



Executive Summary

The Wood Dale Park District (WDPD) staff and Planning Resources Team, working together with community leaders and the general public, collaborated to develop the Wood Dale Park District Community Action Park Plan (CAP Plan). The CAP Plan conveys a vision for parks and recreation within the Park District. The Plan identifies the actions that the WDPD will be working to implement to satisfy the expectations of the community. It includes recommendations that provide guidance for improving programs and services, creating a financially responsible organization, protecting open spaces, improving and repurposing facilities and instituting continuous improvement processes. The purpose of the CAP plan is to guide operational, recreation planning and development efforts, and philosophical decisions of the District over the

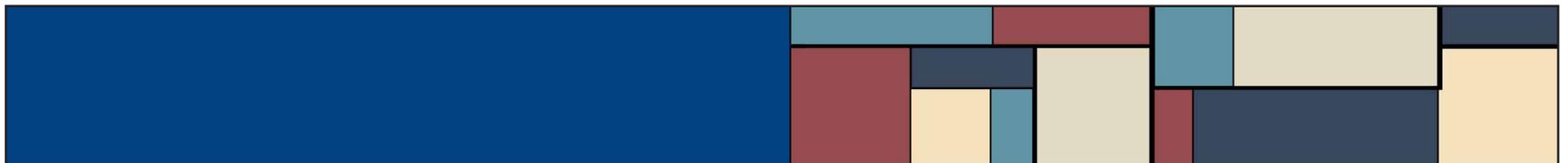
next 5-10 year period, through 2025.

The CAP Plan is the result of an extensive community process. The goal of the Plan is to be a comprehensive park and recreation planning tool for use in improving the District's park system by identifying priorities, long-term physical development, expanding recreation programming and ensuring effective utilization of existing parks and facilities owned and leased by the District.

This CAP Plan is a commitment to a course of action that will lead to the development of a park and recreation system reflecting the vision of the people of the WDPD. As that vision grows and changes, the CAP Plan can be adapted to match the new vision. The CAP Plan contains text, maps, tables and charts that describe existing conditions, apply accepted performance criteria,

and recommend specific improvements to the existing system. Once adopted, the Plan will serve as the official document to be used by the community to guide decisions regarding parks and recreation.

The Planning Resources Team (PRI) was commissioned by the Board to prepare the 2015 CAP Plan. Over the last eight months, WDPD in conjunction with the Planning Resources Team worked cooperatively to study the needs of the District and develop an implementation strategy. The Team is comprised of award winning professionals committed to developing a high quality road map for the WDPD to continue providing exceptional parks, facilities and recreation with a wide range of diversified programs and activities.



The outdoor recreation assessments were completed by Planning Resources Inc., the facility study was completed by FGM Architects, recreational programming, operations and maintenance were completed by Management & Planning Solutions, the public opinion/interest survey was developed and tabulated by Readex Research, and the Salt Creek Golf Club operational assessment was completed by Golf Visions.

Previous to this process, Board members and staff developed the Park District 2014-18 Strategic Initiatives. It was through this Initiative, the District's Mission, Vision, and Values Statements were reviewed and refined. In establishing the future direction of the District, the CAP Plan's objective is to reinforce and establish initiatives and recommendations for implementation in support of the mission, vision, and values identified in this document as well as maximize the quality of life through identifying the community's needs, prioritized improvements to parks, recreation facilities, and open space, and effective allocation of the District's limited resources.

Planning Process Methodology

The planning process was guided by the WDPD Executive Director, key administrative staff, and elected Park Board members, as well as by a public input process – direct public input was gathered at a series of small and large in-person meetings and through a scientific survey effort. Throughout the planning process, District representatives met with the Consultant Team to provide input. This collaborative effort fully utilized the expertise of the consultant team and incorporated local knowledge and institutional history.

Needs & Priorities Assessment Process

To gain an accurate understanding of the existing condition of the WDPD parks system and the needs of its users, the Consultant Team employed the following needs assessment techniques:

Anecdotal Techniques:

- Individual park site evaluations
- Demographics analysis
- Recreation programs analysis
- Operations and maintenance assessment

Qualitative Techniques:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Focus groups
- Community meetings and public forums

Quantitative Techniques:

- Community-Wide attitude and interest survey
- Community benchmarking
- Park Classification Level of Service (LOS) Analysis for park acreage, facilities, and access

Master Planning

The CAP Plan is based on an inventory of current conditions as well as an analysis of community needs, including valuable direction provided by District residents through a comprehensive, community-driven process, statistically-valid survey responses, and comments made in a series of focus groups, public workshops and other forums. The CAP Plan is presented in a sequence of chapters that identify trends in parks and recreation, a detailed look at the District and the community that it serves,

a description of the input garnered from the stakeholders, program and facility users, and interested residents received during the planning process, in-depth assessments of the parks and facilities, and recommendations for the future.

The following is an overview of the contents of the CAP Plan document:

Chapter I: Introduction

The Introduction Chapter of the CAP Plan identifies the purposes of the Plan and provides a general background and history of the past 47 years of the Park District and highlights several key events during the City of Wood Dale's celebrated history.

Chapter II: Community Profile and Demographics

In order to plan for the District's future, we must first understand the history, culture and traditions of the community as these are underlying principles that help shape a community along with the people it serves. This chapter reviews the City of Wood Dale and the Wood Dale Park District's demographics and growth trends since 1970 including annual growth rates. Although the WDPD includes areas within multiple municipal jurisdictions, the chapter focuses on the residents living in the City of Wood Dale rather than on the municipalities as the Team feels the variance in these areas does not adversely affect the comparisons and analysis. This chapter also projects population figures to the year 2020 (5 years out) and 2040 (25 years out). In addition to total population, the age and ethnicity of the City of Wood Dale is reviewed as well as household income trends since 2000. This information provides an understanding of the community allowing the formulation of

viable recommendations for park and recreation programs, amenities and services.

Chapter III: Community-Wide Survey

A survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the WDPD. The Consultant Team, utilizing the services of Readex Research, conducted a Community-Wide Survey to provide the necessary decision making data. The survey was developed in conjunction with the Park Board and staff and was administered from October 17, to November 12, 2014 by mail. The goal was to obtain completed surveys from a randomly selected sample of 2,000 residents. 250 surveys were completed and returned, giving a 13% response rate. The results of the random sample of 250 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 6.0%. Preferences expressed in the statistically valid Community-Wide Survey provide insights about the demand for new programs and validation of the support for past accomplishments.

The results of the survey were used to develop a number of recommendations for improving recreation programming, and facility supply. Two of the major recommendations of the report include the expansion of youth and teen programming and the need to improve and update the District's Aquatic Facility with new and exciting pool amenities. Additionally, the survey identified that no consensus was derived regarding the repurposing and reuse of the existing Log Cabin/Nature Center without future studies and discussion. These and the other recommendations contained in the Plan will prove extremely useful to the District to ensure that its park programming and facilities respond to the needs of its residents.

Chapter IV: Visioning

Visioning brings together the inventory and public input. This chapter sets the course for the CAP Plan recommendations, and is the outcome of the inventory and public process. Public engagement is critical to development of a plan that reflects community goals and build consensus among stakeholders and residents. Chapter IV summarizes the community involvement utilized in the planning process to include the integration of focus groups, staff and Board interviews. The findings of visioning meetings and interviews with WDPD staff and the Board of Commissioners provide an inside view of the District. Feedback received from the community leaders, stakeholders and interested residents are summarized and their responses to activities, challenges and funding sources is documented in the Appendices to the CAP Plan.

Chapter V: Park Classification and Level of Service (LOS)

Chapter V establishes planning standards for parks and open space and a park land/open space classification system based on use. Classification standards are developed which include service areas, size of parks, acres per 1,000 population and population served for the different types of parks. Each park type serves a distinct geographical base that ranges from a few blocks surrounding a mini-park to several miles for parks that offer amenities that are unique to a region. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has developed a classification system that is used as a base to describe most types of parks.

The WDPD oversees 15 park sites with a total of 140 acres, this total includes the Salt Creek Golf Club which comprises 67.98 acres. Based on the 2015 inventory, the WDPD Park

Matrix reflects the current inventory of parks, their acreage, classification, and amenities. The WDPD currently is providing 10.09 acres/1,000 population, which meets the NRPA recommendation of 6.25-10.0 acres/1,000 population. However, if the golf course acres as well as the Special Use park sites are not considered in the overall acreage inventory, the new total is 32.58 acres. Using the NRPA recommendation of 6.25 acres/1,000, the WDPD is deficient by 53.48 acres and utilizing the 10 acres per 1,000 population, the WDPD is deficient by 105.12 acres.

A detailed service area analysis of existing parks establishes the need for additional park space within the Community.

Chapter VI: Benchmarking

Comparing park districts and recreation agencies provide an understanding of how well an agency delivers programs, services, amenities and facilities for its residents compared with other local agencies. The rationale behind this comparison is that a localized comparison provides a more accurate analysis of the needs and deficiencies of an agency. This chapter provides a comparison of the WDPD to other park and recreation agencies in the region, providing quantitative comparison of many of the more common elements found within parks in this region. Because the District boundary extends into the Villages of Bensenville, Elk Grove Village, and Itasca, a comparison that combines the four agency's amenity offerings in addition to other like agencies is also presented. Conclusions are offered that look at this comparison with respect to public needs.

This chapter includes the assessments of key WDPD facilities as developed during the on-site evaluation of the facility properties. FGM Architects served as the team member to provide a cursory review of the six (6) buildings throughout the WDPD. Each facility assessment includes a brief overall description of the facility, discussions regarding the individual amenities and features of each facility, a series of photographs documenting existing conditions, and recommendations for improvements that are specific to each facility. Community-Wide Survey results, community visioning and discussions with WDPD Staff and Board members also factor into the recommendations for facility improvements. These recommendations are presented to allow implementation to be flexible to provide for unforeseen circumstances and for opportunities that present themselves during the course of implementation.

Chapter VIII: Operations and Programming

This chapter looks at a variety of topics regarding the day to day functioning of the District; focusing on a few specific areas where opportunities exist for improved services. Maintenance, training, collaboration, and administrative topics are discussed, with a series of recommendations presented for modifying, tracking, upgrading, or collaborating in ways providing performance standards, check lists, and defined methods of operations which will allow staff efforts to focus appropriately. These recommendations are considered suggested guidelines that can assist the District in providing great services to the community. This chapter also includes a review of the core program offerings of the District, including promotional efforts, financial review of program registrations, programming space requirements, and the

relationship of the Community-Wide Survey results and demographics to future program offerings. The evaluation also includes a review of activity areas, age segment distribution of offerings, fees, gender, and season offered. According to feedback during the public input process, residents greatly appreciate the variety of program offerings. The most significant challenge for recreation programs relates to improving programs and program variety for youth and teens within the community.

Chapter IX: Park Assessments

This chapter includes a thorough review of the parks within the system. Consulting team members reviewed all of the parks and facilities and provided assessments of general conditions of each site. The park assessment includes a 2013 aerial photo image of the park, a brief overall description of the site, discussions regarding the amenities and features of the park, a few photos of select elements and park features, and a summary of recommendations for park improvements. The recommendations incorporate feedback from the public meetings, stakeholder meetings, focus groups and staff discussions. Resident households from the Community-Wide Survey expressed high levels of satisfaction toward the condition of parks and facilities.

Chapter X: Financial Assessment

The District generates just under 74% of its total revenues, excluding golf revenues, from taxes (Real Estate and Replacement Tax). These tax receipts are dependent on the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) of real property located within the District's corporate limits.

Historically, the District's EAV grew from just

over \$589.6 million in 2004 to a high of just slightly over \$750.1 million in 2009. This was equal to an annual growth rate of almost 5% before the economic downturn that began in 2007. The EAV lags behind actual economic conditions, as the economy began to sour in 2007 and 2008 the EAV didn't respond until 2010, when it dropped by almost 13% over 2009. This decline continues to present with the EAV declining just over 31% since the 2009 peak.

In addition to this significant decline in tax base (EAV) the District is subject to the Property Tax Extension Limit Law (PTELL) also commonly called the Tax Cap Law. This legislation originally approved in 1991 limits the yearly increase in taxes levied by the taxing district to 5% or the rate of inflation whichever is lower.

The District should attempt to capture all new real estate growth as well as pursue alternate revenue sources, grants, non-tax revenues such as user fees and if necessary to meet capital improvement and replacement needs referendum and non-referendum sources.

Chapter XI: Salt Creek Golf Club

The WDPD operates the Salt Creek Golf Club which is comprised of two 9-hole short courses and a clubhouse/pro shop. The Clubhouse provides food and beverage service, limited merchandise sales, and general support for the courses. With the decline of the golf industry, decline in golf participants, and restaurant sales keeps the Golf operation from reaching its full revenue generating potential. The facility as currently structured requires significant financial support from the District to make the business viable. Many of the furnishings, equipment, materials, and support facilities within the Clubhouse have reached near the end of

their useful life and are in need of upgrade or replacement.

The WDPD and TopGolf USA entered into a long-term lease agreement. TopGolf constructed a state of the art golf driving range and mini golf course on the property offering an additional recreational/entertainment amenity to the region.

Chapter XI represents a review of the Golf facility, its setting, natural features, and clubhouse operations. The chapter highlights key issues associated with this golf facility that should be improved or adjusted to establish the desired image, playability, challenge and ambiance of this facility. Additional study and assessment is needed to determine the form and function of the clubhouse facility.

Chapter XII: Sustainability

Sustainability is defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability consists of three elements: Environment, Social Structure and Economy. Collectively, these elements provide a foundation for quality of life which supports the vision and mission of the Park District. The growth of the parks, open space, and recreation system has identified the need to refine stewardship activities and establish Best Management Practices within the agency.

Chapter XII serves as a guide for decision making for staff and Board of Commissioners so that the WDPD can provide services and maintain their facilities and operations more sustainably for the well-being of their community and the environment for present and future generations. The development and adoption of a sustainability plan and the formation of a “Green Team” will ensure that sustainable practices are incorporated into all agency activities. Additionally, the

development of an environmental policy focused on the core elements of purchasing, use of resources, energy, waste management, and planning and management will confirm the District’s commitment to leadership and sound use of the District’s resources in a responsible manner.

Chapter XIII: Recommendations

Recommendations are the blueprint for action. Chapter XIII is a series of significant findings and recommendations regarding the District’s parks and open space; open space standards; recreational facilities, park programs, and operations and maintenance.

The CAP Plan recommendations are shaped by extensive public input, a needs assessment, and sound planning practices. These findings provide an overview of details identified within the CAP Plan document.

Over the next 5 to 10 years, many influences will have an impact on the success of this plan. Funding availability, staff resources, and political and community support will play significant roles in the implementation process.

Chapter XIV – Implementation

The implementation chapter represents the conclusion to the comprehensive park master planning process, but not the end. There are a number of important steps necessary to implement the plan.

The implementation chapter identifies 15 target areas some of which include working with the City of Wood Dale to integrate and incorporate the CAP Plan into the City’s comprehensive plan. Additional targets include:

- Maximizing exposure and use of the CAP Plan

- Policy development Integrating the Budget Process
- Land acquisition
- Partnering opportunities
- Site specific (individual) park master planning
- Operations and recreation programming
- Monitor plan implementation and update
- Parks and recreation budget
- Target grant opportunities
- District-wide capital improvements
- Salt Creek Golf Course facility business plan development
- Marketing
- Capital improvement prioritization

Appendix

Additional information utilized during the development of the Community Action Park Plan including community meeting and workshop notes, stakeholder-meeting notes, and the individual site inventory data sheets for each individual park site. Individual park site maps can also be found in the appendix.

The Community-wide survey is included as a separate volume to the CAP Plan and is included in a separate binder.

Conclusion

The WDPD strives to be a best-practice agency. The CAP Plan is a guide where District staff needs to focus their energy, resources, and values for the next 10 years. It is also a plan to inform the residents on where they will invest capital improvements in the future and how they plan to address key issues that were brought forward during the public input process. The Board and staff recognize how important it is to maintain a first-class parks and recreation system to keep people living and working within the District boundaries and the economic impact the District has on the community. The recommendations outlined in the CAP Plan are aligned with the vision, mission, and core values of the community and the District. These recommendations follow what the community voiced as a priority. Currently, the Park Board of Commissioners will need to allocate additional funding to achieve these recommendations to ensure the successful implementation of the plan. Overall, the capital improvements can be utilized as a guideline for future improvements and development with flexibility to be altered and updated as circumstances and conditions change.

Significant projects will require the development of detailed implementation plans. In the development of these plans, the Park District may provide opportunities for residents to provide further comment on the project and influence its final form.

The goal of the CAP Plan is not to overextend the park district financially or operationally. The WDPD will still require strong financial support from user fees and earned income opportunities as well as a commitment from the Board to support the basic infrastructure and staffing needs of the system. This will require a continued business planning approach and support from staff to operate in the most efficient and effective manner. The District is willing and able to deliver on the recommendations in the plan. This will require everyone working together with the support of the Board of Commissioners and to support the implementation of the plan. The community desires and expects it so let the process begin!