



Downers Grove Park District
**2025 ANNUAL
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**



Downers
Grove
Park District

OUR MISSION

The Downers Grove Park District enriches the community through natural area preservation and outstanding recreation, parks, and facilities that inspire memorable experiences.

OUR VISION

To be the community resource encouraging PLAY for L.I.F.E:

LEADERSHIP

IMAGINATION

FULFILLMENT

ENJOYMENT



**CRAIG
LUNDT**

President



**BRET
BENDER**

Vice President



**JON
DAHLSTROM**

Treasurer



**GISELLE
WALSH**

Commissioner



**PAMELA
JOHNSON**

Commissioner

PARK BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL INITIATIVES



- **Cathy Mahoney Recreation Center Dedication:** Officially renamed the Downers Grove Recreation Center to the Cathy Mahoney Recreation Center in honor of past Commissioner Cathy Mahoney's outstanding dedication and leadership as a Park Commissioner from 2005 to 2023. Her passion for recreation, community access, and inclusive programming has helped shape nearly every corner of our parks—from playgrounds and sprayground to historic restorations and sustainability projects.
- **Volunteers:** Hired a new part-time, district-wide volunteer coordinator to assist with recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers for special events, programs, land management/park maintenance, and more throughout the entire Park District. This contributed to a greater than 10% increase in year-over-year volunteer hours.
- **Little Free Library:** Installed a new Little Free Library donated by the Downers Grove Junior Woman's Club at the Cathy Mahoney Recreation Center in the circle drive. A Little Free Library is a free book-sharing system that promotes reading and community engagement. The concept is designed to foster a love of reading and to create a sense of community by sharing books freely.

GRANT FUNDING



Volunteer Workday:

Lyman Woods received a \$5,000 donation from T-Mobile as part of a volunteer workday.



NFL FLAG Football Program:

A \$7,950 grant was received from Toyota for our NFL Flag Football program. Toyota is committed to championing the growth of the sport while emphasizing our shared core values: inclusivity, teamwork, and integrity.

PARK DISTRICT COMMITTEES



CULTURE COMMITTEE

- **Tapestry: A Multicultural Festival:** On Sept. 6, approximately 350 event goers celebrated the vibrant threads that made up our community at TAPESTRY—an energetic afternoon filled with music, culture, and connection. Guests enjoyed free live performances from talented artists, interactive cultural activities, delicious global cuisine, and booths from 13 local community groups that showcased the richness of our shared heritage.
- **Equality Downers Grove's PrideFest:** Provided a craft and information about Park District events at the 2025 PrideFest on June 7 with approximately 750 attendees.
- **Harvest Food Drive:** Hosted drop-off boxes at the Lincoln Center and Cathy Mahoney Recreation Center during Harvest Week in November to collect non-perishable food items for the West Suburban Community Pantry.
- **Halloween Costumes for DuPage Pads:** Provided 30 gently used Halloween costumes collected from the community to children living in the interim housing center. DuPage Pads will utilize more of the remaining costumes in 2026.

AI COMMITTEE

- **Website ChatBot:** Implemented a chatbot on the District's website to enhance customer service with instant responses, improve operational efficiency through automation and capture data-driven insights for service improvements.
- **AI Policy:** An Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy has been developed to guide the responsible use of AI technologies and will be incorporated into the IT Policy Manual for Board review in 2026.

SAFETY COMMITTEE

- **Ergonomics Policy & Assessment:** Developed the District's Ergonomics Policy and completed an initial assessment to prevent work-related injuries and discomfort by promoting safe, efficient workstation design and work practices, while supporting employee health, productivity, and long-term well-being.

ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCE

- **Meetings:** Attended quarterly meetings initiated by Greener Grove members, bringing together staff from multiple Downers Grove agencies (including Village, Park District, D58, D99 and Library) to discuss environmental concerns and initiatives. Recent topics include composting and recycling education, coordinating recycling receptacle style and signage for consistency throughout the community, and electronics recycling events.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

- **Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting:** Unqualified Audit Opinion was received and the District was awarded GFOA's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 41st consecutive year for Fiscal Year 2024.

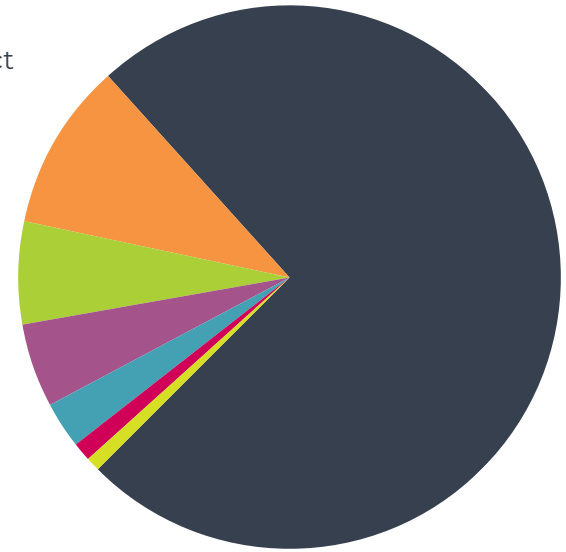


- **Operating Revenues:** Outperformed budget by 3.9%, coming in at \$19.58M
- **Operating Expenditures:** Beat the budget by 2.8% coming in at \$16.44M
- **Total Golf Revenue:** \$2,443,200
- **Total Fitness Revenue:** \$1,051,874

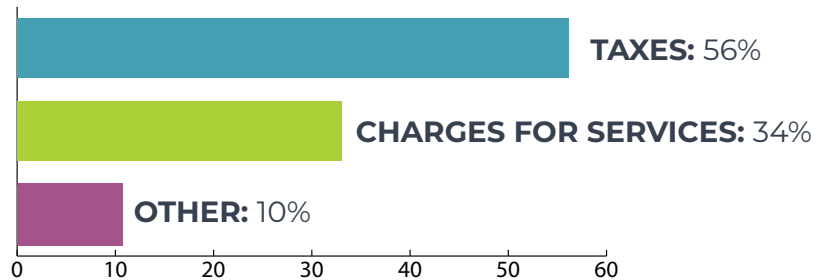
TAX BILL

The Downers Grove Park District represents 5.8% of the total tax levy.

- **EDUCATION:** 74.6%
- **VILLAGE & FIRE:** 9.2%
- **PARK DISTRICT:** 5.8%
- **DUPAGE COUNTY:** 4.9%
- **LIBRARY:** 3.4%
- **TOWNSHIP:** 1.4%
- **SANITARY:** 0.7%



REVENUE



INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY

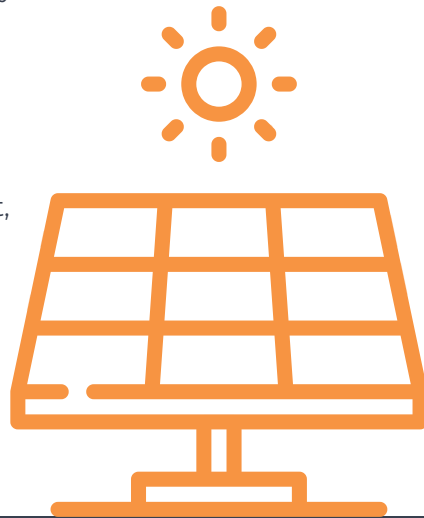
- **Email Migration to Exchange Online:** Email services were migrated to Microsoft Exchange Online, improving reliability and security while providing a scalable cloud-based platform to support future organizational needs.
- **Network Infrastructure Refresh:** Aging Cisco network infrastructure was upgraded to improve performance and reliability, reduce operational risk, and provide a more resilient foundation for current and future technology needs.
- **New Help Desk Platform:** A new help desk software platform was implemented to improve service request tracking, streamline support workflows, and enhance communication and responsiveness to staff needs.
- **Phone System:** The phone system was transitioned from on-premises Cisco infrastructure to Cisco Webex Calling, increasing reliability, simplifying system management, and enabling greater flexibility for future communications needs.



ADMINISTRATION & HUMAN RESOURCES

ADMINISTRATION

- **IAPD Parks Day at the Capital:** Staff and board members attended the annual Parks Day at the Capitol to meet with legislators in Springfield regarding past state-funded projects and to advocate for future initiatives, resulting in the identification and pursuit of additional state grant funding for park district projects.
- **Diligent Board Meeting Platform:** Following the discontinuation of BoardPaaS, board agendas, minutes, recordings, and documents were successfully migrated to the new Diligent platform to enhance transparency and accessibility.
- **Policy Updates:** Throughout the year, several foundational District policies were updated, including a comprehensive update to the Board of Commissioners Policy.
- **Community Solar:** Secured additional enrollment into the Community Solar program, providing an effective, efficient, and fiscally responsible way to utilize additional green energy for the district's facilities and operations.



HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Employee Onboarding:** Implemented a refreshed, employee-centric onboarding process for new hires that emphasizes intentional manager touchpoints, tailored learning, relationship building, and clear role expectations to reduce ramp-up time, prevent disengagement, and position employees and managers for success.
- **Union Decertification:** Successfully navigated a significant organizational transition following the decertification of employees previously represented under a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). To facilitate their seamless assimilation into regular staff status, HR conducted a comprehensive gap analysis between existing CBA terms and standard district policies. This initiative focused on demonstrating organizational goodwill and fostering a culture of equity across all departments. Key actions included a review of roles to assess their impact on work-life balance, leading to the creation of modernized policies that harmonize benefits. To finalize the transition, all policy updates and employee status changes were integrated into the HRIS, ensuring data integrity and administrative consistency.



48,792
DISTRICT
RESIDENTS



31,324
PROGRAM
PARTICIPANTS



2,655
PROGRAMS
OFFERED



60
FULL-TIME
EMPLOYEES



400
PART-TIME & SEASONAL
EMPLOYEES

MARKETING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



- **Summer Search in the Parks:** Celebrated Parks & Recreation Month in July with a scavenger hunt where participants followed daily Facebook clues to find hidden keychains and a coupon redeemable at the July Summer in the Park event at McCollum Park.
- **The Final Cut Haunted House Campaign:** Launched a six-part, lighthearted, campy video ad series to promote The Final Cut Haunted House, doubling as a fun team-building opportunity with staff in acting roles and showcased across the District's social media platforms.
- **Lyman Woods Interpretive Panels:** Developed new outdoor interpretive signs for the hiking trails at Lyman Woods, including Animal Tracks, Wood Duck Overlook, Woodpeckers, and the Great Horned Owl.
- **Golden Years Expo:** Provided information, resources and activities to adults ages 55+ at the inaugural Golden Years Expo with a total of 19 partners, 4 speakers, and approximately 100 participants.

- **Earth Week Volunteer Day:** Coordinated the 3rd annual Earth Day Volunteer Day on April 26 at Fishel Park, Loy Park and Whitlock Park with approximately 28 volunteers.
- **Dog Daze:** Welcomed approximately 500 dogs and their families to Fishel Park to enjoy free activities including a non-competitive agility course, a splash zone, pet pampering station, peanut butter licking contest, and more!
- **Dogs of Downers Grove Social Media Campaign:** Launched and promoted the Dogs of Downers Grove social media spotlight series to build community engagement and generate excitement leading up to the annual Dog Daze event.
- **Sponsorship & Advertising Program:** Generated \$55,080 in revenue through sponsorship and advertising opportunities offered to community businesses.



13,874
FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS



5,626
INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS



42,524
EMAIL
SUBSCRIBERS



281,000
WEBSITE VISITORS
ON 3 SITES

PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION

- **Lyman Woods Master Plan:** The Park District hired a consultant to complete an environmental assessment and develop an updated Master Plan to guide future restoration, management, and project prioritization at Lyman Woods.
- **McCullum Park Improvement Project:** Developed plans, issued for public bidding, and awarded a construction contract for brand-new playground and recreational amenities, which will be constructed in 2026 to serve visitors of all ages and abilities.
- **Wandschneider Park (Museum) – Parking Lot & Driveway Renovation:** The deteriorated east parking lot was removed and replaced with new asphalt pavement, and the accessible parking stalls were adjusted to meet ADA slope requirements.
- **Lyman Woods – Boardwalk Replacement:** An existing 180-foot-long boardwalk was replaced with a new 225-foot-long, 6-foot-wide structure to address deterioration from flooding and improve maintenance equipment access.
- **Washington Park – Entry Arch Painting:** The Washington Park entry arch was removed, repainted by the manufacturer due to paint failure, and reinstalled after the powder-coating process was completed.
- **District-wide Sealcoating:** Completed sealcoating of multiple parking lots and pathways, plus color-coating of the tennis courts at Randall Park and the basketball court at Gilbert Park.

PLAYGROUND RENOVATIONS



Fishel Park – Playground Renovation:

The existing playground equipment, installed in 2005, had reached the end of its useful life and was replaced. Mulch surfacing was upgraded to synthetic turf safety surfacing, and the pre-cast block playground edge was replaced with a stronger concrete curb.



Prince Pond – Playground & Retaining Wall Renovation:

Removed and replaced outdated play equipment installed in 2002, replaced perimeter fencing, replaced the wood mulch surfacing with synthetic turf surfacing, and renovated a large block retaining wall south of the playground.



Sterling & Davis Park – Playground Renovation:

Removed and replaced playground equipment installed in 1999, and replaced the existing wood mulch surfacing with new synthetic turf grass safety surfacing.

PARKS & FACILITIES



FACILITIES

- **Administration Office – Roof Resurfacing:** The aging EPDM roof was resurfaced with a liquid-applied membrane to extend its useful life and included a 12-year warranty and maintenance contract with annual inspections.
- **Adventure Falls Concession Stand:** Modified concession windows to enhance customer service and improve ease of operation for staff.
- **Downers Grove Museum:** The HVAC system was replaced in the Montrew Dunham History Center building.
- **Lincoln Center Flooring:** The 3rd-floor carpeting, auditorium carpeting, and restroom tile at the Lincoln Center were replaced.
- **Lyman Woods Interpretive Center:** Replaced flush valves and fixtures in the restrooms.
- **McCollum Park Core Building:** Installed a new air conditioning unit.
- **Cathy Mahoney Recreation Center Flooring:** Carpet was replaced in the track hallway, lower-level lobby and hallway, and Fitness Center locker rooms. The dance studios and cycling studio floors were refinished.
- **ADA Improvements:** ADA auto door openers were installed on the Fitness Center entry doors and Fitness Center Track doors at the Cathy Mahoney Recreation Center and at the main entrance of Lyman Woods Interpretive Center.

PARKS

- **Vehicles:** Purchased a Ford Transit Van, a turf amendment spreader, a Ford Explorer, an F-350 pickup truck, and an F-150 pickup truck.
- **McCollum Park:** Installed new roofs and painted the irrigation and electrical buildings.
- **O'Brien Disc Golf:** New baskets and tee signage was installed at the O'Brien Park disc golf course.
- **Golf Maintenance and McCollum Maintenance Gas Tanks:** Cleaned interior and exterior and repainted the tanks.
- **Hummer Park Pavilion:** Prepped and painted the pavilion.
- **Lincoln Center:** Renovated the landscaping at the front of the building.
- **Prince Pond:** Installed a new metal roof and painted the historic pavilion.
- **Lyman Woods Kiosk:** Refurbished the kiosk to the south of the main entry drive.

FORESTRY

- **Christmas Tree Recycling Program:** 207 trees were donated and chipped into mulch for use in District projects.
- 28 memorial trees were planted.
- 105 replacement trees were planted.
- 60 oak trees distributed for Oaktober Oak Awareness Month.
- 300 saplings were given away for Arbor Day.

RECREATION

ATHLETICS, FITNESS, GOLF & CUSTOMER SERVICE



CUSTOMER SERVICE

- **RecTrac Software:** Opted to shift registration software to RecTrac's cloud-hosted platform, which will be implemented in 2026 to provide a suite of digital enhancements to improve efficiency, access, and customer experience.
- **Financial Assistance Program:** Continued to expand the established Financial Assistance Program, which provides recreation, health, and wellness opportunities to residents experiencing financial hardships. In 2025, 31 families were approved for over \$43,375 in financial assistance and redeemed \$36,849.53.

4500 FITNESS

- **Fit Fest:** The inaugural Fit Fest welcomed more than 250 participants who explored group fitness options, met personal trainers, connected with sponsors, and enjoyed exclusive promotions. This event resulted in 18 new Fitness Members, 41 personal training packages sold and 26 group exercise passes sold.
- **National Senior Health & Fitness Day:** Hosted senior-focused group exercise samplers, two educational seminars and functional balance training demonstrations for ages 55 and up.
- **Fitness Growth:** Overall Fitness memberships grew to 5,804 – the highest level recorded since before the pandemic.

ATHLETICS

- **Girls Flag Football:** Ran the first-ever Girls Flag Football League with 43 girls participating in the 3rd/4th grade division during the fall 2025 season, which resulted in 5 teams participating.

Youth League Participation Increased:

- Winter Youth Basketball: 1,496 participants (1,451 in 2024)
- Winter High School Basketball: 110 participants (98 in 2024)
- Spring Youth Soccer: 1,465 participants (1,383 in 2024)
- Spring Youth Flag Football: 660 participants (625 in 2024)
- Fall Youth Flag Football: 624 participants (599 in 2024)

Adult League Participation Increased:

- Winter Adult Basketball: 35 teams (31 in 2024)
- Summer Sand Volleyball: 40 teams (34 in 2024)
- Summer Adult Softball: 43 teams (40 in 2024)
- Fall Adult Softball: 34 teams (25 in 2024)



BELMONT GOLF CLUB

- **Irrigation Pond:** Dredged the irrigation pond to improve the water quality in the pond and increase the storage capacity for irrigating the golf course.
- **Irrigation System:** Begun in 2025 and to continue in 2026, the irrigation system project includes installation of main pipelines, phased hole-by-hole closures for piping, wiring, and irrigation components, and the construction of a new elevated prefabricated pump house to prevent flood damage.
- **Practice Area Development Plans:** Collaborated on a comprehensive redevelopment plan for the golf practice area, positioning the course for long-term improvements to the driving range, putting, and short-game facilities in the coming years.
- **Golf Rounds & Revenue:** 47,493 rounds of golf were played at Belmont Golf Club in 2025. Between camps, private lessons, and clinics, our teaching professionals brought in \$156,535 in golf instruction revenue.
- **Driving Range:** The driving range generated \$494,659 in revenue.



DOWNERS GROVE MUSEUM

- **Illinois Association of Museums (IAM) Innovation Award:** Recognized for the creativity and community impact of the “Sip Sip Hooray” program, an engaging program that combines local history with a fun, social experience.
- **Temporary Exhibit – “Through Our Eyes: The Art of Downers Grove”:** Featured works of art created by Downers Grove residents of the past. Each piece of art displayed was not only created by a Downers Grove resident, but depicted scenes around Downers Grove.
- **Honoring our Heroes – A Veteran’s Day Pop-Up Exhibit:** Shared stories of our local Downers Grove Veterans throughout history during the week of Veterans Day.
- **Merry and Bright Victorian Christmas:** Held on December 13, the event welcomed 313 participants compared to 102 participants in 2024—an increase of 207%.
- **Eagle Scout Project:** One (1) Eagle Scout project was completed at the Museum which included fixing the garden fence, clean up around the garden and replacing the compost bin.



LYMAN WOODS

- **Earth Week Celebration:** Hosted the first-ever week of Earth Week events and programs welcoming nearly 200 participants at Wild Day of Service, Wildflower Walk, Veggie Gardening and more.
- **Moth Week:** Moth expert, Jeanette Jaskula, led a presentation and night hike attended by approximately 30 visitors from across the region for National Moth Week.
- **Plant Grant Program:** Visited Indian Trail and Henry Puffer Elementary Schools to install our first two native/natural area gardens through School District 58’s new Plant Grant Program, engaging more than 450 students, staff and parent volunteers from all grades in planting, seeding, mulching, and watering while supporting schools in installing, maintaining, and using garden spaces.
- **Eagle Scout Projects:** Four (4) Eagle Scout projects were completed which included a natural branch and log “wattle fence” in the East Wild Woods play area; permeable pavers for trail improvement; mud kitchen play area; play fruit/veggie stand for the Edible Garden.



RECREATION

- **Adventure Falls:** Welcomed 14,990 visitors to Adventure Falls Sprayground and Mini Golf—an 8% increase from 2024.
- **Active Adult Center:** A new coordinator position was hired to focus individual attention on senior programs, registration and relationship building with that population. Senior and adult participation grew by 45% (1,525 participants compared to 1,053 participants in 2024). Senior programming, specifically, grew by 37%.
- **Summer Camp:** Participation was up 12% compared to 2024 with 4,253 children participating in traditional full- and half-day camps compared to 3,790 in 2024 (does not include sports or specialty camps).

SPECIAL EVENTS

Between the Recreation and Marketing Departments, 62 special events were offered in 2025. Of those 62 events, 32 were free to the public and 23 were designed specifically for adults/seniors in an effort to increase adult programming.



Summer in the Park: The free event welcomed approximately 300 people to McCollum Park to enjoy food trucks, a scavenger hunt, take-and-make crafts, airbrush tattoos, fitness demonstrations, story time with the Downers Grove Public Library, and sponsor tables.



Flannel Fest: Drew approximately 1,000 attendees to the new, free community event, which featured live music by Whiskey Road Band, food from Midwest Smoke Barbecue, beer and cider from Goldfinger Brewing Company, and a popular mechanical bull.



The Final Cut – Haunted House: Welcomed approximately 500 visitors to a heart-pounding, immersive haunted house experience featuring a chilling journey through the dark side of cinema.



Fairy Fest: Welcomed approximately 300 visitors to Fishel Park in June for a few hours of music, food, crafts and fairy-themed activities for children.