



**CHAMPAIGN  
PARK DISTRICT**

**AGENDA**

**STUDY SESSION  
BRESNAN MEETING CENTER  
706 Kenwood Road  
Champaign, Illinois**

**Wednesday, October 24, 2018  
5:30 p.m.**

- A. CALL TO ORDER**
- B. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**
- C. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
  - 1. Flower Programs Update
  - 2. Commissioners Park Plat
  - 3. Comprehensive Plan Update
- D. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS**
- E. ADJOURN**



## REPORT TO PARK BOARD

**FROM:** Joe DeLuce, Executive Director

**DATE:** October 17, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Flower Program Updates

### Background

As staff enter the design and bidding season for the 2019 annual flower beds, it is a good time to assess the overall health and direction of our Park Flowers and Flower Island programs.

The most recent discussion of the annual flower programs hinged on the costs associated with them. As a reminder, here are the relevant numbers from the past five (5) years.

YEAR	NUMBER OF FLATS	COSTS	AVG COST/FLAT
2014	5644	\$81,933.25	\$14.52
2015	5590	\$84,609.00	\$15.14
2016	5693	\$96,018.25	\$16.87
2017	5245	\$94,575.00	\$18.03
2018	4795	\$93,655.40	\$19.53

The above chart reveals staff's recent trend of ordering fewer flats. This is a direct result of staff's focused attempts at reducing the size of many of the larger annual beds and thus, the materials and labor costs that are associated with them. Staff continue to do so without adversely affecting the visual performance of these beds.

Please notice that the cost per flat column shows the average flat cost of the varieties of different flower cultivars that staff typically order. Seeded varieties are cheaper than vegetatively propagated varieties. Seeded varieties typically have a shorter functional season and are far less dependable in the field. Staff have always attempted to strike a reasonable cost-effective balance between seeded and vegetative material. With that said, the average cost per flat of annual flowers went up 8.3% last year.

For season 2018, the Flower Island program cost per square foot was raised from \$11.10 to \$12.00. Of the 58 sponsors from 2017, 56 signed on with the Park District at the newer rate for 2018. The trend for 2019 renewals, with the same rate of \$12.00 per square foot, is similarly strong. The only known client that the Park District will lose this year is the International Society of Arboriculture bed on the NW corner of North Country Fair Drive and West University Avenue. Once that property is sold, staff will approach the new owner and try to convince them to keep that highly-visible site in the program. Going forward, staff have firm commitments from nine (9) new and former clients that will add 735 square feet to the Park District's current directly sponsored Flower Island total of 10,945 square feet, an increase of 6.7 percent. Staff expect the City of Champaign to commit to their usual sponsorship of the downtown planters and lamp-post baskets and hopefully one of the original five (5) in-ground beds that flank Park Avenue.

The horticulture crew staged it's first-ever Flower Island Walk in downtown Champaign on July 7, 2018. Julia Smith, seasonal staff in the middle of her fifth season in our flower program, came up with the idea last winter and coordinated the planning, promotion, and execution of the event. The goal was to showcase the impactful history and ongoing vitality of the 31 year-old program that her grandfather, Robert Toalson, created. She met her goal. Not counting staff, 25-30 plant-lovers attended, enjoying beautiful weather and a casual stroll through the Park District best beds in downtown Champaign. Events like this share the basics about the Park District program and staff are confident that they go a long way toward cultivating connections that might lead to future clients.

The original spirit of the Flower Island program allowed staff to plant and maintain annual flower beds at most all of the Champaign Unit 4 School District (Unit 4) public schools. Unit 4's combined areas totaled 1822 square feet, roughly 11.5% of the Park District's total Flower Island on any given year. While the financial dynamics have changed over the years, staff until very recently continued this practice. Staff are now in the process of changing all of these one-dimensional annual beds into pollinator gardens that can serve as year-long laboratories offering both beauty and function. The Park District will still have its name on gardens, but the maintenance costs will be drastically reduced, along with the yearly costs of the plants themselves. Staff are currently working with Unit 4 to secure an Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant that will offset the one-time costs of giving these sites a facelift (cost of perennials, edging, mulch, etc.). Making these changes will serve the triple purpose of saving money, maintaining a working partnership with Unit 4, and promoting a style of public gardening that is as sustainable as it is beautiful.

Prior Board Action

- At the October 25, 2017 Special meeting, staff presented an update on the flower program and a recommendation on an increase in flower island fees.
- At the November 8, 2017 Regular meeting, the Board approved raising the Flower Island Program fee from \$11.00 per sq. ft. to \$12.00 per sq. ft. for the 2018 season.

Budget Impact

The financial stability of the Flower Island program is best captured by the simple equation of what percentage of our actual costs are recovered by the fees the Park District receive from its clients.

YEAR	EXPENDITURES	RECEIPTS	COST RECOVERY
2016	\$195,834.00	\$118,796.00	60.6%
2017	\$178,792.00	\$125,032.00	69.9%
2018	\$190,430.00	\$116,122.00	60.9%
2019 (projected)	\$175,010.00	\$128,002.00	73.1%

Besides the obvious costs of plant materials, the expenditure numbers above are directly affected by staff salaries and the costs of support materials (fertilizer, peat moss, etc.). Within the context of that ebb and flow, staff will continue its efforts to charge clients a rate that gets the Park District closer to a reasonable cost recovery percentage. Staff would like to see more of the actual performance of the 2018-19 budget before considering a fee increase for 2020. Staff will bring forward a price recommendation as part of the facility and services fee recommendation in April 2019 for the 2020 flower season.

Recommendation

For information purposes only.

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Randy Hauser  
Horticulture and Natural Areas Supervisor

Dan Olson  
Director of Operations



## REPORT TO PARK BOARD

**FROM:** Joe DeLuce, Executive Director

**DATE:** October 24, 2018

**SUBJECT:** Commissioners Park Plat

### Background

Per the 2016 LWCF Dodds Park Land Conversion Agreement, IDNR obliged the Park District to execute an approved Abbey Fields park development plan within three years. During the permitting process, the City of Champaign staff flagged a building permit noting that the 20 acre Trails at Abbey Fields property was never formally platted. In the interest of time the City approved building permits for Commissioners Park construction with the understanding the Park District pursue the final plat which records easements and rights-of-way.

### Prior Board Action

*February 8, 2017*—Board approved 2018 Capital Budget

*March 8, 2017*—Board approved "Commissioners Park" name

*September 27, 2017*—Staff presented park development plan

*March 14, 2018*—Board approved 2019 Capital Budget

*June 13, 2018*—Board approved bid for Commissioners Park Development

### Budget Impact

Capital project 180008 budget is \$292,550. The Park District has a thorough ALTA survey of the property already, but the drawing exhibit will need a few updates for final plat format requirements as well as content based on related Board discussion here. Staff also expect some attorney's fees during the submittal process.

### Discussion

The City approved the preliminary plat (diagram attached) from the original developer which indicates a north/south extension of Glen Abbey Drive with "T" intersection extending to the west. The Park District is under no obligation to construct the road—now or in the future—if final plat does not indicate the extension.

Nonetheless, staff seeks direction since the matter affects the long-range future of the park and the potential surrounding neighborhood. If and when future development occurs, the street would help in keeping Commissioners Park within District Policy 01-08 where parks should be open to streets on at least 3 sides; without the road construction in the park there are no mechanisms in adjacent preliminary plats that would require any developer to include street access to the park. For discussion purposes there are, strictly speaking, three options:

- 1) Take the road out of the final plat. If and when any surrounding development occurs, Commissioners Park runs the risk of being hemmed in with houses/backyards the north, west, and most of the south. The only access to the park would be the current stub in from Glen Abbey Drive. To the east, park would have access by way of future Pipeline Trail, but only if development to the east occurs. *PROS: never have to pay for construction of the road. CONS: runs the risk of greatly diminishing future public access to the park.*

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**The mission of the Champaign Park District is to enhance our community's quality of life through positive experiences in parks, recreation, and cultural arts.**

2) Leave the road in the final plat; if and when any surrounding development occurs, the Park District builds the street to City standard and City takes over maintenance of it. For greater City planning purposes, would make a much more harmonious neighborhood and ensure relatively good public access to the park (per Park District policy). Cannot estimate the cost of construction at that future point, but naturally, it would be more than today's estimated \$300,000. *PROS: Makes some sense from a neighborhood planning perspective, in that the park would have greater public access, and would not have to spend any money if no future development ever occurs. CONS: would have to construct road at greater future expense if development occurs.*

3) Leave the road in the plat and construct it in the near future. If and when any surrounding development occurs in the future, the Park District would not have to build it because it would already be installed. *PROS: same as number 2 with the understanding that City takes over maintenance of the road as soon as it's built; presumably, construction of road will never be at a lower cost than the present. CONS: potential fallout of a so-called "road to nowhere" construction, if future development does not occur immediately, if ever.*

In summary, it comes down to what are the chances of future development in the surrounding areas. Currently, it is not likely within 5-10 years—adjacent areas are not incorporated, and are unimproved. As a public institution the Park District is simply at the crossroads now. In any event recording the final plat now (either with without the road) is in our best interest so there is an unambiguous public record if the road needs to be built or not.

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Andrew Weiss  
Director of Planning

Joe Deluce  
Executive Director





**CHAMPAIGN**  
**PARK DISTRICT**

**2019-2029 Comprehensive Plan**

## **Acknowledgements:**

### **Board of Commissioners:**

Craig Hays, President

Timothy P. McMahon, Vice President

Jane L. Solon

Barbara J. Kuhl

Kevin J. Miller

### **Officers of the Board:**

Joe DeLuce, Executive Director

Cindy Harvey, Secretary

Donna Lawson, Treasurer

Guy C. Hall, Attorney

### **Department Heads:**

Andrea Wallace, Finance

Andrew Weiss, Planning

Chelsea Norton, Marketing and Communications

Dan Olson, Operations

Jameel Jones, Recreation

Steven Bentz, Virginia Theatre

Tammy Hoggatt, HR, IT, Risk

**City of Champaign Planning Department**

**Residents of the Champaign Park District**





January 9, 2019

Dear Champaign Park District Residents,

Our parks and recreation system is a reflection of the community's long held values and support for park land, green space, fitness and wellness. Today's system of urban parks, trails, recreation facilities and programs is a major contributor to Champaign's nationally acclaimed high quality of life and the result of the community support and investment. For over 100 years, the Champaign Park District has promoted the community's access to nature, health, and wellness in the areas of parks and recreation. It is in this tradition that we are proud to submit the Champaign Park District's Comprehensive Plan. This plan presents the framework and policy that will assist and guide the District in the stewardship of our parks, recreation facilities and programs. The Comprehensive Plan includes broad policies and initiatives that will help shape the services that the District will provide to the community over the next ten years.



We invite the reader to delve into the details of the plan to see first-hand how the outlined strategies blend the analysis of parks and facilities with the community's current and future needs, and the order in which the Champaign Park District intends to undertake them. This plan is a strategy moving forward. We are not committing to all ideas detailed in the Comprehensive Plan, but instead will explore all options and look to the community prior to committing to implement any project.

Many thanks to our existing customers for the opportunity to serve you. We encourage residents whom we have not yet served to explore what the Champaign Park District has to offer to you and your family. To all, this is your plan and our commitment to continuous improvement. Please contact us if you have any questions.

Warmest regards,

Craig Hays,  
Board President

Joseph DeLuce, CPRP  
Executive Director



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## Purpose of Comprehensive Plan

The 2019 Comprehensive Plan was developed by the Champaign Park District to help guide future policy decisions, inform Capital Outlays, and direct future planning efforts. According to the American Planning Association, a *comprehensive plan* is the “adopted official statement of a legislative body of a local government that sets forth (in words, maps, illustrations, and/or tables) goals, policies, and guidelines intended to direct the present and future physical, social, and economic development that occurs within its planning jurisdiction.”<sup>1</sup> The Comprehensive Plan builds upon the Mission, Vision, and Values developed and adopted in the *Champaign Park District Community Focused Strategic Plan*, published in 2016.<sup>2</sup> First enacted in 1999, the Champaign Park District Board of Commissioners *Comprehensive Assessment Policy* instructs that a new comprehensive plan should be issued every ten years to evaluate evolving “economic conditions, populations shifts, and changing social needs of the community.”<sup>3</sup> The 2019 plan will help identify strengths and weaknesses of the District and develop strategies to close gaps in service, ensure efficient planning, and evaluate future resource use.



## Document Structure

The 2019 Comprehensive Plan is separated into the following sections:

**01 Introduction:** Reviews Champaign Park District Mission, Vision, and Values. Provides a brief history of the District and Community, and reviews recent initiatives completed by the District.

**02 Inventory:** Provides a snapshot of the District’s existing land use and programming and identifies strengths and weaknesses of the District.

**03 Financial Assessment:** Details existing financial status of the Park District and community and how that may affect future planning, programs, and staffing.

**04 Demographics and Trends:** Considers makeup of our service area and how that may change over the period of our Comprehensive Plan.

**05 Community Engagement:** Identifies important themes from input collected from residents, staff, Park District leadership, and the Board of Commissioners.

**06 Strategic Initiatives:** Reviews internal planning priorities set by Park District documents and initiatives of sister agencies. Provides broad guidance for future capital outlays.

**07 References:** Lists documents cited by the Comprehensive plan and provides an appendix of CPD documents which informed the Comprehensive Planning process.



# Champaign Park District History



Figure 1-Crowd gathered at West Side Park to hear presidential candidate Theodore Roosevelt speak (1912).

Champaign's parks have been a part of the city's fabric nearly as long as the city has been in existence, with land for Champaign's first park made available in 1854. This property was originally laid out as a public square and possibly as the site for the county court house. However in 1859 the 12.7 acre property became the first park in Champaign County and was named White Park in honor of the man who made the land available. Known as the "Commons", the two square block space was put to work by settlers as a cow pasture in 1861 when the city council adopted a motion "to permit calves to be turned into the City Park at \$.35 per month."

The Champaign Park District first organized as a Township Park District in 1911. It had limited taxing power and depended on donations of land to establish the park system. The majority of Champaign's current parks were acquired through donations and in the mid 1920's parks that were owned by the City of Champaign were transferred to the Park District. Since then all public parks have been held by the District. The first tax levy was made in 1912 and collected in 1913.

By the middle 1950's it became evident that due to the exploding growth of the community and the limited taxing powers of the Township Park District, the current structure was inadequate to meet the needs of residents in the community. Therefore in 1957 The District was reorganized as a General Park District by a referendum of voters. The Champaign Park District has since been a local unit of government with its own legal and financial responsibilities and is governed by 5, local residents who are elected into office for 6-year terms.

The Champaign Park District also maintains pieces of history in some of the facilities it owns. The Springer Cultural Center, located in the heart of downtown Champaign, was originally constructed as a post office in 1904 and was later listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. Springer is currently the main location for cultural arts programs within the District and houses cultural, recreational, and educational programs for all ages as well as workshops, lectures, exhibits, and performances.

Another historical facility located in downtown Champaign and owned by the Champaign Park District is the Virginia Theatre which has been part of this community's history and quality of life since 1921. Built in the tradition of great vaudeville-movie palaces of the 1920's and early 30's and now on the National Register of Historic Places, the Virginia is a beautiful theatre with a rich link to our past.

Now celebrating over 100 years of parks, the Champaign Park District currently maintains 62 parks and 11 programmed facilities which serves a direct population of 86,637. The District offers over 1200 programs and special events each year. With specialty facilities like the historic Virginia Theatre, the Sholem Aquatic Center, Prairie Farms and the Tennis Center, the Champaign Park District has something for everyone.

## Geographic Conditions

The Champaign Park District is located in East-Central Illinois. Champaign, Illinois, in many ways, can be considered a twin city with Urbana as both are home to the University of Illinois. Although Champaign is semi-urban, with older neighborhoods enjoying a relatively, mature urban forest, much of the new growth to the north and west is occurring on farmland with little tree cover.

The climate of Central Illinois is highly seasonal. There are four distinct seasons with variable conditions: cold winters, hot summers, and temperate spring and fall.<sup>4</sup> Central Illinois is prone to extreme weather conditions such as frequent thunderstorms, occasional tornadoes, and heat waves. These conditions heavily drive the programs and amenities offered by the District. Indoor recreation space is vital to promote physical activity and social interaction during winter months. The aquatics center, a seasonal facility offers a respite during summer heat waves. Program managers have to be adept in providing alternative activities for the somewhat unpredictable nature of Central Illinois weather.

This region of Illinois was once dominated by tallgrass prairie, specifically the “Grand Prairie.” The Grand Prairie is the most eastern stretch of tallgrass prairie and was dominated by hundreds of species of perennial grasses and wildflowers.<sup>5</sup> Central Illinois had been covered by tallgrass prairie following its last glaciation, roughly 8000 years ago. However, with the advent of the steel plow in the 1800’s, the fertile soils created by prairie have largely been converted to agricultural lands.<sup>6</sup> Efforts in District parks to recreate natural areas typically follow the structure of tallgrass prairie.

Central Illinois’ topography is a remnant of its glaciated past, very flat. Before the area was settled and mechanically drained for agriculture, Champaign was historically damp. Located at the headwaters for three watersheds, many now channelized streams begin in Champaign. The Champaign Park District works closely with the City of Champaign in its efforts to more sustainably manage high rainfall events.



Figure 2-Watershed map of Illinois, highlighting the three watersheds that occur within the District.



*Did you know?  
Our horticulture staff maintains over  
40 acres of natural gardens and  
restorations.*

# Parks, Facilities, and Trails

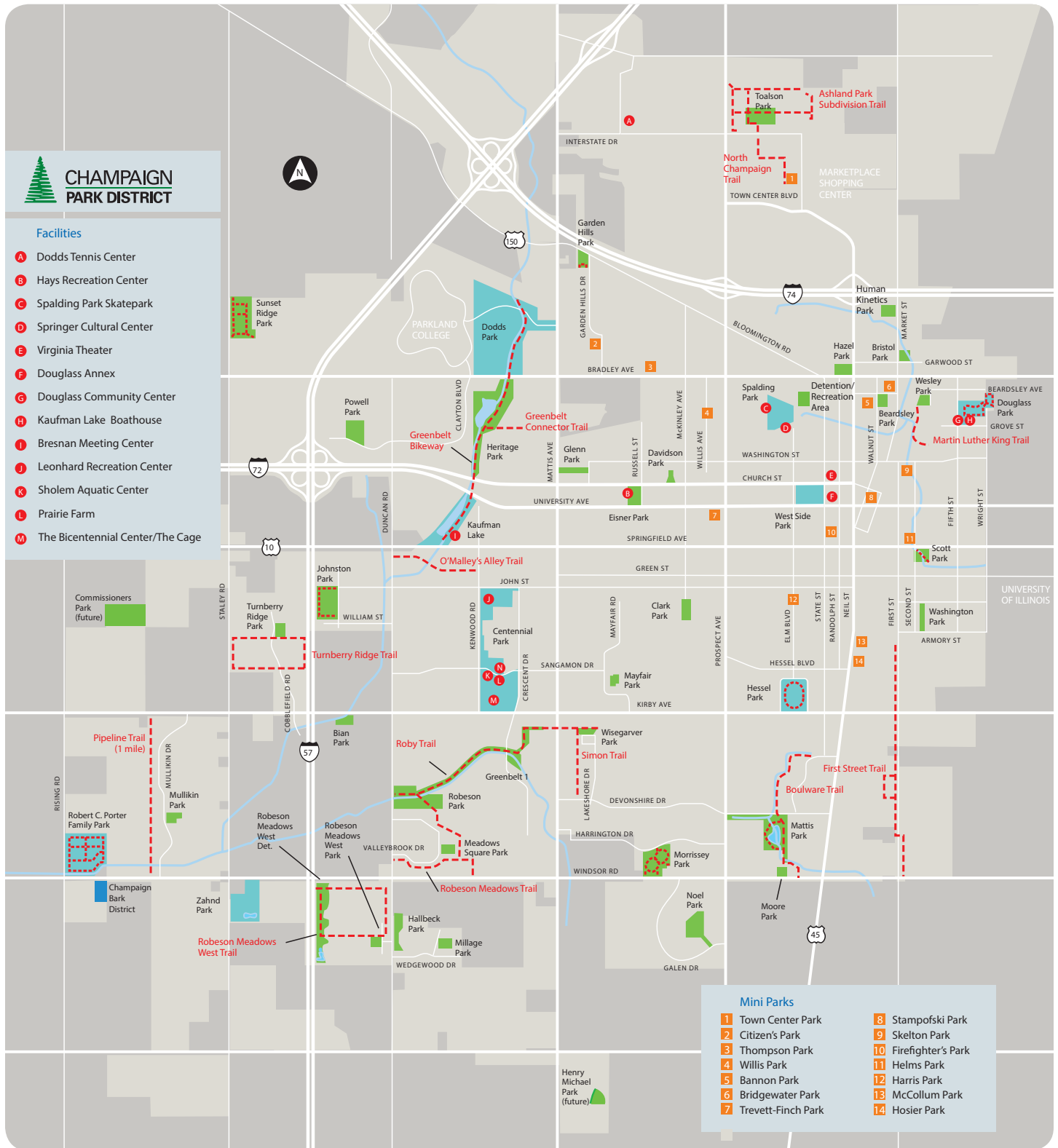


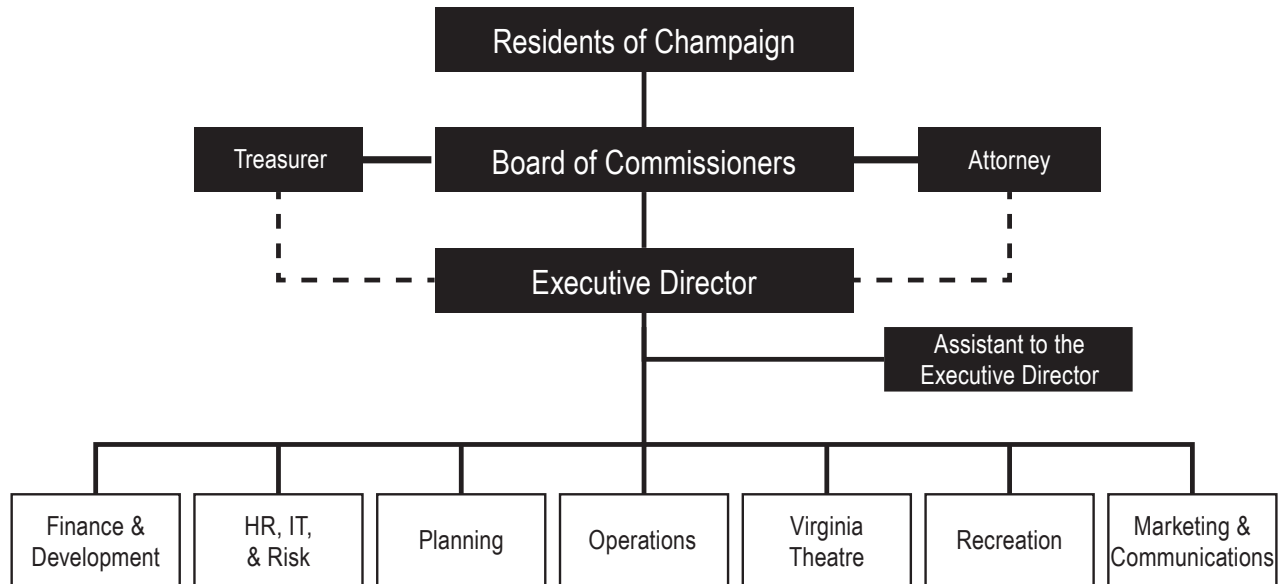
Figure 3-Diagrammatic wayfinding map of Park District. A version of this map can be found in the program guides made available to the residents of the City of Champaign.





# Organizational Structure

The Champaign Park District is governed by five elected residents of Champaign, who volunteer their services. The elected Commissioners elect a President and Vice President, and appoint a Treasurer, Board Secretary, and Assistant Secretary, which are considered paid services to the Board. The staff management team is comprised of seven Department Heads and the Executive Director. There are 71 full time staff, 9 full time II staff, and approximately 700 part-time and seasonal workers.



## Allied Agencies

Especially because of its location in a twin city and campus town, the Champaign Park District is part of a diverse fabric of park and recreation agencies.

The **Urbana Park District**, founded in 1907, has 20 parks, with a total of 613 acres, of which 234 acres are natural areas.<sup>7</sup> Their public facilities include the Brookens Gym, the Crystal Lake Park Family Aquatic Center, the Phillips Recreation Center, and the Urbana Indoor Aquatic Center. Urbana has a population of 42,014.

The **Village of Savoy Park and Recreation Department** maintains 7 parks encompassing over 75 acres and is a subset of the Village of Savoy. The Savoy Recreation Center is a vital resource for the community with a fitness center and athletic courts as well as providing programming at the larger parks. The City of Savoy was incorporated in 1956 and has an estimated population of 8,177 residents.

The **Champaign County Forest Preserve District** is a government agency charged with the stewardship of six forest preserves covering almost 4,000 acres in Champaign County, Illinois. The Forest Preserve District, which covers all but seven sections of Champaign County, was established by referendum in 1935.



Figure 5-Champaign Park District Board of Commissioners, circa 1975.

## Neighbors and Partners

The Champaign Park District frequently partners with allied agencies, community groups, educational institutions, and businesses to better serve residents. As a special district, the Champaign Park District has the authority to enter into agreements such as easements, leases, and land management agreements.

The **City of Champaign**, which shares its boundaries with the Champaign Park District, has a population of roughly 86,000 and encompasses 23 square miles. The City and Park District work closely from a planning perspective and operational perspective. The City owns some property the Park District manages as public park, such as Bristol Park. Alternatively, the Park District cooperates with the City for drainage infrastructure projects, trail management, and event planning on District property.

The **Urbana Park District** and Champaign Park District work closely on several initiatives such as trails plans, programming, and the Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation Program (CUSR). In 1985 the Champaign Park District and Urbana Park District joined forces to create what is now known as the Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation Program. The program currently serves nearly 400 special needs residents every year, providing them with quality recreational opportunities with the assistance of specially trained staff. Both the Champaign and Urbana Park Districts also work together to offer “resident” pricing to patrons from each respective District so that residents of Urbana can enjoy Champaign Park District programs at the reduced rate, and vice versa.

The **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign** is a public research institute located in both Urbana and Champaign. The University was founded in 1867 and established as a land-grant institution. It has a student population of over 45,000 students. The University is situated on 6,730 acres and is the largest employer in the area with nearly 14,000 employees. The Park District owns and operates several parks in “campus town.” The District frequently reaches out to various academic departments for academic advice and regularly works with interns from the University.

**Parkland College** is a two year community college and a member of the Illinois Community College System. The college has an average annual enrollment of 18,000 students and a full time faculty. Parkland is the 10<sup>th</sup> largest employer, employing 707 people. Parkland College is directly adjacent to the District’s largest property, Dodds Park.

The **Champaign Unit 4 School District** serves over 10,000 students in Champaign, Savoy, and Bondville, Illinois.<sup>8</sup> The Park District and School District frequently partner to offer programming and to share open space and facilities. The Park District contributed to gymnasium enhancements to Barkstall and Stratton Elementary Schools in exchange for opportunities for Park District use. The Park District recently entered into an intergovernmental agreement allowing Unit 4 to utilize Spalding Park for high school baseball.

The **Public Art League (PAL)** is a non-profit organization that promotes public art throughout the community. Annually, PAL juries potential pieces from commissioned entries. From this selection, the Champaign Park District leases and purchases public art from the Public Art League with support from the Champaign Park District Foundation and community donors.

The **Champaign County Regional Planning Commission (RPC)** is an intergovernmental organization that provides planning, childhood education, and technical assistance in Central Illinois.<sup>9</sup> RPC has assisted the Park District with several planning documents.

The **Urbana & Champaign Sanitary District (USCD)** is a municipal body which treats wastewater for Champaign, Urbana, Bondville, and Savoy. The USCD leases property to the Park District for its dog park in southwest Champaign.

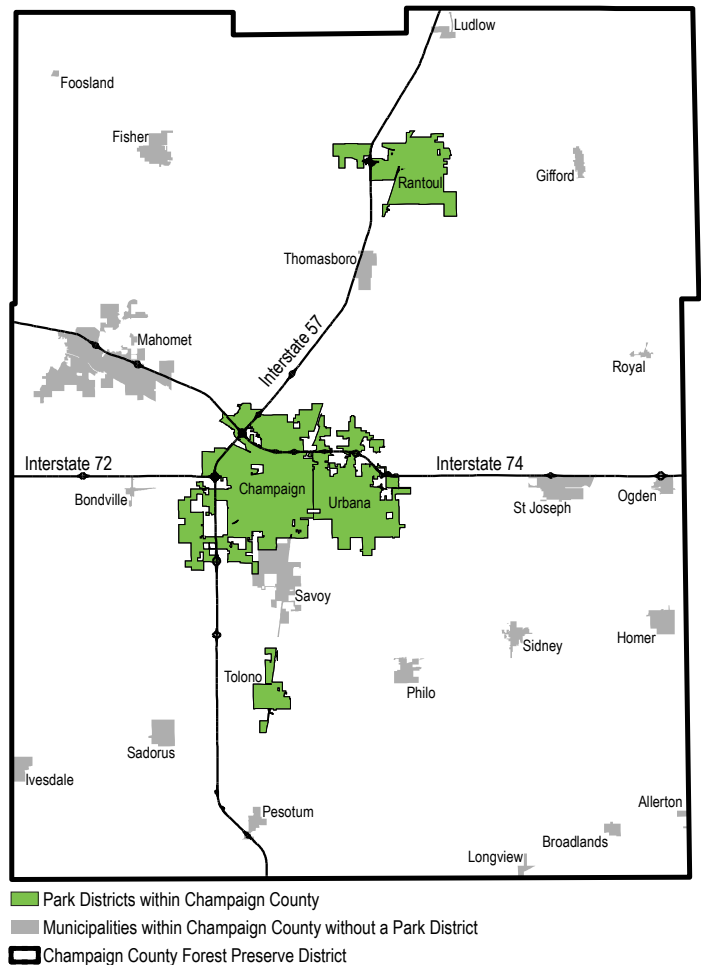


Figure 6-Map of Champaign County and adjacent park districts

## Mission

A mission statement should concisely summarize the goals and purpose of an organization in a matter that helps guide both large scale strategies and daily decision making. Mission statements may evolve as the goals of the Park District change, or as the needs and wants of the community change.

The current Park District mission, drafted in 2013, was approved by the Board of Commissioners as part of the *Champaign Park District Strategic Plan 2020 Vision: Effective and Efficient in the Pursuit of Excellence*. As part of the 2016 *Champaign Park District Community Focused Strategic Plan*, the District also issued a set of values which support our mission and help to guide our administration, operations, programming, and planning.

**To enhance our community's quality of life through positive experiences in parks, recreation, and the cultural arts.**



## Values

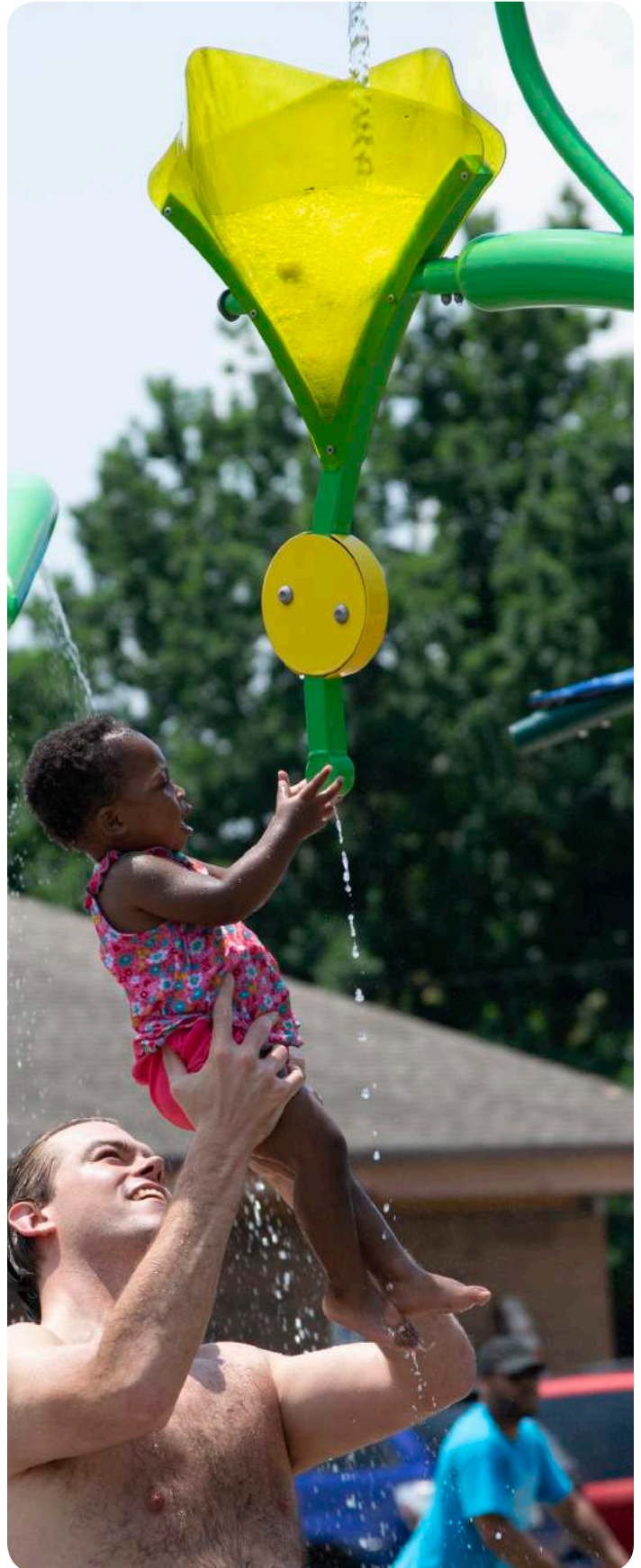
**Stewardship:** We conduct our business fairly, transparently and with integrity. We are fiscally responsible to our residents. We strive to offer affordable programs and services for all residents. We preserve natural resources and promote good conservation and stewardship practices. We provide opportunities for health and wellness for our residents. We strive to provide equal access for all users to all of our parks, facilities and programs. We value and reward honest and forthright employees who provide excellent customer service and stewardship of public resources.

**Organizational Excellence:** We know and respect our roles and responsibilities and work together to accomplish our goals. We work with other agencies and groups throughout the community to accomplish our goals. We encourage all residents to participate in planning, designing, and advocating for parks and recreation. We recognize that being good is simply not good enough. We promote staff development. We follow best practices in providing quality parks, recreation and cultural arts. We assure safety through a comprehensive risk management program.

**Innovation:** We value employees who present creative and proactive solutions to challenges. We encourage doing things differently, progressively, creatively, and with an entrepreneurial spirit. We value an innovative environment that enhances our community's parks and programs. We value our ability to anticipate, influence, and embrace change.

**Customer Service:** We offer consistent, customer-focused service across the organization. We strive to say YES! to our customers for the right things. We actively seek and value customer feedback. We care about our team members and customers.

**Diversity:** We provide quality parks, programs and services that meet the diverse needs of all ages and abilities in our community. We embrace the diversity of our team. We value diversity in all its forms and actively seek people with different perspectives and experiences. We encourage inclusion.





# 02 Inventory

Residents have access to quality programs, trails, facilities, and parks through the Champaign Park District. Reviewing a snapshot of current offerings allows the District to set performance standards and continually work towards meeting those standards. Internal standards are developed by consulting several agency standards such as the Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency and the National Recreation and Parks Agency.

The Champaign Park District owns and manages a total of 718 acres of property of which, 708 acres are developed. There are three distinct types of property: parks, trails, and facilities. There is some overlap in these distinctions. For example, the Leonhard Recreation Center, a facility, is located within Centennial Park while the Springer Cultural Center is specifically a facility property.

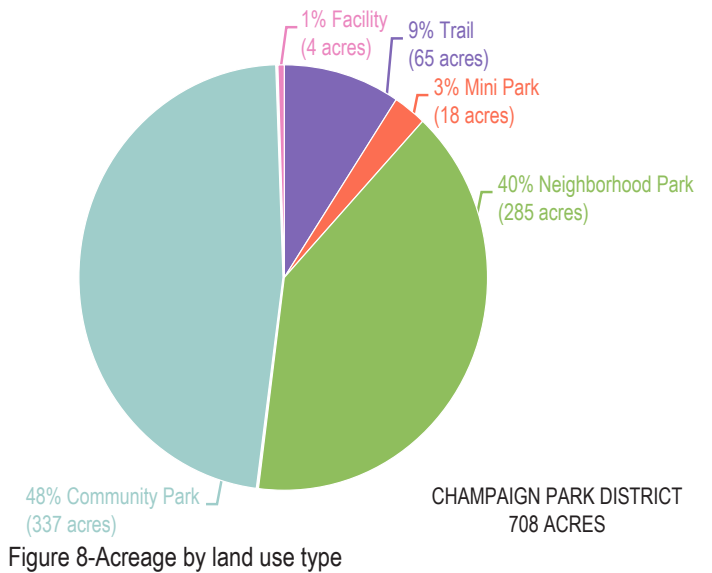


Figure 8-Acreage by land use type

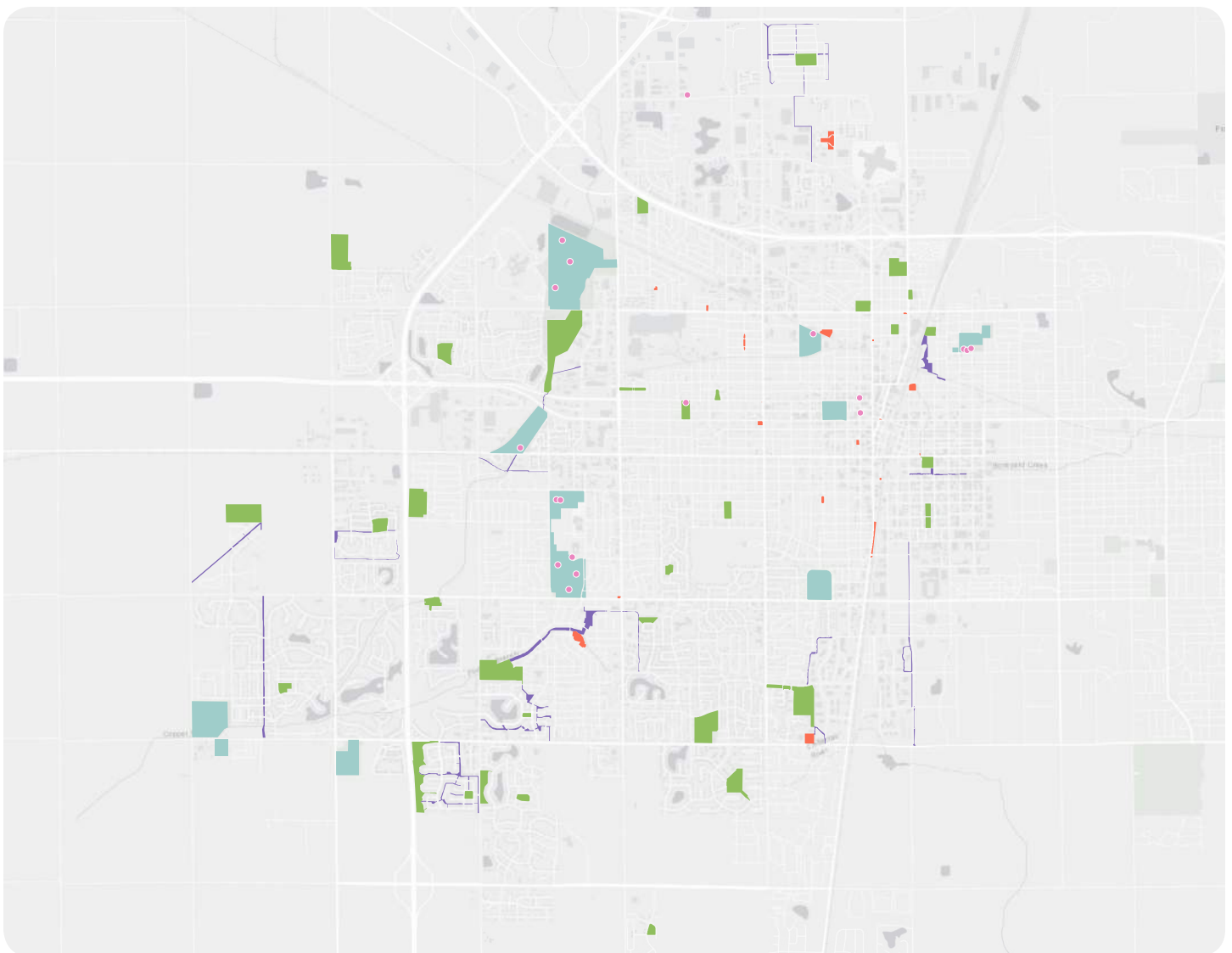


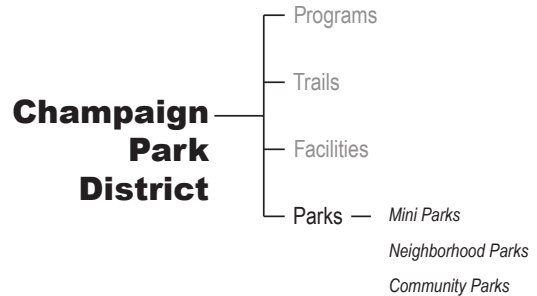
Figure 7-Distribution of parks, trails, and facility by type.

# Parks

There are a wide variety of parks across the District. Their sizes range from large, regional destinations with sports complexes and concession stands, such as Dodds Park, to the traffic calming flower island in downtown Champaign, Stampofski Park. There are 62 total parks in the district, 43 owned by the District, 2 partially owned, and 19 owned by others and managed and programmed by the District. The average park size is 25 acres. Per 1000 District residents, there are 8.2 acres of park space (including trails and facilities). According to the National Recreation and Parks Agency, the median acres of park per 1000 residents for communities ranging from 50,000-49,000 people is 9.4. However, the District rate of 8.2 acres/1000 residents is well within the lower and upper quartile range of 5.1 to 15.0 acres/1000 residents for comparable communities.

Overall, 88% of the District properties are owned by the Champaign Park District (633 acres). The remaining 12% of managed properties are owned by affiliated agencies and community partners such as the City of Champaign. Types of managed properties include many sections of trail, parks such as Bristol Park, and City parkways adjacent to owned properties. A third of mini parks are not owned by the Park District. Mini Parks are often unique arrangements with other agencies and are typically a beautification effort.

*Signature parks* and facilities are defined by iconic features and amenities. This is a designation that is not mutually exclusive; a mini park, neighborhood park, or community park could be a signature park. Signature parks have a higher level of design and maintenance care. The program of these parks are unique as compared to other parks therefore it is important that they be equitably distributed throughout the district.



8.2 acres of park space per 1,000 residents





## Park Typologies

The Park District has three park typologies. These designations guide programming, funding, amenities and staffing. The standards below are based on the Illinois Association of Park Districts Distinguished Agency Accreditation program. However, there are a few typology exceptions to the IAPD Accreditation due to neighborhood context.

**Mini Parks** are specialized properties that the Park District primarily utilizes for signage, beautification projects, and program advertising. These parks serve as a gateway to the Park District and the community it serves. Mini Parks are often situated on busy corridors and serve as a respite for pedestrians. It is the preferable for these parks have bench seating and ornamental plant material.

Service area: ¼ mile

Size threshold: (+/-)1 acre

Acreage Standard: .25-.5 acres/1000 population

Average CPD acreage: .9 acres

**Neighborhood Parks** are programmed with active and passive elements to suit the needs of the surrounding neighborhood. Examples of active programming in neighborhood parks includes tennis courts, basketball courts, and playgrounds. Passive programming might include perimeter paths, picnic areas, or flower beds.

Service area: ¼ mile – ½ mile

Size threshold: (+/-) 15 acres

Acreage standard: 1-2 acres/1000 population

Average CPD acreage: 8.6 acres

**Community Parks** are typically considered a destination within the District. These parks host a variety of programs such as bodies of water, parking, concessions, specialized sports fields, or splash-pads. *Special Use Parks* are a subset of community parks that are a draw to the entire district because of a unique facility such as a swimming pool, facility or dog park.

Service area: 1 -2 miles

Size threshold: (+/-) 25 acres

Acreage Standard: 5 – 8 acres/1000 population

Average CPD acreage: 33.7 acres

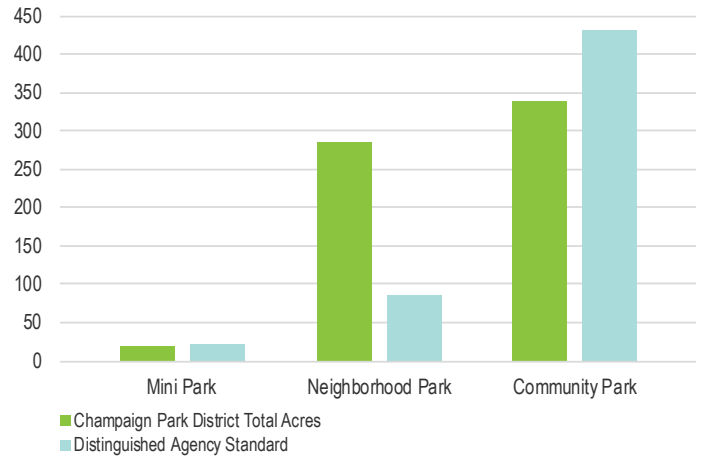


Figure 9-Relative size and service area of park typologies.

## Inventory of Amenities

Park amenities depend on park classification, neighborhood context, and adjacency to similar features in neighboring parks. Many parks have traditional features such as picnic shelters, playgrounds, and paths. There are also both typical and naturalized landscaping beds which range from small annual beds to prairie reconstructions. Recreational amenities typically include tennis courts, basketball courts, softball/baseball fields, and soccer fields but also include unique recreational opportunities such as ga-ga ball and skate parks. Of the 62 parks, there is a range of amenities and levels of development. An inventory matrix is provided to better identify the distinctions between various park types.

### Playgrounds

There are 31 playground structures in the Community and Neighborhood Parks. Playgrounds are often one of the top reasons for park visits. In addition to ensuring that these amenities are fun and enjoyable, equally important is that they are safe. All playgrounds meet the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission standards for safety. The District requires that at least three full time staff have Certified Playground Safety Certification. Accessibility is also an important tenet in playground standards. The District has one fully accessible playground, located at Eisner Park. This park is also the location of the Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation staff. Accessibility in playgrounds can take many forms such as specialized swings that offer more support, smooth rubber surfacing, ground-level activities, and ramps/platforms which can accommodate wheelchairs. Although the Eisner Park playground is the most accessible, all playgrounds meet or exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for public playgrounds. As playgrounds age and safety standards evolve, it is important to plan for scheduled replacement of playground equipment. Typically, playgrounds have a useful life of 20-30 years. The annual capital budget accounts for replacing one playground per year. This replacement schedule is developed based on the age of the playground and overall condition.

Need to draft text about other amenities (pavilions, skate parks, etc)

Park	Park Size (acres)
------	-------------------

Bannon Park	0.06
Bridgewater Park	0.15
Citizen's Park	0.30
Firefighter's Park	0.40
Green Street Entryway Park	0.13
Greenbelt #1 Park	3.44
Harris Park	0.50
Helms Park	0.05
Hosier Park	0.08
McCullum Park	1.33
Mini Park IV	0.20
Mini Park V	0.01
Mini Park VIII	2.08
Moore Park	2.87
Skelton Park	1.42
Stampofski Park	0.04
Thompson Park	0.34
Town Center Park	3.76
Trevett-Finch Park	0.60
Willis Park	0.66

MINI PARKS (18 ACRES)



Park		Park Size (acres)	Restroom	Drinking Fountain	Shelter or Pavilion	Playground	Community Garden	Natural Area	Parking Lot	On-Street Parking	Basketball Court	Baseball or Softball	Skate park	Soccer Field	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court	Aquatic Center	Splash Pad	Fishing
COMMUNITY PARK (337 ACRES)	Centennial Park	69.6		x	x	x			x		x	x			x	x	x		
	Champaign Bark District	6.9		x	x				x										
	Dodds Park	104.0	x	x		x	x		x			x							
	Douglass Park	15.5		x	x	x	x		x		x	x						x	
	Hessel Park	22.2	x	x	x	x			x			x			x			x	
	Kaufman Park	29.1		x					x										x
	Porter Family Park	38.2				x		x	x										x
	Spalding Park	16.8		x	x	x			x		x	x	x		x				
	West Side Park	13.9		x	x	x													
	Zahnd Park	20.6	x	x	x	x			x			x							
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS (285 ACRES)	Beardsley Park	2.4		x		x				x	x								
	Bian Park	4.2								x									
	Bristol Park	1.3				x				x									
	Clark Park	4.0		x		x				x	x				x	x			
	Commissioners Park	20.0				x				x	x								
	Davidson Park	1.3				x				x									
	Eisner Park	4.9		x	x	x			x	x	x	x			x				
	Garden Hills Park	4.5		x		x				x				x					
	Glenn Park	2.4			x	x				x	x								
	Hallbeck Park	6.0			x														
	Hazel Park	4.9		x		x					x	x		x					
	Henry Michael Park	2.3				x				x	x								
	Heritage Park	41.6						x	x										
	Human Kinetics Park	8.9							x		x			x		x			
	Johnston Park	15.1		x		x				x		x		x					
	Mattis Park	22.3			x					x									
	Mayfair Park	2.1		x		x				x									
	Meadows Square Park	1.0		x						x									
	Millage Park	2.5		x	x	x				x									
	Morrissey Park	19.0		x	x	x				x		x		x	x				
	Mullikin Park	3.3		x	x	x					x								
	Noel Park	10.8				x				x		x		x					
	Powell Park	8.0		x	x	x				x	x								
	Robeson Meadows West Detention Park	19.5																	
	Robeson Meadows West Park	2.0		x		x					x								
	Robeson Park	24.1		x		x					x			x					
	Scott Park	3.9			x	x		x		x	x								
	Sunset Ridge Park	19.4		x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x				
	Toalson Park	7.7		x		x				x	x								
	Turnberry Ridge Park	6.1		x	x	x				x	x						x		
Washington Park	3.8									x	x					x			
Wesley Park	2.8				x				x	x									
Wisegarver Park	2.8								x			x		x					

## Natural Areas

Natural areas can help foster an environmental aesthetic, create learning landscapes which recreate native habitats, and provide environmental benefits. These areas demonstrate a landscape resembling pre-European settlement. Prior to European settlement, “over half of Illinois, approximately 20 million acres was covered by flat to rolling tallgrass prairie.”

Establishing natural areas on heavily degraded sites takes time and effort. Transforming or restoring an area that has been disconnected from any natural system requires specialized, ongoing care and maintenance. Since establishing the position of Natural Areas Coordinator in 2014 within the Horticulture Department this effort has been greatly enhanced.

Natural Areas have enjoyed a loyal following and continue to be draw for volunteers, creating opportunities for conservation education which, according to the Illinois Outdoor Recreation Survey (2014) was listed as one of the top four outdoor recreation priorities. “Eight out of ten respondents expressed support for the expansion of conservation education as a mechanism to increase appreciation of natural resources.”

There are four parks within the District including the Robert C. Porter Family Park, Heritage Park, Scott Park, and Sunset Ridge Park. Porter Family Park is the only park whose programmatic function is primarily dedicated to passive recreation and the ecological stewardship required in maintaining a natural areas. This award winning park is exemplar of progressive land management techniques and procedures. Although extensive natural areas are not appropriate for all parks, Porter Family Park plays an important role in the District. Future improvements at Heritage Park are in development that can further secure its identity as an important area for passive recreation.

## Flower Islands

The Flower Island Program, started in 1988, provides aesthetic enhancements through the deployment of planted beds throughout the City. This beautification effort is partially subsidized by the owners of the beds, many of which are located on commercial or private property. The number of flower beds continues to hover around 300. Apart from their regular maintenance of park space, the horticulture group plants around 100,000 flowers per year. This investment requires a regular watering regiment to insure the success of the flowers.

The flower island program continues to be viewed favorably amongst residents. In addition to general ‘park landscaping’, the flower island program received the highest satisfaction ratings in the 2017 Needs Assessment Survey. The District has begun moving toward a mix of traditional annuals and adaptive perennials. Transitioning to more perennial has benefits in that they, ultimately, require less long term care and resources.

## Arbor

In the last four years all trees within the functional boundaries of the District, over 8,000 trees have been geo-located, inventoried and given a full condition report. The Operations Department plants on average 100 trees a year. This database continues to be used on a daily basis by the full time arbor crew. Roughly 10% of the trees across the District belong to the “program tree” project, which allow patrons to make a donation in return for a tree planted to mark a loved one or special occasion.

The Arbor crew continues to adapt to emerging threats to tree species such as emerald ash borer. This past year the trained Arborists have removed 86 ash trees and continue to monitor the health and viability of the entire tree stock. Preserving this very important resource for the community is a very high priority for the District. To that end, a Tree Preservation Ordinance is in development, this tool will ensure that all the trees within the District are properly cared for future generations of Champaign residents.

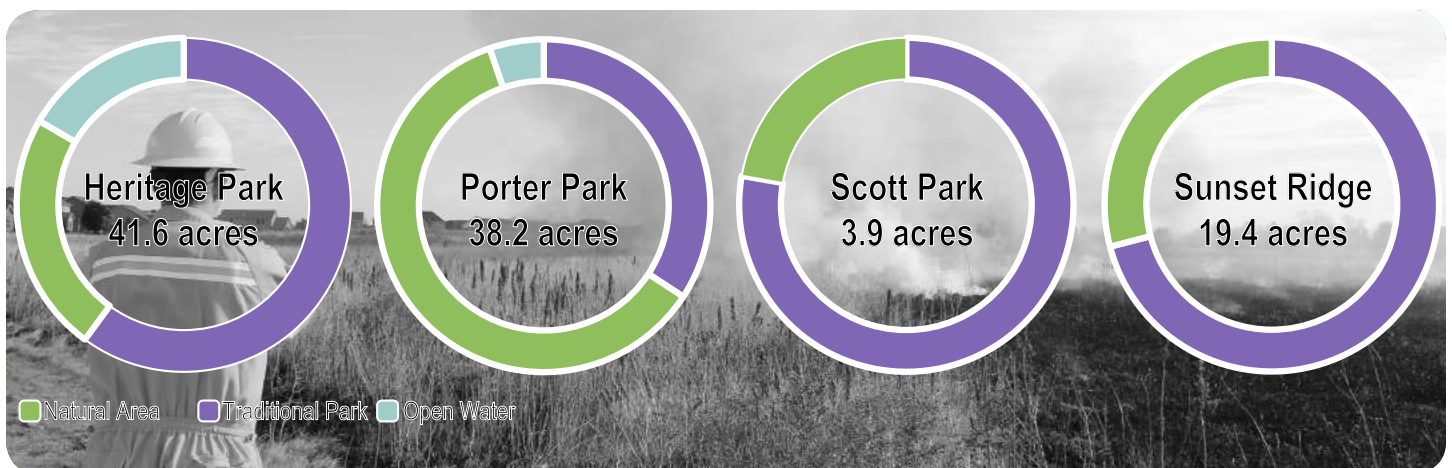


Figure 10-Ratio of natural area to traditional park development in parks which feature reconstructed prairie.

# Facilities

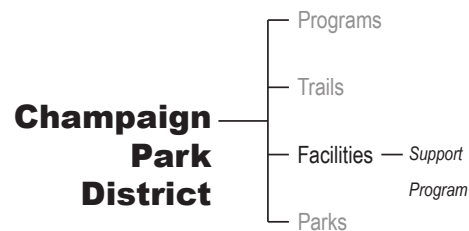
The majority of facilities are situated within parkland, however three facilities are standalone buildings: Dodds Tennis Center, the Virginia Theater, and the Springer Cultural Center. Leonard Recreational Facility is the only new facility the park district has built in the last decade (VT renovation, notwithstanding).

A facilities matrix was created to better understand how facilities meet the needs of both staff and public. Additionally, understanding the overlapping uses and functions of the facilities is important for space management. All the facilities are owned by the District, with the exception of the Material Handling, which is leased from the City of Champaign, the Barkstall Elementary gym, and the Stratton Elementary gym, both owned by the Unit 4 School District.

In 2010, a comprehensive Indoor Recreation and Comprehensive Study was conducted. This feasibility study looked at each facility from an operations/programming standpoint. Many of the problems outlined in this study with regard to Hays, Douglass Community and Douglass Annex still persist. These three buildings have reached the recommended the maximum lifespan of 40 year replacement/ depreciation

threshold. Douglass Community Center has undergone a number of Capital improvements over the past 10 years yet much of it is still difficult to access for mobility impaired visitors.

As noted, the Material Handling Facility which is used for bulk landscape storage was constructed, in 2012, at the cost of \$292,923 (in 2012). The land where this storage facility is located is owned by the City of Champaign. Although in many ways, its central location is ideal when considering the distribution of bulk materials throughout the District, a permanent arrangement should be considered in the next couple of years.



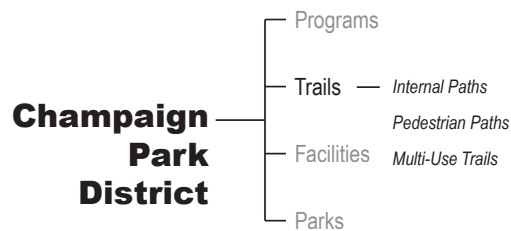
	Facility	App. Area (SF)	Full Time Staff	Parking Spots	Shared Use	Seasonal Facility	Year Built
Community	Douglass Annex	3,811	0	78			1967
	Douglass Community Center	17,058	4	78			1976
	Douglass Library	6,315	0	78	x		1996
	Hays Recreation Center	4,138	6	27			1967
Cultural	Prairie Farm	480	0	61		x	1966
	Springer Cultural Center	24,000	7	24			1904
	Virginia Theatre	30,625	5	0			1920
Recreation	<b>Barkstall Elementary Gym</b>		0		x		
	Dodds Park Soccer Complex	3,473	0	278		x	2001
	Dodds Softball Four Plex	3,685		200		x	2003
	Dodds Softball Three Plex	628	0	106		x	1998
	Dodds Tennis Center	912	2	63		x	1991
	Kaufman Lake Boathouse	609	0	33		x	1978
	Leonard Recreation Center	40,000	7	133			2013
	Sholem Aquatic Center	6,742	1	142		x	2003
	<b>Stratton Elementary Gym</b>		0		x		
	Bicentennial Center	12,750	0	53	x		1976
Support	Bresnan Meeting Center	10,409	19	35			1970
	<b>Material Handling</b>		0	0	x	x	2012
	Operations Shop and Yard	5,106	28	38			1967

# Trails

The Champaign Park District provides three main types of trails: internal park paths, pedestrian trails, and multi-use trails. Roughly half of the trails connect to either another trail or multiple parks. The majority of the trails serve the neighborhoods in which they are sited; however, there are a few trails that provide connections to other parks and uses. There are nearly 17 miles of trails, encompassing 65 acres.

The trails system outside of parks is composed of pedestrian and multi-use trails. These are categorized primarily by width. The Champaign Park District Board Policy 01-08 states that no trail should be considered for either management or ownership if it does not meet an 8' minimum width (with a 20' easement). All 'regional trails' or multi-modal trails must be at least 10' wide (with a 22' easement). For the purposes of this plan, 8' was used for a baseline for multi-use trails.

According to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2015-2019, "agencies with trail development plans indicated constructing more trails than agencies without such plans." In 2008, a joint City of Champaign and Champaign Park District trails plan set forth standards for trail widths and outlined areas of trail development opportunity. In 2011, an updated *Champaign Trails Plan* was completed. A District specific *Trails Master Plan* was created in 2017. Like the 2011 plan, the 2017 plan was completed with the help of the Champaign County Regional Planning Commission. All trails plans address trail width standards. The



2008 plan stated 'internal' paths should be between 6'-8' wide and 'multi-use' paths a minimum of 8'. The 2011 *Champaign Trails Plan* set a standard for Greenways, Multi Use, and Railtrails, and Connector Trails at 10'. The minimum width for a multi-use (pedestrian and bicycle) trail is 10'.

Although generally outside the purview of the Park District, some progress has been made in the City of Champaign with regard to Rails to Trails conservancy efforts. The District has been in the process of securing access toward a connection between Kaufman Lake and Heritage Park which would formalize what is now ad-hoc arrangement. This Greenbelt Trail connection would result in a trail between three parks, Kaufman, Heritage, and Dodds.

Five District trails have been re-categorized from their classification status outlined in the 2008 Comprehensive Park and Open Space Plan. These trails do not meet the requirement set forth in the 2011 Champaign Trails Plan as a green belt, a "corridor that runs along a naturally sensitive area."

- **Garden Hills RR Row**-never developed, scheduled to be part of City's improvements plan
- **O'Malley's Alley Trail**- connector trail
- **Robert Simon Trail**- connector trail
- **Robeson Meadows Trail**- multi-use trail
- **Robeson Park**- multi-use trail
- **Turnberry Ridge Trail**- multi-use trail

Other trail classifications are Railtrails, Multi-Use Trails, and Connector Trails.

Trail	Type	Trail Size (acres)	Length (miles)	Connectivity
Ashland Park Subdivision Trail	Connecting	4.9	1.8	Low
Boulware Trail	Greenway	2.3	1.2	High
First Street Trail	Connecting	5.5	1.7	Low
Greenbelt Bikeway Trail	Greenway	0.9	1.8	High
Greenbelt Connector Trail	Greenway	0.6	0.2	High
Martin Luther King Trail	Connecting	5.6	0.4	Low
North Champaign Trail	Connecting	1.7	0.6	Low
O'Malley's Alley Trail	Connecting	1.3	0.5	High
Pipeline Trail	Multi-Use	5.8	1.0	Low
Robeson Meadows Trail	Connecting	6.5	1.5	High
Robeson Meadows West Trail	Connecting	7.9	3.4	Med
Roby Trail	Greenway	12.0	1.5	High
Simon Trail	Connecting	1.0	0.5	High
Trails at Abbey Fields	Connecting	3.8	0.7	Low
Turnberry Ridge Trail	Connecting	3.3	1.2	Low

**TOTAL LENGTH: 17.9**



Figure 11-Before and after aerial images of Morrissey Park illustrating the 1.7 miles of internal paths added to the park.

### Internal Paths

Internal paths are pedestrian paths within the boundary edges of a park. The Park District has made a concerted effort in building internal paths within established Neighborhood and Community Park property. Within the last 10 years, new paths have been added to older parks. Starting with Hessel Park in 2006, paths have been added to Morrissey, Johnston & Garden Hills. This has been a highly successful endeavor by the District and the work is ongoing.

In 2014, the District conducted a comprehensive Internal Park Paths Study which sought opportunities for increasing the circulation within all parks. Although this type of large scale infrastructure is not always appropriate to every park, we continue to explore opportunities for increasing access to this highly valued amenity. Paths are expected to be installed at Spalding and Zahnd parks within the next couple of years.

Internal Path	Length (miles)
Beardsley Park	0.1
Bridgewater Park	0.0
Centennial Park	0.1
Dodds Park	0.2
Douglass Park	0.7
Firefighter's Park	0.1
Garden Hills Park	0.3
Glenn Park	0.2
Hessel Park	0.6
Johnston Park	0.4
Kaufman Park	0.7
Mattis Park	0.5
Mayfair Park	0.2
Morrissey Park	0.7
Noel Park	0.1
Porter Family Park	1.7
Powell Park	0.2
Scott Park	0.3
Sunset Ridge Park	0.7
Thompson Park	0.0
Toalson Park	0.5
Town Center Park	0.1
Trevett-Finch Park	0.0
Turnberry Ridge Park	0.1
West Side Park	1.1
<b>TOTAL LENGTH:</b>	<b>9.70</b>

# Programming

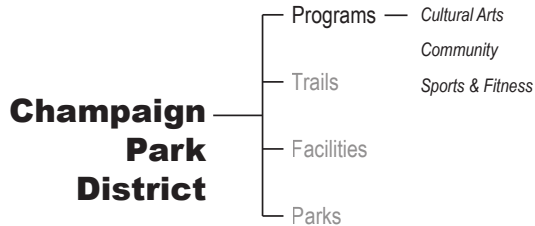
One of the strengths of the Champaign Park District is the quality, quantity, and variety of programs it offers to District residents and beyond. There are three dominant types of Park District programs: Cultural Arts, Community, and Sports & Fitness. Within these categories, there are programs offered across the District and for people of all ages and abilities. There are programs which are targeted to more specific user groups, such as *Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation* and *50 Plus!* programs. However, there is also a variety of programs open to larger groups, such as *Enrichment for All*, *Special Events*, and *Group Fitness*. Programming is organized and facilitated by the Recreation Department, with support from other staff as needed.

In FY 2017-18 the District offered 389 unique programs. Of the 389 program offering 1177 sections were available to the community. The majority of programs (384) have a modest fee for participation. The Champaign Urbana Special Recreation (CUSR) offers 160 unique programs throughout the same year.

## Program Locations

Park District facilities are home to the majority of the programs offered by the District. Occasionally, programming is located outside of a Park District facility, such as School's Out Days trips to local and regional destinations. All Park District facilities offer diverse programming, but there are some facilities that are more specialized than others. For instance, the Virginia Theater and Springer Cultural Center primarily host Cultural programming, whereas the Douglass Community Center offers both Sports & Fitness and Community programming on a regular basis. Douglass Community Center, the Douglass Annex, and the Leonhard Recreation Center are considered more multifunctional because of the types of space and size of space in the facilities. Leonhard Recreation Center has considerable dedicated fitness space, but it also has multipurpose rooms and the gymnasium can be turned over for community programming.

Although modest fees are charged for most programs, the facilities which host these programs are subsidized by the District, with the exception of the Dodds Tennis center.



	FY15	FY16	FY17	Tax Support vs Revenue Average	Average Visitors/Year (2015-17)	\$ per visitor
<b>Dodds Tennis</b>	\$27,947	\$11,511	\$12,318	\$17,259	49,522	\$ 0.35
<b>Douglass Annex</b>	\$23,320	\$15,499	\$15,670	\$18,163	9,861	\$ 1.84
<b>Douglass Community</b>	\$149,723	\$165,700	\$174,815	\$163,413	24,594	\$ 6.64
<b>Hays Rec Center</b>	\$11,390	\$23,961	\$5,318	\$13,556	7,641	\$ 1.77
<b>Leonard Recreation Center</b>	\$38,877	\$135,118	\$166,343	\$113,446	85,291	\$ 1.33
<b>Prarie farm</b>	\$77,357	\$72,592	\$70,653	\$73,534	17,366	\$ 4.23
<b>Sholem</b>	\$140,846	\$251,083	\$146,386	\$179,438	69,708	\$ 2.57
<b>Springer Cultural Center</b>	\$186,085	\$166,993	\$195,571	\$182,883	34,532	\$ 5.30
<b>Virginia Theatre</b>	\$199,970	\$160,454	\$207,038	\$189,154	N/A	N/A



## CULTURAL ARTS

Programming in the cultural arts at the Champaign Park District is dominated by performance and visual arts. Performance arts include theatre, dance, and music lessons. Youth Theatre continues to be a very strong program for youth participation along with our various youth dance classes. Both youth and adult theatre have successfully expanded to include CUSR. Visual arts programming includes drawing, painting, and pottery. These programs range from one time workshops to season long studio courses. There is a mix of adult, child, and family programming within the performance arts which makes it an attractive sector for many groups. There are also several Special Events that are cultural arts focused such as local art shows, lunch hour concerts, and acts at the Virginia Theatre.



## COMMUNITY

Community programs offers residents needed services, personal enrichment, and opportunity to gather as a group. Community related programming is often times targeted towards specific user groups such as school aged children or seniors. Children based programming includes early childhood care, school's out days, and afterschool care. There are many community programs for the 50 Plus! seniors including potlucks, fashion events, and regular card games. Although there is a lot of age specific community programming, there are many community special events that are fun for all groups such as the Taste of Champaign in West Side Park. Enrichment for All programs also offers a variety of options for groups of all ages and abilities such as rocketry and sky-watching events.



## SPORTS & FITNESS

An area in which the Park District excels is its sports & fitness program offerings. There are a range of both youth and adult sports, 50 Plus! group fitness, and opportunities for CUSR participants. Popular special events are sports & fitness oriented such as the CUSR Cupcake 5K and the Pie Run during the Taste of Champaign. There are opportunities for team sports for both youth and adults such as weekly adult softball leagues and seasonal youth soccer. Both Douglass and Leonhard Recreation Centers also offer drop in open gym times for those who may not have the time for regular scheduled events. Tennis programming is one of the most successful offerings at the District; there are a range of tennis offerings for youth, individuals, and teams at a variety of abilities.





# 03 Financial Assessment

In the State of Illinois alone, it is estimated that over ten billion dollars in economic activity was generated by parks and recreation agencies in 2015. Illinois is second only to California in contributing to local economies through parks and recreation. The Champaign Park District contributes heavily to its local economy through a variety of means including salaries for full and part time staff, sponsoring local events, purchasing services from local companies, and funding construction, to name a few.

Each spring, the Board of Commissioners approves the annual budget, which is compiled by staff. The fiscal year of the Champaign Park District begins May 1st and ends April 30th. The budget is guided by the mission, values, and goals of the Park District. The approved budget is made public through the Champaign Park District website and residents have the opportunity to comment on the budget process during Board meetings.

## Revenue and Expenses

There are two main components of the annual budgets: revenue and expenses. There are several sources of revenue for the Park District, with real estate taxes accounting for largest source of revenue. Nearly three quarters of the District's revenue is generated from local real estate taxes, with the remainder of the revenue primarily generated from charges from services provided by the District, special receipts, and grants. Relying on property tax for revenue has its benefits and risks. Although a generally reliable source of revenue, property taxes are heavily dependent on the assessed value of the property. When the housing market is healthy and assessment values are high, generated revenue reflects that; however, if there is a housing market crash similar to that of 2007,

property taxes also follow that trend, resulting in diminished revenues. As a result, the District sets goals to diversify its income sources. In the short term, the source of non-tax revenue should be at least 25%; however, the long term goal is to increase non-tax revenue to 35%. This increased diversification will help buffer the District from potential future housing crises. Current housing trends in Champaign have largely recovered from the 2007 housing crash. Although the housing market is still somewhat soft in the Champaign area, payrolls have improved slightly since 2013 and overall home vacancy rates have declined. Although a demand in new housing is forecasted until 2020, construction of new homes has not close to the boom in the mid 2000's.

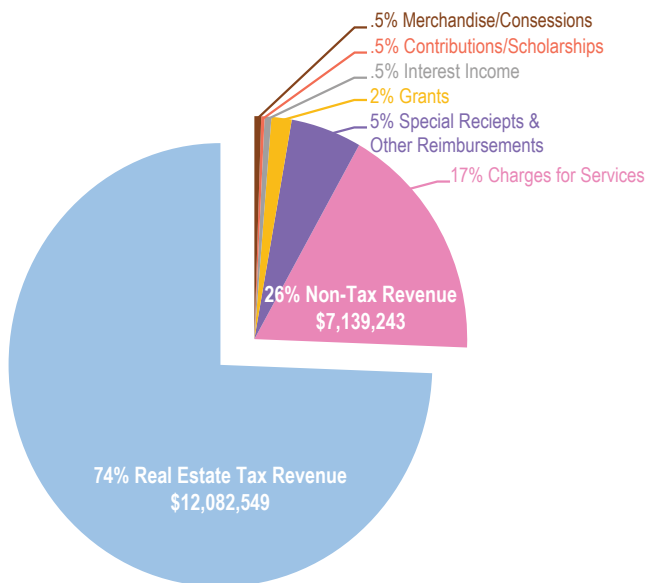


Figure 13- FYE2018 Estimated Revenues. Figures from FYE2018 CPD Budget Book.

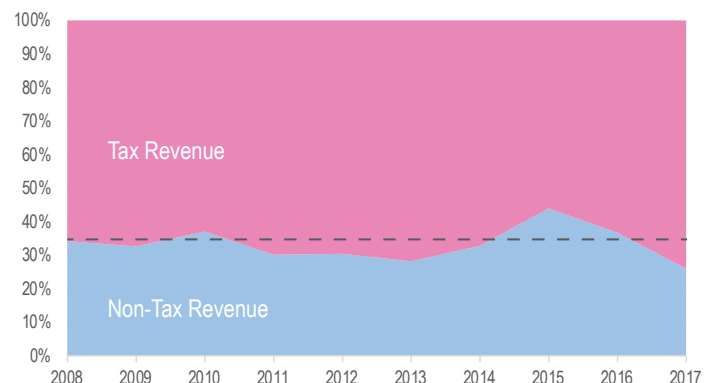


Figure 14-Ratio of non-tax revenue and tax revenue with 35% non-tax revenue target rate highlighted. Figures from CPD annual budgets.

# Expenditures per Capita

Analyzing the expenditures per capita can help contextualize the yearly budget and helps identify spending trends. The expenditure per capita is calculated by dividing the total expenses of the District (including operating and capital) by the population of the District. The average expenditure per capita from FYE2012 to FYE2016 was \$179.81. This figure fluctuates primarily due to changes in the Capital Budget. For example, the rise in fiscal year 2014 was a result of the construction of the Leonhard Recreation Center and improvements at the Virginia Theatre.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) provides the median expenditure per capita in its annual *Performance Report*. The data within the *Performance Report* is an aggregate of collected data from member agencies. The median expenditures per capita of all agencies who report to NRPA is \$77.32, considerably lower than that of the Champaign Park District. However, when compared to the expenditure per capita of agencies with a similar population density to Champaign, IL, the Champaign Park District is within the range of \$66.91 to \$202.42. The wide range

of expenditures per capita is due to the levels of service and types of amenities provided by park and recreation agencies. For example, a park district that offers extensive recreation programming for its residents will have a significantly higher expenditure per capita compared to one that offers limited programming.

The expenditure per capita is a helpful figure because it accounts changes in the population and the breadth of services/amenities offered by the Champaign Park District.

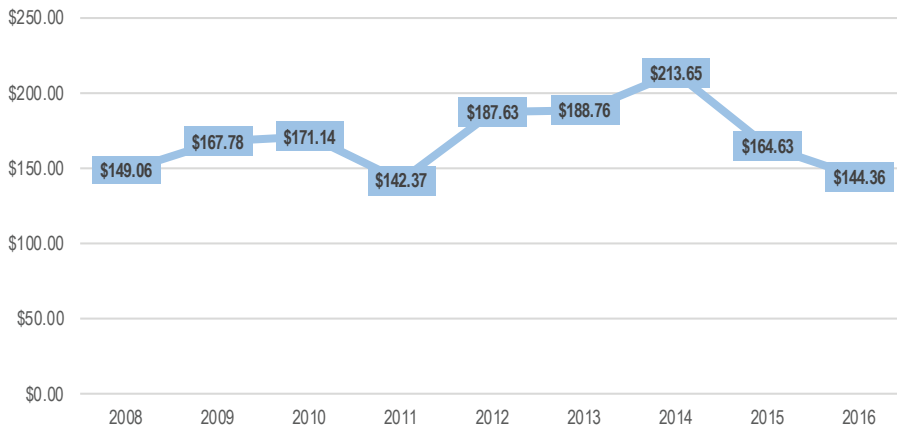


Figure 15-Expenditures per capita by year.

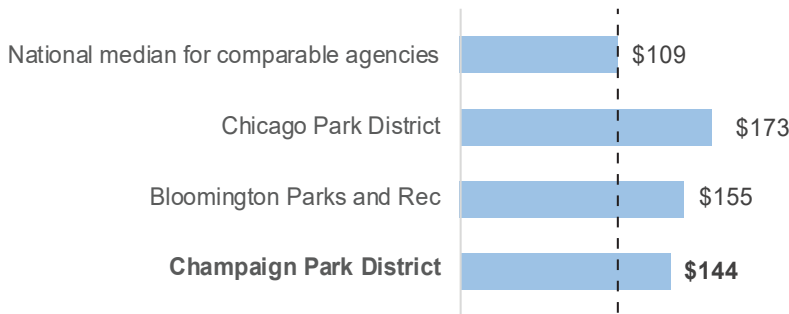
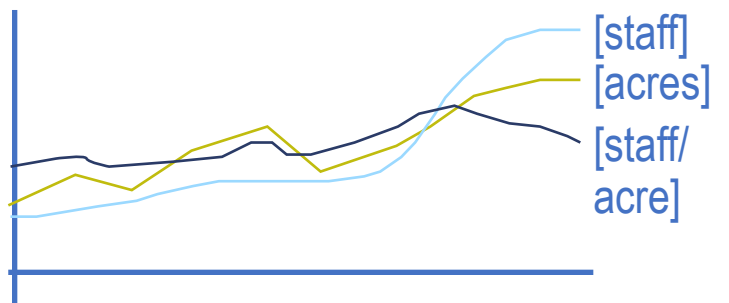


Figure 16-Expenditures per capita in 2016 of comparable agencies.

*[Section to be updated to include study of staff, facility, and land growth over time]*



**Capital Developments Over \$200,000**

<b>2008</b>	Porter Park Development
	Sholem Aquatic Center Amenities
	Pipeline Trail Development
	Virginia Theatre Lobby
<b>2009</b>	Dodds Park Softball Parking
	Porter Park Development
	Scott Park Development
	Sholem Aquatic Center Additions
	Virginia Theatre Marquee
	Pipeline Trail Development
	Johnston and Powell Park Development
	Dodds Park Complex Development
	Kaufmann Pier
	Kaufmann Renovation
<b>2011</b>	Virginia Theatre Projects
	Park Improvements
	Develop Trail Systems
	Virginia Theatre Restoration
<b>2012</b>	Heritage Park Trail
	Porter Park Development
	Boulder Ridge Park (Sunset Ridge Park)
	Virginia Theatre Projects
<b>2013</b>	Sholem Installation of Additional Slide
	Virginia Theatre Remodeling
	Centennial Recreation Center
	Sunset Ridge Park
<b>2014</b>	ADA Compliance
	Leohard Recreation Center
	Kaufman Lake Road Work
	Redevelopment of Spalding Park and Douglass Park
<b>2015</b>	Virginia Theatre Remodeling
	Leohard Recreation Center
	Redevelopment of Douglass Park
	Redevelopment of Spalding Park
<b>2016</b>	ADA Compliance
	Hessel Park Playground
<b>2017</b>	Hessel Park Splashpad/Restroom

**Capital Improvements**

The Capital Improvement Plan describes the proposed improvements for the upcoming fiscal year as well as a proposal budget for the following four fiscal years. In order for a project to be considered a “capital” improvement, the budget must exceed \$10,000 and have a useful life of over ten years. Examples of capital improvements include new facility construction, building renovations, park improvements, or investments in operational machinery.

In the last ten years, the Park District has completed a number of exciting Capital developments. The Park District replaced the aging former Leonhard Center in Centennial Park with a new facility, the “new” Leonhard Center. This new facility allows the Park District to provide quality community and sports and fitness programming at an affordable cost to the community. The District has also enhanced its cultural programming by renovating the historic Virginia Theatre, which hosts numerous Park District programs, movie screenings, and concerts. Several parks have been updated or added to the acreage of the Park District. The playground at Douglass Park was overhauled and a splash pad was added to the park as an additional amenity. The aging splash pad and playground at Hessel Park were also renovated. These updates in facilities and parks help ensure that the Park District is continuing to provide quality amenities that support programming and patron experience in the parks.





# 04 Demographics and Trends

Champaign, Illinois, home of the Champaign Park District, is a growing “campus town” with historic, established neighborhoods, new growth, a bustling downtown, and passionate residents. The Champaign Park District functionally shares its boundaries with the City of Champaign. Champaign, IL has an estimated population of 86,637, as of July 1, 2016.<sup>10</sup> The District encompasses roughly 23 square miles. Champaign is considered an “urbanized area” by the United States Census Bureau because the population is over 50,000 people.<sup>11</sup> Major employers include the University of Illinois, Kraft Foods, and the regional hospital system, Carle. Champaign has its own public school district, Unit 4, as well as a successful community college, Parkland College. Many students and young professionals get their start in Champaign and then emigrate. However, there are many stable, established neighborhoods with lifelong residents as well.

## Demographics

The population characteristics, or demographics, of the District effect land acquisition, programming, and location of various amenities. Compared to the demographics of the State of Illinois, there is a higher percentage of the population aged 18-64. This is most likely due to the location of the University of Illinois; many students reside within the City of Champaign.<sup>12</sup> There are 33,432 households in the City of Champaign, with 2.3 persons per household. This figure is slightly lower than the number of persons per household for the State of Illinois at 2.64.<sup>13</sup> The City of Champaign is a growing community. There was a 6.6% increase in population in Champaign since the 2010 census, compared to a 0.2% decline in population for the State of Illinois.<sup>14</sup> Also likely due the transient nature of college towns, there is a relatively high rate of turnover in housing in Champaign compared to the State of Illinois. Only 69.8% of individuals live in the same house they did a year ago compared to 86.7% for the State of Illinois.<sup>15</sup>

Age range	Percent of Population in Champaign	Percent of Population in Illinois
0-4 years old	5.4%	6.5%
0-17 years old	17.3%	24.4%
<b>18-64 years old</b>	<b>75.1%</b>	63.1%
65 years and older	7.6%	12.5%

Figure 17-City of Champaign Population by Age as compared to the population by age in the State of Illinois. Data provided by the US Census Bureau for the year 2010.



Age range	Percent of Population Growth in Champaign	Percent of Population Growth in Illinois
Growth since 2010	+6.6% 	-0.2% 

Figure 18-Population changes in Champaign, IL compared to the State of Illinois since the 2010 census. Data provided by the US Census Bureau.

## Changing Population

Local factors affect the makeup of Champaign, Illinois; however, there are also larger demographic shifts anticipated in the larger United States according to the United States Census Bureau 2014 National Projections. Due to declines in fertility rates and net immigration, it is expected that the rate of population growth will slow down over the next few decades.<sup>16</sup> As Baby Boomers age, the overall demographics of the nation will shift. Currently 15% of the population is over 65, by 2030 that number will grow to 21%.<sup>17</sup> Although the major effects of this demographic shift may not start in full force until after the 2019 Comprehensive Plan expires, anticipating a shift will help ensure that the appropriate amenities and programs are offered for an evolving population.

Not only are the demographics of the population expected to shift, but also racial makeup. By 2020 it is forecasted that the United States will evolve into a “majority-minority” nation, meaning that no one race will makeup more than 50% of the nation.<sup>18</sup> The fastest growing races are “two or more races,” Asian, and Hispanic.<sup>19</sup> Increasing diversity may have effects on trends in recreation and desired park amenities. It will be important for the District to stay abreast on these changes by soliciting feedback from the community and following industry trends.



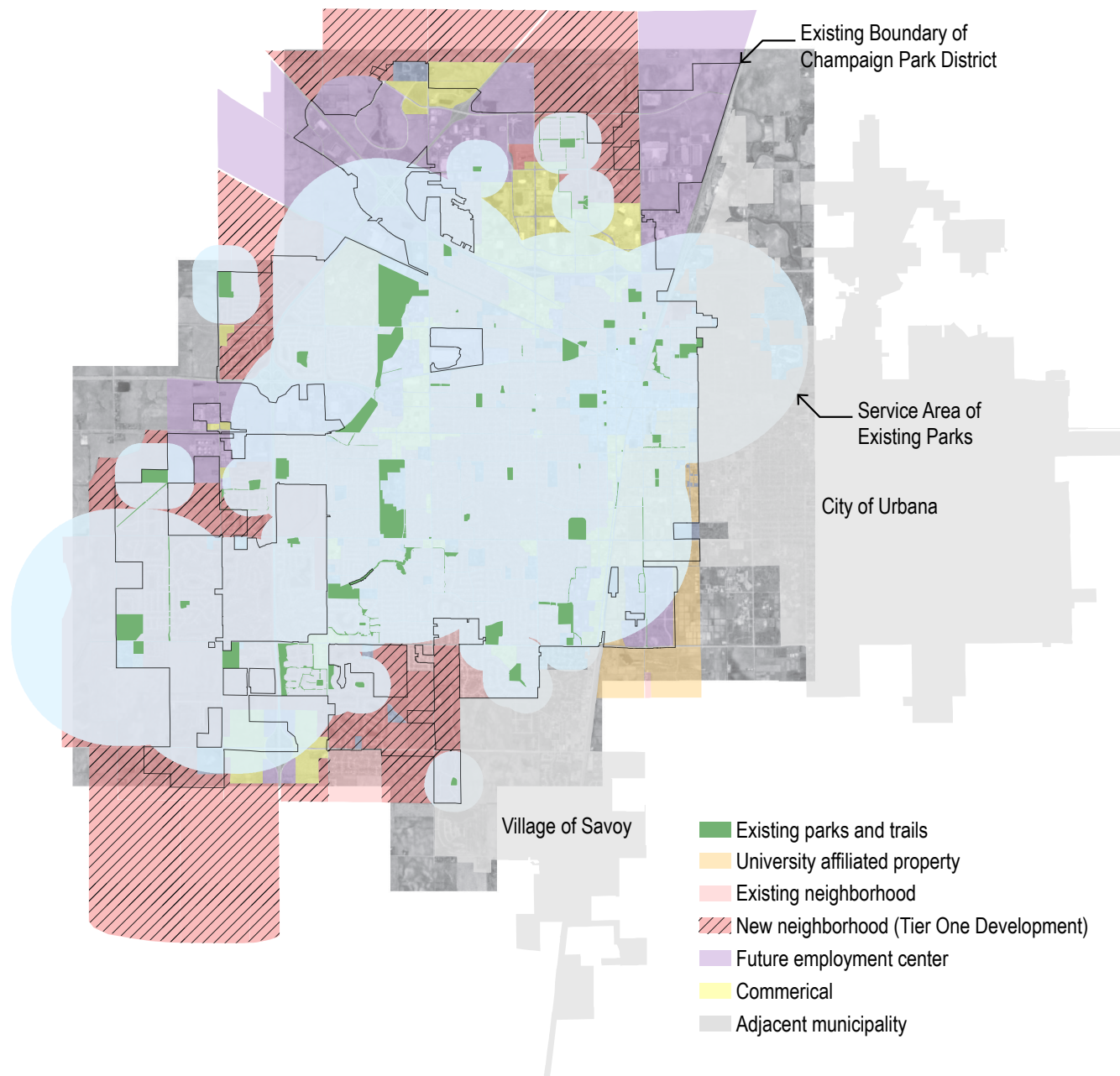


Figure 19-Highlight of residential growth areas delineated in the *Champaign Tomorrow* “Future Land Use Map” that lie outside of existing service areas of mini, neighborhood, and community parks.



## Anticipating District Expansion

As the City of Champaign grows both in population and in area, it is important to ensure that land acquisition is aligned with future land use maps. It is important to consider access to existing parks and trails when evaluating park expansion. “New neighborhoods” north of Interstate 74 would not have direct access to existing parks south of the Interstate, despite their proximity. In comparison, “new neighborhoods” in southwest Champaign have

access to existing parks such as Zahnd Park and Porter Family Park. As a precedent for anticipatory growth, Hessel Park was founded in 1918; however, much of the surrounding neighborhood was not developed until the early 1950’s. Although Hessel Park at one time was a park in the middle of nowhere, by the time the homes were developed, there was a mature park for the community to enjoy.

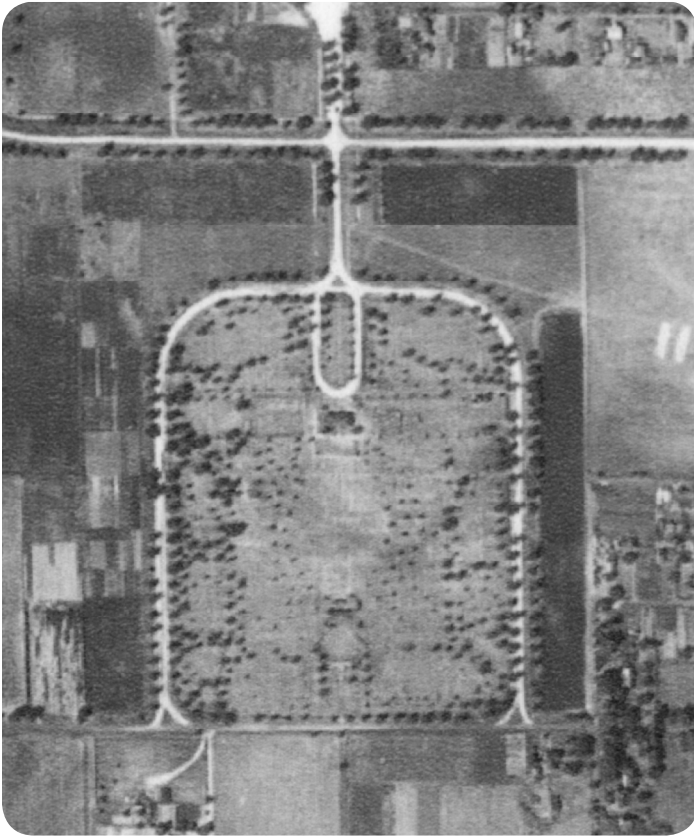


Figure 21-Aerial view of Hessel Park from 1936.



Figure 22-Aerial view of Hessel Park from 1958.



Figure 20-Early view of Hessel Park prior to development of adjacent neighborhood. Photograph by Harold Holmes.

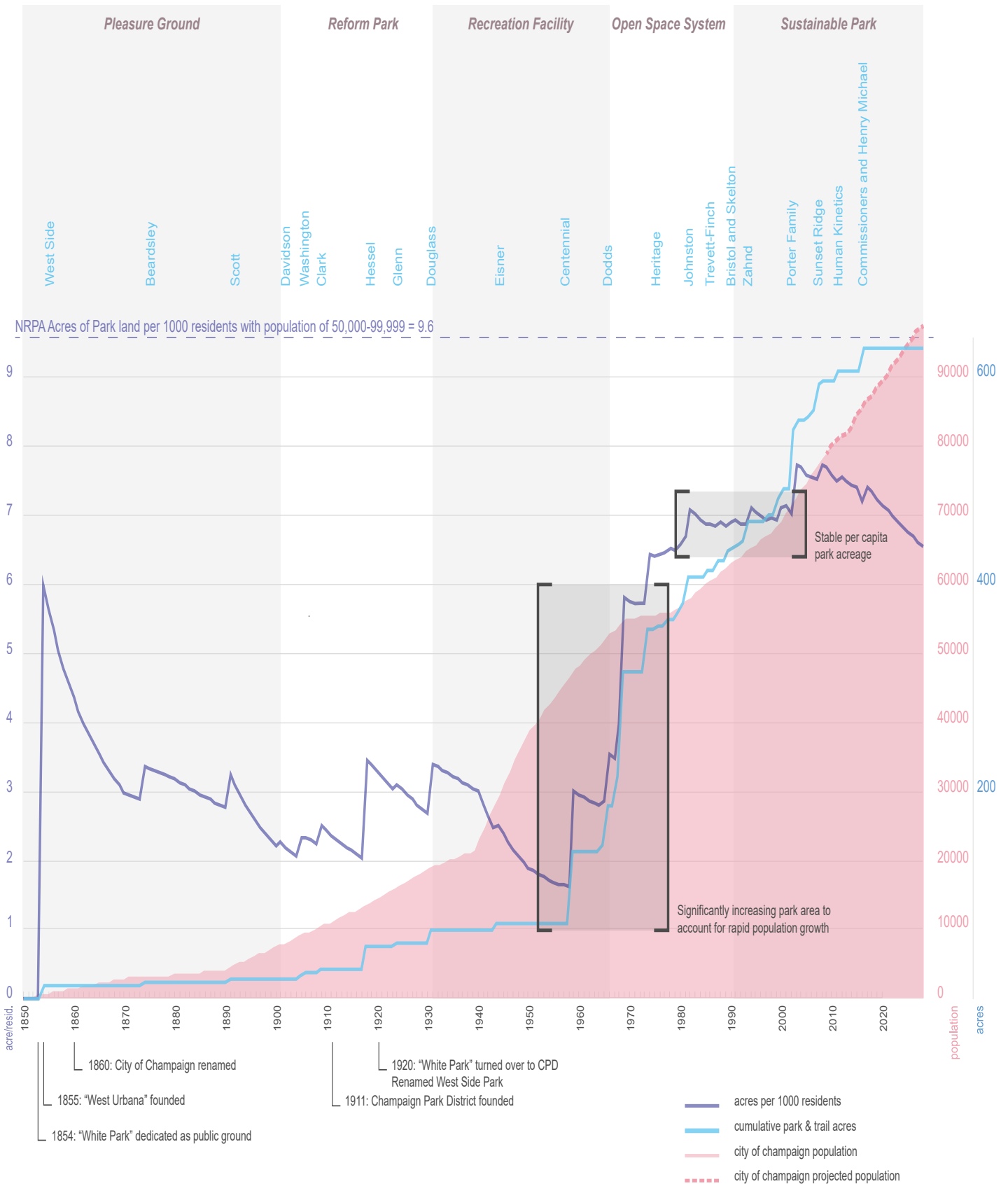


Figure 23-Timeline of Champaign Park District land acquisition compared to the increase in population of the City of Champaign.

## Meeting Demands

The acres per 1000 residents, a common metric used to evaluate open space, was somewhat steady from the time “West Urbana” (now Champaign) was founded in 1855 to the 1930’s. However, in the 1940’s and 1950’s there was a significant decline in acres per resident during a population boom in Champaign. Shortly thereafter, from 1959 to 1969 the District added several large parks, including Centennial Park, Mattis Park, Spalding Park, Kaufman Park, and Dodds Park, significantly increasing the park acres per 1000 residents in a relatively short time span. Since then, the acres per 1000 resident has been slowly increasing along with the population of Champaign.

The Champaign Park District has added two new parks, Henry Michael Park and Commissioners Park, since 2010, increasing the park acreage by over twenty acres. However, due to a steady increase in the population of Champaign, the acres of park land per 1000 residents has decreased. At its peak, the park acreage per 1000 residents for the District was approximately 7.7 in 2003, after the addition of both Porter Family Park and Robeson Meadows West Park. A growing population is beneficial to the District in terms of property tax revenue; however, in order to maintain the park acres per 1000 residents, increasing acreage will be necessary. Assuming that the growth rate of Champaign remains constant until 2028, the acres per 1000 residents will decline to 6.5, the lowest rate since 1980. Forecasting population growth can be extremely difficult because of the many factors that affect migration such as economic conditions and housing availability. Despite the uncertainty in the *rate* of growth of Champaign, it is worth noting that there has not been a period recorded by the United States Census Bureau where the City of Champaign has ever had a decline in population.

## Shifting Ideologies

The motivations for providing public green space have evolved over the centuries. There are five typical models of park which reflect the social issues of the time: Pleasure Ground, Reform Park, Recreation Facility, Open Space System, and Sustainable Park.<sup>20</sup> Each of these models had a goal in social reform from public health to recreation services to preventing public riots.<sup>21</sup> Modern pressures such as climate change, habitat degradation, and pollution have triggered the most recent park type, the Sustainable Park. This ideal assumes that open space is not only for a specific type of resident but for all residents (human and non-human). When considering the demands for additional open space in the District, it is important to consider general societal pressures in addition to immediate program needs.



*Pleasure Ground: West Side Park*



*Reform Park: Glenn Park*



*Recreation Facility: Centennial Park*



*Open Space System: Spalding Park*



*Sustainable Park: Porter Family Park*



# 05 Community Engagement

The Champaign Park District solicits input from patrons and residents through surveys, community meetings, and during monthly Board meetings. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, input was incorporated from two broad, public surveys, an internal staff survey, staff interviews, and from a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threat) activities with the Board of Commissioners and select staff. From these solicitations, several themes emerged: the importance of customer service, a focus on natural areas, increasing walking and multi-use paths, and maintaining high standards of care for existing facilities and parks.

## Community Surveys

The Champaign Park District periodically reaches out to the community to get feedback on facilities, parks, and services. Since the last comprehensive plan was issued in May 2008, the Park District has conducted two Needs Assessment Surveys. The first was conducted in 2011 on behalf of the Champaign Park District by the ETC Institute and the second was conducted in 2017 by the Office of Recreation and Park Resources at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The 2011 Community Survey was solicited to gauge public perception on priorities for future improvements of parks, facilities, and programming. Of the 4000 surveys mailed to residents, 807 were returned, leaving a response rate of approximately 20%. Respondents also had the option of completing the survey via phone.

The 2017 Community Needs Assessment Survey inquired about patronage, participation in programming, facilities and amenities, enrollment fees, and interactions with staff. The Park District serves roughly 86,000 residents and there was a response rate of 11%. Based on the design method of the survey, the responses are considered generalizable to the Park District service area. Where possible, themes are drawn primarily from the 2017 survey as it is more recent and several large capital improvements have

taken place since the 2011 survey (including the construction of the Leonhard Recreation Center.) It is worth noting that a disproportionate number of the respondents to the 2017 were over 60 years of age compared to the population of the service area over 60. In addition, a disproportionate number of the respondents were white compared to the population of the service area.

### Survey Trends

Although the focus of the questionnaires was not identical for the 2011 and 2017 surveys, several common themes emerged, including *general opinions, facility priorities, land use and amenities, and programs*. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, two main points regarding each theme were highlighted per plan, as well as two points which were shared between the surveys. The full results of each survey can be found on the Champaign Park District website.

### General Opinions

Generally speaking, respondents to the 2011 survey and the 2017 survey were satisfied with programs, staff, facilities and parks. Many respondents to the 2017 survey made it a point to include qualitative comments commending the Park District for its programs and amenities. Respondents “enjoy the many programs the Champaign Park District has to offer” and find the parks to be “beautiful.”

The marketing department uses several methods of communication to notify residents of program and facility offerings. One of the main tools used by the Park District is the “program guide,” which is a semi-annual publication that provides detailed information on programs, special events, park amenities, and facilities. This publication is available online, mailed to residents, and is available in all public facilities. Despite increased traffic to the District website and a presence on social media, residents still like to refer to a physical program guide. Similar to the desire to have

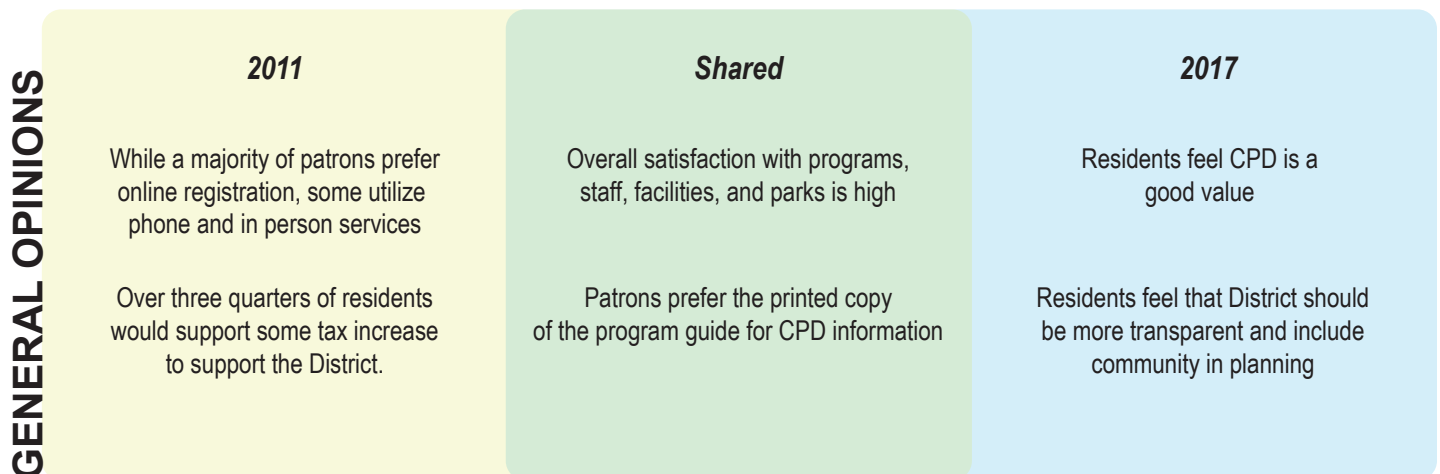


Figure 24-Diagram illustrating similarities between the 2011 Community Needs Assessment Survey and the 2017 Community Survey.



access to analog and digital information regarding Park District programs and amenities is the desire to have flexibility in registration of programs. Patrons generally prefer online registration; however there are those who use phone and walk-in registration. Retaining options for registration allows ease of registration for those who may not have regular access to the internet or who are not computer savvy.

The Champaign Park District strives to provide services and amenities without being burdensome to property owners, as the District is largely funded by property taxes. While there was not necessarily a consensus on *what* the District should fund if taxes were increased, over three quarters of respondents in 2011 would be in favor of some tax increase to support the District. Respondents in 2017 also largely felt that they receive a good value for the services offered by the Park District.

A critique of the District which stemmed from the 2017 survey is the role of the public in the planning process. Only 50% of respondents found that the District involves the public in the planning process and only 52% thought the District provides enough transparency as a public body.

### Facilities

When considering a new facility, the two desired amenities shared between the 2011 and 2017 were an indoor aquatic center and an indoor walking track. The District has one existing indoor walking track at the Leonhard Recreation Center, which has been a popular feature, but does not currently offer any indoor aquatics. In 2011, there was strong support from respondents for indoor fitness class space and weight room space, both of which are also offered at the Leonhard Recreation Center. The support for indoor playing fields, such as indoor soccer with artificial turf, was low among respondents in 2017. In addition, support for community gathering space was low among respondents in 2017.

Generally speaking, respondents are not in support of naming rights of facilities and amenities. Respondents also felt strongly against charging an entrance fee for the Prairie Farm facility, which has traditionally been free for all patrons. Because respondents felt strongly against naming rights or entry fees but also highly value existing facilities, they may also be open to tax increases or fundraising campaigns.

### Programs

Satisfaction of and participation in Champaign Park District programs is high. Over a third of households participate in either programs or special events at least once per year. Not only is there a high participation rate but there is also

a high satisfaction rate for programs and events. Most respondents in 2017 felt satisfied with fees associated with programs, and a small minority felt dissatisfied with program fees. Overall satisfaction with facility and program staff is high. The 2017 survey consultants noted that it is unusual for respondents to go out of their way to leave so many positive comments regarding staff and programs and that the Champaign Park District should take note of this progress.

### Land Use/Amenities

Because there has not been extensive changes in land use or outdoor amenities overall in the parks since the 2011 survey was collected, drawing comparisons between the responses is reasonable. Three themes arose several times in both multiple choice questions and in the free response questions regarding land use and amenities in both surveys. Patrons desire new natural areas and would like to see improvements made to existing natural areas. There is high household participation in natural areas and respondents to the 2017 survey rated wildlife areas/natural areas as the top program or facility to expand. Patrons are interested in both new and upgraded passive recreation spaces as opposed to active recreation (such as playing fields). Patrons also would like to see new and expanded trails and paths within parks. According to the *Illinois Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*, trails are among the most popular and requested amenity in any community. "Eight out of ten (80.7%) respondents to the SCORP survey reported pleasure walking as the most popular outdoor activity in the state."

**FACILITY PRIORITIES**

**2011**

Strong support for indoor fitness class space

Strong support for indoor weight room

**Shared**

Strong support for an indoor aquatic center

Strong support for an indoor walking track

**2017**

Less support for indoor sports, indoor turf

Less support for community gathering space

**LAND USE/AMENITIES**

**2011**

value large Community Parks but don't want expanded

upgrade small Neighborhood Parks

**Shared**

new/upgraded Natural Areas

new/upgraded Open Space with Passive Recreation

**2017**

new/expanded small Neighborhood Parks

Athletic Fields are visited frequently by active users, but have a low user rate

**PROGRAMS**

**2011**

Some dissatisfaction with program offering times

Location of some facilities sometimes prevents usage

**Shared**

Over a third of households participate in CPD programming and events

High overall satisfaction with programs and events

**2017**

Program fees and memberships are reasonable

Overall satisfaction with CPD staff

Figure 25-Diagram illustrating similarities between the 2011 Community Needs Assessment Survey and the 2017 Community Survey.

# Staff Input

The District has many dedicated staff who strive to serve patrons and residents. Staff feedback was solicited with three methods: a survey to all full time staff, interviews with Department Heads, and a SWOT analysis exercise with “focus team” staff.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

Strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats, or “SWOT” exercises help organizations draw critical conclusions about internal successes and issues and external forces that could either help or hurt the organization. The staff “focus team,” a group of full time administrators and managers, worked on a SWOT exercise on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018. The staff perspective helps to shed a light on more operational issues that may not be at the forefront of end users’ minds, but does effect the services and amenities offered to patrons. Staff feel that the Districts strengths include offering high quality parks and trails, a variety of quality programs, high customer service, a providing a safe environment. Staff also feel that one of the strengths of the District is supportive residents. Highly engaged residents and patrons advocate for the programs and amenities that they utilize and often times dedicate their time as volunteers.

Operational weaknesses included aging facilities, staff retention, budget cuts, and agency focus. Aging facilities was discussed in two modes: maintenance and user experience. Staff emphasized the importance of regular maintenance and upgrades for efficiencies sake. However they also noted the importance of keeping facilities current to fit the needs of patrons and offered programming. Budget cuts and the lack of a clear agency focus were discussed in tandem. Staff have an understanding the District operates with a definitive budget maximum. However, staff emphasized the importance of the effect of an agency’s mission and focus its ability to operate efficiently with a balanced budget.

Staff were excited to discuss external opportunities for the District. Partnering with outside organizations and agencies was a common point. Future partnerships included those anticipated at the future Martens Center. The Martens Center is also seen as an opportunity to increase first time opportunities for the District, serve a historically underserved neighborhood, and provide flexibility in programming. Staff also recognized the growing City population and shifts in demographics as opportunities. Staff are also keen to anticipated demographic shifts as an opportunity to expand senior programming for aging baby booms and to be more progressive in

### STAFF SWOT ANALYSIS

<b>Strengths</b>	<i>Where the Park District excels</i>	Quality parks, trails, & amenities <b>Breadth &amp; quality of programming</b> Customer service Supportive residents & patrons Risk management & safety
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<i>Where the Park District struggles</i>	Aging, outdated facilities Staff retention Natural areas & related programming Budget cuts Lack of clear agency focus
<b>Opportunities</b>	<i>How can the Park District improve</i>	<b>Partnerships with organizations</b> Demographic shifts City population growth <b>Future Martens Center facility</b> <b>Sponsorships</b>
<b>Threats</b>	<i>External challenges to the Park District</i>	Aging facilities & infrastructure Service expansion with limited funds Competition from other agencies/facilities <b>Recruiting qualified staff</b> Adapting to evolving patron needs

Figure 29-Champaign Park District staff SWOT exercise summary.



offering multicultural programming and amenities as Champaign becomes more cosmopolitan.

While discussing threats to the District, aging facilities and infrastructure were a high priority. Service expansion was a unique threat because it is also viewed as an opportunity. While it is exciting to serve new residents, it is a challenge for staff to offer the same level of service to a larger number of people without more resources. Adapting to patron needs was also viewed as both an opportunity and a threat. Not only are staff cognizant of demographic changes, they acknowledge trends in recreation evolve.

*[Section to be updated with the inclusion of Commissioner Hays' SWOT form]*

## Board of Commissioners Input

The Champaign Park District Board of Commissioners also completed the "SWOT" exercise. A questionnaire was distributed to Board members in fall 2018 and the results of the exercised were presented during the September 26, 2018 Study Session.

<b>BOARD SWOT ANALYSIS</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<i>Where the Park District excels</i>	Knowledgeable, passionate staff <b>Breadth &amp; quality of programming</b> Virginia Theatre Quality special events
	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<i>Where the Park District struggles</i>	Financial/operational efficiency Overburdened staff Lack of transparency
	<b>Opportunities</b>	<i>How can the Park District improve</i>	<b>Public &amp; private partnerships</b> Grants (especially OSLAD) Innovation in programming/planning <b>Future Martens Center facility</b> <b>Sponsorships</b>
	<b>Threats</b>	<i>External challenges to the Park District</i>	Unfunded mandates (especially wages) Lack of Board/staff innovation High taxes limiting growth <b>Recruiting qualified staff</b>

Figure 30-Champaign Park District staff SWOT exercise summary.



## 06 Strategic Initiatives

**Ensure that parks and amenities meet the District's performance standards and support programming.**

**Increase acreage of natural areas and expand natural areas related programming.**

**Promote financial sustainability**

**Expand existing trail system to improve connectivity.**

**Leverage existing partnerships and develop new partnerships to improve/expand programming.**

**Promote active recreation and healthy living.**

**Ensure equitable access to parks, facilities, and programming across the District.**

**Maintain high standards for customer service**

**Improve environmental sustainability and resource conservation efforts**

**Promote and encourage public input.**

Based on the analysis and community input found throughout this plan, ten goals and objectives have been identified. Comprehensive Plans are meant to help guide policy and decision-making without being too prescriptive or inflexible. A *goal* is a statement that identifies desired future outcomes.<sup>22</sup> Goals should be broad, but specific enough that the outcomes are measurable.<sup>23</sup> *Objectives* are a subset of goals which provide broad strategies for implementation.<sup>24</sup> The ten goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan should help guide future strategic plans and annual budgets. Included with each goal is a set of 2-5 objectives. These objectives should help in the formation of future strategic plans.

## Ensure that parks and amenities meet the District's performance standards and support programming.

The Champaign Park District is recognized as an industry leader, including past recipient of Gold Medal awards. Recent investments in the Leonhard Recreation Center, Douglass Park, the Douglass Community Center, Dodds Park, Virginia Theatre and Hessel Park demonstrate the level of quality desired and expected by the District's residents. Encouraging an ethic of *taking care of what we have* is important for ensuring that existing facilities, trails, and parks are well maintained and are scheduled for regular updates in the budget.

While the Park District has many quality trails, facilities, and parks, it is important to regularly evaluate whether or not amenities and open space meet minimum standards. Periodically checking that existing amenities are meeting the needs of the community and that newer or expanding neighborhoods also have their needs met is important to ensure that the entire District is being served. In order to meet this goal, clearly outlining and updating standards is essential.

Maintaining high standards is one of the few themes that the public, the Board of Commissioners and staff all rate as a high priority item. Both the 2011 and 2017 Needs Assessment surveys found high satisfaction of parks and facilities and maintaining existing parks and facilities was among the top five spending priorities in the 2017 Needs Assessment Survey.<sup>25</sup> The Park District strives to provide quality parks and amenities and now may be the time to slow new capital improvements to reallocate resources and manpower to deferred maintenance.

### Objectives:

#### Performance Standards for Parks

Establish performance standards for neighborhood, community, and regional parks and facilities to demonstrate efficiency and productivity. It is difficult to determine whether or not a park or facility is meeting the program requirements for the District if those program requirements are not clearly defined. While the context and environmental conditions of each park is important to consider when planning, certain minimums should be considered depending on the type of park or facility.

#### Create and Maintain a Renewal-Replacement Program for Parks, Trails, and Facilities

In order to properly account for required maintenance in upcoming budgets, an exhaustive replacement/maintenance schedule should be developed and updated at regular intervals. This program should capitalize on existing reports such as the *Park Report Card* and *Facility Report Card*. A renewal-replacement program should also leverage GIS inventories. Creating and maintain spatial databases can help day-to-day operations, but they can also be used to inform long term planning. The existing tree, plumbing, and electrical inventories have been a successful tool for staff. Expanding this database to additional amenities will help create a better understanding of the condition of parks, trails, and facilities for future planning. A renewal-placement program should ensure that existing facilities and park not only are well maintained, but are meeting the District's minimum standards of service.

#### Virginia Theatre Maintenance Manual

The Virginia Theatre represents a significant cultural asset which supports performances within a well-defined niche. One of the most common themes in the strengths of the entire Park District in the Board of Commissioners SWOT exercise was the Virginia Theatre. The Board believes the Theatre is a strength because of the "quality of shows," its function as "an asset to the community." However, as a nearly 100 year old facility, an extensive facility maintenance plan should be developed and implemented to ensure the integrity of the building. This manual will require outside expertise due to the historical status of the building and the technological nature of the amenities.

#### Evaluate Programming of Existing Facilities

Some existing facilities, such as Springer Cultural Center, have a clear identity and focus. However, other multifunctional facilities such as Hays Center and the Douglass Annex lack clear identity and have some redundancy in their programming. While some redundancy can be helpful in ensuring equitable access to programs, it is also important to use staff resources efficiently. Prior to making significant updates to existing facilities, identifying the program needs should be conducted first. For example, accommodating the evolving needs of the expanding Seniors demographic will effect programming at the Hays Center, the Douglass Community Center, and the Douglass Annex. While these facilities are in need of improvements, studying the projected needs of the program will help drive what types of improvements should be made at each facility.

**Increase acreage of natural areas and expand natural areas related programming.**

Although the Park District manages over 40 acres of natural areas and native plantings, this type of land use represents only approximately 5% of Park District property. With attitudes on sustainable land use evolving to respond to issues such as climate change, biodiversity, and water conservation, it is important for the District to seek out sustainable solutions. Recent community needs assessment surveys illustrate the importance of natural areas and sustainable initiatives to the community. The interest in natural landscapes in our community mirrors national trends as well.

**Objectives:**

**Nature Themed Playground**

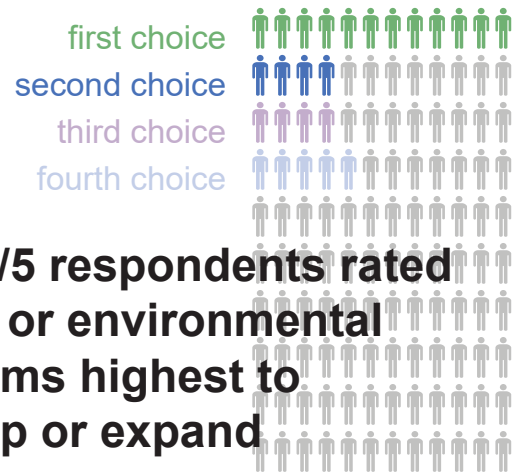
Add a Nature Themed Playground to the playground inventory within the District.

**Natural Area Programming**

Develop a targeted nature programming plan that leverages existing partnerships with local groups such as the Master Naturalists. Natural areas programming can also help meet needs for cross-generational programming.

**Stream Bed Naturalization**

Most parks within the District that have natural areas also have stream corridors running through them, creating opportunities for stream bed naturalization. The 2007 Copper Slough Master Plan advocated for more stream bed naturalization at Dodds, Heritage, and Porter Parks, therefore, a coordinated effort with the City of Champaign and Fountainhead Drainage District for future stream corridor improvements is required.



**Over 1/5 respondents rated nature or environmental programs highest to develop or expand**

Figure 31-Data from the 2017 Champaign Park District Community Survey, p36.

## Promote financial sustainability

All of the proposed investments, when combined with previous investments, present a funding challenge. This calls for positioning the District with very proactive and systematic practices to ensure long term financial sustainability. This includes disciplined focus on renewal and replacement to maintain parks and facilities within a reasonable life-cycle, preventative maintenance programs to head off problems, systems and standards to budget for and monitor results, and long-term financial planning to ensure financial sustainability.

## Expand existing trail system to improve connectivity.

Trails are a valued recreational amenity of the community. While the District has 17.9 miles of trails, many trails lack connectivity and others are too narrow to be considered multi-use. Improving trail connectivity will encourage healthy activities such as jogging, bicycling and walking, will promote safe pedestrian commuting, and encourage residents to walk or bike to parks.

### Objectives:

#### Connecting Parks

Develop connecting trails in greenway corridors to the greatest extent possible with initial emphasis on creating spine corridors that extend across, through and around the District to allow connecting trail linkages. Develop the connection between Kaufman Park and Heritage as a high priority as per the Champaign Park District Trail Plan.

#### Planning for Trails

Ensure that new residential developments create connecting trails built to the District's standards through their communities with the ability to link to spine trails. Work with the City of Champaign Planning Department to make sure the District is included in discussion of new developments and possible open space and trail requirements within the new developments. A critical evaluation of the trails network is necessary to better understand our current inventory. As indicated in the trails matrix, many of the trails in our network are both aging and undersized.

#### Loop Trails

Continue to develop loop trails within existing parks to provide opportunities for easily accessible fitness areas by neighborhoods. These trails should be consistent with the Champaign Park District Trail Plan standards regarding width and access.

#### Establish life cycle replacement schedule for trails

Similar to facility or playground useful life cycles, trails and paths also require repair and replacement. As an example, the Robeson Meadows Trail is the oldest owned trail by the District, installed around 1980. Fifty years is considered a typical life span for a sidewalk or trail. This trail has high connectivity yet the trail width is below the 10' wide requirement (Policy No: 01-08). As trails are repaired and replaced, bringing them to District standards should be included in the budget process.

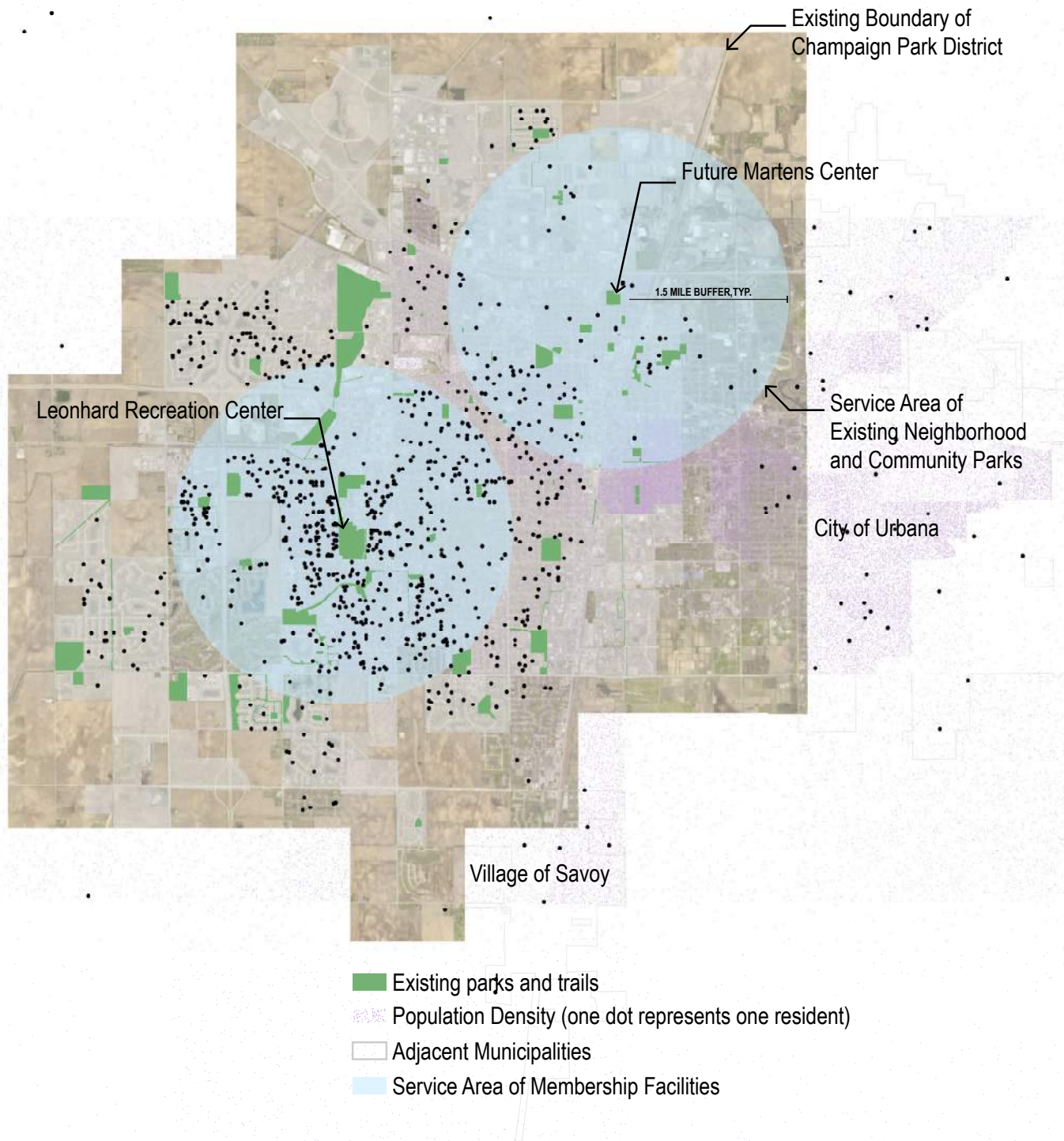


Figure 32- Service area of membership facilities. Service area is defined by a one and a half mile buffer surrounding facility. Population density based on 2007 U.S. Census Bureau tract figures. Membership information for Leonhard Recreation Center from 2017.

**Leverage existing partnerships and develop new partnerships to improve/expand programming.**

In order to maximize services to the community, the District frequently partners with sister agencies and community groups to offer programs and amenities. The District cannot provide every service to every household; however, partnering with other agencies, companies, and organizations to provide recreation programs and events throughout the community helps achieve District goals. This is a trend that will continue as more and more demand is placed on the District to provide recreation opportunities.

**Objectives:**

**Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation**

Constructing or purchasing space for the Champaign-Urbana Special Recreation afterschool and summer day camp programs should be a priority as the Spalding Recreation Center, the former home for CUSR, has been demolished.

**Virginia Theatre**

Increasing opportunities for partnership with renters has allowed the Virginia to expand its programming both with local event organizers and with commercial promoters. Gross ticket and concession sales continue to trend upward, with current fiscal year expectations reaching \$2 million. Film audiences are responding strongly to classic titles like 2001: A Space Odyssey, the Disney animated series (where movies like Snow White easily outperformed recent second-run titles like Minions) along with the special presentation of first-run pictures like Dunkirk. Robust sponsorship from Illini Radio Group on the Rewind Movie Series has resulted in good attendance at popular second-run hits from the 80s and 90s. Increased investment in house-presented live events (such as Michael McDonald and Lyle Lovett) has helped develop a stronger, fuller planned season of touring attractions and continues to help decrease the theatre's annual budget deficit.

**Programming in a University Community**

Since Champaign is a university community staff must realize the needs of the students, employees, and facilities when providing programs and facilities moving forward. These residents' demands for innovative programming, STEM programs and quality facilities will only increase. The University of Illinois has resources that could be maximized by partnering with the District.



**“I’m proud of our Park District!**  
-2017 Needs Assessment Respondent



## Promote active recreation and healthy living.

Communities rely on local park districts for programs, services, and facilities. Youth development, physical health facilities and services, and mental health facilities and services were found to be among the top priorities for park and recreation agencies in a 2016 National Recreation and Park Association report.<sup>26</sup> Access to public parks, trails, facilities, and programs is integral to encouraging active recreation in the community.

### Objectives:

#### Outdoor Fitness

Develop outdoor fitness areas at specific sites to promote healthy lifestyles. These outdoor fitness areas have become extremely popular and represent an investment in the health and wellness of the community. Create recreational programs that focus on a demographic that is less inclined to exercise at a gym or indoor facility

#### Sports Fields Improvements

Our use of Dodds Park as our competitive sports complex has served the residents and District very well over the past twenty plus years but in order to maintain our standards for sports fields, the District needs to continue to invest in our sports fields and amenities. Evaluate the following improvements to the sports facilities: Upgrade three (3) large multi-purpose soccer fields at Dodds Park to synthetic turf and lights to meet the existing and future demand, upgrade the existing three plex restrooms and concession stand, move to LED lights on the four plex fields, evaluate moving to synthetic turf infields at the four plex fields, add additional practice soccer fields next to the four plex, and maintain and improve neighborhood sports fields.

#### Balancing the Park and Recreation System

Champaign Park District should strategically invest in the park and recreation system to achieve better **balance** among outdoor and indoor recreation with emphasis on fitness and health issues, ex-

panded trail system for fitness and connectivity, increased natural and preservation areas and related programming, and additional open space particularly in neighborhood parks. These initiatives will substantially define the District for the future and provide the key elements that citizens have expressed a desire to see the District provide in parks, facilities and services. The District should seek all available resources to develop these components in partnership with other service providers, local resources, state resources and private resources.

#### Seniors

The trend for our senior programs continues to be trips and social activities. As more and more of the baby boomers become older we will continue to see an increase in senior programs that are affordable and accessible to the older seniors. The District must also prepare for changes in requested programs as the boomer generation seeks more active recreation



## Ensure equitable access to parks, facilities, and programming across the District.

Access and equity are important values of the District. As the community grows and evolves, it is important to ensure that existing communities and new neighborhoods have access to green space and facilities. When analyzing the service area of the parks, the District uses a standard set by Distinguished Accreditation Agency (see chapter 2.) Although the population density of these service gaps appears low, which may justify a low priority for expanding park space, the United States Census Bureau tracts at the periphery of town are rather large. Therefore, specific areas within the boundaries of the District have been identified as underserved by the following criteria: existing residential development beyond one half mile from a neighborhood park or two miles from a community park. Due to the lack of programmed amenities in mini parks, they were not considered in this analysis. Portions of neighborhoods were identified in North Champaign, South Champaign, and West Champaign as underserved.

### Objectives:

#### Community Center in North Champaign

In order to better serve the recreation and community needs of north Champaign, the District has developed schematic plans to construct a community center in Human Kinetics Park, the Martens Center. The District will conduct fundraising efforts in 2018 with plans to start construction shortly thereafter. This recreation center will meet the high priorities for adult and youth programming including fitness, swimming and other recreation programs while reducing the need to spend significant capital on existing recreation spaces. Although the District recently constructed the Leonhard Recreation Center in Centennial Park, there is still a need in North Champaign for recreation and community space. A membership study of the Leonhard Recreation Center illustrated that over 50% of the household passes for the Leonhard Recreation Center occur within a one and a half mile radius of the center; however, only 8% of pass holders reside within the one and a half mile radius of the proposed Martens Center. Human Kinetics Park is a strategic location for the new center because it is in a historically underserved neighborhood, its service area does not compete with the existing recreation center, and the population density near the park is relatively high.

## Neighborhood and Community Parks

Over the next 10 years, the District needs neighborhood parks and community parks. While additional open space within the developed areas of the District will be very difficult to find and develop, new growth areas in the Northern, Northwest and Southern/Southwestern areas of the District are prime for identification and acquisition of open space. According to the City of Champaign Comprehensive plan, “neighborhood parks are an essential part of a complete neighborhood. However, the amount of new park acreage being provided is less than desirable according to national standards. Without a mechanism to ensure developers donate land for parks in new development, more new neighborhoods are being established without adequate access to parks.” p31<sup>27</sup>

### Programs

The need for financial assistance for resident participation in Park District programs continues to grow, as many families cannot pay for necessary programming like day camp or afterschool without a full program scholarship. The need to provide financial assistance and provide free or low cost programs will continue to grow.

## Maintain high standards for customer service

The District should continue to strive for excellent customer service. Regular participants and first time users of parks, facilities, and programs should feel welcome during each encounter with staff.

Community Focused Strategic Plan (2016): “Provide first-time opportunities for participants to try recreation and cultural arts programs and services.”<sup>28</sup>



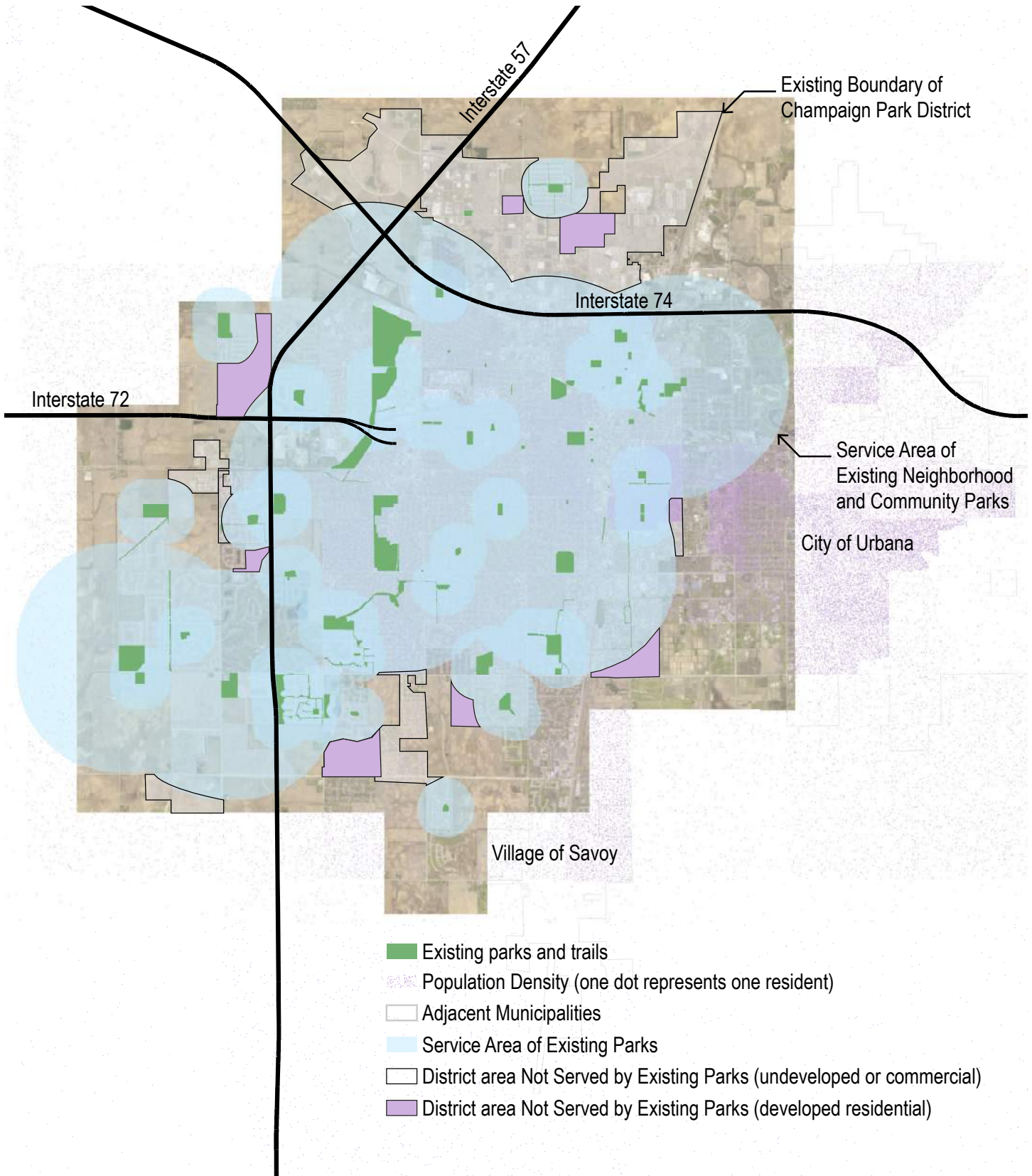


Figure 33- Service area of existing parks. Service area is defined by a one half mile buffer surrounding neighborhood parks and a two mile buffer surrounding community parks. Population density based on 2007 U.S. Census Bureau tract figures.

## Improve environmental sustainability and resource conservation efforts

Environmental sustainability not only improves the ecological function of the parks, but it also improves resource use. Climate change is expected to increase extreme weather events in Central Illinois, resulting in an increase of heat waves, thunderstorms, and blizzards. Models project that Illinois summers will more closely resemble the current climate of the Dallas, Texas area by the end of the century unless emissions are drastically reduced.<sup>29</sup> Future extremes may increase difficulty in park maintenance and create insecurity in program offerings. Being proactive in sustainability efforts will help offset future uncertainty and conserve resources. Although environmental sustainability has global consequences, local attitudes also favor sustainability leadership. When asked how effective the Champaign Park District is in providing leadership on environmental issues, only 59% of respondents felt the District was effective in this regard; 15% felt strongly that the District was ineffective or very ineffective.<sup>30</sup>

### Objectives:

#### LED Lighting

Transitioning to LED lighting technology has been a successful initiative the District has been moving toward.

The long range cost savings of this technology make its initial cost easy to justify. Within the last couple of years full time staff has been transitioning traditional park lighting (metal halide) to LED fixtures and bulbs which can reduce wattage use by ¼. Additionally, staff time is reduced due to the fact that LED lights have a longer lifespan once installed. District staff has transitioned Mayfair, Hazel, Clark, and Hessel Parks to LED components and bulbs. West Side Park is gradually being converted as bulbs and fixtures need replacing. New lighting at the Dodds Park 3-plex and the soccer complex have been funded through Capital Budget initiatives.

#### Explore alternative energy options

#### Analyze Potable Water Consumption

#### Mitigate Stormwater Runoff

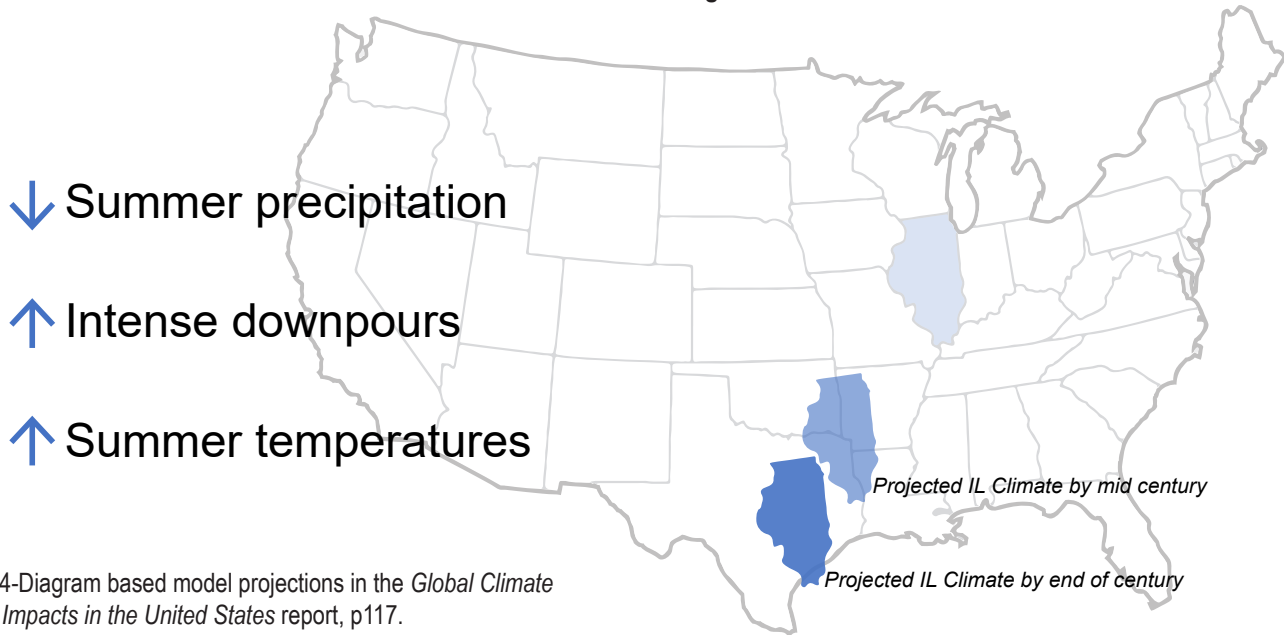
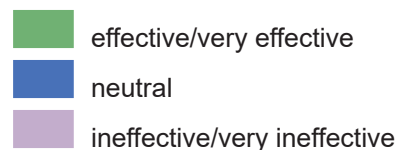


Figure 34-Diagram based model projections in the *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States* report, p117.

providing community leadership on environmental issues (n=167)



## EFFECTIVENESS

Figure 35-Excerpt from the 2017 Champaign Park District Community Survey, p32.

## Promote and encourage public input

As a public agency, input from the community is an important component of the decision making process. Improving the process for collecting public input was an important value for residents. Public input is also a consideration of several ratings agencies such as the Illinois Distinguished Accreditation Agency, Government Finance Officers Association, and the National Recreation and Park Association Gold Medal.

Targeted public meetings are important ways in which the District can directly engage the public. Within the last couple years meetings have occurred for improvements at *Heritage Lake*, *Commissioners*, *Human Kinetics* and *Henry Michael Parks*. These face to face interactions are great for getting immediate feedback on project. Regularly scheduled public Board Meetings are other opportunities for residents to get involved in the planning process.

### Objectives:

#### Transparency Portal

Transparency portal suggested to allow taxpayers better insight into the non-Capital project items.

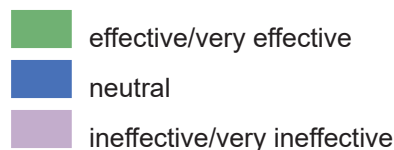
#### Regular Needs Assessment Surveys

Planning a needs assessment survey on a regular schedule will help ensure that the District is meeting the needs of the community. These surveys are an integral tool in preparing long term plans and capital budgets.

involving community in planning future projects (n=173)



providing transparency as a public entity (n=155)



## EFFECTIVENESS

Figure 36-Excerpt from the 2017 Champaign Park District Community Survey, p32.

## Comprehensive Plan Impact

The Comprehensive Plan will help guide planning, programming, staffing, operations, and capital outlays. However, comprehensive plans are broad in their direction. Therefore, more detailed plans should follow the issue of a comprehensive plan to help inform specific projects. Strategic plans, issued every few years, uses the guidelines set forth in the comprehensive plan to develop more specific goals related to each department at the Park District, which are directly related to the yearly budget.

Because of the scale of the comprehensive plan, there are no direct suggestions for each facility or park. The comprehensive plan should set forth general guidelines and benchmarks, but not provide exact plans.

*“Master plans are tangible and often visible statements of where the park is now, what it should be in the future and what is required to get there.”<sup>31</sup>*

The Park District has existing master plans for many of its parks and facilities, some of which have been implemented. These plans are sometimes completed by Champaign Park District staff and other times outside consultants are hired to develop plans, depending on the complexity and scale of proposed improvements. The immediacy of plan implementation is dependent on many factors. The existence of a plan does not necessarily mean that the suggested improvements are immediate. However, having a reference plan does help prioritize developments, organizes space, and ensures that future parks or facility improvements support the goals and benchmarks for that space. Community involvement is important at many stages of master planning, particularly at the schematic design phase.

There are several benefits to developing master plans. They can be tools to help communicate the vision of the Park District to the public, provide direction for staff, and also help support fundraising efforts.<sup>32</sup> There are currently 44 parks within the District that do not have a master plan. Having a master plan for each individual park is not always necessary, but there are target parks for which developing a master plan is a high priority. Bristol Park and Wesley Park, both located in northeast Champaign would benefit from an updated master plan because the City of Champaign is working with the Park District to utilize park space to construct stormwater improvements. Other neighborhood parks, Clark Park and Eisner Park, would also benefit from master plans. These parks both have several amenities including playgrounds and sports fields. However, the physical planning of future improvements is vital to preserve open space in these parks. Lastly, Washington Park, located on the University of Illinois campus, is a highly utilized park that has suffered from a lack of amenities.

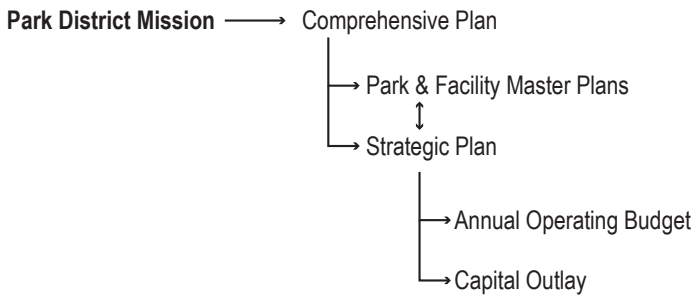
Status of Park Master Plans	Number of Parks
No master plan exists	44
Plan generated, but not implemented	10
Plan implemented	9

Comprehensive plan: 10 years

Average Human Lifespan: 79 years

Lifespan of an Oak Tree: 250 years

Figure 37-Comparative timeline of lifespans in relation to the Comprehensive Plan.



Issue Comprehensive Plan (every 10 years)										
Issue Strategic Plan (every 5 years)					Issue Strategic Plan (every 5 years)					
Community Needs Assessment (every 7-10 years)								CNA		
PMR			Performance Measurement Report (every 4 yrs)				PMR			
Comprehensive Facilities Assessment (every 10 years)										
Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Annual Budget	Annual Budget





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