

Southport Park Association Strategic Plan

Introduction

In 2013 the City of Kenosha Common Council adopted the Southport Park Master Plan (SPMP) which recommended the creation of a private sector partner to assist the city with development and implementation of the plan's envisioned goals. The Southport Park Association (SPA), a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation (NFPC), was established by community volunteers in 2014 to fulfill that recommendation. The City of Kenosha and the SPA entered a Memorandum of Understanding in 2017, establishing a public-private partnership to jointly achieve the aims of the SPMP.

Strategic Plan Overview

SPA Organizational Strengths

- Positive community relationships with citizenry, notably the adjacent Southport neighborhood, other non-profit organizations and across units of government.
- Positive relationships with the City of Kenosha, including the Administration, Common Council, Department Heads, and City Staff.
- SPA's priorities and initiatives align with increasing local interest and financial commitments to historic preservation and sustainable approaches to environmental stewardship. For instance, over the past decade, there has been significant rehabilitation of Kenosha's downtown historic structures and revitalization of the landmark Simmons Island Park.

Southport Beach House Revitalization

At the request of Mayor Antaramian, SPA developed recommendations for utilization and building design in keeping with the historic character and uses of the beach house and objectives of the Southport Park Master Plan. SPA submitted those recommendations to Mayor Antaramian in December 2017.

SPA recommended three conceptual approaches which emphasized the importance of enhanced public engagement with the park through upgraded onsite amenities, sustainable programs and services, and educational opportunities to promote the enduring value of environmental stewardship.

SPA recommended the following uses for the Southport Beach House:

1. Establish onsite food and beverage services via private sector partnership
2. Contract with a private sector vendor for beachfront amenities, equipment, and activities
3. Seek out educational and/or additional community programs that could be offered to the public through seasonal, interim, or ongoing agreements.

Exterior rehabilitation began in 2019 and as of 2026 has been largely completed. Currently a \$115K modernization of the exterior drainage system is underway, jointly financed through grants provided to the SPA [Fund for Lake Michigan] and the City of Kenosha [Wisconsin Coastal Management Program].

Southport Park Landscape-Watershed Rejuvenation Project (SPWRP)

Upon completion of the Design and Utilization plan for the Southport Park Beach House in 2018, Mayor Antaramian asked the SPA for recommendations for improvements to the park landscape, consistent with the vision of the adopted 2013 Master Plan for Southport Park. After the City Parks Commission approved SPA's Watershed Rejuvenation conceptual plan, Mayor Antaramian agreed to set aside funding for implementation of this project. In keeping with SPA's Memorandum of Understanding with the City, the Association applied for and received an \$87K grant from the Fund for Lake Michigan for shovel ready design and engineering construction specifications for the plan. The grant award covered both park Watershed Rejuvenation and an engineered design of a bio-basin exterior drainage system for the historic Southport Beach House--to mitigate non-point source pollution of Lake Michigan and to ensure site stabilization of the beach house itself. These projects were delayed by the COVID pandemic but ultimately approved by the City Parks Commission in 2022.

<https://www.southportparkassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Final-Q.12-Full-Proposal-Project-Narrative.pdf>

https://www.southportparkassociation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/GRAEF-Drainage-Plan-set-20220921_Southport_Beach_House_Drainage_Plans-copy.pdf

<https://live-southport-park-association-2020.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Southport-Park-Watershed-Rejuvenation-Powerpoint-Presentation-1.pdf>

Southport Park Association Watershed Rejuvenation Implementation Strategies

1. Continue to work with the City of Kenosha toward expanded implementation of the public/private partnerships envisioned in the 2013 Master Plan for Southport Park.
2. Expand community engagement and awareness of the SPWRP as developed by the City of Kenosha, Southport Park Association, and Parkitecture and Planning.
3. Maintain ongoing efforts to develop public/private financial partnerships for implementation of the Watershed Rejuvenation Project for Southport Park.