Preserving the Past,
Planning for the Future

A Vision for the Future

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Message from the Director</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Vision for the Future</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Lives: One Park at a Time</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Celebrating 50th Anniversary

LORAIN COUNTY METRO PARKS
The past 10 years have seen numerous changes in our county, state, and nation. The new century will continue to bring with it many new challenges and economic changes. The major challenge for the park district will be to meet the ever-changing needs of our communities while continuing to remain financially sound. This has been accomplished by carefully controlling operating costs, developing partnerships and leveraging outside funding.

The Board of Park Commissioners published a 10-year plan in 1995, and they are pleased and proud to report to you that all of the goals of this 1995 plan have been met and, in fact, exceeded. In 1995, the district encompassed 6,000 acres in nine reservations. The district is still guided by the 1960 Open Space Plan, but by updating this plan and forming partnerships with local communities, the district now has 8,500 acres in 13 reservations. But still only about 4% of Lorain County’s lands are in green space. Additions to the park district in the last 10 years include Amherst Beaver Creek Reservation, Sandy Ridge Reservation, the North Coast Inland Trail, Splash Zone, Columbus Reservation and upgrades to the Catharines Center, French Creek Nature Center and Schoepfle Garden. The district has pursued alternative funding sources for both capital improvements and special events, always maintaining the highest possible state-audited fiscal responsibility.

The public was also asked how they currently use their metro parks – walking, hiking, and natural history programs were the top three responses. Swimming, playgrounds and bicycling were the next most popular events in the parks. When asked what activities were most needed in their communities, bike trails was highest rated with hiking trails, children’s programs and swimming facilities following.

The park district will play an important role in preserving the unique natural habitats of the county in the next decade. By prioritizing projects and exploring alternative funding solutions, the district will continue to set a local standard and provide the leadership to implement this plan.

Along with local success, the park district must recognize that Lorain County plays an integral part in the northern Ohio region with linkages to Cleveland, Lake Erie, and westward toward Toledo. This plan assists in building partnerships and coalitions that are necessary to protect habitats and provide services throughout the region.

Along with local success, the park district must recognize that Lorain County plays an integral part in the northern Ohio region with linkages to Cleveland, Lake Erie, and westward toward Toledo. This plan assists in building partnerships and coalitions that are necessary to protect habitats and provide services throughout the region.

The 2005 plan for the future of the metro parks, established through public meetings, includes a list of park needs, goals, and their commitment to the mission of the park district, includes the following goals:

GOAL #1 To protect and sustain the current natural habitats throughout Lorain County while meeting the needs of the citizens into the future. The survey responses continued throughout the last decade. According to the Lorain County Park Commission, the park district now has 11,000 acres in its 18 townships with the corresponding development of 10,300 new homes. The county anticipates this trend to continue with 30,000 new homes in the next 10 years.

The public surveys expressed concern for the protection of open space. Over 60% of the survey respondents indicated that protecting a park land and preservation of habitat, of particular focus on Avon, Avon Lake, and Amherst. The county’s master plan, the Black River RAED, and Ohio EPA have all identified the protection of Lorain County waterways as a key issue. The park district will strive to work with these and other local communities and organizations to create ways to protect our waterways and stream corridors.

GOAL #2 To develop partnerships with communities along the Black River to improve quality of life issues through economic development and protection of river corridors. The Black River represents the heart of Lorain County. The quality of life along the river in Elyria and Lorain are key components in both cities, plans for economic revitalization. The survey responses clearly indicate that the health of the river and the cities depend on both economic development and protection of the river for public access. The Park District shares these same goals with Lorain and Elyria. By continuing our long tradition of successful partnerships, the park district proposes to join forces with those cities in formulating a big vision of “partnerships with communities along the Black River”.

GOAL #3 To plan in a wide diversity of recreational, environmental, and educational demands of the citizens. The public continues to demand a wide variety of recreational programs and facilities. The Midwest Committee on Parks and Recreation in conjunction with the Lorain County Planning Commission, will work with the park district to develop a long-range natural resource management plan for each park to guide the maintenance of habitat zones and to protect specific species. This plan recommends that the park district strive to maintain a high standard of natural resource management and public safety rating.

GOAL #5 To have a metro park in every major community in Lorain County. Over the past 47 years, the park district now has 8,500 acres in 13 reservations. But still only about 4% of Lorain County’s lands are in green space.

The park district has positioned itself to continue to form partnerships with agencies and communities working towards similar goals.

GOAL #4 To sustain safe, well-maintained facilities, accessible to everyone. For the past 45 years, the park commission have been committed to one primary directive—safe, extremely well- maintained parks. The public surveys reflected the importance of park maintenance. In addition to the park maintenance received 97% and 98% approval ratings, respectively.

The survey respondents emphasized the need for more parking lots and restrooms, children’s programs, and programs to meet the needs of the citizens into the future. The survey respondents emphasized the need for more parking lots and restrooms, children’s programs, and programs to meet the needs of the citizens into the future.

The park district now has 8,500 acres in 13 reservations. The quality of life along the river in Elyria and Lorain are key components in both cities, plans for economic revitalization. The survey responses clearly indicate that the health of the river and the cities depend on both economic development and protection of the river for public access. The Park District shares these same goals with Lorain and Elyria. By continuing our long tradition of successful partnerships, the park district proposes to join forces with those cities in formulating a big vision of “partnerships with communities along the Black River”. The public surveys expressed concern for the protection of open space. Over 60% of the survey respondents indicated that protecting a park land and preservation of habitat, of particular focus on Avon, Avon Lake, and Amherst. This plan assists in building partnerships and coalitions that are necessary to protect habitats and provide services throughout the region.

Along with local success, the park district must recognize that Lorain County plays an integral part in the northern Ohio region with linkages to Cleveland, Lake Erie, and westward toward Toledo. This plan assists in building partnerships and coalitions that are necessary to protect habitats and provide services throughout the region.
Since 1957, the park district has been the recipient of countless gifts. Where would we be today without Mill Hollow, French Creek, Black River, Caley, Sheldon Woods, Miller’s Nature Preserve and Schoepfle Gardens? All of these properties were gifts to the citizens of Lorain County. Today, through the stewardship of the park district, these parcels have become public treasures.

During the last 10 years, those gifts have continued. This map shares with you the amazing gifts during the last 10 years (blue dots) and previous to that (red dots). Please understand and appreciate the enormity of these gifts and the wonderful legacy left to you, the citizens of Lorain County.

**IMPROVING LIVES: ONE PARK AT A TIME**

During the last 10 years, the park district has accomplished a number of goals: Amherst Beaver Creek Reservation, Splash Zone, Sandy Ridge Reservation, Columbia Reservation, the renovation of the Carlisle Visitor Center and French Creek Nature Center as well as many others well documented in this report. The park district expanded public programming, senior activities, and special events, resulting in a tremendous growth in visitation. However, as noted in the park surveys, the public identified many needs throughout the county yet to be addressed. The Board of Park Commissioners would like to thank everyone who assisted with this document, collected surveys, tabulated results, interviewed people, served on committees, volunteered their time, and contributed a wealth of expertise. Without volunteers and community support and generosity, our metro parks would not be the public treasures they are today.

This insert is an excerpt from “Preserving the Past, Planning for the Future,” the ten-year plan for the future of the district. For more information, please contact Becky Voit at (440) 458-5121.