

Lincoln (North) Park Commission

Lincoln Park Commission's, the smallest of the three commissions, only boulevard was Diversey Parkway. The Commission was responsible for connecting the west and south boulevards and parks to the rest through Diversey Parkway, Lincoln Park, and Lake Shore Drive. Early on the commission faced issues with funding and litigation, ultimately leaving the commission unable to develop Diversey Parkway. In 1875, Olof Benson was hired as Superintendent of the Lincoln Park Commission. Benson designed and oversaw construction of Lakeshore Drive and Lincoln Park. By the time the Commission was ready to work on Diversey Parkway, it was already commercialized and was left with no room to widen into a boulevard. The Lincoln Park Commission continued to develop Lincoln Park until it was consolidated into the Chicago Park District in 1934.

West Park Commission

The West Park Commission hired Architect William Le Baron Jenney to design the west parks and boulevards in 1870. Between their financial challenges, lack of civic-minded professionals, poor land conditions, and corruption within the Commission, the west side parks and boulevards had a slow start.

By 1880 only Garfield Park and Humboldt Park were completed, and no boulevard had been started. Two bonds were passed by 1891 to further develop the parks and boulevards for the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. During this time every park and boulevard was worked on within the West Park Commission. Small improvements including new surfacing and electric lighting continued to be worked on throughout the 1890's and into the early twentieth century. Again in 1905, the commissioners were removed due to corruption and replaced by Landscape Architect, Jens Jensen. During the early twentieth century the West Park Commission focused its improvements on adapting the boulevards to vehicular traffic. In 1920, the West Park Commission suffered yet another setback when the governor removed seven of the park commissioners. By 1933 the West Park commission was \$20,000,000 in debt which was a factor in the cities decision to consolidate all park commissions into the Chicago Park District in 1934.

South Park Commission

Right after its creation in 1869, the South Park Commission hired Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, of Olmsted, Vaux & Co. Landscape Architects to design the parks and boulevards in their district. Olmsted and Vaux finished their plans for the South Park Commission in 1870 and construction rapidly started on the parks and boulevards. Construction came to a stop in 1871 when the Great Chicago Fire swept through the city destroying all the South Park Commissions records. The fire destroyed the tax assessment roles leaving the commission with no available money until 1873. The Commission faced other delays due to litigation over land purchase and questions on the validity of the Commission's authority to levy taxes. By 1875, most of the land needed to complete the parks and boulevards were acquired. Within the South Park Commission construction focused first on the boulevards rather than the parks.

Horace Cleveland became the Landscape Architect for the Commission in 1872 and was responsible for overseeing the construction of Olmsted and Vaux's plans. By 1875, Grand, Drexel, Garfield, and Oakwood boulevard had been completed. These boulevards were not only complete as roadways, but the center median was filled with landscaping, pathways, plazas, and art creating park like spaces for pedestrians. By 1880 the last of the land needed to complete the parks and boulevards was obtained. The boulevards were relatively complete by the time of the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893. Following the Exposition, the focus of the boulevards was mostly maintenance and the addition of sculptures throughout the system. In 1934, along with the other commissions, the South Park Commission was consolidated into the Chicago Park District.

LEGEND

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1. Lincoln Park
2. Diversey Parkway
3. Logan Boulevard
4. Logan Square
5. Kedzie Boulevard
6. Palmer Square
7. Humboldt Boulevard
8. Humboldt Park
9. Sacramento Boulevard
10. Sacramento Square
11. Franklin Boulevard
12. Central Park Boulevard
13. Garfield Park
14. Hamlin Boulevard
15. Independence Boulevard
16. Independence Square
17. Douglas Boulevard
18. Douglas Park
19. Marshall Boulevard
20. 24th Boulevard
21. California Boulevard
22. 31st Boulevard
23. McKinley Park
24. Western Boulevard
25. Gage Park
26. Sherman Park
27. Garfield Boulevard
28. Martin Luther King Drive
29. Washington Park
30. Jackson Park
31. Midway Plaisance
32. Drexel Square
33. Drexel Boulevard
34. Oakwood Boulevard

