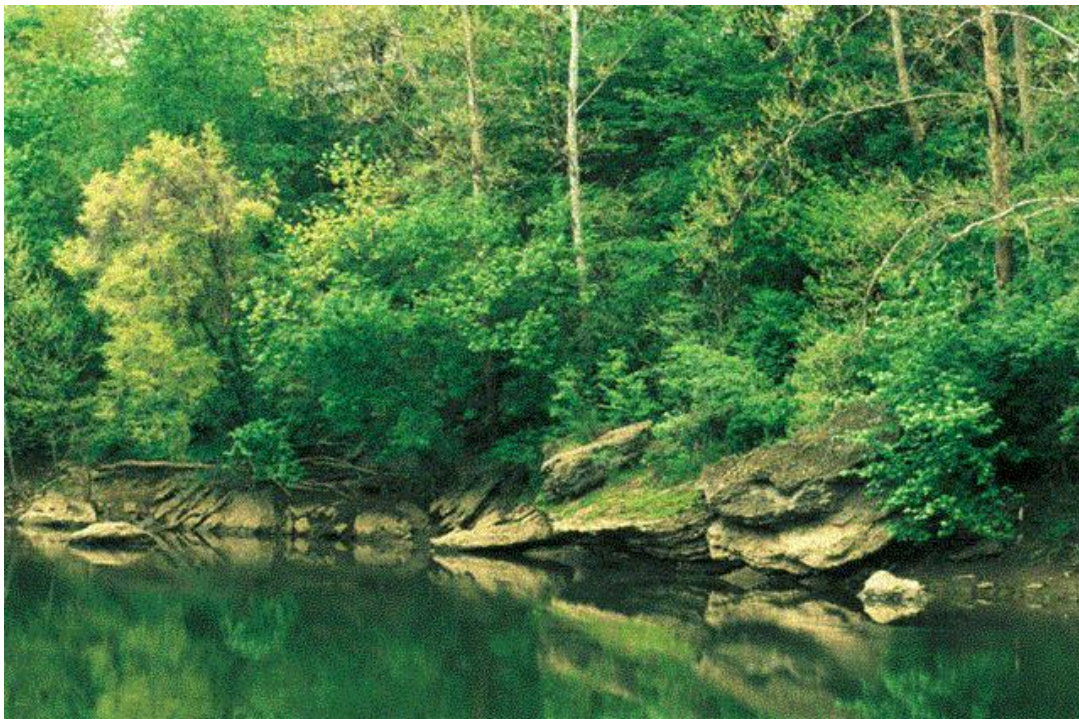


# PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Warren County, Ohio

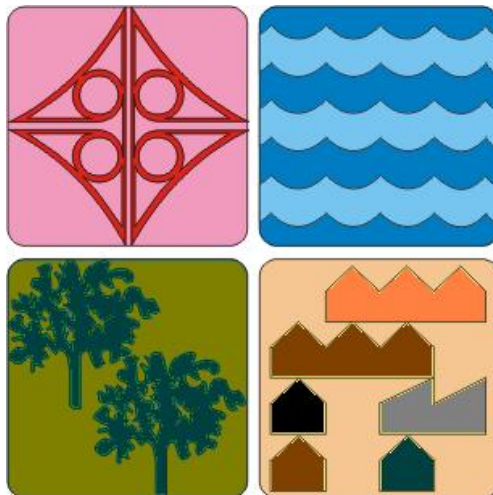


Warren County Regional Planning Commission  
406 Justice Drive, Lebanon, Ohio 45036

# PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE

Warren County, Ohio

October 2008



Warren County Regional Planning Commission  
406 Justice Drive, Lebanon, Ohio 45036

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Warren County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan  
Warren County, Ohio

October 14, 2008

### County Administration:

County Commissioners: David Young, Pat Arnold South, Michael Kilburn



County Administrator: David Gully

Board of Park Commissioners: Fred Bay, Richard Jones, William Schroeder

Park Director: Larry Easterly

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Scott Brunka – City of Lebanon

Larry Easterly – Warren County Parks Director

Michael Hecker – City of Mason

Kimberly Lapensee – Warren County Regional Planning

Margo Lindahl – OKI

Tim Lowe – Warren County Engineer's Office

Jeff Palmer – Clearcreek Township

Joel Smiddy – Deerfield Township

# Warren County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Warren County, Ohio

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## Executive Summary

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### **The Need for a Plan**

Warren County offers parks for use by its residents as well as does each individual city, village and/or township. The County provides limited programming and other offerings for the residents of Warren County. Therefore, the athletic organizations and some cities are primary recreation providers within the County. In addition, the Warren County Regional Planning Commission identified the need for an update to the 1988 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan to be completed. The Warren County Regional Planning Commission authorized the development of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

### **The Mission Statement**

The Mission Statement in the Steering Committee Charge for this plan identifies the purpose of the project that is as follows:

The Steering Committee will assist and advise the County Parks Board and the multiple City and/or Township Parks Boards, and County Staff in the update of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The plan shall at a minimum establish or reaffirm goals, objectives, strategies, funding options, program and facility recommendations, and an implementation schedule for future improvements. The plan will be a tool that assists Warren County and its political jurisdictions in achieving the

division set forth in the Comprehensive Plan update.

### **A Citizen Driven Plan**

The Plan is truly based on community needs. The public was involved throughout the whole process in the following methods:

- Public meetings and workshops.
- A citizen attitude and interest survey that was returned by 350 households.
- An active Parks, Recreation and Open Space Steering Committee.
- Meetings with several special interest groups including Warren County Port Authority, Warren County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Sports Organizations throughout Warren County, Little Miami Inc, Warren County Park District, Warren County Soil & Water Conservation District, Miami Conservancy District, MRDD, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Warren County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council, and the Ohio Valley Carriage Club.

### **What the Citizens of Warren County Told Us**

Through the many opportunities for community input, the citizen's needs were determined. The following is a brief summary of the needs as communicated in the various methods:

- Lack of horse related bridle and carriage trails and interdisciplinary equestrian facility within the county;
- General maintenance of the parks were not up to standards;
- Develop more unleashed dog parks;
- Creation of aquatic (indoor and outdoor)/water recreation opportunities;
- Improve and create more multi-use trails;
- Install more handicapped recreational facilities such as swings and zero grade depth pools to accommodate the handicapped population;
- Purchase property for permanent linkages and green space use only, which would slow down growth in certain areas;
- Develop more passive type use parks which do not include any type of sports related field space;
- Introduce a regional type structure or partnership for funding of parks and the maintenance thereof;
- Construct a regional sports facility that will allow the county to host regional sports tournaments for soccer, baseball, etc.;
- Purchase a large property (such as Armco Park) that will allow the County to have an urban park that will mirror Winton Woods or Sharon Woods in Hamilton County;
- Development of an equestrian center and related facilities for show and recreation purposes.

#### Steering Committee Recommendations

The recommendations of the Master Plan Steering Committee were determined from the surveys, workshops, focus groups,

community input and staff recommendations and includes the following components:

- Development of county park headquarters within a central location in the county;
- Construction of a conference/banquet center for rental space;
- Build or partner with a builder to construct a regional sports facility;
- Develop small water splash parks;
- Develop a marina and provide more boating opportunities;
- Build or partner with a builder to construct a winter sports facility;
- Develop more multi-use trails across the county that connect parks, schools and business districts;
- Develop more unleashed dog parks;
- Install more handicapped equipment and/or parks;
- Construct more fitness trails (par-course);
- Develop skate parks;
- Provide ATV and BMX Parks;
- Provide space for a remote control car race track and/or air space;
- Provide additional sports fields to accommodate baseball, softball, soccer, football and lacrosse organizations across the county;
- Work with abandoned big box companies to provide more indoor team sports space;
- Provide more indoor pool space;
- Develop more picnic shelters with tables and playgrounds across the county;
- Provide additional track and field space;
- Develop botanical gardens, nature preserves, nature centers, wetland areas, and passive type park spaces;
- Expand overnight camping areas around the Caesar Creek area;

- Development of an equestrian center and related facilities for show and recreation purposes;
- Work with developers to provide spaces for mini parks and trails within private developments.

### **Where to Get More Information**

The Master Plan includes a great deal of additional detail regarding the following topics:

- Population and land use trends
- Existing budgets
- Inventory of existing facilities and parks
- Summary of public facilities and parks
- Discussion of survey results
- Park and recreation facility needs
- Individual park recommendations and budgets of surrounding county facilities
- Priorities for the proposed improvements
- Implementation strategies
- Potential funding sources and implementation

The information provided in the Master Plan is intended to provide the direction needed for the County Administration and its political jurisdictions, staff, the Regional Planning Commission, Parks Board and others to implement the Master Plan.

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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Purpose**

Warren County currently benefits from an impressive array of park, recreation and open space facilities. These amenities represent a wide range of activities. One can experience the tranquil natural areas of the Caesar Creek State Nature Preserve, or meet the challenge of an amusement park ride at Paramount's Kings Island. "The Incredible County", as it has become known, is home to professional level golf and tennis facilities, a State and Federal-designated scenic river corridor, state-of-the-art water parks, State parks, a horse racing facility, a reservoir and a number of State nature, wildlife, archaeological and historical areas - illustrating that Warren County plays a significant role in serving the leisure needs of its citizens, as well the region as a whole. Indeed, tourism continues to be a major local industry. In short, a good foundation has been established.

Yet, as we all realize, Warren County represents things that are more fundamental in the minds of many people. This is a fine place to live and work. Even with all the on-going growth and development, being the second fastest growing county in Ohio and among the top 50 in the United States, there remain vast areas of land, ready to be utilized to meet the needs of the existing and future population. Under existing laws and until recently the prevailing mindset, it has been difficult to argue against the development of Warren County for homes, businesses and industries. It is of course equally difficult to defend a development process that fails to consider the importance of the natural environment. Forgetting the fact that we have a duty to preserve its integrity, under the concept of stewardship, we must consider that we depend upon the natural environment for our physical and mental well-being. The root of the word recreation is "re-create".

Thus, we must find a way to reconcile multiple uses of the land. Co-existence is quite possible, once we decide it is to be. The use of land must not be decided solely upon the basis of money, market forces, politics or inaction. It must reflect what is needed for a well-rounded community, which can be accomplished only through implementation of a plan of action.

This document represents such a plan for park and open space areas, set aside in response to the needs of County and regional citizens, updating a 1988 Plan that served Warren County well. As with any plan, periodic amendment is both desirable and necessary. It is perceived as part of an overall comprehensive planning process and, as an update, is again offered in hope that park and local open space planning will not be relegated to a minor role.

### **B. Charge of the Master Plan Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee will assist and advise the County Administration and its political jurisdictions, staff and the Parks Boards in development of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The Plan shall at a minimum establish goals, objectives, strategies, funding options, program and facility recommendations and an implementation schedule for future improvements. The Plan will be a tool that assists the Parks Board of Warren County and perhaps other Park Boards and/or committees throughout the county in achieving the vision set forth in the Comprehensive Master Plan adopted for Warren

County. Therefore, the Committee shall insure the Plan is in conformance with the Comprehensive Master Plan Update.

### **C. Planning Process**

The planning process for the Warren County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan includes the following components:

1. A review of the previous studies that pertain to the delivery of parks and recreation facilities and services within Warren County and the surrounding area.
2. A review of the population and land use trends in Warren County.
3. Preparation of a parks and recreation facilities and programs inventory, including a discussion of facilities by park type and a discussion of parks and recreation facilities provided by the Warren County Political Jurisdictions and other providers.
4. The preparation of a Comprehensive Needs Analysis based on recreation facility goals, surveys of the general public, and discussions with specific interest groups.
5. Preparation of recommendations for improvements to existing County parks.
6. Recommendations for land and new parks.
7. An Action Plan that identifies the recommended tasks and improvements, responsible party, and potential funding sources for the recommendations.

### **D. Why Parks are Important**

Here are some reasons why this Master Planning effort, additional planning, and future of Parks and Recreation in Warren County are very important:

1. Warren County manages approximately 1261 acres of land designated for parks and open space purposes. The 9 school systems within Warren County operate several additional areas of campus and recreation areas on about 1428 acres. All other political jurisdictions, including cities, villages and townships, manage and operate 16,183 acres across Warren County. These agencies have the responsibility to manage this land in an efficient manner that is consistent with the health, safety, and welfare of the community.
2. Parks provide vital green space in a fast developing landscape. Parks also provide vegetative buffers to construction and development, mitigating negative effects. More importantly, parks and public lands also provide groundwater recharge areas, floodplain protection, natural sound barriers, storm water protection from wetlands, reductions in heat island effects, and carbon uptake from abundant trees and vegetation. Parks keep our living environment healthy.
3. Public parks provide millions with the opportunity to be physically active. Physical activity is an essential part of an individual's efforts to stay healthy, fight obesity and prevent chronic conditions. Having close-to-home access to places where one can recreate is one of the most important factors linking whether people will become active and stay that way.
4. Parks have true economic benefits. Proximity to developed state, regional or community parks improves property value. The economic benefits of parks and recreation areas are manifold, but one of the most significant is the increase in value of private land adjacent or near protected public land. The proximity of parks to residential areas leads to increased value of private land, a higher tax base and many economic benefits to a community including increased local and regional revenue

- from heritage tourism, steady jobs, and numerous small business benefits. Park and recreation areas are economic engines that improve the quality of life and make communities livable and desirable for businesses and homeowners.
5. Parks preserve critical wildlife habitat. As our nation develops and our rural, agricultural and forest landscape is being lost, open space and wildlife habitats are disappearing at an alarming rate. The connected network of local, regional, state, and national parks across our country provide permanent protected wildlife habitat corridors for thousands of indigenous and migratory wildlife species. In addition, stream valley parks and community parks allow natural wildlife to co-exist with people while providing enjoyment and educational opportunities for children and families.
  6. Parks and recreation facilities encourage social interactions that are critical to maintaining community cohesion and pride. Parks provide a meeting place where community members can develop social ties, and where healthy behavior is modeled and admired. People gather to share experiences, socialize and to build community bonds in common green spaces. These public commons are often the glue that hold the community together and the means to maintaining and improving future positive social interactions.
  7. A leisure activity in parks improves moods, reduce stress and enhance a sense of wellness. In an increasingly complex world, more and more people are placing a high value on achieving the feelings of relaxation and peacefulness that contact with nature, recreation and exposure to natural open spaces bring. People go to the park to change or uplift their mood, to reinvigorate and “re-create” themselves and to decrease the anxieties of daily life.
  8. Recreational programs provide organized, structured, enjoyable activities for all ages. The diverse range of recreational programs offered by public park and recreation agencies offer everyone the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to successfully and confidently engage in sports, dance, the arts and other social activities. Public recreation leagues and classes offer seniors, adults and children alike the opportunity to interact with coaches and teachers who often turn into mentors and role models. Quality recreational programs facilitate safety, good sportsmanship and community participation.
  9. Community recreation services provide a refuge of safety for at-risk youth. Many parents are rightfully concerned with the dangers of unstructured “hanging-out” or unsupervised after-school activities. Community recreation programs at public park and recreation facilities provide children with a safe refuge and a place to play, which are important in reducing at-risk behavior such as drug use and gang involvement. Recreational programs led by trained leaders offer children healthy role models and give valuable life lessons to help steer youth to a future of promise and opportunity for success.
  10. Therapeutic recreation is an outlet that individuals with disabilities have to be physically active, socially engaged and cognitively stimulated. A goal of all public recreation agencies is to provide access to all people. Public park and recreation agencies are the largest providers in America of high quality, life-enhancing, therapeutic recreation programs and interventions. Such programs prevent the on-set of secondary conditions due to inactivity, improve physical, social, emotional and cognitive functioning, and slow the onset of regressive conditions.
  11. Public parks embody a national tradition of preserving public lands for the benefit and use of all. Since the creation of the first national park in the early 1900’s and the subsequent development and growth of state, national and local park systems in

virtually every part of our nation, Americans have had a special relationship with their parks and public lands. A love of parks is one of the defining characteristics of our national identity. Americans cherish their parks, historic sites, national monuments, recreation areas and public open spaces because they bring such joy and pleasure to all people. The general public has also shown time after time that they are willing to care for their parks, protect them and pay for them.



# COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

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## II. Community Description

Understanding the existing characteristics of the County and its residents is essential to the development of a comprehensive and effective plan. The following data provides a broad look at the physical and social characteristics of Warren County. This data provides the foundation upon which the parks and recreation plan is developed.

### A. Physical Characteristics

Warren County has a geographic area of approximately 407 square miles (400 sq mi land & 7 sq mi water), which is contained within 11 townships, 8 cities and 8 villages. The county is a rough square with the sides roughly 20 miles long. Please see Map 1 for a map of Warren County. Multiple municipalities and townships contribute to the character and diversity of the county. Existing character and natural features combine with the physical characteristics of the County to provide a diverse geographic region for potential park and recreation development. The following highlights the primary physical characteristics of the County.

### B. Transportation

#### Major Roads and Highways

Interstates 71 and 75 pass through the County as do U.S. Route 22/Ohio 3 and U.S. Route 42. Other major highways through the County are State Routes 28, 48, 63, 73, 122, 123, 132, 350, and 741. Interstate 71 crosses over the Little Miami River at the Jeremiah Morrow Bridge, the tallest bridge in Ohio.

#### Railroads

Warren County does not currently have passenger train service, except for the Lebanon Mason Monroe Railroad scenic train that runs between downtown Lebanon and Mason. Freight trains still serve Carlisle, and, Monroe, Mason, and Lebanon on a limited basis. Historically, there have been several trains that ran through the County whose stops became cities and villages. These trains include the Cincinnati, Lebanon, and Northern Railway, the Middletown and Cincinnati Railroad, and the Little Miami Railroad whose path is now replaced by the Little Miami State Park/Scenic Trail. There have been proposals to run Light Rail commuter trains from Cincinnati to the Kings Island area, but none have ever found sufficient support or funding.

#### Airport

Warren County has two public airports, Lebanon-Warren County Airport. The runway is a 4502' X 64' paved and lighted North-South runway, and parallel taxiway. Navigation and communications equipment includes PAPI, AWOS, Pilot Controlled Lighting, and Unicom. The airport runway, taxiway, and navigation equipment is owned by the County. The County owns the runway and adjacent taxiways, but other facilities are owned and operated under contract by a private fixed base operator. The airport serves general and business aviation, but has no commercial airlines. The other public facility is the Dayton-Wright Brothers Airport, owned by the City of Dayton, located along the Montgomery



County/Warren County line, outside the City of Springboro, which offers similar services.

There are also privately owned airports in the county: Waynesville Airport, also known as Red Stewart Field, and Caesar Creek Gliderport.

#### Waterways

There are currently no commercially navigable waterways in Warren County, but the Warren County Canal did operate between 1840 and 1848 as a branch of the Miami and Erie Canal, bringing freight to Lebanon by Canal Boat. Recreationally, the Little Miami River can be traveled by canoe or kayak for its length through the County, and motorized boating can be done at Caesar Creek Lake.

### **C. Natural and Environmental Features**

The natural environment of Warren County is a blend of agricultural uses, open space and built areas. All three uses have an impact on the development and provision of recreational opportunities. The agricultural and open spaces provide the physical areas where new recreational facilities can be constructed. The built environments influence where the recreational facilities should be placed with regards to population base and users of the facility.

The following provides a brief summary of the primary natural and environmental features of the county.

#### Climate

Warren County's weather is temperate and seasonal. Summers are hot and humid with cool evenings. The mean annual temperature is 52 degrees F (29 degrees C), with an average annual snowfall of 32 inches and an average annual rainfall of 41 inches. It is rare for the mercury to fall 16 degrees below zero, or to rise above 98 degrees F. The wettest seasons are the spring and summer, although rainfall is fairly constant all year round. During the winter, particularly in January and February, several days of snow can be expected, allowing for winter sports. Winter temperatures range from 27 to 43 degrees F (-3 to 6 degrees C) and summer temperatures range from 66 to 86 degrees F (19 to 30 degrees C). The highest recorded temperature was 103 degrees F (39.4 degrees C) on 8/17/1988 and the lowest recorded temperature was -22 degrees F on 1/19/1994.

The moisture that gives fertility to the Ohio Valley comes chiefly from the Gulf of Mexico and the winds from the southwest are most likely to be rain producing. The winds from western directions predominate far above all others, those from the southwest being the most frequent, the northwest and the southeast next. The least frequent winds are from the north.

#### Soils

Warren County has been an agricultural community since its initial settlement in 1795. The County's rich agricultural soils have been separated into 6 categories by the United States Department of Agriculture; these categories are illustrated in Map 2, the USDA General Soils Map. The categories and their descriptions are the following:

- *Clermont-Avonburg Association* – Poorly drained and somewhat poorly drained, nearly level to gently sloping soils that formed in loess and Illinoian-age glacial till. This soil association is in scattered areas that are mainly in the southern and east-central parts of the County. The nearly level soils in most of the association are broken in places by slight rises. V-shaped drainage ways dissect the soils and hinder cultivation in some places. This association makes up 14 percent of the County. About 48 percent of this is Clermont soils, 42 percent is Avonburg soils and the remaining 10 percent is other soils.
- *Rossmoyne-Hickory-Fairmont Association* – Moderately well drained and well drained, gently sloping to steep soils that formed in silt-capped glacial till and in residual material. This soil association occupies much of the southeastern and east-central parts of the County. The soils are gently sloping to steep and are in the steepest parts of the County. The major soils occupy side slopes around streams and drainage ways that flow into the Little Miami River and Todd Fork of the Little Miami River. All of this association is highly dissected, for the streams are deeply entrenched. This association makes up about 28 percent of the County. About 55 percent of this is Rossmoyne soils, 19 percent is Hickory soils, 13 percent is Fairmount soils, and the remaining 13 percent is other soils.
- *Russell-Miamian-Zenia-Wynn Association* – Well drained and moderately well drained, nearly level to sloping soils on the Wisconsin-age glacial till plain. This soil association occupies a large continuous area in most of the northern and western parts of the County. Much of the association consists of undulating to rolling uplands that are commonly cut by numerous V-shaped valleys. This association makes up about 36 percent of the County. About 40 percent of this is Russell and Miamian soils, 19 percent are Xenia soils, 12 percent is Wynn soils and the remaining 29 percent is other soils.
- *Fincastle-Brookston Association* – Somewhat poorly drained and very poorly drained, nearly level or gently sloping soils on the Wisconsin-age glacial till plain. This soil association is in areas scattered over the County from near Mason and Kings Mills in the southwestern part to north and east of Waynesville and Harveysburg in the northeastern part. The soils in these scattered areas are nearly level or gently sloping. This association makes up about 9 percent of the County. About 60 percent of this is Fincastle soils, 35 percent is Brookston soils, and the remaining 5 percent is other soils.
- *Genesee-Fox Association* – Well drained, nearly level soils on flood plains and nearly level to moderately steep soils on Wisconsin-age glacial outwash terraces. The largest part of this soil association occupies an area that roughly parallels the Little Miami River and its major tributaries. The other part is in the northwestern part of the County along the Miami River and Clear Creek. Both areas consist mainly of nearly level soils on bottom-lands that are broken in places by nearly level to gently sloping soils on stream terraces. A few areas of steeper soils are between terrace levels. The major soils in the association are well drained. This association makes up about 10 percent of the County. About 30 percent of this is Genesee soils, 30 percent is Fox soils, and the remaining 40 percent is other soils.
- *Patton-Henshaw Association* – Very poorly drained and somewhat poorly drained, nearly level soils that formed in lacustrine sediments in formerly ponded areas. This soil association occupies three areas in Warren County. Two of these areas are located in the eastern part of Massie and Washington Townships. The largest area is long and narrow and is along the Butler County line the western

part of Warren County. This association makes up about 3 percent of the County. About 80 percent of this is Patton soils, 10 percent is Henshaw soils, and the remaining 10 percent is other soils.

#### Water

The major rivers of the County are the Great Miami River, which flows through the northwest corner of the County in Franklin Township, and the Little Miami River, which zigzags across the County from north to south. There is one sizable lake, the Caesar Creek Reservoir, created by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineer's dam on Caesars Creek in the northeast part of the County in Massie Township.

### **D. Areas of Environmental Significance**

Map 3 outlines the areas of environmental significance. These areas include:

- Wetlands
- Grasslands
- Shrubland
- Floodplains
- Woodlands
- Water Resources
- Open Herbaceous Lands
- Sole Source Aquifer/Source Water Protection
- Wellheads and Drinking Water Supplies
- Wildlife Habitats
- Threatened and Endangered Species

These areas are lands of environmental importance that should be prioritized for conservation since they add to the County's quality of life.

### **E. Population Trends and Projections**

An overall understanding of the population trends of Warren County is necessary to identify the present needs and to protect future needs for parks and recreation facilities. This section will include information on existing and historic demographic trends to establish where the County is and has been in terms of growth and provide future population projections.

#### ***Trends***

The County's population in 2006 was estimated by the Ohio Department of Development – Office of Strategic Research at 201,871, which represents approximately 4.58 percent annual population growth since 2000. The County has experienced moderate to high rates of growth since the 1960's with annual averages ranging between 1.5 percent to as much as 6 percent between 2000 and 2001.

Presented below is a table that illustrates the population trends for the County from 1960 through 2006. Table 1 reveals that the County's population grew 30 percent between 1960 and 1970, 17.0 percent between 1970 and 1980, 15 percent between 1980 and 1990,

and 39 percent between 1990 and 2000. From 2000 until 2006, the County has grown 27.5 percent.

**Table 1: Historic Population**

Year	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2002	2004	2006
Total Population	65,711	84,925	99,276	113,909	158,383	175,294	189,823	201,871

Source: U.S Census Bureau and Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research

Figure 1 Historic Population from 1960 to 2006

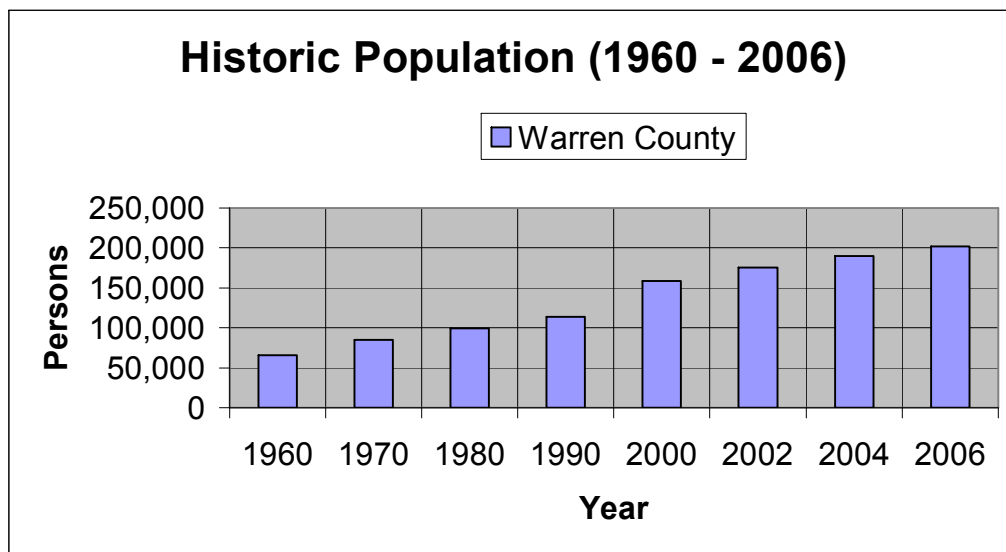


Table 2 breaks down the County's population by jurisdiction from 2000 to 2006 to reveal where the higher rates of growth have occurred within Warren County. The portion of the City of Monroe within Warren County had the largest rate of annual growth at 41.3 percent followed by Hamilton Township with 10.7 percent and Massie Township with 7.4 percent.

**Table 2: 2006 Population Estimates for Warren County, Cities, Villages and Townships**

Jurisdiction	Population			Average Annual Rate of Change (a)
	Census 4/1/00	Estimate 7/1/05	Estimate 7/1/06	
Warren County	158,383	196,793	201,871	3.9%
Butlerville	231	241	244	0.9%
Carlisle	4,876	5,372	5,526	1.9%
Corwin	256	318	322	4.1%
Franklin	11,396	12,422	12,695	1.8%
Harveysburg	563	613	624	1.6%
Lebanon	16,962	20,000	20,346	2.9%
Loveland (pt)	281	361	369	1.8%
Maineville	885	1,009	1,019	2.4%
Mason	22,016	28,879	29,491	4.7%
Middletown (pt)	2,031	2,249	2,303	1.3%
Monroe (pt)	47	274	408	41.3%
Morrow	1,286	1,512	1,534	2.0%

Pleasant Plain	156	164	167	1.1%
South Lebanon	2,538	3,176	3,379	4.1%
Springboro	12,227	16,159	16,696	5.1%
Waynesville	2,558	2,979	3,015	2.7%
Balance	80,074	101,065	103,732	4.1%
Clearcreek	8,747	11,728	12,038	5.2%
Deerfield	25,515	29,973	30,338	2.5%
Franklin	9,947	11,101	11,301	2.0%
Hamilton	8,645	15,858	16,098	10.7%
Harlan	3,240	4,237	4,548	5.3%
Massie	498	663	772	7.4%
Salem	2,847	3,352	3,489	3.4%
Turtlecreek	12,114	13,439	13,838	2.1%
Union	2,230	2,649	2,745	4.5%
Washington	1,855	2,502	2,721	6.2%
Wayne	4,436	5,563	5,844	4.5%

A – The average annual population change from April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2006.

Source: U.S Census Bureau and Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research

### Population Density

The County is currently approximately 260,672 acres or 407.3 square miles. With a population of 201,871, the County's average population density is 496 persons per square mile or 1.29 persons per acre.

### Age

Another factor to consider in planning for parks, recreation services and open spaces is the age of the population. The figure to the right shows the 1990, 2000 and 2006 statistics for each year and the changes between the years. The school age population in the County increased by 21,124 persons, although school aged children remains only

26 percent of the total population. The percentage of population in every category increased at the same rates from 1990 to 2006 except for the 18 to 24 years old where it decreased from 1990 to 2000 by 23 percent, but then increased by 138 percent from 2000 to 2006. This could be largely due to the number of college aged children that either went away to college or came back or they chose to stay at home and attend colleges that are local to the area.

Figure 2: Warren County Population by Age

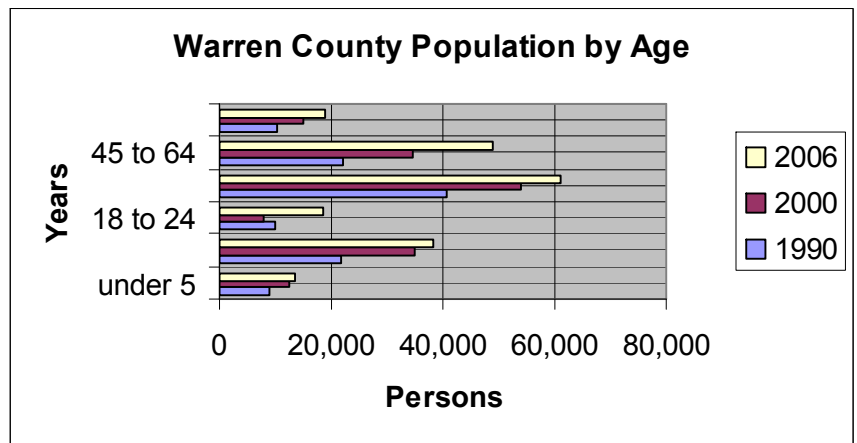


Table 3: Warren County Population by Age

	1990	2000	2006	% change
Under 5	8,789	12,369	13,475	53%
5 to 17	21,867	34,909	38,305	75%
18 to 24	10,161	7,827	18,630	83%
25 to 44	40,555	53,844	61,148	50%
45 to 64	22,219	34,576	48,936	120%

65 and over	10,318	14,858	19,020	84%
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**Table 4: Warren County Percentage of Population by Age**

	1990	2000	2006
Total Pop	113,909	158,383	201,871
Under 5	8%	8%	7%
5 to 17	19%	22%	19%
18 to 24	9%	5%	10%
25 to 44	36%	34%	30%
45 to 64	19%	22%	24%
65 and over	9%	9%	10%

### Race

Warren County's 2006 population was primarily white (92.37 percent) with Black or African American accounting for almost 3.34 percent, Hispanics approximately 0.9 percent, and Asian Americans approximately 2.64 percent. This was only a slight shift since 1990.

### ***Housing***

In a 2006 report conducted by Claritas, the County has an inventory of 58,692 housing units. In the subsequent years (2000 to 2006), the inventory has increased substantially to 74,369 units (15,677 units or 28 percent), which is slightly lower than the rate of population growth for this same period. The average household size for the County in 2000 was 2.72 persons, which decreased to 2.68 persons in 2006.

The 2006 Claritas report also showed that 27 percent of the housing was constructed between 1999 and 2006, with 13 percent of the units constructed between 1995 and 1998. The housing stock in the County is relatively new. The median value of an owner-occupied housing unit in 2006 was \$176,740 and \$142,200 in 2000.

**Table 5: Year Structures Were Built in Warren County**

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Total Housing Units	74,369	100%
1999 to 2006	20,253	27.23%
1995 to 1998	9,900	13.31%
1990 to 1994	6,439	8.66%
1980 to 1989	8,745	11.76%
1970 to 1979	9,176	12.34%
1960 to 1969	6,713	9.03%
1950 to 1959	6,311	8.49%
1940 to 1949	2,173	2.92%
1939 or earlier	4,659	6.26%

### ***Population Forecasts***

The County has grown at variable annual rates over the past forty-five years with the greatest rate of growth experienced during the 1990's. The average annual rate during a decade has fluctuated between 1.5 percent and 6 percent. The growth rate is affected by the starting population and the amount of new growth. From 1990 to 2000 the County gained an average of 4,447 new residents every year for the ten year period and had an

average annual growth rate of 3.39 percent. The tables below show the historic population changes and corresponding annual rates of growth based on historic trends.

**Table 6: New Warren County Population Growth**

	1960 – 1970	1970 – 1980	1980 – 1990	1990 – 2000	2000 – 2004	2004 – 2005	2005 – 2006	1960 – 2006	1990 – 2006
Total in Period	19,214	14,351	14,633	44,474	31,440	6,970	5,078	136,160	87,962
Average Per Yr	1,921	1,435	1,463	4,447	7,860	6,970	5,078	3,025	5,864

**Table 7: Warren County Historic Average Annual Growth Rates**

	1960 – 1970	1970 – 1980	1980 – 1990	1990 – 2000	2000 – 2006	1960 – 2006	1970 – 2006	1990 – 2006
Average Annual Growth Rate	3%	1.7%	1.5%	3.9%	3.9%	4.6%	3.9%	5.1%

Forecasting population is a challenge because it is impossible to predict the future; however, using historic trends to create an estimate of what future growth may occur provides a point of comparison for how long it may take a community to reach a certain population. The Ohio Department of Development – Office of Strategic Research has provided those projections into the year 2030 in the table below.

**Table 8: Warren County Population Projections**

	2006	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population	201,871	215,020	245,635	276,250	307,300	338,350

Table 9, Population Age Trends, identifies the current trends in the age of the population. This table shows that there has been a small increase in the median age of 32.7 years of age in 1990 to 35.2 years in 2000. It is expected to change very little by 2010 but will increase to 38.8 by the year 2030. The percent over age 65 grew very little from 1990 to 2000 from 9.1 % to 9.4 %, but that percentage is expected to grow by 3% as the year 2030 approaches. Another factor is the average household size, which was 2.80 in 1990 and is expected to drop to 2.60 by 2010 and continue to decrease to 2.45 by 2030.

**Table 9: Population Age Trends**

Year	Median Age	Percent Over 65	Average Household Size
1990	32.7	9.1%	2.80
2000	35.2	9.4%	2.72
2006	35.56	9.5%	2.68
2010	35.92	9.6%	2.60
2020	36.8	10.8%	2.50
2030	38.8	12.8%	2.45

Source: U.S Census Bureau and Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research

## CONTEXT

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### III. Context

#### A. Parks and Recreation Budget

The actual expenditures and revenue for the County Parks fund for 2007 totals 1,045,838.00. Of this total, 30 % comes from County property taxes (general fund). The remaining balance is a combination of user fees, grants and private donations.

The current expenditures and budget compared to the population results in an expenditure of \$ 5.24 per person for parks, leisure, and recreation within Warren County. This factor will be discussed with the comparison to similar size counties in Ohio as well as other political jurisdictions within Warren County in the benchmarking discussion in paragraph D.

#### B. Programming

As stated earlier, the majority of the programming for recreation is provided by the athletic organizations and other political jurisdictions within Warren County, which is specifically geared towards athletic and sports activities. Those programs provided by the County include the St. Patrick's Day Run, spring photo contest, Gulley Park and Trails Frisbee golf outing, movie night and summer concert series at Deerfield Landen Park, Jamboree in the Field at Veterans Park in Morrow, and the Fall Celebration at Hisey Park. The organizations all cater toward youth programming and therefore, there are no adult athletic leagues or programs offered by the County. Appendix A identifies the other athletic organizations that sponsor recreation programming and the number of participants that are currently involved in their programs.

#### C. Parks Board of Commissioners

Warren County has a three member Parks Board of Commissioners that are appointed by the County Commissioners. The members are Fred Bay, Richard Jones and William Schroeder.

#### D. Benchmarking Comparison to Other Communities

To gain a perspective on the way Warren County is providing services relative to surrounding counties and the other political jurisdictions within Warren County, the staff sent questionnaires and called several communities to survey various aspects of their parks and recreation operations. The questions revolved around acreage, population, budgets, source of funds, and type of staff involved.

Table 10 provides a summary of the results of this survey. The political jurisdictions that responded include the Village of Butlerville, City of Carlisle, Clearcreek Township, Deerfield Township, City of Franklin, Franklin Township, Hamilton Township, Harlan Township, City of Lebanon, City of Loveland, Village of Maineville, City of Mason, Massie Township, City of Middletown, City of Monroe, Village of Morrow, Salem



Township, Village of South Lebanon, City of Springboro, Turtlecreek Township, Union Township, and the Village of Waynesville.

## **E. Previous Studies and Reports**

### **1. Open Space and Farmland Preservation Report (2001)**

An Open Space/Farmland Preservation Subcommittee was created to research methods of preserving farmland and open space and to determine the best method(s) of establishing such preservation techniques in Warren County. The committee found that two-thirds (2/3) of the land surface in Warren County is Prime Agricultural Land (according to the USDA and the Natural Resource Conservation Service) and a total loss of 33,719 acres of farmland/open space had been lost between 1985 and 2000. They also found that the highest rate of loss occurred most recently (17,034 acres) between 1995 and 2000. They surmised that if that trend continued unabated, there would be very little land in CAUV by the year 2040.

The committee concluded that the total loss of farmland to development of all available open space is not desirable. Most zoning codes throughout the County however, make it feasible. There are no existing zones specifically for open space or agriculture, but imposed zoning is not the answer. To try and combat the loss of farmland and open space, the committee recommended the following options to the County Commissioners, specific to their jurisdiction (which includes 5 townships) for implementation:

- Open Space Preservation Easements;
- Farmland Practices be Considered Prior to Infrastructure Upgrades;
- Land Use Tax Credits;
- Link Deposit Loan Program;
- Agri-Park Concept;
- Develop Leadership at the County Level for Housing and Growth;
- Cluster and Mixed Use Housing;
- Citirama;
- Open Space as Permitted Land use for Tax Programs;
- Park-Agri Concept; and
- Temporary Easement Program

Surveys were also sent to the farming community asking what their current feelings were regarding their land. Out of 898 responses, 335 (37%) people stated that they would farm their land as long as they owned it; 294 (33%) people stated that their land would remain agriculture no matter what; 154 (17%) people stated that they had no strong feelings on agriculture either way; 63 (7%) people stated that their land was a real estate investment; 44 (5%) people stated they owned their land for other reasons; and 8 (1%) people did not respond in any way.

Of the surveys returned, 441 (49%) responders stated that they considered themselves farmers, 455 (50%) responders stated that they did not consider themselves a farmer, and 6 (1%) people did not respond either way.

Table 11 illustrates the Ownership of farmland and it was found that 11.8 percent of land-owners that considered themselves farmers owned between 80 and 160 acres. Those land owners who considered themselves non-farmers, 13.0 percent owned 20 to 40 acres.

**Table 11: Farmland Ownership Acreages**

<i>Farm acres owned</i>	<i>No Entry</i>	<i>5 to 10</i>	<i>10 to 20</i>	<i>20 to 40</i>	<i>40 to 80</i>	<i>80 to 160</i>	<i>160 to 320</i>	<i>320 to 640</i>	<i>&gt; 640</i>
<i>Farmer</i>	10	15	46	85	90	106	63	18	8
<i>Non-Farmer</i>	11	11	73	117	111	92	26	13	1

## 2. Warren County Combined Land Use Plan (2007)

Updated Land Use Plans for Franklin, Harlan, Turtlecreek, Union and Washington Townships (i.e., areas under Warren County zoning jurisdiction) were developed through a collaborative process between January and December 2006, preparatory to a comprehensive re-write of the Warren County Rural Zoning Code. The document prepared marks a thoughtful turning point in land use planning for each Township because the 1974 County-wide Plan and subsequent individual township plans did not include “smart growth” policies or the provision of an economically sustainable future tax base through an increased percentage of non-residential uses. The plan was also outdated as to assumptions regarding sanitary sewer service areas, recent annexation trends, and the attendant implications of each factor, due to extremely rapid growth.

Summarizing future land use, areas where sanitary sewer is currently or may eventually become available are locations where growth and land use intensity are to be encouraged. This is common within a utility service areas concept of planning, which has been carried over from prior Land Use Plans. This concept has been strengthened through recent policy decisions of the Warren County Commissioners, in avoiding extensions of sanitary sewer outside these boundaries. Transitional intensities of development are projected moving outward from municipalities and sewer service areas, with the goal of preserving the prevailing rural character of the remainder of each Township to the extent possible.

The following goals were developed during the Land Use Planning process:

- Protect water resources, wetlands, floodplains, and woodlands, balancing environmental values and the built environment;
- Provide a broad choice of multi-use recreational opportunities, available to all Township citizens;
- Air quality that is not harmful or offensive to the natural or man-made environment;
- Establish a balance between development and growth management, maintaining the desired community character and respecting private property rights;
- A pattern of land use capable of serving and meeting the social, economic and environmental needs of residents and local institutions;

- Provide community services adequate to fulfill the social, environmental and economic needs of residents; and
- Coordination and cooperation among local, State and Federal officials in matters relating to land use planning, to create a well-balanced, compatible and complementary arrangement of land uses.

Table 12 highlights the Future Land Use Percentages that were also developed during this process.

**Table 12: Future Land Use Percentages**

Township	Agriculture/ Rural Reside.		Residential Sewered		Office/ Commercial		Industrial		*Public Use	
	Prior	Future	Prior	Future	Prior	Future	Prior	Future	Prior	Future
Franklin	28.7	14.3	32.0	35.4	1.4	7.3	0.5	5.1	37.4	37.9
Harlan	56.3	56.2	5.2	5.2	0.7	0.8	1.6	1.6	36.2	36.2
Turtlecreek	55.8	37.7	13.0	19.3	0.5	6.3	0.6	3.4	30.1	33.3
Union	50.7	31.1	3.6	10.3	2.2	4.0	4.4	14.5	39.1	40.1
Washington	68.2	68.2	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.3	31.0	31.0
Averages	51.9	41.5	10.8	14.0	1.1	3.8	1.5	5.0	34.7	35.7

\* includes institutional uses (government, schools, police/fire), parks/open space, public rights-of-way, utilities and protection areas (flood plain and steep slopes)

## F. Land Use Trends

As documented elsewhere, since the adoption of the Warren County Parks and Open Space Plan close to 20 years ago, Warren County has continued its rapid population growth. From a land use perspective, the vast majority of this residential growth has consisted of single-family detached housing, which generates a significant demand on parks and recreation facilities. However, notable trends include:

A rising demand for so-called “empty nester” or “lifestyle” (single story detached/attached and multi-family) housing--both owner-occupied and rental--as the local population continues to age;

A measurable increase in non-residential (i.e., commercial, office and industrial) uses as a percentage of overall land use, both from the standpoint of market force demand, and also from a public policy perspective; and

The movement toward “conservation design” in local residential development regulations, preserving a significant proportion of a given development site as private common open space in return for a smaller lot size (clustering) allowance.

Taken together, while the overall population continues to grow rapidly, these positive trends will tend to somewhat mitigate the ever-increasing demand for park and recreation facilities to be provided by the public sector.

## THEORIES OF OPEN SPACE

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### IV. Theories of Open Space

#### A. Definition of Open Space

The term “open space” means different things to different people. To some, it creates a mental picture of something familiar and tangible, such as the Caesar Creek Reservoir, the Little Miami State Park/Scenic Trail, Landen-Deerfield Park, etc. To others, it is more conceptual and passive, perhaps evoking a meadow or wooded expanse. Simply defined, open space is land and/or water with its surface area open to the sky. The term open space is therefore not necessarily synonymous with the words “park” or “vacant”. While undeveloped land has the potential to be classified as open space, that should only be done after a decision has been made to purchase or regulate it for such purposes and if the land is able to perform at least one (1) of the three (3) functions of open space.

#### B. Functions of Open Space

Open space, if planned properly, can provide recreation resources (recreation function), can protect natural resources (conservation/ protection function), or can aid in the structuring of the form or urban development (shaping urban form function).

##### *Recreation Function*

The most well-known and accepted use of open space is for recreation. The provision of land upon which a variety of recreational activities may be pursued is the major use of open space in terms of money, time spent and the number of individuals involved. The wide range of activities incorporated in this function provide the opportunity for both physical and psychological relief from the pressures of daily life, by allowing people to relax and learn about their environment, to enjoy nature and to participate in sports.

Open land used for recreation covers a multitude of facility types and activities. They range from small ones, such as a corner tot lot or vest pocket park, to large areas, including a regional park or special use facility (e.g., marinas, trails, campgrounds, beaches, etc). Recreation open space may be used for active or passive pursuits and may accommodate a single activity, or several.

Although recreation open space may be either publicly or privately owned, much of the demand for outdoor recreation can be met only through provision by government, or a public right to use private facilities. Open space can provide recreation opportunities both formally and informally. Many types of outdoor recreation require developed facilities, but outdoor recreation activities can take place in, and be based upon, undeveloped open space.

##### *Conservation/Protection Function*

Open space for conservation purposes is the next most common purpose for which open space is acquired and preserved. However, the acquisition and preservation of open

space for conservation purposes involves as much, if not more, land than that acquired and utilized for recreation purposes. Conservation open space protects and preserves natural resources and maintains the natural environment, thereby protecting the public from certain natural hazards and protecting unique and fragile areas.

Protection open space is identified and defined by biologic, geologic, hydrologic and/or physiographic characteristics. This designation does not depend upon demand, as is the case for most recreation open space, but rather upon uniqueness as a natural resource or intrinsic unsuitability for urban development--encompassing such objectives as protection of water bodies and water courses, groundwater recharge areas, erodible slopes, forests and woodlands, soils with severe limitations for development, unique or endangered vegetation and wildlife habitat, areas of unique geologic or scientific interest and areas of unique historic or cultural merit.

At the same time, protection does not mean total prohibition of the use of an area so designated. Such lands may be used for a wide variety of recreational activities, such as hiking or fishing, as long as the intensity of use does not cause deterioration or interfere with the ability to perform the desired protective function. Nor do such lands have to be publicly owned, but it is necessary to ensure that they will remain open and that use will be consistent with the level of protection desired.

#### *Shaping Urban Form Function*

The least recognized function of open space is its use to shape the pattern of urban development. This function is based upon a number of principles. Open space can promote the formation of distinct, cohesive neighborhoods, which are in turn served effectively by urban services and facilities, thus directing growth into recognizable corridors and helping to prevent sprawling development patterns. Open space can also provide a sense of community identity, by defining the boundaries of neighborhoods, districts or entire urban areas. Finally, open space can provide relief from extensive urbanization by preserving elements of the natural environment near developed areas.

### **C. Other Definitions**

#### *Park*

A park is publicly accessible, has identifiable boundaries, contributes to overall community aesthetics; and provides a community gathering place.

Publicly accessible – Parks must be publicly accessible, regardless of ownership. Such accessibility is a great virtue and a defining characteristic of parks. Everyone is welcome whenever a park is open. Use of a park is not reserved only for specific users or eliminated because of site constraints. Parks are public goods that provide substantial public access and benefits to all.

Identifiable boundaries – Parks are distinct geographic entities whether they stand alone or, ideally, connect with larger greenway, trail, or environmental systems. They are identifiable public spaces that accommodate a wide variety of public uses. Parks are places where one can picnic with the family, play a game of soccer, fly a kite, watch people, read a book, walk, bike, ride a horse, fish, sail, listen to a concert – the list goes

on. Regardless of the type of park one visits, a sense of freedom and spontaneity should be associated with the experience. While some park sites feature extensive recreation and cultural facilities, park managers need to be careful not to reach a tipping point in which too much space is converted to restricted uses, and the park loses its value as a public park site.

**Aesthetic Places** – Parks develop or preserve natural beauty. These sites can be formal, traditional spaces that provide grass, trees, flowers, public art, and similar attributes. Or they can be environmentally sensitive places characterized by protected streams, meadow grasses, wildflowers, informal pathways, and viewpoints.

**Community Gathering Places** – Parks host major concerts, festivals, and events. Fourth of July celebrations, arts and crafts fairs, holiday light festivals, and similar activities bring a community together, and these events often take place in public parks. In keeping with their flexible nature, parks can absorb these functions, while still maintaining their core mission of providing recreation opportunities and aesthetic space.

### *Natural Areas*

Natural areas are places where the environment exists in a state that has not been affected by man's activities or development.

### *Recreation*

Recreation is any activity that diverts and refreshes the mind and body; the satisfaction that is felt or derived from the voluntary participation in an activity; and activity voluntarily undertaken for pleasure or relaxation that is apart from the essential routines of life. It is an individual or group experience, motivated primarily by the enjoyment and satisfaction derived there from. It takes many forms and may be a planned or spontaneous activity.

Active recreation activities are those activities that require moderate to high physical exertion or participation. For example, horseback riding, tennis, swimming, skateboarding, rollerblading, biking and jogging are active forms of recreation. Passive recreation activities usually consist of quiet pursuits, with minimal exertion. The pace of these activities is quite leisurely. Examples include board games, card playing, gardening, bird watching or picnicking. There are, however, conflicting views as to the difference between active and passive recreation. Hence, it is almost an individual thing, for what may be active recreation to one individual might be passive to another.

Outdoor recreation contrasts with the various forms of recreation typically carried on indoors. There are some borderline activities that can take place either indoors or outdoors, such as basketball and track and field activities. Outdoor recreation obviously requires space and resources for its enjoyment. Some kinds are best carried on where the natural landscape has had minimal modification. Others require extensive investment and modification.

### *Resource Based Open Space*

Resource based open space or recreation facilities are those that are dependant upon the natural qualities or physical features of the land for their location or occurrence.

*Leisure*

Leisure is freedom from work and from fulfilling the basic obligations and necessities of life. Leisure involves pursuits freely decided upon by the individual.

*Conservation*

Conservation is the protection and prudent use of resources against depletion or waste, as opposed to preservation, which involves the strict protection of resources.

## PARK INVENTORY

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### V. Individual Park and Open Space Inventory and Analysis

#### A. Introduction

Parks and open space are valuable resources for Warren County, providing a higher quality of life by contributing to the well being of the residents. Parkland that is not developed is generally referred to as open space. In these open spaces, or undeveloped natural parklands, there is little active interaction between the park users and the site. Both developed and undeveloped parklands are available in Warren County.

There are other ways parkland is defined:

- It can be utilized for passive or active recreation;
- It may be publicly or privately owned and/or operated; and/or
- It may serve a small neighborhood or the whole community.

#### *Active vs. Passive*

Active Recreation includes facilities for field sports such as soccer, baseball or football fields as well as swimming pools, court sports, and playgrounds for children. Passive recreation areas contain elements such as walking trails, picnic shelters and arboretums. Passive recreation is suited well to natural areas that are set aside for conservation in parks.

Passive sites may have trails located through them for hiking or horseback riding and carriage driving, providing for passive recreation or focus merely on natural resource preservation or wildlife habitat. Passive recreation is a way to utilize parkland that is unsuitable for development due to slope restrictions, wetlands, or heavily wooded areas.

#### *Public vs. Private*

The parks and open spaces in Warren County can also be divided into two other categories – publicly owned and privately owned. A public park is an area dedicated to recreational use that is owned and/or maintained by the County or other governmental entity. Public parks are for all citizens of the community to use.

Privately owned parks or facilities may be associated with a private school, refer to a recreation facility such as a YMCA or even include amenities in a residential subdivision where the use is restricted to the residents in the subdivision.

The primary focus of this assessment is the County owned or managed recreation facilities. However, Warren County's current park and open space inventory includes public and private sites. Though their availability to the general public is limited, public and private school facilities are also considered part of the park and open space inventory for Warren County.



## B. Comparison of Public-Owned Parkland and Open Spaces

The last park and open space inventory was conducted for the County in 1985 in a Park and Open Space Plan by the Warren County Regional Planning Commission. At that time of the completion of the Park and Open Space Plan, there were 11,733.5 acres or 53 areas of public open space. The public recreation/open space ratio was 118 acres for 1,000 persons. By 2008, the county's public recreation/open space inventory grew an additional 6,455 acres by acquiring 143 sites. Though the quantity of parkland increased so did the population, but at a greater rate. The ratio of public parks and open space in 2008 has decreased to 90 acres for 1,000 persons (see Table 13).

**Table 13: Comparison of the Public Recreation Areas 1985 to 2008**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Recreation Areas</i>	<i>Total Acreage</i>	<i>Parkland Ratio (Acres/1,000 Population)</i>
1985	53	11,733.5	119
2008	196	18,189	90

It is also important to note that many residents derive their summer time fun through private recreation areas such as Kings Island, The Beach Water Park, numerous summer camps, or even their local subdivision pool that is maintained by their homeowner's associations. If private recreation areas are added into the totals, there are 33,391 acres or 574 areas of recreation space County-wide. The overall recreation space ratio then becomes 165 acres for 1,000 persons as compared to 214 acres for 1,000 persons in 1985 (see Table 14).

**Table 14: Comparison of Public and Private Recreation Areas 1985 to 2008**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Recreation Areas</i>	<i>Total Acreage</i>	<i>County Parkland Ratio (Acres/1,000 Population)</i>
1985	184	21,215	214
2008	574	33,391	165

The current classification system of recreation areas and their total acreages for Warren County were compared to the 1985 park inventory provided by the Park and Open Space Plan for Warren County. The results are shown in Table 15.

**Table 15: Comparison of Recreation Classifications 1985 to 2008**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Mini</i>	<i>Neighborhood</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Regional</i>	<i>Athletic</i>	<i>Special Use</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Trails</i>
1985	11	6	40	13	1	3	22*	88	0*	0*
2008	32	14	71	37	4	12	63	299	35	7

\* *Special Use, Natural, and trail classifications were combined in the 1985 Plan.*

**Table 16: Comparison of Recreation Acreages 1985 to 2008**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Mini</i>	<i>Neighborhood</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Regional</i>	<i>Athletic</i>	<i>Special Use</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Natural</i>	<i>Trails</i>
1985	21	108	662*	921	7738	35*	2945	8857	0	0
2008	69	130	1858*	2606	8876	367*	3253	13,217	2572	443

\* *Private schools and athletic fields have been added into the public open space amounts to give a total acreage amount overall.*

## C. Public Vs. Private Open Spaces

### *Public Open Space*

The largest classification of public open space, in terms of total acreage, is Regional Parkland. There are four facilities that account for 8,876 acres or 49% percent of the public open space total. The largest regional public area in Warren County is Caesar Creek State Park, which contains 7,738 acres within the county (10,730 acres total). Only the portion in Warren County is included in the regional parkland total.

Caesar Creek State Park is primarily located in Warren County, but extends into both Clinton and Greene Counties. Caesar Creek Reservoir was authorized and built by the Flood Control Act of 1938. Construction began in October 1971 with the project becoming operational in January 1978. The lake, covering 2,830 acres of seasonal pool, is a unit of the comprehensive plan for the Ohio River basin to effect reduction in flood stages downstream from the dam. The recreation facilities at the lake and accompanying park are maintained and operated by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources except for certain areas (i.e. the dam) controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Activities available at the park include, boating, camping, hiking, private horseback riding, picnicking and swimming.

Caesar Creek State Park also contains approximately 30 miles of horse back riding trails and a horseman's camp which are both maintained primarily by the Warren County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman's Council (although owned by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources). Equipment is donated by members of the council, and hundreds of members volunteer thousands of hours to clear trails, spread gravel and other maintenance work, including replacing the roof on the campground shelter.

Special Use Areas comprise the second largest classification category of public open space. Special use areas account for 3,253 acres or 18% percent of the public open space total. A special use area is an area established, designed, constructed and/or equipped to provide and meet the requirements of a specific, specialized or limited purpose. Space requirements vary and definite standards cannot be set. A special use facility is not provided in each section of a county in response to social or economic need.

The third largest classification category of open spaces are a combination of athletic fields, community, neighborhood and mini parks that are provided by State, municipal, village, township and County agencies. Together these parks total 3,172 acres or 17% percent of the public open space totals. Athletic fields account for 367 acres, community parkland 2,606 acres, neighborhood parks 130 acres, and mini parks 69 acres respectively.

The Little Miami State Park/Scenic Trail is a linear park with a paved trail that follows an abandoned railroad route that is close to the Little Miami State and National Scenic River, from Milford, an eastern suburb of Cincinnati, to Xenia, Yellow Springs, and Springfield, 69 miles north. The park, approximately 76 miles in length, averages 60 feet in width and runs through Clermont, Greene, Hamilton and Warren Counties. Most of the park (32.3 miles – 278 acres) is in Warren County. The park is a multi-use recreational trail. Since 1985, the trail has been extended more than 32 miles and will continue to be built further south into Hamilton County where it will eventually connect to the Ohio

River Trail that runs along the Ohio River. (To see the segments of the Little Miami Scenic Trail in more detail, see Appendix B). While the use of the Little Miami Scenic Trail has predominately been by hikers, bikers, and those on roller blades, the original intention was for this trail to be a multi-use trail to include horses. Most of the trail has an eight foot paved path and an eight foot grass path beside it for horse riders and carriage driving.

Fort Ancient State Memorial was created as an archeological preserve in 1891. Care and control of the site has been vested with the Ohio Historical Society since that date. Two prehistoric Indian cultures inhabited the Fort Ancient Earthworks and the Anderson Village site. The Hopewell Indians, living in Ohio between 300 BC and 600 AD built the earthworks. Sometime between 1200 AD and pioneer history the Fort Ancient Indians reoccupied the site. A museum, opened in 1967, exhibits tools, pottery, ornaments, and methods of burial.

Two open space/recreational natural features that are not included in the public open space acreage totals are the Great and Little Miami Rivers. The Great Miami River flows approximately 6 miles through the northwest portion of the County. The Little Miami River, one of the most valuable natural resources located in southern Ohio, bisects Warren County with approximately 37 miles of its 105-mile length. These two rivers, particularly the Little Miami, offer both scenic and recreational opportunities. The Great Miami, not possessing the scenic beauty of the Little Miami, has not been utilized to its potential.

As previously indicated, all of the public and private school lands were inventoried. Land owned by school districts, totals 1,858 acres. A calculation was also made regarding the amount of land available at each school site for open space and recreational use that totals        acres. That is, buildings and parking lots were subtracted from the total acreage of a particular school site.

Map 4, the Existing Park Facilities Area Map, illustrates the geographic distribution of parks and recreation facilities throughout the Warren County area.

#### **D. Open Space Classification System**

Park Classification standards provide the County with a way to measure the current status of its parks system and where it needs to be in the future. Park Classifications and standards were initially developed by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in 1983 and updated in 1995. The objective of NRPA park standards was to assist a community in determining what types of park facilities and quantities may be required to adequately provide the recreation amenities that would support a community based upon the size of its population. A classification system was developed that addressed the different types of parks that should be part of a community.

##### *Classifications*

A successful park system needs to have the proper mixture of park classifications ranging from neighborhood playgrounds, sports complexes, open space/natural areas and special use parks (i.e. skate parks, golf courses, etc.) Classifications address the physical size of a park, service area and generally the types of improvements of each park of facility. A

classification system for public parks and open space lands was developed during the compilation of the original Park and Open Space Plan, to assist in determining the extent to which the needs of the Warren County population have been met and to identify where deficiencies exist. The public open space classification system for Warren County, which has been updated to meet the current NRPA standards, contains the following categories:

1. Mini-Park
2. Neighborhood Park
3. School Park
4. Community Park
5. Regional Park
6. Athletic Fields
7. Special Use Parks
8. Natural Resource Areas/Preserves
9. Trails/Greenways/Bikeways
10. Private Parks and Recreational Facilities

The hierarchy represents a complete system of public parkland at all geographic levels. This classification system categorizes facilities primarily by the extent of their service area and by their composition.

Each classification in the hierarchy represents an important part of the system, as each performs a particular function and satisfies specific recreational needs. A detailed explanation of each class, in terms of size service area, location and typical facilities, follows.

Listed typical facilities are meant to be illustrative and not mutually exclusive between classifications. Additionally, the size and number of facilities will vary, from location to location. Service area is defined in terms of both time and distance. Distance is computed based upon average walking and driving rates.

#### **E. Mini Parks**

Mini Parks are used to serve a concentrated or a limited population group and are typically not utilized for programmed activities. These parks tend to be located in downtown, industrial/commercial areas or within shopping districts. They typically provide specific facilities for passive recreation for a limited group of individuals. Mini parks usually do not have parking associated with them.

- Service Area: 0.25 miles (5 minute walking time)
- Suggested Size: 1 – 2 acres
- Level of Service: 0.5 acres/1,000 people

The existing mini parks located in Warren County can be found in Table 17-1.

#### **F. Neighborhood Parks**

Neighborhood Parks are developed for both active and passive recreation. They typically include playground equipment, playfields and courts. Playfields and courts are generally used in an informal manner. Areas should be provided for adults such as shelters and

benches providing a balance between active and passive-park uses. Neighborhood parks should be accessible to the surrounding neighborhood population. Elementary School sites can serve as a neighborhood park during after-school hours.

- Service Area: ½ mile (5 to 15 minutes walking time)
- Suggested Size: 15 acres
- Level of Service: 2 acres/1,000 people

The existing neighborhood parks located in Warren County can be found in Table 17-2.

### **G. School Parks**

- Service Area: Varies
- Suggested Size: Varies
- Level of Service: Varies

The school parks in Warren County are located within each school district and may vary by school, but can be found in Table 17-3.

### **H. Community Parks**

Community Parks are typically larger and serve multiple neighborhoods. They provide a focal point for community-wide activities. Community Park sites should be selected for their natural resources, streams, water bodies, wetlands, etc., to provide active recreation and playfields. An ideal Community Park should not dedicate more than 40 percent of the site to active sports fields and the fields should not be programmed to be used extensively for league or tournament use. The Community Park should be linked internally with trails.

- Service Area: 1 to 2 miles (5 minute driving time)
- Suggested Size: 25 acres
- Level of Service: 8 acres/1,000 people

The existing community parks located in Warren County can be found in Table 17-4.

### **I. Regional Parks**



Regional Parks serve a multi-county area with extensive open space and readily accessible passive recreational opportunities. These parks typically provide a variety of terrain, scenic views and extensive natural areas, along with the opportunity for participation in a variety of recreational opportunities. The most well known Regional Park in Warren County is Caesar Creek State Park.

- Service Area: 15 to 300 miles (½ hour or more driving time)
- Suggested Size: 500 acres or more
- Level of Service: 20 acres/1,000 people

The existing regional parks located in Warren County can be found in Table 17-5.

## J. Special Use Parks

This classification of Parks is the most specialized category. Special Use Parks can be categorized into two areas:

1. Historical/Cultural/Social Sites; and
2. Recreation Facilities/Outdoor Recreation Facilities

A community center or community theater would be classified as a recreation facility. Golf courses, tennis centers and sports stadiums would be classified as outdoor recreation facilities.

The Historical/Cultural/Social Sites designated in Warren County are:

- Carlisle Historical Society & Museum
- Carlisle Station Railway Museum
- Clear Creek Area – MCD
- Corwin Mill Portage – ODNR
- Fort Ancient Access – ODNR
- Fort Ancient State Memorial – OHS
- Glendower State Memorial – OHS
- Glenn Island Access – ODNR
- Halls Creek Woods – ODNR
- Franklin Harding Museum
- Hatton-Lukens Bird & Wildlife Sanctuary
- Lebanon Scenic Railway Station – City of Lebanon
- Little Miami Scenic Overlook – ODNR
- Little Miami State Park – ODNR
- Local Protection Levees – Franklin, Franklin Township, and MCD
- Mathers Mills Access – ODNR
- Miami Valley Building & Loan Association Memorial Park
- Mounts Station Park – Hamilton Township
- Oregonia Access – ODNR
- Warren County Fairgrounds – Warren County Commissioners
- Warren County Historical Society Museum – Warren County Historical Society



Fort Ancient State Memorial

A more detailed inventory of public special use recreation areas can be found in Table 17-6.

The public Indoor/Outdoor and Recreational Facility Sites designated in Warren County are:

- Armco Golf Course (part of Armco Park)
- Franklin Community Center
- Golf Center at Kings Island w/Tennis Center
- Harmon Golf Club

- Heatherwoode Golf Course
- Kingswood Golf Course
- Mason Community Center
- Massie Township/Harveysburg Community Building

The private Indoor/Outdoor and Recreational Facility Sites designated in Warren County are:

- Coffman Family YMCA – Springboro
- Countryside YMCA – Lebanon
- Court Sports – Mason
- Grissam Paintball Game Field – Wayne Township
- Kingdom Sports Center – Franklin
- Mason Dance Academy – Mason
- Sports Express – Mason
- Wall to Wall Soccer Complex – Mason

### **K. Athletic Fields**

An Athletic Field classification consolidates athletic fields and combines them in one place. As such, these sites should be few and strategically placed within the community. By consolidating fields, the County, City or Township improves scheduling, and minimizes impacts to the neighborhood and community parks. Sports Complexes are better facilitated to handle noise and light pollution, traffic congestion, parking and continuous use of the facilities. It is suggested that neighborhood and community parks incorporate the more informal ball fields while a Sports Complex Park be available for the majority of programmed athletic use, league play and tournaments.

- Service Area: 15 minutes drive time
- Suggested Size: 80 – 150 Acres
- Level of Service: Variable

The Athletic Fields in Warren County are:

- Hunter Ball Park – Franklin Township
- Lebanon Sports Complex – City of Lebanon
- Mason Sports Complex – City of Mason
- Posey-Hartman Soccer Complex – Posey Hartman Soccer Company
- Runyan and Roberts Fields – City of Lebanon/Civic Trust
- Vanderveer Fields – Duke Energy (Carlisle Baseball Association)

### **L. Open Spaces and Natural Resource Areas/Preserves**

Parks in this category are lands set aside that are in their natural state. These lands are typically surrounded by development and are un-developable due to their location in the floodplain, utility easements or steep slopes. These sites tend to be forest/woodlands or protected lands (i.e. wetlands). Open Space/Natural Resource areas can provide visual aesthetics/buffering between incompatible land uses (i.e. commercial adjacent to

residential). Some sites can be conducive to passive “low-impact” activities such as walking, horseback riding/carriage driving, and hiking trails.

- Service Area: 30 to 60 minute drive
- Suggested Size: 1,000 acres or sufficient to protect the resource
- Level of Service: Variable

The existing public open space/natural resource areas located in Warren County can be found in Table 17-7

## **M. Walking Trails, Greenways, Bikeways and Bridal/Carriage Trails**

NRPA is a strong proponent for trails and the linkage of park and open spaces. The use of trails and greenways through Warren County could provide safe pedestrian, cyclists, and horse access to/from and between Warren County Parks. A well-developed trail system is composed of park trails, connected trails, bikeways, and all-terrain multi-use trails. The use of developing trails within greenways would allow residents to travel safely and uninterrupted between parks and other areas of the community. The trail system could tie all of Warren County’s parks, recreation and open spaces into one cohesive system.

### *Greenways*

Greenways are natural corridors within a community. In developed areas of Warren County, greenways are wooded ravines along stream corridors or old farm fence rows. Several greenways exist within Warren County, but they are not all publicly owned.

### *Park Trails*

Park Trails are multi-purpose trails that are used internally within parks, greenways and natural resource areas. Park trails emphasize the natural environment within the park setting. Within a park site, park trails would connect internal passive recreation areas to active recreation areas. Used in connection with greenways, park trails would ideally provide uninterrupted travel from one side of the County to the other by way of connecting all of the public parks.

Mini-Park, Neighborhood, and Community Parks should all have park trails associated with them. Currently, [redacted] local parks have some internal hiking trails developed within the parks.

### *Connector Trails*

Connector trails are used by the residents to connect mini-parks, neighborhood, and community parks and around the community. They are located within storm sewer drainage ways, utility easements, existing road rights-of-ways, and old railroad rights-of-way. Connector trails focus on safe transportation and recreation. Existing trails are typically hard-surface trails.

- Type 1 Connector Trails – Separate paved paths for pedestrians and cyclists, and dirt or gravel paths for bridle/carriage riders and are located along collector streets or parkways.



- Type 2 Connector Trails – One paved path for pedestrian and cyclists and are located along parkways or residential streets.

The existing trails/linkages/greenways located in Warren County are:

- Duke Energy land along Little Miami River – Duke Energy
- Fort Ancient Rural Tracts – Ohio Historical Society
- Great Miami River Trail – Middletown, City of Franklin, and Franklin Township
- Various lands along Little Miami River – LMI Inc.
- Various lands along Little Miami River – City of Loveland/ODNR/Warren County Commissioners
- Lebanon Countryside Bikeway – City of Lebanon
- Little Miami State Park/Scenic Trail – Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Little Miami River Morrow Bridge Overlook Annex – Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Mason Montgomery Road Bicycle Trail – City of Mason
- Muddy Creek Bicycle Trail – City of Mason
- Caesar Creek Trails (equestrian, hiking and mountain biking trails) – Ohio Department of Natural Resources

#### **N. Private Open Space Areas**

Non-public or privately owned space accounts for 13,344 acres or 40% percent of the total amount of public and private open space in Warren County. To be considered as private open space, a facility must be supported solely by financial means other than tax monies, and be governed by a means other than a political jurisdiction. In addition, this land must be available for use, either for passive or active recreation by some segment of Warren County’s population. Table 18 contains a listing of private open spaces. Facility locations are shown in Map 5, Private Parks Open Space Inventory.

Agricultural lands and flood plains adjacent to the Little Miami and Great Miami Rivers and their tributaries, and inactive or spent gravel pits are a form of open space. However, unless they are accessible for recreational purposes by some segment of the general public, they have not been included in the inventory. Those lands inventoried include amusement parks, baseball parks, campgrounds, camps, canoe liveries, cemeteries, clubs recreation spaces, community centers/YMCA/exercise trails, equestrian facilities, commercial farms, fishing lakes, golf courses, historical/cultural sites, hunting grounds and clubs, parks and open space areas within subdivisions, private school play areas, picnic grounds, stream easements, swim/tennis clubs and aviation clubs/facilities.



While private open space is available for use today it may not be tomorrow. Organizations, agencies and individuals owning private open space are not required to keep their lands in such use, unless under some type of zoning or other restriction (see below). For that reason, private open space is not a part of the needs and demand discussion. The importance of these facilities should not, however, be minimized by this fact.

A review of Table 18 reveals the diversity and completeness of the types of non-governmental facilities available in Warren County. A number of private facilities deserve special mention. Perhaps, the most notable is Kings Island, a major amusement park. This facility draws approximately 3 million visitors each year. The Jack Nicklaus Sports Center is host to the Ladies Professional Golf Association and Association of Tennis Professionals Championships each year. Camps are maintained in Warren County by eight organizations. These organizations provide 2,440 acres of open space and provide camping experiences for thousands of people, primarily children, each year. The Countryside YMCA is one of the largest family YMCA's in the United States with a building covering almost 2 acres in size.

- Service Area: Variable
- Suggested Size: Variable
- Level of Service: Variable

In an effort to change the patterns of development (avoidance of congestion of the population), the Warren County Regional Planning Commission has adopted open space requirements for each residential development built within the unincorporated areas of the County. The County and other political jurisdictions require the developers to set aside portions of the development for dedicated open space. These open space areas account for 4,386 acres and can be used in a variety of fashions (which include swim and tennis clubs, playgrounds, golf courses etc.). Golf courses, outside Planned Unit Developments (PUD), make up 1,339 acres of open space within Warren County as well.



*Crooked Tree Golf Course – Mason*



*Heritage Club and Golf Course - Mason*

## METHODOLOGY

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### VI. Methodology

The first step in the planning process in the development of the 1988 Park and Open Space Plan was an examination of generalized open space theory. It was felt necessary to determine the roles that parks and open space play in the overall social and economic fabric of society as a whole, and by extension, in Warren County. Most individuals, being intuitive in nature, readily recognize certain inherent functions. However, the relationships of this land use with other activities were reviewed to identify the impacts of parkland and the manner in which the urban/rural framework continues to evolve.

A needs assessment of the community was then undertaken to learn what local residents felt about parks and open space in general. Further, they were asked specific questions as to the types of facilities they considered to be most important to Warren County. This survey was crucial in tailoring the Plan to the actual needs of the population--also key in the development of Plan goals and objectives, the determination of deficiencies/opportunities, as well as the development of open space classifications and standards for these facilities.

Regional, state and national criteria were also examined in the development of the classification system for park, recreation and open space lands. These generic criteria were compared with the identified needs, in order to devise an appropriate parkland hierarchy. Available local physical opportunities were also considered in this process. Standards for the types of facilities that should be available within each class of open space were developed, utilizing the same criteria and assessment data.

The next step was an inventory of all existing facilities throughout Warren County and a review of all previous studies. Public facilities were assigned a classification from the system that had been set up. Private facilities were reviewed to determine to what degree they were assisting in the satisfaction of identified needs and standards.

At this point, local requirements and inventories were compared and deficiencies determined. From there, recommendations were devised for acquisition and development, based upon identified opportunities.

Current planning literature indicates that the above methodology remains sound and defensible. From that perspective, the exercise of updating the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan Update has primarily involved a re-inventory of public and private facilities, a comparison of other methodologies used within Warren County, followed by amended recommendations to meet noted deficiencies.

## NEEDS ANALYSIS

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### VII. Needs Analysis

#### A. General

Since their development in 1983, NRPA Park Classifications and Recreational Facilities Standards have been used as guidelines for the justification of establishing parks and recreational facilities within communities. However, NRPA now recommends that communities establish their own standards that reflect the local community values. Therefore, NRPA has not provided any updates to their national standards since 1995.

Park standards address what type and how many parks might be needed for a community based on its size and compared to a national average. Some communities may meet the standards relative to acreage, but the type, variety, number and locations are not appropriate to adequately serve the community. The geographic location and type of parks are just as important as the numbers of parks in evaluating whether needs are being satisfied and where future parks and recreational facilities should be developed.

For this Assessment, park and open space master plans, including Deerfield Township Park and Open Space Master Plan 2003, Hamilton Township Parks & Open Space Master Plan 2005, Lebanon Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment 2002, Loveland Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2005, Mason Park Master Plan & New Park Design 2004, South Lebanon Comprehensive Recreation & Park Plan 1995, Waynesville and Wayne Township Parks and Facilities Master Plan 2001, were reviewed. A comparison of current standards in these communities provided a guide for the current assessment of Warren County's parks and recreation facilities. The standards, which were utilized for this Assessment, can be found in Section IV. These communities were chosen because they each had recently prepared park master plans and they were within Warren County. Appendix C provides a summary of the communities and their standards.

The standards used in this Assessment were compiled based on the comparison of the standards referenced previously and were refined by the public involvement incorporated into this Assessment. Public opinion via public workshops, focus groups and a community survey served as a gauge for the current and projected trends in Warren County Parks and Recreation needs. The Park Classification and Recreation Facilities Standards in the Warren County Open Space Plan 1988 do vary from the standards developed for this Assessment. Appendix C identifies the changes from the 1988 to 2007 standards.

The Facility Standards and Needs serves to address Warren County's current park sites and their ability to meet the developed Parks and Recreational Facilities Standards for the current population and in the future. The City, County, Township and Village parks provide most of the recreation facilities, while school sites provide secondary facilities.

## B. Park and Recreation Area Needs by Park Types

### *Analysis of Parks and Open Space System*

Mini, Neighborhood and Community Parks have the most definable level of service and are utilized by a larger majority of residents. Therefore, they are predominately utilized to determine if a City, County, Village or Township is providing adequate parkland for the community.

### *Current Park Needs*

The existing parks and open spaces located in Warren County were compared to the developed community park standards and needs based on the current population. Warren County and all the political jurisdictions owned or operated park sites were used in the comparison. Table 18 illustrates that Warren County is deficient in the amount of parkland acreage available to serve the public in the way of Mini and Neighborhood Parks.

**Table 19: Per Capita Existing Park Needs**

<i>Park Classification</i>	<i>Existing Acreage</i>	<i>Park Standard</i>	<i>Minimum Acreage Required for 2008*</i>	<i>Surplus/Deficit</i>
Mini Park	69	.5 acres per 1,000 persons	101	-32
Neighborhood Park	130	2 acres per 1,000 persons	404	-274
Community Park	2606	8 acres per 1,000 persons	1,615	+991

\* Calculations based upon 2006 estimated population of 201,871

It is important to note that if the Public-Owned School sites were included, the amount of acreage for neighborhood parks would increase to 1,752 acres, which is an increase of 1,622 acres. The recreational facilities and open space at Public-Owned School sites is an asset to a community, however since the school sites are not managed by the local political jurisdictions parks and/or recreation departments, the availability of the acreage and/or the facilities should not be assumed in the future.

### *Future Park Needs*

Future park demands were calculated by comparing the developed community park standards based on the projected 2020 population count of approximately 276,250 persons, the results are illustrated in Table 19. If, in the future, Warren County fails to acquire and develop additional parklands, there will be a greater deficit in adequate mini and neighborhood parklands.

**Table 20: Per Capita Future Park Needs (2020)**

<i>Park Classification</i>	<i>Existing Acreage</i>	<i>Park Standard</i>	<i>Minimum Acreage Required for 2020*</i>	<i>Surplus/Deficit</i>
Mini Park	69	.5 acres per 1,000 persons	138	-69
Neighborhood Park	130	2 acres per 1,000 persons	553	-423
Community Park	2606	8 acres per 1,000 persons	2210	+396

\* Calculations based upon projected population of 276,250 in 2020 and 338,350 in 2030.

A total of 492 acres of additional Mini and Neighborhood Park area will be needed to serve the County's population in 2020 and may be best located in the higher density residential, commercial or industrial areas. There will be no need as of 2020 for additional acres of Community Parks for the County as a whole. There are however, individual community park needs for certain jurisdictions across the County, such as the Cities of Franklin and Springboro.

To maintain the current ratio of 90 acres of County parkland per 1,000 persons, Warren County and its political jurisdictions will need to have 24,862.5 acres by 2020 for public park acreage as well as 30,451.5 acres to meet the demands for park land by 2030.

#### *Future Park Needs and Open Space Distribution and Accessibility*

Additional mini and neighborhood parks should be distributed through residential areas in the proposed growth areas for the County as defined in the Warren County Comprehensive Plan, 2007. Maps 6-1, 6-2, and 6-3, Existing Park Services Area, illustrates areas of the existing community and growth areas, which are not serviced by Mini, Community, or Neighborhood parks.

Neighborhood parks should be developed mainly in the higher density areas of the Cities and within the unincorporated areas of the townships where subdivisions without open spaces are located within the County as shown in Map 7-2.

The needs of the horse community have not been addressed in past tables and surveys, but will be included in future tables and surveys and should be given consideration in future park planning.

### **C. Geographic Distribution of Parks and Facilities**

#### *Geographic Distribution of Parks*

Maps 6-1, 6-2, 6-3, Current Park Service Areas, indicates an area within a quarter mile radius of a mini park, the area within a half-mile of a neighborhood park, and the area within one mile of a community park. Review of this map indicates that the largest unserved areas are within Harlan, Washington, and parts of Hamilton, Massie, Salem, Turtlecreek, and Wayne Townships. These plans clearly identify the lack of mini and neighborhood parks within the lower populated areas of the County, but it is even

noticeable within the heavily populated areas of the western half of the County (which includes the cities of Mason, Franklin and Springboro and Clearcreek, Deerfield, Franklin, Hamilton, Turtlecreek and Union Townships).

Maps 7-1, 7-2, 7-3, Future Park Service Areas, indicates recommended areas for new mini parks, neighborhood parks and community parks based on the same service areas shown on Maps 6-1, 6-2 and 6-3.

Map 8, Adjacent Political Jurisdictions Park Service Areas Map also identifies several parks that may serve Warren County residents, but are outside of the County limits.

#### *Geographic Distribution of Facilities*

The largest park within Warren County is Caesar Creek State Park, which consists of 10,730 acres of which 7,738 acres are located within the County, and is located in Massie and Wayne Townships. As you can see from the map, the area it serves is fairly large and stretches into Montgomery and Greene Counties to the north, Butler County and parts of Indiana to the west, Clinton, Brown and Highland Counties to the east, and Clermont and Hamilton Counties to the south.

Playgrounds are fairly well distributed at all of the parks, with a lack of facilities in the following places:

- Northwest quadrant of the County (defined as Franklin, Franklin Township, Springboro, Lebanon, Clearcreek Township, Carlisle and Turtlecreek Township) – 35 structures or play areas
- Northeast quadrant of the County (defined as Corwin, Harveysburg, Massie Township, Washington Township, Wayne Township and Waynesville) – 4 structures or play areas
- Southwest quadrant of the County (defined as Deerfield Township, Hamilton Township, Mason, Union Township, and South Lebanon) – 17 structures or play areas

Map 10, Family Aquatic Centers and Recreation Centers in the Region identifies the family aquatic centers, indoor aquatic facilities, and the various types of recreation centers located throughout the region. The figure shows that Warren County is the home of the Stolle YMCA, which is the largest indoor aquatic center in the USA. Other nearby indoor/outdoor aquatic centers includes the Mason Community Center Pool, The Great Wolf Lodge in Mason, the Springboro YMCA, the Liberty Township YMCA, the Hamilton/Fairfield YMCA System, the Blue Ash YMCA, the Sharonville YMCA, and the Evendale Community Pool. The City of Mason is also home to a variety of indoor recreation facilities such as the Mason Community Center, Mason Dance Academy, Courts 4 Sports, Wall to Wall Soccer, and Sports Express.

#### **D. Interest Groups**

1. *Warren County Park District* – The Warren County Park District is dedicated to the acquisition, development, protection, and preservation of quality parks and natural areas throughout Warren County, Ohio to achieve and maintain a balance of programs, operations and facilities for public use and enjoyment by residents,

guests and visitors. This includes parks that feature natural areas of unique geological and riparian features of the Little Miami Scenic River corridor, the Great Miami and Twin Creek stream basins, and quality park properties for active play and recreation throughout the County. It also includes the ownership and operation of public parks, nature preserves and recreational facilities on a scale and in a manner sufficient to support and maintain quality recreational and natural experiences and opportunities for children and adults of all ages, in anticipation of and response to the changing and growing demographics of Warren County, Ohio.

In the future, the Park District seeks to acquire permanent funding for the acquisition, development, protection and preservation of quality parks and natural areas to achieve and maintain a balance of programs, operations and facilities for public education, use and participation. They plan to create and maintain a park headquarters with conference and public use amenities adequate and suitable for use by the public as well as the park board and staff as well as acquire and manage contractual relations, personnel and staff to keep up with anticipated growth and demand of the changing demographics of the County.

2. *Warren County Commissioners* – The Warren County Commissioners have been active in trying to acquire adequate park land for the County. They recently purchased Armco Park in Turtlecreek Township with help from the Turtlecreek Township Trustees, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Otterbein Homes which will become a regional park destination and hopefully the new site of the proposed Warren County sports complex. They believe in providing quality recreation opportunities for the residents of Warren County as well protecting the existing open space areas from further development. In recent years, they have been dedicated to setting aside monies for the acquisition and maintenance of parks lands. The Commissioners and the Park Board have been successful in acquiring over 1,300 acres of new recreation spaces since the year 2000 either through donations and/or purchases of land. They have committed to continue to acquire property for recreation needs if the land is low in cost and is accessible to a large number of people. They acknowledged that a park levy may be warranted in the future to help fund the capital improvements and maintenance for the parks.
3. *Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District* – The WCSWCD is currently advocating regulations that would require building setbacks (streamside setbacks) alongside the "blue line" streams through zoning. This would guarantee that the areas would be free from structures and hopefully protect the wildlife and water quality. The WCSWCD provided a map to the RPC staff of soils and environmental areas located within Warren County as provided in Maps 2 & 3.
4. *Little Miami Incorporated* – Little Miami Inc. (LMI) was founded in 1967 as a citizen conservation organization dedicated to restoring and protecting the Little Miami River. They have acquired, through various means, an interest in over 50 nature preserves along the River and are working to restore full ecological health to the warm water river. Their overall mission is to restore and protect the outstanding remarkable natural values of the Little Miami National Wild and Scenic River. Over the last 40 years, LMI has been working with landowners with barren riverfront lands to replant trees and prairies along the river, which has



resulted in a restored river ecosystem. Today, 49% of the riverbank forests are under some form of permanent natural protection, either through land ownership or conservation easements held by LMI and other conservation agencies. Another 24% of the riverfront forests receive some protection through local zoning ordinances.

5. *Miami Conservancy District* – The Miami Conservancy District (MCD) has and will continue to protect the floodplains of rivers and streams in the Great Miami River Watershed. The MCD currently manages more than 4,500 acres of protected river and floodplain land. They currently partner with the Warren County Park District to preserve 393 acres along the Twin Creek, and the City of Springboro to protect 80 acres along Clear Creek in Warren County. Natural riparian buffers have been lost in many places over the years and restoring them in appropriate areas is an easy way to protect water quality, riverbank stability, wildlife and aesthetics in the Great Miami River Watershed. The goal of their agency is to educate landowners, communities and conservation organizations to help restore and protect the riparian buffers. MCD is currently working toward the completion of a planned 98-mile multi-use trail that begins in the City of Fairfield (Butler County) and will terminate in the City of Sidney (Shelby County). To date, 57 miles of the trail are complete with 17 more that have received funding and will be built in the near future. Their long-term goal is to finish the entire 98-mile trail by partnering with the many communities located along the trail route. In the past they have partnered with Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission (MVRPC) to develop a trail plan for the greater Dayton area, which includes the City of Springboro and portions of northern Warren County. They would also like to increase boating opportunities along the Great Miami River and preserve source water sensitive areas (wellfields and the aquifer).
6. *Ohio Department of Natural Resources* – The Division of Natural Areas & Preserves protects natural areas with ecological and/or geological significance under provisions of the Natural Areas Act of 1970. Many of these areas include some of the finest remnants of Ohio’s natural heritage. State nature preserves are sanctuaries for rare plants and animals. For this reason, preserves are suited for minimum impact activities such as bird watching, hiking, nature study and photography, but not picnicking or camping.

The Division of Natural Areas and Preserves also oversees the State Scenic Rivers Program, which was pioneered by the State of Ohio in 1968 with the passage of the nation’s first Scenic Rivers Act. Restoration of streamside forests is the single most important ingredient in maintaining the health of streams and rivers. The removal of forested corridors along waterways increases erosion, runoff and sedimentation, resulting in the degradation of water quality and the reduction of the natural diversity of aquatic communities. The Little Miami River has the designation of being a Wild and Scenic River which affords it protection through the State of Ohio.

7. *Warren County Chapter of the Ohio Horseman’s Council (OHC) and Ohio Valley Carriage Club* – The Ohio Horseman’s Council (Warren County Chapter) and Ohio Valley Carriage Club, working together as the Warren County Equine Advisory Board (WCEAB). The Warren County OHC was founded in 1972 to

promote the development and construction of riding trails at Caesar Creek State Park. Their WCOHC chapter currently has over 100 members and represents all horsemen regardless of breed affiliation or style of riding. Ohio Valley Carriage Club: OVCC was founded in 1968 and now has over 90 member families including nationally-recognized carriage historians and restoration experts. Most members are pleasure drivers from Warren/Butler/Clermont/Hamilton counties, but some come from as far away as Kentucky, Indiana, and northern Ohio. Some members compete in combined driving events and others in local shows. More than 20 OVCC carriages typically participate in the annual Lebanon Christmas Carriage parades.

Members of the WCRPC staff and OVCC met on 12/11/07 and formed the WCEAB to discuss the types of facilities needed by the 2000+ horseman and 6,000+ equines throughout the County, and on 9/4/2008 the WCEAB presented their findings and recommendations to the County Commissioners. They recommended that a County-wide riding/carriage trail system be developed, connecting Caesar Creek State Park to all parts of the county, with a trail passing through the center of the entire county from CCSP to Loveland, and a southern and northern loop. The trails should be dedicated for equine use and hiking only, and should include occasional rest stops, parking facilities designed for trucks and trailers to be phased in over the next several years. They also addressed the need for a modern interdisciplinary Equestrian Center designed for various equine events of all disciplines, as well as equine 4-H clinics and shows. The combination of horse trails and an equestrian center could be used by all horsemen living within the county and bring in many visitors from other regions. The group would welcome discussions about conservation easements across their property to facilitate linking parks, trails, etc. See Appendix G for the report of WCEAB affirming the significant impact equines have on Warren County's economy.

Ohio ranks 6<sup>th</sup> nationally in terms of horse numbers with over 300,000 horses, and Warren County is in the top 4% of all counties in the entire United States with more than 6,000 horses and 2,000 owners, spending over \$24 million annually caring for their horses. Per the American Horseman's Council, \$102 billion is generated annually by the horse industry, with \$32 billion of that coming from the recreational use segment. In Ohio the horse industry creates over 43,000 full time jobs and is a \$2.2 billion industry, with more than 200,000 people involved in horses as owners, service providers, employees, and volunteers.

8. *Warren County Convention and Visitor's Bureau* – The Warren County Convention and Visitor's Bureau is a professional destination marketing organization that uses its resources and influence to increase the number of year-round visitors to Warren County. Tourism is the leading industry in Warren County, with 6.4 million visitors each year and \$637 million in direct economic impact to the County. Every dollar spent in Warren County generates an additional \$1.30 in secondary sales and with every \$1 million spent here produces 25 jobs (15,800 tourism related jobs). The Bureau is directly responsible for generating \$64.6 million in economic impact in 2006, the return on investment of \$28 for every \$1 spent in 2005, and there were 95,453 room nights filled in 2005. The Bureau recently finished a feasibility study to potentially construct a Warren

County Sports Complex that would allow the County to compete with other counties to attract major national and international events. The complex would be indoors and outdoors and could potentially house 38 events that would fill 28,000 rooms and have a \$20 million dollar economic impact. This facility would require 132 acres and the estimated construction cost is over \$80 million dollars. The study also determined that a blended approach for site location may be best for the County by locating the fieldhouse at the Golf/Tennis Center area in Mason and the outdoor fields/multi-purpose stadium at the Drake Road County Parks site in Turtlecreek Township.

9. *Warren County Port Authority* – The Warren County Port Authority, the project funding arm of the County Economic Development function, has commissioned an Advisory Board to conduct the planning activities necessary to define and create a regional arts and cultural center. The Advisory Board is a group of experienced, distinguished business, arts, education, and community leaders who will accomplish this task with cooperation throughout Southwest Ohio. A recommendation will be provided to the arts center Trustees on, or before, June 2009.
10. *Board of Mental Retardation and Development Disabilities (MRDD)* – A representative for the Board of MRDD acknowledged that the group would appreciate the development of more handicapped facilities in each of the parks across the County. These facilities would include more swings (including adult swings), cushioned tracks (baseball and running tracks), tennis courts, zero depth pools, and a facility where the Special Olympics could be held in Warren County.
11. *Various Private Sports Organizations Across Warren County:*
  - *Warren County United Soccer Club* – This club indicated that they would like to see a regional soccer complex built that will attract state and regional tournaments to the area. They are the largest club within the County and are growing rapidly. They would like to see more fields and parking areas developed due to lack of field practice and game space. They would like to see the County and Cities work together on maintenance of field areas. Other soccer clubs include Mason SAY Soccer, Lebanon Youth Soccer Association, Thunder United Metro Futbol Club, Franklin Monroe SAY Soccer, Springboro SAY Soccer Association, Northern Warren County Soccer Alliance, Loveland Youth Soccer and Select Soccer, and Kings SAY Soccer. These clubs have indicated that even though the national standards state that Warren County has enough soccer fields, the demand for soccer in this area is higher than the national average. Table 21 Current Field Usage shows how many soccer fields exist in Warren County and what the current demand for soccer is and will be in the future.
  - Baseball/Softball Organizations include Mason Youth Organization, Mason Knothole Association, Lebanon Baseball/Softball Association, Hunter Youth Recreation Association, Springboro Clearcreek Baseball Association, Little Miami Athletic Organization, Morrow Athletic Association, Butlerville Athletic Association, Warren County Little League, Loveland Diamond Sports, and Kings Knothole Baseball. The national standards for baseball and

softball shows that the County needs to develop 18 more baseball fields and 104 more softball fields to meet the current demands of the community.

- Football Organizations include Mason Youth Football, Lebanon Warrior Youth Football League, Franklin Pee Wee Football, Loveland Youth Football, and Kings Football. The national standards for football shows that the County needs to develop 87 more football fields to meet the current demands of the community.

12. *City, Village and Township Political Jurisdictions of Warren County:*

- *Village of Butlerville* - The Village does not have any recreation areas that they own or maintain within the Village limits.
- *City of Carlisle* – The City plans to focus on repairing and replacing the recreation equipment they currently own and maintain. They have no immediate plans to acquire any additional parkland unless it is received through a donation. They would also like to expand their current arts and recreation program that takes place over the summer months. This program is provided to the residents of Carlisle and Franklin Township with funding provided by both political entities.
- *Clearcreek Twp* – The Township has completed two master plans for Patricia Allyn Park and Hoffmann Reserve (please see Appendix F). They have completed a capital improvement budget for each park as well. Clearcreek Township is looking into the possibility of purchasing additional property for recreational facilities development toward the west side of the township, but have no immediate future plans to develop additional bike trails other than what is shown on each master plan for the individual parks.
- *Village of Corwin* - The Village does not have any recreation areas that they own or maintain within the Village limits.
- *Deerfield Township* – The Township is currently in the process of developing a long-range comprehensive plan that will include a park element. They are still in the process of developing their two largest parks – Fleckenstein and Cottell Parks. The Township has indicated that they would like to develop the paved bike trails as shown in the Miami to Miami Bike Path study in the future in phases.
- *City of Franklin* – The City is currently in the process of developing a long-range comprehensive plan that will include a park element. They have indicated that their biggest need is more land for future parks. They have one large park in town and they are out of room to develop additional recreation facilities such as park shelters, baseball and soccer fields, and increased parking areas as indicated by the public opinion survey that was completed in 2007. City Council has indicated that they would like to see new parks developed where they can be accessed by foot traffic closest to their denser areas in town. They indicated that they own a large amount of property on the north side of the Great Miami River (currently being used for their wellfields) and could potentially develop a portion of the property for park uses. They currently allow the Franklin School District to use their community park for their school sports programs (such as the tennis courts, baseball fields, softball fields, soccer fields, and disc and shot put activities). They have indicated that they would like to develop a partnership with the schools to develop more

field space and help with maintaining their current fields at the community park due to a limited budget for parks.

- *Franklin Township* – The Township plans to focus on maintaining the park (Hunter Park) they currently own by enhancing the amenities that are currently located on the property. They would like to replace the restroom facility, install a fishing dock, develop a longer walking trail, and landscape around the new pond they have developed. They are currently developing 2 soccer fields on this property as well. They have no immediate plans to acquire any additional parkland unless it is received through a donation. The township is also very active in providing recreation funds to the City of Carlisle, the City of Franklin, and the Franklin School District to develop recreation programs, erect playground structures, and help fund the municipal pool that is located in the Franklin City Park. This service they provide benefits their residents because their Township has been divided by annexation, and the majority of their children attend the Franklin School District.
- *Hamilton Township* – The Township recently completed a Parks and Open Space Master Plan in June of 2005. The township identified certain goals within the plan and worked toward some of those goals as stated within the last two years. The main goal for the township will be to develop Mounts Park which contains 223 acres of land for passive recreational uses such as a pay fishing lake, trailhead for the Little Miami Bikeway, softballs fields for adults, a banquet/conference center, tent camping and multi-purpose trails. The master plan also indicates that they would like to purchase an additional 164 to 205 acres of land in the next 5 years to meet the future recreational demands of their township, create a central green area for gatherings, build an athletic facility, obtain easements/land for trails and greenways, develop additional recreational facilities, preserve riparian & natural areas within the township, and hire a part-time recreation director to manage these functions. The Township would also like to see the County purchase land in Hamilton Township and develop a County park to serve their fast growing population. A 5-year action plan for the township can be found in Appendix F.
- *Harlan Township* – The Township and the local Athletic Association in Harlan Township plan to focus on maintaining William Whitacre Park by enhancing the amenities that are currently located on the property. They provide some recreational programming throughout the year.
- *City of Lebanon* – The City is currently in the process of creating their parks master plan. This will be an update to their needs assessment that was completed in 2002. They have stated that they have a need for more baseball and soccer fields. This need is based on feedback they have received from the current users of the McClure Field area. They currently own three undeveloped parcels of land that will be used for future parks (Miller property on the north side of town, Floodplain property on the west side of town, and an old land fill property on the southwest side of town). The City has also indicated a need to provide park space on the east side of State Route 48 to serve the needs of the residents within the many subdivisions located on along that stretch of roadway. Due to the limited amount of funds for parks and city services, the City would like to see a more regional approach taken with the funding and maintenance of parklands.

- *Village of Maineville* - The Village does not have any recreation areas that they own or maintain within the Village limits.
- *City of Mason* – The City of Mason completed a Park Master Plan and New Park Design Plan in 2004. Since that time, they have acquired many new sites for future parks. The most recent addition to their inventory has been the Mason Sports Park. The park was recently constructed in late 2007 and opened in April of 2008. The park contains baseball fields that will help Mason meet the current demand for more athletic fields. They have also completed the first phase of their muddy creek bike path that begins at the City building and runs north along Mason Montgomery Road and follows the muddy creek to Pine Hill Lake Park. This will eventually connect to the new Sports Park on Mason Morrow Millgrove Road. City officials have stated that they currently have enough park acreage and they have made the decision to develop the parkland that is partially or currently vacant and to maintain their current recreation facilities that includes an outdoor pool, shelters, playground equipment and many athletic fields. The City of Mason and Mason Schools also jointly operate a community center that is located on the same campus as their City building and the high school. They have an operating levy that provides funding for the community center. City officials have stated that they will re-evaluate their park acreage inventory in the future to make sure they are continuing to meet the demands of their residents.
- *Massie Township* – The Township does not have any recreation areas that they own or maintain within the Township limits.
- *Village of Morrow* – The Village plans to focus on repairing and replacing the recreation equipment they currently own and maintain at various locations. They have no plans to acquire any additional parkland unless it is received through a donation.
- *Village of Pleasant Plain* - The Village does not have any recreation areas that they own or maintain within the Village limits.
- *Salem Township* – The Township does not have any recreation areas that they own or maintain within the Township limits.
- *The City of Springboro* – No information was received.
- *Village of South Lebanon* – No information was received.
- *Turtlecreek Township* – The Township plans to focus on maintaining Turtlecreek Township Park. The park uses that have been identified with this plan are passive in nature and the plan is to continue with those passive uses. They have no immediate plans to acquire any additional parkland unless it is received through a donation.
- *Union Township* – No information was received.
- *Washington Township* – The Township does not have any recreation areas that they own or maintain within the Township limits.
- *Wayne Township* – The Township does not have any recreation areas that they own or maintain within the Township limits.
- *Village of Waynesville* – The Village does not have any recreation areas that they own or maintain within the Village limits. Their funding is limited, but they have indicated an interest in partnering with the County in developing their Village Hall parcel for a park facility. The residents in Waynesville have indicated that they would like to see the Village provide some recreational programming for major holidays.

## **E. Public Workshops**

1. A public workshop was held on January 8, 2008 in the Commissioners Hearing Room of the Warren County Administration Building, with 22 people in attendance. The results from the parks survey were shared with the audience as well as the current inventory for all the parks throughout the County. The following concerns should be noted from the audience:
  - Lack of responses to the parks survey to accurately reflect the needs of the community (as of January 1, 2008 – 120 responses);
  - Possibility of incorporating verbatim responses to the survey into the Plan;
  - Desirability of bridle/carriage paths along stream side corridors and reinforcement of the strong local tradition of carriage and buggy activities and interdisciplinary equestrian facility with stables and arenas;
  - Funding options available that the adopted Plan could generate and the County Commissioner's role in the Comprehensive Plan process;
  - Confusion over the definitions for each park category as defined in the Plan;
  - Analyze private ownership/maintenance by a Homeowner's Association of mini park/open space areas due to cost of providing these types of parks throughout the community;
  - Economic impacts of providing park land should be explored; and
  - Dual use potential for walking and bridle/carriage paths should be explored.
  
2. A second public workshop was held on April 8, 2008 in the Commissioners Hearing Room of the Warren County Administration Building with approximately 25 people in attendance. The persons in attendance were asked a series of questions related to where they currently go for park and recreation activities, what they like about park and recreation opportunities, what they do not like about the programs and facilities, and what their vision for the future would be. More detailed summaries are included in the Appendices. Some of the highlights are included here.
  - The primary park facilities they currently use include a list of about 10 different parks, but many of them use Caesar Creek State Park, the Little Miami Scenic Trail, Mason Parks, Turtlecreek Township Park, Harmon Park, and Landen Deerfield Park;
  - When asked about what they like about the park and recreation opportunities in the County, some of the main responses include the following: locations, Little Miami Scenic Trail, horse trail at Caesar Creek, etc.;
  - When asked what is missing and how can the system be improved to better serve the residents of Warren County, there was a very large quantity of responses. Many were geared around facility needs, which included the following: better restrooms in the parks, more multi-use trails, better and more fields for athletic activities, increased and improved maintenance and expansion of existing horse trails, more camping opportunities, other improvements to the existing parks, and increased equine opportunities;
  - When asked to pretend that it is the year 2015, the Master Plan has been implemented and they are very pleased with the park and recreation services that are being offered by the County. What has happened in the last 10 years to make it a successful program? The major categories of improvement include the following: Development of a multi-use trail that connects major parks throughout

the county and would allow the equine community to ride without having to leave the County, development of sports complex that would house multi activities such as horse shows, soccer, baseball, football, basketball, archery, etc., better and more athletic fields for sports activities, beautification of the parks, increased programs offered by the County, and family oriented parks and natural space; and.

- The final question asked the participants to identify how they could fund additional parks and recreation activities and facilities. Some of the responses include: Corporate sponsors, development of a joint recreation district, partnerships, tax levy, annual fees, fund raising, developer impact fees, grants, and donations.

The updated results from the parks survey were also shared with the audience as well as the current inventory for all the parks and recreational facilities throughout the County. The following concerns should be noted from the audience:

- Include skydiving and aviation activities across the County;
  - Include winter sports such as ice hockey, ice skating and cross country skiing into the plan;
  - Inclusion of skateboard and lacrosse fields into the plan;
  - Re-inventory or double check current inventory of football fields (instructional fields do not have goal posts);
  - Re-inventory or double check current inventory of baseball and softball fields; Baseball fields can be used as softball fields as long as the infield is not made of grass;
  - A discussion on user fees should be added to the text of the plan;
  - A discussion on surplus of soccer fields for this area and how the demand is higher in southwest Ohio than the national average;
  - Economic impacts of providing park land should be explored;
  - Dual use potential for walking and bridle/carriage paths should be explored;
  - Potential for remote controlled paths/raceway for cars;
  - A quadrant approach should be taken when analyzing the recreational and parks facilities across the county so that they can be compared against each other; and
  - There were multiple questions concerning the equestrian facilities and how they would fit into the plan (trails, centers, better facilities, etc.).
3. A work session was held on April 24, 2008 in the Commissioners Hearing Room of the Warren County Administration Building between the County Commissioners, the Park Board and the Regional Planning Commission. The County Commissioners were given an update on the status of the plan and they were also given updated park acreage totals for the whole county. They offered their opinions concerning the proposed plan.
- In 1985, the ratio of park acres to 1,000 persons was 118 acres. In 2008, the ratio has decreased to 90. Despite the decrease in acres per 1,000 persons, there is a surplus of 483 acres per the national standards for park acreages. In order to meet future demands per the same national standards, the County will need to acquire an additional 787 acres to meet the need in 2020. The Commissioners were encouraged to hear that the County had a surplus in the amount of acreage to meet the national standards for 2008. They stated that they are currently in negotiations to try and acquire some additional park which get the county closer to the 2020



need. It should also be pointed out that in order to maintain the 118 acres per 1,000 persons for 2008; an additional 5,632 acres would need to be acquired.

- The Commissioners were asked what their funding commitment level to the parks will be for the future given the needs for the department. The Commissioners stated that they have pledged at least \$500,000.00 over the last couple of years and will probably continue to do so in the future.
  - It should be noted that a majority of the people who have taken the Parks Survey on-line have stated that they support the use of tax dollars to purchase open space areas to limit the density of development within the County. The Commissioners agreed with that and stated that they would continue to acquire park land if it is low cost and accessible to a large majority of the population and would limit the density of the County.
  - One of the questions on the park survey asked the user if they would be willing to pay additional property taxes to support the funding for parks. The vast majority of the respondents were happy to pay additional property taxes (from \$1.00 to \$30.00 additional each month) to support the purchase of open space and parks as well as their amenities. The Commissioners feel that if parks are that important to people across the County, then perhaps a levy could be put on the ballot and people would then vote to fund the acquisition and maintenance costs associated with parks.
  - During the many visits across the County with multiple jurisdictions, it was found that many of the cities and villages were having a hard time funding the parks to the level their constituents were requesting. Many jurisdictions felt that a Countywide park levy fund would be appropriate because then all the jurisdictions across the County would fund the parks and share the funding generated from such a levy. The Commissioners stated that they would not be opposed to such an idea as long as everyone benefited from the structure of the levy; and
  - One of the largest requests from the citizens who have taken the time to fill out the parks survey indicated that they would like to see the County develop multi-use trails which would include horse related facilities. The Commissioners stated that this would be a good idea, but could be very expensive to develop in the future (due to number of users in relation to the overall population of the County).
4. A fourth public meeting was held on July 8, 2008 in the Commissioners Hearing Room of the Warren County Administration Building, with 26 people in attendance. Ms. Lapensee went over the preliminary recommendations of acreages and park amenities with the persons in attendance. The following items were offered up for consideration in the plan:
- List the Otterbein remote controlled air facility in the plan;
  - Use the 5-year capital improvements plan developed for the Park District by an outside consultant which was just formally adopted by the Park District;
  - Update the source standards at the bottom of the standards pages;
  - Place the park recommendations on-line for everyone to see;
  - Overnight camping areas and horse-related facilities should be listed separate in the recommendations area; and
  - Addition of a horse category to the park amenities page.

A question was also raised about the ranking of improvements and what board would be responsible for compiling a capital improvements list. It was pointed out that the Regional Planning Commission is a separate entity from the Park District and that the Master Plan developed within this scope is strictly a recommendation to the multiple park boards across the County. It would be by individual discretion and approval of the multiple political jurisdictions across Warren County to initiate any of the improvements recommended in the plan.

5. A fifth public meeting was held on September 4, 2008 in the Commissioners Hearing Room of the Warren County Administration Building with approximately 60 people in attendance. Mr. Bill Smith of the Equine Advisory Board to the Warren County Regional Planning Commission presented to the Commissioners and the Park Board the economic impacts to providing Equestrian Facilities within Warren County. A complete summary of their recommendations can be found in Appendix G. The Equine Advisory Board recommended three things to be included in the parks plan:
  - Development of a network of County bridle/carriage trails,
  - Development of an interdisciplinary equestrian center for clinics, shows, horse fairs and events, including equine 4-H activities; and
  - Development of a County website to display equine and related business activities and events. See Appendix G for the recommendations of the WCEAB.

#### **F. Citizen Attitude and Interest Surveys**

Warren County Regional Planning Commission conducted a Community Attitude and Interest Survey during the period from July 2007 to June of 2008 to help establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services within the County. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the County. The survey was administered by a combination of public announcements during open meetings held by the Planning Commission and through the newspaper, an on-line survey that was available on the County's website with links from many of the townships, cities and other county departments' websites, and by paper via the Planning Commission's office and throughout the County library system.

The goal was to obtain at least 2,000 (1%) completed surveys. This goal was not accomplished, with only 350 surveys having been completed. The following summarizes major survey findings or findings worth noting:

1. Respondent households that have visited Warren County parks during the past 12 months were asked to rate the physical condition of all the parks they have visited. Of the 339 responses, 48 (14%) were excellent, 142 (42%) were good, and 149 (44%) were fair.
2. Respondent households that have participated in programs offered by various recreation organizations in Warren County during the past 12 months were asked to rate the quality of the programs they have participated in. Of the 118 responses, 20 (17%) were excellent, 54 (46%) were good, 8 (7%) were fair, and 36 (31%) rated them poor.
3. From a list of 10 options, respondent households that have participated in programs offered by various recreation organizations with Warren County during the past 12 months were asked to indicate all of the ways they have learned about the programs.

- Of the 350 responses, the newspaper was the most widely used medium with 198 responses (57%) and word of mouth was a nearby second with 152 responses (43%).
4. From a list of 26 parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate which ones they and members of their household have a need for and which were most important to their household. Of the 350 responses, the top 5 facilities have been listed: 264 (75%) indicated that paved walking and biking trails were important, 215 (62%) for natural areas/nature preserves, 179 (51%) for non-paved walking/biking trails, 161 (46%) picnic shelters/areas, and 150 (43%) for small neighborhood parks.
  5. From the list of 26 parks and recreation facilities, respondent households that have a need for facilities were asked to indicate how well the facilities met their needs. Of the 299 responses, 84 (28%) stated that the current park facilities met their needs 100%, 75 (25%) said 75% of their needs, 79 (26%) said 50% of their needs, 52 (17%) said 25% of the needs were met, and 9 (3%) households stated that none of their needs are being met.
  6. From the list of nine functions that could be performed by the County, City, Village or Townships of Warren County, respondents were asked to rate the level of importance of each one. The top three functions that were most important to people was to operate and maintain parks and facilities, preserve the environment and provide open space, and to provide multi-use trails and linear parks.
  7. From a list of 14 options, respondents were asked to select all of the organizations whose parks and recreation programs and facilities they and members of their household use. Of the 350 responses, the top four choices were regional parks (76%), local parks (75%), Warren County parks (67%), and neighboring county parks (51%).
  8. From a list of 23 various programs and activities available to Warren County residents, respondents were asked to indicate which programs and/or activities at least one person in their household currently participates in. Of the 350 responses, the top four choices were bike/walking trail use (74%), running or walking (71%), visiting nature areas (59%), and recreational swimming (39%).
  9. From a list of 23 various programs and activities available to Warren County residents, respondents who have at least one person in their household participate in programs and/or activities were asked to indicate how often they participate in each one. Of the 338 responses, 236 (70%) indicated that they used the facilities several times per week, 67 (20%) a few times per month, and 35 (10%) at least once a month.
  10. From the list of 23 various programs and activities available to Warren County residents, respondents were asked to select four that they and members of their household would participate in more often if more programming was provided by local jurisdictions. Of the 350 responses, the top four choices were bike/walking trail use (51%), visiting natural areas/nature preserves (43%), running/walking (35%), and attending live concerts (32%).
  11. From the list of 23 various programs and activities available to Warren County residents, respondents were asked to select the top three activities they would be willing to support with their tax dollars. The top three activities were bike/walking trail use (55%), visiting natural areas (44%), and running/walking (28%).
  12. Respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 each year in new tax funding among various types of parks and recreation facilities within Warren County. The top three choices would be to develop new walking and biking trails (41%), improve/maintain existing parks, playgrounds and picnic areas (40%), and acquisition of land for permanent open/green space (40%).
  13. From a list of five options, respondents were asked to indicate the maximum amount they would be willing to pay per month in additional property taxes to build and

operate the types of parks and recreation facilities that are most important to them and members of their household. Of the 343 responses, 151 (44%) stated that they would be willing to pay \$1 to \$4 extra dollars per month toward recreation, 80 (23%) \$5 to \$9 dollars, 55 (16%) \$10 to \$19 dollars, 21 (6%) \$20 to \$29 dollars, 18 (5%) \$30 or more dollars, and 18 (5%) said that they would not spend any additional money to fund parks.

14. Respondents were asked how they would vote if a park levy were held to fund the development and operations of the types of parks, recreation facilities and trails that are most important to them and their members of their household. Of the 317 responses, 228 (68%) stated that they would vote in favor of a levy, 68 (20%) might vote in favor, 34 (10%) were not sure, and 7 (2%) stated that they would vote against a levy.
15. The 109 households who indicated they might, were not sure, or would vote against a levy were asked to indicate the major reason for their response. Of the 227 responses, 112 persons said that additional information would be needed prior to making a decision and 37 persons said that they would only support purchasing land for open space only to control new development.

A strong response from the horse owners in the County should also be noted. The original survey that was circulated on the internet and via paper did not contain any questions pertaining to horse ownership or trail/carriage riding. A copy of the complete survey as amended and the full set of results can be found in Appendix D.

#### G. Other Surveys

1. *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)* – This document, updated most recently in 1993 by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), asserts “comprehensive recreation system planning and the assessment of recreation resource needs are essential components in the effective delivery of quality recreation opportunities”. Clearly, increasing levels of participation, combined with tight fiscal policies make planning and assessment more important than ever. Facilities should not be developed based solely upon the preferences of vocal, special interest groups. Broad public participation is vital.

A questionnaire of 2,515 households designed to assess outdoor recreation participation indicates the following activities had 50 percent or greater participation within the prior year:

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Walking for Pleasure	64.9
Picnicing	59.2
Gardening	55.7
Fishing/Wading	54.0
Beach Activities	52.1

The top outdoor recreational activities as to annual average frequency per household included gardening (17.4), soccer (15.2), hunting (13.9), softball (13.6), walking for pleasure (13.4) and swimming (13.1).

Attitudes toward future investment in outdoor recreation facilities indicate that the public would like to see increased spending for hiking/backpacking, bicycling and nature appreciation and less investment in off-road vehicle trails, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.

2. *Ohio Parks and Recreation Association Survey* – A community needs assessment was conducted for Warren County, under contract, by the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA), prior to preparation of the original mid-1980’s Park and Open Space Plan. The purpose of the survey was to seek citizen input, in the form of attitudes and opinions, concerning perceived open space and recreational needs.

A self-administered questionnaire was mailed to 400 households selected from the Warren County Auditor’s tax database. Tax districts were used as the geographic basis for selection, ensuring a representative socio-economic mix. A total of 280 households responded, at a 70 percent response rate, however 38 responses were unusable for various reasons. This left a usable response of 242 households, or 60.5 percent.

The provision of public open space was favored by a 3.5 to 1 ratio. Wildlife habitat, preservation of natural resources and picnicking ranked highest as preferred uses for undeveloped land. Private property and parks were the most used recreation areas. Almost one-fourth of respondents traveled less than 10 minutes to recreate, while 42.3 percent traveled between 10 and 20 minutes. A full three-quarter of respondents left their neighborhoods to find recreational opportunities. Passive leisure pursuits consistently outranked active, both as “preferred” and “practiced” activities. Outdoor activities slightly outscored indoor activities.

In summary (full survey results are available in the original Park and Open Space Plan), people overwhelmingly supported the provision of public open space, preferring however that it be predominantly kept in its natural state. Travel in excess of 10 minutes was not considered a problem. The distinct preference for passive pursuits may be explained, at least in part, in that relaxation is more of a mental than physical need to many people. However, results of similar surveys in the current age of personal fitness differ, showing a marked increase in preference for active recreation, as shown below.

3. *Little Miami Scenic Trail Survey* – A 1997 survey, co-sponsored by the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), Rivers Unlimited and Little Miami, Inc. (LMI), indicated that between 150,000 and 175,000 individuals utilize the 27.7-mile section of the Little Miami Scenic Trail between Loveland (Clermont County) and Corwin (Warren County) each year. Identified trail benefits included health and fitness, aesthetic beauty, helping preserve open space and providing public recreational opportunities. Noted problems were insufficient drinking water or restrooms and some sections of trail being “too crowded”. Annual per capita trail-related expenses were estimated as \$225 for equipment/clothing/accessories and \$18.95 per person per day of trails use for gas, food, etc.

<i>Overall Trail Activity</i>	<i>Percent</i>

<i>Cycling</i>	66 percent
<i>Walking/Jogging</i>	25 percent
<i>In-Line Skating</i>	9 percent
<i>Other</i>	1 percent

Trail Users by Location:

	<i>Bike</i>	<i>Walk/Jog</i>	<i>Skate</i>
<i>Loveland</i>	59%	32%	9%
<i>Morrow</i>	94%	6%	0%
<i>Corwin</i>	88%	5%	7%

Activities by Day:

	<i>Bike</i>	<i>Walk/Jog</i>	<i>Skate</i>
<i>Weekday</i>	66%	28%	6%
<i>Saturday</i>	55%	39%	6%
<i>Sunday</i>	73%	17%	10%

Activities by Time:

	<i>Bike</i>	<i>Walk/Jog</i>	<i>Skate</i>
<i>AM</i>	45%	52%	3%
<i>Early PM</i>	74%	16%	10%
<i>Late PM</i>	58%	32%	10%

4. *Warren County United Way Needs Assessments* – The Warren County United Way has published comprehensive community needs assessments in 1988, 1994 and 2000. While mainly geared toward gauging social service needs, the most recent survey also included recreation under the “public services” category.

Of 200 Warren County Residents interviewed, only 2.0 percent cited “inadequate recreational areas” as being an extremely serious concern. Almost 4 in 10 respondents (37 percent) said this was “not at all serious” as a public services issue. Broken down geographically, those surveyed in the Franklin/Carlisle area felt most strongly (24 percent) that recreation needs were a “serious” or “extremely serious” issue, while respondents in the Mason/Deerfield Township area were least concerned (10 percent).

5. *Waynesville/Wayne Township Resident Survey* – In preparation of a Parks and Facilities Master Plan, published in 2000, a mail response survey of Village and Township residents was conducted. Under the “active recreational” category, a majority of respondents indicated a need for lighted tennis and basketball courts, a sledding hill and children’s court games. As to “larger, year round facilities”, a desire for a health club or community/recreation center, including a swimming pool was expressed. Under “passive facilities” picnic areas were preferred by most respondents.
6. *Lebanon Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment* – Three (3) community meetings, a public opinion survey mailed with City utility bills and focus groups of middle and high school students were conducted between November 2001 and January 2002. The vast majority of respondents to the mail survey felt that current City facilities will

not meet long term City growth needs (82 percent) and that parks located within a safe walking distance were somewhat to very important (83 percent). As to outdoor facility needs, only jogging/walking/bike trails were selected by more than half of respondents, followed by picnic shelters and a community pool. A youth/teen center was chosen by the majority regarding perceived indoor facility needs, followed by gymnasium, indoor aquatic center, ice skating rink and senior citizens center, each at roughly 47 percent of respondents.

7. *Loveland Parks & Recreation Needs Analysis* – Three (3) public meetings and a community attitude and interest survey mailed/phone were conducted between January 2005 and November 2005 to help establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services within the City. The City determined that the primary needs for its residents were the following: general shortage of park land in many areas of the City, especially for parks in the southwest; the need for a wide variety of specific recreation facilities in many locations; the strong desire for more open space and land to be preserved as future green spaces and some land to remain as natural areas; the realization that, as the population grows, the supply of park land recreation facilities and programs will also need to expand to meet the City’s demands and expectations; the demand for an outdoor aquatic center; high demand for all types of trails including jogging, walking, nature and bicycle trails; the need for a Parks and Recreation Department to better coordinate programs and manage the recreation system; the demand for better athletic fields; demand for indoor activities including an indoor swimming pool, youth center, multi-purpose rooms, game courts and other activities; and the desire to link the parks, schools, and neighborhoods through a series of trails.
8. *City of Franklin Public Opinion Survey* – A telephone survey was randomly conducted between October 1, 2007 and November 1, 2007 to assess satisfaction with City services and to assess general community perceptions of other relevant topics in the community (which included parks and recreation). The City found that the vast majority of the residents were very satisfied with the current park system, persons ages 35 – 44 were more likely to use the park facilities than anyone else, the playing fields and other equipment are well kept and the parks overall were clean, people generally felt safe in the parks and that they were located in close proximity to their homes. The respondents also felt that additional park shelters were needed at the community park and would like to see the City continue the public art mural program in the future.
9. *Summary* – The above indicates that people are generally satisfied with the current parks, open space and recreation level of service. This is gratifying and is considered both a function of prior good planning and good luck, but is not considered a substitute for long range planning.

#### **H. National Sporting Goods Association Survey**

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) conducts a survey every two years of 10,000 households throughout the United States. These are selected from 300,000 pre-recruited households. These surveys are used to generate a series of tables that identify trends in sports participation. Table 22, *Nationwide Ten-Year History of Selected Sports Participation*, identifies the major activities that were surveyed through this study. The

activities are listed by their rank order in the year 2006. For example, exercise/walking is the most participated activity at 87.5 million participants and is followed by swimming at 56.5 million and exercising with equipment at 52.4 million. This table shows baseball and soccer, two of the most common activities requested as part of the study, as 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> on the list with 14.6 million and 14.0 million participants respectively. When combining baseball and softball, it increases to a total of 27.0 million. The table indicates that for the ten-year period, baseball has increased by 0.1 % and soccer and softball has reduced in participation by 0.8% and 5.0% respectively.

Table 23 illustrates that statistics are different for youth participation in the various activities indicating that youth baseball has grown by 3.5% and soccer has grown by 2.7 % over the ten-year period.



**Table 22: Nationwide Ten-Year History of Selected Sports Participation**

Participated more than once (in millions); Seven (7) years of age or older

Sport	2006	2004	2002	2000	1998	1996	% change 2001-2006
Exercise Walking	87.5	84.7	82.2	86.3	77.6	73.3	11.7%
Swimming	56.5	53.4	53.1	60.7	58.2	60.2	3.1%
Exercise with Equipment	52.4	52.2	46.8	44.8	46.1	47.8	19.3%
Camping (vacation overnight)	48.6	55.3	55.4	49.9	46.5	44.7	-0.2%
Bowling	44.8	43.8	42.4	43.1	40.1	42.9	6.9%
Fishing	40.6	41.2	44.2	49.3	43.6	45.6	-8.6%
Workout at Club	36.9	31.8	28.9	24.1	26.5	22.5	39.2%
Bicycle Riding	35.6	40.3	39.7	43.1	43.5	53.3	-8.7%
Aerobic Exercising	33.7	29.5	29.0	28.6	25.8	24.1	28.1%
Weight Lifting	32.9	26.2	25.1	24.8	N/a	N/a	37.6%
Billiards/Pool	31.8	34.2	33.1	32.5	32.3	34.5	-2.7%
Hiking	31.0	28.3	27.2	24.3	27.2	26.5	18.7%
Boating, Motor/Power	29.3	22.8	26.6	24.2	25.7	28.8	22.4%
Running/Jogging	28.8	26.7	24.7	22.8	22.5	22.2	17.3%
Basketball	26.7	27.8	28.9	27.1	29.4	31.8	-4.9%
Golf	24.4	24.5	27.1	26.4	27.5	23.1	-8.3%
Hunting with Firearms	17.8	17.7	19.5	19.1	17.3	18.3	-7.1%
Target Shooting	17.1	19.2	18.9	14.8	12.8	14.7	-1.2%
Baseball	14.6	15.9	15.6	15.6	15.9	14.8	-1.5%
Soccer	14.0	13.3	13.7	12.9	13.2	13.9	1.0%
Backpack/Wilderness Camp	13.3	15.3	14.8	15.4	14.6	11.5	-8.3%
Softball	12.4	12.5	13.6	14.0	15.6	19.9	-5.8%
Football/tackle	11.9	8.6	7.8	7.5	7.4	9.0	45.0%
Volleyball	11.1	11.8	11.5	12.3	14.8	18.5	-8.0%
In-Line Roller Skating	10.5	11.7	18.8	21.8	27.0	25.5	-45.4%
Tennis	10.4	9.6	11.0	10.0	11.2	11.5	-5.1%
Skateboarding	9.7	10.3	9.7	9.1	5.8	4.7	1.1%
Scooter Riding	9.5	12.9	13.4	11.6	N/a	N/a	-24.8%
Paintball	8.0	9.4	6.9	5.3	N/a	N/a	44.0%
Mountain Biking	8.5	8.0	7.8	7.1	8.6	7.3	23.8%
Canoeing	7.1	7.5	7.6	6.2	7.1	8.4	4.5%
Skiing/Alpine	6.4	6.3	7.4	7.4	7.7	10.5	-16.5%
Water Skiing	6.3	5.3	6.9	5.9	7.2	7.4	8.3%
Hunting w/Bow & Arrow	5.9	5.8	4.6	4.7	5.6	5.5	23.9%
Snowboarding	5.2	6.6	5.6	4.3	3.6	3.1	-2.6%
Cheerleading	3.8	3.8	N/a	N/a	3.1	N/a	2.9%
Wrestling	3.8	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	8.5%
Muzzle loading	3.7	3.8	3.6	2.9	3.1	3.2	25.7%
Hockey/Ice	2.6	2.4	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.1	18.2%
Skiing/Cross Country	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.6	3.4	9.5%

\* Source: National Sporting Goods Association, Mt. Prospect IL 60056 847.296 NSGA Fax: 847.391.9827

**Table 23: 2006 Youth Participation in Selected Sports with Comparisons to 1997**

Participated more than once (in thousands); Seven (7) years of age and older

	Year	Total	Change vs. 1997	Total 7-11	Change vs. 1997	Total 12-17	Change vs. 1997
Total U.S.	1997	240,325		19,466		23,071	
Total U.S.	2006	263,138	9.5%	19,472	0.0%	25,261	9.5%
<b>Baseball</b>							
	1997	14,146		4,739		3,678	
	2006	14,646	3.5%	3,691	-22.1%	3,910	6.3%
<b>Basketball</b>							
	1997	30,660		6,837		7,880	
	2006	26,735	-12.8%	5,427	-20.6%	7,218	-8.4%
<b>Bicycle Riding</b>							
	1997	45,119		11,190		8,482	
	2006	35,621	-21.1%	7,872	-29.6%	6,341	-25.3%
<b>Bowling</b>							
	1997	44,770		5,731		7,118	
	2006	44,779	0.0%	5,060	-11.7%	7,612	6.9%
<b>Fishing (fresh water)</b>							
	1997	38,956		4,831		5,025	
	2006	36,637	-6.0%	4,470	-7.5%	4,067	-19.1%
<b>Football (tackle)</b>							
	1997	8,219		1,841		2,983	
	2006	11,888	44.6%	2,199	19.5%	4,149	39.1%
<b>Golf</b>							
	1997	26,216		1,049		2,255	
	2006	24,428	-6.8%	879	-16.1%	2,150	-4.7%
<b>Ice Hockey</b>							
	1997	1,925		304		406	
	2006	2,559	32.9%	430	41.3%	335	-17.5%
<b>In-Line Skating</b>							
	1997	1,925		304		406	
	2006	2,559	32.9%	430	41.3%	335	-17.5%
<b>Mountain Biking (off-road)</b>							
	1997	8,109		997		1,192	
	2006	8,543	5.4%	863	-13.5%	1,000	-16.1%
<b>Skateboarding</b>							
	1997	6,334		2,654		2,401	
	2006	9,731	53.6%	2,910	9.6%	4,437	84.8%
<b>Skiing (alpine)</b>							
	1997	8,866		913		1,321	
	2006	6,394	-27.9%	422	-53.8%	882	-33.2%
<b>Snowboarding</b>							
	1997	2,816		476		1,093	
	2006	5,205	84.8%	859	80.5%	1,686	54.3%
<b>Soccer</b>							
	1997	13,651		5,624		4,109	
	2006	14,024	2.7%	4,796	-14.7%	4,095	-0.3%
<b>Softball</b>							
	1997	16,339		2,385		3,431	
	2006	12,442	-23.9%	2,339	-1.9%	2,824	-17.7%
<b>Tennis</b>							
	1997	11,106		1,022		1,766	
	2006	10,356	-6.8%	787	-23.0%	2,216	25.5%
<b>Volleyball</b>							
	1997	17,836		1,801		4,869	
	2006	11,062	-38.0%	1,095	-39.2%	3,971	-18.4%

## I. Outdoor Recreation in Ohio – A Plan for the Future

The State of Ohio 2003 Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan was prepared by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. As part of this process, there was a survey completed in 1997 of residents throughout Ohio. Part of the questions of the survey asked for respondents to choose among the 59 activities in which they participate most frequently. Table 24 identifies the results of their survey. There were 59 activities included in the survey, which are identified in the recreation and activity column. The “mean” column identifies the number of times the respondents participated. The far right column identifies the percentage of households participating in this activity, which is another way of identifying the need. Table 24 includes the top 10 items, plus other items that have been indicated of interest in Warren County through the public input process, such as picnicking, softball, baseball, tennis, soccer and football.

**Table 24: Ten Most Popular Recreation Activities in Ohio**

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Recreation Activity</i>	<i>Mean (Entire Sample)</i>	<i>Percentage of Households Participating</i>
1	Wildlife Observation	23.3	51.70%
2	Walking/Jogging	19.4	44.90%
3	Gardening	8.3%	50.30%
4	Scenic Automobile Drives	11.5	69.00%
5	Swimming in Pools	8.7	40.70%
6	Road/Paved Trail Bicycling	7.8	35.50%
7	Golf	7.3	33.00%
8	Playground Activities	6.0	42.40%
9	Anything that Bites Fishing	4.8	32.30%
10	Hiking	4.5	34.90%
13	Picnicking	4.1	62.40%
16	Softball	3.1	9.90%
19	Baseball	2.7	14.40%
23	Tennis	2.4	0.50%
25	Soccer	2.0	8.90%
29	Football	1.5	12.80%

## J. Facility Needs Analysis

### *Analysis of Recreation Facilities*

The types of recreation facilities in each publicly and privately owned park are listed in Tables 25-1 through 25-27, Inventory of Park Facilities, on the following pages.

As with park sites, an inventory of all recreation facilities accessible to the general public was conducted from July of 2007 to March of 2008. Tables 25-1 through 25-27 shows the changes that have occurred in the last decade within the park system.

### *Current Recreation Facility Needs*

Recreation Facilities Standards were developed in the same manner as the park standards for this Assessment, by weighing the public opinion of current and future Warren County trends with the recreation facilities standards compiled from other communities. The

summary of the Park and Recreation Facility Standards, utilized for this Assessment, is defined in Appendix A.

The existing recreation facilities located in Warren County were compared to the developed recreation facilities standards. As with the parks and open space analysis, County owned or operated recreation facility sites and those available to the general public were used in the comparison. Table 26 lists recreation facilities and number of each needed per 1,000 persons. Using the County's current estimated 2006 population, 201,871 the number of recreation facilities required was calculated. This quantity was compared to the existing facilities and a deficit or surplus was calculated.

The analysis indicates that there was a surplus or a break even point in the number of hiking trails, outdoor theaters, picnic shelters, and soccer fields. All other items such as baseball fields, outdoor basketball courts, biking and hiking trails, community centers, football fields, hiking trails, horseshoe pits, indoor pools, picnic shelters, picnic tables, playgrounds, skating rinks, softball diamonds, swimming pools, tennis courts, track and field facilities, volleyball courts and golf courses showed a deficit.

#### *Future Recreation Facilities Needs*

The same process used to calculate future park needs was conducted to determine the City's future recreation facility needs for the year 2020 and 2030. The projected 2020 population, of approximately 276,250 and the projected 2030 population of 338,350 were used in the calculation. This quantity was compared to the County's existing facilities to show where the County would be deficient or have a surplus of recreational facilities in 2020 and 2030. The results are shown in Tables 27-1 and 27-2.

**Table 26: Public Recreational Facilities Current Needs in 2008 – Warren County (201,871 persons)**

<i>Recreation Facility</i>	<i>Existing Number of Recreation Facilities</i>	<i>Recreation Facility Standards</i>	<i>Number of Recreation Facilities Recommended for 08</i>	<i>Surplus or Deficit</i>
Baseball Diamonds	<b>103</b>	3 per 5,000	121	- 18
Basketball Courts	<b>35</b>	1 per 2,000	101	- 66
Biking Trails	<b>82.5 Miles</b>	25 miles per 50,000	100 miles	- 17.5 miles
Community Center/Gyms	<b>2</b>	1 per 15,000	13	- 11
Football Fields	<b>14</b>	1 per 2,000	101	- 87
Hiking Trails	<b>112</b>	25 miles per 50,000	100 miles	+ 12 miles
Horseshoe Pits	<b>15</b>	1 per 5,000	40	- 25
Indoor Pools	<b>2</b>	1 per 20,000	10	- 8
Outdoor Theatre	<b>4</b>	1 per 50,000	4	<b>0</b>
Picnic Shelters	<b>124</b>	1 per 2,000	101	+ 23
Picnic Tables	<b>899</b>	7 per 1,000	1414	- 515
Playgrounds	<b>64</b>	1 per 1,000	202	- 138
Skating Rinks	<b>2</b>	1 per 3,500	57	- 55
Soccer Fields	<b>128</b>	1 per 2,000	101	+ 27
Softball Diamonds	<b>98</b>	1 per 1,000	202	- 104
Swimming Pools	<b>2</b>	1 per 10,000	20	- 18
Tennis Courts	<b>35</b>	1 per 5,000	40	- 5
Track and Field	<b>1</b>	1 per 20,000	10	- 9
Volleyball Courts	<b>11</b>	1 per 5,000	40	- 29
Golf Course	<b>4</b>	1 per 25,000	8	- 4

Source: Lancaster, R.A. (Ed.). 1990, *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*. Ashburn, VA: NRPA.

**Table 27-1: Future Public Recreational Facilities Needs for 2020 – Warren County (276,250)**

<i>Recreation Facility</i>	<i>Existing Number of Recreation Facilities</i>	<i>Recreation Facility Standards</i>	<i>Number of Recreation Facilities Recommended for 20</i>	<i>Surplus or Deficit</i>
Baseball Diamonds	<b>103</b>	3 per 5,000	166	- 63
Basketball Courts	<b>35</b>	1 per 2,000	138	- 103
Biking Trails	<b>82.5 Miles</b>	25 miles per 50,000	138 Miles	- 55.5 Miles
Community Center/Gyms	<b>2</b>	1 per 15,000	18	- 16
Football Fields	<b>14</b>	1 per 2,000	138	- 124
Hiking Trails	<b>112 Miles</b>	25 miles per 50,000	138 Miles	- 26 Miles
Horseshoe Pits	<b>15</b>	1 per 5,000	55	- 40
Indoor Pools	<b>2</b>	1 per 20,000	14	- 12
Outdoor Theatre	<b>4</b>	1 per 50,000	6	- 2
Picnic Shelters	<b>124</b>	1 per 2,000	138	- 14
Picnic Tables	<b>899</b>	7 per 1,000	1934	- 1035
Playgrounds	<b>64</b>	1 per 1,000	276	- 212
Skating Rinks	<b>2</b>	1 per 3,500	79	- 77
Soccer Fields	<b>128</b>	1 per 2,000	138	- 10
Softball Diamonds	<b>98</b>	1 per 1,000	276	- 178
Swimming Pools	<b>2</b>	1 per 10,000	28	- 26
Tennis Courts	<b>35</b>	1 per 5,000	55	- 20
Track and Field	<b>1</b>	1 per 20,000	14	- 13
Volleyball Courts	<b>11</b>	1 per 5,000	55	- 44
Golf Course	<b>4</b>	1 per 25,000	11	- 7

Source: Lancaster, R.A. (Ed.). 1990, *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*. Ashburn, VA: NRPA.

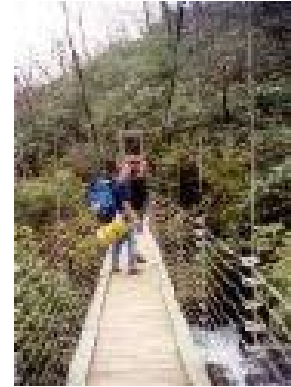
**Table 27-2: Future Public Recreational Facilities Needs for 2030 – Warren County (338,350)**

<i>Recreation Facility</i>	<i>Existing Number of Recreation Facilities</i>	<i>Recreation Facility Standards</i>	<i>Number of Recreation Facilities Recommended for 30</i>	<i>Surplus or Deficit</i>
Baseball Diamonds	<b>103</b>	3 per 5,000	203	<b>- 100</b>
Basketball Courts	<b>35</b>	1 per 2,000	169	<b>- 134</b>
Biking Trails	<b>82.5 Miles</b>	25 miles per 50,000	169 Miles	<b>- 86.5 Miles</b>
Community Center/Gyms	<b>2</b>	1 per 15,000	23	<b>- 21</b>
Football Fields	<b>14</b>	1 per 2,000	169	<b>- 155</b>
Hiking Trails	<b>112 Miles</b>	25 miles per 50,000	169 Miles	<b>- 57 Miles</b>
Horseshoe Pits	<b>15</b>	1 per 5,000	68	<b>- 53</b>
Indoor Pools	<b>2</b>	1 per 20,000	17	<b>- 15</b>
Outdoor Theatre	<b>4</b>	1 per 50,000	7	<b>- 3</b>
Picnic Shelters	<b>124</b>	1 per 2,000	169	<b>- 45</b>
Picnic Tables	<b>899</b>	7 per 1,000	2,368	<b>- 1469</b>
Playgrounds	<b>64</b>	1 per 1,000	338	<b>- 274</b>
Skating Rinks	<b>2</b>	1 per 3,500	97	<b>- 95</b>
Soccer Fields	<b>128</b>	1 per 2,000	169	<b>- 41</b>
Softball Diamonds	<b>98</b>	1 per 1,000	338	<b>- 240</b>
Swimming Pools	<b>2</b>	1 per 10,000	34	<b>- 32</b>
Tennis Courts	<b>35</b>	1 per 5,000	68	<b>- 33</b>
Track and Field	<b>1</b>	1 per 20,000	17	<b>- 16</b>
Volleyball Courts	<b>11</b>	1 per 5,000	68	<b>- 57</b>
Golf Course	<b>4</b>	1 per 25,000	14	<b>- 10</b>

Source: Lancaster, R.A. (Ed.). 1990, *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*. Ashburn, VA: NRPA.

## K. Summary of Parks and Recreation Needs

Based on comments from the public hearings, general meetings with special interest groups and input from the steering committee, the primary needs for parks and recreation facilities, programs and parks indicate the following needs:



1. Shortage of mini parks, neighborhood parks, and in some communities, community park space. This is especially true in the southwest quadrant of the County.
2. The need for a wide variety of specific recreation facilities in many locations throughout the County.
3. The desire/demand and need to develop riding/carriage trails, an interdisciplinary equestrian center and website to support the equine activities that are occurring within the County.
4. The need to develop park headquarters for the county Park District in a central location of the County.
5. The strong desire for more open space and land to be preserved as future green space and some land to remain as natural areas.
6. The demand for a conference center and/or banquet hall that could serve as room for meeting space, a place for receptions and gatherings, etc.
7. The demand for a regional sports facility that would have the ability to host regional sporting events for soccer, baseball, basketball, volleyball, archery, fencing, and the like.
8. The desire for an outdoor aquatic center such as a splash park similar to the park in Miami Whitewater, in Hamilton County.
9. The realization that, as the population grows, the supply of park land, recreation facilities and programs will also need to expand to meet the County's demands and expectations.
10. The demand for increased boating opportunities at Caesar Creek State Park.
11. The demand for all types of trails including equestrian, jogging, walking, nature, ORV, and bicycle trails.
12. The demand to provide spaces for pet activities such as unleashed dog parks.
13. The demand for better athletic fields. Athletic organizations have expressed strong needs for more facilities, especially for tournaments. The existing facilities are overused and the turf on the fields requires more maintenance.
14. Demand for indoor activities including a youth center, multi-purpose rooms, game courts and other activities. The development of indoor centers will offer residents access to year-round programming and activities.
15. The desire to link the parks, schools and neighborhoods through a series of trails.
16. The demand to provide more handicapped facilities throughout the County either through equipment or ball fields.
17. The desire to develop skate parks in certain portions of the County.
18. The desire to develop a remote control car track similar to the one in Joyce Park in Butler County.
19. The desire to develop botanical gardens in the northwest quadrant of the County similar to the gardens at the Cox Arboretum in Montgomery County.



20. The desire to protect the watershed areas and general wetland areas along the banks of the Great Miami and Little Miami Rivers.
21. The demand to provide space for winter activities such as ice skating, ice hockey, and in-line skating.
22. The demand for increased park programming to include a wide variety of ages.



## VIII. County Wide Recommendations

### A. Recommendations Summary

The Warren County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is a multi-dimensional strategy that strives to serve the needs of a rapidly growing community while also preserving the very character of a place that attracted people there in the first place. The proposed master plan is a balance of active and passive facilities, along with connective trails that will truly link all of the amenities together into a county wide system. All of these components, borne out of in-depth analysis and input from the community, are based upon the following goals and strategies.

**Goal 1 - Increase present standards of park land and open space in the community. Preserve the community's rural character, while providing a balance of active and passive recreational opportunities that are easily accessible to all residents.**

Strategies:

1. Purchase 12 or more acres for mini parks, 136 or more acres for neighborhood parks, 193 or more acres for community parks, and develop 18.5 more miles of trails in the northwest quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2008.
2. Purchase 7 or more acres for mini parks, 25 or more acres for neighborhood parks in the northeast quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2008.
3. Purchase 25 or more acres for mini parks, 89 or more acres for neighborhood parks, and 177 or more acres for community parks, and develop 1 more miles of trails in the southwest quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2008.
4. Purchase 2 or more acres for mini parks, and 20 or more acres for neighborhood parks in the southeast quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2008.
5. Purchase 32 or more acres for mini parks, 209 or more acres for neighborhood parks, 1,533 or more acres for regional parks, and develop 38 more miles of trails in the northwest quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2020.
6. Purchase 10 or more acres for mini parks, 35 or more acres for neighborhood parks in the northeast quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2020.
7. Purchase 36 or more acres for mini parks, 169 or more acres for neighborhood parks, and develop 23 more miles of trails in the southwest quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2020.

8. Purchase 4 or more acres for mini parks, and 28 or more acres for neighborhood parks in the northwest quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2020.
9. Obtain land or easements for designated multi-use trails, greenways and alternative trail corridors for parkways and trails.
10. Work cooperatively and in partnerships with other government, non-profits, and corporate units to obtain land and/or easements for the use of land.
11. Continue to work with residents on the importance of preserving lands along the Great Miami River and Little Miami River by developing stream side setbacks.

**Goal 2 - Provide a diverse, well-balanced, well-maintained range of recreational facilities in numbers that will support the future recreation demand/needs of the community for the next 20 years.**

Strategies:

1. Build or work with a developer to build an equestrian center and related facilities with a central location in the County.
2. Cooperatively develop gravel or dirt multi-use trails for horses, joggers, and walkers, and paved trails for bicycles, roller blades, etc. as outlined on the trails map with street and road improvements by State, County and local governments and/or non-profits or developers as outlined in Map 10.
3. Build additional baseball fields – 20 in the northwest quadrant and 6 in the southwest quadrant of the County.
4. Build additional outdoor volleyball courts – 11 in the northwest quadrant, 1 in the northeast quadrant, 3 in the southwest quadrant, and 1 in the southeast quadrant of the County.
5. Build small water splash parks (similar to the one in Hamilton County) – 1 in the northeast quadrant and 1 in the southeast quadrant of the County.
6. Develop more boating opportunities within the county by building a marina at Caesar Creek State Park.
7. Build or work with a developer to build a winter sports facility that could host ice hockey, ice skating or in-line skating events.
8. Build 7 more dog parks throughout the County with possible future locations at (Carmody Park/Twin Creek Nature Preserve, Clearcreek Park, Ivins Park, Hoffman Reserve, William Whitacre Park, Shaw Family Park and Gould Park).

9. Purchase additional handicapped equipment for all of the parks, per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
10. Develop handicapped parks in a southern (City of Mason) and northern (City of Springboro) location within the County.
11. Develop a par-course (fitness course) in a central location within the County.
12. Build skate parks – 1 in the northwest quadrant and 1 in the southwest quadrant of the County.
13. Develop an ATV Park on the eastern side of the County.
14. Develop a BMX Park in the southwest quadrant of the County.
15. Develop a remote controlled car race track in the northwest quadrant of the County (preferably near the remote controlled air facility at Otterbein).
16. Build additional football fields – 36 in the northwest quadrant, 3 in the northeast quadrant, and 33 in the southwest quadrant of the County.
17. Build additional softball fields – 47 in the northwest quadrant, 1 in the northeast quadrant, and 24 in the southwest quadrant of the County.
18. Build or co-locate additional lacrosse fields across the County.
19. Re-use abandoned big box developments across the County to develop additional indoor team sports space.
20. Build or work with a developer to build an additional indoor pool in the northwest quadrant of the County.
21. Build additional picnic shelters across the County – 4 in the northwest quadrant and 4 in the southwest quadrant.
22. Purchase additional picnic tables – 57 in the northwest quadrant and 401 in the southwest quadrant of the County.
23. Build additional playgrounds – 35 in the northwest quadrant, 4 in the northeast quadrant, and 17 in the southwest quadrant of the County.
24. Build 1 additional track and field space in the southwest quadrant of the County.
25. Build or work with a developer to build additional indoor space for volleyball courts within a central location of the County.
26. Build new or expand existing overnight camping areas around the Caesar Creek State Park.
27. Build or develop a dirt mountain bike trail system within the County.

**Goal 3 - Improve and maintain County, Cities, Township's and Village Park and Open Space facilities.**

Strategies:

1. Develop County Park Headquarters Facility that will match the needs of a park district of its current size, have facilities to contain the expected level of services, be centrally located, and be assembled in a manner to promote efficient operation.
2. Focus on maintaining existing facilities to prolong useful life structures and fixtures.
3. Build public/private coalitions to reduce long-term capital and operational expenses
4. Increase maintenance staffing, training, and equipment levels to match increases in facilities and land.
5. Create a written maintenance plan for each facility and structure. The plan should reflect major infrastructure repairs and schedules of maintenance items for each major system at each location.
6. Create a 5-year capital improvements plan for the maintenance of parks in each jurisdiction.
7. Investigate feasibility of improvements suggested by users of each of the parks.
8. Create a horse mounted patrol in cooperation with the Sheriff's Office for the park district to help increase the safety and security at the existing parks.

**Goal 4 - Expand numbers of citizens directly involved in the planning and running of the County Parks and Open Spaces and related initiatives.**

Strategies:

1. Converse with County Park and Open Space users and include as many as possible in issues and solutions that affect them directly.
2. Implement a public relations effort to inform and educate the public about the County Park and Open Space issues, planning functions, events and funding issues.
3. Develop tools for shared decision-making and resource deployment.

**Goal 5 - Provide the citizens with the best trained and most thoroughly knowledgeable staff possible.**

Strategies:

1. Create positions and/or hire employees to manage day-to-day operations and oversee maintenance of the parks as well additional employees as necessary to oversee planning, coordination, implementation, and manage the improvements to the park system.
2. Create dedicated budgets for park operations, maintenance and capital improvements.
3. Coordinate and cooperatively work together with other government agencies to train staff persons directly working with the parks.

**Goal 6 - Expand program offerings as needs of the community expand.**

Strategies:

1. Complete a mail-in-survey or on-line computer survey every five (5) years to measure needs and perceptions in the community.
2. Use volunteer, contract and part-time instructors to supply specialty programs at reasonable costs to participants.
3. Develop additional programs based on yearly surveys and after-program evaluations.
4. Work cooperatively with other government agencies to provide services to multiple jurisdictions where there is an overlap in service areas.

**Goal 7 - Encourage volunteerism to reduce costs and attain goals of the Parks.**

Strategies:

1. Designate and train a Volunteer Manager to recruit and coordinate volunteers to assure wise use and proper recognition of volunteer efforts.
2. Hold at least three major volunteer projects each year. Examples: build a playground, cleanup of river or natural areas, fundraisers, and conducting surveys.
3. Create a volunteer recognition program that celebrates volunteers and publicly shows appreciation of volunteerism.

**Goal 8 - Adequately fund property acquisition, capital improvement, maintenance and program operations.**

Strategies:

1. Investigate tax levies and/or user fees to provide operating budgets for funding levels adequate for the maintenance and projected program needs of the County Park System.
2. Plan campaigns to assure passage of levies and user fees by carefully convincing the public of the wise use of tax dollars and the projected benefits of planned improvements.
3. Examine existing revenue generation from program fees, rentals and other sources. Adjust fees to reflect break-even or profit as appropriate for users of the County. Investigate and institute programs such as pay-to-play, boat rentals, bike rentals, and/or restaurant or concession functions at various locations in the system.
4. Pursue corporate support of programs and capital improvements, either as donations, sponsorships, or naming rights.
5. Engage other government entities, non-profits and schools as partners and supporters of the County Park and Open Space programs, operations and capital improvements.
6. Investigate and write grant applications requesting funding from private foundation, State and Federal sources and local corporate entities.
7. Promote gift of land and equipment from private citizens and non-profit organizations.
8. Investigate, develop and market the construction of a regional sports facility and a major banquet facility to generate rental and user fees for the parks system.

**Goal 9- Private sector initiatives should be encouraged, such as individuals, organizations and corporate citizens partnering with the County to provide leadership to help solve problems for the benefit of the public good.**

Strategies:

1. Think and act with a long-term view.
2. Empower both staff and citizens who have courage and vision to take action.
3. Encourage and accept strong corporate and business leadership.
4. Build upon the base of caring, committed citizens who use the facilities to develop giving through volunteering and philanthropy.

**Goal 10 – Preserve and protect natural areas and promote nature education in the County Parks.**

Strategies:

1. Work cooperatively with other government entities and non-profit organizations to collaboratively create natural areas particularly in and near the Great Miami and Little Miami River corridors.
2. Create and implement a natural resources management policy to address ways to utilize environmentally-friendly management approaches whenever feasible.
3. Plan and create collaboratively a Nature Education Facility at an appropriate location within the County as budget and opportunity allow.
4. Add nature education programs as budget and citizen needs and requests indicate appropriate increases in level of service.
5. Develop regulations which would establish stream side setbacks along blue line streams to protect the natural areas along those streams and preserve the health of the rivers.
6. Work with corporate sponsors or write grants to develop and/or restore wetland areas across the County.
7. Adopt Conservation Design (i.e. Cluster Design) regulations, through local zoning, as recommended by the Liveable Landscapes and Countryside Programs (minimum of 40 percent of the gross site area as open space); protecting natural areas and vistas; reducing development cost and future public sector maintenance; providing usable open spaces and wildlife corridors.
8. Develop tree conservation standards and regulations (Landscape Code) which would require developers and/or landowners to protect tree groves and natural areas within developments.

**Goal 11 – Provide for future Park and Recreation needs of the Community.**

Strategies:

1. Provide adequate indoor and outdoor facilities as populations increase in 2020 and 2030 in accordance with the service standards established in park standards section of this plan and Tables 27-1 and 27-2.
2. Purchase 52 or more acres for mini parks, 284 or more acres for neighborhood parks, 226 or more acres for community parks, and develop 58 more miles of trails in the northwest quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2030.
3. Purchase 12 or more acres for mini parks, 44 or more acres for neighborhood parks in the northeast quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2030.



4. Purchase 52 or more acres for mini parks, 233 or more acres for neighborhood parks, and 254 or more acres for community parks, and develop 39 more miles of trails in the southwest quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2030.
5. Purchase 6 or more acres for mini parks, 36 or more acres for neighborhood parks, 6 acres for community parks, and develop 2 more miles of trails in the southeast quadrant of the County to maintain park land standards as defined in Section V for the year 2030.

**Goal 12 – Work collaboratively to create a connective system of parkways, greenways and trails in the County.**

Strategies:

1. Create parkways with bike, hike and equestrian trails across greenway corridors outlined in the trails master plan to strengthen the visual experience of people traveling through the County as outlined in Map 10 Trails Master Plan and Map 11 Greenways.
2. Create separate equestrian paths (in an outer loop) that encompass the County as outlined in Map 10 the trails master plan and as recommended in the report of the WCEAB to the County Commissioners and the Park Board.
3. Expand the multi-path system as outlined in Map 10 the trails master plan map that connects to the Little Miami Multi-Use Trail and establishes a loop around the entire County as well as provide a connection to the Great Miami River path.
4. Develop all trail systems cooperatively with other government units, non-profits agencies and interested citizen groups.
5. Work with the County Engineer’s Office to change the Trails Map in the Thoroughfare Plan adopted by the County to encompass the changes in the updated Parks Plan so that land and rights-of-way can be obtained for trails and greenways in the future as it becomes available through development opportunities.
6. Link schools, neighborhoods, and business districts with parks and natural areas along vehicular rights-of-way, railroad rights-of-way, along power lines and other utility corridors, within easements through private property along shared property lines, through municipal or public utility property and through existing park and school property as outlined in Map 10 Trails Master Plan Map and Map 11 Greenways Map.

**B. Recommendations Details**

Table 28 breaks down the recommended park acreages by political jurisdiction and Table 29 breaks down the recommended park facilities by political jurisdiction. These tables

simply display how many facilities are located within each jurisdiction. They do not designate which jurisdiction should supply the recommended number of facilities. It is merely a demonstration and would hopefully serve as a guideline for political jurisdictions to work collaboratively with each other to provide these facilities.

## **IX. Individual County Park Recommendations**

### **A. Bowman Park**

1. Location – Bowman Park is located at 200 Corwin Avenue, Waynesville, Ohio in Wayne Township, northeast of Route 73 and southwest of Route 42.
2. History – Woody Bowman donated the original 17-acre parcel as part of the DerDuetchler Restaurant and Market complex on 10/18/1993. Other conveyances were 18.145 acres on 4/25/1996 and 15.0802 acres on 2/1/2000 making the total acreage 50.0802 acres. Roadway and parking area were constructed with ODOT funding.
3. Description – Bowman Park lies along the Little Miami National and State Scenic River. Presently this beautiful park has 4 baseball fields, 10 soccer fields, one football field, a pave driveway, 2 parking areas, 2 shelters with tables. The park is used primarily for youth athletic team sports and playfields. Its natural beauty along the banks of the Little Miami River is among the best in the valley. While this is being preserved, further development for increased access and public use is presently under study.
4. Vision for the Future – Bowman is now one of the three parks in the area that embrace and feature the natural assets of the Little Miami River in the area (Bowman, Hisey and Fultz). The park improvement recommendations for this park are to continue providing enhancements that support the transition from Ballfields to soccer fields while implementing the Riparian Corridor Management procedures along the boundaries of the Little Miami Scenic River. Such improvements may include a soccer equipment shed, portable concession facilities, increased parking, permanent eco-friendly restrooms that can withstand seasonal flooding, and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails. Specifically, additional efforts will be made to link Bowman Park to Fultz Park, and Fultz Park to the Little Miami Scenic Trailhead Parking in Corwin.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – Nearly this entire park lies in the flood plain or floodway of the Little Miami River. This is both a blessing and a problem. Its proximity to the River makes it unique and beautiful in all seasons. However, seasonal flooding calls for a higher maintenance and clean up cost, and sometimes limited use of the park. Its location in the flood plain also limits development, restrooms are prohibited and construction of other structures is severely limited by flood plain zoning. Nevertheless, this park is popular and under heavy usage.

### **B. Butler Warren Road Park/Roberts Property**

1. Location – The Roberts property is located at 3332 Butler Warren Road, Mason, Ohio in Deerfield Township and is not yet owned by the park district. Design and uses are under study in connection with the donor family.
2. History – This property is a family farm that has been sold for development with a provision that approximately 80 acres be set as a passive park and nature preserve. It has been owned and farmed by the Roberts family for many years. In 2003, the Roberts family suggesting that they leave approximately 80 acres of the property to the Park District on the terms that it is an all-passive park approached the Park

District. The Park District accepted the idea and shared the idea with the family of the possibilities of an Arboretum. 60 acres are to be developed with housing around the 80 acres of passive parkland. The land is still in trust and has not yet been conveyed to the Park District.

3. Description – The Roberts property lies pretty flat from its history of farming. It has two ponds and several out buildings. Upon acquisition, expectations would include parking, lake restoration, internal trail restoration, prairie and woodland restoration and enhancements, and a great lawn area with potentially adopt-a-plot gardens, retain private residence, and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails. The Trust restrictions will limit the use to passive recreation with specific uses of linking trails to the planned housing development to the south and east.
4. Future Development Concept/Capital Improvements – Estimated Costs:

### **C. Carmody Park at Twin Creek Nature Preserve**

1. Location – Carmody Park was dedicated on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005. It is located on Martz Paulin Road, near Franklin, Ohio, along Twin Creek. It is part of the larger Twin Creek Park and Nature Preserve project acquired and developed under a Clean Ohio Grant.
2. History – This 60-acre tract was purchased from the heirs of the Carmody Estate. Approximately 40% of the acquisition cost was provided under an agreement to convey a conservation easement to Five Rivers Metro Parks, of Montgomery County. This was done out of a joint interest in restoring and preserving the stream corridor along Twin Creeks. The park was dedicated in 2005.
3. Description – Approximately 36 acres are open agricultural field areas suitable for active plan fields. Soccer, baseball and football will be considered for future development. The remaining 24 acres are wooded and will remain in the conservation area to be made available to the public for trails, interpretive park use and development and scenic stream access and enjoyment. This park is the centerpiece of a complex over several properties acquired under the Clean Ohio Grant Program to supplement the property acquired from the Carmody Estate. The entire complex will comprise more than 400 acres and will be known as the Carmody Park Lower Twin Creek Park Nature Preserve.
4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park are to continue with ballfield enhancements, while implementing the Stream Side Corridor Management procedures along the boundaries of Twin Creek, provide ballfield equipment shed, improved parking and traffic control, and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails. Specifically, efforts should be made to link Carmody Park to Oeder Park and to the parking lot off Martz Paulin Road. Improvements should be made at all entrance locations and specifically identify adequate horse trailer parking and bridle path trailheads so that residents will be able to access the proposed bridle trails. The acquisition of properties along Twin Creek and the Great Miami River should be pursued to establish a river and bridle trail up to the existing trail in the Three Rivers Metro Park in Franklin Township and Montgomery County.

### **D. Clint Fultz Park**

1. Location – Clint Fultz River Park is located at 6102 Corwin, Ohio in the Village of Corwin and Wayne Township.
2. History – Clint and Marilyn Fultz have been substantial supporters of Warren County parks in Wayne Township for many years. The Village of Corwin purchased this tract of land from Carl and Barbara Lamb. In the month of November 2000, the park district purchased the 13.5214-acre tract of land from the Village of Corwin for the amount of \$55,000. An additional 17 acres of land adjoining the original parcel of the northeast border was acquired with funds from the County Commissioners in 2003, making the total acreage now approximately 30 acres. The park was named Clint Fultz Memorial Park at its dedication in 2002.
3. Description – Clint Fultz Park lies on the bank of the Little Miami River on the east side, directly across from Bowman Park. Together they comprise an 80-acre park complex that encompasses and protects both banks of the river and provided public access to the Scenic River. Located in the Village of Corwin, Fultz Park is also adjacent to the Little Miami River Scenic hike and bike trail making it accessible to hikers and bikers who use the trail in that popular area. In 2003-2005 a Little Miami Scenic River Watercraft access was developed with parking, launch ramp and river access facilities. Also added were playground facilities, parking and picnic shelters. The property is well used for these purposes and also for overflow parking for the nearby bike trail. Its setting along the Little Miami River makes this tract of land which is a perfect location for the watercraft access ramp to launch water craft in association with other launch facilities including our similar facility at the Morrow Veterans Park in Morrow. The Fultz Park is accessed from Corwin Avenue but could also have a second access from New Burlington Road.
4. Vision for the Future – Clint Fultz Park is now one of three parks in the area that embrace and feature the natural assets of the Little Miami River in the area (Bowman, Hisey and Fultz). The park improvement recommendations for this park are to continue to enhance the New Burlington Road Entrance Improvements, extend the Riparian Corridor Management procedures along the boundaries of the Little Miami Scenic River up through the north end of the recent park expansion, provide a football equipment storage shed, increase parking, provide vehicular connectivity between entrances, and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails. Specifically, efforts should be made to link Fultz Park to Bowman Park, and to the Little Miami Scenic Trailhead Parking in Corwin.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – Most of this park land lies in the floodplain of the Little Miami River. The river presents some problems and also makes it unique and beautiful. With the bike trail near this tract of land, it offers parking for people using the bike trail as well as offering space for soccer fields and picnic shelters along the scenic river.

#### **E. Gulley Park**

1. Location – Gulley Park is located at 2168 Middleboro Road, Clarksville, Ohio in Washington Township.
2. History – Records reflect the property containing 119.556 acres was purchased from James Hendrix on May 20, 1991 by Michael T. and Kathryn L. McHugh.

The Warren County Park District purchased 84.1722 acres in 1999 from Michael McHugh for \$315,645.75.

3. Description – This is a scenic and rolling 84 acre tract which is situated near the Fort Ancient Historical site and offers active play fields, surrounded by heavily wooded and rolling land that is perfect for hiking, picnicking and trail adventures, as well as group camping for scouts and other groups. In the fall of 1999 the park district started construction on a Kentucky board fence on the property line between the McHugh’s remaining property and the park district. A woven wire fence was constructed on the southern property line. An entrance roadway, parking lot, picnic shelter with picnic tables and grills has also been constructed. A 15-acre tract of land has been developed and seeded for the purpose of 5 soccer fields. A hiking and mountain bike trail is presently being developed. Fence rows and other areas have also been cleared. There is a beautiful entrance way and a handsome stone based park sign. The forest is very attractive and supports a more diverse woodland wildlife population of squirrels, wild turkey and white tail deer. The species of trees found in the forest are Pin Oak, White Oak, Red Maple, Hickory, Cotton Wood, Sycamore, and Green Ash. Pin Oak growing in Clermont soil often exceeds 100 feet in height. There is a unique small vernal pool near the southeast corner of the property; the pool appears to be man made. The pools are shallow depressions that retain water during the winter through early summer. Woodland salamanders and frogs are very dependent on the pools for reproduction and survival of their young. The northwest side of the park is very rolling, a great area to remain natural for other wildlife.
4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park are to improve vehicular circulation, manage event traffic, provide limited (restoration only) group campsites, improve trails, provide ballfield and soccer equipment sheds and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails, and implement natural areas management procedures for woodland restoration and enhancements.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – The soil beneath the property is generally dark-brown Clermont soil silt loam materials to an average depth of one foot below ground surface. The underline soil is generally yellowish brown clay loam materials. The subsurface deposits are underlain by thin layers of glacial till material and then bedrock. The drainage-way originates on the property and forms an intermittent stream near its center. Therefore surface water flows to the center of the property, then northwest toward Harpers Run Creek, then into the Little Miami River.

#### **F. Hatton Lukens Park**

1. Location – Hatton Lukens Park is located on Harveysburg Road in the Village of Harveysburg, Ohio in Massie Township. It is approximately ½ mile from Caesars Creek Lake in the northeastern section of Warren County.
2. History – On November 5, 1974 Miriam Lukens and William A. Lukens conveyed 35 acres of land as a memorial gift in memory of Eleanor Hatton, sister of Miriam Hatton Lukens. The land was to be used exclusively for a bird/wildlife refuge wilderness area and wild flower sanctuary. In 1989 the Wildlife Sanctuary was traded back to Miriam Lukens for 35 acres of real estate on Harveysburg Road in the Village of Harveysburg for the purpose of a Warren County Park. An

80-foot wide roadway easement was granted to Peter Carroll for the purpose of an exit from the Renaissance Festival. Mr. Carroll entered into an agreement to pay the real estate taxes each year on the Hatton Luken Park. This is a permanent agreement. Phase I development began with the development of a 10 acre tract of land, consisting of 1 baseball field, 2 soccer fields, split rail fence, roadway and parking lot. Phase I cost \$89,000.00. In 1993 a picnic shelter and basketball court was constructed. In 1995 a second shelter and playground was added. In 1996 a fenced-in double horseshoe court was constructed. In 1997 a sand volleyball court was constructed, and in the year of 2000 a roadway and parking lot was developed to the rear of the park. Since that time field use and development have been ongoing and use is intense.

3. Description – The Hatton Luken Park is primarily a sport complex located on 35.515 acres. The park has a small stream running through the southwest section of the park. Most of the land is generally rolling terrain. Wild turkeys, deer and other wildlife are often seen in the early morning and late evening. The park backs up to the Caesar Creek State Park and provides parking and access to the Caesar Creek mountain bike and trail complex.
4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park and to improve vehicular circulation, manage event traffic, provide ballfield and soccer equipment sheds, provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails and replace playground equipment.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – There are three types of soil found in this park, Fincastle, Brookston and Russell. The Fincastle soil is used for field crops commonly grown and typically occurs on uplands. Brookston series soil has a very dark silty clay loam surface, layers are about 12 inches thick, and again this type of soil is used for farming. The Russell series is dark grayish-brown silt loam about 7 inches thick, well suited to cultivate crops. The park is generally rolling, located in the northeastern section of Warren County with run off going into Caesars Creek Lake.

## **G. Hisey Park**

1. Location – The Hisey Park is located on Middletown Road in Corwin, Ohio in Wayne Township at the corner of Corwin Road & Middletown Road, 2-miles south of Waynesville.
2. History – Hisey Park was acquired in 2003. With the help of the Hisey family, Wayne Township and the County Commissioners, the Park District was able to acquire this property and develop it into a wonderful park. This historic farm property was purchased from the Hisey Estate utilizing funding available through the Clean Ohio Grand Fund Program. The park was dedicated in 2005 and will incorporate nature trails, views, overlooks, wetlands and a learning center.
3. Description – The 158 acres of land, which lies along the Caesar Creek Nature Preserve, features high views from atop the edge of Caesar Creek Gorge, mature steeply sloped wooded hillsides, and floodplain bordering the Little Miami Scenic River Bike Multi purpose trail. This property provides a staging area for a myriad of activities, including canoeing and kayaking, biking, bird watching, hiking and nature walks and fishing. Additionally, the park includes the restoration of wetlands in the western portion of the site adjacent to the Little Miami Bike Trail. It is estimated that this area will include approximately 10-12 acres of

jurisdictional wetlands once it matures. The property lies along the beautiful Caesar Creek Gorge and borders the Ohio ODNR nature preserve south and the Little Miami Scenic River Trail to the west. The park will feature natural trails, a wetland area and active play fields.

4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park are to continue to enhance Ballfields, stream bed relocation, concession stand, provide trail and par course enhancements, interpretive ecological field station learning center adjacent to wetlands, construct elevated boardwalk over wetland with interpretive signage, establish limited use Trapper’s Hut Campsites, seek appropriate public use for the Hisey Homestead, and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails with specific links to the adjacent Little Miami Scenic Trail, ODNR parking lot, and Caesar Creek State Park.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – The proximity to the well-known and much used Little Miami Scenic River Bike multi-purpose trail assures exposure to the unique geological and ecological features of the property to tens of thousands visitors who traverse the trail annually. The wetland project includes more than 2,000 lineal feet of earth berm construction, over 5,000 lineal feet of tile searching and removal, the planting of 4,400 tree seedlings and container plants and the seeding of sediment and erosion control.

#### **H. Ivins Memorial Park**

1. Location – Ivins Memorial Park is located at 1422 Phillips Road, Lebanon, Ohio in Turtlecreek Township.
2. History – The Ivins Memorial Park was donated to the Park District in October 1994 by Leroy and Anna J. Ivins, in memory of Harry Leroy Ivins, father of Leroy Ivins. Development began in 1995 with the construction of a split rail fence, entrance roadway, picnic shelter, tables and grills. A play area with swings, slide and merry-go-round was added in 1998. The entrance road and parking area was paved in 1999.
3. Description – The property is a 6-acre tract of land in a rural community setting, near Ft. Ancient Indian Burial Ground. There are 2 soccer fields and one instructional field. Because the property is small, its use is limited.
4. Vision for the Future – Due to its location and small size, the park improvement recommendations are to continue “as is” and study adding a dog park facility.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – The park lies on a ridgeline, mostly level, and the soil classification is Rossmoyne soil. This soil occupies relative narrow, convex ridge tops between deeply entrenched streams or convex hillsides. This soil holds moisture and is slow to dry out with spring rains.

#### **I. Kesling Park**

1. Location – Kesling Park is located at 7201 Red Lion Five Point Road near Springboro, Ohio in Clearcreek Township.
2. History – Kesling Park is a 15-acre tract of land. The land was a donation from the Kesling family through NCR of Dayton, Ohio.
3. Description – The Park consists of 2 picnic shelters with tables, sand volleyball court, basketball court, 2 swing sets, 5 soccer fields and one baseball field with dugouts. A drinking fountain was installed on the concession building.



4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park are to improve vehicular circulation, provide football, ballfield and soccer equipment sheds, sewer enhancements, restroom upgrades, replace playground equipment, and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – The Park is slightly rolling except for the soccer fields and baseball fields. The soil is primary Dana Series, it has a dark grayish brown, and the upper part of the soil is yellowish. The park is located in the north central part of Warren County. The water shed flows southwest into Clearcreek.

#### **J. Landen Deerfield Park**

1. Location – The Landen Deerfield Park is located approximately 20 miles northeast of Cincinnati, Ohio at 2258 West State Route 3 and US Route 22 Maineville, Ohio 45039. It is located in the most intensely populated township in the county and is subjected to intense use and pressure for active play fields, as well as picnicking, trails, playground and lake use. Landen Deerfield Park is presently the most heavily used park in the County.
2. History – The total acreage is 95 acres of prime land, donated to the Warren County Park District by Joseph Landen for public recreation and was held in trust by the Nature Conservancy. Conveyance of land occurred on December 18, 1979. A Land and Water grant was applied for the park district, which was a 50/50 funding match for development. On June 18, 1979 the amount of \$802,766.00 was awarded to the park district, resulting in the park district receiving \$401,383.00 for the development of the Landen Deerfield Park.
3. Description – The Landen Deerfield Park conserves 95 acres of open space for public use for recreation, offering soccer, baseball, softball and football fields, tennis, basketball and sand volleyball courts, natural area, hiking trails, mountain bike trails, fishing, shelters, restrooms, concession stand, picnic tables and grills.
4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park are to improve vehicular circulation, manage event traffic, improve trails, provide ballfield and soccer equipment sheds, install ballfield drainage tiles, upgrade restrooms, upon relocation of maintenance facility begin systematic downsizing and deconstruction of maintenance barns to make way for possible signature rental pavilion, and provide link trails to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails, and implement natural areas management procedures for woodland restoration and enhancements.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – Glaciers covered almost all of Warren County in the Illinoian age, the Landen Deerfield Park is located along the ridge line, thus the majority of the soil was formed earlier than the Illinoian glacier. The soil depth is generally more than 200 feet thick. The soil survey of Warren County reflects soil type as Clermont series. This soil group is light colored gray and yellow. Soil characterized by being poorly drained having low Ph. The level areas have about 12 inches of silty topsoil over very tightly compacted clay subsoil. On slope areas, the silt topsoil has been eroded off exposing the subsoil layers. The park is located in the southern section of Warren County. The topography of Landen Deerfield Park high point is approximately

800 feet in elevation. The site is drained by intermittent streams, which flow into the Little Miami River.

#### **K. Loeb Property**

1. Location – The Loeb Memorial Park is located in Turtlecreek Township on the west side of State Route 123, 3 miles to the northwest of the City of Lebanon, Ohio. The property is bounded by SR 123 to the north and east, agricultural land to the south and west.
2. History – The property was purchased from the Loeb Foundation on April 21, 2000. The site has no significant historical or archeological features; primarily the site has remained agricultural and has been farmed over the past several years, present back to 1956. The acreage of property is 66.3789, a portion of the late Dr. Justus Loeb farm.
3. Description – A review of the topographic map shows the property is gently sloping south, the east and west sides are divided. Intermittent tributary of Turtlecreek, a tributary of the Little Miami River. A high pressure gas pipeline right-of-way, 120 feet wide, goes across the northern portion of the property from west to east. The Lebanon airport is located approximately 3,000 feet to the south of the property.
4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park are to defer development for further study of needs, and the acquisition of Armco Park. When initiated, development of this park is suitable for active recreation. Programming and development should include active public participation.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – The native soil beneath this property is generally silt loam to an average depth of 3 feet below the ground surface. The surface soil has moderately slowed permeability. The surface deposits are underlain by generally glacier till material to an approximate depth of 25 feet; these subsurface deposits are underlain by bedrock. A substantial source of ground water is not likely to exist beneath the property. Topographic map shows the property is gently sloping to the south and the tributary of Turtlecreek running north and south with acreage also sloping east to west to the center of the creek. This tract of land is located in the center portion of Warren County to the west.

#### **L. Martin Marietta/Carl E. Oeder Park**

1. Location – Planned Martin-Marietta Carl E. Oeder Park is located in Warren County Ohio in Franklin Township on Franklin-Trenton Road, Franklin, Ohio. This is a gravel-mining site that lies alongside the Warren County water well fields and contains a large ground water lake that is residual from the mining operation. It is part of the Twin Creek Park and Nature Preserve Complex that is under development by the park district and offers a wonderful site for a fishing lake venue, with trails, shelters and playground facilities. The mining site is presently in the process of reclamation by Martin Marietta, which will transfer the property to the park district when the reclamation is complete.
2. History – The 62-acre tract of land has been mined out by Martin-Marietta Aggregates. As soon as reclamation is complete, land will be conveyed to the Warren County Park District, completely restored and developed per agreement between Park District and Martin-Marietta Aggregates.

3. Description – Upon completion of mining, it is anticipated that the property will contain a lake with park development around the perimeter. Shelters, restrooms and a playground will be constructed, other type of development uncertain at this time. There is an area of prime level land and frontage along Franklin Trenton Road.
4. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – This land consists of Abscota Series Soil, this type of soil consists of well-drained dark-colored sandy soils that are subject to flooding. These soils are nearly level and are generally between well drained Ross or Genesee soils on the flood plains. A typical profile has a dark color sandy surface layer about 12 inches thick. Brown sand extends from a depth of 12 to 42 inches. The next layer is brown, well-sorted sand and gravel. This level soil occurs along the Little Miami River, Twin Creek and the lower part of the Clear Creek in Franklin Township. This area is relatively level and located in the northwest section of Warren County in Franklin Township.

#### **M. Minard Memorial Park**

1. Location – The Minard Memorial Park is located at 3460 Fields Ertel Road, Loveland, Ohio in Deerfield Township.
2. History – The 6-acre tract of land was a gift from David Carney, Mallard Crossing LTD. Mr. Carney purchased the land from former owner Morrison Nursery for a multiple housing development and set aside 6 acres for parkland for recreation in the community as well as the housing development.
3. Description – Approximately 4 acres are open space suitable for one soccer field and one instructional field. There is one picnic shelter with tables and grills, a playground area and a drinking fountain, a paved parking lot with space for approximately 30 vehicles.
4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park are to restore soccer fields, grills, and shelter to extend the life cycle of park amenities, and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails with specific links to adjacent condominium community and township park to the north.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – Poorly drained soil that formed in the loess and Illinoian – age glacial. Soil type is Avonburg silt nearly level to sloping. Located in the southwest section of Warren County.

#### **N. Morrow Veterans Memorial Park**

1. Location – The Morrow Veterans Memorial Park is located at 200 Hamlin Street and 104 Lincoln Street, Morrow, Ohio in Salem Township. Its two entrances are split by the Little Miami Scenic River Bike Trail.
2. History – This parkland was purchased in 2004 from the Village of Morrow through a cooperative agreement in which park uses are maintained on the surface of the land where the Village of Morrow maintains a well field protection program. The Warren County Park District purchased the property from the Village of Morrow in 2004 for the purpose of developing and operating a River Access Park.
3. Description – This Park provides a unique opportunity for recreational boating, canoeing, kayaking, bird watching, photography, fishing and hunting on the Little

Miami National and State Scenic River. Along with the many sports fields and activities that take place spring through fall. This park features the Little Miami National State Scenic River Watercraft Access. This park is a multi-purpose park with active play fields, shelters, picnic areas and a watercraft launch access to the Little Miami Scenic River. The property is also intersected by the Little Miami Scenic River hike and bike trail which runs through the property and provides ready access to users of the trail.

4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park are to improve vehicular circulation, manage event traffic, provide football equipment shed and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails, and implement Riparian Corridor Management procedures.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – None.

#### **O. Shaw Family Park/Drake Road Property**

1. Location – The Roxie Shaw Memorial Park is located at 801 Drake Road, Lebanon, Ohio in the City of Lebanon and Turtlecreek Township.
2. History – An anonymous donor gifted this property to the Warren County Park District in 2004. Upon their request, this park will be named after Mrs. Roxie Shaw, a lifelong resident of Lebanon and someone supportive of youth and community activities.
3. Description – Located in the center of the County and in close proximity to the Lebanon High School, this property will be developed into a major park facility and will likely become the headquarters, housing the park offices and maintenance facilities. There is potential for multiple active playfields, trails and a learning center.
4. Vision for the Future – The property is under consideration for a new Park Headquarters Facility and a Regional Sports Complex which may include a Fieldhouse, Championship 3500 seat Baseball Stadium, Championship 5000 seat Soccer Stadium, practice fields, tournament soccer and baseball fields, handicap accessible playground, water spray features, parking, storage, and amphitheater. This property could also be used for a Regional Arts Center as well as active play fields, preserved barn complex for 4-H Clubs, conservatory, amphitheater, competition dog run, and maintenance facilities. Public input from area residents, planners, adjacent high school and churches will help determine local needs to implement into the regional complex.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – This site is flat agriculture land.

#### **P. Shaker Road Park**

1. Location – This property is located at 3848 Shaker Road, Franklin, Ohio in Franklin Township.
2. History – In 2002, this 91-acre tract was gifted to the Warren County Commissioners from the estate of Mrs. Irene List. Said to be used for park purposes, it was transferred to the Park District to comply with her wishes.
3. Description – No park plan has been determined at this time.
4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park are to defer development until needs assessments clarify best uses, and also due to the

acquisition of Armco Park. When initiated, development of this park is suitable for active recreation. Programming and development should include active public participation, specifically from parents and students at Middletown Fenwick High School and the Franklin School District.

5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – None.

#### **Q. Wilmington Road Nature Preserve**

1. Location – This property is located along Wilmington Road in Washington Township.
2. History – This property was acquired in 2007.
3. Description – No park plan has been determined at this time.
4. Vision for the Future – This property will be a nature and wildlife preserve and passive park that will warrant interpretive signage, internal trail restoration which could include hiking and horseback riding, prairie and woodland restoration and enhancements, and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails with specific links to the Little Miami Scenic Trail and Mathers Mill.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – None.

#### **R. Richardson Property**

1. Location – This property is located in Turtlecreek Township on the east side of State Route 741 across the street from the ODOT District 8 Offices.
2. History – This property will be transferred to the Park District either in 2008 or 2009 as part of a lawsuit settlement over a proposed subdivision (The Estates at Keever’s Creek).
3. Description – No park plan has been determined at this time.
4. Vision for the Future – Upon acquisition, providing parking, pond restoration, internal trail restoration, prairie and woodland restoration and enhancements, and provide trail links to and from park property to rights-of-way and adjacent properties participating in “place to place” multi-use trails. Deed restrictions will restrict the uses to passive recreation.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – None.

#### **S. Armco Park Property**

1. Location – This property is located at the northwest intersection of Greentree Road and State Route 741 in Turtlecreek Township.
2. History – In 2008, this property was purchased from AK Steel Corporation through a partnership made up of the Warren County Commissioners, Turtlecreek Township Trustees, Otterbein Retirement Community and the State of Ohio.
3. Description – No park plan has been determined at this time.
4. Vision for the Future – The park improvement recommendations for this park are to defer development until needs assessments clarify best uses. When initiated, development of this park is suitable for active recreation, a Regional Sports Complex, a Regional Arts Center, or a rental pavilion center.
5. Geological, Topographical and Geographical Characteristics – None.

## **X. Potential Funding Sources**

A wide variety of funding sources will be necessary to fund the long-term improvements that are recommended in this Master Plan. There is no single source that could pay for all of this and it is not a wise use of taxpayer's funds to just utilize local funds. Therefore, it is imperative that persons trained in finances and grants work closely with this Master Plan to determine appropriate sources for the recommended improvements.

### **A. General Funds:**

The County and many local jurisdictions already budget funds for operations and capital improvements for the parks and facilities. Increasing the amount of funding is something that must be approved by each local board with the improvements competing against the many needs of the County and each of the local jurisdictions such as roads, infrastructure, and services. The County Commissioners have indicated that they will continue to appropriate \$500,000.00 for capital improvements each year for the parks.

### **B. Public/Private Partnerships:**

There are typically utilized when the public and private sectors cooperate toward a common goal and utilize public and private monies to meet this goal. For example, the County may have land that it could allow a group such as a private investor to develop a regional sports facility for soccer or baseball.

### **C. General Obligation Bonds:**

Several communities within the state have recently utilized General Obligation Bonds for the development of park and recreation areas. With current interest rates, these have been very attractive to Cities and Counties that have income from other sources for debt service or that can issue a tax levy.

### **D. Statewide Funding Sources:**

The State of Ohio uses both Federal sources and its own budget to fund recreation and bicycle and programs. In some cases, project sponsors apply directly to the State for funding. In others, sponsors apply to the regional agency, OKI and/or MVRPC.

1. ODNR Recreational Trails Program – This grant provides up to 80% matching funds for the development of urban trail linkages; trail head and trail side facilities; maintenance of existing trails; restoration of trail areas damaged by usage; improving access for people with disabilities; acquisition of easements and properties; development/construction of new trails; purchase of lease and recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment; environment and safety education programs related to trails. The contact at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources is Mary Fitch at 614.265.6477. Applications are due February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. In 2006, 13 of 52 applications were funded with a total funding of \$928,928.

2. Clean Ohio Trails Fund – The Clean Ohio initiative provides community-directed investments for revitalizing urban areas, protecting rivers and watersheds, preserving green space and farmland, and expanding Ohio’s system of recreational trails.
  - a. Provided up to 75% of the project costs for eligible trail acquisition and development costs.
  - b. The local match can be in-kind contributions or other interests in land, labor, or materials.
  - c. Projects will be selected by criteria identified in, but not limited to, a statewide trails plan and Amended Substitute House Bill 3.
  - d. A nine member advisory board appointed by the director of ODNR will provide advice to the director regarding the selection of applications for funding.
  - e. Approximately \$6.25 million will be available in each of the first four years of the program.

The current capital budget for state fiscal years 2007 – 2008 did not include funding for Round 5 of the Clean Ohio Trails Fund. In 2006, 30 projects were funded with \$6.95 million. To date, a total of almost \$285 million has been allocated to Clean Ohio Fund projects, including the Clean Ohio Trails Fund. The contact at ODNR for this program is Mary Fitch at 614.265.6477.

3. NatureWorks – This program is also coordinated through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Real Estate and Land Management. This program has provided for 75% reimbursement grants from the state for acquisition, development or rehabilitation of public parks and recreation areas. Projects need to be completed within 1 ½ to 2 years. Deadline is February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The contact at ODNR is John Lynch at 614.265.6825. Since NatureWorks’ inception, the state has funded over 1,300 applications totaling over 63 million. In 2007, this program funded \$2.2 million to 107 communities. Warren County communities would be competing against each other for these funds.
4. Land and Water Conservation Fund – The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a Federal program providing grants for planning and acquiring outdoor recreation areas and facilities, including trails. The Fund is administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Congress has yet to determine whether this program will be funded in 2008.

Cities, counties and districts authorized to acquire, develop, operate and maintain park and recreation facilities are eligible to apply. Applicants must fund the entire project, and will be reimbursed for 50 percent of the costs. The grant process for local agencies is competitive and if funding levels are like previous years, there will be a \$50,000 maximum grant request.

5. Safe Routes to School (SR25) – Recent SAFETEA-LU legislation, which requires each state’s Department of Transportation to designate a Safe Routes to Schools Coordinator, also contains a SR25 program. This program is meant to improve the safety of walking and bicycling to school, and to encourage students to walk and bicycle to school through bicycle safety and traffic calming projects. ODOT

requires a Comprehensive Safe Route to Schools Plan to be eligible for funding. The next round of funding will likely take place in January of 2009.

#### **E. Regional Funding Sources:**

Regional transportation funds are administered by OKI and MVRPC. Sponsors using local, state, or other federal Funds are encouraged but not required to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians in the planning and design of all proposed transportation projects.

1. Transportation Improvement Program – In 2007, the State of Ohio awarded approximately \$1.5 billion in funds for highway, transit and bicycle/pedestrian projects for FY 2008-2011. Projects programmed in the Transportation Improvement Program must provide for public comment to the funding list, provide specific project information, be consistent with planning documents, provide a financial plan, establish priorities, and conform to air quality standards. Therefore, when funding becomes available, the project will be ready for implementation.
2. Transportation Enhancements – Transportation Enhancements (TE) are designated SAFETEA-LU funds. OKI and MVRPC solicit applications and funds regional projects and programs with these dollars. The TE Program provides for the implementation of various nontraditional projects, with examples ranging from the restoration of historic transportation facilities, to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, to landscaping and scenic beautification, and mitigates water pollution from highway runoff. In 2006, MVRPC awarded nearly \$2.5 million in TE funds. In 2007, MVRPC received requests in excess of \$6 million for projects.
3. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) – CMAQ funds are allocated as part of the SAFETEA\_LU, and OKI and MVRPC solicits applications and uses these dollars to fund projects. In 2006, MVRPC awarded nearly \$12 million for CMAQ projects. In 2007, MVRPC received CMAQ applications totaling more than \$20 million. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are eligible for these funds if they provide air quality benefits.
4. National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – The National Association of Counties, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the Wildlife Habitat Council, in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Community based Restoration Program with NOAA fisheries, and other sponsors (e.g. Office of Surface Mining) offer applications for a Five-star Restoration Matching Grants Program. The Five-star Restoration Program provides modest financial assistance on a competitive bases to support community based wetland, riparian, and coastal habitat restoration projects that build diverse partnerships and foster local natural resource stewardship through education, outreach and training activities. The average award is approximately \$10,000 and any public or private entity is eligible. The stars in the “Five-star” are the partners, funders, and/or participants necessary to complete the project including: schools or youth groups, local or tribal governments, local business or corporations, conservation or citizens groups, State and Federal Resource Management Agencies, and Foundations and other Funders. ([www.nfwf.org/programs/5star-rfp.htm](http://www.nfwf.org/programs/5star-rfp.htm))



Projects must therefore involve diverse partnerships of ideally five organizations that contribute to the funding, land, technical assistance, workforce support, and/or other in-kind services:

- a. Awards are between \$5,000 and \$20,000, averaging \$10,000.
  - b. Projects must include a strong on-the-ground wetland, riparian, or coastal habitat restoration component and should include training, education, outreach, monitoring, and community stewardship. Projects involving only research, monitoring, or planning are eligible for funding.
  - c. Applicants must demonstrate that measurable ecological, educational, social, and/or economic benefits are expected results from the completed project.
  - d. Projects may be a discrete part of a larger restoration effort but must be ready to complete within one-year timeframe upon receipt of funding.
  - e. Deadlines for applications are March 1.
5. Office of Environmental Education – Ohio EPA’s mission is “to protect the environment and public health by ensuring compliance with environmental laws and demonstrating leadership in environmental stewardship”. The Office of Environmental Education works to enhance public awareness and understanding of issues affecting environmental quality. ([www.epa.state.oh.us/oeeef/](http://www.epa.state.oh.us/oeeef/))
  6. USDA Farm Service Agency Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program – The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is a voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water. The program is a partnership among producers; tribal, state, and federal governments; and, in some cases, private groups. CREP is an offshoot of the country’s largest private lands environmental improvement program – the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

Like CRP, CREP is administered by USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA). By combining CRP resources with state, tribal, and private programs, CREP provides farmers and ranchers with a sound financial package for conserving and enhancing the natural resources of farms. CREP addresses high-priority conservation issues of both local and national significance, such as impacts to water supplies, loss of critical habitat for threatened and endangered wildlife species, soil erosion, and reduced habitat species, soil erosion, and reduced habitat for fish populations such as salmon. CREP is a community based, results-oriented effort centered around local participation and leadership. ([www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov))

#### **F. Other Funding Sources:**

1. Community Development Block Grants – The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides money for streetscape revitalization, which may be largely comprised of bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Federal Community Development Block Grant recipients may use CDBG funds for activities including (but are not limited to) acquiring real property; building public facilities and improvements, such as streets, sidewalks, and recreational facilities; and planning and administrative expenses, such as costs related to developing a

consolidated Plan and managing CDBG funds. CDBG funds totaling \$50 million were distributed statewide in 2007.

2. Baseball Tomorrow Fund – The Baseball Tomorrow Fund is a joint initiative of Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association. The mission is to promote and enhance the growth of baseball in the United States, Canada and throughout the world by funding programs, field and equipment purchases designed to encourage and maintain youth participation in the game. Information on the fund can be found on their web site at [www.baseballtomorrowfund.com](http://www.baseballtomorrowfund.com). Their grant cycles are for four review cycles throughout each year. The fund’s headquarters is located at 245 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10167.
3. Integration into Larger Projects – One of the most effective ways of getting bicycle facilities constructed quickly is to ensure that proposed facilities are constructed as part of a larger transportation projects. As communities adopt “Complete Streets” policies, bicycle and pedestrian facilities can be incorporated into the modified transportation network. If OKI and MVRPC adopt the complete streets policy outlined in their individual transportation plans, bicycle facility construction in the Greater Cincinnati and Miami Valley region should increase significantly.
4. Tax Increment Financing/Urban Renewal Funds – Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a tool that uses future gains in taxes to finance current improvements that will create those gains. When a public project (e.g. sidewalk improvements) is constructed, surrounding property values generally increase and encourage surrounding development or redevelopment. The increased tax revenues are then dedicated to finance the debt created by the original public improvement project. Tax Increment Financing typically occurs within designated Urban Renewal Areas (URA) that meets certain economic criteria and approved by a local governing body. To be eligible for this financing, a project (or a portion of it) must be located within the URA.
5. Street User Fees – Local communities could administer street user fees through residents’ monthly water or other utility bills. The revenue generated by the fee could be used for operations and maintenance of the street system, with priorities established by the Public Works Department. Revenue from this fund could be used to maintain on-street bicycle facilities, including routine sweeping of bicycle lanes and other designated bicycle routes.
6. Local Improvement Districts – Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) are most often used by cities to construct localized projects such as streets, sidewalks or bikeways. Through the LID process, the costs of local improvements are generally spread out among a group of property owners within a specified area (with the City providing a predetermined match). The cost can be allocated based on property frontage or other methods such as trip generation.
7. Business Improvement Districts – Bicycle improvements can often be included as part of larger efforts aimed at business improvement and retail district beautification. Business Improvement Districts collect levies on businesses in

order to fund area-wide improvements that benefit businesses and improve access for customers. These districts may include provisions for pedestrian and bicycle improvements, such as bike parking, wider sidewalks, landscaping and ADA compliance.

8. American Greenways Program – Administered by the Conservation Fund, the American Greenways Program provides funding for the planning and design of greenways. Grant applications can be submitted by local, regional, or statewide non-profit organizations and public agencies. The maximum award is \$2,500, but most awards range from \$500 to \$1,500. American Greenways Program monies may be used to fund unpaved trail development.
9. Volunteer Efforts – Residents and other community members are excellent resources for garnering support and enthusiasm for bicycle facilities, and MVRPC and local agencies should work with volunteers to substantially reduce implementation and maintenance costs. Local schools, community groups, or a group of dedicated neighbors may use the project as a project for the year, possibly working with a local designer or engineer. Work parties can be formed to help clear the right-of-way for a new trail or maintain existing facilities where needed. A local construction company could donate or discount services. Other opportunities for implementation will appear over time, such as grants and private funds. Miami Valley communities should look to residents for additional funding ideas to expedite completion of the bicycle system.
10. US Soccer Foundation – The goal of the grant program is to focus on funding those programs or projects that develop players, referees, and coaches with special emphasis on the economically disadvantaged in urban areas. Two of the major objectives of the grants making program are to increase grassroots awareness of the Foundation’s grants making opportunities and to make basic information in bilingual form. The Foundation’s Grants Program is open to anyone with a soccer-specific program or project that benefits non-profit purposes and meets the established focus for this grant cycle. The Foundation will emphasize programs and projects that have a significant impact on furthering the Foundation’s mission. The application deadline is April 1st. ([www.ussoccerfoundation.org](http://www.ussoccerfoundation.org))
11. Little Miami River Partnership – The LMRP mission is to promote a healthy Little Miami River Watershed through collaboration, Planning, Education and Action by connecting People and Resources to promote a healthy Little Miami River Watershed. The Little Miami River Partnership values: credibility, collaboration, trust, diversity, leadership, empowerment, and consensus building. ([www.littlemiamiriver.org](http://www.littlemiamiriver.org))
12. Warren County Foundation – Subject to available funds, the Warren County Foundation is more likely to award discretionary grants to organizations that demonstrate that their proposed projects: make a clear difference in the quality of life of a substantial number of Warren Countians; demonstrate tangible solutions to community problems; help non-profit organizations manage themselves and their finances more effectively; focus on prevention; encourage cooperation and eliminate duplication of service; stimulate others to participate in problem-

solving; promote volunteer involvement; and promote leverage for generating additional funds. Applications should be sent to Warren County Foundation, P.O. Box 495, Lebanon, Ohio 45036. There is no application deadline. (<http://www.warrencountyfoundation.org/grant.pdf>)

13. Greater Cincinnati Foundation – GCF’s grant programs are designed to make a profound difference in our community. As an exemplary steward of the community’s charitable resources since 1963, GCF awards grants to qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. Application deadlines are the 1<sup>st</sup> of February, April, June, August, October, and December.  
(<http://www.greatercincinnati.org/index.cfm>)
14. The Dayton Foundation – The Dayton Foundation is a community foundation that has been serving the philanthropic needs of the Greater Dayton neighbors since 1921. They provide unmatched services, resources, support and counsel to help individuals achieve their charitable giving goals; they assist other nonprofits by funding important initiatives and offering their expertise to help them operate more effectively; and they are helping to build a better Dayton by identifying important issues and bringing them together the people and organizations who can solve them. The Dayton Foundation requires attendance at an orientation program that is held several times a year followed by the submittal of a Letter of Intent.  
(<http://www.daytonfoundation.com>)
15. Five-Star Restoration Matching Grant Program – Provides modest financial assistance on a competitive basis to support community-based wetland, riparian, and coastal habitat restoration projects that build diverse partnerships and foster local natural resource stewardship through education, outreach and training activities. Requests must be for a \$10,000 to \$40,000. Grants will vary in size, duration and scale. In general, smaller-scale, one-year projects will be eligible for grants up to \$20,000. Two-year larger-scale projects will be eligible for grants up to \$40,000. All projects should be completed within one to two years of award. Partnerships should include at least five organizations (“Five Stars”) that contribute to project success through funding, land, workforce support, technical support and/or other in-kind services. Application deadline is February 15<sup>th</sup>. (<http://www.nfwf.org>) .
16. Tony Hawk Foundation – The Tony Hawk Foundation supports recreational programs with a focus on the creation of public skateboard parks in low-income communities. The Foundation favors programs that clearly demonstrate that funds received will produce tangible, ongoing, positive results. Grant amounts range from \$1,000 to \$25,000. Deadlines for applications are March 2, 2009 with awards in April and again on October 1, 2009 with awards in December 2009.  
(<http://www.tonyhawkfoundation.org/index.asp>).

#### **G. Development of Impact Fees and Fees in Lieu of Land:**

Many cities and some counties require park land for recreational purposes when residential, commercial or industrial development occurs. When areas proposed for dedication of park land are not accepted by the County Commissioners or the Park District, Cities, Villages, or Township, then fees are received in lieu of dedication.

This money can be deposited with the City or County and specifically designated for Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Funds. In many communities in Ohio, developers are required to provide either land or fees that are based upon the impact for increased recreational demand that will be placed upon the County or City from the proposed development. There are many good models of this practice. In Lebanon and Hamilton Township, a fee is charged per single family home that is built. These funds are used for capital improvements. It is recommended that all local boards with such authority evaluate their regulations and practices to be consistent with the recommendations of this Master Plan.

#### **H. Recreation Budget:**

To maintain and improve the quality of life in Warren County, more facilities and programs must be developed and more funding is needed to operate and maintain the new facilities. This Plan has a large capital funding need and, as the recommendations of this Plan is implemented, additional operations and maintenance funding will also be necessary. No new facilities should be constructed without a steady source of funding for operations and maintenance. A variety of sources will be necessary.

The previous sections of this chapter identified several sources, but most are more appropriate for capital expenditures. A referendum for a tax levy is one method for more consistent funding along with increased funding from the County's General Fund. Some facilities, such as a regional sports facility, will pay for their own operations if developed and operated properly. This has been the case in several cities in Ohio that have developed new sports centers.

#### **I. Tax Levy and Bonding Requirements:**

Based upon all of the previous data, the Master Plan Steering Committee recommends that talks should continue surrounding the perplexing question of how to fund the improvements for the park amenities and open spaces that the population is currently demanding. A 1 Mil park levy in Warren County could potentially cost the tax payer of a \$100,000 dollar house approximately \$15 a year. This money could be used to fund capital improvements as well as operating and maintenance costs.

### **XI. Appendices**

- A. Athletic Organizations Needs Surveys
- B. Little Miami Scenic Bikeway and State Park Maps
- C. County Needs Analysis Assessment
- D. Citizen Attitude and Interest Survey Results
- E. Summary of Park and Recreation Facility Standards
- F. Completed Park Master Plan and Capital Improvement Budget for the Park District
- G. Equine Advisory Board Findings and Recommendations