

SUMMIT METRO PARKS

2024 Annual Report to the Community

New and improved

In 2024, we committed to improving the visitor experience with several updates throughout the park district. Crews added electric to 12 sites at Nimisila Campground, replaced aging infrastructure and made several lighting and electrical upgrades, as well. We also opened a beautiful wedding suite at Himelright Lodge and Parours Trails received new signage and exercise stations in both Goodyear Heights and Sand Run Metro Parks.



Inclusion and nature education

Continuing our focus on the *Wild Back Yards* initiative, community engagement staff delivered hundreds of free programs with many focused on native plants and our ecosystem. Staff also delivered 115 outreach programs and added interactive exhibits in our nature centers to serve people with varying abilities. We added "sensory break bags" to our visitors and nature centers, as well.



Unearthing the past and future preservation

Our conservation team regularly monitors ecological health, including removal of invasive species. A total of 800 sites were surveyed in 2024 and three new plant species were noted that have never been recorded in the district: crane fly orchid, large whorled pogonia and American wintergreen. Our cultural resources division continued fieldwork on a precontact Indigenous site and work will continue in 2025 at this historically significant site. ●




Return TO NATURE



Summit Metro Parks has connected people to nature for more than 100 years. In 2024, we completed work on a connection that has been nearly a century in the making when we dedicated the final phase of restoration work at the *Valley*

View Area of Cascade Valley Metro Park in Akron, made possible through \$1.3 million in funds raised by the Summit Metro Parks Foundation. With this park area's award-winning return to nature, we also celebrated new ways to help people enjoy the landscape through a river access point on the Cuyahoga, an open-air shelter, spacious restrooms, stunning native gardens, a natural play space and two new hiking trails.

Conservation remained central to our work when we completed the conversion of the *East End of Sand Run Parkway* to an extension of the popular *Jogging Trail*, which created not only more recreation opportunities but also allowed us to enhance the area's wetlands and native plantings to benefit wildlife.

Thank you for valuing greenspace and the treasures we share stewardship of in Summit Metro Parks. 



AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- OPRA 3rd Place – *Valley View: A park area nearly 100 years in the making*
- Akron-Summit Convention & Visitors Bureau Zenith Awards – *Best Photo Op (Springfield Bog Metro Park)* • *Chairman's Award, Executive Director Lisa King*
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources – *Best maintained dam statewide (Silver Creek Metro Park)*

Summit Metro Parks®

BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

Rev. Dr. Curtis T. Walker Sr. *Chair*
Joel D. Bailey
S. Theresa Carter
Herb Newman
Jill M. Stritch
Lisa M. King *Executive Director*

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

975 Treaty Line Rd., Akron, OH 44313
330-867-5511

By the Numbers –

Approx. **5.1 MILLION** total visits

89,273 visitors/nature center visits

23,446 visitors assisted by
customer service

36,403 visitors assisted by rangers

14,139 participants in **780** programs

18,757 service hours contributed
by **926** volunteers

eight park district projects funded
by the SMP Foundation



summitmetroparks.org

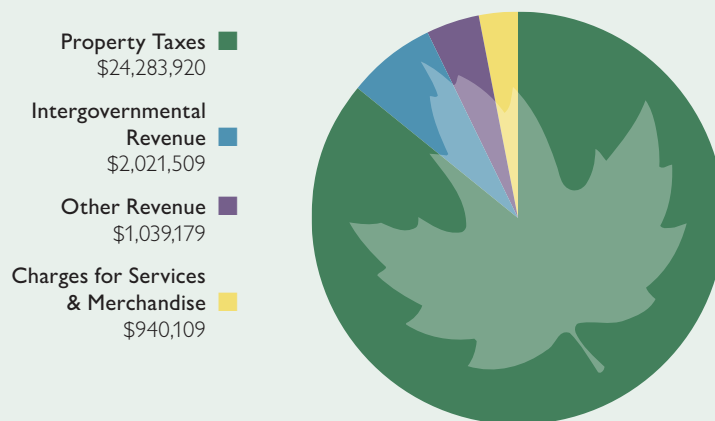
Ohio's Second Oldest Metropolitan Park District

Established in 1921, Summit Metro Parks
has been Your Back Yard for more than 100
years. The park district manages more than
16,000 acres throughout 16 parks, two nature
centers, one visitors center and over 150
miles of trails, including 22 miles of the Ohio
& Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Learn more at
summitmetroparks.org.

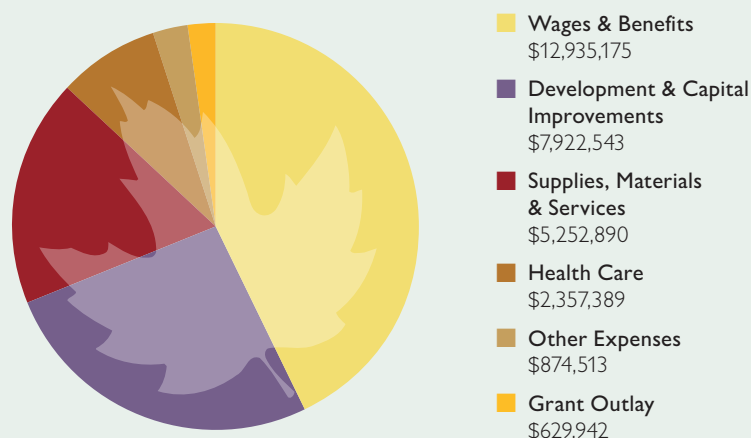
2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Financial Summary

2024 RESOURCES \$28,284,717



TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$29,972,452



*Grant outlay may exceed grants received in any given year
as reimbursement periods vary.*

* Summit Metro Parks | Grant Support

• AMATS TASA Funds – Middlebury Road Connector Trail project (*only partially used in 2024, remaining in 2025*) • Clean Ohio – Sand Run Stream Restoration • Clean Ohio – Sand Run East End Restoration Project • National Park Service – ODNR – LWCF – Valley View Riverfront • Ohio & Erie Canalway Association – Towpath Trail improvements • Ohio Attorney General – Ohio Peace Officer Training Commission (OPOTA) Continue Professional Training (CPT) training funds • Ohio Dept. of Public Safety – Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – Sand Run Restoration • Summit County Community – Sand Run East End Project • Summit County Community Grant – Sand Run East End project

Summit Metro Parks Foundation | Grant Support

• John A. McAlonan Fund of Akron Community Foundation • William C. and Betty J. Zekan Fund of Akron Community Foundation • Akron Garden Club Centennial Gift to the Akron Community • Albrecht Family Foundation & Acme Fresh Market • The Allstate Foundation • The Andrea Rose Teodosio Memorial Foundation • Bridgestone Americas Trust Fund • Lisle M. Buckingham Endowment Fund at Akron Community Foundation • Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs, Cleveland Fund • Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs Charitable Fund of Stark Community Foundation • Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs Fund of Akron Community Foundation • FirstEnergy Foundation • Howard Atwood Family Fund of Akron Community Foundation • Hudson Garden Club • The Lehner Family Foundation • Logsdon Family Foundation • Synthomer Foundation

Summit Metro Parks & Summit Metro Parks Foundation | Sponsorships

• Acme Fresh Market Foundation • Buckingham • Cleveland Clinic Akron General & Cleveland Clinic Children's • Country Maid Ice Cream & Orchard • Davey Tree Expert Co. • Goodyear Hunting & Fishing Club • House of Plants, Inc. • Ohio Department of Natural Resources • Roetzel & Andress • Rubber City Reuse • Sylvan Learning of Twinsburg • The Nightlight • Vertical Runner, Vince Rucci, Owner • Wayside Furniture • Western Reserve Hospital • YellowLite