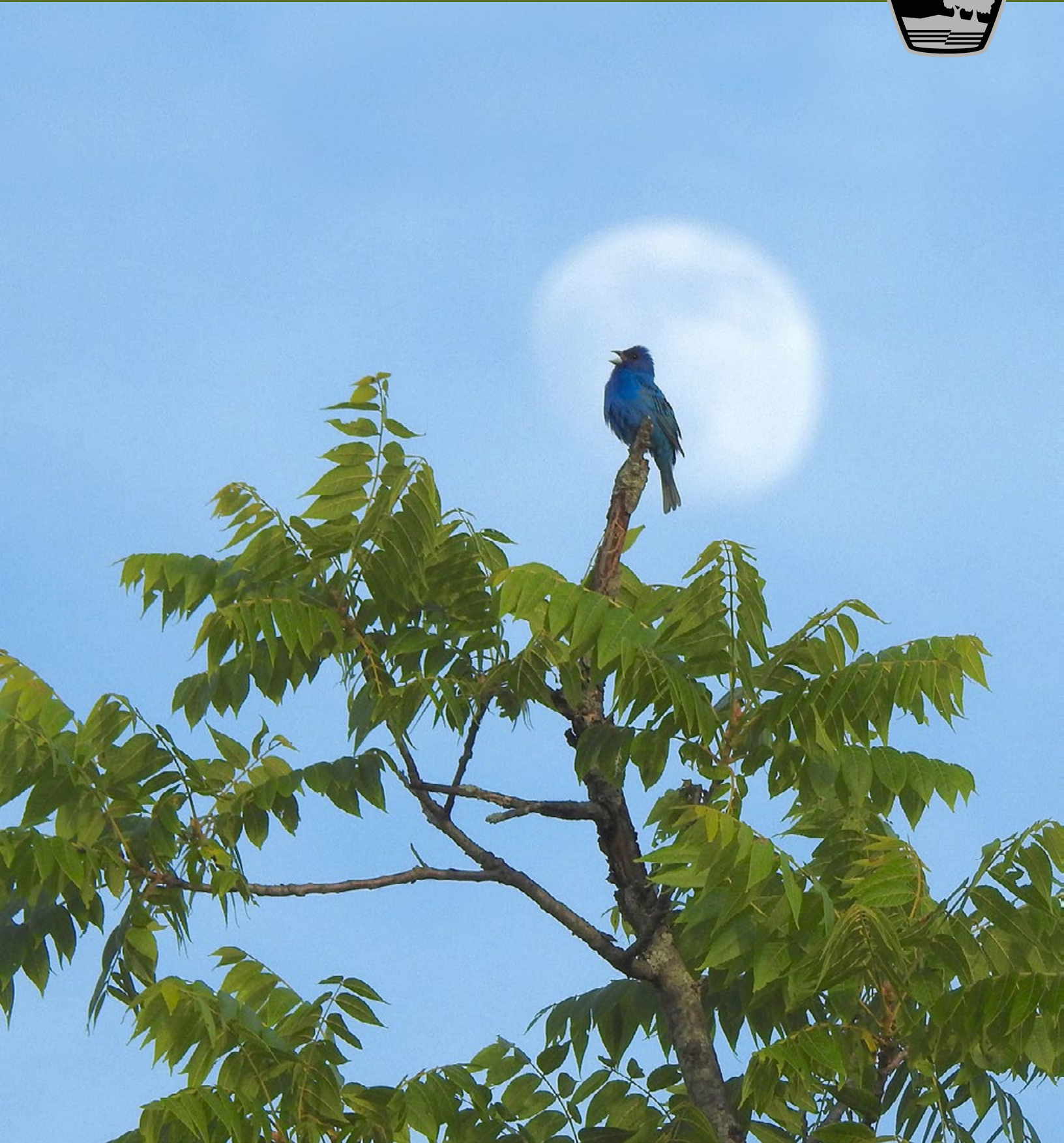


METRO PARKS ANNUAL REPORT & 2026 BUDGET REQUEST



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[Front cover photo: Adam Brandemihl]

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OVERVIEW & HIGHLIGHTS



To: BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT
JB Hadden (Chair)
Aryeh Alex
George McCue

cc: FRANKLIN COUNTY PROBATE COURT JUDGE
Jeffrey D Mackey

From: **Tim Moloney**, Executive Director
Larry Peck, Deputy Director
Rick McGivern, Finance Director and Treasurer
JJ Domiano, Human Resources Director

Re: **2026 Proposed Budget**

On behalf of the staff of Metro Parks, our Executive Team is pleased to present for your consideration the 2026 Annual Report and Budget Request.

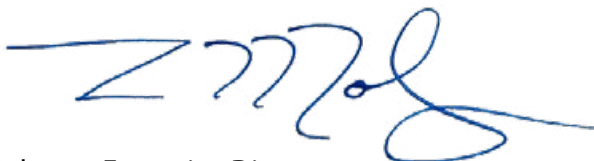
With your approval, Metro Parks will maintain its focus of clean, safe parks and provide for the natural space and outdoor recreation needs of the residents of central Ohio at a low cost. Adoption of the annual budget by board resolution is both a legal requirement and a critical management tool, allocating limited resources to our most important priorities.

In 2025, Metro Parks offered growing park access to more of our citizen-customers. The Inclusive Playground at Blendon Woods now fills a critical void for special-needs children. Trails for biking and walking in a natural setting were expanded across the district. New parks such as Quarry Trails, Great Southern and Bank Run continue to develop new opportunities to enjoy nature in areas of Franklin County previously underserved. Each park implemented improvements to improve our park offerings. Furthermore, our mission of natural space preservation was accomplished through several major land acquisitions and wetland development projects.

In 2026, Metro Parks will continue to seek efficiencies in operations while investing in our people, equipment and facilities, as detailed herein. The Vision of Metro Parks is to: *Change Lives... Naturally*. This budget provides the blueprint for achieving that vision while acting as a careful steward of taxpayer funds. Metro Parks will likely experience rapid growth and change in the years to come, which heightens our challenges and opportunities as the largest metropolitan parks system in Ohio.

The entire team at Metro Parks is deeply appreciative of the stewardship and guiding direction provided by the Board of Park Commissioners. We look forward to 2026 as another opportunity to share the wonderful natural resources and opportunities offered at Metro Parks.

Respectfully submitted,



Tim Moloney, Executive Director
Columbus & Franklin County Metropolitan Park District

Budget Summary

Total Appropriations

The 2026 Budget Request totals \$50,051,769. This includes all appropriations for personnel, operating expenses, equipment purchases, capital improvements, land purchases, Blacklick Woods Golf Course operations and all Interfund transfers.

Total Revenues

Total combined new revenues for the General Fund, Capital Improvements Fund and the Golf Course Fund are estimated at \$39,682,161 for 2026. Approximately 78% of this revenue is derived from our 0.95 mill operating levy. The Franklin County Auditor's office provides the official estimate which is used in this budget request, an estimate that includes the most recently available data on property valuations, effective tax rates and historical actual collections. An additional 8% is Local Government Funding from the State of Ohio, for which an official estimate is provided in August each year. Remaining significant revenues are reimbursement-based grants, fees for rentals and programs, and interest income.

General Fund

The General Fund captures the bulk of the park district's operating costs, equipment, vehicles and the renovations not included in the capital improvements budget. Requested appropriations, exclusive of transfers to the Capital Improvements Fund, total \$30,731,269.

Capital Improvements Fund

The specific capital improvement requests for 2026 are detailed on pages 64–65, including land acquisition. \$10,635,000 is budgeted for 2026.

Blacklick Woods Golf Course Fund

The Golf Course is projected to earn revenues of \$1,289,800 in 2026, primarily from greens fees, driving range fees and rental of the Eagleview venue.

Fund Balances

Year-end fund balances for all Funds are detailed on pages 57-58. Over the course of the 10-year levy cycle, Metro Parks expects to draw down these balances as revenues are expected to remain largely flat but expenditures will grow due to inflation, additional land purchases and increasing operating and capital costs as new parks come online.

2025 Year in Review

Metro Parks maintained its core focus on Clean, Safe Parks in 2025, while building and improving our services for the benefit of all in central Ohio.

Investment in our existing parks was a top priority. A new nature center was completed at Blendon Woods. The popular Observation Tower at the Glacier Ridge Honda Wetland underwent an extensive renovation. Fiber-optic cable was extended at Battelle Darby Creek locations to improve connectivity for staff and the public. The Rose Trellis at Inniswood Metro Gardens was completely disassembled and refurbished to offer visitors a beautiful and enduring feature. The new canopy walk at Blacklick Woods continues to be a very popular attraction and had improved elevator access. The Truss Bridge at Quarry Trails offers a new overlook in a serene corner of the new park. New docks at Prairie Oaks improved access to waterways. Other major improvements for 2025 included new playgrounds at Three Creeks, a new climbing wall surface at Scioto Audubon and new golf cart paths at the Blacklick Woods Golf Course. Other improvements across several parks in 2025 included paved roads, parking lots and trails to make our parks more accessible and enjoyable, nature center renovations, new utility lines and security cameras.

New parks were also created. Bank Run, set to open officially in May 2026, underwent several improvements, such as major facility renovations, newly paved roads, trails and signage, a large recreational slide, and utility upgrades, including a major waterline connection made possible through cooperative efforts with the City of Obetz.



Jack Rockwood

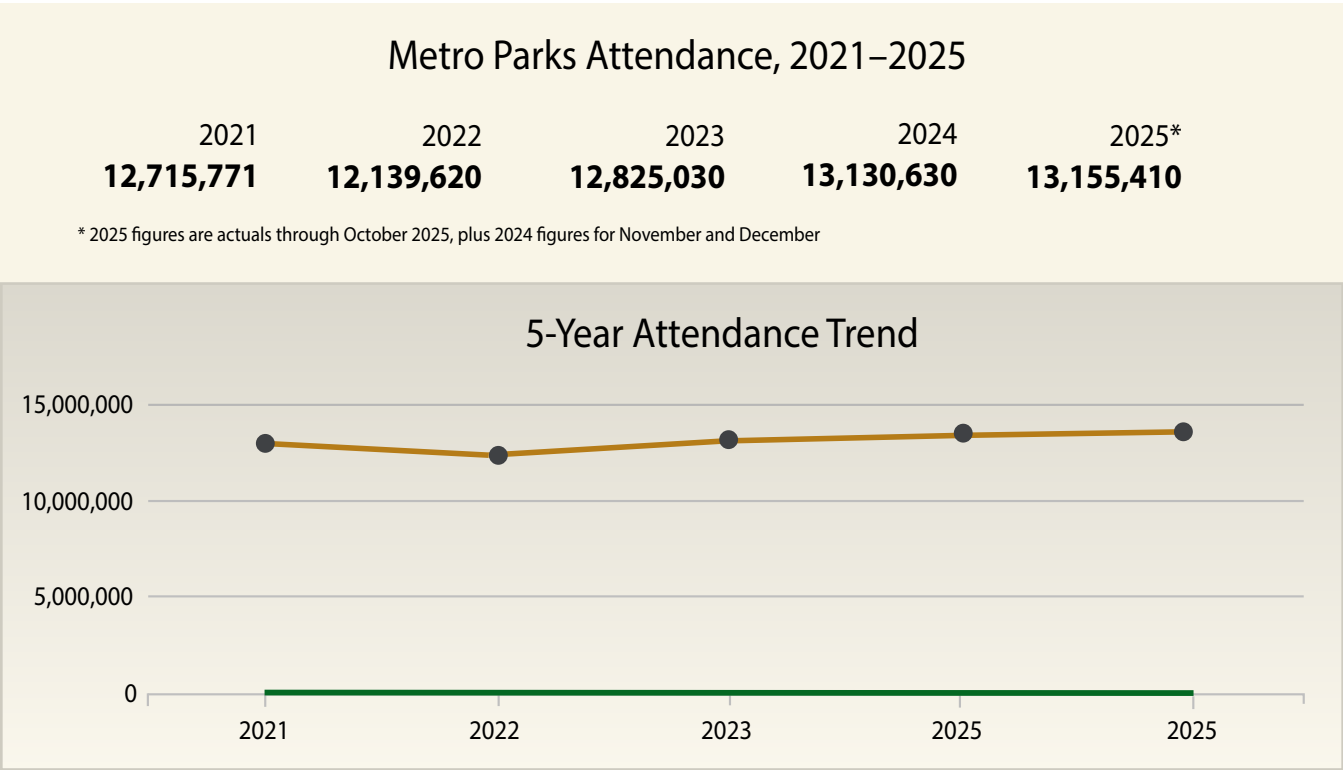
The rebuilt Rose Trellis in the Rose Garden at Inniswood.

Great Southern, another new park on the southside of Columbus, saw finalized lease agreements with AEP and the State of Ohio, paved trails, and a new obstacle course. Quarry Trails also saw major accomplishments such as a new truss bridge, restrooms, playgrounds and office facilities. Also, the trail connector project at Sharon Woods, which is a new project at a well-established park, offers new access for bicycling across the north end of Franklin County.

Metro Parks remained a careful steward of Mother Nature. Natural resources improvements were spearheaded by our Resource Management section, which undertook several wetlands reclamation projects through the State of Ohio’s H²Ohio program. Invasive species removal and stream restoration projects were other points of emphasis.

Outreach to ever more park users was also realized in 2025. Our Outdoor Adventure programs offered a wider variety of outdoor fun activities, including the via ferrata at Quarry Trails. Special events such as our Bark Bash and Scioto Fest also brought people together in our parks in a festive atmosphere. We also invested in new interpretive displays for our nature centers, to better connect with and educate the visiting public. Educational events for schoolchildren saw a resurgence while our summer camps hosted more than 1,000 campers. At the golf course, free golf at the 9-hole starter course continues to be a popular option for seasoned players and beginners alike.

Finally, we invested in our employees through competitive pay, excellent benefits, tuition reimbursement and employee recognition activities. Metro Parks offered extensive in-service training for our rangers and maintenance crews to keep their skills sharp. An extensive survey process was also undertaken, to better understand how Metro Parks can continue to improve in 2026 and beyond.



ABOUT METRO PARKS



Metro Parks History & Community Profile

Columbus & Franklin County Metro Parks, better known as Metro Parks, was created in 1945 with broad community support. An independent political subdivision of the State of Ohio, Metro Parks is governed now, as it was then, by a three-member, unpaid Board of Park Commissioners, appointed by the Probate Court Judge of Franklin County to alternating three-year terms.

The early years of Metro Parks saw many important accomplishments, such as hiring its first leaders, finding office space and identifying lands for future parks. By 1948, the park district had its first parcel of land, a 113-acre tract that became the core of what is now Blacklick Woods Metro Park.

A big obstacle in those early days was funding to support daily park operations, popular nature programs and land purchases. Donations of time and land helped the fledgling park district immensely, but more was needed for the park district to grow.

By the late 1950s the park district’s few small parks were bursting at the seams with guests and demand was high for picnic areas, nature programs and open spaces. The post-WW II suburban expansion was transforming the American landscape and Columbus was no exception. The suburbs were here to stay and so was the demand for more parks.

In 1960, 15 years after its founding, the first levy was approved, a 0.30 millage (mill) levy to purchase land. All these years later, despite fast-growing land prices and tax laws that restrict the revenue growth of levies, Metro Parks has maintained a funding mechanism below 1.00 mill.

Levy Growth Over the Decades

Levy Year	Levy Request	Millage	Approval Rate
1960	Initial Levy	0.30	61.00%
1970	Renewal	0.30 + 0.00 = 0.30	55.40%
1979	Renewal	0.23 + 0.00 = 0.23	64.16%
1989	Replace & Increase	0.23 + 0.32 = 0.55	62.36%
1999	Replace & Increase	0.55 + 0.10 = 0.65	58.96%
2009	Replace & Increase	0.65 + 0.10 = 0.75	57.83%
2018	Replace & Increase	0.75 + 0.20 = 0.95	67.26%

The consistent generosity of Franklin County residents has provided Metro Parks with the necessary resources to serve a population of more than two million residents in central Ohio, with a wide diversity of parks, conservation efforts and recreational outlets, all of which are detailed in this document.

Metro Parks benefits from, and contributes to, a consistently strong central Ohio economy. Central Ohio has outperformed the state of Ohio and the nation across a number of economic metrics for several years, such as unemployment rates and economic growth per capita. These measurements reflect a job market characterized by above average education levels and wages.

The foundation of this economic strength is a diversity of employers. Growth is driven by a wide range of private sector employers across many industries, complimented by the stability of major public sector employers and large-scale institutions of higher education and healthcare.

The table below indicates how central Ohio compares to Ohio and the US, across a number of categories.

Central Ohio Economic Indicators

	Metro Area	Ohio	US
Bachelor’s Degree %	40%	32%	35.7%
Median Age	36.9	39.9	39.0
Median Household Income	\$75,777	\$65,720	\$74,755
Below Poverty Line	12.4%	13.4%	12.6%
Median Home Value	\$289,200	\$204,100	\$320,900

Sources: US Census Bureau (Census Reporter Community Profiles 2022)

In summary, Metro Parks operates in an economic region that is predicted to experience above average growth for years to come and the need for parks will continue to grow as well.



Virginia Gordon

Strategic Planning

Mission, Vision, Values and Core Convictions

Metro Parks actively engages in strategic planning as a way to focus efforts and resources toward the achievement of goals that our guests expect. The core of the strategic planning process is our **Statement of Mission, Vision, Values and Core Convictions**, which are detailed below:

Mission

To conserve open spaces, while providing places and opportunities that encourage people to discover and experience nature

Vision

Change Lives... Naturally

Values

Excellence, Integrity, Respect, Teamwork, Leadership, Accountability, Communication

Core Convictions

We put customers first. We make situations better. We make central Ohio extraordinary.

Levy Promises

Metro Parks tied strategic planning to specific, measurable goals during the 2018 Levy campaign, with the **Levy Promises** detailed below. This focuses our daily efforts for the duration of the levy cycle.

- ✓ Clean, safe parks
- ✓ Three new parks
- ✓ New or remodeled nature centers at Blacklick Woods and Blendon Woods Metro Parks
- ✓ Reforest 1,000 acres, create 500 acres of wetlands, reintroduce 500 acres of native prairie
- ✓ Technology improvements at parks
- ✓ Fifty miles of new trails
- ✓ Reinvestment in all existing parks
- ✓ Non-traditional opportunities for guests age 50 and older
- ✓ Overnight camping opportunities in the parks
- ✓ Expand non-traditional hours
- ✓ Linking of parks to other locations via the Greenway Trails

Community Partnerships

Metro Parks continually works with a number of government agencies, non-profits and local businesses to grow, enhance and connect the park district. Whether preserving a wetland, building a bike trail, improving a park or planning for the future, Metro Parks is active with our community partners.



PARKS, PROGRAMS & SUPPORT FUNCTIONS



Bank Run Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

The 61-acre Bank Run Metro Park is another new southside park, and a future hub for major events that require rental space with plenty of outdoor access for various activities. With several existing structures in good repair and ample utilities, this property is adjacent to a quarry lake and just a short distance downriver from Three Creeks Metro Park, providing exciting opportunities as a key waterway connector and natural area corridor through a busy part of town.



Melissa Turpening

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

New Park Development

\$600,000

Maintenance Truck

\$60,000

Tree Plantings

\$5,000

BANK RUN METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

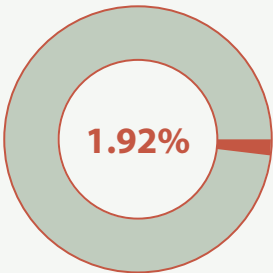
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
5

PART-TIME
2

SEASONAL
1

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$485,183
Operating Costs	\$102,555
TOTAL	\$587,738

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

The largest Metro Park, Battelle Darby Creek features more than 7,000 acres of forest, prairies and wetlands. Stretching along 13 miles of the Big and Little Darby Creeks, both State and National Scenic Rivers, it has more than 1,600 acres of restored wetlands and prairies.

Bison have been reintroduced to the park and roam in two large enclosed pastures. A major nature center, premier shelters and a section of the Ohio to Erie Trail are other highlights.



2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Nature Center
Improvements

\$90,000

Maintenance Truck

\$60,000

New Bridge Decking

\$20,000

BATTELLE DARBY CREEK METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

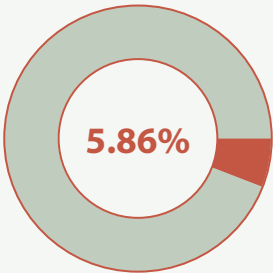
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
15

PART-TIME
9

SEASONAL
5

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$1,495,373
Operating Costs	\$295,855
TOTAL	\$1,791,228

Park Attendance (2024) **929,670**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Blacklick Woods Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Blacklick Woods Metro Park, the oldest Metro Park in the park district, features 643 acres of woods, fields, swamps and prairies, with a tremendous beech-maple forest. A unique canopy walk among the trees now offers a wonderfully-different experience for guests.

The park is pet-friendly and caters to family gatherings with several shelters and picnic areas. An extensive trail system winds through the entire park, allowing fitness enthusiasts plenty of options for hiking, biking and walking, along with two exercise stations to make fitness fun.



Dan Ferrin

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

New Cold Storage Building
\$100,000

Beech Maple Lodge Improvements
\$20,000

Lodge Tables and Chairs
\$11,500

BLACKLICK WOODS METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

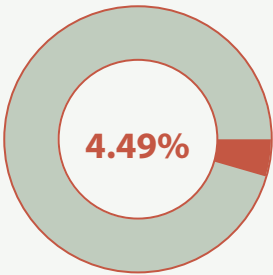
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
11

PART-TIME
5

SEASONAL
6

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$1,100,159
Operating Costs	\$271,800
TOTAL	\$1,371,959

Park Attendance (2024) **1,405,010**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Blacklick Woods Golf Course

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

The Blacklick Woods Golf Course is carefully managed so birds and birdies peacefully coexist. Developed with a long-range vision of protection and enhancement of the natural environment, the Championship Course offers tree-lined fairways and quality greens. Golf carts allow for easy mobility.

With no charge for play, the Learning Course is perfect for beginners, families or just practicing iron play. A full-service driving range and practice holes, bunkers and greens allow our guests to fine-tune their game.



Cheryl Blair

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Eight New Golf Carts

\$55,000

New Mower

\$17,000

Eagleview Countertops

\$5,000

BLACKLICK WOODS GOLF COURSE AT A GLANCE

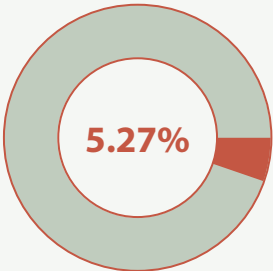
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
7

PART-TIME
12

SEASONAL
7

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$1,006,550
Operating Costs	\$579,950
TOTAL	\$1,586,500

Park Attendance (2024) **389,260**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Blendon Woods & Rocky Fork Metro Parks

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Blendon Woods Metro Park contains spectacular stream-cut ravines and open fields surrounded by beech-maple and oak-hickory forests. The 653-acre park is a great place to see a variety of songbirds, waterfowl and other wildlife, especially the flock of wild turkeys meandering about in search of food.

The 118-acre Walden Waterfowl Refuge with its 11-acre Thoreau Lake provides a sanctuary for hundreds of birds, ducks and other wildlife. Nearby Rocky Fork Metro Park provides open spaces and extensive trails winding through woods and fields.



Andrea Krava

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Playground
Improvements

\$13,000

Classroom Furniture

\$12,000

Replace Drinking
Fountains

\$12,000

BLENDON WOODS & ROCKY FORK METRO PARKS AT A GLANCE

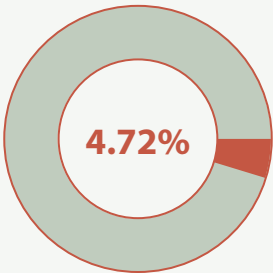
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
10

PART-TIME
9

SEASONAL
8

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$1,145,755
Operating Costs	\$298,470
TOTAL	\$1,444,225

Park Attendance (2024)	1,044,585
Blendon Woods	675,585
Rocky Fork	369,050

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Clear Creek Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Clear Creek Metro Park features over 5,400 acres of woodland interspersed with sandstone cliffs, ravines and creeks and is home to more than 2,200 species of plants and animals.

Forested areas range from Canadian hemlocks and ferns, to oak and hickory, to Ohio’s last remaining colonies of rhododendron. Home to Ohio’s largest state nature preserve, with 12 miles of trails for all levels of hikers and fishing spots for avid anglers, the park offers rugged beauty for all to enjoy.



2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Bridge Replacement

\$100,000

Ranger Truck

\$45,000

Crack Seal Roadway

\$5,000

CLEAR CREEK METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

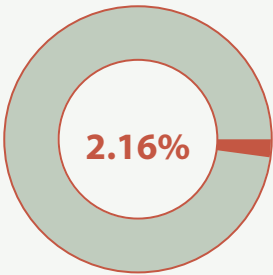
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
4

PART-TIME
6

SEASONAL
3

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$557,901
Operating Costs	\$102,950
TOTAL	\$660,851

Park Attendance (2024) **74,430**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Glacier Ridge & Homestead Metro Parks/Heritage Trail

(page 1 of 2)

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Glacier Ridge Metro Park was named for the end moraine or glacial debris left behind when the glaciers retreated some 12,000 to 17,000 years ago. Much of the 1,032-acre park was once covered with farmland.

Guests can traverse a boardwalk through the Honda Wetlands Area or climb a 25-foot observation tower to see waterfowl and other animals. An obstacle course, a dog park, playgrounds and miles of trails crossing diverse terrain make this park a popular destination.



2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Homestead Park
Improvements
\$1,000,000

Maintenance Truck
\$60,000

Durbin Barn Repairs
\$15,000

GLACIER RIDGE & HOMESTEAD METRO PARKS/HERITAGE TRAIL AT A GLANCE

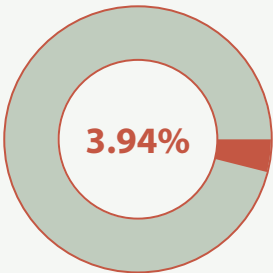
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
9

PART-TIME
8

SEASONAL
6

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$960,841
Operating Costs	\$244,255
TOTAL	\$1,205,096

Park Attendance (2024)	1,453,230
Glacier Ridge	453,480
Homestead	620,390
Heritage Trail	379,360

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Glacier Ridge & Homestead Metro Parks/Heritage Trail

(page 2 of 2)

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

The 43-acre Homestead Metro Park offers a quiet, country atmosphere with a covered bridge, wonderful pavilions, and great views within fast-growing suburban neighborhoods. A popular spot for picture-taking, the park features a fishing pond, play equipment and recreational courts.

Connected to the Heritage Trail, it is popular with bikers, runners and walkers of all ages. Further improvements to roadways, paths, parking, facilities and equipment are currently underway to make this park better than ever.



Liz Christian

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Land Shark

\$10,000

Truck Bed Replacement

\$7,000

Educational Supplies

\$6,200



Kim Strosnider

Great Southern Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Stretching along the Scioto River on the south side of Columbus near State Route 23 and I-270, this 51-acre site will be reclaimed from a mining use and provide both a new park and bike trails in an underserved area.

Lush wetlands and riverfront access along a scenic wooded bend in the river are among the hidden gems of this future park. Much like Quarry Trails, a vision for repurposed land is the driving force at Great Southern.



Stefan Bruch

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Trail and Facilities Development

\$1,000,000

Maintenance Truck

\$60,000

Frisbee Golf Baskets

\$9,000

GREAT SOUTHERN METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

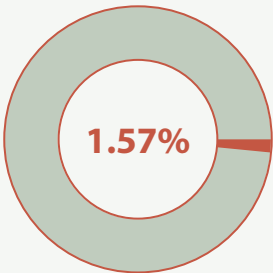
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
4

PART-TIME
3

SEASONAL
1

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$423,344
Operating Costs	\$55,760
TOTAL	\$479,104

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Highbanks Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Highbanks Metro Park is named for its massive 100-foot-high shale bluff towering over the Olentangy State Scenic River. Tributary streams cutting across the bluff have created a number of deep ravines in the eastern part of the 1,203-acre park.

Ohio and Olentangy shales, often containing outstanding large concretions, are exposed on the bluff face and sides of the ravines. One of the most visited parks, Highbanks offers wonderful picnic areas, great trails and incredible views.



Dale Miller

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Arch Bridge
Replacement

\$600,000

Patrol Vehicle

\$40,000

Concrete Pads
for Public Grills

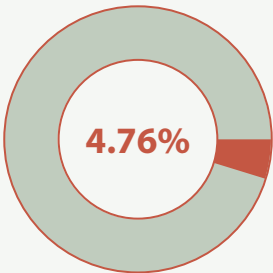
\$20,000

HIGHBANKS METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

Number of Employees *

- FULL-TIME
12
- PART-TIME
8
- SEASONAL
5

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$1,224,883
Operating Costs	\$231,188
TOTAL	\$1,456,071

Park Attendance (2024) **1,333,360**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Inniswood Metro Gardens

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Nestled within a scenic nature preserve, the 123-acre Inniswood Metro Gardens is a source of inspiration for all ages. Streams and woodlands filled with wildflowers and wildlife provide a majestic backdrop to the beautifully landscaped areas.

Inniswood boasts more than 2,000 species of plants, specialty collections and several theme gardens. Inniswood Garden Society volunteers and park team members maintain these wonderful gardens for all to enjoy.



Chris Shea

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Plants for Gardens
\$15,000

Trail Resurfacing
\$10,000

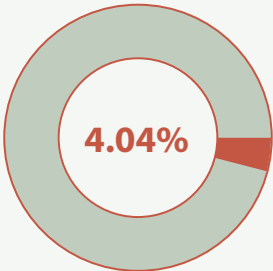
December Lights
\$500

INNISWOOD METRO GARDENS AT A GLANCE

Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
9
PART-TIME
9
SEASONAL
5

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$1,082,110
Operating Costs	\$154,863
TOTAL	\$1,236,973

Gardens Attendance (2024) **637,580**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Pickerington Ponds Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Pickerington Ponds Metro Park is a premier spot for birdwatching, with more than 260 species seen. The combination of seasonal ponds and rich wetland vegetation, with bordering woodlands, serve as a magnet for migrating waterfowl, shore birds and land birds.

Deer, beaver, fox and other wildlife can be seen near the ponds and adjoining woods and fields of this 1,608 acre park. It's also a vital connector in the larger 16-mile Blacklick Creek Greenway Trail, popular for biking.



John Bonnett

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Restroom Improvements

\$40,000

Kubota RTV

\$38,000

Replace Grills

\$2,000

PICKERINGTON PONDS METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

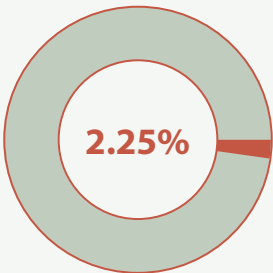
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
5

PART-TIME
6

SEASONAL
3

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$581,085
Operating Costs	\$108,445
TOTAL	\$689,530

Park Attendance (2024) **366,110**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Prairie Oaks Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Prairie Oaks Metro Park features nearly 500 acres of lush flowering prairies and grasslands that were restored using seeds native to the Darby Plains. The spectacular scenery of Big Darby Creek, a State and National Scenic River which flows through the 2,291-acre park, provides a beautiful backdrop for outdoor adventures.

The park also has several deep lakes for fishing and boating. Canoe access, a bridle trail and plenty of picnic areas make this park an outdoor experience for the entire family.



Kim Graham

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Precast Restroom

\$50,000

Mower

\$20,000

Brush Hog

\$18,000

PRAIRIE OAKS METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

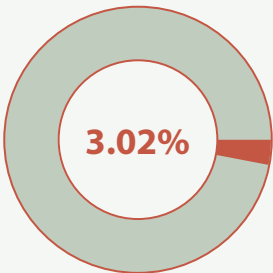
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
7

PART-TIME
6

SEASONAL
2

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$808,026
Operating Costs	\$114,445
TOTAL	\$922,471

Park Attendance (2024) **660,750**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Quarry Trails Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

The 20th Metro Park is all-new in many ways. Adjacent to new housing, the 62-acre park packs adventurous challenges into an efficiently-planned design. Rock climbing, biking, canoeing, kayaking, paddle boarding and sledding are among the outdoor fun options.

What was once an abandoned rock quarry and a blighted property has been transformed into a hotspot of outdoor action and beauty. Guests can view a 20-foot waterfall from a new deck or descend limestone steps and wade into the water.



2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Toro Workman
\$40,000

Picnic Tables
\$12,000

Workout Station
\$10,000

QUARRY TRAILS METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

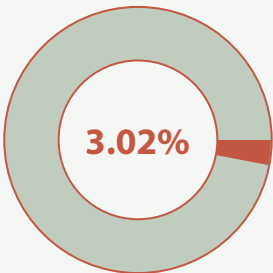
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
8

PART-TIME
5

SEASONAL
1

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$786,944
Operating Costs	\$136,875
TOTAL	\$923,869

Park Attendance (2024) **573,750**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Scioto Audubon Metro Park / Greenway Trails

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Formerly an industrial landscape, Scioto Audubon Metro Park has been transformed from a blighted brownfield into a green oasis where wildlife and the community flourish. A recreational and educational destination for guests of all ages, the 119-acre park is located along the banks of the Scioto River just south of downtown Columbus.

Scioto Audubon Metro Park hosts a 35-foot climbing wall, a major nature center, sand volleyball and an iconic water tower, connecting fun and nature in the heart of the city.



2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Volleyball Area
Improvements
\$63,000

Playground
Improvements
\$35,000

Boardwalk Repairs
\$8,000

SCIOTO AUDUBON METRO PARK & GREENWAY TRAILS AT A GLANCE

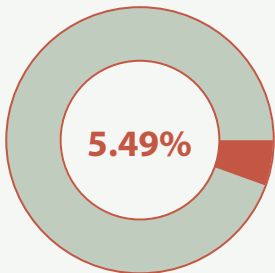
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
14

PART-TIME
8

SEASONAL
4

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$1,398,856
Operating Costs	\$280,880
TOTAL	\$1,679,736

Park Attendance (2024)	1,670,220
Scioto Audubon	540,850
Greenway Trails	1,129,370

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Scioto Grove Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Scioto Grove Metro Park is a 620-acre park along the Scioto River in southern Franklin County with mature forests and scenic bluffs, featuring more than seven miles of trails, two picnic areas with shelters, tables and grills, a children’s play area and several overlook decks.

Beautifully situated on a scenic river bend, the park allows great views of waterfowl and other wildlife. Outdoor activities abound here, with an archery course, backpacking, biking, canoeing, kayaking, disc golf and fishing.



Virginia Gordon

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Playground Shade
Structure
\$11,000

Rotary Tiller
\$6,000

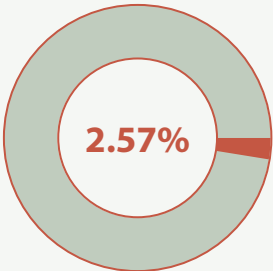
Chainsaw
\$1,700

SCIOTO GROVE METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

Number of Employees *

- FULL-TIME
5
- PART-TIME
8
- SEASONAL
2

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$623,854
Operating Costs	\$162,080
TOTAL	\$785,934

Park Attendance (2024) **361,640**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Sharon Woods Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Sharon Woods Metro Park is a mixture of forests and fields with towering oak, hickory and beech trees and an 11-acre lake. Tucked inside the 761-acre park is the Edward Thomas Nature Preserve, named for the renowned Ohio naturalist and one of the founders of the park system.

Many seasonal pools provide critical breeding habitat for wildlife. Biking, fishing, canoeing, fitness trails, wonderful shelters and a popular sledding hill make the park a true urban oasis for outdoor enthusiasts.



Virginia Gordon

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Apple Ridge Playground

\$150,000

New UTV for Trails

\$30,000

Replace Shelter Roofs

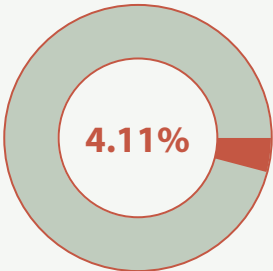
\$20,000

SHARON WOODS METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

Number of Employees *

- FULL-TIME
10
- PART-TIME
7
- SEASONAL
4

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$1,059,547
Operating Costs	\$197,817
TOTAL	\$1,257,364

Park Attendance (2024) **904,370**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Slate Run Metro Park & Living Historical Farm / Chestnut Ridge Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

The 1,705-acre Slate Run Metro Park provides critical species habitat. Northern bobwhite quail were reintroduced here and sandhill cranes nest in the 156-acre wetland.

Go back in time at the Living Historical Farm for an authentic view of farm life in the 1880s, with a barnyard of animals and a restored farmhouse. Nearby Chestnut Ridge Metro Park has the first ridge in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, with diverse woodland beauty and a 9-mile Mountain Bike Trail.



Wanda Bruntz

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Playground
Improvements
\$40,000

Zero Turn Mower
\$17,500

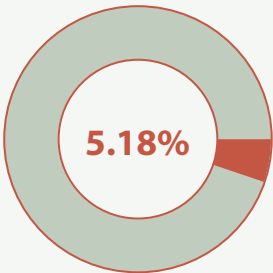
Replace Farm House
Porches
\$10,000

SLATE RUN METRO PARK & LIVING HISTORICAL FARM / CHESTNUT RIDGE METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
11
PART-TIME
12
SEASONAL
3

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$1,402,698
Operating Costs	\$180,990
TOTAL	\$1,583,688

Park Attendance (2024)	569,400
Slate Run (incl. Farm)	352,410
Chestnut Ridge	201,255

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Three Creeks Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Three Creeks Metro Park is named for the confluence of the Alum, Big Walnut and Blacklick Creeks. Owls, great blue herons and more than 100 other species of birds have been sighted. Guests may also catch a glimpse of beaver, mink, coyote and deer.

The 1,100-acre park is a partnership with the City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department. Beyond connecting waterways, more than 40 miles of Greenway Trails converge at the park to connect people across central Ohio.



Tom Harvey

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Plate Compactor
\$3,500

Grill Replacements
\$2,000

Pollinator Plants
\$800

THREE CREEKS METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

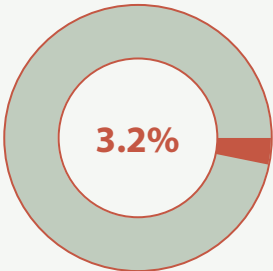
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
8

PART-TIME
4

SEASONAL
1

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$857,134
Operating Costs	\$120,587
TOTAL	\$977,721

Park Attendance (2024) **439,410**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Walnut Woods Metro Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS

Walnut Woods Metro Park features 1,455 acres of woodlands, fields and wetlands, bordered by Walnut Creek to the north. The Tall Pines Area features dramatic stands of pines and sweetgum trees, and the Buckeye Area has long rows of old nursery trees such as serviceberry, crab apple and red maples. A sledding hill, picnic areas and playgrounds make it family-friendly. Walnut Woods may also be a dog’s best friend, with separate dog parks for large and small dogs.



Mindi McConnell

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Trails Aggregate
\$20,000

Shelter Roofs
\$12,000

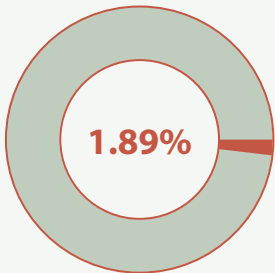
Dump Trailer
\$7,500

WALNUT WOODS METRO PARK AT A GLANCE

Number of Employees *

- FULL-TIME
4
- PART-TIME
5
- SEASONAL
2

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Park Budget

Personnel	\$460,321
Operating Costs	\$116,770
TOTAL	\$577,091

Park Attendance (2024) **333,540**

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Education & Outdoor Adventure

HIGHLIGHTS

Metro Parks are dynamic outdoor classrooms and exciting places for active learners of all ages. Our programs engage people in hands-on experiences that promote appreciation and understanding of our area’s great cultural and natural resources.

Metro Parks Outdoor Adventure provides hands-on experiences, expanding your love of the outdoors and the natural resources we strive to protect each day. Perfect for all skill levels, from the novice to the seasoned pro, our team will be there each step of the way to help as you dip your paddle into the creek, climb a rock wall or load up your pack for overnight camping.



Fred Miller

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Playground Equipment

\$10,000

Senior Programs

\$8,000

Winter Hikes

\$2,000

METRO PARKS EDUCATION & OUTDOOR ADVENTURE AT A GLANCE

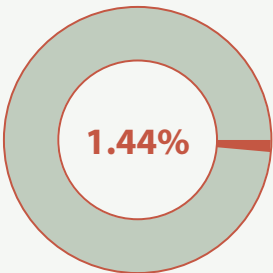
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
3

PART-TIME
3

SEASONAL
5

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$364,428
Operating Costs	\$75,005
TOTAL	\$439,433

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Summer Camp

HIGHLIGHTS

Metro Parks Summer Camp is about fun and friends while providing lessons about the natural world for more than 1,500 young campers every summer.

Each Spring, Metro Parks hires the seasonal camp team members needed to manage the programs for summer campers. Whether a young animal scientist investigating backyard critters, getting wet feet while fishing or learning outdoor skills, campers have summer fun while taking home lessons of wildlife and natural preservation for a lifetime.



2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Camp Supplies

\$12,000

Special Events

\$7,000

Camp Counselor Uniforms

\$1,500

METRO PARKS SUMMER CAMP AT A GLANCE

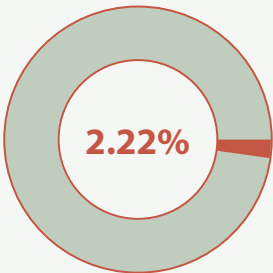
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
3

PART-TIME
0

SEASONAL
30

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$591,400
Operating Costs	\$87,945
TOTAL	\$679,345

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Resource Management

HIGHLIGHTS

Keeping our natural spaces truly natural within a large urban environment requires the specialized knowledge, training and skills found in our Resource Management professionals.

Successional mowing and controlled burns help native flora to stay dominant in our prairies and meadows, while inhibiting invasive species. Wildlife management tasks to control species health and populations include surveys of activity, water quality and chemistry monitoring. Species reintroductions also require specialized care, whether it be tiny frogs or huge bison.



Jack Rockwood

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

H2Ohio Projects

\$966,000

Fish Stocking

\$10,000

Boom Sprayer

\$2,200

METRO PARKS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

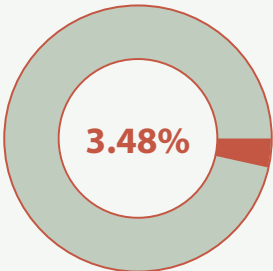
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
8

PART-TIME
0

SEASONAL
2

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$806,954
Operating Costs	\$258,780
TOTAL	\$1,065,734

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Roving Crew

HIGHLIGHTS

The Metro Parks Roving Crew is a group of skilled trades workers and laborers that handle a wide variety of specialty construction, renovation and repair projects that are best suited for in-house professionals.

While Metro Parks regularly contracts out for major construction projects, the Roving Crew creates value by building decks and other structures, using earth-moving equipment to build wetlands, repairing and resurfacing trails and renovating interior work spaces, among other projects.



Virginia Gordon

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Dump Truck
\$180,000

Tools and Equipment
\$7,000

Employee Certifications
\$225

METRO PARKS ROVING CREW AT A GLANCE

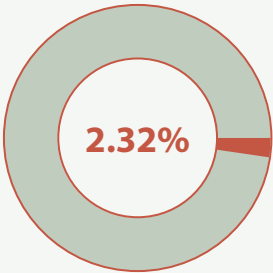
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
7

PART-TIME
0

SEASONAL
0

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$665,735
Operating Costs	\$45,230
TOTAL	\$710,965

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Administration

HIGHLIGHTS

Providing direction and coordination among our many parks and programs across central Ohio is a primary function of our Administration. Keeping the Board of Park Commissioners updated on both current and planned activities is a priority at monthly board meetings.

Administration also interacts with outside agencies and partners such as the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) and the Nature Conservancy to promote and grow our offerings. Peer reviews and certifications with local, state and national parks organizations also helps to ensure efficient and effective management.



2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Community Support Projects

\$75,000

Audubon Center Utilities

\$38,800

HQ Furniture and Equipment

\$3,000

METRO PARKS ADMINISTRATION AT A GLANCE

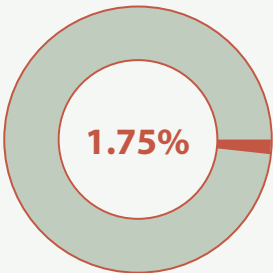
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
1

PART-TIME
0

SEASONAL
0

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$240,772
Operating Costs	\$295,500
TOTAL	\$536,272

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Operations

HIGHLIGHTS

Metro Parks Operations helps maintain high standards of excellence by taking the lead in areas such as visitor service, programming, land acquisition, development and equipment. This team also helps keep construction and renovation projects on track, and actively reviews the budget request of each park annually.

Under the Operations team, the Columbus City Schools Intern Initiative (CSI) offers summer jobs and mentoring for high school students. Many interns find a newfound respect for nature and have often been hired to positions within the parks.



Liz Christian

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Security Cameras

\$100,000

Radios

\$30,000

Drone

\$10,000

METRO PARKS OPERATIONS AT A GLANCE

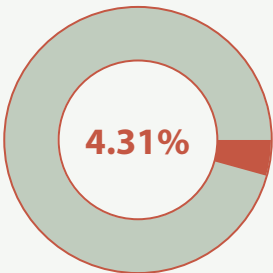
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
13

PART-TIME
1

SEASONAL
16

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$1,043,344
Operating Costs	\$275,370
TOTAL	\$1,318,714

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Planning & Design

HIGHLIGHTS

Creating a vision for the future of Metro Parks is a key mission for our Planning & Design section. By working with architects, landscape architects, contractors and park team members, Metro Parks is able to plan, design and construct park facilities that preserve nature and provide positive outdoor spaces for our guests to experience and enjoy.

Other critical tasks include land acquisition, applying for state and federal grants, plus bidding and construction management for many of the park district’s complex projects.



Liz Christian

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Small Truck
\$40,000

Engineering and GIS
Support
\$8,000

Project Consultants
\$2,000

METRO PARKS PLANNING & DESIGN GROUP AT A GLANCE

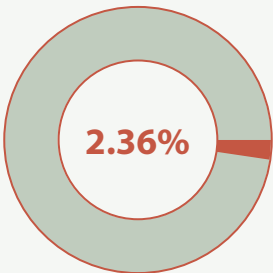
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
6

PART-TIME
0

SEASONAL
2

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$699,768
Operating Costs	\$23,460
TOTAL	\$723,228

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Finance

HIGHLIGHTS

Using modern software, Metro Parks Finance manages daily banking, accounting, purchasing, payroll and investment functions, to serve all our guests and central Ohio residents.

Through monthly board resolutions and reports, annual budgets, regular audits and the posting of this information to our website, accountability and transparency are maintained. Free of long-term debt and with the lowest tax rate of any major park district in Ohio, the finances of Metro Parks demonstrate value and efficiency.



Virginia Gordon

2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

District Insurance

\$299,000

Audit Services

\$35,731

Treasury Management

\$10,800

METRO PARKS FINANCE AT A GLANCE

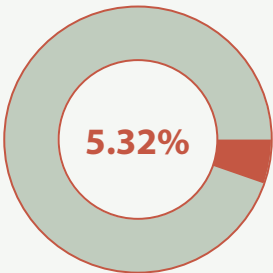
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
5

PART-TIME
0

SEASONAL
0

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$581,160
Operating Costs	\$1,046,891
TOTAL	\$1,628,051

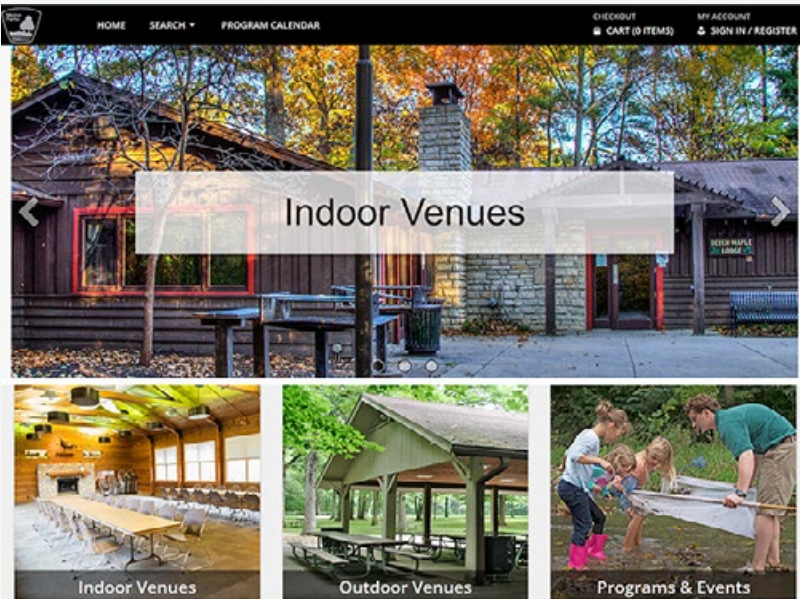
* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Information Technology

HIGHLIGHTS

Information Technology (IT) is increasingly important. Our IT team is trained to handle a wide variety of technology challenges, from desktop support and IT security to technology procurement and software management.

Metro Parks uses information technology extensively to manage finances, help guests make reservations for reservable venues, book Blacklick Woods Golf Course tee times and interact on social media. Improvements are also underway for expanded IT connectivity through fiber-optic systems.



2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

District Software and Support

\$129,600

District Connectivity

\$10,000

PCs and IT Equipment

\$6,000

METRO PARKS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AT A GLANCE

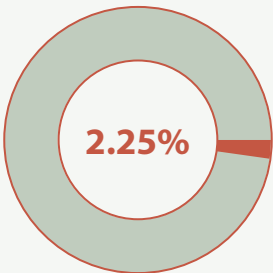
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
4

PART-TIME
0

SEASONAL
6

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$295,401
Operating Costs	\$394,038
TOTAL	\$689,439

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Human Resources

HIGHLIGHTS

Metro Parks Human Resources performs the critical role of ensuring the park district has dedicated and skilled team members who can properly manage our parks and programs. Team member interviews, training, policy updates, contract negotiations and performance recognition programs are among the numerous tasks performed.

The department also takes the lead on the annual surge of seasonal hiring, a major effort to find the Camp Counselors, Park Technicians, Park Rangers and other team members that keep Metro Parks running in the busy summer months.



2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Tuition Reimbursement for Employees

\$44,000

Fingerprinting Services

\$20,000

CPR Training and Supplies

\$2,400

METRO PARKS HUMAN RESOURCES AT A GLANCE

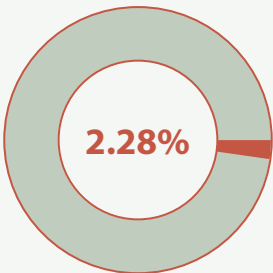
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
3

PART-TIME
0

SEASONAL
1

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$495,395
Operating Costs	\$202,357
TOTAL	\$697,752

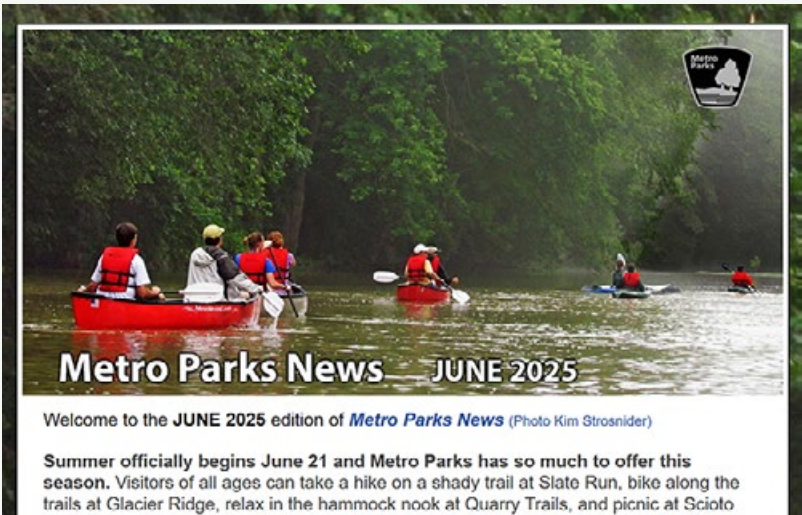
* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

Metro Parks Visitor Engagement

HIGHLIGHTS

Metro Parks Visitor Engagement manages communications and information, including via the Metro Parks website, social media, blogs, e-newsletters both for employees and public subscribers, and the park district’s intranet. It also designed and produced this annual report and budget document.

The department also handles all of Metro Parks’ paid advertising and promotion, manages reservations at numerous lodges and shelters across the park district, plays a prominent role in the organization of major park events, such as Bark Bash and Scioto Fest, and organizes programs for seniors.



2026 BUDGET ITEMS OF NOTE

Video Design Services

\$25,000

Mobile Mapping

\$10,000

Graphic Design Services

\$4,500

METRO PARKS VISITOR ENGAGEMENT AT A GLANCE

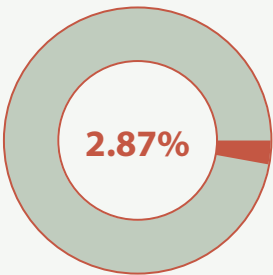
Number of Employees *

FULL-TIME
6

PART-TIME
0

SEASONAL
0

Percentage of Total Budget



2026 Operating Budget

Personnel	\$551,047
Operating Costs	\$325,850
TOTAL	\$876,897

* The full-time, part-time and seasonal numbers represent the estimated peak of employment, typically in the summer

RETURN ON INVESTMENT



Value of Metro Parks



Liz Christian

The benefits of parks are well-known and numerous: fresh air, exercise, stress-relief, clean water, species protection, outlets for youth and a source of civic pride are just some of the benefits. But how efficiently does Metro Parks provide those benefits? By comparing Metro Parks to other park districts and county agencies, the value becomes clear.

Metro Parks has the lowest voted tax rate of any major park district in Ohio. Among Franklin County agencies, Metro Parks has the second-lowest tax burden. (see Levy Rates tables on following pages)

Metro Parks also makes significant efforts to bring the parks experience to those who may have physical limitations. For instance, our Canopy Walk at Blacklick Woods has elevator access and a wide boardwalk amidst the treetops, bringing nature within easy reach for those with mobility issues. Also, our inclusive playground at Blendon Woods is specifically designed for disabled individuals who may not otherwise have access to recreation.

Furthermore, Metro Parks is always prepared for unforeseen spikes in attendance, as evidenced by the nearly 3.5 million additional visitors who found respite in our parks in 2020.

Levy Rates comparison

Columbus & Franklin County Metropolitan Park District
ranking among large Ohio Park Districts

COUNTY	MAJOR CITY	PARK DISTRICT	VOTED TAX RATE
LUCAS	TOLEDO	METROPARKS TOLDEO	4.30
MONTGOMERY	DAYTON	FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS	3.00
CUYAHOGA	CLEVELAND	CLEVELAND METROPARKS	2.75
SUMMIT	AKRON	SUMMIT METROPARKS	2.00
MAHONING	YOUNGSTOWN	MILL CREEK METROPARKS	2.00
HAMILTON	CINCINNATI	GREAT PARKS OF HAMILTON COUNTY	1.98
STARK	CANTON	STARK PARKS	1.00
FRANKLIN	COLUMBUS	METRO PARKS	0.95

- MetroParks Toledo

Five Rivers Metro Parks

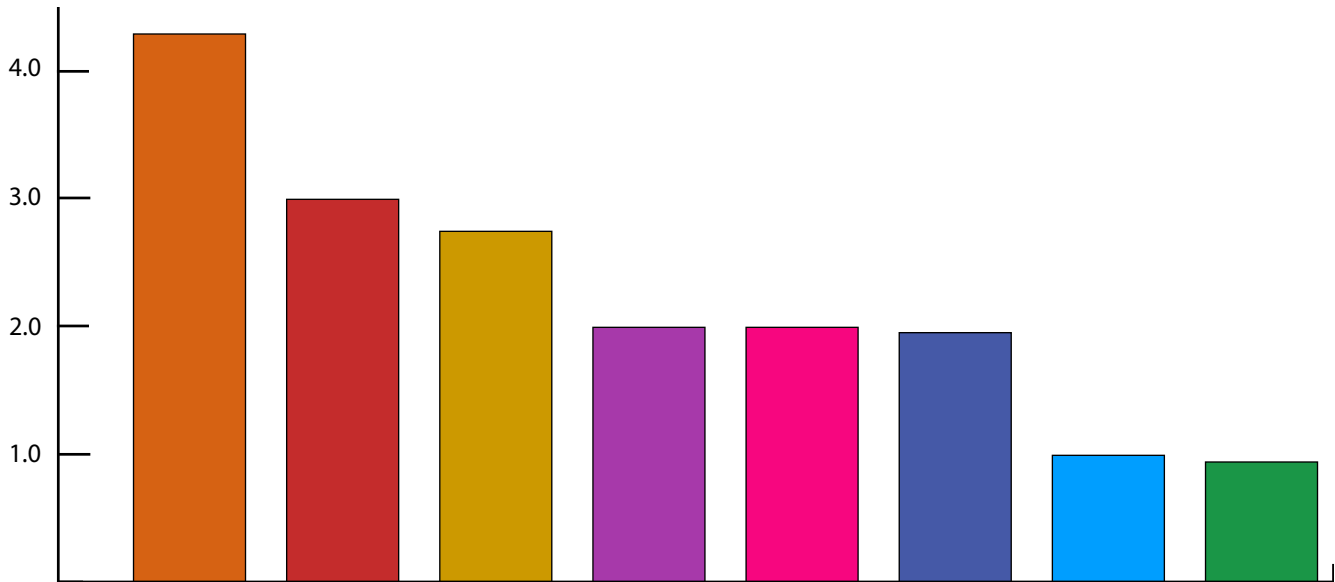
Cleveland Metroparks

Summit MetroParks
- Mill Creek Metro Parks

Great Parks of Hamilton County

Stark Parks

Columbus & Franklin County Metro Parks

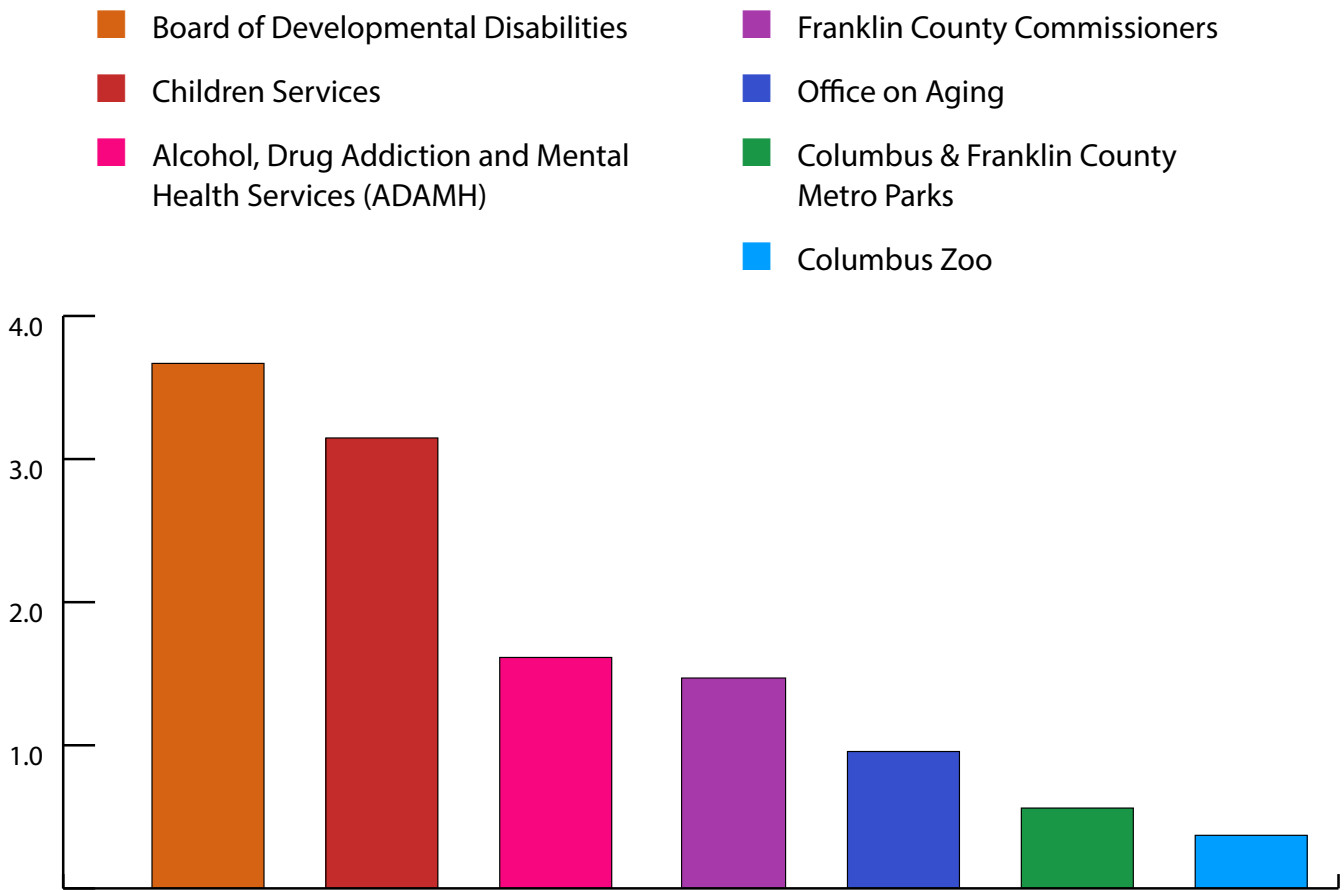


Levy Rates comparison

Columbus & Franklin County Metropolitan Park District
ranking among Franklin County agencies

AGENCY	TAX RATE (2024 Residential Tax Rate in Millage)
BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES	3.670638
CHILDREN SERVICES	3.147408
ALCOHOL, DRUG ADDICTION & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (ADAMH)	1.613192
FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS	1.470000
OFFICE ON AGING	0.918308
COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT *	0.559478
COLUMBUS ZOO	0.365786

* Metro Parks costs about \$27.50 annually for every \$100,000 of home market value



Metro Parks Volunteers



Liz Christian



John Nixon

Volunteers have long been a valuable resource for Metro Parks. Hundreds of volunteers give their time, skills and energy to preserve and enhance the parks for all to enjoy.

Horticultural volunteers at Inniswood Metro Gardens have a proud history of exemplary care for these pristine gardens, performing flowerbed maintenance and grounds upkeep.

Trail volunteers help keep our extensive network of trails safe for guests and often lend a hand with some of our bigger seasonal events, such as Winter Hikes, helping with parking and trail guiding.

Volunteers also help our Resource Management team through plantings, land management tasks and monitoring wildlife. Monitoring precious species from bluebirds and butterflies to bats and bald eagles, the information collected by volunteers helps Metro Parks effectively manage wildlife. Other volunteers assist in nature centers and with educational programming.

In the many ways they lend a helping hand, volunteers are a critical part of the Metro Parks team.



Allison Shaw

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

982 volunteers served 35,002 combined hours in 2024, equaling a single person working full-time for nearly 17 years!

To learn more about volunteering at Metro Parks, visit metroparks.net

FINANCIALS & BUDGET REQUEST



Financial Summary 2026

Combined General, Capital & Golf Course Funds

ESTIMATED ENDING CASH BALANCE – 12/31/2025		\$24,108,771
Add New Revenues		\$39,682,161
Total Available Cash Resources		\$63,790,932
Less: Budgeted Expenditures		
Salaries and Benefits (excluding Blacklick Woods Golf Course)	\$22,987,468	
Operating and Administrative	\$7,743,801	
 Blacklick Woods Golf Course Fund		
Salaries and Benefits	\$1,013,550	
Operating Expenditures	\$671,950	
Total Operating Expenditures	\$32,416,769	
 Capital Improvements and Land Acquisition		
Capital Improvement Projects	\$8,395,000	
Land Acquisition	\$2,240,000	
Total Capital Improvement Projects and Land Acquisition	\$10,635,000	
 Total Budgeted Expenditures		\$43,051,769
ESTIMATED 12/31/2026 CASH BALANCE *		\$20,739,163

* (if all Appropriations are fully expended)

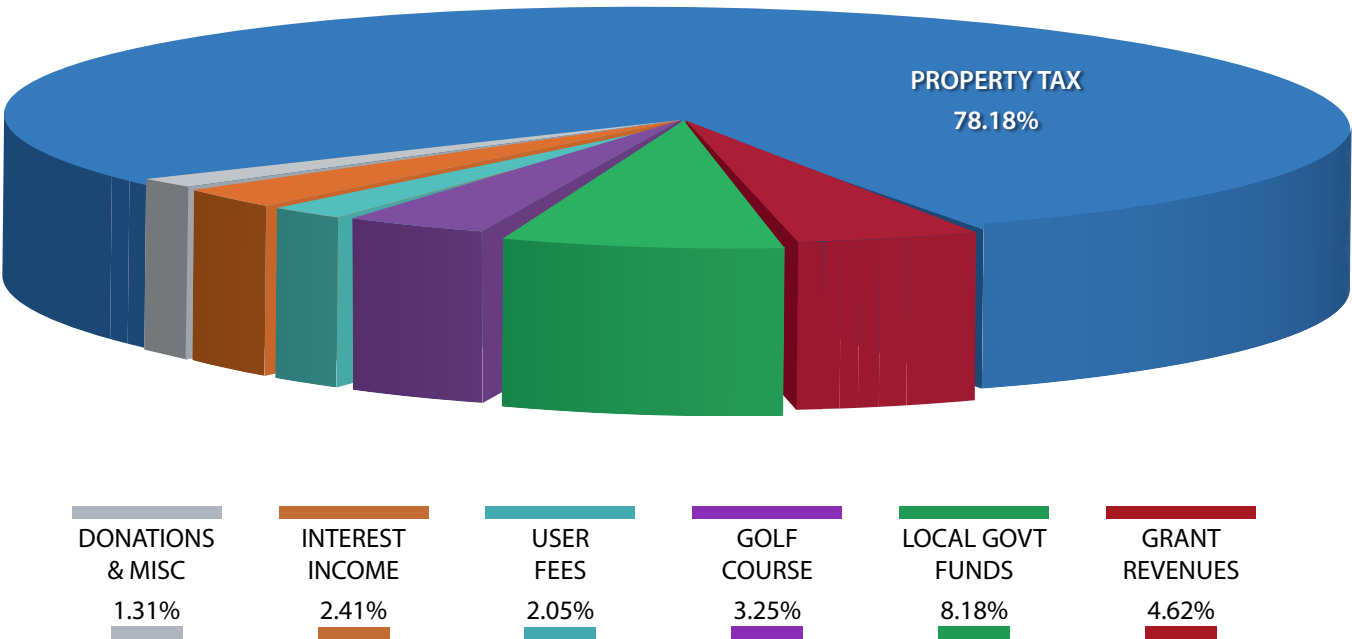
Projected changes in 2026 Fund Balances (page 1 of 2)

	FUND 27 GENERAL FUND	FUND 29 CAPITAL FUND	FUND 30 GOLF COURSE FUND	ALL FUNDS
PROJECTED NEW REVENUE				
Public Sources:				
Tax Levy	31,025,107	-	-	31,025,107
LGF (Local Govt Funds)	3,247,770	-	-	3,247,770
Grants	24,000	1,810,000	-	1,834,000
TOTAL Public Sources	34,296,877	1,810,000	-	36,106,877
Income from Operational Sources				
Blacklick Woods Golf Course	-	-	1,289,800	1,289,800
Reservations Fees, Special Events & Concessions	508,000	-	-	508,000
Interpretive Programs	200,000	-	-	200,000
House & Land Rental	104,645	-	-	104,645
TOTAL Income from Operational Sources	812,645	-	1,289,800	2,102,445
Income from Investment	767,037	188,302	-	955,339
Donations & Bequests	1,000	-	-	1,000
Miscellaneous Receipts (settlements, refunds, salvage sale)	136,500	380,000	-	516,500
TOTAL 2026 PROJECTED REVENUES	36,014,059	2,378,302	1,289,800	39,682,161

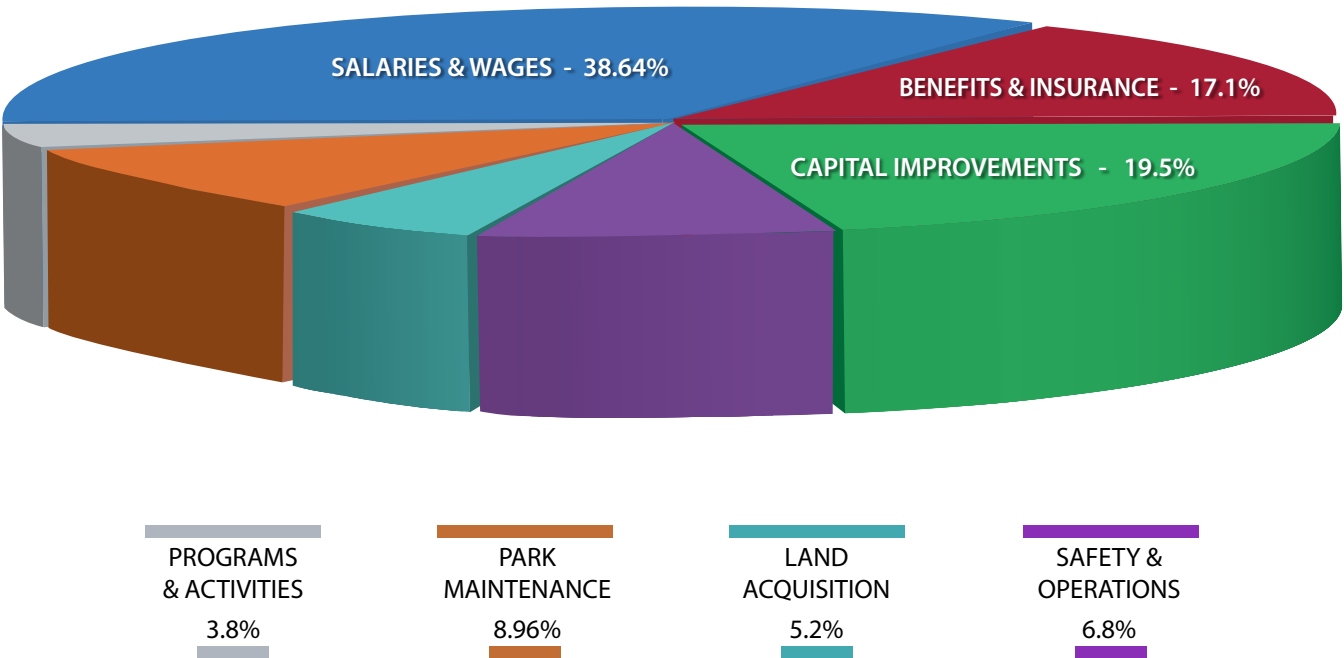
Projected changes in 2026 Fund Balances (page 2 of 2)

	FUND 27 GENERAL FUND	FUND 29 CAPITAL FUND	FUND 30 GOLF COURSE FUND	ALL FUNDS
Projected New Revenues (from previous page)	36,014,059	2,378,302	1,289,800	39,682,161
PROJECTED EXPENDITURES				
Salaries & Benefits				
Salaries	15,902,323	-	733,699	16,636,021
Fringe Benefits	4,487,929	-	165,109	4,653,037
PERS	2,369,432	-	104,206	2,473,638
Medicare	227,784	-	10,537	238,321
TOTAL Salaries & Benefits	22,987,468	-	1,013,550	24,001,018
Operating Expenditures				
Admin	1,927,339	-	8,100	1,935,439
Education/Interpretive	392,350	-	-	392,350
Park Maintenance	3,298,572	-	67,000	3,365,572
Promotion	334,675	-	-	334,675
Rental Properties	151,868	-	-	151,868
Natural Resource Management	308,375	-	-	308,375
Revenue Programs	119,962	-	596,850	716,812
Safety & Law Enforcement	503,710	-	-	503,710
Special Facilities	221,950	-	-	221,950
Renovations	485,000	-	-	485,000
TOTAL Operating Expenditures	7,743,801	-	671,950	8,415,751
Capital Improvement Projects	-	8,395,000	-	8,395,000
Land Acquisition	-	2,240,000	-	2,240,000
TOTAL 2026 PROJECTED EXPENDITURES	30,731,269	10,635,000	1,685,500	43,051,769
CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES	5,282,791	(8,256,698)	(395,700)	(3,369,607)
Projected Balance 12/31/2026	18,570,035	4,709,572	829,165	24,108,771
Loan Proceeds	-	-	-	-
Loan Payments	-	-	-	-
Transfer to / (from) Fund	(7,000,000)	7,000,000	-	-
ESTIMATED BALANCE 12/31/2025	16,852,825	3,452,874	433,465	20,739,164

2026 Revenues



2026 Expenditures



Summary of Revenues

Metro Parks receives revenue from multiple sources, which can be generally classified under three categories: public sources such as property tax levies and governmental grants; operational fees such as Blacklick Woods Golf Course revenues and fees for programs; and other sources such as donations and interest income. Total new revenue estimated for 2026 for Funds 27, 29 and 30 is \$39,682,161. This amount does not include any carryover cash at year-end 2025. An explanation of the primary sources of revenue is below.

PUBLIC SOURCES

Property Tax Levy

The 0.95 millage (mill) property tax levy is the primary source of revenue for Metro Parks. Approved by Franklin County voters in November 2018 this levy is in place through 2029. Revenue is projected at \$31,025,107 for 2026, per official estimates provided by the Franklin County Auditor's Office.

Local Government Fund

This allocation from the State of Ohio to Franklin County is determined by formula per the Ohio Revised Code. Metro Parks in turn receives 5.5% of the total Franklin County allocation. The amount budgeted to be received in 2026 is \$3,247,770, per official estimates from the State of Ohio.

Governmental Grants

Metro Parks projects to receive \$1,834,000 in grants for 2026, as of the date of the budget submission. These funds are allocated primarily to the Capital Improvements and Land Acquisition Fund (Fund 29). Should additional grant funding become available in 2026, the budget can be amended accordingly.

OPERATIONAL FEES

Golf Course receipts generated from the operation of the Blacklick Woods Golf Course include: greens fees, cart rentals, food and beverage sales and the operation of the Eagleview and the Banquet Room reservable venues. Total revenues for the Golf Course are projected at \$1,289,800 for 2026.

Metro Parks has several other fee-based revenue sources, including:

- Reservable venue fees to cover the cost of maintaining shelters, lodges and meeting rooms
- Special Event fees for events in the parks for which participants pay a fee
- Interpretive receipts to cover costs of providing nature education presentations
- Rental income for various properties and agricultural lease payments

Total General Fund fee-based revenues for 2026 are projected at \$812,645.

Summary of Revenues (continued)

OTHER SOURCES

Investment Income

Investment income is projected at \$955,339 for 2026. To maximize available returns and liquidity, Metro Parks will continue to request tax advances and make deposits in an expeditious manner.

Miscellaneous

Other revenues of an unpredictable nature include, but are not limited to: court fines, damage settlements, refunds on prior year payments of property taxes, reimbursements, and sales of assets.

Donations and Bequests

Metro Parks receives donations of varying amounts from many sources, with various levels of restrictions upon those receipts. Unrestricted donations are recorded in the General Fund.

Special Revenue Funds

Four special revenue funds have been established in honor of Allen F Beck, J C Hambleton, E S Thomas, and Marian K and Albert H Thomas, which are in the Metro Parks Treasury. The Beck Fund and the Marian K and Albert H Thomas Funds are expendable (ie, principal and earnings are expendable), while the other two funds are classified as non-expendable (only interest earned on the principal may be spent).

Inniswood Fund of Metro Parks

Additionally, the Columbus Foundation manages the investment of assets of the Inniswood Fund of Metro Parks. The focus of this fund is to support the cost of capital improvements and the maintenance of the Inniswood Metro Gardens.



Annette Boose

Revenues and Combined Fund Balances (page 1 of 2)

	2024 Actual	2025 Projected	2025 Budget	2026 Budget	2026 Budget v 2025 Budget	% Change
NEW REVENUES: GOVT (27, 29 and 30) FUNDS						
Public Sources:						
Property Tax Levy – 0.95 millage (mill)	30,416,219	30,703,574	31,023,384	31,025,107	1,723	0.01 %
LGF (Local Govt Funds)	3,016,518	3,200,000	3,088,080	3,247,770	159,690	5.17 %
Grants	1,099,912	2,844,189	3,092,238	1,834,000	(1,258,238)	(40.69) %
TOTAL Public Sources	34,532,648	36,747,763	37,203,702	36,106,877	(1,096,825)	(2.95) %
Operational Sources						
Revenues from Blacklick Woods Golf Course Operations	1,713,996	1,638,772	1,650,300	1,289,800	(360,500)	(21.84) %
Revenues from Park Operations						
Reservations Fees, Special Events & Concessions	519,366	503,000	503,000	508,000	5,000	0.99 %
Interpretive Programs	197,548	196,000	180,000	200,000	20,000	11.11 %
House & Land Rental	141,803	140,000	140,000	104,645	(35,355)	(25.25) %
TOTAL Income from Operational Sources	2,572,713	2,477,772	2,473,300	2,102,445	(10,355)	(14.99) %
Governmental Partnership Contributions	–	–	–	–	–	–
Income from Investment	1,570,097	1,273,786	1,178,614	955,339	(223,275)	(18.94) %
Wetlands/Groundwater Credits	16,440	242,960	–	–		
Donations & Bequests	2,481	14,000	1,000	1,000	–	0 %
Miscellaneous Receipts (settlements, refunds, salvage sale)	138,148	254,231	187,500	516,500	329,000	175.47 %
TOTAL NEW REVENUES	38,832,527	41,010,511	41,044,116	39,682,161	(1,361,955)	(3.32) %

Revenues and Combined Fund Balances (page 2 of 2)

	2024 Actual	2025 Projected	2025 Budget	2026 Budget	2026 Budget v 2025 Budget	% Change
TOTAL NEW REVENUES (from previous page)	38,832,527	41,010,511	41,044,116	39,682,161	(1,361,955)	(3.32) %
Transfer from Columbus Foundation	-	196,000	111,000	-	(111,000)	- %
BEG Fund Balances	28,601,689	27,673,430	20,935,170	24,108,771	3,173,601	15.16 %
FUND BALANCES PLUS NEW REVENUES (exc. Interfund transfers)	67,434,216	68,879,942	62,090,286	63,790,932	1,811,646	2.74 %
Other Funds Prior Balance						
Expendable (Beck & Thomas)	628,033	703,013	659,874	776,142	116,268	17.62 %
Expendable (E.S. Thomas, Hambleton)	156,591	175,256	169,248	199,096	29,848	17.64 %
Non-Expendable (E.S. Thomas, Hambleton)	97,796	97,796	97,796	97,796	0	0 %
Columbus Foundation Inniswood Fund	377,457	195,161	281,406	195,161	(86,245)	(30.65) %
Plus: Current Year Projected Income	59,551	59,499	53,520	54,525	1,005	1.88 %
Plus: Donations & Bequests	47,800	54,668	45,000	48,500	3,500	7.78 %
GRAND TOTAL ALL FUNDS	68,801,443	70,148,136	63,397,129	65,162,152	1,765,022	2.78 %

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

Metro Parks carries no long-term debt, allowing revenues to be spent for parks rather than the interest and fees associated with borrowing.

Summary of Expenditures

Operating Expenses – Excluding Personnel and Capital Improvements

The materials and supplies, services, equipment and renovations portion of the budget includes all of the operating expenditures required to maintain the park district, exclusive of team member salary and benefits costs and those large dollar items classified as capital improvement projects.

The total 2026 budget for these items is \$8,415,751 of which \$7,743,801 is allocated to the General Fund (Fund 27) and \$671,950 to the Blacklick Woods Golf Course Fund (Fund 30).

Specifically, this portion of the budget contains: materials and supplies, contracted services, equipment, renovations, information technology items, community partnership expenses and other miscellaneous costs. These budget items are carefully reviewed annually during budget meetings with a focus on achieving the goals of Metro Parks.

Materials and supplies

The materials and supplies request includes: vehicle fuel, building and grounds maintenance materials, office supplies, uniform expenses, housekeeping items, educational supplies for programs, and minor equipment and tools for all of the park district's locations and programs. From road salt and grass seed to light bulbs and paint, this category captures all operating supplies costs.

Services

The services category includes: utilities, trash removal, vehicle maintenance, telephone and internet access, equipment rental and other necessary services. Whether a regular expense like the electricity bill or a special need such as rental equipment, this category captures required outside services items.

Equipment

Equipment purchases for 2026 are budgeted at \$1,143,790 to meet the needs of the park district, and will be approved by Resolution of the Board of Park Commissioners prior to purchase if the cost exceeds \$50,000. This category includes items such as trucks and grounds maintenance equipment along with safety items such as surveillance cameras and radio equipment. Page 66 details the equipment requests for 2026.

Renovations

Renovations for 2026 of \$485,000 are also incorporated into this portion of the budget to maintain, improve and expand the wide variety of facilities and structures across the park district.

Sample categories of renovation expenditures include:

- Improvements to buildings and venues such as roof repairs, painting and flooring
- Various replacement items such as outdoor recreation equipment and dog park improvements
- Trail, bridge and walkway repairs or improvements
- Landscaping and grounds improvements such as trees, parking lot repairs and signage

Summary of Expenditures (continued)

Information Technology

The expenditures of the Information Technology section are part of both the materials and supplies and contracted services categories for budgeting purposes, but were singled out in the budget process to maintain information systems that are integrated park district-wide, while meeting applicable security and compatibility standards. Software, hardware and technical support contracts are increasingly being budgeted within this budget center rather than at the park level.

Standards of Service

The 2026 budget reflects the continuing desire of Metro Parks to meet or exceed the existing standards of service to the community that we have established in terms of administration, maintenance, programming, customer service, law enforcement and natural resource management.



Frank Kozarich

A biker rides by Leaning Lena, one of the prominent landmarks in Clear Creek Metro Park.

Expenditures - Summary Table

	2025 Amended Budget *	2025 Projected Actual	2025 Original Budget	2026 Original Budget	2026 to 2025 % Change
FUNDS 27 & 29					
Personnel (Fund 27)					
Salaries (including merit increases)	15,221,355	14,768,061	15,221,355	15,902,323	4.47 %
Employee Benefits	4,296,758	3,924,182	4,296,758	4,487,929	4.45 %
PERS	2,252,582	2,186,374	2,252,582	2,369,432	5.19 %
Medicare	216,725	205,578	216,725	227,784	5.1 %
Personnel Subtotal	21,987,420	21,084,195	21,987,420	22,987,468	4.55 %
Park Operations & Admin (Fund 27)					
Admin	1,873,719	1,832,321	1,837,348	1,927,339	4.9 %
Education/Interpretive Operations	352,200	295,523	352,200	392,350	11.4 %
Park Maintenance	3,068,719	2,961,882	3,043,260	3,298,572	8.39 %
Promotion	352,435	255,405	349,675	334,675	(4.29) %
Rental Properties	166,868	197,665	166,868	151,868	(8.99) %
Natural Resource Management	535,879	464,105	471,875	308,375	(34.65) %
Revenue Programs	98,162	102,538	98,162	119,962	22.21 %
Safety & Law Enforcement	569,653	789,190	564,435	503,710	(10.76) %
Special Facilities	216,750	195,894	216,750	221,950	2.4 %
Renovations	568,881	449,078	559,300	485,000	(13.28) %
Park Operations & Admin Subtotal	7,803,266	7,543,600	7,659,873	7,743,801	1.1 %
Capital Improvement Projects (Fund 29)					
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	- %
Building Construction	1,239,566	1,371,945	125,000	220,000	76 %
Facility Improvements	1,490,141	1,621,799	755,000	190,000	(74.83) %
Natural Resource Improvements	945,000	200,000	945,000	1,256,000	32.91 %
Planning	168,944	836,626	-	-	- %
Site Improvements	8,671,184	7,090,194	6,978,000	6,719,000	(3.71) %
Utilities	227,845	-	50,000	10,000	(80) %
Other - Prior Year	-	62,369	-	-	- %
Capital Improvement Projects Subtotal	12,742,680	11,182,933	8,853,000	8,395,000	(5.17) %
Land Acquisition (Fund 29)	3,354,000	3,300,000	1,500,000	2,240,000	49.33 %
TOTAL EXPENDITURES – FUNDS 27 & 29	45,887,366	43,110,728	40,000,293	41,366,269	3.41 %
FUND 30 – BLACKCLICK WOODS GOLF COURSE					
Personnel (Fund 30)					
Salaries (including merit increases)	769,419	729,195	769,419	733,699	(4.64) %
Employee Benefits	153,301	181,352	153,301	165,109	7.7 %
PERS	106,319	100,940	106,319	104,206	(1.99) %
Medicare	11,012	9,989	11,012	10,537	(4.31) %
Subtotal	1,040,051	1,021,476	1,040,051	1,013,550	(2.55) %
Other Operating Costs (Fund 30)	661,230	638,966	661,230	671,950	1.62 %
TOTAL EXPENDITURES – FUND 30	1,701,281	1,660,443	1,701,281	1,685,500	(0.93) %
TOTAL EXPENDITURES – ALL FUNDS	47,588,647	44,771,170	41,701,574	43,051,769	3.24 %

* Includes carryover encumbrances from 2024 and any Board-approved appropriation adjustments in 2025

Metro Parks Team Members



Liz Christian



Virginia Gordon

The Human Resources (HR) Department is responsible for managing Metro Parks' most valuable assets: Our Amazing Employees. HR oversees the employee lifecycle, from the initial recruiting and onboarding process, all the way to retirement. Our main goal is to create and maintain a productive, rewarding and positive work environment that supports our community's needs, our employees' needs and Metro Parks' strategic goals. Some of the key responsibilities of the HR Department include talent acquisition, compensation and benefits, performance management and development, and employee relations and compliance.

In 2025 HR focused on updating policies, creating standardized training manuals, adding all positions to the applicant tracking and onboarding software (Neogov) and employee development. Employees are now active in the **U Matter**, the new Franklin County Learning Management System. This free system offers a wide range of benefits to staff and to taxpayers, as it enhances the learning process, streamlines training, and reduces costs.

Plans for 2026 include adding additional Metro Parks trainings to **U Matter** for greater staff development, and increasing templates and fillable forms on our Intranet (MetroLink), which will significantly reduce waste and administrative time. One of our team members will be completing the Society of Human Resources Certified Professional (SHRM-CP) examination, ensuring our practices align with the best standards. Team HR will also be conducting in-person training for all new managers on some of the following topics: evaluations, coaching, discipline, federal employment laws, and workers compensations and injury reports.



Virginia Gordon

Personnel Analysis

BUDGET vs BUDGET

	2026 Budget	2025 Budget	Budget % Change	Budget \$ Change
TOTAL PERSONNEL COSTS (Excluding new positions)	23,637,316	22,753,859	3.88 %	883,457
TOTAL PERSONNEL COSTS (Including new positions)	24,001,018	23,027,472	4.23 %	973,456

Notes:

The change incorporates several current budgeted vacancies

PROJECTED ACTUAL vs BUDGET

	2026 Proposed Budget	2025 Projected Actual	% Change #1	2025 Budget	% Change #2
PERSONNEL COSTS					
Staffing (FT & PT positions)					
Salaries	15,711,116	14,817,817	6.03 %	15,263,208	2.93 %
Health Care Benefits	4,500,113	3,968,143	13.41 %	4,298,708	4.69 %
PERS	2,473,638	2,287,314	8.15 %	2,358,901	4.86 %
Medicare	238,321	215,567	10.56 %	227,738	4.65 %
SALARIES & BENEFITS TOTAL	22,923,188	21,288,841	7.68 %	22,148,555	3.5 %
OTHER APPROPRIATIONS					
Merit	724,905	429,289	68.86 %	442,566	63.8 %
Uniform Allowances	50,000	50,150	(0.03) %	50,000	0 %
Claims-based Expenses					
Retirements *	150,000	200,000	(25) %	235,000	(36.17) %
Unemployment	5,000	1,000	500 %	10,000	(50) %
Workers Comp	147,924	136,391	8.46 %	141,351	4.65 %
OTHER APPROPRIATIONS TOTAL	1,077,829	816,830	31.95 %	878,917	22.63 %
TOTAL PERSONNEL COSTS	24,001,018	22,105,671	8.57 %	23,027,472	4.23 %

Notes:

* Accrued vacation / sick leave payments for new retirees

1 Percentage change is from the 2026 Proposed Budget to the 2025 Projected Actual

2 Percentage change is from the 2026 Proposed Budget to the 2025 Budget

Capital Improvement Program

The total amount allocated to the 2026 Capital Improvements Program is \$10,635,000. Figures associated with each project are the amount of park district funds that will be initially allocated. As with all capital projects and land acquisition efforts, supporting funds through grants or other means will be sought.

Land Acquisition (\$2,240,000)

To continue the growth of Metro Parks, these funds are allocated for strategic land acquisition as opportunities arise. With more than 45 square miles of parkland, Metro Parks is a major landholder and continuously strives to preserve more natural areas. As in years past, grant opportunities will be pursued to support land acquisition. Many of Metro Parks' land purchases are either partially or fully reimbursable through a variety of state programs.

Resource Management Projects (\$1,256,000)

In 2026, H²O Ohio wetland development and restoration projects at Prairie Oaks and Glacier Ridge, along with district-wide reforestation and invasive species removal are the focus for our Resource Management section. Recent successes include groundwater mitigation credit programs, wherein Metro Parks receives financial support for wetlands development which offset development impacts within designated watersheds.

District-wide Paving of Roadways and Parking Lots (\$1,000,000)

These funds will be used to improve and repair existing roadways and parking lots at Sharon Woods, Inniswood, Three Creeks, Highbanks, and Pickerington Ponds. In 2025, work projects were accomplished at the Blacklick Woods Golf Course and Sharon Woods, Scioto Audubon and Three Creeks.

Homestead Metro Park Improvements (\$1,000,000)

These funds will result in a major facelift to Homestead. For 2026, improvements are planned for the park playgrounds, maintenance shop, lakeside shelter, wetlands, restrooms and the connection to the Heritage Trail. In 2025, work was initiated on roadways and parking lots.

Great Southern Park Development (\$1,000,000)

As one of our newest parks on the southside of Columbus, Great Southern features new trails, facilities and wetlands. For 2026, further trail and wetlands development is planned along with other park amenities. In 2025, accomplishments included a new paved trail, an obstacle course installation, overlook areas, an entrance gate and a paved parking lot.

District-wide Trail Paving (\$900,000)

This includes resurfacing, trail improvements and culvert work at Rocky Fork, Blendon Woods, Sharon Woods, Chestnut Ridge, Slate Run, Scioto Audubon and Walnut Woods. In 2025, trails were improved on the Greenway Trails and at Glacier Ridge, Prairie Oaks and Sharon Woods Metro Parks, and Inniswood Metro Gardens.

Quarry Trails Park Development (\$840,000)

These funds will further improve several amenities at Quarry Trails Metro Park. Specific projects include a precast restroom at the northern section of the park, new playgrounds, trail and roadway improvements. Achievements for 2025 included completion of a new office, restroom construction, a viewing deck, playgrounds and kayak area improvements.

Bridge Replacements (\$700,000)

At Highbanks, a new Arch bridge over the Dripping Rock Trail is planned. Also, a replacement bridge is needed at Clear Creek. Bridge work in 2025 included the truss bridge at Quarry Trails, a swinging bridge at Scioto Grove and extensive work at Sharon Woods.

Bank Run Facility Development (\$600,000)

Extensive efforts will continue to develop this newly acquired park. Among the improvements for 2026 are development of the quarry and maintenance area. Extensive improvements in 2025 included the grand shelter, Ingram building, restrooms at the Optimus Lodge, utilities, a large recreational slide, trails and parking lot improvements.

District-wide Recreational Improvements (\$546,000)

To improve visitor access and park enjoyment, projects include playground improvements at Highbanks, Sharon Woods, Slate Run, Scioto Audubon, Blendon Woods, Battelle Darby Creek, and Prairie Oaks. Playgrounds were added or improved in 2025 at Quarry Trails, Highbanks and Three Creeks.

District-wide Improvements (\$343,000)

This includes security cameras and technology district-wide, nature center improvements at Battelle Darby Creek, fencing at Sharon Woods, shelter improvements at Prairie Oaks and maintenance shop and restroom improvements at Pickerington Ponds. In 2025, a renovated observation deck at Glacier Ridge, a renovated rose trellis at Inniswood Metro Gardens, and a wetlands access area at Rocky Fork are among the major improvements.

New Facilities (\$150,000)

For 2026, this includes a new cold storage building at Blacklick Woods to protect, store and maintain vehicles and heavy equipment and a precast restroom at the Prairie Oaks Darby Bend Lakes area. In 2025, new facilities included a nature center at Blendon Woods, a climbing wall at Scioto Audubon, new docks at Prairie Oaks, and new interpretive displays at Blacklick Woods and Blendon Woods.

District-wide demolition (\$50,000)

To properly demolish park structures on an as-needed basis, these being structures that are no longer of value to the district, whether due to damage, age or the changing needs of a park. Multiple dilapidated structures were properly demolished in 2025.

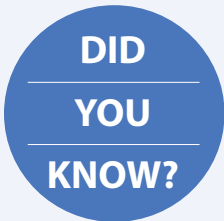
District-wide fiber connectivity (\$10,000)

These funds are allocated to expansion of a modern fiber infrastructure to additional parks to increase connectivity, efficiency and security of communications, per a Levy Promise from the 2018 levy campaign. In 2025, fiber connectivity was completed across several locations at Battelle Darby Creek and to a rentable lodge at Sharon Woods. Service improvements were also undertaken at Highbanks, Blacklick Woods and Slate Run Living Historical Farm.

Equipment Budget Highlights

Below is the recommended 2026 equipment budget, with items equal to or exceeding \$40,000 individually listed. An additional \$371,790 is allocated for equipment purchases below \$40,000 across all parks. Purchases over \$50,000 require Board of Commissioners approval by resolution.

Metro Park or Department	Item Description	Budgeted Cost
Roving Crew	District Dump Truck	\$180,000
Battelle Darby Creek	Maintenance Truck with Plow	\$60,000
Glacier Ridge	Expanded Cab Maintenance Truck	\$60,000
Bank Run	Maintenance Truck with Plow	\$60,000
Great Southern	Maintenance Truck with Plow	\$60,000
Blacklick Woods Golf Courses	Eight Golf Carts	\$55,000
Battelle Darby Creek	Ranger Vehicle with Light Bar	\$45,000
Clear Creek	Ranger Vehicle with Light Bar	\$45,000
Pickerington Ponds	Ranger Vehicle with Light Bar	\$45,000
Sharon Woods	Replace Ranger Truck	\$42,000
Highbanks	Replace Ranger Vehicle	\$40,000
Quarry Trails	Toro Workman	\$40,000
Planning & Design	Truck for Site Visits	\$40,000
Total for above items		\$772,000
Items below \$40,000	Includes: utility vehicles, lawn mowers, radios, furniture, playground equipment, security equipment, trailers, IT equipment, power tools and equipment, patrol bikes and recreational equipment.	\$371,790
Multiple Park locations		
Total 2026 Equipment Budget		\$1,143,790



Metro Parks total land area is 28,920 acres, bigger than New Albany, Hilliard, Groveport, Bexley and Grandview combined!

Blacklick Woods Golf Course

2026 Golf Course Budget & Projected Income

Revenues

Projected at \$1,289,800 for 2026, Blacklick Woods Golf Course revenues consist of greens fees, range rentals, reservable venue rentals, merchandise sales, food and beverage items.

Expenditures

Projected at \$1,685,500 for 2026, expenditures include all salaries and benefits costs, general operating and maintenance costs, utilities and equipment expenses.

	2025 Budget	2025 Projected	2026 Budget
REVENUES			
Greens fees, cart rentals, facility rentals, merchandise sales, etc.	1,650,300	1,638,772	1,289,800
EXPENDITURES			
Personnel			
Salaries	769,419	729,195	733,699
Benefits, PERS, Medicare	270,632	292,281	279,851
Total Personnel Costs	1,040,051	1,021,476	1,013,550
Operating Costs (non-personnel)	661,230	638,966	671,950
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	1,701,281	1,660,443	1,685,500
NET INCOME	(50,981)	(21,671)	(395,700)
BEGINNING YEAR FUND BALANCE	850,835	850,835	829,165
TRANSFER IN FROM GENERAL FUND *	0	0	0
YEAR-END FUND BALANCE	799,854	829,165	433,465

* Transfers to the Golf Course will only be made as necessary for cash flow purposes

RESOLUTION No. 6286

RELATIVE TO THE ADOPTION OF THE 2026 BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR 2026

WHEREAS, The Board of Park Commissioners of the Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District has reviewed the estimated receipts and projected expenditures of the Park District for the period January 1, 2026 through December 31, 2026; and

WHEREAS, It is necessary that this Park Board adopt a budget and appropriate funds before funds can be disbursed in 2026; Now, Therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That this Board hereby adopts the following budget for 2026 for Funds 27, 29, and 30 and appropriates the amounts listed below to the various funds; and authorizes the Finance Director and Treasurer to initiate Inter Fund transfers as needed during 2026 within the appropriated amounts listed herein; and determines that the amounts shown are the maximum allowable expenditures during 2026 and may be expended only as cash receipts are available;

FUND 27	
Personnel	\$22,987,468
Non-Personnel	\$7,743,801
Inter Fund Transfer to Fund 29	\$7,000,000
FUND 27 Appropriation	
	\$37,731,269
FUND 29	
Capital Projects and Land Acquisition	\$10,635,000
FUND 29 Appropriation	
	\$10,635,000
FUND 30	
Blacklick Woods Golf Course Personnel	\$1,013,550
Non-Personnel	\$671,950
FUND 30 Appropriation	
	\$1,685,500
FUNDS 27, 29 & 30 – GRAND TOTAL	
	\$50,051,769

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this Board acknowledges that the Metro Parks staff will determine the amount of 2025 encumbrances to be carried forward as of December 31, 2025 and are thus not included in this resolution.

Adopted this 1st day of December 2025

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
Columbus & Franklin County Metropolitan Park District

Attest:

Chair

Executive Director



COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY METRO PARKS

1069 W MAIN STREET
WESTERVILLE OH 43081

metroparks.net



Eric Reiner