



Cleveland Metroparks®

# FIND YOUR PATH

Cleveland Metroparks Board of Park Commissioners  
**STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE - WORK SESSION FOUR**

November 18, 2021

## Agenda

- Schedule Update
- Engagement Activities and Comments
- Plan Outline
- Core Goals and Mission
- Priorities, Initiatives and Metrics
- Strategy and Implementation
- Discussion and Next Steps

# Plan Components and Schedule

Tasks and Schedule - 2021 Strategic Plan Update														
TASK	Lead	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Board Work Session 1														
Board Work Session 2														
Board Work Session 3														
Board Work Session 4														
Draft Plan Content														
Draft Final Plan submitted for review; Adoption early 2022														
Rec. & Leisure Trends Analysis	PROS													
Community Inventory	PROS													
Benchmark Assessment	PROS													
Needs Assessment	Kelly													
Level of Service Standards	Kelly													
Financial Assessment	Fin./Ent.													
Operational Assessment	Park Ops/Fin													
Marketing Assessment	Mktg													
IDEA Coordination	IDEA comm.													
Chiefs Interviews & Check-ins	P&D													
Staff Engagement & Mission Focus Groups	Marketing													
Community Eng. - online	P&D / Mktg													
Community Eng. - in person	P&D / Mktg													
Community Leader Engagement														
Strategic Goals														
Key Initiatives														
Strategy and Implementation														
Metrics and Reporting														

# Stakeholder and Community Engagement

Online at [ClevelandMetroparks.com/Planning](https://ClevelandMetroparks.com/Planning)

## Stakeholder Engagement

- Weds., Sept. 29, 8:30 AM – Community Leader Breakfast
- Thurs., Oct. 28, 9 AM – Mayors and City Managers Meeting

## Public Open Houses

- In person at Euclid Creek, Ohio & Erie Canal, Rocky River, and Brecksville
- Virtual Open Houses: Thurs. Oct. 28, 6:30-8:00 PM & Tues. Nov. 9, 4-5:30 PM

## Staff Engagement

- Internal Working Group and Interviews with each Chief
- Staff Update Videos – July & October
- Internal Focus Groups (Mission & Goals) – Sept.
- Eight meetings open to all park staff in Sept. – Oct.

Board Work Sessions in February, June, September, & November



# Additional Public Engagement

Lakefront Events held at North Gordon Park with partners including Ingenuity Cleveland, Famicos Foundation, St. Clair Superior Development Corporation, Bike Cleveland, and others; additional groups participating include Black Environmental Leaders, Intercity Yacht Club, Kirtland Bird Club, and Cuyahoga Soil and Water.

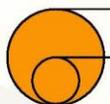
- July 24 – Common Ground / Cleveland Foundation
- August 21 – Safe Routes to Parks / Bike Cleveland
- September 25 – Ingenuity Festival / Ingenuity Cleveland

Staff Outreach at Other Community Festivals:

- June 26 – Glenville Festival: Youth Field Day / Sam Miller Park
- August 28 – Glenville Festival: Senior Village / Sam Miller Park
- August 28 – CWRU Know Your Neighbors (KYN) Community Palooza
- Oct. 2 – Doan Brook Watershed Partners Bike Event



# WHERE WERE ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS HELD?



THREE SESSIONS

ONE SESSION



# Some of What We've Heard...

## Favorite Things About the Parks:

- New Downtown work
- Best public partners
- Golf for everyone
- The area is so vast!
- Paths are well-maintained but natural
- The exercise facilities
- Cleanliness and accessibility
- Entrepreneurial spirit

## Ideas for the Future:

- Make a deal with Cleveland for Highland
- Redevelop Washington Park for learners
- More exercise equipment
- Take over all lakefront
- More wildflowers
- More senior-friendly trailways, buildings, activities, etc.
- More bike path signs
- T-shirt and anti-littering programs
- Installing some benches along the beach
- Ninja courses
- Keep opening more public access to Lake Erie
- Expand concessions
- The website is hard to navigate to find trail maps

**WE'RE LISTENING!**

Please share with us:

Your three favorite things about the parks:

The volume or area is so vast!  
The paths are well maintained but natural  
The exercise facilities

Your three ideas for the future:

more exercise equipment  
more wildflowers  
more identification of species

Or comment online at [clevelandmetroparks.com/planning](http://clevelandmetroparks.com/planning)

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# Some of What We've Heard...

## *Comment highlights:*

“Continue to be standard-bearer for resilient infrastructure as an example for other public and private entities”

“Beautiful trails near the river and along cliffs”

“An escape from the developed world”

“The Cleveland Metroparks are in Cleveland, finally!!”

“Dedication to Conservation + Education + Recreation”



# Comment Cards

## Your three favorite things about the parks:

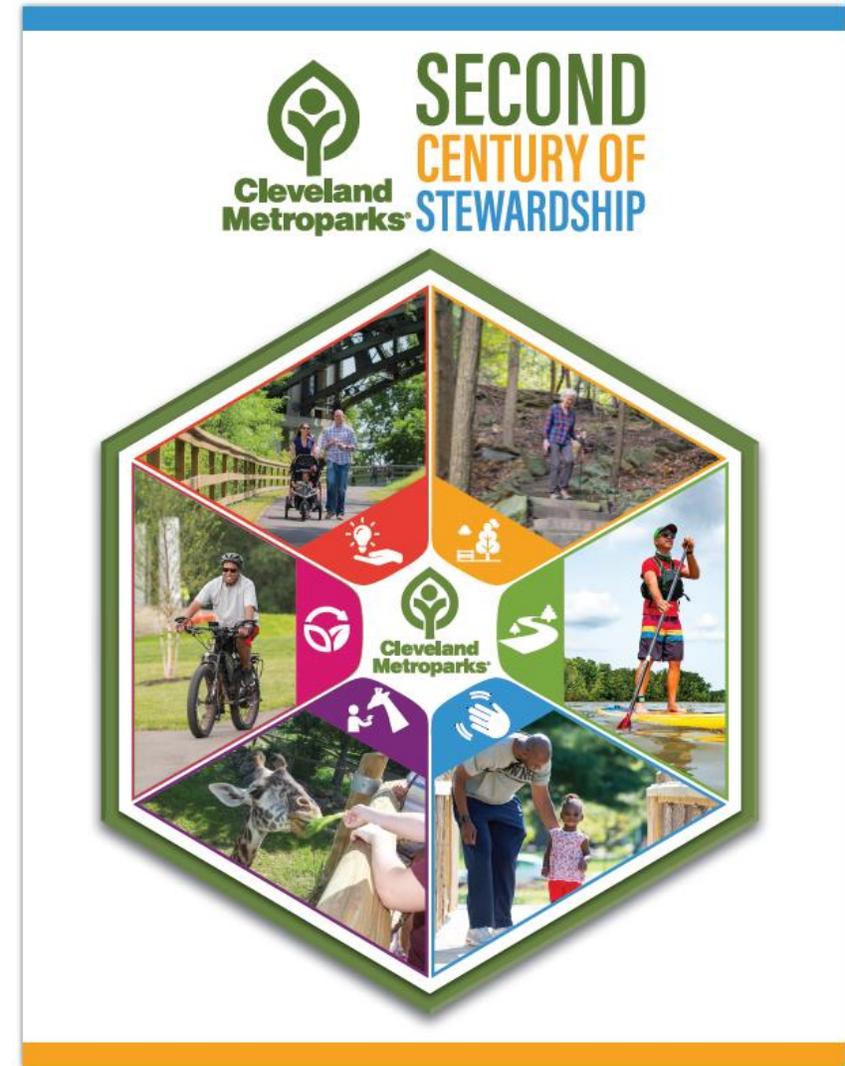
- Programming and amenities (40) 21%
  - Nature center and nature center programs
  - Bathrooms
  - Food spots
  - Rental equipment
- Other (39) 20%
  - Connectivity and accessibility
  - Willingness to take on big projects
- Recreation (36) 19%
  - Trails and trail variety
  - Exercise stations
- Maintenance (27) 14%
  - Cleanliness
  - Friendliness of maintenance workers
- Nature (28) 14%
  - Land usage split (natural v groomed areas)
  - Trees
- Scenery/feeling (24) 12%
  - Safety
  - Peaceful
  - Quality experience

## Your three ideas for the future:

- Recreational amenities (38) 22%
  - Exercise/workout equipment
  - Winter activities
- Accessibility (33) 19%
  - Expanding park locations
  - Improving experience for those with disabilities
- Maintenance (33) 19%
  - Anti-littering campaigns
  - Reduce trash/litter in water
- Signage and communication (26) 15%
  - Improved website
  - More educational and historical plaques
  - Signage typically around bike paths need to be improved
- Other (24) 14%
  - Green Infrastructure
  - Reduce speed limits
- Passive amenities (18) 10%
  - Benches
  - Drinking fountains
  - Fireplaces

# Park District Strategic Plan

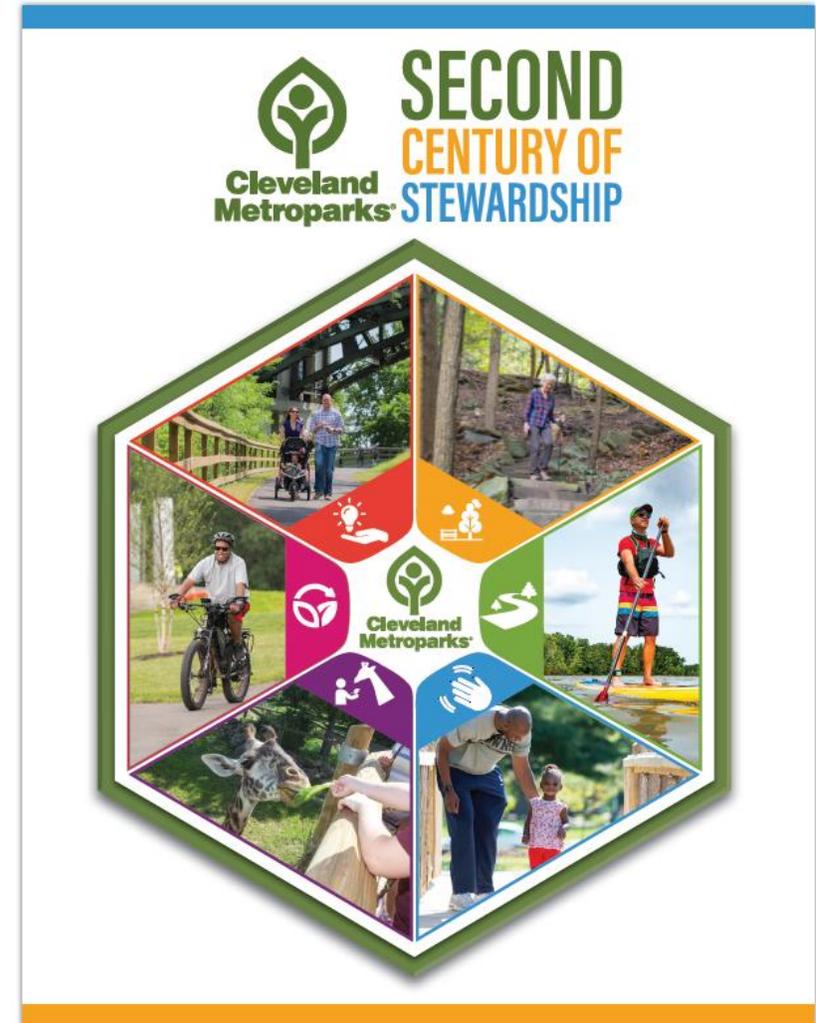
1. About Cleveland Metroparks
2. The Role of Cleveland Metroparks in the Community
3. Results since 2012: Expanding Community Impact
4. **Action Framework**
  - a. **Core Goals**
    - i. **Priorities**
    - ii. **Initiatives**
    - iii. **Metrics**
5. **Strategy and Implementation**
  - a. CAPRA tie-in
  - b. Periodic updates
    - a. Budgeting
    - b. Benchmarking
6. Conclusion



# Park District Strategic Plan

## Appendices

- a. Performance Summary - 10-year Look Back
- b. Engagement Summary
- c. TPL Economic Impact
- d. Reservation Master Plans
- e. Zoo Master Plan
- f. CAPRA
  - i. Demographic and Leisure Trends Analysis
  - ii. Needs Assessment
  - iii. Community Inventory
  - iv. Level of Service Standards
  - v. Benchmark Assessment
  - vi. *Departmental Plans or 2022 Budget?*
- g. IDEA



# Mission and Core Goals



## Our Mission

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

## Core Goals

**Conserve** land, wildlife and waterways to protect the beauty and ecological resilience of our region and the world.

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

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

**Engage** and serve people with high quality facilities, recreational opportunities, compelling zoological experiences, and responsive programs.

**Sustain** and uplift our region, our parks, 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.

# Advancing the Strategic Plan

## ***CAPRA Standard 2.5 – Strategic Plan***

An agency shall have a strategic plan, approved by the approving authority, stating how it will achieve its mission, goals, and objectives over an extended period of time, typically three to five years. The strategic plan shall be reviewed annually. The goals and objectives of the plan shall be measurable to demonstrate progress and results. The strategic plan shall support the priorities and initiatives of the whole organization. The strategic plan is a tool to implement the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan (see CAPRA Standard 2.4).

For Cleveland Metroparks, the *Second Century of Stewardship System Plan* is the organization's Parks and Recreation System Master Plan. **Chapters 4 and 5 serve as the strategic plan portion.**

- **Chapter 4: Action Framework** – The priorities, initiatives and metrics for each of the six Core Goals are being developed with input from the 11 departments of the Park District.
- **Chapter 5: Strategy and Implementation** – The six Core Goals will inform all department goals, annual priorities, and work plans. The annual budget process revisits performance measures with metrics that are tracked annually.



## Conserve



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

Conservation is one of the core pillars underlying all of Cleveland Metroparks initiatives and activities. The importance of conserving natural resources, protecting habitat, and providing places for people to experience nature has remained as essential today as it was when the Park District was first founded. Cuyahoga County has urbanized significantly over the last century, yet opportunities remain to expand the Park District's stewardship, to improve access to parks, to address the challenges posed by climate change, and to educate and inspire towards a healthier and more sustainable world. The goal of conservation includes land protection as well as land reutilization, habitat restoration, resilience efforts, ongoing stewardship and resource management activities, as well as global animal conservation efforts led by Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.



# Conserve

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

## Priorities:

- Participate in local and regional efforts to increase resilience to climate change
- Partner and facilitate research into xxxx
- Add additional acreage to expand resource protection
- Champion habitat protection for xxx species (zoo)
- Complete habitat restoration along waterways

## Initiatives:

- Cleveland Tree Plan
- Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership
- Research
- Invasive species control / removal
- Carbon credit pilot project

## Metrics:

- Acres protected, acres restored, trees planted, research initiatives





## 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 alternative transportation, 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 to improve equity, expand recreational opportunities and enhance community connections.





## Connect

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

### Priorities:

- Participate in Cuyahoga Greenways Partners and help lead efforts to implement the planned network of county-wide bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- Work with partners to standardize regional trail wayfinding and communications including the trails app and online information
- Serve hikers, cyclists, and equestrians of all ages and abilities
- Provide a variety of trail types and experiences within the parks

### Initiatives:

- Cleveland Lakefront Bikeway East 9<sup>th</sup> to East 55<sup>th</sup>
- Slavic Village Downtown Connector
- Solon to Chagrin Falls Trail
- Legacy trail renovation and natural surface trail construction
- Eastern Ledge Trail

### Metrics:

- Miles of paved trail, miles of natural surface trails, grant funds received, bike/walkshed analysis





# 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 make all people feel welcome when visiting the Park District. Race, mobility, income, and lack of transportation are some of the barriers to park access in the region. For instance, 58% of Cuyahoga County's population resides in Environmental Justice Areas (EJA), a designation meaning 20% or more individuals live at or below the federal poverty line and 30% of the population identifies as a non-white minority. The community also skews older than state and national averages, with a projected 41% of the population over age 55 by 2035.





# Welcome

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

## Priorities:

- Identify and remove barriers to park use, particularly in EJ areas
- Provide responsive programming in the parks and throughout Cuyahoga County and Hinckley Township.
- Continue relationship building with surrounding communities and advocacy groups.
- Develop new facilities with universal design and continue accessibility retrofits
- Strive for a representative workforce through efforts in recruitment, training, and organizational culture
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere that encourages all to experience the parks, programs, and trails of the Park District.

## Initiatives:

- IDEA Working Group
- Workforce development
- Mentorship
- Internships
- Specific new facilities / ADA

## Metrics:

- Recruitment of diverse candidates, employee retention, visitor demographics and satisfaction





## Engage

Engage and serve people with high quality facilities, recreational opportunities, compelling zoological experiences, and responsive programs.

Cleveland Metroparks strives to engage all visitors through the beauty and enjoyment of the Park District and ensure the parks are a point of pride for residents and a draw for tourists. Through responsive programming, volunteer opportunities, guest focus, and compelling experiences and locations, Cleveland Metroparks seeks to create lifelong environmental stewards – not only of Cleveland Metroparks, but of the natural world.





## Engage

Engage and serve people with high quality facilities, recreational opportunities, compelling zoological experiences, and responsive programs.

### Priorities:

- Partnerships, donor relationships, and active volunteers
- Vested park users
- Facilities, programs Events
- Nature preschool

### Initiatives:

- Sponsorships and community partners
- Volunteer services – Journey on Yonder
- Programs – Youth Outdoors, adaptive recreation, nature preschool
- Special Events – River Winterfest, Asian Lanterns
- Planning and Project Engagement – Garfield Pond, CHEERS, Strategic Plan

### Metrics:

- Volunteer recruitment, program attendance, park attendance, number of donors, number of partner initiatives, amount of community engagement





## Sustain

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

The legacy of the more than a century-old Park District reflects careful management to maintain the region's natural resources, community relevancy, and fiscal responsibility. The inventory of 436 buildings, 60 miles of parkways, 320 miles of trails, and 24,260 acres of parkland require continued investment to maintain high quality park experiences. Cleveland Metroparks long term approach of lifecycle cost analysis, cost recovery practices, and careful investment ensure the capability to continue to deliver quantifiable community benefits.





## Sustain

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

### Priorities:

- Maintain existing infrastructure to Park District standards through a program of repair and replacement
- Partner to extend impact of funding
- Continue cost control and cost recovery programs
- Continue pursuit of diverse funding sources
- Ongoing habitat management and restoration

### Initiatives:

- Cleveland Tree Plan
- Annual pavement / infrastructure renovations
- Facility upgrades and replacement

### Metrics:

- Infrastructure and renovation projects, financial performance (including Zoo, Golf, Enterprise, and Development), acres/stream miles of restoration projects





# 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 government entities and non-profit organizations to expand effectiveness in mission-driven activities. Internally, Cleveland Metroparks agency culture supports research and empowers creative action.





## Innovate

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

### Priorities:

- Partner in local and regional efforts to research impacts and increase resilience to climate change
- Upgrade facilities and systems with emerging materials and technologies to provide more sustainable services
- Actively identify and respond to opportunities to remove barriers and connect the community with the Park District mission in new ways

### Initiatives:

- Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership (LEAP) partner agency
- Cleveland Tree Coalition / Cuyahoga County Healthy Urban Tree Canopy efforts
- Carbon Credit program
- Forest Research / Lubrizol Partnership

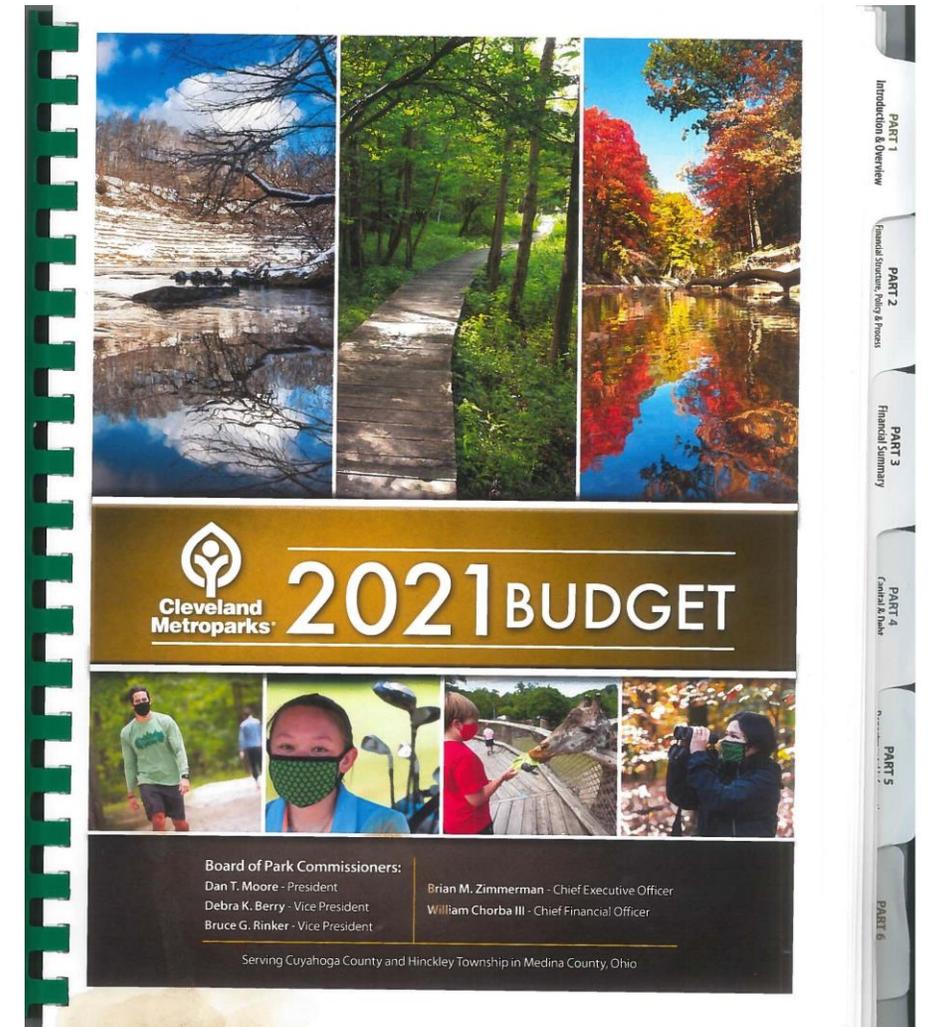
### Metrics:

- Partnerships, number of research initiatives, technological advancements, community impact in new areas of service



# Strategy and Implementation

- Annually – each Department to report (as part of Departmental Budget process):
  - Department priorities and work plans
  - Report on accomplishments
  - Report on metrics
- In five years - update initiatives for each goal per CAPRA
- Continue rotating Reservation Master Plan process; all plans to be updated on a rotating basis
- In ten years – revisit CAPRA-required analysis and update Strategic Plan



# Discussion and Next Steps



- 1.10.2022 Draft Final Plan submitted to Board
- 2.17.2022 Board Adoption



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