



Black River Audubon Society
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City of Lorain Mayor/Safety Service Director
City of Lorain Council
200 W Erie Avenue
Lorain, OH 44052

Re: Cromwell Park

Dear City Officials,

Thank you for your continued dedication to the City of Lorain and for the opportunity to comment on issues of public interest.

Undeniably, a 2–3-minute public comment period does not provide enough information to adequately address an issue like Cromwell Park. Public comment is also not the most productive forum to discuss in-depth concerns. Statements may be made from council and stakeholders without the opportunity for questions or to offer refutation.

For example, aerial photographs suggest that trees and vegetation (habitats for birds and other wildlife) have now reclaimed about 80 percent of the former landfill. Those who visit may call it a park and enjoy walking trails and bike paths. However, some still refer to Cromwell Park as a “dump,” even though the developer himself said, “It’s a beautiful piece of land out there. It’s really pretty.” I guess it is all a matter of perspective and motivation.

Council also spoke about “balance,” a word that sounds fair and considerate but has little meaning. If the city is trying to balance gray and green spaces, it is failing miserably. The City of Lorain occupies an envious location, extensively bordering a Great Lake, from which a beautiful river flows with possibility. Yet beauty, creativity and potential are sacrificed by impatience. Development is necessary and welcome, but it doesn’t need to come at the expense of other community values.

Our mission at Black River Audubon is “to promote conservation and restoration of ecosystems, focusing on birds and other wildlife, through advocacy, education, stewardship, field trips and programs for the benefit of all people today and tomorrow,” and our objection is out of this commitment. We understand that sometimes communities have difficult decisions—and generally give those communities the benefit of the doubt.

We would like to reiterate that we are not against kart racing in Lorain, we only oppose the proposed location.

Below are links to several related studies, written by scientific research organizations and governmental resources. We will gladly provide hard copies, if requested.

1. [Urban green space, public health, and environmental justice: the challenge of making cities just green enough \(University of California Berkley\)](#)
2. [Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis \(U.S. Fish Wildlife Sources\)](#)
3. [The Important Bird Areas Program in the United States \(USDA Forest Service\)](#)
4. [Important Bird Areas \(Audubon\)](#)
5. [Great blue herons and effects of human disturbance \(Several scientific sources\)](#)
6. [Forest Biodiversity: Understanding Biological Health in our Forests \(Penn State, College of Agricultural Research\)](#)
7. [Habitat Fragmentation \(USDA/NRCS\)](#)

We just ask for a progressive, forward-leaning, community approach. I can't imagine if given the choice between a busy racetrack and a well-maintained green space that nearby homeowners would choose to risk the potential noise nuisance of a racetrack. Such a nuisance may even impact their property values. Unscientific surveys may not be the best measure of community values—many people no longer read the newspaper on a regular basis. Would residents of Oak Estates welcome a racetrack to their neighborhood?

We have been contacted by many supporters and from those asking for our help—from residents of the area, birders from across the state, and professional conservation organizations. Nature transcends city lines.

Black River Audubon has over 550 members while national Audubon is made up of over 600,000 members. Birdwatching is the second most popular outdoor activity after gardening. We would welcome the opportunity to work together. COVID helped people rediscover nature and enjoy wildlife. Sandy Ridge Reservation, perhaps the prime birding location in Lorain County, had to close their gates and turn people away at times in 2020 because the park was full. Nature is a valuable community asset.

We appreciate your further consideration of not only this issue, but also other related issues as they may arise in the future. Ecosystems may take centuries to develop but can be swiftly destroyed by a careless moment in time.

Kind Regards,

Rob Swindell

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