



# Deerfield Park District Strategic Plan 2017-2022 Adopted September 2017



*The Deerfield Park District's mission is to provide outstanding parks, services, facilities and recreation programs that enrich lives, promote healthy living and inspire memorable experiences.*

## Introduction

The Deerfield Park District completed an extensive planning process in 2017. The process was intended to develop a Strategic Plan for the district. The Strategic Plan will enable the district to ensure the district is organizationally aligned to its newly established core strategies within the plan and can be achieved through a set of goals and measurable objectives. The plan developed covers a 5 year period and encompasses 6 core strategies that were developed from the planning process.

The plan will enable the district to further its mission through establishing focus, dedicating appropriate resources, assessing organizational operations and establishing clear accountability throughout the district. The plan was developed through collaborative efforts of many staff members at all levels of the organization along with the Board of Commissioners and compiled by the district's Executive Director.

## Board of Park Commissioners

Gil Antokal  
Jan Caron  
Joe Cohen  
Greg Lapin  
Rick Patinkin

## Park District Management Staff

Jeff Nehila	Executive Director
Linda Anderson	Director of Recreation
Tony Korzyniewski	Director of Revenue Facilities
Bob Taylor	Director of Finance
Jay Zahn	Director of Parks
Sherry Prause	Communications and Foundation Manager
Tammy Ingoglia	Executive Assistant

## Participating Staff

Mike Bavier	Dolores Daley	Trena McDaniel	Ryan Rickerson
Jim Beckman	Curt Ellis	Audrey Melchiorre	Tom Roark
Lyle Burkett	Mark Fiorio	John Meredith	Kailey Schwartzhoff
Miguel Cabrera	Jonathan Gagne	Jennie Michalik	David Shamrock
Dan Caraher	Jim Gariti	Chris Moilanen	John Treichler
Carl Caruthers	John Greene	Jeff Napolski	Lisa Turner
Tomas Cisneros	Tim Johnson	Jim Nicholson	Jacob Weber
John Clark	Jan Krapf	Pat Powers	Ginny Wiemerslage
Chris Czajka	Jason Mannina	Larry Pullega	Adam Wohl
Ashley Dahl	Antonio Mata	Nancy Reese	Mark Woolums

## Profile of the Deerfield Park District

The Deerfield Park District was established in 1951. At that time, Deerfield had 3,200 residents. That same year, the district acquired its first piece of property which is now Jewett Park. Over the next 66 plus years, both the community and the park district have steadily grown. The district now covers 5.8 square miles in both Lake and Cook counties and includes a section of Riverwoods in addition to the Village of Deerfield. The district serves over 18,500 residents.

The park district currently owns or manages 20 parks totalling over 204 acres and operates a multitude of facilities. The parks range from small tot-lot areas to community parks that provide amenities which include playgrounds, sports fields, tennis and basketball courts, picnic areas and ice skating areas. The facilities include a 100,000 square foot recreation center, a 38,000 square foot community center, an 18,000 square foot senior center, two outdoor pools and a golf course. The golf course covers an additional 141 acres that includes a clubhouse and a learning center.

The district employs nearly 50 full-time employees and hundreds of part-time and seasonal staff with an annual budget, including capital project expenses, of nearly \$15 million. Throughout its history, the park district has been a stalwart provider of quality programs and services and enjoys a highly regarded reputation within the community. This reputation has been established by committed leadership from the Board of Commissioners, staff at every level and continual community engagement.

### Community Engagement

A significant contributor to the park district's continual achievements has been its commitment to community engagement. Through the utilization of citizen advisory committees, community surveys and a long-standing philosophy of providing multiple avenues of soliciting and receiving resident feedback, the district has been able to institute new programs and services, develop facilities and provide high levels of customer service throughout its history. The district currently has 3 citizen advisory committees, (Recreation Center, Golf and Pools), and an Affiliate Committee. These citizen-focused committees provide assistance and advice on specific programs, activities or projects for the district and are highly regarded by district staff and the board for their insight and perspective. The district also engages residents through program-specific surveys and community level surveys. The most recent community survey was administered in 2013. It focused on satisfaction and importance of issues for a wide range of services. The survey results reflected that a high majority of residents were overall satisfied with the services and parks, playgrounds and facilities provided by the district. The survey also reflected a desire for residents to see the district continue to improve the overall quality of existing parks and playgrounds and the Sachs Recreation Center. These survey results have been incorporated into the district's capital project planning processes for implementation of continual physical improvements to its existing amenities.

Another area that the district has had a long and productive track record of community engagement is with other local governments and entities. The park district currently enjoys highly cooperative relationships with both local school districts and the Village of Deerfield. It also has established favorable relationships with the local township and numerous churches and religious institutions. The agreements with the school districts go beyond the typical shared use agreements where both entities provide facilities and services at their respective locations for shared use at no or minimal cost. The agreement with School District 109 also incorporates cost sharing practices for physical improvements such as playgrounds and parking lots. The Village of Deerfield has been instrumental in developing the Patty Turner Center, the local senior center, and the Township partnership includes cost sharing for social services and senior transportation. A long-standing agreement with a neighboring church also centers around joint use of facilities. Suffice to say the Deerfield Park District has developed positive and productive relationships and agreements with many local entities. These arrangements have benefited everyone in the community and have displayed a high level of successful planning.

### 2017 Planning Process

In 2017, the district completed some additional planning processes to assess its purpose and its current inventory of programs, services and facilities. The first part of that process was to develop a mission statement. As a mission statement is used to convey the overall purpose of an organization, a great number of staff and the Park District Board of Commissioners were recruited to participate in the process. The process began with over 30 employees submitting candidates for consideration. Those statements were then reduced to three from voting from a large number of staff. The three “finalists” were then brought to the board for their review and the following was officially adopted in April, 2017:

“To provide outstanding parks, services, facilities and recreation programs that enhance lives, promote healthy living and inspire memorable experiences”

Also in April, 2017, the district performed a Strategic Planning Retreat. Participants included all of the board members and nearly 50 regular full-time staff. The ultimate purpose of the retreat was to develop a planning document which will provide strategic elements and measurable goals and objectives for the district going forward.

The retreat began with the reaffirmation of the district’s new mission statement. A maturity model assessment was then reviewed. The model was utilized to measure how staff and board felt that the district was aligned with common and agreed upon goals and direction. The model utilized reflected that the district is mostly structured and proactive and processes in place and measurements are somewhat aligned within strategy. A SWOT Analysis then followed in which participants provided input on both internal (Strengths and Weaknesses) and external (Opportunities and Threats) influences. The following is a summary of the SWOT Analysis:

### Strengths (internal analysis)

- a. financial stability
- b. great board
- c. family atmosphere
- d. family focused services
- e. value provided through services
- f. appreciative audience
- g. strong community relations w/other entities
- h. programs for all ages and abilities
- i. outstanding customer services
- j. wide variety of services
- k. updated facilities
- l. distribution of parks throughout community
- m. parks are well maintained
- n. awesome, knowledgeable staff
- o. seasoned, veteran staff

### Weaknesses (internal analysis)

- a. policies – policy vs. actual practice
- b. need improved evaluation process
- c. staff's extent and/or ability to make trustworthy/justified decisions for customers
- d. differing relationships with different clientele
- e. need to improve preventative maintenance planning and scheduling
- f. communication
- g. no room for expansion
- h. no natural bodies of water
- i. overuse of fields (and facilities)
- j. no consistent best management practices for conservation
- k. need to “go green” which includes taking a leadership role, educating the public and recycling
- l. part-time/seasonal employee actions/reactions
- m. understaffed esp. parks dept.
- n. available workforce candidates
- o. meeting generational expectations, needs and wants
- p. adapting to most current societal needs i.e. communication methods (social media, apps, providing immediate information, proactive dissemination)
- q. consistency of policies/practices (lack of flexibility)
- r. extending resources to meet all needs
- s. cannot say no
- t. identify changing audiences
- u. not admitting less than successful initiatives
- v. rigid policies/procedures for customers
- w. lack of long term planning
- x. change within takes too long (size of agency)

- y. rapid response/changes in our services
- z. analyzing enrollment/programs that run vs. ones that don't

Opportunities (external analysis)

- a. improve district reciprocal agreements with other entities
- b. increase exposure in community for district as a whole
- c. engage new businesses with uniform, district-wide approach
- d. engage staff in planning
- e. engage new residents
- f. add and expand promotional avenues
- g. add and expand existing facilities
- h. recruit/utilize volunteers for district-wide opportunities
- i. re-engage existing businesses
- j. establish natural area management and educate staff & public
- k. expand staffing recruitment avenues
- l. engage established residents for services, programs, volunteers
- m. improve/enhance cross promotion of programs
- n. add more area to park district

Threats (external analysis)

- a. possible property tax freeze
- b. private firm competition
- c. environment/natural disasters and issues (i.e. emerald ash borer)
- d. neighboring park districts (duplication/similar programs)
- e. supply/demand of golf
- f. reliance on outside entities
- g. increase to minimum wage
- h. decrease/cuts of services to community
- i. consolidations of local governments

The participants then engaged in idea sharing and brainstorming to further elaborate on SWOT results as well as additional thoughts on programs, services and parks. Eighty items were identified. A voting process then followed which was intended to narrow this field down to the most important items to each participant. A total of 30 items did not receive votes which narrowed the prioritized items to 50.

Following the retreat, all of the items were then categorized in 6 strategic areas. These areas have been incorporated and classified as part of this Strategic Plan. Within the strategic areas, a number of goals and objectives were developed.

The draft of this plan was developed and then presented to staff and the Board of Commissioners for review and refinement in July and after 3 months, the plan was refined and officially adopted by the Board of Commissioners on September 14, 2017.

The plan will serve as the guiding document for the district to enhance the physical condition of its parks and facilities, to engage the staff in participative management and enhance the programs and services to the community. It will also serve as a springboard for additional planning processes for short, mid and long term strategies, and further development of goals and objectives. Another purpose of the plan is to ensure the district is organizationally aligned to achieve the desired results of the plan by incorporating district goals and objectives into departmental and individual performance plans.

Assumptions:

1. The continued operations and provisions of services by the park district will “run parallel” to the Strategic Plan in terms of its current policies, procedures and practices to include its current Replacement and Five Year Capital Plans (Appendices A-C) until the specific core strategies, goals and objectives relating to those plans are updated accordingly.
2. The information within this Strategic Plan is a true and accurate reflection of the planning processes the district underwent to develop the plan.
3. Historical information relating to the park district is as accurate as possible based on the supporting documentation available.

Limitations:

1. Some of the identified goals and objectives within the plan may be completed or near completion upon official adoption of this plan.
2. The plan is a “fluid” document which may be altered during its 5 year span. Alterations may be required due to external influences and/or internal priorities changing.

Implementation of the Plan

Once the plan is adopted by the Board of Commissioners, the plan will be implemented within 60 days. Within those 60 days all regular full and part time staff will be presented with a copy and the plan will be reviewed in formal orientation and training sessions. Understanding the timing of the plan’s adoption and its actual implementation may not match the timeline of budget development and passage, the full implementation of the plan may take up to a year. Within that implementation period, the applicable goals and objectives will have been included in budgetary planning processes to best ensure they are met.

## Reporting

Reporting of the plan's progress will occur a minimum of twice per year to the Board of Commissioners. The reporting will include all objectives met, in progress or delayed.

## Review

A review of the entire plan will occur once per year. The review will include all objectives met and in progress. It will also cover any required decision-making needs by the board for alterations, deferment or elimination of any specific objectives. The review will also serve as a springboard for any Goals and Strategies to be incorporated into any future planning documents.

<b>Strategy 1 = Organizational Excellence</b>			
		<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Status/Comments</b>
Goal 1: Engage board, staff and community in planning processes			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Identify and recruit staff at all appropriate levels and board to participate in program, facility and services planning processes	<b>[on-going]</b>	
2	Identify and recruit community partners, advisory committees and local governments to participate in large scale project and long-term planning processes	<b>[on-going]</b>	
3	Develop comprehensive 5-year replacement plans for mechanical systems, HVAC, roofs, fleet, playgrounds, parking lots, fields, courts and equipment and update annually for continual 5-year plans <b>[by June 2018]</b>		
4	Develop a district-wide succession plan for full-time and regular part-time staff for professional development and to facilitate upward mobility opportunities within the organization <b>[complete plan by June 2019]</b>		
5	Develop a district-wide I.T. Plan for internal operations and customer service needs with staff input from all departments <b>[complete by June 2019 and update annually]</b>		
6	Implement comprehensive maintenance plans and tracking systems for all applicable equipment <b>[by December 2019]</b>		

Goal 2: Maximize organizational efficiency, operations and communications			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Update Personnel Policies to ensure consistency and clarity <b>[First update by December 2017; Review and update as necessary or every 3 years- whichever comes first]</b>		
2	Update all job descriptions for all district positions <b>[by December 2017]</b>		
3	Complete integration of electronic work order system <b>[by December 2017]</b>		
4	Complete integration of payroll and timekeeping softwares to provide up-to-date vacation and sick-leave accumulations for employees <b>[by January 2018]</b>		
5	Implement new performance evaluation system that includes measurable goals and desired outcomes <b>[by May 2018]</b>		
6	Evaluate organizational structure for optimal alignment to district's mission, departmental structure and optimal provision of services. Results may include re-structuring of department(s) and/or specific positions. May also include addition of positions. Evaluation and potential restructuring of some activities may occur sooner <b>[by June 2018]</b>		
7	Create wage and salary tables and ranges for all district positions <b>[by August 2018; Provide tables and ranges as part of annual budget documentation]</b>		
8	Create district "intranet" system for use by staff to post news, notices, policy updates, safety reminders, etc. <b>[by January 2019]</b>		

9	Provide position specific, departmental level and district level trainings on subjects that include staff empowerment, human relations and internal and external customer service <b>[by April 2019 and on-going from then]</b>		
Goal 3: Seek state and national recognition for excellence			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Submit applications for state level awards through IAPD and IPRA <b>[Begin in 2018 and submit annually whenever applicable thereafter]</b>		
2	Apply for Joint Distinguished Park and Recreation Agency Accreditation <b>[March 2019 and undergo review in Fall 2020]</b>		
3	Apply for National Gold Medal Award <b>[Apply in 2021]</b>		
4	Apply for GFOA Accounting Award <b>[Apply in 2021 or 2022]</b>		

<b>Strategy 2 = Customer Engagement</b>			
		<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Status/Comments</b>
Goal 1: Increase customer feedback			
<u>Objective</u>			
1	Develop uniform survey process for all programs with common elements along with program-specific data <b>[by April 2018]</b>		
Goal 2: Identify customer and community profile			
<u>Objective</u>			
1	Develop updated profile of community's demographics and conduct informational training/education sessions with all staff <b>[by April 2018]</b>		
Goal 3: Establish uniform branding, recognition and identity program(s) for the district			
<u>Objective</u>			
1	Determine optimal method for customer recognition of district through logos, signage, etc. <b>[by December 2018]</b>		
Goal 4: Engage new customers			
<u>Objective</u>			
1	Identify un-served audiences for programs and services through updated demographics and established customer base and create awareness promotional programs to gain new and former customers <b>[by March 2019]</b>		
Goal 5: Increase participation of established customers			
<u>Objective</u>			

1	Expand cross promotion of programs and services through additional social media, IT-related and promotional techniques <b>[by June 2019]</b>		

<b>Strategy 3 = Community Engagement</b>			
		<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Status/Comments</b>
Goal 1: Engage businesses			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Develop uniform and comprehensive district-wide engagement program for all new businesses for potential sponsorship and partnership opportunities <b>[by March 2019]</b>		
2	Identify former sponsors and partners and re-engage by utilizing uniform engagement program <b>[by June 2019]</b>		
Goal 2: Engage and recruit community for additional involvement opportunities			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Develop uniform and comprehensive district-wide volunteer opportunity program for individuals, groups and businesses <b>[by March 2019]</b>		
2	Increase awareness of district's contributions to community by promoting district and increasing exposure through participation in additional community events <b>[by June 2020]</b>		

<b>Strategy 4 = Going Green/Environmental Stewardship</b>			
		<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Status/Comments</b>
Goal 1: Parks, Open Space and Golf Course Enhancements and Services			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Reduce NPS pollutants by adding rain gardens and native plants in any new park renovation	[on-going]	
2	Add habitat for Monarch Butterflies and other agreed upon at-risk animals and insects	[on-going]	
3	Add alternative transportation routes (bike/walking paths) throughout parks and coordinate with other local and county entities to enhance connectivity to other paths	[on-going]	
4	Use mulch obtained from chipping all lost trees throughout district parks	[on-going]	
5	Complete a minimum of 1 hole per year improvements/renovations at golf course <b>[through November 2022]</b>		
6	Provide recycling opportunities within entire parks system <b>[Ensure every park 1 acre or less has a minimum of 1 recycling container and all other parks have recycling containers at every backstop, picnic shelter, playground and 1 per 1/4 mile of paved trails]</b>		
7	Reduce NPS pollutants by eliminating phosphorus in all fertilizers except for new turf grass establishment <b>[by November 2018]</b>		
8	Establish no-mow and low-mow in parks and open spaces <b>[by April 2020]</b>		
9	Eliminate habitat for Emerald Ash Borer by removing all affected ash trees <b>[by December 2020]</b>		

10	Eliminate invasive species in parks by removing all buckthorn and other invasives <b>[by December 2021]</b>		
Goal 2: Incorporate energy and natural resource savings practices at all district facilities			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Incorporate water and energy savings practices in all new facilities and existing facility renovation projects such as adding water saving toilets, air hand dryers, light occupancy sensors wherever possible, energy efficient lighting, water fountains with bottle filler spigots and use recycled and re-purposed materials such as recycled materials for restroom partitions	<b>[on-going]</b>	
2	Incorporate LEEDS design elements in any new facility or renovation projects	<b>[on-going]</b>	
3	Examine feasibility of adding re-newable energy initiatives (such as wind and solar power), at all applicable facilities	<b>[on-going]</b>	
4	Recycle all eligible office supplies and materials such as paper, plastic, toner cartridges, batteries, light bulbs and electronics <b>[by July 2018]</b>		
5	Provide a minimum of 3 recycling containers within every facility <b>[by October 2018]</b>		
6	Implement cold water washing at Sachs Recreation Center <b>[by December 2018]</b>		
7	Use only recyclable materials for food and beverage services throughout the district <b>[by January 2019]</b>		

8	Use organic based cleaners and other applicable chemicals at all facilities <b>[by March 2019]</b>		
9	Reduce domestic water usage by utilizing rain barrels at all facilities for outside watering <b>[by March 2020]</b>		
10	Reduce water usage by adding faucets with timers and aerators to all district sinks <b>[by December 2021]</b>		
Goal 3: Engage/Educate Community in conservation efforts			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Provide educational opportunities to community through programs covering topics such as recycling and re-purposing household and outdoor items <b>[provide 1 program by November 2018 and provide a minimum of 2 programs per year every year after]</b>		
2	Serve as drop-off/donation point for recyclable materials by identifying partnerships and lone drop-off source opportunities with other entities <b>[serve as continual or special event drop-off point by May 2019]</b>		
3	Host native plant sales (can be partnered with other local entities) <b>[by October 2019]</b>		
4	Add Little Free Libraries in parks system to promote re-use of books <b>[partner with Deerfield Library if possible and implement by May 2020]</b>		
5	Measure interest of community in establishing a bee-keeping program <b>[by November 2019]</b> and implement program if establishment is desired <b>[by April 2021]</b>		

Goal 4: Reduce emissions			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Replace equipment and vehicles with low or no emission capabilities when district replacement plan dictates. Examples would be low-emission or hybrid vehicles and battery operated vehicles and equipment <b>[implement in 2018]</b>		
2	Provide incentives for staff to carpool and use mass-transit <b>[develop Incentive Plan by October 2018 and implement by February 2019]</b>		
3	Explore feasibility of providing bike share/bike rental program at select parks and facilities and implement if feasibility demonstrates need <b>[Develop feasibility study in 2019 and implement by 2020/21]</b>		
4	Examine impact of condensed work week to reduce transportation needs of employees <b>[examine feasibility and economic impact and service consequences by July 2020]</b>		
Goal 5: Implement Climate Change/Global Warming Initiatives			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Identify local efforts that may be undertaken to reduce effect of climatic change (i.e drought resistant plants & turfgrass) <b>[by June 2022]</b>		

<b>Strategy 5 = Expand and Enhance Parks and Properties</b>			
		<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Status/Comments</b>
Goal 1: Acquire additional parkland			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Examine all opportunities for acquisition of contiguous property to parks when approached by owner to determine immediate and long-term benefit to district	[on-going]	
2	Identify key acquisition targets of contiguous property to parks and pursue acquisition	[on-going]	
3	Explore acquisition opportunities of larger parcels or properties, (20+ acres), within or contiguous to park district boundaries to minimize any deficiencies in parkland acreage and amenities according to national standards	[on-going]	
Goal 2: Enhance existing parks with new amenities or enhance existing amenities			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Continually update all replacement plans developed to ensure existing amenities are not beyond their useful lives and update annually	[on-going]	
2	Examine potential sites within existing inventory for artificial turf fields(s) [June 2018]		
3	Develop Master Plan for Jewett Park for improvements and new amenities [by July 2018]		
4	Identify and prioritize existing park improvement opportunities to include dog park renovation, lighting upgrades, disc golf course improvements and uniform bench, table and receptacle replacement program [by July 2018]		

5	Examine need and determine support and interest levels for new amenities within parks to include mountain bike trails, foot soccer, outdoor fitness stations and nature trails <b>[by July 2019]</b>		

<b>Strategy 6 = Enhance Existing Facilities and Add New Ones</b>			
		<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>Status/Comments</b>
Goal 1: Prioritize enhancements at existing facilities			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Use newly created physical assessments and develop facility specific improvement plans for existing facilities <b>[by March 2019]</b>		
2	Determine total additional storage needs and examine feasibility of optimizing existing space and/or adding new storage areas at all existing facilities <b>[by July 2019]</b>		
3	Identify and select best options for significant enhancements to existing facilities i.e. alternate use(s) of space(s) at Sachs Center, expanding golf clubhouse, renovating splashpad, wading pool and pool at Deerspring, expanding/upgrading parks maintenance facility and renovation of Community Center <b>[by December 2019]</b>		
4	Create 10 year plan for significant enhancements of existing facilities <b>[by June 2020]</b> and develop associated funding requirements		
5	Measure community interest and support of 10 year plan through community survey <b>[by April 2021]</b>		
Goal 2: Identify and prioritize options for adding new facility(ies)			
<u>Objectives</u>			
1	Identify specialized facilities that would supplement existing facilities i.e. indoor turf field(s), shooting range, more meeting space, off-season learning center at golf course, community theater, paddleball courts, putt-putt <b>[by December 2018]</b>		

2	Examine potential joint-development and shared use opportunities for new facilities with local governments and private partnerships <b>[by July 2019]</b>		