



6 Comparative Analysis

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The development of a comparative analysis is a benchmarking tool that provides an understanding of how the Addison Park District compares to other area park and recreation agencies in providing park and recreation amenities and facilities for its residents. Because the Addison community is at or near its population capacity, and the potential for land acquisition is limited, this type of comparison could be considered less important than it is in communities that are still developing and growing. The comparison does provide a good understanding of APD's current offerings to their residents, and can be considered when developing new master plans for existing park properties.

This comparative analysis is developed as a localized regional assessment that offers a more accurate analysis of needs and potential District deficiencies as compared to an assessment that considers national or even state averages. The comparison includes park districts that are in regional proximity to Addison and near population capacity. Park Districts that are in high growth areas are not used for comparison as their level of service offerings are subject to ongoing changes in population or amenities. While some of the adjacent or nearby districts are relatively small when compared to APD, their inclusion is still valid when comparing amenity offerings based on population ratios. This approach is consistent with National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources *Statewide Outdoor Recreation Partnership Plan* (SORPP) recommendations.

The sixteen districts used for comparison include:

- Arlington Heights Park District
- Bensenville Park District
- Bloomingdale Park District
- Carol Stream Park District
- Downers Grove Park District
- Elk Grove Park District
- Elmhurst Park District
- Glen Ellyn Park District
- Itasca Park District
- Lisle Park District
- Lombard Park District
- Medinah Park District
- Oak Brook Park District
- Roselle Park District
- Wheaton Park District
- Wood Dale Park District

This comparative analysis includes the quantification of recreation amenities that are traditionally found in park districts and common to most of those districts included in the analysis. It also includes a few specialty amenities that are often found in park agencies in the region. The population of each park district and the number of total acres of park lands are key components of the assessment in being able to provide a viable analysis based on comparable elements.

COMPARISON OVERVIEW

When preparing an assessment comparing the offerings of park districts, it is important to recognize that side by side comparisons of the quantity of any amenity is not a comparison that is viable or even appropriate unless the population numbers of the districts are almost identical. Clearly a community of 10,000 people is likely to have less soccer fields than a community of 50,000; a difference that translates to any amenity. Therefore, it is important to compare the Addison Park District to others districts based on the ratio of an amenity to the population. As such the two columns in the Comparative Analysis chart that are of key importance are the 'Average per 1000 Population' and the 'Addison Park District per 1000 Population', where the ratio of amenities to population are definitive.



For this analysis, the population, acreage and amenities are totaled for the sixteen districts and then divided by sixteen to get an average for each comparison element. The acreage and amenities are then divided by the average population (in thousands) to provide the ratio of each amenity that is compared with the Addison Park District.

The comparison analysis does assume some measure of inconsistency given that park agencies often have various types of a single amenity that are simply identified on their web-sites and promotional materials without differentiating the type. For example, the reporting of a basketball facility could include a full court, a half court or even a three-way basket often found at parks adjacent to elementary schools. Similarly, soccer fields come in a variety of sizes, and are simply totaled based on published numbers. Unfortunately, some park agencies will count all of their available amenities regardless of their size or use, while others identify only those used for organized sports. Also, some agencies will count a single field as both a soccer and football field based on its dual use. In all cases, unless specific alternative documentation was readily available, the individual park agency's websites, quarterly program brochures or comprehensive plans were used to garner the number of amenities shown in the comparison chart.

COMPARISON MATRIX

PARK DISTRICT

	Arlington Heights	Bensenville	Bloomington	Carol Stream	Downers Grove	Elk Grove	Elmhurst	Glen Ellyn	Itasca	Liste	Lombard	Medinah	Oak Brook	Roselle	Wheaton	Wood Dale	Totals	Average per Park District	Average per 1000 Population	Addison Park District
Population (in 1000s)	77	25	24	47	50	35	44	35	9	33	42	10	9	19	55	14	528	33.0		37
Total Acreage	715	334	159	567	602	474	538	328	115	392	441	96	150	163	891	156	6121	382.6	11,593	7,595
Ball Fields	45	15	15	25	19	29	32	35	12	20	22	8	4	9	30	12	332	20.8	0.629	0.595
Soccer/Football Fields	20	2	8	27	10	29	36	19	9	10	14	3	5	6	25	5	228	14.3	0.432	0.243
Tennis Courts	52	5	7	4	17	19	33	8	4	23	11	8	22	3	17	4	237	14.8	0.449	0.486
Basketball Courts	29	8	12	17	8	25	14	6	10	9	5	1	9	2	13	5	173	10.8	0.328	0.162
Playgrounds	40	11	13	26	24	33	18	21	9	28	15	7	10	12	24	11	302	18.9	0.572	0.541
Pools/Aquatics	6	1	1	1	2	4	3	3	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	28	1.8	0.053	0.054
Skate Parks/In-Line	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0.6	0.017	0.000
Sand Volleyball	6	1	2	5	3	0	4	2	1	0	3	1	3	1	4	1	37	2.3	0.070	0.000
Outdoor Ice Skating	12	4	2	0	3	3	0	3	0	2	2	1	0	2	6	0	40	2.5	0.076	0.027
Golf Courses	1.5	2	0	0	0	0.5	1	0.5	0	0.5	0.5	0	0	0	1.5	1	9	0.6	0.017	0.014

A M E N I T Y

POPULATION

The sixteen park districts included in this comparison range in population from 8,700 (Itasca) to 77,000 (Arlington Heights), with an average of approximately 33,000; just 4,000 less than the Addison Park District. Of those park districts included in the comparison, Elk Grove and Glen Ellyn have population numbers most similar to Addison, with approximately 35,000 residents in each district.

ACRES OF PARK LAND

The total acres of land are used for this comparison, including land that is owned and leased by the park districts. The acreage in the comparison ranges from only 96 acres in the Medinah Park District to 891 acres in the Wheaton Park District.

NRPA has long utilized 10 acres per 1000 population as a standard recommendation for the amount of land that a park and recreation agency should provide. Of course this standard is one that, again, varies based on local needs and assessment. While the Addison Park District has approximately 100 fewer acres than the average of the sixteen comparison districts, the true comparison is in the number of acres per 1000 population. The average of the sixteen comparative districts exceeds the NRPA standard in a relatively significant manner, with 11.6 acres per 1000 residents.



The Addison Park District is one of the five districts that are below the NRPA standard, with 7.6 acres per 1000 population. This can be attributed in large part to the development trends of the 1950s and 60s, when open space was not a priority in residential development. Only a few developers from that era created master plans that included significant open space. Acquisition of lands that become available will allow the District to approach the 10-acre NRPA standard.

In the Chicagoland area, there are numerous park districts that provide less than five acres per 1000 because of their history of land development and open space acquisition. In fact, two nearby park districts average only 1.15 acres per 1000 residents. These park districts, in densely developed communities inside the I-294 corridor, were purposely excluded from this comparison as they do not accurately represent the suburban development patterns found in most of the area. Addison is not typical of overall suburban development either, but managed to acquire and develop a significant number of parcels to meet the recreation needs of the community

Other park districts in the comparison significantly exceed the 10 acres per 1000 standard as visionary planning and development combined to allow greater open space for parks and recreation to be provided. Oak Brook and Wheaton exceed 15 acres per 1000, while Elk Grove and Bensenville each have over 13 acres per 1000.



BALL FIELDS

The number of baseball and softball fields varies significantly from district to district, and the type of field also varies. Ball fields for neighborhood pick-up games may not have all the amenities of competition field, but still meet resident needs. Only two of the districts, Itasca and Glen Ellyn, provide more than one ball field for every 1000 population. Only six of the sixteen comparison districts provide a greater ratio of ball fields to population than does APD. With 22 ball fields, APD provides one ball field for every 1,682 residents of the District. While APD does have some park sites where additional ball fields for neighborhood play could be developed, 82% of the Community Survey respondents feel that the availability of ball fields is at least average, with 53% good to excellent.

SOCCER/FOOTBALL FIELDS



The Addison Park District provides 9 marked soccer and football fields to serve its residents. APD provides one soccer/football field for every 4,111 residents of the District. Only the Itasca Park District provides a ratio of soccer/football fields higher than one per 1000 population. Of the sixteen districts compared, only two provide lesser ratio than APD. It should be noted that there are several parks that have open space that can be utilized for additional fields, with many currently used by residents for neighborhood pick-up games.

TENNIS COURTS

The importance of tennis is evidenced from one park district to another by the extreme differences in ratio of courts to population. The Wheeling Park District provides one tennis court for every 11,750 residents while Oak Brook, where tennis is of obvious importance to its residents, provides one court for every 409 residents. Six of the sixteen park districts compared provide a greater ratio of tennis courts per 1000 than does APD, with the Addison Park District providing one tennis court for every 2,055 residents of the District.



BASKETBALL COURTS



Basketball continues to be a staple amenity in most park districts as an amenity that can be utilized by individuals as well as groups; as a pick-up game as well as organized team competition. The Addison Park District only has 6 basketball courts serving the community, a ratio of one for every 6,167 residents. Only four of the sixteen park districts in the comparison - Downers Grove, Lombard, Medinah and Roselle - provide a lower ratio of basketball courts than does the Addison Park District. Two of the smaller districts, Oak Brook and Itasca, provide more than one court for every

1000 residents. Given that basketball ranked 12th in the Community Survey results for future facility/recreational needs, APD will need to consider its basketball offerings when redeveloping park sites.

PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds are a very important part of any park district, providing many residents with their first park experiences as children. The Addison Park District provides one playground for every 1,850 residents of the District, virtually an exact average of the park districts in the comparison. Every park in the APD system where a playground makes good planning sense has a playground, most with a tot lot area included.



POOLS/AQUATICS

With two pool facilities at Community Park and at Club Fitness, the Addison Park District provides an exact average of the park districts in the comparison. Club fitness is an indoor facility that caters to a membership base, but provides lessons and open swim programs for all. One park district, Medinah, does not have an aquatic facility and utilizes the Addison facilities for their swim programs. Six of the sixteen districts have a greater ratio than APD. Five of the districts have true waterparks, with a wide array of amenities and features. In addition, there are private indoor waterparks nearby with year-round availability, including two that are located within the borders of the comparison districts.

SKATE PARKS

In the Chicagoland area, skate parks continue to be an optional amenity rather than a required one. Finding the right location and offering the right skate features contribute to the success of these amenities. The Addison Park District does not offer a skate park, and of the sixteen park districts in the study, six do not have a skate park. Of the ten districts with skate parks, the Glen Ellyn Park District has two.

SAND VOLLEYBALL

Sand volleyball has increased in popularity in recent years in large part to the success of the US Olympic Volleyball team. Many park districts offer sand volleyball, either in direct relationship to their aquatic facilities or as stand-alone amenities in their parks. Along with the Addison Park District, only two of the districts in the comparison study do not offer sand volleyball facilities, with an average of 2.3 per district overall.

ICE SKATING

Ice skating facilities come in many forms, including ponds, flooded tennis courts, flooded lawn depressions and occasionally an actual ice rink. This diversity makes it very difficult to provide a meaningful comparison as some districts offer two or three of these types. The Addison Park District has no formalized skating, but does flood an area at Highview Park for this purpose. Five of the districts offer no ice skating amenities. The average number of ice skating amenities in the sixteen districts is 2.5, a ratio to population that is three times better than APD. Addison is also home to the Addison Ice Arena, a privately owned facility providing two indoor rinks and ancillary services.

GOLF COURSES



Golf course offerings are unique in that the quality of the course determines whether it will draw users from outside the district in addition to the district residents who might have annual memberships and participate in golf programs. A quality facility in a small district can successfully compete with any other course and make development and operations a viable amenity for a park district. One of the comparative districts (Bensenville) offers 36-holes, two offer 27 holes, two

offer an 18-hole course, four a 9-hole course and seven have no golf facility. With a nine-hole executive course, the Addison Park District provides a service offering ratio that is similar to the average of the sixteen districts. APD has an advantage over many of the other districts as it also offers the Golf Dome for winter use.

CONCLUSIONS

The comparative analysis shows that the Addison Park District provides an amenity to population service ratio that meets the averages of the area districts for five of the ten amenities used for comparative purposes. Tennis is the amenity that APD best compares with the averages of other districts. Ball fields, playgrounds, aquatics and golf are the other recreation amenities where APD meets the averages. Two amenities - skate parks and sand volleyball - are not offered by APD. Only eight of the sixteen districts do have a skate park, but fourteen of the sixteen offer sand volleyball as a standard amenity. APD falls short of the average in providing basketball courts, soccer/football fields and ice skating facilities.

Certainly there are facilities and amenities provided in some area park districts that the Addison Park District does not have. But at the same time APD has some facilities, such as golf dome, that are unique to APD and do not have comparable offerings in other districts. When these findings are compared with the results of the community survey, discussion regarding overall needs of the residents and decisions for new/expanded amenities can take place.