

Winnetka Park District Comprehensive Master Plan

Park Board Update: June 26, 2025





Agenda

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- 5 Park Inventory and Evaluation
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Project Team



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Plan Purpose

- The primary purpose of the Plan is to establish a forward-looking vision for the Winnetka Park District—one that defines community priorities, identifies future needs, and lays the groundwork for a focused Strategic Plan.
- The Plan will position the Winnetka Park District to achieve accreditation through the NRPA CAPRA and the Illinois Distinguished Agency programs.

Purpose of a Comprehensive Plan

A strategic, long-term document that guides the development, management, and enhancement of a community's parks, open spaces, and facilities.

It serves as a roadmap for leadership, staff, and the public, ensuring that parks and recreation resources meet current needs and adapt to future growth and trends.

A Comprehensive Plan typically contains:

- Demographic analysis
- Community engagement
- Inventory of parks, facilities, and programs
- Analysis of financial health, facilities and parks, and programs

The first step to more comprehensive and site-specific assessments

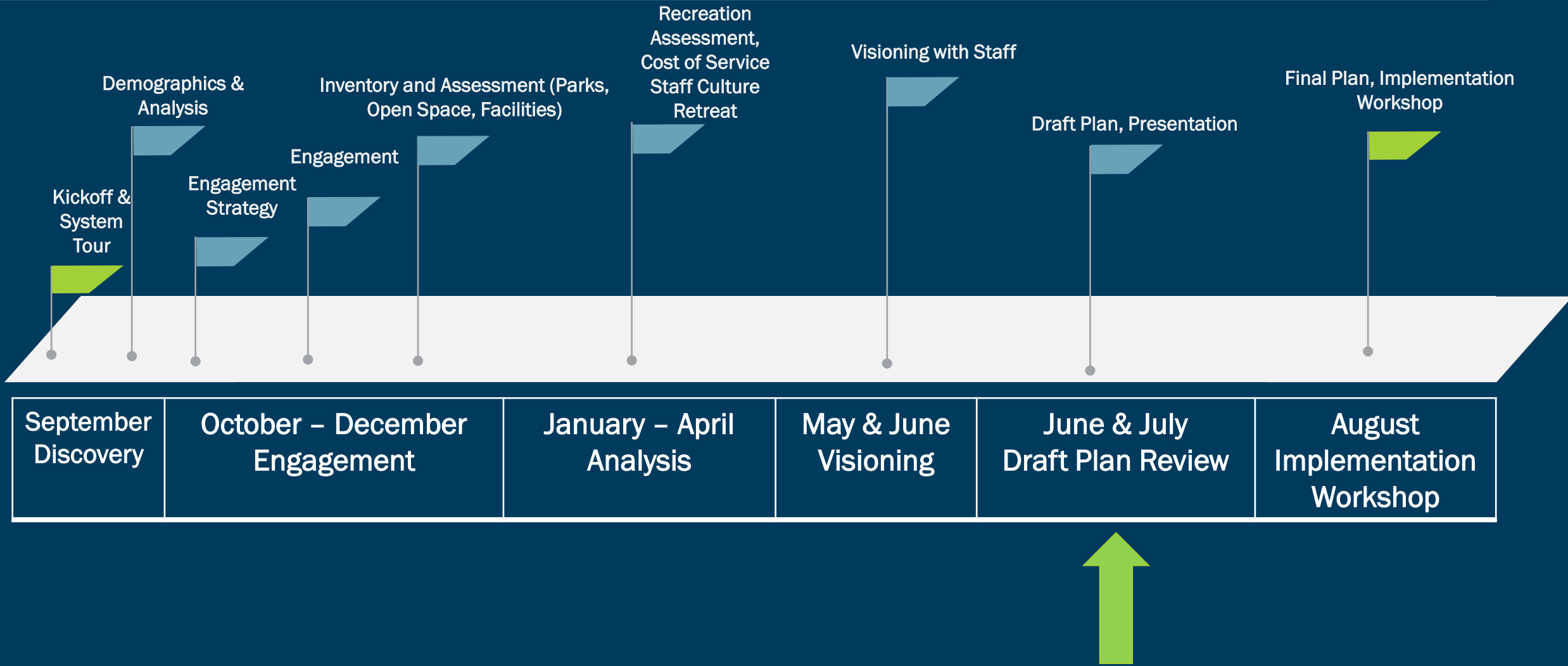


Project Approach

Six Project Phases



Project Timeline



Facility Inventory and Evaluation

Facility Inventory & Evaluation

Williams Architects conducted an evaluation of the District's facilities, including:

- A. C. Nielsen Tennis Center & Tennis Shack
- Winnetka Ice Arena
- Platform Tennis Facility
- Winnetka Golf Club and Cart Barn
- Administration Building
- Golf Maintenance Building
- Park Services Center
- Hubbard Woods Park Shelter
- Tower Road Beach House
- Lloyd Beach House
- Maple Street Beach House
- Elder Lane Beach House



- Each evaluation includes photo documentation and recommended repairs.
- **Important Site Note:** Entire main campus lies within a floodplain. Any improvements would require a floodplain impact review and compliance measures.

Facility Visioning

- **Visioning Session**

- With BerryDunn & Winnetka Park District staff

- **Identified Facility & Programmatic Needs**

- Based on information collected from the statistically valid survey,
- Supported by community input

- **Recommended Strategies to Address Needs**

- Majority of the facilities are located on a central campus.
- Additional properties within the community, to explore the community's needs, are limited.
- Proposed strategy to accommodate the identified community need for additional programmatic spaces and improvements to existing facilities recommends a Master Plan / Feasibility Study of the Main Campus.



A large, mature tree with a thick trunk and dense green foliage stands in the center of a grassy park. A paved path winds through the park, and a person is walking on it in the distance. The background shows more trees and a glimpse of a blue body of water under a clear sky.

Park Inventory and Evaluation


Park and Open Space Assessment

Assessment Series:

- Parks and Open Space Inventory
- Park Acreage and Amenity Level of Service Tables and Distribution Maps
- Assessment of Physical Condition

Inventory and Data Gathering:

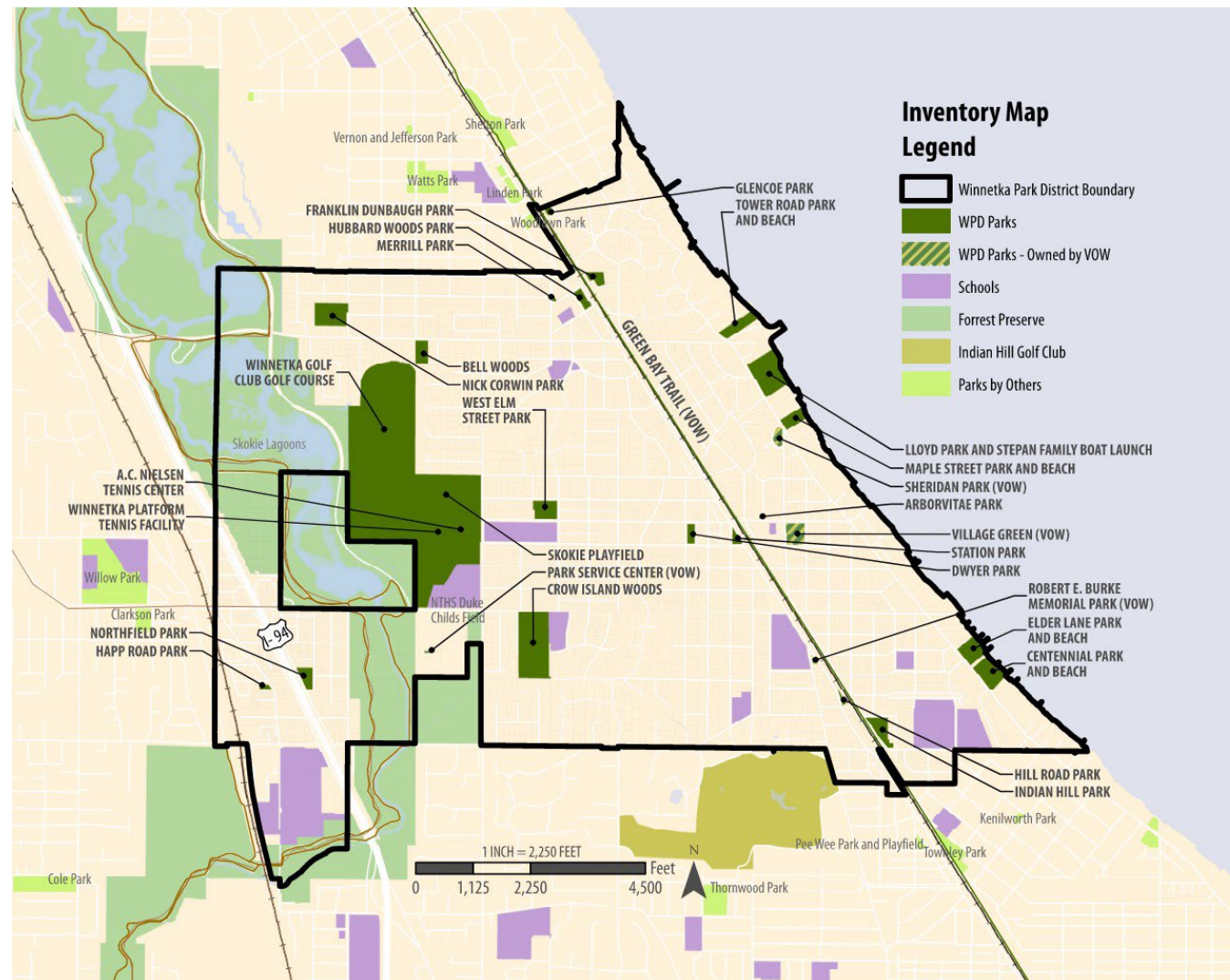
- Onsite evaluation
- Institutional agency perspective
- Relevant plans and park history
- Classification, acreage, amenities
- Distribution



	ACREAGE	TRAILS	INDOOR FACILITIES	DAY USE AMENITIES	SPORTS COURTS AND
	Acreage - Own Acreage - Lease / Manage Regional Trail Access	Multi-Use Trails Hiking Trails Bicycle Trails Nature / Interpretive Trails	Indoor Program / Support Facility Restrooms (X - Permanent, P - Portable) Concessions	Fitness Stations Dog Park Picnic Shelter / Shade Sail Amphitheater/Bandshell Playground	Basketball Volleyball Court Platform Tennis Pickleball Tennis Court Tennis Court with Pickleball Overlay Backstop / Practice Field Baseball Softball Cricket Lacrosse
WPD ACTIVE PARKS					
Mini Parks					
Shelden Park					
Station Park	0.83				
Mini Park Acreage	0.83				
	2.83				
Neighborhood Parks					
Elmer Lane Park and Beach	8.31		X		1
Glenwood Park	0.39	X			1
Happ Road Park	0.35				1
Indian Hill Park	3.35	0.17	X		1
Monroe Road Park and Beach	2.67		X		1
Northfield Park	1.89				1
Neighborhood Park Acreage	13.30	0.09			
	13.30				
Community Parks					
Dwyer Park	1.23				1
Hubbard Woods Park	1.84		X		1
Nick Green Park	6.05		X		1
Slater Playfield	99.57	1.68	X		1
Tower Road Park and Beach	3.87		X		1
Village Green		3.34			1
Community Park Acreage	112.56	5.02			
	117.58				
	126.7	6.2			
TOTAL PARK & OPEN SPACE HOLDINGS	132.9	1 0.3 0 0 0.0	7 6 1 0 0 3 1 11 1.5 1 8 0 11 1 2 3 1 0 0		
OTHER WPD OPEN SPACE & FACILITIES					

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Inventory Map



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Park Classifications

▲ Mini Parks:

- Sheridan Park, Station Park

▲ Neighborhood Parks:

- Elder Lane Park and Beach, Glencoe Park, Happ Road Park, Indian Hill Park, Maple Street Park and Beach, Northfield Park

▲ Community Parks:

- Dwyer Park, Hubbard Woods Park, Nick Corwin Park, Skokie Playfield, Tower Road Park and Beach, Village Green

▲ Pocket Park:

- Arborvitae Park, Hill Road Park, Merrill Park, and Robert E. Burke Memorial Park

▲ Natural Area:

- Bell Woods, Crow Island Woods, Franklin Dunbaugh Park, West Elm Street Park

▲ Special Use:

- Centennial Park and Beach, Lloyd Park and Stepan Family Boat Launch, Winnetka Golf Club Golf Course, Skokie Playfield - A.C. Nielsen Tennis Center, Skokie Playfield - Winnetka Platform Tennis Facility, Parks Service Center

▲ Greenways, Corridors, and Linear Parks

- Green Bay Trail

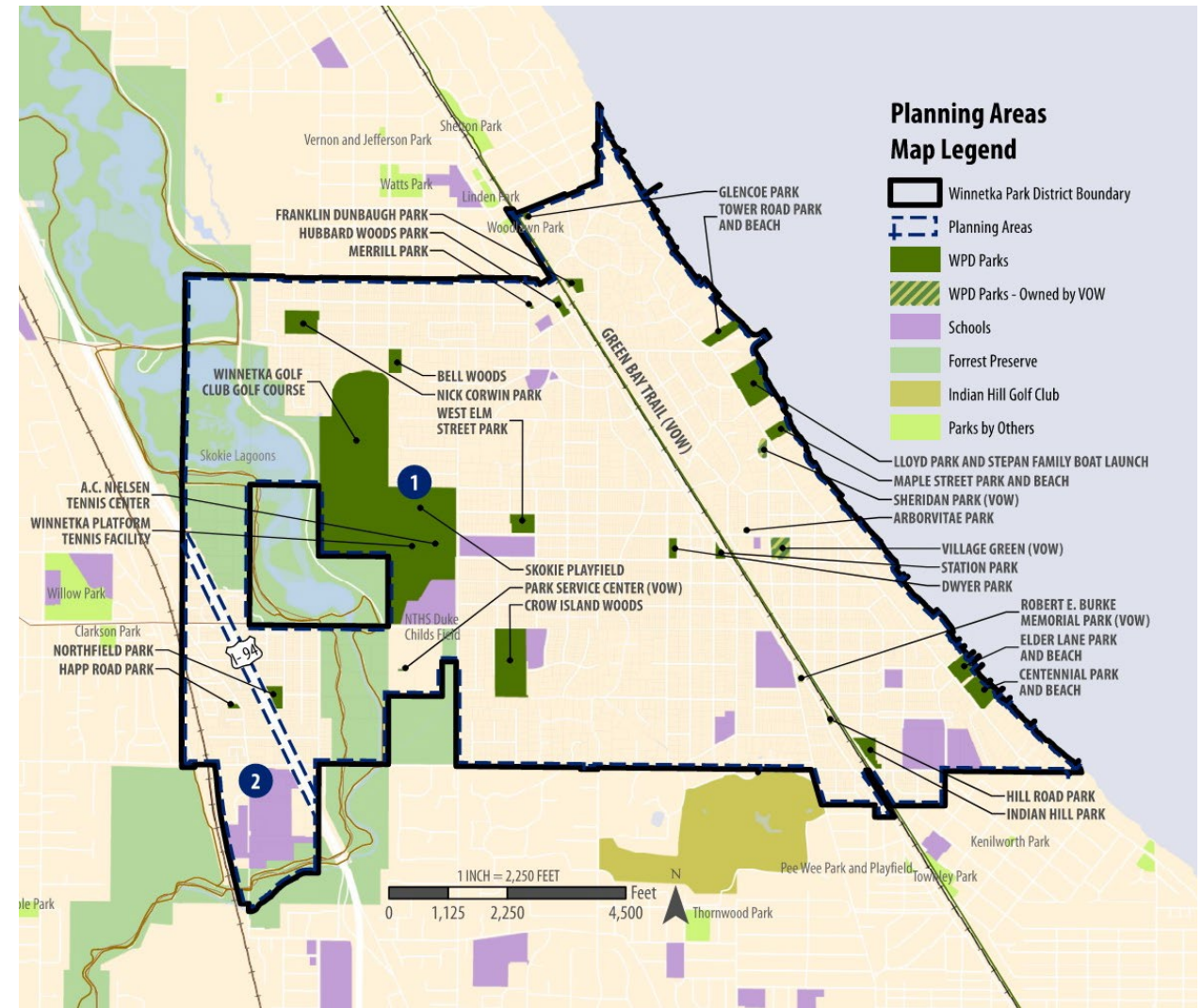
Level of Service



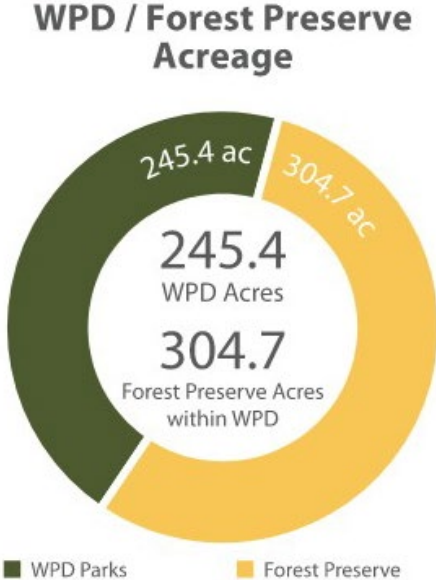
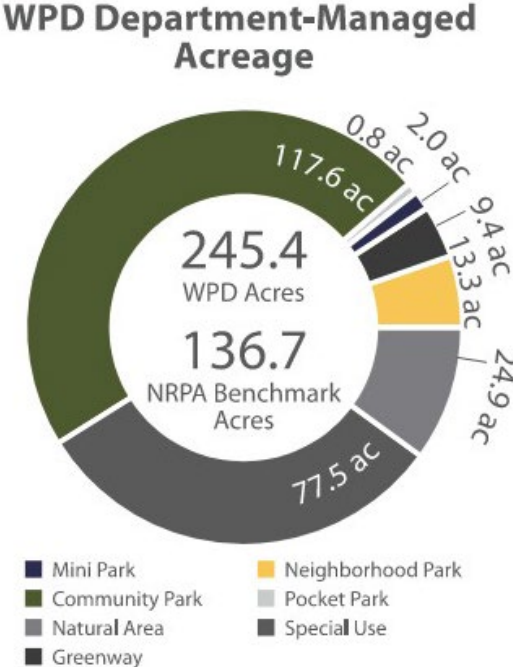
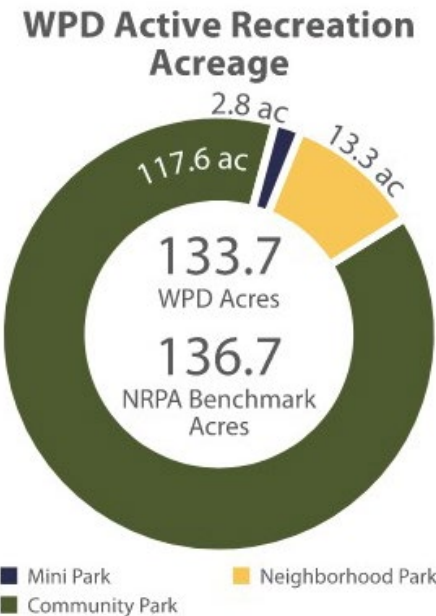
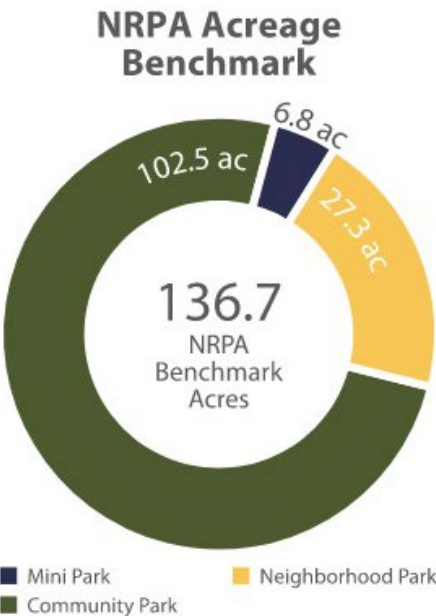
Level of Service (LoS)

Analysis and Benchmarking:

- LOS analysis amenities and park distribution
 - Planning area boundaries are considered barriers to access. In the District boundaries, the only major pedestrian barrier is I-94, which resulted in just two planning areas: #1 east and #2 west of the interstate
- National, state, regional benchmarks
- Trend comparison
- Park and open space service gaps
- Demographic distribution analysis

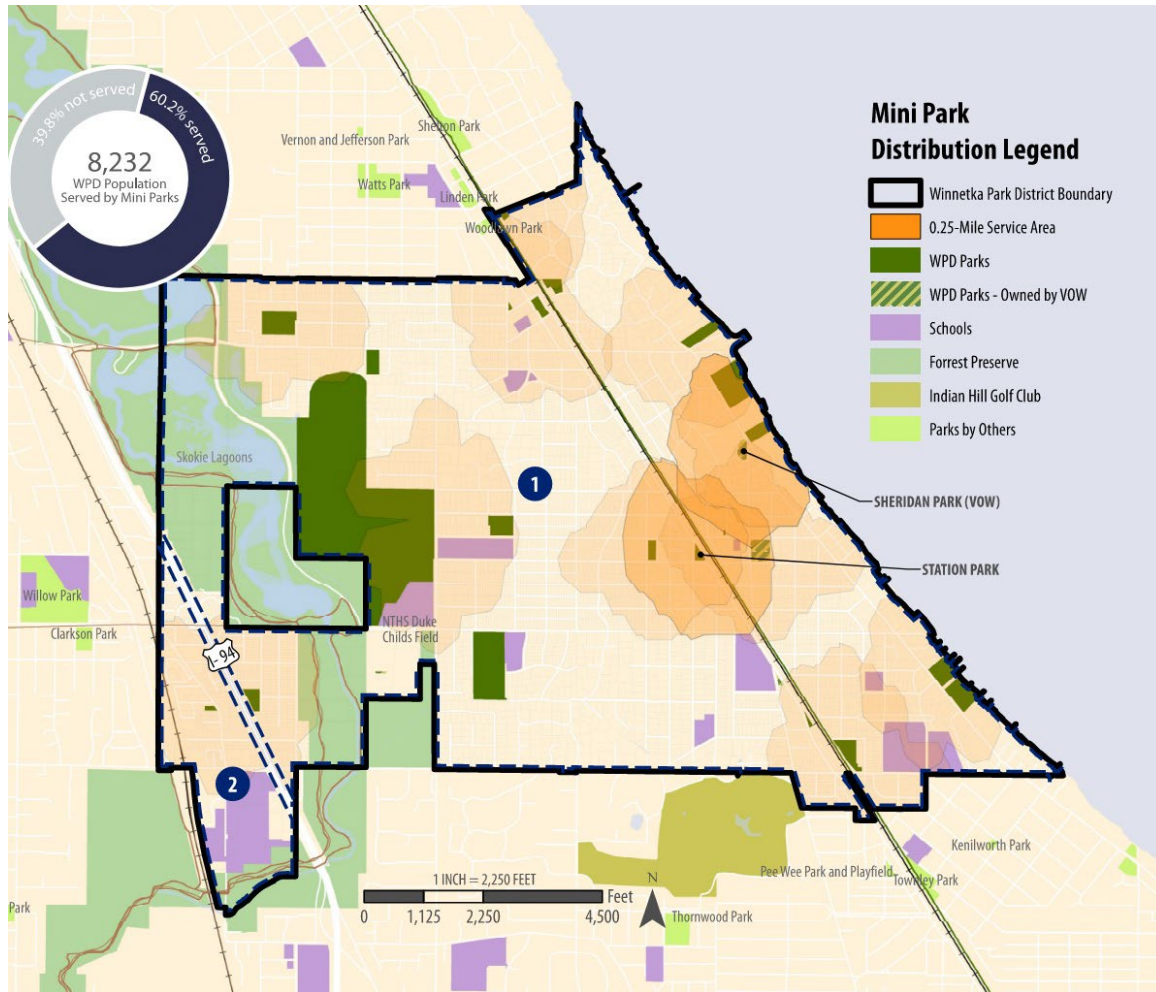


Acreage Level of Service

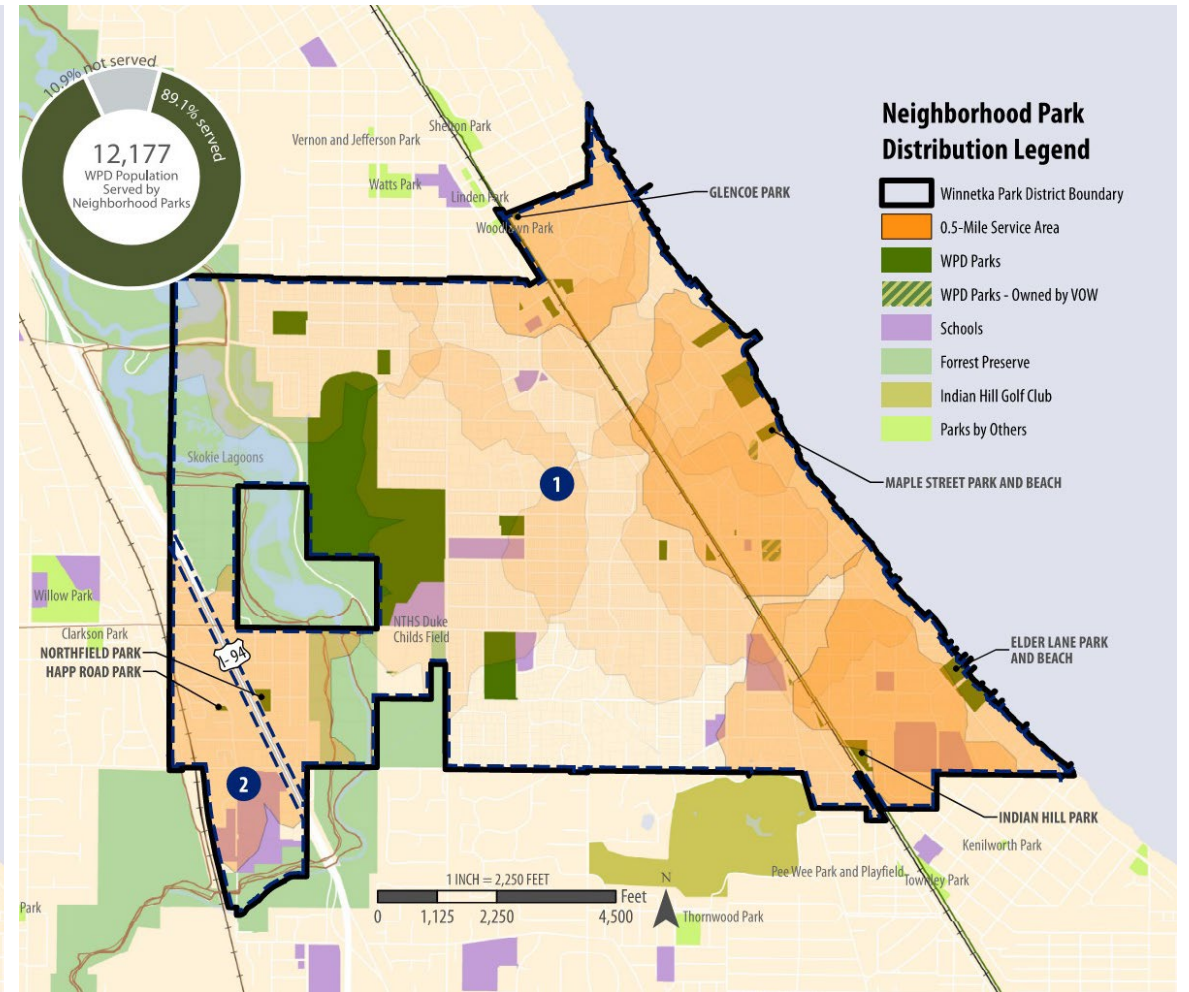


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Distribution Maps

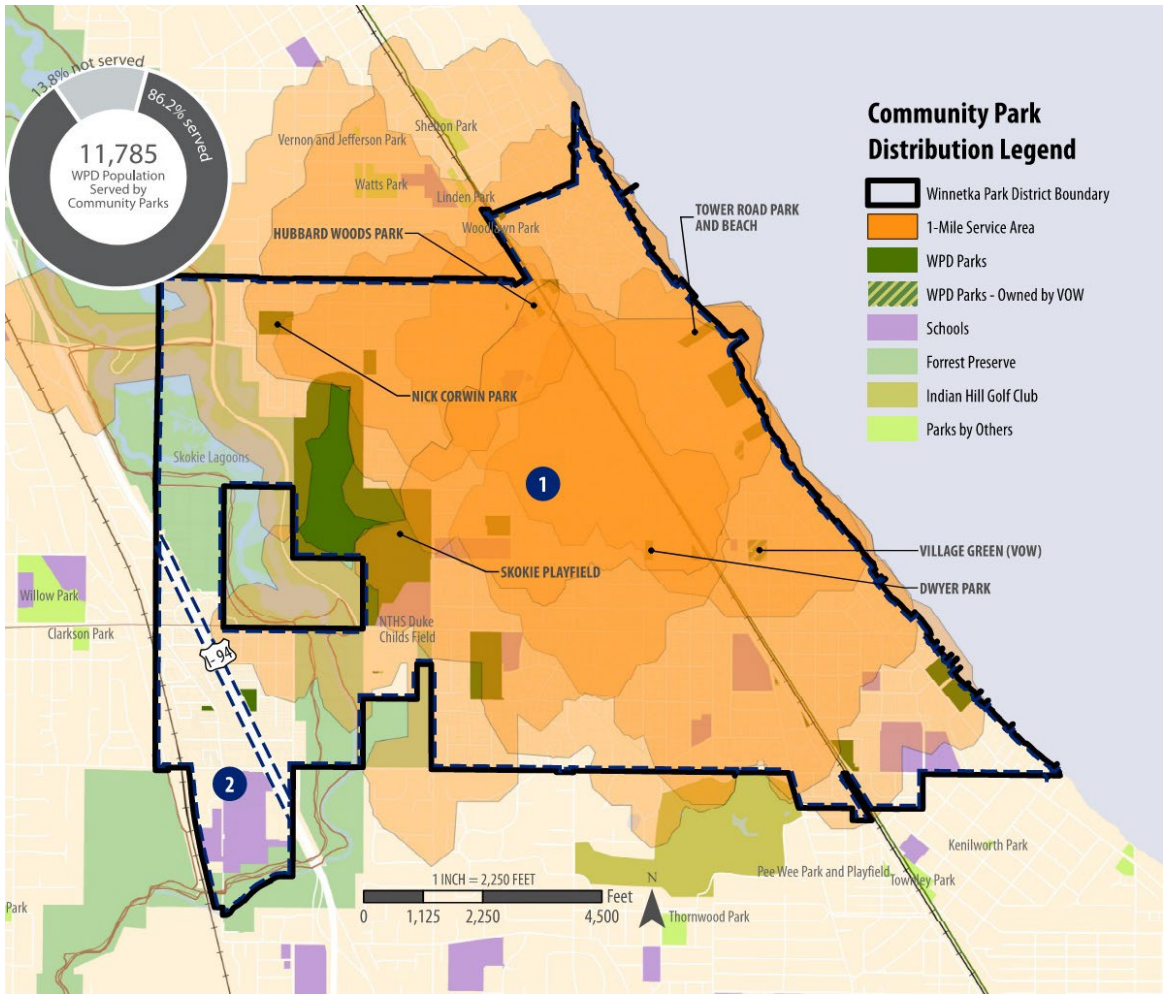


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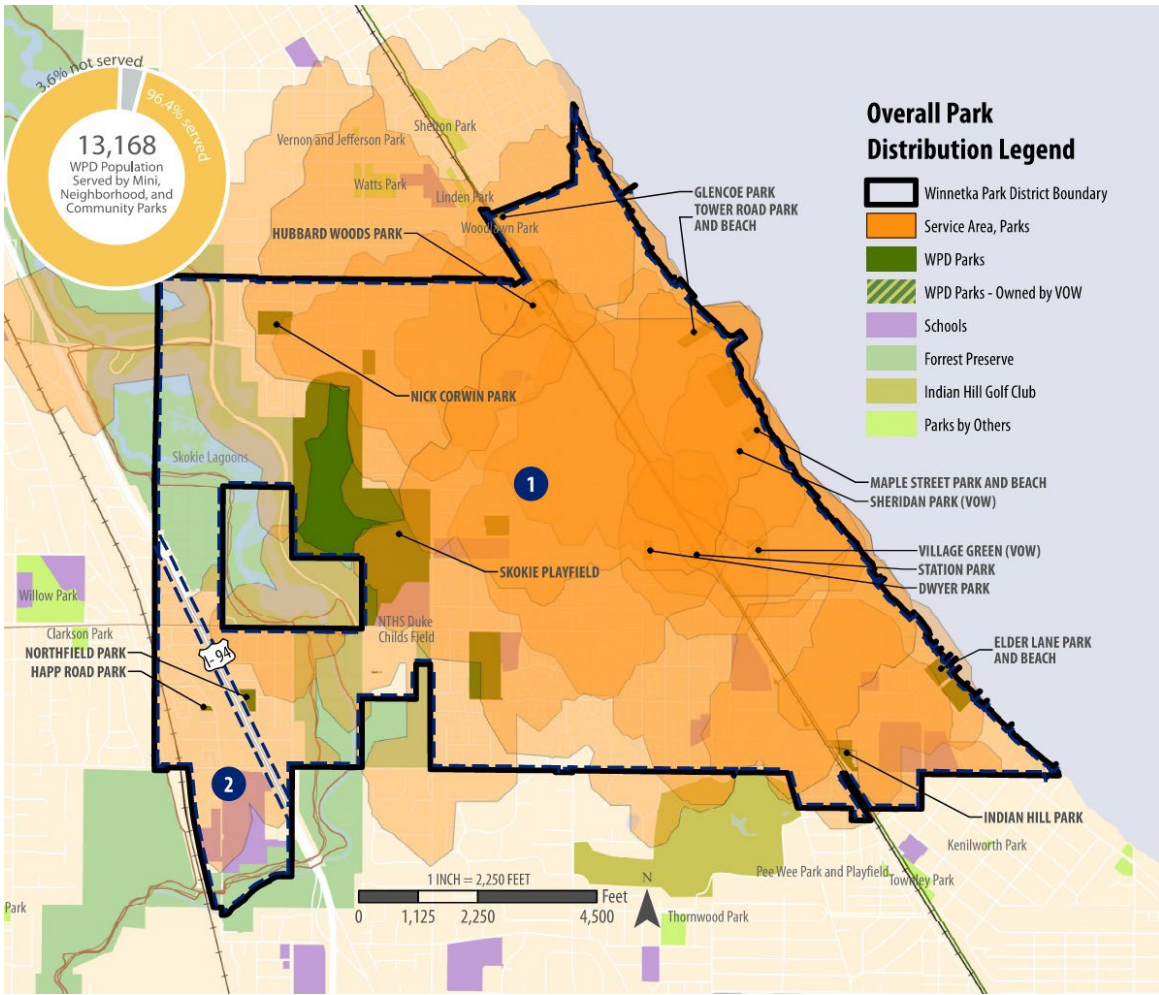


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Distribution Maps



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Amenity Needs

Winnetka Park District			Park Metrics Facility Median	Surplus / Deficit	Ranking
Existing # of Facilities (total)	Existing # of Facilities at current standards	Existing # of Facilities per population	Total # of Facilities needed to meet Park Metrics median	Surplus / Deficit	Highest to Lowest Need

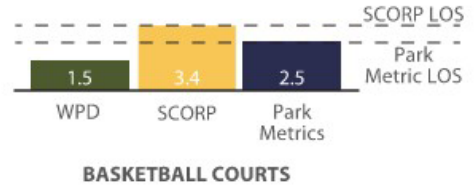
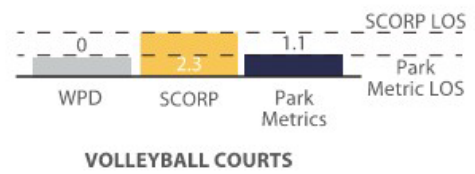
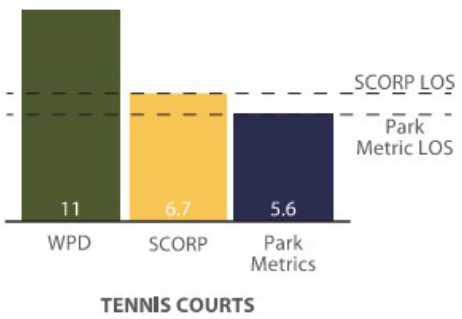
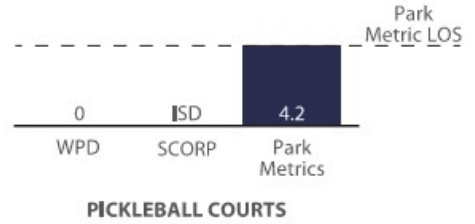
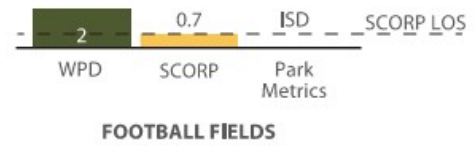
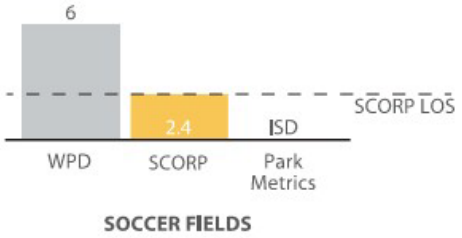
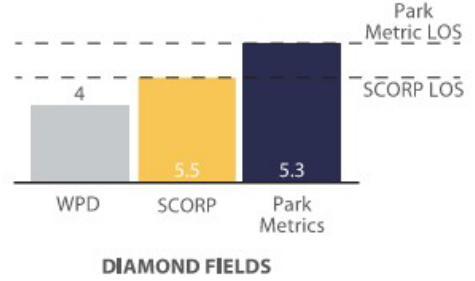
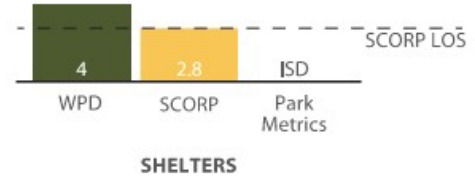
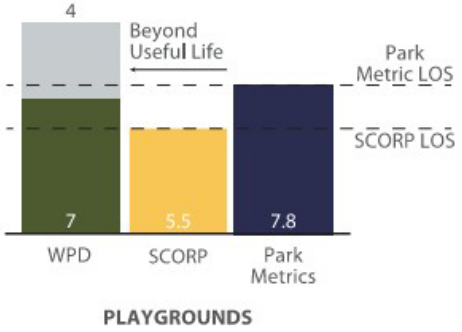
DAY USE FACILITIES

Playgrounds	11	7	0.51	7.76	-0.8	8
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SPORTS COURTS AND FACILITIES

Basketball Courts	1.5	1.5	0.11	2.51	-1.0	6
Dedicated Pickleball Courts	0	0	0.00	4.17	-4.2	2
Dedicated Tennis Courts	11	11	0.80	5.56	5.4	16
Tennis Courts with Pickleball Overlay	1	0	0.00	3.35	-3.3	3
Diamond Fields	4	0	0.00	5.33	-5.3	1
Football/Rugby Fields	2	2	0.15	ISD	ISD	ISD
Soccer Fields	6	0	0.00	ISD	ISD	ISD
Synthetic Rectangular Fields	2	2	0.15	0.84	1.2	13
Seasonal Ice Rink	3	3	0.22	1.28	1.7	15
Splashpads	2	2	0.15	0.73	1.3	14
Skateboard Parks	0	0	0.00	0.94	-0.9	7
Volleyball	1	0	0.00	1.13	-1.1	5
Driving Ranges	1	1	0.07	1.42	-0.4	10
9-Hole Golf Courses	1	1	0.07	0.73	0.3	12
18-Hole Golf Courses	1	1	0.07	1.16	-0.2	11
Disc Golf Courses	0	0	0.00	0.73	-0.7	9
Swimming Pools (Outdoor)	0	0	0.00	1.30	-1.3	4

Amenity Needs Summary



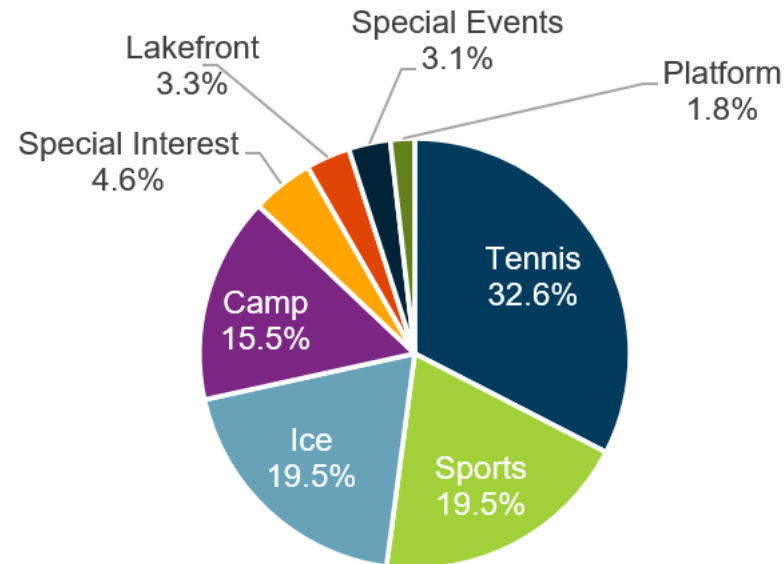
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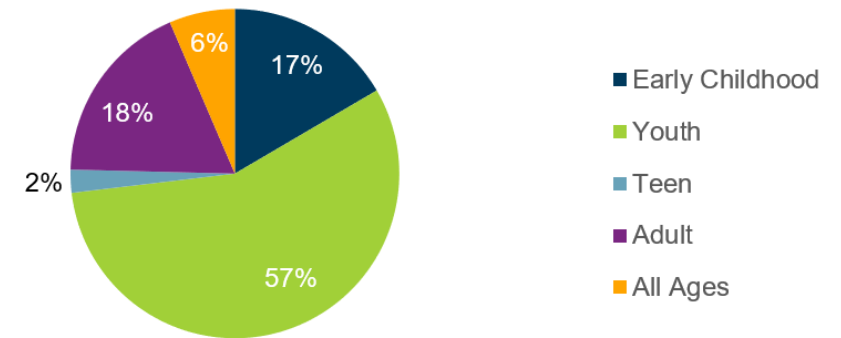
Recreation Assessment

Recreation Assessment – 2024 Data

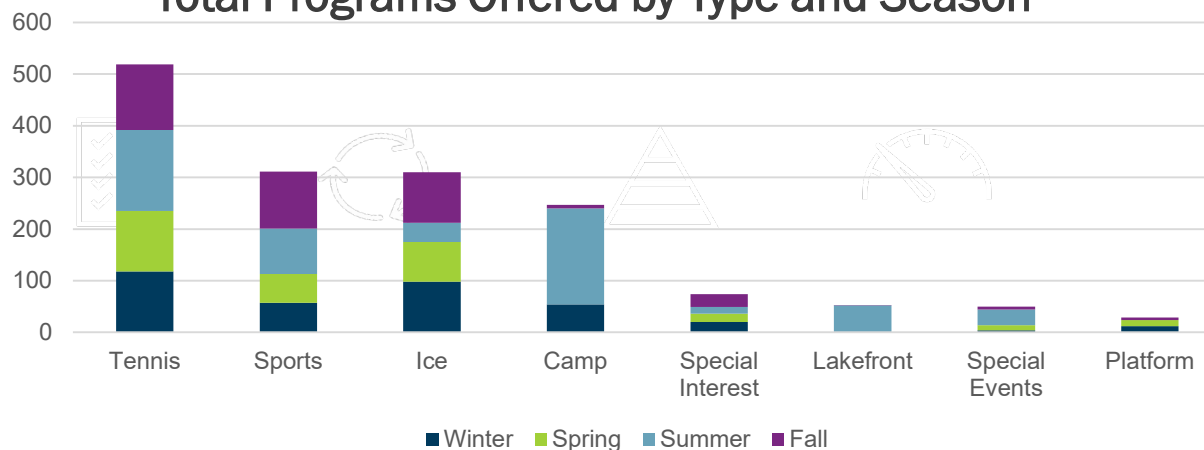
Enrollment-Based Program Distribution



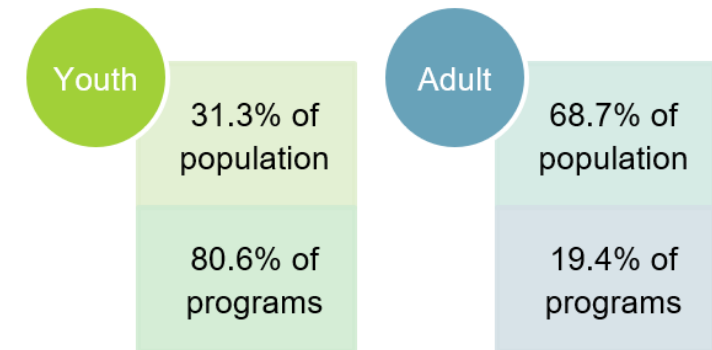
Age Segmentation of Enrollment Based Programs Offered



Total Programs Offered by Type and Season

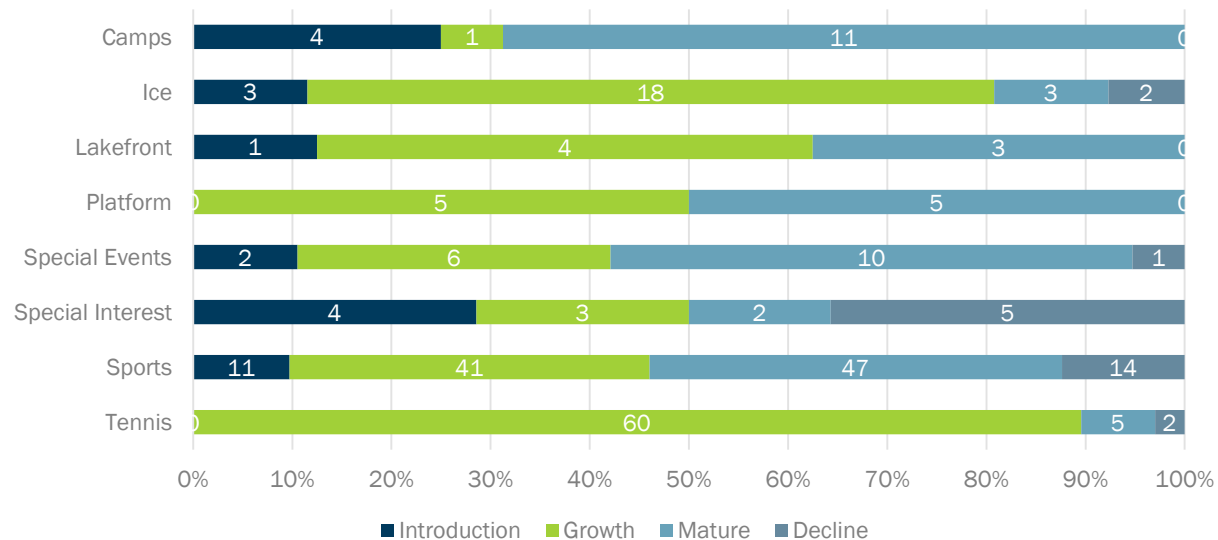


Population vs. Program Menu

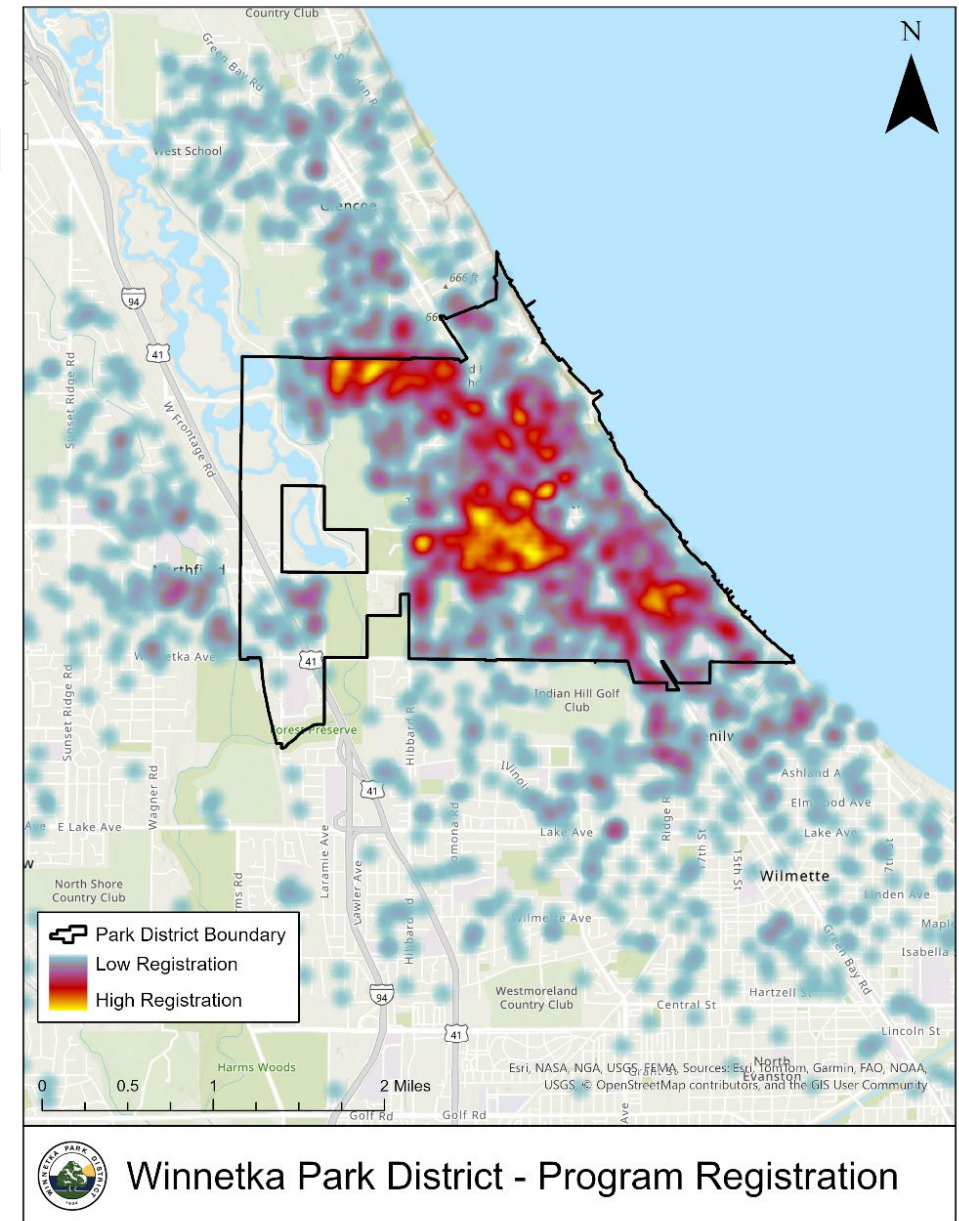


Recreation Assessment

Life Cycle Distribution of Programs



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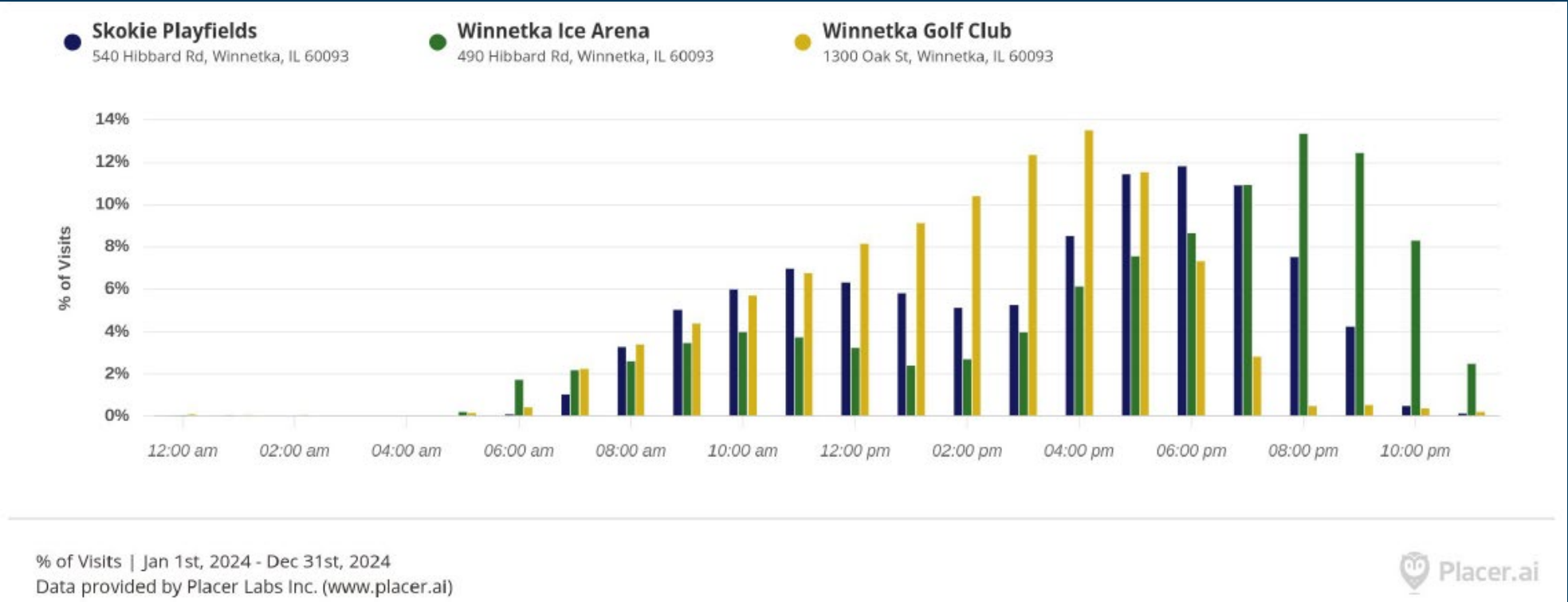
Visitation Trends

Visitation Trends

Metric	Winnetka Parks			Waterfront Parks		Skokie Playfield			Green Bay Trail
	Dwyer Park	Hubbard Woods	Nick Corwin	Lloyd Park	Tower Rd Beach	Skokie Playfield	Ice Arena	Golf Club	Green Bay Trail
Visits	31K	77.1K	14.2K	97.3K	112.1K	107.2K	144.3K	30.3K	92.3K
Unique Visitors	8.1K	40.7K	4.8K	41.5K	58.6K	28.3K	34.4K	10.9K	41.3K
Visit Frequency	3.8	1.89	2.96	2.33	1.92	3.79	4.2	3.04	2.24
Avg. Duration	36 min	38 min	47 min	46 min	57 min	76 min	83 min	81 min	6 min
Busiest Hour	10 a.m.	12 p.m.	4 p.m.	1 p.m.	2 p.m.	6 p.m.	8 p.m.	4 p.m.	3 p.m.
Busiest Day	Tuesday	Saturday	Saturday	Sunday	Sunday	Saturday	Sunday	Saturday	Wednesday

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Understanding Park Use of Guests



A person with curly hair, wearing a yellow knit sweater, is sitting at a wooden desk. They are using a silver laptop and holding a credit card in their hands. A grey cup is on the desk next to the laptop. A smartphone is lying face down on the desk in the foreground. The background shows a window with a view of a city at night, with blurred lights visible.

Cost of Service

Cost of Service Analysis - Scope and Methodology of Work Performed

Collaborated with the District’s Project Team to develop an applicable approach to the cost of service analysis.

Analyzed a review of District service delivery for fiscal year 2022 through FY 2024 and projections for FY 2025 – FY 2028.

Focused the analysis to compile all revenue generated from the user fees and charges environment, and the identified expenses associated with providing all activities, programs, and services.

Included full cost modeling and analysis, direct personnel and non-personnel expense allocations, applicable indirect expense allocations, and removal of non-applicable/capital expense allocations.

Developed final report that includes project approach, findings, and recommendations.

General Recreation Services Summary

FY	Revenue	Operating Expense	Capital Expense	Net Operating	Operating Cost Recovery
2022 (budget)	\$1,873,999	\$1,944,070	(\$238,999)	(\$70,071)	96.40%
2022 (actual)	\$2,264,500	\$1,906,312	(\$7,948)	\$358,188	118.8%
2023 (budget)	\$2,058,170	2,210,889	(\$394,000)	(\$152,719)	93.1%
2023 (actual)	\$2,446,554	\$2,279,177	(\$56,808)	\$167,377	107.3%
2024 (budget)	\$2,225,694	2,533,832	(\$535,949)	(\$308,138)	87.8%
2024 (unaudited)	\$2,420,401	2,299,222	(197,065)	\$121,179	105.3%
2025 (budget)	\$2,338,059	2,725,673	(\$222,801)	(\$387,614)	85.8%
2026*	\$2,419,891	2,943,727	(\$181,655)	(\$523,836)	82.2%
2027*	\$2,504,587	3,179,225	(\$196,187)	(\$674,638)	78.8%
2028*	\$2,592,248	3,433,563	(\$245,637)	(\$841,315)	75.5%
*estimated					

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Items for Consideration

Item #1: Improve Beachfront Parks



Objectives:

- Review, update (in accordance with current community context and development requirements), and finish implementation of the Winnetka Park District Waterfront 2030 Master Plan as funding becomes available.
 - Enhance public access to the lakefront
 - Improve connectivity between parks
 - Balance environmental preservation with recreation
 - Upgrade infrastructure to meet long term needs
 - Provide additional amenities and recreational opportunities.
- Implement interim enhancements to activate key lakefront areas in the short term
 - Continue enhancements at Elder Lane Park and Beach

Item #2: Improve Non - Vehicular Connectivity



Objectives:

- Review bicycle and pedestrian plans, update, approve, and implement to reflect current community needs and priorities, considering:
 - New amenities (e.g., fitness stations, restrooms, seating areas, bike rack/repair stations, etc.)
 - Enhanced landscaping
 - Additional ADA accessible access points in District
 - Signage and wayfinding
 - Trail and pathway infrastructure (e.g., shared bike lanes, sidewalk improvements, etc.)
 - Accessibility upgrades
- Expand trail offerings at existing parks

Item #3: Provide In - Demand Amenities



Objectives:

- Prioritize amenities of interest based on community engagement results and benchmark comparisons, taking into account proposed amenities from the Winnetka Park District Lakefront 2030 Master Plan and benchmarks from the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics database.
- Provide in-demand amenities at key park location (in conjunction with potential park improvements from other needs)
- Monitor community use of other recreation providers to confirm and address unmet needs

Item #4: Replace Amenities Beyond Their Useful Life and/or in Poor Condition (Maintain Current Assets)



Objective:

- Identify and prioritize annual park improvements to address aging amenities and maintenance needs (in conjunction with potential park improvements from other needs)

Item #5: Maintain and Improve Upon Park Aesthetics and Natural Areas



Objectives:

- Develop park improvement/concept plans (in conjunction with potential park improvements from other needs)
 - Incorporate nature-based play elements, green infrastructure, and art installations that reflect local character and landscape
- Continue to abide by environmental principles outlined in the Winnetka Park District Policy Manual
- Expand the native plantings and ecological restoration program to enhance biodiversity and reduce maintenance needs

Item #6: Improve Park Access for Underserved Areas



Objectives:

- Evaluate resident use of neighboring park district's community parks near Planning Area 2
- Provide unique asset in Planning Area 2
- Provide additional low impact amenities
- Identify land acquisition opportunities and strategies
 - Identify and pursue funding opportunities, including grants, TIFs, bonds, and developer contributions



Item #7: Enabling Park Development and Improvements Procedures

Objectives:

- Explore rezoning the District's parks within the Village to support long-term renovation plans and strategic acquisition opportunities
 - Conduct Zoning compatibility study and benchmarking
 - Develop a Park Zoning Overlay proposal
 - Align rezoning efforts with Village Comprehensive Plan, CMP and future Strategic Plans
- Engage with Village staff and Plan Commission



Item #8: Master Plan and Conduct a Feasibility Study for a Potential Redesign of the District's Main Campus

Objectives:

- Consider a new front two-story addition to better identify a new central entry and add administrative space.
- Consider adding a second floor to the Administration building, potentially moving offices to a second floor and adding general programming spaces on the first level.
 - Collaborative space
 - Conference room
 - Workspace for part-time and seasonal staff

Item #8

continued...



Objectives:

- Consider relocation of the playground for additional building space
- Increase parking and enhance traffic flow
- Reimagine the indoor tennis gallery
- Repurpose the pony field to optimize the usage of the space
- Determine if the Ice Arena should be renovated or replaced
- Add exterior restrooms
- Create an opportunity for food trucks to service the site
- Consider space for Pickleball facilities

Item # 9: Conduct a Pool Facility Feasibility Study



Objective:

- Identify possible sites, capacity, indoor or outdoor conditions, and potential partnerships for a pool. The Master Plan and Feasibility Study for the main campus will identify if any space is available at this location. Other community locations should be explored.

Item #10: Update the District's ADA Transition Plan



Objective:

- Update current plan (which is more than 10 years old) for compliance with the latest adopted accessibility codes, which would include a plan for updating of the non-compliant items identified in the Facility Assessment Report.



Item #11: Assess Overall Programmatic Needs of the Golf Club House and Plan Renovations to Better Support the Programs of This Facility, and to Potentially Use Available Space to Support Additional Golf-related Programming.

Objective

- This strategy must be considered after two years to assess the financial performance of the golf club now that it is operational following an 18-month closure in conjunction with the contracted facility administration.



Item #12: Address Immediate Need for Programming Spaces.

Objective:

- Explore alternative programming spaces within the District.

Item #13: Evaluate Program Administration



Objectives:

- Evaluate the usability of current registration system and explore opportunities for an enhanced user experience.
- Continue to use the registration data to make informed decisions.
- Investigate and work to reduce program cancellation rates.
- Continue to strengthen existing—and explore new—partnerships.
- Research enrollee residency, to better understand residency by program type. Assess results for gaps and opportunities.
- Strive for balanced distribution across life cycle stages within each program category.

Item #14: Enhance Programming



Objectives:

- Investigate alternative staffing and space options to extend the full-day traditional summer camp season to include the days between school and summer camp.
- Work to include more adult programming into the annual menu of offerings.
- Consider programming that helps meet home school community needs, to expand service offerings and to utilize otherwise vacant spaces during the traditional school day.
- Continue to monitor areas where enrollment is declining and identify any root cause for the change.
- Continue to work toward reducing the summer camp waitlists, as facility space allows.
- Work to secure additional program space to support increased programming levels.

Item #15: Evaluate the need for Additional Recreation Staff Support



Objectives:

- Continue to reevaluate IT support.
- Re-visit the program evaluation process for consistency and regularity.
- Investigate new avenues for staff and instructor recruitment in high-demand program areas.

Item #16: Monitor and Assess the Cost Recovery Rate and Address Projections



Objectives:

- Review and update policies regarding revenues and fees as needed to align with the board's direction on cost recovery and monitoring annual fee schedules.
- Explore ways to reduce non-personnel expenditures and make more efficient use of resources to help prevent overreliance on fee increases.



Objectives:

- Monitor local indicators related to recreation services demand and trends; this will help assure that services continue at current levels and that increased service levels can be achieved to accommodate increased customer demand and the District's growth trajectory.
- Review and assess the current reserve balances to help ensure sufficient funds are available to support both short- and long-term financial goals, including funding for capital projects. This assessment will help identify potential funding gaps and inform strategies to maintain financial sustainability while minimizing the need for drastic fee adjustments and ensuring the ability to finance necessary capital improvements.



Item #17: Foster a Collaborative and Trust Building Board Culture

Objectives:

- Enhance communication
- Revise ethical guidelines
- Provide ongoing opportunities for conflict resolution and mentorship
- Ensure effective decision-making despite differing opinions



Item #18: Following the approval of the Comprehensive Master Plan, update the District's Strategic Plan.

Objectives:


- Determine short, mid, and long-term goals
- Assign champions for each goal and objective
- Track and share results

Next Steps

- ✓ Following Board review and direction, the final report will be formatted in InDesign with supporting photos and graphics for public-facing distribution.
- ✓ A final report will be ready for the August Board meeting.
- ✓ BerryDunn will facilitate an implementation workshop with District staff.
- ✓ Staff will begin preparation of the District's Strategic Plan—an actionable roadmap for the next five years—with draft anticipated for Board review in Fall 2025.

Q&A

Thank You!



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