

**Morton Grove  
Park District**  
*Quality Parks & Recreation*

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **2017 - 2022**

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## Acknowledgements

### Board Members

Daniel J. Staackmann, President  
Mark Manno, Vice President  
Dan Ashta, Treasurer  
Georgianne Brunner, Commissioner

### Executive Steering Committee Members

Jeff Wait, Executive Director  
Greg Jaynes, Supt. of Parks and Facilities  
Joe Bruntmyer, Supt. of Recreation  
Marty O'Brien, Supt. of Finance  
Laura Kee, Supt. of HR and Risk Management  
Claudia Marren, Executive Administrative Assistant  
Kari Redmond, Recreation Supervisor  
Sue Braubach, Fitness and Wellness Manager  
John Stroesser, Parks Foreman  
Tim Brunning, Park Maintenance

### Consultants

Chuck Balling  
Charlie Williams



Dear Community member,

It is my pleasure to present the Morton Grove Park District's Strategic Plan for 2017–2022.

This plan was formulated over the past six months in three phases:

1. Community, board and staff input
2. Staff research and planning
3. Board of Park Commissioners review and approval

Please take the time to read the Executive Summary on page 4 and review the entire report.

This plan establishes a roadmap for the park district to achieve success in all areas of its operation and provide the community with an increased sense of pride in their park district.

Thank you for taking the time to review this plan. If you have any questions please feel free to call Jeff Wait, Executive Director, at 847-965-0383 or [jwait@mgparks.com](mailto:jwait@mgparks.com).

Sincerely,

***Dan Staackmann***

President, Board of Park Commissioner

## Executive Summary

### **Morton Grove...**

The Village of Morton Grove, Illinois (pop. 23,270) is a progressive, family-oriented community located 15 miles northwest of downtown Chicago in Cook County. Morton Grove's unique location (between I-94 and I-294), combined with its dedication to delivering the highest level of services to its residents, excellent schools, and abundance of park and forest preserve land, make it an ideal community in which to live and work. Nearly 20% of the land in Morton Grove is owned by the Cook County Forest Preserve and is dedicated to open space and recreation. Although primarily residential in nature, Morton Grove's 5.2 square miles includes a healthy commercial and industrial base as well. The community is bordered by the Villages of Glenview and Golf on the north, Skokie on the east, and Niles on the south and west.



### **Morton Grove Park District...**



The Morton Grove Park District has been providing memorable experiences in parks and recreation since its inception in 1951. The District serves an active and engaging community of 23,000. As a separate municipal governing agency, the District is responsible for providing parks, facilities and recreational programs for the community. The organization is led

by five (5) elected park commissioners, 24 full time staff and nearly 200 seasonal and part time employees. The district owns and maintains ten facilities including two outdoor pools, a museum, four field houses, a 50,000-square foot community center and 14 parks totaling over 70 acres. The District is a member of the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) and the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD). The District also contracts with the Maine Niles Association of Special Recreation to provide for recreational services to individuals with Special Needs.

This past year, the Morton Grove Park District has successfully transitioned several key leadership positions on the Board of Park Commissioners and administration. Park District finances remained stable. The Board and staff worked collectively with School District #67 to revise their use agreement of Hren Park that helped the district to secure much needed programming space for its GAP and BASE programs. It also revised its agreement with the Morton Grove Historical Society better outlining roles and responsibilities.

Staff has created over 100 new recreation programs for the community, installed air conditioners in all four field houses, replaced outdated playgrounds at Oriole and Overhill Parks, installed Thor Guard Lightning Prediction Systems in all of the parks-adding a new level of alerting athletic field users of pending severe weather, and looked for ways to streamline services and cut expenses so that the District didn't need to raise fees and charges.

In 2016, the Morton Grove Park District became an Illinois Distinguished Agency. This recognition confirming that the agency provides exceptional parks and recreation services to their community, came after a lengthy review process conducted by a committee of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association.

### ***Morton Grove Park District Strategic Planning for 2017-2022...***

In the spring of 2016, the Morton Grove Park District Board and staff initiated a five-year strategic planning process for the years 2017-2022. There were three phases to this process:

- **Phase 1: Research and Issue Identification** - The park district conducted stakeholder (Board, staff and community) research to identify strategic issues, focusing on those items that were most important to the future success of the park district over the next five years.
- **Phase 2: Strategic Initiative Development** – Park district staff clarified and developed the strategic initiatives and identified associated goals, objectives, tasks and action timelines.
- **Phase 3: Review and approval** – The Morton Grove Board of Park District Commissioners approved the plan.



### ***About the strategic planning process...***

As part of the Strategic Planning for 2017-2022, the District conducted a series of feedback sessions, park and facility tours and community meetings.

The research and formats included...

- A workshop with the Strategic Plan Executive Steering Committee (ESC). The ESC consisted of senior-level park district leadership.
- A workshop with the Park District Board of Commissioners
- Five community meetings
- Park and facility tours by the Commissioners
- Review and reference of the *2013 Comprehensive Master Plan*. This extensive research effort included: Community visioning, Individual park site evaluations, Assessment of existing facilities, and Analysis of practices and procedures.

This research and the District's 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan allowed the District to identify major issues/initiatives/projects that need to be addressed over the next five years. Issues were grouped by themes. These themes were consolidated into six forward-looking **strategic initiatives** for the 2017-2022 timeframe.

- 1. Enhancing Resident Experience at Parks and Facilities**
- 2. Improving Communications, Marketing and Customer- Friendly Processes**
- 3. Strengthen Community Relationships and Park District Governance**
- 4. Develop and Retain Highly Engaged Employees**
- 5. Financial Planning for Long-term Stability**
- 6. Enhance Recreation Opportunities to Meet Residents' Needs**

A team leader was assigned to each initiative along with staff team members to:

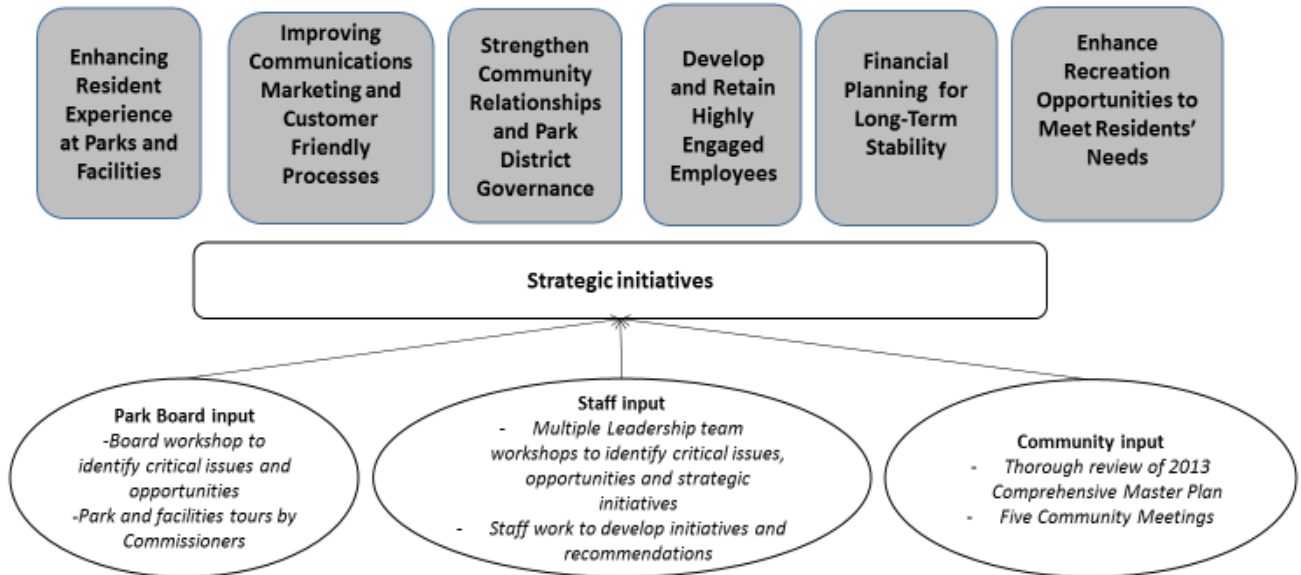
- Study and analyze each initiative.
- Clarify and define the initiative.
- Identify internal and external factors that may impact the District's ability to move forward on the initiative.
- Develop recommendations with specific steps that must be taken to address the stated initiative.
- Define measures of success to monitor the progress towards achievement of the initiative.

Drafts of these initiatives and recommendations were presented and reviewed at the October 2016 Park Board meeting.

The illustration on the following pages summarizes the research input and the resulting strategic initiatives.

## Morton Grove Park District Strategic Planning Process (2017-2022)

**Mission:** The Morton Grove Park District is committed to enrich the quality of community life and promote recreational activities through creative programming for people of all ages and abilities, while protecting open space and natural resources for future generations.



## Morton Grove Park District Strategic Planning (2017-2022)

**Mission:** The Morton Grove Park District is committed to enrich the quality of community life and promote recreational activities through creative programming for people of all ages and abilities, while protecting open space and natural resources for future generations.

Enhancing residents' experience at facilities and parks	Improving effective communications, marketing and customer friendly processes	Strengthen community relationships and park district governance	Develop and retain highly engaged employees	Financial planning for long-term stability	Enhance recreation opportunities to meet residents' needs.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify and explore use options for the district's four fieldhouses.</li> <li>2. Finalize feasibility study for a Dog Park</li> <li>3. Identify and explore options for the future of Harrer Park Pool</li> <li>4. Explore community interest in renovating and/or expanding the Prairie View Community Center</li> <li>5. Acquire indoor space through formal "exchange of services" agreements</li> <li>6. Address selected general park improvements</li> <li>7. Other action items</li> <li>8. Conduct a study to investigate the development of a new multi-use facility in place of Harrer Pool</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collect and analyze feedback to improve operations</li> <li>2. Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing efforts</li> <li>3. Strengthen internal communications and customer-service standards</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve professional relationships through engagement and outreach</li> <li>2. Strengthen board competencies and engagement</li> <li>3. Develop and update policies and procedures</li> <li>4. Update existing intergovernmental agreements</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide a continuous learning environment</li> <li>2. Uphold an accountable work environment</li> <li>3. Continue and maintain transparent and trusting management practices and relationships</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop and update financial strategies</li> <li>2. Update policies and procedures</li> <li>3. Expand employee knowledge of financial concepts</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leverage metrics and research to optimize programming mix.</li> <li>2. Introduce creative program incentives to encourage participation</li> <li>3. Maintain financial stability in program offerings</li> </ol>



# Strategic Initiatives and Recommendations

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #1: ENHANCING RESIDENTS EXPERIENCE AT FACILITIES AND PARKS

The Morton Grove Park District will endeavor to provide well maintained, safe and updated parks and facilities to its users that appropriately reflect the interests and needs of its residents and are within the financial ability of the park district.

### DEFINE THE ISSUE

Parks and recreational facilities are the foundation of the park district. They provide an outlet for programs, services, events, and all manner of active/passive recreational pursuits for the community. It is imperative that the district maintain all of its physical properties at the highest level possible and seek to make necessary improvements, updates and where feasible, additions to its parks and facilities. To date, the district has maintained park properties, including athletic fields, playgrounds, sport courts and passive areas in a consistent and appropriate manner. With few exceptions, the parks are in good to excellent shape and can be maintained at that level with continued diligence and planned repair/replacement of major park components.

The district's facilities present a greater challenge in that many of them are in need of significant renovation, reinvention or replacement. Only Oriole Pool has received this level of attention in recent years. There are also opportunities to consider new facilities that would allow for new or expanded programming and recreational service options in the community.

The 2011/12 community input meetings and the 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan did an excellent job of identifying areas where parks and facilities were in need of attention as well as identifying opportunities for new services. Oriole Pool has since been replaced with a modern water park. In addition, there have been some improvements to the fieldhouses. All four facilities are now air conditioned, making the space more useable during the hotter summer months. The playgrounds at Harrer north, Overhill and Oriole Parks have been replaced. However, there are a number of other opportunities that were discussed in the two reports that still need to be addressed in some form or another.

Funding for future capital improvements will be a significant challenge for the district. The District's non referendum bonding authority has been dedicated to debt retirement of the Oriole pool project and is committed until 2033. While there is a planned funding program for many of the district's assets, the program is limited to replacing existing furniture, fixtures and equipment. It does not address funding for new capital development. Given the current bond

payment requirements for Oriole Pool, any significant new capital projects will take efforts to secure grants, public/private partnerships and the last resort would be a referendum.

## **INTERNAL FACTORS**

*What things within the park district (both positive and negative) will affect our ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- The lack of non-referendum bonding power to fund a larger project.
- The need for staff and Board support for those projects selected vs. ones that may not make the cut.
- Communication to all staff to keep them informed and involved in the process.
- The ability of the district to maintain and manage existing facilities.
- The cost of operation and maintenance of new facilities and the opportunity for the district to generate new revenues through operations. (cost/benefit analysis)
- What impact will decisions have on existing operations.
- Space necessary to build new facilities.
- Ability of staff to take on new projects in light of their current workload.
- Impact to existing facilities/parks – potential loss of open space already at a premium in the community.
- Long-term effect of new facilities on capital repairs and replacement program funding.
- Incorporating latest technology, eco-friendly systems and accessibility into new facility designs.
- Potential need for additional parking facilities to accommodate increased use of new or expanded facilities.

## **EXTERNAL FACTORS**

*What things outside the control of the district (both positive and negative,) will affect our ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Level of competition within the community and/or service area.
- Current local economy.
- Local government support/oversight (permitting, zoning, potential partnerships, etc.)
- Cost/accessibility to local utilities (gas, water, electricity, sewer).
- Search and selection of a quality design/construction team.
- Resident and stakeholder support and organized assistance for potential referendum.
- Explore public/private partnership opportunities and both state and federal grants.
- Current and projected market conditions related to planned improvements and services.

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. Existence of a long term plan for use of all four field houses.
2. Determination of the future of Harrer Park Pool.
3. Maximizing use of all existing facilities and park spaces.
4. Existence of a comprehensive conditions and space study for Prairie View Community Center.
5. A clear and Board-approved plan for facility financing/development that has community support.

## Action Plan

### Initiative #1: ENHANCING RESIDENTS EXPERIENCE AT FACILITIES AND PARKS

		<u>Objective</u>	<u>Fiscal Yr.</u>	<u>Assigned to:</u>
<b>1.1</b>		<b>Objective 1.1: Identify and explore use options for the district's four field houses.</b>		
	1.1.1	Conduct a review of current use levels for all four field houses and determine available opportunities.	2017	Joe & Rec.
	1.1.2	Renovate the field houses for general and/or specific use and address ADA issues as required by law.	2019	Parks & Joe
	1.1.3	Present a board report with the pros and cons as well as cost to adding outside access bathrooms with automated opening and closing devices to the field houses to address public requests for access.	2019	Parks & Joe
	1.1.4	Investigate and present a feasibility study on the need and estimated construction costs of renovating one or more of the field houses into an outdoor pavilion with indoor storage to reduce operating and maintenance costs and to serve camp and picnic uses. If funding is not available to maintain field houses, consider the option of closing one or more facilities.	2022	Staff & Board
<b>1.2</b>		<b>Objective 1.2: Finalize feasibility study for a Dog Park</b>		

		<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Fiscal Yr.</u></b>	<b><u>Assigned to:</u></b>
	1.2.1	Review available sites and recommend best option to park board.	2016	Jeff
	1.2.2	Develop an operational pro forma identifying potential revenues and expenses to determine financial feasibility.	2016	Jeff
	1.2.3	Identify potential partners (neighboring agencies, private partners, support groups) that might assist in funding the development of a facility.	2016	Jeff
	1.2.4	Consider allowing dogs on leashes in parks where there are paved paths as a no-cost option to building a dedicated facility.	2017	Jeff
<b>1.3</b>		<b>Objective 1.3: Identify and explore options for the future of Harrer Park Pool</b>		
	1.3.1	Conduct a five-year operations budget projection to determine cost of continued operation without significant changes in order to better understand the financial ramifications of operating the facility as is.	2017	Joe & Parks
	1.3.2	If funding is not available for repairs and operations, consider closing the pool and demolishing the facility for open space or alternate uses.	2017	Staff & Board
	1.3.3	Operate the facility for as long as financially and/or physically possible.	2017	Staff
	1.3.4	Conduct a facility conditions assessment with an architect and engineer to determine remaining life expectancy and options for renovation or replacement.	2017	Jeff & Parks
	1.3.5	If Harrer is closed, explore additional parking at Oriole to accommodate increased use.	2017	Jeff & Parks
<b>1.4</b>		<b>Objective 1.4: Explore community interest in renovating and/or expanding the Prairie View Community Center</b> to better meet the needs and interests of the community.		

		<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Fiscal Yr.</u></b>	<b><u>Assigned to:</u></b>
	1.4.1	<p>Engage an architect to conduct a comprehensive space analysis of the existing facility, addressing (at minimum) the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitness floor and segregated workout areas (old courts)</li> <li>• Viability of current track vs. the addition of a new, larger track.</li> <li>• Need for dedicated program space.</li> <li>• The possible addition of an indoor aquatic facility to complement fitness and serve other needs.</li> <li>• Explore expanding gym by removing the stage area and reordering the space.</li> <li>• Address the old entrance area, either by enclosing it for additional program space or demolishing old stair and ramp and developing the open space to complement the building.</li> <li>• Identify and address all current HVAC, electrical and plumbing issues as well as ADA requirements.</li> </ul>	2018	Parks & Jeff
1.5		<p><b>Objective 1.5:</b>  <b>Acquire indoor space through implementation of formal “exchange of services” agreements</b> with select school districts or other available partners in the community in order to increase access to existing facilities and minimize costs to the taxpayer</p>	2017	Parks, Jeff, Joe & Rec
1.6		<p><b>Objective 1.6:</b>  <b>Address selected General Park Improvements</b></p>		
	1.6.1	Explore and document findings on adding bathroom facilities to the Harrer Park pavilion to accommodate current high user volume, by using existing storage and concession areas.	TBD	
	1.6.2	Develop maintenance standards and classification of all sports fields and implement maintenance practices accordingly, in order to address public concern over conditions of some fields.	2017-18	Joe, John & Parks

	1.6.3	Assess and quantify use of all existing sports fields and determine future use of athletic space to ensure efficient use of available park space.	2017	Joe & Elizabeth
	1.6.4	Identify areas in existing parks and install dedicated picnic areas, including picnic tables, water fountain, available bathrooms, shade opportunities and active open space to serve family and other small group park usage.	2018	Parks & Jeff
	1.6.5	Address community interest in outdoor exercise by mapping all formal walking paths in parks and identify length of paths and market to the community. Include opportunities to connect public spaces that have safe pedestrian access between them.	2016-2017	Maintenance Staff
<b>1.7</b>		<b>Objective 1.7:</b> <b>Other Action Items:</b>		
	1.7.1	If any major capital projects move forward, develop a citizens' support group to assist in garnering public support and preparing for a possible referendum.	TBD	Jeff
	1.7.2	Implement a formal donation program to encourage the community to donate trees and minor park amenities in honor or memory of someone.	TBD	Kathy
	1.7.3	Identify an area at Prairie View Community Center to install clay pavers and allow the community to buy a personalized paver with funds going to a specific capital use.	TBD	Kathy
	1.7.4	Conduct a thorough review of the organizational structure of the Parks and Facilities Department to assess current staffing levels and efficiency. Identify opportunities to improve operations and ensure they are conducted in the most cost-effective manner.	2017	Parks
<b>1.8</b>		<b>Objective 1.8:</b> Address the stated community interest expressed in the 2013 master plan and 2011/12 community input documents by <b>conducting a study to investigate the development of a new multi-use facility in place of Harrer Pool</b> that would provide needed and/or expanded services to the community.		

		<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Fiscal Yr.</u></b>	<b><u>Assigned to:</u></b>
	1.8.1	Develop plans to construct a Preschool and Daycare center to consolidate and expand existing programs into a centralized, state-of-the-art facility.	TBD	Joe, Jeff & Parks
	1.8.2	Explore and document findings on the addition of a multi-use gymnasium to accommodate various ages and sports interests.	TBD	Joe, Jeff & Parks
	1.8.3	Investigate the installation of an outdoor spray park (or expand the existing one if viable) to complement the preschool age programming and serve the general public.	2021	Joe, Jeff & Parks

## **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #2: IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND CUSTOMER- FRIENDLY PROCESSES**

Effective Communication is a proactive effort utilizing the right mix of marketing tools to increase awareness of programs and services the park district offers.

Customer-friendly processes are those avenues and the steps residents must take to conduct business with the park district.

### **DEFINE THE ISSUE**

Today, residents receive information from various sources and via multiple methods. Whether it is from seasonal brochures, flyers, email, texts, Twitter, Facebook, word-of-mouth, or any number of other electronic means; residents have access to information. Because of this abundance of information, messages can become lost in all of the clutter. As an organization the Morton Grove Park District has to be efficient, persistent and creative in the dissemination of information on programs and services offered to the community. Additionally, the District needs to focus on adapting to residents' needs by updating our park district technologies and processes to be customer friendly.

The Morton Grove Park District promotes its programs and services primarily through a program brochure. Other supplemental communication pieces include newspaper articles, word-of-mouth referrals, website, specialty brochures and flyers. The Marketing Manager is responsible for all of the District's marketing efforts.

The Fun Guide is distributed to households three times a year and is available online, which is helpful for customers. The brochure content is well organized, and information is easy to find due to the table of contents listing of programs. The program guide is attractive to the eye with appropriate use of photographs. Residents generally look to the price of a program and then the program title as a means of determining whether or not they will register for a class. Therefore, creative program titles are important. Descriptions should include features, attributes, and benefits. Some of the text included in program descriptions is informational, rather than promotional. Identify the unique value propositions for each program and identify the "hook" that will entice people to register. It is also suggested to try to keep the descriptions brief, no longer than six or seven lines, as readers lose interest in programs if they read too much.

In today's environment, where consumers are seeking more high quality, value-oriented services than ever before, it is critical that the District recognize and take action toward improving the level of service and convenience offered throughout the organization. Taking resident needs and input into consideration when making decisions and doing more to



determine and respond to customer needs, particularly through the use of focus groups and surveys, are two of the primary ideas offered. Others include implementing quality assurance programs and being more responsive to resident needs by empowering employees to make decisions and removing unnecessary barriers.

The District has much to offer to the community in terms of facilities and services. It is integral that residents, despite their age, activity level, or usage, find value in what the District provides to the community. The District will be tasked with generating more efficiency to provide more to residents. It will be a challenge for the next several years, considering the ever changing state of the economy. Focusing the district's limited marketing and technology resources on the most effective communications tools and processes will be critical.

## **INTERNAL FACTORS**

*What are the things within the park district that will affect its ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Inadequate funds budgeted to marketing
- Complacency of staff
- Instrument design errors
- Distrust of findings
- Reliance on qualitative data not quantitative
- Lack of knowledge and expertise
- Failure to implement
- Rush to get pieces out that produces errors, poor proofreading
- Greater emphasis placed on marketing rather than program design as indicator of success

## **EXTERNAL FACTORS**

*What are the things outside of the control of the park district that will affect its ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Willingness of residents to complete surveys
- Disengagement
- Spam blocking
- Constant need for incentives to complete survey
- Respondent biases
- Rapid changes in technology
- Squeaky wheel syndrome
- Resistance to change

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Create a scorecard to monitor and measure progress.

1. Completion of recommendations per year
2. Users response rate of at least 15% or better
3. Better than average score on customer feedback surveys
4. Use website analytics i.e., Google results to determine marketing outcomes

## Action Plan

### Initiative #2: IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND CUSTOMER-FRIENDLY PROCESSES

		<u>Objective</u>	<u>Fiscal Yr.</u>	<u>Assigned to:</u>
<b>2.1</b>		<b>Objective 2.1: Collect and analyze feedback to improve operations</b>		
	2.1.1	Conduct program evaluations after each program to increase feedback from participants.	All	Joe & Rec
	2.1.2	Conduct customer service satisfaction survey annually to monitor the need for changes in processes and procedure. i. Attach a survey with every e-blast ii. Develop meaningful, but limited, incentive program to ensure residents participate in surveys.	All	Jeff & Laura
	2.1.3	Closely monitor employee satisfaction survey annually. Use results to improve employee engagement and performance for: i. Full-time employees ii. Part-time employees	All	Laura & Jeff
<b>2.2</b>		<b>Objective 2.2: Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing efforts</b>		
	2.2.1	Internalize website to gain control over changes and to eliminate fees charged by the developer.	2017	Jeff & Kathy

		<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Fiscal Yr.</u></b>	<b><u>Assigned to:</u></b>
	2.2.2	Re-evaluate and streamline brochure process to improve coordination and communications between Recreation, Front desk, and Marketing departments.	2017	Kathy, Rec & Guest Services
	2.2.3	Conduct annually targeted patron surveys using Constant Contact.	2018	Kathy
	2.2.4	Develop marketing plans for programs and to build awareness of the park district.	2018	Kathy & Rec
	2.2.5	Develop a review process for marketing pieces assuring consistency and accuracy before being distributed to the public (i.e., postcards, flyers, brochures, etc.).	All	Kathy, Claudia & Jeff
	2.2.6	Replace front entrance marquee sign for better visibility of PVCC via better technology.	2018	Kathy & Jeff
	2.2.7	Explore opportunity to install quality produced, temporary signs for special events at entrance to the Village.	All	Jeff
	2.2.8	Develop and distribute annual report on programs' finances	2018	Marty & Jeff
<b>2.3</b>		<b>Objective 2.3: Strengthen internal communications and customer service standards</b>		
	2.3.1	Conduct an annual all-staff training session on customer service to standardize methods and techniques of service provided to community.	All	Jeff & Laura
	2.3.2	Improve communication between staff members by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Conducting an annual survey.</li> <li>ii. Holding quarterly meetings with staff to provide updates and a forum for staff feedback.</li> </ul>	All	Jeff

## **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #3: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS AND PARK DISTRICT GOVERNANCE**

The Morton Grove Park District is just one of several taxing and non-taxing agencies within the Village. The park district must make every effort to collaborate with all agencies for the betterment of the residents.

Park District governance involves the policies, ordinances, procedures, and philosophies the five-member Board of Park Commissioners follow in working together and making decisions that guide the district.

### **DEFINE THE ISSUE**

Since 1951 the Morton Grove Park District has been an intricate part of the Village of Morton Grove. One of several, separate taxing bodies within the Village, the Morton Grove Park District understands the importance of working with other agencies. The residents of Morton Grove have a great expectation that all agencies will collaborate with each other to eliminate duplication of services and to ensure their taxes are being utilized effectively and without waste.

Along with this collaboration comes an interdependence among agencies. For example, the Village uses Harrer Park for Morton Grove Days; the schools use park space for classes while allowing the park district to use rooms and gyms for programming. There are many intergovernmental agreements, many outdated; some are in need of review. These agreements need to be strengthened and in some cases, developed. In cases where the other party is unwilling to enter into a formal agreement, the park district should reach memorandums of understanding to better define relationships.

In the past, intergovernmental agreements have been developed with various agencies. However, many need to be revisited and possibly renegotiated. The park district and the Village of Morton Grove have several agreements in place but all need to be reviewed and renegotiated. A school district agreement was revised this past winter, while another was completed this summer.

### **INTERNAL FACTORS**

*What are the things within the park district that will affect its ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Agreement must be mutually beneficial
- Board or Administrative turnover
- Need for well-defined agreements

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

*What are the things outside of the control of the park district that will affect its ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Willingness of other organization to enter into agreement
- Negotiating agreements may be complex
- Residents expect intergovernmental cooperation

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Create a scorecard to monitor and measure progress.

1. Completion of recommendations per year
2. Number of updated agreements
3. Increase visibility and transparency of park district
4. Obtain Distinguished Agency Accreditation
5. Well-defined trusting relationships with all stakeholders

## Action Plan

### Strategic Initiative #3: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS AND PARK DISTRICT GOVERNANCE

		<u>Objective</u>	<u>Fiscal Yr.</u>	<u>Assigned to:</u>
3.1		<b>Objective #3.1 Improve professional relationships through engagement and outreach.</b>		
	3.1.1	Strive to become the Village agency of choice and a trusted partner in the community by developing trusting working relationships with all stakeholders-adding this requirement to the leadership team's annual performance plan.	All	All
	3.1.2	In time of need, provide other agencies with support in the most effective and efficient way possible.	All	Board & Jeff
	3.1.3	Coordinate leadership meetings with other local taxing agencies to enhance communications and partnerships.	2017	Jeff

		<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Fiscal Yr.</u></b>	<b><u>Assigned to:</u></b>
	3.1.4	Annually update the Park Board on the Park District's private/public partnerships	All	Jeff
	3.1.5	Increase community engagement by completing an annual review of accomplishments and/or the development of an annual report	All	Jeff
	3.1.6	Park District leadership will be encouraged to participate in at least one community service club.	2018	Jeff, Marty, Laura & Parks
	3.1.7	Continued participation in State and National organizations to develop strong leaders and increase knowledge of industry best practices.	All	All
<b>3.2</b>		<b>Objective 3.2: Strengthen Board competencies and engagement</b>		
	3.2.1	Develop a formal budget presentation to the board to increase transparency and to educate the board on fiscal direction of District.	2018	Marty & Jeff
	3.2.2	Compile or develop a comprehensive board policy handbook to strengthen decisions and to ensure long-term adherence to those decisions.	2019	Jeff & Claudia
	3.2.3	Provide pre-election packets and new Board member orientation.	All	Jeff & Claudia
	3.2.4	Make available state and national park and recreation conferences.	All	Jeff
	3.2.5	Participate in Board member training opportunities.	2020	Jeff
	3.2.6	Closely monitor and provide timely legislative updates to board regarding state legislation impacting parks and recreation.	All	Jeff
	3.2.7	Attend Legislative Conference annually and share information with Park Board and leadership team.	All	Jeff
	3.2.8	Seek opportunities for legislators and Park Board members to meet to build stronger relationships.	All	Jeff

		<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Fiscal Yr.</u></b>	<b><u>Assigned to:</u></b>
<b>3.3</b>		<b>Objective 3.3: Develop and update policies and procedures</b>		
	3.3.1	Develop/Distribute Fiscal Year End financial review for the community.	2019	Jeff, Marty & Kathy
	3.3.2	Compile or develop a comprehensive Administrative Policy Manual to tighten processes and procedures staff is to follow.	2019	Jeff
	3.3.3	Complete Distinguished Agency Accreditation to ensure policies and procedures are up-to-date and conform to industry standards.	2017	Jeff & Claudia
<b>3.4</b>		<b>Objective 3.4: Update Existing Intergovernmental Agreements</b>		
	3.4.1	Village of Morton Grove <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Mutual Aid Agreement – Park Police</li> <li>ii. Morton Grove Days (new)</li> <li>iii. Joint Access and Parking Lot Sharing (Expires 2021)</li> <li>iv. Museum ground (Expires 2106)</li> <li>v. Shared services and equipment (Open-ended)</li> </ul>	TBD	Jeff
	3.4.2	School Districts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. #63 (new)</li> <li>ii. #67 (Open-ended)</li> <li>iii. #70 (Open-ended)</li> <li>iv. #219 (Expired)</li> </ul>	TBD	
	3.4.3	Executive Director Contract (2017)	2017	Jeff
	3.4.4	Niles Park District – Resident rates for certain programs	TBD	Jeff & Joe
	3.4.5	Museum agreement with Historical Society (Open-ended)	TBD	Jeff & Joe
	3.4.6	M-NASR lease agreement (Expires 2021)	2021	Jeff

		<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Fiscal Yr.</u></b>	<b><u>Assigned to:</u></b>
	3.4.7	Ancel/Glink – corporate counsel (open-ended)	2018	Jeff
	3.4.8	Morton Grove Baseball Softball Association	TBD	Joe & Elizabeth
	3.4.9	American Youth Soccer Organization	TBD	Joe & Elizabeth
	3.4.10	Farmers Market (annually)	All	Joe
	3.4.11	Possible Morton Grove Library	2022	Jeff
	3.4.12	Possible Niles Township	2022	Jeff
	3.4.13	Possible Cook County	2022	Jeff



## STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #4: DEVELOP AND RETAIN HIGHLY ENGAGED EMPLOYEES

Developing and retaining highly engaged employees requires the park district to organize, plan, implement and evaluate programs, conferences, seminars, webcasts, and other avenues for employees to understand their importance, embrace and execute established rules, regulations, and procedures.

### DEFINE THE ISSUE

As a service-based organization; the only way to ensure the best possible customer service experience for Morton Grove residents, is hiring and training the most qualified staff to provide those services. Most recently the Morton Grove Park District has worked diligently to hire, train, and retain a team of highly qualified staff. In an effort to retain this team of highly-qualified, trained and motivated staff, the District has to ensure that its compensation and benefits are competitive in comparison to similar and surrounding Districts. Hiring ranges, salary ranges, position adjustments and job descriptions must stay competitive in an effort to attract and retain the highest quality staff.

### INTERNAL FACTORS

*What things within the park district will affect our ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- *Resistance to change.*
- *Complacency.* This goes hand in hand with the above resistance to change. Employees become comfortable and familiar within their job therefore not always thinking outside the box, or changing with trends.
- *Need for increased training.* Employees are not given the proper tools to perform their duties or the training is incomplete or missing important information the employees need in order to perform at a high level.
- *Lack of funds for training.* – There have not been sufficient funds in the budget for all staff to attend trainings.
- *Ineffective recognition program.*
- *Lack of upward mobility.* Due to the nature of our business the potential to move upward, or be promoted is limited, therefore causing staff to look elsewhere.
- *Job Sharing/Cross Training Opportunities.*

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

*What things outside the control of the district (both positive and negative) will affect our ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- *Improve image in the industry.* Due to the frequent turn-over in the past couple of years, professionals may be hesitant to apply for open positions.
- *Competing Agencies.* Being a smaller agency, it may appear that a larger district has more to offer to an employee. Larger districts have more employees which allow upward mobility, and growth or promotions into higher positions. We do not have a lot of room for advancement within the District. Want to try and build a larger tier for advancement in an effort to retain staff.
- *Training expenses.* – Residents are always concerned about where their tax dollars are being spent. We must be cognizant on how and on what we are spending these dollars.
- *Rising costs of training opportunities.*
- *Resident expectations.* – Our residents expect us to deliver excellent customer service, not only with our programs and special events, but equally with our staff.

## MEASURE OF SUCCESS

Employee satisfaction surveys will provide management with the knowledge and tools to build positive employee/customer relations and a positive work environment. Employees' attitudes, passion, loyalty, workplace and competitive intelligence are key indicators for employee retention, satisfaction and productivity.

1. Number of workplace improvements completed each year.
2. 75% or better satisfaction rate on employee satisfaction survey.
3. 75% or better rating on customer service survey.

## Action Plan

### Strategic Initiative #4: DEVELOP AND RETAIN HIGHLY ENGAGED EMPLOYEES

		<u>Objective</u>	<u>Fiscal Yr.</u>	<u>Assigned to:</u>
4.I		<b>Objective 4.I: Provide a Continuous Learning Environment</b>		
	4.I.I	Develop core competencies for leadership positions.	2020	Laura & Jeff

		<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Fiscal Yr.</u></b>	<b><u>Assigned to:</u></b>
	4.1.2	Allow staff to participate in ongoing training opportunities.	2017	Dept. Heads
	4.1.3	Evaluate and revise new employee orientation and training program.	2018	Laura
	4.1.4	Revise performance evaluation to include core competencies.	2017	Laura & Jeff
	4.1.5	Develop a succession management process.	2019-2020	Laura & Jeff
	4.1.6	Create new guest service and standards trainings.	2018	Laura & Guest Services
<b>4.2</b>		<b>Objective 4.2: Uphold an Accountable Work Environment.</b>		
	4.2.1	Hold employees accountable to meet their goals and position expectations.	2018	Dept. Heads
	4.2.2	Monitor and report on progress of individual, department, and Agency goals.	2017	Dept. Heads
	4.2.3	Develop a district-wide transition plan.	2019	Dept. Heads
	4.2.4	Hold an Annual Leadership Retreat.	2018	Dept. Heads
<b>4.3</b>		<b>Objective 4.3: Continue/Maintain Transparent and Trusting Management Practices and Relationships</b>	2017	Guest services & Rec
	4.3.1	Develop a purpose statement and objectives for a district-wide customer service committee		
	4.3.2	Conduct Annual Employee Survey for both full time and part time.	2017	Laura
	4.3.3	Conduct District wide staff trainings quarterly.	2017	Laura, Claudia & Jeff
	4.3.4	Develop online training opportunities.	2017	Laura

## **STRATEGIC INITIATIVE #5: FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY**

The Morton Grove Park District will continue to strengthen and maintain its fiscal health and stability through careful monitoring of its funding and ensuring scarce resources are allocated where they will provide the most “good” to the community.

### **DEFINE THE ISSUE**

The Morton Grove Park District's overall financial picture remains strong in spite of the current challenging economic conditions. The District's main sources of revenue are property taxes and user fees. Currently, property taxes represent approximately half of the district's operating revenue. Tax revenue is allocated to the various funds based on the need and use of the service by a large percentage of residents as well as the ability of the service to generate user fees. Under the tax cap, the District is limited in its ability to increase taxes without a referendum.

User fees are the other major source of operating revenue and are viewed as a barrier to some families to signing up, at times with low income families getting priced out of our programs. However, we continue to see a high level of participation in our programs and use of park district services. Surveys of user fees are conducted on a regular basis to assure that we remain competitive in the marketplace. In addition, the District strives to return value to our residents by enhancing property values and meeting the recreational needs of the community by providing quality parks, facilities and programs. It is important to note that a compelling reason we are able to offer the wide ranging facilities and programs is because of our residents' income levels and abilities to pay user fees.

The Morton Grove Park District has historically taken a conservative and long- term approach to managing the District's finances. Fiscal responsibility is a key factor in the District's finances. This is demonstrated by adhering to a balanced budget annually. The District has several important components in place which contribute to our financial stability.

*Investment Policy:* The District's investment policy is conservative to protect the principal and only allows for investments in Certificates of Deposit, Government Agencies and Money Market Accounts.

*Long Term Financial Plans:* The District also has a long term financial plan that identifies funds available for future capital projects after considering the effects of the debt already incurred. It also has a long term financial plan for funding the operational needs of the Park

District. The Park District operating expenses are primarily for the maintenance of parks, playgrounds, sports fields and field houses which have limited, if any, ability to generate user fees.

*Fund Balances:* The District has fund reserves with sufficient balances overall to cover short term delays in tax receipts, temporary shortfalls in meeting budget expectations, or moderate unexpected expenses.

*Staff:* The majority of our employees are part time or seasonal staff. The purpose of this plan is to provide more flexibility in adjusting staffing levels, as needed, based on weather and participation levels.

*Debt:* The District has invested heavily in rebuilding Oriole Aquatic Center, one of its pools, and renovating its existing facilities. This decision three years ago currently consumes 26% of our rollover debt and will consume 50% in December of 2018. Through careful long term planning, the District identified and segregated certain funds to be used to repay the existing debt for Oriole Pool. We will continue to use this approach until the current debt is paid down.

While the District continues to hold its own in these uncertain times, the District must remain diligent in monitoring participation levels and financial performance, strengthen internal controls and processes and continue to update long-term financial plans. One of the challenges is to develop plans to meet both the ongoing operational needs of the District in conjunction with the desire for new investment in capital items or increased services. Costs in some areas such as utilities and insurance are increasing faster than the Consumer Price Index and taking a larger percentage of our limited tax dollars. It should be noted that the district work force is made up of 24 full-time and 250 part-time workers.

Competition among other providers of services is a key factor in our ability on whether we can increase user fees. In addition, while the District has acquired many assets like parks and open space that provide many public benefits, these assets have a limited ability to generate user fees and therefore will require a larger portion of available tax revenue as costs of operations increase. Until the current debt is paid down, major investments in capital will require identifying a payment stream to finance the projects or passing a referendum.

## **INTERNAL FACTORS**

*What things within the park district (both positive and negative) will affect our ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Continuation of a financially conservative approach
- Limited tax dollars available for maintenance and operation
- Ability to react and adjust fees as needed
- Expense control, especially labor-related costs and current debt
- Programs that can consistently operate on at least a break even basis

- Oriole Aquatic Center debt will be retired in 2033
- High expectations of maintenance and services levels while controlling costs, staying focused on core services and delivering value to our customers and residents
- New Federal and State mandates such as the new Federal Labor Standards rules on exempt employees.

## **EXTERNAL FACTORS**

*What things outside the control of the district (both positive and negative) will affect our ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Possible economic recession
- Increasing competition from both public and private sector service providers
- Weather-dependent facilities
- Investment rates of return
- Number of participants supporting programs
- Tax Cap that limits how much the tax levy can be increased
- The District's ability to issue more debt and if necessary for major projects, including much needed facility updates, pass a referendum to do so
- Escalating operating costs, particularly utilities and insurance

## **MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

Create a scorecard to monitor and measure progress.

1. Updated policy manual that includes all GFOA recommended policies.
2. Updated Fund balance goals that are at target or greater.
3. All facilities operating within budget constraints to spend efficiently and wisely.
4. Recipients of the GFOA Certificates of Excellence in Financial Reporting and Budgeting.
5. Development of a capital repair and replacement program and setting aside funds annually to support the upkeep of existing facilities ensuring that multi-year financial planning will be in place and closely monitored so the Park District can be proactive and adapt to changing economic conditions.
6. Accreditation with IPRA Distinguished Agency and Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA).
7. Maintain or improve bond rating.

## Action Plan

### Strategic Initiative #5: FINANCIAL PLANNING FOR LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

		<u>Objective</u>	<u>Fiscal Yr.</u>	<u>Assigned to:</u>
<b>5.1</b>		<b>Objective 5.1: Develop/Update Financial Strategies</b>		
	5.1.1	Formalize the District's philosophy for the allocation of tax dollars and the setting of fees (Categories of Park Services Policy).	2016-2017	Marty
	5.1.2	Annually review and update the long term financial plans both for capital projects and park operations.	2016-2017	Marty
	5.1.3	Maintain fund balance goals set by Park Board.	2016-2017	Marty
	5.1.4	Analyze the financial impact of independent contractor agreements versus hiring employees to optimize the value to the District.	2017-2018	Marty
	5.1.5	Explore concept of expanding outsourcing opportunities to supplement existing staff and for non-core business operations.	2017-2018	Marty
	5.1.6	Explore alternate funding sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naming Rights</li> <li>• Donations</li> <li>• Sponsorships</li> </ul>	2017-2018	Marty
<b>5.2</b>		<b>Objective 5.2: Update Policies and Procedures</b>		
	5.2.1	Formalize, develop and/or update Financial Policies in accordance with those required for GFOA (Government Finance Officers Association) Best Practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stabilization of Funds (Fund Balance Policy)</li> <li>• Fees and Charges (When they are reviewed and how they are set)</li> <li>• Debt Issuance and Management (Best practices &amp; conservative approaches)</li> <li>• Balancing the Operating Budget</li> <li>• Contingency Planning</li> <li>• Guide the Design of Programs and Services</li> </ul>	2017-2018	Marty

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies and Plans for Capital Asset Acquisition and Maintenance</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		
	5.2.2	Re-evaluate the policy on resident/non -resident rates and make recommendation to maximize program participation.	2016-2017	Marty
	5.2.3	Strengthen the procedures for following-up on outstanding balances.	2016-2017	Marty
	5.2.4	Strengthen internal controls and increase internal operational audits.	2017-2018	Marty
	5.2.5	Streamline billing and collections.	2017-2018	Marty
	5.2.6	Changing the district fiscal year to coincide with the calendar year.	2017-2018	Marty
	5.2.7	Establish a foundation to address the community needs.	2018-2019	Marty
	5.2.8	Consolidate all capital repair and replacement lists into a single, comprehensive document in order to give staff and Board a clearer picture of future capital expenditures.	2016-2017	Marty
<b>5.3</b>		<b>Objective 5.3: Expand Employee Knowledge of Financial Concepts</b>		
	5.3.1	Conduct training for staff on financial concepts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting terms</li> <li>• Income statement</li> <li>• Balance sheet</li> <li>• Cash flow</li> <li>• Expand Alternate Revenue Sources</li> <li>• Grants</li> <li>• Sponsorships</li> <li>• Public and private partnerships</li> <li>• Etc.</li> </ul>	2016-2017	Marty



## **STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE #6: ENHANCE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET RESIDENTS' NEEDS**

Increased competition, changing demographics and rising customer expectations require that the Morton Grove Park District continues to gain insight into its residents' interests, adapt its programming to meet those needs and broaden the appeal of program offerings to all segments of the population. The District needs to continually differentiate itself from other local agencies and be the "go-to" organization for recreation opportunities in the area.

### **DEFINE THE ISSUE**

Program services represent the life-blood of the Morton Grove Park District operations. Whether at the Prairie View Community Center, the Historical Museum and Education Center, one of the four field houses or two pools, or at a neighborhood park; recreation programs are the focus of our mission. The Morton Grove Park District employs a professional staff dedicated to program development/management.

As the demand for high-quality and affordable recreational activities continues to increase, it will become more important to quickly anticipate and plan for unrealized community needs. Through trend analysis, creative thinking and listening to customer feedback, the District plans to identify areas of growth, set up systems to bring about needed program changes and introduce new program offerings that provide new and unique experiences to our residents.

The Village of Morton Grove's population is thriving and becoming increasingly diverse. The housing market is stabilizing, property values are increasing and the percentage of traditional sales are on the rise. Great schools, low crime rates and competitive cost-of-living makes Morton Grove a desirable place to live. Families make up almost three-quarters of the households; the average household size is 2.79 people. 19% of the population is under 18 years of age and 5% are under the age of five. The community is ethnically diverse. 40% of residents were born outside of the United States. The largest demographic shift has been an increase in Asian residents, a wide-ranging group of nationalities. As of the 2010 census, residents who identified as "Asian alone" represented 28% of the population (up from 22% in 2000). Over 90 languages are spoken in Morton Grove homes; English is not the primary language spoken at home in 52% of the households.

Due to the District's current financial constraints, it is increasingly important to boost revenues generated from program registration. Currently about 40% of district revenues are generated through user/registration fees. User fees are sometimes viewed as a barrier to participation. It is important that programs are properly classified according to the District's revenue policy, ensuring that basic and core services are offered for the betterment of the community and that instructional and specialized programs generate revenues that contribute to the financial health of the District.

There are a number of other agencies that offer recreational opportunities that may compete with programming offered by the Morton Grove Park District. This competition leads to a duplication of services that dilutes participation and adds additional burden to the taxpayers to support the operation of multiple agencies.

As part of the 2013 Comprehensive Master Plan, a community needs assessment was conducted. This assessment did an excellent job in identifying opportunities for the District to expand programming. Some of these opportunities have been addressed since the plan was published, but there are still plenty of opportunities for additional programming.

Strategic Plan initiatives for achieving this goal will focus on the following programming options:

1. Health/Wellness
2. Swimming/Aqua Fitness
3. Preschool enrichment classes
4. Expanded after-school/school's out programs
5. Sport specific training programs
6. Active Adult/Senior programs
7. Drop-in programming
8. Expanded use of existing facilities (field houses/Education Center)

Strategic Plan initiatives will also:

1. Demonstrate leadership by providing innovative and “uncommon” experiences that go beyond traditional park and recreation offerings.
2. Identify key community partners to enhance and expand programming opportunities.
3. Identify cultural recreation interests within the community and develop programs in support of those interests.
4. Expand research on residents programming preferences and feedback on the quality of current programs and surveying for unmet customer needs and wants.
5. Analyze demographic information to drive programming.

In order to fully serve our residents, the District must maximize the use of all existing resources. Use patterns of facilities, staffing levels, operating expenses, user fees, unused/underused space and aging facilities need to be studied and addressed.

## **INTERNAL FACTORS**

1. Aging facilities
2. Staff turnover rate
3. Continuing education opportunities for staff
4. Financial reporting capabilities
5. Data analysis
6. Ease of registration process

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

1. Availability to find/train qualified program instructors/leaders
2. Availability to find/retain quality independent contractors
3. Cooperation from other agencies
4. Competition from private business and other agencies
5. Diversity of population
6. Health and safety concerns (concussions)

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. Maximize use of existing facilities
2. Offer a minimum of 15 new programs per year
3. Increase program participation by 5% per year
4. User fees equal from 40% to 50% of District revenue
5. Annual facility survey results and participant evaluation improvements

## ACTION PLAN

<b>Strategic Initiative #6: ENHANCE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET RESIDENTS' NEEDS</b>
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		<u>Objective</u>	<u>Fiscal Yr.</u>	<u>Assigned to:</u>
6.1		<b>Objective 6.1:</b> <b>Leverage metrics and research to optimize programming mix.</b>		
	6.1.1	Continue to provide customer oriented recreation activities that address diversity and changing demographics. i. Include basic, core, instructional and specialized programming. ii. Annually review program offerings and identify areas of deficiency. iii. Evaluate programs that are not reaching targeted participation and/or revenues and modify or discontinue.	ongoing	Rec. Staff
	6.1.2	Develop program evaluations that match program format and conduct annual surveys to evaluate existing programs and identify trends.	2017	Joe

		<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Fiscal Yr.</u></b>	<b><u>Assigned to:</u></b>
	6.1.3	Identify opportunities to form focus groups of targeted residents to determine needs specific to their interest/demographic	2018	Joe & Rec
	6.1.4	Collect demographic information and use it to help make programming changes.	2019	Joe & Rec
<b>6.2</b>		<b>Objective 6.2: Introduce creative program incentives to encourage participation.</b>		
	6.2.1	Develop a plan to enhance programming and scheduling to accommodate working parents (including afterschool and days off programming).	2018	Joe & Rec
	6.2.2	Implement a “loyalty” program to reward patrons that are frequent users of District programming.	2019	Joe & Liz M.
	6.2.3	Create “program bundles” to encourage registration into multiple activities.	2020	Joe, Rec & Kathy
	6.2.4	Investigate communication tools to allow non-native speakers to better communicate with the District.	Ongoing	Kathy
	6.2.5	Study program locations and make changes as necessary... i. Are facilities being used to their full scheduling potential? ii. Does program location limit opportunities for entire family to participate? iii. Does program location limit opportunities for individual to participate in multiple programs?	2017	Parks & Joe
<b>6.3</b>		<b>Objective 6.3: Maintain financial sustainability in program offerings.</b>		
	6.3.1	Identify and contract with independent contractors to provide programming where specific/advanced skills or specialized equipment is required.	Ongoing	Joe & Rec
	6.3.2	Coordinate programs with other agencies to provide comprehensive recreation opportunities.	Ongoing	Joe & Rec

		<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Fiscal Yr.</u></b>	<b><u>Assigned to:</u></b>
	6.3.3	Increase Recreation Department portion of District's total revenue to 50% by establishing pricing philosophies and categories of services.	2022	

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats Analysis

A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis was completed to summarize feedback and information from:

- Board workshop
- Meetings with the Morton Grove Leadership Team

SWOT is a basic and straightforward tool for understanding the internal and external factors facing the Morton Grove Park District in the delivery of recreation services. The tool is useful in showing the opportunities and threats facing the Park District going forward. Please review the following chart to better understand the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the Morton Grove Park District.



## MORTON GROVE PARK DISTRICT

### SUMMARY “QUADRANT ANALYSIS” OF SWOT ITEMS

	POSITIVES	NEGATIVES
<b>Internal to your agency</b>	<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated core staff with diverse skills</li> <li>• Parks are well-kept, safe and clean</li> <li>• Strong leadership</li> <li>• Good reputation in community</li> <li>• Loyal patrons</li> <li>• New Executive Director</li> <li>• Understanding of common goals</li> <li>• Good programs at reasonable price</li> </ul>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging facilities</li> <li>• Staff turnover; stability in leadership</li> <li>• Lack of training, cross-training &amp; written procedures</li> <li>• Breakdown in communication –internal and external</li> <li>• Image within the industry</li> <li>• Budget restraints/lack of State funding</li> <li>• Outdated technology/registration software</li> <li>• Increased demands of the community</li> </ul>
<b>External to your agency</b>	<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsorships, grants, business partnerships</li> <li>• More Intergovernmental agreements</li> <li>• Increase programming e.g. ethnic, nature, arts &amp; crafts</li> <li>• Update, improve facilities &amp; equipment</li> <li>• Improve marketing &amp; communication</li> <li>• Explore options for outsourcing</li> <li>• Dog Park</li> <li>• Encourage staff to seek training &amp; education</li> </ul>	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced public funding</li> <li>• Competition – from private business &amp; public agencies</li> <li>• Staff turnover for higher salaries or advancement</li> <li>• Aging, outdated facilities</li> <li>• Duplication in community programs</li> <li>• Space</li> <li>• Land-locked</li> </ul>

## Attachments:

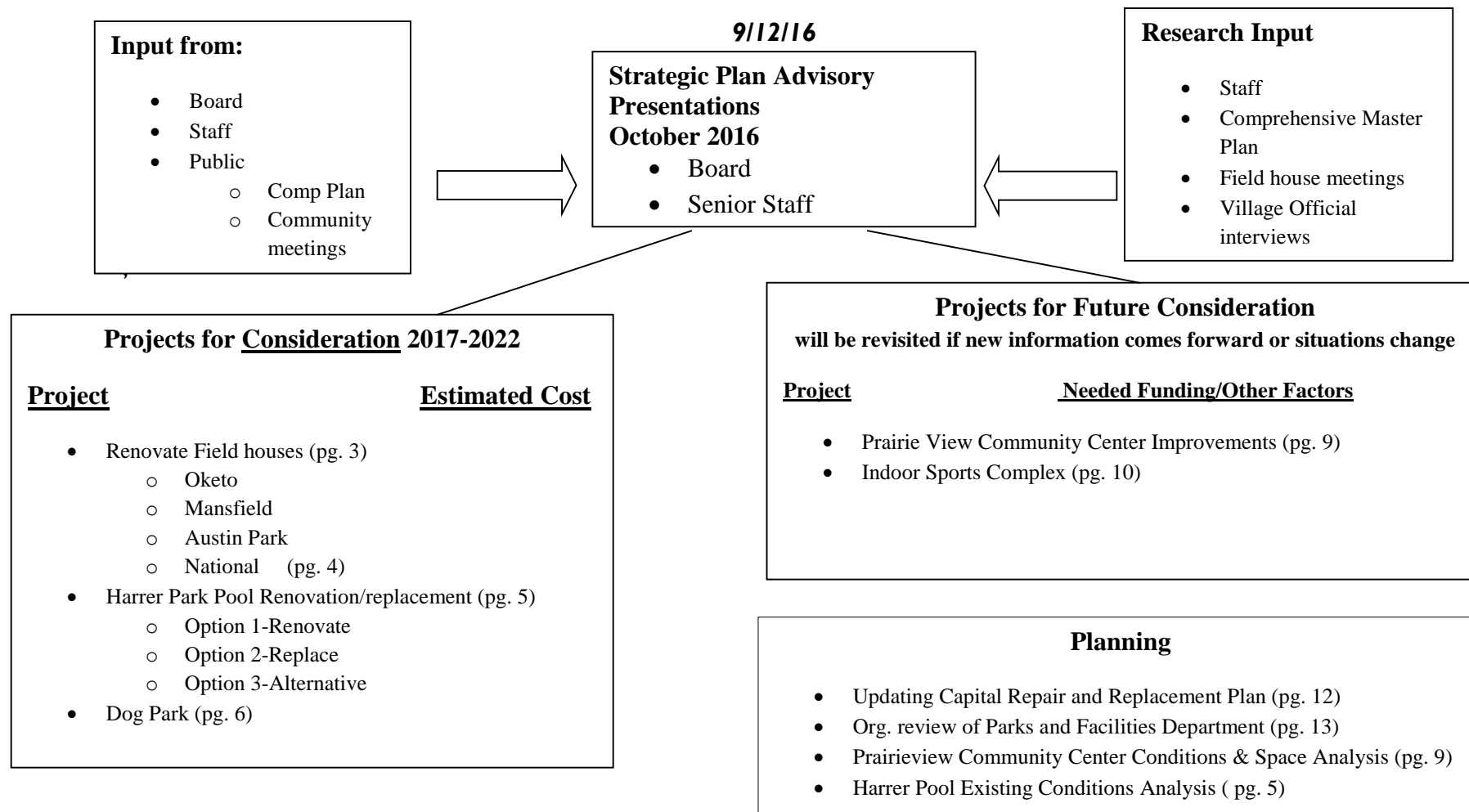
Attachment A- Morton Grove Park District Proposed Strategic Plan Projects for Consideration

Attachment B- National Recreation and Park Association-“Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services”





## Morton Grove Park District Strategic Plan: Projects/Improvements 2017-22



# **MORTON GROVE PARK DISTRICT**

## **PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**2017 - 2022**

How should we best invest **available capital** dollars over the next 5 years?

<b>Project Under Consideration</b>	<b>Approx Cost</b> (based on initial studies or square footage estimates)	<b>Market Characteristics</b> Who is target audience and what is size of potential market?	<b>Competition</b> What options exist (for the customer) that fill the same demand?	<b>Financial and Economic Factors</b> What are the operating costs vs. revenues?	<b>Daily, Monthly, Annual Attendance</b> What are the projected programs & attendance?	<b>Strategic Fit</b> How does it fit with mission, focus, staffing strengths as well as the community?	<b>Compelling Reason</b> What is the compelling reason to build component now?	<b>Staff Recommendation</b>
<b>Oketo, Mansfield and Austin Park Fieldhouses - Renovation</b>	According to the 2012 Facility assessment and analysis all three fieldhouses have significant issues that will require attention in order to continue operating the buildings (adjusted for inflation): Mansfield = \$56,750 Austin = \$59,600 Oketo =	The fieldhouses are primarily used for camps, and other programs such as dog obedience and preschool classes. They are also available for rental by residents for picnics, meetings and parties.  These facilities were part of the neighborhood recreation strategy common in the 50's and 60's. With the construction of Prairie View, programs have	The field houses are designed as general use facilities. There are limited programming opportunities and many options in the community for general meeting space.  For these reasons, the three fieldhouses are significantly underutilized	Revenues and expenses from rentals and programs in the three fieldhouses during the 2015-16 fiscal year are as follows: Austin = \$62,858 in Revenue against \$46,800 in expense generating a net of \$16,058 Mansfield = \$138,479 in revenues against	Oketo Park is the least used of the three facilities while Mansfield has the highest use. Future attendance and registration will be determined by what changes, if any are made to one or more of the field houses.	While underutilized, the three fieldhouses serve some critical programming and rental needs in the community. The challenge is in identifying opportunities to increase use to justify both operating and capital costs of maintaining the facilities.	The field houses are capital assets of the district. In order to continue operating they all require some level of investment to ensure they remain useable. While each require significant improvements, the cost of maintaining them could be prioritized and stretched out over several years. Lessening the fiscal impact on the District.	Complete a comprehensive use study of each facility with recommendations for alternate use options.  Conduct a revenue and expense analysis of each facility. Include operating and capital costs compared net program and rental revenue.  Use results of these studies to identify opportunities and alternatives for future use

	\$77,600	long since been consolidated to a central facility.		<p>\$76,986 in expense generating a net of \$61,493</p> <p>Oketo =\$ 40,123 in revenue against \$32,000 in expense generating a net of \$8,123</p> <p>It should be noted that no utilities, maintenance or capital costs are included in these calculations.</p>					
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<b>Renovate Fieldhouses (National)</b>	<p>Basic building improvements per Master Plan – facility assessment: Est. \$75,000.</p> <p>If District considers transforming National Fieldhouse into a dance studio, certain improvements must also be implemented including flooring, mirrors, ballet barres and some specialized storage and</p>	<p>Basic improvements as noted in the Master plan should be completed as part of normal facility upkeep and to meet ADA standards.</p> <p>Transforming the facility into a dance center would allow for the current program to expand significantly while also allowing more time for group fitness classes</p>	<p>Competition in dance classes is wide spread including Arthur Murray, Kaleidoscope Dance, and many others in the surrounding suburbs. Current registration levels in park district programs indicate the market is large enough to support existing outlets.</p>	<p>It is anticipated that with a specialized facility and more class time slots, the number of participants would increase. By moving out of Prairie View, the fitness program could also expand offerings, increasing its net revenue as well. This translates to increased revenues for the dance program as</p>	<p>With a dedicated space, registration could grow by 40 to 50% within a relatively short period of time. The same level of increase would be anticipated in the group exercise program given additional hours being available at Prairie View Community Center</p>	<p>Dance and Group fitness programming is already a staple of the district’s offerings. This project allows for both to grow and provide a wider array of programming at more levels than are currently offered. A more diverse program inventory tends to strengthen the base as well. Users see a comprehensive</p>	<p>National Park fieldhouse is the largest of the four fieldhouses and has the greatest potential to increase usage and have an impact in the community.</p> <p>The fieldhouse is currently underutilized with limited programming and rentals</p> <p>The District’s dance and fitness programs are</p>	<p>Direct Staff to develop a draft program schedule for dance and fitness programs based on suggested improvements.</p> <p>Develop pro forma budgets and determine potential increase in net revenues based on the draft schedules.</p> <p>If the staff exercise supports the idea of transforming National Field House into a dance studio, consider hiring an architect to develop a</p>

	space modification. Est cost: \$60,000 to \$90,000.	at Prairie View. Target audience is children through adult and includes tap, jazz, ballet, hip hop and other popular genres.		well as group exercise classes		program and are more likely to continue registering as long as they have the opportunity to progress.	competing with each other for limited space at Prairie View and this project will allow for both to grow and serve more residents.	concept design and cost estimate.  Identify sources of funds needed to pay for the improvements.
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How should we best invest <b>available capital</b> dollars over the next 5 years?								
<b>Project Under Consideration</b>	<b>Approx Cost</b> (based on initial studies or square footage estimates)	<b>Market Characteristics</b> Who is target audience and what is size of potential market?	<b>Competition</b> What options exist (for the customer) that fill the same demand?	<b>Financial and Economic Factors</b>  What are the operating costs vs. revenues?	<b>Daily, Monthly, Annual Attendance</b> What are the projected programs & attendance?	<b>Strategic Fit</b> How does it fit with mission, focus, staffing strengths as well as the community?	<b>Compelling Reason</b> What is the compelling reason to build component now?	<b>Staff Recommendation</b>
<b>Harrer Park Pool Renovation/ Replacement</b>	To be determined based on specific direction determined by Park Board	Children and families are the primary users of outdoor pool facilities. Harrer Park Pool is one of two community pools with Oriole having been replaced in 2012. With a population of approximately 23,000 the community has more pool capacity than currently needed.	In addition to the District's two outdoor pools, each of the surrounding communities have at least one outdoor waterpark. In some cases, there are two. Most of the surrounding communities have updated or relatively new facilities.  Other competition comes from camps, sports leagues, family vacations and a	The operating loss for Harrer Pool for 2015, 2016 and 2017 fiscal years is projected to be \$55,761.  At the same time, Oriole Pool has averaged an annual loss of \$52,149 over the same period. It should be noted that the current fiscal year projects Harrer to lose \$43,843 while Oriole's deficit is projected at	Annual attendance for Harrer Pool over the last three years has averaged 13,996 compared to 14,114 during a two-year period at Oriole. Harrer Pool Programs include open swim hours, swim lessons, rentals, water aerobics and a host of special events.  Attendance is driven directly	Aquatic facilities and programs are a staple of the District (as well as almost every other area district) Pools play a significant part of many residents' summer fun.  In addition to the recreational value of aquatics, the pools offer a needed service of teaching individuals how to swim.	Harrer Park Pool is 54 years old. The average life span of an outdoor pool facility in this part of the country is approximately 35 years.  The pool experiences significant water loss and its filter system is antiquated and suffers from frequent breakdowns. The bath house is in poor shape and does not	Engage an architectural firm to conduct a thorough existing conditions report, including the estimated remaining useful life of the facility. Include a minimum scope of work necessary to keep the facility in compliance with IDPH code and in operation for the next five years.  The architect should also assess ADA compliance and specify areas of non-compliance along with the

			<p>multitude of other activities.</p> <p>\$22,937. This can be attributed to Oriole being a newer pool.</p> <p>Because of Harrer Pool's age and condition, there is significant financial exposure due to potential structural or mechanical failure</p>	<p>by weather. Cooler summers will result in lower attendance and warmer summers should produce higher attendance.</p>		<p>comply with ADA standards. Due to its age and condition, the pool is in danger of experiencing a catastrophic failure at any time.</p>	<p>estimated cost to remediate the issue.</p> <p>Develop a plan on how the district would accommodate all of the community's swimming needs at Oriole pool in the event Harrer could not continue operating DUE TO LACK OF PUBLIC SUPPORT.</p>
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How should we best invest **available capital** dollars over the next 5 years?

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<b>Dog Park</b>	To be Determined based on project scope	According to the Humane society's 2016 survey 36.5% of all households nationally own a dog. Many dog owners have more than one dog (1.6 animals on average) Dog size is fairly evenly spread among large, medium and small animals. Nearly 67% of dog owners consider their	As Dog Parks are uniquely public spaces, there is no real private sector competition. In the absence of a dog park, owners use their yards, sidewalks and other public open spaces (regardless of posted restrictions).  There are several dog parks operated by neighboring park districts.	Dog Parks are operated on a membership only basis (per Cook County ordinance). Owners pay a fee per animal and that fee will generally cover all maintenance costs of the facility. More successful parks tend to generate an operating surplus.	Usage of a dog park will depend on its location, access, size and cost of membership.  Assuming a membership fee of \$55 per dog and a membership total of 250 dogs, gross revenues would be \$13,750 annually.	With 36.5% of households in Morton Grove being dog owners, the community has a clear need for such a facility.  Nearly 18% of mail survey respondents indicated an interest in having a dog park.	Given the national average of households with dogs as pets (36.5%) it is estimated that there are more than 3,000 households with dogs in the community. With an estimated 4,900 dogs in Morton Grove, this is a significant segment of the community that is currently not being served.	Conduct a review of available parcels of property (owned or leasable) and determine the best location for a dog park. Take into consideration size of parcel, adjacent property uses, ease of access, parking and noise issues.  Engage a landscape architect to develop plans and estimate costs of a dog park with input from stakeholders.  Seek partnership or

		<p>pet to be part of the family.</p> <p>With approximately 3,079 dog owning households in Morton Grove, it is estimated there are more than 4,900 dogs in the community</p>	<p>In general, there is a significant non-resident fee to become a member as usage is very high – especially for the larger, well designed parks.</p>				<p>As the development of a dog park facility is relatively basic and only requires fencing, water, shade and a controlled point of entry, the cost of such a project would be relatively inexpensive.</p>	<p>sponsorship opportunities in the community to help finance construction.</p> <p>Develop membership requirements (see Cook County Ordinance) fee structure and maintenance standards. Develop an operations budget estimate.</p>
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# **MORTON GROVE PARK DISTRICT**

**PROJECTS FOR  
FUTURE  
CONSIDERATION  
IF FUNDING  
BECOMES  
AVAILABLE**

<b>Project Under Consideration</b>	<b>Approx Cost</b> (based on initial studies or square footage estimates)	<b>Market Characteristics</b> Who is target audience and what is size of potential market?	<b>Competition</b> What options exist (for the customer) that fill the same demand?	<b>Financial and Economic Factors</b>  What are the operating costs vs. revenues?	<b>Daily, Monthly, Annual Attendance</b> What are the projected programs & attendance?	<b>Strategic Fit</b> How does it fit with mission, focus, staffing strengths as well as the community?	<b>Compelling Reason</b> What is the compelling reason to build component now?	<b>Staff Recommendation</b>
<b>Prairie View Community Center - Existing Conditions and Space Analysis</b>	A detailed report reviewing current conditions of the structure and all MEP systems, along with a space study, identifying possible building modifications to better serve the user would cost between \$15,00 and \$18,000	Prairie View Community Center is the largest and most diverse facility of the District. With fitness, a gym, program rooms and administrative offices, the facility appeals to nearly everyone in the community.	The fitness center experiences strong competition in the community, including just across Dempster Street. Gymnasium space is not as widespread and exists in local schools for the most part.	Programs, services and rentals are currently operating at near break-even with a modest \$14,590 net over direct expenses.  One goal of this initiative is to determine if building improvements can help drive higher use and increase net revenue.	The fitness center currently has slightly over 1,000 members. Program growth is limited due to lack of excess program space.  The conditions and space analysis will assist the District in determining what opportunities there may be to use the facility more efficiently and increase membership and program registration.	Prairie View Community Center is the flagship facility of the District and is integral to the District's operations.	As the District's most important asset, it is critical that the facility be maintained at a high level and that it continue to be relevant to the community's needs and interests. Just as the District reinvented the facility after racquetball faded, the facility should be once again evaluated to determine if it is meeting the current and future needs of the community.	Engage an architect to conduct an existing conditions study of the building, including structural and MEP systems.  Complete a space study to determine if the facility is meeting current and future program needs and identify opportunities to improve, repurpose and potentially expand the facility.  Provide an estimate of costs to implement each option identified.

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<b>Indoor Sports Complex</b>	No Estimate available. First opportunity to estimate cost would be after a concept design is developed.	A well planned and comprehensive indoor sports complex would appeal to most segments of the community whether it is by age, gender or interest.  The potential market would include residents as well as other area participants who might travel to the facility to participate with/against residents.	Indoor sports complexes exist throughout the near north and north shore suburbs. Types of facilities commonly found include sports courts, fitness centers, ice arenas, turf fields and pools. While there are a number of these facilities that exist, the market is strong for such indoor spaces and there is significant demand, especially for prime time.	Financial performance of such facilities is generally good. Most facilities can cover or exceed operational costs through program and usage fees.  The cost to construct such a facility is generally not recoverable through operations revenue.	The level of use will depend on the types of facilities constructed. Indoor sports facilities tend to serve large numbers of participants and are used even more in the colder months of the year.	With as many as six months of the year where outdoor facilities are either limited in use or unavailable entirely, an indoor facility allows for year-long participation. This allows the district to serve more residents for more days of the year.	Given the enormity of this type of project and the many factors involved in determining if such a facility is warranted, there is no recommendation to build a facility at this time. However, there is value to beginning the investigative process to determine if the concept is sound and what types of spaces would best serve the interests of the community.	Initiate and complete an indoor sports facility study within the next five years to identify opportunities, prioritize needs and define the character of the facility. Identify possible locations for such a facility and develop a concept budget for its construction.

# **MORTON GROVE PARK DISTRICT**

## **PLANNING**

<b>Project Under Consideration</b>	<b>Approx Cost</b> (based on initial studies or square footage estimates)	<b>Market Characteristics</b> Who is target audience and what is size of potential market?	<b>Competition</b> What options exist (for the customer) that fill the same demand?	<b>Financial and Economic Factors</b>  What are the operating costs vs. revenues?	<b>Daily, Monthly, Annual Attendance</b> What are the projected programs & attendance?	<b>Strategic Fit</b> How does it fit with mission, focus, staffing strengths as well as the community?	<b>Compelling Reason</b> What is the compelling reason to build component now?	<b>Staff Recommendation</b>
<b>Update Capital Repair and Replacement Plan</b>	None	This is a staff and Board tool that allows for long term, planned replacement of capital assets that have a specific useable life. This does not include assets such as buildings but does include vehicles, trees, mechanical equipment, roofs and the like.	The District currently has several documents that address different areas of capital replacement. The goal of this initiative would be to consolidate the lists into one document with defined sections (Parks, Pools, Prairie View Community Center, Fieldhouses etc.).	A combined document will give the district a comprehensive inventory of capital items scheduled for replacement.  This is a valuable planning document that allows the District to prioritize and plan for major expenditures over a multiple year period.	N/A	Planning documents such as the Capital Repairs and Replacement list are financial and planning tools that allow the District to better manage its resources and maintain its assets.	There are currently five separate planning documents that address capital repairs and replacement. They are in different formats and do not allow staff and the Board an opportunity to have a comprehensive picture of its long term capital expenditures plan.	Determine the most appropriate format for a capital repairs and replacement schedule and modify existing, separate documents to fit in a single document. For ease of use, the document should be divided into chapters such as pools, Parks, Prairie View CC, fieldhouses, vehicles etc.

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<b>Organizational Review of Parks Department</b>	It may be most prudent to engage a consultant to review the current organizational structure of the Parks Department. This will provide the District with an unbiased view based on a factual review of all data. The cost would likely range from \$4,500 to \$6,000.	This is an internal exercise with the goal of determining what opportunities there may be to improve the performance and structure of the Parks Department in the most cost-effective manner.	Opportunities for partnerships and contracting out some tasks should be part of any departmental review process.	While not the only goal of this review, cost savings through multiple methodologies is an important part of the exercise.	N/A	As a public, tax supported entity, it is incumbent upon the District to look for opportunities to maintain and improve services in the most efficient and cost effective manner available.	The Parks Department has significant responsibilities within the District's structure and represents a large percentage of its expenditures. It is important to ensure that operations, policies, methodologies and overall performance are reviewed and opportunities for improvements are identified given their potential impact on the District's operations and financial health.	Engage a consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of the Parks Department, including structure, resources, policies, procedures and responsibilities. Identify opportunities for improvements and confirm areas where performance and efficiency is strong. Make recommendations to improve services and reduce costs wherever possible and practical while avoiding negative impacts to the District or community.



**National Recreation and Park Association-**  
**"Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services"**

**Attachment B**



**National Recreation  
and Park Association**

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### **Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services**

Parks and recreation have three values that make them essential services to communities:

1. Economic value
2. Health and Environmental benefits
3. Social importance

Just as water, sewer, and public safety are considered essential public services, parks are vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community, ensuring the health of families and youth, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and a region.

There are no communities that pride themselves on their quality of life, promote themselves as a desirable location for businesses to relocate, or maintain that they are environmental stewards of their natural resources, without such communities having a robust, active system of parks and recreation programs for public use and enjoyment.

#### **Economic Value**

- Parks improve the local tax base and increase property values. It is proven that private property values increase the value of privately owned land the closer such land is to parks. This increase in private property value due to the proximity to parks increases property tax revenues and improves local economies.
- A Texas A&M review of 25 studies investigating whether parks and open space contributed positively to the property values of surrounding properties found that 20 of the 25 studies found that property values were higher. "The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity."
- American Forests, a national conservation organization that promotes forestry, estimates that trees in cities save \$400 billion in storm water retention facility costs.
- Quality parks and recreation are cited as one of the top three reasons that business cite in relocation decisions in a number of studies.

- Parks and recreation programs produce a significant portion of operating costs from revenue generated from fees and charges
- Parks and recreation programs generate revenue directly from fees and charges, but more importantly, provide significant indirect revenues to local and regional economies from sports tournaments and special events such as arts, music, and holiday festivals. Economic activity from hospitality expenditures, tourism, fuel, recreational equipment sales, and many other private sector businesses is of true and sustained value to local and regional economies.

#### **Health and Environmental Benefits**

- Parks are the places that people go to get healthy and stay fit.
- Parks and recreation programs and services contribute to the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors.
- According to studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, creating, improving and promoting places to be physically active can improve individual and community health and result in a 25 percent increase of residents who exercise at least three times per week.
- A study by Penn State University showed significant correlations to reductions in stress, lowered blood pressure, and perceived physical health to the length of stay in visits to parks.
- Parks and protected public lands are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, produce habitat for wildlife, and provide a place for children and families to connect with nature and recreate outdoors together.

#### **Social Importance**

- Parks are a tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community. They provide identity for citizens and are a major factor in the perception of quality of life in a given community. Parks and recreation services are often cited as one of the most important factors in surveys of how livable communities are.
- Parks provide gathering places for families and social groups, as well as for individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of their ability to pay for access.
- An ongoing study by the Trust for Public Land shows that over the past decade, voter approval rates for bond measures to acquire parks and conserve open space exceeds 75%. Clearly, the majority of the public views parks as an essential priority for government spending.

- Parks and recreation programs provide places for health and well-being that are accessible by persons of all ages and abilities, especially to those with disabilities.
- In a 2007 survey of Fairfax County, VA, residents of 8 of 10 households rated a quality park system either very important or extremely important to their quality of life.
- Research by the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods indicates that community involvement in neighborhood parks is associated with lower levels of crime and vandalism
- Access to parks and recreation opportunities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and to reduced juvenile delinquency.
- Parks have a value to communities that transcend the amount of dollars invested or the revenues gained from fees. Parks provide a sense of public pride and cohesion to every community.

*National Recreation and Park Association  
For more information on the value and benefits of parks go to [nrap.org](http://nrap.org)*