



# SYCAMORE PARK DISTRICT

## Annual Report 2024



**A YEAR OF PLANNING AND PROGRESS**





# SYCAMORE PARK DISTRICT

## MISSION

Connecting Sycamore to wellness, nature, and each other.

## VISION

To enhance the Sycamore community through wellness, recreation and greenspace, the Board and Staff take a responsive and inclusive approach to service, community relationships, and sustaining the Sycamore Park District legacy.

## CORE VALUES

We value...

**Equity** by recognizing and serving all groups in our community, and continually seeking new ways to be inclusive and engage with diverse populations.

**Transparency** through fiscal responsibility, equitable policies, and pro-active communication.

**Sustainability** and are committed to the conservation of Sycamore's greenspace for recreation and the well-being of the community today and for future generations.

**Connections** that stem from the relationships that begin and grow through the opportunities and partnerships we maintain.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report provides highlights of the Sycamore Park District's finances, significant projects and initiatives, facility usage, and community relationships in 2024. It is also a chance to reflect on goals and values as we look towards the coming year.

Complete budget reports and other District information can be found on the Transparency Portal at [sycparks.org](http://sycparks.org). Questions and feedback regarding the information in this document can be sent to

Jonelle Bailey, Executive Director  
[jonelleb@sycparks.org](mailto:jonelleb@sycparks.org) | 815-895-3365.

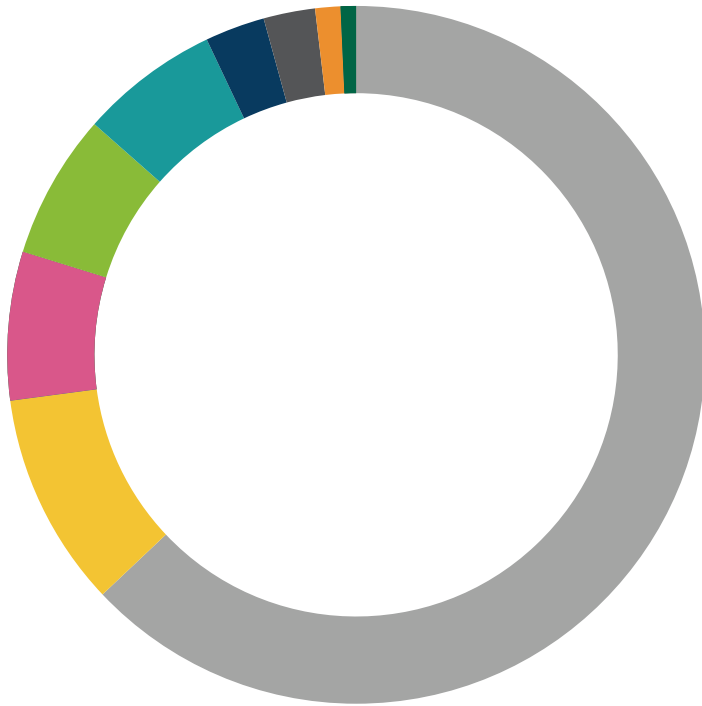
You may obtain a paper copy at the Sycamore Park District Community Center, 480 Airport Road, Sycamore.

## ABOUT THE DISTRICT

The Park District, established in 1923, is in the process of acquiring and developing park sites and open spaces to serve a growing community. Park sites, totaling 509 acres, include neighborhood parks, community parks, two sports complexes, and natural areas. The Park District also maintains a Community Center, 18-hole golf course, dog park, sled hill, and splashpad. In addition, staff provides recreational and wellness programming throughout the parks and facilities.

Through the support of tax dollars, the Sycamore Parks Foundation, and partners, which include community groups and local bodies of government, the Sycamore Park District keeps Sycamore connected to wellness, nature, and each other.

# YOUR TAX DOLLARS



The graph on the left shows how your 2023 tax bill (paid in 2024) is allocated among the various taxing districts in Sycamore.

● School District 427 .....	62.95%
● DeKalb County .....	9.95%
● City of Sycamore .....	6.88%
● Sycamore Park District .....	6.72%
● CC 523 Kishwaukee .....	6.46%
● Sycamore Library .....	2.77%
● Sycamore Road & Bridge .....	2.39%
● Sycamore Township .....	1.17%
● DeKalb Count Forest Preserve ...	0.71%

## CAPITAL BUDGET & ALLOCATING RESOURCES

The District has approximately \$525,000 available annually for the maintenance and upkeep of parks and facilities.

The Board focuses funds on the highest priorities and most impactful ways to achieve sustainability. Areas where these funds were divided in 2024 include:

**NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**

**GOLF COURSE & CLUBHOUSE**

**TRAILS**

**SPLASHPAD**

**COMMUNITY CENTER**

**SPORTS COMPLEXES**

**EQUIPMENT**

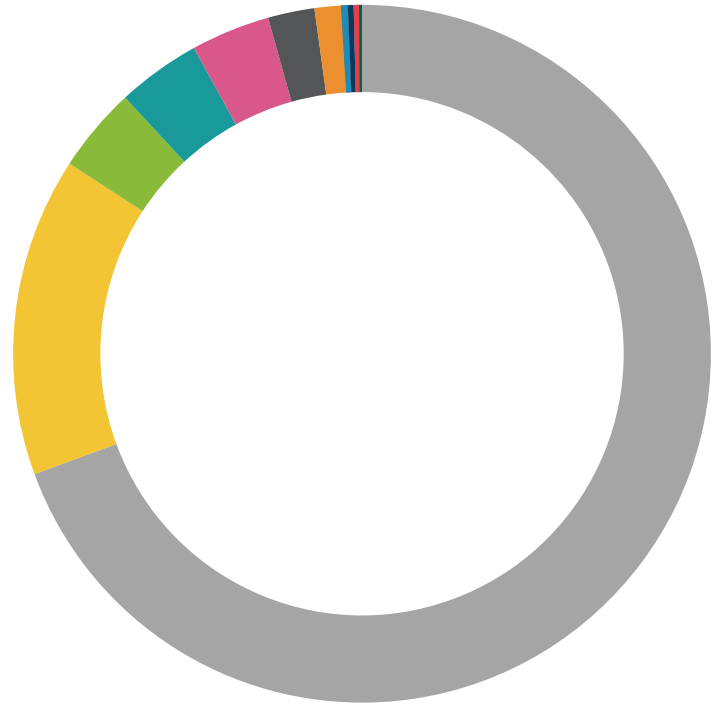
**UPKEEP OF EQUIPMENT**



# OPERATING BUDGET

## Revenue FISCAL YEAR 2024

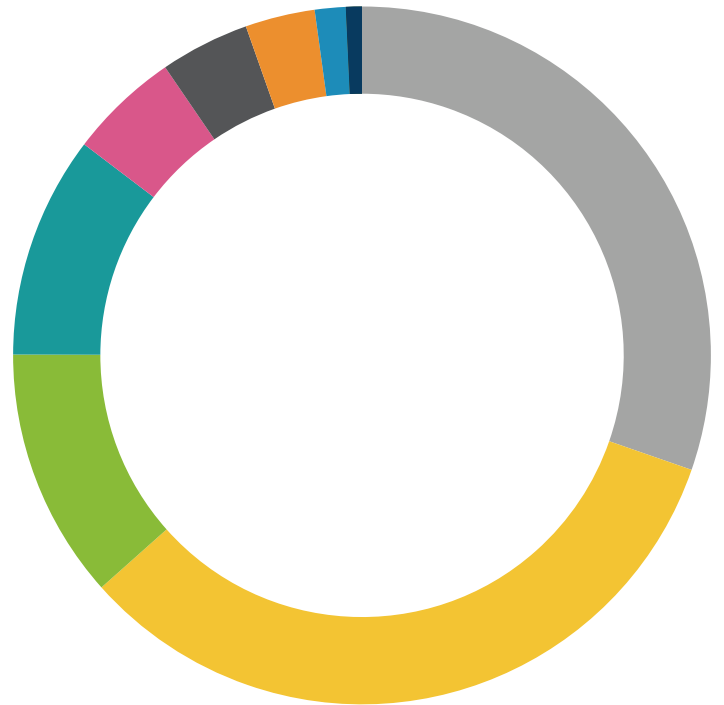
Property Tax Receipts.....	\$3,933,025 ..	69.40%
Golf .....	\$837,293 ..	14.78%
Pathway Fitness/Gym.....	\$223,639 .....	3.95%
Concessions .....	\$219,855 .....	3.88%
Program Fees .....	\$207,275 .....	3.66%
Miscellaneous.....	\$122,383 .....	2.16%
Rentals.....	\$68,876 .....	1.22%
Grants & Donations .....	\$17,678 .....	0.31%
Interest .....	\$15,531 .....	0.27%
Aquatics.....	\$14,182 .....	0.25%
Dog Park.....	\$7,205 .....	0.13%



TOTAL.....\$5,666,942

## Expense FISCAL YEAR 2024

Salaries & Wages.....	\$1,662,390 ..	33.10%
Debt Service.....	\$1,523,039 ..	30.32%
Materials & Supplies .....	\$583,773 ..	11.62%
Employment Expenses .....	\$517,414 ..	10.30%
Contractual.....	\$257,304 .....	5.12%
Utilities.....	\$208,042 .....	4.14%
Special Recreation.....	\$162,269 .....	3.23%
Insurance .....	\$71,866 .....	1.43%
Misc.....	\$36,937 .....	0.74%



TOTAL.....\$5,023,034



# LEGACY CAMPUS & RECREATION



## LEGACY CAMPUS

	2022	2023	2024
Splash Fountain Visits	3,903	3,779	3,300
Dog Park Memberships	381	338	331
Community Center Daily Visits	52,764	54,100	54,289
Pathway Fitness Members	2022	2023	2024
24/7 Members*	279	312	307
Building Hours Pass Holders*	263	279	276
Track Only Passes*	234	270	296
Open Gym Passes*	304	337	332

\*Average Active Members/Pass holders per month

## 2024 Highlights

- The following Recreation staff became Certified Park and Recreation Professionals. This esteemed certification program is managed by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration and the National Park and Recreation Association.  
Lisa Metcalf, Superintendent of Recreation Services  
Chris Hoblit, Recreation Supervisor  
Will Turner, Recreation Supervisor
- Held the first Park Party at Brothers Park with NIU Athletes, the Sycamore Library, Kish Kids Outside, and the Sycamore Parks Foundation.
- Hosted the Opportunity House Volleyball Fundraiser. After their original venue became unavailable, staff helped coordinate the large full-gym rental within a week's notice.
- A new Safety Committee was established to help all departments advocate for safety in the workplace and in public spaces.
- The Sycamore Fire Department presented the Park District with a plaque recognizing its continued support. Training and facility usage between the two agencies has built a strong partnership over the years.





# PARKS AND MAINTENANCE

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

[Reston Ponds Park](#) was completed. Phase I Projects included a playground, small loop trail, picnic shelter, soccer field, the district's first dedicated outdoor pickleball court, native landscaping buffer and an educational sign.

[Kiwanis Prairie Park's](#) playground received a new music chime feature donated by the Kiwanis Club of Sycamore. Also, the small play structure was replaced with a net climber.

Plans for [North Grove Park](#) were completed with a projected installation of 2025.

New drainage installation was completed under [Brothers Park](#) playground structures.

Plans continue for 2025 trail extension from Page and Pleasant Streets to [Old Mill Park](#).



## SPORTS COMPLEXES

Four large tournaments were held at [Citizens Memorial Sports Complex](#) using the five new ballfields for the first time.

The plans for an additional parking lot at [Riverside Soccer Complex](#) were completed. It is projected it will be installed summer 2025.

## WEATHER HIGHLIGHTS

Sycamore saw severe storms three days in a row July 13-15 with damaging winds causing tree damage and over 3 inches of rain. Long periods of drought extended from mid-summer through fall.

## SUSTAINABILITY

All ball field light fixtures were replaced with LED lights through a Com Ed program. This completes the transition of all Park District lights to LED.

In 2024, solar panels were installed on the Maintenance Building and Community Center roofs at no cost to the District. It is projected to help save 55% on electricity costs.

Over the last two years, an incentive program through ComEd facilitated the installation of energy efficient.

LED lights in facilities, parking lots, and ball fields at little to no cost to the District per project.

## NATURAL AREA MANAGEMENT

In April, the Park District welcomed new Full-time Natural Areas Specialist, Kiara Rodriguez.

### Mowed Areas

Selective mowing of invasive species took place at Riverside Soccer Complex, Legacy Campus, the Disc Golf Course, Old Mill Park, and Merry Oaks Path. While appearing to be haphazard, these large sections targeted nonnative species.

This method is efficient, prevents excess use of chemicals, and gives the surrounding natives a place to drop their seeds with reduced competition.

### New Native Areas

In November, two small native areas were installed at the Reston Ponds Park and Sycamore Golf Club clubhouse. Late-season planting ensures cool soil temperatures that keep the seed from sprouting too early and becoming damaged. Also, some species need the winter freeze/thaw cycle before germinating. An oat cover crop will sprout quickly and complete with the weeds as the native species become established.

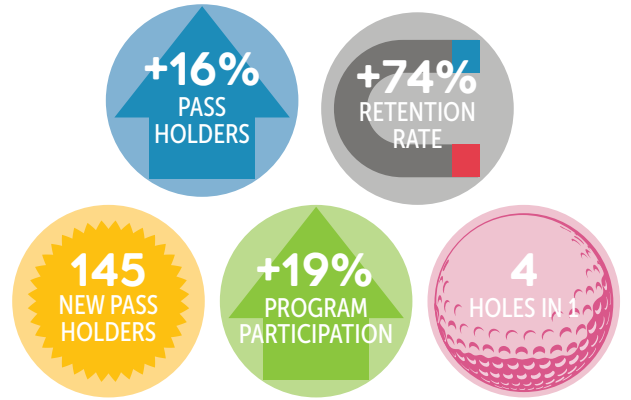


## Educational Classes

Kiara led a series of classes each season called "Habitat Hoppers" with the goal of introducing the field of ecology to elementary and middle school aged children and parents. She also worked with the Recreation Department to provide "Nature Hour" for summer camps. Campers observed and learned about the plants, animals, and insects around the Park District and Illinois.



# SYCAMORE GOLF CLUB



	2022	2023	2024
Pass Holders	374	363	419
Rounds Sold	28,952	31,768	33,849

## 2024 Highlights

- This was Paul Price's first season as Superintendent of Golf Services.
- The course opened for play on March 13 and saw record revenue and increased rounds.
- 24 outings & tournaments totaling 1,761 golfers were held including in-house and community events.
- Voted Best Golf Course in DeKalb County by the Daily-Chronicle's Readers' Choice Awards.
- The Annual Pumpkin Scramble expanded to a two-day event, with 252 golfers participating across both days.
- Implemented a new 6-week Veteran's Golf Program in partnership with Kishwaukee Special Recreation Association and the Chicago District Golf Association.
- Hosted an IHSA Girls Golf Regional Match with 11 schools totaling 66 players.
- Hosted the International Junior Golf Association Player's Challenge for the second year in a row.
- Revamped and Expanded SAY-GOLF and SAY-GOLF JR LEAGUE.
  - 78 total youth golfers over 21 sessions. SAY-GOLF had a 93% attendance rate in June and 96% in July.

## Course & Facility Maintenance

- The road through the golf course from 1 tee to 9 tee was replaced.
- The clubhouse and pro shop had new furnace and air conditioners installed.
- The storage shed at the old shop was removed and replaced with new shed





# 2025 *New Strategic Plan* 2030

As we look ahead to the next five years, our focus is on maintaining the high standard of care for our existing facilities, expanding and enhancing our program offerings, and deepening our engagement with the diverse communities we serve.



## FUNDING

Long-term financial sustainability will be maintained by diversifying revenue streams and optimizing resource allocation.

Secure grants

Enhance program offerings

Increase rental income

Foster partnerships

Expand donation opportunities

Sound financial planning supports facility improvements, capital projects, and long-term community investments.



## GROWTH

Equity and inclusivity are at the forefront of expanding programs and services to meet the evolving needs of our growing and diverse community.

Revise policies

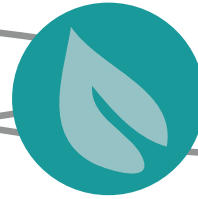
Enhance marketing strategies

Increase program availability

Address staffing needs

Improve metrics to measure success

By tracking key performance indicators, we aim to increase participation rates and enhance impact.



## SUSTAINABILITY

A commitment to conserving green space and historical assets and the sustainability of a healthy agency ensures a vibrant park system today and for future generations.

Sustainable practices

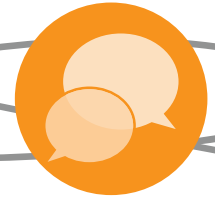
Environmental education

New conservation initiatives

Succession planning

Ongoing training/education

Balancing the protection of our resources with the recreational needs of the community will create healthy long-lasting environments for all.



## ENGAGEMENT

Building deeper, more meaningful connections with all community members to improve and increase services.

Stakeholder participation in decision-making processes

Improve communication

Increase visibility

Ensure access for all

Promote physical and mental well-being

Successful engagement means creating a welcoming environment that values health, wellness, safety, and equitable opportunities.



## Our Commitment to You

As a reflection of community input this plan prioritizes...

- Access & Equity
- Health, Wellness & Safety
- Sustainability & Conservation.
- Community Engagement & Safety
- Economic Development & Revenue Generation

## Investing in Our Future

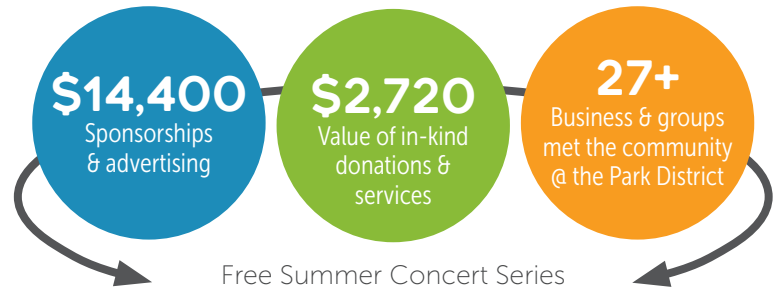
The Board and staff are actively working on...

- Scholarship Program
- Community Engagement
- Pool Development: Securing land and exploring funding opportunities for future pool development.
- Trail Connections: Prioritizing connections between various parks and exploring partnerships to expand our trail network.
- ADA Compliance: Ensuring all our facilities are accessible and inclusive.



# Community Connections

Community connections play a vital role in maintaining a vibrant park system that doesn't just exist - it thrives!



- Free Summer Concert Series
- Live Music at Sip 'n' Savor
- Helped make free community events happen
- Free Community Outreach Programming
- Enhanced programming by lending expertise
- Prizes added a special local connection to events and took that impact off of the entry fee.
- In-kind service supplemented operation costs.

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS

- City of Sycamore
- Sycamore CUSD 427
- Kishwaukee Special Recreation Association

## AFFILIATES

- AYSO Soccer
- Kishwaukee Valley Storm
- Sycamore Youth Baseball
- Sycamore Girls Softball

## PARTNERS

- DeKalb County Forest Preserve District
- DeKalb County History Center
- Family Service Agency of DeKalb County
- Kish Kids Outside
- Kishwaukee Special Recreation Association
- Sycamore Chamber of Commerce
- Sycamore Parks Foundation
- Sycamore Public Library

## FRIENDS, SPONSORS, & DONORS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Banner Up Signs                                     | Old National Bank                              |
| Chef Rudy Galindo                                   | Orthodontic Experts                            |
| DeKalb County United Soccer                         | Pest Control Consultants                       |
| DeKalb Mechanical                                   | Pizza. Beer. Whiskey                           |
| DeKalb Park District                                | Raising Cane's                                 |
| Doty and Sons Concrete Products, Inc.               | Ralph's Car Wash                               |
| Edward Jones Financial Advisor: Brittany L. Starkey | Resource Bank                                  |
| Engineering Resource Associates                     | Rosati's Pizza                                 |
| First State Bank                                    | Safe Passage                                   |
| Genoa Park District                                 | ServiceMaster Restoration and Cleaning by Skip |
| Hauser-Ross Eye Institute                           | Sycamore Chamber of Commerce                   |
| Jubilee Artisans                                    | Sycamore Integrated Health                     |
| Kiwanis Club of Sycamore                            | Sycamore Lions Club                            |
| Midwest Irrigation                                  | Sycamore Orthodontics & Pediatric Dentistry    |
| MVP Sports Bar                                      | Sycamore Whiskey Club                          |
| NewLife Church of Sycamore                          | Sycamore-DeKalb Chevy                          |
| NIU Athletic Dept                                   | Turning Back Time Car Club                     |
|   | Winters Landscaping                            |

## Staff Attended 6 Community Events/Programs

- Chamber's Community Expo & Job Fair
- Chamber's Leadership Academy
- Hy-Vee Car Show and Back-to-School Event
- School District's Back-to-School Bash
- Chamber's Power Academy at Sycamore High School
- Sycamore School District Family Academy Events



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Bill Kroeger  
President



Ben Doty  
Vice President



Ted Strack  
Commissioner



Daryl Graves  
Commissioner



Denise Ackmann  
Commissioner

## PARK BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Commissioners meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 6pm in the Sycamore Golf Club Clubhouse, 940 E. State Street, unless otherwise noted at [sycparks.org](http://sycparks.org). The public is invited to attend.

## LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Jonelle Bailey..... Executive Director, CPRE, MAOL
- Jeff Donahoe.....Superintendent of Parks & Facilities, GCSAA, CPO, CPSI
- Jackie Hienbuecher.....Superintendent of Finance & Business Services, CPA & CPRP
- Lisa Metcalf.....Superintendent of Recreation Services, CPRP
- Paul Price.....Superintendent of Golf Services

ESTABLISHED  
**1923**

**21**  
PARKS

**9.8**  
MILES  
TRAILS

**509**  
ACRES