Elevate Elmhurst Parks
2026 Strategic Work Plan
Mission, Vision, Values, Priorities, Goals, and Objectives

Mission	We enrich lives while having fun!
Vision	To be a national leader in providing memorable parks and recreation experiences to our community
Values	
Community Focused **Customer Service Excellence** **Integrity** **Fun** **Belonging**	At the end of the day, it's all about the community we serve. We will exceed customer expectations consistently and present the 'wow' moment. We will always do the right thing and we will do it the right way. We will inject fun and passion in what we do every day. We will foster a culture where all employees feel they are valued and belong.
Priorities and Goal Statements	**Objectives**
Invigorated Parks **Enhance park amenities and open spaces**	IP1: Invest in new park amenities
	IP2: Modernize current park amenities
	IP3: Expand open space
	IP4: Support park operations
Vibrant Facilities **Expand and upgrade facilities**	VF1: Add new indoor programming facilities/spaces
	VF2: Modernize current facilities/spaces for maintenance and programming
	VF3: Ensure staff workspaces meet evolving needs
Dynamic Offerings **Expand program and service experiences**	DO1: Integrate data-driven program/service analysis to guide program planning and execution
	DO2: Offer innovative programs and services that include a diverse array of audiences
Engaged Community **Increase opportunities for communication and collaboration**	EC1: Expand transparency through communication and feedback initiatives
	EC2: Implement strategies to foster a culture of belonging for community members
	EC3: Strengthen and grow partnerships
Stronger Finances **Grow Fiscal Capacity**	SF1: Prepare for future fiscal impacts and opportunities
	SF2: Secure alternate revenue to address community priorities
	SF3: Increase financial communications regarding outlook and capacity
	SF4: Implement operational improvements to increase effectiveness and maximize financial resources
Thriving Culture **Foster a culture where every employee feels valued**	TC1: Enhance employee development opportunities
	TC2: Improve employee communication between departments and staff levels
	TC3: Continue fostering a culture of belonging
	TC4: Enhance employee benefits, compensation, and recognition to remain competitive with market and ensure equity

2026 STRATEGIC WORK PLAN TACTICS (Revised and Approved by Park Board on August 10, 2026)

Year 3								
Priority	Objective	Tactic	Anticipated Start	Anticipated Completion	Cost Range	Lead	Staff Groups	Implementation Goal
IP	IP1	Complete Prairie Path restroom building design development and construction	January 2026	March 2027	$$$	Director of Referendum Project Construction	Facilities, Parks, Marketing and Communications, IT	Working with Dewberry, complete design development, permitting, bid process, and construction based on Park Board approval of year-round restroom building near the Prairie Path.
IP	IP1	Complete design development and begin construction of Wilder Park bandshell	January 2026	March 2027	$$$$$	Director of Referendum Project Construction	Wilder Park South Planning Task Force	Complete City of Elmhurst Planned Unit Development process, bid process, and permitting, and begin construction of Wilder Park bandshell.
IP	IP1	Convert a grass field to artificial turf at Berens Park	February 2026	December 2026	$$$$	Director of Referendum Project Construction	Parks, Recreation, Marketing and Communications	In conjunction with construction of new Wagner Community Center, start turf field construction, including excavation, grading, drainage, stormwater tie in, and utilities.
IP	IP1 & IP2	Complete design development for Wilder Park South Master Plan implementation and issue for bid	March 2026	October 2026	$$$	Director of Referendum Project Construction	Parks, Facilities and Project Task Force	Working with Upland Design and coordinating with Dewberry (as it relates to the bandshell), complete design development and permitting and issue construction documents for bid.
IP	IP2	Complete design development and construction documents for Wilder Park Recreation Building redevelopment	March 2026	December 2026	$$	Director of Referendum Project Construction	Facilities	Working with Dewberry, complete design development, apply for permit, and prepare to issue for bid in the second quarter 2027.
IP	IP1 & IP2	Begin Crestview Park Master Plan Phase 1 implementation, including replacing playground and constructing restroom building	January 2026	December 2026	$$$$$	Assistant Director/Director of Parks	Administration, Facilities, Recreation, Parks, Marketing and Communications	Contract with V3 to assist with construction documents and bid specifications and coordinate with restroom building plans and implement all improvements concurrently.
IP	IP2	Develop Jaycee Tot Lot Master Plan	March 2026	September 2026	$	Parks Planner	Administration, Facilities, Marketing and Communications, Parks	To develop a master plan prior to playground replacement in 2027, complete a topographic survey, plan development, public meetings to garner community input, and presentation of the draft master plan to the Park Board for review and approval.
IP	IP2	Replace Berens Park tennis courts	March 2026	July 2026	$$$$$	Assistant Director/Director of Parks	Special Use Facilities, Facilities, Parks, Marketing and Communications	Complete the removal and replacement of the existing tennis courts and amenities, including fences and lights.
IP	IP2	Redevelop Berens Park mini golf site	January 2026	July 2026	$$$	Division Manager - Facilities	Facilities, Parks, Marketing and Communications, Recreation	Replace existing mini golf course with fully upgraded, professionally designed facility (utilizing the Modular Advantage system) by completing demolition, site re-grading, and installation of new course features including turf, sidewalks, signage, and all necessary infrastructure.
IP	IP2	Execute Plunkett Park ball diamond and paving improvements	April 2026	November 2026	$$$$$	Assistant Director/Director of Parks	Facilities, Marketing and Communications, Parks	Complete the removal and replacement of existing ballfield pathways, backstops, and amenities including upgrading the fences and seating areas and adding a new shade system and backstop netting.
VF	VF1 & VF3	Construct new Wagner Community Center	January 2026	September 2027	$$$$$	Director of Referendum Project Construction	All Departments	Continue Wagner Community Center construction, which began in 2025, including procurement of steel and precast, foundations, underground mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP), exterior enclosures, interior construction, and parking lot drainage; construction will continue into 2027 to open the facility in Fall 2027.
VF	VF2	Complete American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) audit for Courts Plus	January 2026	May 2026	$	Director of Facilities	Facilities	Complete an ASHRAE audit through a comprehensive evaluation of building energy systems to help identify a broader range of Energy Conservation Measures (ECMs) and offer a preliminary financial analysis to support and justify implementation.
DO	DO1	Optimize program offerings and scheduling to improve fill rate across all programs	September 2025	December 2027	$	Director of Recreation & Director of Special Use Facilities	Recreation, Special Use Facilities	Increase overall average program fill rate from 62% (baseline) to 75% in 2026 through program consolidation, schedule adjustments, and targeted marketing.
DO	DO1	Assess program age segmentation and create action plan to drive future program planning	September 2025	June 2027	$	Director of Recreation & Director of Special Use Facilities	Recreation, Special Use Facilities	Develop a clear age-segmentation framework that correlates to the age segmentation of the City of Elmhurst and action plan to guide program planning.
DO	DO2	Begin offering programs at Canine Corner	March 2026	December 2026	$	Director of Recreation	Recreation, Marketing and Communications	Successfully launch and sustain new recreation programs and events at Canine Corner.

Priority	Objective	Tactic	Anticipated Start	Anticipated Completion	Cost Range	Lead	Staff Groups	Implementation Goal
DO	DO2	Explore options to expand maximum number of Rec Station registrants	September 2025	September 2026	$$	Director of Recreation	Recreation	Increase the maximum number of Rec Station program registrants by addressing space, staffing, and operational limitations within the 2026-27 school year.
DO	DO2	Expand wellness offerings for all ages	September 2025	December 2027	$	Director of Recreation & Director of Special Use Facilities	Recreation, Special Use Facilities, Marketing and Communications	Introduce and expand age-inclusive wellness offerings to increase participation in wellness programs by 20% by the end of 2026.
DO	DO2	Add new programs or special events that promote adult recreation and involvement	September 2025	December 2027	$	Director of Recreation & Director of Special Use Facilities	Recreation, Special Use Facilities, Marketing and Communications	Increase adult recreation participation by 15% by the end of 2026 through new programs and special events.
EC	EC1	Communicate referendum implementation progress and engage with community about projects	January 2025	December 2027	#	Director of Marketing and Communications	Community Engagement and Communications Task Force	Provide monthly communications to internal and external audiences regarding referendum implementation progress, including project updates, construction milestones, and community engagement opportunities along with targeted outreach to neighbors impacted by construction activities (e.g., advance notice of potential construction and traffic impacts), while celebrating key achievements such as ribbon cuttings and project completions.
EC	EC3	Begin review of existing partnership agreements	April 2026	December 2026	#	Executive Director	Administration, Management Team	Establish criteria for prioritizing and scheduling the review of District partnership agreements and begin reviewing high priority partnership agreements with the appropriate partners, including terms and conditions, roles and responsibilities, dispute resolution procedures, etc.
EC	EC3	Identify and seek new partners	July 2026	December 2026	#	Director of Marketing and Communications	Administration, Marketing and Communications, Strategy and Planning	Collaborate with staff to identify potential new partners, conduct outreach, and secure partnerships that support the District's mission and advance strategic priorities.
SF	SF1	Develop operating plan and budget to successfully operate the new Wagner Community Center	October 2025	July 2026	#	Assistant Director/Director of Parks	Management Team and other departmental staff	Create a comprehensive operating and financial plan for the new Wagner Community Center focused on programing, administration, and maintenance.
SF	SF1	Develop operating plan and budget to successfully operate the Wilder Park bandshell	July 2026	December 2026	#	Director of Marketing and Communications & Director of Recreation	Marketing and Communications, Recreation	Create operating plan and budget that support the successful operation and programming of the Wilder Park bandshell.
SF	SF1	Begin updating cost recovery model	April 2026	December 2026	#	Director of Finance	Finance, Recreation, Special Use Facilities	Form a staff team to compile data to review current cost recovery levels, program and service categories, and category definitions and determine cost recovery levels for each category to finalize new model.
SF	SF1 & SF2	Complete evaluation of long-term bonding capability to leverage debt capacity for funding capital projects	January 2026	June 2026	#	Director of Finance	Administration, Finance, Strategy and Planning	Work with bond advisor to determine how best to leverage long-term debt capacity to fund annual asset management and large-scale projects following retirement of the 2014A G.O. Limited Tax Park Refunding Bond (approximately $500,000 per year).
SF	SF2	Seek alternate revenue to offset Elevate Elmhurst Parks capital project costs	January 2026	December 2026	#	Executive Director	Marketing and Communications, Facilities, Parks, Finance, Administration	To address Elevate capital project priorities, investigate and secure alternate sources of revenue such as grants (e.g., State of Illinois), donations (e.g., individuals, community partners), sponsorships, etc.
SF	SF4	Convert 50% of toggle light switches to automatic light switches	January 2026	June 2026	$	Director of Facilities	Facilities	Switch from toggle light switches to automatic light switches to help enforce energy-saving habits, reduce energy waste, and minimize unnecessary electricity use.
SF	SF4	Update lighting at Eldridge and Wilder Parks and Prairie Path to LED	April 2026	December 2026	$	Director of Facilities	Facilities	Transition to LED lighting to lower energy consumption, resulting in reduced electricity bills and overhead costs, as LED lights are significantly more energy-efficient and have a much longer lifespan than traditional bulbs.
TC	TC1	Offer trainings to assist employees with addressing training plans	March 2026	December 2026	#	Director of Human Resources & Risk	Human Resources	Begin developing targeted training sessions to support employees in executing their individual training plans.
TC	TC2	Host quarterly virtual "Ask HR" sessions for both supervisory and non-supervisory staff	January 2026	December 2026	#	Director of Human Resources & Risk	Human Resources	Establish and host quarterly virtual 'Ask HR' sessions for both supervisory and non-supervisory staff, with the goal of addressing employee questions and providing timely HR-related support.

TC	TC3 & TC4	Provide training and resources on the District's Values to further a Values-based culture	January 2026	June 2026	$	Director of Strategy & Planning	Strategy and Planning, Human Resources, Marketing and Communications	Create and implement training and resources (e.g., video, handouts, training presentations/tools) for all employees based on the Values behaviors reviewed and drafted by the Values Recognition Program Task Force based on employee feedback.

COST RANGE SYMBOL KEY					
$	$1-$25,000	**$$$**	$100,001-$500,000	**$$$$$**	>$1,000,000
$$	$25,001-$100,000	**$$$$**	$500,001-$1,000,000	**#**	Indirect Cost Expenses Only

Performance Measurement

Performance measurement provides data to complement decision-making, improve performance, communicate progress, and provide accountability. To address the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) best practice of using performance metrics as a link to budget and planning processes, the purpose of the District's performance metrics has been to support strategic planning and goal setting, improve/enhance service delivery and customer service, evaluate effectiveness of operations, strengthen accountability, communicate results of programs/services, and provide information for effective decision-making. When metrics are aligned with organizational priorities, the Board and staff can use the data to make improvements, validate current practices, evaluate operations, and assist with determining budget priorities that reflect long-range plans.

To monitor implementation of the EEP Plan, staff track performance metrics in the Year-end EEP Progress Report, including EEP Plan needs assessment metrics and other measures that link to monitoring long-range strategy. Staff determined targets for performance metrics to provide a snapshot of how actual performance compares to the target goal. By tracking achievement of targets, staff can assess the effectiveness of current District strategy and adjust work plans and the allocation of resources to ensure successful EEP implementation.

Performance Metric		Performance Target
Invigorated Parks	Total Quantity of Park Amenities	304 amenities
	Total of Park Amenities Modernized	60 amenities
	Total New Acreage Addressing Planning Area Deficiencies	461 total acreage goal (3 new acres needed)
	Total Natural Area Acreage	26 acres
	Percent of Equipment and Vehicles Within Useful Life	85%
Vibrant Facilities	Total Square Footage by Facility Type	Recreation – 268,805 square feet Maintenance/Support – 65,092 square feet Administration – 38,038 square feet
	Facilities Average Age	To be determined
	Percent of Office Space Square Footage Modernized	To be determined
Dynamic Offerings	Program Success Rate by Core Program Area	85%
	Program Life Cycle Distribution	Introduction/Growth – 55% or above / Mature – 45% or above / Decline – 5% or below
	Total Unique Registrants	10,000
	Percent of Program and Pass Registrants by Age Group	Range from 19% to 70%
	Percent of Adult & Youth Population Represented in Program Menu	60% Adult / 40% Youth
	Percent of Unique Resident Households that Completed a Transaction	50%
	Percent of Program Sessions with a Waitlist	15% or below
Engaged Community	Belonging Rating	To be determined
	Partner Satisfaction Rate	To be determined
Stronger Finances	Percent of Non-tax Revenue	55.0% or above
	Met Fund Reserve Targets – Tier 1	Met Board Reserve Policy Targets
	Met Fund Reserve Targets – Tier 2	Met Budget Target
	Debt Service Ratio	20% or below
	Program Revenue Per Unique Registrant	$650
	Cost Recovery Goals	To be determined
Thriving Culture	Employee Net Promoter Score®	60%
	Employee Wellbeing Indicator for Belonging	90%
	Employee Wellbeing Indicator for Recognition and Praise	90%

Staff also track performance measures for monitoring progress toward accomplishing the mission and work plans for each District department/function and to assist with shaping budget goals and projections. Some of these measures are reported in the Expenditures by Function section of this document.