



# Park System Strategic Plan 2016-2020

City of Lakewood  
Department of Planning and Development



**GREAT PEOPLE - GREAT PARKS - GREAT CITY:**

Park System Strategic Plan

2015 Update

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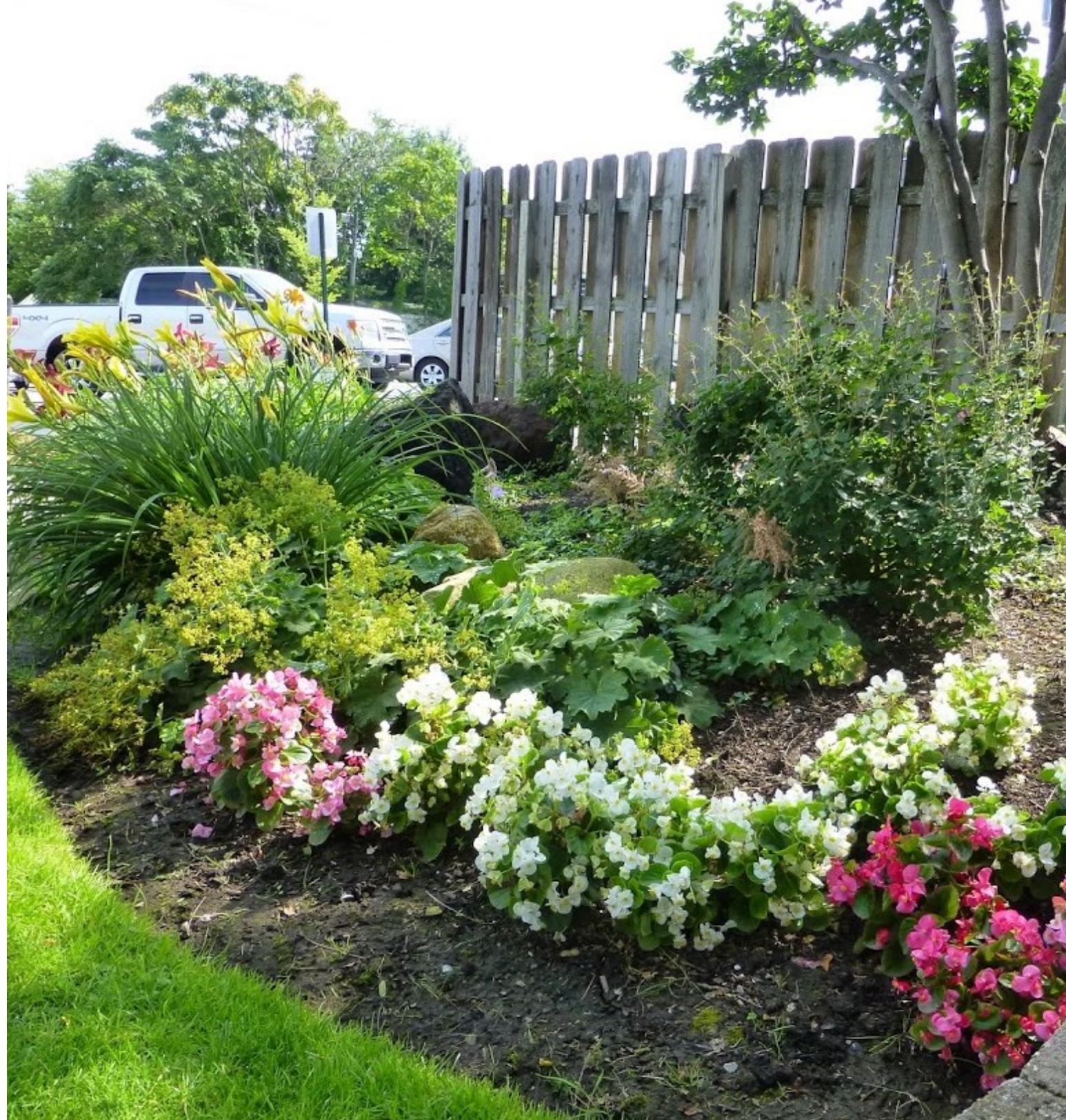


## Executive Summary

Parks are an essential component of Lakewood's community identity, and it is our collective community obligation to manage and provide first rate park facilities for all to enjoy. The 2015 Parks Strategic Plan Update (2015 Update) is a guidebook to effectively maintain and improve our parks while being mindful of the need to prioritize limited resources. The plan considers the City's parks as a system, not just individual parks, and works toward consistency in appearance, maintenance and improvement design.

The foundation of the 2015 Update is the 2010 Parks Strategic Plan (2010 Plan), which provided an on-going community input process, articulated a clear vision and recommended the implementation of strategic park improvements over a 5-year timeline. The 2015 Update will review our community priorities, evaluate and restate park improvement recommendations, and establish a concrete method to inventory and evaluate existing conditions to allow for proactive analysis of the system's current state and plan for the future. The result of this update will help inform the community over the next 5 years as we continue to implement park improvements citywide.

An existing conditions analysis completed in 2014 evaluated Lakewood's parks system with an overall grade of a B+. This quantitative analysis evaluated the condition and safety of equipment and infrastructure at all of Lakewood's parks to establish a uniform methodology and baseline grade to measure improvements from. It is an overarching goal of this plan to achieve a grade of an A by 2020.





## Introduction

Since the 2010 Plan was adopted, many park improvements have been under taken. The 2015 Update is an opportunity to check our progress, update the community at-large and solicit vital feedback on the current state of parks and emerging trends in park usage. Continual updates to the plan help keep the City and the community on the same page as progress is made in implementing the 2010 plan. As such, this update proposes an annual update schedule.

In 2014 the Planning and Development staff conducted a quantitative analysis of all the parks to inventory current conditions of the overall park system, in addition to solidifying a quantitative analysis methodology for the future. This analysis also identifies areas where additional investments may be needed.

Throughout discussions and formulation of the 2015 Update, other plans currently in place or being formulated citywide were reviewed and incorporated to ensure uniformity and shared missions between all existing and future city plans. A great example of this was the Active Living Task Force Plan, which evaluated recreation and active living options throughout the city. Their report focuses on all options available to residents including school properties and the Metroparks, while also addressing how to better utilize our parks to promote active living. The recommendations from the Active Living Report were reviewed during the creation of the 2015 Update and influenced updated recommendations.

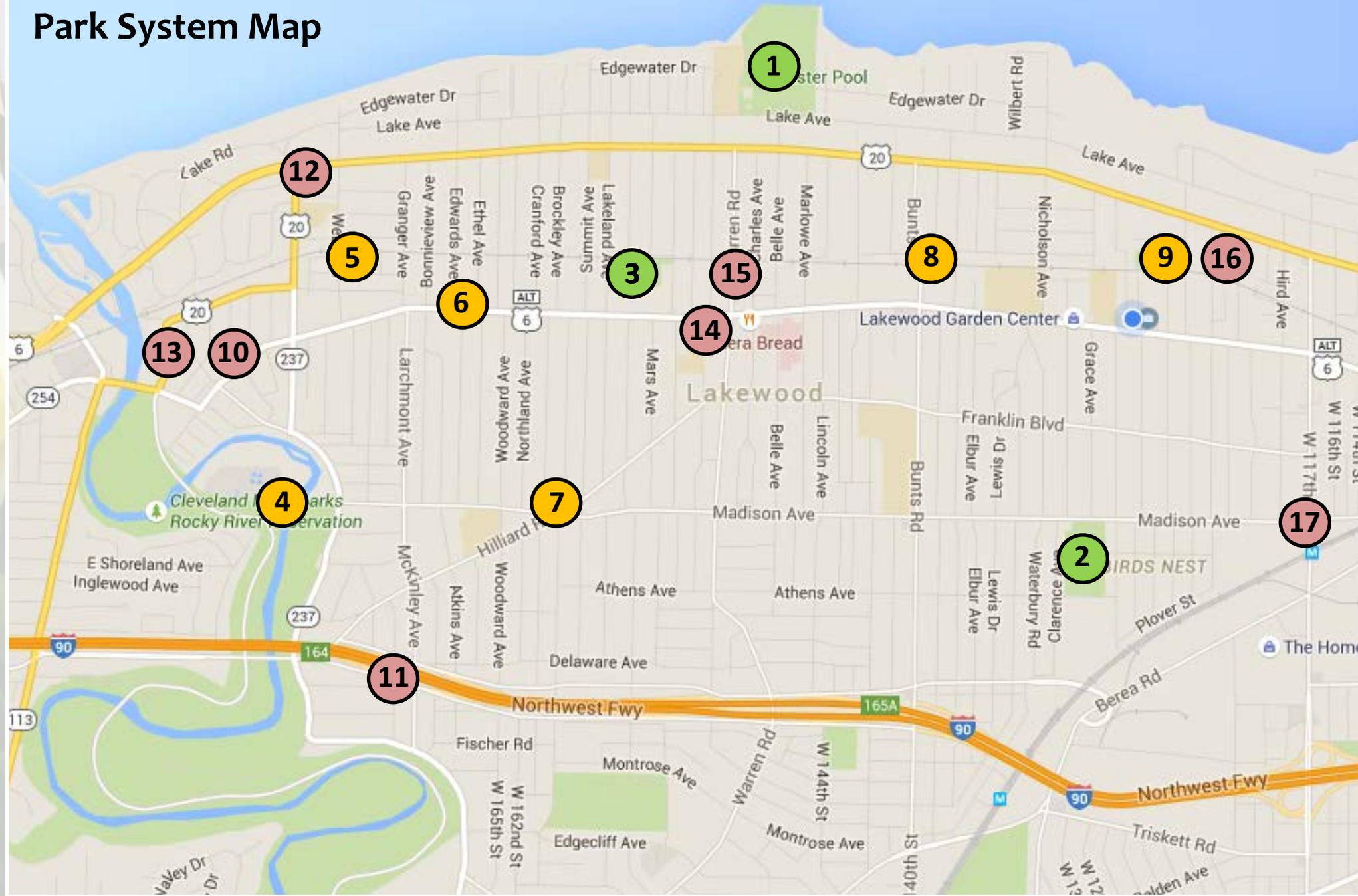
All recommendations from the 2010 Plan were reviewed for implementation and successes. This update was designed to assess the effectiveness of these recommendations, provide feedback and offer recommended action steps for each recommendation. Based on the findings of 2010 recommendations and updated park condition survey, we have created supplementary recommendations for future improvements until a new comprehensive parks study is undertaken.

The underlying principles, guidelines and recommendations of the 2010 Parks Plan remain sound and this document seeks to build upon the solid foundation created by the original parks plan.

# Park System Inventory

Park Name	Address	Acreage	Picnic	Pavilion	Tennis	Pool	Playground	Ball Field	Soccer	Volleyball	Benches	Picnic Tables	Lights	Trash Cans	Grills	Bike Racks	Fence systems
<b>Community Parks (3+ acres)</b>																	
1 Lakewood Park	14532 Lake	32	X	2	4	X	X	2		3	50	117	45	43	12	21	15
2 Madison Park	13029 Madison	17		1	3	X	X	1	1		18	42	59	19	2	17	3
3 Kauffman Park	15450 Detroit	7			2		X	1	1		9	6	15	5	1	0	7
<b>Neighborhood Parks (Up to 3 acres)</b>																	
4 Dog Park	1299 Metropark	1															
5 Webb Park	1301 Webb	2.25	X		1		X				2	1	1	3	0	0	4
6 Edwards Park	16800 Detroit	1.5					X	1			6	0	5	1	0	0	1
7 Wagar Park	15900 Madison	3	X		4		X				4	0	6	7	0	0	2
8 Merl Park	Bunts & Merl	1	X		1		X				5	2	2	3	0	0	2
9 Cove Park	1294 Cove	3	X				X	1	1		4	0	3	3	0	0	1
<b>Pocket Parks (&lt;1 acre)</b>																	
10 Park Row Park	1386 Park Row	0.55	X				X				3	0	2	1	0	0	0
11 Niagara Park	Lakewood Hts & Niagara	0.95	X				X				4	1	0	1	0	0	0
12 Celeste Park	Clifton and West Clifton	0.75									2	3	2	1	0	0	0
13 Sloane Park	1355 Sloane	0.25									3	0	2	1	0	0	0
14 City Center Park	Cook and Detroit	0.65									5	0	0	3	0	2	0
15 Issac Warren Park	Warren, north of Detroit	0.85	X								6	0	0	2	0	0	0
16 Clifton Prado Park	1265 Clifton Prado	0.25	X				X										
17 Mini Park	Madison & W. 117th	0.02															
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>72.02</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>172</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>

# Park System Map



# Community Profile

Lakewood is 5.3 square miles in area with an approximate population of 53,000 residents, according to the estimate from the 2010 American Community Survey. Lakewood is the most densely populated city in Cuyahoga County and has more than 10,000 residents per square mile. Anecdotally, it is often cited that Lakewood is the most densely populated city between New York and Chicago. In a local context, most cities in the county are less than half of Lakewood's density.

Lakewood has a variety of housing options that range from classic single-family homes to high-rise apartments. Since our city is so densely populated, most of our residents do not have large backyards, or, as in the case of most apartment dwellers, any backyard at all, making access to high quality parkland a necessity.

## Total Population

Rank	Community	2010	2014	% Change	2010 Rank
	Cuyahoga County	1,393,978	1,280,122	-8.9%	
1	Cleveland	478,399	396,815	-20.6%	1
2	Parma	85,619	81,601	-4.9%	2
3	Lakewood	56,646	52,131	-8.7%	3
4	Euclid	52,675	48,920	-7.7%	4
5	Cleveland Heights	50,090	46,121	-8.6%	5
6	Garfield Heights	30,739	28,849	-6.6%	6
7	Shaker Heights	29,414	28,448	-3.4%	7
8	Maple Heights	26,092	23,138	-12.8%	9
9	South Euclid	23,536	22,295	-5.6%	10
10	Brook Park	21,217	19,212	-10.4%	11
11	East Cleveland	27,069	17,843	-51.7%	8
12	Fairview Park	17,559	16,826	-4.4%	12
13	Warrensville Heights	15,123	13,542	-11.7%	13
14	University Heights	14,120	13,539	-4.3%	15
15	Bedford	14,213	13,074	-8.7%	14
16	Bedford Heights	11,372	10,751	-5.8%	16

## Median Age

Rank	Community	2010	2014	Change	2010 Rank
1	University Heights	32.1	31.3	-0.8	1
2	Lakewood	34.2	34.5	0.3	3
3	Cleveland Heights	35.2	35.2	0	4
4	Cleveland	33	36.3	3.3	2
5	South Euclid	38	37.4	-0.6	8
6	Garfield Heights	38.3	39.3	1	9
7	Warrensville Heights	37.7	39.4	1.7	7
8	Euclid	38.9	39.7	0.8	11
9	Bedford	39	39.9	0.9	12
10	Cuyahoga County	37.3	40.2	2.9	5
11	Shaker Heights	39.6	40.2	0.6	14
12	Maple Heights	37.4	40.8	3.4	6
13	Fairview Park	40.9	42.1	1.2	16
14	Parma	39.4	42.3	2.9	13
15	Bedford Heights	38.7	42.6	3.9	10
16	East Cleveland	41.2	42.6	1.4	17
17	Brook Park	40.1	42.8	2.7	15

## Population Density per Square Mile

Rank	Community	2010	2014	% Change	2010 Rank
1	Lakewood	10,208.5	9,419.3	-8.4%	1
2	University Heights	7,713.6	7,437.9	-3.7%	3
3	East Cleveland	8,761.8	5,782.4	-51.5%	2
4	Cleveland Heights	6,160.2	5,689.3	-8.3%	5
5	Cleveland	6,166.5	5,107.2	-20.7%	4
6	South Euclid	5,019.2	4,794.0	-4.7%	7
7	Euclid	4,923.2	4,602.1	-7.0%	8
8	Shaker Heights	4,685.0	4,528.2	-3.5%	9
9	Maple Heights	5,039.1	4,473.6	-12.6%	6
10	Parma	4,291.3	4,075.1	-5.3%	10
11	Garfield Heights	4,253.0	3,990.3	-6.6%	11
12	Fairview Park	3,742.2	3,596.6	-4.0%	12
13	Warrensville Heights	3,661.4	3,277.7	-11.7%	13
14	Cuyahoga County	3,040.4	2,800.0	-8.6%	14
15	Brook Park	2,815.1	2,551.5	-10.3%	15
16	Bedford	2,653.3	2,443.2	-8.6%	16
17	Bedford Heights	2,507.4	2,370.9	-5.8%	17

# Community Priorities

The 2010 Parks System Strategic Plan prescribed six (6) community priorities for our parks, which should guide future improvements throughout our park system. While not direct recommendations, they did create a framework for how future improvements should be graded for their impact on our park system. As a part of this update, each priority was analyzed and examples were provided on how improvements have been made towards that priority since 2010.

- Safety
- Natural Resources
- Quality of Facilities
- Cultural and Social Resources
- Access
- Year Round Use

## Safety

*Safe parks are well designed, well maintained and well used both day and night. Our safety forces in Lakewood are exceptional, have a good presence in the parks and respond quickly when called, but a safe park system is more than police and security cameras. Just like feeling safe in your own home is a combination of many factors, so too is real and perceived safety in the parks. Clean parks that are busy and attractive to a variety of park users look, feel and are safe.*

- Actively used by multiple groups throughout the day in organized and unorganized fashions.
- Off duty police patrol the parks
- Continued invest demonstrates a watchful eye
- Providing multiple attractions produces a diverse set of users at the park which promotes all day activity
- Bike cycle cops frequent the park during the summer months

## Access

*Access to safe and well-designed parks, trails, and public open spaces is an absolute necessity for communities to effectively combat the alarming rates of chronic disease related to physical inactivity in the United States. Access also means that the parks provides for and accommodates passive enjoyment and active recreation for users of all ages and abilities.*

- New walking path at Kauffman Park
- Significant investment in bike infrastructure to encourage healthy living
- Bike racks installed at most frequently used parks.





# Community Priorities

## Quality of Facilities

*The condition of park facilities like ball fields, seating, parking, pools, restrooms, shelters and trails leave a lasting impression on park patrons. From those who just drive by to everyday users, our parks will have life long fans who have a sense of ownership and will be protective of the parks. If not, they will be lifelong detractors or have little interest in the condition of the parks. Existing facilities need to be proactively maintained with needed repairs happening quickly, being done correctly and long lasting. New amenities must be durable, cost effective and improve the park. The key is to look at facilities from the perspective of the customer and ask “would you recommend our parks to a friend?”*

- Improvements at Madison Park and Kauffman Park ballfields have improved their appearance and safety as outdated bleacher systems were removed.
- The Madison Park Skatehouse received a major rehabilitation including new ADA compliant restrooms.
- When did we make improvements at Park Row?
- Kauffman Park received a new walking trail. (2014)
- New basketball courts were installed at Lakewood Park.

## Natural Resources

*Natural resources like Lake Erie, the Rocky River, and our urban forest contribute significantly to the beauty, recreational value and ecological habitat of the parks. Protecting these resources is a must and so is taking steps to enhance or create natural habitat areas in the parks while highlighting nature through programming and interpretive signage. Increasing opportunities for contact with nature will attract a wider variety of users to our parks.*

- The Lakewood Park Solstice Stair project dramatically increases the way residents experience Lake Erie. The project also takes advantage of the minimal linear feet of public owned waterfront along Lake Erie.
- The Lakewood Tree Task Force, created by City Council, has been on task for years to devise strategies to fortify our tree canopy and plan for the addition forestation as our existing tree stock ages.

# Community Priorities

## Year Round Use

*Due to the climate in Northeast Ohio, the peak use in our parks is during the warmer months and tends to taper to almost zero from the middle of December until March. In addition to all the warm weather uses, wintertime provides an opportunity to activate our parkland in creative ways. Winterfests, cross-country ski events, holiday gatherings and sledding, to name a few, are prospects to make our parks a year-round asset to the community.*

- The Parks department routinely clears the running and walking paths of ice and snow during the winter to allow Lakewood residents to continue to exercise.

## Cultural and Social Resources

*Cultural and social resources encompass events, history, food, buildings, traditions, food, festivals, arts, music, food, theater: all the activities that are important to the heritage and identity of the community. Lakewood is rich in these resources, and the parks are an ideal venue to highlight our cultural history through special events, public art, and the style and type of constructed improvements. Did we mention the food?*

- Our larger parks, Lakewood and Madison, continue to be used for a variety of cultural events throughout the year.
- Lakewood Alive has been to hold more community events at Kauffman Park, bringing additional exposure to our third largest park.
- Public Art has been discussed as a part of the Lakewood Park Solstice Stair project, particularly as a piece marking the summer solstice point in the park.
- The new element of relaxation and enjoyment of Lake Erie at Lakewood Park has also sparked ideas of allowing food vendors within the park.
- Taste of Lakewood was hosted in Madison Park for the first time in 2014.



# Updated Recommendations

A status check was performed in the fall of 2014 for each recommendation to gain an understanding of what progress had been made since 2010. Additionally, action steps were formulated to help guide the implementation of the 2010 recommendation for the next 5 years.

2010 Recommendation	
<b>Status, as of November 2014</b> (Not Implemented, Progress Made, In Progress, Implemented)	Status Description
<b>Recommended Action, as of August 2015</b> (Remove, Maintain, Expand)	Action Description

## On-going Recommendations *(On-going, in the near term)*

Community Park Site Improvement Plans	
<b>Implemented</b>	Planning Commission adopted the Friends of Kauffman Park's master plan for Kauffman Park and the City has begun implementing recommendations. Kauffman Park was the last community park without an adopted master plan.
<b>Maintain</b>	With adopted master plans for all three community parks, this recommendation should be removed. Perhaps other park planning activities should be undertaken.
<b>Examples</b>	<i>Create master plans for our neighborhood and pocket parks. Special attention should be paid to promoting use, access and safety at our smaller parks. (Safety, Access)</i>

Community Garden Program	
<b>Progress Made</b>	There are number of community garden plots throughout our park system. There are now plots at the following parks: Madison, Kauffman, Cove, and Webb
<b>Expand</b>	Utilize the existing community gardens as blueprints to expand to other parks

Annual Parks Report	
<b>Not Implemented</b>	City Council has been updated and approved funding for many of the improvements made to our parks; however there has been no annual update on the overall condition of our park system.
<b>Maintain</b>	Recommend modifying the annual reporting requirement to the Planning Commission, which regularly approves the overall and individual park plans. City Council is invited to each Planning Commission meeting and receives their agendas.

Strategic Maintenance Program	
<b>Implemented</b>	Parks Department has implemented playground and park condition inspections that are completed by worker twice during the park activity season.
<b>Maintain</b>	Through the implementation of the strategic maintenance program in 2009, the Parks department has done a great job maintaining our parks. As new amenities are created, we must ensure they receive adequate maintenance to maintain high quality park facilities.

## On-going Recommendations *(On-going, currently in-progress)*

Obsolete Equipment and Structure Removal Plan	
<b>Progress Made</b>	Two examples include: Little Links was removed in 2009, Usher Field Bleachers were removed in 2010.
<b>Maintain</b>	We should continue to evaluate all parks facilities and equipment and remove obsolete or unsafe equipment whenever identified.
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate retaining wall at Wagar Park for structural integrity</li> <li>• Evaluate usage and condition of all tennis courts (<i>Quality of Facilities</i>)</li> </ul>

Tree & Planting Donation Program	
<b>Implemented</b>	The Gift-a-Tree Fund allows for tax-deductible donations to be made for such activities as the purchase of trees, planting, corrective pruning and proper care and maintenance of trees.
<b>Maintain</b>	The City of Lakewood, in conjunction with the Tree Task Force has made progress to protect and expand our tree canopy.

Community Work Days	
<b>Progress Made</b>	Several community groups and companies such as Keep Lakewood Beautiful, Friends of Kauffman Park, and Graftech have provided volunteer maintenance and clean up at various Lakewood parks.
<b>Maintain</b>	It is important that the City maintains these crucial partnerships that not only improve our parks, but also builds community investment and pride.

Public Art and Performance	
<b>Progress Made</b>	The City regularly programs the parks, including Shakespeare in the Park, Friday Night Flicks, and Sunday Band Concerts. In 2014, Taste of Lakewood was held at Madison Park for the first time.
<b>Expand</b>	The completion of the Solstice Steps at Lakewood Park provides an opportunity for public art and a new space for programming events. Additionally, any improvements to other parks should include the opportunity for public art and/or art-related programming.
<b>Examples</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a public art in the park program</li> <li>• Consider allowing food vendors in our parks for special events.</li> </ul>

## Short-term Recommendations *(within the next 1-2 years)*

Parks Advisory Committee	
<b>Not Implemented</b>	Tree Task Force was created by City Council to address our tree canopy and assess the condition of trees throughout public property.
<b>Remove</b>	The City routinely engages the public with each master plan created for our park system and each individual park plan. Even designs for projects within each park are reviewed by our residents. As such, a dedicated committee on Parks would be unnecessary given our commitment to public engagement that already exists.

Parks Foundation	
<b>Not Implemented</b>	No effort has been undertaken to create a parks foundation.
<b>Remove</b>	Creating a parks foundation does not appear feasible at this time.

Signage and Wayfinding Program	
<b>Progress Made</b>	Many park name signs were replaced over several years. The new signs however retained the previous sign style.
<b>Remove</b>	Any wayfinding signage for our parks should be included in an overall wayfinding signage program for our entire city.

Community Partner Network	
<b>Not Implemented</b>	The City is undertaking a redesign of the website in 2014-15 and could be implemented at this time.
<b>Maintain</b>	The Active Living Task Force has been actively seeking to provide a unified resource for all recreation opportunities in the City, including Metroparks, Board of Education, and Lakewood Recreation.

Park Standards Handbook	
<b>Progress Made</b>	Through upgrades at Madison Park Skatehouse and Lakewood Park Waterfront, the City has established a design language for park improvements that will be echoed with future improvements throughout the park system.
<b>Maintain</b>	Similar design language established in recent park improvement projects should be incorporated in future improvements at all parks. Each park should still have its own distinct character, but a resident visiting any park should be treated similar experience.

Safety Initiatives	
<b>Progress Made</b>	Since 2009, the Parks Department has contracted with a local security firm to provide 4-5 hours of coverage at various parks between April and October. This is on top of increase presence of Lakewood Police.
<b>Maintain</b>	Safety measures currently in place have proven very effective and should be continued.

Urban Forest Inventory and Assessment	
<b>Progress Made</b>	The Division of Forestry has worked with the Tree Task Force to evaluate the condition of trees in our parks.
<b>Maintain</b>	Forestry should continue evaluating and maintaining trees on city-owned property. We should also plant new trees to help replenish our tree canopy.

## Short-term Recommendations *(within the next 1-2 years)*

Strategic Scheduling of Recreation Programs	
<b>Progress Made</b>	Rotation of field use has been coordinated with Lakewood
<b>Maintain</b>	Continue to coordinate with Lakewood Recreation to insure our fields are maintained in the long run. This will be particularly important during any park construction if fields are taken off-line.

Pilot Projects	
<b>Progress Made</b>	<p>Community garden plots began as a pilot project at Madison Park and have expanded to several other parks. Scheduling of park facilities (Women's Pavilion, Kiwanis) has been streamlined and centralized.</p> <p>Community based improvements have also been implemented such as the new walking path at Kauffman Park. This project was born out of the master plan created by the Friends of Kauffman Park.</p>
<b>Expand</b>	Pilot projects can and should be expanded to other parks. New ideas can be incorporated throughout our park system. For example, the City has installed bio-retention cells in Lakewood and Madison parks recently, which could be expanded to neighborhood parks to serve as educational tools.

## Mid-term Recommendations *(within the next 3-5 years)*

Connectivity Planning	
<b>Not Implemented</b>	While there have been no specific plans to address direct park to park linkages, the City has worked to improve the cycling network in the City which is utilized to access our parks.
<b>Expand</b>	Continue to identify means of ingress and egress into our parks. For example, installing a pathway, and redesigning a more visible entrance to Kaufman Park from Andrews Avenue improved connectivity, which can be replicated at other parks with multiple access points.
<b>Example</b>	<i>Explore how pedestrian and cycling infrastructure can be improved between our parks and other key destinations in the city. (Access)</i>

Open Space Habitat Development	
<b>Not Implemented</b>	No locations in Lakewood have been identified for conversion yet.
<b>Maintain</b>	Explore creative solutions for converting existing open, underutilized spaces into natural habits.
<b>Example</b>	<i>Convert Clifton Bridge Approach and ODOT right-of-way from turf grass to prairie, wildflower plantings. (Natural Resources)</i>

Major Structures Rehabilitation and Improvements	
<b>Progress Made</b>	The Madison Skatehouse was completely remodeled in 2014.
<b>Maintain</b>	As with previous recommendations, the City should be prepared to rehabilitate or improve any facilities that are identified to be deficient.

## Mid-term Recommendations *(within the next 3-5 years)*

Bikeway Planning	
<b>In progress</b>	The City of Lakewood has continued to make our public right of ways more bike accessible, including sharrows on Detroit and bike lanes on Franklin and Madison.
<b>Remove</b>	Since the creation of the current Parks Master Plan, the City of Lakewood has adopted a city wide bike plan, Bike Lakewood. Current and future bikeway planning will be guided by this plan, as such this recommendation should be removed from the Parks Master Plan.

Investigate Renewable Energy Alternatives	
<b>Not Implemented</b>	While discussions have occurred to implement renewable energy in park and public improvements, the City has yet to make an investment in renewable energy.
<b>Maintain</b>	The City should continue to investigate the use of renewable energy within the parks and other public facilities. When the technology is feasible and appropriate, the City should consider implementation.

## Long-range Recommendations *(beyond 5 years)*

Lakefront Access Improvements	
<b>In progress</b>	The City of Lakewood is in the process of completing construction documents for improvements to the waterfront at Lakewood Park. Construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2015.
<b>Maintain</b>	The Solstice steps at Lakewood Park are scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2015, but the City should continue to consider other options that bring residents closer to the lake.

Acquisition of Additional Park Land	
<b>Not Implemented</b>	There has been no concentrate effort to acquire additional park land within the City, however all new developments have been required incorporate green space or feature extensive and innovative landscaping.
<b>Remove</b>	The Community Vision noted that should seek to enhance the green space we already have to ensure we are making the most of the land we currently own. This is a sound strategy and the City has already begun implementing this strategy.

## Existing Conditions—2014 Analysis

In the fall of 2014, Planning and Development staff conducted a quantitative analysis of all the parks to inventory current conditions of the overall park system. The goal was to establish a base line of existing conditions and a system of rating the amenities and facilities in the parks. The methodology for the quantitative analysis is provided in this report and should form the basis of future analysis of the park system for adequate comparison.

*\*NOTE: The inventory of existing conditions and methodology from the 2010 plan was unavailable to the 2014 staff, so comparisons between the two reports existing conditions cannot be made as they were not graded on the same scale.*

The group developed an evaluation form that listed park elements and assigned a numerical rating of 1 to 10 and brief notes for the overall condition of the park. The list of evaluated elements included play equipment, ball fields, courts, shelters, benches, buildings, fences, lighting, greenspace, and pathways. Each park received a report that details its evaluation as was assigned a letter grade based on park conditions.

It is important to note, that the park report card is solely based on a quantitative analysis. That is to say, a piece of equipment may receive a high rating from a maintenance, safety and cleanliness standpoint, but may be functionally obsolescent or underutilized because it no longer fulfills a need in the community.

The overall grade given to the  
2014 conditions of the Park  
System was a B+.





## **Current Conditions – Parks Report Card**

In order to consistently rank the quality of the park system during the evaluation period, the following letter grade system was created as a common rating method:

**A – Excellent Condition** – Park is overall in great condition with well utilized and maintained facilities, requires only annual maintenance.

**B – Good Condition** – Park is overall in good condition with well utilized facilities, requires maintenance and some facilities maybe near end of useful life.

**C – Fair Condition** – Park is overall in adequate condition but facilities within the park in are need of updating.

**D – Poor Condition** – Park is worn, but functional, should be given increased attention.

**F – Failing** – Park is in need of immediate attention.

Two members of the Planning and Development staff toured each park together but scored the parks separately. The average of the two scores was taken for each item evaluated. The

evaluations were collected and tabulated in late 2014 and from this an overall picture of Lakewood’s parks and facilities was developed. Many parks received high scores overall and in most cases, each park had a least one high scoring amenity or feature. From this evaluation, an overall letter grade was assigned to the whole park system.

Based on the findings during the inventory and evaluation, **the overall grade given to the 2014 condition of the park system was a B+.**

**Current Conditions – Parks Report Card**

Beyond providing foundational knowledge, the self-assessment was valuable for other important reasons:

The analysis was a needed update to our parks inventory and recorded a number of important changes that occurred in the last five years. Items such as the new walking path at Kauffman Park and renovated skatehouse at Madison Park, and the implementation of the strategic maintenance plan created in 2010. These changes had bearing on the evaluations.

The analysis and its process for inventory and ranking provided a standardized and replicable way to measure our parks. This method will be part of future evaluations and a way to measure progress in the coming years.

The analysis aided staff in identifying the need for future improvements at neighborhood parks and comparing the quality of facilities between each park. This analysis greatly informed our revisions to the 2010 recommendations.

The analysis reinforced the need for a comprehensive improvement plan that **establish a five year target goal of an A rating for the park system.**





## Park Report Cards

Each park has a stand-alone report card that provides the ratings gathered during on-site inspections as well as observations and recommendations. These ratings are only based on current conditions and are out of a maximum of 40. Letter grades are computed by multiplying the observed ratings multiplied by the weight of each category. The weights were determined by Lakewood residents who were asked to rank the eight categories. Rankings were based on what matters most to them during their park experiences. These reports should only be interpreted as an evaluation of existing conditions based on the eight categories. A park may have scored well, but it doesn't necessary translate to the park providing the best experience or amenities to residents.

### Categories

<b>Active Recreation</b>	Active Recreation evaluates the maintenance, cleanliness, safety, and structural integrity of each soccer, football, basketball, tennis court, etc. in the selected park
<b>Pathways</b>	Pathways evaluates the maintenance, cleanliness, safety, and structural integrity of each type of walkway in a zone, including those made of asphalt, pavers, brick, dirt or concrete in the selected park.
<b>Passive Greenways</b>	Passive Greenspace evaluates the maintenance, cleanliness, and safety of every lawn, landscaped area, garden, natural area in the selected park.
<b>Playground</b>	The Playground category evaluates the maintenance, cleanliness, safety, and structural integrity of each playground in the selected park.
<b>Sitting Area</b>	Sitting Areas evaluates the maintenance, cleanliness, safety, and structural integrity of each sitting area in the selected park.
<b>Drinking Fountains</b>	The Drinking Fountains category evaluates the maintenance, cleanliness, safety, and structural integrity of each discrete drinking fountain in the selected park.
<b>Bathrooms</b>	The Bathrooms category evaluates the maintenance, cleanliness, safety, and structural integrity of each bathroom in the selected park.
<b>Trees</b>	The Trees category evaluates the condition and abundance of trees within the selected park.

# Methodology

Each category is evaluated in the following four (4) areas: maintenance, cleanliness, structural integrity, and safety. Each is ranked from 1-10 with 10 reflecting optimal conditions, as such each category may have a maximum score of 40. Parks with multiple facilities under a single category, will have each facility graded separately. The category score will then reflect the average score of each facility.

In order to grade each park a weighting system was developed by through community input. The City conducted a survey through Survey Monkey have citizens decide which one of the eight categories had a greater impact of their park experience. They were asked to rank each category from 1-8. 1 being the most important. This weighting system can be updated at any time through future community surveys to allow the overall grading system to reflect changing preferences among our residents. Parks not featuring a category (e.g. bathrooms) will not receive a score for the category and the eight of that category will not be included in further calculations. After receiving survey results, categories were given their reverse of their results. (e.g. #1 ranked category was given a weight of 8)

## Determining Park Grade

(Table 1) - Total scores for each category are multiplied by the weight of each category.

(Table 2) - To determine the letter grade, total raw score is divided by the total weight for the park.

Passive Greenspace		
E X A M P L E	Maintenance	5
	Cleanliness	2
	Structural Integrity	8
	Safety	7
TOTAL		22

Community Weights		
E X A M P L E	Active Recreation	1
	Pathways	7
	Passive Greenspace	3
	Playground	6
	Sitting Area	5
	Trees	8
	Drinking Fountains	2
	Bathrooms	4

LETTER GRADE CALCULATION	
Raw Scores	Grade
38 - 40	A+
35 - 37	A
32 - 34	A-
29 - 31	B+
26 - 28	B
23 - 25	B-
20 - 22	C+
17 - 19	C
14 - 16	C-
11 - 13	D
10 or below	F

Table (1)	Score	Weight	Raw Score
Active Recreation	29	3	87
Pathways	35	4	140
Passive Greenspace	27	4	108
Playground	15	2	30
Sitting Area	23	4	92
Trees	18	4	72
Drinking Fountains	16	2	32
Bathrooms	20	3	60
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>621</b>

Table (2)	
Total Raw Score	621
Total Park Weight	26
<b>Final Score</b>	<b>24</b>





# Annual Review Schedule

City Staff will provide an annual update to the Planning Commission related to the prior year's progress in our parks. Below will be the general format followed each year to allow for consistency in reporting each year.

## Contents of Annual Review

- Summary introduction to Parks System Strategic Plan
  - Why a parks plan? What is a parks plan? How we use a parks plan?
- Introduce 6 Community Priorities
- Provide major improvements and progress for all parks related projects from year prior
  - Examples from 2014 – Solstice steps, Madison Park Skatehouse, Kaufman Park, Strategic Maintenance Program, Public performances at Lakewood Park
  - Not meant to be a comprehensive list, but providing examples of ongoing improvements to our parkland
- Explain the plan for the year(s) ahead related to the recommendations provided in the 2015 update
- Q&A
  - Address any questions Planning Commissioners have
- January or February Annual Report to Planning Commission
- Proposed action – Receive and file

# Annual Review Schedule

## Proposed 5 Year Schedule

- 2015 – Adopt an update to the Parks System Strategic Plan, originally adopted in 2010
- 2016 – Annual update to Planning Commission, showing year in review and evaluating recommendations
- 2017 – Annual update to Planning Commission, showing year in review and evaluating recommendations
- 2018 – Annual update to Planning Commission, showing year in review and evaluating recommendations
- 2019 – Annual update to Planning Commission, showing year in review and evaluating recommendations
- 2020 – Create a new Parks System Strategic Plan





## Conclusion

Lakewood’s parks system is multi-functional, well programmed and maintained, and set up well to improve. The 2015 Update allows Lakewood to evaluate, refine and articulate the next 5 years of development within our parks.

In order to strive for an A grade for our parks system by 2020, Lakewood should continue operating under the existing 6 community priorities of Safety, Access, Quality of Facilities, Natural Resources, Year round Use and Cultural and Social Resources. Paramount in importance is treating the parks strategic plan as dynamic, allowing for flexibility. When opportunities and funding arise to improve, redesign or expand any part of our park system the City and the citizens have established and documented a productive way of working together.

Establishing a quantitative methodology to rank and rate the parks system has established a useful baseline that is consistent and accountable. In addition to the quantitative methodology, it’s important to evaluate qualitative characteristics of the parks system, which should include how the parks are used, desires of residents and potential future uses of the park. As with previous park projects, the City should continue to engage residents about improvements to park system to continuously gather qualitative feedback.

**“This suggestion is made in order that the people of Lakewood may have the best possible plan for an ideal park system within our own boundaries.”**

**E.A. Wiegand, 1924 - Mayor and Director of Lakewood City Park System**

# Parks System History

## A new idea with a long history

In 1924 Mayor Edward Wiegand wrote an article entitled “Parks and Playgrounds” discussing the virtues of parks while articulating the importance of well managed and well planned city parks. At the time he was not only the Mayor but the Director of the City Park System as well. He was a parks enthusiast, going so far as to make trips to Detroit and Milwaukee to learn from their world-class park systems so he could apply those same ideals to Lakewood.

Mayor Wiegand can be credited not only for significantly expanding the size of our park system but for also having a long-range vision that made recommendations for management of the park system. In “Parks and Playgrounds”, Wiegand stated:

“The increasing population requires a park program continued over a period of years. Therefore, a Lakewood Park Committee of a permanent nature, composed of ten or twelve representative citizens, chosen from agencies working for the betterment of Lakewood should be formed to make a comprehensive study of the need and problem, which, if formed would make possible by investigation, study and a frequent report of recommendations a developed program for years to come. This suggestion is made in order that the people of Lakewood may have the best possible plan for an ideal park system within our own boundaries.”

Lakewood has had a commitment to outstanding parks for a century. Our current effort to revitalize the park system is possible only because our forefathers had the prudence to establish it in the first place. Having an understanding of our parkland heritage reminds us of responsibility ensure “... the people of Lakewood may have the best possible plan for an ideal park system within our own boundaries.”





## Parks System History

### Highlights of Lakewood's Park History

Our parks have enjoyed a colorful history. From the early days of the amusement park in the Rocky River valley to the current network of parks throughout the city, the citizens of Lakewood have taken pleasure in the natural scenery and beauty inherent in this coastal city.

In 1866, nine businessmen came together with the idea to create a summer resort at the mouth of the Rocky River, called the Clifton Park Summer Resort. It featured picnic groves, beer gardens, bathing and boating, as well as a cable car attraction to traverse the river. By 1917, the City had purchased the property and the park became Lincoln Park now under the management of the Cleveland Metroparks system, where it is part of the popular Rocky River Reservation.

In 1918, the City purchased what is now considered to be the “diamond in Lakewood’s tiara,” Lakewood Park for \$214,500 by acquiring 25 acres on the former Rhodes estate. An additional four acres were purchased from the Hopkinson estate to add to the park. In 1953, construction began on Foster Pool, named for long-time Recreation Commissioner Charles A. Foster. This Olympic-sized pool replaced the old wading pond, which had been popular among children despite its diminutive depth. In 1996, a promenade was built to provide a place to stroll along the lakefront and enjoy the views.

The 15 acres of Madison Park were purchased in 1917 for \$40,222. This park features a pool designed by architect John Lidaj that was built in 1955 for the sum of \$260,000. The park has been home to many softball and baseball teams.

Elks Field, no longer extant, was located near Detroit and Bunts, due south of the rail line. This field was very popular in the 1930s and 40s, and was home to the first lighted softball field in the entire United States. The field had the privilege of hosting the 1944 and 1946 World Softball Championships.

The City Ice & Fuel Skating Rink on Lakewood Heights Boulevard was very popular in the 1930s and on. In 1961, Lakewood purchased the rink for \$200,000 and eventually built an indoor rink, now called Winterhurst. At the time, it was the largest rink in the country, and was a popular training facility for world- and Olympic-class skaters.

In addition to its heritage of fine outdoor spaces, Lakewood has also enjoyed a strong city-wide recreation program. From the play schools of the 1930s to the youth sports teams of today, the citizens have had abundant opportunities to get outside and enjoy beautiful Lakewood.

# Strategic Maintenance

Strategic maintenance is an effort to improve the methods for the ongoing upkeep of the parks by more efficiently using existing resources in order to meet the five year target goal of an **A** rating. During the inventory and assessment of the parks, a review of the Parks Division current staffing, methods and responsibilities was also undertaken.

## Staffing and Responsibilities

- 8 full time Groundskeepers and 1 part time Groundskeeper
- Three groundskeepers are at Lakewood Park full time from 7:00 AM to 11:30 PM seven days a week, and one Groundskeeper is assigned to Madison Park Monday thru Friday. One of the groundskeepers is on nights rotating between parks and the public works garage.
- Six groundskeepers on days attending to the majority of the park system when staffing is at maximum levels.

### Summary of duties

- Cut and trim approximately 75 Acres of dedicated Parks Property
- Cut and trim approximately 75 Acres of Public Property (Green Space)
- Pick up all ground litter
- Empty over 90 garbage cans in the City Parks
- Remove all trash from the Public Works garage and Armory
- Remove over 375 Tons of garbage from the Parks a year
- Clean and maintain 8 pairs of restrooms throughout the City's Parks
- Clean, setup and tear down for all events at the Woman's Club Pavilion, 264 events in the year 2008
- Clean Kiwanis Pavilion for events, 157 events in the 2008 season
- Backup for school crossing guards
- Setup for special events, band concerts and Friday night flicks
- Remove graffiti from parks
- Maintain both municipal swimming pools
- Repair fences

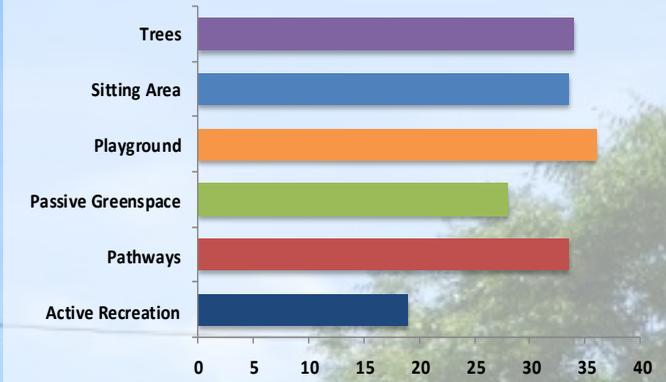


# WAGAR PARK

neighborhood park



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	4	Grills	0
Picnic Tables	0	Bike Racks	0
Lights	6	Fence Systems	2
Trash Cans	7		

**A-**

Overall Grade

**2nd of 5**

Rank among Neighborhood Parks

# ISSAAC WARREN

*pocket park*



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	6	Grills	0
Picnic Tables	0	Bike Racks	0
Lights	0	Fence Systems	0
Trash Cans	2		

# A+

Overall Grade

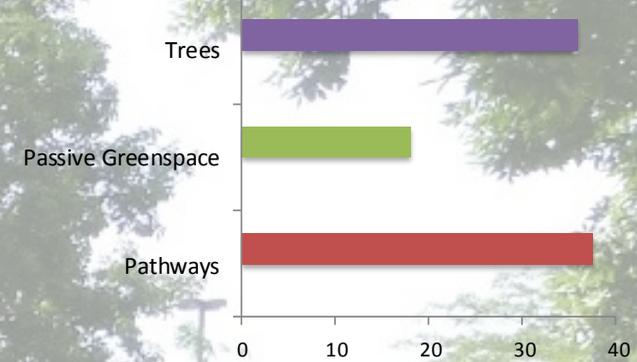
# 1st of 6

Rank among Pocket Parks

# CITY CENTER PARK

*pocket park*

## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	5	Grills	0
Picnic Tables	0	Bike Racks	2
Lights	0	Fence Systems	0
Trash Cans	3		

**A-**

Overall Grade

**3rd of 6**

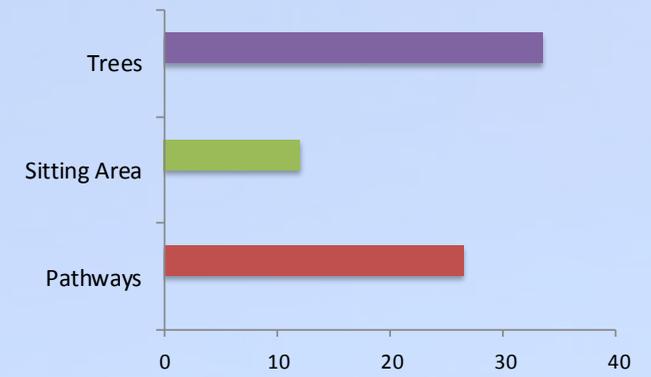
Rank among Pocket Parks

# SLOANE PARK

*pocket park*



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	3	Grills	0
Picnic Tables	0	Bike Racks	0
Lights	2	Fence Systems	0
Trash Cans	1		

# B

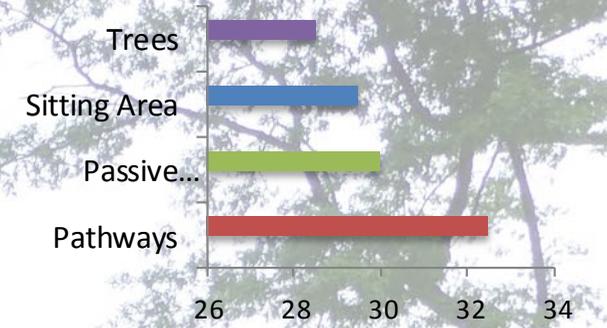
Overall Grade

# 6th of 6

Rank among Pocket Parks

# CELESTE PARK

## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	2	Grills	0
Picnic Tables	3	Bike Racks	0
Lights	2	Fence Systems	0
Trash Cans	1		

**B+**

Overall Grade

**5th of 6**

Rank among Pocket Parks

# NIAGARA PARK

neighborhood park



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	4	Grills	0
Picnic Tables	1	Bike Racks	0
Lights	0	Fence Systems	0
Trash Cans	1		

**A-**

Overall Grade

**4th of 6**

Rank among Pocket Parks

# PARK ROW PARK



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	3	Grills	0
Picnic Tables	0	Bike Racks	0
Lights	2	Fence Systems	0
Trash Cans	1		

# A

Overall Grade

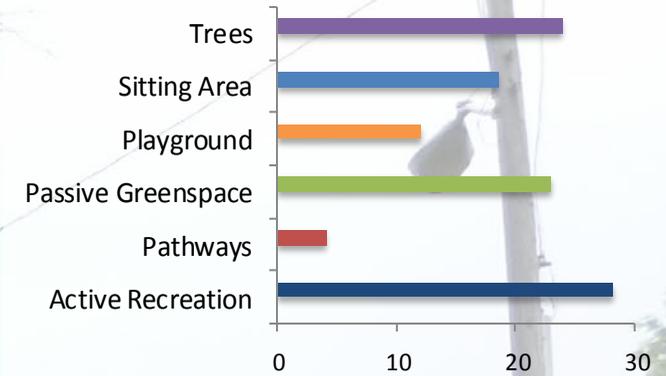
# 2nd of 6

Rank among Pocket Parks

# COVE PARK

neighborhood park

## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	4	Grills	0
Picnic Tables	0	Bike Racks	0
Lights	3	Fence Systems	1
Trash Cans	3		

C-

Overall Grade

5th of 5

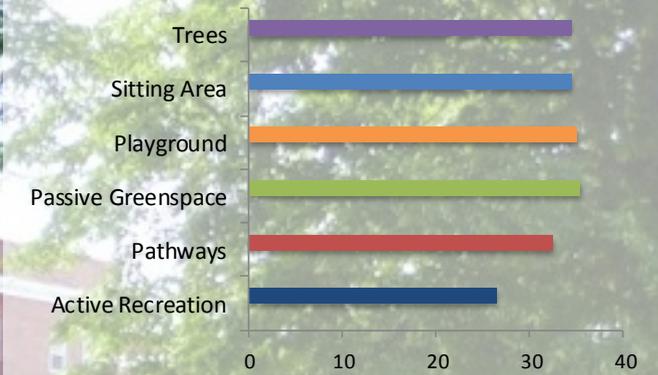
Rank among Neighborhood Parks

# MERL PARK

neighborhood park



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

<b>Benches</b>	5	<b>Grills</b>	0
<b>Picnic Tables</b>	2	<b>Bike Racks</b>	0
<b>Lights</b>	2	<b>Fence Systems</b>	2
<b>Trash Cans</b>	3		

**A-**

Overall Grade

**1st of 5**

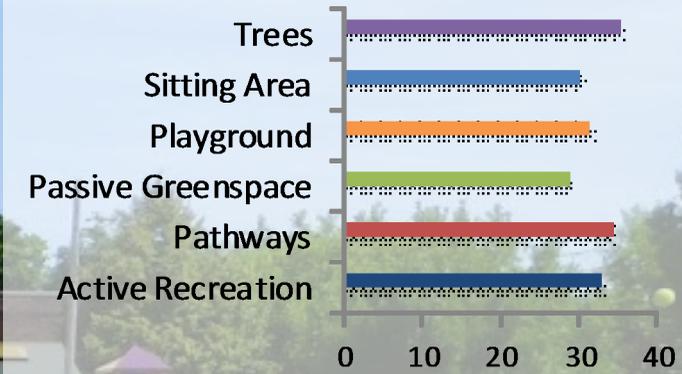
Rank among Neighborhood Parks

# EDWARDS PARK

neighborhood park



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	6	Grills	0
Picnic Tables	0	Bike Racks	0
Lights	5	Fence Systems	1
Trash Cans	1		

# A-

Overall Grade

# 2nd of 5

Rank among Neighborhood Parks

# WEBB PARK

neighborhood park



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	2	Grills	0
Picnic Tables	1	Bike Racks	0
Lights	1	Fence Systems	4
Trash Cans	3		

**B+**

Overall Grade

**4th of 5**

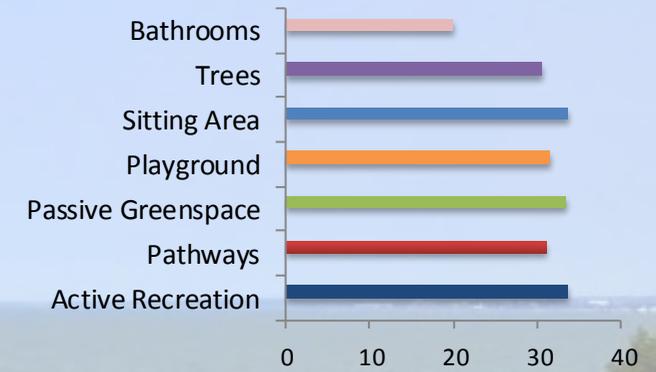
Rank among Neighborhood Parks

# LAKEWOOD PARK

community park



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

<b>Benches</b>	50	<b>Grills</b>	12
<b>Picnic Tables</b>	117	<b>Bike Racks</b>	21
<b>Lights</b>	45	<b>Fence Systems</b>	15
<b>Trash Cans</b>	43		

# B+

Overall Grade

# \*2nd of 3

Rank among Community Parks

\*(tie)

# MADISON PARK

community park



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	18	Grills	2
Picnic Tables	42	Bike Racks	17
Lights	59	Fence Systems	3
Trash Cans	19		

**A-**

Overall Grade

**1st of 3**

Rank among Community Parks

# KAUFFMAN PARK

community park



## PARK ANALYSIS



## PARK INVENTORY

Benches	9	Grills	1
Picnic Tables	6	Bike Racks	0
Lights	15	Fence Systems	7
Trash Cans	5		

# B+

Overall Grade

# \*2nd of 3

Rank among Community Parks