

PALOS HEIGHTS



Parks and Recreation Master Plan City of Palos Heights, IL

SEPTEMBER 9, 2019

TESKA ASSOCIATES





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City Council

Robert Straz, Mayor
James Daemicke, City Treasurer
Thomas Kantas, City Clerk
Donald Bylut, Alderman, Ward 1
Jeffrey M. Key, Alderman, Ward 1
Robert Basso, Alderman, Ward 2
Jack Clifford, Alderman, Ward 2
Delores Kramarski, Alderwoman, Ward 3
Brent Lewandowski, Alderman, Ward 3
Jerry McGovern, Alderman, Ward 4
Michael McGrogan, Alderman, Ward 4

Planning & Zoning Commission

Edward J. Stevens, Jr., Chairman
Jeff Berry
William DeLeo
Bob Fisher
Tom Gabel
Michael Lombard
Patrick Scully

Planning & Zoning Committee

Alderman Jack Clifford, Chairman
Alderman Jeffrey M. Key
Alderman Jerry McGovern
Alderman Michael McGrogan

Recreation Committee

Alderman Jeffrey M. Key, Chairman
Alderman Donald Bylut
Alderman Jack Clifford
Alderman Jerry McGovern

Steering Committee

Barb Bergamo
Ken Busse
Joe Haberkorn
Gerald Keller
Matthew Fairbanks, MS, CPRP
Michael Lombard
Daniel Nisavic, MPA
Lisa C. Pesavento, PhD, CPRP
Dr. Chuck Polcaster

Recreation Advisory Board

Lynda Schiappa, Chairperson
Timothy E. Cronin
Gayle I. Greenwald, MA, MS, NBPTS
Essie M. Harris, PhD
Denise D. Hyker
Lisa C. Pesavento, PhD, CPRP

Consultant

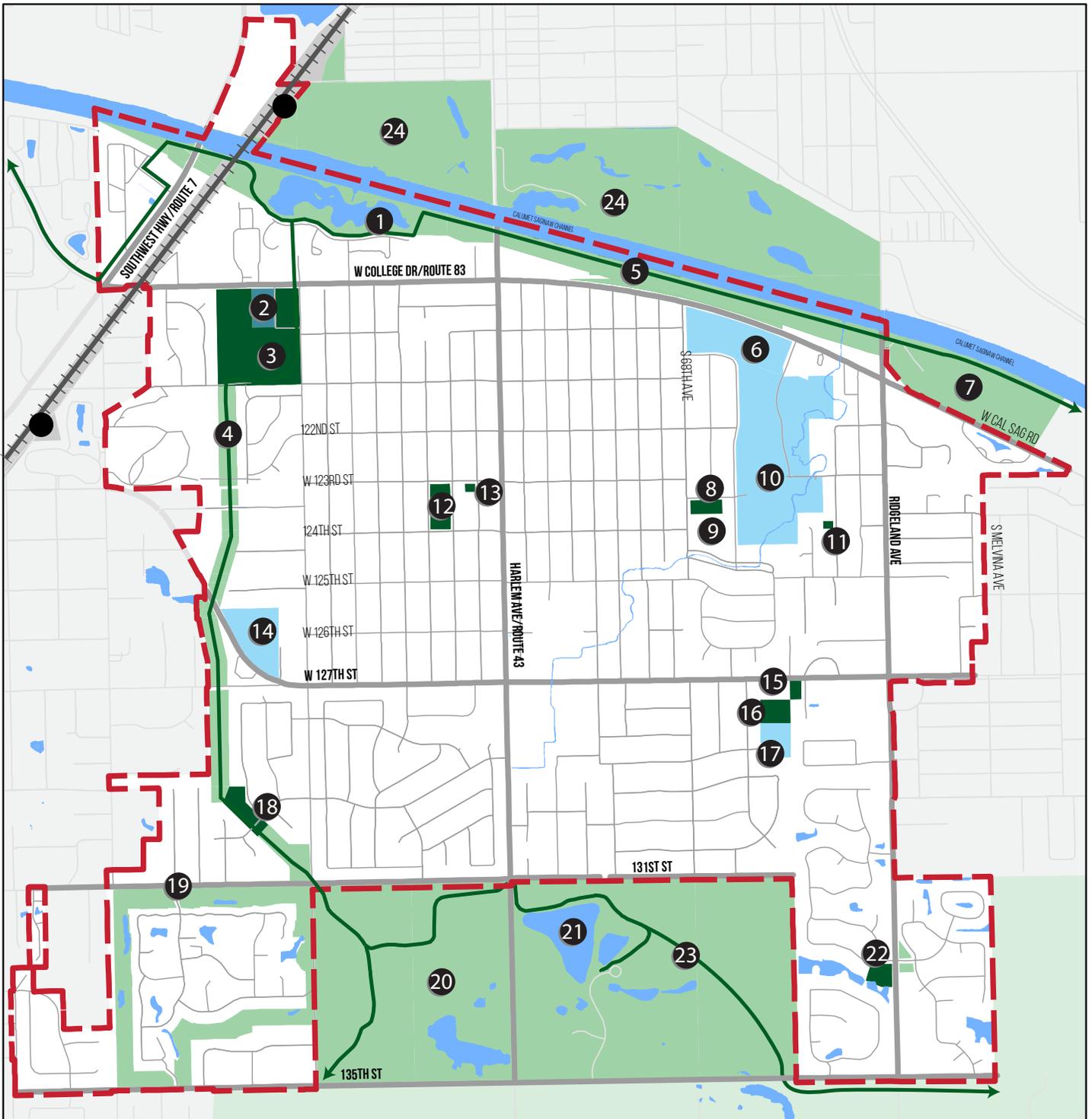


www.TeskaAssociates.com

(page left intentionally blank)

Table of Contents

Section 1.0 Introduction	01
Purpose and Use of Plan	02
Parks and Recreation Department	04
Planning Process	05
Section 2.0 Community Outreach	06
Community Survey.....	07
Interviews and Focus Groups.....	13
Section 3.0 Park and Open Space System	14
Regional Open Space	14
Lake Katherine	15
Local Parks.....	15
Recreational Programming	21
Section 4.0 Park Specific Recommendations	22
Passarelli Park.....	24
Meyers Park	28
Crawford Park.....	32
Veterans Playlot	36
Walsh-Westgate Park.....	38
Palmer Park.....	42
Community/Memorial Park.....	46
Section 5.0 Implementation	52
Park Improvements.....	52
Alternative Funding Sources	53
Partnerships	54
Plan Communications and Updates.....	54
Section 6.0 Appendix	56



PARK & OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS PARKS

- 1 LAKE KATHERINE NATURE CENTER & BOTANIC GARDENS *
- 2 CITY HALL
- 3 COMMUNITY PARK
- 4 PALOS HEIGHTS BIKE TRAIL
- 5 CAL-SAG BIKE TRAIL

*OWNED BY THE CITY,
MANAGED BY A NON-PROFIT

OTHER OPEN SPACE

- 6 CHICAGO CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL
- 7 GEORGE AND JUNE SCHAAF ATHLETICS COMPLEX (TRINITY COLLEGE)
- 8 PASSARELLI PARK
- 9 NAVAJO HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 10 TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
- 11 VETERANS PLAYLOT

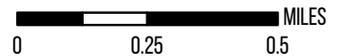
SCHOOLS

- 12 PALMER PARK
- 13 SCULPTURE GARDEN
- 14 PALOS EAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 15 PALOS HEIGHTS RECREATION CENTER
- 16 MEYERS PARK
- 17 INDEPENDENCE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL

METRA STATION

- 18 CRAWFORD PARK
- 19 OAK HILL GOLF CLUB
- 20 BURR OAK WOODS (FPCC)
- 21 ARROWHEAD LAKE (FPCC)
- 22 WALSH-WESTGATE PARK
- 23 TINLEY CREEK TRAIL (FPCC)
- 24 WATER'S EDGE GOLF COURSE





1

Introduction

Located southwest of Chicago, Palos Heights is a mature, primarily residential suburban community.

The Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department (PHPRD) serves a community of over 12,000 residents, plus numerous visitors from neighboring communities. The City is bounded by the I&M Canal to the North, S. Moody Avenue/Ridgeland Avenue to the east, 135th Street and Forest Preserve land to the south, and 80th- 82nd Avenue to the west. The Cal-Sag Trail runs east/west along the northern edge of the City limits. This major regional trail runs 26 miles through the Chicago Southland from the Indiana border and Chicago lakefront to Lemont and the I&M Trail. The Palos Heights Bike Trail

provides an off-street bicycle connection to the Cal-Sag Trail to the north and terminates at the Forest Preserve Trails to the south. PHPRD manages (7) seven city parks, one outdoor pool, and an indoor recreation facility. Although currently operated independently from the PHPRD, the Lake Katherine Nature Center and Botanic Gardens is an 85-acre non-profit park that includes woodlands, prairie, wetlands, gardens and a 10-acre lake. This facility, along with an extensive Forest Preserve system surrounding the community, supplement the local park system.

Purpose and Use of the Plan

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan examines the City’s overall network of parks and open space, ensuring residents have access to parks and recreation facilities. The plan contains recommendations for enhancement to the park system based on public input, previous plans, staff input, and site visits. Using the plan, the PPHRD will continue its vision “to create a healthy, connected community through play” by implementing park improvements and management strategies as funds and budget become available. After official City adoption, the plan will assist the PPHRD in meeting national-recognition requirements of the Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). These Master Plan requirements will ensure community involvement, a systematic updating process and linkage to the City’s capital improvement budget. The plan will also provide guidance and assistance in preparing State and Federal grant applications. This Master Plan follows a previous plan completed in 2008. Since 2008, PPHRD has implemented most recommendations within the 2008 plan and is looking toward the next long-range set of recommendations for the community found in this plan.

This plan does not replace, but was informed by, a separate Strategic Plan. That Strategic Plan, prepared by PROS Consulting, Inc. in 2015, focused more on the operation of the department. Key recommendations outlined in that planning effort include:

- Complete CAPRA Accreditation in 5 years
- The Department must ‘tell its story’ and consistently communicate its brand and message in the community
- Improve the customer experience through web 2.0 technology
- Continue seeking dedicated funding sources to ensure long-term financial sustainability through complementary means beyond users fees and taxes
- Develop/update revenue and pricing policy to focus on maximizing earned income generation.
- Ensure organizational structure reflects future vision
- Invest in staff training and development to grow internal staff strength and capacity
- Focus on consistency, customer service excellence and professionalism
- On-going strategic efforts, including:
 - Update Aquatic Business Plan and develop mini business plan for the Community Recreation Center
 - Revise SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis annually
 - Review Service Classification Update
 - Conduct organizational culture survey
 - On-going staff training and development



INTRODUCTION

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a companion document to the City's overall Comprehensive Plan. Both documents were prepared at the same time to ensure consistency and integration of recommendations. The overall Comprehensive Plan examines a variety of development issues including land use, transportation, and economic

development. It also includes recommendation on key areas of the community including Olde Palos, the Indian Trails Shopping Center, and the Harlem and College Drive area. The Plan includes a chapter on community facilities, referencing this document for details on recommendations for parks and recreational facilities.

PALOS HEIGHTS



Comprehensive Plan City of Palos Heights, IL

DRAFT // MARCH 26, 2019



Parks and Recreation Department

The Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department is exemplary in its variety of programs, services and facilities available to people of all abilities. Their mission, “to create memorable experiences through people, innovative programs, parks and partnerships” is seen through extensive programming for all age groups. Programs are well supported by the community and PHPRD staff monitor class selection to ensure they include a range of topics such as sports and athletics, theater, fitness, performing fine arts, and special events. PHPRD currently relies on the City’s Public Works Department for maintenance on all park properties, although some maintenance activities are contracted out to private landscape maintenance firms. Staff roles include program planning, program attendance, facility management, office management, and director for overall vision and direction of the department. Staff currently shares the role of marketing for programs and events. Staff members strive to be organized, creative, and approachable to the public. The department strives to include one unique item in each park design that isn’t found in any others within the system.

The Parks and Recreation Department has a separate Strategic Plan that addresses the values, vision and mission of the organization. That Plan addresses much of the operational and programmatic elements of providing park and recreational opportunities in Palos Heights while this Parks and Recreation Master Plan is more focused on physical facilities. The overall vision of the Department is to create a healthy, connected community through play. Key strategic recommendations include:

- Complete Council for the Accreditation of Parks and Recreational Agencies (CAPRA)
- The Department must “tell its story” and consistently communicate its brand and message in the community
- Improve the customer experience through web 2.0 technology
- Continue seeking dedicated funding sources to ensure long-term financial sustainability through complementary means beyond users fees and taxes
- Develop/update revenue and pricing policy to focus on maximizing earned income generation
- Ensure organizational structure reflects future vision
- Invest in staff training and development to grow internal staff strength and capacity
- Focus on consistency, customer service excellence and professionalism

Planning Process

The Parks Master Plan planning consisted of site visits, interviews, committee meetings and community engagement via an online survey. The purpose of engagement with these groups was to gather input from a variety of backgrounds and recreation involvement within the community.

Site Visits and field work were performed in December of 2017 and July of 2018.

Key Person Interviews were conducted in March of 2018 with representatives from the City of Palos Heights Department of Parks and Recreation Staff. The representatives oversee activity and programming planning, event planning, existing parks, and planning for future park locations.

Staff Meetings were conducted to gain insight on existing parks, programs and future needs.

Project Website- www.Plan4PalosHeights.com was created to provide a way for residents to access information regarding the planning process for the Parks and Recreation Plan and the concurrent Comprehensive Plan update. Through the website, an online survey covering topics relevant to parks and recreation was available from April 2018 to August 2018 and allowed the Palos Heights community to share their ideas and opinions. Door hangers promoting the online survey were distributed throughout the community. A total of 234 respondents shared feedback. A summary of responses and insights can be found in the 'Community Survey' section.

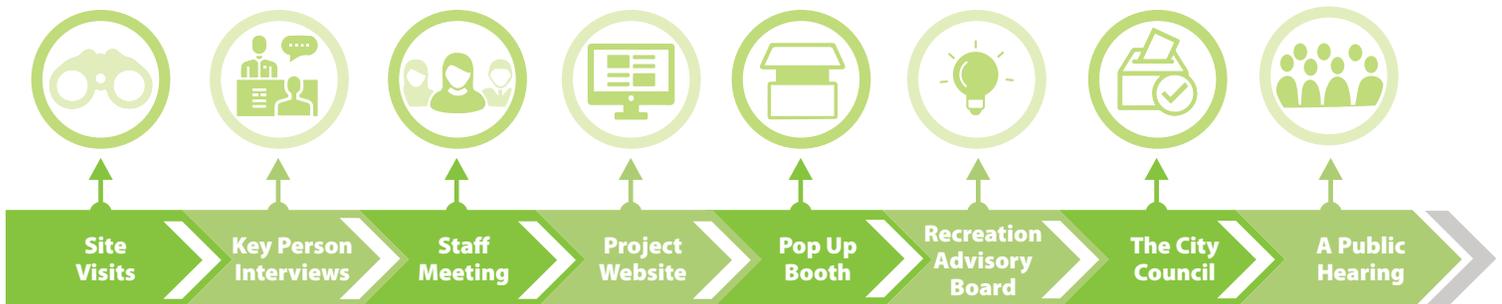
Pop-Up Booth was used to gain informal community input regarding parks and recreation issues at the business expo in Palos Heights.

Recreation Advisory Board meeting was held to review and provide feedback on the draft Park and Recreation Master Plan.

A Public Hearing was conducted before the Planning and Zoning Commission to allow the Park and Recreation Plan to be adopted as part of the overall Community Comprehensive Plan.

The City Council reviewed and adopted the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

PLANNING PROCESS





2

Community Outreach

To better understand community satisfaction and desired improvements to the park system, an online survey was created. A total of 234 individual responses were received between April and August 2018.

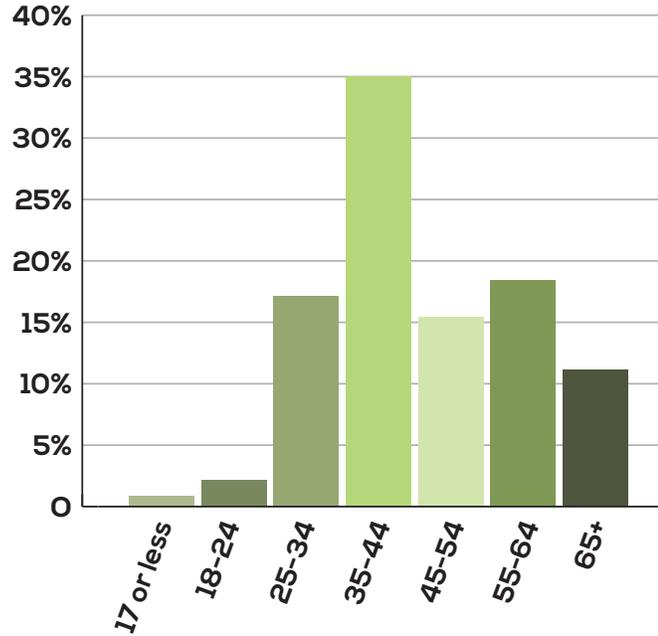
The survey was promoted on the City's web site the project web site, and through door-to-door distribution of materials encouraging resident responses to this park survey and a separate comprehensive plan survey. The survey provided important information regarding resident desires, and responses were evenly distributed from all areas of the community. It is important to note that, while valuable for providing overall insights into residents' thoughts on parks and recreation services in Palos Heights, this on-line format is not considered statistically accurate. For example, the addition of a splash pad was the facility chosen as the most desired from a list of possible additions including a dog park, outdoor pickleball court, skate park, outdoor ice rink and golf course. This on-line survey tells us that it is an element that is of interest to the community, but we can not say statistically what percentage of Palos Heights residents desire this improvement. It is also clear from the survey response

demographics that respondents were generally from larger families, with approximately 53% of survey respondents having a family size of 4 or more compared with an average Palos Heights household size of 2.5 per census data. Given the park and recreation focus of this survey, it is certainly not surprising that larger families would take a more active interest in participating in such a survey.

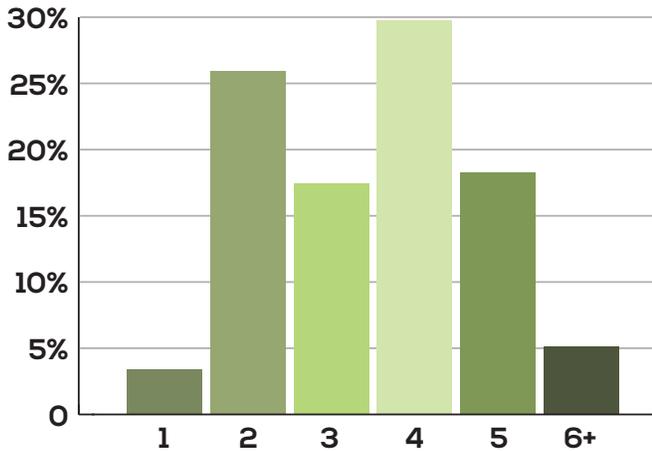
Demographics of Survey Respondents

What is your age?

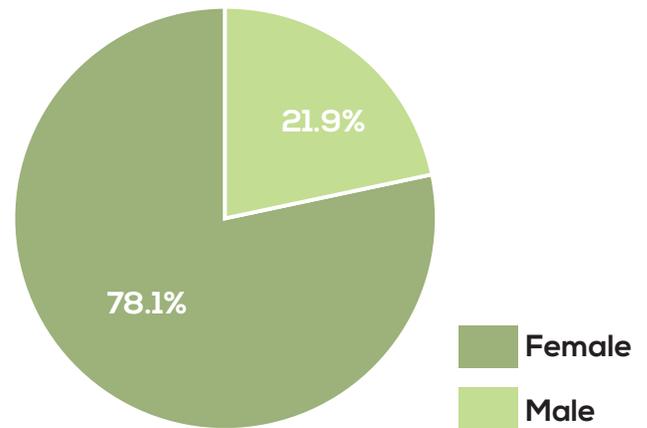
Compared to the overall population (assuming most respondents would be over 18), the online survey had a much stronger proportionate response in the middle age ranges (35-54), which seems logical as this age group likely has school age children at home and would be more likely to actively participate, and have interest in, parks and recreation activities.



How many in your household?

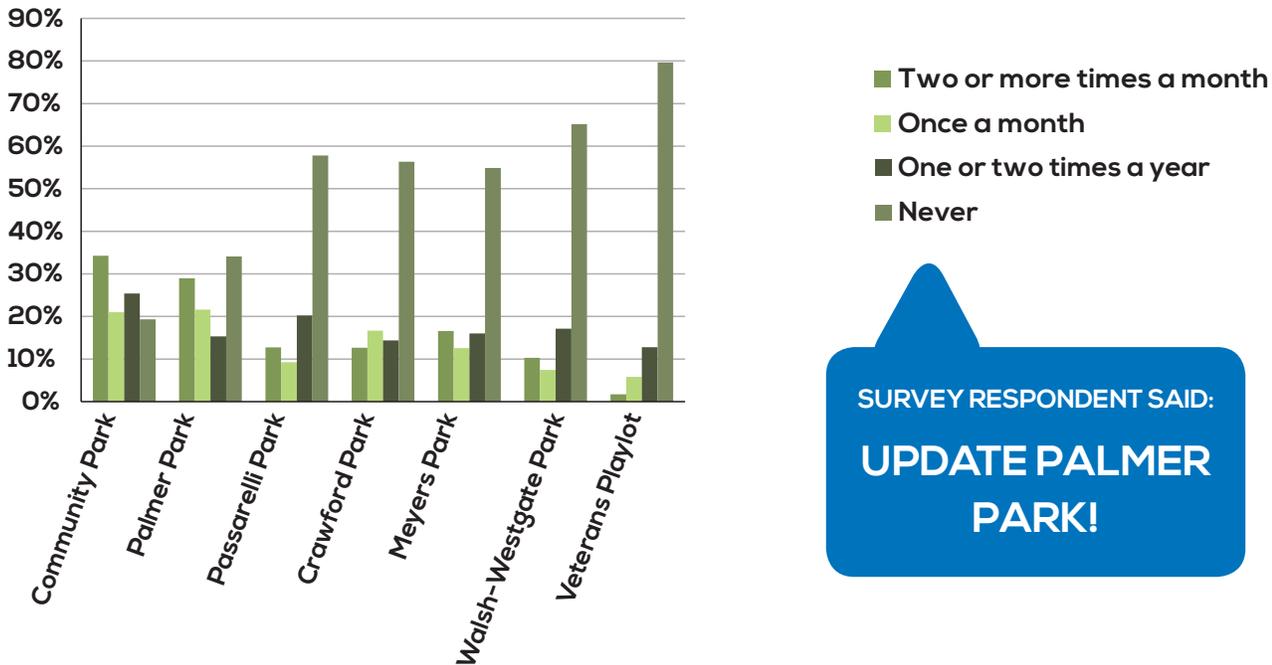


Male or Female?



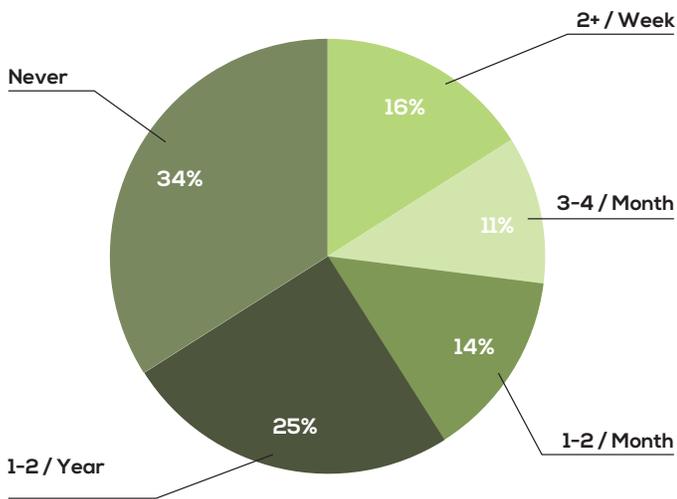
Park and Open Space Facility Usage

How often do you or your family use the following park facilities?



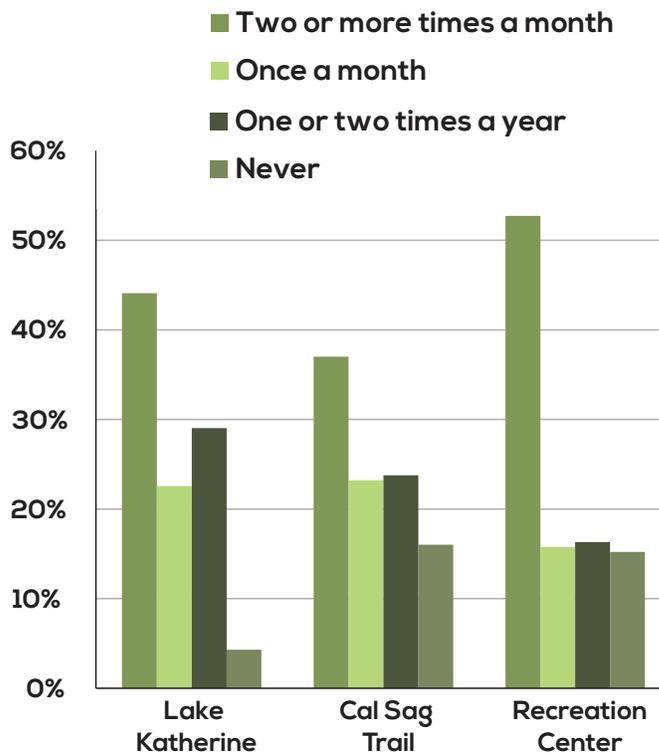
SURVEY RESPONDENT SAID:
UPDATE PALMER PARK!

How often do you or your family use the Community Pool in season?

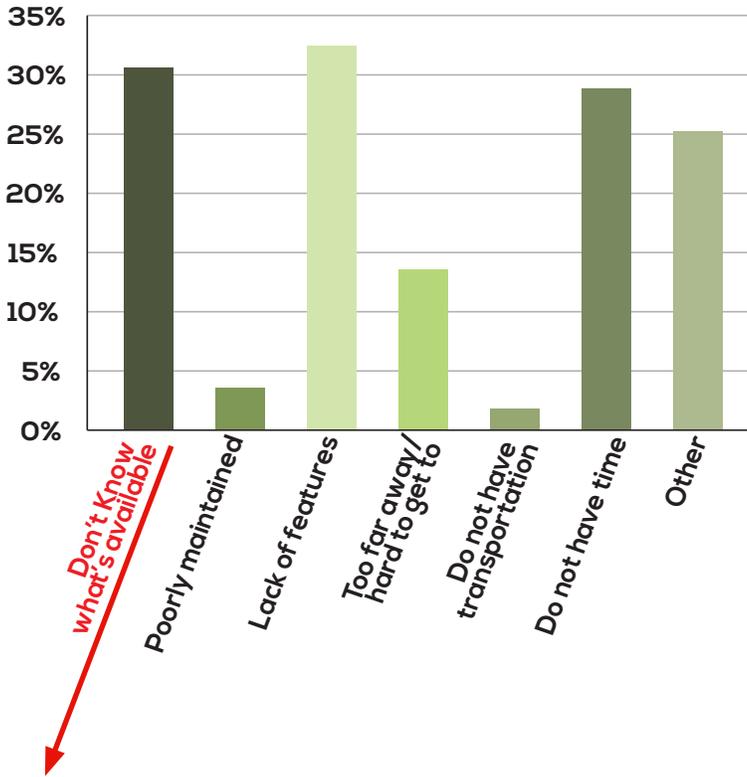


The highest percentage of survey respondents answered that they never use the Community Pool. This finding was unsurprising as families without kids (under 18 years old) would be less likely to use this feature. Other comments regarding lack of pool use noted the fee structure, hours of operation, and maintenance in the shallow kids pool.

How often do you or your family use the following facilities?

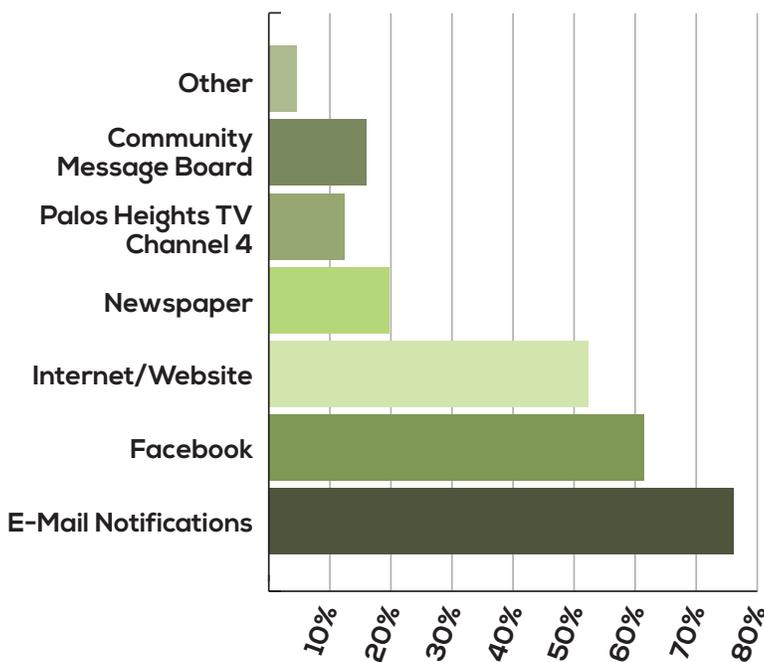


If you seldom use or do not use parks in Palos Heights, why?



- 111 (60%) of total responses
- 40 other responses, no patterns

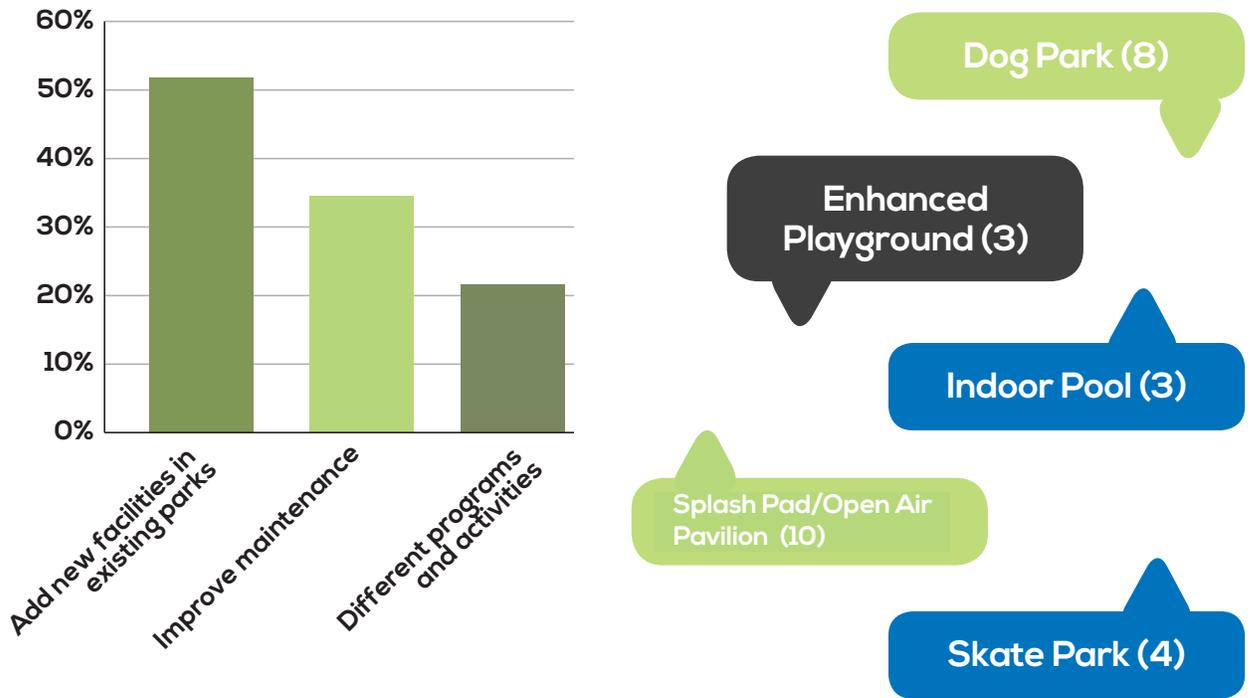
How can the Palos Heights Parks & Recreation Department improve communication with residents?



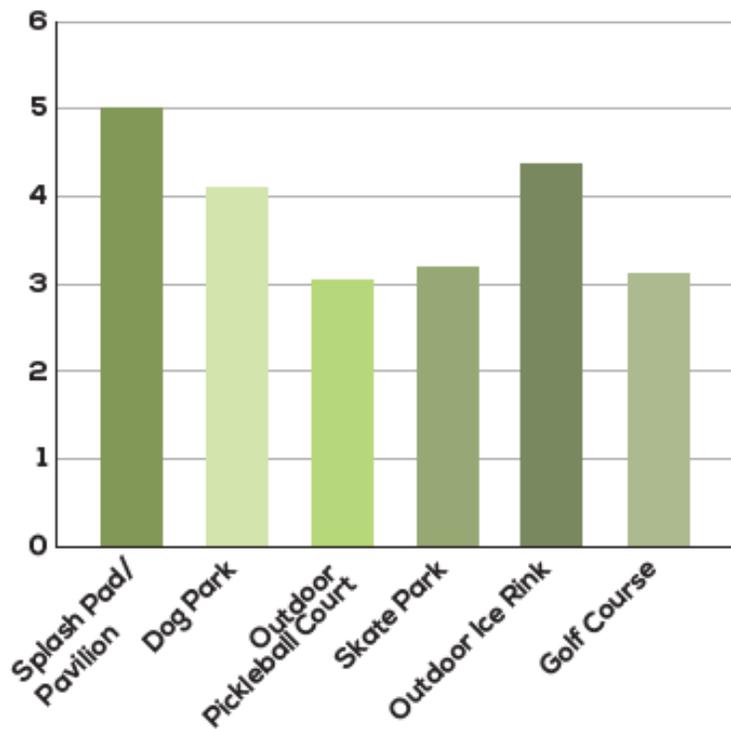
It was recognized by PHPRD staff during interviews that communication with residents about upcoming programs and opportunities is not as efficient as it could be. Survey respondents overwhelmingly chose digital forms of communication as their preference.

New Community Facilities

Identify your top priority for improving open space, parks, and recreation



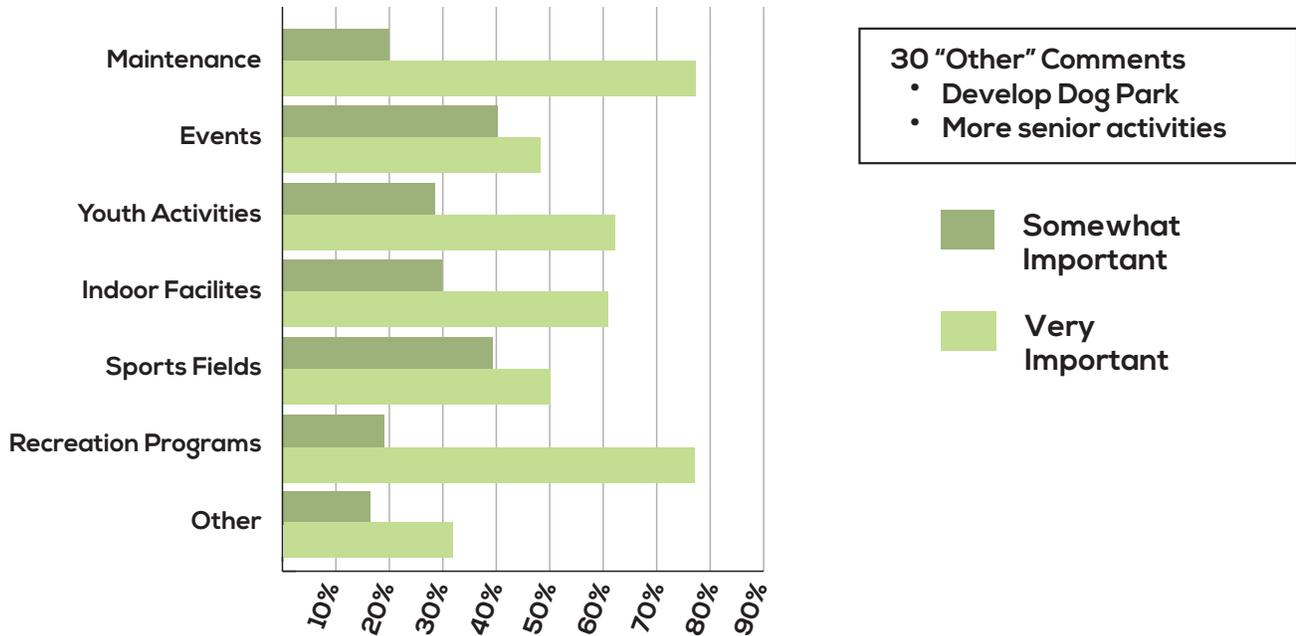
Rank your interest in having the following public facilities in Palos Heights



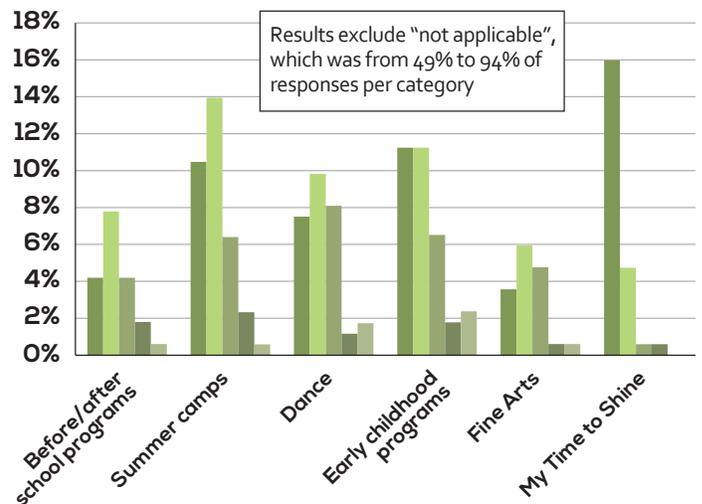
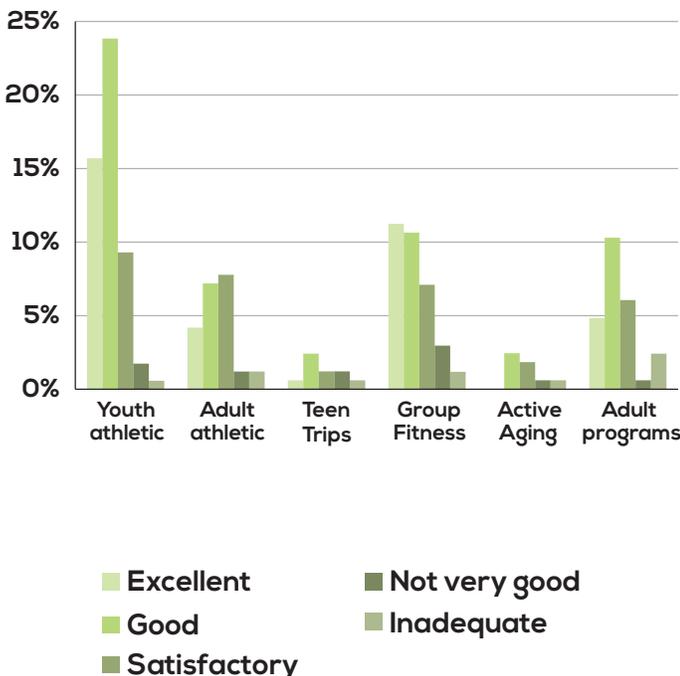
When asked to rank interest in the activities listed, splash pad and outdoor ice rink were favored most, followed closely by dog park. It is recommended that PHPRD think about where these activities fit within Palos Heights and potential partnerships with Lake Katherine and the Forest Preserve.

Recreation Programming & Participation

Where should Palos Heights focus our parks and recreation efforts?



Rate the following activities in which you or your family have participated

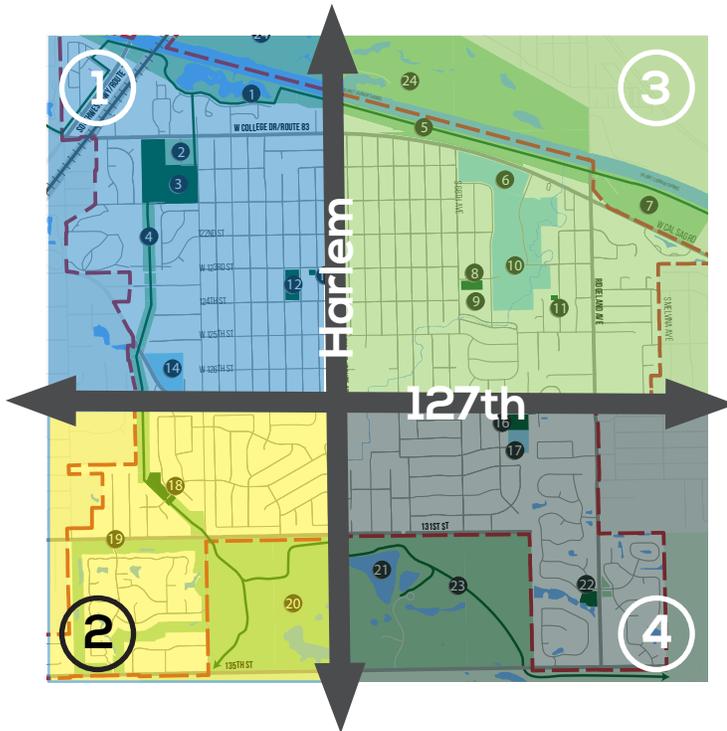


Open comments showed that some residents think the fee for summer camp is too high. There were also concerns about child to staff ratio for summer camps.

FIGURE X.X SURVEY BY AREA

Responses by Geographic Area

In which quadrant of Palos Heights do you live?



Survey responses were relatively evenly spread from throughout the community. The following section summarizes responses by geographic area.

1. West of Harlem, North of 127th

The survey asked what area of Palos Heights respondents lived. 25% indicate living west of Harlem Ave and north of 127th St. Of the group in that geographic area, respondents overwhelmingly voted very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with maintenance in Palos Heights. When asked which parks they frequent most, 50% said they use Community/Memorial Park and Palmer Park two or more times per month. The most common open comments from residents in this quadrant include desire for a splash pad, redevelopment of Palmer Park, and park equipment to engage toddler age children, middle school targeted obstacle courses, and an inclusive playground.

2. West of Harlem, South of 127th

Respondents living West of Harlem Ave. and south of 127th St. made up 18% of total survey responses. Over 70% of that group are very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with maintenance in the park system. 43% of this group frequents Crawford Park and 31% uses Community/Memorial Park two or more times per month. 36% visits Palmer Park once a month despite the park location outside of the respondent's geographic area. This group voted splash pad #1 for desired features, followed closely by outdoor ice rink. Open comments focused on winter events and activities and programming for children under the age of 3.

3. East of Harlem, North of 127th

28% of respondents live east of Harlem Ave. and north of 127th St. 92% of respondents in that geographic location rated very or somewhat satisfied with maintenance in the parks. Passarelli Park is most visited with 32% of respondents visiting two or more times per month. Meyer Park, Palmer Park, and Community/Memorial Park are visited two or more times per month by 23-25% of respondents in this area. 77% of respondents voted splash pad as their number 1 or 2 choice when asked interest in new facilities. An outdoor ice rink and dog park also ranked high with this group. Open comments supported a new splash pad as well as equipment upgrade in Veteran's Park.

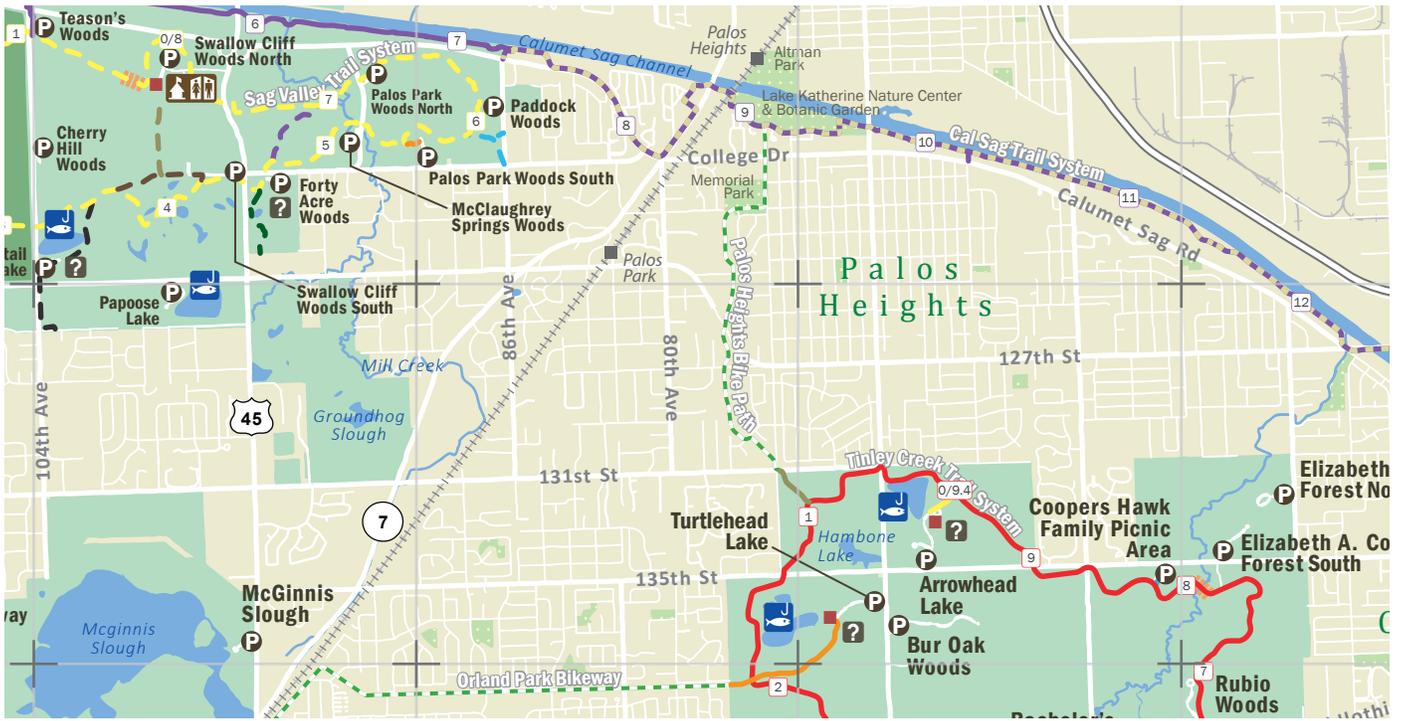
4. East of Harlem, South of 127th

21% of respondents live east of Harlem Ave. and south of 127th St. This group indicated approval of maintenance in the park system, but more voted neutral (16%) than any other geographic group. 40% indicated never visiting the community pool, the highest of any other geographic group. Despite being the farthest geographic area away from Community/Memorial Park, it was the most visited by survey respondents from the southeast portion of the City. Thirty-four (34%) reported visiting two or more times per month. Meyers Park and Walsh-Westgate Park follow closely behind with 28% of respondents in this group visiting two or more times per month. Open comments had multiple mentions of fitness classes focused on middle aged health and more convenient class times around typical workday hours.

Interviews and Focus Groups

A focus group with Department of Recreation Staff was conducted to gain insight of the Palos Heights vision for parks and programming. Programmed activities and classes are very successful in Palos Heights. Staff listed day camp, basketball tournaments, musical theater, dance, preschool groups, and athletic leagues as the most popular programs offered by PPHRD. Programming that has been attempted in the past, but proven unsuccessful includes senior movies, youth art, volleyball, and (rec department) softball. Staff reported that most complaints revolve around full classes, ease of registration (especially for seniors), and advertising when registration is open. It was recognized that program marketing could be enhanced but is constrained by budget limitations. A possible full-time city wide marketing person would be ideal to handle advertising and promotions. Parking at the Recreation Center can be a challenge during big events and tournaments. The parking lot at community pool is often full during peak summer hours.

PHPRD staff noted that park maintenance is currently performed by the public works department of the City. In recent years, City maintenance efforts have been supplemented by an outside landscape maintenance firm. While overall maintenance is good, consideration should be given to shifting park maintenance to be under the control of the PPHRD. Given the PPHRD's understanding of horticulture and recreational equipment, it was felt that park improvements and maintenance could potentially be taken to an even higher level if internally controlled. Of all the Palos Heights parks, Palmer Park was noted as the top priority of improvement. A park specific master plan was completed in 2018. After Palmer Park, Passarrelli Park was identified as the next site in need of renovation given the age of existing equipment. Facilities currently missing from parks in Palos Heights which residents have expressed some interest include a dog park, splash pad, ice skating rink, indoor pool, ropes course, skate park, wave machine, and an outdoor stage/ amphitheater. Some of these items, particularly the skate park and the wave machine, may not be realistic for Palos Heights given the community's overall demographics and budget constraints. After the tennis court/pickle ball courts are updated (fall of 2018), staff suggested that a location and funding for a splash pad should be considered.



3 Park and Open Space System

As a developed and mature community, Palos Heights has an established system with excellent local parks and regional open spaces. This chapter examines those resources and provides some suggestions for improved connectivity and access.

Regional Open Space

Palos Heights is surrounded to the south and west by portions of the Forest Preserves of Cook County. This nearly 70,000 acres open space system is one of the best in the nation, if not one of the best in the world, in terms of size and regional benefit. The system offers extensive hiking trails, fishing opportunities, camping, and excellent nature centers with outdoor educational programming and exhibits. The Burr Oak Woods and Elizabeth A. Conkey Preserves are located immediately south of Palos Heights, and the Paddock Woods and Palos Park Woods are immediately to the west.

More information on the Forest Preserves of Cook County can be found here:

<http://fpdcc.com/>

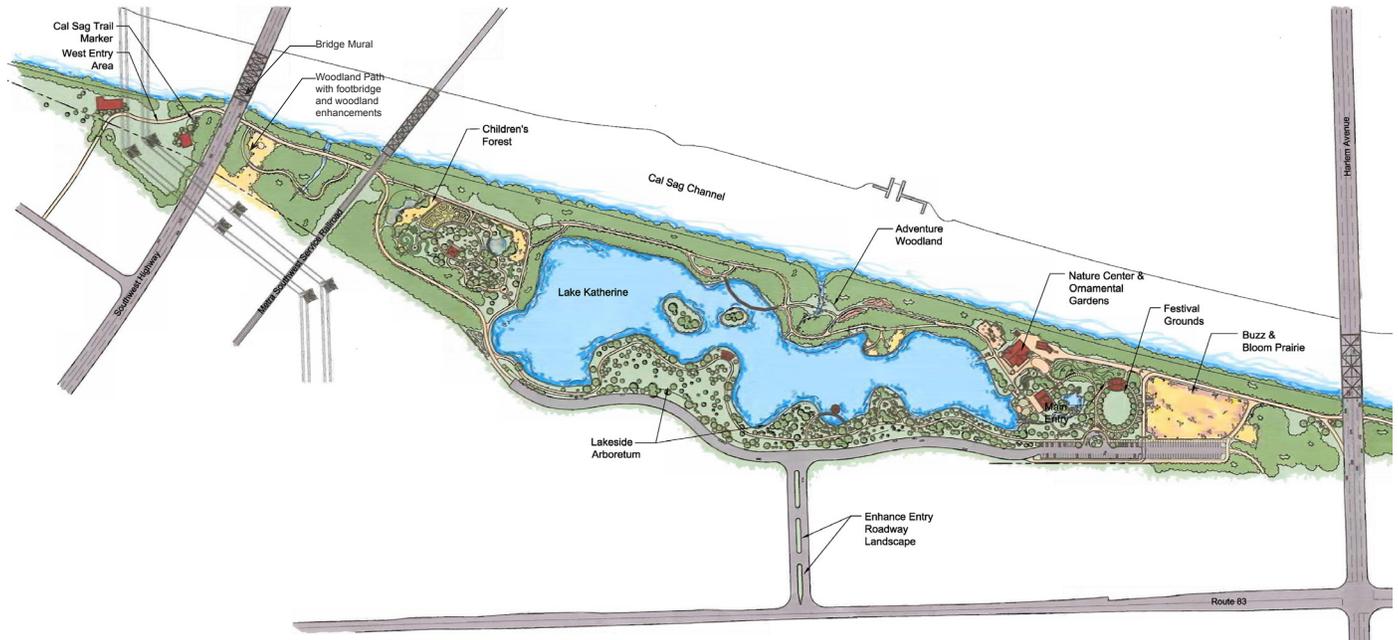
As the above illustration shows, Palos Heights also benefits from a strong regional trail system. The Tinley Creek Trail System extends 33 miles along Palos Heights southern border, and the Cal Sag Trail extends 26 miles along the City's northern border. These extensive regional trail systems are linked by the Palos Heights Bike Path to the west. One future trail connection not shown on the above exhibit is a 10' wide multi-use path along Ridgeland Avenue. This path is currently under construction, and will allow Palos Heights residents a great opportunity to complete a loop around the entire community using this new trail, the Tinley Creek Trail to the south, the Palos Heights Trail to the west, and the Cal Sag Trail to the north.

Lake Katherine

The Lake Katherine Nature Center and Botanical Garden is another outstanding regional recreational resource which is located within Palos Heights. With a mission to “connect people with nature”, this 136-acre facility offers both indoor and outdoor environmental education displays and programs. It serves an estimated 100,000 visitors per year. The facility is owned and supported by the City of Palos Heights. However, since 2005 the facility has been under the management of an independent non-profit with its own Board of Directors. In addition to the educational resources offered at Lake

Katherine, the facility is a popular location for events and weddings. The E.G. Simpson Clubhouse can accommodate parties of up to 100 guests.

A Master Plan for Lake Katherine was developed in 2012 to guide future enhancements to the facility. This Master Plan provides a 10-15-year vision of future enhancements to the facility. Portions of the Master Plan have already been completed, but many more improvements are envisioned. One improvement noted in the Master Plan, expansion of the parking lot, is planned in 2019.



Lake Katherine 2012 Master Plan

Local Parks

The City Parks and Recreation Department operates a system of neighborhood and community parks that meet local recreational needs. As the name suggests, Community/Memorial Park serves the entire City, offering sports fields, an outdoor swimming pool, and other facilities designed to serve community-wide needs. Remaining parks operated by the Parks and Recreation Department are neighborhood facilities designed to meet the daily recreational needs of residents. Nationally, communities provide approximately 10.1 acres of park space

per 1,000 residents. As the following table indicates, Palos Heights exceeds this average, providing a total of 186.7 acres of local park space, or almost 60 acres more than the national average. It should be noted that Lake Katherine was included in this calculation since it is a City owned facility (although managed by an independent non-profit). If Lake Katherine was removed from this calculation, Palos Heights would be below national averages.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

TABLE 3.1 COMPARISON OF PALOS HEIGHTS PARK FACILITIES TO NATIONAL STANDARDS

PARKS	ACRES	NATIONAL AVERAGE (AC./1,000)	COMPARABLE ACRES	ACRES SURPLUS/ DEFICIT
SPECIAL USE PARKS				
Lake Katherine	136.0			
COMMUNITY PARKS				
Community/Memorial Park	34.0			
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS				
Palmer Park	4.0			
Crawford Park	4.0			
Passarelli Park	2.5			
Walsh-Westgate Park	2.0			
Meyers Park	4.0			
Veterans Playlot	0.2			
Subtotal	16.7			
TOTAL	186.7	10.1	126.9	59.8

The National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA), in cooperation with The Trust for Public Lands and the Urban Land Institute have established a goal of providing a park within a 10-minute walk of all municipal residents in the United States. The following map (map 3.2), based on GIS data, illustrates this issue, showing a ½ mile radius around existing parks. This ½ mile radius approximates a 10-minute walk.

This map shows three areas of the community which are currently outside of a 10-minute walk from a City park:

1. The southwestern corner of the City. There are a few undeveloped lots within the Misty Meadows subdivision in the southwest corner of the City. Acquisition of one or two of these lots would allow the City to provide walkable access to all residents in the community.
2. The northern portion of the City, between Harlem Avenue and 68th Avenue just south of College Drive. Given the developed nature of this area, locating an additional park in this area of the community would be very difficult and is not recommended.

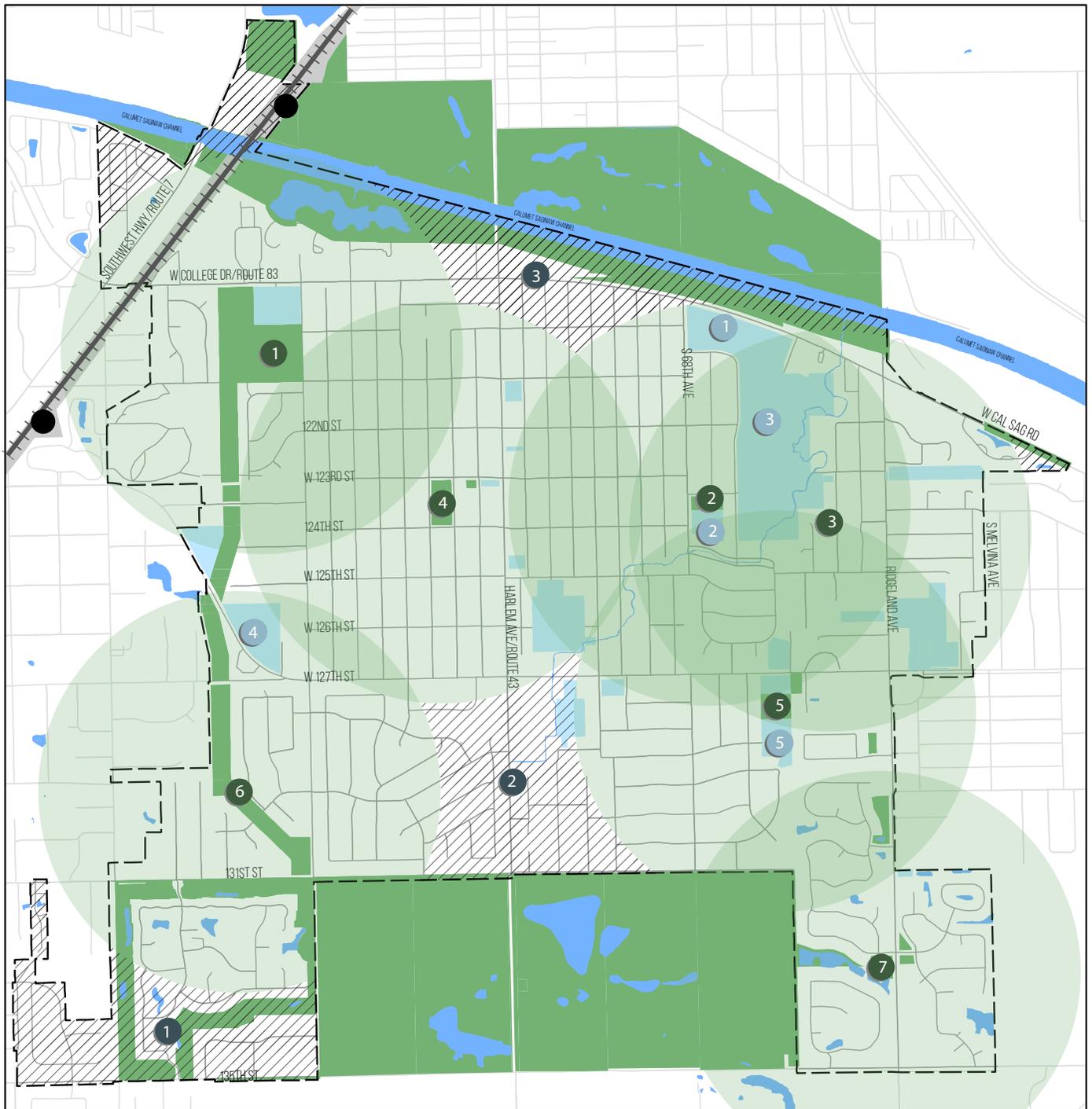
3. The southern portion of the City, on either side of Harlem Avenue. This area is also fully developed and would be difficult to acquire land for a park. Harlem Avenue also serves as a walkability barrier in this portion of the community – meaning a park on one side of Harlem would not necessarily be easy to walk to from the other side of the roadway. Given these conditions, no additional park site is recommended in this area.

Recreational Facilities

In addition to examining the acres and accessibility of parks in a community, it is important to examine the actual facilities provided. While every community is unique, there are some national and state standards that are worth considering when evaluating local recreational facilities. At the national level, the NRPA has surveyed park departments and districts across the country to compare facilities offered in comparison to the municipality's population. The following table (table 3.3) provides a comparison of available facilities in Palos Heights to these national standards. A negative number suggests a deficit, while a positive figure indicates the City has more of that type of facility than the national average.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

MAP 3.2 10 MINUTE WALK PARK ACCESS



OPEN SPACE	10-MINUTE WALK (1/2 MILE)	INSTITUTIONAL	AREAS OUTSIDE OF 10 - MINUTE WALK	
1 COMMUNITY PARK	5 MEYERS PARK	1 CHICAGO CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL	1	0 0.25 0.5 MILES
2 PASSARELLI PARK	6 CRAWFORD PARK	2 NAVAJO HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	2	
3 VETERANS PLAYLOT	7 WALSH-WESTGATE PARK	3 TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE	3	
4 PALMER PARK		4 PALOS EAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL		
		5 INDEPENDENCE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL		

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

TABLE 3.3 COMPARISON OF PALOS HEIGHTS PARK FACILITIES TO NATIONAL STANDARDS

FACILITY	NRPA AGENCY RESIDENTS PER FACILITY	FACILITIES IN PALOS HEIGHTS	# OF FACILITIES NEEDED IN PALOS HEIGHTS PER NRPA DATA	SURPLUS	DEFICIT
Aquatic Centers/ Pools	8,916	1	1.41	0	-0.41
Baseball Fields	3,250	5	3.87	1.3	0
Softball Fields	5,240	5	2.40	2.60	0
Basketball Courts	3,598	3	3.49	0	-0.49
Soccer Fields	3,480	2	3.61	0	-1.61
Outdoor Ice Rink	8,500	0	1.48	0	-1.48
Playgrounds	2,268	7	5.54	1.46	0
Community Garden	8,500	0	1.48	0	-1.48
Dog Parks	10,000	0	1.26	0	-1.26

Where a deficit is illustrated, that indicates an area where residents should be surveyed to better understand their interests and desires for that type of facility. From community outreach efforts during development of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan, some interest was expressed in development of a dog park and an outdoor ice rink. The Forest Preserve District of Cook County has developed dog parks in some of their preserves. Given the limited park space available in Palos Heights, it is recommended that the City work with the Forest Preserve District to explore the potential for a dog park in one of the nearby preserves. Additional outreach is recommended to evaluate local interest in an outdoor ice rink. If strong community support is identified,

an appropriate location would need to be identified – likely in one of the City’s larger parks like Community/Memorial Park or perhaps at Lake Katherine. Ice rinks are often challenging to support financially, and require mechanical systems to cool the ice given warming climate trends.

Given the relatively large lot size of most homes in Palos Heights, there has not been much interest expressed in creation of a community garden space. While this table suggests a need for additional soccer fields, additional facilities in Palos Heights would be difficult to accomplish given the developed nature of the community.



PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

TABLE 3.4 COMPARISON OF PALOS HEIGHTS FACILITIES TO STATE AVERAGES

FACILITY	AVERAGE NUMBER IN ILLINOIS PER 1,000 POPULATION (1)	FACILITIES NEEDED IN PALOS HEIGHTS TO MATCH STATE AVERAGES	NUMBER OF FACILITIES IN PALOS HEIGHTS	SURPLUS	DEFICIT
1. WATER-BASED FACILITIES					
Fishing Piers & Docks (4)	0.0408	1	0	0	-1
Aquatic Centers/ Pools	0.0282	0	1	1	0
Spray Grounds	0.0292	0	0	0	0
2. TRAILS					
Trails (Miles)	0.1630	2	4.3	2.25	0
Bike Trails (Miles)	0.1058	1	4.3	2.97	0
Nature Trails (Miles)	0.0547	1	1	0.31	0
3. SPORTS FACILITIES					
Baseball Fields	0.2552	3	5	2	0
Softball Fields	0.1425	2	5	3	0
Basketball Courts	0.2500	3	3	0	0
Soccer Fields	0.1779	2	2	0	0
Skate Parks	0.0163	0	0	0	0
Golf Course (18 holes)	0.0081	0	0	0	0
Golf Course (9 holes)	0.0051	0	1	1	0
Golf Course (disk or frisbee)	0.0080	0	1	1	0
Tennis Courts (5)	0.8700	11	3	0	-8
Outdoor Ice Rink					
Volleyball Courts	0.1900	2	1	0	-1
4. DAY-USE FACILITIES					
Picnic Shelters	0.2060	3	2	0	-1
Playgrounds	0.4035	5	7	2	0
Dog Parks	0.0074	0	0	0	0
POPULATION 12,566					

NOTES:

1. Source: Illinois Recreational Facilities Inventory;
2. Assumes a population of 12,566;
3. The tennis courts double as pickleball courts, plus 2 additional pickleball courts and several indoor courts;
4. Fishing is available at Lake Katherine, but no dock is provided.
5. While not addressed in current State standards, pickleball is growing in popularity and some tennis courts are being converted for dual use.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

When compared to other communities in the State of Illinois, Palos Heights is generally well served with recreational facilities. A deficit was identified in the following areas:

FISHING DOCKS

Lake Katherine would be the only potential location for a fishing dock in Palos Heights.

TENNIS COURTS

While not within Palos Heights, the adjacent Alan B. Shephard High School has 8 public tennis courts that are available when not used for school purposes.

VOLLEYBALL COURTS

It should be noted that the above table only includes outdoor facilities. Indoor volleyball courts can be played at the gym at the Recreation Center, and the private Palos Court facility on Ridgeland Avenue has 6 indoor courts available.

PICNIC SHELTERS

An additional picnic shelter would be an appropriate amenity to consider within future park improvements.

SPRAY GROUNDS

While not listed in the preceding table as a deficit in comparison to other communities in Illinois, spray grounds (or splash pads as they are often called), are becoming more and more popular. Many residents expressed interest in such a facility in Palos Heights.

USEFUL LIFE

Even well-maintained recreational facilities reach a point where they should be replaced. The Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) – Park & Natural Resource Management Section has developed a helpful “Useful Life Criteria” table (appendix) that examines the anticipated useful life various types of recreational facilities. In addition to an estimated number of years, it provides helpful criteria that can be used to more specifically evaluate individual facilities. This table is included in the Appendix of this Plan.

This useful life criteria is important when evaluating the need for park improvements in Palos Heights. For example, Tables 3.3 and 3.4 suggest that Palos Heights has a surplus of playgrounds compared to national and state standards.



While true, that does not take into consideration the age of the equipment. For example, the existing equipment in Palmer Park is older and residents – through a series of focus groups conducted as a part of a park specific master plan – rated renovation of the playground as their top priority for park improvements. As noted later in the Plan, the playground equipment at Passarelli Park is also nearing the end of its useful life. Park and Recreation Department and City budgets should closely track the age and condition of all recreational facilities and develop a capital improvement plan to replace facilities as they reach the end of their useful life – or replace them with other facilities based on community needs.

Recreational Programming

Palos Heights has programs available for various ages, abilities, genders, and interests. Local recreational choices far exceed offerings in surrounding communities. Staff members report residents from neighboring cities come to Palos Heights for classes and activities because they aren't available or are of lower quality elsewhere.

When the Department of Parks and Recreation is considering adding programs or services, they abide by Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) recommendations. The following questions are asked:

- Does the program or service meet the conceptual foundation of play, recreation and leisure?
- Is the program or service in line with the Department's values, vision, mission and goals?
- Is the program or service expressly desired by the community?
- Does the program or service create a constituent centered culture?
- Does the program or service provide community connectedness?
- Considering all local service providers, does the program or service fill a play, recreation or leisure gap?

Early childhood programming makes up 15%-20% of all programs offered. Creativity, imagination, playtime, exploration, cooperation, and discovery are the focus of programs with this age group. Programs incorporate discovery education to teach through play instead of traditional academics. While many activities are offered such as sports, cooking, dance, and storytime, the focus within each is centered around social skills, following directions, and resolving conflicts. *(Palos Heights Recreation Program Plan and Recreation Program Assessment, 2017)*

Youth age programming has the most programs available, comprising 45%-55% of all programs offered. This age group has the most successful participation rate, but requires high levels of supervision and diverse offerings. Sports, performing arts, technology, play, environmental education, safety awareness, and after school programs are the general categories that youth age residents can participate in. *(Palos Heights Recreation Program Plan and Recreation Program Assessment, 2017)*

Programming for teens is the most challenging of all age groups. The Department of Parks and Recreation competes with school activities and traveling sports leagues. Internships, skill building, outdoor adventures, tours, sustainability, and volunteer hours are among the top drivers for teens outside of programs offered by schools. *(Palos Heights Recreation Program Plan and Recreation Program Assessment, 2017)*

Adult programming success varies by interest and activity levels. The range of activities focused on adults includes sports, exercise, health & wellness, technology, entertainment, art, and professional skills. *(Palos Heights Recreation Program Plan and Recreation Program Assessment, 2017)* Programming is split into the following age ranges:

- Adult: 25-44
- Middle Age: 44-64
- Senior: 65+

The Department of Parks and Recreation has seen a renewed interest in physical, social, spiritual, economic, and emotional well-being programs with the senior age group. When a program is being considered for this age group, the following three focuses are considered by the Department:

- Low risk of disease and injury
- Maintain a high level of mental and physical functioning
- Have an active engagement with life

While recreation programming is popular and well attended, annual events are an opportunity to engage community members who don't have time for a more frequent class or activity. Events can also expose residents to the variety of other recreational programs offered by the City. Palos Heights events that have proven to be successful include the Farmer's Markets, Movies in the Park, and Music in the Park. Big events need participation or partnerships with other entities in Palos Heights. More detail about partnerships can be found in the Implementation section.

One potential event space to explore would be along the Cal-Sag trail near Harlem within a future redevelopment area identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

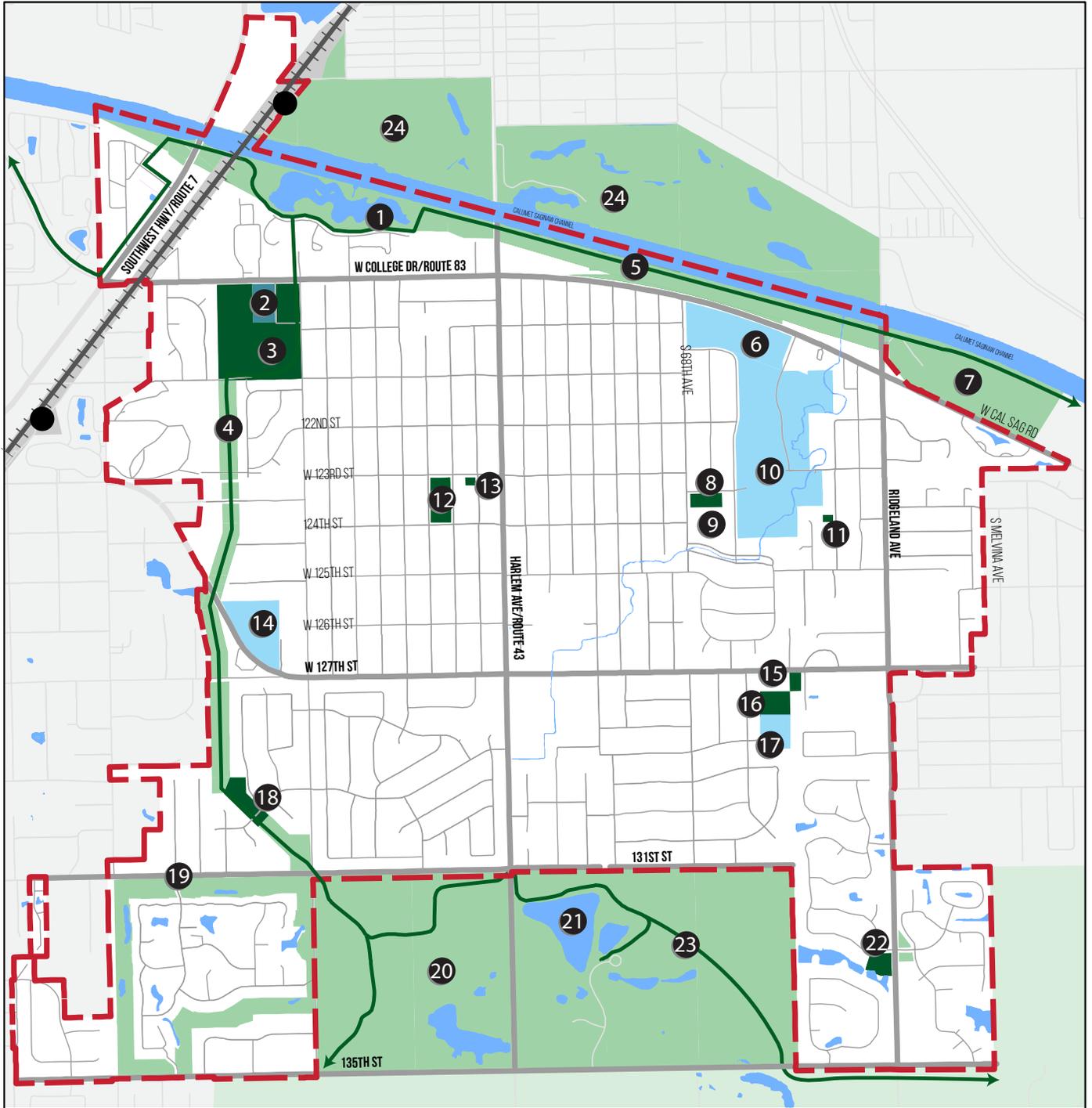


5

Park Specific Recommendations

Palos Heights has seven evenly distributed parks throughout the community. They vary in size from Community/Memorial Park, offering the Community Pool and many sports amenities to the smallest, Veterans Playlot, nestled into a residential neighborhood. Each is well-used and maintained. The following section outlines each park's maintenance and overall condition. Existing conditions are followed by site specific recommendations and comparable examples of successes in other communities.

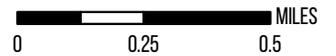
PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



PARK & OPEN SPACE FACILITIES

- | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| CITY OF PALOS HEIGHTS PARKS | OTHER OPEN SPACE | SCHOOLS | PUBLIC/INSTITUTIONAL | METRA STATION |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 LAKE KATHERINE NATURE CENTER & BOTANIC GARDENS * 2 CITY HALL 3 COMMUNITY PARK 4 PALOS HEIGHTS BIKE TRAIL 5 CAL-SAG BIKE TRAIL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 CHICAGO CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL 7 GEORGE AND JUNE SCHAAF ATHLETICS COMPLEX (TRINITY COLLEGE) 8 PASSARELLI PARK 9 NAVAJO HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 10 TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE 11 VETERANS PLAYLOT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 PALMER PARK 13 SCULPTURE GARDEN 14 PALOS EAST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 15 PALOS HEIGHTS RECREATION CENTER 16 MEYERS PARK 17 INDEPENDENCE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18 CRAWFORD PARK 19 OAK HILL GOLF CLUB 20 BURR OAK WOODS (FPCC) 21 ARROWHEAD LAKE (FPCC) 22 WALSH-WESTGATE PARK 23 TINLEY CREEK TRAIL (FPCC) 24 WATER'S EDGE GOLF COURSE | |

*OWNED BY THE CITY, MANAGED BY A NON-PROFIT



PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Passarelli Park

Existing Conditions

Passarelli Park is located adjacent to Navajo Heights Elementary School. Outside of school hours, only 12% of total survey respondents reported visiting Passarelli Park two or more times per month and 10% said once per month. It is the only park in Palos Heights to have a ramp system integrated into the playground equipment. The playground equipment is in good structural condition but is beginning to look the most outdated of all the parks. The plastic barrier around the edge of the playground is failing in some areas and mulch is washing out in result. The swing chains are beginning to rust. An old painted tennis court is located adjacent to the playground but has major cracks and the net has been removed. Basketball hoops have been placed on the periphery of the pavement as well as in the parking lot for use when cars aren't present.

Recommendations

Passarelli Park should be the next priority for master planning and renovation following Palmer Park. Adding new equipment is the number one priority over maintenance and department programming for 54% of survey respondents who indicated using the park two or more times per month. Given PHPRD's use of unique play elements in each park, it is recommended that the renovation of this park should integrate inclusive playground equipment. Its location next to Navajo Heights Elementary School benefits the highest amount of elementary aged users. The playground equipment should incorporate ramps and diverse activities at different height levels. Swings may be a combination of typical belt swings and full seat swings. Courts should be repaired and incorporate basketball court line paint. Large yard games such as checkers or chess and a performance stage should be considered for those less interested in the other playground equipment. It is recommended PHPRD partners with the school district to incorporate educational programming such as outdoor classrooms or demonstration gardens.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



The playground equipment at Passarelli Park features elevated climbing activities.



Swings, slides, and elevated ramps are incorporated into the playground at Passarelli Park

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



(Above Left)- The playground mulch barrier is failing at Passarelli Park.

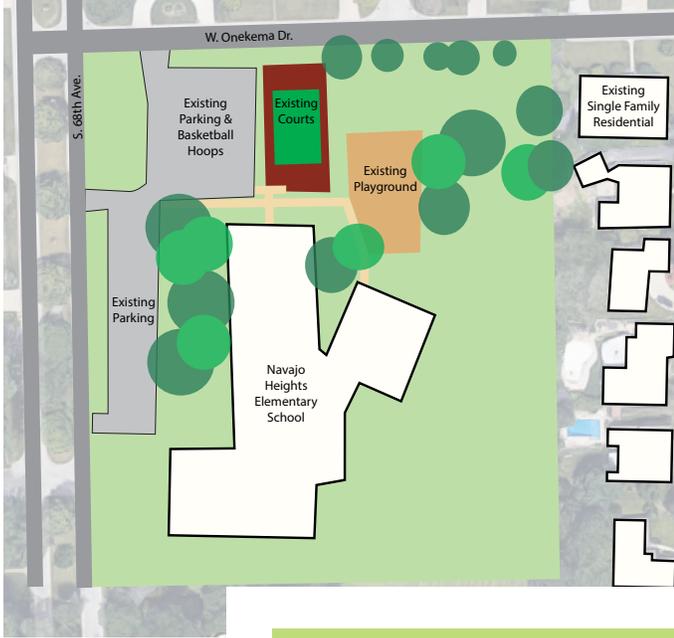
(Above Right)- At Passarelli Park, the swing covering is failing and rust is exposed.

(Left)- The basketball courts have major cracks and need repair at Passarelli Park.

Inspiration | Magical Bridge Playground | Palo Alto, CA



Passarelli Park Existing Conditions



Passarelli Park Recommendations





MEYERS PARK

Existing Conditions

Meyer's Park is located just south of the Recreation Center and the Parks and Recreation Department office. The Park shares open space with Independence Junior High School located just to the south. The park's equipment is among the newest and is still in great condition. In addition to the playground, Meyers Park also has a baseball field, a picnic shelter, and a small rain garden. This park is a popular location for groups. In addition, the City recently acquired the property immediately to the east of the Recreation Center.

Recommendations

Given proximity to the recreation center and high group use, more picnic areas should be added in both sun and shade for multi-season use. General park maintenance should include replenishing mulch in playground area as needed to maintain 12" depth requirement, monitoring mulch levels under zip line slider, replacing dead or poor condition plants in planting beds, continual maintenance of baseball field, and monitoring rain garden for invasive species. The addition of a single lane measured running track around the edge of the park should be considered, along with ensuring an ADA path connects to bleacher seating. Meyers Park would be the ideal place to add a fitness obstacle course as it's a great activity for middle school aged groups from the adjacent Junior High School. Survey respondents indicated the desire for a children's garden to learn gardening skills and foster natural processes education. Expanding the rain garden to a full children's garden in Meyer's Park would be a potential way to address this request.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



(Above Left)- Continual maintenance of baseball field at Meyer's Park should be prioritized.



(Bottom Left)- The planting beds adjacent to parking lot at Meyers Park need to be replanted.



Meyers Park is the only park to incorporate a rain garden.



Kids play in the shade in July at Meyers Park.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



The playground equipment and picnic shelter are popular with large groups at Meyers Park.

Inspiration | Powhatan Park | Arlington, VA



Meyers Park Existing Conditions



Meyers Park Recommendations



PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Crawford Park

Existing Conditions

Crawford Park is a small neighborhood park located within a single family residential subdivision, with a major ComEd power distribution line overhead. The Palos Heights bike trail extends along the west edge of the park, under the overhead wires. The park is separated into two areas by W. Sequoia Drive. The north half has a playground, baseball field and basketball court. The playground equipment is in good structural condition but starting to fade in color. It is one of two parks in the system to include an ADA style chair swing. The play area is located near the base of the overhead wire tower, with no barrier between the play area and tower. Two movable soccer nets are located south of Sequoia Drive. It was noted pedestrians and cars tend to have conflicts when teams are using the field for games. Of respondents who use Crawford Park two or more times per month, 12% said they were somewhat unsatisfied with maintenance. The basketball court has major cracks and needs replacement. There is very little shade due to restrictions with overhead wires.

Recommendations

Crawford Park should be reorganized to group play activities on the north side of Sequoia Drive. The playground area should remain furthest north, closest to residential homes. Given the playground's proximity to the electrical tower, installation of a barrier or fence with locking mechanism is recommended. A new baseball field, soccer field, and basketball court with benches surrounding each should be considered on the north side of Sequoia Drive to group play activities. Any chain link fencing associated with new fields and courts should be black powder-coated to match the other parks. An earth berm no taller than 2' or fence no taller than 4' should separate sport field/ court and Sequoia Drive. To address the pedestrian/car conflict described above, a sidewalk should be incorporated along Cedar Ln. and the west side of Sequoia Dr. to connect back to the Palos Heights Bike Trail. The sidewalk could also connect to the Bike Trail north of the playground to create a loop. Fifty-one percent (51%) of survey respondents ranked a dog park in their top 3 choices of new park facilities. The south side of Sequoia Dr. is a potential location to implement it with a few parking spaces. Located along the trail, residents will have the choice to walk their dog on the trail or drive. Plenty of room to run and a water element are features to be included in the new dog park.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

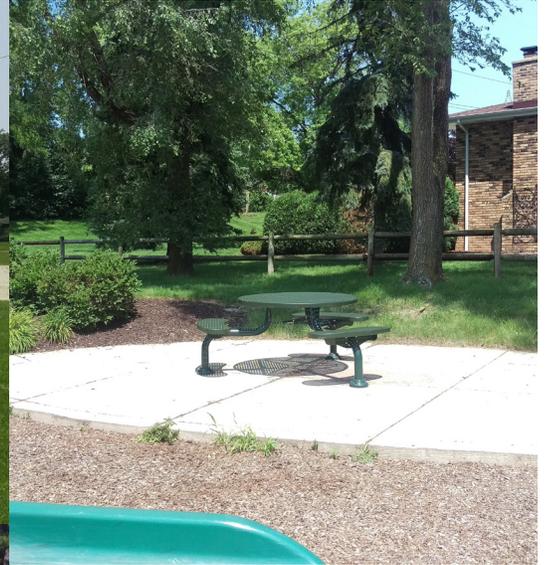


The gardens are well maintained in Crawford Park.



Crawford Park is one of the few parks to feature an accessible swing.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



(Above Left)- At Crawford Park, the baseball backstop needs replacing. The field needs new infield material. Seating should be incorporated.

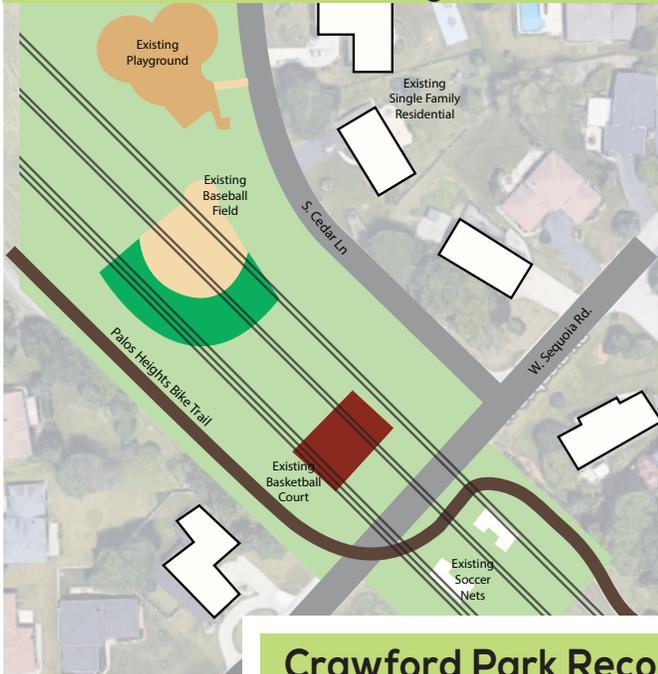
(Above Right)- Crawford Park is lacking shade due to overhead wires. Given tree restriction, add shade sails to seating areas.

(Left)- The basketball court is cracked and needs replacement at Crawford Park.

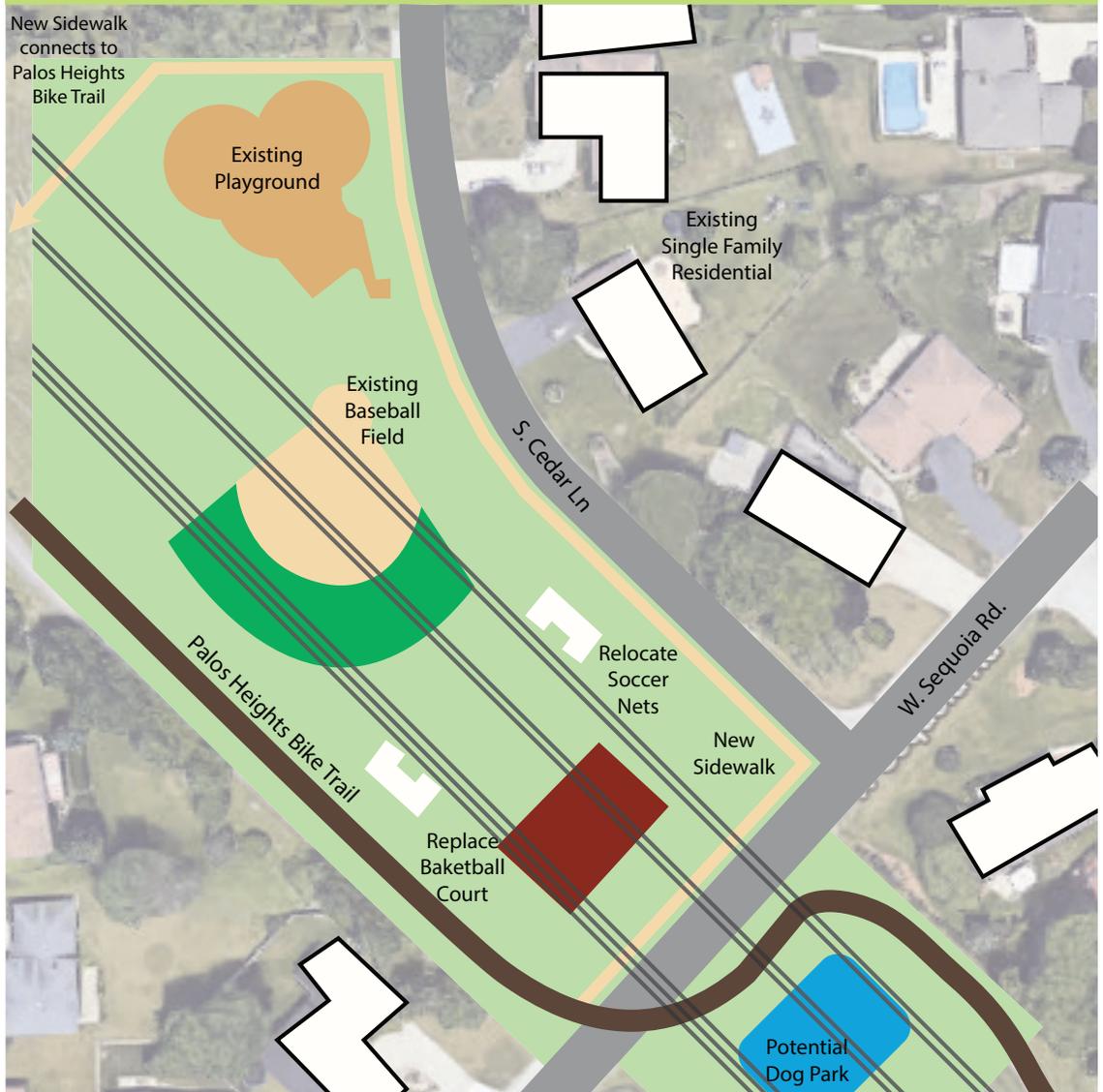
Inspiration | Dog Park & New Basketball Court



Crawford Park Existing Conditions



Crawford Park Recommendations



PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Veterans Playlot

Existing Conditions

Veterans Playlot is the smallest park in Palos Heights. It's located on a small parcel, adjacent to single family homes. The shady, wooded park currently has just a few pieces of play equipment including swings, a small dinosaur climber, and a spinner. A few benches and picnic tables are located on the edge of the playground.

Recommendations

Adding more equipment to Veterans Park was a common comment in the survey. Recommendations for Veterans Playlot include adding more equipment geared toward a variety of ages. The equipment should take little square footage as the total size of the park is relatively small. Given the wooded nature of the lot, play equipment could be tree house themed. If the addition of equipment causes encroachment toward the sidewalk, an attractive 4' tall decorative fence could be installed along the front edge of the park for safety. A sign that matches the rest of Palos Heights Parks should be added at the front of the property.

Veterans Playlot Existing Conditions



Veterans Playlot Recommendations



PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Veterans Playlot is the smallest park and nestled into a residential neighborhood. (Image Credit - PHPRD)

Inspiration | Tree House Themed Play





Walsh-Westgate Park

Existing Conditions

Walsh-Westgate Park is located in a residential neighborhood with the highest property values in Palos Heights. The park currently includes a large play area, gardens, bag toss, and fitness equipment. It's located on a hill with the playground at the top of the hill and a well maintained pond with fountain jet at the bottom. One edge of the park is adjacent to a residential lot and the other to the road. The edge of the park adjacent to the road is planted with trees and shrubs and has a fence.

Recommendations

Near term maintenance should include re-grading the low spot at the base of the park adjacent to the pond and addressing mulch run-off issues in some garden areas. The hill in Walsh-Westgate Park makes this an ideal location for a slope themed playground. Slides sunk into the ground and various climbers to get back up the hill would be part of this theme, providing a unique alternative to other play areas in Palos Heights. The materials for these pieces of equipment would remain natural including wood climbers, ropes, boulders, and plenty of plantings. Additional sculptures would also be appropriate. Incorporation of another multi-age activity such as bocceball should also be considered. At the base of park, the addition of an overlook plaza and seating along pond would add an appealing amenity for all ages.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



The playground equipment is beginning to fade, but still in good structural condition in Walsh-Westgate Park.



Walsh- Westgate Park features a statue near the swings.



During a July site visit to Walsh- Westgate Park, sidewalk chalk art was seen under the picnic shelter.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



(Above Left)- Maintenance should be increased in garden areas at Walsh-Westgate Park.

(Above Right)- Address mulch run-off issues in some garden areas near the pond at Walsh-Westgate Park.

(Left)- Walsh- Westgate Park could benefit from another multi-age activity such as bocce ball.

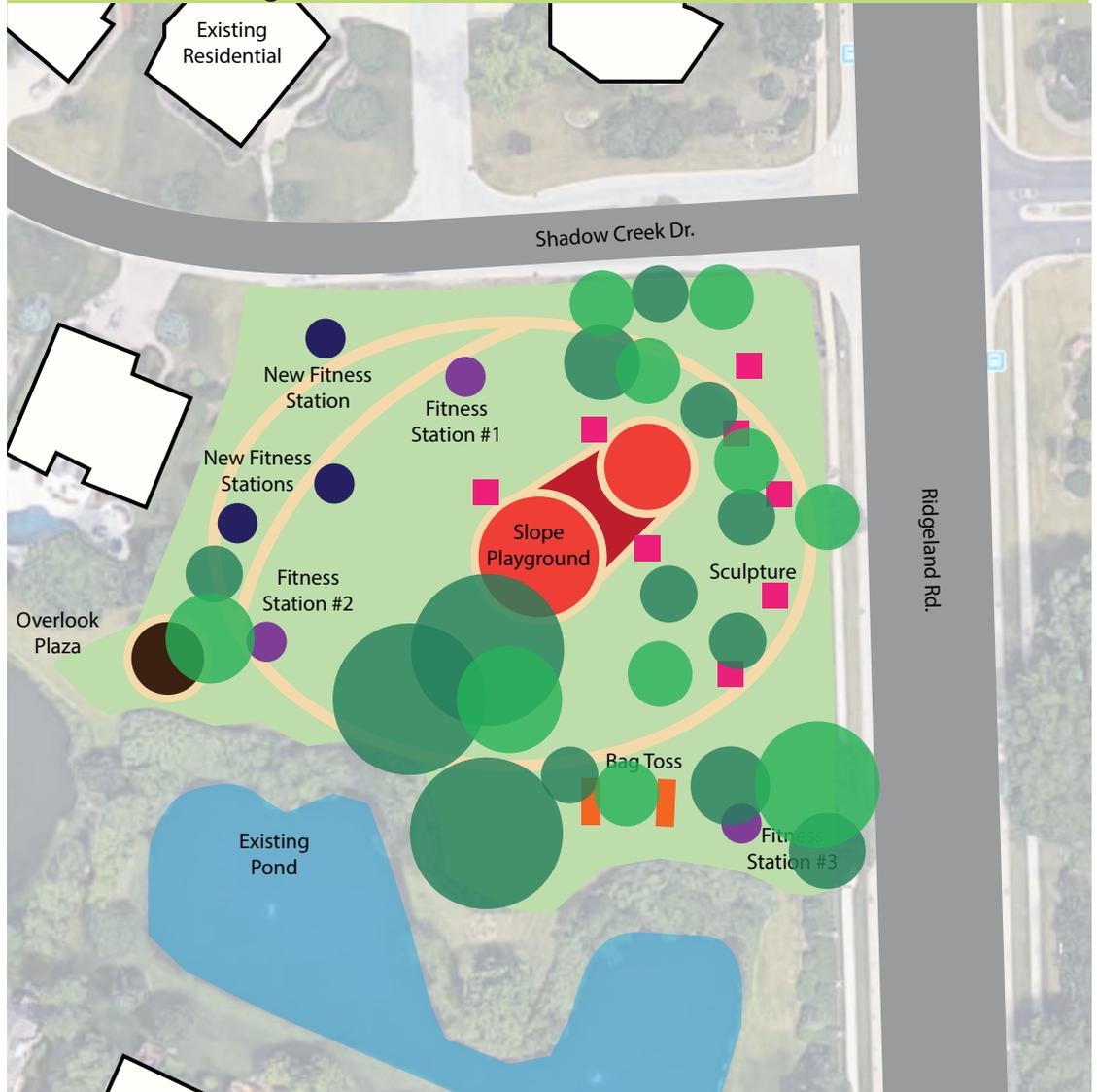
Inspiration | Riverfront Park | Little Rock, AR



Walsh- Westgate Park Existing Conditions



Walsh- Westgate Park Recommendations





Palmer Park

Existing Conditions

A new master plan was recently approved for Palmer Park and the City will be seeking an OSLAD grant to help fund improvements. The existing equipment is outdated. An ADA ramp leads from lawn to mulch, but no ADA accessible path connects to the base of the ramp. The existing basketball court is cracked and in need of replacement. The baseball field is overgrown, and infield material needs replenishing. The tennis court was recently replaced with a new tennis court and two pickleball courts.

A series of neighborhood meetings were conducted as a part of the master planning process to better understand residents' desires and needs regarding improvements to the Park. The top priority was renovation of the existing playground, followed by improvements to sports fields and the basketball court. Strong interest in development of a walking path was also evident from these sessions.

Recommendations

The approved OSLAD grant and master plan for Palmer Park envisions updated playground equipment including a climber for ages 2-12, swings, zipline, and inclusive spinner. The plan recommends installing new sport courts and fields such as a new baseball field, basketball court and volleyball court. A soccer field, previously unavailable in Palmer Park has been recommended. A new bocce ball court and perimeter running path provide activities for multiple ages. Protecting existing trees was a priority in the new master plan as many high quality mature trees exist on site. Given Palmer Park's current condition and the \$400,000 of OSLAD grant funding, proceeding with construction documents to renovate the park in the near term is highly recommended.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



The playground equipment should be replaced at Palmer Park.



The playground equipment should be replaced at Palmer Park.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

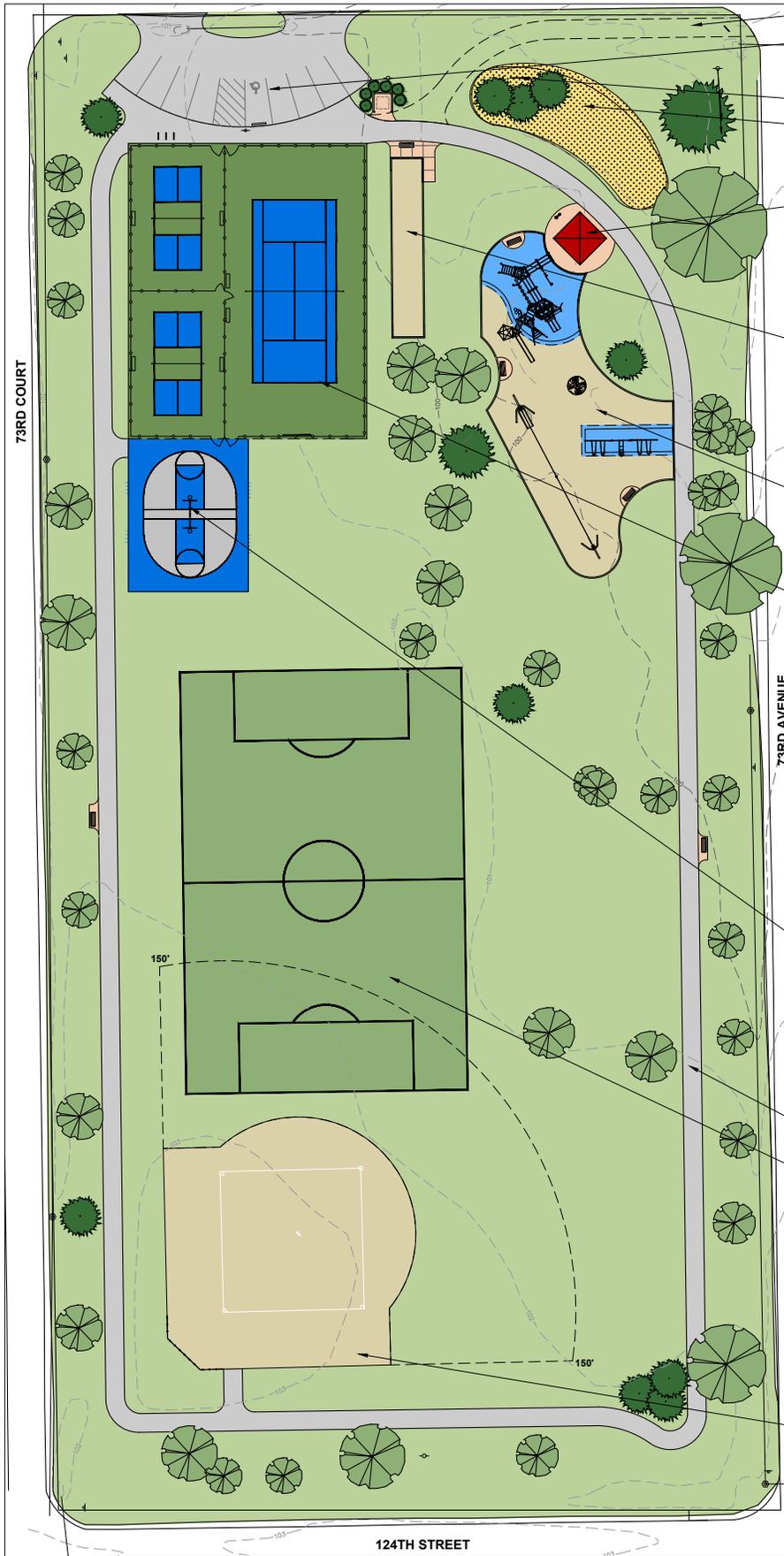


(Above Left)-Play equipment should be replaced at Palmer Park.

(Above Right)- The playground at Palmer Park should be ADA accessible from the sidewalk to play equipment.

(Left)-The basketball court needs repair or replacement at Palmer Park.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Future Sidewalk connection to Harlem Avenue

Future Parking Lot Renovation

- 8 Parking Spaces
- 1 Additional Accessible Space
- Asphalt Paving with Wheelstops

Existing Park Sign

Pollinator Garden

- Native Garden with Interpretive Signage

Restroom Enclosure

- Wood fence Screening for Portable Restroom

16' x 16' Shade Structure and Drinking Fountain Area



Bocce Courts

- 1 Bocce Courts with Gravel Surfacing, Concrete Curb with Accessible Entry
- Seating Area



Playground Area

- 2-12 Playground Equipment
- Swings: 2 Belt, 2 Bucket, 1 Accessible
- Zipline and Inclusive Spinner
- Partial Poured in Place Rubber Surfacing and Engineered Wood Fiber Surfacing
- Concrete Playground Curb
- Bench Seating

Existing Tennis and Pickleball Courts

- 1 Full Court Tennis
- 2 Pickleball Courts
- Perimeter Chainlink Fence with Pedestrian Access Gates and Low Intermediate Fences Separating Courts



Basketball Courts

- 2 Half Basketball Courts



Loop Trail

- 8' Wide Asphalt Paving
- Benches along Path with Companion Seating

Practice Soccer Field

- Natural Lawn Field 120' x 180'
- Moveable Soccer Goals



Practice Ball Field

- Replace Existing with PVC Coated Chainlink Backstop
- Skinned Infield with Gravel Sports Mix
- Relocate Location of Existing Field



SCALE: 1" = 20'-0"

0 10' 20' 40' 60'

PALMER PARK



MASTER PLAN



August 15, 2018
Copyright 2018
Upland Design, Ltd.
Project #643



Community/Memorial Park

Existing Conditions

Community/Memorial Park is the most widely used park in the system. It houses the community pool, a playground, new picnic shelter, newly renovated tennis & pickleball courts, baseball & softball fields, a frisbee golf course, and Nabel Woods. City Hall and the Police Station are located adjacent to the park with connecting driveways and parking. Of all survey respondents, 35% reporting using Community/Memorial Park two or more times per month. The parking lot is typically busy during the summer. The Palos Heights Bike Trail connects to Community/Memorial Park, but wayfinding signage is lacking. The park includes extensive baseball and softball fields including concessions, bleachers, and picnic areas.

The Community Pool recovers its operating costs throughout the season. Forty-one percent (41%) of survey respondents use the pool at least once per month or more during the season.

Recommendations

Near term improvements for Community/Memorial Park include enhancements to the parking lot, a new splash pad, and wayfinding signage. The parking lot and entrance to the pool are often busy and enhancements should be considered to address conflicting pedestrian and vehicular space. Adding a central walkway for pedestrians and providing marked entrances of buildings with clear pedestrian crosswalks is recommended. Adding a sidewalk along the west edge of the parking lot would also improve pedestrian safety. Survey respondents favored a new splash pad as the priority new park facility. It is recommended that the splash pad is organized to be available with the pool, but also open before and after pool hours. Wayfinding is difficult when visitors are arriving from Palos Heights Bike Trail. Signs to and from trail should be incorporated throughout to provide clarity.

In the long term, Community/Memorial Park and City Hall should be studied for parking needs. A campus layout would benefit the park. Currently, the center of the park is the parking lot, but in a campus layout central areas are organized around pedestrians. The heart of the park would be a place for concerts and fests, incorporating an amphitheater or stage. The stage could be located south of the parking lot for proximity to the playground and splash pad, but would require parking reorganization. Alternatively, the stage could be located west of 76th Ave. in the location currently used for temporary events. This layout would not change parking and is depicted in the long term map on the following pages. The baseball and softball area currently feels separate from the rest of Community/Memorial Park and can be reconnected by continuing specialty paving to the existing parking lot. The batting practice area should be relocated closer to the dugout and team benches for convenience. The baseball concession stand should be updated to match contemporary picnic shelter and restrooms near existing fields.

The Community Pool received many open comments on the survey. Common themes include desire for maintenance improvements in the shallow kid's pool, more open hours around typical workday hours, and addition of a splash pad area.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



Community/Memorial Park hosts many tournaments and games for baseball and softball clubs of Palos Heights.



The Community Pool is very successful and recovers its costs each season.

PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



(Left)-The parking lot adjacent to the Community Pool entrance is typically full and busy during peak season.

Inspiration | Pedestrian Safety

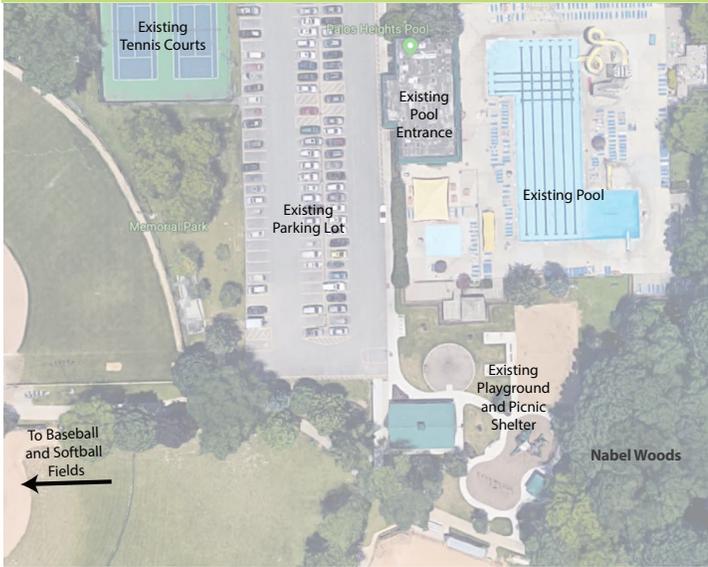


Inspiration | Brooklyn Bridge Park | NYC

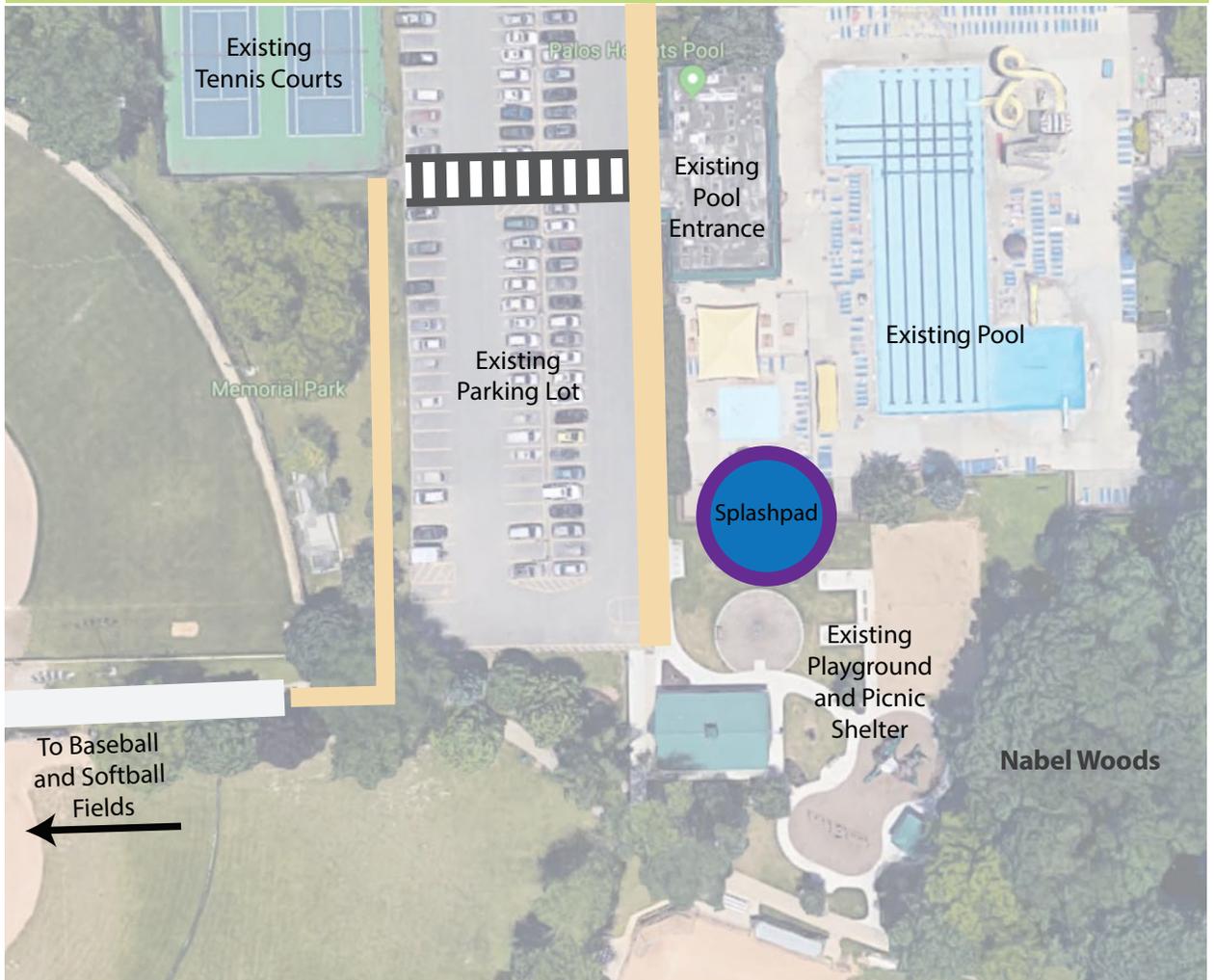


PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Community/Memorial Park Existing Conditions



Community/Memorial Park Near Term Recommendations



PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS



(Left and Bottom Left)- Specialty paving occurs in some areas, but not others within the baseball and softball section of Community/Memorial Park.

Inspiration | Amphitheater for Events

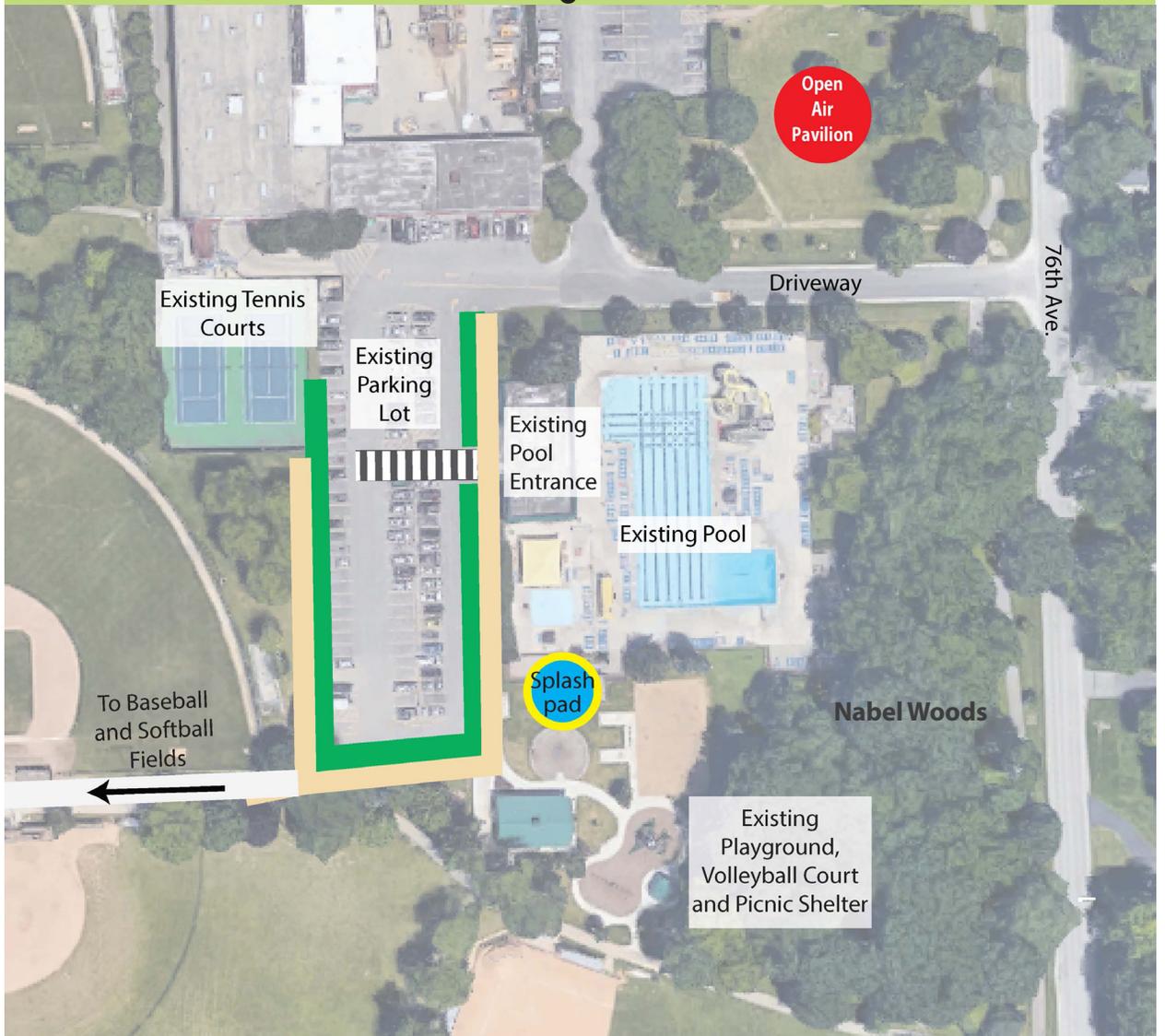


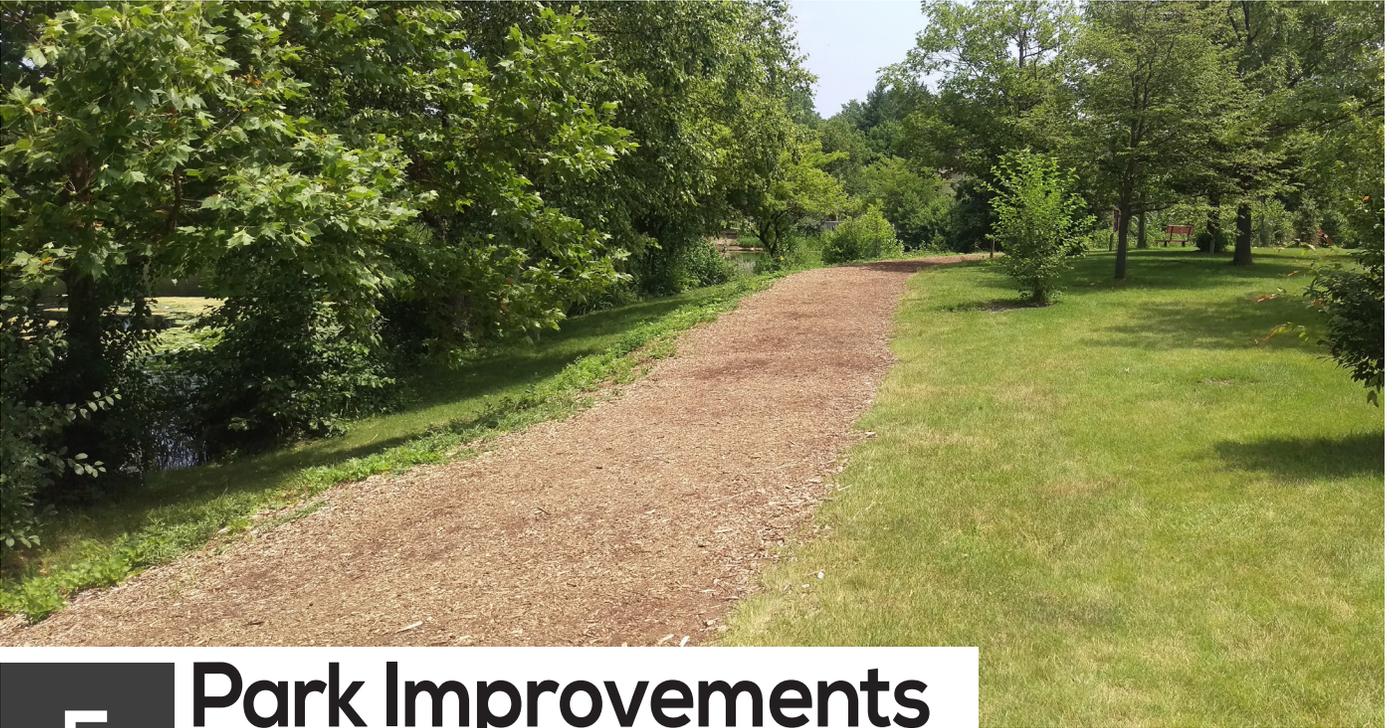
PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Community/Memorial Park Existing Conditions



Community/Memorial Park Long Term Recommendations





5

Park Improvements + Implementation

THIS CHAPTER PRIORITIZES PARK PROJECTS LISTED IN THE PARK SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS SECTION. POTENTIAL GRANTS AND PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ALONG WITH AN EXPECTED TIME FRAME CORRELATE WITH EACH PROJECT.

IMPLEMENTATION

PROJECT	TIMEFRAME	FUNDING *
GOAL 1: RENOVATE PALMER PARK		
1.1 Using approved Master Plan of Palmer Park, obtain construction documents.	S	OSLAD, Baseball Tomorrow Grant
1.2 Complete construction of Palmer Park renovation.	S	OSLAD, Baseball Tomorrow Grant
GOAL 2: OBTAIN LAND IN SOUTHWEST PALOS HEIGHTS FOR NEW PARK		
2.1 Work with property owners to site new park location.	S	OSLAD, LWCF, PARC, Private Property Owners
2.2 Begin Master Plan for new park.	M	OSLAD, LWCF, PARC, Private Property Owners
GOAL 3 : RENOVATE PASSARELLI PARK		
3.1 Begin Master Plan for fully inclusive park.	S	OSLAD, Palos Heights School District, Inclusive Recreation: Tommy Wilson Memorial Grant
3.2 Perform community and school outreach.	S	Palos Heights School District, Inclusive Recreation: Tommy Wilson Memorial Grant
3.3 Finalize Master Plan for fully inclusive park.	S	OSLAD, Palos Heights School District, Inclusive Recreation: Tommy Wilson Memorial Grant
3.4 Complete construction of Passarelli Park renovation.	M	OSLAD, Palos Heights School District, Inclusive Recreation: Tommy Wilson Memorial Grant
GOAL 4: INCORPORATE SPLASH PAD AND WATER SLIDE ADDITIONS AT COMMUNITY/MEMORIAL PARK & POOL		
4.1 Consider incorporating splash pad at Community/Memorial Park.	M	OSLAD
4.2 Install additional water slide to existing slide tower at Community/Memorial Park & Pool.	S-M	OSLAD
4.3 Replace existing bath house and locker rooms.	S-M	Park and Recreation Facility Construction Program (PARC)
GOAL 5: RENOVATE CRAWFORD PARK		
5.1 Begin Master Plan for Crawford Park.	M	OSLAD, Baseball Tomorrow Grant
5.2 With community outreach, finalize Master Plan.	M	OSLAD, Baseball Tomorrow Grant
5.3 Complete construction of Crawford Park renovation.	L	OSLAD, Baseball Tomorrow Grant
GOAL 6: RENOVATE WALSH-WESTGATE PARK		
6.1 Begin Master Plan for hillside park.	L	OSLAD
6.2 Finalize Master Plan for hillside park.	L	OSLAD
GOAL 7: DEVELOP ACQUIRED LAND IN SOUTHEAST PALOS HEIGHTS FOR NEW PARK		
7.1 Begin Master Plan for new park.	S	City of Palos Heights
7.2 Renovate existing barn for equipment storage and add parking on newly acquired lot east of the Recreation Center.	M	City of Palos Heights

LEGEND:

- S = 0 - 3 YEARS**
- M = 3 - 5 YEARS**
- L = 5 + YEARS**

**As each goal is pursued, project costs should be estimated and included in the City's Capital Improvement Plan.*

Alternative Funding Sources

Baseball Tomorrow Grant:

This non-profit organization reviews application for funds to finance a new program, expand or improve an existing program, undertake a new collaborative effort, or obtain facilities or equipment necessary for youth baseball or softball programs. Applications are reviewed on a quarterly basis and awards average to \$40,000.

Inclusive Recreation: Tommy Wilson Memorial Grant

The Tommy Wilson Memorial Grant supports individuals with disabilities, providing funds to support recreational activities (e.g., equipment, housing, registration fees, facilities). Applications are accepted once per year in December. This grant would be ideal for considering Passarelli Park the inclusive park.

Land and Water Conservation Grants (LWCF)

This grant matches up to 50 percent of the project cost to help purchase land to be used for public access. It would be helpful to buy land in southeast Palos Heights for residents without a park in walking distance.

Parks and Recreation Facility Construction Grant

- Agencies of local government are eligible for this award.
- Evaluates useful life of existing facilities and improvements in comparison to the Department's schedule of Useful Life and Park Recreation Facilities;
- Address public health and safety needs;
- Sponsor has high economic need;
- Correct accessibility deficiencies as defined by the Americans With Disabilities Act (43 USC 12101)
- Projects that provide the greatest benefit in terms of cost per capita within the applicant's jurisdictional boundaries;
- Land acquisition

OSLAD

The OSLAD grant matches 50% of a parks and recreation project and is similar to PARC, but the rating system is evaluated differently. In order to apply for OSLAD, a master plan must be complete for the park in the application. The plan is considered for funds, scoring higher if it includes activities or equipment that isn't found anywhere else in the community. Grants up to \$750,000 are awarded for acquisition projects and \$400,000 can be awarded for renovation projects. Applications are evaluated on Statewide Outdoor Recreation Priorities and Project Need (60%), Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Priorities (10%), Project Concept and Site Characteristics (15%), Local Planning (10%), and Other Considerations (10%). The largest category, Statewide Outdoor Recreation Priorities and Project Need is based on the following criteria:

- 35%- Extent of the project to address the following major outdoor recreation/conservation priorities identified in the state plan:
 - Protection or enhancement of a state or locally significant natural area;
 - Protection or enhancement of significant wildlife habitat;
 - Protection or enhancement of natural wetland areas;
 - Promoting conservation education opportunities
 - Promoting recreational use of Illinois' surface waters;
 - Protection or recreational use of linear greenways;
 - Inter-agency cooperation in providing and/or effectively utilizing local recreation resources;
 - Enhancing recreational opportunities for minority and less affluent populations;
 - Use of resource conservation elements and native landscaping
- 25%- Local needs assessment in comparison of existing supply of recreational facilities per capita and existing supply of local open space/ parkland acreage.

Partnerships

Palos Heights School District

It is recommended that PHPRD partners with Palos Heights School District for the master planning of Passarelli Park. Outreach with teachers and students will give insight for future uses of the park and ensure success after construction.

Forest Preserves of Cook County (FPCC)

Given the amount of land adjacent to Palos Heights that is owned by FPCC, a partnership would be a great platform to discuss trail systems and other community requests. Survey respondents answered in favor of a dog park in Palos Heights. The FPCC could be a partner in this initiative as a shady place away from residential neighborhoods should be a strong consideration for placement. In addition to facilities, a partnership could begin co-led events. For example, the PHPRD could set up a day of fishing event and have it at Arrowhead Lake with FPCC.

Private Donors- Naming Rights

Private donors are a great way to raise money for a cause. It could be utilized in something as large as a new park in Palos Heights or as small as a children’s garden in Myers Park.

Local Businesses

While big events are great for the community, it is a financial strain for just one Department. Pairing with local businesses could help more events become reality with their financial support. Business partnerships would be an ideal way to support a pocket park in the business district of Palos Heights.

Recreation and Park Associations

The Parks and Recreation Department should continue to be an active part of both the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and Illinois Parks and Recreation Association (IPRA). Both organizations offer excellent educational and networking opportunities for both staff and elected/appointed officials. In addition, the Park District should strive to obtain CAPRA accreditation to recognize the standards of excellence the agency employees to meet community parks and recreational needs.

Plan Updates & Communication

This plan is intended to guide planning and updates to the Palos Heights Parks and Recreation Department over the next 5-10 years. It is recommended that PHPRD tracks updates to the park recommendations as they occur. When the recommendations listed in this plan are completed, PHPRD should acquire a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan to continue growth in the Palos Heights community.

The close integration of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan with the City’s overall Comprehensive Plan is also critical. If land use of other major changes are made to the overall Comprehensive Plan, this Parks Plan should also be reviewed and updated accordingly.





Appendix

USEFUL LIFE CRITERIA

**IDNR Grant Administration Division
Per IPRA-Park & Natural Resource Management Section's Recommendations**

<u>Facility Type</u>	<u>Expected useful life</u>	<u>Evaluation Criteria – Factor</u>
<u>Baseball/Softball Fields</u>	8-10 years	# Games/week, # Practices/week Grass infields? Maintenance Procedure/Standards Is site used for multiple uses, soccer, and football? Is space used for organized or programmed events? Spectator considerations – bleachers Concession stands
<u>Baseball/Softball Field Lighting</u>	20 years	Pole Type (wood, steel, concrete) Wiring type (aluminum, copper) HID or incandescent fixtures Existing FC vs. new standards Accepted grounding systems? Panel Capabilities/Technology Electrical Code compliance
<u>Basketball Courts</u>		
Resurface	12-15 years	Same as tennis courts
Total Renovation	20-25 years	
<u>Bike Paths</u>	Same as Parking lots	Same as Parking lots
<u>Boathouse</u>	10-15 years	Attached to Community Center Y/N Mechanical room connected? ADA compliance Y/N Local Code compliance? Preventive Maintenance record Location i.e. Lake Michigan
<u>Boat Launch Ramps</u>	15-20 years	Construction materials, gravel, concrete Location i.e. Lake Michigan Annual Usage Is facility fee generating? Region
<u>Fishing Piers & Docks</u>	15-20 years	Original construction materials plastic, wood, aluminum Location i.e. Lake Michigan Annual volume/usage Winter removal and storage? Preventive maintenance record
<u>Interpretive Center</u>	Same as Bathhouse	Same as Bathhouse
<u>Irrigation System</u>	20 years	Irrigated Y/N Usage # games per week Drainage considerations Maintenance standards/levels Is site used for organized or programmed events? To What extent? Is site used for multiple uses? Softball, BB or football

APPENDIX

<u>Parking Lots</u>	Resurface Total Renovation	12-15 years 20-25 years	Gravel, asphalt or concrete Monthly volume and load use (i.e. delivery trucks or garbage) Spring use –heavy, moderate, light Seal coating frequency Preventive maintenance record Original construction design loads Location: flooding/water concerns Snow removal or salt use? Curbed or sheet drainage to edges
<u>Picnic Shelters</u>		25 years	Support structures: masonry, steel, wood Roof type: metal, asphalt, shingle, slate, cedar shake Construction type: post & beam, frame Historical value and consideration Preventive maintenance record Is site used for organized or programmed events? To what extent?
<u>Playgrounds</u>		15 years - metal 10 years - plastic 8 – 12 years - wood	Meet Standards? ASTM, CPSC, ADA Daily usage by intended user group Location: school, or Neighborhood Park Surfacing Material Preventive maintenance record Border construction material Location: retention area/water?
<u>Restrooms</u>		Same as pools	Same as pools
<u>Shuffleboard</u>	Resurface Total Renovation	12-15 years 20-25 years	Same as tennis courts
<u>Soccer Fields</u>		8-10 years	Usage rating A/B/C/D # games/week, # weeks/year, time of year, age of user
<u>Swimming Pools</u>	Bathhouse	25 years 25 years	Stand alone site? Heated for winter?
<u>Tennis Courts</u>	Resurface Total Renovation	12-15 years 20-25 years	Lighted Y/N (Use Baseball Criteria) Surface clay, asphalt, other Color coat/overlay/rebuild Frequency of color coating Location – high water table Fencing material/posts Preventive maintenance Location: Water table concerns Is site used for organized or programmed events? To what extent? Are courts used for making ice?
<u>Volleyball Courts</u>			Sand / Grass? Lighted Y/N Borders Bleachers/spectator area

IDNR Division of Grant Administration Useful Life Criteria 7/21/97

