

Oak Lawn Park District Comprehensive Plan

History of the Park District

STATUTORY AUTHORITY OF THE OAK LAWN PARK DISTRICT

Park Districts are a form of municipal government almost unique of Illinois. In other states, parks, other than state parks, are usually maintained and operated by the city. While under the laws of Illinois, cities and villages are authorized to maintain parks and levy a tax, therefore, the greater number of municipal parks are maintained and operated by park districts. There are several reasons for this. First, under the Illinois constitution, the bonding power of all municipal corporations is limited and as a practical matter because of other bonds, which most cities have, outstanding, bonds cannot be issued for the acquisition and improvement of parks. Second, a park district does not have to be continuous with a city or village and additional territory outside of the city or village may be included in the park district, which permits both better community service and increases the revenue which may be raised by taxation. Third, by making the park board completely independent of the city, it is not involved in village politics.

A park district is a municipal corporation, created for the purpose of acquiring, and maintaining parks, and is separate and distinct from the city, county, or any other body politic. It is an agency through which in part the people of the State carry on government. It is not purely local in function for the Courts have held that the park property is held in trust for the use of the people of the state at large and not for the exclusive use of the people of the district. (Quinn V. Irving Park District, 207 Ill App. 449)

A park district is purely a creation of the legislature, and has no inherent powers, but only such powers as have been granted it by the legislature, or as are necessarily implied to give effect to the powers specifically granted.

The Oak Lawn Park District was organized December 1944 under the 'Submerged Land Act.' This act, which was passed in 1895 by the legislature, had the full file of "An Act to provide for the organization of park district and the transfer of submerged lands to those bordering on navigable bodies of water." Park districts formed under this act were known as Submerged Land Park Districts.

In 1947, the legislature enacted "The General Park District Code." This was the first step in codifying the laws pertaining to park districts of less than 500,000 and it incorporated all of the basic laws of the three different types of park districts, which existed. The 1895 act under which the Oak Lawn Park District was organized was repealed and our park district became a "General Park District."

**MUNICIPAL CODE OF THE
OAK LAWN PARK DISTRICT
1990
OAK LAWN, COUNTY OF COOK
STATE OF ILLINOIS**

AN ORDINANCE

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the Oak Lawn Park District:

That the Code of general ordinances originally passed by the Board of Commissioners of the Oak Lawn Park District on August 9, 1955, February 14, 1972, and April 4, 1981, and known as the "Municipal Code of the Oak Lawn Park District, 1955" and all amendments or additions thereto, be and the same are hereby repealed, subject to the saving clause.

That following ordinance be and the same hereby is adopted to provide for the conduct of the business of, and to regulate the use of the park system of, the Oak Lawn Park District; this ordinance to be known and cited as the -Municipal Code of Oak Lawn Park District, 1990."

All ordinances or parts thereof in conflict or inconsistent with any of the provisions of this ordinance are hereby repealed, subject to the saving clause set forth herein. This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

HISTORY OF OAK LAWN PARK DISTRICT

A petition and referendum to form the Oak Lawn Park District was an outgrowth of a project sponsored by the Cook Avenue PTA led by Lucille Gaddis.

On September 26, 1944 a petition was filed in County Court, Cook County, Illinois to organize the Oak Lawn Park District. Petition #108623 was filed in accordance with an act to provide for the Organization of a Park District, and the transfer of submerged lands to those bordering on navigable bodies of water" (approved June 24, 1895, L1895, p. 272).

An election was held on November 28, 1944 with 144 votes cast for the formation of a park district and 53 votes opposing it. Roland j. Beckley, Lucille C. Gaddis, Harvey Bergeson, Albert Vex Schave and John C. Utz were elected as the first Oak Lawn Park District Commissioners. The results of the election were filed with the County Court, Cook County, Illinois on December 8, 1944. An order was filed October 1, 1945 declaring the park district as officially organized retroactive to December 8, 1944. At the first meeting John Utz was elected President, and Albert Vex Schave, Vice President with the other commissioners, Roland Beckley, Lucille Gaddis and Harvey Bergeson in attendance. Meetings were held in the Village Hall until a park building could be erected, Lake Shore Park being the only park in the district's possession at the time.

The Oak Lawn Park District was supported by the Oak Lawn Community Chest and by solicited funds; with the Oak Lawn Lions contributed \$987.00 by June 6, 1945.

The Oak Lawn Park District is a separate taxing government body, composed of facilities and owned and leased parks. The Oak Lawn Park District and the Village have the same boundaries, except for a small subdivision located at 115th and Central Avenue which is part of the Worth Park District. The Oak Lawn Park District also owns and maintains the Oak Lawn Prairie, formerly known as the Chicago Ridge Prairie, which is a 12.83-acre nature preserve located at 105th & Menard Avenue. A portion of the Stony Creek Golf course is also located in Chicago Ridge but is owned and operated by the Oak Lawn Park District.

The Oak Lawn Park District is administered by a Board of five commissioners, each serving a six-year term without pay. The Board of Commissioners selects their President and Vice President yearly. It also appoints the positions of Treasurer, Secretary, Attorney and Executive Director to assist the Board in their functions. The Board of Commissioners is directly responsible to the General Assembly of Illinois and to the citizens of their District.

OAK LAWN PARK DISTRICT: 2020 AGENCY INFORMATION

Organized:	1944
Governing Body:	Board of Park Commissioners, Five elected officials
Assessed Valuation:	\$1,202,809,508
Location:	The Village of Oak Lawn is located 25 minutes southwest of Chicago
Population:	58,362
Parks:	23, largest = 45.7 acres, smallest = .3 acres Total acreage = 290.6
Facilities:	Indoor Ice Arena Community Pavilion sports center 4 indoor basketball courts 8 volleyball courts Racquet & Gymnastics Center Golf Course Clubhouse 1 18-hole Golf Course 1 mini-golf 1 driving range Oak View Center & Theatre Administrative Center David Johnston Center Menard Activity Center Dream Center Little White Schoolhouse Maintenance Business Office and Garage 2 Aquatic Facilities 9 splash pads 1 Dog Park
Employees:	50 Full-Time, 566 Part-Time/Seasonal

Recreation Services Division

Childcare Services: Oak View Preschool, Play School, Prep School, Preschool Sports and Games, Rug Rats Sports, Mini Sports Camp, Sports Camp, Day Camp, Extended Camp

Cultural Arts: Creative Drama, Dramatics, Broadway Jr Theater, Dance Camp, Ballet, Jazz, Tap, Ballroom, Hip Hop, Salsa, Pre-Teen/Teen Broadway Dance Troupe for Adults, Private Voice Lessons, Piano Lessons, Group Piano Lessons

Children's Programming: Early Childhood/Youth Instructional Classes, Camps, Counselor in Training, Birthday Parties, Children's Special Events, Youth Instructional and Athletic Leagues (Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Baseball), Martial Arts, Summer Camps

Athletics: Leagues, Tournaments, Sports Camps, Fitness, Informal Gyms, Instructional Classes, and Athletic Permits

Teen Programming: Ski Trips, Co-Ed Sand Volleyball

Adult/Senior Adult Programming: Dance Classes, Special/Events, Trips, Extended Travel, Adult/Senior Instructional Classes, Adult/Senior Exercise Classes, Informational Seminars

Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education: Special Interest Classes, Workshops and Trips

Special Events: Holiday/Seasonal Events, 4th of July Celebration, Halloween "Howl-O-Ween at Wolfe", Monarch Fest, Concerts on the Village Green, Movies on the Village Green, Easter Egg Hunt, Adult Easter Egg Hunt, Breakfast with Santa Claus, Candy Cane Flashlight Hunt and Volleyball for Charity

Development: Fundraising, Donations, Tree and Bench Donations, Grants

Community Centers: Permits, Registrations, Building Rentals, and Picnic

Marketing Division

Public Relations / Marketing: Promotion of the District's positive public image, Marketing strategies, Digital Brochure Creation, Corporate Sponsorships

Computer Services / Technology: Maintenance of Electronic Infrastructure and Computer Related Hardware and Software, Internet Connectivity, Telephone Services, Web Site Maintenance,

Enterprise Facilities Division

Skating Operations: Contracted Rentals, Maintenance Service, Rink Surfaces, Building Rentals, Public Skating, Concession Services, Instructional Classes (Figure Skating, Hockey, Golf) and Special Programs

Swimming Pool Operations: Staffing, Maintenance, Scheduling, Rules and Regulations, Rentals, Swimming Lessons, Health Department Regulations, Supplies and Equipment, Concession Services

Athletics: Gymnastics, Tennis Leagues, Tennis Instruction, Tournaments, Tennis Sports Camps, Fitness, Informal Gyms, Instructional Classes, Birthday Parties, Field Trips, Batting Cage, Hitting and Pitching Instruction, Baseball Camps, Indoor Pickleball, and Athletic Permits

Golf Course Operations: Golf Rounds, Public Golf Leagues, Minigolf, Driving Range, Golf Simulators, Indoor Golf Leagues, Maintenance Service and Concessions

Banquet Operations: Food Service, Catering, Special Events, Rentals

Park Services Division

Park and Recreation Areas: Site and Equipment Upkeep, Ball fields, Turf Maintenance, Construction, Motorized Equipment, Tennis and Basketball Courts.

Landscape Services: Trees and Shrubs, Park Development, Adopt-A-Flower Bed Program

Buildings and Facilities: Recreation Centers, Restroom Shelters, Swimming Pool Maintenance, Splash Pad Maintenance, Parking Lots, Signs

Business Services Division

Human Resources: Insurance Coverage, Retirement Benefits, Workman's Compensation

Accounting Services: Budgeting Procedures, Auditing Procedures, Bonding Procedures, Balance Sheets, General Ledger, Monthly Financial Statements.

Computer Services / Technology: Maintenance of Electronic Infrastructure and Computer Related Hardware and Software, Internet Connectivity, Telephone Services, Web Site Maintenance and video surveillance.

Office Procedures: Records, Systems, Inventory Control, Registration and Deposits

Accounts Payable and Receivable

Affiliate Organizations: Oak Lawn Baseball, Westside Baseball, Oak Lawn Outlaws

Intergovernmental Agreements: West Side Baseball, Oak Lawn Baseball, Village of Hometown, Village of Oak Lawn, Ridgeland School District 122, Oak Lawn-Hometown School District 123

OAK LAWN TAX BASE

The Village of Oak Lawn derives most of its income to provide services to its residents (police, fire, emergency and infrastructure construction and maintenance) from taxes. The three most identifiable are property taxes; commercial and residential, sales taxes from retail sales within the Village and income taxes.

SALE TAXES

Oak Lawn has a large amount of retail space primarily located in commercial, strip and corridor retail malls and centers. The strength of Oak Lawn’s retail market is reflected in the amount of local retail sales tax collected.

The Illinois Department of Revenue reports that local sales tax returned to the Village of Oak Lawn in 2021 totaled over 21.8 million dollars.

The Illinois Department of Revenue figures released for 2021 give the following breakdown:

Automotive and Filling Stations	32%
Drugs and Misc. Retail	18%
Food	13%
General Merchandise	8%
Restaurant and Taverns	16%
Lumber, Building & Hardware	5%
Manufactures	1%
Agriculture and all Other	4%
Apparel	1%
Furniture & H.H. & Radio	2%

PROPERTY TAXES

Cook County assesses property as a percentage of market value. Residential property is assessed at the lowest rate.

Property Type	Percentage of Market Value
Residential	72%
Commercial	26%
Industrial	1%
Railroad	1%

Real estate taxes paid by Oak Lawn residents and businesses go to several taxing bodies. Below is the approximately percentage distributed to the governmental bodies.

Property Tax Distribution	Approximate Percentage of Bill
School Districts	74.2%
Village of Oak Lawn	9.6%
Oak Lawn Park District	4.4%
Oak Lawn Library	3.7%
Metropolitan Water Reclamation District	3.0%
County and Other	5.2%

REPLACEMENT TAXES

Replacement taxes are levied on some corporations and partnerships by the state. On average the park district receives \$150,000 annually.

Statements of Purpose

Statement of Purpose Finance Department

The Finance Department is comprised of accounting and IT services. The department is responsible for all financial records and transactions for the park district, including general ledgers, payroll, accounts payable, investments and fixed assets. Additionally, the department co-ordinates and prepares the annual budget, annual audit and related annual comprehensive financial report (ACFR). The Oak Lawn Park District has received the “Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting” for 19 consecutive years for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2021. The certificate is awarded by the Government Finance Officers Association to governmental units whose comprehensive annual financial reports (CAFRs) achieve the highest standards in government accounting and financial reporting. IT services are responsible for Maintenance of Electronic Infrastructure and Computer Related Hardware and Software, Internet Connectivity, Telephone Services, Web Site Maintenance, and video surveillance. This department consists of five full-time and 2 part-time employees.

Statement of Purpose Human Resources & Safety Department

Human Resources provides services and assistance to all park district employees, including managerial staff. Benefit administration, payroll, employee relations, unemployment, and post-employment requirements are part of the services provided. The department consists of two full-time employees. This position is the Safety Coordinator for the District and is responsible for all PDRMA programs and general safety training and recording for the district.

Statement of Purpose Enterprise Facilities

The Enterprise Facilities department operates 3 enterprise funds: Stony Creek Golf Course, Racquet, Fitness and Gymnastics Center and Ice Rink. These facilities are set up to operate independent from property tax revenue. The main sources of revenue generation are user fees, rentals, and special events. As self-sustaining operations, they are required to cover all expenses including capital outlays. These facilities are operated by 13 full time employees and anywhere from 125 to 175 part time employees, and 60 volunteers depending on the season.

Statement of Purpose Recreation Department

The Recreation Department provides quality recreational and leisure opportunities that meet the emotional, physical, cognitive, and social desires for all patrons of the Oak Lawn Park District. This department also provides volunteer opportunities and encourages community service. The Recreation Department operates 5 facilities, 2 pools, and offers a variety of classes, programs and activities to all age groups and abilities. There are 14 full time and approximately 107-244 part time employees in the Recreation Department depending on the season.

Statement of Purpose Golf Facility

The Stony Creek Golf and Banquet Facility consists of three departments: Golf, Food and Beverage and Golf Maintenance.

The purpose of the Golf Department is to provide exceptional service with a “Can do” attitude. As team players, our staff promotes not only the golf course facility but also the entire Oak Lawn Park District. The purpose of the Food & Beverage Department is to provide exceptional customer service to our patrons while controlling costs and promoting the park district.

The purpose of the Golf Maintenance Department is to maintain superior course conditions, organization and cleanliness of the clubhouse, maintenance area, driving range and all golf course common areas.

Statement of Purpose Parks Department

The Parks and Maintenance Department is dedicated to providing safe, clean, accessible parks, facilities and open space for our patrons. It is the intent of the department to design for each park its own unique identity utilizing innovative play structures and landscaping. Through initiative and dedication, the division is committed to ensuring a balance between the stewardship of natural resources and recreation while providing professional planning and design expertise to enhance the quality of life in Oak Lawn. The department has 15 full-time and 20 seasonal employees that maintain 24 parks and green spaces comprising 291 acres.

Statement of Purpose Public Relations and Marketing Department

The Public Relations and Marketing Department is, responsible for the digital brochure, marketing materials, public relations, social media, branding, and marketing. They also work on special projects, community relations, outreach, and partnerships. They work to define, adjust and present the public perception of the park district, and strive to keep all departments and facilities focused on the unified mission defined in our strategic plan. This department is comprised of two full-time employees.