



## PARK DISTRICT of OAK PARK

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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***Park Board of Commissioners awards construction contracts to build Community Recreation Center (CRC) and exceeded goal with 29.39% of MWBE awards.***

The Park District of Oak Park exceeded its goal awarding diverse vendors more than 29% of contracts for construction of the Oak Park Community Recreation Center.

On Nov. 18 the Park Board of Commissioners awarded the construction contracts for the CRC; bids opened on Nov. 5. The Board was thrilled to receive bids within the established budget, given concerns over rising steel costs and supply chain issues. The Board awarded 29.39% of the construction contracts to Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE), which exceeded the District's 25% goal.

The total project cost is \$20.5 million. An Oak Park family donated the land for the new CRC to the Parks Foundation, which then transferred it to the District in 2019. It is located on the south side of Madison Street between Harvey and Highland. The facility will be built as a net-zero energy building, and the Park District secured funding from both the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and the Village of Oak Park's sustainability fund to cover the additional cost of the energy efficiency, which is \$2.2M. Groundbreaking for the CRC is set for Saturday, March 19. Construction is estimated to take 12 months for completion.

Kassie Porreca, President of the Park Board, said: "The CRC will be a game-changer for serving a diversity of people of all ages in our community. We are building "A Place to Belong." The Parks Foundation of Oak Park is doing an excellent job raising private funds to support the Center that will include gymnasiums, an e-sports room, a fitness center, kids' play zone, community rooms, a walking track and more. Regardless of your age, this space will have something for you."

The CRC will provide *free* afterschool access for 6-12 grade Oak Park students who can use the sports courts and e-sports room, participate in teen-developed programming, and have a safe space to gather. All Oak Park residents will have access to the free indoor walking track as well as low-cost fitness memberships to promote a healthy lifestyle regardless of income.

“The Park District anticipates that community members will gather in the lobby, attend community meetings, walk together on the track, play pickleball, shoot some hoops or participate in a variety of our program offerings,” said Jan Arnold, Park District Executive Director “It is the Park District’s desire to create a safe and welcoming space for all.”

The Park District is excited to partner with the Oak Park Community Mental Health Board and believes their presence in the building will be beneficial to our community. This partnership highlights the importance and commitment to both mental and physical health. Additionally, the need to access mental wellness services was identified in the 2016 feasibility study, where OPRF high school students expressed the need for accessible mental health services and desire to include these services as part of the CRC offerings.

*The discussion of the CRC began in 2013 during the creation of the Park District 10-year plan (2014-2023). As part of the plan, the District undertook a feasibility study in 2016 in which all six Oak Park taxing bodies participated. This study identified the desire, and more importantly, the need for such a space. In 2018, the Parks Foundation stepped up to lead a Capital Campaign to assist in raising funds for the construction of the CRC. In 2020, the Park District held three community meetings via Zoom to gather feedback that helped shape the design and amenities inside the new facility. This fall, the Foundation launched the community portion of the campaign after it secured 75% of the project funding.*

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