“Right Sizing” Your Parks: Canton’s Shifting Demographics

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Have you ever been asked:

to do something you don’t have in the budget?
to buy or build something that should not be?
to “check out” this great new park site?
Canton founded in 1805 as a **statutory city**, not charter
+ prominent manufacturing center
+ manufacturing decline started in 1970
+ Canton’s population is declining
+ “shrinking city” like many midwestern cities
66 parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities totaling 790 acres, or 5% of Canton (71% lie within floodplains)

+ Mature park system that is unsustainable as a result of shifting demographics and decreased tax base

+ Last city-wide park master plan was completed 1980

+ Last city-wide comprehensive plan was complete 1960

+ Park had plenty of rules but 9 park ordinances only!!!!
the Parks background

population vs. parkland

1960
Population: 113,631
Acres of Parkland: 596

1970
Population: 110,053
Acres of Parkland: 665

1980
Population: 94,730
Acres of Parkland: 708

1990
Population: 84,161
Acres of Parkland: 718

2000
Population: 80,806
Acres of Parkland: 765

2010
Population: 73,007
Acres of Parkland: 790
In 2012, park and recreation facilities were historical divided between the Canton Parks Department and Canton Joint Recreation District. +1 YMCA and 5 independent community centers (no indoor facilities for programming) + statutory governance + total reliance on dwindling general fund (no levy funds and capital projects dependent on council) 
+ competition from emerging township, church and private recreation facilities + two high schools + school district facilities had limited public access
benchmark (categorize + critique) + public meetings + public survey + level of service + recommendations + prioritization of recommendations

City of Canton Parks Master Plan was developed concurrently with 2015 Canton Comprehensive Master Plan

Example Goals for a Mature Park System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past Goals</th>
<th>Future Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Park Creation</td>
<td>Park Maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Capital</td>
<td>Repair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Acquisition</td>
<td>Land Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Initiatives</td>
<td>Finely Tuned Initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park Dedication Funding</td>
<td>Property Tax/Levy/Grants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The process

**benchmark (categorize + critique)**
- public meetings
- public survey
- level of service
- recommendations
- prioritization of recommendations
Type of parks:
- Mini park (1)
- School park (2)
- Neighborhood park (3)
- Community park, large urban park + sports complex (4)
- Natural resource area, greenway + trail (5)
- Special use (6)
the benchmark

mini park
unimproved park/donation
the benchmark

neighborhood park
the benchmark

community park, large urban park + sports complex

nimisilla park

stadium park

willig park
the benchmark

natural resource area, greenway + trail

fairhope nature preserve
the benchmark

special use

colonial park boulevard

canton lincoln highway station
How many of you have been forced to use the peanut butter approach?

(Hint: to cover everything, spread it thin)
Assessment of existing physical conditions

- Each park feature was rated based on industry standards like:
  - Community Park Audit Tool developed by Kansas State University and University of Missouri
  - Mortgage Bankers' Association Property inspection workbook

Over $6.5 million in park rehabilitation costs are needed based on the existing physical conditions.

Overall Assessment of Canton Parks:

- Very Poor: 4%
- Poor: 6%
- Fair: 20%
- Good: 33%
- Very Good: 26%
- No Amenities: 11%
benchmark (categorize + critique) + **public meetings**
  + **public survey**
  + level of service
  + recommendations
  + prioritization of recommendations

the process
the benchmark
6 public meetings

one city-wide meeting
+ one meeting for each quadrant of the city
+ one city-wide summary meeting
Which park did you visit?

- Arboretum Park: 3.91%
- Bernard Avenue Playground: 0.78%
- Covered Bridge Park: 0.78%
- Jackson Park: 0.78%
- Maple Avenue Playground: 0.78%
- Martin Dale Park: 1.56%
- Mckinley Park: 3.13%
- Meyer's Park: 0.78%
- Monument Park: 25.78%
- Nimisilla Park: 0.78%
- Schreiber Park: 0.78%
- Stadium Park: 33.59%
- Vassar Hill Park: 3.13%
- Weis Park: 7.03%
- Westbrook Veteran's Memorial Park: 3.91%
- Willig Field: 2.34%
- N/A: 10.16%
On a scale from 1-10, with 10 being the best, how would you rate the overall quality of Canton Parks?

- 1: 2.36%
- 2: 2.36%
- 3: 0.79%
- 4: 3.94%
- 5: 11.81%
- 6: 16.54%
- 7: 30.71%
- 8: 20.47%
- 9: 5.51%
- 10: 4.72%
- N/A: 0.79%
the benchmark online survey (128 individuals responded)

What activities do you use the parks for?

- Trails - Walk/Exercise Pets/Running/Jogging: 36.98%
- View Nature, Birds, Wildlife, etc.: 18.97%
- Use Playground: 13.83%
- Picnicking: 13.18%
- Active Recreation - Baseball/Softball/Sports: 9.32%
- Other: 7.72%

Other: Family picnics, miscellaneous events, use of bike facilities, frisbee golf, classroom use, holiday decoration viewing, community events, use of Garden Center (Stadium Park), skateboarding, community/organization meetings, fishing
What Parks and Recreation facilities would you like to see added, developed, or updated for Canton Parks in the future?

- Multi-use trails and trail connections: 29.58%
- Protection and restoration of natural areas: 22.08%
- Playgrounds: 15.83%
- Picnic Shelters/Pavilions: 11.67%
- Sports fields/courts: 10.42%
- Indoor recreational/meeting facilities: 10.42%

The benchmark online survey (128 individuals responded)
### Site Facility Assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Facilities</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>CONDITION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Composite Play Structure (Medium)</td>
<td>New</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Playground - Swings (Large – 6 seats)</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Metal Climbing Structure</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Picnic Shelter w/ tables, grill</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parking Lot (Asphalt)</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Restroom (Flush)</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Usage:** Moderate  
**Classification (NRPA Standards):** Neighborhood Park  
**Opportunities:** Park is utilized often. Park falls within flood plain. Opportunity to provide designed regional flood storage. Proximity to Millis Hill Creek.  
**Constraints:** Transitional neighborhood. Documented uncontrolled flooding events. Lack of lighting. Restroom building has a step up to it, therefore it is not accessible.  
**Surrounding Uses:** Residential, Commercial, Natural  
**Historic Features (Y/N):** No  
**Environmental Issues:** Unknown  
**Vegetation Analysis:** Lawn with some trees. Lack of vegetation around stream bank, resulting in bank erosion.  
**Site Access:** Boundary of park is open.  
**Circulation Patterns:** No external trails or nearby bike routes. No internal trail network.  
**Deed Restrictions/Easements:** Unknown  

**NOTES:** Graffiti, vandalism, and location in a transitional neighborhood give park some safety/appearance concerns. No lighting in park. Park falls within flood plain. Outdated park signage is used and should be replaced with new standard. Trash cans are blue plastic barrels. Restroom building brick, tile and roof are in good shape, however sinks, doors, and toilets are in need of replacement. Provide ramp to restroom building for accessibility. Parking lot needs resurfacing and restriping. Playground lacks handicap accessible path from parking lot to handicap accessible opening. In playground curbing. Metal climbing structure and swings are not handicap accessible. Public sidewalks are adjacent to roadway and are in poor condition, consider removing and relocating connector sidewalks away from the road.  
**PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS:** Park is utilized often and is in a good location. A food truck used the picnic shelter over the summer and it was successful. Many residents use the park for picnicking. Shelter is underutilized and is not rented often. Grease have been a problem due to location near stream. Banks of stream are steep and may be a safety hazard.
benchmark (categorize + critique) + public meetings + public survey + level of service + recommendations + prioritization of recommendations
the level of service

how Canton compares to similar cities
the level of service

how Canton compares to similar cities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canton - Level of Service (For parks of high or moderate use)</th>
<th>Playground</th>
<th>Sports Field - Open Play</th>
<th>Baseball Field</th>
<th>Pool</th>
<th>Splashpad</th>
<th>Basketball Court</th>
<th>Tennis</th>
<th>Volleyball</th>
<th>Trail</th>
<th>Fitness Equipment</th>
<th>Skate Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youngstown, Ohio (65,000)</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorain, Ohio (64,000)</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elyria, Ohio (55,000)</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average LOS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.38</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.04</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.01</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.25</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.15</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.08</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.09</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.07</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.01</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2015 Canton Comprehensive Master Plan
Recreation Facility LOS Comparison Figure
current Canton parks department:
- maintains 790 acres (1)
- has 21 full time employees (FTE) (2)
- has 32 acres maintained per FTE (3)
- annual maintenance cost of $2,321 per acre (4)

deficient 23 FTE + $1.01 million dollars to operate current acres (5)

national average is 14.1 acres maintained per FTE

Canton FTE should be 44

Would you have us continue to do a below average job or above to excellent job?
# National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)

## 6 maintenance categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Type</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Maintenance Description</th>
<th>Average Annual Cost/Acre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Plaza/Parks</td>
<td>Mode I</td>
<td>State of the art maintenance applied to a high quality diverse landscape. Usually associated with high traffic urban areas such as public squares, malls, governmental grounds or high visitation parks.</td>
<td>$2,500 to $3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Park, Mini Park, Sports Complex Parks</td>
<td>Mode II</td>
<td>High level maintenance associated with well-developed park areas with reasonably high visitation.</td>
<td>$2,500 to $3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Park, School Park</td>
<td>Mode III</td>
<td>Moderate level maintenance associated with locations with moderate to low levels of development, moderate to low levels of visitation or with agencies that because of budget restrictions can’t afford a high intensity of maintenance</td>
<td>$3,500 to $6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Resource Area</td>
<td>Mode IV</td>
<td>Moderately low level usually associated with low level of development, low visitation, undeveloped areas or remote parks hazard mitigation to support public safety</td>
<td>$600 to $800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails, Greenways, Special Use</td>
<td>Mode V</td>
<td>High visitation natural areas-usually associated with large urban or regional parks. Size and user frequency may dictate resident maintenance staff. Road, pathway or trail systems relatively well developed. Other facilities at strategic locations such as entries, trail heads, building complexes and parking lots.</td>
<td>$3,000 to $4,000 per mile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
<td>Mode VI</td>
<td>Minimum maintenance level low visitation natural area or large urban parks which are undeveloped.</td>
<td>$600 to $800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies, 2014
benchmark (categorize + critique) + public meetings + public survey + level of service + recommendations + prioritization of recommendations

the process
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Name</th>
<th>Current Park Maintenance Designation</th>
<th>Proposed Park Maintenance Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lee Park</td>
<td>Community Park, School Park (Mode III)/Trails, Greenways, Special Use (Mode V)</td>
<td>Neighborhood Park, Mini Park, Sports Complex Parks (Mode II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard A. Mallon Memorial Park</td>
<td>Community Park, School Park (Mode III)</td>
<td>Natural Resource Area (Mode IV)/Trails, Greenways, Special Use (Mode V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Park</td>
<td>Neighborhood Park, Mini Park, Sports Complex Parks (Mode II)</td>
<td>Natural Resource Area (Mode IV)/Trails, Greenways, Special Use (Mode V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arboretum Park</td>
<td>Neighborhood Park, Mini Park, Sports Complex Parks (Mode II)</td>
<td>Natural Resource Area (Mode IV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Park</td>
<td>Neighborhood Park, Mini Park, Sports Complex Parks (Mode II)</td>
<td>Natural Resource Area (Mode IV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiker Park</td>
<td>Neighborhood Park, Mini Park, Sports Complex Parks (Mode II)</td>
<td>Natural Resource Area (Mode IV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covered Bridge Park</td>
<td>Community Park, School Park (Mode III)</td>
<td>Trails, Greenways, Special Use (Mode V)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Correll Park</td>
<td>Neighborhood Park, Mini Park, Sports Complex Parks (Mode II)</td>
<td>Natural Resource Area (Mode IV)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside Park</td>
<td>Neighborhood Park, Mini Park, Sports Complex Parks (Mode II)</td>
<td>Natural Resource Area (Mode IV)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

recommendations

reclassification
“People did not know they could help/participate.”

Adopt-a-park program

recommendations

partnerships, volunteers + coordination
recommendations

to re-use,
decommissioning
+ shared
responsibility
recommendations

re-use, decommissioning + shared responsibility

turtle park re-use

before
recommendations

sustainable growth

areas not served by the parks

gervasi station trailhead
two types of investment:
long-term park system expansion (1)
reinvesting in existing parks (2)

recommendations
investment criteria
recommendations

target investment areas from 2015 Canton Comprehensive Master Plan

aultman (1)
downtown (2)
shorb (3)
mercy (4)
hall of fame (5)
recommendations

high poverty areas (1)
park usage (2)

investment prioritization criteria
recommendations

connections to existing or proposed trails (3)

investment prioritization criteria
recommendations

investment prioritization criteria

current/potential revenue generation (4)
overall quality assessment of park amenities (5)
recommendations
investment prioritization criteria
proximity to school with playground facilities (6)
benchmark (categorize + critique) + public meetings + public survey + level of service + recommendations + prioritization of recommendations
PRIORITY INVESTMENT
- Parks for immediate investment and Master Plan Creation.
  - Brian's Park
  - Cook Park
  - Canton Lincoln Highway Station
  - Crenshaw Park
  - King Park
  - Mini Park #19
  - Mother Gooseland
  - Nimisilla Park
  - Stark-Wayne Schrader Playground
  - West Park

SECONDARY INVESTMENT
- Parks for upgrades after “Priority Investment” and “Decommission/Re-purpose” group tasks are completed.
  - Albert Reiter Park
  - Harmont Park
  - Lee Park
  - Maryland Park
  - Mini Park #8
  - Monument Park
  - Robert E. Schreiber Park
  - Stadium Park
  - Waterworks Park
  - West Park

MODEST INVESTMENT
- Priority to keep facilities in current condition—no deferred maintenance, facility upgrades as needed.
  - Brian C. Roshong Park
  - Lawrence Park
  - Martindale Park
  - Meyers Park
  - Mini Park #25
  - Vassar Hill Park
  - Weis Park
  - Westbrook Veteran's Memorial Park
  - Willig Field

prioritization of recommendations
Prioritization of recommendations

**SUSTAINED MAINTENANCE**
- Continue current maintenance of each site.

- Arboretum Park
- Bernard Ave. Playground
- Bors Field
- Bup Rearick Park
- Colonial Park Boulevard
- Don Correll Park
- E. Jay Welch Playground
- Fairhope Nature Preserve
- Freeway Park
- Garaux Park
- Gervasi Station Trailhead
- Herbruck Park
- Ink Park
- Jackson Park
- Maryland Ave. Boulevard
- McKinley Park
- Mt. Vernon Boulevard
- Reifsnyder Park
- Richard A. Mallon Memorial Park
- Spiker Park
- Thurman Munson Stadium
- Washington Boulevard

**DECOMMISSION or REPURPOSE**
- Priority for decommission or re-purpose/re-use.
- Tasks completed in conjunction with “Priority Investment” tasks.

- Covered Bridge Park
- Grovemiller Park
- Jackson Pool
- Maple Playground
- Mini Park #1
- Mini Park #3
- Mini Park #5
- Mini Park #9
- Mini Park #11
- Mini Park #19*
- Mini Park #32
- Northview Park
- Oak Park
- Park Connector Strip
- Riverside Park
- Triangle Peninsulas (Crystal Park)
- Waynesburg Park
- West Park*
where are you? (1)
question the status quo (2)
find the low hanging fruit (3)
develop a road map (4)
get consensus + follow the plan (5)

so what??
remove the “broken windows” + remove unused or worn-out features
(sometimes, nothing is better than something)
thank you

questions?

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