

CLEVELAND METROPARKS 2015 STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE



Cleveland
Metroparks

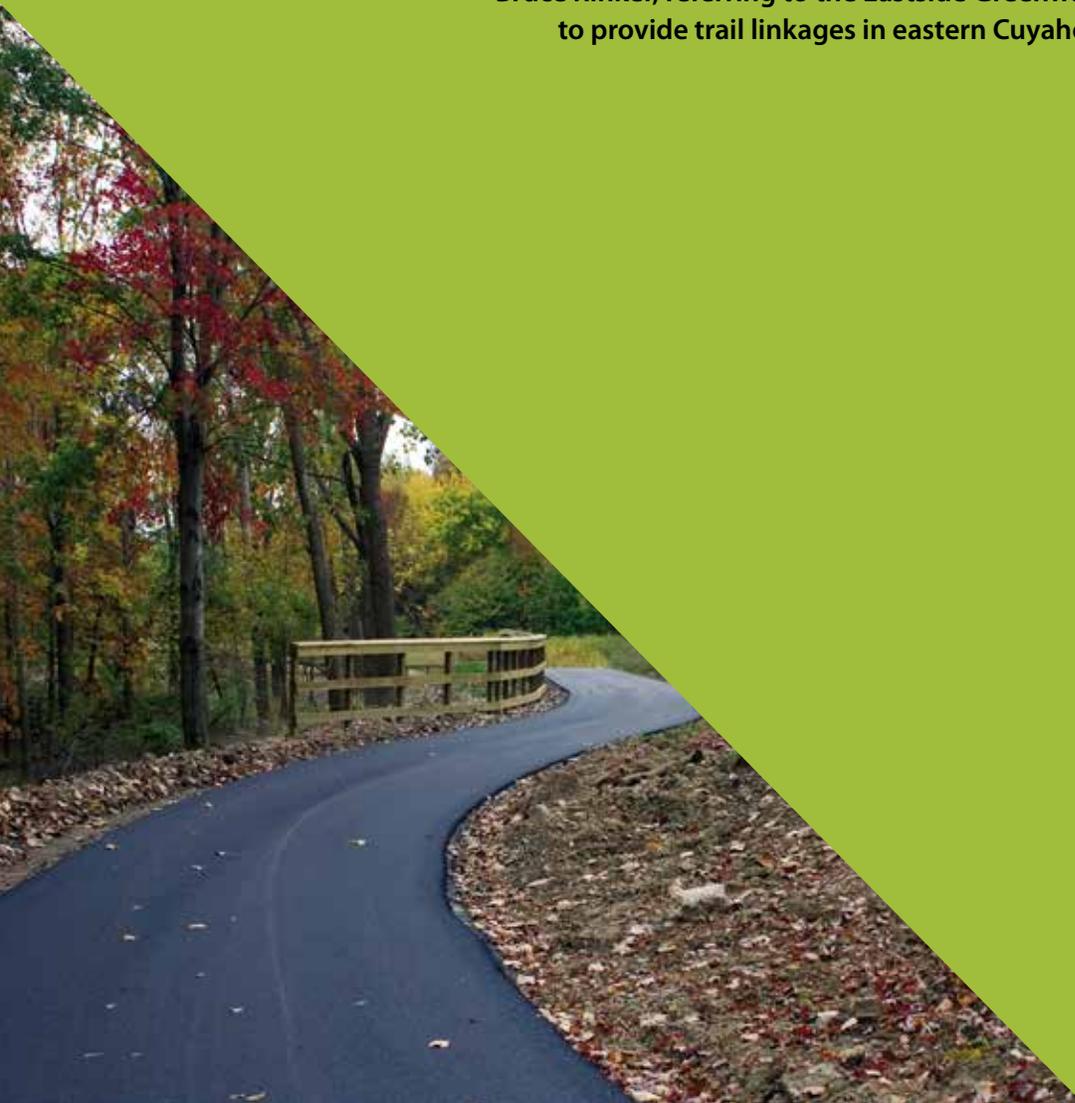
**COME OUT
AND PLAY**

Cleveland Metroparks will conserve significant natural resources and enhance people's lives by integrating safe, high-quality outdoor education, recreation, and zoological opportunities into people's lives.

PROTECTION • RELEVANCY • CONNECTIONS • COME OUT AND PLAY • ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

**“WHEN YOU CREATE EASE OF ACCESS TO
TRAILS AND PARKS THEY BECOME USED.”**

**- Bruce Rinker, referring to the Eastside Greenway Initiative
to provide trail linkages in eastern Cuyahoga County**



CLEVELAND METROPARKS

THEN:

The oldest park district in Ohio, Cleveland Metroparks was founded in 1917 to fulfill the idea of a chain of parks connected by a scenic parkway. Founder William Stinchcomb's genius was to anticipate the future need for open space at a time when Cuyahoga County outside of Cleveland was still largely rural. From a few scattered donations of land in the Rocky River Valley, the Park District has grown to encompass over 23,000 acres, including some of the most scenic areas of Greater Cleveland.

NOW:

Today, Cleveland Metroparks enjoys a high level of community support due to the agency's thoughtful growth, quality resource stewardship, and reliable services. Strategic planning efforts have helped identify Park District priorities and guide actions.

THE MOST RECENT STRATEGIC PLAN, CLEVELAND METROPARKS 2020:

The Emerald Necklace Centennial Plan, reflects over two years of internal discussions, outreach to stakeholders, and community involvement. The Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Park Commissioners in February 2012, and is the foundation of the 2015 update.

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS:

The Strategic Plan directly influences the Park District's actions. Many milestones have been accomplished in the short time since the plan was adopted, including:

- Acquisition of the lakefront parks from the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County: 585 acres along the lakefront including Edgewater, Whiskey Island and Wendy Park, E. 55th, North Gordon, Euclid Beach, Villa Angela, and Wildwood, plus 3 marinas and 5 yacht clubs
- Expansion of greenway corridors and trail connections to the Towpath Trail
- Completion and grand opening of the West Creek Watershed Stewardship Center and West Creek Reservation
- Green infrastructure and resource protection efforts
- Restructuring of several internal departments, including integration of the Zoo and Park District Marketing Departments
- New branding and marketing campaign, Come Out and Play
- Events and programs along the lakefront, including Edgewater Live and Euclid Beach Live
- The opening of Merwin's Wharf restaurant and waterfront patio and Rivergate Park, a new park along the Cuyahoga River
- Acquisition of 70 acres in Hinckley Reservation and 80 acres on the East Branch of Rocky River in Mill Stream Run Reservation
- Hosted over 90,000 students at our world class Zoo
- First offering of a shared use trail featuring both bridle trail and mountain biking
- Introduction of FootGolf, which has helped reinvigorate Mastick Woods Golf Course



2015 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE:

In light of recent achievements, Park District leadership embarked on an update to the Strategic Plan. The report documents progress, assesses new trends, links actions to the overall goals, and includes findings from Cleveland Metroparks September 2014 update to the Demographic Analysis and Recreation and Leisure Trends Report.

The 2015 update maintains Cleveland Metroparks Policy Framework, including vision, mission and associated policies. The seven key directions and seven goals of the action plan were condensed to form five updated strategic goals.

PROTECTION



RELEVANCY



ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY



COME OUT AND PLAY



CONNECTIONS



MOVING FORWARD:

The Strategic Plan forms the foundation for staff work plans throughout the Park District. Strategic actions are identified to help accomplish each goal. The new format encourages collaboration across departments and eliminates redundancy.

The internal working document is available on the intranet and identifies departmental responsibilities for leading and supporting progress on each task, as well as key metrics.

Cleveland Metroparks will revisit the document on a regular basis.

GOAL: PROTECTION



IMPLEMENT NATURAL RESOURCE AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PRACTICES TO CREATE AND MANAGE URBAN PARK SPACES SO THEY ARE MORE RESILIENT TO ECOLOGICAL CHANGE AND DISTURBANCE AS PART OF THE SURROUNDING AND REGIONAL COMMUNITY.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

▪ RESOURCES:

Position Cleveland Metroparks in a leadership role by planning and implementing a regional natural resource and green infrastructure strategy and continuing regional collaboration.

▪ PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE:

Evaluate physical infrastructure to meet changing user needs, and increase the contributions to a regional green infrastructure.

▪ LAND:

Develop and implement a land acquisition strategy including regional greenways, land conservation, habitat value, and green infrastructure initiatives.

▪ CONSERVATION:

Support efforts to conserve wildlife and natural resources locally and around the globe through education, research, and enhancing best practices.

▪ ANIMAL CARE / HUSBANDRY:

Ensure that the physiological, biological, psychological, and social needs of the animals cared for in the Zoo are addressed, while working to gain greater understanding of animal welfare science. Meet or exceed AZA Standards.



GOAL: RELEVANCY



STRENGTHEN THE RELEVANCY OF THE EMERALD NECKLACE AND CLEVELAND METROPARKS ZOO AS THE PARK SYSTEM ENTERS ITS SECOND CENTURY. AFFIRM THE PARK DISTRICT'S ROLE AND IDENTITY IN RESPONSE TO CHANGES IN DEMOGRAPHICS AND ECONOMICS AND CONTINUE TO EMPHASIZE CONSERVATION EDUCATION. SUPPORT THE RESURGENCE OF THE CITY OF CLEVELAND AND THE INNER RING SUBURBS.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

▪ COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP:

Strive to maintain and improve public knowledge of and regard for Cleveland Metroparks and the Zoo by continuing to provide value as leaders in ways that are impactful to multiple audiences.

▪ PARTNERSHIP:

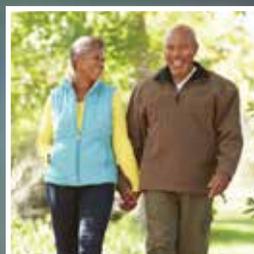
Seek, involve, and educate partners in restoration, stewardship, and conservation activities locally and regionally. Continue and expand partnerships. Quantify and report activities.

▪ ECONOMIC IMPACT:

Work with regional attractions, tourism and economic development organizations to market Cleveland Metroparks as a destination for visitors from the region and beyond. Extend the Cleveland Metroparks brand to a broader audience. Partner with other regional destinations and organizations.

▪ MASTER PLANS:

Update Master Plans for existing Reservations on rotating schedule (4 per year) and for new acquisitions (including Lakefront) as needed. Prioritize investments to reflect sustainability and strategic goals.



GOAL: CONNECTIONS



ADVANCE CONNECTIONS AND TRAIL SYSTEMS THAT COMPLETE THE EMERALD NECKLACE AND, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND COMMUNITIES, CONNECT WITH LOCAL, STATE AND REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORKS, COMMUNITIES AND PLACES OF INTEREST.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

▪ PLAN, PRIORITIZE AND IMPLEMENT:

Utilize Cleveland Metroparks Trail Master Plan, Trail Matrix, Reservation Plans, community-based TLCI grants, and other partnerships to identify, design, and implement a range of greenways, trail connections, and experiences.

▪ EXPAND USER BASE:

Expand park, greenway, and trail recreational experiences for a range of users.

▪ WAYFINDING:

Assist visitors, enhance brand, and improve experiences through effective maps, signage, and wayfinding. Develop standard signage manual and implement system-wide improvements. Assure compliance with standards.



GOAL:

COME OUT AND PLAY



EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES CONSISTENT WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S MISSION, AND KEEP PACE WITH MARKET TRENDS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE REGION'S ATTRACTIVENESS AS A PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

- **MARKETING GUIDE:**

Develop a Marketing Plan to define the brand and guide all marketing related services for Cleveland Metroparks.

- **PROGRAM PLAN:**

Develop an integrated, system-wide strategic Programming Plan aligning programs provided with trends and market demand and the changing needs of the Northeast Ohio community, including increased interest on health and wellness and the expansion of outdoor recreation. Expand outdoor adventure activities.



GOAL: ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY



CONTINUE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES TO SUPPORT CLEVELAND METROPARKS CAPITAL, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE NEEDS OVER THE NEXT TEN-YEAR LEVY CYCLE AND BEYOND.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS:

▪ BUSINESS PLANS:

Develop a business plan and pricing policy based on cost recovery goals for facilities including nature centers, recreation facilities, the Zoo, golf courses, and for events and program services.

▪ ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN:

Develop an asset management plan with a life cycle replacement schedule that will help determine capital investment in existing facilities. Adopt design standards and cost benefit criteria to maximize facility use, promote operations and maintenance, and support sustainable design. Use a standardized GIS management approach for inventory and assessment of all facilities and amenities.

▪ STAFFING:

Provide appropriate staff levels as needed for new initiatives.

▪ SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES:

Establish practices for Cleveland Metroparks and its contractors and suppliers related to environmental sustainability. Address energy efficiency, use of local materials, waste reduction, resource conservation, and green products/procedures.



**“THERE HAS BEEN A HUGE DIFFERENCE. PEOPLE
(PRIOR TO CLEVELAND METROPARKS INVOLVEMENT) SAW
EDGEWATER PARK AS A LIABILITY. IT WASN'T THEIR FIRST
CHOICE FOR RECREATION. NOW, WITH THE TYPE OF EVENTS THE
METROPARKS ARE PUTTING ON, EVERYONE CAN FEEL
SAFE, THE PARK IS CLEAN, AND THE EVENTS ARE WELL RUN.”**

- Anita Brindza, Executive Director of Cudell Improvement Inc., a community development organization neighboring the Lakefront Reservation's Edgewater area, crediting the Cleveland Metroparks involvement for the recent increase in property values





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