



**OLMSTED
PARKS
CONSERVANCY**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2023 - 2033**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Organizing and facilitating a robust process that results in a creative, forward-looking and inclusive strategic plan is significant endeavor. The Consultant Team would like to thank the numerous members of the community, partner organizations, and organizational leadership and staff that generously contributed to the development of this plan. This includes but is not limited to those listed below.

Olmsted Parks Conservancy Staff and Board of Trustees

Louisville Parks & Recreation staff

Department of Public Works staff

Aretha Fuqua, West Louisville Tennis Club

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Shawn Reily, Tyler Park Neighborhood Association

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Henry Heuser

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OLMSTED PARKS CONSERVANCY

The Olmsted Parks and Parkways of Louisville create a canvas upon which the community can come together, connecting across diversity and differences to share in the commonality of the human experience of being outside, enjoying play, and celebrating the beauty of nature. Chartered in 1989, Olmsted Parks Conservancy is a strategic partner with the City of Louisville and Louisville Parks and Recreation to help protect, restore and enhance the system of 17 Olmsted parks and network of parkways within the city.

This Strategic Plan was developed in coordination with key partners and stakeholders and details the priorities and direction of the Conservancy over the next 10 years.

OUR VISION

Elevate our parks to bring the restorative power of nature to all.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to restore, enhance and forever protect Louisville's Olmsted-designed parks and parkways, connecting nature and neighborhood while strengthening the community's well-being.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Olmsted Parks Conservancy is an organization that just marked its 30-year anniversary in 2019 serving the neighborhoods and community of Louisville focused on the protection and advancement of the Olmsted parks and parkways system. Frederick Law Olmsted first visited Louisville in 1891 and subsequently developed the design of the community's first three large multi-purpose parks – Cherokee, Iroquois, and Shawnee Parks – as well as a system of interconnecting parkways to link them together. The premise of Olmsted's designs are parks that connect communities through providing mental, physical and social recreation. Olmsted's guiding principals were public spaces that reflect the natural character of the land, support balanced uses, are easily accessible, and preserve the prominence of nature to built landscapes.

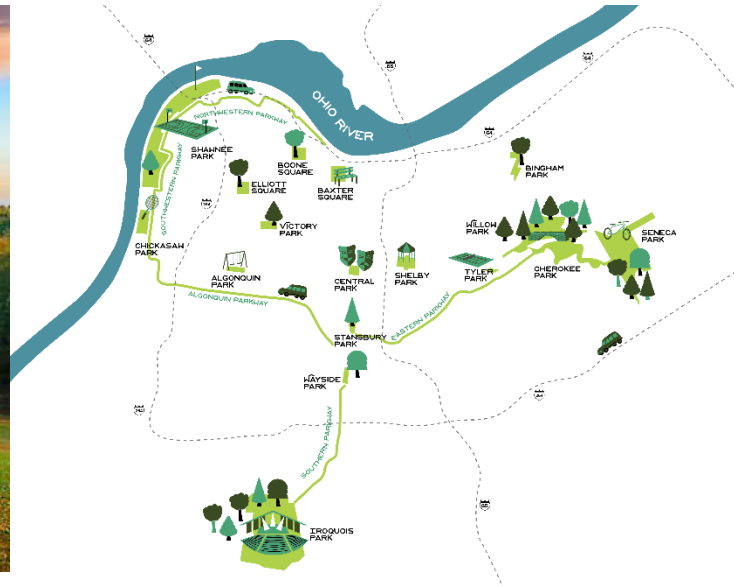
We are dedicated as an organization to further the original design intentions of Olmsted while also modernizing these parks to meet the needs of current and future generations. We do this through our commitment to our core values:

- **Stewardship:** We act as trustworthy and reliable caretakers of parks, resources, and nature.
- **Community:** We bring people together on common ground for the public good.
- **Inclusivity:** We strive to seek out the perspectives and experiences of all Louisvillians and represent diverse voices and interests in all we do.
- **Enduring:** We bridge past, present, and future by upholding Olmsted's vision, meeting today's needs, and preparing for generations to come.

Today we are the stewards of 17 Olmsted parks located throughout the Louisville community and the network of parkways that interconnect them. We are respectful of the past, nestled in the present, and are looking to the future as we crafted this strategic plan that outlines our key priorities and planned action steps over the next 10 years. We extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to our community partners and stakeholders, donors, volunteers, members of our Board of Directors, and our staff as we could not be successful without your untiring commitment and support.

LOUISVILLE'S OLMSTED PARKS

	Acres	Playground	Picnic Shelter	Tennis Court	Ballfield	Multi-purpose Field	Basketball Court	Volleyball Court	Sprayground	Swimming	Restrooms	Picnic Tables	Walking/Running Path	Community Center	Amphitheater	Archery	Mountain Biking	Hiking Trails	Dog Run	Fishing	Golf	Horseshoe Pit	Lodge	Equestrian Trails	Disc Golf
Algonquin Park	17	•	•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•												
Baxter Square	4	•	•	•			•		•			•		•											
Bingham Park	4	•					•		•		•	•													
Boone Square	4	•	•				•		•		•	•													
Central Park	17	•		•				•	•		•	•			•								•		
Cherokee Park	389	•	•			•	•		•		•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•				
Chickasaw Park	61	•	•	•		•	•		•		•	•	•							•		•	•		
Elliott Park	4	•	•			•	•		•		•	•										•			
Iroquois Park	726	•	•	•			•		•		•	•	•		•	•				•	•			•	•
Seneca Park	135	•		•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•				•	•			•				
Shawnee Park	285	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•					•		•	•				
Shelby Park	17	•	•	•		•	•		•		•	•	•	•								•			
Stansbury Park	7	•		•			•	•	•		•	•													
Tyler Park	13	•		•			•		•		•	•	•												
Victory Park	4	•					•		•		•	•	•										•		
Wayside Park	2																								
Willow Park	1.37	•	•								•	•													



THE NEED FOR OLMSTED PARKS CONSERVANCY

Louisville's Olmsted park system was always meant to be a jewel of the City, and with the vision and leadership of Olmsted Parks Conservancy and the support of our donors, it can be.

Our 17 Olmsted-designed parks and six parkways have unique needs and opportunities that require a specific set of skills to operate. Olmsted Parks Conservancy understands what makes these parks so special and has the vision required to manage these landscapes to their full potential.

THE VALUE OF OLMSTED PARKS CONSERVANCY

Olmsted Parks Conservancy provides an extra layer of care and engagement for Olmsted-designed landscapes. We offer unparalleled expertise and experience, with our staff focused on balancing the historical value alongside modern day ecological needs and community opportunities.

We act as a partner to Louisville Parks and Recreation as well as to the communities in which Olmsted landscapes are located through our focus on capital investment, stewardship, advocacy, and programming.

Olmsted Parks Conservancy has maintained a high level of trustworthiness through our 30 years of experience and this plan outlines how we will achieve organizational excellence in the immediate future and set the parks up for long term success.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Over the next 10 years, Olmsted Parks Conservancy will prioritize strategy and actions around five strategic initiatives. Those initiatives are:

Park Investments

The Conservancy helps to fill a critical gap in funding for the Olmsted Parks system as an independent and dedicated source of strategic support and leadership that meets capital needs which enrich the visitor experience and enhance environmental stewardship.

Stewardship

The Conservancy protects, restores, and enhances the Olmsted Parks system through our work in ecological restoration, landscape management, horticulture, and cultural resource stewardship.

Outreach and Advocacy

The Conservancy centers community voices through feedback from park users, neighborhood groups, and other key stakeholders on important park matters, allowing us to better understand and address community needs.

Community Programming

The Conservancy deepens connections between parks and people through thoughtful and intentional community programs.

Organizational Excellence

The Conservancy strives to be a self-improving organization that meets the community's needs, is a reliable partner, and is aligned with the legacy and intent of the Olmsted Parks system.

PARK INVESTMENTS

- 1. Develop capital improvement and maintenance plans for each park that clearly define Olmsted Parks Conservancy and Louisville Parks roles and expectations to be reinforced in the agreement with the City including both financial and maintenance responsibilities in individual project agreements.**
- 2. Explore contracting out more park maintenance activities that we already do and where efficiencies can be gained including but not limited to deferred maintenance and bench installation.**

STEWARDSHIP

- 1. Meet annually with Louisville Parks and community stakeholders to review resource management issues, priorities, and strategies for each Olmsted Park.**
- 2. Meet annually with Louisville Parks maintenance staff to provide updated training on the role and responsibilities of the Conservancy in Olmsted Parks.**
- 3. Follow management plan for each park that addresses:**
 - a. Ecological health of the natural resources of Olmsted Parks.**
 - b. Vegetation and invasive species management.**
 - c. Management of historically and culturally significant resources of Olmsted Parks.**
 - d. Climate adaptation and resilience.**
 - e. Supports varied and diverse usage and enjoyment of Olmsted Parks.**
- 4. Grow volunteer service hours to approximately 25% of the Conservancy's labor costs and align hours by park with equity goals.**

OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

1. Cultivate relationship-focused community support for each park using one of the following three models (as most feasible/appropriate per park):
 - a. Formalized Friends group
 - b. Coalition of user groups and/or neighborhood associations
 - c. Community member advisory group
2. Deploy a more equitable expenditure of volunteer time across parks and neighborhoods on an annual basis, develop an analytical framework for volunteer hours based on the previous assessment performed by Olmsted Parks Conservancy.
3. Establish a proactive parks advocacy program with the goal of expanding the current park-specific approach to implementing change at scale across Louisville and expand our network.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

1. Work through partners to activate spaces within the Olmsted Park system as an enabler and facilitator, in line with the Conservancy's mission and available resources.
2. Provide high-quality volunteer opportunities and experiences for a broad spectrum of audiences.
3. Curate a productive calendar of community events that provide superb visitor experiences, activate the Olmsted Parks and their amenities, and attract revenue opportunities.



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

1. Expand earned revenue opportunities that could include either partnerships or direct service provision.
2. Implement a communications and engagement plan that elevates the brand of Olmsted Parks Conservancy, establishes its prominence as a major community partner, and builds resiliency in long-term, sustainable fundraising (potential cause-oriented fundraising) that includes facilitating an annual campaign.
3. Align organizational chart around the priorities articulated in this plan.
4. Explore capital projects that include operations funding.
5. Explore feasibility of Annual Meeting for members and donors, during which Conservancy staff present updates from previous year and vision for upcoming year.
6. Align the operational strategies that emerge from this Strategic Plan with the organization's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion goals, and focus on the development and retention of our team members.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

The future for Olmsted Parks Conservancy and the people and parks we serve is bright.

The path plotted in this plan will ensure that Olmsted Parks are available for enjoyment for generations to come. Through our inclusive approach that centers community needs and stewardship opportunities, we will create an enduring legacy that helps Louisville live up to the name “City of Parks.”

The Olmsted name is both an honor and a responsibility, and with the help of our staff, our community, and our donors, we look forward to meeting the needs of the park system today and in the future.

