INTRODUCTION

To support the goal of leveraging strengths like the lakefront, Winnetka Park District (Park District) officials identified a lakefront master plan update as a priority initiative in its 2011 – 2015 Strategic Master Plan. In November 2013, the Park District released an RFP for lakefront master planning services, and selected the Lakota Group team to guide the master planning process. Once engaged, the Lakota Group team assisted Park District staff in preparing an application for an Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Coastal Management Grant. The IDNR’s Coastal Management Program supports a range of projects that seek to protect, restore, and manage the Illinois Lake Michigan coast for future generations.

In April 2014, the Park District was awarded $119,000 in funding through the Coastal Management Grant program, and work on the Lakefront Master Plan began. As a first step, the Park District interviewed interested parties for positions on a ten-member advisory committee. The Lakefront Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) hosted its first meeting in December 2014.

Since December 2014, the Project Team has engaged hundreds of stakeholders - Village of Winnetka residents, Village and Park District staff and elected officials, representatives from program partners and affiliates, representatives from neighboring lakefront communities, permitting agencies, and funding partners – all of whom were enthusiastic when speaking of Winnetka’s lakefront. The Project Team heard a lot of ideas for how to improve the lakefront, as well as some concern about changing things too much. All of this input was taken to heart by the Project Team and advisory committee in developing the final recommendations outlined in this plan. The result: a community-supported vision - comprised of large-scale projects and more modest projects - that will both improve the quality of lakefront amenities available to park and beach users as well as improve the overall quality of the Illinois Lake Michigan coast for future generations.

Project work was organized into four phases: Engage, Analyze, Envision, and Implement. The first phase, Engage, focused on data collection and facilitating community conversations with a wide range of lakefront stakeholders. These conversations served two critical functions: first, they provided the Project Team with an understanding of lakefront history, context, and ideas for next steps. The conversations also helped the Project Team to convey information about the project to stakeholders and the community. The second phase, Analyze, involved a comprehensive analysis of the data collected, giving way to alternative strategies for implementation and criteria by which to evaluate each strategy. The third phase of the project, Envision, focused on the creation of a shared vision for the lakefront. Strategies for achieving this vision were drafted during the final project phase, Implement.
**Meetings**
- Consultant Team Kick-Off
- Establish Lakefront Advisory Committee (LAC)
- Establish Project Website

**Tasks**
- Refine detailed alternative concepts for lakefront site planning and programming
- Prepare draft project budgets
- Prepare for Community Open Houses #3, 4, and 5

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**Meetings**
- LAC Member Reception
- LAC Meeting #1
- IDNR Update Meeting #1

**Tasks**
- Prepare stakeholder list and contacts, begin stakeholder outreach
- Stakeholder interviews
- Website posted

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**Meetings**
- LAC Meeting #2 - LAC Meeting #6
- Community Open House #1 - State of the Lakefront
- Community Open House #2 - Lakefront Alternative Concepts

**Tasks**
- Continue stakeholder interviews
- Review State of the Lakefront summary report with LAC
- Finalize State of the Lakefront Summary report
- Prepare alternative concepts for lakefront site planning and programming
- Prepare for Community Open Houses #1 and 2
- Refine alternative concepts for lakefront site planning and programming

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**Meetings**
- LAC Meeting #7 - LAC Meeting #10
- Community Open House #3 - Draft Lakefront Master Plan
- Village of Winnetka Total Fitness Challenge Presentation Booth
- Village of Winnetka Fourth of July Celebration Presentation Booth
- Community Open House #4 - Draft Lakefront Master Plan
- Community Open House #5 - Draft Lakefront Master Plan
- WPD Park Board Presentation #1
- Lakefront tour

**Tasks**
- Refine detailed alternative concepts for lakefront site planning and programming
- Prepare draft project budgets
- Prepare for Community Open Houses #3, 4, and 5

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**Meetings**
- LAC Meeting #11 - LAC Meeting #14
- WPD Park Board Presentation #14
- IDNR Update Meeting #2
- IDNR Update Meeting #3
- WPD Park Board Presentation #2

**Tasks**
- Review draft Winnetka Lakefront Master Plan report with LAC
- Prepare final draft Winnetka Lakefront Master Plan report

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**SUMMER - FALL 2015**

**ENJOY**

**ANALYZE**

**JUNE - OCTOBER 2014**

**FALL 2014**

**WINTER - SPRING 2015**

**SUMMER - FALL 2015**

**IMPLEMENT**

**WINTER 2015 - 2016**
At the beginning of the project, the Project Team and the Advisory Committee developed a project mission statement, defining the purpose of this Lakefront Master Plan based on themes revealed through stakeholder engagement and input from the Advisory Committee:

To provide a long-term, sustainable strategy for the preservation, protection, restoration, and enhancement of Winnetka’s lakefront for both Winnetka residents and a broad range of Lake Michigan user groups.

To support this mission, the planning team also established seven plan goals:

1. Enhance recreation and open space facilities and programming for Winnetka residents.
2. Develop facilities with intergenerational appeal.
3. Facilitate safe and convenient access.
4. Support and enhance Lake Michigan ecosystems.
5. Adopt a sustainable operations model.
6. Expose and inform Winnetka residents to the value of the public lakefront.
7. Encourage and seek partnerships (public and private).

LAKEFRONT FAQ: WHY DID THE WINNETKA PARK DISTRICT UNDERTAKE THIS PROCESS NOW?

The last Winnetka Lakefront Plan was completed in 1983, when erosion issues were threatening some of Winnetka’s public beaches, particularly Lloyd Beach. To support the goal of “upgrading assets to leverage strengths” improving the lakefront – a valuable community asset - was identified as an objective of the 2011 Winnetka Park District strategic plan.

In October 2013 Winnetka park district issued an RFP for Lakefront Master Planning services, and in April 2014 Winnetka park district was awarded an Illinois department of natural resources Coastal Management Grant to help fund the Lakefront Master Plan. The purpose of the lakefront plan is to create a strategic and unified community vision for the future of Winnetka’s shoreline.