

## America in Bloom 2015 EVALUATION FORM



**Participant:** Fairview Park, OH

**Population Category:** 16,000 to 20,000

**Visiting Dates:** July 22-23, 2015

**Judges:** Evelyn Alemanni and Stephen Pategas

America in Bloom envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work, and play – benefitting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage; and planting pride through volunteerism.

All judging criteria will be adjusted to the climate and environmental conditions of the participant's location.

The judges' report is based on efforts in management, planning, maintenance, improvement, and innovation of each of the following criteria:

Criteria	Actual Points	Possible Points
1. Floral Displays	128.00	175.00
2. Landscaped Areas	131.00	175.00
3. Urban Forestry	122.00	175.00
4. Environmental Efforts	120.00	175.00
5. Heritage Preservation	119.00	175.00
6. Overall Impression	92.00	125.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>712.00</b>	<b>1000</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>71.20</b>	
<b>Bloom Rating</b>	<b>3</b>	

Five blooms = 85%   Four blooms = 72.50–84.95%   Three blooms = 60.00–72.45%   Two blooms = 45.00–59.95%   One bloom = <45.00%

Participant representatives met: (including email)

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## General Comments and Suggestions:

Suggestions are indicated in italics.



Congratulations to Fairview Park, OH on your first year of participation in the American in Bloom national awards program. Welcome to the America in Bloom family of towns and cities across our country that are making America a better place.

You have earned a three bloom rating, which is great for your first effort and of course the most challenging. Next year will be much easier, and you'll have more to show the judges as you become more familiar with the program.



Fairview Park is a pleasant community with approximately 6,500 single family homes, attractive school and municipal facilities. We were impressed to learn that 67% of the property tax supports the schools. In addition to Fairview Park's own parks, the extensive Cleveland Metro Parks system runs through the town and offers a wide range of amenities.



The city aggressively pursues grant opportunities to fund projects throughout the city.

Your community profile is nicely done. *Please be sure to give a copy to the library and museum. Also, consider selling it to realtors as a marketing tool and using it as an addendum for grant applications and for economic development proposals.*



The Community Council designates a citizen of the year and volunteer efforts are recognized. *If you are not already doing it, be sure to record volunteer hours as they can be used as the matching portion of matching funds grants.*

We appreciate the organizations that handled fundraising for Fairview Park's AIB entry fee and the judges' accommodations. *For next year, remember that you can get a 25% discount on your registration when you recruit a new city, college campus, business district, or military installation. Recruit four and your entry is free. Please consider asking hotels to comp the judges' rooms, they are often glad to do that. The same goes for restaurants.*



*There are so many America in Bloom towns within a one day drive of Fairview Park that you might want to consider working with them to create a tourism route. These towns include Bay Village, Rocky River, Westlake, Hudson, Lakeside Chautauqua, Cleveland, Oberlin, Wickliffe, Willoughby, Sandusky, Kent, Springfield, Ironton, Swanton, Toledo, Oberlin, Middlefield, Olmstead Falls, Berea, Sylvania, Bowling Green, Findlay and more.*

*Please see the map on the next page.*



We're looking forward to your participation next year and wish you a bright and vibrant future – after all, Fairview Park is a great place to grow!

## 1. Floral Displays

	Max points	Actual Score
Flower beds, containers, baskets, window boxes. Arrangement, originality, distribution, location, diversity, balance, harmony, quality of maintenance. Use and integration of annuals, perennials, ornamental grasses, bulbs, tropical plants, and seasonal flowers that provide year-round interest.		
<b>Municipal</b>		
Leadership and plan of action for floral displays	20	16
Concept and design, variety of plantings, overall effect	20	15
Maintenance and quality of displays	20	15
Design for all seasons	15	9
<b>Business</b>		
Concept and design, overall effect	15	10
Maintenance and quality of displays	15	10
<b>Residential</b>		
Concept and design, overall effect	15	11
Maintenance and quality of displays	15	12
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Volunteer involvement in design, planting, and maintenance of floral displays	20	16
Financial and in-kind contributions to floral displays	20	14
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	<b>175.00</b>	<b>128.00</b>

### Comments and suggestions:

Fairview Park is working hard on incorporating color into its landscapes. There are 100 hanging baskets planted by a local nursery (fifth year for this program), eight containers planted by volunteers and watered by city and the garden club maintains 30 terra cotta containers which are also watered by the city.

Floral displays create a welcoming atmosphere and are an appropriate way to attract the eye to gateways, streetscaped roadways and municipal, commercial and residential buildings. *The hanging baskets along Lorain Road should be placed on hold (see below) or reorganized. Cluster them in groups to improve the visual impact. Instead of a string with pearls (meaning baskets) spaced out, think of a number of pearls clustered into broaches which would attract more attention. The flowers in the baskets would benefit from the use of a slow release fertilizer in the soil when they are planted and regular watering with a diluted liquid fertilizer. Note that when plants are dry they can be harmed by fertilizer.*



Containers full of colorful plants make very strong focal points and can be used singly or in groups of three with one large and two smaller in size. This can be determined by the size of the available space, the size of surrounding elements and the speed of the passing vehicles. *Consider placing the hanging basket program on hiatus in order to use the funds for the purchase and installation of durable cast stone containers with an appropriate theme. These containers could be planted with bulbs for a spring show, annuals for the summer and cut evergreen boughs for the winter. Containers are easier to maintain and require less water. Potential handsomely styled containers include the Berkeley Planters from Campania International that are available in three sizes and are heavy enough to deter theft (<http://campaniainternational.com/index.php?page=berkeley-large-planter>).*



City hall has a colorful display of annuals and there are numerous businesses such as Sidari and 200 West Apartments that have colorful displays of flowers. Residential areas have many flower beds and flowering plants that create visual interest in neighborhoods. *There are opportunities to add lower maintenance color that repeats by using perennials. Consult with the extension service to determine appropriate plants. Locations that are in need of color include: the sign at Fairview Corporate Center, Gemini Center sign, portions of the street facing slope of the berm at PEP Prentiss (combined with a backdrop of ornamental grasses) and the Cleveland Metroparks Rocky River Reservation sign.*



The front of City Hall has great curb appeal, but most visitors arrive at the rear entrance since that is where the parking is located. *The rear entry is ready for a makeover with a well designed garden with a sculpture and patio with shaded seating.*

Fairview Center has attractive containers along Lorain Road that are well planted and maintained by a volunteer and watered by the city. There are also attractive planting beds along the sidewalk. *At the flagpole, the flowers could extend to the sidewalk with the addition of medium height plants in front of the tall ones at the rear. Three tiers of plantings would fit the bill here.*



Morton Park has an attractive sign and new wall. *This is a prime location for some beefy cast stone containers flanking the sign. Note that the tree already planted behind the sign is now encroached upon by the new wall. Transplant the tree to behind the wall.*

## 2. Landscaped Areas

Overall design and suitability of landscape, turf, and ground covers. Use of native plants. Overall design and suitability for location/use. Good use of design principles (i.e., balance of plant material and constructed elements, harmony, color, texture, shape, etc.). Sustainability. Integration of hardscapes, lighting, site features. Maintenance (weeds, mulching practices, edging). Site rejuvenation and rehabilitation. Efforts in strategic planning. Community gardens, children's gardens, healing gardens, Audubon and other specialty public gardens and zoos.	Max points	Actual Score
<b>Municipal</b>		
Overall design and planting of landscape, turf and groundcovers	15	10
Environmental management of sports fields and turf	15	11
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	13
Sustainable management, naturalization and eco-design	15	10
<b>Business</b>		
Overall design and planting of landscape	15	11
Management of turf and groundcovers	10	7
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	11
<b>Residential</b>		
Overall design and planting of landscape	15	11
Management of turf and groundcovers	15	13
Quality of landscape maintenance	15	12
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Volunteer involvement, i.e. garden clubs, neighborhood groups, Master Gardeners and University extension, in funding, planting, and maintenance of landscaped areas	15	11
Participation in future planning (committees, councils, and advisory boards.)	15	11
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	<b>175.00</b>	<b>131.00</b>

### Comments and suggestions:



Landscaped areas throughout the city are appropriately maintained. The garden club helps with maintenance of the city hall grounds. We commend the garden club for its efforts to improve landscapes in several parts of the city. We understand that you have had a harsh, snowy winter and have taken that into consideration.

The Valley Forge neighborhood has an attractive gateway that can serve as a model to other neighborhoods and even as a city gateway. Likewise, the Coffinberry Estates neighborhood has beautiful landscaping that adds to property values. *The large medians could be further enhanced with flowering shrubs and ornamental grasses.*



Commendations for the streambed restoration in Bain Park. *Consider adding native wildflowers, ornamental grasses (typically deer-proof) and shrubs in that area to reduce maintenance and create pollinator habitat.*



The garden club sponsors a Showcase Garden award program for attractive front yards. Every two weeks, between May and September, two properties, either commercial or residential, receive a Showcase Garden Award. In addition, the garden club periodically sponsors a garden tour. *These tours can be a great way to inspire homeowners with new ideas and can be important fundraisers for your organization. Be sure to approach local businesses for sponsorship in addition to charging admission. As an additional incentive to homeowners who take pride in their landscapes,*

*consider using inexpensive door hangers to express admiration and appreciation. These can be distributed by mail carriers, delivery people, and even pizza delivery personnel – in short, anyone who sees your neighborhoods on a regular basis.*

Turf throughout the city appears healthy and well maintained. We observed the groundskeepers at Bain Park aerating the turf. *Many of the sloping areas at the park could be transformed into meadows of wildflowers to attract bees and butterflies. This would also reduce mowing costs. Where possible, reduce the size of turf areas to reduce maintenance costs that include labor, equipment, fuel, fertilizers, etc. Consider planting low maintenance blooming shrubs and ornamental grasses instead for visual interest.*



Mowing at the Fairview Park cemetery is challenging and time-consuming due to all the tombstones. *Because it is a closed cemetery, consider replacing the lawn with low-growing wildflowers and native groundcovers to eliminate mowing after a few years.*

Several of the shrubs along the gateway entrance to the Gemini Center appear to be dead or dying, possibly as a result of the past winter's cold temperatures. *By now, it is clear what is dead and should be removed, so work on how you should proceed as soon as possible to enhance this important entrance that is seen by thousands of people each year.*

*To help assure quality landscapes in the future, develop a landscape code for new residential and commercial construction that defines minimum open space, number of trees, screening of parking lots with hedges, etc. and require a landscape plan review as part of the approval process.*

*The Brookpark Road medians could incorporate ornamental grasses planted in patterns, swaths, or curves surrounding the trees. Add small color beds among the grasses.*

*Consider painting a mural on the outside walls of the restrooms at Morton Park. Also, check the plantings around the park sign and trim as needed to keep the sign visible.*

The community garden is a wonderful success and an asset to the neighborhood. Kudos to the Eagle Scouts who built fences, garden frames, benches, compost bins and a shed. Paths are mulched with wood chips made from dead ash trees removed by the city. There was a small sign indicating that it's a community garden. *Add a larger sign to indicate who is making the land available and also contact information in case someone wants to rent a space or to report a problem.*

*Consider incorporating gardens into the school curriculum. For a good resource, check [www.grannysgardenschool.org](http://www.grannysgardenschool.org). This program is based at the elementary school in Loveland, Ohio and is worth a field trip.*

*Look into the possibility of having some of your parks certified as wildlife habitats. Check <http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife/Certify-Your-Wildlife-Garden.aspx> .For schools visit: <http://www.nwf.org/How-to-Help/Garden-for-Wildlife/Schoolyard-Habitats.aspx>*

*Review your hardscapes for areas of unnecessary asphalt and concrete. Work with a landscape architect or landscape designer to identify areas that can be removed and replaced with attractive shrubs and ornamental grasses. These areas will not only soften the look of the city but help with storm water mitigation. Make sure to lower the grades so they hold water for a short period of time.*

### 3. Urban Forestry

Distribution, variety and suitability of trees; new plantings; urban tree program; qualified personnel or access to trained individual(s); inventory or database; frequency of tree surveys; care and maintenance programs; preservation of heritage trees and woodlots and green buffer zones; scheduled succession plantings. Efforts in management, planning, maintenance, improvement, and innovation. Written policies, bylaws and regulations, long- and short-term plans.	Max points	Actual Score
<b>Municipal</b>		
Overall plan of action, tree planting programs, variety of species, inventory	20	13
Tree maintenance	15	11
Preservation and restoration of natural areas	15	12
Tree protection/planting regulations and by-laws	15	10
<b>Business</b>		
Overall planting program	20	13
Tree maintenance	15	12
<b>Residential</b>		
Overall planting program	20	10
Tree maintenance	15	12
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Volunteer involvement in funding, planting, and maintenance of trees (i.e. Tree City USA)	20	15
Volunteer involvement of youth in tree programs (i.e., Arbor Day, etc.)	20	14
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	<b>175.00</b>	<b>122.00</b>

#### Comments and suggestions:



Fairview Park residents are fortunate to live in an urban forest with fabulous, old trees. Most of them appear to be healthy and well maintained. *The trees are so large, in fact, that you may actually have some champion trees in the city.* <http://forestry.ohiodnr.gov/championtrees>. *Work with the schools to have students identify the largest trees they can find, and then designate them as heritage trees. Devise a way to protect them.*



We appreciated seeing the naturalized woodlands in Bain Park. They are a treasure to preserve forever.

In the past, it was customary to plant a monoculture of trees and this practice is very apparent in many neighborhoods. While this practice allows for uniform appearance in neighborhoods, we have learned from experience with Dutch Elm disease and more recently with the Emerald Ash Borer, that mixing species is a better practice so that a disease or insect infestation doesn't wipe out entire blocks of trees. *As you develop your master plan for tree replacements, be sure to encourage a wide variety of species.*

In some neighborhoods, we observed large dead trees. *Perhaps their removal could be encouraged by code enforcement. Similarly, Bain Park has a number of dead trees that should be removed as they present a safety concern.*

The city website lists prohibited trees but we were unable to find a list of recommended trees. Check <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/1000/1082.html> for a list of trees recommended for Ohio and adapt it to your needs.

*When someone damages a city-owned tree, be sure to go after them for damages. For example, if a car crashes into a tree, the driver's insurance company can be required to pay not just for a replacement tree, but for the economic value of the tree that has been lost.*

The city conducted a tree inventory in 2010. *This should be updated periodically. If funding is not available, you may be able to update it with volunteers. Pam Bennett, head of the Ohio Master Gardeners, has created a free webinar on how to do a tree inventory with volunteers. It is available at [www.americaninbloom.org/webinars.aspx](http://www.americaninbloom.org/webinars.aspx).*

Trees and power lines are both important community assets. Trees provide beauty, shade, wildlife habitat, wind protection and other environmental benefits, while power lines bring electricity for lights, heat, and appliances. Unfortunately, trees and power lines often end up in conflict. Trees under power lines in Fairview Park have been butchered by power company employees who, judging by the work they have done, are not properly trained. In fact, they are killing your trees. Trees are an incredibly valuable asset. If someone totaled your truck, you would go after them for repair or replacement costs. *The same should be true for someone who damages your trees. You can determine the environmental benefits that trees are giving you with i-tree software available free from the US Forest Service ([www.itreetools.org](http://www.itreetools.org)). By measuring the size of the damaged tree, you can determine the dollar value of the tree's economic benefits and the total dollar impact of the bad pruning job the utility is doing. Hopefully by presenting this information, you can encourage them to do a professional job. However, this may mean that they have to train their workers or hire new personnel, because the current work being done indicates a complete lack of understanding in the field of arboreal care. In the long run, however, it would be better to have them cut down the offending trees and plant new trees only on the side of street with no power lines. Going forward, plant trees whose mature height is less than the height of the power lines. The most expensive solution would be to move utilities underground, and this is something you can require for new developments and redevelopments.*

*In the medians on Brookpark Road, the soil in the raised beds has been pushed up too high on the trees. Remove soil from around the trees and do any plantings at the original grade.*



*Volcano mulching, where mulch is piled high on the tree trunks, was observed throughout the city. This must be something that a mulch company invented to sell more mulch. The practice is detrimental to tree health, as it can cause the tree trunk to rot, causes tree roots to grow upward and potentially girdle the trunk, prevents water from reaching the roots on young trees and encourages rodents to live in the mulch piles. When mulching trees, think "donut" not "volcano" and spread the mulch out to a maximum two to three inch depth to a*

*four foot diameter. Keep mulch four inches from the trunk. More details can be found at <http://quilford.ces.ncsu.edu/2014/02/volcano-mulching-too-much-of-a-good-thing/>.*

Check with the city of Bexley, OH for a copy of their tree ordinance and work with your Tree Commission to adapt it to Fairview Park's needs. *Particularly, you need to be protecting trees on private property, protecting trees during construction and requiring trees to be planted in new residential and commercial developments. Having tree pruning standards would give you leverage when talking with your electric utility company.*

#### 4. Environmental Efforts

Sustainability practices. Recycling (paper, glass, metal, plastic, electronics, clothing, etc.), policies and by-laws, sustainable development strategies, waste reduction, hazardous waste minimization and collection (oil, paint, chemicals, used batteries, etc.), water quality and conservation, energy conservation, environmental cleanup activities, reducing carbon footprint, environmentally friendly transportation, LEED certification, air, noise and light pollution, rain gardens and rain barrels, composting, energy efficiency, youth programs, etc. Events such as Earth Day, Recycling Days, Bike to Work Days, etc.	Max Points	Actual Score
<b>Municipal</b>		
Leadership in environmental initiatives	25	16
Effective communication of environmental strategies and initiatives	25	16
New programs, improvement and innovation	25	16
<b>Business</b>		
Participation in environmental efforts	20	14
New programs, improvement and innovation	10	5
<b>Residential</b>		
Participation in environmental efforts	20	16
New programs, improvement and innovation	10	6
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Volunteer involvement in environmental efforts	20	16
Youth participation in environmental activities	20	15
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	<b>175.00</b>	<b>120.00</b>

#### Comments and suggestions:

PEP Prentiss is a LEEDS silver facility with recycling, gardening and composting programs. Proceeds from recycling are used to help fund their prom event and cover the catering cost.

The Fairview Park Green Team consists of volunteers that provide education and have developed innovative programs such as recycling used strings of Christmas lights, power strips and campaign yard signs. These are items that are typically never recycled.



We saw recycling receptacles paired with trash receptacles in parks. *As these temporary receptacles age, consider replacing them with permanent ones using a consistent style throughout the city.*



There is a year round prescription drug drop-off box in the lobby of the police station in city hall and it is promoted on the city web site.

The City has partnered with Simple Recycling, an innovative company that allows residents to thoughtfully recycle clothing, shoes, textiles, and household

goods curbside. Since pickups occur weekly on Mondays with trucks driving up and down every street, *we feel there would be a benefit to develop a system that allows pickups on the same day, but only to residences that announce the need for a pickup. Perhaps this can be accomplished on the cities web site. This would reduce truck traffic, use of fuel and man-hours.*



The city managed an Ohio EPA Swift grant to restore a portion of Coe Creek along with its floodplain in Bain Park. Judging from an un-restored stretch this was a very successful project. *Brag about it and install educational signage describing the project and its benefits.* Meanwhile the students at Fairview High School are fortunate to have an Environmental Studies teacher. *There may be an opportunity to create a class that incorporates environmental monitoring of the water quality in Coe Creek and the Rocky River. Look for a local environmental water quality*

*business as a partner.*

Solar power is an attractive option as equipment prices continue to drop. *The reserved parking spaces at the rear of city hall are ripe for overhead panels which would also keep vehicles parked underneath cool in the summer. This would make an excellent high profile demonstration project.*

Alternative modes of transportation will take vehicles off of the roads and help decrease the carbon footprint. *Encourage the use of bicycles by developing a bicycle plan with shared bike lanes and bike trails. Make connections to the Cleveland Metro Parks system and require new construction to provide bike racks. The bike rack at the rear door of city hall is not functional in its present location. Relocate it so it can be used.*

Nationwide, invasive plants are found within most natural areas. An invasive plant removal program and vigilance are needed in every community. *Develop an educational program with a brochure and a web presence and visit <http://ohiodnr.gov/invasiveplants> for guidance. Getting on top of this problem will save countless hours of labor and dollars down the road.*

There are occasional recycling opportunities for shredded paper. Hazardous waste pickups were once monthly and apparently the last pickup was in September of 2015. *The city should provide information on how residents can dispose of these materials otherwise they will end up in trash receptacles. Currently there are no business recycling programs. Check with waste hauling providers to determine whether there are options for the creation of a program.*

Water quality is a major issue in almost every community. Stormwater full of pollutants often finds its way into water bodies and drinking supplies. All stormwater in the city ultimately finds its way into Coe Creek and Rocky River. From there it flows into Lake Erie which is a source of drinking water for many municipalities. Meanwhile we heard that stormwater is the city's biggest environmental challenge. Fortunately the city is requiring bio retention ponds. *There are many additional strategies to reduce and improve the quality of stormwater runoff. Incorporate numerous landscaped rain gardens in areas of the city where stormwater can be collected. These may be at the end of downspouts or where surface runoff collects. Plantings that can take wet or dry conditions will help filter and reduce pollutants. Here is a helpful link to a guide for homeowners that is also useful for municipalities and businesses:*

<http://www.lakecountyohio.gov/Portals/20/forms/Projects/raingardenmanual.pdf>

*The city could also explore the adoption of an ordinance that limits the percentage of impervious (non-absorbent) area on a site (50% is a typical threshold). This helps decrease stormwater runoff and increases the area for stormwater infiltration. A stormwater utility fee for each property would generate funds for*

stormwater control. For information visit

<http://www.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=f48e1258d51c47a5aeb396c4648ef815>



A good water saving technique is the use of rain barrels. *An excellent place to have a demonstration rain barrel is at the Fairview Park Community Garden. With the addition of a few feet of gutters and a downspout, the shed roof could collect water for rain barrels and provide a convenient water source. Add signage to highlight the benefits of collecting rain water.*

Confusion by users at recycling receptacles often leads to contamination or recyclables being thrown away in the trash. *Please visit Recycle Across America ([www.recycleacrossamerica.org](http://www.recycleacrossamerica.org)). This not-for-profit organization is dedicated to simplifying the act of recycling and in helping the general public recycle more and recycle right with their standardized labeling initiative. Clearly marked receptacles will increase and improve the quality of recycle materials collected, leading to higher profits for the recycling center and less contaminated loads sent to the landfill.*

## 5. Heritage Preservation

Historical, natural, agricultural, and cultural heritage. Preservation and restoration of buildings, homes, churches, cemeteries; heritage sites and/or monuments; heritage parks, historical gardens; artifacts; historical society; heritage advisory committee, museums, archives, history books, and interpretative programs; ordinances and policies. Resource availability. Farmers markets, festivals and parades.	Max Points	Actual Score
<b>Municipal</b>		
Leadership in preservation and restoration initiatives	25	16
Legal protection of heritage sites	25	16
Resource availability for preservation and restoration	25	18
<b>Business</b>		
Conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of properties	15	10
Participation in and support of heritage/cultural activities	15	7
<b>Residential</b>		
Conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of properties	15	10
Participation in and support of heritage/cultural activities	15	12
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Volunteer involvement in cultural, historical, and natural heritage activities	20	16
Youth involvement in heritage activities	20	14
Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)	175.00	119.00

### Comments and suggestions:



There are a number of heritage related events enjoyed by the residents. Winterfest is held in the autumn and Summerfest (in its 24<sup>th</sup> year) is a multi-day event with a parade. A Memorial Day service is held at city hall where a parade starts before heading to the cemetery. The city hall marquee sign announces residents celebrating 90th birthdays and inside city hall there is a permanent Veteran's Memorial.

The We Do Care program is a wonderful way to engage youth and honor military personnel serving overseas. Gift boxes are sent overseas and each school year 7th and 8th grade students at three schools compete in the God and Country letter writing contest aimed at acknowledging overseas members of the Armed Forces. 2015 marks the 39th year of this heartwarming and valuable program.

We heard that a Georgian style of architecture is preferred in the city and noticed new construction that is not even complementary to this style. *Since the city has a tax abatement program as an incentive to encourage development, there should be architectural design standards. There is also an opportunity to require redeveloped structures and new construction to provide bicycle racks, connections to potential bike lanes/trails and streetscape improvements for adjacent streets. These are all improvements the community would benefit from and increase property values.*

If you have made oral history audio tape or video tapes, you may realize that they're not searchable and you have to watch or listen to most or all of the recording to get the information you need. *If you have these in your archives, consider using a free service such as <https://speechlogger.appspot.com/en/> (there are many) to translate your audio files to text.*

The Century Homes program is an excellent way to increase awareness of historic structures in the city. At our suggestion, a map of the 14 homes was created soon after we left. *Posting this on the website would create more awareness of the program and be an aid to increasing tourism. Adding half-century designation would increase the pool of available homes for recognition.*

There are a number of stunning older homes and neighborhoods, such as Coffinberry Estates, with historic



homes that add character to the city and are a draw for visitors. Without protection, development pressure will cause some of these homes to be demolished. *The city should consider a program to protect these historic resources. A city appointed Historic Preservation Board (to be created) could develop an ordinance and review requests for structures or districts to be designated and protected from demolition. Design reviews for changes to designated structures should also be part of this process.*



The Fairview Park Cemetery has an amazing "Adopt a Tombstone" program that is bringing aged, crooked and unreadable tombstones back to life. It involves research and people of all ages. Since equipment access is needed to do this work there are some stones that cannot be permanently set in place. The Gessner Mother and Father stones are two that need to be movable but are unable to stay plumb. *Perhaps stainless steel rods could be embedding into them underneath. The stakes could then slip into sleeves set flush with the ground. The stones with the stakes would then be removable for equipment access.*

*To create a sense of place in residential areas, distinct neighborhoods could be defined at their boundaries with markers set in the ground or with cast bronze plaques attached to existing street light poles or new poles.*



The Fairview Park Historical Society Museum & Archives has a wonderful collection and resides in a portion of the historic Bain Park Cabin. A sign is placed outside when the museum is open. *Consider placing a permanent sign outside the museum door so visitors know a museum is there. Information on the sign should include hours and the museum web site. This will encourage visitors to return during open hours and visit the website. Perhaps a tickler about the yearbook project would entice more locals.*

Display cases in the museum are historic and are in need of restoration. One case contains school exhibits. *Reach out to the schools and their graduates for funding. Another source of funding is to move them to the Gemini Center and set up exhibits inside them. Place the cases inside protective clear cases and include donation boxes for fundraising. Add touch screens to access more information and make the displays interactive.*

*There are dozens of communities in Ohio that are Certified Local Governments (CLG). CLG is the official preservation partnership that connects local, state and Federal governments to help communities save their irreplaceable historic resources. CLG communities have access to historic preservation resources and can apply for grants that fund many kinds of historic preservation projects. Consider applying to join. Visit <https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserve/state-historic-preservation-office/clg/clq/clqsinohio>*

## 6. Overall Impression

	Max points	Actual Score
Lack of litter and graffiti. Maintenance of public open spaces, medians and boulevard strips, streets, sidewalks, walking and biking trails, curbs, ditches, road shoulders, unattended and vacant lots, buildings, garbage receptacles; lack of weeds, dog waste policies and receptacles, notices/posters appropriately displayed, vandalism not evident. Maintenance of the hardscape: walls, lamp posts, benches, playgrounds, etc. Appropriate use and placement of sculpture, wayfinding signs, graphic elements such as banners, signs and murals.		
<b>Municipal</b>		
Overall cleanliness	10	6.5
Maintenance of public roads and shoulders	10	6.5
Condition of public buildings and properties	10	8
Impact of graphic elements - banners, wayfinding signs, murals, etc.	10	6.5
<b>Business</b>		
Overall cleanliness	20	14
Condition of buildings and properties	20	14
<b>Residential</b>		
Overall cleanliness	10	8
Condition of buildings and properties	10	8
<b>Community Involvement</b>		
Participation in clean-up efforts, adopt-a-spot, annual cleanup days, etc.	15	13
Recognition of volunteer efforts	10	7.5
<b>Total (the fields automatically calculate – do not type in them)</b>	<b>125.00</b>	<b>92.00</b>

### Comments and suggestions:



Fairview Park demonstrates pride in the municipal and residential sectors. Neighborhoods are well maintained and clean. A new design has been selected for street banners. *Consider having a contest for banner designs for various occasions and seasons. It could be open to only elementary students or residents of all ages. Have a display of all the designs at Gemini Center and ask residents to vote for their favorites. At the end of the season, the banners can be auctioned to raise funds for new banners.*

Obelisk shaped clock towers have been themed into a few places in the city. They could be developed into a defining element of the city streetscape. *Consider siting a few more and work to get corporate sponsorship for them.*



The city gateway near the Emerald Necklace Inn features a small flower bed and brick wall with plaques for the names of donors. *A light box cover at the base of the sign could be painted black rather than white to make it less visible.*

*Black paint (satin or flat, not glossy) can do wonders for chain link fences – making them nearly invisible from a distance. An existing fence along an entry walk alongside the Gemini Center field is begging for some paint. Portions of the black chain link fence there would benefit from a touch-up.*

While municipal and residential areas are generally well maintained, Lorain Avenue through the city is looking tired despite the hard work of the garden club to add flowering planters. We were pleased to learn that the city offers façade improvement matching grants up to \$20,000 and noted that this program is starting to make a difference. Also, the tax abatement program is a remarkable incentive for property owners to add to their structures. *When funding becomes available, replace the curbs and sidewalks – they are crumbling and detract from the improvements.*

There are some empty storefronts on Lorain Ave. *Consider contacting the property owners and get permission to use the store windows for a display about the museum, award winning gardens, and even your America in Bloom projects. It will make the properties more attractive and may even help the owner find a new tenant.*

*Work with store owners whose planters have “naturalized” (i.e. are full of weeds) and encourage them to clean them up. Perhaps this is an area where code enforcement can help.*

Details matter. *Wherever possible, apply a fresh coat of paint to curbs, poles, and fire hydrants.*

*Work on removing weeds and grass from sidewalks, curbs and gutters for a neater appearance. Pre-emergents and herbicides will work well. If you prefer an organic approach, work on removing sand and dirt from these areas so seeds don’t have a place to sprout. You can also use a pressure washer or propane torch to remove the weeds.*

*If the city doesn’t own a street sweeper, consider partnering with a nearby city to borrow theirs.*

*Nelson Russ Park desperately needs a makeover. We were so glad to learn that the city is starting to meet with neighbors in their area to develop plans for regenerating the park and making it vibrant and relevant again.*

*Encourage local businesses to give their employees time off for community projects. Church congregations can be encouraged to help as well.*

Checklist for Judges and Participants:

Yes	No	N/A	
X			Were the judges given a community profile, itinerary, and map prior to their arrival?
X			Did the itinerary provide for seeing a representative cross-section of the participant?
X			Were the guides knowledgeable about the participant and horticultural aspects?
X			Were the judges able to modify the schedule if needed?
X			Did the judges meet with the media?
X			Did the judges meet with municipal leaders?
	X		Were the judges asked to give presentations?
X			Were the judges able to meet with and talk to volunteers?
X			Was enough time allotted to complete the evaluation form in a quiet place?

Comments:

DEFINITIONS

**Municipal:** City hall and other municipal properties, parks and open spaces, roads, roadsides, sidewalks, cemeteries, schools and sports facilities, empty lots and brownfields, libraries, hospitals, assisted living, churches, universities, and colleges

**Business:** Commercial and industrial sectors, shopping centers, stores, office buildings, restaurants, mixed use developments, service stations, railway and bus stations, plant nurseries/garden centers

**Residential:** Single family residences, condominiums, town houses, planned communities, apartment buildings, gated communities, manufactured home communities, trailer parks, residential developments, neighborhoods, graduated care facilities

**Community Involvement:** Volunteer efforts by individuals, clubs, youth groups, church groups, civic organizations, and social clubs for community enhancement



## 2015 Special Mentions

**Participant:** Fairview Park, OH

### **Recognized Criterion: Landscaped Areas**

Fairview Park has beautiful natural areas in Bain Park. Many of the neighborhoods are defined by their attractive landscapes and large trees. Our commendations to the Garden Club, Green Team and other volunteers for their work to improve landscapes all over the city.

### **Special Project or Initiative: Adopt a Tombstone**

Adopt-A-Tombstone is a community project involving numerous volunteers and donors of all ages. All restoration is performed by volunteers and all material and supplies are obtained through donations. The visible difference of the cleaned tombstones is amazing. One sculptural tombstone in the shape of a lamb for a seven year old girl who died in 1909 was adopted and cleaned by a seven year old girl. Touching and impressive!

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