

COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Park District of Oak Park is **continually planning** for the future.



The Park District of Oak Park strives to provide the Oak Park community with high quality parks, programs and facilities, keeping wellness, equity, and conservation at the forefront of planning. PDOP recognizes the need to continuously improve parks and facilities throughout the District and utilizes a Comprehensive Master Plan to guide and direct decision-making and investments to continue to exceed our community's desires and expectations.

The Comprehensive Master Plan for the years 2015-2024 supports the Mission, Vision and Values of the Park District. It has been crafted to provide the District with a clear delineation of action items and key steps needed for the successful implementation of the community's priorities over time. It serves as a living document that provides the foundation for future plans and addresses the changing needs of our community. The District annually evaluates the Plan to stay on top of current community needs, while remaining transparent in our capital process.

This Plan was developed through a community-driven process that evaluates existing open space, facility conditions, current programming, demographic projections, changing trends, and gaps and overlaps in levels of service. Using this information combined with community input, a list of priorities was established for facilities, open space, and programs.



PLANNING PROCESS

Four distinct phases make up the Comprehensive Master Plan:

- 1 Engage:** Gathered input from a broad spectrum of community members through stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and a quantitative community attitude and interest survey.
- 2 Analyze:** Conducted a comprehensive analysis of Park District parks, facilities, programs, and operational practices. Commissioned a study of community demographics and trends in recreation to evaluate the Park District's current successes in meeting community program needs.
- 3 Envision:** Based on the input from community dialogue, the survey results, and the analysis conducted, a range of master plan recommendations were developed and vetted with the Park Board, the Park District Citizen Committee, and through three community meetings.
- 4 Implement:** Through quarterly staff review and implementation of the detailed plan recommendations, the District tracks progress and completion of the recommendations through MPower, our performance management system.

2015-2024 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Seven categories of recommendations and the steps needed to implement them make up the core of the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Parks & Open Space · Recreation Facilities & Buildings
Programming · Marketing · Organization & Planning
Administration · Maintenance & Operations · Funding

Parks & Open Space

The items in this category focus on the open space components of the Park District and the modifications necessary to ensure they meet the needs of the community.

- ✓ Purchased land adjacent to Carroll Park; transformed this area to expand Carroll Park with grass, benches, and a walkway
- ✓ Added two additional walking paths to parks totaling 3.67 miles of park walking paths
- ✓ Added two additional bioswales in our parks
- ✓ Deployed all-natural field maintenance approach using biosolids on sports fields
- ✓ Acquired and demolished home located across from Carroll Center and recycled 90% of its materials
- ✓ Renovated five playgrounds and added inclusive and natural play features; donated playground equipment to Kids Around the World to repurpose in underdeveloped countries
- ✓ Added six bike repair stations to our parks
- ✓ Installed signage utilizing QR codes to educate visitors about the trees in the parks
- ✓ Added a temporary batting cage at Lindberg Park
- ✓ Installed PDOP's first permanent outdoor fitness equipment

Recreation Facilities & Buildings

The recommendations in this category address the built structures and specific recreation amenities within the District.

- ✓ Constructed Carroll Center using Passive House design; successfully operating as a net zero building
- ✓ Diverting excess energy collected from Carroll Center solar panels to the park lights

- ✓ Added dashboards highlighting energy usage and savings at Carroll Center
- ✓ Added 604 additional solar panels to five existing and/or new facilities
- ✓ Purchased Dole Center from the Village for senior and arts and crafts programming
- ✓ Installed two, new energy-efficient electric heat pumps in facilities
- ✓ Awarded 33 construction contracts to build the Community Recreation Center; 29% awarded to MWBE
- ✓ Repurposed worn tennis courts to dedicated pickleball courts; striped four additional tennis courts with pickleball lines
- ✓ Installed Geothermal HVAC system at Pleasant Home
- ✓ Began construction of the Communication Recreation Center

Programming

This section has recommendations focused on the changes to programming within the District.

- ✓ Expanded arts & crafts programs and dedicated senior programming at Dole Center
- ✓ Expanded programs focused on sustainability and the environment, including zero-waste stations at all PDOP events, and nature-themed summer camps
- ✓ Hosted a new mentoring program for marginalized youth through partnerships with a local government group, local youth club, and former resident
- ✓ Increased the number of free community events, including three park scavenger hunts, pop-up park events, and a new mobile pop-up park bike
- ✓ Created an Esports team for teens



2015-2024 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN HIGHLIGHTS



Marketing

The recommendations in this section address activities necessary to create further awareness of the Park District and its offerings.

- ✓ Adjusted the timing and focus of marketing materials and messaging to enhance communications
- ✓ Identified the need to launch a new website and conducted preliminary research to address current issues
- ✓ Engaged multiple local BIPOC groups to discuss program ideas and how to effectively market to these residents

Organization & Planning

This section includes recommendations on activities that will keep the District organized, focused, and prepared for the key issues of the next 10 years.

- ✓ Created the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan
- ✓ Conducted annual updates to the Capital Improvement Plan
- ✓ Conducted a virtual Master Plan review with community members for one park
- ✓ Completed 2019 Community Survey (conducted every five years) to evaluate residents' demographics and identify recreation needs and interests

Administration, Maintenance, and Operations

Recommendations in this section work to address the day-to-day activities that occur “behind the scenes” that keep the District operating in an efficient manner.

- ✓ Purchased a computerized work-order system to improve productivity, asset prevention maintenance, and agency-wide planning
- ✓ Developed or restructured custom online training programs for internal and external use
- ✓ Conducted three online community meetings in real-time with survey tools to gather information
- ✓ Purchased battery-powered landscaping equipment

Funding

The recommendations of this section address items critical to the future financial health of the District.

- ✓ Engaged the Parks Foundation to lead the capital campaign for the Community Recreation Center
- ✓ Secured \$3.2 million in grant funding to support sustainability efforts
- ✓ Launched the Tribute Brick Paver program to support the CRC capital campaign efforts

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The Park District of Oak Park will continue to work on the recommendations included in this plan through 2024. In 2023, the District will commence work on developing a new 10-year Comprehensive Master Plan. Using the planning process outlined above, the Plan will also explore and include emerging community trends, environmental implications, and current events.

