

GREENPRINT 2024

A Community Vision for the Park District of Highland Park

2019 Review and Amendment

Approved January 2020



INTRODUCTION

The 2019 GreenPrint Review evaluates changes in the community and recommends an amendment to the capital development initiatives outlined in the GreenPrint 2024 plan approved in 2015.

The 2019 GreenPrint Review initiative is rooted in the notion that GreenPrint 2024 is a living document. As noted in the plan: civic, economic and demographic conditions change, and therefore the plan should be flexible to allow the Park District Board of Commissioners the ability to make amendments. As such, the plan recommends that the Board and Park District Staff reevaluate the priority projects on a regular basis to track progress, assess priorities, and maintain a desired implementation momentum, tied to available funding and resources.

The District conducted a community-wide attitude and interest survey in the spring of 2019 in compliance with District policy. This statistically valid survey, nearing the half way point in the master plan, presented an optimal opportunity to review GreenPrint 2024.

The 2019 survey results are an important tool to ensure that Park District plans and priorities continue to align with community needs. The survey results, along with an internal audit of program trends, guide future facility and program improvements.

GreenPrint 2024 Background

In 2013 the Park District Board of Commissioners and staff initiated a district-wide master planning process. After an extensive community engagement effort coupled with an audit of District facilities, parks, programs, and operations, GreenPrint 2024, a comprehensive 10-year plan, was approved by the Park District Board of Commissioners in 2015. This planning document provides guidance for current and future facility and program development decisions through 2024. GreenPrint 2024 was developed to address community input, needs and desires, and intends to support the Park District's mission of enriching community life, and vision to provide extraordinary experiences to Highland Park residents.

The plan recommendations are divided into three categories: capital development initiatives, planning initiatives, and capital plan initiatives.

The 2019 review effort focuses on GreenPrint capital development initiatives. These are construction projects that to the highest degree possible address community, staff, and board priorities support GreenPrint 2024 master planning goals, and support the Park District mission, vision, and values. These projects are supported by master plan goals and respond to stated community priorities and needs. These priority projects also seek to maximize the community investment by strategically fulfilling the demand for new, improved, or enhanced recreational opportunities for programs that cater to all age groups.

The GreenPrint 2024 Plan further sorts proposed projects into two tracks. Track one projects utilize current funding mechanisms available to the Park District. Track two projects require partnerships, synergies with other agencies, or alternative funding sources. Project recommendations are conceptual. Detailed programming, design, engineering, and public input and Park Board approval is needed.

Track 1 projects from Green Print 2024 approved in 2015

- Sunset Valley Golf Course Improvements
- Centennial Ice Arena entrance, locker room, washroom, office, and gymnastics facility improvements
- Recreation Center of Highland Park Improvements
- Sunset Woods Park Master Plan and Improvements

Track 2 projects from GreenPrint 2024 approved in 2015

- Highland Park Country Club new multi-purpose facility and site improvements
- Centennial Ice Arena ice expansion
- Lakefront Enhancements
- Athletic Field Improvements

OVERVIEW

Accomplishments since 2015

Sunset Valley Golf Club, Course and Clubhouse Renovation

In August 2018, the Park District of Highland Park reopened Sunset Valley Golf Club following an extensive \$7 million renovation that took 18 months to complete. The new Sunset Valley accommodates every level of golfer and reflects an open British Heathlands course design with strategic landforms, flowing masses of native grasses and groves of trees which harken back to the character and aesthetics of a 1920's era golf course. The project included renovation of all tees, fairways, greens, bunkers as well as overall infrastructure, drainage and storm water management.

The remodeled clubhouse offers a classic vibe with striking views of the course. Now featuring an expanded golf shop, the new "13ninety" restaurant, as well as a cozy lounge with fireplace, the clubhouse is no longer just a "pass through" to the course, but a destination for guests and golfers to shop and relax with a cold drink, a meal, and a beautiful view.

Recreation Center of Highland Park Renovations

Renovation of the Recreation Center of Highland Park was a project identified in the GreenPrint 2024 Master Plan supported by significant community interest to improve the fitness floor and multi-purpose space for classes. The project included relocation of the Group Exercise studio to the lower level, creation of a new training studio for both personal and small group fitness training, reconfiguration the fitness desk and lobby area, and expansion of the fitness floor square footage.

Highland Park Country Club Conversion

The Park District of Highland Park acquired the Highland Park Country Club in December 2018 from the City of Highland Park. Pursuing acquisition followed recommendations from the Park District's GreenPrint 2024 Master Plan and the community's expressed desire for passive recreational opportunities such as walking and biking trails. The property offers unique connectivity to the Recreation Center of Highland Park, adjacent trails and the Skokie River Woods property. The District conducted an extensive community engagement effort in 2019 to develop plans for the park and is finalizing approvals in advance of construction in 2020.

Planning Initiatives

Though the master planning effort concluded in 2015, the Park District continued planning, approving various plans since 2015. Approved plans include: The 2016-2020 Strategic Plan that addresses Park District operations including program scheduling, program and age distribution review and program delivery; the Land Management Plan approved in 2018 encompasses GreenPrint recommended trail

planning, cultural asset planning, natural area planning, stormwater management planning, and facility/park appearance and maintenance strategy; the Sustainability Plan was approved in 2018; the Athletic Field Master Plan was approved in 2018; and the Lakefront Master Plan update is pending approval.

Review Process

The GreenPrint review initiative began in the Spring/Summer of 2019 and followed a similar 4-step approach to the original plan: engage, analyze, envision, and implement.

ENGAGE

- **SPRING/SUMMER 2019:** Attitude and Interest Survey was administered to a random sample of the community by a third-party research consultant.

ANALYZE

- **SUMMER 2019:** Staff conducted an internal program and facility analysis.
- **AUGUST 6, 2019:** (Special Meeting): Presentation of Attitude and Interest Survey results to the Park District Board of Commissioners.

ENVISION

- **SEPTEMBER 2019:** Presentation of Attitude and Interest Survey results and Program/Facility assessment to managers and full-time staff.
- **SEPTEMBER 19, 2019:** Park District Board of Commissioners Special Meeting (retreat). The Board reviewed the results of the Attitude and Interest Survey results alongside the Program and Facility assessment and GreenPrint 2024. The Board used the information to deliberate community needs and Park District usage trends. The Board then brainstormed strategic concepts to guide Districtwide capital and operation opportunities and priorities.
- **OCTOBER 2019:** Working meetings with Park District Board liaisons were held to draw from the conclusions from staff, board, and community to further develop cost estimates for priority areas.
- **NOVEMBER 2019:** Staff drafting GreenPrint 2024 Review report and proposed amendments to GreenPrint 2024.
- **JANUARY 2020:** Staff present GreenPrint 2024 amendments to Park District Board of Commissioners.

IMPLEMENT

- **2020+:** District staff will focus on assessing feasibility and implementing recommended projects. Specific timelines are detailed further in the report.

REPORT DOCUMENT

The GreenPrint 2024 Review report focuses on GreenPrint capital development initiatives. The following pages describe the process concluding with the recommended amendment to GreenPrint 2024 Track 1 and Track 2 projects based on information collected through the 2019 review process.

ENGAGE

The extensive and thorough community engagement approach taken for GreenPrint 2024 provides a reliable foundation for the GreenPrint review. The 2019 Attitude and Interest Survey complements the priorities established in the comprehensive plan to provide insights into our changing community.

The 2019 Attitude and Interest Survey was conducted by a third-party research consultant. The survey was administered from May 17th, 2019 through June 23rd, 2019. Surveys were sent to all households within the District boundaries. Survey respondents were offered the option to submit surveys online, by mail, or by phone. There was an option to take the survey in Spanish.

851 surveys were completed and provided for a margin of error of +/- 3.4% and a 95% confidence level. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the community demographic.

The survey results are posted on the Park District website. Some highlights as reported by the research firm include:

- The District is held in very strong regard overall, given its strong esteem rating (85% vs 8% dissatisfied) and perceived “good” value overall (68% good/great value overall vs. 13% poor value)
- Two capital improvements register as priorities to about 40% of resident’s community wide namely:
 - Playground improvements at Sunset Woods Park
 - Renovation of West Ridge Center

ANALYZE

The 2019 Attitude and Interest survey informs all components of the Park District operations from programming, capital, communications, and park/facility maintenance.

The insightful information gathered from the Attitude and Interest Survey was analyzed alongside the results of an internal program and facility assessment. The program and facility assessments consider enrollment trends, competition, net revenue, and program maturation.

The graphs below indicate the results of the holistic analysis of the Attitude and Interest Survey and the program and facility assessment. The top graph highlights primary program areas the bottom graph highlights Park District facilities.

The colors indicate, opportunities (green), neutral (yellow), and low opportunities (red).

Core Program Area	Distinct Participants Summer 2018 - August 2019	Community Interest	Participation Trends	Revenue Generation	Competition	Adult Participation	Youth Participation	Family Participation	Market Analysis
		Tennis & Raquet Sports	997	Green	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Green
Athletic Leagues	1139	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Green
Summer Camp	868	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Green	Red	Green
Learn to Skate	670	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Red	Yellow
Gymnastics	731	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Yellow
Performing & Creative Arts	382	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow
Learn to Swim	300	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow
HNC Programs	404	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Red
Childhood Enrichment	214	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Red	Yellow
Golf Programs	99	Red	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red
Youth Fitness	67	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Red	Yellow

Indoor/Outdoor Facility	Facility Usage	Community Interest	Competition	Usage Trends	Revenue Generation	Adult Usage	Youth Usage	Family Usage	Market Analysis
	Rosewood Beach	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Deer Creek Racquet Club	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green
Centennial Ice Rink	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Green
Sunset Valley Golf Club	Green	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Red	Green
Hidden Creek Aqua Park	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
Recreation Center	Green	Green	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green	Red	Green
Heller Nature Center	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Green
Rosewood Interpretive Center	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Green	Green
Centennial Gymnastics Studio	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Green	Red	Yellow
Golf Learning Center	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green
West Ridge Center	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Green
Park Avenue Boating Facility	Red	Red	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Red

ENVISION

This comprehensive analysis, the results from the attitude and interest survey, and the program and facility assessments informed the Park District staff and Park Board of Commissioners as they evaluated GreenPrint 2024 priorities and envisioned future priorities. The following serve as updated GreenPrint priorities based on the analysis conducted in 2019.

Priorities developed based on board, staff, and survey feedback

- ❖ Continued maintenance of the District's facilities that support the District's core programs
- ❖ Multi-use recreation center
- ❖ Gymnastics improvements
- ❖ Synthetic turf
- ❖ Community gathering space
- ❖ Improved features at Hidden Creek Aqua Park

IMPLEMENT

The following projects encompass the 2019 amendment to GreenPrint 2024 Track 1 and Track 2 projects.

Track 1

Track 1 projects are funded.

Centennial Ice Arena Lobby Renovation and Turn-Around Parking Lot Improvements

Improvements to the Centennial Ice Arena were identified in GreenPrint 2024 as a Track 1 priority. During the review initiative the community and Park District Board of Commissioners both expressed the need to maintain existing facilities. Centennial Ice Arena was first built in 1972 and was last renovated in 2003. The facility is aging and is due for a renovation in the common areas (lobby, restrooms, locker rooms, community rooms, and offices) to make the facility more welcoming to patrons. In addition, the turn-around improvements in the parking lot will enhance participant drop-off conditions.

An amendment to the Centennial project reevaluates the gymnastics studio renovation. GreenPrint 2024 recommends improvements to the gymnastics studio; however, after further consideration, the feasibility of expanding and or improving the studio in its current location prove challenging. Improvements for consideration included creating a viewing area into the studio for parents and expanding the room size to increase capacity for the growing program. As a result, West Ridge Center was identified as an opportunity to explore for a larger studio to accommodate the growing program and improvement of participant conditions.

Community Park Development

The former Highland Park Country Club golf course property was acquired in December 2018 by the Park District following a GreenPrint 2024 recommendation to create an intergenerational park that offers opportunities for passive recreation and trails. The proposed design for the property was developed in collaboration with community advisory committee and calls for natural restoration of the property, an extensive trail system, nature play, scenic areas, and passive recreation including bird watching and fishing.

Sunset Woods Playground Improvements

Sunset Woods Park is one of the most frequented parks in Highland Park as reported in the 2019 survey. It is centrally located and supports a variety of outdoor recreational amenities including a playground, ballfields, skate park, basketball court, tennis courts, and natural areas. Sunset Woods is also the location for a variety of the District's programs and events including Crew Camp, Fourth Fest, Egg Hunt, and Touch a Truck. Renovation of the playground was a priority in 2015 and continues to be a priority for the community.

Track 2

Track two initiatives are currently unfunded.

Multi-Purpose Facility: West Ridge Center

The community and staff expressed the need for a multi-purpose facility as well as the need to address the West Ridge Center. The West Ridge Center is an existing Park District facility that serves as a community center on the Southwest side of Highland Park. The primary programs currently offered at West Ridge Center include early childhood enrichment programs, dance, theater, arts, athletics, and special interests like martial arts. The facility also provides space for administrative offices for the District.

The facility is the former West Ridge Elementary School. The facility is aging, and the layout is challenging for the current use. The existing building offers an opportunity to provide flexible programming space to better serve the community with youth and adult programming. The space available at West Ridge Center may also serve as an opportunity for a gymnastics studio.

Synthetic Athletic Turf Field

Improvements to athletic fields were identified as a Track 2 priority in GreenPrint 2024. The Athletic Field Master Plan approved by the board in 2018 explored the initiative further and recommends synthetic turf fields at Danny Cunniff Park. Synthetic turf fields would offer benefits for scheduling, reduce cancellations, improve play surface conditions, and allow for increased clustering of programs. Turf fields would also offer rental opportunities for private athletic organizations and support local school districts.

Next Steps

Community Park Development

- ✓ *Community Engagement: 2018/19*
- *Design Development, budget, permits, approvals: 2019/20*
- *Construction Documents, bid award: 2019/20*
- *Construction: 2020*

Sunset Woods Park Playground Improvement

- *Community Engagement: 2020*
- *Design Development, budget, permits, approvals: 2020*
- *Construction Documents, bid award 2020*
- *Construction 2020/21*

Centennial Ice Arena Facility Improvements

- *Project Start, Stakeholder engagement, planning, and programming: 2020*
- *Design Development, budget, permits, entitlements: 2020*
- *Construction Documents, bid, award: 2020*
- *Construction: 2021*

Multi-Purpose Facility: West Ridge Center

- *Feasibility (stakeholder engagement, funding and partnership opportunities): 2020*

Athletic Fields: Synthetic Turf

- *Feasibility (Funding, Partnership Opportunities): 2020+*

Funding Strategies

The Park District will fund the Centennial Ice Arena Facility Improvement project, Sunset Woods Park Playground Improvements and Community Park Development with capital dollars.

Once feasibility is conducted to address needs and opportunities at West Ridge Center, the Park District will follow the GreenPrint plan recommendation to conduct programming and business modeling for each new target initiative prior to implementation. The funding strategies outlined in GreenPrint 2024 will be reviewed as well as other funding strategies.

Synergies and Partnership

The Park District of Highland Park is supportive of synergy within the community and will pursue partnership opportunities.