



PLANTING

The Cincinnati Parks



THE FUTURE

and Greenways Plan



*A Strategic Plan
for the Conservation
and Growth of
Cincinnati Parks
and Greenspaces*

*Letters from the
Mayor and President
of the Board of Park
Commissioners*

Credits

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The Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan has been prepared by the Board of Park Commissioners, their staff and technical consultants. It has been guided by a Citizens' Advisory Committee, and by neighborhood representatives, business and community leaders, civic and environmental groups, and park users. It is a strategic plan for the Cincinnati Park System, its facilities, operations, services and financing for the next decade. This Summary provides an overview of the plan. A Technical Report contains more detailed material.

I take great pleasure in endorsing and supporting the Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan.

One of our City's greatest resources is the greenspace that dots our neighborhoods, lines our streets and parkways, and gives us breathing space downtown. These areas should be maximized to enhance our lives and protect our environment.

For almost 200 years, Cincinnatians have planted trees and flowers, donated land and dollars and lobbied to create and preserve the City's greenspace. The Parks and Greenways Plan lays the framework for revitalizing and insuring this great legacy for at least another 200 years.

I encourage every member of our community to be committed to "Planting the Future."

Sincerely,



Dwight Tillery
Mayor
City of Cincinnati





On behalf of the Board of Park Commissioners of the City of Cincinnati, Ohio, I take great pride in presenting "Planting the Future - the Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan."

This master plan, the first for Cincinnati's city parks since 1907, is well-rooted in what we Cincinnatians treasure from the past and what we want for the future. During the nearly three years the plan has been in the making, the ideas of hundreds of park users; park advocates; government, business and community leaders; educators; environmentalists; planners and employees have helped shape its bold, exciting vision.

This vision sees city parkland as everybody's backyard, enriching the lives of all of us every day. It focuses on Cincinnati parks, parkways, green hillsides and open spaces as some of the city's most valuable resources and most marketable assets. It invests in the conservation of the environment through strong stewardship and leadership. It spotlights greenspace as the core of our city's healthy future, the revitalization of not only Cincinnati, but of the entire region.

The plan will chart the future for our park system and the services we will provide into the next century. I look forward to sharing with all of you the excitement and gratification of "Planting the Future" together.

Caleb Brown, Jr.

Caleb Brown, Jr.
President
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*Submitted to the People of
Cincinnati by the Board of
Park Commissioners*



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A Vision for Cincinnati

An Overview of the Plan

A PLACE
Introduction



TO GROW
to the Plan

Cincinnati is a city gifted in many ways. One of those ways is in its distinctive parklands, and in Cincinnati's love and support of their parklands. Since 1817, generations of citizens have donated, lobbied, planned and built for today's park system. Today's almost 5,000 acres of parks and parkways are the living legacy of that tradition.

It is the challenge today to ensure that what we have inherited is preserved, strengthened, and reinvigorated for tomorrow. Our parks are at a crossroads.

Not since the Kessler Plan, created for our parks in 1907, has the city had a plan — a vision — for its parks, greenspaces and parkways. The time has come for a new plan and direction to further our parks and greenspaces and all they afford our community. There are needs to be addressed, solutions to be found, and steps to be taken ... all to maintain and grow Cincinnati's historically-rich and quality park system.

The Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan does what previous city plans have done so well for Cincinnati — what the "Cincinnati 2000 Plan" did for downtown, what the "Smale Commission" did for the parks and the city's infrastructure and what the original park Master Plan, the Kessler Plan, created for our parks at the turn of the century.

The Cincinnati Park Board response is a dynamic new direction, not just for parks, but for our entire city ... *Planting The Future - The Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan* ... a roadmap to the future. The Plan is flexible, ambitious, achievable and responsive to the community. It is devised to be carried out within ten years. Though it is comprehensive, it cannot include or address every conceivable issue and problem. In many areas, further study and refinement will be necessary, and, as with all plans, this one must be monitored and "revisited" regularly to respond to changing needs and conditions.

Most importantly, the new Plan enables Cincinnati to "plant the future" ... socially, economically and environmentally.

*What has aged and
deteriorated must be fixed.
What is threatened must be
protected. What is good can
be the best.*

This statement is a description of the vision for the City and its parks which has emerged from the planning process. This is a summing up of what the Plan seeks to achieve.

“Cincinnati — a city where greenspace and parklands touch the lives of all people. A city where a network of parkways, greenways and open spaces shape the future of the entire region. A city with distinctive parklands and greenspaces, providing a natural setting for the community’s outdoor leisure activities, education and growth. This is the new vision for Cincinnati and its park system. A vision that will come to life through the conservation, appreciation and enjoyment of our parks’ natural resources.”



An Overview Of The Plan

The major recommendations of the Plan are described below, grouped into broad categories. They are explained and illustrated in greater detail elsewhere in this document.

Revitalizing Existing Parks

As indicated in the Infrastructure Commission Report of 1987, Cincinnati’s treasured old parks are in need of repair, restoration and revitalization. The new Plan calls for aggressive renovation and maintenance of our parks to ensure they are at their best now and for future generations. The renovation of neighborhood parks focuses on removing barriers to equal access, meeting infrastructure needs and enhancing parks throughout the city.

Acting On Unique Opportunities

In the development of the new Plan, certain opportunities presented themselves that enable Cincinnati and its parks to grow and further enrich the community. Among these are new and expanded river parks and special new facilities and improvements at two region-serving parks, Eden Park and Mt. Airy Forest. A new conservatory, revitalized arboretum, new shelters, enhanced lodges and new visitor centers are proposed.

Conserving, Managing and Interpreting Our Natural Resources

The new Plan sees the Park Board proudly assuming a leadership role in conserving, managing and interpreting greenspace and the environment. The Plan proposes a network of greenways and protected hillsides linking the city's parks and open spaces, including new hiking and biking trails. Innovative new programs and facilities throughout the system will provide for environmental education.

Enhancing The City's Image

To add to Cincinnati's unique appeal and image and therefore our economy, the new Plan proposes a "greening" of the city. New parkways and boulevards, landscaped gateways, and new plantings downtown are proposed. A reforestation of city streets and parks also are recommended. These enhancements and more effective management of city-owned greenspace strongly impact the way the world sees us and projects a positive image of our city that benefits us all.

Providing New Programs and Events

The new Plan is driven by the core concept that city parks should be "everybody's backyard" — free and beautiful places that belong to everyone. Parks also assume a responsibility to meet the diverse needs of many people. To this end, the Plan promises new life for old parks, and new and expanded programs, services, facilities to increase parks' use and enjoyment.

Developing New Partnerships

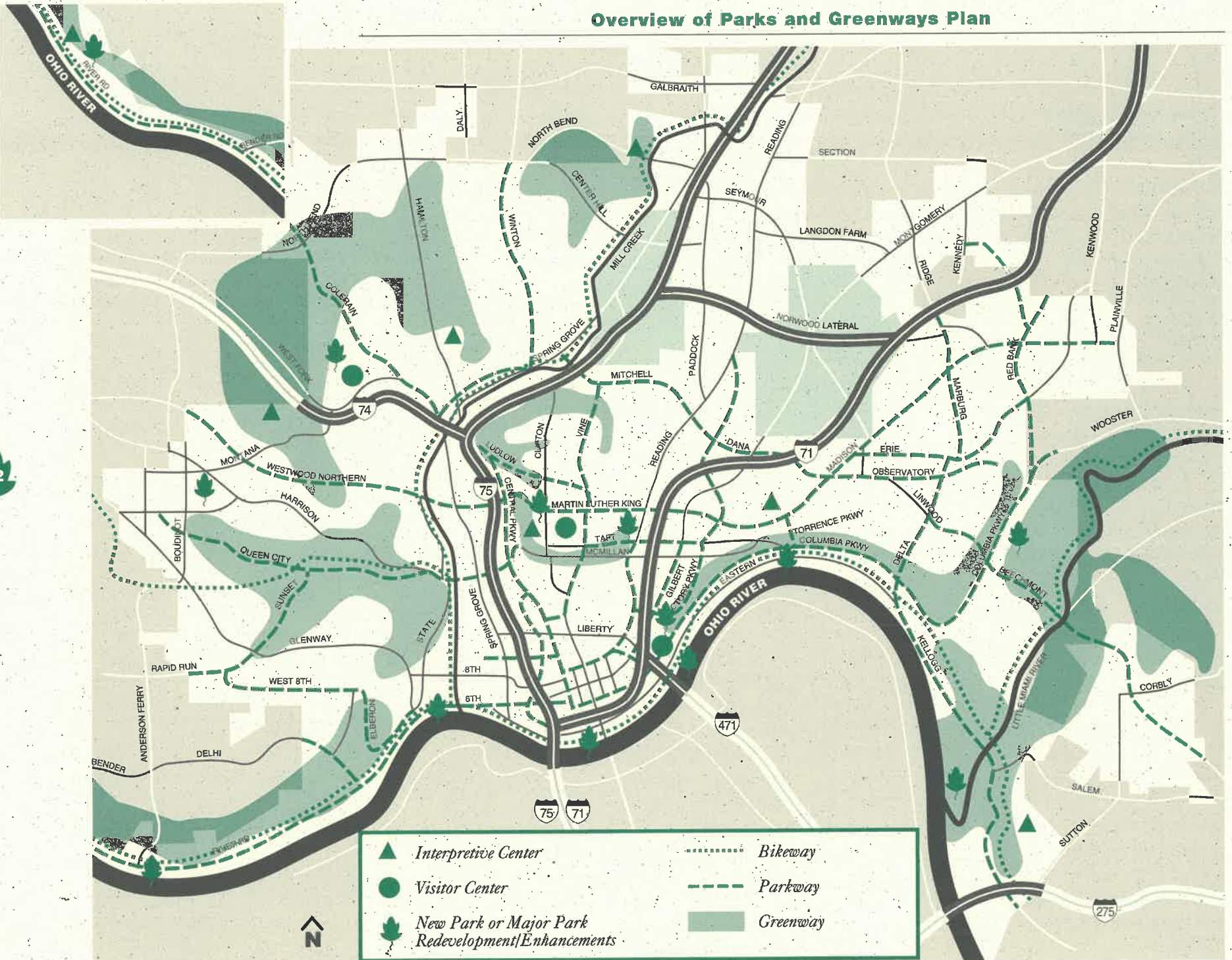
Key to turning the Plan's vision into reality are proposed partnerships. These new and renewed relationships with civic groups, donors, neighborhoods, the business community, all levels of government, and caring individuals are essential to take the Plan from paper to practice — for funding, for running programs, for providing services, and for maintaining the system.

Reorganizing Operations and Affirming A New Commitment To Quality

To meet the challenges posed by the Plan's recommendations in a more efficient and effective manner calls for reorganization and new staffing and staff support. It further calls for the creation of a new Parks Foundation and Development Office to lead fundraising and promotional efforts, and a greater level of service and high quality maintenance — while providing a responsive and innovative park system.



Overview of Parks and Greenways Plan



	<i>Interpretive Center</i>		<i>Bikeway</i>
	<i>Visitor Center</i>		<i>Parkway</i>
	<i>New Park or Major Park Redevelopment/Enhancements</i>		<i>Greenway</i>

FROM THE

The Roots



GROUND UP

of the Plan

The Plan Goals

*How the Plan was
Created*

Community Needs

The Cincinnati Park System, and in many ways the City of Cincinnati, is at a number of crossroads. As pointed out in the Infrastructure Commission Report, we are facing an aging infrastructure, one which has more massive renovation and restoration needs than we have the resources to address. The economy of the city and the region is tied to our quality of life, and to Cincinnati's image — the way others see us. But our collective image needs an overhaul. Parks and greenspaces can shape this image, making the park system a smart investment in our city — a drawing card for new business and industry, major events and tourism, and key to keeping Cincinnati competitive as a great place to live, visit, shop, work and play. The environment and how we treat it is another kind of crossroads. Its responsible care and management is a necessity. And though there is greater competition for decreasing financial resources, there is an increasing demand for park and recreational services and facilities.

In light of these challenges and in order to be more efficient, creative, effective and responsive, it became clear that a strategic and comprehensive plan was needed. The Park Board set out to put together a planning program and consultant team in 1989, charged with devising a strategic plan to address all aspects of operations, services, financing and facilities.

The Plan Goals

The Master Plan set out to create a framework within which Parks can determine its physical, operational and fiscal needs based on a clear understanding of its mission and objectives. Among the many goals of the planning process were the following:

- Address the community's most important park and open space-related needs
- Create more park usage, more often, among current and new users
- Broaden the support base for parks and open space
- Identify flagship projects that will draw more people from the "region" into the parks
- Establish a distinct Cincinnati Park Board identity and mission that differentiates it from other providers of parks and open space
- Establish guidelines for appropriate park management, operations, and development
- Improve Cincinnati's competitive stance

The park system is a smart investment in our city — key to keeping Cincinnati competitive.

- Create new funding sources that reduce dependency on the current City budget
- Provide a compelling vision for the future of the city and its parks
- Develop a comprehensive Capital Improvements Program
- Identify organizational and staffing needs
- Identify areas of overlapping services and operations and devise solutions
- Identify new park opportunities, resources requiring protection, and properties under Park Board control which could better serve another purpose.

How The Plan Was Created

The Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan has been over two years in the making and grown from many roots: neighborhood representatives, business and community leaders, planning consultants, park employees, park users, volunteers, environmentalists and technical advisors. As a “community-based” plan, input from all factors was critical to the Plan’s development and paramount to its success.

A Citizen’s Advisory Committee helped drive the entire planning process with major input coming from a series of neighborhood meetings. All community councils were invited to send representatives.

Major findings on demographics and social issues, economics, park and recreation trends, internal operational needs, the needs of an aging infrastructure, and specific community desires also were incorporated into the planning process. This process also included individual interviews, a regional phone survey, in-park user surveys, and various focus groups.

In addition, staff and consultants reviewed the state of the art, other park system experiences, and findings in the field. Past plans and documents were reviewed, including regional and city plans, and such studies as that of Cincinnati’s critical hillsides. Again, relevant findings and recommendations have been incorporated into the new Plan.

One result of extensive community input is a list of community-perceived needs. These were seen as unmet or inadequately met, or as current services or features which were important to continue delivering or maintaining. The needs or desires can be summarized as follows:

- Safe and clean facilities
- More events and programs and greater diversity of experiences in parks
- Greater partnership opportunities for neighborhoods, volunteers, individuals, business
- More linkages of greenspaces with parkways, trails, bike paths and other green corridors
- More environmental education
- Continued beautification
- More reserved areas
- Better trails, upgraded facilities, more water features
- Greater protection of natural resources.

Neighborhood Representatives 5 Year Vision For Cincinnati Parks And Open Space

(Consolidation of Sessions)

Safe, Well Maintained Parks With Neighborhood And Business Participation	Careful Programming To Attract People To The Parks	Preservation And Expansion Of Greenspaces	Ecology Awareness
<p>Safe, Well Maintained Parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Repair, Well Kept • Maintenance/Safety Fixtures Kept Up • Restore Shelter House – Bellview Park <p>Neighborhood Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Neighborhood Involvement <p>Effective Park Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid Duplication of City Services • Consolidate Greenspace • Cooperation of City, County, and State Entities • Fund Parks Independently: Loyalty, Taxes <p>Appropriate Business Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Outdoor Cafes • 5-Star Restaurant Nestled in Park • Business Recognition, Benches, Plantings, etc. 	<p>Vibrancy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Tall Stacks Center” Year Round, Museum w/Boats • Special Events, Concerts, Vendors • Natural Amphitheater • Designed to Draw People in and Explore • Educational Forest • “A Bustling Park” Full of Activities • “Meandering Garden” – Interest Points Along Path <p>People In The Parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Nature Trails • Activities That Draw People To Parks • Eating Opportunities • More Water Features • Better Park Utilization • Natural Resource Activities, Picnics, Concerts <p>Daily Accessible Parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise Path With Stations, Bike Path • Incorporate Parks Into Daily Life • Public Garden Plots Competition 	<p>Urban Greenway Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic Island Gardens • Bikeways to Connect Areas of the City • Visual Consistency of Open Space • Green Parkways • Business District Parks • Bike & Walkways to Connect Parks & Along Parkways <p>Neighborhood Pocket Parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pocket Park Development By Neighborhoods • More Pocket Parks Within Neighborhoods <p>Preservation of Greenspace</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of Greenspace in Urban Area • Acquire Greenspace in Urban Areas – Mini Parks • Donation of Trees and Estates • Park for East Westwood • Protection Trust <p>Greenspace Expansion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversion of Greenspace to Expand Parks • Little Miami Scenic Park, Wild Park 	<p>Natural Resource Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree/Vegetation Upkeep/Replacement • Preserve & Protect Natural Resources • Emphasis on Natural Features • Expand – More Flowers, Greenspace and Wildlife <p>Assurance of Serenity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate Heavy Recreation From Passive Users • Balance: Some Parks Retreats, Some Busy <p>Ecology Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Trees For Buffers • Awareness of Ecology • Alternatives to Auto Transportation <p>Nature Awareness Appreciation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Impact Statement of Park System • Outdoor Education Opportunities





The Mission

*Administrative and
Legal Structure*

*Overview of Operations
and Services*

*Relationships to Other
Governmental Units
and Civic and Private
Entities*

*Buildings to Support
Operations*

GROUND

The Mission and



TO COVER

Park Services

Part and parcel to the success of the new Plan is the clear understanding of the Park Board's mission and purpose, and the programs and services that should be offered by the park system. To do so requires:

- Defining Park's mission and purpose
- Assessing the administrative and legal structure of the Park Board
- Creating an "operations" and "services" plan to carry out Park's mission and purpose
- Developing a policy and decision-making framework to guide the park system into the next century

This mission statement is the outgrowth of objectives, needs and goals which emerged from the planning process. Listed here, these define what parks should be and, therefore, what our mission and purpose must be:

- To provide a clean and safe park system
- To beautify and visually enhance the City's parks and public open spaces
- To manage the park system's resources in an environmentally-sound manner
- To provide distinctive and natural settings for park programs and services and for individual and community outdoor leisure needs
- To provide for the community's environmental education needs
- To assist in the protection of the City's natural resources
- To act as a catalyst for economic development and growth
- To provide barrier-free facilities and services
- To provide a free, accessible and community-responsive park system for all citizens
- To provide a daily link with the natural environment

The Mission

"To conserve, manage, sustain and enhance parks' natural and cultural resources and public greenspace — for the enjoyment, enlightenment and enrichment of the Cincinnati community."



An extensive analysis of the Park Board's administrative and legal structure was conducted to determine how to best carry out the Park Board's mission and purpose. The analysis examined legal constraints and current relationships with such entities as the Recreation Commission, the County Park District and various city governmental units as well as potential new models of structuring the Board and the park system's means of delivering services.

*Finding: Keep The Current
Legal Structure of the Park
Board*

The Cincinnati Board of Park Commissioners, as presently enabled under the Ohio Revised Code and the City Charter, is a five-member Board appointed by the Mayor, confirmed by City Council. Though most cities have a single department of parks and recreation, Plan findings confirm little advantage to merging these currently separate operations. The few areas of overlap can be minimized as directed by the Plan. A regional or county-wide park system may be an appropriate long-range goal, but obstacles to achieving such goal in a relatively short period of time make it unfeasible currently. As strongly advised by the Citizen's Advisory Committee, the Plan is structured so as not to preclude this from happening in the future.

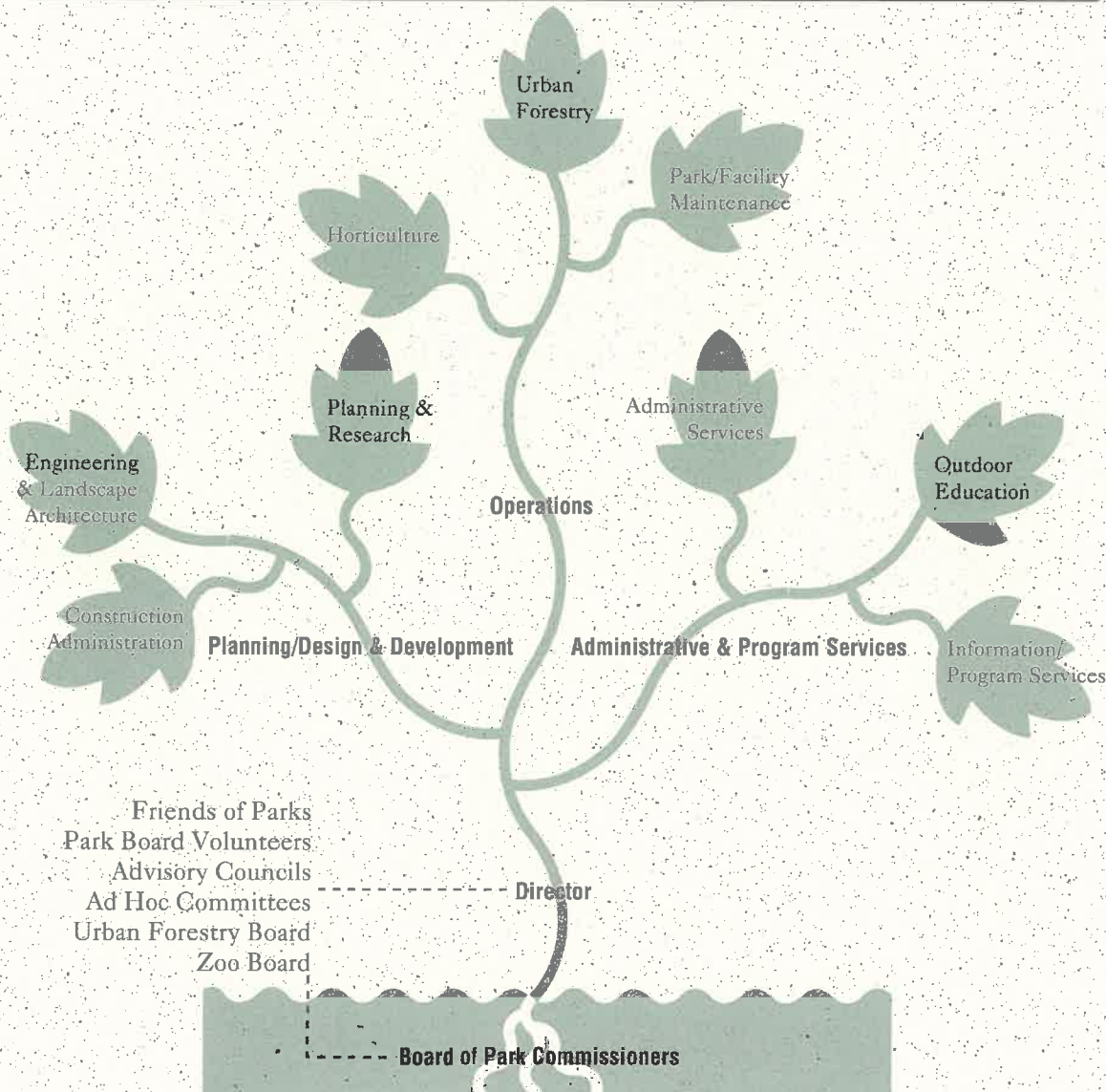
In response to the suggestion that a new legal structure for parks would provide greater economies and financial independence, the Plan has determined that goals can be largely achieved under the existing legal structure, as can issues of political autonomy, new funding opportunities, and control and management of the park system.

Overview of the Parks Board's Operations and Services

The structure and needs of the board and staff

Park staff is currently structured into three divisions: **1. Operations** - Maintenance, Horticulture, Forestry, **2. Administrative and Program Services** - Administration, Information and Program Services, Interpretive Services, **3. Planning, Design and Development** - Design Services, Construction Management, Landscape and Facility Planning.

Cincinnati Park Board Current Organizational Structure

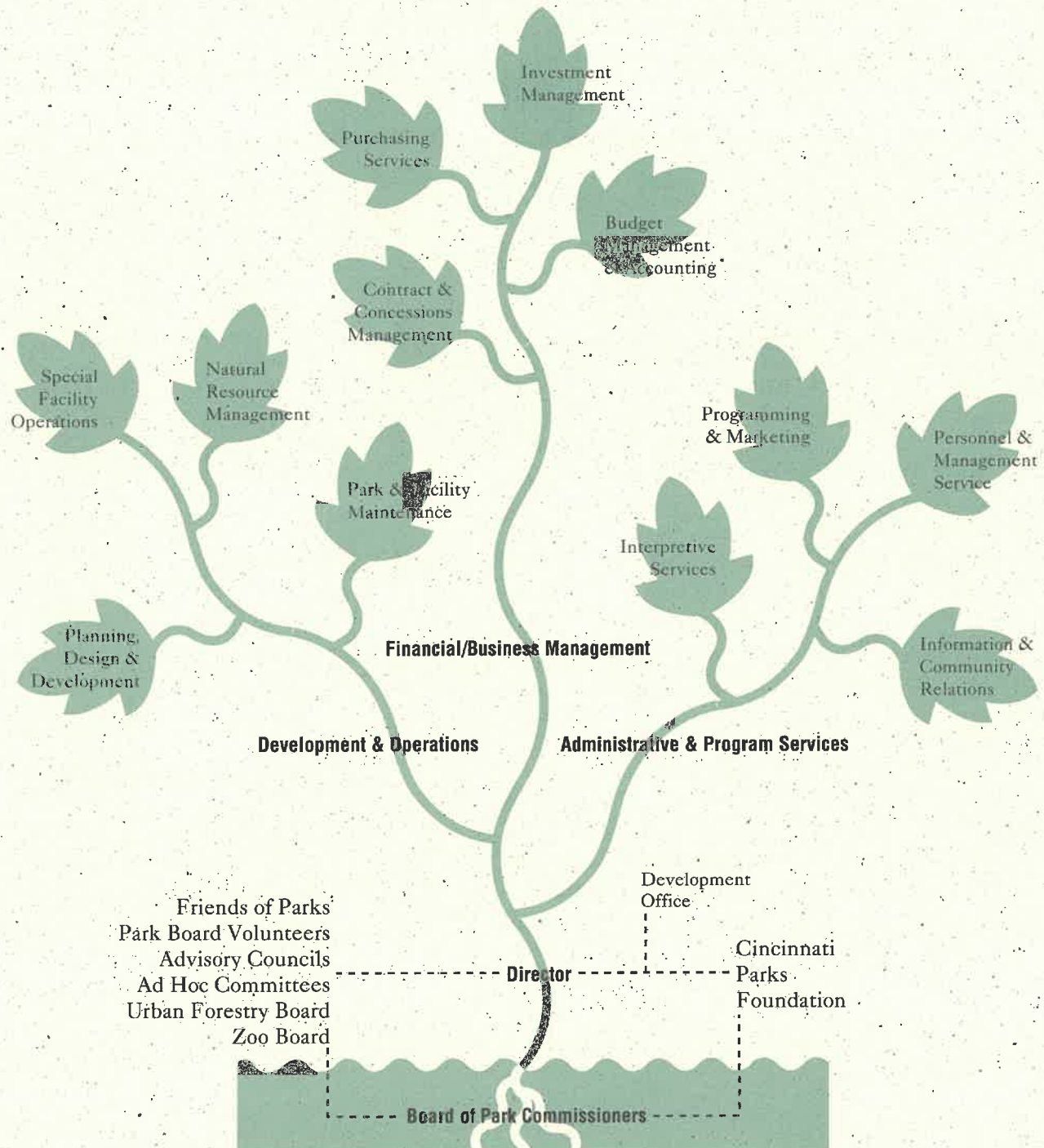


The three divisions work under the Director's Office, responsible to the Board of Park Commissioners. Additionally, the Director and the Park Board are advised or assisted by the Zoo Board, the Urban Forestry Board, various advisory committees and such groups as Friends of Cincinnati Parks and Park Board Volunteers. Though the basic organization does not have serious inherent deficiencies, reorganization and improvements can be made.

Cincinnati Park Board Proposed Organizational Structure

Finding: Create A New Organizational Structure

In light of new directions and a new Vision for parks, a revised organizational structure is recommended to more effectively carry out Plan recommendations. This is a chart of the proposed new structuring.



The proposed new structure addresses specific weaknesses in the current organization that can impair the success of the new Plan, including:

- **Staff Level**
Inadequate staff to provide proper levels of service in a number of areas, including trail maintenance, administrative support for fiscal management, Capital Improvement program management, marketing, programming, and environmental education.
- **Staff Functions**
Lack of positions (and funding for those positions) in critical areas, such as grant writing, fundraising and volunteer services coordination, and such emerging new functions as natural resource management, city-wide greenspace management and downtown landscape design.
- **Internal Communications**
More effective coordination and communication needed among divisions and within the various disciplines in each division.
- **Staff Support and Training**
A need for better management tools, as well as more extensive staff development and training opportunities.

Park Development & Operations

Planning, Design, Development

- Long Range Planning & Research
- CIP Development/Implementation
- Park/Facility/Site Design
- Landscape Architecture
- Engineering
- Construction Administration
- Graphic Design
- Survey/Boundaries/Mapping

Natural Resource Management

- Urban Forestry/Reforestation
- Greenspace Management
- Land Management
- Greenways/Natural Areas
- Natural Resource Monitoring & Research
- Environmental Issue Coordination
- Property Assessment

Park & Facility Maintenance

- Grounds Care
- Building & Facility Care
- Program/Special Event Support
- Equipment Management
- Horticulture/Landscape Features

Special Facility Operations (examples of potential self-sufficient units)

- Mt. Airy Park
- Conservatory (ies)
- Hauck Gardens
- Eden Park
- Downtown/Riverfront
- Ault/Alms/Little Miami
- Fernbank
- Uptown Parks
- Cinti. Zoo

Administrative & Program Services

Programming & Marketing

- Program Planning
- Program Coordination
- Special Events Development
- Marketing and Promotions

Personnel and Management Services

- Personnel Administration
- Training & Staff Development
- Permits and Reservations
- Operations/Services Assessment & Evaluation
- Policy/Procedures Monitoring & Development
- Central Administrative Support

Public Information & Community Relations

- Information Services and Publications
- Visitor Centers
- Community Relations
- Library/Resource Center
- Advisory Council Coordination
- Volunteer Development & Coordination

Interpretive Services

- Education Program Development & Operations
- Nature Centers
- Historical/Cultural Interpretation
- Development of Educational Materials
- School Curriculum & Educational Partnership Coordination

Financial/Business Management

- Budget Development/Management
- Accounting
- Investment Management
- Purchasing/Inventory
- Contract Management
- Concessions Coordination/Management
- Fee/Revenue Monitoring
- Lease Agreements
- Foundation Coordination

The missions of the Zoo and Parks are closely aligned.

New and renewed relationships with numerous organizations are key to the success of the Plan. Specifically, these partnerships are with:

Cincinnati Zoological and Botanical Gardens

The Cincinnati Zoo is located on Park Board property, but is unique in that it is almost entirely self-sufficient in its operations and development. As the Zoo's landlord, the Park Board is closely linked with the future of the Zoo. The Director of Parks sits on the Zoo Board and must approve all building and site improvements on Zoo grounds. The missions of the Zoo and Parks are closely aligned, in that both are heavily involved in environmental education, both offer extensive horticultural programs, and both are major regional attractions.

It is recommended that new partnerships be developed with the Zoo in these areas:

- *Education*
Joint ventures in education from school programs to internships, to natural resource interpretation in parks.
- *Facility development*
Development of new park facilities should incorporate opportunities for Zoo-related programs at park sites.
- *Horticulture*
New cooperative arrangements can enrich programs of both groups, i.e., use of Warder Nursery to grow plants for the Zoo. Park Board greenspace experts can assist the Zoo to enhance the neighborhood around the Zoo, and roadways leading to the Zoo.
- *Programming/Marketing/Public Relations*
The Park Board can actively participate in programming and marketing with the Zoo, and in coordinating and mobilizing volunteer services.

Cincinnati Recreation Commission

Cincinnati uniquely has its Parks and Recreation services provided by two separate agencies. The Cincinnati Recreation Commission is an independent commission established by the City Charter to provide for the community's recreational needs.

One member of the commission must also be a Park Board Commissioner. Though independent, both agencies' funding is tied to the city budget and all Park Commissioners and several Recreation Commissioners are appointed by the Mayor. The missions and orientation of both agencies and their basic operations are quite different, but a few areas of overlap were identified and can be altered to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness.

- Focus park development, programs and services to be consistent with its mission, which is distinctively different from Recreation's mission.
- Parks should assume a leadership role in providing educational programs and facilities targeted to the environment, interpreting Park's natural and cultural resources.
- Parks should provide active recreational facilities only as required to support other park activities, such as reserved picnic or lodges functions, not for organized, team-related play.
- Refine facility operations and maintenance agreements between Parks and Recreation and pursue various property swaps/transactions between the two agencies as called for in the *New Park Lands/New Park Development* section of "Sowing the Seeds."

Additional specifics on the partnership between Parks and the Recreation Commission can be found in The Technical Report.

City of Cincinnati Departments

Park operations are closely linked to many city departments, such as Law, Economic Development, Public Works, Planning, Purchasing, Finance, Safety, and the City Manager's Office.

Implementation of the Plan and refinements of the organizational structure and staffing recommended may necessitate incorporation of certain administrative functions within Park Board staff. Further study is required to assess the need for greater "in-house" expertise, particularly in the areas of Law, Real Estate, Purchasing and Finance.

An entire section of Park's operations, the Park Police, were placed within the city's Safety department in 1989. There is still a park police unit, but it is not under the control or jurisdiction of the Park Board. The nature of law enforcement and providing security in parks is different from the city at large. Additionally, park regulations are an entirely separate body of law which are enforced by Park Police. The Park Police should remain as a separate unit within the Safety Department because of the uniqueness of these responsibilities. The following steps should be taken to improve safety, efficiency, good "customer" relations and cooperation:

*Refine facility operations
and maintenance agreements
between Parks and Recreation.*

*Park Police should remain
as a separate unit within the
Safety Department.*

The County Park District and the City Park System should form partnerships to provide parks and park services.

- *Rules and Regulations Review*

Park staff and police should review all park rules and regulations for relevance, logic, enforcement ability, and to eliminate inconsistencies.

- *Training*

Training should be established to sensitize Park Board staff to security issues and to encourage park development and operations which are designed to promote safety. Also, training of police about the park system and Park's mission can assist the Park Police unit to become park "ambassadors."

- *Facilities*

Provide, at selected park sites, small "satellite" or police sub-station facilities. Generally located at operations centers, these need be no more than a desk and phone for occasional Park Police use, reducing travel time while increasing police presence in various parks. A stable and office center for the mounted patrol should also be provided within Mt. Airy Forest, the present location of the Park Police Unit.

- *Security*

Increased patrols of the trails system and the walkway system in parks should be pursued. This will become even more important as the trail system grows and as greenways and bike trails are established.

Hamilton County Park District

The County Park System is independent of city Parks, funded in part by a county-wide levy. A significant amount of this tax-supported system is funded through a dedicated tax on all property within city limits. The levy "returns" no direct funds to city parks. The bulk of the County Park District system is well outside of the city limits.

Recognizing that the broad mission of "County" Parks is similar to that of "City" Parks, and in the spirit of fostering new partnerships to provide better and more effective parks and park services, (and until such time as a consolidated metropolitan park system may be seen as appropriate and achievable), the following steps are recommended.

Recommendations:

- *Greenways*

The Park Board and County Park District should work together to identify, protect and develop greenways, extending beyond city limits, ie... bike paths, wildlife corridors, hillsides.

- *New Facilities*

The Board and Park District should seek a means of joint development of proposed new major region-serving facilities, ie., Little Miami River Park, the East End Riverfront Greenway, Fernbank Park, or the new Conservatory.

- *Services*

Partnerships in education, programs and public relations should be sought to further the goals of both organizations, providing greater levels of service to the region.

- *Funding*

County Park District participation in the above areas would have the effect of providing some of the financial support, direct or indirect, necessary to fund the Plan. The proposed funding stream of non-city, public sources recommends participation of the County Park District along with state and federal sources. See "Nurturing the System."

Cincinnati Board Of Education

Recommendations:

- Forge a strong link between the Park Board and school system in environmental education. (Also, see Environmental Education recommendations.)
- Lend Park Board expertise to the school system's landscaping and site development of school property so that school sites function more like parks. This will help eliminate the need to acquire property for open space in dense, inner-city surroundings.

Other Educational Institutions

Recommendations:

- Develop partnerships with institutes of higher education that provide training and/or resources that could be beneficial to city parks, and to student education and professional development. Examples include the University of Cincinnati School of Design, Art, Architecture and Planning; Great Oaks Technical/Vocational System; Cincinnati Technical College; and Ohio State University.
- Parks should provide training/internships for students and volunteers.

"Forge a strong link between the Park Board and school system in environmental education."

Other Civic and Private Groups

Civic Garden Center

The Civic Garden Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting interest and education in gardening. The Center operates out of a building adjacent to Hauck Gardens, donated by Cornelius Hauck to improve the quality of public parks and gardens. Recommendations:

- Expand educational programming involving both Park Board and Civic Garden Center staff.
- Jointly develop and manage Hauck Gardens to be consistent with recommendations of this Plan and the garden's master plan.
- Partner programming, marketing and public relations efforts for Hauck Gardens.

Environmental Interest Groups

Special interest groups which focus on environmental issues should have strong working relationships and partnerships with the Park Board. These groups include, but are not limited to: Sierra Club; Hillside Trust; Little Miami, Inc; Rivers Unlimited; City Gardens; Columbia Parkway Trust; Western Wildlife Corridor, and the Audubon Society, for example.

Friends of Cincinnati Parks

Incorporated as a non-profit support group in 1975, "Friends" mission is to assist and enhance Cincinnati parks. Its objectives include the preservation and growth of parkland, developing public awareness of parks, and promoting the use and enjoyment of parks. "Friends" and "Park Board Volunteers" compose the Park Board's two major advocacy groups.

Park Board Volunteers

This incorporated non-profit group is dedicated to providing volunteer horticultural services and financial support to parks. The volunteers manage Krohn Conservatory's gift shop, assist with the conservatory outreach, and help at Ault Park and Mt. Airy Forest. As with "Friends," a strong, mutually-supportive relationship should be continued.

Community Advisory Councils and Advocacy Groups

Several neighborhoods have formed advocacy groups to promote, care for, fundraise and help act as stewards of particular parks, i.e., Ault Park, Mt. Echo Park and Bellevue Hill Park. These groups are encouraged to form and help lobby for or essentially "adopt" parks of their choice. The Park Board should continue to work

with these groups, coordinating their efforts, and balancing system needs with each group's desires.

Corporate and Business Sector

Partnerships with Cincinnati corporations that provide financial assistance as well as employee participation are critical to the success of Parks' future. These relationships must be initiated and nurtured.

Greater Cincinnati Convention and Visitors Bureau

As potentially one of the city's finest attractions, Parks should work closely with the Convention and Visitors Bureau in its efforts to attract visitors to the area.

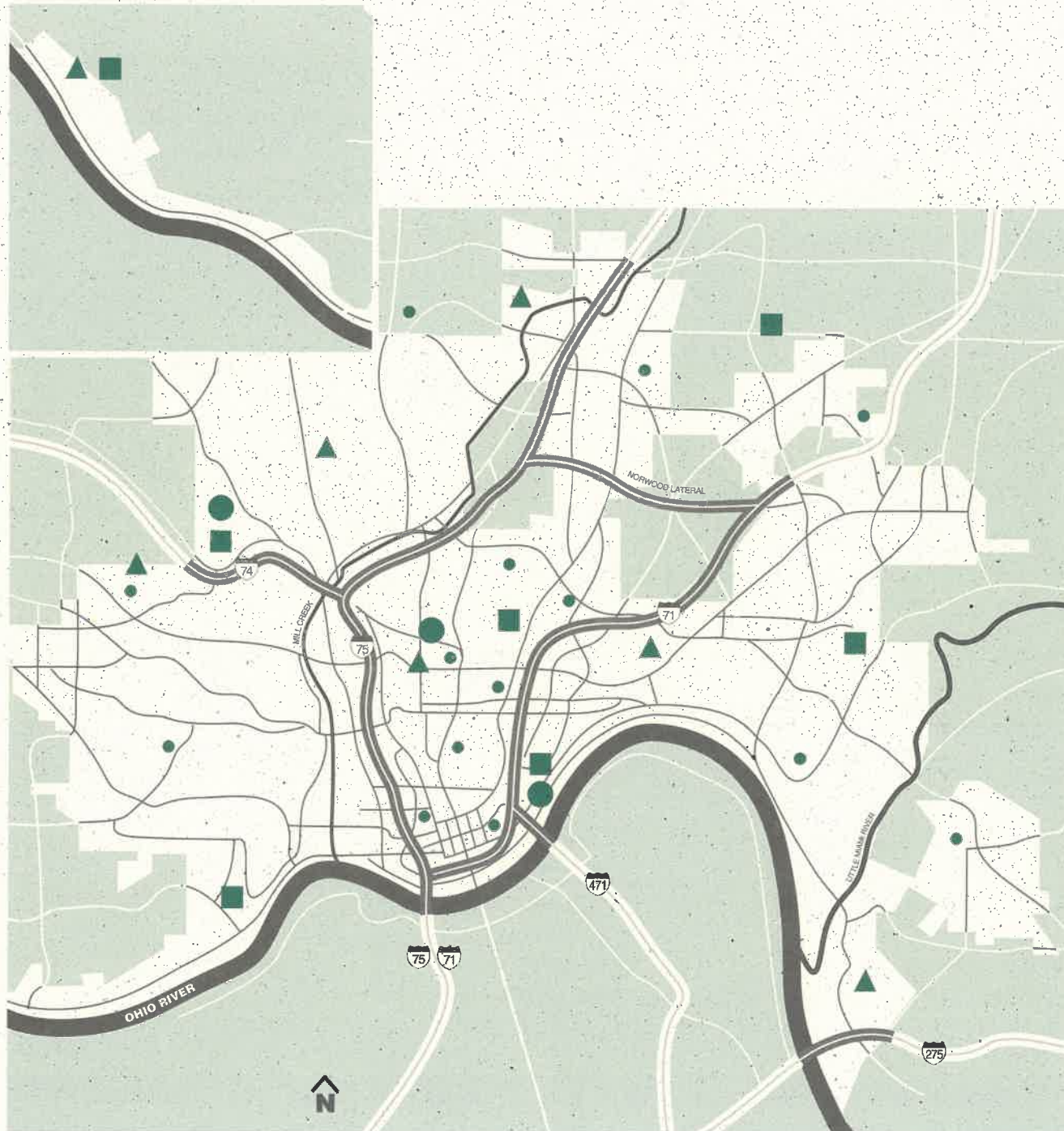
Downtown Council

This arm of the Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to promoting and maintaining a vital center city. The Plan's proposed enhancements in the downtown area and at the gateways to the city encourage the partnering of the Council with the Park Board to achieve these goals.

Cultural Institutions

Partnerships that marry the common goals of Cincinnati's many cultural institutions with the Parks should be fostered and developed.

Buildings To Support Operations



To support the park system and its operations, programs and services as envisioned in the new Plan, will require an upgraded system of maintenance and operational facilities. This consists of basic structures needed to house staff, equipment and supplies, as well as specialized (and staffed) facilities to serve the public. The individual buildings and the parts of the park system they serve are listed on the following page.

-  Interpretive Center
-  Operations Center
-  Visitor Center
-  Secondary Maintenance Facility

Administration Centers

Park Board Offices

- Eden Park Administration Building
- Reading Road Administration Center

Visitor Centers

(Information Center/Visitor Services)

- Eden Park - Conservatory
- Mt. Airy - Arboretum
- Burnet Woods - Trailside

Mini-Visitor Centers

- At Hauck Gardens
- At Fernbank Park - Ohio River Center

Education/Interpretive Centers

(Exhibits, seminar/meeting space, staff support)

- Bettman Preserve - Training and Administration Center
- Caldwell Nature Center
- Burnet Woods - Trailside
- LaBoiteaux Woods Nature Center
- California Woods Nature Center
- Fernbank - Ohio River Center
- Mt. Airy - Nature Center

Maintenance Support

A. Operations Centers

(Serves multiple park sites. Contains office staff and support and equipment and materials storage.)

Maintenance Support (cont'd)

Fernbank

Services Fernbank, Saylor Park, scattered site greenspace, hillside park.

Mt. Echo

Services Mt. Echo, Wilson Commons, Miles-Edwards, Bruening, Glenway, Mayfield, Olden View, Glenway Woods, Rapid Run*, St. Clair Heights, miscellaneous greenspace/hillsides.

(Future - Anderson Ferry)

Mt. Airy

Mt. Airy operations as well as servicing Brodbeck, Westwood Town Hall, Westwood-Northern Parkway, Fox Preserve, Felters Tanglewood, McEvoy, LaBoiteaux Woods, Buttercup Valley, Parker Woods, Jergens, Hoffner, miscellaneous greenspace/hillsides.

(Future - Westwood/Werk Road site)

Reading Road

Vehicle and equipment storage and servicing center and services Seasongood Square, King, Woodward, Stella, Victory Parkway, Fleischmann*, Zoo*, Mt. Storm, Rawson Woods, Edgewood, Burnet Woods*, Classen, Inwood*, Jackson Hill, Bellevue, Fairview, Valley,

Hauck*, Auburn Triangle, Hopkins, Central Parkway, miscellaneous greenspace/hillsides. *(Future - Martin Luther King Parkway)*

Central Avenue

Services Ezzard Charles, Laurel, Central Parkway, Washington Park, Piatt, Court Street, Downtown Planters, Sabin, Lytle*, Yeatmans Cove, Fountain Square, Eggleston, Johnson. *(Future - Riveifront West, Eggleston at Reading, Central Parkway extension)*

Eden Park (Sinton)

Eden Park operations as well as serving Fecheimer, International Friendship, Columbia Parkway, Victory Parkway, Torrence Parkway, Owl's Nest, Annwood, Scarborough Woods, Wulsin, Madison, Bettman, miscellaneous greenspace/hillsides. *(Future - East end Riverfront)*

Ault

Ault Park operations as well as Alms*, Larz Anderson, Hyde Park Square, Geier, Little Duck Creek, Bramble, Little Miami River, Stanbery*, California Woods, Pioneer Cemetery.

French

Services French Park as well as Kennedy Heights, Drake*, Roselawn*, Kennedy Heights Triangle, Caldwell, Seymour Nature area, Montgomery Triangle.

B. Secondary Maintenance Facilities

(Supplemental support for individual park sites.) Rapid Run, Mt. Airy (west side), Burnet Woods, Inwood, Hauck, Lytle, Fleischmann, Victory Parkway (at Rockdale), Roselawn, Drake, Alms, Stanbery.

C. Other Operational Support

Warder Nursery

- Maintenance Storage
- Composting
- Nursery Facilities:
 - Reforestation/Park Plantings
 - Horticultural Support for Conservatories, Zoo, Arboretum, Gardens
 - Gateway/R.O.W./Downtown Planting
 - Botanical Research/Education

*These parks also contain secondary maintenance facilities.

SOWING
Capital Improvements



THE SEEDS
& Resource Conservation

Conditions and Needs

*Capital Improvement
Program Highlights*

*Resource Management
and Development*

*New Park Lands/New
Park Development*

*Summary of Estimated
Capital Costs*

Park Board holdings constitute nearly 5000 acres, which amounts to approximately 10% of Cincinnati's total land area. These holdings consist of over 60 developed parks, 18 natural areas and preserves, 30 Recreation-Commission-operated sites, four parkways, and such specialized sites as the Cincinnati Zoo and Pioneer Cemetery. Of the 130 buildings in the park system, 60% are over 50 years old. Park Board responsibilities also extend to the planting and maintenance of street trees along the 1,000 miles of city streets. All of these holdings have been reviewed in developing The Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan.

An analysis of the amount and distribution of park and recreational land in the city found it to be within generally recognized standards, even given the city population losses of recent decades. A statistical analysis alone, however, is not adequate to make a definitive assessment of need. Also looked at were such factors as the accessibility of parks within particular geographic areas and the facilities and characteristics of individual parks as well as other qualitative factors. An additional consideration is that there can be no single standard on the appropriate amount of "natural" area in a park system. This is contingent on the presence of natural resources to be protected.

Several additional park sites have been identified as recommended in prior city plans or to better meet community needs, as well as greenway areas within which acquisition or other means of protection should be sought (see below). An assessment also was conducted to determine if there were park-owned properties not used or needed as parks or otherwise in conflict with the Plan's emerging mission and various recommendations. These also are listed below.

Facility needs were assessed throughout the park system. In general, deficiencies were identified in the areas of barrier-free access, trails, signs, furnishings, lighting, and basic infrastructure needs, from roadway and retaining wall repairs to restoring shelters and comfort stations. Beyond these needs, the planning process identified special community desires and new opportunities, all consistent with this Plan's vision and services/programs recommendations.

Highlights of the proposed Capital Improvement program follow. There are seven broad categories of improvements. Implementation is targeted over a ten-year period, with initial priorities focused on providing access and restoring the system's infrastructure.

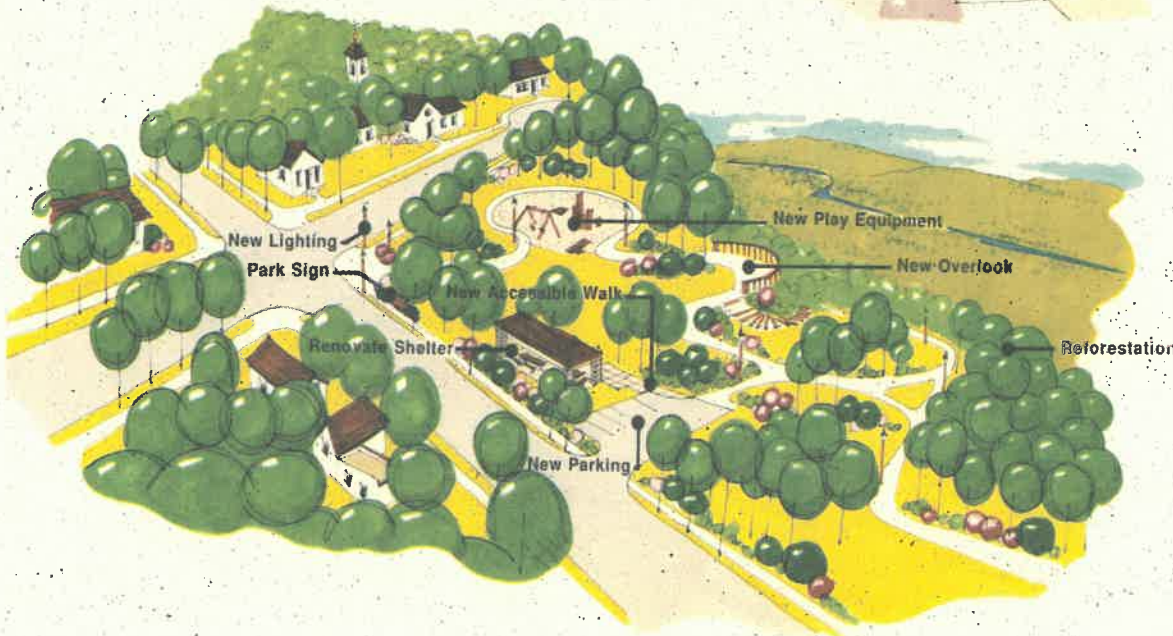
Plan highlights include:

- *Improving neighborhood parks*
- *Developing river parks*
- *Revitalizing environmental education centers*
- *New regional attractions and improvements in Eden Park and Mt. Airy Forest*
- *New parkways, gateways and reforestation*
- *A network of greenways*

Neighborhood Park Improvements

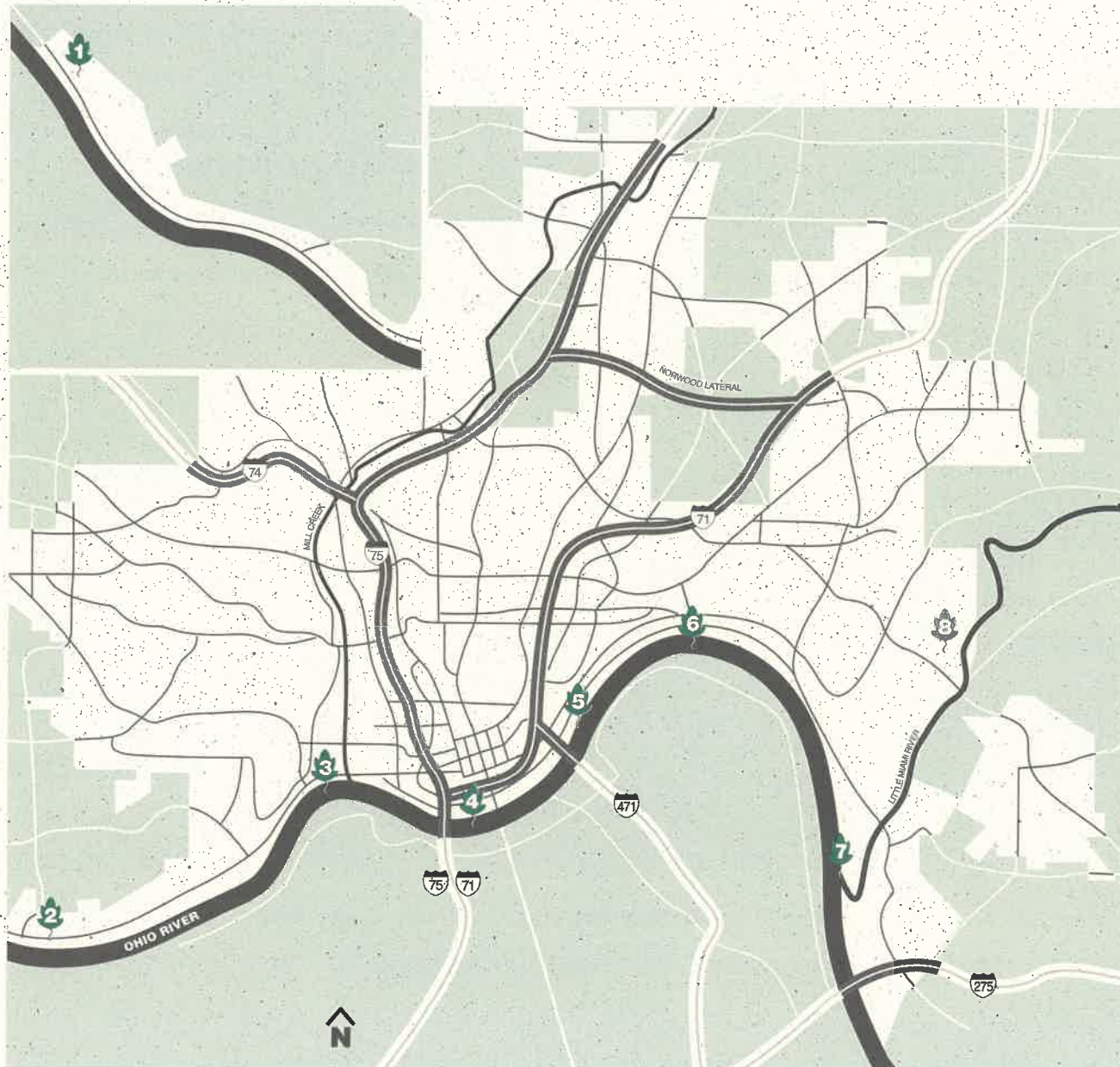
The Plan calls for our parks to grow and blossom and be revitalized throughout the city.

- *The Basics:*
 - Remove barriers to access
 - Remove hazardous and unsafe conditions
 - Improve lighting and underground utilities
 - Renovate structures
 - Renovate roads, walks, walls, steps
 - Provide signs
 - Improve trails
- *The Enhancements:*
 - Redesign selected parks or sections of parks to better serve the community, provide greater accessibility and a more attractive setting
 - Provide amenities...improved or new overlooks, new shelters, new furnishings, enhanced landscaping



River Parks

The Plan pays special attention to our River Parks, taking advantage of Cincinnati's unique location along the Ohio and Little Miami Rivers. New and enhanced parks will dot the river shoreline, merging the city's locale and beauty with her exciting river heritage.

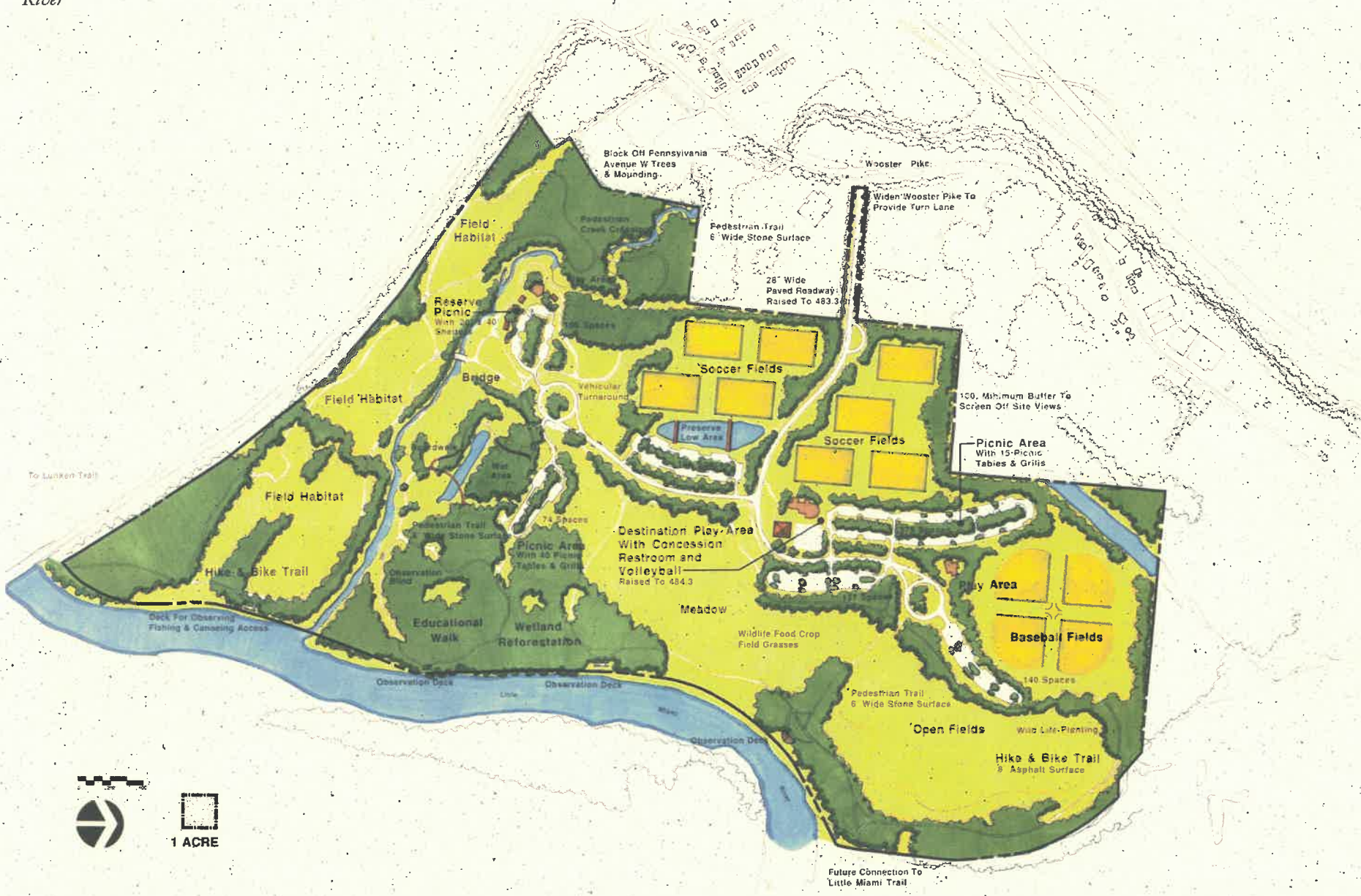


River Parks include:

- 1** *Fernbank*
(existing park, to be redeveloped)
- 2** *Anderson Ferry Historic Park* (proposed)
- 3** *Mill Creek Park* (proposed)
- 4** *Riverfront West* (proposed)
- 5** *International Friendship Park* (existing site, to be developed)
- 6** *East End Riverfront Greenway* (proposed)
- 7** *Mouth of the Little Miami*
- 8** *Little Miami Scenic River Park* (existing site, to be developed ...see plan on next page)

Little Miami Scenic River Park

A park and sports complex is proposed along the Little Miami River



1 ACRE

To Lunken Trail

Future Connection To Little Miami Trail

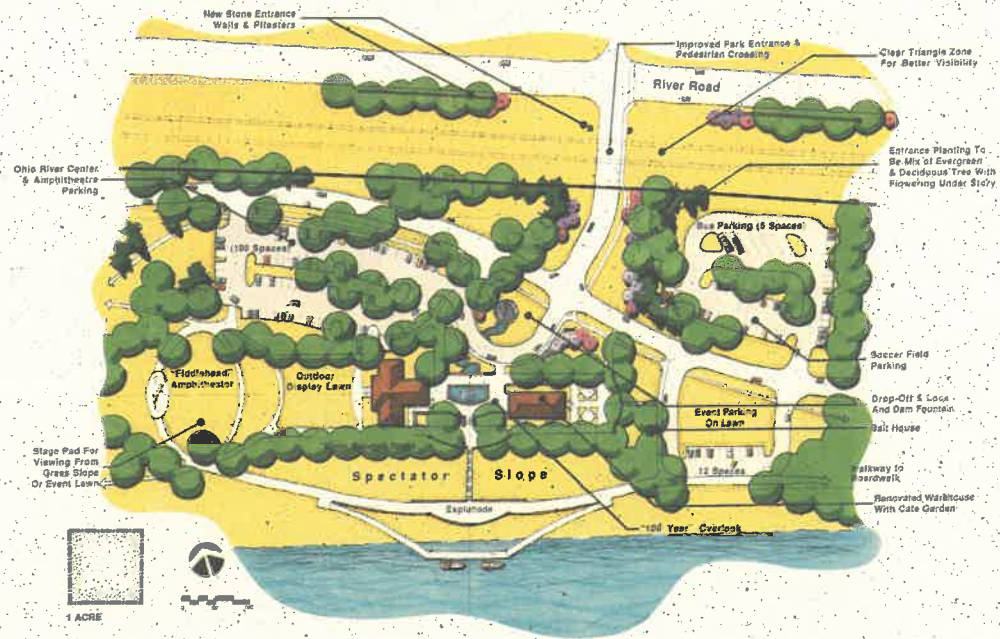
Environmental Education Facilities

Innovative new ways to learn about and appreciate nature and preserve our natural resources will be the focus of new education programs and facilities in parks city wide. The new Plan includes environmental education facilities and opportunities at:

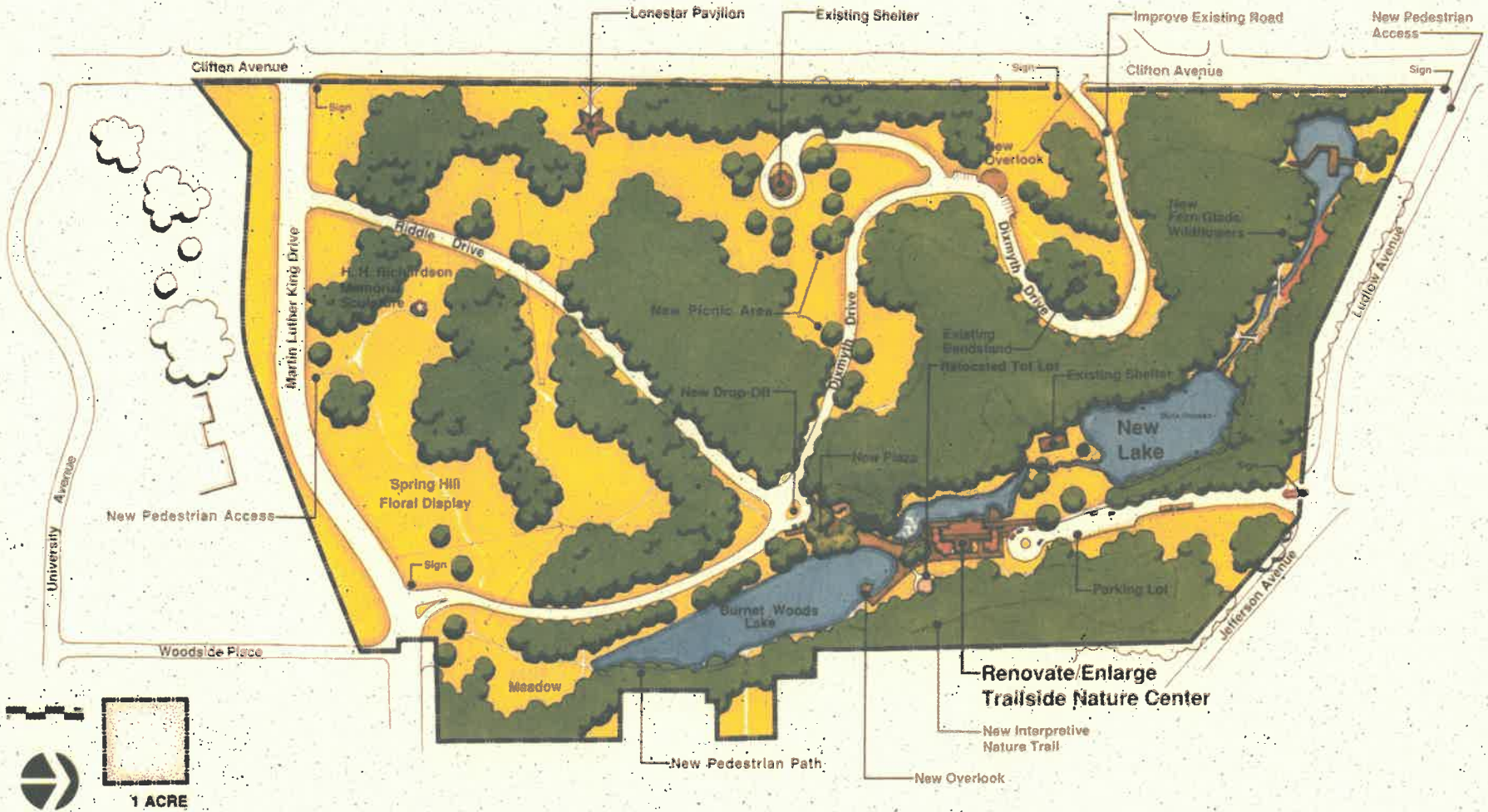
- 1 Fernbank - Ohio River Interpretive Center (see plan)
- 2 Mt. Airy Forest (New Nature Center)
- 3 LaBoiteaux Woods (currently Recreation Commission-operated, primarily on Park Board property)
- 4 Caldwell Center Expansion
- 5 Burnet Woods - Trailside Expansion (see plan; next page)
- 6 Bettman Nature Preserve
- 7 California Woods building and grounds renovation (currently Recreation Commission-operated on Water Works property)

Environmental Education Facility Sites

Fernbank Park-Ohio River Center



Burnet Woods



The renovation and expansion of Trailside Center is a feature of proposed changes at Burnet Woods

Regional Attractions

The new Plan sees two of the biggest attractions in the park system — Eden Park and Mt. Airy Forest — as flagship parks worthy of regional and national attention. Both offer unique opportunities to meet community needs and to provide for economic growth. Both also offer special joint public/private venture opportunities. The proposal for these two parks is:

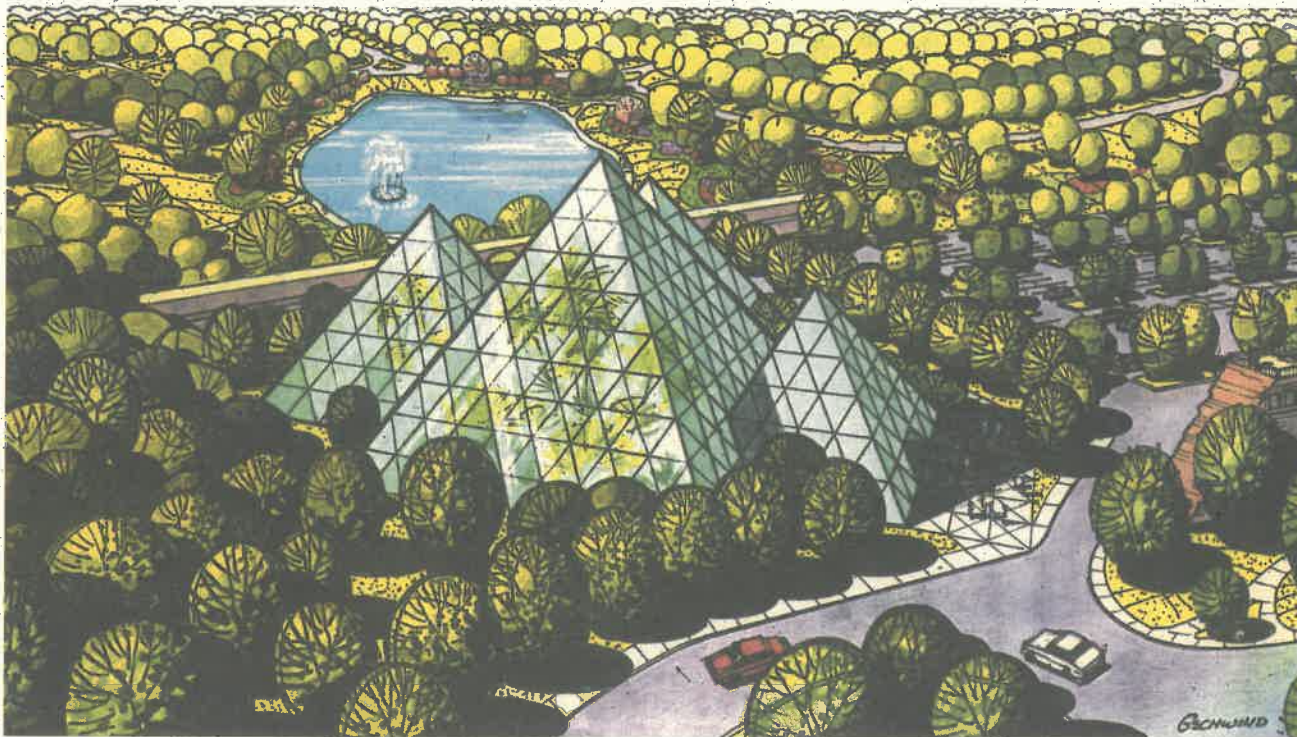
- *Eden Park*

Access, site, and building limitations at Krohn Conservatory prevent a major expansion at the current conservatory site; however, a glistening new, world-class conservatory is proposed. It will include a Visitor Center, gift shop, educational and meeting facilities, performance space, and expanded areas for plant display and shows, to be built below Mirror Lake at one of the entrances to Eden Park. Krohn Conservatory and the gardens between Krohn and the new Conservatory would be designed and programmed to support the new facility, horticultural features and educational programs.

Enhancements, including better vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns, parking and a plaza at Mirror Lake, as well as overlook improvements are also proposed.



View across Mirror Lake of proposed conservatory



Proposed conservatory at Martin Drive entrance to Eden Park

Eden Park



Regional Attractions (continued)

- *Mt. Airy Forest* (see plan next page)
 - A redeveloped, nationally-recognized Arboretum and a Visitor Center (see plan)
 - New lakes and ponds
 - Expanded or enhanced lodges, including the creation of a new Executive Conference Center at Maple Ridge Lodge.
 - New shelters
 - New biking and hiking trails
 - New campground
 - Roadway/circulation improvements

Mt. Airy Arboretum



A new visitor center and redeveloped Arboretum are proposed at the Colerain Avenue entrance to Mt. Airy

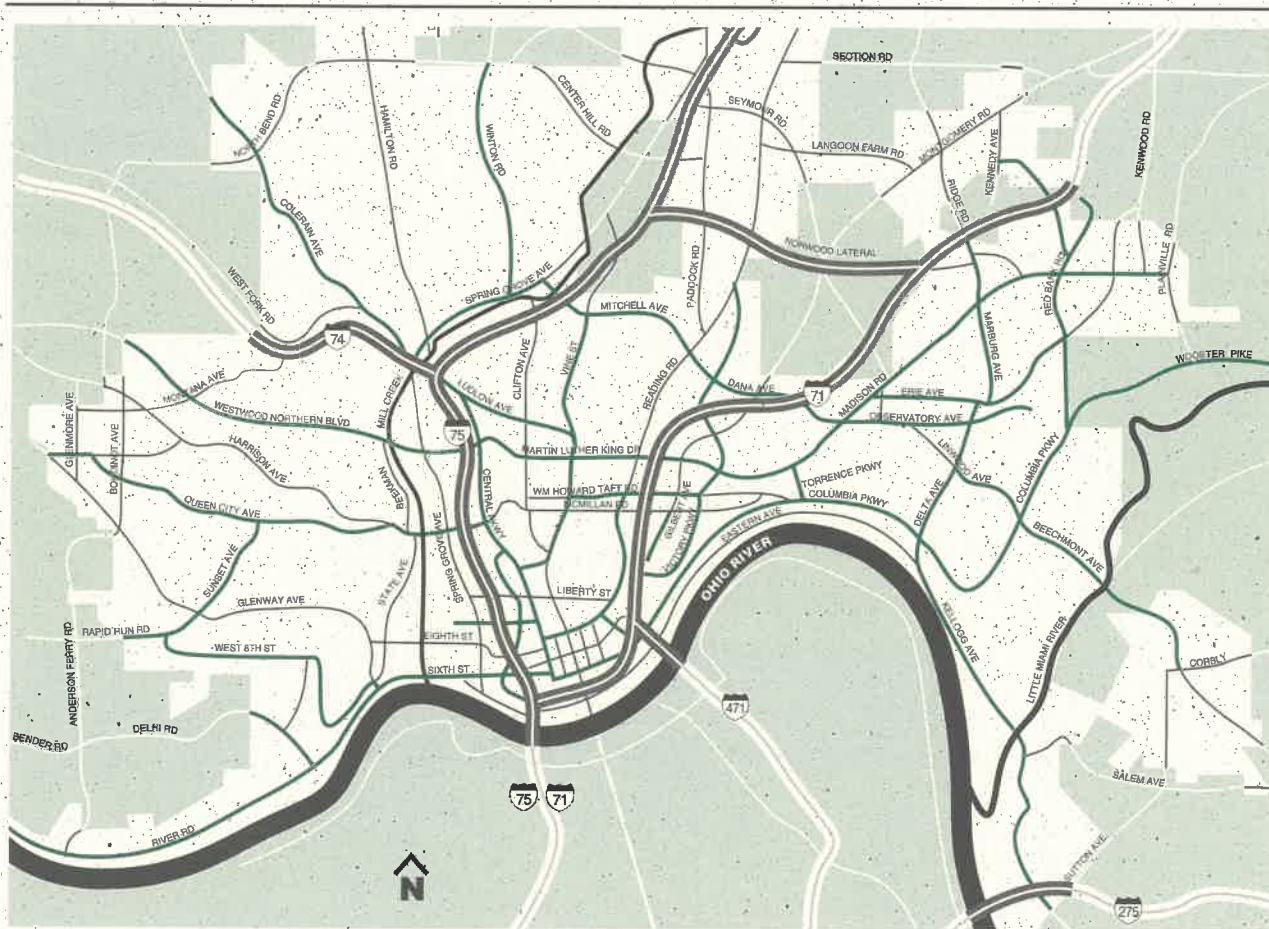
Mt. Airy Forest



Civic Greenspace

An extension of the city's parkway system with new parkways and boulevards is proposed. In order to enhance the city's "front doors," the Plan also proposes landscape enhancements to neighborhood gateways, significant roadways and in downtown, and a renewed reforestation of city streets and parks. Improved and coordinated management of city greenspace as called for in the 1991 Greenspace Management Report also is proposed. Though most of these sites are not owned or proposed for ownership by the Park Board, they are a kind of visual extension of the park system and are critical parts of the city's image.

Parkways and Boulevards



- *New Parkway and Boulevards*
- *Enhancement of the Interstate Highway Corridor*
- *Downtown Plantings*
- *Neighborhood Gateway Plantings*
- *Expanded Street Tree Program*

Facility-related improvements in natural areas includes:

- *New or renovated hiking trails*
- *Elimination of inappropriate trails*
- *New trail linkages*
- *Trail head and directional signs*
- *Reduction of access to identified critical areas*
- *Increase of access and improvement of parking at identified appropriate areas*
- *Bike trails along Little Miami River, East End Riverfront, Mill Creek, Ohio River and Westside Corridors*

Natural Areas and Greenways

A network of greenways and protected hillsides will link the city's parks and open spaces. Hillsides, water courses, and other natural corridors should be explored for protection through easements, development controls, or acquisition through purchase or donation. Expansion of Caldwell Park and Glenway Woods, both currently categorized as park "natural areas," is proposed (also, see page 48).

Natural area management objectives are as follows:

- *Minimizing of maintenance requirements*
- *Maximizing diversity of indigenous flora and fauna*
- *Preserving and protecting unique features*
- *Maximizing visitor experience and safety, while minimizing visitor impact.*

A land management plan is proposed to formalize the location and manner in which development occurs within the park system, and how operations and maintenance are to be conducted. Such a plan would be built, in part, on a comprehensive park resource inventory. A guide for determining how much of any single park should be “developed,” on a system-wide basis, is being proposed as a general formula of 60/40, meaning that 60% of the system’s total acreage be maintained in a natural state and 40% developed. This percentage varies by individual parks as some will have no natural areas and others may be entirely “natural.”

More detailed descriptions and definitions of what constitutes developed and natural areas and the targeted percentages by park type are found in the Technical Report.

The Plan proposes a number of property acquisitions, primarily to create a protected greenway system and to extend a number of park natural areas, to be achieved primarily through property donations and easements. Specific criteria are being proposed to be used as guidelines for all acquisition decisions and for any potential divestments as proposed in the Plan or requested in the future. A majority of these criteria should be met for approval. These apply to gifts and purchases in fee or other interest such as scenic easements.

Acquisition Criteria:

- Contiguous to existing property
- Contains unique, scarce, or threatened natural or cultural resource(s)
- Clearly demonstrated need for additional parks or open space in the area
- Public/community support
- Suitable for a specific use of demonstrated value
- Maintenance and operating funds are available
- Recommended in The Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan
- Ability to provide public access
- Property is free of environmental hazards or other significant liability.

Divestiture Criteria:

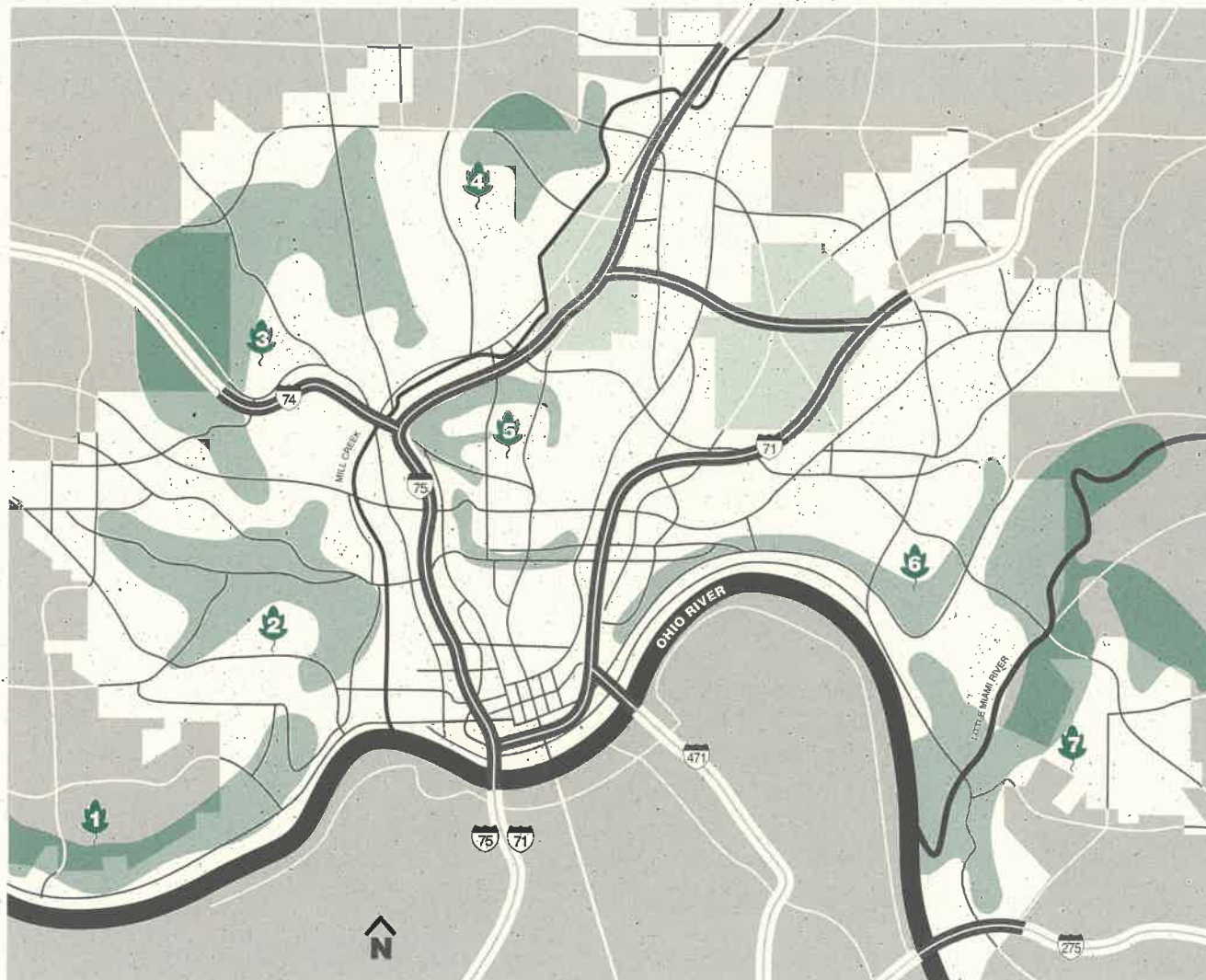
- Does not contain unique, scarce, threatened natural or cultural resource(s)
- Public/community support
- Not suitable for a specific use of demonstrated value
- The parcel can remain as open space in total or significant part even after divestiture
- Represents a threat to health, safety and welfare of community in present status
- Higher and better use is available which is consistent with City plans and policies
- Parcel is outside the City of Cincinnati
- Property is unnecessarily duplicative of other park resources.

New Park Lands/New Park Development

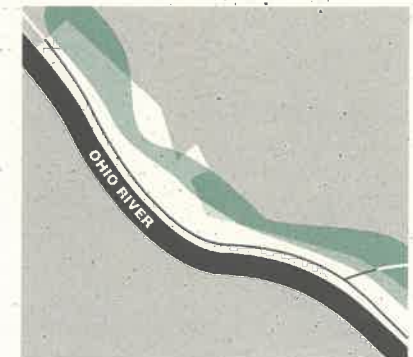
Natural Areas/Greenways

The City's hillside and natural corridors system as identified in many previous plans and studies has been assessed and incorporated into this Plan. For the most part, the recommendations for the conservation of natural areas and greenways are not site specific, but indicate the general locations within which specific opportunities should be explored. This further exploration should be in concert with other city agencies, civic, and environmental special interest groups, and the County Park District.

Greenway Corridors



- 1 *Western Wildlife Corridor*
- 2 *Queen City Avenue
Lick Run Valley Greenway*
- 3 *Mt. Airy/Kirby Valley/
Spring Grove Hillside*
- 4 *Winton/Caldwell Hillside*
- 5 *Uptown Chain-of-Parks/
Greenbelt*
- 6 *Columbia Parkway
Hillside*
- 7 *Little Miami/Clough Valley/
Stanbery Park Hillside*



Greenways (continued)

In some instances, compatible new development may be appropriate on many of these properties, with provisions for protection of natural areas. Environmental Quality District controls and development agreements are two methods of achieving this. In other cases, excess city-owned parcels in greenway areas could be transferred to Parks. Primarily easements and property gifts would contribute to the creation of greenways (also, see "Proposed Capital Improvement Program").

1 *Western Wildlife Corridor*

This hillside corridor runs from Mt. Echo park west to Shawnee Lookout Park, well outside of city limits. Both city and country parks fall within the corridor. The Park Board should participate in protection of the corridor.

2 *Queen City Avenue/Lick Run Valley greenway*

This wooded, hillside system is bisected by Queen City Avenue which is proposed as a new parkway. There are numerous opportunities in this and adjacent undeveloped areas to create a greenway. Additions to Glenway Woods could form part of this system.

3 *Mt. Airy/Kirby Valley/Spring Grove Hillsides*

A large interconnecting system of greenways in this area could expand Mt. Airy and link it to Bradford-Felters Tanglewood, Fox preserve, LaBoiteaux Woods, Buttercup Valley, Parkers Woods, and the Spring Grove Cemetery area. Linkages to the west and south of Mt. Airy could link it to the Brodbeck Preserve.

4 *Winton/Caldwell Hillsides*

There are opportunities to expand Caldwell nature Center, link it with Recreation's Seymour Outdoor Center and create new greenway linkages to the north and east of Spring Grove.

5 *Uptown Chain-of-Parks/Greenbelt*

A hillside system in the center of the city offers opportunities to link Mt. Storm, Edgewood Grove, and Rawson Woods. Also proposed are new linkages in North Avondale and Avondale, and a series of parks connecting Coy Field, Fairview Park, Bellevue Park, Inwood and Jackson Hill Parks.

6 *Columbia Parkway Hillside*

This hillside above Columbia Parkway links Mt. Adams to eastern neighborhoods and Ault and Alms Parks.

7 Little Miami/Clough Valley/Stanbery park Hillside

This Little Miami River corridor provides opportunities to link both Park Board and Recreation Commission owned properties along this State and National Scenic River. The Little Miami River Bike Trail and County park District holdings upriver give further impetus to these linkages. Another greenway can be created by expanding Stanbery park and linking it on the west to the Little Miami. This system also includes California Woods, the mouth of the Little Miami River, and the Clough Creek Valley.

• *Ohio River Greenway*

The East End Riverfront Plan proposes a bikeway along rail right-of-way and a riverwalk along the banks of the Ohio. It is anticipated that the bikeway will be under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Commission, and the walkway under the Park Board. The Parks Plan essentially incorporates the East End Riverfront Plan, with the intent that a linear park and recreation network of active and passive public spaces will be built along the river. Additional new parks are proposed elsewhere on the Ohio River, beyond the boundaries of the East End Riverfront Plan

• *Bikeways*

The Plan supports the development of bikeways along the Mill-Creek, the West Side Corridor, and the Ohio River/Little Miami Corridor. Other potential corridors include along parkways and abandoned rail lines. The Parks Plan is not specific, however, about how and to what extent the Park Board may be involved in bikeway development.

New Park Sites

In addition to potential acquisitions within the above greenways and potential expansions of several existing park sites, several new parks are proposed. Another type of addition to the inventory of park lands will come from a return of control of several park-owned properties now operated by the Recreation Commission, as well as the transfer of some Recreation properties to Parks. (These are listed on the next page.)

Proposed New Parks

- 1** *Anderson Ferry Historic Site*
- 2** *Westwood Park at Werk Road*
- 3** *Mill Creek Park*
- 4** *Downtown Gateway Park (Eggleston at Central Parkway)*
- 5** *Riverfront West at Downtown*
- 6** *Mouth of Little Miami*



Consistent with Parks' Mission, a number of sites are recommended to be transferred to parks or be placed under Park Board control



Properties Operated by Cincinnati Recreation Commission Recommended For Transfer or Return of Control to the Park Board

1 *LaBoiteaux Woods*

An environmental education center and natural area operated by Recreation but owned by the Park Board. This transfer, along with recommendations for California Woods and Seymour Outdoor Recreation Area (below) would eliminate duplication of city services. This also more clearly fits within Parks' mission and vision.

2 *Seymour Outdoor Recreation Area*

A natural area in the vicinity of Caldwell which could potentially be linked to Caldwell Nature Center.

3 *Hoffner Park*

Split between Parks and Recreation. With other ballfields at the community center a few blocks away, that part now used for ballfields should be transferred to parks, and the entire site converted to a passive neighborhood park that serves the community and the business district.

4 *Washington Park, Pool Area*

Two spaces flanking the swimming pool, a playground, and a blacktop area now operated by Recreation should be transferred to Parks.

5 *Inwood Park, Pool Area*

Split between Parks and Recreation. It is recommended that with the exception of the pool and pool building, the area south of Hollister Street be operated entirely by parks.

6 *Losantiville Triangle*

Long-term expansion of the adjacent Hauck Gardens would require the relocation of Recreation Commission tennis courts now located on this Park Board property.

7 *Eden Park, Ballfields*

Consistent with the Eden Park Master Plan, the ballfields and parking operated by Recreation on Water Works property below Mirror Lake should revert to Parks at such time as the Plan is implemented.

8 *Magrish property*

Property adjacent to Little Miami River.

9 *California Woods*

An environmental education center and natural area operated by Recreation on Water Works property.

 **Park Property Recommended For Transfer or Sale**

Several unused or underused sites have been identified for sale or transfer. Communities should be contacted and involved before any transactions take place.

- Johnson Woods, Madisonville - Several undeveloped parcels
- Stuart Park, Saylor Park - Vacant lot
- Beechmont Levee Park, Linwood - Vacant lot

A number of park sites which are adjacent to or partially operated by the Recreation Commission should be considered for transfer to the Recreation Commission. Other park sites might also better serve recreational needs.

- Salway Park
- Bramble Park
- Yeatman's Cove
- Shorts Woods – This site is leased to a golf course operator. It might better serve a different recreational use.

Ten-year Capital Improvements Program

Total program costs are made up of over a thousand individual improvements, spread over 150 facilities, during a 10-year period. The following is a summary of costs by category. All costs are in 1992 dollars and include contingencies and fees.

1. City-Wide, Neighborhood Park Improvement Program	\$41 million
• Restoration and Revitalization • New Initiatives	
2. New and Expanded River Parks	\$14 million
• Fernbank • East End Riverfront Greenway	
• International Friendship Park • Little Miami Scenic River Park	
• New Ohio River Parks	
3. New and Upgraded Environmental Education Facilities	\$6 million
• Burnet Woods • Caldwell Center • Little Miami River Trails	
• Mt. Airy Nature Center • Ohio River Center at Fernbank	
• Bettman Preserve • LaBoiteaux Woods • California Woods	
4. Major Attractions at Two Region Serving Parks	\$46 million
• New Eden Park Conservatory and Visitor Center	
• Mt. Airy Visitor Center • Mt. Airy Arboretum	
• Water Features • Enhanced Lodges	
• Mt. Airy Campground • Mt. Airy Conference Center	
5. Enhanced Civic Greenspace	\$9 million
• New Parkways and Boulevards • City and Neighborhood Gateways	
• "Greening" Downtown • City-Wide Greenspace Management	
• Reforesting City Streets	
6. Greenways and Natural Areas	\$6.5 million
• Natural Resource Protection • Hike/Bike Trails	
• Improved Access and Signage	
7. Maintenance and Operations Facilities	\$7.5 million
Total Estimated Capital Costs	\$130 million

How Will Funds Be Spent?

All figures in millions based on 1992 dollars



Financing Parks Today

Financial Needs and Sources

NURTURING  **THE SYSTEM**
Funding **the Plan**

As the Board of Park Commissioners embarks on a 10-year program for a significantly upgraded park and open space system, it outlines here the options for financing the improvements and the resulting operating costs. Fiscal resources are identified and strategies detailed.

Inherent with The Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan is a mandate for Parks to expand its mission and its funding base. The clear message is that the community wants Parks to do and provide more, but to seek creative strategies to equitably broaden the financial burden. Partnerships, discussed previously, are at the core of achieving funding that satisfies these desires.

Financing Parks Today

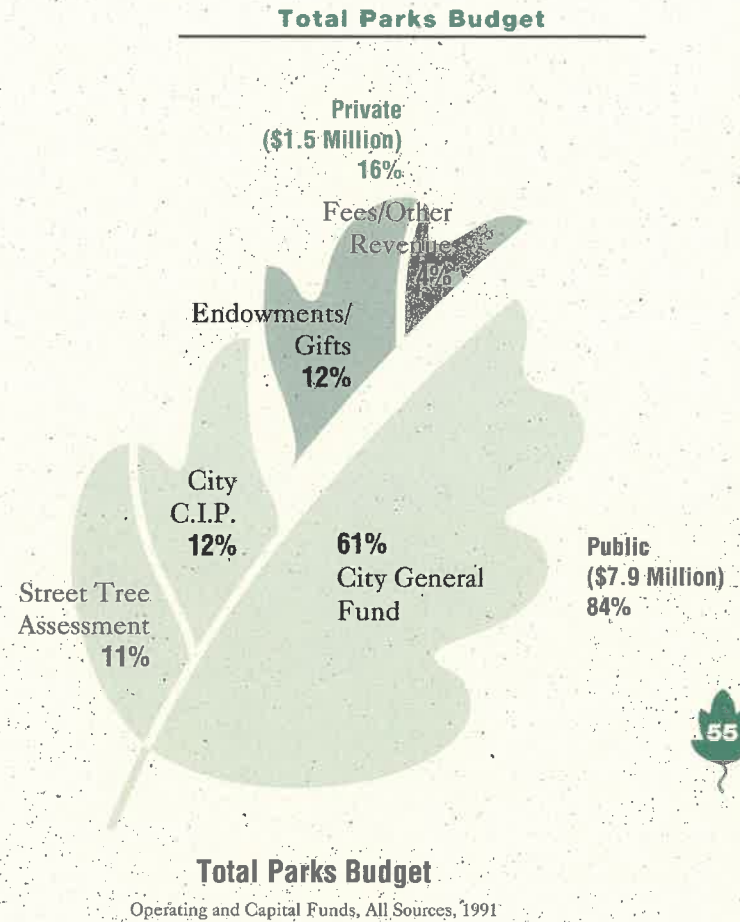
The ability to generate, control, manage, and expend funds is currently complex and inadequate to meet the needs and recommendations as described in this Plan. Over 80% of all park activities collectively are funded through public, city sources. The remainder is generated privately and through fees and other revenue collected. The challenge is to increase the budget to be able to implement The Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan, as well as reduce the heavy reliance on public dollars to fund the system.

Financial Needs and Sources

To complete the restoration and development of the park system as called for in the proposed Capital Improvement Program will cost \$130 million over the next 10 years.

A dramatic reallocation of resources will be sought, proportionately reducing the city tax share from its current level of over 80% to only 42% of the cost of park improvements. Greater support would come from other public sources such as the county and state and the federal governments - and a full third of the capital budget from such private sources as foundations, corporations and individual donations and endowments.

Special new attractions such as the proposed conservatory will be funded primarily through private gifts and non-local public sources. Local, tax-supported funding is to be focused on the restoration and revitalization of neighborhood parks.



Funding Sources – Local Public

- *City Capital Funding*

Parks' 1992 allocation of \$1.5 million represented 3% of the City's almost \$50 million capital budget. With a proposed funding strategy calling for \$31 million over 10 years from city capital sources, a decade of funding at current levels would leave a shortfall of \$16 million. The gap could be closed by increasing Parks' budget allocation from 3% to 6% of the city's capital budget. A way to attain additional city capital dollars is via a one-time \$10 million bond sale for Park improvements which falls within current city bonding limits. The Plan recommends an annual Capital Improvement Program allocation of \$2.5 million for the first few years of implementation, to be increased to \$3.5 million annually.

- *Assessment*

Currently there is a city-wide street tree assessment of 10 cents per lineal foot of street frontage which generates approximately \$1.1 million annually. An increase of at least one cent per year over the next 10 years is recommended, generating an additional \$6 million over the 10-year period for a total of \$16.4 million.

- *Tax Levy*

A two-tenths percent earnings tax could produce tax levy support of approximately \$20 million by 1997. The timing and need for any potential levy will be contingent on the economy and many other factors.

- *Other Local Public Sources*

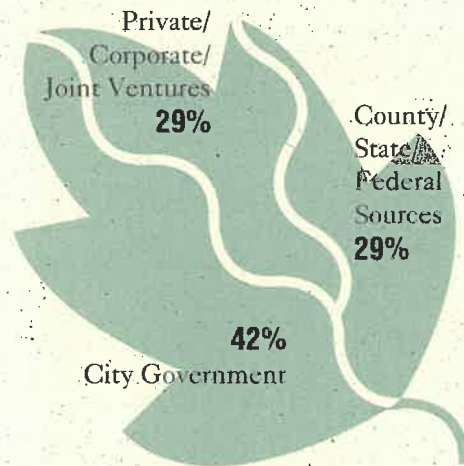
Another potential funding source is tax increment financing (TIF), commonly used to fund public improvements associated with new development. Increased taxes generated by new development such as new housing in the East End Riverfront area is, by an agreement, channeled into retiring bonds sold by the city, the proceeds of which can be used for public improvements such as the East End Riverfront Greenway or other Park development.

- *City General Funds*

Operating support out of city general funds and non-capital infrastructure funds was approximately \$5.7 million in 1991. This basic level of city support should be adjusted for inflation and cost increases and modestly increased over the Plan's 10 years.

- *Hamilton County Park District*

In 1988, Hamilton County residents passed a 15-year tax levy to support County Parks, generating a total of approximately \$11 million of annual tax support ... one third of which, or \$3.6 million, is generated by city residents. The Plan proposes that co-development and operations/services partnerships be established between the Park District and the Park Board to "return" more direct benefits to city residents.



Where will the Money Come From?

Funding Sources – State and Federal

• *State Capital Budget*

Major projects can sometimes find support in the state legislature. A new Eden Park Conservatory would be eligible for such funds, but would require extensive political as well as community and state support.

• *Other State and Federal Sources*

A number of programs and funding sources have been available in prior years which can fund Parks, though the future availability of funding programs is unpredictable. Programs may include some of the following:

- Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF)
- Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)

Sources may be available for the construction of bike trails that are transportation oriented, not just recreational improvements.

- Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR)
- Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program

Funding Sources – Private

The goal of the Park Board is to give increased emphasis to the Parks' legacy of private support.

Almost 40% of today's parklands have been donated to the Park Board, and numerous individual gifts, donations and special endowments have been and continue to be contributed by the private sector.

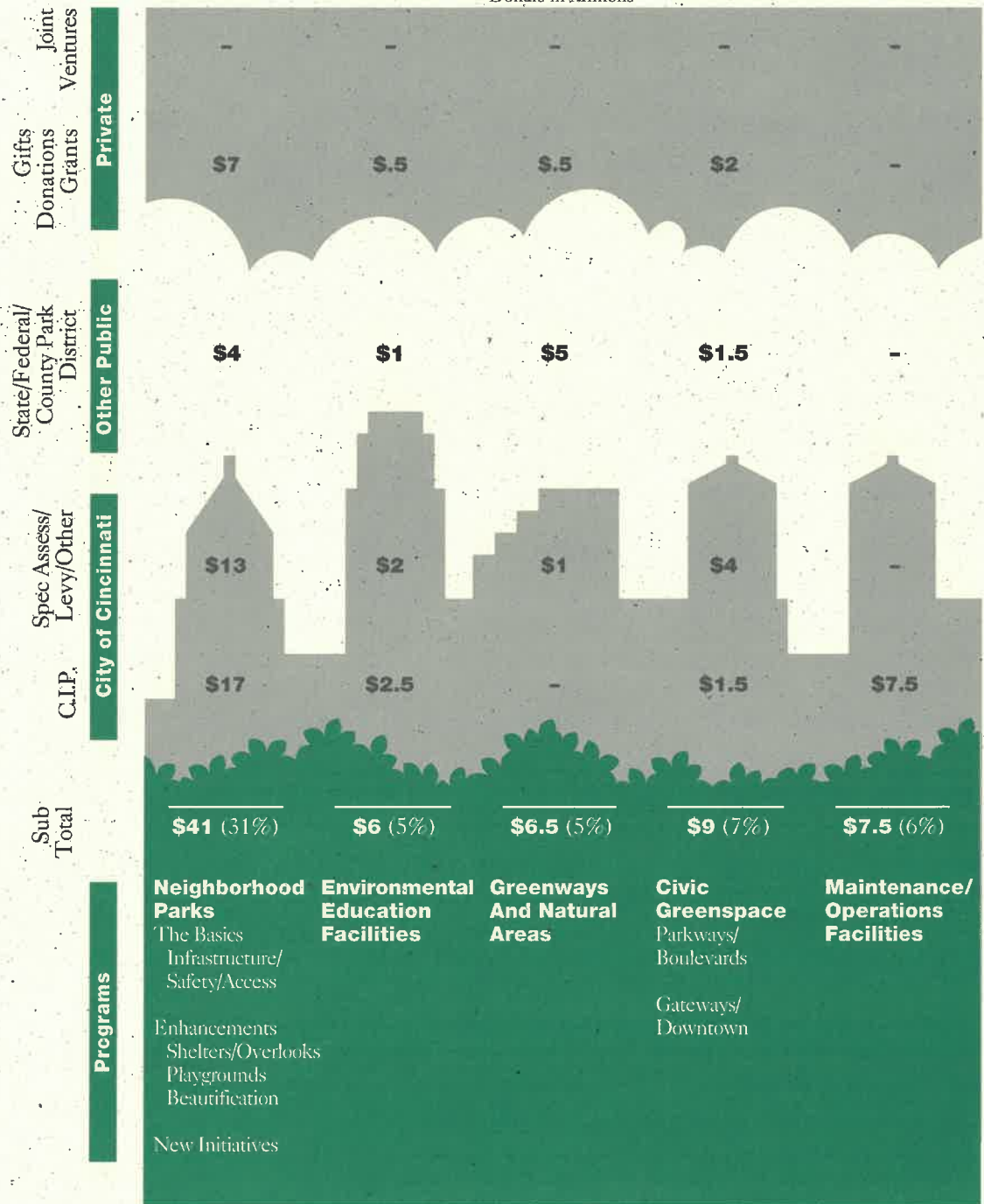
Specifics of this strategy are:

- Create a Parks Foundation and Development Office focused on raising \$25 million in private funds over 10 years for Capital Improvements and increased giving for operational support.
- Though the Park system and its basic services will remain free to all park users, the Plan encourages new revenue development in specifically targeted ways, through fees for unique services or facilities and such joint ventures as:
 - A new Eden Park Conservatory which includes a food/gift shop, conference center, reception area and Visitor Center
 - An Ohio River Center at Fernbank
 - A Conference Center and campgrounds at Mt. Airy Forest
 - Admission fees at a few selected regional sites.

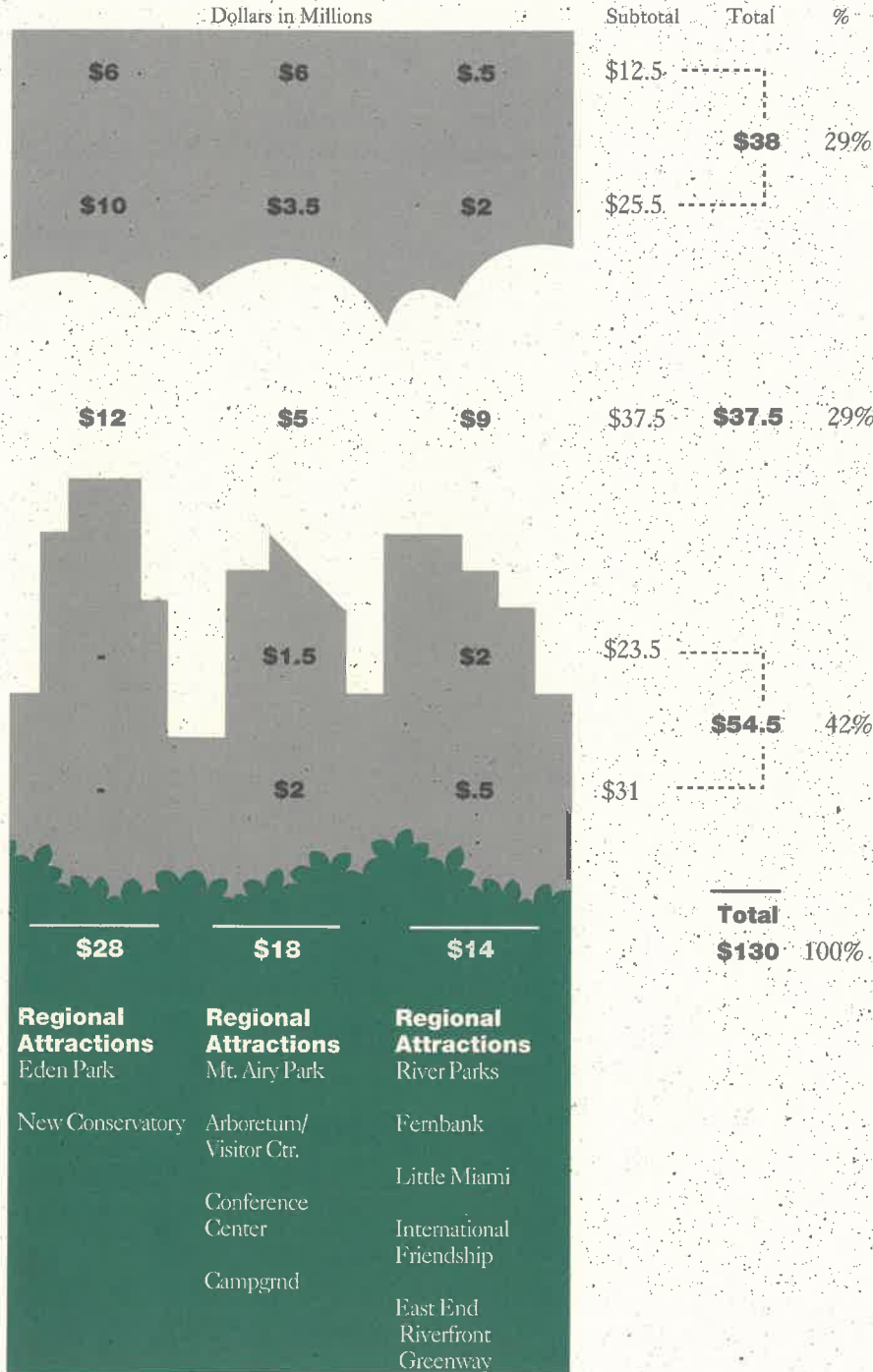
The costs of running the programs, providing the services, and maintaining the system will be partially borne by developing new self-sufficient facilities, by developing partnerships with business and volunteers, and by aggressively expanding maintenance endowments. Whereas today over 80% of the costs of operating the Park system annually are funded from local tax dollars, within 10 years the city tax burden should be reduced to half the operating need.

Capital Improvement Program/Sources and Uses of Funds

Dollars in Millions



10 Year Total



Private

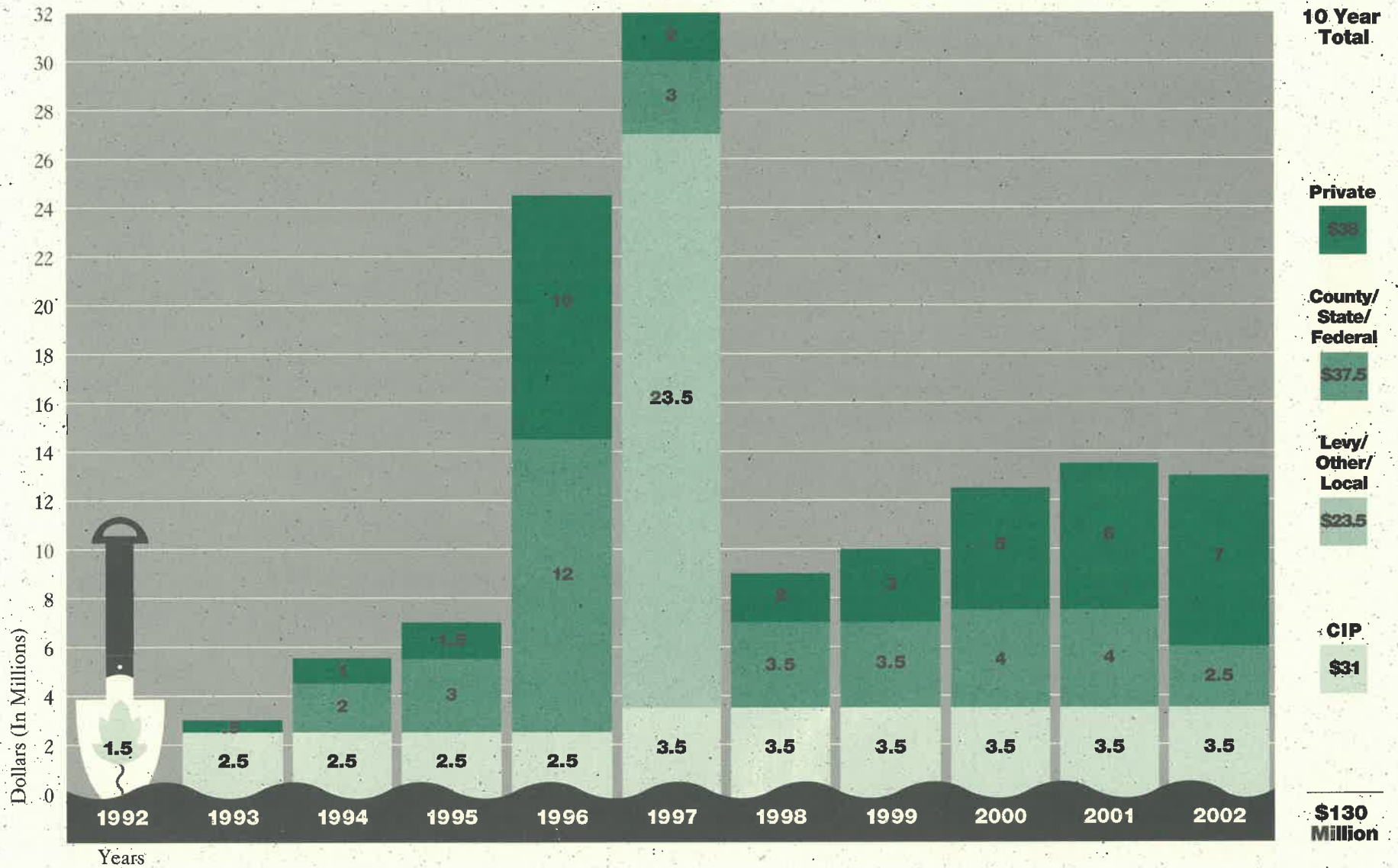
Other Public

City of Cincinnati

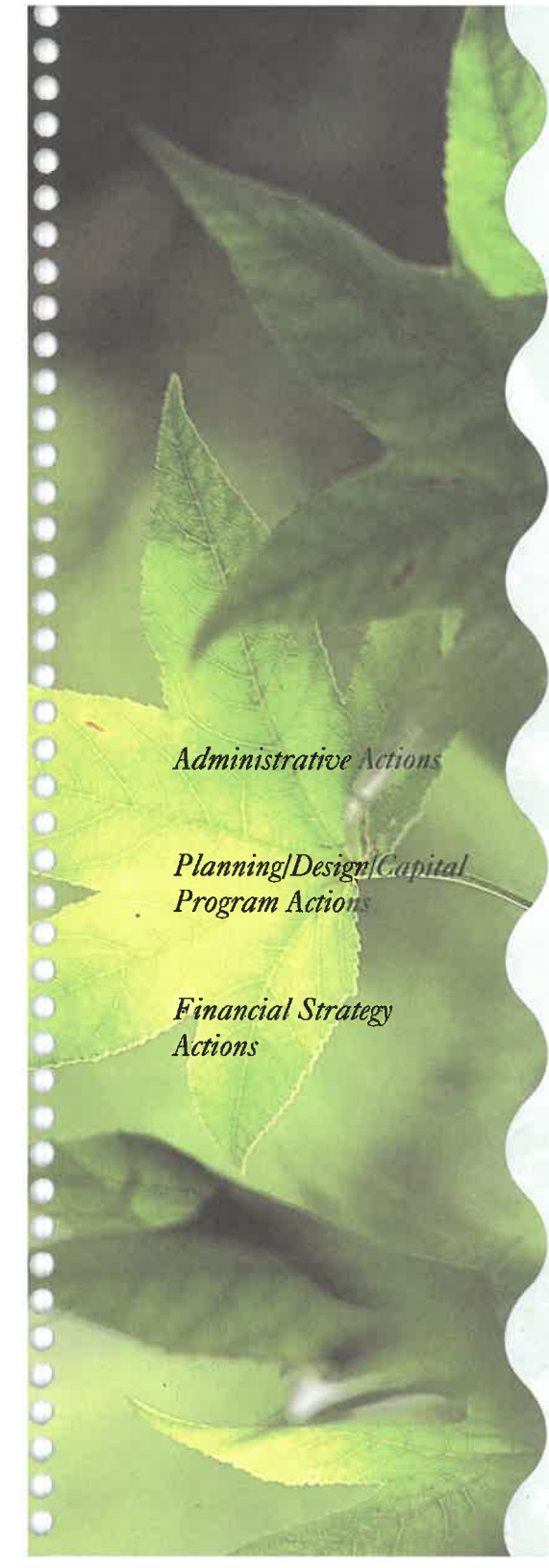
In general, revenue collected from fees, rents, admissions and endowments, and various partnerships and volunteer services are not reflected in this capital budget as funding sources, but are used to offset operating and program costs

Capital Budget - Annual Funding Scenario

60



This is one of many possible scenarios. Available funding in any particular year is dependent on many variables. If a levy is placed on the ballot (in whatever year is appropriate) it may become available over several years rather than as shown here.



Administrative Actions

*Planning/Design/Capital
Program Actions*

*Financial Strategy
Actions*

FOUNDATIONS TO
Making it Happen



CELEBRATE
the Action Steps

The Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan charts a course for the future of parklands, facilities, operations, services and financing. Though the Plan is visionary, it is also down to earth. Implementation begins from the moment the Plan and its recommendations are adopted. Many specific actions, administrative steps, and feasibility studies need to occur — and in many instances in a particular sequence to carry out the Plan, or to be in a position to initiate certain recommendations.

The availability of funding, the ability to achieve partnerships, and continuous Plan refinement will all have significant impact on implementation strategies as they actually unfold. To be successful, the support and endorsement of all of Parks' diverse constituency and current and future partners should be sought.

Action steps to be taken fall under three categories: Administrative Actions, Planning/Design/Capital Program Actions, and Financial Strategy Actions. Following is a summary of all Plan recommendations and actions.

*Making it Happen –
Partnerships are essential*

The Action Steps

Administrative Actions

- 1 Establish and fill key staff positions.
 - Fill positions in financial management, operations management, and construction management.
- 2 Refine organizational structure and initiate implementation.
 - Establish job description and positions. Initially seek support in education, volunteer coordination, personnel, and development. Strategically create and fill other positions as budgets, capital program and operational/service needs dictate.
- 3 Create a Parks Foundation
 - Establish structure and legal relationships. Appoint Board. Assign staff.
- 4 Develop policy manual and procedures guide.
 - Review, compile, and assess existing policies and procedures for all services and operations.

Administrative Actions (continued)

- 5** Reassess rules and regulations.
 - Review and assess with Park Police the existing body of regulations. Determine need for modifications.
- 6** Monitor and update fees for reserved facilities.
 - Review fees, services, internal costs, and use of reserved facilities.
- 7** Develop a new educational/interpretive program and facilities plan.
 - Convene study group and develop recommendations on programs, facility needs, functions, partnerships and future staff.
- 8** Establish and implement Bettman Preserve/educational program.
 - In context of systemwide program, develop and initiate Bettman plan.
- 9** Develop transition plan with Recreation Commission for combined interpretive program.
 - Establish agreements and timing to coincide with facilities plan and financial plan.
- 10** Assess lease agreements and other property arrangements for appropriateness and consistency.
 - Review existing property agreements. Determine need for modifications.
- 11** Strengthen staff training, development and communications.
 - Increase support for personnel section. Continue development of training and internship programs and internal communications for improved customer service and enhanced effectiveness in operations.
- 12** Develop a business plan and financial management program.
 - Hire appropriate staff and consultant services, and provide staff support.
 - Assess concession operations and management.
 - Review all trusts and "private" fund sources and assess tracking, investment and management needs.
 - Assess financial management issues tied to city funds.
 - Assess privatization opportunities.

- 13** Pursue grant opportunities.
 - Monitor and assess potential grants. Prepare applications as appropriate.
 - 14** Increase scope of marketing, special event programming and public relations.
 - Provide staff support and consultant services as required.
 - Actively solicit program sponsorships.
 - Develop “publications” and “displays” programs.
 - Increase outreach efforts to community councils, park support groups, civic groups and media.
 - Review market research/assess user satisfaction and needs.
 - 15** Implement Greenspace Management Program.
 - Obtain funding to continue planning and coordination efforts and to carry out recommendations of Greenspace Management Report.
-

Planning/Design/Capital Program Actions

- 1** Develop a land management plan.
 - Survey Parks/ natural and cultural resources.
 - Determine critical areas, undertake further study as needed.
 - Assess impacts of waste management, wetlands regulations, and other environmental regulations on parks and park operation.
 - Complete a management program and individual park management plans.
- 2** Create a park sign manual.
 - Prepare needs assessment and retain consultant. Develop sign standards. Implement.
- 3** Initiate neighborhood park improvement program.
 - Focus capital efforts on correcting safety hazards, renovating infrastructure and providing access.

Planning Actions (continued)

4 Develop Bettman Center.

- In concert with the environmental education program, plan and then implement the creation of the Bettman Environmental Center.

5 Initiate planning and design for key long-range projects.

- Develop Mt. Airy Visitor Center/Arboretum Plan.
- Program and design lodge improvements/expansions.
- Conduct new conservatory feasibility study.

6 Initiate planning and design to address short-range needs.

- Assess reserved areas needs. Design renovations, expansion, and new shelters, as appropriate, with supporting facilities.
- Plan and redesign selected parks for improved/enhanced use and new amenities.
- Complete a "Trails Program" for maintenance, renovation and new trail construction.
- Refine a facility preventive maintenance program.
- Complete a systemwide accessibility program.
- Establish an extensive interpretive facilities program of signs, displays, and special features systemwide (see "Sign Manual").


7 Develop a detailed Greenways Program.

- Determine key properties for protection.
- Determine acquisition and easement needs, appropriate linkages, and public access needs.
- Develop plan in concert with County Parks, state, city agencies, and private groups.
- Pursue bike trail corridor identification and planning efforts.
- Create a property donation and easement strategy and campaign.

- 8** Initiate the development of existing and proposed river parks.
 - Design first phase of East End Riverfront Greenway.
 - Complete the design of International Friendship Park
 - Continue phased development of Fernbank Park. Initiate programming of Ohio River Interpretive Center.
 - Carry out required remediation at Little Miami Park site.
- 9** Pursue new park development.
 - Strategically acquire control of proposed park sites.
 - Prepare conceptual plans as appropriate.
- 10** Carry out Greenspace Management Program.
 - Complete a downtown planting and enhancement plan.
 - Coordinate city greenspace efforts.
 - Initiate privately-funded interstate highway enhancement and neighborhood gateway program.
 - Develop new parkway and boulevard program.
 - Develop an "Existing Parkways Enhancement Plan."
- 11** Manage expanded Capital Improvement Program.
 - Increase capacity to design, implement, and administer projects.
- 12** Develop special-use and commemorative parks.
 - Identify funding and developmental opportunities for new special-purpose parks (or for sections of existing parks), such as an "Art Park."

 **Financial Strategy Actions**

- 1** Develop a private fundraising strategy and campaign.
 - Carry out related administrative actions to establish a foundation and an office of development.
 - Retain consulting services, develop a strategy, schedule, and supporting materials to solicit private funding.
 - Establish relationships/partnerships with foundations, civic groups and such entities as the Zoo, Garden Center and County Park District.
 - Initiate campaign.
- 2** Establish necessary agreements and legal requirements to fund plan.
 - Work with Solicitor's office and City administration to determine needs.
 - Refine public funding strategy for capital budget, bond sales, assessments, and future tax levy needs.
 - Monitor and evaluate economic conditions, city financial/budgetary constraints, and state and federal program funding.
 - Obtain political support for proposed strategy.
- 3** Prepare joint venture and concession operation strategy.
 - Conduct assessment and feasibility studies as needed to implement plan recommendations.
 - Package initial joint venture opportunities.
 - Identify new concession operations opportunities.
- 4** Implement financial and business management-associated administrative actions.
 - Put into place appropriate staff and support.



The Cincinnati Parks and Greenways Plan is a vision of parks as a place to grow. Its roots are well grounded in what our community has treasured in the past and what it wants for the future. It addresses the needs of people, of the city, and of the environment – boldly and creatively. It promises new vitality and new life for Cincinnati and the entire region. It is a vision of Cincinnati parks – *planting the future*.

CINCINNATI



PARKS

CINCINNATI

PARK BOARD

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Cincinnati, Ohio 45202