

EFFICIENCY REPORT

FOR THE
YORK CENTER PARK DISTRICT



APPROVED BY THE PARK DISTRICT'S
COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ON
February 20, 2024

I. Purpose

The York Center Park District (“Park District”) formed its Committee on Local Government Efficiency on May 16, 2023 to study efficiencies, report recommendations regarding those efficiencies and increased accountability pursuant to 50 ILCS 70/1, *et seq.* (the “Committee”).

II. Committee Membership

The Committee consisted of the following individuals:

- Theresann Purkart, President, Committee Chair
- Ann DeGroot, Treasurer
- Julie May, Vice President
- Linda Polacek, Secretary
- Robert Fritz, Commissioner
- Jeremy Fila, Executive Director
- Melyssa Otake Greenacre, Superintendent of Operations & Planning
- Margaret Crotty, Resident
- Joan Stout, Resident
- Alice Truty, Resident

III. Committee Meetings

The Committee met as follows:

<u>Meeting Date</u>	<u>Meeting Time, and Place</u>
May 16, 2023	4:45 pm, York Center Park District
September 19, 2023	4:45 pm, York Center Park District
January 16, 2024	4:45 pm, York Center Park District
February 20, 2024	4:45 pm, York Center Park District

Minutes of these meetings are available on the Park District’s website or upon request at the Park District’s administrative office.

IV. General Overview of Governing Statutes, Ordinances, Rules, Procedures, Powers, Jurisdiction

The Park District was established by a referendum initiated and approved by the voters of the Park District in 1971. All Illinois park districts, including York Center Park District, are governed by the Park District Code, 70 ILCS 1205/1 *et seq.*

The York Center Park District’s mission, core values, and strategic goals identify focused efforts on fiscal responsibility in an environmentally sustainable manner in partnership with the community and other community service providers, avoiding duplication of efforts. Having a separate and distinct taxing body for parks, recreation, and conservation within the local community, which operates apart from general-purpose governments, is exceptionally beneficial to the community for many reasons, as detailed further in this report.

- Elected, non-partisan, non-compensated board. A board of five commissioners governs the Park District. Commissioners must reside within the boundaries of the park district and are

elected at the Consolidated Election in odd-numbered years. Pursuant to state law, commissioners are non-partisan and serve without compensation.

- Accessible and focused representation. Having a dedicated board to oversee these essential facilities, programs, and services provides the community with increased access to their elected representatives. It allows those elected representatives to remain focused solely on those facilities, programs, and services. This is contrasted with general-purpose governments where elected representatives are responsible for broad oversight on a wide range of issues. This special purpose benefit is particularly advantageous regarding budget and finance oversight.
- Increased transparency. Having a dedicated local government unit to provide park and recreation services improves the relationship between the park district and its residents because of the transparency, as well as openness related to the board and park district operations. Having detailed agendas and action items allows taxpayers to be better informed about the inner workings of their local government. When individual government units are responsible for providing specified services like park districts, transparency is increased because action items and budget procedures are more detailed. Additionally, these items and budgetary decisions are subject to more scrutiny by locally elected officials than is the case with larger, multi-purpose governments with a multitude of departments.
- Protection of revenues. Because the Park District is a separate unit of local government, the revenues it generates can only be used for park district purposes. This assurance is contrasted with general-purpose governments like cities, villages, and counties that provide a multitude of services such as fire, police, public works, economic development, etc., where revenues that are generated specifically for parks and recreation can be expended on these other services with limited, if any, input from voters.
- Protection of assets. Public parks and other real property owned by the park district is held in trust for the residents of the park district, and subject to very limited exceptions, can only be sold or transferred if residents approve of the sale or transfer by a referendum. This is contrasted with general-purpose units of government, which have the authority to sell or dispose of property by a vote of the governing board.
- Provides the community more with less. The Park District does more with much fewer funding options. Unlike other units of local government that receive direct state funding, and income, sales, use, hotel/motel, motor fuel, and other numerous taxes, the Park District's only tax revenues come from a modest portion of a resident's overall property tax bill. In fact, despite its limited funding options, the Park District's share is only 5.6% of the local tax bill. Additionally, only 72% of the revenue earned by the Park District is generated through property taxes. The remaining 28% is generated charges for services, interest income, and other revenue sources.

As part of good governance and implementing best practices in the management of day-to-day operations, the Park District has also adopted the following ordinances, rules, policies, and procedures:

- Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual
- Board Policies and Procedures Manual
- General Use Regulations
- Safety Manual

V. List of Shared Services and Partnerships

The Park District works diligently to provide the best possible programs, services, and facilities for our community at the least possible cost. One of the many ways the Park District achieves this goal is by partnering with neighboring park districts, school districts, other local government units within or near the community, the State, non-profit organizations, and for-profit corporations. Below is a comprehensive list of the current partnerships, agreements, and other relationships that assist the Park District's mission of delivering the best possible services at the least possible cost to our community.

1. Membership in SRA

The Park District is part of the Gateway Special Recreation Association ("SRA"). Special recreation associations are a form of intergovernmental cooperation among units of local government that are authorized under the Illinois Constitution, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, the Park District Code, and the Municipal Code.

Their formation is rooted in a fundamental belief and recognition that "Recreation is for Everyone." They are shining examples of local government efficiency.

By partnering together, local communities can effectively and efficiently deliver more successful program opportunities to community members who have special needs. Furthermore, by participating in the SRA, the Park District networks with eight other local governments to provide many more program opportunities for our community members who have special needs and offers a choice between participating in the SRA's programs or in programs that are provided by the Park District. The following park districts are part of the Gateway SRA with York Center Park District:

- Burr Ridge Park District
- Elmhurst Park District
- Oak Brook Park District
- Pleasant Dale Park District
- Westchester Park District
- The City of Countryside
- Village of Hinsdale
- Village of Willowbrook

The Park District and the SRA also achieve efficiency by utilizing existing facilities that are owned and operated by the SRA's members. Utilizing these existing facilities allows the SRA to deliver services to its member communities at a lower cost.

In 2022 - 2023, the SRA successfully served 220 participants across 469 inclusive programs that were provided in collaboration with the members of the SRA.

The Park District is very proud of the ongoing collaboration with the SRA. By working cooperatively with other local governments, not only are we better able to collectively serve all citizens within our communities, including persons with disabilities, but we can do so as efficiently and effectively as possible.

2. Other intergovernmental agreements with other park districts, forest preserve districts, conservation districts, or municipal recreation agencies

- York Township - Knolls Park 50-year use agreement
- Villa Park Park District Intergovernmental Basketball Program

3. Intergovernmental agreements with the State of Illinois

- State of Illinois Joint Purchasing Program
- Sourcewell – Cooperative Purchasing Agreement
- The Interlocal Purchasing System – TIPS Agreement

4. Grants

- In 2005, the Park District received an Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Grant for Knolls Community Park in the amount of \$602,500.
- In 2006, the Park District received an Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Grant for Knolls Community Park in the amount of \$394,700.
- In 2024, the Park District received an Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) Grant for Knolls Community Park in the amount of \$304,200.

5. Partnerships or agreements with athletic or similar affiliate organizations that operate sports or other leagues

- Firebirds SC
- Trinity Lutheran

6. Partnerships or other interrelationships with non-profits

- Conservation Foundation
- ComEd Green Region Foundation

7. Partnerships with for-profit organizations

- GoldFish Swim School Glen Ellyn
- Knollcrest Funeral Home Sponsorship Agreement
- Ultimate Ninjas Elmhurst

VI. Other Examples of Efficient Operations

Use of Volunteers. One way in which the Park District reduces the burden on taxpayers is through the use of volunteers. Last year, many residents and community members volunteered several hours of service to the Park District.

Youth employment. The Park District is a major employer of youth in the community. Last year, the Park District employed 44 youths. Not only is this an efficient way to deliver services, but youth employment is a valuable training tool for the future workforce.

Collaboration with other park districts on best practices. As park districts are not in competition with one another, they are more willing than the private sector to share best practices. These best practices help to avoid unnecessary costs, as well as deliver services more effectively and efficiently.

Reliance on Non-Tax Revenue. Unlike most local governments, which rely on a wide range of sales, use, and income taxes, the York Center Park District is not permitted to assess these types of taxes. Additionally, the York Center Park District works as an economic engine for the

local community, generating revenue for the state and as well as our community in the form of hotel/motel, sales, and motor fuel taxes. Our Park District does not receive any of these revenues. Also, unlike Illinois cities, villages, counties, or school districts that received billions of dollars in direct financial assistance from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the York Center Park District did not receive any such direct federal aid. Our Park District does not receive state funding under the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) or General State Aid (GSA) that these same cities, villages, counties, and school districts receive through the State budget.

Instead, the York Center Park District provides all of the programs, facilities, and services to the community with a very modest amount of property taxes and from non-tax sources such as program registrations, grants, and more.

VII. Transparency to the Community

The following information about the Park District may be obtained by citizens in the location listed.

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location(s) Available</u>
Annual Tax Levy	Website, Administrative Office
Annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance	Website, Administrative Office
Board Meeting Agendas and Minutes	Website, Administrative Office
Annual Audit	Website, Administrative Office

The Park District offers residents many opportunities to provide feedback. These include:

- The board of commissioners meets once each month. Residents may provide public comment at every meeting.
- The Park District's annual Budget and Appropriation Ordinance is available in a tentative form at least 30 days prior to its adoption at an open meeting of the Park District board. Additionally, at least one public hearing is held prior to final action, and notice of the hearing is published in the newspaper at least one week prior to the hearing.
- The Park District's annual property tax levy is approved at an open meeting of the Park District board in accordance with the Open Meetings Act. The Park District follows all public notice and hearing requirements under the Truth in Taxation Law prior to the adoption of this annual tax levy. The Park District's annual levy is also subject to the limitations of the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law.

Residents may contact or request information from the Park District by phone at 630-629-0886 or email at jeremy@yorkcenterparks.org.

Additionally, the Park District has solicited community input through the following:

- Resident Surveys
- Program Surveys
- OSLAD Public Meeting

VIII. Benefits and Services

The Park District serves the entire community, from the youngest child to the oldest adult through various ways.

1. Parks

The Park District offered the following parks to the community last year:

LOCATION/PARK TYPE	SIZE (ACRES)	SHELTER/GAZEBO	PLAYGROUND	BASEBALL FIELD	TENNIS COURT	BASKETBALL COURT	ICE SKATING AREA	TRAIL/PATH (mi.)	FISHING AREA	GYMNASIUM	LAKE/POND	PARKING LOT	RESTROOM	SLEDDING	VOLLEYBALL COURT	BARBECUE GRILLS	OPEN FIELD/PLAY AREA	FITNESS AREA/TRAIL	ROOM RENTALS	BOCCE BALL
COMMUNITY PARKS																				
Knolls Community Park	6.5	1			1			0.32				1						1		1
Knolls Park	11.13	1	1					0.55	1		1	1		1	1	2	1			
Lake Yelenich Park	5.9	1	1			1	1		1	1	1	1	4						3	
Villa Roosevelt Park	3.5	1	1	2								1				2	1			
COMMUNITY PARK TOTAL:	27.03	4	3	2	1	1	1	0.87	2	1	2	4	4	1	1	4	2	1	3	1
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS																				
Co-Op Park	2.5															2	1			
Grammecy Park	0.66		1																	
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK TOTAL:	3.16	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0
TOTAL:	30.19	4	4	2	1	1	1	0.87	2	1	2	4	4	1	1	6	3	1	3	1

2. Facilities

The Park District offered the following facilities to the community last year:

Recreation Center

- 7,150 square feet facility
- Administration office
- Boardroom/Museum
- One preschool and additional multi-purpose room
- One gymnasium
- Registration and Customer Service area

3. Programs

The Park District offered over 80 programs with 7,768 registrations in 2022.

4. Additional Services

The Park District provided the following service to the community:

- Using the Park District as a voting center

5. Other Benefits

The York Center Park District is a multi-purpose district, allowing a multi-faceted and far-reaching impact on the community. For example, the Park District's parks, recreational programming, and other opportunities improve the community's overall physical and mental health and wellness, thereby reducing healthcare costs. Before, after school and summer programs offer safe, convenient, and affordable childcare options for working families during critical times when school is not in session. These opportunities also assist in the reduction of juvenile crime. The York Center Park District's open green space helps improve air quality, improve water quality, mitigate flooding and provide the local community with a naturally scenic area to recreationally enjoy.

IX. Recommendations for Increased Accountability and Efficiency

1. The York Center Park District should create new Intergovernmental Agreements with Park Districts in the area to broaden our program options and offer a wide variety of educational opportunities for the community.
2. The York Center Park District should work in creating an Intergovernmental Agreement – Joint Use of Manpower, Equipment, and Easements with the York Township. This would be beneficial for both sides as a way to lower costs for each agency by sharing staff, equipment, and resources.
3. The York Center Park District should continue to improve community relations through additional surveys, focus groups, increased volunteer opportunities and creating a foundation.
4. The York Center Park District should work towards creating Intergovernmental Agreements with local school districts, such as District 44 and District 45.

X. Final Report Certification

The signature of the Committee Chairperson and date indicates the Decennial Committee on Local Government Efficiency's final review and approval of this Efficiency Report for the York Center Park District.

Dated:

Signed:

Name:
