

Washington Park District

Districtwide Comprehensive Master Plan Update

Prepared by
Hitchcock Design Group
September 2019



Acknowledgements

Hitchcock Design Group would like to thank the Washington Park District and staff members for the opportunity to assist with the planning of the Park District's parks, open space and facilities.

Board Of Commissioners

Lorelei Cox
President

Jim Bremner
Vice President

John Foy
Secretary/Treasurer

Jeff Schultz
Commissioner

Mark Heuermann
Commissioner

Task Force

Brian Tibbs
Executive Director

Kim Hess
Finance Manager

Matt Suellentrop
Recreation Manager

Jeremy McMenimen
Superintendent of Parks and Property

Staff

Dan Graham
Building Maintenance

Jackie Hofer
Administrative Assistant

Jean Escue
Athletic Coordinator

Kathy Werstein
Athletic Coordinator

Julie Harper
Recreation Coordinator

Tabatha Waid
Recreation Coordinator

Janni Johnson
Pre-K Program Coordinator

Matt Dwyer
Athletic Coordinator

Consultants

Hitchcock Design Group
Planning and Landscape Architects

Project Advisors

City of Washington
School District 50
School District 51
School District 52
School District 308
Arts Festival Committee
Washington Chamber of Commerce
Rotary Club
Lions Club
Recreation Trail Committee
Junior Football League
Washington Park District Soccer
Washington Park District Lacrosse
Washington Ministerial Alliance
Washington Kiwanis Club
Washington Water Jets

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Executive Summary | 4 |
|-------------------------|---|

Chapter One: Introduction

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| Structure of the Document..... | 6 |
| Planning Area Summary | 6 |
| Contextual Map | 7 |
| Agency Profile..... | 8 |
| Budget Information | 10 |
| Previous Planning Efforts | 10 |
| Funding History | 10 |
| Demographics | 12 |
| Related Planning Documents | 13 |
| Aerial Map | 14 |

Chapter Two: Inventory and Analysis

| | |
|--|----|
| Purpose | 16 |
| Existing Conditions..... | 16 |
| Land Use Map | 17 |
| Park Classification Criteria..... | 18 |
| Parks, Open Space and Facility Matrix..... | 19 |
| Level of Service | 20 |
| Planning Areas | 22 |
| Planning Areas Map | 23 |
| Service Areas..... | 24 |
| Mini Park Service Areas..... | 24 |
| Mini Park Service Area Map..... | 25 |
| Neighborhood Park Service Areas | 26 |
| Neighborhood Park Service Area Map | 27 |
| Community Park Service Areas | 28 |
| Community Park Service Area Map | 29 |
| Overall Park Service Area | 30 |
| Overall Park Service Area Map..... | 31 |
| Trail Corridors and Linkages | 32 |
| Trail Corridor Map..... | 33 |
| Outdoor Facility Comparison Analysis..... | 34 |
| Parks, Open Space and Facilities Inventory | 36 |
| Key Points of Inventory and Analysis | 36 |

Chapter Three: Needs Assessment

| | |
|--|----|
| Background | 38 |
| Research | 38 |
| National Research Trends..... | 38 |
| Illinois Recreation Trends..... | 42 |
| Local Trends..... | 44 |
| Demographic Analysis..... | 46 |
| Needs Input Phase | 46 |
| Stakeholder Meetings..... | 47 |
| Key Stakeholder Meeting Takeaways..... | 48 |
| Community Input - User Survey..... | 48 |
| Survey Demographics | 48 |
| Survey Toplines | 49 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Common Comments..... | 49 |
| Survey Responses..... | 50 |
| Community User Survey Template | 55 |

Chapter Four: Plan Recommendations

| | |
|---|----|
| Planning Process..... | 58 |
| Park District Mission Statement | 58 |
| Comprehensive Plan Vision | 58 |
| District-wide Strategies..... | 59 |
| Recreation Program Strategies..... | 60 |
| Existing Parks, Trails, and Facilities Strategies | 61 |
| New Parks, Trails, and Facilities Strategies..... | 63 |

Chapter Five: Implementation Guideline

| | |
|---|-------|
| Action Plan - Facilities | 66-67 |
| Action Plan - Parks and Open Space..... | 66-67 |
| Action Plan - Planning and Programs | 66-67 |
| Justification Considerations | 67 |
| Planning Actions for Next 5 Years..... | 68 |

Chapter Six: Park Inventory

| | |
|---|-----|
| Neighborhood Park Inventory..... | |
| Birchwood Park | 76 |
| Candlewood Park | 78 |
| Ganzhorn Park..... | 80 |
| Grant Park..... | 82 |
| Harry LaHood Park..... | 84 |
| Meadow Valley Park..... | 86 |
| Recreation Facility Park | 88 |
| Sweitzer Park..... | 90 |
| Weaver Park..... | 92 |
| Westgate Park/Washington Park District Pool | 94 |
| Community Park Inventory..... | |
| Oak Ridge Park | 96 |
| Washington Park..... | 98 |
| Open Space Inventory | |
| Bowen Lake Park..... | 100 |
| Gully Park..... | 102 |
| Future Park..... | 104 |
| Special Use..... | |
| Recreation Facility | 106 |

Chapter Seven: Appendix

| | |
|--|-----|
| Definitions and Abbreviations..... | 110 |
| Zoning Map | 111 |
| IDNR Useful Life Criteria | 112 |
| Board of Trustees Priority Worksheet | 114 |
| Board Priorities Summary..... | 119 |
| Meeting Summaries | 120 |
| User Survey..... | 136 |

Executive Summary

Why the Plan was Developed

As greater numbers of residents enjoy the Park District's open space assets, there has been increased use patterns and wear on existing parks, recreation facilities and programs. The Park District wishes to compile all of the planning tools prepared to date, and build consensus, and plan for the orderly expenditure of funds. To meet the current and anticipated demands and to carry out their mission, the Washington Park District commissioned Hitchcock Design Group to create a Districtwide Comprehensive Master Plan that will serve as a development guide for the Park District for the next 5 years. This plan:

- Identifies and assesses park, facility, and recreational needs
- Provides recommendations
- Provides an implementation and funding action plan

Goals of the Process

The following goals were identified during the early stages of the planning process:

- Create an existing park inventory
- Determine what improvements, changes or additions should be made to existing parks and trails
- Identify potential planning areas for new park opportunities
- Assess the needs and expectations of the population served
- Develop a prioritized list of goals, targeting an initial five-year assimilation period

Planning Process

The planning process began in August 2018. A task force of Park District staff was assembled to work directly with Hitchcock Design Group to provide background information and direction. Hitchcock Design Group completed a tour of the Park District's land holdings and an inventory of the each park site. Once the existing assets and programming were reviewed, input on the issues and needs were gathered from the Park District Board members, the task force, Park District staff and the community. The key findings from the input phase, along with the analysis of the Park District's land holdings and facilities helped determine the master plan recommendations and prioritize the action items.

How the Document Should be Used

This master plan document should be used as a guide for development by the Park District's staff to implement the primary action items over the next 5 years. The plan should be thought of as a working list and objectives should be checked off as they are completed. It should be reviewed on an annual basis and modified as appropriate.

Chapter One:
Introduction

Chapter One: Introduction

Structure of the Document

The Districtwide Comprehensive Master Plan Update is organized to follow the series of tasks that were completed in the development of the plan.

Chapter One: Introduction

Provide a summary of the planning area and adjacent agencies. Document the relevant Washington Park District history. Reference other relevant planning documents used during the development of this plan.

Chapter Two: Inventory and Analysis

Develop a detailed map that identifies all park land, municipal owned property, schools, golf courses, trails and relative adjacent land uses. Classify all of the Washington Park District's park land based on standards, size, location, and amenities. Analyze the Park District's Level of Service for land area and service area.

Chapter Three: Needs Assessment

Determine the park, facility, and recreation needs of the community, based on the results from the community survey, staff input, board input, and local trends. Identify current issues based on information gathered during the inventory and analysis phase.

Chapter Four: Plan Recommendations

Identify specific projects and improvements for the following categories

- District-wide Strategies
- Recreation Programs
- Existing Parks, Trails, and Facilities
- New Parks, Trails, and Facilities

Chapter Five: Implementation Guideline

Identify action items directly related to the plan recommendations and determine priorities for the next 5 years.

Chapter Six: Park Inventory

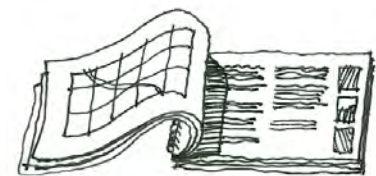
Complete detailed park inventory that catalogs the individual parks and natural areas, addressing each property's observations, needs and recommendations.

Chapter Seven: Appendix

Provide raw information from the community survey and excerpts from other planning documents.

Planning Area Summary

The map on the adjacent page illustrates the area served by the Washington Park District and adjacent municipalities. Additional information about the Park District and it's surrounding context can be found on the following pages.



Planning Process






Pleasant View
Park District

Washington Park District

Fondulac
Park District

Morton
Park District

Legend

-  Park District Limits
- Park Districts**
-  Washington Park District
-  Morton Park District
-  Fondulac Park District
-  Pleasant View Park District



Agency Profile

Geographic Location

The Washington Park District is approximately 12.75 square miles encompassing the City of Washington, Illinois and is primarily surrounded by unincorporated Tazewell County with a portion of the western boundary adjacent to the City of East Peoria. US Route 24 crosses East-West in the north edge of the District and the Toledo, Peoria, and Western Railroad crosses diagonally from Northeast to Southwest through the southern portion of the District. The Park District sits approximately 8.5 miles East of Peoria, Illinois and 26 miles Northwest of Bloomington, Illinois. Latitude: 40.695618/Longitude: -89.434327, Elevation: 533.

Parks & Facilities

The park district offers a wide range of parks and facilities including 12 developed parks, 3 natural areas, a pool, trail system, and a Recreation Facility. It also offers a wide range of programming opportunities for all ages and abilities from structured athletics to open ended art. The majority of indoor programming occurs at the Recreation Facility and the programmed outdoor activities occur primarily at Washington Park and Oak Ridge Park.

Natural Resources

The Park District is located within the Lower Illinois-Senachwine Lake Watershed and a large portion of the Park District drains to Farm Creek and it's various tributaries, ultimately leading to the Illinois River. The creek provides moderate topography change and minor riparian vegetative buffers throughout the community. The surrounding lands are slightly rolling to flat with high quality soils.

History of the Washington Park District

Washington Park District was formed by a referendum vote of the public in 1968. The first Washington Park District Board elected consisted of H.W. "Bud" Engel, Noah Hickman, John Holtzman, Wilson Kimmell and Bonnie Richart with Mel Moehle serving as the Park District Attorney.

In April 1969, the Park District purchased land from the Heyl Pony Farm to develop the first park in Washington, Washington Park. The Park District continued to grow quickly while developing Washington Park, Weaver Park was gifted to the Park District in 1971, and the Schmoeger property was purchased for the development of Meadow Valley Park.

In 1972, the Board purchased the Neptune Swim Club. A referendum was approved to renovate and add to the Neptune Swim Club which was also renamed the Washington Park Pool.

In 1975 lights were added to diamond #5 at Washington Park. The first Director of the Park District, George Curtis, donated part of his salary toward this goal and the diamond is named after him. Tennis Courts were also added to Washington Park.

In 1979 through 1980, the Park District worked cooperatively with Caterpillar Tractor Co. to lease property now known as Oak Ridge Park. Oak Ridge Park was first designed with 6 baseball diamonds and some space for soccer fields. The lease was expanded and more soccer fields were added.

Park District received a grant from the Illinois Department of Conservation to renovate the Washington Park Pool. An aluminum shell system was added to the competition pool and the kiddie pool replaced.

In 1992, Bowen property was purchased. As part of the IL Route 24 By-Pass project, a lake was created on the property and became Bowen Lake Park.

The first segment of the Washington Recreation Trail was constructed in 1995 running from McDonald's to Wilmor Rd. A second segment was added from Wilmor Rd. through to Washington Park. In 2003, a third phase was added to the Trail system, further extending the trail to the east and west. This phase was funded in part by another Bike Trail Grant from the Illinois DNR.

In 2004, the Park District was awarded a \$200,000 OSLAD Grant from the Illinois DNR for the construction of Harry LaHood Park in the Trail's Edge Subdivision development. This 5 acre parcel was donated by developers in memory of Harry LaHood. The park was dedicated in 2005.

In 2004, the Park District was awarded a \$400,000 OSLAD Grant from the Illinois DNR for a Washington Park Pool project. The project included the demolition of the original Neptune Swim Club bathhouse and tot pools and the construction of a new bathhouse, sun deck and interactive play pool. The project began in September of 2005 and completed in August of 2006.

In August 2005, the Washington Park District moved their offices to the old Washington Middle School/Grade School on 105 S. Spruce St. and began an Adaptive Reuse project. The Park District opened the facility officially on February 4th, 2006 with a Grand Opening. As a result of the additional space provided by the facility, recreation programming has dramatically increased and diversified.

The N. Main St. extension was built in 2005 to provide an off road trail to the new Washington Middle School. This extension ran along Main St. from Washington Park to Easy St. just past the new school.

In 2007, the Washington Park District participated in cooperation with the City of Washington, Washington Community High School, Washington District Library and Washington Area Community Center to fund the construction of Five Points Washington. Five Points provides fitness facilities and services as well as an Aquatic Center, Auditorium, Banquet Rooms and home to the Washington Library.

An Illinois Bike Trail grant was awarded to the Park District by the Illinois DNR in 2009. In the fall of 2009, construction began on the Wilmor Rd. Connection which connected the original Washington Recreation Trail, (Phases 1 and 2) with the Kern Rd. and Cummings Lane sections and provided a safer crossing at Peoria St.

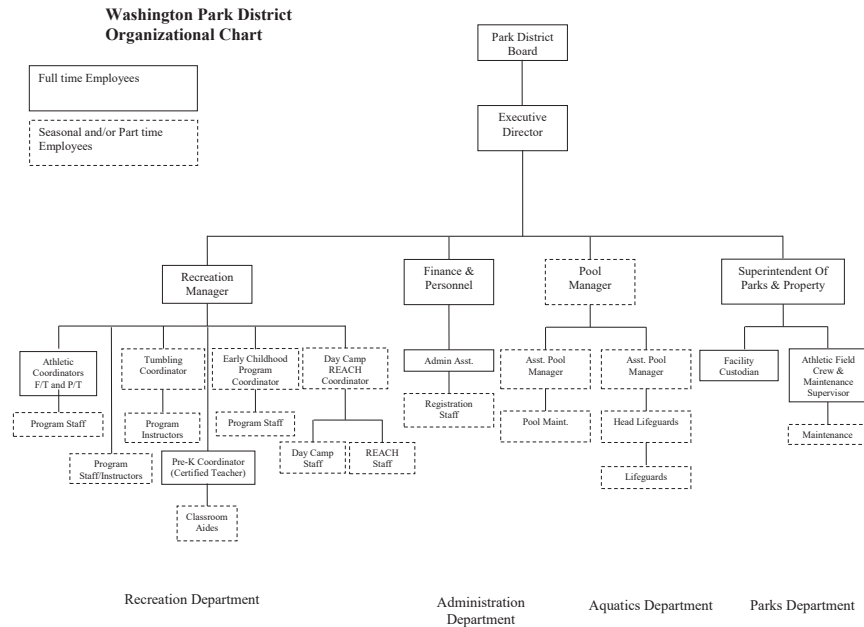
Over the years sections of Kern Rd., Cummings Lane and Dallas Rd. were completed in cooperation with the City of Washington and developers. The last sections of Kern Rd. and Dallas Rd. were completed in 2010 finishing the Western loop of the Recreation Trail.

Recent History

In November of 2013, the City of Washington was devastated by an EF-4 tornado that tore through the community, damaging or destroying over 1,100 homes along with wreckage to various roadways, utilities, and open space areas. Since the tornado, various city groups and organizations have helped Washington to quickly recover by rebuilding homes and neighborhoods most impacted, as well as public utilities and open space improvements.

Staffing and Structure

The Park District currently employs 7 full-time employees, and 90 part-time employees. They are governed by a five member elected board of commissioners.



Budget Information

The Park District has an annual operating budget of approximately \$3.75 million derived primarily from tax revenue, program user fees, and occasional assistance from state grants and local donations. The Washington Park District is an Illinois Registered Park District and is subject to the opportunities and limitations of such.

Previous Planning Efforts

- 2011 Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan
- 1997 Plan - Washington Recreation Trail Committee

Funding History

| | | | |
|------|---|--------------|---|
| 1969 | Washington Park | \$47,550 | HUD (Federal Housing and Urban Development) |
| 1974 | State Grant | \$40,000 | IL Department of Conservation |
| 1989 | Noted in minutes we have received \$400,000 to date | | |
| 1990 | Pool Grant | \$187,500 | IL Department of Conservation |
| 1996 | Illinois Bike Trail | \$58,000 | ILDNR |
| 2003 | Illinois Trails Grant | \$200,000 | DNR |
| 2004 | OSLAD Grant | \$196,000 | DNR |
| 2005 | OSLAD Grant | \$400,000 | DNR |
| 2005 | Healthy Kids Grant | \$ 18,184.50 | GameTime |
| 2005 | PowerPlay | \$ 3,000 | IAPD |
| 2007 | Safety Grant | \$ 600 | IPRF |
| 2007 | Fighting Obesity | \$ 9,925.50 | GameTime |
| 2008 | Safety Grant | \$ 600 | IPRF |
| 2009 | Safety Grant | \$ 800 | IPRF |
| 2009 | Illinois Trails Grant | \$ 83,700 | DNR |
| 2010 | Safety Grant | \$ 900 | IPRF |
| 2011 | Lighting Grant | \$ 16,082.84 | IDCEO |
| 2011 | Safety Grant | \$ 900 | IPRF |
| 2012 | Safety Grant | \$ 1,100 | IPRF |

| | | | |
|------|---------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| 2013 | Safety Grant | \$ 1,600 | IPRF |
| 2014 | Youth Recreation Corp Grant | \$42,150 | IDNR |
| 2014 | PowerPlay | \$ 500 | IAPD |
| 2014 | Safety Grant | \$1494 | IPRF |
| 2014 | US Tennis Association | \$600 | USTA |
| 2014 | Glenview Park Foundation | \$10,000 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2014 | IAPD | \$10,000 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2014 | Kids Count Corporation | \$10,000 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2014 | Ronald McDonald House Charities | \$10,000 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2014 | Crown Family Foundation | \$25,000 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2014 | Kiwanis Club | \$18,107.34 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2014 | Taylor Lodge – Masonic Hall | \$2305 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2014 | Washington Tornado Relief Fund | \$4500 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2014 | Rotary District 6460 | \$54,953.16 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2014 | Rotary Club of Peoria – North | \$10,000 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2015 | Connect Church | \$3,000 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2015 | Our Savior Lutheran Church | \$19,500 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2015 | Crossroads United Methodist | \$2,000 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2015 | Rebuilding Together | \$10,000 | Tornado Recovery |
| 2015 | PowerPlay | \$500 | IAPD |
| 2015 | Safety Grant | \$1530 | IPRF |
| 2016 | PowerPlay | \$500 | IAPD |
| 2016 | Safety Grant | \$1580 | IPRF |
| 2017 | Power Play | \$500 | IAPD |
| 2017 | Safety Grant | \$1796 | IPRF |
| 2017 | Arts Award | \$1000 | IAPD |
| 2018 | Power Play | \$500 | IAPD |
| 2018 | Safety Grant | \$1683 | IPRF |
| 2018 | Washington Township United Way | \$3000 | United Fund |
| 2019 | Power Play | \$500 | IAPD |

Demographics

Overall population is based on 2010 US Census data targeting the Washington Park District limits. The following demographics are generated using the 2018 Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Business Analyst Online (BAO) software. These projections are based on the data collected in the decennial U.S. Census and annual updates. All data for the years after 2010 are projections and are approximate.

Population Summary

The Washington Park District has a population of 15,769 (2018). The District's population is relatively stable with growth and decline expected to fall within a range of a few hundred people. The population grew from 2010 to 2018 but is expected to decline again by 2023. The majority of households in Washington Park District are composed of families. According to the U.S. Census a household "includes all persons who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence" and a family is defined as a household in which one or more residents are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.



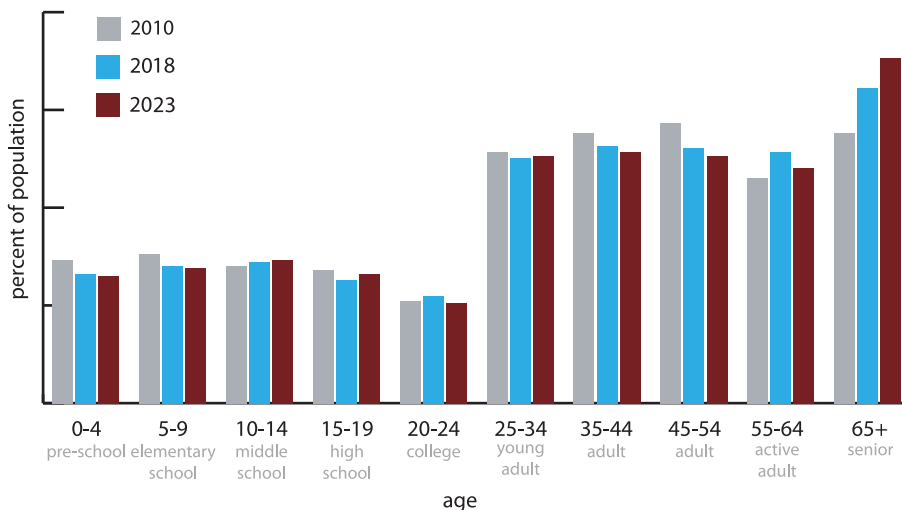
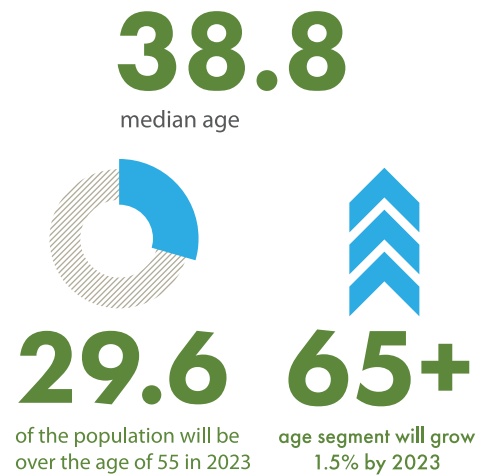
TOTAL POPULATION



Age Distribution

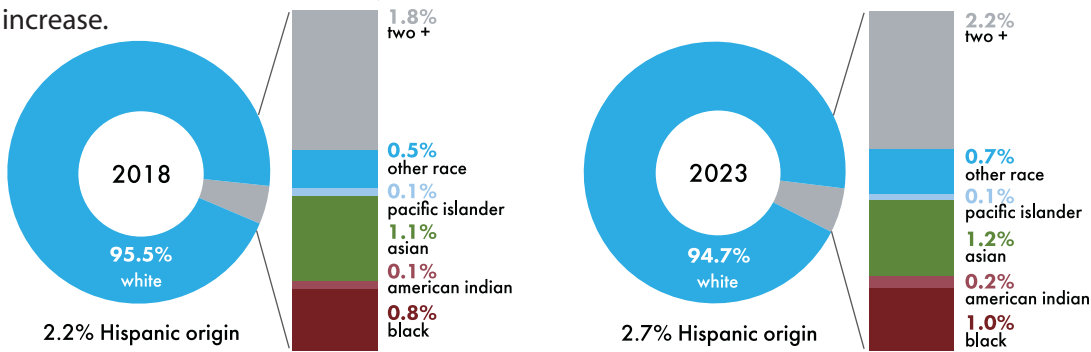
The median age of Washington Park District residents is 38.8 and the population is experiencing very little change in age group composition. It appears that the population is generally aging in place which is typical for the Chicago-land area. The number of children between the ages of 0 and 9 is decreasing while the number of children between the ages of 10 and 19 is increasing. Among adults, only two age groups are growing: 25-34 and 65+. According to 2018 estimates, 28.9% of the population is over the age 55 and this is projected to increase to 29.6% by 2023, entirely due to growth in the 65+ category. This increase in the active adult and senior population mirrors that of Illinois and the United States and these populations area and will continue to be a major District demographic.

AGE DISTRIBUTION



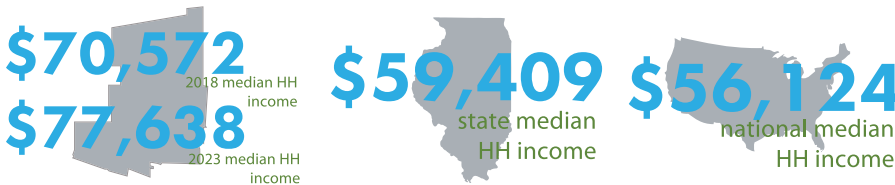
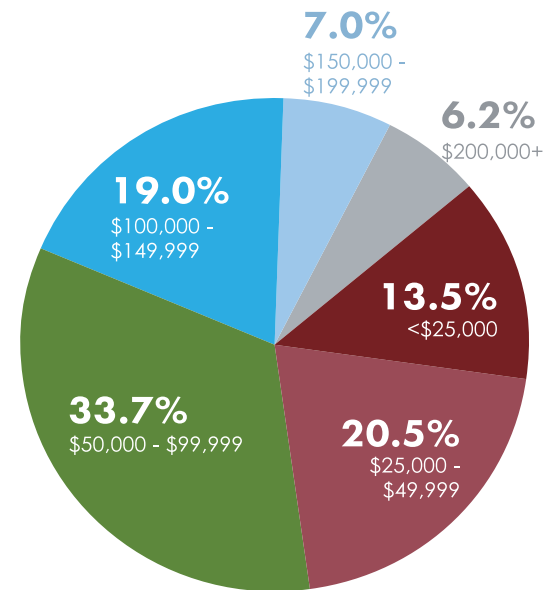
Race and Ethnicity

The primary ethnicity within the Washington Park District is White, making up approximately 95.5% of the population in 2018 resulting in a diversity index of 8.49. The diversity index is “the likelihood that two persons, selected at random from the same area, would belong to a different race or ethnic group. Diversity is measured using a single number between 0 and 100 with lower numbers representing less diverse communities. The second largest group in the Park District is Two or More Races (1.8%) followed by Asian (1.1%). Additionally, 2.2% of the population identifies as Hispanic in addition to the race they reported. In the next five years, the number of residents in all racial/ethnic groups other than White are expected to increase.



Income

Over a quarter of Washington Park District households are within the two lowest income brackets, with 13.5% of households living below the poverty line as defined by Illinois Legal Aid as households making less than \$25,000 per year. While a significant number of people in the Park District are below the poverty line, it is below the state and national percentages of population (20.2% and 20.6%). About 7% of the Park District population is within the second highest tier and about 6% is within the highest tier of income. This is very similar to state and national trends. The median household income in Washington Park District is higher than both the state and national medians and is expected to increase at a rate of 1.96% over the next five years.

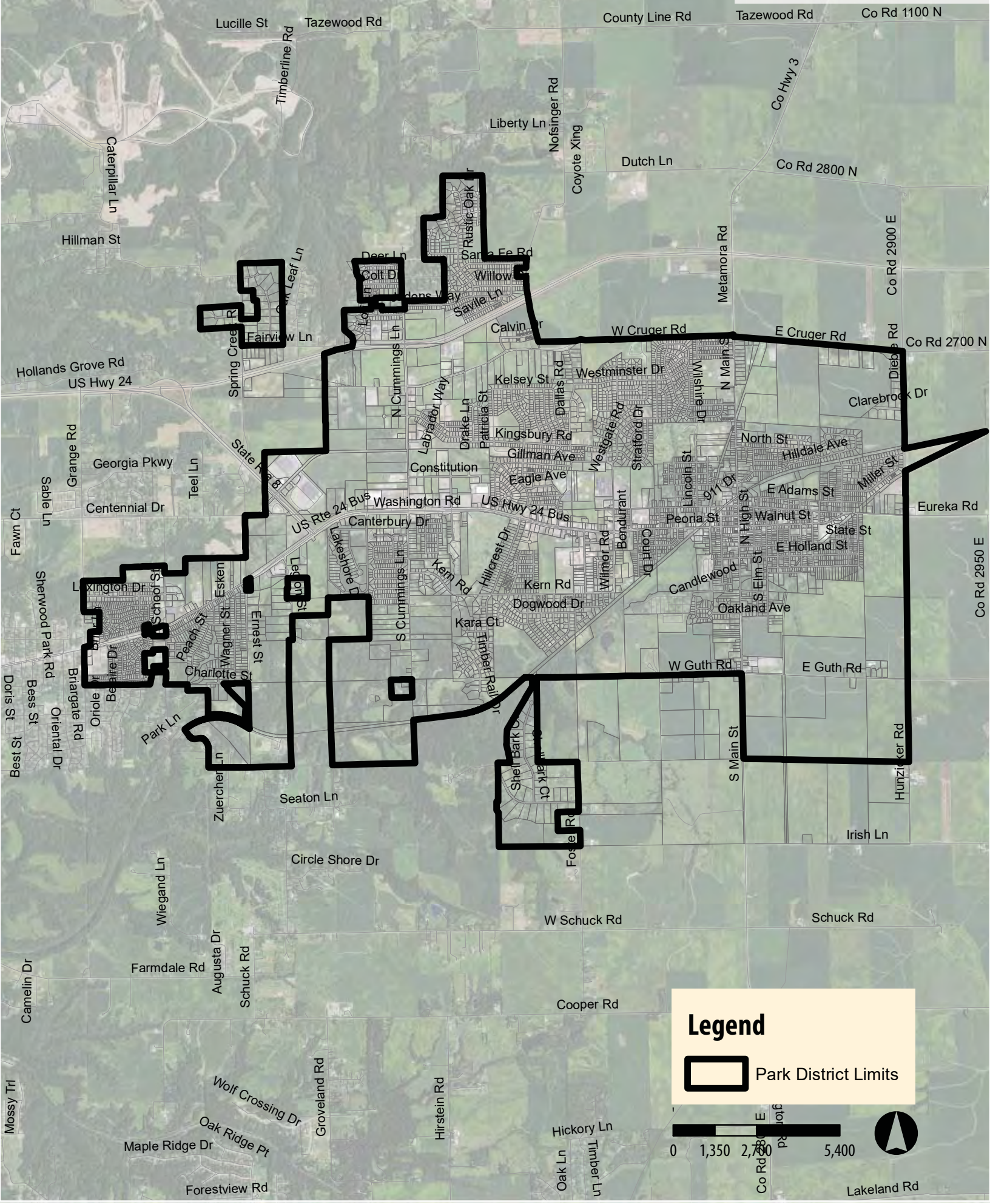


Related Planning Documents

Planning documents and other reports that relate to the Park District’s Districtwide Comprehensive Master Plan were studied for information and guidelines relevant to the master plan goals and objectives. The following documents were reviewed as a part of the planning process.

- 2011 Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan
- 2001 City of Washington Comprehensive Plan
- Illinois Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), 2015-2019
- U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Data
- Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2018, The Outdoor Foundation
- 2018 SFIA Topline Report, Sports and Fitness Industry Association

Aerial Map Washington Park District



Legend

 Park District Limits

