



## **Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan Update**

*October 16, 2003*

The development of the Park District of Oak Park's Comprehensive Plan got underway in September with 31 stakeholder interviews of governmental, non-profit and community leaders. In addition, six focus groups were held concentrating on seniors, youth advocacy, community centers, special properties, indoor and outdoor sports and two public forums attended by over 75 residents. The intent of these meetings was to collect information in order to identify key issues facing our community.

At the same time these various meetings were being held, the Park District Citizen Committee was being formed. Thirty six residents volunteered to be a voice of the community in the Comprehensive Plan project, and 11 members were selected with 2 alternates. The remaining volunteers are being utilized as project resources.

Ron Vine, Project Leader and Vice-President of Leisure Vision Consultants, presented a report of the findings regarding the interviews, focus groups and public forums on October 9 at a Strategic Directions Workshop. Attended by Park Board Commissioners, Village Trustees and members of the Park District Citizen Committee, Mr. Vine identified eight key issues to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan including funding, governance, (the legal governing and funding structure), historic properties, maintenance of facilities, neighborhood centers, partnerships, recreation program needs and priorities, and a unified approach/intent. Meeting attendees had an opportunity to discuss these issues in small groups and eventually rank the list. Funding was the most important issue identified followed by program needs and governance.

The identification of these issues will assist in the next steps in the plan development which include a community needs assessment survey to be mailed to over 2000 Oak Park households in late November or early December. Other steps in the Comprehensive Planning Process include review of finances and revenue sources; benchmarking of other communities for facilities, parks and services; benchmarking governance structures of other communities; SWOT analysis of parks; partnership inventory with schools and other providers; and analysis of the role of community centers.

The entire planning process is expected to be completed within one year. If you have any questions about this project, please contact Gary Balling at [garyb@oakparkparks.com](mailto:garyb@oakparkparks.com) or 725-2020 or Craig Failor at [failor@oak-park.us](mailto:failor@oak-park.us) or 358-5418.

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