

7 Public Facilities

7.1 Introduction

Leroy Township, like many exurban and rural communities with a small population, does not have the same level of amenities as more densely populated urban and suburban areas. Surveys of residents have revealed that there is little dissatisfaction with public facilities in the township; schools, parks, and other municipal facilities. As the population grows, though, existing public facilities may become stretched. There is room for improvement, without sacrificing the rural character and independent spirit of the township.

The intent of the Public Facilities element of the Comprehensive Plan is to ensure that schools, parks, public safety facilities, community centers, and other government-provided amenities continue to meet, if not exceed, the needs of township residents and visitors, contribute positively to enhancing the overall quality of life, and preserve the rural character of the township.

Please note this is not a capital improvement plan. A capital improvement plan is a budgetary document that links the programming of capital projects, such as public facilities, to the planning goals found in this document.

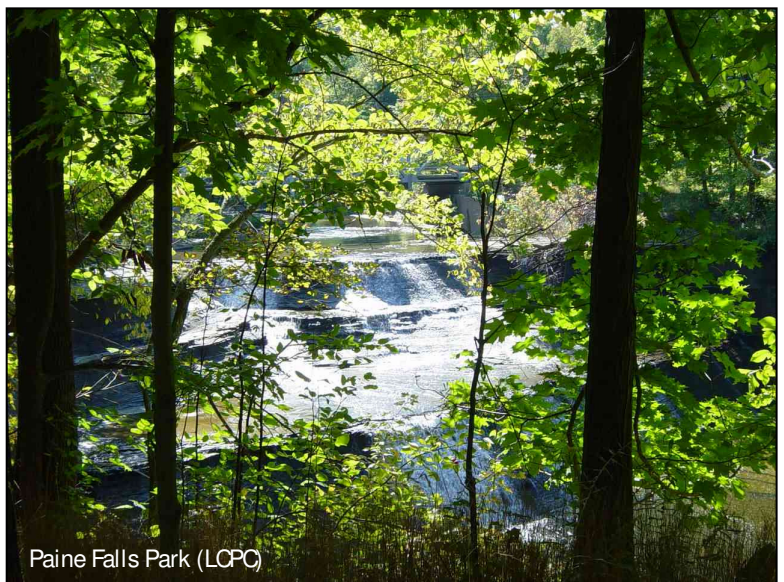
7.2 Schools

Leroy Township is included in the Riverside Local School District. The Riverside School District has decided to close Leroy School, along with Hadden, Madison Avenue and Hale Road Elementary Schools. The four schools have been combined into two new Elementary Schools, Parkside Elementary in Concord Township and Riverview Elementary in Painesville Township. Most of the elementary school kids attend Parkside. The children of Leroy Township then attend LaMuth Middle School, John R. Williams Junior High and Riverside High School.

7.3 Parks and public open space

Lake County Metroparks

Five parks owned and managed by Lake Metroparks occupy 1,735 acres (395 hectares) in Leroy Township. Metroparks land is mostly undeveloped, although they do provide basic amenities such as



Paine Falls Park (LCPC)

picnic and parking areas. There are only 4.47 miles (3.78 kilometers) of improved and marked hiking trail among all the Metroparks land, excluding the abandoned portion of Leroy Center Road across the Paine Creek valley in Hell Hollow.

Most of Girdled Road Reservation is in Concord Township, but an 82.46-acre (19 hectare) portion of the 932-acre (260 hectare) park is in Leroy Township. The main entrance to Girdled Road Reservation is in Concord Township. Mason’s Landing is also split between Perry Township and Leroy Township of which 41.36 Acres is in Leroy Township.

Table 7.1
Parks and public open space
Leroy Township

<i>Park name</i>	<i>Size (acres)</i>	<i>Size (hectares)</i>	<i>Amenities</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Hell Hollow Wilderness Area	981	397	Picnic area, picnic shelters, drinking water, restrooms, hiking trails, playground, ball/game fields	Lake Metroparks; group camping by permit
Indian Point Park	644	261	Picnic area, drinking water, restrooms, hiking trails, fishing	Lake Metroparks
Paine Falls Park	377	153	Picnic area, picnic shelter, restrooms, hiking trails	Lake Metroparks
Girdled Road Reservation (Straddles into Concord Twp)	82 (932)	33	Picnic area, picnic shelter, restrooms, hiking trails, playground, cross-country ski area, fishing	Lake Metroparks
Hidden Lake	452	183	Fishing, camping	Lake Metroparks
Leroy Township Park	21	8	Playgrounds, ball fields, picnic shelters	Township Park
Baker Road Park	76	31	Hiking, Camping and Fishing	Lake Metroparks
Blair Ridge Park	63	25	Fishing Pond, Observation Tower, Hiking	Lake Metroparks
(Lake Metroparks, Leroy Township, field observation)				

Township owned/operated parks

Leroy Township Park is on a 21-acre (8 hectare) site east of Five Points, between Leroy Center Road and Painesville-Warren Road. The Park, designed for active recreation rather than as a passive space, includes a large playground, picnic shelters, a

concession stand, and seven baseball diamonds that are used by the Leroy Softball League. There is sufficient land and great potential for expanding the level of active recreational amenities at the park such as adding walking trails, a football field, soccer field, community garden, and/or a dog park.

Future parks and the expansion of existing parks

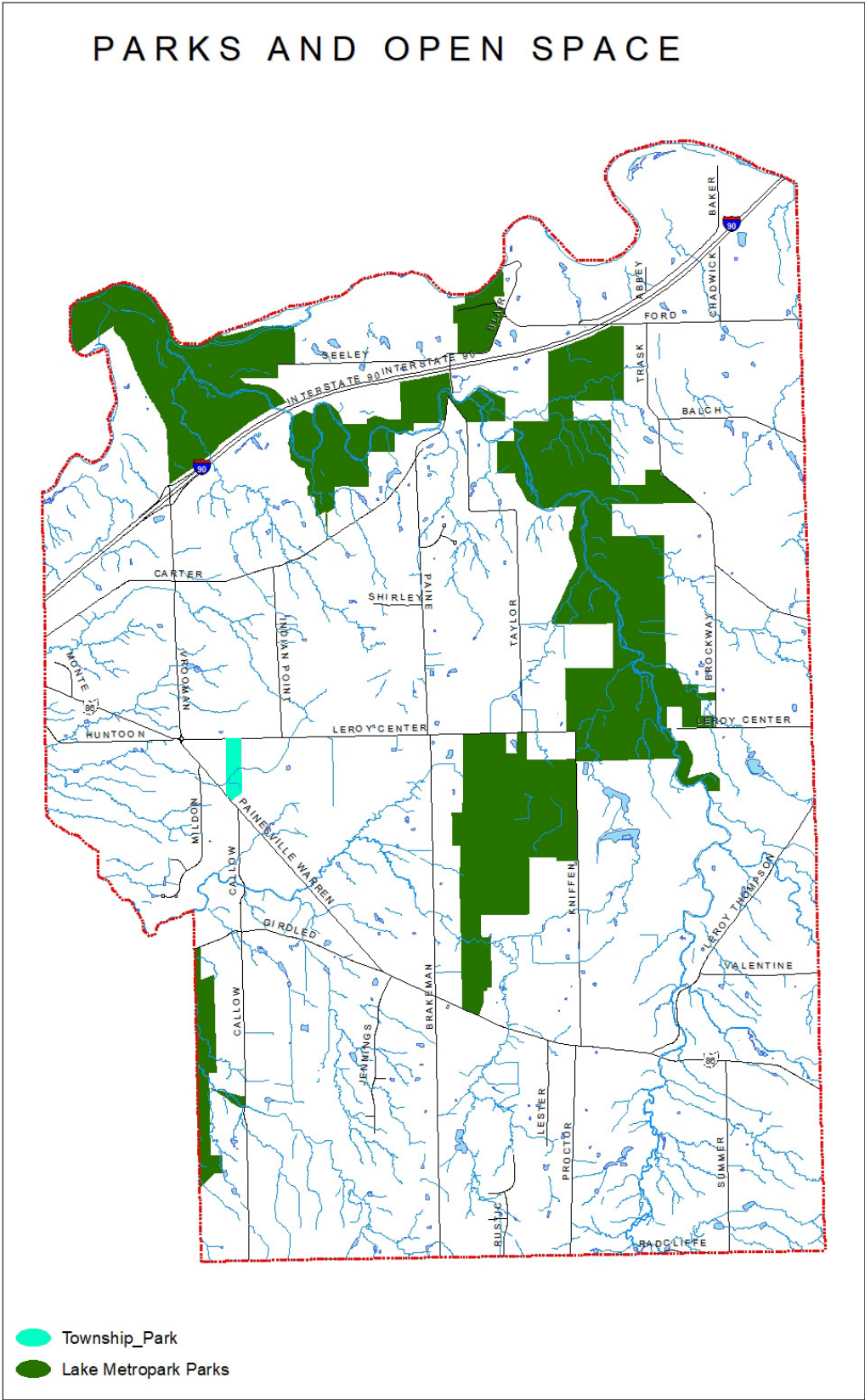
In a community like Leroy Township, where the population is relatively low and widely scattered, small neighborhood parks are not practical – especially when you consider that many residents live on lots that are much larger than a typical neighborhood park in greater Cleveland. A small “town commons” with a gazebo, however, could form the centerpiece of a traditional town center, as in Painesville and Chagrin Falls. There is support for additional recreational use of the old Leroy School site. Lake Metroparks will continue to add to their holdings and create larger regional parks.

Lake Metroparks may continue to add to their holdings and create larger regional parks. Lake Metroparks has a mission to provide recreational opportunities and access to historic sites and natural features like wetlands, smaller streams, the Grand River and Lake Erie. They are also trying to protect these same natural features and historic sites.

Lake Metroparks has multiple parks across Lake County. They have noted that the western parks get more visitors than the eastern parks. One of their objectives is to have equal visitors going to all of their parks.

Seeing as how this is one of their objectives, the Lake Metroparks could be approached to consider recreation enhancements in their parks in Leroy Township. They are open to hear ideas from the local governments and from the public to increase visits to the parks. This could include a trail connecting Paine Falls to Hell Hollow or adding other types of recreation options like bridle trails or mountain bike trails.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE





Leroy Township Park (LCPC)

The 1984 Township Comprehensive Plan raised concerns that expanding parkland in the township would decrease the tax base. Parks make up about 6.4% of all land in the township. Any expansion would be onto land zoned for low density residential use, which is assessed and taxed at a much lower rate than land zoned for commercial or industrial use. The relatively large amount of parkland and its impact on tax rolls is offset by the relatively small amount of other land uses not subject

to taxes, such as churches and large government-owned facilities

The trail systems of the various Metroparks should be expanded, but only where it would not harm sensitive natural areas or archaeological sites or intrude on the privacy of nearby residents. Views of the Paine Creek Valley from the abandoned portion of Leroy Center Road in Hell Hollow are spectacular, and a “Hell Hollow Trail” on the former roadbed would provide a significant amenity to the community.

7.4 Public safety

Fire Department

The Leroy Township Fire Department operates out of a station on Leroy Center Road, east of the Five Points Roundabout area in Leroy Township Park. Although it is technically a volunteer fire department, it employs both full-time and part-time firefighters to provide 24-hour protection to its residents. It is also the EMS provider for the township. The annual budget



Leroy Township Fire Department (LCPC)

of the Fire Department is generated from three dedicated fire levies.

The presence and quality of the fire department, along with its low response times, was often cited when residents were polled about strengths or improvements to the township in recent years.

Police protection

There is no police station in Leroy Township. The township is patrolled by the Lake County Sheriff's Department, based in downtown Painesville, with local calls dispatched from the Emergency Operations Center in Kirtland. If town officials decide that a substation or full-time police department is necessary, land in Leroy Township Park next to the Fire Department, should be considered as the favored location. This would create a unified, centrally located public safety complex.



7.5 Township government

The small Town Hall sits on a three-acre (1.2 hectare) site at the northwest corner of Leroy Center Road and Paine Road. The Town Hall site also includes garages and a large maintenance yard that dominates the site.

Many of the comments gathered during neighborhood meetings expressed a need for better facilities at Town Hall; bathrooms, community meeting rooms, paved parking, and upgraded landscaping. Such improvements, along with future relocation and screening of utilitarian buildings and functions on the site, are recommended.

Leroy Township also owns four cemeteries, but only three that are still active – Williams, Brakeman and Northeast. Paine cemetery is the original township cemetery, where many founding residents of Leroy Township are buried. The last burial at Paine Cemetery was in 1872.



7.6 Community and senior citizen centers

Leroy Township does not have a formal senior citizen center, but does have a “community center” at the Leroy Township Fire Department. The room serves as a general community meeting room. The senior room was built with the assistance of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

7.7 Goals and policies

Each primary paragraph (**in bold type**) is a statement of a goal. The subparagraphs are policies for implementing the goal.

PF-1 Parkland and dedicated open space will continue to serve the recreational needs of residents and visitors, protect irreplaceable natural resources, and preserve the rural character of the township.

PF-1-P1 Create a traditional town square at Five Points if a town center is developed, to serve as a focal point and commons for the township.

PF-1-P2 Seek opportunities to acquire land for expansion of township property for the benefit of its residents.

PF-1-P3 Diversify the recreational amenities at Leroy Township Park.

PF-1-P4 Consider adding additional recreational amenities to the Old Leroy School site.

PF-1-P5 Consider opportunities for incorporating accessible open space and trails.

PF-1-P6 Consider working with Lake Metroparks to increase recreation facilities in Leroy Township.

PF-2 Urban-quality public safety facilities and services should continue to be offered.

PF-2-P1 Expand the network of fire ponds and other water reserves in areas without water service.

PF-3 Town government facilities will be improved.

PF-3-P1 Improve landscaping, parking and access management at the existing Town Hall facility.