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Lan-Oak Park District Master Plan

Adopted December 15, 2014

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CMAP is the region's official comprehensive planning organization. Its GO TO 2040 planning campaign is helping the region's seven counties and 284 communities to implement strategies that address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality of life issues. See www.cmap.illinois.gov for more information.



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INTRODUCTION





The Lan-Oak Park District's last Master Plan was completed in 1994. Over the last 20 years the District has experienced significant changes and currently faces many challenges ahead. The District is essentially landlocked, with very few dollars available to make capital improvements. Many of the District's existing parks are in need of improvements and some facilities, such as the District's only outdoor community pool, have been closed.

The creation of this updated Master Plan involved input from district staff, elected and appointed officials, residents, and sports groups/affiliates throughout the planning process. The Master Plan—representing the accumulation of 12 months of research, analysis, and public outreach activities—provides a guiding document for the District to use as it plans for parks and recreation services over the next 10-15 years.

Purpose of the Master Plan

The Plan aims to address important issues and concerns of the community related to parks and recreation. An updated plan was desired by the District for a number of important reasons including: 1) to assist with prioritizing capital improvements; 2) to guide its park and recreational programming; and 3) to improve the District's financial situation. The Plan will also be a tremendous asset for the District as it pursues grant opportunities.

Planning Process and Timeline

The planning process consisted of multiple steps that were designed to be completed in 12 months. The process included extensive community input through a series of focus groups, key-person interviews, surveys, public meetings, and a series of technical analyses and assessments.

The planning process was crafted with assistance from the Lan-Oak Park District staff and guidance from the Forest Preserves of Cook County and Cook County Department of Public Health. It was designed to include the input of Lansing residents, business owners, sports and recreation affiliates, senior groups, school administrators, and other stakeholders.



Community Outreach

One of the key goals in the development of the Lan-Oak Park District Master Plan was to ensure the active engagement of stakeholders throughout the planning process. A number of engagement activities were designed to better understand issues and opportunities currently facing the community. In particular, the outreach strategy focused on including the Park District and its users, Lansing residents, area sports groups, school districts, community organizations, religious institutions, and youth and senior citizens. The following outreach activities were conducted as part of the planning process:

- **Steering committee meetings**
- **Key person interviews**
- **Community workshop**
 - November 13, 2013
- **On-line and hard-copy questionnaires**
 - Available from November 2013 through January 2014
- **Focus group meetings**
- **Senior group meeting**
 - Met with seniors at the Buford Walker senior facility on January 30, 2014
- **Neighborhood watch meeting**
 - March 26, 2014
- **Youth group meeting**
 - Met with youth from the Patti Leach Youth Center on April 9, 2014
- **Public open house at the Eisenhower Center**
 - November 18, 2014

Key community outreach findings

Although a more detailed summary is included in the Appendix, the following are key conclusions from the input gathered during community engagement activities:

- ***The Park District is rich in the number of green spaces it offers to residents.*** However, the quality of the parks and associated facilities need improvement. For example, residents expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of access to washroom facilities, lack of play structures in neighborhood parks, missing equipment, and lack of specific features such as water fountains, benches, basketball hoops, and similar amenities.
- ***The Park District's financial state needs to improve in order for the Park District to develop district parks and facilities.*** The Park District should continue to seek alternative funding sources to repair and expand facilities. Interest was also expressed in an adopt-a-park program, where residents would organize to invest in their neighborhood parks. Additionally, the Park District should manage its partnerships so that resources do not become drained.
- ***Residents would like to see the Park District play more of a role in contributing to the quality of life and overall health of Lansing.*** The Park District could do so by offering healthy food and beverage options, meeting the cultural needs of the community, linking residents with other resources and facilities, and providing residents with opportunities to give feedback about the park district.
- ***The changing demographics of the Village of Lansing are an opportunity for the Lan-Oak Park District to assess its parks and facilities as well as its programming and activities.*** Doing so will help the Park District to meet the cultural needs of the community, ultimately fostering social interaction among all community residents and contributing to a greater quality of life in the village.

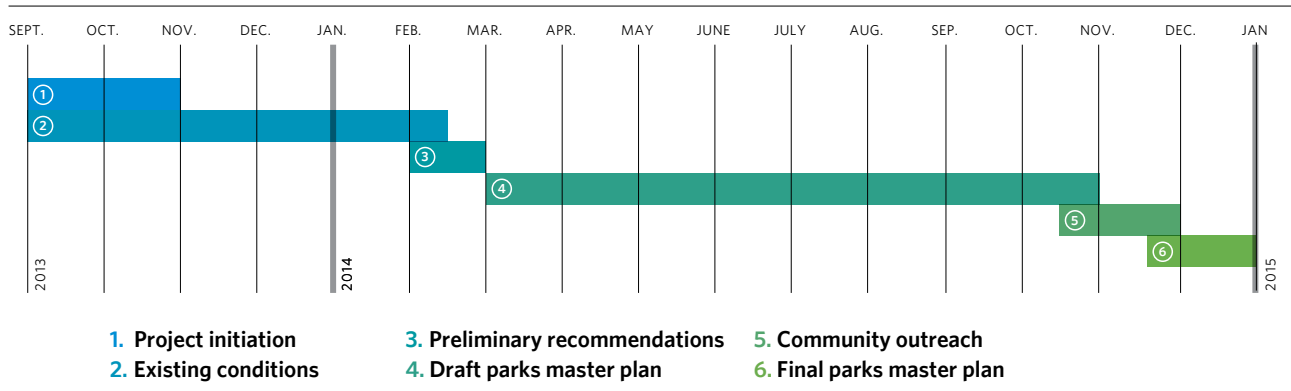
Organization of the Master Plan

- *The Park District's former outdoor swimming pool is an eyesore to the community.* The Park District should prioritize the renovation of the entire Bock Park which includes the former outdoor pool.
- *Residents are concerned about their safety when visiting Park District parks and facilities.* The Park District should install park features such as security lighting at key locations to foster safety as well as launch a campaign that promotes safety in parks throughout the village.
- *Residents value opportunities for active transportation throughout the village.* The Park District may want to publicize Pennsy Greenway Trail more as well as install complementary facilities (e.g., trailhead) to encourage usage. The Park District may also want to consider installing more walking/biking/running paths around its parks to encourage physical activity throughout the village.
- *Residents would like to see Park Plaza developed.* The development of Park Plaza is an opportunity to complement the businesses and restaurants, and existing civic space, within the downtown area.

The Master Plan is organized into the following sections:

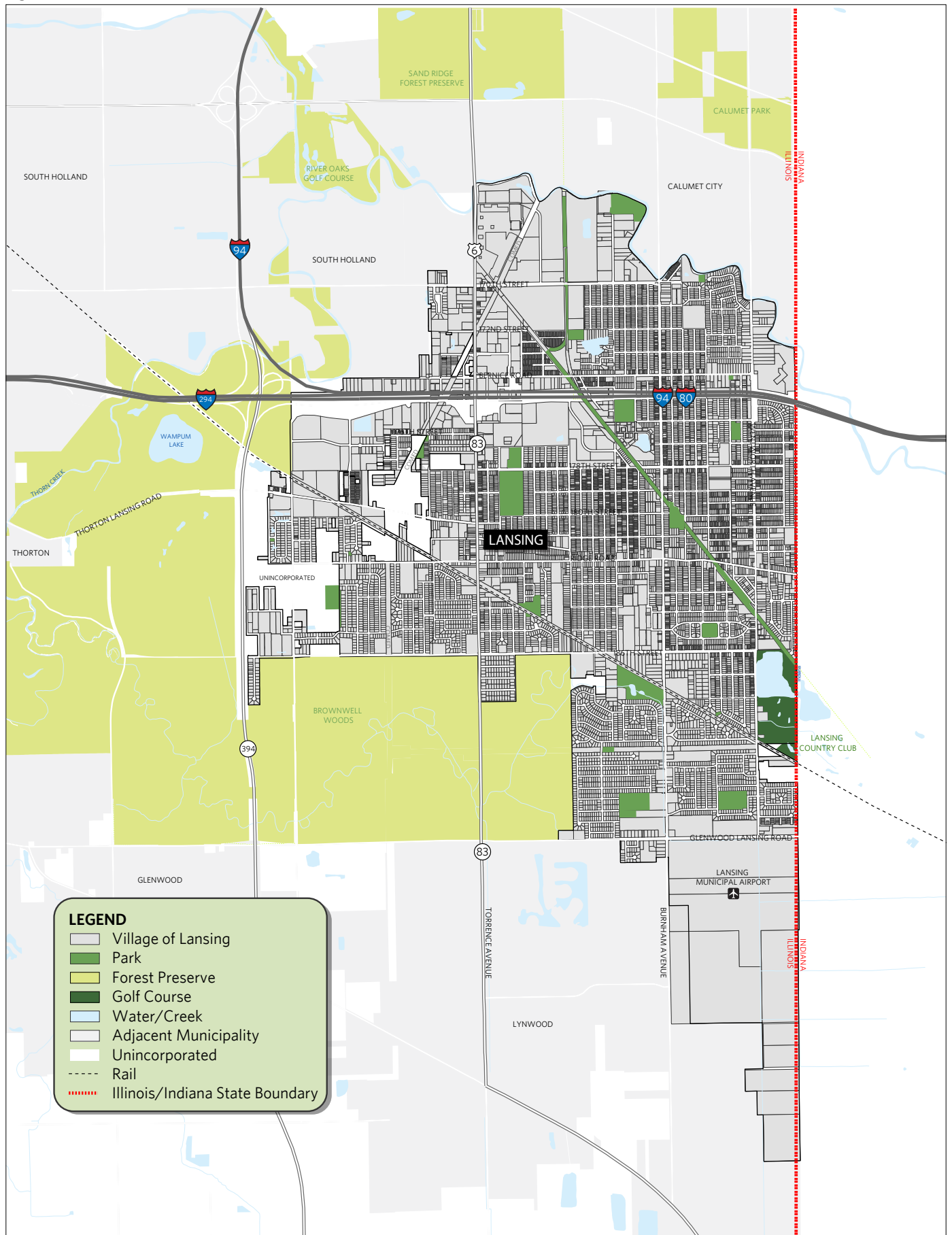
- Introduction
- Section 1: History and Regional Context
- Section 2: Benefits of Parks and Recreation
- Section 3: Summary of Existing Conditions
- Section 4: Recommendations
- Section 5: Implementation
- Appendix

Figure 1. Planning process



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

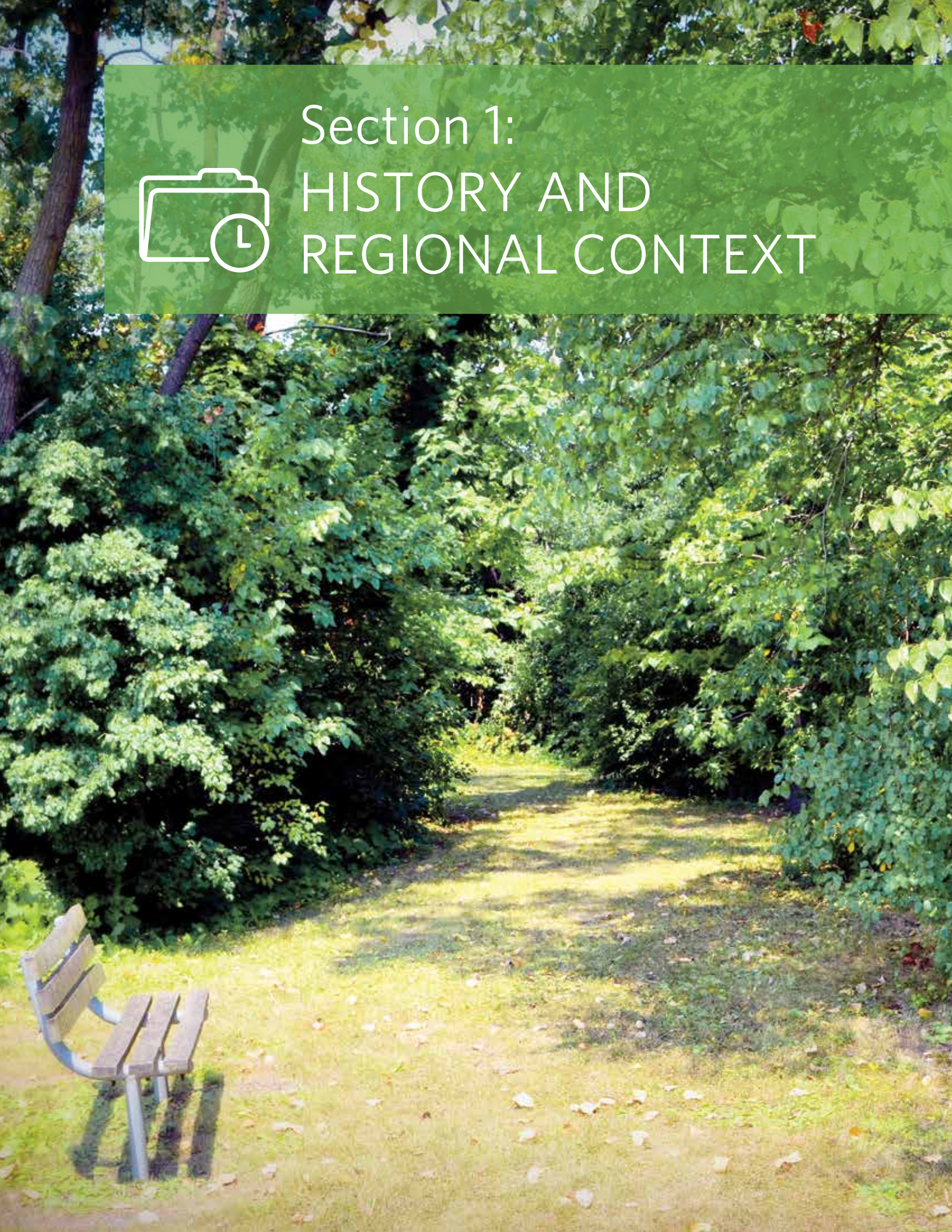
Figure 2. Lan-Oak Park District



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Section 1: HISTORY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT





This first section provides an overview of the history of the Lan-Oak Park District and its relationship with the Village of Lansing and the larger Chicago region. Understanding the District's past and its regional position, especially with regard to its open space and demographic profile, aids in both the understanding of existing conditions and in identifying potential opportunities or issues.

History

The Lan-Oak Park District and the Village both have a long history of offering sports and recreation in the community. For example, in 1894 the Village had its first organized baseball team, the Lansing Red Hots. Other sports teams from the past include the Kindt's Colts (1916), the Lansing Greys (1920s), the Brickyard Teams (1920s), and the Lansing Athletics Club Ward's Indians (1930s). The Lansing Old Timers, a volunteer organization which still runs the community's baseball program, was organized in 1944. The Lansing Old Timers baseball program is a regional program that hosts many tournaments, drawing players and families to Lansing.

¹ Committee on Lansing Centennial, "Lansing Centennial Album", Lansing Historical Society, 1993.

² Pam Jiraneck, "Lansing Centennial. History of Lan Oak Park". Published on nwi.com, March 30 1993. See: http://www.nwitimes.com/uncategorized/lansing-centennial-history-of-lan-oak-park/article_cb467f42-e96e-50a3-9755-7b47d5e5c8d0.html.

³ Joan Carreon, "Students from TF South turn up Lansing." Published on nwi.com, January 11, 1993. See: http://www.nwitimes.com/uncategorized/students-from-tf-south-turn-up-lansing/article_83a70a56-2551-50a1-81be-18275ba00c83.html.

Creation of the Park District

The Park District was established in April 1949 after the then Mayor of Lansing, George Jones, and a few residents circulated a petition to establish a Park District.¹ A contest was organized for Lansing's schoolchildren to name the new park district. Two first-graders at Calvin Coolidge Elementary School happened to submit the same name -- Lan-Oak Park District, in honor of two settlements, Lansing and Oak Glen, which today comprise the Village of Lansing. Oak Glen occupied the western part of the Village while the Lansing settlement occupied the eastern part. Their entries won and they were both rewarded with a \$25 savings bond.²

1950s

Following the creation of the Lan-Oak Park District, a Board of Commissioners was elected. The board, consisting of five commissioners, hired George Molenhouse to be the first superintendent of the Park District, a position he held from 1951 until his death in 1973. Molenhouse oversaw the development of most of the original parks in Lansing, which were mostly acquired through donations and leases. He founded the Lansing's Molenhouse Zoo in 1970, which only existed for a few years. Molenhouse Zoo was located at the intersection of Chicago Avenue and 175th Street in Bock Park.³ The zoo housed over 50 animals during its brief existence. Following the death of George Molenhouse in January 1973, residents unsuccessfully tried to save the zoo. At that time no group or entity was willing to take over the zoo operations and maintenance. In November 1974, the Board voted to close the zoo.

Lan-Oak Park, located at 178th Street and Oakley Avenue, was the first park in Lansing. The 20-acre park was dedicated by George Schultz, Walter Schultz, and Gus Bock in 1949. Over the next decade, Lan-Oak Park District acquired land both to the north and south of Lan-Oak Park and developed several parks, including Winterhoff Park, Schultz Park, Lions Park, Potts Park, and Bock Park.



1960s

The Park District established a series of smaller parks in the 1960s including Bernice Park, Kiwanis Park, Veterans Park, Flanagan Park, Oakley Park, and Oakwood Park. In an effort to modernize Lan-Oak Park, a pool was constructed after a special election in 1961, in which sixty percent of Lansing voters supported the addition. The pool was constructed on a piece of land that the Park District purchased from a subsidiary of Nagle Packing. The land acquisition and subsequent construction of the pool cost \$290,000, paid through a 20-year bond issue. During the winter, the pool parking lots and the tennis courts at Lan-Oak Park were turned into skating rinks.

1970s

In the 1970s, the Park District focused on developing its sports programs and modernizing existing park facilities. In 1976, the Park District entered into a lease with the Village for a parcel on Chicago Avenue to construct a sports complex. The complex was initially known as the McNary Sports Complex but was later renamed to the Old Timers Sports Complex. Today, the Old Timers Sports Complex hosts a large number of youth baseball and softball programs.

1980s

After School District #158 closed down Eisenhower School the Park District began to use the facility to hold recreational classes and programs. In 1983, the Park District purchased the school and turned it into a community center. In 1985, the Park District remodeled the school and added a new front entry, administrative offices, showers and lockers and a double gymnasium. The school was renamed “Eisenhower Center.”

1990s

In the 1990s the Park District focused on several capital improvement to its existing park facilities. In 1992, the Park District spent over \$1 million to modernize and expand the Eisenhower Center. Improvements included the addition of 16,500 square feet of new recreational space that included a lap pool, showers, locker rooms and fitness rooms.

2000s to today

In the early 2000s the Park District led the effort to acquire the vacant Pennsylvania Railroad. The acquisition by the Village of Lansing (the Park District wrote the acquisition grant to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources on the Village's behalf) led to the development of the Pennsy Greenway. The development of the Pennsy Greenway was started by the Lan-Oak Park District with funding assistance provided by a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) grant. The Illinois portion of the trail in Lansing was completed in 2008 while the Indiana connection was completed in 2013.

In 2013, the Park District added a new boiler for the spa and remodeled the bathrooms at the Eisenhower Center. The Park District also constructed new bleachers and pathways at Lions Stadium.

The Park District continues to provide a variety of programming and recreational opportunities throughout its parks and within the Eisenhower Center. The majority of Lansing residents have reasonable access to parks, many of which have playgrounds, sports field, picnic areas and other recreational facilities. However, most of the parks are in a state of disrepair and some are in very poor condition. Unfortunately, the District does not have the funding to undertake many of the necessary capital improvements necessary to address these issues. Less than three percent of the property taxes levied in the Village support the Park District.

In November 2014, Lansing residents narrowly rejected a referendum that would have increased property taxes in the Village to fund capital improvements in the Park District. The referendum, which lost by a very narrow margin would have increased the property tax levy by 10 cents (per \$100 equalized assessed value) to raise money to pay for the long overdue improvements to the local parks. Residents voted down similar referendums in 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2013.⁴

⁴ The Northwest Indian Times, "Lansing voters narrowly reject Park District referendum", April 10, 2013. See: http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/elections/lansing-voters-narrowly-reject-park-district-referendum/article_199de3d3-dc26-5161-b10f-d571aff12148.html.

Figure 3. Regional Setting



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Regional Setting

The Lan-Oak Park District is located 27 miles to the south of Chicago's Loop. The Park District shares the same taxing boundary as the Village of Lansing and covers approximately seven square miles.

Relationship with the GO TO 2040 Regional Comprehensive Plan

The Lan-Oak Park District influences and is influenced by the larger Chicago metropolitan region. CMAP developed and now guides the implementation of GO TO 2040, metropolitan Chicago's first truly comprehensive regional plan in more than 100 years. To address the anticipated population growth of more than two million new residents, GO TO 2040 establishes coordinated strategies that will help the region's 284 communities address transportation, housing, economic development, open space, the environment, and other quality of life issues. The Plan contains four themes and 12 major recommendation areas:

Livable communities

1. Achieve greater livability through land use and housing
2. Manage and conserve water and energy resources
3. Expand and improve parks and open space
4. Promote sustainable local food

Human capital

1. Improve education and workforce development
2. Support economic innovation

Efficient governance

1. Reform state and local tax policy
2. Improve access to information
3. Pursue coordinated investments

Regional mobility

1. Invest strategically in transportation
2. Increase commitment to public transit
3. Create a more efficient freight network

Expanding and improving parks and open space is one of the four recommendations within the Livable Communities theme. GO TO 2040 states, “green spaces contribute to our personal well-being and regional economy. Access to parks and open space improves the health of our region’s residents and the value of their homes.” Through coordinated investments, existing land and water corridors are recommended to be preserved, and new ones created. GO TO 2040 recommends that the region make significant, criteria-based investments in parks and open space — providing more parks in developed areas, preserving the region’s most important natural areas, and providing functional connections between parks and preserves by using the green infrastructure network as a design concept.

Park districts play an important role in implementing these recommendations. The Master Plan will assist the Lan-Oak Park District in achieving its goals of preserving and maintaining existing open space which in turn supports regional objectives.



Section 2:



BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Lan Oak Park District is governed by five elected Commissioners. The following individuals served the residents of the Park District from 1949 to 1999. They gave many of their personal time to provide the community with excellent recreation programs, parks, and leisure facilities.

Dorothy Olas
Mildred Young
George Schultz
Charles Gabriel
Delphus LaTulpe
John Koenes
Donald Bruce
Wayne Vorec

Edwin Greider
Donald Salvano
Clarence Sweet
Edward Hargeshimer
Gerald (Duke) Flanagan
Leone LaAssure
Irving Lange
Ker Straka

James Foubler
Bernard Fox
Patricia Leach
Marcell Eversong
Paul Hinton
Bill Rathie
Dennis Flanagan
Roger Wood

Mark Fox
George McNally
Michael Fiso
Julie Palumbo
Jim Long
Sally Reynolds
Michael Flough

During the community during the 2003 Anniversary Week

Dennis G. Flanagan, President
Sally Reynolds, Vice President
Michael Fiso, Commissioner
Jim Long, Commissioner

Robert D. Molenaar, Commissioner

John W. Wilson, CRRF, Director of Parks and Recreation
Ronald N. Brown, Esq., Attorney
L. (Butch) Brown, Treasurer
Lan Oak Park District



This section presents the benefits of parks and open space. It includes a discussion focused upon the general benefits of parks and a more detailed discussion regarding the connection between parks and public health in the region and the Lansing community. Lan-Oak Park District parks and facilities are places that have proven physical, mental, and social benefits for individuals and the entire community.

Many sources were used to compile this section including GO TO 2040, the CMAP “Preservation of Parks and Open Space Lands Strategy,” and information written by the Cook County Department of Public Health. This section highlights key benefits associated with parks, including:

- Environmental
- Social
- Health
- Economic

Environmental Benefits

Environmental benefits like improved water and air quality, increases in biodiversity and habitat protection, and reductions in greenhouse gases, are all inherent when preserving open space. However, environmental benefits are often difficult to quantify and may not receive as much consideration as those which are easily quantifiable. This subsection identifies and describes key environmental benefits related to preserving parks and open space.

⁵ Paul M. Sherer (2006). *The Benefits of Parks: Why America needs more City Parks and Open Spaces*. The Trust for Public Land.

Improved air quality

By preserving vegetation, the Lan-Oak Park District helps to improve air quality in the community and the region. By protecting open space and creating parks, trees and other vegetation are preserved and protected, and often planted. Vegetation plays a significant role in improving air quality, reducing chemicals including ozone, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and carbon monoxide.

Another benefit from the presence of parks and open space in a community is the capacity that leaf cover and vegetation have for filtering air pollutants such as dust, gases, and soot.⁵ This is both an environmental and public health benefit that is significant to highly urbanized areas like the Chicago region.

Open space may also be used as a noise barrier or buffer zone when the need for noise control arises due to the proximity of incompatible uses. For example, a number of parks owned by the Lan-Oak Park District such as Bock Park are adjacent to, or near, Interstate 94/80. These parks help to act as a buffer between the Interstate and nearby residential areas. Parks including Lions Stadium and Erfert Park are also located along the rail line that travels through Lansing. In these areas, open space with tree cover serves to reduce the noise as well as the pollution emitted from the rail line and Interstate 94/80.



Climate change mitigation

The Lan-Oak Park District — through its parks and trees — helps to reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, mitigating climate change. Planting trees has the direct effect of reducing atmospheric CO₂ because each individual tree directly sequesters carbon from the atmosphere through photosynthesis. According to a study focused on the greater Chicago region, one acre of tree cover absorbs 2.2 tons of carbon per year.⁶

Parks and trees can also offset or even reverse the heat-island effect, which affects urbanized areas and which can exacerbate air pollution and increase energy use. Parks and trees can reduce building energy use by lowering summertime temperatures, shading buildings during the summer, and blocking winter winds. Increasing tree cover by 10 percent could reduce total heating and cooling energy use by five to 10 percent.⁷ Planting trees also has an indirect effect on CO₂ by reducing the demand for energy, and thereby reducing emissions from power plants.

Improved water quality

The Lan-Oak Park District's parks and open space improves water quality in the community. Preserving open lands and creating parkland preserves natural processes of infiltration and limits imperviousness, both of which are intimately linked to stormwater management and water quality. A study by the Illinois State Water Survey estimated the value of open space for floodplain storage, including wastewater reclamation, pollution abatement, and aquifer recharge as more than \$52,000 per acre in the Chicago region.⁸

As the amount of imperviousness increases in a watershed, the velocity and volume of stormwater runoff increases, which can have several environmental impacts: increased flooding, erosion, and pollutant loads in receiving waters; decreased groundwater recharge and level of water table; altered stream beds and flows; and impaired aquatic habitat. Preserving open space and creating parks and greenways are key tools to limit imperviousness and create riparian buffers in a watershed. Preserving open space is also one of the most cost-effective means for reducing and managing stormwater runoff and protecting water quality.⁹

The Lan-Oak Park District has property adjacent to creeks and detention basins, including Old Timers Sports Complex, Veterans Memorial Park, and Erfert Park. Open space in those areas helps to improve water quality — especially within the creeks — by reducing stormwater runoff. As these parks and others are improved, the District should include best management practices that help to reduce and manage stormwater runoff. For example, the use of pervious pavers and bioswales in parking lots would be an example of a best management practice the District should consider.

⁶ McPherson, E. Gregory; Nowak, David J.; Rowntree, Rowan A. eds. 1994. Chicago's urban forest ecosystem: results of the Chicago Urban Forest Climate Project. Gen. Tech. Rep. NE-186. Radnor, PA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Illinois Environmental Council, 2007.

⁹ Schueler, T. 2000. Clearing and Grading Regulations Exposed: The Practice of Watershed Protection. Center for Watershed Protection, Ellicott City, MD. Pages 315-316.

Social Benefits

Parks and open space also provide many social benefits. Properly designed open space may help in creating social ties and a sense of community in an area. This is true in Lansing where parks provide active and passive recreational opportunities and community gathering areas such as Park Plaza.

Fosters community and provides safe environments

Parks can foster community among nearby residents. One of the Master Plan’s ultimate recommendations is to continue to develop Park Plaza as a community gathering place for the entire area. In addition to Park Plaza, each park provides neighborhood gathering areas, which is a proven benefit of parks. Additionally, participation in recreational activities or programs promotes volunteerism that is essential for park districts to meet community recreational needs, as well as appreciation, connection, and involvement with open space, parks, and recreational areas. Active parks also contribute to safety by providing more “eyes on the street.”

Provides programs and services for individuals with special needs and older adults

Park and recreation provides valuable programs and services for individuals with disabilities and older adults.

Individuals with disabilities, who may be less likely to engage in regular moderate physical activity than those without disabilities, often have limited physical activity and social opportunities that increase their risk for negative health conditions. Parks and recreation provide them with physical activity and social opportunities that help them to continue leading independent, happier, and healthier lives. In order to provide quality programs and services for individuals with special needs or older adults, the Lan-Oak Park District is an active member of the South Suburban Special Recreation Association (SSSRA). The SSSRA is an organization consisting of a number of Park Districts that provides individuals with disabilities or special needs with the opportunity to be involved in year-round recreation.

The Lan-Oak Park District offers a variety of programs and services designed for seniors. For example, the Park District offers a program for seniors age 62 and older called ZOOMERS. For a membership fee, seniors enjoy a variety of activities including Tai Chi, bingo, day trips, movie matinees, crafts, archery, badminton and more. Seniors that participate in parks and recreation activities realize physical, mental, and social benefits. Examples of senior activities can include traveling, pursuing old hobbies and learning new ones, socializing with friends, meeting new people, increasing knowledge, and becoming and staying physically fit.



Supports youth development

Parks and recreation play an integral role in supporting youth health and well-being of youth. In addition to supporting healthy physical development, physical activity and play nurture young children’s cognitive and emotional development. By offering the open spaces and opportunities for unstructured play, parks support the development of social “soft skills” needed for school success. For adolescents and young adults, recreation, in particular, can cultivate leadership and foster life skills. Participation in such opportunities builds self-esteem and confidence and impacts academic achievement, all of which help can prevent youth from engaging in harmful behaviors. Youth participation in parks opportunities can also reduce crime, especially related to juvenile delinquency.

The Lan-Oak Park District’s Eisenhower Center offers a variety of fitness and recreational programs for youth that helps to support healthy behavior. In addition to the Park District, the Patty Leach Youth Center located on Burnham Avenue also provides afterschool activities for Lansing youth. The Youth Center is committed to providing opportunities for Lansing youth in grades 6-12 to socialize in a fun, safe, and positive environment.¹⁰

¹⁰ http://www.lansingmunicipal.com/village_departments/youth_center/index.php.

Health Benefits

Well-planned parks can also build social capital not only by providing central meeting places or cultural cohesion for surrounding neighborhoods, but also by modeling healthy behavior, like exercise, to the community at large.¹¹ The health benefits of active living are numerous and well documented, and include reduced obesity, lowered risk of disease, stronger bones, enhanced immune system, and improved academic performance for youth.

Lansing residents, similar to the country as a whole, are confronted by a number of complex and challenging health and social issues, which parks and recreation can play an integral role in addressing. The United States is currently suffering an epidemic of illnesses associated with obesity and lack of physical activity, with young people at particular risk. The percentage of children who are overweight has quadrupled since the early 1970s, while the percentage of adolescents who are overweight has trebled since that time. Of children aged 6–11, 18.8 percent are now seriously overweight; for those aged 12–19, the figure is 17.4 percent.

Parks and recreation are vitally important to promote vibrant, healthier and equitable communities by establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community, ensuring the health of families and especially youth, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and region. Parks even bridge gaps between public health and social equity by providing exercise facilities to low-income residents who may find gym fees prohibitive.

- ***Supports risk reductions for chronic diseases.*** Chronic diseases are among the most preventable health problems and share many common risk factors, including obesity, unhealthy eating, physical inactivity, and tobacco, as well as underlying social, economic, and environmental determinants of health.¹² Parks and recreation support risk reduction for chronic diseases through various strategies that encourage active living, healthy eating, and tobacco-free environments.¹³

¹¹ Ariane L. Bedimo-Rung, Andrew J. Mowen, Deborah A. Cohen (2005). The Significance of Parks to Physical Activity and Public Health: A Conceptual Model. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 2005;28(2S2):159–168.

¹² Robinson, K. et al. (2007). From heart health promotion to chronic disease prevention: Contributions of the Canadian Heart Health Initiative. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, 4(2). Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2007/apr/06_0076.htm.

¹³ National Recreation and Park Association. (n.d.). Parks build health communities: Success stories. Retrieved from http://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpaorg/Grants_and_Partners/Recreation_and_Health/Resources/Case_Studies/Healthy-Communities-Success-Stories.pdf.



- **Promotes physical activity.** Residents who live near parks have more opportunities to be physically active. In one study, subjects who regularly used their local parks were “nearly three times as likely as others to achieve recommended levels of activity, regardless of how it was measured.”¹⁴
- **Improves mental health.** Mental health benefits, like reduced depression and anxiety, improved mood, reduced stress, and increased self-esteem and life satisfaction have been associated with physical activity and/or contact with open and natural spaces.^{15,16}
- **Supports healthy eating habits.** Aside from physical activity, healthy eating plays a role in chronic disease prevention and helps people maintain a healthy weight.¹⁷ Park districts across the nation have supported policies and programs that support increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, reduced consumption of sugar-loaded beverages and energy-dense, high caloric foods, and increased breastfeeding.¹⁸ The Lan-Oak Park District offers a variety of cooking classes at the Eisenhower Center that promote healthy eating habits.
- **Minimizes tobacco exposure.** Tobacco-free parks result in a healthier atmosphere for park users by limiting their overall exposure to secondhand smoke, and by minimizing their exposure to tobacco in the places where they play which reinforces a tobacco free norm.¹⁹ The Eisenhower Center became a smoke-free facility in 1992.

¹⁴ Billie Giles-Corti, Melissa H. Broomhall, Matthew Knuiiman, Catherine Collins, Kate Douglas, Kevin Ng, Andrea Lange, Robert J. Donovan (2005). Increasing Walking: How Important Is Distance To, Attractiveness, and Size of Public Open Space? *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, volume 28(2S2):169-176.

¹⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). Nutrition and physical activity: Helping people choose healthy eating and active living. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/nutrition.htm>.

¹⁶ National Recreation and Park Associations. (n.d.) Health and wellness. Retrieved from <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Health-and-Wellness/?Overlay>.

¹⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). Nutrition and physical activity: Helping people choose healthy eating and active living. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/nutrition.htm>.

¹⁸ National Recreation and Park Associations. (n.d.) Health and wellness. Retrieved from <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/Health-and-Wellness/?Overlay>.

¹⁹ Community Preventive Services Task Force. (2012). Reducing tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure: Smoke-free policies. Retrieved from <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/tobacco/RRsmokefreepolicies.html>.

Economic Benefits

Parks and open space are often evaluated by levels of conserved land or recreational facilities. Less obvious benefits can be found in municipal revenues and the balance sheets of nearby businesses. Well-planned parks and open lands are linked to increased property values, more efficient use of public resources, and healthier local economies where implemented. In short, public parks are often financial assets.²⁰

Increases land value

The Trust for Public Land reports that in 25 studies of properties surrounding parks, twenty correlated the parks' presences with increased property values.²¹ Also, according to a 2001 survey by the National Association of Realtors by Public Opinion Strategies, 50 percent of respondents said they would pay 10 percent more for a house located near a park or open space.²² Another study focused in Illinois found that neighborhood parks could increase home values up to 20 percent, and community parks could increase home value by 9 percent.²³ Studies such as these show that there is a close relationship between housing prices and proximity to urban environmental amenities.²⁴

The greatest home value premiums seem to occur within 800 feet of a park.²⁵ Results also vary depending on the size of an open area, purpose, and whether it is located in the city or the suburbs. It is important to mention that the opposite is true of properties near poorly maintained parks.²⁶ In those instances home values are negatively impacted.

20 CMAP "Preservation of Parks and Open Lands Strategy" Page 21.

21 Paul M. Sherer (2006). *The Benefits of Parks: Why America needs more City Parks and Open Spaces*. The Trust for Public Land.

22 CMAP's "Preservation of Parks and Open Lands Strategy" Page 21.

23 ERA's Real Estate Impact Review of Parks and Recreation (2005).

24 JunJie Wu and Andrew J. Plantinga (2002). The influence of public open space on urban spatial structure. Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, Oregon State University. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management* 46 (2003) 288-309.

25 Sarah Nicholls. *Measuring the Impact of Parks on Property Values*. National Recreation and Park Association (2004). *Parks & Recreation Magazine*, March 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.nrpa.org/content/default.aspx?documentId=1013>.

26 Paul M. Sherer (2006). *The Benefits of Parks: Why America needs more City Parks and Open Spaces*. The Trust for Public Land.



Supports the local economy

In addition to improving home value, parks and open space have been shown to support the local economy. As a result communities throughout the country have invested in parks and open space to strengthen their ability to attract businesses and employment opportunities.

Many companies look at the overall quality of life within a community, including park access, when deciding upon where to relocate or set-up a new business, because high quality of life can help to attract and retain high-quality employees. Many park jobs also provide a gateway into the working world for local youth who find employment as camp counselors, lifeguards, and maintenance workers. The Lan-Oak Park District employs several students as summer or part-time employees.

Parks can be the “engine” that drives tourism in many communities.²⁷ Since the mid-1980s, there has been unprecedented growth in the number of festivals and events. Communities organize, host, and promote festivals and special events whose objectives frequently include attracting tourists.²⁸ In addition to special events and festivals, sports tournaments can significantly impact a local economy. The Lan-Oak Park District currently supports a number of community festivals and special events primarily in Park Plaza. The District’s vision for Park Plaza is that it be developed as a community gathering area.

²⁷ APA City Parks Forum, “How Parks Support Tourism,” <https://www.planning.org/cityparks/briefingpapers/tourism.htm>.

²⁸ Ibid.



Section 3: SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS





This section summarizes the existing conditions within the Lan-Oak Park District that help form the Plan's recommendations discussed in Section 4. For a more detailed analysis and discussion, please refer to the Existing Conditions Report that was created as part of this planning process. This section includes a summary of demographics and health as well as an inventory of existing parks.

Demographics and Health

This subsection provides an overview of Lansing’s demographics and health to gain insight into population trends and dynamics that affect the Park District. Analysis was conducted for population, households, income, age, and overall community health status. For demographic comparisons and trend analysis, data for the same periods for Cook County and the seven-county Chicago metropolitan region were analyzed.

Table 3.1. Population and change in population, 2000 and 2010

	LANSING	COOK COUNTY	REGION
Population, 2000	28,332	5,376,741	8,146,264
Population, 2010	28,331	5,194,675	8,431,386
Change, 2000-10	-1	-182,066	285,122
Change as %, 2000-10	0.0%	-3.4%	3.5%

Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census.

Table 3.2. Changes in race and ethnicity between 2000 and 2010

	LANSING		COOK COUNTY		REGION	
	Change in Population	Percent Change	Change in Population	Percent Change	Change in Population	Percent Change
White	-8,557	-36.8%	-280,351	-11.0%	-200,702	-4.3%
Hispanic or Latino*	2,479	152.6%	173,022	16.1%	414,407	29.4%
Black or African American	5,864	196.6%	-124,670	-9.0%	-72,117	-4.7%
Asian	54	26.9%	61,026	23.7%	137,701	36.6%
Other	159	55.6%	-11,093	-11.3%	5,833	4.3%
Total	-1	0.0%	-182,066	-3.4%	285,122	3.5%

* includes Hispanic or Latino residents of any race.

** includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Some Other Race, and Two or More Races.

Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census.

Table 3.3. Age cohorts and median age, 2010

	LANSING		COOK COUNTY		REGION	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Under 19 years	7,831	27.6%	1,374,096	26.5%	2,346,937	27.8%
20 to 34 years	5,163	18.2%	1,204,066	23.2%	1,790,049	21.2%
35 to 49 years	5,825	20.6%	1,067,351	20.5%	1,807,886	21.4%
50 to 64 years	5,669	20.0%	928,833	17.9%	1,534,488	18.2%
65 to 79 years	2,587	9.1%	436,799	8.4%	679,470	8.1%
80 years and over	1,256	4.4%	183,530	3.5%	272,556	3.2%
Total Population	28,331	100.0%	5,194,675	100.0%	8,431,386	100.0%
Median Age	38.3		35.3		35.5	

Source: 2010 U.S. Census.



Key population findings

The following are key findings regarding the existing conditions of Lansing's population:

- ***While Lansing's total population remained unchanged in the last decade, the community experienced a significant increase in its ethnic diversity, which could impact its social and cultural makeup.*** In contrast to the surrounding communities that lost significant population over the last decade, Lansing's population was stable. Racial makeup of the community is changing rapidly, with significant increases in the African American and Hispanic/Latino populations between 2000 and 2010. The African American population almost doubled in the last decade and now represents over a third of the Village's total population, an increase from approximately 10 percent in 2000. In that same period the Hispanic population more than doubled.
- ***Lansing features a demographic that is much older than the surrounding region.*** Proportionally, it has a higher senior population (65 years and over), representing 13.5 percent of the area's total population, than Cook County (11.9 percent) or the region (11.3 percent). The median age for Lansing is 38.5 years, which is higher than that of the County (35.3). Communities such as Lansing that have an aging population may require particular aging in place strategies to deal with the economic, social, and health needs of their aging population. The term "aging in place" relates to preserving the ability for people to remain in their home or neighborhood as long as possible.²⁹

²⁹ AARP. <http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/livable-communities/plan/planning/aging-in-place-a-toolkit-for-local-governments-aarp.pdf>.



- ***Lansing is mostly characterized by low-density, single-family detached housing.*** Approximately 68 percent of the village’s housing stock is single-family detached units whereas the proportion for the County and the region is approximately half of the total housing units. The residential vacancy rate as well as the proportion of housing stock that is occupied by renters is significantly lower compared to the County and the region.
- ***Most of the Village’s housing units are owner-occupied, with over 72 percent of the occupied units being owner-occupied.*** The County and the region have a much more even split between owner-occupied and rental units. A majority of the rental units are contained in larger apartment buildings like Ridgewood Apartments, Salem Cross Apartments, Regal Apartments, Kings Crossings, Golden Manor Apartments, and Sandridge Apartments among others.
- ***The median housing value for homes in Lansing (\$143,600) is significantly lower than the median home value in Cook County (\$244,900).*** According to U.S. Census data from 2008-2012, over 93 percent of the homes in Lansing value at \$250,000 or less, compared to 51.5 percent for the County and 50.2 percent for the region. In contrast, only one percent of the Village’s housing stock is valued at \$400,000 or above, compared to 20.2 percent in the County and in the region.

Table 3.3. Age cohorts and median age, 2010

	LANSING		COOK COUNTY		REGION	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Less than \$100,000	1,259	15.0%	90,412	7.8%	130,071	6.4%
\$100,000 to \$249,999	6,556	78.0%	468,679	40.5%	834,102	40.9%
\$250,000 to \$399,999	509	6.1%	343,510	29.7%	624,532	30.7%
\$400,000 to \$749,999	69	0.8%	192,073	16.6%	345,950	17.0%
\$750,000 or more	16	0.2%	61,978	5.4%	102,585	5.0%
Total	8,399	100.0%	1,140,135	100.0%	2,013,880	100.0%
Median value, 2012	\$ 143,600		\$ 244,900		NA	

Source: 2010 U.S. Census.

Table 3.4. Housing tenure, 2010

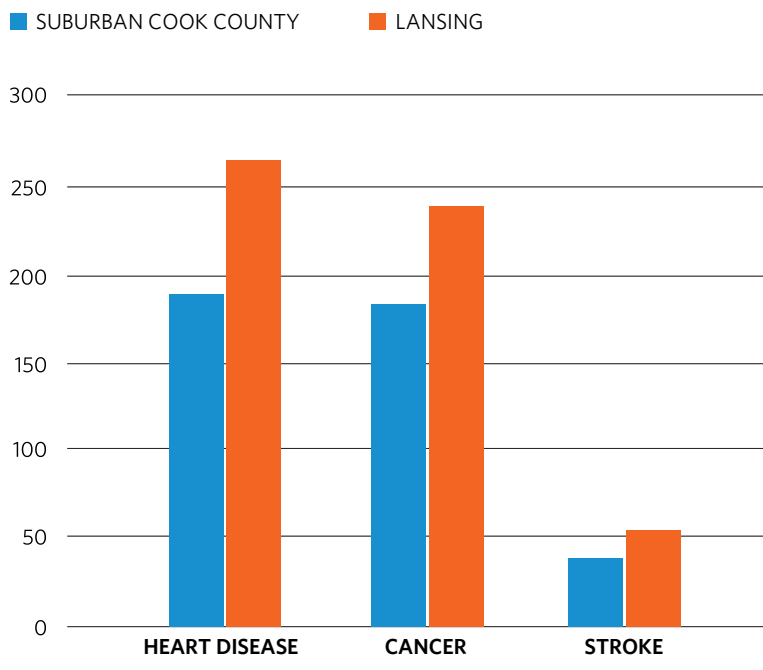
	LANSING		COOK COUNTY		REGION	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Total occupied units	10,957	100.0%	1,966,356	100.0%	3,088,156	100.0%
Owner-Occupied	7,896	72.1%	1,143,857	58.2%	2,022,176	65.5%
Renter-Occupied	3,061	27.9%	822,499	41.8%	1,065,980	34.5%

Source: 2010 U.S. Census.

- *Chronic disease and mental health are public health issues affecting the adult population in Lansing. Chronic diseases are the leading causes of death in Lansing where heart disease, cancer, and stroke account for over sixty percent of all deaths.³⁰ Most chronic diseases are preventable, due to common preventable risk factors like smoking, physical inactivity, poor diet, and overuse of alcohol. In addition, approximately one in six suburban Cook County residents reported that their mental health was poor at least every other day of the month.*

³⁰ Illinois Department of Public Health. (n.d.). Death Pull File 2006-2008.

Chart 3.1. Comparison of 2006-08 age-adjusted rates (per 100,000) for heart disease, cancer and stroke between Lansing and suburban Cook County, Illinois



Source: Cook County Department of Public Health.



Inventory of Existing Parks

Within Lansing, natural resources, parks, and open space are provided primarily by the Park District and the nearby forest preserves owned by the Forest Preserves of Cook County. This subsection provides a summary of the existing conditions in terms of Park District facilities, Forest Preserves of Cook County holdings, trail systems, and environmental conditions

Key existing park findings

The following are key findings regarding parks and facilities within the Lan-Oak Park District.

- ***The majority of Lan-Oak Park District facilities are in need of improved maintenance and repair.*** A review of the park system showed many parks and park facilities are in very poor condition. While some, like the Eisenhower Center, are popular facilities in excellent condition, many other facilities are in such poor condition that they need to be removed completely.
- ***According to District staff, the Park District has only around \$124,000 a year to spend on capital projects.*** As a reference, that amount could be spent on just one new playground (a new playground for example can cost between \$55,000 to \$225,000). Therefore the balance between maintenance of existing facilities and adding new features leans strongly towards only ongoing maintenance efforts.
- ***The Park District's parks and facilities appear to be evenly distributed throughout the community.*** At this time no significant areas have been determined to be underrepresented in terms of space.
- ***Neighborhood park service areas are limited due to significant pedestrian barriers.*** As illustrated later in this section, a neighborhood park typically serves residents within a half-mile. This recommended service area is reduced by pedestrian or physical barriers such as creeks, interstates, and rail lines. Many of the service areas for neighborhood parks in Lansing are impacted by barriers which reduce the number of residents within walking distance of a park.
- ***The Forest Preserves of Cook County is a tremendous environmental and recreational resource in the area that provides hundreds of acres of open space and environmental protection near Lansing.*** A number of off-street trails exist within the nearby Forest Preserves of Cook County preserves, connecting to other regional trail systems including the Pennsy Greenway. The Forest Preserve also continues to plan for and add trails whenever feasible. Recently the Forest Preserve completed a Trails Master Plan and is currently constructing extensions to both the Thorn Creek Bicycle Trail and the Sand Ridge Bicycle Trail.
- ***The Pennsy Greenway is an important regional bike trail.*** Its connections to other regional trails (in Illinois and Indiana) present excellent tourism and economic development opportunities for Lansing.
- ***Several parks include detention and retention areas that aid in stormwater management.*** The Village of Lansing and homeowners associations also have detention and retention ponds located throughout the community.
- ***Three creeks run through the community that creates natural greenways.*** Thorn Creek runs through the Wampum Lake Woods forest preserve and meets with the Little Calumet River that forms the northern boundary of Lansing. North Creek also runs from the preserve, however, it meanders east through the southern portion of the Village.



Park District Finances

Throughout the creation of the Master Plan the issue of the District's poor finances was raised. Unfortunately the lack of funds available for capital improvements has led to unmaintained parks and facilities.

The following subsection highlights the Park District's finances for the fiscal year 2013 ending April 30th, 2013. The purpose for presenting these highlights is to briefly illustrate the District's key financial components including revenues and expenses. In addition to presenting the District's financial highlights, information from another Park District in the region of similar population size was compared.

The Lan-Oak Park District's annual budget was \$2,424,050 in 2013. Of this, \$161,000 was budgeted for capital improvements, and \$124,000 was actually allocated for this purpose. The Lan-Oak Park District's 2013 tax rate was 0.457, which is low compared to nearby communities. According to Park District staff there was also a seven percent drop in the Lan-Oak Park District's equalized assessed valuation of real estate.

For a comparison, the budget of the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District (HFDP) was reviewed. It is always difficult to make comparisons because every community is so unique. However, the HFPD was chosen because it is located near Lansing and serves roughly the same number of residents as the Lan-Oak Park District (approximately 30,000 residents).

Some key differences to note are that the HFPD covers a larger geographic area (nine square miles compared to the Lan-Oak Park District's nearly seven square miles). A number of communities are served by the HFPD including: the Village of Homewood, the Village of Flossmoor, and portions of the Villages of Thornton, Glenwood, Hazel Crest, and some unincorporated areas. In general, residents in the HFPD are more affluent (Median household incomes: Village of Homewood \$57,213, Village of Flossmoor \$110,083 — compared to the Village of Lansing \$47,554).



A review of the two district's finances reveals that the HFPD is in a much better financial situation than the Lan-Oak Park District. As Table 3.7 shows, the HFPD benefits from a higher equalized assessed valuation of real estate, additional revenue streams, and a higher tax rate. According to the HFPD, the district has maintained approximately 30-40 percent of its revenues from tax dollars and 60-70 percent from user fees and other sources.³¹

³¹ <http://www.hfparks.com/Form/2013%20Comprehensive%20Annual%20Financial%20Report.pdf>.

Table 3.6. Community comparison

	LAN-OAK PARK DISTRICT	HOMEWOOD FLOSSMOOR PARK DISTRICT
Service area	7 square miles	9 square miles
Communities served	Village of Lansing, unincorporated	Village of Homewood, the Village of Flossmoor, and portions of the Villages of Thornton, Glenwood, Hazel Crest, and some unincorporated areas
Average household incomes	\$47,554	(for two main Villages) Village of Homewood \$57,213, Village of Flossmoor \$110,083
Park District Acres owned	140	365
Number of Parks owned	24	32
Park District Full Time Employees	14	55

Source: U.S. Census 2010, IAPD 2014 membership directory.

Table 3.7. Financial comparison

	LAN-OAK PARK DISTRICT	HOMEWOOD FLOSSMOOR PARK DISTRICT
Equalized assessed valuation of real estate	\$406,824,668	\$595,064,146 (2012)
Property tax revenue	\$1,703,931 (FY 2013)	\$5,829,174 (FY 2013)
Tax rate (2013)	0.457	0.946
Total budget	\$2,424,050	\$17,515,600
Operating allocation	\$2,262,616	\$14,285,724
Capital allocation	\$161,434	\$2,100,000

Sources: <http://www.hfparks.com/Form/2013-14%20Final%20Budget.pdf>;
<http://www.hfparks.com/Form/2013%20Comprehensive%20Annual%20Financial%20Report.pdf>;
<http://www.lanoakparkdistrict.org/documents/BAOrdinance20132014.pdf>.



Lan-Oak Park District Facilities

The analysis includes a summary of the District’s existing parks and facilities, park classifications, standards and level of service analysis, and lastly an overall inventory of the District’s facilities. The Lan-Oak Park District currently owns 24 parks and almost 140 acres of open space within the community (see **Figure 3.1** and **Table 3.9**). Seven of the 24 parks are leased (as shown in **Table 3.8**)

Table 3.8. Leased parks

PARK	LESSOR	LEASE EXPIRES	NOTES
Heritage Park	School District 171	July 15, 2028	
Oakwood Park	ComEd	March 31, 2033	Part of the lease for the Pennsy Greenway Spur.
Jaycees Park	Village of Lansing	December 31, 2017	
Veterans Park	Village of Lansing	December 31, 2017	
Bernice Park	Village of Lansing	December 31, 2017	
Sports Complex	Village of Lansing	December 31, 2017	
Volunteers Park	ComEd	March 29, 2030	Leased property is the connection to the trail.

Source: Lan-Oak Park District.

Park classifications

The Lan-Oak Park District park system consists primarily of three types of parks: 1) neighborhood parks, 2) community parks, and 3) special use parks. Separating parks into different classifications will help in understanding park service areas and will identify if any gaps or duplication in services exist. The following types of parks create the Lan-Oak Park District system:

Neighborhood parks

The majority of Lan-Oak Park District parks are classified as Neighborhood Parks. These parks are the basic unit of the park system and function as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. In the Park District, these parks typically include a playground. The service area for a neighborhood park is 0.5 mile (a typical 10-minute walk). Neighborhood parks usually are 0.25 acre (tot-lots) to 5 acres in size.

Community parks

There are only a few community parks in the Lan-Oak Park District. These parks serve a larger purpose and geographic area than neighborhood parks. Community parks may have unique environmental or recreational features (such as a skate park, or a fishing area). Community Parks often have a service area of one or two miles depending on the size of the district. For the Lan-Oak Park District a one mile service area is recommended. They are usually between five to 20 acres in size. Community Parks in the Lan-Oak Park District include Gus Bock Park, Erfert Park, Lan-Oak Park, Van Laten Park, and Rotary Park.

Special use facilities

Special use facilities are unique in the park district. Parks in this classification include Pennsy Greenway, Park Plaza, the Eisenhower Center, and Old Timers Sports Complex. There are no recommended standards for special use areas.

Standards and level of service

This subsection presents the national standards and level of service recommendations that are most commonly used. The Master Plan uses these standards to identify residential neighborhoods that are underserved by park sites.

³² NRPA's Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines.

Pedestrian barriers

A key component of any discussion concerning level of service recommendations is the concept of pedestrian barriers. Pedestrian barriers can be either physical or visual impediments that either completely block, or discourage, pedestrian activity. Within Lansing, pedestrian barriers include the interstate, an active rail line, and creeks (**Figure 3.5**). As discussed later in this section, when analyzing park service areas, these barriers are taken into consideration and quite often reduce coverage areas of neighborhood park.

Level of service

CMAP assessed the service area coverage for each park type using industry standards such as National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)³² level of service as well as the Illinois Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Plan (SCORP). In addition, barriers such as rail lines, Interstate 80, and creeks were factored in to understand where gaps may exist (as identified on **Figure 3.5**).

The Level of Service (LOS) guideline is a ratio representing the minimum amount of open space and park land needed to meet the recreation demands of the community as recommended by IAPD and NRPA. According to the NRPA, the LOS should:

- **Be practicable and achievable.**
- **Provide for an equitable allocation of resources throughout a community.**
- **Reflect the real-time demand of its residents.**

Gap in neighborhood park service areas

As shown on **Figure 3.6**, according to standards the District is short neighborhood park coverage for some residential neighborhoods. One of the largest gaps is the residential area to the east of Lan-Oak Park and south to the rail line. Lan-Oak Park, as a community park with a one mile service area does provide service to this area, but to access that park many residents would have to cross arterial and collector streets (which is not recommended for pedestrians accessing neighborhood parks).

JAYCEE PARK

LAN-OAK
PARK DISTRICT



Park standards

Park and facility standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population and support investment decisions. The population ratio method (acres per 1000 of population) was used to determine the LOS for the Lan-Oak Park District. This method is used most often for determining park and recreation space standards. These standards should be viewed only as a guide — each community is different, and therefore, each should not solely rely upon national or state standards. However, by applying these standards to the population and geography of the Lan-Oak Park District, gaps and surpluses in the parks system can be identified.

As shown in **Table 3.10**, the major deficiencies are a lack of open space, although the community does benefit tremendously from having Forest Preserve property nearby. The Forest Preserves provide passive activities and include multi-use trails but do not offer more typical active recreational opportunities such as playgrounds, baseball fields, or similar facilities. A lack of basketball courts is the most significant recreational facility deficiency. It is also important to note, that although facilities exist, many are in such poor condition that the standards are not truly being met.

Table 3.9. Existing parks and facilities

PARK / FACILITY	ACRES	BASEBALL/ SOFTBALL	BASKETBALL	PARK BENCHES	BIKE RACKS	CONCESSIONS	DRINKING FOUNTAIN	FISHING	FOOTBALL	HORSESHOE	INDOOR RECREATION	INDOOR SWIMMING	LIGHTS (SECURITY)	LIGHTS (ATHLETIC)	PARKING	PICNIC AREA/SHELTER	PLAYGROUND	ADA ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND	RESTROOM (INCLUDES PORTOLET)	SIGN (PARK IDENTIFICATION)	SLEDDING	SKATEBOARDING	SKATING (INLINE)	SOCCER	TENNIS	TRAILS (INCLUDES INTERNAL SIDE-WALK) IN FEET	VOLLEYBALL	DISTRICT BUILDING
Bernice Park	0.4																											
Eisenhower Center	4.9				1		1				1	1	Yes		150		1	1	1	1						360.0		1
Erfert Park	18.0			4				1					Yes		50	2	1	1	1	1	1					3,300.0		
Flanagin Park	0.3			2													1			1								
Gus Bock Park	8.2			3									Yes		140	2	1		1	1		1	1			360.0		
Heritage Park	15.4	1		3					1				Yes		50									1		875.0	1	1
Jaycee Park	6.2																			1				2				
Lan-Oak Park	19.5	2		5						8			Yes	Yes	100	2	1	1	1	1	2				3	1,000.0	1	
Lions Park	3.1	1		2						1			Yes				1	1	1	1				1			1	
Lions Stadium	4.4	2		4	1	1	1						Yes		45				1	1								
Oakley Park	0.3																											
Oakwood Park	1.2														10		1			1								
Old Timers Sports Complex	11.8	4		8	1	1	1						Yes	Yes	100	1			1	1				4				
Park Plaza	6.7			4	1								Yes		10				1	1						1,120.0		
Penny Greenway	4.7																									17,169.3		
Potts Park	2.9		0.5												5		1			1								
Rotary Park	9.8	1	1.5	2			1						Yes		40	2	1		1	1			1	2	1,900.0	1		
Schultz Park	4.1	1		2	1					1			Yes				1	1	1	1				1			1	
Stoney Ridge Park	0.2			6	1											1	1	1		1						250.0		
Van Laten Park	7.5	1		2			1						Yes		25	1	1		1	1			2			1,750.0		
Veteran's Memorial Park	2.0			1													1											
Volunteers Park	2.0			9												3	1	1		1						785.0		
Whitman Park	0.2			1												1	1	1		1								
Winterhoff Park	5.8			1																1						745.0		
	139.2	13	2	59	6	2	5	1	1	10	1	1	11	3	725	15	15	8	11	20	1	1	1	4	13	29,614.0	5	2

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Table 3.10. Park and facility standards

FACILITY/ OPEN SPACE	NATIONAL STANDARD (NRPA) ³³	ILLINOIS STATE AVERAGE (SCORP) ³⁴		CURRENT POPULATION RATIO (28,331 POPULATION)		MEETS NRPA STANDARD**	MEETS STATE AVERAGE**
		NUMBER OF FACILITIES PER 1,000	NUMBER OF FACILITIES NEEDED	EXISTING	CURRENT LAN-OAK PARK DISTRICT STANDARD		
Open Space	10 acres per 1,000	11.35 acres per 1,000	6.45 acres	139 ac.	4.9 acres per 1,000	No	No
Baseball	1 per 5,000	0.2552	7.2	13	1 per 2,179	Yes	Yes
Basketball	1 per 5,000	0.2500	7.0	2	1 per 14,165	No	No
Dog Park	N/A	0.0074	0.2	0	0	NA	No
Fishing	N/A	0.4080	11.5	1	1 per 28,331	NA	No
Football	1 per 20,000	0.0546	1.5	1	1 per 28,331	No	No
Horseshoe	1 per 7,500	N/A	N/A	11	1 per 2,575	Yes	N/A
Inline Rink	1 per 20,000	N/A	N/A	1	1 per 28,331	No	N/A
Picnic Shelter	1 per 2,000	0.2060	5.8	15	1 per 1,888	Yes	Yes
Playgrounds	N/A	0.4035	11.4	14	1 per 2,023	N/A	Yes
Pool	1 per 20,000	0.0282	0.8	1	1 per 28,331	No	Yes
Outdoor Volleyball	1 per 5,000	0.1700	4.8	5	1 per 5,660	No	Yes
Skate Park	1 per 100,000	0.0163	0.5	1	1 per 28,331	Yes	Yes
Soccer	1 per 10,000	0.1779	5.0	3	1 per 9,443	Yes	No
Spray Ground	N/A	0.0292	0.8	0	0	N/A	No
Tennis	1 per 2,000	0.4900	13.8	13	1 per 2,179	No	No
Trails	1 mile per 2,000	0.1630	4.6	5.6 miles	1 mile per 5,059	No	Yes

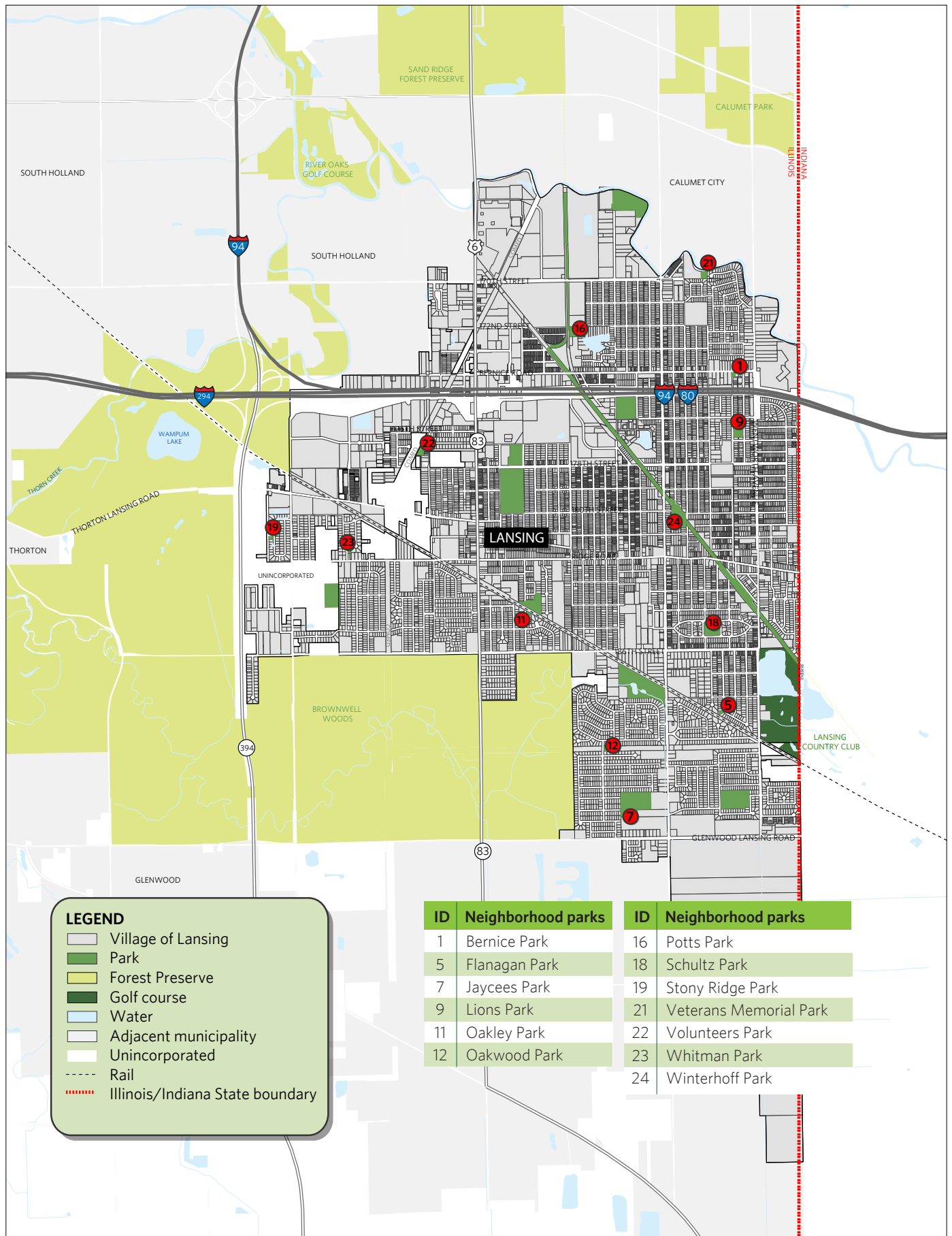
Notes: Baseball is used as a common standard in this table; different types of baseball such as softball and little league have slightly different standards. Basketball includes half-courts.

³³ NRPA's Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines.

³⁴ <http://dnr.state.il.us/publications/pdf/00000755.pdf> — Community Outdoor Recreation Facilities in Illinois — 2008 Park Districts & Municipal Departments.

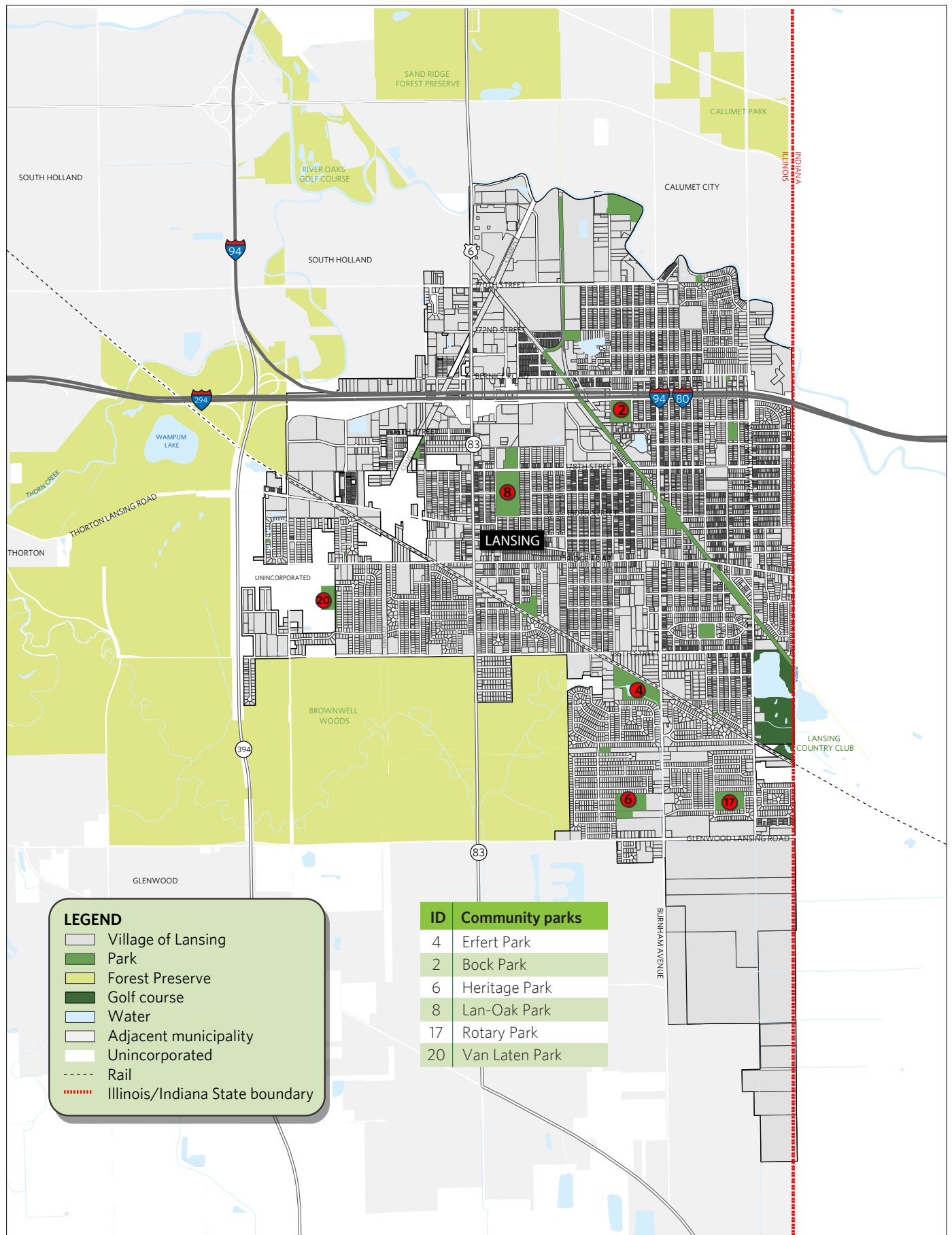


Figure 3.2. Neighborhood parks



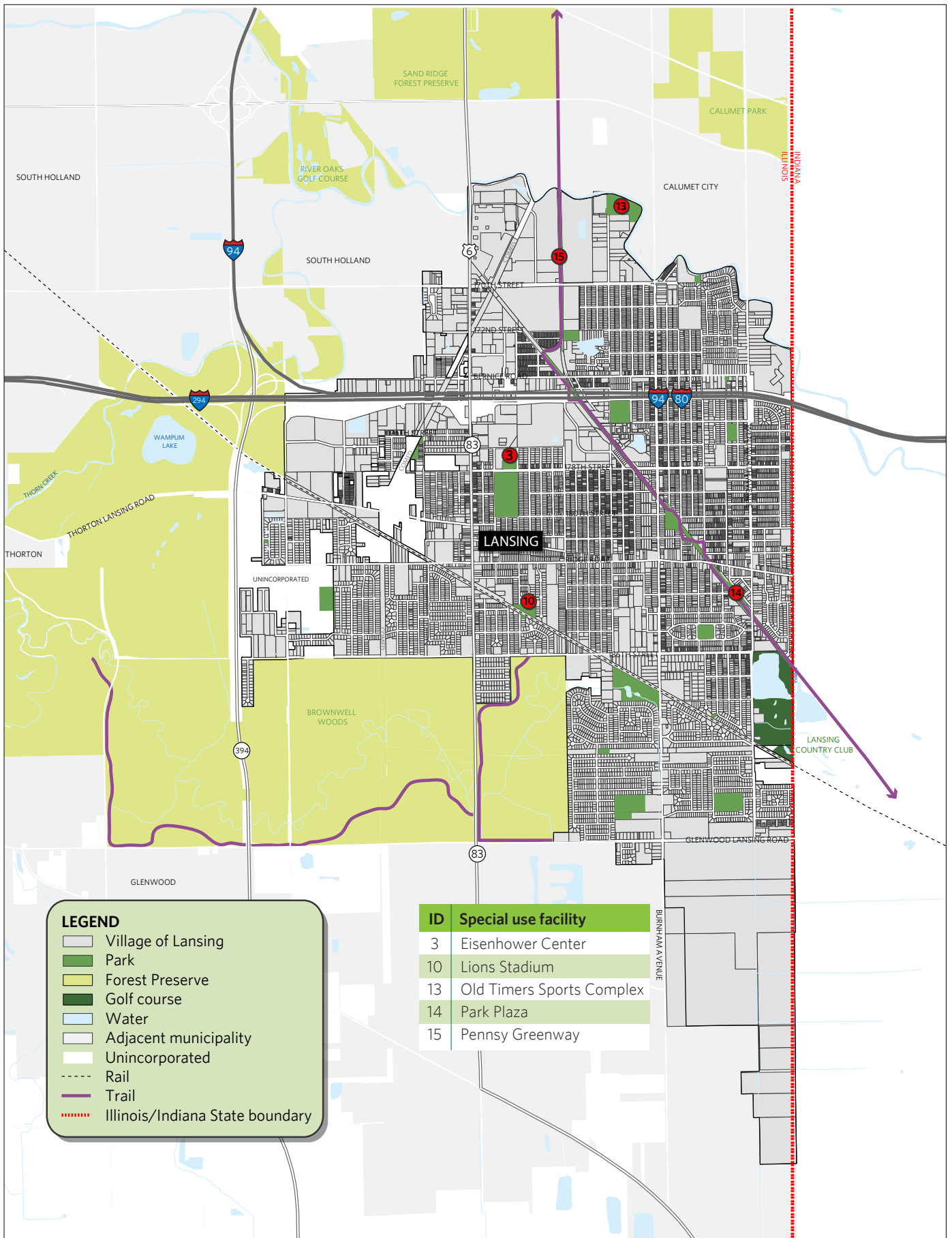
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 3.3. Community parks



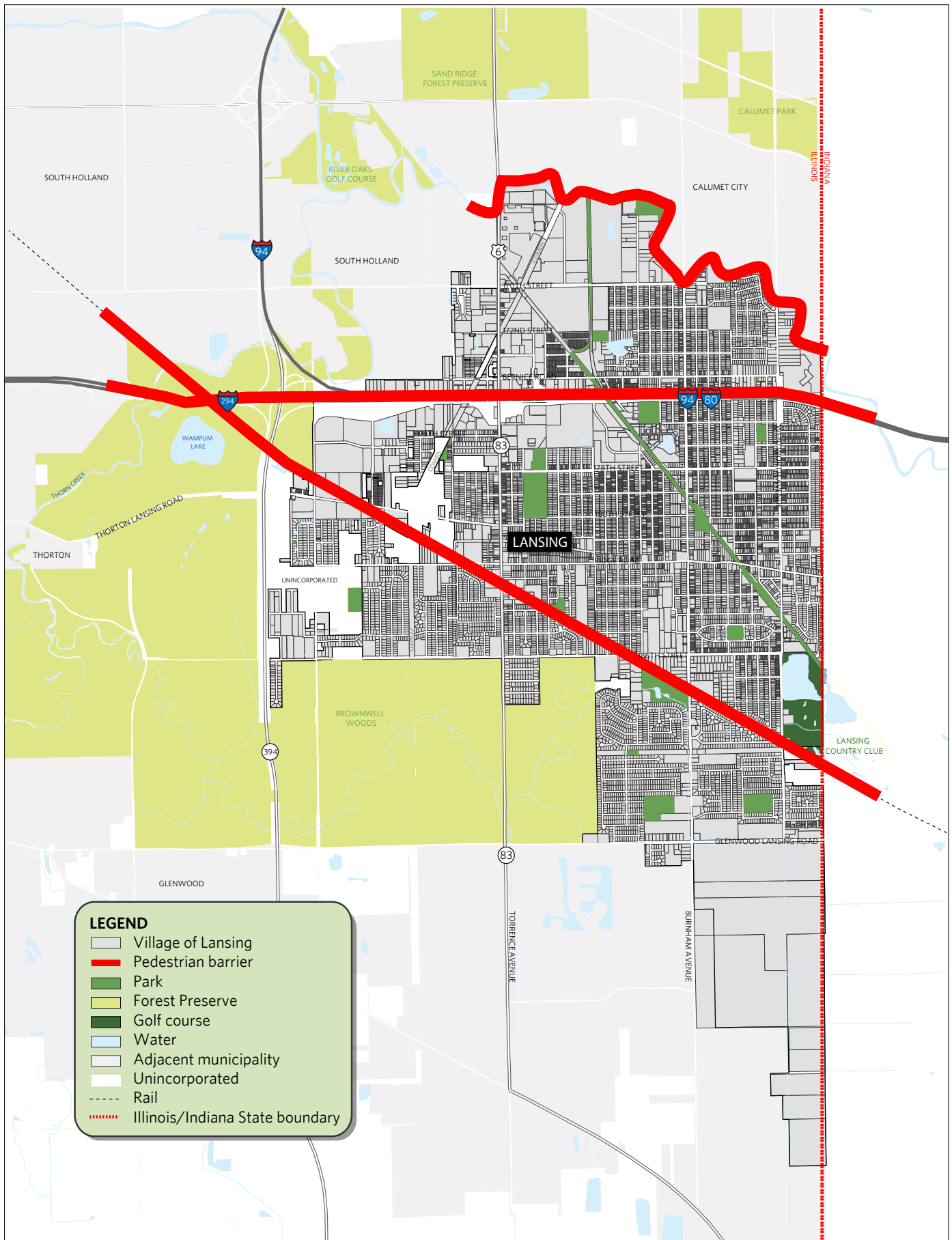
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 3.4. Special use



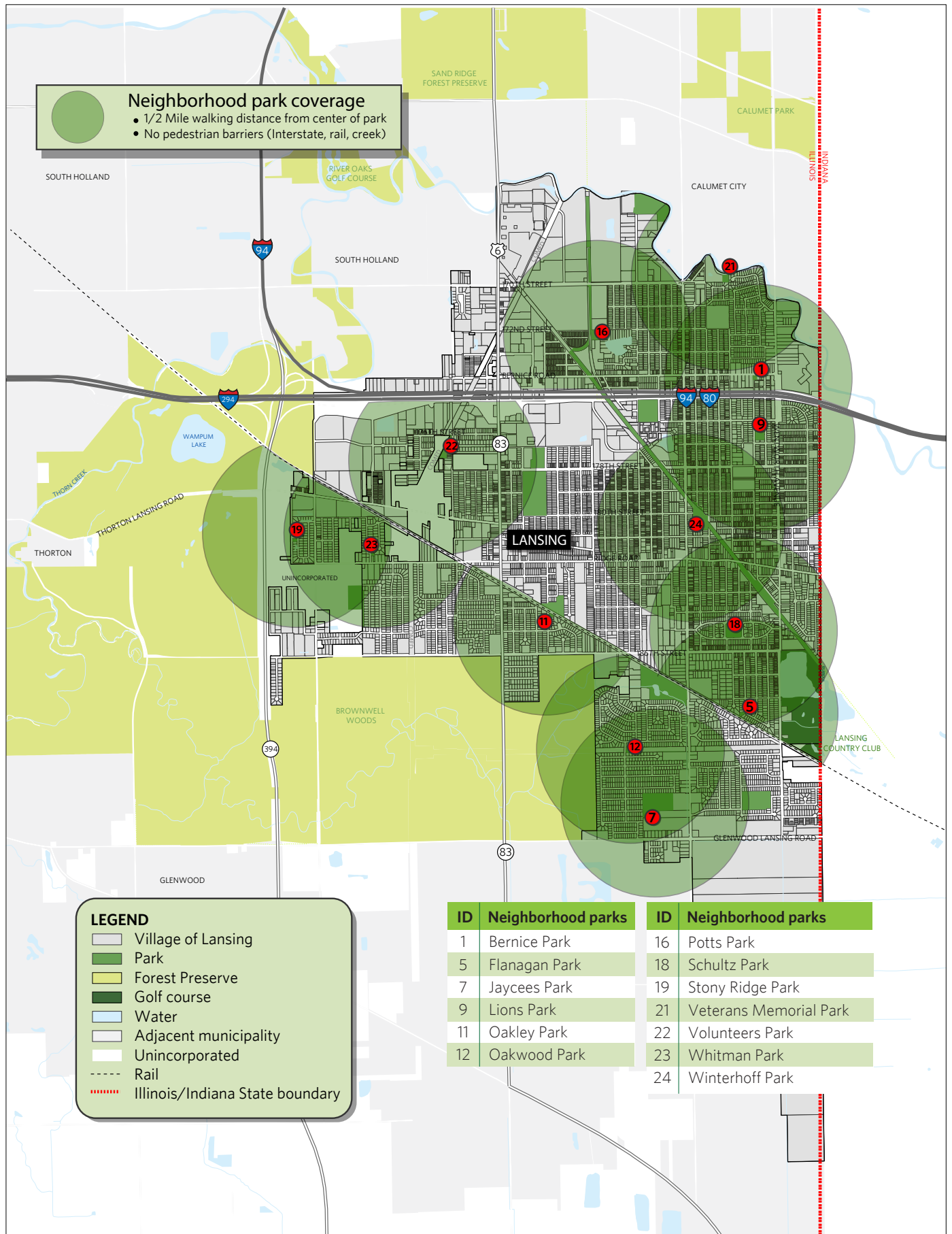
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 3.5. Pedestrian barriers



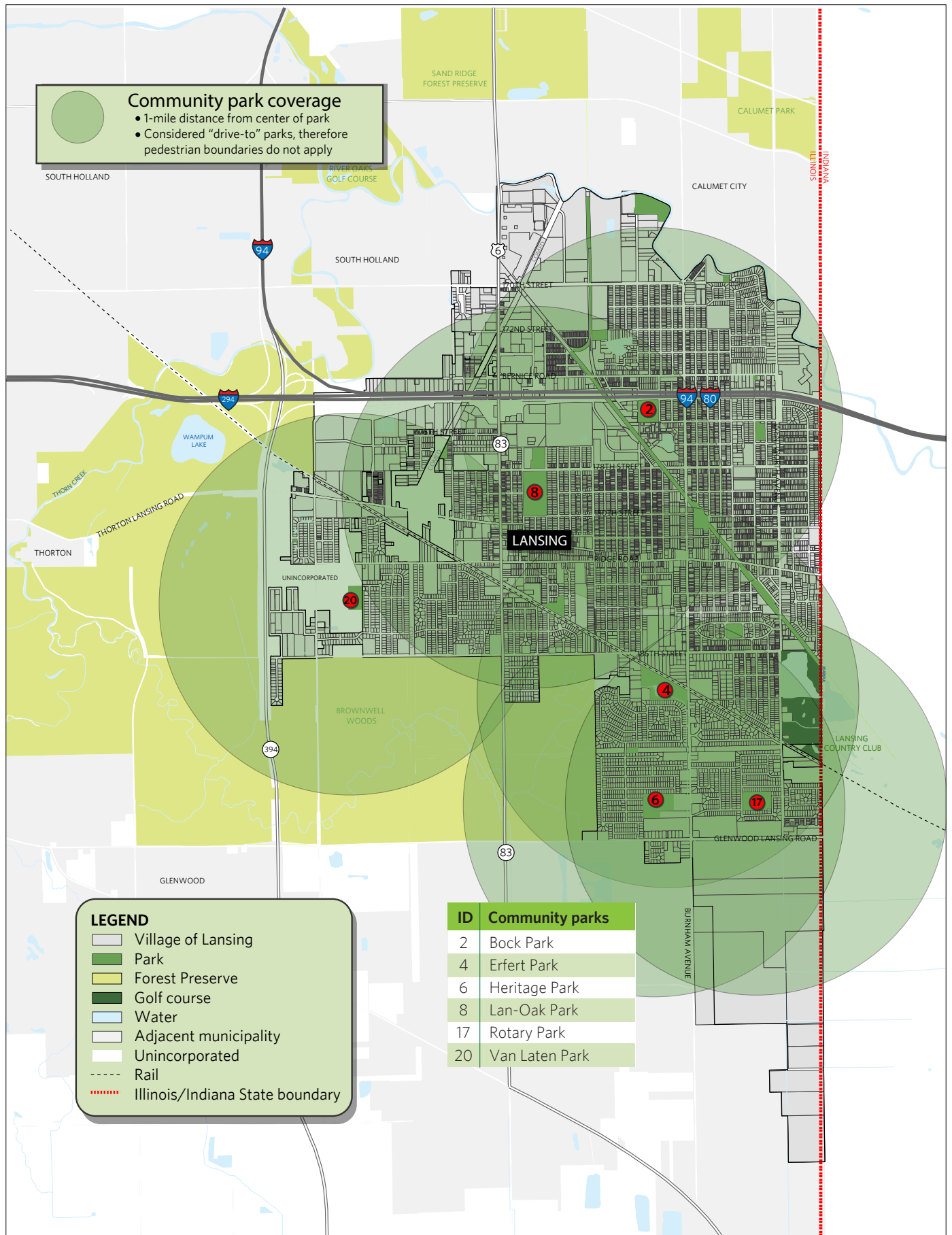
Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 3.6. Neighborhood park service areas



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Figure 3.7. Community park service areas



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Trail System

The Lan-Oak Park District has made significant investments in pedestrian and bicycle routes within the community. This subsection highlights the key existing trail system within the community.

Penssy Greenway

The main off-street multi-use trail is the Penssy Greenway. The greenway runs from the east of 186th Street northwest to Calumet City along a vacated rail line. The trail includes numerous at-grade street crossings and travels at-grade beneath the interstate.

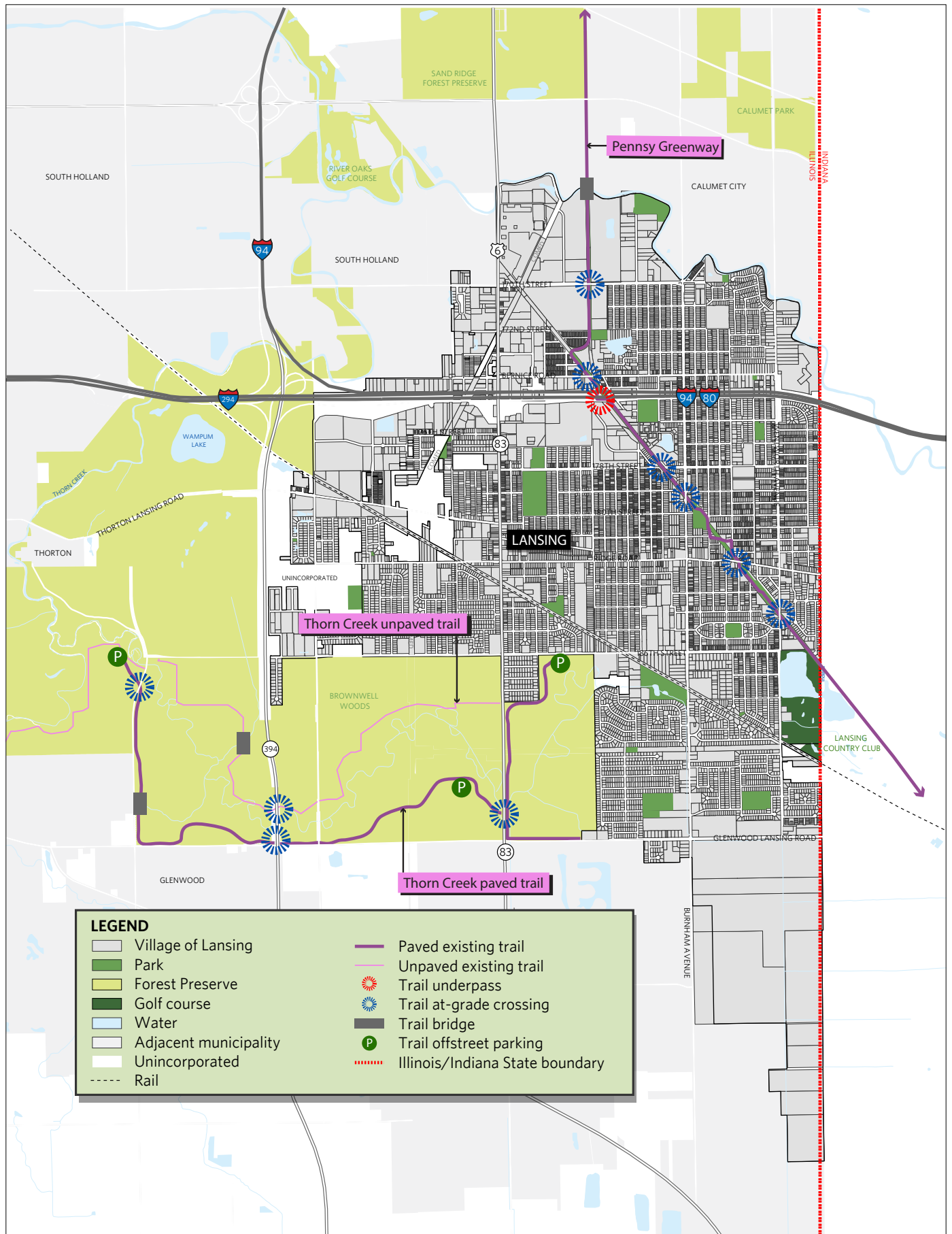
The Penssy Greenway is currently open in three segments between Calumet City, Illinois, and Schererville, Indiana. The northern portion begins at the southern end of the Burnham Greenway in Calumet City on the eastern edge of the Forest Preserves of Cook County's Green Lake Woods. The trail proceeds south to Bernice Road, crosses under I-80/94, and continues southeast through residential neighborhoods to just past the Illinois-Indiana state line. Currently approximately 3.25 miles of the greenway travels through the Lan-Oak Park District.

The majority of the Penssy Greenway is owned and maintained by the Lan-Oak Park District within its district boundaries. There are two small portions that are owned by the Village of Lansing: The first area is the portion of the path that travels under I-80/94 and then portion that travels adjacent to the highway alongside 175th Street, and the second area is the portion of the path that travels from Winterhoff Park to the Park Plaza.

Thorn Creek Trail

Bromwell Woods Forest Preserve includes both paved and unpaved segments of Thorn Creek Trail. As shown on **Figure 3.8**, these trails both run east and west through the preserves. These trails include parking areas and at-grade crossings over U.S. Route 83 and IL Route 394.

Figure 3.8. Existing trail system



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Section 4: RECOMMENDATIONS





This section presents the recommendations and strategies for achieving the community’s vision for the Lan-Oak Park District. The recommendations are presented in operational and facility categories. Each topical discussion includes the following information:

- Goals that are short statements describing the desired condition to be reached and addressing key issues or needs relating to particular core principles. Goals are broad, overarching, and general. Goals are based on community input, the evaluation of existing conditions, interviews with stakeholders, discussions with the steering committee, and the District’s current mission statement.
- Strategies that would help reach the goal. Strategies include detailed recommendations and associated implementation steps. More detailed implementation priorities are included in **Section 5**.

1. Operational Recommendations

The following recommendations are meant to assist the Lan-Oak Park District in improving its internal operations as well as its overall visibility and identity in the community.

Operational goals

The following goals serve as guiding tenets for the operational recommendations of the plan. Each goal is addressed by a number of strategies:

- **Goal. 1.1. Improve the District's finances.**
- **Goal. 1.2. Improve the Park District's image and identity.**
- **Goal. 1.3. Strengthen existing partnerships and enter into new partnerships.**
- **Goal. 1.4. Improve community health throughout all facets of the District.**

Operational strategies

The following strategies represent action steps to accomplish the goals identified for enhancing the operational function of the Park District.

Goal 1.1: Improve the District's finances.

As discussed throughout the Plan, the Park District's single greatest challenge is financial – in particular, a lack of funding for capital improvements. Over the last several years the District has reduced its expenses which has freed up additional funds for capital improvements.

Still, the Park District's inability to undertake capital improvements was raised as a key issue by residents and staff throughout the planning process. Approximately six percent of the District's expenses are attributed to capital expenses. This percentage translates into approximately \$125,000 on an annual basis for capital improvements throughout the District's parks. This is insufficient to make necessary improvements, and has affected the overall operations and image of the Park District.

The Park District continues to be fiscally prudent with their limited resources. For example, the District has recently refinanced their bonds to raise \$725,000 for capital improvements. However, due to the number of projects that are necessary throughout the District those dollars will be spent quickly.

It's also important to note that acquiring a single grant to complete a construction project is not going to solve the District's larger problems. The District is not in a position to maintain or improve its facilities, much less expand them, given its overall budget. Moving forward, the District should continue to seek ways to improve its finances, not simply for one-time projects, but to allow capital improvements, ongoing maintenance, and repairs well into the future. This may require creative ways to increase revenue and reduce costs, potentially by increasing parks user fees, constructing facilities that can be rented, or by continuing to cut expenses.



In order to obtain necessary funds, the District should continue to seek outside funding sources such as grants to supplement the financing of capital projects. It is important to note that in general grants should not be considered a stable and/or reliable source of funding since they are tied to outside agencies and their separate funding sources/budgets.

Examples of potential grant sources include the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Opens Space Land Acquisition Development Grants (OSLAD), Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Grants (DCEO), and Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Section 319 funding. A more complete listing of potential funding sources is provided at the end of Section 5.

Currently, the Park District seeks out corporate sponsorships once a year. Possible opportunities include sponsoring special events or youth activities. The Village should continue to seek corporate sponsorships.

Goal 1.2: Improve the Park District's image and identity.

Create a free flow of communication between the Park District and residents regarding events, actions, and problems that affect the District. The Park District should work with residents, business owners, governmental entities, sports and recreation affiliates, neighborhood and community groups, and advisory committees to gain input into the planning, development, and improvement of park areas and facilities. The following strategies should be pursued to not only gain input by those groups but to also improve the overall image of the Lan-Oak Park District.

- **Continue to hold Board of Commissioner meetings in neighborhood parks.** The Park District has held a number of Board of Commissioner meetings in neighborhood parks throughout the community. According to District staff these meetings have been well attended, successful, and well-received.

Neighborhood park meetings allow Board members to meet with residents which create opportunities for residents and officials to exchange ideas and share their issues and future opportunities. The District should continue to hold these neighborhood meetings whenever feasible. In the future, if finances improve, the District should meet with residents while planning park improvements to gather resident input in the future design, layout, and amenities desired for their neighborhood park.

- **Strengthen the District's online presence.** The Park District's website should be updated to include more interactive options. An updated website could include a variety of new or improved features including: more photos, information in both Spanish and English, "questions of the week," and a new park location map (a new park location map should also be included in the Park District program guide). The District should also embrace other social media that should be connected to its website and promoted throughout its program guide. Examples of other social media include the creation of a Facebook page, a Twitter account, and an Instagram account to help improve its online presence.
- **Administer annual user surveys.** The Park District should regularly survey park users and program participants to assess and evaluate the quality of its facilities and services. Survey results can help inform district staff when making programming and capital improvement decisions. Ideally, the results should be compared annually to determine trends and/or new areas of focus.
- **Form an advisory committee.** The Park District should create a resident advisory committee. An advisory committee formed of a mix of residents, business owners, and students would assist the District in a number of ways including: 1) clearly communicating resident's needs to both the staff and Park District Board, and 2) assisting with positively marketing the Park District's assets to neighborhoods and other residents at the "grassroots" level. An overall and immediate advantage of forming an advisory committee is that they could greatly assist the District in more effectively "telling its story."

Example of a Resident Advisory Committee

An example of a Park District that has a resident group is the Park District of Oak Park. A Park District Citizen Committee (PDCC) was organized in 2003 to assist in the comprehensive planning process. The committee oversees the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan and Capital Improvement Plan and provides a valuable communication channel between the Park District and the citizens of Oak Park. The PDCC is made up of 11 members, two alternate members and two student representatives. Members of the Park District Citizen Committee must be Oak Park residents.³⁵

Increase the capacity of the Park District to meet its communication and marketing needs based on changing demographics and evolving needs. The Park District should budget more resources to improve its communication and marketing efforts. The goal for the District should be to diversify its existing strategies to better communicate and market what the Park District has to offer.

- **Create a new marketing plan.** The first step in this strategy should be to create a new marketing plan. The new plan would help to create a more positive image of the District and would assist staff in efficiently communicating this message.

The District's new marketing plan should be a relatively short, internally-developed document that should be designed for internal purposes only. The report should be strategic in nature and outline specific actions, timelines, and responsibilities wherever feasible.

The marketing plan should include strategies for a number of tasks including: developing and supporting volunteer programs; and strengthening translation abilities (e.g., hiring staff that are bilingual; or purchasing translation services to develop materials that are bilingual).

In 2005 the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) created a very useful guide to assist Park Districts in creating a marketing plan. The report is available at http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.ilparks.org/resource/resmgr/files/guide_to_marketing.pdf. The report provides a very detailed step-by-step approach to how to create a marketing plan and how to implement that plan. Several examples and links to other resources are included in the document.

³⁵ <http://www.napervilleparks.org/docs/b49554a7-5795-4eee-8e73-cf28247d9c19.pdf>.



The IAPD recommends that the marketing plan should cover the:

- Results from researching the District itself
 - Results from researching the agency's market
 - Conclusions reached after analyzing the research results
 - Marketing goals that are set
 - Strategies that are developed
 - Marketing budget
 - Media plan and the timeline for its implementation
 - Evaluation of the methods and results of marketing efforts
 - Executive overview ³⁶
- **Include marketing to all residents.** The District should utilize community demographic information that was compiled as part of this plan to increase marketing to adults for cultural, fitness, and wellness programs. The District should also organize multi-cultural community events and programs considering outreach and accessibility to those who may only speak Spanish. The marketing plan should serve to communicate the District's support of non-English speaking residents and help to show that the District is an organization that is attempting to unify the residents of Lansing.
 - **Build-in a review of the marketing plan.** Once the marketing plan is up and running, it is important to continue monitor results and evaluate the plan. As part of the evaluation process the District should conduct an annual review and update of its communication and marketing plan and continuously update and improve its plan as new ideas or opportunities present themselves.

³⁶ http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.ilparks.org/resource/resmgr/files/guide_to_marketing.pdf.

- **Increase program awareness and identify new program opportunities.** The District should enhance its marketing and community relations efforts to generate public interest and participation in programs, facilities and park areas. The creation of a new marketing plan (discussed earlier) should also focus on the value that residents receive from the District. The marketing plan should also aim to provide information on established and new program offerings that meet the needs of an aging and diversifying population.

Potential new strategies to increase program awareness and new program opportunities including the following:

- Install a digital community message board sign at Park Plaza
 - Post additional website features in English and Spanish
 - Host a variety of community events throughout the year
 - Administer volunteer awards
 - Conduct surveys and questionnaires
- **Create educational and promotional materials based upon the recommendations of the Master Plan.** Using the information contained in the Master Plan and the Existing Conditions Report — from data, recommendations, and graphics — the District should create educational and promotional materials to help communicate its strengths. The variety of information included in this document, especially the demographics data and analysis, will greatly assist the District. Other areas of focus for educational and programming materials include a discussion regarding the connection between parks and health, economic value, stability, the District’s current finances, and the changing demographics of the community.

- **Change the Park District’s name to one that is more easily identifiable, such as the Lansing Park District to improve its image and to create a stronger connection with Lansing residents.** The Board of Commissioners should consider changing the name of the Lan-Oak Park District to a more recognizable name such as the Lansing Park District. This would have a number of benefits and would help strengthen the District’s identity. A name change would also help residents to understand that the District is “theirs,” thereby improving residents sense of ownership. The District should consider holding resident focus groups to determine if there is a grassroots level desire to see a new name, and if so, some potential names to be considered by the Board. If it is the direction of the Board to rename the District it should be tied to a larger marketing campaign and rebranding effort.

According to the Illinois State Statutes (Section 70 ILCS 1205/8-9) it appears that a name change simply requires a favorable vote from the Board of Commissioners. As part of a renaming effort, the Park District should consider creating a new logo. The new logo should include easily identifiable Park District landmarks such as the Park Plaza clock tower and/or images of bicyclists to showcase the accomplishments of the District in constructing Pennsy Greenway. Examples of potential logos are illustrated on **Figure 4.1**. Once a new name and logo are chosen the District should begin to update its stationery, website, materials, and park identification signage when feasible.

Figure 4.1. New logo design concepts



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.



Goal 1.3: Strengthen existing partnerships and enter into new partnerships.

Promote agreements and partnerships to maximize open space and recreational resources, maintenance, and programs. The Park District already partners with many groups to provide parks and recreation in the community. Examples of current partners include: the Lansing Old Timers, the Village of Lansing, Chamber of Commerce, the Lansing Public Library, the Cook County Department of Public Health, the Forest Preserves of Cook County, and School Districts #171, #158, and #215.

The Park District should continue to strengthen and add to its current partnerships. Increasing the number of intergovernmental agreements and formalized partnerships will result in the Park District maximizing open space and recreational resources, and saving resident's tax dollars by eliminating duplication of services.

- **Strengthen the partnership with the Cook County Department of Public Health.** As part of this planning process the District has established a strong working relationship with the Cook County Department of Public Health. There are many benefits for the District and the Department working together including improved expertise, sharing of resources, and the potential for the Lan-Oak Park District of becoming a regional model for incorporating health within parks planning.
- **Potential revenue generator.** The District should evaluate if there are any possibilities for generating new revenue streams that could be used towards maintenance and improvements to shared parks and/or facilities. For example, the District should explore the possibilities of charging a minimal fee for their park and/or facility space on a sliding scale to — at the minimum — support the maintenance of the park or facility caused by that particular use.

| Existing signs are not consistent.



- **Explore new agreements and partnerships.** In addition to maintaining current agreements, the District should also pursue the following new agreements and partnerships to improve parks and recreation throughout the community:
 - **Village maintenance agreements.** The District should discuss with the Village of Lansing to see if there are opportunities for maintenance assistance. There may be savings in entering into a shared-maintenance agreement at certain parks or even district-wide.
 - **Volunteer assistance.** The District should be proactive in attracting volunteer opportunities. To attract volunteer groups the District should create an “Adopt a Park” program. Potential partners interested in such a program may be nearby residents, businesses, homeowners associations, youth service organizations, non-profits, and religious institutions.
 - **School shared-use agreements.** The Park District should meet with the school district(s) to see if any additional formal “shared use” agreements are possible. At this time, the Park District shares the football field at Heritage Park with School District #171. New opportunities may exist for both indoor and outdoor facilities. Intergovernmental agreements between the districts will allow the general public to access a wide variety of recreational programs for all ages especially after school hours. These types of agreements would also allow the Park District to provide activities that would be otherwise prohibitive. In return, if the Park District used school facilities, participating schools would likely receive funds that could reduce their maintenance costs.
 - **Senior programming agreements.** The Park District should meet with other entities in the community that serve seniors. Possible partners include senior housing groups and Thornton Township. Thornton Township — the largest township in Illinois — has a Senior Services Department. Although the Senior Services Department does not have a facility in Lansing, it does offer services at three locations nearby: Thornton Township Hall, 333 East 162nd Street in South Holland; the Senior Center at 1420 Huntington Drive in Calumet City; and at 14323 Halsted in Riverdale.
 - **Recreational programming agreements.** The District has a long history of working with, and supporting, private sports and recreation providers. The Park District should continue to work with existing recreation partners in the community to provide a variety programs, leagues, and special events. Some examples of partnerships that should be continued include the Lansing Old Timers and the South Suburban Special Recreation Association (SSSRA).
 - **Co-host a variety of community events.** The Park District should continue to seek out partnerships and potential sponsors for community events. The Chamber of Commerce is an example of a group that currently works with the Park District to host community events throughout the year. The Chamber of Commerce also sponsors a number of community events on its own that are supported by the District including the Annual Golf Outing, Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, Good Neighbor Parade, Sidewalk Sales, Santa House, and Taste of the Holidays. When Park Plaza is fully developed as a community gathering area, the District should ensure that a variety of community events are held at the park throughout the year.

Example of an Anti-Idling Policy

The Glenview Park District has established an anti-idling policy to protect public health, improve the environment, and reduce fuel consumption. Patrons waiting in “pick-up” areas at the facilities and drivers of Park District vehicles operating in the parks must turn off their engines if they will be sitting for more than 30 seconds. The facilities will encourage patrons to not idle through the use of signage.³⁷

Goal 1.4: Improve community health throughout all facets of the District.

- *Promote health, safety, and well-being through Park District decisions, policies, programs, events, and communication.* The Park District currently has a number of policies and programs in place that are aimed at improving the health of Lansing residents. It should continuously strive to strengthen its policies and programs that promote physical and mental health, youth development, and social well-being of Lansing residents. The District should work with the Cook County Department of Public Health to identify recommendations that the department can assist to implement as resources allow.

³⁷ Glenview Park District
<http://www.glenviewparks.org/about/policies/>.

Potential policies, programs, or actions include, but are not limited to:

- o Establishing nutritional standards for Park District vending machines and events.
 - o Strengthening the District's current smoke-free policy (the City of Chicago has a recent policy: http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdph/supp_info/tabacco_alcohol_drug_abuse/smoke_free_illinoisact.html).
 - o Increasing youth volunteer and leadership opportunities.
 - o Organizing multicultural community events and programs.
 - o Linking residents to evidence-based community preventive health resources (e.g., Illinois Tobacco Quitline; chronic disease self-management program).
 - o Marketing the Park District's existing "Silver Sneakers" program to older adults, or conducting health-related campaigns in collaboration with other local entities (e.g., school districts).
 - o Encouraging active living via capital improvement recommendations that increase access and use of the parks.
 - o Consider the establishment of an anti-idling policy.
 - o Work with other agencies such as the Village and the School Districts to promote public policy efforts such as those that improve health and safety (i.e. bike helmet requirements for youth).
- **Support Village efforts to support "complete streets."** In an effort to provide more facilities for walking and biking throughout the community, the Park District should encourage the Village to include "complete streets" techniques into roadway improvements. In general, by following this concept, streets should be designed to provide for all modes of travel, not just automobiles, such as public transit riders, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Complete Streets

Chicago-based Active Transportation Alliance, in Chapter 1 of their design manual Complete Streets Complete Networks, takes a broad, holistic approach defining Complete Streets as "a movement that brings together policy and people, networks and neighborhoods, designs and destinations. The Complete Streets concept reclaims streets for people, reexamines the public realm, and challenges some commonly held perceptions about transportation.

A Complete Streets approach combines the physical planning, design and maintenance of infrastructure with an institutional understanding of project management, funding, and prioritization."³⁸

³⁸ Complete Streets Complete Networks: A Manual for the Design of Active Transportation, available at <http://www.atpolicy.org/Design>.



2. Facility Recommendations

The following recommendations are meant to assist the Lan-Oak Park District in improving its parks and recreational facilities over the next 10-15 years. Due to limited funds the majority of the District's parks and facilities are in poor condition, because the District has been unable to provide adequate maintenance and replacement of facilities. Therefore, the following strategies have been created with the acknowledgement that the District should focus on maintaining its current parks and facilities before acquiring new parks and open space acreage or undertaking significant capital improvements.

Facility goals

The following goals serve as guiding tenets for the facility subsection. Each goal is addressed by a number of strategies:

- Goal. 2.1. Develop a comprehensive park and recreation system that is accessible, safe, well-maintained, and provides a balance of passive and active recreational opportunities.
- Goal. 2.2. Expand the trail system.
- Goal. 2.3. Develop conservation policies to ensure conservation and best use of natural resources.

Facility strategies

Based upon the three goals noted above, the following strategies represent action steps to improve the District's parks and facilities.



Goal 2.1: Develop a comprehensive park and recreation system that is accessible, safe, well-maintained, socially equitable, and provides a balance of passive and active recreational opportunities.

- ***Continue to focus on maintaining existing parks and facilities.***

Because of the District's limited finances it should continue to focus on retaining and maintain its existing parks and recreation rather than acquiring new parks and/or constructing brand new facilities. However, if the District does establish new revenue streams it should focus on renovating its most severely rundown parks such as Bock Park and its abandoned pool facility. As a point of reference, in 2013 the District undertook major renovations including - remodeled bathrooms at the Eisenhower Center, a new HVAC system for the Eisenhower gymnasium, new Lions Stadium dugouts and pathways, and a reroof of the Effert Park restrooms.

- ***Retain existing owned and leased parks.*** The Park District should retain all of the parks that it owns and maintains, including those that are leased. It is important to keep in mind that seven of the District's parks are leased from the Village and/or the School District.³⁷ Although unlikely, there is always the possibility that those lease agreements may not be extended. If those park sites are removed there would be less parks serving residents and the District would likely be short more than the recommended State standards. The following park leases are set to expire at the end of 2017: Jaycees Park, Veterans Park, Bernice Park, and the Sports Complex. The Park District should begin discussions within the Village to seek extensions.

There are several benefits to retaining existing parks including helping the District to provide parks and open space within easy access to as many residents as possible, in assisting the District to aim for national standards, and in providing acreage that can be used when funds become available to add new facilities.

³⁹ Heritage Park, Oakwood Park, Jaycees Park, Veterans Park, Bernice Park, Sports Complex, Volunteers Park.

- ***Provide neighborhood park coverage.*** As shown on **Figure 3.6**, according to standards the District is short neighborhood park coverage for some residential neighborhoods. One of the largest gaps is the residential area east of Lan-Oak Park south to the rail line. Lan-Oak Park, as a community park with a one mile service area, does provide service to this area but to access that park many residents would have to cross arterial and collector streets (which is not recommended for pedestrians accessing neighborhood parks). Unfortunately, very few opportunities, if any, for new neighborhood parks exists in this area, so the District should work with the Village to ensure that signalized intersections and pedestrian crosswalks near Lan-Oak Park have safe and accessible pedestrian and bicyclist access. In order to provide better service to the residential areas that are underserved, the District should monitor these areas for potential acquisitions. The fact that some areas are underserved stresses the importance of maintaining existing neighborhood parks whenever feasible.

- ***Strive towards meeting park acreage standards.*** According to standards the Park District is short 180 acres of open space. Unfortunately, because Lansing is a mature built-out community, there are very few opportunities to acquire that much property. Therefore the District should retain its existing parks so as not to increase its shortage of recommended open space.

- ***Provide acreage for new amenities when funds become available.*** As redevelopment and infill begins to occur in Lansing as the economy improves the importance of its existing parks will increase. Also, an overarching goal of the Master Plan is to improve the Park District finances so that it can undertake more capital improvements in the future. If, and when, the Park District is able to do more, parks that are currently vacant or underutilized should be improved. Therefore, the District should retain its parks so that in the future, if funds are available, there will be an opportunity to construct new amenities throughout the community. Examples of amenities include: new playgrounds, benches, sidewalks, basketball courts, tennis courts, and landscaping.

- ***Remain open to possibilities.***

Although the main strategy for the District should be to focus on maintaining and improving existing parks and facilities, there is one exception. As a long-range planning document, the Master Plan acknowledges that if the opportunity to acquire a new park or facility that could improve the District's finances arises, that the District should be open to discussions.

For example, a facility that may have the ability to generate revenue — such as a golf course — should be taken into consideration. It is strongly recommended that the District undertake a very detailed and thorough analysis to be sure that such an acquisition would not negatively impact the District as a whole. Throughout the region there are examples of park district golf courses that generate revenue and those that generate little if any revenue. The District should be sure to consult experts in the field of golf course operations and maintenance to ensure that a golf course would be a benefit for the District in the short- and long-term.

- ***Provide both passive and active programming for a variety of ages, health, and abilities.*** The Park District is an important contributor to the area's quality of life. The District should continue to provide a variety of programming to support a variety of age groups and ability levels. In order to continue to serve all of its residents, regardless of age and ability, the District should strive to provide high-quality programming and facilities for youth, seniors, and those with disabilities.

- **Improve park accessibility whenever feasible.**
Creating a park system that is accessible and usable by all individuals within the District, including those with disabilities, is essential.

- **Implement the recommendations of the Accessibility Audit**

In 2010 the District hired Recreation Accessibility Consultants to audit parks and facilities. The audit included an examination of 28 facilities and parks. From this audit 982 access deficits identified.

In the consultant's evaluation, some common issues arose. Examples of common issues ranged from ways in which maintenance affects accessibility, the type of playground surfaces used, and the importance of maintaining appropriate access to recreational facilities. The common issues are also "big picture" items for the District and incorporate many of the specific site recommendations.

According to Park District staff, as facilities and parks are renovated the District follows the recommendations of the audit whenever possible. The Park District should continue its efforts towards improving accessibility when financially feasible and during renovations or new construction.

- **Continue to support SSSRA.** In addition to making necessary improvements during renovations, the District should also continue its support of programming for individuals with disabilities or special needs. The Lan-Oak Park District is a member agency of the SSSRA which is an excellent resource for the District and partner organization to help it support this type of programming.

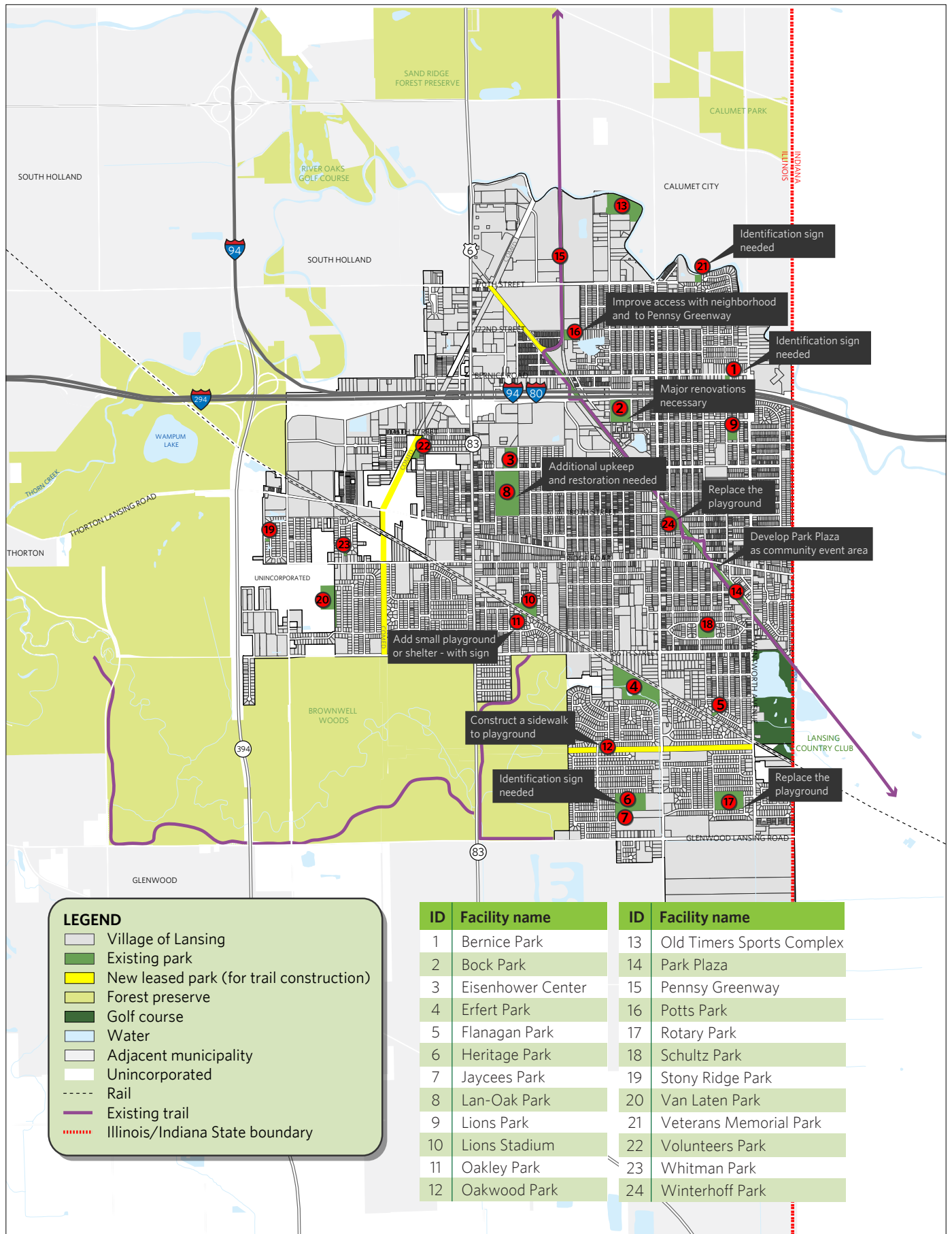
Golf Course Example

Coyote Run Golf Course —
Homewood-Flossmoor Park District

According to the HFPD's 2013 Financial Report the net position of Coyote Run Golf Course declined \$411,687, excluding a financing transfer from the General Fund. Operating income from course play improved from last year by \$31,738 to \$67,087, but the loss of \$118,992 during Wiley's Grill's first year of operations together with depreciation and financing expenses resulted in the net loss for the 2013 fiscal year.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ <http://www.hfparks.com/Form/2013%20Comprehensive%20Annual%20Financial%20Report.pdf>.

Figure 4.2. Future parks and open space



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

- *Acquire funds to remove the former outdoor community pool and renovate Bock Park.*

The Park District should prioritize the renovation of Bock Park as the first major capital project to be undertaken (when financially feasible). The poor appearance of Bock Park and the former pool facility are tremendous eyesores within Lansing. The facility promotes a negative image of both the Village and the Park District. The Park District has created a redevelopment plan for the park that includes a number of active recreational amenities that are needed in the community including a soccer/football field, two soccer practice areas, as well as a playground, picnic area, and restrooms/concession.

A. Preferred Option A: Full Park Renovation.

Current plans require demolishing the pool, filling it in, and converting the area back to active recreational amenity space. In the summer of 2014, the Park District submitted a Park and Recreational Construction (PARC) grant to the IDNR for \$2.4 million to remove the former pool and renovate the park. If the District is not successful in securing the PARC grant, the District should continue to apply for other grants that can be used to fund this renovation.

B. Option B: Pool Demolition Only.

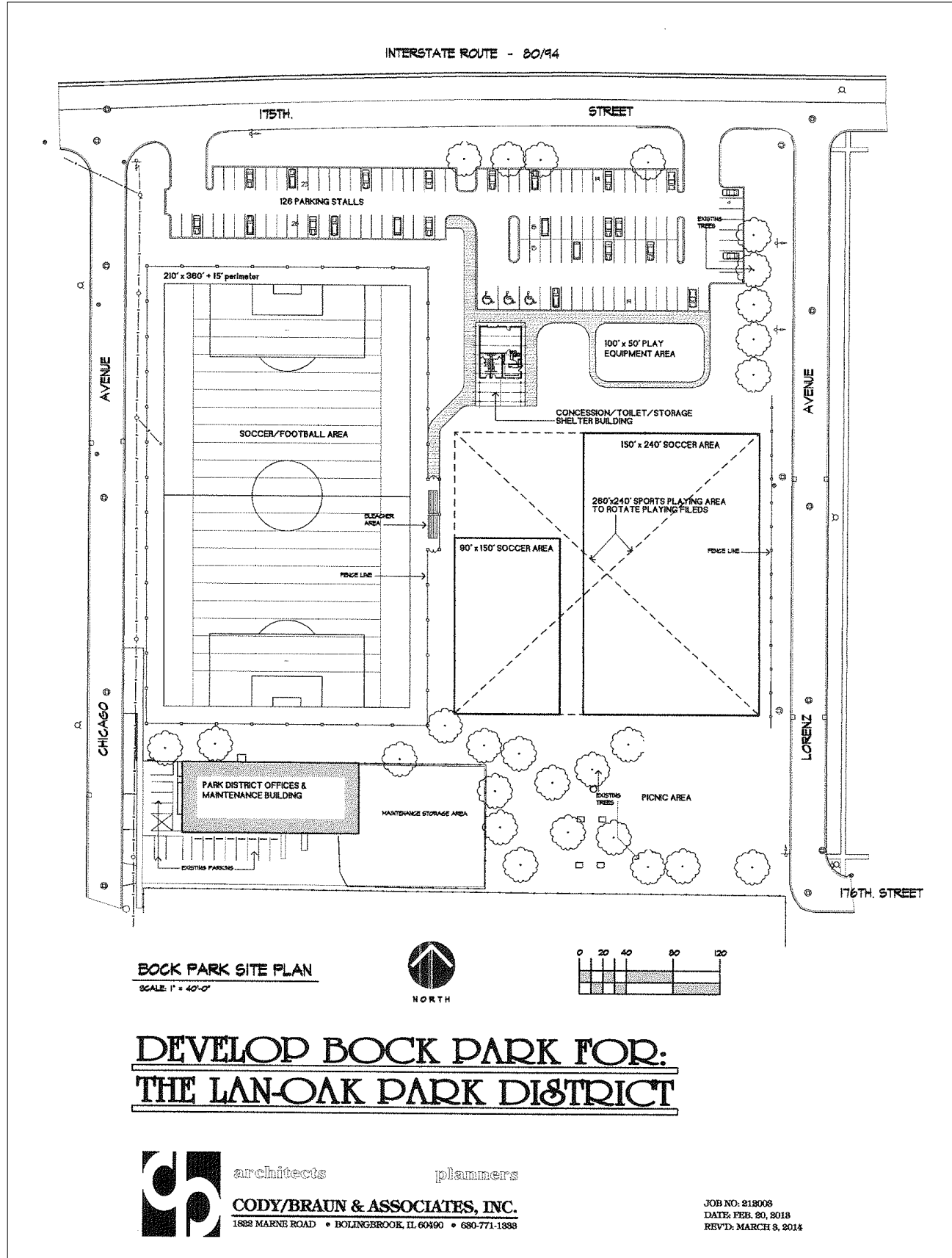
If the District is unable to obtain the funds necessary to complete a full park renovation, it should begin to set aside funds to demolish the pool facility. Ideally, the District should strive to demolish the pool within five years if funding the project on their own without grants. For example, based upon a recent demolition estimate provided to the District of \$125,000, the LOPD would need to set aside \$25,000 a year for five years.

SSSRA

South Suburban Special Recreation Association (SSSRA) is a therapeutic recreation program that is an extension of eight park districts and three recreation and parks departments. It is organized to provide individuals with disabilities or special needs the opportunity to be involved in year-round recreation. SSSRA programs are for individuals from birth through adult who are in special education classes, sheltered workshops, or who have recreational needs not met by traditional park district programs. This could include individuals who have varying degrees of physical disabilities, mental handicaps, learning disabilities, emotional difficulties, hearing or visual impairments, and developmental delays.⁴¹

⁴¹ <http://www.sssra.org>.

Figure 4.3. Bock Park proposed renovations



Source: Lan-Oak Park District and Cody/Braun Associates.



- ***Develop Park Plaza as a community event area that supports the downtown area.***

The District should continue to strive towards developing Park Plaza as a high-quality gathering area for the entire Lansing community. Because Park Plaza is located at a prominent location within Downtown Lansing its development has the ability to help reenergize the downtown area. The District should begin to work with the Village to revise the Village's current ordinance that restricts non-taxing districts from owning land in the Downtown. The District should work with the Village to rectify this ordinance through a text amendment.

The District should continue to seek funding assistance to develop the park and should look for partnerships with other entities such as the Village and the Chamber of Commerce to assist with fund raising efforts or development assistance. The District should continue using the revised Park Plaza concept plan as a guide (see **Figure 4.4**). In the short-term, as recommended earlier, the District should install a digital community message board at the park to help promote community events and park district programming.

- ***Monitor trends and new emerging recreational opportunities that are growing in popularity.***

According to the Superintendent of Recreation, programming trends and participation numbers are regularly reviewed. Based upon staff analysis program offerings are continuously updated. The Eisenhower Center is a tremendous asset for the District that allows for a number of recreational programs and services. The Superintendent should continue to communicate with other private or public entities to see if opportunities for shared space would assist the District in providing a variety of desirable recreational programs.

Staff should continue to work together to identify new trends and provide appropriate indoor or outdoor space necessary whenever feasible. This will become increasingly important if the District's finances improve and it is able to construct new facilities.

- ***Improve maintenance.***

Because of the District's limited funds and limited number of maintenance staff the District's facilities are suffering. To be clear, this is not a negative analysis of staff's abilities or management; however, with limited funds and personnel it is proving difficult to "keep up" with ongoing maintenance. Because of the lack of maintenance a number of facilities throughout the District have had to be removed.

- ***Create a capital improvement plan and a maintenance prioritization plan.*** The District should develop a capital improvement plan (CIP) and a maintenance prioritization plan to assist maintenance staff in their efforts. These plans will also further justification to the community that additional funds are necessary for maintenance and capital improvements.

- ***Step 1: Create a CIP.***

Based upon existing conditions and the recommendations presented in the Master Plan the District should create a detailed CIP. The CIP should include a list of potential projects that could be included over the next five years. Each project should include budget estimates. Using the CIP as a foundation, the District should then establish priority projects.

o **Step 2. Create a maintenance prioritization plan.**

Following the creation of a CIP the District should then create a maintenance prioritization plan. The plan should identify maintenance priorities based upon key issues that have been continuously identified throughout the Master Plan including: public safety, the usability of facilities, and the District's image and identity. The following are examples of maintenance priorities:

- » Conduct regularly scheduled safety inspections and repairs.
- » Maintain safe lighting levels (athletic, parking, and security).
- » Maintain the Eisenhower Center.
- » Ensure all restrooms are clean.
- » Pick up all litter (includes garbage can pick up).
- » Maintain turf - especially programmed fields.
- » Maintain sidewalks, trails, parking areas.
- » Maintain trees and landscaping.

o **Step 3. Create a time and resource**

management system. The District should establish a time and resource management system to assist in efficiently implementing the CIP and the maintenance improvement plan. Such a system could track employee time and maintenance expenses, allowing the District to monitor actual maintenance expenses in a detailed manner and allocate resources more accurately.

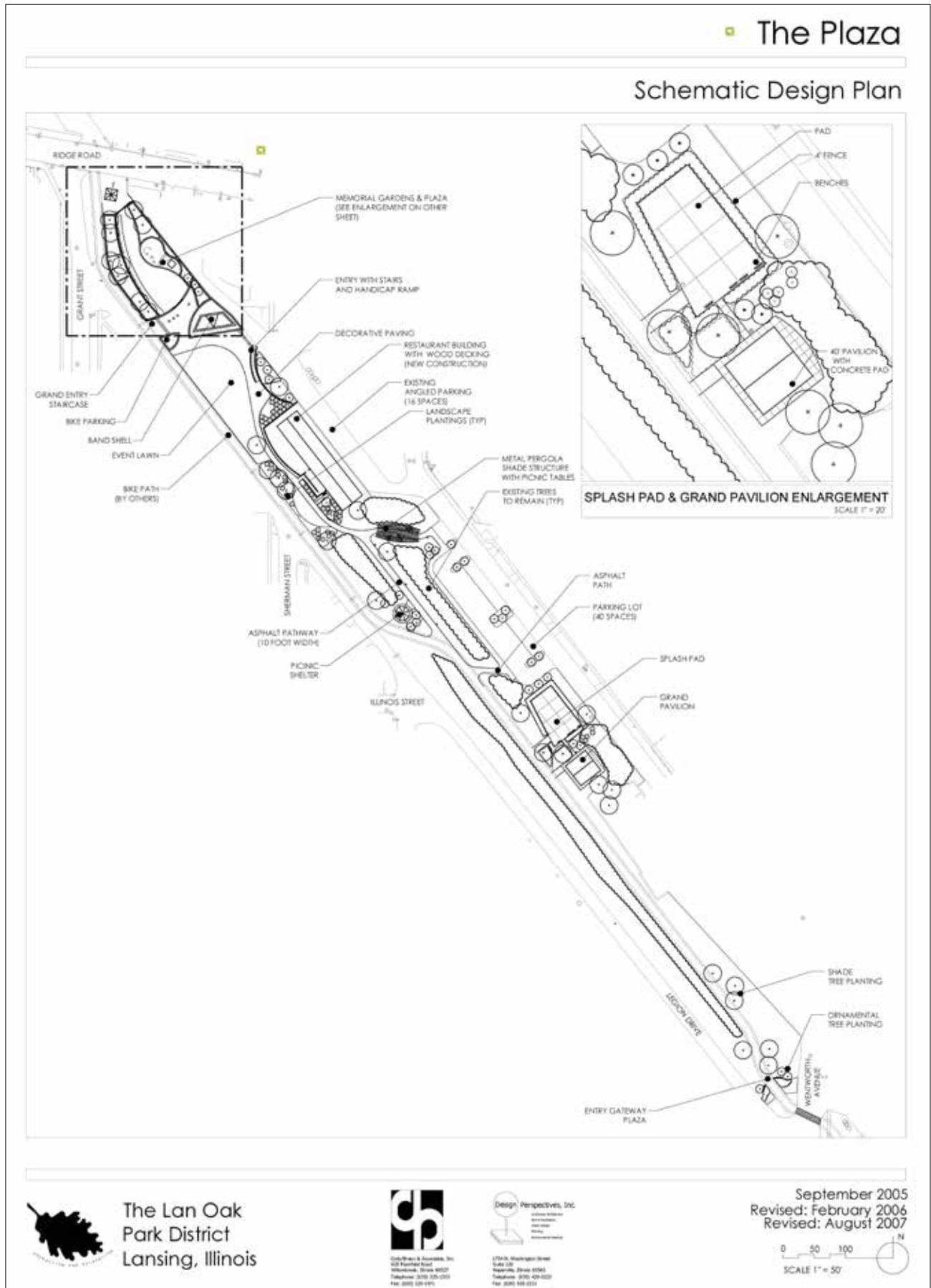
Goal 2.2 Maintain and expand the trail system

- **Complete trail improvements as planned and improve cooperation with the Village.** The Park District has a long history as being the leader in establishing trails within Lansing. The District should continue to maintain its high-quality trail system while pursuing opportunities for expansion.
- **Implement trail plans.** In order to expand upon the system efficiently, the Park District and the Village should work together to construct trails as recommended in the Village's newly adopted Comprehensive Plan and the Park District's 2009 Bike Plan (combined to form **Figure 4.5**). The Park District should encourage the Village to install signage, and clearly marked trail crossings on Village right-of-way where recommended.

Moving forward, the Village and the Park District should establish agreements related to which agencies should fund specific projects to create their shared vision for an interconnected trail system. For example, the Village should fund installation of trail improvements—including signage—on Village right-of-way while the District should fund installation of trail improvements on Park District property.

The following is a summary of the short-term recommendations that were included in the Park District's 2009 Bike Plan. Although the following projects have yet to be implemented, they are still recommendations that should be undertaken in the short-term.

Figure 4.4 Park Plaza concept plan



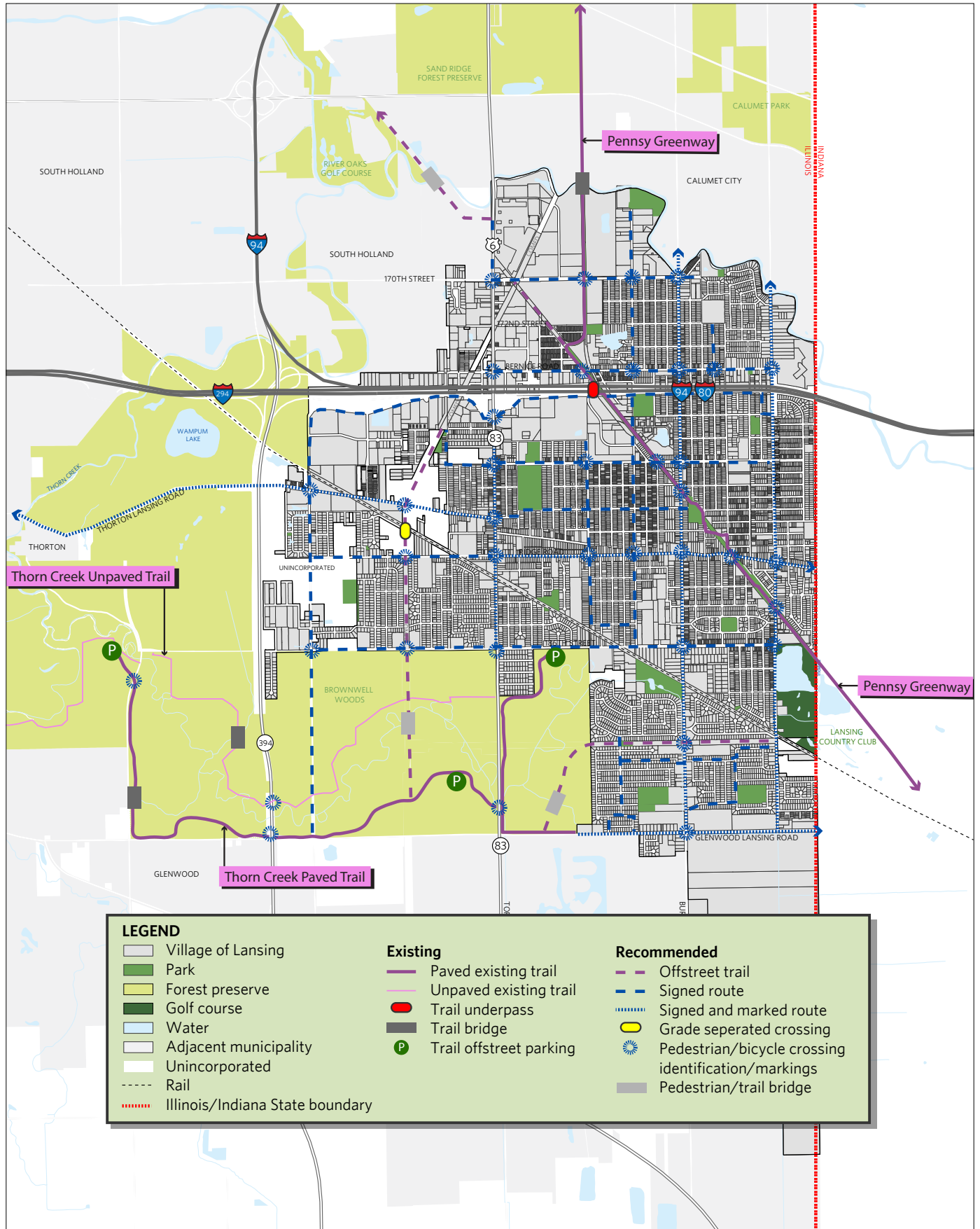
September 2005
Revised: February 2006
Revised: August 2007

Source: Lan-Oak Park District and Design Perspectives.

Complete trail system priority projects

- 1. Sign the bicycle network.** The Park District and Village should work together to install wayfinding and bicycle route signs along bike trails and routes throughout the community. Signage should be designed and constructed using accepted standards for that identify routes and communicates key destinations, distances and directions. Signage should be installed at key locations to serve two main purposes: 1) to direct bicyclists and pedestrians along designated routes, and 2) to inform motorists that a trail crossing or on-street route is present.
- 2. Mark traffic signal pavement detectors.** The District and the Village should cooperatively install consistent markings at signalized intersections. It is recommended that markings utilize vehicle detector loops that show cyclists where to place their bike for detection by the loop.
- 3. Stripe shared lanes and bike lanes.** The Park District and Village should work together to install on-street markings on high-traffic arterials with five foot travel lanes wherever feasible. In order to add bike lanes as efficiently as possible, the Village of Lansing should include them as part of any road reconstruction projects along recommended routes whenever feasible.
- 4. Install bicycle parking.** The Park District should purchase and install bicycle parking at key parks and facilities throughout the community. Bicycle racks should be located within clear view of the destination's entrance way, and preferably as close as the closest motor vehicle parking space, no more than 50 feet away. The District should also encourage the Village of Lansing to require bicycle parking for multi-family and retail uses. This could be accomplished by updating the Village's development regulations.
- 5. Create a Park District bicycle map.** The District should create a bicycle map and make it available on its website and for free pick-up at the Eisenhower Center. A bicycle map encourages bicycle use by promoting the network and identifying bicycle-friendly routes to important community destinations. A bicycle map also becomes a powerful message for marketing Lansing's high quality of life.
- 6. Hold education and community events.** The Park District currently has a "bike education trailer" that it uses at special events throughout the community. The District also allows other agencies to use the trailer. The Park District should also partner with the Village's Police Department and the school districts to host additional bicycling events and education programs. Events and programs raise the skill level of bicyclists and grow support for implementing the plan's recommendations. Sample education and community events that should be considered by the District include:
 - Safe Routes to Schools and Parks programs
 - Bicycle education for children and adults
 - Shop by Bike program
- 7. Research the use of utility easements, street right-of-way, and on-street bike lanes as potential trail connections.** The Park District should work with ComEd to establish acceptable lease agreements to construct off-street bike trails. For example, trails should be pursued along three existing utility easements as shown in **Figure 4.5**.

Figure 4.5. Trails plan



Source: Lan-Oak Park District and Design Perspectives.

Importance of Bike Lanes

Bike lanes offer the highest level of safety for drivers and cyclists on streets with heavy traffic. Where bicyclists must share road space with heavier traffic and available width is insufficient for bicycle lanes, mark the existing travel lane as shared space using federally accepted shared lane markings on the asphalt. Shared lane markings help drivers to expect and accept cyclists in the street, and guide drivers in passing with caution at an acceptable distance. For bicyclists, shared lane markings encourage legal bicyclist behavior and raise cyclists' comfort level, helping them to ride more predictably and safely.

When entering into a lease agreement with ComEd the District should clearly understand what its maintenance obligations will be.

- ***Create trail connections with Pennsy Greenway.***
The Pennsy Greenway is the main regional trail running through the community. **Figure 4.5** identifies numerous future formal connections with the Pennsy Greenway that provide a number of neighborhood connections.
- ***Connect the Park District's trail system with the Forest Preserves of Cook County's trail system.*** The Park District should continue to coordinate with the Forest Preserves of Cook County and the Village of Lansing to strengthen trail connections to all parks and preserves in the community.

Figure 4.5 illustrates an interconnected trail system throughout Lansing that provides local trail connections to Thorn Creek trail.



Goal 2.3. Develop conservation policies to ensure conservation and best use of natural resources.

- ***Encourage green infrastructure practices for stormwater management.*** The Park District should establish development guidelines for the use of green infrastructure techniques to manage stormwater. Using green infrastructure techniques are particularly important to improving the quality of streams — such as Thorn Creek and North Creek — in and downstream from Lansing. Such practices can help reduce the quantity and improve the quality of runoff, enhance groundwater recharge, stabilize site and regional hydrology, and provide habitat, recreation, and aesthetic benefits.

Practices should include those that filter, infiltrate, and clean water runoff such as rain gardens, bioswales, and filtration strips, and should be tailored to each park site. Green infrastructure will also minimize the need for impervious drainage systems such as storm sewers. Where stormwater detention and retention areas are used, the Park District should consider multi-use strategies for design and management of these facilities, including use of detained water as a source of water for irrigation, detention areas as habitat areas, and for recreation such as fishing.

- ***Market and promote conservation measures to raise awareness of environmental issues.*** The Park District should help to educate residents about the impact of individual landowner actions on the condition of natural resources. To encourage more sustainable and environmentally beneficial activities on private land, the District should partner with other agencies such as the Village and the school districts to develop and conduct outreach education programs. The programs should be designed to increase understanding and awareness of the social, economic, and environmental importance of natural resource conservation and to encourage landowners and homeowner’s associations to protect, maintain, and conserve natural resources and use water responsibly.
- ***Apply best management practices and green building techniques.*** When new facilities are constructed, or existing facilities renovated, the Park District should strive to include green building standards when possible. For example, if renovations are required at the Eisenhower Center, the District should include green infrastructure techniques that will preserve water, reduce stormwater runoff, and conserve energy.
- ***Create landscape standards that encourage the use of trees and native landscape elements.*** The Park District should promote the re-establishment, restoration, and use of trees and native vegetation in its parks. Through the use of natural landscape management techniques the District should convert areas of turf grass lawn to naturalized landscapes, particularly for areas within parks that are not used, or planned to be used, for active recreational uses. Where stormwater detention and retention areas are used, the Park District should consider multi-use strategies for design and management of these facilities, including use of detained water as a source of water for irrigation, detention areas as habitat areas, and for recreation such as fishing.



Green Infrastructure

The term “green infrastructure” refers to related but distinct concepts that work together to conserve natural ecosystem values and functions, contribute to clean air and water, and provide a variety of benefits to people and wildlife. At the community, regional, or watershed scale, green infrastructure is the interconnected network of preserved or restored natural lands and waters that provide essential environmental functions, such as habitat corridors and water resource protection. At the neighborhood scale, green infrastructure incorporates planning and design approaches such as compact, mixed-use development, parking reductions, and street trees and other vegetation that reduces impervious surfaces, help manage stormwater, and make communities greener, more livable, and more attractive. At the site scale, green infrastructure practices (also known as stormwater best management practices) mimic natural systems by filtering and infiltrating stormwater using landscape elements such as rain gardens or swales that allow it to seep into the ground, using trees and other vegetation to soak up water, and using rain barrels or cisterns to capture stormwater for reuse.



Section 5: IMPLEMENTATION





This section includes an implementation checklist that will assist the Park District in moving towards its 10-15 year vision. The checklist is organized based upon the goals and strategies presented in the Recommendations section. It also prioritizes the strategies to better allow the District—with its limited resources—to focus on what is most important, primarily maintaining its current parks and facilities.

Priority Actions

The following identifies the top priority actions that the Park District should begin focusing on now as an ongoing action step or should be completed in the next 0-2 years and the next 3-5 years. The timeframes were dictated by the complexity and impact of implementation, as well as current and anticipated resources. Each strategy includes a proposed timeline, potential partners, and potential funding sources.

Table 5.1. Priority actions (0-2 years)

ACTION	STEPS	LEAD	POSSIBLE PARTNERS	BUDGETING IMPLICATIONS/ FUNDING SOURCES
Improve the District's image and identify				
	Continue to hold Park District Board of Commissioners neighborhood meetings. Move meetings around to all parks. Consider holding a meeting at a park that will be renovated in the near term to engage residents in park planning.	Park District Board of Commissioners	Homeowner Associations	No additional funding needed.
	Conduct an annual park users and program participant survey. The results of the annual survey should be reviewed each year to see where changes could be made to improve service. The District should use free software such as "Survey Monkey."	Recreation Department	School Districts	Staff resources and possible operating budget allocation.
Create a free flow of communication between the LOPD and its residents	Form a resident advisory committee. This may be a new group or possibly a new role for the Citizen's Referendum Committee. The advisory committee should provide input in the Board's decision making.	Park District Board of Commissioners	School Districts, Homeowner Associations, sports affiliates	No additional funding needed.
	Update the Park District's webpage and use of social media including an improved Facebook page, Instagram and Twitter feeds. Include new photos, park inventory map, photos, and information in Spanish.	Administration (i.e. community events coordinator)	Local businesses, Chamber of Commerce, School Districts	Staff resources and/or possible operating budget allocation if there is a need to hire an outside consultant.
	Work with CMAP to create an educational and marketing materials based upon the results of the Master Plan. Once the Master Plan is adopted by the Board, CMAP staff can prepare a poster summary of the Master Plan. An electronic file (PDF) of the document will be provided to the District.	Parks and Recreation Department	CMAP	No additional funding needed for design and creation of a PDF file, however, if printing is desired operating funds would likely be necessary.

Source: Forest Preserve District of Cook County.

Table 5.1. Priority actions (0-2 years) (continued)

ACTION	STEPS	LEAD	POSSIBLE PARTNERS	BUDGETING IMPLICATIONS/ FUNDING SOURCES
Change the Park District's name	The Park District should ask residents for possible names to consider. The LOPD should ask for suggestions from the public. Ideally the name should be clearer and strengthen the community's sense of ownership of the District.	Administration	Chamber of Commerce, School Districts, Village, sports affiliates	Staff resources.
	The Board of Commissioners should vote for their preferred name. According to State of Illinois Statute, the Board simply needs to vote in favor of the name change.	Board of Commissioners	N/A	N/A
	Update letterhead, website, program guides, etc.	Administration	N/A	Operating budget and staff resources.
	Install new logos on existing park signs, or replace entire signs. This could be done by installing a new logo over existing logos or it could be part of complete sign replacement.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Capital budget or part of OSLAD/ PARC projects.
Strengthen existing partnerships and pursue new agreements				
Enter into new agreements	Enter into formal agreements with the School Districts to share indoor and outdoor recreation space.	Parks and Recreation Department	School Districts	Operating budget and staff resources.
	Enter into formal agreements for senior services with the Cook County Department of Public Health and Bloom Township.	Parks and Recreation Department	Age Options and Bloom Township	Operating budget and staff resources.
	Enter into formal agreements for trail construction on ComEd property.	Parks and Recreation Department	ComEd, Village	Operating budget and staff resources.
	Consider partnering with the Village of Lansing to handle maintenance of parks and continue to promote implementation of bike trails/routes on Village property.	Parks and Recreation Department	Village	Capital budget and staff resources.
Improve community health				
Promote public health and safety	Review programs and policies to ensure physical and mental health, youth development and social well-being are being promoted. Consider adding new programs and policies. See assistance from the Department of Public Health whenever possible.	Administration	Cook County Department of Public Health	Staff resources.
Improve the District's finances				
Submit for grants	If the Park District is not successful in its PARC grant application to the IDNR for the redevelopment of Bock park the LOPD should apply for an OSLAD grant. The OSLAD grant will likely be due July 1, 2015. The District should determine what scope of work they can afford based upon local match.	Parks and Recreation	N/A	Staff resources, potential consultant services, and either PARC funds or OSLAD funds through the IDNR. Other potential grants include DCEO and IEPA Section 319 funding.
Establish additional revenue sources	If the Park District is not successful in its PARC grant application to the IDNR for the redevelopment of Bock park the LOPD should apply for an OSLAD grant. The OSLAD grant will likely be due July 1, 2015. The District should determine what scope of work they can afford based upon local match.	Parks and Recreation	N/A	Staff resources, potential consultant services, and either PARC funds or OSLAD funds through the IDNR. Other potential grants include DCEO and IEPA Section 319 funding.

Table 5.1. Priority actions (0-2 years) (continued)

ACTION	STEPS	LEAD	POSSIBLE PARTNERS	BUDGETING IMPLICATIONS/ FUNDING SOURCES
Increase volunteer efforts	The District should look for creative ways to increase its revenue. This could be by increasing parks user fees, constructing facilities that can be rented or charge fees, or by continuing to cut expenses.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Staff resources, capital and operating budgets.
Consider maintenance partnerships	The Park District should meet with representatives from the School Districts and Village to undertaken an analysis of maintenance costs, staff and equipment. A study should be conducted to determine if there would be any cost savings in entering into shared maintenance agreements or the separation of different maintenance activities for each entity.	Parks and Recreation Department	School Districts, Village	Staff resources.
Maintain existing facilities and develop a well-balanced recreation system				
Ensure all parks and facilities are accessible	As parks and facilities are renovated and as funds are available follow the recommendations of the District’s accessibility audit.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Capital budget and staff resources. Also include these improvements as part of overall park development grant applications (i.e. OSLAD).
	Continue to support the SSSRA.	Parks and Recreation Department	SSSRA	Operating budget.
Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of maintenance	Create a capital improvement plan that provides necessary projects to be completed over the next five years.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Operating budget and staff resources.
	Based upon the capital improvement plan create a maintenance prioritization plan to help prioritize park maintenance.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Operating budget and staff resources.
	Create a time and resource management system.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Operating budget and staff resources.
Improve community health				
Cooperate with the Village to construct an interconnected trail systemw	The Village of Lansing’s recently adopted Comprehensive Plan and this LOPD Master Plan both include future trail plans that complement each other. Both entities should work together to implement the trails plan.	Parks and Recreation Department	Village, Cook County Forest Preserve District, Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), Openlands	Village capital budget, grants such as CMAQ funds.
	The District should encourage the Village to include the addition of trail improvements into future road reconstruction projects along recommended routes.	Parks and Recreation Department	Village, South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association (SSMMA)	Village capital budget, grants such as CMAQ funds.
	Create a Park District bicycle map.	Parks and Recreation Department and Administration (i.e. community events coordinator)	Chamber of Commerce, Chicago Southland Convention and Visitors Bureau	Operating funds and business contributions.
	Hold education and community events such as Safe Routes to School programs, bicycle education and shop by bike programs.	Administration (i.e. community events coordinator)	Village, Police Department, School Districts	Operating funds.
	Establish lease agreements with ComEd, and seek funding to construct trail extensions.	Parks and Recreation Department	ComEd	Capital budget and staff resources. Also include these improvements as part of overall park development grant applications (i.e. OSLAD).

Table 5.2. Actions (3-5 years)

ACTION	STEPS	LEAD	POSSIBLE PARTNERS	BUDGETING IMPLICATIONS/ FUNDING SOURCES
Improve the District's image and identify				
Improve the communication and marketing needs of the District	Allocate additional staff and resources for improving communication including bi-lingual staff and materials.	Administration (i.e. community events coordinator)	School Districts	Operating budget.
	Create a new marketing plan that includes diversifying strategies. The new marketing plan should be reviewed annually to ensure it is being successful. The plan should be changed based upon input received.	Administration (i.e. community events coordinator)	Chamber of Commerce, School Districts, Village, sports affiliates	Operating budget and staff resources.
	Install a community messaging board at Park Plaza. As the park is developed a digital messaging board sign should be installed. The sign would not only promote the LOPD but also LOPD events and other community events. Business sponsorship could help fund the sign.	Parks and Recreation Department	Chamber of Commerce	Capital budget and also potential business sponsorship.
	Continue to host and participate in a variety of community events with a focus on multi-cultural events. The LOPD should continue to promote itself and the community throughout the year at various locations within the community.	Administration (i.e. community events coordinator)	Chamber of Commerce, School Districts, Village, sports affiliates	Operating budget and staff resources.
Renovate Bock Park	Preferred Option A: Full Park renovation. Recently the Park District submitted a Park and Recreational Construction (P.A.R.C.) grant to the IDNR for \$2.4 million to remove the former pool and renovate the park. If the District is not successful in securing the PARC grant, the District should continue to apply for other grants that can be used to fund this renovation.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Staff resources, potential consultant services, and either PARC funds or OSLAD funds through the IDNR. Other potential grants include DCEO and IEPA Section 319 funding.
	Option B: Pool demolition only. If the District is unable to obtain the funds necessary to complete a full park renovation, it should begin to set aside funds to demolish the pool facility. Ideally, the District should strive to demolish the pool within five years if funding the project on their own without grants.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Staff resources, potential consultant services, and either PARC funds or OSLAD funds through the IDNR. Other potential grants include DCEO and IEPA Section 319 funding.
Develop Park Plaza	The District should continue to seek funding assistance to develop the park as envisioned and should look for partnerships with other entities such as the Village and the Chamber of Commerce to assist with fund raising efforts or development assistance.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Staff resources, potential consultant services, and either PARC funds or OSLAD funds through the IDNR. Other potential grants include DCEO and IEPA Section 319 funding.
	In the shorter, install a community message board at the park to help promote community events and park district programming.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Staff resources, potential consultant services, and possibly local business contributions.
Monitor trends and new emerging recreational opportunities that are growing in popularity.	Continue to review programming trends and participation numbers and add or eliminate programs/facilities whenever necessary and feasible.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Staff resources for monitoring.
Develop conservation policies to protect the environment				
Encourage green infrastructure practices	Establish guidelines for the use of green infrastructure and landscape standards.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Staff resources.
	Use green building techniques when renovating or constructing parks and facilities. This includes natural landscape management techniques and native plantings.	Parks and Recreation Department	N/A	Capital budget and staff resources. Also include these improvements as part of overall park development grant applications (i.e. OSLAD).
Market and promote environmental awareness	Partner with local school districts and the Forest Preserves of Cook County to market and promote environmental education.	Administration (i.e. community events coordinator)	School Districts, Forest Preserves of Cook County, Cook County Department of Public Health	Operating budget and staff resources.



Appendix A: EXISTING PARKS



graphics

banners

signs

equipment

BERNICE PARK

North of Bernice Avenue and west of Bernadine Street

Bernice Park is a small open space area adjacent to the Village of Lansing's water department facility. There are no amenities and no identification signs on this parcel.



Number	Type of Facility
0.37	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
No	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
No	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom
No	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
No	Trails
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

BOCK PARK

South of 175th Street and east of Chicago Avenue

Bock Park is an 8.2-acre park located in the north-central sector of the district just south of the expressway. The park is in poor condition and its facilities are in need of repair or removal.

The district's outdoor pool has been closed and presents a poor image. Adding to the poor image is the large surface parking lot that lacks any interior trees or landscaping.



Number	Type of Facility
8.16	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
3	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
140	Parking
1	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
1	Restroom (includes portolet)
Yes	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
1	Skateboard
1	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
360	Trails
1 (no net)	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

EISENHOWER CENTER

2550 178th Street

The Eisenhower Center is a well designed and attractive indoor recreational center for the District. Many of the District's offices are also located within the facility. Numerous programs and activities are provided within this facility.



Number	Type of Facility
4.86	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
No	Benches
1	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
Indoor	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
1	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
1	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
150	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
1*	Playground (<i>daycare use only</i>)
Yes	ADA Accessible Structure
1	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Softball
No	Tennis
360	Trails (includes internal sidewalk)
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

ERFERT PARK

West of Burnham Avenue, south of the rail line

This 17.5-acre community park includes a number of unique recreational opportunities for the district including a sled hill and a fishing area (with pedestrian bridge). Other facilities include a looped trail, parking area, two shelters, a playground, and a restroom.



Number	Type of Facility
17.98	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
4	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
Yes	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
50	Parking
2	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
Yes	ADA Accessible Structure
Yes	Restroom (includes portolet)
Yes	Sign (park identification)
Yes	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Softball
No	Tennis
3,300	Trails
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

FLANAGIN PARK

Sherman Street, south of 188th Street

This is a small neighborhood park that consists of a playground, two benches, and a park identification sign. The park is situated between two homes and backs a rail line.



Number	Type of Facility
0.29	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
2	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
Yes	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
No	Trails
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

HERITAGE PARK

North of 193rd Place and west of Burnham Avenue behind Heritage Middle School and north of Jaycee Park.

Heritage Park is a large open space area behind Heritage Middle School. The park consists of a lighted multi-use sports field (baseball, football, soccer). The park has shared parking with the adjacent school. There is no park identification sign at Heritage Park.



Number	Type of Facility
15.37	Acres
1	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
3	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
1	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
1	Lights (athletic)
50	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
No	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom
No	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
875	Trails
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

JAYCEES PARK

North of 193rd Place and west of Burnham Avenue - behind Fire Station #3 and south of Heritage Park.

Jaycees Park is a two acre park located south of the larger Heritage Park. The park has no parking, however, shared

parking for Heritage Park and the adjacent Middle School is nearby. An old playground has recently been removed. Two tennis courts remain. If the park is named Jaycees Park the sign should be updated from "Jaycee" to "Jaycees."



Number	Type of Facility
2.0	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
No	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
No	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Softball
2	Tennis
No	Trails (includes internal sidewalk)
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

LAN-OAK PARK

South of 180th Street, and east of Arcadia Avenue

This large community park consists of a number of recreational facilities. The park is generally in good condition, but many of its features are in need of improved maintenance.

Existing landscaping, memorials, benches, garbage cans, and shelter roofs are in need of attention. The park is located south of the Eisenhower Center.



Number	Type of Facility
19.51	Acres
2	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
5	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
Yes	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
8	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
Yes	Lights (athletic)
100	Parking
2	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
Yes	ADA Accessible Structure
1	Restroom (includes portolet)
2	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
3	Tennis
1,000	Trails (includes internal sidewalk)
1	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

LIONS PARK

North of 177th Street and west of Bernadine Street

Lions Park is located within a residential neighborhood in the northeast area of Lansing. The park is in fairly good condition, and a new sand volleyball court was recently installed.



Number	Type of Facility
3.06	Acres
1	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
2	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
1	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
Yes	ADA Accessible Structure
1	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
1	Tennis
No	Trails
1	Volleyball (new sand surface)



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

LIONS STADIUM

183rd Place, east of Oakley Avenue and north of the rail line

Lions Stadium is a community park used primarily for baseball. The park consists of two baseball fields with dugouts, infields, and outfield fences. In addition to the two fields the park includes a washroom and concession building.



Number	Type of Facility
4.43	Acres
2	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
4	Benches
1	Bike Racks
1	Concessions
1	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
45	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
No	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
1	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
No	Trails (includes internal sidewalk)
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

OAKLEY PARK

End of Oakley Avenue south of the rail line

Oakley Park is a small neighborhood park located at the end of a residential street adjacent to a rail line. A playground was recently removed from the park. No recreational amenities exist at this park.



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Number	Type of Facility
0.25	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
No	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
No	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom
No	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
No	Trails
No	Volleyball

OAKWOOD PARK

East of Oakwood Avenue and south of 190th Street

Oakwood Park is located within a ComEd easement. The 1.5-acre park includes a playground that is well set-back from Oakwood Avenue without any formal sidewalk or trail

connection to the sidewalk system. Angled parking is available along Oakwood Avenue. Because it is located below an electrical line no trees are located on the parcel.



Number	Type of Facility
1.17	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
No	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
10	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
No	Trails (includes internal sidewalk)
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

OLD TIMERS SPORTS COMPLEX

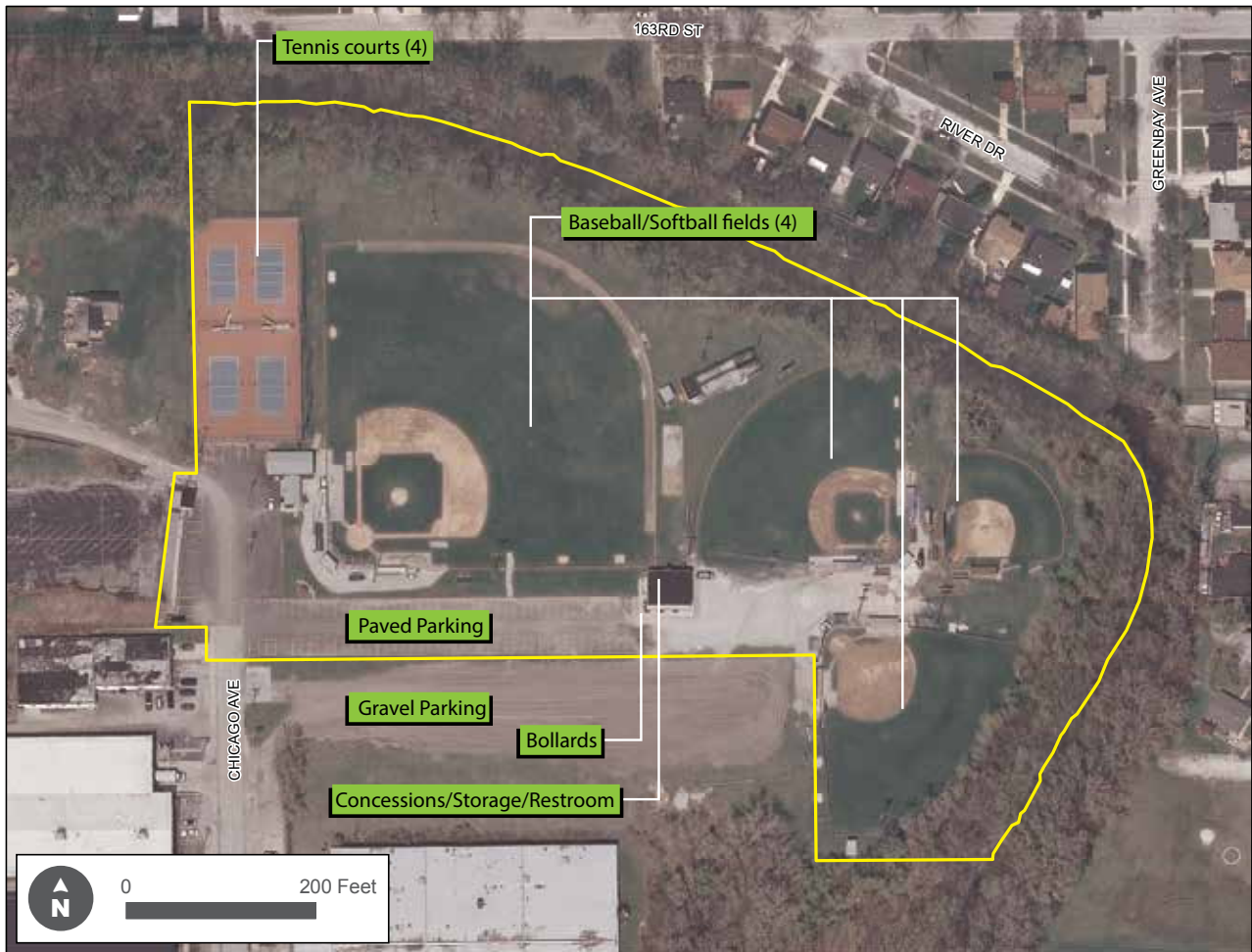
North of 165th Street, and east of Chicago Avenue

The Park District and the Lansing Old Timers Association maintain the sports complex. The complex includes a number of lighted recreational facilities including four tennis courts and four baseball/softball fields. The park is in generally good condition, however, some improved maintenance to the concession building, benches, bike racks, and gravel parking area should be considered.

Lansing Old Timers

The Lansing Old Timers Association provides oversight to Lansing Little League Baseball, Lansing Challenger Program for boys and girls ages 6 through 18 with disabilities, Lansing Babe Ruth Baseball, Lansing 35 and Over Baseball, Lansing Girls Softball, Lansing Volleyball, and Lions Football.

The Lansing Old Timers Tournament began in 1982 for 11 year old players. In the early 1990s eight year olds were added and this year nine year olds will be hosted. Over the years the tournament has seen more than 5,800 individual players. The Tournament hosts teams from all over the Illinois and Indiana Calumet region, and some from beyond.



Number	Type of Facility
11.76	Acres
4	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
8	Benches
1	Bike Racks
1	Concessions
1	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe

Number	Type of Facility
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
Yes	Lights (athletic)
100	Parking
1	Picnic Area/Shelter
No	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
2	Restroom
1	Sign (park identification)

Number	Type of Facility
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (ice)
No	Soccer
4	Tennis
No	Trails
No	Volleyball

Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

PARK PLAZA

South of Ridge Road and east of Grant Street

For many years the Park District has desired to improve the parcel into a true community gathering place in the heart of downtown Lansing. The most recent concept plan for Park Plaza is included in this report.

As shown in the photo, Park Plaza includes a number of unique features including a clock tower, historical signage, unique streetscaping, the Pennsy Greenway, and art work. A community garden is also located within Park Plaza along West Street.



Number	Type of Facility
6.75	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
4	Benches
0	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
10	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
No	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
1	Restroom (includes portolet)
0	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
1,120	Trails
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

PENNSY GREENWAY

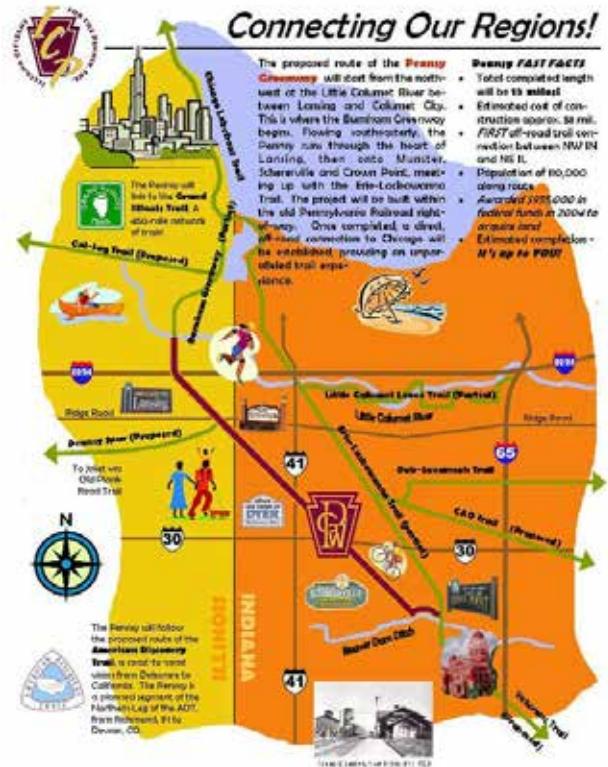
The Pennsy Greenway is currently open in three segments between Calumet City, Illinois, and Schererville, Indiana. The northern portion begins at the southern end of the Burnham Greenway in Calumet City on the eastern edge of the Forest Preserve District of Cook County's Green Lake Woods. The trail proceeds south to Bernice Road, crosses under I-80/94, and continues southeast through residential neighborhoods to just past the Illinois-Indiana state line. Currently 3.25 miles of the greenway travels through the Lan-Oak Park District.

The Pennsy Greenway was a dream that originated in the 1990s. Once completed, the trail will connect to the Burnham Greenway on the northern end of Lansing, travel through the community, then hook up with the Thorn Creek Trail, making Lansing a part of the 475-mile Grand Illinois Trail.

On the larger scale, the 6,000-mile American Discovery Trail traveling coast to coast will use the Pennsy Greenway as part of its trail system.



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning



Source: Illiana Citizens for the Pennsy.



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

POTTS PARK

At the end of 172nd Street and west of Oakwood Avenue

Potts Park is an isolated neighborhood park located in the northern sector of the district. The park is located at the dead-end of 172nd street. It is primarily open space with a half

court basketball facility located in the center of the park, with a playground and large trees near it. There is a connection to the regional trail system, although the connection ends abruptly without a full connection.



Number	Type of Facility
2.89	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
1/2 court	Basketball
No	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
5 Informal	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (ice)
No	Soccerl
No	Tennis
No	Trails
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

ROTARY PARK

192nd Place west of Wentworth Avenue

Unfortunately, this park and its facilities are in need of improved maintenance. The park includes a number of amenities including baseball, tennis, shelters, and a

playground, but all are in varying states of disrepair. The playground is in especially poor condition. On a positive note, the two existing tennis courts are in good condition.



Number	Type of Facility
9.78	Acres
1	Baseball/Softball
3 half	Basketball
2	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
1	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
Yes	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
40	Parking
2	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
1	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (ice)
1	Soccer
2	Tennis
1,900	Trails
Yes - poor	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

SCHULTZ PARK

Between North and South Schultz Drive, and east of Ada Street

This park is centrally located within a residential neighborhood. The park is in generally good condition and includes a number of recreational facilities.

The park consists of a recently renovated playground. The volleyball area is gravel and at the time of the inspection no net was setup. Also, during the inspection maintenance staff were painting the fences surrounding the tennis court.



Number	Type of Facility
4.09	Acres
1	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
2	Benches
1	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
1	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
1	ADA Accessible Structure
1	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (ice)
No	Soccer
1	Tennis
No	Trails
1 (no net)	Volleyball

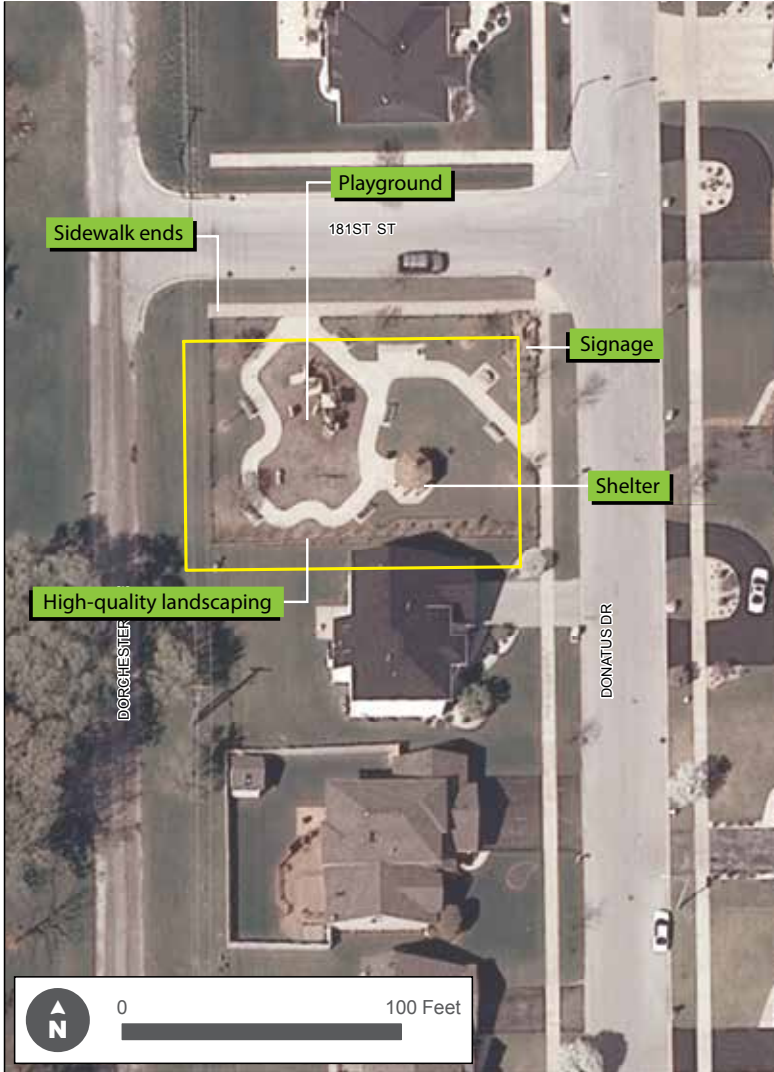


Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

STONE RIDGE PARK

South of 181st Street and east of Blackstone Avenue

This is a new neighborhood park that is well designed and in good condition. The park includes a number of amenities within its 0.2 acres. The park is connected to the subdivision's internal sidewalk system.



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

Number	Type of Facility
0.23	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
6	Benches
1	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
1	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
Yes	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (ice)
No	Soccer
No	Softball
No	Tennis
250	Trails (includes internal sidewalk)
No	Volleyball



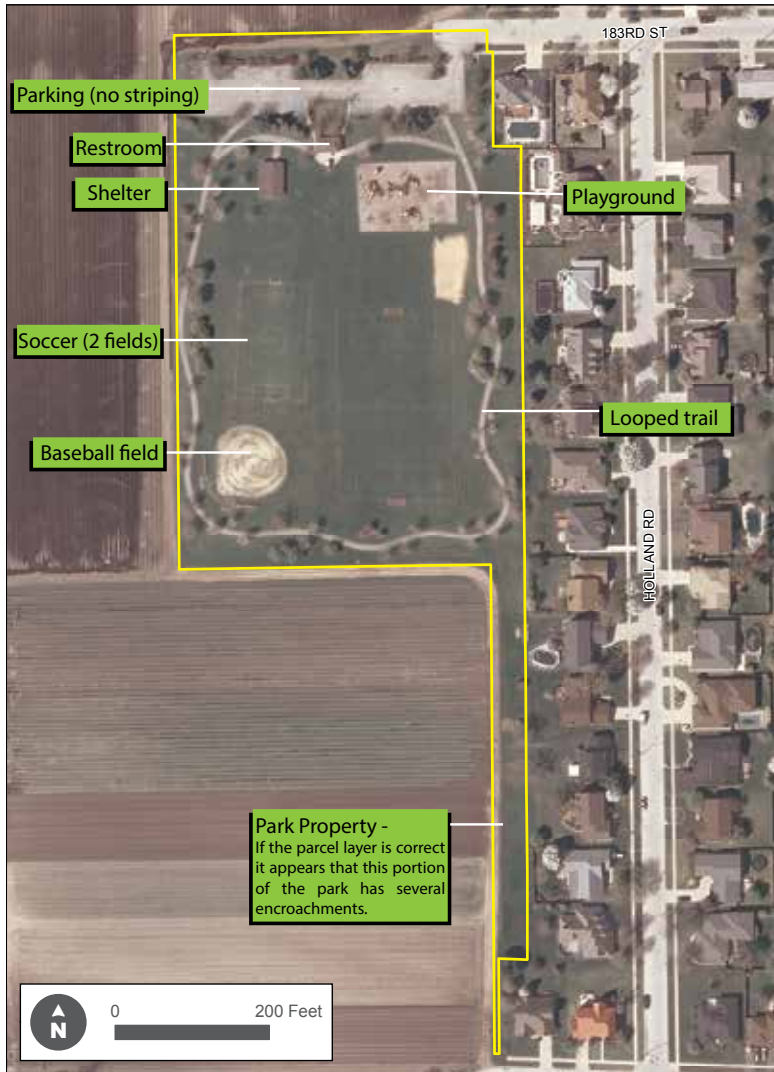
Source: Google Street View

VAN LATEN PARK

West end of 183rd Street and west of Holland Road

Van Laten Park is a well-maintained, large community park located in the far western portion of the district. The park has

a number of recreational amenities including soccer fields, playground, baseball and a looped-trail. The park is currently bounded on three sides by agriculture.



Number	Type of Facility
7.46	Acres
1	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
2	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
1	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
Yes	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
25	Parking
1	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
1	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
2	Soccer
No	Tennis
1,750	Trails
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK

170th Street and Roy Street - Pedestrian access from 169th Court

Only a small portion on the east end of a village owned detention area is considered "high and dry" and is the location of an isolated public park site. This area includes a playground and is accessed only from a sidewalk from 169th Court.



Number	Type of Facility
0.87	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
1	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom
No	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (ice)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
No	Trails
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

VOLUNTEERS PARK

176th Place and Locust Avenue

Volunteers Park is a neighborhood park located in the north-west sector of the district. The park was recently constructed and includes a variety of recreational features along a

multi-use trail system. A playground and three shelters are the focal points of this park that follows ComEd property.



Number	Type of Facility
2.03	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
9	Benches
1	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
3	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
Yes	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Softball
No	Tennis
785	Trails (includes internal sidewalk)
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

WHITMAN PARK

Jason Lane, north of 182nd Street

Whitman Park is a small park located in the northwest sector of the district. The neighborhood park is in excellent condition and includes newer facilities. The park includes large trees, a playground, a bench, and a picnic table.



Number	Type of Facility
0.19	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
1	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
1 table	Picnic Area/Shelter
1	Playground
Yes	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (ice)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
No	Trails
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

WINTERHOFF PARK

West of Roy Street and north of 181st Street

This park is primarily open space with a portion of the Pensy Greenway running through it. Where the trail bends along Roy Street there is a park sign, a bench, and a memorial.



Number	Type of Facility
5.76	Acres
No	Baseball/Softball
No	Basketball
1	Benches
No	Bike Racks
No	Concessions
No	Drinking Fountain
No	Fishing
No	Football
No	Horseshoe
No	Indoor Recreation Center/Fitness
No	Indoor Swimming
No	Lights (security)
No	Lights (athletic)
No	Parking
No	Picnic Area/Shelter
No	Playground
No	ADA Accessible Structure
No	Restroom (includes portolet)
1	Sign (park identification)
No	Sledding
No	Skateboard
No	Skating (inline)
No	Soccer
No	Tennis
745	Trails
No	Volleyball



Source: Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning





Appendix B: COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUMMARY





Developing a Public Engagement Strategy

A significant feature of CMAP's Local Technical Assistance (LTA) program is the commitment to broad-based public involvement. The local planning projects that result from the program's competitive application process are strengthened by the engagement of residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders from each municipality or study area. In particular, the LTA program focuses on both reaching and involving those groups and populations that are traditionally underrepresented in planning processes, including low-income persons, minorities, non-English speaking persons, and persons with disabilities.

It is essential to formulate an approach to public engagement that is tailored to each LTA community. In this way, both CMAP and local representatives or staff can set outreach goals for the project, and keep track of the effectiveness of various strategies to determine what is replicable for future public engagement. This approach is captured in a document called a "project outreach strategy" (PROUST), which describes outreach goals and activities as they align with the steps of the project scope. The PROUST is a malleable document that can and should be updated throughout the project, according to which methods are effective and which target groups require further outreach efforts.

For the Lan-Oak Park District (LOPD) Master Plan, the PROUST document was supported by background research and initial conversations with the Lan-Oak Park District staff and project Steering Committee members. The first steps to developing the public engagement strategy for LOPD were: to find out what types of public participation events associated with LOPD had occurred prior to this project (see **Figure 1** for the worksheet that lists questions to assess past public participation efforts); to learn more about the demographics of the study area; and to begin building a comprehensive list of the key stakeholders to involve in the planning process (see **Figure 2** for a relevant worksheet).

From this background research, the initial direction of the PROUST was devised, establishing an overarching goal that the project's public outreach would draw from a number of stakeholders familiar with LOPD parks, facilities and programs. The outreach strategy was designed with the intent to attract individuals, who would share their experiences at LOPD parks and facilities and brainstorm ideas about how to improve the park system. Based on study area demographics, the project team chose to conduct outreach activities that would appeal to LOPD users and stakeholders.

Each LTA project also has a steering committee that serves as a review body at each step of the project. In the case of the LOPD Master Plan, the steering committee was made up of individuals representing LOPD, Lansing Association for Community Events, Lansing Chamber of Commerce, Lansing Old Timers (an active group affiliated with LOPD), Lansing Public Library, Village of Lansing, Cook County Department of Public Health (a partner on the project), and residents.

Overall Lessons Learned

An important component of this project's outreach strategy was to meet people where they were. This was accomplished through the community workshop held at LOPD's Eisenhower Center in the fall of 2013. The workshop, organized by the Illinois Public Health Institute (IPHI), was designed for residents of South Suburban Cook County to share their thoughts on health and community development.

CMAAP and CCDPH collaborated with IPHI to conduct outreach and expand the community workshop exercises to include questions about what park districts can do to contribute to the quality of life of residents. Despite only a few workshop participants being residents of Lansing, the input from the discussion about park districts helped shape what LOPD can do to improve the health of residents.

In addition to creating questions for the workshop discussion, CCDPH played a vital role in helping publicize the workshop. CCDPH tapped its networks in the South Suburbs to attract a large crowd of 80 residents to the workshop. These same connections could have been drawn upon throughout the duration of the planning process, especially when seeking the input of the African-American and Latino residents. Connecting with these populations, especially the latter, was a challenge.

Surveying LOPD users and stakeholders was not as effective as anticipated. The survey's demographic data showed that respondents did not accurately represent LOPD users. It may have proven useful to hold a focus group with LOPD users, particularly those who are members of the Eisenhower Community Center. That way staff could hear about their personal experiences with the park district and its facilities, as well as their ideas for improvement.

Holding focus groups with LOPD users and stakeholders proved to be an effective method for garnering broad public participation. The three focus groups with seniors, youth, and neighborhood residents offered rich information that helped shape the plan. The focus groups provided a comfortable setting for participants to discuss the strengths and issues associated with LOPD and share ideas about how to improve the park district's operations and facilities. (More information about the focus groups can be found below.)

The Steering Committee, made up of leaders throughout the village, could have included one or two more LOPD users. Having the participation of these individuals on the Steering Committee would have enhanced the committee's feedback on the planning documents and proposed outreach strategies. The Open House will specifically target LOPD users, in an effort to capture their voice in the plan's recommendations and strategies.



Overview of Outreach and Engagement Activities

The LOPD Master Plan process featured several outreach activities to engage LOPD users and stakeholders. At the start of the planning process, it was determined that the process would include four phases.

The first phase entailed data collection and surveying residents about their use of parks, enjoyable features about the parks, and desired improvements to the parks. The second phase focused on assessing the existing conditions of the Lan-Oak Park District facilities. The third phase involved the preparation of the park master plan and its presentation to the users and stakeholders of the Park District for feedback. The fourth and final phase will consist of presenting a final park master plan to the Lan-Oak Park District Board for adoption and implementation.

Outreach activities mostly took place during the first phase of the planning process. These activities included leveraging an existing community meeting, conducting a survey, and holding focus groups with potential and existing LOPD users. Below are details about each outreach method and associated outcomes, including how stakeholder input helped shape the Plan’s future directions and recommendations.

Table 1. LOPD Master plan community participation from October 2013 to April 2014

OUTREACH ACTIVITY	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Key Stakeholder Interviews (October to November 2013)	10
Creating A Healthier South Suburban Community Workshop (November 13, 2014)	70
Community survey (November 2013 to January 2014)	77
Seniors at the Buford Walker senior facility (January 30, 2014)	22
Neighborhood Watch Meeting (March 26, 2014)	15
Youth from Patti Leach Youth Center (April 9, 2014)	26
Total	220

Public Engagement and Results

Project Web Page

Prior to gathering information from LOPD users and stakeholders, a web page was developed for the project (<http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/ita/lan-oak>). The web page serves as a place where LOPD users and stakeholders can find basic information about the project, such as an overview of the study area, the background to the park master plan including project goals, public engagement activities, recent news, project timeline, and staff contact information (see **Figure 3** for screenshots of the webpage).

Steering Committee

Another initial important step in the planning process was to create a project steering committee. This group was tasked with providing guidance and feedback on existing issues and opportunities, developing central goals, reviewing plan documents, and identifying stakeholders who should be involved in the planning process. Members of the Steering Committee included:

- **Kristi DeLaurentiis**,
Village of Lansing (no longer with Village)
- **Sharon Desjardins**,
Lan-Oak Park District staff member
- **Terry Earp**, *Lansing Old Timers*
- **Mike Fish**,
Former Lan-Oak Park District Board member
- **Patrick Gulotta**,
Lan-Oak Park District Board member
- **Jo-Ellyn Kelley**,
Lansing Association for Community Events
- **John Kelly**,
Lan-Oak Park District Board member
- **Maureen Mason**, *Lansing Public Library*
- **Erin Meegan-Polanski**,
Lansing Chamber of Commerce
- **Gina Massuda Barnett**,
Cook County Department of Public Health
- **Bob Tropp**, *Lansing resident*
- **John Wilson**, *Lan-Oak Park District staff member*

The first steering committee meeting was held on October 2, 2013 at the Eisenhower Fitness and Community Center. At the meeting, committee members were introduced to the project and participated in an exercise where they discussed important issues and opportunities faced by the Park District as well as potential projects for LOPD. Below is a list that highlights comments and input received from members of the steering committee. This input helped the project staff to gain a better understanding of LOPD assets, issues, and opportunities.

Strengths of the Park District:

- Volunteers to help out with various efforts and activities.
- Residents and businesses support LOPD.
- Park District staff and elected officials support LOPD.
- Indoor facilities and programming.
- A large variety and number of programs are offered.
- The Park District and the Village are working together on this plan as well as the Village's Comprehensive Plan.
- Park Plaza has excellent potential to help anchor the Downtown.
- Bike trail system.
- Community festivals.
- A number of parks located throughout Lansing's neighborhoods.
- New improvements to baseball field.
- Erfert Park's climbing hill.



Issues or concerns about the Park District:

- Poor financial condition, especially lack of funds to make capital improvements.
- A park district referendum failed last year—significant education/marketing campaign would need to be done to seek another.
- The Park District pool has been closed, which has resulted in a poor image and eyesore for the District.
- Poor park maintenance—some playgrounds have had to be removed for safety reasons.
- Limited staff.
- There is a feeling that some residents no longer value parks and recreation.

New projects that should be developed:

- Park Plaza improvements.
- Splash pad.
- Storywalk.
- Clean restroom facilities.
- Catch-and-release fishing area.
- Bike trail system expansion.
- Bike racks.
- Dog park.
- Potential partnership opportunities with other agencies and/or taxing bodies.
- Expand the Park District boundaries into unincorporated areas.

The Steering Committee met for a second time on March 12, 2014, when they were reviewed existing conditions and key goals of the Master Plan and discussed the key recommendations. At this time, Steering Committee members gave feedback on how to expand outreach through focus groups with various organizations throughout Lansing.

Key Stakeholder Interviews

Key stakeholder interviews were conducted with ten individuals representing a variety of interests and perspectives including the Park District, residents, institutions, community organizations, and sports groups and affiliations.

The key stakeholders discussed the strengths, issues, and opportunities with LOPD as well as how the Park District currently promotes health and how it can improve in this area. The interviewees also suggested new projects that LOPD should spearhead. Based on input (listed below) from key person interviews, the following Plan goals and strategies were derived:

Operations goals/strategies created based on input from key person interviews

Goal 1.1: Improve the Park District's image and identity

- Create a free flow of communication between the Park District and residents regarding events, actions and problems that affect the District.
- Increase the capacity of the Park District to meet its communication and marketing needs based on changing demographics and evolving needs.
- Increase program awareness and identify new program opportunities.
- Change the Park District's name to one that is more easily identifiable, such as the Lansing Park District to improve its image and to create a stronger connection with Lansing residents.

Goal 1.2: Strengthen existing partnerships and enter into new partnerships

- Promote agreements and partnerships to maximize open space and recreational resources, maintenance, and programs.
 - A. Explore potential revenue generators.
 - B. Explore new agreements and partnerships.
 - Village maintenance agreements.
 - Volunteer assistance.
 - School share-use agreements.
 - C. Recreational programming agreements.
 - D. Co-host a variety of community events.

Goal 1.3: Improve community health throughout all facets of the District

- Promote health, safety and well-being through Park District decisions, policies, programs, events and communication.

Goal 1.4: Improve the District's finances

- Pursue alternative funding sources to help fund capital improvements and maintenance projects.

Goal. 2.1: Develop a comprehensive park and recreation system that is accessible, safe, well-maintained, and provides a balance of passive and active recreational opportunities

- Provide both passive and active programming for a variety of ages, health, and abilities.

Goal. 2.2. Expand the trail system

The following is detailed input shared during key person interviews. In most cases, the input is organized based on relation to LOPD operations and facilities.

Strengths of the Park District

Operations

- Embraces diversity and is inclusive of all residents regardless of ethnic background.
- Maximizes dollars to the best extent possible in spite of the limited funds available.
- Exhibits a strong sense of community.
- Publicizes the fall and spring programs, and mails them to each household in Lansing.

Facilities

- The variety of recreational programs and activities that are available for all ages.
- Organizes and hosts events.
- Working to make Park Plaza a destination place by hosting programs and events at the location.
- Offers access to several green spaces.
- Provides access to the Pennsy Greenway bike trail, which supports active transportation.
- Does a good job at maintaining parks and equipment.
- The Eisenhower Fitness and Community Center.



Issues or concerns about the Park District

Operations

- There is a lack of participation among residents. It is a challenge to attract residents of diverse backgrounds to participate in LOPD events. The Park District needs to expand its sense of community.
- Disinterest in Park District programs and activities. There is apathy among the public and residents do not take advantage of these programs.
- Lack of park safety.
- The perception of Park District funding needs to change so that more residents would support an increase in funding.
- Limited tax base to support park development
- The need to increase transparency of Park District budget (e.g., publicize quarterly reports).
- Lower the costs of programming and activities so that activities can be accessed by all.
- There is a conflict of interest between the Park District and the Old Timers—a private organization with a separate board but uses LOPD facilities at no charge to run its programs.
- The need to expand summer activities to accommodate children and youth.
- Lack of access to washroom facilities.
- Missing basketball hoops on courts.
- Lack of play structures in parks.
- A need to improve the maintenance of the parks and facilities.
- The need to update the facilities at the Eisenhower Center and at some of the parks (e.g., washroom facilities, fitness gym, etc.).
- The Eisenhower Center is not fully utilized (e.g., indoor pool).
- Although the Park District has several greenspaces, very few parks have destination-type facilities (e.g., Winterhoff Park).
- The Pennsy Greenway bike trail is underutilized among residents and non-residents of Lansing. There is a need to promote the trail throughout Lansing and surrounding areas.

Facilities

- The need to extend the Eisenhower Center's hours.
- The need to extend hours associated with the afterschool program; the hours should be adjusted to accommodate student transportation needs.
- Lack of access to transportation within close proximity to the Eisenhower Center. The farmers' market, a much-needed amenity, was discontinued. If it's revived, the market should accept the Link card.
- Lack of wide variety of programs and activities.
- Limited outdoor and indoor space dedicated to basketball. Eisenhower Center is the only option for indoor basketball but only so many people can be allowed into the gym at a given time.
- There is a need for more fun activities for children and youth.

Areas in Lansing where there is a lack of parks or recreational facilities:

- Winterhoff Park needs to be improved to accommodate youth in the neighborhoods as well as those who attend the nearby Patti Leach Youth Center.

Opportunities that LOPD could take advantage of to improve parks and facilities

Operations

- Create or partner with a booster organization that could serve as a link to residents.
- Establish a campaign that allows community residents to adopt a park and provide resources to improve it.
- Form partnerships with the school districts to provide gym time for students or support sports activities like basketball.
- To increase use of Park Plaza, the park district should continue to utilize the space.

Facilities

- Create a walking/biking trail along the levee system that protects the Little Calumet River.

Ways that LOPD promotes health

- Through physical activities.
- Through cooking classes.

How LOPD can improve its promotion of health

Operations

- Establish a bike sharing program, where bikes can be rented; or create activities that promote bike riding.
- Organize more competitive physical activities (e.g., races).
- Serve healthy food options at events.

Facilities

- Provide more recreational facilities.
- Install a trailhead on the Pennsy Greenway Trail so that people can park their cars and then take a bike ride, walk, run, or skate along the trail.
- Install paved walking paths around the larger parks.

New projects that should be developed

Operations

- LOPD should reach residents whom they are currently not connected with. It's imperative for LOPD to not concentrate all park activities at the Eisenhower Center. Staff should go outside the Park District facilities and connect with residents. LOPD staff should consider conducting activities along Ridge Road to meet residents.
- Place another referendum on the ballot. Like in the past, the Park District should work with different groups to promote the referendum.
- LOPD should become more visible if the District wants to pass the referendum to secure funding.
- Establish a campaign to allow community residents to adopt a park and raise resources to improve it, similar to Schultz Park.

Facilities

- Renovate or eliminate the public swimming pool.
- Improve the park areas with facilities and equipment.
- Fix Park District equipment (e.g. television at Eisenhower center).
- Create destination places for community gathering.
- Create a dog park or skate park at Winterhoff Park.



Creating a Healthier South Suburban Community Workshop

On November 13, 2013, the Illinois Public Health Institute hosted the “Creating a Healthier South Suburban Community Workshop,” at the LOPD’s Eisenhower Center. The purpose of this workshop was to understand the links between community development and health. The workshop was one of three gatherings taking place throughout the Chicago metropolitan region during fall of 2013; others were held on the South Side of Chicago and in Aurora. The workshops were an extension of the Healthy Communities Summit held in Chicago in June 2013 at the Federal Reserve Bank, where nearly 100 stakeholders came together to share ideas related to community development and health.

Majority of the workshop attendees were residents of South Suburban Cook County, with less than half being familiar with LOPD. CCDPH was instrumental in coordinating outreach for this effort.

During the workshop, participants shared how park districts could positively impact resident health, including:

- Host an annual health fair
- Offer more free fitness programs to the community
- Address health through programming and activities

This input, all related to LOPD facilities, helped shape the following plan recommendations:

Goal. 1.3. Improve community health throughout all facets of the District

- Promote health, safety and well-being through Park District decisions, policies, programs, events and communication.
- Lead or champion public policy efforts that promote health and safety (e.g., bike helmet requirements for youth; Complete Streets).

Community survey

CMAP and the Cook County Department of Public Health worked with Park District staff to develop and administer a community survey. The survey was available on-line and the link to access the survey was publicized at various locations throughout the community including the Park District website, Village of Lansing website, and Northwest Indiana Times. The survey was available for nearly two months between November 2013 and January 2014.

Focus Groups

To ensure broad public participation throughout the planning process, focus groups were conducted to capture input from important groups that may not have participated in the online and paper survey. The focus groups were with seniors, neighborhood residents and youth of the Lansing community. The input from these groups is critical to this process, as they represent existing or potential users of LOPD.

Buford Walker senior facility

The Buford Walker senior facility is located just east of the Eisenhower Community and Fitness Center. Given the facility's close proximity to the LOPD facility, many residents could be users or potential users of the Eisenhower Center. On January 30, 2104, about 20 seniors gave their perspective on the LOPD parks, facilities and programming. The seniors' input led to the following Plan goals/strategies:

Operational goals/strategies created based on senior responses

Goal 1.1: Improve the Park District's image and identity

- Create a free flow of communication between the Park District and residents regarding events, actions, and problems that affect the District.
- Increase the capacity of the Park District to meet its communication and marketing needs based on changing demographics and evolving needs.
- Create a new marketing plan.
- Include marketing to all residents.
- Increase program awareness and identify new program opportunities.

Goal 1.2: Strengthen existing partnerships and enter into new partnerships

- Promote agreements and partnerships to maximize open space and recreational resources, maintenance, and programs.
- Explore new agreements and partnerships.
- Senior programming agreements.
- Facilities goals/strategies created based on senior responses.



Goal. 2.1: Develop a comprehensive park and recreation system that is accessible, safe, well-maintained, and provides a balance of passive and active recreational opportunities

- Provide both passive and active programming for a variety of ages, health and abilities.
- Improve park accessibility whenever feasible.
- Implement the recommendations of the Accessibility Audit.
- Continue to support the South Suburban Special Recreation Association (SSSRA).
- Monitor trends and new emerging recreational opportunities that are growing in popularity.

Below are the questions and seniors' responses given throughout the focus group:

1. What comes to mind when they think of the Lan Oak Park District, including the Eisenhower Community and Fitness Center and parks across Lansing?

Responses related to Operations

- (no responses provided)

Responses related to Facilities

- Don't use the facilities; would go if there was something closer to our building to make it accessible.
- Belongs to park district in Munster. You get a discount for being a member for events like the plays; safety is a concern for some with the park near Buford Home.
- Does the park district have an office? Three of us go to Munster to play bingo (once a week)—pay \$19 to belong to a Teenager's Club, and they have several others things you can do—approximately 50 men/ women; \$1 per card; residents pay \$14, out of town pay \$19. . .we take turns driving; they have pinochle, bridge and you can play any of these; they also go on trips like plays (you pay for these, but you get a discount).
- Some Sundays, the bands in the park in the summer, they are too loud; pick another day if they are going to play this music.
- I know the park district has barbecues; would like to see them have more during the warm weather, at least one day each month a BBQ/picnic, not just hamburgers and hotdogs and have people socialize, games, relay races—Lan Oak should do something for us, not Thornton Township; could charge.
- Use to take grandkids to the park, but too old now.

2. What are some issues with LOPD?

Responses related to Operations

- Don't understand what they have.

Responses related to Facilities

- Social gatherings are needed, see more; some harassments in the park, some shady looking characters, police are over there.
- To join the gym, it is very expensive (people would like to join, but don't have the money); supplemental insurance does not include the Silver Sneakers program.
- Insurance covers Silver Sneakers, swim—free to go anywhere in the gym; joined since last year; classes like Thorton (playing cards, exercise) more for low cost.
- Zucherilli—Township Supervisor, provide events
- If I was going to go there, cut a hole in the gate to make it accessible for the older adults; most people go there drive or go with someone; booklet is sparse —is an artist, likes crafts, involved with my peers and interact (e.g., beads, painting, crafts, knit, crochet, ceramics) at a lower cost; 9 AM - 3 PM, afternoons —any time before 3 PM.
- Satisfied with what they have; I go to Eisenhower on Tuesdays for lunch; nice meal and it only costs \$1.50.
- Supplement what the Township offers; increase meals to 2 meals a week.
- I love Eisenhower, walk around the park, use the facility; part of the Silver Sneakers and participates in the programs.
- Accessibility to Eisenhower is hard, some direct path is needed.
- Moved in August, not familiar with all of the activities and benefits of the Lan Oak Park District.
- Park District tried to do crafts on site about 5 years ago; stopped b/c of lack of interest—minimum of 10 participants required.
- Walks around the parks; sidewalks are ok; they don't have a walking trail. I'd like to see a walking trail. Walk on the sidewalks. Shultz is nice; what I would like to see if more trees/more shade.
- Restroom facilities were nasty; women's was not even open, had to use the men's; kids go in there, and tear it up. If we have an event, need to assure facilities are open/available.
- Not ADA accessible; could not get up there with wheel chair...make more accessible to anyone.
- Use to have trips (e.g., Peoria; Bears games). I'd like to see if they could make it accessible (e.g., wheelchairs/walkers).
- Playgrounds...get rid of the mulch, and use the foam on the ground.
- Graffiti - Lyons park, use to take granddaughter there; did report it; I would, but I am in the low poverty. Would love to go for exercise, but can't afford it. Feel safer on this property, not on the parks. Have guardians/security.
- Would like to know about the insurance/Silver Sneaker Program.
- Computer classes for seniors? Craft fairs?
- Programming in-house - Cards games; crafts; what can we do for our community...volunteer?
- Lower the prices would make them look at the book; the senior center could invite them to promote programs.
- Low turnout when park district offered program at Buford; Boredom; Instructor did not know what she was doing.
- We have had a variety of things that died out; exercise classes.
- Park - Senior day at the park in Lansing—would need a lot of announcement made; late spring/early summer; food, entertainment, games, etc. aimed at seniors.
- Like the art of conversation—subject that we can draw on and seniors discuss; miss being able to talk to adults...would like to meet other people, broaden my horizons.

3. What do you like about LOPD? / What would you like to see at LOPD?

Responses related to Operations

- (no responses provided)

Responses related to Facilities

- Go to the things over there; it's been nice. I would like to see seniors and families/our children and grandkids...
- Intergenerational events.
- I think it would be more feasible if the fees were lower or based on income brackets/income-based pricing/sliding scales.



Neighborhood Watch Meeting

On March 26, 2014, outreach staff visited a Neighborhood Watch Meeting to hear about their experiences with LOPD parks and facilities, as well as their recommendations for improvements. The represented the following neighborhood and lived by the following parks:

- Lan Oak Park
- Bock Park
- Lansing/Locust
- Hickory St.
- Lansing
- Rose St.

The input from the seniors helped shape the following Plan goals/strategies:

Goal. 1.3. Improve community health throughout all facets of the District

- Promote health, safety and well-being through Park District decisions, policies, programs, events, and communication.

Goal. 2.1. Develop a comprehensive park and recreation system that is accessible, safe, well-maintained, and provides a balance of passive and active recreational opportunities

- Focus on maintaining existing parks and recreation rather than acquiring new open space and/or constructing new facilities.
- Acquire funds to remove the former outdoor community pool and renovate Bock Park.
- Improve maintenance.
- Create a capital improvement plan and a maintenance prioritization plan.

1. What are your issues and concerns about the parks?

Responses related to Operations

- Large groups of kids gathering – Noise.
- Loud music – People urinating in public – Drug Use.
- Cleaner parks – Safer.
- Not safe for kids to go alone – Drug activity – Lan Oak (Eisenhower Center) too expensive – Sports overtaking the parks.
- Safety.
- Lan Oak should be better patrolled.

Responses related to Facilities

- Cleanliness. lack of bathrooms being open, condition of playground equipment.
- Poor upkeep of fields – Poor placement of trash bins, bad idea to close pool without replacement program, could the Park District do a joint venture.
- Bathrooms are not usable and concerned about children using them alone.
- Pool need to be reopened, gangs.
- Pool and skate park are not managed so children can consistently play.
- Bathroom care.
- Are they well?—Amount of children using?
- Cleaner bathrooms.
- Lighting and supervision in Lan Oak.



2. What projects would you like to see developed in the parks? (Please be specific by listing improvement along with park name, neighborhood, or closest intersection.)

Responses related to Operations

- Patrolling more by the parks.

Responses related to Facilities

- Lan Oak Park—Update of playground equipment—Update of bathroom facilities.
- Water park with sprinklers for kids, walk trail around Lan Oak and other larger parks.
- Walking team.
- Pool, washrooms.
- After school programs when children can obtain homework assistance that is affordable.
- Track for running or walking.
- Basketball courts: Need more courts, need more running paths with I.C.E. phone at check points.
- Lan Oak Park needs better washrooms.
- New swimming in park district pool.
- Swimming pool.
- Better maintenance and lighting at night.
- Walking paths, restrooms.
- Cleaner picnic area, new bathrooms that work, new tennis net, new pool, better lighting at tennis court.
- The swimming pool comes back so kids have some place to go during the summer, walking path that is lit up.

3. What are the strengths of the Park District?

Responses related to Operations

- Good programs at the Eisenhower Center.
- Children playing.
- Not quite sure it isn't bad.

Responses related to Facilities

- Good facilities at the Eisenhower Center.
- Nice looking properties, some good equipment, Eisenhower Center is an asset, fireworks at Lan Oak, Farmer markets.
- Eisenhower Park District, it is in the main area that has enough traffic to keep crime down.
- Sports in Lansing—The sports comply well lit and clean, events like the 4th of July.
- Need more swimming time for the kids and it should be free for residents.
- Nearly events that promote community involvement: Parades and Fireworks.
- Good place to meet for lunch if safety is provided.
- A lot of small and large parks.
- Good parks bring more families to Lansing.
- Good exercise equipment, picnic areas.
- Picnics, playground, fireworks.
- You can throw parties, fireworks.
- Offer a lot of indoor activities not as many outdoor activities, firework displays are very nice and safe.

4. How does the Park District promote health? How could the Park District improve in promoting health?

Responses related to Operations

- The fitness center at Eisenhower promotes a healthy lifestyle.
- Programs at Eisenhower for seniors are nice, Eisenhower fitness programs are nice, immunization programs for kids in need at parks.
- Lan Oak would be a good park to have a walking group so they would not have to walk alone.
- Fitness center is the best, the pool should be opened for health of the children, not only keeping them off the streets, walking path patrolled.
- Promote first at home, it is expensive and should be free for all kids and adults.
- Blood drives, blood pressure checks, dental checks, family reading nights, but the cost for these are always increasing yearly or quarterly.
- Never seen any, but the park district should lower the price or make it free.
- Offer sporting activities- Walking trails would be nice.
- By getting children away from video games and out in the fresh air and exercise.
- Exercise for kids, clean restroom in Lan Oak Park.
- They could offer more sports.
- Volleyball, basketball, gym Walking paths.
- Walking path.
- Washroom facilities could be improved, water fountains provided.

Responses related to Facilities

- (all responses were related to Operations)

5. Are there any safety concerns with the parks?

Responses related to Operations

- Groups of kids who congregate in the park for bad reasons. Not enough lighting.
- Some feel unsafe at night be parks—Graffiti, but police seem to be on top of it.
- No video surveillance, sketchy people.
- Older kids hanging out, more lights.
- Not for me and my family.
- Should place phone post all around.
- Seems like a mixture of groups gather (good and bad), better lighting.
- Yes more police patrols.
- Kids destroy property, teenagers take over Lan Oak Park.
- Lighting.
- Volunteers Park (Lansing) - Its not safe for kids to play - Too many thugs hang out there - It's a small park and should be shut down.
- Supervision, lighting.
- High school students hang out there instead of young kids.
- Finding drug items in the pot-a-potty.



Patti Leach Youth Center focus group

With youth being the predominant user of LOPD parks and facilities, it is imperative to gather their input to shape the LOPD Master Plan. On April 9, 2014, outreach staff conducted a focus group with twenty-six youth and one parent of the Patti Leach Youth Center. The youth's input resulted in the following Plan goals/strategies (the focus group questions and detailed responses are below):

Goal. 1.1. Improve the Park District's image and identity

- Create a free flow of communication between the Park District and residents regarding events, actions and problems that affect the District.
- Strengthen the District's online presence

Goal 2.1: Develop a comprehensive park and recreation system that is accessible, safe, well-maintained, socially equitable, and provides a balance of passive and active recreational opportunities

- Focus on maintaining existing parks and recreation rather than acquiring new open space and/or constructing new facilities.
- Retain existing parks to help meet State and National standards, especially with neighborhood park recommendations.

1. What is one word to describe LOPD?

- Clean
- Nice
- Worth your time
- Beautiful
- Graffiti
- Playful
- Enjoyable
- Where we can have picnics at
- Entertainment
- BBQs
- Decent
- Cool
- Alright
- Relaxing
- Exciting
- Not enough for skate park
- Dangerous—skate park (secluded)
- Not enough streetlights/security

2. What would you like to see changed about the parks?

Responses related to Operations

- A Facebook page for the Lan-Oak Park District, like the Patti Leach Youth Center's
- Responses related to Facilities
- Redo the pool
- Stairs with ramp
- Swimming pool
- Bike shop
- Across street from PLYC – vacant space for skate park
- More garbage cans and signs for me to pick up the trash especially at Lan-Oak Park
- More benches at skate park
- Water fountain
- Flowers and green grass to beautify
- Restroom at Lan-Oak
- Potable potty at skate park
- Lan-Oak pool—eliminate
- Bike racks
- More water fountains
- Expand or relocate skate park
- Fireman pool
- Move skate park to more populated place
- Monkey Gym and high rope (incline ropes)

- Trampoline
- Rock climbing
- Paintball
- Soccer field and Lan-Oak
- Capture the flag equipment
- Community activities
- Inside pools
- Erfert Park – more fish
- Outside basketball court
- Vending machines
- Indoor skate parks
- Concession stand at Lan-Oak
- Vacant lot – green
- Redo streets
- Safer- fence around water/lake area at Erfert Park
- Bouncy House

3. What do you like about the parks?

Responses related to Operations

- (no responses provided)

Responses related to Facilities

- Swings—swinging back and forth
- Monkey bars—Whitfield Park/ Lan Oak
- Spacious
- LOPD—flowers, activity, nice atmosphere
- Baseball field—Lan-Oak
- Likes a lot of parks
- Nice equipment—Lan-Oak, Schultz, Whitfield
- Skate park floor



Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

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The following questions will assist the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) in understanding community dynamics and past public engagement efforts. This information will be used to develop a customized public participation strategy for this project. Ideally this form will be completed during a discussion with local staff to ensure staff has a complete understanding of each answer.

Community:

Address:

Primary contact
(including title):

Email:

Phone:

Website:

General Questions

1. What are some examples of community participation that have occurred to date and relate to this project (and how was such feedback incorporated into your planning activities)?
2. Please describe a typical public meeting in your community. Have there been any successful approaches or challenges to engaging community residents?
3. Please describe your priority audience and any specific goals when presenting community plans.
4. What tools do you currently use to engage your community (ex. paper survey, online survey)?
5. Are there any "hot button" topics that tend to galvanize residents and get people to events in your community?
6. Please describe your typical methods for advertising community meetings (ex. newsletters, water bill notices, library bulletin board, social media).
7. Do you have a media contact for press releases
8. Will we want to distribute materials in languages other than English?
9. Is your community tech-savvy and computer-literate?
10. Should we post event information on your municipal website; if so who is the IT contact person?

Logistics

1. Please list three ideal community locations for public meetings:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
2. What are the A/V capabilities of these venues?
 - a. Computer
 - b. Projector
 - c. Screen or blank walls to project onto
3. When are the preferred days and times of day to hold a public meeting in your community?
 - a. Weekday evening (circle) – M T W Th F
 - b. Weekend (circle) – Sat / Sun
 - c. Time
 - Morning (9 a.m. – 11 a.m.)
 - Mid-day (11 a.m. – 1 p.m.)
 - Afternoon (1 p.m. – 5 p.m.)
 - Evening (6 p.m. – 9 p.m.)
 - Other (please specify)
4. Are there any scheduled community events in the coming months that we should know about to coordinate public participation efforts?

Figure 2. Community Stakeholder Analysis Form



Chicago Metropolitan
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This form is to be used at the beginning of the public outreach strategy development process to identify key community stakeholders.

Community:

Project:

Identify stakeholders (individual or group)	Directly affected?	Position or what issues are most important?	Potential steering committee member?	Candidate for direct outreach (ex. membership org.)?	Notes about resources	Contact information



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