

# RECREATION & OPEN SPACE



**Connecting Cleveland  
2020 Citywide Plan**

# RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

## OVERVIEW

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Parks and open spaces play an important part in the quality of life of city neighborhoods. It should come as no surprise, in fact, that numerous studies have found that the presence in a neighborhood of parks and open space increases the value of surrounding properties. But parks and natural greenspace not only make our neighborhoods more attractive places, they provide opportunities for recreation and exercise essential to good health. The more health-conscious Clevelanders become, the more they will see the importance of creating an environment that makes a healthier life style easier to incorporate into one's daily life. Parks provide opportunities for neighbors to socialize and get to know one another, fostering a sense of community.



Recreational activity provides many physical, psychological and social benefits for a community. [Edgewater Park]

Parks, even small pocket parks, foster the spirit of play. Play has been shown to improve a child's capacity to learn, reason and develop strength and coordination. The recreational opportunities afforded by parks, baseball diamonds and outdoor basketball courts, keep at-risk youth off the street and provide them with positive outlets for their energy.

Attractive greenways and off-street trails that meander through a community can be used not only for recreation but for traveling to stores and other destinations. Bicycling provides an affordable alternative to combustion-driven transportation for many as well as a means of exercise. Developing greenways and connecting trails, along with some "bicycle-friendly" streets, is an effective way of encouraging residents to increase their physical activity. In addition to the health benefits, physical activity relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety and enhances psychological well being. A growing body of research indicates that just contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health.

Natural areas also form a kind of "green infrastructure" that performs many practical functions—such as improving air and water quality, reducing flooding and mitigating the effects of the "urban heat island"—that save



Street trees provide both aesthetic and environmental benefits. [Old Brooklyn neighborhood]

communities money. By absorbing and filtering out nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide and particulate matter with their leaves, trees in the city provide a vital air cleaning service to city residents. In the hot summer months, they offer shade, helping to reduce residential temperatures and the amount of energy required for air conditioning. By absorbing much of the rainfall and filtering out some of the airborne and surface pollutants rain collects, trees, landscaped areas and natural areas also have a positive impact on the amount and quality of storm water runoff that enters our streams and the sewer system.

Some open spaces can even become community gardens, allowing residents to grow healthy fruits and vegetables, which can be expensive for lower-income residents to purchase at stores.

## TRENDS

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*Several trends have been identified that give a clearer picture of the challenge before us in the area of Recreation, and may also suggest some areas of greatest vulnerability (or opportunity), where connections with appropriate community assets could be helpful:*

- **Rise in Obesity:** Americans in general are getting fatter. In 2003 approximately 24.5% of adult Americans were obese and another 40% were overweight; and these numbers have been climbing over the last 20 years. Ohio is no exception. According to the Health Policy Institute of Ohio, 24% of Ohioans are obese; 12.9% of Ohio high school students are obese; and 11.1% of low-income children ages 2 to 5 are overweight. Obesity rates for low-income groups, it seems, are approximately twice as high as those for high-income groups; and obesity is a gateway to heart disease, diabetes, cancer and other chronic diseases. Nor is obesity is just an issue for adults. Childhood obesity is also on the rise.

Obesity is also a financial issue. It not only levies a cost on the individual in terms of health and quality of life, it impacts the entire community in the form of higher health care costs, which raises everyone's insurance premiums. The Trust for America's Health estimated that in 2003 Ohio spent \$3.3 billion dollars on obesity-related medical care. Half of obesity related care is financed by Medicare and Medicaid. Meanwhile, Ohio spends \$289 per person per year on medical costs related to obesity.

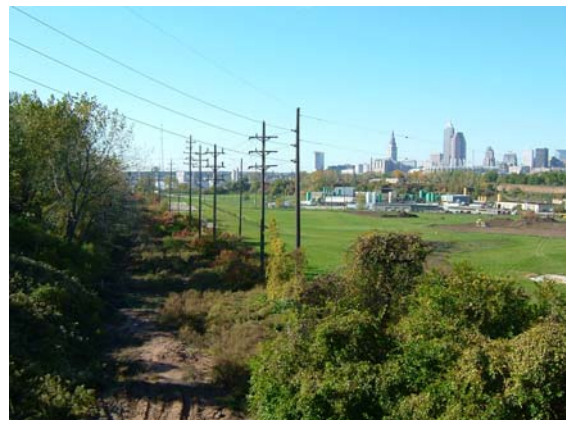
The causes of obesity can include genetic predisposition and ethnicity, fast-food and full-service restaurant growth, unhealthy food environments, smoking and physical inactivity. Physically active jobs were the norm in 1950, but sedentary employment is now twice as common. Lack of physical education in the school day, too much time in front of the television or computer and lack of leisure-time physical activity and recreation contribute to weight gain. Developmental patterns that necessitate an over reliance on automobile travel and discourage physical activity are also part of the problem, while the lack of easily accessible and attractive parks and open space relegates many city residents to a sedentary, largely indoor existence. Driving downtown to see a Cavaliers game is not the same as tossing a few hoops yourself at a neighborhood court.

- **Dwindling Greenspace:** Cleveland was once known as the "Forest City". With the spreading out of the metropolitan area from the city's core over time, however, most of the land in and near the city has been developed. This has taken its toll on the natural character of the area. It has been estimated that Cuyahoga County is now nearly 90% developed. Increased pressure for development of the few remaining natural areas has created the need for a

more proactive approach to their preservation. At the same time, an opportunity has arisen, with the abandonment and underutilization of many previously developed places within the city, to restore previously degraded landscapes and features (such as waterfronts) and to incorporate greenspace into neighborhoods where it is sorely lacking.

- **Poor Green Infrastructure Maintenance:**

The American Forests organization estimates that tree cover in urban areas east of the Mississippi has declined by about 30% over the last 20 years, while the footprint of the urban areas has increased by 20%. This decline in tree cover negatively impacts air water quality. The tree and landscape cover that does exist on currently developed sites must be maintained; and trees that die must be replaced. The City's Parks Department estimates that between 1,000 and 2,000 trees die annually in Cleveland and that 1,500 to 2,000 trees need to be planted just to maintain the current tree resource. The Parks Department's [Urban Forestry](#) office maintains trees on City properties and right-of-way. American Forests suggests general tree canopy goals, for metropolitan areas east of the Mississippi, of 25% for urban residential zones and 15% for central business districts.



Abandoned and underused rail corridors provide opportunities to create greenways in the City. [Kingsbury Run area]

- **New Forms of Recreation Overlooked:** A key to getting people to participate in recreation is providing them with the types of activity they desire. The City's parks offer numerous recreation facilities such as ball fields, basketball and tennis courts, pools, playgrounds and recreation centers. There are many other types of recreation that have grown in popularity, however, that the City parks either do not provide facilities for or that are not easily accommodated. Skateboarding, mountain biking, rowing, dog runs, rock climbing and outdoor fitness courses are examples of the non-standard types of recreation facilities people want nowadays. Some of these might be provided through partnerships with other organizations or by nonprofit or user groups.

## ASSETS

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*Cleveland has a number of important assets in the area of Recreation & Open Space that can be built upon. These include:*

**Natural Features:** Cleveland is fortunate to be located on one of the largest bodies of fresh water in the world, Lake Erie. The lake has played an important role in the transportation of goods and materials that fuels the city's economy and is one of the best sources of drinking water in the world. The vastness of Lake Erie creates an environment that is unusually compelling and lends itself to a wide variety of water-related activities. It also provides important habitat and migration corridors for a variety of birds and animals.

The Cuyahoga River and Valley are also important natural features that link Cleveland with many communities situated further from the lakeshore. The navigation channel, the more natural

sections of the river, and the valley hillsides also create unique places that provide the opportunity for a variety of recreational experiences. The various tributaries that flow from higher elevations down to Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga River also create corridors that provide opportunities to connect city neighborhoods to the lakefront and river.

The lakefront, hillsides along creek and river valleys, and the hillside of the Portage Escarpment offer excellent vistas of large parts of the city and Lake Erie. These views of expansive landscapes give the observer a strong sense of connection to the larger community.



Cleveland is fortunate to be located on one of the largest bodies of fresh water in the world. [Whiskey Island]

**Existing Park Systems:** The Cleveland area benefits from a number of park systems administered at the local, county, state and national levels. Many of these parks are located along sections of the natural features cited above. The City of Cleveland's Department of Parks, Recreation and Properties administers nearly 160 sites, from recreation centers to play lots. Some of the largest parks in the city were originally established in the 1890s as part of Cleveland's first master park plan, which proposed a system of parks and parkways to that would ring the city. Gordon, Rockefeller, Wade, Shaker Lakes, Luke Easter, Garfield, Washington, Brookside and Edgewater parks, as well as West and MLK boulevards, were created as part of this first park system.

A second system, consisting of countywide parks, was proposed in 1916. The Metroparks were established predominantly in areas that were still rural and suburban in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The western part of the "Emerald Necklace", so named because the park system takes the form of a loop of reservations around Cuyahoga County, lies along the far western boundary of the city along the Rocky River. Metroparks facilities are also located in the city along sections of the Big Creek and Mill Creek. The Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, the Mill Creek waterfall and the First Tee golf learning center at Washington Reservation are all facilities that the Metroparks operate within the city. The Metroparks have recently claimed an even greater presence within the first ring suburbs and the city with the expansion of the park system along West Creek, Mill Creek and the Cuyahoga River Valley. The establishment of the Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation and the extension of the Towpath Trail north from the Cuyahoga Valley National Park to Harvard Road bring a major part of the Metroparks system to downtown Cleveland's doorstep.

The Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation and the Towpath Trail now connect the city to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, which is one of the most visited parks in the national park system. Not only is a national park located in part of the Cuyahoga Valley, but there are a number of other national designations along the valley that may be leveraged to complement recreation and open space projects. The Ohio & Erie Canalway National Byway, the Ohio & Erie National Heritage Corridor, and the Cuyahoga American Heritage River all benefit, as officially designated natural treasures, from national programs promoting the history of the area. The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad offers riders an alternative transportation choice for observing the natural and historic features of the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, as well as providing connections to Akron and Canton. Its northern terminus is currently five miles south of the city of Cleveland at Rockside Road; but operators of the railroad would like to extend it north toward Downtown Cleveland.

The State of Ohio's Department of Natural Resources administers most of the public lakefront parks in the city including Edgewater Park, the East 55<sup>th</sup> Street Marina, Gordon Park, Euclid Beach, Villa Angela and Wildwood Park. These parks collectively cover approximately 450 acres.

**City Park and Recreation Facilities:** The City of Cleveland's Parks Department administers a wide range of recreational facilities including play lots, playgrounds, community parks, district parks and recreation centers. The few passive open spaces it administers are concentrated primarily near downtown. The roughly 160 sites located within the city cover approximately 1,400 acres and include 87 neighborhood level parks and 17 recreation centers. Approximately 180 urban gardens are located in city neighborhoods. A recent study by the Northeast Ohio Foodshed Network indicates that the \$100,000 in block grant monies invested annually reap an annual \$1,000,000 worth of produce for residents. Gardening itself provides needed physical activity for many people and is also an activity that promotes intergenerational contact.

**Recreational Organizations:** "Communities" of residents drawn to various types of recreation, have formed to promote their favorite pastime and organize events aimed at increasing participation. Rowing, road and mountain biking, walking, hiking, field trips for natural history buffs, and bird watching are all examples of local interests around which groups of enthusiasts have formed. These groups bring a great degree of expertise, passion and energy that can be mobilized to expand local recreational offerings.



Despite its image as an industrial river with water quality problems the recreational potential of the Cuyahoga River is currently being realized by some recreational organizations. [Western Reserve Rowing Foundation members]

A number of private groups lease or own facilities on the waterfronts that have been improved to provide access to their members.

In the Collinwood area, a number of small lakefront parks located at the ends of cul-de-sacs are owned and maintained by an association of homeowners on that street. A number of private marinas located on the lakefront and river channels provide water access to their members.

## CHALLENGES

*Cleveland faces a number of specific challenges in the area of Recreation & Open Space that need to be thoughtfully addressed:*

- **City Neighborhoods Lack Access to Natural Resources and Larger Open Space Systems:** Enabling neighborhood residents to access the benefits of the Cleveland area's tremendous natural resources and the splendid region-wide system of parks that ring the city would greatly enhance the opportunities for healthy exercise and recreation available to Clevelanders, as would making better connections between the neighborhoods and our City parks and recreation facilities. This was a major aspect of the City's extensive lakefront planning process and is a signal feature of the resulting [Lakefront Plan](#), which proposes specific and imaginative connections between existing neighborhoods and the city's lakefront parks that would greatly increase public access to Lake Erie.

Another challenge will be changing the perception of the Cuyahoga Valley as the division between the east and west sides of the city and giving it a new image as our central gathering place. The extension of the [Towpath Trail](#) from Harvard Avenue to Downtown Cleveland will provide many residents with an opportunity to discover the recreational possibilities of the Valley. Providing safe and attractive connections between the surrounding neighborhoods and the Towpath Trail will be necessary to take maximum advantage of it.

The proposed trails and open space along the Lakefront and Valley will also provide an opportunity to better connect the city and its facilities to the larger system of parks and open space such as the Metroparks reservations and Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Many opportunities to make such connections have been identified in the [Cuyahoga County Greenprint](#) developed by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.



The extension of the Towpath Trail to Downtown Cleveland will open new recreational opportunities for many City residents. [Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation]

The need for safer and more attractive connections between neighborhood recreation facilities within the city is addressed by the City's [Bike Cleveland Plan](#). To see the opportunities for recreation and open space that have been identified, consult the [Cleveland Bikeway Master Plan Map](#) and the Recreation & Open Space section of the individual district chapters.

- **Insufficient Opportunities for Physical Activity:** The fact that city streets and bridges are designed to facilitate automobile traffic is another thing that keeps many Clevelanders in a sitting position even when they are outdoors. Making the "built environment" more conducive to walking and cycling, so residents can more easily incorporate physical activities into their daily lives, would thus be another way of fostering a healthier citizenry. In September of 2002 the Mayor's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee was formed. Its purpose is to establish citywide policies for bicycle and pedestrian-related improvements. The Advisory Committee produced the [Bike Cleveland Plan](#) to encourage public and private entities to set goals and implement key strategies that include:
  - ✓ Developing a network consisting of a minimum of 180 miles of trails and bike routes.
  - ✓ Attaining 2% bicycle usage for all short (5 miles & under) urban trips by the year 2020.
  - ✓ Improving air quality and the environment of Cleveland and reducing the use of diminishing natural resources.
  - ✓ Developing bicycling as a serious alternative transportation mode by the year 2010.

- ✓ Increasing awareness of bicycle safety.

If making Cleveland more bike-friendly is one way of creating a healthier community, providing neighborhood residents with access to affordable, healthy food is another key component of such an effort, which community gardening addresses.

- **Polluted Everyday Environment:** A major challenge to creating a healthier community is cleaning up the everyday environment in which the city's residents live. Past development patterns and industrial processes have left in their wake polluted "brownfields" that now stand in the way of economic redevelopment efforts and compromise natural features such as valleys and waterways that hold so much opportunity as open space amenities. Cleaning up brownfields, restoring the quality of our air and waterways, and integrating economic development with the establishment of new "open space corridors" are all important elements of this challenge.
- **Overburdened Storm Sewers:** We now recognize that even the newest developments have an impact on the quality of our environment. Concrete and roofing shingles don't absorb rainwater and snow the way soil does. When rain falls on hard surfaces like rooftops, parking lots and roadways, the runoff has to go somewhere, however, so it is directed to the sewer system as quickly as possible. But too much rainwater flowing into storm sewers in a short amount of time can overburden the system. Thankfully, the system has release valves designed for just such an occasion. The problem is that in much of the system storm water and sanitary sewage must share the same pipes; so when the overburdened sewer system release valves open they dump raw sewage directly into streams, the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie. As followers of the lakefront water quality advisories know, this negatively impacts recreational use of these natural assets for some period of time thereafter, not to mention the potential for creating additional recreation opportunities on our waterfronts.

The regional sewer district is planning to spend \$3 billion to help prevent many (but not all) of these occurrences by building large underground holding tanks. But the community also needs to start thinking in more wholistic terms: The choices we make and decisions that are made in one seemingly unrelated sector of city life can have consequences, whether we like it or not, for other sectors. Choosing to cover several more acres of land with concrete and buildings may make sense economically, but steps must be taken to ensure that some other precious asset will not pay the price. Those planning future developments on the land's surface need to take all these things into consideration and design their developments in such a way as to limit the amount of storm water that enters the sewer system at peak periods. The water quality of our rivers and lake is at stake. The time has come for *integrated* planning.

- **Recreation Programs and Facilities Need Improvement:** Creating a more even distribution of facilities across the city has been identified as an issue. Providing facilities within reasonable walking distance that address the interests and needs of residents and is one part of the challenge; another is ensuring that the persons who staff all City facilities are knowledgeable, professional and friendly.
- A 2003 report by the Trust for Public Land titled "The Excellent City Park System" showed that, compared to other medium-high population density cities, Cleveland had approximately 6 acres per 1,000 people compared to the average of 12 acres. For many years the City of Cleveland has had a policy of no new parks; but some established cities



such as Denver and Seattle have actually increased their parkland by over 44 percent over the last 30 years. In many cities, however, a higher percentage of park lands are made up of so-called “natural properties”, which cost less to maintain. By contrast, most of Cleveland’s recreation facilities are “designed” landscapes that carry a higher operating cost. In addition, the City has limited resources.

Through forming creative partnerships with other groups and organizations around specific opportunities, however, it may be able to identify new sources of revenue and find ways to make better use of existing staff and facilities.

A number of opportunities currently exist to develop recreational settings that take advantage of certain natural features, as well as some very promising projects that fall outside the traditional scope of City of Cleveland parks. To see these, go to the [Alternative Recreation Opportunities Map](#).



Recreation programming should serve the interests of all Clevelanders including seniors and working adults. [Luke Easter Park]

## POLICIES & STRATEGIES

*The goal of these efforts is to **provide high-quality recreation opportunities and facilities that meet the needs of Clevelanders of all ages, ability levels, incomes and interests.** It is with this goal in mind that the Connecting Cleveland 2020 Plan puts forth a comprehensive set of policies relating to opportunities for Recreation and the enjoyment of Open Space citywide, along with specific strategies through which immediate steps may be taken toward their implementation:*

- 1) **Waterfront Access:** Maximize public access to the lakefront, riverfront and stream valleys, including safe and convenient access from nearby neighborhoods for pedestrians and bicyclists.
  - a. Implement the recommendations in Cleveland’s Lakefront Plan.
    - Replace the Memorial Shoreway downtown with the Lakefront Boulevard, a slower speed pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly byway.
    - Create new pedestrian bridges and underpasses.
    - Develop enhanced transit linkages and trail connections.
  - b. Use existing or buried stream corridors to create greenways as access routes between neighborhoods and the Cuyahoga Valley and lakefront.
  - c. Design trails that provide access to the water’s edge where feasible.
  - d. Improve the visual access to vistas of natural and man-made landscapes by developing scenic overlooks or protecting scenic views enjoyed from public spaces.
  
- 2) **Waterfront Recreation.** Develop and expand publicly accessible recreation sites along the lakefront and waterways.
  - a. Implement the recommendations in Cleveland’s Lakefront Plan.

- Develop new and expanded public beaches.
  - Establish new parkland and facilities.
  - Create a connected lakefront greenway network.
- b. Support the construction of Canal Basin Park.
  - c. Integrate publicly accessible waterfront sites or walkways into private development projects.
  - d. Support the development of facilities by private or non-profit organizations that promote water-related recreation such as rowing, sailing, kayaking, etc.

**3) Bikeways.** Create a comprehensive network of bicycle routes, bicycle lanes and multi-purpose trails safely linking neighborhoods to recreation sites, schools, shopping areas, places of employment and other destinations throughout the city and the region.

- a. Continue the Mayor's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee as a body charged with establishing citywide policies for bicycle-related improvements.
- b. Focus improvements and signage along those routes and trails identified on the "Cleveland Bikeway Master Plan".
- c. Complete the Towpath Trail from Harvard Avenue to the proposed Canal Basin Park and eventually to Lake Erie.
- d. Enhance and upgrade existing portions of the Lakefront Bike Path.
- e. Plan and implement trail connections to the Towpath Trail and the Lakefront Bike Path from adjacent neighborhoods.
- f. Develop and expand continuous trails along waterways as part of broader greenway corridors.
- g. Coordinate bikeway planning with adjacent communities and the Cleveland Metroparks.
- h. Evaluate Ohio Department of Transportation property, railroad property and underutilized rights-of-way for use as potential trail routes.
- i. Incorporate, where appropriate, bike lanes or trails as part other capital improvement projects.
- j. Adopt standards and requirements for the design of trails and bike improvements for roadways in keeping with American Association of State and Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards.
- k. Systematically identify and reduce road hazards and barriers such as potholes, glass, and sewer grates.
- l. Use educational programs within the police department and other agencies to teach children and adults, cyclists and motorists to safely share the roads and trails.
- m. Develop a City Bikeway Map, safety brochure and other bicycle publications that are regularly updated.

- 4) Bicycle and Pedestrian Amenities.** Provide bicycle racks, benches, water fountains and other amenities to encourage bicycling and pedestrian travel throughout the city.
  - a. Develop incentives and accommodations to encourage employees of the City, other public agencies and private industry to commute to work by bicycle.
  - b. Establish secure bicycle parking at City buildings and parks.
  - c. Develop programs for biking parking at existing downtown buildings and consider implementing bike parking requirements in Cleveland's zoning code for new buildings and developments.
  - d. Provide improved coordination of mass transit facilities, routes and bicycles.
  - e. Support an Annual Bicycle Week to promote bicycle use in Cleveland.
  - f. Design bicycle and pedestrian amenities as public art.
  
- 5) Serving Neighborhoods.** Ensure that a wide range of recreation facilities are equitably distributed throughout the city, with playgrounds located within approximately 1/4-mile (a 5-minute walk) of all residents.
  - a. Create a variety of public open spaces and recreation activities at the city-, district-, neighborhood-, and sub-neighborhood level equitably distributed throughout the city.
  - b. Focus development of new playgrounds in those areas further than 1/4 mile from an existing recreation facility.
  - c. Transform vacant lots into community gardens or pocket parks.
  - d. Require greenspace amenities to be developed as part of new development projects.
  - e. Evaluate Ohio Department of Transportation property, railroad property and underutilized rights-of-way for trail and open space/neighborhood greening opportunities.
  - f. Improve the identity of parks through better wayfinding and signage.
  
- 6) Quality of Facilities.** Provide recreation facilities competitive with the best available in the region, consolidating large-scale facilities at transit-accessible locations.
  - a. Improve the opportunity for community input in the planning process for park construction or renovation.
  - b. Partner with community organizations to train staff to deal with the challenges of today's youth.
  - c. Invest in professional development training for parks design and maintenance staff.
  - d. Identify those programs residents would be willing to pay for to improve the quality of their facilities.
  - e. Create a program to collect crime data in parks in order to better plan safety improvements.

- 7) **Diverse Programming.** Offer a diversity of recreation programs to serve the recreation needs and interests of Clevelanders of all ages, incomes, lifestyles and ability levels.
  - a. Redefine conventional definitions of recreation and open space to include community resources such as community gardens, skateboard parks, mountain bike courses, etc.
  - b. Use parks as community space to bring people together.
  - c. Expand opportunities to interpret community heritage.
  - d. Expand opportunities to facilitate exposure and participation in broader arts and cultural activities.
  - e. Create a disability advisory committee in the Parks Department to address special needs use at parks.
  - f. Create programs to assist low-income park users, such as fee reduction programs.
  - g. Improve programming for seniors.
  
- 8) **Serving Working Adults.** Provide recreation services and equipment geared to the interests and schedules of working adults, supplementing recreation services oriented principally to children and seniors.
  - a. Engage recreational clubs in the use of City facilities and the development of their own facilities that address their areas of interest.
  - b. Review hours of operation to ensure that the desired programs or facilities are available at times convenient for working adults.
  - c. Expand the participation with the health-care community in developing programs that address the exercise and health needs of working-age residents.
  
- 9) **Sharing Resources.** Increase the availability and quality of recreation services through shared use of facilities owned by the City, School District, YMCA and other nonprofit organizations.
  - a. Take stronger advantage of national, state and nonprofit grants and programs designed to provide resources for natural area restoration.
  - b. Explore the potential of using school facilities for off-hour recreational purposes to better serve neighborhood residents.
  - c. Explore creative partnerships with other organizations to enhance programming and resource development.
  - d. Use cemeteries as passive recreation opportunities for walking, biking or heritage interpretation.
  
- 10) **Sharing Responsibilities.** Improve maintenance of public parks and recreation centers through “adopt-a-park” programs and corporate sponsorships.

- a. Coordinate efforts with other government and nonprofit organizations with the goal of protecting and restoring the natural environment.
- b. Encourage volunteerism from local communities and adopt a labor-supported City policy.
- c. Consider other funding sources such as sponsorships, fees, partnerships, etc., to increase revenues for programs and facilities.
- d. Increase the use of labor from groups like the Court Community Services, Americorps, Civilian Conservation Corps, inner-city churches and nonprofit groups to provide added maintenance and programming.
- e. Charge non-residents for the use of facilities.

**11) Community Gardens.** Reserve land for both temporary and permanent use as community gardens in every neighborhood throughout the city.

- a. Undertake an inventory of community gardens to identify those sites that should be protected for permanent use as gardens.
- b. Grant community gardens a status that protects them similarly to other park properties.
- c. Create a suitable nonprofit organization that is stable, able to manage multiple garden sites, able to address liability issues, and has a mission of conservation; or expand an urban gardening program to acquire, protect and manage garden sites in Cleveland.
- d. Establish community gardens in parts of the city not currently served.
- e. Develop and distribute a gardening curriculum to schools.

**12) Preserving Natural Areas.** Identify and protect natural areas characterized by stream valleys, wetlands, hillsides, forests and other environmentally sensitive and valuable features.

- a. Adopt ordinances that protect environmentally sensitive areas such as hillsides, riparian areas and wetlands.
- b. Develop neighborhood-level plans centered on restoring the function and aesthetics of natural features and highlighting them as amenities for neighborhood preservation and restoration.
- c. Include water and habitat quality improvements as part of lakefront projects.
- d. Support the acquisition of, and assist in the assembly of, land that will facilitate the achievement of specific greenspace protection goals.
- e. Maintain most of Dike 14 as a nature preserve.
- f. Identify opportunities for wetland mitigation projects within the city.
- g. Engage organizations such as the Wildlife Habitat Council, which work with private businesses, to protect, restore and manage natural areas on private property in order to the presence of such assets in Cleveland.

- h. Educate property owners on best management practices that reduce the negative environmental impacts of residential structures and uses.
- i. Encourage the use of conservation easements on properties that will facilitate the achievement of a specific greenspace protection goal.
- j. Encourage the incorporation of low-impact development features into new development proposals.

**13) Urban Forest.** Protect and expand the supply of street trees and landscaped areas within Cleveland's urbanized districts, maximizing environmental and aesthetic benefits.

- a. Establish tree canopy goals for different types of uses within the city.
- b. Use satellite and aerial photography to target areas most in need of tree planting.
- c. Increase support for the City's tree planting program.
- d. Consider development of a tree preservation ordinance that addresses private property.

Specific identified opportunities relating to recreation are listed in the [Development Opportunities](#) section of the Citywide Plan website.