



2014 Comprehensive Master Plan

Park District of Oak Park

Adopted December 18, 2014

Historic Preservation

The Park District of Oak Park currently owns and maintains several historic landscapes, buildings and sites that are considered significant architecturally, historically and culturally to the Village of Oak Park. These architectural and historical resources are not only important Park District facilities but also “iconic” buildings and places that help define and contribute to the Village’s overall image and quality of life. Over the years, the Park District has taken the appropriate measures to preserve, rehabilitate and re-use these historic resources for current and future generations of Oak Park residents and visitors to the community.

Of the Park District’s facilities, there are three historic resources that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, this nation’s official list of buildings, structures and sites worthy of preservation. The National Register is a program of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and administered in Illinois by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA). The buildings include the Oak Park Conservatory (constructed in 1929 and listed in 2005), and the Pleasant Home (constructed in 1897 and listed in 1972), originally known as the Farson-Mills House and designed by noted Prairie School architect George W. Maher. Scoville Park (originally Scoville Place, constructed in 1913), Oak Park’s first public park and designed by the landscape architect Jens Jensen, was listed in the National Register in 2002. According to the Village of Oak Park’s Historic Preservation Commission, Taylor Park, also designed by Jens Jensen, is considered potentially eligible for listing in the National Register but has not been nominated.

In addition to National Register listing, the Pleasant Home is also a designated National Historic Landmark. National Historic Landmarks are nationally-significant historic properties and places designated only by the Secretary of the Interior due to their exceptional value or quality in demonstrating and illustrating a certain aspect of the heritage of the United States. There are currently 86 National Historic Landmarks in Illinois. Designation as a National Historic Landmark or listing

in the National Register do not place restrictions on the use of property but provide a level of protection against federally-funded or licensed projects that may alter or significantly impact listed or designated buildings, structures, sites and objects. Designation also provides the opportunity for the Park District to apply for federal-level grants for bricks and mortar projects when funding is available. National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) are also eligible to receive in-depth site inspections funded and coordinated by the National Park Service regional offices, with the nearest located in Denver, Colorado. The purpose of the inspection is to analyze a NHL’s condition, identify and prioritize recommended preservation treatments, and provide cost estimates for such treatments. A building condition assessment report may also be completed.



FENCING CLASS AT ANDERSEN

It should be noted that two other parks and facilities are included as part of the three National Register Historic Districts in Oak Park. Austin Gardens Park at Forest Place and Ontario Street is a contributing resource in the Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie School of Architecture National Register Historic District, which is bounded by Division Street to the north, Lake Street to south and Harlem and Ridgeland Avenues to the west and east respectively; and, Mills Park, part of the original Farson-Mills estate, is a contributing resource in the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District, which extends south from Lake Street and South

Boulevard to Washington Boulevard and from Harlem to Ridgeland Avenues from west to east. Contributing resources are buildings, sites, structures and objects that add or “contribute” to the architectural, historical and other design qualities of a particular National Register Historic District. The Randolph Park at the southwest corner of Randolph Street and Oak Park Avenue is located within the Ridgeland-Oak Park Historic District; this park facility is a non-contributing resource due to its most recent renovation in 2010.

The three National Register Historic Districts are also designated Village of Oak Park Historic Districts by municipal ordinance, which mandates design review for proposed plans that may alter the exterior appearance of contributing buildings to the Historic District by the Village’s Historic Preservation Commission. The Oak Park Conservatory and the Pleasant Home are also designated as Village of Oak Park Landmarks. While routine maintenance projects and exterior changes that are not visible in the public right-of-way only receive an advisory review by the Commission, projects that propose partial or full demolition of a contributing resource must receive a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Commission, with which owners of historic properties must comply. Therefore, design review for contributing historic resources located in Park District parks, whether they be buildings, sites, structures or objects and located in Village of Oak Park Historic Districts is required for any proposed projects that may alter or demolish such resources.

Going forward, the Park District of Oak Park should continue to be good stewards of its historic buildings, sites and landscapes that make up part of its facilities. Such facilities are important legacies of Oak Park’s heritage and serve to inform the community on the important people, architects and landscape architects that helped shape the community’s architectural icons and public spaces. While it is recognized that maintaining historic park facilities can be challenging,

the Park District may need to continue underwriting operations and maintenance costs while exploring additional partnership opportunities, such as Pleasant Home Foundation’s co-stewardship partnership for example, which can help generate additional revenues for rehabilitating buildings and landscapes. Additionally, the Park District should pursue funding and grant opportunities when they become available and consult with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and the National Park Service.

The Park District could also participate in or partially fund professional consultation and training services that can help potential partners and organizations build their capacity to help manage historic buildings and facilities. Consultation and training services could focus on topics ranging from organizational assessments, strategic planning, board development and fundraising. The Park District could partially fund such consultation with possible matching grants from local foundations and corporations.



Manage & Refine Partnership Opportunities

Due to existing space constraints, the Park District has been diligent in establishing and maintaining partnerships that provide additional spaces for recreational programming. These include the use of indoor and outdoor spaces owned by School Districts 97 and 200. The Park District has continued to refine these partnership opportunities over the last several years by partnering with District 97 on enhancements to some of the school fields, and through the recently approved Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) for the maintaining the school district's fields.

The District should review and evaluate these agreements to identify opportunities to address level of service goals, such as additional pool or indoor gymnasium usage. Additionally, the District should search for other partnerships, which could include private or public groups, health/medical entities or other adjacent park districts.

Manage District Historic Resources

The Park District has three historic properties: The Oak Park Conservatory, Pleasant Home and Cheney Mansion. These properties contribute to the unique character of the community and should continue to be managed by the Park District.

As established in the Park District's Historic Property Management Plan, the District should continue to provide staff for the operations of both Cheney Mansion and the Conservatory and coordinate with its partner entity, the Pleasant Home Foundation, which provides staff for the day-to-day operations of Pleasant Home. The District should also continue to work with the Friends of the Conservatory, a volunteer group which provides funds for both programming and capital projects for this facility. These existing partnerships are important to the success of the District's historic resources.

The Park District of Oak Park should continue to provide capital funds for all three properties and identify and budget for expenditures in the Capital Improvement Plan. Historic resources create opportunities for different types of funding and grant opportunities than traditional recreational sources. These sources, such as Federal-level funds aimed at planning and rehabilitation, should be explored and pursued where applicable and when available.

Another consideration for further managing the District's historic properties would be to fund and conduct training services to grow capacity and build skills for partner organizations such as the foundations or other volunteer groups. Strategic planning and fundraising are the two most important skills as well as leadership development and training of Foundation board members. Enhanced capacity in these partner groups will ultimately help the District as it relates to historic properties.

LEGEND

\$ less than \$100,000
 \$\$ \$100,000 to \$1,000,000
 \$\$\$ greater than \$1,000,000

Recommendation	Page	Timeframe	Responsible Parties and Partners (Project Lead in BOLD)	Funding Sources	Cost Level	Actions/Key Tasks	Target Completion
PARKS & OPEN SPACE							
PURSUE PARK/RECREATION SPACE ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT	129	On-Going	Executive Director Parks Foundation of Oak Park Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Finance Director	Capital Projects Fund Donations	\$\$ - \$\$\$	Monitor and update list of potential properties Work with Parks Foundation to approach property owners Develop agreements with property owners when opportunities arise Re-evaluate and adjust fund set-aside as needed as part of the annual CIP	On-going
LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO USE UNDERUSED SPACES	130	On-Going	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Finance Director	Capital Projects Fund Grants	\$ - \$\$	Identify and prioritize potential underused spaces within the Village Contact and communicate with land owners Identify potential mechanisms for temporary or long-term use Develop agreements Budget for improvements and maintenance	On-going
ENHANCE WALKING & BIKING AMENITIES	131	On-Going	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Finance Director Recreation Superintendent	Capital Projects Fund Corporate Fund Recreation Fund	\$	Coordinate with Village on planned bike improvements Evaluate quantities and identify locations for additional racks Identify opportunities to expand walking opportunities Incorporate additional bike racks into future Master Plans Provide signage for path distances in each park Budget for site improvements and additional racks in CIP Create walking and running programs for youth and adults Create programs for bike safety lessons	On-going
INTEGRATE ART INTO PARKS	133	On-Going	Parks Foundation of Oak Park Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Recreation Superintendent Finance Director Arts Advisory Committee Oak Park Area Arts Council Village of Oak Park Public Art Advisory Commission	Donations Grants Corporate Fund	\$	Coordinate with other local agencies Parks Foundation to begin fund raising Identify priority locations within District Seek grants from art focused foundations Implement art when fund raising goals achieved Set goals, policies and procedures that support local artists	On-going
ENHANCE DISTRICT SIGNAGE	134	Short-Term (1 to 3 Years)	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Finance Director Marketing and Communication Director	Capital Projects Fund Corporate Fund	\$	Develop standards and consistent information for rules/hours signs Budget for new signs in CIP Integrate new branding into park identification signs Interchange park rule signs as needed	2015/016
REGULARLY UPDATE MASTER PLANS & ADA IMPROVEMENTS	135	On-Going	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Asst. Superintendent of B & G Recreation Superintendent Finance Director Marketing and Communication Director Revenue Facilities Superintendent	Capital Projects Fund Corporate Fund Revenue Facilities Fund	\$	Continue with scheduled Master Plan reviews and updates Continue implementing ADA Transition Plan Prioritize the ADA transition plan, identifying sites and incorporate into the budget. Continue to record ADA improvements Incorporate Level of Service Standards	On-going
CONTINUE WITH FIELD MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT	136	On-Going	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Sport Field Manager Finance Director	Corporate Fund Capital Projects Fund	\$	Identify long-term goals for underdrainage, irrigation and re-grading Incorporate long-term goals into Master Plans and CIP Work to raise D97 fields up to PDOP standards	On-going
RECREATION FACILITIES & BUILDINGS							
PLAN FOR DECONSTRUCTION OF NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS	137	Mid-Term (4-7 Years)	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Finance Director Recreation Superintendent Project Manager Marketing and Communication Director	Capital Projects Fund Corporate Fund	\$	Identify cost savings associated with removal Identify locations to relocate current programs Identify costs with deconstruction and include in CIP Receive Park Board Action Incorporate deconstruction into Master Plans Relocate programs Deconstruct buildings Create Communication Plan for neighbors, users and media	2019

LEGEND

\$ less than \$100,000
 \$\$ \$100,000 to \$1,000,000
 \$\$\$ greater than \$1,000,000

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ALIGN PARK MASTER PLANS WITH DISTRICT LEVEL OF SERVICE	138	On-Going	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Recreation Superintendent Finance Director Marketing and Communication Director	Capital Projects Fund Corporate Fund Grants	\$\$	Evaluate opportunities for additions/changes during Master Plan updates Incorporate changes into CIP Implement changes	On-going
INCORPORATE BATTING CAGES INTO FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS	139	On-Going	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Recreation Superintendent Finance Director Marketing and Communication Director	Capital Projects Fund Corporate Fund Grants	\$	Identify and evaluate potential batting cage locations Test locations with community during associated Master Plan updates Incorporate planned additional batting cages into CIP Implement additional batting cages	On-going
CONDUCT FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR INDOOR RECREATION FACILITY	140	Short-Term (1-3 Years)	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Finance Director Recreation Superintendent Marketing and Communication Director Project Manager	Capital Projects Fund	\$ - \$\$\$	Identify if indoor pool or other elements should be incorporated into feasibility study Identify budget for study and budget funds Prepare RFP for feasibility study Select consultant and conduct feasibility study Identify potential program opportunities facility would allow Communicate the decision to the public	2016
ASSESS OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDOOR POOL	141	Mid-Term (4-7 Years)	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Revenue Facilities Superintendent Recreation Superintendent Finance Director	Capital Projects Fund Revenue Facilities Fund	\$ - \$\$\$	Continue to track D200 progress and keep communication open Identify other public & private agencies in community for potential partnerships Include indoor pool in recreation feasibility study if D200 opportunities do not exist Make decision based on results and budget in CIP if appropriate	2019
CONTINUE TO MANAGE PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES	142	On-Going	Executive Director Recreation Superintendent	Recreation Administration Fund	\$	Identify additional opportunities for use of spaces/facilities Update and refine agreements with existing partners as needed Identify funding partnerships with user groups	On-going
CONTINUE TO MANAGE HISTORIC RESOURCES OWNED BY THE DISTRICT	142	On-Going	Executive Director Buildings and Grounds Superintendent Conservatory Manager Cheney Mansion Supervisor Pleasant Home Foundation Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory	Capital Projects Fund Museum Fund Corporate Fund Cheney Mansion Fund	\$\$	Continue to build and refine partnerships with foundations and friends groups Continue to budget for on-going maintenance and improvements Explore and pursue additional funding and grant opportunities Fund and conduct training services to build partner capacity and skills	On-going
PROGRAMMING							
INCREASE PARTICIPATION LEVELS WITHIN THE DISTRICT	143	On-Going	Executive Director Recreation Superintendent Revenue Facilities Superintendent Conservatory Manager Marketing and Communications Director	Corporate Fund Revenue Facilities Fund Recreation Fund	\$	Evaluate programs lifecycles and participation levels on annual basis Modify program offerings to increase participation levels Advertise and promotes new program offerings Conduct in-person and online survey on an annual basis to evaluate progress Use 5 years Needs Assessment update as statistically valid survey to track progress	On-going
IMPROVE ADULT FITNESS PROGRAMMING	144	Short-Term (1 to 3 Years)	Executive Director Recreation Superintendent Revenue Facilities Superintendent Finance Director Communication and Marketing Director	Recreation Fund Communications & Marketing Fund Recreation Administration Fund	\$	Identify potential changes to delivery of service Test and implement changes Retire or reposition programs near the end of their lifecycle Conduct additional targeted surveys to identify program specific community needs/priorities Introduce new or repositioned programs to address identified needs/priorities Conduct and track program lifecycles on an annual basis Marketing efforts to target user groups	2015
IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMING	144	Short-Term (1 to 3 Years)	Executive Director Conservatory Manager Recreation Superintendent Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory	Corporate Fund Recreation Fund Grants	\$	Identify potential environmental programs that can be paired with specific District facilities Conduct additional targeted surveys to identify program specific community desires Introduce new programs to address identified needs/priorities Conduct and track program lifecycles on an annual basis Use GAC to assist in ideas and marketing options to get the word out on our new programs. Partner with D97 and D200 and local colleges for program offerings	2016

Recommendation	Page	Timeframe	Responsible Parties and Partners (Project Lead in BOLD)	Funding Sources	Cost Level	Actions/Key Tasks	Target Completion
CREATE & SUPPORT CONTINUED CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES	145	On-Going	Executive Director Recreation Superintendent Arts Advisory Committee Oak Park Area Arts Council	Corporate Fund Recreation Administration Fund	\$	Participate in current Oak Park Cultural Plan development process Coordinate with other local agencies Evaluate opportunities to continue/expand concerts and theater in parks Integrate Art into Parks (see previous recommendation)	On-going
MARKETING							
IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BRANDING STUDY	146	Short-Term (1 to 3 Years)	Executive Director Marketing and Communications Director Finance Director	Corporate Fund	\$\$	Refresh Logo Develop Brand Standards Guide Develop similar looks for revenue centers Develop a photography calendar Adjust and tune the focus of marketing materials and messaging Ensure messaging reflects unique attributes of PDOP: Convenience, Variety, Affordability, Quality Conduct a branding study/survey in 5 to 10 years	2017
ORGANIZATION & PLANNING							
CONTINUE TO UPDATE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) ANNUALLY	147	On-Going	Executive Director Finance		\$	Monitor outcomes of Master Plan updates Monitor feedback from maintenance analysis, park ambassador outreach and other sources Evaluate priorities, issues and opportunities and modify CIP accordingly	On-going
COMMUNICATE COLLABORATION & ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP EFFORTS	148	On-Going	Executive Director Marketing and Communications Director Recreation Superintendent	Corporate Fund	\$	Update list of collaboration efforts on an annual basis Identify opportunities (annual report, website, program brochure) to communicate efforts Implement communications on a regular basis Use VOP's FYI to highlight	On-going
UPDATE NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN FIVE YEARS	148	Mid-Term (4-7 Years)	Executive Director Marketing and Communications Director	Corporate Fund Capital Projects Fund	\$	Identify additional information goals of updated assessment Select consultant to write and administer survey Review, evaluate and communicate results Make changes/improvements as appropriate	2019
ADMINISTRATION, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS							
ADVANCE PARK AMBASSADOR PROGRAM	149	On-Going	Executive Director Revenue Facilities Superintendent Recreation Superintendent	Corporate Fund	\$	Identify opportunities to collect additional data at parks without centers Work with park ambassadors to collect additional information Develop process for regularly evaluating and sharing input Provide additional training on software to increase functionality Incorporate a continuous improvement model	On-going
EVALUATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO FURTHER SUSTAINABILITY WITHIN DISTRICT	149	On-Going	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds	Buildings & Grounds Fund Facilities Fund	\$	Develop policy for evaluating cost recovery on sustainable upgrades to capital projects Identify potential target projects or sustainable goals Integrate sustainable practices where appropriate opportunities arise Monitor and track impacts - communicate and market successes	On-going
CONDUCT FURTHER ANALYSIS & USE OF MAINTENANCE FEEDBACK	150	Short-Term (1 to 3 Years)	Executive Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Finance Director Revenue Facilities Superintendent	Corporate Fund Revenue Facilities Fund	\$	Continue to track work orders Continue to evaluate open spaces on a regular basis Develop tool for evaluating facilities on a regular basis Implement process for analysis of information collected and development of recommendations	2015
FUNDING							
MANAGE REVENUE GROWTH	151	Mid-Term (4-7 Years)	Executive Director Finance Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Revenue Facilities Superintendent Recreation Superintendent	Recreation Administration Fund Revenue Facilities Fund	\$	Conduct and track program lifecycles on an annual basis Continue to track and analyze use of facilities Establish cost recovery goals for programs or program areas Develop full cost accounting for each program or class Implement changes based on lifecycle, use, and cost recovery analysis Meet tax/earned revenue ratio goal of 50/50	2020
IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE PARKS FOUNDATION	151	Short-Term (1 to 3 Years)	Executive Director Parks Foundation of Oak Park Finance Director Buildings & Grounds Superintendent	Donations	\$	Participate in the development of the Foundation's Master Plan Identify key opportunities for Foundation to support District goals Establish key giving areas for Foundation to approve	2016