



PEORIA PARK DISTRICT

Strategic Plan

2024 REVIEW



As we reflect on 2024, the Peoria Park District remains steadfast in our mission to build a healthier, more connected community through parks and recreation. This year, our Strategic Plan has guided our efforts to expand access, enhance sustainability, and strengthen the impact of our programs and facilities.

Through thoughtful planning and community-driven decision-making, we have made significant strides—improving infrastructure, fostering new partnerships, and increasing opportunities for residents of all ages to engage with our parks and programs. Our commitment to equity remains at the forefront, ensuring that every person in Peoria has access to high-quality recreation and natural spaces.

While we celebrate our progress, we also recognize the work ahead. The challenges we face—economic, environmental, and social—reinforce the importance of strategic investment and responsible stewardship. As we look toward the future, we remain dedicated to fulfilling our mission: to contribute to a healthy, vibrant community by responsibly stewarding our natural and recreational resources.

Thank you to our community, partners, and staff for your passion and support. Together, we are shaping a Park District that continues to serve Peoria for generations to come.

Emily Cahill
Executive Director
Peoria Park District



OUR MISSION

We contribute to healthy and vibrant communities by responsibly using our resources to offer high quality parks, recreation, and education experiences to those who live, work, or play in our District.

OUR VISION

Building on our commitment to our PRAISE model for customer service, we agree to uphold the following values in our work. We will be:

Professional: well-trained and proficient at all levels of our organization.

Respectful: considerate of others and honest in our interactions; focused on opportunities for collaboration.

Accountable: transparent and responsible for our decisions and their short- term and long-term impact on our District, our community, and our environment.

Innovative: open to new approaches that achieve better outcomes and that make our District more financially secure while promoting sustainability of our resources; as we support innovation, we will prioritize environmental sensitivity in all of our activities.

Safe: proactive in providing safe spaces and places for those who work, learn or play in our District parks and facilities.

Equitable: focused on equitable access to parks, facilities, and programs that promote healthy and active lifestyles across our diverse community, while also prioritizing a workforce, both internally and through collaboration and contracting, that looks like the communities we serve.

OUR COMMITMENTS

At the Peoria Park District, we have prioritized our initiatives to ensure we are the best possible stewards of the incredible resources entrusted to us.

VIBRANCY.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY.

These guiding principles shape both our strategy and daily operations, serving as the foundation for everything we do.

In an ever-changing world, adaptability is key. That's why our staff and elected Board of Trustees develop annual action plans rooted in these commitments. Our progress is measured monthly and shared with the community at least quarterly—because accountability and transparency are just as important as the work itself.

4 | CORE COMMITMENTS



OUTCOMES MEASURED:

We define success through measurable outcomes that reflect our commitment to vibrancy, environmental sustainability, and diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. By setting clear goals and evaluating progress, we ensure our efforts create meaningful, lasting impact in the community.

DATA:

Data-driven decision-making guides our strategy, helping us allocate resources effectively and respond to community needs. Through consistent data collection and analysis, we track progress, identify trends, and adjust initiatives for continuous improvement.

CORE COMMITMENTS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Peoria Park District is driven by three core commitments—Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA); Environmental Sustainability; and Vibrancy—each of which plays a crucial role in shaping our strategic priorities. These commitments serve as the foundation for our decision-making, ensuring that every initiative, program, and investment is aligned with our mission to serve the community in a meaningful and impactful way. See our website for a commitment document for each pillar.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY (DEIA)

At the heart of our work is the belief that parks and recreation should be for everyone. Our commitment to DEIA ensures that all individuals, regardless of race, color, gender, disability, age, or culture, feel welcome and represented in the spaces we maintain and the programs we offer. By fostering a diverse workforce and actively seeking community voices, we create opportunities that reflect the needs of those we serve. This commitment is integrated into our strategic priorities by shaping policies, improving access to facilities and programs, and strengthening partnerships with organizations that support underserved populations.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

As stewards of more than 1,600 acres of natural areas, the Peoria Park District is committed to protecting and enhancing the environmental health of our community. Sustainability is more than a responsibility—it is a guiding principle that influences our approach to resource management, facility operations, and long-term planning. By prioritizing conservation, preservation, and restoration efforts, we ensure that future generations can enjoy the beauty and benefits of Peoria’s natural spaces. This commitment is embedded in our strategic priorities by promoting eco-friendly practices, reducing our carbon footprint, and educating the public about environmental stewardship.



VIBRANCY

A thriving community is one that is active, engaged, and inspired. Our commitment to vibrancy means creating dynamic spaces, programs, and experiences that enhance quality of life. Whether through recreational opportunities, cultural events, or wellness initiatives, we strive to provide meaningful experiences that encourage social connections and personal growth. By aligning this commitment with our strategic priorities, we focus on innovative programming, infrastructure improvements, and partnerships that contribute to the overall vitality of Peoria.

These core commitments are not standalone ideals—they are interwoven into every aspect of our strategic vision. By measuring our progress, adapting to changing needs, and maintaining a steadfast focus on DEIA, sustainability, and vibrancy, we ensure that the Peoria Park District remains a valuable and lasting resource for all who live, work, and play in our community.

6 | 2024 IMPACT REPORT BY THE NUMBERS



6

MAYOR YOUTH INTERNS HOSTED IN 2024

4500

ATTENDED PNC WORLDWIDE DAY OF PLAY AND HAD EXPOSURE TO BE ANYTHING CAREER EXPO

17

STAFFERS ARE PART OF OUR UNDER 30 AFFINITY GROUP

30

MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGED IN REDEVELOPMENT OF GLEN OAK PARK PLAYGROUND

\$4.6M

OR 33% MINORITY CONTRACTORS DIVERSE SPEND

148

AVERAGE FULL-TIME WORKERS WITH 22% MINORITY WORKFORCE

779

AVERAGE TOTAL WORKFORCE WITH 25% MINORITY WORKFORCE

26

PAID INTERNSHIPS



12.5

ACRES CONVERTED TO NO MOW AREAS

5

NEW ENGAGING INTERPRETIVE AND EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE THAT PROMOTES RESTORATION AND ITS BENEFITS

7

SUSTAINABLE PERENNIAL FLOWER BEDS ESTABLISHED AT VARYING PARKS

5928

VOLUNTEER HOURS FOR RESTORATION WORK

950K

IMPRESSIONS ON FORREST, PPD SUSTAINABILITY MASCOT, CAMPAIGN

1.4M

SOLAR KW HOURS PRODUCED IN 2024

93

TREES PLANTED IN 2024



71

VOLUNTEERS ATTENDED THE FIRST VOLUNTEER APPRECIATE EVENT

6

PARKS ARE HOME TO REC 'N ROLL THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER

1.5M

LOCAL ECONOMIC INPUT FROM EVENTS HOSTED ON THE RIVERFRONT

30K

ATTENDEES OF PPD SIGNATURE EVENTS IN 2024

3026

RESPONSES FOR COMMUNITY INPUT/ FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES

383K

VISITORS TO PPD ADMISSION BASED FACILITIES

12K

PROGRAM REGISTRATIONS PROCESSED IN 2024

2119

RENTALS SUPPORTED IN 2024

12K

INTERACTIONS THROUGH COMMUNITY OUTREACH

780K

UNIQUE WEBSITE VISITORS



From enhancing community access to preserving natural spaces, every initiative reflects our dedication to making a meaningful difference. We invite you to dive in to explore the progress, achievements, and future direction that bring our vision to life.

View the full 2024 strategic review, individual commitment documents, implementation guiding principles, and the 2025-2027 Strategic Plan, on our website, PeoriaParks.org/about

