

#1 (Rev.1/93) SINGLE PAGE COMMUNICATION TO THE COMMON COUNCIL

TO: THE COMMON COUNCIL: DATE: October 25, 2005

FROM: DEPARTMENT: Audit and Control

DIVISION: Audit

SUBJECT:[: **Parks Review under** "Intermunicipal Cooperation  
[: Agreement for Operation, Management and  
[: Improvement of City of Buffalo Parklands."  
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PRIOR COUNCIL REFERENCE: (IF ANY)

TEXT: (TYPE SINGLE SPACE BELOW)

**Audit Objectives:**

To review the condition of various City of Buffalo parks now maintained by the County of Erie as per the "Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreement for Operation, Management and Improvement of City of Buffalo Parklands" in order to determine their level of maintenance, in accordance with this agreement.

**Audit Program:**

In order to determine the condition of each park reviewed, the following items were observed. Each item was given a number from one to five, **five being the worst rating**. All categories were reviewed at each location visited and pictures were taken. Not every location had the equipment or facilities we sought to review. The inspection took place over five days and results of the rating were reviewed by the team for a second time after completing the walking tour. The categories chosen do not require an expertise in forestry or engineering but to provide a citizen with a common sense appraisal of the condition.

**Comments on Individual Parks**

Delaware Park – The Park was beautiful when we visited, except for the brown grass. Rain has since cleared up that problem. Some bathrooms were closed, notably near the 198 expressway, and a few paths need work. Overall, this is a great park to visit. As with every Olmsted Park we visited, we spotted employees working on various tasks as we made our review.

Gates Circle – Although not strictly a park, it is a valuable respite from the city's concrete. Good benches and grass provide a great place to take a break if you work at the

hospital. The fountain's use as a pool has been curbed by signage and opening of other pools in other parks.

Amherst/Middlesex – Green space for the neighborhood. Nothing here but trees and grass.

Masten Park – Of all the parks visited, this is one of the two worst. It needs major repairs to the recreation building, due to many incidents of vandalism. A chain link fence was stolen two days before our inspection. Neither of the two pools was operational. New playground fixtures were being installed during our visit. A night watchman or increased Police patrols need to be implemented. Hopefully, this would stop the actions of the few individuals bent on destroying equipment, damaging the recreation building and stealing its equipment.

Sperry Park - A small area but very clean and well kept.

John F Kennedy Park – A larger park, with playgrounds and a ball diamond. Graffiti and petty vandalism keeps this from being a fabulous family park.

LaSalle Park – A beautiful playground with a nearby pavilion. A great place for kids.

Fronczak Park – This area is in good shape but playground equipment needs some minor repairs and ball fields need the same.

Father Conway Park – Along with Masten, this is the other park that needs major attention. Litter was everywhere, and graffiti was everywhere on the playground equipment. The basketball and tennis courts are weed infested and overgrown; a real eyesore. It is our understanding that these courts will be broken up and removed and the area regraded. (NOTE – this did occur upon conclusion of our fieldwork)

Langion Playground - A well-used playground.

Valley Nature Trail / Redmond Park –The park is clean and well groomed. The nature trails provide for a great walk as well as some interesting views. One of Buffalo's hidden treasures.

Erie Basin Marina – One of Buffalo's most popular parks. The gardens and flowers are rivaled only by Delaware Park's Rose Garden and the Botanical Gardens. Fantastic views, clean grounds, ample parking and the cleanest public bathrooms in Buffalo combine in Buffalo's finest non-Olmstead park.

Buffalo Naval and Serviceman's Park – A park that makes it difficult to visit. The parking area is closed. The museum is open during construction, if you brave the dust, dirt and can find the entrance. This will be a great park to visit when construction ends. During construction, this is a public relations disaster.

Walden Park – One of Buffalo's park gems. Lovely, with plenty of park to play in, a good play area and a small pavilion with grills, it seems underused. Open bathrooms would help this park.

Moreland Park – A small park with ball diamonds and a batting/pitching cage. The playing fields need work.

Hennapin Park – A generally clean park, with the only problem being weeds and overgrowth evident on the cement steps and between play areas/playground equipment. A crew was placing and grading wood chips into the playground area during our inspection.

Martin Luther King Park – The wading pool was operational and in use during our visit. Olmstead staff were performing maintenance on the play area as we arrived. It is a clean, well maintained park.

Trinidad Park – An obviously well used park. Some graffiti was evident on the recreation building. Minor repairs are needed to playground equipment. A section of the fencing needs repair/replacing.

Columbus Park – Small but very well kept park. Some graffiti on building and benches could use a coat of paint.

Prospect Park – Neighbor to Columbus Park and basically in the same condition.

Front Park – A great, if somewhat hidden, play area. It is maintained well. Olmstead staff were watering the grass as we reviewed the park.

Symphony Circle – Well kept and manicured with beautiful flowerbeds.

Broderick Park – A fisherman's delight, however, the park has problems with litter. The refreshment stand was locked solidly, as were the restroom facilities. The breakwater is a VERY long walk and has some minor graffiti.

Squaw Island Park – Generally in good condition, some graffiti and trash/litter evident. Overgrowth could be trimmed along the bike path/walkway.

Riverside Park – Another Olmstead Park in great condition except for minor graffiti and some litter seen on the day we visited.

George Washington Park – Green space that overlooks the river. It is in good condition.

Towpath Park – Another small park in Buffalo that seems to be an underutilized gem. It was in good condition and provides a great view of Lake Erie.

Cazenovia Park – Another jewel in the Olmstead Park system. The restrooms could use some paint and cleaning.

Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens – A local treasure to be cherished. Besides some brown patches in the surrounding grass area, it was perfect in every other aspect. Heavy reconstruction during our visit limited our review.

Tift Farms Nature Preserve – An amazing park to explore. Hope you like to walk! Trails are well kept and the fishing pond gets its share of attention. Building was locked when we visited.

South Park – Park with golf course, another Olmstead park. It is in great condition, with the exception of the baseball diamonds deep within the park. These diamonds don't seem to be used and that may account for their low maintenance.

Heacock Park – Green space with trees and not much else. Overall good condition.

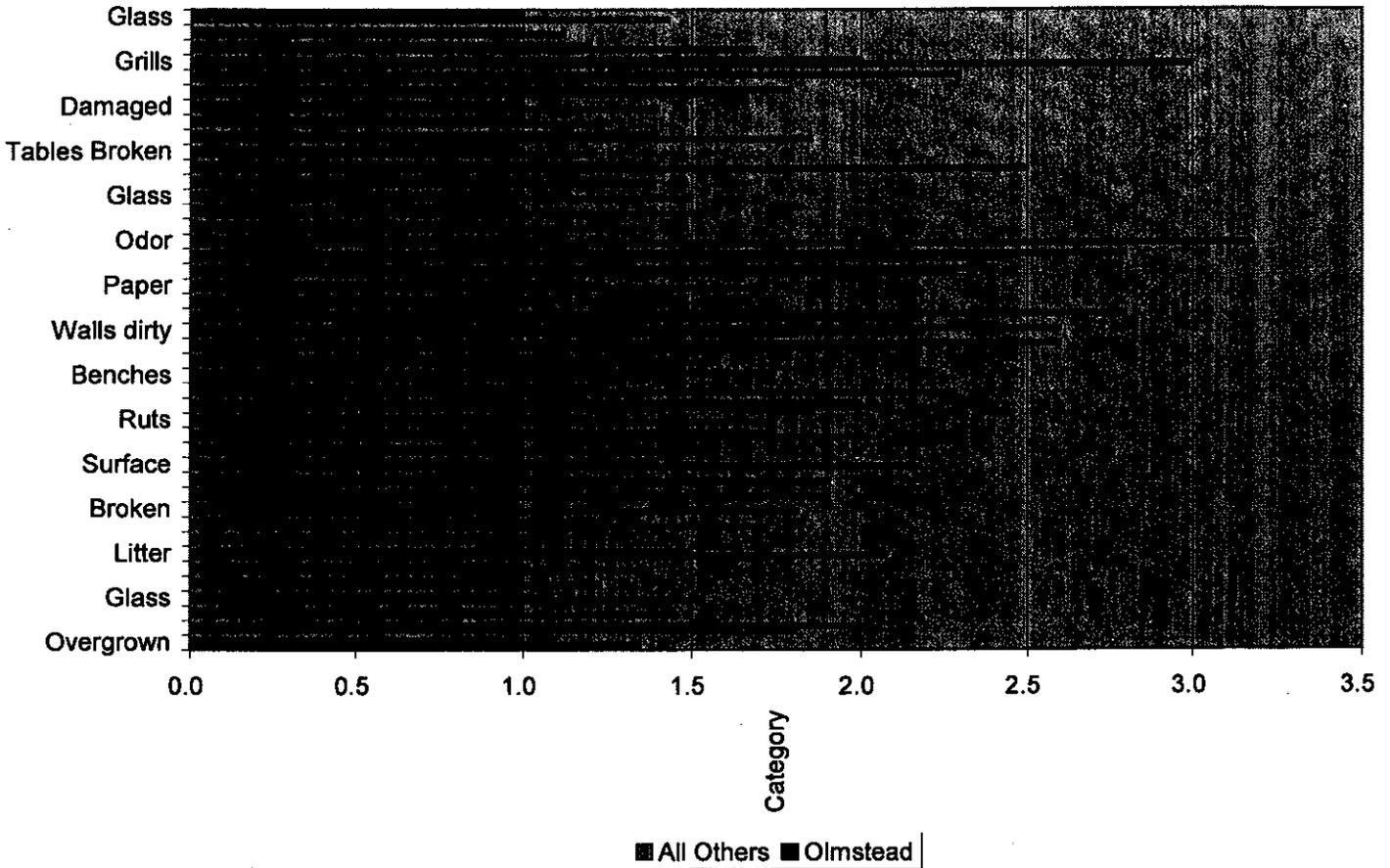
Stachkowski-Houghton Park – A large but well maintained park in extraordinary condition.

Shoshone Park – Well used park with the only problems being graffiti on buildings and an abundance of trash and litter. Parents who bring their children there to play were “cleaning” up litter themselves on the day of our inspection!!

McCarthy Park – Newly refurbished and large park. Playing courts, walkways, ball diamonds, and playground equipment were in excellent condition. Minor landscaping was being performed during our visit there.

All High Stadium – The playing field is in excellent condition, the seating area needs work and cement bleachers are crumbling and weed infested. County money was set aside to repair this facility, but under the current crisis that issue seems in doubt.

Olmstead v All Others



Park Awards (and Raspberries)

Best Overall Park – Erie Basin Marina. It’s clean. It’s beautiful. It’s fun. What else is there?

Worst Overall Park – Father Conway Park. It’s trash infested, not maintained well, and needs major work.

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