

Frankfort Square 2014 Master Plan w/2022 Addendum Executive Summary

Historically, the Frankfort Square Park District's planning process has provided formats to secure resident household input.

The primary vehicle is frequent continual surveys of all resident households by an independent third party professional, employing a scientific method in results assessment.

All Park District information is fully transparent, with every record of the District immediately available to residents. This includes all completed surveys and results, as well as all other financial, meeting, ordinance, and other relevant information from District incorporation in 1974 that are available on the Park District's website.

The success of referenda, grants, and the development of the Park District as whole is related to the direct involvement and trust in action provided by its residents.

All actions of the Park District are directly related and traceable to input generated by its residents.

The Master Plan in 2014 was supported by a community-wide survey to move forward on varied capital improvements within budget and with grant support. The 2017 Community Survey resulted in a bridge referendum, made possible through restructuring of existing debt so it would not be necessary to raise resident taxes with a 2018 \$1.5 million "No Tax Increase" Referendum. This successful referendum provided capital funds to move the District towards the retirement of debt incurred through the 2002 "Something for Everyone" \$5 million Referendum that matured on January 1, 2022.

FSPD was headed in that direction until Covid prevented any reasonable government entity from asking for referendum funding in the midst of a pandemic, with many out of work, and while there were required limitations imposed on all Park District services.

Although the District did not go to referendum, it kept residents informed on this decision. With the retirement of debt completed in January, 2022, residents will see that the FSPD lowered its overall tax rate by over \$200 for a home valued at \$200,000.

2014 Master Plan Recommendations

General Administration & Planning

Goal to continue promoting and strengthening intergovernmental collaborations.

- *Update: The Frankfort Square Park District has a long and successful history of collaborating with all surrounding government agencies. This continues to be a priority with regularly scheduled meetings with agency administrators on cooperative efforts for the residents mutually served. The District's Transition Plan also includes a series of scheduled meetings with all local government agencies in March, April, and May of 2022, with the FSPD Executive Director and appointee sharing the history, current projects, and importance of intergovernmental cooperation to ensure the continued success of these longstanding relationships.*

Goal to continue taking care of existing parks and facilities.

- *Update: Contracted outdoor maintenance of 700+ acres of Park District properties. This action allowed the District to downsize its seasonal staffing needs that are historically difficult to fill. It also enabled the District to downsize its vehicle and equipment fleet, and reduced worker's comp claims and related insurance costs. The result is improved overall service and savings that exceeds \$200,000 annually.*

Goal to maintain pulse on agency financials.

- *Update: The Park District made a concerted effort to eliminate smaller loan payments, worked with financial partners to restructure existing bonds in 2019, and paid off maturing loans/bonds resulting in a reduction of overall debt from \$1,110,198 in the 2014/2015 fiscal year, to \$500,272 in the upcoming 2022/2023 fiscal year, realizing a 55% reduction, demonstrating the District's mission of fiscal responsibility.*
- *Update: The Park District worked closely with, and per the recommendation of its independent audit firm of Lauterbach & Amen, LLC, to adopt financial policies to address fiscal responsibility by strengthening its financial position and better guiding its financial planning that included the following:*
 - *Fund Balance Policy – Adopted June, 2019 to determine the principles and parameters to which fund balance targets are defined with a goal to establish fund balance classifications utilized to identify and define appropriate reserve retirement. The goal of the Fund Balance Policy is to increase the combined unassigned fund balance of the Corporate, Recreation, Audit, Liability Insurance, Paving & Lighting, Special Recreation, Social Security, and Golf Course funds over a five year period to defined levels beginning with a 4.25% of annual expenditures in those funds in FYE: 2020 to 9.00% of annual expenditures in those funds by FYE: 2024*
 - *Capital Asset Policy – Adopted March, 2021 to provide control and accountability over capital assets and to gather and maintain information needed for the preparation of financial statements. The policy was established to safeguard assets to ensure compliance with GASB34 for governmental financial reporting.*
 - *Investment Policy – Adopted March, 2021 to provide its Park Board with a strong internal control for cash and investment related transactions, as well as a benchmark for monitoring the success of its investment program. The policy outlines a plan for ensuring prudent investment of the District's funds and maximizing the efficiency of the District's cash management procedures. Public funds will be invested in a manner that will provide the maximum security and tightest investment return while meeting the daily cash flow demands of the District.*

Goal to maintain focus on community trends and changing demographics.

- *Update: Continue to survey our residents. In 2017 residents indicated interest in increased wellness opportunities. This prompted a follow-up survey, the 2019 Wellness & Capital Improvement Study. Results are reviewed by the Administration and Recreation departments, and new programs and potential facility adjustments/improvements are prioritized, per the data received.*

Goal to invest in human resources.

- *Update: The Park District encourages and supports continuing educational opportunities for all staff to ensure they are well-trained and skilled, including but not limited to:*
 - *NRPA Director's School*
 - *IPRA/IAPD State Conference*
 - *IAPD Legal Symposium*
 - *PDRMA's onsite and online risk management training sessions in a wide variety of subjects such as snow plowing and ladder safety, to certificates of insurance, and reasonable suspicion of drug and alcohol impairment*
- *Update: Completed the 2018 Salary Equity Study for all full-time and part-time positions within the Park District. Critical to that process was a thorough review of the Park District's job descriptions to ensure each were current and provided a comprehensive summary of the responsibilities associated with each job title.*

Goal to prepare for growth in senior programming.

- *Update: FSPD applied for and received OSLAD Grant funds to redevelop Community Park, its oldest and original park site, to a more adult-oriented park that is highlighted with lifetime sports that appeal to the senior population. Amenities include pickleball courts, bocce ball courts, horseshoe pits, and elevated and accessible garden plots. Solar security lighting and a looped path that links to the local Township/Park District bike path system provides all with safe and enjoyable recreational opportunities.*

Goal to maintain success with Square Links Golf Course.

- *Update: The District recently added a 4th tee configuration, known as “Family Tees” that opens the sport to all skill levels and ages, and benefits the player’s game and enhances playing pleasure.*
- *Update: The Square Links Golf Course driving range is equipped with Toptracer Range technology that includes local, national, and international competition, along with exceptional training aids that send shot data directly to the player’s cell phone, as seen on televised professional golf tournaments.*
- *Update: Met with an architect group to evaluate and develop plans for improvement or replacement of aging clubhouse facility.*

Goal to maintain ADA compliance.

- *Update: Contracted with professional independent agency to conduct the District’s accessibility survey. Each park and facility was reviewed for their accessibility, including multiple entrances features, elements, and facilities, to revise/update various areas to correct access issues.*

Goal to consider possible trail expansion and interconnectivity.

- *Update: Working with area governments to promote and develop resources to connect park paths that will allow access to the existing 50+ miles of Cook County paved paths and the 50 mile Old Plank Road Trail paved path corridor. This will place the Park District’s paths in the center of 100+ miles of trails that will be accessible to hundreds of thousands of Will and Cook County residents.*
- *Update: Working with local Developer in the Village of Tinley Park to connect Park District’s path to new townhome development path that will access new playground and park area.*
- *Update: Applied for and received \$10,000 ComEd Green Region Grant to construct a boardwalk extension at Island Prairie Park. This project enabled public access into the Island Prairie Park wetlands from the main park path, and included a shoreline/wetland restoration that utilized native plant material grown in the Island Prairie greenhouse.*

Goal to continue maintenance and assessment of natural areas.

- *Update: The Park District completed improvements to its most visible pond, located at Community Park. This site faced algae blooms, but since the community’s water supply comes from area wells, the District understands the importance of protecting the aquifers. To protect not only Community Park pond but all ponds within the District, native grasses were installed at waters’ edge to filter nitrogen-based fertilizer run off and limit erosion. Secondly, aeration was installed to improve water quality, and grass eating carp were also added to the pond. These actions join the District’s policy that applies best practices for all open water within the District.*
- *Update: FSPD is a showplace for natural area restoration, with 25% of all property being restored Illinois prairie in locations sprinkled throughout the District. These areas create an environment that limits old practices of fertilization with nitrogen-based fertilizers, herbicide applications needed to maintain typical turf monoculture, and replaces weekly mowing with controlled burns.*