

Cleveland Parks & Recreation Plan





Prepared for:
City of Cleveland

Prepared by: **OLIN**

with PROS Consulting, DesignExplorr, OHM Advisors, Rhonda Crowder and Associates, ThirdSpace Action Lab, IG Global Solutions, Neighborhood Connections, ETC Institute, and Foote Printing

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PARKS AND RECREATION TODAY



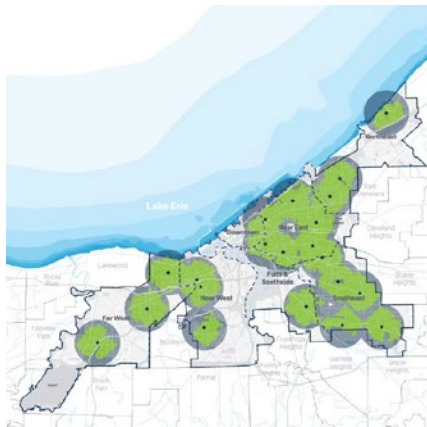
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Cleveland Metropolitan School District
Cleveland Metroparks
Trust for Public Land
Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Cleveland Neighborhood Progress
Greater Cleveland Partnership
Downtown Cleveland, Inc.
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
Canalway Partners
LAND Studio
America SCORES

Cleveland Plays
Muny Football
Refugee Response
St. Ignatius High School Soccer
Old Brooklyn Baseball
B-Buzz Baseball
Case Western Reserve
University Pickleball Club
Holden Parks Trust

The project team on a parks and recreation site tour.
Source: OLIN, 2023.





Mayor Bibb at one of the Department of Aging's Senior Walks which take place in city parks.
Source: City of Cleveland



Cleveland residents and valued partners,

Over the past year and a half, Clevelanders from all across the city have been clear that parks and recreation are essential public services that support health, wellbeing, and community.

Our invaluable system of public spaces spans the natural and the designed, the big and the small, the urban and the not-so-urban. These spaces bring beauty to Cleveland and give it an intentional sense of place. This Cleveland Parks and Recreation Plan – the city’s first in more than 40 years – is a community-driven vision that will guide park and recreation investments for decades to come. The plan provides a road map for decision-making around parks and recreation policy, maintenance, physical improvements, programming, and funding.

With the creation of the new Department of Parks and Recreation to enhance day-to-day experiences and implement the Parks and Recreation Plan, we are continuing the important work of improving City services and making a commitment to be more equitable in the way we invest in our parks, recreation facilities, and programs.

Thank you to all those who contributed to this plan, and to those who remain committed to ensuring this vision for our parks, recreation facilities, and programs becomes a reality. We know that together with our partners within and outside of city government, we can provide the high-quality spaces and programs that residents expect. I could not be more optimistic for the future of parks and recreation in Cleveland and look forward to seeing the vision set forth in this plan come to life for the benefit of all Clevelanders for generations to come.

With gratitude,

Mayor Justin M. Bibb
City of Cleveland







Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The Cleveland Parks and Recreation Plan examines park and recreation needs in the context of the city's system of public spaces and articulates an ambitious yet attainable vision for parks and recreation in the future.

A HOLISTIC SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SPACES

A bike ride along the Towpath Trail for some fresh air or for a commute to work. A walk in Rockefeller Park to decompress or to see the Cultural Gardens. A ballgame for the championship or between neighbors. A dip in the pool to cool off or to maintain agility. Pick-up games on the courts and fields. Flowers and holiday skating in Public Square. Volleyball on the lakefront or exploring history along the river. Public spaces are part of the daily lives of all Clevelanders.

The Parks and Recreation Plan focuses specifically on City-owned facilities. To implement this vision, the plan weaves together strategies, guidelines, and decision-making tools that the City can use as a road map to shape the parks and recreation system over the next 15 years. The Parks and Recreation Plan was informed by a collaborative process with Cleveland residents, park partners, elected officials, and other key groups.

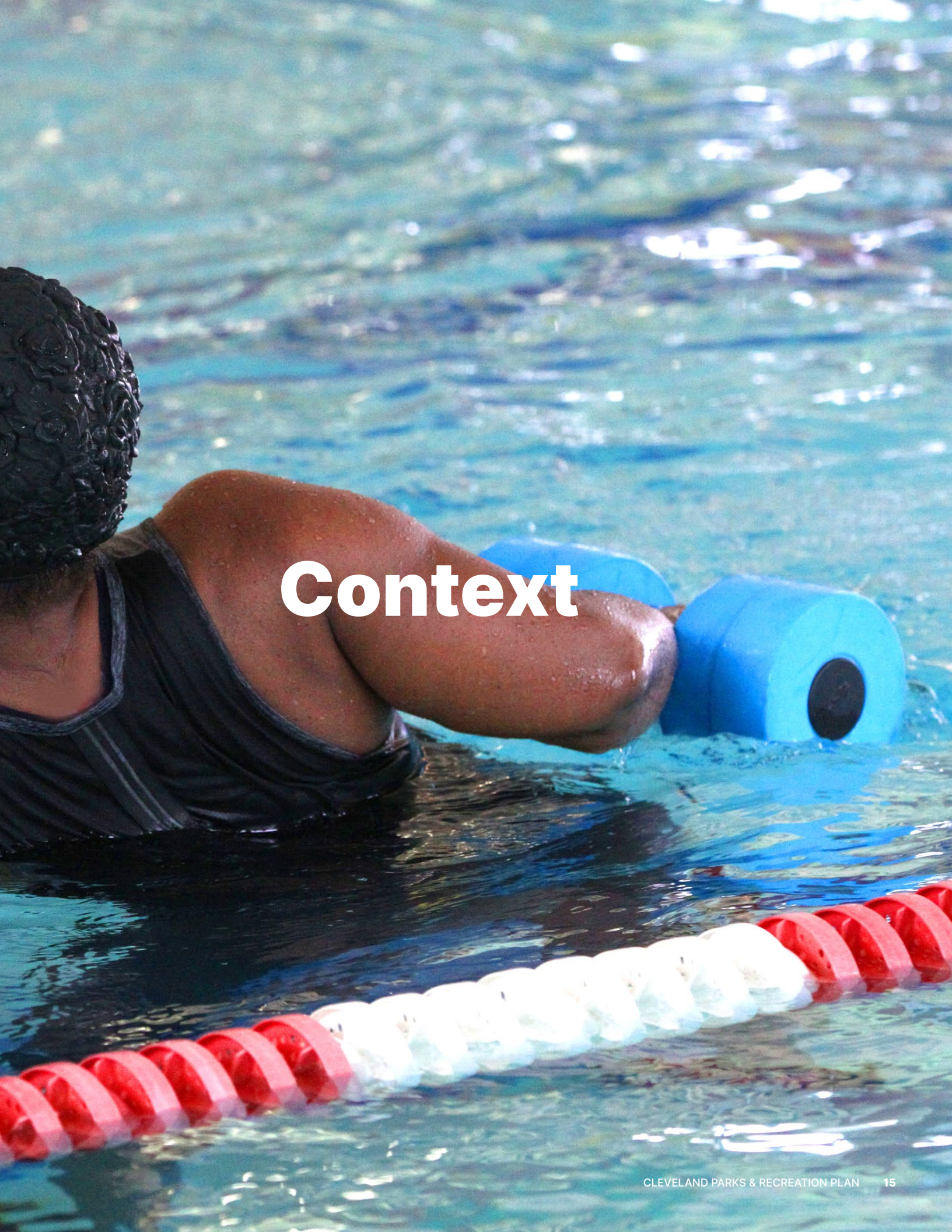
Cleveland's parks and recreation facilities are a crucial component of the city's system of public spaces.
Source: City of Cleveland.



Parks & Recreation Vision:

Cleveland's **dynamic and equitable** network of parks and recreational facilities **enhances** quality of life and the natural environment, **preserves and stewards** the city's rich cultural identities, and **evolves** with the needs of current and future generations of Clevelanders.





Context

THE VALUE OF PARKS & RECREATION

Parks and recreation are essential. They are so much more than places to play. The following research compiled by the National Recreation and Park Association backs up what people intuitively know—that parks and recreation are critical resources that ensure residents’ and cities’ well-being.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

People who live near parks are both physically and mentally healthier than those who do not.

Access to indoor and/or outdoor recreation facilities and frequency of park visitation correlate with greater physical activity.¹

People who use parks and open spaces are three times more likely to achieve recommended levels of physical activity than non-users.²

Greenspace exposure corresponds with improved physical health, including decreases in stress, blood pressure, heart rate, and risk of chronic disease (cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular heart disease).^{3,4}

Children with access to parks and facilities have shown decreased prevalence of obesity compared to children without access.⁵

Time spent in nature positively impacts mental health by increasing cognitive performance and well-being and alleviating illnesses such as depression, attention deficit disorders, and Alzheimer’s.⁶

Children lacking parks are more likely to be physically inactive, have excessive screen-time (greater than or equal to 4 hours daily), obtain inadequate sleep, and be obese, overweight, or diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).⁷

Inadequate/Insufficient physical activity leads to greater aggregate health care expenditures. Annual healthcare costs are significantly lower for adults who maintain moderate or high physical activity levels and adults who increase physical activity levels in early adulthood (in comparison to adults who were consistently inactive from adolescence into middle age).^{8,9}

The following research is from the National Recreation and Park Association’s **“Parks and Recreation Is Essential”** report.

An individual practices yoga in a park.
Source: City of Cleveland.





Individuals out for a walk in one of Cleveland's parks.
Source: City of Cleveland.

Park quantity, quality and accessibility are predictors of overall well-being.¹⁴

Access to parks and other public open space promotes greater mental well-being.

Access to parks and greenspace exposure correlates to reductions in stress and symptoms of depression as well as improved attention and mood.¹⁰

Mental health is significantly related to residential distance from parks. People living more than 1 kilometer away from a green space have nearly 50% higher odds of experiencing stress than those living fewer than 300 meters from a green space.¹¹

Physician-diagnosed depression was 33% higher in the residential areas with the fewest green spaces compared to the neighborhoods with the most.¹²

Parks promote positive mental health by providing access to nature and encouraging recreational and sporting activity.¹³

People with access to parks and green spaces live longer, healthier lives.

Parks provide opportunities for physical activity and connecting with the outdoors. The resulting impacts are better mental health, improved physical health, and increased physical activity.¹⁵

Greenspace exposure in urban environments corresponds with lower mortality.^{16,17}

Outdoor green environments enable physical distancing that reduces the risk of airborne viral infections (e.g., COVID-19) and increases resilience to global climate change.⁴

CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Parks and recreation agencies are leading providers of childcare and out-of-school time programming.

Park and recreation agencies deliver out-of-school time programs to children of all ages.¹⁸

Eighty-five percent of U.S. adults say it is important for their local park and recreation agency to offer before-/after-school childcare and summer camps for youth.

Parks and recreation agencies are leaders in youth sports, providing opportunities for children of all skills and abilities to play and introducing kids to a wide variety of sports activities.

Availability of nearby parks correlates with higher participation in active sports.¹⁹

Ninety-eight percent of U.S. adults agree that it is important to provide youth with equitable access to sports opportunities.

Seventy-eight percent of U.S. adults believe that it is important that youth sports providers offer all children and young adults opportunities to learn about and play sports regardless of their skill or ability to pay.²⁰

Parks and recreation teach kids about environmental responsibility, provide better cognitive and emotional stimulation, and promote creativity and imagination.

Youth who spend more time in nature tend to place a higher value on nature and have greater pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors (PEAB).^{21,22}

Ninety-four percent of U.S. adults agree that it is important for children and young adults to learn about the environment and ways they can help be good environmental stewards.

Children who spend a significant amount of time in nature also experience better emotional stability and improved mental health.

Self-reported time in nature correlates with overall positive youth development and each of the individual “Cs” of positive youth development: competence, connection, confidence, character, and caring.²³

The positive effects of nature exposure for children include improved cognitive functioning (including increased concentration, greater attention capacities and higher academic performance), better motor coordination, reduced stress levels, increased social interaction with adults and other children, and improved social skills.²⁴

Nature play is an important component of the development of resilience in early childhood.^{25,26}

Participating in outdoor recreation bolsters adolescent resilience to stressors such as the COVID-19 pandemic and improves overall adolescent mental health.

Self-reported time in nature correlates with overall positive youth development.

An example of a nature-based playground at Pier 26 in New York City.
Source: MONSTRUM Playgrounds / Connor Ryan.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Local park and recreation agencies' expenditures support economic activity and job creation.

Local parks and recreation agencies in the United States generated \$218 billion in economic activity and supported more than 1.3 million jobs in 2019.²⁷

Preliminary data suggests that parks and recreation's economic impact held resilient during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, as local parks' operations and capital spending generated \$225 billion in economic activity and supported 1.25 million jobs in 2020.

The outdoor recreation economy, which includes local parks and recreation, accounted for \$373.3 billion of 2020 U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP), or 1.8% of the U.S. economy.²⁸

The more than 10,000 local park and recreation agencies across the United States employ more than 160,000 full-time and hundreds of thousands of part-time and seasonal park and recreation professionals.²⁹

Systematic review shows economic benefits exceed the cost for park, trail, and greenway infrastructure interventions to increase physical activity and use.³⁰

Employers and employees are more likely to locate near high-quality park and recreation amenities.

Eighty-seven percent of corporate executives indicate that quality-of-life is an important factor when they consider making new facility, expansion or relocation plans.³¹

Investments in improving a community's quality of life can create a virtuous cycle: high-quality places attract workers and employers, which in turn attract more investments and jobs.³²

Research and development (R&D) facilities, technology companies, and corporate headquarters are more likely to prioritize quality-of-life and cultural amenities when making site-location decisions.³³

Parks and recreation boost home values and property tax bases.

Nearly three in four U.S. adults say that access to a nearby park, playground, open space, or recreation center is an important factor in deciding where they want to live.¹

A review of 33 studies suggests a home value premium of 8-10% percent for properties adjacent to a passive park.³³

Parks and recreation are leading sources of first jobs for youth and young adults.

Ninety-six percent of U.S. adults agree there are important benefits that teenagers and young adults gain from their first jobs and volunteer opportunities.

Ninety percent of U.S. adults want their local park and recreation agency to provide job and volunteer opportunities for youth and young adults.

Nearly **three in four** U.S. adults say that access to a nearby **park, playground, open space, or recreation center** is an important factor in deciding **where they want to live.**

STRONG COMMUNITIES

Parks and recreation counter social isolation by connecting people with nature and each other.

Eighty-eight percent of U.S. adults agree that parks and recreation provide good opportunities to interact with nature and the outdoors.³⁴

Ninety-one percent of U.S. adults seek park-centered entertainment and social events that allow them to mix and mingle with others.³⁵

Walking, park prescriptions, community gardening, and farmers' market vouchers may promote nature contact, strengthen social structures, and improve longer term mental and physical health by activating intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental processes.³⁶

High-quality parks and built environment features help to foster positive social interactions and increase social capital within historically marginalized communities.¹

The U.S. public strongly supports parks and recreation's mission and funding.

In the United States, 275 million people visited a local park or recreation facility at least once during the past year.¹

Ninety percent of U.S. adults say that parks and recreation are an important local government service. People of all ages, income levels, and all racial, ethnic, and political backgrounds agree that parks and recreation are essential.³⁷

Eighty-one percent of U.S. adults want parks and recreation to ensure inclusivity through policies and practices. Inclusive practices and policies are those that take into account people of all mental and physical abilities, as well as ethnic, religious, racial, cultural or socio-economic backgrounds, or orientations.

U.S. adults want their political leaders to fully fund parks and recreation.

Sixty-two percent of U.S. adults — crossing ages, income levels and political affiliation — are more likely to vote for politicians (e.g., mayor, county executive, or council member) who make park and recreation funding a priority.

Nearly nine in 10 people agree that it is important for local, state, and federal governments to fund local park and recreation agencies sufficiently in order to ensure every member of the community has equitable access to amenities, infrastructure, and programming.¹

Sixty-six percent of U.S. adults say that they support their local government dedicating revenues, taxes, and levies that specifically target park and recreation operations or expansion projects.³⁸

Nearly **nine in 10 people** agree that it is important for local, state, and federal governments to **fund local park and recreation agencies** sufficiently.

Community festival in Lincoln Park.
Source: City of Cleveland.





Cleveland is the largest city on Lake Erie.
Source: City of Cleveland.

RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Parks and recreation agencies are on the forefront of their communities' emergency response.

Three in five park and recreation agencies provided essential, emergency services in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in October 2020, including:³⁹

- supporting food to vulnerable youth, older adults, and families
- opening agency facilities to serve as virtual learning centers
- providing facilities to serve as vaccination and testing centers
- transforming recreation centers to serve as emergency shelters

Six in seven U.S. adults **support** their local park and recreation agency's **environmental initiatives.**

Climate-ready parks provide proven, cost effective, and sustainable environmental solutions.

Parks lower ground temperatures with tree canopy, clean water, reduce flooding, and contribute to healthier air.⁴⁰

Trees and vegetation in parks help reduce air pollution directly by removing pollutants and reducing air temperature.¹⁵

Urban parks can improve the environment, enhance storm water management, reduce traffic noise, and increase biodiversity.⁴¹

The U.S. public wants parks and recreation to protect natural resources and mitigate the impact of climate change.

Ninety-three percent of U.S. adults agree that it is critical that their local government develops local parks, trails, and greenspaces near bodies of water for the purpose of protecting natural resources in their community.³⁵

Six in seven U.S. adults support their local park and recreation agency's environmental initiatives, including wildlife conservation, educating the public on environmental issues, natural resource management, mitigating the impacts from climate change, nurturing pollinator habitats, and managing land for flood mitigation.¹

Eighty-nine percent of U.S. adults want their local park and recreation agency to reduce the impact of extreme temperatures through the planting of trees and other vegetation.¹

CITYWIDE DYNAMICS

Understanding key citywide dynamics is crucial for grounding the Parks and Recreation Plan, as they are undercurrents that affect the present and the future.

A CHANGING POPULATION

Cleveland’s parks and recreation system once served a population of 1 million people. Today, however, Cleveland has just around 370,000 residents. The trend with the greatest impact on the future of parks and recreation can be found in population forecasts that show continued population decline in Cuyahoga County through at least 2050. This affects the number of facilities needed over the coming years and increases the pressure to reexamine the distribution of parks and recreation resources across Cleveland. These trends informed this plan’s recommendations and will continue to guide its implementation.

State & County Population Trends

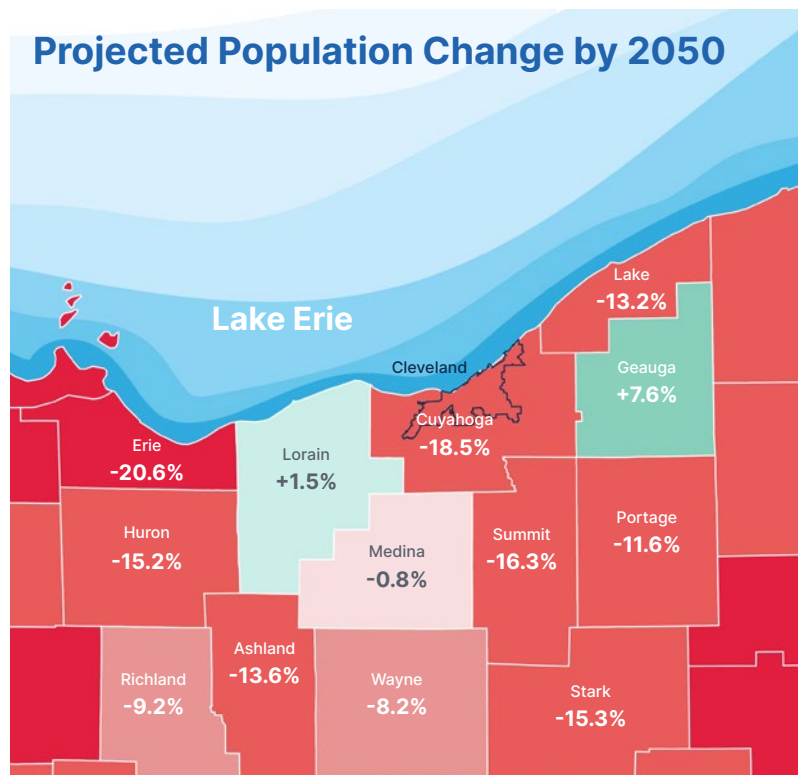
Ohio can expect gradual population loss, with an expected loss of approximately 675,000 residents (5.7%) between 2020 and 2050 if current trends continue.⁴²

- As baby boomers continue to age, the number of young seniors (under 85) will decline while the number of older seniors (85+) will increase by nearly 25%. No other age cohort is expected to exert as big an influence on the state’s age distribution.
- The number of deaths exceed births in the state, leading to a net loss, though this is projected to be partially offset by modest in-migration.

- In both the state and the country, people are delaying having children and are having fewer children overall.

As in Ohio as a whole, Cleveland and Cuyahoga County have lost population since 1970 and are projected to continue experiencing population decline through 2050. Between 2020 and 2050, Cuyahoga County is expected to shrink by nearly 19%, from 1.26 million residents to 1.03 million residents. If Cleveland follows the same trend, it will go from 372,624 residents to 305,922 residents over the same time period.

Figure 1. Projected population percent changes for Ohio Counties between 2020-2050. Source: Ohio Department of Development Office of Research, 2022.



Neighborhood Population Change

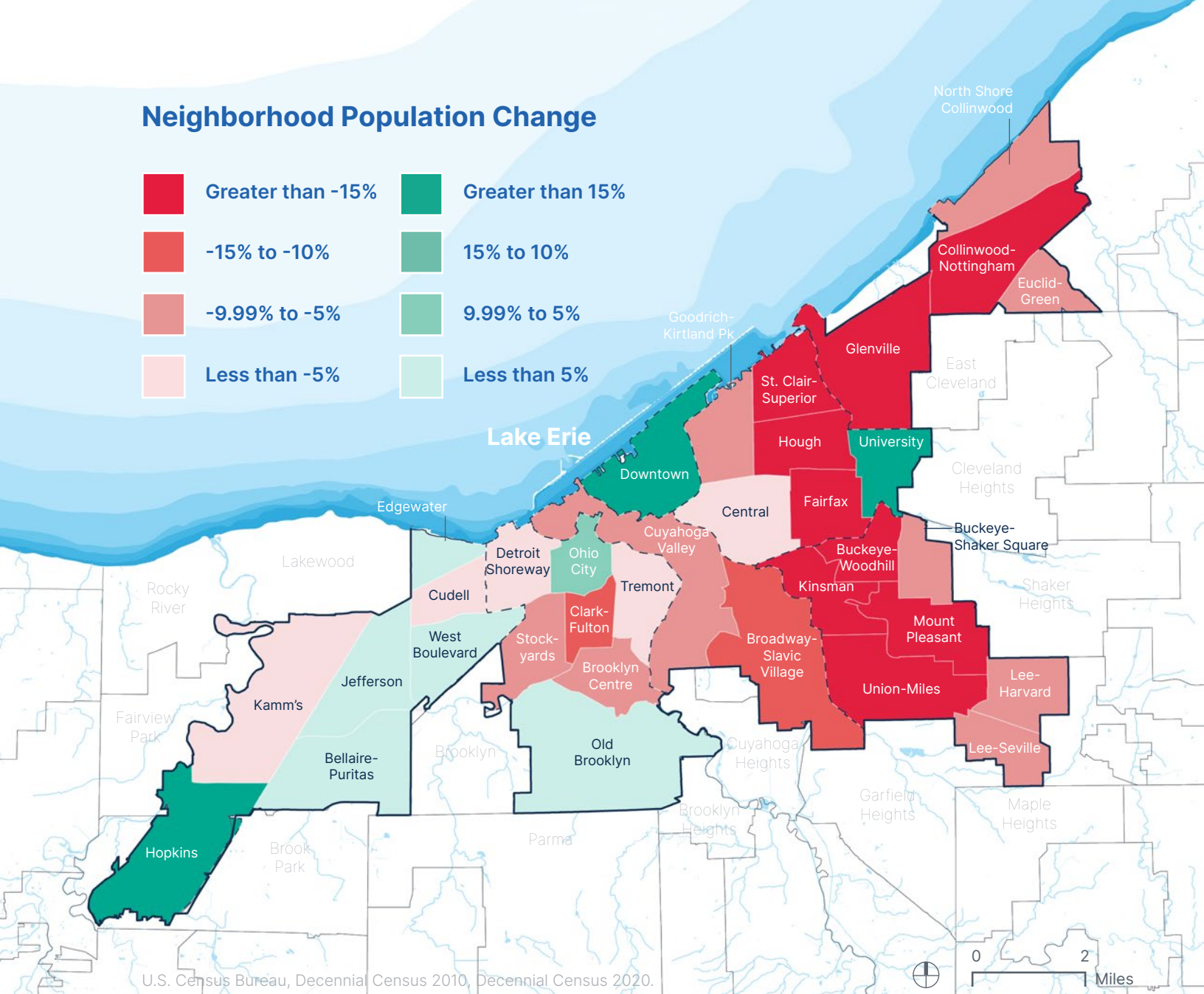
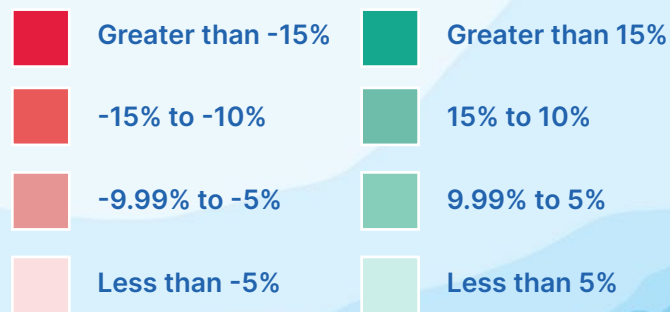


Figure 2. Cleveland's neighborhood population percent change from 2010 to 2020.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Areas with the Greatest Population Density

Placing parks and recreation facilities in densely populated areas improves accessibility for residents who may have limited access to private outdoor spaces. It promotes equity by providing recreational opportunities to a diverse population, including those without private yards or means to travel far for leisure, while offering environmental and social benefits. West Boulevard, Buckeye Shaker, and Ohio City are Cleveland's most densely populated neighborhoods.

Areas of Growth in Cleveland

While Cleveland overall has experienced a declining population, there are areas in the city that have experienced growth. Downtown and University Circle saw the greatest increase, with Ohio City, Jefferson, West Boulevard, Bellaire-Puritas, and Old Brooklyn also growing since 2000. Understanding where the population is changing can help anticipate future demand for facilities and allows the City to strategically allocate resources.



CLEVLOT

Cleveland Vacant Land Opportunity Tool

CLEVLOT is a collaborative initiative, collectively built by a group of project partners and participants including the City of Cleveland. The initiative, funded through a US EPA Grant and administered by Western Reserve Land Conservancy, aims to unify vacant land reuse strategies around shared environmental justice and economic development goals.

The final outcome will be an open-source database and planning tool to guide vacant land reuse projects and management strategies for the advancement of environmental justice, public health, and quality of life for Cleveland's overburdened communities.



LandCare

City of Philadelphia & Pennsylvania Horticultural Society | Philadelphia, PA

The City of Philadelphia contracts with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) to clean, green, and stabilize vacant lots to help return them to productive use. Since its start, more than 800 properties are now used for housing, commercial properties, and green spaces.

The LandCare program holds two primary initiatives: "Clean and Green" and Community LandCare. The "Clean and Green" program targets vacant parcels in neighborhoods without open or green spaces. PHS then hires city-based landscape contractors, who clean and mow the lots twice per month from April through October.

Through the Community LandCare initiative, PHS works with 18 community organizations. Together, they hire local residents to perform landscape maintenance work on vacant lots in their neighborhoods.

Residents living near cleaned and greened lots experience many health benefits. These benefits include decreased gun violence, decreased stress levels, and increased exercise among local community members.



Vacant Parcels

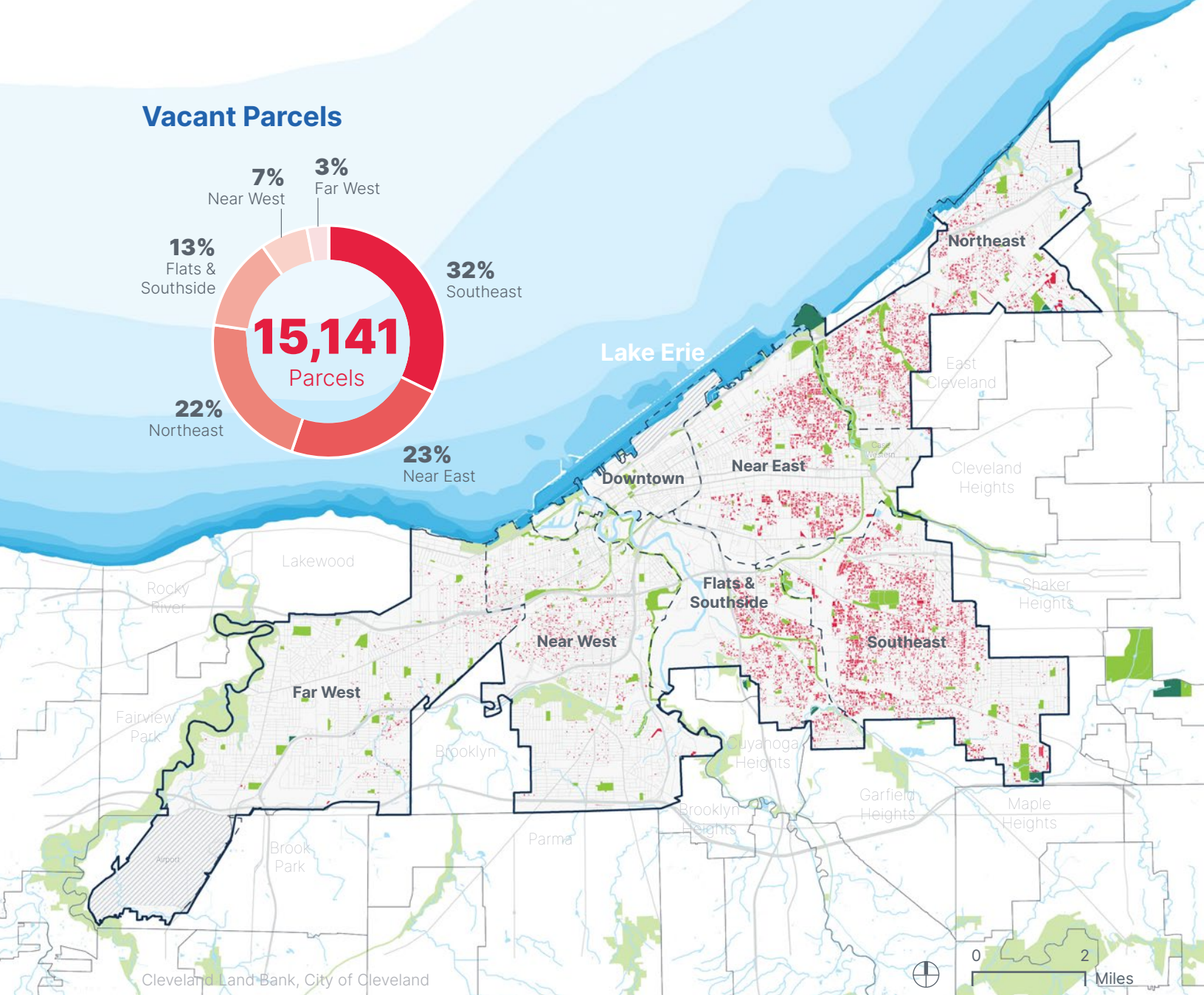
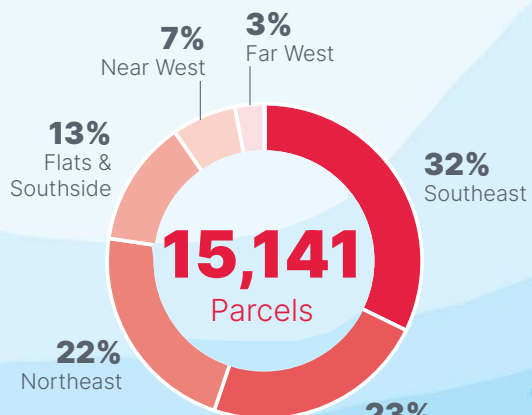


Figure 3. Land bank available vacant parcels.
Source: Cleveland Land Bank, City of Cleveland.

Vacant Parcels

A physical reminder of Cleveland's population loss is in its immense inventory of vacant parcels. The number of vacant lots increased dramatically following the 2008–2009 housing recession, when thousands of homes were demolished and the land was transferred into the city's land bank. Today, there are around 30,000 vacant lots in Cleveland, spanning 6,000 acres. These vacant lots become a nuisance for crime, experience illegal dumping, and pose a legitimate health and safety threat to residents. These lots also cost the City in maintenance and upkeep. Previously, the

Parks Maintenance Division was responsible for maintaining these lots and spent roughly half their budget mowing and maintaining these parcels.

As the City considers the creative reuse and management of these parcels, there is a tremendous opportunity to not only stabilize neighborhoods, but also address pressing environmental justice and public health challenges. Vacant land reuse can improve air and water quality, reduce illegal dumping of hazardous material, and increase access to greenspace to help communities be more resilient to a changing climate.

A CHANGING CLIMATE

Changes in Northeast Ohio's climate can exacerbate existing challenges by putting additional stress on vulnerable populations, infrastructure, and ecosystems. Impacts on public health include:⁴³

- more heat-related stress
- greater risk of vector-borne illness, and
- reduced summer air quality in urban areas than would otherwise occur due to increased ground-level pollution

Large areas of pavement, a lack of trees in many neighborhoods, and the city's aging sewer system also contribute challenges.

Extreme Weather Events

Changes in climate may cause more frequent and unpredictable storms, heavy rain and snowfall, and flooding in Cleveland. From 1956 to 2012, the average annual precipitation increased by 25%, average snowfall increased 40%, and the annual Great Lakes ice coverage declined by 71%.⁴⁴

Decline in Water Quality

Changes in climate will also place additional stress on water resources, key natural assets in Cleveland and Northeast Ohio. Impacts include:⁴⁴

- warmer water temperature in lakes and rivers causing increased evaporation and heavy precipitation events
- increased competition for water
- stress on wetlands
- earlier snowmelt and peak runoff increasing flooding risk

When it rains a lot, storm sewers overflow into sanitary sewers, releasing untreated sewage into Lake Erie. Climate change may make this problem worse. The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District's Project Clean

Lake is an investment in improved sewers and green infrastructure to help combat this problem and improve Cleveland's water quality.

Loss of Native Plants

The changing climate has resulted in a decrease in biodiversity—the level of variety of life in our ecosystems.⁴⁴ This crisis is global in scale, but all species are inherently local—requiring space and habitat to survive and thrive. Additional climate impacts to biodiversity and ecosystems in Northeast Ohio include:

- shift in the distribution and range of species
- loss of species not able to adapt to changes and facing increased competition from invasive species
- decline in beach health and more harmful blooms of algae.

Longer growing seasons over the next few decades will increase yields of some crops, but benefits will be offset by occurrence of extreme events such as heat waves, droughts, and floods.

Park and recreation programming plays an important role in stewarding and protecting habitat, including educational programs about the environment, rare species, and the importance of healthy ecological systems.

Heat Related Health Issues

From 1956 to 2012, the number of days above 90 degrees increased by 4.2 days and is projected to increase by 20–30 more days by 2070.⁴⁴ Hot weather and air pollution increase the risk of heart attacks, stroke, asthma, and other illnesses.

Cleveland is one of the top urban heat islands in the country, ranking 15th out of

Urban Heat Island Effect

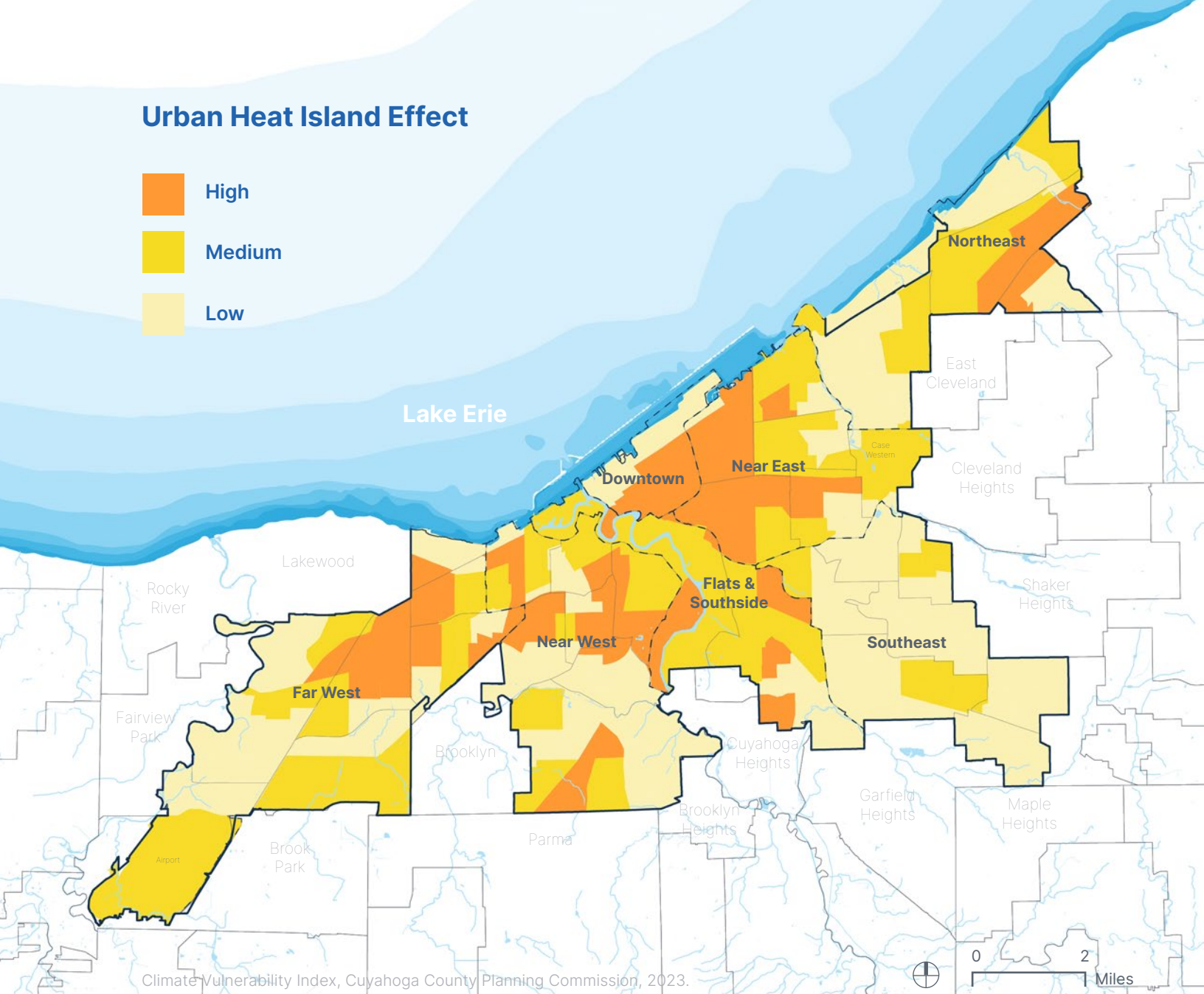
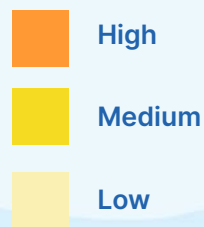


Figure 4. Urban Heat Island Effect in Cleveland.

Source: Climate Vulnerability Index, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, 2023.

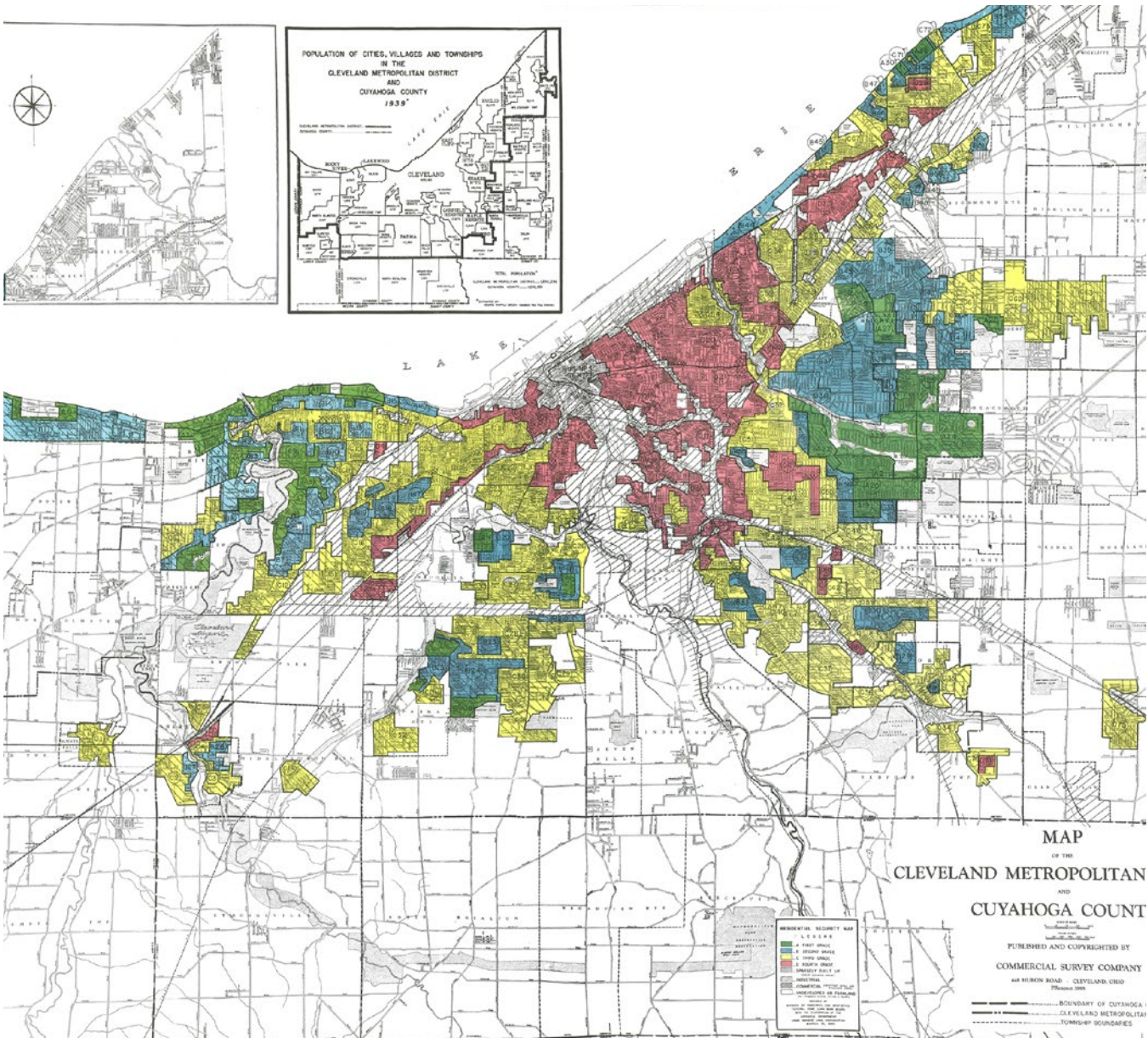
158.⁴⁵ Research shows that Cleveland is up to seven degrees warmer than the average temperature in the state of Ohio, despite its northern location and direct proximity to Lake Erie.⁴⁵ The loss of Cleveland's urban tree canopy is directly related to increasing temperatures in neighborhoods.

The Disproportionate Impact of a Changing Environment

The impacts of a changing climate will be experienced differently by residents across Cleveland, influenced by factors such as income, age, health, and where they live, with a disproportionate impact felt

by communities of color and low-income communities. These communities are more likely to:

- live in areas with less green space and to be more vulnerable to heat related and respiratory illnesses
- be impacted by extreme weather events that occur as a result of climate change due to low access to key information and available programs and services as a result of language, cultural, or geographic barriers
- have less access to healthy and energy efficient housing, transit, or safe bicycling and walking routes.



RACIAL DISPARITIES

Cleveland’s population is highly segregated by race. Across various assessments, the Cleveland metro ranks anywhere from the fifth to the 10th most segregated in the nation.⁴⁶

Redlining

In the 1930s, the federal Home Owners’ Loan Corporation (HOLC) drew red lines around neighborhoods that local real estate appraisers said were undesirable

for mortgage lending. Race profoundly impacted these decisions, cutting off places and families, and neighborhoods from resources.

Redlining perpetuated racial divisions and led to systemic disinvestment in Black neighborhoods. The impacts of these policies reverberate today. People living in redlined neighborhoods deal with higher rates of lead poisoning, have less tree canopy, and are more likely to suffer from asthma and diabetes.⁴⁷

1940 Home Owners’ Loan Corporation Redlining Map for Cleveland.
Source: National Archives/ Ohio State University Libraries.

Race & Ethnicity

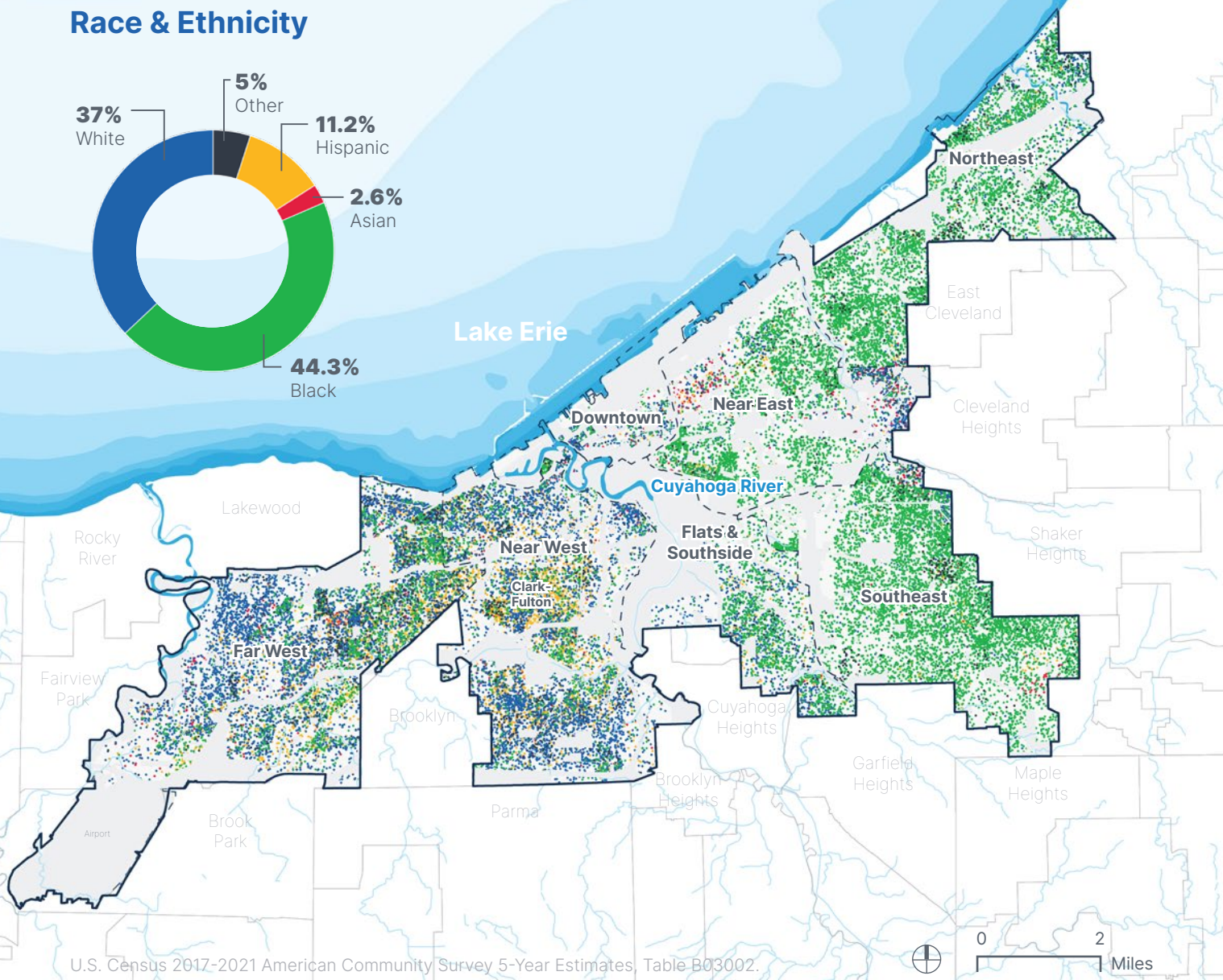
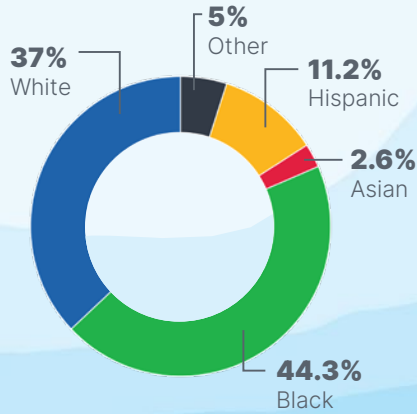


Figure 5. Race & Ethnicity of Clevelanders.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021.

Demographics in Cleveland

Within Cleveland, 46% of residents identify as Black, 34% identify as white, 13% identify as Hispanic or Latino, and 2% identify as Asian. Since 2017, the share of residents who identify as Black has decreased (from 50%) and the share of residents who identify as Hispanic or Latino has increased (from 11%), while the share of residents who identify as white and Asian have remained the same.⁴⁸

Race and ethnicity are geographically segregated in the city. East of the Cuyahoga River residents are predominantly Black, while west of the Cuyahoga River residents are predominantly white. The Clark-Fulton area has a high concentration of Hispanic and Latino residents.

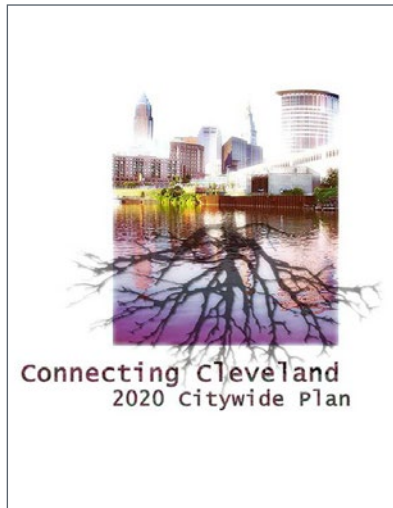
PREVIOUS PLANS & ONGOING EFFORTS

The City of Cleveland has a constellation of existing and ongoing plans with visions and policy that guide City actions toward a better future. It is essential to understand the planning context within which the Parks and Recreation Plan fits and which should, in turn, be informed by this plan in the future.

Cleveland Parks and Recreation Recovery Action Program (1980)

The last planning effort in Cleveland that looked at parks and recreation systemically was adopted in 1980 and created a 5-year roadmap to maintain and increase the City's capacity to provide quality park and recreation opportunities. The plan acknowledged a number of systemwide issues that still ring true today, including the need to better align capital investments with ongoing operating and maintenance resources, as well as the need to better engage residents in determining the future of parks and recreation services. The plan also suggested the creation of a new Department of Parks and Recreation, which has only just recently come to fruition.





Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan (2007)

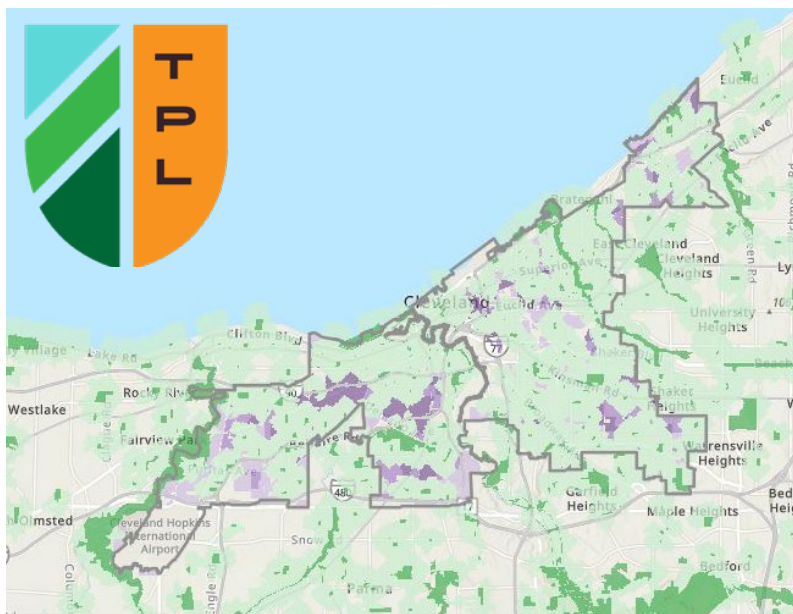
A city's comprehensive plan is a foundational document used by the city, its partners, and the community at large to work towards a common vision. The most recent comprehensive plan for the city of Cleveland, the *Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan*, is based on the premise that the city is not just a collection of buildings but a place that connects people, places, and opportunities. This Parks and Recreation Plan is one of several plans that provide more explicit direction on how to implement the *Citywide Plan's* recreation and open space priorities.

Southeast Side Promise

Mayor Bibb's Southeast Side Promise is a multi-faceted plan to address the issue of concentrated disinvestment in the neighborhoods of Cleveland's southeast side. The mission is to rejuvenate the area, providing residents with a safe, equitable, and vibrant community they rightfully deserve.

SOUTHEAST SIDE PROMISE

A Vision for Hope. A Plan for the Future.



Park Equity Accelerator

Cleveland was chosen by the Trust for Public Land (TPL) as one of the inaugural cities for their 10-Minute Walk Park Equity Accelerator. The Trust for Public Land has worked with Cleveland to develop a framework for assessing resource allocation for local parks based on park quality.

Cleveland Tree Plan - Progress Report (2020)

The Cleveland Tree Plan, originally published in 2015, outlines a roadmap for rebuilding Cleveland’s urban forest through partnership, to help Cleveland reclaim its identity as “The Forest City.” The 2020 Progress Report reviews progress in implementation, evaluates the current tree canopy, and provides new recommendations to help reverse the canopy loss trend in Cleveland.



North Coast Master Plan (2023)

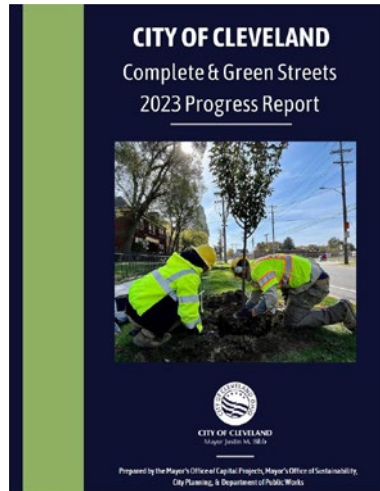
Cleveland’s *North Coast Master Plan* is a blueprint for a vibrant and equitable recreational hub along Lake Erie, connecting people with nature and the city to its waterfront. Recommendations about specific park and recreation amenities from the *North Coast Master Plan* have been incorporated into this plan.



North Coast Connector (2023)

The North Coast Connector is a proposed land bridge connecting the grassy lawns of Mall C and City Hall to the lakefront. It would span the railroad tracks and the Shoreway to restore access and repair a more than a century-old divide. It would open up new land for community gatherings and future economic development.





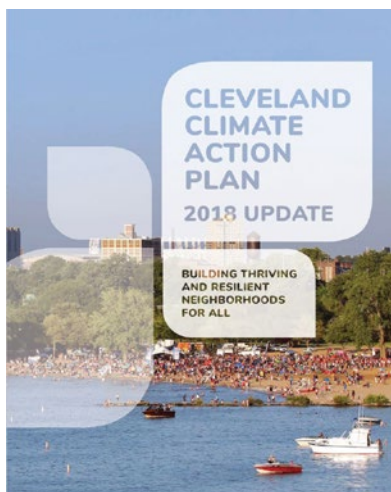
Cleveland Complete and Green Streets - Progress Report (2023)

In 2022 a new complete and green streets ordinance was passed updating the City's 2011 ordinance. This created a new process to incorporate design elements in roadway projects that expand opportunities for travel via modes like walking, biking, and transit and reduce environmental impact within the City of Cleveland.



CHEERS (in process)

The Cleveland Harbor Eastern Embayment Resilience Strategy (CHEERS) project is a concept that emerged from a yearlong study to determine how to transform Cleveland's lakeshore through reconnecting communities to the lake, improving public health, bolstering the economy, and benefiting the environment and natural habitat. CHEERS will utilize beneficial use of dredge material to improve shoreline resilience, build habitat, expand parks, and work to heal damage done by past unjust developmental practices and industrial use.



CLEAN WATER AND VIBRANT GREEN SPACE

609 people were employed in landscaping services in Cleveland in 2015 with an average wage of **\$36,700**.

Cleveland's commitment to green infrastructure and its urban forest will require skilled landscapers and arborists.

Summary

Without clean water, there is no sustainability. And vibrant green spaces is critical for thriving and healthy neighborhoods. Providing access to quality green space improves neighborhood walkability, provides a place of gathering spaces, improves property values, supports a sense of pride, and so much more. At the same time, green spaces reduce water pollution by absorbing water runoff during storms that otherwise in summer overflows, Cleveland has made great strides in these areas, but much work remains.

Heat Island: describes the phenomena by which urban areas are hotter than nearby rural areas due to heat absorption and retention of asphalt and concrete.

Key Facts

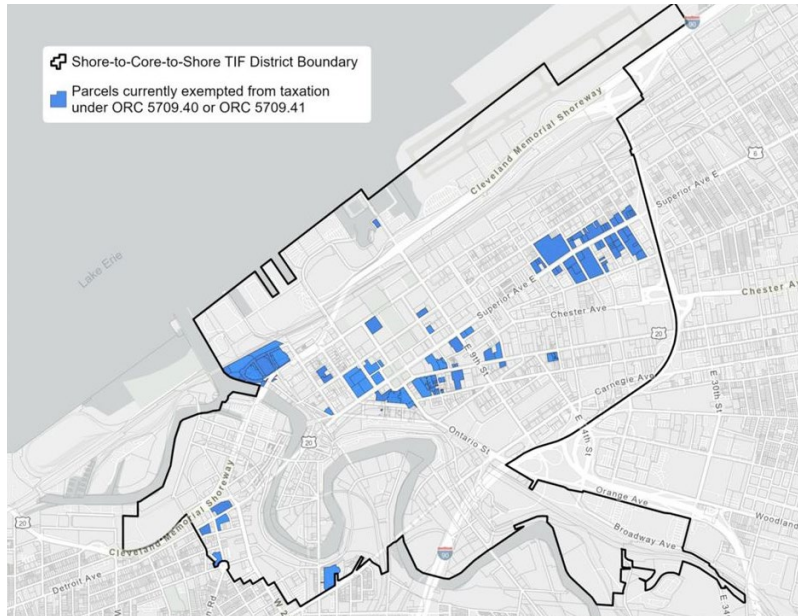
- Cleveland Metroparks awarded largest state grant ever received to further conservation initiatives.
- The amount of wastewater overflow has decreased from 5 billion gallons in 2011 to 4.2 billion gallons in 2015.
- The 2013 Tree Canopy Assessment found that Cleveland's tree canopy cover has increased by about half over the last half-century, to about 29%.

Cleveland Climate Action Plan Update (in process)

The City of Cleveland Mayor's Office of Sustainability is in the process of updating the Climate Action Plan (CAP), the framework and guiding implementation plan of sustainability and climate action throughout the broader Cleveland community. The CAP includes five focus areas, including one on vibrant green spaces, and have guided Cleveland's decade-long efforts to address environmental injustices and the impacts of climate change.

Shore-to-Core-to-Shore Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District (in process)

The proposed Shore-to-Core-to-Shore TIF District is designed to create, capture, and leverage growth in Cleveland's downtown to support public improvements that will transform the city's waterfronts, improve the downtown core, and fund investments in parks and public spaces across Cleveland neighborhoods.



Cleveland Moves - Citywide Mobility Plan (in process)

The City is currently developing a mobility plan that recognizes walking, rolling, biking, scooting, and transit as key to Cleveland's success. By prioritizing people over cars, the City hopes to create a safer, healthier, and more accessible Cleveland.



Irishtown Bend Park (in process)

Irishtown Bend Park will be a new 23-acre, waterfront park along the Cuyahoga River. Community members led the process to turn a deserted waterfront site that was once home to a 19th-century Irish shantytown into a welcoming space with views of the downtown skyline and connections to regional trails like the Redline Greenway and the Towpath Trail.



RE

IMAGINE
INVEST
CREATE

A Plan for Gordon Park

Gordon Park (in process)

Once an iconic waterfront park tightly connected to surrounding communities, Gordon Park was cut into pieces and disconnected from communities by the development of interstate highways. It has also suffered from the growth and decline of adjacent industry. Cleveland Metroparks and LAND Studio are leading a project to repair Gordon Park South and better connect it to its neighbors.



Cuyahoga Riverfront Master Plan (in process)

The Cuyahoga Riverfront Master Plan is a comprehensive multi-year plan that reimagines and transforms 35 acres along the riverfront, including Tower City Center and the surrounding landscape, with the core tenets of accessibility, equity, sustainability, and resilience. The project will use the Shore-to-Core-to-Shore Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Overlay District to help finance the project.



Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad Feasibility Study (in process)

Cleveland Metroparks, Canalway Partners, and the National Park Service are conducting a feasibility and engineering study of extending the 24-mile Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad service to Downtown Cleveland. This extension will increase access to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and will complement the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail.

AN EQUITABLE PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM

Cleveland must continue to work towards a parks and recreation system that is equitable, providing just and fair inclusion for all people across race, age, culture, economic status, ability, and gender.

DEFINING EQUITY

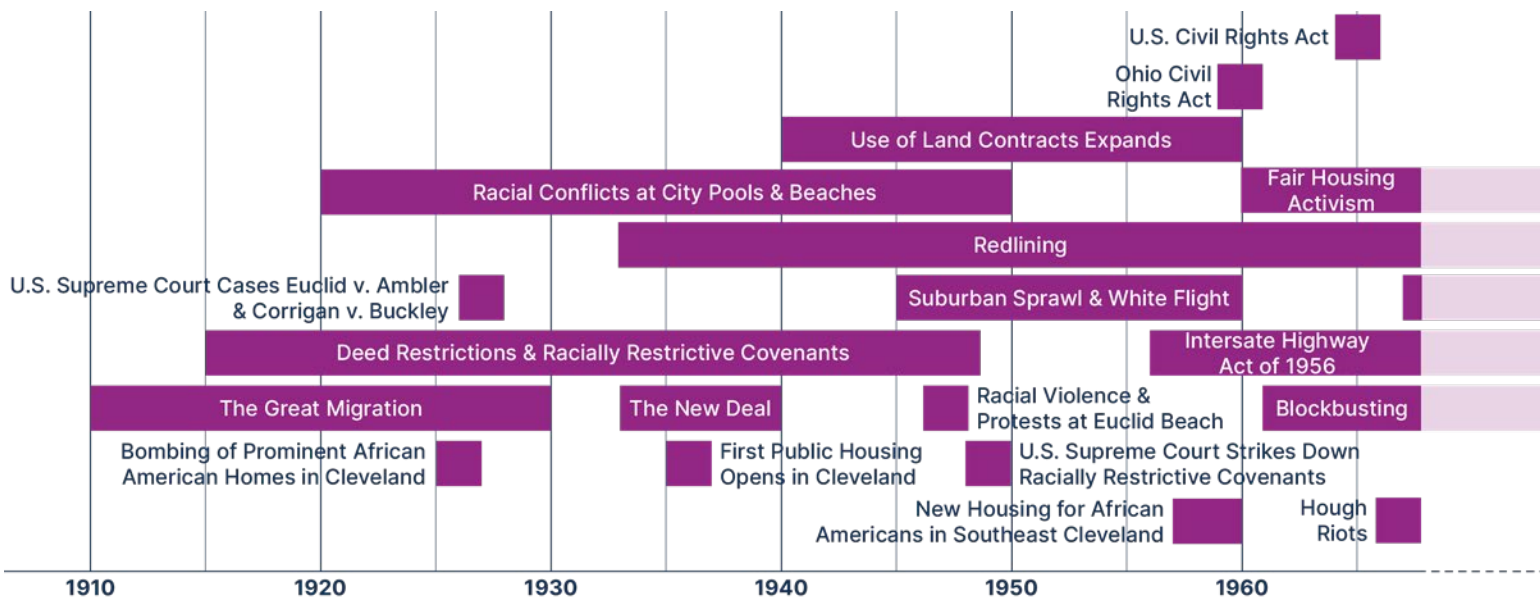
Equity in parks and recreation can be defined as when race is no longer a predictor of access to and quality of parks and recreation, health, well-being, and quality of life. An equitable parks and recreation system honors the unique qualities and needs of each user and neighborhood in design, programming, access to nature, registration, customer service and management.

To take an equitable approach is to constantly work to recognize and acknowledge past harms, work to ameliorate them, be adaptable, and center and reflect

the community in the planning, design, and staffing/operations of parks and recreation facilities. It also means filling park and recreation gaps where there have not historically been investments and making sure that when improvements happen existing residents can enjoy those improvements.

Equity is also about the distribution of resources and decision-making. A more equitable parks and recreation system invests in historically underinvested communities and gives people opportunities to engage in shaping the facilities and programs in their neighborhoods.

Figure 6. Key policies and events shaping where people live in Cleveland today.⁴⁹
Source: Ideastream Public Media.





Children play in the Glenview Pool on East 110th Street in Cleveland, 1967. Glenview Pool was a site of racial threats against Black swimmers. Source: Cleveland State University / Michael Schwartz Library.

HOW THIS PLAN ADDRESSES EQUITY

Level of Service Standards

The level of service access-based standards seek to ensure equitable access to fundamental recreational amenities within a short walk of each Clevelander's home. [See p. 154.](#)

General Investment Strategies

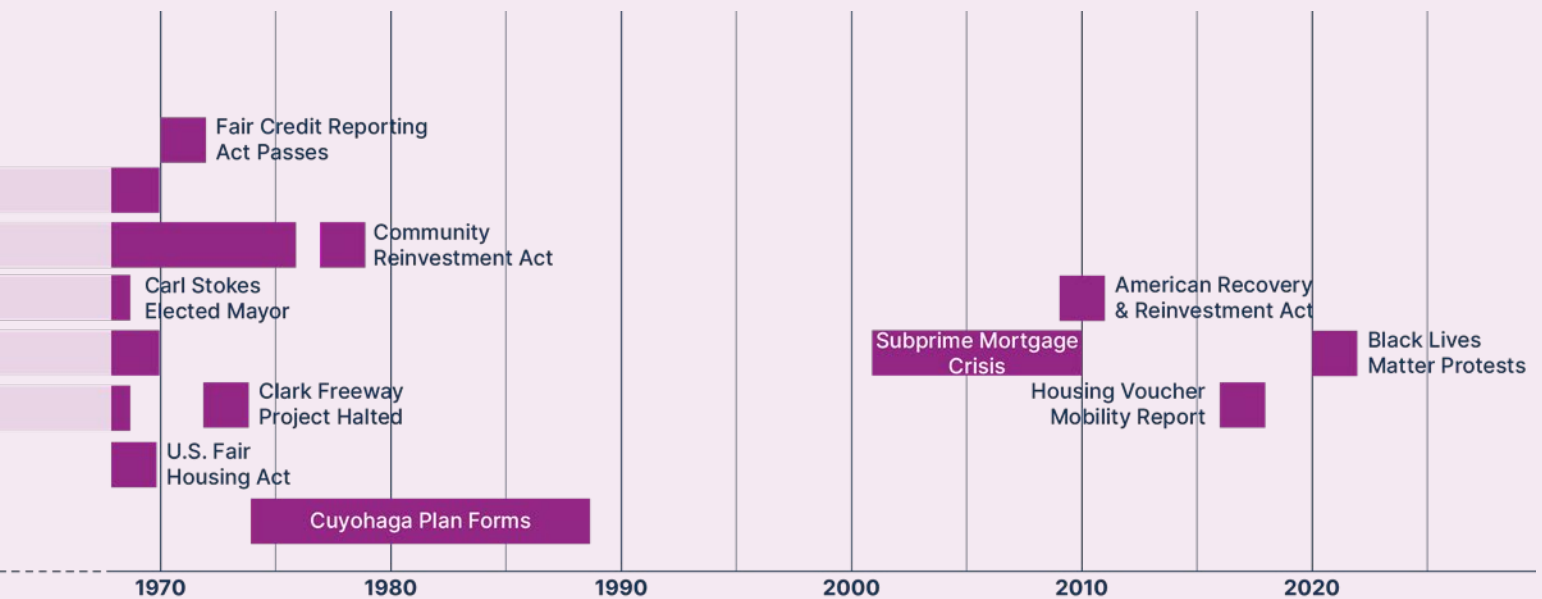
Based on an analysis of proximity to park space, number of parks, and access to recreational amenities, the plan identifies parts of the City where additional amenities are needed, where current amenities should be maintained, and where there is an abundance of amenities—with the aim of more equitable investments. [See p. 188.](#)

Park Prioritization Strategy

In an effort to move beyond the City's current condition-based strategy for prioritizing capital investments, this Plan proposes a strategy that centers equity and citywide priorities. [See p. 224.](#)

Policy Framework

In support of all the goals of this plan, a number of specific methods aim to create more equitable City policy around parks and recreation. These methods are specifically indicated with an **EQUITY** callout. [See p. 244.](#)



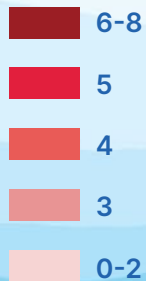
A TOOL FOR MAPPING EQUITY IN CLEVELAND

CLIMATE & ECONOMIC JUSTICE SCREENING TOOL (CEJST)

Developed by the Council on Environmental Quality in 2021, the CEJST measures the level of burden that communities across the country experience. The eight categories of burden the tool measures are:

- climate change
- energy
- health
- housing
- legacy pollution
- transportation
- water and wastewater
- workforce development

Number of Burden Thresholds Met



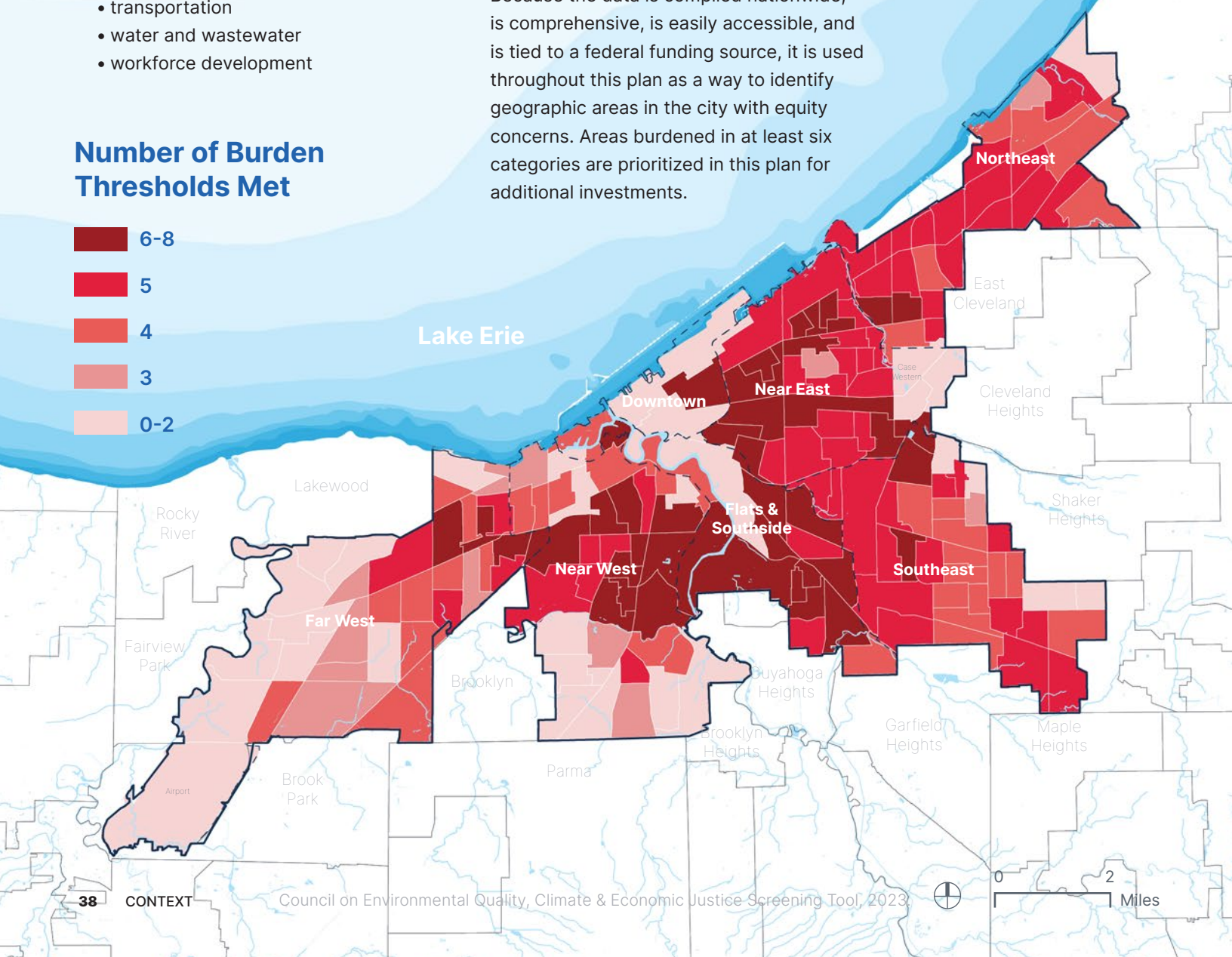
Communities are considered disadvantaged if they are in census tracts that meet the thresholds for at least one of the tool's categories of burden.

Federal agencies use the tool to identify disadvantaged communities that will benefit from programs included in the Justice40 Initiative. The Justice40 Initiative seeks to deliver 40% of the overall benefits of investments in climate, clean energy, and related areas to disadvantaged communities.

Because the data is compiled nationwide, is comprehensive, is easily accessible, and is tied to a federal funding source, it is used throughout this plan as a way to identify geographic areas in the city with equity concerns. Areas burdened in at least six categories are prioritized in this plan for additional investments.

Figure 7. CEJST Burden Thresholds for Cleveland.

Source: Council on Environmental Quality, Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool, 2023.





Cleveland
City



CLEVELAND
METROPO
SCHOOL DI

DR ACADEN
SOCCER FIE
KICKOFF



Embassy of the
United Arab Emirates
Washington, DC



CITY OF CLEVELAND
Mayorick G. Lee

Soccer practice for
a youth league in
Cleveland.
Source: City of Cleveland.

RECREATION TRENDS

National, regional, and local trends affect Cleveland's public spaces. National participation trends show the growth or decline in recreational activities, which provides insight into recreational amenities that may be more or less important to residents.

Yet, the trend with the greatest impact on the future of parks and recreation can be found in population forecasts that show continued population decline in Cuyahoga County through at least 2050. This affects the number of facilities needed over the coming years and increases the pressure to reexamine the distribution of parks and recreation resources across Cleveland. These trends informed this plan's recommendations and will continue to guide its implementation.

NATIONAL RECREATION TRENDS

National trends shed a spotlight on which activities are growing, which are steady, and which are declining in participation. The data in this section was obtained from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association's *Sports, Fitness & Recreational Activities Topline Participation Report 2023*.

Basketball has one of the highest levels of participation.
Source: City of Cleveland.



Pickleball is the fastest growing general sport.



National Trends in General Sports

Basketball (28.1 million), golf (25.6 million), and tennis (23.6 million) have the highest participation of all general sports, followed by golf entertainment venues (15.5 million) and baseball (15.5 million).

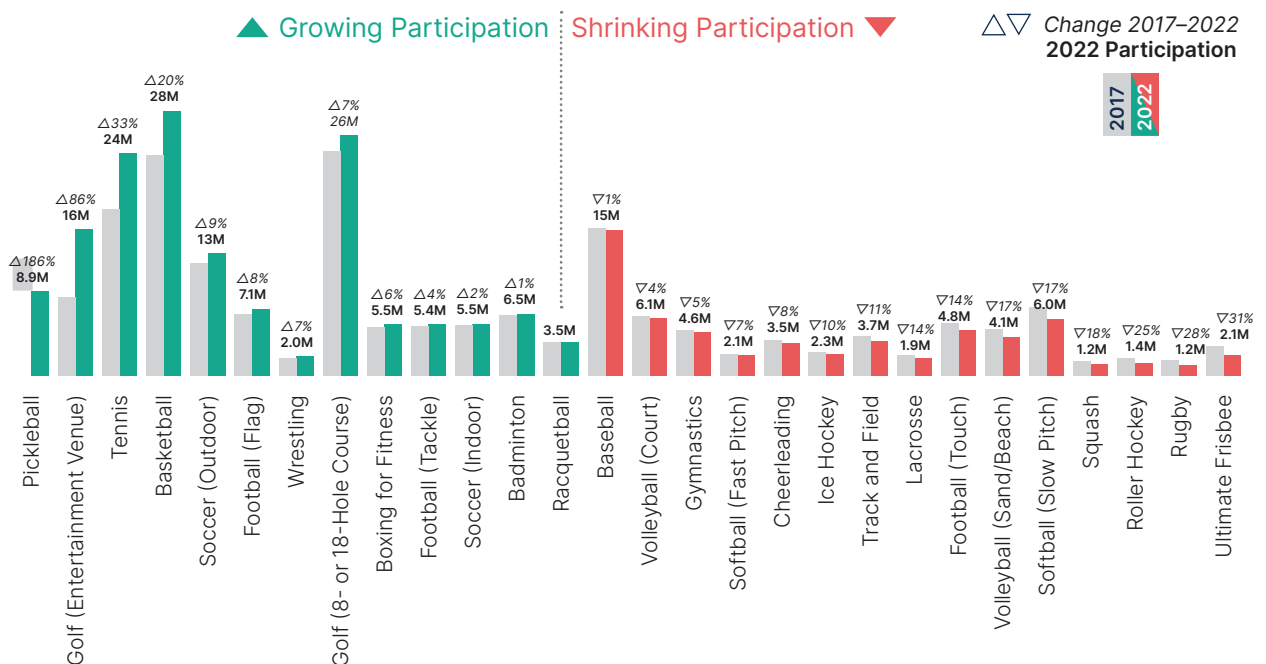
The popularity of basketball, golf, and tennis can be attributed to the fact that they can be played with relatively few participants. Basketball's success can also be attributed to its low barrier to entry. It requires limited equipment and space. This makes basketball the only traditional sport that can be played at the majority of American homes as a driveway pickup game.

The ability for these sports to be played outdoors and at a distance helps explain

their continued popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though golf has experienced a decrease in participation in the last five years, it still continues to benefit from its wide age segment appeal and is considered a life-long sport. The emergence of golf entertainment venues (e.g., Top Golf) has presented a new alternative that has breathed life back into the game.

In the past five years, pickleball has continued to grow rapidly (+186%). Following that, golf entertainment venues (+86%) and tennis (+33%) have seen the fastest growth. Traditional sports basketball (+20%) and outdoor soccer (+9%) have also experienced significant growth. Sports most rapidly declining in participation include ultimate frisbee (-32%), rugby (-28%), and roller hockey (-25%).

Figure 8. General Sports Trends.
Source: Sports & Fitness Industry Association's Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, 2023.



National Trends in Fitness

Overall, fitness activities have experienced strong growth in recent years. Many of these activities have become popular due to an increased interest among Americans in improving their health and enhancing quality of life by engaging in an active lifestyle. These activities also have very few barriers to entry, are relatively inexpensive to participate in, and can be performed by most individuals. Many are also able to be done at home or in a virtual

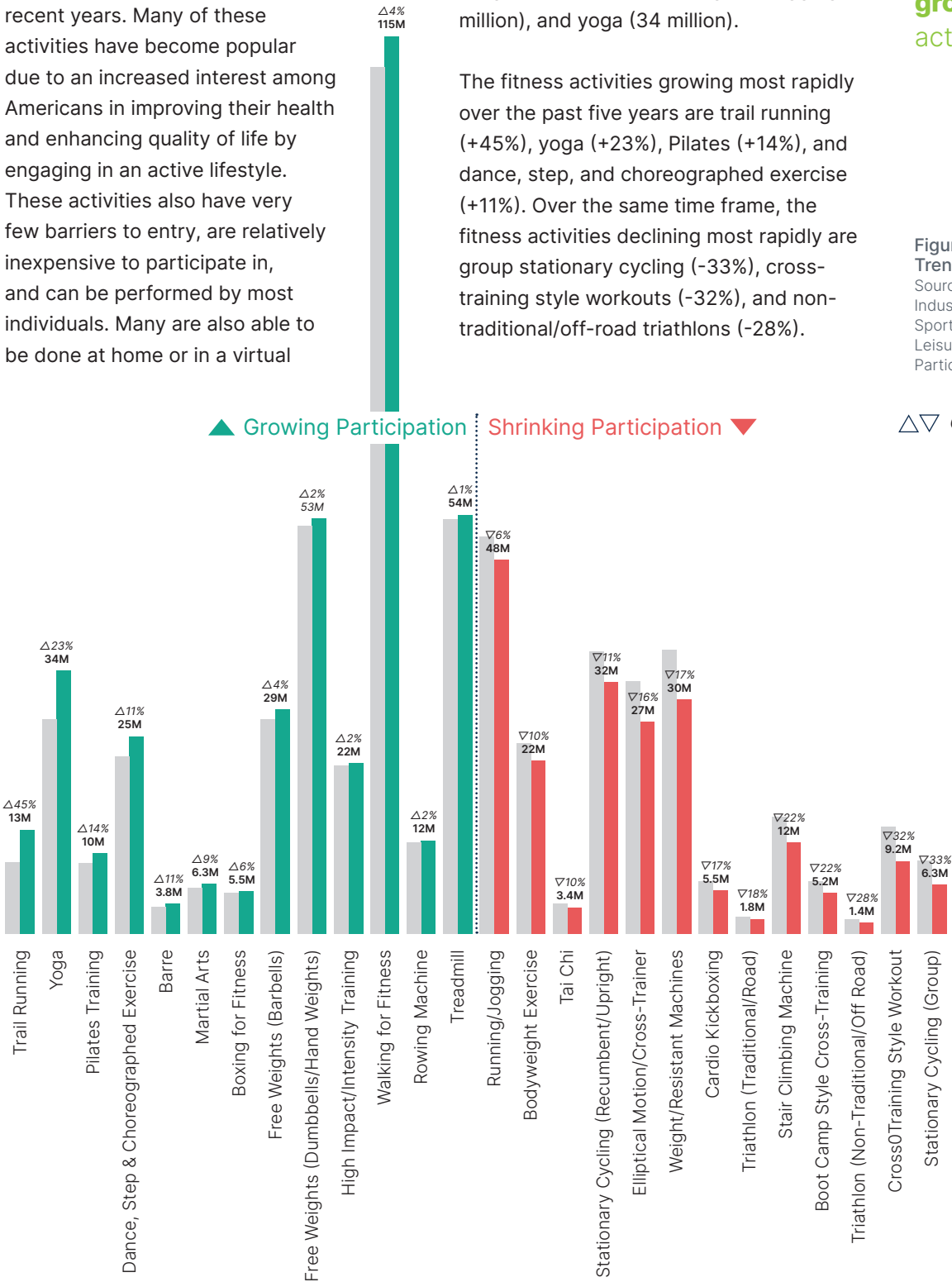
class. The most popular general fitness activities nationally include fitness walking (115 million), treadmill (54 million), free weights (53 million), running and jogging (48 million), and yoga (34 million).

The fitness activities growing most rapidly over the past five years are trail running (+45%), yoga (+23%), Pilates (+14%), and dance, step, and choreographed exercise (+11%). Over the same time frame, the fitness activities declining most rapidly are group stationary cycling (-33%), cross-training style workouts (-32%), and non-traditional/off-road triathlons (-28%).

Trail running is the **fastest growing** fitness activity.



Figure 9. Fitness Trends.
Source: Sports & Fitness Industry Association's Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, 2023.



△▽ Change 2017–2022
2022 Participation



Climbing is the fastest growing outdoor/adventure recreation activity.



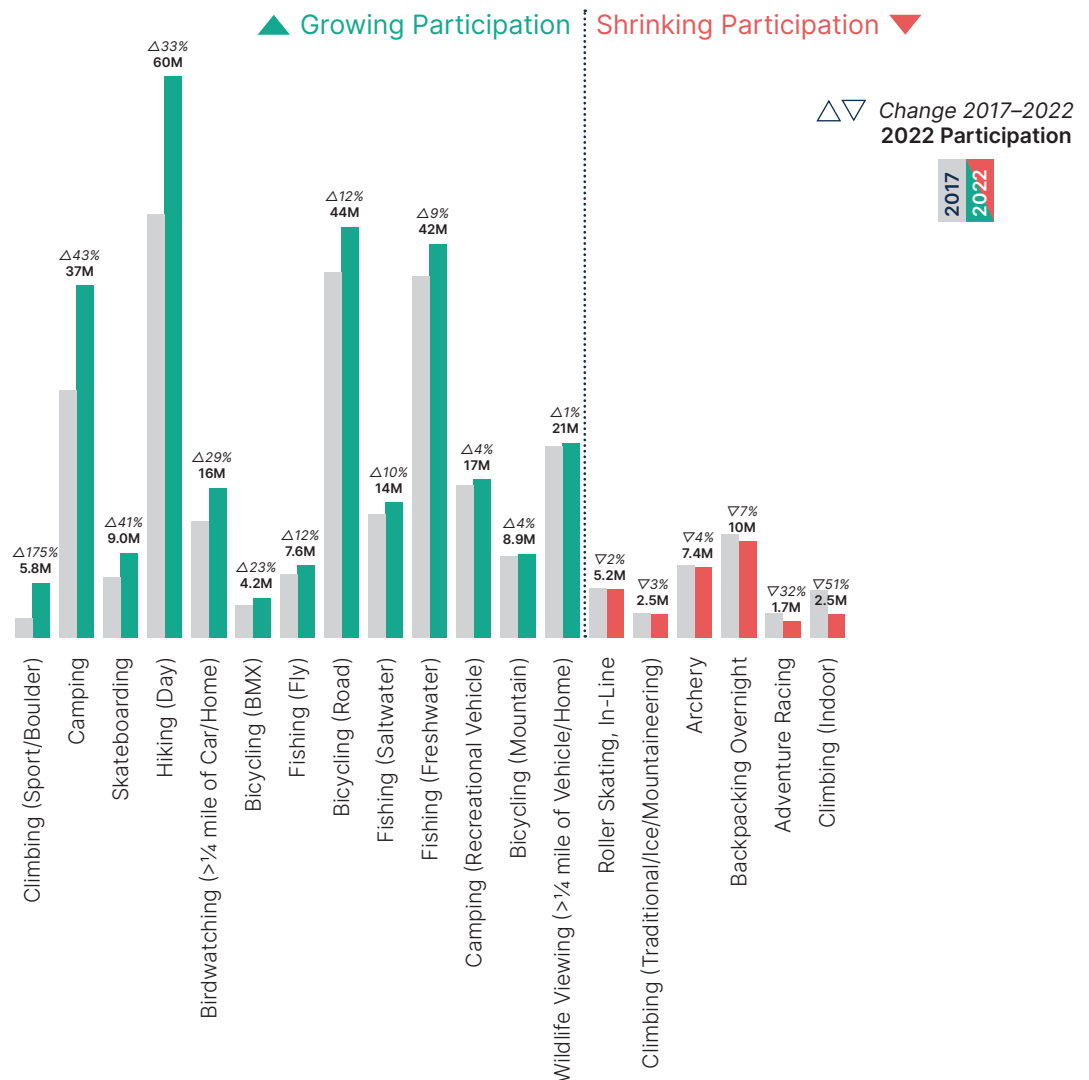
National Trends in Outdoor/Adventure Recreation

Trends show rapid growth in participation in outdoor/adventure activities. Like general fitness activities, these activities encourage an active lifestyle, can be performed individually or within a group, and are not as limited by time constraints. Outdoor/adventure activities with the greatest participation are day hiking (60 million), road bicycling (44 million), freshwater fishing (42 million), camping (37 million), and wildlife viewing (21million).

The greatest increases in participation over the last five years were seen in sport/boulder climbing (+175%), camping (+43%), skateboarding (+41%), day hiking (+33%), and birdwatching (+29%). Indoor climbing (-51%) and adventure racing (-32%) saw the greatest decreases in participation.

Figure 10. Outdoor/Adventure Recreation Trends.

Source: Sports & Fitness Industry Association's Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, 2023.



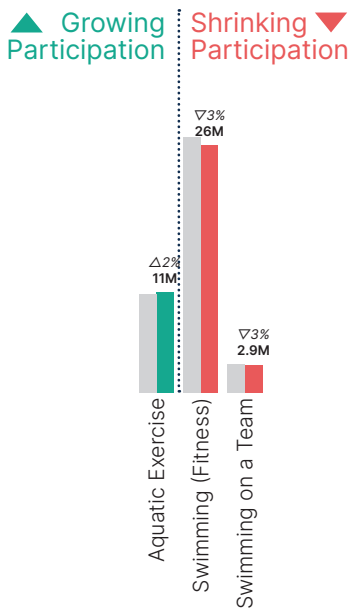
National Trends in Aquatics

Swimming is often a lifetime activity, which is most likely why it continues to have such strong participation. Fitness swimming has the highest participation (26 million) by far among aquatic activities, largely due to its broad, multigenerational appeal.

That said, participation in fitness swimming (-3%) and swimming on a team (-3%) decreased moderately over the past five years due to the inaccessibility of facilities during COVID-19, while aquatic exercise (+2%) saw a slight increase in participation during this same time period.

Figure 11. Aquatics Trends.

Source: Sports & Fitness Industry Association's Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, 2023.



National Trends in Water Sports/Activities

Recreational kayaking (14 million), canoeing (10 million), and snorkeling (7 million) are the most popular water sports. Participation levels in water activities tend to vary by region, season, and environmental factors. A region with more water access and a warmer climate is more likely to have a higher participation in water activities than a region with a long winter or limited water access. Therefore, fluctuations in participation may be the result of environmental factors.

Over the last five years, surfing (+38%), recreational kayaking (+29%), stand-up paddling (+14%), and white-water kayaking (+9%) were the fastest growing water activities. Over the same period, water skiing (-15%), snorkeling (-12%), boardsailing/windsurfing (-12%), and sea/touring kayaking (-11%) saw declines in participation.

Surfing is the fastest growing water sport.



Figure 12. Water Sports/Activities Trends.

Source: Sports & Fitness Industry Association's Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, 2023.

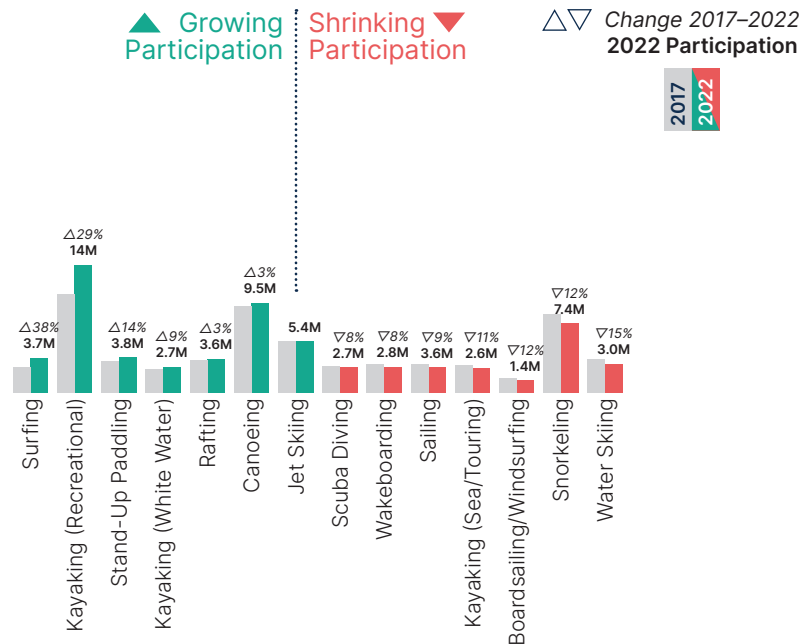
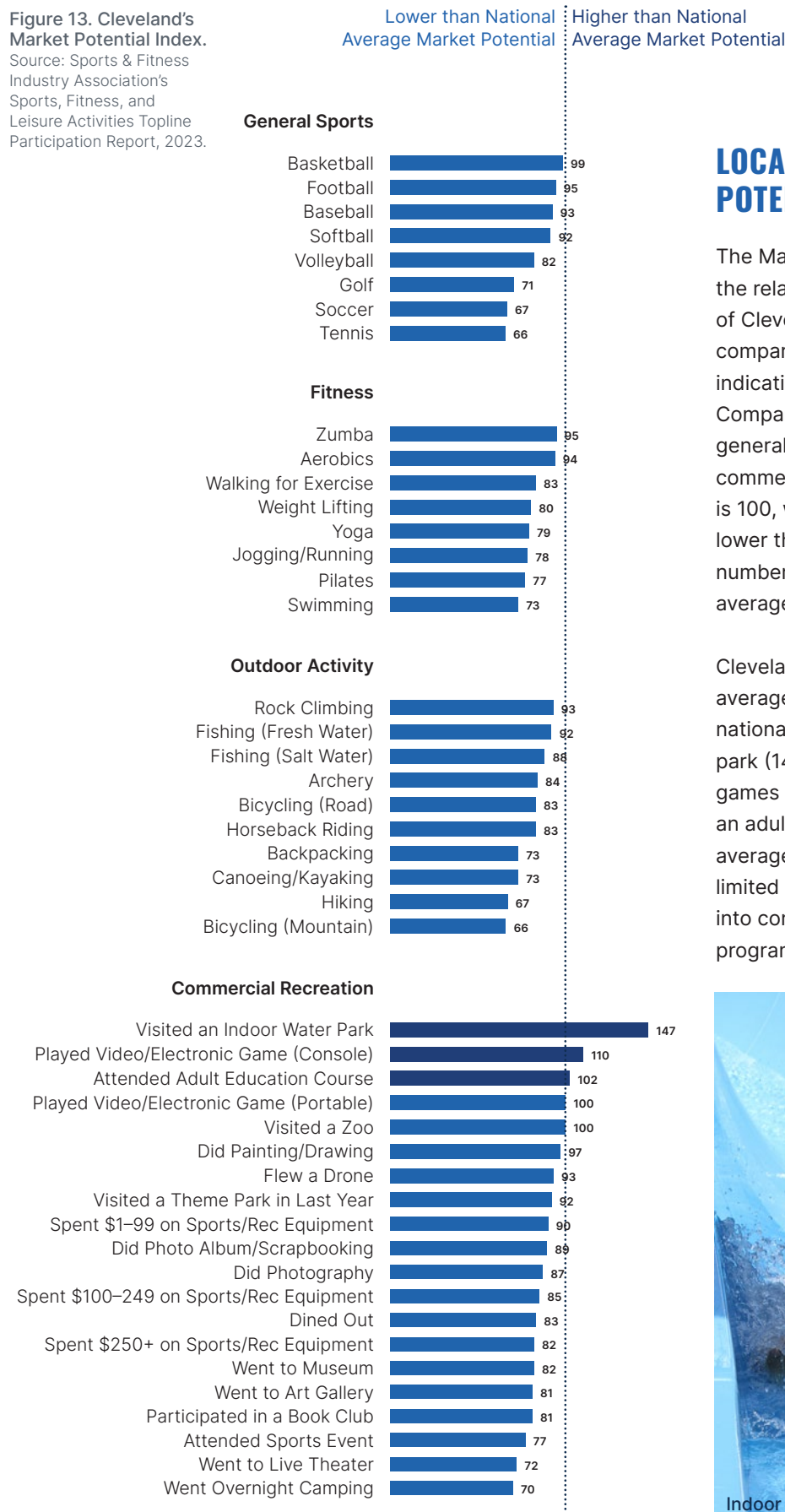


Figure 13. Cleveland's Market Potential Index.
 Source: Sports & Fitness Industry Association's Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, 2023.



LOCAL SPORT AND MARKET POTENTIAL

The Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the relative likelihood that an adult resident of Cleveland will participate in an activity compared to the U.S. national average, indicating probable demand for that activity. Comparisons are made in the categories of general sports, fitness, outdoor activity, and commercial recreation. The national average is 100, with numbers below that indicating lower than average participation rates and numbers above that indicating higher than average participation rates.

Cleveland's MPI hovers around the national average with a few activities above the national average: visiting an indoor water park (147), playing video/electronic games - console (110), and attending an adult education course (102). Below average MPI scores indicate potentially limited participation. This should be taken into consideration when starting up new programs or building new facilities.



Indoor waterparks have a higher than the national average market potential in Cleveland.
 Source: City of Cleveland.



A group of children in orange shirts are walking away from the camera on a paved path in a park. They are surrounded by lush green trees and bushes. In the background, a building with a red roof is visible. The scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a pleasant day outdoors.

Parks & Recreation Today

CLEVELAND'S PARKS & RECREATION STORY

Looking to the roots of Cleveland's parks and recreation system provides a frame for understanding current conditions and an opportunity to cultivate a stronger system that speaks to present-day needs.

The history of Cleveland's parks and recreation system has been cyclical in nature—alternating between periods of active concern for parks and recreation and periods of substantial neglect. While Cleveland's first century was marked by a general lack of parks and recreation policy, today there is a collective rethinking and reimagining by the City and partners of how Cleveland's parks and recreation can best serve communities for the next century.

LAND STEWARDSHIP (PRE-1796)

Ohio's name derives from *Ohi:yó*, an Onöndowa'ga:' (Seneca) term meaning "beautiful river." For millennia, many Indigenous peoples occupied, traversed, lived from, and cared for the land and waterways in what we now call Cleveland.

THE EARLY YEARS (1796–1892)

Founded in 1796, Cleveland was surrounded by vast wilderness. Beyond Public Square, which was unofficially established as a town green in the city's founding, city leaders saw no real urgency to secure parkland.⁵⁰ By the time the city awakened to the need for public open space, areas near the center of Cleveland had long since been appropriated to other uses, and the City was unable to establish parks convenient to the crowded neighborhoods that most needed them.⁵¹

During the 1850s and 1860s, residents began to recognize the importance of parks as sources of public enjoyment as well as a public utility. There were several attempts to persuade the City to acquire additional parkland beyond Public Square and Clinton Square (1835), but city council did not see the need.

The First Park Board

In 1865, a city council committee was appointed to consider the establishment of public parks. The committee reported that Cleveland was "far behind most cities of its class" and urged the purchase of parkland to accommodate the city's "great future population."⁵¹ In 1871, the city's first Board of Park Commissioners was created. Lake View Park, Franklin Circle, and Lincoln Park were all acquired during this time. In 1882, Jephtha H. Wade gifted 64 acres of open space to the city—the first large gift of open space to the city and a pioneer for the city's modern park system.⁵⁰

By the 1890s, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit, and Buffalo all had established, well-planned park systems.⁵¹ Cleveland's park commissioners recognized that Cleveland was well behind those cities in the development of parks and identified some natural park sites—Doan Brook Valley, the

The following research is from the 1976 **Cleveland Parks & Recreation Study** and Carol Poh Miller's **Cleveland Metroparks, Past and Present** published in 1992.



1894 General Scheme for Parks and Parkways, Cleveland, OH.
 Source: Cleveland State University Library Special Collections.

lakeshore on the west side, and the Big Creek Valley south of Brooklyn Village—that should be acquired before development encroached on them and put their purchase out of reach.⁵⁰

MAJOR EXPANSION & FIRST PARKS PLAN (1893–1900)

Perhaps the system's most critical decade, the 1890s saw Cleveland actively and ambitiously acquire and develop parkland. In 1893 the state legislature granted park boards expanded authority to appropriate parkland and issue bonds. Cleveland appointed a new board of five commissioners “to provide for the Forest City a system of parks commensurate with her size and importance.”⁵¹

This second park board adopted the first general plan for park development in Cleveland. The plan's principal feature was the location of a large park on the outskirts of the city in each of seven main sections. These would be connected by broad paved boulevards encircling the city. The board hired Boston landscape architect Ernest W. Bowditch to carry out the plan.

Acquisition of parkland accelerated dramatically with over nine major parks created, including: Gordon Park, Rockefeller Park, Ambler Park, Edgewater Reservation, Brookside Reservation, Garfield Reservation, Washington Reservation, and Luke Easter Park.⁵⁰ These parks were, as elsewhere in the nation's cities during this period, envisioned as passive “public pleasure grounds.”

While there was great park expansion in Cleveland, there was also some serious opposition to the park board and concerns around equity. Residents were concerned that by establishing parks on the outskirts of the city, the park board was making them accessible to those in adjacent townships, but inaccessible to those in the city who could not afford transportation out to the parks.⁵¹ The park board was abolished in 1900 and administration of the city's parks was vested in the new Division of Parks & Boulevards of the Department of Public Works.

Within a comparatively brief period, some 1,200 acres had been assembled and improved. Two-thirds of the land had been donated, leaving the City to pay only for improvement and maintenance.⁵¹ But therein lay the problem that would plague the city's parks: bond funds could be used only for the purchase and permanent improvement of parkland, not maintenance. The City increasingly found that it lacked the resources to maintain what it had built.

RECREATION COMES INTO FOCUS (1900–1940)

Cleveland parks entered a new era under Mayor Tom L. Johnson, who vowed to “bring the parks to the people.”⁵¹ He ordered the removal of “Keep Off the Grass” signs, and set a goal to establish playgrounds in more crowded neighborhoods.⁵¹ This mirrored the situation in other large industrial cities, where park-reform advocates argued for the location of new parks on sites more accessible to the working classes and for organized sports and other recreation activities. Thus, during the early 1900s, the Division of Parks added new children's playgrounds, constructed athletic fields and basketball and tennis courts, and introduced Sunday and evening band

concerts.⁵¹ Winter sports, especially ice skating, had gained in popularity, and in 1901 the City established skating rinks at all the larger parks and hosted skating races at Brookside and Rockefeller Parks. Park shelters at Edgewater and Woodland Hills Parks were converted for use as municipal dancing pavilions. By 1904, eight children's playgrounds were operating in denser areas of the city, and the Division of Parks had embarked on construction of the first of five free public bath houses. In 1916, with 2,160 acres of parkland, Cleveland ranked 12th nationally in park area.⁵¹

During this timeframe the City acquired very little land, mostly small parcels where land was available and the cost was not prohibitive. However, the City did develop a number of plans (including the Group Plan, the Lot-Garden Plan, and two recreation plans), conduct surveys establishing guidelines and improvements, create the City Planning Commission, and develop the Cultural Gardens and Greenhouse.⁵⁰ It was also during this time that William A. Stinchcomb proposed an outer system of parks and boulevards, which would become the Cleveland Metroparks in 1917.

Lincoln Park
Playground, 1940.
Source: Clayton Knipper /
Cleveland Public Library.





**Division of Recreation
Baseball League Game.**

Source: Oscar P. Harke,
Division of Recreation
/ Places for Playing in
Cleveland, 1945.

**Clark Avenue Bath
House Gym, 1939.**

Source: Cleveland Memory
Project, Cleveland State
University Library Special
Collections.



**Rockefeller Park
Greenhouse, 1946.**

Source: Edward Dork /
Cleveland Public Library.



By the 1920s, Cleveland's parks had begun to show the effects of intensive use and inadequate funding and maintenance. In 1922, the City cut around 800 people from the division and eliminated the positions of city forester and park engineer.⁵⁰ The widespread introduction and ownership of cars also had an impact on the parks and recreation system. Park drives were widened and picnic grounds enlarged, resulting in loss of native vegetation and mature canopy trees; waterways became more polluted; and many residents moved from the city to the surrounding suburbs.⁵⁰

In 1938, in response to the Great Depression and with aid from the Work Projects Administration, the city's parks were extensively rehabilitated and redesigned to accommodate cars and better withstand intensive use. Nearly 9,000 individuals, divided into 2 shifts, worked 6 days a week building bridges, culverts, bath houses, swimming pools, athletic fields, tennis courts, and playgrounds and planted trees and shrubs throughout the city.⁵¹

STANDARDS FOR THE SYSTEM (1940-1965)

With highway construction decimating large portions of Edgewater, Gordon, and Brookside Reservations, serious outbreaks of vandalism and theft, water pollution, and perpetually inadequate maintenance and security, this period was focused on developing a plan for the acquisition of parkland and a resurgence in concern for parks and recreation.⁵⁰

New standards for park and recreation facilities were outlined in plans like the 1945 "Places for Playing in Cleveland - Standards for Public Recreation Areas" and the 1949 City Planning Commission General Plan. Under the General Plan, the City decided to bank as much potential recreation land as possible, acquiring more than 700 acres of undeveloped land by the early 1960s, the majority of which was concentrated in the northeast and southwest parts of Cleveland.⁵⁰

WHAT, WHERE, AND HOW BIG?

Because people of different ages need different kinds of PLACES FOR PLAYING . . .

The
CLEVELAND CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
 with staff cooperation from the
CLEVELAND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC PROPERTIES
 and the
CLEVELAND BOARD OF EDUCATION

. . . prepared a set of Standards for Public Recreation Areas in Greater Cleveland — adopted August 18, 1944—to serve as a guide to the future development of our recreation system.

These Standards say—

- WHAT** WHAT FACILITIES THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF PLACES FOR PLAYING SHOULD PROVIDE
- WHERE** HOW NEAR TO EVERY HOME EACH PLAY PLACE SHOULD BE
- HOW BIG** HOW LARGE EACH PLAY PLACE SHOULD BE

as follows

. . . IN CLEVELAND—7

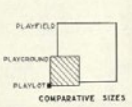
HERE IS A PLAYFIELD

(preferable location: at junior or senior high school)

WHAT Fields and courts for softball, baseball, football, volleyball, soccer, handball, horseshoes, skating, archery, bowling, tennis, swimming, bandstand, picnicking, night lighting, landscaping, etc.

WHERE Within 1/2 to 1 mile walking distance of every home—one for every 15,000 to 25,000 people.

HOW BIG 10 to 30 acres—about 4 times the size of Public Square.



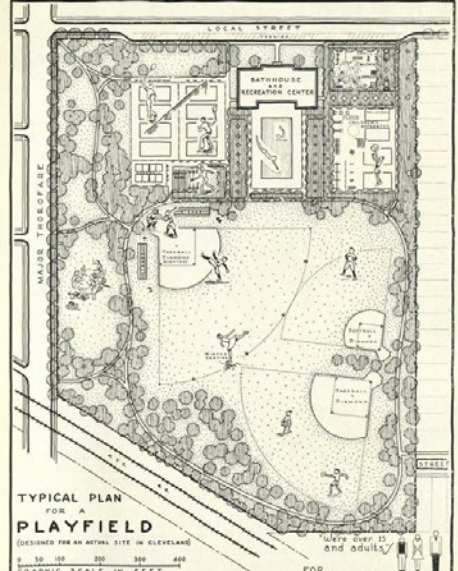
AN AREA for active organized play for older children and adults, ages 15 and over. A section of it should be developed as a children's playground.

PLAYFIELDS should be insulated from surrounding residences by a landscaped buffer.

MANY playfield facilities are used for junior and senior high school physical education and sports programs as well as for general public use; consequently, it is desirable that the playfield be located adjacent to such school site.

FREQUENTLY an outdoor swimming pool is made a major feature of the playfield, with a well-equipped recreation center building adjacent to the pool.

OTHER features such as a bandstand, outdoor theater, and picnic facilities are sometimes provided in the landscaped area away from the intensively-use 1 areas, when a playfield is in combination with a neighborhood park.



TYPICAL PLAN FOR A PLAYFIELD
 (DESIGNED FOR AN ACTUAL SITE IN CLEVELAND)

GRAPHIC SCALE IN FEET

"PLACES FOR PLAYING keep children from straying"

Standards for Public Recreation Areas. Source: Places for Playing in Cleveland, 1945.

DISINVESTMENT & OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE (1965–1980)

The parks division traditionally received little from the City’s budget, and as the budget grew leaner in the 1960s, park personnel were continually reduced. The parks, once one of Cleveland’s finest assets, were reduced to a deplorable condition. Mayor Ralph Perk’s attempt in 1972 to address the situation with “Operation Turn Around” was ineffective, as was a \$500,000 federal investment in 1975.⁵¹ No longer able to manage its extensive park system, the City looked to other government agencies for help. In 1977, the City negotiated a long-term lease with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, making Edgewater, Gordon, and Wildwood Parks part of a new Cleveland Lakefront State Park.

Spectators picnic under the trees at Edgewater Park, while waiting for fireworks. In 1977, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources began operating Edgewater Park, taking it out of the City of Cleveland’s management. Today, Cleveland Metroparks operates the park.
Source: George Heinz / Cleveland Public Library.



REFOCUSING THE SYSTEM (1980–TODAY)

In 1980, the most recent parks and recreation plan prior to this one was released—The Cleveland Parks and Recreation Recovery Action Program. Following the successful capital improvements, maintenance, and security of the state’s management of the lakefront parks, Euclid Beach Park, a popular amusement park closed in 1969, was added to the lakefront chain. In 1986, after failing to maintain Garfield Reservation, Cleveland Metroparks agreed to lease and operate the 180-acre park for \$1 a year for 99 years.⁵¹ In 1993, in a similar deal, Cleveland relinquished control of 135-acre Brookside Reservation to Cleveland Metroparks. In 2013, the State of Ohio transferred the Lakefront Reservation to Cleveland Metroparks, and in 2023, Cleveland Metroparks took control of Gordon Park from the City.

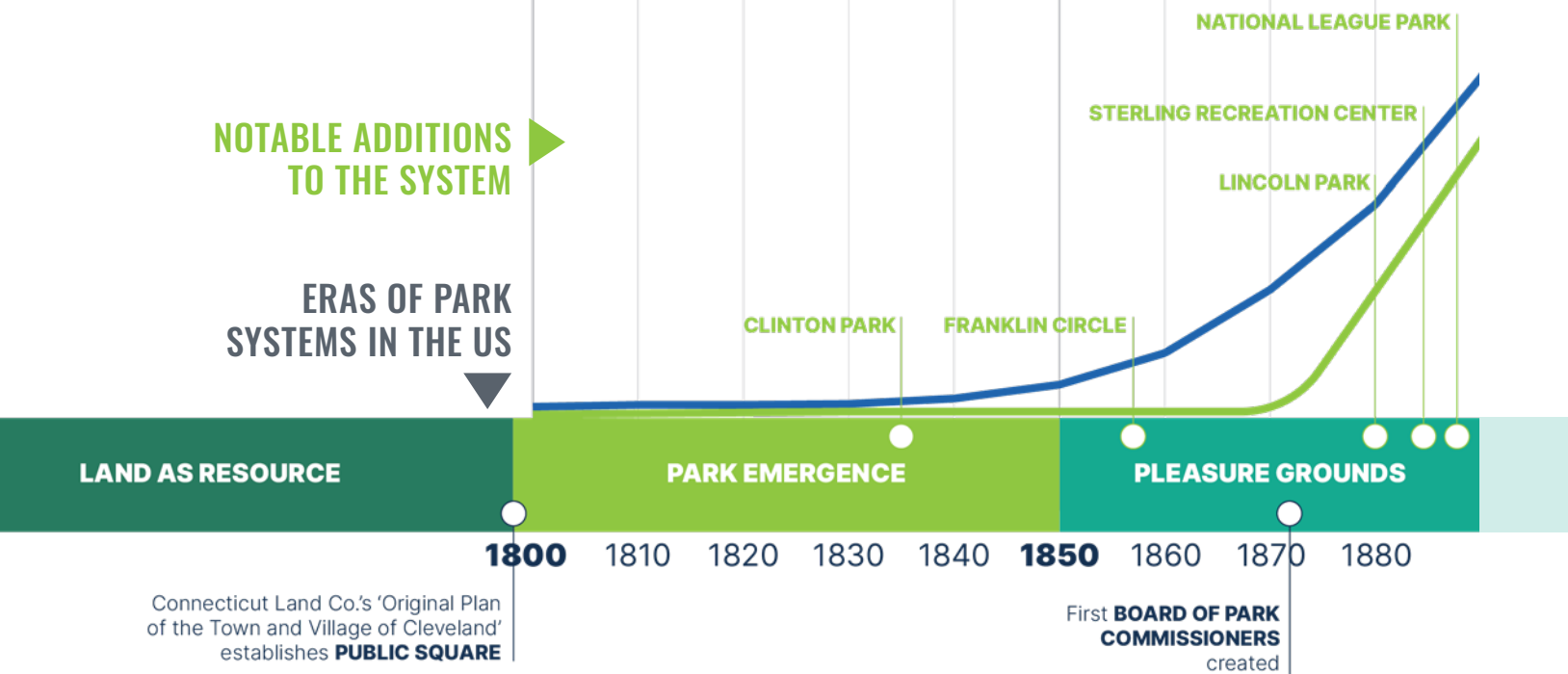
Today, the City still suffers from many of the similar issues it faced in the early 1900s—a lack of funding for maintenance, improvements, and proper staffing of parks and recreation facilities.

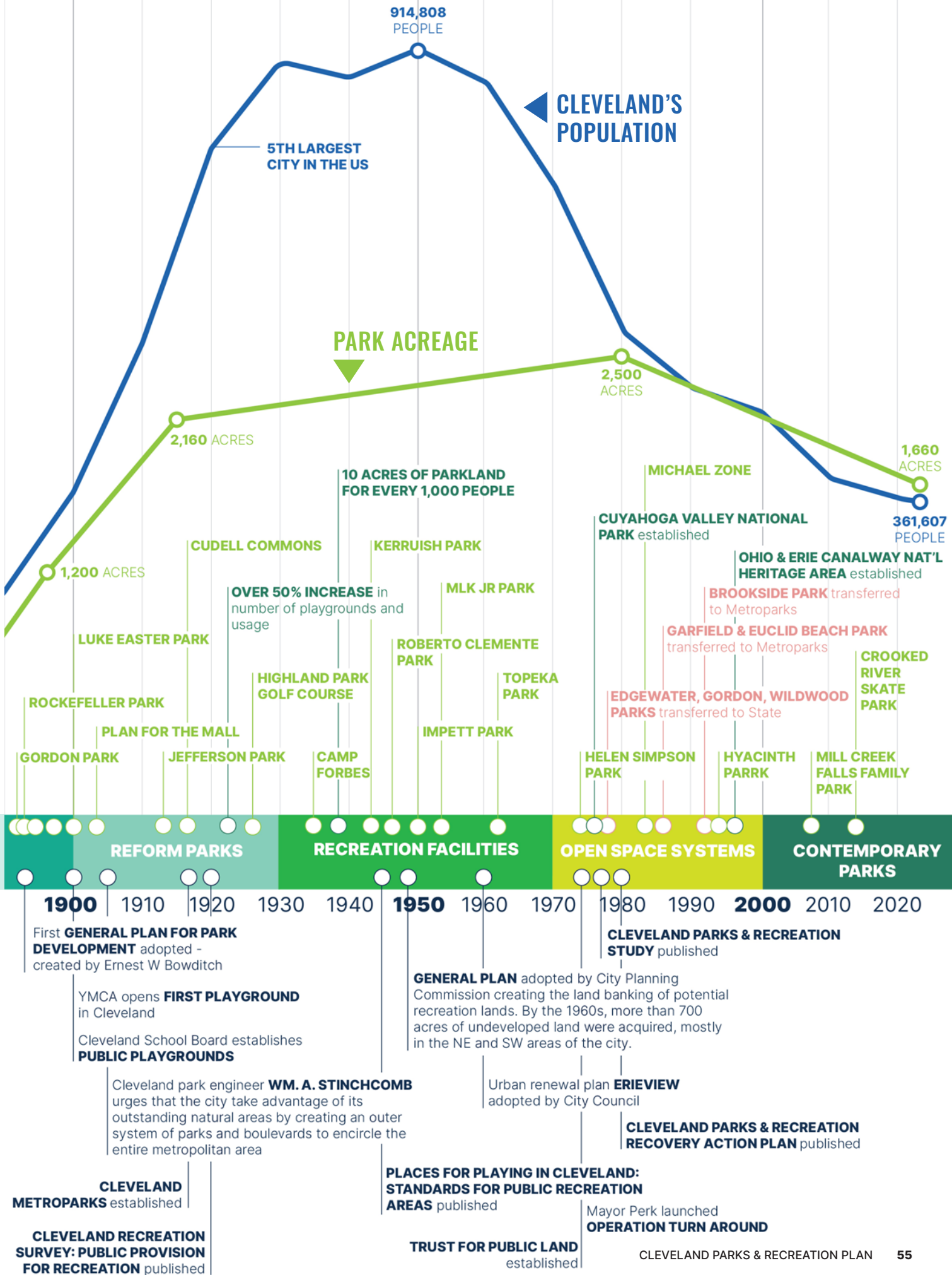
Baseball Tournament.
Source: City of Cleveland.



PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM GROWTH

This timeline tracks significant events in the growth and development of the City of Cleveland's parks and recreation system from 1800 to today.



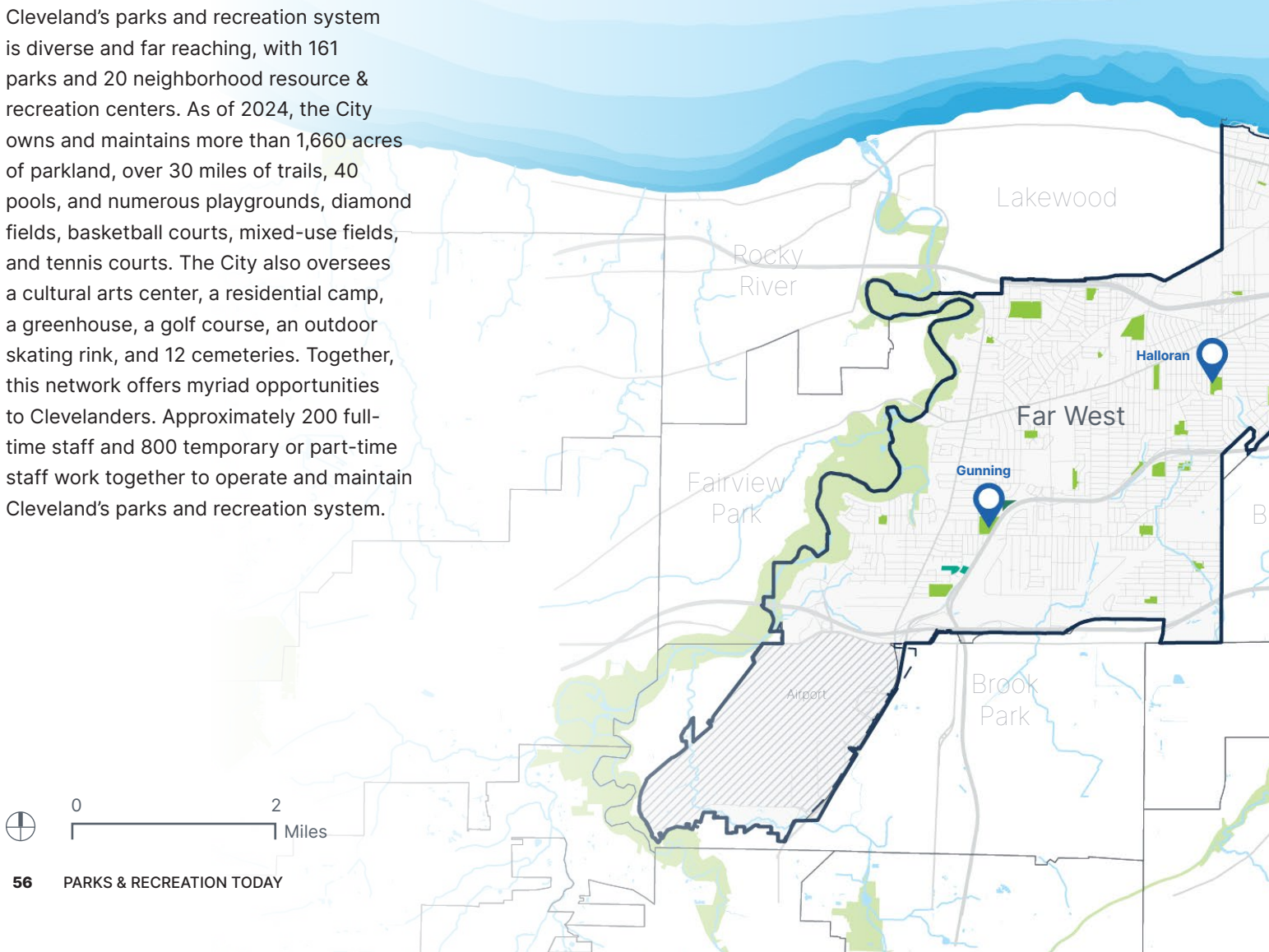


THE PARKS & RECREATION SYSTEM TODAY






Cleveland's parks and recreation system reflects its unique geography, history, and culture. As the Forest City, Cleveland's identity was shaped by its parks and recreation system, which have become woven into the daily routines of many residents. The system's proximity to natural features, like Lake Erie, the Cuyahoga River, and Doan Brook, draw residents from near and far to experience first hand the unique dynamism of these remarkable public places.

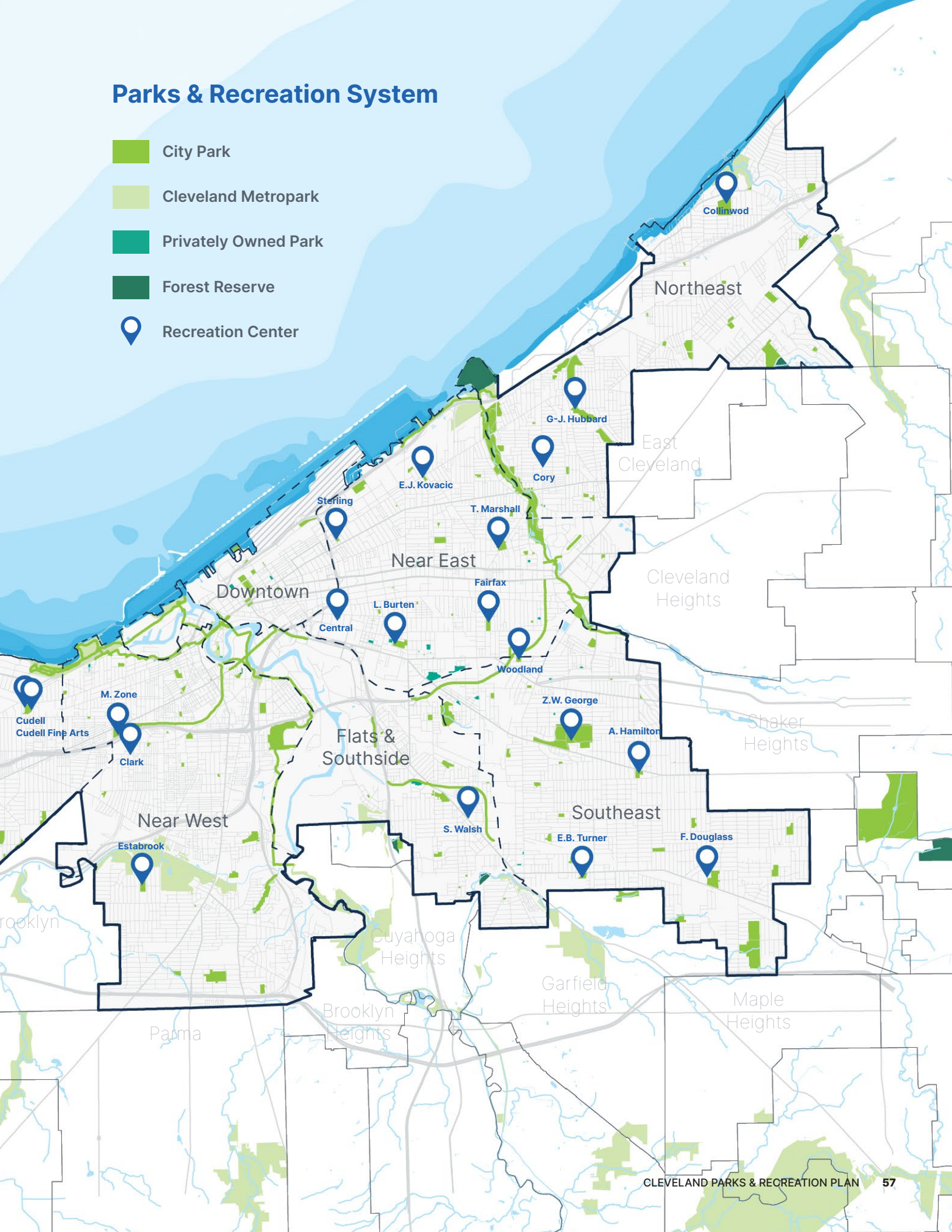
Cleveland's parks and recreation system is diverse and far reaching, with 161 parks and 20 neighborhood resource & recreation centers. As of 2024, the City owns and maintains more than 1,660 acres of parkland, over 30 miles of trails, 40 pools, and numerous playgrounds, diamond fields, basketball courts, mixed-use fields, and tennis courts. The City also oversees a cultural arts center, a residential camp, a greenhouse, a golf course, an outdoor skating rink, and 12 cemeteries. Together, this network offers myriad opportunities to Clevelanders. Approximately 200 full-time staff and 800 temporary or part-time staff work together to operate and maintain Cleveland's parks and recreation system.

Lake Erie



Parks & Recreation System

-  City Park
-  Cleveland Metropark
-  Privately Owned Park
-  Forest Reserve
-  Recreation Center



1,660+

ACRES OF PARKLAND



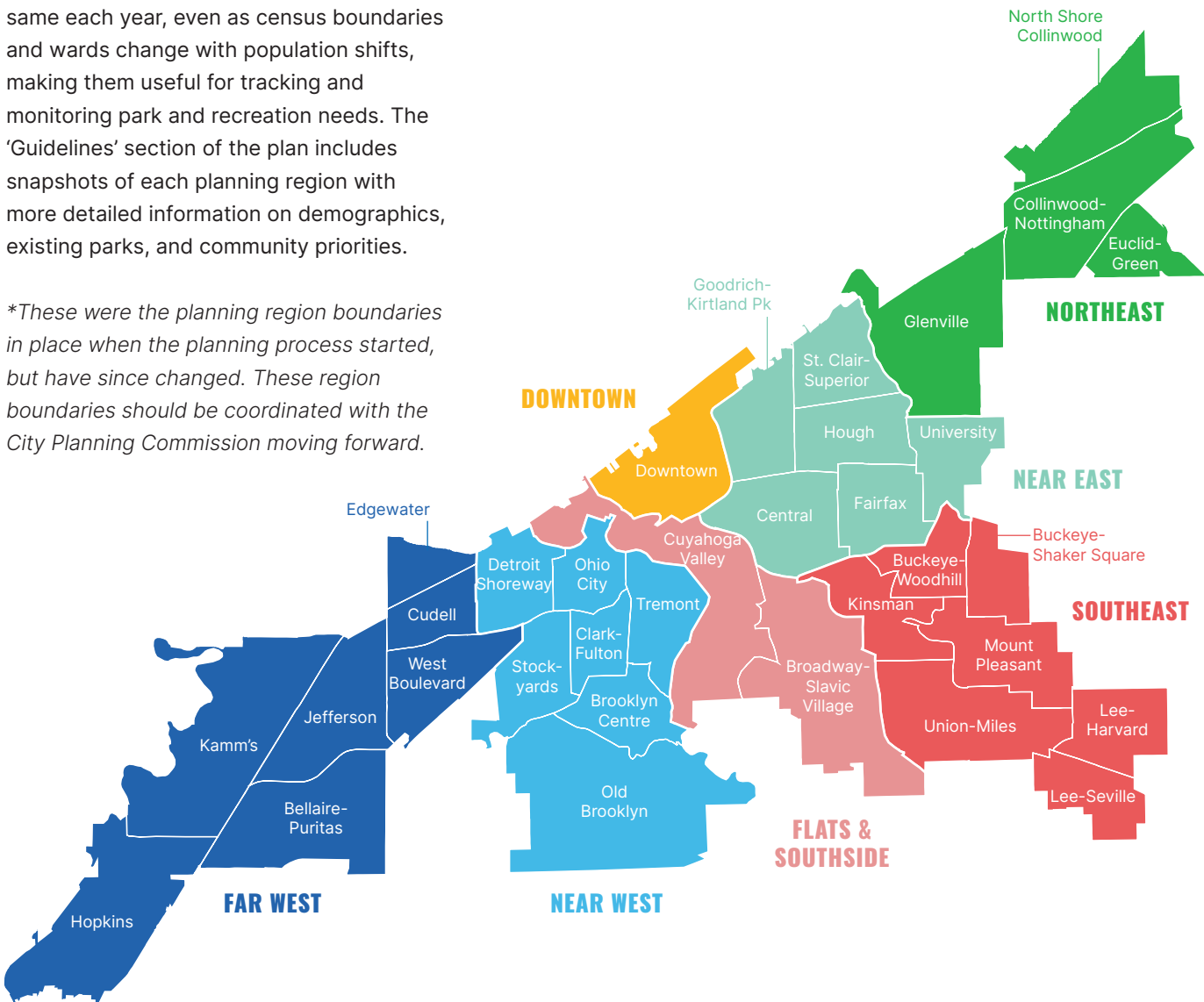


CLEVELAND'S PLANNING REGIONS

In order to coordinate local needs with system-wide needs in an efficient and consistent way, the City uses seven planning regions: Far West, Near West, Downtown, Flats & Southside, Southeast, Near East, and Northeast.

The seven planning regions* remain the same each year, even as census boundaries and wards change with population shifts, making them useful for tracking and monitoring park and recreation needs. The 'Guidelines' section of the plan includes snapshots of each planning region with more detailed information on demographics, existing parks, and community priorities.

**These were the planning region boundaries in place when the planning process started, but have since changed. These region boundaries should be coordinated with the City Planning Commission moving forward.*





Cleveland's 34 unique neighborhoods are grouped into one of seven planning regions.
Source: City of Cleveland.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Cleveland provides and facilitates hundreds of recreation programs and services to residents each year. Planning, implementing, conducting, and evaluating this diverse array of recreation programs and special community-wide events happens year round.

Currently, the Recreation Division focuses on providing basic services through its network of neighborhood resource and recreation centers (NRRCs or recreation centers).

These centers offer various programs and activities for residents of all ages. The Mayor's Office of Prevention, Intervention, and Opportunity for Youth and Young Adults (PIO) contracts with non-profit and for-profit agencies to deliver "enhanced" services, including family support programs, to children, teens, adults, and senior residents.

Notably, Recreation and PIO service delivery are based on a trauma-informed care model, partnering with Case Western University to leverage their expertise in this area. This approach is intended to provide residents who are facing challenges with support services and guidance.

Through these two divisions, residents have hundreds of City-provided offerings in athletics, classes, summer camps, aquatics, teen activities, and therapeutic recreation available to them.

CORE PROGRAM AREAS

Cleveland strives to provide access to outstanding programs, services, and community amenities. Core program areas are activities and outcomes of greatest importance to the community as informed by current and future needs. Public recreation

is often challenged by trying to be all things to all people. Identifying core program areas assists staff, policy makers, and the public to focus on what is most important.

Core program areas are those that:

- have been offered for a long period of time (over 4 years) and/or are expected by the community
- consume a relatively large portion (5% or more) of the overall recreation budget
- are offered 3-4 seasons per year
- have wide demographic appeal
- have a tiered level of skill development available
- have dedicated full-time staff
- have facilities to support the program area
- represent a significant share (20% or more) of the local market

The Recreation Division, which will be folded into the new Parks and Recreation Department, offers programs and services in six core program areas:

- Education & Youth Development
- Organized Sports
- Residential Camp
- Senior
- Cultural Arts
- Aquatics

32%

of Clevelanders have participated in a city recreation program in the past year.

PIO offers programs and services in six core program areas:

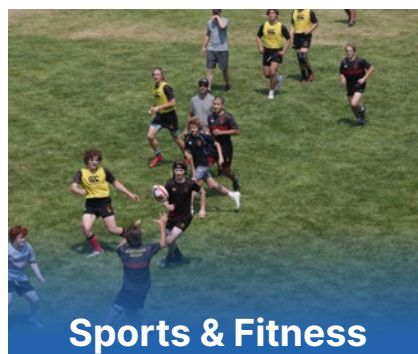
- Youth & Adult Education
- Job & Career Readiness
- Health & Wellness
- Youth Development, Mentorship, Leadership, and Community Service
- Performing & Visual Arts
- Sports & Recreation

Streamlining Core Program Areas

An opportunity exists to streamline core program areas that are being offered by the Parks and Recreation Department and PIO to maximize resources and overall capacity. Each has specific strengths that can be applied to various core program areas. Cleveland will need to coordinate program planning through an annual recreation plan to ensure that the goals and strategies of the Parks and Recreation Department and PIO and their partners do not overlap and duplicate efforts.

Proposed Core Program Areas.
Source: City of Cleveland.

Proposed Core Program Areas



POTENTIAL NEW CORE PROGRAM AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

The community engagement process revealed additional core programs that are a high priority to the Cleveland community. These areas open many more opportunities for Cleveland to address critical health and wellness needs.

Farming and Gardening

Community gardens can fill a need in areas of the city where there is poor access to affordable and nutritious food. Expanding partnerships with organizations like Sustainable Cleveland, Cleveland Roots, or Ohio City Farm can provide essential training for Cleveland staff to successfully manage community gardens and expand the reach of each of these community-based organizations.

Through collaboration with schools, food banks, community organizations, and businesses Cleveland can provide services such as:

- garden access and education including community plots, junior gardener programs, and multi-cultural workshops;
- skill-building and support including a Master Gardener mentorship program, beginner gardening workshops, and seed saving and plant exchange programs; and
- community outreach including cooking demonstrations, nutrition workshops, harvest festivals, and garden clean-up and beautification days can build better connections to fresh food throughout neighborhoods.

Nature Experiences and Education

Nature immersion, particularly for those without regular or reliable access to the natural environment, can provide benefits for all ages. Partnerships with a nature center, such as Nature Center at Shaker Lakes or the many offered by Cleveland Metroparks, can offer opportunities for children to play and learn in a natural environment, foster a connection with nature, contribute to sensory development, and refine gross motor skills.

Organizations such as the National Wildlife Federation, Project Learning Tree, Rid-All Partnership, and The Nature Conservancy can offer free educational resources, lesson plans, and activities for the recreation centers.

Other program ideas include:

- indoor sensory nature play stations that include natural materials and textures for children to explore;
- “art in nature” workshops where participants can explore their surroundings and creatively express themselves;

Nearly
20%
of Clevelanders identified farming & gardening and nature experiences & education as an important program.

Greenhouses can provide spaces for residents to grow food, learn about healthy food systems, and build community.
Source: City of Cleveland.



- “build your own adventure trail” and scavenger hunts where children can use recycled materials and natural elements to build bridges, tunnels, and play structures, encouraging collaboration and creative problem-solving;
- wildlife demonstrations at the recreation centers by surrounding conservation organizations can help youth learn about the role that urban habitat plays in helping wildlife survive;
- collaborations with natural resource organizations to create and maintain pollinator habitats throughout community spaces to teach youth the important role pollinators play in a variety of food and everyday products; and
- outdoor learning areas or classrooms for educational and stewardship programs and workshops for youth through older adults (Nature Explore [natureexplore.org] offers design ideas and resources to develop an outdoor classroom and programming plan).

Planting native meadows can help increase nature experiences in city parks.
Source: City of Cleveland.



Mental and Public Health Services

Parks and recreation programs are critical to any public health strategy as they can foster mental and physical well-being by providing consistent access to wellness opportunities. Through collaboration with health organizations and other community-based groups, Cleveland can expand their offerings within the recreation centers in these areas:

- physical activity and wellbeing programs such as outdoor group fitness classes, walking groups, and other organized group activities that provide opportunities for exercise and social connections;
- sessions with social workers or therapists on-site;
- stress reduction and mindfulness activities that promote relaxation, creativity, and meditation to reduce stress and improve overall well-being, such as those that offer connections to nature, art therapy, or free or low-cost mindfulness or meditation classes; and
- social connection and community support opportunities such as community workshops on stress management, depression, and anxiety, peer support groups for illnesses and grief, and intergenerational programming where older adults interact with youth can all provide opportunities for social connection as well as additional resources for health and wellness.

Seniors

Opportunities exist for Cleveland to expand senior and active adult programming to ensure access to low-cost activities that improve well-being and social connections for older adults. Some creative senior program ideas include:

- partnering with local schools to pair seniors with tech-savvy students who can teach them basic computer skills, social media usage, and video conferencing;
- offering workshops on using technology for specific purposes, such as online banking, genealogy research, and travel planning;
- partnering with local artists and art studios to offer rotating pop-up art experiences in recreation centers and community spaces;
- providing materials and guidance for various art forms like painting, pottery, drawing, photography, and sculpture;

- organizing art exhibitions and community events displaying senior artwork;
- partnering with healthcare professionals and fitness experts to organize guided walks in nature with health-related discussions and activities;
- focusing on topics like managing chronic conditions, maintaining physical fitness, and mental health awareness; and
- offering transportation assistance and support for seniors with mobility limitations.

ENSURING THE RIGHT CORE PROGRAM MIX

Cleveland's current core program areas appear to meet some of residents' major needs, but the program mix must be evaluated on a recurring basis to ensure that offerings within each core program area—and the core program areas themselves—align with changing leisure and recreation trends, demographics, and residents' needs. The Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) recommends that six determinants be used to inform what programs and services are provided.

Conceptual Foundations of Play, Recreation, and Leisure

Programs and services should encourage and promote a degree of freedom, choice, and voluntary engagement in their structure and design. Programs should reflect positive themes aimed at improving quality of life for both individuals and the overall community.

Organizational Philosophy, Mission, and Vision

Programs and services should support a department's mission and vision, values,

Senior
programming
was the **most**
important type
of program
identified by
Clevelanders.



Left: The Department of Aging offers Cleveland's seniors many unique ways to stay active.
Source: City of Cleveland.

goals, and objectives. These generally center on promoting personal health, community well-being, social equality, environmental awareness, and economic vitality.

Constituent Interests and Desired Needs

Departments should actively seek to understand the recreational needs and interests of their constituency. This not only ensures an effective (and ethical) use of taxpayer dollars, but also helps to make sure that programs perform well and are valued by residents.

Creation of a Constituent-Centered Culture

Programs and services reflect a culture where constituents' needs are the prime factor in creating and providing programs. This should be reflected not only in program design, but in terms of staff behaviors, architecture, furniture, technology, dress, forms of address, decision-making style, planning processes, and forms of communication.

Programs should provide experiences for all age ranges of Clevelanders.
Source: City of Cleveland.

Experiences Desirable for Clientele

Programs and services should be designed to provide the experiences desirable to meet the needs of the participants/clients in a community and identified target markets. This involves not only identifying and understanding the diversity of needs in a community, but also applying recreation programming expertise and skills to design, implement, and evaluate a variety of desirable experiences for residents to meet those needs.

Community Opportunities

When planning programs and services, a department should consider the network of opportunities afforded by other organizations such as nonprofits, schools, other public agencies, and the private sector. Departments should also recognize where gaps in service provision occur and consider how unmet needs can be addressed.



PARKS & RECREATION MANAGEMENT & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Concurrently with the development of this plan, the City has re-established a Parks and Recreation Department. For the first time in many years, the management and operations of parks and recreation facilities and programs will be integrated and coordinated.

Prior to the re-establishment of a Parks and Recreation Department in 2024, responsibilities were dispersed across various City offices, departments, and divisions. As a result, implementing parks and recreation best practices proved very difficult with varying, inconsistent, and competing expectations and demands of staff; divergent practices and standards; and a leadership and management model that was not built on parks and recreation professionals leading and driving the delivery of services.

Park and recreation systems are complex systems that serve communities 7 days a week, 365 days a year, often up to 24 hours a day. These systems provide amenities across a variety of parks, greenspaces, and natural areas including picnic shelters, athletic facilities, trails and walkways, conservation areas, recreation centers, playgrounds, swimming pools, a tree canopy for the city in its parks and along public thoroughfares, and a whole host of other amenities. Within these public spaces, daily recreation and human services are provided through a variety of recreation programs, including special events, sporting events, human services, classes all critical for the activation of these public spaces. By ensuring these programs and spaces are

inviting, welcoming, safe, and well maintained they create places for social gatherings for all residents, improve the mental and physical well-being of Cleveland residents, contribute to the environmental sustainability of the city, make Cleveland a livable city, and serve as drivers of economic development for the city.

Managing and operating this complex system requires consistent and daily leadership within a parks and recreation department that drives coordination of service delivery by staff that includes park maintenance workers; arborists; landscape architects; park planners; horticulturists; park rangers; and recreation, youth development, IT, customer service, HR, and communications and marketing professionals. With the creation of a consolidated and fully functioning Parks and Recreation Department, Cleveland is taking a big step towards effectively and professionally managing the City's complex park and recreation system for its residents.



The creation of a **standalone Parks & Recreation Department** will finally give our city's parks, playgrounds, and pools the attention they deserve.



— Mayor Justin M. Bibb

CONTEMPORARY BEST PRACTICES ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

With a focus on improving the management and operation of the City's parks and recreation system, providing efficient and effective coordination and management all within the context of an urban community, this plan recommends best practices in implementing the following organizational structure for management and leadership of the parks and recreation system. This organizational structure will help ensure the City's ability to implement this Parks and Recreation Plan. The new department can focus on the delivery of parks and recreation

services, modernizing and optimizing city operations, creating conditions for employees to thrive, improving the user experience with improved access to city services, and securing the City's future finances.

The department should have four (4) divisions—environmental stewardship services, planning and development services, recreation and human services, and strategic support services. The department leadership consists of urban parks and recreation professionals with specific expertise in each of the division's focus areas.

Figure 14. Recommended Parks & Recreation Department Organization. Source: OLIN, 2024.



Environmental Stewardship Services

Environmental Stewardship Services is responsible for the care and upkeep of the system's parks and assets with the overarching ethos of environmental stewardship. The division's responsibilities include:

- park and facility maintenance (park maintenance, building maintenance, aquatics maintenance)
- cemeteries
- athletic field maintenance
- pest and disease management
- rehabilitation projects
- irrigation system management
- urban forestry (management of the City's tree canopy, park and street tree planting, pruning, disease and pest management)
- horticulture (park landscape care, greenhouses, formal gardens)
- natural resource management of lands, water, invasive species, and wildlife
- park security through a park ranger program.

Planning and Development Services

Planning and Development Services is responsible for strategic, master, and park site planning, including:

- park system strategic planning
- individual park master planning
- park site planning
- land acquisitions
- design and project management (individual park design, capital and rehabilitation project management, capital and rehabilitation project construction management)
- GIS management (spatial park and park asset data management and mapping)

Recreation & Human Services

Recreation & Human Services is responsible for:

- aquatic facility and program management
- recreation facilities and programs (Camp Forbes, fine & performing arts centers)
- neighborhood recreation & resource centers
- citywide recreation programming (special events, senior programming, therapeutic recreation programming, pre-school, school aged, teen programming, adult, and family programming)
- prevention, intervention and opportunity programs and services
- athletic facilities and program management (sports complexes, tennis facilities, youth and adult sports leagues, tournaments, athletic instruction and clinics)

Strategic Support Services

Strategic Support Services is responsible for providing administrative support services to the operating divisions—environmental stewardship, planning and development, and recreation and human services—to maximize the delivery of outstanding parks and recreation services to Cleveland residents through effective and efficient practices.

Strategic Support Services include:

- finance (accounting, budget, procurement, and purchasing)
- human resources (recruitment and selection, training, employee development, labor relations, employee performance management, workers compensation)
- customer service (customer service training, reservations system management, permitting, volunteer management, registration system)

Right: The four divisions of the newly formed Parks & Recreation Department.
Source: City of Cleveland.



Environmental Stewardship Services



Planning & Development Services



Recreation & Human Services



Strategic Support Services

management, customer feedback management)

- information technology (data management, hardware and software management, IT training)
- communications and marketing (external communications, marketing, media management, internal communications, intranet management, parks and recreation department website management)
- Grants, Alliance, Partnerships, Sponsorship (GAPS) management and legislative services.

TRANSITION TO NEW PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Transitioning from the current structure to the new Parks and Recreation Department will require a thoughtful and intentional process. The initial transition will move recreation, Highland Park Golf Course, West Side Market, park maintenance (including cemeteries, forestry, and greenhouse), Public Auditorium (including special events), and the Cleveland Browns Stadium into the newly created department. This initial transition will include moving existing associated parks and recreation positions and budgets (expenses and revenue) that are housed in the various offices, departments, and work units to the newly created department; the movement of these positions and budgets will be labor and budget neutral on day one.

Future transitions beyond these initial steps will require additional funding and staffing to allow Cleveland to manage the park and recreation system to national best practices for cities and park and recreation systems of comparable size.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

While Cleveland continues to make capital investments in its parks and recreation facilities, operations and maintenance continue to be underfunded, as they have been for decades.

Management of the city's parks and recreation system has been dispersed across various departments making it a challenge to understand the true cost of parks and recreation services. The following financial snapshot is based on the City's FY2023 adopted budget.

CURRENT BUDGET

The City of Cleveland spends \$55.7M on the divisions responsible for parks and recreation, with \$38M on maintenance and administration, \$0.7M on recreation programming, and \$17M on capital and land acquisition. However, since the functions of parks and recreation activities are housed within divisions that have other responsibilities, these reported dollars include functions that fall outside of the parks and recreation system. Of this \$55.7M, only about \$30M is spent on caring for Cleveland's parks and recreation system.

National Benchmarking

The most useful comparisons for financial benchmarking are with agencies that serve a similarly sized population at a similar population density since the denser the population served by an agency, the higher the per capita operating expenses. For Cleveland, this means looking at cities with over 250,000 people and densities of over 2,500 people per square mile. The typical

agency serving a jurisdiction of more than 2,500 people per square mile has a median of \$116 in operating expenses per resident. Agencies serving a jurisdiction of more than 2,500 people per square mile have a 5-year capital budget spending of \$43M (an average of \$8.6M/year), nearly 1.5 times what Cleveland currently spends. The per capita revenue for these densely populated cities is \$7.39 and volunteer hours are equivalent to 5-7% of agency staffing costs.

Additionally, national best practices for the distribution of operating budgets include 36% of operating budgets are allocated to parks, 41% to recreation, and 13% to other. These same best practices operating budgets have 55% allocated for personnel services, 38% to operating expenses, 5% to capital expenses not in the CIP, and 2% to other.

National Benchmarking for Agencies Serving Similarly Sized Populations at a Similar Population Density

\$116
Operating Budget per
Capita Spending

\$43M
5-Year Capital Budget
Spending

\$7.39
Agency per Capita
Revenue

5-7%
of Agency Staffing Costs
for Volunteer Hours



More money needs to be allocated for the operations and maintenance of facilities.
Source: City of Cleveland.



A photograph of a community meeting. In the foreground, a woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a light grey t-shirt, is leaning over a table and writing on a purple sticky note with a black marker. Behind her, a woman in a green t-shirt is looking down at the table. In the background, other people are visible, including a man in a patterned polo shirt and khaki pants. The setting appears to be an indoor community space.

Community Needs

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The development of the Cleveland Parks and Recreation Plan was a 19-month long process, beginning in the summer of 2023 and concluding in the fall of 2024. The planning process was framed around three main phases with significant engagement efforts to ensure the desires of the community and city staff were accurately reflected in the plan’s recommendations.

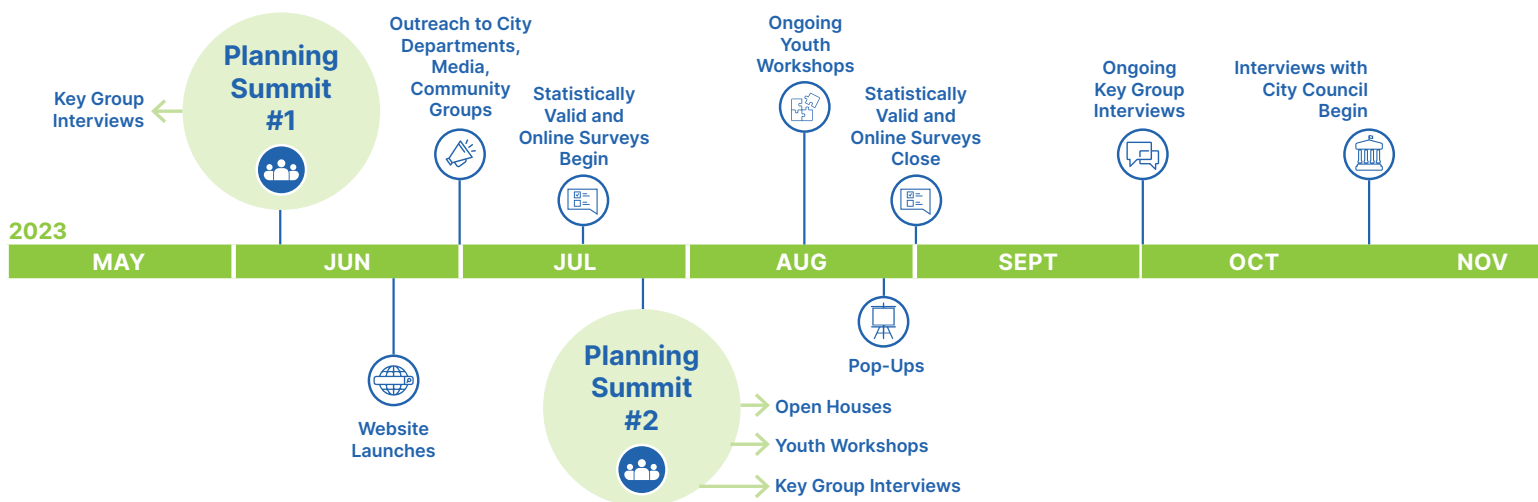
PHASE I: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The first phase encompassed understanding the current state of Cleveland’s parks and recreation system, its organization, program offerings, and residents’ needs. Multiple methods of engagement were leveraged, including a statistically valid survey.

PHASE II: LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Building on the findings of the first phase as well as the City’s existing inventory and assessments, system-wide concepts, tools, recommendations and goals were developed and tested through public and staff review and comment. The public outreach of this component reported back to the community on the Community Needs Assessment, received feedback on the draft plan, vision, and goals, and continued to foster dialogue with residents about parks and recreation in Cleveland.

Figure 15. Community Engagement Timeline.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



Top: Open house attendees were asked to put a dot on the park they visit most often.

Source: Sylvén Lamar Edwards.

Bottom: Community members providing feedback at a pop-up engagement event at Kerruish Park.

Source: City of Cleveland.

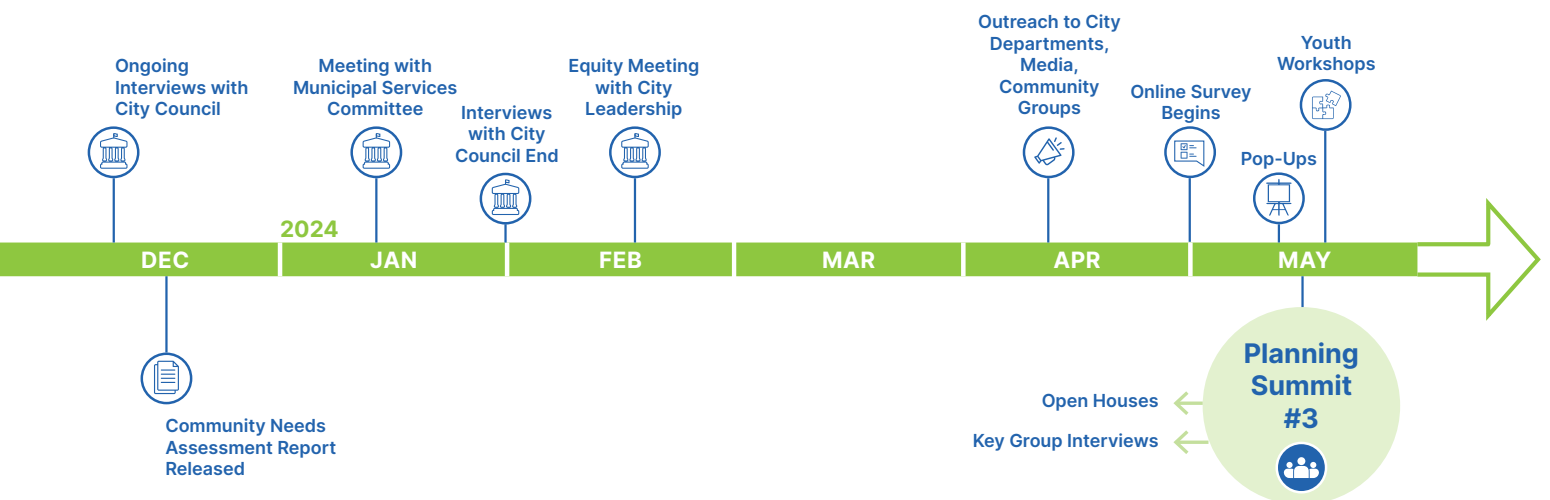
PHASE III: STRATEGIC PLANNING

The third phase of the process was focused on setting the City up for short-term and long-term successes, developing funding and implement a strategy for the long-range plan and identify best practices and early action projects.

ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

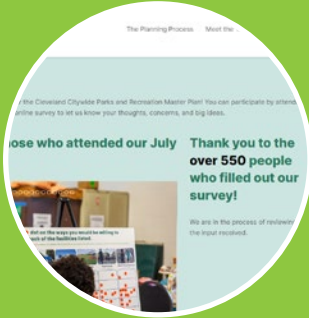
The process of developing this Parks and Recreation Plan included a number of opportunities for residents, advocates, and elected leaders to provide input. The goal of these touch points was to foster dialogue among the widest possible audience to cultivate a shared vision for the future of Cleveland’s parks and recreation facilities.

During the 19-month long planning process, the project team engaged over 2,000 community members and key groups and organizations. The City’s parks, facilities, and programs are all beloved, and the planning process was structured to ensure that all park users and communities were invited and had the chance to weigh in on the future of this important recreational system.

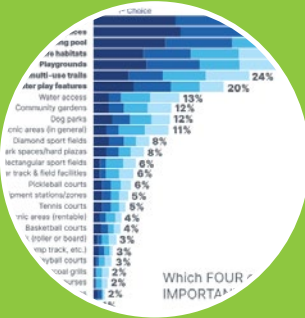


2,000+

POINTS OF ENGAGEMENT



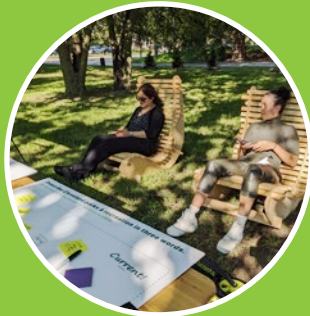
765
Online Survey Responses



528
Statistically Valid Survey Responses



250+
Open House Attendees



250+
Pop-Up Attendees



158
Neighborhood Meeting Participants



100+
Youth Workshop Participants



45+
City & Community Group Interviews

ENGAGEMENT BY THE NUMBERS



COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This Community Needs Assessment summarizes the biggest park and recreation needs identified by residents, community groups, partner organizations, and City leadership and how well they think the current system is meeting those needs.

In addition to talking with City leadership and staff, Clevelanders were invited to share their opinions during the summer of 2023 in a variety of ways:

- a statistically valid survey of residents
- open houses
- youth workshops
- pop-ups at existing community events
- a website and online survey
- meetings with local neighborhood groups and organizations

The variety of engagement formats spanned geographic, language, and other accessibility barriers to capture as great a diversity of voices as possible, particularly from those traditionally disengaged from the planning process.

The multiple methods of engagement highlighted areas of agreement—those recurring needs and themes that are most important to residents—and areas of disagreement that may indicate disparities that could inform different priorities for different planning regions.

STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

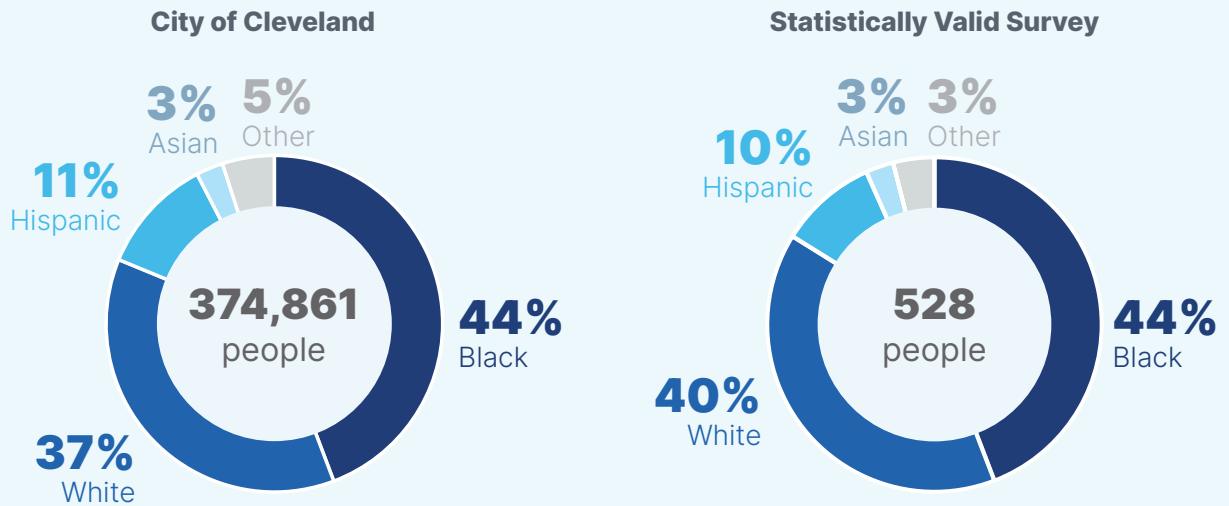
A statistically valid survey was conducted of a random sample of city residents by mail, phone, and internet to understand and measure Clevelanders' needs across the city. The 528 responses received exceeded the goal of 500 responses and ensured that the opinions of a representative cross-section of residents—geographically and across demographic groups—were heard. With this sample size, there is 95% confidence that citywide opinions are within 4.3 percentage points of the values shown.

Residents were asked to identify the facilities and programs most important to them.
Source: Sylven Lamar Edwards, 2023; Zelma Watson George Open House.

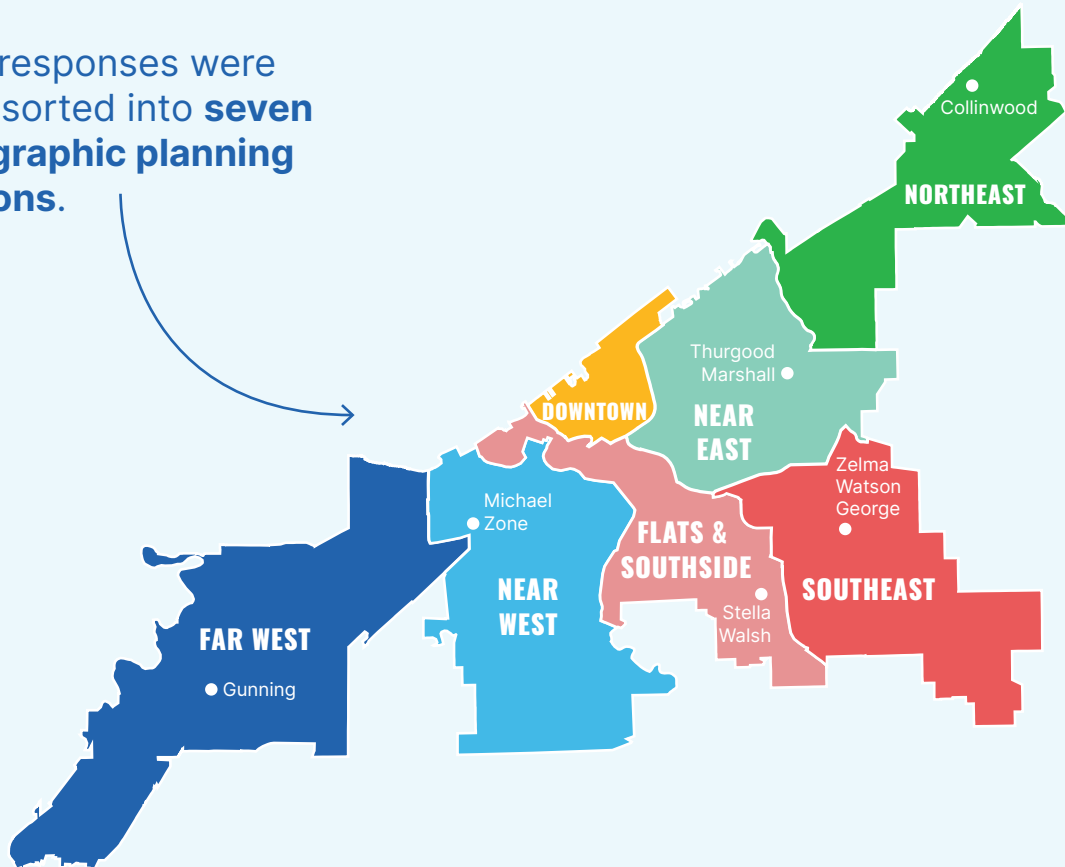


WHO TOOK THE STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY?

The **demographic and geographic makeup** of the statistically valid survey's respondents **closely match that of the city.**

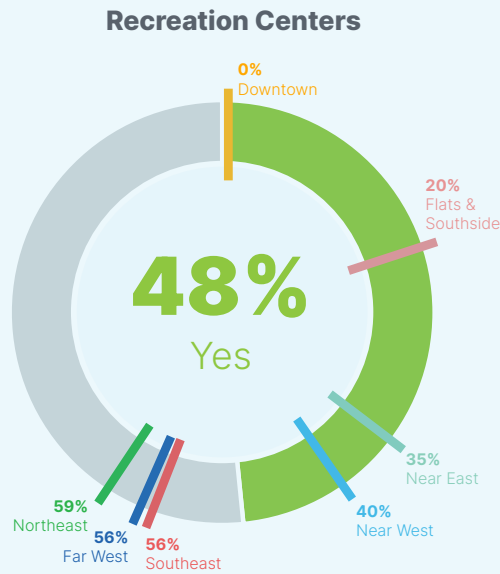
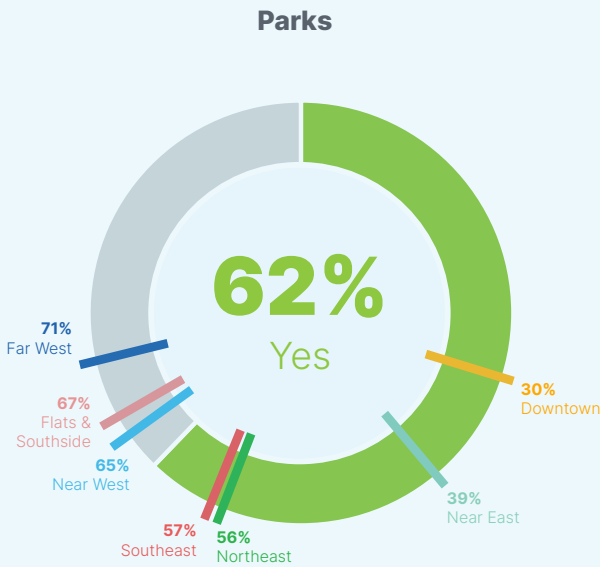


The responses were also sorted into **seven geographic planning regions.**



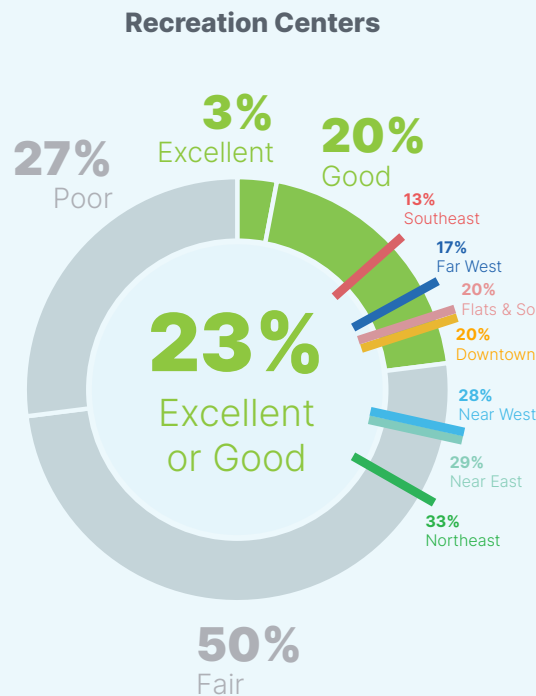
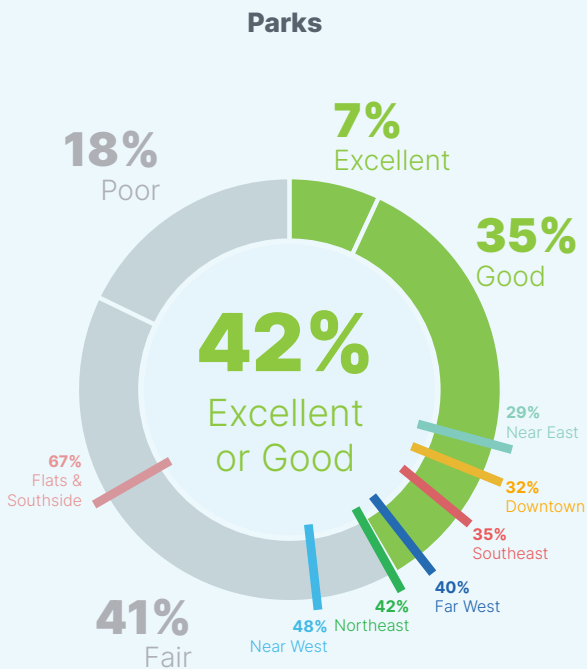
KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

Close to 2/3 of respondents feel that there are enough parks within walking distance of their home, while **less than 1/2** feel there are enough recreation centers.



Households with older children (10-18) are more likely to **say there are sufficient parks (73%) and recreation centers (57%)** within walking distance than other households.

A little over 40% of respondents think parks are in excellent or good condition, **less than 25%** for recreation centers.



Seniors are more likely to **rate the condition of parks and recreation centers higher (54% and 33% excellent or good, respectively)**, than households with children.

Top three most important . . .

Outdoor Facilities



Downtown	Northeast	Near East	Southeast	Flats & Southside	Near West	Far West
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unprogrammed green spaces 2. Paved, multi-use trails 3. Non-paved, multi-use trails <p>Natural areas & wildlife habitats</p> <p>Downtown park spaces/hard plazas</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming pool 2. Playgrounds 3. Paved, multi-use trails 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming pool 2. Water play features 3. Unprogrammed green spaces 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paved, multi-use trails 2. Playgrounds 3. Unprogrammed green spaces 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming pool 2. Water play features 3. Playgrounds <p>Paved, multi-use trails</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Paved, multi-use trails 2. Unprogrammed green spaces 3. Natural areas & wildlife habitats 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming pool 2. Paved, multi-use trails 3. Unprogrammed green spaces

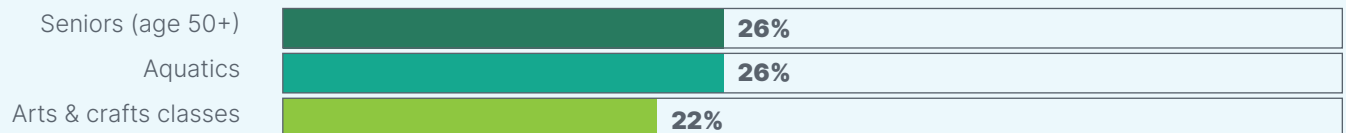
Indoor Facilities



Aquatics were identified as important across outdoor facilities, indoor facilities, and programs.

Downtown	Northeast	Near East	Southeast	Flats & Southside	Near West	Far West
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming pool 2. Walking/jogging track 3. Weight rooms/gyms 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming pool 2. Walking/jogging track 3. Exercise & fitness equipment <p>Makerspaces</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exercise & fitness equipment 2. Swimming pool 3. Walking/jogging track 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming pool 2. Lap pool 3. Walking/jogging track <p>Exercise & fitness equipment</p> <p>Weight rooms/gyms</p> <p>Space for meetings, parties, etc.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indoor sports fields 2. Rooms for arts, crafts & games 3. Classroom space 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming pool 2. Walking/jogging track 3. Exercise & fitness equipment 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swimming pool 2. Exercise & fitness equipment 3. Walking/jogging track

Programs and Activities



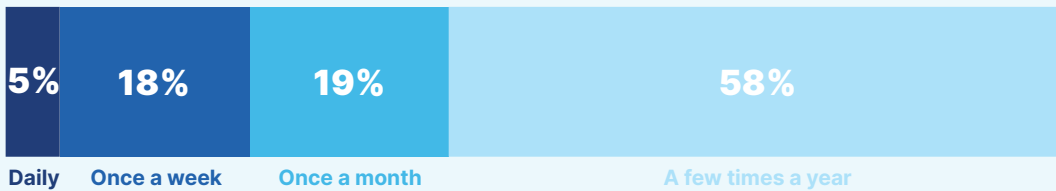
Downtown	Northeast	Near East	Southeast	Flats & Southside	Near West	Far West
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recreation (organized & drop-in) 2. Arts & crafts classes 3. Special events/festivals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seniors 2. Aquatics 3. Fitness/wellness programs <p>Arts & crafts classes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seniors 2. Public health services 3. Mental health services 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental health services 2. Aquatics <p>Seniors</p> <p>Youth & family</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth & family 2. Teens <p>Recreation (drop-in)</p> <p>Special events/festivals</p> <p>Mental health services</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aquatics 2. Arts & crafts classes 3. Seniors <p>Recreation (drop-in)</p> <p>Nature experiences or education</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seniors 2. Aquatics 3. Arts & crafts classes <p>Fitness/wellness programs</p>

A little over half of respondents visit a park at least once a week, however **less than 25%** visit a recreation center that often.

Parks



Recreation Centers



Over 56% of **households with children visit parks** at least once a week, **more frequently** than households without children.

Over 40% of **households with children (10-18) visit recreation centers** at least once a week, **more frequently** than other than other households.

Top three barriers to visiting parks and recreation centers more often:

50%

Facilities are not well maintained

40%

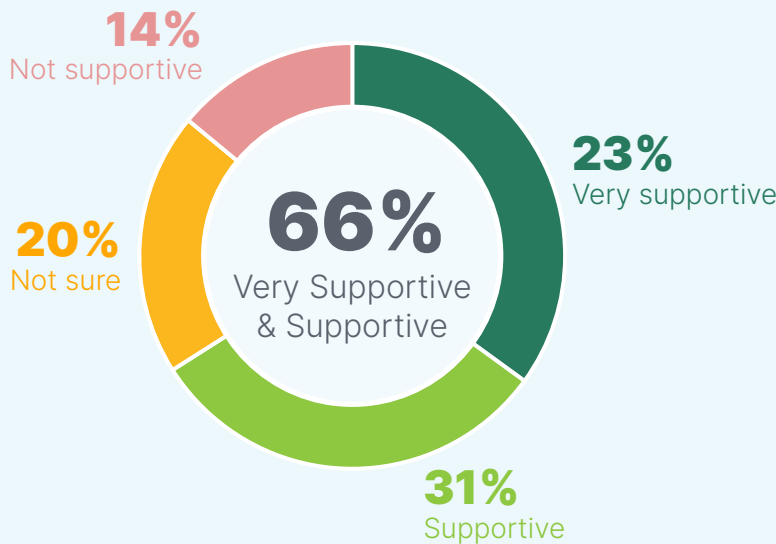
Do not know where to go/ what is offered

38%

Poor/uncomfortable atmosphere

Households with young children (under 10) do not rate the quality of recreation programs as highly as other households. Only 1/3 rate them excellent or good.

Two thirds of respondents are supportive of an increase in taxes or levies to fund parks & rec facilities.



Engagement Locations

- Open House
- Pop-Up
- Youth Workshop
- Meeting with Local Neighborhood Groups

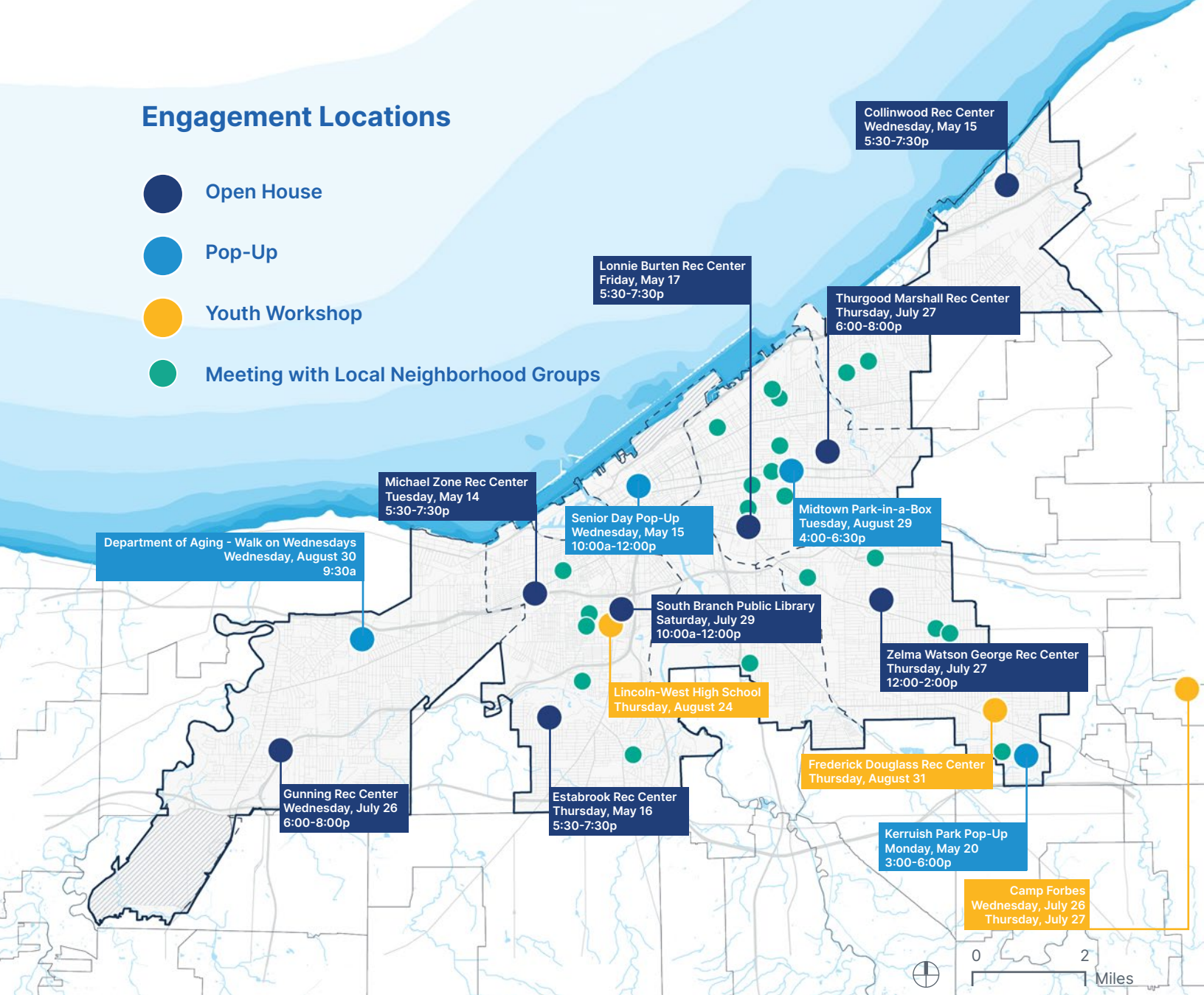


Figure 16. Community Engagement Activity Locations.
Source: OLIN, 2023.

OPEN HOUSES

In July of 2023, over 150 participants attended four public open houses at Gunning, Zelma Watson George, and Thurgood Marshall Recreation Centers and at the South Branch of the Cleveland Public Library. In May of 2024, over 100 participants attended four additional open houses at Michael Zone, Collinwood, Estabrook, and Lonnie Burten Recreation Centers.

The open houses took place in different neighborhoods throughout the city and were scheduled at varying times throughout the

day allowing residents to attend the open house that fit best within their schedule.

At the open houses, a series of boards in English and Spanish were set up for participants to explore at their own pace. Informational boards provided maps and statistics about the parks and recreation system and the planning process. At input boards, participants voted for their preferred choices and wrote in their own ideas. City staff and members of the planning team provided clarifications, answered questions, and listened to participants' concerns and ideas—both in English and Spanish. Youth-tailored activities engaged the city's

See the following page for images from the open houses and pop-up events.



To help get the word out about the engagement events, we contacted:

- 22** Community Development Corporations
- 21** Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Centers
- 41** Community Leaders & Concerned Residents
- 6** Community Centers
- 22** Businesses
- 7** Libraries
- 300+** Residential Flyer Drops
- 18** News & Media Outlets

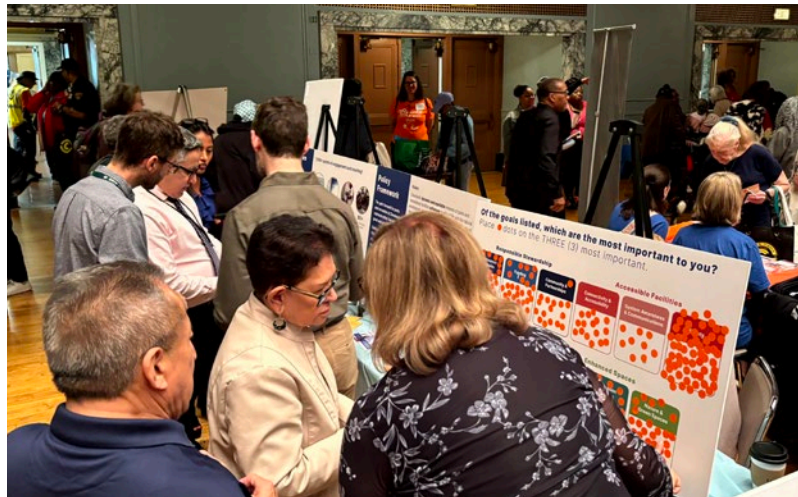
youngest parks and recreation users. Light meals from local establishments were provided. Outreach in advance of meetings included a press release, posters distributed to neighborhood resource and recreation centers, flyers distributed in neighborhoods around the open houses, emails, and social media announcements.

POP-UPS AT EXISTING COMMUNITY EVENTS

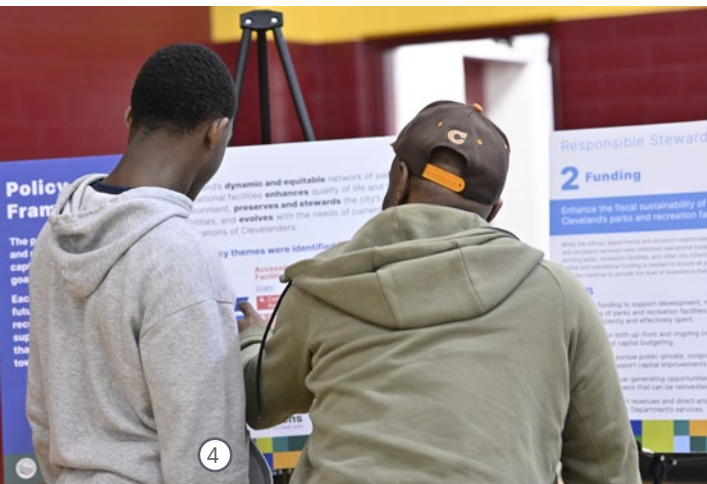
Tables were set up at Mohican Park during a senior walk and during Senior Day both hosted by the Department of Aging and at two Trust for Public Land events— one in midtown and one at Kerruish Park. These events provided spontaneous opportunities for gathering feedback and to inform the community about the plan.

Top: Division of Recreation Commissioner Sam Gissentaner being interviewed at the Gunning Open House. Source: Sylvén Lamar Edwards, 2023.

Bottom: Pop-up at the Department of Aging's Senior Day. Source: OLIN, 2024.



- ① Youth activities were available at all the open houses.
Source: Sylven Lamar Edwards, 2023.
- ② Open house at Estabrook Recreation Center.
Source: Sylven Lamar Edwards, 2024.
- ③ Pop-Up at the Trust for Public Land's event in Midtown.
Source: City of Cleveland, 2023.
- ④ Open house at Lonnie Burten Recreation Center.
Source: Sylven Lamar Edwards, 2023.
- ⑤ Open house at Gunning Recreation Center.
Source: Sylven Lamar Edwards, 2023.
- ⑥ Pop-Up at the Department of Aging's Wednesday Walks.
Source: City of Cleveland, 2023.



**Describe
Cleveland parks
& recreation in
three words.**

What does Cleveland do well in parks & recreation?

**MANY COMMUNITIES
HAVE WALKABLE PARKS,
WHICH IS GREAT TO
HAVE CLOSE TO HOME!**

– Open house participant at Gunning

CLEVELAND BELIEVES IN
THE IMPORTANCE OF GREEN
SPACE AND ACCESS TO IT.

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

**THE NUMBER OF BOTH
[PARKS & REC CENTERS]
IS INCREDIBLE BRAVO!!**

– Online survey participant from Northeast Cleveland

I LIKE THAT OLDER
FACILITIES ARE KEPT
UP AND RUNNING, LIKE
HALLORAN PARK, PLACES
THAT GIVE A FLAVOR TO
THE NEIGHBORHOOD THEY
SERVE. I ALSO LIKE THAT A
LOT OF THE BIGGER PARKS
ARE ON BUS LINES.

– Online survey participant from Far West Cleveland

WHEN THE CITY RENOVATES
RECREATION CENTERS, THEY
DO A REALLY GOOD JOB.

– Neighborhood meeting participant from Hough

**STRIVING TO IMPROVE
AND MAINTAIN EQUITY
THROUGHOUT THE CITY.**

– Online survey participant from Near East Cleveland

LOCALLY “PROGRAMMED”
ACTIVITIES - ATHLETIC
LEAGUES.

– Open house participant at South Branch Library

**LOTS OF BASKETBALL
AND GRILLS.
BASKETBALL COURTS
IMPROVES MENTAL
HEALTH & STRESS RELIEF.**

– Neighborhood meeting participant from St. Clair Superior

THERE PLAYGROUNDS AND
POOLS EVERYWHERE. WE
ARE ACCESSIBLE BECAUSE
WE ARE FREE.

– Online survey participant from Southeast


YOUTH WORKSHOPS

There are approximately 67,000 school-aged children in Cleveland. To encourage participation from the next generation of park and recreation stewards, teens at Camp Forbes participated in workshops during their summer camp sessions, and students at Lincoln-West High School and at Frederick Douglass Neighborhood Resource and Recreation Center participated in workshops to prototype their ideal park and recreation facilities and identify what could be improved.



- 1 Prototyping an ideal park at Lincoln-West High School.
Source: DesignExplorr, 2023.
- 2 Identifying most and least important park and recreation facilities at Camp Forbes.
Source: OLIN, 2023.
- 3 Prototyping an ideal park at Camp Forbes.
Source: DesignExplorr, 2023.
- 4 Prototyping an ideal park at MOCA.
Source: DesignExplorr, 2024.

Adjacent Page: Youth workshop attendees were asked to identify what they liked about their park and recreation facilities and what they would do to improve them.
Source: DesignExplorr, 2023.




A design challenge is an opportunity to think deeply about solving a problem. Below are questions to think about for our design challenge today.

1 THINK: What do you like about your park/recreation center?
It has a Pool

What do you dislike about your park/recreation center?
It is not open

2 UNDERSTAND: What needs to be better? For who?
the Pool

3 CREATE: What's your design idea to make it better?
We can ask to fix the Pool




A design challenge is an opportunity to think deeply about solving a problem. Below are questions to think about for our design challenge today.

1 THINK: What do you like about your park/recreation center?
What I like about parks/recreation centers is that you could spend time with family and friends.

What do you dislike about your park/recreation center?
What I don't really like is sometimes how unsafe the environment can be.

2 UNDERSTAND: What needs to be better? For who?
The security needs to be better for adults, children, seniors, and teenagers.

3 CREATE: What's your design idea to make it better?
Try adding Park Patrol Rec Use Metal Detectors




A design challenge is an opportunity to think deeply about solving a problem. Below are questions to think about for our design challenge today.

1 THINK: What do you like about your park/recreation center?
spaces for people to be active

What do you dislike about your park/recreation center?
only appeals to some groups of people

2 UNDERSTAND: What needs to be better? For who?
easier access to rec centers for kids, teens, elders

3 CREATE: What's your design idea to make it better?
plenty of parking/racks near fields & courts



A design challenge is an opportunity to think deeply about solving a problem. Below are questions to think about for our design challenge today.

1 THINK: What do you like about your park/recreation center?
The location and easiness to start going

What do you dislike about your park/recreation center?
barley any space

2 UNDERSTAND: What needs to be better? For who?
more space for clubs for teenagers

3 CREATE: What's your design idea to make it better?
a indoor Rec center with a bunch of rooms for different activities

DEAR CLEVELAND PARKS & RECREATION,



I would like for you to come into the 21st century and provide the service's we need for a world-class city.

Sincerely,

Hough Resident



I really love you and would like for our relationship to expand. Creating a space for indoor swimming, paved trails, roller skating rinks and a facility to exercise would help to enhance and contribute to the growth of our relationship. I'm in it to win it . . . and hope you are too. Let's make it happen . . . soon!

With love, City Resident



You've been there for me ever since I was young, giving me a space to play, make friends, and create new memories with my own children & family. I must say, overtime you haven't changed much but the world around you has and I'm afraid if you're not willing to grow and adapt with the rest of us you'll be a memory of the past

Sincerely,

St. Clair Superior Resident



I love you so much, you have kept me from so much trouble and I want you to know how much you mean to me. With love, St. Claire Superior Resident



I think you have a ton of potential but you don't always give me what I need or want...I'm looking forward to more organization, more engagement, and more oversight. I hope you get the help you need.

Sincerely,

Buckeye-Woodhill-Shaker Square Resident



How fondly I remember so many activities, days, crafts, skills that were fostered through my rec center growing up. I learned to swim which got me my first job. I tried sports and built endurance and overcame challenges. I was able to sail on a tall ship and learned how critically we need to care for our natural resources. I haven't experienced this in the last few decades. I've tried and I'll keep trying and hoping. These memories shaped me and I hope there are more of these for others.

With love,

Old Brooklyn Resident

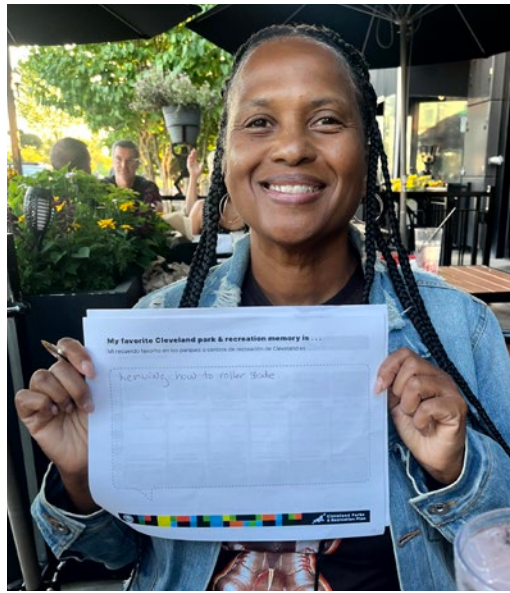


Please keep improving each of your parks to serve the community. As a child I have fond memories walking, playing, and watching rec league baseball games. I learned tennis at Luke Easter. These parks can continue to be spaces where memories are made and skills are learned.

With love,

Buckeye-Woodhill-Shaker Square Resident

Residents were asked to complete worksheets as part of the neighborhood conversation kits. Source: Cleveland Neighbors, Ben Franklin Garden & SE Cleveland Resource Center, 2023.



MEETINGS WITH LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS & ORGANIZATIONS

Over the month of August 2023 and in May 2024, neighborhood conversation kits were distributed to neighborhood groups to host their own discussions about parks and recreation. Each group, 11 in the first round and 16 in the second round, used the kit to host its own meeting and submitted photo, video, and written documentation of the meeting. Small grants were provided to cover refreshments or other resources for participants. The kits were also made available to all City Council members.

RESIDENTS' LETTERS TO PARKS AND RECREATION REVEALED **A LOVE OF THE CITY'S FACILITIES AND A DESIRE TO HAVE THEM KEEP UP WITH THE TIMES.**

My favorite Cleveland park & recreation memory is:

Residents were asked to share their favorite memory of parks and recreation in Cleveland.



MY KIDS PLAYING IN SAM MILLER PARK. WE LIVE NEAR THE PARK SO I CAN WATCH THEM FROM MY PORCH. ALSO, THE PARK WOULD OFTEN **HOST THE GLENVILLE FESTIVAL.**



AS A KID, I WENT THROUGH LUKE EASTER EVERYDAY TO GO SOMEWHERE. **I PLAYED BASEBALL** DURING THE SUMMER AND **TONS OF FOOTBALL.** IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL PERIOD OF MY LIFE. **THE PARK IS A TRUE JEWEL.**

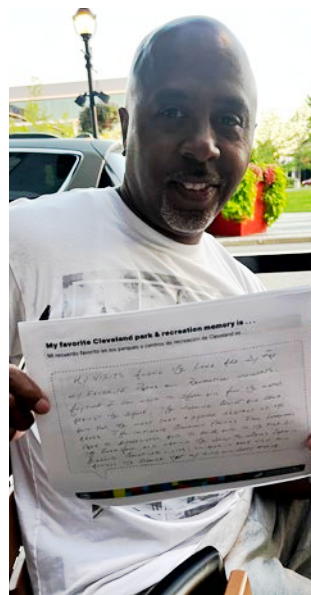
AS A CHILD, MY GRANDFATHER AND I WOULD USE **LUKE EASTER AS A MAKESHIFT DRIVING RANGE.** IT MADE ME LOOK AT THE LARGE GREEN SPACE THROUGH A DIFFERENT LENS. IT MADE ME REALIZE THERE WAS SOME **UNTAPPED OPPORTUNITY.**



WALKING TO **KERRUSH PARK** ALONE AS A KID WAS **MY FIRST TASTE OF INDEPENDENCE.** WHEN I HAD KIDS, WE SPENT ALL OF OUR TIME THERE BECAUSE THERE WERE **TONS OF FROGS AND BUTTERFLIES** TO CATCH.



SPENDING ALL SUMMER GOING FROM **BENJI GARDEN,** THEN **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN SCHOOL PLAYGROUND** TO SET UP **SWINGS AND PLAY** ON EQUIPMENT, THEN TO **LOEW POOL SWIMMING ON HOT DAYS!**



MY VISITS ALONG **THE LAKE** ARE BY FAR MY FAVORITE MOMENTS...THE **MORNING QUIET AND CALM** AND FOR THE MOST PART **A SHARED RESPECT OF THE AREA.** COUNTLESS VISITS; **UNIQUE EACH TIME.**

PROJECT WEBSITE

The Cleveland Parks and Recreation Plan website launched in June of 2023. The website changed throughout the planning process, providing information on the plan's background, ways to participate, and related informational resources.

ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey available on the project website was designed to be a digital complement to the open houses, for those who were not able to participate in person and received 555 responses in the first round of engagement and 210 responses in the second round. A short version of the survey gave people a quick opportunity to provide input in 5-10 minutes, and a long version of the survey gave people an opportunity to answer all questions that were asked at the open houses.

CITY AND PARTNER ORGANIZATION INTERVIEWS

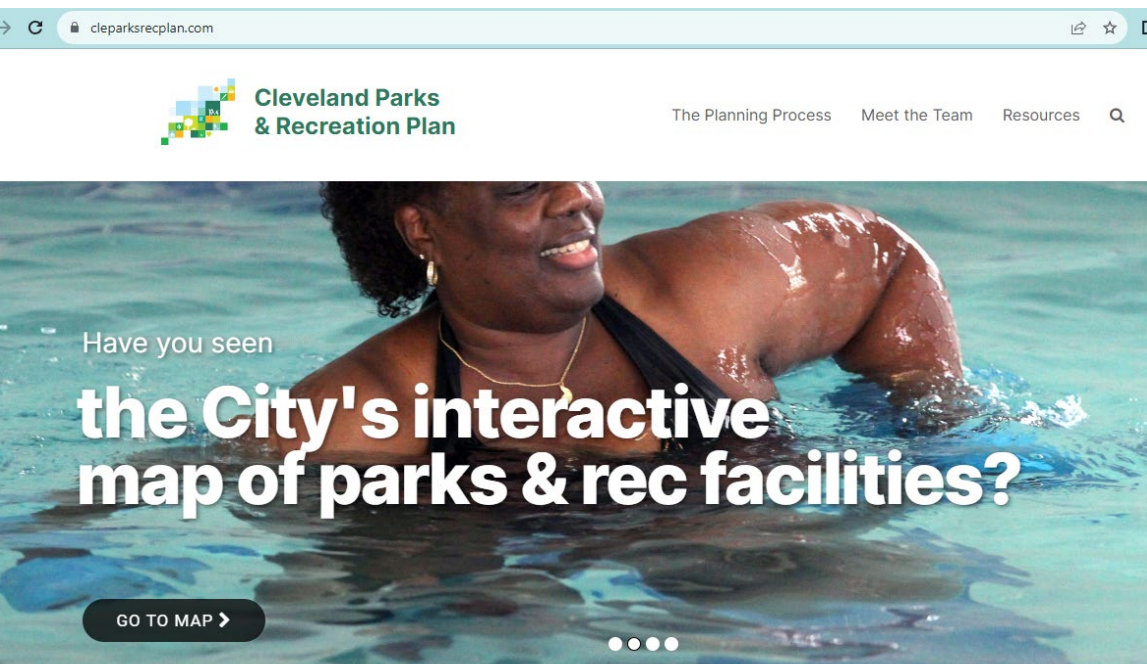
Small group interviews provided an opportunity to hear from advocacy organizations, user groups, and city departments about the way they use or interact with parks and recreation in Cleveland and the needs they have for parks and recreation moving forward. These interviews highlighted departmental perspectives, challenges working within existing government structures, and opportunities to leverage Clevelanders' passion for parks. See opposite page for all of the organizations and departments that participated in these interviews.

Opposite: Councilman Slife at the Gunning Open House.
Source: Sylvan Lamar Edwards, 2023.

The project website has over

920

visits.



The project website serves as a resource for residents throughout the planning process.
Source: OLIN, 2023.

The City of Cleveland is excited to begin work on the city's first ever parks and recreation plan. The plan will create a 15-year roadmap that ensures just and



Who We Talked To:

Partner Organizations

- Cleveland Metropolitan School District
- Cleveland Metroparks
- Trust for Public Land
- Western Reserve Land Conservancy
- Cleveland Neighborhood Progress
- Greater Cleveland Partnership
- Downtown Cleveland, Inc.
- Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District
- Canalway Partners
- America SCORES
- Cleveland Plays
- Muny Football
- Refugee Response
- St. Ignatius High School Soccer
- Old Brooklyn Baseball
- B-Buzz Baseball
- LAND Studio
- Case Western Reserve University Pickleball Club
- Holden Parks Trust

City of Cleveland

- MOCAP
 - Division of Architecture and Site Development
- Public Works
 - Division of Recreation
 - Division of Park Maintenance & Properties
 - Urban Forestry
 - Cemeteries
 - Rockefeller Park Greenhouse
- Chief Operating Officer
- Youth & Family Success
 - Office of Prevention, Intervention, and Opportunity for Youth & Young Adults
 - Department of Aging
- Community Relations Board
- Land Bank
- Department of Public Health
- City Planning Commission
- Mayor's Office of Sustainability
- Council President Griffin and Council Members Bishop, Gray, Howse-Jones, Kazy, Maurer, McCormack, Polensek, Santana, Slife, Spencer, Starr

KEY THEMES & PRIORITIES

Collectively, all of the events, surveys, and workshops generated thousands of comments and data points. Throughout these community touchpoints, several key themes and priorities emerged which formed the basis of the plan's recommendations.

MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES

People are concerned that parks and recreation facilities are not being adequately maintained and updated. Half of survey respondents identified this as the top reason for not visiting parks and recreation centers more often, and 38% noted “poor or uncomfortable atmosphere” as a major barrier. People noted issues around trash collection and mowing, upkeep of existing equipment and facilities, and investments to older and dated facilities. Just over 40% of survey respondents think parks are in excellent or good condition. That number drops to less than 25% for Neighborhood Resource and Recreation Centers.

PROGRAMMING

Clevelanders love and appreciate the City's free programming. The 57% who participated in recreation programs in the previous year rated program quality as excellent or good. There is a desire for more diverse, multigenerational, community-focused programming in parks and recreation facilities. Close to a third of survey respondents said they do not participate because their desired facility/program is not offered.

NATURE AND GREEN SPACE

People expressed a desire for parks that feel more natural and incorporate sustainable elements that move beyond grass. This includes increased tree canopy, wildlife habitats, ecological diversity through native plantings, opportunities to interact with nature, and unprogrammed green space. In the survey, unprogrammed green spaces (36%) and natural areas and wildlife habitats (29%) were both in the top four most important outdoor facilities to respondents.

CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Many people emphasized the importance of having a well-connected park and recreation system through a network of biking and walking trails that make traveling to facilities safe for everyone in the neighborhood. This includes access to other city facilities, as well as the waterfront and other regional recreation areas. Paved, multi-use trails were most frequently cited as the most important outdoor facility, selected by 41% of respondents.

DESIGN

People voiced the importance of basic amenities like restrooms, seating, shade/shelter, lighting, water fountains, and directional/informational signage in parks. In addition, people expressed interest in moving beyond the traditional playground and traditional field, with universally accessible playgrounds, natural playgrounds, elements that reflect the unique identity of the community, and multi-use facilities frequently mentioned.

SYSTEM AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION

Many people said that they are unaware of the full range of services, programs, and amenities offered by the City. Respondents frequently indicated that they do not know where to go for programs or what is offered and noted that an online system for searching and registering for programs was missing. In the survey, 40% of respondents identified this as a major barrier to visiting parks and recreation centers more often.

Open house boards included opportunities for residents to write in their own ideas.

Source: Miracle Walker for LaunchArts Media, 2023.

STAFFING AND HOURS

People noted inadequate staffing numbers and a lack of convenient hours at park and recreation facilities. Specifically, people noted uncertainty at Neighborhood Resource and Recreation Centers around when indoor and outdoor pools are open and a desire for senior-specific hours. Nearly half of survey respondents said they do not participate in programs because of the times the programs are offered, and close to a third of respondents said they do not visit parks and recreation centers more often because facility operating hours are not convenient.

SAFETY

People expressed concern around safety, both in park and recreation facilities and getting to those facilities. They cited a general lack of visible patrolling, lighting, and other preventative security as barriers to usage. Over a third (37%) of survey respondents said they did not visit parks and recreation centers more often due to a lack of visible patrolling presence.

COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIPS

Community and other organizations expressed interest in developing collaborative partnerships with the City. There is energy to establish “Friends of” groups and to leverage community volunteerism, but navigating the City’s organizational structure and processes is currently difficult.



WHAT CLEVELANDERS SAID . . .

Maintenance and updates

Programming

Nature and green space

Connectivity and accessibility

System awareness and communication

Staffing and hours

Community and partnerships

Design

Safety

Need to do a better job advertising what is offered at parks.

– Neighborhood meeting participant from Hough

More trees, native plants and pollinator habitats.

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

Think beyond old fashioned parks with only concrete and metal. Places for play and rest for everyone.

– Online survey participant from Downtown

Connectivity among different spaces across the city.

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

Too many parks in Cleveland are un-programmed, and are severely underutilized as a result.

– Online survey participant from Downtown

Have consistent and thorough programming for ALL ages at times working families can make it.

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

Community upkeep of small parks.

– Open house participant at South Branch Library

There are so many parks they can't all be maintained well and some are deeply neglected.

– Neighborhood meeting participant from citywide organization

It's pretty hard to figure out what's available when, and what's open. Posting updated schedules online . . . would be awesome.

– Online survey participant from Far West Cleveland

Extended hours of all rec centers.

– Online survey participant from Far West Cleveland

Enhancing safety measures, such as increased lighting, security patrols, and surveillance.

– Neighborhood meeting participant from Buckeye-Woodhill-Shaker Square

Transit and trails connecting public assets.

– Open house participant at Zelma Watson George

Better bathrooms and more seating.

– Neighborhood meeting participant from Ohio City

Renovations to parks have been really well received.

– Neighborhood meeting participant from Slavic Village

Lean into Cleveland's identity as the forest city - planting more trees is a simple way to add more beauty, privacy, and better for the environment.

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

Encourage & create clear process for "friends of" and volunteer park maintenance.

– Online survey participant from Near East Cleveland

Safer routes from my home to a park.

– Online survey participant from Southeast Cleveland

Regular maintenance of facilities, landscaping, and infrastructure is crucial to ensure that the amenities remain attractive, safe, and accessible to the public.

– Neighborhood meeting participant from Buckeye-Woodhill-Shaker Square

Playspace for people of all ages and abilities - moving beyond the old fashioned playground.

– Online survey participant from Downtown

Volunteer programs!

– Online survey participant from Near East Cleveland

Innovative playgrounds including those that use natural elements.

– Online survey participant from Near East Cleveland

More staff, my kids couldn't even do tee ball and baseball this summer because the rec had no staff.

– Online survey participant from Southeast Cleveland





Guidelines

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Design guidelines are a road map for designing new parks and recreation facility sites and refreshing existing ones—or evaluating whether sites need to be refreshed. They help ensure that parks and recreation facilities are functional and beautiful, and meet resident expectations.

The following design guidelines are meant to ensure that park and recreation facility sites are well integrated into their surroundings and provide the best experiences for visitors. They address overall design, site context, access and connectivity, wayfinding, and various zones of use within the site. The guidelines are intended to inform:

- the development of framework and site plans;
- the periodic evaluation of parks and recreation facilities to determine if they're functioning as intended; and
- the design of refreshed or new parks.

Following the list of design guidelines are diagrams showing how they apply to a prototypical park of each classification.

DESIGN

System Wide Language

Use a consistent design language throughout the system, while maintaining flexibility.

Signage and wayfinding elements should be consistent from one park or recreation facility to another, especially for community, neighborhood, and mini parks. Regional parks provide opportunities for more unique design expressions. Having a consistent design language helps identify a park or recreation facility as being part of the Cleveland parks and recreation system and helps users feel more comfortable visiting parks or recreation facilities they may be unfamiliar with. Consistency does not, however, preclude unique identity features.

Design Vocabulary

Ensure the vocabulary of design is appropriate for the scale and materials of the landscape and existing infrastructure.

Particularly on larger sites, landscape and architectural design elements should respond to the scale and aesthetic of their context.



Cohesive Site Layout

Consider the holistic design and layout of a space.

Facilities should move beyond just a collection of elements; they should be used to create spaces. Rather than a single tree, think of a grove of trees creating a picnic space. Rather than a pavilion separate from play area, think of natural adjacencies.

Park Core

Locate key park and recreation elements together, creating a hub/core for the space.

Particularly on larger sites, key elements should form a central space for users.

Indoor-Outdoor Connections

View recreation centers and parks as one during capital improvements.

These are not two separate elements and by considering their adjacencies, improved indoor-outdoor connections can be created.

Planting Variety

Move beyond mown turf grass and include a variety of native plantings to create inviting spaces within parks.

Plantings should include native perennials, grasses, shrubs, and trees. This is an opportunity to strengthen Cleveland's relationship with natural systems and to develop new approaches for City-owned and managed parks. Planting variety will help the City adapt to climate change, sustain ecosystem services, and provide for the recreational use and enjoyment for generations to come.

Shade

Provide shade to create a comfortable environment for facility users.

Shade can be provided through trees or shade structures. Trees reduce the impacts of urban heat island on hot days, while also sequestering carbon and helping to reduce soil erosion through their root systems. Trees contribute to the natural look and feel of urban parks year round. Shade structures should be used in places where trees are limited and where trees conflict with the particular park use.

Identity Features

Incorporate resident input, cultural values, and individual community identities in park and recreation facility design, ensuring alignment of spaces with specific neighborhood and cultural uses.

Identity features help tie a park or recreation facility to the neighborhood it is in and become a signature for the facility. Public art, sculptures, decorative arches, or water fountains are examples of identity features that may attract users and serve as landmarks for meeting people or giving directions.

Natural & Historic Features

Create, enhance or protect existing natural features including native landscapes, vegetative ecosystems, groves/forests, significant topography, and drainageways.

Preserve historically significant features.

Natural features, such as wetlands, stream corridors, or historic features, such as historic structures or routes, add interest and preserve experiences that are rare or unique. These features become destinations themselves and attract local and regional visitors. Parks and recreation facilities with naturally or historically significant features provide opportunities for interpretation and education.

CONTEXT

PSU

Park Supportive Uses

Ensure a mix of uses that support parks and recreation facilities.

A mix of residential, commercial, and civic uses expands the user base, particularly at street intersections where people are traveling in multiple directions and encourages activity through a longer part of the day. The number and mix of uses may vary by size, type, and location.



Building Frontage

Ensure that buildings adjacent to and across the street from parks and recreation facilities have frontages or entrances designed to face them.

Buildings with active ground floor uses that face parks and recreation facilities help frame the space and provide “eyes on the park.” Such visibility from adjacent uses enhances the perception of safety. Building entrances adjacent to a park or recreation facility provide a built-in user-base. In addition, proximity to parks and recreation facilities is correlated with higher property values—benefiting property owners.



Metroparks Connectivity

Connect to adjacent Cleveland Metroparks Reservations.

City parks and recreation facilities and Metroparks Reservations should be thought of as a unified regional system. Clear connections between facilities help expand park and recreation access to all residents.



Public Property/Institutional

Connect to adjacent public properties or institutional facilities.

Facilities like schools, libraries, and museums offer community programming and information, resources, and recreation opportunities for residents that complement those of parks and recreation facilities.



Streetscape Enhancements

Surround parks and recreation facilities with enhanced streetscapes.

Streets surrounding parks and recreation facilities should be treated as extensions of those facilities. Trees, planters, rain gardens, and other features provide a visual cue to all street users that a park or recreation facility is nearby.

CONNECTIVITY



Street Grid Connectivity

Maintain physical and visual connections to the street grid.

Parks and recreation facilities should fit into the fabric of the neighborhoods they are in. They should be sited to minimize disruptions to the street grid, which is integral to a functional transportation network. Where streets do not continue through a park or recreation facility site, efforts should be made to maintain physical and visual connections, such as gateways, sight lines, or walking paths through the site in line with those streets.



Seamless Public Space

Ensure seamless connections between parks and recreation facilities and other adjacent public spaces.

Residents do not typically perceive differences between ownership, but they do perceive differences in experiences and missing connections. Barriers and breaks in access limit attractiveness and viability. Regional ecosystems also do not observe jurisdictional boundaries and must be thought of as integrated, functional systems.



Trail Mode Separation

Separate trails into pedestrian and bicycle paths.

On larger sites, where there is space to separate faster-moving bicycles and slower-moving pedestrians, splitting trails can reduce conflicts while signaling to trail users that they are in a park or recreation space. Trails may have different materials for different uses. For instance, a walking trail may be finished with stone fines as opposed to an asphalt bike trail.



Loop Trails

Provide a loop trail for people to explore, circulate, and recreate.

Loop trails provide opportunities for people to see parts of a park or recreation facility site that they may not otherwise be aware of. When they are a specifically measured length, they allow users to easily walk, jog, bike, or skate to a number of steps or miles they may be targeting for exercise and wellness.



Internal Walking Trail

Connect features in parks to each other.

Walking trails in parks allow users to explore the various features of a park and connect to adjacent uses. They also help keep users off of any sensitive native vegetation or planted areas.



Trail Connections

Maintain connections to the paved trail network.

Trail users are park and recreation facility users. Parks and recreation facilities can serve as trailheads, trail destinations, or locations to stop and rest along a trail. Parks and recreation facilities may also host critical trail links, leading to a more connected system.



Safe Routes/Passages

Create safe routes to parks and recreation facilities.

Critical to equitable access and connectivity is ensuring people have safe ways to get to parks and recreation facilities from other destinations within their neighborhoods. Well-lit, well-paved sidewalks and trails, partnerships with community organizations and public agencies, and opportunities to overcome physical and perceived barriers should be considered.

WAYFINDING



Gateways (Primary & Secondary)

Create gateway features at major entrances to parks and recreation facilities.

Gateway features clearly indicate major entrances and signal to visitors that they are welcome to enter. Architectural, landscape, art, and/or signage features may be used to indicate a gateway. The placement and design of gateway features can guide users to use specific routes through park and recreation facility sites.



Path Hierarchy

Ensure on-site paths have a clear hierarchy.

Establish a hierarchy of paths that offer a range of experiences for diverse users, access to destinations, and connections to surrounding circulation networks. Provide consistent widths and surface materials based on path hierarchy and user.



Better approach to entrances to the parks, many feel tucked away in a corner of the neighborhood. There's no 'procession' experience.



– Online survey participant from outside Cleveland

INFRASTRUCTURE



Bike Parking

Provide adequate places for users to secure their bikes.

Bike parking should be in visible and convenient places in parks and near recreation facilities. In order to make bike racks accessible, they should be installed within at least 50 feet of a facility's entrance. This ensures accessibility, safety, and security while reducing the potential for bikes getting locked to trees, signposts, handrails, fences, and other non-rack structures.



Transit Stop

Connect parks and recreation facilities to transit.

As with trails, transit users are park and recreation facility users and vice versa. Particular types of parks, such as plazas, may relate directly to a bus stop or to a rideshare drop-off, providing a sense of place and spaces to welcome and send off visitors.



Shared Parking

Pursue shared parking strategies to eliminate or reduce on-site surface parking.

Particularly in higher density areas, where

space is at a premium and where parks and recreation facilities abut each other or other public facilities, on-site surface parking is difficult to justify. In addition to on-street parking, shared parking may be a better option than losing valuable on-site area to parking.



On-Site Parking

When needed, integrate on-site parking with park and recreation facility site design.

On larger sites, like regional and community parks, on-site parking should be thoughtfully integrated with the site and natural elements. Green infrastructure elements and canopy trees should be included to help reduce the impact of parking on stormwater and urban heat island effects.



Safe Pedestrian Access

Provide adequate sidewalks and safe pedestrian crossings.

While street frontage can encourage usage and increase safety, too much vehicular traffic can deter pedestrians. Sidewalks and marked, safe crossings, whether at intersections or mid-block, encourage access and allow pedestrians to feel comfortable that they are protected.



Support Facilities

Provide facilities that support the use of parks and recreation facilities.

In order for parks and recreation facilities to function optimally, it is necessary to include facilities, such as restrooms and water fountains, to support their use. Appropriate support facilities may vary by park or facility type.



Maintenance Facilities

Consider areas for facilities that support maintenance needs.

On larger sites, like regional parks, it may be beneficial to store necessary equipment to make maintaining and caring for a park easier. These maintenance facilities may also serve as satellite storage areas to optimize maintenance of other nearby parks.

ZONES

IU

Intensive Use Areas

Design spaces that can accommodate intensive use.

Parks and recreation facilities may attract large numbers of users due to the density of their surroundings, their integration into pedestrian and bicycle travel routes, and their use as event and gathering spaces. This high level of usage can impact the integrity of the space. Areas that are expected to be heavily used—for example, near entrances or gathering spaces—should be designed to accommodate that level of use, perhaps incorporating more hardscape areas or more resilient landscape plantings, but still be designed to feel comfortable even when large events are not occurring.

PG

Programmable Gathering Areas

Provide flexible open spaces that can be used as gathering spaces.

Parks and recreation facilities often serve as community gathering spaces, from small get-togethers to large events. Areas should be designed to be flexible enough to accommodate these events while serving as space for informal play, picnicking, or other uses between events. These spaces may include both paved and soft surfaces and include amenities such as amphitheaters for performances.

RE

Recreation Areas

Provide areas and facilities that are specifically designed for recreation and are responsive to the needs of surrounding neighborhoods.

How parks and recreation facilities are used, and the degree to which they are used, depends on how well they respond to the needs of those who live near them. This may include both traditional and unique facilities and spaces.

CU

Casual Use Areas

Provide areas that are specifically designed for casual, impromptu use.

Just as important as programmed spaces are unprogrammed areas intentionally designed for people to enjoy a park or recreation facility without being displaced by programmed uses. Such casual use spaces may include areas for sitting (e.g., benches, walls, steps), picnicking, or playing a game of catch.

NA

Natural System Areas

Define areas that focus on the enhancement and function of natural systems.

Natural environments, including habitat areas, woodlands, wetlands, and stream corridors are not always thought of as predominant components of parks and recreation facilities. Yet, natural systems do not stop at site boundaries. In addition, parks and recreation facilities are the closest opportunities to interact with natural spaces in some neighborhoods. Incorporating best stormwater management practices, enhancing existing ecosystems, providing habitat, and planting diverse landscapes can maximize the function of natural systems and enhance the user experience. Native, low-water-use or drought tolerant species establish climate-resilient and drought tolerant areas. Natural areas can also be effective at buffering parks from incompatible adjacent uses, such as highways.

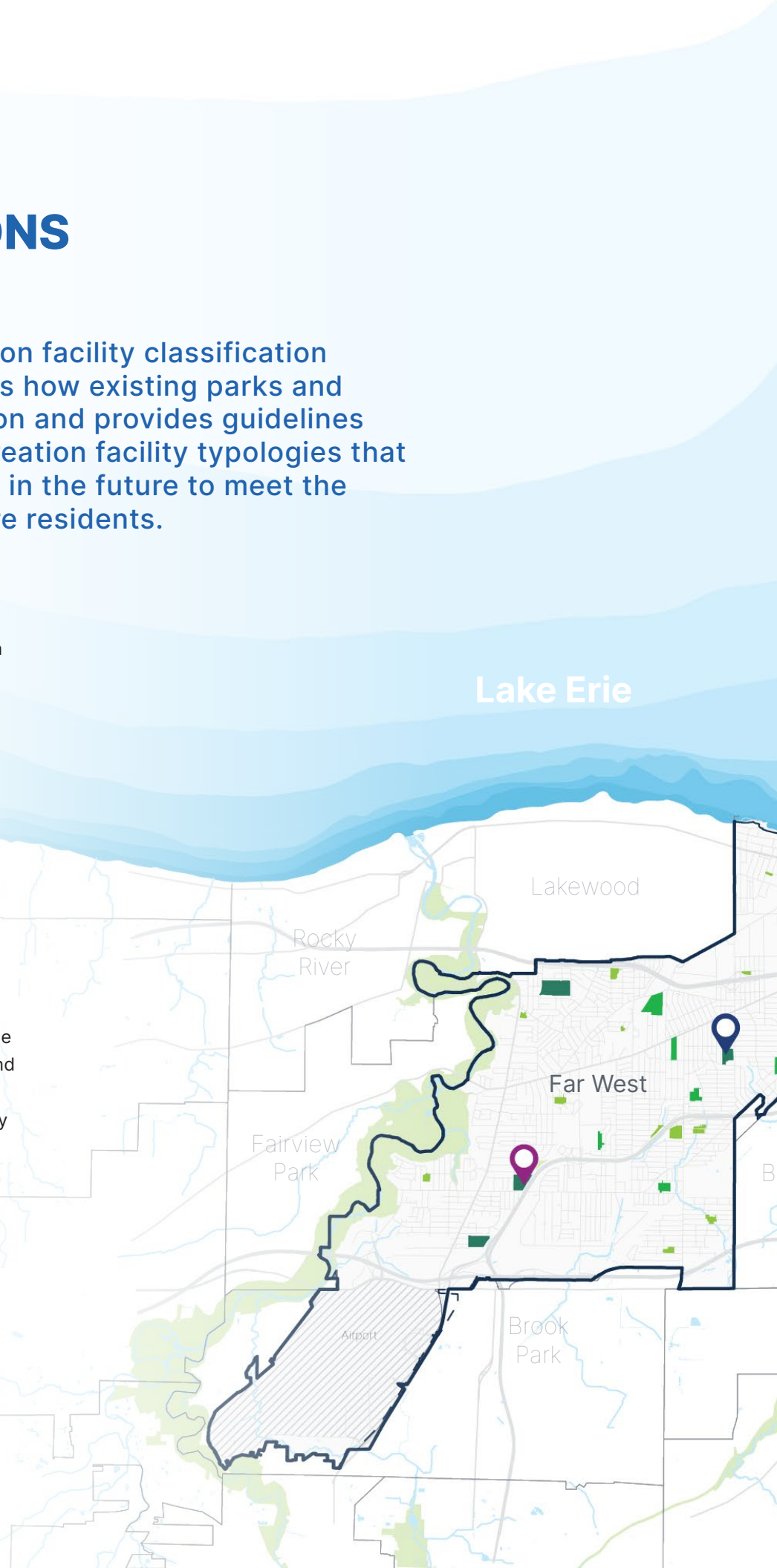
CLASSIFICATIONS

The new park and recreation facility classification system in this plan clarifies how existing parks and recreation facilities function and provides guidelines about future park and recreation facility typologies that may be necessary to build in the future to meet the needs of current and future residents.

For each park and recreation facility classification, the following pages include a general description of the classifications:

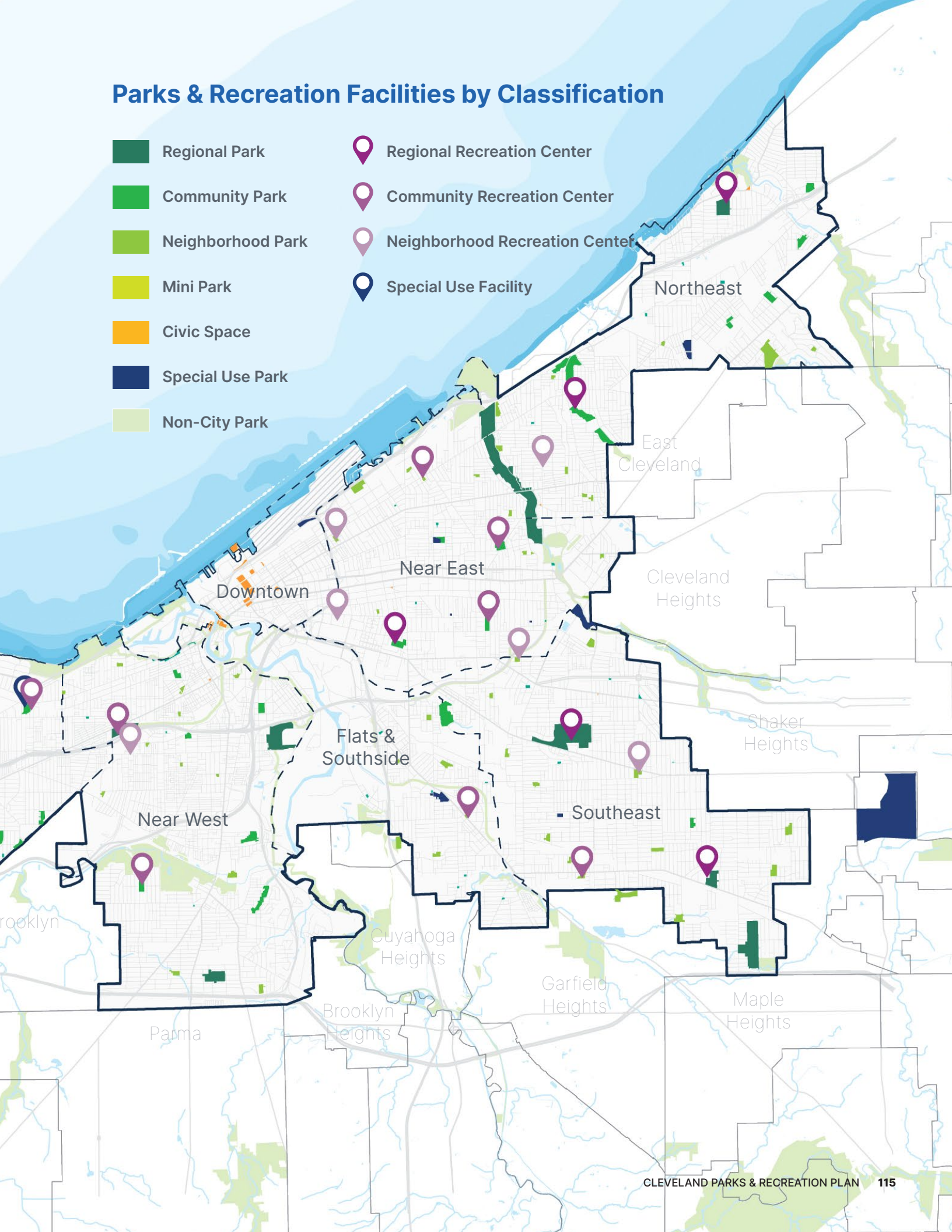
- typical size range;
- typical length of visit;
- access provisions;
- list of appropriate amenities, and
- applicable design guidelines
(Descriptions of the design guidelines can be found in the previous section).

The list of amenities is not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive. The appropriate amenities for any individual park or recreation facility should be determined through a planning process that involves the community it is meant to serve. All parks and recreation facilities should be designed to serve multiple age segments and a diversity of users.



Parks & Recreation Facilities by Classification

- Regional Park
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Mini Park
- Civic Space
- Special Use Park
- Non-City Park
- Regional Recreation Center
- Community Recreation Center
- Neighborhood Recreation Center
- Special Use Facility



REGIONAL PARK



Michael Zone Recreation Complex.
Source: OLIN, 2024.

Regional parks are the largest parks, many over twenty-five acres in size. These parks serve several neighborhoods, attracting residents from a relatively large area and across the city. They should include both intensive and casual use spaces, offer a variety of recreation activities, preserve unique landscapes and open spaces, allow for group activities, be able to accommodate community and city-wide events, and offer unique recreation opportunities not feasible at the community or neighborhood park level. Regional parks may also include revenue-producing facilities and recreation or community centers. They should include a permanent and accessible public restroom.

Typical Size

10+ Acres

Typical Length of Visit

1–5 Hours

Typical Access

Regional parks should be accessible by way of the city's trail network, sidewalks, and major streets. Since they serve residents from longer distances, regional parks should have on-site parking.

TYPICAL AMENITIES

Intensive Use

- ✓ Outdoor Event Space
- ✓ Group Picnic Area
- ✓ Restroom
- ✓ Dog Park

Programmable Gathering

- ✓ Park Shelter
- ✓ Seating

Recreation

- ✓ Outdoor Fitness/Exercise
- ✓ Creative Play Attraction
- ✓ Playground
- ✓ Rectangular Field
- ✓ Diamond Field
- ✓ Basketball Court
- ✓ Tennis/Pickleball Court
- ✓ Volleyball Court
- ✓ Pool
- ✓ Water Play

Casual Use

- ✓ Individual Picnic/Sitting Area
- ✓ Casual Use Space
- ✓ Internal Walking Trail

Natural System

- ✓ Stormwater Management
- ✓ Natural Space
- ✓ Community Garden
- ✓ Unique Landscape Feature

EXISTING PARKS

Clark Field
Frederick Douglass Park
Gunning Park
Halloran Park
Humphrey Park
Impett Park
Kerruish Park
Loew Park
Luke Easter Park
Maplewood Park
Michael Zone Park
Rockefeller Park

Rockefeller Park.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



REGIONAL PARK

Trail connection along park to regional green space

Programmable gathering spaces for local and regional visitors

Coordinate park design with vacant lots

SCHOOL/LIBRARY/CHILD CARE

Accessible corridor to local institutions

Recreation amenities for all ages

Stormwater management near parking

Mixed-use forms entry sequence, and complements activity zones

Casual spaces along main circulation

CLE METROPARKS



0 600'









DESIGN

- SYSTEM-WIDE DESIGN LANGUAGE
- DESIGN VOCABULARY
- COHESIVE SITE LAYOUT
- PARK CORE
- INDOOR-OUTDOOR CONNECTIONS
- PLANTING VARIETY
- SHADE
- IDENTITY FEATURES
- NATURAL / HISTORIC FEATURES




CONTEXT

- PSU PARK SUPPORTIVE USES
-  BUILDING FRONTAGE
- METROPARKS PROPERTY
- PUBLIC PROPERTY / INSTITUTIONAL
-  STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS






CONNECTIVITY

-  STREET GRID CONNECTIVITY
-  SEAMLESS PUBLIC SPACE
-  TRAIL MODE SEPARATION
-  LOOP TRAIL
-  INTERNAL WALKING TRAIL
-  TRAIL CONNECTION
-  SAFE ROUTES / PASSAGES


























WAYFINDING

-  PRIMARY GATEWAY
-  SECONDARY GATEWAY
-  PATH HIERARCHY

INFRASTRUCTURE

-  Bike Rack
-  Transit Stop
-  Street Parking
-  On-Site Parking
-  Safe Pedestrian Access
-  Support Facility
-  Maintenance Facility

ZONES

- IU INTENSIVE USE
 -  Outdoor Event Space
 -  Group Picnic Area
 -  Restroom
 -  Seating
 -  Dog Park
- PG PROGRAMMABLE GATHERING
 -  Park Shelter
 -  Seating
- RE RECREATION
 -  Fitness / Exercise Facility
 -  Creative Play Attraction
 -  Playground
 -  Rectangular Field
 -  Diamond Field
 -  Basketball Court
 -  Tennis / Pickleball Court
 -  Volleyball Court
 -  Water Play
 -  Pool
- CU CASUAL USE
 -  Individual Picnic Area
 -  Casual Use Space
 -  Seating
- NA NATURAL
 -  Stormwater Management
 -  Natural Space
 -  Community Garden
 -  Unique Landscape Feature
 -  Seating

COMMUNITY PARK



Lincoln Park.
Source: OLIN, 2024.

Community parks are smaller than regional parks but still serve several neighborhoods. Community parks should include both intensive and casual use spaces, offer a variety of recreation activities, preserve unique landscapes and open spaces, allow for group activities, and be able to accommodate community events.

Typical Size

5–10 Acres

Typical Length of Visit

1–3 Hours

Typical Access

Community parks should be accessible by way of the city's trail network, sidewalks, and major streets. Since they serve residents from longer distances, community parks should have on-site parking.

TYPICAL AMENITIES

Intensive Use

- Outdoor Event Space
- Group Picnic Area
- Restroom
- Dog Park

Programmable Gathering

- Park Shelter
- Seating

Recreation

- Outdoor Fitness/Exercise
- Creative Play Attraction
- Playground
- Rectangular Field
- Diamond Field
- Basketball Court
- Tennis/Pickleball Court
- Volleyball Court
- Pool
- Water Play

Casual Use

- Individual Picnic/Sitting Area
- Casual Use Space
- Internal Walking Trail

Natural System

- Stormwater Management
- Natural Space
- Community Garden
- Unique Landscape Feature

EXISTING PARKS

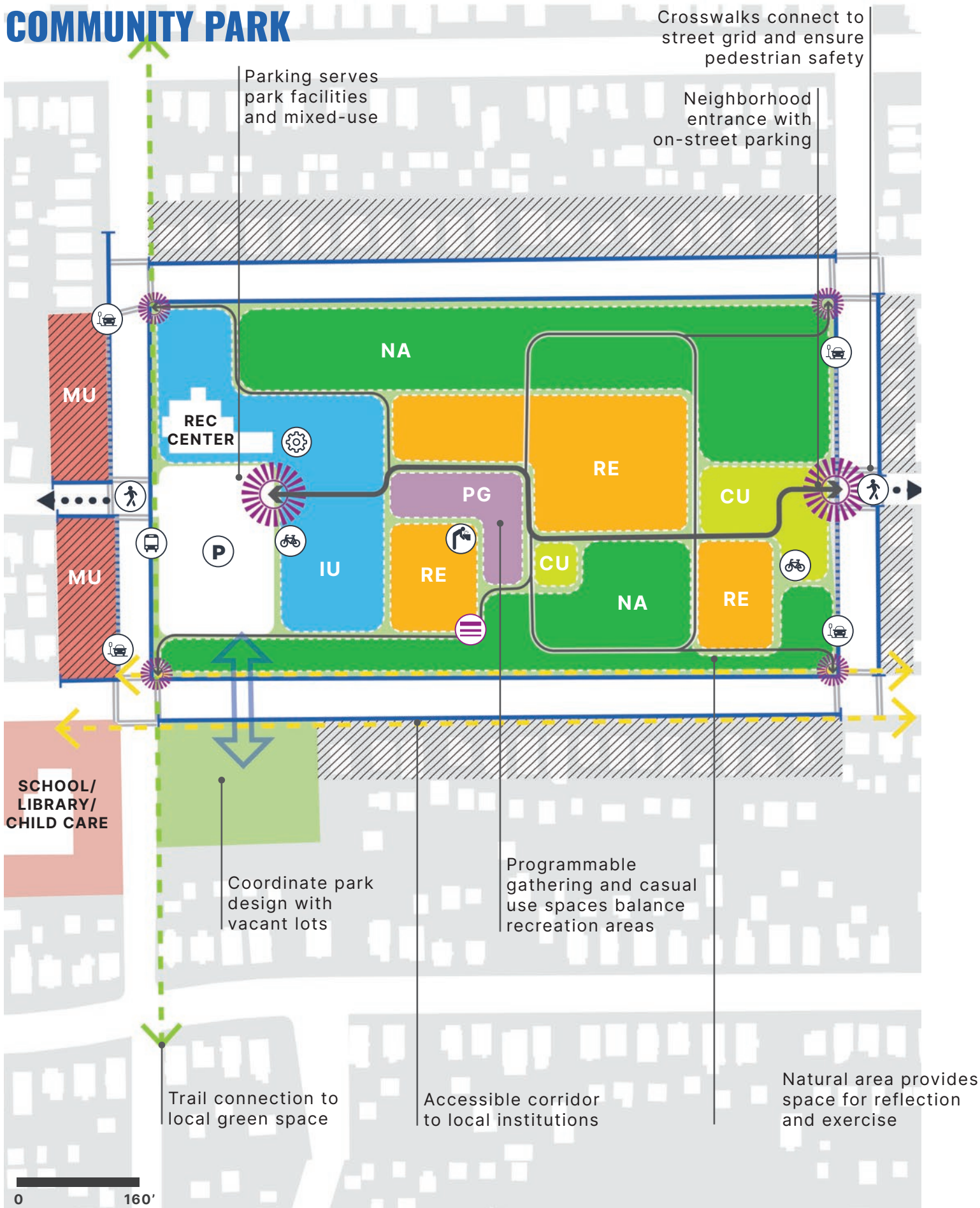
Cudell Commons
Duggan Park
Estabrook Park
Fairfax Park
Fairview Park
Fannie M. Lewis Community Park
Forest Hills Park
Gilmore Park
Glendale Park
Glenview Park
Glenville-James Hubbard Park
Harmody Park
James M. Dunphy Park
Jefferson Park
Lincoln Park
Lonnie Burten Park
Marion Motley Park
Mark Tromba Park
Mercedes Cotner Park
Mohican Park
Neff Park
R.J. Taylor Park
Roberto Clemente Park
Terminal Park
Thrush Park
Thurgood Marshall Park
W.C. Reed Park
Worthington Park

Terminal Park.

Source: OLIN, 2024.



COMMUNITY PARK



Crosswalks connect to street grid and ensure pedestrian safety

Parking serves park facilities and mixed-use

Neighborhood entrance with on-street parking

SCHOOL/
LIBRARY/
CHILD CARE

Coordinate park design with vacant lots

Programmable gathering and casual use spaces balance recreation areas

Trail connection to local green space



Accessible corridor to local institutions

Natural area provides space for reflection and exercise



DESIGN

- SYSTEM-WIDE DESIGN LANGUAGE
- DESIGN VOCABULARY
- COHESIVE SITE LAYOUT
- PARK CORE
- INDOOR-OUTDOOR CONNECTIONS
- PLANTING VARIETY
- SHADE
- IDENTITY FEATURES
- NATURAL / HISTORIC FEATURES




CONTEXT

- PSU PARK SUPPORTIVE USES
-  BUILDING FRONTAGE
- METROPARKS PROPERTY
- PUBLIC PROPERTY / INSTITUTIONAL
-  STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS

CONNECTIVITY

-  STREET GRID CONNECTIVITY
-  SEAMLESS PUBLIC SPACE
-  TRAIL MODE SEPARATION
-  LOOP TRAIL
-  INTERNAL WALKING TRAIL
-  TRAIL CONNECTION
-  SAFE ROUTES / PASSAGES


























WAYFINDING

-  PRIMARY GATEWAY
-  SECONDARY GATEWAY
-  PATH HIERARCHY

INFRASTRUCTURE

-  Bike Rack
-  Transit Stop
-  Street Parking
-  On-Site Parking
-  Safe Pedestrian Access
-  Support Facility
-  Maintenance Facility

ZONES

- IU INTENSIVE USE
 -  Outdoor Event Space
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 -  Playground
 -  Rectangular Field
 -  Diamond Field
 -  Basketball Court
 -  Tennis / Pickleball Court
 -  Volleyball Court
 -  Water Play
 -  Pool
- CU CASUAL USE
 -  Individual Picnic Area
 -  Casual Use Space
 -  Seating
- NA NATURAL
 -  Stormwater Management
 -  Natural Space
 -  Community Garden
 -  Unique Landscape Feature
 -  Seating

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK



E.J. Kovacic Park.
Source: OLIN, 2024.

Neighborhood parks serve the needs of residents within walking distance of their homes. Neighborhood parks should strike a balance between passive and active recreational opportunities. They generally serve residents from adjacent neighborhoods for visits of a couple of hours.

Typical Size

1–5 Acres

Typical Length of Visit

1–2 Hours

Typical Access

Neighborhood parks should be accessible by way of the city's sidewalks and local streets. They should be easily accessible from the surrounding neighborhood with no physical barriers or busy streets restricting access. Neighborhood parks should have street parking nearby.

TYPICAL AMENITIES

Intensive Use

- Outdoor Event Space
- Group Picnic Area
- Restroom
- Dog Park

Programmable Gathering

- Park Shelter
- Seating

Recreation

- Outdoor Fitness/Exercise
- Creative Play Attraction
- Playground
- Rectangular Field
- Diamond Field
- Basketball Court
- Tennis/Pickleball Court
- Volleyball Court
- Pool
- Water Play

Casual Use

- Individual Picnic/Sitting Area
- Casual Use Space
- Internal Walking Trail

Natural System

- Stormwater Management
- Natural Space
- Community Garden
- Unique Landscape Feature

EXISTING PARKS

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Abbey Park | Greenwood Park |
| Alexander Hamilton Park | Groton Park |
| Archmere Park | Herman Park |
| Artha Woods Park | Hyacinth Park |
| Arthur R. Johnston Park | Idalia Park |
| Baltic Children's Park | Jo Ann Park |
| Barkwill Park | Kirtland Park |
| Belmont Park | Lake Pool Park |
| Brookfield Park | Martin Luther King Jr. Park |
| Calgary Park | McGowan Park |
| Carol McClendon Park | Meyer Pool |
| Carrie Cain Park | Morgan Park |
| Cedar Glen Park | Munn Park |
| Central Park | Oleatha Wilson Park |
| Coit Park | Orr Park |
| Crawford Park | Otter Park |
| Crossburn Park | Rainbow Park |
| Davinwood Park | Raus Park |
| Dove Park | Regent Park |
| Drakefield Park | Sam Miller Park |
| E.J. Kovacic Park | Shirley Chisholm Park |
| Earle B. Turner Park | Stella Walsh Park |
| Easton Park | Sterling Park |
| Emery Park | Storer Park |
| Emery-Alexco Park | Tony Brush Park |
| Endora Park | Train Park |
| Farmer's Yard | Trent Park |
| Frank Novak Park | Tuland Park |
| Gawron Park | Walter A. Burks Park |
| Goudreau Park | Warsaw Park |
| Grant Park | Woodland Park |
| Grdina Park | |

Drakefield Park.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Accessible corridor to local institutions

Centrally locate recreation area

Intensive uses near main entrance

SCHOOL/
LIBRARY/
CHILD CARE



Expand existing trail connections with clear public space and mid-block crossings

Natural areas buffer adjacent homes and street

Casual use amenities connect through park

DESIGN

- SYSTEM-WIDE DESIGN LANGUAGE
- DESIGN VOCABULARY
- COHESIVE SITE LAYOUT
- PARK CORE
- INDOOR-OUTDOOR CONNECTIONS
- PLANTING VARIETY
- SHADE
- IDENTITY FEATURES
- NATURAL / HISTORIC FEATURES

CONTEXT

- PSU** PARK SUPPORTIVE USES
- BUILDING FRONTAGE
- METROPARKS PROPERTY
- PUBLIC PROPERTY / INSTITUTIONAL
- STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS








CONNECTIVITY

- STREET GRID CONNECTIVITY
- SEAMLESS PUBLIC SPACE
- TRAIL MODE SEPARATION
- LOOP TRAIL
- INTERNAL WALKING TRAIL
- TRAIL CONNECTION
- SAFE ROUTES / PASSAGES


























WAYFINDING

- PRIMARY GATEWAY
- SECONDARY GATEWAY
- PATH HIERARCHY

INFRASTRUCTURE

-  Bike Rack
-  Transit Stop
-  Street Parking
-  On-Site Parking
-  Safe Pedestrian Access
-  Support Facility
-  Maintenance Facility

ZONES

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 -  Group Picnic Area
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 -  Basketball Court
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 -  Volleyball Court
 -  Water Play
 -  Pool
- CU** CASUAL USE
 -  Individual Picnic Area
 -  Casual Use Space
 -  Seating
- NA** NATURAL
 -  Stormwater Management
 -  Natural Space
 -  Community Garden
 -  Unique Landscape Feature
 -  Seating

MINI PARK



Miriam Ortiz-Rush Park.
Source: City of Cleveland.

Mini parks provide places for residents to enjoy a few minutes outside and are great ways to enhance access to walkable recreational amenities, particularly on sites not suitable for other uses. These parks tend to be more passive and simpler in their designs.

Typical Size

<1 Acre

Typical Length of Visit

30 Minutes–1 Hour

Typical Access

Mini parks should be accessible by way of the city's sidewalks and local streets. They should be located away from busy streets and noisy areas.

TYPICAL AMENITIES

Intensive Use

- Outdoor Event Space
- Group Picnic Area
- Restroom
- Dog Park

Programmable Gathering

- Park Shelter
- Seating

Recreation

- Outdoor Fitness/Exercise
- Creative Play Attraction
- Playground
- Rectangular Field
- Diamond Field
- Basketball Court
- Tennis/Pickleball Court
- Volleyball Court
- Pool
- Water Play

Casual Use

- Individual Picnic/Sitting Area
- Casual Use Space
- Internal Walking Trail

Natural System

- Stormwater Management
- Natural Space
- Community Garden
- Unique Landscape Feature

EXISTING PARKS

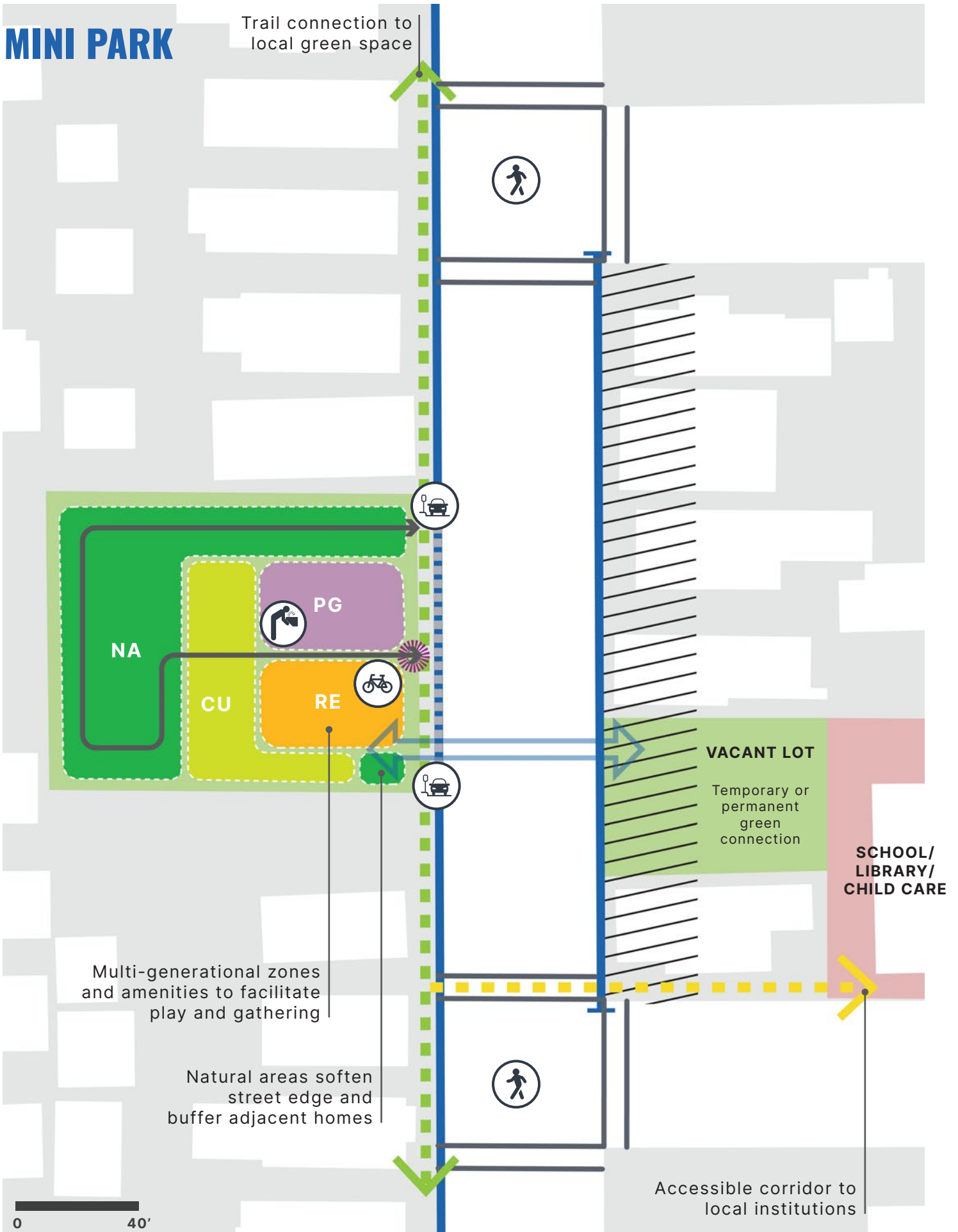
Ambler-Holton Park
Briggs Park
Dan Kane Gardens
Fenwick Ave. & W. 43rd St. Park
Flora Park
Forest City Park
Harding Park
Helen Simpson Park
Henritze Park
Irma Park
Jim Mahon Green
Jimmy Bivens Park
Kossuth Park
Longfellow Park
Mill Creek Falls Family Park
Miriam Ortiz-Rush Park
Odelia V. Robinson Park
Oman Park
Pennsylvania Park
Rathbun Park
Saranac Park
Spear Park
Spencer Ave. & E. 53rd St. Park
Thames Park
Tillman Triangle
Topeka Park
Virginia Havens

Spear Park.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



MINI PARK

Trail connection to local green space



Multi-generational zones and amenities to facilitate play and gathering

Natural areas soften street edge and buffer adjacent homes

VACANT LOT

Temporary or permanent green connection

SCHOOL/ LIBRARY/ CHILD CARE

Accessible corridor to local institutions

0 40'

DESIGN

- SYSTEM-WIDE DESIGN LANGUAGE
- DESIGN VOCABULARY
- COHESIVE SITE LAYOUT
- PARK CORE
- INDOOR-OUTDOOR CONNECTIONS
- PLANTING VARIETY
- SHADE
- IDENTITY FEATURES
- NATURAL / HISTORIC FEATURES

CONTEXT

- PSU PARK SUPPORTIVE USES
- BUILDING FRONTAGE
- METROPARKS PROPERTY
- PUBLIC PROPERTY / INSTITUTIONAL
- STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS

CONNECTIVITY

- ◀ ⋯ ▶ STREET GRID CONNECTIVITY
- ↔ SEAMLESS PUBLIC SPACE
- ⇒ TRAIL MODE SEPARATION
- ≡ LOOP TRAIL
- ↔ INTERNAL WALKING TRAIL
- ← - - → TRAIL CONNECTION
- ← - - → SAFE ROUTES / PASSAGES

WAYFINDING

- ☀ PRIMARY GATEWAY
- ☀ SECONDARY GATEWAY
- ≡ PATH HIERARCHY

INFRASTRUCTURE

- 🚲
Bike Rack
- 🚊
Transit Stop
- 🚗
Street Parking
- P
On-Site Parking
- 🚶
Safe Pedestrian Access
- 👉
Support Facility
- ⚙️
Maintenance Facility

ZONES

- IU INTENSIVE USE
 - 🌿
Outdoor Event Space
 - 🍽️
Group Picnic Area
 - 🚻
Restroom
 - 🛋️
Seating
 - 🐕
Dog Park
- PG PROGRAMMABLE GATHERING
 - 🏠
Park Shelter
 - 🛋️
Seating
- RE RECREATION
 - 🏃
Fitness / Exercise Facility
 - 👧
Creative Play Attraction
 - 🎡
Playground
 - 🏟️
Rectangular Field
 - ⬡
Diamond Field
 - 🏀
Basketball Court
 - 🎾
Tennis / Pickleball Court
 - 🏐
Volleyball Court
 - 🌊
Water Play
 - 🏊
Pool
- CU CASUAL USE
 - 🍽️
Individual Picnic Area
 - 🛋️
Casual Use Space
 - 🛋️
Seating
- NA NATURAL
 - ☁️
Stormwater Management
 - 🌳
Natural Space
 - 🌿
Community Garden
 - 🌱
Unique Landscape Feature
 - 🛋️
Seating

CIVIC SPACE



Public Square.
Source: Sahar Coston-Hardy.

Civic spaces are generally located in higher density areas. They should have a mix of planted and paved areas. These spaces should face surrounding development, and surrounding development should face them. Downtown civic spaces provide residents access to park amenities without having to travel far from urban centers. They should be well lit in order to extend their use and provide safe, comfortable spaces at night. They may be designed with more hardscape to accommodate events, gatherings, and high usage.

Typical Size

<10 Acres

Typical Length of Visit

30 Minutes–1 Hour

Typical Access

Civic spaces should be accessible by way of the city's sidewalks, trail network, and local streets. They should have multiple entrances to allow for permeability and clear access in populated urban areas. On-street parking may be located nearby.

TYPICAL AMENITIES

Intensive Use

- Outdoor Event Space
- Group Picnic Area
- Restroom
- Dog Park

Programmable Gathering

- Park Shelter
- Seating

Recreation

- Outdoor Fitness/Exercise
- Creative Play Attraction
- Playground
- Rectangular Field
- Diamond Field
- Basketball Court
- Tennis/Pickleball Court
- Volleyball Court
- Pool
- Water Play

Casual Use

- Individual Picnic/Sitting Area
- Casual Use Space
- Internal Walking Trail

Natural System

- Stormwater Management
- Natural Space
- Community Garden
- Unique Landscape Feature

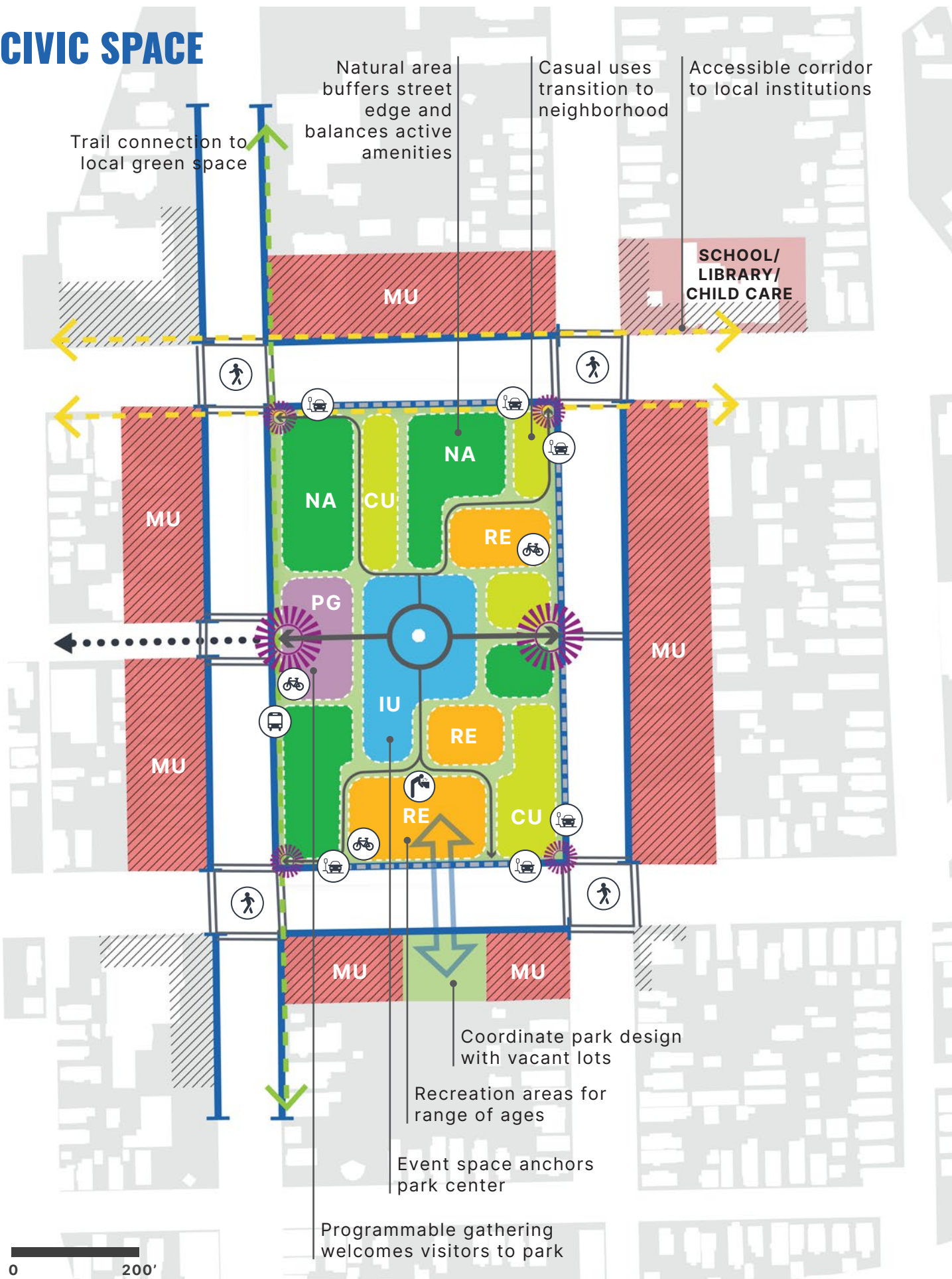
EXISTING PARKS

Betty Klaric Park
Buckeye Community Park
Canal Basin Park
Cardinal Mindzenty Plaza
Circle North Park
Colonel Charles Young Square
Heritage Park
Mall A (Memorial Plaza)
Mall B (Hanna Plaza)
Mall C (Strawbridge Plaza)
Market Square Park
Public Square
Ralph J. Perk Plaza
Rotary Plaza
Settlers Landing Park
Superior Viaduct
Veterans Park
Voinovich Bicentennial Park
Willard Park

Mall B (Hanna Plaza).
Source: OLIN, 2024.





CIVIC SPACE







DESIGN

- SYSTEM-WIDE DESIGN LANGUAGE
- DESIGN VOCABULARY
- COHESIVE SITE LAYOUT
- PARK CORE
- INDOOR-OUTDOOR CONNECTIONS
- PLANTING VARIETY
- SHADE
- IDENTITY FEATURES
- NATURAL / HISTORIC FEATURES




CONTEXT

- PSU PARK SUPPORTIVE USES
-  BUILDING FRONTAGE
- METROPARKS PROPERTY
- PUBLIC PROPERTY / INSTITUTIONAL
-  STREETScape ENHANCEMENTS








CONNECTIVITY

-  STREET GRID CONNECTIVITY
-  SEAMLESS PUBLIC SPACE
-  TRAIL MODE SEPARATION
-  LOOP TRAIL
-  INTERNAL WALKING TRAIL
-  TRAIL CONNECTION
-  SAFE ROUTES / PASSAGES


























WAYFINDING

-  PRIMARY GATEWAY
-  SECONDARY GATEWAY
-  PATH HIERARCHY

INFRASTRUCTURE

-  Bike Rack
-  Transit Stop
-  Street Parking
-  On-Site Parking
-  Safe Pedestrian Access
-  Support Facility
-  Maintenance Facility

ZONES

- IU INTENSIVE USE
 -  Outdoor Event Space
 -  Group Picnic Area
 -  Restroom
 -  Seating
 -  Dog Park
- PG PROGRAMMABLE GATHERING
 -  Park Shelter
 -  Seating
- RE RECREATION
 -  Fitness / Exercise Facility
 -  Creative Play Attraction
 -  Playground
 -  Rectangular Field
 -  Diamond Field
 -  Basketball Court
 -  Tennis / Pickleball Court
 -  Volleyball Court
 -  Water Play
 -  Pool
- CU CASUAL USE
 -  Individual Picnic Area
 -  Casual Use Space
 -  Seating
- NA NATURAL
 -  Stormwater Management
 -  Natural Space
 -  Community Garden
 -  Unique Landscape Feature
 -  Seating

SPECIAL USE PARK



Camp Forbes.

Source: City of Cleveland.

Special use parks are unique outdoor spaces, usually oriented toward a single-purpose use. They can vary greatly in size.

Typical Size

Varies

Typical Length of Visit

Varies

Typical Access

Varies

TYPICAL AMENITIES

Intensive Use

- ☐ Outdoor Event Space
- ☐ Group Picnic Area
- ☐ Restroom
- ☐ Dog Park

Programmable Gathering

- ☐ Park Shelter
- ☐ Seating

Recreation

- ☐ Outdoor Fitness/Exercise
- ☐ Creative Play Attraction
- ☐ Playground
- ☐ Rectangular Field
- ☐ Diamond Field
- ☐ Basketball Court
- ☐ Tennis/Pickleball Court
- ☐ Volleyball Court
- ☐ Pool
- ☐ Water Play

Casual Use

- ☐ Individual Picnic/Sitting Area
- ☐ Casual Use Space
- ☐ Internal Walking Trail

Natural System

- ☐ Stormwater Management
- ☐ Natural Space
- ☐ Community Garden
- ☐ Unique Landscape Feature

EXISTING FACILITIES

Ambler Park
Camp George L. Forbes
Collinwood Athletic Complex
Crooked River Skate Park
Gassaway Pool
Gay Ave. & E. 104th St. Gardens
Harold T. Clark Tennis Courts
Highland Park Golf Course
James Bell Pool
League Park
Morgana Park
Morganic Gardens

League Park.
Source: City of Cleveland.



REGIONAL RECREATION CENTER



Frederick Douglass Recreation Center.
Source: OLIN, 2024.

Regional recreation centers are the largest centers, offering many amenities and resources. These centers serve several adjoining neighborhoods, attracting residents from a relatively large area and across the city.

Typical Size

30,000–100,000ft²

Typical Hours of Operation

M–F 6a–10p, Sat 6a–8p

Open Hours/Week

100+

Typical Staffing

8–10 full-time employees + part-time employees + seasonal employees

TYPICAL AMENITIES

Support

- ✓ Storage
- ✓ Admin Office
- ✓ Restrooms

Community

- ✓ Childcare
- ✓ Kitchen
- ✓ Small Kitchen
- ✓ Community Meeting Rooms
- ✓ Program Rooms
- ✓ Multiple Program Rooms
- ✓ Study Rooms

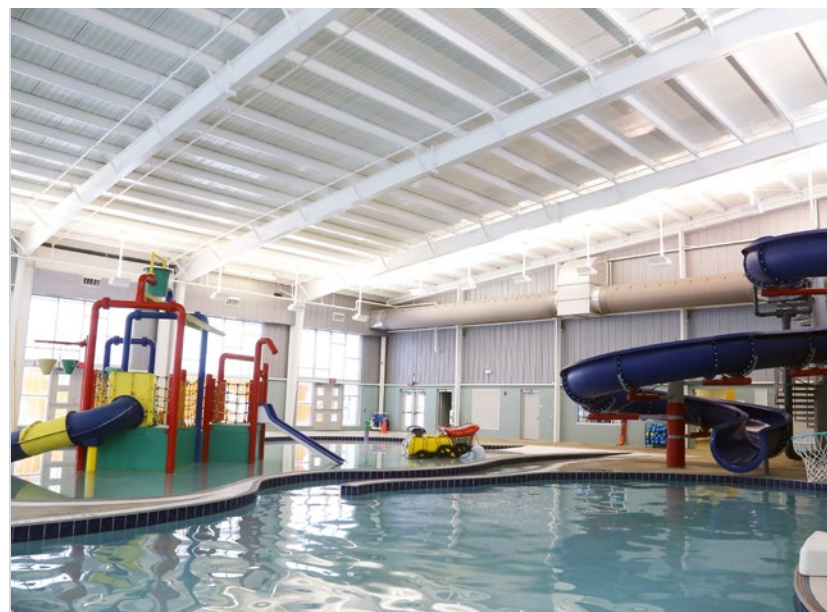
Recreation

- ✓ Gym
- ✓ Game Room
- ✓ Outside Play Space
- ✓ Fitness Room
- ✓ Multiple Fitness Rooms
- ✓ Indoor/Outdoor Pool
- ✓ Walking Tracks

EXISTING RECREATION CENTERS

Collinwood Recreation Center
Frederick Douglass Recreation Center
Glenville-James Hubbard Recreation Center
Gunning Recreation Center
Lonnie Burten Recreation Center
Zelma Watson George Recreation Center

Collinwood Recreation Center.
Source: City of Cleveland.



COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER



Thurgood Marshall Recreation Center.
Source: Sylven Lamar Edwards, 2023.

Community recreation centers are smaller than regional recreation centers but still serve several neighborhoods, attracting residents from a larger area.

Typical Size

15,000–30,000ft²

Typical Hours of Operation

M–F 6:30a–8p, Sat 9a–5p

Open Hours/Week

70–75

Typical Staffing

4–5 full-time employees + part-time employees + seasonal employees

TYPICAL AMENITIES

Support

- Storage
- Admin Office
- Restrooms

Community

- Childcare
- Kitchen
- Small Kitchen
- Community Meeting Rooms
- Program Rooms
- Multiple Program Rooms
- Study Rooms

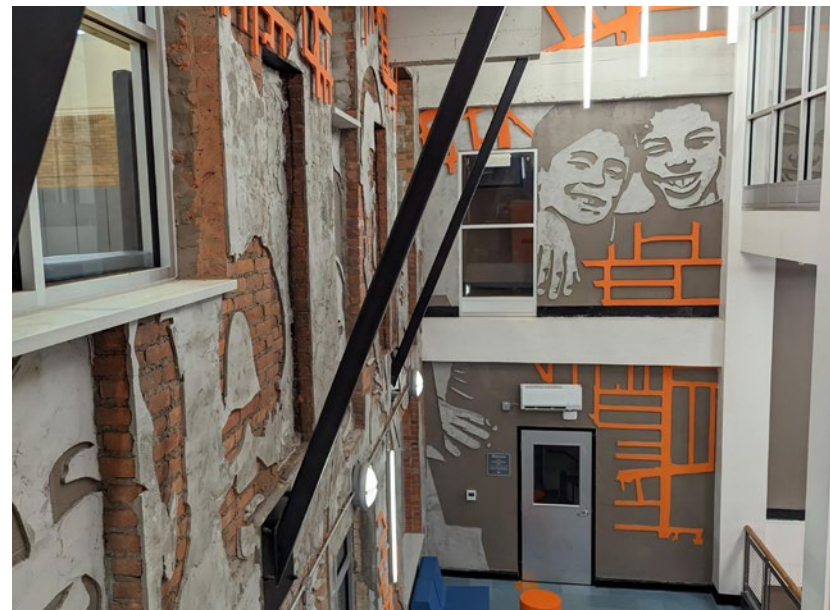
Recreation

- Gym
- Game Room
- Outside Play Space
- Fitness Room
- Multiple Fitness Rooms
- Indoor/Outdoor Pool
- Walking Tracks

EXISTING RECREATION CENTERS

Cudell Recreation Center
Earle B. Turner Recreation Center
E.J. Kovacic Recreation Center
Estabrook Recreation Center
Fairfax Recreation Center
Michael Zone Recreation Center
Stella Walsh Recreation Center
Thurgood Marshall Recreation Center

E.J. Kovacic Recreation Center.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



NEIGHBORHOOD RECREATION CENTER



Central Recreation Center.
Source: City of Cleveland, 2024.

Neighborhood recreation centers serve the needs of residents within walking distance of their homes.

Typical Size

10,000–15,000ft²

Typical Hours of Operation

M–F 12:00p–8p, Sat 9a–5p

Open Hours/Week

45–55

Typical Staffing

3–4 full-time employees + 2–3 part-time employees

TYPICAL AMENITIES

Support

- Storage
- Admin Office
- Restrooms

Community

- Childcare
- Kitchen
- Small Kitchen
- Community Meeting Rooms
- Program Rooms
- Multiple Program Rooms
- Study Rooms

Recreation

- Gym
- Game Room
- Outside Play Space
- Fitness Room
- Multiple Fitness Rooms
- Indoor/Outdoor Pool
- Walking Tracks

EXISTING RECREATION CENTERS

Alexander Hamilton Recreation Center
Central Recreation Center
Clark Recreation Center
Cory Recreation Center
Sterling Recreation Center
Woodland Recreation Center

Sterling Recreation Center.
Source: City of Cleveland, 2024.



SPECIAL USE FACILITY



Cudell Fine Arts.
Source: OLIN, 2024.

Special facilities are unique centers, usually oriented toward a single-purpose use. They can vary greatly in size, hours of operation, and staffing.

Typical Size

Varies

Typical Hours of Operation

Varies

Open Hours/Week

Varies

Typical Staffing

Varies

TYPICAL AMENITIES

Support

- Storage
- Admin Office
- Restrooms

Community

- Childcare
- Kitchen
- Small Kitchen
- Community Meeting Rooms
- Program Rooms
- Multiple Program Rooms
- Study Rooms

Recreation

- Gym
- Game Room
- Outside Play Space
- Fitness Room
- Multiple Fitness Rooms
- Indoor/Outdoor Pool
- Walking Tracks

EXISTING FACILITIES

Camp George L. Forbes
Cudell Fine Arts
Halloran Skating Rink
Rockefeller Park Greenhouse

Halloran Park Skating Rink.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



TYPICAL AMENITIES BY PARK CLASSIFICATION

	Regional Park	Community Park	Neighborhood Park	Mini Park	Civic Space	Special Use Facility
Typical Size (Acres)	10+	5-10	1-5	<1	varies	<10
Typical Length of Visit (Hours)	1-5	1-3	1-2	0.5-1	1-3	0.5-1
Intensive Use						
Outdoor Event Space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group Picnic Area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restroom	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog Park	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programmable Gathering						
Park Shelter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seating	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation						
Outdoor Fitness/Exercise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Creative Play Attraction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playground	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rectangular Field	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diamond Field	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basketball Court	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tennis/Pickleball Court	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volleyball Court	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pool	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water Play	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Casual Use						
Individual Picnic/Sitting Area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Casual Use Space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal Walking Trail	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural System						
Stormwater Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural Space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Garden	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unique Landscape Feature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

TYPICAL AMENITIES BY REC CENTER CLASSIFICATION

	Regional Rec Center	Community Rec Center	Neighborhood Rec Center	Special Use Facility
Typical Size (ft ²)	30,000-100,000	15,000-30,000	10,000-15,000	Varies
Typical Hours of Operation	M-F 6a-10p Sat 6a-8p	M-F 6:30a-8p Sat 9a-5p	M-F 12p-8p Sat 9a-5p	Varies
Open Hours/Week	100+	70-75	45-55	Varies
Typical Staffing	8-10 FTE + PTE + Seasonal	4-5 FTE + PTE + Seasonal	3-4 FTE + 2-3 PTE	Varies
Support				
Storage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Admin Office	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restrooms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community				
Childcare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kitchen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small Kitchen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Meeting Rooms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Program Rooms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multiple Program Rooms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study Rooms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation				
Gym	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Game Room	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outside Play Space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fitness Room	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multiple Fitness Rooms	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indoor/Outdoor Pool	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walking Tracks	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DESIGN GUIDELINES BY PARK CLASSIFICATION

	Regional Park	Community Park	Neighborhood Park	Mini Park	Civic Space	Special Use Facility
Design						
System-Wide Design Language	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Design Vocabulary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cohesive Site Layout	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Park Core	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indoor-Outdoor Connections	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planting Variety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identity Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural/Historic Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Context						
Park Supportive Uses	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building Frontage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metroparks Property	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public Property/Institutional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Streetscape Enhancements	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Connectivity						
Street Grid Connectivity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seamless Public Space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trail Mode Separation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loop Trail	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internal Walking Trail	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trail Connection	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safe Routes/Passages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Regional Park	Community Park	Neighborhood Park	Mini Park	Civic Space	Special Use Facility
Wayfinding						
Primary Gateway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secondary Gateway	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Path Hierarchy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infrastructure						
Bike Rack	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transit Stop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Street Parking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On-Site Parking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safe Pedestrian Access	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support Facility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance Facility	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Zones						
Intensive Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programmable Gathering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Casual Use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PROGRAM CLASSIFICATIONS

As with parks and recreation facilities, Cleveland has a wide array of programs available to serve residents' interests and needs. Currently, the City does not classify its programs.

Classifying programs is an important process to ensure they remain aligned with interests and needs, serve the mission of the department, and sustainably operate within the bounds of its financial resources. Conducting a classification of services analysis informs how each program serves the overall mission, goals, and objectives of each core program area, and how the program should be funded with tax dollars, user fees, or charges. How a program or service is classified depends upon alignment with the department's mission, how the public perceives a program, legal mandates, financial sustainability, personal benefit, competition in the marketplace, and access by participants. Program classifications can also help to determine the most appropriate management, funding, and marketing strategies.

New programs should be assigned a classification when being developed based on the following factors:

Essential

- mostly PUBLIC good;
- part of the mission;
- serves a majority of the neighborhood or community

Important

- mix of PUBLIC and PRIVATE good
- important to the community
- serves the broad community

Value-added

- mostly PRIVATE good
- enhances community offerings
- serves niche groups or interests

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Planning Process

Ideally, all programs should be aligned with this plan, which incorporates community priorities for recreation services. A formalized program planning resource guide can provide recreation staff with consistent standards for developing, implementing, and evaluating programming. A Program Assessment provides a template to guide staff in creating the most critical program details and deciding whether the department should invest in that service. A strong case is made for resources to

be allocated to a service if it has a high community priority ranking, appropriate cost recovery, good age segment and partnership potential, and strong market conditions.

Program Development Plan

A standardized program development process provides staff with the resources necessary to organize ideas into relevant services for the community. There are many components that must receive the necessary attention before a service is unveiled. Below are some key areas to establish during the development process.

- program goals and objectives;
- program budget and pricing;
- supplies and services needed;
- program action plan and timeline;
- staffing and volunteers needed;
- marketing plan including target marketing;
- emergency action plan; and
- program evaluation and performance measures.

Program Standards

Program standards should be established as a part of the development process to ensure consistency with service delivery. A focused approach should be applied to quality assurance for all services and how they are planned, implemented, and evaluated.

Quality standards include expectations for staff training on service delivery and evaluation, the condition of the program space, supplies and equipment used for activities, and adhering to risk management policies and practices. Program standards can be found in the Program Assessment.

Customer service standards as detailed in the Program Assessment ensure that staff are maintaining a safe, quality, and positive experience for participants. Important standards are applied to the customer's journey from the point of deciding to register for a program or activity, through the registration process, participation, and, finally, evaluation of the customer's experience after the program or activity has been completed. Staff should always be mindful of consistent communication with the customer through the completion of the program or activity as well as ways that the customer experience can be enhanced.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND STRATEGIES

In general, Cleveland program staff should evaluate programs on both individual merit as well as within the program mix. This can be completed at one time on an annual basis, or in batches at key seasonal points of the year, if each program is checked once per year. The following tools and strategies can help facilitate this evaluation process:

Program Development Worksheet

When developing program plans and strategies, it is useful to consider all the core program areas and individual program analysis discussed in the Program Assessment. Lifecycle, age segment, classification distribution, and cost recovery goals should all be tracked, and this information, along with the latest demographic trends and community input, should be factors in program decision-making. Community input can help staff focus on specific program areas to develop new opportunities in, what residents to reach out to, and the best marketing methods to use.

A simple, easy-to-use tool like the Program Development Worksheet Template in the Program Assessment will help compare programs and prioritize resources using multiple data points, rather than relying solely on cost recovery. In addition, this analysis will help staff make an informed, objective case to the public when a program in decline, but beloved by a few, is retired. If the program/service is determined to have strong priority, appropriate cost recovery,

good age segment appeal, good partnership potential, and strong market conditions, the next step is to determine the marketing methods.

Arts and crafts classes were the third most important program for Clevelanders.
Source: City of Cleveland.





Guardians of
Transportation at the
Hope Memorial Bridge.
Source: City of Cleveland.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Level of service standards help guide decisions about how many recreational amenities are needed and where.

The City of Cleveland has a robust, distributed public space system that seeks to provide residents with convenient access to amenities and services. However, different parts of the city have different levels of access to recreational amenities.

No uniform level of service standards exists for parks or recreational amenities across the country. There are generally two types of standards that communities use to analyze service: population-based standards and access standards. This plan defines both population-based and access standards by amenity.

SETTING AND USING LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Level of service standards help guide decisions about how many recreational amenities are needed and where. Population-based standards address how many amenities are needed and access-based standards address where amenities are needed, both now and in the future.

Using the level of service standards to increase access to recreational amenities could result in different types of actions:

- In areas where sidewalk and trail connections are lacking for pedestrians, or where roads are disconnected for drivers, increased access could

mean adding sidewalks, trails, or road segments to better connect residents to existing amenities.

- In areas where there is access to school district amenities but not to City-owned amenities, increased access could mean formalizing a partnership agreement to ensure that school district amenities are always open and available to the public.
- In areas with a high population density that do not have access to school or City amenities, increased access could mean building new amenities in new or refreshed parks.
- In growing areas, where developers may provide new public spaces, increased access could mean working with developers during the development review process to provide needed amenities.
- In areas with access to multiple amenities in close proximity, increased access could mean removing or repurposing an underused amenity.

Used in combination, the population-based and access standards provide a snapshot of the level of service provided by current recreation amenities and a road map for addressing the number and location of amenities in the future. The level of service standards can be used to help prioritize which actions will increase equitable access to recreational amenities for the most residents.

Not all recreational amenities have level of service standards. Level of service standards are used for common amenities that have broad user bases and whose inventories should match the population.

Level of service standards can and should change over time as industry trends change and demographic trends of the community change. The City will update its inventory of recreation amenities annually and will reexamine the recommended level of service standards approximately every five years as the needs assessment is updated.

POPULATION-BASED STANDARDS

Population-based level of service is expressed as a ratio of number of amenities to population. The current ratio is compared to a recommended ratio, which indicates whether additional amenities are needed.

Methodology

A number of data points were considered in setting the recommended level of service standards:

- current level of service
- level of service in peer cities
- national participation trends
- community priorities, from the statistically-valid survey

Some data supports raising the current level of service. Other data supports maintaining or lowering the current level of service.

A big driver of the future number of amenities is the projected decline in the city's population over the next 25 years.

Peer Cities

Through the benchmarking analysis data collected by the Trust for Public Land was reviewed for eight peer cities that have similar demographic or economic characteristics, or have highly regarded public space systems.

- Cincinnati, OH
- Pittsburgh, PA
- Milwaukee, WI
- Minneapolis, MN
- St. Louis, MO
- Kansas City, MO
- Buffalo, NY
- Newark, NJ

Cleveland's amenity counts include city amenities, CSMD amenities, and Cleveland Metroparks amenities.

National Participation Trends

National participation data from the Sports and Fitness Industry Association ([See p. 40.](#)) shows trends in participation in recreational activities over time. While the national trends for amenities are useful, it is important to keep in mind they include numbers from localities that have very different demographics from Cleveland.

Community Priorities

The statistically valid survey conducted as part of this planning process in 2023 asked residents whether they or their households have a need for various outdoor and indoor amenities, and how well those needs are currently being met. Combining these metrics into a priority investment rating (PIR), the survey report indicates the relative priorities for investing in these amenities.

PEER CITY BENCHMARKING

How Does Cleveland Compare?





Population **276,011**
TPL 2024 Park Score **#41**
% within 10-min Walk **91%**
Regional Comparison

Buffalo, NY

Cleveland, OH

Population **374,861**
TPL 2024 Park Score **#31**
% within 10-min Walk **81%**



Population **306,247**
TPL 2024 Park Score **#63**
% within 10-min Walk **93%**
Similar Demographics

Newark, NJ



Population **303,207**
TPL 2024 Park Score **#17**
% within 10-min Walk **93%**
Aspirational System; Regional Comparison

Pittsburgh, PA



Population **308,664**
TPL 2024 Park Score **#8**
% within 10-min Walk **88%**
Aspirational System Regional Comparison

Cincinnati, OH

10-Minute Walk

Playgrounds

Basketball Courts

20-Minute Walk

Pools

Splashpads

Rectangular Fields

Diamond Fields

Recreation Centers

Community Gardens

Pickleball Courts

Dog Parks

ACCESS-BASED STANDARDS

Access standards are expressed as a time within which residents should be able to get to a particular type of amenity by a particular mode of transportation. Where population-based standards indicate how many of an amenity is needed, access standards indicate where new amenities, or better ways of accessing existing amenities, are needed.

Residents' expectations of how close recreational amenities should be to their homes—and the City's ability to provide those amenities—vary by type of amenity. People tend to expect some amenities, like basketball courts or playgrounds—which require little equipment to use, have broad drop-in usage, and are well used by children—to be within a close walk of home. For facilities and amenities like dog parks and recreation centers—which are used by a subset of residents or have highly scheduled or programmed usage—residents are willing to travel a bit further but still want them close by. Both of these categories of facilities and amenities require access standards. Other facilities and amenities, particularly those that cater to more niche user groups, do not require access standards since people are willing to travel longer distances to use them.

Considering these differences in expectations, this plan establishes two tiers of access standards: a 10-minute walk standard and a 5-minute drive standard, informed by the distance residents said they would be willing to travel to different amenities.

It may also be possible in some cases to increase the level of service by improving the walkable street and trail network that



Example of areas within 10-minute walk from park amenities (green), school amenities (yellow), and Metropark amenities compared to an idealized 10-minute walk radius.

connect to existing amenities. In some instances an amenity has a smaller service area because the sidewalks and trails to get there may not exist and therefore the amenity's full service potential is not being met. These gaps in access are shown as circles, which represent an idealized service area. An example is shown above.

like constructing more sidewalks, or adding another amenity in the general area identified as having limited access.

The access maps were created using geographic information systems (GIS) software. Travel time for each individual amenity (e.g., basketball courts) was calculated using the City's walking network.

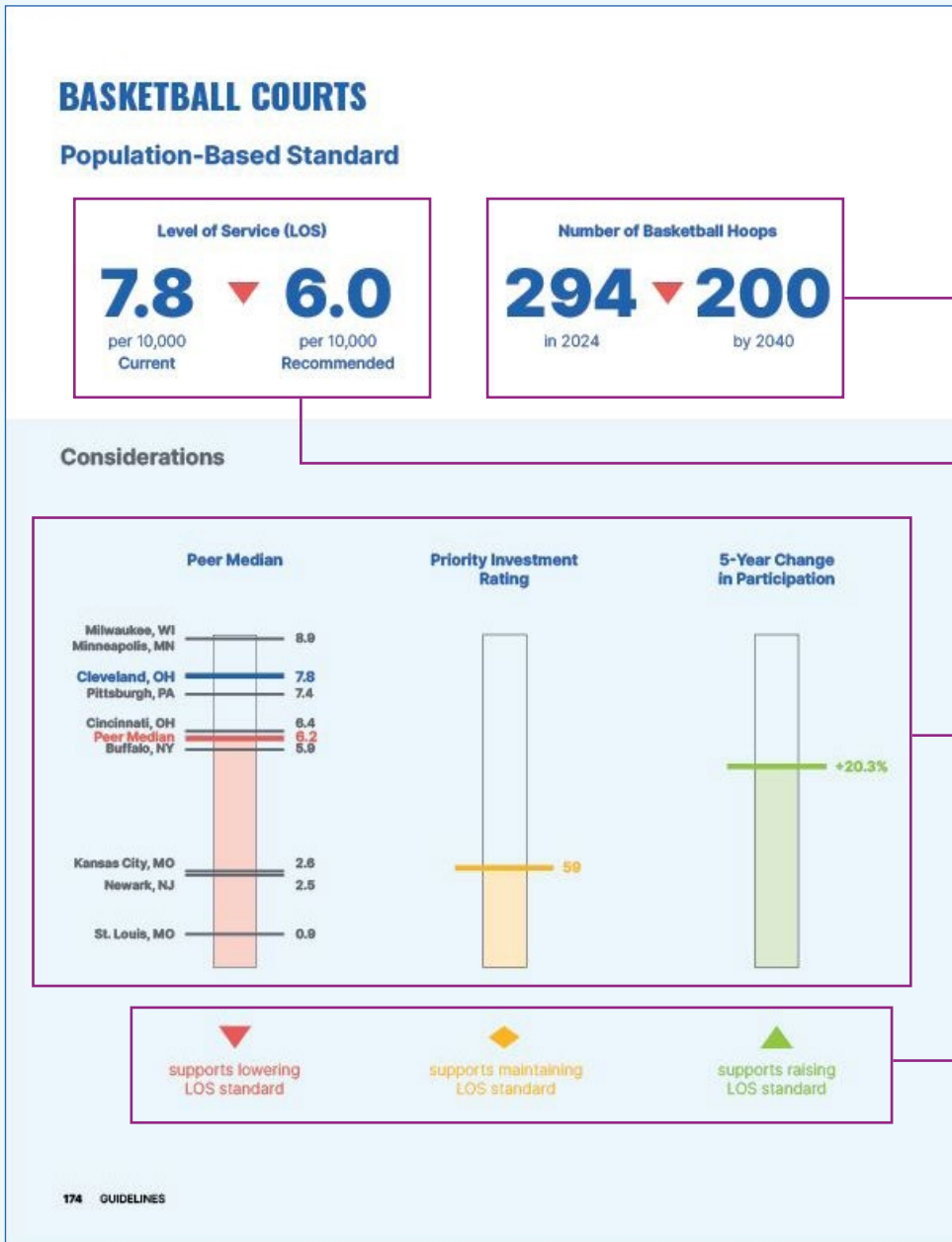
How the Maps Were Created

A spatial access analysis was performed for certain public space and school district amenities. To determine what parts of the city meet and do not meet the recommended access standards, areas were drawn around each individual amenity (e.g., basketball court) within which a person could reach that amenity within a specified time by walking. This overlay analysis reveals parts of the city with gaps in access.

The access maps are a planning tool to evaluate access across the City to certain recreational amenities and highlight general areas where access to amenities could be improved. Improved access could mean adding new linkages to the travel network,

HOW TO READ THE LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Population-Based Standards



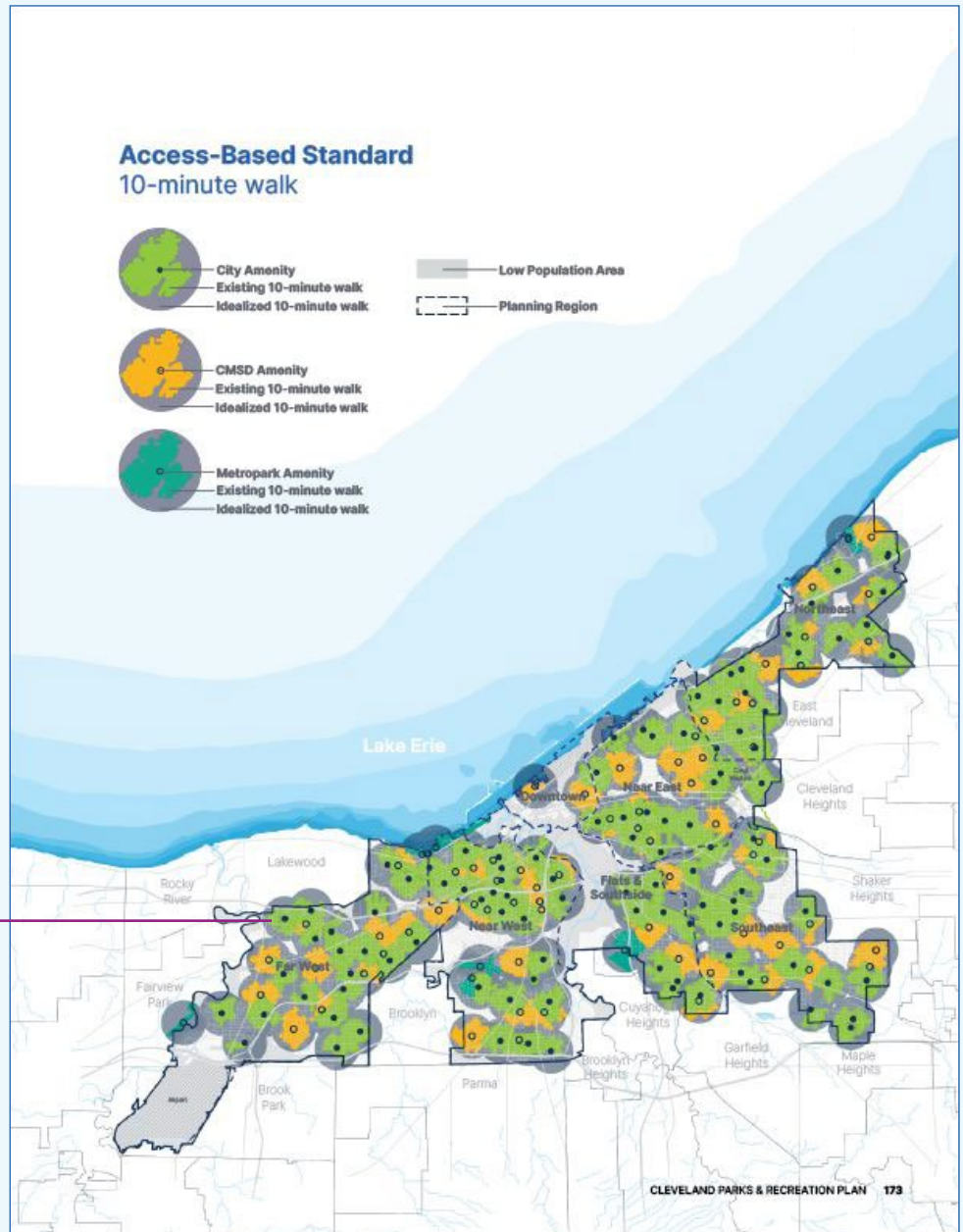
The current number of amenities and the number to be added or reduced/removed by 2040.

Whether the recommended level of service (LOS) is ▲ higher or ▼ lower than the current level of service.

The data that was used to build the recommended LOS. These data points are the peer median level of service, priority investment rating, and 5-year national participation change.

How the above data points inform the recommended LOS. For example, if the peer median LOS is greater than Cleveland, it suggests raising the LOS.

Access-Based Standards



The current amenity access standards are represented by the green, yellow, and teal walksheds on the maps. The dark gray circles show an ideal walkshed that could be achieved with enhanced street walkability.

PLAYGROUNDS

Population-Based Standard

Level of Service (LOS)

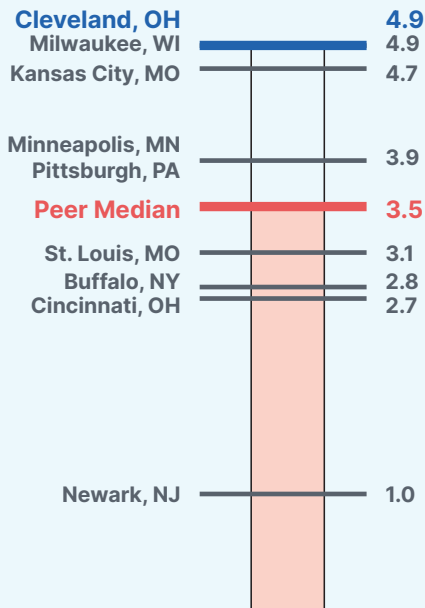


Number of Playgrounds

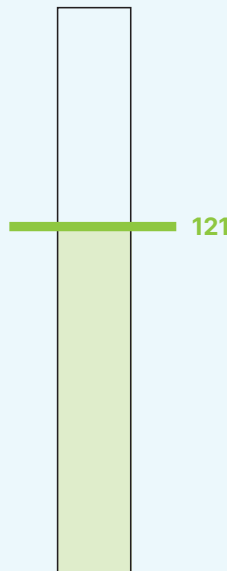


Considerations

Peer Median



Priority Investment Rating



5-Year Change in Participation

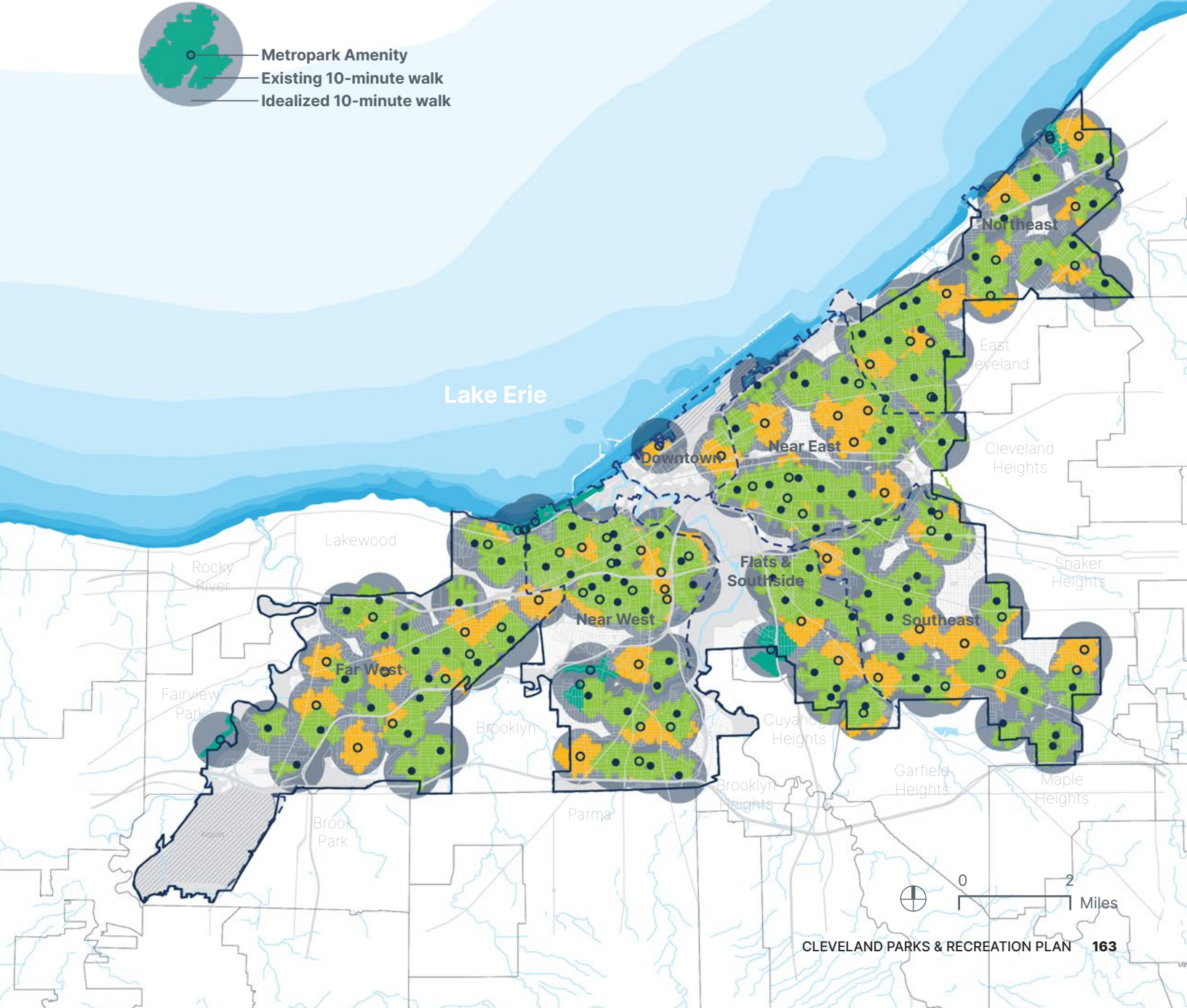
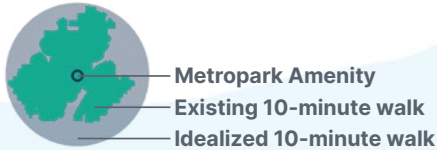


▼
supports lowering
LOS standard

▲
supports raising
LOS standard

Access-Based Standard

10-minute walk



BASKETBALL COURTS

Population-Based Standard

Level of Service (LOS)

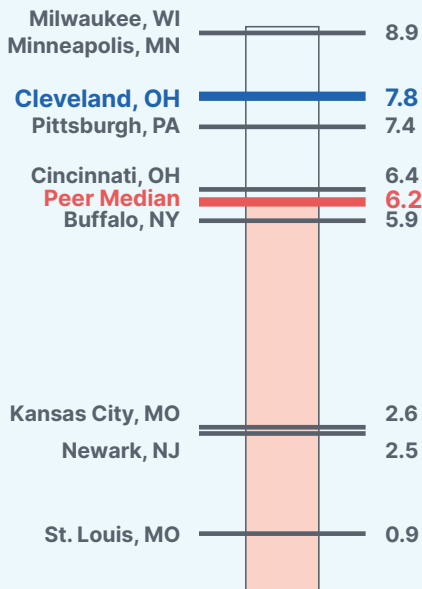



Number of Basketball Hoops



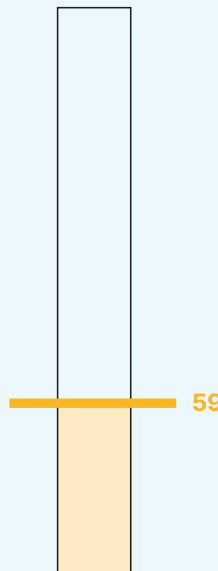
Considerations


Peer Median



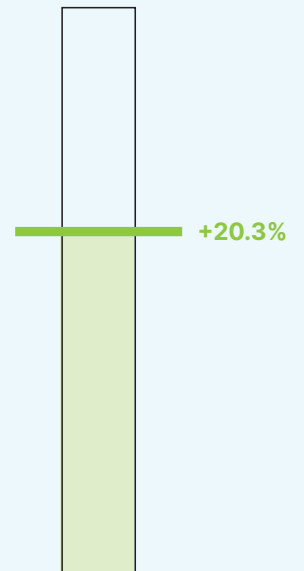
 supports lowering LOS standard

Priority Investment Rating



 supports maintaining LOS standard

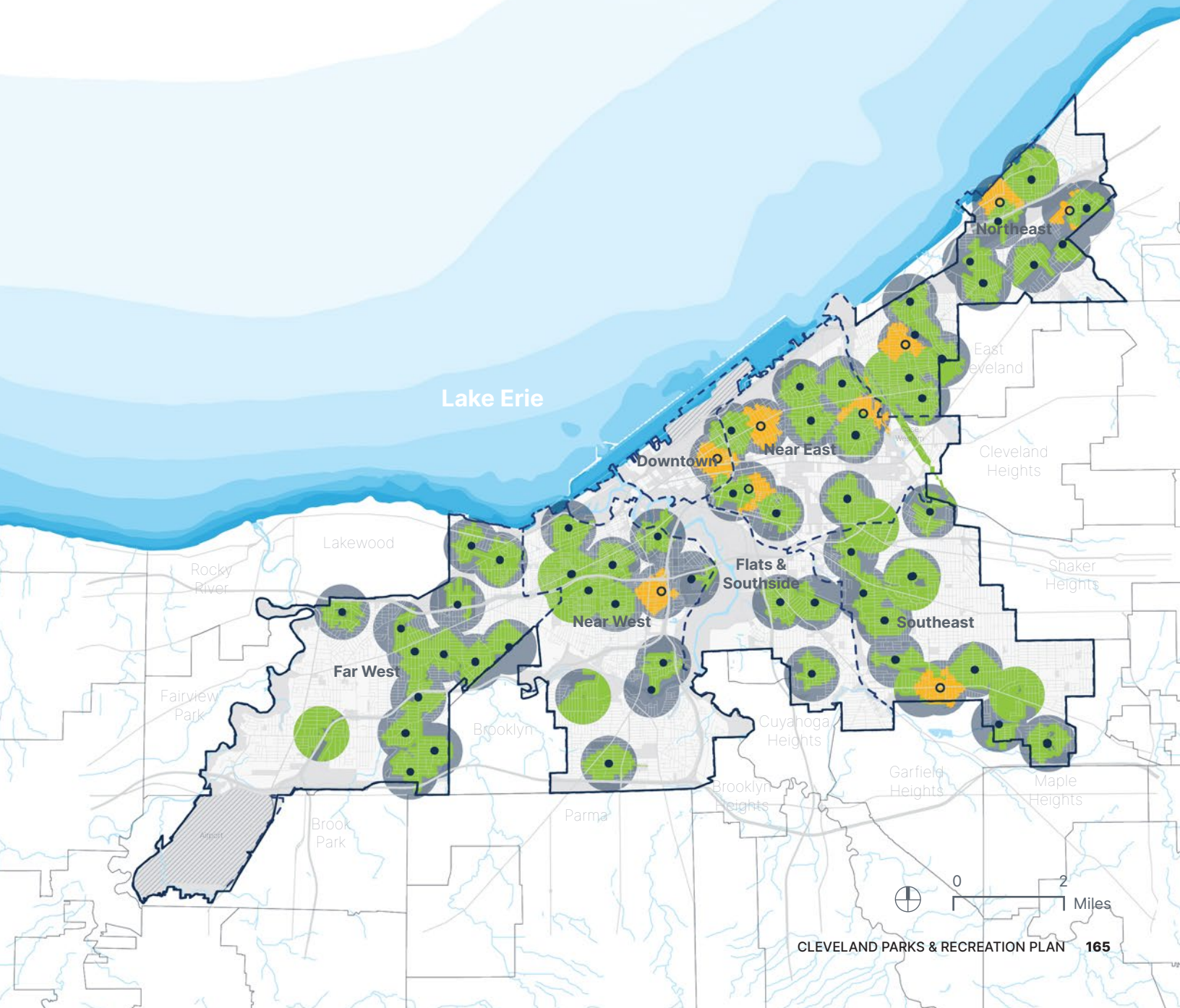
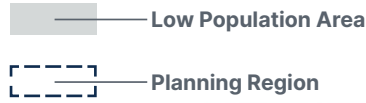
5-Year Change in Participation



 supports raising LOS standard

Access-Based Standard

10-minute walk



POOLS

Population-Based Standard

Level of Service (LOS)

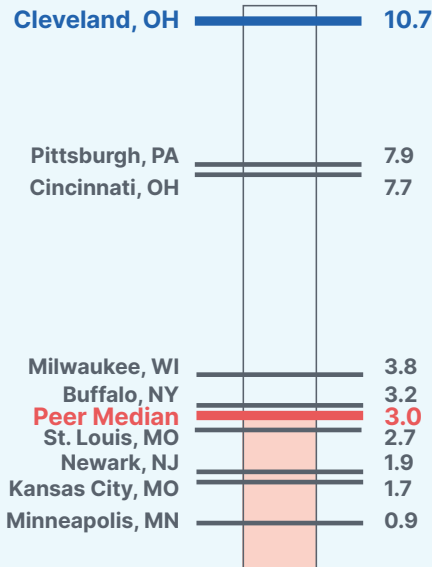


Number of Pools (Indoor & Outdoor)



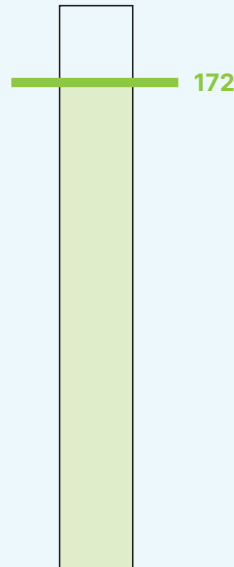
Considerations

Peer Median



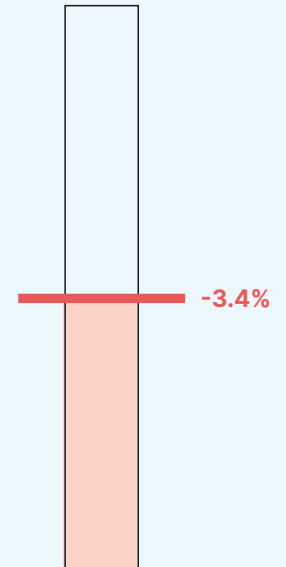
▼ supports lowering LOS standard

Priority Investment Rating



▲ supports raising LOS standard

5-Year Change in Participation



▼ supports lowering LOS standard

SPLASHPADS

Population-Based Standard



Considerations





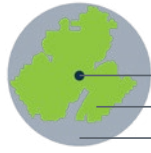
TPL's City Park Facts reports that Cleveland has the **highest number of pools per resident** among the country's 100 most populous cities.

Clevelanders enjoying the City's pools and splashpads throughout the city.
Source: City of Cleveland.



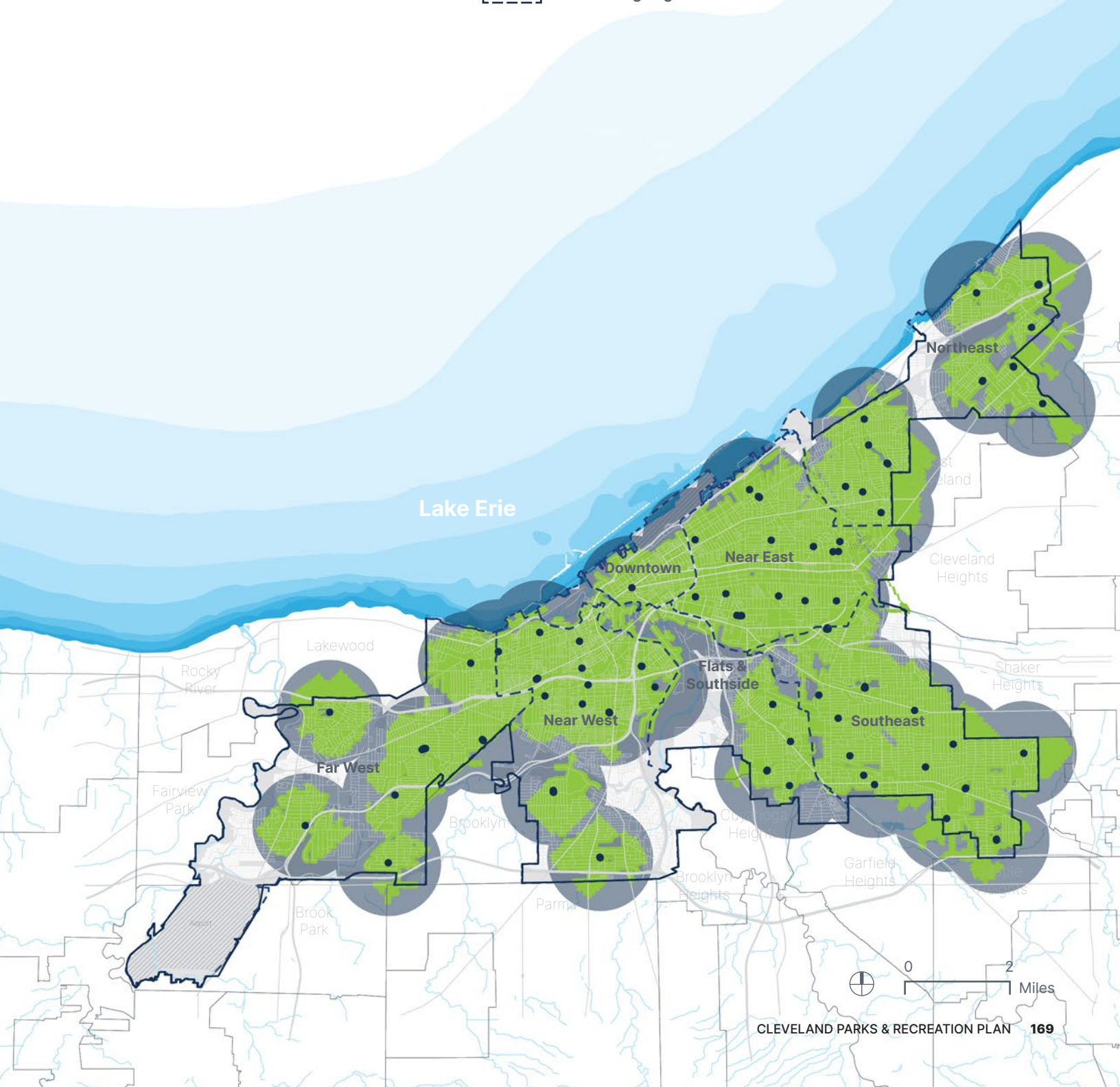
POOLS & SPLASHPADS

Access-Based Standard 20-minute walk



City Amenity
Existing 20-minute walk
Idealized 20-minute walk

Low Population Area
Planning Region



WHY ARE THERE NO POPULATION-BASED STANDARDS FOR RECREATION CENTERS?

For Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Centers, it is more important to consider size, facilities, and programs than the number of centers. [See p. 142-149](#) for more information.



Above: Gunning Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Center.

Source: Sylven Lamar Edwards, 2023.

There are 20 Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Centers in Cleveland.

Source: City of Cleveland.



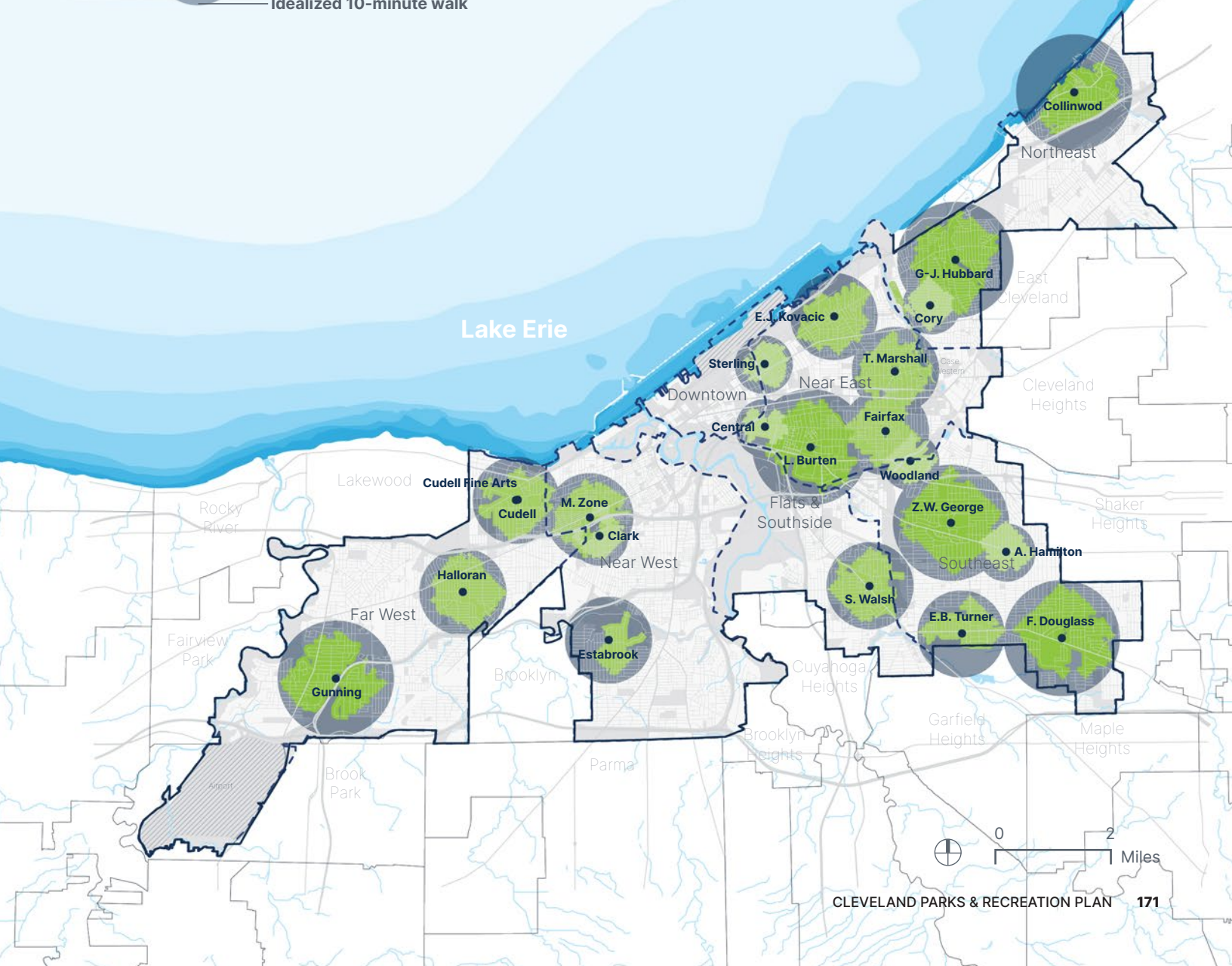
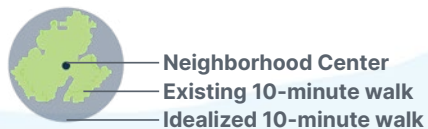
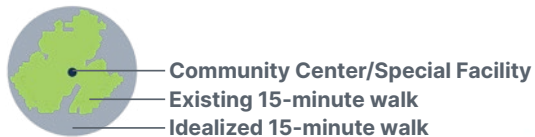
RECREATION CENTERS

Access-Based Standard 10, 15, & 20-minute walks



Low Population Area

Planning Region



RECTANGULAR FIELDS

Population-Based Standard

Level of Service (LOS)

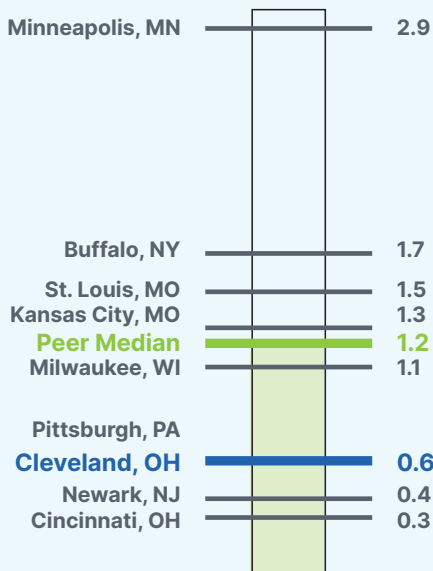


Number of Rectangular Fields



Considerations

Peer Median



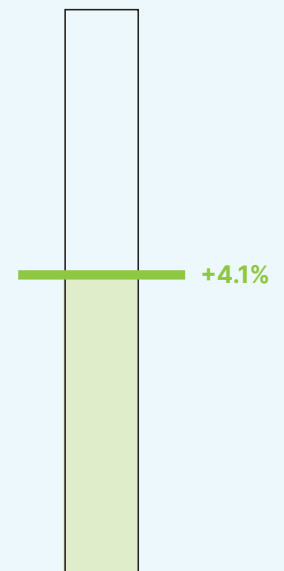
▲ supports raising LOS standard

Priority Investment Rating



◆ supports maintaining LOS standard

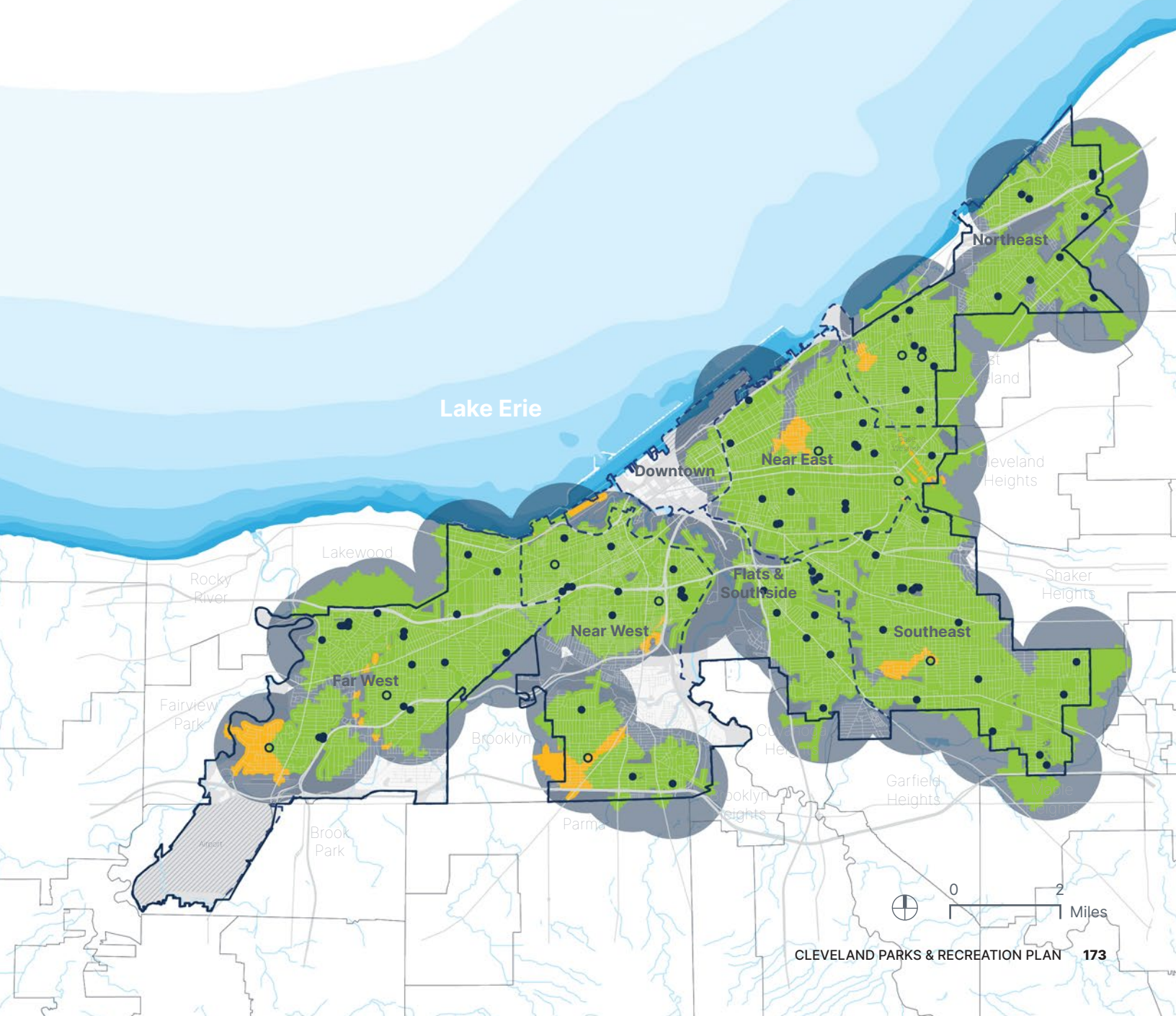
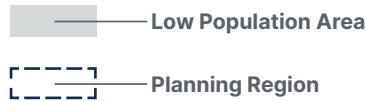
5-Year Change in Participation



▲ supports raising LOS standard

RECTANGULAR FIELDS & MULTI-USE FIELDS

Access-Based Standard 20-minute walk



DIAMOND FIELDS

Population-Based Standard

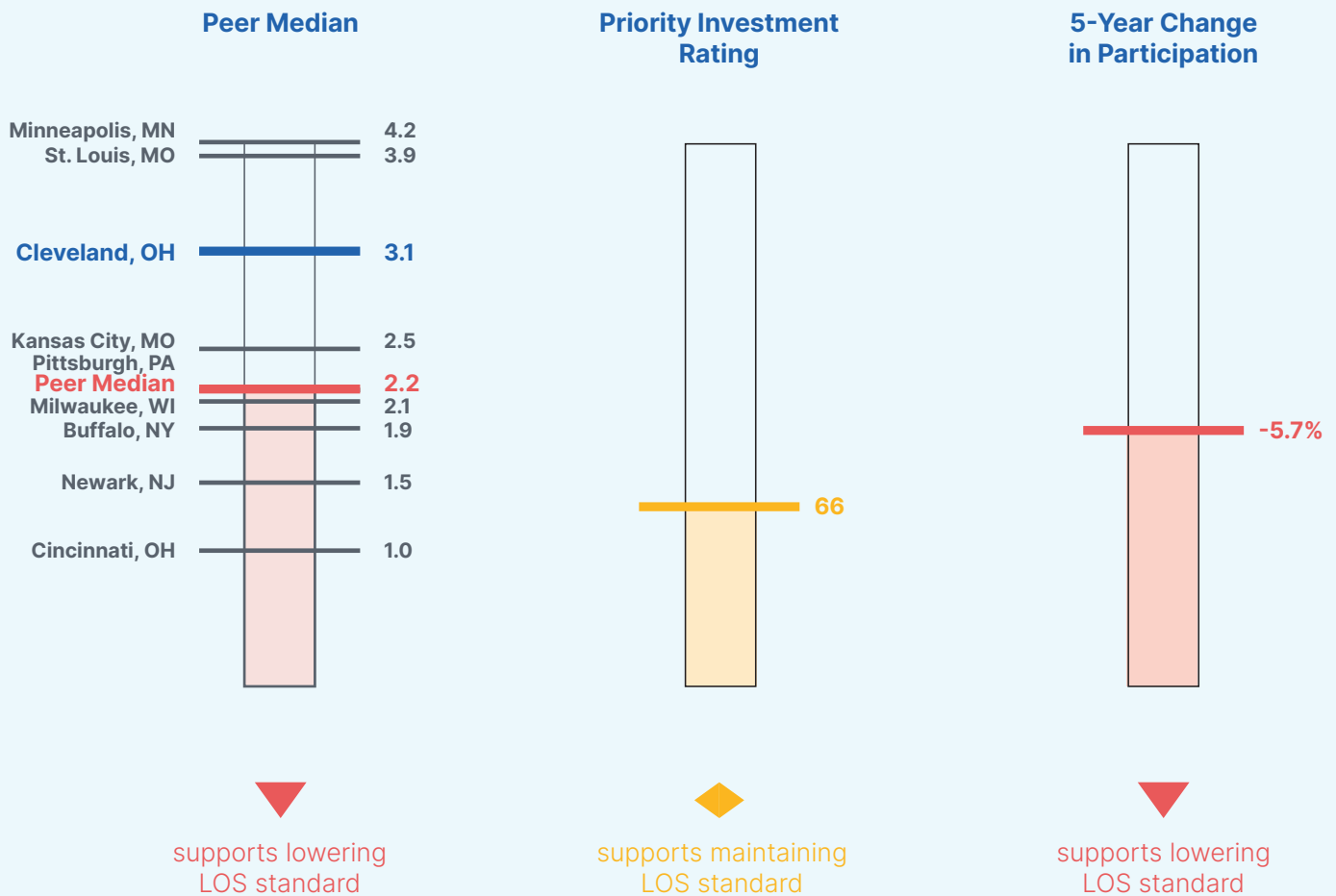
Level of Service (LOS)



Number of Diamond Fields

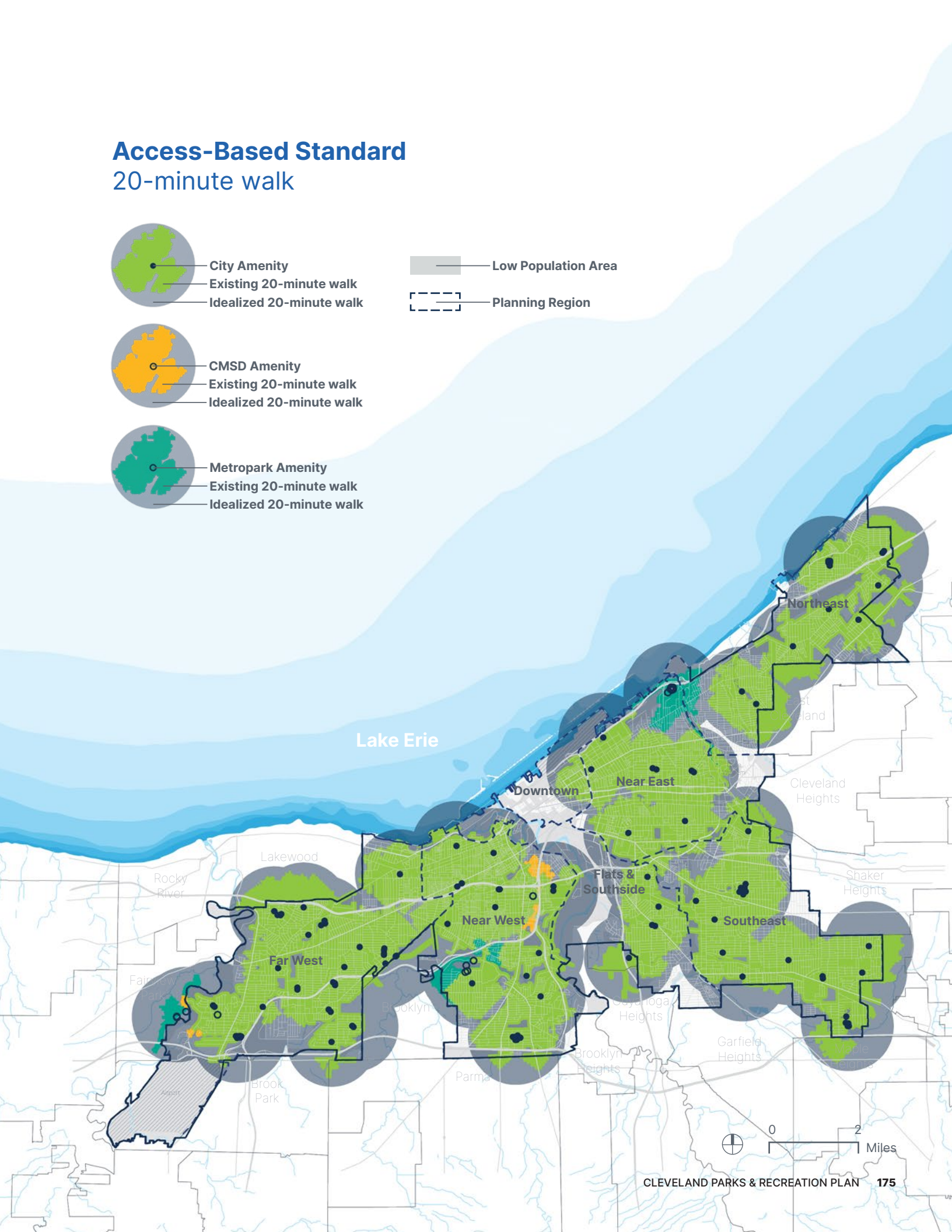
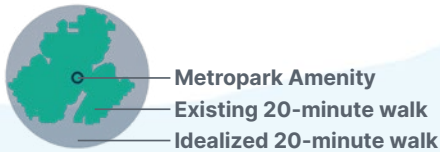
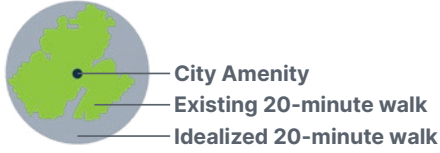


Considerations



Access-Based Standard

20-minute walk



COMMUNITY GARDEN SITES

Population-Based Standard

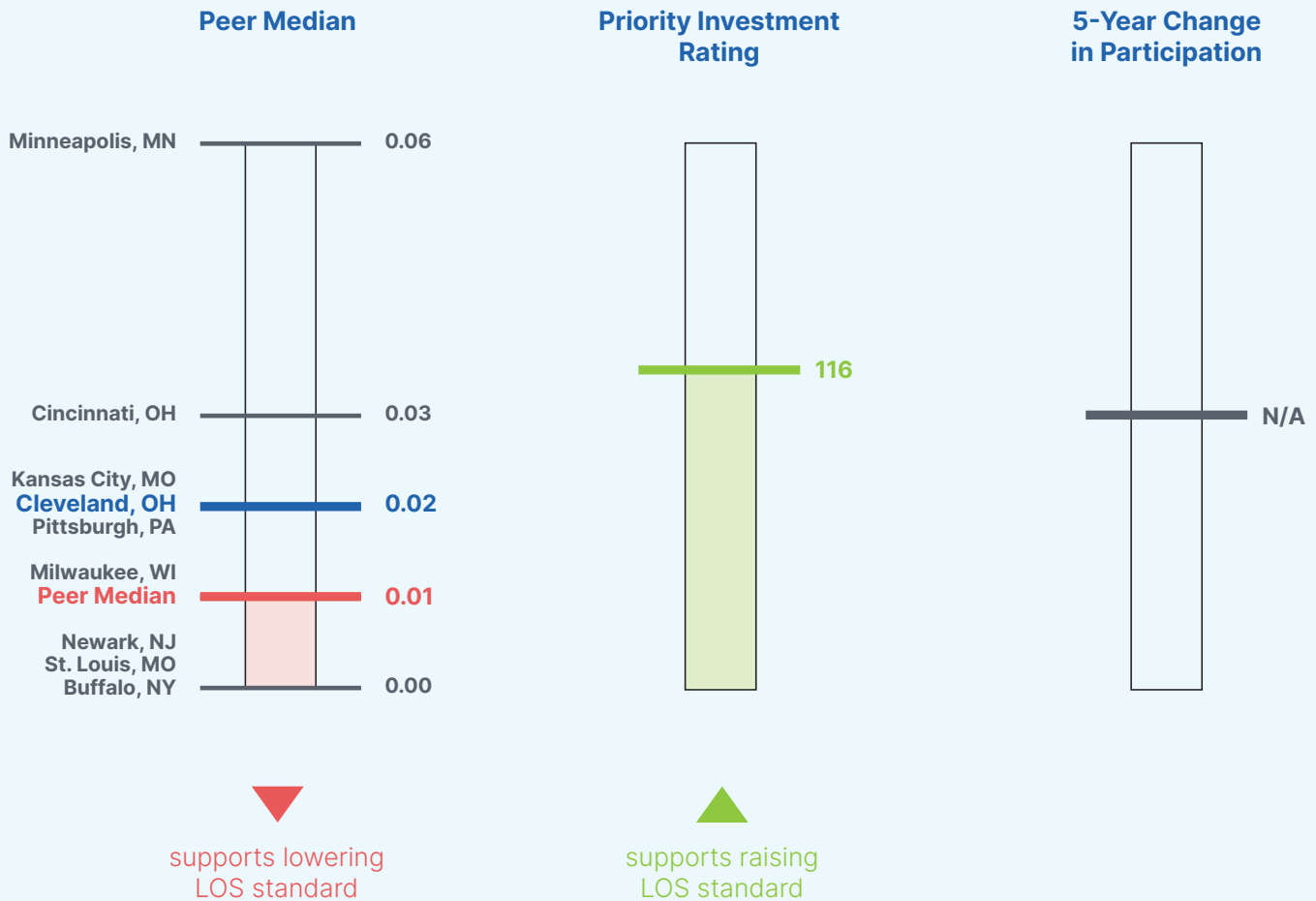
Level of Service (LOS)

0.02 ▲ **0.03**
 per 1,000 Current per 1,000 Recommended

Number of Community Garden Sites

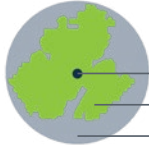
5 ▲ **10**
 in 2024 by 2040

Considerations



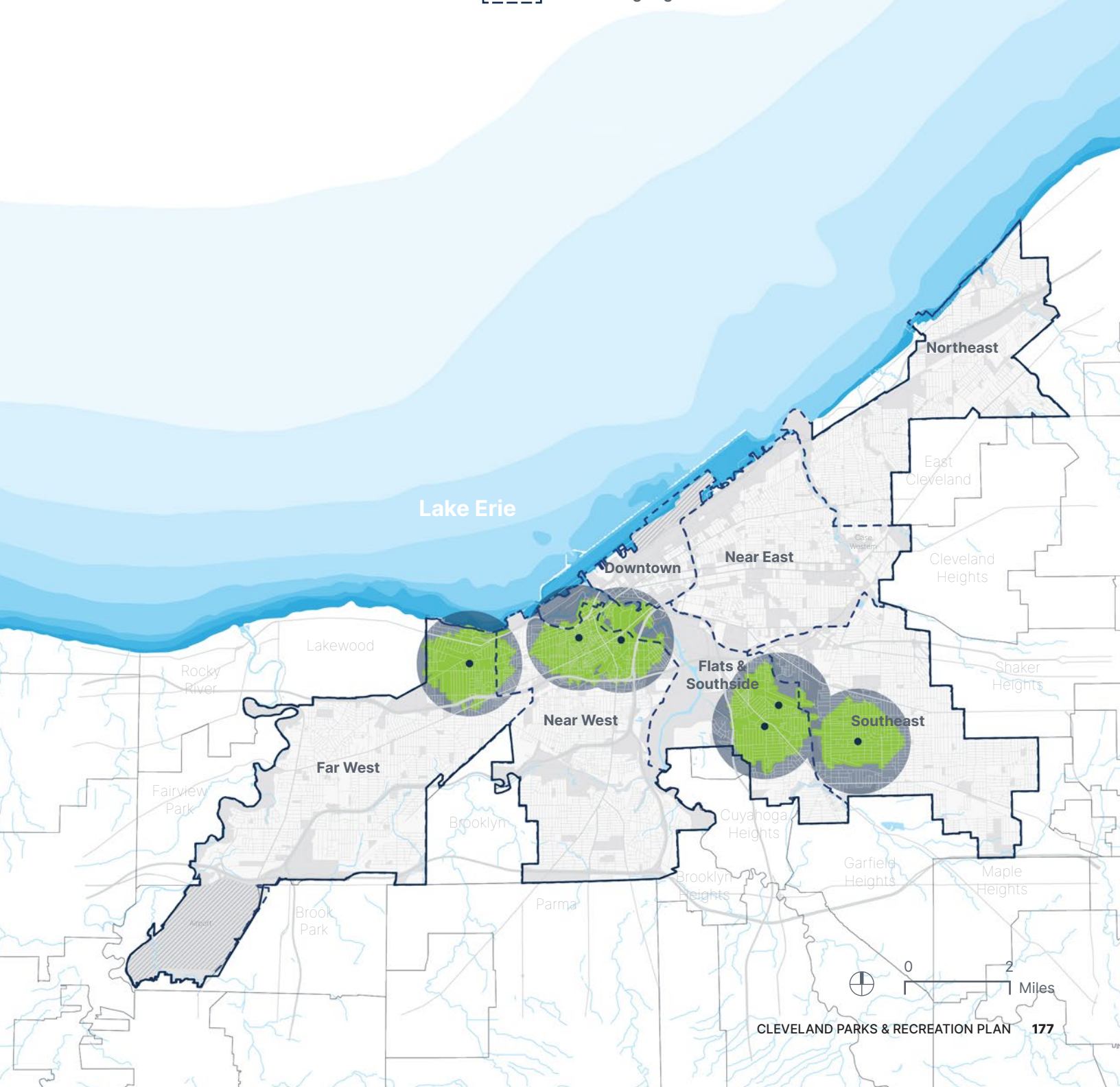
Access-Based Standard

20-minute walk



City Amenity
Existing 20-minute walk
Idealized 20-minute walk

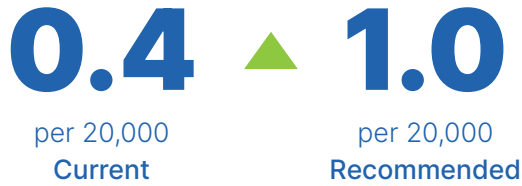
Low Population Area
Planning Region



PICKLEBALL COURTS

Population-Based Standard

Level of Service (LOS)

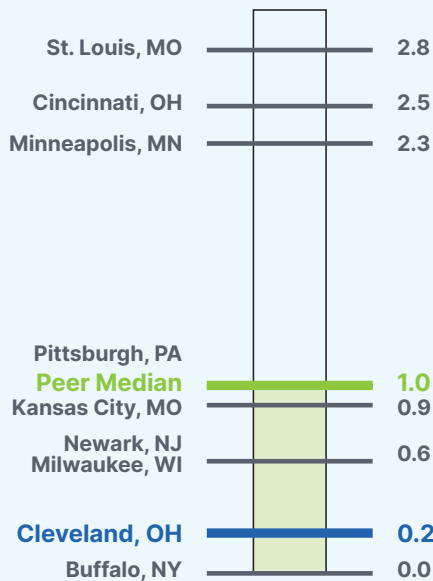


Number of Pickleball Courts



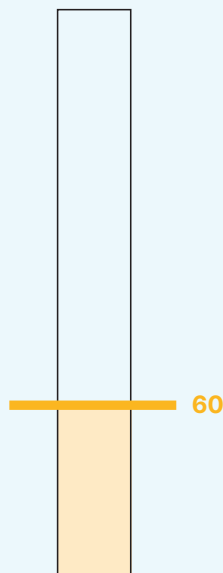
Considerations

Peer Median



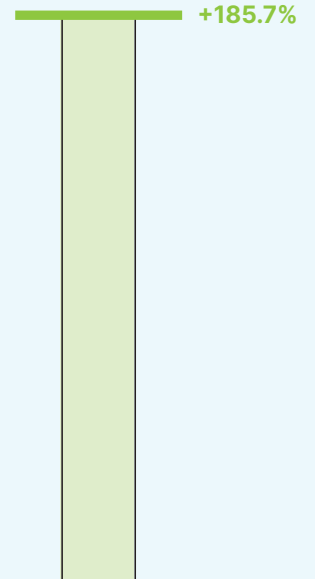
▲ supports raising LOS standard

Priority Investment Rating



◆ supports maintaining LOS standard

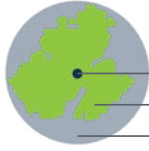
5-Year Change in Participation



▲ supports raising LOS standard

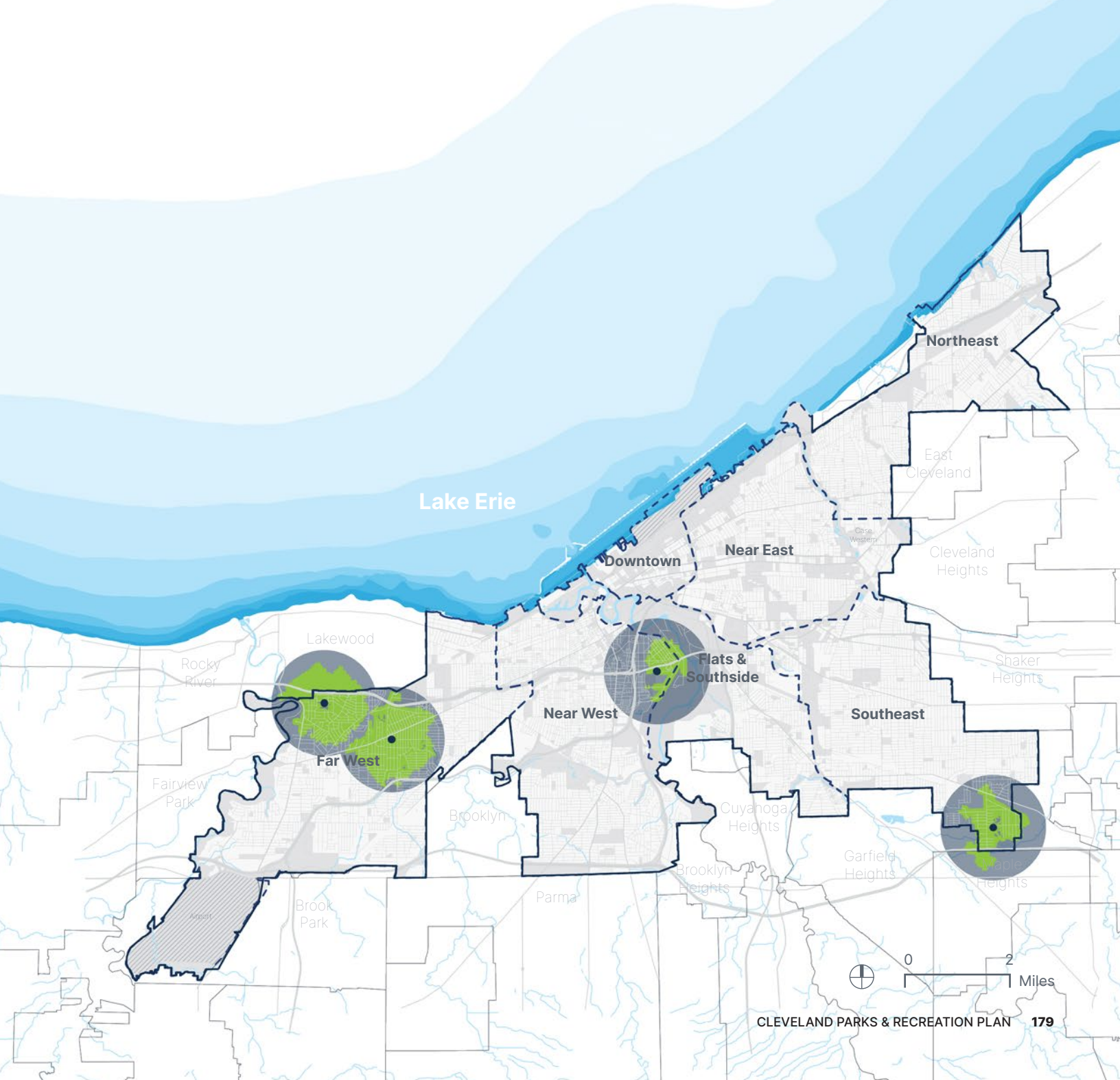
Access-Based Standard

20-minute walk



City Amenity
Existing 20-minute walk
Idealized 20-minute walk

Low Population Area
Planning Region



DOG PARKS

Population-Based Standard

Level of Service (LOS)

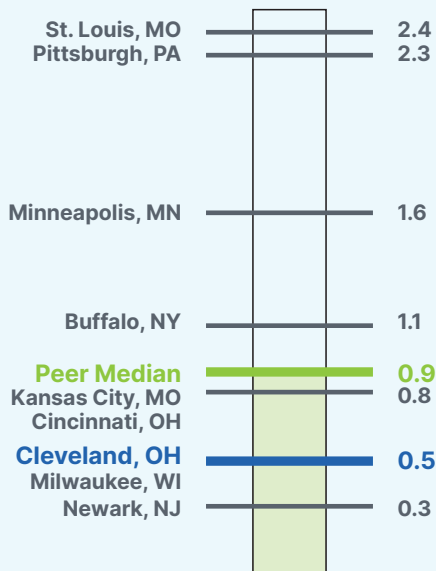


Number of Dog Parks

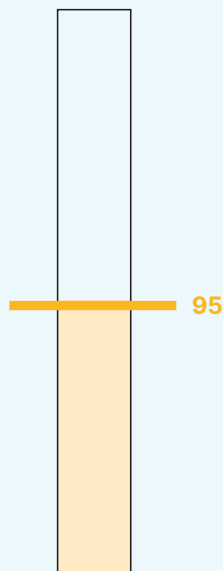


Considerations

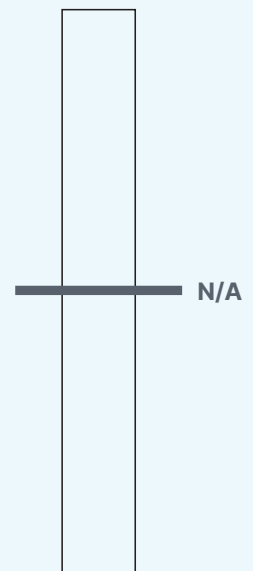
Peer Median



Priority Investment Rating



5-Year Change in Participation

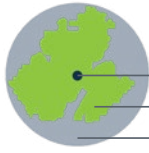


▲ supports raising LOS standard

◆ supports maintaining LOS standard

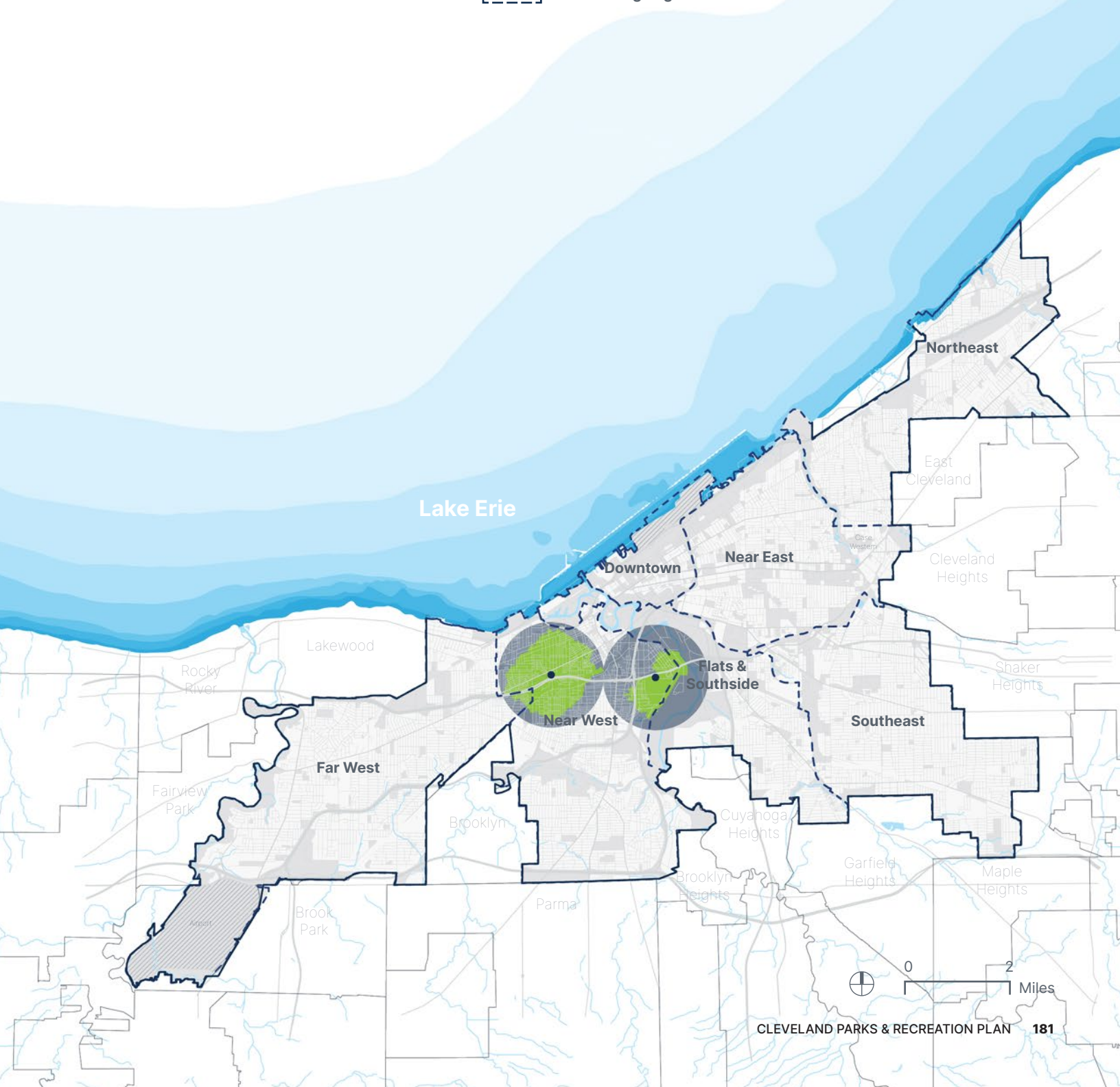
Access-Based Standard

20-minute walk



City Amenity
Existing 20-minute walk
Idealized 20-minute walk

Low Population Area
Planning Region



TENNIS COURTS

Population-Based Standard

Level of Service (LOS)

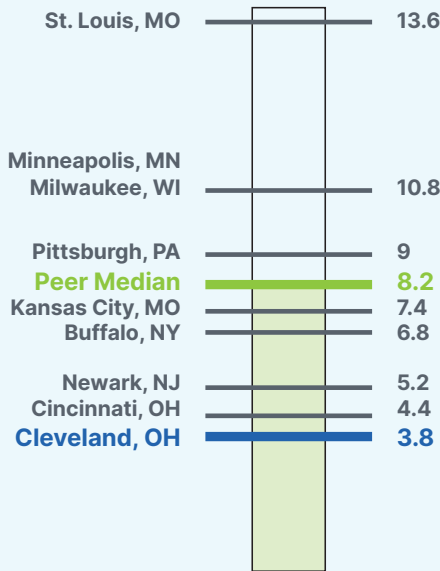


Number of Tennis Courts



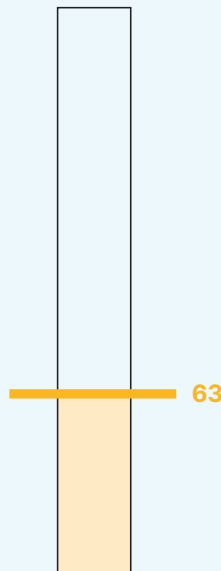
Considerations

Peer Median



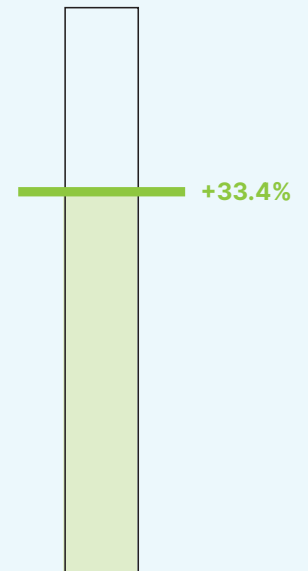
▲ supports raising LOS standard

Priority Investment Rating



◆ supports maintaining LOS standard

5-Year Change in Participation

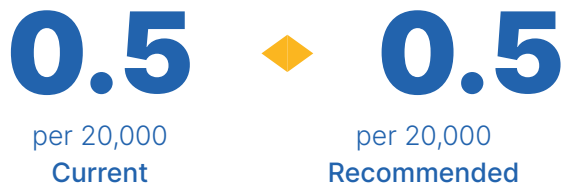


▲ supports raising LOS standard

VOLLEYBALL COURTS

Population-Based Standard

Level of Service (LOS)

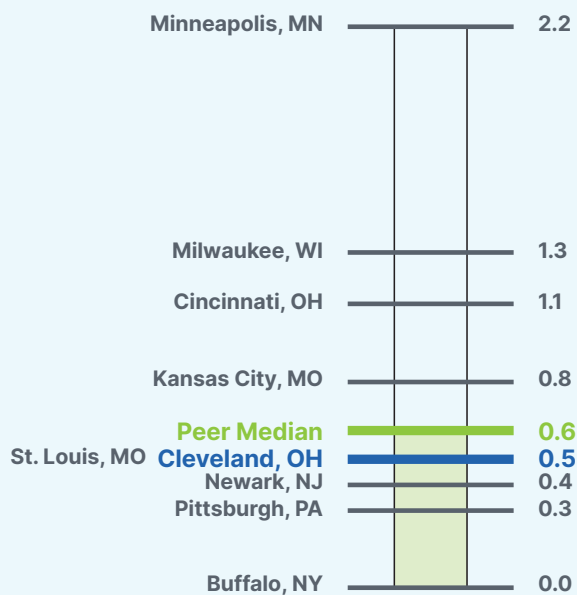


Number of Volleyball Courts



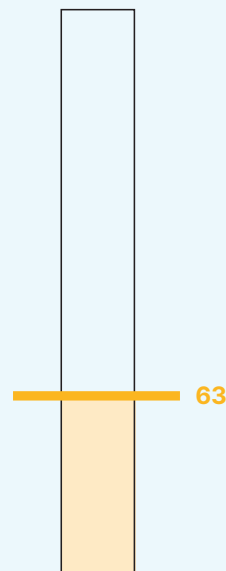
Considerations

Peer Median



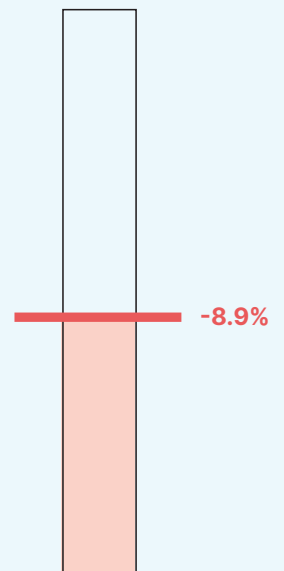
▲ supports raising LOS standard

Priority Investment Rating



◆ supports maintaining LOS standard

5-Year Change in Participation



▼ supports lowering LOS standard

WALKING LOOPS

Population-Based Standard

Level of Service (LOS)



Number of Walking Loops

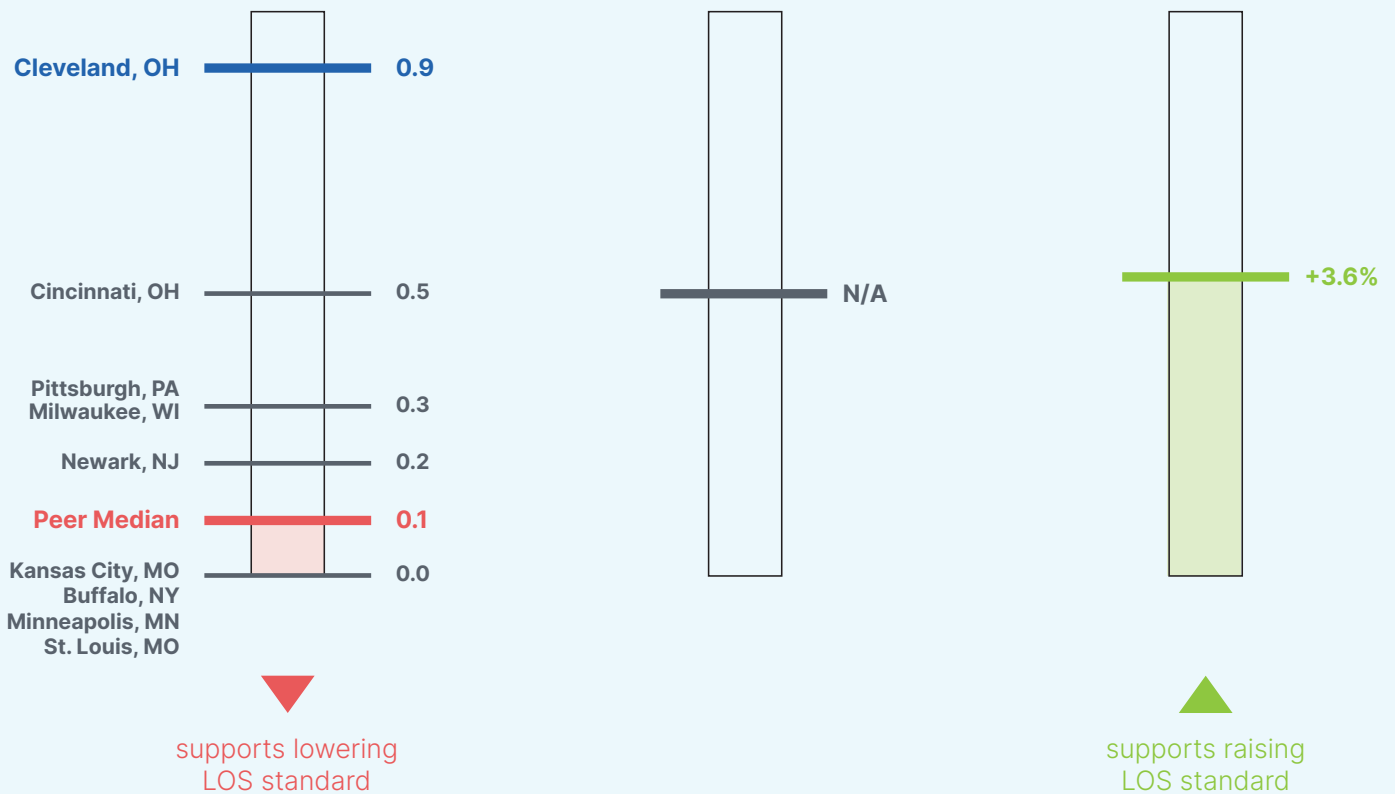


Considerations

Peer Median

Priority Investment Rating

5-Year Change in Participation





The Department of Aging's Cleveland Senior Walks utilize walking loops in the city's parks.
Source: City of Cleveland.

LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS SUMMARY

Amenity	Total Count	Metric	Current LOS	Peer Median LOS	Survey Priority	5-Year Change in Participation	Rec. LOS	# by 2040
Playgrounds	183	1/10,000	4.9	3.5	121	NA	5.0	166
Basketball Courts	294	1/10,000	7.8	6.2	59	+20.3%	6.0	200
Pools	40	1/100,000	10.7	3.0	172	-3.4%	7.0	23
Splashpads	46	1/100,000	12.3	3.8	111	-3.4%	10.0	32
Rectangular Fields	21	1/10,000	0.6	1.2	60	+4.1%	0.75	25
Diamond Fields	118	1/10,000	3.1	2.2	66	-5.7%	2.5	84
Community Garden Sites	5	1/1,000	0.02	0.01	116	NA	0.03	10
Pickleball Courts	7	1/20,000	0.4	1	60	+185.7%	1.0	17
Dog Parks	2	1/100,000	0.5	0.9	95	NA	1.0	4
Tennis Courts	70	1/20,000	3.8	4.1	63	+3.4%	4.0	67
Volleyball Courts	10	1/20,000	0.5	0.6	6	-8.9%	0.5	8
Walking Loops	34	1/10,000	0.9	0.1	NA	+3.6%	1.0	32

- Supports **raising** LOS standard
- Supports **maintaining** LOS standard
- Supports **lowering** LOS standard
- No information available

The Anthony J. Celebrezze fireboat extinguished hot spots on a railroad bridge torched by burning fluids and debris on the Cuyahoga River in 1969.
Source: City of Cleveland.



GENERAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

The availability of parks and recreation facilities varies across Cleveland. The general investment strategies provide guidance on what parts of the city might need additional facilities, what parts need existing facilities to be maintained, and what parts might be considered for consolidating facilities.

CONSIDERATIONS

The general investment strategies suggest larger patterns for future study and inform, but do not dictate site-level investment.

They take into account three factors:

- park acres per capita;
- number of parks within a 10-minute walk; and
- number of park amenities



Park Acres per Capita

Analyzed by the Trust for Public Land, park acres per capita measures the amount of parkland available to residents in each census tract of the city. An acre of parkland in a denser neighborhood must work harder and serve more people than an acre of parkland in a less dense neighborhood.

Number of Parks within a 10-Minute Walk

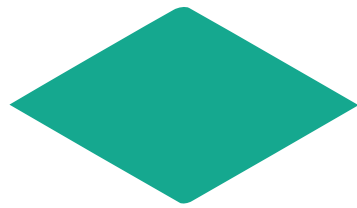
Also analyzed by the Trust for Public Land, the number of parks within a 10-minute walk measures the level of choice available to residents in each census tract of the city. More parks within walking distance provides more variety of experiences, but can also be an indicator of abundance of availability.

Number of Park Amenities

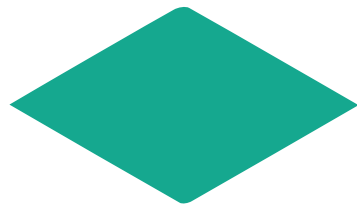
A compilation of the maps applying the level of service access-based standards ([See p. 154.](#)), the number of park amenities indicates the level of access to amenities such as playgrounds, basketball courts, and recreation centers within walking distance of residents' homes.

Ensuring that all people have access to a park within a 10-minute walk of home and that there's adequate park space in all neighborhoods is essential to creating an equitable park system. Source: City of Cleveland.

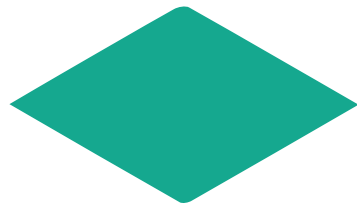
Considerations



Park Acres per Capita



Number of Parks within a 10-Minute Walk



Number of Park Amenities



General Investment Strategy



GENERAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

Areas to Potentially Add Facilities

Where park acres, the number of walkable parks, and number of amenities is low, the City should consider opportunities to increase acreage or facilities.

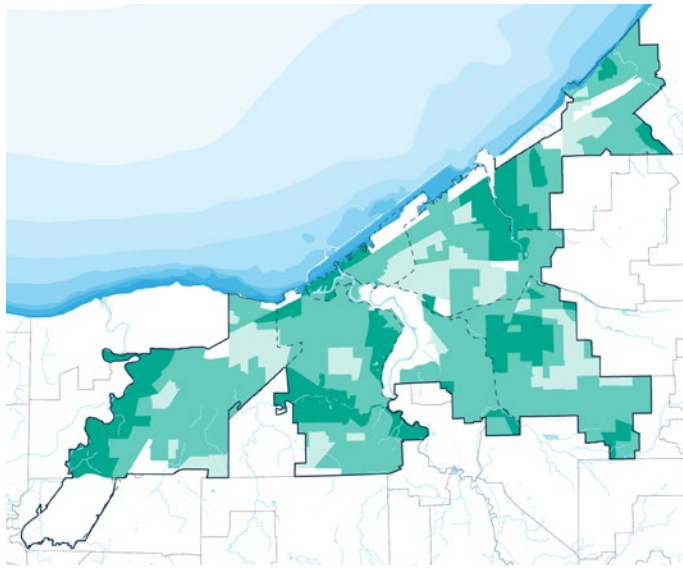
Areas to Maintain Facilities

Where park acres, the number of walkable parks, and number of amenities is average, the City should continue to maintain existing facilities.

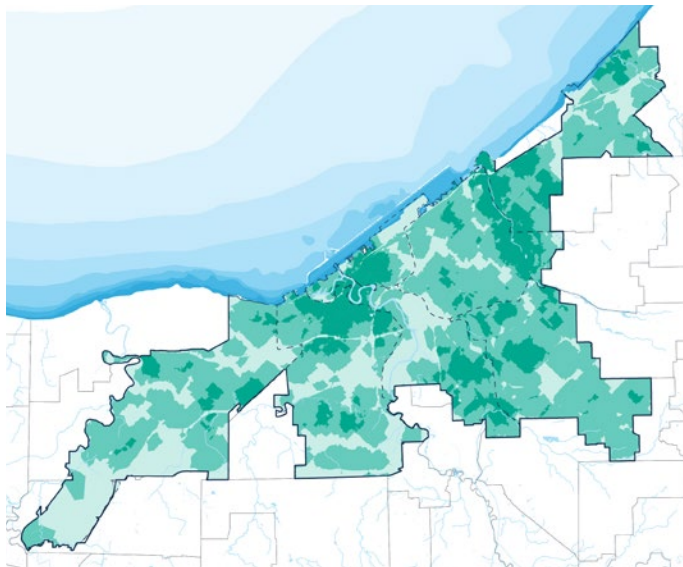
Areas to Potentially Consolidate Facilities

Where park acres, the number of walkable parks, and number of amenities is high, the City should consider doing additional studies to determine if facilities can be consolidated without significantly reducing level of service.

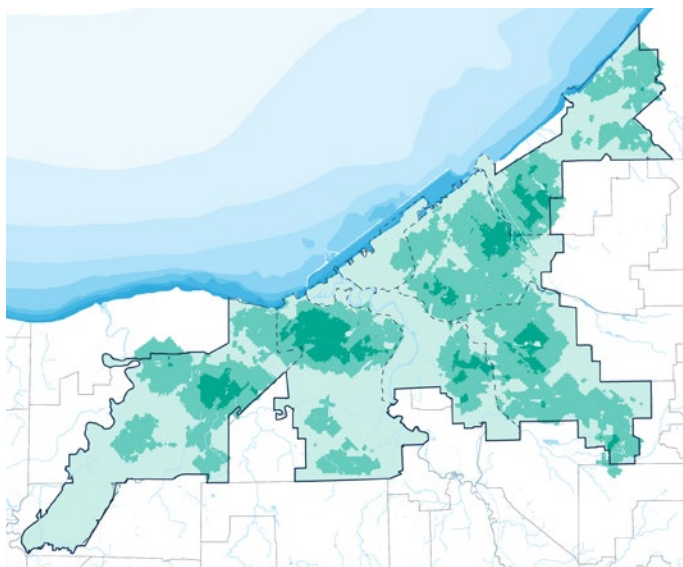
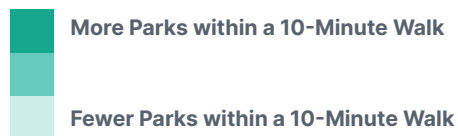
CONSIDERATIONS



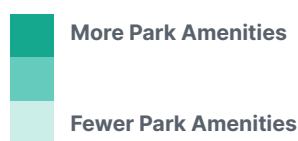
Park Acres per Capita



Number of Parks within a 10-Minute Walk

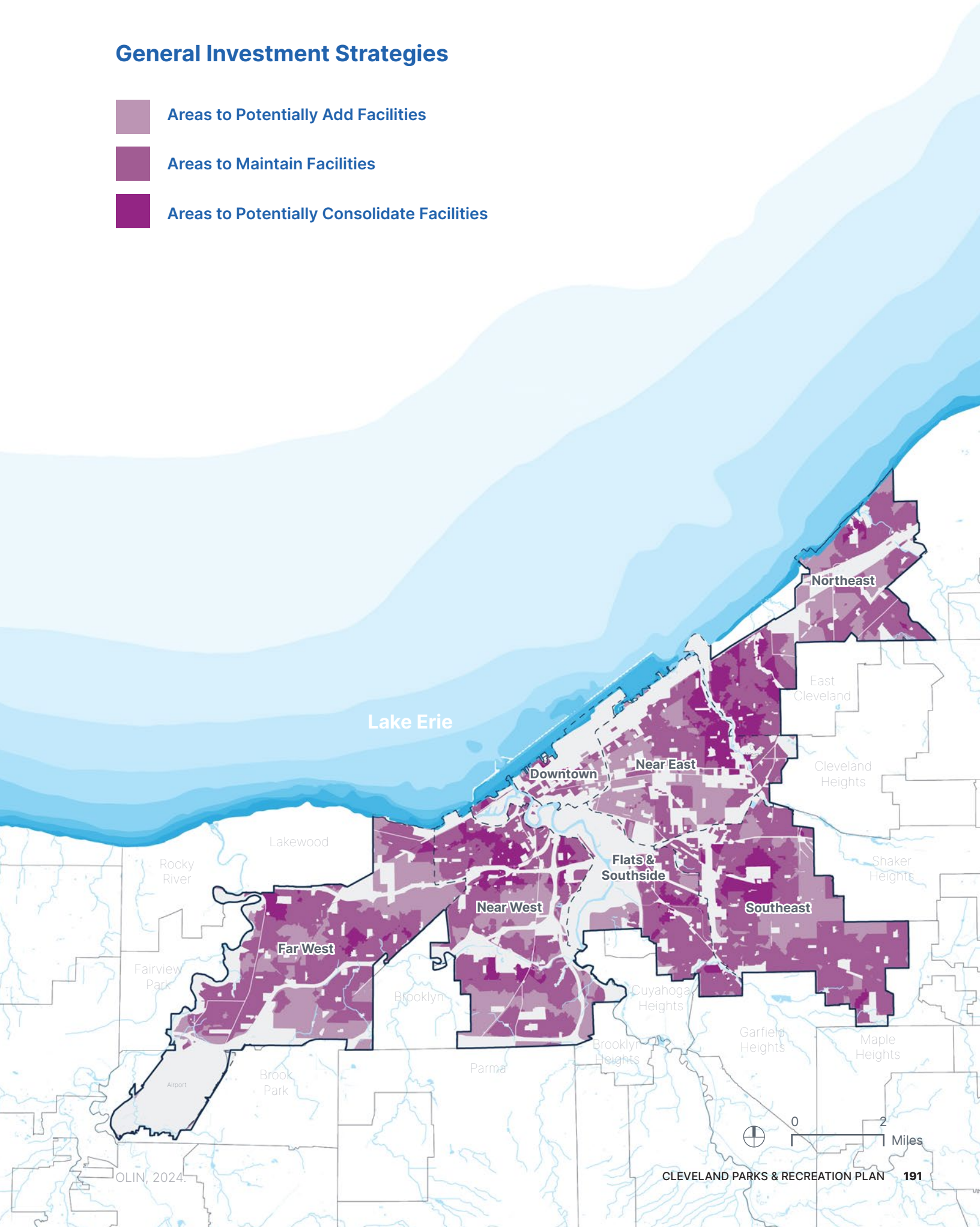


Number of Park Amenities



General Investment Strategies

-  Areas to Potentially Add Facilities
-  Areas to Maintain Facilities
-  Areas to Potentially Consolidate Facilities





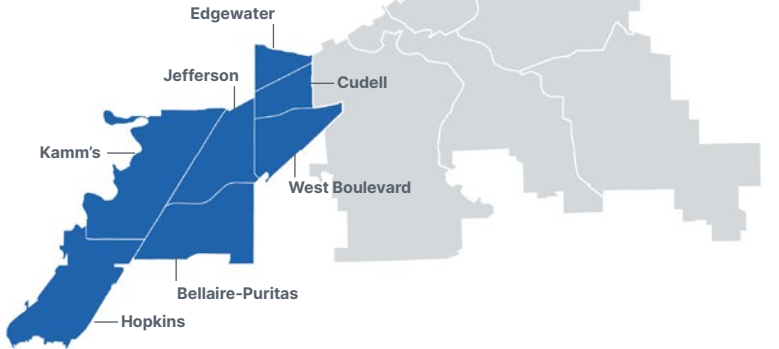
THE
CLEVELAND
MUSEUM
OF ART

Community Arts Center
wall mural created by
Rafael Valdivieso.
Source: City of Cleveland.

PLANNING REGION SCORE CARDS

A snapshot of demographics, community needs, general investment strategies, and areas of highest burden from the Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST).

FAR WEST



26 City Parks
4 Recreation Centers
206 Acres of Parkland

477 vacant lots
 (15,141 citywide)

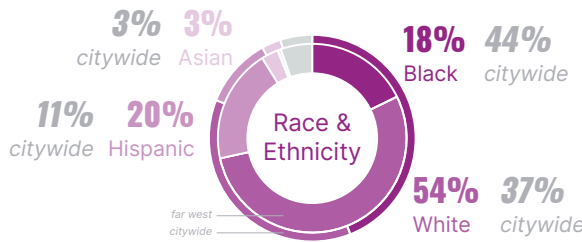
90,340 residents
 (370,896 citywide)

Includes wards:

17 | 16

15 | 14

11 | 3

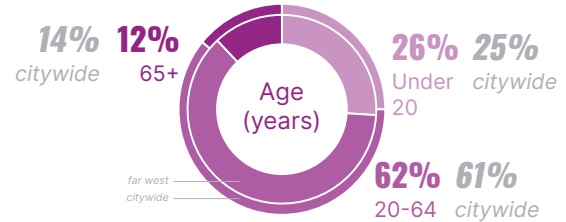


\$57,017

mean household income
 (\$49,375 city avg)

26%

Income below poverty level
 (31% city avg)



Top Issues

MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES

SYSTEM AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION

SAFETY



Impett Park

MAINTAINING THE REC CENTERS AND PROVIDING ADEQUATE FACILITIES. GUNNING POOL WATER TEMPERATURE, FOR EXAMPLE.

– Online survey participant

EASY AND NAVIGABLE INFO ONLINE FOR RESIDENTS.

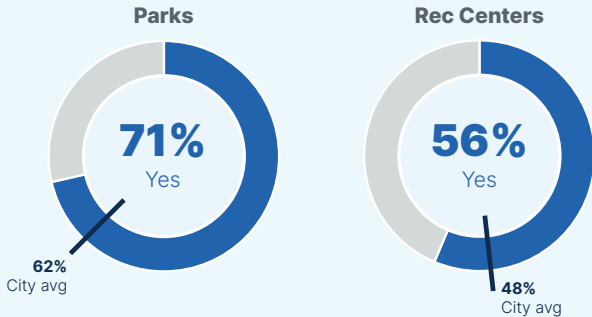
– Open house participant at Gunning

AS A WOMAN, THE PARKS ARE SCARY TO APPROACH/WALK THROUGH NEAR DAWN/DUSK AND AFTER DARK.

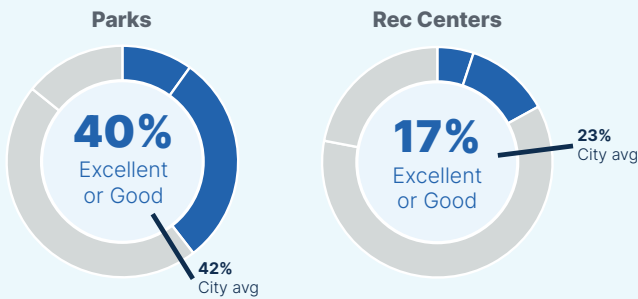
– Online survey participant

CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Far West respondents **feel better** than the city as a whole with the **number of parks and recreation centers** within walking distance of their home.



Far West respondents **feel slightly worse** than the city as a whole with the **physical condition of parks and recreation centers**.



Top three most important . . .

Outdoor Facilities

- Swimming pools; Paved, multi-use trails
- Unprogrammed green spaces

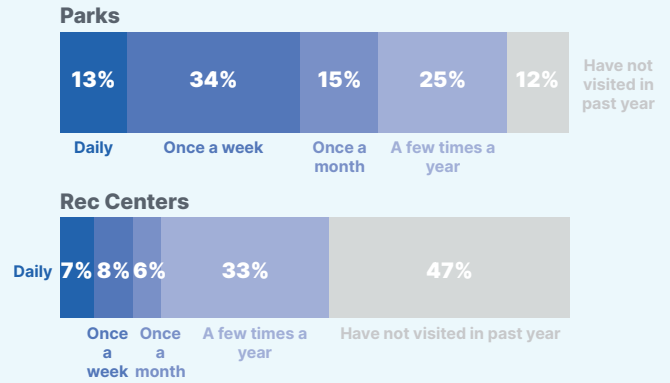
Indoor Facilities

- Swimming pools
- Exercise & fitness equipment
- Walking/jogging track

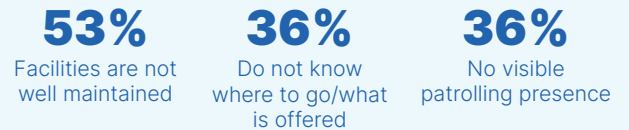
Programs

- Seniors; Aquatics
- Arts & crafts classes; Fitness/wellness programs

A little less than half of Far West respondents visit a park at least once a week, however **close to half** have not visited a recreation center in the past year.



Top three barriers to visiting parks and recreation centers more often in the Far West:



Some of the Facilities that **Need Attention:**

GUNNING REC CENTER NEEDS MAJOR UPDATING.

BALTIC CHILDREN'S PARK.

DRAKEFIELD PARK HAS A NEW PLAYGROUND BUT THE TENNIS COURTS ARE NOT MAINTAINED.

ANY OF THE ONES NOT CALLED "EDGEWATER."

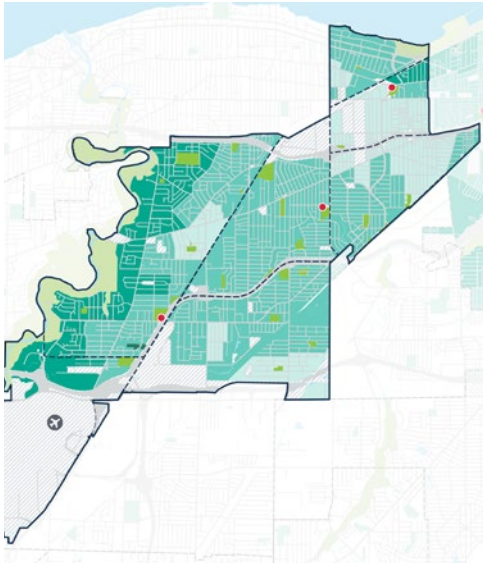
IMPETT PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, IT IS OVER 30 YEARS OLD.

HALLORAN PARK & REC CENTER.

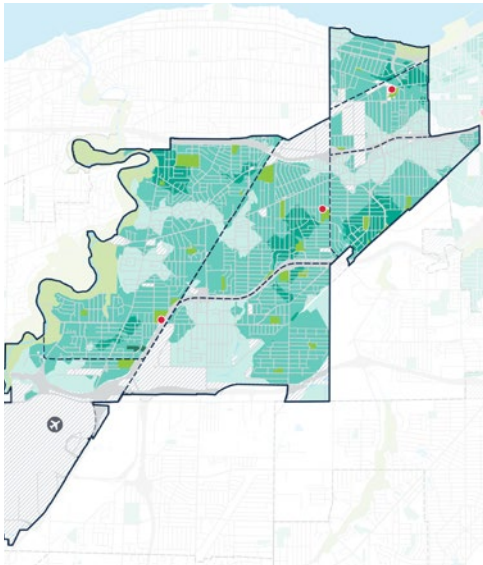
CUDELL FINE ARTS.

CUDELL COMMONS.

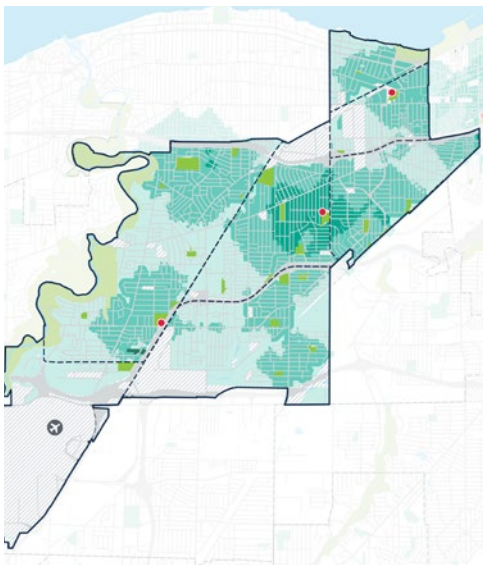
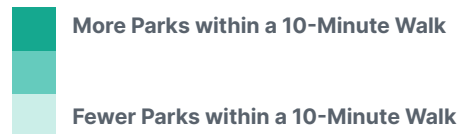
CONSIDERATIONS



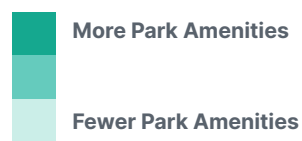
Park Acres per Capita



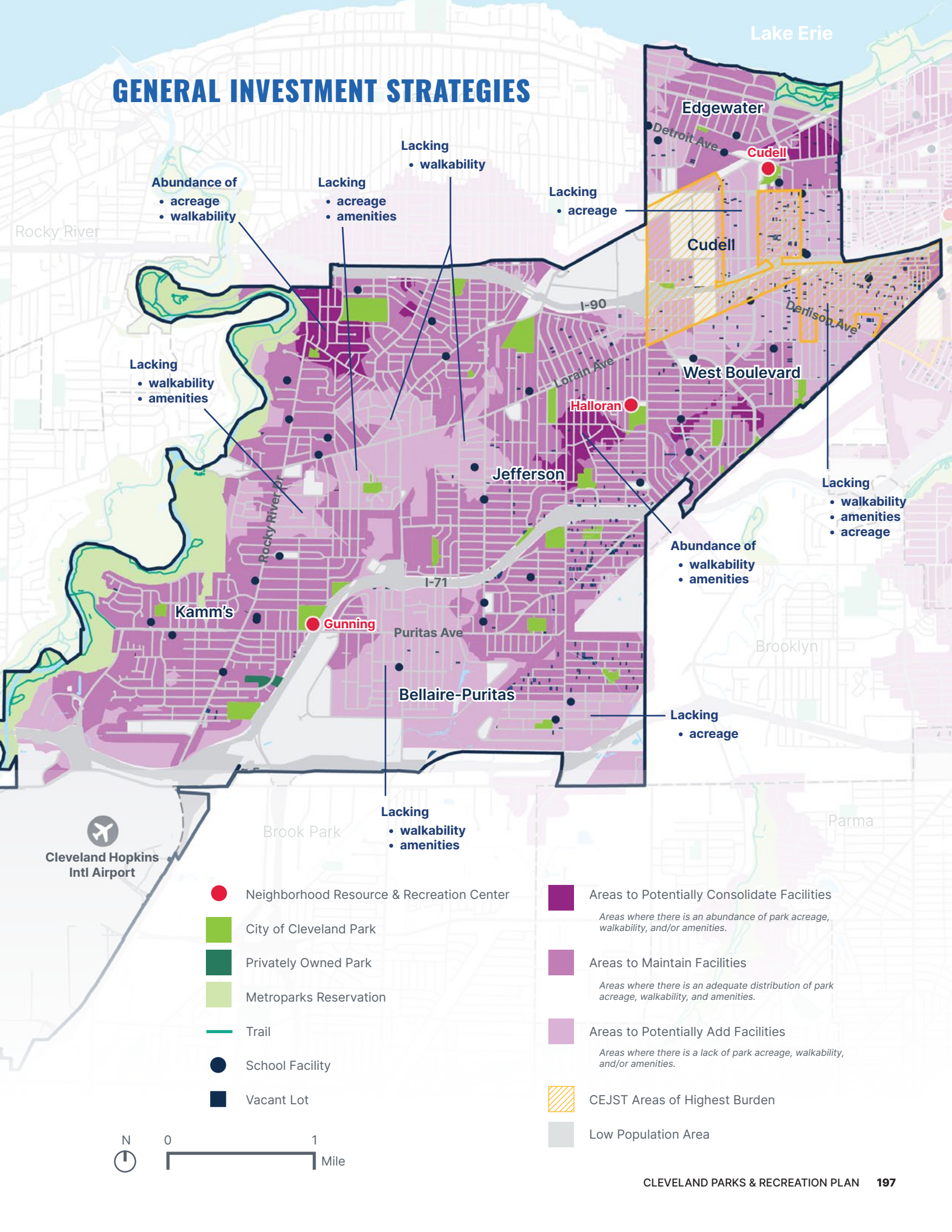
Number of Parks within a 10-Minute Walk



Number of Park Amenities



GENERAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES



Cleveland Hopkins Intl Airport

- Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Center
- City of Cleveland Park
- Privately Owned Park
- Metroparks Reservation
- Trail
- School Facility
- Vacant Lot

- Areas to Potentially Consolidate Facilities
Areas where there is an abundance of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.
- Areas to Maintain Facilities
Areas where there is an adequate distribution of park acreage, walkability, and amenities.
- Areas to Potentially Add Facilities
Areas where there is a lack of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.
- CEJST Areas of Highest Burden
- Low Population Area



NEAR WEST



29 City Parks
3 Recreation Centers
192 Acres of Parkland

1,045 vacant lots
 (15,141 citywide)

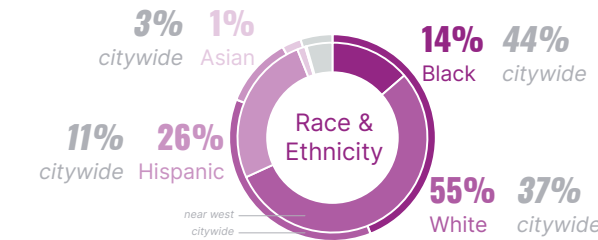
83,359 residents
 (370,896 citywide)

Includes wards:

15 | 14

13 | 12

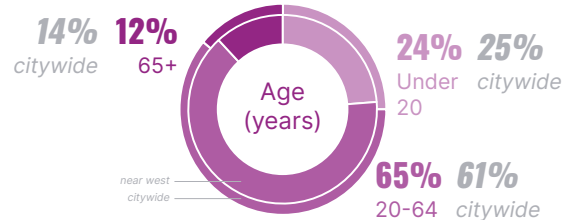
3



\$56,335

mean household income
 (\$49,375 city avg)

27%
 Income below poverty level
 (31% city avg)



Top Issues

PROGRAMMING

STAFFING AND HOURS

SYSTEM AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION



Harmody Park

HAVE CONSISTENT AND THOROUGH PROGRAMMING FOR ALL AGES AT TIMES WORKING FAMILIES CAN MAKE IT.

– Online survey participant

POOLS ARE HARD TO GET INTO - HOURS ARE INCONSISTENT BECAUSE OF STAFFING.

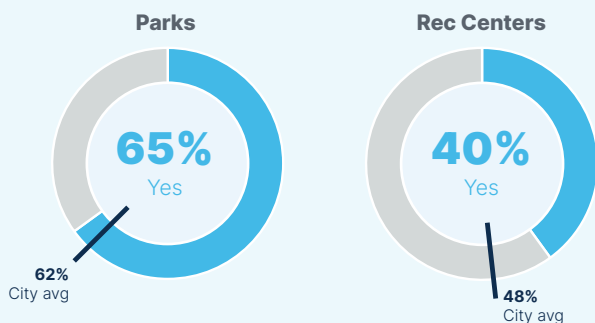
– Online survey participant

NO REAL WEBSITE FOR THE REC CENTERS, AND NO PICTURES OF THEIR SPACES AND FEATURES, SO I TRULY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT INSIDE EACH CENTER.

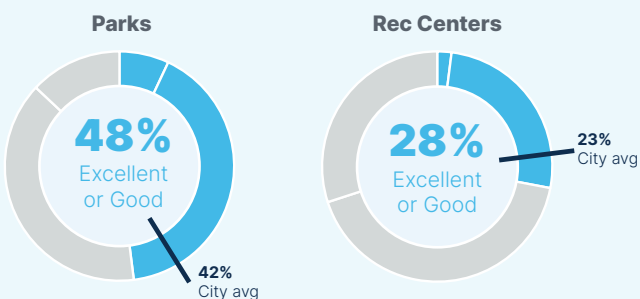
– Online survey participant

CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Far West respondents **feel slightly better** than the city as a whole with the **number of parks** within walking distance of their home, but **feel worse with the number of recreation centers**.



Near West respondents **feel better** than the city as a whole with the **physical condition of parks and recreation centers**.



Top three most important . . .

Outdoor Facilities

1. Paved, multi-use trails
2. Unprogrammed green spaces
3. Natural areas & wildlife habitats

Indoor Facilities

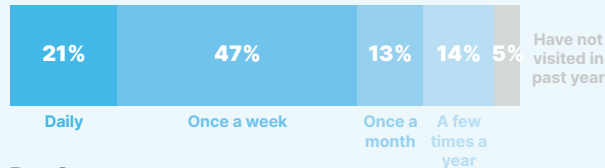
1. Swimming pools
2. Walking/jogging track
3. Exercise & fitness equipment

Programs

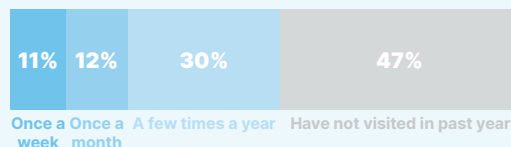
1. Aquatics
2. Arts & crafts classes
3. Seniors; Recreation (drop-in); Nature experiences

A little over 2/3 of Near West respondents visit a park at least once a week, however **only 11%** visit a recreation center that often.

Parks



Rec Centers



Top three barriers to visiting parks and recreation centers more often in the Near West:

- 51%** Facilities are not well maintained
- 43%** Do not know where to go/what is offered
- 42%** Poor/uncomfortable atmosphere

Some of the Facilities that **Need Attention**:

CLARK REC CENTER.

I DON'T ALWAYS FEEL SAFE USING MICHAEL ZONE REC CENTER WITH MY CHILD BECAUSE OF SAFETY INCIDENTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED.

ESTABROOK REC CENTER.

LAKE PARK POOL.

ABBAY PARK.

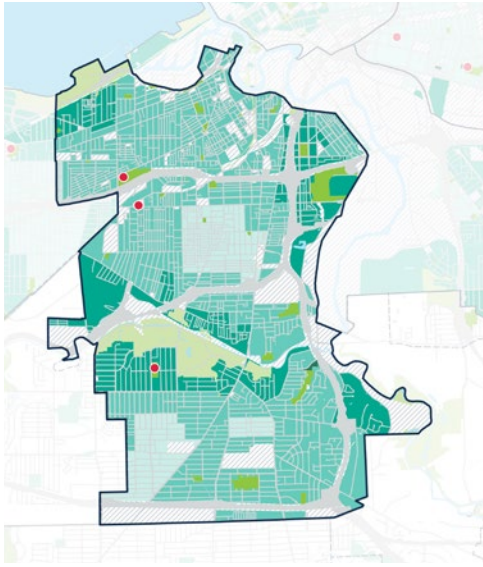
FRANK NOVAC PARK.

HERMAN PARK.

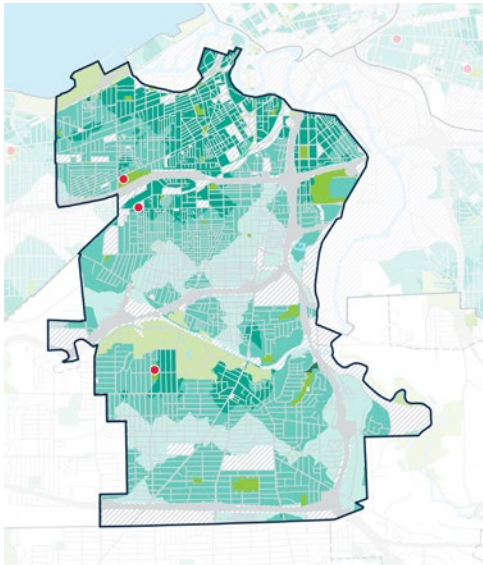
MANY PARKS ON NEAR WEST SIDE INCLUDING FAIRVIEW PARK HAVE BECOME HAVENS FOR HOMELESS HANGOUTS.

MICHAEL ZONE REC COMPLEX.

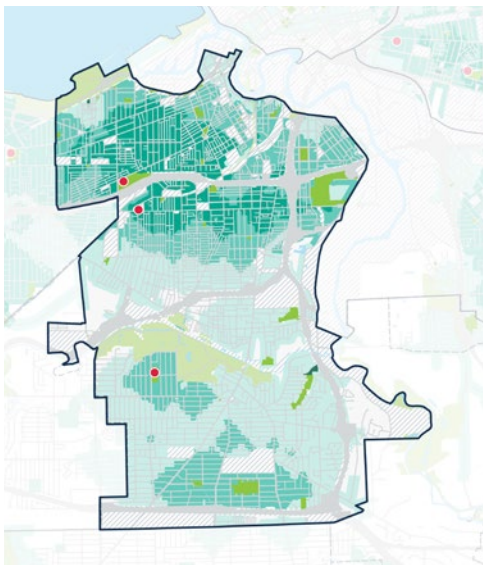
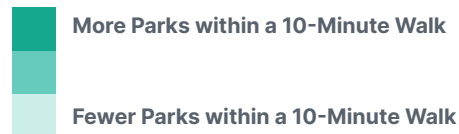
CONSIDERATIONS



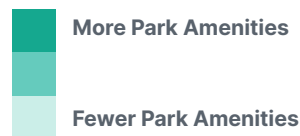
Park Acres per Capita



Number of Parks within a 10-Minute Walk



Number of Park Amenities



Lake Erie

GENERAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

Abundance of
• walkability
• amenities

Abundance of
• walkability
• amenities

Abundance of
• walkability
• acreage

Detroit
Shoreway

Ohio
City

Tremont

Michael Zone

Clark

Clark
Fulton

Stockyards

Lacking
• walkability
• acreage

Lacking
• walkability
• amenities

Brooklyn Centre

Lacking
• walkability
• amenities
• acreage

Abundance of
• walkability
• acreage

Estabrook

Memphis Ave

Old Brooklyn

Lacking
• walkability
• amenities

Lacking
• walkability
• amenities
• acreage

Brooklyn

I-480

Brooklyn Heights

Parma

Cuyahoga
Heights

● Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Center

■ City of Cleveland Park

■ Privately Owned Park

■ Metroparks Reservation

— Trail

● School Facility

■ Vacant Lot

■ Areas to Potentially Consolidate Facilities

Areas where there is an abundance of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.

■ Areas to Maintain Facilities

Areas where there is an adequate distribution of park acreage, walkability, and amenities.

■ Areas to Potentially Add Facilities

Areas where there is a lack of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.

▨ CEJST Areas of Highest Burden

■ Low Population Area



FLATS & SOUTHSIDE

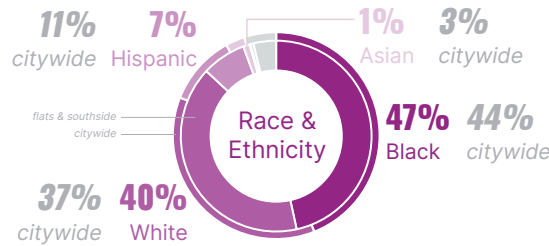


17 City Parks
1 Recreation Centers
71 Acres of Parkland

2,049 vacant lots
 (15,141 citywide)
24,060 residents
 (370,896 citywide)

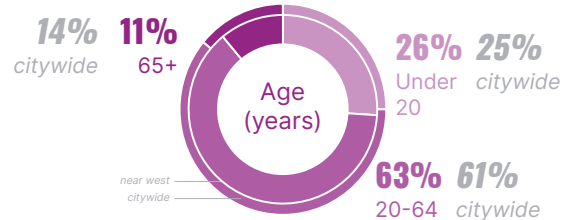
Includes wards:

15 | 12
6 | 5
3 | 2



\$52,134
 mean household income
 (\$49,375 city avg)

36%
 Income below poverty level
 (31% city avg)



Top Issues

MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES

SAFETY

STAFFING AND HOURS



Canal Basin Park

MAKE SURE THE REC CENTERS ARE THE CLEANEST, SAFEST SPACES OUTSIDE OF SOMEONE'S HOME.

- Online survey participant

MAKE IT SAFE.

- Online survey participant

MORE STAFF IN REC CENTERS AND EARLIER HOURS.

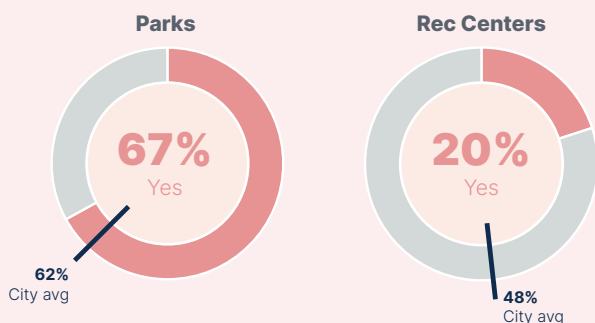
- Online survey participant

MORE CONNECTING TRAILS.

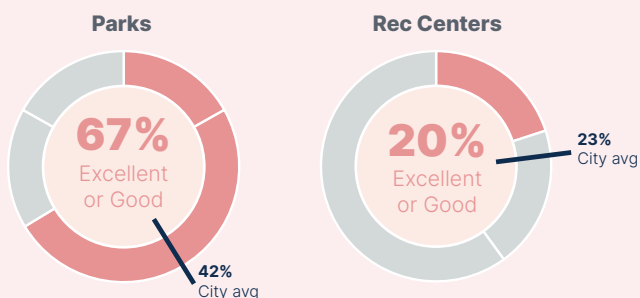
- Online survey participant

CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Flats & Southside respondents **feel slightly better** than the city as a whole with the **number of parks** within walking distance of their home, but **feel significantly worse with the number of recreation centers.**



Flats & Southside respondents **feel significantly better** than the city as a whole with the **physical condition of parks**, but **slightly worse about recreation center conditions.**



Top three most important . . .

Outdoor Facilities

1. Swimming pool
2. Water play features; Playgrounds; Paved, multi-use trails

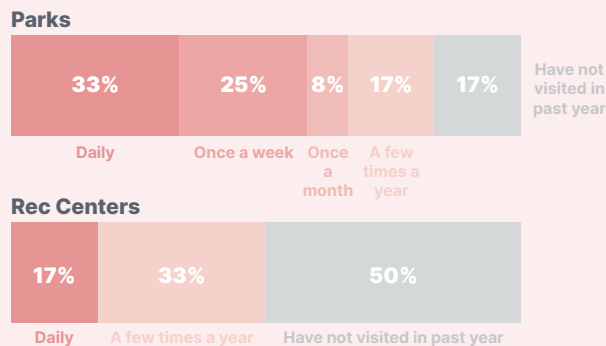
Indoor Facilities

1. Indoor sports fields; Rooms for arts, crafts & games; Classroom space

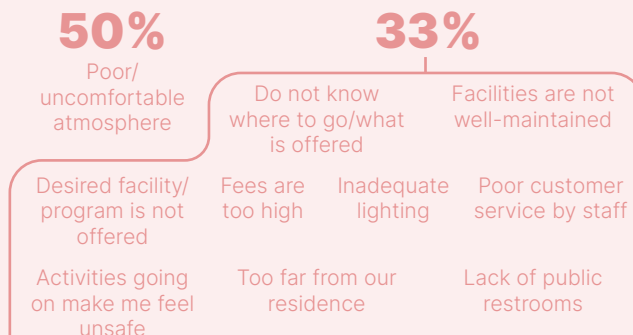
Programs

1. Youth & family
2. Teens; Recreation (drop-in); Special events/festivals; Mental health services

Close to 60% of Flats & Southside respondents visit a park at least once a week, however **50%** have not visited a recreation center in the past year.



Top three barriers to visiting parks and recreation centers more often in the Flats & Southside:



Some of the Facilities that **Need Attention:**

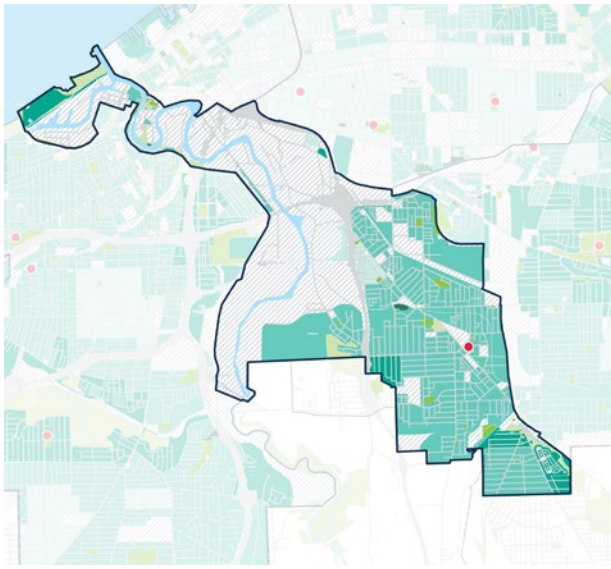
STELLA WALSH REC CENTER.

WARSAW PARK POOL.

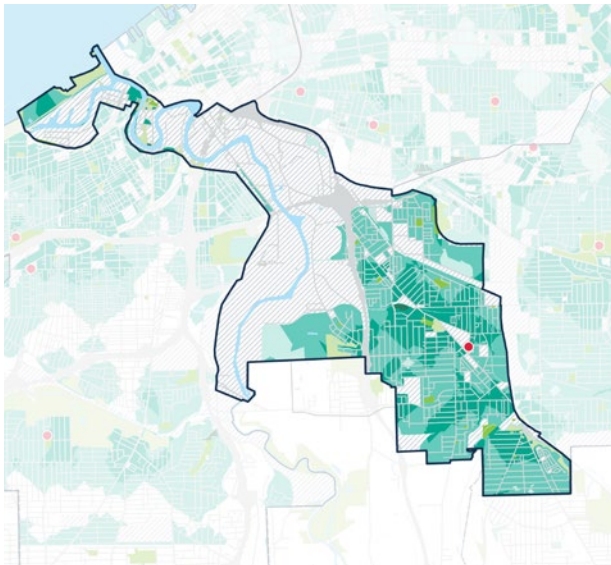
FOREST CITY PARK - CITY DROPPED THE BALL BY NOT ACQUIRING VACANT LOT TO APPROPRIATELY SIZE IT.

PARKS IN SLAVIC VILLAGE.

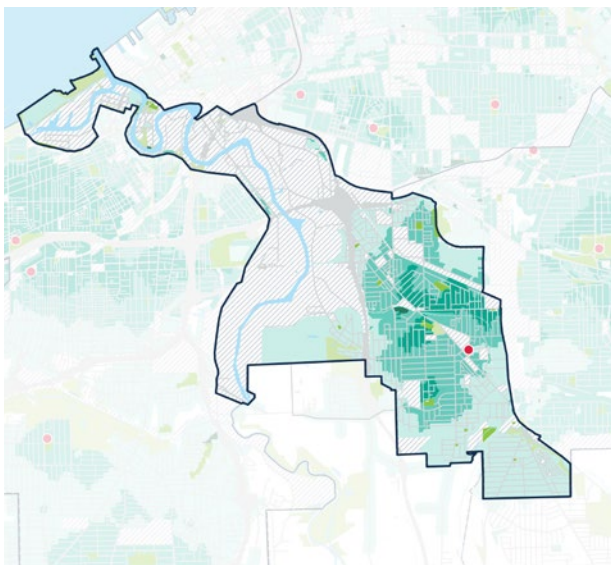
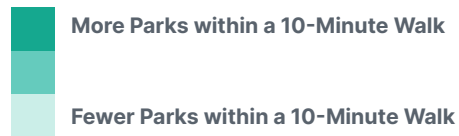
CONSIDERATIONS



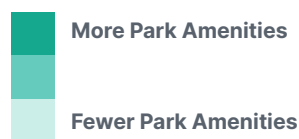
Park Acres per Capita



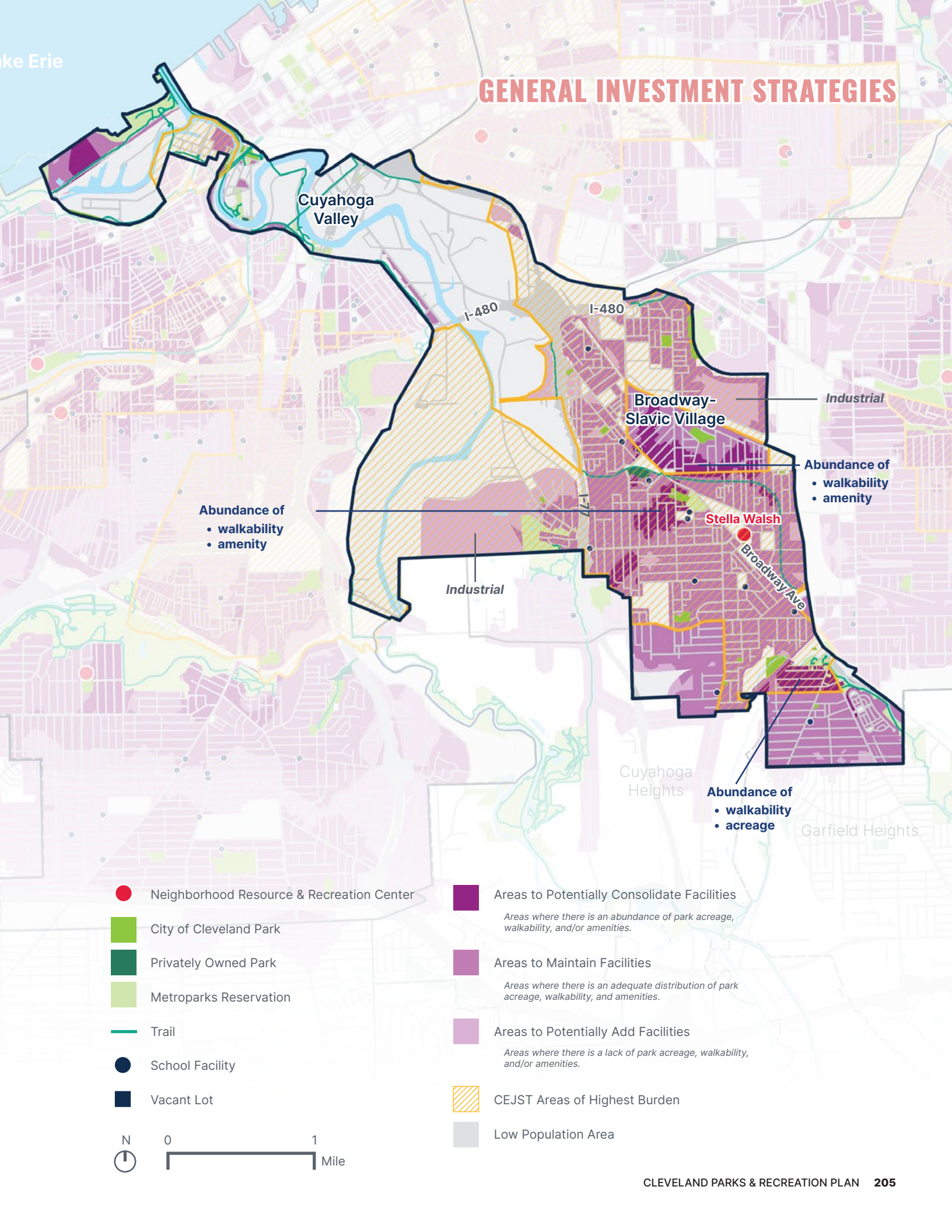
Number of Parks within a 10-Minute Walk



Number of Park Amenities



GENERAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES



Abundance of
 • walkability
 • amenity

Industrial
 Abundance of
 • walkability
 • amenity

Industrial

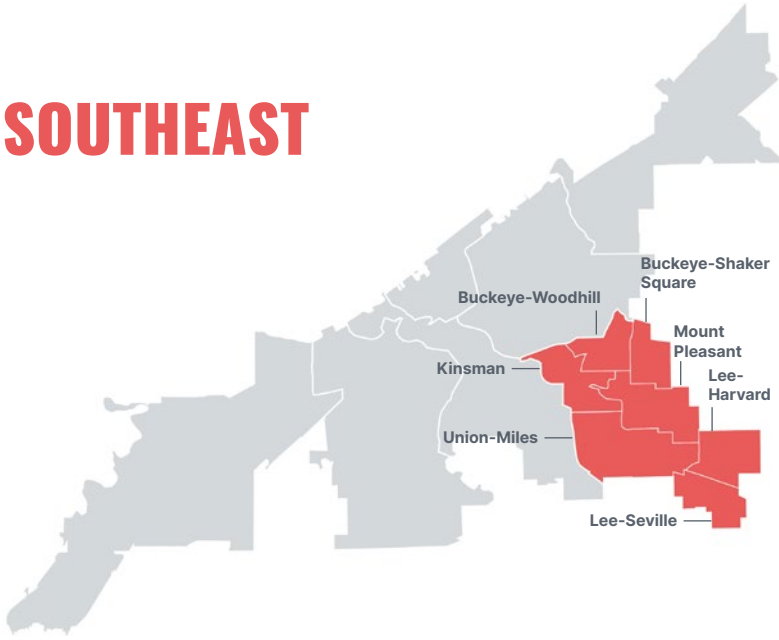
Abundance of
 • walkability
 • acreage

- Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Center
- City of Cleveland Park
- Privately Owned Park
- Metroparks Reservation
- Trail
- School Facility
- Vacant Lot

- Areas to Potentially Consolidate Facilities
Areas where there is an abundance of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.
- Areas to Maintain Facilities
Areas where there is an adequate distribution of park acreage, walkability, and amenities.
- Areas to Potentially Add Facilities
Areas where there is a lack of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.
- CEJST Areas of Highest Burden
- Low Population Area



SOUTHEAST



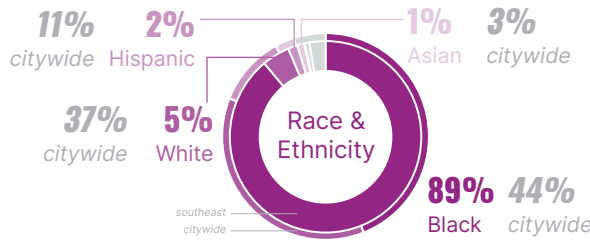
27 City Parks
5 Recreation Centers
363 Acres of Parkland

5,080
 vacant lots
 (15,141 citywide)

65,591
 residents
 (370,896 citywide)

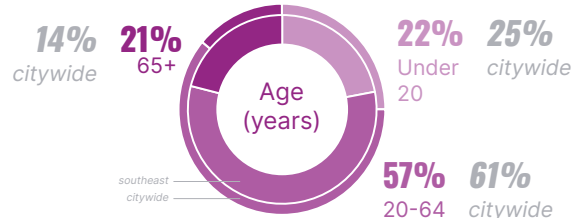
Includes wards:

6 | 5
4 | 2
1



\$43,520
 mean household income
 (\$49,375 city avg)

30%
 Income below poverty level
 (31% city avg)



Top Issues

SAFETY

MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES

STAFFING AND HOURS



Artha Woods Park

NEED FREQUENT POLICE PATROL.

– Zelma Watson George open house participant

MUST IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS, THE FACILITIES ARE IN HORRIBLE CONDITION.

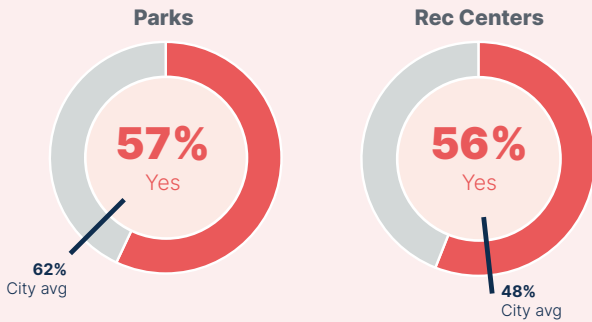
– Online survey participant

MORE STAFF, MY KIDS COULDN'T EVEN DO TEE BALL AND BASEBALL THIS SUMMER BECAUSE THE REC HAD NO STAFF. THAT WAS DISAPPOINTING.

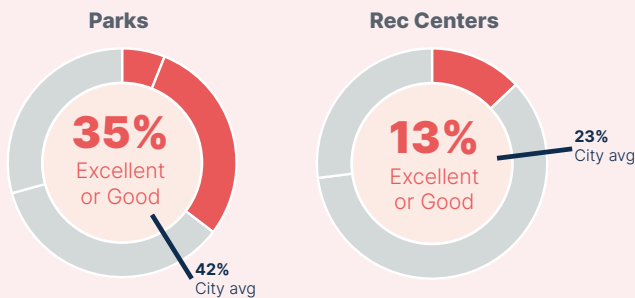
– Online survey participant

CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Southeast respondents **feel slightly worse** than the city as a whole with the **number of parks** within walking distance of their home, but **feel slightly better** with the **number of recreation centers**.



Southeast respondents **feel worse** than the city as a whole with the **physical condition of parks and recreation centers**.



Top three most important . . .

Outdoor Facilities

1. Paved, multi-use trails
2. Playgrounds
3. Unprogrammed green spaces

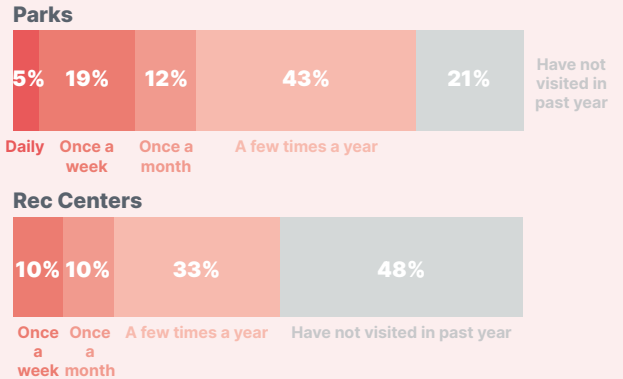
Indoor Facilities

1. Swimming pools
2. Lap pools
3. Walking/jogging track; Exercise & fitness equipment; Weight rooms/gyms; Space for meetings, etc

Programs

1. Mental health services
2. Aquatics; Seniors; Youth & family

Close to 1/4 of Southeast respondents visit a park at least once a week, with just **10%** visiting a recreation center that often.



Top three barriers to visiting parks and recreation centers more often in the Southeast:



Some of the Facilities that **Need Attention:**

ZELMA WATSON GEORGE REC CENTER.

ARTHA WOODS PARK, ESPECIALLY BASEBALL FIELD & JUNGLE GYM.

LUKE EASTER PARK, ESPECIALLY BASEBALL FIELDS AND TENNIS COURTS.

KOSSUTH PARK.

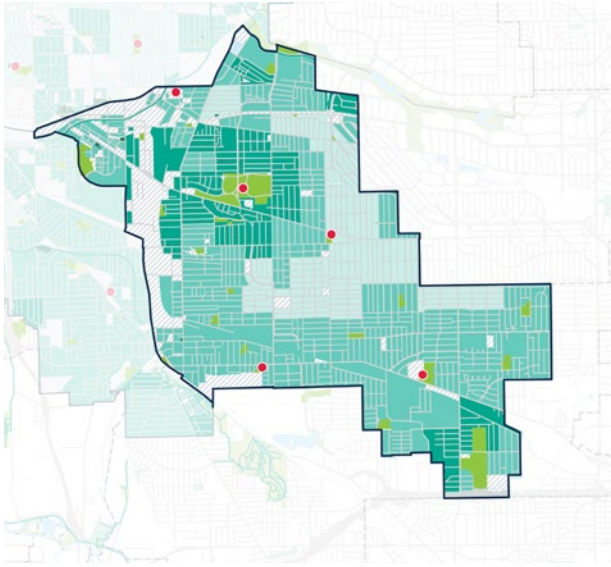
WOODLAND REC CENTER IS POORLY LOCATED. AN INDUSTRIAL NEIGHBORHOOD ON A ROAD WITH NO TRANSIT ACCESS.

ALEXANDER HAMILTON REC CENTER.

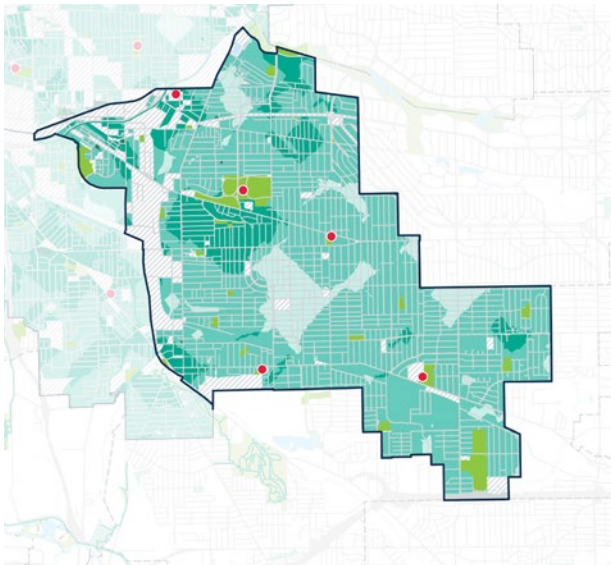
HELEN SIMPSON PARK.

EASTON PARK.

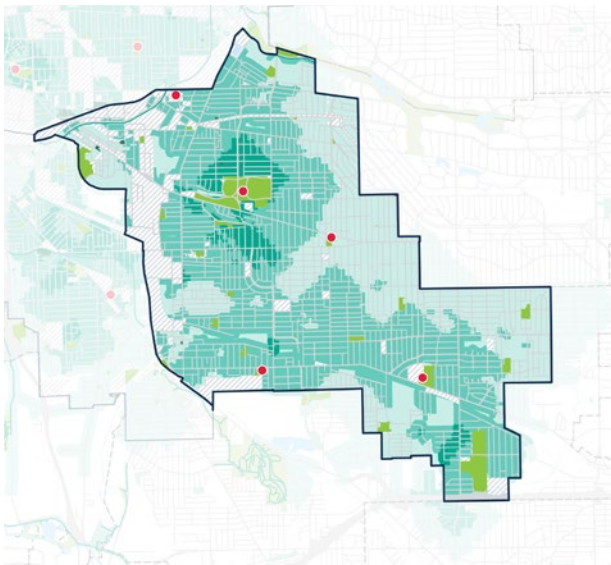
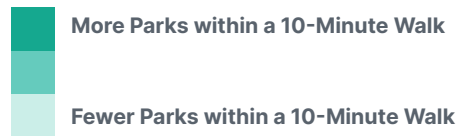
CONSIDERATIONS



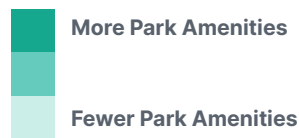
Park Acres per Capita



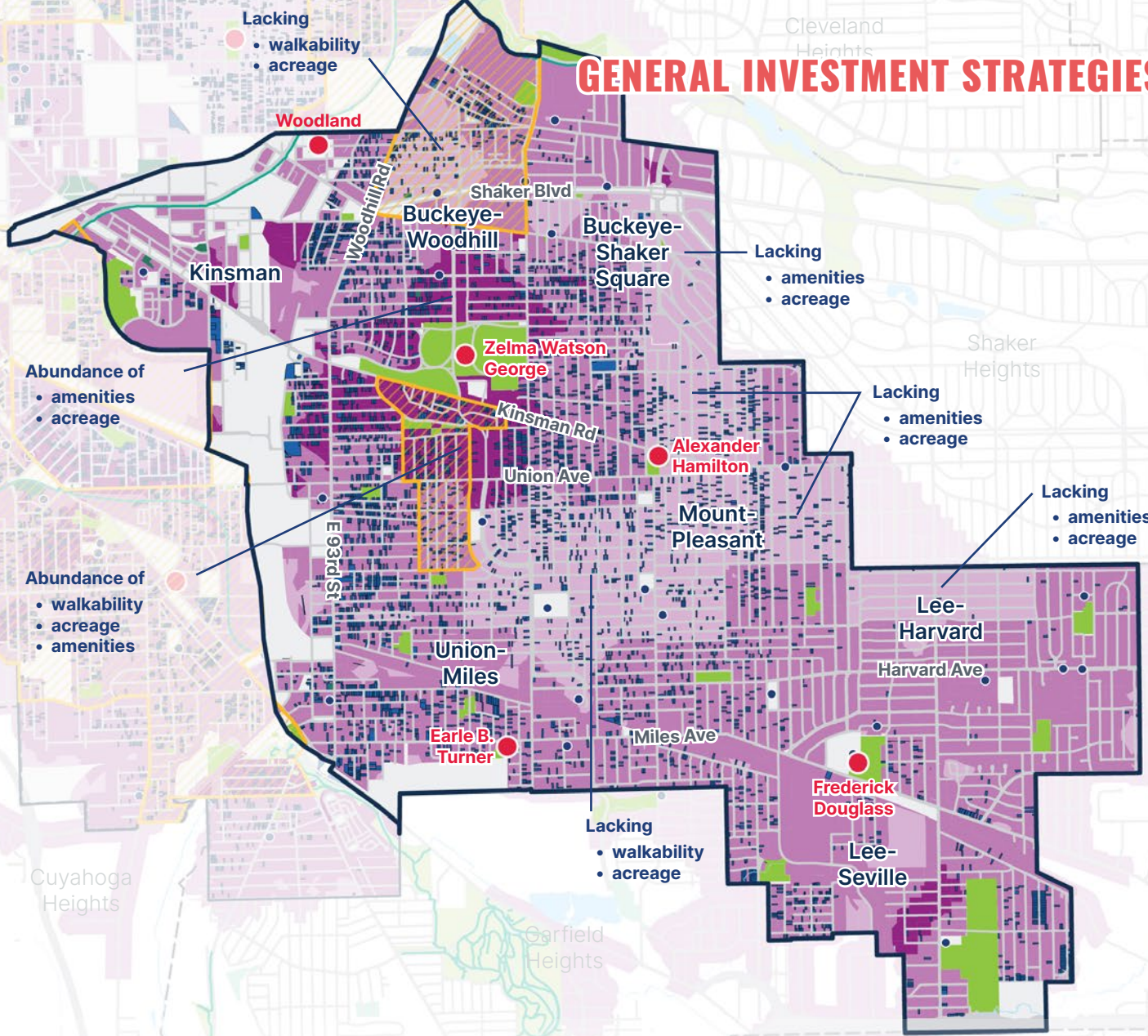
Number of Parks within a 10-Minute Walk



Number of Park Amenities



GENERAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES



Lacking
 • walkability
 • acreage

Lacking
 • amenities
 • acreage

Lacking
 • amenities
 • acreage

Lacking
 • amenities
 • acreage

Abundance of
 • amenities
 • acreage

Abundance of
 • walkability
 • acreage
 • amenities

Lacking
 • walkability
 • acreage

● Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Center

■ City of Cleveland Park

■ Privately Owned Park

■ Metroparks Reservation

— Trail

● School Facility

■ Vacant Lot



■ Areas to Potentially Consolidate Facilities

Areas where there is an abundance of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.

■ Areas to Maintain Facilities

Areas where there is an adequate distribution of park acreage, walkability, and amenities.

■ Areas to Potentially Add Facilities

Areas where there is a lack of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.

▨ CEJST Areas of Highest Burden

■ Low Population Area

DOWNTOWN



12 City Parks
0 Recreation Centers
33 Acres of Parkland

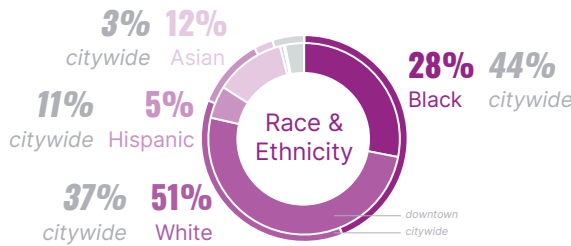
2 vacant lots
 (15,141 citywide)

12,797 residents
 (370,896 citywide)

Includes wards:

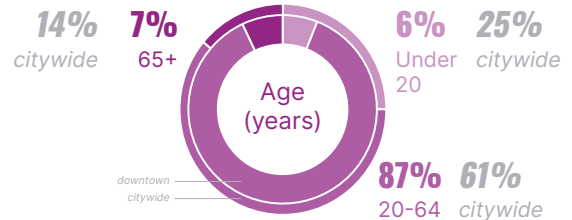
7 | 5

3



\$84,044
 mean household income
 (\$49,375 city avg)

31%
 Income below poverty level
 (31% city avg)

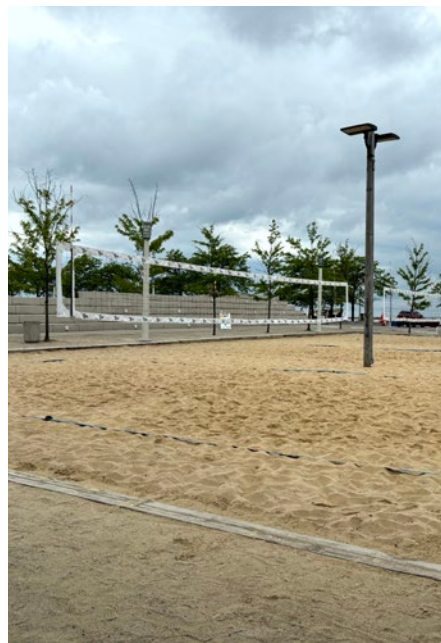


Top Issues

PROGRAMMING

DESIGN

NATURE AND GREEN SPACE



Voinovich Bicentennial Park

NOT ENOUGH "ACTIVITY" PARKS WALKABLE IN DOWNTOWN CLEVELAND. WE HAVE NO WALKABLE TENNIS, BASKETBALL, OR BASEBALL COURTS FOR CITY RESIDENTS.

– Online survey participant

BLEND PARKS AND RECREATION INTO CITY FABRIC MORE BY MAKING PARKS AND RECREATION NOT JUST A DESTINATION, BUT ALSO SOMETHING THAT PEOPLE EXPERIENCE IN THEIR DAY TO DAY COMMUTE.

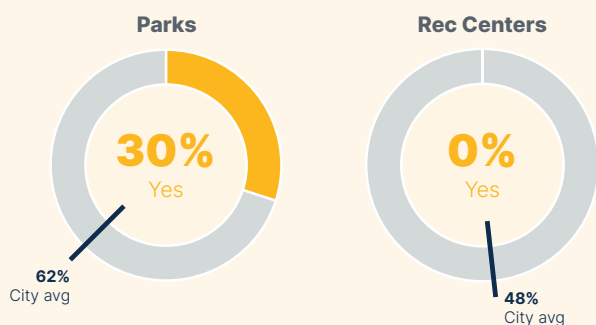
– Online survey participant

PLANT MORE TREES. TAKE CARE OF LANDSCAPING.

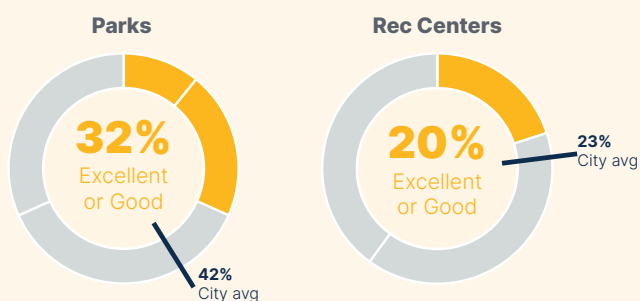
– Online survey participant

CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Downtown respondents **feel significantly worse** than the city as a whole with the **number of parks and recreation centers** within walking distance of their home.



Downtown respondents **feel slightly worse** than the city as a whole with the **physical condition of parks and recreation centers**.



Top three most important . . .

Outdoor Facilities

1. Unprogrammed green spaces
2. Paved, multi-use trails
3. Non-paved, multi-use trails; Natural areas & wildlife habitats; Downtown park spaces/hard plazas

Indoor Facilities

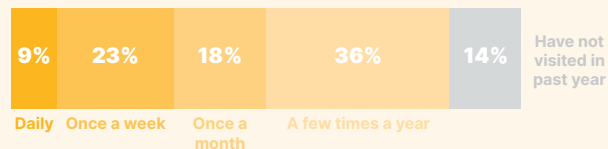
1. Swimming pools; Walking/jogging track; Weight rooms/gyms

Programs

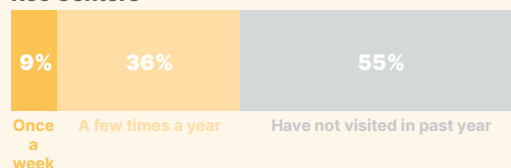
1. Recreation (organized & drop-in)
3. Arts & crafts classes; Special events & festivals

Over 30% of Downtown respondents visit a park at least once a week, while only **9%** visit a recreation center that often.

Parks



Rec Centers



Top three barriers to visiting parks and recreation centers more often in Downtown:

- 54%** Poor/uncomfortable atmosphere
- 54%** Do not know where to go/what is offered
- 46%** Facilities are not well-maintained

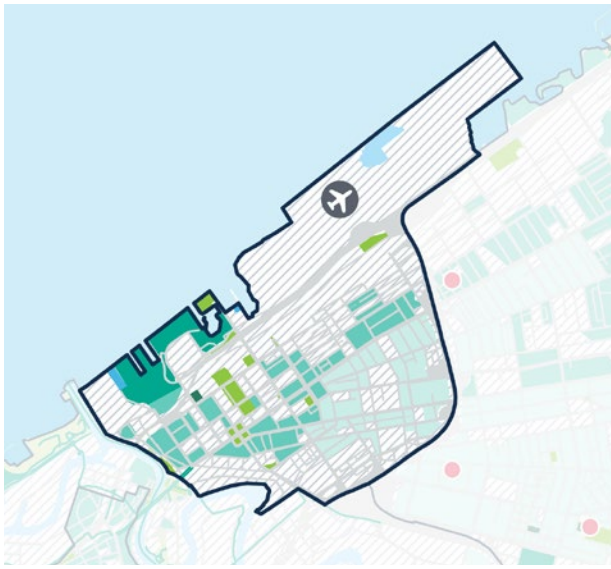
Some of the Facilities that **Need Attention:**

THE HAROLD T. CLARK TENNIS COURTS. MORE PEOPLE WOULD USE THIS AREA IF THE COURTS WERE MAINTAINED. LIVING DOWNTOWN, WE HAVE NO WALKABLE COURTS.

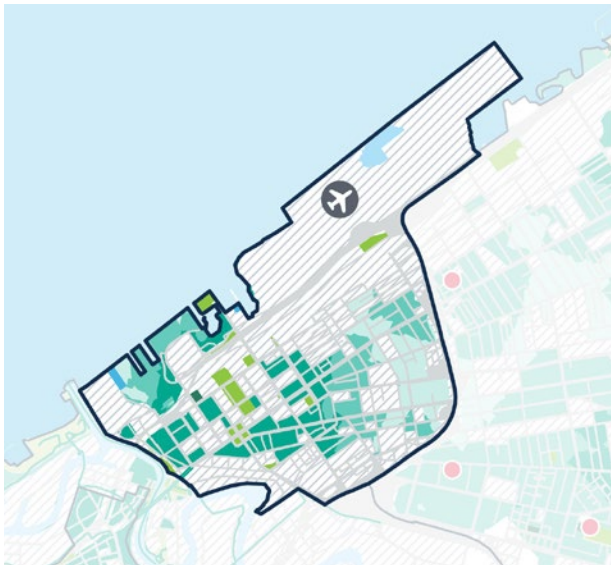
PUBLIC SQUARE. NO MAINTENANCE IS DONE WHATSOEVER, IT IS OVERGROWN LIKE CRAZY.

MALL LAWNS.

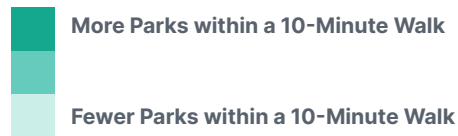
CONSIDERATIONS



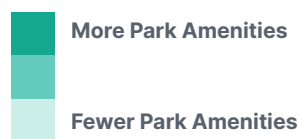
Park Acres per Capita



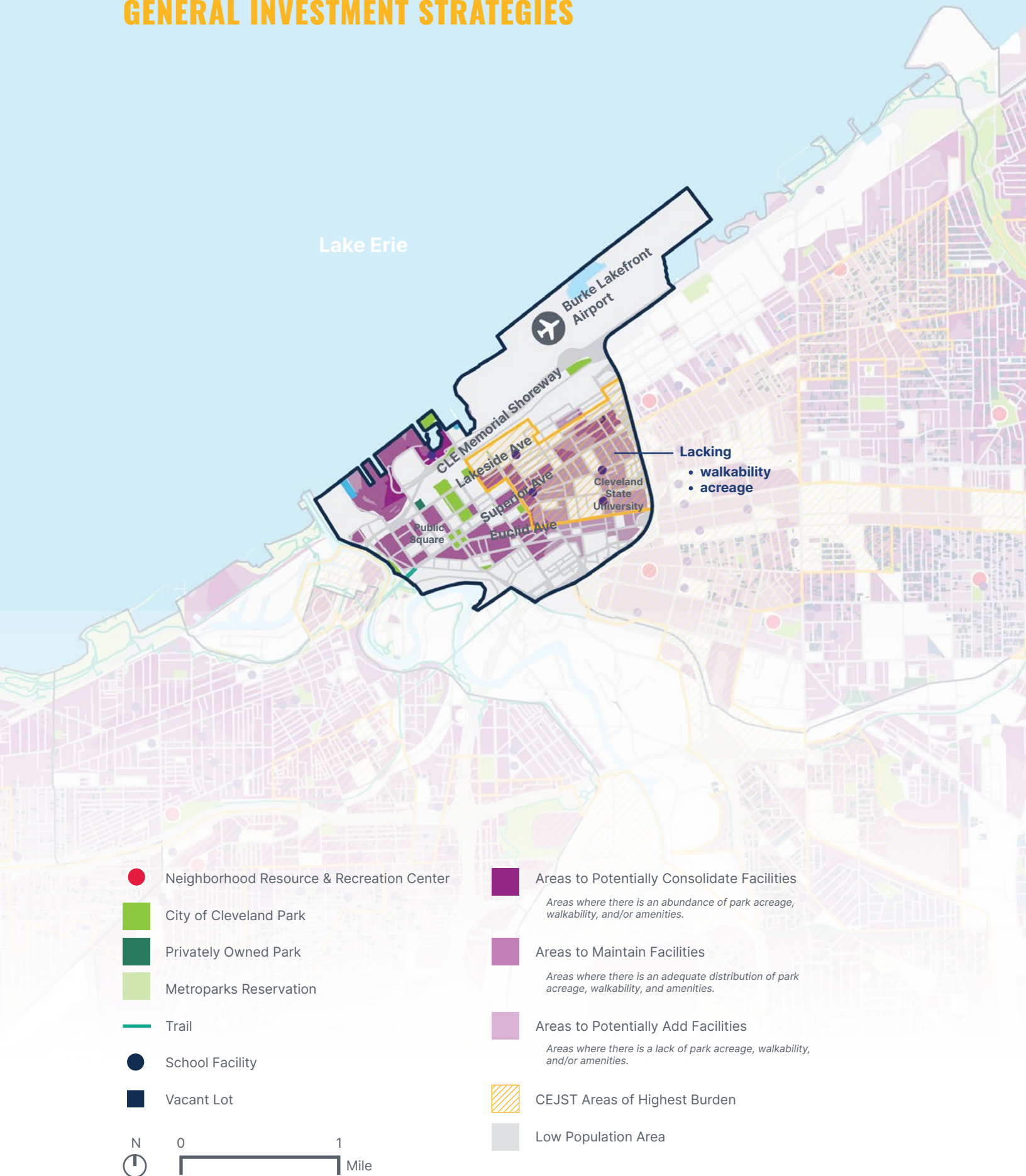
Number of Parks within a 10-Minute Walk



Number of Park Amenities



GENERAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES



Lake Erie

Burke Lakefront Airport

CLE Memorial Shoreway

Lakeside Ave

Superior Ave

Euclid Ave

Public Square

Cleveland State University

Lacking
 • walkability
 • acreage

- Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Center
- City of Cleveland Park
- Privately Owned Park
- Metroparks Reservation
- Trail
- School Facility
- Vacant Lot

- Areas to Potentially Consolidate Facilities
Areas where there is an abundance of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.
- Areas to Maintain Facilities
Areas where there is an adequate distribution of park acreage, walkability, and amenities.
- Areas to Potentially Add Facilities
Areas where there is a lack of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.
- CEJST Areas of Highest Burden
- Low Population Area



NEAR EAST

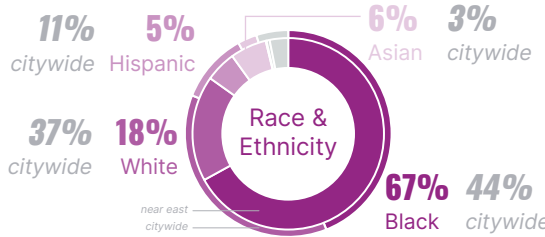


32 City Parks
6 Recreation Centers
351 Acres of Parkland

3,619 vacant lots
 (15,141 citywide)
43,795 residents
 (370,896 citywide)

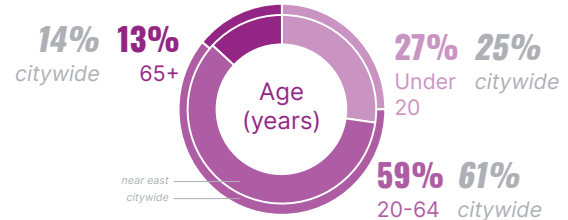
Includes wards:

10 | 9
7 | 6
5 | 3



\$36,551
 mean household income
 (\$49,375 city avg)

49%
 Income below poverty level
 (31% city avg)

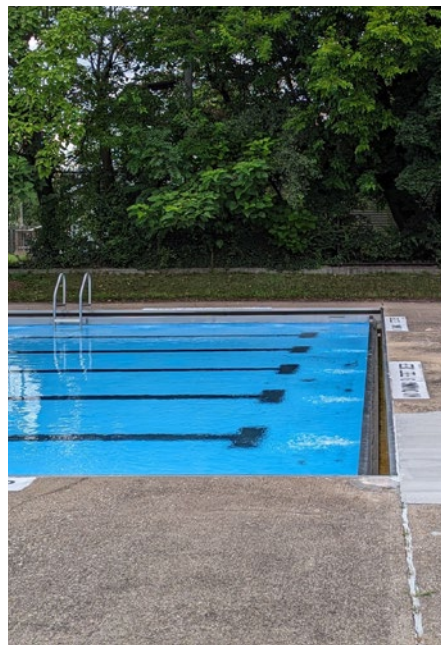


Top Issues

MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES

DESIGN

PROGRAMMING



James Bell Pool

FUNDING EVERYDAY MAINTENANCE, UPKEEP, AND REPLACEMENT OF WORN EQUIPMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS.

– Online survey participant

TAKING THE BEAUTY OF THE PARKS THEY CREATE INTO CONSIDERATION. PROVIDING THE COMMUNITY WITH BEAUTIFUL SPACES THROUGHOUT THE CITY TO FIND RESPITE CAN DO WONDERS FOR MENTAL HEALTH.

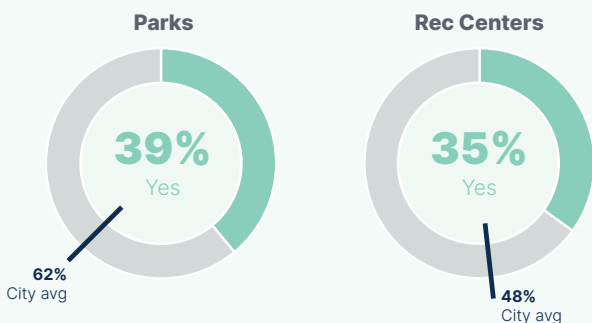
– Online survey participant

MORE PROGRAMMING AND RECREATION LEAGUES TO MAKES PARKS FEEL LIKE SAFE, ENGAGING COMMUNITY SPACES.

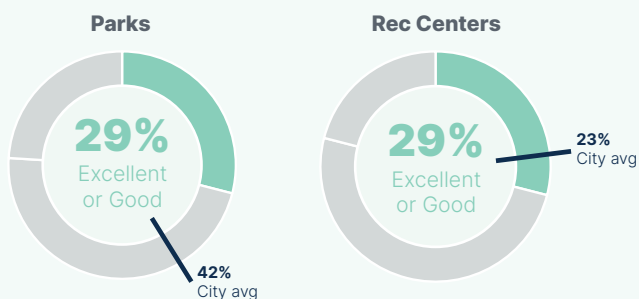
– Online survey participant

CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Near East respondents **feel worse** than the city as a whole with the **number of parks and recreation centers** within walking distance of their home.



Near East respondents **feel worse** than the city as a whole with the **physical condition of parks**, but **slightly better** about **recreation center** conditions.



Top three most important . . .

Outdoor Facilities

- Swimming pools; Water play features
- Unprogrammed green spaces

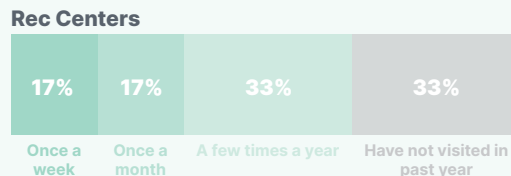
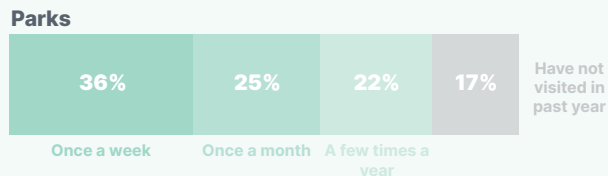
Indoor Facilities

- Exercise & fitness equipment
- Swimming pools
- Walking/jogging track

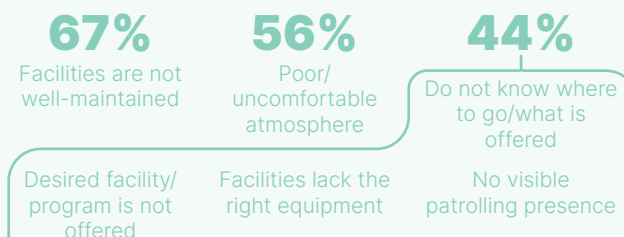
Programs

- Seniors
- Public health services
- Mental health services

Over 1/3 of Near East respondents visit a park at least once a week, while less than **20%** visit a recreation center that often.



Top three barriers to visiting parks and recreation centers more often in the Near East:



Some of the Facilities that **Need Attention:**

KIRTLAND PARK. IT'S ISOLATED FROM CITY MAKING IS DIFFICULT TO GET TO, AND IT IS LOUD NEXT TO THE HIGHWAY MAKING IT UNCOMFORTABLE AND STRESSFUL.

SPENCER AVE. & E. 53RD ST. MINI PARK IS IN UNBELIEVABLE DISREPAIR.

LONNIE BURTEN PARK & REC CENTER.

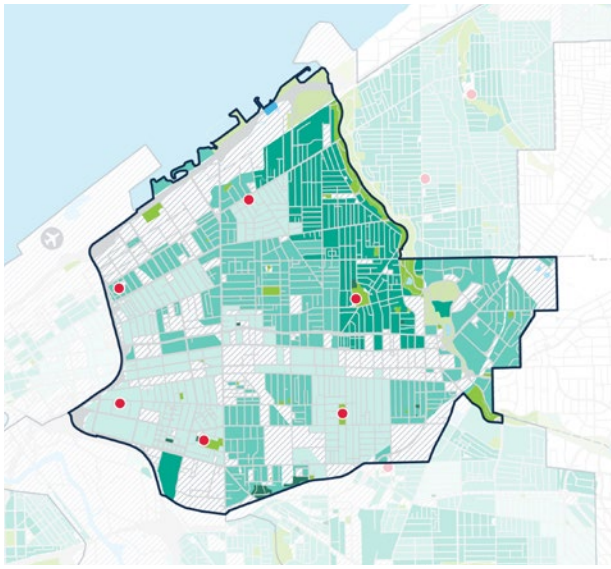
STERLING REC CENTER.

FAIRFAX REC CENTER.

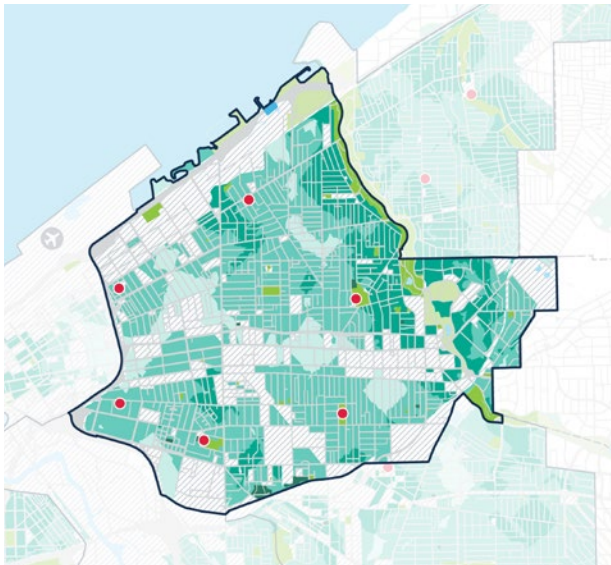
THURGOOD MARSHALL REC CENTER COULD USE A LOT OF HELP ON THE INSIDE.

LEAGUE PARK.

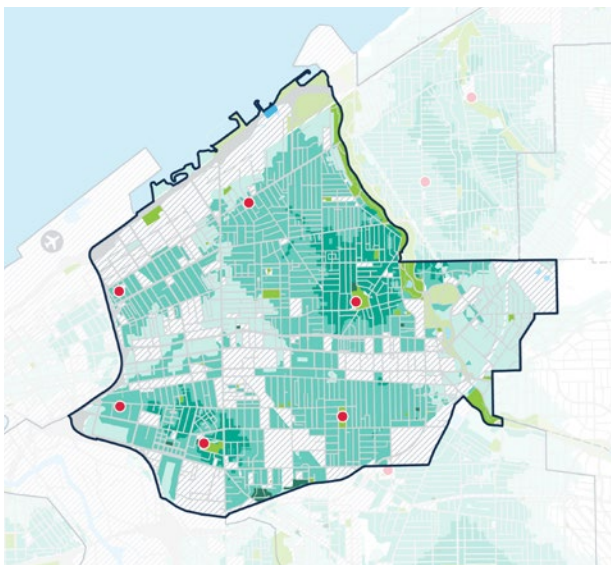
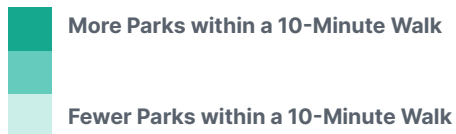
CONSIDERATIONS



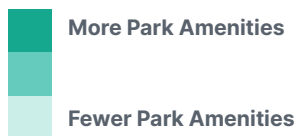
Park Acres per Capita



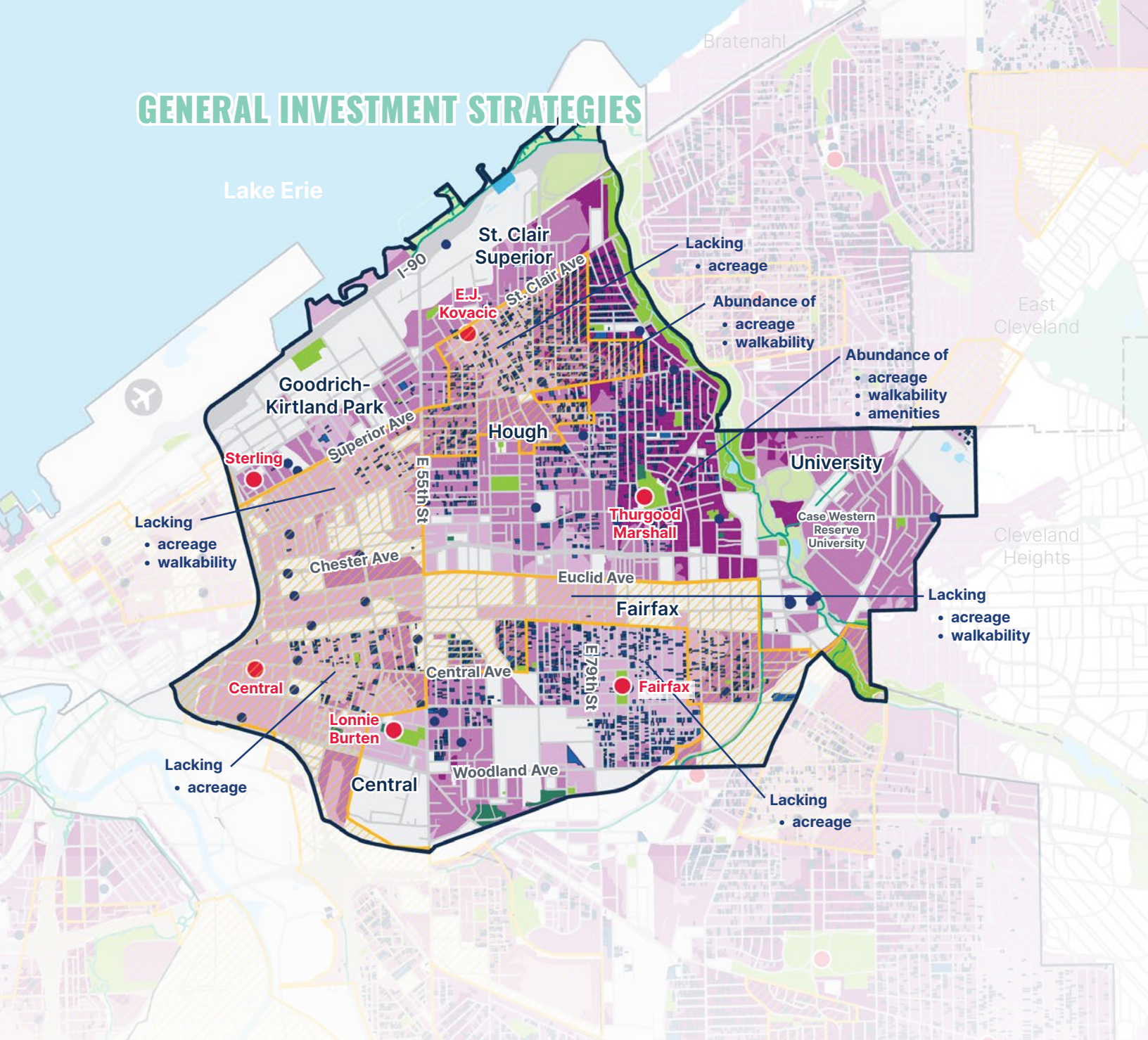
Number of Parks within a 10-Minute Walk



Number of Park Amenities



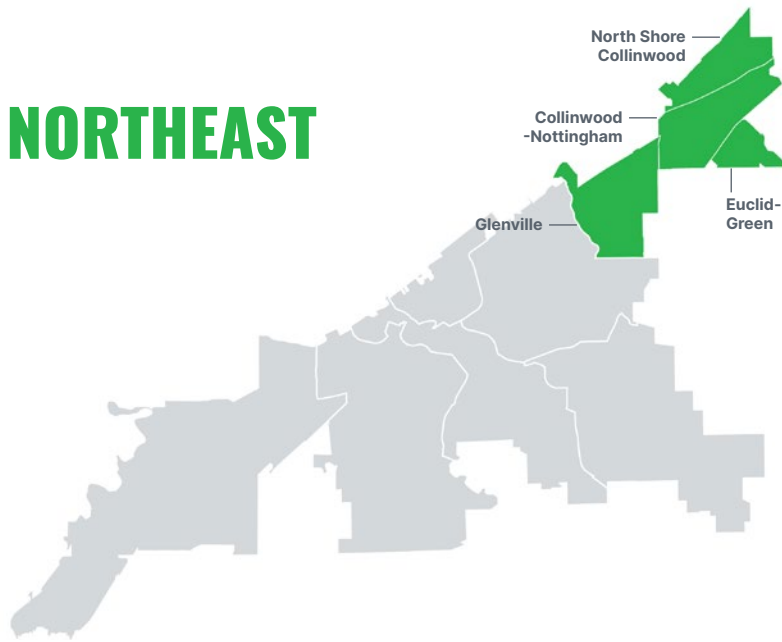
GENERAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES



- Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Center
- City of Cleveland Park
- Privately Owned Park
- Metroparks Reservation
- Trail
- School Facility
- Vacant Lot
- Areas to Potentially Consolidate Facilities
Areas where there is an abundance of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.
- Areas to Maintain Facilities
Areas where there is an adequate distribution of park acreage, walkability, and amenities.
- Areas to Potentially Add Facilities
Areas where there is a lack of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.
- CEJST Areas of Highest Burden
- Low Population Area



NORTHEAST



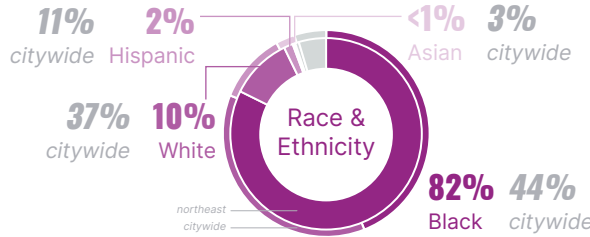
26 City Parks
3 Recreation Centers
393 Acres of Parkland

3,489 vacant lots
 (15,141 citywide)
52,719 residents
 (370,896 citywide)

Includes wards:

10 | 9

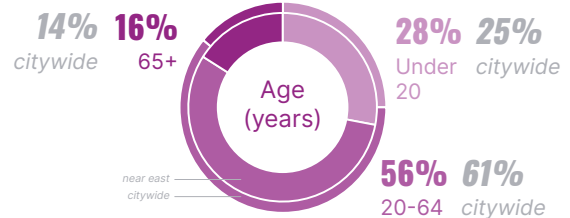
8



\$38,348

mean household income
 (\$49,375 city avg)

34%
 Income below poverty level
 (31% city avg)



Top Issues

STAFFING AND HOURS

DESIGN

MAINTENANCE AND UPDATES



Endora Park

THE LETHARGIC ATTITUDE OF STAFF IS NOT WELCOMING.

– Online survey participant

SEEING COLLINWOOD CLOSED ON SATURDAY AND SUNDAY MAKES NO SENSE.

– Online survey participant

PARKS NEED ELECTRICAL OUTLETS, WATER SOURCES, LIGHTING, SHADE, INFORMATION KIOSKS.

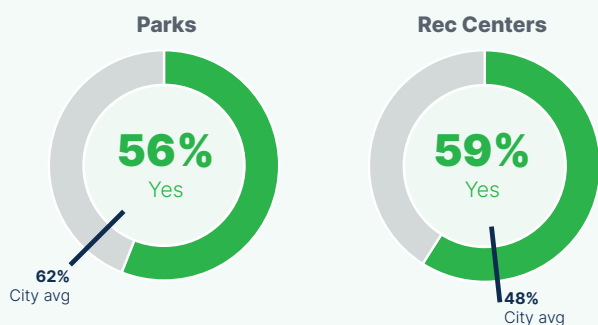
– Online survey participant

CLEANLINESS.

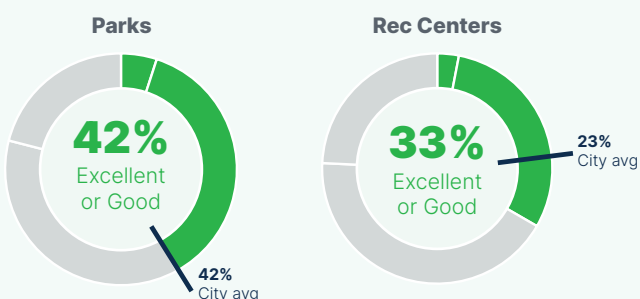
– Online survey participant

CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Northeast respondents **feel slightly worse** than the city as a whole with the **number of parks** within walking distance of their home and **better** with the number of **recreation centers**.



Northeast respondents **feel similarly** as the city as a whole with the **physical condition of parks**, and **better** about **recreation center** conditions.



Top three most important . . .

Outdoor Facilities

1. Swimming pools; Playgrounds
3. Paved, multi-use trails

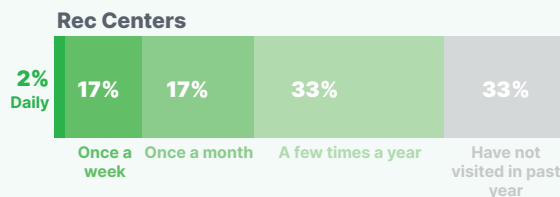
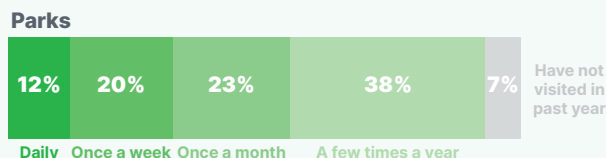
Indoor Facilities

1. Swimming pools; Walking/jogging track
3. Exercise & fitness equipment; Makerspaces

Programs

1. Seniors
2. Aquatics
3. Fitness/wellness programs; Arts & crafts classes

Nearly **1/3** of Northeast respondents visit a park at least once a week, while less than **20%** visit a recreation center that often.



Top three barriers to visiting parks and recreation centers more often in the Northeast:

- 46%** Facilities are not well-maintained
- 44%** Do not know where to go/what is offered
- 39%** Facilities lack the right equipment

Some of the Facilities that **Need Attention:**

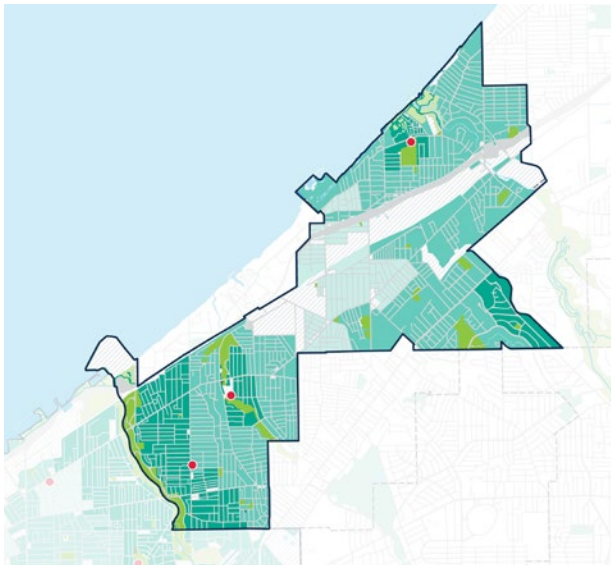
THE WALKING PATHS AROUND ROCKEFELLER PARK AND CULTURAL GARDENS ARE IN VERY POOR CONDITION AND ARE OFTEN COVERED IN DEBRIS.

GLENVILLE REC CENTER.

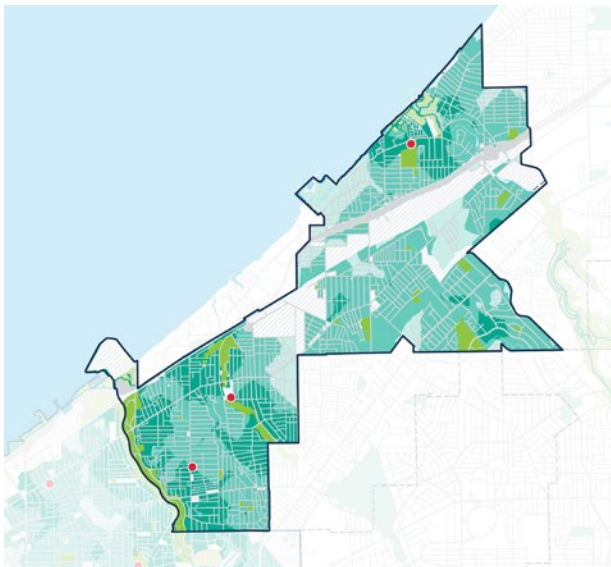
COLLINWOOD REC COULD BE SO EASILY REHABBED WITH MINIMAL EFFORT AND GET BACK TO THE FULL USE IT WAS MEANT FOR.

COLLINWOOD OFTEN LACKS THE LIFEGUARDS TO OPEN ITS POOL.

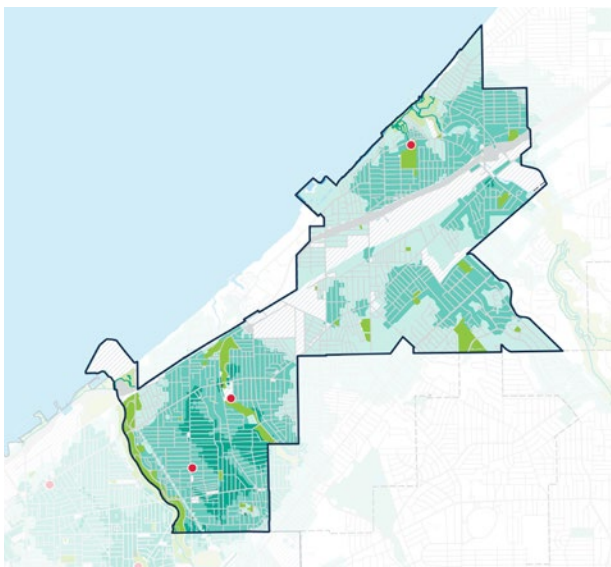
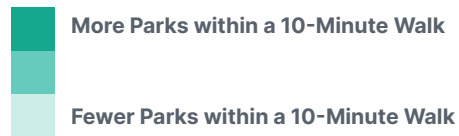
CONSIDERATIONS



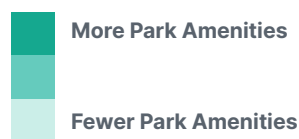
Park Acres per Capita



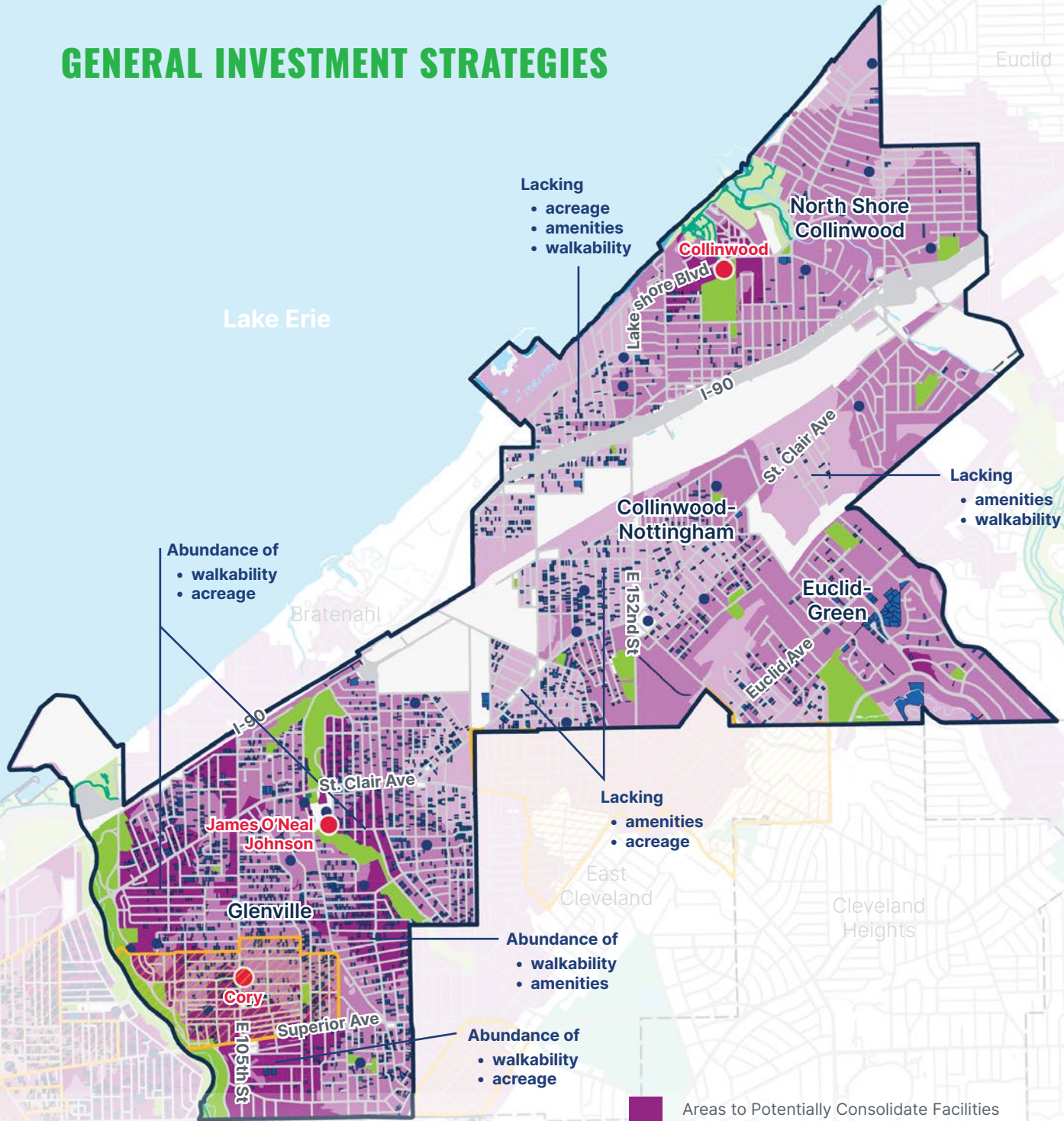
Number of Parks within a 10-Minute Walk



Number of Park Amenities



GENERAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES



- Neighborhood Resource & Recreation Center
- City of Cleveland Park
- Privately Owned Park
- Metroparks Reservation
- Trail
- School Facility
- Vacant Lot

- Areas to Potentially Consolidate Facilities
Areas where there is an abundance of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.
- Areas to Maintain Facilities
Areas where there is an adequate distribution of park acreage, walkability, and amenities.
- Areas to Potentially Add Facilities
Areas where there is a lack of park acreage, walkability, and/or amenities.
- CEJST Areas of Highest Burden
- Low Population Area



CAPITAL LIFE CYCLE

Capital facilities, including parks and recreation facilities, go through various phases of a life cycle. New parks and facilities are planned, built, and operated. Periodically, they must be evaluated to ensure that they are still serving their intended purpose and to determine whether they need updating to meet the changing needs of the community.

CAPITAL FACILITY PHASES

Acquire & Framework Plan

The City acquires and assembles the land, and prepares a framework plan that sets site-specific goals, outlines intended site usage and amenities, and includes a sketch layout.

Master Plan

The master planning process should include community engagement to ensure the site layout and facilities meet the parks and recreation needs of the community.

Design

Following a master plan, the City develops construction drawings for needed onsite and offsite improvements. These improvements may include water delivery systems, utility infrastructure improvements, and stormwater enhancements, in addition to development of park amenities, plantings, and structures.

Build

The City secures a contractor or contractors needed to build the park through a traditional bid process. The City works with the contractor throughout the construction process to complete the project.

Operate

The City operates the park or facility with staff to support residents' ongoing use.

Evaluate

Periodically, the City evaluates whether a park or facility is still serving its intended purpose. If not, improvements may be needed. The criteria on the following pages are used to evaluate the park or facility.

Evaluation Criteria

Design Guidelines

Does the park meet the design guidelines identified in this plan?

Design Quality

Is the design and layout of the park still relevant?

Amenity Availability

Does the park have the amenities that are appropriate for its classification?

Amenity Condition

What condition are its amenities in?

Community Priorities

Does the park have the amenities that were identified as priorities in the statistically valid survey?

Usage

How well used is the park? Is it overused? Underused?

More or less parks and facilities may be needed to **address overall level of service needs**, as described in the General Investment Strategies section of this plan (See p. 188.).

SITE INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

Maintain

The park or facility is maintained to keep it in a good state of repair.

Life Cycle Replacement

A particular amenity, or a few amenities, have reached the end of their usable life, where they can no longer effectively be maintained, and are replaced in kind—though potentially with updated versions.

Minor Refresh

The current site master plan is still valid, but there are unmet community needs, the site is underused, a few amenities have reached the end of their usable life, plantings need to be refreshed, or elements of the design or function need to be rethought, requiring new design thinking.

Moderate Refresh

Parts of the master plan are still valid, but some structural or site layout changes may be necessary to meet community needs or design guidelines.

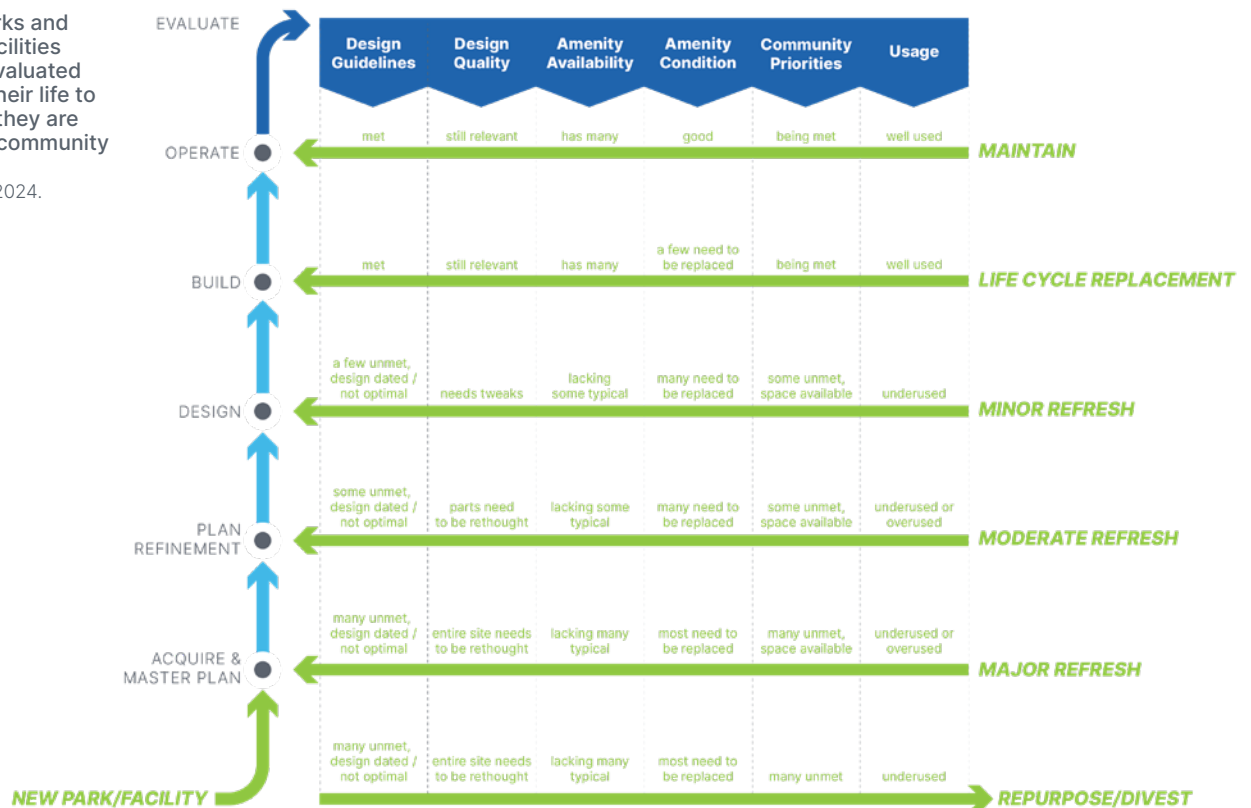
Major Refresh

Enough community needs are unmet, the site is underused or overused, enough amenities have reached the end of their usable life, plantings need to be refreshed, and the design direction from the site master plan is no longer valid. A new framework plan and master plan are needed.

Repurpose/Divest

When a park or facility is no longer serving its intended purpose and community needs are being met elsewhere, it may not be worth continued investment as a park and may be more suitable for another purpose.

Figure 17. Parks and recreation facilities need to be evaluated throughout their life to determine if they are still meeting community needs.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



EQUITY-BASED PARK PRIORITIZATION STRATEGY

In an effort to move beyond the City’s current condition-based strategy for prioritizing capital investments, this Plan proposes a strategy that centers plan priorities, equity, and citywide priorities. This strategy is meant to ensure that investments have a greater impact.

The park prioritization strategy uses nine criteria to ensure that capital investments are targeted first in the parks and communities where they are needed the most. The criteria should be reviewed periodically to adapt to changing neighborhood demographics, investments, and city priorities.

PARK AND RECREATION PLAN PRIORITIES

The following four criteria are identified within this plan.

Site Investment Strategy

Following the city’s site evaluations, each park receives a score based on design,

amenity conditions, community priorities and usage. Parks potentially needing more investment are scored higher than those that potentially need less. Previously, this was the only criteria used for prioritization.

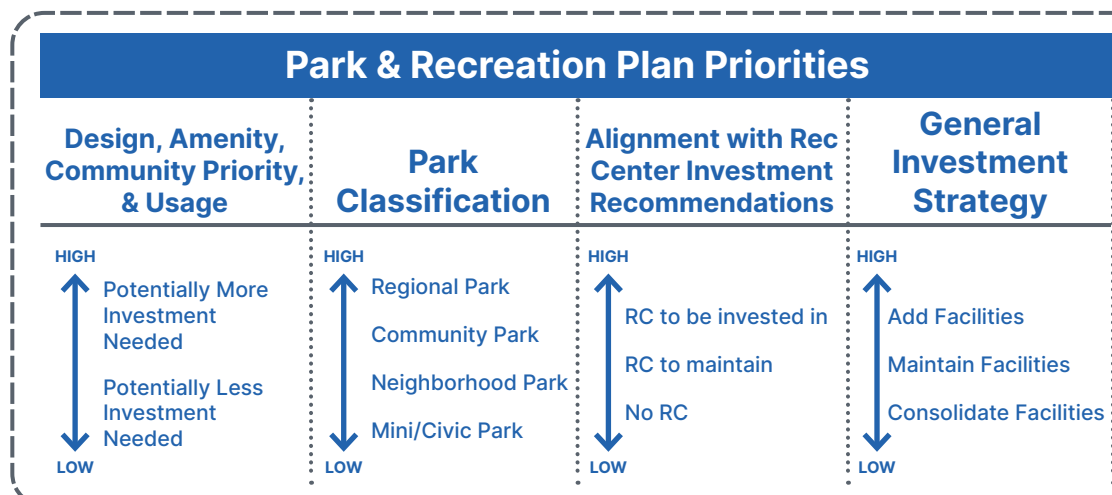
Park Classification

Regional parks are crucial destinations in Cleveland’s park system, offering many amenities, programs, and access to green space. Because of this, regional parks receive a higher score than mini parks.

Alignment with Recreation Center Investment Recommendations

If a park has a recreation center identified for investment, it receives a higher score.

Each park is scored on these nine criteria and ranked for prioritization!



General Investment Strategy

This plan identifies three areas in the general investment strategy. Parks in the 'areas to potentially add facilities' receive a higher score.

EQUITY

The following criteria center racial and economic equity.

Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)

Areas burdened in at least six of the eight categories are prioritized in this plan for investments.

Expenditures Since 2013

Measuring previous investments in existing park assets is an important way to identify parks that have historically received lower levels of investment. These parks are much more likely to be due for significant reinvestment.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER CITY PRIORITIES

These criteria may vary by administration, but are helpful to advance projects and priorities across Cleveland.

Crime

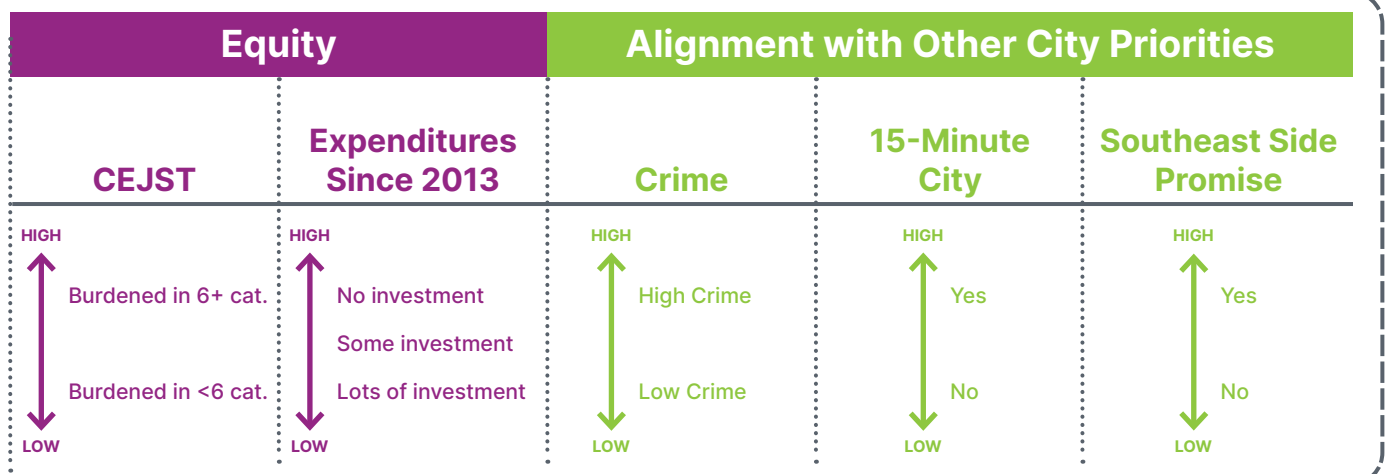
Parks in areas with high crime are prioritized for additional investments.

15-Minute City

A priority of the City Planning Commission, areas with a high index rating receive a higher score than areas with a lower index rating.

Southeast Side Promise

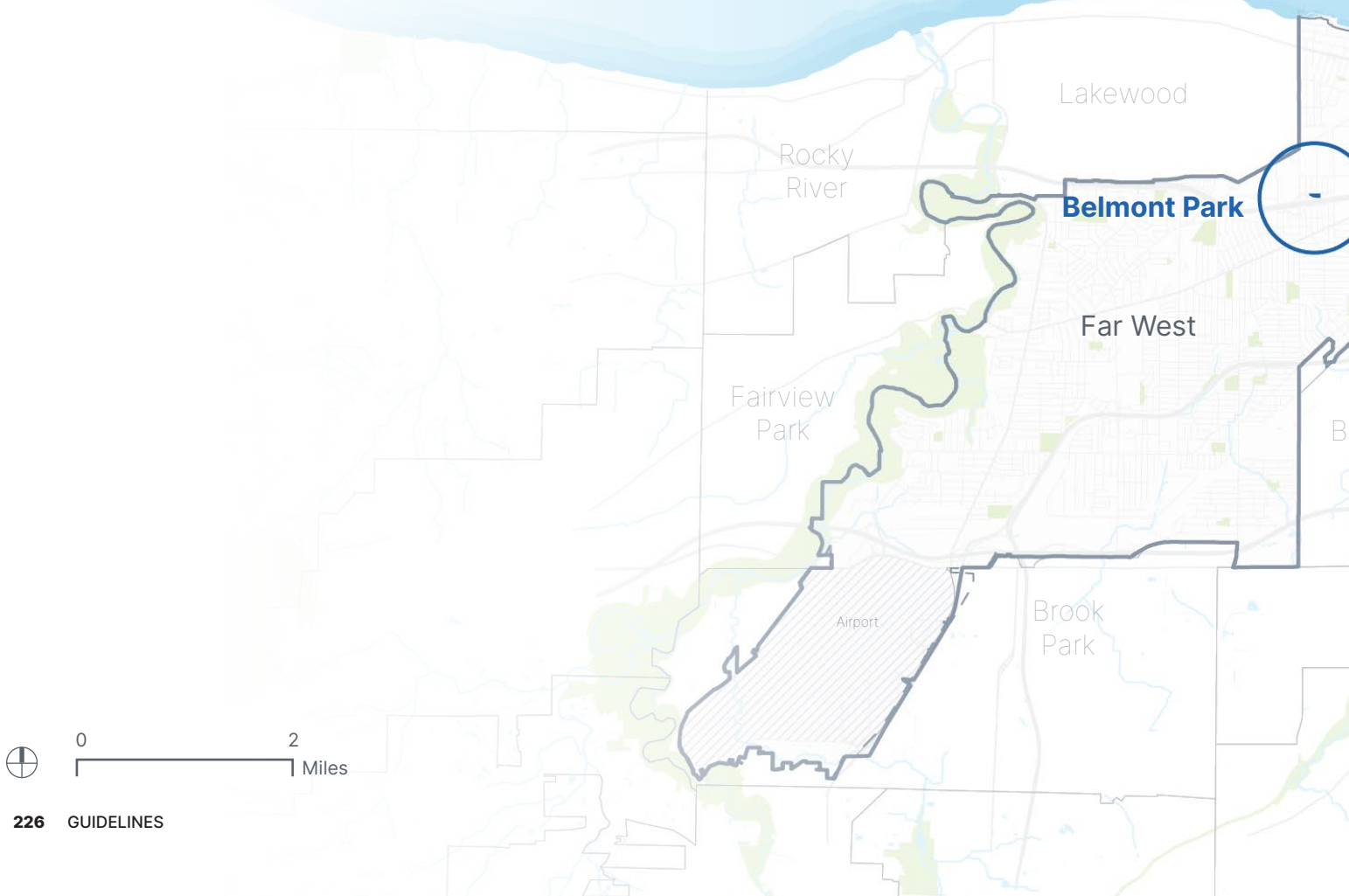
A priority of Mayor Justin M. Bibb to address the issue of concentrated disinvestment in the neighborhoods of Cleveland's southeast side. Parks in this area are prioritized for investments.

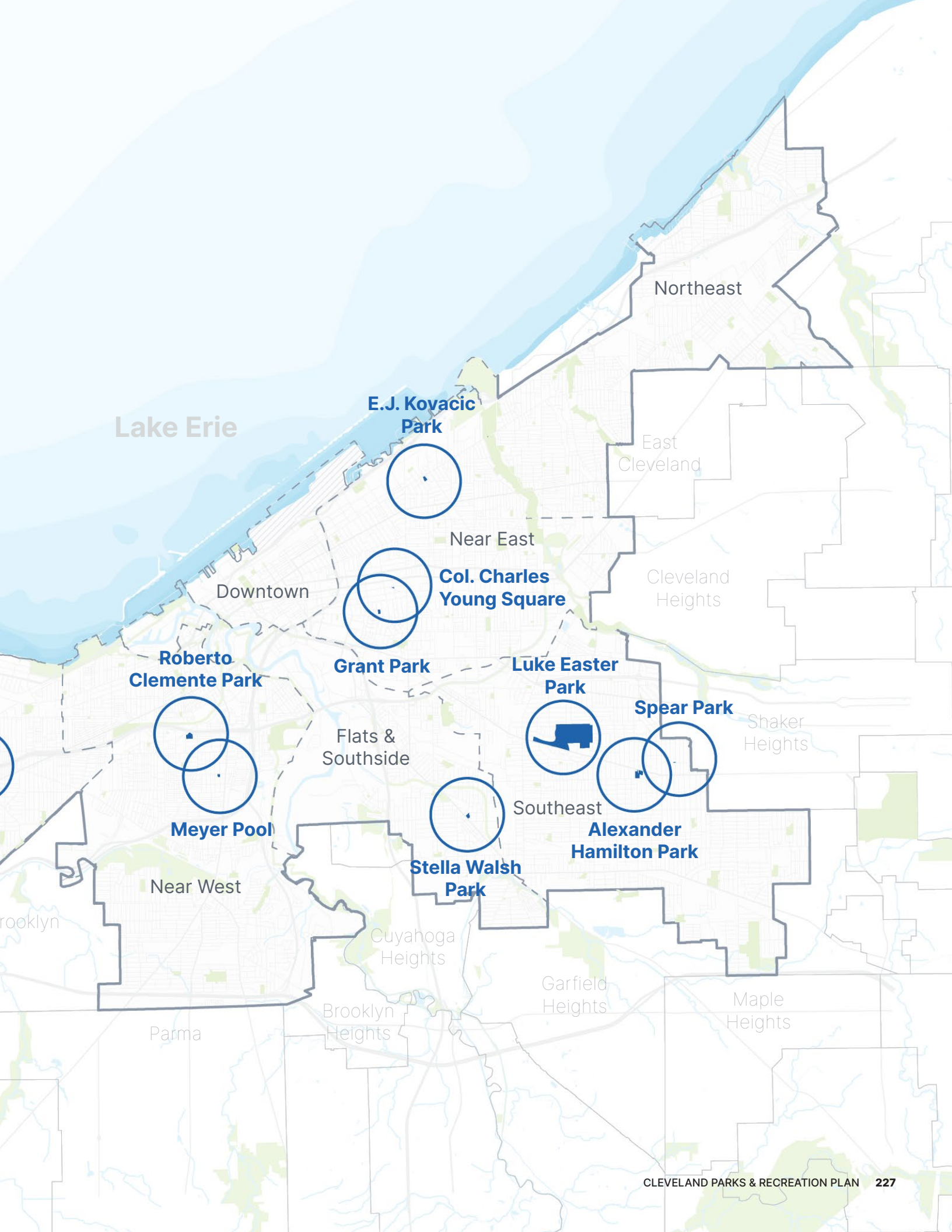


Park Prioritization Strategy

	Classification	Planning Region	
1	Alexander Hamilton Park	Neighborhood Park	Southeast
2	Stella Walsh Park	Neighborhood Park	Flats & Southside
3	Spear Park	Mini Park	Southeast
4	Grant Park	Neighborhood Park	Near East
4	Meyer Pool	Neighborhood Park	Near West
6	Luke Easter Park	Regional Park	Southeast
7	Belmont Park	Neighborhood Park	Far West
7	Col. Charles Young Square	Civic Space	Near East
7	E.J. Kovacic Park	Neighborhood Park	Near East
7	Roberto Clemente Park	Community Park	Near West

Top 10





Lake Erie

Northeast

E.J. Kovacic Park

East Cleveland

Near East

Col. Charles Young Square

Cleveland Heights

Downtown

Grant Park

Luke Easter Park

Roberto Clemente Park

Spear Park

Flats & Southside

Shaker Heights

Southeast

Meyer Pool

Alexander Hamilton Park

Stella Walsh Park

Near West

Brooklyn

Cuyahoga Heights

Garfield Heights

Maple Heights

Parma

Brooklyn Heights

RECREATION FACILITY PRIORITIZATION STRATEGY

With 22 recreation centers & special facilities, Cleveland needs an approach for prioritizing investments in these critical resource hubs. These recommendations are designed to be implemented over a 20-year period through an intentional phased plan.

The phased approach is designed in 5-year increments to transition the city's recreation centers and special facilities into modern, quality recreation facilities to serve the residents of Cleveland.

These overall recommendations and the phasing plan can only be accomplished with adequate funding for planning, capital investments, and ongoing operation, maintenance, and programming. If adequate funds are not available to cover all these costs, not just the capital costs, the City should look at further reducing the number of centers and special facilities it invests in and operates to ensure quality facilities and quality programs are provided. If reductions in centers and special facilities is necessitated, the City of Cleveland should prioritize investments in and operation of facilities to ensure:

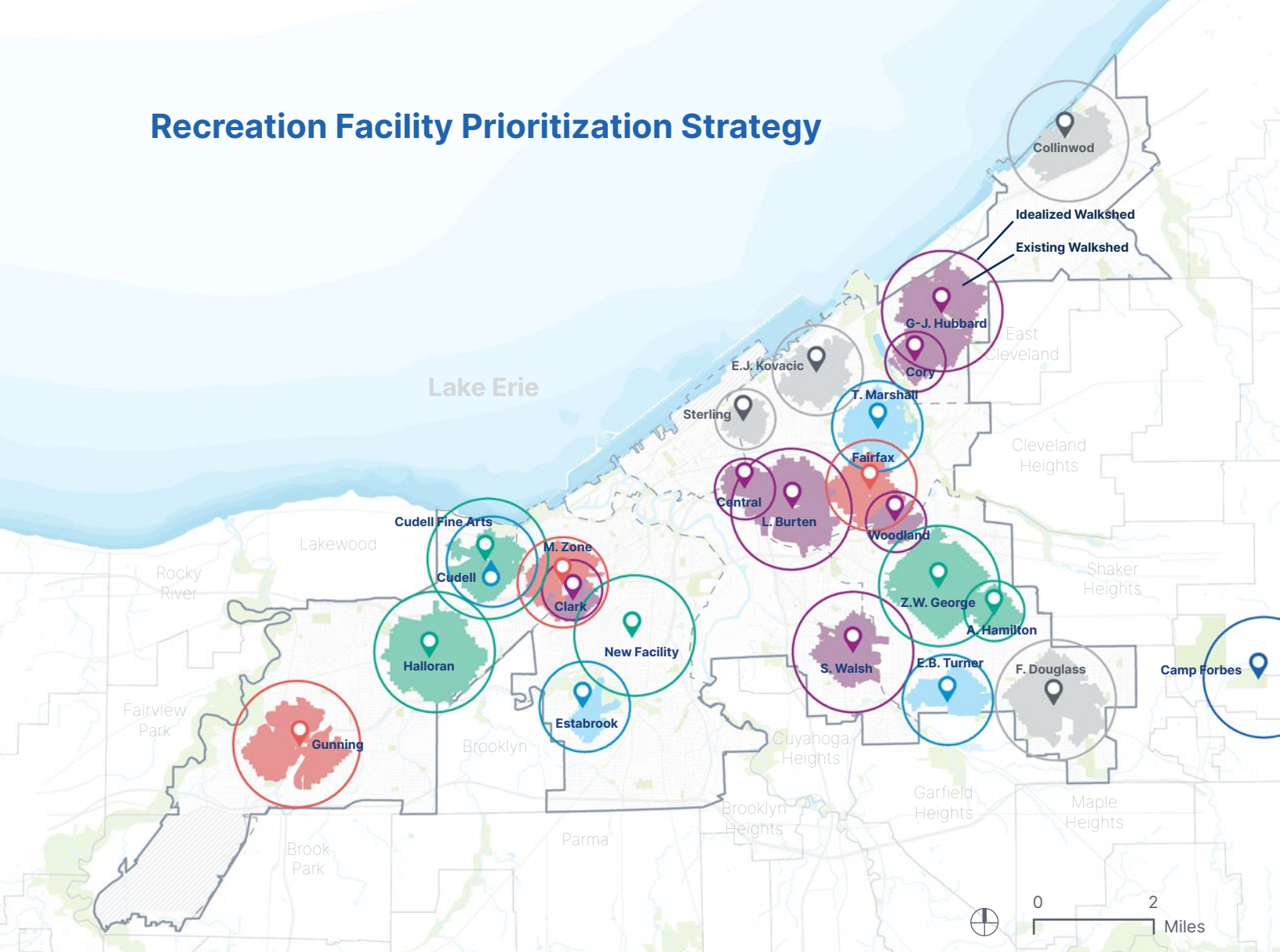
- recreation centers and special facilities are provided in neighborhoods with the greatest needs
- recreation centers are geographically distributed across the City, and;
- the City does not duplicate facilities and services in close proximity to other similar providers (i.e., YMCA, YWCA, Boys & Girls Clubs).

Additionally, implementing this plan requires that at the time of planning for the capital investments of each facility the city provide a pro forma that details the ongoing operation, maintenance, and programming costs along with the capital costs to educate decision makers and budget for the annual costs needed to operate, maintain, and program each facility, along with the capital investment costs.

Zelma Watson George
Recreation Center.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



Recreation Facility Prioritization Strategy



Phase I (Years 1-5)

- 1** Complete renovations of Clark & Central
- 2** Invest in Lonnie Burten
- 3** Invest in Stella Walsh as a regional recreation center
- 4** Invest in Glenville-James Hubbard
End lease at Cory
- 5** Consider repurposing Woodland for other City uses or closing
- 6** Develop a strategic plan for Camp Forbes

Phase II (Years 6-10)

- 1** Add new regional recreation center in Clark-Fulton
- 2** Invest in Zelma Watson George
- 3** Consider repurposing Alexander Hamilton as a special facility or closing
- 4** Invest in Cudell Fine Arts
- 5** Implement Phase I of Camp Forbes Strategic Plan
- 6** Conduct a study on the future use of the Halloran Ice Rink

Phase III (Years 11-15)

- 1** Invest in Earle B Turner
- 2** Invest in Thurgood Marshall
- 3** Invest in Cudell
- 4** Invest in Estabrook
- 5** Implement Phase II of Camp Forbes Strategic Plan

Phase IV (Years 16-20)

- 1** Invest in Fairfax
- 2** Invest in Gunning
- 3** Invest in Michael Zone
- 4** Implement Phase III of Camp Forbes Strategic Plan

Phases I-IV: Make rehab investments across rec centers and special facilities to improve the functionality, safety, and lifespan of existing assets making sure accessibility and flexibility of spaces are addressed in this work.

PROGRAM LIFE CYCLES

Recreation programs go through a life cycle. New programs are introduced, become mature, and may eventually be retired. Periodically, programs must be evaluated to ensure that they are still serving their intended purpose. If they are not, improvements may be needed.

Understanding where a program is in its life cycle can inform strategic decisions about the overall recreation program portfolio. The various stages of program lifecycles are:

- Introduction: new program, modest participation
- Take Off: rapid participation growth
- Growth: moderate, but consistent, participation growth
- Mature: slow participation growth
- Saturated: minimal to no growth, extreme competition
- Decline: declining participation

Program staff should evaluate programs on an annual basis to determine program mix. This can be incorporated into the Program Operating/Business Plan process. A diagram of the program evaluation cycle and program lifecycle is found on the facing page.

During the introductory stages, program staff should establish program goals, design program scenarios and components, and develop the program operating/business plan. Regular program evaluations will help determine the future of a program.

If participation levels are still growing, continue to provide the program. When participation growth is slowing (or non-existent) or competition increases, staff should look at modifying the program to

re-energize customers to participate. When program participation is consistently declining, staff should terminate the program and replace it with a new program based on the public's priority ranking and/or in activity areas that are trending nationally/regionally/locally, while taking into consideration the anticipated local participation percentage.

Determining what stage in its life cycle a program is in relies not only on quantitative data, but on staff knowledge.

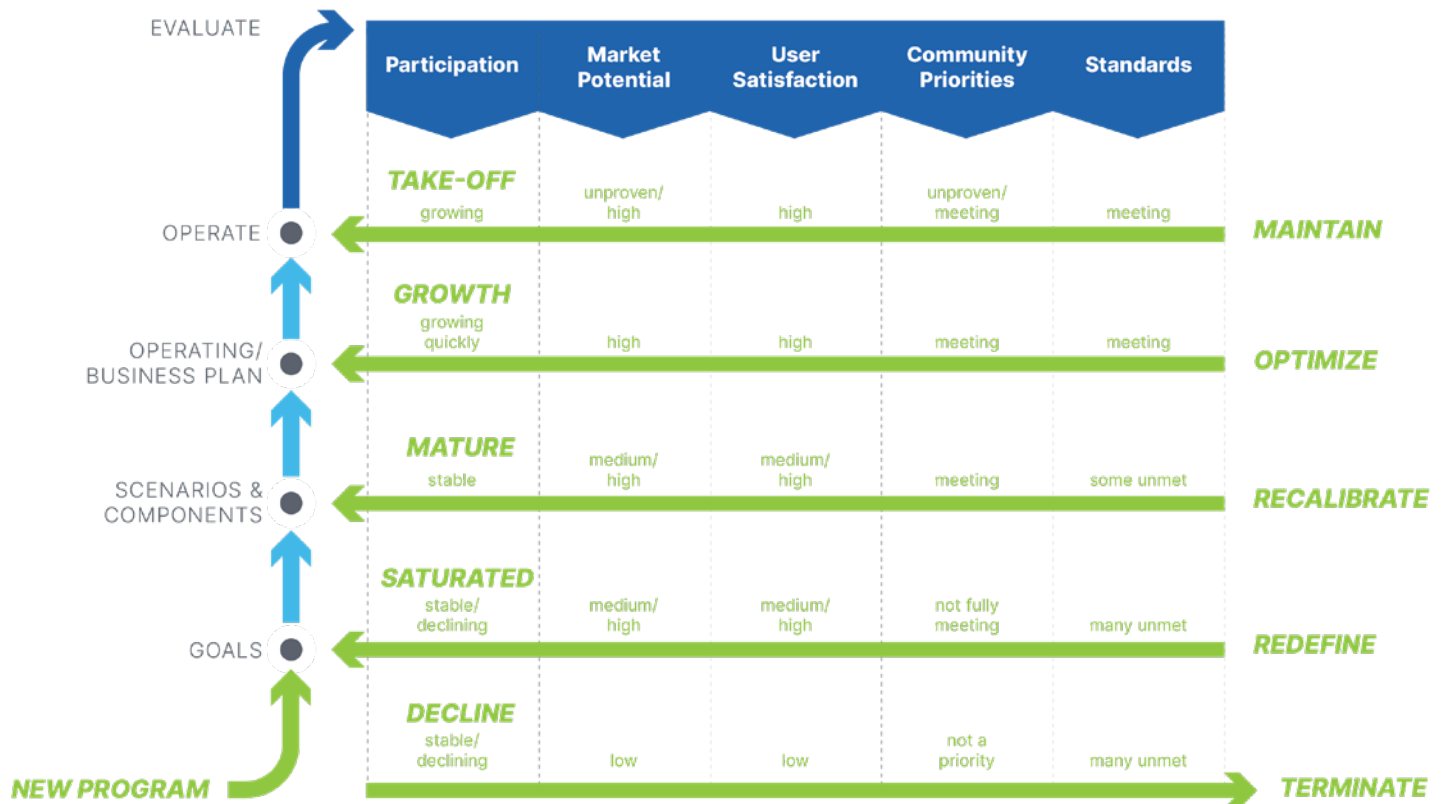
Programming is currently provided by both the Division of Recreation and the Mayor's Office of Prevention, Intervention & Opportunity for Youth and Young Adults.
Source: City of Cleveland.



LIFECYCLE STAGES

	% of Programs	Current Distribution	Best Practice Distribution
Recreation Programs			
Introduction	15%	58%	50-60%
Take-Off	14%		
Growth	29%		
Mature	26%	26%	40%
Saturated	12%	16%	0-10%
Decline	4%		

PIO Programs			
Introduction	20%	96%	50-60%
Take-Off	20%		
Growth	56%		
Mature	4%	4%	40%
Saturated	0%	0%	0-10%
Decline	0%		



FUNDING

In order to continue to build and maintain parks and recreation facilities, fiscally sustainable and realistic funding sources are essential. A diversified approach is necessary. This plan includes realistic and diverse funding options for the City to consider moving forward.

TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

It is critically important to view the financial sustainability of parks and recreation through the concept of “total cost of ownership.” Total cost of ownership refers to total cost to build, operate, maintain, and update parks and recreation facilities.

The maintenance of current assets and their periodic replacement at the end of their life cycles must be balanced with the refresh of existing parks and facilities and the development of new parks and facilities. Maintaining current infrastructure with limited funding will inhibit the City’s ability to take care of all existing assets and build new facilities.

Operations & Maintenance

Operations and maintenance refer to the daily tasks needed to keep parks and recreation facilities running and minor repairs to capital assets to keep them in a good state of repair.

Capital Investment

Capital investment encompasses life cycle replacement, park and facility refreshes, and new parks and facilities.

It is assumed that all capital investments are:

- financially viable
- likely to be implemented within the period they are budgeted for
- consistent with other planning efforts

Life Cycle Replacement

Life cycle replacement includes critical maintenance projects or repair of existing assets—when regular maintenance can no longer keep them in a good state of repair—safety and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) improvements, and existing debt service obligations. Many of these types of improvements typically require one-time funding and are not likely to increase annual operations and maintenance costs. In many cases, these types of projects may reduce annual operations and maintenance costs.

Basketball courts at Cudell Commons. Costs should include maintenance of amenities and where applicable capital investments.

Source: OLIN, 2023.



Playground and outdoor court repair project at Halloran Park.

Source: OLIN, 2024.



Basketball courts at Cudell Commons. Costs should include maintenance of amenities and where applicable capital investments.

Source: OLIN, 2023.

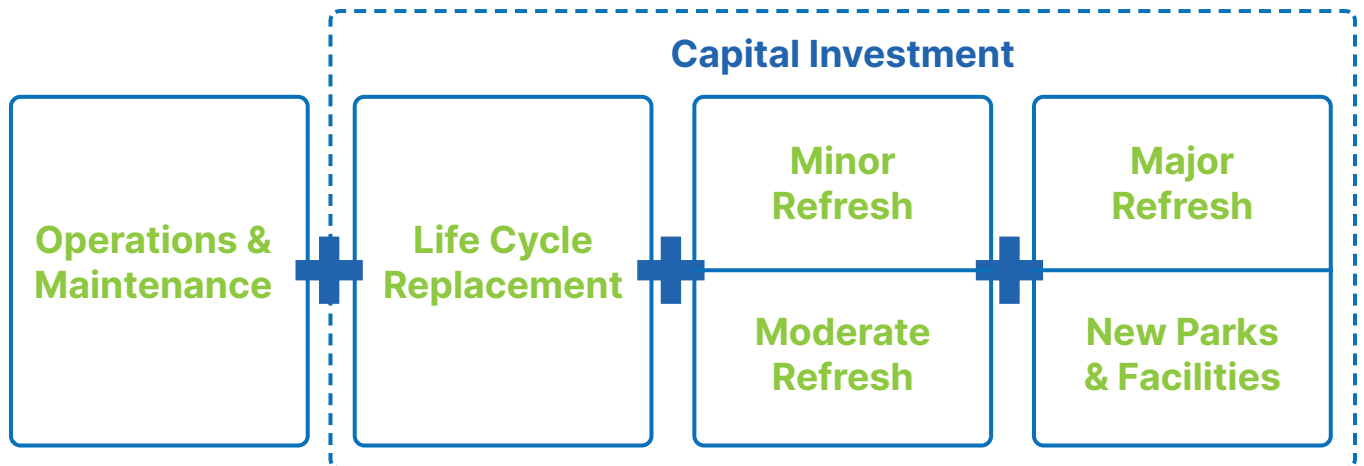
Minor/Moderate Refresh

Minor and moderate refreshes include strategic changes to existing parks or recreation facilities to better meet the unmet needs of the community, including adding features such as play fields, shade structures, adult fitness equipment, covered picnic shelters, and trail loops to extend recreation opportunities. These refreshes may also include a refresh of plantings or other design elements within the framework of an existing, relevant site master plan. These types of improvements typically require one-time funding and may trigger slight increases in annual operations and maintenance costs, depending on the nature of the improvements.

Major Refresh/New Facility

Major refreshes and new parks and recreation facilities may both involve land acquisition, new site master planning, and development of new infrastructure and amenities in concert with new master plan. These improvements are likely to increase annual operations and maintenance costs.

Total Cost of Ownership



RECOMMENDED BUDGET

Based on the current conditions of parks, recreation facilities, and services as well as the national benchmarking numbers, Cleveland should reallocate and gradually ramp up funding for parks and recreation.

Establish a New Baseline

Establish FY25 baseline Parks and Recreation Department operating budget of \$26M (\$70 per capita) and a capital budget of \$7M (\$18.8 per capita).

Reallocate According to Best Practices

Starting in FY25, establish ongoing annual operating budgets that follow national best practices:

- 46% of operating expenditures allocated to parks, 41% to recreation, and 13% to other
- 55% of operating expenditures allocated to personnel services, 38% to operating expenses, 5% to capital expenses not in the CIP, and 2% to other

Figure 18. Recommended Department Budget.

	FY25	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
OPERATING BUDGET	\$26.0M	\$28.5M	\$30.1M	\$33.5M	\$36.0M	\$38.5M	\$41.0M	\$43.5M
Parks (46%)	\$12.0M	\$13.1M	\$14.3M	\$15.4M	\$16.6M	\$17.7M	\$18.9M	\$20.0M
Recreation (41%)	\$10.7M	\$11.7M	\$12.7M	\$13.7M	\$14.8M	\$15.8M	\$16.8M	\$17.8M
Other (13%)	\$3.4M	\$3.7M	\$4.0M	\$4.4M	\$4.7M	\$5.0M	\$5.3M	\$5.7M
Personnel (55%)	\$14.3M	\$15.7M	\$17.7M	\$18.4M	\$19.8M	\$21.2M	\$22.6M	\$23.9M
Operating Expenses (38%)	\$9.9M	\$10.8M	\$11.8M	\$12.7M	\$13.7M	\$14.6M	\$15.6M	\$16.5M
Capital Expenses not in CIP (5%)	\$1.3M	\$1.4M	\$1.6M	\$1.7M	\$1.8M	\$1.9M	\$2.1M	\$2.2M
Other (2%)	\$0.5M	\$0.6M	\$0.6M	\$0.7M	\$0.7M	\$0.8M	\$0.8M	\$0.9M
CAPITAL BUDGET	\$7.0M	\$7.5M	\$8.0M	\$8.5M	\$9.0M	\$9.5M	\$10.0M	\$10.5M
TOTAL SPENDING	\$33M	\$36M	\$39M	\$42M	\$45M	\$48M	\$51M	\$54M
REVENUE GENERATION	—	\$0.9M	\$1.4M	\$1.5M	\$1.8M	\$2.0M	\$2.3M	\$2.6M
VOLUNTEER HOURS	—	\$0.3M	\$0.6M	\$1.0M	\$1.4M	\$1.9M	\$2.5M	\$3.0M

Gradually Increase Funding

To achieve parity with peer and comparable cities by population by FY32:

- beginning in F26 increase annual operating budget by \$2.5M a year to achieve annual operating budget of \$43.5M (\$117 per capita) in FY32
- beginning in FY26 increase capital budget by \$0.5M a year to achieve capital budget of \$10.5M in FY32
- by FY26 adopt a scholarship and revenue policy and revenue strategies to generate these graduated agency per capita revenues:

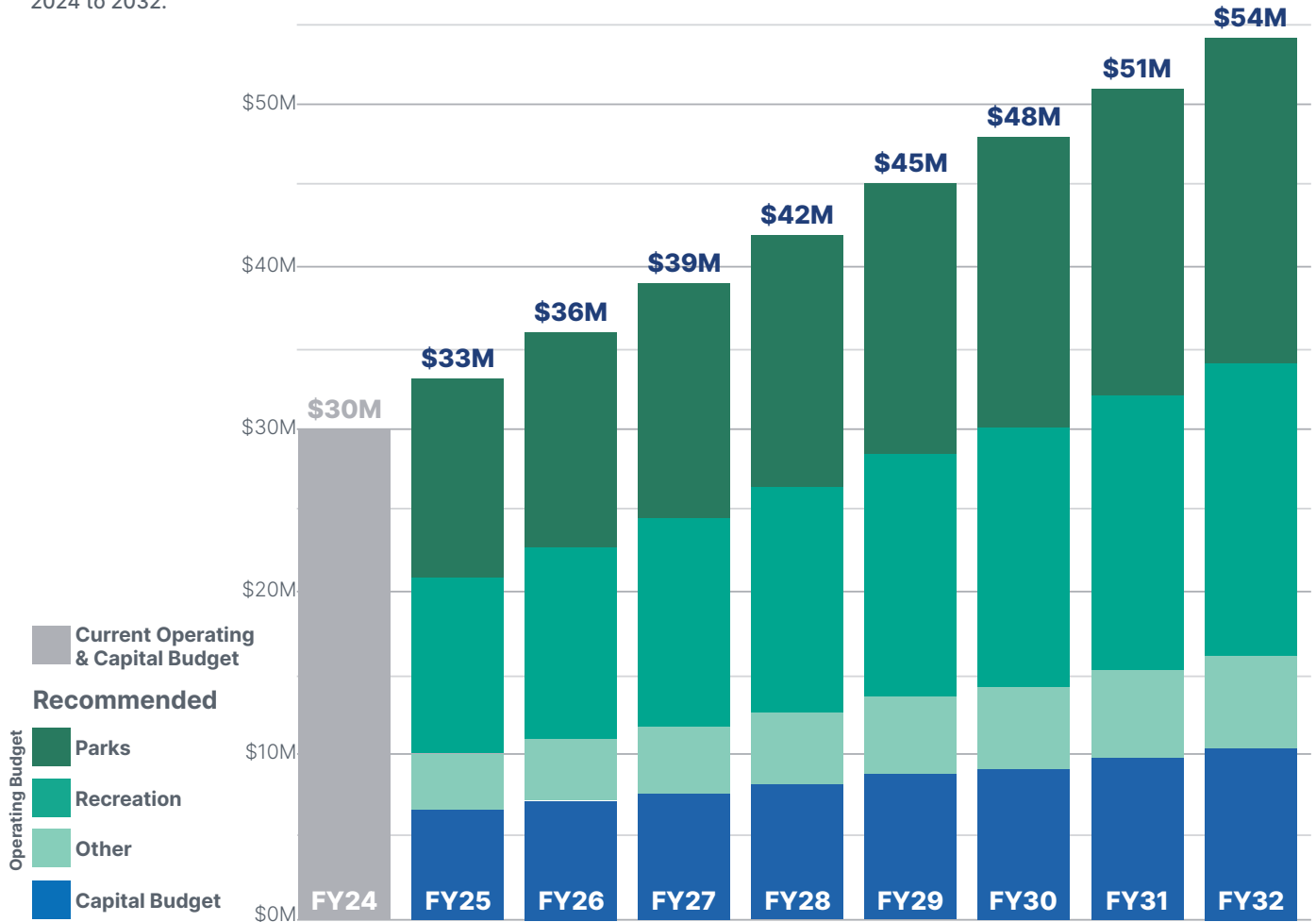
FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
\$2.50	\$3.75	\$4.00	\$4.75	\$5.50	\$6.25	\$7.00

- by FY26 adopt a volunteer program plan and volunteer strategies to generate these graduated agency volunteer hours as a percent of agency staffing costs:

FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	FY31	FY32
1%	2%	3%	4%	5%	6%	7%

These recommendations do not include inflationary increases. Funding recommendations will need to be adjusted to account for inflation to achieve appropriate funding levels.

Figure 19. Recommended Department Spending 2024 to 2032.



FUNDING & REVENUE STRATEGIES

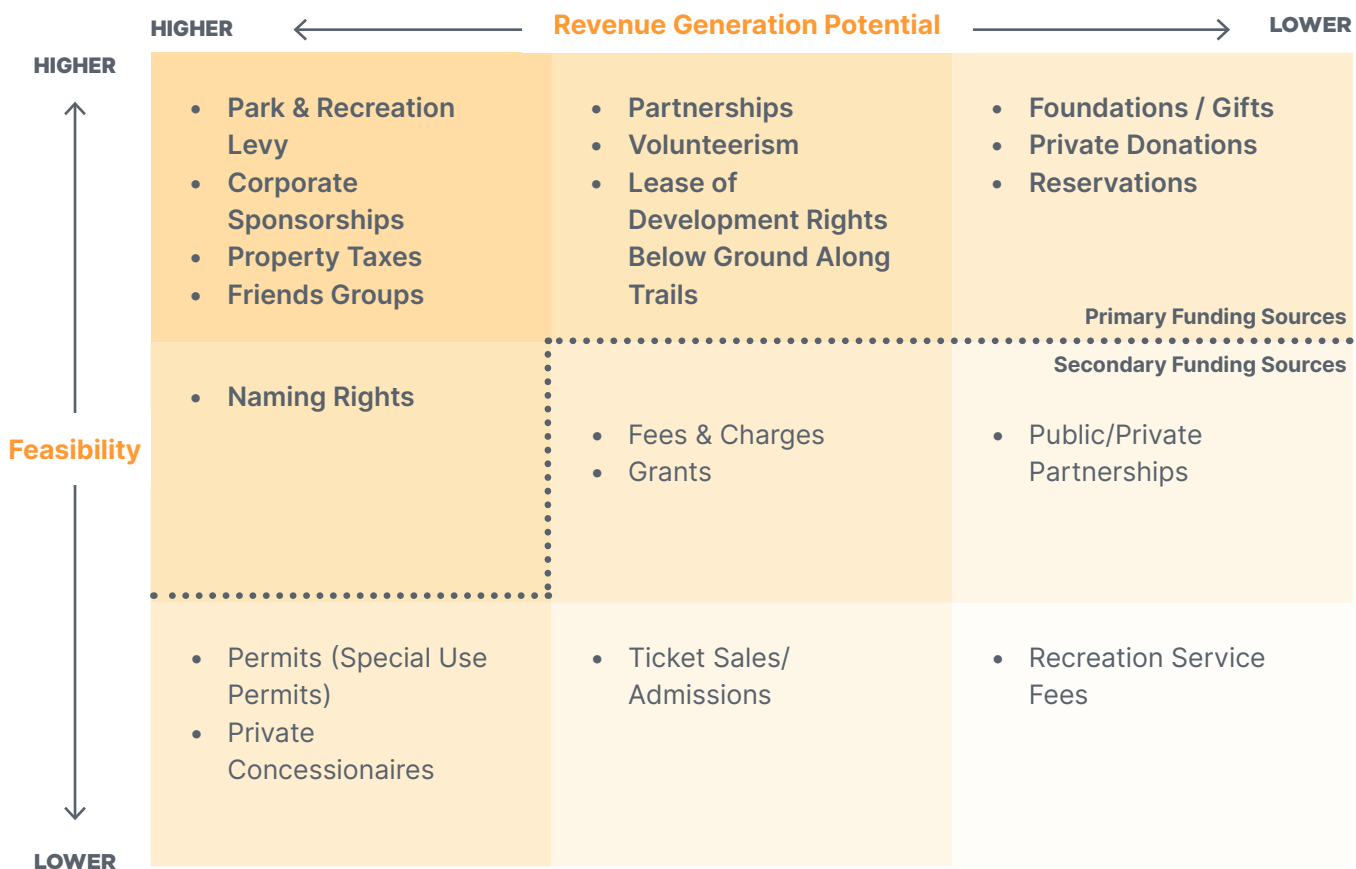
Parks and Recreation departments across the country have learned to optimize revenue generation, where appropriate, to support the typically limited general fund dollars allocated to parks and recreation services. They have developed new sources of revenue to help support capital and operational needs.

The City of Cleveland should consider the following funding sources—some of which are currently employed by the City and some of which would be new opportunities—to support implementation of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This menu of options should serve as a resource to fit a variety of projects, operational needs, or partner-specific initiatives.

Each of the funding sources is rated on a scale of revenue generation potential and a scale of feasibility. The funding sources with higher feasibility and higher revenue generation potential are categorized as primary funding sources, while others are categorized as secondary funding sources. While the City should pursue all available options, the primary funding sources are a first place to start over the next five years.

Given the financial condition of the City, many of the primary funding sources are private sector resources. As the City rebuilds and is in a stronger financial situation (both as a City entity and as individual Clevelanders) other funding strategies, secondary funding sources, can be expanded or added to the toolbox for parks and recreation.

Figure 20. Park & recreation levy, corporate sponsorships, property taxes, and friends groups are the funding sources that are most feasible and have the highest revenue generation potential for Cleveland.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



Park Levy, Cannabis Levy, or Sweet Beverage Tax

Special tax levies are used across Ohio and the country to provide funding dedicated specifically to parks and recreation. A tax levy is the only funding source that has the potential to generate funding on an order commensurate with the existing funding gap for Cleveland’s parks and recreation system. Should the City pursue asking voters to approve a levy or tax, operational and service level improvements should be implemented first that demonstrate the City’s ability to deliver improved services to deliver better maintained parks and facilities and improved programs and services. Once the Parks and Recreation Department is able to consistently deliver these park, facility, and service improvements it would be an appropriate to consider asking voters to approve a special levy or tax that can provide the funding needed to rebuild a park and recreation system that Clevelanders can be proud of and become the crown jewel of the City.

Primary Funding Sources

Corporate Sponsorships

Sponsorships allow corporations to invest in the development or enhancement of new or existing facilities in park systems. They can be used to pay for Parks and Recreation Department programs and events.

Implication for Cleveland: Implementation feasibility is high, with low implementation risk. Corporate sponsorship agreements should protect both parties and identify a set of terms, including for breach and termination. Ideally, a Cleveland Parks Foundation would complement the Department’s needs in delivering on its mission. Sponsorships can fund operations or capital expenses.

Friends Groups

Friends groups are typically formed to raise money for a single purpose—for example, a park amenity like a playground or a specific program that will better the neighborhood or community as a whole. Their value may come in the form of time, labor, funding, or capital investment.

Implications for Cleveland: Friends groups provide a great way to build advocacy and support for the system with donated labor, supplies, and capital that benefit the community and help build support and culture in their organization.

Partnerships

Partnerships are joint development funding sources or operational funding sources between two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit and a governmental entity, or a private business and a governmental entity. Two partners jointly develop revenue producing park and recreation facilities and share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management, based on the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

Implication for Cleveland: The City should develop specific policies based on best practices to build and manage public, private, and non-profit partnerships. To quantify the partnerships, the City can identify the cost of service being provided by each party in the terms and define outcomes with performance measures. Implementation feasibility is high, with low implementation risk. Partnerships can fund operations or capital expenses. Hospitals have begun to support the development of “heart health trails” in park systems as well as wellness centers inside of community centers to promote healthy living. Many

cities have a hospital corporation that supports some portion of the capital expenses for community centers as well as a portion of funding for operations through naming rights.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is an indirect revenue source in that people donate time to assist a department on an hourly basis. This reduces the cost to provide a service and builds advocacy.

Implication for Cleveland: Volunteer programs can be made available through the Parks and Recreation Department specifically or through the City more generally. By FY26 the Parks and Recreation Department should adopt a volunteer program plan and volunteer strategies.

(See recommended budget on page 234

for volunteerism targets as a percentage of agency staffing costs.) The value of a volunteer hour is currently \$27.00 in Ohio which can be counted as in-kind dollars for matching grants. This is a form of cost containment to stretch budget dollars further. In Indianapolis, the major utility company each year renovates an entire community center in three days as a company team building measure. Their labor and materials are a give-back to the community. Volunteerism can be used to support operations. Implementation feasibility is high, with moderate implementation risk.

Lease of Development Rights Below the Ground Along Trails

The linear nature and consolidated ownership of trails makes them valuable to utility companies for the provision or expansion of service lines. Leasing development rights below or alongside trails

for fiber optics or other utilities can support overall operations.

Implication for Cleveland: Implementation feasibility and implementation risk are both moderate.

Naming Rights

The Parks and Recreation Department can offer naming rights opportunities for specific park amenities, such as ball fields, playgrounds, staging areas, sports arenas, amphitheaters, swimming pools, community gardens, community rooms, and trails. Naming rights can be considered for both existing and new amenities.

Implication for Cleveland: Implementation feasibility and implementation risk are both moderate.

Foundations/Gifts

Private dollars raised by tax-exempt, non-profit organizations may be gifted to promote specific causes, activities, or issues. They offer a variety of means to fund capital campaigns, gifts catalogs, fundraisers, endowments, and sales of items, among other capital projects.

Implication for Cleveland: The City should establish a standalone parks foundation dedicated to helping the Parks and Recreation Department accomplish its mission through fundraising and financing capital projects and services. The Department should also consider becoming a member of the National Association of Park Foundations to identify best practices from other city/foundation relationships nationwide and in Ohio. Implementation feasibility is high, and implementation risk is low.

Grants are often seen as an opportunity for **free money, increased credibility of fiscal stewardship, increased access to valuable data, and the ability to point to past grants awarded in future applications.**

Figure 21. The City should explore the following types of grants for improvements to the park system.

Grants to Explore	
Aquatics Education Grant	Nature Works
Boating Safety Education Grant	Ohio Arts Council
CDBG Funding	Paddling Enhancement Grant
Clean Ohio Trails Fund	Partnership Enhancement Monetary Grant Program
Land & Water Conservation Fund	Recreational Trail Program
Local Nonprofit Foundation Grants	Urban Canopy Restoration Grant
LWCF Outdoor Legacy Partnership Program	Wetland Restoration Assistance
Natural Areas Research Grant	

Private Donations

Private donations may also be received in the form of funds, land, facilities, recreation equipment, art, or in-kind services. The City should pursue donations from local and regional businesses as sponsors for events or facilities. Donations can be used for operations and capital expenses.

Implication for Cleveland: Actively seeking donations can become time consuming and would eventually require an employee to oversee. Implementation feasibility and implementation risk are moderate.

Reservations

Reservations provide a right to use a specific public property at a set time for a set length of time. Fees for reservations are usually set for and apply to facilities for special activities such as meeting rooms for weddings, reunions, and outings; aquatic centers; community rooms; sports fields; and park shelters.

Implication for Cleveland: Implementation feasibility and implementation risk are moderate.

Secondary Funding Sources

Fees and Charges

The City has minimal fees and charges for parks and recreation. Funds generated by the City's fees are not currently invested back into parks or recreation.

Implication for Cleveland: Implementation feasibility and implementation risk are moderate. The City should monitor for changing circumstances that could make fees and charges more favorable in certain aspects of the Parks and Recreation Department's programs. The Department should examine the feasibility of keeping revenues generated from parks and recreation fees and charges to help offset operating expenses.

Grants

Grants can be a great funding source as part of an overall funding strategy for capital projects and some for specific services. Grants are often seen as an opportunity for free money, increased credibility of fiscal stewardship, increased access to valuable data, and the ability to point to past grants awarded in future applications.

Implications for Cleveland: The City must understand each grant's requirements and weigh the pros and cons to understand the cost-benefit ratio. Consider:

- the overall time commitment
- level of competition
- how well the project or service meets the application requirements
- opportunities to renew the grant, or if the City will have to fund long-term
- reporting requirements and length of time to continue an offered service

P3 – Public Private Partnerships

Like business partnerships, public-private partnerships for parks include both general partners and limited partners, each with its own set of responsibilities, strengths, and weaknesses. In public-private partnerships, both a park and recreation department and its partner bring assets to a collaboration that make it viable. The deal structures for almost every joint venture are unique. However, there are enough commonalities that several general frameworks can be identified, including outsourcing, public-sector leasing, leaseback from the private sector, and takeover of failing private ventures.

Implication for Cleveland: The City can explore public-private partnerships to help fund park improvements, leverage them to assist with operating costs, and use them to bring in expertise that the City does not have. Opportunities are currently limited for Cleveland, but with the right partner(s) it could prove beneficial to both the City and the partner.

Permits (Special Use Permits)

A special permit allow an individual to use a specific park property for financial gain. In return, the City either receives a set amount of money or a percentage of gross revenue. Implication for Cleveland: Implementation feasibility and implementation risk are moderate.

Private Concessionaires

Concessions provide commercial visitor services such as food and retail through a third party (concessioner) within a park or recreation facility. Concession contracts are established for a set period of time and specify the range of facilities

accommodation and types of services the concessioner agrees to offer. The rates the concessioner can charge for these services must be approved by the City.

Implication for Cleveland: The City should explore pilot concessionaire arrangements at key park and recreation facilities. Implementation feasibility and implementation risk are moderate.

Ticket Sales/Admissions

Tickets or admission fees for self-directed activities such as aquatic, special use, and entertainment facilities can help off-set operational costs.

Implication for Cleveland: The City should monitor for changing circumstances that could make this funding source more favorable. Implementation feasibility and implementation risk are moderate.

Recreation Service Fees

Recreation service fees are dedicated user fees, which can be established by a local ordinance or other government procedure, for the purpose of constructing and maintaining recreation facilities that support recreation programming. The fee can apply to all organized activities that require a reservation or other activities as defined by the City. Examples of such activities include adult sports and youth sports, and special interest classes.

Implication for Cleveland: Implementation feasibility and implementation risk are moderate. The City should monitor for changing circumstances that could make this funding source more favorable. The Parks and Recreation Department should examine the possibility of keeping any revenues generated from recreation service fees to help offset operating expenses.

Clark Field features a turf field courtesy of the Cleveland Guardians.
Source: City of Cleveland.





A wide-angle photograph of a large indoor sports facility, likely a gymnasium or arena. The ceiling is high and features a complex network of green-painted steel trusses and white structural beams. Several pendant lights are suspended from the ceiling. In the center, a scoreboard is visible with "HOME" and "VISITOR" sections. The floor is a polished wooden basketball court with white lines. Along the back wall, there are rows of bleachers and a large window that looks out onto a parking lot with several cars. The overall atmosphere is bright and spacious.

Policy Framework

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The path forward for parks and recreation in Cleveland is captured within the following goals, actions, and methods.

Each **goal** describes an ideal future for the parks and recreation system and is supported by a set of **actions** that the City can take to move towards that ideal future. Many of the actions are, in turn, supported by a set of **methods** that provide more specific implementation steps.

RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP



Maintenance & Updates



Funding



Community & Partnerships

ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES



Connectivity & Accessibility



System Awareness & Communications



Safety

ENGAGING EXPERIENCES



Recreation Programming



Staffing & Hours

ENHANCED SPACES



Parks



Recreation Facilities



Nature & Green Spaces

RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

Responsible stewardship of Cleveland's parks and recreation system was the primary concern for many residents. Responsible stewardship involves consistent maintenance and thoughtful updates, sufficient funding for ongoing improvements, and fostering community partnerships with local organizations and groups encouraging collective responsibility and innovative solutions to challenges. These efforts ensure safe, accessible spaces that enhance community life while preserving natural beauty for future generations.

1 Maintenance & Updates

2 Funding

3 Community & Partnerships





1/ MAINTENANCE & UPDATES

Goal: Ensure parks and recreation facilities are operated and maintained effectively and to defined standards.

Clevelanders are concerned that parks and recreation facilities are not being adequately maintained and updated. Half of survey respondents identified this as the top reason for not visiting parks and recreation centers more often, and 38% noted “poor or uncomfortable atmosphere” as a major barrier. People noted issues around trash collection and mowing, upkeep of existing equipment and facilities, and investments to older and dated facilities.

ACTIONS

- 1.1.** Define clear maintenance standards that will be consistently met.
- 1.2.** Make procurement and contracting processes clearer and more transparent.
- 1.3.** Strengthen sustainability policies and practices.



City staff working with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy to plant trees.
Source: City of Cleveland.

1.1. DEFINE CLEAR MAINTENANCE STANDARDS THAT WILL BE CONSISTENTLY MET.

Through site analysis, key group interviews, and conversations with community members, it was clear that spaces are maintained to different standards. Clarifying and regularizing maintenance standards will ensure high-quality spaces across the entire system.

- 1.1.1.** Develop maintenance standards and schedules for each park and recreation facility classification and regularly update them with higher levels of service as more resources are available.
- 1.1.2.** Apply maintenance standards across the park system consistently ensuring standards are equity-driven, transparent, and accessible by community members, and includes a feedback-loop. **EQUITY**
- 1.1.3.** Implement a hierarchy of landscape maintenance standards based on regular, low-mow, and no-mow zones.
- 1.1.4.** Develop a native plant palette that can be easily maintained across the system.
- 1.1.5.** Encourage cross-departmental knowledge sharing and training on maintenance practices.
- 1.1.6.** Improve interdepartmental coordination to ensure that short- and long-term maintenance is well coordinated with planning, design, and construction of capital projects.
- 1.1.7.** Consider design and maintenance measures (like snow removal) that can accommodate more year-round use of facilities.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



Mows to Meadows

Fairmount Park Conservancy | Philadelphia, PA

In 2021, the Fairmount Park Conservancy embarked on a “Mows to Meadows” project that transforms four traditionally mowed sites that have been underused into meadows.

Transforming these areas into meadow will bring many benefits to the park. They help soak up stormwater and provide important habitat for a diversity of wildlife, including birds and insects. Additionally, not mowing these areas will conserve resources, including money for mowing contracts and the fuel used for the mowers.



1.2. MAKE PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACTING PROCESSES CLEARER AND MORE TRANSPARENT.

Clear and transparent procurement and contracting processes are crucial for parks and recreation departments. They ensure fairness, efficiency, and accountability, fostering trust among partner organizations and maximizing the value of taxpayer dollars. By promoting competition and adhering to clear guidelines, these processes help departments secure high-quality services and products at competitive prices, ultimately enhancing community recreational facilities and services. Currently, lengthy contracting timelines discourage vendors and partner organizations from working with the City and delay City action.

1.2.1. Work with the Departments of Law and Finance to identify efficiencies that can reduce timeframes for how quickly contracts with vendors can be executed and already budgeted funds can be spent.

1.2.2. Work with the Departments of Law and Finance to map out procurement and contracting processes to be used for staff training and consistent application.

1.2.3. Work with the Department of Law to develop master agreements with frequent partner organizations.

1.2.4. Work with the Department of Law to develop a template for less stringent agreements for community organizations that would like to make park improvements or volunteers that would like to assist with the maintenance and beautification of parks and recreation spaces. **EQUITY**

The Cultural Gardens in
Rockefeller Park.
Source: City of Cleveland.



1.3. STRENGTHEN SUSTAINABILITY POLICIES AND PRACTICES.

Changing environmental conditions and resource consumption have a direct impact on natural resources. By strengthening sustainability policies, the parks and recreation system can lead by example to preserve and conserve natural resources, reducing costs and serving as a model for other organizations and residents.

1.3.1. Work with the Office of Sustainability and Climate Justice to optimize operations and maintenance standards to meet the objectives and goals outlined in the Cleveland Climate Action Plan and the Sustainable Cleveland Municipal Action Plan.

1.3.2. Develop park design, green building, and product standards that reflect best practices for ecological restoration and sustainability including green stormwater infrastructure; materials sourced from responsible industries, many recycled or locally produced; net zero energy goals; rainwater use in buildings and in the landscape and on-site treatment safely disposes of wastewater. **EQUITY**

1.3.3. Develop park maintenance routines and strategies that reflect best practices for ecological restoration, meadows, forests, sensitive natural areas, and green stormwater infrastructure maintenance.

1.3.4. Work to prioritize biodiversity and emphasize native and water-wise plants over non-native species. *See also 1.1.4.*

1.3.5. Use environmentally friendly products (e.g., cleaners and chemical treatments) where feasible.

1.3.6. Provide training for staff on how to include sustainability in evaluating costs and benefits.

Rain garden at Michael Zone Park.
Source: OLIN, 2023.





Native Plants for Northeast Ohio

Native plants are ideal for sustainable landscapes. They are adapted to the harsh climates, soil, and environmental challenges. Native plants also help to restore habitat and increase biodiversity by attracting pollinators.

Perennials



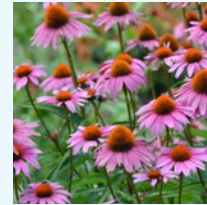
Canada Anemone



Golden Knees



Turtlehead



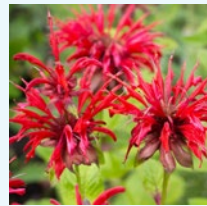
Purple Coneflower



Cardinal Flower



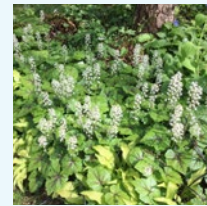
Great Blue Lobelia



Bee Balm



Swamp Candles



Foam Flower



Spiked Blazing Star

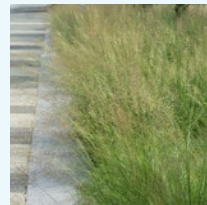
Grasses



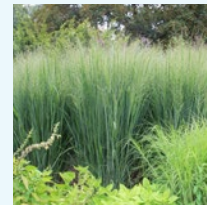
Sideoats Grama



Little Bluestem



Prairie Dropseed



Switch Grass



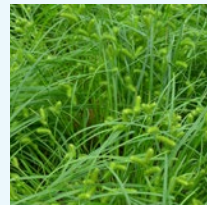
June Grass



Tufted-Fescue Sedge



Fox Sedge



Bottlebrush Sedge

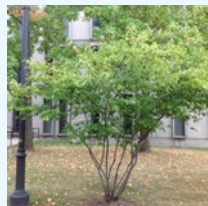


Soft Rush



Torrey's Rush

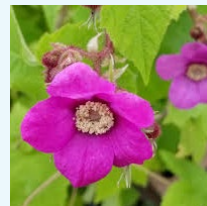
Shrubs



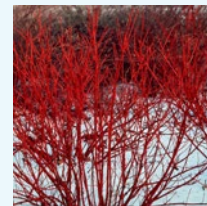
Winterberry



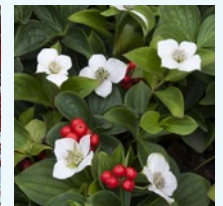
Winterberry



Flowering Raspberry

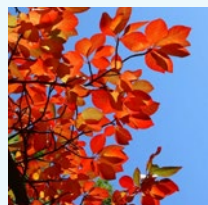


Red-Osier Dogwood



Bunchberry

Trees



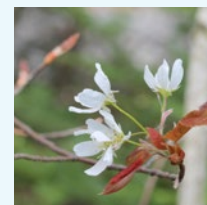
Blackgum



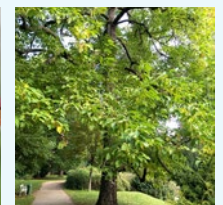
Kentucky Coffee Tree



American Basswood



Allegheny Serviceberry



Cucumber Magnolia



2/ FUNDING

Goal: Enhance the fiscal sustainability of Cleveland’s parks and recreation facilities.

While operational budgets have been stretched to maintain existing parks, recreation facilities, and other city infrastructure, additional capital and operational funding is needed to ensure all parks and recreation facilities continue to provide the level of experience that residents seek.

ACTIONS

2.1. Secure funding to support development, maintenance, and programming of parks and recreation facilities and ensure those public funds are efficiently and effectively spent.

2.2. Account for both up-front and ongoing costs and benefits in maintenance and capital budgeting.

2.3. Identify and pursue public-private, nonprofit, and philanthropic partnerships to support capital improvements and programs.

2.4. Identify revenue-generating opportunities from parks, recreation facilities, and programs that can be reinvested back into these assets.

2.5. Track and report revenues and direct and indirect costs with the Parks and Recreation Department’s services.



A view of City Hall from the Anthony J. Celebrezze Federal Building.
Source: City of Cleveland.

ACTIONS

2.1. SECURE FUNDING TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT, MAINTENANCE, AND PROGRAMMING OF PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND ENSURE THOSE PUBLIC FUNDS ARE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY SPENT.

The operation of parks and recreation facilities comes primarily from the City's general fund, and city budgets have not prioritized funding in these areas. Two thirds of survey respondents indicated they would be supportive of an increase in taxes to fund the types of parks and recreation facilities and programs that are most important to them.

2.1.1. Implement balanced distribution of financial resources that are in alignment with national best practices with annual budget allocations:

- 40-45% for park maintenance;
- 30-35% for recreation;
- 10-12% for administration;
- 4% for equipment, and;
- 4-5% of the total asset value of the park and recreation system back into the capital budget.

2.1.2. Identify dedicated funding streams for capital investments in and maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities and rehabilitation of existing assets to extend their life and improve their functionality and safety.

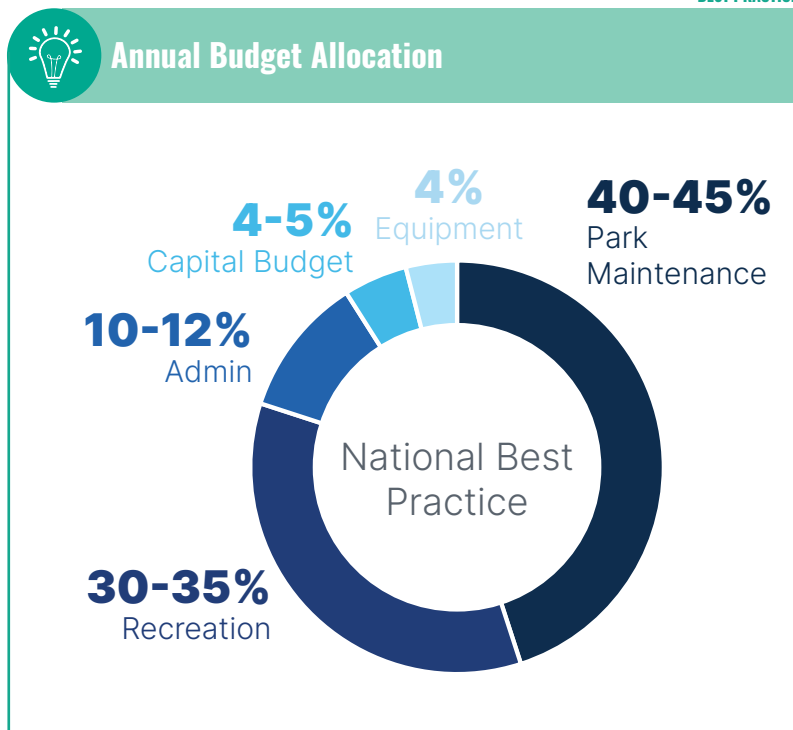
2.1.3. Identify funding to support park construction and the expansion of parks and recreation facilities in parts of the city that are lacking walkability, acreage, or access to amenities. **EQUITY**

2.1.4. Identify and implement cost savings related to consolidating facilities in parts of the city that

have an abundance of park and recreation facilities. **EQUITY**

2.1.5. Prioritize areas based on the Council on Environmental Quality's Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool and Trust for Public Land's ParkServe where communities are especially burdened and where there is a lack of park acres per capita, parks within a 10-minute walk, and park amenities. **EQUITY**

BEST PRACTICE



2.2. ACCOUNT FOR BOTH UP-FRONT AND ONGOING COSTS AND BENEFITS IN MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL BUDGETING.

66%

of respondents are **supportive** of an increase in taxes or levies to fund parks & recreation facilities.

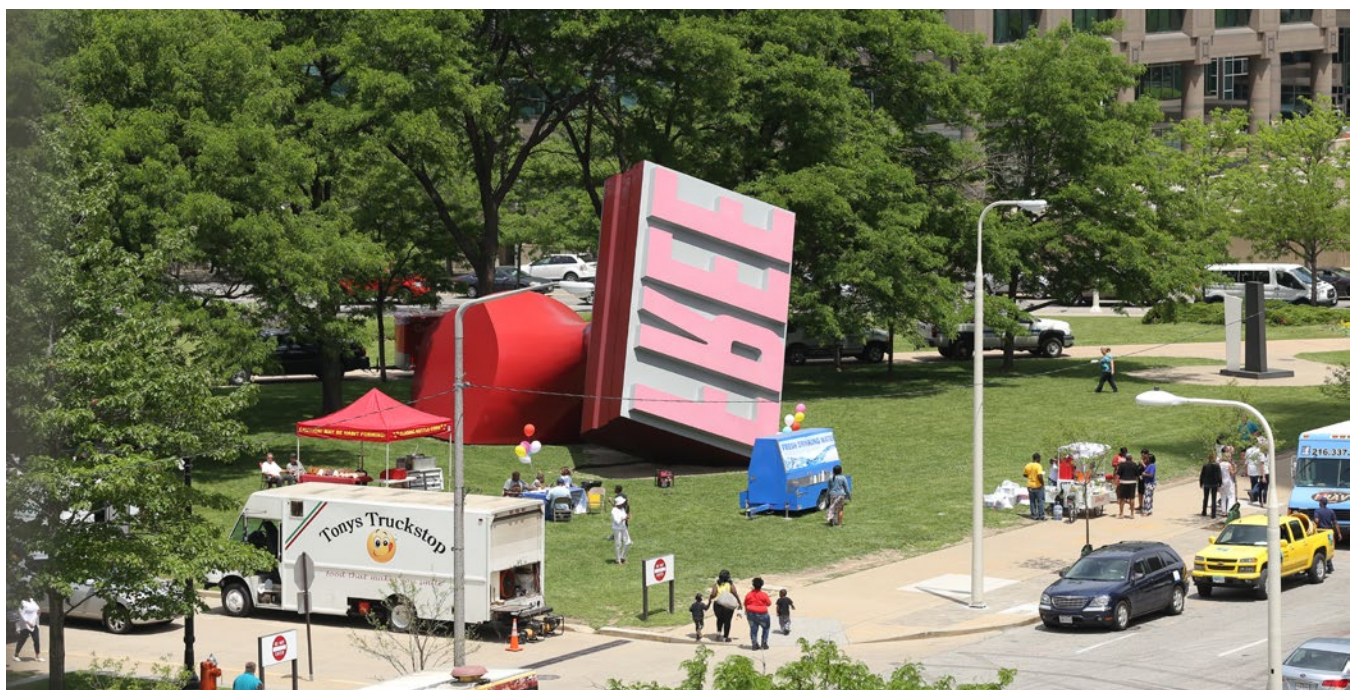
Building capital projects is necessary to provide the parks, recreation, and services that residents expect. It is seen as a sign of progress. While some capital investments come with a warranty period, all capital investments inevitably require maintenance and replacement. Yet, the source of funding to maintain new capital investments is often not considered when weighing their costs and benefits of or committing funding for their construction..

2.2.1. Identify schedules and standards for asset management and maintenance of capital projects at the time they are approved and ensure funding is committed to meet those standards.

2.2.3. Consider developing a maintenance endowment fund exclusively for park maintenance.

2.2.2. Ensure that the Parks and Recreation Department's budget accounts for responsibilities it has to operate or maintain City facilities that are not parks or recreation facilities. (e.g., street trees, City Hall and Public Auditorium landscapes).

Food trucks and vendors regularly set up in Willard Park.
Source: City of Cleveland.



2.3. IDENTIFY AND PURSUE PUBLIC-PRIVATE, NONPROFIT, AND PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND PROGRAMS.

The City has established partnerships, for example with the Cavaliers and Guardians to build athletic facilities. Public-private, nonprofit, and philanthropic partnerships are crucial for parks and recreation departments to enhance capital improvements and programs. These collaborations bring diverse resources and funding that governments alone may lack, enabling departments to expand facilities, develop new programs, and improve community services.

2.3.1. Build upon existing relationships and create new partnerships with corporations and foundations to explore funding and grant partnerships and leverage City investments, particularly where missions are aligned for shared citywide outcomes. **EQUITY**

2.3.2. Establish a Cleveland Park Foundation to support the Cleveland Parks and Recreation Department with a strategic plan for implementation of the Foundation.

2.3.3. Identify partnerships with individuals, groups, corporations, and foundations to support defined projects in parks and recreation facilities. **EQUITY**

2.3.4. Develop a donor outreach strategy, including informational materials tailored to donors.

2.3.5. Develop sponsorship proposals to help underwrite and offset operating costs for programs and services.

IN-PROGRESS



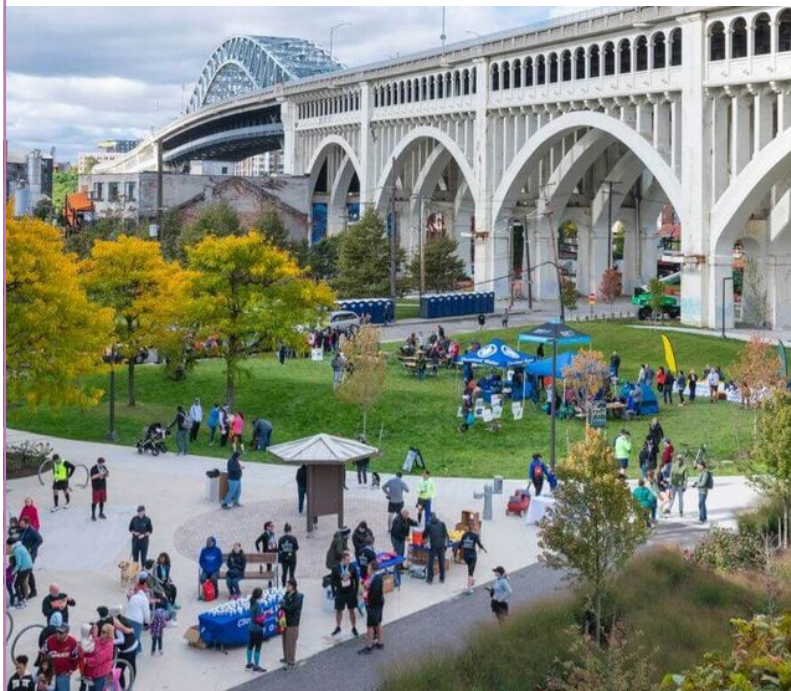
Canal Basin Park Public-Private Partnerships

The City of Cleveland and its partners are updating the vision for Canal Basin Park to celebrate its unique history, while creating an inclusive place where everyone belongs.

The City is working closely with:

- Canalway Partners
- Downtown Cleveland, Inc
- Cuyahoga County
- Cleveland Metroparks

to create a park that will serve as a gathering place, interpretive park and connective hub. These partnerships make the creation of the park possible!



2.4. IDENTIFY REVENUE-GENERATING OPPORTUNITIES FROM PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS THAT CAN BE REINVESTED BACK INTO THESE ASSETS.

There are currently very few revenue-generating opportunities in Cleveland's parks and recreation facilities and programs. By identifying these opportunities, the Parks and Recreation Department could recover a portion of what is spent on operations.

2.4.1. Develop a revenue policy to provide the framework for establishing fees and charges, cost recovery goals and targets, and retention of revenue within the parks and recreation department for investments in the parks and recreation system.

2.4.2. Expand the offering or permitting of concessions in regional and community parks, athletic complexes, and at special events in parks and recreation facilities.

2.4.3. Pursue revenue from special events, such as weddings, that rent park and recreation facility spaces.

2.4.4. Expand capacity to proactively set revenue goals, seek revenue generating opportunities, and provide a point of contact for those looking to rent public spaces for events.

Rockefeller Park Greenhouse hosts a variety of events throughout the year.
Source: City of Cleveland.



2.5. TRACK AND REPORT REVENUES AND DIRECT AND INDIRECT COSTS WITH THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT'S SERVICES.

Collecting better data on services provided can allow the Department to make more informed decisions, compare itself to other providers, and make a more general case for continued investment.

2.5.1. Create transparency around the development and adoption of the department's budget.

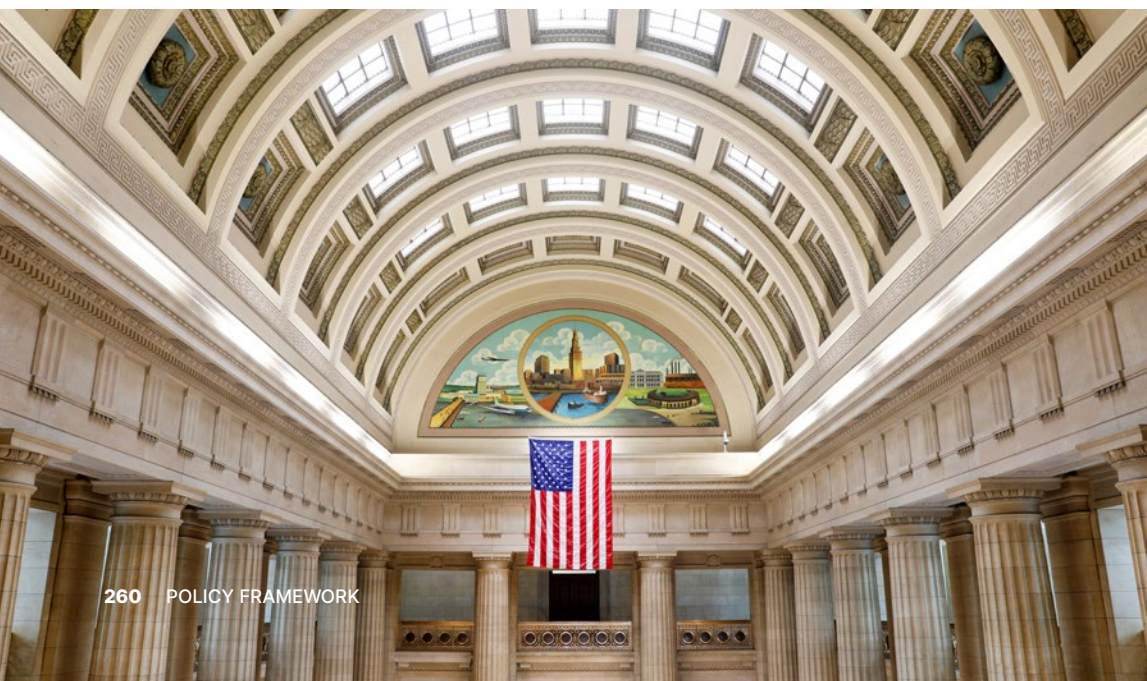
2.5.2. Institute quarterly budget review sessions for each division whereby the current status of budgeted and actual expenses and revenues are reviewed as well as discussion of potential financial challenges.

2.5.3. Train all supervisory and management staff in evaluating costs and benefits of existing facilities and for using that information in decision-making

2.5.4. Optimize operations and maintenance standards to ensure financial sustainability.

2.5.5. Establish department wide performance measures and establish protocols for collecting data and reporting. Discuss the performance measures at the quarterly budget meetings. Provide quarterly reports on performance measures to staff, City Council, and the public. **EQUITY**

2.5.6. Communicate the value of parks, recreation facilities, and programs provide to the city in describing the return on investment in these assets and services.



Inside City Hall.
Source: City of Cleveland.



The Jack Knife Bridge is the oldest of eight historic bridges that line the Cuyahoga River. This 1907 bridge serves as a reminder of the centrality of railroads and manufacturing in the city and region's history.

Source: City of Cleveland.



3/ COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIPS

Goal: Build and strengthen partnerships to leverage resources for mutual benefit.

Clevelanders benefit from having access to amenities provided by the City and other entities, including Cleveland Metroparks and the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. In an era of limited resources, partnerships can help deliver more efficient and effective services. By strengthening existing partnerships and identifying new partners, the City can leverage its resources to make limited funding stretch further. In addition, community and other organizations have expressed interest in developing collaborative partnerships with the City. There is energy to establish “Friends of” groups and to leverage community volunteerism, but navigating the City’s organizational structure and processes is currently difficult.

ACTIONS

3.1. Establish partnerships between the new Parks and Recreation Department and other City departments.

3.2. Formalize and strengthen partnerships with other major providers of parks, recreation facilities, programs, and community services in Cleveland and the greater Cleveland area.

3.3. Create and regularly revise partnership policies and agreements to ensure fair and equitable relationships.

3.4. Cultivate long-term relationships with community members, leaders, and community and cultural organizations to help enhance parks and recreation facilities and programs.



The Mall hosts a variety of large-scale events throughout the year.
Source: City of Cleveland.

3.1. ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE NEW PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT AND OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS.

While each City department has specialized expertise core to its responsibilities, departmental silos can also lead to duplication of effort and inefficiency in achieving policy goals. There is particular opportunity at the service area level for departments to work together to achieve common goals. These collaborations should be formalized to endure staff changes.

3.1.1. Enable opportunities for joint facilities and programming among Parks and Recreation, Mayor's Office of Capital Projects, City Planning Commission, Public Works, Public Health, Aging, and Community Development.

3.2. FORMALIZE AND STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER MAJOR PROVIDERS OF PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN CLEVELAND AND THE GREATER CLEVELAND AREA.

Though the City of Cleveland provides a significant amount of parks, recreation facilities, and programs in Cleveland, the full set of experiences currently available to residents is dependent on other providers. For example, Cleveland Metroparks offers access to more natural experiences and programs, while the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) operates an extensive array of playgrounds and recreational facilities throughout the city.

3.2.1. Collaborate with CMSD to formalize public access to outdoor recreational facilities on school property outside of school hours.

3.2.2. Collaborate with CMSD to understand the recreational needs of students and to explore joint-use facilities.

3.2.3. Coordinate with Cleveland Metroparks on the provision of parks and recreational facilities to prevent duplication.

3.2.4. Coordinate with Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District to develop park "leave-behinds" that fill community needs after the completion of sewer projects.

3.2.5. Collaborate with Canalway Partners on the interpretation of the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area within parks and recreation facilities.

3.2.6. Leverage joint community programming, information and resource collaborations with the Cleveland Public Library and other City providers.



OHIO & ERIE
CANALWAY

The Ohio & Erie Canalway is a National Heritage Area. Annually, more than 2.5 million people find their way to the iconic 101-mile Towpath Trail running through the heart of the Canalway. Source: City of Cleveland.

3.3. CREATE AND REGULARLY REVISE PARTNERSHIP POLICIES AND AGREEMENTS TO ENSURE FAIR AND EQUITABLE RELATIONSHIPS.

Successful partnerships are borne of clear responsibilities and mutual benefit. As circumstances change, partnership agreements may need to be updated to accurately reflect roles and responsibilities.

3.3.1. Review existing partnership agreements.

3.3.2. Develop a partnership assessment tool for the many types of partnership models that can be used to evaluate effectiveness. **EQUITY**

3.3.3. Track measurable outcomes and evaluate impacts of partnership agreements and regularly share progress with the public. **EQUITY**

3.3.4. Communicate areas of need and opportunity with existing and potential partners. **EQUITY**

3.3.5. Create umbrella and standardized agreements for different types of partners to expedite the ability of partners to provide services at parks and recreation facilities. See also 1.2 in Maintenance & Updates.

“

The city doesn't have the capacity to manage all of these suggested opportunities.

Shared opportunities to program our parks and recreation centers.

”

– Online survey participant from Southeast Cleveland



John F. Kennedy High School is adjacent to the Frederick Douglass Recreation Center and has created a successful partnership in programming and use of park space. Source: City of Cleveland.

3.4. CULTIVATE LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS, LEADERS, AND COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS TO HELP ENHANCE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS.

“

Encourage & create clear process for “friends of” and volunteer park maintenance.

”

– Online survey participant from Near East Cleveland

Wade Oval Wednesdays.
Source: University Circle, Inc., 2016.



Resident engagement plays an important role in supporting and caring for parks, recreation, and programs. The City will continue to seek ways to make it easy for residents to engage.

- 3.4.1.** Develop a guide that communicates a transparent, centralized process for becoming a partner organization that works with the City to improve parks and recreation facilities. **EQUITY**
- 3.4.2.** Formalize “friends of” groups and support and collaborate with their mobilized volunteer base to support and strengthen the work of parks and recreation staff across the department. **EQUITY**
- 3.4.3.** Establish a Parks Advisory Committee for the Parks & Recreation Department. **EQUITY**
- 3.4.4.** Identify a process to develop and manage volunteer recruitment, policies and agreements, and a current database of volunteers.
- 3.4.5.** Partner with community development corporations to program and maintain parks and recreation facilities. **EQUITY**
- 3.4.6.** Collaborate with local art and cultural organizations on programming initiatives. **EQUITY**
- 3.4.7.** Partner with local fitness operators, such as yoga studios and training gyms, for outdoor programming in parks. **EQUITY**

ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES

Cleveland's parks and recreation system ensures accessibility through improved connectivity, clear communication, and robust safety measures. By enhancing access for all residents, promoting awareness of park amenities and events, and prioritizing visitor safety through adequate infrastructure and protocols, these parks serve as inclusive community hubs where everyone can enjoy park and recreational activities safely and conveniently.

4 Connectivity & Accessibility

5 System Awareness & Communications

6 Safety





4/ CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

Goal: Ensure equitable access to quality parks & recreation facilities.

Clevelanders aspire to have a well-connected park and recreation system with biking and walking trails that make traveling to facilities safe. Paved, multiuse trails were most frequently cited as the most important outdoor facilities, selected by 41% of respondents.

ACTIONS

4.1. Utilize this plan's level of service standards as a planning tool to manage public space assets equitably and efficiently and provide a high quality of service.

4.2. Make efficient use of land resources and facilities through system-wide planning and investments.

4.3. Create safe routes to parks and recreation facilities.

4.4. Embed accessibility and universal access as a fundamental aspect of parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services.



Connectivity is about creating safe and accessible ways to get to parks and recreation facilities.

Source: City of Cleveland.

ACTIONS

4.1. UTILIZE THIS PLAN'S LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS AS A PLANNING TOOL TO MANAGE PUBLIC SPACE ASSETS EQUITABLY AND EFFICIENTLY AND PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY OF SERVICE.

For future investments, the City should use park space and level of service mapping to prioritize facilities and amenities in areas that have limited access today, or by reducing barriers, such as rail or highways, between existing neighborhoods and parks.

4.1.1. Identify opportunities to add or change park and recreation amenities or enhance multi-modal access based on Level of Service analysis. **EQUITY**

4.1.2. Identify opportunities to add park space or recreational amenities in areas that are lacking walkable access. *See p. 188.* **EQUITY**

4.1.3. Identify opportunities to consolidate park space or recreational amenities in areas that have redundant access. *See p. 188.* **EQUITY**

“

Provide [a facility] within a **5-15 minute distance of an area.**

”

– Open house participant from Thurgood Marshall Rec Center



Construction in Glendale Park. Source: City of Cleveland.

4.2. MAKE EFFICIENT USE OF LAND RESOURCES AND FACILITIES THROUGH SYSTEM-WIDE PLANNING AND INVESTMENTS.

In addition to looking for opportunities to grow Cleveland's system of parks and recreation facilities, the City must also make the best use of the space that it currently has through system-wide planning and investments in facilities.

4.2.1. Regularly evaluate the usage, effectiveness, and design of park and recreation facilities.

See p. 222. **EQUITY**

4.2.2. Develop park master plans for all new parks, or when renovation of an existing park requires a major rearrangement of park amenities.

4.2.3. Enhance the sidewalk and street tree network to optimize the public space realm. **EQUITY**

4.2.4. Periodically review and update the inventory of public spaces to ensure accuracy and consistency of data.

Residents participate in an engagement workshop for the redesign of Neff Park.
Source: City of Cleveland.



4.3. CREATE SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.

In some parts of Cleveland, parks and recreation facilities are a short distance away from residents as the crow flies, but missing sidewalks and trails, as well as invisible or perceived barriers make them difficult to access on foot or by bicycle.

4.3.1. Coordinate with the Citywide Mobility Plan planning process to enhance the city's trail network to connect parks and recreation facilities with each other, with other destinations, and with neighborhoods.

4.3.2. Coordinate with Public Works to identify well-lit, well-paved sidewalk and trail routes with active frontages that connect neighborhoods to parks and recreation facilities.

4.3.3. Support the Safe Passages Project with partners CMSD and GCRTA and work to expand the program to parks and recreation facilities.

4.3.4. Coordinate sidewalk and paved trail development with other city infrastructure projects, like transportation and stormwater planning.

4.3.5. Work with City departments to identify and alleviate gaps in sidewalks and on-street bicycle facilities that connect parks and recreation facilities to neighborhoods, schools, transit, and other facilities. **EQUITY**

4.3.6. Improve pedestrian access to parkland by advocating for safe crossings within a 1/4

mile walkshed of all parks and recreation facilities.

4.3.7. Encourage regional parks and recreation facilities to be connected to a major paved trail.

4.3.8. Work with City departments to evaluate opportunities to create better connections across or around current barriers, including major arterial streets. **EQUITY**

4.3.9. Consider the use of signalization, signal prioritization, pedestrian refuges, grade separation, and other techniques where trails cross wide and heavily trafficked roads.

4.3.10. Coordinate trail expansion with the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission's Cuyahoga Greenways Plan and partner organizations, like the Cleveland Metroparks.

4.3.11. Look for opportunities to acquire vacant lots for greenbelt, trail and linear park expansions.

4.3.12. Work with City departments to improve integration with transit and bikeshare networks to expand park and recreation facility access.

4.3.13. Consider physical barriers to access, and how to avoid or overcome them, in the siting of new parks and recreation facilities.

“

More **protected bike paths** to parks.

”

– Online survey participant from Near East Cleveland

“

Safer **crosswalks**.

”

– Online survey participant from Near East Cleveland

Paved, multi-use trails

are the most important outdoor facility for residents.



Safe Passages Project

In partnership with the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority, the City is investing in the Safe Passages Project, a program aimed at improving safety for students and staff before and after school. One of its main components includes an increase in security camera coverage and police patrol presence, along with volunteer safety monitors.

BEST PRACTICE



Safe Routes to Parks

Safe walking and biking connections to parks are essential to ensuring everyone can easily access great parks. Safe Routes to Parks was developed in collaboration with the Safe Routes Partnership to support park and recreation professionals and their partners to implement environmental, policy, and program strategies to create safe walking and biking access to parks.

The Safe Routes to Parks Action Framework provides professionals with a “how-to” guide to improve walking access to parks.



Source: City of Cleveland.

4.4. EMBED ACCESSIBILITY AND UNIVERSAL ACCESS AS A FUNDAMENTAL ASPECT OF PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES.

Parks should be accessible to everyone regardless of age, ability, or language. The City should strive to create equitable access for all by reducing barriers to use.

- 4.4.1.** Seek opportunities to go beyond minimum ADA requirements to achieve broader access for all residents. **EQUITY**
- 4.4.2.** Conduct an access audit and site report for all city parks and recreation facilities. **EQUITY**
- 4.4.3.** Create universal accessibility guidelines for parks and recreation improvements to determine changes necessary for improved accessibility to amenities by all. **EQUITY**
- 4.4.4.** Provide multilingual signage in all parks and recreation facilities. **EQUITY**
- 4.4.5.** Incorporate new and creative recreation facilities and amenities that provide universal access and offers a variety of experiences where people of all abilities can interact. **EQUITY**
- 4.4.6.** Evaluate accessibility and universal access policies and practices to programs and services. **EQUITY**
- 4.4.7.** Establish standards for accessibility to department programs and services. **EQUITY**

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Adaptive Play

Let's All Play Playground | Salem, OR

Salem, Oregon's "Let's All Play" Playground is an adaptive playground that follows universal design and all abilities play principles.

The structures and equipment are designed to be usable by all people regardless of ability. It features an accessible slide, sensory elements, specialized swings, geoball climber, collaborative water play, smooth and grass areas (no wood chips), and a serpentine track that also functions as an accessible circuit.





Disabled People in the Design Process

In order to design with disabled people, cities must begin to identify disabled community members and organizations at the very beginning of the process. Through accessible community meetings, specialized disabled focus groups, prototyping accessible design elements, and conducting access audits, disabled community members and experts should be at the table for each and every project.

THE DESIGN PROCESS WITH DISABLED PEOPLE

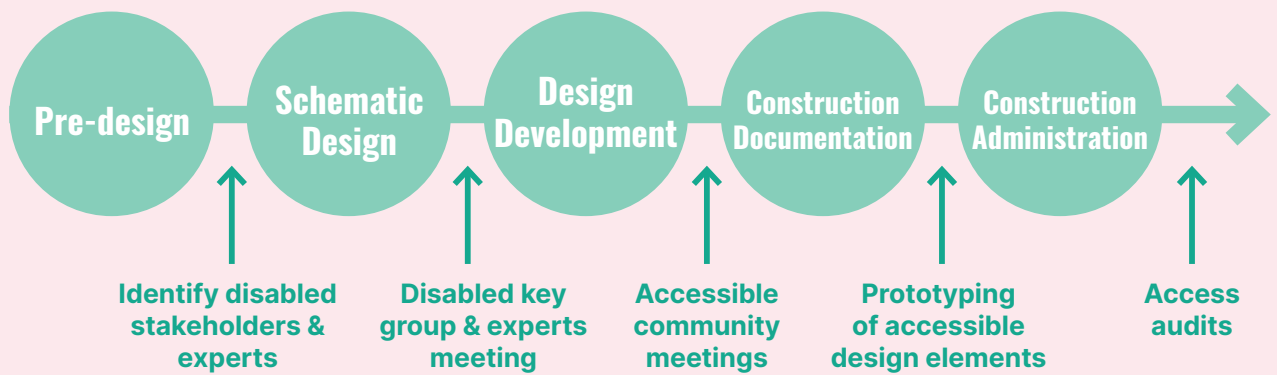
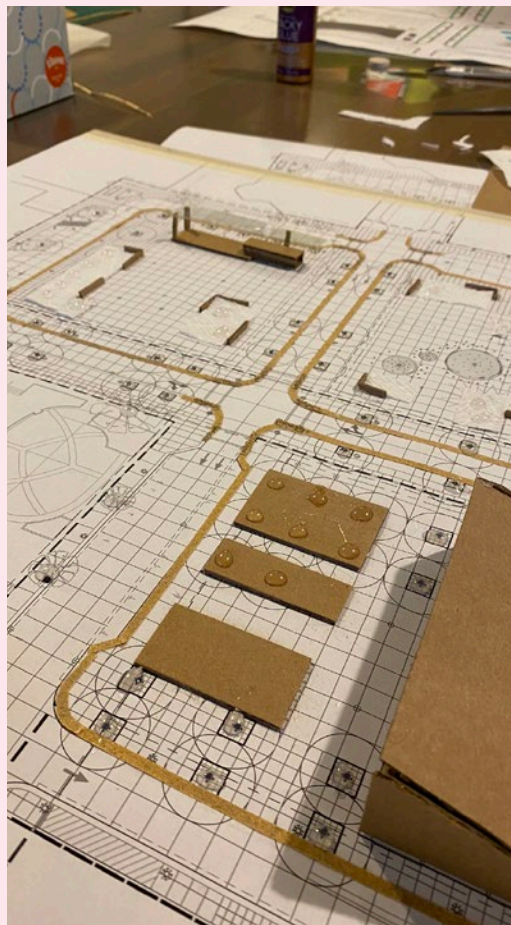


Figure 22. Diagram of the design process, with disabled people. Source: Alexa Vaughn, Design with Disabled People Now.

Disabled key group meeting in Eugene, OR during the schematic design phase of a project. Agendas and surveys printed in braille, a tactile site plan, a hearing aid loop, and live captioning were all used to help gather feedback. Source: OLIN, 2020.





CITY OF CLEVELAND
Mayor Justin M. Bibb

NEIGHBORHOOD RESOURCE & RECREATION CENTER PROGRAM GUIDE

FREE!

Spring Seasonal Session

**Register for
programs** held at
your Neighborhood
Resource &
Recreation Center
during our Spring
Seasonal Session



Spring programs begin:
March 11, 2024 – May 17, 2024

5/ SYSTEM AWARENESS & COMMUNICATIONS

Goal: Improve users ability to quickly find park and recreation facilities and programs.

Many Clevelanders are unaware of the full range of services, programs, and amenities offered by the City. In the survey, 40% of respondents identified not knowing where to go for programs or what is offered as a major barrier to visiting parks and recreation centers more often. People noted a desire to be able to search and register for programs online.

ACTIONS

5.1. Promote City parks and recreation facilities as part of a unified regional system.

5.2. Create a legible brand identity for City parks and recreation facilities.

5.3. Develop a communications and marketing plan that increases awareness of parks, recreation facilities, programs, and other department services.

5.4. Provide a single source to learn about programs and services, register for programs and make facility reservations.

5.5. Gather input from residents on a recurring basis in the planning of parks, facilities, and programs.



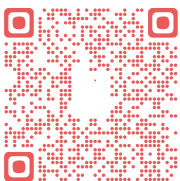
ACTIONS

5.1. PROMOTE CITY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AS PART OF A UNIFIED REGIONAL SYSTEM.

There is currently no unified map or informational resource to understand all components of Cleveland's public space system—parks, paved and unpaved trails, recreation facilities, natural areas, stormwater management areas, and community gardens. While residents may have their favorite parks or natural areas that they visit, having separate informational resources precludes an understanding of how these resources are all physically connected—that one may be able to walk or ride their bike between resources—or the full array of programs offered by various City departments and other major park providers.

- 5.1.1. Create new maps and guides that show all City parks, trails, and recreation facilities together with those of Cleveland Metroparks, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, the Cleveland Housing Authority, and other public agencies.

Check out the City of Cleveland's Parks and Recreation **Online Map!** Here you can search for parks, amenities, and recreational facilities.



BEST PRACTICE

Public Space System Imageability

Community Services Map | Fort Collins, CO

The City of Fort Collins Community Service's Map shows all the city's parks, trails, recreation facilities, and natural areas together with those of other major park, recreation, and program service providers. This allows residents and visitors to easily understand the unified system, despite management and operations by different departments.

CITY OF FORT COLLINS COMMUNITY SERVICES MAP

MAP LEGEND MUSEUM OF

5.2. CREATE A LEGIBLE BRAND IDENTITY FOR CITY PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.

Creating a legible brand identity for city parks and recreation facilities is essential for establishing a cohesive and recognizable image within the community. A distinct brand helps in promoting the facilities' unique offerings, enhancing public awareness, and ensures consistent communication of the department's mission and values to residents.

- 5.2.1.** Ensure consistency of marketing materials.
- 5.2.2.** Continue to develop wayfinding and signage standards.
- 5.2.3.** Ensure printed communication materials across recreation centers adhere to system standards.

Inconsistent signage identity throughout parks.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



Wooden bollards are a signifier of city parks.
Source: OLIN, 2024.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Cohesive Brand Identity Great Parks of Hamilton County

Identified as part of the park district's comprehensive master planning process, Great Parks of Hamilton County, OH recently went through a rebranding process to unify the entire system.

New signage relies more heavily on the new 'acorn' brand, letting people know they've arrived to a Great Parks reservation.



5.3. DEVELOP A COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING PLAN THAT INCREASES AWARENESS OF PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES, PROGRAMS, AND OTHER DEPARTMENT SERVICES.

The City's offerings, public interests, and communication tools are constantly evolving. Marketing strategies should be regularly updated to ensure the most current messages are being disseminated using the most effective tools available.

- 5.3.1. Improve materials that communicate the full range of facilities and experiences available across the city to all residents, workers, and visitors.
- 5.3.2. Ensure communication materials and signage use consistent language to refer to parks and facilities of various classifications.
- 5.3.3. Highlight the environmental, social, economic, and wellness benefits of parks, trails, recreation facilities, and programs.
- 5.3.4. Ensure materials are easy to understand and are accessible to non-English speakers and the visually impaired. **EQUITY**
- 5.3.5. Incorporate the National Recreation and Park Association's Equity Language Guide in all verbal, visual and written communication. **EQUITY**
- 5.3.6. Explore expanded use of technology and digital platforms to disseminate information about parks, recreation, and trails and to enhance the user experience. **EQUITY**
- 5.3.7. Provide more robust information on each park, trail, recreation facility, and program on the City's website.
- 5.3.8. Create a Parks and Recreation Department website that is managed by the Parks and Recreation Department.
- 5.3.9. Regularly measure and report on the progress of Parks and Recreation Plan implementation.
- 5.3.10. Proactively engage communities adjacent to parks and recreation facilities about the availability of programs and facilities to inspire users to participate more often. **EQUITY**
- 5.3.11. Develop marketing strategies that center outreach to diverse racial and ethnic communities. **EQUITY**
- 5.3.12. Continue to review the most effective uses of electronic and social media for marketing and informational purposes.
- 5.3.13. Establish protocols, standards and training for use of electronic and social media platforms.

“ Updated website & registration platform. It would be nice to go the website and easily find out what classes are being offered each day/weekly, location & how to sign up. ”

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

“

Need to do a better job advertising what is offered at parks.

”

– Neighborhood meeting participant from Hough

Cleveland marketing campaign.
Source: City of Cleveland.

5.3.14. Establish individual social media pages for each NRRC and for key programs with staff designated to manage consistent with the department electronic and social media standards.

5.3.15. Provide marketing and communications training and tools to NRRC staff.

5.3.16. Clearly communicate the reasons behind safety, operational, partnership, technical and budgetary decisions.

Information kiosks in the North Coast Harbor.
Source: City of Cleveland.



5.4. PROVIDE A SINGLE SOURCE TO LEARN ABOUT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, REGISTER FOR PROGRAMS AND MAKE FACILITY RESERVATIONS.

Respondents frequently indicated that they do not know where to go for programs or what is offered and noted that an online system for searching and registering for programs was missing. In the survey, 40% of respondents identified this as a major barrier to visiting parks and recreation centers more often.

5.4.1. Implement a comprehensive recreation management software system to better track user data and provide better user registration experience.

5.4.2. Based on the Communications and Marketing Plan, develop materials that highlight parks and park amenities, programs, facilities, and services to educate and inspire use of parks and participation in programs and services.

Front staff provide helpful information to users at the Collinwood Recreation Center.
Source: City of Cleveland.



5.5. GATHER INPUT FROM RESIDENTS ON A RECURRING BASIS IN THE PLANNING OF PARKS, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS.

Throughout engagement, residents expressed opinions on plans for their local park or recreation center and indicated a desire to have more involvement in the planning of parks, facilities, and programs. In addition, employees that were engaged in the planning process provided valuable insight, and the City should take advantage of their knowledge and expertise.

5.5.1. Follow the Analysis and Recommendations for Park Investment Community Engagement Strategies (ARPICES) guide to embedding community engagement into the planning, design, and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. **EQUITY**

5.5.2. Conduct a parks and recreation needs assessment, including a statistically valid survey and Level of Service analysis, on a 5-year cycle. **EQUITY**

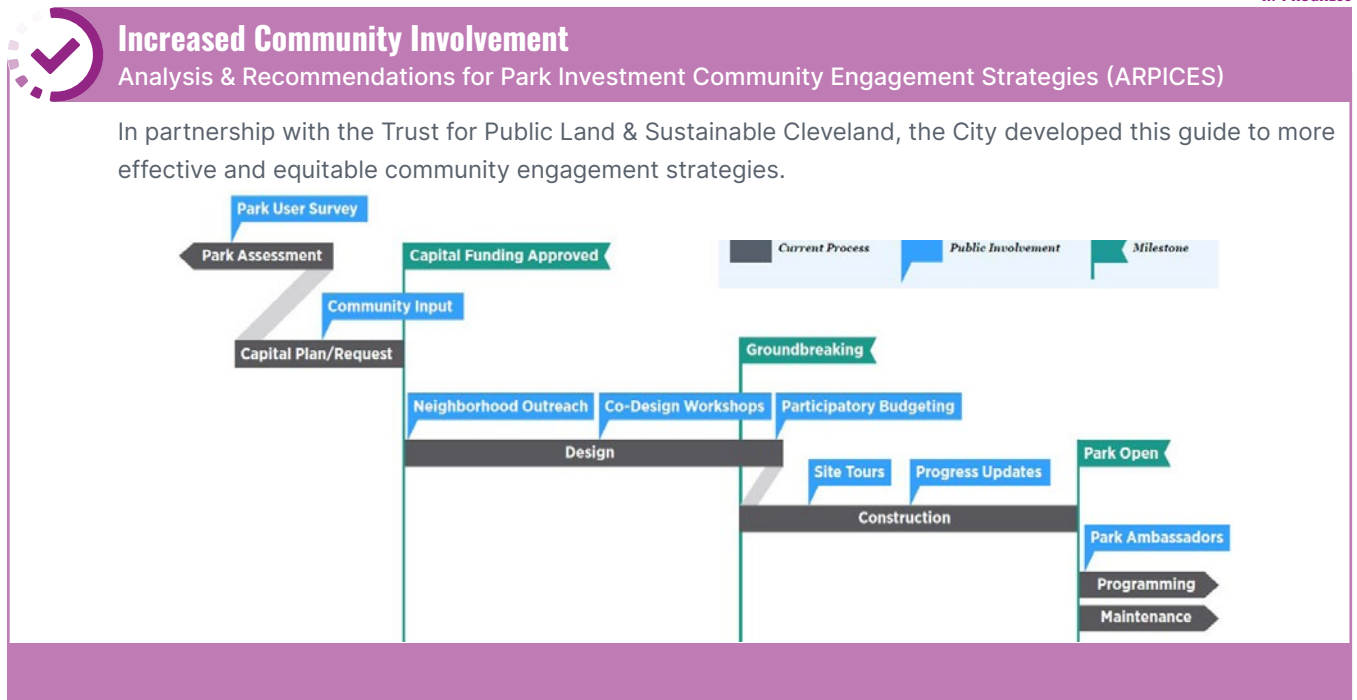
5.5.3. Engage users on an ongoing basis to evaluate the success of parks, trails, recreation facilities, and programs to establish a meaningful feedback loop

between the City and residents and to account for differences in needs and desires between neighborhoods. **EQUITY**

5.5.4. Use online, social media, notifications at NRRCs, and the recreation registration software system regularly to inform and solicit feedback from residents.

5.5.5. Continue to evolve and practice creative community engagement to be more inclusive and representative of diverse populations. **EQUITY**

IN-PROGRESS





6/ SAFETY

Goal: Continue to enhance safety and security in all parks and recreation facilities through multiple models of community safety and harm reduction.

Residents want to feel safe in parks and at recreation facilities, and they want to feel safe getting to those facilities. Over a third (37%) of survey respondents said they did not visit parks and recreation centers more often due to a lack of visible patrolling presence. Other residents cited a general lack of lighting and other preventative security as barriers to usage.

ACTIONS

- 6.1.** Support a visible community presence in parks and recreation facilities.
- 6.2.** Work with law enforcement and social service agencies on a coordinated approach to preventive and reactive safety and security in parks and at recreation facilities.
- 6.3.** Incorporate 'Crime Prevention through Environmental Design' (CPTED) principles into design standards.



ACTIONS

6.1. SUPPORT A VISIBLE COMMUNITY PRESENCE IN PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.

The most effective way to improve the perception of safety and reduce the incidence of crime is to support increased community usage of parks and recreation facilities. The more parks and recreation facilities are used by the community, the more “eyes on the street” there are and the less inviting they are to unwanted activities.

- 6.1.1.** Develop a park ambassador program to increase visible surveillance, positive staff and park user interactions, and rule enforcement in parks and recreation facilities. **EQUITY**
- 6.1.2.** Engage “Friends of” groups and community volunteers to give neighboring residents a stake in the safety of parks. **EQUITY**
- 6.1.3.** Expand usage of security cameras with consideration of the balance between safety and identity protection, lighting that balances safety and light pollution, and enhanced technology for crime prevention, intervention and investigation in parks and recreation facilities.
- 6.1.4.** Empower security officers staffed at parks and recreation facilities to respond to issues that may arise either indoors or outdoors, regardless of where they are stationed.

BEST PRACTICE



City Park Ambassador Program

Long Beach, CA

In 2023, the Long Beach Parks, Recreation and Marine launched a Park Ambassador program. The program’s main goals are to significantly enhance staff presence in its major parks, provide staff to address patron complaints, enhance the cleanliness of park facilities and improve the experience of visitors at City parks. The program will focus on 39 parks citywide.

While the daily focus and goals of the Park Ambassador team are to ensure parks are clean and more welcoming for all visitors, park patrons will be able to report concerns to the Ambassadors, who will also serve as extra “eyes and ears” in the park. The extended presence of Park Ambassadors into the evening hours will provide greater opportunities for the public to engage with friendly, approachable and knowledgeable PRM staff members about matters of importance in their beloved parks.



6.2. WORK WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES ON A COORDINATED APPROACH TO PREVENTIVE AND REACTIVE SAFETY AND SECURITY IN PARKS AND AT RECREATION FACILITIES.

The City should clarify the ways it intends to combat safety concerns, whether through people-based approaches or through design-based approaches. Safety was one of the residents' top priorities.

“

I just want to feel safe from the time I get out of my car, and while I am in the facility.

”

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

37%

of respondents said they did not visit parks and recreation centers more often **due to a lack of visible patrolling presence.**

- 6.2.1.** Clarify emergency response procedures and roles for park and recreation facility staff and law enforcement.
- 6.2.2.** Provide safety training for all parks, recreation, and maintenance staff who work in parks, recreation, and public facilities.
- 6.2.3.** Develop response and intervention plans for mental health crises in parks. **EQUITY**
- 6.2.4.** Ensure that policing of parks and recreation centers is based in community policing principles and accountable to stakeholder partnerships in order to collaboratively work toward safety and crime reduction in parks and recreation facilities. **EQUITY**
- 6.2.5.** Establish a Parks and Recreation Department policy that outlines a consistent approach towards unhoused individuals in city parks that is person-first, sympathetic, and solution oriented. **EQUITY**

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT



Woodruff Park Atlanta, GA

Woodruff Park has been a key green destination for years. Many of its regular users were experiencing homelessness. Rather than ignore these users or confront them with hostile tactics and policing, Project for Public Spaces implemented a dual strategy to physically improve the park while meeting social needs.

A mobile game cart offers users games, but also information, power outlets, and access to a full-time case manager who builds relationships with regular park users and connects them to services and permanent housing.



6.3. INCORPORATE CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED) PRINCIPLES INTO DESIGN STANDARDS.

The intent of CPTED is to create an environment that can help prevent crime with the resources that are available to encourage positive human experiences. The four principles of CPTED are diagrammed below.

6.3.1. Encourage new public and private development to face, rather than turn its back to, parks and recreation facilities.

6.3.2. Work to avoid or eliminate “backs” of parks and recreation facilities.

6.3.3. Expand and standardize entrances, while limiting unofficial entrances to create clear points of entry and enhance natural access control.

BEST PRACTICE



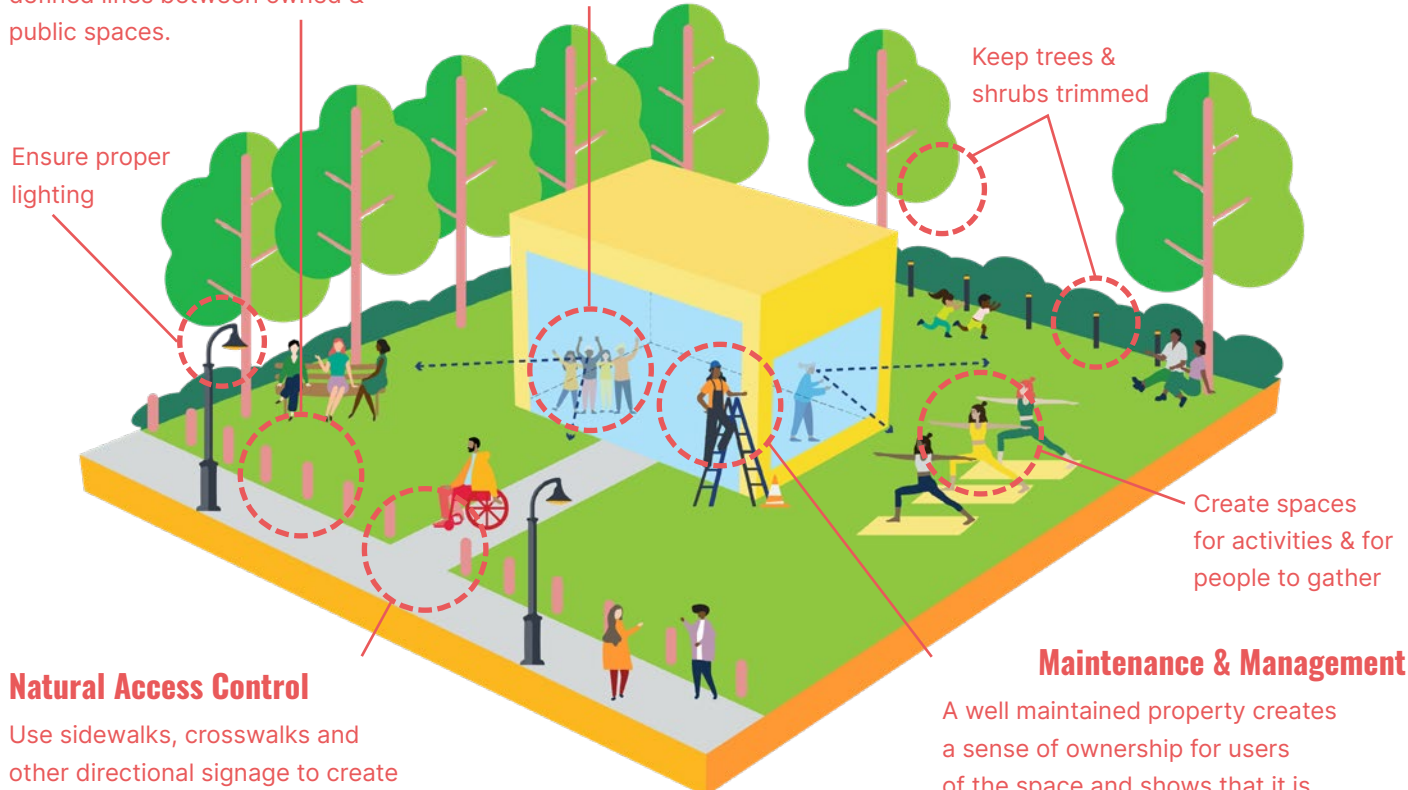
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Territorial Reinforcement

Use physical attributes to create defined lines between owned & public spaces.

Natural Surveillance

Establish clear sightlines from rec centers into and across the park.



Natural Access Control

Use sidewalks, crosswalks and other directional signage to create clear entry & exit points.

Maintenance & Management

A well maintained property creates a sense of ownership for users of the space and shows that it is cared for and used.



Hoops After Dark

In partnership with the Cleveland Cavaliers, the City created Hoops After Dark, a summer basketball league and development program designed for 18-26 year olds that is part of Mayor Bibb’s Comprehensive Violence Prevention Strategy.

This initiative uses sports and wraparound services to create community, offer customized interventions, and mitigate participation in crime.

An hour before each game, participants attend a life skills workshop on topics such as job readiness, financial literacy, and gun safety. Participants are also connected to services that support emotional, social, spiritual, physical, environmental, and occupational wellness and health.



Source: City of Cleveland.



Source: City of Cleveland.

ENGAGING EXPERIENCES

Recreation centers, their programming, and staffing play a pivotal role in the lives of residents, offering a broad range of activities that cater to diverse interests and age groups. These centers provide vital spaces for physical fitness, social interaction, and skill development.

By supporting these facilities, the staff, and programming, Cleveland invests in the health, happiness, and cohesion of its residents.

7 Recreation Programming

8 Staffing & Hours





7/ RECREATION PROGRAMMING

Goal: Provide equitable access to quality recreational experiences.

Clevelanders love and appreciate the City's free programming. The 57% who participated in recreation programs in the previous year rated program quality as excellent or good. There is a desire for more diverse, multigenerational, community-focused programming in parks and recreation facilities. Close to a third of survey respondents said they do not participate because their desired facility/program is not offered.

ACTIONS

- 7.1.** Expand year-round usability of existing recreation facilities.
- 7.2.** Ensure indoor and outdoor facilities and programs continue to respond to changing user needs.
- 7.3.** Promote public health and wellness through public space programming.
- 7.4.** Consider the separate and combined needs of children, youth, families, adults, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.



Summer baseball league at one of the many fields throughout Cleveland's parks.
Source: City of Cleveland.

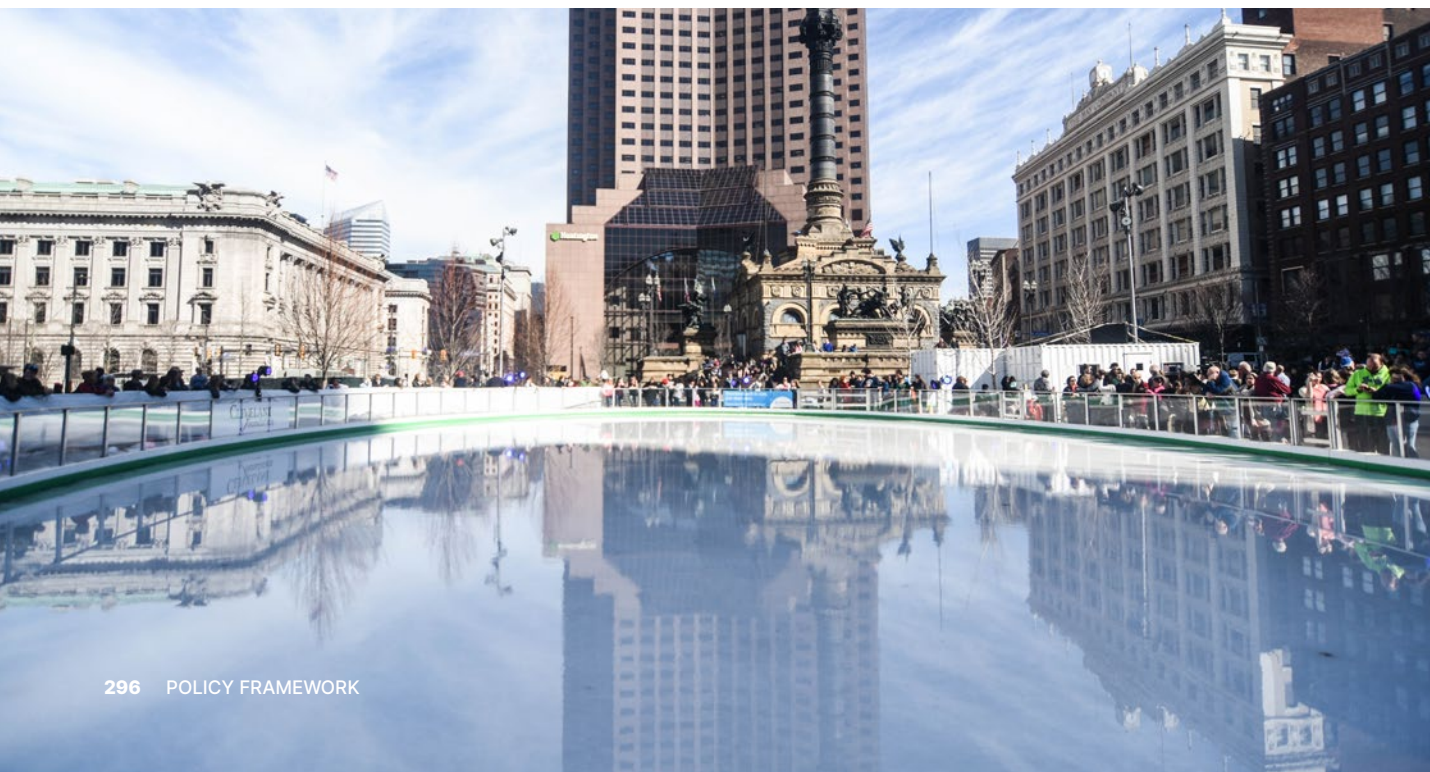
ACTIONS

7.1. EXPAND YEAR-ROUND USABILITY OF EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES.

Changes in daylight hours and temperatures affect the usability of some outdoor recreation facilities over the course of the year. This has the dual effect of suppressing participation in colder months and putting greater pressure on facilities in warmer months. Expanding year-round usability could help distribute these waves of usage and participation.

- 7.1.1.** Develop a comprehensive Recreation Program Plan.
- 7.1.2.** Develop a rehab and capital plan that ensures recreation facilities are designed to meet the recreation needs of neighborhoods and are in alignment with the comprehensive Recreation Program Plan.
- 7.1.3.** Develop a citywide, objective lighting policy that addresses how early and late lights should be on at parks and recreation facilities to extend year-round usability.
- 7.1.4.** Explore opportunities to provide all-season access to certain high-use facilities through the use of temporary or permanent structures.
- 7.1.5.** Leverage special events, “pop-up” programming, and temporary uses to activate public spaces and expand access to programs year-round.
- 7.1.6.** Increase opportunities for winter programming, such as developing cross country skiing/ snowshoeing trails, to create active park and recreation facilities year-round.

Ice skating rink at Public Square during the winter.
Source: Eric Drost via Wikimedia Commons, 2017.



7.2. ENSURE INDOOR AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO CHANGING USER NEEDS.

While traditional sports like basketball and soccer still attract large numbers of participants, recreational preferences change over time. For example, pickleball is one of the fastest growing sports. Such trends have implications for facilities and programs. A degree of nimbleness is necessary to prepare for and adjust to these trends.



Expanding programming options...

through a diverse range of activities and events.



– Neighborhood meeting participant from Buckeye-Woodhill-Shaker Square

57%

of people who participated in a recreation program rated it as **excellent or good**.

- 7.2.1.** Identify recreation metrics to be used and analyzed annually across all recreation programs and facilities and train staff on how to implement them.
- 7.2.2.** Track and evaluate program participation, customer retention, outcomes and adjust offerings as needed as an incentive for innovation and alignment with community trends.
- 7.2.3.** Evaluate Core Program Areas and individual programs annually to ensure offerings are relevant to evolving demographics and trends in the local community. **EQUITY**
- 7.2.4.** Undertake a demand and capacity analysis of existing programs offered by the City of Cleveland, program partners, and competitors.
- 7.2.5.** Conduct user/staff surveys and public input processes to assess and implement new program innovations. **EQUITY**
- 7.2.6.** Monitor local and national recreation trends and best practices and incorporate new and innovative recreation programs to sustain community participation.
- 7.2.7.** Periodically evaluate which programs are using indoor and outdoor spaces and identify needs for additional space and opportunities to reallocate space.
- 7.2.8.** Implement best practices in program life cycles to maintain a culture of quality program delivery.
- 7.2.9.** Increase partnerships with other recreation providers to help meet demand.
- 7.2.10.** Explore streamlining the process of permitting temporary program and event spaces.
- 7.2.11.** Evaluate opportunities to repurpose or expand the range of allowable uses of existing facilities before building new, specialized facilities.
- 7.2.12.** Develop a Program Development and Resource Guide to provide staff with consistent standards for developing, implementing, and evaluating programming.
- 7.2.13.** Integrate check in system with new recreation management software system for the NRRCs to help track demographics of facility users. **EQUITY**

7.3. PROMOTE PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLNESS THROUGH PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMMING.

Over 90% of Cleveland residents agree that parks and recreation facilities, and programs improve physical health and fitness. Fitness and wellness programs were the fourth highest priority program for residents, and exercise and fitness equipment was the third highest priority for indoor facilities.

7.3.1. Enhance fitness, wellness, and healthy lifestyle programming and facilities.

7.3.2. Work with partners to identify community health and wellness needs and to assess the effectiveness of Park and Recreation Department programming on public health over time. **EQUITY**

7.3.3. Evaluate existing programs for their contribution to health and wellness, and adjust programs or develop new programs to meet health and wellness needs.

7.3.4. Coordinate with Public Health to elevate voices of those most impacted by health disparities and environmental injustice to inform policies, programming, activities and services in parks. **EQUITY**

7.3.5. Highlight the health and wellness benefits of recreation and nature based programs in informational materials.

7.3.6. Coordinate with Public Health to track public space usage indicators over time to determine the positive health impacts of public space system improvements.

7.3.7. Increase and diversify nature based programs to provide educational opportunities for residents to better understand and interact with natural resources.

7.3.8. Collaborate with Public Health and local healthcare providers on a park prescription program that has medical professionals prescribe time spent in parks to improve physical and mental wellness.

7.3.9. Work with the Department of Public Health to develop dedicated clinic space in strategic NRRCs. *See also 3.1.1.*

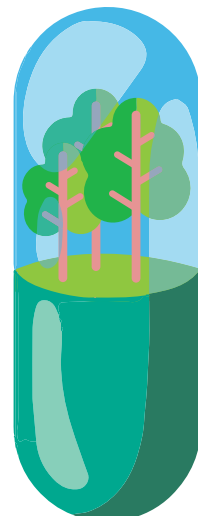
Over
90%
of respondents agree that park and rec facilities improve physical health and quality of life, and make Cleveland a more desirable place to live.

BEST PRACTICE



Park Prescription Programs (ParkRx)

Park Prescription programs (also called ParkRx) involve health or social service providers encouraging people to spend time in nature to improve their health and well-being. They can be as diverse as the communities for which they are designed and often include collaboration between park and public land agencies, healthcare providers, and community partners.



7.4. CONSIDER THE SEPARATE AND COMBINED NEEDS OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, FAMILIES, ADULTS, SENIORS, AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES.

Parks and recreation agencies tend to heavily focus on children, who are heavy users of programs. Programming offered by Cleveland should provide more diverse and inclusive offerings for a wide range of user groups. By doing this, the City creates a welcoming, inclusive, and accessible environment for all Clevelanders.

“

Have consistent and thorough programming for **ALL** ages.

”

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

Programming should consider the combined needs of both seniors and youth.

Sources: City of Cleveland.

- 7.4.1.** Promote and increase the availability of programming that caters to diverse ages, interests, and abilities that create shared community experiences. **EQUITY**
- 7.4.2.** Expand senior-only times at recreation centers and swimming pools.
- 7.4.3.** Work with partner organizations to expand and diversify youth and senior programming and ensure programs are available at hours that work for them. **EQUITY**
- 7.4.4.** Work with partner organizations to generate program ideas and increase overall active adult participation.
- 7.4.5.** Ensure parks and recreation facilities have sufficient shade, benches, maintained and open restrooms, even walking surfaces, and appropriate signage and lighting.





8/ STAFFING & HOURS

Goal: Ensure that staff capabilities match park and recreation needs.

Residents are encouraged to use parks and recreation facilities when they are open at convenient times and when there are staff available to support their experience. Currently, people feel uncertain about the hours that neighborhood resource and recreation centers and indoor and outdoor pools are open. Nearly half of survey respondents said they do not participate in programs because of the times the programs are offered, and close to a third of respondents said they do not visit parks and recreation centers more often because facility operating hours are not convenient.

ACTIONS

- 8.1.** Increase full and part-time staff and contractor capacity and capabilities.
- 8.2.** Provide regular training to ensure that existing staff develop the skills to perform their duties.



The City has experienced a shortage of lifeguards in the past few years.
Source: City of Cleveland.

ACTIONS

8.1. INCREASE FULL AND PART-TIME STAFF AND CONTRACTOR CAPACITY AND CAPABILITIES.

The design and upkeep needs of parks and recreation facilities and the growing variety of programs offered by the City increasingly requires a larger staff. The City needs to increase staff capacity now, while simultaneously looking to the future. As needs and offerings grow, the new Department must constantly reassess and adapt its staffing to maintain efficiency and meet the community expectations.

8.1.1. Evaluate part-time and seasonal staffing levels a minimum of 6 months in advance of each season to ensure proper staffing for upcoming needs.

8.1.2. Evaluate staffing levels annually to ensure proper staffing levels are included in annual budgets to meet program and service expectations.

8.1.3. Actively recruit qualified, diverse staff to fill open positions. **EQUITY**

8.1.4. Identify and encourage opportunities to share maintenance responsibilities with partner organizations and community-based groups for efficiency.

8.1.5. Create a local high school/college internship program to augment staffing resources, experiment with new management practices, and develop a pipeline into the city's environmental stewardship division. **EQUITY**

8.1.6. Refine onboarding and provide ongoing training to ensure that existing staff develop the skills to perform their duties.

8.1.7. Establish key performance indicators and certifications for park and recreation staff and collect data on a regular basis to measure and chart progress.

8.1.8. Update job descriptions to reflect needed job requirements, performance expectations, necessary skills/abilities, experience requirements, licensing requirements, and the physical demands of the position.

8.1.9. Review compensation rates of parks and recreation staff to ensure they are competitive with comparable positions with other regional parks and recreation providers.

“

It's been hard to use public pools this year because of hours and understaffing that creates uncommunicated closings.

”

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

Job fair for the City of Cleveland.

Source: City of Cleveland.



8.2. PROVIDE REGULAR TRAINING TO ENSURE THAT EXISTING STAFF DEVELOP THE SKILLS TO PERFORM THEIR DUTIES.

The new Department should build on its work to develop a Department-centric training program. For example, if the City begins installing more native meadows, overall maintenance is likely reduced but is much different from mowing turf grass because its management requires different types of equipment and technical skills. Staff should be trained to gain needed expertise.

8.2.1. Conduct training that is job specific for each different discipline (e.g., trades, maintenance, arborists, horticulture).

8.2.2. Develop and conduct onboard training programs – one for new full-time employees and one for part-time and seasonal employees.

8.2.3. Develop an internal continuing education program that trains new and current staff on core skills, responsibilities, and competencies.

8.2.4. Develop a leadership training program to build staff leadership skills and provide a training program for future department supervisors, managers, etc.

8.2.5. Ensure all staff have customer service training.

8.2.6. Ensure a proactively safe workplace through systems of accountability, training and support.

8.2.7. Encourage and incentivize professional certification.

Recreation center staff are a crucial and appreciated aspect of parks and recreation throughout the city.
Sources: City of Cleveland.



ENHANCED SPACES

Beautifully designed parks and recreational facilities not only offer residents and visitors a respite from urban life but also foster social interaction and promote mental well-being. Well-cared-for green spaces support local wildlife, enrich the city's visual appeal, and contribute to ecological balance and health. Investing in these areas makes Cleveland a more vibrant, appealing, and resilient city.

9 Parks

10 Recreation Facilities

11 Nature & Green Spaces





9/ PARKS

Goal: Elevate the design of park facilities.

Basic amenities like restrooms, seating, shade/shelter, lighting, water fountains, and directional/informational signage in parks are critical to an enjoyable parks and recreation experience. In addition, residents expressed interest in moving towards universally accessible playgrounds, natural playgrounds, elements that reflect the unique identity of the community, and multi-use facilities were all frequently mentioned.

ACTIONS

9.1. Develop a unified design language for parks and recreation facilities that is flexible enough to reflect individual community identities.

9.2. Consider the design of adjacent parks, recreation facilities, and other public facilities holistically.

9.3. Strive for design excellence in the development and refresh of parks and recreation facilities.

9.4. Incorporate public art, including landscape-based art and functional art, into parks and recreation facilities.



Lush and diverse plantings at Otter Park.
Source: OLIN, 2023.

ACTIONS

9.1. DEVELOP A UNIFIED DESIGN LANGUAGE FOR PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES THAT IS FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO REFLECT INDIVIDUAL COMMUNITY IDENTITIES.

Though design evolves over time through changing preferences, the availability of materials, and more informed practices, it is possible to use plantings, color, materiality, and other devices to achieve a cohesion that allows users to immediately identify that they are in a City park or recreation facility while reflecting local history and identities.

The community surrounding Roberto Clement Park made sure that their neighborhood was reflected in the park.
Source: OLIN, 2023.

9.1.1. Identify elements, such as signage, lighting, and plantings that can be standardized across all parks and recreation facilities to increase efficiency and create a cohesive identity.

9.1.2. Standardize the design language of structures and equipment across all park and recreation facilities.

9.1.3. Empower and inspire community members to participate in the public engagement process of parks and recreation facilities so that they are reflected in the design of the spaces. **EQUITY**

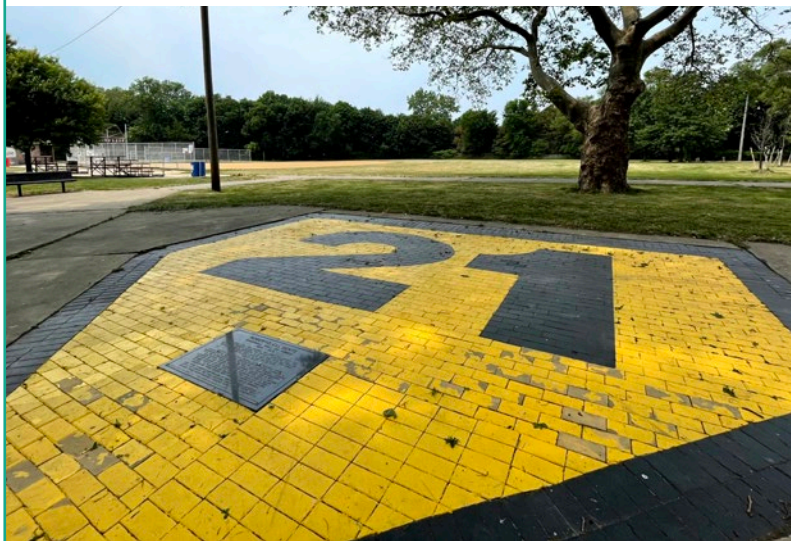
BEST PRACTICE



Reflect Community Character & Identity

Roberto Clemente Park

The community surrounding Roberto Clement Park made sure that their neighborhood was reflected in the park through murals.



9.2. CONSIDER THE DESIGN OF ADJACENT PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES, AND OTHER PUBLIC FACILITIES HOLISTICALLY.

By considering these facilities comprehensively, the City can optimize land use, enhance accessibility, and promote a sense of unity and connectivity within neighborhoods.

9.2.1. Strategically acquire land adjacent to existing parks, when available and cost effective, to expand existing parks and increase total parkland, visibility, and street frontage.

“

Build upon strengths, continue to turn vacant lots into green space, more parks in more neighborhoods!

”

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

9.3. STRIVE FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND REFRESH OF PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.

“

Taking the beauty of the parks [the City] creates into consideration. What people see on the outside affects what is going on inside their minds.

”

– Online survey participant from Near East Cleveland

Though more recent parks, such as Public Square, Canal Basin Park, and Clark Field, have elevated the level of design, many of Cleveland’s parks and recreation facilities feel frozen in time—maintained as they were when they were built. Refreshes of parks and recreation facilities will provide an opportunity to not just replace individual elements in kind but to reimagine the parks’ and recreation facilities’ design to increase usability; environmental, social, and economic benefits; and aesthetic appeal.

- 9.3.1.** Comprehensively evaluate the design and function of parks on a regular basis using this plan’s design guidelines to determine if they need to be refreshed.
- 9.3.2.** Peer review award winning parks and recreation facilities to keep up to date on successful design solutions.
- 9.3.3.** Partner with local and nationally recognized designers to add different design perspectives.
- 9.3.4.** Incorporate best practices in park and recreation planning, design, and operation from other park systems.
- 9.3.5.** Develop master plans for all parks in need of a major refresh. *See also 4.2.2.*
- 9.3.6.** Prior to any significant master plan or development, work with partner organizations and current and long-time residents to ensure equitable community involvement in the process. **EQUITY**
- 9.3.7.** Reflect community input and cultural values in future park designs and program activities, ensuring alignment of park spaces with specific neighborhood and cultural uses. **EQUITY**

Mercedes Cotner Park.
Source: City of Cleveland.



9.4. INCORPORATE PUBLIC ART, INCLUDING LANDSCAPE-BASED ART AND FUNCTIONAL ART, INTO PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.

Public art can enhance the experience in parks and recreation facilities. Public art can tell stories, reveal histories, and provide opportunities for whimsy or reflection. Involving artists in the design process can ensure that public art works with, rather than detracts from, the user experience.

9.4.1. Develop an overarching strategy to better implement the Cleveland Public Art Program and enrich the user experience.

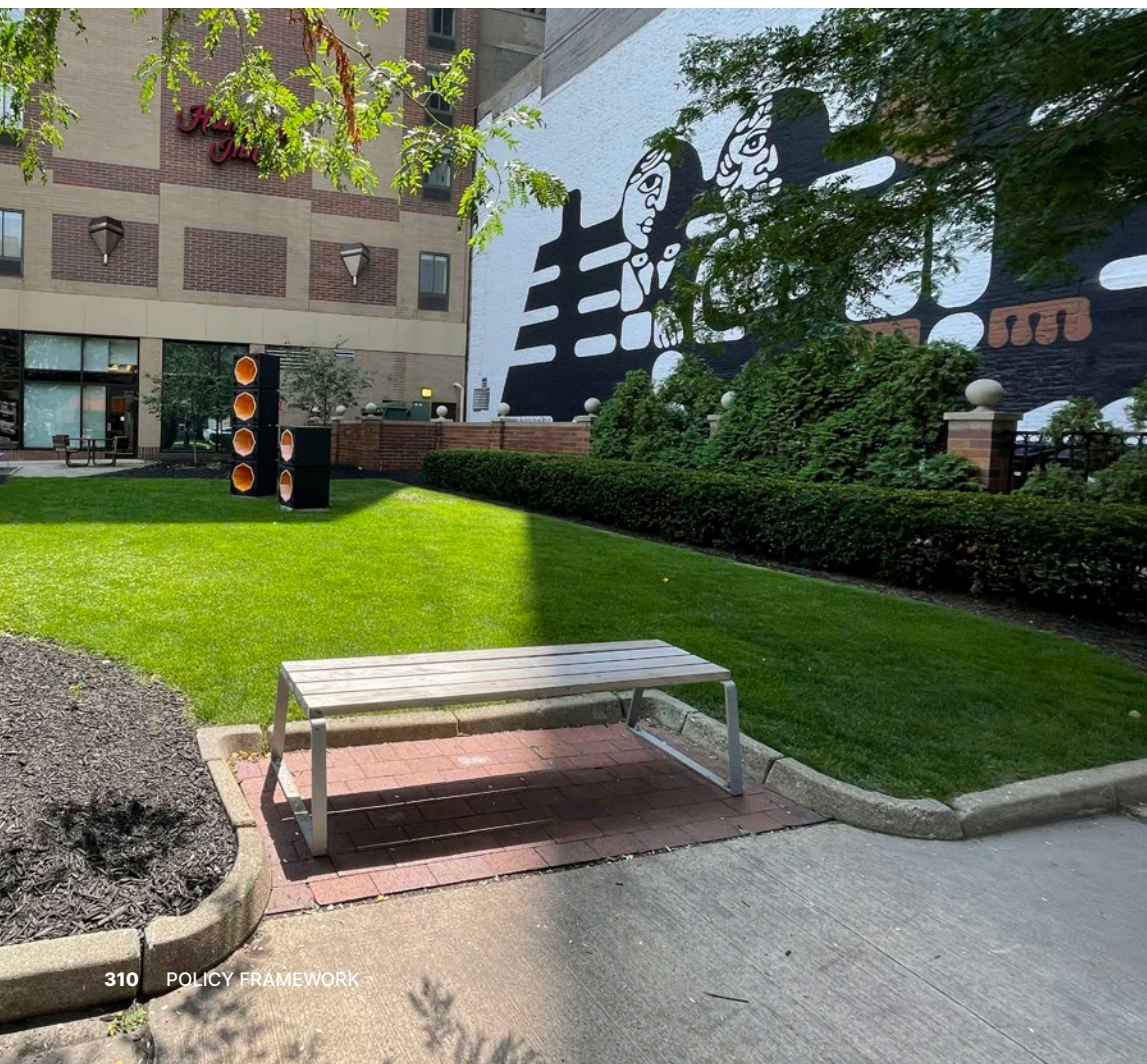
9.4.2. Integrate public art design and installation timelines with overall park and recreation facility design and construction timelines.

“

More art and color!

”

– Open house participant from South Branch Library



Life is Sharing the Same Park Bench is a mural by artist John Francis Morell and has been an iconic part of the downtown Cleveland cityscape since its completion in 1969. The mural was commissioned by Cleveland Mayor Carl Stokes, the first African American mayor of a major US city. The park also features an audio installation.

Betty Klaric Plaza.
Source: OLIN, 2023.



Sculptural element at Michael Zone. Source: OLIN, 2023.



10/ RECREATION FACILITIES

Goal: Better leverage recreation facility resources to enhance the delivery of recreation programming.

Neighborhood resource & recreation centers provide not just recreational opportunities but social, cultural, and other support services. Appropriate resources will allow for these facilities to meet the needs of current and future residents and expand their services. In the survey, less than a quarter of respondents said that recreation centers are in excellent or good condition indicating the need for enhanced recreation spaces throughout Cleveland.

ACTIONS

10.1. Optimize the use of recreation centers to best meet recreation needs and provide access to City services.

10.2. Utilize this plan's level of service standards as a planning tool to manage recreation assets efficiently and reduce duplication of services without reducing the overall quality of service.

10.3. Create a welcoming, safe, and seamless experience between recreation facilities and adjacent parks.



The recent renovations of Frederick Douglass Recreation Center include an indoor water park.
Source: OLIN, 2023.

ACTIONS

10.1. OPTIMIZE THE USE OF RECREATION CENTERS TO BEST MEET RECREATION NEEDS AND PROVIDE ACCESS TO CITY SERVICES.

Recreation centers are anchoring institutions for neighborhoods and key touchpoints with the community, especially for seniors and youth. The system as it currently exists, with a mix of large and small buildings and a mix of amenities and programs should be optimized to better serve and connect residents to crucial city services.

10.1.1. Align recreation facilities with the Recreation Program Plan.

10.1.2. Encourage resource and knowledge sharing across NRRCs.

10.1.3. Identify opportunities for NRRCs to expand access to health, financial, and other City services. **EQUITY**

10.1.4. Consider consolidating resident-facing facilities at existing NRRCs or at new multi-use facilities.

10.1.5. Build and renovate recreation centers with versatility of use as the core principle, large room sizes, ample storage, technology enhancements, sustainable building methods, and comfort in summer heat.

10.1.6. Expand recreation programs to target underserved residents based on the Recreation Program Plan and current parks and recreation needs assessment, such as providing more fitness programming at recreation centers or expanding athletic leagues for adults. **EQUITY**

10.1.7. Explore the feasibility of partnerships to establish new cultural/arts/community programming across the city. **EQUITY**

“

Create **community wellness hubs.**

”

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

Woodland Recreation Center and Playground.
Source: City of Cleveland.



10.2. UTILIZE THIS PLAN'S LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS AS A PLANNING TOOL TO MANAGE RECREATION ASSETS EFFICIENTLY AND REDUCE DUPLICATION OF SERVICES WITHOUT REDUCING THE OVERALL QUALITY OF SERVICE.

Population-based and access standards for level of service can be used together as a tool to understand how many of a particular amenity is needed in Cleveland and where. The periodic evaluation of park and recreation facility performance provides an opportunity to determine how well current amenities, and access to them, relate to defined standards and residents' needs.

10.2.1. Identify opportunities concurrent with periodic condition assessments to evaluate adding or changing recreation amenities or enhancing access based on citywide needs and resident input. **EQUITY**

10.2.2. Consider national and regional recreation trends, local demand, and projected usage and participation before introducing new and innovative amenities.

10.2.3. Based on level of service, determine where to reduce duplication of services without reducing the overall quality of service provided to the community.

10.2.4. Site new amenities in locations that are or will be made accessible by as many modes of transportation as possible. **EQUITY**

10.3. CREATE A WELCOMING, SAFE, AND SEAMLESS EXPERIENCE BETWEEN RECREATION FACILITIES AND ADJACENT PARKS.

Currently, the City approaches the design and capital improvements of recreation facilities separately from the parks that most sit in. The two should be thought of as a cohesive space and relate to each other, enhancing the experience of park and recreation users.

10.3.1. Enhance inside-outside visibility to create clear, welcoming entrances and active edges of NRRCs.

10.3.3. Coordinate programming within and outside of NRRCs to bring more park users inside and more NRRC users outside.



11/ NATURE & GREEN SPACES

Goal: Protect and enhance natural, historic, and cultural resources in parks and at recreation facilities.

Clevelanders want parks that feel more natural and incorporate sustainable elements that move beyond grass. This includes increased tree canopy, wildlife habitats, ecological diversity through native plantings, opportunities to interact with nature, and unprogrammed green space. In the survey, unprogrammed green spaces (36%) and natural areas and wildlife habitats (29%) were both in the top four most important outdoor facilities to respondents.

ACTIONS

11.1. Integrate natural resources and natural resource interpretation into the design of parks and recreation facilities.

11.2. Promote the planting, preservation, and maintenance of canopy trees and native vegetation.

11.3. Expand the capacity to care for natural resources.

11.4. Capitalize on historic and cultural resources, themes, neighborhood history, and stories in parks and recreation facilities. [e.g., Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area]



ACTIONS

11.1. INTEGRATE NATURAL RESOURCES AND NATURAL RESOURCE INTERPRETATION INTO THE DESIGN OF PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.

Residents identified unprogrammed green spaces as their second most important outdoor facility. However, in Cleveland, parks are severely lacking natural areas. Natural resources within parks, including stream corridors, plant communities, and wildlife, should be treated as vital assets, with enhanced care and integration into park design.

11.1.1. Use parks as functional landscapes that perform green stormwater infrastructure and flood mitigation roles to enhance resiliency, recreational use, and beauty.

11.1.2. Integrate native plants and plants with high pollinator value to increase the ecological value and biodiversity of parks.

11.1.3. Design to take advantage of the solar exposure of slopes by integrating amenities of the built environment into the compatible exposure.

11.1.4. Utilize existing topography that may provide buffers and barriers to surrounding uses.

11.1.5. Add interpretive signage within public spaces that highlight the natural resources and the benefits those resources provide.

11.1.6. Encourage nature-inspired play and experiences in public spaces.

11.1.7. Explore opportunities to use public art to interpret natural resources.

11.1.8. Work with partners, including recreation centers and Camp Forbes, to increase nature programming throughout the city.

11.1.9. Develop a Park Ranger nature stewardship program to better connect residents of all ages to nature.

11.1.10. Mitigate urban heat and climate change in park design, planning, programming and management based on industry best practices, data informed decisions, and innovations. **EQUITY**

“

More trees, native plants and pollinator habitats.

”

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

Below: Youth fishing in Lake Erie.

Right: Mill Creek Family Park.

Sources: City of Cleveland.





11.2. PROMOTE THE PLANTING, PRESERVATION, AND MAINTENANCE OF CANOPY TREES AND NATIVE VEGETATION.

Trees and native vegetation are irreplaceable assets. Prioritizing their planting, preservation and maintenance will ensure that these valuable resources are maintained for future generations.

11.2.1. Create or preserve existing vegetative ecosystems that reflect the native conditions of the area.

11.2.2. Prioritize a comprehensive tree inventory as a baseline to inform increased tree planting.

11.2.3. Develop maintenance standards and systematic schedules for all trees in the public realm (parks, street trees, etc).

11.2.4. Practice sound arboriculture best practices, including diversification of species; monitoring and managing insect and disease impacts; and preparing for unanticipated events, such as extreme weather, and climate change.

11.2.5. Strive to offset the removal of trees from maintained areas to create adequate canopy cover and to maximize the benefits of the urban forest.

11.2.6. Protect existing trees when new parks and recreation facilities are in development, or when existing parks and recreation facilities are maintained or refreshed.

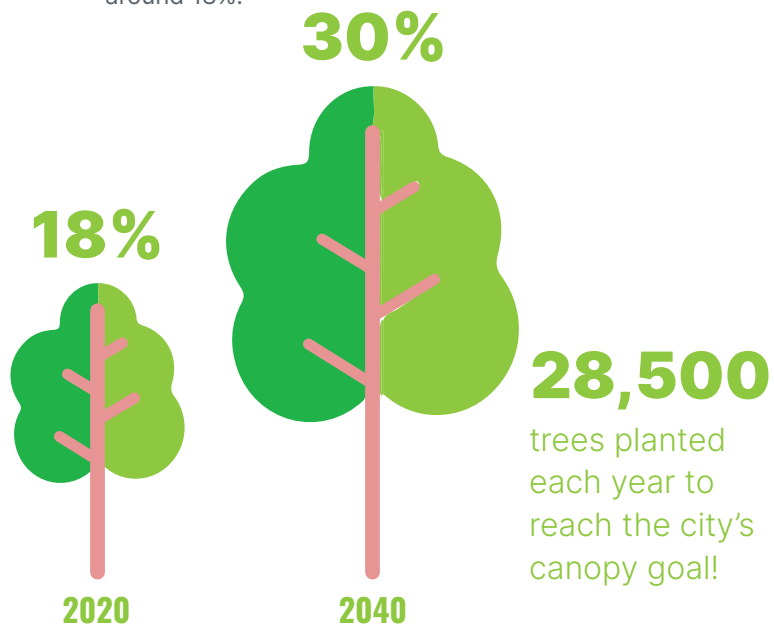
11.2.7. Continue to support and work towards the goals of the Cleveland Tree Plan. **EQUITY**

IN-PROGRESS



Cleveland Tree Plan

The Cleveland Tree Plan, released in 2015, provided recommendations and actions to recognize trees as critical infrastructure, reverse the trend in canopy loss, and assume full stewardship of the tree infrastructure in the City of Cleveland. The Plan established a citywide canopy goal of 30% by 2040. In 2020, the canopy was around 18%.



Urban Tree Canopy

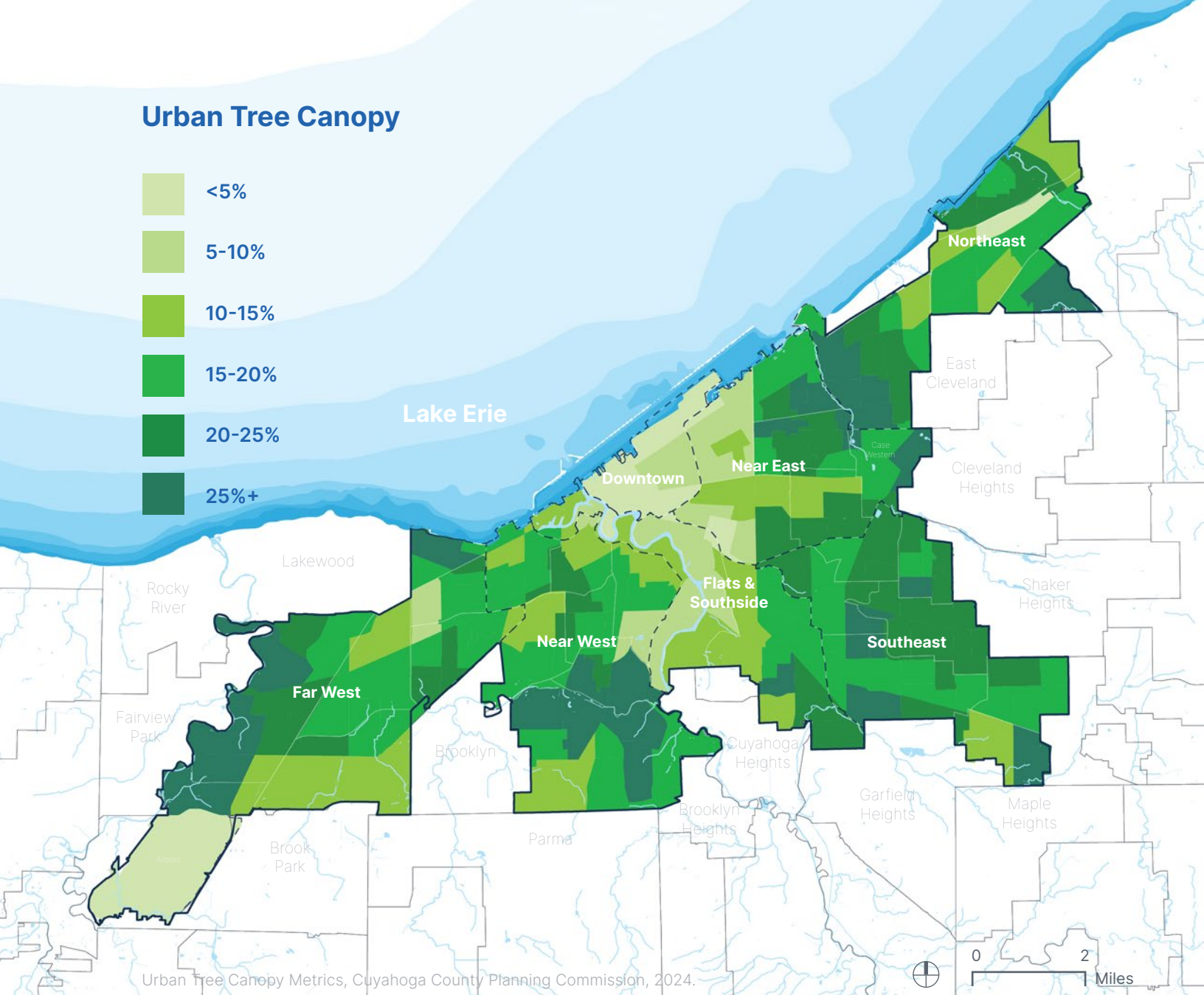
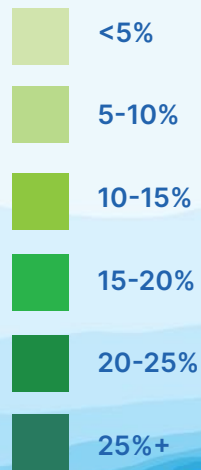
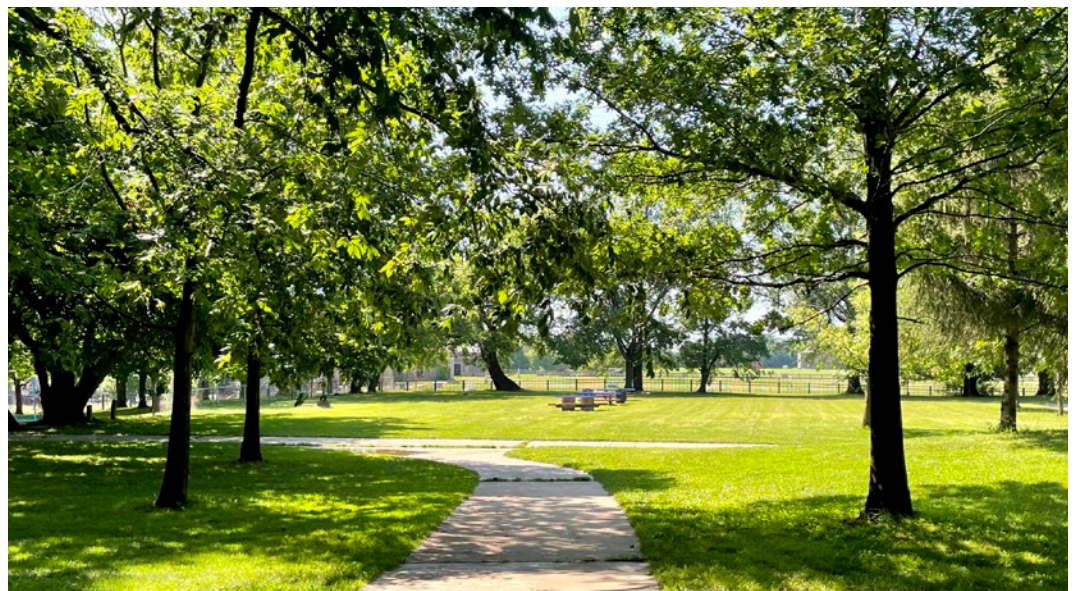


Figure 23. Urban Tree Canopy Cover Percentage by Census Tracts.
Source: Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, 2024.

18%
minimum tree canopy cover goal in every Cleveland neighborhood.



11.3. EXPAND THE CAPACITY TO CARE FOR NATURAL RESOURCES.

The Department will have the responsibility of defining the standard of care of natural resources within the properties it maintains. While there is often knowledge sharing between City departments and partner organizations, there are opportunities to seek alignment to better steward cross-boundary natural resources.

11.3.1. Create a shared approach for the care and maintenance of plantings and habitat areas across City-owned properties.

11.3.2. Expand partnerships around natural resource stewardship and identify opportunities where partners can assist the City in meeting tree and native vegetation needs.

“

Investigate alternate/ no-mow solutions to replace grass, and phase in **more natural landscaping to reduce maintenance needs.**

”

– Online survey participant from Near West Cleveland

11.4. CAPITALIZE ON HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES, THEMES, NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY, AND STORIES IN PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.

Cleveland residents identified a need and desire for more cultural programming. In addition to considering programs, Cleveland’s parks and trails have a chance to engage with and express community culture, the city and region’s history, industrial relics, local heroes, and unique environmental systems.

11.4.1. Include historical and cultural interpretive elements in new and existing parks and recreation facilities, where appropriate.

11.4.2. Identify critical historic and cultural resources that may need protection and have potential educational and interpretive components.



Left: Hart Crane Park in the Flats neighborhood. Source: Canalway Partners.

Right: Extents of the Ohio and Erie Canalway National Heritage Area and Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Source: National Park Service.





Fall colors at Highland Park Golf Course.
Source: City of Cleveland.





Implementation

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Successful implementation of the vision, strategies and recommendations identified in this Parks and Recreation Plan requires balancing and addressing community aspirations, partner and key group goals, and the Department's mission and vision.

The Parks and Recreation Plan is a Roadmap

The vision, goals, strategies, and recommendations should serve as a framework for decision making. When decisions or responses to the Cleveland community or to elected or appointed officials, the plan serves as the reference point for decision making. Because the plan is an integral tool for the Department, it should also be central to training for existing and new employees.

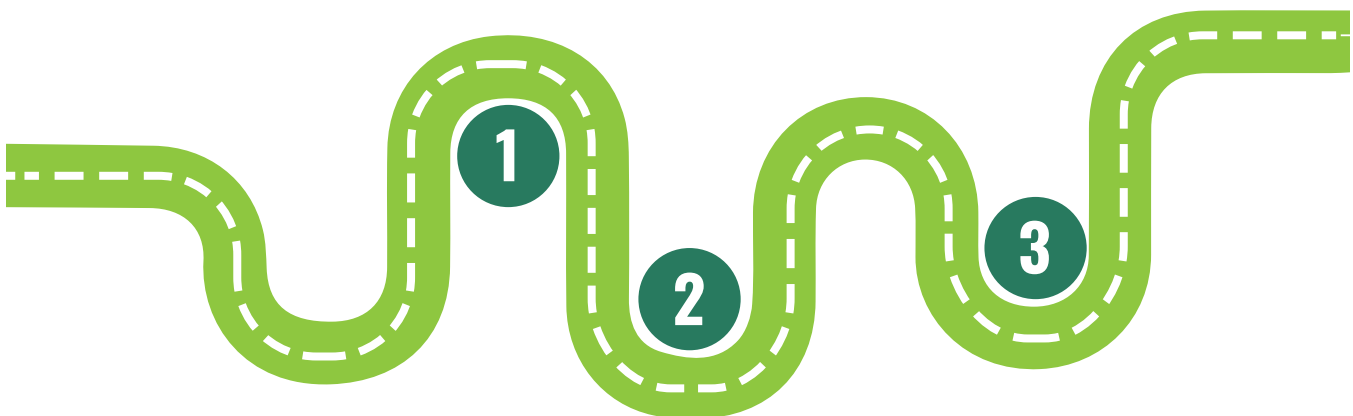
The Cleveland Parks and Recreation Plan sets forth an ambitious vision and series of goals for the growth of the system that are driven by community voices. These goals are the product of rigorous community conversations, multiple surveys, in-depth analysis, and key group visioning. Going forward, the City should use the plan as a

tool to assist in decision making as it relates to investment strategies and resource allocation to ensure barriers to participation are removed and create a more equitable system. Finally, the Plan should serve as a unifying document that helps align the needs of the community with the priorities and actions of the City in order to continue to grow an inclusive, loved, and connected parks and recreation system.

Identify the Plan Champions

Identify a primary staff person (or team) to guide various pieces of the plan's implementation to ensure success. These staff members are responsible for monitoring progress and works with peers to effectively integrate the plan into the Department.

The Parks and Recreation Plan is a roadmap.



Commit to Community Goals

Engage community members (residents, businesses, and partner organizations) early and often during the implementation process. A knowledgeable community is the best way to secure support and ensure that implementation efforts and projects suit the needs of those who will benefit from them. Equity needs to continue to be at the forefront of all conversations and engagement with underresourced communities must also be paramount to the engagement process.

Track Progress

Publicly release the plan, track implementation efforts, and periodically share progress updates with interested partners, community members, and key decision makers.

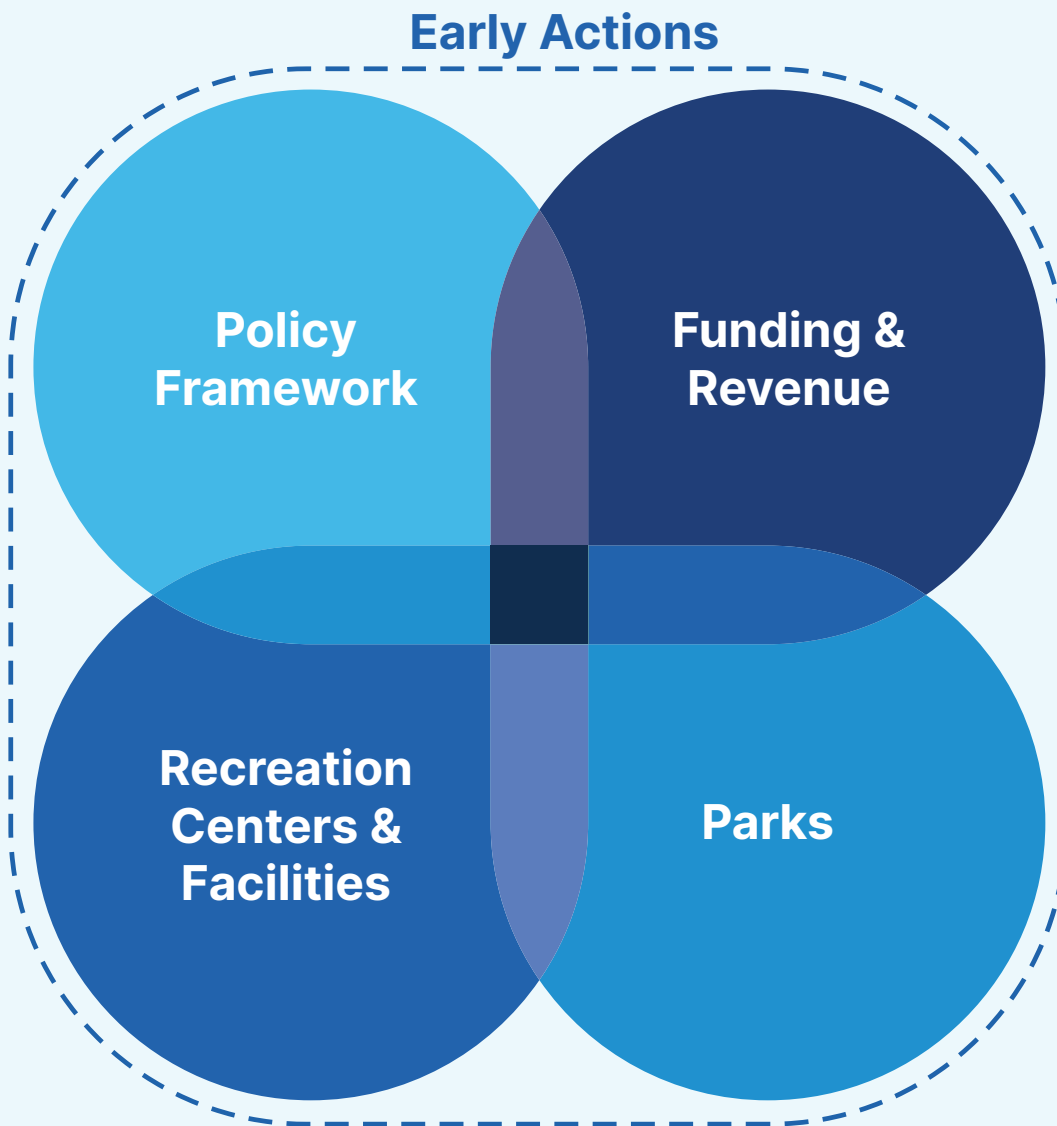
At the end of each fiscal year, reflect on the impact of implementation efforts to-date on community trust and satisfaction, equity, and financial sustainability. These comprehensive reviews are an opportunity for Cleveland to update strategies and underlying data to reflect changing community needs and recreation trends. The Department should clearly articulate plan developments and explain project benefits in a way various audiences can understand.



Early actions are the first step of many actions identified in this plan.

EARLY ACTIONS

The following build on the strategies and actions identified in the plan and serve as first steps the Department and the City can take to begin a successful and inclusive implementation process.



There are four categories of early actions.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

PRIORITY ACTIONS

Responsible Stewardship

- 2.1. Secure funding to support development, maintenance, and programming of parks and recreation facilities and ensure those public funds are efficiently and effectively spent.
- 3.4. Cultivate long-term relationships with community members, leaders, and community and cultural organizations to help enhance parks and recreation facilities and programs.



Accessible Facilities

- 4.4. Embed accessibility and universal access as a fundamental aspect of parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services.
- 5.3. Develop a communications and marketing plan that increases awareness of parks, recreation facilities, programs, and other department services.
- 6.1. Support a visible community presence in parks and recreation facilities.



Enhanced Spaces

- 9.3. Strive for design excellence in the development and refresh of parks and recreation facilities.
- 10.2. Utilize this plan's level of service standards as a planning tool to manage recreation assets efficiently and reduce duplication of services without reducing the overall quality of service.
- 11.1. Integrate natural resources and natural resource interpretation into the design of parks and recreation facilities.



FUNDING & REVENUE

EARLY ACTIONS

Parks & Recreation Levy

Nov 2024



Plan Completed

1

Stand up the Parks & Recreation Department

- ✓ **Year 1** Reconcile staff and budget that will move to the new department

Demonstrate Department Effectiveness

- ✓ **Years 1-3** Improve level of service and meet customer service expectations

2

3

Plan & Publicly Campaign for a Levy

- ✓ **Year 3-4** Make the case for a levy based on improved performance

Nov 2028



Ballot Measure Put to Voters

Primary Funding Sources

- 1** Pursue high revenue generation potential + high feasibility sources like corporate sponsorships, property taxes, friends groups, and naming rights.
- 2** Leverage partnerships & volunteerism.
- 3** Explore foundations/gifts, private donations, and reservations.
- 4** Test the leasing of development rights below ground along trails.

RECREATION CENTERS & FACILITIES

EARLY ACTIONS

Phase 1 (Years 1-5)



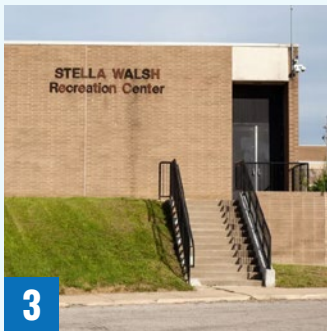
1

Complete renovations of Clark & Central



2

Invest in Lonnie Burten



3

Invest in Stella Walsh as a regional recreation center



4

Invest in Glenville-James Hubbard



End lease at Cory



5

Consider repurposing Woodland for other City uses or closing



6

Develop a strategic plan for Camp Forbes

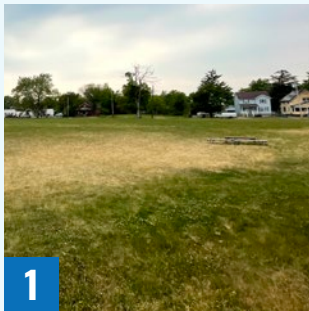
7

Make rehab investments across recreation centers and special facilities to improve the functionality, safety, and lifespan of existing assets making sure accessibility and flexibility of spaces are addressed in this work.

PARKS

EARLY ACTIONS

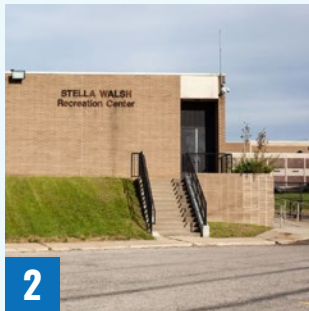
Park Prioritization - Top 10



1

Alexander Hamilton Park

Neighborhood Park | Southeast Cleveland



2

Stella Walsh Park

Neighborhood Park | Flats & Southside Cleveland



3

Spear Park

Mini Park | Southeast Cleveland



4

Grant Park

Neighborhood Park | Near East Cleveland



4

Meyer Pool

Neighborhood Park | Near West Cleveland



6

Luke Easter Park

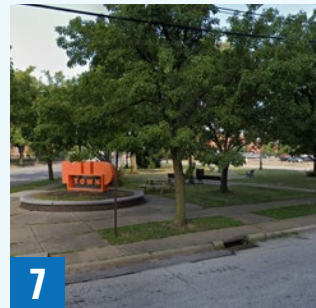
Regional Park | Southeast Cleveland



7

Belmont Park

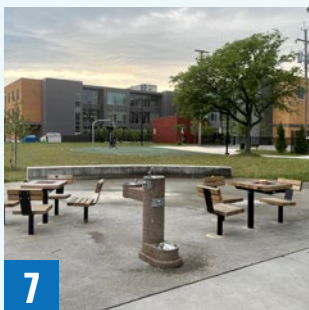
Neighborhood Park | Far West Cleveland



7

Colonel Charles Young Square

Civic Space | Near East Cleveland



7

E.J. Kovacic Park

Neighborhood Park | Near East Cleveland



7

Roberto Clemente Park

Community Park | Near West Cleveland

See the capital life cycle (page 222) to determine what site investment strategy is appropriate for each park.

Engage the community and partners!

Next Steps

See the 'Equity-Based Park Prioritization Strategy' on page 224 for more information on the ranking process.

Community mural at Roberto Clemente Park.
Source: OLIN, 2023.



INDEX OF ALL ACTIONS

The action plan consolidates all of the goals, actions, and methods of the policy framework into a matrix that can be used as a quick reference guide and checklist for implementation of the plan’s recommendations.

1. ENSURE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES ARE OPERATED AND MAINTAINED EFFECTIVELY AND TO DEFINED STANDARDS.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
1.1.	Define clear maintenance standards that will be consistently met.	
	<p>City Lead Parks & Recreation Environmental Stewardship Services</p> <p>Potential Partners MOCAP, Public Works</p>	
1.1.1.	Develop maintenance standards and schedules for each park and recreation facility classification and regularly update them with higher levels of service as more resources are available.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
1.1.2.	Ensure maintenance standards are applied consistently across the park system to ensure equitable application of standards.	Short (0–2yrs) Ongoing
1.1.3.	Implement a hierarchy of landscape maintenance standards based on regular, low-mow, and no-mow zones.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
1.1.4.	Develop a native plant palette that can be easily maintained across the system.	Short (0–2 yrs)
1.1.5.	Encourage cross-departmental knowledge sharing and training on maintenance practices.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
1.1.6.	Improve interdepartmental coordination to ensure that short- and long-term maintenance is well coordinated with planning, design, and construction of capital projects.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
1.1.7.	Consider design and maintenance measures (like snow removal) that can accommodate more year-round use of parks and recreation facilities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
1.2. Make procurement and contracting processes clearer and more transparent.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	MOCAP, Law, Finance	
1.2.1.	Work with the Departments of Law and Finance to identify efficiencies that can reduce timeframes for how quickly contracts with vendors can be executed and already budgeted funds can be spent.	Short (0–2 yrs)
1.2.2.	Work with the Departments of Law and Finance to map out procurement and contracting processes to be used for staff training and consistent application.	Short (0–2 yrs)
1.2.3.	Work with the Department of Law to develop master agreements with frequent partner organizations.	Short (0–2 yrs)
1.2.4.	Work with the Department of Law to develop a template for less stringent agreements for community organizations that would like to make park improvements or volunteers that would like to assist with the maintenance and beautification of parks and recreation spaces.	Short (0–2 yrs)
1.3. Strengthen sustainability policies and practices.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Environmental Stewardship Services	Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services, MOCAP, Sustainability & Climate Justice	
1.3.1.	Work with the Office of Sustainability and Climate Justice to optimize operations and maintenance standards to meet the objectives and goals outlined in the Cleveland Climate Action Plan and the Sustainable Cleveland Municipal Action Plan.	Long (0–10 yrs)
1.3.2.	Develop park design, green building, and product standards that reflect best practices for ecological restoration and sustainability including green stormwater infrastructure; materials sourced from responsible industries, many recycled or locally produced; net zero energy goals; rainwater use in buildings and in the landscape and on-site treatment safely disposes of wastewater.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
1.3.3.	Develop park maintenance routines and strategies that reflect best practices for ecological restoration, meadows, forests, sensitive natural areas, and green stormwater infrastructure maintenance.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
1.3.4.	Work to prioritize biodiversity and emphasize native and water-wise plants over non-native species.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
1.3.5.	Use environmentally friendly products (e.g., cleaners and chemical treatments) where feasible.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
1.3.6.	Provide training for staff on how to include sustainability in evaluating costs and benefits.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing

2. ENHANCE THE FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY OF CLEVELAND’S PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
2.1. Secure funding to support development, maintenance, and programming of parks and recreation facilities and ensure those public funds are efficiently and effectively spent.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Parks & Recreation Planning & Development Services, MOCAP, Finance, Planning	
2.1.1.	Implement balanced distribution of financial resources that are in alignment with national best practices with annual budget allocations: 40-45% for park maintenance, 30-35% for recreation, 10-12% for administration, 4% for equipment, and 4-5% of the total asset value of the park and recreation system back into the capital budget.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
2.1.2.	Identify dedicated funding streams for capital investments in and maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities and rehabilitation of existing assets to extend their life and improve their functionality and safety.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
2.1.3.	Identify funding to support park construction and the expansion of parks and recreation facilities in parts of the city that are lacking walkability, acreage, or access to amenities.	Long (0–10 yrs)
2.1.4.	Identify and implement cost savings related to consolidating facilities in parts of the city that have an abundance of park and recreation facilities.	Long (0–10 yrs)
2.1.5.	Prioritize areas based on the Council on Environmental Quality’s Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool and Trust for Public Land’s ParkServe where communities are especially burdened and where there is a lack of park acres per capita, parks within a 10-minute walk, and park amenities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
2.2. Account for both up-front and ongoing costs and benefits in maintenance and capital budgeting.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	Parks & Recreation Environmental Stewardship Services, Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services, MOCAP, Finance	
2.2.1.	Identify schedules and standards for asset management and maintenance of capital projects at the time they are approved and ensure funding is committed to meet those standards.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
2.2.2.	Ensure that the Parks and Recreation Department’s budget accounts for responsibilities it has to operate or maintain City facilities that are not parks or recreation facilities. (e.g., street trees, City Hall and Public Auditorium landscapes).	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
2.2.3.	Consider developing a maintenance endowment fund exclusively for park maintenance.	Short (0–2 yrs)

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
2.3. Identify and pursue public-private, nonprofit, and philanthropic partnerships to support capital improvements and programs.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Government Affairs, Finance	
2.3.1.	Build upon existing relationships and create new partnerships with corporations and foundations to explore funding and grant partnerships and leverage City investments, particularly where missions are aligned for shared citywide outcomes.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
2.3.2.	Establish a Cleveland Park Foundation to support the Cleveland Parks and Recreation Department with a strategic plan for implementation of the Foundation.	Long (0–10 yrs)
2.3.3.	Identify partnerships with individuals, groups, corporations, and foundations to support defined projects in parks and recreation facilities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
2.3.4.	Develop a donor outreach strategy, including informational materials tailored to donors.	Short (0–2 yrs)
2.3.5.	Develop sponsorship proposals to help underwrite and offset operating costs for programs and services.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
2.4. Identify revenue-generating opportunities from parks, recreation facilities, and programs that can be reinvested back into these assets.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	City Council	
2.4.1.	Develop a revenue policy to provide the framework for establishing fees and charges, cost recovery goals and targets, and retention of revenue within the parks and recreation department for investments in the parks and recreation system.	Short (0–2 yrs)
2.4.2.	Expand the offering or permitting of concessions in regional and community parks, athletic complexes, and at special events in parks and recreation facilities.	Short (0–2 yrs)
2.4.3.	Pursue revenue from special events, such as weddings, that rent park and recreation facility spaces.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
2.4.4.	Expand capacity to proactively set revenue goals, seek revenue generating opportunities, and provide a point of contact for those looking to rent public spaces for events.	Mid (0–5 yrs)

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
2.5.	Track and report revenues and direct and indirect costs with the Parks and Recreation Department's services.	
City Lead	Potential Partners	
	Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Communications, City Council
2.5.1.	Create transparency around the development and adoption of the department's budget.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
2.5.2.	Institute quarterly budget review sessions for each division whereby the current status of budgeted and actual expenses and revenues are reviewed as well as discussion of potential financial challenges.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
2.5.3.	Train all supervisory and management staff in evaluating costs and benefits of existing facilities and for using that information in decision-making	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
2.5.4.	Optimize operations and maintenance standards to ensure financial sustainability.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
2.5.5.	Establish department wide performance measures and establish protocols for collecting data and reporting. Discuss the performance measures at the quarterly budget meetings. Provide quarterly reports on performance measures to staff, City Council, and the public.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
2.5.6.	Communicate the value of parks, recreation facilities, and programs provide to the city in describing the return on investment in these assets and services.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing

3. BUILD AND STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS TO LEVERAGE RESOURCES FOR MUTUAL BENEFIT.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
3.1. Establish partnerships between the new Parks and Recreation Department and other City departments.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	MOCAP, Planning, Public Works, Public Health, Aging, Community Development, Youth & Family Success	
3.1.1.	Enable opportunities for joint facilities and programming.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
3.2. Formalize and strengthen partnerships with other major providers of parks, recreation facilities, programs, and community services in Cleveland and the greater Cleveland area.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Parks & Recreation All Divisions, CMSD, Cleveland Metroparks, NEORS, Canalway Partners, Cleveland Public Library	
3.2.1.	Collaborate with CMSD to formalize public access to outdoor recreational facilities on school property outside of school hours.	Short (0–2 yrs)
3.2.2.	Collaborate with CMSD to understand the recreational needs of students and to explore joint-use facilities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
3.2.3.	Coordinate with Cleveland Metroparks on the provision of parks and recreational facilities to prevent duplication.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
3.2.4.	Coordinate with NEORS to develop park “leave-behinds” that fill community needs after the completion of sewer projects.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
3.2.5.	Collaborate with Canalway Partners on the interpretation of the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area within parks and recreation facilities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
3.2.6.	Leverage joint community programming, information and resource collaborations with the Cleveland Public Library and other City providers.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
3.3. Create and regularly revise partnership policies and agreements to ensure fair and equitable relationships.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services		
3.3.1.	Review existing partnership agreements.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
3.3.2.	Develop a partnership assessment tool for the many types of partnership models that can be used to evaluate effectiveness.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
3.3.3.	Track measurable outcomes and evaluate impacts of partnership agreements and regularly share progress with the public.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
3.3.4.	Communicate areas of need and opportunity with existing and potential partners.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
3.3.5.	Create umbrella and standardized agreements for different types of partners to expedite the ability of partners to provide services at parks and recreation facilities.	Short (0–2 yrs)
3.4. Cultivate long-term relationships with community members, leaders, and community and cultural organizations to help enhance parks and recreation facilities and programs.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services		Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services, “Friends of” groups, CDCs, local arts and recreation organizations
3.4.1.	Develop a guide that communicates a transparent, centralized process for becoming a partnership organization that works with the City to improve parks and recreation facilities.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
3.4.2.	Formalize “friends of” groups and support and collaborate with their mobilized volunteer base to support and strengthen the work of parks and recreation staff across the department.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
3.4.3.	Identify a process to develop and manage volunteer recruitment, policies and agreements, and a current database of volunteers.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
3.4.4.	Partner with community development corporations to program and maintain parks and recreation facilities.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
3.4.5.	Collaborate with local art and cultural organizations on programming initiatives.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
3.4.6.	Partner with local fitness operators, such as yoga studios and training gyms, for outdoor programming in parks.	Mid (0–5 yrs)

4. ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
4.1.	Utilize this plan's level of service standards as a planning tool to manage public space assets equitably and efficiently and provide a high quality of service.	
	<p>City Lead Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services</p>	<p>Potential Partners MOCAP, Planning</p>
4.1.1.	Identify opportunities to add or change park and recreation amenities or enhance multi-modal access based on Level of Service analysis.	Short (0–2 yrs)
4.1.2.	Identify opportunities to add park space or recreational amenities in areas that are lacking walkable access. [See level of service standards and report cards]	Short (0–2 yrs)
4.1.3.	Identify opportunities to consolidate park space or recreational amenities in areas that have redundant access. [See level of service standards and report cards]	Short (0–2 yrs)
4.2.	Make efficient use of land resources and facilities through system-wide planning and investments.	
	<p>City Lead Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services</p>	<p>Potential Partners MOCAP, Public Works</p>
4.2.1.	Regularly evaluate the usage, effectiveness, and design of park and recreation facilities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
4.2.2.	Develop park master plans for all new parks, or when renovation of an existing park requires a major rearrangement of park amenities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
4.2.3.	Enhance the sidewalk and street tree network to optimize the public space realm.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.2.4.	Periodically review and update the inventory of public spaces to ensure accuracy and consistency of data.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
4.3. Create safe routes to parks and recreation facilities.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	MOCAP, Public Works, Public Safety, Cleveland Metroparks	
4.3.1.	Coordinate with the Citywide Mobility Plan planning process to enhance the city's trail network to connect parks and recreation facilities with each other, with other destinations, and with neighborhoods.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.3.2.	Coordinate with Public Works to identify well-lit, well-paved sidewalk and trail routes with active frontages that connect neighborhoods to parks and recreation facilities.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
4.3.3.	Support the Safe Passages Project with partners CMSD and GCRTA and work to expand the program to parks and recreation facilities.	Long (0–10 yrs) Ongoing
4.3.4.	Coordinate sidewalk and paved trail development with other city infrastructure projects, like transportation and stormwater planning.	Long (0–10 yrs) Ongoing
4.3.5.	Work with City departments to identify and alleviate gaps in sidewalks and on-street bicycle facilities that connect parks and recreation facilities to neighborhoods, schools, transit, and other facilities.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.3.6.	Improve pedestrian access to parkland by advocating for safe crossings within a 1/4 mile walkshed of all parks and recreation facilities.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.3.7.	Encourage regional parks and recreation facilities to be connected to a major paved trail.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.3.8.	Work with City departments to evaluate opportunities to create better connections across or around current barriers, including major arterial streets.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.3.9.	Consider the use of signalization, signal prioritization, pedestrian refuges, grade separation, and other techniques where trails cross wide and heavily trafficked roads.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.3.10.	Coordinate trail expansion with surrounding communities and partner organizations, like the Cleveland Metroparks.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.3.11.	Look for opportunities to acquire vacant lots for greenbelt, trail and linear park expansions.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
4.3.12.	Work with City departments to improve integration with transit and bikeshare networks to expand park and recreation facility access.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.3.13.	Consider physical barriers to access, and how to avoid or overcome them, in the siting of new parks and recreation facilities.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
4.4.	Embed accessibility and universal access as a fundamental aspect of parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services.	
	<p>City Lead Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services</p> <p>Potential Partners Youth and Family Success, Aging</p>	
4.4.1.	Seek opportunities to go beyond minimum ADA requirements to achieve broader access for all residents.	Short (0–2 yrs)
4.4.2.	Conduct an access audit and site report for all city parks and recreation facilities.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.4.3.	Create universal accessibility guidelines for parks and recreation improvements to determine changes necessary for improved accessibility to amenities by all.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
4.4.4.	Provide multilingual signage in all parks and recreation facilities.	Long (0–10 yrs)
4.4.5.	Incorporate new and creative recreation facilities and amenities that provide universal access and offers a variety of experiences where people of all abilities can interact.	Short (0–2 yrs)
4.4.6.	Evaluate accessibility and universal access policies and practices to program and services.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
4.4.7.	Establish standards for accessibility to department programs and services	Short (0–2 yrs)

5. IMPROVE USERS ABILITY TO QUICKLY FIND PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
5.1. Promote City parks and recreation facilities as part of a unified regional system.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Communications, Cleveland Metroparks, NEORSD, CMHA	
5.1.1.	Create new maps and guides that show all City parks, trails, and recreation facilities together with those of Cleveland Metroparks, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, the Cleveland Housing Authority, and other public agencies.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.2. Create a legible brand identity for City parks and recreation facilities.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Communications	
5.2.1.	Ensure consistency of marketing materials.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.2.2.	Continue to develop wayfinding and signage standards.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.2.3.	Ensure printed communication materials across recreation centers adhere to system standards.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.3. Develop a communications and marketing plan that increases awareness of parks, recreation facilities, programs, and other department services.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Communications	
5.3.1.	Improve materials that communicate the full range of facilities and experiences available across the city to all residents, workers, and visitors.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.3.2.	Ensure communication materials and signage use consistent language to refer to parks and facilities of various classifications.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
5.3.3.	Highlight the environmental, social, economic, and wellness benefits of parks, trails, recreation facilities, and programs.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.3.4.	Ensure materials are easy to understand and are accessible to non-English speakers and the visually impaired.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.3.5.	Incorporate the National Recreation and Park Association’s Equity Language Guide in all verbal, visual and written communication.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.3.6.	Explore expanded use of technology and digital platforms to disseminate information about parks, recreation, and trails and to enhance the user experience.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.3.7.	Provide more robust information on each park, trail, recreation facility, and program on the City’s website.	Short (0–2 yrs)

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
5.3.8.	Create a Parks and Recreation Department website that is managed by the Parks and Recreation Department.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
5.3.9.	Regularly measure and report on the progress of Parks and Recreation Plan implementation.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
5.3.10.	Proactively engage communities adjacent to parks and recreation facilities about the availability of programs and facilities to inspire users to participate more often.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
5.3.11.	Develop marketing strategies that center outreach to diverse racial and ethnic communities.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.3.12.	Continue to review the most effective uses of electronic and social media for marketing and informational purposes.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.3.13.	Establish protocols, standards and training for use of electronic and social media platforms.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.3.14.	Establish individual social media pages for each NRRC and for key programs with staff designated to manage consistent with the department electronic and social media standards.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
5.3.15.	Provide marketing and communications training and tools to NRRC staff.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
5.3.16.	Clearly communicate the reasons behind safety, operational, partnership, technical and budgetary decisions.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
5.4.	Provide a single source to learn about programs and services, register for programs and make facility reservations.	
	City Lead	Potential Partners
	Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services
5.4.1.	Implement a comprehensive recreation management software system to better track user data and provide better user registration experience.	Short (0–2 yrs)
5.4.2.	Based on the Communications and Marketing Plan, develop materials that highlight parks and park amenities, programs, facilities, and services to educate and inspire use of parks and participation in programs and services.	Short (0–2 yrs)

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
5.5. Gather input from residents on a recurring basis in the planning of parks, facilities, and programs.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services	
5.5.1.	Follow the ARPICES guide to embedding community engagement into the planning, design, and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
5.5.2.	Conduct a parks and recreation needs assessment, including a statistically valid survey and Level of Service analysis, on a 5-year cycle.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
5.5.3.	Engage users on an ongoing basis to evaluate the success of parks, trails, recreation facilities, and programs to establish a meaningful feedback loop between the City and residents and to account for differences in needs and desires between neighborhoods.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
5.5.4.	Use online, social media, notifications at NRRCs, and the recreation registration software system regularly to inform and solicit feedback from residents.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
5.5.5.	Continue to evolve and practice creative community engagement to be more inclusive and representative of diverse populations.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing

6. CONTINUE TO ENHANCE SAFETY AND SECURITY IN ALL PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES THROUGH MULTIPLE MODELS OF COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HARM REDUCTION.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
6.1. Support a visible community presence in parks and recreation facilities.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services, "Friends of" groups, Public Safety	
6.1.1.	Develop a park ambassador program to increase visible surveillance, positive staff and park user interactions, and rule enforcement in parks and recreation facilities.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
6.1.2.	Engage "Friends of" groups and community volunteers to give neighboring residents a stake in the safety of parks.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
6.1.3.	Expand usage of security cameras with consideration of the balance between safety and identity protection, lighting that balances safety and light pollution, and enhanced technology for crime prevention, intervention and investigation in parks and recreation facilities.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
6.1.4.	Empower security officers staffed at parks and recreation facilities to respond to issues that may arise either indoors or outdoors, regardless of where they are stationed.	Short (0–2 yrs)
6.2. Work with law enforcement and social service agencies on a coordinated approach to preventive and reactive safety and security in parks and at recreation facilities.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services	
6.2.1.	Clarify emergency response procedures and roles for park and recreation facility staff and law enforcement.	Short (0–2 yrs)
6.2.2.	Provide safety training for all parks, recreation, and maintenance staff who work in parks, recreation, and public facilities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
6.2.3.	Develop response and intervention plans for mental health crises in parks.	Short (0–2 yrs)
6.2.4.	Ensure that policing of parks and recreation centers is based in community policing principles and accountable to stakeholder partnerships in order to collaboratively work toward safety and crime reduction in parks and recreation facilities.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
6.3. Incorporate 'Crime Prevention through Environmental Design' (CPTED) principles into design standards.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	MOCAP, Planning, Public Safety	
6.3.1.	Encourage new public and private development to face, rather than turn its back to, parks and recreation facilities.	Long (0–10 yrs)
6.3.2.	Work to avoid or eliminate “backs” of parks and recreation facilities.	Long (0–10 yrs)
6.3.3.	Expand and standardize entrances, while limiting unofficial entrances to create clear points of entry and enhance natural access control.	Long (0–10 yrs)

7. PROVIDE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO QUALITY RECREATIONAL EXPERIENCES.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
7.1.	Expand year-round usability of existing recreation facilities.	
	<p>City Lead Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services</p> <p>Potential Partners Parks & Recreation Planning and Development, Parks & Recreation Environmental Services</p>	
7.1.1.	Develop a comprehensive Recreation Program Plan.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
7.1.2.	Develop a rehab and capital plan that ensures recreation facilities are designed to meet the recreation needs of neighborhoods and are in alignment with the comprehensive Recreation Program Plan.	Long (0–10 yrs)
7.1.3.	Develop a citywide, objective lighting policy that addresses how early and late lights should be on at parks and recreation facilities to extend year-round usability.	Short (0–2 yrs)
7.1.4.	Explore opportunities to provide all-season access to certain high-use facilities through the use of temporary or permanent structures.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
7.1.5.	Leverage special events, “pop-up” programming, and temporary uses to activate public spaces and expand access to programs year-round.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
7.1.6.	Increase opportunities for winter programming, such as developing cross country skiing/snowshoeing trails, to create active park and recreation facilities year-round. See also 1.1.7. in Maintenance & Updates.	Mid (0–5 yrs)

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
7.2. Ensure indoor and outdoor facilities and programs continue to respond to changing user needs.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services	Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	
7.2.1.	Identify recreation metrics to be used and analyzed annually across all recreation programs and facilities and train staff on how to implement them.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
7.2.2.	Track and evaluate program participation, customer retention, outcomes and adjust offerings as needed as an incentive for innovation and alignment with community trends.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
7.2.3.	Evaluate Core Program Areas and individual programs annually to ensure offerings are relevant to evolving demographics and trends in the local community.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
7.2.4.	Undertake a demand and capacity analysis of existing programs offered by the City of Cleveland, program partners, and competitors.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
7.2.5.	Conduct user/staff surveys and public input processes to assess and implement new program innovations.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
7.2.6.	Monitor local and national recreation trends and best practices and incorporate new and innovative recreation programs to sustain community participation.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
7.2.7.	Periodically evaluate which programs are using indoor and outdoor spaces and identify needs for additional space and opportunities to reallocate space.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
7.2.8.	Implement best practices in program life cycles to maintain a culture of quality program delivery.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
7.2.9.	Increase partnerships with other recreation providers to help meet demand.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
7.2.10.	Explore streamlining the process of permitting temporary program and event spaces.	Short (0–2 yrs)
7.2.11.	Evaluate opportunities to repurpose or expand the range of allowable uses of existing facilities before building new, specialized facilities.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
7.2.12.	Develop a Program Development and Resource Guide to provide staff with consistent standards for developing, implementing, and evaluating programming.	Short (0–2 yrs)
7.2.13.	Integrate check in system with new recreation management software system for the NRRCs to help track demographics of facility users.	Mid (0–5 yrs)

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
7.3. Promote public health and wellness through public space programming.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services, Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services, Public Health	
7.3.1.	Enhance fitness, wellness, and healthy lifestyle programming and facilities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
7.3.2.	Work with partners to identify community health and wellness needs and to assess the effectiveness of Park and Recreation Department programming on public health over time.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
7.3.3.	Evaluate existing programs for their contribution to health and wellness, and adjust programs or develop new programs to meet health and wellness needs.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
7.3.4.	Coordinate with Public Health to elevate voices of those most impacted by health disparities and environmental injustice to inform policies, programming, activities and services in parks.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
7.3.5.	Highlight the health and wellness benefits of recreation and nature based programs in informational materials.	Short (0–2 yrs)
7.3.6.	Coordinate with Public Health to track public space usage indicators over time to determine the positive health impacts of public space system improvements.	Long (0–10 yrs)
7.3.7.	Increase and diversify nature based programs to provide educational opportunities for residents to better understand and interact with natural resources.	Short (0–2 yrs)
7.3.8.	Collaborate with Public Health and local healthcare providers on a park prescription program that has medical professionals prescribe time spent in parks to improve physical and mental wellness.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
7.3.9.	Work with the Department of Public Health to develop dedicated clinic space in strategic NRRCs.	Long (0–10 yrs)

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
7.4.	Consider the separate and combined needs of children, youth, families, adults, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.	
	<p>City Lead Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services</p> <p>Potential Partners Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services, MOCAP, Youth and Family Services</p>	
7.4.1.	Promote and increase the availability of programming that caters to diverse ages, interests, and abilities that create shared community experiences.	Short (0–2 yrs)
7.4.2.	Expand senior-only times at recreation centers and swimming pools.	Short (0–2 yrs)
7.4.3.	Work with partner organizations to expand and diversify youth and senior programming and ensure programs are available at hours that work for them.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
7.4.4.	Work with partner organizations to generate program ideas and increase overall active adult participation.	Short (0–2 yrs)
7.4.5.	Ensure parks and recreation facilities have sufficient shade, benches, maintained and open restrooms, even walking surfaces, and appropriate signage and lighting.	Long (0–10 yrs)

8. ENSURE THAT STAFF CAPABILITIES MATCH PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
8.1.	Increase full and part-time staff and contractor capacity and capabilities.	
	<p>City Lead</p> <p>Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services</p>	<p>Potential Partners</p>
8.1.1.	Evaluate part-time and seasonal staffing levels a minimum of 6 months in advance of each season to ensure proper staffing for upcoming needs.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
8.1.2.	Evaluate staffing levels annually to ensure proper staffing levels are included in annual budgets to meet program and service expectations.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
8.1.3.	Actively recruit qualified, diverse staff to fill open positions.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
8.1.4.	Identify and encourage opportunities to share maintenance responsibilities with partner organizations and community-based groups for efficiency.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
8.1.5.	Create a local high school/college internship program to augment staffing resources, experiment with new management practices, and develop a pipeline into the city’s environmental stewardship division.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
8.1.6.	Refine onboarding and provide ongoing training to ensure that existing staff develop the skills to perform their duties.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
8.1.7.	Establish key performance indicators and certifications for park and recreation staff and collect data on a regular basis to measure and chart progress.	Short (0–2 yrs)
8.1.8.	Update job descriptions to reflect needed job requirements, performance expectations, necessary skills/abilities, experience requirements, licensing requirements, and the physical demands of the position.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
8.1.9.	Review compensation rates of parks and recreation staff to ensure they are competitive with comparable positions with other regional parks and recreation providers.	Short (0–2 yrs)

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
8.2.	Provide regular training to ensure that existing staff develop the skills to perform their duties.	
City Lead	Potential Partners	
	Parks & Recreation Strategic Support Services	
8.2.1.	Conduct training that is job specific for each different discipline (e.g., trades, maintenance, arborists, horticulture).	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
8.2.2.	Develop and conduct onboard training programs – one for new full-time employees and one for part-time and seasonal employees.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
8.2.3.	Develop an internal continuing education program that trains new and current staff on core skills, responsibilities, and competencies.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
8.2.4.	Develop a leadership training program to build staff leadership skills and provide a training program for future department supervisors, managers, etc.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
8.2.5.	Ensure all staff have customer service training.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
8.2.6.	Ensure a proactively safe workplace through systems of accountability, training and support.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
8.2.7.	Encourage and incentivize professional certification.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing

9. ELEVATE THE DESIGN OF PARK FACILITIES.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
9.1.	Develop a unified design language for parks and recreation facilities that is flexible enough to reflect individual community identities.	
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	MOCAP	
9.1.1.	Identify elements, such as signage, lighting, and plantings that can be standardized across all parks and recreation facilities to increase efficiency and create a cohesive identity.	Short (0–2 yrs)
9.1.2.	Standardize the design language of structures and equipment across all park and recreation facilities.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
9.1.3.	Empower and inspire community members to participate in the public engagement process of parks and recreation facilities so that they are reflected in the design of the spaces.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
9.2.	Consider the design of adjacent parks, recreation facilities, and other public facilities holistically.	
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	MOCAP, Planning	
9.2.1.	Strategically acquire land adjacent to existing parks, when available and cost effective, to expand existing parks and increase total parkland, visibility, and street frontage.	Long (0–10 yrs) Ongoing

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
9.3. Strive for design excellence in the development and refresh of parks and recreation facilities.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	MOCAP	
9.3.1.	Comprehensively evaluate the design and function of parks on a regular basis using this plan's design guidelines to determine if they need to be refreshed.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
9.3.2.	Peer review award winning parks and recreation facilities to keep up to date on successful design solutions.	Short (0–2 yrs)
9.3.3.	Partner with local and nationally recognized designers to add different design perspectives.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
9.3.4.	Incorporate best practices in park and recreation planning, design, and operation from other park systems.	Short (0–2 yrs)
9.3.5.	Develop master plans for all parks in need of a major refresh.	Long (0–10 yrs)
9.3.6.	Prior to any significant master plan or development, work with partner organizations and current and long-time residents to ensure equitable community involvement in the process.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
9.3.7.	Reflect community input and cultural values in future park designs and program activities, ensuring alignment of park spaces with specific neighborhood and cultural uses.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
9.4. Strive for design excellence in the development and refresh of parks and recreation facilities.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	MOCAP	
9.4.1.	Develop an overarching strategy to better implement the Cleveland Public Art Program and enrich the user experience.	Short (0–2 yrs)
9.4.2.	Integrate public art design and installation timelines with overall park and recreation facility design and construction timelines.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing

10. BETTER LEVERAGE RECREATION FACILITY RESOURCES TO ENHANCE THE DELIVERY OF RECREATION PROGRAMMING.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
10.1.	Optimize the use of recreation centers to best meet recreation needs and provide access to City services.	
	<p>City Lead Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services</p> <p>Potential Partners Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services, MOCAP</p>	
10.1.1.	Align recreation facilities with the Recreation Program Plan.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
10.1.2.	Encourage resource and knowledge sharing across NRRCs.	Short (0–2 yrs)
10.1.3.	Identify opportunities for NRRCs to expand access to health, financial, and other City services.	Short (0–2 yrs)
10.1.4.	Consider consolidating resident-facing facilities at existing NRRCs or at new multi-use facilities.	Long (0–10 yrs)
10.1.5.	Build and renovate recreation centers with versatility of use as the core principle, large room sizes, ample storage, technology enhancements, sustainable building methods, and comfort in summer heat.	Long (0–10 yrs)
10.1.6.	Expand recreation programs to target underserved residents based on the Recreation Program Plan and current parks and recreation needs assessment, such as providing more fitness programming at recreation centers or expanding athletic leagues for adults.	Short (0–2 yrs)
10.1.7.	Explore the feasibility of partnerships to establish new cultural/arts/community programming across the city.	Short (0–2 yrs)
10.2.	Utilize this plan's level of service standards as a planning tool to manage recreation assets efficiently and reduce duplication of services without reducing the overall quality of service.	
	<p>City Lead Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services</p> <p>Potential Partners MOCAP, Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services</p>	
10.2.1.	Identify opportunities concurrent with periodic condition assessments to evaluate adding or changing recreation amenities or enhancing access based on citywide needs and resident input.	Mid (0–2 yrs)
10.2.2.	Consider national and regional recreation trends, local demand, and projected usage and participation before introducing new and innovative amenities.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
10.2.3.	Based on level of service, determine where to reduce duplication of services without reducing the overall quality of service provided to the community.	Short (0–2 yrs)
10.2.4.	Site new amenities in locations that are or will be made accessible by as many modes of transportation as possible.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
10.3. Create a welcoming, safe, and seamless experience between recreation facilities and adjacent parks.		
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services	
10.3.1. Enhance inside-outside visibility to create clear, welcoming entrances and active edges of NRRCs.		Mid (0–5 yrs)
10.3.2. Coordinate programming within and outside of NRRCs to bring more park users inside and more NRRC users outside.		Short (0–2 yrs)

11. PROTECT AND ENHANCE NATURAL, HISTORIC, AND CULTURAL RESOURCES IN PARKS AND AT RECREATION FACILITIES.

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
11.1.	Integrate natural resources and natural resource interpretation into the design of parks and recreation facilities.	
City Lead	Potential Partners	
Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	MOCAP, Parks & Recreation Environmental Stewardship Services, NEORSD, Western Reserve Land Conservancy	
11.1.1.	Use parks as functional landscapes that perform green stormwater infrastructure and flood mitigation roles to enhance resiliency, recreational use, and beauty.	Long (0–10 yrs)
11.1.2.	Integrate native plants and plants with high pollinator value to increase the ecological value and biodiversity of parks.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
11.1.3.	Design to take advantage of the solar exposure of slopes by integrating amenities of the built environment into the compatible exposure.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
11.1.4.	Utilize existing topography that may provide buffers and barriers to surrounding uses.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
11.1.5.	Add interpretive signage within public spaces that highlight the natural resources and the benefits those resources provide.	Mid (0–5 yrs)
11.1.6.	Encourage nature-inspired play and experiences in public spaces.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
11.1.7.	Explore opportunities to use public art to interpret natural resources.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
11.1.8.	Work with partners, including recreation centers and Camp Forbes, to increase nature programming throughout the city.	Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
11.1.9.	Develop a Park Ranger nature stewardship program to better connect residents of all ages to nature.	Short (0–2 yrs)
11.1.10.	Mitigate urban heat and climate change in park design, planning, programming and management based on industry best practices, data informed decisions, and innovations.	Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing

Actions/Methods		Time Frame
11.2. Promote the planting, preservation, and maintenance of canopy trees and native vegetation.		
City Lead Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	Potential Partners	
11.2.1. Create or preserve existing vegetative ecosystems that reflect the native conditions of the area.		Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
11.2.2. Prioritize a comprehensive tree inventory as a baseline to inform increased tree planting.		Mid (0–5 yrs)
11.2.3. Develop maintenance standards and systematic schedules for all trees in the public realm (parks, street trees, etc).		Short (0–2 yrs)
11.2.4. Practice sound arboriculture best practices, including diversification of species; monitoring and managing insect and disease impacts; and preparing for unanticipated events, such as extreme weather, and climate change.		Short (0–2 yrs)
11.2.5. Strive to offset the removal of trees from maintained areas to create adequate canopy cover and to maximize the benefits of the urban forest.		Short (0–2 yrs)
11.2.6. Protect existing trees when new parks and recreation facilities are in development, or when existing parks and recreation facilities are maintained or refreshed.		Short (0–2 yrs)
11.2.7. Continue to support and work towards the goals of the Cleveland Tree Plan.		Short (0–2 yrs)
11.3. Expand the capacity to care for natural resources.		
City Lead Parks & Recreation Environmental Stewardship Services	Potential Partners Public Works, Cleveland Metroparks	
11.3.1. Create a shared approach for the care and maintenance of plantings and habitat areas across City-owned properties.		Short (0–2 yrs)
11.3.2. Expand partnerships around natural resource stewardship and identify opportunities where partners can assist the City in meeting tree and native vegetation needs.		Short (0–2 yrs) Ongoing
11.4. Capitalize on historic and cultural resources, themes, neighborhood history, and stories in parks and recreation facilities.		
City Lead Parks & Recreation Planning and Development Services	Potential Partners Parks & Recreation Environmental Stewardship Services, Parks & Recreation, Recreation and Human Services	
11.4.1. Include historical and cultural interpretive elements in new and existing parks and recreation facilities, where appropriate.		Mid (0–5 yrs) Ongoing
11.4.2. Identify critical historic and cultural resources that may need protection and have potential educational and interpretive components.		Mid (0–5 yrs)



Youth activities at an open house.
Source: OLIN, 2024.

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