



Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan Update

February 11, 2004 Update

Work continues to progress on schedule in the development of the parks and recreation comprehensive master plan through the efforts of the team of consultants, lead by Leisure Vision, with the support and assistance of the Park District Citizen Committee (PDCC) and Park District and Village staff.

Some 3,500 Oak Park residents selected at random were asked to share their views and desires for the community's parks and recreation facilities and services by completing a survey mailed in early January. Park District and Village staffs were confident that the expected response rate of 800 would be achieved. Over 600 responses have already been received at press time. Information gleaned from this survey will be key in the development of the comprehensive plan by providing a statistically valid measure of residents' views on current programs and facilities, as well as direction for future planning.

Doug Varn, PDCC Chair extends a sincere thank you to all residents who completed the needs assessment survey, stating "You have helped to shape the future of parks and recreation here in Oak Park and influenced the long-term quality of life for our community."

As part of an effort to learn about the facilities, programs, and practices of other communities similar to Oak Park, a benchmarking survey was mailed in January to 18 park and recreation agencies selected by the Park District Citizen Committee. Variables used to make agency selections included population, percentage of renters, percentage of minorities, median household income and miles to the nearest large city. Only agencies located in the Midwest were considered. Benchmark comparisons are being made in regard to types and numbers of parks and open space areas, types and numbers of outdoor and indoor recreation facilities, programs, cooperative usage of facilities, staffing, budget and other relevant measures.

An inventory of potential funding sources and methods for financing the Comprehensive Master Plan, including tax and non-tax means, is currently being completed. This includes an assessment regarding the potential for increasing these sources and/or developing other methods for financing the Plan's implementation.

A comprehensive review of the current neighborhood-based community center model as it relates to its effectiveness and efficiency in meeting community needs also is underway.

In addition, the consultants will develop comparisons of similar communities regarding governance structures and best practices specifically addressing issues impacting service delivery for the Master Plan.

The final report on the Comprehensive Plan is scheduled to be presented to the Park Board of Commissioners in July. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Gary Balling at 725.2020 or Craig Failor at or 358.5418, or email parkmasterplan@oak-park.us.

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