



Comprehensive Master Plan Process

Project Description: Development of a Comprehensive Master Plan.

Ashtabula County Metroparks was awarded \$1,500 toward the development of a Comprehensive Master Plan.

Metroparks developed the Master Plan on a \$32,000 budget, with significant assistance from the Ashtabula County Commissioners, Ashtabula County Planning Office, Ashtabula County Parks Foundation in addition to the OPRA Foundation grant.

Over a two-year period, Ashtabula County Metroparks hired Environmental Design Group as a consultant, conducted data gathering, parks assessment, community surveying, and parks planning efforts.

Following early survey work, initial parks master planning documents were created, circulated to staff, volunteers and the Metroparks Board, modified, and were presented in a series of county-wide Master Planning workshops and online surveying.

As a result of the feedback, staff and the Board made needed changes, revised and revisited the plan after Metroparks' park levy passage this past November.

Objectives:

- Use OPRA Foundation Funds to leverage governmental and other grant opportunities.
- Build upon the evolution of the staff and Metroparks' significant growth during the past three years (tripling in number of parks, acreage and amenities).
- Provide a broad brush as well as park-specific roadmap for the future.

These objectives were easily achieved by the cost-conscious planning process:

- Metroparks raised another \$21,000 in grant funds, limiting levy funds to less than \$10,000.
- The Comprehensive Master Plan reflects the growth already achieved by the park district.
- The Plan incorporates both the broader vision as well as individual park-specific plans for adding amenities.
- The plan is short enough to be accessible to all readers, yet specific enough to provide a usable, living roadmap for the next 10 years.

Cost: \$32,000

Process and Outcomes

The Master Planning process began in the Fall of 2018 with a detailed review of existing conditions at the individual Metropark properties. This data collection and existing conditions analysis was conducted through a series of site visits, photo logs, desktop analysis, internal Metroparks data, and publicly available data review.

Following the inventory and analysis of the existing conditions, a county-wide map was developed that displayed the existing park and trail locations as well as planned trail additions. As part of the mapping exercise, a detailed park amenity iconography was established to represent existing and planned amenities at the various properties. This iconography is also included in the Park Vision Plan portion of this report to map key amenity locations such as parking and restrooms, as well as existing and planned park amenities.

The park amenity analysis then transitioned into the public and stakeholder involvement process, which included a detailed online survey as well as in-person stakeholder and public involvement meetings. The online survey, which gathered 160 responses, focused on understanding typical park visitors, preferred programming, park preference, and desired future amenities. The in-person meetings allowed stakeholders and the public to vote on specific amenities that were desired on a per-park basis, which provided the project team with insight to guide the individual park visions. In total, 1,099 amenity votes were cast by the public and stakeholders.

The feedback and votes collected through the process were analyzed by the team and highlighted the overarching desires of increased Connectivity and Conservation. These two themes helped guide the project team in developing the Vision Plans for individual parks, with a focus on both short-term and long-term opportunities for new trail connections and new park amenities. Additionally, the Metroparks will explore potential acquisition opportunities in the future to strategically expand the park and greenway system.

Results:

The Comprehensive Master Plan outlines a clear set of both short-term and long-term goals for each of the Metroparks and trails included in the report to guide Metroparks staff, Board and Stakeholders for the next decade.

These goals and objectives were developed through a detailed planning process led by Ashtabula County Metroparks and incorporated significant stakeholder and public input through in-person meetings and surveys. The individual park visions included in this report present the results of this planning process. The short, 40 page report provides a detailed list of existing and planned parks amenities and services for short term (1-5 years) or long term (6-10 years). While these provide a snapshot in time, they provide a useful framework for future plans and adaptations.