

Five Rivers MetroParks



Wegerzyn MetroParks

Master Plan

2017



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SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

In 2016, Five Rivers MetroParks (FRMP) completed a [Comprehensive Master Plan](#) (CMP) to guide the agency for the next ten years and beyond. The plan included extensive staff and public feedback from intercept and online surveys, focus groups, public meetings, individual interviews with community leaders and a formal statistically valid survey. Studies were conducted to benchmark FRMP to other outstanding park agencies across the country. The resulting plan included several tools to guide FRMP including new park typology, level of service standards, and a detailed implementation plan. One of the primary recommendations in the implementation plan was to update or develop new master plans for each MetroPark.



In 2016, FRMP began developing site plans for several parks and conservation areas as the first step in developing park master plans for each location. These plans ensure the organization's three pillars, conservation, education and recreation, were foregrounded and interconnected. To support the planning process, a comprehensive set of [Planning Guidelines](#) were developed to help ensure the integration of the three pillars. The park master plans consist of several components that will guide planning and implementation of the parks' functions that support the world-class amenities and services provided to the region:

- Conservation, maintenance, programming, interpretation, and business planning
- Capital investment and phasing
- Operational impacts and budgets

1.2 MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

Development of the Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark Master Plan began with the development of the site plan. A Core Team of approximately 15 FRMP employees whose work is key to the success of the park was formed to provide direct input to the process. A landscape architectural firm, Towers Golde, LLC of New Haven Connecticut with experience in park planning was selected to lead the effort. A full two-day work session with these two groups gathered input from staff, volunteers, the public and key stakeholders and visited key areas to gain a detailed understanding of the park. Two public meetings were held during the two-day session to gather input and understand the needs of park users.

From this two-day work session, the consultant developed a park program which would drive the evolution of the site plan. After input on the program from the Core Team, the consultant prepared a series of site plan alternatives to explore how the program elements could be incorporated into the park. The core team evaluated the alternatives and provided direction to the consultant toward a preferred site plan. This preferred site plan was reviewed by the core team and the public and revised to reflect their comments, and a cost estimate was developed.



As part of the park master planning process and in conjunction with the site plan development, a variety of other plans for Wegerzyn MetroPark were developed or updated: conservation, business operations, interpretation, programming, philanthropy and land protection plans. These five plans along with the planning guidelines provide comprehensive guidance in the evolution of the parks. Referencing those plans and the CMP, staff identified a list of priority capital

projects for the next ten-year period. Staff then developed the operational cost and revenue estimates for those priority projects to reflect the comprehensive resources required to implement the plans' recommendations. This information will be incorporated into the agency's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) along with capital projects for other parks to chart a course of continual evolution of the parks towards meeting the community's needs and desires.

This ten-year park master plan will be reviewed and updated in five years. After ten years, FRMP will determine whether a new park master plan is needed or whether a second update to this plan will be adequate to provide direction for the park's future.

1.3 MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Several components of the site plan include projects that respond to some of the highest priorities in the CMP, including taking care of existing assets, providing basic amenities, and increasing trail and outdoor play opportunities:

- Develop a more user-friendly network of paved and natural surface walkways, trails throughout the park to guide visitors to all park assets and features

- Continue to develop facilities and gardens which educate and teach users about local food and thriveable living concepts
- Develop additional day use facilities including picnic shelters and areas to meet the needs of park users and the surrounding neighborhoods

Major Recommendations:

The site plan includes several components of the long-term vision for the park. FRMP should constantly work towards exploring opportunities to evolve toward these concepts as part of the capital projects that are implemented.

- Develop a new lease agreement with the City of Dayton to take on full management responsibility of the property
- Replace or fully renovate the visitor center and the arts center to create a facility which supports the programming needs of the park
- Replace the existing parking lot with a low impact concept design utilizing best management features and providing a high-quality arrival experience for park users
- Develop a high-quality user experience for the Community Garden area including a shelter, restrooms and fencing
- Reshape and enhance Jay Lake to include a new day use area including picnic shelter, restroom and nature play area



Other Notable Projects

The plan also makes recommendations to explore additional improvements for the park including:

- Improve the South Plaza area to provide a new day use area which can also support special event activities, such as weddings in the park
- Explore opportunities to activate the park with the Dayton Playhouse.
- Work with the Dayton Wingmaster's to incorporate a wildflower meadow around the flying field to reduce maintenance efforts and increase conservation elements in the park
- Re-purpose the old City of Dayton tree nursery into a productive conservation section of the park
- Consolidate the operations area including a new operations center to provide more efficient operations activities of the park and provide additional space for demonstration gardens



SECTION 2: THE PLAN

2.1 PARK POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark lies along the east side of the Stillwater River a few miles north of downtown Dayton. It is surrounded on three sides by neighborhoods, and the Stillwater River Bikeway travels from Wegerzyn through six other parks into downtown. To the north is less densely populated land. Despite the adjacency to populated areas, Wegerzyn feels quite isolated. The river and Riverside Drive are significant barriers to the west; the steep valley wall separates the park from homes on the east side; Siebenthaler Avenue lies along the south boundary; and Shoup Mill/Needmore Road, a divided roadway, lies along the north boundary. The park itself is an alternating patchwork of responsibility between Five Rivers MetroParks (FRMP) and the City of Dayton, with four distinct park areas.



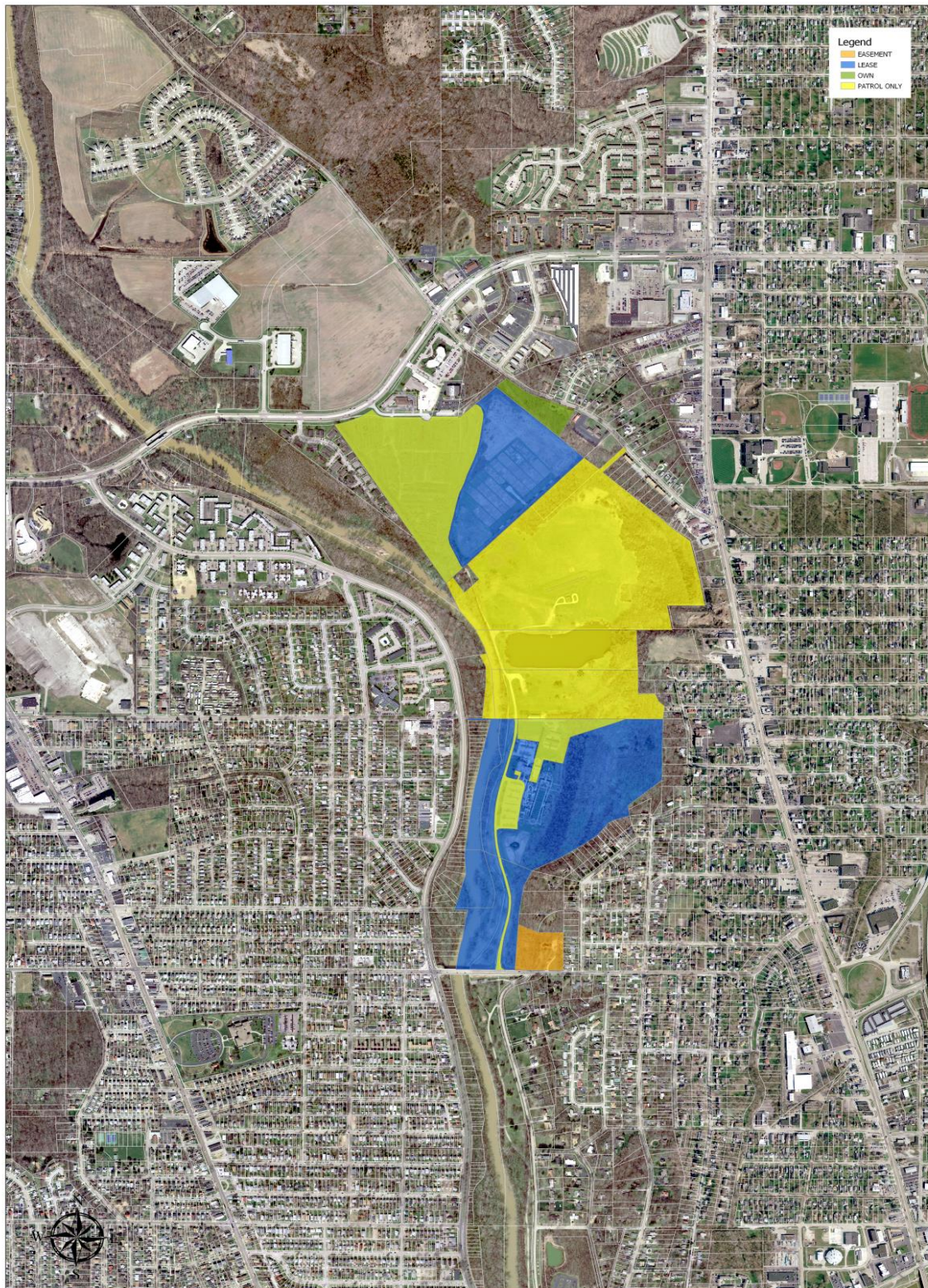
Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark is most well-known for its formal gardens and the Children's Discovery Garden. Trails lead from the garden area through the adjacent woods, and the bikeway traverses the park north to south. Fishing is popular at Jay Lake and the model airplane flying clubs are active at the flying fields, though these areas are owned and operated by the City of Dayton. Beyond them is the community garden that is large and active. Further to the north is the former tree nursery, also owned by the City of Dayton. Paddlers who have come down river from Englewood MetroPark can take out at Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark.

Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark is considered an urban community park in FRMP's typology based on the highly urban and human setting and a higher degree of human activity and amenities. Urban parks have the greatest focus on park amenities and the highest level of access and connectivity. At 88 acres, Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark is relatively large for an urban park, second to Eastwood MetroPark. Slightly over one quarter of Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark is developed, predominantly in gardens, both formal and community gardens, buildings, and parking lots. Open lawn use areas are minimal at the park. Woods line the river, and a swamp wood thrives between the formal gardens and the valley wall. The open area between the river and entry drive grow in meadow. Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark on average is in the lower third of attendance among MetroParks.

Two core agency-wide interpretive themes apply to Wegerzyn Garden MetroPark, that each park within the FRMP system tells a story from the past and that parks make our lives healthier and happier. The theme particular to Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark focuses on the idea that gardens build a community connected to nature through horticulture. People have been growing food in the Miami Valley for centuries, and this park has a long history of horticultural education in our community.

Wegerzyn Garden MetroPark's image and allure is centered on the stunning aesthetic of the formal gardens. In recent years, the park has also become well-known for the Children's Discovery Garden, which attracts flocks of young children in the summer months. These two destination-level amenities pose a dichotomous focus at Wegerzyn: serene, manicured beauty next to the rambunctious energy. The formal gardens are unique in the FRMP system, and more than any other park, Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark offers formal horticulture at an intimate scale for visitors to enjoy and imagine for their own gardens.





Wegerzyn MetroPark

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2.2 PARK HISTORY



The formal gardens under construction

In the early 1960's two garden club organizations, The Dayton Council of Garden Clubs and the Garden Club Federation of Dayton and Vicinity, representing their combined membership of nearly 2,000, worked together to identify a community need and formalized their vision "to create a place that would bring people and plants together." By 1963 they shared these plans with City of Dayton Commissioners who gave approval for a horticultural complex to be built beside the Stillwater River in what was then still a part of DeWeese Park.

The first park master plan for Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center, created by James Bassett, Landscape Architect of Lima Ohio, included greenhouses, a garden center activity building, flower conservatory, and formal gardens. Construction began on the greenhouses – funded by the City and which they continue to manage today. In 1972, the garden clubs formed The Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center. At the same time, those 2,000 garden club members began fund raising events for the garden center activity building and during that time, Mr. Benjamin Wegerzyn, philanthropist, and lover of Dayton and gardening, donated Xerox stock valued at \$375,000 to the City for this structure. The garden clubs' efforts after five years amounted to \$125,000. Collectively they had \$500,000 to begin construction for the building. On October 31, 1973 this garden center activity building was opened and dedicated to the people of Dayton.



The next sixteen years were full of growth in programming, including the introduction of the community gardens in 1978. The Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center Associate Board was created in 1979 to raise capital funds and provide programming for the facility; but operational funding was a challenge. During these years, two requests made by the garden clubs to the Montgomery County Park District to take over operational control of the facility; but in both instances the requests were turned down by the Park District. Mr. George Cooper, who retired as director of the City's Human Resources Department, was able to arrange that the City incur the expenses for the maintenance of the garden center activity building and the utility costs. The City of Dayton then pursued construction of the Riverbend Art Center, built to the west and adjacent to the garden center activity building and operated by the City of Dayton. The Dayton Playhouse was built to the east and adjacent to the garden center activity building and is operated by Dayton Playhouse Inc. This created the Cultural Arts Complex at DeWeese Park. These structures opened in September 1987.

Jackie (Simms) McArdle, who was a trustee for The Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center for three years, was hired as the director in 1986. The Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center board wanted formal gardens. In the next 30 months, Phase I, which included the garden green and the north and south plazas, was completed. Then in 1988, The Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center began its first capital campaign and over three years raised enough funds to continue the development of the gardens. The arbor garden (formerly the rose garden) and reception lawn were completed in Phase II; and the period gardens, Federal, English, and Victorian were completed in Phase III.



Wegerzyn in the 1990s

Bingo, one of the earliest fund-raising activities, continued to be one of the Associate Board's largest funding sources and investments allowed those funds to grow rapidly. Eventually, the decision was made to eliminate the bingo activity. Staff levels were reduced to five employees, and the future looked bleak. The Park District was again approached by The Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center, and the Park District agreed to lease and manage the gardens and the garden center activity building's portion of the Cultural Arts Complex from the City of Dayton. The garden center activity building was also renamed as the Visitor Center contingent on the passage of tax levy that would provide additional funding for that purpose. After a passage of a levy in 1994, it the Park District added Wegerzyn Gardens to its park system. The Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center was relieved of financing, operational expenses and overseeing staff and so could then focus on fundraising for future development.



On January 1, 1995, through agreements with the City of Dayton and Miami Conservancy District, the Park District (FRMP) added Wegerzyn Garden Center along with Island Park, Van Cleve Park, Deeds Point, Wesleyan Nature Center, Sunrise Park, and river corridor areas to its facilities to provide daily management, programming and security.

Wegerzyn in the 1990s



Bird's eye view of the formal gardens



Conceptual Master Plan for the Children's Garden circa 2001

Under FRMP, Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center was transformed into Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark, with its employees consisting of educators, a horticulturalist, horticultural/park technicians, and administrative staff, all FRMP employees. FRMP also assumed the responsibility of maintenance and utilities from the City, for the Visitor Center “portion” of the building and installed an elevator to meet ADA requirements among other building renovations. In 1997, Mr. Wegerzyn passed away and again he gave a sizable donation to support the park.

The Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center worked on the design of a Children’s Discovery Garden and conceptual drawings were approved by the FRMP Board of Park Commissioners in 2000. After completion of a feasibility study, the Benjamin Wegerzyn Garden Center Corporation, which would change its name in 2003 to the Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation, began another capital campaign to build the garden. Six months into the campaign, the September 11th attacks occurred, and funding was a struggle during the following years. Despite this set back, the Children’s Discovery Garden became a reality and opened in 2006.



Children’s Garden under construction

In addition to the beautiful formal gardens and the interactive Children’s Discovery Garden, today’s Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark contains an outstanding example of a swamp forest, mature woodlands along the Stillwater River, the rich aquatic life of the Stillwater River, a meadow, and two planted prairies. The Marie Aull Nature Trail is adorned by a stunning variety of trees and wildflowers; and provides many opportunities for spotting native birds and wildlife. The Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark remains dedicated to providing the people of the Miami Valley with learning experiences in gardening, horticulture, the environment, and urban land stewardship of the Stillwater River Corridor.

2.3 SITE PLANNING PROCESS

FRMP has established a [site planning process](#), and that process was used to develop this Site Plan for Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark (the “park”). FRMP retained the services of Towers Globe of New Haven, Connecticut, to develop the site plan. A core team of key, cross-agency staff was established to guide the plan throughout the process. The core team participated with the consultant in a two day kick off process to provide orientation and input and continued to be closely engaged throughout the development of the plan, providing feedback at each key decision point and engaging individually as various issues and opportunities arose that pertained to their work responsibilities. Core team members also gathered feedback from other staff, and additional staff members directly associated with the park had an opportunity to provide their ideas, insight and issues.



The public had several opportunities to provide input into the development of the site plan. Two public open houses were conducted during the two-day kickoff session where attendees were able to talk to staff and the consultant team. Intercept surveys were provided to meeting attendees and were online for those who were not able to attend. An additional public meeting was held to present the pre-final concept plan and gather feedback. Stakeholders and attendees from the first open house were sent direct invitations to attend or to comment about the plans online.

FRMP also engaged key stakeholders in the project to collect input and feedback. Stakeholders included the neighboring jurisdictions of the City of Dayton and Miami Conservancy District, as well as representatives from the Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation, various model flying clubs, neighboring residents (which included members of the Deweese Ridgeway Civic Association), and FRMP volunteers. These meetings provided insight to the context around the park, identified opportunities and issues, and explored future partnerships.

Data and Analysis Summary

2006 Master Plan Review

A previous master plan for Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark, completed by Woolpert of Dayton, Ohio in 2006, was also consulted. Key recommendations of the 2006 Plan included the following:

A. Enhance the identity of the park and the cultural institutions contained within the park:

Identity for the park begins with establishing the park's primary place name as Wegerzyn Gardens or Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark. The institutions, programs and facilities located or conducted within the park and the cultural complex are all contained within Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark as a subset. Developing park entrance signage and monumentation consistent with this theme and in a manner consistent with FRMP's new branding and graphic standards is an obvious first step and a high priority.

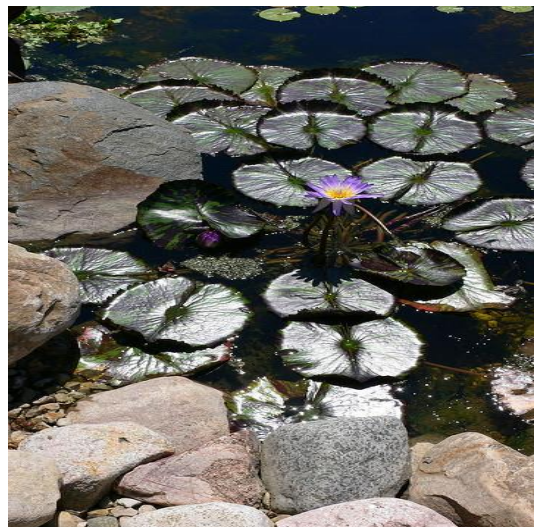
Other recommended tasks that support this principal include:

- Put Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark and the Stillwater River corridor on the map. Update data and name information for mapping and guide services (both internet and print) for parks and botanical gardens, hiking and biking trails and canoeing/kayaking guides. Establish highway signage for the park on I-75. (Completed)
- Partner with the City of Dayton, Riverbend Arts, Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation, and Dayton Playhouse in marketing the programs and amenities of the park and cultural complex to the community and the region. Develop a consistent Wegerzyn Gardens brand and image that can be used in conjunction with the FRMP brand and graphic standards. (Not Completed)
- Build a visual entry sequence along the park frontage, including the corner of E. Siebenthaler and Riverside Drive, to the park entrance on Siebenthaler, up to the gardens and cultural complex and beyond to Jay Lake. Include new entrance signage and landscaping at the park entrance and the corner of Siebenthaler and Riverside Drive identifying Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark and current events. Locate secondary directional signage for the Visitor Center, Children's Discovery Garden, the Dayton Playhouse and Riverbend Arts Center past the main entrance on the park drive. (Completed)

- Create vistas within the park to the gardens and cultural complex and between the park and Riverside Drive. (Not Completed)
- Consolidate park operations and maintenance area with existing City of Dayton Public Works compound and screen from public view. (Not Completed)
- Establish limits of public vehicular access and park drive terminus at south edge of Jay Lake. Limit vehicular access beyond this point to users of community gardens, model airplane field, maintenance personnel and park rangers. (Partially Completed)

B. Focus on connectivity between areas within the gardens, the park and with the adjoining neighborhood:

Identity and knowledge of the park's amenities is enhanced and supported by the manner that visitors move through the park and experience the various facilities and landscapes. Connectivity can be thought of as not only physical, as in via walking or river trails, but also visual. Relationships between users, management, community and public organizations can also promote connectivity. Providing places for interaction, cross-pollination of interests and community building is an important function of this park now and into the future. Tasks to accomplish over the next 15 years that support connectivity include:



- As new facilities are added or current facilities are upgraded or replaced, incorporate pedestrian and visual connections to other areas within the park along with these improvements. (Partially Completed)
- Ease of vehicular access and parking are important to the success of the programs and facilities within the park but should be accommodated in an unobtrusive manner. The natural landscape and gardens should dominate as one travels throughout the park. (Not Completed)
- Provide safe and interesting bike, walking, and nature trails within the park. Create circuits or loops in the trail system with connections to the cultural complex and gardens. (Not Completed)

- Separate the Stillwater River recreational trail from the park drive as previously proposed with some modifications to allow for connections across the park drive to the gardens and cultural complex. (Not Completed)
- Create new and attractive public entrances to the gardens at the north and south ends with convenient parking close by. (Not Completed)
- Provide safe pedestrian connections to the adjoining neighborhood. (Not Completed)
- Consider access for maintenance and park rangers with layout of trail systems. Screen maintenance compounds from public view from park drive and trails. (Not Completed)
- Create places within the park, gardens and the cultural complex where individuals and groups can continue to come together for programs, events and casual interaction. (Completed)

C. Promote river corridor and urban land stewardship:



The presence of the Stillwater River, the park's position within the floodplain and on a suburban edge, and its great landscape diversity present multiple recreational, educational and land stewardship opportunities. Using green technologies within the gardens and the park can become an important educational theme for park programs that is compatible with its organic master gardening program. Positive publicity, granting opportunities and long-term rewards in reduced energy consumption, conservation of the river corridor and mitigation of watershed impacts are additional benefits. Tasks that support this principal of stewardship include:

- Incorporate LEED principals into the design and construction of new buildings, pavements and other site improvements. Intercept parking lot and roof runoff with bio-filtration basins or "rain gardens". Explore options for passive solar design and green roofs for the proposed south shelter and horticultural hall buildings. (Not Completed)
- Create areas for composting garden wastes. Reuse materials on-site. (Ongoing)

- Explore partnership opportunities with higher educational and other institutions for conducting river corridor research and public educational programs on site at the park. (Ongoing)
- Expand no-mow and wildflower areas along the existing woodland and river edges. Consider expanding the woody plant collection at the gardens with native riparian woodland species located along the woodland edge trail. (Not Completed)
- Seed existing leaf dump area with native grasses and wildflowers as the leaf dump is phased out. (Not Completed)
- Establish vegetated filtration edges around Jay Lake and along the Stillwater River. Remove non-native invasive species around these edges to open up views of the water. (Not Completed)
- Work with adjacent property owner(s) to stabilize eroded embankment along northeastern property boundary. (Not Completed)
- Develop a river access and canoe and kayak put-in area directly across from the cultural complex with trail connections in between. (Completed)

D. Wegerzyn Gardens will become a "World Class Garden":

The Wegerzyn Horticultural Center and Gardens is positioned to become a world class garden and a significant regional horticultural institution. Focus future development on the context and edges of the gardens rather than significant expansion of the formal display gardens. The current established garden themes of organic gardening, formal estate, historic prototype, and children's discovery dovetail nicely with the emerging themes of native woodland/swamp forest, riparian meadow and river corridor landscapes. The juxtaposition of these themes helps to expand the image of the gardens beyond its traditional boundaries and presents educational opportunities for programs and activities within the park. Master plan tasks that enhance Wegerzyn Gardens MetroParks as a world class garden include:



Plan for the eventual future renovation or replacement of the Wegerzyn Horticultural Center building either in its current location or combined with a new "Horticultural Hall" that can host visitor accommodations, park staff, community meetings, programs and events. (Still in Plans)

Changes within the cultural complex should address the complex as a whole "cultural campus" with sister organization's needs considered with the development of renovation or new construction plans. Consider creating a unified entity capable of upgrading and operating all the buildings within the cultural complex. (Still in Plans)

Upgrade the level of public accommodation within the gardens with the development of easily accessible public restrooms, information kiosks, horticultural library and resource center, drinking fountains, picnic areas for school groups and opportunities to purchase food or snacks. Create easy access from the recreational and river trails to these facilities. (Not Completed)

Enhance both casual and special event use of the gardens. Continue to develop accommodations for both casual seating and catered affairs. Continue to develop nontraditional uses of the gardens such as wireless access, transient art events, geocaching, young professional's nights, music and outdoor theater. (Ongoing)



Establish an architectural north and south terminus to the gardens on axis with the great lawn. An open-air shelter with restrooms and a three-season room could be located adjacent to the South Plaza and a new Horticultural Hall north of the Rose Arbor Garden. Incorporate vertical elements in the design of these structures to provide a visual focus and orienting device within the gardens and a visual connection along the park drive. (South Not Completed)

2017 Park Master Plan Input Summary

During the two-day kick off process, several key high-level issues and ideas were raised that were considered throughout the planning process:

- Need to address the existing visitor center/ Riverbend Arts building. Renovate or replace the building to provide multi-use space for education and rentals
- Consider the Dayton Playhouse in future planning and programming efforts

- The Children's Discovery Garden is almost too successful. Need to consider how to manage access and numbers of visitors to ensure a quality experience. The water play system has become more than it was intended, and it is serving as a water playground
- The Formal Gardens are a major attraction and feature of Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark
- The Community Gardens are very successful. Additional work is needed to help with the overall appearance and access of the area and to secure the gardens from both human and wildlife
- The trail system is not cohesive or easily understood by park users
- There is a need to have a single management entity of the park as a whole to create a uniform park for visitors
- Arboretum vs Botanical Garden- How does Wegerzyn Gardens fit/compete with Cox Arboretum
- Arrival and circulation throughout the park is not clear to visitors. Many visitors are not aware of the formal gardens and natural parts of the park
- Dayton Wingmaster's Flying Club and field has been there for over 40 years and wishes to remain at this location and be a part of the MetroPark
- There is little awareness or interaction with the Stillwater River



Site Plan Program

The site plan program was developed from all of the input gathered from the public, stakeholders and staff along with the physical data and analysis. The program provides a guiding framework and a set of overarching goals which should be met in the final site plan and ultimately the park master plan. The following highlights provide an overview of the park program that guided the development of the site plan.

Comprehensive

- To preserve and enhance this garden-focused park, integrated into the beautiful natural setting along the Stillwater River, and utilize the expanded land opportunities to be obtained from the City of Dayton to better fulfill the park's programs and activities
- Expand and enhance natural habitat areas with ecological and visual diversity, which will be linked with a series of trail corridors, supporting Five Rivers MetroParks' conservation mission
- Future gardens expansion should be planned to include educational and demonstration garden areas such as diverse cultural groups' food crops, "the home landscape" and native pollinator plants
- A new main Visitor Center Building, providing a large meeting / program space which relates to the gardens and a special terrace with pavilion will be suitable for small weddings and similar groups
- Consolidated facilities for maintenance and horticultural operations
- Additional shelters and restrooms are needed throughout the park

Program Goals for Wegerzyn MetroPark

- Gardening and Local Foods
 - Community Gardens
 - Provide garden plots and manage the program
 - Gardens and Garden Education Programs
 - Educate and Inspire through gardening-specific programs and classes
 - Enhance garden education through other media
 - Link with other institutions

- Celebrate and care for the formal gardens
 - Utilize formal, children's and other gardens as teaching and demonstration tools
 - Enhance gardening programs through potential new and expanded facilities
- Cultural History and Art
 - Protect, promote and share cultural resources
 - Native American Culture
 - Botanic Garden Characterization (Wegerzyn as a true botanic garden)
 - Natural Park Culture
 - Visual Art
 - Performing Arts
 - Cultural Diversity
- Conservation and Nature Education
 - Teach and Promote Appreciation of Natural Systems, Ecology and Conservation
 - Practice Conservation
- Sustainable Living
 - Park and gardens should demonstrate ecological, efficient, sustainable practices
- Outdoor Recreation
 - Biking
 - Kayaking
 - Fishing
 - Hiking and Nature Trails
 - The Dayton Wingmaster's Flying Field
- Health and Wellness
- Community Wide Special Events

2.4 CONSERVATION PLAN

Based on the [Natural Areas Management Guide](#), a series of park-specific goals have been developed as a part of the site planning process. These goals should be used as a guide during the implementation of the plan to minimize impacts to sensitive habitats and the wildlife that depend on these special places. The activation of spaces within natural areas that have not before been promoted for public use will require thorough assessment and a thoughtful approach to minimize impacts.



Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark consists of various portions of Deweese Park owned by the City of Dayton. In addition to the developed horticultural facilities, the sections managed by MetroParks contain mature woodlands along the Stillwater River, a mature swamp forest with vernal pools, successional woodlands, a meadow, and two planted prairies.



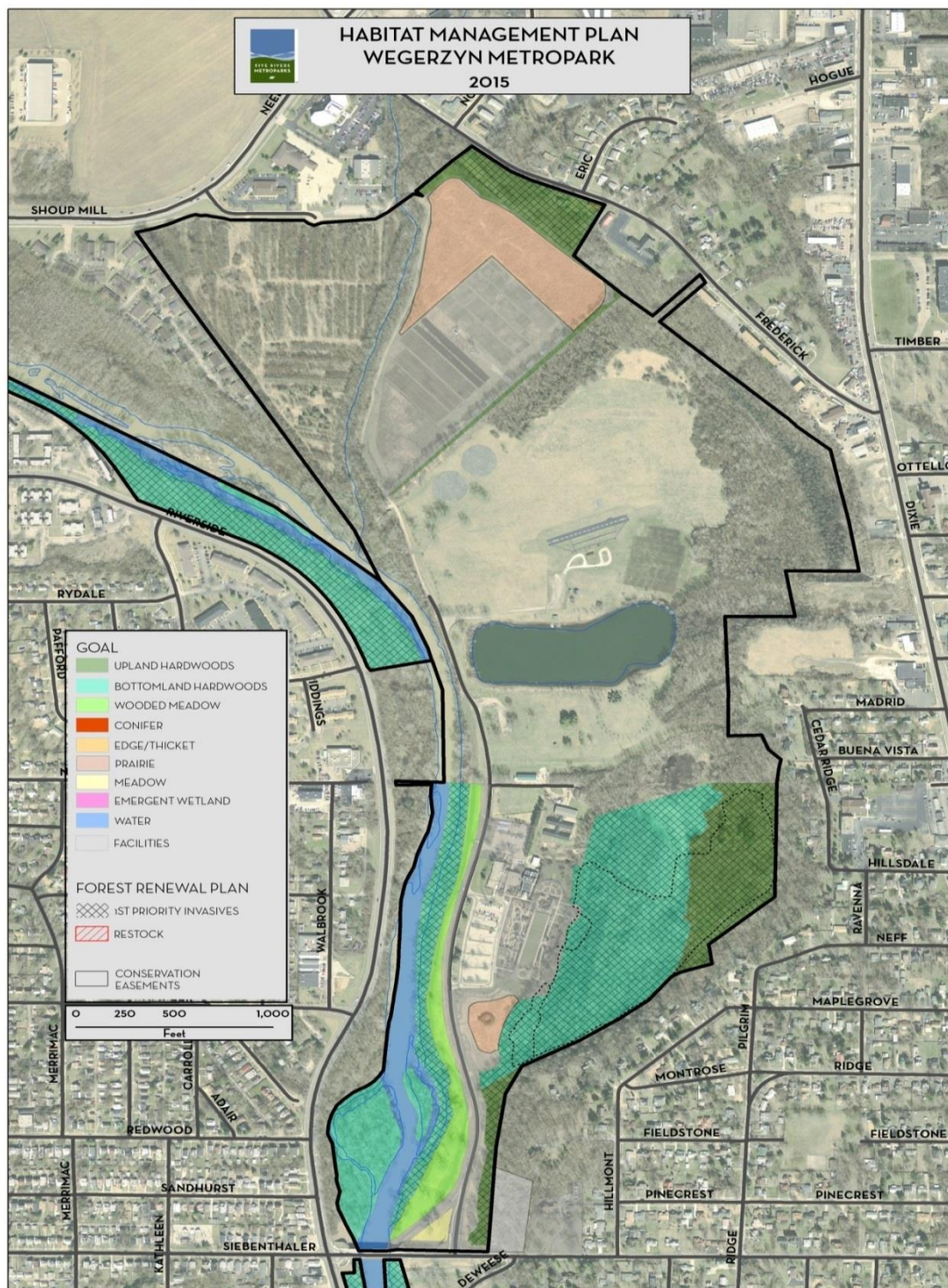
This park is home to a couple of the district's largest trees. The "Pedestal Oak" has a 201-inch circumference and can be found along the loop trail between the parking lot and gate entrance. Another burr oak, dubbed "Aaron Burr," stands nearby at 110 feet tall. The Stillwater River is home to beavers and otters along with our state's largest population of river redhorse, a fish sensitive to pollution that has become rare in Ohio.

Conservation goals for the site plan include the following:

- Preserve the existing mature woodlands throughout the park.
- Manage honeysuckle and other invasive species in all habitats as designated.

- Permit natural succession to occur in designated areas to maximize forest size and minimize edge effects within large tracts. Reintroduction and planting of native mast species in designated areas to augment succession and ensure a diverse future forest.
- Protect and manage the existing prairies to reflect a southwest Ohio prairie remnant.
- Manage meadow to maximize habitat for grassland nesting birds and the continuation of grassland ecological processes.
- Manage special habitats such as the swamp woods and vernal pools to benefit wildlife that is dependent on these habitats.
- Design and maintain recreational trails to preserve the integrity of the habitats and maximize user experiences.
- Monitor conservation easement lands.





2.5 INTERPRETIVE PLAN

Wegerzyn MetroPark

- 223 acres leased (up from 88acre lease) from City of Dayton in North Dayton.
- Habitats–
 - **Gardens:** Formal gardens are unique to the FRMP system and one of the few free formal gardens in the region.
 - **Water:** Stillwater River runs through the site. There is one river access area.
 - **Forest:** The swamp woods on site are a unique habit.
 - **Meadow:** The entry drive and areas surrounding the flying fields are managed as meadow. Meadows provide wonderful habitat for pollinators.
- Situated along the Stillwater River Trail connects the park to Downtown Dayton.
- CMP park typology classified Wegerzyn Gardens MetroParks as an Urban Community Park.

Audience

After site visit and discussions with FRMP staff and stakeholders, the following “Falk Visitor Types” identifies current and potential audiences, as well as activity which are defined below:

- Explorers–motivated by personal curiosity (i.e. browsers)
- Facilitators–motivated by other people and their needs (i.e. a parent bringing a child)
- Experience-Seekers–motivated by the desire to see and experience a place (i.e. tourists)
- Professional/Hobbyists–motivated by specific knowledge-related goals (i.e. a scholar researching a specific topic)
- Rechargers–motivated by a desire for a contemplative or restorative experience

Audience

Audiences:

- Explorers
- Rechargers
- Hobbyist (gardeners)

Potential Audiences:

- Experience Seekers
- Facilitators (primarily CDG users)

User Groups

Current User Groups:

- Children's Discovery Garden (CDG) Visitors
- Cycling (opportunity for growth)
- Walking/ dog walking
- Hiking: Marie Aull Trail
- Running on Stillwater River Trail
- Community Gardening
- Fishing (Jay Lake or Stillwater River)
- Picnics on the plazas

Potential User Groups:

- Opportunities to redirect users from CDG: 8 – 13+ year old nature play area
- Bird Watching/ wildlife observation
- Pull city center workers and residents for lunch breaks/ post work recreation
- Bike/kayak river use to RiverScape. Install a Link Station in the park
- Shelters/ social gathering spaces
- Fitness programs for seniors
- Heart Healthy trail along Stillwater River Paved Trail

Private/Club Users on Sites:

- Theater – Dayton Playhouse
- Model Airplane Flying fields – two clubs

Intended Visitor Experience for Wegerzyn

Visitor experience provided for all visitor types and activities:

- Landscaping, basic amenities, and wayfinding provide a sense of comfort and safety while offering an inviting pleasure garden experience that blends into naturalized landscaping and active recreational use areas of the park.
- Visitors stay for at least an hour and up to 2 or 3 hours for some activities.
- Visitors are connected to nature through gardens and leave with a positive image of FRMP.
- The site has the opportunity to serve as a horticultural demonstration area for visitor enjoyment, relaxation, recreation, and connecting to nature through horticulture.

What makes this park special?

It is the only formal garden of this scale in the FRMP system.

Neighborhood Population Information

- Median age surrounding the park is 42.5, in zip code 45414, when adding a 5 mile buffer the age is 40.
 - That is four years older than the county median age. Possibly a higher concentration of retirees or soon to retire residents surrounding the park.
- Dayton city center (45402 zip code) grew 350% from 2000 to 2010 from 3,275 to 11,420.

See [full interpretive plan for details](#). Sources: <http://webapps-cdn.esri.com/Apps/location-strategy-for-business> and <http://www.city-data.com>

FRMP System-Wide Themes/Storylines

An interpretive theme is the overarching message. It is more detailed than a broad topic; it is a complete thought in one to two complete sentences. The theme may be used verbatim in signage or verbally in talks, or it may be unspoken but guide the general feel the project aims to have for the visitor experience on site. A theme will help answer the “so what?” – “the moral of the story.” Themes connect tangibles: those things you can touch, see, feel, smell, and taste with intangibles, and those things that are symbolic or metaphoric

Theme: A succinct, central message about a topic of interest that a communicator wants to get across to an audience. (Ham, 2013)

StoryLine: Part of the Thematic hierarchy-Theme-Sub-theme-storyline, Storylines are the details of the interpretive content.

Central Themes:

Each park within FRMP system tells a story from the past.

Protect natural areas, parks and river corridors, and promote the conservation and use of these lands and waterways for the ongoing benefit of the people of the region.

Themes for the Park:

- Parks make our lives healthier and happier.
- We can all take part in conservation.

Interpretive Theme for site:

- Communities, like gardens, take time and attention to grow and thrive.

Sub-themes:

- Gardens build a community connected to nature through horticulture.
- Explore recreation opportunities often to set your roots in nature and connect to community conservation.
- Outdoor exercise contributes to your physical health and well-being.

Storylines specific to Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark:

- Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark provides horticultural, environmental, and urban sustainability education for volunteers and community.
- Inspire your inner gardener. Demonstration gardens inspire opportunities for home garden.
- You can grow your own food even in your front yard. No yard? No problem! Join our community garden.
- Volunteering helps you be active in conservation in our community.
- Gardens can be therapeutic. Time outside to stroll through gardens, walk through forests, run, cycle, or fish taking in the fresh air is healthy for our body and mind.
- Wegerzyn's wet woods are a part of the MCD's flood control system for our community.

Other opportunities to connect to agency-wide themes:

- Partnerships create healthy and vibrant communities.
- Each park within the FRMP system tells a story from the past.

Park brand statement:

- Inspire your inner gardener

Partnership opportunities:

- Wegerzyn Gardens Foundation



Interpretive Media Recommendations: (*optional with partner or foundation funding)

Personal programs by topic

- Senior focused and/or gardening, photography, hiking, fitness, etc.
- Multigenerational organic gardening
- Family gardening
- Nature education, bird watching, stream studies
- Fitness: Cycling, yoga, walking, running, etc.
- Special events/fundraisers

Wayside self-guided (Signs or Audionetics)

- near new small nature play
- at display gardens*
- Wayside Exhibit
- Interactive exhibit in the building. (design funded)
- Interpret Bioswale and rain gardens.*

Non-personal interpretation

- 1 Trailhead interpretation: New unnamed trail in North park.



2.6 PROGRAMMING PLAN

Current Programming

Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark's variety of gardens and habitats as well as the access to the Stillwater River provide programming opportunities that connect participants to nature through natural, recreational, and horticultural experiences. Current programming at Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark currently engages visitors to in a variety of ways.

The programs are directed at specific audiences, and interpretive elements provided in the park are inventoried below.

Youth & Teens

Guided and self-guided tour experiences are offered to schools with students in Kindergarten through fifth grade to help them meet academic standards in science through stream studies. Guided and self-guided preschool and daycare tours through the Children's Discovery Garden are the most common youth programs. Youth programs get youth exploring the Children's Discovery Garden while also building visitor comfort



to explore the other gardens and natural areas at the park. Youth programs include making seed bombs, discovering the seasons, exploring a variety of nature topics, and listening to a variety of gardening and nature topics during story time. The annual Bike Rodeo helps youth build skills for bike safety. Teens learn how to get active safely during backpacking, paddle sports, fly tying, bike packing, and camping programs.

Families

Spring, Summer, and Fall give families the opportunity to explore the gardens through hands on seasonal programs featuring Earthday, Scarecrow building, and gardening. Families get a view of the gardens and natural areas at night during owl prowls and night hikes. Offered year round, Conservation Kids programming empowers families to become conservationists through a three-step program progression. Conservation Kids programming at Wegerzyn MetroPark consists of both Discover and Act level programming where participants explore the Stillwater River and natural areas. Get Outside Book Club is a partnership program with Dayton Metro Library that combines early literacy with getting children outdoors. Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark has earned the Miami Valley Leave No Child Inside's and Dayton Regional Green's "Connect to Nature Site Award". This award recognizes the facility for providing programs and access points to nature that enable the Ohio Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights to be exercised by youth.

Adults

Adults learn horticulture and gardening skills during programs that include vegetable gardening, container gardening, garden trends, and disease prevention. Workshops give adults hands on experience seed saving, perennial dividing, wreath making, and bulb forcing. Photography programs give adults photography techniques and inspiration. Backpacking, camping, paddle sports, bicycle maintenance, and bike packing programs give adults the skills for active outdoor lifestyles. Advanced recreation enthusiasts can learn professional skills during American Canoe Association instructor certification courses and river rescue skill programs. Senior adults learn about gardening and tour the gardens during partnership programs through Sinclair and University of Dayton. Guided garden tours are offered to garden clubs and other community groups. Community Garden coordinators can develop their leadership skills during leadership trainings. Law Enforcement can hone their cycling skills during the Police Cyclist Course.

Multiple ages

Participants of all ages can learn about bike touring trips and other recreational adventures during travel lectures. Another recreational activity for all ages is Discover Fishing. Anyone interested in boating can take the Ohio Boating Education Course hosted at Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark. Culture Kitchen explores the recipes and food from cultures around the world. Community garden plots are available for multiple ages. Spooky Afternoon and Spooky Evening in the Garden attract almost 1000 participants of all ages each year.

Interpretation



Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark has one of the most in-depth interpretive experiences in -FRMP's system. Visitors to the wet woods and board walk are greeted with a sign that introduces them to this special habitat and what to look for. Eight metal plaques are posted along the boardwalk rails identifying important species along that make up the wet woods habitat. The Marie Aull Trail consists of 16 interpretive signs that encourage visitors to reflect on the amazing

contributions trees make in the lives of humans. The Children's Discovery Garden, opened in 2006, has a rich interpretive experience that includes a sensory garden, a music maze, sandboxes, a fossil cave and water feature with an interactive stream. Each area consists of interpretive signs to help provoke and encourage unstructured play, enhance visitor experiences, connect visitors with nature, and guide them to underutilized areas of Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark. Two kiosks help first-time visitors orient themselves to the features of the park. One kiosk is located near the building and one at the Southeast side of the parking lot.

Aspirational Programming

Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark has the natural, horticultural, and recreational elements that can connect participants and visitors to nature and in healthy lifestyles. The indoor facilities of the park have the ability to accommodate large and small groups with presentation amenities needed, however, little natural light and no expansive views make the spaces feel uncomfortable and unwelcoming to the program participants.

The site plan project priorities including improved classroom facilities, shelters, restrooms, and river access will improve the experiences for tour groups, program participants, and visitors. As programming and interpretive efforts and resources evolve, activation of the new amenities and creating a recreational and educational use culture in the parks, whether through interpretation, programming, or independent use, will be our primary goal. This goal will be realized in various ways, depending on the audience.

Audiences

Youth and Teens

New building and exhibits could include a nature trading post where youth can bring in natural items they find and tell staff and volunteers what they've learned about the item for points. Once the youth has saved up enough points, they can pick out a special scientific item to take home with them. Improved access to the river will allow more stream study programming for school tours. Schools with elementary aged children can extend their stay with the Nature Play addition. Trail system improvements and shelter additions will improve and extend the experience for guided and self-guided school and youth tours.



Families

Conservation Kids could be offered more frequently with river access improvements. Trail extensions and improvements could enhance family programming allowing for strollers and access for families varying mobility.

Adults

New classrooms could improve program participant experience and allow for conference style programming on recreational and horticultural topics. Trail enhancements and extensions could improve access for adults with varying mobility.

Interpretation

The renovations to the Marie Aull Trail will require a re-evaluation of the existing interpretive trail.

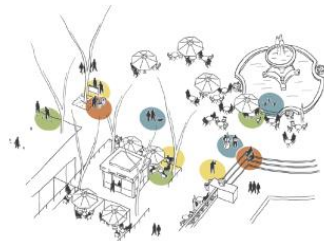


2.7 SITE PLAN

Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark offers a series of use areas that will help organize and orient visitors to the array of opportunities available for them to explore. The Core Garden use area is the front door to the park where new visitors will experience the park for the first time. As park users become familiar with the park, visits can begin at other use areas where basic amenities and unique and varied activities are provided. These use areas will be connected by park trails, allowing users to create diverse experiences each time they visit. The use areas for the park have been redefined to include the following:

- Core Garden Area
- Jay Lake
- Wetland Woods
- Community Garden
- Model Aircraft Flying Field

A second important factor driving the development of this and all park site plans is the Power of 10+, a concept, developed by Projects for Public Spaces, to evaluate and facilitate place making at multiple scales. Places thrive when users have a range of reasons—ten or more—to be there. These might include a place to sit, playgrounds to enjoy, art to touch, music to hear, food to eat, history to experience, and people to meet. Ideally, some of these activities will be unique to that particular place, reflecting the culture and history of the surrounding community. The following activities were identified in the planning process as appropriate for this park:



Place
10+ THINGS TO DO,
LAYERED TO CREATE SYNERGY

- Gardens
- Horticulture Education
- Local Foods
- Children's Discovery Garden
- Biking
- Picnicking
- Model Flying
- Fishing
- Theater
- Public Art
- Hiking
- Nature Trails
- Kayaking

Key Site Plan Recommendations

With a foundation of the two concepts described above, key site plan recommendations were developed. Many of these recommendations have resulted in specific projects that are prioritized for the FRMP capital improvement plan in Section 2.1. The full [site plan](#) provides significant detail not provided here.

Expanded Park Area Recommendations

Jay Lake Expanded Group Picnic and Passive Recreation area

Develop a new day use area with support node north of lake with shelters, restrooms, parking, biking/kayaking stop, nature play and shared access with the flying field. The lake shore will be modified in shape with diverse wetland plants for more varied habitat and visual interest, accessed partly via accessible boardwalk. South of the lake a naturalistic, 'romantic style' English landscape with specimen tree groups (including memorial trees) will invite walkers and wedding photography. The lake landscape will be accessed via a paved walking trail around it.

Expanded Trails with Series of Loops

A new bike trail loop through the former tree nursery will provide a somewhat shorter connection towards the northwest and a loop alternate route. An added series of hiking trail loops through portions of woodlands, wooded wetlands, field edges/meadow and prairie edges to north and east provide optional routes of varied lengths with interpretive information. Connections will link the river trail and island from the end of Marie Aull Trail to south.

Expanded Conservation Areas, Grasslands / Pollinator Habitat

Modify the existing mowed area of the model airfield will allow for larger meadow/prairie grasslands to the northeast. The former city tree nursery will be selectively thinned to allow establishment of more native and successional plants with small meadow and glade openings to maximize diverse edge habitats and restore this to a natural area, accessed by the new extension of the Stillwater River Trail.

Core Gardens Recommendations

A new visitor center/main building

Develop a new building which is set back from a generous arrival space on the south with demonstration plantings at front. A community room and educational spaces towards north with large outdoor terrace can be utilized by various groups. A service court is shared with the Dayton Playhouse.

Separate group area at south end of formal gardens

Develop a new elegant pavilion on a terrace with balustrade, above wildflower meadow, having generous amount of seating and lawn area (for possible tent) which could be utilized for weddings and similar groups; Install nearby restrooms at the south end of the Children's Garden.

Large wildflower meadow garden

Create a new wildflower meadow at south end of formal gardens defining large-scale arrival landscape with sculpture as visual focus, which can also be viewed from terrace.

A strong axial-arrival space

Create a clear and strong entry sequence at the front of new building which will link west across drive to river bikeway and paths to wildlife observation deck and kayak access node, and east into woods trails. Curving bands of native flowering trees, shrubs and grass plants along the drive and walkway will define Wegerzyn Gardens zone within larger 'Stillwater Park' context.

Expanded (future) gardens area

Create a new display and demonstration garden to north of the new building with strong indoor/outdoor space connection. These gardens will link to others and the park with a central walkway with interpretive information.

Sculpture and Public Art

Incorporate a variety of public art at selected locations, marking special locations and communicating the cultural context of this place.

Children's Discovery Garden Expansion

Expand the flexible open space at the south end of Children's Discovery Garden including 2 shelters with fixed roofs and a new restroom. Consider including a wedding ready room in the restroom building to support the south green.

Reconfigured parking

Reconstruct the existing parking lot with a north-south alignment with a center-developed landscape 'median' with more convenient, safe pedestrian circulation, rain gardens as storm water management demonstration sites; capacity will slightly more than existing, about 185 with 6+/- accessible spaces. Provide for 4 smaller buses, possible food truck sites.



Additional Recommendations

Outdoor Play Sites

Develop new sites to supplement the Children's Discovery Gardens near Jay Lake and at the south end of the park near the river and on the island. Develop family picnic spots near the river location which can be accessed from the parking just south of Siebenthaler under the bridge at Deweese Park.

A consolidated service/operations center

Create a new single operations area with one access road from the main park entrance which will include a new operations building, garages, materials yard, hoop house and parking. Access will also be provided to the existing greenhouse facility, a new building service use area to be shared with the theater. Consider shifting theater storage building to open corner space.

Existing MetroPark Features and Uses will remain with enhancements, upgrades and improvements including –

- Formal Wegerzyn Gardens and Children's Discovery Garden
- Community Gardens with restrooms/shelter; better parking, security and fencing all around gardens.
- Stillwater River Recreational Trail – Separate the trail from the drive north of Jay Lake and develop a new route through former tree nursery
- Wingmasters' Flying Field
- Wooded and natural areas with woodland trails
- Entry drive and gateway
- Archeological sites

Short Term Recommendations

Some recommendations could be achieved at a relatively low-cost using staff resources:

- Develop the wildflower prairie around the Flying Field
- Develop nature play at the south end of the park with access to the island
- Create a complete loop for the Marie Aull Trail
- Work with the City to eliminate the invasive species of trees from the tree nursery

Level of Service Amenities

- The following amenities outlined in the CMP are included in the site plan:
 - (2) Reservable Picnic Shelters (Small 1-25)
 - (0) Reservable Picnic Shelters (Medium 26-50)
 - (2) Reservable Picnic Shelters (Large 51-100)
 - (0) Outdoor Pavilions (100+)
 - (2) Nature Play Playgrounds
 - (1.04) Paved Trails (Miles)
 - (1) Soft/ Non-Paved Trails (Miles)
 - (0) Nature/ Hiking/ Backpacking Trails (Miles)
 - (0) Equine Trails (Miles)
 - (0) Mountain Bike Trails (Miles)

2.8 LAND PROTECTION PLAN

FRMP's [Land Protection Plan](#) (link once LPP is done) identifies priorities for land protection based on criteria addressing conservation, the park, and the user. Specific recommendations regarding land protection to achieve park needs and associated attainment strategies are listed below:

- Create a single agency responsible for management and operations for the Wegerzyn Gardens MetroParks Complex. Ownership will likely remain with the City of Dayton, but the entire property (less the greenhouse area) should become under the management of FRMP.
- Continue to protect both banks of the Stillwater River. Parcels owned by the Miami Conservancy District and Montgomery County should be considered in conservation efforts to remove invasive species.
- Most properties along the north and west side of the park are currently developed and are significantly higher in elevation than the park and are not easily accessible from the park. The hillside provides a natural boundary to the park, so significant efforts are not required along these boundaries to protect additional acreage.

All desired land for Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark is currently under municipal ownership including The City of Dayton, FRMP, Miami Conservancy District and Montgomery County. Efforts should be made to coordinate management and conservation efforts in the area to ensure a consistent experience for humans and wildlife alike.



SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Wegerzyn Gardens [MetroPark Master Plan](#) identifies a comprehensive proposal and [cost estimates](#) for the improvement of this MetroPark. From those recommendations, it was necessary to prioritize the many proposed projects. Applying priorities established in the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP), MetroParks established [Capital Project Criteria](#) to identify projects that will be incorporated with other projects throughout the district into the FRMP Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). To reflect full project costs of the prioritized projects, operational cost estimates were developed for conservation, maintenance, programming, interpretation, and law enforcement as well as businesses and philanthropic revenue. These operational costs and revenue will be evaluated alongside the capital costs to identify the projects' placement in the CIP to identify year-by year investment.

3.2 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed site plan represents the long-term vision for the park. The plan proposes a number of capital projects that will move the park toward that long-term vision. In this park master plan, specific improvement projects have been identified as priority projects for the upcoming ten-year period. Those projects, listed below, include priority repair and replacement projects which were identified in the CMP process and, when applicable, include the furniture, fixtures, and equipment investments necessary to provide a complete project.



- Visitor Center – Maintenance, Enhancement or Replacement
 - Anticipated Budget: \$6,462,540
 - Update the current building to a facility that meets the current programming needs. Project includes surrounding site work and plantings.
- Core Area – New Operations Building
 - Anticipated Budget: \$1,697,400

- Construct a new operations building and make updates to the existing building to create a new consolidated operations area for the park.
- Core Area – South Plaza Enhancements
 - Anticipated Budget: \$745,200
 - Enhance the south plaza area to include a new pavilion to function as a day use and a reservable special events area.
- Core Area – South Children’s Garden Enhancements
 - Anticipated Budget: \$519,570
 - Renovate the south end of the Children’s Discovery Garden to create two reservable shelters and a new restroom facility to serve both the Children’s Garden and the new South Plaza area.
- Community Garden – Enhancements and New Restrooms
 - Anticipated Budget: \$754,308
 - Enhance the community garden with a restroom facility and shelter, protective fencing and a formal parking area to better serve the garden users.
- Jay Lake – New Parking Area
 - Anticipated Budget: \$696,388
 - Design and construct a new parking area to serve the Jay Lake day use area and support the model flying field.
- Jay Lake – New Restroom
 - Anticipated Budget: \$179,400
 - Design and construct a new restroom to serve the Jay Lake day use area and support the model flying field.

- Jay Lake – New Shelter
 - Anticipated Budget: \$207,000
 - Design and construct a new shelter to serve the Jay Lake day use area and support the model flying field.
- Park Wide – Natural Surface Trail Enhancements
 - Anticipated Budget: \$551,724
 - Develop a trail master plan and implement a natural surface trail network throughout the park to enhance the existing trail segments in the park.
- Flying Field – Meadow and Prairie Enhancements
 - Anticipated Budget: \$124,200
 - Develop a wildflower meadow around the flying field to reduce mowing efforts and enhance the conservation value in the park.

In addition, all pavement maintenance and repair work required in the parks will be covered by the district-wide pavement management program plan.



3.3 PARKS AND CONSERVATION

The Parks and Conservation Department staff is responsible for the care and maintenance of facilities, horticultural beds and natural areas within Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark. This work includes daily cleaning and inspection of areas, completion of general repairs, maintenance of landscaped areas and completion of conservation tasks that protect the biodiversity of natural areas and are recorded and tracked in the [Annual Habitat Action Plan](#). The completion of the routine tasks outlined below ensure that all areas are maintained to FRMP standards for safety, cleanliness, and appearance and that FRMP visitors have high quality experiences.

Current Primary Routine Tasks:

- Park Clean-up
 - Litter pick up
 - Bathroom cleaning
 - Shelter cleaning /checks
 - Drinking fountain cleaning/checks
- Roadway/parking lot/paved trail blowing
- Mowing (excluding trails)
- String Trimming
- Wegerzyn Visitor Center Maintenance
 - Cleaning
 - Program set-up
- Natural surface trail trimming/mowing/tree removal
- Horticultural Maintenance
 - Watering
 - Pruning
 - Weeding
- Park Inspections
- Equipment/Vehicle repairs and service
- Water Feature



- Daily start-up
- Chemical balance testing
- Daily shut down
- Children's Discovery Garden daily inspections

Current Primary Special Tasks:

Parks and Conservation staff also complete work tasks that may be completed annually or monthly and require more time and attention than some of the routine tasks. These tasks may be tied to weather events or special projects. In some cases, special tasks involve timing in relation to the weather or events within the facilities. Other considerations for this work could include scheduling to reduce negative impacts on plant communities or animal populations.

- Snow removal-hand and truck
- AHAP plan mowing
- Pressure washing shelters and bathrooms
- Park Inspections
- Fixture maintenance
 - Plumbing repairs
 - Picnic table repairs
 - Trash can painting
 - Grill maintenance
 - Gate maintenance
- Structure Repairs
- Hazardous Tree Removal
- Chemical (herbicide) application



- Community Garden prep
- Facility Maintenance
- Horticultural Maintenance
 - Planting
 - Mulching
 - Raking leaves
- Winterizing and opening water systems and bathrooms.

Expected Increases to Primary Routine Tasks:

Upon review of the priority projects in the proposed master plan it projected that a need of 1,962 labor hours would be needed to complete primary routine tasks. A breakdown of projected increases is outlined by project below and equates to .94 full time equivalent staff (FTE). The detail of these projections can be viewed in the [costing spreadsheet](#) that was produced as a part of the park master plan process.



Project	Projected Hours	FTE Equivalent
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Visitor Center enhancement	0 hours	0 FTE
Core area-new operations building	223 hours	.11 FTE
Core area- south plaza improvements	257 hours	.13 FTE
Core area- Children's Discovery Garden enhancements	487 hours	.24 FTE
Community Garden enhancements	253 hours	.12 FTE
Jay Lake parking area enhancements	96 hours	.05 FTE
Jay Lake restroom	381 hours	.18 FTE
Jay Lake shelter	121 hours	.06 FTE
Natural surface trail enhancements	113 hours	.06 FTE
Flying field meadow and prairie	31 hours	.015 FTE
Grand Total	1,962	.94

Expected Increases to Primary Special tasks:

Upon review of the priority projects in the proposed master plan staff projects an increased need of an additional 631 hours to complete special tasks. A breakdown of projected increases is outlined by project below and equate to .30 FTE. The detail of these projections can be viewed in the costing spreadsheet that was produced as a part of the master plan process.

Project	Projected Hours	FTE Equivalent
Visitor Center enhancement	0 hours	0 FTE
Core area-new operations building	24 hours	.01 FTE
Core area- south plaza improvements	55 hours	.03 FTE
Core area- Children's Discovery Garden enhancements	39 hours	.02 FTE
Community Garden enhancements	20 hours	.01 FTE
Jay Lake parking area enhancements	205 hours	.1 FTE
Jay Lake restroom	16 hours	.01 FTE
Jay Lake shelter	27 hours	.01 FTE
Natural surface trail enhancements	214 hours	.11 FTE
Flying field meadow and prairie	31 hours	.015 FTE

Grand Total	631	.30
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One Time Tasks:

Staff also identified 88 hours for plant surveys and meadow planting as one-time tasks needed to support the implementation of the proposed site plan. This task would likely be required of Parks and Conservation staff as part of the construction of new amenities. These numbers are not included in the staffing projection that is included in the next section.

- Plant surveys: 63 total hours
- Meadow planting: 25 total hours

Below are the current staffing levels at Wegerzyn MetroPark:

- (1) Horticulturist
- (1) Site Leader
- (2) Full-time Park Technicians
- (2) Full-time Horticulture Technicians
- (1) Part-Time Custodial Technician
- (2) Part-time Horticulture Technicians
- (2) Seasonal Park Technicians
- (4) Seasonal Horticulture Technicians
- Conservation support provided by the north conservation team.

Summary of Operational Impacts:

Based on the spreadsheet that identified tasks for each item in the master plan staff identified an estimated **2,593** hours of additional annual labor that would be created. These operational requirements total **1.25** FTE Technicians.

3.4 PROGRAMMING AND INTERPRETATION

Programming and Interpretation Projection

Based on the proposed site plan, new facilitated programming is required for Outdoor Education. No new facilitated programming is required for Outdoor Recreation or Historical and Cultural Resources. The nature play site is ideal family and youth audiences.

Programming Projection

New facilitated program falls into the following category:

- Nature Play Programming: Richard Louv's book Last Child in the Woods brought attention to the need of children to be outside for their emotional, developmental, and physical well-being. Nature Play sites throughout FRMP helps families and youth leaders feel comfortable and safe getting children outside. Programming for these sites includes play naturalists that help children feel welcome and comfortable playing in non-commercial spaces.

Proposed Facilitated Programming	Location	Frequency	Audiences			
			Youth/teens	Family	Adults	Multiple Audiences
Nature Play Programming	Nature Play Sites	8		•		

Costs	Location
	Nature Play site
Personnel	\$1866.27
Contract Services	\$0
Ongoing Supplies	\$313.28
Startup supplies	\$0
Total	\$2179.55

Interpretive Projection

The site plan proposes additions to interpretive elements throughout the park. The improvements outlined below focus on areas of the park prioritized for improvements. The full [Interpretive Plan](#) for the park can be found in Section 2.5.

- Wayside Self-guided is a single-style interpretive media, such as an interpretive panel or other interpretation method, which connects visitors to a park feature. The priority project that includes a wayside self-guided site is the Nature Play Site designated as part of the Children's Discovery Garden enhancements.
- Wayside Exhibit is an interactive experience that includes a variety of interpretive media and may include interpretive panels and interactive displays that are designed to provoke curiosity in visitors. The priority projects that include a wayside exhibit in the visitor center.
- Kiosks are the first decision point for visitors in the park and are designed to welcome and orient visitors with trail and feature descriptions. No new kiosks are designated from project priorities.



The site plan identifies capital costs for interpretive elements in priority project areas. Corresponding one-time personnel costs to develop these interpretive elements have been established below. Ongoing operational expense for the interpretive elements focus on periodic repair and replacement costs and the associated personnel costs. The capital and operational

costs for these interpretive elements, matrixed by the individual project, are summarized in the table below.

Interpretation Priority Project Costs

Project	Capital Development Costs		Materials Cost	
	Materials	Personnel	Materials	Personnel
Visitor Center maintenance, enhancement, or replacement: Wayside Exhibit	*	\$17,798.84	*	\$233.96
Core Area- new operations building	NA	NA	NA	NA
Core Area – South Plaza enhancement	NA	NA	NA	NA
Core Area – South Children’s Garden enhancements	*	\$3512.93	*	\$46.84
Community Garden – enhancements and new restroom	NA	NA	NA	NA
Jay Lake – new parking area	NA	NA	NA	NA
Jay Lake - new restroom	NA	NA	NA	NA
Jay Lake – new shelter	NA	NA	NA	NA
Park Wide – natural surface trail enhancements	NA	NA	NA	NA
Flying Field – meadow and prairie enhancements	NA	NA	NA	NA

3.5 BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Park Plan

In reviewing the Wegerzyn Gardens MetrPark proposed site plan, the Business Operations developed a list of assets that would generate additional revenue. These assets include additional picnic shelters, camp sites, and new education programming

Shelters

Increase the amenities and proximate services of existing shelters to offer a picnic experience consistent with our most popular agency-wide shelters, thereby increasing rental rates and utilization rates.

Capital Improvement Plan

Current Revenue Sources

The shelter at Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark averaged a fill rate of 46.5% during the weekend peak season from 2016 to 2018, a rate that ranks *2nd* among the 13 parks with reservable shelters.

Proposed Revenue Sources

The proposed priority project installation of (3) new 30'x50' picnic shelters with appropriate and desired amenities and services would produce approximately 22 permit applications per year per site and generate annual revenue of approximately \$3,023 per site based on the agency wide median of large sized shelters averaged over the last three full years of operation.

The proposed priority project installation of (3) new 20'x25" picnic shelters with appropriate and desired amenities and services would produce approximately 21 permit applications per year per picnic shelter site and generate annual revenue of approximately \$715 per site based on the agency wide average of comparable small sized shelters over the last three full years of operation.

3.6 PUBLIC SAFETY

Implementation of the Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark Master Plan will not have a significant impact on the Ranger Division. Below are the considerations:

Current Patrol

- **Patrol Area** - Rangers are typically assigned a patrol area, or “beat.” The beats are North, South, East, and Central. Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark is part of the Central Beat along with RiverScape, Deeds, Island, Sunrise, Hills & Dales, Wesleyan MetroParks, the Second Street Market and Adventure Central.
- **Patrol Strategies** - Typically, the ranger assigned to a patrol beat will patrol all the parks in his or her assigned beat several times each day at various intervals, being careful not to have a predictable routine in their patrol times and methods. Rangers frequently make informal contact with park visitors and are encouraged to contact people who have reserved a shelter. Rangers look for anything suspicious and make contact with people who may be involved in criminal activity. The primary focus is preventing criminal activity, but rangers are encouraged to take enforcement action, including making physical arrests or issuing citations, when appropriate.
- **Patrol Time Estimates** - Rangers had previously estimated the amount of patrol time they spend actively patrolling in each of our parks during their 10-hour day while assigned to that area, not counting any drive-times from park to park or other non-patrol time.

In a typical 10-hour work day, the estimated average time the ranger spends on active patrol in Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark is 65 minutes.

Anticipated Changes to Patrol

- **Vehicular traffic and parking** – Most patrols conducted by rangers are done by driving through the park areas in a marked cruiser. Although there are some significant changes made to the roadways and parking lots at Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark, there is very little, if any, additional roadway. It is not anticipated that any significant change is needed to patrol strategies related to patrolling in a cruiser.
- **Impact of additional paved and hiking trails** – Rangers occasionally walk trails and use their bikes to patrol the paved and hiking trails. The proposed additional paved and unpaved loop trails at Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark will likely add a small amount of time to the average patrol time for rangers at park.

- Impact of additional structures/features – The new features and amenities will require more attention from the Ranger Division, though not significantly more. It will require additional patrol throughout the day and night, but since the rangers will be able to patrol most of the area using their cruisers, the amount of extra time will be minimal.
- Impact of additional activities/visitation and new park design is expected to attract more visitors. This increase will likely have some impact on the amount of patrol time rangers spend in the park. Whenever there is an increase in the amenities and corresponding increase in the number of visitors at a location, the potential for increased criminal activity is a possibility. In this case, it is anticipated to have an additional occasional theft or vandalism incident, but a significant increase in crime as a result of the proposed changes is not expected.



Impact/Cost to Public Safety

- Based on the changes and additional amenities proposed in the Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark Master Plan, an estimated additional 10 minutes of patrol time per ranger, per shift, will be required after the improvements are completed. This is based on the assumption that the improvements and increased attendance will require additional ranger time to patrol it consistently and effectively throughout the day and night.
- An additional 10 minutes of patrol per shift x 3 shifts = 30 minutes of additional patrol per day x 365 days = 183 additional patrol hours per year.

3.7 PHILANTHROPY

The addition of new trails, features and amenities proposed in the Wegerzyn Gardens MetroPark site plan provide excellent naming, sponsorship and tribute opportunities. Based on item descriptions and notes from the site plan the following elements of the plan could generate philanthropic revenue:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Visitor Center | Naming |
| • South Plaza Enhancements | Naming |
| • Community Gardens | Sponsor or naming |
| • Jay Lake Shelter | Sponsor or naming |
| • Trails | Sponsor or naming |
| • Flying Field Meadow and Prairie | Sponsor or naming |
| • Benches and Trees | Tribute |

All donations will be required to include an endowment for a ten-year period.

