

GOMPERS PARK

Framework Plan



Chicago Park District
Department of Planning & Development
January 2014

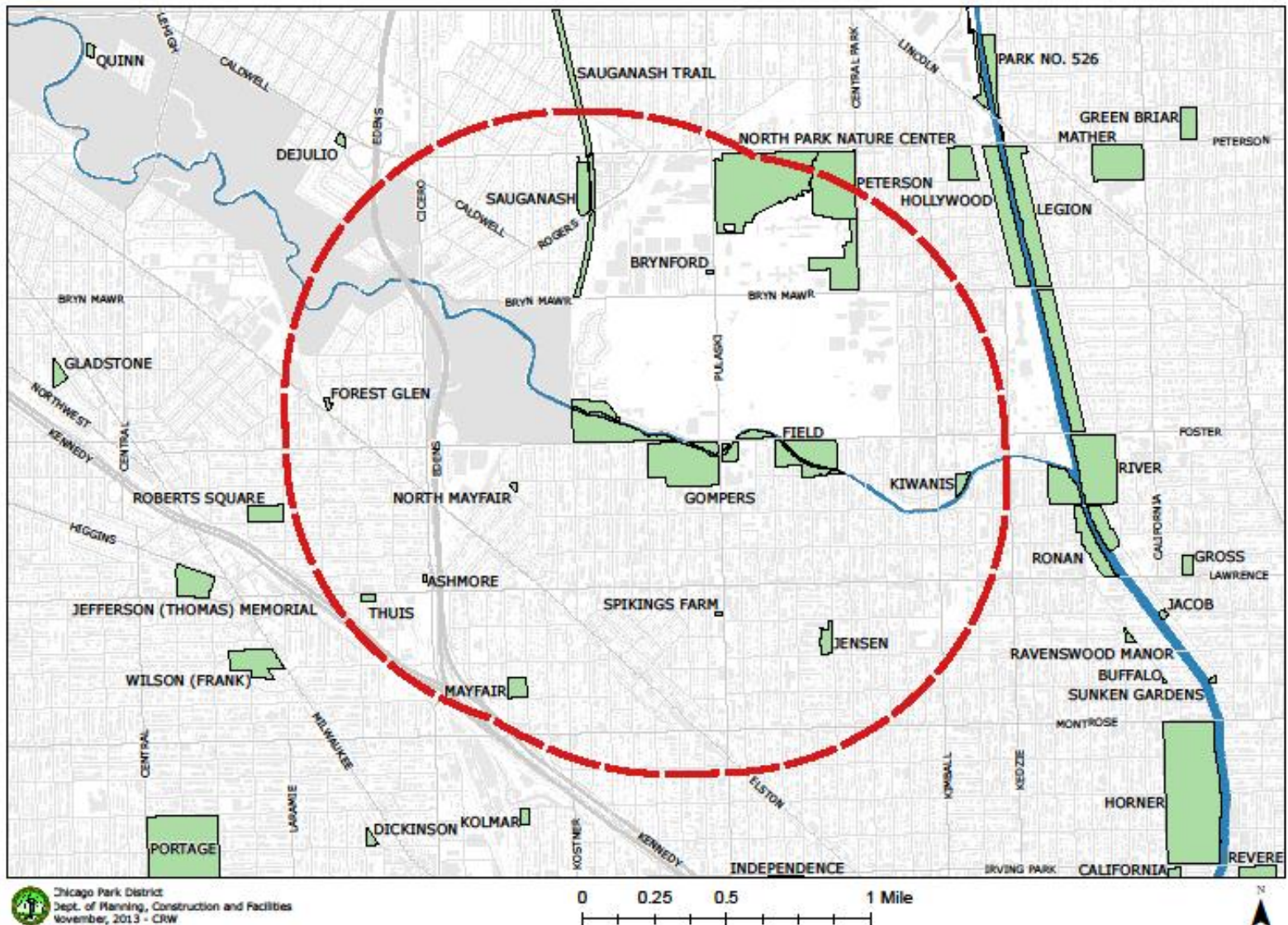
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Framework Plan Purpose

The purpose of this framework plan is to create a long-term plan for Gompers Park that responds to diverse neighborhood needs as well as the historic context of the park. It provides a vision for improvements to the park over time and serves as a planning tool for both the community and the Chicago Park District. It also outlines priorities and ensures that improvements are done in a coordinated and holistic manner. The plan is consulted as capital funding becomes available.

Radius Map – One Mile



Aerial Map

Gompers (Samuel) Park
4222 W. Foster Ave.



Chicago Park District
Dept. of Planning, Construction and Facilities
CRW

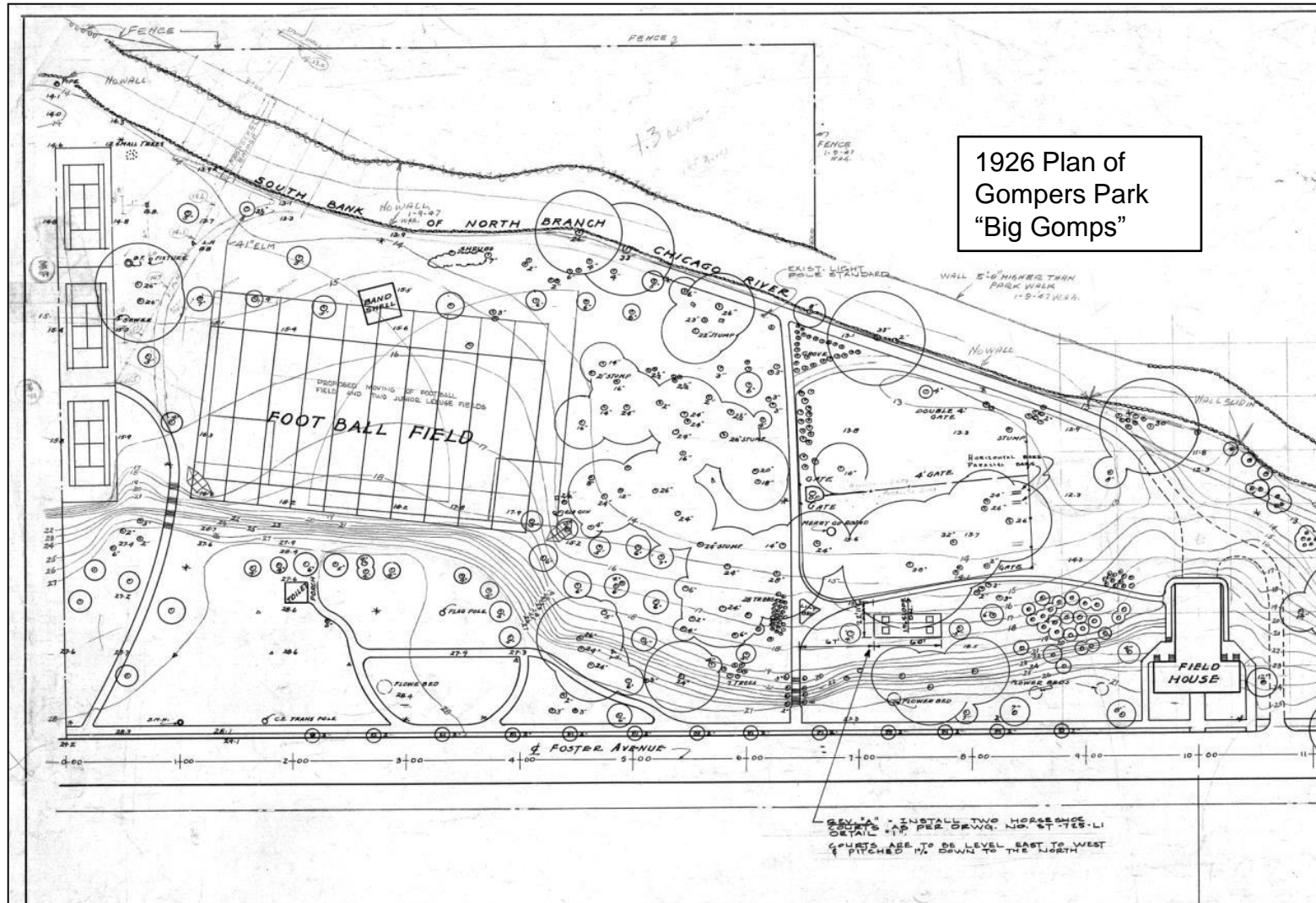


Summer 2009 Aerial
October 2013

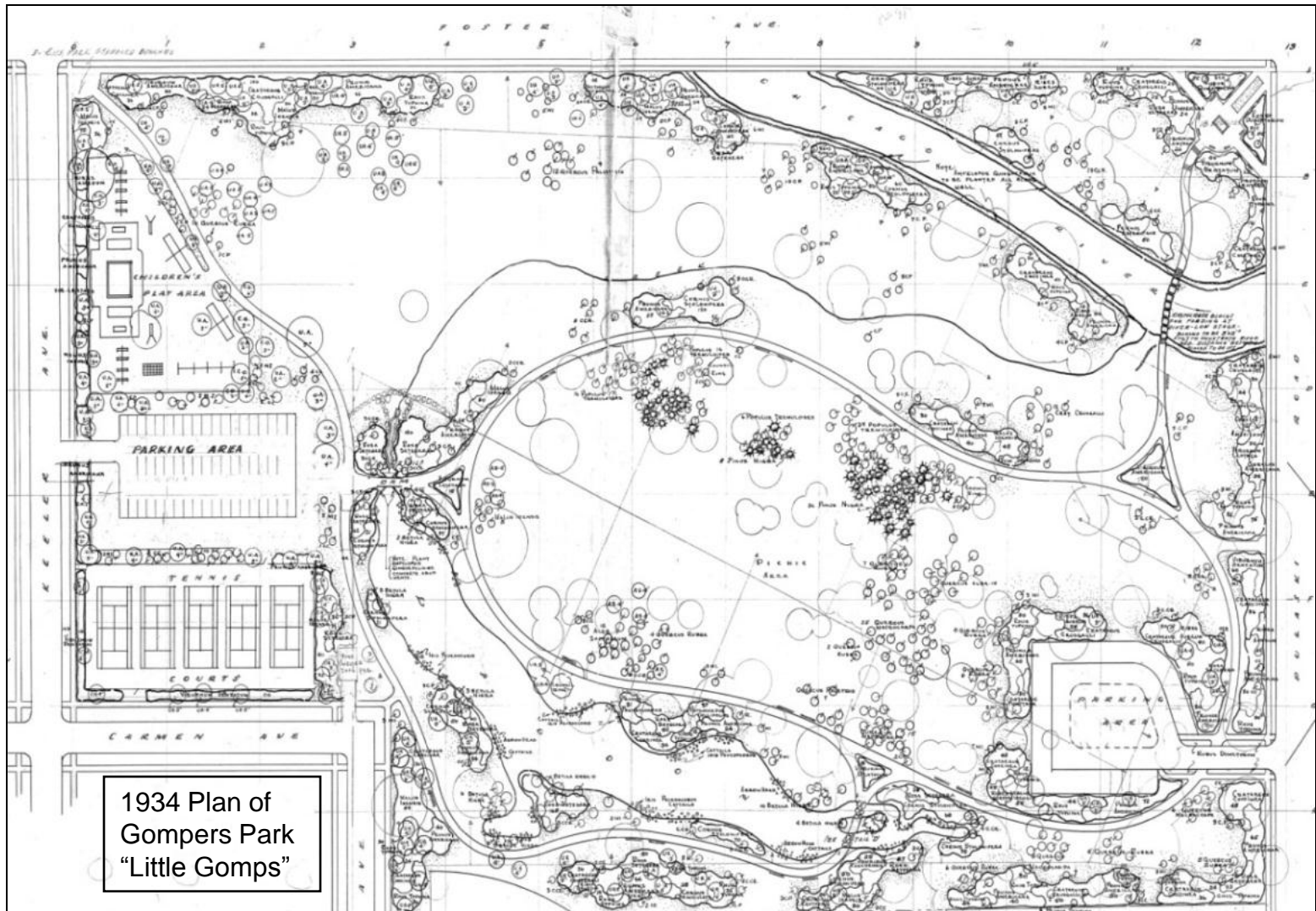
Gompers Park History

Gompers Park was created by the Albany Park District, one of 22 independent park districts consolidated into the Chicago Park District in 1934. In 1926, not long after the Albany Park District identified nearly 40 acres of wooded farmland along the North Branch of the Chicago River, landscape architect Henry J. Stockman prepared a plan to transform the property into parkland. Improvements began almost as soon as initial land purchases were completed in 1927. By 1932, in addition to wooded areas and a natural stream dammed to create lagoons, the property had basketball courts, archery ranges, football fields, and playgrounds. Clarence Hatzfeld, a Chicago architect and member of the Albany Park board, designed the park's Tudor Revival-style fieldhouse. In 1934, financial pressures created by the Great Depression prompted formation of the Chicago Park District. Using federal funding through the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the park district soon began rehabilitating the southern portion of the park, constructing tennis courts, a footbridge over the river, a dam and spillway for the lower lagoon. After adding a wading pool in 1946, the park district built a full-sized swimming pool 30 years later. In the mid-1990s, with tremendous community support, the park district began restoring the wetlands along the south bank of the river according to plans prepared by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In its earliest days, Gompers Park was briefly known as Matson Park, for Samuel Matson, Superintendent of the Albany Park District. Albany Park District President Henry A. Schwartz, an official of the shoemakers' union, soon convinced the park board that it was inappropriate to name the park for a living person. In 1929, the district renamed the site in honor of Samuel Gompers (1850-1924), long-time president of the American Federation of Labor. Elected president of his local cigar makers' union in 1875, Gompers progressed quickly through the ranks, becoming the AFL's first president in 1886.

Historical Images



Historical Images



Historical Images



Viewing south west from Foster Avenue
(1930s)



Existing conditions

Existing Conditions: Playground



Playground



Playground



Playground features



Playground seating

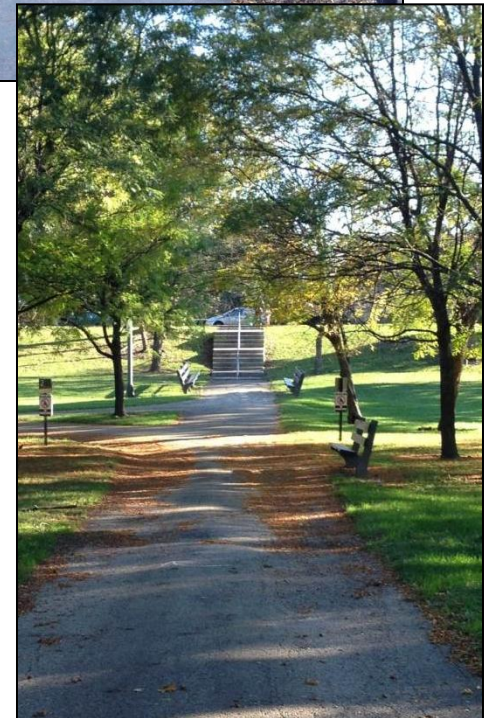
Existing Conditions: Paved Areas



Paved sports court and west property line with Forest Preserve



Existing water spray feature



Path leading south to
Foster Avenue

Existing Conditions: Athletic Areas



Little Goms (south) ballfield flooded



Big Goms (north) ballfield

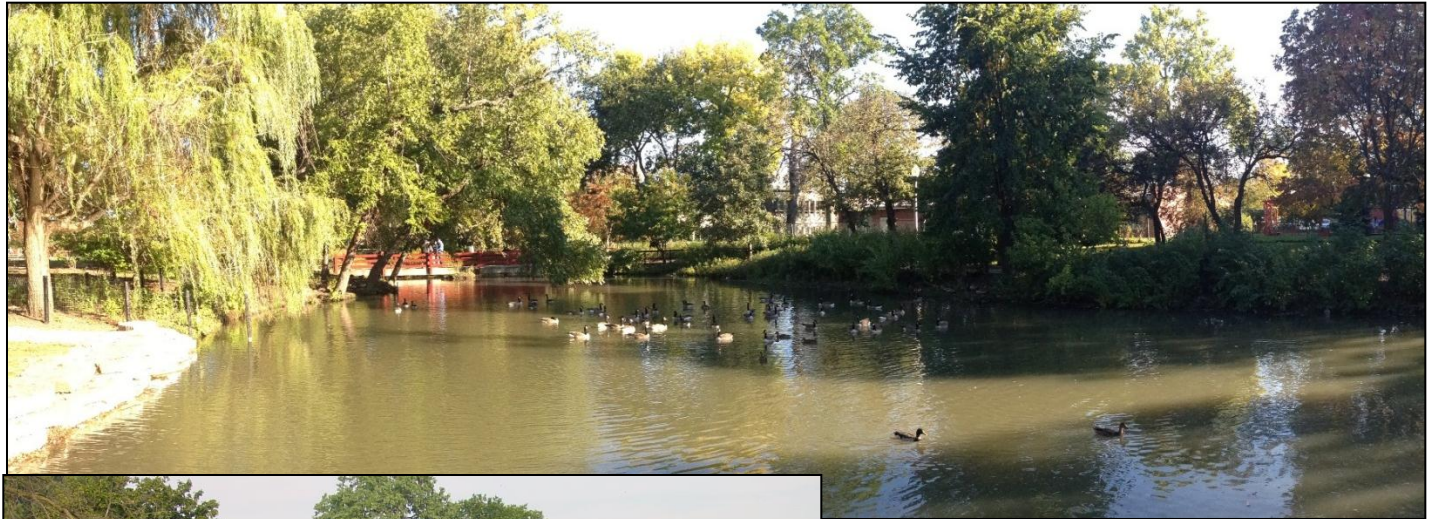


Parking lot and basketball court in "Little Goms" (south)

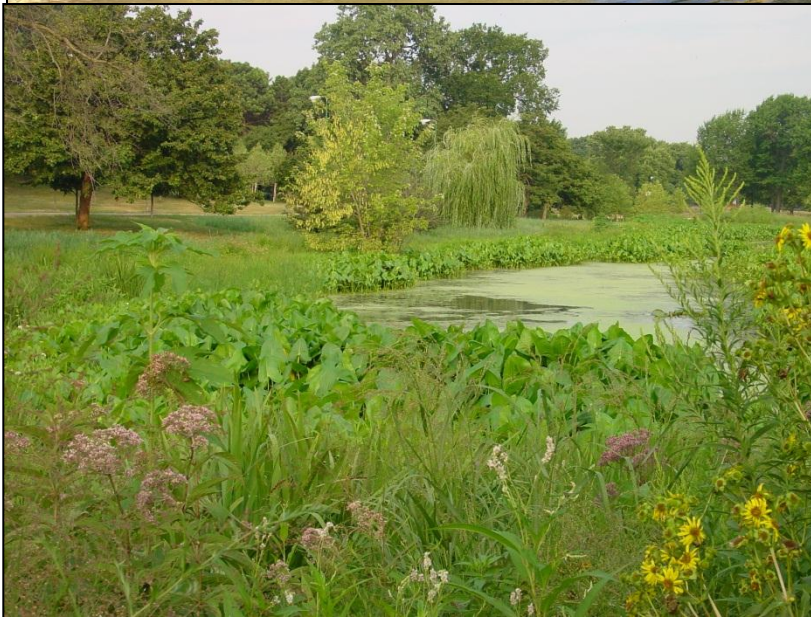


Tennis courts

Existing Conditions: Lagoon and Wetland



Upper lagoon



Wetland viewing west



City water feed / water fall for upper lagoon

Existing Conditions: River



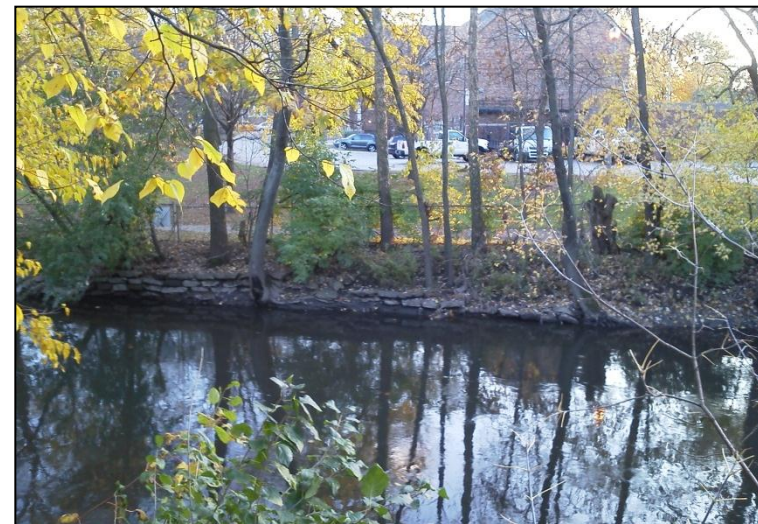
Chicago River and fence north of fieldhouse



Conservation easement area north of river



Chicago River and fence south of Foster



Viewing fieldhouse from the north

Existing Conditions: Flooding



Flooded wetland in "Little Gomps"



Flooded pool



Flooded ballfield in "Little Gomps"



Flooded fieldhouse and maintenance yard

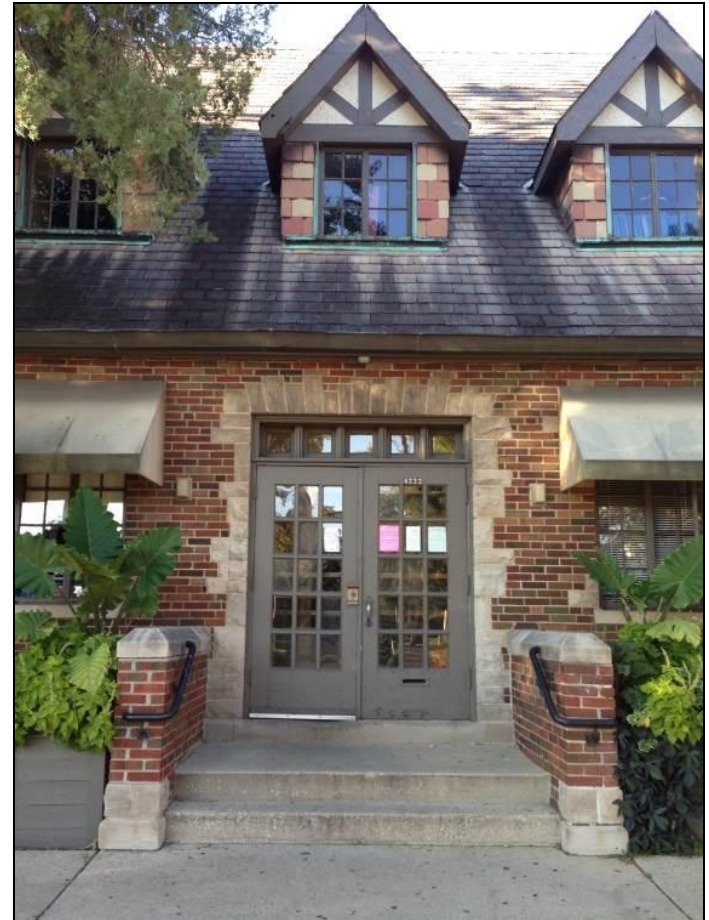
Existing Conditions: Building Exterior



Fieldhouse on Foster Avenue



Fieldhouse viewed from staff parking lot



Entry to fieldhouse

Existing Conditions: Building Interior



Interior drinking fountain



Storage room on second floor



Community Room

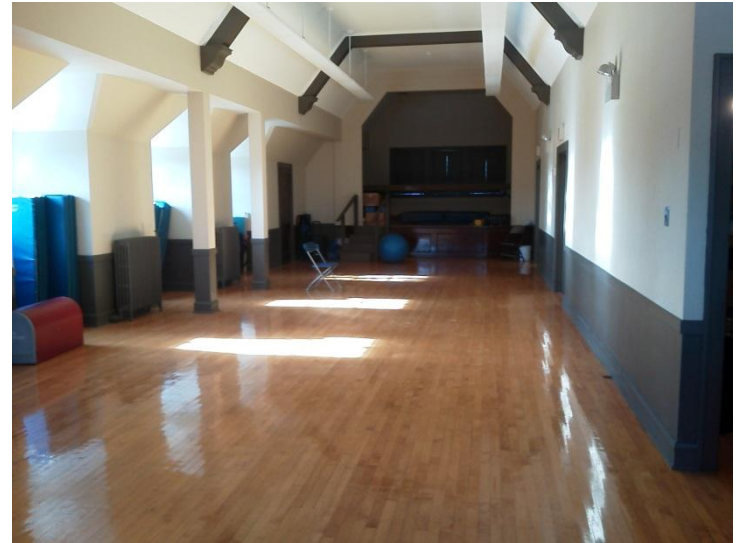


Viewing west from staff room windows

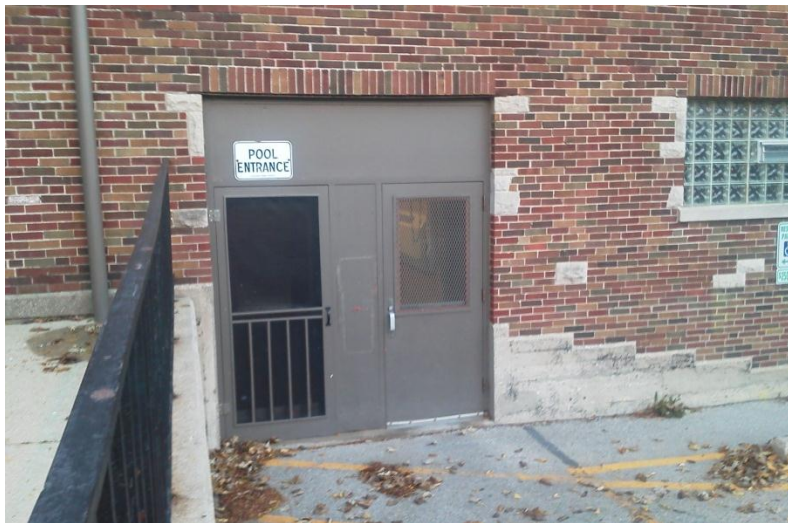
Existing Conditions: Building Interior



South wall of gym



Second floor Auditorium



Ground level entry from parking lot



Community room kitchen

Kick Off Meeting: October 16, 2013

This meeting was held to introduce the framework planning process to the advisory council and community. The meeting included a visioning session where the advisory council supplied ideas for future improvements to the park.

Public Framework Plan Meetings

October 16, 2013

October 30, 2013

December 5, 2013

December 11, 2013

January 23, 2014

Framework Plan Completed

January 23, 2014



Process: Contributors

Gompers Park Framework Plan Participants

Lynn Burmeister
Steve Davern
Jon Erikson
Rich Kroon
Jim MacDonald+
George Mueller*+
Brian Nadig*
Jen O'Grady*
Sharon Parmet*
James Rix
Matt Robertson
Amy Stirk
Mike Stirk*+
Lisa Stringer
Peter Strom
Gretchen Tate*+
Steve Tonkinson

* Gompers Park Advisory Council member
+ Gompers Park Framework Plan Committee

39th Ward – Alderman Laurino's Office

Elizabeth Granato

Chicago Park District

Bob Foster, Planning & Construction
Denise Raymond, Gompers Park Supervisor
Amalia Turkewitz, Planning & Construction
Erich Sprague, Planning & Construction
Maya Solis, North Area Manager



Framework Plan Goals

- Encourage community to use the park
- Create a safe and inviting park environment
- Increase special events in the park
- Repair of existing utilities and infrastructure
- ADA accessible
- Fieldhouse to be visually accessible and pleasing
- Improvements are to enhance park programming
- Reduce Flooding
- Safe access across Foster Avenue
- Improve lighting
- Park improvements should engage the Chicago River as a park element
- Coordinate with the Cook County Forest Preserve and other governmental agencies on mutually beneficial improvements
- Preserve historical context of the park
- Balance passive and active recreation types



Major Recommendations

Playground

- Relocate water spray feature next to the new playground

Chicago River

- Incorporate the river as a prime feature in the park
- Non-motorized boat landing
- Bridge crossing river in Big Gomps
- Remove fencing along river where practical
- Stabilize masonry wall along river

Lagoon, Wetland, and Nature

- Plant additional trees
- Remove invasive species
- Expand and maintain the natural areas
- Native area signage and specific tree / plant identification signage
- Encourage people to use designated fishing areas at the Lagoon
- Expand programming in the Conservation easement north of the river



Trails

- Coordinate with Cook County Forest Preserve to link the north branch trail and Park District trails
- Trails to be ADA compliant
- Foster Avenue underpass to connect Little and Big Gomps. This would be part of the multipurpose trail.
- Incorporate a par (exercise) course along the trail
- Establish the Riverfront Trail through the park that will connect to the Forest Preserve and City of Chicago on street trail connections.

Major Recommendations

Safety

- Improve lighting throughout park
- Security cameras
- Safe access across Foster between the neighborhood and Gompers Park
- Sturdier and more attractive protection along Foster in front of fieldhouse
- Discourage large, non-permitted gatherings

Athletic

- Transform NW roller rink into a skate park
- Grade athletic fields to remove low areas and ponding
- Sports lighting and scoreboard at athletic fields
- Separate basketball court from parking
- Rehab tennis courts to CPD standards

Amenities

- Increase special events such as movies in the parks
- Gathering space for special events
- Find creative ways to add additional parking around Gompers Park
- Add kiosks to inform patrons of park events
- Coordinate with Forest Preserve for use of their parking lot
- Multi-use storage building in Little Gompers



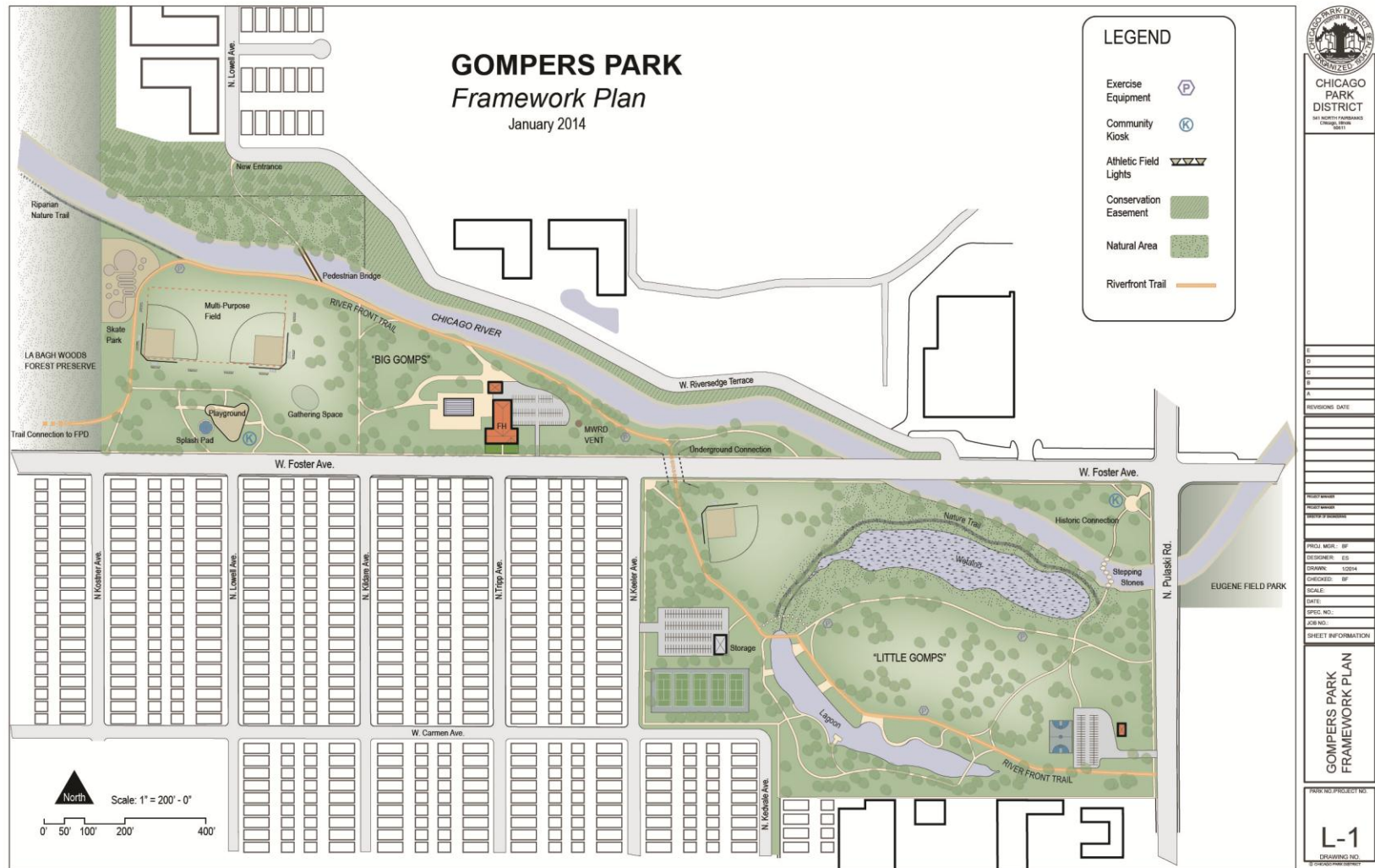
Major Recommendations

Building Improvements

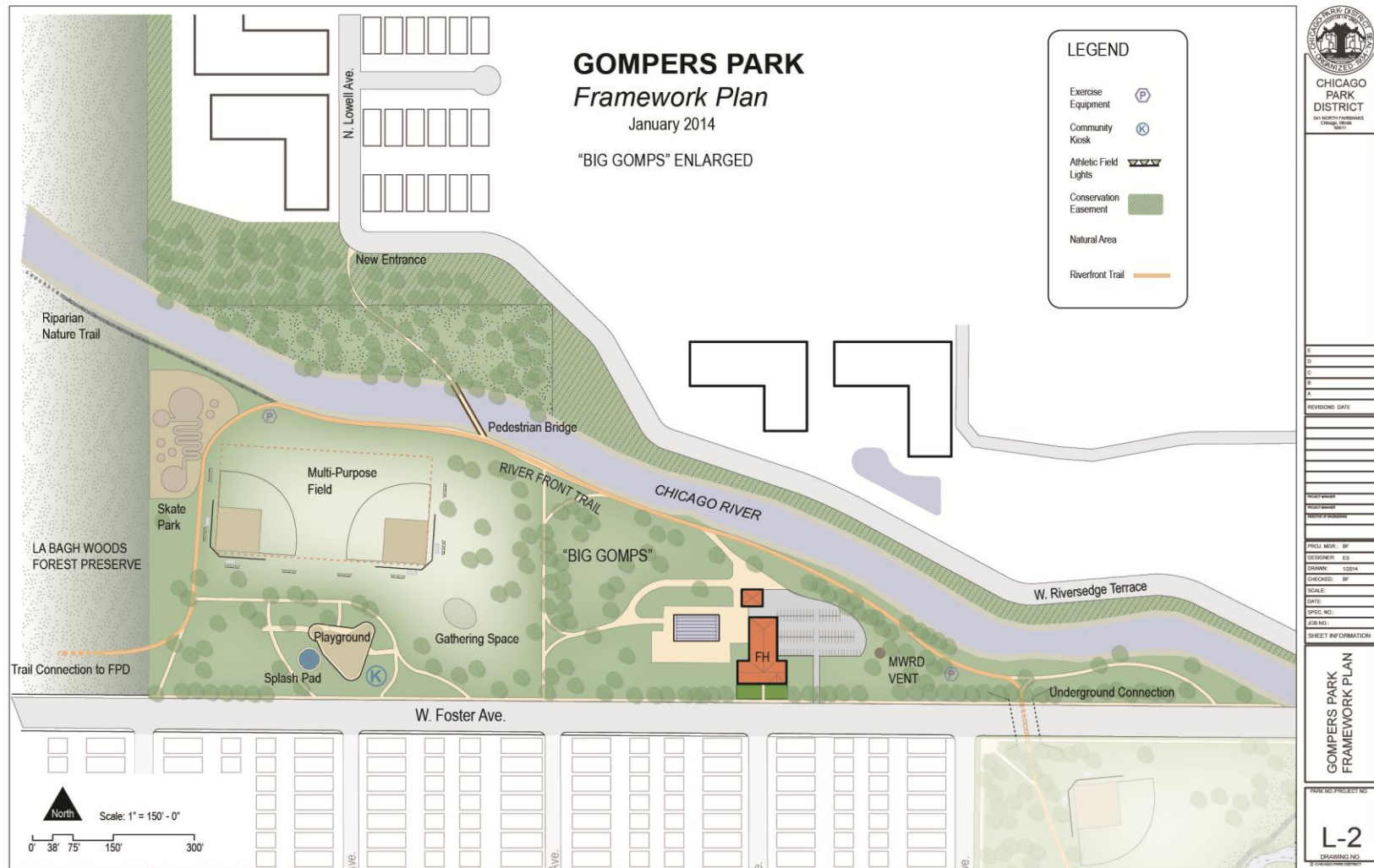
- New exterior doors
- Restore or replace windows
- New roof
- Tuck point building
- New tile in the east room, preschool room and staff office
- Update kitchen on main floor
- New partitions in the bathrooms on main floor (women's and men's)
- Refurbish the water fountain in the main lobby
- New mirrors in both bathrooms on the main floor
- Become ADA compliant
- Finish bathroom in nature/art craft room
- Waterproof around building to prevent flooding
- Convert second story storage room to view the gym



Concept: Overall Plan



Concept: Big Gomps Plan



Concept: Little Gomps Plan

