



CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT 2012 STRATEGIC PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The strategic plan builds on the Chicago Park District's strong foundation as the leading provider of recreation in the City of Chicago and offers a vision for a Park District that can adapt and grow to new circumstances and find fresh and innovative ways to express our values and serve our customers. The strategic plan is the result of a two-year process that began with conversations led by the Monitor Group, a strategy consulting firm that focuses on top management issues most critical to long-term competitiveness. The initial strategic direction was set through evaluating key questions related to our priorities and making critical decisions to guide us toward our vision of the future. This process helped us assess our mission, define our vision and aspirations, identify our market and customers, understand how we best serve those customers, and determine what activities and capabilities needed investment. From the answers and decisions associated with those key questions, we developed general targets for growth, volume, and revenue and identified the capabilities needed to operationalize the strategic direction.

A critical piece of the process included engagement of staff at all levels in assessing the Park District's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Through months of roundtable discussions and SWOT analyses with field staff, managers, executive staff, and the board of commissioners, we refined our strategic goals and developed specific actions and key performance indicators that have set our direction and will measure our success.

We also carefully reviewed the last several years of public comments received at dozens of Park District hearings held in communities across the City and we analyzed customer feedback collected through surveys and various social media outlets.

While this plan represents a final product, it is a living document and the strategic planning process is ongoing and institutionalized. We have recently implemented a new performance management system that engages all departments in evaluation of their strategic and departmental goals relative to established metrics for achievement. We have operationalized new technologies that collect and analyze data relative to nearly every aspect of our business, from customer behavior to facility maintenance. We have engaged top academic and corporate strategy partners to keep us aligned with best practices and on the cutting edge of our field.

OUR MISSION

It is the mission of the Chicago Park District to enhance the quality of life in Chicago by being the leading provider of recreation and leisure opportunities; provide safe, inviting and beautifully maintained parks

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and facilities; and create a customer-focused and responsive park system that prioritizes the needs of children and families.

OUR VALUES

CHILDREN FIRST

Our Most Important Customers are Children

We will work tirelessly to make the Park District the first choice of parents and children for the best in programs, events, camps, and daily leisure activities. We will target key segments of Chicago's youth population and develop opportunities that align with their preferences and priorities. We will develop new and exciting choices for classes and programs and make it easy to enroll in them. We will give every child a reason and an opportunity to play in the parks. This is an investment in Chicago's children today for the return of a lifetime.

KEY GOALS

- **Maximize program enrollment**
- **Enroll at least 30,000 children in summer camp**
- **Develop new programs for broad outreach to families and children**
- **Develop new offerings for teens**
- **Expand early childhood fitness programs**
- **Increase youth sports participation by 25 percent**
- **Increase culture and art opportunities for children and families**
- **Develop strategy to address areas of the City with low program enrollment**

BEST DEAL IN TOWN

We Prioritize Excellent and Affordable Recreation

To provide the best value in recreation, we work diligently to balance expenses with revenues. Thanks to prudent fiscal management over the last few years, we remain on solid financial ground. To maintain long-term stability, we will continue to find innovative and appropriate ways to bring in new revenue while making thoughtful investments and carefully managing costs. Our goal is to maintain the high quality of our programs and events while making them as affordable as possible.

KEY GOALS

- **Eliminate structural deficit within three years**
- **Develop strategy to increase non-tax revenue, focused on non-programmatic sources of funds**
- **Develop inventory controls to reduce unnecessary purchases and expenses**
- **Improve public benefit component of agreements with external entities**
- **Maximize use of under-utilized program space**

BUILT TO LAST

We Invest for Today and Tomorrow

We have inherited a world class park system that has served generations of Chicagoans. We are stewards of treasures that take the form of landscapes, buildings, sculptures, and parks. We must also maintain and expand our holdings to meet the current and future recreation needs of our customers. To balance these challenges, we strategically invest our limited capital resources

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and leverage partnerships and alternative sources of funds to do more with less. In doing so, we will honor our inheritance and build for the next generation.

KEY GOALS

- **Invest in capital projects that reduce operating expenses**
- **Evaluate long term performance of capital projects**
- **Develop and implement a new park maintenance evaluation program**
- **Implement program for LEED certification of existing buildings**
- **Implement new work order and capital project management system**
- **Improve in-house evaluation of land use and development transactions**
- **Have parks within a 10 minute walk of every Chicago resident**
- **Develop new park systems and assets that serve multiple communities**

EXTRA EFFORT

We Work Hard, Smart, and Together

We will do everything possible to make the Park District better tomorrow than it is today. We will implement new ideas and technologies that reduce costs and make program delivery more effective. We will invest in our employees and provide the training and tools they need to get the job done. We will open new lines of communication between our customers and each other. And we will work as a team as we build toward a new future together.

KEY GOALS

- **Expand network and internet connectivity to all staffed park locations**
- **Develop long-term plan for information technology**
- **Increase training opportunities for new and existing employees**
- **Increase professionalism, with emphasis on great customer service to the public and among internal departments**
- **Develop plan for marketing programs and events based on customer analytics**
- **Develop new teen marketing campaign**
- **Implement performance review sessions with executive team**
- **Implement new and more efficient ways to reach customers**
- **Engage community in strategic planning discussions using new technology and methods**

With our mission and values defined, we developed strategic goals to make our vision actionable. The goals themselves, in some cases difficult to measure, correlate to key metrics that serve as proxies by which to measure our success in meeting our strategic goals. While we may decide to refine exact metrics as we begin measuring over the next year, we commit to measuring ourselves and improving ourselves in the areas of prioritizing children and families, providing high quality and affordable recreation, making intelligent investments in our physical plant, and supporting innovation, communication, and teamwork.

The strategic plan contains forty eight goals break out into over two hundred and fifty performance measures we use to proactively and productively manage our performance.

A living document, the strategic plan is updated every two years.