

EFFICIENCY REPORT FOR THE FRANKFORT SQUARE PARK DISTRICT

APPROVED BY THE PARK DISTRICT'S
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY
ON MAY 18, 2023



I. Purpose

The Frankfort Square Park District (“Park District”) formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on May 18, 2023, to study efficiencies and report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, *et seq.* (the “Committee”).

II. Committee Membership

The Committee consisted of the following individuals:

Kenneth Blackburn, Park Board President / Committee Chairman

Phillip Cherry, Park Board Commissioner

Frank Florentine, Park Board Commissioner

Ryan Holley, Park Board Commissioner

Pamela Kohlbacher, Park District Resident

David Macek, Park Board Vice President

Craig Maksymiak, Park Board Treasurer

Audrey Marcquenski, Executive Director / Park Board Secretary

Denis Moore, Park Board Commissioner

Bonnie Roach, Park District Resident

III. Committee Meetings

The Committee met as follows:

| Meeting Date | Meeting Time and Place |
|---------------------|--|
| September 21, 2023 | FSPD Administration Building 7:45 p.m. |
| December 4, 2023 | FSPD Administration Building 7:30 p.m. |
| January 18, 2024 | FSPD Administration Building 6:30 p.m. |
| February 15, 2024 | FSPD Administration Building 6:50 p.m. |

Minutes of these meetings are available on the Park District's website or upon request at the Park District's administrative office.

IV. General Overview of Governing Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Procedures, Powers, Jurisdiction

The Park District was established by a referendum initiated and approved by the voters of the Park District in 1974. All Illinois park districts, including the Frankfort Square Park District, are governed by the Park District Code, 70 ILCS 1205/1 *et seq.*

Our community has experienced substantive change over the past 50 years, with many of our acres of farmland returned to native Illinois prairies, and of course thousands of homes have been built, expanding our population from 2,000 to over 18,000. Throughout the years, the Park District has taken its role as a steward of all parks, facilities, and open spaces seriously and understands that all changes and improvements must be resident driven. The Park District Board and staff listen to the community, building what will best serve its residents and taking care of what has been built. Since its inception, the Park District has and continues to abide by the spirit of its mission statement:

“The Frankfort Square Park District provides accessible, non-discriminatory recreational services, facilities, and open space in an environmentally conscious, fiscally responsible manner”.

Having a separate and distinct taxing body for parks, recreation, and conservation within the local community, which operates apart from general purpose governments, is extremely beneficial to the community for many reasons, as detailed further in this report.

- **Elected, non-partisan, non-compensated board.** The Park District is governed by a board of seven commissioners. Commissioners must reside within the boundaries of the Park District and are elected at Consolidated Elections in odd-numbered years. Pursuant to state law, commissioners are non-partisan and serve without compensation.
- **Accessible and focused representation.** Having a dedicated board to oversee these essential facilities, programs, and services provides the community with increased access to their elected representatives and allows those elected representatives to remain focused solely on those facilities, programs, and services. This is contrasted with general purpose governments where elected representatives are responsible for broad oversight on a wide range of issues. This special purpose benefit is particularly advantageous when it comes to budget and finance oversight.
- **Increased transparency.** Having a dedicated unit of local government to provide park and recreation services also improves the relationship between the Park District and its residents because of the transparency and openness related to the board and Park District operations. Having detailed agendas and action items posted to the Park District’s website that also includes archived agendas and minutes, allows taxpayers to be better informed about the inner workings of their local government. When

individual units of government are responsible for providing specified services like park districts, transparency is increased because action items and budget procedures are more detailed. Additionally, these items and budgetary decisions are subject to more scrutiny by locally elected officials than is the case with larger, multi-purpose governments with a multitude of departments.

- **Protection of revenues.** Because the Park District is a separate unit of local government, the revenues it generates can only be used for Park District purposes. This assurance is contrasted with general purpose governments like cities, villages, and counties that provide a multitude of services such as fire, police, public works, economic development, etc., where revenues that are generated specifically for parks and recreation can be expended on these other services with limited, if any, input from voters.
- **Protection of assets.** Public parks and other real property owned by the Park District is held in trust for the residents of the Park District, and, subject to very limited exceptions, can only be sold or transferred if residents approve of the sale or transfer by a referendum. This is contrasted with general purpose units of government, which have authority to sell or dispose of property by a vote of the governing board.
- **Providing the community more with less.** The Park District does more with much fewer funding options. Unlike other units of local government that receive direct state funding, and income, sales, use, hotel/motel, motor fuel and other numerous taxes, the Park District's only tax revenues come from a modest portion of a resident's overall property tax bill. In fact, despite its limited funding options, the Park District share is only 5.74% of the local tax bill.
- **Transparency.** As a local government agency, established statutes and regulations guide the Park District to serve its residents with openness and strong communication by disclosing information in an easily accessible manner proving its dedication to transparency, accountability, and efficiency.

The Park District prides itself on its transparency and is evidenced by the importance its Board Members place on ensuring public trust by taking steps to apply transparency to all of its actions, but specifically giving priority to financial related documents by posting them to its website, including:

- Treasurer's Reports dating back to October 2012.
- All income and expense reports, including payroll under Board Packets.
- Every audit since the inception of the Park District.
- Standard and Poor's Rating Reports dating back to 2009.

The Park Board and staff also work diligently to keep residents informed by including a transparency tab on its website where general information such as surveys and master plans, summary of grant dollars received, successful referenda, natural area management reports, and employee manuals are publicly available. In addition, visitors to the website can find a complete history of the Park District where permanent records of Board Meeting minutes and agendas, dating back to 1974 are posted.

As part of good governance and implementing best practices in the management of day-to-day operations, the Park District has also adopted the following ordinances, rules, policies, and procedures:

- **Ordinances Directing Board Policies, Procedures, and Fiscal Responsibility**

- Rules for Conduct of Business
- Regulations & Restrictions
- Remote Meeting Participation
- Agreement with CorLands
- Ethics
- Providing for Park Land Donation and Impact Fees
- FOIA/OMA Compliance
- Natural Areas Maintenance Policy
- Park Code Regarding Park Board Vacancies
- Rules for Public Comment and Recording of Meetings
- Investment Policy
- Fund Balance Policy
- Providing for Park Land Donation & Impact Fees
- Annual Tax Abatements
- Annual Budget & Appropriations, Tax Levy, & PTELL
- An Ordinance Defining Meeting and Adopting Policies for Remote Participation.
- Inclusion Policy
- Seizure Management Policy & First Aid Procedures
- Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards Policy
- Grievance Procedure under the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Ordinance Establishing a Travel Reimbursement Policy in Accordance with the Local Government Travel Expense Control Act (Public Act 099-0604)

- **Personnel Policies & Manuals**

- Personnel Handbook
- Safety Manual
- IDOL/OSHA Compliance Manual
- Sexual Harassment Policy

- **Safety and Risk Management Policies**

- Vehicle Usage and High-Risk Driver Policies
- IDOL Inspections Policy

- **2024 Comprehensive Master Plan/Strategic Plan** developed by Campfire Concepts in progress.
- **Annual Financial Report** conducted by independent audit firms.
- **Surveys** Conducted by Independent Third Parties
 - Community-Wide Survey Studies
 - Wellness & Capital Improvements Study
 - Internal Equity & Salary Study
- **Intergovernmental Agreements**
 - Agreement with Frankfort Square Wildcats Football Organization.
 - Agreement with the Frankfort Square Baseball League
 - Agreement with BSA 237
 - Agreement with CorLands, a non-profit organization that works with governing bodies and citizens dedicated to the preservation of open lands.
 - Intergovernmental Agreement with Summit Hill School District 161.
 - Intergovernmental Agreement with Lincoln-Way Community High School District 210
 - Intergovernmental Agreement with the Village of Frankfort
 - Intergovernmental Agreement with the Lincolnway Special Recreation Association
 - Intergovernmental Agreement with the Village of Tinley Park Per the Village's Chapter 90 of the Code of Ordinances Regarding Rules Governing Park District Parking Lot Regulation.
- **Management Standards of All Natural Areas Owned by the Frankfort Square Park District**



V. List of Shared Services and Partnerships

The Park District works diligently to provide the best possible programs, services, and facilities to our community at the least possible cost. One of the many ways the Park District achieves this goal is by partnering with neighboring park districts, school districts, other units of local government within or near the community, the State, non-profit organizations, and for-profit corporations. Below is a comprehensive list of the current partnerships, agreements, and other relationships that assist the Park District's mission of delivering the best possible services at the least possible cost to our community.

1. Membership in LWSRA

The Park District is committed to inclusion and providing equal public recreation opportunities in the most integrated setting to individuals with disabilities, as defined under applicable law. Accordingly, we do not discriminate against eligible individuals with disabilities regarding participation in public recreation opportunities. The Frankfort Square Park District is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Illinois Human Rights Act (IHRA), and all other applicable local, state and federal laws in providing reasonable accommodation and shall review requests for accommodation on a case-by-case basis.

To meet this objective, the Park District is part of the Lincolnway Special Recreation Association ("LWSRA"). Special recreation associations are a form of intergovernmental cooperation among units of local government that are authorized under the Illinois Constitution, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, the Park District Code, and the Municipal Code. Their formation is rooted in a fundamental belief and recognition that "Recreation is for Everyone." They are shining examples of local government efficiency.

By partnering together, local communities can effectively and efficiently deliver more successful opportunities to community members who have special needs. Furthermore, by participating in LWSRA, the Park District networks with seven other local agencies that include Crete, Frankfort, Manhattan, Mokena, New Lenox, Peotone, and Wilmington Park Districts to provide many more program opportunities for our community members who have special needs and offers a choice between participating in the LWSRA's programs or in programs that are provided by the Park District.

The Park District and LWSRA also achieve efficiency by utilizing existing facilities that are owned and operated by LWSRA's members, including the Park District. Utilizing these existing facilities allows LWSRA to deliver services to its member communities at a lower cost. Currently the Park District provides LWSRA access to the following facilities for their program offerings:

- Park District-owned Square Links Golf Course & Practice Center.
- Lincoln-Way North High School Field House & Gymnasium, managed by the Park District.
- Mary Drew Administrative Center, managed by the Park District.
- Community Park raised bed community gardens.

- Island Prairie Park Nature Center
- Park District Community Center
- Any and all Park District-owned and/or managed facilities that may accommodate LWSRA's participants/programming needs.

LWSRA also provides the support needed for participants with special needs who choose to register for the Park District programs or inclusive programming. LWSRA collects information on the registered participant and determines what support is needed for that participant to be successful in this inclusive setting or the Park District program. This could include additional training of the supervisory staff, additional support staff, the use of adaptive equipment, behavior management, and/or other measures that will assist in the successful participation of this individual in the Park District program. Although success may not look the same for everyone, LWSRA works with the Park District's staff to ensure the best possible results for all the participants in the program. The Park District's cost of providing these services would be much greater without its participation and partnership in LWSRA.

In 2022, LWSRA successfully served 358 participants ranging from preschool through adult in over 300 programs. LWSRA also offers support, when needed, to participants in inclusive programs provided by the Park District. In addition, LWSRA offered financial assistance to 48 families, totaling \$8,900.

The Park District is very proud of the ongoing collaboration with LWSRA. By working cooperatively with other local governments, not only are we better able to collectively serve all citizens within our communities, including persons with disabilities, but we are able to do so in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

2. Other intergovernmental agreements with other park districts, forest preserve districts, conservation districts, or municipal recreation agencies.

- Agreement with Frankfort Park District to conduct cooperative programming to benefit individuals residing within the corporate borders of the separate and distinct Frankfort Square Park District and the Frankfort Park District.
- Memorandum of Understanding with Chicago Wilderness, a consortium of organizations that champions biodiversity and the value of nature in its urban, suburban, and rural areas of the Chicago Metropolitan region.
- The Park District has enjoyed a longstanding cooperative relationship with the Morton Arboretum and in 2016, received a grant in the amount of \$7,777 to replace trees that were lost due to the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. This beneficial relationship has also contributed to donations of trees that has increased the Park District's tree canopy and expanded biological diversity of native Illinois trees that have been planted throughout the community through the Morton Arboretum's partnership with the Chicago Region Trees Initiative.

3. Intergovernmental agreements with other units of local government

- Park District offerings are dramatically enhanced through cooperative efforts that maximize tax dollars by minimizing duplication of facilities and services. This proven formula is evidenced through the intergovernmental agreements with Summit Hill School District 161 and Lincoln-Way High School District 210. The Park District enjoys access to school facilities, for indoor and outdoor programming space. In exchange for school usage, the Park District constructed and maintains playground facilities and picnic shelters at the schools, provides green area maintenance, and various facility improvements.
- The benchmark for intergovernmental success is the 48-year agreement with its local elementary school district, Summit Hill School District #161 (SHSD). The Park District enjoys keyed access to SHSD's Mary Drew Administrative Center (formerly Mary Drew School), conducting its Before & After School Program, Summer Day Camp Program, BDC Dance Program, various children's programming, and provides gymnasium space to local athletic and community organizations. In addition, the Park District constructed professional dance studios in Mary Drew that are utilized weekly by 600+ dancers from beginners to seasoned competitors ages 3 through adult. In exchange for school usage, the Park District has designed, installed, and constructed all athletic fields, playgrounds, and picnic shelters at all SHSD school sites. Park District and SHSD administrators meet monthly to review cooperative efforts of their inclusive IGA. FSPD expanded its offerings and SHSD met its goal of bringing children back to the hallways of its once empty school.



- Opened in 2008, funding shortages closed Lincoln-Way North High School (LWN), located within the Park District's borders, following the conclusion of its 2015-2016 school year. The Lincoln-Way Community High School District (LW210) Board and the Park District Board jointly developed an intergovernmental agreement to allow the Park District to provide access to LWN's indoor/outdoor athletic spaces. In September 2016, the Park District introduced its Frankfort Square Park District Activities at North program that is available to all residents within the 105-square-mile area of LW210. In 2023, there were 1,702 outdoor games and practices and 729 indoor practices were scheduled. Residents from six surrounding communities appreciate having use of the facility that is supported by their tax dollars. By keeping LWN open, LW210 is also able to provide space to the Illinois State Police for training, including active shooter training in an actual school setting, helping the State meet its goal of preparing officers for duty.



- The Park District is a member of the Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA), an agency that has tailored coverage to the unique needs of 160+ Illinois park districts, forest preserve, conservation districts, and special recreation associations for 40 years. PDRMA partners with its members in a risk-sharing pool governed by members to promote wellness, manage risk, protect employees and patrons, and control costs by offering two coverage programs (Property/Casualty Program & Health Program), each of which is a cost-effective alternative to commercial insurance. In 2022, PDRMA received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting for its comprehensive annual financial report. PDRMA has received GFOA certification for the past 33 years for its publication of its easy-to-read and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report that must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.

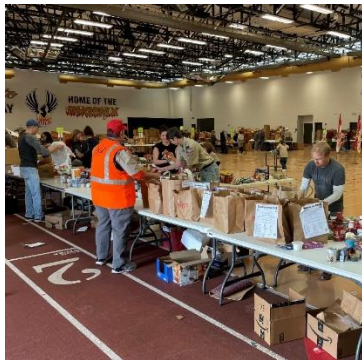


4. Partnerships or agreements with athletic or similar affiliate organizations that operate sports or other leagues.

- The Park District recognizes that certain organizations exist within the community whose purposes are to serve and enhance recreational opportunities for a specific purpose and group. These organizations are separate and independent from the Park District and provide for their own leadership, organizational, and operational structure. Although the stated missions of the organizations may differ, public investment in public recreational facilities and programs creates a mutually beneficial environment in which to provide quality recreation for all the individuals we mutually serve.
- The Park District recognizes that at times it is in the best interest of the community that it works with outside organizations in coordinating, integrating, and consolidating the planning and provision of recreational facilities and programs to derive a benefit to the public. Working relationships are established through intergovernmental agreements with the Frankfort Square Wildcats Football League and the Frankfort Square Baseball League. These agreements provide a frame of reference, defining mutual expectations and individual responsibilities of the community groups and the Park District.
- Annually, the Park District's Executive Director meets with community organizations and local government entities. During various meetings, groups receive updates on Park District activities and projects. In addition, groups are offered the opportunity to publicly voice interests or concerns.

5. Partnerships or other interrelationships with non-profits

The Park District is the charter organization for Scout Troop #237, #732, and Cub Pack #101, providing meeting space and working cooperatively with their members through Eagle Scout projects and fundraising activities, such as their annual food drive that generates the single largest donation, 20,000+ pounds, to local food pantries. Also, the Super Scout Clean-up celebrates Earth Day each year by gathering Scouts and neighbors to remove garbage from parks. Similar to the athletic community organizations, the Park District established an intergovernmental agreement with Scout Troop #237 to define the working relationship and expectations between their organization and the Park District.



6. Informal cooperation with other units of local government which save taxpayer dollars by eliminating redundancies.

The Park District services residents in Frankfort Square, as well as residents in the Villages of Frankfort, Tinley Park, and Matteson and values its strong relationships and open lines of communication with local government officials to better serve and meet the needs of all residents.

- The Park District works jointly with the Township Highway Department, local School Districts and Village of Frankfort and Tinley Park Public Works Departments as all understand that we serve the same residents and believe helping others succeed is beneficial to the agencies and residents alike.
- The Park District works closely with the Frankfort Park District, offering dozens of shared programs annually that provide resident rates for participants of our two separate and distinct agencies.
- The Park District partners with Frankfort Township, collecting trees and branches from residents and landscape contractors, processing them into high-quality mulch. FSPD uses the mulch in its landscaped areas, and residents are provided with free product. This partnership annually saves both agencies \$35,000 and benefits the environment by reducing landscape waste that was previously taken to landfills. This program has been so successful, that FSPD allowed drop off to two area tree services and surrounding villages to generate more of the valued mulch.



- The Park District led the effort to secure OSLAD grant funding for the Frankfort Township bike path connection to the existing Park District's path. Park District staff worked with its grant administrator and provided the Township with all required documentation including but not limited to sample letters requesting support from legislators, local agencies, and residents, along with maps of existing and planned trails defining connections to Old Plank Road Trail, Will County Forest Preserve trail, Village of Frankfort subdivisions, and the Village of Tinley Park trail system. These pathways link multiple communities providing environmentally conscious and safe and healthy transportation while offering easy access to recreation, open space, and local area businesses. They also provide children with safe passage to SHSD 161 elementary schools.
- The Park District has a long history of working cooperatively with the Frankfort Township Highway Department (Township) and in addition to the above-described mulch program and OSLAD grant project, the following typify the longstanding relationship between our two agencies:
 - The Township buys road salt in bulk with the understanding that the Park District (as well as others) will purchase what is needed to keep Park District walkways and parking lots clear during ice and snow events.
 - The Park District often communicates with the Township's certified arborist to help diagnose issues with tree pests.
 - The Park District and Township assist one another with equipment needs. The Township owns larger/heavier equipment that it loans to the Park District when needed. Conversely, the Park District owns smaller detailing equipment that it loans to the Township.
 - The Park District and Township assist one another with manpower and supplies and materials as needed, and also schedule tasks that benefit one another. For example, the Township will schedule tasks such as snowplowing roads next to Park District plowed pathways.
- In the mid-90's, the Park District was approached by its residents after the Village of Frankfort had acquired the privately owned sewer and water utility service that serviced its residents. The Village had imposed a water surcharge on the unincorporated area to fund this \$11.2 million asset acquisition. Park District residents believed this action was inherently unfair, and they solicited the Park District to begin discourse on the matter, and eventually pursue legal recourse. A corporate rate increase referendum was offered to residents to provide a funding source for legal action that was resoundingly approved. The Park District and residents lost the litigation, but the Village settled, resolving the disagreement by imposing the water surcharge against all village and non-residents equally.

Once the litigation was over, the Park District, through the efforts of dedicated volunteers, solicited signatures necessary to add a non-binding question to the ballot, allowing the Park District to continue the corporate rate tax increase previously used for the “water fight”, for park district purposes. This non-binding referendum was not required to continue the expanded corporate tax assessment but was necessary to ensure residents had the opportunity to object or reject the new direction. Once again, the residents supported this issue and resoundingly approved the advisory measure. The Park District benefitted from this new funding source, enabling the addition of much needed capital funds for a myriad of improvements throughout park properties.

The relationship between the Park District and Village of Frankfort has come a long way, with both agencies collaborating on projects such as the wastewater treatment plant relocation that resulted in a positive impact on nearby residents and Park District property, as well as improvements that include the addition of a bike path along St. Francis Road and the 2024 completion of a bike path on Pfeiffer Road that will extend the Park District’s path and lead to the 22-mile Old Plank Road Trail. The affirmative relationship between the Park District and Village demonstrates good government through collaborative efforts that has served and continues to serve our residents well.

- The Park District services residents in Tinley Park and values its relationships with Village of Tinley Park officials. Park District staff regularly communicate with Village Administrative staff and Trustees to stay informed about Village improvements to ensure projects include amenities that will benefit mutually served residents. In 2023, Will County began the 80th Avenue Roadway and Bridge Reconstruction Project, widening 80th Avenue from 191st Street to 183rd Street in Tinley Park. Park District and Village staff worked together to ensure the planned multi-use path would include a connection to the Park District’s path system, extending opportunities for residents to safely recreate while also providing an option for commuters to bike to the 80th Avenue Metra Train Station in Tinley Park.

Tinley Park Village staff have worked with the Park District and developers on residential development plans. This beneficial relationship has resulted in park land donations of 149.75 acres, far exceeding the minimum requirement and providing space for Union Creek Park, a destination park, and five additional neighborhood parks that also include an extensive and contiguous path system, as well as the site where Hilda Walker Intermediate School was constructed.

In 2010, an intergovernmental agreement by and between the Village of Tinley Park was adopted that allows its Police Department to enforce certain regulations regarding motor vehicle traffic and parking at the Park-District-owned Union Creek Park site located at Hilda Walker Middle School for the health, safety, and welfare of persons using the parking areas.

- The Park District Board and staff understand that a strong and long-standing relationship with the Will County Sheriff's Office is paramount to the safety of its residents and the parks and facilities for which it is charged with maintaining on behalf of the taxpayers. To that end, the Park District has provided office space as a substation for the Will County Sheriff's officers. Residents appreciated the physical presence of officers in the heart of the Frankfort Square community that helped to contribute to rapid response times. An intergovernmental agreement was also executed that allowed Will County Sheriff's deputies to control certain activities on Park District-owned properties to preserve and protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

VI. Other Examples of Efficient Operations

Use of volunteers. One way in which the Park District reduces the burden on taxpayers is through the use of volunteers. In 2023, 23 individuals volunteered 252 hours of service to the Park District.

Youth employment. The Park District is a major employer of youth in the community. Last year, the Park District employed 15 youth under the age of 18, and 26 individuals under the age of 21. These employees worked as Before and After School Program aides, Summer Day Camp counselors, Splash Park attendants, Dance teachers, golf course ball pickers, and as maintenance laborers, ensuring the success of our yearly offerings. Not only is this an efficient way to deliver services, but youth employment serves as a valuable training tool for the future workforce.

Collaboration with other park districts on best practices. Because park districts are not in competition with one another, they are more willing than the private sector to share best practices. These best practices help to avoid unnecessary costs and deliver services more effectively and efficiently. For example, the Park District provided its Developer Donation Ordinance to be used as a model, enabling the Frankfort Park District to enact a similar ordinance to ensure they would capture impact fees for their agency.

Reliance on non-tax revenue. Unlike most local governments that rely on a wide range of sales, use, and income taxes, the Park District is not permitted to assess these types of taxes. Additionally, although the Park District is an economic engine for the community and generates much revenue for the state and our community in the form of hotel/motel, sales, and motor fuel taxes, our Park District does not receive any of these revenues. Also, unlike Illinois cities, villages, counties, and school districts that received millions of dollars in direct financial assistance from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), our Park District did not receive any such direct federal aid. Our Park District also does not receive state funding under the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) or General State Aid (GSA) that these same cities, villages, counties, and school districts receive through the State budget.

Instead, the Park District all of its programs, facilities, and services to the community with a very modest amount of property taxes and from non-tax sources such as memberships, program registrations, and other user fees. Over the years, the Park District has regularly sought grant dollars to enable major capital improvements to supplement tax dollars, thereby easing the tax burden on its residents. Since 1989, the Park District has received \$4,930,510 in grant dollars and in the interest of transparency, has posted the entire list on its website, detailing the year, grant source, funded projects and amounts for resident review. In 2024, the Park District was awarded a \$600,000 OSLAD grant to redevelop Hunter Prairie Park. This park has been in continuous use for over 40 years, and approval of this grant project ensures that Hunter Prairie Park will continue to be a much needed and accessible recreation destination that our community will enjoy for many more years to come.



Arbor Park - \$400,000 Grant



Square Links - \$750,000 Grant



Brookside Bayou Park - \$400,000 Grant

VII. Transparency to the Community

The following information about the Park District may be obtained by citizens in the location(s) listed.

| Document | Location(s) Available |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual tax levy | Park District website and Administrative Office, Will & Cook County Clerk's Offices |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual budget and appropriation ordinance | Park District website and Administrative Office, Will & Cook County Clerk's Offices |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda and minutes | Park District website and Administrative Office |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comptroller's annual finance report (AFR) | Park District website and Administrative Office, State Comptroller's website, MSRB EMMA |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual audit | Park District website and Administrative Office, MSRB EMMA |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Receipts and Disbursements | Park District Administrative Office and website |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct Ordinances | Park District Administrative Office and website |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long range plans | Park District Administrative Office and website |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plans | Park District Administrative Office and website |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital improvement plan | Park District Administrative Office and website |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ADA transition plan | Park District Administrative Office and website |

- Annual Board Meeting Schedule Park District Administrative Office and website
- Archived Board Meetings & Agendas Dating back to 1974 inception Park District Administrative Office and website
- Management Standards of Natural Areas Park District Administrative Office and website
- Natural Areas Site Assessment and Management Report Park District Administrative Office and website
- Surveys, Master Plans, and Planning Documents Park District Administrative Office and website
- Employee Manuals Park District Administrative Office and website
- Standard and Poor's Rating Reports Park District Administrative Office and website

The Park District offers residents many opportunities to provide feedback that include:

- The Board of Commissioners meets on the third Thursday of each month. Residents may provide public comment at every meeting.
- The Park District's annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance is available in tentative form at least 30 days prior to its adoption at an open meeting of the Park District board. Additionally, at least one public hearing is held prior to final action, and notice of the hearing is published in the newspaper at least one week prior to the hearing.
- The Park District's annual property tax levy is approved at an open meeting of the Park District board in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The Park District follows all public notice and hearing requirements under the Truth in Taxation Law prior to the adoption of this annual tax levy.
- The Park District's annual levy is also subject to the limitations of the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) and it annually adopts and files an ordinance giving the Cook County and Will County Clerks direction related to its tax levy, directing the Clerks to levy its Corporate Fund at its maximum level and reduce each of the other funds comprising the aggregate extension under PTELL proportionately.

- Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at (815) 469-3524 and/or by email at info@fspd.org, admin@fspd.org, and recreation@fspd.org. In addition, all full-time staff and Board Member email addresses are posted to the Park District's website, and all welcome resident contact through these means.
- The Park District provides the public with the right to access its documents and records per the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Persons are able to submit requests in writing, and the Park District's website includes a FOIA section, providing instruction on how to make such requests along with a link to the Illinois Attorney General's website where they can learn more about this state statute.
- The Park District's Executive Director serves on the LWSRA Board, holding various positions of authority and presiding over monthly meetings in roles that include Treasurer, Secretary, and President since 2017. In addition, in 2018, the Park District's Vice-President began serving on the Lincolnway Special Recreation Foundation (LWSRF), a 501(c)3 charitable organization that is dedicated to providing financial support to LWSRA and was elected to the role of President of the LWSRA Board in 2020. The volunteer members of LWSRF organize and assist in annual fundraiser events that enhance the quality of LWSRA programming for persons with disabilities and also contributes to the expansion of LWSRA.
- Community and program surveys have been conducted for nearly 30 years, and this report details a look back at surveys and studies that were conducted over a 5-year period beginning in 2019.

It is imperative that the Park District plans for the future, and over the years, challenging economic conditions increased the importance in involving resident input on how tax dollars are allocated. The Park District believes that an evaluation of service must be completed by an independent third party to ensure impartial results and regularly seeks resident input through community-wide surveys and studies. Unique to the Park District, all households within the Park District receive survey questionnaires through bulk mail that includes a return envelope.

The Park District also conducts internal surveys of its participants to gather interest on program expansion and/or input on how to improve its offerings or facilities.

The Park District has received tremendous support from the community it serves, and it is believed this is a direct result of communicating and involving residents in its planning. Resident appreciation is evident with surveys consistently reflecting District-wide approval at/or above 95%.

➤ **2019 Wellness & Capital Improvements Study**

Conducted by an independent parks and recreation marking and consulting firm. Campfire Consultants, whose mission is to assist parks and recreation providers meet the needs of their residents and to identify opportunities for improvement and to strengthen engagement with the people agencies serve.

Study Objectives:

The 2019 study sought to provide insight into residents' priorities for future direction and potential improvements; residents' current patterns of participation with existing wellness areas and facilities; obtain feedback from residents on future wellness-related projects and improvement areas; and obtain demographic characteristics of the Park District's residents.

➤ **2021 Community-Wide Survey Study**

Conducted by an independent parks and recreation marking and consulting firm. Campfire Consultants.

Study Objectives:

The 2021 survey study was insights into the following areas: residents' current patterns of participation with existing parks, programs, and facilities; residents' satisfaction with current parks, programs, and facilities; residents' attitudes and preferences with the Park District's marketing and publicity methods; residents' feedback on future recreation needs; and general demographic characteristics and information for Park District residents. Results are used in the Park District's short-term and long-range planning efforts.

➤ **2021 Walking Program**

The 2021 internal survey was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic, and sought resident interest related to the potential opening of the Lincoln-Way North High School fieldhouse for winter walking, a facility that provides the Park District with keyed access to the school's indoor and outdoor facilities per an intergovernmental agreement.

Residents were asked what days and times of the week they would like to see made available, and their likelihood of signing up for this proposed walking program.

➤ **2023 Early Learning Center Preschool Parent Survey**

The 2023 internal survey was conducted to determine interest in extending 4-year-old preschool hours for the 2023/2024 school year for the purpose of better preparing students for Summit Hill School District 161's extended kindergarten hours.



➤ **2024 Comprehensive Master Plan/Strategic Plan**

The Park District has contracted with Campfire Concepts to develop a master plan/strategic plan document that will include a community-wide survey instrument that will be mailed to all Park District households in 2024.

- In addition to resident surveys, the Park District enables the community to provide public input at its monthly Park Board Meetings and holds Town Hall Meetings and public hearings related to future planning.
 - January 18, 2018 Town Hall Meeting where information about a referendum was shared in an open forum.
 - Annual Budget & Appropriation public hearings.
 - Annual public Truth in Taxation Hearings
 - July 19, 2018 public input during regular board meeting – Resident addressed the Board, commending the Early Learning Center teachers for her child's experience in Park District's preschool program during the regular meeting of the Park District board.

- August 16, 2018 public input during regular board meeting – Community leaders representing the Frankfort Square Wildcats Football organization, Frankfort Square Baseball League, and Boy Scout Troop 237 expressed appreciation for the Park District's efforts that ensure the success of their respective organizations.
- June 28, 2023 initial public hearing to introduce potential redevelopment of Hunter Prairie Park, pending OSLAD grant approval, and to gather input from residents on what amenities they would like to see added.
- July 12, 2023 second public hearing to gather resident comments and feedback on potential redevelopment of Hunter Prairie Park.



VII. District Awards and Recognition

The Park District's achievements have been recognized in numerous ways and credits its success to the efforts of its key staff that have a combined 122 years of employment with the Park District and a dedicated Park Board of Commissioners that have a combined 68 years of volunteer service, providing direction and leadership to the Park District staff while representing the Park District's residents. Below provides a snapshot of key staff credentials and Board Member service.

Supervisory Staff Credentials

Executive Director

Education

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN
Master of Science in Recreation and Leisure Studies
The University of Illinois, Urbana, IL
Bachelor of Arts in Economics,

Continuing Education

Graduated from the NRPA Directors School in cooperation with North Carolina State University
Completed the Safety Coordinator curriculum through PDRMA.
Annual OMA/FOIA Certification

LWSRA Board President

Senior Bookkeeper

Bachelor of Science Business Administration, minor in Economics and Accounting,
J.L. Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University
Master of Management

Superintendent of Parks

Education: BS in Aviation Maintenance Management

Superintendent of Office Management and Technology

Education: BS in Recreation Administration, Eastern Illinois University

Superintendent of Recreation

Education: BS Leisure Studies, Eastern Illinois University

Board Members

Ken Blackburn, President – 1989-Present

David Macek, Vice President and LWSR Foundation President – 2005-Present

Phillip Cherry – Appointed in 2022 – Elected to 4-year term in 2023

Frank Florentine – 2021-Present

Ryan Holley – Elected to 4-year term in 2023

Craig Maksymiak, Treasurer – 2011-Present

Denis Moore – 2017-Present

Awards

The Park District was first recognized nationally, named a finalist for the prestigious National Recreation and Park Association Gold Medal Award in 2003. This would be the first of seven finalist recognitions, with the FSPD receiving the Grand Plaque Award in 2007 and again in 2016.



The Park District was selected by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and Chicago Wilderness for a 2010 Conservation and Native Landscaping Award for its environmental contribution through the 2009 installation of the Island Prairie Interpretive Gardens, a component of a grant project that aided in furthering the Park District's mission of establishing, restoring, and advocating natural landscaping for the protection of water quality and enhancement of biodiversity.



VIII. Benefits and Services

The Park District services over 18,000 residents in a variety of ways, exceeding national standards for open space, athletic facilities, natural areas, and playgrounds to meet the needs of residents from the youngest child to the most senior adult and all ages in between.

1. Facilities

The Park District offered the following facilities, listed per park location, highlighted by free opportunities such as community gardens, large and small dog parks, splash park, 9.9 miles of walking/bike paths, skate parks, athletic fields, owning and maintaining 706 acres throughout the District. The school sites are available to residents and maintained by the Park District through Intergovernmental Agreements by and between SHSD 161 and LWCHSD 210 and the Park District.

Park District Community Center/Island Prairie Park



- Administrative Offices
- Resident & Community Group Rentals
- Preschool & Early Childhood Classrooms
- Board Room
- 2 Playgrounds
- 2 Picnic Shelters
- Pergola
- Elevated Sand Tables
- Walking Path
- Boardwalk
- Fishing Pond
- Canoe & Kayak Launch
- Splash Park
- Interpretive Gardens
- Bandshell
- Interpretive Signage



Square Links Golf Course & Practice Center



Square Links Golf and Practice Center offers beginners and seasoned golfers many fine amenities including a 10-hole course and driving range that covers over 400,000 square feet and features Toptracer Range, and a spectacular 18-hole natural grass putting green and practice sand bunker. The 2023 season saw a marked increase in patronage, with a total of 826,800 balls struck on the driving range, reflecting a 45% increase over the 2022 season. Additionally, 21,731 rounds of golf were played in 2023, reflecting a 28% increase over the 17,000 rounds that were played during the 2022 season.

Both private and group lessons are offered for all ages along with the popular free monthly golf clinics. Golfers are able to demonstrate their abilities in leagues and special events such as the Parent/Child Scramble and \$5 College Scholarship Classic benefiting the FSPD's College Scholarship Program.

A beverage upcharge is utilized at Square Links to provide financial support annually to local community groups, including the Scouts, Frankfort Square Wildcats Football and Cheer, and the Frankfort Square Baseball League.



Island Prairie Park Nature Center



- Meeting Room/Classroom
- Attached Picnic Shelter
- Greenhouse

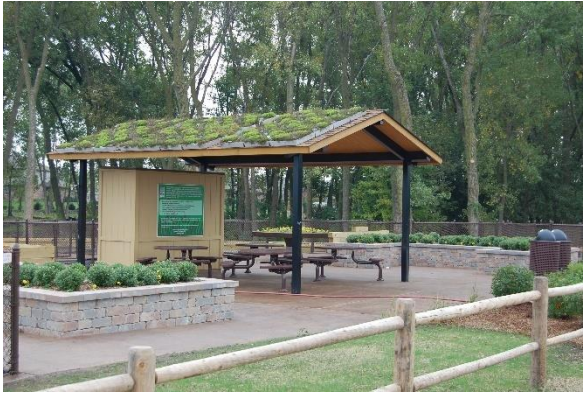
Arbor Park



- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Outdoor Exercise Equipment
- Walking Path
- Fishing Pond with Rock Outcropping
- Bocce Ball Court



Brookside Bayou Park



- Picnic Shelter
- Outdoor Exercise Equipment
- Boardwalk
- Community Gardens w/additional ADA Accessible Elevated Gardens
- Interpretive Signage

Candle Creek Park

- Walking Path
- Fishing Pond

Champions Park

- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Baseball Field
- Soccer/Football Field
- Pickleball Courts-Lighted
- Outdoor Ice Rink
- Concession Stand/Meeting Room



Community Park

- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Walking Path
- Fishing Pond w/Pier and Rock Outcropping
- Pickleball Courts
- Bocce Ball Court
- Horseshoe Pits
- Bag Toss
- Community Gardens w/additional ADA Accessible Elevated Gardens
- Interpretive Signage



Crystal Lake Park

- Playground
- Gazebo
- Walking Path
- Fishing Pond



Frankfort Square School Park

- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Sandbox
- Walking Path
- Sledding Hill
- Interpretive Signage

Hawthorne Lakes Park

- Playground

Hoffman Park



- Playground
- Walking Path
- Interpretive Signage

Hunter Prairie Park

- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Sandbox
- Baseball Field
- Tennis Courts
- Basketball Goal

Indian Boundary South Park

- Picnic Shelter
- Walking Path
- Fishing Pond
- Soccer Field
- Frisbee Golf Course
- Interpretive Signage



Indian Trail School Park

- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Baseball Field
- Basketball Goal

Kingston Park

- Playground
- Sandbox
- Walking Path



Kiwanis Park

- Playground
- Walking Path
- Baseball Fields

Lake of the Glens Park

- Playgrounds
- Walking Path

LaPorte Meadows Park

- Playground
- Fishing Pond



Lighthouse Pointe Park



- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Outdoor Exercise Equipment
- Walking Path
- Fishing Ponds

Lincoln-Way North Campus

- Fitness Center
- Weight Room
- Field House
- Gymnasium
- Walking Path
- Lighted Baseball Fields
- Soccer Fields
- Lighted Football Stadium
- Practice Football Field
- Sledding Hill



Lincoln-Way North Park

- Walking Path



Odyssey Park

- Playground

Plank Trail Park



- Playground
- Gazebo
- Walking Path with connection to 50-mile Old Plank Road Trail
- Fishing Pond

Ridgefield Park

- Walking Path
- Fishing Pond

Rogus School Park

- Playground
- Picnic Shelter
- Fishing Ponds

Summit Hill Junior High School Park

- Walking Path
- Baseball Fields
- Soccer/Football Field

Union Creek Community Park



- Playgrounds
- Picnic Shelters
- Walking Path
- Fishing Ponds
- Lighted Baseball Fields
- Sand Volleyball Court
- Basketball Goal
- Skate Park
- Inline Hockey Rink
- Sledding Hill
- Dog Park
- Band Shell

White Oak Park

- Playground
- Walking Path
- Fishing Ponds



Woodlawn Park

- Playgrounds
- Walking Path
- Fishing Pond w/Pier



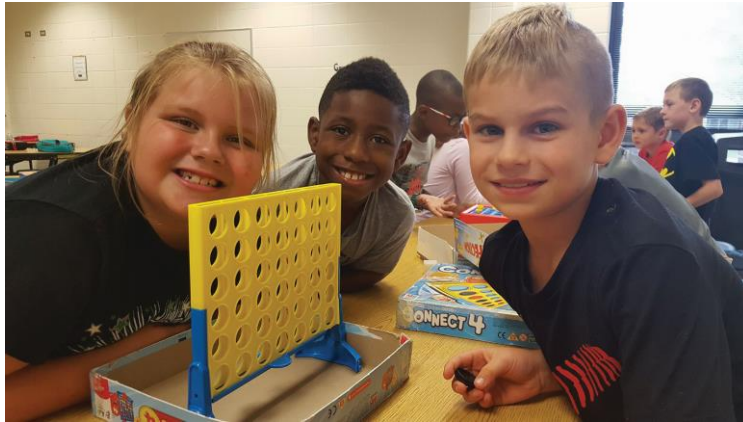
2. Programs

The Frankfort Square Park District offers over 650 programs annually, serving tens of thousands of individuals of all ages. In 2023, highlights include the Early Learning Center Preschool program, the FSPD's oldest running program educating three and four-year-olds with current enrollment totaling 65 students.



The Before and After School (BAS) program serves local students from kindergarten through sixth grade during the 37 weeks of school with an average of 50 – 60 students daily. BAS is highly valued by working parents who understand that the Park District offers their children a safe and nurturing program when they are not able to be home immediately before or after school.

Realizing the need for parents to find safe, affordable, and convenient childcare for their children elementary-school-age children on days off school, the Park District developed its Escapades program. Escapade days are available to all students, whether or not they participate in the BAS program. Escapades operates on school holidays, breaks, and snow days, where children participate in games, crafts, activities, and the mainstay of the program is the fun field trips to a wide variety of offsite locations. Historically, 360 children register for this offering annually.



When the school year ends, the Park District provides Summer Day Camp for children in kindergarten through sixth grade and an Early Childhood Summer Camp for preschool-age children. In 2023, there was a combined registration total of 2,427 for both of these early and childhood and elementary-school-age children camps.

FSPD's Braemar Dance Center is a nationally award-winning program and in 2023 had 646 dancers and 93 involved in the company competitive dance program. Each year is highlighted by the Showcase performances where thousands of family members and friends fill the auditorium to celebrate these talented dancers.



The F.A.N. program includes open gyms, fitness center, and weight room activities at Lincoln-Way High School with weekly average attendance of 500.

In 2022, 852 individuals and families enjoyed special events including the popular Polar Express, Sweetheart Dance, Ice Cream Social, and various holiday events. 2023 was no exception, with continued interest and enjoyment of the Park District's special events.



Summer Concerts in the Park are enjoyed lakeside at the Island Prairie Park Bandshell featuring free professional entertainment for all ages. The Local Showcase Community Concerts are performed by talented local musicians.



Hundreds of programs are offered by the FSPD serving all ages from Tot Time for the youngest residents through youth, teen, and adult sports, fitness, music, art, and general programming to the latest new offering of an active adult trip to Niagara Falls.



The FSPD offers program scholarships to residents in financial need ensuring that opportunities are available to all.

3. Additional Services

The Park District provides the following additional services to the community.

- The Park District acts as a clearing house of information to the residents it serves in unincorporated Frankfort Township (Frankfort Square), and the Villages of Frankfort, Tinley Park, and Matteson, spanning Will and Cook Counties.
- The Park District provides free access to meeting space for 32 community groups. In 2023 the Park District scheduled 729 indoor practices at facilities it owns and manages, and 1,702 outdoor games and practices at athletic fields throughout the District for community groups and private athletic teams.
- The Park District has 5 rental facilities available, annually booking 200 celebrations in its Community Room, Board Room, Nature Center and picnic shelters where residents and non-residents alike can enjoy banquets, weddings, birthday parties, showers, and family gatherings.



- The Park District takes environmental stewardship seriously and prides itself on being a community leader through its installation and use of solar panels, wind turbine, electric vehicle, green roof picnic shelters, and energy efficient lighting in its main facilities.



- The Park District assists the Maddog Strong Foundation with its annual events that include a 10K Run /5K Run & Walk/Virtual Race to raise funds and awareness of organ and tissue donation. The foundation was created in the spirit of Park District resident and program participant, Maddie “Maddog” Grobmeier. Working together, The Maddog Strong Foundation and the Frankfort Square Park District have created the first living organ donation memorial in the Chicago Southland: The Giving Trees at Island Prairie Park in Frankfort Square. The Giving Trees are individual trees dedicated to organ donors from various years, and a new memorial tree will be dedicated at this site each year.
- In 2006, the Park District established a College Scholarship Program for the purpose of providing funds to college-bound high school seniors who reside within the borders of the Frankfort Square Park District, and to date, has recognized 145 graduating high school students with remarkable academic achievements and contributions to their community through volunteerism, with scholarship awards, totaling \$145,000. Funds are raised through the generosity of donors such as area businesses, local organizations, Park District vendors, and participants that support this program’s efforts during the annual College Scholarship Classic, held at the Park District-owned Square Links Golf Course and Practice Center.



- In 2022, the Park District introduced Path to Reading, where pages of children’s books are installed on signs along its 1.9 miles of bike paths that connect to various parks throughout the community. The storybook displays are designed to encourage families with young children to engage with one another in the outdoors, combining opportunities to improve their literacy skills and curiosity, while encouraging physical activity through exploration of the many amenities offered at District’s parks.



- Dog Park
- Splash Park
- Community Gardens
- Skate Park
- Inline Hockey Rink
- 18 Hole Natural Grass Putting Green
- Group Golf Lessons
- Football & Soccer Fields
- Baseball & Softball Fields
- Sand Volleyball Courts
- Frisbee Golf Course
- Outdoor Track
- Lakeside Summer Concerts
- Walking/Bike Path Linking 32 Parks
- Pickleball Courts
- Picnic Shelters with Permanent Outdoor Grills
- Tennis Courts
- Permanent Outdoor Game Tables
- Horseshoe Pits

- Bag Toss
- Bocce Ball Courts
- Outdoor Fitness Equipment and Fitness Stations
- Native Tree Walks
- Interpretive Signage
- Boardwalks
- Canoe/Kayak Launch
- Fishing Piers & Rock Outcroppings



4. Other Benefits

While the Park District is a special purpose district, its impact on the community is multi-faceted and far reaching. For example, the Park District's parks, recreational programming, and other opportunities improve the community's overall physical and mental health and wellness, thereby reducing health care costs. Before and after school and summer programs offer safe, convenient, and affordable childcare options for working families during critical times when school is not in session. The Park District's open space, natural areas, and trees help improve air and water quality and mitigate flooding.

The Park District is a leader in the establishment, restoration, and advocacy of natural landscaping, and owns and maintains unique and diverse natural areas throughout incorporated boundaries of the Park District, including, but not limited to, mesic and wet mesic prairies, wetlands, woodlands, ponds, basins, designed constructed wetlands, and retention/detention areas.

Natural areas owned and maintained by the Park District provide a myriad of benefits that include, but are not limited to, improved water quality, compensatory water storage, erosion control, elimination of nitrogen-based fertilizers, reduction of chemical herbicide usage, proliferation of wildlife habitat and the creation of sustainable landscapes.

Most of the Park District's natural areas are well defined with diverse native plants that provide wildlife with food and shelter. The deep roots of these native plants help stabilize shorelines and prevent fertilizer runoff, keeping the basins free of silt and algae.

Natural areas increase biodiversity by creating greenways that provide a safe haven for mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and beneficial insects, and thanks to the Park District's restoration efforts, bald eagles, red-tail hawks, heron, egret, and even American white pelicans can be spotted throughout the Park District's natural areas. They also sustain an environment where native Illinois plants can thrive and be successfully reintroduced.

These unique areas provide non-traditional recreational opportunities for the entire community, as well as a place for spiritual, scientific, and educational study.



Dated: February 15, 2024

Signed: *Dave Macek*