



**L | A | N | D** studio

landscape art neighborhoods development





# CLEVELAND METROPARKS, LAKEFRONT PARKS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: A LAND STUDIO REPORT

## GOALS

- **Establish relationships with key stakeholders** of the lakefront parks & adjoining neighborhoods
- Identify **issues and opportunities** for each of the four lakefront parks
- Create a **platform for successful park operations & community engagement**
- Manage expectations & **encourage community partners to identify neighborhood projects with mutual benefits** to the lakefront parks
- Create a **base for future civic partnerships** and community involvement

## PROCESS

- Four **stakeholder working groups**, with over 70 organizations & individuals represented
- One online **survey** = 1,678 participants
- Two meetings with **marina and yacht club** operators and **concessionaires**
- Three **community open houses** with 150 neighborhood participants
- Five meetings with **special interest groups**
- Two meetings with individual **community development corporations**
- Two briefings with **Cleveland City Council** reps
- One special meeting with **neighborhood residents**

## ADVISORY GROUPS

- Three neighborhood-based **Advisory Groups** focused around each location
- Met four times each:
  - Overall Outreach
  - Safety & Security
  - Programming, Volunteers & Capital Improvements
  - Report out on survey and operations
- A **Community Open House** was held in each neighborhood, informing stakeholders of the transfer of management and providing a platform for communication between residents and Cleveland Metroparks staff

## STEERING COMMITTEE

- One **Steering Committee** comprised of civic leaders addressed topics that had system-wide importance
- Met twice & discussed:
  - Cohesive development around the parks
  - Connections between parks and into the community
  - Positioning and marketing of lakefront parks image regionally
  - Activity in the parks
  - Water quality
  - Public health
  - Being proactive about future waves of opportunity

## SPECIAL MEETINGS

- Euclid Beach Park Now / *Remembering the Sights & Sounds of Euclid Beach Park*
- Scoop on Collinwood
- Cleveland Marathon
- Hermes Cleveland
- Marina & Concessions Operators
- Yacht Club Operators & Members
- Glenville Development Corporation
- St. Clair Superior residents





## SURVEY

- LAND studio conducted an online survey
  - 1,678 total responses & 53 pages of comments
- Cleveland Metroparks conducted an in-park survey
  - 322 total responses
- Key Takeaways from Online Survey
  - Clean & Safe is Most Important
  - Region's eyes are on Edgewater
  - Room for improvement in both perception and experience at these parks

**LAKEFRONT  
PARKS  
SURVEY**



## COMMUNICATIONS

- Communications package shared with community partners for neighborhood-based newsletters: press release, FAQs
- Op-Ed on cleveland.com by LAND studio's executive director
- On-going social media support via Facebook and Twitter



**The future of our lakefront is now in good hands under stewardship of the Cleveland Metroparks: letter to the editor**

# RECOMMENDATIONS & KEY FINDINGS

# Proactive Community Outreach is Critical to Successful Park Operations

- Cleveland Metroparks **garnered community support and civic goodwill** by initiating this process and inviting participation from a broad array of partners.
- Engagement of elected officials, community development professionals, residents and volunteer groups was critical.
- The participation of **Cleveland Metroparks staff from every department was crucial to the success of the process.**
- LAND studio's role as an independent partner working in partnership with Cleveland Metroparks was critical.
- A mechanism **to continue to engage these constituencies in an ongoing manner** should be determined by Cleveland Metroparks staff.
- Partners are eager to communicate and advocate on behalf of the Metroparks and its continued success.

# Safety and Cleanliness are Top of Mind

- Immediate impact of Cleveland Metroparks stewardship – through its attention to the details of park operations and visible Ranger presence will address most outstanding issues and major concerns at each park.
- Volunteer engagement around parks have been focused on clean ups and can now be redirected to new opportunities.
- Cleveland Metroparks earned **rave reviews** and **community confidence** through the results of its **improved park operations** and the **visible presence** of its **Ranger program**. This support can be leveraged.



# Three Very Different Parks: Three Very Different Opportunities

## Edgewater Park

- Considered by most in the region as **the “lakefront park”** in Cleveland.
- A **strong network of volunteers and residents groups are engaged** and eager to participate with Metroparks moving forward.
- The **current entrance to the lower park creates an opportunity** for significant impact.
- A large base of existing users means that **increased visits to the park will likely require increased amenities to accommodate usage.**

# Three Very Different Parks: Three Very Different Opportunities

## Euclid Beach / Wildwood / Villa Angela

- Strong & **engaged residential base** and Friends-of volunteer group
- Recently completed strategic plan **better connects parks to the neighborhood, and adjoining assets**, e.g, Nottingham Branch of Cleveland Public Library, Collinwood Rec Center
- Euclid Beach Park Plan has **projects with implementation potential**
- First phase of **NEORSD CSO projects** will greatly improve water quality.
- Due to proximity to commercial and residential areas, has **greatest opportunity of spin-off neighborhood development.**

# Three Very Different Parks: Three Very Different Opportunities

## Gordon Park / E. 55<sup>th</sup> Street Fishing Pier

- Lack of residential neighborhoods bordering the park **creates a vacuum of eyes and ears on the park**. The park **lacks relevance** in terms of having a daily impact on the neighborhood.
- **Highly visible location along the Shoreway creates significant potential** for future growth and marketing.
- **Creating connections south, as well as east/west to the neighborhoods** will impact future use and the success of park as neighborhood asset.
- The **Cleveland Lakefront Nature Preserve** is a regional asset that provides opportunities for the eastern side of Gordon Park.

# Park Programming – Expanding Usership

- Survey results and Advisory Group findings point to the dramatic potential of programming, from **ongoing programs to major special events**, as a means to increase usership and interest in the lakefront parks.
- Cleveland Metroparks **staff has significant capacity** to deliver innovative program agenda.
- **Civic and community partners** interested in developing and producing signature events.
- **Philanthropic and/or market driven support** for programs could be significant.



# Management of the Lakefront Parks can Catalyze the Community Development Agenda

- Lakefront parks can be **anchors for new development, neighborhood connections and priority investments** by community development leaders.
- A new emphasis on creating **north/south connections to each park and east and west connections that link the system** will become a priority.
- Cleveland Metroparks has set the table but need not lead this work. **Civic and philanthropic partners stand ready to lead the conversation** and develop plans for neighborhood impact.

# Ongoing Community Partnerships

- Cleveland Metroparks' strategic approach to **Year One of Park Management: "Clean, Safe and Learn"** has been endorsed by community partners.
- Partners are ready to assist with **creating a vision, capital improvements, collaborative initiatives and park programs** that build on the Cleveland Metroparks sound operational base.
- **Several friends groups currently exist.** Determining the ongoing role of these groups will need to be considered.
- Cleveland Metroparks can reinforce its value by participating in **highly visible summer festivals and events** in neighborhoods near the parks.
- Cleveland Metroparks will need to determine **how best to structure its community partnership programs** over the long term and how to **harness this enthusiasm and support** of a wide network of civic and community partners.

# Develop a Strategic Approach to Fundraising, Marketing & Communications

- A strategic, **comprehensive fundraising plan should be developed** that matches opportunities with funders. Existing partners can be used to help forge relationships and strategic partnerships.
- Develop a strong marketing and communications plans that **addresses negative perceptions of safety, cleanliness**. Residents who regularly use the parks have seen the results, but a huge opportunity exists to **promote the lakefront parks by crafting a message for potential new visitors**. Such a campaign can reinforce the overall positive perception of Cleveland Metroparks from all County residents.

# Mobilizing An Army of Supporters

- Cleveland Metroparks has **earned the respect and support of community partners for its willingness to take on the stewardship** of the lakefront.
- **Proactively engaging this network** of community partners in advance of the management transition **enhanced this support.**
- The value of **Cleveland Metroparks stewardship** has already been **highlighted through the dramatic improvements already realized** at the parks with strong neighboring residential populations.
- **Civic groups, nonprofit partners and residents can be mobilized** to support ongoing Cleveland Metroparks efforts.



# Capitalize on Current Momentum

- **Cleveland Metroparks has taken a huge step toward securing the future success of our lakefront.** The community support for Cleveland Metroparks is strong at this moment and **harnessing this energy can go a long way toward making future goals a reality.**
- The work to be done around the edges of the parks cannot—and should not—be the responsibility of Cleveland Metroparks alone. **Continuing to involve the broad community and our civic** leaders for development in these areas will ensure that decisions are made for the greatest community benefit.

## Questions? Comments?

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