

MAYOR'S BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION

ASSESSING FINANCES AND SERVICES



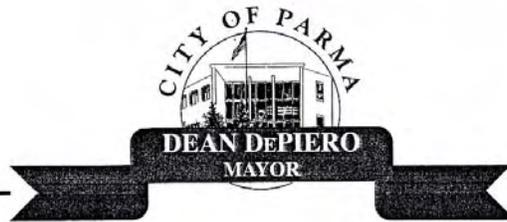
PARMA, OHIO

2007

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Parma, along with many area communities, is experiencing a period of economic downturn. The problem is not a single issue, but a combination of a number of factors including a changing economy, reduced state support, and global budget issues. The issues facing Parma are not unique, but can be found throughout Northeast Ohio.

Realizing this, I felt the need to organize a group of individuals who could help guide Parma through the next several years. To that end, I established the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission. I chose to select members who had a wide range of talents and who were from various areas of our community.

I commend the extensive work of the Blue Ribbon Commission members and their willingness to review all aspects of Parma's municipal government. I look forward to their recommendations, and know that they will have been reviewed thoughtfully and fully vetted.

I know that given the timeframe within which the Commission created the report, there will not be a simple answer to the economic issues in Parma and Northeast Ohio, nor a silver bullet contained within the report's pages. I do have faith, however, that the recommendations will provide Parma with a path for the future.

The City of Parma has already benefited from the work of the Blue Ribbon Commission. New partnerships have been formed and information has been shared. I look forward to continued relationships with the members of the Blue Ribbon Commission.

With Sincere Appreciation,

DEAN DEPIERO
Mayor

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Honorable Dean DePiero
Mayor of Parma
Parma, Ohio

Dear Mayor:

In response to your request, the Blue Ribbon Commission convened as a special study group to assess the City's finances and services. Its mission was to:

- Assess and recommend methods for improving the operation of City government to seek greater efficiency and effectiveness
- Seek ways to increase City revenues in recognition of the decrease in City income caused by business sector downturns

We have completed our study and submit to you this report, which contains several findings and fifteen recommendations. Some of the recommendations suggested are relatively simple to adopt, others will require additional time for analysis and implementation. Still others will require a change in law and priority by City Council. Not all of the recommendations will result in immediate financial returns. However, all recommendations, over time, should result in greater productivity and effectiveness in the delivery of City services.

We must mention that all City officers and employees who participated in this study exhibited a full and complete willingness to cooperate. We especially note the cooperative involvement of the President of City Council and the elected agency heads. The Executive Assistant to the Mayor Meghann E. McCall and the City's Economic Development Officer/Grantwriter Shelley Cullins were also especially helpful in providing information and facilitation assistance. We also appreciate the excellent staff work of Denise McCray McCall and Vincent Tenaglia, Doctoral and Master's students respectively at Cleveland State University's Levin College of Urban Affairs.

All of us on the Commission have a deep respect for the outstanding quality of Parma's management team and the professional manner in which City employees accomplish their tasks.

Respectfully Submitted,



The Rev. Todd A. Biermann
Chairman

Barry L. Franklin, C.P.A., Thomas F. Jones, Sylvester Murray, David M. Nedrich,
Robin Darden Thomas, Kevin Yaughner, William Ziganti

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD TO THE COMMISSION REPORT

Rev. Todd A. Biermann

It has been a distinct honor for me to serve as the Chairman of this Mayoral Blue Ribbon Commission. I wish to thank Mayor DePiero for this privilege to be able to serve my fellow citizens of Parma in this capacity. It is with great hopefulness that I anticipate the positive outcomes to follow from the work of the Commission and the report which follows.

My service in this role has shown me that the City of Parma is an upstanding community with strong and trustworthy leadership. I hold every confidence that Mayor DePiero and the rest of the officials of this City will do all within their power to implement the constructive suggestions of this report for the betterment of Parma. I am also very eager to see the positive advancements in store for Parma as the community more fully utilizes the many resources already at its disposal.

What were once seen as challenges can also be seen as great advantages...our vast ethnic diversity, our changing business environment and also our multi-faceted religious representation, to name a few. New collaborative efforts have already begun as a result of this Commission's work; efforts that are fostering the right environment for brilliant minds to work together for the common good. There will certainly be many more positive associations formed and fostered in the future as the proposals of this report are put into action. Indeed, the greatest strength in Parma is to be found in the heart and soul of its citizens. Parma is truly a microcosm of America.

This city offers a place for everyone, regardless of race, color or creed. As we all work together, from the elected official down to the most seemingly insignificant resident, passions will be stirred, standards will be raised and dreams will become reality ... even in the face of, and often because of, the challenging obstacles that we will face and overcome as one. Parma will continue to be a vibrant city that represents all the good that is America.

PARMA CITY GOVERNMENT

The City of Parma was originally established as a township in 1826, incorporated as a village in 1924, and organized as a city in 1931. The City is not Chartered. The City operates under, and is governed by, the Mayor/Council form of government in accordance with general laws of the State of Ohio. Under the Ohio Constitution, the City may exercise all powers of local self-government to the extent not in conflict with applicable general laws.

Legislative authority is vested in a nine-member Council. Nine members are elected from wards for two year terms. The Council fixes compensation of City officials and employees, and enacts ordinances and resolutions relating to City services, tax levies, appropriating and borrowing money, licensing and regulating businesses and trades, and other municipal purposes. The powers of Council are legislative. The presiding officer is the President of Council.

The City's chief executive and administrative officer is the Mayor, elected by the voters for a four year term. The Mayor is the chief conservator of peace within the City. He appoints and removes the director of public service, the director of public safety and the heads of sub departments of public service and public safety. The Mayor approves every ordinance or resolution of the City before it goes into effect. The Mayor may not approve an ordinance or resolution but return it to Council with his objections, which may be overridden by a two-thirds vote of all members of Council. The Mayor sees that all ordinances, bylaws and resolutions of Council are faithfully obeyed and enforced. The Mayor signs all commissions, licenses and permits.

Other City elected officials are the Law Director, Auditor, Treasurer, Judges, and Clerk of Municipal Court. The Mayor, Law Director, Auditor and Treasurer are all elected to four year terms.

The Law Director defends and acts as legal counsel for all complaints, lawsuits, and other controversies naming as a party the City, any board or agency of the City or the Parma Municipal Court. The Law Director renders legal opinion to elected officials and department heads pertaining to City matters, and prepares all legislation requested by City officials. When requested, the Law Director renders legal opinions, defends lawsuits, and reviews contracts and leases for the Parma City School District.

The Auditor is the City's chief fiscal and accounting officer. Duties include maintaining the accounting records, preparing monthly and year-end reports, and ensuring that expenditures do not exceed appropriations. The Auditor is the keeper and supervisor of all City accounts.

The City Treasurer has custody of all City monies, is responsible for investing City funds and oversees the operation of the income tax department. He is involved in the financing of City operations and capital construction through the issuance of short-term and long-term bonded debt.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

To establish a coherent method for evaluating city functions and agencies, we started by developing a comprehensive list of criteria for evaluation. This was accomplished with participation from the full Commission and administrative officers, including the Mayor's office.

The next stage was to determine what information would have to be gathered so we would have a fair way to evaluate the functions and agencies. Members of the Commission were experts in policing, business practices, human relations, taxation and development.

Next was the gathering of information. The Commission organized itself into five functional sub-committees: (1) Taxation and Finance, (2) City Image and Leisure Services, (3) Public Safety Services, (4) Housing and Community Development, and (5) Economic Development. This report will follow this same organization.

We had sub-committee interviews with agency heads and their staffs, we reviewed written reports of the agencies, and we sought information from external publications, including audit reports, annual reports, agency special reports, FBI Reports, journals and other professional publications. We also sat in on meetings of civic organizations and listened to the comments and opinions of Parma citizens.

The Commission met on numerous occasions to analyze and deliberate on the findings from the information-gathering phase. This report is the summation and recommendations resulting from the methodology.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Each criterion marks a subject studied by the Commission in evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the City of Parma's departments, programs, and services.

Workforce

Has comprehensive and readily available data about its current workforce and its future workforce needs that can be used to make decisions involving human resource management

Production

Has a method for measuring the efficiency and effectiveness of the work being produced and seeks continually to improve the quality of work expected by citizens and taxpayers of the City

Budget

Has revenue and expenditure forecasting processes that are thorough, accurate and transparent and include a multi-year perspective

Infrastructure

Has a method for regularly conducting infrastructure assessment and setting priorities for maintenance and renewal with emphases on housing, community and economic development

Inclusion

Has meaningful information sharing to inform citizens, businesses, groups and other agencies about City programs and decisions for participation and relationship building purposes

Needs

Has identified short-term and long-term needs in terms of strategies, objectives, staffing and financial requirements

Goals

Has developed informal or formal targets or benchmarks to identify success in terms of processes and/or services

FINANCES AND TAXATION

The sub-committee approached this review area as being a very important part of the study. In addition to the evaluation criteria, several questions were asked concerning operations. For example, does the City collect all of its revenue? Are fee amounts sufficient and related to the service being provided? Does the City utilize a Lock Box System or other efficient method for processing payments? Is it more cost effective for the City to collect its own income taxes or to utilize RITA? Has the City considered privatization or contracting out as a means of saving money? Does the City participate in regional bodies that are concerned with effective financial governance, such as the Inner Ring Suburb Group, the Ohio Municipal League, the Cuyahoga Mayors and Managers Association?

The Parma Treasurer's Office collects all funds received by the City directly. These include permit charges, recreation fees, court fines, income tax receipts (corporate and individual), and investment interest. Property taxes and special assessments for the City are collected by the Cuyahoga County Treasurer.

The City of Parma receives a majority of its operating funds from City Income Tax (64%). The second largest amount of funds comes from State Shared Taxes (15%) and the third largest is Property Tax (11%).

History of Parma's Income Tax

- 1966: Council passed Ordinance No. 473.66 creating 0.5% income tax
- 1968: Council increased income tax to 1%
- 1979: Council placed 0.5% increase on ballot for road/sewer capital and police/fire personnel (passed)
- 1981: Council placed 0.5% increase on ballot for road/sewer capital and police/fire personnel (passed)
- 2002: Council passed a reduction of the income tax credit (100% of the first 1% paid to another municipality)
- 2006: Council placed a 0.5% increase to the existing city income tax and a credit up to a maximum of 2% of taxable income paid to another municipality on the ballot (effective 1/01/07). The new tax rate will provide an estimated \$800,000 in additional income tax revenues annually.

Because the income tax is so important to the City, a review was made on the efficiency of its collection. Several communities collect their own income tax revenues, rather than utilize the services of the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA). The below survey of nearby cities responsible for collecting their own taxes illustrates that Parma's cost for collecting income taxes is efficient.

Cost for Collection of Income Taxes¹

CITY	COLLECTIONS	COST OF COLLECTIONS	COST AS % OF COLLECTIONS
Cleveland Heights	\$21,000,000	\$1,000,000	4.8%
Lakewood	\$17,000,000	\$772,000	4.5%
Parma	\$32,000,000	\$871,000	2.7%*
Lorain	\$17,000,000	\$347,000	2.0%

*Parma's Cost of Collection for 2005 was 2.56%

Municipal Income Tax Rates, 2007

CITY	INCOME TAX RATE	INCOME TAX CREDIT
Parma Heights	3%	100 % up to 2%
Euclid	2.85%	100% up to 2.85%
Parma	2.5%	100% up to 2%
Brook Park	2%	100% up to 2%
Canton	2%	100% up to 2%
North Royalton	2%	100% up to 1.25%
Strongsville	2%	0.75%
Lakewood	1.5%	0.5%

The City Auditor has responsibility for developing the City's budget for the Mayor's review and City Council's approval. The Auditor also makes all expenditures for the City.

The Commission suggests four areas should be examined for possible savings:

1. *Budget:* The process for developing the City's annual budget can be improved by providing a greater relationship to executive and policy-makers' goals and priorities. The current process is for the Auditor to distribute documents illustrating five-year actual expenditures for each department, as well as estimates of finances for the next fiscal year. Department heads usually use this information to determine if there is a need to reduce their budget request for the new fiscal year. Priority setting at the Citywide level stands to be improved by establishing critical objectives during this budgeting process.
2. *Justice Center:* Parma is home to the municipal court for several municipalities. The operations cost burdens of the court are not aligned with the arrests, fines and fees of persons from individual municipalities. The Justice Center is not currently self-sustaining from the City's point of view. Costs for the municipal court are not pro-rated by population to all involved municipalities. The City pays an amount for the court that is greater than its proportional population count. As the home site, the City of Parma uses its bonding capacity to build infrastructure for the court.

1) Sartin, V. David. *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Sept. 19, 2005. p. B-1.

3. *Sewer Maintenance*: This is a significant cost item. The City's general fund handles maintenance costs. No charges or fees are made to homeowners. Back-ups occur regularly in some citizens' basements. The EPA is requiring that all septic tanks be eliminated.

4. *Refuse Collection*: The Commission finds Parma's refuse collection to be operating efficiently. The City currently contracts for refuse collection at a cost of \$3 million per year. While other communities may charge additional fees for refuse service, the City of Parma provides it through its general fund with no separate assessment or fees charged to residential customers.

Refuse Collection by Community

<i>CITY-PROVIDED COLLECTIONS</i>		<i>PRIVATE CONTRACTOR COLLECTIONS</i>	
<i>FEES</i>	<i>NO FEES</i>	<i>FEES</i>	<i>NO FEES</i>
Barberton: \$11.30/month Canton: \$24.80/bi-monthly Cuyahoga Falls: \$17.50/month Warren: \$14.12/month	Brook Park Lakewood North Royalton	Aurora: \$41.67/quarter Mentor: \$5.37/month	Euclid Parma Parma Heights Strongsville

Overall Efficiency

Perhaps the most significant finding of the Commission is the fact that per capita spending by the City in 2006 is relatively low (\$515.62 per person) compared to other cities in the region, based on budgeted figures and 2005 census estimates. This is an effective measure of Parma's efficient spending to fund its public services. It is acknowledged that a cause for Parma's low spending is the lack of budgeted Police Levy funds. Had the previous Police Levy funding been included in the budget, Parma's per capita spending would have increased to \$536.71. In comparison to other local municipalities, this figure is still an efficient level of spending. The Commission therefore finds that the City is well managed.

Municipal Government Per Capita Spending, 2006

CITY	GENERAL FUND BUDGET	POPULATION ¹	PER CAPITA SPENDING
Brook Park	\$ 25,200,000	21,218	\$ 1,187.67
Strongsville	\$ 31,552,000	43,858	\$ 719.41
Euclid	\$ 36,764,444	52,717	\$ 697.39
Lakewood	\$ 37,332,889	56,646	\$ 659.06
Parma Heights	\$ 14,064,661	21,659	\$ 649.37
Canton	\$ 50,963,258	80,806	\$ 630.69
Elyria	\$ 32,605,127	55,953	\$ 582.72
Parma	\$ 43,838,568*	85,021	\$ 515.62
Brunswick	\$ 16,925,000	33,388	\$ 506.92
North Royalton	\$ 12,573,698	28,648	\$ 438.90

**Parma's actual expenditures for fiscal year 2006 were \$42,780,839 (\$503.18 per capita).*

1) Population Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder, 2003-2005

Revenue Losses

The Commission reviewed data illustrating a trend of decreasing revenues. This trend requires attention by the City, as public expenditures will increase if the current level of services enjoyed by Parma residents is desired in the future. See the chart below:

Major Revenues for City Operations

<i>SOURCE</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007 (Est.)</i>	<i>2008 (Est.)</i>
Income Tax	\$32,341,785	\$32,405,426	\$33,777,991	\$34,311,815	\$34,285,298	\$34,028,146
Fire Levy	\$1,762,051	\$1,782,714	\$1,783,519	\$1,792,714	\$1,730,319	\$1,730,319
Police Levy	\$1,762,051	\$1,782,714	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL	\$35,867,890	\$35,972,858	\$35,563,515	\$36,106,535	\$36,015,617	\$35,758,465

It is recognized that the City has passed an income tax increase, effective January 1, 2007. This increase will provide an estimated \$800,000 in additional revenue annually (included in the 2007 collections estimate in the above chart). However, lost production at major employers in the City will contribute to a net loss in income tax revenue for 2007 and future years.

FIRM	ESTIMATED LOSS 2007
General Motors	\$1,400,000
Tops Markets	\$150,000
Shiloh Industries	\$100,000
Total Annual Loss	\$1,650,000

Production Loss Impact

Revenue losses are also predicted based on another factor: State of Ohio House Bill 920. HB 920 restricts non-chartered cities from allowing their property tax levies to increase with increases in property assessments. As a result, the City of Parma will not benefit from the Cuyahoga County property re-assessments in 2007. The Major Revenues chart above demonstrates that the Fire Operations Property Tax Levy will actually decrease beginning in 2007. To maintain services generally and to improve services in the safety forces, it is quite likely that the City needs to increase its revenues.

CITY IMAGE AND LEISURE SERVICES

Internal Strengths

The City of Parma is comprised of residents from many ethnic backgrounds and features over fifty different religious institutions. Building upon that internal strength, the Commission discussed the creation of an ethnic retail center. Parma has the ability to reshape itself by creating a community of attraction. Celebrating the ethnic composition of the community and seeking to develop unique and promising businesses offers opportunities to Parma residents as well as those currently living outside the City.

Collaboration

Citizens and public groups have expressed a need for a common gathering place as well as additional recreation opportunities within the City of Parma. In 2001, a proposed income tax rate increase to fund a new recreation center was opposed by 68 percent of voters. Therefore, the Commission discussed alternatives to the construction of a community recreation center, based upon various groups expressing interest in developing collaborative partnerships throughout the City. A collaborative effort to identify available meeting places, sports facilities, and cultural celebrations would enhance the opportunities for Parma residents while containing costs otherwise associated with developing a new facility entirely. The City's Recreation Department, Senior Center, Parma City Schools, and several civic groups throughout the community are committed to finding available recreation and gathering places for residents. Efforts are also underway to expand volunteer service opportunities.

Human Services

The City of Parma demonstrated a committed effort towards improving services to its citizens by creating a full-time Human Service Specialist position in early 2004, as a foundation towards the development of a more comprehensive service program. Originally designed to provide services to seniors, the role of Parma's Human Service Specialist has grown in recent years.

The current role of the Human Service Specialist is to identify the needs of the City's residents and provide them appropriate information or direct them to the appropriate center for attention. This process involves a highly interactive role between the Specialist and inquiring resident, including interviews and advisory sessions. Residents seeking advice or counseling related to medical, family, drug and alcohol, legal, or financial issues have contacted the Specialist increasingly since the position was developed. This relationship and opportunity for Parma residents represents an effective method towards improving the City's services for its citizens.

The City has taken efforts to enhance that service for all residents within the community. Recent attempts to secure a grant for that purpose have failed, therefore the Commission calls attention to this function moving forward.

Police Services

The initiatives suggested by the Commission pertaining to the Police Department may also improve the livelihood of the City itself and the perception of safety within Parma.

A Civilian Review Board, Substations, Citizens' Police Academy, and a Police Chaplaincy Program would each offer an opportunity to support community policing efforts by incorporating citizens' perceptions, needs, and perspectives into the law enforcement strategy. The relationship between police officers and residents is highly indicative of a community's level of trust in its government¹. Because officers are the front line of government, it is important for citizens to develop an interactive line of communication with their officers in order to promote safer and more vibrant neighborhoods.

Youth Diversion Program

As an alternative to the juvenile court system, the City's Youth Diversion Program allows for greater intervention by local judges into the behavior of troubled youth within the community. The Diversion Program creates an opportunity for public officials to improve the lives of young Parma residents. Many communities throughout the nation employ successful diversion programs and have reported benefits of improved attitudes and perceptions about their public legal system.

Parma's program seeks to improve young offenders' self-image, communicative and conflict resolution skills, and ultimately to prevent another decision to break the law. Juvenile offenders benefit in that the offense never appears in his or her juvenile record. Rather than serving juvenile detention, the Diversion Program requires participants to complete public service projects and offers counseling to both the young offender and his or her family members, if deemed appropriate. The Program creates an effective exchange of information between its safety forces, social service providers, and participating families.

Utilizing current capacity, together with other religious/service organization leaders, the City of Parma has the ability to bolster its Youth Diversion Program without adding significantly to the Justice Center's payroll. The program enhances the relationships and trust between young Parma residents needing proper guidance and their public officers, and is noted as operating effectively. The City Law Director suggests the program be extended to include traffic citations. It may also prove beneficial to utilize religious leaders and leaders of other social service agencies in Parma to serve as supervisors for the youth in the Diversion Program.

1) Geller, W.A. and D. W. Stephens. Local Government Police Management, Fourth edition. Municipal Management Series. ICMA Press. 2003.

Leisure Services

The Commission found that the City currently provides basic core leisure services. The City has great parks and playgrounds and a great relationship with the Parma City Schools. Together they are able to provide many sports and athletic services to the City's youth. Non-profit groups such as the YMCA and Boy and Girl Scouts also exist and provide good services.

However, additional leisure service opportunities and potential needs exist. They include:

- A large Recreational Center proposal supported by family membership fees
- A large outdoor water park and/or hotel/indoor water park
- Cultural arts programs developed alongside sports programs, especially for teenagers
- More sports and cultural arts programs
- Expanded Cuyahoga Community College Encore Program for Seniors and partnerships with the Parma Recreation Department
- Additional programs for seniors of age 55 and above
- Better low-cost/volunteer provided transportation for seniors and the disabled
- Citizens and public groups have expressed a need for a "common gathering place" along with multiple smaller gathering places

PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

The assessment of Public Safety Services included the functions of Police, Fire, EMS, City Jail and Animal Control.

When assessing the Police Division, the Commission was interested in ascertaining the overall effectiveness of the Police in reducing crime and ensuring the safety of Parma citizens. Central issues are authorized staffing patterns, resources available, patrol coverage, overtime usage and neighborhood/community relations. There were concerns about Homeland Security Funds (HSF), and the Commission was informed that HSF funded ballistic vests for officers and also funded the Community Emergency Response Team. Comparable statistics will be reviewed to see how Parma police protection compares to other cities in the region and nationally.

The Commission found that Police staffing is down 20 positions. There are 86 officers today as compared to 106 officers ten years ago. There are 44 Auxiliary Officers. Prior to 2006, only one officer had been sworn into the force since 2001 and as a result the average age of the police force continues to rise¹. Over 25 percent of the force is eligible to retire in the near future. There is also a lack of diversity on the police force: one African-American, no females.

The Commission found that the Safety Director and Police Chief have utilized improved management techniques to enhance the operations of the Police Department. They have installed new policies and procedures to maintain tight control of work processes and overtime usage. It is understood that a certain amount of overtime is necessary. Significant problems for the Parma Police Division include low staffing (resulting in high overtime usage), additional training, aging police cars and a need for technology improvements. A predictable and enhanced revenue stream is needed to solve these problems.

The charts that follow show that the Parma Police Department is operating efficiently and above the norm when compared to other police agencies.

1) Four new police officers were sworn in during this study

**Municipal Police Departments
Total Expenditures by Departments Per Capita, 2005**

The City of Parma's law enforcement total expenditures per capita are significantly less than those of other local communities.

CITY	POPULATION ¹	TOTAL EXPENDITURES ²	PER CAPITA COST
Mentor	51,485	\$10,759,750	\$208.99
Warren	45,796	\$9,231,118	\$201.57
Lakewood	53,244	\$10,686,045	\$200.70
Euclid	49,619	\$9,690,372	\$195.30
Canton	79,748	\$14,856,553	\$186.30
Cuyahoga Falls	50,494	\$9,303,940	\$184.26
Strongsville	43,949	\$7,846,317	\$178.53
Westlake	31,331	\$5,152,283	\$164.45
Parma	81,469	\$11,396,830	\$139.90
Lorain	67,820	\$8,832,479	\$130.23

**Municipal Police Departments
Officers Per 1,000 Residents, 2005**

In 2005, the rate of full-time sworn officers per 1,000 residents across the nation was 2.3. Regionally, that rate was 1.7 per 1,000 residents. The City of Parma's coverage level per 1,000 residents is less than both the national and regional averages.

CITY	POPULATION ¹	TOTAL SWORN OFFICERS ³	OFFICERS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS
Canton	79,748	167	2.09
Euclid	49,619	94	1.89
Cuyahoga Falls	50,494	95	1.88
Strongsville	43,949	76	1.73
Parma Heights	20,657	34	1.65
Lakewood	53,244	87	1.63
Westlake	31,331	50	1.60
Mentor	51,485	80	1.55
Lorain	67,820	102	1.50
Parma	81,469	91	1.12
Warren	45,796	50	1.09

- 1) Population Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder, 2003-2005
- 2) Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports and local public Finance officers
- 3) Police Employee Data from FBI.gov Crime in the United States 2005 report

**City of Parma Police Department
Sworn Officer/Overtime Expense Comparison, 1999-2006**

The City's Police Department overtime expenditures increased in 2005 and 2006 as officer staffing levels decreased.

YEAR	TOTAL SWORN OFFICERS ¹	OVERTIME EXPENDITURES
1999	103	\$1,524,516
2000	103	\$2,030,050
2001	100	\$1,753,031
2002	102	\$1,211,265
2003	96	\$812,459
2004	93	\$754,296
2005	91	\$788,451
2006	86	\$1,007,170*

**Through November 2006*

The Police Department is witnessing an increase in the rate of reportable crimes, primarily burglaries. The Commission suggests the rate of violent crimes may potentially decrease by bolstering the police officer staffing level. The chart below illustrates Parma's need for additional police coverage due to its size and rate of violent crime.

Violent Crime Reported by Municipality, 2005

CITY	POPULATION ²	VIOLENT CRIME OFFENSES REPORTED ³	OFFICERS PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	VIOLENT CRIMES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS
Canton	79,748	668	2.09	8.38
Lorain	67,820	341	1.50	5.03
Euclid	49,619	176	1.89	3.55
Lakewood	53,244	114	1.63	2.14
Parma	81,469	146	1.12	1.80
Cuyahoga Falls	50,494	67	1.88	1.33
Mentor	51,485	57	1.55	1.11
Parma Heights	20,657	19	1.65	0.92
Strongsville	43,949	38	1.73	0.86

- 1) Police Employee Data from FBI.gov Crime in the United States 1999-2005
- 2) Population Estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder, 2005
- 3) Uniform Crime Report Data from FBI.gov Crime in the United States 2005

**Safest City and Safest Metropolitan Area
13th Annual Awards, Morgan Quitno Press**

The 2006 Awards publication lists the City of Parma as the 32nd safest community in the nation (of cities with populations greater than 75,000), based on six crime categories - murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and motor vehicle theft.

CITY	SAFETY RANKING ¹
Parma	32
Akron	290
Canton	296
Columbus	326
Toledo	331
Dayton	346
Youngstown	363
Cleveland	365

1) Morgan Quitno Press, "City Crime Rankings," 13th edition, Oct. 30, 2006.

Civilian Police Review Boards

The Commission discussed the possibility of utilizing a Civilian Police Review Board to improve the relations between Parma residents and their police force. Civilian Police Review Boards have become integral in fostering trust and accountability between citizens and police officers, while creating an open environment for residents to report legitimate complaints. They have been established to work together with internal investigation units as well as to review complaints against officers including abusive language, harassment, or excessive force.

The fundamental purpose served by a Civilian Police Review Board is for individuals outside the Police Department to conduct an external review of police officers' actions and behaviors. Citizens appointed to a Board have the opportunity to voice concerns and either sustain, not sustain, or exonerate specific actions brought to their attention, and make specific recommendations regarding policy and procedures.

Complaints filed against a police officer or civilian employee will result in an investigation by the Board, or a deferral to an internal affairs body with the Board maintaining authority to review. Citizens serving the board can review complaints made by citizens and provide reports and recommendations to the Police Chief and/or Safety Director.

The City of Cleveland's Civilian Review Board, for example, rests within the Cleveland Division of Police's Office of Professional Standards (OPS), the investigative arm of the Board. The Board acts with greater authority, including a specific role in addressing deadly force cases. The Board consists of five part-time members and an Administrator. Among other complaints, OPS shares the responsibility to fully review investigative results in those instances in which a City police officer has used deadly force on or off duty. The review board's role is to determine if incidents of police misconduct have been properly investigated, as well as to make recommendations of disciplinary actions as a result of the investigation¹.

A Civilian Police Review Board within the City of Parma may not only enhance the accountability of City police officers, but also provides an opportunity to build a higher level of trust between the residents and their law enforcement officers.

1) City of Cleveland Police Department,
<http://www.city.cleveland.oh.us/government/departments/pubsafety/diroff/adminind.html>

Police Department Substations

The Commission discussed the use of Police Department Substations – one or more – throughout the City of Parma in an effort to build closer relationships between residents in the community and their law enforcement officers. A substation is a smaller “branch” of the central command and can be used to close both the physical and psychological distance between the police and the community. Often such substations are located in low-rent facilities, storefronts, malls, or retail centers as a common access point. They have proven successful at reducing residents’ fears or hesitations in reporting problems and confronting officers, and have been instrumental in improving the perception by the community of its local police work¹.

Many communities across the country have utilized substations in order to build community and bolster law enforcement. University City, a primary neighborhood within the City of Philadelphia, utilizes a police substation from the hours of 8:00am to 2:00pm, seven days per week, within a key retail center. It acts to provide supplemental coverage to three specific districts, utilizing Geographic Information Systems technology to identify crime trends and targets. The use of the mapping software, combined with the presence of an additional coverage office, allows officers to better strategize their deployment within the neighborhood and build relationships with “Ambassador” residents in the community. As a result, a four-year downward trend in crime offenses has taken place within the University City district and violent crime has decreased by 19 percent².

The City of New Haven, Connecticut also employs a neighborhood substation to help provide a permanent police presence in specific districts. The New Haven Police Department specifies that the goal of its substations is not to act similarly to the central command headquarters, but to provide an opportunity for close relations between residents and officers. They are considered “resource” centers, whereby citizens can learn to become active in the community policing efforts of the City and communicate to officers the specific needs of the neighborhood in terms of patrol and security³.

Conveniently located and accessible police substations within the City of Parma may help to enhance community policing efforts and neighborhood watch alerts, establish a better understanding of police responsibilities, and provide opportunities for building relationships between citizens and officers.

Realizing current staffing levels and budgetary constraints, the Commission emphasizes the need for additional financial resources before recommending the development of police substations.

1) Geller, W.A. and D. W. Stephens. *Local Government Police Management*, Fourth edition. Municipal Management Series. ICMA Press. 2003.

2) University City District Public Safety Program, http://www.ucityphila.org/ucd_programs/police_substation.php

3) City of New Haven Department of Police Service, <http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/Police/CommunityPolicing.asp>

Citizen Police Academies

The use of Citizen Police Academies was discussed by the Commission as a means of educating Parma residents about the specific demands and requirements placed on their local police officers. Academies train citizens regarding common police responsibilities and actions, including probable cause and search and seizure requirements, use-of-force policies, patrol operations, crime scene and drug scene investigations, and juvenile crime¹. The goal of the program is to alleviate citizens' misunderstandings by providing them with a first-hand experience in the rules, regulations, and policies of their officers.

Citizen Police Academies were first developed in the late 1970s and are now offered in local police departments throughout the country². The City of San Antonio's Police Department, for example, utilizes Academies to facilitate community policing and neighborhood watch programs³. By better educating citizens as to the realities of local law enforcement, the San Antonio police force has found residents better prepared to assist with neighborhood enforcement initiatives. The San Antonio Academy is structured in a similar fashion to most other programs; participating residents meet one night per week for three to four hours over a ten to twelve week period. Citizens who successfully complete the program receive a graduation certificate, which typically awards membership into a local Academy's alumni network.

These programs are hands-on in their approach to connect citizens with police duties, and provide informational demonstrations as to how individual citizens can take part in active community policing or neighborhood watch programs. The City of Evanston, Illinois Police Department encourages graduates of its Academy to act as partners with the police department, and to keep local officers abreast of activities within citizens' neighborhoods and streets⁴. This interactive role between community and police keeps empowered residents engaged with their surroundings and improves both the perception of crime by residents and the prevention strategies of the central command. It also allows for the development of personal relationships between officers and their community members, which helps combat apprehensions of reporting criminal activity or suspicious behavior.

The City of Parma's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) marks an effective approach to citizen involvement in public safety by utilizing citizen volunteers to improve disaster preparedness.

The City can further enhance the role of citizens in public safety efforts by adopting the strategies of Citizen Police Academy models, resulting in more effective community policing and block watch services.

1) Geller, W.A. and D. W. Stephens. *Local Government Police Management*, Fourth edition. Municipal Management Series. ICMA Press. 2003.

2) National Citizens Police Academy Association, <http://www.nationalcpaa.org/index.html>

3) San Antonio Police Department Citizen Police Academy, <http://www.ci.sat.tx.us/sapd/cpa.asp>

4) City of Evanston Police Department, <http://www.cityofevanston.org/departments/police/cpa/index.shtml>

Police Chaplaincy

In order to improve the morale of the City's police officers, the Commission discussed the development of a Police Chaplaincy Program to ease tensions within the force. Chaplaincy programs utilize volunteer spiritual leaders who provide their services to the police force in an advisory and counselor-type relationship. With Parma's wealth of diverse religious institutions, the Commission identified an opportunity through Chaplaincy to connect community leaders with their local police force. A Police Chaplain is a clergy person who has completed a training program in law enforcement (often the Police Citizens Academy), and offers him or herself to all members of the local police force, regardless of an officers' own religious or spiritual affiliation. The nature of law enforcement often causes police officers to deal with complex emotions. The role of a Police Chaplain is to empathize with the officers, advising where necessary, serving as a spiritual leader with experience and understanding of the unique environment confronted by police officers.

The International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) supports this movement for local law enforcement officers, and many communities have adopted its merits¹. The City of Evanston, Illinois, for example, utilizes Chaplains as specified by the ICPC in many capacities: handling domestic disputes, serving as members of the Police Department's Crisis Response Team, counseling the family members of local officers, visiting sick and injured officers at home or while hospitalized, participating in "ride-a-longs" with officers, and offering prayers when requested in times of need². Evanston Chaplains are professionally trained to provide guidance and listen to problems following any unexpected deaths, violent crimes, or domestic disputes and are available on a 24 hour basis as needed. The ICPC calls for additional duties of Police Chaplains, such as providing assistance to victims, teaching Stress Management, Ethics, Family Life, and Pre-Retirement courses to officers, and serving the spiritual needs of prisoners.

The City of Carrollton, Georgia has expressed the significance of its own Police Chaplain program, which is considered an effective instrument in its community policing effort³. The City's Chaplain serves as a liaison between the Police Department, its officers and their families, and the community at large, and seeks to enhance the communication network between citizens and law enforcement.

The City of Parma features over fifty different religious institutions currently serving its citizens. A Police Chaplaincy Program may build upon that internal strength and provide effective spiritual guidance to the local police force, particularly in times of crisis.

1) International Conference of Police Chaplains, <http://www.icpc4cops.org/>

2) City of Evanston Police Department, <http://www.cityofevanston.org/departments/police/chaplain.shtml>

3) The City of Carrollton Police Department, http://www.carrolltonpd.com/support_services.html

Other Public Safety Issues

Because the Fire Department's prevention initiative is functioning effectively, the Commission elected to emphasize the community's immediate need, which it has identified as improved law enforcement services.

The Commission did find reduced staffing in the Fire Department. The current level of 100 City firefighters falls below the 2005 ISO's Fire Suppression Rating Schedule. Overtime expenses totaled over \$1.1 million in 2006 for the Fire Department.

The Fire Department handles all EMS calls and a fee is charged to patients transported for hospitalization. In 2006, approximately \$1.5 million was collected for this service from patients' insurance. The revenue is used to offset the Fire Department's expenditures and debt service for the two new fire stations.

A full-service jail is located in the City's Justice Center with 16 full-time Corrections Officers and an Administrator. It is capable of handling up to 28 inmates for one year. The facility has achieved a 100% compliance rating from the State of Ohio Jail Inspection each year since it opened in 2000.

The City's Animal Control function is currently operating with only one officer. In order to perform more effectively, this component of public safety will require at least one additional part-time officer. Cooperation has been effective with Parma Animal Shelter, Inc.

HOUSING ISSUES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Commission recognizes that housing and families represent the bedrock of any livable community. A summary conclusion of the Commission is that Parma's housing stock needs to be diversified. There is a need for more upscale housing, more development and redevelopment. Parma needs to attract and retain more young families.

The Commission identified many housing concerns. Among them are:

- Age of housing stock
- Maintenance issues; lack of upgrades
- Home values
- Aging population
- Absentee landlords
- Foreclosures & predatory lending
- Lack of new, high priced homes (\$300K+)

Lack of attention to these concerns can lead to potential problems for the City and its residents. Among them are:

- Depreciation of home values
- Increase in rentals over owner occupancy
- Deteriorating neighborhoods
- Long time residents moving out
- Increased poverty of persons renting

The Commission assessed the City's current programs and future plans regarding these housing concerns and potential problems. To its credit, the city currently offers special assistance to first time home-buyers, and the City offers low interest and/or matching loans for home improvements to current qualified home-buyers. The City conducts exterior home maintenance inspections and offers snowplowing, grass cutting and furnace cleaning for seniors at no charge. The City works with other agencies to offer several other housing programs. These include Home Enhancement Loan Program (HELP), Heritage Home Loan Program for historic home restoration, Home Heating Assistance Program (HEAP) and Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers.

The City should institute point-of-sale inspections in order to better promote and maintain the quality of homes. The Cities of Cleveland Heights and Euclid currently conduct effective point-of-sale programs. Parma should adopt similar inspections. The City should also improve its rental unit inspections, which are currently limited to external, walk-by inspections. The City should institute fees for point-of-sale inspections and increase the present fees for rental unit inspections. These programs should function as self-funding services and enable the Building Department to increase its staff of inspectors. Ultimately, this will create a more stringent inspection program that effectively serves the community by addressing the quality of its housing stock.

The Commission would like to note, without necessarily recommending the same for Parma, what other cities are doing to enhance neighborhoods and housing stock. They include (a) street replacement, including aprons and tree lawns (b) tree planting (c) sidewalk snow removal (d) city-wide leaf pickup (e) sewer cleaning & maintenance and (f) construction of large, modern recreation centers.

Successful community development includes supporting viable neighborhoods with adequate retail and public services. Small business concerns for Parma's neighborhoods begin with the inability to compete with national companies. If a national firm moves in, it will likely cause the family owned small business to go out of business. There are also problems with a lack of parking on main streets and the fact that many small businesses are owned by part-timers who do not devote full attention to the business and who do not become "civic minded" in trying to make improvements. Because Parma has so many business streets, with many aging businesses, there is a great need for storefront and streetscape renovations. It would be proper for the City to coordinate the renovations by providing comprehensive design guidelines for commercial properties along the City's gateway streets.

Traffic safety and traffic control are also important considerations for community development, especially in school districts and in high pedestrian corridors such as near parks, public facilities and other gathering places.

The City of Parma can also facilitate community development by investigating and possibly implementing special programs. These may include:

- Incubator program: support entrepreneurial initiatives with growth potential
- Marketing campaign to improve city image
- Establish an ethnic marketplace
- Encourage local businesses to bid city jobs
- Formation of business associations to encourage improvements

Much work needs to be done. It may be proper for the City to review privatization or contracting out some of the work. This could introduce competition that may reduce costs, and it may be an effective way to complement the work done by City staff.

In summary, the Commission feels that Parma must compete with neighboring cities to attract homeowners and businesses, and the City must act soon to revitalize existing housing and small businesses.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Current Economic Conditions

The City of Parma, as one of Cleveland's inner ring suburbs, is facing many of the same economic challenges faced by the region as a whole. Parma, the region's largest suburb, has been losing population and the City's manufacturing base continues to erode. Generally speaking, the City has maintained a stable financial condition with a low level of debt. Future economic challenges include the relatively stagnant regional economy, limited available vacant land, access and infrastructure issues, and limited additional revenue generation potential. The City has also been identified as being over-retailed, with more retail space than can be supported by the population.

The City has currently identified a number of development opportunities throughout the City, which in many cases are based on private initiatives or inquiries. These opportunities include the Veteran's Administration Clinic, the potential relocation of WOIO Channel 19, several opportunities along Day Drive, and a number of smaller initiatives throughout the City.

Redevelopment Opportunities

The dearth of available vacant land for development has been identified as one of the City's greatest challenges. Both the 1996 Economic Development Strategy and the 2004 Master Plan identified several geographical areas within the City that would be appropriate for mixed land use redevelopment initiatives. Possibilities include the area surrounding Parmatown Mall and the Ridge Road corridor North to I-480.

The land bank recommendation from the 1996 Economic Development Strategy was also identified as an initiative that would provide a solid basis for managing the City's land with development potential. Program features of a land bank would include acquisition and control, demolition and clearing, site assembly, infrastructure improvements, and financing and marketing considerations.

Gateway Initiatives

Ridge Road and other major thoroughfares have been identified as City gateways, which should be aesthetically pleasing and have good traffic flow. Traffic flow improvements have already begun along Ridge Road, to include elimination of some traffic signals and timing of remaining signals. The gateway initiative has the opportunity to create a consistent, unified image for the City as well as improving City-wide access, which has been identified as a limiting factor to economic development.

Debt Capacity

It was observed that the City maintains a low debt profile, which indicates capacity to issue additional debt. This capacity could provide the City with additional resources to support significant economic development initiatives. The issuance of such debt should be reserved for those more significant initiatives that both require a higher level of investment and carry the potential for greater long-term return to the City.

Partners in Economic Development

The Mayor's Economic Development Advisory Council is a valuable resource in furthering the City's economic development goals. The City also has existing community and governmental organizations that can assist the City with its economic development initiatives. Economic development partners would include the Parma Area Chamber of Commerce, Parma City Schools, Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland State University, county and state organizations including the County Port Authority and the State Departments of Development and Transportation, the Cleveland Partnership (formerly the Growth Association) and others.

One potentially valuable partnership initiative could be the development of a business incubator facility. This incubator would support entrepreneurial initiatives in technology and other related areas identified as having significant economic growth potential.

The City has made effective use of government grant funding to support various economic initiatives. These efforts should continue, and the City should also develop a database of public and private funding possibilities to track and monitor those opportunities.

Previous City Plans

The City has two previously completed plans, including a 1996 study by the Urban Center of Cleveland State University and a 2004 Master Plan created by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission. The 1996 Plan identified a number of specific economic development initiatives to be considered, including guidelines and time frames for implementation. The City has successfully implemented several of the strategies identified in the 1996 Plan, including the new RTA Community Circulator and the new industrial park in the City's northwest quadrant. The 2004 Plan was very comprehensive in terms of demographic data, statistics and observations; the recommendations included therein were more general in nature.

The Commission believes that an updated Master Plan could be more effective if there were annual monitoring and evaluation. It was also noted that voter approval of a Master Plan, as has been done in Hudson and North Royalton, would give the Plan the greatest credibility and provide the City with the necessary ability to enforce the Plan's provisions. Given the limitations of both staffing and funding resources, the updated Plan needs to identify several specific high-priority, high impact initiatives that could provide immediate successes to build upon.

OBSERVATIONS OF EFFICIENT OPERATIONS

The following observations have been made in addition to the reported statements and findings. The Commission highlights these as specific demonstrations of efficiency led by Parma City officials.

- Parma's property tax collection rate is 98%; the National standard is 95%.
- Direct Deposit for payroll checks now covers 60% of employees.
- Lock Boxes are used for City revenues.
- Credit Card payments are accepted for death and birth certificates.
- Refuse recycling occurs at no cost to citizens.
- Office of Grants is well organized with unified procedures.
- Medical costs for prisoners have been reduced by analysis and documentation producing a savings of \$78,700 from 2004 to present.
- Workers' Compensation costs have been reduced by approximately \$100,000 through appropriate oversight and implementation of cost savings programs from 2004 to present.
- Tax Department employees assist citizens in completing their City income tax forms.
- Parma takes advantage of bulk discounts by utilizing the State of Ohio purchasing system.
- Parma offers an annual Employee Health Fair with representatives from the Health Department and Parma Hospital.
- Parma became the first governmental aggregator of electricity in Ohio, saving Parma residents over \$14 million in rates since 2001.
- The City operates a highly successful youth diversion program, bringing in over \$12,000 in fines and/or donations, and over 3,125 hours of community service.
- Parma operates a mediation division that handles approximately 60 neighborhood dispute cases per year at no cost to participants.
- The City created a risk management committee that meets quarterly to discuss ways to reduce the City's exposure to injury and/or liability.
- The City conducts fraud prevention outreach seminars to various citizen groups at no charge.
- Through a grant, the City employs a crime victim advocate to assist victims of crime through the justice system.
- The City created a landlord/tenant assistance program, offering general legal advice to landlords and tenants in dispute.
- The City created a traffic intervention program to assist drivers with suspended licenses to obtain valid license privileges.
- The City offers Requests for Proposals (RFP) for bidding purchases and services in electronic version on its website.
- The City's Purchasing Department utilizes the Internet for all supply items that are not required to be formally bid.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The City should proceed with development of a revised Master Plan.

The Master Plan should include implementation goals and timeframes that will guide future growth. Consideration should also be given to having the updated Master Plan approved by the voters to give it the greatest possible credibility.

2. The City should contract with the Cuyahoga County Sanitary Engineer for sewer line maintenance and management.

Sewer back-ups occur frequently with heavy rains. Parma citizens want relief. The County Engineer has the expertise and resources to address the problem in a more cost-effective manner. The County Engineer already provides this service to 30 Cuyahoga County communities including Parma Heights, Middleburg Heights, and Brooklyn.

3. The City should place a police levy on the ballot for a vote in 2007.

It must be communicated that the City needs more revenues to maintain City services. The City should organize an aggressive, inclusive campaign that informs the voting public about the need to maintain the City's safety and low crime rate, which can only occur with an adequately staffed and well-managed police department. Demonstrate to the voters that problems with overtime abuse and improper police behavior are well behind us. Checks and balances exist to safeguard against these problems from arising in the future.

4. The City should institute point of sale inspections and more stringent inspections on rental properties.

The objective is to maintain the integrity of the City's housing stock. Inspections should include interior and exterior items. Fees charged should cover 100% of the cost of the inspection programs, including the hiring of new inspectors.

5. The City's Community Development Department should develop a comprehensive design for commercial properties.

The staff should be given a certain time limit to bring the program back to City Council for approval and implementation. It should emphasize the entrance into Parma and the City's main corridors, particularly Ridge Road.

6. The City should offer incentives to developers to build upscale housing in Parma.

The incentives can be varied. The incentives must have the goal of assisting new home-buyers and young families to the City.

7. The City should investigate privatization or contracting-out more services.

The competitiveness of the private sector often allows for work to be accomplished more efficiently. The City should evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the private sector providing assistance in community development services such as street repair, property maintenance, and streetscape improvements.

8. The City should create a Civilian Police Review Board and a Citizens' Police Academy.

Police services are probably the most important public service the City provides. Trust and confidence in the Police Division is necessary for citizens to respect and feel comfortable with the police. A Civilian Review Board would investigate complaints against police officers behavior and make recommendations to the Chief of Police for action. A Citizens' Academy will develop programs for residents to gain knowledge of the Police Division functions.

9. The City should investigate the establishment of police substations.

Police substations would bring the police closer to the residents, reduce response time, and may reduce divisive neighborhood issues. The Commission recognizes the additional manpower required.

10. The City should expand its Youth Diversion Program to include traffic violations.

This program has the advantages of preventing recidivism and providing models for changing behavior. It can also reduce criminal justice costs.

11. The City should continue technological advancements to improve traffic control.

These technologies should include equipment in patrol cars, traffic signalization, and technology to deter speeding and minor traffic violations.

12. The City should review its financial relationship with the Parma Court.

The goal is to ensure that the manner in which court costs are paid and revenues are distributed is rational and fair.

13. The City should review ways to enhance its effort to establish collaborative endeavors within the community, possibly by utilizing citizen volunteers.

The goal is to establish buy-in for the City's image and service enhancement, identify target groups, engage with them and determine their specific needs/interests.

14. The City should continue efforts to develop a business incubator facility to support new businesses that can grow the City's economy.

This incubator would support entrepreneurial initiatives in technology related and other areas identified as having significant economic growth potential. This model has been used with success elsewhere.

15. The City should investigate site options for a large common gathering place for city-wide events.

Such a gathering place would provide a visible "city center" where many diverse groups of citizens that make up the city could gather for regular common events such as the ACT Community Fair.

APPENDICES

A. BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Rev. Todd A. Biermann

Pastor, Calvary Lutheran Church
Member, Parma City Centennial Worship Planning Team
Mediator with local community representatives and civic officials

Barry L. Franklin, C.P.A.

Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Parma Community General Hospital
Board Member, Cleveland Health Network Managed Care Organization
Former Board Member, YMCA of Greater Cleveland

Thomas F. Jones

President and CEO of Marionette Consulting, Inc.
Former Inspector-in-Charge, Cleveland F.B.I. Office
Former Chief of Police/Security, Cleveland Clinic Foundation Hospital
Former Board Member, Cleveland Council of the Boy Scouts of America

Sylvester Murray

Professor of Public Administration, Cleveland State University
Former City Manager, City of Cincinnati, Ohio
M.G.A. Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

David M. Nedrich

Communications Manager, General Motors Corporation, Parma Metal Center
Member, Parma Area Chamber of Commerce
Member, Parma Mayor's Economic Development Advisory Committee
Member, Business/School Advisory Committee, Parma City Schools

Robin Darden Thomas

Chief Deputy Treasurer, Cuyahoga County, Ohio
Former Manager of Property Assessments and Taxation, Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office

Kevin Yaughner

President and C.O.O., Marc Glassman, Inc.

William Ziganti

Former Volunteer, Elder Day Care Center
Former Volunteer, Veterans' Affairs Medical Center, Brecksville, Ohio
Representative of Parma Senior Citizen's Community

**B. BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION SUB COMMITTEE MEETINGS:
Persons Interviewed and Groups Engaged**

Finances and Taxation

Sy Murray and Robin Darden Thomas

Tim Dobeck, Law Director

Dennis Kish, City Auditor

Anthony Zielinski, City Treasurer

Shelley Cullins, Economic Development Officer/Grantwriter

Paul Deichmann, Building Commission/City Engineer

Terence J. Lentz, Deputy Treasurer

Michael P. Mason, Tax Commissioner

Elayne Siegfried, Human Resources and Purchasing Director

Erik Tollerup, Community Development Director

City Image and Leisure Services

Rev. Todd Biermann and William Ziganti

Mayor Dean DePiero

Powell Caesar, Communications/Public Relations Director

Shelley Cullins, Economic Development Officer/Grantwriter

Paul Deichmann, Building Commissioner/City Engineer

JoAnn Mason, Senior Center Director

Donna Smallwood, Human Service Specialist

Erik Tollerup, Community Development Director

Mickey Vittardi, Recreation Director

Suna Aziz, Islamic Center of Cleveland

Bonnie Black, Broadview Multi Care Center

Dr. Christina Dinklocker, Parma City Schools

Kristin Gill, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Parma-Snow Branch

Glenn Haley, YMCA of Greater Cleveland

Rosemarie Hurt, Parma Area Collaborative Family Services

Mary Hopkins, Pleasantview/Legacy Place

Dodi Lettus, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Parma-South Branch

Isaac Lifschutz, Broadview Multi Care Center

Katherine Malmquist, Cuyahoga County Public Library, Parma-Ridge Branch

Pat Moore, Parma Community General Hospital

Sandy Robinson, Cuyahoga Community College - Western Campus

Mark Rodriguez, Cuyahoga Community College - Western Campus

Peggy Rossi, Holy Family Home

Rosey St. Mollo, Pleasantview/Legacy Place

Amber Vourheir, Mount Alverna Home

Patrick Welsh, Mount Alverna Home

Tom Woll, Parmadale

Stephen Wertheim, United Way

Public Safety Services

Thomas Jones and Kevin Yaughner

Mayor Dean DePiero

Greg Baeppler, Safety Director

Daniel Hoffman, Police Chief

Housing Issues and Community Development

Robin Darden Thomas and Kevin Yaughner

Mayor Dean DePiero

Chuck Germana, President of City Council

Sean Brennan, Ward 2 Councilman

Nicholas J. Celebrezze, Ward 3 Councilman

Brian Day, Ward 4 Councilman

Mary Galinas, Ward 1 Councilwoman

Roy Jech, Ward 9 Councilman

Larry Napoli, Ward 6 Councilman

Tom Regas, Ward 5 Councilman

Scott Tuma, Ward 8 Councilman

Tim Dobeck, Law Director

Anthony Zielinski, City Treasurer

Don Graves, Assistant Building Commissioner

Lev Kulchytsky, Public Housing Director

Erik Tollerup, Community Development Director

Economic Development

Barry Franklin and David Nedrich

Shelley Cullins, Economic Development Officer/Grantwriter

Chris Monaco, Parmatown Mall

Pat Pell, Parma Area Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Patricia Rowell, Cuyahoga Community College - Western Campus

Patricia Ruflin, Parma Community General Hospital

Paul Schneider, Parma Community General Hospital

Harold Shachter, Broadview Multi-Care

Bob Verdile, City of Parma Heights

Tom Weinrich, City of Parma

Dr. Sarah Zatik, Parma City Schools

C. STATE OF OHIO HOUSE BILL 920 OVERVIEW

According to the Cuyahoga County Budget Commission, property taxes are calculated based on two factors: (1) the value of the property and (2) the tax rate levied in a specific community.

Property value is determined by the County Auditor. This is done through a reappraisal every six years, an update every three years, and an inspection of any additions or modifications to a property on an annual basis. As the cost of groceries, automobiles, and clothing increases with inflation, so does the value of real property.

Tax rates are determined by each community. Tax rates are expressed in terms of mills. One mill of taxes is equal to \$1 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

The Ohio Constitution allows taxing authorities to jointly tax up to 1% of property value without voter approval.

House Bill 920 was enacted in order to keep inflation from increasing voted taxes.

- For chartered cities, almost all millage approved by the charter is exempt from H.B. 920. As property value rises, charter city taxes will also rise.
- H.B. 920 comes into effect when property values increase due to inflation.
- H.B. 920 applies to all voted levies.

Suppose, for example, a city receives voter approval to raise \$5 million through a 5 mill levy. The following year, after a reappraisal, property values have increased. H.B. 920 does not allow the City to receive any additional revenue from this voted levy. The voted 5 mills will be reduced to a millage amount that will generate \$5 million, and each taxpayer will pay a lower “effective” tax rate. In order for the City to raise more revenue, it must go to the voters for approval of another levy.

H.B. 920 was designed to protect property owners from unvoted tax increases. It also serves to ensure that each property owner pays his or her fair share of taxes.

County Residential Property Tax Rates:

TAXING DISTRICT	VOTED TAX RATE	EFFECTIVE TAX RATE	TAX AS PERCENT OF MARKET
Cleveland Heights	166.70	92.42	2.83
Lakewood	146.60	85.42	2.62
Euclid	115.60	69.43	2.13
Strongsville	108.20	61.18	1.87
Cleveland	102.60	65.87	2.02
Brook Park	97.20	58.44	1.79
Parma Heights	95.70	69.50	2.13
North Royalton	91.50	62.03	1.90
Parma	90.60	63.90	1.96
Brooklyn	69.10	52.94	1.62

D. PREVIOUS CITY PLANS

1. City of Parma Master Plan

A copy of the 2004 City of Parma Master Plan, conducted by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, can be found at:

<http://www.cityofparma-oh.gov/cityhall/index.htm>

2. Economic Development Strategy

The 1996 Economic Development Strategy, conducted by Cleveland State University's Urban Center, follows this report.