pressures, the plan remains highly relevant but requires continued adaptation. Moving forward, it should be maintained as a focused sub-area plan, with its recommendations carried forward into the Capital Plan and revisited periodically to respond to evolving conditions. Strengthening connections between the lakefront and the broader park system will also be an important next step.

Beach Management (2021)

The Beach Management Plan provides recommendations for protecting and managing the Park District of Highland Park's beaches, bluffs, ravines, and other lakefront properties. The Beach Management Plan complements the Lakefront Master Plan in that it focuses on actionable recommendations for the protection, management, and enhancement of the beaches to respond to the dynamic environment. The recommendations provided in the plan are based on an evaluation of the existing conditions found at the beaches, uses associated with the beach, and a review of lake and habitat conditions. Following the Lakefront Master Plan Update, the Park District implemented a series of shoreline management and sand nourishment projects to address erosion and fluctuating lake levels. These efforts, particularly at Rosewood Beach and Millard Beach, stabilized bluffs, replenished sand, and protected both natural habitats and recreational amenities. The initiatives reflected a proactive approach to climate resilience and long-term lakefront stewardship, ensuring that Highland Park's beaches remain safe, accessible, and environmentally sustainable for future generations.



The Preserve of Highland Park Site Master Plan (2018–2022)

The planning and development of The Preserve of Highland Park transformed a former golf course into a 100-acre community park focused on ecological restoration, education, and recreation. Through a multi-year master planning and public engagement process, the project introduced walking trails, ponds, bird habitats, interpretive signage, and nature-based play areas. The park's 2022 grand opening marked a milestone in adaptive reuse and sustainability, turning a previously single-purpose landscape into one of the District's most celebrated natural and educational destinations. This effort has been highly successful, and its long-term impact will depend on continued programming, activation, and stronger integration with the broader park system. The Plan continues to guide improvements and growth at The Preserve.



Sunset Woods Park Master Plan (2021–2022)

The Sunset Woods Master Plan recognizes Sunset Woods as Highland Park's premier community park that balances active play for all ages with natural respite. It proposed reconfigured circulation, upgraded playgrounds, enhanced gathering areas, and stronger visual and physical connections to surrounding streets. The result was a clear design direction and phased improvement plan that aligns with the community's desire for a modern, inclusive, and accessible park experience. The Plan continues to guide improvements and growth at Sunset Woods Park.



West Ridge Park Site Master Plan (2022–23)

The West Ridge planning process focused on modernizing facilities and optimizing the site to better support recreation, programming, and community use. Its end result was a set of conceptual recommendations for updating the park’s amenities, improving circulation, and aligning future redevelopment with the District’s broader master plan and community needs. Rather than remaining a standalone effort, West Ridge is positioned as a priority opportunity site within the New GreenPrint. Future planning and investment should build on the original concepts, refined through updated data and system-wide insights. The West Ridge Park Master Plan can be found in the Appendix.



Park Avenue Beach and Boating Facility Master Plan Report

The Park Avenue Beach and Boating Facility Master Plan explores opportunities to improve public access, circulation, safety, and recreational functionality along one of Highland Park’s unique lakefront destinations. The plan focuses on strengthening the relationship between the boating facility, beach access, bluff conditions, and surrounding public spaces while maintaining the site’s informal and community-oriented character. Recommendations include improved circulation, enhanced storage and support facilities, accessibility upgrades, shoreline resiliency measures, and strategies to better support both recreational boating and passive lakefront use. While portions of the plan have informed ongoing improvements and operational decisions, many of its broader goals remain relevant due to the evolving conditions of the lakefront and continued demand for improved public access and waterfront recreation.



SYSTEM EVALUATION

The Acreage Level of Service (LOS), Park & Facility Assessments collectively evaluate how well the Park District of Highland Park's properties, parks, facilities, and amenities are serving today's community. Together, these tools measure acreage, access, experience, capacity, and distribution so the GreenPrint Comprehensive Plan can align future investments with resident needs and expectations.

Types of System Evaluations



ACREAGE LOS

Do we have enough land to support recreation and conservation needs for our population?



PARKS ASSESSMENTS

What is the condition and user experience of the Park District's parks and amenities?



FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS

What is the condition of facilities and their future reinvestment needs?



ACREAGE LOS



30,459

Population
ACS 2019-2023



750

Total PDHP Parkland
(all categories)



24.62

Acres of PDHP
managed property per
1,000 residents



19.17

Acres of open access
park land per 1,000
residents



PDHP
EXCEEDS
ACREAGE
BENCHMARK

10.8

acres of park land per
1,000 residents

NRPA's Acreage Benchmark of 10.8 acres / 1,000 residents

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) publishes annual park and recreation benchmarks through its Park Metrics database, which compiles information from agencies across the United States. In its Agency Performance Review, NRPA reported a median parkland provision of 10.8 acres per 1,000 residents. The Park District of Highland Park elected to use this benchmark as the basis for evaluating the community's parkland supply and identifying potential gaps and future needs.



NATURAL AREAS

Total Natural Area Acreage: 350 acres
Of the 350 acres, 65 acres are unmanaged
Restoration Opportunities: 37 acres

Outdoor Amenity Benchmarks | The Park District of Highland Park strives to exceed benchmarks in amenity offerings.

	PDHP Inventory	NRPA 2026 Median # of Residents per Amenity	Target Quantity of Amenities	Benchmark Variance
CORE AMENITIES				
Playground	41	3,010	10.7	30.3
Basketball Courts	12	7,934	4.1	7.9
Standalone Diamond Fields (does not include backstops)	7	3,650	8.8	-1.8
Racquet Courts (tennis, pickle, and dual use)	46	7,396	4.4	41.6
Standalone Rectangle Fields	20	4,294	7.5	12.5
Walking Trails (miles)	18.7	N/A	10.0	8.7
AREAS OF GROWTH TO CONSIDER IN THE COMING YEARS				
Fitness Zones	1	23,138	1.4	-0.4
Splash Pads	0	28,000	1.2	-1.2
Synthetic Fields	0.5	24,096	1.3	-0.8



PARKS ASSESSMENTS



11

Neighborhood
Districts Assessed



49

Parks Assessed



600+

Individuals Heard



2,000+

Feedback Points
Collected

In 1996 the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) began to encourage agencies to develop their own standards instead of relying on a national standard. The standards used for this assessment were shared with the Park Board in 2021, in advance of the assessments completed in 2022–2023. These standards were developed by staff using resources informed by NRPA Park Metrics, the American Planning Association guide to determining Parks and Recreation Level of Service, and trends in park design.

The assessments evaluate each park at a site-specific level of service, while the report also evaluates the broader level of service at the neighborhood scale.

In this inaugural assessment, the team assessed 11 neighborhood districts and a total of 49 parks. The parks and neighborhood districts were evaluated based on the standards summarized in the table below.

Standards alone cannot tell the entire story. During the summer of 2023, the Park District launched the Your Parks - Your Perspectives campaign to collect feedback from park visitors. In total, the District heard from over 600 individuals and collected over 2,000 feedback points.

For the parks that do not meet all of the standards, the assessment pages offer suggestions for improvements to meet or exceed standards. Recommendations range from minor operational adjustments to large-scale capital improvements.

Results of the Park Assessments can be found in the Key Takeaways section. The Park District expects to update the standards and assessment every five years.

Refer to the appendix for the complete assessment for each park.

Individual Park Standards

Each park is evaluated based on four standards: Capacity, Access, Quality and Experience. The criterion for each standard varies by park type. Listed below are the standard descriptions and the criteria to be met for each park type.

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Measures diversity of park elements and play value within a park.	Measures diversity of park elements within a neighborhood.
ACCESS	Measures access to the park by travel type.	Measures accessibility to PDHP parks.
QUALITY	Measures the scale and type of landscaping at a park in addition to general maintenance.	NA
EXPERIENCE	Measures a park's contribution to the community based on economic, environmental, and social criteria.	NA



1. Capacity Standard

The Capacity standard measures the diversity of park elements and play value represented within a park. This standard evaluates parks based on the number of core recreation amenities present. Core amenities, supported by GreenPrint and the 2019 Attitude and Interest Survey, include: baseball, basketball, multi-use field, playground, racquet sports (tennis/pickleball), and walking path.

CAPACITY STANDARD - (BY PARK TYPE)

- **Community Park:** should have all six core amenities present
- **Neighborhood Park:** should have at least two of the six core amenities present
- **Special Use Park & Regional Park & Mini Park:** N/A
- **Passive Natural Area:** N/A
- **Undeveloped Park:** core amenities are not required

2. Access Standard

The Access standard measures access to the park by travel type. Travel considerations vary by park type and include biking, walking, driving, and public transit. Evaluation is determined by residents' ability to travel to a park and by the travel amenities present in a park.

ACCESS STANDARD - (BY PARK TYPE)

- **Community Park & Regional Park:** should be accessible by pedestrian, bicycle, personal vehicle, and public transit. To support access, travel amenities available should include parking, City sidewalk connections, curb cuts (if applicable), bike parking, and pedestrian connections to nearby public transit (within 1/4 mile).
- **Neighborhood Park:** should be accessible by pedestrian and bicycle. At least one entrance should have travel amenities including: curb cuts (if applicable), bike parking, and City sidewalk connections. The best practice is for all entries to have these amenities present.
- **Special Use Park:** should be accessible by pedestrian, bicycle, personal vehicle, and public transit. To support access, travel amenities available should include parking, City sidewalk connections, curb cuts (if applicable), bike parking, and pedestrian connections to nearby public transit (within 1/4 mile).
- **Passive Natural Area:** should be accessible by pedestrian and bicycle. At least one entrance should have travel amenities including: curb cuts (if applicable), bike parking, and City sidewalk connections. The best practice is for all entries to have these amenities present. If within 1/4 mile of public transit, pedestrian connections should be provided.
- **Undeveloped Park & Mini Park:** N/A

3. Quality Standard

The Quality standard measures the scale and type of landscaping at a park in addition to general maintenance. General park maintenance criteria are supported by park maintenance modes. The condition of accessory amenities and accessory structures is also considered as part of this standard. Accessory amenities include: benches, bike racks, drinking fountains, perimeter fencing, picnic benches, player seating, restrooms, and trash/recycling receptacles. Accessory structures include: fishing decks, gazebos, shade structures, and small shelters. This standard also considers pathway conditions and signage standards.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE CRITERIA - (BY PARK TYPE)

- **Community Park:** maintained at a higher level than any other property. Visitors can expect to see ornamental shrubs and perennial plantings throughout the landscape. These beds are weeded, and grass is mown regularly. Restrooms are present and maintained at least once daily. Trash is picked up at a higher frequency than other park properties (minimum of once daily, 5–7 days per week).
- **Neighborhood Park:** landscape is intended to be lower maintenance than a Community Park. Patrons will primarily see grass and trees; ornamental shrubs and plantings are not recommended for these sites. Restrooms, if present, are maintained daily and trash is picked up at least twice per week.
- **Special Use Park & Regional Park:** these sites have cultural or historic elements and unique landscapes with their own standards of maintenance.
- **Passive Natural Area:** (also includes natural areas within Community or Neighborhood Parks) maintenance is based on enhancing the quality of native plantings. Low frequency mowing schedule is based on species, low growing grasses may not be mowed, and high grasses may receive periodic mowing to aid public use or reduce fire damage. Weed control is limited to the legal requirements for noxious weeds, weeds will be removed on an area-specific basis.
- **Undeveloped Park & Mini Park:** landscaping varies depending on the site and existing landscaping. If landscaped with grass, these properties are on a low frequency mowing schedule (once every 10 working days). Regular maintenance is limited.
- **All Park Types:** General maintenance criteria should be met, accessory amenities and accessory structures (if present) should be in good condition, park paths (if present) should be in good condition, and park signage should meet PDHP standard (if applicable).

4. Experience Standard

The Experience standard measures a park's contribution to the community based on economic, environmental, and social criteria. The Experience standard measures a park against David Barth's High Performance Public Spaces Criteria (HPPS).

EXPERIENCE STANDARD - (BY PARK TYPE)

- **Community Park:** strives to meet 80% of the HPPS criteria
- **Neighborhood Park:** strives to meet 25% of the HPPS criteria.
- **Special Use Park:** strives to meet 40% of the HPPS criteria.
- **Passive Natural Area & Regional Park:** strives to meet 25% of the HPPS criteria.
- **Undeveloped Park & Mini Park:** N/A



Parks Strengths

Across the system, parks demonstrate a strong foundation in providing core recreational amenities and a well-distributed network of spaces that support everyday use. Community and neighborhood parks consistently feature playgrounds, courts, open fields, and walking paths, allowing them to function as reliable destinations for both active and passive recreation. In many cases, these parks are already meeting baseline expectations in terms of capacity, meaning the system is not lacking in assets or land, but rather in how those assets perform over time.

A defining strength of the system is its natural character. Many parks include expansive open lawns, mature tree canopy, and passive landscape areas that create a strong sense of place and identity. These spaces are widely valued by the community for walking, informal play, and quiet recreation. Park sites such as The Preserve, Foley's Pond, and Highmoor illustrate how natural areas are preserved and actively used and appreciated for their ecological and experiential value.

Many of these spaces already have the physical capacity to support gathering and social use. Large open areas, flexible layouts, and scenic environments provide the foundation for community interaction, even if they are not yet fully designed or programmed to function that way. This reinforces that the system's strength lies in its underlying structure and potential.

Parks Challenges & Opportunities

While the system is strong at its core, the assessments consistently identify gaps in quality, comfort, and overall user experience, which limit how parks are used and how long people stay. Across many parks, amenities such as benches, pathways, fencing, and signage are either aging, limited in quantity, or not aligned with current expectations.

One of the most consistent systemwide opportunities is the absence of intentional design for gathering and social use. While many parks include open lawns and flexible areas, they often lack the supporting elements, such as shade structures, defined gathering zones, and orientation, that would allow those spaces to function as true community destinations. As a result, parks that have the capacity to host social interaction often remain underutilized beyond basic or pass-through use.

Shade and seating are among the most frequently identified gaps. Even in parks that are otherwise well-used, the absence of these basic comfort elements limits accessibility for older adults, families, and individuals who may benefit from places to rest, observe, or spend extended time.

Access-related challenges also persist in specific locations. While many parks are technically reachable, gaps in sidewalk connectivity, bike infrastructure, and entry visibility make them less intuitive and less inviting to access. In passive or natural areas in particular, entrances can be unclear or disconnected from surrounding neighborhoods, limiting their usability as part of the broader system.

EXAMPLE IMPROVEMENTS FOR PARKS

Team observations have identified amenity gaps across parks and open spaces.

BENCHES, FENCING, SIGNAGE — AGING, BROKEN, OR NEEDING UPDATES

- Brown Park
- Carroll F. Snyder Park
- Danny Cunniff Park
- Foley's Pond

MISSING, UNCLEAR, OR DETERIORATING PATHS AND CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

- Devonshire Park
- Kennedy Park
- Central Park
- Highmoor Park

NOT ENOUGH BENCHES, SEATING, GATHERING ELEMENTS, ETC.

- Fontana-Pasquesi Park
- Kennedy Park



FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS

Facility assessments were developed through a combination of field observations and discussions with the Deputy Director of Operations and Facilities at the Park District of Highland Park. Assessments considered the condition and functionality of buildings and sites, operational considerations, existing deficiencies, and each facility's ability to support current and future recreation needs.

Facility assessments represent a qualitative evaluation informed by staff knowledge, site visits, and anticipated upgrades or reinvestment needs identified throughout the planning process. Assessments reflect overall performance and help identify strengths, deficiencies, and opportunities for improvement.

The intent of the assessment is not to rank facilities against one another, but to provide a consistent framework for identifying service gaps, prioritizing investments, guiding capital planning decisions, and tracking progress over time.

Refer to the appendix for the complete assessment for each facility.

Facility Strengths

Across the system, facilities provide a diverse network of indoor recreation spaces that support year-round activity, structured programming, and community use. These facilities serve as essential anchors within the park system, allowing the Park District to deliver programs and services, and extend recreation opportunities across seasons.

Many facilities, especially newly built or renovated ones, perform well in terms of core functionality and program delivery, supporting a wide range of uses including athletics, fitness, enrichment programs, and community activities. Spaces such as Centennial Ice Arena along with other multi-use recreation facilities demonstrate the District's ability to provide specialized environments that respond to both recreational and competitive needs.

A key strength of the system is its ability to support multi-generational use, with facilities serving youth, teens, adults, and older residents through a variety of programs and services. In many cases, these spaces are well-utilized and reflect strong alignment with community demand, particularly in areas such as athletics, fitness, and structured programming.

Similar to the park system, facilities also have underlying capacity and adaptability. Many buildings and spaces have the footprint and structural foundation to support expanded or evolving uses over time.



Facilities Challenges & Opportunities

The assessments highlight ongoing challenges related to aging infrastructure, evolving expectations for indoor recreation, and the need to continually adapt facilities to changing community needs. The Park District has demonstrated a strong commitment to modernizing and reinvesting in its facilities over time, including major renovations and improvements at facilities such as Centennial Ice Arena and Hidden Creek Aqua Park. These investments have helped ensure that many facilities remain functional, relevant, and adaptable.

Recreation trends, program demands, and user expectations continue to evolve. As a result, facilities will require ongoing reinvestment and, in some cases, expansion or reconfiguration to accommodate emerging needs. While many buildings possess the structural capacity to support future adaptations, there remain limitations in certain facilities related to layout, flexibility, and the ability to accommodate multiple uses throughout the day and across seasons.

User experience is also impacted by outdated amenities and support spaces in a number of facilities including the Deer Creek Raquet Club and Hidden Creek Aqua Park. Elements such as locker rooms, restrooms, circulation areas, and gathering spaces do not consistently meet current expectations for comfort, accessibility, and quality. While facilities may function well from a program standpoint, the overall experience of being in these spaces can feel dated or limited.

There is also a notable gap in social and informal gathering spaces within facilities. Older facilities often prioritize program space over user experience, resulting in limited areas for people to wait, connect, or spend time outside of structured activities. This reduces opportunities for facilities to function as true community hubs.

At a broader system level, challenges related to capacity and specialization are also evident. In certain program areas, demand exceeds available space, while in others, facilities are not optimized to support the types of activities the community is increasingly seeking. This is particularly relevant for emerging needs such as indoor sports, flexible recreation areas, and year-round athletic facilities.



RECREATION ASSESSMENT KEY TAKEAWAYS

BerryDunn found the District to be a high-functioning, high-producing agency. Any changes to the recreation services menu, administration, and/or the facilities that support the programs and services will only continue to enhance an already strong agency. The following key findings summarize the opportunities to strengthen the District's performance.



PROGRAMMING

Continue to increase adult programming. Work with the City's Senior Center to determine how PDHP can support and collaborate the demand for increased older adult services. Capitalize on the new gymnastics space. Increase repeat registrants in all groups outside youth. Recapture and grow the teen market. Use caution when considering increased community festivals/events, as significant resources, both fiscal and human, would be required.



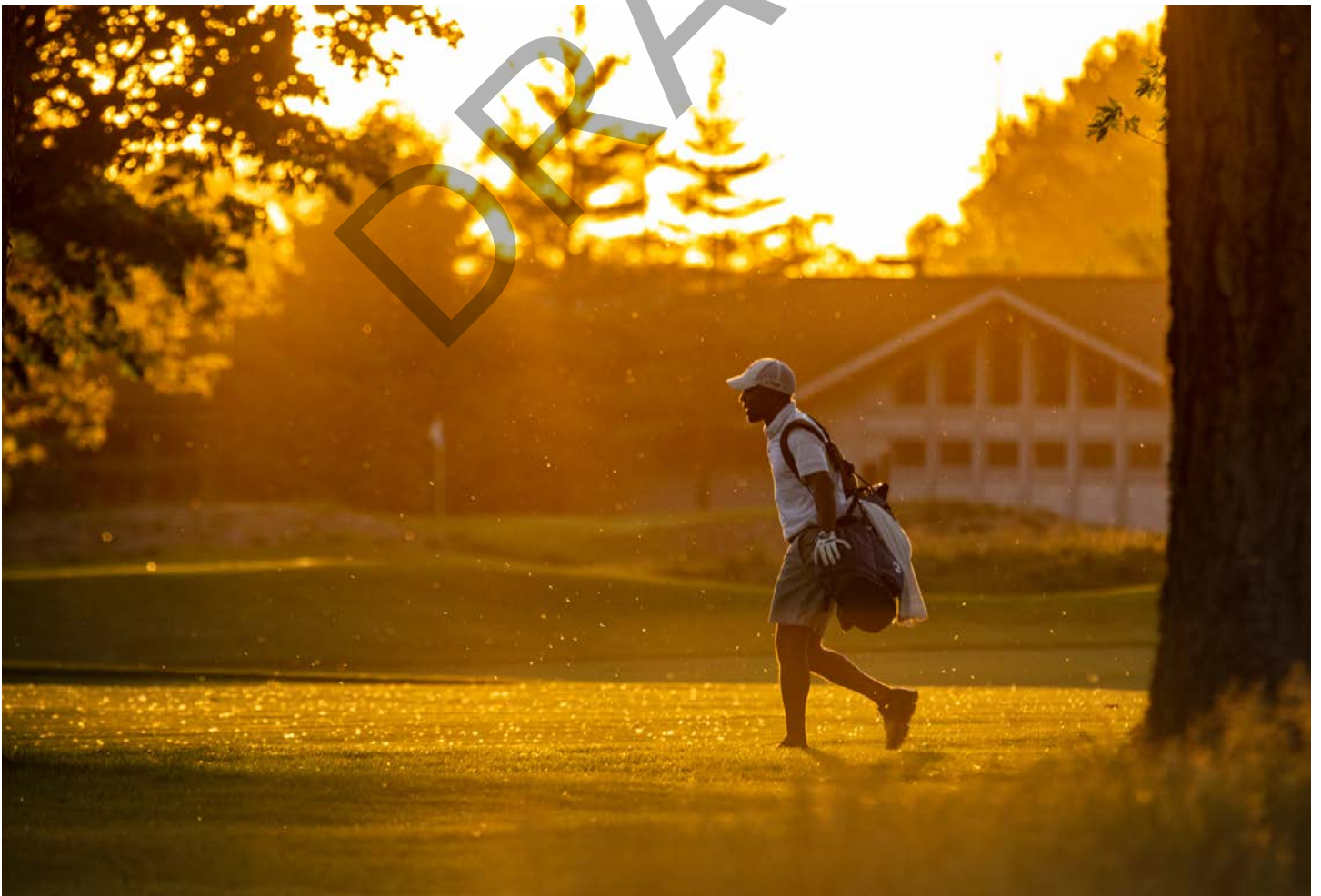
ADMINISTRATION

Enhance the registration software's database management to support future reporting enhancements. Consider formalizing the program evaluation process. Enhance marketing initiatives to cross-promote programs through additional promotional items and digital brochures. Conduct a districtwide life cycle analysis. Increase staffing support to retain current performance levels. Work to reduce cancellation rates to the 12% – 15% window. Enhance the internal waitlist tracking process to understand true demand. Consider a follow-up (non-random) survey to better understand which sports are of most interest.



RECREATION FACILITIES

Consider alternative locations for existing programs and storage not accommodated at the new West Ridge Center. Consider increasing registration-based programs at locations beyond core indoor facilities. Create a business plan for Heller Nature Center. Consider marketing DCRC to residents in the District's northwest quadrant.







PLAN & IMPLEMENT

CHAPTER 5

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Capital Projects Funding

The Capital Projects Fund is used to account for all capital projects. Funding sources for the Capital Projects Fund include the following:

- **Operational Fund Transfers:** Park District operations are funded by a combination of property taxes, user fees, and other miscellaneous revenue sources. Surplus revenue from Park District operations may be transferred to the Capital Fund in accordance with policy. The amount of surplus revenue is not guaranteed year-to-year and is only transferred at the end of each fiscal year.
- **Debt Financing:** Per Illinois statute, when operating funds do not provide adequate revenue to support capital projects, the Park District may issue debt to finance these projects. Several financing options are available, such as General Obligation Bonds and Debt Certificates. The amount of outstanding debt is limited by statute and the Park District's ability to finance repayment.
- **The Parks Foundation of Highland Park:** The Parks Foundation is a separate nonprofit 501(c)(3) entity that generates private philanthropic donations and grants, which can be used to support capital projects. These funds help reduce reliance on property taxes, debt financing, and operational transfers.
- **Grants:** The Park District may apply for grant funding from federal, state, private, and other sources that support public park and recreation improvements. Grants vary from year to year, are awarded based on multiple factors, and often require matching funds from the Park District.
- **Partnerships:** The Park District may partner with public agencies, nonprofit organizations, or private entities to share costs or resources for capital improvements. These partnerships can help advance projects that align with shared community goals while reducing reliance on traditional funding sources.

Implementation Schedules

The following pages present the implementation schedules for Funded Capital GreenPrint Priority Projects identified for the 2026–2030 and 2031–2036 planning periods.



Funded 1 - 5 year (2026 - 2030)

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Outdoor Sports																									
COST		PROJECT		FY 2026				FY 2027				FY 2028				FY 2029				FY 2030					
\$500,000	West Ridge Field Lighting	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
\$0 Staff Time	Concept Plan																								
\$0 Staff Time	Select Design/Engineer																								
\$15,000	Design and Preliminary Engineering																								
\$5,000	City Design and Review/Permitting																								
\$30,000	Final Documentation and Bidding																								
\$450,000	Construction																								
\$100,000	Sports Field Development Study (Olson / West Ridge)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4				
\$0 Staff Time	Planning																								

Funded 5 - 10 year (2031 - 2036)

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Outdoor Sports																									
COST	PROJECT	FY 2031				FY 2032				FY 2033				FY 2034				FY 2035				FY 2036			
\$3,900,000	Sports Field Development Project	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	Project start, scoping, planning, and programming, acquisition pursuit																								
	Design development, budget, permits, and entitlements																								
	City review and approvals																								
	Construction documents, bidding, and negotiation																								
	Material Procurement and Construction																								

Recreation Facilities																									
COST	PROJECT	FY 2031				FY 2032				FY 2033				FY 2034				FY 2035				FY 2036			
\$3,000,000	Waterpark Development Project Implementation - Locker Rooms	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Staff	Project start, scoping, planning, and programming																								
\$50,000	Design development, budget, permits, and entitlements																								
	City review and approvals																								
\$50,000	Construction documents, bidding, and negotiation																								
\$2,900,000	Construction																								

Park Amenities																									
COST	PROJECT	FY 2031				FY 2032				FY 2033				FY 2034				FY 2035				FY 2036			
	Administration/Operations Support Study & Project	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
\$544,300	Administrative Office Leasehold	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
\$4,000,000	Administrative Building Development	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
\$50,000	Project start, scoping, planning, and programming																								
\$100,000	Design development, budget, permits, and entitlements																								
	City review and approvals																								
\$250,000	Construction documents, bidding, and negotiation																								
\$3,600,000	Construction																								
\$11,444,300	Funded (5 to 10 Years)																								

DRAFT



OPERATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN

Prioritize (Ongoing)

Committees for each District perspective, plus an Implementation Committee, will ensure Implementation is focused on Priority Goals, Focused Strategies, and alignment between departments. Responsibilities:

- *Finalize action items to be prioritized in the Annual Work Plan (Q1)*
- *Provide clarity on priorities for Action Items in the upcoming budget cycle (Q2)*
- *Assess progress on Focused Strategies and Action Items in the current year. (Q3)*
- *Evaluate and report on key performance indicators from the previous year and their impact on achieving Priority Goals (Q4)*
- *Ensure tracking, measuring and communicating progress to staff, board and community (Ongoing)*

Align (Q2/Q3)

Department Teams are responsible for developing annual Action Items to be placed in the Annual Work Plan. Responsibilities include:

- *Conduct Annual SWOC analysis as part of the budget process, specifically focused on impact towards Strategies and progress on Priority Goals. SWOC focuses on what has been going well over the past year, and what should be focused on in the upcoming year (Q2)*
- *Prepare Action Items as part of the budget process. Align with Strategies and have the biggest impact on Priority Goals. Include lead employees, and deadline(s) for implementation and completion. Each year will have a Strategy Focus, but all Strategies considered (Q3)*



Implement (Ongoing)

Department Teams and lead employees implement the Annual Work Plan

Track (Ongoing)

Department Teams assign lead employees to track progress on Action Items in Smartsheets

Measure (Ongoing)

Department Teams assign lead employees to update Key Performance Indicators

Report (Ongoing)

- *Ongoing – Department Teams provide ongoing progress updates at département team meetings*
- *Quarterly – Committees provide progress reporting shared via email or intranet*
- *Annually – Committees provide District Progress Assessments (Q3) and Impact Reporting (Q1) to the Park Board, Staff and Community*







APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARKS & FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS

APPENDIX B

RECREATION ASSESSMENT

APPENDIX C

STATISTICALLY-VALID COMMUNITY SURVEY

APPENDIX D

STRATEGIC PLAN DOCUMENT

APPENDIX E

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT SUMMARIES

APPENDIX F

WEST RIDGE MASTER PLAN

APPENDIX G

OLSON PARK PLANNING & INVESTMENT REPORT (DRAFT)

APPENDIX H

VALUE STATEMENTS & DESCRIPTORS



APPENDIX A

PARKS & FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS

PARKS ASSESSMENTS

Each park was evaluated using four core categories: Capacity, Access, Quality, and Experience. Every park has its own assessment entry, allowing sites of different sizes, functions, and settings to be assessed using the same base criteria, with park type taken into consideration.

FACILITIES ASSESSMENTS

Facility assessments were developed through a combination of field observations and discussions with the Deputy Director of Operations and Facilities at the Park District of Highland Park. Assessments considered the condition and functionality of buildings and sites, operational considerations, existing deficiencies, and each facility's ability to support current and future recreation needs.

BRAESIDE PARKWAY

Havenwood Ave and Lincolnwood Rd

Undeveloped Park | Southeast District

Overview

Braeside Parkway is a triangular parkway located at the angled intersection of Havenwood Avenue and Lincolnwood Road. The parkway is northwest of the Braeside Elementary School, which was under construction at the time of analysis. The parkway consists of mowed grass and one Siberian Elm tree. Given the small scale of the parkway, the addition of amenities or development of this park is not feasible.



Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N/A	
QUALITY	Y	Grass is mowed.
EXPERIENCE	N/A	

Considerations to Exceed Standards

- None currently identified

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

None at this time



BROWN PARK

655 Burton Avenue

Neighborhood Park | S. Green Bay Rd. E. District

Overview

Brown Park is a long, narrow neighborhood park that includes a playground, tennis and pickleball courts, and open green space along the Green Bay Trail. It serves as a key recreational amenity in the S. Green Bay Rd. E. District, supporting a range of informal activities and serving nearby residents. Community members appreciate the playground but have voiced concerns about overall maintenance, particularly around gathering areas and shade.

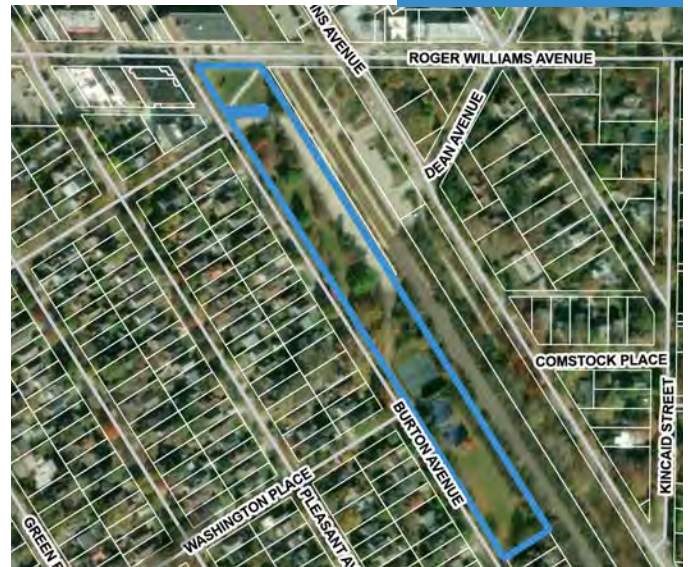
Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	Park includes multiple core recreation amenities, including courts and a playground
ACCESS	Y	Accessible via sidewalk and bike infrastructure
QUALITY	N	Several maintenance issues affect benches, fencing, signage, and shelter
EXPERIENCE	N	Gathering space and shaded areas are limited or underutilized

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality and Experience standards:

- Clean or replace benches on the park's north end
- Repaint Brown Station shelter pole removing rust at the base
- Update park signage to meet current PDHP standards
- Replace fencing around the playground
- Enhance the social space within the play area



- Create a new gathering space in the open green area at the north end of the park

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Add a walking path or loop trail to support passive recreation and circulation
- Plant shade trees or install a permanent shade structure
- Improve the layout and signage of the existing parking area to reduce confusion
- During future playground renovations, expand the gathering space

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** Tennis and pickleball courts, playground, general open space
- **What Residents Like:** The playground is popular and well-used
- **Desired Improvements:** More shade, comfort, and enhanced gathering space options



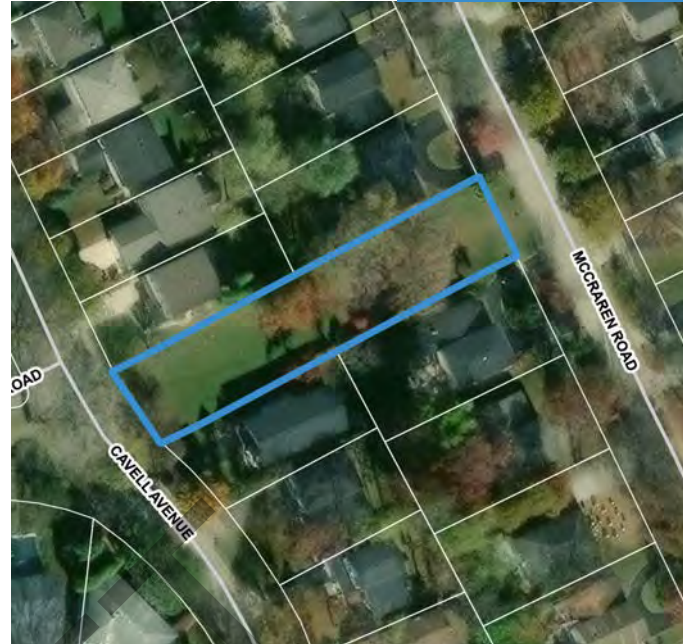
BUCKTHORN PARK

1815 Cavell Avenue

Mini Park | Westside District

Overview

Buckthorn Park is a small, undeveloped open space tucked between residential lots in the Westside District. Though modest in offerings and size, it serves as a casual shortcut, passive play space for neighbors, and dog-walking area for local residents. As a Mini Park, Buckthorn is not expected to meet the full range of park standards, but feedback indicates it still plays a meaningful role as a passive space. The site currently includes a single aging bench and is partially enclosed by vegetation. Community input emphasized a desire to improve its usability by activating the open space and landscaping.



Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N/A	Accessible via sidewalk only
QUALITY	N	Replace aging bench, remove shrubs from behind bench
EXPERIENCE	N/A	

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Add a picnic bench to support informal gathering
- Consider the park as a site for public art to create identity

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality standards:

- Replace the existing aging bench
- Clear overgrown shrubs behind and around the bench to improve visibility and comfort

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** Walking, dog-walking, shortcut through neighborhood
- **What Residents Like:** Open space, peaceful character, small gathering area
- **Desired Improvements:** Reduce weeds, activate the space, maintain regular mowing frequency



CARROLL F. SNYDER PARK

747 Pleasant Avenue

Neighborhood Park | S. Green Bay Rd. E. District

Overview

Carroll F. Snyder Park is a large neighborhood park with a mix of active and passive spaces, including a playground, mature trees, and a ravine running along the eastern edge. It is well-utilized by families and dog walkers alike and offers opportunities for both play and relaxation. While the park meets the capacity and access standard, there are clear opportunities to improve the visitor experience, clarify park edges, and activate underused areas, particularly the open central lawn and wooded eastern section.



playground area

- Plant additional trees near the eastern lawn and around the playground to improve shade
- Update park signage

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	Park includes multiple core recreation amenities, including a playground
ACCESS	Y	Accessible via sidewalk and bike infrastructure
QUALITY	N	Update Park signage
EXPERIENCE	N	Gathering space and shaded areas limited or underutilized, park boundaries unclear

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- When replacing the playground, separate the 2-5 and the 5-12 age play areas to improve usability
- Replace woodchip surfacing with a more durable, low-maintenance alternative
- Add a path that aligns with the existing ravine, creating an immersive nature experience
- Activate the large central lawn area by adding another core amenity, such as a basketball half-court or multiuse field
- Enhance the secondary entrance at the northern edge to create a more welcoming arrival experience

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality and Experience standards:

- Add a walking path (loop) for circulation and accessibility
- Install benches along the sidewalk and at the park's northern entrance
- Create a picnic or gathering space near the historic tree and

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** *Picnicking, dog walking, playground use, walking paths*
- **What Residents Like:** *Sand play area, variety of space, natural elements*
- **Desired Improvements:** *More shade, improved playground design, more social areas*



CENTRAL PARK

125 Central Ave

Neighborhood Park | Central East District

Overview

Central Park is a neighborhood park located at the top of the bluff overlooking the Park Avenue Boating Facility and North Shore Yacht Club. The site has generous tree canopy coverage, providing shaded picnic areas for park users looking to relax. Playgrounds and restroom facilities encourage families to visit and spend more time in the park. Improved public access and additional programming may allow this space to meet qualifications as a neighborhood park. The site is owned by the City of Highland Park and managed by the Park District.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N	Park includes multiple core recreation amenities, including a playground
ACCESS	N	The park is accessible for pedestrians and those arriving by vehicle, but it does not have bike infrastructure
QUALITY	N	Most amenities are in good condition. Fencing along the bluff needs repair
EXPERIENCE	Y	The park provides a nice gathering and activity space for locals. Trimming and clearing of vegetation is needed near benches by the bluff overlook.



present with the intention of providing a bluff overlook view

- Add walkways around the site connecting to the existing bench seating nodes

Considerations to Excess Standards

- None currently identified

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Capacity and Access standards:

- Install bike racks at the park entrance
- Address fencing failure on the northeast side of the park at the bluff
- Clear/trim vegetation on the northeast side where seating is



DANNY CUNNIFF PARK

2700 Trail Way

Community Park | North Central District

Overview

Danny Cuniff Park is a major community park in Highland Park's North Central District, offering a full range of core recreation amenities. The park includes multiple athletic fields, tennis and pickleball courts, walking paths, a playground, and a large naturalized open space. While the site performs well in terms of amenities and recreational variety, it falls short on access and experience standards, particularly in terms of overall park connectivity. Community feedback praised the courts and playground but highlighted the need for improvements to the walking experience, enhanced seating, and more visible gathering spaces.

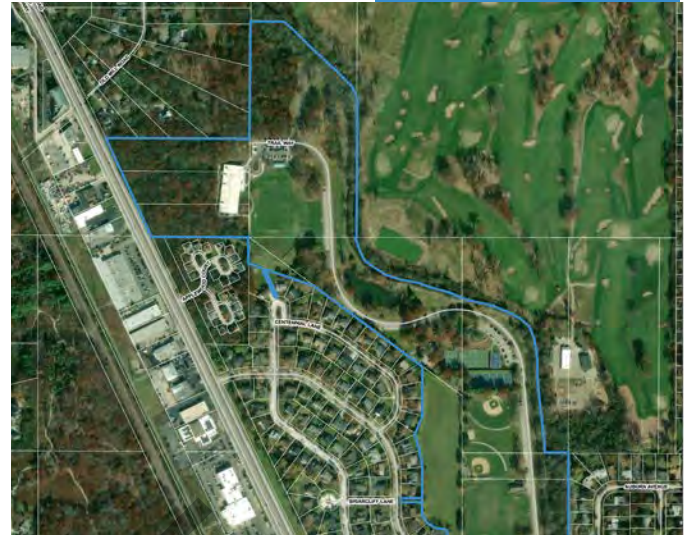
Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	All six core amenities are present
ACCESS	N	Limited public transit access
QUALITY	N	
EXPERIENCE	N	

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Access, Quality, Experience standards:

- Collaborate with the City and transit providers to explore improved public transit access
- Replace the drinking fountain at the athletic field building



- Update and park signage
- Activate the dead-end sidewalk near the basketball court by adding a bench or small gathering node
- Add more benches along the walking path and near the tennis/pickleball courts for resting and spectating
- Plant more ornamental trees and shrubs to provide shade and interest along walking paths and near the playground
- Improve the picnic area adjacent to the playgrounds for casual gatherings
- Create a rain garden in the detention basin west of the athletic fields to enhance sustainability and aesthetics

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Improve safe crossing opportunities along Trail Way to reduce barriers between park areas
- Relocate the playground's bike rack to a more visible and accessible location
- Remove the circle turnaround on the west side of the south parking lot to reclaim space for landscaping amenities
- If artificial turf is installed in the future, consider continuing paths west of the fields for better circulation
- Replace existing walking paths with porous pavement during future resurfacing
- Extend the natural area between Trail Way and the paved path
- Restore the pond shoreline near the former gazebo site and improve views of the river along the walking path

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** Tennis, pickleball, walking trails
- **What Residents Like:** Playground, athletic courts
- **Desired Improvements:** Better pickleball amenities



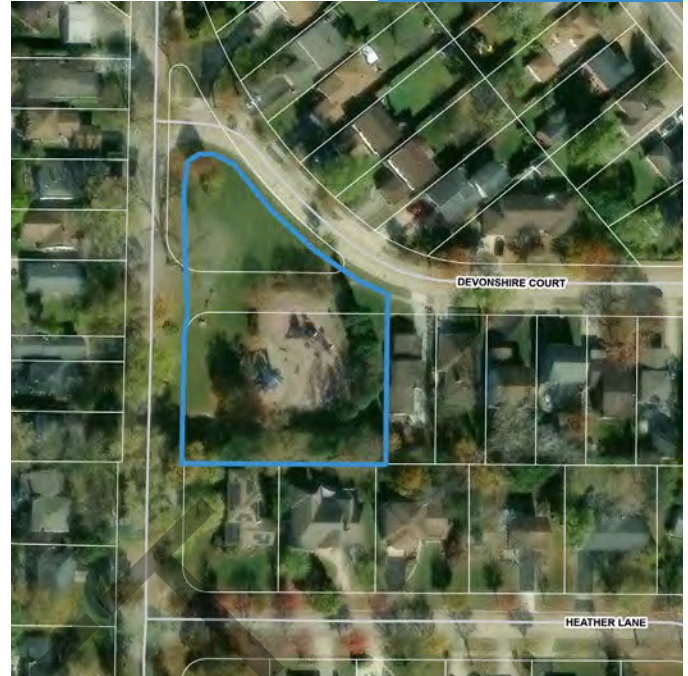
DEVONSHIRE PARK

1060 Devonshire Court

Neighborhood Park | Southwest District

Overview

Devonshire Park is a quiet neighborhood park tucked within a residential cul-de-sac in the Southwest District. While the site includes a playground and open lawn, it lacks defined pathways, shaded areas, and interactive gathering features that could make it more welcoming and usable. Residents who use the space enjoy the playground and the openness of the green lawn but have expressed interest in more shaded seating, improved path access, and the addition of creative or community-focused amenities. Although the park meets standards for amenities and maintenance, its access score is impacted by limited pedestrian connections, particularly from adjacent streets like Winthrop Road.



- Activate the central open space with new community-friendly elements, such as a game table area or low-impact recreation features

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N	Playground is only core recreation amenity
ACCESS	Y	
QUALITY	Y	Park is well maintained and meets PDHP standards
EXPERIENCE	N	Missing walking paths, seating, and shaded gathering space

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Coordinate with the city to install a pedestrian crosswalk that connects the park to sidewalks on Devonshire Court and/or Winthrop Road, improving safety and neighborhood access

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Capacity and Experience standards:

- Create a walking path to support circulation, mobility, and passive recreation
- When renovating the playground, incorporate a small social/gathering area nearby
- Plant more trees for shade and to create a more immersive play/discovery environment

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** *Picnicking, playground use, informal play in open space*
- **What Residents Like:** *Playground and open space*
- **Desired Improvements:** *More shade, and better path maintenance*



FOLEY'S POND

1268 McDaniels Avenue

Passive Natural Area | Central District

Overview

Foley's Pond is a serene Passive Natural Area in the Central District, valued by residents for its peaceful walking paths, pond views, and opportunities for quiet recreation such as fishing. While minimal in amenities, the site plays an important role in supporting natural experiences and ecological diversity within the park system. Its rustic setting includes a walking path, informal seating areas, and a small fishing deck. The park has room for improvement to meet the access standards, improving connection at McDaniels. The entrance is technically outside the park boundary and is often missed by first-time visitors.



- Relocate or remove hidden signage and consolidate signs for improved visibility
- Place a trash can closer to the fishing deck for convenience
- Improve walking path edges near the pond with natural barriers or anchors, and widen narrowing segments where possible

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N	Lack of direct sidewalk connection and visibility issues from street
QUALITY	N	Trash cans, signage, and edge protection could be improved
EXPERIENCE	Y	Improve Fishing Amenities, additional trash cans, pond and deck maintenance

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Connect the Bob O' Link sidewalk to the park's northern entrance to improve access
- Add wayfinding signage along paths
- Enhance or replace the existing log seating area for comfort and durability
- Create a small picnic or gathering area, potentially with a shade structure
- Add more seating options throughout the park for walkers and observers
- Improve the entry experience

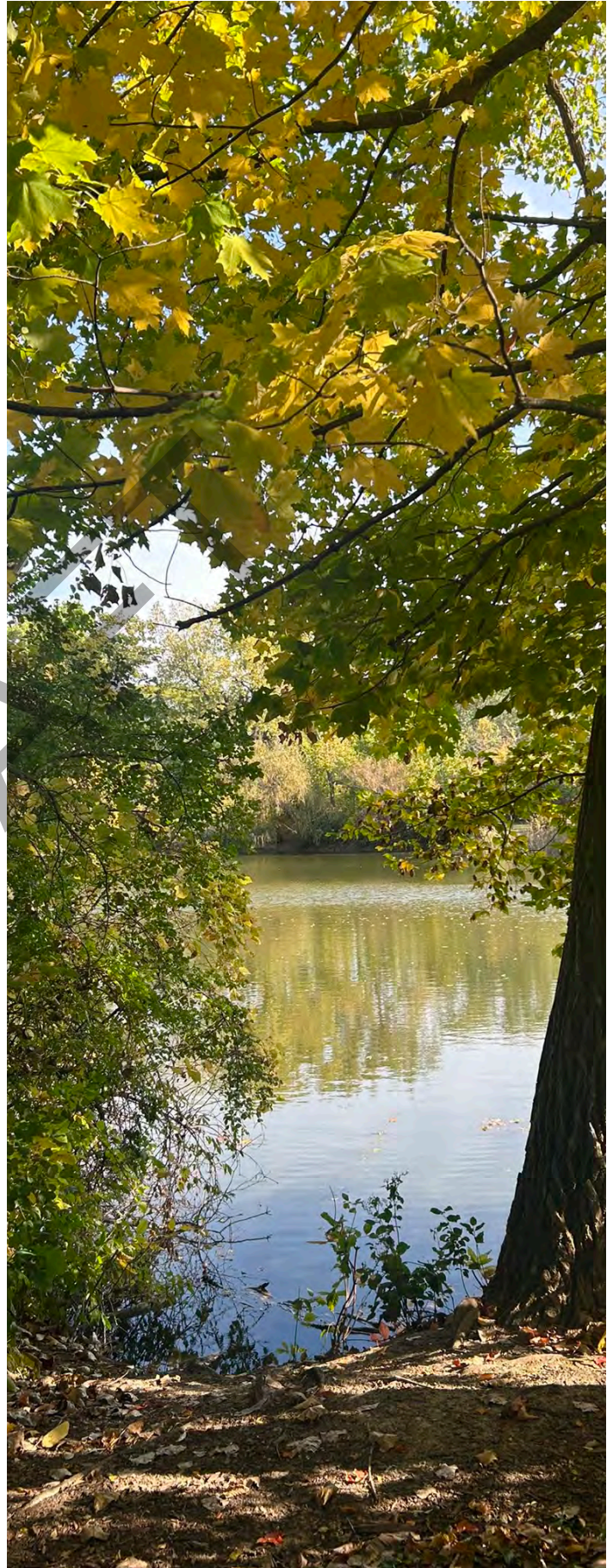
Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality and Access standards:

- Install a bike rack at the park entrance to support multi-modal access
- Support the MoveHP initiative to extend sidewalks along McDaniels Avenue and install curb cuts and crosswalks at key access points

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** Walking, fishing, quiet reflection
- **What Residents Like:** Peaceful setting, nature-based experience
- **Desired Improvements:** Additional seating, better signage, pond maintenance, and more trash cans



FONTANA-PASQUESI PARK

1780 Eastwood Avenue

Neighborhood Park | Westside District

Overview

Fontana-Pasquesi Park is a neighborhood park in the Westside District that serves nearby residents with a combination of open green space, a playground, a backstop, and court amenities. The site is appreciated for its openness and informal feel, but opportunities remain to increase usability, comfort, and cohesion. While the park meets basic standards for amenities, quality, and experience, its limited connectivity and underutilized infrastructure, like a small basketball court and aging backstop, limit its full potential. Community feedback emphasized a desire for more shaded areas, court upgrades, and improvements to seating and gathering spaces.

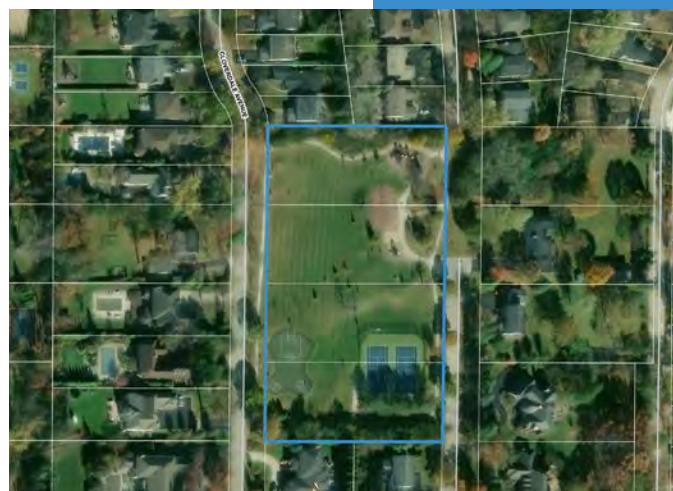
Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	Park includes multiple core recreation amenities
ACCESS	Y	Park is accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists
QUALITY	N	Generally meets PDHP standards, though bike rack and backstop are outdated
EXPERIENCE	N	Lacks intentional gathering spaces, benches, and shade

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality and Experience standards:

- Replace the existing bike rack with a Park District styled one
- Replace the aging backstop
- Create a designated picnic or gathering area



- Add benches near the basketball court and backstop to support casual use
- Plant more trees throughout the park to increase shade, discovery, and visual interest

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Rethink and consolidate the playground layout during future renovations to maximize space and functionality
- Support the City's MoveHP initiative by advocating for sidewalk and pedestrian improvements along Cloverdale Avenue
- Explore replacing crushed stone paths with porous pavement for reduced maintenance and improved comfort
- Install a drinking fountain near the playground to support longer visits and hydration needs
- Evaluate striping the existing tennis court for dual pickleball use, expanding recreational flexibility

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** Open space play, playground, baseball backstop
- **What Residents Like:** Playground and flexible green space
- **Desired Improvements:** More shade, basketball court enhancements, improved access and entry experience, where the street dead ends



FOUNDER'S PARK

1 Saint Johns Avenue

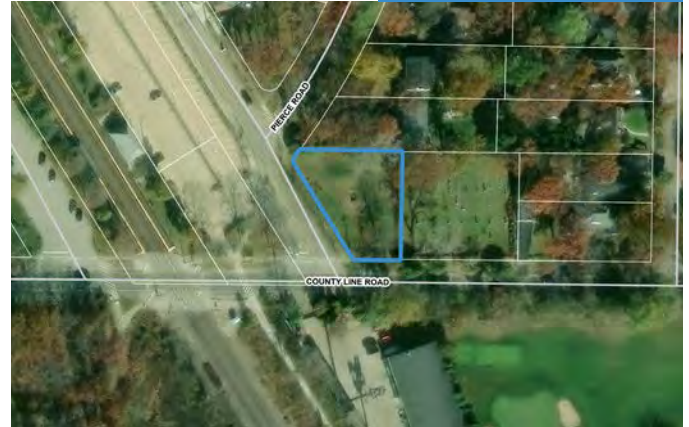
Special Use Park | Southeast District

Overview

Founder's Park is a small, art-forward green space in the Southeast District, located adjacent to the Metra station. The park functions primarily as a pass-through or contemplative spot, offering seating, gardens, and public art that reflect Highland Park's character and history. Its unique identity contributes to the Village's cultural landscape and its visibility to commuters and pedestrians.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	Y	
QUALITY	Y	Missing signage
EXPERIENCE	N	Limited gathering areas, interpretation, and unsatisfactory garden bed conditions



identity and sense of destination

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Add a wayfinding sign along the adjacent bike path to encourage visits to the park
- Redesign and diversify the gardens using native, low-maintenance plantings
- Consider breaking up the garden space into sections that promote meandering and interaction
- Explore outsourcing garden maintenance to ensure consistent quality and appearance

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality and Experience standards:

- Create a small picnic or gathering area
- Improve the pedestrian connection between the park and the nearby train station
- Develop interpretive gardens with signage
- Introduce low-impact features that give the park a stronger

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** *Pass-through space, viewing art, occasional seating*
- **What Residents Like:** *Artistic elements, peaceful setting*
- **Desired Improvements:** *Better maintenance, improved paths, additional seating*



GROVE PARK

1566 Grove Avenue

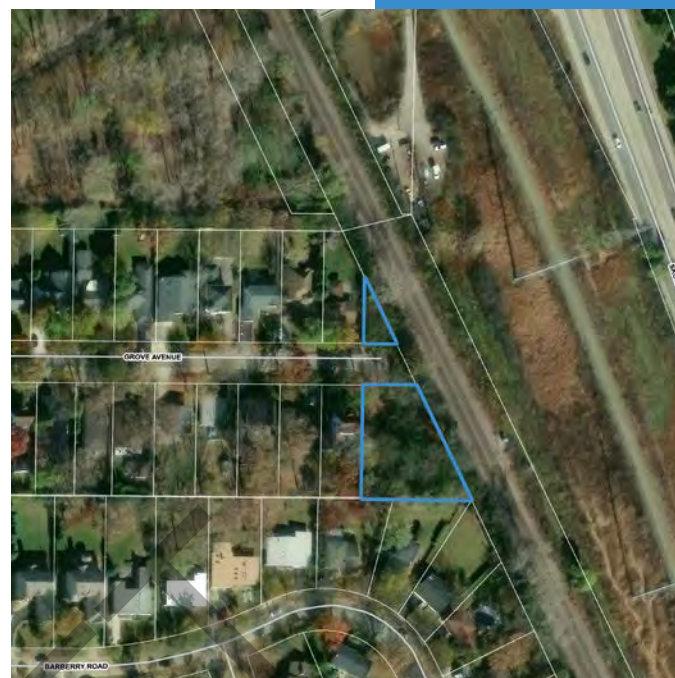
Undeveloped Park | Southwest District

Overview

Grove Park is a small, undeveloped open space within the Southwest District. With no formal recreation amenities, paths, or gathering spaces, the park functions primarily as a green buffer along Grove Avenue. Its role in the park system is limited, but it still contributes to the district's overall green space acreage inventory.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	No core amenities
ACCESS	N/A	
QUALITY	Y	Site is in acceptable condition
EXPERIENCE	N/A	



Considerations to Exceed Standards

- None currently identified

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time

Community Feedback Highlights

- *This park was not included in the community engagement activities under Your Parks, Your Perspectives, and no direct public input was collected.*



HIGHMOOR PARK

2255 Ridge Road

Passive Natural Area | Northwest District

Overview

Highmoor Park is a large Passive Natural Area in the Northwest District, best known for its scenic walking path. The park offers an immersive nature experience with woodchipped trails and minimal built infrastructure. It functions as a destination for quiet walks and reflection, and is appreciated for its tranquil environment. However, several barriers—such as limited pedestrian access, overgrown entry points, and lack of wayfinding—undermine the park’s visibility and usability.



Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N	No direct bike infrastructure or welcoming entry points
QUALITY	N	Aging benches
EXPERIENCE	Y	Minimal signage, benches, and no defined destination or rest areas

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Complete the secondary pedestrian entrance by connecting the unfinished path to Ridge Road
- Install interpretive signage at key points, such as the trail entrance or lookout area
- Create a modest destination or gathering space, such as a seating circle or overlook
- Add more benches along the path to support rest and extended use

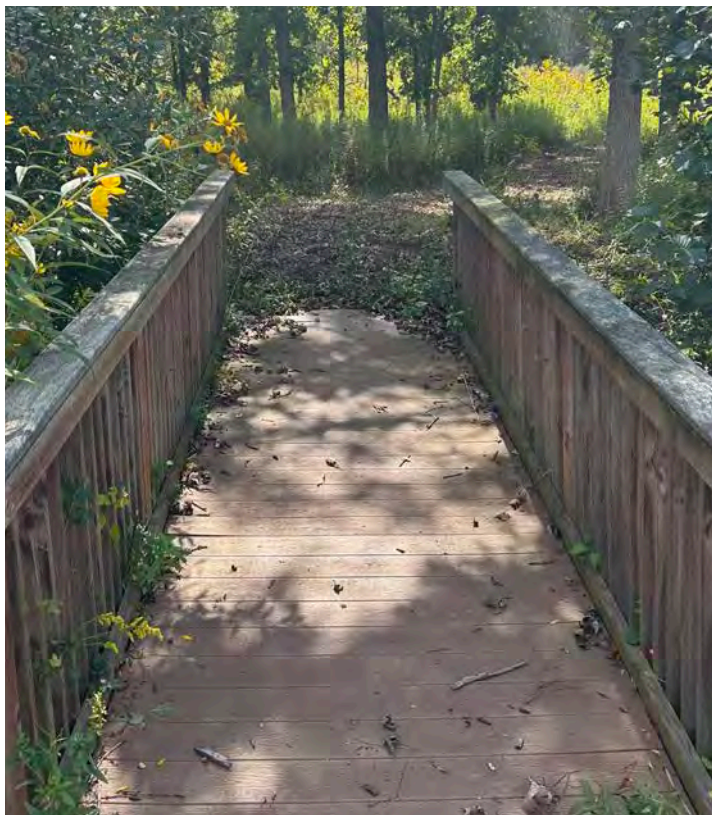
Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Access and Quality standards:

- Install a bike rack near the entrance
- Create a clear pedestrian entry pathway at the sidewalk and crosswalk interface
- Add wayfinding signage along the trail to improve orientation and visibility throughout the park
- Replace overgrown or hidden benches and increase the frequency of path maintenance

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** Walking and nature exploration
- **What Residents Like:** Peaceful setting and walking path
- **Desired Improvements:** Better path maintenance, awareness and signage, concerns about ticks



JENS JENSEN PARK

486 Roger Williams Avenue

Mini Park | Ravinia Business District

Overview

Jens Jensen Park is a centrally located green space in the heart of the Ravinia Business District, serving as both a civic gathering place and a quiet respite within a busy commercial corridor. The park's naturalistic character and shaded seating areas reflect the legacy of its namesake while providing space for informal community interaction, dog walking, and passive use. While the park meets basic expectations for access and quality, opportunities exist to improve the user experience and enhance its visibility as a destination for both residents and visitors. Community feedback emphasized the park's welcoming character but identified a need for more frequent maintenance, improved seating, and additional infrastructure to support bike use and events. The community has varying interests with some prioritizing the experience at the park and other prioritizing then historical character.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	Y	Well-connected via sidewalk and transit, with strong neighborhood interface
QUALITY	Y	Overall maintenance and signage are in acceptable condition
EXPERIENCE	Y	



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

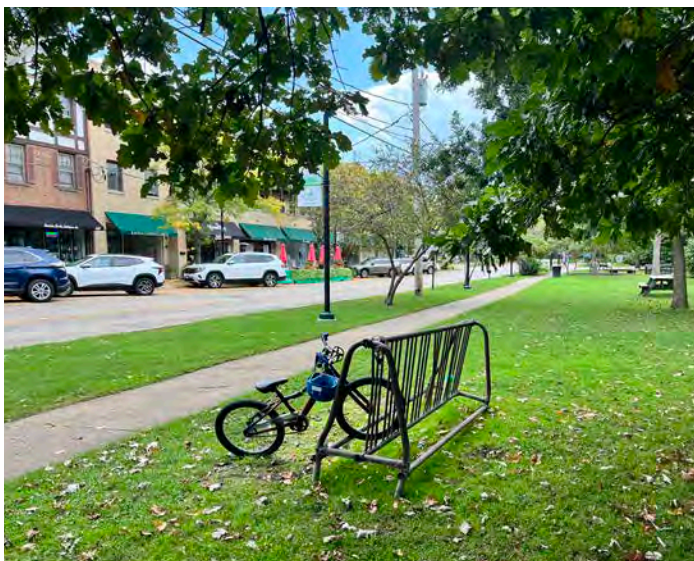
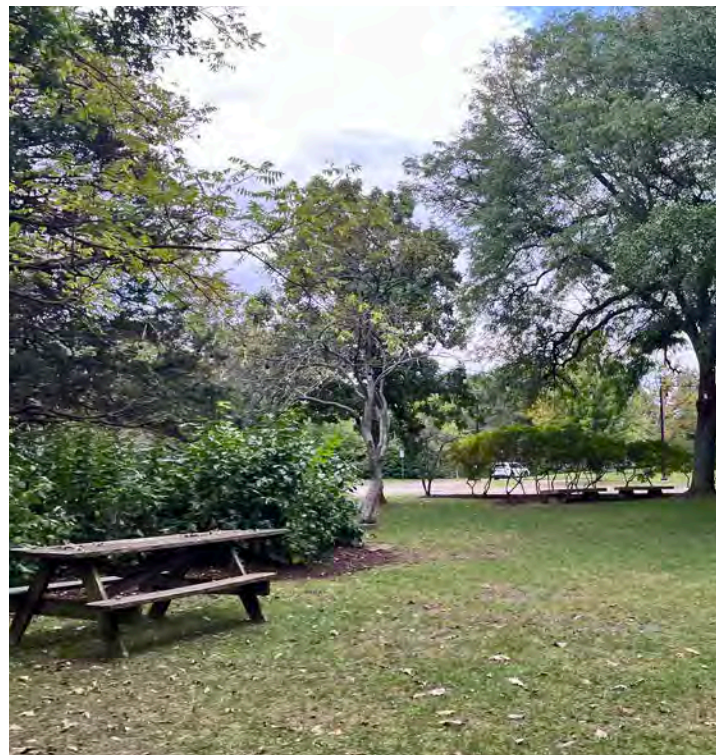
- Add a short walking path to connect the park's sidewalks and improve internal circulation
- Replace the bike rack with a permanent, better-placed model; coordinate with the City and local businesses
- Consider adding multiple bike racks to better serve cyclists at support high-traffic events like the farmers market
- Introduce more seating options, particularly benches with back support, to accommodate longer stays
- Evaluate outsourcing maintenance services to ensure consistent upkeep given the park's unique plantings and high visibility

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** Community gathering, dog walking, picnicking
- **What Residents Like:** Park character, shaded areas, civic atmosphere
- **Desired Improvements:** More frequent trash pickup, improved maintenance, updated amenities



KENNEDY PARK

850 Clavey Road

Neighborhood Park | South Central District

Overview

Kennedy Park is a highly utilized neighborhood park in the South Central District, offering a mix of active and passive recreation amenities including a playground, basketball court, and open green space. With mature trees and shaded areas, the park serves as a convenient local destination for families and individuals looking for casual play, walking, or relaxation. While it meets standards for amenities, access, and general quality, it falls short in terms of experience—lacking gathering spaces, seating variety, and upgraded infrastructure. Community feedback centered on the desire for more gathering opportunities, updated paths and play amenities, and enhancements like shade and dog-friendly amenities.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
AMENITY	Y	Park includes multiple core recreation amenities, including courts and a playground
ACCESS	Y	Accessible via sidewalk and bike infrastructure
QUALITY	N	Basic infrastructure is functional but aging in some areas
EXPERIENCE	N	Minimal seating and no formal gathering areas



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Add a walking loop path to improve circulation and encourage light exercise
- Install a pedestrian path connecting Clavey Road directly to the playground
- Collaborate with the City or a neighborhood association to install a wayfinding sign at Hastings
- Increase the number of benches throughout the park to provide more rest opportunities
- Install a drinking fountain to support longer stays

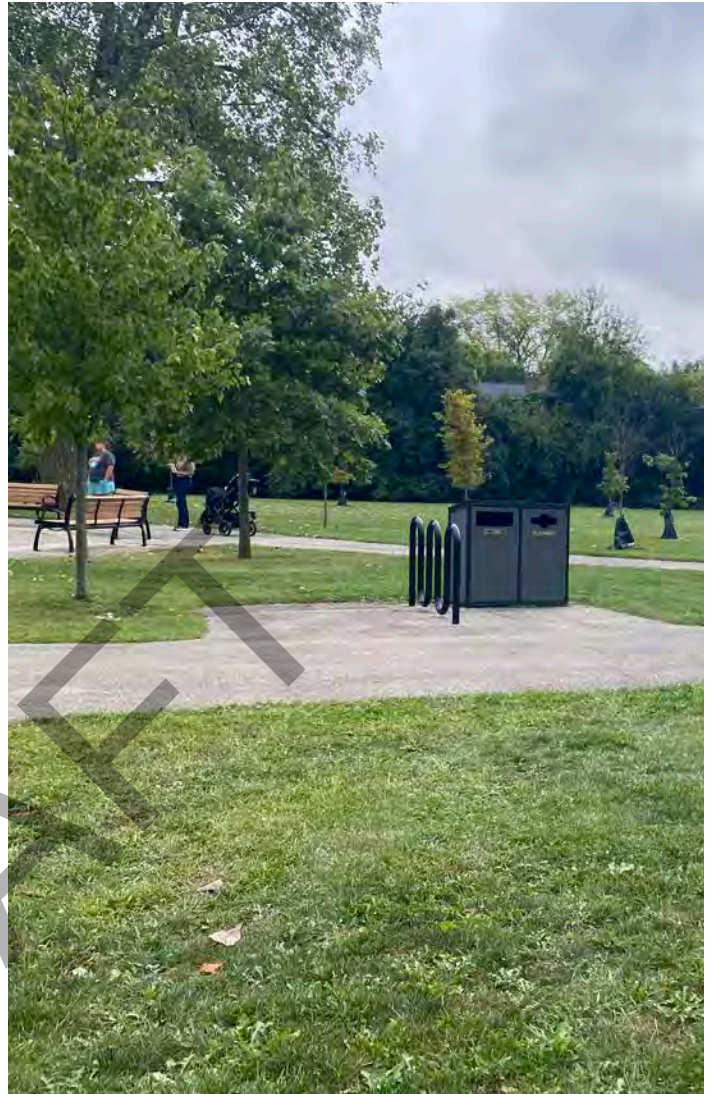
Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality and Experience standards:

- Repave aging park paths to improve walkability and safety
- Add a bench near the basketball court for spectators
- Create a small picnic or gathering area near the grove of trees west of the parking lot

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** Playground, walking, basketball
- **What Residents Like:** Playground
- **Desired Improvements:** More community gathering areas, fenced playground, shade, and dog-friendly amenities



KNOLL PARK

3485 Krenn Avenue

Undeveloped Park | North Central District

Overview

Knoll Park is a small, undeveloped green space located in a residential area of the North Central District. The park features minimal infrastructure and functions primarily as an open, passive-use space. While it meets expectations for an Undeveloped Park in terms of maintenance and condition, opportunities exist to strengthen access and enhance its usability through small-scale improvements. This park was not included in the Your Parks, Your Perspectives engagement initiative, and no public feedback was collected. However, internal assessment suggests a few targeted enhancements could make the space more accessible, comfortable, and visually appealing for neighborhood use.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	
ACCESS	N/A	
QUALITY	Y	Site is in acceptable condition
EXPERIENCE	N/A	



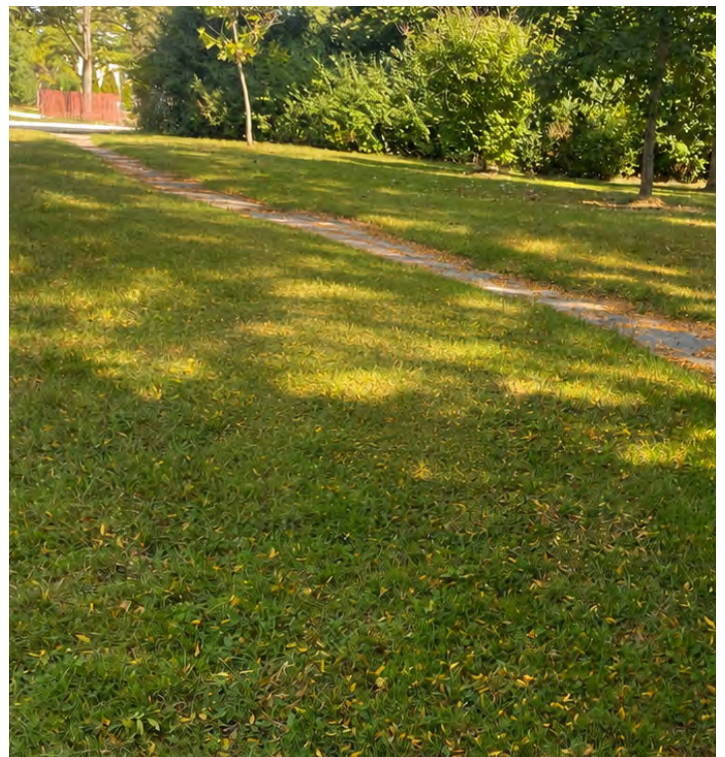
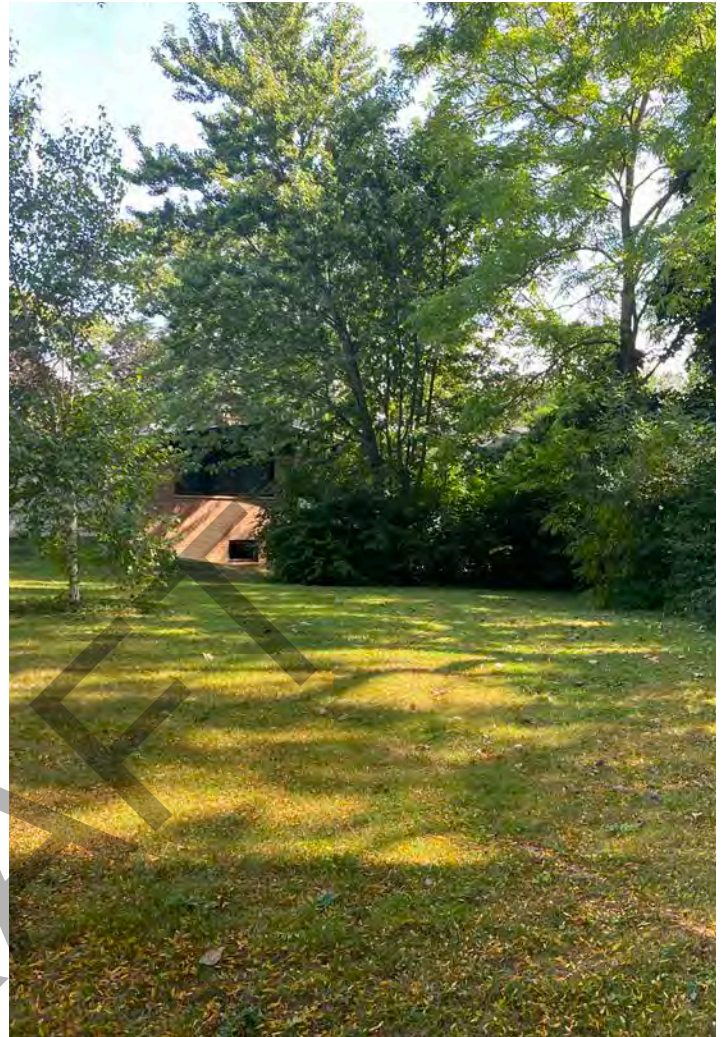
Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Support the city's MoveHP initiative to install sidewalks on Hyacinth Place and Krenn Avenue and add curb cuts or connecting paths where needed
- Replace the existing, informal path with either turf or a formal concrete sidewalk for improved clarity and ease of use
- Add a bench to create a quiet resting spot
- Plant additional trees to enhance visual appeal and increase shade coverage

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

None at this time



LARRY FINK MEMORIAL PARK

1377 Clavey Road

Community Park | South Central District

Overview

Larry Fink Memorial Park is a large, multi-use Community Park in the South Central District that serves a broad range of users—from families and dog owners to athletes and trail walkers. The park includes a playground, dog park, basketball courts, walking paths, and a naturalized pond, offering a full suite of core amenities. While the site meets standards for amenities and quality, gaps in access and overall experience limit its effectiveness as a fully connected community asset. Residents value the dog park and trail system but have expressed a desire for improvements in accessibility and shade and seating.



Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	All six core amenities are present across the park's north and south areas
ACCESS	N	Public transit coverage and pedestrian infrastructure are limited
QUALITY	Y	Facilities are well maintained, though some updates are needed
EXPERIENCE	N	Gathering areas could be better defined

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Access and Experience standards:

- Add benches along the northern portion of the trail and near the basketball court
- Enhance the picnic and gathering area near the pond and dog park for casual use and social connection

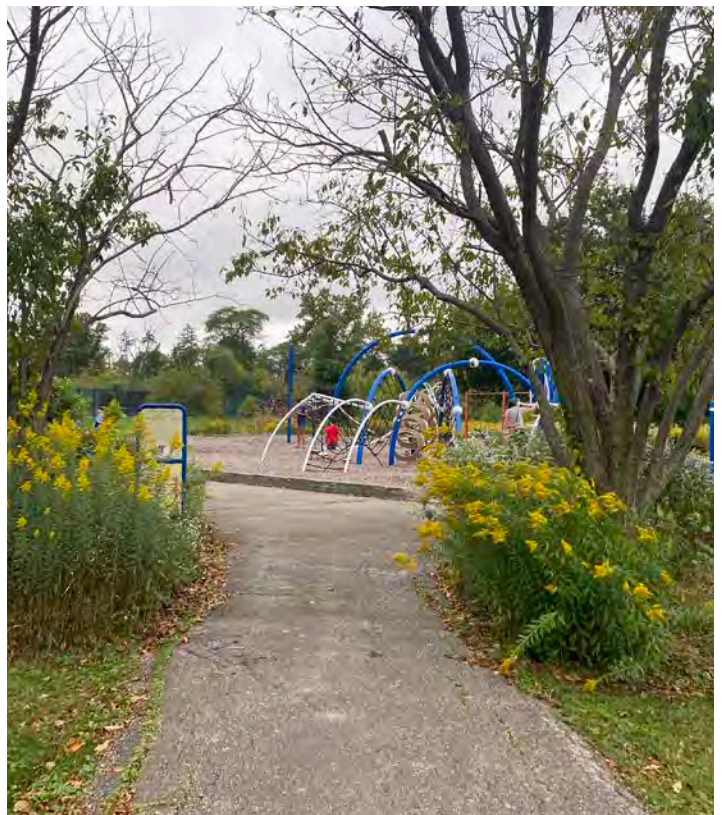
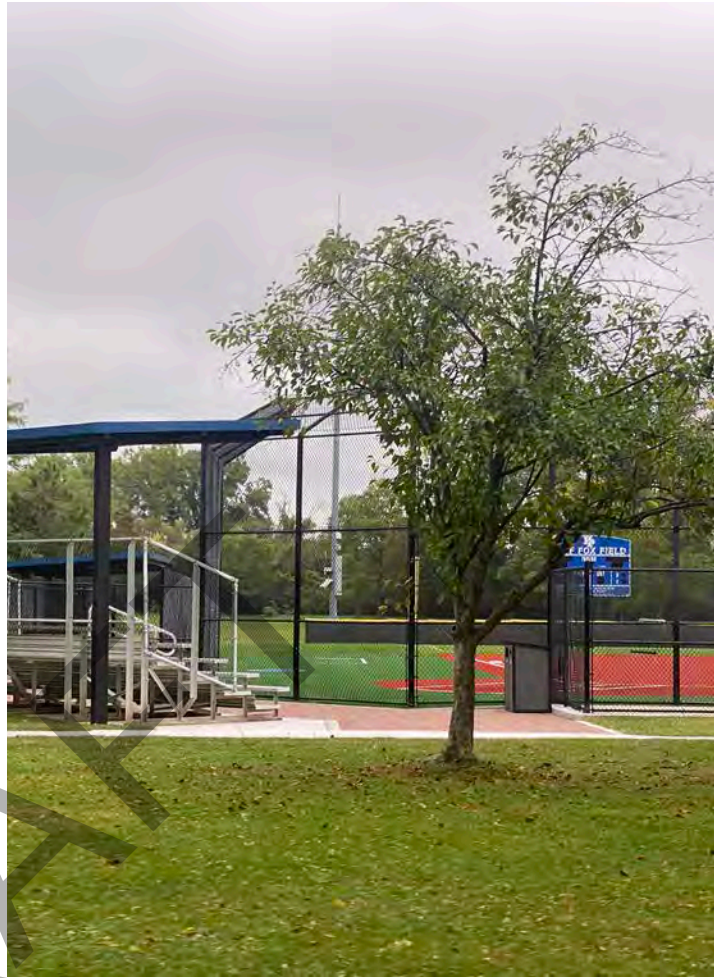
Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Add arterial walkway along Deer Creek Parkway to enhance pedestrian access
- Replace and better locate trash and recycling receptacles to improve maintenance efficiency and user convenience
- Improve the pedestrian entrance at Clavey Road and create stronger sidewalk connections throughout the site
- Install and relocate bike racks to encourage active transportation
- Create a path connection to Crofton Avenue to improve neighborhood-level access
- Explore the feasibility of opening up access to the natural area east of the Skokie River
- Improve visual access to the pond and support interpretive or educational opportunities

Community Feedback Highlights

- *Common Uses: Dog park, walking path, playground*
- *What Residents Like: Dog amenities, playground, and tennis courts*
- *Desired Improvements: Playground updates, dog park and policy changes*



LEONARDI PARK

2300 Grange Road

Undeveloped Park | Northwest District

Overview

Leonardi Park is a small, undeveloped green space located in the Northwest District. Leonardi is classified as an Undeveloped Park, it is currently maintained as a Passive Natural Area and supports native habitat. The park has no entry infrastructure or amenities. A roadside guardrail restricts pedestrian access, further limiting its usability. Leonardi serves Highland Park as open space acreage it does not function as a recreational community resource. Leonardi Park was not included in the Your Parks, Your Perspectives engagement initiative, and no direct public feedback was collected.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	Y	
QUALITY	Y	Site is in acceptable condition
EXPERIENCE	Y	



Considerations to Exceed Standards

- None currently identified. If future improvements are pursued, the existing roadside guardrail would need to be removed or relocated to create a viable public entry.

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time



LINCOLN PARK

1280 Green Bay Road

Neighborhood Park | S. Green Bay Rd. E. District

Overview

Lincoln Park is a neighborhood park located along Green Bay Road, adjacent to the former Lincoln School property. It features a playground, open green space, a basketball court, a restroom building, and walking paths. With key amenities in place and a well-connected location, the park meets all baseline standards for Neighborhood Parks.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	Features core amenities including playground, walking path, and restrooms
ACCESS	Y	Good sidewalk connectivity, though a crosswalk across Green Bay Rd. is needed
QUALITY	Y	Well-maintained, though path and signage need updates
EXPERIENCE	Y	Changing tables to be added



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Renovate the restroom building to include more user-serving features, such as a picnic shelter or shaded seating
- Plant more trees along Green Bay Road to increase shade, improve aesthetics, and buffer the park from traffic
- Coordinate with the City to install a crosswalk at Green Bay Road and Lincoln Avenue to improve safety and access

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Experience standards:

- Add changing tables in the restrooms to support families with small children

Community Feedback Highlights

- **Common Uses:** Playground (park and school), walking / dog walking
- **What Residents Like:** Accessible playground and walkable location
- **Desired Improvements:** Replacement of the 5-12 playground, additional amenities like shade, seating, and better restroom facilities



LINCOLN PLACE PARK

1410 Saint Johns Avenue

Mini Park | Central East District

Overview

Lincoln Place Park is a small, triangular park adjoining the Robert McClory Bike Path. The park currently contains a grassy lawn, small seating area, and a sculpture.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N/A	
QUALITY	N	Replace aging bench
EXPERIENCE	N/A	

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality standards:

- Replace the bench in the southwest corner of the park with a model that meets current park standards



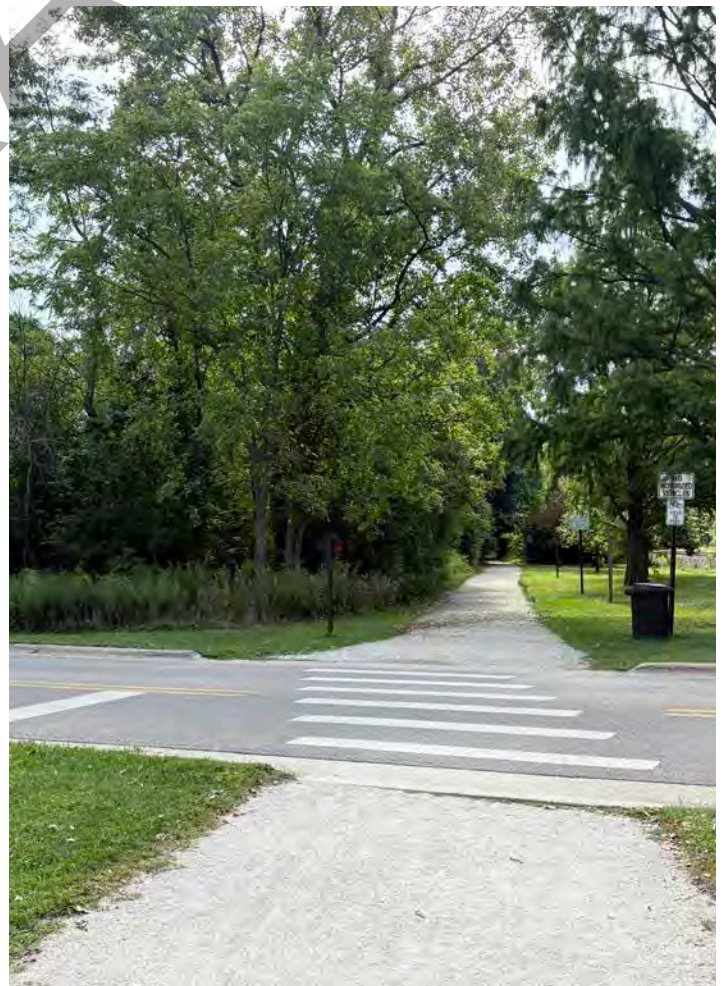
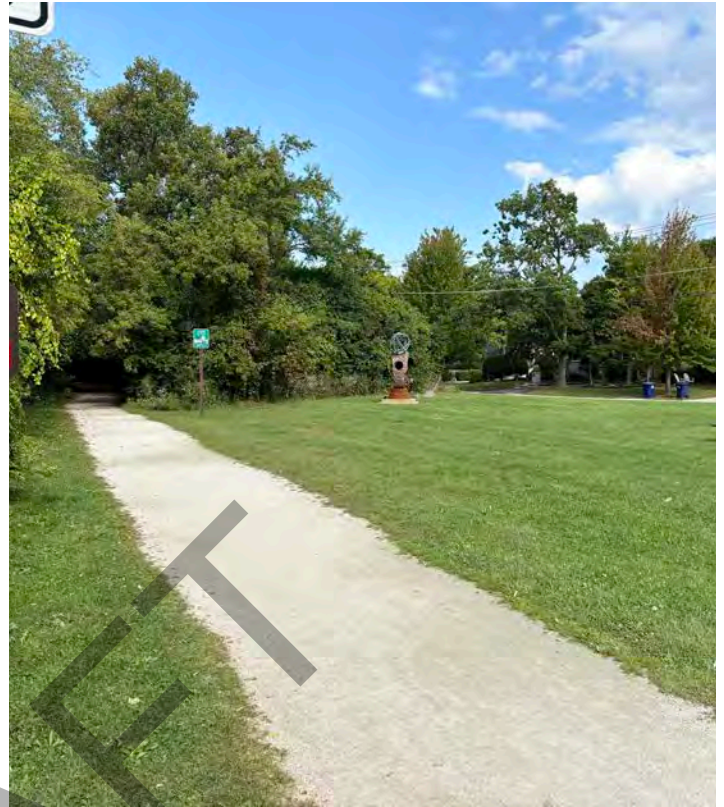
Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Incorporate more artwork or other interactive attraction pieces to the space
- Install drinking fountain with water bottle filling station
- Install bike racks for those traveling on the adjacent bike path

Community Feedback Highlights

- *Common Uses:* Pass-through space, viewing art, occasional seating
- *What Residents Like:* Sculpture, open space, park character
- *Desired Improvements:* additional seating, activating green space, drinking fountain



LINCOLNWOOD PARKWAY

Saint Johns Avenue and Lincolnwood Road

Undeveloped Park | Southeast District

Overview

Lincolnwood Parkway is a triangular parkway located at the angled intersection of Saint Johns Avenue and Lincolnwood Road. The parkway is east of the Green Bay Trail and southwest of the former Braeside Elementary School.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N/A	
QUALITY	Y	
EXPERIENCE	N/A	



Considerations to Exceed Standards

- None currently identified

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time



LONGVIEW PARKWAY

Saint Johns Avenue

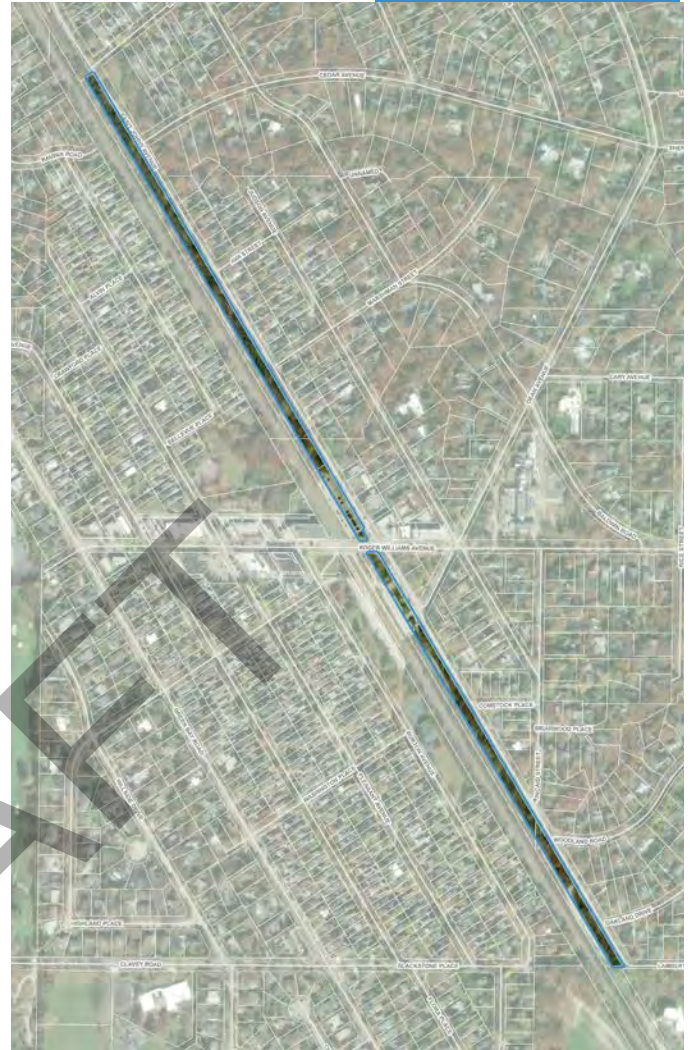
Parkway | S. Green Bay Rd. District, Ravinia Business District

Overview

Longview Parkway is a long stretch of naturalized area which holds the Robert McClory Bike Path in the north extension of the Green Bay Trail. The Park follows the eastern border of the Metra tracks, terminating at the Ravinia Metra Station Parking Lot. The native prairie planting on the east side provides comfortable separation from St. John's Avenue, and the dense woody planting on the west side provides screening from the Metra tracks.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N/A	
QUALITY	Y	Site is in acceptable condition
EXPERIENCE	N/A	



Considerations to Exceed Standards

- None currently identified

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time



MEMORIAL PARK

405 Prospect Avenue

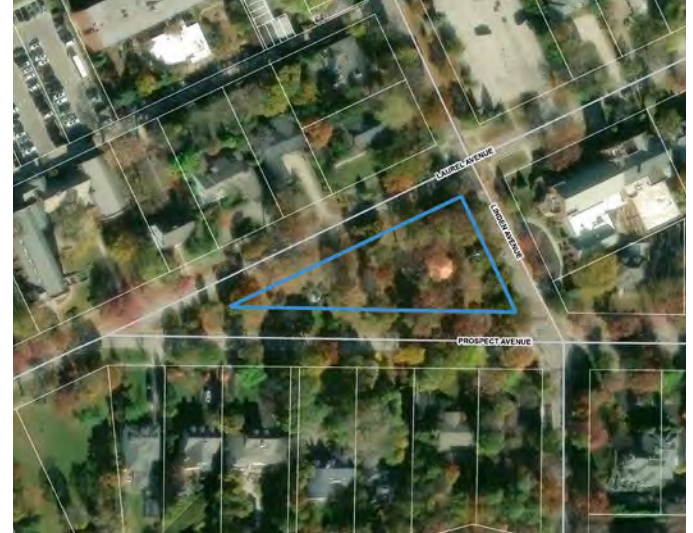
Special Use Park | Central East District

Overview

Memorial Park is a tranquil, reflective park commemorating War I veterans from Highland Park. Central points of the park include the veterans monument and the Bob Robinson Bandstand. Mature trees provide ample shade for the park's seating areas and center lawn space.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N	No direct bike infrastructure, no dedicated parking lot
QUALITY	N	Replace aging benches
EXPERIENCE	N	



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Add a formal park sign with foundation plantings at the corner of Laurel Ave. and Prospect Ave.
- Perform restoration of bandstand and memorials to encourage more events and public engagement
- Explore outsourcing garden maintenance

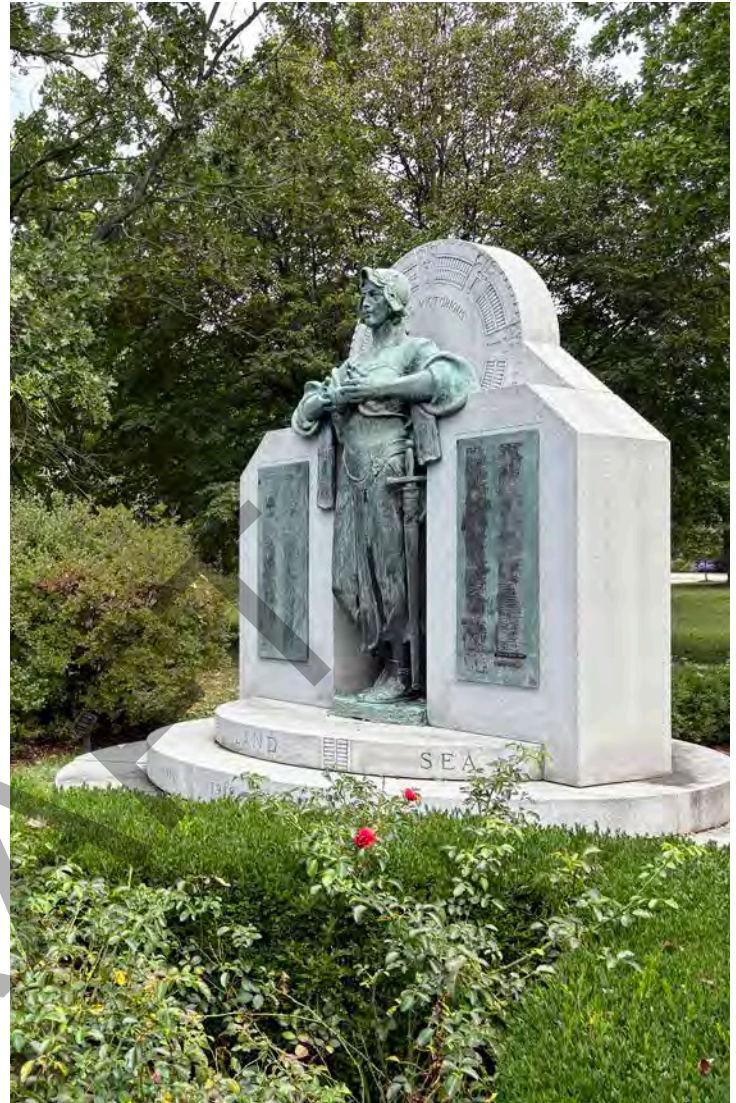
Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality, Experience, and Access standards:

- Install a bike rack to better support active transportation users
- Replace the current drinking fountain
- Create a small picnic or gathering area to encourage lingering
- Coordinate with the city to install public sidewalk on the west side of the park along Laurel Ave and/or Prospect Ave to improve access.
- Add walking paths connecting park elements to public sidewalk
- Define an intentional picnic area by adding trash and recycling receptacles

Community Feedback Highlights

- *Common Uses:* Community gathering, open space
- *What Residents Like:* Park character, community gathering place
- *Desired Improvements:* Community events



MILLARD PARK AND BEACH

35 Ravine Drive

Passive Natural Area | Central East District

Overview

Millard Park is a natural area along Lake Michigan in the Central East District. The lower section of the park includes a passive, non-swimming beach. The upper portion of the park, includes a historic garden and gazebo structure. Millard Park is intended to offer a neighborhood-friendly park that provides areas for contemplation and respite. It is maintained as a passive natural area with rustic paths. In 2022, work began at the park to repair the bluff slopes and improve slope stability. Work is ongoing and informed by the Park Districts Beach Management Plan.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N	No direct bike infrastructure, no pedestrian access points
QUALITY	Y	Signage meets PDHP standard, amenities present are in good condition
EXPERIENCE	Y	Educational park signage present for visitors, beach present for passive recreation only and not swimming

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Access standards:

- Collaborate with City to install park wayfinding signs along right of way of Forest Ave, Hazel, and Ravine Dr. Install bike racks near the park entrance
- Enhance the Sycamore Rd. Entrance for walkers and bikers



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Restore Historic Garden with the support of funding and partnerships.
- Incorporate a path into and through the park
- Explore partnerships and grant opportunities to address major infrastructure improvements to improve break water and restore the ravine outlet
- Continue to support and improve the beach for both people and dogs.
- Explore partnerships and funding opportunities to restore the natural character of the ravine outlet at the lake.

MOONEY PARK

1160 Cavell Avenue

Neighborhood Park | Westside District

Overview

Mooney Park is a moderately-sized neighborhood park in the Westside District that has a large playground area, field space, outdoor basketball courts, walking paths, and a restroom.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	Core amenity standards are met with the playground, walking path, basketball courts, and multi-use field
ACCESS	Y	Bike racks are present, and the park pathway is connected to the city sidewalk
QUALITY	Y	Signage is present and updated to Highland Park standard. Playground, sports structures, benches, and drinking fountains are in good condition
EXPERIENCE	N	Social spaces within the park could be improved to encourage gathering



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Support City's MoveHP initiative to install sidewalk on Cavell Ave. and a crosswalk at Cavell Ave. and Richfield Ave.
- Create dedicated landscaped spaces using native, low-maintenance plantings
- Expand dedicated picnic and gathering spaces for wider range of social interaction through more defined features

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Experience standards:

- Create a "forest walk" pathway connection from the council ring gathering space to the north side of the park

Community Feedback Highlights

- *Common Uses:* Walking, dog-walking
- *What Residents Like:* Walking path, good park maintenance, playground
- *Desired Improvements:* Activate open space



MORaine PARK AND BEACH

2501 Sheridan Road

Special Use Park | Moraine North District

Overview

Moraine Park and Beach is a neighborhood friendly park that is focused on passive recreation. The upper portion of the park features a sculpture park, opens space, walking trails, seating areas, and restroom. A boardwalk through the wooded ravine area provides year round beach access, and a seasonal dog-friendly beach. After years of closure, in 2024 the Park District completed a major renovation of the bluff stairs providing improved access to the beach and experience along the ravine trail. The park has a rich history as the former site of the Moraine Hotel.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	Y	Bike racks present. The site is accessible for pedestrians and within close proximity to public transportation. Parking lots are present.
QUALITY	Y	Signage meets Highland Park standard, amenities present are in good condition
EXPERIENCE	Y	The space emphasizes natural restoration and ecological context for visitors. The beach is a nice amenity which attracts new residents to the area



Considerations to Exceed Standards

- Continue to support and improve the beach for both people and dogs
- Explore partnerships and funding opportunities to restore the natural character of the ravine outlet at the lake

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time



MORONEY PARK

1055 Saint Johns Avenue

Neighborhood Park | Central East District

Overview

Moroney Park is a combination of two neighborhood street corner parcels located on either side of Cedar Avenue. There is a fenced-in playground on the south parcel, and open green space on the north parcel. The north side of the park is a passive space, primarily composed of grass lawn and shade trees. The playground is surrounded by dense vegetation offering a tucked in feel and shade.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N	
ACCESS	N	No direct bike infrastructure/ bike racks present
QUALITY	Y	Existing playground equipment pathways are in good condition. Signage is updated to meet park standards
EXPERIENCE	N	Limited gathering areas, site lacks defining characteristics that would draw people into the area



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Work with City to add wayfinding signage along the GreenBay Trail

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Capacity, Access, and Experience standards:

- Install a bike rack to support bikers
- Activate the north side of the park with a walking trail to or other neighborhood approved recreational amenities.
- Create a picnic area for gatherings

Community Feedback Highlights

- *Common Uses: Open space*
- *What Residents Like: Open space, playground*
- *Desired Improvements: Additional seating, activate the open space*



OLD ELM PARK

3420 Krenn Avenue

Neighborhood Park | North Central District

Overview

Old Elm Park is a neighborhood park located in the North Central District. The park offers a range of amenities for active and passive recreation, including a backstop, tennis courts, basketball courts, playground areas, picnic shelter, and restrooms.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	Multiple amenities present
ACCESS	Y	Park has multimodal access
QUALITY	Y	Signage is updated per park standards, and other amenities and pathways are in good condition.
EXPERIENCE	N	Park offers a range of amenities and programming capabilities

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Experience standards:

- Install bench at the bus stop
- Create additional gathering space in the southeast corner of the park
- Expand planting of trees and native species throughout the park



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Extend pathways throughout the park
- Support Move HPs initiative to install sidewalk on Krenn Ave. Create a secondary entrance on Lotus Place
- Expand planting of trees and native species throughout the park

Community Feedback Highlights

- *Common Uses:* Sport courts
- *What Residents Like:* Playground, sport courts, seating
- *Desired Improvements:* Activate open space, add more sport courts



OLSON PARK

1800 Spruce Avenue

Neighborhood Park | Westside District

Overview

Olson Park is a neighborhood park that has shared ownership between the Park District and School District. The primary amenity in the park is its large open field space, typically used for soccer and other field sports. The 20-acre park can fit multiple soccer fields, making it ideal for leagues and tournaments. The park also has a baseball backstop, a walking trail along its perimeter, and a playground.



Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	Walking path, multi-use field, playground, and baseball area present
ACCESS	Y	Park is accessible for bicyclists and pedestrians
QUALITY	Y	Signage and amenities are in good condition and meet park standards
EXPERIENCE	N	Limited seating and gathering areas, no restroom facilities, limited high-value planting areas

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Support MoveHPs initiative to replace gravel path along Ridge Rd with a sidewalk and enhance the entry experience for visitors using that path
- Construct a shelter or covered seating area
- Install additional bike racks at the park entrance to the west
- Add signage at park entrance on Spruce Ave.
- Remove backstop if baseball area is underutilized
- Work with NSSD112 to evaluate paving the parking lot
- Formalize user-made pedestrian entrance on West side of the park

Recommendations to Fill Gaps & Constraints

These actions address unmet Experience standards:

- Create a small picnic or gathering area to encourage lingering

Community Feedback Highlights

- *Common Uses:* Dog walking, soccer games
- *What Residents Like:* Walking path
- *Desired Improvements:* Activate the park with additional programming elements, add shade structures and seating areas, pave parking lot



PARK AVENUE BOATING FACILITY

8 Park Avenue

Special Use Park | Central East District

Overview

Park Avenue Boating Facility is a boating and fishing beach that features launching ramps, beach access, and limited seating. Park Avenue Beach is also home to the North Shore Yacht Club. A portion of the site is owned by the City of Highland Park and managed by the Park District. A portion of the site is owned by the City of Highland Park and managed by the Park District.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	Y	Bike racks are present, pedestrians are able to access the park from the sidewalk, and parking is available. Remote location and terrain make public transit opportunities not viable
QUALITY	Y	Signage is updated per HP standard, accessory structures and amenities are in good condition
EXPERIENCE	Y	The park and beach attract new residents and provide opportunities for community members to socialize. The beach front is a valuable asset that is well maintained and utilized



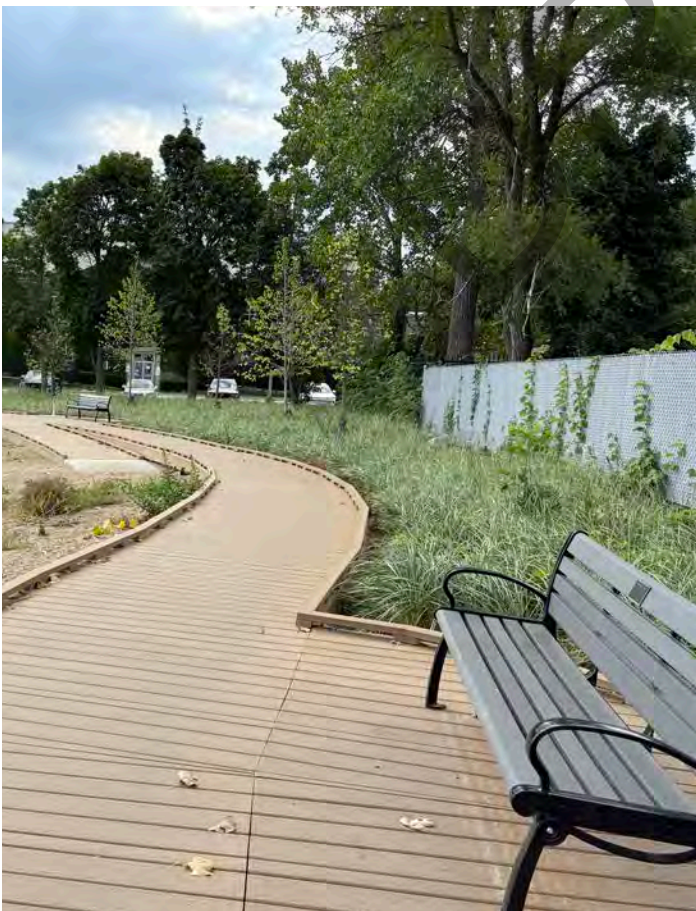
Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Incorporate the phase 2 and 3 recommendations not yet completed from the Park Ave Site Master Plan Completed by Lakota Group.
- Add a covered shade structure at the north beach
- Explore incorporating a painted path for walkers
- Enhancements to the boat storage
- Enhancements to the building leased by the North Shore Yacht Club.
- Extended Board Walk and Enhance view to Lake Michigan

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time



PORT CLINTON PARK

2627 Saint Johns Avenue

Neighborhood Park | Moraine North District

Overview

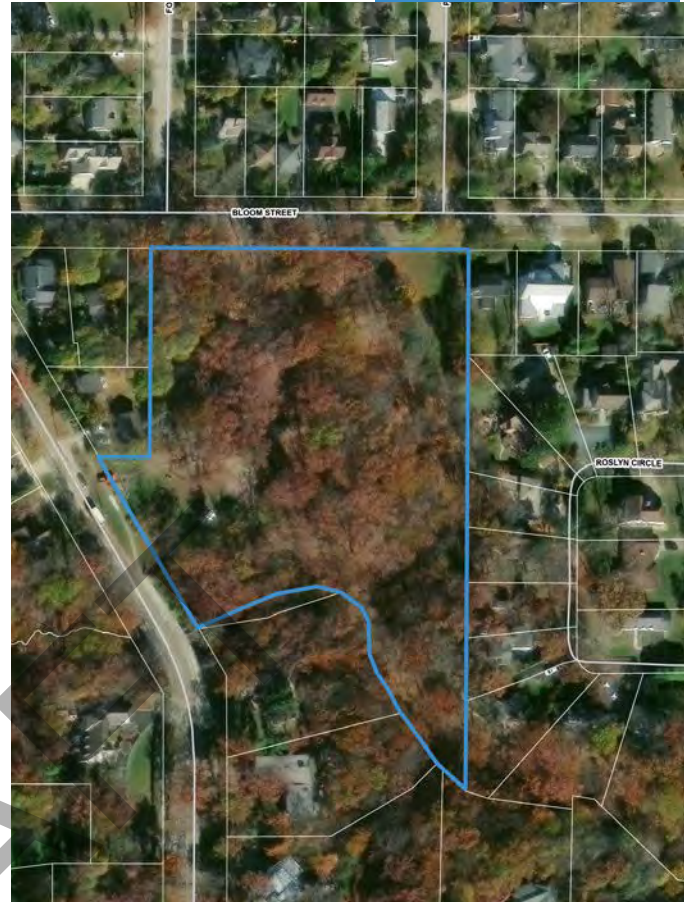
Port Clinton Park is a heavily-wooded neighborhood park with multiple play areas, including a playground and a small basketball court, and several seating areas. The park leans into the woodland theme with curated play structures. Paved walking trails offer pedestrian and bicycle access into the park.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	Core amenities present
ACCESS	Y	Park is accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists
QUALITY	Y	The park is well maintained, though some updates are needed
EXPERIENCE	Y	

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Relocate bike racks closer to entrance
- Support City's Move HP initiative to install a crosswalk on St. Johns Ave
- Consider adding a vegetation screen on West Side of basketball court to provide buffer with neighbor
- Create a look out space near the ravine
- Add interpretive signage at the ravine overlook

Community Feedback Highlights

- *Common Uses: Basketball, playground*
- *What Residents Like: Playground, open space*
- *Desired Improvements: Playground update, additional amenities*



RED OAK (MAGNOLIA) PARK

2127 Old Briar Road

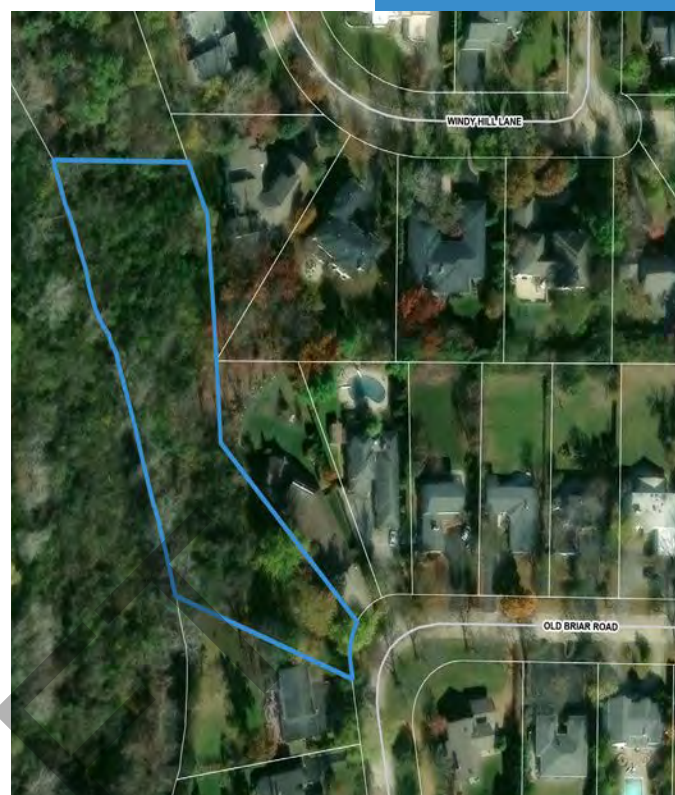
Undeveloped Park | Southwest District

Overview

Red Oak (Magnolia) Park is a small, undeveloped park in the Southwest District. Adjacent to the North Branch of the Chicago River and Deerfield Park District's Briarwood Nature Area.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N/A	
QUALITY	Y	Site is in acceptable condition
EXPERIENCE	N/A	



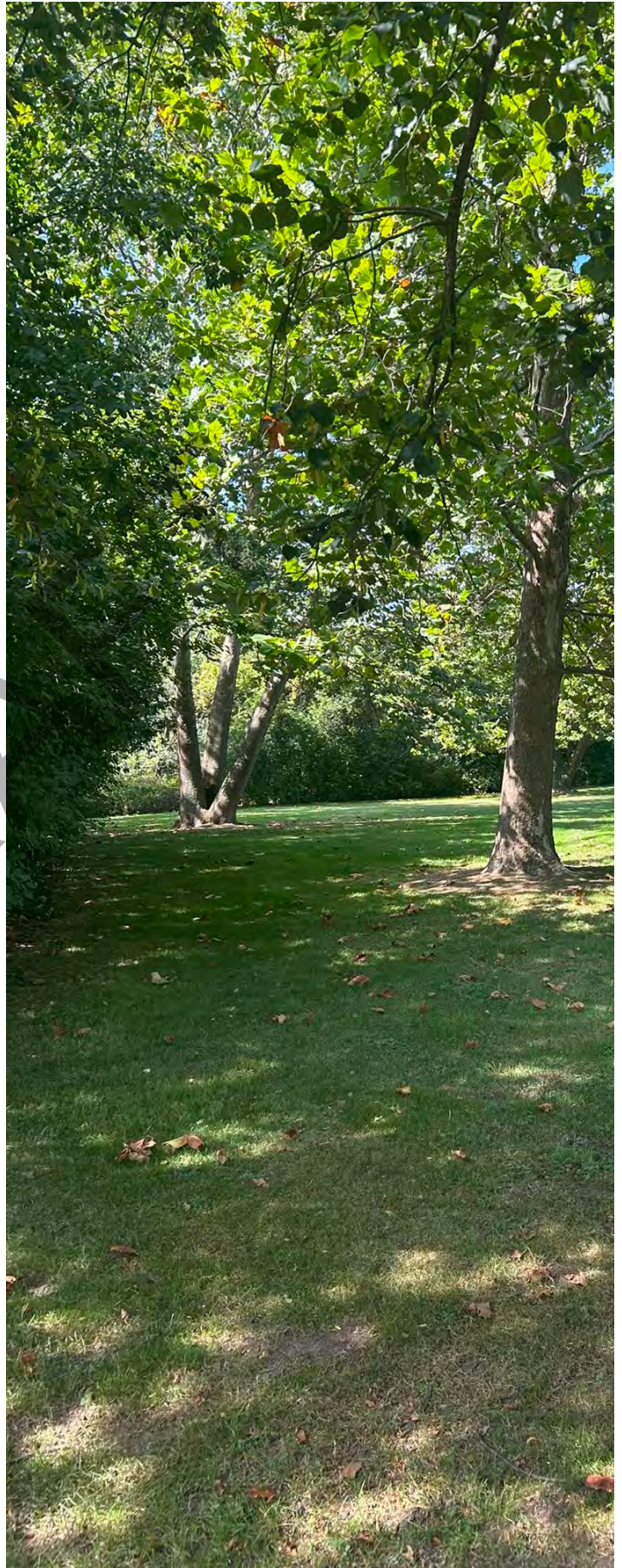
Considerations to Exceed Standards

If developed, the following enhancements are suggested to meet standards for visitor experience:

- Develop this area to help meet access standards for neighborhood park coverage
- Provide a fishing dock or opening where anglers can enjoy recreational fishing on the North Branch of the Chicago River
- Create connection to Deerfield Park District's Briarwood Park across the river
- If a connection is made, consider improving site with additional park amenities such as signage, benches, pathways, bike racks, and trash receptacles.

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time



RORY DAVID DEUTSCH TOT LOT

1301 Hillary Lane

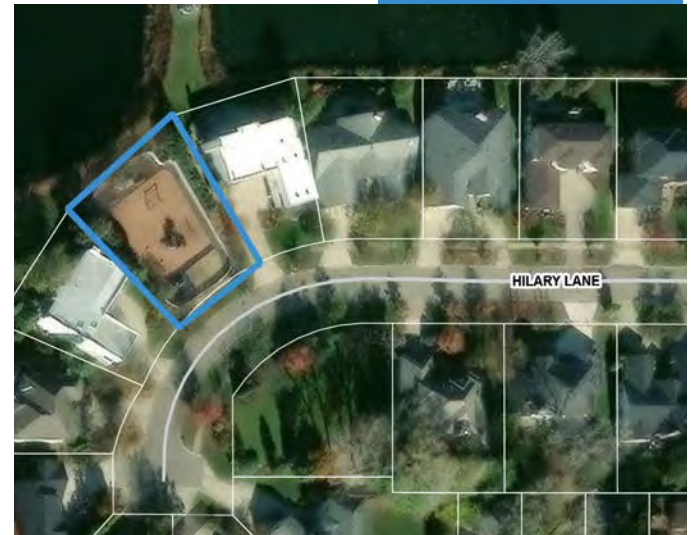
Mini Park | Central District

Overview

The Rory David Deutsch Tot Lot is a small, memorial park for kids ages 2-5 to enjoy.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N	There is a sidewalk connection but no parking or bike infrastructure - on street parking is a challenge
QUALITY	N	Signage, some play structures, benches, and drinking fountains are outdated or not aligned with current park standards
EXPERIENCE	N	Outdated playground equipment and a lack of a gathering space



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Improve landscape quality around the perimeter of the site and dedicate on-street space for an ADA parking stall
- Incorporate educational or interpretive signage include tactile displays for more inclusivity

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality and Experience standards:

- Provide bike parking
- Add drinking fountain with bottle filler near the entrance
- Include standard park signage for this facility
- Update walking paths, amenities, and outdated structures
- Update outdated playground equipment and create a central gathering space to promote varied use
- Incorporate native drought-tolerant plantings and opportunities for stormwater BMPs



ROSEWOOD BEACH

833 Sheridan Road

Special Use Park | Southeast District

Overview

Rosewood Beach is Highland Park's swimming beach and is a highly frequented destination for locals and visitor seeking to enjoy lake Michigan. Shoreline improvements of the breakwaters help to retain sand at the beach, provide a wider range of aquatic microhabitats for local marine species, and designate a safer swimming space for beach-goers. Boardwalks, seating areas, playgrounds, and equipment rental facilities provide a range of activities for active and passive uses of the beachfront. The beach is further activated by an interpretive center that hosts programs and is available for community members to rent.



Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N	Sidewalk access is limited for pedestrians, and public transportation is not within walking distance for this area. Some stair-only entries and steep paths limit accessibility for some users arriving from the main road.
QUALITY	Y	The site is in good condition
EXPERIENCE	Y	

- Once a sidewalk is constructed on Sheridan road, evaluate feasibility of providing an accessible walkway to the beach from Sheridan
- Enhance experience for walkers accessing the beach from the Roger Williams and upper park, such as coordination with the City to replace the brick paver path and evaluate wayfinding signage

Considerations to Exceed Standards

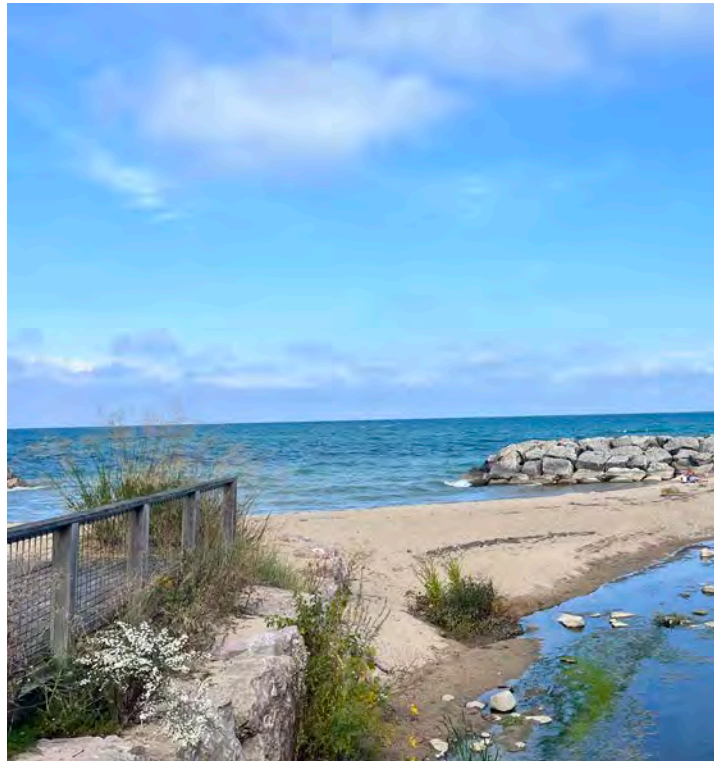
To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Add electric charging stations for electric vehicles in the parking lot
- Provide beach wheelchairs for public use
- Reintroduce a sand volleyball or other sand base recreational sports

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Access standards:

- Install additional bike racks at the lower parking lot to better support users visiting by bike



ROSEWOOD PARK

45 Roger Williams Avenue

Neighborhood Park | Southeast District

Overview

Rosewood Park is at the top of the bluff overlooking Rosewood Beach. The park includes a playground and the historic Jens Jensen stone pool, as well as a couple seating pockets overlooking the bluff for a nice beach view. The majority of the area is covered by grass, natural areas, and shade trees, with picnic benches scattered throughout. Native perennials and grasses line the north and east borders of the park where there is a pathway connection from the sidewalk to the ravine walk down to Rosewood Beach.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	
ACCESS	Y	The park is accessible by bike, and bike racks are provided. There is a pedestrian connection present on the southeast corner.
QUALITY	N	At the time of evaluation, the park was under renovation.
EXPERIENCE	Y	

Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

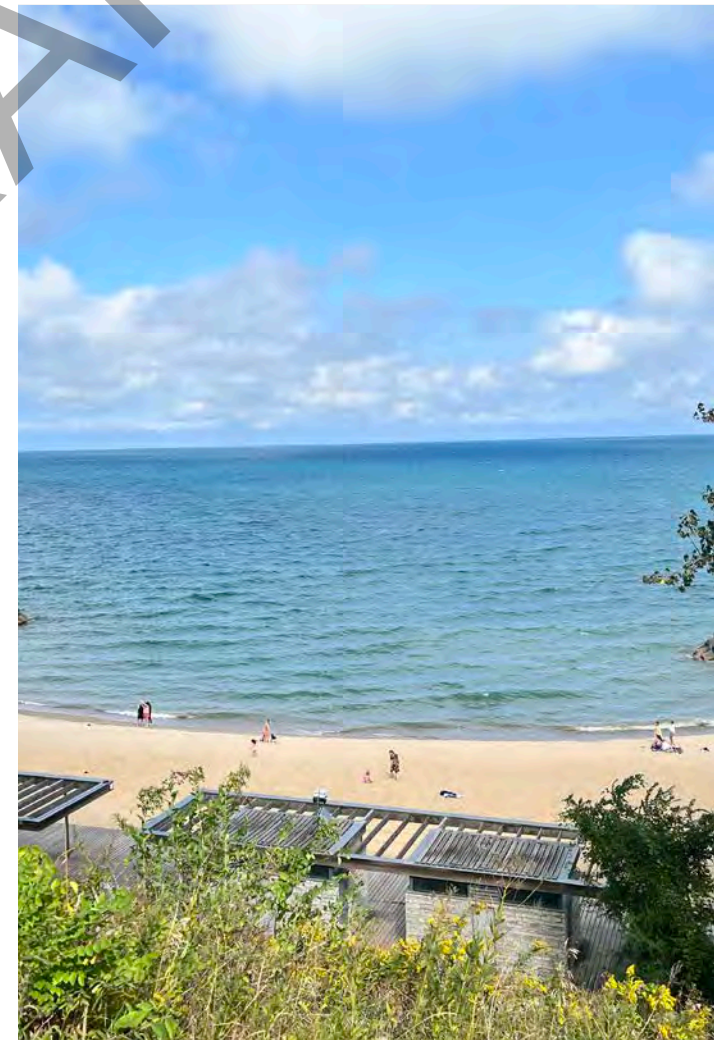
- Explore opportunities to incorporate event space or shelter small gathering space

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality standards:

- Add an ADA-accessible path through the site to allow all visitors to access the site and overlook areas
- Enhance park paths for ADA compliance
- Fill the stone circle feature with water as it may have originally been intended





SLEEPY HOLLOW PARK

2755 Trail Way

Neighborhood Park | North Central District

Overview

Sleepy Hollow Park is a neighborhood park located along the Skokie River. A paved walking trail runs through the park and extends across the river and continues north into Danny Cuniff Park. The park also has a baseball/softball backstop.

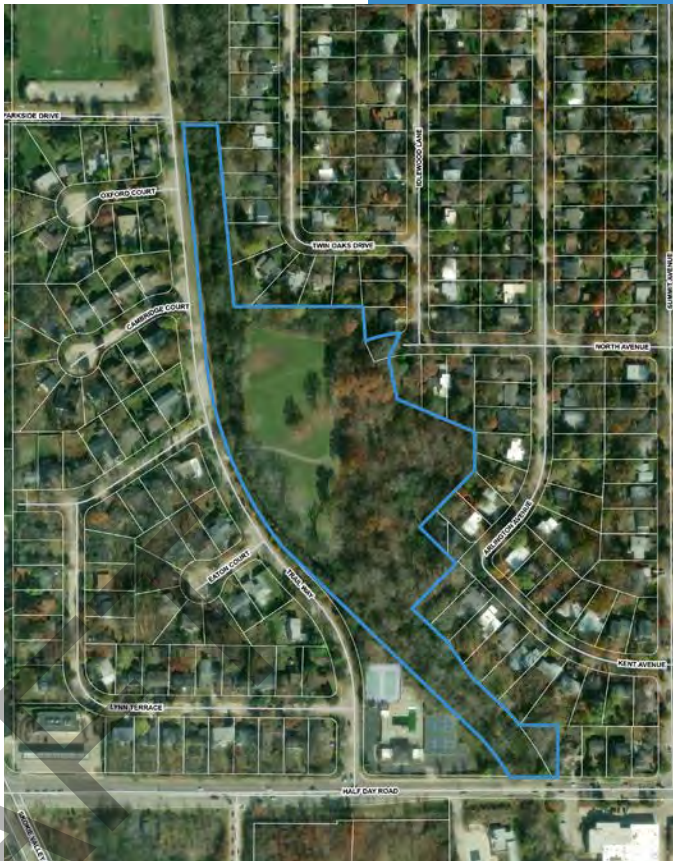
Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	Amenities include a walking path, and backstop
ACCESS	N	No direct bike infrastructure
QUALITY	Y	Park is well-maintained and amenities are in good condition. Park signage meets District standard.
EXPERIENCE	Y	Park is considered an asset to the surrounding neighborhood by providing passive recreational space

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Access standards:

- *Install a bike rack to better support visitors biking to the park*



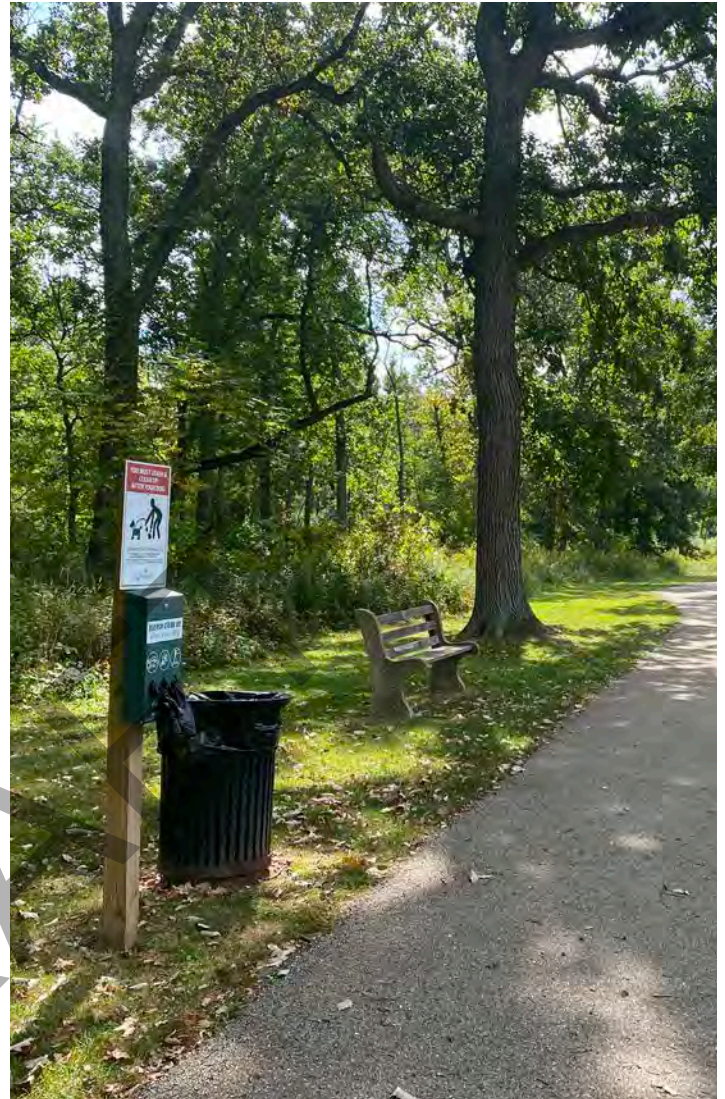
Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Add benches along the existing walking path
- Create a picnic gathering area to provide neighbors a neighborhood park picnic area as an alternative to Danny Cunniff Parkk
- Explore grant opportunities to restore the streambank and allow for safe river views
- Consider removing underutilized backstop, and replace with alternative amenity to fulfill capacity standard for the park as a neighborhood park
- Evaluate stormwater infrastructure and options for rain garden, where flooding occurs in the park
- Consider adding a community supported recreational amenity if the back stop is removed

Community Feedback Highlights

- *Common Uses:* Walking, dog-walking, short-cut path, community gathering spot
- *What Residents Like:* Dog walking, open space, tranquility
- *Desired Improvements:* Additional seating



SOUTH DEERE PARK DRIVE

209 South Deer Park Drive

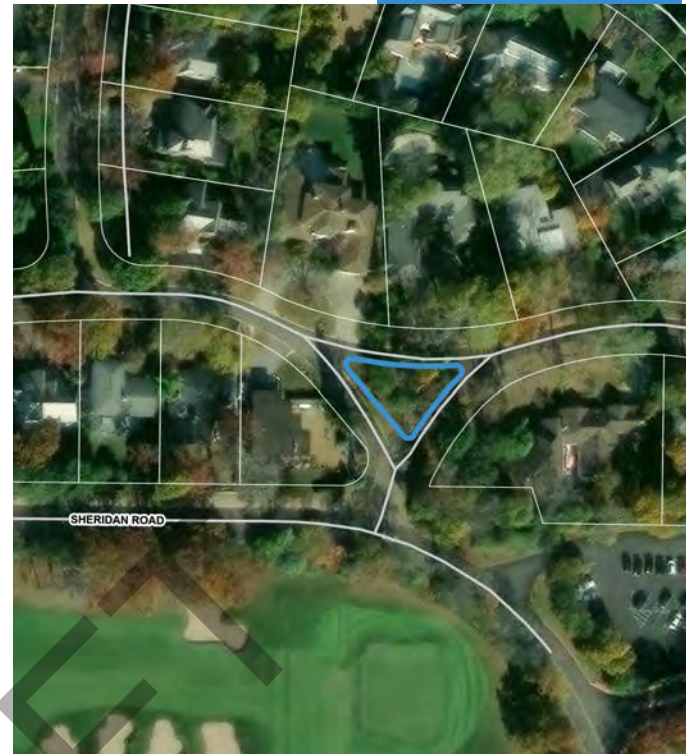
Undeveloped Park | Southeast District

Overview

South Deere Park Drive is a triangular parkway located in the South Deere Park cul-de-sac. The undeveloped space is noticeably mounded with soil in the center, and a small stand of trees remain on the north edge of the area.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	N/A	
QUALITY	Y	
EXPERIENCE	N/A	



Considerations to Exceed Standards

- None currently identified

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time



SUNSET WOODS PARK

1801 Sunset Road

Community Park | Central District

Overview

Sunset Woods Park is a major community park located in the heart of Highland Park. The park is walking distance from downtown, the Highland Park Metra Station, and several schools. Sunset Woods offers something for everyone, including play areas, sports facilities, walking trails, shelters, picnic areas, and eight acres of designated natural areas.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	All six core amenities are present
ACCESS	Y	Park facilitates multimodal accessibility
QUALITY	Y	Facilities are well maintained
EXPERIENCE	Y	Experience criteria met

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time



Considerations to Exceed Standards

- Adjust parking lot to allow for 2-way traffic circulation and more efficient layout to support large community events.
- Strengthen connectivity to the neighborhood to the West and downtown to the East
- Enhance pedestrian path entries around the park for a consistent welcoming experience
- Renovate the fieldhouse for improved program space
- Renovate north pavilion for improved program space
- Active the northeast corner of the park
- Consider introducing new amenities such as a tiered seating area for programs and events, multi-use water play plaza, and/or outdoor adult fitness equipment



THE PRESERVE OF HIGHLAND PARK

1207 Park Avenue West

Regional Park | North Central District

Overview

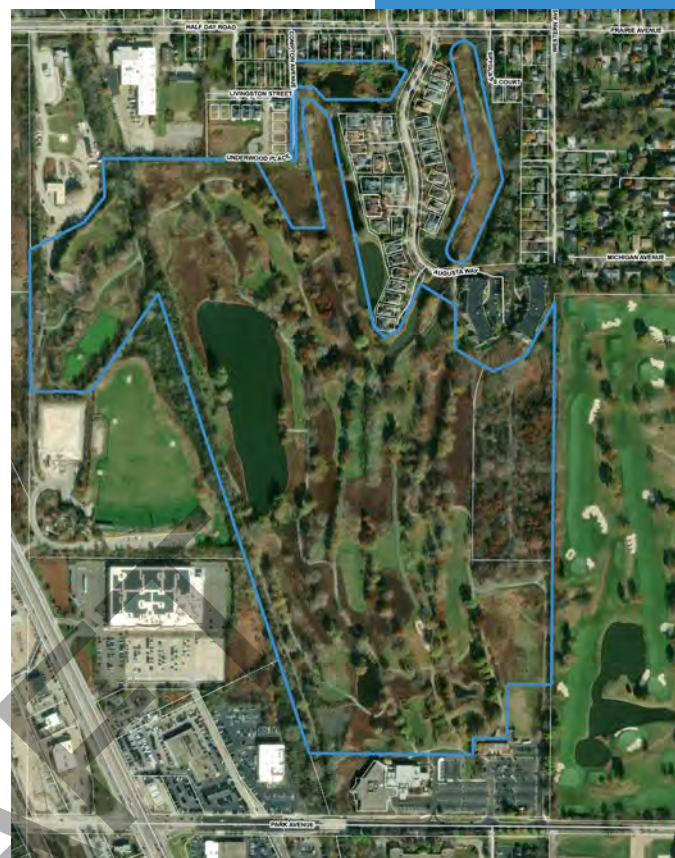
The Preserve is a one-of-a-kind natural area for passive recreation, welcoming visitors to immerse themselves in the sights, sounds, and experiences of nature and outdoor play. Park amenities include green lawns, nature-based play areas, specialized native gardens, restored woodlands, and walking and biking trails.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N/A	
ACCESS	Y	Park site facilitates multimodal accessibility
QUALITY	Y	Facilities are well maintained, though some updates are needed
EXPERIENCE	Y	The park is a valuable community asset

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

- None at this time



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Add bike repair stations
- Consider partnerships, sponsorships, adopt-a-feature programs, and low-impact rentals to support programming and revenue
- Update outdated amenities, including benches and the gazebo
- Add drinking fountains with bottle fillers
- Add additional bike parking near the site perimeter
- Enhance aquatic habitats through native plantings and in-water structures to support water quality and biodiversity



WEST RIDGE PARK

636 Ridge Road

Community Park | Southwest District

Overview

West Ridge Park is a community park and formerly home to the Park District of Highland Park Administrative Offices. The park offers multiple areas for active recreation including a basketball court, baseball diamond, batting cage, and multi-use field space, along with a playground, picnic area, and walking path.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	N	Not all core amenities present, missing raquet sport facilities
ACCESS	Y	Multimodal accessibility facilitated
QUALITY	N	Park paths need improvement
EXPERIENCE	N	Seating is limited and gathering areas could be better defined

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Quality and Experience standards:

- Add a space for raquet sports



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Introduce ballfields at the north side of the park
- Replace athletic lighting that was removed as part of the renovation
- Create an activity hub by relocating the playground and adding a shade shelter for gathering
- Create connection to the west side of the park and central walkway
- Update aging bike racks



WOODRIDGE PARK

150 Barberry Road

Neighborhood Park | Southwest District

Overview

Woodridge Park is a neighborhood park located in the Southwest District. The park has a variety of active recreational amenities along with green space, a walking trail, and a community garden.

Standards Summary

STANDARD	MET?	KEY NOTES
CAPACITY	Y	All six core amenities are present across the park's north and south areas
ACCESS	N	No bike racks or welcoming entry points from nearby transit
QUALITY	Y	Facilities are well maintained, though some updates are needed
EXPERIENCE	Y	Park serves neighborhood uses and draws people into the area. Food garden supports local food pantry and encourages community gathering, well-being, and cooperation



Considerations to Exceed Standards

To improve visitor experience and meet long-term community needs, the following enhancements are suggested:

- Consider introducing a walking loop around the park
- Consider removing the back stop when it is up for replacement.
- Install dog amenities
- Create a more intentional picnic/gathering space
- Add a picnic table near the community garden
- Install a storage shed near the community garden
- Add a few benches (for players) near the tennis and pickleball courts
- Create a rain garden to surround the exposed drain
- Explore the opportunity to expand the community garden

Recommendations to Fill Gaps

These actions address unmet Access standards:

- Add bike racks

Community Feedback Highlights

- Common Uses: Playground
- What Residents Like: Pickleball & Playground
- Desired Improvements: More pickleball courts



CENTENNIAL ICE ARENA

3100 Trail Way | R3: Low Density Single Family Residential

Overview

Centennial Ice Arena, built in 1973 and modernized in phases, is a heavily used community facility providing ice sports, classes, and community events. It remains structurally sound but requires ongoing reinvestment in mechanical systems, roofing, and aging infrastructure. Recent improvements to the drop-off area, parking, and lobby have greatly enhanced accessibility and aesthetics.

As part of the master planning process the Park District is exploring various possibilities to repurpose the gymnastics room to maximize utility for the community once the gymnastics program relocates to West Ridge Park. This 3,400 square foot space opens up utilization opportunities for either indoor recreation or an ice studio rink. Significant community and stakeholder dialogue has been received to date, with conflicting opinions on what needs this space should fill.

Site Character & Condition

Recent improvements to the main drop-off circulation and entry areas have significantly enhanced vehicle flow and pedestrian access to the main entrance. The site is heavily wooded along its western and northern edges, featuring mature tree species, and is accessible from both Half Day Road and Trail Way.

Building Age & Condition

The current building, occupying 35,040 square feet, is heavily utilized and is approximately 52 years old. The Ice Arena opened in 1973 with the first round of renovations completed in 1994. The building and facility are in good condition with the most recent improvements conducted in 2003, which included reconstructing the ice rink, parking lot reconfiguration, pavement resurfacing, new compressors, and renovation of the lobby, locker rooms, multi-purpose room, bathrooms, and office spaces. As part of GreenPrint 2024, updates were made to the main lobby and waiting areas to create a more contemporary environment, including improved seating, lighting, and a more open layout for

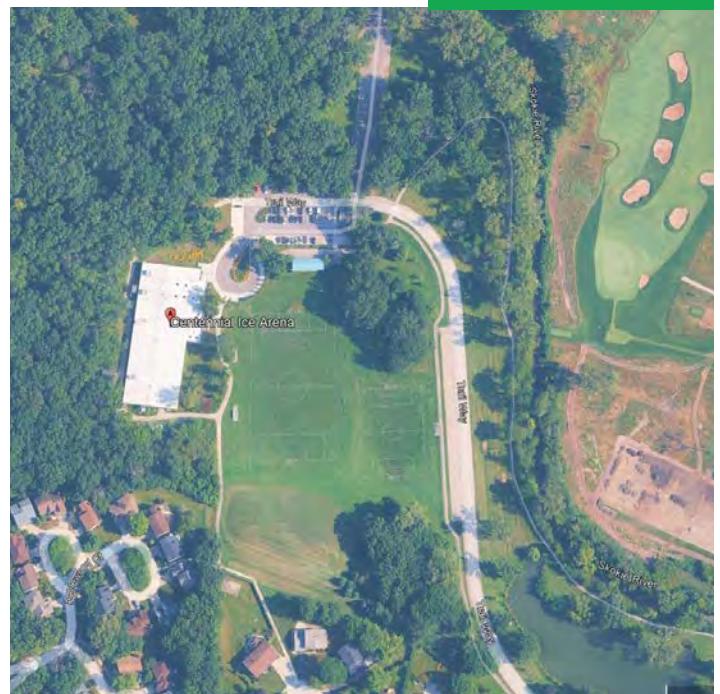
families and patrons. While these changes enhanced the space, additional updates to the lobby may be warranted to fully align the facility with current user expectations and long-term needs.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

Anticipated capital improvements in the 2025-2029 budget cycles include:

- *Switch gear replacement to maintain electrical reliability and system safety.*
- *Additional HVAC servicing to ensure consistent temperature control and improve energy efficiency.*
- *Board and glass replacement to preserve rink quality and meet current safety standards.*
- *Roof replacement to protect the building envelope.*

35,040 SF



ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	162 spots
CONDITION	Good condition with recent drop off area improvements.



Considerations & Recommendations

- Continue scheduled mechanical, roof, and switch gear replacements within the current capital cycle.
- Convert the former gymnastics area into an indoor ice training (studio rink or dry training) to improve year-round programming flexibility.
- Re-evaluate the feasibility of adding a second full sheet of ice, considering site context and capacity, capital costs, community demand, and operational impacts.
- Consider adding a dedicated concessions area and improved spectator amenities to better support users and modernize the overall experience
- Develop a parking and access circulation study to manage higher traffic volumes if expansion proceeds.



CLUB PICKLE & PADEL

2205 Skokie Valley Road | R1 County Estate Single Family Residential

Overview

Opened in 2025, Club Pickle & Padel is PDHP's newest indoor recreation facility and represents a significant reinvestment in the District's indoor athletic system. The \$3+ million project transformed the site of the former Indoor Golf and Athletic Dome into a modern pressure-controlled, free-span dome designed specifically for racket sports. The facility includes ten pickleball courts and four padel courts, introducing one of the region's first dedicated public padel venues for year-round use.

The opening of Club Pickle & Padel fills a critical gap in indoor athletic offerings but also leaves a shortfall in broader indoor recreation space that previously existed at the old dome. As community demand for flexible indoor recreation continues to rise, PDHP may consider additional strategies, such as shared programming with Deer Creek Courts or future multi-sport facilities, to offset the loss of that space and maintain balanced services across the system.

Site Character & Condition

Access to the site is currently limited to a right-in/right-out along US-41, with a deceleration lane and a shared entry drive and signage with the adjacent Golf Learning Center. While parking and basic circulation are adequate, site visibility and pedestrian connectivity remain challenges that should be addressed in future efforts. A new surfaced parking lot is anticipated as part of the new club pickle/padel facility.

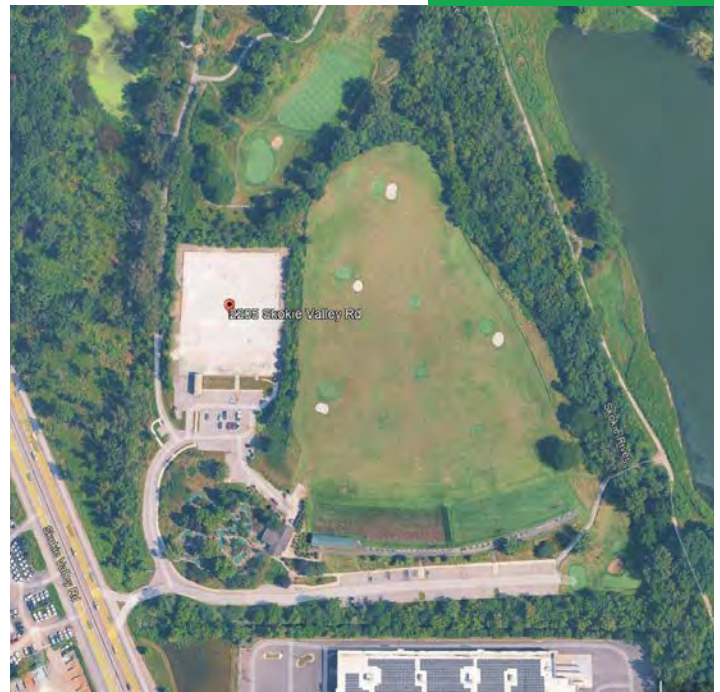
Building Age & Condition

Completed in August 2025, the new Club Pickle & Padel dome investment was supported by a substantial donor gift that provides for 4 padel and 10 pickleball courts. The 80' dome provides ample office, restroom, storage space, and locker rooms. New LED lighting is supported by a general skylight at the top of the facility.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

While no additional capital improvements have been identified at this time, future maintenance and reinvestment will likely focus on dome fabric replacement, HVAC calibration, and lighting system upkeep to preserve long-term performance. As programming grows, court resurfacing, spectator seating, and amenity enhancements may also be considered to sustain the facility's quality and meet increasing community demand for pickleball and padel play.

50,000 SF



ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	TBD
CONDITION	Fair, but anticipated to be completed and renovated by Fall of 2025.

Considerations & Recommendations

- Strengthen site access and wayfinding along US-41 to improve visibility and safety.
- Explore improvements to current parking situation.
- Coordinate with the Golf Learning Center to create cross-programming opportunities between facilities.
- Establish data collection tools to monitor court reservations, peak demand hours, and user demographics. This information should guide programming adjustments and future facility considerations.
- Explore co-located amenities such as social lounge areas, indoor seating, or small café services through donor or partner collaborations.
- Evaluate the potential for shared amenities or expanded partnerships to address the loss of former indoor athletics space.
- Prepare for typical dome system upkeep, including fabric inspection and replacement cycles (every 10–15 years), air-handling unit servicing, and HVAC calibration to maintain structural performance and air pressure stability.
- Schedule periodic resurfacing of pickleball and padel courts (approximately every 5–7 years) and review lighting intensity standards to ensure consistent play quality as usage increases.



HIDDEN CREEK AQUAPARK

1220 Fredrickson Place | PA – Public Activity District

Overview

Hidden Creek Aquapark serves as the Park District of Highland Park's primary aquatic attraction, offering a mix of leisure and family-oriented amenities including slides, a zero-depth entry pool, a lap pool, splash pad, party deck, and seasonal concessions. The facility is operated as a fee-based venue, attracting residents and non-residents alike during the summer season. Its range of amenities and convenient location make it one of the most recognizable warm-weather destinations in Highland Park and a draw for neighboring communities, though its primary audience remains local families and youth.

While the park's facilities are generally in fair to good condition, the infrastructure is nearing a point where reinvestment will be needed to sustain operations at a high level. Many of the core systems, such as pumps, drains, and structural elements of the splash pad and decking, require regular maintenance or upcoming replacement. As with many outdoor aquatics facilities, weather dependency significantly influences annual attendance and revenue performance.

Site Character & Condition

The site is in fair to good condition, with well-maintained landscaping and walkways. A new service facility, constructed during the Sunset Valley Golf Course renovation, supports equipment and maintenance needs for both properties. Its location behind Hidden Creek has proven efficient and beneficial for ongoing operations.

Building Age & Condition

The main building and pool facilities are generally in fair to good condition but require a significant level of ongoing capital investment and maintenance to remain operational. The aquapark typically operates at an annual loss that fluctuates with weather and the number of usable days per season. Improvements to the buildings, pools, splash pad, and site were completed as part of the original GreenPrint 2024 plan. However, several supporting elements remain in need of attention, including existing locker rooms that are in poor condition and no longer meet user

expectations. There is also a need for additional community gathering spaces and complementary amenities to better support families, spectators, and group use and to enhance the overall functionality of the facility.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

Looking ahead, the 2025–2029 capital plan identifies additional improvements, including:

- *Splash pad replacement to address aging infrastructure.*
- *Bathhouse / locker room renovations to modernize finishes.*
- *Pool refinishing to extend the lifespan of existing structures.*
- *Ongoing maintenance for pools, drains, slides, pumps, generators, and water heaters to ensure reliable operation.*
- *Party deck replacement designed to meet current ADA accessibility requirements.*
- *Structural repairs and component replacement for the splash pad feature to maintain long-term functionality.*

15.01 ACRES



ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	205 spots
CONDITION	Fair/Good

Considerations & Recommendations

- Comprehensive condition audit; energy, water, and system upgrades; ADA and safety review.
- Add new aquatic play features or slides to refresh the user experience.
- Explore a warm-water therapy component to extend the operating season and broaden user demographics.
- Consider introducing smart play features that allow kids to control water effects with motion sensors or touch-activated spray elements.
- Consider transitioning from standard snack offerings to local vendor partnerships or rotating food truck programs, which have proven to increase attendance and secondary spending.
- Explore solar thermal systems to preheat pool water and LED retrofits for lighting efficiency.



GOLF LEARNING CENTER

2205 Skokie Valley Road | R1 County Estate Single Family Residential

Overview

The Golf Learning Center includes a driving range, mini golf course, and a small service building co-located with Club Pickle & Padel along US-41. While the site remains functional and actively used, portions of the facility, particularly the mini golf area and support building, are dated and no longer reflect the quality or design standards of PDHP's newer amenities. The driving range continues to perform well and supports seasonal programs and informal practice, but the mini golf area's aging layout, materials, and current theme limit its appeal and revenue potential.

The adjacency to Club Pickle & Padel presents an opportunity to re-envision the site as an integrated sports and recreation destination, leveraging shared access, parking, and programming. Reinvestment could focus on replacing the mini golf course with a modern, themed, or technology-enhanced putting experience, adding covered hitting bays or simulator spaces to extend use into colder months. A renewed concept could strengthen the facility's identity, attract new audiences, and support PDHP's broader enterprise and revenue generation goals.

Site Character & Condition

The Golf Learning Center is accessed directly from US-41, with a shared right-in/right-out entrance with Club Pickle & Padel. Access is a challenge for safe pedestrian or bicycle connections.

The west and north edges of the property lie within the floodplain, which restricts opportunities for new development or building expansion. Drainage management and soil stabilization will need to be considered in any future site improvement. The site's layout and surface parking areas are serviceable but could benefit from circulation and signage improvements.

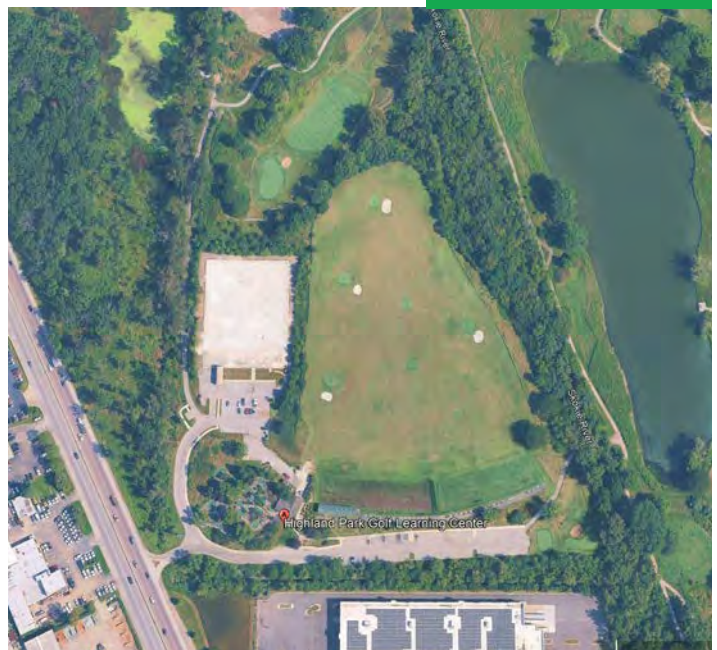
Building Age & Condition

The Golf Learning Center consists of an open driving range and a small service building that supports the adjacent Rivers Edge Mini Golf. Both the service building and mini golf course are dated and in need of significant updates, replacement, or reprogramming to meet current user expectations. The restrooms within the service building require modernization, and sections of the wood structure show deterioration that will need repair or replacement.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

- Convert the mini golf area into a modern indoor golf simulator or multi-year round practice facility.
- Parking lot/vehicle circulation upgrade and future entry/access improvements
- Lifecycle replacement of major site and building systems as part of the 5-Year Capital Plan¹

20.86 ACRES



ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	26,280
CONDITION	Anticipated improvements in conjunction with the Dome facility opening.



Considerations & Recommendations

- Replace or upgrade the service building (restrooms/storage/training bays) to contemporary standards (accessibility, energy, aesthetics).
- Consider a covered or partially enclosed hitting bay/Toptracer zone (three-season) to extend use into shoulder months.
- Improve pedestrian and signage / wayfinding access along US-41, especially linking with the dome and parking.
- Complete a floodplain/drainage study for the site’s west and north edges to ensure future adaptability and resilience before large investment.
- Develop performance/usage tracking dashboards for range and simulators.
- Replace major turf-maintenance equipment such as the topdresser and rough mower on a planned cycle.



DEER CREEK RACQUET CLUB

701 Deer Creek Parkway | R4: Low to Moderate Density & R1: Country Estate

Overview

Built in 1976, Deer Creek Racquet Club is a 58,000-square-foot indoor athletic facility that houses six tennis courts and four racquetball courts, serving as one of PDHP's primary indoor recreation venues. However, the racquetball wing and adjoining hallway are increasingly underutilized, reflecting a decline in demand for traditional racquetball play. These spaces present a significant opportunity for repurposing or adaptive reuse, potentially accommodating new indoor programming.

Site Character & Condition

The surrounding site context, anchored by ballfields, open play areas, and the disc golf course, supports active recreation year-round, with the building often used as a weather shelter for summer camps. While the facility's structural and mechanical systems are in solid shape, targeted modernization and creative reprogramming could help Deer Creek Courts reach its full potential as a flexible, multi-sport hub for the community.

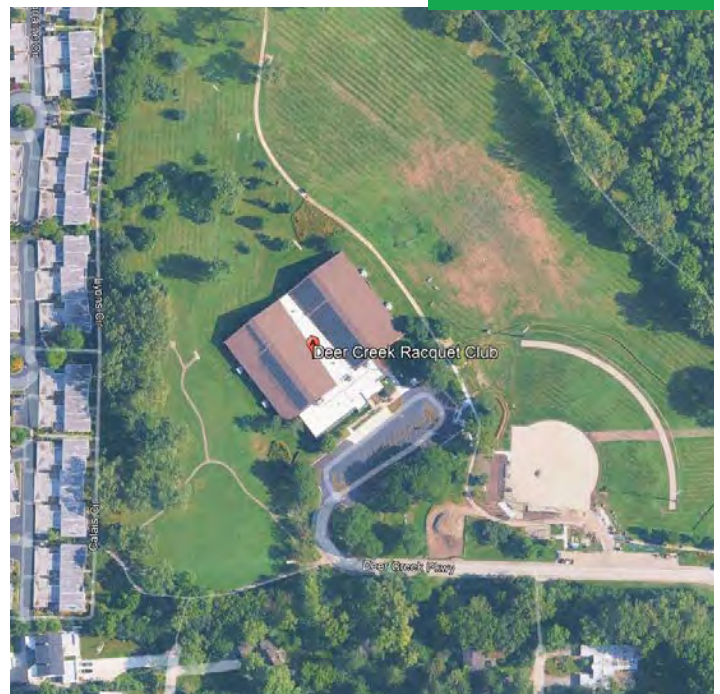
Building Age & Condition

Built in 1976, the 58,250 square foot building is in good condition. The Deer Creek Racquet Club has benefited from periodic improvements to the lobby, locker rooms, and court lighting following the GreenPrint 2024 plan. Park District staff noted that the south exterior wall of this wing has been studied for potential expansion, which could provide added flexibility for future adaptive reuse. The temporary indoor pickleball courts will be removed as a result of these amenities being covered in the new Club Pickle & Padel facility.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

- Mechanical replacements are planned for key building systems, including fire panels, switch gears, grinder pumps, light poles, rooftop units (RTUs), and peak fans, to ensure continued operational reliability.
- Interior improvements will include carpet replacement and court resurfacing and painting, to be completed following the removal of the temporary indoor pickleball courts.

58,250 SF

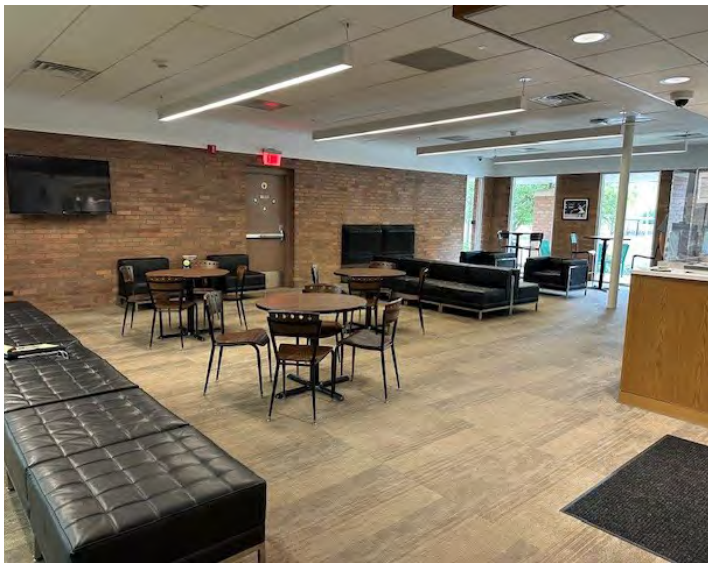


ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	TBD
CONDITION	Good



Considerations & Recommendations

- Convert the racquetball wing into indoor sports space that supports current athletic trends. The area’s ceiling height and structural layout lend themselves well to batting cages, pitching tunnels, or cross-training zones for baseball, softball, and other field sports.
- Consider re-striping or adapting one or more tennis courts for volleyball, futsal, or youth basketball, diversifying use and increasing year-round participation.
- Refresh flooring, lighting, and spectator areas to create a more contemporary and welcoming indoor environment. Adding lounge or fitness corners could appeal to families and casual users.
- Revisit the previously studied expansion concept along the south exterior wall to determine whether limited building additions or mezzanine-level fitness space could enhance long-term flexibility.
- As part of modernization, integrate energy-efficient lighting, upgraded HVAC, and improved acoustic treatments to reduce operating costs and enhance comfort.



HELLER NATURE CENTER

2821 Ridge Road | R2: Country Home Single Family Residential

Overview

Heller Nature Center serves as the Park District of Highland Park's flagship environmental facility, set within a 100-acre woodland preserve that provides a rare natural retreat in an otherwise urbanized area. The site includes one main building, two service structures, extensive trail systems, and surface parking areas that collectively support year-round environmental education and recreation. The building functions as the operational and educational hub for PDHP's nature-based programming, hosting school field trips, youth and teen camps, seasonal workshops, cross-country skiing, and rental events.

Despite some challenges, the facility continues to draw strong attendance and serves as a beloved community asset. With modest investment in building upgrades, interpretive technology, and site accessibility, Heller has the potential to remain a regional model for nature-based learning and sustainability education while strengthening its role in connecting residents to Highland Park's environmental heritage.

Site Character & Condition

The woodland preserve is in good to excellent condition, with well-maintained trails and a diverse range of nature-based and passive recreation opportunities. The structure fits comfortably within its wooded setting, but it is dated in appearance and functionality. The immediate surroundings of the Nature Center and its service buildings are also in good condition, supported by recent parking lot paving and concrete walk improvements. The main entry walk is ADA-accessible, though select sections of concrete will require targeted replacement in the near future. The landscape character remains true to a natural Illinois woodland vernacular, blending native plantings with minimal formal landscaping to preserve the site's ecological integrity.

Building Age & Condition

The 5,400-square-foot, single-story building, constructed in 1979, has received periodic interior updates over the years. The concrete and wood structure remains in sound physical condition and is thoughtfully sited within a sloped, wooded setting that enhances its natural character. Interior spaces for administration, educational

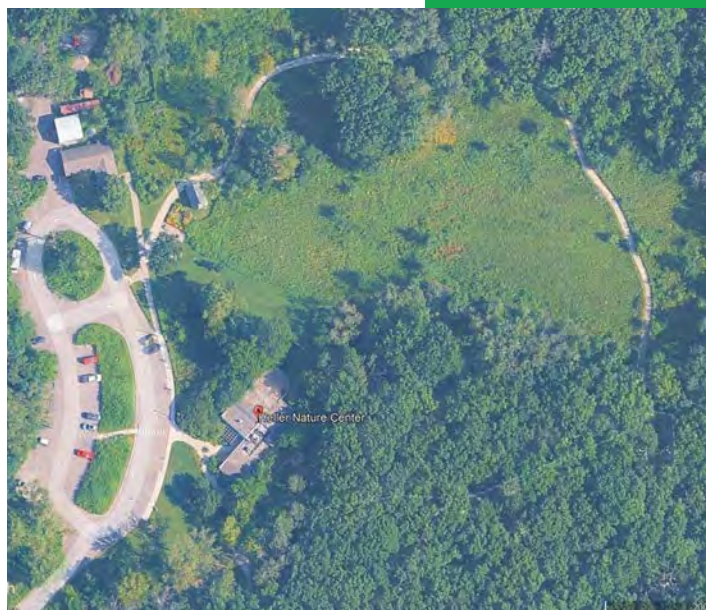
displays, and community programs are functional but dated in appearance and would benefit from modernization to support evolving programming needs.

An ancillary ski rental building is attached to the south façade and features wood construction with a shingle roof; it remains in fair to good condition. A small historic log and stone cabin on-site, representing the preserve's rural heritage, is also in fair condition. While no internal review of utilities or HVAC was conducted, it is understood that the building struggles to maintain consistent indoor temperatures, and a full HVAC assessment is recommended to identify long-term efficiency and comfort solutions.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

- HVAC replacement and calibration to improve building comfort and energy efficiency.
- Selective concrete and pathway repairs to maintain accessibility and safety throughout the site.
- Routine roof and envelope maintenance to preserve the building's structural integrity and prevent weather-related wear.
- Exhibit and display refresh to replace outdated interpretive materials and enhance educational engagement.

100 ACRES

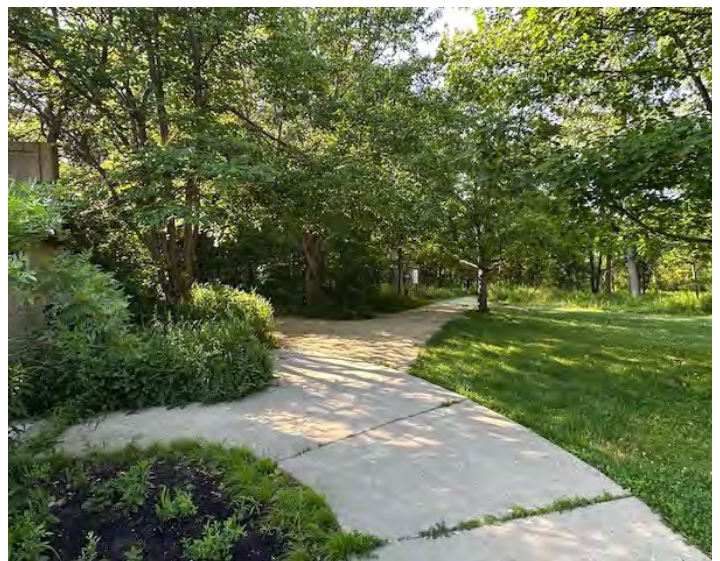


ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	TBD
CONDITION	Good to excellent



Considerations & Recommendations

- Address limited office space to avoid staff using classroom spaces.
- Upgrade interior finishes and interpretive spaces with interactive, technology-supported exhibits that appeal to contemporary audiences and enhance learning outcomes. This includes updating office spaces, the exhibition area, and overall experience.
- Develop outdoor learning environments, such as small pavilions, teaching decks, or nature play areas, that extend programming into the landscape while minimizing ecological impact.
- Consider integrating sustainability features, including solar panels, rainwater harvesting, or native demonstration gardens to model best environmental practices for visitors.
- Reimagine rental and community use potential by updating multi-purpose rooms to host workshops, retreats, or wellness programs aligned with PDHP's broader recreation goals.
- Strengthen identity and wayfinding, incorporating updated signage, interpretive graphics, and storytelling that connect the building and trail system under a unified brand.
- Continue to pursue partnerships with local schools, conservation organizations, and artists to co-develop programming that links ecology, culture, and creative expression.



PARK & GOLF OPERATION CENTER

1240 Fredrickson Place | PA – Public Activity District

Overview

The Park and Golf Operations Center is a utilitarian like facility that provides essential maintenance, equipment storage, and operational support for both the Park District and golf course functions. The building remains structurally sound and functionally efficient.

Over time, this facility may be better suited for partial repurposing or potential relocation as part of a broader plan for consolidated maintenance and administrative services across the park system.

Site Character & Condition

As noted, the site is out of sight from the vast majority of the community. A large gabion basket retaining wall supports the elevated storage yard and upper-level vehicular areas, while service vehicle access is provided along the north façade at the lower level. The site is generally clean, organized, and well maintained, functioning efficiently for its intended operational use despite its utilitarian appearance.

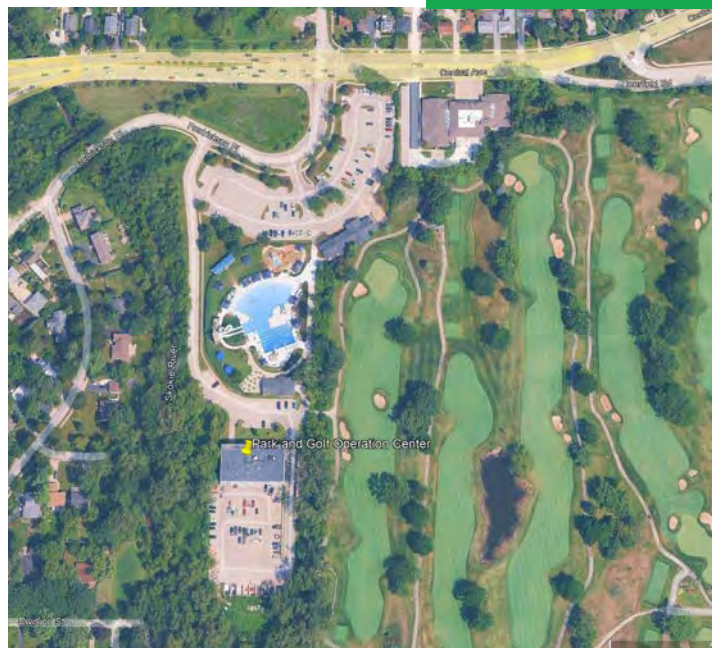
Building Age & Condition

The Park and Golf Operations Center is a two-story prefabricated concrete facility that serves as the primary maintenance hub and material storage yard for the Park District. The exterior is in fair condition, yet while functional, lacks visual appeal. Despite its aesthetic shortcomings, the facility plays a vital operational role within the park system, providing essential support for maintenance and service operations. An interior and utilities assessment has not yet been conducted, but such an evaluation would help guide future maintenance, modernization, and energy efficiency improvements.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

At this time, no major capital improvements are identified for the Park & Golf Operations Center. More recent budgets (2024–2025) include general capital funding allocations for district-wide improvements but do not specify projects for this facility. Because the Operations Center primarily supports internal maintenance and storage functions, it is not typically featured in public-facing capital project listings, though lifecycle replacements and operational upkeep are expected to continue as needed.

23,000 SF

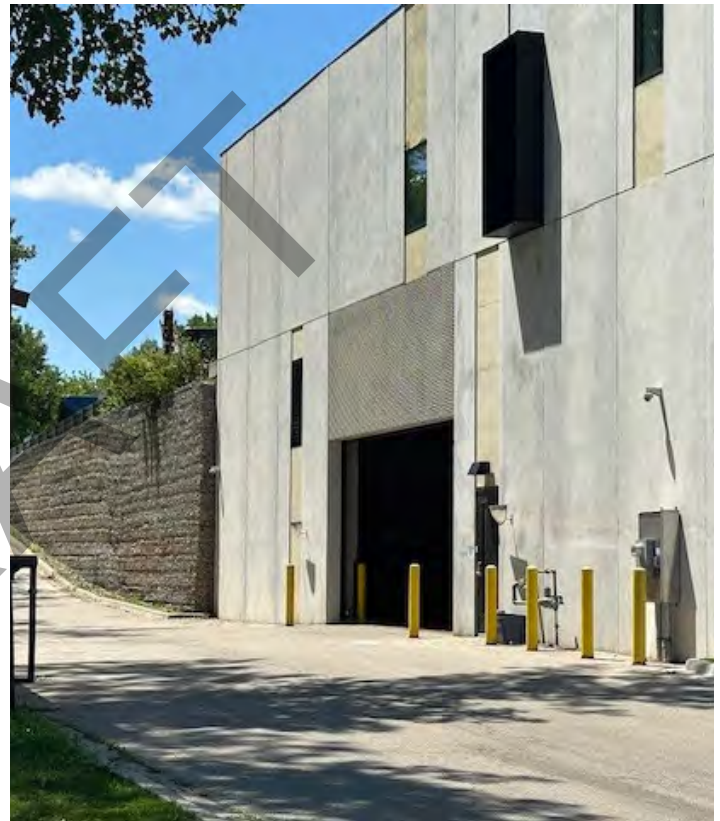


ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	TBD
CONDITION	Fair



Considerations & Recommendations

- Conduct a structural, mechanical, and electrical (MEP) audit to identify deferred maintenance and modernization needs.
- Implement drainage and grading improvements around the facility to reduce stormwater impacts on the lower level and storage areas.
- Perform a safety and flow assessment to improve vehicle circulation, equipment access, and staff efficiency.
- Retrofit lighting, ventilation, and HVAC systems to improve energy efficiency, comfort, and air quality in workspaces.
- Prepare for fleet electrification infrastructure upgrades such as conduit installation, charging stations, and electrical capacity.
- Upgrade storage yard and waste management systems.
- Consider future upgrades to serve as PDHP's first "green operations" prototype, using renewable energy, and more.



SUNSET VALLEY GOLF CLUB

1390 Sunset Road | R1: Country Estate Single Family Residential

Overview

Fully renovated in 2018, Sunset Valley Golf Club has reestablished itself as one of the Park District's premier golf and hospitality destinations. The renovation modernized both the course and the clubhouse, creating a high-quality, resort-style experience for golfers and visitors alike. The clubhouse, featuring a bar, dining area, pro shop, and event terrace, provides an inviting and contemporary setting that supports daily play, league events, and private functions.

Site Character & Condition

Exterior improvements to the clubhouse have created a comfortable and attractive outdoor environment, offering ample open and shaded seating areas under pergolas. The design features accessible upper and lower terraces, outdoor grills, and gathering areas that accommodate casual dining, tournaments, and events. While outdoor spaces are well utilized, opportunities remain to expand event capacity through additional tent or covered structures to support larger functions and inclement weather.

The course itself is in excellent condition, featuring a meticulously maintained layout with strong integration into the surrounding open space and natural features, such as restored wetlands and native plantings. Pathways, signage, and course edges are well defined, reinforcing Sunset Valley's identity as a premier golfing destination.

Operationally, the facility performs strongly, with an increasing revenue stream and consistent use. However, there are opportunities to enhance year-round engagement through expanded indoor training, simulator technology, and stronger partnerships with the Golf Learning Center.

Building Age & Condition

The clubhouse and maintenance shed are in very good to excellent condition, having been fully upgraded, modernized, and restored as part of the GreenPrint 2024 plan. The 2018 renovation

elevated the facility to a new standard of hospitality and service, adding interior food and beverage areas, a bar, dining space, and a pro shop that create a welcoming and contemporary experience for golfers and guests. Significant fenestration improvements have also enhanced natural light and visual connection to the course, giving the clubhouse an open, inviting character. Locker rooms and restrooms were also renovated to the same high-quality standard, reflecting a cohesive and professional design throughout.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

While no major capital expenditures are currently identified for the clubhouse beyond routine preventive maintenance, it has been suggested that the facility explore the addition of a covered indoor/outdoor space within the next five years to improve comfort and usability during varying seasonal conditions.

5200 SF



ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	TBD
CONDITION	Good to excellent



Considerations & Recommendations

- Study options for a covered or enclosed pavilion to expand year-round event and dining capabilities.
- Integrate digital guest management (e.g., reservations, mobile ordering, or event coordination platforms) to improve operational efficiency and customer experience.
- Coordinate with the Golf Learning Center to explore joint programming and pricing models.
- Implement incremental upgrades to hospitality interiors, including furnishings, finishes, lighting, and technology, to maintain a fresh and contemporary guest experience.
- Evaluate opportunities for expanded simulator or indoor training space to enhance off-season programming and attract younger audiences.
- Develop partnerships with local food and beverage vendors or sponsors to diversify offerings and share operational costs.
- Pursue sustainability measures (energy-efficient equipment, native landscaping, and waste reduction) to position the course as a regional leader in environmentally responsible golf operations.



PARK AVENUE BOATING FACILITY

31 Park Ave | PA: Public Activity District

Overview

The Park Avenue Boating Facility is a small, lakefront recreation and boating center licensed to the North Shore Yacht Club and managed in partnership with the Park District of Highland Park. The site provides direct access to Lake Michigan for non-motorized watercraft, including sailboats, kayaks, and paddleboards, making it one of the District's most unique waterfront amenities. While the facility remains functional and actively used, its structure and exterior components show signs of wear.

Site Character & Condition

The lakefront site provides ideal access for launching non-motorized watercraft, offering calm waters well-suited for sailing, kayaking, and paddleboarding. Parking and vehicle access areas are in good condition, with circulation improvements made in recent years. However, the building itself lacks ADA accessibility, and physical access to the site is limited to vehicular and pedestrian routes behind the City's water plant.

New signage at Park Avenue Beach has improved visibility and wayfinding, but topographic constraints remain a significant challenge. The building is embedded into the base of a bluff, where drainage and grading issues lead to ongoing maintenance concerns. A public staircase once provided access from the top of the bluff but was removed due to bluff failure and resulting structural and safety impacts. Reestablishing safe bluff access, potentially through a shared partnership between PDHP and the City of Highland Park, should be explored as a long-term improvement and a key component of equitable public lakefront access, as outlined in GreenPrint 2024.

Building Age & Condition

The 1,970-square-foot Park Avenue Boating Facility serves as the home of the North Shore Yacht Club, supporting sailing and watercraft programs along with small meetings and private events. The building's "boater's shack" character contributes to its charm and identity, featuring an open interior layout with ancillary restrooms and a small kitchen. While the building is functional and well-used, it remains dated and in fair condition. The interior

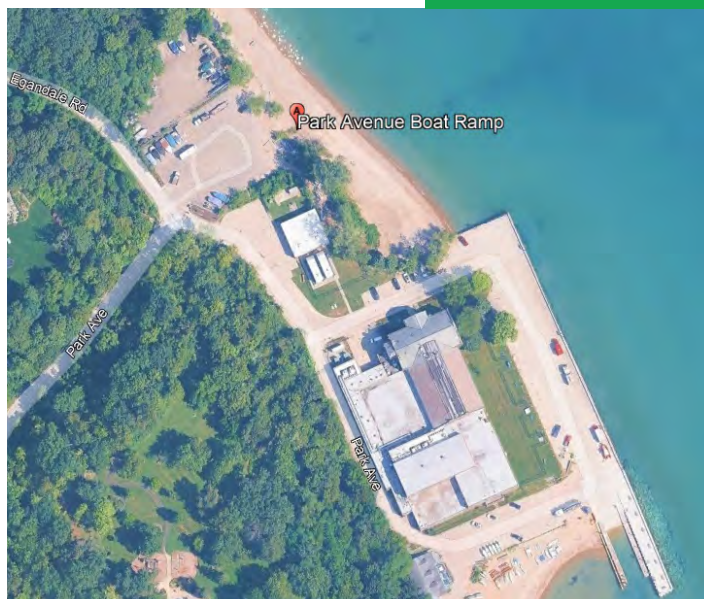
requires modernization, and the exterior shows signs of wear, including peeling paint, wood rot, and roof deterioration. The adjacent metal storage structure, used for club equipment and seasonal boat storage, is in fair to good condition.

Although no major building upgrades were completed as part of GreenPrint 2024, the boat ramp and storage areas were significantly improved in 2024, enhancing launch operations and park access.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

- *Roof replacement to address ongoing weathering and prevent future water intrusion.*
- *HVAC repairs and system upgrades to improve energy efficiency.*
- *Decking and railing removal and replacement to meet current safety standards and extend the life of outdoor circulation areas*
- *Exterior wood repair and repainting to restore the building's appearance, protect structural components, and maintain the site's nautical character.*
- *Modernization of bathroom facilities*

3.93 ACRES



ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	TBD
CONDITION	Good



Considerations & Recommendations

- Develop improved lakefront access by developing a Park Avenue Bluff staircase to provide a safe and functional connection between the bluff and shoreline.
- Replace the exterior deck and railings to improve safety, accessibility, and daily boating activity and small gatherings.
- Repaint and restore exterior wood elements to preserve structure and maintain the building's coastal aesthetic.
- Upgrade interior spaces, including lighting, finishes, and HVAC to improve comfort, energy efficiency, and usability.
- Develop a joint maintenance and investment framework with the North Shore Yacht Club to support cost-sharing and upkeep.
- Expand outdoor functionality with shaded seating, improved storage, and small event areas that enhance the lakefront experience.
- Evaluate shoreline resilience strategies, such as bluff stabilization, flood-resistant materials, and native vegetation buffers.
- Integrate public lakefront access improvements consistent with GreenPrint 2024, improving pedestrian connections.
- Explore adaptive reuse or phased replacement of the facility to meet future recreation and environmental needs.



WEST RIDGE CENTER

636 W. Ridge Road | PA – Public Activity District

Overview

Built as a replacement for a dated facility, the new West Ridge Center, scheduled to open in Spring 2026, will serve as a modern hub for childcare, gymnastics, and community classes, as well as administrative spaces. Its location on a larger campus allows for coordinated outdoor improvements, including upgraded ballfields, improved walking paths, and enhanced playgrounds that are slated for a future phase.

Programming will include early childhood enrichment, youth athletic development, community gatherings, and indoor recreation options typically underserved in the district. With its modern infrastructure and multi-use intent, West Ridge is positioned to become a flag-ship facility for PDHP's next generation of recreation.

Site Character & Condition

The new West Ridge Center and subsequent demolition of the existing facility will pave the way for the next phase of campus improvements outlined in the original GreenPrint 2024 plan.

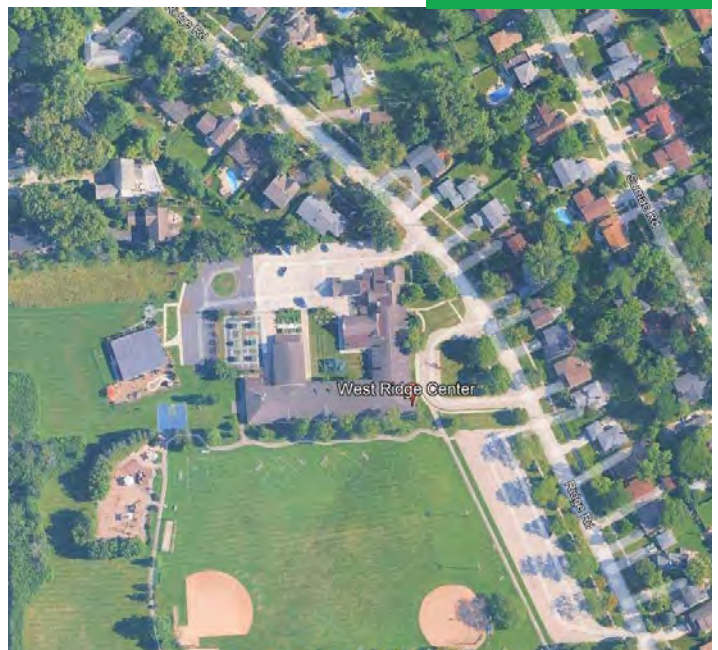
Building Age & Condition

The existing West Ridge Center, currently in poor condition, is scheduled for demolition to make way for the new West Ridge Center. During this transition, administrative offices will be temporarily relocated to a leased space on Central Avenue, adjacent to Sunset Woods Park. This short-term arrangement will allow PDHP to evaluate long-term options for a permanent administrative headquarters as part of future planning efforts.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

No additional capital expenditures are planned within the 5-year capital plan or beyond. However, phase 2 enhancements, which remain unfunded at this time, include upgraded baseball fields, improved lighting, expanded walking paths, enhanced landscaping, and playground modifications that will complement the new building and strengthen the site's role as a community recreation hub.

XX ACRES



ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	TBD
CONDITION	The new Westridge facility will provide both modified existing and new surface and lit parking facilities as part of the current Phase 1 construction plan.



Considerations & Recommendations

- Pursue funding for unfunded Phase 2 site enhancements.
- Develop a long-term strategy for permanent administrative headquarters, assessing whether future consolidation or new construction best meets PDHP's operational goals.
- Plan for lifecycle maintenance and system replacements to preserve facility performance and minimize long-term costs.



ROSEWOOD BEACH HOUSE

883 Sheridan Road | NA

Overview

Completed in 2013, the Rosewood Beach House stands as a regional model for sustainable lakefront design and environmental stewardship. The award-winning facility integrates wood, glass, and stone materials to blend seamlessly into the bluff and dune landscape while maintaining a strong visual connection to Lake Michigan. It supports a variety of uses, including seasonal beach operations, environmental education programs, and private rentals. With its contemporary architecture and focus on ecological preservation, Rosewood continues to demonstrate how public waterfront design can balance recreation, education, and sustainability.

Site Character & Condition

The Rosewood Beach House is fully accessible from the parking area via wooden boardwalks and concrete pathways, providing a seamless transition from bluff to shoreline. The landscape character, dominated by native dune grasses, enhances the site's natural appearance and long-term ecological stability.

Vehicular access and parking remain limited, which helps preserve the site's character but constrains capacity during peak season. Pedestrian access from nearby neighborhoods is also limited, as crossings along the ravines of Sheridan Road create barriers and safety concerns. The City of Highland Park is currently developing roadway and sidewalk improvements along Sheridan Road, which will incorporate new pedestrian connections within the parkway to improve walkability and access to Rosewood Beach.

Building Age & Condition

The beach site and surrounding landscape, constructed more than 12 years ago, continue to perform well and meet their original design intent. The building is in good to excellent condition, featuring a glass and wood structure that provides rental and event space, catering support, restrooms, and covered shelter areas. Smaller ancillary restroom and lifeguard buildings are located nearby to support seasonal beach operations.

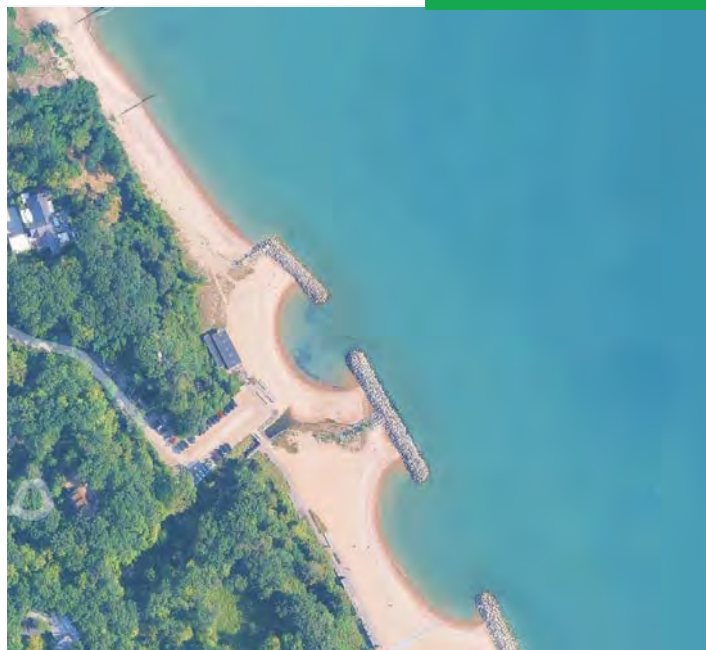
Programs include:

- Premium and major rental opportunities for private gatherings, community events, and special occasions
- Nature-based and educational programs offered in partnership with PDHP's environmental initiatives
- Lifeguard-managed swimming beach providing safe access for public use and passive recreation along the lakefront
- Seasonal and passive enjoyment opportunities, including informal lakefront activities and relaxation areas.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

No additional capital expenditures are planned within the 5-year capital plan or beyond.

1,850 SF



ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	TBD
CONDITION	Good

Considerations & Recommendations

- Resolve ongoing geothermal HVAC issues and transition to a more reliable, energy-efficient electric system while maintaining sustainability goals.
- Implement preventive maintenance protocols for glazing, roof systems, and wood finishes to protect against corrosion, salt exposure, and wind-driven weathering.
- Refine event operations by updating rental policies, pricing tiers, and digital booking systems to balance community access with revenue goals.
- Expand outdoor event functionality with modular shade structures, flexible seating, or terraces that accommodate small performances or programs.
- Consider integrating interpretive and art elements (sculptures, signage, or interactive exhibits) that reinforce the site's identity.
- Consider exploring solar integration or battery backup systems to reduce long-term operating costs and align with PDHP's sustainability goals.



PARK FITNESS

1207 Park Avenue West | PA – Public Activity District

Overview

PDHP's flagship year-round recreation facility, the Recreation Center of Highland Park, remains in good condition and continues to serve as the cornerstone of community health, fitness, and wellness programming. The facility offers a comprehensive mix of aquatics, fitness, athletics, and community gathering spaces, drawing consistent participation across all age groups. Its strong operational performance reflects ongoing reinvestment in building systems and programming flexibility. As one of the district's most visible and heavily used facilities, the Recreation Center continues to anchor Highland Park's wellness network, fostering both individual wellbeing and community connection through inclusive and high-quality recreation opportunities.

Site Character & Condition

The site is surrounded by open space that includes floodplain, wetland, and conservation easement areas, limiting development but enhancing the facility's natural setting. A newly built parking area and maintenance shed support both PDHP and City operations. The former driving range and a small portion of land near the maintenance shed present potential opportunities for future district expansion or outdoor programming if compatible with environmental constraints.

Along Park Avenue West, the facility's visual character lacks appeal, with minimal landscape and limited pedestrian space. Although an evergreen hedge screens the parking area, the frontage would benefit from enhanced landscaping, updated signage, and improved pedestrian circulation to strengthen the facility's public identity and overall site connection.

Building Age & Condition

The Recreation Center of Highland Park serves as the district's flagship indoor recreation facility and has been consistently improved over the years. The building, approximately 45,000 square feet, is in good condition and remains well maintained and efficiently managed. It shares common spaces, utilities, and site access with the Highland Park Senior Center, both of which occupy the grounds of the former Highland Park Country Club and Golf Course.

As part of GreenPrint 2024, the Park District decommissioned operations and ownership of the former Country Club and Golf Course, transitioning the land into The Preserve of Highland Park, a restored natural area managed in partnership with the Lake County Forest Preserve District. The former pro shop and golf area have since been repurposed as the Highland Park Senior Center, operated by the City. Together, these adaptive reuse efforts have created a multifunctional campus that balances recreation, nature, and community programming within a unified setting.

Anticipated Investment & Improvements

- New boilers to enhance heating efficiency and reduce long-term energy costs.
- Roof replacement to address lifecycle needs and maintain building integrity.
- Entry access control system upgrades to improve security and visitor management.
- Locker room improvements to modernize finishes, enhance accessibility, and elevate user experience.

29,920 SF



ON-SITE PARKING FACILITIES	
PARKING AVAILABLE?	Yes
QUANTITY	TBD
CONDITION	Excellent (newly renovated)

Considerations & Recommendations

- Expand facilities to accommodate additional programming, such as boutique fitness studios, wellness spaces, or additional flexible group exercise rooms.
- Evaluate the addition of a warm-water therapy pool to support rehabilitation, senior wellness, and low-impact fitness offerings.
- Explore pilot partnerships with private wellness or fitness brands (e.g., Barry’s Bootcamp style programming, small-group training concepts, or recovery zones) to test new market-driven uses and appeal to younger demographics.
- Consider a multi-year facility usage and membership analysis to guide future space allocation and ensure programming aligns with evolving community health trends.





APPENDIX B

RECREATION ASSESSMENT





PDHP Recreation Assessment Progress Update



July 21, 2025

Agenda

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Progress
- 3 Next Steps



What is a Recreation Assessment?

The exploration of a recreation programs and services through a series of analyses that identify:

- ▲ What you are doing well
- ▲ Strengthening opportunities
- ▲ Growth opportunities
- ▲ Performance measures
- ▲ Alignment with community need



3

Why a recreation assessment?

What are you offering?

Who are you reaching?

What did the community say?

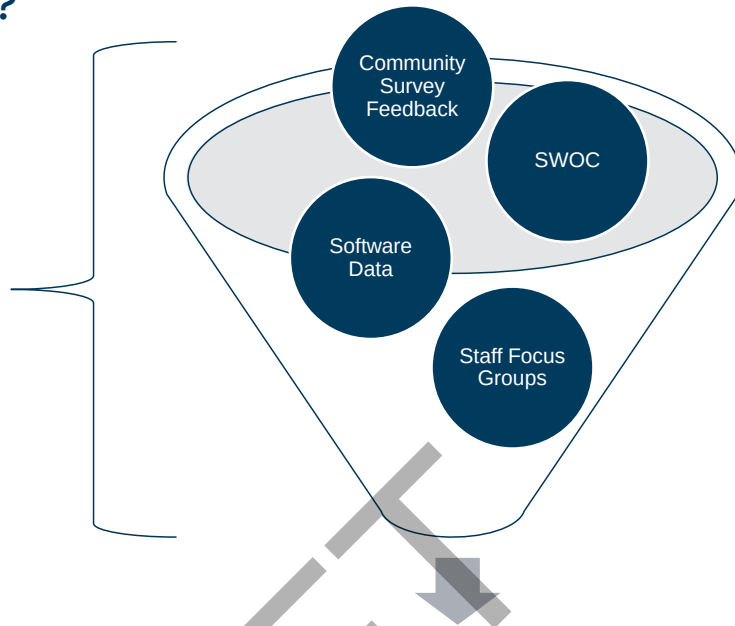
Informs
future
direction



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What are we assessing?

- ▲ Programs
- ▲ Memberships
- ▲ Rentals
- ▲ Drop-In Activities
- ▲ Events
- ▲ Services

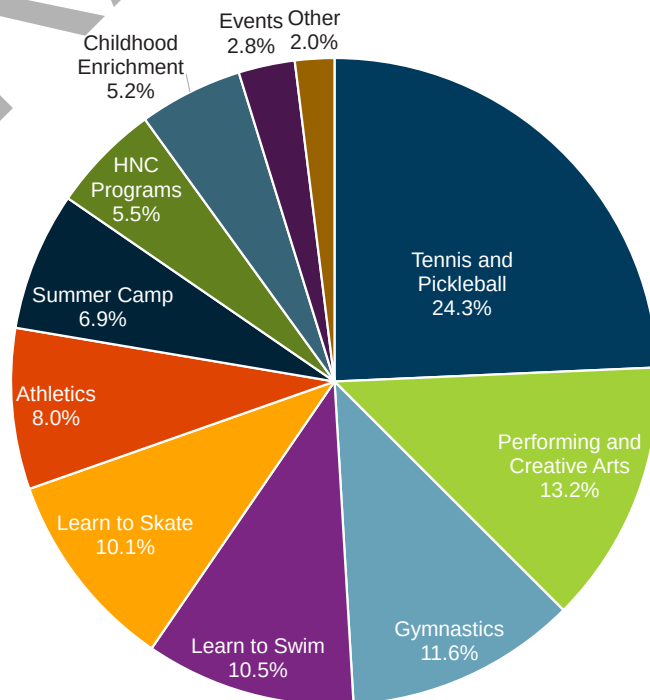


Observations and Recommendations

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Program Distribution

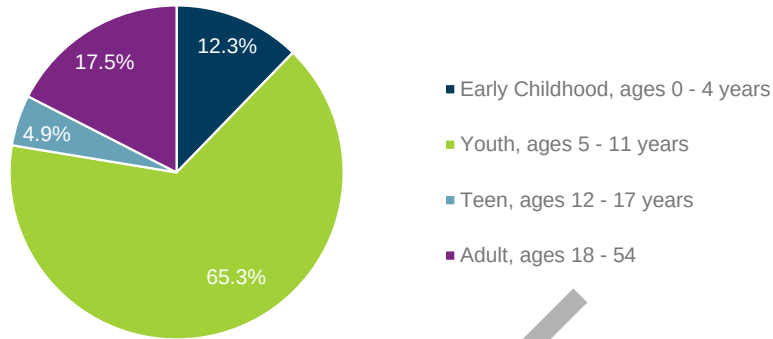
- ▲ 2024's "menu" of enrollment-based programs



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Age Segmentation

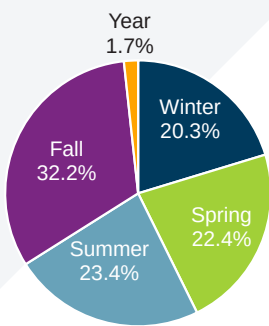
Age Segmentation of Enrollment-based Programs Offered, 2024



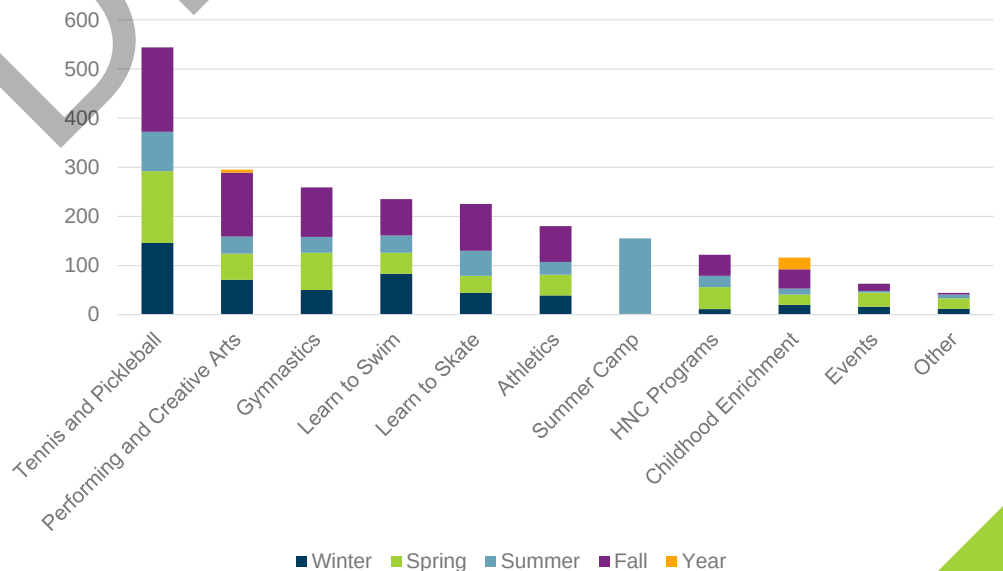
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Offerings by Season

2024 Program Offerings by Season

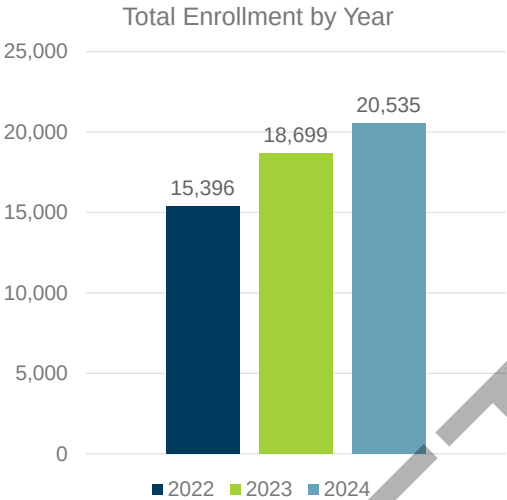


2024 Program Offerings by Category and Season

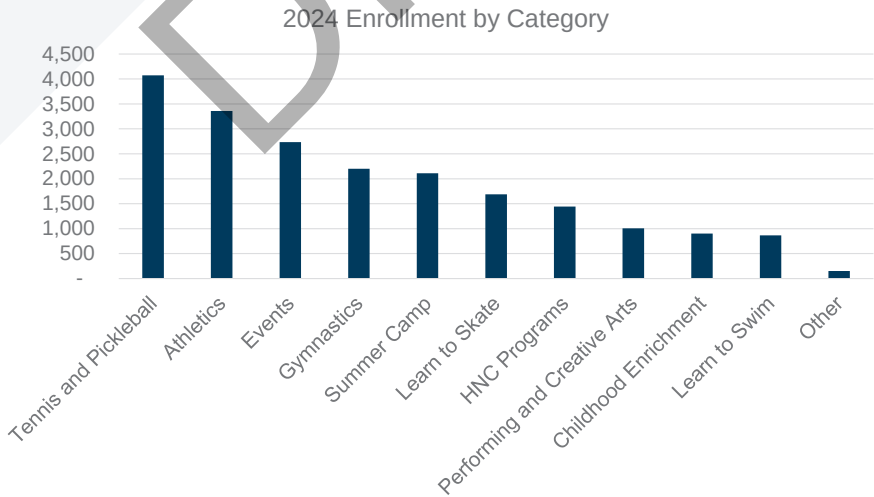


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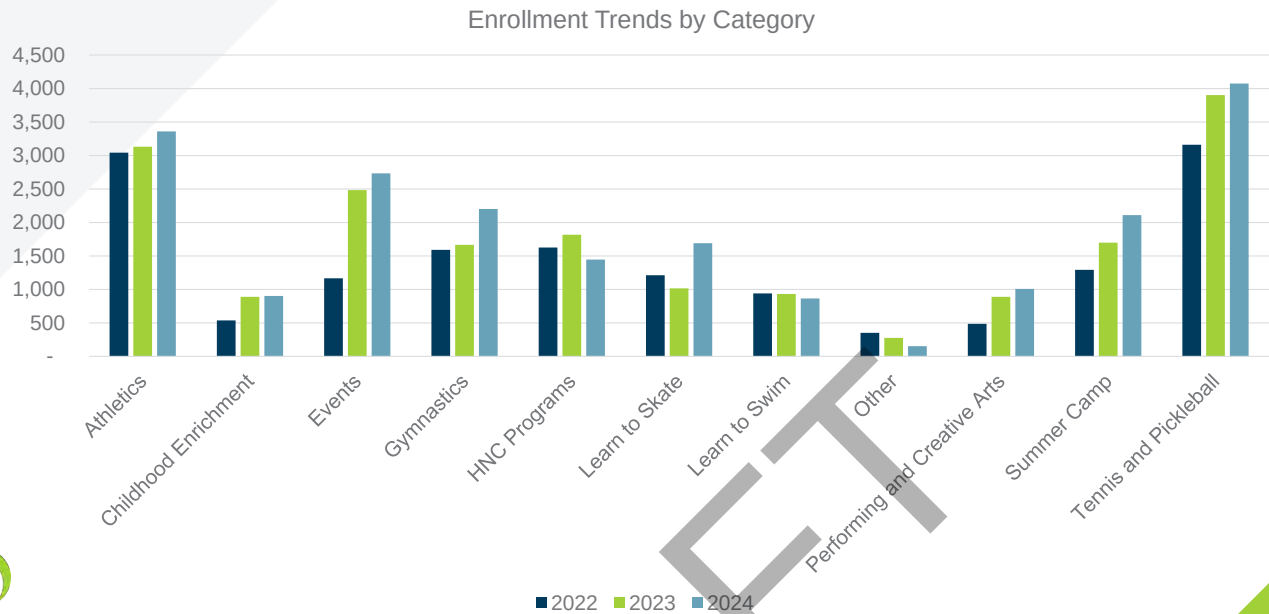
Participation: Enrollment-based Participant Totals



Enrollment by Program Category

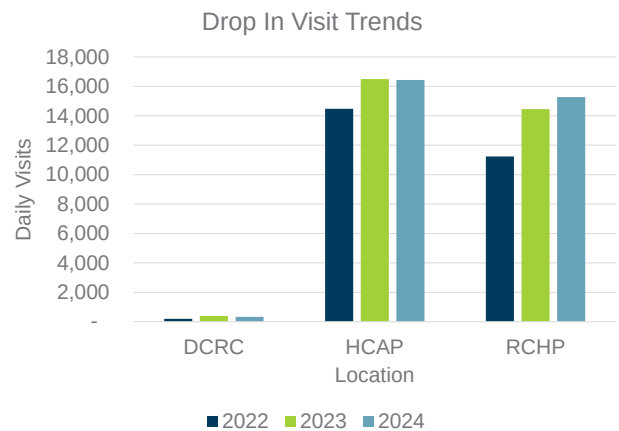
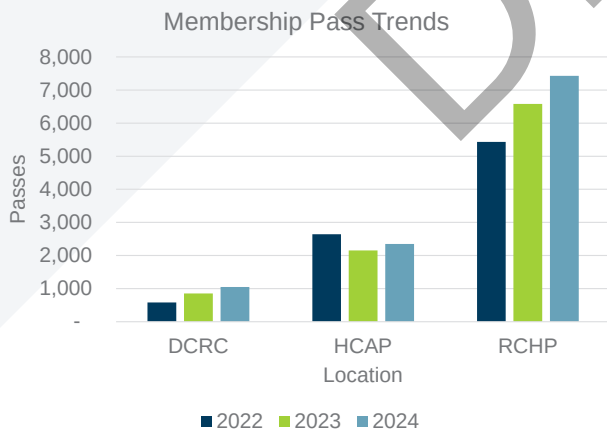


Enrollment Trends by Category



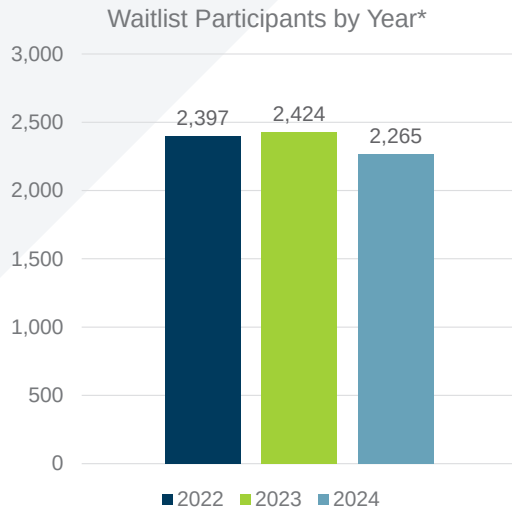
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Membership Participation

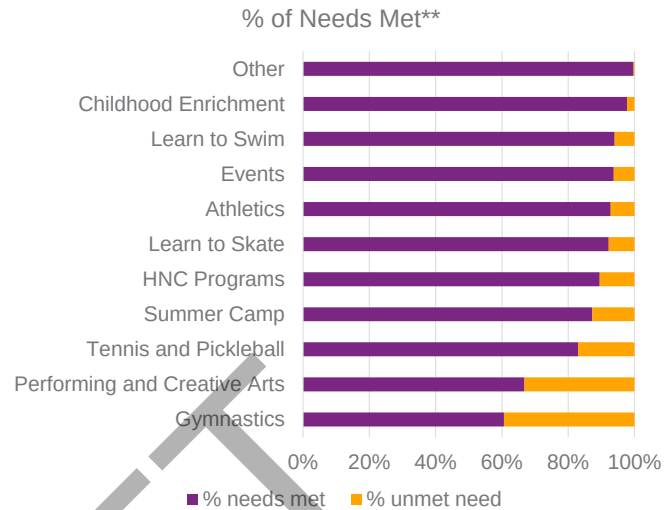


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Waitlists



*Participants who did not get into their first choice



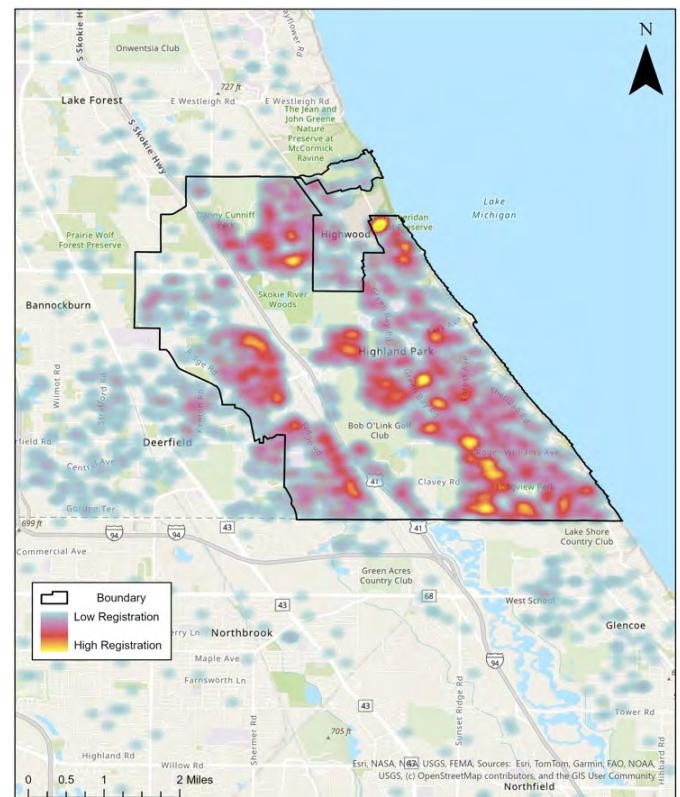
**Based on first choice needs



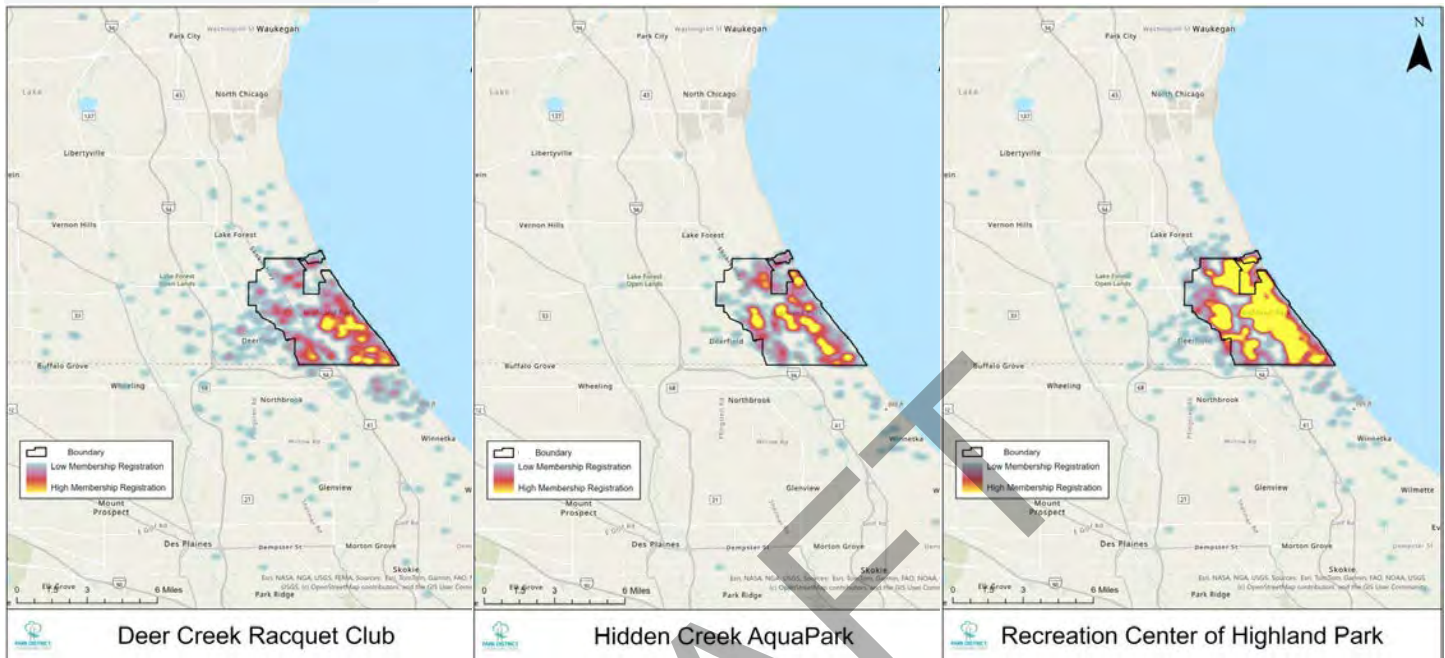
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Participant Reach – Regional View

- Significant reach into Deerfield
- Some reach toward Glencoe



Participant Reach – Memberships



Connecting to Community Feedback

Theme: Top (programming) survey results are adult-focused

Top reason for non-participation in programs:

Do not have children/children are grown (53%)

- Adult programs are 17.5% of offerings

Top unmet program needs:

Non-sports and sports programs for ages 55+ and for ages 18-54

- Adult and Active Adult programming and sports

Highest program needs/interests:

Community festivals/events (59%), Programs for 55+ (33%)

- Senior programs currently provided by external providers





APPENDIX C

STATISTICALLY-VALID COMMUNITY SURVEY





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COMMUNITY SURVEY FOR THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK

AUGUST 2025

aQity Research & Insights
Evanston, IL



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Survey Methods

- These results are based on a survey of n=403 residents within the Park District of Highland Park (PDHP) boundaries, conducted between May 20th and June 25th, 2025.
- Survey invitations were sent via email and USPS to a sample of PDHP households within the five communities. Respondents had the option to reply online, by hard copy (printed / mailed questionnaires), or by phone.



- The respondent data for the n=403 surveys were weighted to match US Census targets for Highland Park by region, gender, age, race/ethnicity, homeownership vs. renter status, and presence of children under age 18 in the household.
- The maximum margin of error for a sample of n=403 respondents is +/- 4.9 % (at the 95 % confidence level).*



* In addition to sampling error, question wording, respondent error, and practical difficulties in conducting surveys may introduce error or bias in any opinion poll.
NOTE: Some %s in this report may not total to 100%, due to rounding.

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Sample Demographics

Gender *	
Male	44%
Female	54%
Other/self-describe	2%
Race *	
White	87%
African American/Black	3%
Asian	8%
Other/Multi	7%
Hispanic/Latino Ethnicity *	
% Yes	13%
Child(ren) Under 18 in Household? *	
% Yes	32%
Household (HH) Income	
<\$75,000	12%
\$75,000-\$124,999	15%
\$125,000-\$199,999	16%
\$200,000-\$299,999	19%
\$300,000+	24%
Refused/NA	14%

Length of PDHP Residence	
< 5 years	23%
5-9 yrs.	19%
10-19 yrs.	16%
20-29 yrs.	13%
30-44 yrs.	16%
45+ yrs.	11%
Mean/average	19.0 yrs.
Age (adults) *	
Under 35	13%
35-44	15%
45-59	26%
60 to 69	19%
70+	26%
Mean/average age	56.6

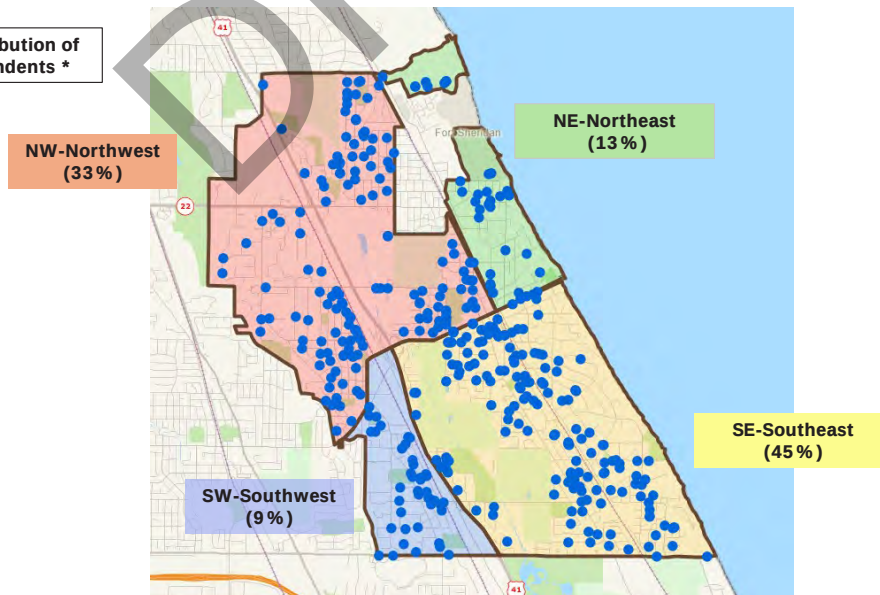
* Weighted to align with US Census data for Highland Park

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Sample Demographics

Regional Distribution of
n=403 Respondents *



* Weighted to align with US Census data for Highland Park

5



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Executive Summary



6



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Summary: Key Findings

Residents Continue to Hold the PDHP In High Regard, Mostly for its Parks/Outdoor Assets, Programs, and Overall Management

- **On a 0-10 scale, 86% give the District positive esteem ratings (scores of 6+), including 36% who hold it in the highest regard (scores of 9+). Only 8% give negative scores.**
 - Its average rating of 7.7 is virtually identical to its 2019 mark (7.6). However, residents are now more familiar with the PDHP, with only 6% who remain unfamiliar overall (down from 12% six years ago).
 - Its average score is generally in line with benchmark comparisons from nearby agencies (with a few exceptions).
- **When asked what they like most about the PDHP (in an open-ended format), many give multiple responses/positive comments, most often its parks, playgrounds and trails (mentioned by 45%), especially their care and upkeep, the number and variety, and overall appreciation of having open space nearby.**
 - Nearly as many (41%) cite various admin/management responses, most often how well the District manages and maintains its properties in general, the friendly staff service. (While 6% appreciate the reasonable fees, twice as many (13%) said PDHP fees/costs are their top dislike.)
 - Another 40% cite the programs among the District's top strengths, usually the range of offerings available (25%). About a quarter as many cite the quality of these programs as well (6%).
 - PDHP facilities are cited by 25% overall (usually the Rec Center specifically).
- **Virtually all (88%) feel that their household's interests/lifestyle/background is reflected by the District and all that it offers, with 83%+ of all subgroups agreeing.**
- **Given that 6.8% of one's property taxes goes to the PDHP, 67% think this is at least a good value given all that the District provides, with 32% saying it represents an excellent value.**
 - Only 15% rate it a poor value, and the remaining 18% rate it an average value.
 - The average value rating (6.8) is about the same as in 2019 (6.9 when the District represented a 6% share of taxes) but continues to lag slightly below scores from nearby districts. (Again, PDHP fees are cited as a top dislike by 13%).

< pg. 16 >

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< pp. 18-21 >

< pp. 27-28 >

< pp. 29-30 >



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Summary: Key Findings

Usage and Satisfaction with District Parks and Facilities Likewise Remains Very Strong

- **As in 2019, virtually all (93%) still report that someone in their household used or visited a PDHP park or facility in the past year. This includes a majority who report going to Sunset Woods Park (73%), the Rec Center (63%), and Rosewood Swimming Beach (58%).**
 - Other popular destinations (cited by at least 30%) include the Preserve of Highland Park, Danny Cuniff Park, one of the other District beaches, Heller Nature Center, and/or Hidden Creek Aqua Park.
 - While many of the most visited PDHP assets tend to be used by nearby residents, several draw from all parts of Highland Park, especially Danny Cuniff Park and most of the District's facilities (Rec Center, Heller Nature Center, Hidden Creek, Centennial Ice Arena, the Boating Center/Yacht Club, and Sunset Valley Golf Course).
- **Satisfaction with these parks and facilities is very strong, outperforming the overall esteem rating for the District. Each attribute receives an average rating of 8.2 or higher (on a 0-10 scale), with the highest scores going to:**
 - Safety (8.6 on average; no change over time)
 - Cleanliness/upkeep/maintenance (8.5, significantly higher than 8.0 in 2019)
 - Accessibility (8.4, up slightly from 8.1).

< pp. 32-33 >

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Summary: Key Findings

Needs Assessment Analysis Shows that Most of the Indoor Amenities Garner Only Some Demand and Represent "Gaps"

- **From a list of seven possible indoor facilities/amenities, those that garner the highest level of demand or interest are:**
 - Space for fine arts programs (35%, especially among younger and newer residents, those with children, SE region)
 - An indoor warm water therapy pool (32%, especially from lower-income households).
- **Fewer (15% to 22% each) express a need or interest in the next "tier" of possible facilities:**
 - Rental rooms for private events (22%, usually younger and higher income residents with children)
 - Gym space (16%) and/or an indoor sports training facility (15%) – both of which receive high interest from NW residents
 - An indoor ice rink (with 15% citing a need, interest or current usage).
- **Most are seen as less critical "gaps" (given low demand levels), with under half of those interested in each facility feel it is readily available currently. This is especially true for the top two options – a fine arts studio, and a warm water therapy pool (bigger unmet needs).**
 - The gaps are smaller for those interested in facilities that the PDHP already offers – indoor ice rink, gymnasiums, rental rooms – which may reflect concerns about the availability or condition of these facilities.
- **None of these represent overwhelming priorities for the PDHP to address or deliver, with fine arts space receiving only 16% of the "#1 priority" rankings (followed closely by a warm water therapy pool at 13%).**
 - In fact, the most frequent response was "none of these are priorities/needed" (41%, especially among the oldest residents and households without children).

< pp. 43-48 >



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Summary: Key Findings

Outdoor Facilities Are More Likely to Meet Demand, Though Some Opportunities Remain

- **A majority (54 %) express a need or interest for an outdoor aquatic park/pool, and for the most part that need is already being met. Nearly a third also express a need or interest in:**
 - Miniature golf (32%) – mostly met currently
 - Water splash pad at a community park (31%) – a top “gap” or opportunity
 - Outdoor fitness stations or court (28%) – likewise a gap.
- **All other outdoor amenities tested garnered less need or interest, and some (paddle/ platform tennis, baseball/softball diamonds) are seen as readily available currently.**

< pp. 50-55 >

Most Residents Report Household Member Participation or Attendance at PDHP Programs/Events in Past Year

- **Overall, 70 % recently took part in a District event or program, with very high overall satisfaction (7.6 average on a 0-10 scale).**
 - The highest ratings tend to come from older residents (ages 70+) participating in these activities. However, older adults in general and households without children tend to be the least likely to report program participation.
- **From a needs assessment standpoint, community events generate the greatest demand and are the top priority. While these needs are mostly being met, residents are especially interested in more music events and festivals/family events (e.g., block parties).**
- **Otherwise, adult programs for the 18-54 and 55+ age groups rank next highest in interest, priority, and unmet needs. Aside from pickleball (important to both age groups):**
 - Younger adults (18-54) seek more team/competitive sports (scheduling is key for working adults).
 - Those 55 and older tend to seek more arts and crafts as well as fitness/wellness activities.

< pp. 57-59 >

< pp. 61-68 >



10



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Summary: Key Findings

Residents Support Most of the Unfunded Capital Projects Tested

- **Support is strongest (88 %, and 76 % + among all subgroups) for completing the stairway from Central Park to Park Avenue Beach. Nearly half (44 %) voice “strong” support..**
- **Three other projects receive majority support (at least 2:1 over opponents) and rank close together in terms of priority (after the Central Park/Park Avenue Beach staircase):**
 - Improvements to Hidden Creek locker rooms, water features, etc. (77% support, mostly from younger/newer adults, upper income households, and those in the NE region)
 - Adding inclusive and accessible artificial turf fields at West Ridge Park for youth of all abilities, including those with assistive devices (73%, likewise strongest support from younger adults, higher income residents, and the NE region)
 - Adding a splash pad at Sunset park (70%, with a high level of “strong” support at 35%).
- **Slightly less support (62 % to 67 %) is given to:**
 - Improvements at Olson Park including natural and inclusive artificial turf sports fields and other amenities such as bathrooms, improved paths, and shelters (67% mostly from the NE region, but only 19% “strong” support)
 - Indoor artificial multi-sport game fields (62%, with as many “strong” opponents as “strong” supporters at 14% each).
- **Respondents are most divided on whether to replace the gymnastics space at Centennial Ice Arena with a ¼ sheet studio training ice rink (53 % support, 47 % opposed). In fact, when given an alternative option:**
 - They instead tend to favor using that space for indoor sports classes and training (39%) over a studio ice skating training rink (15%), more than 2:1. Recent Centennial users are even more likely to feel this way (54% vs. 20%, respectively).
 - Overall, 46% have no strong opinion/preference (mostly non-users of this facility).

< pp. 70-76 >

< pg. 77 >



11

While resident opinions about the PDHP remain very positive, several improvement opportunities remain:

➤ Perception / Image

- Similar to many park districts, the biggest reason for non-usage or limited usage of the PDHP's parks, facilities and programs is the perception that it is primarily focused on youth and young families. Specifically, adults without children (both the youngest residents and especially empty nesters) feel there is little offered for them. < pp. 40-41 >
- Some of this perception may be due to lack of information, or less compelling reasons to seek options for the Park District.
- Know that while most residents get information about programs, facilities etc. on the PDHP website (66%), a majority (53%) also go to City sources such as its website, the Highlander newsletter, etc. < pp. 79-81 >
 - Note that non-program participants and households without children are nearly twice as likely to prefer City (non-PDHP) sources for District info, compared to program participants.
 - Frequent and consistent promotion and updates via these City sources (especially the Highland) should be maintained, with steady emphasis on adult offerings.
- Keep in mind that visitors/users most appreciate how safe they feel at PDHP locations, and how well they are maintained. It is worth reinforcing this messaging when trying to engage and attract non-users. < pp. 37-38 >

➤ Programming

- As mentioned, adult programs/activities are the biggest unmet needs (both sports and non-sports) for ages 18-54 and 55+. < pp. 61, 65 >
- A frequent comment is that many of the existing program options for adults are during work hours. < pg. 23 >
 - Program scheduling ranked as the 2nd biggest dislike overall (after costs/fees).
 - These residents would like to see more evening and weekend activities – not just for adults, but also for some younger youth programs (which require the parent to drop off/pick up or attend).
- Pickleball remains the top suggestion across the board, but younger adults seek other team or competitive activities as well, while those ages 55+ most want arts/crafts options and wellness or fitness options (yoga, stretching, tai chi, group classes). < pg. 68 >

➤ Outdoor Amenities / Needs

- Knowing that residents are especially happy with the parks and outdoor facilities in general, and those deemed most important (Hidden Creek, miniature golf) are seen as readily available (along with paddle/platform tennis and ball fields). < pp. 50, 54 >
- That said, a number of outdoor improvements generate strong support, especially: < pp. 70-75 >
 - The Central Park to Park Avenue Beach stairway
 - A splash pad at Sunset Park (echoing support for water features at a neighborhood park, with Sunset being heavily used)
 - Inclusive and accessible fields at West Ridge Park allowing all abilities to participate in sports activities.

➤ **Indoor Amenities/Facilities**

- The indoor facilities tested generated a lower sense of priority, due to lower levels of demand for each. < pp. 43-47 >
- That said, a few opportunities are worth considering/pursuing:
 - Locker room and water feature improvements at Hidden Creek (strong support at a popular, valued facility)
 - Additional space for fine arts programing and studios – which appeals mostly to younger adults but also nearly one in four of those without children and who have not participated in programs recently
 - An indoor warm water therapy pool.
- For the former gymnastics space at Centennial, residents consistently favor an indoor sports training facility (broader demand) than an additional ice rink for private skating lessons and training, or hockey clinics. < pg. 77 >
 - Regardless, either decision from the District and Park Board will need to be carefully reasoned and explained to the most interested parties (e.g., ice/hockey groups and broader sports communities).

I. Overall Opinions of the PDHP



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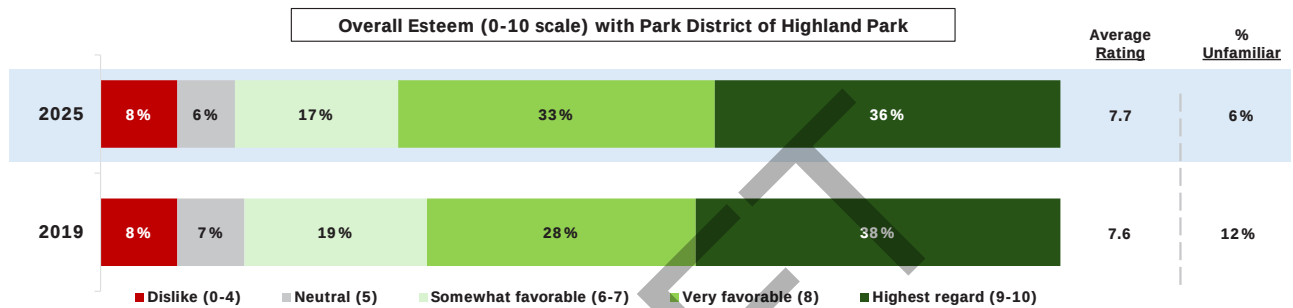
Overall Opinion: PDHP

Park District residents continue to hold the PDHP in very high regard. Overall, 86 % have a positive opinion about the District (rating it a “6” or higher on a 0-10 scale), including 36 % who hold it in the highest regard (scores of “9+”).

The average rating of 7.7 is very positive (essentially unchanged from its 7.6 average rating in 2019).

- > Only 8% have a negative opinion and the remaining 6% are neutral (little change since 2019).
- > More importantly, the percent who are unfamiliar with the District (unable to give a rating) has been cut in half, from 12% to 6% currently (greater awareness).

Based on the average ratings, recent visitors/users of PDHP parks and facilities tend to be the most favorable (7.8, vs. 5.8 from the relatively few non-users) along with households without children (7.9, vs. 7.3 among those with children – still very positive). All other segments and regions reflect the strong 7.7 overall score (no statistically meaningful differences).



Q1. Please give your overall opinion of the Park District of Highland Park (PDHP) using the 0-10 scale below. If you are not familiar enough to offer an opinion, please mark "Unfamiliar".

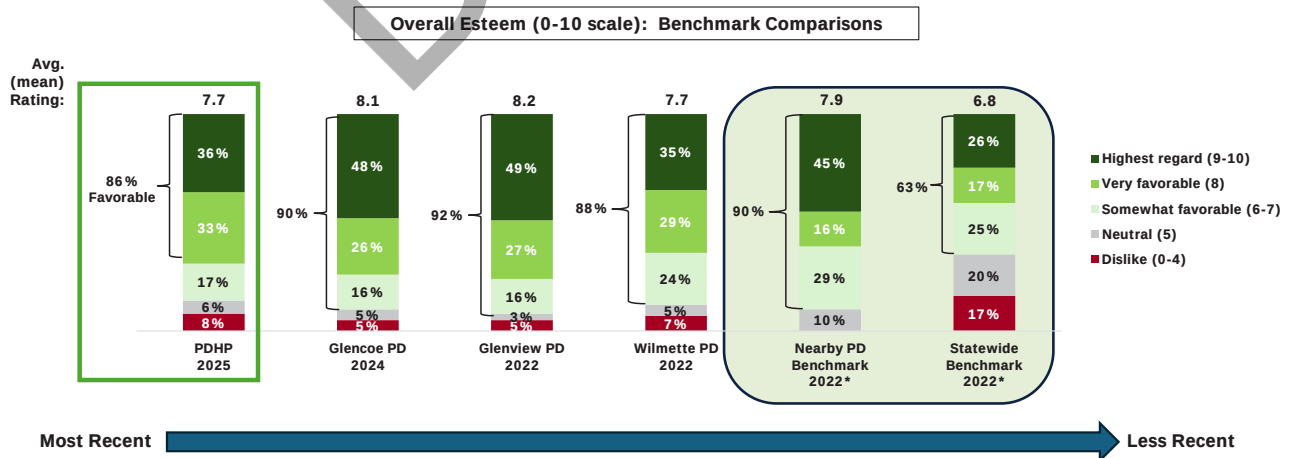
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Overall Opinion: PDHP

The PDHP's overall esteem ratings are generally in line with the regional benchmark ratings from 2022*, and with the Wilmette Park District. Scores for the Glencoe and Glenview agencies are slightly higher.



* 2022 IAPD statewide survey results. Benchmark comparisons with neighboring park districts/agencies include Highland Park, Highwood, Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, Deerfield, Northbrook, Glenview, Wilmette, Kenilworth, and Winnetka.



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Likes/Strengths of PDHP

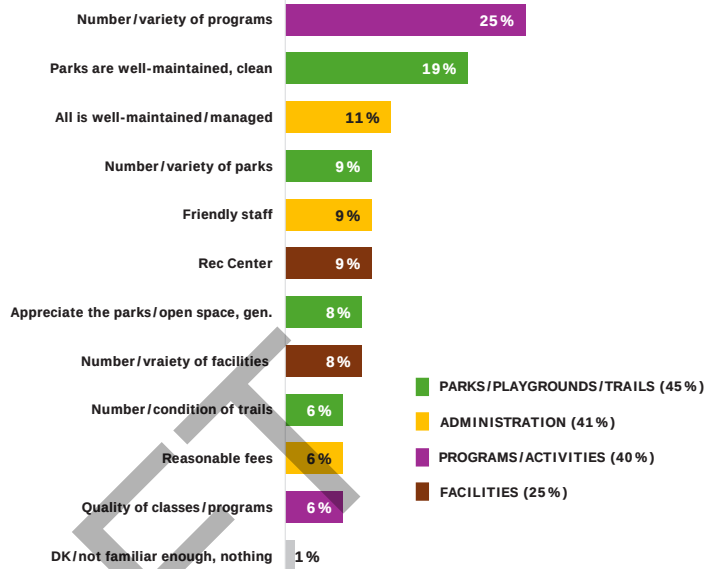
When asked (in an open-ended format) to identify the PDHP's top strengths or what residents like most, most gave multiple responses with nearly half mentioning at least one of the following:

- The parks, playgrounds, trails and open space (45%) – especially their level of upkeep, the number of locations in the community, good trail system, and general appreciation of these properties
- Administration and system management (41%, which is higher than typically seen) – with most citing the overall good management of the park and recreational system, helpful staff, and reasonable costs/fees
- Program options (40%) – almost all of which pertain to the wide range of activities and programs offered (with quality of these options a distant second).

Note that most respondents (n=346 of 403) were able to give a response, and only 1% could not mention anything that they like.

Examples of the responses to this question are provided on the next few pages.

Positives for PDHP
(top multiple open-ended responses, n=346)



Q2. What do you like about the Park District of Highland Park (PDHP), or what does it do well? (multiple open-ended responses)

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PARKS/PLAYGROUNDS/TRAILS (NET=45 %)

- "Sunset Park remodel and upkeep is wonderful."
- "Maintenance of the beachfront and parks like Rosewood and Olson Park."
- "The lawns are mowed and trees trimmed. I've seen them surveying the parks after a storm to see what needs to be done."
- "I think they work hard to maintain a clean and inviting environment in the parks and beaches."
- "I love the accessibility to lots of recreation! I love the beach, it's always so well maintained and clean. Our parks are ample and offer a lot of different activities for kids of all ages."
- "Variety of offerings. Nice upkeep. Natural settings."
- "Multiple locations; a great variety of activities close to my home. Well maintained grounds and facilities."
- "Variety of parks and facilities. Preserve is very nice."
- "The opportunity to enjoy green space in a variety of ways, to exercise and stay, fit, and along with that some of the social aspects associated with that."
- "The parks are terrific! They are well taken care of and delightful to walk through. I love Sunset Woods and Central Park the best."
- "The outdoor parks. The Preserve and Sunset Woods are enjoyable & pleasant to walk in or chat with others in the parks."
- "Very clean parks, lots of green space, easy parking for enjoying the parks, variety of parks and trails."
- "Broad array of facilities. Golf, tennis/pickle courts, playgrounds, nature trails."
- "Wooded areas, nature (increased planting of trees and native flowers) in the parks. Paved bike-specific paths."



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ADMINISTRATION (NET=41%)

"Great care and attention given to all facilities, and the staff are almost all helpful and pleasant. Great range of facilities for almost every interest."

"The quality of the park district facilities and offerings. Well maintained, regular investment in improvements, quality programs that are affordable."

"Extremely well maintained, clean, trusted to be safe."

"Clean, very nice facilities and helpful staff."

"I love how committed the commissioners are to thoughtful, strategic planning so that the City has a constant pipeline of growth and improvements. The dedication of the staff is top-notch!"

"Good outreach to community. Many activity options."

"Reasonable price for Rec Center membership, good facility and classes."

"Value based pricing."

"Affordability for community members compared to private programs and a good variety of options."

"Different classes and levels. I like the scholarship option."

"I have noticed that 'change' seems to be a part of the Park District. You are willing to try new ideas and then implement a plan that meets those needs."

"The Park District representative who answered my call requesting pickleball lines be added to our local courts while being resurfaced, was very receptive and the lines were added."



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PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES (NET=40%)

"Provides numerous activities and services for residents."

"I like all your programs, especially the day camps. When my kids were in school, they went to all the camp programs (4 kids)."

"Some lovely programming!! We loved making lanterns and doing a nature walk at Heller, salsa band and Encanto at Sunset Park, and others. We have young children and still need to try out the beach offerings, but it seems like there are a lot of nature-based play opportunities."

"Has a good variety of programs. Adding and tweaking each year as well so it's not always the same stuff."

"The Park District has something for everyone. No age group is left out. Almost all areas of sports are included."

"The PDHP offers a wide range of opportunities for Highland Park residents of all ages and most interests to engage in a multitude of activities both indoors and outdoors. Our family of 6 has participated in sooo many athletic programs and we use, appreciate and enjoy almost all the facilities from the Rec Center to Sunset Valley Golf Course Clubhouse (we are not golfers yet) to Danny Cuniff & Old Elm & Sunset Parks, and LOVE Heller Nature Center and the beaches!!!"

"My son has autism, and the classes are so accommodating. Each class I have enrolled him in has been so great. After struggling with other classes his whole life, I can't say enough how nice it's been so be around such kind, understanding people."

"So many things to choose from. Organized and fun camps are great. Rec Center is great. Always improving. Good supervision at camps."

"Youth programs, which are growing and improving."

"Lots of activities for our family, especially our kids."

"Variety of family options! Playgrounds and parks, forward thinking!"

"There are a lot of youth programs offered, the quality of the programs and the communication is high. The parks themselves are always in great condition"



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FACILITIES (NET=25%)

"The West Park Ave. facility is great and has a wonderful selection of offerings."

"The Rec Center. Excellent staff, excellent instructors, clean, multiple options to work out....track, weights, classes, pool."

"I use the Recreation Center 4-5 days a week and find it a top-notch facility. Good programming, friendly employees and excellent instructors."

"I can speed walk the track for free as a resident. Many options are offered. The people at the front desk, and the person on the second floor desk, are exceptionally nice, and helpful."

"Recreation Center is always clean and the employees always helpful."

"Free indoor track at Rec Center."

"The fitness center is outstanding."

"Excellent facilities -- plenty of programs and activities -- convenient locations."

"Provides facilities and resources for physical health."

"Great facilities, variety of programs for everyone in the family, variety of options in every season of the year."

"Great facilities with lots of options for different types of activities."

"I love the ceramics studio."

"Variety of accessible facilities across the city; commitment to making resources available to all people in Highland Park."



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Dislikes / Improvements Sought for PDHP

When residents were asked what they dislike about the District or improvements they would like to see, fewer (n=319 of 403) gave an answer and most often they said there is nothing they dislike at all (13%).

The remaining comments most often pertain to:

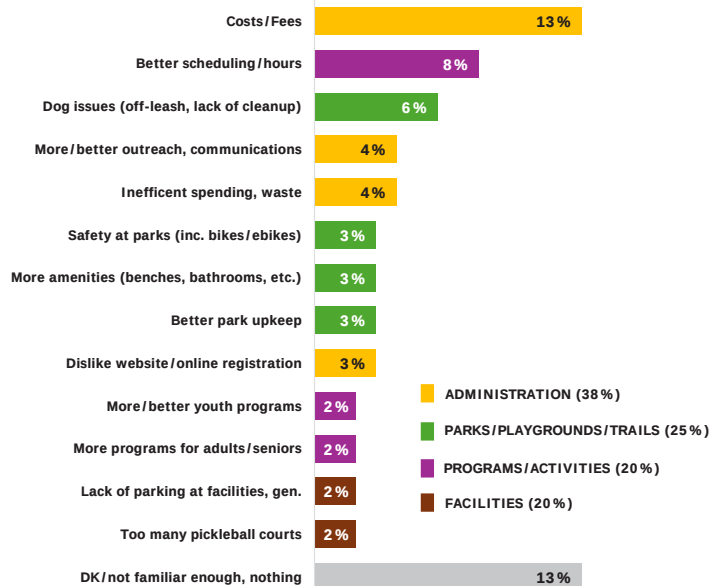
- Admin or management matters (38%) – with most citing the fees and costs for programs and facilities (tied as the top response at 13%). Others seek more communication about PDHP offerings, or express concerns about spending/waste.
- Parks and trail issues (25%) – with concerns about dog owners coming up most often, followed by physical safety concerns (mostly from bike riders), some seeking more features or amenities in the parks, and generally better maintenance.
- Program issues (20%) which tend to center around scheduling and availability – most often from those seeking more options in evenings and/or weekends (non-working hours).
- Facility comments (20%) with very scattered responses (mostly centered around limited parking at more heavily-used facilities). Included in this are 2% who feel there are too many pickleball courts in the community (vs. 1% who feel there are not enough).

Sample verbatims are on the next few pages.



Q3. What do you dislike about the Park District of Highland Park, or what could it improve? (multiple open-ended responses)

Dislikes / Improvements for PDHP (top multiple open-ended responses, n=319)



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ADMINISTRATION (NET=38%)

"Sometimes the camp prices are more than surrounding park districts."

"Rec Center charges too much for what it provides."

"Price of Recreation membership seems high for residents. Also, free beach access seems appropriate. Evanston now provides free beach access for Evanston residents."

"Cost vs. benefit - programs are generally okay, but pricing does not seem accessible for many."

"Price can be a barrier. For example, we've never signed our kids up for the summer camps because of cost."

"More expensive than neighboring towns, availability of after school programming, availability of adult programs."

"I dislike the high fees the most! As a resident paying high taxes, I would expect the user fees to be more user-friendly. The PDHP is highly staff - maybe too highly? As a single mother of two, my children were not able to participate in many PDHP activities because the fees were out of reach for us, but we made just a touch too much to be eligible for the scholarship program. That being said, the Recreation Center fees, summer camp, and Aqua Park fees are reasonable. I also REALLY dislike the \$30 sticker fee to use our beaches."

"Spending too much tax money and too many ridiculous rules at facilities."

"Too many unnecessary improvements. Lots of money spent."

"Spent too much resources on annual plants and lawn maintenance, should go more sustainable both environmental sense and financial sense."

"Communicate offerings and resources more frequently and effectively, for example by email."

"More disclosure of everything the Park District has to offer."

"More communications of the events or offerings to ensure there's a good turn out."

"At times, I have found it hard to register for things."

"Park District website is not user friendly. Rec Center website is very bad, as is the app."

"The website and registration is absolutely awful. Timing and scheduling for baseball and T-ball is very last minute. There's a park district app but only for iPhones."

"The membership and registration system(s) are cumbersome and not always easy to figure out. You need a new digital system that is clear and easy to use."



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PARKS/PLAYGROUNDS/TRAILS (NET=25%)

"Owners having their dogs off leash. I would like this to be better enforced by HPPD."

"Many off leash dogs."

"It should be dog poop bags at all parks and playgrounds!! No excuse to not pick it up and dispose of it."

"Dog park (needed)."

"The lack of enforcement of e-bikes and e-scooters in Sunset Park and in the Preserve and the lack of enforcement of dogs off leash."

"Unenforced expectations. It doesn't do any good to put up signs banning off-leash dogs and e-scooters/e-bicycles if it isn't enforced. Sunset Woods Park is literally full of off leash dogs and kids ripping around on Class 3 ebikes."

"Not too sure of this question, but there is one play equipment tall slide that is twisty, tubular. It is dangerous for young children. I have seen parents needing to go down with their child and it turns the child and parent upside down...seen many tears there."

"Not a fan of the motorized bikes in the parks. Maybe have someone monitor the park."

"Not enough open restrooms."

"We asked for more streetlights through the park (in Ravinia), dog waste bags, a trash can and some landscaping and a few trees."

"There are a few parks with no toilets."

"I would love an extra shower closer to the lower parking lot at Rosewood Beach!"

"Too many tennis courts have transitioned to pickleball courts."

"Need more pickleball courts."



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PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES (NET=20%)

- "More kids programming with hours that match working families. Summer camp should be 8-5."
- "As a family with two working parents, the ratio of programs/events that happen during the week before 'working hour' end compared to programs on weekends is a little skewed."
- "Better times with classes such as kids' gymnastics. Later times and weekends."
- "Not tons of late afternoon class options."
- "More options for middle schoolers/high schoolers in the summer. Right now they can either do counselor in training or nothing."
- "Toddler programs, gymnastics program is horrible."
- "Offerings for little kids are during the weekday, which is great for stay-at-home moms, but makes it really hard for working moms when we don't employ a nanny."
- "When I've looked at class offerings for the preschool and under ages, it seems like there are significantly more offerings in neighboring communities than there are in Highland Park."
- "I wish there were more adult programs."
- "Could add adult programs such as Tai Chi."
- "(It seems) Geared to kids."

FACILITIES (NET=20%)

- "Parking nearest the Rec Center is very inefficient. Wasted spaces and too many handicapped spots when combined with main parking lot which is 30 yard away."
- "Rosewood Beach parking lot needs a space for cars to drop off people & belongings. Usually a sign saying NO STOPPING is put out & that is not good."
- "Provide an indoor space for sports programming that was lost when the dome went away (for) baseball, lacrosse, football, etc. West Ridge gym is NOT close to being enough space for training."
- "Outdoor fields are much worse than neighboring communities. Why are ours so bad? Olsen, Edgewood, and Northwood are very poor."
- "Many of the activities we do have aren't done well. The facilities aren't great, and we don't have enough of them, especially indoor gyms..."
- "You don't maintain the ice rink; never in good shape when Lake Forest is perfect."



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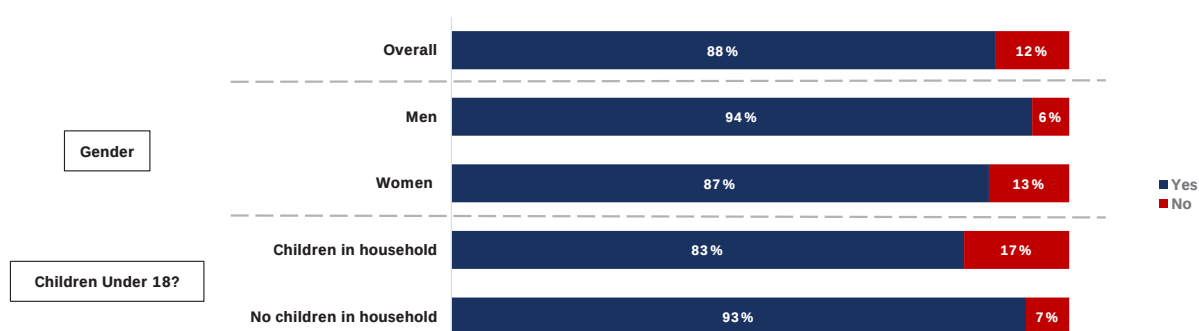
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PDHP's Representation / Inclusion of Residents' Needs

Nearly nine out of ten residents (88 %) feel that they are included and represented by the PDHP and its overall offerings. At least 83 % of all subgroups feel this way, especially men and those without children.

Those who disagree were asked why they feel this way; these respondents gave a wide range of reasons which mostly focus on a need for more adult programming options/activities, and lower fees (see next page along with sample verbatims).

Does Your Household Feel Properly Represented / Included Within the PDHP's Offerings?



Q11. The Park District of Highland Park is committed to being an ally for inclusion and equitable access, where everyone is afforded the same rights and opportunities that result in a sense of belonging by providing access and opportunities to everyone, regardless of social/financial/ethnic background, gender, age, sexual orientation, or physical ability. Do you believe that your household and its interests are properly represented and included in the Park District of Highland Park and its offerings?

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Top Reasons: Not Feeling Included / Represented by PDHP

More for specific populations/segments:

- Need more for seniors (n=7)
- More for adults in general and/or those without children (n=7)
- Better scheduling (e.g., for working adults, moms – n=5)
- More for youth, general (n=4)
- Better serve/accommodate those with special needs (n=3)
- More focused on diversity (cultural, LGBTQ, etc. – n=3)

Other Admin/Management Issues

- Lower fees/costs (n=8)
- Better decisions on spending, enforcing rules, etc. (n=4)

More Facilities/Amenities

- Need new/bigger facilities (n=4)
- More park amenities/features (n=2)

Sample Verbatims

"I'm not sure if there are activities or programs for older adults or senior citizens. My in-laws moved in with us; I'm looking for activities that are age-appropriate for them."

"Provide more activities for seniors. Senior hikes, affordable senior outings. The plays and concerts are usually over \$200."

"Programs for working adults who don't have children. It seems all of the programs are for retirees or families with young kids. Childless adults who work are left out."

"Many of the programs are reasonably priced, but some, like tennis, are extremely expensive. I would also love to see more classes/diversity of offerings for adults who aren't available from 9-6 because of the workday."

"Would like to see more tennis classes for kids."

"More art classes and more classes for kids ages 2-5."

"More representation of POC in leadership. More diversity at classes and events."

"Little or no offerings for users who are disabled."

"There is NO playground that is usable for those with physical disabilities/mobility challenged."

"Lowering the cost. Not everybody living in this area has the wealth that most have."

"Free parking at Moraine Park for all Highland Park residents."

"Because rules are not followed or enforced!"

"Indoor facilities for soccer and other youth sports. Programming to fit hours for working parents."

"I am a widow, and I walk my dog in Brown Park...We would like a few streetlights in the north end of Brown Park (and) also dog waste bags in all parks like Glencoe has."

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Needs Assessment Analysis Shows that Most of the Indoor Amenities Garner Only Some Demand and Represent "Gaps"

- **From a list of seven possible indoor facilities/amenities, those that garner the highest level of demand or interest are:**
 - Space for fine arts programs (35%, especially among younger and newer residents, those with children, SE region)
 - An indoor warm water therapy pool (32%, especially from lower-income households).
- **Fewer (15% to 22% each) express a need or interest in the next "tier" of possible facilities:**
 - Rental rooms for private events (22%, usually younger and higher income residents with children)
 - Gym space (16%) and/or an indoor sports training facility (15%) – both of which receive high interest from NW residents
 - An indoor ice rink (with 15% citing a need, interest or current usage).
- **Most are seen as less critical "gaps" (given low demand levels), with under half of those interested in each facility feel it is readily available currently. This is especially true for the top two options – a fine arts studio, and a warm water therapy pool (bigger unmet needs).**
 - The gaps are smaller for those interested in facilities that the PDHP already offers – indoor ice rink, gymnasiums, rental rooms – which may reflect concerns about the availability or condition of these facilities.
- **None of these represent overwhelming priorities for the PDHP to address or deliver, with fine arts space receiving only 16% of the "#1 priority" rankings (followed closely by a warm water therapy pool at 13%).**
 - In fact, the most frequent response was "none of these are priorities/needed" (41%, especially among the oldest residents and households without children).

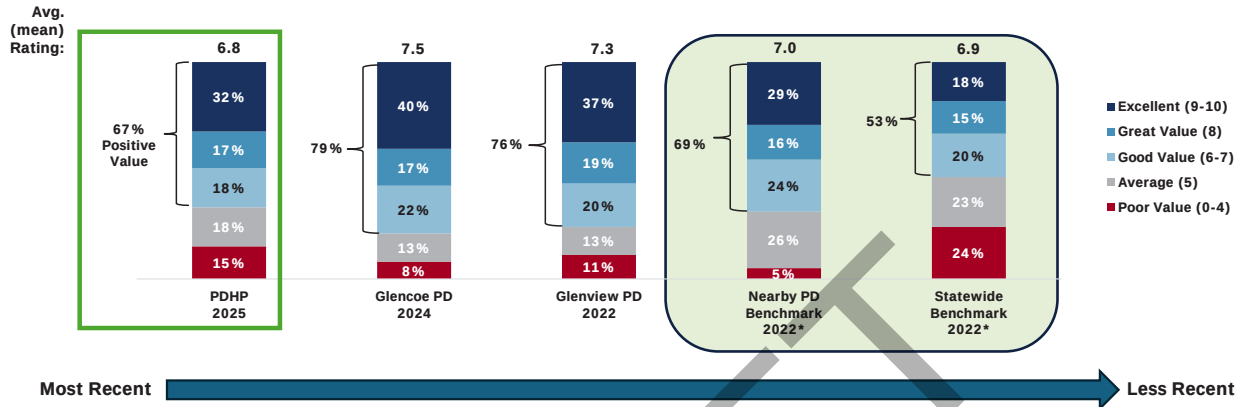
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PDHP Overall Value

PDHP's average value rating (based on its share of property taxes) is generally in line with regional and statewide benchmarks but slightly lags behind value scores for nearby agencies in Glencoe and Glenview.



* 2022 IAPD statewide survey tested a 5% share to park districts as the statewide average. Benchmark comparisons with neighboring park districts/agencies include Highland Park, Highwood, Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, Deerfield, Northbrook, Glenview, Wilmette, Kenilworth, and Winnetka. Glencoe PD tested an 8% property tax share. Glenview PD tested a 7.8% property tax share.



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II. PDHP Park and Facility Usage, Satisfaction



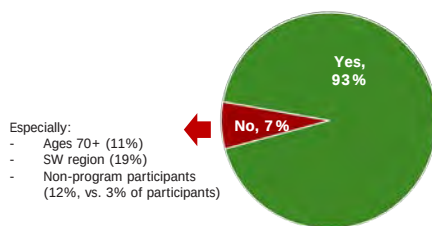
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Overall, 94 % report someone in their household using a PDHP park or facility in the past year (identical to 2019 usage level).

- Usage is lowest in the SW region, where nearly one in five respondents (19%) report no usage or visits. Those ages 70+ also tend to report no recent usage.

Despite the large number of parks and recreational options available in the District, many receive high levels of self-reported usage (suggesting that many residents utilize multiple properties). A majority report going to Sunset Woods Park and the Rosewood Swimming Beach, as well as the Rec Center.

Usage of PDHP Park/Facility in Past Year



Locations Visited or Used in Past Year (top responses*)	% Reporting (n=371)
PARKS/TRAILS/OPEN SPACE	
NET: 96%	
Sunset Woods Park	73%
Rosewood Swimming Beach	58%
The Preserve of Highland Park	42%
Danny Cuniff Park	34%
Other beaches (Millard, Moraine, Park Ave.)	33%
Larry Fink Park	27%
Other neighborhood park (various)	27%
West Ridge Park	24%
Dog beach at Moraine Park	19%
Olson Park	14%
Dog park at Larry Fink Park	12%
Dog park (winter) at HP Golf Learning Center	4%
FACILITIES	
NET: 87%	
Recreation Center of Highland Park	63%
Heller Nature Center	30%
Hidden Creek Aqua Park	30%
West Ridge Center	25%
Centennial Ice Arena (skating, gymnastics)	22%
Park Ave. Boating Facility/North Shore Yacht Club	21%
Deer Creek Racquet Club	19%
HP Golf Learning Center (driving range)	19%
Sunset Valley Golf Club	18%
River's Edge Adventure Mini Golf	9%

* Parks/facilities cited by 3% or fewer respondents are not shown.

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When looking at the regional distribution of self-reported visitors to individual parks and facilities, many tend to attract users from specific areas.

- For example, 45% of the overall population is in the SE region, but nearly two-thirds (65%) of those going to Larry Fink Park come from this area.
- Similarly, a quarter (26%) of those reporting usage of West Ridge Park come from the SW area, even though this region represents 9% of the total population.

This analysis also shows that some parks (e.g., Danny Cuniff) and most facilities attract residents throughout the city. This is especially true for the Recreation Center, Heller Nature Center, Hidden Creek, Centennial Ice Arena, Park Avenue boating/yacht club facilities, and Sunset Valley Golf Club.

Significant Differences: Facility and Park Usage by Region

PDHP Parks /Facilities Recently Visited/Used (top responses)	n	Region			
		NE	NW	SE	SW
Overall (row) % of Respondents	403	13%	33%	45%	9%
PARKS/TRAILS/OPEN SPACE					
Sunset Woods Park	266	10%	38%	45%	7%
Rosewood Swimming Beach	229	9%	30%	54%	7%
The Preserve of Highland Park	163	10%	44%	43%	4%
Danny Cuniff Park	140	13%	38%	43%	7%
Other beaches (Millard/Moraine/Park Ave.)	108	14%	34%	45%	7%
Larry Fink Park	88	0%	24%	65%	12%
Other neighborhood parks	117	16%	41%	35%	8%
West Ridge Park	88	9%	34%	31%	26%
FACILITIES					
Recreation Center of Highland Park	223	14%	34%	46%	6%
Heller Nature Center	118	12%	36%	41%	11%
Hidden Creek Aqua Park	133	11%	27%	51%	10%
West Ridge Center	96	9%	30%	43%	18%
Centennial Ice Arena	85	14%	37%	44%	6%
Park Ave. Boating Facility/NS Yacht Club	62	21%	38%	31%	11%
Deer Creek Racquet Club	65	6%	24%	65%	5%
HP Golf Learning Center (driving range)	60	4%	51%	40%	4%
Sunset Valley Golf Club	57	18%	31%	48%	3%

○ = statistically higher regional response at the 95% confidence level

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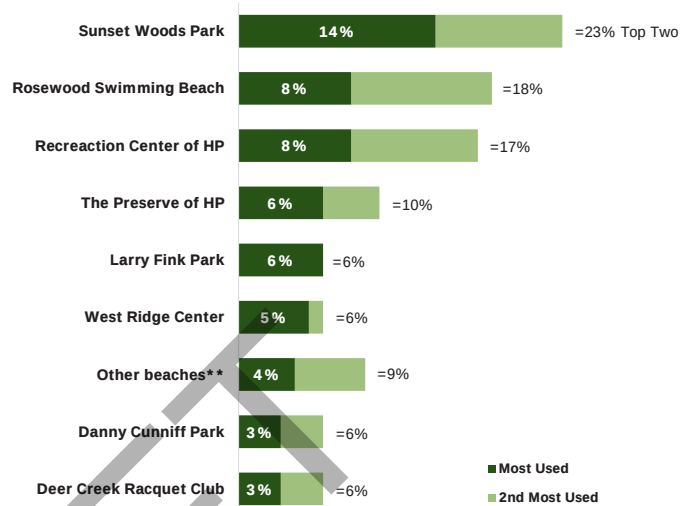
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PDHP Usage

Of these top PDHP locations, nearly one out of four residents (23%) cite Sunset Woods Park as the one that they utilize most often.

- Sunset Woods has nearly twice the number of “#1 most visited” responses (14%) than the next most-used location (Rosewood Beach, cited by 8% overall).

Most Frequently Used PDHP Parks/Facilities: Top Responses*



Q5. Which park or facility do you use most often? Second most often?

* All other locations cited by no more than 5% as a “top two” most frequently-visited location

** (Millard, Moraine, Park Ave. beaches)

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PDHP Usage / Activities

Most PDHP park users (78%) report engaging in light active recreation (walking, jogging, fitness, etc.) when visiting local parks, followed closely by simply enjoying the natural setting (71%).

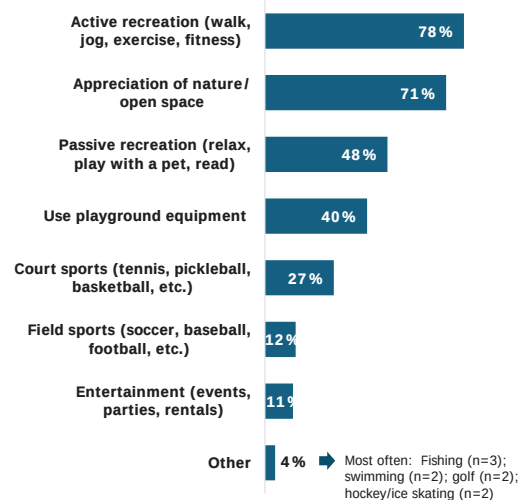
- More long-term PDHP residents and those without children tend to report taking part in active recreation during these visits, while younger and newer residents are more likely to appreciate the open space and nature (see next page).

Nearly half (48%) report more passive activities such as relaxing or reading a book (again, newer local residents as well as more affluent households).

Forty percent use playground equipment at the parks. Not surprisingly, those with children and younger/newer residents tend to utilize these amenities.

Those using sports courts at the parks tend to report higher incomes, while residents utilizing field sports amenities are somewhat older (usually 45-59) and have children.

Top Activities When Using/Visiting PDHP Parks (multiple responses)



Most often: Fishing (n=3); swimming (n=2); golf (n=2); hockey/ice skating (n=2)



Q6. When you visit the outdoor parks, what do you or your household typically do there? Please select all that apply.

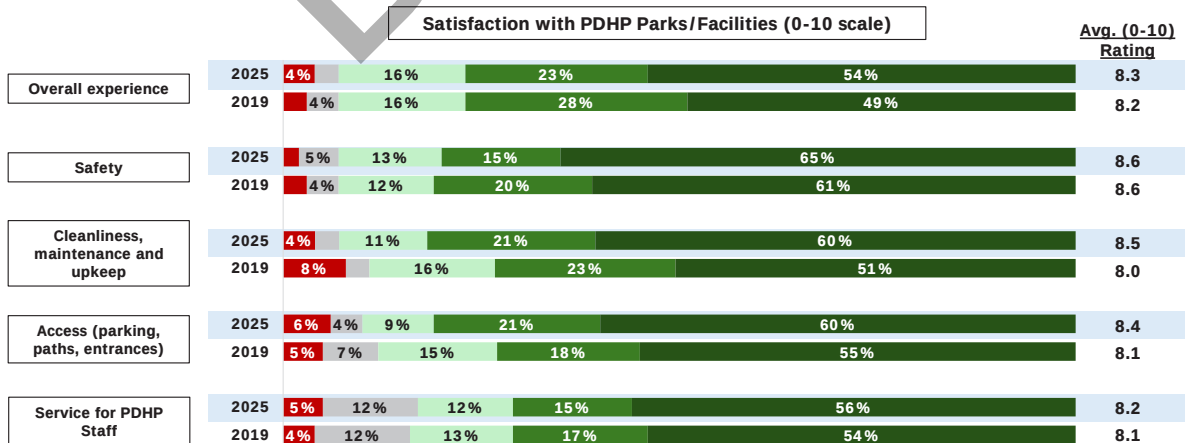
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Significant Differences: Top Activities When Using/Visiting PDHP Parks

	Overall	Most Likely to Mention
Active recreation (walk, job, exercise, fitness)	78%	- Lived in Highland Park 20-29 yrs. (91%), 45+ yrs. (86%) - HH income under \$75K (95%), \$75K-\$124.9K (91%) - NW (84%) and SW regions (86%) - No children in household (87%, vs. 65% of those with children)
Appreciation of nature/open space	71%	- Under age 35 (90%), 60-69 (76%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (83%), 20-29 yrs. (84%) - HH income \$75K-\$124.9K (84%) - Non-white adults (90% of n=16)
Passive recreation (relax, play with a pet, read, etc.)	48%	- Under age 35 (77%), 60-69 (64%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (62%) - HH income \$300K+ (60%) - Non-white adults (79% of n=16)
Use playground equipment	40%	- Ages 35-44 (70%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (49%), 5-9 yrs. (55%) - Children in household (81%, vs. 15% of those without children) - Program participants (50%, vs. 22% of non-participants)
Court sports (tennis, pickleball, basketball, etc.)	27%	- Lived in Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (40%) - HH income \$125K-\$199K (20%), \$200K-\$299.9K (53%), \$300K+ (34%) - NW (29%) and SE regions (32%) - Program participants (32%, vs. 9% of non-participants)
Field sports (soccer, baseball, football, etc.)	12%	- Ages 45-59 (22%) - Lived in Highland Park 10-29 yrs. (21%) - Children in household (27%, vs. 4% of those without children) - Program participants (16%, vs. 2% of non-participants)
Entertainment (events, parties, rentals)	11%	- Lived in Highland Park 5-9 yrs. (16%), 20-29 yrs. (23%) - NE region (21%) - Children in household (18%, vs. 7% of those without children)

Among recent users/visitors, satisfaction with PDHP parks and facilities remains very strong, with at least 54% now saying they are completely satisfied (scores of 9+ on a 0-10 scale). The average ratings of 8.2+ (across all attributes) are very strong, and scores for the cleanliness/upkeep are even higher now (8.5 average) than in 2019 (8.0).

> Scores for accessibility are also up slightly (from 8.1 to 8.4 on average). Note that no more than 6% are dissatisfied with any attribute.



This strong satisfaction is generally consistent across all subgroups, as no segment gives an average rating lower than 7.6 (still positive) for any attribute (highest income residents when rating PDHP staff service).

- > Note that the newest local residents are especially satisfied with the upkeep and accessibility of PDHP properties.

Significant Differences: Satisfaction with PDHP Parks/Facilities

	Average (0-10) Rating	Lower than Avg.	Higher than Avg.
Overall experience	8.3	- Men (8.2)	- Women (8.6)
Safety	8.6	- HH income \$125K-\$199K (8.3)	- HH income \$200K-\$299K (9.1)
Cleanliness, maintenance and upkeep	8.5	- Lived in Highland Park 5-9 yrs. (8.3), 20-29 yrs. (8.4)	- Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (9.0)
Accessibility	8.4	- Ages 70+ (8.2) - Lived in Highland Park 20-29 yrs. (7.8)	- Under age 35 (9.2) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (8.9)
Quality of service from PDHP staff	8.2	- HH income \$300K+ (7.6)	- HH income \$75K-\$124.9K (8.6), \$200K-\$299.9K (9.1)

Respondents giving low satisfaction scores (6 or below on a 0-10 scale) for any attribute were asked to explain the reason in an open-ended format. These responses are summarized on the next page, and most often concern:

- > Staff/instructor/counselor issues (not helpful/responsive)
- > General need for more/better park upkeep (landscaping issues, garbage pick-up)
- > Rosewood Beach (crowded, lack of parking, amenities/facilities).

Top Reasons for Dissatisfaction: PDHP Facility/Park/Staff Experience (n=73 respondents)



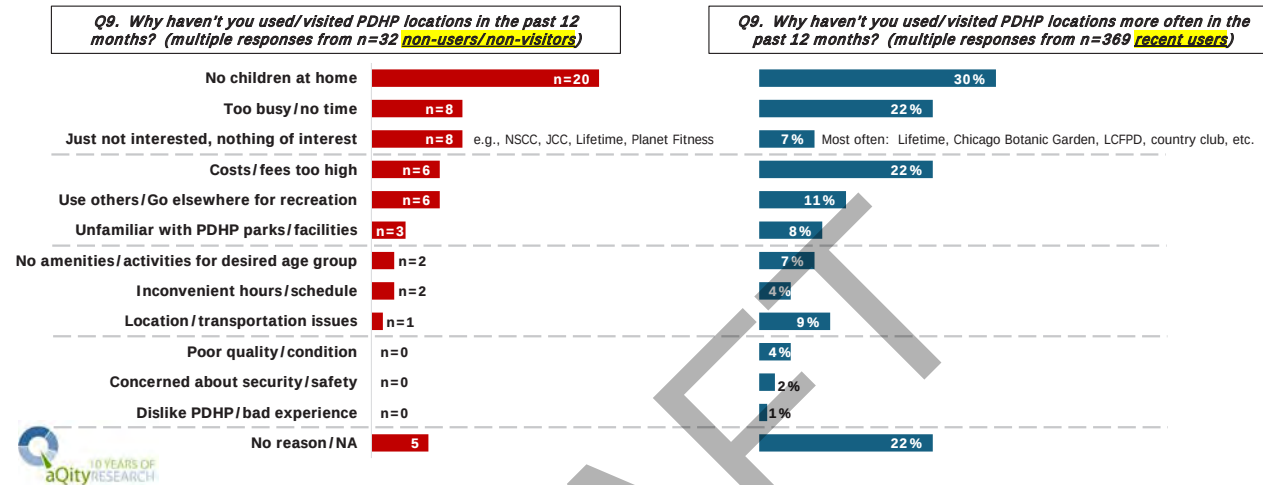


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Reasons for PDHP Non-Usage/Limited Usage

The top reason selected for non-usage (among the few non-PDHP visitors) and for not more usage (among recent visitors) is not having children under age 18 at home – suggesting a perception that the District is focused on youth and young families.

- Busy schedules, general lack of interest (especially among non-users) and program/facility fees (especially among users) round out the top reasons for limited PDHP engagement. Other sources of recreation or fitness vary across other organizations, agencies, or private clubs.
- Note that very few cite safety concerns as a barrier to usage.



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Reasons for PDHP Limited Usage

Among the top reasons that recent PDHP users/visitors give for not engaging more frequently with the Park District:

- Adults ages 60+ are most likely to report not having children at home as the biggest barrier, and those ages 45-59 (slightly younger) tend to feel there is little offered for their age group.
- Fees are cited most often by the youngest and newest residents, and adults in the SE region. The newest residents also tend to be less familiar with the District.

Significant Differences: Reasons Limiting More Frequent PDHP Usage (among n=369 recent visitors)

	Overall Response	Lower than Avg.
Do not have children/children are grown	30%	- Women (37%, vs. 26% of men) - Ages 60+ (48%) - NW region (41%)
Too busy/no time	22%	- Ages 35-44 (54%) - Children in household (35%, vs. 18% of those without children) - SW region (49%)
Just not interested/nothing of interest	7%	- SW region (33%)
Cost/Fees too high	22%	- Under age 35 (57% of n=15) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (39%) - SE region (31%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (38%)
Use others/Go elsewhere for recreation	11%	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Unfamiliar with PDHP parks/facilities	8%	- Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (21%) - Children in household (12%, vs. 5% of those without children)
No amenities/activities for desired age group	7%	- Ages 45-59 (12%)
Inconvenient hours/schedules	4%	- Women (7%, vs. 1% of men)
Location/Transportation issues	9%	- Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (26%) - SE region (14%) - Men (12%, vs. 5% of women)



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III. Needs Assessment: Indoor Facilities

From a list of indoor recreational facilities, roughly a third report an interest or need for:

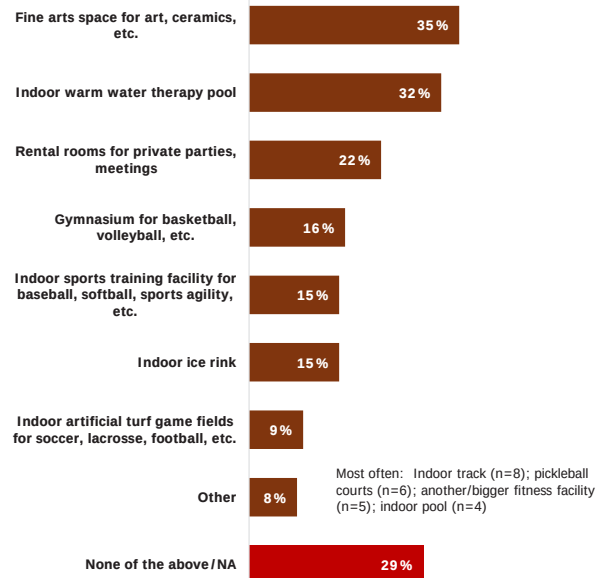
- Program space for fine arts activities, such as an art or ceramics studio (35%), which is especially of interest to the youngest and newest Highland Park residents, and households with children (see next page).
- An indoor warm water therapy pool (32%), especially among lower income households. This level of interest is generally consistent by age group.

Between 15% and 22% expressed demand or interest in most of the other indoor options tested, mostly among those in the 35-to 44-year old age group, and residents with children.

In addition, 29% said none of these are needed or of interest to them (most often the oldest and longer-term local residents, and those without children).

Just under one in ten express a need for indoor artificial turf fields (9%, again usually younger adults with children at home).

Level of Demand / Need for Indoor Facilities



Significant Differences: Level of Demand/Interest/Need for Indoor Facilities

	Overall	Most Likely to Express Demand/Need/ Interest/Use
Fine arts space for art, ceramics, etc.	35 %	- Under age 35 (68%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (66%) - SE region (43%), SW region (52%) - Children in household (47%, vs. 33% of those without children) - Program participants (41%, vs. 23% of non-participants)
Indoor warm water therapy pool	32 %	- HH income <\$125K (48%)
Rental room for private parties, meetings	22 %	- Ages 35-44 (50%) - HH income \$125K+ (29%) - Children in household (40%, vs. 16% of those without children) - Program participants (26%, vs. 16% of non-participants)
Gymnasium for basketball, volleyball, etc.	16 %	- Lived in Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (35%) - NW region (24%) - Children in household (29%, vs. 10% of those without children) - PDHP user (17%, vs. 5% of non-users) and program participants (19%, vs. 6% of non-participants)
Indoor sports training facility for baseball, softball, sports agility, etc.	15 %	- Ages 35-59 (25%) - NW region (24%) - Children in household (25%, vs. 9% of those without children) - Program participants (18%, vs. 3% of non-participants)
Indoor ice rink	15 %	- Ages 35 to 44 (30%) - HH income \$300K+ (26%) - Children in household (34%, vs. 8% of those without children) - Program participants (19%, vs. 11% of non-participants)
Indoor artificial turf game fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, etc.	9 %	- Ages 35-59 (17%) - Children in household (26%, vs. 0% of those without children) - PDHP user (9%, vs. 1% of non-users) and program participants (14%, vs. 0% of non-participants)
None of the above/NA	29 %	- Ages 70+ (43%) - Lived in Highland Park 30-44 yrs. (43%) - No children in household (36%, vs. 10% of those with children) - Non-program participants (50%, vs. 23% of participants)

Respondents who report use or interest in each type of indoor facility were also asked how well those interests are currently being met on a 1-5 scale, either by the Park District of Highland Park or any other source/provider.

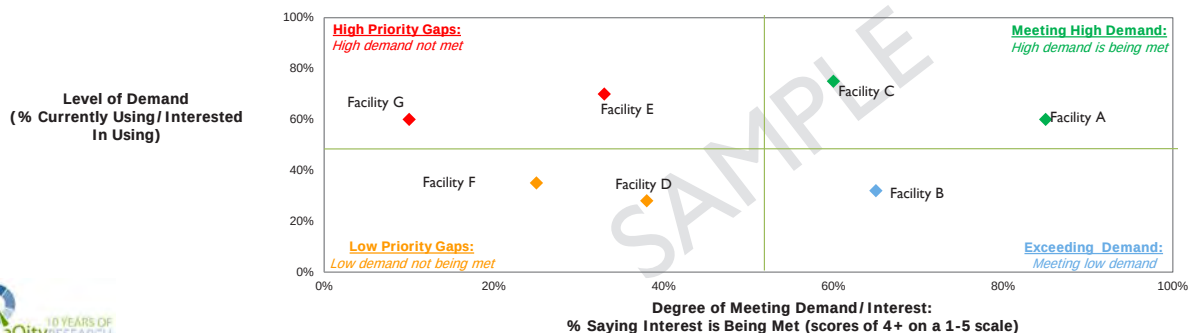
- A score of "4" means their interests are mostly met, and a "5" means they are completely met.

The results are reported on the following pages using a scatter plot that shows both:

- Overall demand for each facility (vertical axis) based on the % who indicate usage or interest
- And the % with scores of "4" or "5" who report that this "interest" is currently being met (horizontal axis) using the 1-5 scale.

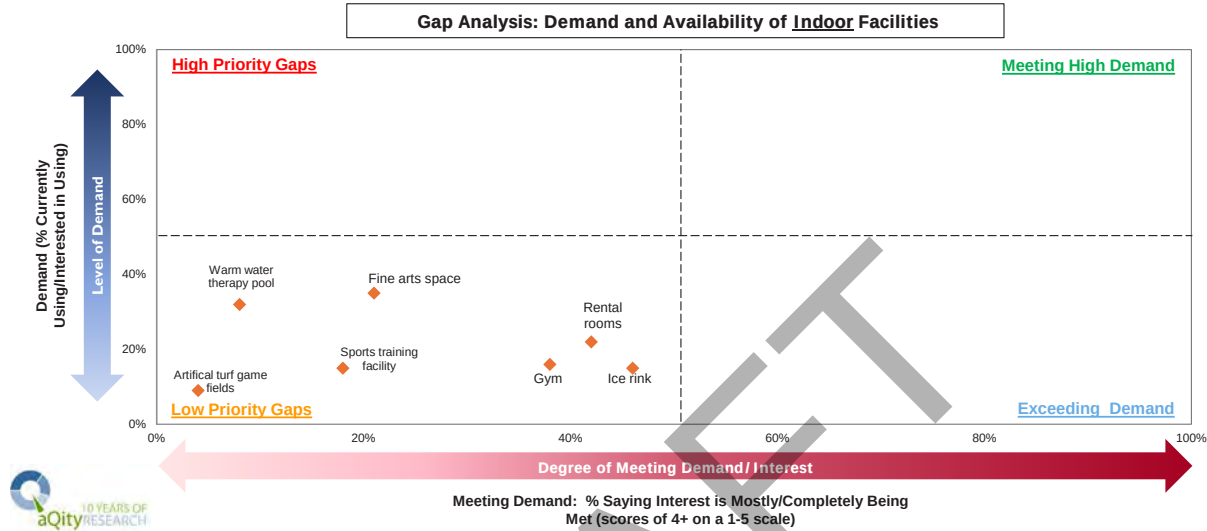
In the example below, facilities A and C in the upper right quadrant are in high demand and sufficient supply, while facilities E and G (upper left) represent opportunity (high demand not currently being met).

- Facilities to the bottom (B, D, and F) are in lower demand.



Each of the indoor facilities tested represent lower priority gaps given that no more than 35% express a need or interest, and among those residents fewer than half feel that these needs are already being met (either by the PDHP or other providers).

The biggest opportunities (given higher levels of demand/interest) are fine arts space and a warm water therapy pool. Note that nearly half of residents interested in an ice rink, rental rooms, and/or a gym feel those needs are already met (and the issue may be more about availability of these facilities).



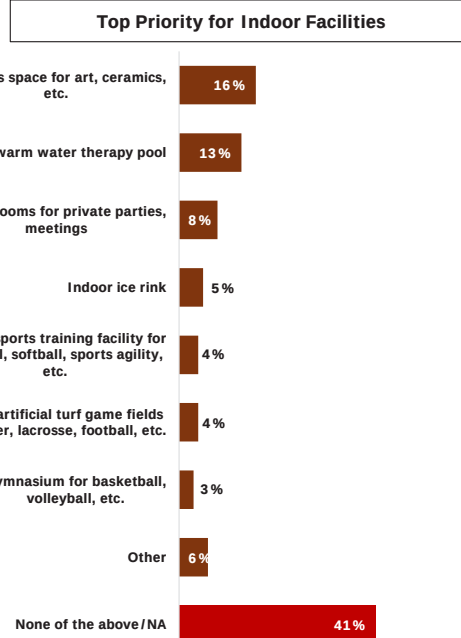
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When asked which one of these indoor facilities should be the top priority for the PDHP, the most frequent response is "none of these" (41%). Space for fine arts programming/activity is a distant second at 16%.

This echoes the earlier finding that these specific options generate relatively low levels of demand or interest (as 65%+ expressed no need for each).

> Even among households with children, nearly one in five (18%) said "none" of these are a priority (see next page).

As reported earlier, all age groups express relatively equal interest in a warm water therapy pool. Rental rooms are a priority mostly among younger households with children, and high-income households.



Q15. Of the indoor recreation facilities listed above, please indicate the one that you think should be a top priority for the Park District of Highland Park to provide, add or improve.

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Significant Differences: Top Priority for Indoor Facilities

	Overall	Most Likely to Cite as #1 Priority
Fine arts space for art, ceramics, etc.	16 %	- Under age 35 (41%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (35%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (35%) - Non-white adults (42%, vs. 18% of white residents) - PDHP program participants (20%, vs. 12% of non-participants)
Indoor warm water therapy pool	13 %	- PDHP program participants (17%, vs. 9% of non-participants)
Rental room for private parties, meetings	8 %	- Ages 35-44 (16%) - Lived in Highland Park 5-9 yrs. (17%) - HH income \$300K+ (18%) - NE region (16%) - Children in household (18%, vs. 3% of those without children)
Indoor ice rink	5 %	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Indoor sports training facility for baseball, softball, sports agility, etc.	4 %	- NW region (9%)
Indoor artificial turf game fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, etc.	4 %	- Lived in Highland Park 10-29 yrs. (10%)
Gymnasium for basketball, volleyball, etc.	3 %	< no statistically meaningful differences >
None are priorities/NA	41 %	- Ages 45-69 (46%), 70+ (62%) - Lived in Highland Park 20-44 yrs. (54%) - No children in household (49%, vs. 18% of those with children) - Non-program participants (54%, vs. 26% of participants)

IV. Needs Assessment: Outdoor Facilities



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Needs Assessment: Outdoor Facilities

A majority of respondents (54%) express a need or interest for an aquatic park/pool and is especially important to younger adults and those with children (see next page).

The next “tier” of top demand outdoor options are each cited by nearly a third of respondents:

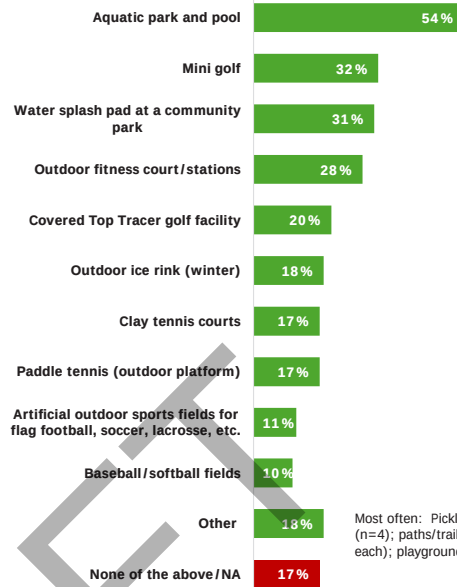
> Mini golf course (32%), water splash pad at a local park (31%), and outdoor fitness stations (28%).

> Younger and higher-income households tend to express a need or interest in each of these. Those with children likewise are among the most interested in mini golf and a splash pad.

Each of the remaining outdoor features are of interest to 20% or fewer residents overall. In addition, a similar number (17%) feel that none of these represent a need or interest.

> The full profile of those interested in each outdoor facility is provided on the next two pages.

Level of Demand/Need for Outdoor Facilities



Most often: Pickleball courts (n=12); dog park (n=4); paths/trails and basketball courts (n=3 each); playgrounds and track (n=2 each)



Q12. Please indicate if you or any household member uses or has a need or interest in the following outdoor recreational facilities.

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Needs Assessment: Outdoor Facilities

Significant Differences: Level of Demand/Need for Outdoor Facilities

	Overall	Most Likely to Express Demand/Need/Interest/Use
Aquatic park and pool	54%	- Under age 35 (81%), 35-44 (90%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (82%), 5-9 yrs. (62%) - Children in household (82%, vs. 42% of those without children) - PDHP users (55%, vs. 35% of non-users) and program participants (65%, vs. 35% of non-participants)
Mini golf	32%	- Ages 35-44 (53%) - Lived in Highland Park 5-9 yrs. (46%) - HH income \$300K+ (43%) - Children in household (53%, vs. 22% of those without children) - PDHP users (33%, vs. 16% of non-users)
Water splash pad at community park	31%	- Women (35%, vs. 20% of men) - Under age 35 (53%), 35-44 (67%) - Lived in Highland Park <10 yrs. (47%) - HH income \$200K+ (39%) - Children in household (72%, vs. 11% of those without children) - PDHP users (32%, vs. 15% of non-users) and program participants (43%, vs. 11% of non-participants)
Outdoor fitness court/stations	28%	- Under age 35 (49%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (47%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (47%) - PDHP users (29%, vs. 10% of non-users) and program participants (37%, vs. 10% of non-participants)
Covered Top Tracer golf facility	20%	- Ages 45-59 (28%) - Lived in Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (32%) - HH income \$300K+ (37%) - NW region (27%)



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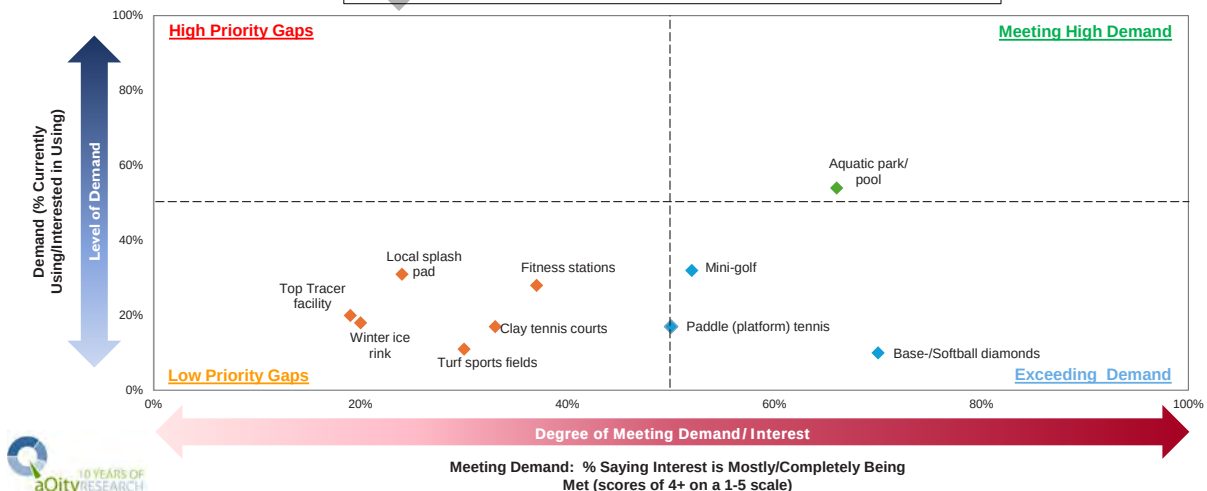
Significant Differences: Level of Demand/Need for Outdoor Facilities (cont'd)

	Overall	Most Likely to Express Demand/Need/Interest/Use
Outdoor ice rink (winter only)	18 %	- Women (24%, vs. 11% of men) - Ages 35-59 (25%) - Children in household (33%, vs. 12% of those without children) - PDHP program participants (24%, vs. 11% of non-participants)
Clay tennis courts	17 %	- Under age 35 (58%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (29%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (41%) - SE region (25%) - Non-white adults (46%, vs. 17% of white residents) - PDHP program participants (24%, vs. 6% of non-participants)
Paddle tennis (outdoor platform)	17 %	- Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (30%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (33%) - PDHP program participants (22%, vs. 4% of non-participants)
Artificial sports fields for flag football, soccer, lacrosse, etc.	11 %	- Ages 45-59 (23%) - Children in household (25%, vs. 4% of those without children) - PDHP users (12%, vs. 2% of non-users) and program participants (15%, vs. 2% of non-participants)
Baseball/softball diamonds	10 %	- Ages 35-44 (24%) - Children in household (21%, vs. 4% of those without children) - PDHP program participants (14%, vs. 2% of non-participants)
None of the above / NA	17 %	- Ages 60-69 (23%), 70+ (36%) - Lived in Highland Park 30-44 yrs. (28%), 45+ yrs. (32%) - HH income \$75K-\$124.9K (24%) - No children in household (21%, vs. 4% of those with children) - Non-program participants (30%, vs. 10% of participants)

Those interested in the highest-demand outdoor options of an aquatic park/pool and miniature golf mostly feel that these facilities are already available (meaning their demand is currently met). The same is true for relatively less popular paddle/platform tennis facilities and baseball/softball diamonds.

> All of the other outdoor options register as lower priority gaps (less demand, less available), with outdoor fitness stations and a splash pad at a local park representing the top opportunities.

Gap Analysis: Demand and Availability of Outdoor Facilities





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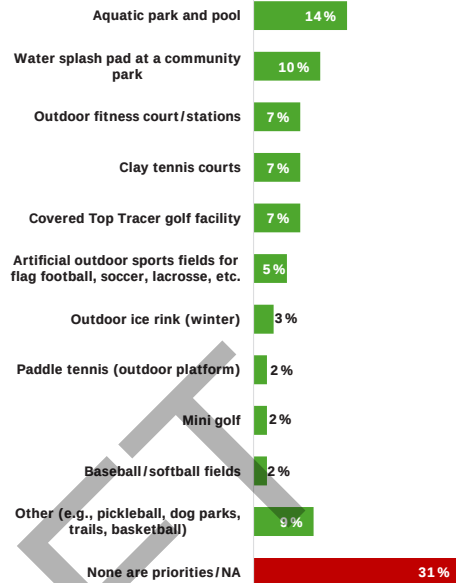
Needs Assessment: Outdoor Facilities

Similar to top indoor priorities, the most frequent priority for outdoor improvements is “none of these” (31%, again mostly among the oldest residents and those without children, along with lower-income residents – see next page).

At least one in ten feel that the #1 priority for the PDHP to maintain/improve/add should be:

- The aquatic park/pool (currently meeting this need).
- Installing a splash pad at a local park – which moved into the 2nd highest position as a priority.
- While miniature golf generated a high level of initial demand/interest (see page 50), very few see it as a top priority. In other words, this appears to be a “nice-to-have” – and not a “need-to-have” – feature.

Top Priority for Outdoor Facilities



Q13. Of the outdoor recreational facilities listed above, please indicate the one that you think should be a top priority for the Park District of Highland Park to provide, add or improve.

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Needs Assessment: Outdoor Facilities

Significant Differences: Top Priority for Outdoor Facilities

	Overall	Most Likely to Cite as #1 Priority
Aquatic park and pool	14%	- Ages 45-59 (26%)
Water splash pad at community park	10%	- Ages 35-44 (34%) - Children in household (21%, vs. 3% of those without children)
Outdoor fitness court/stations	7%	- Ages 35-44 (19%) - HH income \$75K-\$124.9K (17%) - SW region (30%)
Clay tennis courts	7%	- Men (10%, vs. 5% of women) - Under age 35 (43%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (19%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (31%) - SE region (14%) - Non-white adults (27%, vs. 7% of white residents)
Covered Top Tracer golf facility	7%	- Lived in Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (18%) - HH income \$300K+ (16%) - SE region (12%)
Artificial sports fields for flag football, soccer, lacrosse, etc.	5%	- Children in household (14%, vs. 0% of those without children)
Outdoor ice rink (winter only)	3%	- NW region (7%)
Paddle tennis (outdoor platform)	2%	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Mini golf	2%	- Ages 35-44 (10%) - HH income \$75K-\$124.9K (7%)
Baseball/softball diamonds	2%	< no statistically meaningful differences >
None are priorities/NA	31%	- Ages 60-69 (44%), 70+ (63%) - Lived in Highland Park 20+ yrs. (46%) - HH income <\$75K (56%) - No children in household (34%, vs. 10% of those with children) - Non-program participants (55%, vs. 17% of participants)



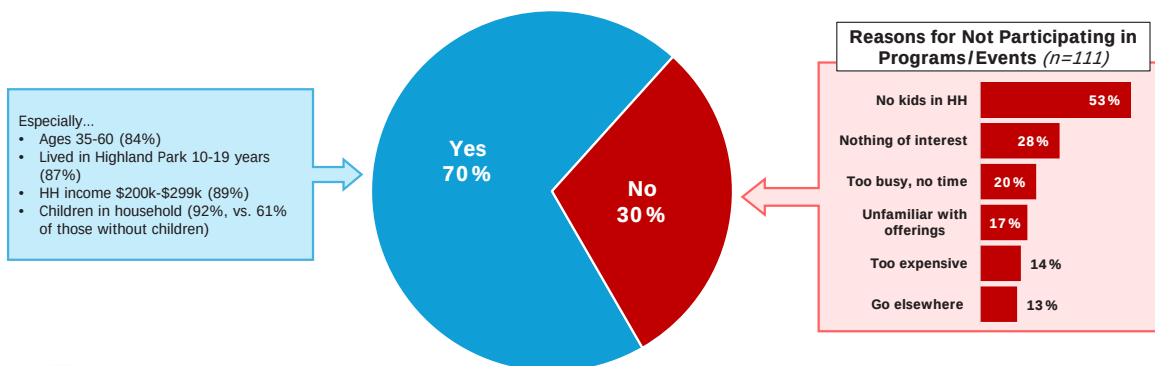
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V. PDHP Program Participation and Satisfaction

Over two thirds of residents have participated in a Park District program or event in the past year, including nearly all households with children (92 %). Households earning \$200K-\$299K are also avid participants, with just under 9 in 10 participating in a Park District-sponsored activity.

➤ Unsurprisingly (given the high participation levels of households with children), the absence of children is the most common reason for non-participation, followed by a lack of interest, time, and/or awareness.

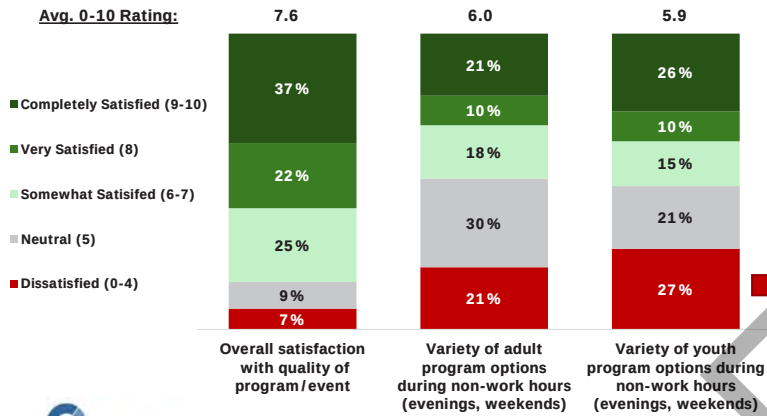
Program/Event Participation in Past Year



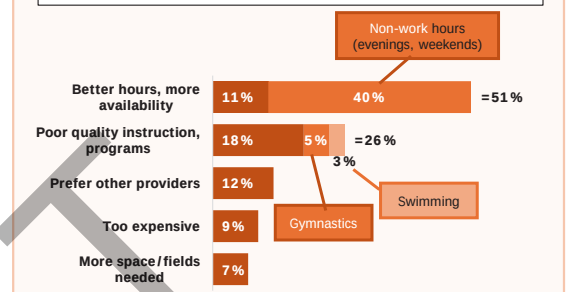
Satisfaction with the *quality* of programs and events remains strong, with 5 in 6 residents (84 %) at least somewhat satisfied (especially older adults).

➤ However, residents clearly desire more options for evenings and weekends. Compared to satisfaction with program quality, dissatisfaction scores triple for the variety of adult activities during non-work hours (21% dissatisfied) and quadruple for youth options (27%).

Satisfaction with PDHP Programs/Events (0-10 scale)



Reasons for Dissatisfaction with PDHP Programs/Events (n=91)



Significant Differences: Satisfaction with PDHP Programs/Events

	Avg. (0-10) Rating	Lower than Avg.	Higher than Avg.
Overall satisfaction with quality of program/event	7.6	- Lived in Highland Park 5-9 yrs. (6.5) - White residents (7.4)	Ages 70+ (8.3)
Variety of adult program options during non-work hours (evenings, weekends)	6.0	- White residents (5.6) - Ages 60-69 (5.3) - Lived in Highland Park 20-29 yrs. (4.7) - NW region (5.4)	Ages 70+ (6.8)
Variety of youth program options during non-work hours (evenings, weekends)	5.9	White residents (5.5)	- Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (7.3) - Under age 35 (7.8)



VI. Needs Assessment: Programming Options

From a list of PDHP program options – most of which are by age group and include both sports and non-sports options – respondents express the greatest interest in community events (a majority at 59 %) and adult programming/activities (especially for those ages 55+).

- Given that only adults completed the survey, only some of whom have children under 18 at home, it is not surprising that youth program options register less demand overall.
- Note that across most age groups, PDHP residents are slightly more interested in sports programs vs. non-sports options.

Community events appeal to almost every age group. Even among the oldest residents ages 70+ (30 % of whom are interested in none of these options), nearly half (45 %) express a need or interest in community events (see next page).

- Consistently, younger households and those with children are interested in all of the youth-based options.
- Note that interest in adult sports programs is by far strongest among the youngest adults under age 35.

Level of Demand/Need for Program Options

Community festivals / events	59 %
Learn to swim programs (all ages)	16 %
Early child enrichment programs (under age 5)	12 %
Sports/athletics for grades K-5 (ages 5-10)	19 %
Non-sports/athletics for grades K-5 (ages 5-10)	16 %
Sports/athletics for grades 6-8 (ages 11-13)	10 %
Non-sports/athletics for grades 6-8 (ages 11-13)	8 %
Sports/athletics for grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)	7 %
Non-sports/athletics for grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)	6 %
Sports/athletics for ages 18-54	29 %
Non-sports/athletics for ages 18-54	27 %
Sports/athletics for ages 55+	33 %
Non-sports/athletics for ages 55+	33 %
None of the above / NA	14 %

Significant Differences: Level of Demand/Need for Program Options

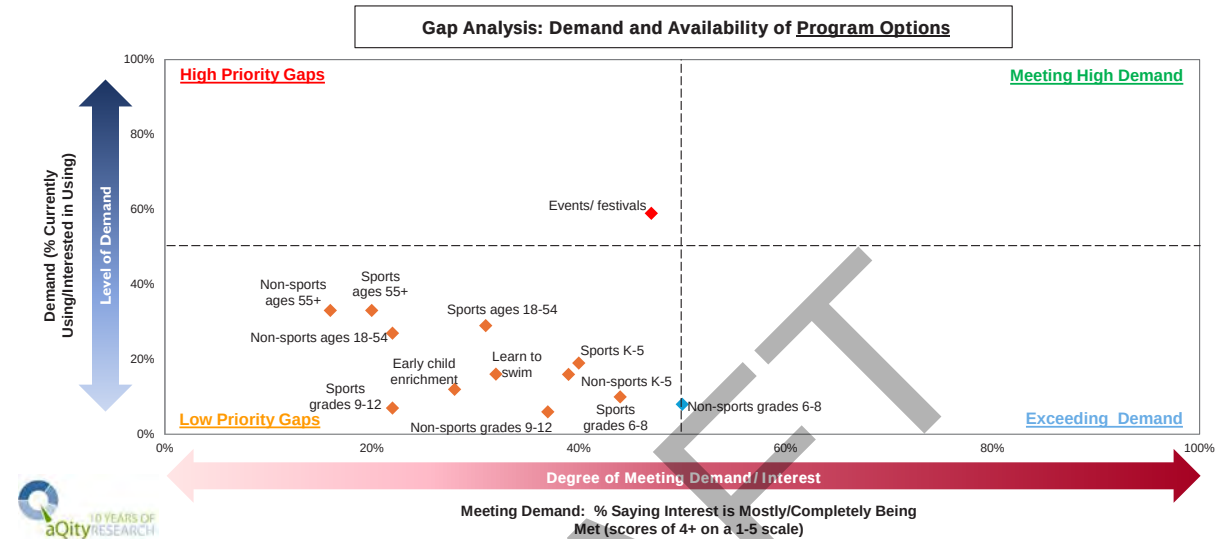
	Overall	Most Likely to Express Demand/Need/Interest/Use
Community festivals/events	59 %	- Ages 35-44 (85%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (84%) - Non-white adults (87%, vs. 60%)
Learn to swim program (all ages)	16 %	- Women (21%, vs. 11% of men) - Under age 45 (37%) - Lived in Highland Park <10 yrs. (30%) - SW region (36%) - Children in household (37%, vs. 5% of those without children)
Early child enrichment programs (under age 5)	12 %	- Ages 35-44 (39%) - Lived in Highland Park <10 yrs. (23%) - HH income \$300K+ (28%) - Children in household (35%, vs. 1% of those without children)
Sports/athletics for grades K-5	19 %	- Ages 35-44 (51%) - Lived in Highland Park 5-9 yrs. (41%) - Children in household (51%, vs. 3% of those without children)
Non-sports programs for grades K-5	16 %	- Ages 35-44 (47%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (22%), 5-9 yrs. (29%) - Children in household (44%, vs. 2% of those without children)
Sports/athletics for grades 6-8	10 %	- Ages 45-59 (29%) - Lived in Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (33%) - Children in household (25%, vs. 2% of those without children)
Non-sports programs for grades 6-8	8 %	- Ages 45-59 (22%) - Lived in Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (26%) - Children in household (20%, vs. 1% of those without children)

Significant Differences: Level of Demand/Need for Program Options (cont'd)

	Overall	Most Likely to Express Demand/Need/Interest/Use
Sports/athletics for grades 9-12	7 %	- Ages 45-59 (22%) - Lived in Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (24%) - Children in household (21%, vs. 0% of those without children)
Non-sports programs for grades 9-12	6 %	- Ages 45-59 (15%) - Lived in Highland Park 10-29 yrs. (15%) - Children in household (15%, vs. 1% of those without children)
Sports/athletics for ages 18-54	29 %	- Under age 35 (69%), 35-44 (45%), 45-59 (41%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (60%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (46%) - Non-white adults (59%, vs. 28% of white residents) - Children in household (48%, vs. 22% of those without children)
Non-sports/programs for ages 18-54	27 %	- Under age 35 (62%), 35-44 (42%), 45-59 (36%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (60%) - Non-white adults (56%, vs. 25% of white residents) - Children in household (40%, vs. 24% of those without children)
Sports/athletics for ages 55+	33 %	- Ages 60-69 (72%) - Lived in Highland Park 30-44 yrs. (59%) - SE region (43%) - No children in household (55%, vs. 6% of those without children)
Non-sports programs for ages 55+	33 %	- Ages 60-69 (63%), 70+ (41%) - Lived in Highland Park 30-44 yrs. (55%), 45+ yrs. (43%) - SE region (43%) - No children in household (56%, vs. 5% of those with children)
None of the above/NA	14 %	- Ages 70+ (30%) - Lived in Highland Park 30-44 yrs. (20%), 45+ yrs. (30%) - No children in household (14%, vs. 3% of those with children) - Non-PDHP users (36%, vs. 12% of users) and non-participants (24%, vs. 8% of participants)

The gap analysis for these program categories shows that residents consistently seek more, as fewer than half who are interested in most options feel these activities are not readily available currently. This is especially true for adult sports and non-sports programs (all ages over 18) – which are among the highest in overall demand.

- The only exceptions are no-sports activities for grades 6-8 (for which half report their needs are met), and for community events/festivals (nearly half feel likewise).



When asked which of these options should be the highest priority for the PDHP to address/maintain, the top responses are:

- Community festivals and events at 23% (especially among newer residents and lower income households).
- "None of these" (21% -- including about a third or more of the 70+ age group, the longest-term residents, and non-participants in PDHP programs).
- Still, significant numbers of non-program participants express interest in community events (29%) and either sports or non-sport programs for adults ages 55+ (16% for each) as a top priority.

Note that the youngest adults, men, newer residents, non-white residents, and those in the SE region continue to express strong interest in sports programs for ages 18-54, more than average (see next page).

Top Priority for Program Options

Community festivals / events	23 %
Learn to swim programs (all ages)	4 %
Early child enrichment programs (under age 5)	3 %
Sports/athletics for grades K-5 (ages 5-10)	3 %
Non-sports/athletics for grades K-5 (ages 5-10)	4 %
Sports/athletics for grades 6-8 (ages 11-13)	1 %
Non-sports/athletics for grades 6-8 (ages 11-13)	2 %
Sports/athletics for grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)	1 %
Non-sports/athletics for grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)	0 %
Sports/athletics for ages 18-54	9 %
Non-sports/athletics for ages 18-54	4 %
Sports/athletics for ages 55+	14 %
Non-sports/athletics for ages 55+	10 %
None of the above/ NA	21 %

Significant Differences: Top Priority for Program Options

	Overall	Most Likely to Cite as #1 Priority
Community festivals/events	23 %	- Ages 35-44 (47%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (36%), 5-9 yrs. (31%) - HH income under \$75K (41%)
Learn to swim program (all ages)	4 %	- Women (6%, vs. 0% of men) - Children in household (7%, vs. 1% of those without children)
Early child enrichment programs (under age 5)	3 %	- Children in household (9%, vs. 1% of those without children)
Sports/athletics for grades K-5	3 %	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Non-sports programs for grades K-5	4 %	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Sports/athletics for grades 6-8	1 %	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Non-sports programs for grades 6-8	2 %	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Sports/athletics for grades 9-12	1 %	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Non-sports programs for grades 9-12	0 %	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Sports/athletics for ages 18-54	9 %	- Men (14%, vs. 7% of women) - Under age 35 (43%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (25%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (27%) - SE region (13%) - Non-white residents (33%, vs. 11% of white adults) - No children in household (14%, vs. 8% of those with children)
Non-sports/programs for ages 18-54	4 %	- HH income <\$75K (13%) - NW region (10%)

Significant Differences: Top Priority for Program Options (cont'd)

	Overall	Most Likely to Cite as #1 Priority
Sports/athletics for ages 55+	14 %	- Ages 60-69 (33%) - Lived in Highland Park 30-44 yrs. (25%) - No children in household (21%, vs. 3% of those with children)
Non-sports programs for ages 55+	10 %	- White residents (11%, vs. 2% of non-white adults) - Non-PDHP users (27%, vs. 9% of users) - No children in household (15%, vs. 1% of those with children)
None of the above/NA	21 %	- Ages 70+ (42%) - Lived in Highland Park 20-29 yrs. (30%), 30+ yrs. (39%) - White residents (24%, vs. 7% of non-white adults) - Non-users (39%, vs. 20% of users) and non-participants (32%, vs. 16% of participants)

Among the options garnering the highest “top priority” responses (see below), residents most interested in community events especially favor something with live music and or festivals or block party-type options for families.

Pickleball tends to be the top sports option for adults (especially those ages 55+). Other than that, adults 18-54 tend to prefer more team/competitive sports, while the older residents focus more on personal fitness activities.

➤ The top non-sport preferences for those ages 55+ include a wide range of arts and crafts classes (ceramics, painting, stitching/needlepoint etc.). The rest are largely interested in a range of exercise/wellness classes (often focusing on tai chi, stretching, yoga, meditation).

Specific Suggestions for Top Priority Event/Program Needs

Community events/festivals	Sports Ages 18-54	Sports Ages 55+	Non-Sports Ages 55+
Music events (n=9)	Pickleball (n=4)	Pickleball (n=10)	Arts/crafts (n=11)
Block parties/festivals (n=9)	Softball (n=3)	Exercise classes (n=4)	Walking groups (n=3)
Family events (n=5)	Tennis (n=2)	Weight/fitness training (n=3)	Tai Chi (n=3)
Food events (n=3)	Kickball (n=2)	Group classes, gen. (n=2)	Learning/enrichment/lectures (n=3)
Nature events, cleanup days (n=3)	Volleyball (n=2)	Swim classes (n=2)	Yoga/meditation (n=3)
Theater/outdoor performances (n=2)	Paddle (n=2)	Volleyball (n=2)	Exercise classes (n=2)
Art exhibits/festivals (n=2)	All others n=1 each (e.g., soccer, football)	Yoga/meditation (n=3)	Games (e.g., cards) (n=2)
Dance performances/lessons (n=2)		All others n=1 each (e.g., golf, clay tennis, softball, hockey, etc.)	All others n=1 each (music lessons, trips, cooking classes)

VII. Support/Priorities for Potential PDHP Facility Improvements

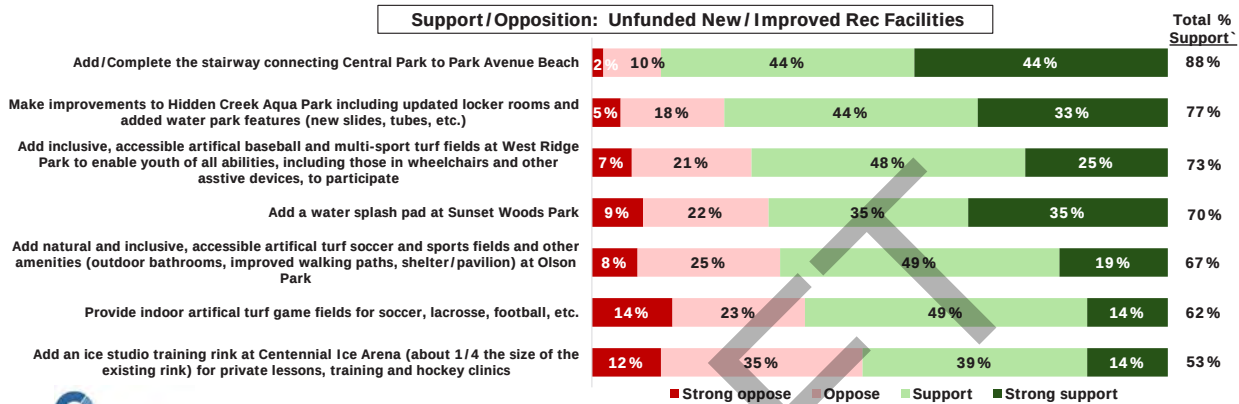


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Support for Potential Non-Funded PDHP Improvements

From a list of potential capital/facility improvements (and being informed that these are not yet funded nor budgeted), at least two-thirds of respondents support most of these. Completing the Central Park-to-Park Avenue Beach stairway garners the most support (and the highest level of “strong support”).

- Roughly three-fourths support upgrades to Hidden Creek and adding inclusive turf fields at West Ridge Park (though most support is “not strong”). By comparison, the 70% favoring a splash pad at Sunset Woods are equally “strong” as well as “not strong” supporters.
- Two-thirds support added features at Olson Park. While at least half also favor indoor turf game fields, and/or add a studio rink at Centennial Ice Arena, as many residents are “strongly opposed” as “strongly supportive”.



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Support for Potential Non-Funded PDHP Improvements

A majority of all regions and subgroups (76%+) support completing the stairway between Central Park and Park Avenue Beach.

Households with children tend to be the strongest supporters of improvements/upgrades to Hidden Creek, along with more affluent residents and those in the NE region. At least 57% of all subgroups are in favor.

Significant Differences: Willingness-to-Pay for Potential Non-Funded Improvements				
Improvement	Most Likely to Be Opposed		Most Likely to Support	
	Overall Opposed (12%)		Overall Support (88%)	
Add/Complete the stairway connecting Central Park to Park Avenue Beach	< no statistically meaningful differences >		- Ages 35-44 (97%)	
	Strongly Opposed (2%)	Opposed (10%)	Support (44%)	Strongly Support (44%)
	- Lived in Highland Park 45+ yrs. (10%)	< no statistically meaningful differences >	- Over age 70 (58%) - HH income <\$125K (54%)	- Lived in Highland Park 30-44 yrs. (58%)
Make improvements to Hidden Creek Aqua Park including updated locker rooms and added water park features (new slides, tubes, etc.)	Overall Opposed (23%)		Overall Support (77%)	
	Strongly Opposed (5%)	Opposed (18%)	Support (44%)	Strongly Support (33%)
	- Ages 60-69 (30%) - Lived in Highland Park 20-29 yrs. (43%) - SE region (30%) - HH income \$125K-\$199K (42%)	- HH income \$125K-\$199K (37%)	- Ages 35-54 (96%) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (87%) - NE region (89%) - HH income \$200K+ (85%)	- No children in household (52%) - NE region (51%) - Children in household (55%) - HH income \$300K+ (43%)



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Similarly, accessible and inclusive turf fields at West Ridge Park, and adding a splash pad at Sunset Woods Park, are supported by virtually all subgroups. Only non-users of PDHP parks/facilities do not care to see a splash pad at Sunset Woods (60 % of this small group are opposed).

Significant Differences: Willingness-to-Pay for Potential Non-Funded Improvements (cont'd)

	Most Likely to Be Opposed	Most Likely to Support
Add inclusive, accessible artificial baseball and multi-sport turf fields at West Ridge Park to enable youth of all abilities, including those in wheelchairs and other assistive devices to participate	Overall Opposed (27%) - Under age 35 (66% of n=16) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (46%) - SE region (36%) Strongly Opposed (7%) - Lived in Highland Park 20-29 yrs. (14%) - NW region (13%) Opposed (21%) - Under age 35 (61% of n=16) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (29%), 45+ yrs. (25%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (34%) - SE region (31%)	Overall Support (73%) - Ages 35-44 (97%) - HH income \$75K-\$124.9K (86%), \$300K+ (80%) - NE (87%) and SW regions (83%) Support (48%) - Over age 70 (61%) - HH income \$300K+ (57%) - NE region (65%) Strongly Support (25%) - Women (35%, vs. 14% of men) - Ages 35-44 (42%) - Lived in Highland Park 30-44 yrs. (28%)
Add a water splash pad at Sunset Woods Park	Overall Opposed (30%) - Men (42%) - Under age 35 (44%) - Lived in Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (48%), 45+ yrs. (49%) - No children in household (43%) and non-PDHP users (60% of n=22) - SE region (40%) Strongly Opposed (9%) < no statistically meaningful differences > Opposed (22%) - Men (31%, vs. 16% of women) - Under age 35 (39%) - No children in household (30%) - Lived in Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (38%), 45+ yrs. (39%) - SE region (34%)	Overall Support (70%) - Women (76%) - Ages 35-44 (91%) - Children in household (84%) - HH income \$300K+ (81%) Support (35%) - Ages 60-69 (56%), 70+ (47%) - No children in household (41%) - Lived in Highland Park 20-44 yrs. (53%) Strongly Support (35%) - Women (42%, vs. 23% of men) - Ages 35-44 (66%) - Children in household (59%, vs. 16% of those without children) - HH income \$300K+ (46%)

Households with children, residents in the NE region, and those earning the highest incomes are most supportive of improvements to Olson Park, as well as adding indoor artificial turf game fields (at no specific location yet). Conversely, those without children and SE area residents are least interested in these improvements.

Significant Differences: Willingness-to-Pay for Potential Non-Funded Improvements (cont'd)

	Most Likely to Be Opposed	Most Likely to Support
Add natural and inclusive, accessible artificial turf soccer and sports fields and other amenities (outdoor bathrooms, improved walking paths, shelter/pavilion) at Olson Park	Overall Opposed (33%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (55%) - SE region (44%) - No children in household (43%) Strongly Opposed (8%) - Lived in Highland Park 20-29 (20%) Opposed (25%) - Men (32%, vs. 19% of women) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (48%) - SE region (36%) - No children in households (33%)	Overall Support (67%) - HH income \$300K+ (84%) - NE region (84%) - Children in household (74%) Support (49%) - NE region (71%) - Non-program participants (61%) Strongly Support (19%) - Children in household (33%, vs. 11% of those without children)
Indoor artificial turf game fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, etc.	Overall Opposed (38%) - Men (46%) - Under age 35 (65% of n=16) and residents without children (48%) - Lived in Highland Park 45+ yrs. (52%) - HH income \$125K-\$299K (53%) - SE region (46%) Strongly Opposed (14%) - Men (21%, vs. 11% of women) - Under age 35 (45% of n=16) - Lived in Highland Park <5 yrs. (29%) - HH income \$200K-\$299K (29%) - SE region (21%) - No children in household (23%) Opposed (23%) - Lived in Highland Park 5-9 yrs. (29%), 45+ yrs. (40%) - HH income \$125K-\$199K (41%)	Overall Support (62%) - Women (68%) - Ages 35-44 (91%) and residents with children in household (72%) - Lived in Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (75%) - HH income <\$124.9K (79%), \$300K+ (76%) - NE region (84%) Support (49%) - Ages 35-44 (67%) - HH income <\$75K (77%), \$75K-\$124.9K (67%), \$300K+ (60%) - NE region (78%) Strongly Support (14%) - Women (17% vs. 7% of men) - Ages 35-44 (24%) - In Highland Park 10-19 yrs. (25%) - Children in household (31%)



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Support for Potential Non-Funded PDHP Improvements

Respondents are more evenly divided overall on adding a studio training rink at Centennial Ice arena (53% support, 47% opposed). Women tend to be the strongest supporters, while again, residents in the SE region and those under age 35 tend to be more opposed.

Significant Differences: Willingness-to-Pay for Potential Non-Funded Improvements

Table with 4 columns: Most Likely to Be Opposed, Most Likely to Support, Overall Opposed (47%), and Overall Support (53%). Rows include demographic breakdowns for men/women, age groups, and household income.



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Top Priority: Potential Non-Funded PDHP Improvements

Across these seven potential capital projects, one in four respondents (26%) place the highest priority on completing the stairway from Central Park to the Park Avenue Beach.

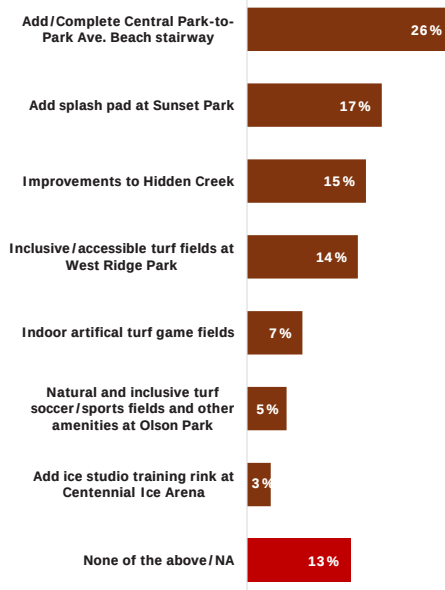
- This tends to be most important to residents in the SE region, and those without children at home (across various ages – see next page)

The second "tier" of top responses is shared among:

- Installing a splash pad at Sunset Park (17%), usually among those with children and residents in the NE area
Facility improvements at Hidden Creek (15%), more important among women and again those with children
Adding inclusive and accessibility turf fields at West Ridge park for youth of all abilities (14%), with residents in the SW area twice as likely to prefer this (28%)
"None of these" are priorities (13%), usually the oldest respondents, those without children, and residents not engaged with the PDHP parks/facilities/programs.

The remaining options received no more than 7% priority responses overall.

Top Facility/Capital Improvement Priority



Q14. Below, please indicate if you or any household member uses or has a need or interest in the following indoor recreational facilities.

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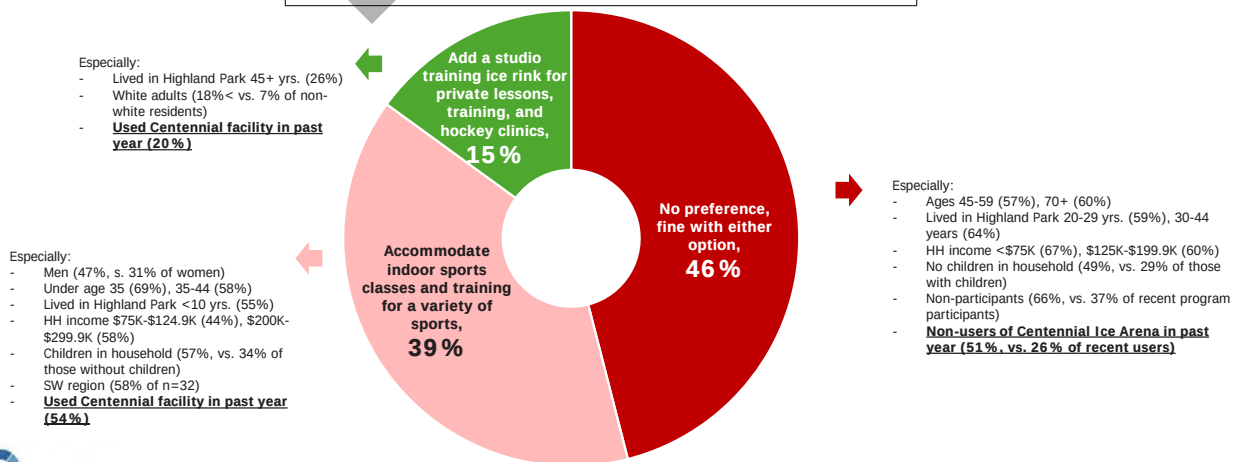
Significant Differences: Top Priority for Potential Facility Improvements

	Overall	Most Likely to Cite as Top Priority
Complete Central Park-to-Park Ave. Beach stairway	26 %	- Under age 35 (41%), 45 to 69 (32%) - SE region (32%) - No children in household (39%, vs. 8% of those with children)
Add splash pad at Sunset Park	17 %	- Ages 35-44 (31%) - NE region (32%) - Children in household (32%, vs. 5% of those without children)
Improvements to Hidden Creek	15 %	- Women (21%, vs. 8% of men) - Children in household (26% vs. 11% of those without children) - PDHP users (16%, vs. 2% of non-users)
Add inclusive/accessible turf baseball and softball fields at West Ridge Park	14 %	- HH income \$75K-\$124.9K (26%) - SW region (28%)
Indoor artificial turf game fields	7 %	- Children in household (12%, vs. 5% of those without children)
Natural and inclusive artificial turf soccer and other sports fields, and amenities, at Olson Park	5 %	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Add an ice studio training rink at Centennial Ice Arena	3 %	< no statistically meaningful differences >
None of the above/NA	13 %	- Households without children (17%, vs. 3% of those with children) - Non-PDHP users (32%, vs. 12% of users), and non-program participants (22%, vs. 9% of participants)

When informed that the gymnastics center is moving out of Centennial Ice Arena and asked about their preferred use for that space, nearly half (46 %) of residents have no opinion. The rest favor putting in an indoor sports training facility (39 %) vs. adding a studio training ice rink (15 %).

- Among those who report going to Centennial in the past year (22% of all respondents), nearly 3:1 support an indoor sports training facility in this space (54%) vs. adding a studio ice sheet (20%).

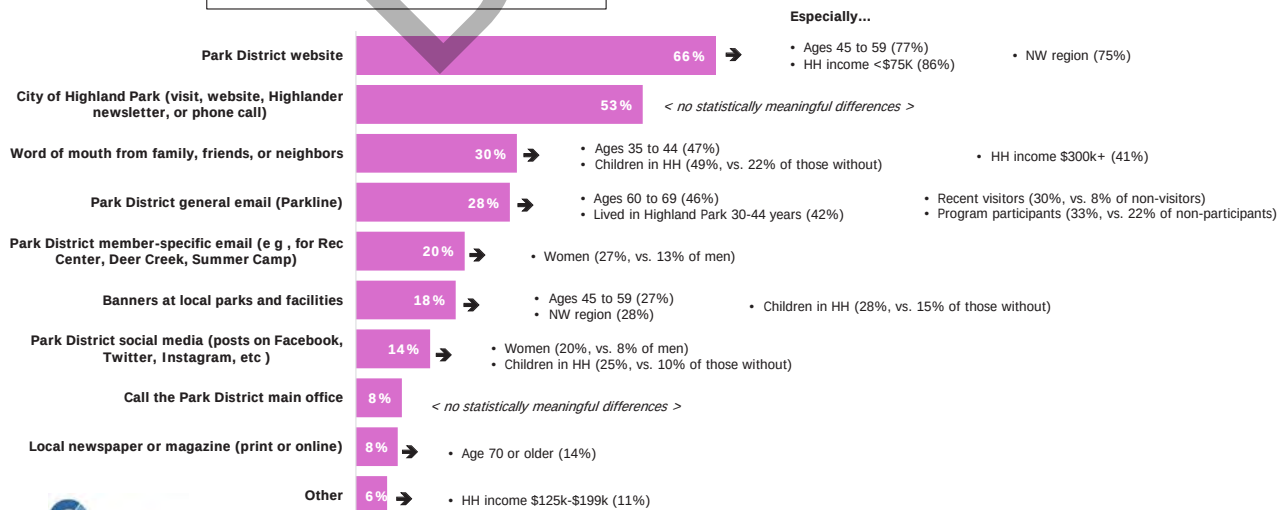
Preference for Former Gymnastics Studio at Centennial Ice Arena



VIII. Sources of Information

The Park District website is the most popular source of information (used by two thirds of residents), and about half of residents refer to City sources. Word of mouth (especially popular among parents) and Parkline emails come in a distant third.

Sources of Information about PDHP



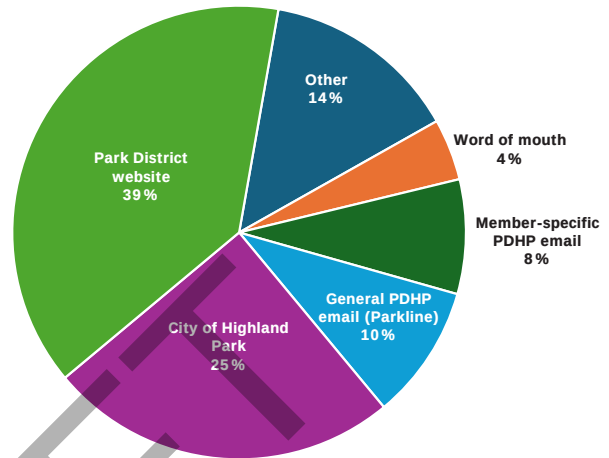
Two thirds of residents prefer either the Park District website or City of Highland Park resources as their primary source of information.

Parkline emails are still in third place, but word of mouth ranks much lower in terms of the most-relied-upon source of information.

➤ Word of mouth still ranks third for those who have lived in Highland Park for 5-9 years, are 35-44 years old, have children, high income earners, and live in the NE region.

Non-program participants are nearly twice as likely to rely on the City of Highland Park for information about the Park District as participants.

Preferred Source of Park District Information



Significant Differences: Preferred Source of Information

	Overall	Most Likely to Use as Preferred Source
Park District website	39%	- HH income \$200k-\$299k (55%) - Children in HH (52%, vs. 33% of those without children)
City of Highland Park (visit, website, Highlander newsletter, or phone call)	25%	- Men (33%, vs. 17% of women) - Lived in Highland Park 45+ years (45%) - No children in HH (33%, vs. 13% of those with children) - Non-participants (35%, vs. 19% of program participants)
Park District general email (Parkline)	10%	- HH income \$200k-\$299k (19%) - SE region (15%)
Park District member-specific email (e.g., for Rec Center, Deer Creek, Summer Camp)	8%	- Women (13%, vs. 2% of men) - Ages 70+ (15%) - Lived in Highland Park 10-19 years (20%)
Word of mouth from family, friends, or neighbors	4%	- Ages 35-44 (16%) - Lived in Highland Park 5-9 years (12%) - HH income \$300k+ (13%) - NE region (15%) - Children in HH (8%, vs. 3% of those without children)
Local newspaper or magazine (print or online)	4%	- No children in HH (8%, vs. 1% of those with children)
Park District social media (posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	4%	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Banners at local parks and facilities	3%	- NW region (7%) - HH income under \$75k (17%) - Lived in Highland Park less than 5 years (12%) - Under age 35 (24%)
Call the Park District main office	2%	- Ages 70+ (7%)
Other	1%	< no statistically meaningful differences >
Other non-Park District website	1%	< no statistically meaningful differences >

Appendices

		
2025 COMMUNITY SURVEY: TOPLINE RESULTS		
Results based on n=403 responses collected between May 20 and June 25, 2025		
NOTE: Percentages may not sum due to rounding (+/-1%)		
Q1. Please rate your overall opinion of the Park District of Highland Park.		
(0=Completely dislike, 10=Highest regard)		
	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	272	278
Highest regard (9-10)	36%	36%
Great (8)	33%	21%
Good (6-7)	17%	23%
Neutral (5)	6%	11%
Poor (0-4)	6%	9%
Mean	7.71	7.46
Median	8.00	8.00
Unfamiliar	6%	3%
Q2. What do you like about the Park District of Highland Park (PDHP), or what does it do well?		
Coding of open-ends is in progress.		
Results will be included in the final report.		
Q3. What do you dislike about the Park District of Highland Park, or what could it improve?		
Coding of open-ends is in progress.		
Results will be included in the final report.		
Q4A. In the past 12 months, have you visited any Park District of Highland Park facilities or parks?		
	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	403	285
Yes	94%	99%
No	5%	1%
Not sure	<1%	-

Q4. Which locations have you or others in your household used or visited in the past year?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	371	283
PARKS (NET)	96%	97%
Danny Cuniff Park	34%	56%
Dog Park at Larry Fink Park	4%	5%
Dog Beach at Moraine Park	12%	8%
Larry Fink Park	19%	17%
Olson Park	27%	29%
The Preserve of Highland Park	14%	22%
Rosewood Swimming Beach	42%	52%
Other beaches (Millard/Moraine/Park Ave.)	58%	67%
Sunset Woods Park	23%	20%
West Ridge Park	73%	75%
Other neighborhood park	24%	31%
FACILITIES (NET)	87%	96%
Centennial Ice Arena (skating, gymnastics)	27%	41%
Deer Creek Racquet Club	19%	24%
Heller Nature Center	30%	40%
Hidden Creek Aqua Park	30%	51%
HP Golf Learning Center (driving range)	19%	16%
Park Ave. Boating Facility/North Shore Yacht Club	21%	19%
Recreation Center of Highland Park	63%	70%
River's Edge Adventure Mini Golf	9%	19%
Sunset Valley Golf Club	18%	14%
West Ridge Center	25%	36%
Other PDHP facilities	2%	1%
None of the above	1%	**

Q5. (#1) Which park or facility do you use most often?

	Stat. valid		Public	
Total (unweighted)	403		287	
	#1 Most Used	Top 2 Most Used	#1 Most Used	Top 2 Most Used
Sunset Woods Park	14%	23%	15%	24%
Recreation Center of Highland Park	8%	17%	9%	23%
Rosewood Swimming Beach	8%	18%	9%	17%
Your neighborhood park/other HP parks	8%	10%	7%	11%
The Preserve of Highland Park	6%	10%	4%	11%
Larry Fink Park	6%	6%	1%	3%
West Ridge Center	5%	6%	6%	9%
Other beaches (Millard/Moraine/Park Ave.)	4%	9%	2%	5%
Olson Park	3%	5%	2%	3%
Heller Nature Center	3%	5%	1%	3%
Danny Cuniff Park	3%	6%	8%	12%
Deer Creek Racquet Club	3%	6%	4%	9%
Sunset Valley Golf Club	2%	5%	1%	3%
Park Ave. Boating Facility/North Shore Yacht Club	2%	4%	1%	3%
Centennial Ice Arena (skating, gymnastics)	1%	3%	8%	13%
Hidden Creek Aqua Park	1%	5%	3%	9%
Dog Park at Larry Fink Park	1%	1%	2%	2%
West Ridge Park	1%	5%	2%	5%
HP Golf Learning Center (driving range)	1%	3%	**	2%
Dog Beach at Moraine Park	1%	1%	**	1%

Q6. When you visit outdoor parks, what do you or your household typically do there?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	360	280
Active recreation (walk, jog, exercise, fitness, etc.)	78%	70%
Park sports (soccer, baseball, football, etc.)	12%	22%
Use playground equipment	40%	52%
Appreciation of nature/open space	71%	57%
Passive recreation (relax, play with a pet, read, etc.)	48%	32%
Court sports (tennis, pickleball, basketball, etc.)	27%	26%
Entertainment (events, parties, rentals)	11%	12%
Other	4%	5%

Q7A. Overall experience - Thinking about the parks and facilities that you have visited, rate your satisfaction. (0=Completely dissatisfied, 10= Completely satisfied)

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	365	279
Completely satisfied (9-10)	54%	47%
Very satisfied (8)	23%	22%
Somewhat satisfied (6-7)	16%	22%
Neutral (5)	3%	7%
Dissatisfied (0-4)	4%	3%
Mean	8.29	8.07
Median	9.00	8.00
Unfamiliar	0%	-

Q7B. Overall cleanliness, maintenance, & upkeep - Thinking about the parks and facilities that you have visited, rate your satisfaction. (0=Completely dissatisfied, 10= Completely satisfied)

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	364	277
Completely satisfied (9-10)	60%	56%
Very satisfied (8)	21%	23%
Somewhat satisfied (6-7)	11%	13%
Neutral (5)	3%	4%
Dissatisfied (0-4)	4%	4%
Mean	8.52	8.39
Median	9.00	9.00
Unfamiliar	0%	**

Q7C. Overall safety - Thinking about the parks and facilities that you have visited, rate your satisfaction. (0=Completely dissatisfied, 10= Completely satisfied)

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	362	276
Completely satisfied (9-10)	65%	61%
Very satisfied (8)	15%	19%
Somewhat satisfied (6-7)	13%	10%
Neutral (5)	5%	7%
Dissatisfied (0-4)	2%	3%
Mean	8.62	8.47
Median	9.00	9.00
Unfamiliar	2%	1%

Q7D. Overall access (parking, paths, entrances) - Thinking about the parks and facilities that you have visited, rate your satisfaction. (0=Completely dissatisfied, 10= Completely satisfied)

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	361	279
Completely satisfied (9-10)	60%	48%
Very satisfied (8)	21%	21%
Somewhat satisfied (6-7)	9%	17%
Neutral (5)	4%	9%
Dissatisfied (0-4)	6%	5%
Mean	8.44	8.01
Median	9.00	8.00
Unfamiliar	1%	-

Q7E. Overall service provided by Park District staff - Thinking about the parks and facilities that you have visited, rate your satisfaction. (0=Completely dissatisfied, 10= Completely satisfied)

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	327	252
Completely satisfied (9-10)	56%	52%
Very satisfied (8)	15%	19%
Somewhat satisfied (6-7)	12%	14%
Neutral (5)	12%	8%
Dissatisfied (0-4)	5%	6%
Mean	8.20	8.07
Median	9.00	9.00
Unfamiliar	11%	10%

Q8. If you are dissatisfied with any Park District of Highland Park facility, park, or staff experience, please explain which one(s) and why.

Coding of open-ends is in progress. Results will be included in the final report.

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Q9B. [IF NON-PDHP USER/VISITOR]: Why haven't you used or visited any Park District of Highland Park locations in the past 12 months?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	32	5
Do not have children/children are grown	n=20	n=3
Unfamiliar with Park District parks/facilities	n=3	n=1
Location/transportation issues	n=1	n=1
Cost/fees are too high	n=6	n=2
Use other facilities for recreation/activities	n=6	n=0
Unable due to physical challenges (ADA issues, lack of ramps or proper surfaces, difficult access)	n=3	n=0
Too busy/don't have time	n=8	n=1
Just not interested/doesn't offer what I'm interested in	n=8	n=2
Inconvenient hours of operation	n=2	n=0
No amenities/activities for desired age group	n=2	n=0
Other	n=3	n=1
None of the above	n=5	n=0

Q9A. [IF PDHP USER/VISITOR]: What keeps you from using or visiting Park District of Highland Park locations more often?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	360	267
Do not have children/children are grown	30%	25%
Unfamiliar with Park District parks/facilities	8%	4%
Location/transportation issues	9%	3%
Dislike the Park District, had bad experience	1%	3%
Concerned about security/personal safety at park district locations or events	2%	3%
Cost/fees are too high	22%	26%
Use other facilities for recreation/activities	11%	11%
Unable due to physical challenges (ADA issues, lack of ramps or proper surfaces, difficult access)	1%	1%
Too busy/don't have time	22%	21%
Just not interested/doesn't offer what I'm interested in	7%	9%
Inconvenient hours of operation	4%	10%
No amenities/activities for desired age group	7%	13%
Poor quality/condition	4%	4%
Other	9%	7%
None of the above	22%	21%

Q10A. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	399	287
One (I live alone)	15%	8%
Two	45%	33%
Three	18%	16%
Four	17%	31%
Five or more	5%	9%
Six or more	1%	4%

Q10B. How many members of your household are under age 18?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	311	279
None	60%	38%
One	15%	13%
Two	20%	37%
Three	4%	8%
Four	4%	3%
Five or more	4%	4%

Q11. The Park District of Highland Park is committed to being an ally for inclusion and equitable access. Do you and other household members feel included and represented?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	392	278
Yes	88%	84%
No	12%	16%

Q11A. What could the Park District do to better represent or include you or your household?

Growing of open-ends is in progress. Results will be included in the final report.

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Q12A. Please indicate if you or any household member uses or has a need or interest in the following outdoor recreational facilities

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	403	284
Aquatic park and pool	54%	66%
Mini golf	32%	37%
Water splash pad at a community park	31%	39%
Outdoor fitness court/stations	28%	21%
Covered Top Tracer golf facility	20%	16%
Outdoor ice rink (winter)	18%	30%
Clay tennis courts	17%	13%
Paddle tennis (outdoor platform)	17%	17%
Artificial outdoor sports fields for flag football, soccer, lacrosse, etc.	11%	19%
Baseball/softball fields	10%	21%
Other	18%	12%
None of the above	17%	15%

Q12B. Select how well each need or interest is being met, whether it is provided by the Park District of Highland Park or any other source. (1=Not at all met, 5=Completely met)

	Stat. valid		Public	
Total (unweighted)	310		237	
	Top 2 Box	Avg. Score	Top 2 Box	Avg. Score
Aquatic park and pool	66%	3.87	74%	4.02
Mini golf	52%	3.43	50%	3.46
Water splash pad at a community park	24%	2.51	21%	2.36
Outdoor fitness court/stations	37%	2.80	27%	2.58
Covered Top Tracer golf facility	19%	2.37	21%	2.31
Outdoor ice rink (winter)	20%	2.51	21%	2.36
Clay tennis courts	33%	2.71	51%	3.60
Paddle tennis (outdoor platform)	50%	3.15	42%	3.16
Artificial outdoor sports fields for flag football, soccer, lacrosse, etc.	30%	2.77	10%	2.08
Baseball/softball fields	70%	3.81	66%	3.76
Other	32%	2.52	29%	2.50

Q13. Of these outdoor recreation facilities, please select the one that you think should be a top priority for the Park District of Highland Park to provide, add, or improve.

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	403	279
Paddle tennis (outdoor platform)	2%	3%
Clay tennis courts	7%	2%
Aquatic park and pool	14%	24%
Covered Top Tracer golf facility	7%	3%
Baseball/softball fields	2%	5%
Artificial outdoor sports fields for flag football, soccer, lacrosse, etc.	5%	8%
Outdoor ice rink (winter)	3%	8%
Outdoor fitness court/stations	7%	6%
Water splash pad at a community park	10%	19%
Mini golf	2%	5%
Other	9%	8%
None of the above/NA	31%	9%

Q14A. Below, please indicate if you or any household member uses or has a need or interest in the following indoor recreational facilities.

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	403	279
Indoor sports training facility for baseball, softball, sports agility, etc.	15%	21%
Indoor artificial turf game fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, etc.	9%	19%
Rental rooms for private parties, meetings	22%	25%
Indoor warm water therapy pool	32%	28%
Gymnasium for basketball, volleyball, etc.	16%	20%
Indoor ice rink	15%	28%
Fine arts space for art, ceramics, etc.	35%	44%
Other	8%	9%
None of the above	29%	19%

Q14B. Select how well each need or interest is being met, whether it is provided by the Park District of Highland Park or any other source. (1=Not at all met, 5=Completely met)

	Stat. valid	Public		
Total (unweighted)	310	221		
	Top 2 Box	Avg. Score	Top 2 Box	Avg. Score
Indoor sports training facility for baseball, softball, sports agility, etc.	18%	2.56	12%	2.30
Indoor artificial turf game fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, etc.	4%	1.66	6%	1.57
Rental rooms for private parties, meetings	42%	3.04	41%	3.24
Indoor warm water therapy pool	8%	1.76	9%	1.71
Gymnasium for basketball, volleyball, etc.	38%	3.36	43%	3.25
Indoor ice rink	46%	3.29	40%	3.18
Fine arts space for art, ceramics, etc.	21%	2.59	17%	2.46
Other	33%	2.54	5%	1.77

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Q15. Of these indoor recreation facilities, please select the one that you think should be a top priority for the Park District of Highland Park to provide, add, or improve.

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	403	220
Indoor sports training facility for baseball, softball, sports agility, etc.	4%	9%
Indoor artificial turf game fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, etc.	4%	9%
Rental rooms for private parties, meetings	8%	5%
Indoor warm water therapy pool	13%	15%
Gymnasium for basketball, volleyball, etc.	3%	5%
Indoor ice rink	5%	15%
Fine arts space for art, ceramics, etc.	16%	25%
Other	6%	8%
None of the above/NA	41%	9%

Q16A. Add inclusive, accessible artificial baseball and multi-sport turf fields at W Ridge Park to enable youth of all abilities including those in wheelchairs & other assistive devices to participate- Do you support or oppose this suggested improvement?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	333	257
SUPPORT	73%	82%
OPPOSE	27%	18%
Strongly support	25%	36%
Somewhat support	48%	46%
Somewhat oppose	21%	11%
Strongly oppose	7%	7%

Q16B. Add natural and inclusive, accessible artificial turf soccer and sports fields and other amenities (outdoor bathrooms, improved walking paths, shelter/ pavilion) at Olson Park - Do you support or oppose this suggested improvement?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	333	257
SUPPORT	67%	75%
OPPOSE	33%	25%
Strongly support	19%	30%
Somewhat support	49%	45%
Somewhat oppose	25%	15%
Strongly oppose	8%	9%

Q16C. Add a water splash pad at Sunset Woods Park - Do you support or oppose this suggested improvement?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	333	265
SUPPORT	70%	82%
OPPOSE	30%	18%
Strongly support	35%	43%
Somewhat support	35%	39%
Somewhat oppose	22%	11%
Strongly oppose	9%	7%

Q16D. Add/Complete the stairway connecting Central Park to Park Avenue Beach - Do you support or oppose this suggested improvement?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	340	263
SUPPORT	88%	83%
OPPOSE	12%	17%
Strongly support	44%	43%
Somewhat support	44%	40%
Somewhat oppose	10%	10%
Strongly oppose	2%	6%

Q16E. Make improvements to Hidden Creek Aqua Park including updated locker rooms and added water park features (new slides, tubes, etc.) - Do you support or oppose this suggested improvement?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	331	266
SUPPORT	77%	86%
OPPOSE	23%	14%
Strongly support	32%	49%
Somewhat support	44%	38%
Somewhat oppose	18%	9%
Strongly oppose	5%	5%

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Q16F. Add an ice studio training rink at Centennial Ice Arena (about 1/4 the size of the existing rink) for private lessons, training and hockey clinics - Do you support or oppose this suggested improvement?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	321	256
SUPPORT	53%	64%
OPPOSE	47%	36%
Strongly support	14%	24%
Somewhat support	39%	41%
Somewhat oppose	35%	20%
Strongly oppose	12%	16%

Q16G. Indoor artificial turf game fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, etc. - Do you support or oppose this suggested improvement?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	325	256
SUPPORT	62%	69%
OPPOSE	38%	31%
Strongly support	14%	23%
Somewhat support	49%	45%
Somewhat oppose	23%	16%
Strongly oppose	14%	15%

Q17. Which one of these improvements do you think should be the top priority?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	364	279
Add/Complete the stairway connecting Central Park to Park Avenue Beach	26%	19%
Add a water splash pad at Sunset Woods Park	17%	16%
Make improvements to Hidden Creek Aqua Park including updated locker rooms and added water park features (new slides, tubes, etc.)	15%	19%
Add inclusive, accessible artificial baseball and multi-sport turf fields at West Ridge Park to enable youth of all abilities, including those in wheelchairs and other assistive devices, to participate	14%	12%
Indoor artificial turf game fields for soccer, lacrosse, football, etc.	7%	8%
Add natural and inclusive, accessible artificial turf soccer and sports fields and other amenities (outdoor bathrooms, improved walking paths, shelter/pavilion) at Olson Park	5%	8%
Add an ice studio training rink at Centennial Ice Arena (about 1/4 the size of the existing rink) for private lessons, training and hockey clinics	3%	9%
None of the above/NA	13%	10%

Q18. How should the Park District use the former gymnastics facility at Centennial Ice Arena (approx. 3,400 sq ft)?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	352	275
Add a studio training ice rink for private lessons, training, and hockey clinics	15%	30%
Accommodate indoor sports classes and training for a variety of sports	39%	28%
No preference/I'm fine with either option	46%	42%

Q19. In the past 12 months, have you or household members participated in Park District of Highland Park recreation programs, activities, memberships, or community events?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	403	297
Yes	62%	86%
No/NA	38%	13%

Q20. [NON-PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS]: Why haven't you participated in a Park District recreation program recently?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	111	35
Use recreational programs elsewhere	13%	11%
Unfamiliar with Park District programs/activities	17%	11%
Location/transportation issues	1%	6%
Dislike the facility where program/activity is held	2%	-
Concerned about personal safety at events	<1%	3%
Do not have children/children are grown	53%	46%
Dislike the instructors/trainers/loaders	<1%	-
Too busy/don't have time	20%	11%
Nothing of interest offered	28%	29%
Inconvenient schedule/days/times	7%	11%
Unable due to physical challenges	7%	3%
Registration is difficult	2%	3%
Cost/fees are too high	14%	26%
Other	6%	11%

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Q21A. Overall satisfaction with quality of program/event - Rate your satisfaction with PDHP programs. (0=Completely dissatisfied, 10= Completely satisfied)

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	241	237
Completely satisfied (9-10)	37%	40%
Very satisfied (8)	22%	22%
Somewhat satisfied (6-7)	25%	21%
Neutral (5)	9%	9%
Dissatisfied (0-4)	7%	8%
Mean	7.6	7.6
Median	8	8
Unfamiliar/Not applicable	2%	3%

Q21B. Variety of youth program options during non-work hours (evenings, weekends) - Rate your satisfaction with PDHP programs. (0=Completely dissatisfied, 10= Completely satisfied)

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	212	230
Completely satisfied (9-10)	26%	18%
Very satisfied (8)	10%	21%
Somewhat satisfied (6-7)	15%	24%
Neutral (5)	21%	13%
Dissatisfied (0-4)	27%	24%
Mean	5.9	6.2
Median	6	7
Unfamiliar/Not applicable	12%	7%

Q21C. Variety of adult program options during non-work hours (evenings, weekends) - Rate your satisfaction with PDHP programs. (0=Completely dissatisfied, 10= Completely satisfied)

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	212	230
Completely satisfied (9-10)	21%	17%
Very satisfied (8)	10%	8%
Somewhat satisfied (6-7)	18%	14%
Neutral (5)	30%	35%
Dissatisfied (0-4)	21%	26%
Mean	6.0	5.5
Median	5	5
Unfamiliar/Not applicable	34%	28%

Q22. If you are dissatisfied with any Park District program or event, or have selected another provider for similar activities, please explain which one(s) and why.

Coding of open-ends is in progress.
Results will be included in the final report.

Q23A. Please indicate if you or a household member uses or has a need or interest in the following programs.

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	166	277
Community festivals/events	59%	53%
Learn to Swim group program (all ages)	16%	15%
Early child enrichment programs (under age 5)	12%	12%
Sports/athletics for grades K-5 (ages 5-10)	19%	33%
Non-sports programs for grades K-5 (ages 5-10)	16%	26%
Sports/athletics for grades 6-8 (ages 11-13)	10%	20%
Non-sports programs for grades 6-8 (ages 11-13)	8%	16%
Sports/athletics for grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)	7%	14%
Non-sports programs for grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)	6%	10%
Sports/athletics for ages 18 to 54	29%	21%
Non-sports programs for ages 18 to 54	27%	22%
Sports/athletics for ages 55+	33%	25%
Non-sports programs for ages 55+	33%	22%
None of the above/NA	14%	18%

Q23B. Select how well each need or interest is being met, whether it is provided by the Park District of Highland Park or any other source. (1=Not at all met, 5=Completely met)

	Stat. valid		Public	
Total (unweighted)	262		221	
	Top 2 Box	Avg. Score	Top 2 Box	Avg. Score
Community festivals/events	47%	3.42	49%	3.49
Learn to Swim group program (all ages)	32%	2.73	26%	2.89
Early child enrichment programs (under age 5)	28%	2.90	32%	3.00
Sports/athletics for grades K-5 (ages 5-10)	40%	3.30	47%	3.35
Non-sports programs for grades K-5 (ages 5-10)	39%	3.17	42%	3.24
Sports/athletics for grades 6-8 (ages 11-13)	44%	3.29	45%	3.25
Non-sports programs for grades 6-8 (ages 11-13)	50%	3.41	26%	3.03
Sports/athletics for grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)	22%	2.57	30%	3.06
Non-sports programs for grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)	37%	2.98	4%	2.39
Sports/athletics for ages 18 to 54	31%	2.61	31%	2.89
Non-sports programs for ages 18 to 54	22%	2.52	19%	2.47
Sports/athletics for ages 55+	20%	2.51	21%	2.76
Non-sports programs for ages 55+	16%	2.35	16%	2.58

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Q24. Of these programs, please select the one that you think should be a top priority for the Park District of Highland Park to provide, add, or improve

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	166	216
Community festivals/events	23%	19%
Learn to Swim group program (all ages)	4%	4%
Early child enrichment programs (under age 5)	3%	6%
Sports/athletics for grades K-5 (ages 5-10)	3%	12%
Non-sports programs for grades K-5 (ages 5-10)	4%	6%
Sports/athletics for grades 6-8 (ages 11-13)	1%	6%
Non-sports programs for grades 6-8 (ages 11-13)	2%	2%
Sports/athletics for grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)	1%	1%
Non-sports programs for grades 9-12 (ages 14-18)	-	3%
Sports/athletics for ages 18 to 54	9%	4%
Non-sports programs for ages 18 to 54	4%	7%
Sports/athletics for ages 55+	14%	14%
Non-sports programs for ages 55+	10%	7%
None of the above/NA	21%	8%

Q25. What one specific activity would you like the Park District to offer for your program priority?

Coding of open-ends is in progress.
Results will be included in the final report.

Q26. When you seek information about the Park District of Highland Park and its programs, parks, facilities, or services, from what sources do you go?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	403	207
Local newspaper or magazine (print or online)	8%	7%
City of Highland Park (visit, website, Highlander newsletter, or phone call)	53%	39%
Park District website	66%	70%
Park District general email (Parkline)	28%	38%
Park District member-specific email (e.g., for Rec Center, Deer Creek, Call the Park District main office)	8%	7%
Banners at local parks and facilities	18%	17%
Word of mouth from family, friends, or neighbors	30%	28%
Park District social media (posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	14%	23%
Non-PDHP social media (other posts on Facebook, Instagram, Reddit, etc.)	2%	4%
Other non-Park District website	1%	4%
Other	3%	2%

Q27. IF Q26=2+ SOURCES: Select your preferred source of information about the Park District.

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	276	203
Local newspaper or magazine (print or online)	4%	2%
City of Highland Park (visit, website, Highlander newsletter, or phone call)	25%	16%
Park District website	29%	40%
Park District general email (Parkline)	10%	18%
Park District member-specific email (e.g., for Rec Center, Deer Creek, Call the Park District main office)	8%	8%
Banners at local parks and facilities	3%	1%
Word of mouth from family, friends, or neighbors	4%	2%
Park District social media (posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)	4%	8%
Non-Park District social media (other posts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Reddit, etc.)	1%	1%
Other non-Park District website	1%	-
Other	1%	1%

Q28. Thinking about the programs, parks, facilities, and services that the PDHP provides, please rate the overall value that it represents given its 6.8% share of property taxes. (0=Poor value, 10=Excellent value)

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	390	274
Excellent value (9-10)	32%	26%
Great value (8)	17%	17%
Good value (6-7)	18%	20%
Average value (5)	18%	19%
Poor value (0-4)	15%	18%
Mean	6.8	6.6
Median	7	7

DEMOGRAPHICS

Q29. In what year were you born? (AGE SHOWN BELOW)

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	388	268
Under 35	13%	6%
35 to 44	15%	29%
45 to 54	18%	21%
55 to 64	19%	17%
Over 65	35%	27%
Mean	56.6 years old	54.1 years old
Median	58 years old	50.5 years old

Q30. Please indicate the gender you identify with

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	390	271
Male	44%	30%
Female	54%	70%
Prefer to self-describe	2%	1%

Q31. How long have you lived in Highland Park?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	388	272
Less than 5 years	24%	19%
5-9 years	20%	22%
10-19 years	16%	21%
20-29 years	13%	10%
30-44 years	16%	18%
Over 45 years	11%	10%
Mean	19.8 years	19.5 years
Median	12 years	13 years

Q32. Which of the following identifies your ethnicity?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	392	269
American Indian or Alaska Native	2%	1%
Asian	8%	2%
Black/African American	3%	**%
Middle Eastern or North African	3%	**%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	-	1%
White	87%	95%
Other	2%	3%

Q33. Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	391	271
Yes	13%	4%
No	87%	96%

Q34. Last year, what was your total household income (before taxes)?

	Stat. valid	Public
Total (unweighted)	403	287
Less than \$75,000	12%	6%
\$75,000 to \$124,999	15%	14%
\$125,000 to \$199,999	16%	18%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	19%	18%
\$300,000 or more	24%	25%
Refused	14%	18%



APPENDIX D

STRATEGIC PLAN





STRATEGIC PLAN (2026-2029)

DRAFT (5.26.2026)

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Park District of Highland Park (PDHP) and Bright Threads Leadership Group, worked collaboratively with Park Board Commissioners and Staff to develop the Park District of Highland Park **Strategic Plan (2026-2029)**. The Plan is a component of the greater Comprehensive Plan, **GreenPrint**, which is a long-term, comprehensive roadmap that lays out a vision and framework for how the park district should grow, develop, and operate. It is based on community needs and rooted in the Park District's Mission and Values.

The **Strategic Plan (2026-2029)** focuses on district operations, guiding leaders and aligning teams in establishing and prioritizing near term goals, strategies and action items that support the day-to-day work of all employees. The Plan evaluates current priorities, emerging needs, gaps in service or performance and future opportunities.

The **Strategic Plan (2026-2029)** is rooted in the District's Mission Statement and builds off the district's work in 2022 when it reestablished its **Values** and developed the **Values Driven Strategic Plan 2023-2025**.

DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

To enrich community life through healthy leisure pursuits and an appreciation of the natural world

DISTRICT VALUES

In 2022 Park District Staff, Park Board Commissioners, and community members were engaged through a process of Appreciative Inquiry. Together, they discovered, imagined, and designed fundamental beliefs that reflect the best of who we are, and who we aspire to be. The result was a living, breathing set of shared **District Values** that guide operational principles for decision-making, future strategy development, and day-to-day behavioral norms.

Welcoming: We welcome everyone, fostering supportive relationships through positive interactions that appreciate the best in others and create a sense of belonging

Caring: We care about our relationships with others, as well as sustaining and improving our material, financial and natural resources, through best practices that foster trust and ensure long term health, safety, and wellbeing.

Extraordinary: We aspire to provide extraordinary experiences by thinking creatively, creating personal interactions, and delivering unique services that positively

DISTRICT OPERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

District Values are applied to its core operational functions, or perspectives.

Customers: Residents, participants, and visitors, and the services they experience.

Team members: Employees, Commissioners, volunteers, affiliates, contractors and partners

Resources: Capital assets, such as facilities, parks and natural areas, finances, and equipment

VALUES DRIVEN STRATEGIC PLAN (2022-2025)

After the development of District Values, these became the driving force for the development of Strategic Themes and Objectives and annual goals in 2023-2025. The Park Board of Commissioners approved these themes, objectives and goals in its annual review and approval of the annual budget book.

- **Customer Theme:** Creating community pride, customer loyalty and a place where you belong.
 - **Objectives:**
 1. Build personal relationships
 2. Create inclusivity
 3. Deliver the extraordinary
- **Team Member Theme:** Engaged Team Members
 - **Objectives:**
 1. Empowering our Team
 2. Grow our team
 3. Value our Team
- **Resources Theme:** Investing in sustainable destinations.
 - **Objectives:**
 1. Build and maintain trust
 2. Create a sustainable future
 3. Steward our Resources

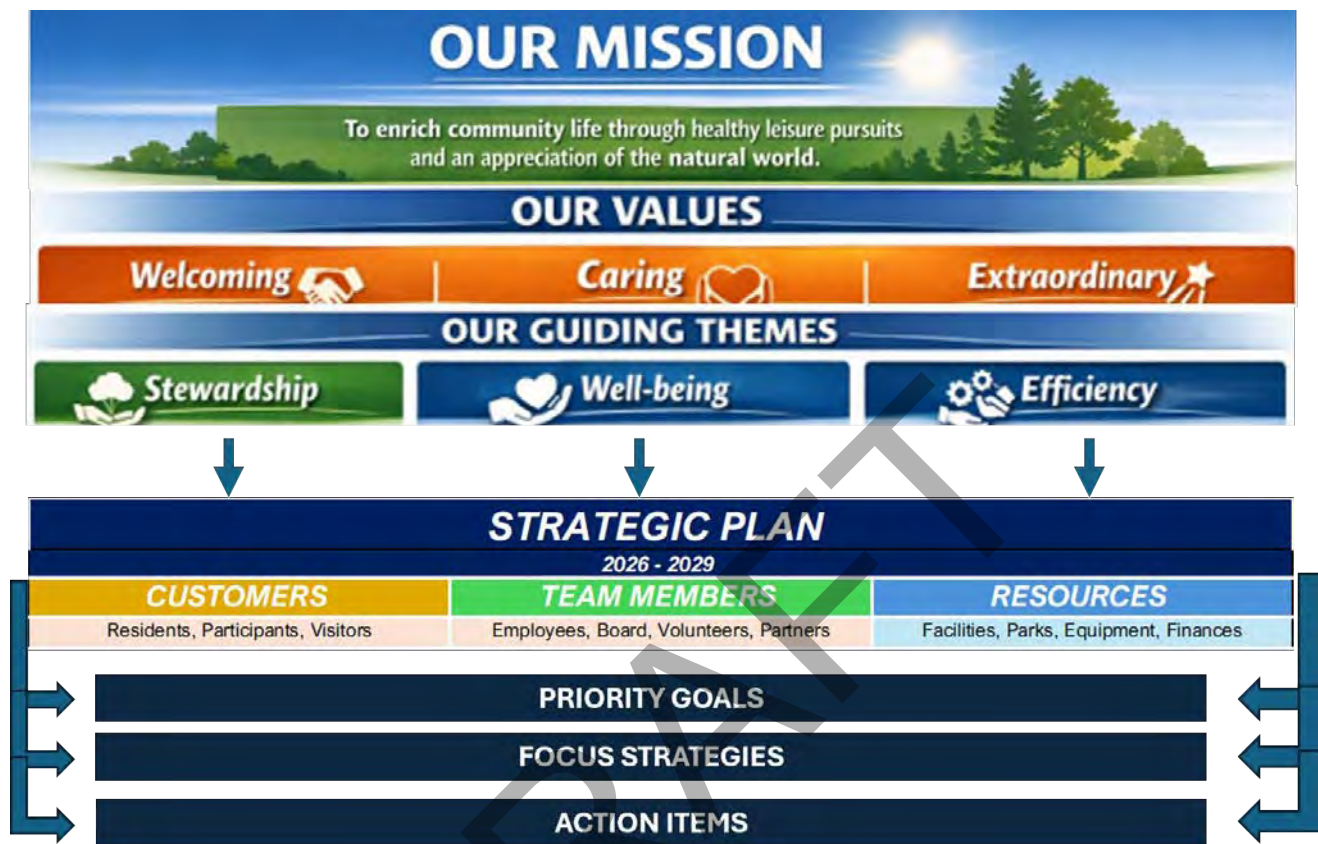
FUTURE GUIDING THEMES

The **Strategic Plan (2026-2029)** aligns with its Comprehensive Plan “GreenPrint”, and a vision shaped through a combination of service analysis, needs assessment, and community engagement, ensuring that the Park District’s future decisions are grounded in both data and lived experience. This vision is guided by three overarching themes which provide a unifying framework for decision-making, ensuring that future investments and actions are thoughtful, community-centered, and sustainable over time. Together, they define how the Park District will care for its assets, support the health and experience of its residents, and operate in a responsible and effective manner. **Guiding Themes** aligned with the District’s **Mission** and **Value Statements**, and applied to the **operational perspectives** as the framework for the strategic planning process.

Stewardship: Responsibly acquire, protect, and maintain parks and open spaces. Implement sustainable and resilient practices. Foster a vibrant community by creating inclusive gathering places. Champion parks and recreation through advocacy, impact, education, partnerships, and policy leadership to enrich community life.

Well-being: Ensuring that parks, recreation, and sport serve the essential social, physical, intellectual, emotional, environmental, economic, and cultural needs of all individuals regardless of life stage, ability, or income, while providing flexible options that remove barriers.

Efficiency: Partnering with our local municipality, schools, libraries, and other nonprofits to share facilities, staff, and programs, avoiding duplication of services, and leveraging each partner’s strengths, results in cost savings, streamlined operations, partnerships, and innovative funding help extend program reach without overburdening taxpayers. Fiscal responsibility ensures that our Park District delivers maximum community benefit with the resources we have.



STRATEGIC PLAN (2026-2029) – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PRIORITY GOALS

1. Customer- Customer Engagement

Develop and implement Innovative customer engagement processes to increase our reach and ensure consistent delivery of extraordinary experiences that foster community connections and enrichment of community life.

2. Team Members - Values Driven Workplace

Establish and champion values-driven workforce practices designed to attract and retain top industry talent; empower employees to perform at their highest level; and cultivate a culture of belonging, where all team members' contributions are acknowledged, recognized, and appreciated.

3. Resources- Stewardship of Community Resources

Create a comprehensive long-term resource plan for ensuring responsible stewardship, efficient operations, proactive maintenance, and funding for future development.

FOCUS STRATEGY

Short Term (2026-2027)

- **Customer Focus - Improve Accessibility**
Enhance and standardize customer accessibility to recreation services, facilities, parks and communications
- **Team Member Focus - Operational Clarity**
Establish systems for district-wide alignment, operational efficiency, and clarity in achieving priority goals
- **Resource Focus - Resource Management**
Maintain planning documents and guidelines that ensure the long-term care and management of existing and future capital assets and natural resources.

Mid Term (2028)

- **Customer Focus - Assess Needs**
Create consistent modes for evaluating community needs, assessing gaps in services, and prioritizing future improvements to our services, facilities and parks
- **Team Member Focus - Attract, Empower and Retain Talent**
Build a structured talent lifecycle framework
- **Resource Focus - Capital Funding**
Develop a funding plan to advance unfunded or underfunded capital projects

Long Term (2029)

- **Customer Focus - Create Loyalty**
Elevate the customer experience and communicate community impact in effort to build loyalty and advocacy
- **Team Member Focus - Culture of Belonging**
Create employee practices that cultivate a culture of belonging, where team members' contributions are acknowledged, recognized, and appreciated
- **Resource Focus - Financial Sustainability**
Prioritize and align capital investments with a long-term funding model



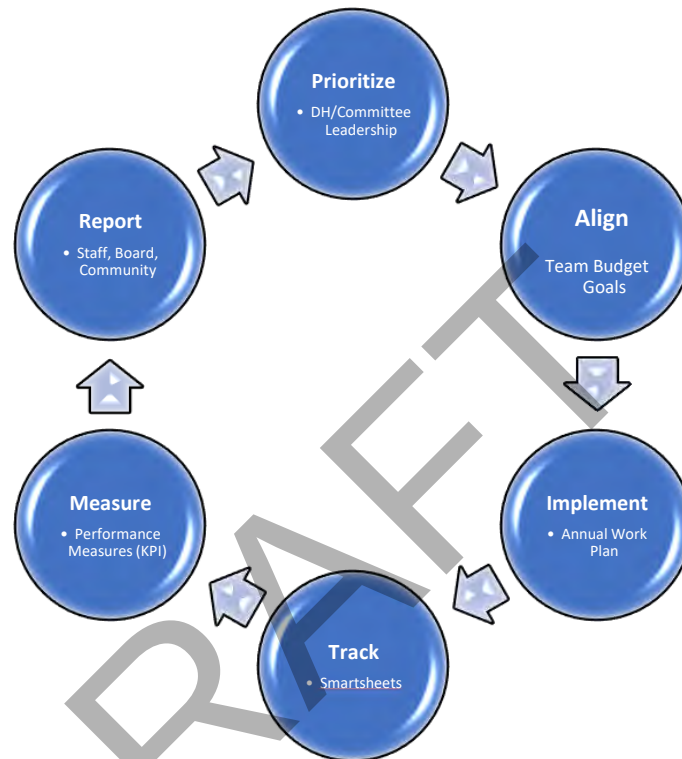
STRATEGIC PLAN (2026-2029) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Throughout the process of developing the Strategic Plan, we have acknowledged that strategic planning is an evolving conversation. **This is a living document**—it represents our best thinking at one point in time, anticipating the need to adjust as circumstances change. The plan is a roadmap, but all journeys require pauses, pivots, detours, and adjustments. We expect the same for the action items recommended in this document. To enable this, the leadership of the district will revisit the plan each quarter to assess progress, encourage accountability, and identify where adjustment is required.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION CYCLE

- **Prioritize (Ongoing)**
 - **Committees** for each district Perspective, plus an Implementation Committee, will ensure Implementation is focused on Priority Goals, Focused Strategies, and alignment between departments.
 - i. Finalize action items to be prioritized in the Annual Work Plan (**Q1**)
 - ii. Provide clarity on priorities for Action Items in the upcoming budget cycle (**Q2**)
 - iii. Assess progress on Focused Strategies and Action Items in the current year. (**Q3**)
 - iv. Evaluate and report on key performance indicators from the previous year and their impact on achieving Priority Goals (**Q4**)
 - v. Ensure tracking, measuring and communicating progress to staff, board and community (**Ongoing**)
- **Align (Q2/Q3)**
 - **Department Heads** provide direction to Teams/Areas on developing annual Action Items, and finalizing Department Action Items for the Annual Work Plan.
 - i. **Teams/Areas conduct Annual SWOC analysis** as part of the budget process, specifically focused on impact towards Strategies and progress on Priority Goals. SWOC focuses on team strengths can be leveraged into opportunities, while addressing weaknesses and overcoming challenges in the upcoming year (**Q2**)
 - ii. **Teams/Areas prepare Action Items** as part of the budget process. Align with Strategies and Priority Goals. Assigned employees who are responsible, accountable, informed and consulted, as well as deadline(s) for implementation and completion. Each year will have a Strategy Focus, but all Strategies considered (**Q3**)
 - iii. **Department Heads recommend final Department Action Items for the Annual Work Plan**
- **Implement (Ongoing)**
 - **Departments** and lead employees implement the Annual Work Plan
- **Track (Ongoing)**
 - **Departments** assign lead employees to track progress on Action Items in Smartsheets
- **Measure (Ongoing)**
 - **Departments** assign lead employees to update Key Performance Indicators
- **Report (Ongoing)**
 - Ongoing – **Departments** provide ongoing progress updates at département team meetings
 - Quarterly – **Committees** provide progress reporting shared via email or intranet
 - Annually – **Committees** provide District Progress Assessments (**Q3**) and Impact Reporting (**Q1**) to the Park Board, Staff and Community

Implementation Plan Diagram



STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

This section document outlines the process used throughout the development of the Comprehensive Plan, *GreenPrint*, to develop the *Strategic Plan 2030*.

VISION SCRIPTS

Staff evaluated each operational perspective against our Guiding Themes and values by asking:

What would it look like in the coming years if we are fully living out our Values of being welcoming, caring and extraordinary with our customers, team members and resources, when guided by our themes of stewardship, wellbeing, and efficiency?

In asking these questions for each operational perspective, staff created a series of **vision scripts**: phrases for each perspective that describe what we most want to be true. We then invited all staff members to comment on the vision scripts, asking them to identify which scripts were most significant to them and to share their reflections on the importance.

- **Customers**
 - New residents are drawn to Highland Park because of the park district.
 - We are essential to the health and wellbeing of our residents; we are their preferred place to engage in a healthy and community-focused lifestyle.
 - We gain new customers and retain our current customers because they see the value we offer and feel appreciated and connected—and because we regularly offer innovative new opportunities.
 - Our multi-generational customers feel welcomed and care by our inclusive and accessible materials, programming, and facilities and by our flexible options.
 - Our customers become donors and advocates for the park district, because of the value we've delivered to the community—they see how we listen and meet community needs.
- **Team Members**
 - Team members make their careers here because of their great experiences. It's a fun place to work with competitive compensation.
 - We invest in educating our people so they know they can grow here and be seen as industry leaders and innovators.
 - We have a strong values-driven culture of belonging and inclusivity; our team members feel heard and respected.
 - We work collaboratively with efficiency and accountability.
- **Resources**
 - We have the financial resources and thorough planning to meet our obligations and invest in our community for the long-term.
 - Our fiscally sound practices and partnerships ensure we are good stewards of tax payer dollars.
 - We responsibly care for the environment, our parks, and facilities.
 - Our facilities are extraordinary because we invest in preventative maintenance that ensures the wellbeing of our resources and customers.
 - We use technology to increase efficiency. We have strong relationships with our vendors and partners to help us steward our resources

PRIORITY GOALS

Vision Scripts and the input received by staff helped inform the next phase of identifying priority goals. A **Priority Goal** clarifies what is most important for the district to achieve in the coming years to have the biggest impact on achieving our **Vision Scripts**. These goals are broad based, involve collaboration and action items for every department and were established for each **Operational Perspective**.

- **Priority Goal #1: Customer Engagement**
Develop and implement Innovative customer engagement processes to increase our reach and ensure consistent delivery of extraordinary experiences that foster community connections and enrichment of community life.
- **Priority Goal #2: Values Driven Workplace**
Establish and champion values-driven workforce practices designed to attract and retain top industry talent; empower employees to perform at their highest level; and cultivate a culture of belonging, where all team members' contributions are acknowledged, recognized, and appreciated.
- **Priority Goal #3: Stewardship of Community Resources**
Create a comprehensive long-term resource plan for ensuring responsible stewardship, efficient operations, proactive maintenance, and funding for future development.

STRATEGIES

To provide further clarity on what must be done to support each Priority Goal, staff prioritized three **Strategies** for each Priority Goal. In effort to establish these strategies, an electronic survey was shared with all employees and board members engage team members throughout the agency, and gauge what strategies resonate with what most excites our team members, and what is most important for us to prioritize. Through this process, the district's leadership team a description of the strategy outcomes that will have the most influence on achieving Priority Goals over the next 3-4 years.

Priority Goal #1: Customer Engagement

1. Strategy 1: Improve Accessibility:

Enhance and standardize customer accessibility to recreation services, facilities, parks and communications.

Eliminate barriers, promote inclusivity, and make it easier for everyone in the community to engage with the Park District. Embracing universal design principles means that awareness, enrollment, and participation in services, facilities, and parks, and are created to be accessible to the widest range of people, regardless of age, ability, or circumstance, making services more intuitive and reducing the need for special accommodations. Collectively, these initiatives advance customer engagement by ensuring that all community members—regardless of language, ability, income, or familiarity with technology

2. Strategy 2: Assess Needs:

Create consistent modes for evaluating community needs, assessing gaps in services, and prioritizing future improvements to our services, facilities and parks.

Enable a systematic, consistent, data-driven approach to understanding and addressing community needs related to services, facilities, and parks. By providing avenues for deeper analysis of participation and attendance trends, fees charged for services, and consistently empowering community members to actively participate in providing ongoing feedback, we can identify gaps in existing offerings, measure our impact, and determine where improvements are needed.

3. Strategy 3: Create Loyalty:

Elevate the customer experience and communicate community impact in effort to build loyalty and advocacy.

By understanding and mapping the customer journey, we gain insight into every interaction and touchpoint a customer experiences, allowing for the identification and resolution of pain points. This comprehensive understanding leads to tailored improvements that elevate satisfaction and cultivate loyalty. Consistently refining, implementing, and enforcing clear customer service standards across the organization ensures that every customer receives high-quality service, building trust and fostering long-term advocacy. Staff training alignment further enhances service delivery by equipping team members with the skills and knowledge needed to meet customer needs and resolve issues effectively. Additionally, pursuing recognition awards signals a deep commitment to excellence and community impact, strengthening the organization's reputation and encouraging pride and loyalty among customers and stakeholders.

Priority Goal #2: Values Driven Workplace

1. Strategy 1: Attract, Empower and Retain Talent

Build a structured talent lifecycle framework

The employee life cycle outlines key stages employees experience within our organization, from recruitment and onboarding to engagement, development, retention, and exit. Effective onboarding programs help new hires feel welcomed and ready to succeed, while initiatives like youth internships foster early talent growth. Ongoing training and streamlined technology enable skill development and reduce administrative burdens, enhancing job satisfaction and retention. Consistent communication and regular surveys keep employees engaged and informed, while analyzing departures helps address turnover and improve the workplace. These strategies together attract, empower, and retain top talent by supporting their needs at every stage.

2. Strategy 2: Culture of Belonging

Create employee practices that cultivate a culture of belonging, where team members' contributions are acknowledged, recognized, and appreciated.

Establishing an intentional forum to assess and improve the workplace environment ensures that diverse perspectives are gathered and that everyone's voice matters. This strategy cultivates inclusion and psychological safety, so employees feel empowered to contribute. When employees discover and leverage their unique strengths, it boosts self-esteem, engagement, and their sense of being valued. This recognition of individual talents is vital for fostering an environment where everyone feels seen and appreciated. Practices that reflect a commitment to fairness and employee well-being and equitable balance of responsibilities reduce burnout and reassure team members that their needs are prioritized, making them feel supported and included. Conducting ongoing compensation studies ensures that pay is both equitable and competitive, reinforcing transparency and fairness. Implementing an employee recognition program formalizes the celebration of achievements and the reinforcement of positive behaviors. Regular recognition ensures that all team members' efforts are visible and appreciated, further strengthening their sense of belonging and connection.

3. Strategy 3: Operational Clarity

Establish systems for district-wide alignment, operational efficiency, and clarity in achieving priority goals.

This strategy establishes the structure, transparency, and accountability necessary for efficient operations and the accomplishment of priority projects and goals. Standardizing how policies and procedures are created, communicated, trained on, and accessed ensures that every staff member is aware of expectations, responsibilities, and processes, which in turn aligns actions and decision-making throughout the organization. Developing and implementing an operational Performance Measurement Program further enhances clarity by providing a means to objectively assess progress toward district goals. With clear metrics and regular measurement of outcomes, the district fosters transparency, identifies areas in need of improvement, and enables leadership to make data-driven decisions that keep operations effective and aligned with strategic priorities. Creating systems for aligning priority goals and projects, and establishing a clear framework for ongoing evaluation, progress reporting, and completion of capital and operational goals, ensures that everyone in the district is working toward the same objectives. By linking project and budget goals to employee performance and the Annual Work Plan, the district creates a direct connection between individual contributions and organizational outcomes. This alignment is essential for operational clarity, as it reduces ambiguity, focuses resources, and enables the district to track and celebrate progress toward its strategic goals.

Priority Goal #3: Stewardship of Community Resources

1. Strategy 1: Financial Sustainability

Prioritize and align capital investments with a long-term funding model

Establish a strong, resilient foundation for the district's fiscal health and operational effectiveness. Maintaining a long-term funding plan allows the district to anticipate future capital and operational needs, allocate resources wisely, and avoid unexpected financial challenges. By conducting a cost-of-service assessment and creating a cost recovery strategy, the district gains transparency around true service costs and can make informed decisions about pricing, subsidies, and resource allocation, fostering accountability and efficiency. Formalizing a rubric for assessing and prioritizing capital project implementation ensures projects are evaluated objectively, so funds are invested in initiatives that deliver the greatest impact and align with strategic goals. Capital asset lifecycle management ensures assets are managed from acquisition through maintenance and eventual replacement, reducing emergency repairs, extending asset lifespans, and supporting proactive budgeting for future needs. Collectively, these initiatives equip the district to plan strategically, operate efficiently, and maintain transparency.

2. Strategy 2: Capital Funding

Develop a funding plan to advance unfunded or underfunded capital projects

Increasing capital fundraising opportunities through the Parks Foundation plays a pivotal role, as it generates financial resources by leveraging philanthropic support and donor engagement. This direct infusion of funds helps bridge financial gaps for projects that may not be eligible for traditional funding mechanisms, expanding the pool of available resources and fostering greater community involvement. Similarly, emphasizing grant applications and cultivating relationships with grant recipients opens doors to external funding from government agencies, nonprofits, and foundations, diversifying revenue streams and providing substantial support for projects otherwise at risk of delay or cancellation. Expanding government partnerships through intergovernmental agreements enables the district to collaborate with other public bodies, share costs, and tap into joint investments, thereby reducing the financial burden and increasing project efficiency. In addition, public/private partnerships combine the strengths of both sectors, allowing access to private investment and expertise. This approach lowers costs, accelerates timelines, and brings in resources not available through public funding alone, ensuring a broader, sustainable base for capital development.

3. Strategy 3: Resource Management

Maintain planning documents and guidelines that ensure the long-term care and management of existing and future capital assets and natural resources.

Effective, consistent, and sustainable stewardship of the district's capital assets and natural resources. By aligning asset management tracking throughout the district, standardized procedures are established that allow for reliable monitoring, maintenance, and evaluation of assets. This uniformity fosters informed decision-making, reduces duplication, and enhances the efficient allocation of resources, ensuring assets are cared for in both the short and long term. Implementing a Sustainability Plan further integrates environmental responsibility and resource conservation into daily operations, promoting energy efficiency and protecting natural areas for future generations. The development and ongoing update of planning documents such as land, lakefront and site master plans or beach and athletic field management plans, help provide a clear vision for ongoing management, near term improvements and future development.

RECOMMENDED ACTION ITEMS

With Priority Goals and supporting strategies established, the district conducted a **Action Planning Summit** with full time Managers and Supervisors, and front-line professionals. employees were split into small groups from different departments and with various levels of supervision and responsibility, to ensure a diversity of perspectives was captured. Using the Appreciative Inquiry methodology, **leaders identified possible action items** (including projects, initiatives, programs, and other ideas) that represented the perspectives of all departments. Next, the groups revisited the established priority goals and strategies, and prioritized which action items would most important, relevant, and achievable, with each item being assigned to a timeframe (short-term, mid-term, or long-term).

These action items then went back to the Department Heads, where further refinement and discussion created an **Implementation plan**, which established a framework and system for annual prioritization of Recommended Action Items, while also clarifying workflows, workloads, roles, and expectations for the district's annually established work plan. This system includes standards for ongoing reporting, evaluation, and assessment of action items.

Below is a comprehensive list of the district's recommended action items.

Priority Goal #1: Customer Engagement

1. Strategy 1: Improve Accessibility:

Enhance and standardize customer accessibility to recreation services, facilities, parks and communications.

Update Website and social media to ADA Accessibility Compliance
Implement approved ADA Transition Plan
Formalize Annual Marketing and Communication Plans to address different marketing mixes that address priority services, and diversity in target markets
Develop and Implement Universal Design Planning, Programming and Experience Standards
Implement a Multilingual Communications Plan
Select and implement New Registration Software with intuitive user functionality, modernized convenience capabilities, and AI searchability
Enhance website searchability with AI features

2. Strategy 2: Assess Needs:

Create consistent modes for evaluating community needs, assessing gaps in services, and prioritizing future improvements to our services, facilities and parks.

Formalize Customer Feedback modes and methods addressing both satisfaction and needs assessment in services and experiences in parks, facilities, marketing, phone etc. (surveys, advisory groups, focus groups, in person, social pinpointing, comment cards, QR codes, etc.)
Formalize a process for analyzing, assessing, and reporting on customer/community feedback
Formalize a process for responding and addressing identified gaps in customer experiences in parks and facilities
Formalize a process for responding and addressing identified gaps in customer satisfaction and gaps in recreation services.
Conduct a recreation services fee analysis

3. Strategy 3: Create Loyalty:

Elevate the customer experience and communicate community impact in effort to build loyalty and advocacy.

Create ongoing Customer Experience Standards Training to ensure continuity and consistency between services, facilities and parks
Refine, implement, and reinforce clear customer experience standards organization-wide to ensure the Extra-Ordinary experiences
Conduct a Customer Experience “Journey Map” Study in effort to identify, evaluate, assess and make recommended improvements on existing customer touch points (marketing, parks, facilities, registration, phone, in person, email, website, apps etc.)
Create an action plan for improvements on customer touch points from the “Journey Map” Study
District-wide integration of services (all-inclusive benefits) and customer retention (reward-based loyalty programs)
Create Facility and Park Experience Standards Scorecards
Apply and receive the NRPA Gold Medal Award

Priority Goal #2: Values Driven Workplace

1. Strategy 1: Attract, Empower and Retain Talent

Build a structured talent lifecycle framework

Continue to improve our onboarding process
Conduct an Employee Life Cycle Study in effort to identify, evaluate, assess and make recommended improvements on existing employee touch points (recruitment, onboarding, development, retention, mentorship, succession planning, offboarding etc.)
Develop and implement an action plan based on suggested improvements from the Employee Life Cycle Study
Implement a Training Management System within Paycom that encompasses both compliance training and educational initiatives designed to empower team members.
Develop a Youth Internship and young professional leadership development program
Utilize technological solutions, including artificial intelligence, to enhance efficiency in file and employee database searches, facilitate interdepartmental collaboration, and streamline communication of district-wide updates through platforms such as SharePoint or intranet systems.

2. Strategy 2: Culture of Belonging

Create employee practices that cultivate a culture of belonging, where team members' contributions are acknowledged, recognized, and appreciated.

Conduct a comprehensive staffing assessment including workload analysis, organizational structure, job descriptions, job classifications and compensation and benefits for full and part time.
Develop and implement formal employee feedback methods including an annual engagement survey, district-wide 360 survey, Operation SWOC analysis, stay interviews, exit interviews, etc.
Continue to embed Strength Finders workshops, tools and resources that help team members give the best of themselves, understand and appreciate the best in others, and collaborate more efficiently
Continue to expand a values driven employee recognition program
Develop an employee development "pathways" program intended to ensure ongoing personal growth, team cohesion, inter-department collaboration and ongoing support for all staff
Continue to expand employee engagement activities

3. Strategy 3: Operational Clarity

Establish systems for district-wide alignment, operational efficiency, and clarity in achieving priority goals.

Create a clear framework and workflow process for evaluating, reporting progress and completion of priority capital projects and operational goals, including alignment with annual budget goals, employee performance goals, and the Annual Work Plan.
Clarify how we create, train, communicate and access policies and procedures consistently across the district.
Create and/or expand employee behavior standards, operational norms, and expectations for creating a values driven culture
Create a Performance Measurement Program including identification, tracking, reporting and drawing conclusions on Key Performance Measures relative to achieving our vision scripts, priority goals and strategies as well as advocating our impact.
Distinguished Accreditation Certification.

Priority Goal #3: Stewardship of Community Resources

1. Strategy 1: Financial Sustainability

Prioritize and align capital investments with a long-term funding model

Continue to maintain a 10-year long-Term Funding Plan and create transparency and education to staff and community
Conduct a cost-of-service assessment to assess true service costs; educate staff and develop a cost recovery strategy based on measurable impacts of each service (return on investment) that leads to informed decisions about pricing, subsidies, operational resource allocation and capital investments, fostering transparency, alignment and efficiency.
Using the cost-of-service assessment and cost recovery strategy, create a rubric for assessing and prioritizing capital project implementation to ensure projects are evaluated objectively, so funds are invested in initiatives that deliver the greatest impact and align with priority goals

2. Strategy 2: Capital Funding

Develop a funding plan to advance unfunded or underfunded capital projects

Expand Grant Funding
Grow the Parks Foundation's Capital Fundraising Campaigns to support unfunded capital projects that meet community needs.
Explore Public/Private Partnerships
Evaluate Government Partnerships to reduce the duplication of services; leverage financial capabilities and efficient manage resources

3. Strategy 3: Resource Management

Maintain planning documents and guidelines that ensure the long-term care and management of existing and future capital assets and natural resources.

Formalize our Capital Asset inventory and lifecycle management to ensure assets are managed from acquisition, maintenance and eventual replacement, reducing emergency repairs, extending asset lifespans, and supporting proactive budgeting for future needs.
Maintain Facility and Park Scorecards and create Facility and Park Inspection reports to assess existing conditions compared to measurable service standards
Continue to educate and implement the District's Sustainability Plan.
Continue to evaluate, update and develop Planning Documents that support the maintenance, improvement and development of our natural resources
Track facility usage in effort to assess impact and inform future decisions.

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APPENDIX E

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT SUMMARIES



POP-UP EVENTS

1. EGG HUNT

Family Accessibility & Lifestyle Impacts

- Parents expressed a strong need for after-school childcare options, especially programs that allow them to drop off their children for approximately two hours. This time window is often the most challenging part of a parent's day, even for those working remotely, as it interrupts their workflow and is too short to make meaningful progress between drop-offs and pick-ups.
- There is a desire for more toddler classes, particularly those that are scheduled outside of traditional daytime hours to better accommodate working parents.
- Several parents suggested hosting "Parents' Night Out" events a few times a month, during which they could drop off their children in the early evenings for a couple of hours in the evening to enjoy a date night or some personal time.
- A parent of a child with a disability shared challenges in finding sensory-friendly or sensitive spaces within Park District programs and facilities. They felt that accessibility is not a primary focus of PDHP and would like to see more thoughtful consideration for children who require additional support.
- The Wiggle Play program at the Recreation Center was highlighted as a popular offering. However, recent price increases—from \$6 to \$8 per child—have made it more difficult for larger families to participate regularly. One family of six suggested implementing tiered pricing by age to improve affordability.
- Parents voiced a strong desire to better coordinate programs for families with children of different ages. They asked if more programs could be scheduled at the same location and time to make it easier and more convenient for parents to coordinate.
- Transportation remains a major concern. School District-provided transportation has become less reliable over time, and many parents rely on Park District transportation to make up for that gap. This service is highly appreciated, and parents would like to see it maintained.
- Transportation to and from the water park was raised as a concern, though there were also comments about the facility not always being open due to changing water levels. (More clarity on the challenge is needed here.)

Outdoor Environment Opportunities & Enhancements

- Participants expressed a strong interest in nature-based play areas, which they felt could foster a greater appreciation for the natural environment among children while also supporting physical agility and cognitive development.
- There was a desire to incorporate more sand pits into different parks throughout the community.
- Community members also expressed interest in adding a splash pad or other water-based play amenities in the area.
- Multiple participants voiced interest in an outdoor gym or fitness amenities within existing parks and open spaces to encourage physical activity for all ages.
- The maintenance of existing walking trails was raised as a concern, with some residents noting that paths are in need of more frequent upkeep.
- Many residents expressed a desire for more dedicated and accessible running paths throughout the community.
- Additional bike trails and paths that connect the Recreation Center to other destinations were frequently mentioned. Residents would like to see a more connected trail system for biking and walking.
- Participants also called for improvements to Lincoln Park, though no specific suggestions were noted.

- There was enthusiasm for the beaches, particularly Park Avenue Beach. One resident shared, “I love Highland Park because of the beaches!” Others echoed the desire to maintain and expand beach access, including boating opportunities, despite the limited number of boaters currently in the community.

Indoor Space Needs & Enhancements

- Some parents would like to see the development of an indoor waterpark to provide year-round aquatic recreation.
- Community members expressed a desire for indoor playground spaces to provide children with opportunities to play during colder seasons.
- The swimming lessons program was a common topic of feedback. Suggested improvements included:
 - Offering free swim assessments for children
 - Ensuring the water temperature is warmer
 - Hiring more engaged and qualified instructors
 - Improving curriculum content and structure
 - Extending class durations
 - Making the online registration system more user-friendly, including the ability to sync schedules with personal calendars
 - A number of community members expressed interest in adult swimming lessons.
 - The idea of incorporating a sauna at the Recreation Center was suggested.
- The Recreation Center was generally well-received, though several individuals mentioned that “we need more” in terms of both space and variety.
- With the closure of the Golf Dome, participants raised concerns about the lack of indoor golf facilities and inquired about future plans to replace this amenity.

Improved Active Adult Programming

- There is a growing desire for adult-focused programs beyond athletics and fitness. Community members expressed interest in:
 - Continuing education and enrichment opportunities
 - Culinary and cultural classes
 - DIY classes and workshops (trending topics might include woodworking, pottery, home organization, or herbal wellness)
 - Beer, wine, and scotch tasting events, especially in the colder months
 - Bonfires and casual, social gathering opportunities during winter
- Some residents mentioned a newer group fitness model called “Barry’s,” a high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workout that combines treadmill running and strength training in an energizing, club-like environment. This was shared as an example of innovative programming worth exploring.

Youth Sports, Leagues, and Facility Capacities

- Parents are seeking a broader variety of sports offerings, particularly for younger age groups (ages 3–5), to better align with children’s developmental needs and interests.
- There is strong demand for turf multipurpose fields, as teams and leagues often have to travel to neighboring communities to access such facilities. Highland Park previously had three soccer teams, but the lack of turf has contributed to their decline.
- Residents want to see the continued growth of baseball in Highland Park, noting that interest has increased significantly over the years.

- Some parents expressed frustration with the competitive nature of entry into youth sports leagues. One mother of a 9-year-old noted how difficult it is to gain entry into Park District-basketball local and travel leagues. The Park District does not train the youth to be ready to try for the leagues and parents end up taking their kids to private lessons to make sure they are ready to try. Also, there was mention that children who are not selected often feel discouraged. Suggestions included creating more inclusive programs for those who don't make it and providing stronger foundational training.
- There is also a desire for smoother transitions between program levels.

Technological & Communication Advancements

- Participants expressed a desire to improve the PDHP website and app. Many find it difficult to navigate, particularly because of the Park District's wide range of services. Suggested improvements included:
 - Streamlining the user experience
 - Hiring a UI/UX designer to potentially design a more web or app based platform that is more curated to the different services that the Park District offers.
 - Adding features like weekly/monthly calendar views, personalized schedules, and calendar syncing was mentioned as very critical.
- With increasing reliance on technology, there was an interest in installing interactive touchscreen signage at key PDHP facilities to provide up-to-date information and announcements.
- Several individuals expressed a desire to see more public recognition for local talent, including photographers, trainers, instructors, and other recreation professionals.

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POP-UP EVENTS

2. CENTENNIAL ICE ARENA

General Comments

- Improvements to the ice rink is the single most important park district improvement that Highland Park needs to make. As a family of both hockey and figure skaters, the limitations of only having one ice rink facility have had real implications in our lives. Whereas most figure skaters skate at their home rink, every figure skater we know in Highland Park practices at surrounding rinks due to lack of practice ice and overall availability. My daughter practices at Wilmette and Northbrook. This is ice time money that the park district could easily be making. It would be much more convenient for us to stay local in our community and spend that money here.
- Compared to Northbrook, Highland Park's population is similarly sized, yet they offer two full sheets of ice. Comparing Highland Park to Wilmette, our population size is larger and yet we only offer one sheet of ice compared to them offering two.
- My son used to figure skate, and due to extremely limited space in the practice ice, he was waitlisted and could not practice, for an entire season, at the same time as my daughter - she was also waitlisted but got in. He ended up switching to Wilmette hockey in large because of the lack of availability and facility here. In Wilmette, the league uses a studio ice, as well as a main ice sheet, to accommodate both hockey and figure skaters, at once.
- Hockey skills sessions (clinics) can be easily done at the studio ice, as that does not require a full sheet of ice. Most park districts offer specialty classes or jumps classes - my daughter, as well as other kids, would love additional classes, if we had the ice to offer it.
- As it stands right now, our facility here at Centennial, does not compare well to other park districts - and as a traveling hockey family, we have been to plenty of rinks in the region and the Midwest.
- Overall, the limitation of only having one ice sheet and the lack of additional ice sheets, significantly impacts the ice programs.
- Often, we see skaters just waiting at the rink, in between sessions, when they could get on the ice for additional practice.
- Generally speaking, there needs to be more ice time and better staffing. An additional studio rink would allow for more classes to be taught, providing additional revenue for the park districts and more options for currently offered classes. Certain classes are only offered at niche days and times, and it simply does not work for a lot of the skaters here in the community - this limitation in availability has led to a lot of frustration.
- With the gymnastics program moving to the new West Ridge facility, it is important to adapt that space into a studio rink.
- My family of three skaters drives to other rinks, multiple days a week, due to the lack of ice time. Highland Park has the talent, and we see a huge gap in supply, when the demand is high.
- Centennial Ice Aren is the only park district skating rink in the area with one sheet of ice, and this significantly impacts the ice program. If there was another Studio Rink, more skaters could skate in that sought after time after school and more classes could be taught - providing more revenue for the park district and more options for the classes that are being offered. It is extremely important - if Highland Park wants any sort of ice skating program - we preserve the space here for skaters and hockey players and add a studio rink.
- Mom has a cheerleading program - there is no cheerleading at the high school. It started last year and last night (May 2025). They had try outs and had at least 30 girls come through.
- Sunday programming. Operations too hot in there. Cost of operations. Highland Pak skaters going enemy. Other public skating has 1.5 hours, while Highland Park has 45 minutes. Coaches want 1.5 hours and need more space and a more friendly rink - not as competitive.

- Wilmette will have an extra day of rink – that is dedicated to have games without the caches. They also have a concession space/stand – that would be helpful as well. We want a studio specifically for hockey. Sunday morning is when they have Sunday schools so that's when they have games and it overlaps. The open skate is the same cost everywhere else but 1.5 hours there and 45 min here -fact check that.
- In comparison to others, we need more than 2 sheet facilities. Studio rink will help. A small concession stand. Hockey focused.
- My daughter and son go to Lake Forest Academy. That revenue through Falcons team is not going to other park districts. All the teams they play against have at least 2 sheets of ice. They get a lot more development and we simply end up luring kids to other places.
- We can't do the adult and teen show because we don't have the space.
- Glenview is the example – they have two full sheets and a studio sheet. The batting cage is not a great idea here where the gymnastics are. Getting more practice, space and time during the week would be great. Getting them to do free ice is only an option from 11:30 – 12:15 and that is when they are in gymnastics. Figure skaters can also be practicing at the studio. There is generally a wait list.
- There is room to the left that could be maybe used for concession space. That is not a zamboni space because that is off to the right.
- Other revenue options. Private parties. Broomball and Curling. Service to other communities.
- Private lessons. They are done at other facilities. Golley coaches and other focused training can be done in the small space.
- Supportive of another sheet of ice.
- Hockey instructor for Falcons. They could use it for tot. The kids in their early days are overwhelmed and scared and can go the small rink. They can also do team practices or the small sheet. Travel or home can use it here. Often Falcons are here 5-7 on Monday and other weekdays. High school from 7-9.
- Time spent here is between 10-20 hours per week.
- Leakage to Northbrook.
- Serving Deerfield, Lake Forest and Lake Bluff.
- We did outgrow having one ice sheet. Falcons might be open to funding another full-size rink if they expand the building.
- A second rink would boost the ability for the rink to be on the same level as Northbrook or Glenview.
- It is very challenging to find time. They are starting to go to Northbrook, and they are taking to instructors, even Glenview has 3. Even a good idea to have a new sheet of ice for events. The gymnastics space is going to the new west ridge center – the space we were at.
- Make more butterfly sanctuaries.
- Maybe we can do yoga for kids and adults at Centennial. Evanston has ballet and yoga for the kids. That helps with flexibility and posture as well.
- More time on the ice. Glenview, Evanston and Northbrook are also more advanced and that creates more issues.
- We are here from 9:30 to 12 and I bring my own food to make sure my kid can last.
- Vernon Hills as the skate store. They sharpen blades there and have a concession space. We did not know that they sharpen blades here, so improve communication.
- More space and more classes. They do a good job with the space that they have in terms of making the space work. There are grades 1, 2, 3 and tots all at once.
- More fishing.
- The gymnastics program is good, but we might need more instructors. They just redid the space, and it is great, however is it possible to replace the gymnastics space with another sheet of ice for younger?
- Another ice rink. Glenview and Wilmette have up to three ice rinks. Wilmette has a studio portion solo room. Also need a concession area. The ice time is not enough. Need of another room.
- The ice is not zambonied enough and the space is not well kept.
- 3 weeks senior during the summer is not enough – a senior might need to be a month and a half.

- *More ice space and even a smaller rink – special needs kids might be more comfortable getting on the ice if it was a smaller space. The gymnastics space can grow more.*
- *The gymnastics space can grow more. It is a newly renovated one, but we can make room for more ice space.*
- *Highland Park seems to have money to improve other places, and the taxes go up every year.*
- *Availability of ice time. It starts at 2 and it ends at 4:30 – to get here and get skate time is limited. Can we extend the time to 7 or so?*
- *The space right now is also limited for gymnastics.*
- *Girl's shift is out. No soccer. They don't have space here and we are having to pay for other park districts like Glenview and Wilmette. The batting cage is insulting. The ice team before school at 7am is very disruptive. We are not investing in girls here and often investing in boys a lot.*

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POP-UP EVENTS

3. DANNY CUNNIFF PARK

General Comments

The Saturday morning engagement at Danny Cuniff Park drew strong participation from families associated with the Highland Park Giants baseball program. Several coaches and parents expressed frustration over the loss of indoor training space, specifically noting that the former athletic area had been repurposed for pickleball without a clear plan to replace it.

Concerns centered on the lack of batting cages, pitching lanes, and year-round facilities necessary for skill development. As a result, many families reported leaving Highland Park's baseball programs in favor of neighboring communities like Deerfield, Northbrook, and Buffalo Grove, where they believe public and private training options are more competitive. Coaches in particular voiced concern that local players are falling behind their peers regionally, and asked whether underused indoor spaces, such as the former gymnastics area, could be adapted for baseball training needs.

In addition to the baseball-focused feedback, two nearby residents from the single-family neighborhood west of the park raised long-standing concerns about drainage issues along the perimeter trail. They shared that puddling remains unresolved and creates icy hazards in winter, making walking unsafe and unpleasant. Despite being frequent park users, they felt this issue has gone unaddressed for too long.

Several soccer families also stopped by during the pop-up and asked why the ice rink building was not open to provide access to restrooms during weekend games. They expressed frustration at having to rely on nearby port potties despite the proximity of a full facility that remains closed during field use.

POP-UP EVENTS

4. PARK FITNESS

General Comments

- **Fitness Programs and Scheduling:** There is a desire for expanded cycling class offerings, beyond the current early morning options (currently only offered at 5:30 AM on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays). These times are appreciated by those who work out before work but are too niche to serve a broader population. Afternoon and evening classes are desired to accommodate those with different schedules and to attract a younger demographic interested in evening workouts.
- **Aquatics and Lifeguard Concerns:** Several community members expressed a desire for more lap swimming hours, both indoor and outdoor. There is also interest in adding an outdoor pool to expand aquatic programming. Concerns were also raised about lifeguard preparedness. Specifically, as lifeguards were seen fully dressed, including wearing shoes, which raised questions about their ability to respond quickly in emergencies.
- **Recreation Access and Membership:** Community members are interested in bundling pickleball access into Rec Center monthly or annual memberships. There is also a request to understand how much traffic at the Rec Center is specifically driven by pickleball use.
- **Facility Amenities and Infrastructure:** Feedback on the recently renovated parking lot noted a missed opportunity to include electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. Residents see this as a forward-looking amenity that could attract younger users, as well as align with Park District environmental sustainability goals. There were suggestions to partner with companies like ChargePoint or Electrify America, citing a local example (three fast chargers at Bank of America in Downtown Highland Park).
- **Trail Improvements and Connectivity:** Residents want the portion of the Green Bay Trail that runs through Highland Park to be improved, including enhancements like paving, public art, butterfly sanctuaries, pollinator gardens, and gathering spaces. Thinking broadly, a safe, continuous north south bike route is needed to reduce car vs bicycle conflicts and promote green transportation options. While this trail is not owned or managed by the Park District of Highland Park, residents saw value in partnering with the City of Highland Park to address issues, serving the needs of the community. Important to share that drainage is a major issue, with portions of the trail becoming unusable during rain due to poor runoff management. There was some recognition of continued need for an east west bike and pedestrian connection in Highland Park.
- **Open Space and Youth Activities:** A suggestion was made to create space for kids to engage in informal outdoor activities such as launching model rockets or driving go-karts, along other activities that may require more staffing or additional open space.
- **Divergent Viewpoints on Park Development:** While many support more recreational amenities, one comment expressed concern about “elevating the experience” too much, suggesting the Park District should focus more on preserving natural areas and less on active recreation expansion, potentially as a means to lower taxes.
- **Sustainability and Park District Messaging:** A resident objected to the use of plastic bags in locker rooms for wet swimsuits, arguing that it sends the wrong message about environmental values. They suggested that adults should bring their own reusable or recyclable bags.

WEBSITE COMMENTS

PDHP GreenPrint Online Comments

- It would be great for Highland Park to have more and better-maintained soccer fields. They should have permanent bathroom facilities, nets without holes, and I'm sure that field maintenance is ultimately the largest expense. If possible, I'd love to dream about an indoor soccer space in HP, but for starters, how about more and better maintained outdoor fields!
 - 2025-03-28T20:21:55Z
- what about a Bocce ball court?
 - 2025-04-25T22:29:18Z
- Dream scenario...to have 2 sheets of ice for hockey. Even having a studio rink would be greatly beneficial. Build out a concession/restaurant area to the side of Centennial which will bring a large amount of revenue to the building. Then have an "off ice" training and development section to build strength and work on other key areas of skill development. All other arenas within the north shore area have these available and we are very far behind the times to grow the Falcons program. Time to step up our game!
 - 2025-04-29T22:54:20Z
- We need more ice!!! All other ice rinks in the Northshore have 2 or more sheets. It is essential to have ice time for our kids to develop this sport. It can also be a new revenue center if rented for private parties.
 - 2025-05-02T03:06:12Z
- Add an additional ice rink so the figure skaters have more ice time (and based on a comment below the hockey players are feeling the pinch too). Also need an additional studio for off ice training classes. As the kids achieve the higher levels they typically leave for other rinks.
 - 2025-05-03T12:07:47Z
- Keep centennial ice arena an ice arena. We spend so much money driving all over going to different rinks that have ice time. My daughter is a competitive skater and my son is on falcons. The lack of ice time compared to neighboring rinks is significant. Putting in anything else is so disrespectful to highland park families who have put in so much time nurturing our skaters passions. It is an ice arena. Not a baseball field. Not a bocce ball facility.
 - 2025-05-03T13:13:46Z
- We need a second sheet of ice desperately. We are spending so much money at other rinks and driving all around to find ice time.
 - 2025-05-03T13:24:22Z
- Dog park at Sleepy Hallow. Would be a great way to get the community together and have the pups play.

- 2025-05-03T13:27:18Z
- Ideally, Highland Park should have two sheets of ice. All other neighboring communities have two sheets of ice, if not more. Concessions and additional amenities would be an added bonus. We have to travel to other rinks to get ice time for hockey. The skaters do not have enough room to practice for ice show or hold enough classes to accommodate the demand. We need to improve all of our facilities and get in line with the other rinks in the area.
 - 2025-05-03T13:46:51Z
- Please convert the current gymnastics facility at Centennial Ice Arena, which is being relocated to the new Westridge, into a practice figure skating rink. We regularly need to drive our daughter to Glenview, Northbrook and Wilmette for ice time because we only have one rink (as do the parents of all of the other figure skaters). This would enable HP to maintain a competitive program and reduce or eliminate the need for HP families to commute for skating lessons and team practices.
 - 2025-05-03T14:19:49Z
- Centennial is in dire need of 5 things: 1. A 2nd rink- ideally another full ice sheet- to be competitive with other neighboring suburbs. We are constantly forced to go to other rinks for ice time. We are spending money outside of Highland Park that could easily be put back into our community. Our programming needs improvement and the only way that happens is by building a proper facility for our skaters. 2. Dedicated locker rooms for figure skaters. They need space to get ready separate from the public lobby. Having a specific space for skaters elevates the facility to a more professional standard. It enhances their ability to prepare both physically and mentally. 3. A proper concession area IN the building with real food and drinks for the athletes and general public. This would not only keep people in the building longer and create a better culture at our facility, but it would rake in TONS of revenue for PDHP. Parents probably pay \$10 for a bag of Doritos from the vending machine - revenue that I'm sure goes to an outside vendor when it could easily be kept in the community. 4. Better bathrooms- both new private ones for skaters and improvements to the current public bathrooms. 5. Handicap access/seating.
 - 2025-05-03T14:34:22Z
- Hello! Highland Park NEEDS another sheet of ice/rink. We are the only rink in the area with only one. There is barely any ice time. It is sad to see so many skaters leave the rink because of this. We are losing them and potential money for the rink. My family of 3 skaters currently drives to other rinks multiple days a week due to lack of ice time. If we had two rinks, more ice time would be available and we wouldn't have to go elsewhere. Our skating program could be so much bigger and better!!! Please consider adding another rink.
 - 2025-05-03T15:00:55Z
- Important to remember that there are two major sports happening here and it is necessary that the figure skaters also get the ice time they need. We have many passionate young up and coming skaters who need more ice time to reach the top level

they are capable of! We really need another rink so we can provide both programs with their deserved and needed ice time!!

○ 2025-05-03T15:23:08Z

- Making Centennial Ice Arena a hybrid facility with another sport is unnecessary because the figure skating and hockey community regularly use other facilities to supplement a lack of ice time at Centennial. We need more available ice time after school that would allow for figure skating program practice, special figure skating classes, and even more space for off-ice and stretching would benefit the athletes.
○ 2025-05-05T16:30:28Z
- An actual accessible playground for those with physical disabilities that has numerous activities for those in wheel chairs. We have to travel outside of our city to locate a playground that has actual rubber surfacing, at least 2 adaptive swings that truly fit 0-5 year olds with straps/harness, wheelchair friendly merry go round, wheelchair friendly play sets that aren't just ramps up to nothing (give the kids something to roll up to and interact with), multiple wheelchair accessible ground play items, wheelchair accessible sensory/music garden, etc. Also, a splash pad that wheelchair/physically disabled people can go through as well (or any free splash pad in this entire city). Numerous examples around Chicagoland and other cities across the Midwest (check vlassis park in ballwin, MO as an example). Further, the lack of 0-5 year old programming during the weekends is beyond disappointing and a major money loss for Pdhp. Every one we know leaves this city to go to other park districts or private centers further away for swimming, gymnastics, Tball, soccer, music, etc as there are hardly any classes for this age group over the weekend. The general demographic is now a full time two working parent household and there are hardly any activities for this age range on weekends. Super disappointing and unattractive to get young families to move in when we can't take advantage of the park district we pay so much for in taxes.
○ 2025-05-12T02:08:55Z
- The majority of kids in our neighborhood are actively involved in soccer, and Brown Park continues to be a central gathering place where they meet to play informally. However, the park currently lacks soccer goals, which limits the experience and quality of play. Adding permanent or semi-permanent soccer goals would greatly enrich the use of this open space for older children and teens who already make use of the park daily, weather permitting. This simple addition would encourage physical activity, teamwork, and outdoor engagement—core values that align with the mission of any well-rounded park system. Sincerely, A Ravinia district Parent who has children that want to play in the World Cup one day.
○ 2025-05-26T12:46:09Z
- I am writing as a local resident and parent to request the installation of soccer goals at Brown Park as part of your ongoing master planning efforts. Our family has lived just a block away from Brown Park since our children were in kindergarten, and we have cherished the years spent playing at what we fondly refer to as the "train park." Now that the children (and many of their neighborhood friends) have grown, their recreational interests have evolved. The majority of kids in our neighborhood are

actively involved in soccer, and Brown Park continues to be a central gathering place where they meet to play informally. However, the park currently lacks soccer goals, which limits the experience and quality of play. Adding permanent or semi-permanent soccer goals would greatly enrich the use of this open space for older children and teens who already make use of the park daily, weather permitting. This simple addition would encourage physical activity, teamwork, and outdoor engagement. All are core values that align with the mission of any well-rounded park system. Should funding be a concern, our community is willing and able to assist with fundraising efforts to help bring this project to life. Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to improving our neighborhood parks. Sincerely, Ravinia District Parent of children who want to play in the World Cup one day.

○ 2025-05-26T12:54:41Z

- I am writing as a local resident and parent to request the installation of soccer goals at Brown Park as part of your ongoing master planning efforts. Our family has lived just a block away from Brown Park since our children were in kindergarten, and we have cherished the years spent playing at what we fondly refer to as the "train park." Now that the children (and many of their neighborhood friends) have grown, their recreational interests have evolved. The majority of kids in our neighborhood are actively involved in soccer, and Brown Park continues to be a central gathering place where they meet to play informally. However, the park currently lacks soccer goals, which limits the experience and quality of play. Adding permanent or semi-permanent soccer goals would greatly enrich the use of this open space for older children and teens who already make use of the park daily, weather permitting. This simple addition would encourage physical activity, teamwork, and outdoor engagement. All are core values that align with the mission of any well-rounded park system. The nearest soccer goals next to YPCC on Clavey Rd. To get there the children need to cross busy Green Bay Road, which my children don't feel safe crossing alone. This makes it difficult for them to access a proper space to play. Adding goal posts at Brown Park (right in our neighborhood) would give them a safer, more accessible option and allow them to stay active without the safety concerns. Should funding be a concern, our community is willing and able to assist with fundraising efforts to help bring this project to life. Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to improving our neighborhood parks. Sincerely, Ravinia District Parent of children who want to play in the World Cup one day.

○ 2025-05-26T13:13:27Z

- HP has great offerings for kids! Just never enough spaces. For example, things like Saturday morning gymnastics or Safety Village are full minutes after registration opens. It would be great to see additional classes for those that are popular.

○ 2025-05-28T00:31:32Z

- HP needs more baseball facilities, particularly for indoor training during the cold months. Baseball lost use of the dome on Hwy 41 and will be losing the West Ridge gym, so after 2026 we won't have any indoor facilities in HP. Would be great to be able to use the gymnastics gym at centennial for baseball. Also would be great to use the extra land by Jeff Fox field for a new facility. Thanks!

○ 2025-05-28T01:11:57Z

- LEED certified.
 - 2025-05-28T02:06:43Z
- LEED certified and no artificial turf to start 😊
 - 2025-05-28T02:07:18Z
- I would love to see expansion of the indoor pool facilities or increased access for younger children, especially in the cooler months. Currently there are very limited week day options for open swim, and on weekends only in the afternoon. Ideally there would be space for lap swimmers, lessons, swim teams and children to all have good access to indoor swimming facilities. There are lots of examples of Midwest cities making investments in aquatic centers resulting in pretty incredible community engagement and ensuring children are strong swimmers at an early age, regardless of socioeconomic status. Very important for a community on the lake. See Holland Michigan Aquatic Center for an example.
 - 2025-05-28T16:02:23Z
- I agree that indoor training facilities for baseball would be nice but I disagree that the gymnastics area at centennial is the right fit for that. What is desperately needed is more ice and centennial is already set up for that. It would be better to expand the gymnastics area into a second sheet of ice or at least a studio rink and find a separate location for indoor baseball facilities. It would be much more cost effective to do it that way.
 - 2025-05-28T20:05:04Z
- Our community has a growing need for more ice time – both for hockey and figure skating. Relocating gymnastics to West Ridge frees up valuable space at Centennial, making it possible to add another sheet of ice. This addition would significantly expand recreational and competitive opportunities for residents of all ages. Additionally, I'd like to advocate for a more inclusive design at Hidden Creek. Currently, the only access to the pool requires walking through gender-specific locker rooms. This setup poses challenges for single parents, same-sex couples, and others who may not fit neatly into this structure. They're often forced to choose between sending their young child through a long locker room alone or having their child accompany them through the 'wrong' locker room and risking confrontation from other patrons. A non-gendered entrance to the pool would be a simple, yet meaningful improvement that promotes accessibility and inclusion for all families in our community. Finally, I believe it's important to reassess the cost structure of Park District programming. Currently, our offerings are more expensive—and often shorter in duration—compared to those in neighboring communities. For example, families have found it more economical to pay non-resident rates for Glencoe's summer camp, which offers longer hours and more weeks, than to enroll in Highland Park's program at the resident rate. This pricing disparity not only makes our programs less accessible to many local families but also contributes to a loss of participation and revenue as residents turn to more affordable alternatives nearby.
 - 2025-05-28T20:21:17Z

- I would like to see a lot more places to sit along the path of the Nature Preserve. The park did a great job on the rocketship playground at Sunset Park. I would like to see an update to Hidden Creek
 - 2025-05-30T01:17:45Z
- I would love to see family membership plans as an option at the Rec Center to allow parents to more easily trade off taking children with them as interests evolve. i also am strongly supportive of Amy Waickman's comment that we need to have a more inclusive entrance to Hidden Creek. The gendered changing room setup as the only access point is limiting and unnecessarily restrictive and unwelcoming. i likewise agree that we continue to face challenges in the timing of offerings and cost for park district programming. I would also truly love to see cricket as an option for a camp or activity. A long shot I know, but it would be a dream come for my cricket obsessed kids.
 - 2025-05-30T01:37:41Z
- Would love more covered shade at parks, specifically Fontana-Pasquesi (formerly Cloverdale Park) With summers getting hotter and hotter, there's no respite from the intense sun. Parents usually pull an old picnic table and put it under a tree - which then gets cover in bird crap and berries. Each park should have some shade or pavilion type thing.
 - 2025-05-30T16:10:13Z
- I would like to see a Bocce Ball court but it is my understanding that there will be one installed at Sunset!
 - 2025-05-30T16:53:18Z
- we rent skates and there is one gentleman that loops the laces around the skates which makes them easy to grab for the next renter. Some of the folks just stuff the laces in the boot of the skate which has resulted in large knots in the laces and tardiness to class as a result!
 - 2025-05-31T01:09:25Z
- The HP little league baseball program pales in comparison to Deerfield in terms of level of play and competition. The margin between the two programs is wide. Considering the comparative size and resources available for both communities, I struggle to understand the disparity.
 - 2025-05-31T20:18:25Z
- We absolutely need an indoor facility for winter workouts for baseball. Losing the dome affected baseball, soccer, flag football and maybe more. As we are all acutely aware, winter goes on forever here. It's such a bummer to have to drive to surrounding towns to use their turf surfaces. I sure hope we can add something with high ceilings, turf floor, room for batting cages etc. Kinda like a large dome. 😊
 - 2025-06-03T02:09:50Z
- More unpaved walking trails. I suggest a unpaved trail along the Middle Fork of the North Branch from Deerfield rd to Briargate Dr. and continue from Briargate Dr. to the Berkley Prairie Forest preserve and on to Deerfield High School practice fields.

- 2025-06-04T20:44:54Z
- World dance (salsa, w. African) for adults. The HPPD event with salsa dancing and a screening of encanto was a joyful, inclusive opportunity. I'd love to see more programming like that.
 - 2025-06-05T02:41:15Z
- Thank you for the opportunity to share feedback on our local Park District. I would love to see an expansion of our community garden offerings. Nearby communities like Glencoe have set a wonderful example, with large community garden space that not only serve local residents but also incorporate composting initiatives and food donation programs to support charitable organizations. A similar initiative in our community could provide meaningful opportunities for residents of all ages to engage in gardening, sustainability, and community service. It could also serve as a hub for education around healthy eating, environmental stewardship, and food insecurity in neighboring communities. Thank you for your consideration!
 - 2025-06-26T16:20:04Z
- Just moved to the area and am obsessed with rosewood beach! Only thing I can think of right now is a playground or something more interactive at Sleepy Hollow park. All that space with nothing to do! Anything that gets us outside more we're happy with.
 - 2025-06-29T03:30:11Z
- Suggestion: Acquire 147 Central Avenue to Expand Central Park I'd like to suggest the Park District consider purchasing the historic property at 147 Central Avenue that's currently for sale. This 4.1-acre estate is directly adjacent to Central Park and would be a perfect opportunity to expand our park system. Why this makes sense: - Location: The property borders Central Park and is near Park Avenue Beach and North Shore Yacht Club, creating better connectivity between these recreational areas - Size: Would expand Central Park from 7.44 acres to over 11.5 acres - Historic Value: The 1910 Cornelius Field House is a Highland Park landmark that deserves preservation - Community Benefits: The existing buildings could serve as event spaces, meeting rooms, or educational facilities What it would add: - More green space and trails - Potential for environmental education programs - Protected historic architecture - Enhanced beach and waterfront access - Beautiful mature landscaping and bluff views This feels like a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure a property that perfectly complements our existing park infrastructure. The buildings could generate revenue through event rentals while the grounds would provide more recreational space for residents. I hope the Park District will explore this possibility. Thanks for considering this suggestion!
 - 2025-07-05T14:37:28Z
- Any plan to add saunas to the rec center?
 - 2025-07-21T22:04:54Z
- Sheridan Park on Western Ave between Dato Court and Audubon is an overgrown disaster that harbors drug/alcohol users, encampments, illegal dumping and is in danger of forest fire. The greenspace is apart of the HP Park District portfolio of

properties. Sheridan Park was bequeathed to HP in the 1920's. There are ample pics of if over the decades NOT looking overgrown w/ invasives and dead trees. The park district has been asked REPEATEDLY to clean it up. Are they waiting for a dead tree to fall on people walking, biking or driving by? Are they ok w/ criminal activity happening w/in the overgrown brush in close proximity to homes w/ families, young children, elderly residents?? Tired of "covid" being used as an excuse for low staffing or not enough money. I'd ask that the city please maintain the space in accordance w/ proper forestry standards to avoid potential fire. With it being close to the Metra tracks...there is potential that the unchecked invasive dry brush could ignite. Enough is enough. Maybe hire a herd of goats to clear out the invasives and overgrowth to save money.

○ 2025-08-07T15:23:23Z

- any plans for phase 2 (<https://www.pdhp.org/project/park-avenue-north-beach-access-improvements>) like the project just stopped short of greatness. It's nice but phase 2 can make it great.
 - 2025-08-12T19:00:41Z
- I'd love to see an increased focus on planting native plants and trees and a deprioritization of non-native/invasive plants in landscaping.
 - 2026-01-30T17:13:07Z

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

CROSS DEPARTMENTAL SUMMARY

The Park District of Highland Park is staffed by deeply committed professionals who care not just about their work, but about each other, the community, and the long-term value of the places they steward. Across departments, a shared sense of mission and pride in public service stands out as a core strength. Teams consistently described themselves as collaborative, passionate, responsive, and adaptable—even under pressure. This people-first mindset has created a culture where staff go above and beyond to deliver quality experiences, often despite limited resources.

However, that same commitment is also revealing signs of strain. Many departments are operating at or near capacity, balancing rising public expectations with aging infrastructure, outdated systems, and flat or shrinking staff support. The burden of deferred maintenance, the pace of reactive problem-solving, and the quantity of new construction projects often overshadows adequate time for proactive planning and innovation. Staff are asking for more time, more space, and more clarity—not just to do their work well, but to do it sustainably.

Several internal barriers surfaced repeatedly: inconsistent systems and modes for interdepartmental communication, unclear decision-making channels for project management, and lack of systems for interdepartmental accountability. Staff across the organization expressed a desire for stronger internal systems—tools for scheduling, marketing, registration, and communication that are intuitive, consistent, and centralized. They also see a need for better alignment between departments, especially in how programs are developed, promoted, and supported.

On the opportunity side, there is significant appetite for strategic modernization. Teams are eager to update technology, rethink workflows, and refine customer-facing tools. They also want to expand programming thoughtfully, reaching new audiences while strengthening their core offerings. Several departments are exploring how to reposition their identity—whether it's Park Fitness seeking a clearer brand, Aquatics rethinking lakefront operations, or Heller aiming for better visibility in the District's storytelling. Others, like Facilities and Planning, are thinking about structural and operational reforms to meet long-term capital and staffing demands while Finance is seeking opportunities for long term funding to ensure fiscal sustainability.

At the heart of many challenges is a broader question of capacity. Departments want to serve well, but they also want to plan, reflect, and innovate. Investing in professional development, supporting succession planning, and right-sizing teams to match expectations were common suggestions. There's also a call for more intentionality—less chasing shiny new ideas and more focus on maintaining and improving what already exists, with clarity and shared direction.

In sum, the District is rich with talent and commitment. What staff are asking for now is a stronger organizational backbone: better tools, better coordination, and the structural support to keep delivering on their values of being welcoming, caring and extraordinary while adapting to what's next.

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

1. AQUATICS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
HCAP - Camp Lessons	HCAP - Not enough after Hours Rentals, too expensive	HCAP - New program ideas: deep water running, diving lessons	HCAP - General Public Annoyance with Large Camps
HCAP - Accommodate many user groups	HCAP - Limited deck space and indoor meeting space	HCAP - New Events: Twilight Swim Series and Dive in Movies	HCAP - Ongoing maintenance requirements
Indoor - Facility does receive compliments on cleanliness	Indoor - Private swim lesson program	Indoor - Therapeutic Use	Indoor - Year round staff recruitment, trying to accommodate staff's sports and club schedules.
Indoor - Growing the FYI swim program	Indoor - Time to train new swim instructors during the school year.	Indoor - Better Indoor Calendar - Needs to be a better way to make accessible to the public.	Indoor - Multiple Groups (teams, lessons, open swim,) has created crowded lanes.
RWB - Clean and welcoming Beach	RWB - Lack of resident parking	RWB - Beach fun activities run by a party planner	RWB - Limited facility storage for program supplies.
RWB - Strong operational leadership	RWB - Swim Zone Environment changing with the tides and lake levels: Rocks and low points in swim zone	RWB - Outside camp field trips	RWB - Having all customers to pay, access control
Park Ave - Proactive staffing along lakefront	Park Ave - Not enough parking in north lot	Park Ave Lakefront restraint/Bar with rental opportunities	RWB - Far offsite parking, requesting lot use from school district, and taking up spaces at train station.
Park Ave - Lakefront improvements for passive recreation and open land space.	Park Ave - Easy access to lakefront at all times of the day. Access control.	Park Ave - Kayak or Stand up paddle board rentals	Park Ave - Yacht Club alternate use.
Cohesive Full-Time Team: With the current full-time team entering its second season together, there is increasing operational familiarity and potential for improved efficiency and programming.	Park Ave - Community buy in of ordinances and following rules	RWB - Volleyball or sand games to rent or loan out	Park Ave - Rule enforcement: limited signage about the rules and patrons not listening to staff.
		RWB - Resident Gate at the top of Rosewood	Overall Hiring and Onboarding Process
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
Continue to develop the camp swim lesson program at HCAP.	Work with marketing department on a recruitment plan specific to Private Swim Instructors.	Work with marketing department on Rosewood Beach group rental/summer camp advertisements	No Camp Fridays at HCAP. One day in June, July, and August.
	Community campaign about lakefront ordinances for public safety.		
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
Work with Parks and Facilities Departments to continue providing welcoming facilities.	Optimize facility rentals by shifting to an online booking system with an interactive calendar.	Work with other Lakefront districts/agencies to have consistent and fair practices.	Address shoreline sustainability and erosion prevention
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)
Continue to provide quality programming through staff training, updated facilities, and current trends.	Lakefront Parking improvements and adding additional spaces to prioritize resident access.	Hidden Creek master plan for facility improvements (front entry and family changing rooms)	Keeping up with aging facilities and evolving staffing needs.

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

2. PLANNING

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Knowledge and experience of team	Asked to do too much / taking on too much	Better tracking of Planning efforts	Cost increases, lead times, tariffs
Staff dedication	Not sticking to established goals	Focus on resources Planning Department can provide to the District	Competing and changing priorities
Reliable, dependable, flexible, adaptable	Fast, uncollaborative decision making	Explore alternative funding opportunities	Regulatory process
Collaborative	Focus on projects takes away from other efforts	Utilize our parks to build community	Ensuring staff understand and adhere to Purchasing Policies and Procedures
Provide unique approach to every project	Planning team roles and skills not clear to others	Greater collaboration and partnership with the City	Some groups underrepresented in community feedback
High level of productivity	Too many decision makers at times	Improve/grow community engagement efforts	Keeping consultants and contractors on schedule
Effective communication, internally and externally	Inefficient processes		Workload expectations
Standards and metrics	ADA maintenance		Difficulties working with partner agencies
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
Promote Department progress and strenghts by reporting on metrics.	*Establish process of setting clear expectations at start of project to clarify goals and objectives, define roles, and set guidelines for decision making. *Develop District-wide resource that ideinties staff roles and responsibilities.	*Implement Social Pinpoint digital engagement platform. *Develop Park Advisory Groups. *Establish a process to empower community to build support for new ideas they may have.	Update Project Purchasing Manual and provide new training.
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
Validate and approve Level of Service Standard.	*Update ADA inspection sheet and develop process for working with staff to identify and resolve ADA issues. *Enter into Master Contracts for regularly used consultants (utility locate, surveying, etc.)	*Collaborate with the City on their Comprehensive Master Plan. *Collaborate with the City on the new Stormwater Ordinance.	Establish stronger relationships with the City and other partner agencies, particullarly on a staff level.
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)
		Work with City to develop an Open Space Zone and rezone properties.	

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

3. ATHLETICS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Increased Female Enrollment & programming	Lack of field space (indoors & outdoors)	In-house lessons	Facility Access
Staff & Vounteers/ Rentention	Non-ideal use time of shared spaces (7-9pm)	Adult programming	Demanding community
Adaptability/ Creativity (Not having to cancel program or restrict)	demand vs. space	Continued expansion of female athletics	Operational logistics (moving equipment from one space to another or having to set up t-ball) Takes up time & costs more money
Full time staff presence at practices and games	quality of fields	Elevate offerings for house (camps, clinics, one off)	Loss of space (lincoln & west ridge)
Demand for athletics across all spectrums	inadequate on-site storage	Shortened program offering (less of a commitment)	
Relationships-Staff/Patrons	Being over accomadating (at what cost?)	Volunteer/ Coach Clinic	
Access to facilities	Quality vs. Quantity	Sponsorship	
Continuing to evaluate and adjust programming		Connecting with the High Schools to create feeders	
Ever-evolving		Use of old CIA gymnastic space	
Maintain strong competitive & recreation level athletics			
Community Feedback			
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
1. Female Athletics: A. Clinic offerings Community Survey & townhall	B. 1.Field Space: A. Utilize unused field space B.Double up to maximize field use.	1.House League: Elevate offerings for house by offering one off clinics	1.Operational Logistics: Maximize current storage space (cunniff & Lincoln)
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
Female Athletics: A. Create, impliment and market leagues based on past year feedback	1.Field Space: A. Establish relationships with local schools to utilize space. Define program space for set programs to allow expansion and growth B.	1. House Leauge: Offer an extension programs to support skill of house players	1. Operational Logistics: Develop plan for storage shelters at key locations
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)
Female Athletics: A. Create and sustain multi level female programs	1.Field Space: A. Re-evaluate and structure fields, schedule field rest days.	1. House Leauge: Expand training to year round	

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

4. CENTENNIAL ICE ARENA

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Loyal user groups and high demand for ice	not enough FT or PT staff	Host larger skating competition with additional sheet	not enough ice
High quality sheet of ice	limited space for cheer team (do not like spring floor)	Host additional hockey tournaments with additional sheet	skating waitlist that cannot be accommodated
Cohesive programming leadership team	uncertainty of staffing responsibilities	Additional special event opportunities with additional sheet	staff uncertainty in all areas
Yearround programming available to participants (continuity/retention skating and gymnastics)	uncertainty of empty gymnastics space at CIA	Accommodate special skaters, new skater groups with additional sheet	staff hiring for gymnastics
Primary destination for girl athletes in HP (skating/gymnastics)	limited space for skating school	Attract new hockey groups with additional sheet	High expectation for fiscal responsibility
Skating coaches have loyal customers	limited ice for hockey groups	Increase skating school participants with additional sheet	Parking at CIA with Cunniff field/courts/park usage
High quality Skating Program	loss of staff in the summer	Attract higher quality skating coaches with additional sheet	Office space and PT Staff space, and storage space limited
Annual skating competition has excellent reputation in Chicagoland figure skating community	not being able to offer PT staff FT positions	expand upon entire building by adding studio rink, second sheet of ice, concessions stand, raised ceiling, walking track around the rink, new bleachers, new locker rooms, and off-ice training	Loss of loyalty and support if no additional sheet
Skating competition numbers continued growth	Frustrated customers over limited ice	ability to accommodate additional skating groups like synchro and performance teams, curling or ice bocce	Loss of potential revenue if no additional sheet
Brand new gymnastics club and equipment	Retaining high quality staff due to pay and available hours	ability to retain higher level figure skaters with additional sheet (current and future olympic skaters)	Logistics if hosting gymnastics meets
		build a new brand for gymnastics	
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenges Objective - Short Term (2026)
Skating - Leverage the rinks existing high demand, strong community support and proven program success to justify and support the addition of a second sheet of ice	Skating - Accelerate the decision making process for facility expansion to resolve the frustration caused by limited ice time and facility space constraints	Skating - Plan and begin fundraising for the expansion of an additional sheet of ice to accommodate our growing needs and demands of our user groups.	Skating - Secure approval and funding to build a second sheet of ice to meet growing demand and expand program capacity.
Gymnastics - Use the expertise and passion of our founding team to establish a trusted, high-quality gymnastics brand, focusing on exceptional coaching, community connection, and a welcoming environment that builds a strong foundation for future growth.	Gymnastics - Proactively plan for full-time gymnastics staff to ensure smooth transition to new facility.	Gymnastics - Build a brand to welcome our community to the new gymnastics and cheer club (HPGCC)	Gymnastics - Have staff trained and prepared to welcome new and existing gymnasts to the Highland Park Gymnastics and Cheer Center
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
Skating - Maximize our ability to serve growing user groups, reduce scheduling conflicts, and increase revenue through expanded programming, rentals, and event hosting.	Skating - Address the weakness of limited ice space through expansion of facility to improve scheduling efficiency, while also reducing conflicts and dissatisfaction of user groups and skaters to accommodate growing demand.	Skating - Expand the ice rink to position it as a regional destination for hockey, figure skating, and community events, driving increased participation, revenue and recognition.	Skating - Welcome additional skaters and user groups to new facility due to additional space and available ice times
Gymnastics - Ensuring consistent program quality and high retention as the brand continues to grow, while forming a strategic partnership with the high school for both cheer and gymnastics programs.	Gymnastics - Maintain high-quality staff to ensure continued growth of program through strategic hiring, training, and competitive pay.	Gymnastics - Work with the high school to have a cheer and gymnastics feeder program through the growth of both competitive gymnastics and cheer teams.	Gymnastics - Continue to sustain high-quality coaching staff and programs to attract and retain participants
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)
Skating - Capitalize on our established reputation, sustained community demand, and operational success to transform the facility into a premiere, multi-sheet ice arena.	Skating - If no expansion of facility make alternative plans for facility due to loss of revenue and loyalty.	Skating - With expansion of ice arena and reputation, host regional hockey tournaments and skating competitions, special events, and be extraordinary compared to other area rinks.	Skating - Effectively manage increased demand and operational complexities from the expansion of ice arena to sustain high-quality programs, maintain equitable access, and maximize community and economic benefits.
Gymnastics - Sustain reputation of our gymnastics club as a trusted community leader by maintaining a high quality, committed coaching staff. Continue to create seamless pathways for athlete development, program variety, shared resources, and expanded opportunities for youth engagement and competitive success.	Gymnastics - Sustain leadership team of high-quality and knowledgeable staff through strategic hiring, training, and competitive pay.	Gymnastics - Grow the competitive team to include different and higher level gymnasts, and become the premiere training facility for gymnasts on the North Shore.	Gymnastics - Effectively manage increased demand and operational complexities from the expansion of the new gymnastics club, sustain high-quality programs, maintain equitable access, and maximize community and economic benefits.

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

5. HIGHLAND PARK GOLF LEARNING CENTER

[illegible]

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

6. MARKETING DEPARTMENT

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
experienced	team isn't scaling to increased demands & responsibilities	marketing technology evolves rapidly, we are a flexible team that can adapt	Managing the Foundation and providing marketing support is draining on the department.
deep breadth of in-house skills that save the District \$	there is no time for training, long-term planning, etc	AI may help us do things faster	
flexible	there is a disconnect between customer service & marketing	Website ADA features and a refresh must be done in 2026	
	with a separate registration system, it is impossible to track customer journeys & campaign measurements	Continue to grow our followings on social media,	
	work with Recreation to create & analyze a surveying system for program participants & facilities		
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
		Implement ADA features and refresh to website, Utilization of AI to facilitate design, more reliance on short-form video, omni-channel (our facilities, customer service, email, website, apps, etc should all feel the same), build influencer relationships & community connections.	Hire fulltime Foundation & donor relations staff member. Develop long-term giving and other sustainable giving programs to eliminate the reliance on fundraising events.
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
	Customer journey analysis, implement a customer service tracking system to track number and types of calls that come in, implement Chatbox. Begin researching our own end-to-end platform with predictive analytics & voice search		
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)
	Implement our own end-to-end platform		

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

7. PARK FITNESS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Extraordinary Staff Culture: Long-tenured, passionate staff who embody Welcoming, Caring, Extraordinary Values. Reinforced by internal recognition efforts.	Limited Staff Office Space: Inadequate office space for staff limits collaboration, privacy, and productivity.	Strong Brand Identity: Rebranding from "Recreation Center of Highland Park" to "Park Fitness" will refresh community interest and aligned with member values	Part-Time Staff Morale & Pay Equity: Growing dissatisfaction among part-time membership support staff due to internal pay disparities, especially when compared to other district roles with the same title just not MOD. Staff responsibilities include daily engagement, sales, payments, cancellations, collections, and complex administrative tasks, fitness equipment navigation, monitoring, security, etiquette and complaints. Staff are seeking recognition and want compensation that reflect their true value.
Loyal Member Base: High retention among group exercise participants and steady increase in recurring memberships.	Insufficient Storage Space: Lack of organized storage for equipment, event supplies, and group exercise props creates daily operational inefficiencies and impacts program setup time.	Fitness Supervisor Hire: Adding a full-time Fitness Supervisor can unlock leadership capacity, improve program oversight, and enhance operational sustainability.	Teen Accountability: Upholding safety and etiquette standards among teen members without discouraging youth engagement.
Fitness Floor & Equipment Upgrades: Recent remodel of the fitness floor and major equipment enhancements have elevated the member experience, modernized the space, and reinforced Park Fitness as a top-tier community facility.	Space Constraints in Key Areas: Limited space in staff offices, storage areas, and the fitness floor restricts innovation, equipment rotation, and workflow efficiency.	Digital Engagement & Marketing: Expand storytelling campaigns to educate and engage members and newer audiences.	Balancing Inclusivity with Safety: Ensuring equitable access for those with aids or cognitive challenges while managing elevator use, fob access, and staff conflict.
Group Ex Variety & Innovation: Dynamic offerings in group fitness programming, large attendance classes for all demographics and levels all driven by instructor creativity and community needs.	Access Control Limitations: The current facility layout lacks a clear and consistent access control system. Each year, temporary or workaround solutions are implemented, but long-term resolution remains unresolved, creating ongoing operational and security challenges.	DEIA Program Expansion: Strong potential to broaden inclusive offerings across fitness, aquatics, Athletics, and events, reinforcing Park District values and attracting new programs and members.	Operational Limits Without Burnout: Balancing innovation and growth with staff well-being, especially with limited resources and lean teams.
Thriving Personal Training Program: Personal training generates strong revenue, consistent sessions, and high loyalty, with over 8% of members actively participating in an extraordinary engagement benchmark for a community facility.		Retention-Driven Enhancements: New equipment, special events, and targeted class launches build stickiness and generate member excitement.	Rising Member Expectations: As the facility grows, so do expectations around personalized service, premium amenities, and seamless technology use.
Strong Operational Leadership: High-touch leadership with clear communication, quick adaptation to facility needs, and DEIA focus.		Partnership & Sponsorship Growth: Local business sponsorships and grant opportunities to support capital improvements and fund new initiatives.	Industry-wide Decline in Cycle: Impacting class attendance and long-term scheduling viability. Trends indicate shifting interest toward strength, mobility, and hybrid formats.
Exceptional Member Retention: Monthly attrition rate sits impressively low at just 3.15%, showcasing consistent member satisfaction and long-term loyalty.		Cycle Studio Reinvention: Reimagine the underutilized cycle room into a boutique-style Cardio HIIT Studio: <i>Ride, Stride & Row</i> . This innovative, class-based space would feature Keiser M5i striders, Concept2 rowers, and Stages indoor bikes. A format that can't be replicated on the fitness floor or Group Ex Studio and doesn't require bulky electric machinery.	
Beach Yoga Program and Beach Yoga Events: Beach Yoga held 3 mornings a week year-round at our awe-inspiring, award-winning Rosewood Beach has become a signature wellness experience. Seasonal events such as Full Moon Yoga, Mother's Day Yoga, International Day of Yoga, Independence Day Community Flow, and Candlelight Yoga continue to fill year after year.		Member-Driven Amenity Expansion – Sauna Addition: There is growing member interest in incorporating a sauna into the facility. This aligns with national wellness trends emphasizing recovery, holistic health, and post-workout rejuvenation. Adding a sauna could enhance member satisfaction, improve retention, and position Park Fitness competitively among premium fitness centers.	
Community Integration: Events like Billy Blanks Celebrity Sweat, Beach Yoga, Mother's Day Yoga & Mimosas, 2 free summer Community Yoga events, and Candlelight Yoga for Autism Acceptance have deepened community ties.		Access Enhancement in Master Plan: Redesigning the front lobby and entry areas offers a major opportunity to improve access control, streamline elevator use, and champion DEIA values reinforcing a welcoming and inclusive first impression	
		Warm Water Pool Addition: A strategic and community-aligned opportunity that supports aging populations, rehab programming, and dementia-friendly initiatives.	
		Rehabilitation & Recovery Studio Conversion: Reimagine the underutilized KidsClub space into a high-impact Rehabilitation and Recovery Studio. This transformation would support the growing demand for wellness-based services by expanding Pilates Reformers to Small Group and a Stretching Studio for assisted stretching and recovery sessions directly contributing to the Personal Training cost center.	

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

8. PARKS & NATURAL AREAS

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Hosting special events	constant maintenance of sore spots with little improvement - outdoor ice, paths, Olson parking lot, Sunset clay courts	greater public understanding of natural areas allows to continue to create no-mow areas, convert areas to native plantings	continuously adding to District - CPP, PA North Beach improvements, Sunset Woods games area - staff cannot adequately keep up
collaboration & teamwork on large park projects	no pesticide policy presents challenges for maintenance	more artificial turf athletic fields	climate - lake levels, shifting zone, shifting season, bluff erosion
overall skills, knowledge, experience of park staff	floodplain/floodway creates path challenges	improve user experiences on ballfields	A.I.
natural areas - size, quality, maintenance	new policies not thought through on effects to hourly staff	splash pad	difficult relationship with City
residents love programming and improvements	the strength of positively reacting to requests from residents/other departments affects workloads, staff, project timelines	address storage needs	potential for growing community, but older population
overall aesthetics of parks, use of ballfields	Board/public pressure to Go Green is not always best option to effectively complete tasks		
parks well used	software issues		
park staff communication, response to residents	storage		
capital improvements	overlapping & unclear responsibilities with ownership, maintenance of buildings		
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
work to our current strengths	cease setting up hockey boards / address POGO pole barn damage / address POGO storage / upgrade software on timely basis / begin to use maintenance / software / better system to track Paycom PTO / address electric equipment battery needs / address unclear responsibilities of buildings	address POGO pole barn damage / address POGO storage possibilities / address Lot 4 Agreement (Preserve Pole Barn)	secure Preserve pole barn for District only use / reset expectations of outdoor pickleball court maintenance / address constant evolution of electric equipment / storage needs / overlapping & unclear maintenance responsibilities
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
continue to add specialized staff in order to keep up with demand & expectations	work with Engineering firms to plan for flooded path solutions / continue to add specialized staff in order to keep up with demand & expectations / eliminate clay courts	continue to identify areas to convert to natural spaces / make use of other areas for athletics (allowing for field rotation, restoration, spread across parks instead of confined to 5 locations)	continue to add specialized staff in order to keep up with demand & expectations / growth of facilities and programming & ensuing needs /
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)
continue to add develop un-maintained natural areas / obtain additional spaces to address deliveries, growing maintenance staffs / obtain more property for either green space and/or garage space	add permeable paths into capital to replace path / permit Staff to address Olson parking lot issues / growing District requires more space for storage, deliveries, materials, staff	convert soccer/ballfields to turf / identify funding for further capital improvements (Millard breakwater, turf fields, concrete dugouts) / develop Olson in order to rotate soccer fields / Solo cup property natural area / Green Bay School property / Elm Place School / Red Oak School / property west of tracks behind Menoni	placeholders in capital budget to address needs arising from climate change, bluff erosion, high lake levels / landscape changes due to seasonal shifts and climate zone changes / continued District growth requiring additional staffing needs / District permanent administration location / separate maintenance garages

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

9. RECREATION

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Our programs are mostly taught by trained staff, not outside vendors.	Our staff are stretched thin and don't always get to help shape big district decisions.	We can grow the Life Skills program to help kids with social and life skills.	Program supplies cost more now, and budgets are tight.
We save money by using part-time staff for some programs instead of hiring vendors.	Youth Enrichment has had some turnover, making it harder to keep things steady.	There are new program topics we could try, like nature play, building things, and art-tech combos.	People expect top-notch programs, but we don't have enough staff to keep up.
Many of our staff return each year, which helps keep programs consistent and strong.	Some vendor-led programs (like Coding and KiddoKinetics) aren't consistent in quality.	STREAM programs (like robotics and chess) are growing and could expand more.	Hiring and training seasonal staff takes a lot of time and is sometimes confusing.
Programs like ParkSchool, Family Dance, and Early Childhood Camps are very popular and often full.	Theater doesn't have clear plans or its own space, which makes it hard to grow.	There's strong interest in growing arts and dance programs too.	We're unsure how to grow Adult Programming, even though it's needed.
ParkSchool enrollment is solid and families are already showing interest for next year.	Our website isn't fully accessible to people with disabilities or those who don't speak English.	We should keep the Adult Ceramics program running as a great option for older residents.	It's hard to predict how many people will come to one-day or pop-up events.
Arts and dance programs keep growing, showing we're meeting community interest.	Some smaller events got canceled a lot because not enough people sign up.	ParkSchool Sprouts could add Friday mornings to help more families.	We don't always have time to plan programs as a team.
One-day events and pop-ups help more people try our programs.	We don't have enough space for all the camps we'd like to run in 2026.	Early Childhood could have its own movement program instead of using outside vendors.	We could train the WRC front desk team to help with entering programs into RecTrac.
We've built new partnerships for spring break camps that add variety.		SPOT Camp could move to a new building for better space and flow.	We're expected to earn money, but don't want to raise prices too high.
We work with Heller Nature Center to make School Day Off programs more creative and outdoorsy.		We need to make event walk-throughs more consistent and clear for staff.	Camp registration starts early, which leads to more cancellations later on.
We've started adding sensory-friendly features to make programs more inclusive.		We could collect data better and share it with the marketing team.	We often don't have enough time to plan and adjust programs properly.
		The website could have a better way to show programs by age group.	Without a printed or easy-to-use online guide, families have trouble finding programs.
		We could try short "mini sessions" to let families sample new programs.	Marketing is limited, and many people still don't hear about what we offer.
		Hosting open houses could help families get to know our programs and staff.	
		We can add more sensory-friendly supports and show that on flyers and the website.	
		The Design & Discover tool could help us hear directly from underrepresented groups in the community.	
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026) What: Embed more sensory-friendly elements into all core recreation programs and events. Why: We've already started adding sensory-friendly supports—this helps make them a consistent part of everything we offer. Value Alignment: Extraordinary – We lead by making programs accessible for all. Action Item: Create a simple checklist to help staff include sensory-friendly options during program planning.	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026) What: Begin collecting and reviewing participation data to identify trends in one-day and small program enrollment. Why: Understanding what's working (and what's not) helps us make better decisions and reduce cancellations. Value Alignment: Caring – We listen and respond to the needs of our community. Action Item: Create a simple tracking sheet to monitor registration and attendance for one-day programs.	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026) What: Test new program formats that make it easy for the community to try something new (e.g., mini-sessions or Try-it weeks). Why: Low-commitment options lower barriers and help us identify what people are excited about. Value Alignment: Welcoming – We invite exploration by making it easier to get involved. Action Item: Pilot two new program formats designed for first-time or casual participation.	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026) What: Adjust internal planning timelines and staff responsibilities to reduce burnout and better manage seasonal workloads. Why: Shifting how and when we plan helps make expectations more manageable without needing more staff right away. Value Alignment: Caring – We protect our team's well-being while delivering high-quality service. Action Item: Build out and test a 12-month planning calendar that includes buffer time for onboarding, seasonal ramp-up, and realistic deadlines.
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years) What: Make inclusive and sensory-friendly design a standard part of all recreation programs, from planning to delivery. Why: Consistency builds trust. When every program considers diverse needs, more community members can fully participate. Value Alignment: Caring – We remove barriers and meet people where they are. Action Item: Train all instructors and program staff in sensory awareness and inclusive practices.	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years) What: Develop a simple internal process for using participation data and community feedback to shape program changes and new offerings. Why: When we align programs with what people ask for and actually attend, we reduce cancellations and boost impact. Value Alignment: Welcoming – We listen actively and adjust our offerings to reflect community needs. Action Item: Create a basic template for proposing new or revised programs that includes space for data and feedback insights.	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years) What: Build a creative pipeline that encourages Recreation staff to propose, test, and refine new program ideas. Why: Staff-driven innovation helps us stay fresh and responsive while making the most of team strengths. Value Alignment: Extraordinary – We lead by building new experiences that reflect a dynamic, evolving community. Action Item: Launch a seasonal internal "Program Lab" where staff can pitch and trial new ideas with low risk.	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years) What: Track workload distribution and program growth data to better understand capacity needs and prepare a case for expanded staffing. Why: Having clear data on what we manage—and what we could grow with more help—strengthens future staffing requests. Value Alignment: Extraordinary – We prepare thoughtfully to grow sustainably and strategically. Action Item: Create a shared workload log or dashboard to track seasonal pressure points, unmet needs, and opportunities deferred due to staffing.
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years) What: Be known as a community leader in inclusive recreation—where every person feels seen, supported, and welcomed. Why: Sustained, district-wide inclusion makes Highland Park a model for other communities and reflects who we truly serve. Value Alignment: Welcoming – We create a place where everyone belongs. Action Item: Develop a full inclusion framework to guide Recreation planning, hiring, facilities, and communications.	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years) What: Establish a district-recognized procedure for introducing new programs and events, rooted in participation data and community input. Why: A clear, repeatable process ensures that future offerings are community-informed, sustainable, and successful. Value Alignment: Extraordinary – We lead with thoughtful planning and bold responsiveness. Action Item: Work with leadership to formalize and adopt a Recreation "Program Launch Protocol" that guides how new offerings are evaluated and introduced.	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years) What: Position Recreation as a hub of creative, inclusive program development—where community input and team innovation shape the future. Why: Embedding innovation into our culture ensures long-term relevance and positions us as a leader in public recreation. Value Alignment: Caring – We grow with our community by staying curious, flexible, and forward-thinking. Action Item: Establish a rotating innovation committee of staff and community members to co-create and evaluate future-forward offerings.	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years) What: Establish internal systems that improve how we delegate, cross-train, and onboard to prevent bottlenecks and over-reliance on individuals. Why: Even with a larger team, sustainable growth depends on shared knowledge, flexible roles, and built-in backups. Value Alignment: Extraordinary – We plan ahead to protect quality, resilience, and service. Action Item: Create and maintain a team-wide operations manual with documented procedures, shared calendars, and cross-training plans.

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

10. REGISTRATION

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Rapport with current and new customers and members.	Registration desk is not identifiable as the registration desk.	Creating a second registration hub at the new West Ridge.	Customers want instant gratification and sometimes feel there is a lack of individualized accommodations.
Willingness to learn new skills to help anyone in the agency.	All team members cannot be in a meeting or event at the same time.	Adding AI or chat features to website for customer needs.	98% of registration takes place online. Also, tasks can become more automated.
Communication with each other.	Multiple devices (to go paperless) at each front desk can be confusing and takes of space.	Program and/or camp brochures.	Each department wants to do things their own way, making things hard on the registration team which runs on consistency.
Desire and striving for consistency.	Inconsistent communication from other departments on important information.	Offering personalized training for all departments in RecTrac and/or on Agency procedures related to registration.	Lack of bi-lingual staff as our community becomes more diverse.
Timeliness when following up with customers and staff.	Multi-tasking while trying to control access of who is in the building.	Utilizing more modules in RecTrac that help streamline current processes.	Access Control or lack thereof at Park Fitness (registration hub).
Utilizes multiple forms of communication.	Under utilized as we can provide training to new and old staff on RecTrac and procedures as it pertains to registrations.	Anyone on registration team could process refunds, transfers and cancellations.	Team is limited to only the registration desk.
Vast knowledge of the entire Park District.		Too many plastic scan cards are given out. Is there a solution that uses less plastic?	
Knows how to use the resources available to them.		Restructuring the registration desk at Park Fitness	
98% registration is online.		Working with community partners to raise awareness for our scholarship programs.	
PDHP scholarship programs			

SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
Continue to build better communication amongst all departments. Continue to learn more the behind the scenes of our registration software (RecTrac).	Find out what departments are struggling with in RecTrac to identify ways to streamline a process (Ex. Punch passes, reporting, etc.). Identify Registration desk with signage. Find ways to have more team meetings with entire FT and PT staff.	Work with departments and new staff for a registration and RecTrac orientation and training. Work with entire team to be able to provide refunds, cancellations and transfers instead of one person. Possibly help and/or create a second registration hub at new West Ridge.	Work with all departments, to provide consistency on registration procedures instead of every department handling registration requests different ways. With more projects for the team and distractions at the registration desk, create admin time in their daily schedule to be able to walk away from the desk.
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
Continue to ensure successful and easy online registration as needed.	As technology advances, see if we can a signature pad and credit card machine in one.	Keep researching different registration software and add-ons as technology and needs advance.	When the time comes to look for new team members, work with HR to possibly find bi-lingual staff. Or work on finding a way to communicate with customers and staff where English is not their first language.
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)
		Updating and rebuilding the registration desk at Park Fitness for ease of access control, comfortable for team, and easily identifiable as a registration desk for the district.	Updating and rebuilding the registration desk at Park Fitness for ease of access control, comfortable for team, and easily identifiable as a registration desk for the district.

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

11. SUNSET VALLEY GOLF CLUB

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Staff	Lack of onsite driving range	Hire district wide event planner for non-golf events	Keeping up with the maintenance due to course usage
Customer Service	Limited Closing Staff and shoulder season staff	Continue partnership with TGP for junior programs at SVGC	Weather
Strong Golfer Retention and Loyalty	Flood Plain	New clubhouse with cart storage	Flood Plain
Course Condition	Pace of Play - too much golfers	Additional putting green	Small/Older staff
Course Layout	Golfers do not fix ball marks and divots	New pergola with covering	Bad golfer etiquette
Short Game Area	Canal Restoration	new outdoor kitchen	Recruit and hire an employee available for 9 months (Mar-Nov)
Course recognition and reviews on social media	Old sound system that needs consistent maintenance	Hire more full time staff	Finding and hiring a knowledgeable Player Assistant
Proximity to City	Not enough staff office space for restaurant and golf teams.	Renovate bunkers	Keeping up with the board's request for non-golf events at the golf course
Partnership with restaurant - Relish catering		Expand fairways	Not enough staff office space for restaurant and golf teams.
Private club feeling		Replace irrigation system	
		New golf carts	
		New sound system	
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
Promote top course conditions and layout through social media and local media. Highlight proximity to the city and customer loyalty in marketing. Continued training of staff on customer service. Co-create events such as "Dine & Nine". Strengthen staff training programs to maintain top-tier customer service. Require Restaurant Staff to host 12 non golf events throughout the year. This will include at least 6 music nights that they will host and provide adequate staffing.	Incorporate and cross promote the HPGLC with golf events. Hire a fulltime Desk Attendant coordinator that will be the night and weekend closing Manager on Duty. Launch player education on pace of play etiquette. Introduce an "Adopt a Hole" program with our PTT players. Increase rates to encourage the more serious golfers who want to play the course.	Recruit and onboard district-wide event planner. Assess staffing needs and hire 1-2 fulltime employees for golf operations. Expand and Renew TGP partnership agreement.	Increase maintenance staffing during peak months. Recruit younger staff and cross-train for more flexibility. Develop a handbook or training guide for Player Assistants. Education for golfer etiquette (signage on course, reminders on GPS, Starter speeches, social media reels). Hire an Event Coordinator that will focus on Non-Golf Events at the Golf Course. This person will work underneath the Special Event Manager for the Park District.
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
Expand partnerships with nearby businesses and city offices to increase weekday play. Member guest day - Sapphire members invite.	Fully upgrade sound system. Evaluate tee sheet demand and introduce dynamic pricing. Incentives to retain evening and weekend workers. Install drainage pumps to help move the water off the course more quickly.	New pergola with covering, outdoor bar and kitchen. Construct additional lighted putting green on the lawn area next to the clubhouse. Expand fairways on tighter holes or in areas where trees are dead or to be removed.	Implement a drainage draw down pump system to remove the water off the course after flood events. Retain the younger staff and mentor them into a bigger role.
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)
Become a Premier Destination Course- Aim for state or regional recognition (Top 10 Public Courses in the state).	Introduce XGD drainage systems in fairways, greens and tees. Work with the Army Corps of Engineers and the East Skokie Drainage District to implement a plan to restore the Canal that runs through the golf course. This will include erosion control measures.	Bunker renovation, replace irrigation system, new golf carts, new clubhouse. Install a new entertainment system.	Introduce XGD drainage systems in fairways, greens and tees. Work with the Army Corps of Engineers and the East Skokie Drainage District to implement a plan to restore the Canal that runs through the golf course. This will include erosion control measures.

12. FACILITIES

	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	
	size keeping what we have well maintained,	Finding ways to be more efficient in Facilities purchasing	Ta rel
	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	
	Range operational financial to address expenses that are increasing at a faster rate than our	Integrate as much District wide BAS as possible as well integrating other specialized systems	W
	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	
			No

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

13. BUSINESS OFFICE

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Welcome to staff requests	Plan 2 Play	New Equipment (scanner, bigger monitors)	P2P
Efficient operations not a lot of exceptions	Urgent request - wire transfers/emergency checks, utilities and special projects	New Part Time Staff	Communication with other departments - surprises, urgent district requests
Knowledgeable skilled efficient team	Need more staff - Park Foundation growing, new portals, reconciling between portals	Learning new operations facilities/software/cost centers	Capital \$\$
	L-T not enough cash	Organization (clean up) of the drives, folders and files	Not enough time /long hours
	P-card training needed for the PDHP Staff. Too many staff errors	Referendum	Admin move
	New to PDHP: Dome, West Ridge Community Center, Admin Space		Better defined work from home policy

SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
Maintain the strengths listed above	Consider whether to keep Plan 2 Play or not, Hiring part time employee. Have mandatory P-card training. Assist staff with Dome, WRCC, Admin Space accounting and budgeting	Buy 3 scanners and a mouse. Can we get bigger monitors? Hire Part Time Staff. Visit new facilities to understand the operations better. Clean up of the drives, folders and files.	Reconsider Plan 2 Play. Work more closely with other departments to stifle urgent requests and surprises. Hire a part time staff. Prepare office for move. Department Heads reevaluate work from policy.
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
Maintain the strengths listed above	Attempt passing a Referendum to fund Capital	Attempt passing a Referendum to fund Capital	Attempt passing a Referendum to fund Capital
Strength Objective - Long Range (6 + years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6 + years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6 + years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6 + years)
Maintain the strengths listed above	Attempt passing a Referendum to fund Capital	Attempt passing a Referendum to fund Capital	Attempt passing a Referendum to fund Capital

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

14. HELLER

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
loyalty and retention of core participants	Visibility physical building	Utilize preserve of highland Park space	Program costs / cost of living
Customer service in programming - welcoming knowledgeable	Outside of central Highland park	New West Ridge and Rec Team collabs	NSSD 112 afterschool
additional programming spaces /unique	Finding new patrons(scouts, schools, teams)	Camp - Variety camp or camps existing	Library/ Botanic Garden/ Park School (early child)
school programming - schools come back year after year	Marketing visibility	Family Campouts- beach campouts	
Rec Collabs	Special Events (cost assoc.)	Mini-Bus (mobility of patrons/kids for AS)	parking - lot is small- can't fit 100
	Deteriorating infrastructure (building/ trails/ Wanderwoods)	Scouts with-in HP and Deerfield	Cross Country Ski's (winter weather)
Variety of content/ programming		Senior and Adult programs - senior center /libraries	Programming- scheduling/amounts of prog/ weather
		find connections with DEI based community groups	Relavence in changing society - how do we fit in with your rising concerns? Needs?
		Partnerships-	
		Rental hub	
		Sustainable/Greenprint programming	
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
Continue fostering long-term relationships with core participants through consistent, high-quality experiences and personalized engagement using thank you notes/promos to those who come to us year after year. Build on the strong foundation of school programming by nurturing relationships with returning schools and developing new educational partnerships.	Evaluate and adjust special event offerings to balance community impact with cost-effectiveness, including exploring sponsorships, partnerships, and alternative funding sources to offset expenses.	Build connections with senior centers and libraries to offer targeted wellness, education, and recreation programs that meet the needs of older adults. Actively seek partnerships with organizations that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion to develop programs that reflect and support the community's diverse population. Offer memorable overnight and beach-based campout events to strengthen family bonds and create signature community traditions.	Continuously review and adjust program pricing structures to balance affordability with sustainability.
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
Optimize and promote new available spaces (parks, new West Ridge) to expand program offerings, provide new experiences, and attract diverse user groups. Strengthen interdepartmental collaborations(recreation team, athletics, aquatics) to broaden program offerings, share resources, and increase community impact events (ex. Bike event). Identify, innovate and introduce a wide range of programs that meet evolving community needs and interests, appealing to new and returning participants alike (possible Heller Survey).	Actively engage with new audiences such as scout troops, schools, and sports teams through targeted outreach with promo materials (emails/ post cards/ events), partnerships, and tailored programming that meets their specific interests and needs. Invest in strategic marketing efforts (both digital and traditional) to increase awareness of the facility and its programs, ensuring consistent and widespread messaging across the community- Possible approach with "Friends of Heller" program perks, family nights, and giveaways.	Expand current camp options and introduce variety camps to meet different interests and age groups, fostering greater community engagement and participation. Implement mini-bus services to improve mobility for patrons and children, especially for after-school and camp programs, reducing transportation and location barriers. Position the facility as a central hub for rentals and community partnerships, attracting new groups and generating additional revenue through expanded event and space usage.	Explore creative solutions for parking limitations, such as partnerships for off-site parking with shuttle services, designated event parking plans, or encouraging alternative transportation options to better accommodate larger groups. Strategically deliver/market programs and news to community that relates to their needs and wants in current environmentalism/ sustainability.
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)
	Prioritize repairs and upgrades to critical infrastructure, including the building, trails, and Wanderwoods area, to ensure safety, enhance user experience, and protect long-term facility value.	Incorporate environmentally responsible practices and educational programs, supporting community sustainability goals and increasing environmental stewardship among participants.	Develop complementary programs that enhance, rather than duplicate, offerings from the Library, Botanic Garden, and Park School, creating unique experiences that encourage shared participation and cross-promotion.

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

15. HR & RISK

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Crushed the other departments in pumpkin carving contest	Hiring Process (Rec, Aquatics); could be more streamlined, feedback was that HR could be involved with orientation date scheduling.	Manager/Supervisor training (Paycom, timecards, interviewing)	Managers/Supervisors not following procedure
welcoming	Lack of procedures and documentation	Make supervisors/managers provide timecard training to new hires	Managers/Supervisors managing timecards on behalf of their staff (each employee should manage their own timecard)
creating a connection with others; responding to emails quickly.	Manual Processes (ambassador report, FT merit increases)	Automate the Manual Stuff (ambassador report, utilize excel formulas enhance efficiency)	Mutual accountability when working with other departments/employees.
visually seeing the positive turnout at community events	Overpromise/over-commit	Paycom Learning Management System Module	Employee retention of full-time employees
authentic positivity	No more paper checks - everyone gets direct deposit or Paycom Vault Card	Paycom Background Checks	Timely email response from others.
customer service focus	Better or more efficient process for orientation	Build Employer Brand. Big first impression. (recruiting, onboarding, benefits of working here, benefits of staying here). Ex: Grainger, Aon (employee events, fairs, outings, incorporate values, community)	Hard to get certain depts to complete required trainings. Or tell us when it's been done.
adaptable and flexible	better orientation format	Enhance part-time employee experience. Make them feel like part of the PDHP team.	Cross-department accountability. "we need to all be in this together!"
availability to help (email with Paycom issue example)	hard to get every staff member to attend a required training	our own park district police force (at least 1) to enforce rules and ordinances	Training opp: handling behaviors for customers (or staff) with special needs
"thank you for always being helpful."	being pulled in too many directions - it's hard to say "no."	Job Fairs at schools, community events, Hispanic-focused fair	Finding a new home for admin staff
strong risk mgmt resources available to staff		Visibility with staff outside of West Ridge Center	New office space
responsiveness		Paycom Training and User Manuals	anxiety about office proximity to our coworkers
follow-through & follow-up		continue with follow-through, being communicative, consistent & welcoming	full time retention
staff at the Park District has a passion for what we do		continue to get involved with District events	employee happiness and mental well-being (the world is a bit chaotic at the moment)
camaraderie on the team, free to ask questions			Underserved: Hispanic residents in HP
Park District staff have a strong emphasis on community and how it affects our work. Strong connection with our mission.			Spanish / English Language Barrier with some residents/customer
continuous improvement - welcome to feedback			
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
(1) Create more opportunities for employee celebration/recognition/fun. (2) Create HR Values to align (under) District Values	(1) Enhance procedural documentation for HR processes. (2) Enhance orientation (3) Enhance Onboarding to promote learning. (4) HR site visits to other facilities.	(1) Implement Paycom Learning Management System (2) Utilize Paycom Criminal Background Screening Process (3) Development more training opportunities for managerial staff (Paycom, Timecards, handling conflict with staff) (4) Manager Training: managing kids in programs with special needs or outbursts.	(1) Get Managers/Department involved with Onboarding Training of new FT staff. (2) Provide timecard standards for all employees.
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
		(1) Build Employer Brand with Communications + Marketing assistance.	(1) Invest in english/spanish transition tools for communication with customers.
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)

STAFF SWOC ANALYSIS

16. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Challenges
Depth of knowledge of IT team	Deferred Maintenance	Artificial Intelligence	Cost increases, tariffs
Collaboration/teamwork	Lack of an IT Strategic Plan	Provide trainings to make staff more knowledgeable and self-sufficient	Not having a Park District vehicle available to drive to facilities.
Responsiveness, most issues resolved quickly	Taking on too much	Modernizing our deployment of computers with software such as Microsoft Intune	Competing and changing priorities
Partnership with L6 Technology	Moving too quickly to meet deadlines	Modernizing camera and access control systems	Workload demands and project timelines
High level of productivity	District-wide IT housekeeping issues		Cyber security threats
	File storage needs improvement		Difficulties working with City
			Artificial Intelligence - privacy and security concerns
SWOT ANALYSIS SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES			
Strength Objective - Short Term (2026)	Weakness Objective - Short Term (2026)	Opportunity Objective - Short Term (2026)	Challenge Objective - Short Term (2026)
	Modernize file sharing and file storage (move to SharePoint)	Make improvements to camera s for improved remote access and bandwidth	Expand Cyber security training.
Strength Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Weakness Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Opportunity Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)	Challenge Objective - Mid Range (2-5 years)
	Develop IT Strategic Plan	Continue to research and implement Artificial Intelligence systems to improve productivity.	Build relationship with the City IT staff and collaborate on future efforts.
Strength Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Weakness Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Opportunity Objective - Long Range (6+ years)	Challenge Objective - Long Range (6+ years)

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

OLSON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD MTG

Key Themes

The Park District of Highland Park and The Lakota Group conducted a targeted engagement open house for Olson Park on Monday, June 2nd. This exercise was well attended and revealed the care and concerns of community members that live in the surrounding neighborhoods, near Olson Park. This summary consolidates input received at the event across all responses, integrating both the number of unique mentions and upvote counts, to more fully represent collective sentiment. Raw data can be found at the end of this section on key themes.

1. ENSURING THE PARK'S FUTURE: OWNERSHIP AND STEWARDSHIP

The most strongly expressed and upvoted theme was the need for the Park District to gain full ownership or control of Olson Park. This theme appeared in at least 10 unique comments and received a total of 18 upvotes.

Key concerns included:

- Preventing future development or loss of green space.
- Enabling long-term investment, stewardship, and maintenance.
- Aligning Olson Park's future with community-driven planning rather than school district priorities.

This idea was often framed as urgent, with multiple comments fearing the park would be "paved over" or repurposed without proper intervention. The community also expressed distrust towards the School District's openness around property disposition.

- "Purchase the park from the School District so it stays a green space." (7 upvotes)
- "Purchase or swap land with the Park District." (3 upvotes)
- "Park District should purchase the western half or trade with the School District." (2 upvotes)

This resounding theme suggests that the Park District of Highland Park's leadership should begin exploring the acquisition options and initiate a dialogue with School District 112.

2. WIDESPREAD DRAINAGE PROBLEMS: A BARRIER TO RECREATIONAL USE

Flooding and poor drainage were referenced in 12 unique comments with a total of 10 additional upvotes, making this one of the most pressing infrastructure concerns.

Community members repeatedly highlighted:

- Water accumulation along walking paths, especially near the southeast corner, parking lot, and south and west edges.
- Safety issues during the winter due to ice buildup.
- Ongoing issues near specific features like drinking fountains and benches.

Quotes included:

- “Fix all the low spots along the path that are constantly flooding.” (2 upvotes)
- “Flooding is a major issue at Olson Park and during the winter season the park is purely ice.” (2 upvotes)

Drainage was viewed as a major issue; it was cited as a significant deterrent to park use and programming with calls to elevate trail segments and resolve underlying issues like the underground spring.

3. BATHROOMS, BENCHES, AND MORE

Feedback regarding the lack of permanent restrooms was shared in 7 comments, with 4 upvotes, highlighting both frustration and demand for lasting solutions.

Community members expressed that:

- Porta-potties are inadequate, particularly for families, seniors, and during cold months.
- Permanent bathrooms, more benches, and a picnic area would significantly improve user comfort and overall experience.
- These upgrades are seen as basic expectations for public spaces.
- While not as overwhelmingly expressed, some participants were against permanent structures all together.

Quotes included:

- “Take out the porta potties and put a permanent structure in there instead.”
- “A bathroom facility and some additional benches all around the park would be amazing.”

This theme represents a desire to support extended and multigenerational park use through thoughtful amenities and overall park design and feature placement.

4. PARKING AND ACCESS: IMPROVING ARRIVAL AND SAFETY

The need for better parking, safer access, and improved circulation was reflected in 6 unique comments, receiving 3 upvotes. The parking lot condition was one of the most discussed topics during the workshop.

Key access concerns included:

- The unpaved parking lot and its poor condition almost make it impossible to park and go into the park area.
- AYSO pick-ups and drop-offs are congested, inefficient, and can cause safety concerns.
- Distance from the playground to the parking area makes family use inconvenient.
- Visibility issues along Ridge Rd., lead to safety concerns for visitors.

Quotes included:

- “Pave the parking lot and improve the landscaping facing Ridge Rd.” (2 upvotes)
- “At Olson Park, the playground is half a mile away from the parking lot. It does not make sense.”

Parking at Olson Park is framed as a mobility issue, as well as more as a barrier to inclusive, accessible park usage, especially for families with young children or mobility limitations. There was a group of participants who want to see sustainability best-practices employed at the park, suggesting a permeable paver parking lot as one method to consider.

5. KEEP IT NATURAL: CELEBRATE THE PARK'S QUIET BEAUTY

The natural feel of Olson Park was mentioned positively in 10 comments, with at least 4 upvotes, making it one of the most beloved qualities of the park, as highlighted by community members who live near Olson Park.

Respondents valued:

- The open skies, lack of artificial lighting, and quiet atmosphere.
- The presence of wildlife, especially along the wooded perimeter.
- The sunset views, which multiple people described as unique in Highland Park.

Many respondents opposed any additions that might jeopardize this character, including turf fields, lights, and sports that require paved areas.

Quotes included:

- “Please keep the park natural and add more native trees and plants.” (1 upvote)
- “No pickleball or tennis – keep it as it is.”

The neighborhood and community sees Olson Park as a passive recreational space and as a natural refuge, one that should be protected as open, quiet, and green.

6. MIXED VIEWS ON TURF FIELDS AND ACTIVE RECREATION

The idea of adding turf fields, a field house, or new courts sparked divided opinion. These were mentioned in 10 total comments, with roughly half supportive and half opposed. Supporters often tied turf to year-round usability and improved conditions for soccer and football, while others viewed it as a threat to the park's natural feel.

Examples:

- Pro-turf: “Turf fields will be a big plus – the fields are constantly flooding.”
- Anti-turf: “No turf field.” / “Do not add any pavement sports.” (2 upvotes)

This theme reveals a tension between athletic field utility / operational programming and nature preservation, and it highlights the need to strike a balance through careful design and sensitivity to the setting, if any sports infrastructure were to be added.

7. TRAILS, TREES, AND LOVED FEATURES

The walking paths, open layout, and new tree plantings were celebrated in at least 8 comments, with 6 upvotes.

Participants praised:

- The quiet walking loop, used by all ages.
- The ability to observe wildlife and experience seasonal changes.
- The impact of the newly planted trees and a desire to see more planted.

Quotes included:

- “The walking paths at Olson are great!” (5 upvotes)
- “Newly planted trees are great – would love to see more added.”

There is no question that these simple features contribute significantly to the park's identity and should remain central in any enhancement effort.

Olson Park Exhibits

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT OLSON PARK?

- Walking around the park
- Walking my dog at Olson Park
- We enjoy the playground at Olson Park
- We do utilize the soccer fields and open fields, as well as the walking and biking trails.
- The open sky at Olson Park is unique and the fact that there are few lights around makes it magical. (3 upvotes)
- Newly planted trees are great – would love to see more added.
- My grandkids have a lot of fun there.
- The walking paths at Olson are great! (5 upvotes)
- Enjoy the open layout for quiet walks, green space, and love the new trees.
- Leave the park the way it is, just raise the areas that are low in walkway near parking. (1 upvotes)
- We love how open it is! One of the few places to see an undisturbed sunset in Highland Park.
- The wooded area along the parameter of Olson Park is a wildlife corridor – Deer, coyotes, possums, and more can be found often. Deer also sleeps near the southeastern entrance of the park.

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS COULD MAKE YOU VISIT MORE OFTEN?

- More drainage behind the playground, and the southeast corner in general.
- Pave the parking lot and improve the landscaping facing Ridge Rd. (2 upvotes)
- Turf fields will be a big plus – the fields are constantly flooding and this impacts soccer. It would be great if we had tennis, an outdoor pavilion / bathroom facility, and better parking.
- Need to take care of the land on the south edge between the walking trail to the chain link fence.
- Flooding is a major issue at Olson Park and during the winter season the park is purely ice. (2 upvotes)
- We need turf fields for football, softball, and soccer. We could also add a basketball court, new parking lot, pavilion, and somehow fix the flooding.
- The parking lot must be paved, please.
- A bathroom facility and some additional benches all around the park would be amazing.
- Fix all the low spots along the path that are constantly flooding. (2 upvotes)
- Permanent picnic area with benches and all.
- Please improve the drainage.
- Purchase or swap land with the School District. (3 upvotes)
- Field house for indoor activities for the colder months.
- Take out the porta potties and put a permanent structure in there instead.
- Purchase from the School District to do an overhaul.
- The Park District should purchase the School District's portion of the park or else it will be paved over.
- When the Ridge Rd. street frontage is overgrown, I do not feel safe alone. (1 upvote)
- Build up the ground at the west side – enough to avoid having the underground spring soak the park and paths every time it rains.

- *Park District should purchase the western half or trade with the School District. (2 upvotes)*
- *Purchase the park from the School District so it stays a green space. (7 upvotes)*
- *Park District should buy the west half of Olson Park.*
- *Fix the parking lot and the low areas of the sidewalk that are constantly flooding.*
- *Make sure we don't bring pickleball to Olson.*
- *The area by the drinking fountain either freezes up or floods. The area by the parking lot by one of the benches also floods and there is no way around.*
- *We need better drainage on the entire south side of the park – there is still water there. (2 upvotes)*
- *Please keep the park natural and add more native trees and plants. (1 upvote)*
- *Simply improving what is there is enough.*
- *Improvements including a bathroom and more seating along the perimeter would be helpful.*

ARE THERE ANY AMENITIES MISSING TODAY THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE AT OLSON PARK IN THE FUTURE?

- *Do not add any pavement sports.*
- *Proper restrooms.*
- *No lights*
- *At Olson Park, the playground is half a mile away from the parking lot. It does not make sense.*
- *Parking near the playground.*
- *Lights for nighttime safety.*
- *Upgraded bathrooms.*
- *Field house and indoor activities.*
- *Get rid of the porta potties and build real bathrooms.*
- *Better parking off Ridge Rd.*
- *No field house. (2 upvotes)*
- *No turf field.*
- *No pickleball or tennis – keep it as it is.*

WOULD YOU BE IN SUPPORT OF GENERAL CHANGES AT OLSON PARK?

- *Yes at 11 votes*
- *No at 5 votes*
- *Maybe at 9 votes*

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP | FEBRUARY

Overall Comments

Listed below is numerous bullet points stating some of the comments that members of the public who attended the community workshop on the 7th of February 2026 left.

- Members of the community are concerned about the future of “dog parks”, residents stating that there is not enough of them and even asking for consideration that some parks are converted such as at Upper Moraine which could then connect to the beach.
- There are concerns about the ownership of Olsen Park. Residents nearby are worried that a developer will purchase the land and build upon it making the area unsightly.
- Questions developed about the recent asphalt work and why the east side entry was not regraded to help prevent water ponding on the asphalt.
- There are hopes that the set of stairs at Bluff gets completed.
- In addition to the steps being completed members of the public would like to see residents can be used allowing for the projects to be “made by Highland Park” before spending capital on engineers to design the projects.
- Further residents mention that there is already a splash pad at the water park meaning we do not need to add another, however, a set of stairs would rather increase connectivity.
- Members of the public are hoping that the stairs at Park Avenue will be completed now that the beach has been renovated. The public think that this should be a higher priority than renovating the clubhouse.
- People of the community that swim have asked not to go to the extent of replacing the lockers or the facilities just make sure that they are cleaned on a regular basis as currently there is mold growing in the showers.
- Furthermore, swimmers have said that the lockers can be removed entirely as people usually tend to take their belongings out to the pool deck and not leave them in the locker room.
- Residents are asking for the Sunset Woods Hockey Rink and Warming House to be brought back as it offered a space for people to skate, while spectators and parents could stay warm in the winter.
- Furthermore, members of the public have asked for a warm water pool at Park Fitness.
- There is a huge drive for the ceramics center, as currently local resident’s are having to travel elsewhere to continue their hobby. It would be nice if we could have a place to do what we enjoy near our homes.
- Park users have mentioned that there is no need to replace the whole fence around the north storage area at Park Ave. Although the front of the fence should be replaced.
- Most of my interests are around making the community much more bike-friendly: Racks for bikes at the parks and park buildings, improved bike access to them as well.
- Evaluation looks very comprehensive. Thank you for including ceramics!! I am concerned about the size of Cuniff Park building for Ceramics. The funding for Sunset Valley Golf Simulators seems severely high as compared to arts programming. Have you compared demand / number of people reached & community involvement.

- *West Ridge Field Lighting: Make sure lights go off after events are over (this doesn't always happen at other fields) – Please consider that West Ridge Field is a decent place to observe the night sky, it would be cool to allow for this, and perhaps even have programs for it.*
- *Lighting along trail near Ravinia – Safety, visibility, make it visible at nighttime.*
- *I really like the planned capital improvements. It would focus on enhancements to outdoor facilities in the parks.*
- *I would like to see increased bicycle related functionality improvements. (bike racks, trails to access other park district facilities) All of these would be utilized greatly. I'm Wondering how much communication is done to let people know about Mill and Parks.*
- *Ceramics studio is a great idea. I've been sculpturing at the Evanston Art Center for a while and there ceramics studio is very much in demand. Ceramics is a great gateway for people looking to explore art. So a combined ceramics and sculpture studio would be great. – Steve Tilkin / (847) 650-3160.*
- *More Dog Parks – Provide a corridor from parking lot to beach at Moraine Park for dogs off leash. North side of the park could be used (behind bathrooms). Robert Dalrymple / (410) 299-5245.*
- *There are several boards that mention the installation of artificial turf. Artificial turf contains "forever chemicals" that are bad for users. Please consider eliminating artificial turf entirely.*
- *Topic: Dog Parks – within Highland Park, I would love to see more areas fenced for dogs to run off leash. For example, at Moraine Park, I would love to see the area between the washrooms and Sheridan fenced to allow off leash running and easier access to dog beach.*

DRAFT

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Athletics Community

The survey and engagement results were strongly aligned on the need for reinvestment in athletic fields and indoor training space. While field and court sports ranked relatively low in terms of visitation, that appears to be directly tied to poor field conditions and limited year-round access, as opposed to a lack of interest. In person engagement sessions, especially with youth sports organizations and parents, revealed high levels of frustration with flooding, field closures, and a lack of indoor training infrastructure.

At the same time, the survey showed relatively low community support for expanding indoor turf facilities, suggesting that these needs would result in costly improvements that may not be well understood or visible to the broader public.

This session is focused specifically on issues related to indoor training today. The soon-to-be-available gymnastics space at Centennial presents a unique opening. At 48' x 70', the room isn't large enough for full indoor fields or courts, but it's well-suited for a variety of functional training setups. From batting cages and pitching tunnels to agility zones, futsal drills, or shared-use conditioning space, the room could serve as a flexible, rotating venue for both sport-specific and general athletic development.

This conversation will help determine which training uses, user groups, and seasonal demands could be best matched to this space, and how to configure and program it to support athletes across ages and sports.

The team would like to better understand what issues, beyond field conditions at Olson Park, West Ridge, Fink, Danny Cunniff, and others impede outdoor athletics and training - discussions and solutions can include programming, scheduling, access, and more.

- Participants acknowledged that proposed improvements would represent a step forward from existing conditions but emphasized ongoing frustrations with the loss of the dome and limited indoor practice space. They noted that competitive baseball programs require year-round training opportunities that cannot occur on gym floors or other unsuitable surfaces.
- Several participants stated that without additional indoor training options, the long-term viability of the baseball program may be at risk. Some reported losing players to neighboring communities that offer more comprehensive facilities, including batting cages, coaching, and drop-in practice opportunities.
- Participants emphasized that even modest indoor facilities would provide meaningful benefits. Previous access to Deer Creek was viewed positively,

although scheduling conflicts and communication challenges between departments were cited as recurring issues.

- Winter practice opportunities at West Ridge were viewed favorably and participants expressed interest in retaining similar opportunities.
- Some participants suggested opening netting or adapting existing spaces to allow for activities such as ground balls and infield drills, even if full practices are not possible.
- Participants noted that batting cages, pitching tunnels, and private lesson spaces would significantly strengthen the long-term sustainability of the baseball program.
- Deer Creek was repeatedly mentioned as a potential location for additional athletic facilities or programming.
- Several participants expressed frustration that the athletics community was not meaningfully engaged in discussions surrounding the removal of the dome, noting that pickleball facilities do not address youth athletic needs.
- The Hitting League was viewed positively, particularly for younger players. Participants also raised concerns about pitcher injuries resulting from inadequate opportunities to train on mounds before transitioning outdoors.
- Participants noted that the dome previously supported multiple sports, including soccer, and provided valuable year-round programming opportunities.
- Some families reported seeking programs in neighboring communities such as Deerfield due to perceived limitations in local facilities.
- Participants raised concerns regarding the availability of both indoor and outdoor space for baseball and softball programs.
- Parking at Olson Park was identified as a challenge, with vehicles frequently lining Ridge Road during events and tournaments.
- Pegasus was cited as an example of a private facility that expanded programming through the addition of indoor turf space.
- Longtime residents expressed concern that athletic facilities in Highland Park have declined over time, despite previous investments and stronger programming.
- Participants questioned whether concentrating investments in select facilities or programs may yield greater benefits than spreading resources across many needs.
- Fox Field was praised for its larger diamonds designed for older players; however, participants noted that the facility serves multiple age groups and lacks amenities such as restrooms, limiting its functionality.
- Some participants questioned how investments are prioritized across recreational programs, including baseball and tennis.
- Participants suggested exploring opportunities to convert underutilized spaces at Deer Creek, such as racquetball courts, into batting cages or training areas, noting that even modest improvements would be beneficial.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

AYSO Stakeholder Session

The focus group convened with representatives from AYSO (American Youth Soccer Organization) to discuss current challenges and future opportunities at Olson Park, which serves as a primary practice and play site for HP/Highwood AYSO's 640 youth participants, 98% of whom are Highland Park residents. The majority of the discussion centered on persistent field conditions that have significantly disrupted programming and diminished the quality of the athletic experience.

1. Field Conditions and Use

Olson Park was described as having the worst field conditions in recent memory. Of eight scheduled practices this spring, four were cancelled due to flooding, and one was relocated to an undersized field where scrimmaging wasn't feasible. Participants emphasized that the field is usable only 50-60% of the time, largely due to poor drainage, leveling issues, and possibly an underground spring. In addition to soccer, the fields serve a growing demand from other sports such as girls flag football and potentially high school teams.

2. Lighting and Infrastructure Concerns

Evening practices currently rely on temporary diesel-powered lights, which have raised concerns among nearby residents due to fumes and noise. Participants expressed strong interest in installing permanent lighting to reduce these impacts and increase field usability. The adjacent parking lot and drop-off areas were also flagged as dangerous and dysfunctional, especially after rain events, when large areas flood and become impassable.

3. Pathway System and Broader Park Use

The perimeter path system, frequently used by local residents, is in disrepair and suffers from the same drainage issues as the fields. Participants noted that improvements here would benefit not only AYSO but the surrounding community as well.

4. Future Uncertainty and Investment Readiness

A major point of concern was the future of Olson Park should SD112 sell their portion of the property. AYSO expressed a strong desire to invest in field improvements in partnership with the Park District of Highland Park (PDHP), but only if the land's future use is secured. They are eager for PDHP to take action, given the field's regional importance and the growing pressure on athletic facilities citywide.

5. Resilience and the Bigger Picture

Underlying many of the concerns was a broader call for building resilience into Highland Park's park system. Stakeholders emphasized that recurring cancellations due to flooding are not just logistical frustrations—they are missed opportunities for youth development and community connection. Lasting solutions will require interagency collaboration, capital investment, and proactive infrastructure planning.

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STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Civic Groups Listening Session

Transportation Advisory Group, Disability Advocates, Historical Society, Antidrug Coalition

The civic group conversation surfaced several powerful themes around access, equity, communication, and long-term stewardship of Highland Park's park and recreation assets. Stakeholders voiced broad support for increasing inclusivity across the Park District, not just in ADA compliance, but in experience design, cultural awareness, and sustainability. Across the board, there was a desire to move beyond current thresholds and toward parks and programs that reflect the full diversity and needs of the community.

1. Accessibility Must Be Holistic, Not Minimal

Stakeholders with disability advocacy backgrounds emphasized that the Park District should adopt a more comprehensive and human-centered view of accessibility, one that accounts for sensory, cognitive, and developmental needs in addition to mobility. Organizations including Dare2Tri stressed that "disability is not about seniors, it's about individuals with disabilities experiencing spaces to their fullest extent." Referencing examples like a sensory room at the Chicago Children's Museum and sign language integrated into playground structures, the group advocated for design solutions that are both functional and educational.

One parent noted that even spaces like dog parks are out of reach. "My 10-year-old son can't use the dog park, not because there's no ramp, but because the space wasn't designed for use by everyone."

2. Sustainability Needs to Be Embedded in Capital Planning

Sustainability advocates expressed disappointment that recent capital investments, including the new building replacing West Ridge, lacked visible sustainable features like solar panels or energy-efficient systems. "If we're spending \$11 million, where's the commitment to the future?" They also raised questions about planned fleet purchases, encouraging a shift toward electric vehicles. Some also noted a missed opportunity in the conversion of indoor athletic space to pickleball, suggesting a need to align investments with community-wide priorities rather than trends.

3. Program Capacity and Equity Are a Growing Concern

Advocates from the Antidrug Coalition described significant gaps in youth program availability and wraparound care. "By 9:04 a.m., the camps are already full," she

said, emphasizing that the lack of before- and after-care makes participation harder for working families. This reinforces an equity gap, where families with more flexible schedules or early access are more likely to secure slots.

Stakeholders urge the Park District to build capacity not just by adding new programs, but by rethinking how access and signups work, especially for underrepresented or high-need families.

4. Heritage, Storytelling, and Historical Access Matter

Representatives from the Highland Park Historical Society and others reflected on the untapped potential of the District's historical and archival assets. Some important items, such as Rivinia ticket boxes, train keys, or hats made by local milliners, are currently in storage. There was interest in reintegrating these artifacts into accessible public exhibits or interpretive elements in parks. "Let's bring some of these stories out of the archives and into our public spaces."

The group also referenced landscape architects like Jens Jensen and O.C. Simonds and asked whether preservation easements or interpretive signage might play a role in elevating Highland Park's cultural landscape heritage.

5. Communications and Advocacy Need to Evolve

A shared concern across the groups was the perception that Park District taxes and investments lag behind those of the School District. "The School District maxed out their levy and passed a referendum twice. Somehow, they got community support to do that." Stakeholders urge the Park District to learn from those tactics and build a stronger communications strategy to make the value of parks more visible to residents. "We need to tell the story better."

Community members suggested using platforms like the HPHighwood Planning Facebook page and conducting pop-ups at well-trafficked places like the Highland Park Library—"the most visited building in town"—to spread awareness and gather more feedback.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Government Partners Listening Session

Participants: Township HS District 113, Highland Park Public Library, NSSD 112, NSSRA, Highland Park Senior Center, TrueNorth District 804, City Council

This session brought together leaders from local school districts, regional agencies, the library, and senior services to reflect on shared priorities, programming gaps, and the future of collaboration with the Park District. The conversation underscored a growing demand for youth and inclusion-oriented programming, persistent staffing and facility pressures, and a shared commitment to coordinated service delivery across agencies.

1. Demand Is Outpacing Supply in Youth and Inclusive Programs

Across agencies, a common challenge is the volume of families trying to access youth sports and recreation programs. Waitlists are frequent for both park district offerings (like gymnastics and leagues) and NSSRA's therapeutic recreation programs. "Most of our programs fill up the same day they open," one leader noted, citing both staffing and facility limitations.

The rise of club sports has added another layer of pressure. Families are increasingly pushed toward private, travel-based leagues due to limited local options. "There's no house league for baseball anymore," one participant observed. "Kids have to go to Deerfield or join a travel team." This shift has also made it harder for new athletes to try out sports like lacrosse or field hockey without jumping straight into competitive teams.

2. There's Strong Collaboration Yet Room to Sharpen Alignment

Leaders praised the strong relationships between partner agencies and the Park District. Intergovernmental agreements and open communication have laid a solid foundation. That said, opportunities exist to better align programming and reduce duplication, especially in niche areas like field hockey, lacrosse, or adapted sports. "GLASA already provides Paralympic-level disability sports," one member said. "There's no need to duplicate, especially for a small user base."

NSSRA and GLASA also noted their capacity limitations, highlighting the importance of strategically coordinating who offers what and where. Staffing shortages, especially for therapeutic recreation, are a major constraint.

3. Flexible Program Models and New Offerings Needed

Not every child wants to participate in team sports. Government partners emphasized the need for programs in STEM, robotics, and the arts, especially as club sports become more specialized and expensive. “We need more opportunities for kids to just try something out before committing,” one attendee said, suggesting intro clinics, makerspaces, or free-form drop-in options.

The Park District’s exploration of new spaces was welcomed, and School District 113’s upcoming facilities master plan may offer further space-sharing opportunities. Several participants expressed interest in co-locating programs to maximize access and minimize redundancies.

4. Access, Affordability, and Inclusion Are Shared Priorities

Affordability remains a concern, particularly for Highwood families who fall within School District boundaries but not Park District taxing boundaries. “We don’t want to turn families away because of finances,” one agency leader said, advocating for more scholarship support and regional coordination. Public agencies were praised for their no-turn-away policies for people with disabilities.

The group also highlighted the decline in trained therapeutic recreation professionals and lifeguards, which has led to reductions in programming and facility access, including beach closures.

5. Celebrating Successes, Measuring Impact

While much of the conversation focused on challenges, participants emphasized the need to celebrate wins and evaluate collaborations more intentionally. “Are we really serving the needs?” one member asked, urging partners to use metrics that reflect inclusion, accessibility, and actual community impact versus basic enrollment numbers.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Highwood Residents Focus Group

1. Programs reflect your needs? Barriers to participation?

- Participants expressed appreciation for the current registration process, noting that they are now able to register at the same time as others rather than being a week behind, as was previously the case.
- Highwood residents noted challenges accessing the beach. To visit, residents must pay both parking and entrance fees, often requiring them to park in Downtown Highland Park or near Ravinia.
- Concerns were raised regarding early childhood programming. While these programs were previously offered at Green Bay, they have since moved to Oak Terrace, though participants acknowledged that the school remains within the district.
- Participants noted that not all residents speak English and emphasized the need for more translated materials and information in Spanish. One participant shared that their children attended the pool in Highland Park but had to pay non-resident rates.
- One resident shared that when attempting to add her sons to her account, she was informed that because she lived in Highwood rather than Highland Park, they were not eligible in the same manner as Highland Park residents. As a result, her children did not receive prorated rates despite being district residents.

2. Tell us more about the Park District's communication channels.

- Participants noted that Park District communications do not consistently indicate that D112 residents receive the same benefits as Highland Park residents.
- Because of this lack of clarity, some residents reported uncertainty regarding whether they should pay resident or non-resident fees.
- Participants suggested having a Spanish-speaking staff member who is accessible to Highwood residents. Beyond translation services, they expressed interest in having an advocate or liaison who understands and represents their needs.
- Concerns were raised about the fee introduced for use of the Recreation Center track, which had previously been free. Participants wondered whether the \$50 annual fee may have reduced participation among seniors, people with disabilities, and other frequent users.
- Some participants described inconsistent experiences and noted that they often find themselves needing to advocate for their eligibility or benefits. In some cases, they felt their status as residents was questioned.

- Accessibility challenges extend beyond language and include computer literacy and understanding where to find information.
- Participants described the website as requiring numerous clicks and difficult navigation pathways to locate information.
- Overall, participants emphasized the need for clearer communication that Highwood residents within D112 receive the same benefits as Highland Park residents, noting that this information currently spreads largely through word of mouth.

3. Representation of the Latinx community.

- Some participants indicated that they generally feel included and represented. However, they also recognized that portions of the Latinx community may participate less frequently due to language barriers and limited representation.
- The Farmers Market was cited as an example of a community space where some participants do not feel fully represented.
- Participants suggested hosting welcome days or community events specifically for the Latinx community, with Spanish-speaking staff and culturally relevant programming. They noted that such events would demonstrate intentionality, create an open door for participation, and help residents understand how to access services.
- Because Oak Terrace is located in Highwood, participants suggested partnering with the school and PTO to host Park District tables at open houses and distribute information home through students.
- Participants praised the increased staffing and programming at Heller Nature Center but noted that some programs remain expensive. Concerns were also raised regarding registration windows for free programs, which often require sign-up well in advance and fill quickly. Participants suggested allowing registration closer to program dates, recognizing that plans often change and no-shows can occur when registration opens too early.
- Philicia received particularly positive feedback from participants, with one participant giving her “five stars.”
- Participants referenced conversations with Diana at the Library regarding family programming and costs. While some Park District programs are more affordable than alternatives in Highwood, they often fill before lower-income families have the opportunity to register. Oak Terrace was cited as an example of a site that hosts Park District programming.
- Although scholarships are available, participants described the process for locating information and applying as difficult and not easily accessible.
- Some participants described the paperwork associated with scholarships and programs as overly burdensome, comparing it to “going to the DMV.” They noted

that the application process itself can be a barrier. Concerns were also raised among undocumented families about sharing personal information and uncertainty regarding how that information may be used.

- Participants discussed the needs of undocumented families and suggested opportunities to provide services that minimize information-sharing requirements while still ensuring access. The library was highlighted as a trusted community resource. Participants also suggested offering drop-in programs, informal outdoor activities, or short summer sessions that reduce registration barriers and better utilize available scholarship funds.
- Participants highlighted the work of Luisa Espenosa, who regularly creates programs for parents of high school students, including book clubs and other activities. She also serves on the Parks Foundation and works closely with local families.
- Participants referenced ongoing Zoom meetings with Berta, which occur twice per week and often focus on broader health-related topics. They suggested sharing summaries of engagement meetings, providing questions in advance, distributing QR codes, and keeping surveys open through the end of the month.
- Additional barriers to participation were discussed, including the cost of items such as bathing suits. One Board member offered to purchase bathing suits for families in need. Participants also emphasized the importance of translating information into Spanish in a timely manner.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

The Ice Community

The GreenPrint engagement and survey results present a nuanced picture of ice programming needs in Highland Park. While satisfaction with the current rink is moderate to high and usage appears steady, support for a full-scale studio rink was mixed, nearly half of survey respondents opposed the idea. This suggests that while the broader community may not see expanded ice as a top-tier priority, there remains a highly invested group of users with clear and specific unmet needs.

Through in-person engagement, we heard directly from skaters, families, and coaches about the ongoing strain, limited ice time, waitlists, and regular travel to other towns for training. These stories point to a localized but urgent demand for expanded access.

In early stakeholder discussions, several participants suggested converting the current gymnastics studio at Centennial into a studio rink to help meet growing demand for ice time. While the intent was to create additional capacity and relieve pressure on the existing sheet, a closer look at the space revealed that it cannot accommodate a typical studio rink. At just 44' x 66', the footprint is less than half the size of a standard studio rink and does not support full scrimmages, long-stride skating, or group classes with larger numbers.

Instead, the Park District is exploring the possibility of a studio-rink or training pad in this space, an intentionally smaller facility that could still support specific ice programming like private or semi-private lessons, figure skating edge work, goalie training, and small-area hockey drills. This meeting is an opportunity to assess whether a rink of this scale could offer meaningful value to the ice community, reduce scheduling strain on the main rink, and support targeted programming, while also identifying what needs would still remain unmet.

- If a second sheet of ice is not feasible, participants suggested investing in complementary facilities and training amenities.
- Shooting lanes were frequently mentioned as a need. These designated practice areas allow players to work on shooting mechanics, accuracy, and repetition without requiring a full sheet of ice. Participants referenced synthetic ice facilities, such as Home Ice in Winnetka, which support shooting and stickhandling rather than skating.
- Participants emphasized the importance of dryland training, which includes off-ice conditioning such as strength, speed, agility, stickhandling, and endurance exercises. Dryland spaces often incorporate resistance equipment, agility courses, and synthetic surfaces that mimic on-ice movements.
- Ballistic training was identified as a major gap in existing facilities and programming, potentially paired with a shooting lane.

- Participants noted that relocating Learn to Skate and younger programs, including Mites, off the main sheet of ice could free up several hours of ice time each day and additional weekend capacity. While helpful, participants generally did not view this as a substitute for a second sheet of ice.
- Many participants emphasized that a second sheet of ice remains the community's highest priority. Some suggested offsetting operating costs through food and beverage concessions or other revenue-generating uses.
- Participants expressed concern that programming has shifted heavily toward hockey, reducing opportunities for figure skating. Some figure skaters have migrated to communities such as Northbrook due to more vibrant facilities, concessions, and training opportunities.
- Several participants described many recent improvements as temporary fixes rather than long-term solutions.
- Figure skaters noted that access to practice ice has become more limited. Participants explained that skaters often need a coach to access the ice unless they have reached freestyle levels, creating barriers for newer skaters who require additional practice time to advance.
- Participants noted that the quality of ice in neighboring communities is often perceived as superior.
- Some suggested dedicating the Studio Rink more specifically to the figure skating community while hockey activities continue on the primary ice surface.
- Others noted that while a Studio Rink would provide benefits, it is not a substitute for a second sheet of ice in the long term.
- Participants observed that many successful two-sheet facilities are complemented by restaurants or other amenities that support both revenue generation and community activity.
- Concerns were raised regarding the future of the Falcons program, with participants noting challenges competing against larger organizations that offer more robust training opportunities, including off-ice facilities.
- Participants emphasized that while ice facilities require significant capital investment, the revenue potential and return on investment can be substantial compared to other recreational facilities.
- Evanston's recent investment in its ice facility, combined with other recreational amenities, was cited as a precedent.
- Some participants suggested that The Preserve could serve as a suitable location for future ice facilities.
- Participants noted that a second sheet of ice could attract users from surrounding communities such as Lake Bluff and Glenview, expanding the regional draw of the Falcons program. They also suggested exploring sponsorships and funding partnerships to support implementation.
- Parents of figure skaters noted that Highland Park currently operates one of the smallest ice facilities in the area, requiring families to seek practice time and programming elsewhere. Participants stated that a Studio Rink could bring

programming more in line with neighboring communities such as Wilmette while also supporting birthday parties and additional recreational uses.

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STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

New Residents Stakeholder Session

This focus group included families and individuals who have recently moved to Highland Park, including parents of young children, multi-generational households, and working professionals. Their stories reflect deep appreciation for the community's charm and natural beauty. Stakeholders did mention some challenges around communication, access, and the early sense of disconnection that many feel upon first moving to Highland Park. Their feedback reveals opportunities for the Park District to strengthen relationships with newcomers and build pathways for more seamless integration into the Highland Park community.

1. Highland Park's Charm and Natural Setting Are Powerful Draws

For all participants, the decision to move to Highland Park was rooted in a desire to connect with a unique sense of character, access to nature, and living in a place that felt both human-scaled and alive. Families sought refuge from the congestion of the city or more generic suburban sprawl. The trails, proximity to the lake, and a certain "eclectic charm" were essential to their decision-making.

Participants described Highland Park as a "walkable suburb that doesn't feel suburban," and emphasized how important it was to find a place where they could connect to nature without sacrificing cultural and social vibrancy. Access to the Green Bay Trail, Rosewood Beach, and wooded neighborhoods contributed to their feeling of having arrived somewhere that feels more "real" and grounded.

However, several noted that while the natural environment is compelling, its potential isn't fully realized through programming or activation. Some are traveling to nearby communities like Glencoe for parks, downtown experiences, and family-friendly amenities simply because of proximity and perceived quality.

- *"We didn't want a suburb that felt like a suburb, Highland Park has a different energy."*
- *"Something about Highland Park feels more human-scale and walkable. It's a little quirky, in a good way."*
- *"It's great to be near the lake. That was huge for us."*
- *"We use the Green Bay Trail to get to Ravinia, one of our favorite things."*
- *"Honestly, we go to Downtown Glencoe more often. It's closer to our home and they have a really charming park."*

2. New Residents Struggle to Understand What the Park District Offer

There is an information and orientation gap for new residents. While they are eager to engage, many shared that it is unclear where to begin, how to sign up, or

even what exists. While some mentioned getting a brochure, others mentioned that they discovered certain facilities and the water park only by accident. Participants also reported that basic questions, such as which building to go to for a certain program, how to sign up, and more can feel confusing and sometimes unwelcoming.

What's missing is a clear, structured onboarding experience for new residents. A new resident welcome guide / kit, a printed trail map, a digital orientation portal, and potentially a "New Resident Starter Pass" that gives families a chance to explore without commitment. Some requested weekend drop ins, where residents get to go in and out of classes, meet with various instructors, and get a firsthand experience of class structure, level of intensity, and other variables before committing fully.

Additionally, several expressed a desire for a better blend of exposure and subtlety—they love that Highland Park isn't over-commercialized but want to see hidden gems communicated without overpromotion. The challenge is to help new residents feel "in the know" without compromising what makes Highland Park feel special. A simple trails map and brochure was mentioned multiple times.

- *"We didn't even know the water park existed. We just stumbled on it."*
- *"Is the preserve by the Rec Center public? How do you even get in?"*
- *"We walked Rosewood and there were two paths—stairs and no stairs—but no signage. We had to guess."*
- *"There's this hidden map feeling we love... but right now it's too hidden."*
- *"We're interested in so many things, but just don't know how to get started."*
- *"Sometimes I don't even know if something's happening at West Ridge or the Rec Center."*

3. Families Want Flexible, Seasonal, and Social Programming

Today's new families are busy, and traditional programming structure often doesn't align with their lifestyles. Long registration periods, bundled class packs, and one-size-fits-all pricing models don't work for families just trying to "dip their toes" in.

Participants also expressed a desire for more seasonal and experiential programming, particularly in nature and at the beach—winter events, bonfires, beach concerts, food and wine pairings, and child-friendly community festivals.

Rosewood Beach was mentioned several times as an underutilized gem, particularly given its investment. Participants want it activated thoughtfully, with adult and family events alike, and see it as a signature space that should be more fully celebrated.

- *"We're so busy... I don't want to sign up for a whole session without knowing if we even like it."*
- *"Could we get a three-class trial pack just for new families?"*
- *"They do a snowman building contest in Cook County parks. Winter time activities would be something like that here."*
- *"Rosewood is beautiful, but it feels quiet. What about a bonfire night or wine tasting?"*
- *"Lincoln Park Zoo had adults-only nights with music and drinks—it was so fun."*
- *"We'd go to a Lightscape-style event in a heartbeat. Those holiday events are magical."*
- *"We've got the lake—can we use it more creatively?"*

4. Some Areas Feel Geographically Isolated from Amenities

Several residents in the southern part of Highland Park, reported that they often find themselves heading to Glencoe because of limited playgrounds and accessible programming nearby. While they're eager to be part of Highland Park life, they feel physically separated from many family-oriented destinations.

East-west connectivity across Skokie Highway was raised as a major problem. Even motivated residents feel stifled when safe walking or biking routes are missing. Addressing this gap is as much about equity and inclusion as it is about infrastructure.

- *"We go to Glencoe for the park. There just aren't many options on the south side."*
- *"There's no safe way to walk across Skokie Highway. It really divides the town."*
- *"Ravinia has a couple of fun spots, but we have to go elsewhere for variety."*
- *"We want to be part of things, but it just feels far."*

5. Residents Seek Connection, Purpose, and Opportunities to Volunteer

In the background of conversations about programs and events was something deeper: a desire for connection, contribution, and belonging. New residents want to feel useful. They want their children to participate not just in play, but in stewardship. They want to help maintain the nature that drew them here, and they want it to feel fun, accessible, and family-friendly.

There's also a desire to meet other new residents, whether through service opportunities, family-focused events, or wellness activities that allow organic socialization.

- *"My toddler would love to help clean a trail. Even kids want to contribute."*
- *"Is there a way to volunteer as a family?"*
- *"We want to give back and meet people at the same time."*
- *"Do you have a run club or nature team? Something with a sense of purpose?"*
- *"Volunteering could be a way out of the isolation that comes with moving."*

6. Residents Want to Know the Park District is Protecting What Matters

This group demonstrated notable awareness of Highland Park's natural assets with mild concerns for its future. Questions around **ravine access**, **shoreline erosion**, and **land preservation** came up not as complaints, but as expressions of care and curiosity.

Residents are not just passive users, they're engaged and invested. They want to be educated on preservation efforts and invited into the stewardship of the landscapes that make Highland Park unique.

- *"We're worried about the beach disappearing. Is there a plan?"*
- *"Can we explore the ravine area? Is it protected? Programmed?"*
- *"The Botanical Gardens and Preserve are amazing—can we learn more about what's being done behind the scenes?"*
- *"I'd love to understand more about the shore control efforts."*

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Parks Foundation Session

The Parks Foundation plays an essential but often underrecognized role in elevating Highland Park's park and recreation system through fundraising, sponsorship cultivation, and program support. As a volunteer-led organization, the Foundation's members bring deep community ties and genuine passion but face capacity limitations, branding confusion, and the challenge of reaching beyond their inner network. Their feedback reflects a desire for stronger alignment with the Park District, a clearer community-facing identity, and a more intentional, year-round fundraising infrastructure.

1. Events and Sponsorships Drive Revenue, but Big Gifts Still Come from Personal Connections

- The Foundation's most effective fundraising efforts continue to revolve around major events and a small number of large personal gifts. Events like the annual gala and pickleball tournament generate meaningful revenue, though ticket sales are not the primary driver, however sponsorships are. That said, most sponsorships tend to materialize last minute, with Board members pushing personal contacts or scrambling for support shortly before the event.
- *"Sponsorships are almost always last minute. Josie is always the one pushing to get them."*
- The gala remains a major success, but the Foundation noted sponsorship saturation across similar events in the community, leading to challenges in donor fatigue and competition.
- While event revenue is critical, the largest gifts often come without being asked, typically from individuals with personal ties to the park system or a strong belief in the Foundation's mission.
- *"When someone walks in and says, 'I want to support this,' that's when we raise the most."*
- In one standout example, the boat ramp donation was cited as a major success story, showing the power of aligning capital projects with donor interests and values.
- *"People don't just want to give to an organization; they want to invest in something meaningful for the future."*

2. The Foundation Faces a Visibility and Identity Problem

- A recurring concern was that the community doesn't know what the Parks Foundation is or what it does. Despite years of effort, including videos, e-blasts, infographics, and social media, there's still a broad lack of recognition, even among frequent Park District users.
- *"It's like we're selling a product no one knows exists."*

- Most donations are still coming from people already inside the Foundation's social or professional networks, not the broader community. At best, people think the Foundation is part of the Park District; at worst, they confuse it with the Highland Park Community Foundation, which competes for the same donor base.
- *"We're partners, but we're also competitors, and we're often asking the same people for support."*
- Without a full-time staff person to manage outreach, the Board (nine volunteers) is stretched thin. They have strong internal relationships and institutional knowledge, but not enough capacity to represent the Foundation at every event or maintain consistent presence in the community.
- *"We're a group of volunteers trying to reach a city. That's a lot."*
- They also acknowledged the need for more help developing sponsorships and donor stewardship infrastructure, something that might live within the Park District's marketing team or in a hybrid role.

3. Community Events Offer Potential for Awareness

- Foundation members see public-facing events as a missed opportunity. Attending events like Food Truck Thursdays, Hidden Creek Pool events, or even just being present at the Rec Center could help organically build visibility and relationships with new audiences.
- *"We need to be out there at the events, walking around, talking to people."*
- Several referenced other communities, like Northbrook and Deerfield, that have more prominent Foundation presences and more successful engagement models, including dad-focused events, golf outings, and creative auction items (e.g., guitars). These ideas offer models worth exploring.
- They also raised the idea of selling bricks and other memorabilia from the demolition of the West Ridge facility or creating a signature recurring event that is less formal than the gala but builds year-round community connection and brand awareness.

4. Partnerships Are Important, but Consistency is Lacking

- There was a strong desire for a more stable and strategic partnership with the Park District. This includes:
 - Shared event planning calendars
 - Greater alignment on priorities (especially capital needs and GreenPrint implementation)
 - A more deliberate, regular rhythm of collaboration and communication
- *"We don't always know what the Park District needs from us, or when."*

- They emphasized that shared vision and project alignment would help make donor pitches more compelling.
- *"If we know what's coming in the plan, we can get ahead of it."*
- They also saw opportunity to deepen relationships with the Chamber of Commerce (despite prior resistance), and to tap into Highland Park's realtors, developers, and philanthropic leaders, if positioned properly.

5. Donor Engagement and Recognition Need Structure

- Currently, there's no formal system for donor recognition or stewardship beyond event thank-yous. Foundation members recognized this as a growth area, especially if the goal is to move small donors toward becoming major supporters over time.
- They referenced wealth screening as a tool that helped them identify high-potential donors from among those who had previously given small gifts. This approach yielded results, and they are looking to refine it into a more sustainable pipeline of giving.
- *"Some of our biggest supporters were originally small donors—it's about building the relationship."*
- Stewardship efforts, like signage, donor boards, or branded donor benefits, could help make contributions feel more visible and appreciated, particularly in a community where recognition carries social value.

6. Fundraising Goals Must Align with Community Needs

- Although the group didn't have a formal list of priority fundraising areas, they expressed interest in supporting capital improvements, equity-based programs, and community-wide amenities that are tangible and emotionally resonant.
- They expressed interest in having early visibility into GreenPrint priorities so the Foundation can be part of building momentum behind specific initiatives, particularly those that touch underserved populations or bring lasting infrastructure change.
- *"If we're going to ask people to invest in something, we need to show them the story—and the future."*

7. Metrics Matter, but Storytelling Matters More

- While metrics like number of donors or dollars raised were referenced, the group emphasized that impact storytelling, who was helped, what was improved, what changed, is often more important to the community than numbers alone.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Pickleball Committee

Existing Strengths and Amenities

- Participants expressed appreciation for the current pickleball system and noted that Highland Park offers a substantial number of courts relative to many communities.
- The availability of six reservable courts at Danny Cunniff was viewed positively, particularly given the reasonable reservation fee of approximately \$10 per hour.
- Participants indicated that the current geographic distribution of courts throughout the community is generally effective, noting that distance and access across neighborhoods are not significant barriers.
- The presence of private providers, such as Think Social and other programs, was viewed as helping alleviate pressure on public courts during peak periods.

Court Culture, Scheduling, and Operations

- While court availability is generally viewed favorably, participants identified the lack of open play opportunities as a significant challenge. They noted that many neighboring communities have established open play cultures that allow players of varying skill levels to participate and meet others.
- Several participants agreed that the absence of open play opportunities has negatively affected the community's reputation among pickleball players. New players or individuals without established groups may find it difficult to integrate into the local pickleball community.
- Participants emphasized that Highland Park lacks a culture of court sharing compared to other communities.
- Participants noted that court reservations are currently managed through an app in 30-minute intervals, with six courts available for reservation while five front courts remain open for public use.
- Some participants reported experiencing conflict or harassment while attempting to enforce court rules among users.
- Participants suggested the presence of dedicated staff, particularly at Danny Cunniff, to help manage court operations, enforce rules, and address conflicts.

during peak hours. A staffing presence between approximately 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. was suggested as one potential approach.

- Participants noted that they had heard additional staffing may be introduced in the future to assist with rule enforcement.

Indoor Facilities and Future Court Capacity

- Participants expressed concern regarding the future availability of indoor pickleball courts at the Recreation Center. While appreciative of the existing opportunities, they noted that current indoor courts are located on gym floors and do not provide an ideal playing experience.
- Participants emphasized the need for dedicated space for leagues, drills, and structured programming.
- Several participants noted that if additional courts are needed in the future, converting underutilized tennis courts may help alleviate demand pressures. However, they acknowledged that new pickleball courts can create concerns related to noise and neighborhood compatibility.
- Participants observed that some existing tennis courts experience relatively low utilization, while others, such as those at Larry Fink Memorial Park, continue to support lessons and programming.

Club Pickle & Padel

- Participants expressed strong enthusiasm for the proposed Club Pickle & Padel facility and viewed it as an important addition to the community.
- Affordability was repeatedly emphasized as a priority, with participants noting that membership costs should ideally remain at or below approximately \$40 per month.
- Participants suggested exploring joint or complementary membership structures with Deer Creek, particularly if membership costs could align with existing Deer Creek rates.

Future Opportunities and Long-Term Vision

- Participants emphasized that the new facility should prioritize everyday recreational play and access to courts. While tournaments and special events

may have value, they cautioned against allowing events to limit regular community access.

- Professional exhibitions, instructional clinics, and select tournaments were viewed favorably when balanced with community use.
- Participants noted that pickleball leagues would likely generate substantial demand for additional court space.
- Several participants emphasized the importance of maintaining courts for open play at all times, including evenings, to better accommodate working adults.
- Overall, participants expressed a desire for Highland Park's pickleball system to remain affordable, accessible, inclusive, and welcoming to players of all skill levels as participation continues to grow.

DRAFT

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Wolters Field Advisory Committee Session

The Wolters Field Advisory Committee discussion reflected both the complex relationship between neighborhood expectations and active recreation, and the deep appreciation for the Park District's diverse programming. While tensions have existed in the past, particularly around lighting and traffic, participants acknowledged significant improvements in communication and coordination that have helped ease frustrations and support smoother operations.

1. Managing Neighborhood Impacts Through Communication

Concerns about field lighting and gravel road access once stirred considerable neighborhood pushback. However, attendees credited improved communication from the school district's athletics team, especially notices about evening games, as having significantly calmed tensions. "Once they started telling us when the lights would be on, people relaxed," one member shared. Some felt that initial neighborhood complaints may have been disproportionate given the field's long-standing presence.

2. Traffic & Wayfinding Challenges Remain

Access to Wolters Field was described as confusing. With no clear entry route, visitors often try to cut through surrounding neighborhoods, creating unintended traffic issues. "People just don't know how to get to the field," a member noted, suggesting a potential opportunity for wayfinding or directional signage improvements.

3. Expanding Use and Growing Demand

With new additions like the girls' softball field and expanded programming, Wolters Field now hosts activity nearly every afternoon and evening. Committee members were supportive of the site's increased utilization and recognized the importance of keeping up with demand, especially as more programs continue to activate the space.

4. Strong Support for Park District Programs

Committee members expressed broad enthusiasm for Park District offerings, from youth sports and figure skating to senior programs and seasonal events like campfires at Heller. Programs like Curiosity Club and Mom's Morning Away were

remembered fondly, and there was interest in low-key adult programs like cards or social clubs. “The Park District is a big reason people move here,” one participant said.

5. Growing Popularity of Facilities Like the Skate Park

Participants praised the decision to expand the skate park at Sunset Park, admitting they hadn’t realized its popularity until now. The Rec Center was also mentioned as a beloved community space. However, some noted that access through inactive baseball fields can create awkward or unwelcoming circulation.

DRAFT

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Young Adult Focus Group

The team talked to a young resident, a rising sophomore studying architecture at the University of Illinois, who participated in a one-on-one conversation reflecting on her limited engagement with the Park District of Highland Park (PDHP). Although she grew up in Highland Park near Lincoln School, Emily attended private schools, including Lake Forest Academy, and described having little connection to PDHP offerings during her youth.

Her main point of interaction with the Park District was through the Centennial Ice Rink, where she skated when she was younger and later worked part-time. She expressed support for expanded ice facilities, such as a second sheet or practice space. She also complimented the architecture of the new Rosewood Beach facility, which she finds “neat.”

While she has fond memories of the old rocket structure at Sunset Woods Park, she noted that there wasn’t much for teens to do through the Park District and still feels there is little programming for that age group. Now working summers at Ravinia Festival, she continues to have minimal interaction with PDHP and noted that she never learned to ride a bike—symbolizing, in a way, how disconnected she’s felt from some core community recreation offerings.

WEBSITE COMMENTS

PDHP GreenPrint Online Comments

- It would be great for Highland Park to have more and better-maintained soccer fields. They should have permanent bathroom facilities, nets without holes, and I'm sure that field maintenance is ultimately the largest expense. If possible, I'd love to dream about an indoor soccer space in HP, but for starters, how about more and better maintained outdoor fields!
 - 2025-03-28T20:21:55Z
- what about a Bocce ball court?
 - 2025-04-25T22:29:18Z
- Dream scenario...to have 2 sheets of ice for hockey. Even having a studio rink would be greatly beneficial. Build out a concession/restaurant area to the side of Centennial which will bring a large amount of revenue to the building. Then have an "off ice" training and development section to build strength and work on other key areas of skill development. All other arenas within the north shore area have these available and we are very far behind the times to grow the Falcons program. Time to step up our game!
 - 2025-04-29T22:54:20Z
- We need more ice!!! All other ice rinks in the Northshore have 2 or more sheets. It is essential to have ice time for our kids to develop this sport. It can also be a new revenue center if rented for private parties.
 - 2025-05-02T03:06:12Z
- Add an additional ice rink so the figure skaters have more ice time (and based on a comment below the hockey players are feeling the pinch too). Also need an additional studio for off ice training classes. As the kids achieve the higher levels they typically leave for other rinks.
 - 2025-05-03T12:07:47Z
- Keep centennial ice arena an ice arena. We spend so much money driving all over going to different rinks that have ice time. My daughter is a competitive skater and my son is on falcons. The lack of ice time compared to neighboring rinks is significant. Putting in anything else is so disrespectful to highland park families who have put in so much time nurturing our skaters passions. It is an ice arena. Not a baseball field. Not a bocce ball facility.
 - 2025-05-03T13:13:46Z
- We need a second sheet of ice desperately. We are spending so much money at other rinks and driving all around to find ice time.
 - 2025-05-03T13:24:22Z
- Dog park at Sleepy Hallow. Would be a great way to get the community together and have the pups play.

○ 2025-05-03T13:27:18Z

- Ideally, Highland Park should have two sheets of ice. All other neighboring communities have two sheets of ice, if not more. Concessions and additional amenities would be an added bonus. We have to travel to other rinks to get ice time for hockey. The skaters do not have enough room to practice for ice show or hold enough classes to accommodate the demand. We need to improve all of our facilities and get in line with the other rinks in the area.

○ 2025-05-03T13:46:51Z

- Please convert the current gymnastics facility at Centennial Ice Arena, which is being relocated to the new Westridge, into a practice figure skating rink. We regularly need to drive our daughter to Glenview, Northbrook and Wilmette for ice time because we only have one rink (as do the parents of all of the other figure skaters). This would enable HP to maintain a competitive program and reduce or eliminate the need for HP families to commute for skating lessons and team practices.

○ 2025-05-03T14:19:49Z

- Centennial is in dire need of 5 things: 1. A 2nd rink- ideally another full ice sheet- to be competitive with other neighboring suburbs. We are constantly forced to go to other rinks for ice time. We are spending money outside of Highland Park that could easily be put back into our community. Our programming needs improvement and the only way that happens is by building a proper facility for our skaters. 2. Dedicated locker rooms for figure skaters. They need space to get ready separate from the public lobby. Having a specific space for skaters elevates the facility to a more professional standard. It enhances their ability to prepare both physically and mentally. 3. A proper concession area IN the building with real food and drinks for the athletes and general public. This would not only keep people in the building longer and create a better culture at our facility, but it would rake in TONS of revenue for PDHP. Parents probably pay \$10 for a bag of Doritos from the vending machine - revenue that I'm sure goes to an outside vendor when it could easily be kept in the community. 4. Better bathrooms- both new private ones for skaters and improvements to the current public bathrooms. 5. Handicap access/seating.

○ 2025-05-03T14:34:22Z

- Hello! Highland Park NEEDS another sheet of ice/rink. We are the only rink in the area with only one. There is barely any ice time. It is sad to see so many skaters leave the rink because of this. We are losing them and potential money for the rink. My family of 3 skaters currently drives to other rinks multiple days a week due to lack of ice time. If we had two rinks, more ice time would be available and we wouldn't have to go elsewhere. Our skating program could be so much bigger and better!!! Please consider adding another rink.

○ 2025-05-03T15:00:55Z

- Important to remember that there are two major sports happening here and it is necessary that the figure skaters also get the ice time they need. We have many passionate young up and coming skaters who need more ice time to reach the top level

they are capable of! We really need another rink so we can provide both programs with their deserved and needed ice time!!

- 2025-05-03T15:23:08Z
- Making Centennial Ice Arena a hybrid facility with another sport is unnecessary because the figure skating and hockey community regularly use other facilities to supplement a lack of ice time at Centennial. We need more available ice time after school that would allow for figure skating program practice, special figure skating classes, and even more space for off-ice and stretching would benefit the athletes.
 - 2025-05-05T16:30:28Z
- An actual accessible playground for those with physical disabilities that has numerous activities for those in wheel chairs. We have to travel outside of our city to locate a playground that has actual rubber surfacing, at least 2 adaptive swings that truly fit 0-5 year olds with straps/harness, wheelchair friendly merry go round, wheelchair friendly play sets that aren't just ramps up to nothing (give the kids something to roll up to and interact with), multiple wheelchair accessible ground play items, wheelchair accessible sensory/music garden, etc. Also, a splash pad that wheelchair/physically disabled people can go through as well (or any free splash pad in this entire city). Numerous examples around Chicagoland and other cities across the Midwest (check vlassis park in ballwin, MO as an example). Further, the lack of 0-5 year old programming during the weekends is beyond disappointing and a major money loss for Pdhp. Every one we know leaves this city to go to other park districts or private centers further away for swimming, gymnastics, Tball, soccer, music, etc as there are hardly any classes for this age group over the weekend. The general demographic is now a full time two working parent household and there are hardly any activities for this age range on weekends. Super disappointing and unattractive to get young families to move in when we can't take advantage of the park district we pay so much for in taxes.
 - 2025-05-12T02:08:55Z
- The majority of kids in our neighborhood are actively involved in soccer, and Brown Park continues to be a central gathering place where they meet to play informally. However, the park currently lacks soccer goals, which limits the experience and quality of play. Adding permanent or semi-permanent soccer goals would greatly enrich the use of this open space for older children and teens who already make use of the park daily, weather permitting. This simple addition would encourage physical activity, teamwork, and outdoor engagement—core values that align with the mission of any well-rounded park system. Sincerely, A Ravinia district Parent who has children that want to play in the World Cup one day.
 - 2025-05-26T12:46:09Z
- I am writing as a local resident and parent to request the installation of soccer goals at Brown Park as part of your ongoing master planning efforts. Our family has lived just a block away from Brown Park since our children were in kindergarten, and we have cherished the years spent playing at what we fondly refer to as the "train park." Now that the children (and many of their neighborhood friends) have grown, their recreational interests have evolved. The majority of kids in our neighborhood are

actively involved in soccer, and Brown Park continues to be a central gathering place where they meet to play informally. However, the park currently lacks soccer goals, which limits the experience and quality of play. Adding permanent or semi-permanent soccer goals would greatly enrich the use of this open space for older children and teens who already make use of the park daily, weather permitting. This simple addition would encourage physical activity, teamwork, and outdoor engagement. All are core values that align with the mission of any well-rounded park system. Should funding be a concern, our community is willing and able to assist with fundraising efforts to help bring this project to life. Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to improving our neighborhood parks. Sincerely, Ravinia District Parent of children who want to play in the World Cup one day.

○ 2025-05-26T12:54:41Z

- I am writing as a local resident and parent to request the installation of soccer goals at Brown Park as part of your ongoing master planning efforts. Our family has lived just a block away from Brown Park since our children were in kindergarten, and we have cherished the years spent playing at what we fondly refer to as the “train park.” Now that the children (and many of their neighborhood friends) have grown, their recreational interests have evolved. The majority of kids in our neighborhood are actively involved in soccer, and Brown Park continues to be a central gathering place where they meet to play informally. However, the park currently lacks soccer goals, which limits the experience and quality of play. Adding permanent or semi-permanent soccer goals would greatly enrich the use of this open space for older children and teens who already make use of the park daily, weather permitting. This simple addition would encourage physical activity, teamwork, and outdoor engagement. All are core values that align with the mission of any well-rounded park system. The nearest soccer goals next to YPCC on Clavey Rd. To get there the children need to cross busy Green Bay Road, which my children don’t feel safe crossing alone. This makes it difficult for them to access a proper space to play. Adding goal posts at Brown Park (right in our neighborhood) would give them a safer, more accessible option and allow them to stay active without the safety concerns. Should funding be a concern, our community is willing and able to assist with fundraising efforts to help bring this project to life. Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing commitment to improving our neighborhood parks. Sincerely, Ravinia District Parent of children who want to play in the World Cup one day.

○ 2025-05-26T13:13:27Z

- HP has great offerings for kids! Just never enough spaces. For example, things like Saturday morning gymnastics or Safety Village are full minutes after registration opens. It would be great to see additional classes for those that are popular.

○ 2025-05-28T00:31:32Z

- HP needs more baseball facilities, particularly for indoor training during the cold months. Baseball lost use of the dome on Hwy 41 and will be losing the West Ridge gym, so after 2026 we won’t have any indoor facilities in HP. Would be great to be able to use the gymnastics gym at centennial for baseball. Also would be great to use the extra land by Jeff Fox field for a new facility. Thanks!

○ 2025-05-28T01:11:57Z

- LEED certified.
 - 2025-05-28T02:06:43Z
- LEED certified and no artificial turf to start 🤔
 - 2025-05-28T02:07:18Z
- I would love to see expansion of the indoor pool facilities or increased access for younger children, especially in the cooler months. Currently there are very limited week day options for open swim, and on weekends only in the afternoon. Ideally there would be space for lap swimmers, lessons, swim teams and children to all have good access to indoor swimming facilities. There are lots of examples of Midwest cities making investments in aquatic centers resulting in pretty incredible community engagement and ensuring children are strong swimmers at an early age, regardless of socioeconomic status. Very important for a community on the lake. See Holland Michigan Aquatic Center for an example.
 - 2025-05-28T16:02:23Z
- I agree that indoor training facilities for baseball would be nice but I disagree that the gymnastics area at centennial is the right fit for that. What is desperately needed is more ice and centennial is already set up for that. It would be better to expand the gymnastics area into a second sheet of ice or at least a studio rink and find a separate location for indoor baseball facilities. It would be much more cost effective to do it that way.
 - 2025-05-28T20:05:04Z
- Our community has a growing need for more ice time – both for hockey and figure skating. Relocating gymnastics to West Ridge frees up valuable space at Centennial, making it possible to add another sheet of ice. This addition would significantly expand recreational and competitive opportunities for residents of all ages. Additionally, I'd like to advocate for a more inclusive design at Hidden Creek. Currently, the only access to the pool requires walking through gender-specific locker rooms. This setup poses challenges for single parents, same-sex couples, and others who may not fit neatly into this structure. They're often forced to choose between sending their young child through a long locker room alone or having their child accompany them through the 'wrong' locker room and risking confrontation from other patrons. A non-gendered entrance to the pool would be a simple, yet meaningful improvement that promotes accessibility and inclusion for all families in our community. Finally, I believe it's important to reassess the cost structure of Park District programming. Currently, our offerings are more expensive—and often shorter in duration—compared to those in neighboring communities. For example, families have found it more economical to pay non-resident rates for Glencoe's summer camp, which offers longer hours and more weeks, than to enroll in Highland Park's program at the resident rate. This pricing disparity not only makes our programs less accessible to many local families but also contributes to a loss of participation and revenue as residents turn to more affordable alternatives nearby.
 - 2025-05-28T20:21:17Z

- I would like to see a lot more places to sit along the path of the Nature Preserve. The park did a great job on the rocketship playground at Sunset Park. I would like to see an update to Hidden Creek
 - 2025-05-30T01:17:45Z
- I would love to see family membership plans as an option at the Rec Center to allow parents to more easily trade off taking children with them as interests evolve. i also am strongly supportive of Amy Waickman's comment that we need to have a more inclusive entrance to Hidden Creek. The gendered changing room setup as the only access point is limiting and unnecessarily restrictive and unwelcoming. i likewise agree that we continue to face challenges in the timing of offerings and cost for park district programming. I would also truly love to see cricket as an option for a camp or activity. A long shot I know, but it would be a dream come for my cricket obsessed kids.
 - 2025-05-30T01:37:41Z
- Would love more covered shade at parks, specifically Fontana-Pasquesi (formerly Cloverdale Park) With summers getting hotter and hotter, there's no respite from the intense sun. Parents usually pull an old picnic table and put it under a tree - which then gets cover in bird crap and berries. Each park should have some shade or pavilion type thing.
 - 2025-05-30T16:10:13Z
- I would like to see a Bocce Ball court but it is my understanding that there will be one installed at Sunset!
 - 2025-05-30T16:53:18Z
- we rent skates and there is one gentleman that loops the laces around the skates which makes them easy to grab for the next renter. Some of the folks just stuff the laces in the boot of the skate which has resulted in large knots in the laces and tardiness to class as a result!
 - 2025-05-31T01:09:25Z
- The HP little league baseball program pales in comparison to Deerfield in terms of level of play and competition. The margin between the two programs is wide. Considering the comparative size and resources available for both communities, I struggle to understand the disparity.
 - 2025-05-31T20:18:25Z
- We absolutely need an indoor facility for winter workouts for baseball. Losing the dome affected baseball, soccer, flag football and maybe more. As we are all acutely aware, winter goes on forever here. It's such a bummer to have to drive to surrounding towns to use their turf surfaces. I sure hope we can add something with high ceilings, turf floor, room for batting cages etc. Kinda like a large dome. 🤔
 - 2025-06-03T02:09:50Z
- More unpaved walking trails. I suggest a unpaved trail along the Middle Fork of the North Branch from Deerfield rd to Briargate Dr. and continue from Briargate Dr. to the Berkley Prairie Forest preserve and on to Deerfield High School practice fields.

- 2025-06-04T20:44:54Z
- World dance (salsa, w. African) for adults. The HPPD event with salsa dancing and a screening of encanto was a joyful, inclusive opportunity. I'd love to see more programming like that.
 - 2025-06-05T02:41:15Z
- Thank you for the opportunity to share feedback on our local Park District. I would love to see an expansion of our community garden offerings. Nearby communities like Glencoe have set a wonderful example, with large community garden space that not only serve local residents but also incorporate composting initiatives and food donation programs to support charitable organizations. A similar initiative in our community could provide meaningful opportunities for residents of all ages to engage in gardening, sustainability, and community service. It could also serve as a hub for education around healthy eating, environmental stewardship, and food insecurity in neighboring communities. Thank you for your consideration!
 - 2025-06-26T16:20:04Z
- Just moved to the area and am obsessed with rosewood beach! Only thing I can think of right now is a playground or something more interactive at Sleepy Hollow park. All that space with nothing to do! Anything that gets us outside more we're happy with.
 - 2025-06-29T03:30:11Z
- Suggestion: Acquire 147 Central Avenue to Expand Central Park I'd like to suggest the Park District consider purchasing the historic property at 147 Central Avenue that's currently for sale. This 4.1-acre estate is directly adjacent to Central Park and would be a perfect opportunity to expand our park system. Why this makes sense: - Location: The property borders Central Park and is near Park Avenue Beach and North Shore Yacht Club, creating better connectivity between these recreational areas - Size: Would expand Central Park from 7.44 acres to over 11.5 acres - Historic Value: The 1910 Cornelius Field House is a Highland Park landmark that deserves preservation - Community Benefits: The existing buildings could serve as event spaces, meeting rooms, or educational facilities What it would add: - More green space and trails - Potential for environmental education programs - Protected historic architecture - Enhanced beach and waterfront access - Beautiful mature landscaping and bluff views This feels like a once-in-a-generation opportunity to secure a property that perfectly complements our existing park infrastructure. The buildings could generate revenue through event rentals while the grounds would provide more recreational space for residents. I hope the Park District will explore this possibility. Thanks for considering this suggestion!
 - 2025-07-05T14:37:28Z
- Any plan to add saunas to the rec center?
 - 2025-07-21T22:04:54Z
- Sheridan Park on Western Ave between Dato Court and Audubon is an overgrown disaster that harbors drug/alcohol users, encampments, illegal dumping and is in danger of forest fire. The greenspace is apart of the HP Park District portfolio of

properties. Sheridan Park was bequeathed to HP in the 1920's. There are ample pics of if over the decades NOT looking overgrown w/ invasives and dead trees. The park district has been asked REPEATEDLY to clean it up. Are they waiting for a dead tree to fall on people walking, biking or driving by? Are they ok w/ criminal activity happening w/in the overgrown brush in close proximity to homes w/ families, young children, elderly residents?? Tired of "covid" being used as an excuse for low staffing or not enough money. I'd ask that the city please maintain the space in accordance w/ proper forestry standards to avoid potential fire. With it being close to the Metra tracks...there is potential that the unchecked invasive dry brush could ignite. Enough is enough. Maybe hire a herd of goats to clear out the invasives and overgrowth to save money.

○ 2025-08-07T15:23:23Z

- any plans for phase 2 (<https://www.pdhp.org/project/park-avenue-north-beach-access-improvements>) like the project just stopped short of greatness. It's nice but phase 2 can make it great.

○ 2025-08-12T19:00:41Z

- I'd love to see an increased focus on planting native plants and trees and a deprioritization of non-native/invasive plants in landscaping.

○ 2026-01-30T17:13:07Z

PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MINUTES OF A THE MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON January 14, 2026, 5:03 PM.

Present: Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg

Absent: None

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Voss; Director Peters; Director Gogola; Director Hall; Director Ochs; Assistant Director Acevedo; Manager Schwartz; Supervisor Sanchez; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: The Lakota Group: Siraj Asfahani and Scott Freres

Additions to the Agenda
None.

Master Plan Update
Scott Freres, the Lakota Group, reviewed the presentation which will be shared at the Community Open House in February 2026.

He also revisited the GreenPrint Master Plan initiatives matrix. The matrix has capital development projects, capital improvement projects, planning/programming projects, and operational planning projects listed by prioritization tiers designed for the capital plan. Tiers 1-3 are safety and legal compliance, critical repairs, and scheduled replacements (highest priority), Tiers 4-5 are improving existing items and new items, and Tier 6 are unfunded items. The matrix also includes 2026 hard costs for each project and whether the projects are funded.

Other Business
None.

Open to the Public to Address the Board
None.

Adjournment
A motion was made by Commissioner Greenberg and seconded by Commissioner Beck and approved by a unanimous vote. The Master Planning Committee Meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary

PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MINUTES OF A THE MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON FEBRUARY 24, 2025, 5:04 PM.

Present: Commissioner Labrador, Commissioner Grossberg, Vice President Freeman,

Absent: None

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr, Director Peters, Director Smith, Director Voss, Director Gogola, Director Baird, Assistant Director Acevedo, Assistant Director Soto, Manager Schwartz; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: The Lakota Group: Kevin Clark, Siraj Asfahani and Scott Freres, BerryDunn: Dannielle Wilson
aQuity Research and Insights, Inc: Jeff Andreasen

Vice President Freeman left the meeting at 5:54pm.

Additions to the Agenda
None.

Master Plan Update

Mr. Freres President and Co-Founder of the Lakota Group reviewed his teams' roles and responsibilities, the project methodology and scope of services, and project deliverables.

Mr. Asfahani, Vice President of the Lakota Group, reviewed the community engagement timeline and sequencing of outreach efforts.

Mr. Andreasen, President of aQuity Research and Insights, Inc, reviewed the target audiences and the survey results timeline.

Several questions were asked from the Lakota Group to understand Park District staff and Park Board liaisons' thoughts on community needs today. Staff and Park Board liaison's also shared success stories from the GreenPrint 2024 Master Plan.

The Lakota Group asked Park District staff and the Park Board liaison's to think about the future and share what facilities, programming, operations and staffing, and financial capacities look like. Are community needs being met, what facilities are underutilized or overlooked, what demographic shifts or community interests should be considered, are there partnership opportunities with local organizations, are there staffing challenges or opportunities for development, how will long-term financial projections impact operations, and are there grant opportunities or alternative funding sources available that have not been explored. Lastly, the Lakota Group asked Park District staff and the Park Board liaison's to share their priorities and aspirational goals.

Other Business
None.

Master Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
February 24, 2025

Open to the Public to Address the Board

None.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Grossberg and seconded by Commissioner Labrador and approved by a unanimous vote. The Master Planning Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary

DRAFT

PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MINUTES OF A THE MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON APRIL 02, 2025, 5:09 PM.

Present: Commissioner Labrador, Commissioner Grossberg

Absent: None

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Director Peters, Director Gogola, Director Voss, Director Baird, Assistant Director Acevedo, Manager Ochs, Manager Schwartz; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: None

Additions to the Agenda

None.

Master Plan Update

Executive Director Romes reviewed the master plan scope, highlighting the plan:

- Theme: Building Community Wellbeing
- Purpose: Reassesses changes in the community needs, conditions of parks, natural areas and facilities, and programs/services; Refines and recommends changes to planning, programming, capital and funding initiatives; Reimagines a vision of the future focused on our Mission and Values; and Validates performance and service standards consistent with Distinguished Accreditation
- Process: Engage, Analyze, and Plan
- Outcomes: Accomplishments and Implementation Strategy

He reviewed the draft timelines which is broken into four parts, engage, analyze, plan, and implement, and adopt and approve the updated Master Plan.

The New GreenPrint Master Plan will build upon the success of the original plan while incorporating new insights, priorities, and emerging needs. This process will involve robust community engagement, a fresh analysis of parks and recreation assets, and a clear roadmap for future investments—ensuring that Highland Park’s facilities, parks, and programs continue to serve residents for years to come.

The community can learn about the process on the Park District website. The website also includes a community idea board, so community members can share their thoughts and ideas about the plan and what they would like to see prioritized. Additionally, planning staff will be at Sunset Woods Park from 9:30 – 11:00 a.m. during the Egg Hunts and at the Recreation Center of Highland Park from 11:30 – 1:00 p.m. on April 5, 2025, to take community feedback and answer questions about the updated master plan.

Master Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
April 02, 2025

Lastly, staff and consultants are developing the community engagement survey. Hoping to release the survey in May.

Other Business

None.

Open to the Public to Address the Board

None.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Labrador and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg and approved by a unanimous vote. The Master Planning Committee Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary

PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MINUTES OF A THE MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON April 08, 2026, 5:00 PM.

Present: Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg

Absent: None

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Director Smith; Director Voss; Director Peters; Director Gogola; Director Hall; Director Baird; Director Ochs; Manager Schwartz; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: The Lakota Group: Siraj Asfahani and Scott Freres

Additions to the Agenda

None.

Master Plan Update

Scott Freres, the Lakota Group, reminded the Committee of the community engagement efforts completed to date and the three guiding themes that emerged most consistently during community discussions: (1) Stewardship, (2) Well-Being, and (3) Efficiency. While the community shared additional ideas beyond these themes, they reflect the priorities residents believe should guide the Park District of Highland Park's long-term planning and investment.

He noted that capital projects in the updated GreenPrint Plan are organized by category (Outdoor Sports, Indoor Sports, Recreation Facilities, and Park Amenities) and prioritized by tier. Tiers 1–3 address safety and legal compliance, critical repairs, and scheduled replacements (highest priority). Tiers 4–5 include improvements to existing amenities and new amenities, and Tier 6 includes unfunded items. Mr. Freres also shared two graphs: one outlining funded capital projects, including estimated costs and proposed construction timelines over the next 10 years, and another outlining unfunded capital projects, including estimated planning and design costs and potential timeframes for future planning discussions if funding becomes available.

Other Business

None.

Open to the Public to Address the Board

None.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenberg and seconded by Commissioner Beck and approved by a unanimous vote. The Master Planning Committee Meeting adjourned at 5:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary

PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MINUTES OF A THE MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON APRIL 24, 2025, 5:02 PM.

Present: Commissioner Labrador, Commissioner Grossberg

Absent: None

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Director Peters, Director Smith; Manager Ochs, Manager Schwartz; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: The Lakota Group: Kevin Clark, Siraj Asfahani and Scott Freres,
BerryDunn: Dannielle Wilson
aQuity Research and Insights, Inc: Jeff Andreasen and Tessa Andreasen

Additions to the Agenda

None.

Master Plan Update

Mr. Andreasen from aQuity Research and Insights, Inc reviewed the 2025 Community Survey questionnaire page by page.

Mr. Freres from the Lakota Group reported there are six desired outcomes for the updated 10year master plan: create a visionary roadmap for the next ten years supported by actionable planning initiatives, refine the district's long range capital investment plan and associated funding strategies, conduct a statistically valid community-wide survey, evaluate existing facilities, parks, natural areas, and recreational services that are aligned with national and local best practices, engage with community key stakeholders, and build public trust through a transparent master planning process that reinforces the district's impact on community well-being.

Mr. Asfahani reminded the Committee of the project timeline, which is broken into four parts, engage, analyze, plan, and implement, and adopt and approve the updated Master Plan. We are currently in the engagement process, which is very robust. The community can learn about the process on the Park District website. The website also includes a community idea board, so community members can share their thoughts and ideas about the plan and what they would like to see prioritized. Lastly, representatives and park district staff will host three community open houses and attend three pop-up events.

Other Business

None.

Open to the Public to Address the Board

None.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Labrador and seconded by Commissioner Grossberg and approved by a unanimous vote. The Master Planning Committee Meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

Master Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
April 24, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary

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PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MINUTES OF A THE MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON JULY 21, 2025, 5:09 PM.

Present: Commissioner Grossberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador

Absent: None

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Peters, Director Gogola, Director Voss, Director Smith; Director Baird, Director Hall; Assistant Director Acevedo, Manager Ochs, Manager Schwartz; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: The Lakota Group: Siraj Asfahani and Scott Freres, BerryDunn: Dannielle Wilson

Additions to the Agenda

None.

Master Plan Update

Dannielle Wilson, BerryDunn, provided a progress update of the Park District's Recreation Assessment, which is an exploration of recreation programs and services through a series of analyses that identifies what the District is doing well, strengthening and growth opportunities, performance measures and alignments with community needs. The assessment informs future direction. She reviewed the statistics for:

- 2024 enrollment based programs, program participant ages, and offerings by season
- 2022-2024 total enrollments, enrollment trends by category, membership participation, drop in visit trends, participant waitlists and percentage of needs being met

She shared maps highlighting participant and membership reach in Highland Park and neighboring suburbs.

When connecting the recreation assessment to the topline survey, the top reason for non-participation in programs is 53% of the Highland Park population does not have children, top unmet program needs are adult and active adult programming and sports for ages 55+, and highest program needs/interests are senior programs.

BerryDunn will finalize the data and integrate the community survey feedback into the finalized Recreation Assessment Report. Recommendations will be integrated into the GreenPrint visioning process.

Siraj Asfahani, The Lakota Group, provided a recap of community engagement share points:

- 41 residents attended focus groups
- 130 residents provided feedback at special events

Topics discussed during community engagement opportunities included: parks and open spaces, facilities and spaces, amenities, natural areas, programs, and community events. Fifteen themes emerged from these discussions:

Master Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2025

1. Equity Across Users
 - o registration system is creating unintentional barriers
 - o before and after camps hours impact working parents
 - o cost related access barriers for Highwood residents
 - o extend accessibility beyond ADA standards
2. Ice Programming
 - o desire a second sheet of ice
3. Athletic Fields
 - o poor field conditions
 - o AYSO needs more field space
 - o desire year-round multi-sport indoor training spaces
4. Pickleball
 - o outdoor courts at Danny Cunniff heavily used and appreciated
 - o intimidating social culture for casual or first time players
 - o excited for the new Club Pickle and Padel facility, but worried about pricing and access for community users
5. Modern Lifestyles
 - o Park Fitness programming/classes is concentrated in early morning hours, desire for afternoon and evening hours
 - o desired for expanded lap swim hours
 - o desire for wellness-based programming
6. Programming
 - o families with toddlers want programming outside of weekdays (9am-5pm)
 - o participants want flexible forms (short sessions, trail packs, and seasonal drop ins)
 - o adults desire more enrichment offerings like DIY workshops, cultural classes, and social events like wine and bourbon tasting
7. Family Dynamics
 - o time between 3-5pm remains one of the hardest to cover for working families
 - o interest in short formats, drop-off, and sensory friendly programs for households with children of different ages
 - o with school transportation changes reducing bus availability more families are depending on Park District provided transit
8. Youth Inclusion
 - o youth programs fill immediately, with many families unable to access offerings
 - o decline in house leagues has forced families into more exclusive club models that are more costly
 - o desire for more low-pressure, affordable, and inclusive programs
 - o desire for adopted and therapeutic recreation for children with disabilities
9. Connected Parks
 - o parks and trails are often disconnected. Desire for Park District to work with City Highland Park, IDOT, and Schools to improve
10. Communication
 - o desire for improved welcome kits for new residents
 - o communication was framed at essential to equity, ensuring that everyone not just long-time residents can benefit from programs and amenities
11. Partnerships
 - o lack of coordination between the Park District, the City of Highland Park, and Schools

Master Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
July 21, 2025

12. Parks Foundation
 - o residents are unaware of the Parks Foundation's existence, purpose and role
 - o untapped potential for the Parks Foundation to support GreenPrint priorities
13. Sustainability
 - o residents expressed strong emotional ties to Highland Park's natural areas
 - o concerns around shoreline erosion
 - o strong appetite for educational programming that promotes environmental stewardship
14. Storytelling
 - o Highland Park's rich history is undercelebrated
15. Giving Back
 - o strong desire for opportunities to volunteer

The Lakota Group identified Key Themes from the initial Engagement, Survey, Assessments, and Staff SWOC Analysis. Themes are:

1. A Mission-Driven Culture rooted in collaboration and public service
2. Growing pressure on staff capacity and resources
3. Systemic gaps in internal communication and coordination
4. Momentum toward strategic modernization and identity building
5. Call for sustainable staffing and long-term investment in people
6. Desire for focused, intentional growth over reactive innovation
7. A clear ask for structural support to uphold extraordinary service

Other Business

None.

Open to the Public to Address the Board

None.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenberg and seconded by Commissioner Beck and approved by a unanimous vote. The Master Planning Committee Meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary

PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MINUTES OF A THE MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON SEPTEMBER 03, 2025, 5:02 PM.

Present: Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg

Absent: None

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Peters, Director Voss, Director Smith; Director Baird, Assistant Director Soto; Assistant Director Acevedo; Manager Schwartz; Manager Ochs; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: Dannielle Wilson, Recreation Consultant with BerryDunn

Vice President Freeman joined the meeting at 5:09 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda

None.

Master Plan Update

Dannielle Wilcon of BerryDunn presented the findings from the Recreation Assessment. The assessment evaluated current parks and recreation programs and services to identify community needs, opportunities for growth, and alignment with performance measures. Areas analyzed included enrollment-based programs, memberships, rentals, drop-in activities, events, and services.

Key findings included:

- **Program Offerings:** 82% of enrollment-based programs are geared toward youth, while 17.5% serve adults. Most programs are offered at indoor core facilities. Enrollment-based participation continues to grow annually; however, additional staffing will be needed to support this growth.
- **Program Support Needs:** Certain areas—such as Heller Nature Center, “Other” programming, and Early Childhood Enrichment—require additional support to reduce cancellations due to fluctuating or declining participation. Enhancements to the internal waitlist tracking process are also recommended. Gymnastics, Tennis, and Pickleball waitlists are expected to ease with the addition of new facilities at Club Pickle and Padel and the West Ridge Community Center.
- **Community Feedback:** The assessment highlighted community interest in expanded adult programming. Strengthening the partnership with the City of Highland Park is recommended to meet this priority.
- **Additional Findings:** Enhance database management to support future reporting enhancements, consider formalizing the program evaluation process, and enhance marketing initiatives to cross-promote programs through additional promotional items and digital brochures.

She concluded with next steps.

Master Planning Committee Meeting
September 03, 2025

Other Business

None.

Open to the Public to Address the Board

None.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Labrador and seconded by Commissioner Beck and approved by a unanimous vote. The Master Planning Committee Meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary

PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MINUTES OF A THE MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON NOVEMBER 08, 2025, 8:02 AM.

Present: Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, Vice President Freeman, President Grossberg

Absent: None

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Director Smith; Director Hall; Director Ochs; Manager Schwartz; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: The Lakota Group: Siraj Asfahani and Scott Freres

Additions to the Agenda

None.

Master Plan Update

Based on community engagement, findings from the statistically-valid survey, a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) analysis, findings from the recreation assessment, the Lakota Group identified key Master Planning priorities related to Capital Development Projects, Capital Improvement Projects, Planning Initiatives, and Operational Goals. The Park Board and staff reviewed the capital development projects, capital improvement projects, planning/programming projects, and operational planning projects and identified seven projects from each category as top priorities.

The Park Board and staff reviewed capital development, capital improvement, planning/programming, and operational projects, and identified seven priority projects within each category.

Other Business

None.

Open to the Public to Address the Board

None.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Greenberg and seconded by Vice President Freeman and approved by a unanimous vote. The Master Planning Committee Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary

PARK BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

MINUTES OF THE MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK HELD ON DECEMBER 17, 2025, 4:32 PM.

A motion was made by Commissioner Beck and seconded by Commissioner Labrador to allow Commissioner Greenberg to participate by electronic means.

Present: Commissioner Greenberg, Commissioner Beck, Commissioner Labrador, President Grossberg

Absent: None

Also, Present: Executive Director Romes; Deputy Director Carr; Director Smith; Director Voss; Director Peters; Director Gogola; Director Hall; Director Ochs; Assistant Director Soto; Manager Schwartz; Coordinator Hejnowski

Guest Speaker: The Lakota Group: Siraj Asfahani and Scott Freres

Vice President Freeman joined the meeting at 4:43 p.m.

Additions to the Agenda

None.

Master Plan Update

Scott Freres, the Lakota Group, presented the GreenPrint Master Plan initiatives matrix. The matrix has capital development projects, capital improvement projects, planning/programming projects, and operational planning projects listed by prioritization tiers designed for the capital plan. Tiers 1-3 are safety and legal compliance, critical repairs, and scheduled replacements (highest priority), Tiers 4-5 are improving existing items and new items, and Tier 6 are unfunded items. The matrix also includes 2026 hard costs for each project and whether the projects are funded.

Other Business

None.

Open to the Public to Address the Board

None.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Beck and seconded by Vice President Freeman and approved by a unanimous vote. The Master Planning Committee Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Roxanne Hejnowski

Roxanne Hejnowski, Assistant Secretary

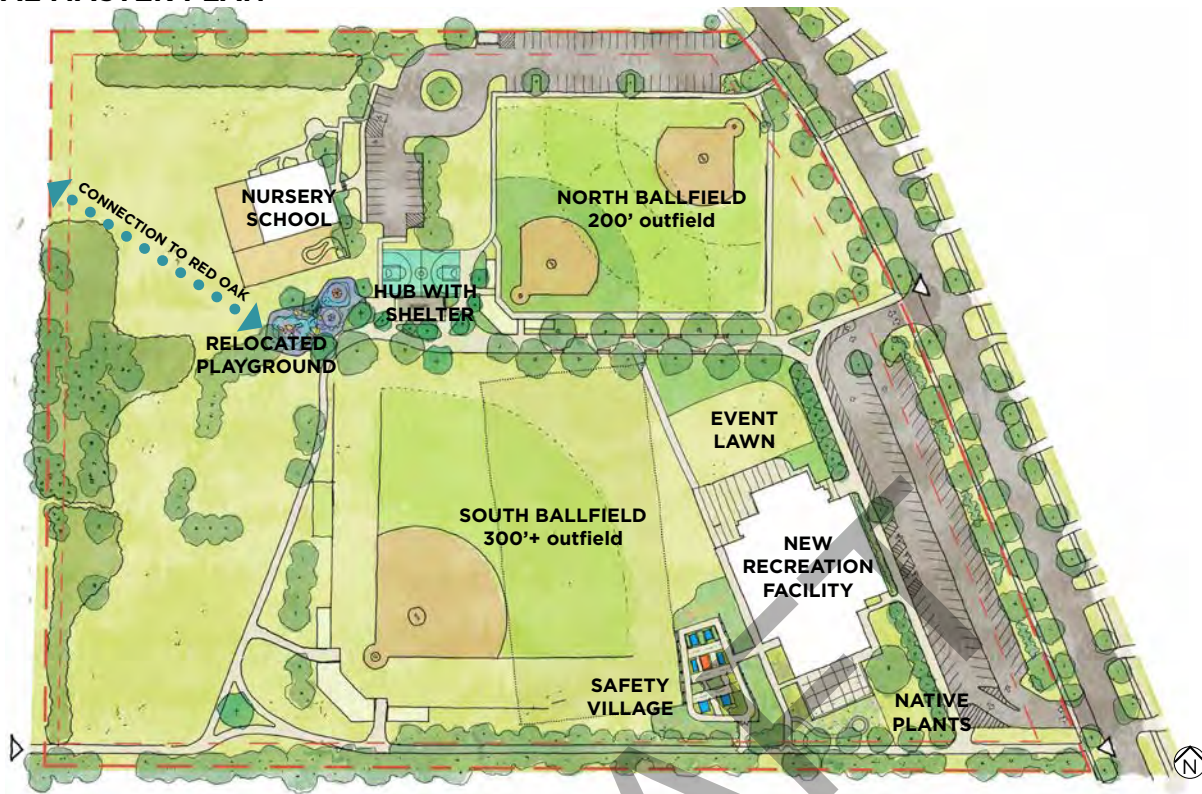


APPENDIX F

WEST RIDGE MASTER PLAN



FINAL MASTER PLAN



PROGRAM - NORTH BALLFIELD

1 SPATIAL QUALITIES

- MULTIPURPOSE LAWN FIELD
- CURRENT BALLFIELDS HAVE WET AREA IN OUTFIELDS THAT REDUCE PLAYABILITY
- SHARED WITH PUBLIC

2 SPATIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- SIZE SHOULD PROVIDE 200 FOOT OUTFIELD
- LAYOUT TO ALLOW MULTIPLE GAMES OR PRACTICES AT ONCE
- CURRENT BALLFIELDS HAVE WET AREA IN OUTFIELDS THAT REDUCE PLAYABILITY

3 PROGRAM SUMMARY

ORIGINAL REQUESTED PROGRAM

- CURRENT SIZE AT A MINIMUM

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUESTS

- DUGOUTS TO BE AT GRADE (NO LOWERED DUGOUTS)
- PROVIDE NEW BALLFIELD WITH FENCING, DUGOUTS AND AREAS FOR BLEACHERS
- PROVIDE SHADE OVER DUGOUTS AND BLEACHERS
- POSITIVE DRAINAGE TO ELIMINATE CURRENT WETTER ZONES OF FIELD
- NO LIGHTING NEEDED ON THIS FIELD
- CHAIN LINK FENCING NEEDED FOR PROTECTION
- IDEALLY THIS FIELD IS ARTIFICIAL TURF OR OTHER ACCESSIBLE SURFACE TO OFFER UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY FOR BALL AND MULTIPURPOSE USE
- CONSIDER FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY PARTNER KESHET REGARDING UNIVERSAL DESIGN FEATURES INCLUDING:
 - PERIMETER SIDEWALK TO ACT AS CLEAR EDGE
 - SEPARATION BUT NEARBY PARKING LOT
 - SEPARATION FROM OTHER PARK EVENTS BUT NEARBY FOR USE
 - MULTI-EVENTS AT ONCE ON FIELD
 - DUGOUTS AT GRADE WITH FENCING FOR PROTECTION BUT OPEN ON TWO SIDES FOR ACCESS
 - CLEAR AND FREQUENT DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE
 - ADJACENT SPACE FOR GATHERING AND STAGING INCLUDING BOARD TO POST EVENT ACTIVITIES AND LEARNING
 - BE CONSCIOUS OF COLOR CHOICES - NO RED, YELLOW COLORS
 - ENOUGH SPACE TO ALLOW FOR A QUIET MOMENT, SENSORY SPACE
 - BALLFIELD BASES FLAT AND ABILITY TO INSERT BASES FOR DIFFERENT AGE RANGES AND ABILITIES

PROGRAM - HUB / PLAYGROUND

1 SPATIAL QUALITIES

- GATHERING FOR FAMILIES AND VISITORS OF PARK
- SHARED WITH PUBLIC

2 SPATIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- SHELTER OPTIONS WITH SPATIAL OPTIONS FOR TENTS TO BE SETUP FOR EVENTS
- PLAYGROUND MAY WANT TO ADJUST OR EXPAND, AND INCORPORATE ACCESSIBLE ACCESS

3 PROGRAM SUMMARY

ORIGINAL REQUESTED PROGRAM

- PROVIDE CONNECTIVITY OF ACTIVITIES BETWEEN HUB AND ADJACENT BALLFIELDS AND PLAYGROUND TO ALLOW FOR SUPERVISION AND MULTI-ACTIVITY USE

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM REQUESTS

- CONSIDER PROTECTIVE NETTING FOR ANY ADJACENT ACTIVITY TO BALLFIELDS DEPENDING ON USE
- CONSIDER EXPAND HALF COURT BASKETBALL TO FULL COURT TO ALLOW FOR DEVELOPMENT OF HUB CONCEPT
- CONSIDER THIS LOCATION FOR REMOTE RESTROOMS INCLUDING ADULT CHANGING TABLE, OR CONCRETE PAD ACCESSIBLE TO NEARBY DRIVE FOR EASY PORTABLE TOILET SETUP AND MAINTENANCE. CONCRETE PAD COULD BE SIZED TO ACCOMMODATE 2 ADA AND 1 NON-ADA PORTABLE TOILET.

DRAFT



APPENDIX G

OLSON PARK PLANNING & INVESTMENT REPORT





OLSON PARK

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT STRATEGY



9.3.25

THE
LAKOTA
GROUP.

DRAFT FOR REVIEW 1

OLSON PARK

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT STRATEGY

Overview

Olson Park is a twenty acre open park land used for field recreational programming located in west Highland Park. The site is adjacent to single family homes, natural areas, and is served by existing infrastructure. Only ten of the twenty acres are owned by the Park District of Highland Park with the western half of the site owned by North Shore District 112. While the park supports long-term goals for open space, accessibility, connection, and community-orientation, the park is in need of upgrades and improvements to its field, pathways, parking, and utilities to better serve current and future recreation programming.

Opportunity Statement “Community Reinvestment Vision”

There is a significant opportunity to enhance recreational programming and overall user experience by advancing a clear and strategic investment in site improvements that support contiguous open space and trail connectivity. By strengthening partnerships and prioritizing efficient management and stewardship, the initiative can preserve the existing land use mix and community values while providing greater certainty for adjacent neighborhoods. Together, these efforts position the site to deliver improved amenities, long-term sustainability, and a cohesive vision that benefits both and the broader community.

Why This, Why Now?

Development of Olson Park offers an opportunity to secure significant long-term community benefit and open space before it becomes cost-prohibitive or potentially lost to private development. The Park District can develop a site master plan and capital improvement strategy to identify and secure funding opportunities, and respond to growing demand for athletic field space, outdoor recreation, and equitable park access across the community.

DRAFT FOR REVIEW



PARK DISTRICT
OF HIGHLAND PARK

2



OLSON PARK | COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT STRATEGY
EXISTING CONDITIONS
 PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK

SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

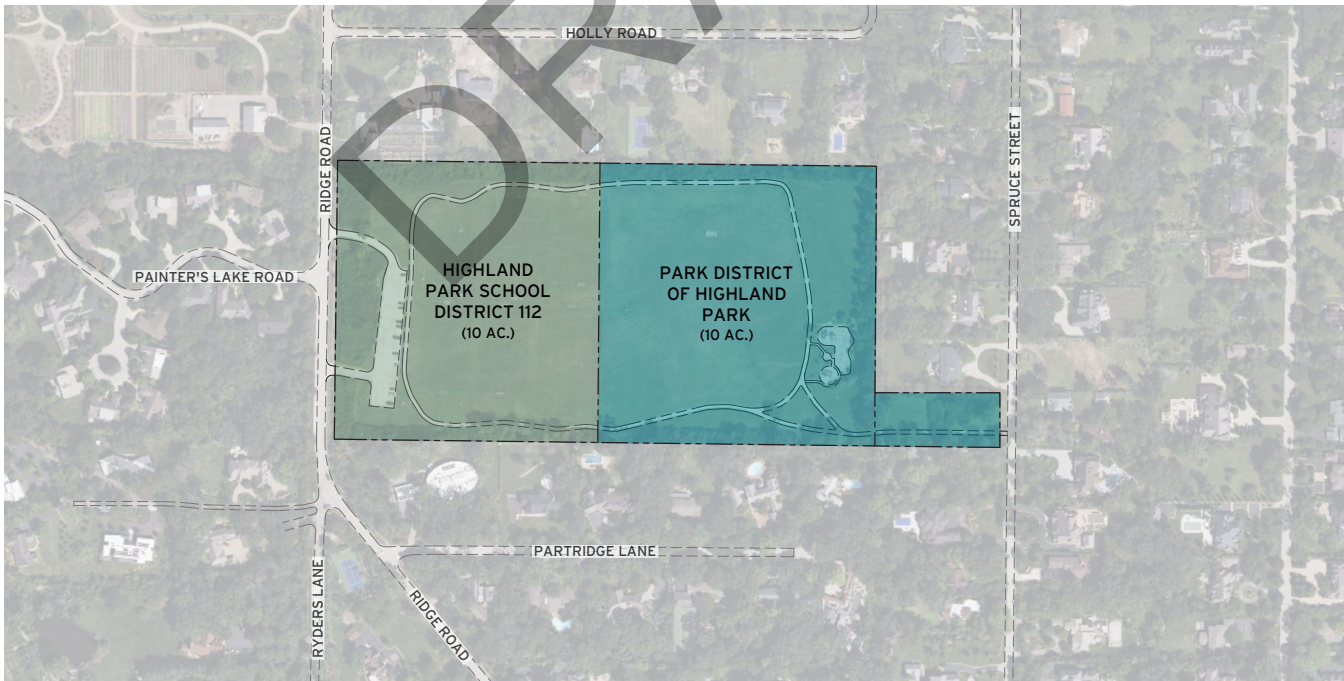
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 SCALE: 1"=200'



THE LAKOTA GROUP.
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DRAFT FOR REVIEW

3



OLSON PARK | COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT STRATEGY
EXISTING OWNERSHIP - PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION
 PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK

SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

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 SCALE: 1"=200'



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4

OLSON PARK | COMMUNITY VALUE ADDED PROPOSITION

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT STRATEGY

Context & Purpose

Olson Park functions today as a parks and recreation hub for both passive and active activities, with primary utilization for soccer and leisurely walking. While only portions of the site are under PDHP ownership; future plans would ensure the most public benefit through: long-term public access and use, enabling efficient and effective capital and operational investment in athletic fields and natural systems, enhancement of passive recreational pursuits, alignment of public grant funding opportunities, and most importantly show responsible governance by stewarding open space and maximizing its usability, flexibility, and accessibility.

Public-Interest Benefit Rationale

The following points further outline the key considerations and community benefits that support PDHP's interest in developing Olson Park.

01 Responsible Governance = Repurposing/Reinvesting in Community

The opportunity to assemble two civic-owned parcels of land and maintain recreational and open space for future generations represents responsible and efficient Community planning. It models best practices for long-range Community Comprehensive planning initiatives.

No less important than Community-wide Comprehensive Planning is the opportunity to demonstrate how local government agencies can partner together to meet and achieve broader benefits and community goals of Efficient and Responsible Governance. The repurposing and reinvesting School District property through a "Community Transfer" to The Park District of Highland Park most importantly demonstrates the right civic stewardship of public property to reinvest in the long-term infrastructure that will provide community-wide benefit of Open Space and Recreation.

02 Adjacency + Current Use = Immediate Operational & Program Value

Olson is already programmed and maintained for field athletics; owner controlled management and stewardship improves efficiency and coordination. proper field maintenance, as well as future development and ongoing improvements associated with the Park District's Athletic Field Master Plan including field capacity, access, quality, playability, and maintenance.

DRAFT FOR REVIEW



PARK DISTRICT
OF HIGHLAND PARK

5

OLSON PARK | COMMUNITY VALUE ADDED PROPOSITION

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT STRATEGY

03 Predictability & Neighborhood Stability

Securing Olson Park under PDHP ownership provides long-term certainty and predictability for residents, partnerships, and the broader Highland Park community. Permanent land-use designation as public parkland removes the risk of redevelopment, stabilizing any impact on traffic, lighting, noise, and activity patterns—particularly important given the site's proximity to schools and homes. This predictability not only safeguards neighborhood character and property values but also gives potential funding partners confidence that their investments will have lasting impact, ensuring that future improvements to the park continue to benefit the community for generations.

04 Program Capacity + Scheduling Relief For Youth Sports

The 2019 Sports Field Master Plan, PDHP operations updates and current community stakeholder input cite poor or greatly impacted field playability/flooding, practice slots, and quality. These parcel assemblages support efficient field management through rotation, rest periods, and phasing of drainage/turf upgrades to expand usable hours and reduce cancellations. The current 2025 statistically valid survey data and on-going community engagement results are strongly aligned on the need for reinvestment in athletic fields, with specific reference to Olson Park, among others. In person engagement sessions, especially with youth sports organizations and parents, revealed high levels of frustration with seasonal flooding, poor turf conditions, field closures, and site access and serviceability.

05 Long-Term Capital Stewardship

With site control, PDHP can effectively plan and phase in turf/drainage, lighting, circulation, and accessibility upgrades within a multiyear capital plan without lease/ownership caveats. Potential public funding sources may also require certain time commitments for work to begin and be completed within a specified time requiring complete site control.

06 Open Space Land Acquisition (OSLAD) & Additional Funding Sources Alignment & Timing

PDHP may align this reinvestment strategy with a future Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) pursuit through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources or the Land and Water Conservation Fund. OSLAD may fund up to \$1,125,000. Schools are not eligible for this funding source. Clear, single ownership is typically required to "stack" funds (e.g., OSLAD + Land and Water Conservation Fund). With a strong strategy for reinvestment, a clear plan direction, and significant community engagement and public benefit defined, Olson Park stands a strong chance of being selected for future funding.

DRAFT FOR REVIEW



PARK DISTRICT
OF HIGHLAND PARK

6

OLSON PARK | COMMUNITY VALUE ADDED PROPOSITION

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT STRATEGY

07 Alignment with NRPA Best Practices

The acquisition of Olson Park reflects nationally recognized best practices, including those outlined by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). NRPA emphasizes that expanding parkland delivers measurable public benefits by supporting health and wellness, enhancing community value, and meeting the needs of residents across all demographics. Research consistently shows that accessible parks encourage physical activity, reduce stress, and foster social connection, while also contributing to economic stability and environmental resilience. Research from the CDC and the Community Preventive Services Task Force confirms that proximity to well-designed parks is associated with increased exercise, reduced stress, and lower rates of chronic disease.

08 Neighborhood Property Value Stabilization

Well-maintained public parks are a proven element of neighborhood stability and enhanced property values. Peer-reviewed studies (Crompton, Nicholls) consistently show that homes near high-quality parks experience measurable premiums—trails often adding 3-5% and passive open spaces adding 8-10%, depending on area/regional context. Just as importantly, permanent park use eliminates uncertainty about potential future redevelopment— a factor that can otherwise discourage area investment and suppress home values.

09 Stormwater Performance + Climate Resilience

Olson Park and the surrounding area currently experience drainage and stormwater challenges, particularly affecting homes to the southeast and west. Clear PDHP ownership would enable the District to manage both sides of the park holistically, allowing for coordinated green infrastructure and stormwater improvements to address these localized flooding concerns. Improved site grading, expanded use of permeable surfaces, bioswales, and other “best practice green infrastructure” can reduce runoff, improve water quality, and mitigate flood impacts on the site and adjacent neighborhoods.

10 Alignment with MoveHP 2030

Acquiring Olson Park aligns directly with the City of Highland Park’s MoveHP 2030 Plan. This community connectivity plan prioritizes safer walking and biking routes to parks and other community destinations. As an established recreation site within a residential area, Olson Park serves as a natural node in the city’s active transportation network. Full PDHP ownership would allow for coordinated improvements to both the park and its access points, ensuring safe, comfortable, and connected routes for residents arriving on foot or by bike. The plan also notes Olson Park’s proximity to a currently planned bike route connecting to Deerfield High School campus.

DRAFT FOR REVIEW



PARK DISTRICT
OF HIGHLAND PARK

7

OLSON PARK | COMMUNITY VALUE ADDED PROPOSITION

COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT STRATEGY

Sources Referenced Include:

- OSLAD (IDNR): Program overview, FY26 manual, eligibility, match, perpetuity, and Sept 30, 2025 application close in AmpliFund.
 - (Links: [Illinois Department of Natural Resources](#) & [AmpliFund](#))
- NRPA Agency Performance Review 2025: Park acreage medians and caution that these are not prescriptive “standards.” Useful for framing need without over-relying on outdated ratios.
 - (Link: [NPRA](#))
- CDC & CPSTF: Health/physical activity evidence and “park/trail/greenway” recommendations (and economics).
 - (Links: [CDC: Parks, Recreation, & Green Spaces](#), [The Community Guide](#) & [CDC Stacks: Physical Activity](#))
- EPA Green Infrastructure: Flood loss avoidance, neighborhood value, and infrastructure savings.
 - (Link: [EPA: Benefits of Green Infrastructure](#))
- Trust for Public Land (ParkScore & economic reports): Property value, health, equity gaps.
 - (Link: [Trust for Public Land](#))
- PDHP docs: Sports Field Master Plan (2019), operations FAQs on flooding/playability, PDHP budget (OSLAD success at Sunset Woods), PDHP Sustainability/GreenPrint pages
 - (Links: [MapQuest](#), [Yelp](#), [PDHP 2024 Budget](#), [St. Paul Minnesota P&R](#))
- MoveHP 2030: Active transportation connectivity to parks.
 - (Link: [City of Highland Park](#))

Potential Funding Strategy

Primary: OSLAD acquisition (up to 50% match, up to \$1,125,000, deed covenant in perpetuity; FY26 applications due Sept 30, 2025).

- (Links: [Illinois Department of Natural Resources](#) & [AmpliFund](#))

Secondary: LWCF (IDNR co-administered; encouraged to apply alongside OSLAD).

- (Link: [Illinois Department of Natural Resources](#))

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PARK DISTRICT
OF HIGHLAND PARK

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OLSON PARK | COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT STRATEGY
ANTICIPATED FIELD & FACILITY SCHEMATIC PLAN
 PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK

SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

0 50' 100' 200'
 SCALE: 1"=200'
 NORTH

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- A** New paved parking lot and drop-off facilities
- B** Improved natural stormwater facilities
- C** Re-graded and drained sport fields
- D** Improved pathway network
- E** New shelter
- F** New shelter and restroom facilities

THE LAKOTA GROUP
 #2025 THE LAKOTA GROUP

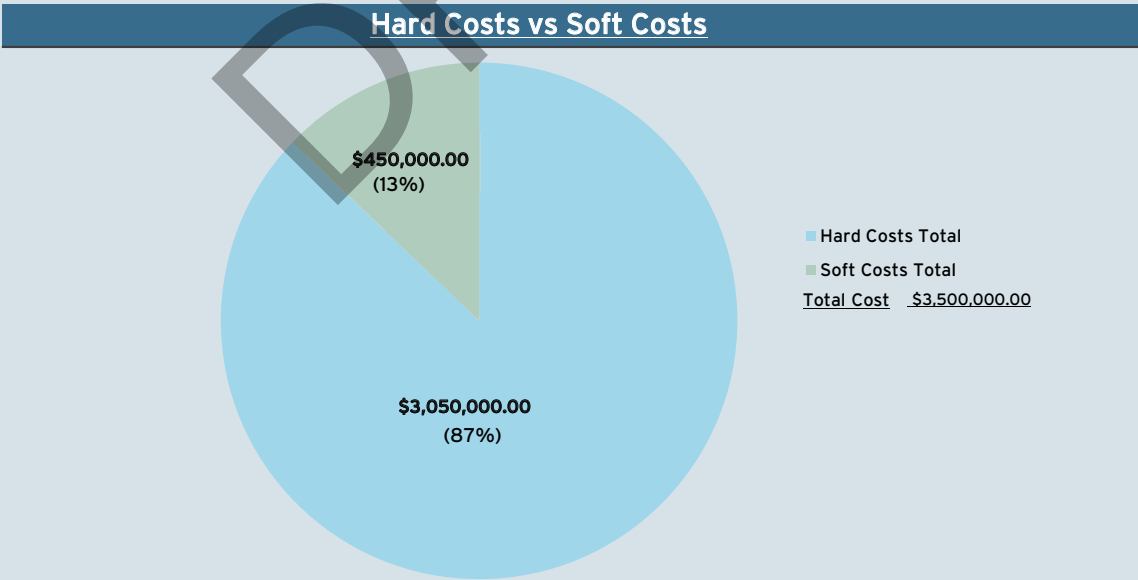
9

OLSON PARK

SCHEMATIC PLAN REINVESTMENT BUDGET

PARK DISTRICT OF HIGHLAND PARK

Schematic Investment Budget Hard & Soft Costs	
HARD COSTS	
SITE PREP, DEMO, & GRADING	\$400,000.00
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT	\$150,000.00
PARKING & CIRCULATION	\$400,000.00
SHELTER & RESTROOM	\$800,000.00
PATHWAYS & WALKS	\$150,000.00
OPTION: ARTIFICIAL TURF ATHLETIC FIELDS	\$: TBD
NATURAL GRASS ATHLETIC FIELDS	\$600,000.00
LANDSCAPING	\$150,000.00
CONTINGENCY (15%)	\$400,000.00
BASE HARD COST:	\$ 3,050,000.00
SOFT COSTS	
DESIGN & ENGINEERING	\$100,000.00
SURVEY, PERMITS, TESTING	\$350,000.00
BASE SOFT COST:	\$ 450,000.00
TOTAL INVESTMENT VALUE:	\$ 3,500,000.00
COST PER ACRE (20 ACRES):	\$ 175,000.00



PARTNERS: PDHP | DISTRICT 112 | AYSO | OTHERS

Why does Ownership Under PDHP Serve the Public Interest?

VALUE ADD PROPOSITION

Community Benefits Summary

It's a sound investment strategy that employs responsible governance and protection of a long-term community asset for generations to come.

- Repurposing of community tax dollars in long-term return on investment
- Supports civic collaboration and operational efficiencies
- Puts property in right management hands to provide public benefit
- Illustrates exceptional stewardship of tax payer trust and resources
- Will add ten acres of contiguous public parkland and open space
- Will deliver improved multipurpose fields, pathways, and passive recreation areas
- Will allow for improved site stormwater management and environmental quality
- Will enhance access and walkability for nearby residents and park users
- Will support citywide health and wellness goals
- Will establish predictability of use and ownership for current and future area residents
- Will allow for improved and more efficient seasonal programming

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APPENDIX H

VALUE STATEMENTS & DESCRIPTORS





PARK DISTRICT
of HIGHLAND PARK

WELCOMING

We welcome everyone, fostering supportive relationships through positive interactions that appreciate the best in others and create a sense of belonging

EXTRAORDINARY

We aspire to provide extraordinary experiences by thinking creatively, creating personal interactions and delivering unique services that positively impact lives

CARING

We care about our relationships with others, as well as sustaining and improving our material, financial and natural resources, through best practices that foster trust and ensure long term health, safety, and wellbeing.

OUR VALUES

WELCOMING

Value Statement

We welcome everyone, fostering supportive relationships through positive interactions that appreciate the best in others and create a sense of belonging

Value Descriptors

APPRECIATIVE

We appreciate and celebrate the best in others

INCLUSIVE

We are allies for inclusion and equity, (where everyone is afforded the same rights and opportunities that result in a sense of belonging, and the ability to safely express themselves authentically, without judgement.)

SUPPORTIVE

We give the best of ourselves, create positive interactions that foster supportive relationships

Operational Framework

CUSTOMER

We welcome patrons by being allies for inclusion, fostering positive interactions that show appreciation to our customers and support the needs of our community in effort to create a sense of belonging.

TEAM MEMBER

We welcome all team members by being allies for inclusion, fostering positive interactions that appreciate the best in others, and support the collective needs of the organization in effort to create a sense of belonging.

RESOURCES

We create a welcoming environment by investing in resources that promote inclusivity, support the essential services we exist to provide, in effort to create a sense of belonging



EXTRAORDINARY

Value Statement

We aspire to provide extraordinary experiences by thinking creatively, creating personal interactions and delivering unique services that positively impact lives

Value Descriptors

CREATIVE

We are Innovative and resourceful in effort to deliver the delightfully unexpected

PERSONAL

We create personal interactions that strive to exceed expectations

IMPACTFUL

We strive to leave a long-term positive impact through memorable experiences

Operational Framework

CUSTOMER

We strive to provide an extraordinary customer experience by thinking creatively and creating personal interactions that leave a, long-term positive impact

TEAM MEMBER

We strive to provide an extraordinary work culture by thinking creatively and creating personal interactions that leave a long-term positive impact

RESOURCES

We strive to provide extraordinary experiences by investing in innovative resources that improve personal interactions and leave a long-term positive impact



CARING

Value Statement

We care about our relationships with others, as well as sustaining and improving our material, financial and natural resources, through best practices that foster trust and ensure long term health, safety, and wellbeing.

Value Descriptors

HEALTHY AND SAFETY

We are committed to material, social, emotional, financial, and environmental health, safety and security

TRUST

We believe in each other and demonstrate a commitment to honesty, empathy, humility and accountability.

LEADERSHIP

We responsibly steward our relationships and resources through best practices and a focus on long-term vitality

Operational Framework

CUSTOMER

We show care towards our customers by prioritizing health and safety, fostering trusting relationships and displaying responsible leadership

TEAM MEMBER

We show care towards our team members by prioritizing health and safety, fostering trusting relationships and displaying responsible leadership

RESOURCES

We invest in resources that prioritize health, safety, and responsible stewardship of our material, financial and natural resources



APPENDIX I

PARK LIST INVENTORY



PARK LIST INVENTORY

Park ID	Park Name	Park Category	Park Amenities	Open Access Park Land	Land Owner	Planning District	Zone	Parcel	Acquisition Year	Encumbrance	Former Name	Address	Included In	Accuracy
45	Brandside Parkway	Pathway	Playground Picnic Area Tennis (Dual Use) Backstop Drinking Fountain Bike Rack	Unstructured Greenspace	PDHP		R-5	N/A					No	0.01
44	Brown Park	Neighborhood Park		Open Access Park Land	PDHP	S. Green Bay Rd. E.	R-6 and B2	16-36-112-001	1930		West Longview Park	655 Burton Ave.	Yes	4
20	Buckhorn Park	Mini park		Open Access Park Land	PDHP	West Side	R-6	16-23-300-003	1967			1855 Cawth Ave.	Yes	0.4
4	Carroll F. Snyder Park	Neighborhood Park	Playground Walking Paths & Biking Trails Drinking Fountain Bike Rack Water Spigot	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	S. Green Bay Rd. E.	R-6	16-36-103-023	1951, 1978		Burn Oak Park	747 Pleasant Ave.	Yes	4
40	Central Park	Neighborhood Park	Picnic Area Public Restroom Parking Drinking Fountain Basketball Court Baseball Baseball Practice Area Fishing Access Frisbee/Disc Golf Mixed-Use Fields Playground Picnic Area Tennis Walking Paths & Biking Trails Athletic Field Lights Bike Rack Drinking Fountain Public Restroom Parking	Open Access Park Land	CHP	Central East	R-4	16-23-236-001				125 Central Ave.	No	7
10	Danny Carroll Park	Community Park	Playground Public Restroom Parking Fishing Pier Walking Paths & Biking Trails	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	North Central	R-1 and R-5	16-09-300-010 16-09-300-011 16-09-300-012 16-09-400-003 16-16-200-001 16-16-200-006 16-16-200-007 16-16-200-011 16-16-200-012 16-16-200-013 16-16-201-001 16-16-201-022	1963	EPA	Centennial Park, Skokie Highlands	2700 Trail Way	Yes	64
24	Devonshire Park	Neighborhood Park	Playground Bike Rack	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	Southwest	R-6	16-37-300-001	1958-1967			1060 Devonshire Ct.	Yes	1
34	Foley's Pond	Passive Natural Area	Backstop Basketball Half Court Playground Tennis Walking Paths & Biking Trails	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	Central	R-1	16-26-107-019	1925			1268 McCannells Ave.	Yes	5
26	Fontana-Pascual Park	Neighborhood Park	Bike Rack Drinking Fountain Walking Paths & Biking Trails	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	West Side	R-4	16-21-411-012 16-21-415-013 16-21-411-014 16-21-411-015	1972, 1973, 1979		Cloverdale Park	1780 Eastwood Ave.	Yes	3
42	Founder's Park	Special Use Park	Drinking Fountain Indoor Pickleball and paddle courts Off-Leash Dog Areas (Seasonal) Miniature/Hobbyist Golf Driving Range Golf Practice Area Parking	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	Southwest	R-5	16-36-415-008				1 St. Johns Ave.	Yes	0.3
38	Golf Learning Center/Club Pickle and Paddle	Special Use Park	Drinking Fountain Public Restroom	Primarily Paid Access	PDHP	North Central	R-1	16-22-101-007	319 EPA			2505 Skokie Valley Hwy.	No	21
2	Grove Park	Undeveloped Park	Picnic Area Swimming Pool Splash Pad Play Area Drinking Fountain Concession Public Restroom Parking	Unstructured Greenspace	PDHP	Southwest	R-6	16-27-402-012				1566 Grove Ave.	Yes	0.5
37	Hidden Creek Aqua Park	Special Use Park	Bike Rack	Primarily Paid Access	PDHP	South Central	PA	16-27-201-025	1959			1220 Fredrickson Pl.	No	15
2A	Higmoor Park	Passive Natural Area	Parking Walking Paths & Biking Trails Picnic Area Council Ring Drinking Fountain Bike Rack Playground Basketball Half Court Mixed-Use Fields Backstop	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	Northwest	R-3	16-21-101-034 16-21-101-035 16-21-101-036	1964			2255 Ridger Rd.	Yes	11
49	Jens Jensen Park	Special Use Park	Drinking Fountain Bike Rack Playground Basketball Half Court Mixed-Use Fields Backstop	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	Ravine Reserves	B2	16-36-113-001 16-36-113-002 16-36-113-003 16-36-113-004	1924		Station Park	488 Roger Williams Ave.	Yes	1
31	Kennedy Park	Neighborhood Park	Parking Bike Rack	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	South Central	R-6	16-36-300-018 16-36-301-030 16-36-300-017	1963		Clawey Park	Clawey Rd.	Yes	7
18	Knoll Park	Mini park	Playground Picnic Area Off-Leash Dog Areas Basketball Court Frisbee/Disc Golf Tennis Mixed-Use Fields Baseball Fishing Pier Outdoor Fitness Trail Walking Paths & Biking Trails Baseball Practice Area Public Restroom Parking Drinking Fountain Athletic Field Lights Golf Bike Rack Water Spigot	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	North Central	R-5	16-10-311-001				3485 Kismet Ave.	Yes	0.2
3	Larry Fink Memorial Park	Community Park		Open Access Park Land	PDHP	South Central	R-1	16-35-100-001 16-35-100-002 16-35-100-003 16-35-100-005 16-35-100-006		EPA Project IDNR Easement for ingress and egress at the Skokie Drainage Ditch bridge and portion of the road. OS&AD Water Main Easement	South Skokie Park, Deer Creek Park	1377 Clavay Rd. 2200 Gorge Ave.	Yes Yes	71 2
36	Leonard Park	Passive Natural Area	Playground Picnic Area Basketball Court Mixed-Use Fields Baseball Walking Paths & Biking Trails Public Restroom Parking	Unstructured Greenspace	PDHP	Northwest	R-3	16-21-200-010 16-21-200-011 16-21-200-017	1972		Orange Park			
40	Lincoln Park	Neighborhood Park	Bike Rack	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	S. Green Bay Rd.	R-6	16-26-215-001 16-26-215-007		IDNR - OS&AD24		1289 Green Bay Rd.	Yes	4
43	Lincoln Place Park	Mini park		Open Access Park Land	PDHP	Central East		16-26-200-001	1961			1410 St. Johns Ave.	Yes	0.4
47	Lincolnwood Parkway	Pathway		Unstructured Greenspace	PDHP		R-5	N/A					No	0.01
46	Longview Park	Pathway	Walking Paths & Biking Trails	Open Access Park Land	CHP	Central East	R-6	16-25-300-002 16-36-100-002 16-36-100-001 16-25-300-001	1929			1040 St. Johns Ave.	No	5
4E	Memorial Park	Special Use Park	Picnic Area Drinking Fountain Public Restroom Parking Walking Paths & Biking Trails Beach Access Fishing Water Spigot Council Ring Public Restroom Parking	Open Access Park Land	CHP	Central East	R-5	16-23-412-001				405 Prospect Ave.	Yes	1
4	Millard Park	Passive Natural Area	Picnic Area Off-Leash Dog Areas (Seasonal) Walking Paths & Biking Trails Sculpture Park Beach Access Drinking Fountain Bike Rack Water Spigot Public Restroom Parking	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	Central East	R-4	16-25-100-001 16-25-100-002 16-24-307-009 16-24-307-010 16-24-307-011 16-24-307-012 16-25-100-027	1910, 1970, 1976	USEPA, OS&AD	Ravine Beach	35 Ravine Dr.	No	13
20	Mooney Park	Neighborhood Park	Playground Basketball Court Basketball Half Court Backstop Walking Paths & Biking Trails Volleyball Drinking Fountain Bike Rack Water Spigot Council Ring Public Restroom Parking	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	West Side	R-6	16-27-301-010 16-27-301-011	1954, 1957					
48	Moraine Park	Special Use Park	Picnic Area Off-Leash Dog Areas (Seasonal) Walking Paths & Biking Trails Sculpture Park Beach Access Drinking Fountain Bike Rack Water Spigot Public Restroom Parking	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	Moraine North	R-4	16-14-403-005	1999	NISD Easement		2051 Sheridan Rd.	No	13
41	Moroney Park	Neighborhood Park	Playground Drinking Fountain Backstop Playground Picnic Area Basketball Half Court Tennis (Dual Use) Public Restroom Drinking Fountain Bike Rack	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	Central East	R-6	16-25-306-001 16-25-308-001	1927			1055 St. Johns Ave.	Yes	2
3C	Old Elm Park	Neighborhood Park	Playground Mixed-Use Fields Backstop Walking Paths & Biking Trails Parking	Open Access Park Land	PDHP	North Central	R-5	16-10-313-001 16-10-308-017	1928			3420 Kismet Ave.	Yes	5
2C	Olson Park	Neighborhood Park	Drinking Fountain Bike Rack	Open Access Park Land	PDHP/NISD 112	West Side	R-3	16-21-300-008 16-21-401-012 16-21-300-007	1962	Storm Sewer Easement		1800 Spruce Ave.	Yes	21



2036

