



Cleveland Metroparks®

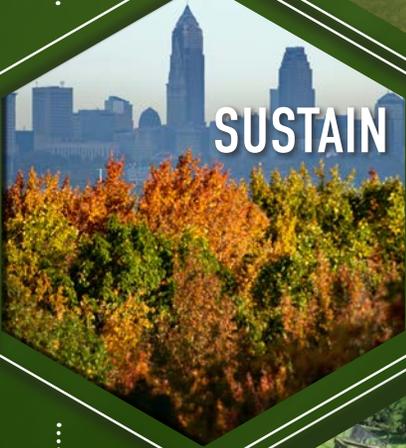
INNOVATE



CONSERVE



SUSTAIN



**SECOND  
CENTURY OF  
STEWARDSHIP**

CONNECT



ENGAGE



WELCOME



SYSTEM PLAN 2022

## Letter from Chief Executive Officer Brian M. Zimmerman

---



Cleveland Metroparks' ring of interconnected parks throughout Northeast Ohio was built upon a vision established more than a century ago by park founder William Stinchcomb. While the Park District has grown from its initial three acres to over 24,000 acres, the abundant resources enjoyed by the region today represent this legacy of conservation, education and recreation. As Cleveland Metroparks enters its second century of stewardship, we are excited to renew our mission, goals and objectives alongside our community and partners through the *Second Century of Stewardship System Plan*.

While conserving and protecting parks, forests, and waterways in the region over the last century has helped prioritize goals and strategic decision-making, Cleveland Metroparks has thrived through innovation and adaptation to enhance community connections and relevancy. Beyond just the protection of natural resources, the Park District also has the unique ability to enhance and uplift communities, strengthen the region's connection to nature and create the next generation of environmental stewards. All of these efforts helped identify our updated organizational mission: **Protecting nature, connecting communities and inspiring conservation of our world**. This mission expresses the foundational aspirations of the Park District along with the values and community challenges of today and tomorrow. It is supported by six Core Goals moving the mission to action: **Conserve, Connect, Welcome, Engage, Sustain and Innovate**.

Cleveland Metroparks' last Strategic Plan was adopted in 2012 and updated in 2015 to reflect the rapid progress following transformational acquisitions along the lakefront. Now, as the Park District looks towards its 105th year, we are updating our framework to best meet the new opportunities and challenges in our changing world. The *Second Century of Stewardship System Plan* provides us with the tools to meet and grow with the changing needs of our community and lays out a course of action to meet the national excellence standards set forth by the Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

Cleveland Metroparks' transformational achievements over the past decade were accomplished thanks to strong community support and partnerships. Results include a 10% increase in park land, 53 miles of additional trails and new facilities and amenities across the region. The Trust for Public Land's 2018 study revealed that Cleveland Metroparks generates an annual regional economic impact of \$873 million by enhancing property values, contributing to recreation, reducing stormwater runoff, improving local health and wellness and generating tourism. In recent years, park visitation has soared to its highest levels on record, park programs and events have become community traditions and the Park District has been recognized twice, in both 2016 and 2021, as the "Best in Nation" in Parks and Recreation Management by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA). These accomplishments have strengthened our organization and our region.

Above all, as we move into our second century of stewardship, we want to strengthen our connection with you. As the oldest park system in the state, the Emerald Necklace began as a vision but has grown to one of the best park systems in the nation through the unwavering support of Northeast Ohio. Thank you for joining us on this mission that has spanned generations. I hope you continue to stay active and involved in our parks, in our story and in our future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian M. Zimmerman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "Z".

Brian M. Zimmerman  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cleveland Metroparks

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

## LETTER FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

1. ABOUT CLEVELAND METROPARKS | PAGE 1
2. THE ROLE OF CLEVELAND METROPARKS IN THE COMMUNITY | PAGE 5
3. EXPANDING COMMUNITY IMPACT (2012 THROUGH 2021) | PAGE 10
4. ACTION FRAMEWORK AND CORE GOALS | PAGE 13
5. STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION | PAGE 21
6. CONCLUSION | PAGE 22

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

### APPENDICES:

- A. The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks
- B. Cleveland Metroparks Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility Policy
- C. Cleveland Metroparks Sustainability Policy
- D. Cuyahoga Greenways Vision Plan
- E. Cleveland Metroparks Community Survey 2020
- F. Cleveland Metroparks 2021 Community Engagement Summary
- G. Cleveland Metroparks Reservation Master Plans
- H. Community Inventory of Alternative Providers
- I. Cleveland Metroparks 10-year Performance Summary
- J. Cleveland Metroparks Zoo 150 Campus Plan
- K. Demographic and Leisure Trends Analysis
- L. Park Benchmark Analysis

# 1. ABOUT CLEVELAND METROPARKS

## CLEVELAND METROPARKS TODAY

Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, and Northeast Ohio enjoy a beautiful setting along Lake Erie in an area rich with natural resources. The river valleys, shorelines, parkways, trails and forests of Cleveland Metroparks resonate with the community and enjoy broad support. The nearly 105-year-old park system is both a significant tourist attraction and an integral part of the region's identity and quality of life.

The 24,350 acres currently protected by Cleveland Metroparks hosted a record-breaking 19.7 million recreational visits in 2020.

Some of this increase can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, 2021's statistics remained strong, with more than 19 million recreational visits. Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Northeast Ohio's most popular year-round attraction, drew 1.3 million visitors in 2021, the highest in a decade. The visitation rates confirm the popularity of Cleveland Metroparks with the local community, particularly considering Cuyahoga County's population of 1.26 million residents.



## MISSION AND CORE GOALS

Focused action, trust in staff expertise, core goals and purpose and a newly adopted mission are the guiding tenets of the *Second Century of Stewardship System Plan*. The mission expresses the foundational aspirations of the Park District along with the values and community challenges of today:

**Protecting nature, connecting communities and inspiring conservation of our world.**

## THE MISSION IS SUPPORTED BY SIX CORE GOALS

### MOVING THE MISSION TO ACTION:

**CONSERVE** land, wildlife and water to protect the beauty and ecological function and resilience of our region and the world.

**CONNECT** people to nature and each other to build community and inspire action.

**WELCOME** all people to explore the parks and zoo and prioritize inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

**ENGAGE** and serve people with high quality facilities, compelling zoological experiences, volunteer and recreational opportunities and captivating programs and events.

**SUSTAIN** and uplift our region, our parks and our zoo, our people and our infrastructure for future generations.

**INNOVATE** by exploring new solutions to expand the health and well-being of our region and the world.



**VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY**

Cleveland Metroparks delivers direct and quantifiable benefits to the community beyond experiencing and enjoying the 18 distinct park areas, referred to as reservations, and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The Trust for Public Land estimates \$873 million in annual economic value is provided to local residents and governments, plus additional benefits from enhanced property values and recreation-related spending.<sup>1</sup> The table summarizes the study; refer to **Appendix A, *The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks***, for the complete document.

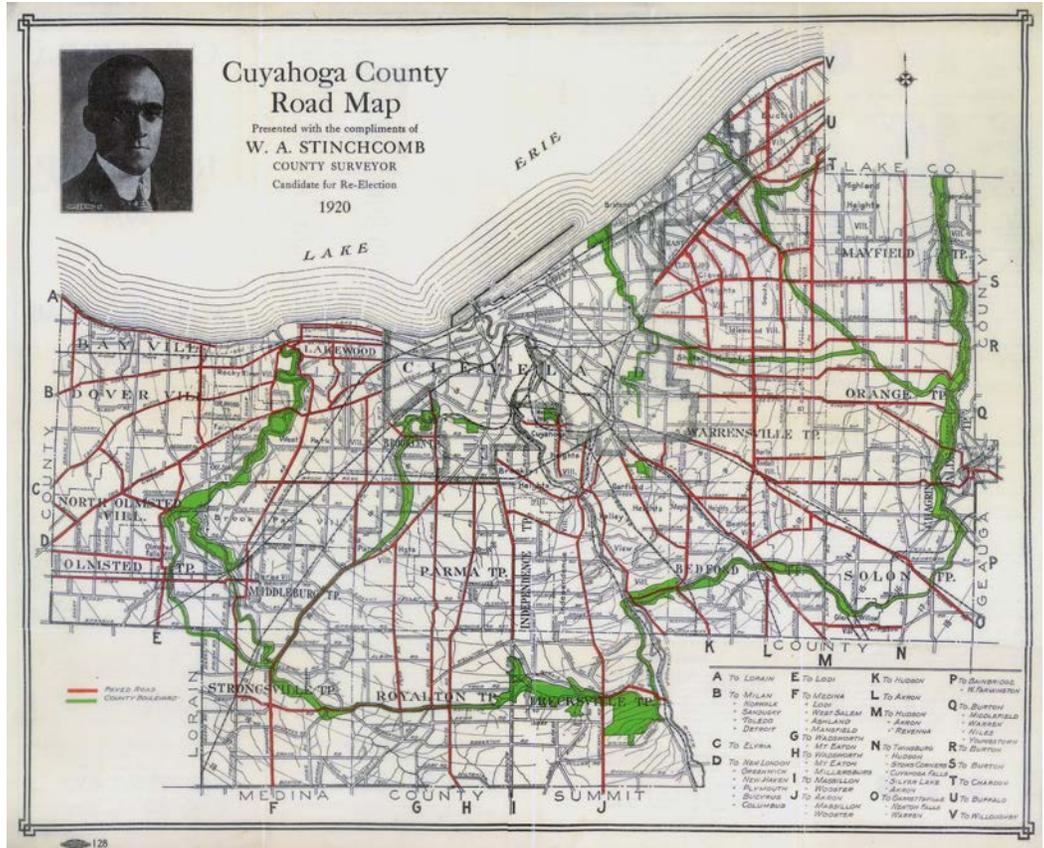
**SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED ECONOMIC BENEFITS PROVIDED BY CLEVELAND METROPARKS (2018\$)**

Benefit category	Total
Enhanced property	
<i>Total additional property value</i> *	\$155,000,000
Additional annual property tax	\$4,180,000
Stormwater infiltration	\$20,400,000
Air pollution removal	\$8,090,000
Tourism	\$616,000,000
Recreational use	\$64,600,000
Health care cost savings	\$160,000,000
<b>Total annual benefit</b>	<b>\$873,270,000</b>
Economic development **	
<i>Annual spending on sports, recreation and exercise equipment by residents</i>	\$77,400,000
<i>Annual sales generated by sporting goods stores</i>	\$170,000,000

\* Total additional property value is a one-time benefit and is not included in the annual benefit total  
 \*\* The economic development values presented here illustrate the importance of the recreation economy in Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township. Not all spending and sales in these categories are exclusively generated by Cleveland Metroparks reservations and trails.

**THE EMERALD NECKLACE**

The Park District resources enjoyed today were protected through the foresight from over a hundred years ago when several leading citizens sought to preserve Cuyahoga County's outlying scenic river valleys and connect them with a parkway system. This vision, known as the Emerald Necklace, was first proposed in 1905. Cleveland was one of the largest cities in the country at the time and Progressive Era reforms such as public parks were sought to provide green space and recreation to mitigate urbanization, industrialization and economic disparities.



<sup>1</sup> *The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks* (Boston: The Trust for Public Land, September 2018), 8.

# ABOUT CLEVELAND METROPARKS

## 1917 TO TODAY

Ohio Revised Code Section 1545, adopted in March 1917, enables the creation of metropolitan park districts for the conservation of natural resources. The Cleveland Metropolitan Park District, more commonly known as Cleveland Metroparks, was officially established on July 23, 1917. Engineer William A. Stinchcomb, an early champion of the Emerald Necklace concept, became the first Executive Director and served until 1957.

Today, the Park District preserves natural resources and provides programs and passive recreation in 49 communities across six counties. Cleveland Metroparks' 18 reservations encompass 24,350 acres with a footprint remarkably similar to the original Emerald Necklace vision. Programs, parks and facilities have evolved to best meet the needs of the public while fulfilling the foundational goals. Examples include Cleveland Metroparks' assumption of Cleveland-owned Brookside Reservation and Garfield Park Reservation, new parks and trails, Cuyahoga River restoration efforts and the formation of Lakefront Reservation.

The Park District has been guided by various system plans over the years. *Cleveland Metroparks 2020: The Emerald Necklace Centennial Plan* shifted attention to include areas outside park boundaries in order to leverage greater community benefits. Consideration of equitable park access and levels of service, including a focus on Environmental Justice (EJ) Areas, is delivering expanded access to parks. This focus is formalized in the organization's "Dignity and Respect for All: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Policy", adopted in September 2020; refer to **Appendix B**. Cleveland Metroparks' park and trail expansion since 2015 has resulted in a 24.1% increase in EJ Area populations served, with plans to continue this progress.

"The Metropolitan Parks have many values to the great urban community... They belong to all of us, without distinction as to race or religion or political party. Rich or poor, they belong to all of us, let us ever protect and keep them."

- William A. Stinchcomb  
Founder and Executive Director 1921-1957

## PARK ADMINISTRATION

Cleveland Metroparks management is directed by a three-member Board of Park Commissioners appointed by the presiding Judge of the Probate Court of Cuyahoga County. The operation of the Park District is funded through property taxes supported by the citizens of Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township. This funding is complemented by income from enterprise operations, events and admission to Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, golf rounds, local, state and federal grants, private donations and philanthropy.

In a typical year, Cleveland Metroparks employs more than 900 full-time, part-time and seasonal employees (based on full-time equivalents) to manage and maintain the parks and zoo and to administer finance, events and other operations of the organization. New employees participate in a week-long onboarding course to familiarize them with the Park District, ethics of public employment and the core values and goals of the agency. The Park District also relies on a vigorous volunteer program to provide services to park guests. In 2019, 5,722 volunteers provided 137,220 hours of service in roles as Trail Ambassadors, guest services assistants and for service projects in the parks. In 2020, even with COVID-19 closures and restrictions implemented, 1,876 volunteers contributed 57,017 hours of service.

Providing high levels of service to the community and maintaining a healthy agency culture are internal foundational elements of Cleveland Metroparks. Achieving performance standards and accreditation from national organizations helps confirm that the organization is meeting or exceeding the latest national standards and benchmarks. Cleveland Metroparks maintains the following national accreditations:

- Cleveland Metroparks – Commission for the Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA)
- Cleveland Metroparks Zoo – Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA)
- Cleveland Metroparks Police – Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA)

## Cleveland Metroparks Core Values:

Guest Focus | Sustainability | Teamwork | Professionalism | Dignity and Respect | Integrity

## COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

Cleveland Metroparks provides consistent, high-quality park experiences and natural resource conservation. The organization is the 2021 recipient of the National Gold Medal “Best in Nation” Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Administration from the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA). This marks the fifth time, including 2016, that the Park District has achieved the highest honor in the parks and recreation field. Other recent national awards and recognition include:

- National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA):
  - 2021: Innovation in Social Equity Award: Re-Connecting Cleveland: Pathways to Opportunity TIGER Grant Project and Advocate Award: Bruce Rinker, Cleveland Metroparks Board of Park Commissioners
- 2021 Golf Magazine – Two courses ranked in the top 30 Best Municipal Golf Courses in America
- Cleveland Metroparks Purchasing – recipient of the Government Finance Officers Association’s Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for 28 consecutive years
- National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials (NACPRO):
  - 2017: Programming: Youth Outdoors; Marketing: Future for Wildlife
  - 2018: Professional Fellow: Brian Zimmerman; Area and Facility: Edgewater Beach House; Environment and Conservation: Acacia Reservation Restoration
  - 2019: Trails: Outstanding Contributor: Matt Cole and Fat Head’s; Outstanding Support Organization: West Creek Conservancy; Environment and Conservation: Jackson Property acquisition; Planning: Reservation Master Plans; Historical Facility: Look About Lodge Renovation
  - 2020: Trails: Valley Parkway Connector; Programming: First People’s Day
  - 2021: Trails: TIGER Trails – Re-Connecting Cleveland



## LEADERSHIP IN CONSERVATION

### ASSOCIATION OF ZOOS & AQUARIUMS

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo’s Executive Director, Dr. Christopher Kuhar,

served as Chair of the Board of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) from 2019 to 2020 and as a member of the Executive Committee from 2017-2021. Through his service to AZA and his ongoing role at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, Dr. Kuhar improves the sustainability of animal populations and continues to expand initiatives focused on animal welfare and conservation.

AZA has 240 member institutions from 13 countries and is the premier zoo and aquarium accrediting body in North America. AZA provides leadership in animal husbandry, animal welfare and conservation programming and education. Cleveland Metroparks Zoo has been AZA accredited since 1981.

## WORKPLACE CULTURE



Cleveland Metroparks has been recognized 15 consecutive years by NorthCoast 99 as one of the best workplaces in Northeast Ohio. In 2021, Cleveland Metroparks garnered an additional Special Category Award for Talent Attraction, Acquisition and Onboarding.

Local and national accreditation and awards demonstrate the value of highly motivated staff and an organization that delivers excellent value to constituents. Many employees of the Park District dedicate personal time to serve on professional and community groups. Cleveland Metroparks strives to expand nature-based education and recreation opportunities, and improve conservation not just locally and regionally, but nationally and internationally. Park leaders serve on 40 external boards across the nation and researchers lead studies on international threats including beech leaf disease. Cleveland Metroparks Zoo’s global mission supports more than 50 animal conservation partners in a dozen countries around the world each year.

## 2. THE ROLE OF CLEVELAND METROPARKS IN THE COMMUNITY

### WHO WE SERVE

Cleveland Metroparks is committed to serving all residents and visitors in the numerous and diverse communities that make up the Park District. As part of the strategic planning process, Cleveland Metroparks contracted with PROS Consulting to perform a demographic and leisure trends analysis to better understand residents of the Tax District and potential needs for facilities and programming into the future.

The demographic analysis demonstrates the overall size and total population by specific age segment, race and ethnicity and the overall economic status and disposable income characteristics of the residents through household income statistics. Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from U.S. Census Bureau and from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in January 2021 and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2010 Census as 2020 Census figures were not yet available.

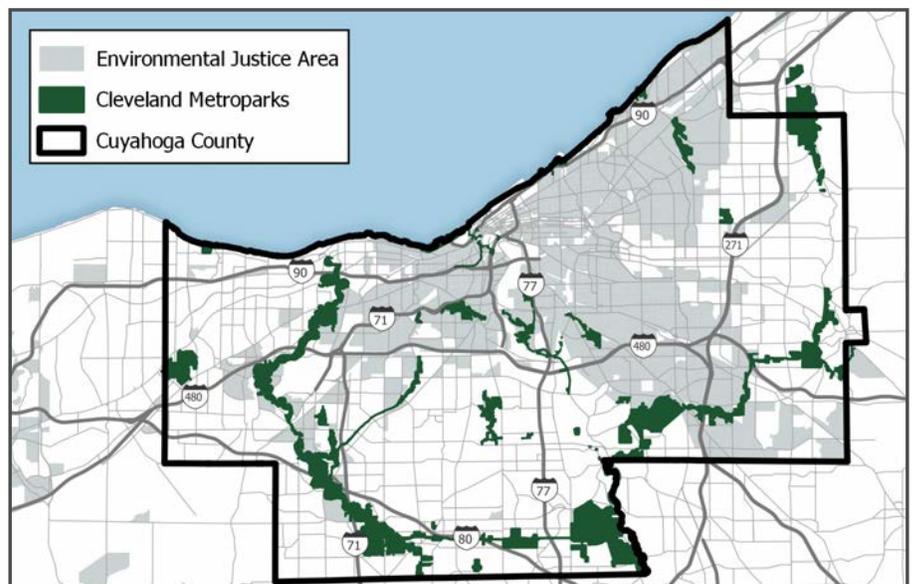
The Cleveland Metroparks Tax District, which includes all of Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township in Medina County, consists of just over 1.26 million people, a number that is expected to decline by about 50,000 by 2035. Cuyahoga County has seen decades of declining population, though the rate has slowed.

Overall, the Tax District is growing older and less affluent as median household income is just over \$51,000, a figure below both state and national levels.

From the report the following was found:

- The Tax District's recent population annual growth rate (-0.27%) is significantly lower than both the state (0.25%) and the nation's (0.81%) growth rates.
- Similarly, the Tax District's current number of households annual growth rate (-0.12%) is well below state (0.33%) and national averages (0.80%).
- When assessing age segments, the Tax District exhibits a slightly older population than both state and national age segment distributions.
- The Tax District's racial distribution is notably more diverse than Ohio's population distribution, with a much greater Black Alone population percentage (30.0%) compared with (12.9%).
- The Tax District's percentage of Hispanic/Latino population (6.6%) is slightly above the state Hispanic/Latino population percentage (4.2%) but roughly one-third of the national average (18.8%).
- The Tax District's per capita income (\$33,343) is in line with Ohio's and the U.S.'s per capita incomes (\$31,425 & \$34,136, respectively) but its median household income (\$51,275) is lower than state and national averages (\$56,352 & \$62,203, respectively).

Beyond general demographics of the Park District, detail was gathered through the analysis of Environmental Justice (EJ) Areas. These are areas where more residents live at or below the federal poverty level and/or identify as a non-white racially minority. Understanding locations of EJ Areas is important to the work of the Park District to ensure both fair treatment and meaningful engagement of residents in these areas. Significant portions of Cuyahoga County are classified as EJ Areas, as demonstrated in the following figure.



## FOUNDATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND LENSES

As part of the 2012 Centennial Plan, the Park District developed priorities and goals to ensure that broader and better access was provided to residents throughout the district, leading to acquisition of lakefront parks in the city of Cleveland and a focus on building regional trails by partnering with communities and nonprofits to expand beyond the park's boundaries to take a more active role throughout the service area.

Cleveland Metroparks is committed to providing safe and accessible facilities and services to all citizens. Consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, Cleveland Metroparks works to ensure that there is no discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability in its programs and services and seeks to address and eliminate structural barriers associated with its public facilities.

Equitable access was a key direction in the 2012 Centennial Plan and continues to be a foundational element in this new system plan. Included is a thorough analysis of how residents are being served and where there are gaps in access and how best to address them. The Park District also recently updated two specific policies that guide the agency's work:

- "Cleveland Metroparks Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Policy" – **Appendix B**
- "Cleveland Metroparks Sustainability Policy" – **Appendix C**

## MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Cleveland Metroparks' Trail Division staff mentored a five-student cohort from Cleveland through a partnership with the Student Conservation Association Trail Corps (SCA). Participants learned trail building skills, reclaimed impacted areas of the parks and explored options for conservation-related careers. Friday field trips showcased community history and conservation-related topics. The inaugural year of SCA resulted in impactful student experiences and an expanded relationship between Cleveland Metroparks and our community. The SCA program is a tangible demonstration of Conserve, Connect, Welcome, Engage, Sustain and Innovate, the six Core Goals of Cleveland Metroparks.



SCA Crew members cutting in a new trail in Bedford Reservation

# THE ROLE OF CLEVELAND METROPARKS IN THE COMMUNITY

## PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION

An example of one area where the Park District has partnered for innovative approaches is around trails and access to parks. In 2015, Cleveland Metroparks updated its strategic plan and identified “Connections” as one of five key goals of the agency. These connections include constructing trails that further the vision of the interconnected Emerald Necklace, as well as other projects that link Cleveland Metroparks to other local, state and regional trail networks or places of interest. To help achieve the “Connections” goal, Cleveland Metroparks staff evaluates trail, greenway and multimodal facility projects using the Park District’s Trail Matrix decision-making tool to quantitatively rank these projects to determine which projects to prioritize or support. This tool scores across fourteen different attributes such as improving access to underserved areas and contributing to network connectivity.

This focus led to pursuit of the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant for the Re-Connecting Cleveland project in partnership with The Trust for Public Land and LAND studio, partnering with the City of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, and Canalway Partners to complete the Towpath Trail in the city of Cleveland, and many other recent and ongoing efforts. Additionally, Cleveland Metroparks staff serves on many community and stakeholder committees for active transportation efforts, including the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency’s (NOACA) Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

In 2016, with funding from NOACA, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, and others, Cuyahoga Greenway Partners (CGP) members led a trail and bikeway planning effort which resulted in a countywide plan for a network of both on-road and off-road connections called the Cuyahoga Greenways Plan. The vision of the CGP is a completed, county-wide network of off-road trails and on-road low-stress bike facilities which is accessible to all for transportation, recreation and enjoyment. The Cuyahoga Greenways Plan is the culmination of regional collaboration, route identification, technical evaluation and community engagement.

Through this effort, the plan identified 69 projects (242.5 miles) and divided them into three categories:

- Critical Gaps: 12 projects totaling 13.5 miles
- Regional Links: 27 projects totaling 122 miles
- Key Supporting Routes: 30 projects totaling 107 miles



These high impact projects were determined based upon a combination of technical input and stakeholder feedback. The projects were prioritized due to their functional role within the network, the potential benefits they afford to the county, community needs that are addressed and local support for implementation. Equity and access factors were a prominent part of the analysis and prioritization of the routes. The plan was adopted by Cleveland Metroparks Board of Park Commissioners on March 18, 2021, and is included as **Appendix D**.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS AND FEEDBACK

Cleveland Metroparks is a community leader in planning, and citizen and stakeholder involvement is integral to the work the agency does. The Park District builds extensive public involvement into the development of all major planning documents and is committed to the core value of guest focus. Public meetings, surveys, stakeholder engagement and online information materials and comment forms are all methods of engagement that are utilized.

For the system plan, internal engagement with Cleveland Metroparks staff began in December 2020, and public engagement began in summer 2021. Multiple engagement strategies were employed throughout 2021 to allow public participation during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the plan incorporates input gathered during a *2020 Community Survey* on perceptions and use of the park system, and those survey results are included as **Appendix E**.



Cleveland Metroparks' goal was to reach as many people as possible in order to hear many different voices from all corners of the Park District. The community was able to provide input through a myriad of engagement sessions, including community events, online comment forms, task forces, public open houses, in-house engagement sessions and more. Park staff went to 12 reservations for community input, while visitors to other reservations had the opportunity to participate through online open houses and comment forms. Virtual engagement sessions were advertised through social media, as well as Cleveland Metroparks' website.

These conversations with the community allowed Cleveland Metroparks to formulate a vision for the future that includes the needs, values and vision of residents the Park District serves. While most feedback was general to the Park District as a whole, some reservation-specific themes were voiced. These specific survey results were recorded in the system plan engagement outcomes and will be specifically addressed in the Reservation Plan Updates and with reservation managers. See **Appendix F** for the *2021 Community Engagement Summary*.

Reservation Plans for each park were completed in 2012 as part of the Centennial Plan. Beginning in 2014, a rotating cycle of Reservation Master Plan Updates have taken place, addressing four to five park reservations each year. The plan updates outline specific actions and prioritize four to five initiatives at each park reservation. Plan priorities generate higher rankings during the budget process, and this cycle of updates ensures each reservation is reviewed at least once every ten years. For more information and the current *Reservation Master Plans*, see **Appendix G**.

“

“For over a century, the Cleveland Metroparks have been here for the community. The preservation of land may be our greatest gift to the generations that follow.”

- Brian Zimmerman  
Chief Executive Officer

”

## ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

Various studies were conducted as part of the system plan process to better understand the characteristics and needs of the community. This additional information helps guide the Park District by identifying barriers that limit park participation and where there is opportunity for new or improved access or programming, all with the end goal of providing programs and services that encourage and engage residents of Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township.

A community inventory was compiled with the goal to provide a quick-reference overview of alternative providers of similar activities to what Cleveland Metroparks offers in the general area. See *Community Inventory of Alternative Providers* prepared by PROS Consulting, **Appendix H**.

Information was assembled about recent capital projects that impact community access and facilities. Information on more than 50 major capital projects across the Park District over the preceding decade are listed in **Appendix I**, *Cleveland Metroparks 10-year Performance Summary*.

Reservation and zoo master plans that outline possible improvements were also reviewed to understand how services could adapt in the future to meet changing needs of the community. See **Appendix G**, *Cleveland Metroparks Reservation Master Plans* and **Appendix J**, *Cleveland Metroparks Zoo 150 Campus Plan*.

A study of the characteristics of the community, including recreation and leisure trends, was also conducted. See **Appendix K**, *Demographic and Leisure Trends Analysis*. As part of the system plan, PROS Consulting provided a benchmark comparison of the Cleveland Metroparks to five other high-performing park and recreation agencies with similar characteristics to provide more detailed information on acreage, trail mileage, operations and core program areas to identify areas of areas where the Park District is a leader and where there may be opportunity to optimize efforts. See **Appendix L**, *Park Benchmark Analysis*.

## RECREATION AND LEISURE TRENDS

Overall, PROS found that the Tax District's residents demonstrate participation trends that have slightly below average potential index numbers in all four categories studied (general sports, fitness, outdoor activity and commercial recreation).

A few activities that demonstrate above average probable demand within the Park District compared to the nation include:

- Participation in sports such as basketball, golf and softball
- Leisure fitness activities related to walking for exercise, such as a walking club
- Outdoor programming in areas such as equestrian and watercraft recreation
- Money spent on attending classical music performances, birdwatching, and buying sporting equipment

PROS found contrast of growth and decline in participation regarding outdoor/adventure recreation activities. Much like the 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.

Across the country, the most popular activities, in 2019 in terms of total participants, from the outdoor/adventure recreation category include:

- Day Hiking (49.7 million)
- Road Bicycling (39.4 million)
- Freshwater Fishing (39.2 million)
- Camping within ¼ mile of Vehicle/Home (28.2 million)
- Recreational Vehicle Camping (15.4 million)



### 3. EXPANDING COMMUNITY IMPACT (2012 THROUGH 2021)

Cleveland was a thriving transportation and industrial hub and the fifth largest city in the United States during the 1920s, with a peak population of more than 900,000 after World War II. The impacts of a changing economy, declining manufacturing sector, and disinvestment in urban centers resulted in Cleveland’s population shrinking to 381,009 in 2019. Other Northeast Ohio and Midwestern legacy cities have had similar challenges. The 2008 foreclosure crisis and resulting Great Recession pushed local leaders to address a collaborative plan for future regional development and investment practices.

In January 2011, 33 organizations from Northeast Ohio’s 12 counties formed the Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium (NEOSCC) to help address the region’s challenges. The resulting plan, *Vibrant NEO 2040*, was published after a three-year effort funded in part through a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Sustainable Communities grant. The plan is built on quantitative research showing detrimental effects if the footprint of new development continues to expand as population levels decline.

Four common areas of focus are identified in *Vibrant NEO 2040*’s vision:

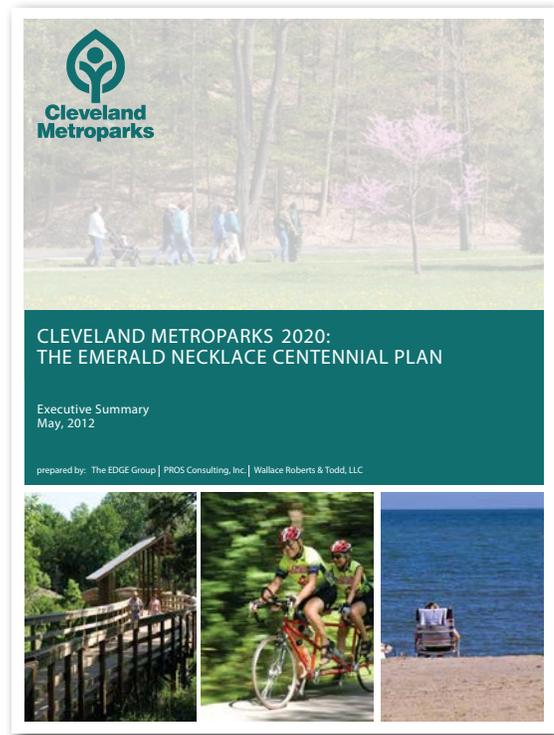
- Strengthen Established Communities
- Increase Transportation Choice
- Preserve and Protect Natural Resources
- Promote Collaboration and Efficiency

Parallel to the work of NEOSCC, Cleveland Metroparks worked with stakeholders to develop an updated Strategic Plan. *Cleveland Metroparks 2020: The Emerald Necklace Centennial Plan* was the organization’s first effort to look outside park boundaries to leverage the Park District’s impact for greater community benefit.

The plan relates to *Vibrant NEO 2040*’s vision by leveraging natural capital and focusing on seven key directions:

- Green Infrastructure
- Scale
- Cleveland and Inner Ring Suburbs
- Outdoor Recreation
- Regional Greenway System
- Lakefront Parks
- Financial Sustainability

*The Emerald Necklace Centennial Plan* helped guide the Park District through a successful levy approved by 70% of voters. The plan’s policy framework statement express Cleveland Metroparks’ dedication to looking beyond park boundaries to deepen the organization’s scope of influence. The guidance of the Emerald Necklace Centennial Plan and 2015 update refocused Cleveland Metroparks to more holistically serve all residents of Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township. The Second Century of Stewardship System Plan incorporates current research and community input to advance work based on the framework outlines in the following section. The following Decade in Review infographic summarizes the overall accomplishments of the Park District since 2012. The plan’s key directions and resulting actions are highlighted on the following pages.



# DECADE IN REVIEW



## 2012 Acquired: 210 Acres

- Acacia Reservation opens
- Rivergate Park acquired
- Royalview Trail in Mill Stream Run Reservation redesigned for mountain biking
- Adopted *Cleveland Metroparks 2020: The Emerald Necklace Centennial Plan*

## 2015 Acquired: 56 Acres

- Aukerman Park in Brecksville Reservation opens
- Merwin's Wharf restaurant at Rivergate Park opens
- Stillwater Place event center opens at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
- Ben Gogolick Giraffe Encounter opens at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
- Surpassed 100,000 Facebook page likes
- Cleveland Metroparks Police Department received prestigious CALEA Accreditation

## 2018 Acquired: 227 Acres

- Asian Highlands Destination opens at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
- Completion of Valley Parkway Connector Trail
- Trailside Program Center at Brecksville Reservation opens
- Nature Based Preschool opens in Rocky River Reservation
- Inaugural Asian Lantern Festival at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo

## 2013 Acquired: 635 Acres

- Lakefront Reservation opens
- Watershed Stewardship Center in West Creek Reservation opens
- Cleveland Metroparks receives prestigious accreditation from The Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA)

## 2016 Acquired: 73 Acres

- Awarded National Gold Medal Award for Park and Recreation Management
- Rosebrough Tiger Passage opens at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
- Cleveland Metroparks eLCee2 Water Taxi opens
- New Fort Hill Stairs open in Rocky River Reservation
- Secured federal TIGER Grant of \$8 million for Re-Connecting Cleveland trail projects

## 2019 Acquired: 217 Acres

- Euclid Beach Pier opens at Euclid Creek Reservation
- Inaugural Wild Winter Lights event at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
- Cleveland Metroparks receives prestigious Ohio EPA Platinum Award

## 2014 Acquired: 227 Acres

- Circle of Wildlife Carousel and Nature Discovery Ridge open at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
- Edgewater LIVE and Euclid Beach LIVE concert series
- Purchase of Wendy Park and Whiskey Island
- e55 on the lake opens

## 2017 Acquired: 171 Acres

- Cleveland Metroparks 100th Anniversary and record recreational attendance with more than 18.5 million visitors
- Emerald Necklace Donor Circles and Centennial Forest Fund established
- Edgewater Beach House opens
- Cleveland Foundation Centennial Lake Link Trail
- Cleveland Metroparks Zoo launches Securing a Future for Wildlife rebrand
- Launched overhauled public website

## 2020 Acquired: 277 Acres

- Adapted operations in response to COVID-19 pandemic and experienced record attendance of more than 19.7 million recreational visits
- Daniel Maltz Rhino Reserve opens
- Developed drive-through events: Cruise the Zoo, Asian Lantern Festival and Wild Winter Lights
- IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility) Committee created
- Inaugural Winter RiverFest

\*2021 figures and numbers

® Registered trademark of Cleveland Metroparks



**\$873 Million**

in economic value to the region



The land the Park District manages has increased in the past 10 years. **10%**

Cleveland Metroparks now encompasses

**24,250** acres  
**Over 35,000** trees planted



**More Than 53 Miles**

of trails added, totaling **321+ miles** of trails



**Over 61,000**

education programs serving more than **4.6 million** guests



**49** diverse communities served with land in **6** counties



More than **9.6 Million** visits to



**21% Increase**

in annual recreational visits



**Over 46,000**

volunteers with over **1.1 million hours**



**2021**

Acquired: 165 Acres

- Completion of TIGER Trails – including Red Line Greenway, Whiskey Island Trail and Wendy Park Bridge
- Introduced “Find Your Path” campaign with new mobile app
- Brookside Reservation’s Brighton Park opens
- New amenities open including Lindsey Family Place Space at Edgewater Park, the Noshery at Huntington Beach and Eagle Zip Adventure at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo
- Completed Towpath Trail Extension Project



**More Than 3.6 Million**

golf visits since 2012



## 4. ACTION FRAMEWORK AND CORE GOALS

2012's *Emerald Necklace Centennial Plan* was a catalyst for modernizing the founding principles of Cleveland Metroparks. 2022's *Second Century of Stewardship System Plan* further updates the Mission and identifies six Core Goals, continuing the momentum of the Park District and refining the purpose-driven actions. Focused action, a strong sense of mission and purpose and trust in staff expertise are the guiding tenets for this document.

The framework of the Core Goals includes a criteria statement to help evaluate potential initiatives that may arise over time. Several priorities are outlined, focusing on specific aspects of each goal. Initiatives are listed for the next five-year period. These initiatives begin to shape the priorities into specific, actionable items, with accompanying metrics to assess performance.

The Mission and Core Goals provide a stable framework for the foreseeable future. This structure relies upon departmental expertise to determine the best means and methods for accomplishing the goals. Progress is measured annually by existing metrics and performance tracking. Departmental work plans and budgets are incorporated into the framework and provide a pathway to progress towards larger goals.

Initiatives have a variety of scales and timeframes for accomplishment. Initiatives will be updated every five years to reflect progress. The goals will also inform individual park plans through the reservation master planning process.

Ongoing master planning also takes place at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The Zoo's most recent Master Plan is included as **Appendix J**.

### RELATING GOALS TO THE PARKS: THE RESERVATION MASTER PLAN PROCESS

*Cleveland Metroparks Reservation Master Plans* (see **Appendix G**) outline actions to help sustain each reservation for the next two to 20 years. The process rotates through the Park District to look at four to five reservations each year. The staff-led process includes internal experts from natural resources, marketing, information technology, outdoor experiences, park management, planning and design, construction, law enforcement, development and land protection. Stakeholders develop recommendations during workshops throughout the year. Outreach to external stakeholders includes public open houses, online plans and comment forms, meetings with surrounding communities and groups with special interests to generate feedback on the plans. Work is finalized and presented to the Board of Park Commissioners. The final plans highlight the Core Goal corresponding to each recommended action. Plans are available on the Park District website and are used by park staff to develop annual budgets and work plans. This process and the resulting planning documents received a NACPRO award in 2019.



# SECOND CENTURY OF STEWARDSHIP

Plan Framework:

**Mission**  
Core Goals  
Priorities  
Initiatives  
Metrics





# CONSERVE



## Conserve land, wildlife and water to protect the beauty, ecological function and resilience of our region and the world.

---

Conserving natural resources, protecting habitat and providing places for people to experience nature are the reasons Cleveland Metroparks was established. Cuyahoga County has shifted from open countryside to cities and suburbs over the last century, but important opportunities remain to expand stewardship, improve access to parks, mitigate climate change and educate and inspire people to take action for a healthier and more sustainable world. Efforts include land protection, land reutilization, habitat restoration, resilience efforts, ongoing stewardship and resource management and global animal conservation efforts led by Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The resulting improvements to water and air quality, pollution prevention, species survival and climate moderation benefit local communities and the world.

---

### Priorities:

- **Expand parks** through a variety of mechanisms to increase resource protection and preserve ecological function, with attention to equitable service in Environmental Justice Areas
- Partner to plan and implement local and regional **conservation efforts** maximizing ecosystem benefits and increasing resilience to climate change
- Conduct cohesive **research and monitoring** to advance best practices and complement adaptive management of natural resources
- Champion **habitat protection** for rare, threatened and endangered species to secure a future for wildlife
- **Manage** local habitat to balance animal welfare and sustainability

### Select Initiatives:

- Use and maintain the Land Protection Plan to identify, track and secure opportunities for accomplishing conservation and connectivity goals
- Collaborate with partners to implement projects that protect species, restore habitat, increase access and advance shared goals
- Advocate for policies and funding related to local and international conservation
- Actively manage park resources through restoration and monitoring activities, including invasive species control and enforcement actions
- Advance research related to conservation, climate change and species protection

**Metrics:** Acres protected, acres restored, trees planted, research initiatives, advocacy efforts, tracking of key species or features, surveys completed, peer-reviewed publications, grant funds received



# CONNECT



## Connect people to nature and each other to build community and inspire action.

Proximity to parks and trails improves health outcomes, provides options for active transportation, reduces vehicular emissions and contributes to community well-being. Cleveland Metroparks will continue to work to expand access to parks by advancing the comprehensive network of trails envisioned by regional planning efforts including the Cuyahoga Greenways Plan. Sustainable best practices will be employed to manage existing trail systems and construct new trails, as space and resources allow, providing a variety of trail types and experiences within the parks. Related efforts will improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, signage and wayfinding and communications including Cleveland Metroparks mobile app and online information.

### Priorities:

- Serve as a leader in Cuyahoga Greenway Partners' collaborative effort to implement the planned **county-wide trail network**. Utilize the Trails Matrix tool and bike/walkshed analysis to identify internal priorities
- Work with partners to standardize regional trail **wayfinding and communications**, including the mobile app and online information
- Serve hikers, cyclists, multi-modal users, paddlers and equestrians of **all ages and abilities** with a variety of trail types and experiences
- Facilitate opportunities for interaction and **relationship building** with a variety of trail and park experiences

### Select Initiatives:

- Obtain funding and implement priority projects identified through the Trails Matrix and coordination with Cuyahoga Greenway Partners
- Maintain and renovate legacy trails. Pursue appropriate new natural surface trail construction
- Continue to implement ADA transition plan for paved trails to improve trails for people of all abilities
- Utilize trails and parks for community events that bring diverse groups together

**Metrics:** Miles of trails added, miles maintained, grant funds received, bike/walkshed analysis, number of partner initiatives, number of ADA improvements, number of events



# WELCOME



## Welcome all people to explore the parks and prioritize inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility.

.....

Cleveland Metroparks is working to improve equitable access to the well-documented benefits of parks and greenspace and ensure all people feel welcome when visiting the Park District. Race, mobility, income and lack of transportation are some of the determining factors that indicate barriers to park access faced by people in Northeast Ohio. 58% of Cuyahoga County's population resides in an area designated as an Environmental Justice (EJ) Area and the overall community is older than state and national averages. Cleveland Metroparks will remove barriers to park use to continue to advance community resilience and resurgence, with a particular focus on EJ Areas.

.....

### Priorities:

- **Remove barriers** to accessing parks, trails, and programs, with a focus on awareness, distance to parks and trails, transportation and accessibility
- Provide a **welcoming atmosphere** and **high-quality experiences** to encourage all residents to experience the parks, programs, facilities and trails of the Park District
- Strive for a **diverse workforce** that respects and welcomes all visitors and represents area demographics

### Select Initiatives:

- Use data and technology to measure access and expand community awareness and engagement
- Develop fruitful relationships with new partners and audiences while strengthening and sustaining relationships with existing ones
- Build on existing core values of Guest Focus and Dignity and Respect with employees and volunteers to provide exceptional service and evaluate results through user surveys
- Improve communications to help share information and acclimate new park users
- Attract, support and retain a diverse workforce through efforts in recruitment, training and organizational culture

**Metrics:** Visitor demographics and satisfaction, usage (visitation, nature center attendance, golf, zoo attendance and events), recruitment of diverse staff, volunteer statistics, employee retention, technologies deployed



# ENGAGE



## Engage and serve people with high quality facilities, compelling zoological experiences, volunteer and recreational opportunities and captivating programs and events.

Cleveland Metroparks strives to engage all visitors through the beauty and enjoyment of our parks and trails and works to ensure the Park District is a regional asset. Cleveland Metroparks contributes to Northeast Ohio's quality of life and is a component of regional tourism and economic development. Through responsive programming, volunteer opportunities, guest focus and compelling experiences and places, Cleveland Metroparks seeks to serve visitors and area residents and create lifelong environmental stewards – not only of Cleveland Metroparks, but of the natural world.

### Priorities:

- Work with communities and advocacy groups to strengthen relationships, listen to resident priorities and engage park visitors of all ages with **responsive programs and facilities**
- **Partner** with outside organizations that share similar values and goals to expand impact
- Encourage **active stewardship** through an active volunteer program along with opportunities for sponsorships and donations to support Park District initiatives
- Build **shared experiences** of Cleveland Metroparks to promote a community ethic of care and sustainability at homes, workplaces and neighborhoods

### Select Initiatives:

- Evolve and adjust programs to expand reach and increase attendance to better serve all residents
- Create a Youth Advisory Council at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo to develop programs to meet the needs of a diverse student population
- Maintain open communications and up to date Park District information via website, social media, local media, public meetings, and various outreach efforts with opportunities for community feedback
- Broaden community participation and introduce new audiences to Cleveland Metroparks and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo with creative special events

**Metrics:** Volunteer recruitment, program attendance, park attendance, number of donors, number of partner initiatives, amount of community engagement, public records program annual audit



# SUSTAIN

## Sustain and uplift our region, our parks, our people and our infrastructure for future generations.

.....

The Park District's legacy reflects more than a century of stewardship of the region's natural and cultural resources. Cleveland Metroparks' mission-driven leadership, employees and volunteers are essential to the agency's success, managing 24,350 acres of parkland, 18 reservations and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The organization's inventory includes 700 buildings, over 100 miles of parkways, 320 miles of trails, eight golf courses, 350 historical and cultural sites, and five nature centers. The Park District's Sustainability Policy details commitments to preserving natural and economic resources, reducing consumption and waste, reducing the carbon footprint and promoting green practices in facilities and programs. Addressing sustainability ensures the ongoing ability to maintain high quality park experiences and deliver quantifiable community benefits.

.....

### Priorities:

- **Maintain** facilities and infrastructure to agency standards using databases, schedules and planning documents
- Demonstrate **fiscal responsibility** to extend the impact of public funds
- Value the contributions of a diverse team of employees and volunteers to **attract and retain** skilled and dedicated personnel
- Use technology to **improve efficiency and effectiveness** to identify gaps, excess overhead and bottlenecks to improve efficiency

### Select Initiatives:

- Continue annual maintenance program with investments in facility maintenance, pavement resurfacing and green infrastructure retrofits
- Address major infrastructure approaching the end of expected life cycle
- Complete ongoing Cleveland Metroparks Zoo improvements
- Expand recruitment and mentoring with efforts like the Student Conservation Association and NOWcorps
- Track data and use it to inform ongoing decision making for efforts including land acquisition, park operations, marketing and community outreach
- Use continued cost control, cost recovery, pursuit of diverse funding sources and efficient project delivery methods to advance organizational sustainability

**Metrics:** Number and amount of grants and donations, number of volunteers/volunteer hours, employee performance and retention statistics, infrastructure and facility maintenance projects, financial performance metrics, increased energy efficiency



# INNOVATE



## Innovate by exploring new solutions to expand the health and well-being of our region and the world.

.....

Record visitation to parks, an expanded trail network, labor shortages, climate change, and the pandemic have all required nimble adjustments with creative solutions. On a community scale, Cleveland Metroparks works as a partner with other governmental entities and non-profit organizations to expand effectiveness in mission-driven activities. Internally, Cleveland Metroparks' agency culture supports research and empowers creative action, adaption and leadership.

.....

### Priorities:

- Participate in local and regional efforts to research impacts and **increase resilience** to climate change
- Exemplify **best practices** in green building, site development, construction practices, renovations and retrofits, as well as sustainable and equitable procurement practices
- Facilitate **collaboration** opportunities among individuals and departments and between the organization and external stakeholders to encourage innovative solutions and streamline knowledge transfer and efficiency
- Explore **new technologies** that improve efficiencies, enhance outcomes and magnify reach

### Select Initiatives:

- Implement innovative efforts and partnerships
- Use technology for research and monitoring
- Embrace change in technology and materials and incorporate in design and purchasing
- Update Cleveland Metroparks regulations to reflect new technologies and user trends

**Metrics:** New technologies investigated/ deployed formal partnerships including mutual aid agreements, number of research initiatives, technological advancements, skilled workforce to advance research and innovation

## 5. STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The Action Framework and Core Goals in Section 4 identify priorities and initiatives that the Park District intends to accomplish on an ongoing basis. The Strategy and Implementation section provides the approach for identifying specific actions. The actions roll up to make progress towards the goals. Implementation will align with the existing annual process for identifying staff priorities and projects centered around the budget development process.

The strategy relies on decentralized expertise to direct projects and initiatives that accomplish the Core Goals. Current accomplishments by Cleveland Metroparks reflect the ability to work across departments and work groups in a collaborative approach to management and operations. Rather than dictating a static list of tasks, this decentralized approach allows the Park District to nimbly act upon opportunities that arise while working towards ingrained longer-term commitments. Department Chiefs, Directors and staff carry the expertise to identify and advance work towards goals.

The budget process includes financial needs, staffing needs and metrics for performance. The resulting budget document includes financial performance data and a summary of priorities, impacts, issues and strategies. The budget meets requirements for ongoing CAPRA accreditation through the inclusion of reports from each department with priorities and work plans and reporting on accomplishments and metrics aligned with the Core Goals.

Cleveland Metroparks Board of Park Commissioners reviews and provides input during the budget process through a series of work sessions. The Board then approves the final budget document. More formally tying the budget to the system plan streamlines work which is already occurring and provides a comprehensive annual report to the community.

Priorities and initiatives listed beneath each of the Core Goals will be updated in approximately five years. The Reservation Master Plan process will continue to update all plans and correlate actions to the Core Goals on an ongoing basis. Specialty research, reporting and analysis will be updated periodically.

The approach to identifying tasks lies with each Department Chief and is embedded in the annual budget process. Chiefs develop work plans and departmental goals and tie them to Park District goals during this process. The plans outline key initiatives and issues facing Cleveland Metroparks in the forthcoming year. The work plans include:

- Financial resources needed for the completion of various projects and attaining departmental goals through the year
- Influences of the community related to revenue and expenditure for each of its enterprise areas
- Infrastructure and capital asset needs (repair, replacement or new additions)
- Specific initiatives related to communications, customer relations and service

### DISTINGUISHED BUDGET AWARD

The budget process is a key tool for implementing the *Second Century of Stewardship System Plan*. Cleveland Metroparks' annual budget identifies expenditures, documents accomplishments and forecasts staff priorities. Cleveland Metroparks has earned 28 consecutive years of Distinguished Budget awards from the Government Finance Officers Association. The association presents the award to recognize governmental units which publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, as an operations guide, as a financial plan and as a communication device.



## 6. CONCLUSION

*The Second Century of Stewardship System Plan* reflects the serious importance of stewarding Cleveland Metroparks resources, facilities, and opportunities to experience nature for future generations. The legacy of the parks and the widespread personal support from residents and organizations is intrinsic to Northeast Ohio's community character. New residents are invited along to outings in Cleveland Metroparks, visitors to the area are urged to explore the diverse and interconnected parks and trails and the Park Districts' contribution to quality of life is part of local recruiting efforts for new business and industry.

Ongoing support for Cleveland Metroparks is not taken for granted, nor is the organization static and unresponsive. Listening to the community and tracking trends across the country led to the creation of some of the first paved all purpose trails in the state in 1973 with the five-mile All People's Trail in Rocky River. By 1985, the Park District had 45 miles of all purpose trails and today has 124 miles of paved trails within the parks, including numerous links to regional trails and communities. The Wendy Park Bridge, Towpath Trail and other recent additions to trails along the lakefront and Cuyahoga River demonstrate the organization's expanded role and commitment to providing equitable trail connections and access to nature in the heart of Cleveland.

Completion of this cluster of lakefront, river corridor and Towpath trail projects, along with many other recent initiatives, are the result of past strategic plans and a focus on vibrant partnerships. Partnerships are one way the Park District's deep community support is actualized. The resulting successful initiatives strengthen each partner's contribution to deliver greater overall impact. Cleveland Metroparks is committed to continuing to engage with the community, particularly residents of EJ Areas, to working with partners to develop actionable plans and to execute projects to provide equitable service across Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township.

Focused action, a strong sense of mission and purpose, and trust in staff expertise are the guiding tenets for this document. The structure purposely allows and encourages the ability to modify and adapt as opportunities become available. Park District leadership has the tools to evaluate alignment with Cleveland Metroparks' Core Goals and community need and to invest time, talent and funding accordingly.

The vantage point of early 2022 provides a look back to recent growth and positive impact as well as the confidence gained through successful navigation of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Park District is buoyed by community support and looks to meet the challenges and demands of the future with positive agency culture, dedicated staff and motivated leadership. The Second Century of Stewardship begins now!





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

Citizens of Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township

Cuyahoga County Senior Probate Judge Appointing Authority, Board of Park Commissioners  
The Honorable Judge Anthony J. Russo

Cleveland Metroparks Board of Park Commissioners  
Debra K. Berry, President  
Dan T. Moore, Vice President  
Bruce G. Rinker, Vice President

Chief Executive Officer  
Brian M. Zimmerman

Cleveland Metroparks Administration  
Chief Financial Officer (Interim) – Gary A. Butzback  
Chief Operating Officer – Joseph V. Roszak  
Chief Development Officer – Natalie A. Ronayne, CFRE  
Chief Human Resources Officer – Harold G. Harrison  
Chief Information Officer – Anthony M. Joy  
Chief Legal and Ethics Officer – Rosalina M. Fini  
Chief Marketing Officer – Kelly M. Manderfield  
Chief Planning and Design Officer – Sean E. McDermott, PE  
Chief of Police – Kelly J. Stillman  
Cleveland Metroparks Zoo Executive Director – Christopher W. Kuhar, PhD

Cleveland Metroparks Principal Planners  
Kelly Coffman, ASLA, LEED AP  
Sara Byrnes Maier

Cleveland Metroparks Senior Graphic Designer  
Donna Cipriani

***Cleveland Metroparks appreciates the participation and support from Cleveland Metroparks staff, Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township residents and community leaders in the strategic planning process.***

Supporting Documentation provided by consultants:

Demographic and Leisure Trends Analysis, Benchmarking Study and Alternative Provider Inventory:  
PROS Consulting  
The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks: The Trust for Public Land  
Cleveland Metroparks Community Survey 2020: National Survey Research Center  
Cuyahoga Greenways Vision Plan: prepared for the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission by  
Smith Group, WSP and Guide Studio

All photographs courtesy of Cleveland Metroparks.

CONSERVE | CONNECT | WELCOME | ENGAGE | SUSTAIN | INNOVATE

EMERALD NECKLACE®



SECOND CENTURY  
OF STEWARDSHIP  
SYSTEM PLAN 2022

