

2012

Missed Lay-ups

A study of the decision to remove basketball courts in Lakewood, Ohio



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction.....	5
Methodology	7
Findings	9
Recommendations.....	19
Opportunities for future study.....	21
Conclusion	23
Lessons learned from the MPA program	24
References.....	26
Charts and Tables.....	28
Appendices.....	29

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Executive Summary

In 2007, in the midst of a climbing crime rate and political pressure of other public offices, former Mayor of Lakewood, Tom George, agreed to the decision to remove all of the basketball courts in the city. Of the concepts in Public Administration, decision-making is known as the most common source of controversy. This decision was no exception. This research analyzed the decision-making process that George utilized to arrive at the conclusion that removal of the courts would result in a lower crime rate. Using public administration theory, case studies, crime data, and personal interviews, I seek to compare this process to those that scholars attribute to effective public policy creation. This research intentionally avoided solving Lakewood's crime 'problem' and instead sought to determine if the decision was an effective one based on subsequent years' crime rates and civic reaction.

In the years following the removal of the courts, the citizens reacted with the creation of the non-profit organization the Lakewood Outdoor Basketball Committee. This committee sought to replace the courts that they felt were erroneously removed. This research attempted to remain impartial in the context of right and wrong, and instead sought to base recommendations on the findings of the research.

The research provided an understanding of the process that took place. While the results did not show how the 2007 decisions affected crime rates and occurrences of crime, it did show that the decision-making practices could be improved to follow scholarly recommendations in the PA concept of decision-making and rational logic.

Introduction

In 2007, the City of Lakewood removed basketball courts in both the public parks and local schools. Mayor Tom George and his administration made the decision to remove these hoops and courts in response to an increase in nuisance calls to police and a rise in drug and gang activity at a number of these locations (George, 2007). The reasoning for removing these courts has been to curb the fighting, bad behavior, and drug use at these locations. There is little data to support this claim, and a 2006 study by Hartmann and Depro attempted to support a theory that basketball added to a community might actually deter criminal activity (Rethinking Sports-Based Community Crime Prevention). In this study, I intend on challenging the decision-making process used by the City in 2007 using rationality theories in Public Administration and prevent further removal of valued services. The research done in this study has the potential to affect policy-making in other communities, as well. Changes made by local government based in rhetoric and anecdotes in the name of public safety can have a detrimental effect on the community as a whole.

This issue is significant to public administrators because it shows that a policy change made across an entire community can have many unintended consequences. I intend to analyze this policy through the public administration lens of decision-making. This is a way to look back at the process for how this particular policy was developed. The methods used to analyze the information are that of qualitative analysis of my personal interview, literature review of historical public discourse and similar studies in other communities, and a quantitative comparative analysis of the crime data – both at the national and local level.

This issue is significant to the community because of the impact on residents and the removal of services. Based on a press release from the National Recreation and Parks

Association entitled, *Why parks and recreation are essential public services*, "...community involvement in neighborhood parks is associated with lower levels of crime and vandalism", and "Access to parks and recreation opportunities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and to reduced juvenile delinquency" (2010). This press release counteracts the very reasons that the City gave as their purpose for removing the courts. Evidence that this issue is significant to the community is the creation of the non-profit organization, the Lakewood Outdoor Basketball Committee (LOBC), in March 2009. According to Peter Drucker, non-profit organizations tend to fill gaps in service between public sector and citizen (Managing the nonprofit organization: Principles and practices, 1990). These organizations do not form naturally in a community without the intent to fulfill a need. The decision and removal created a need that LOBC intends to fill.

As I began my research into the removal of the basketball courts there were several avenues to take for which the issue could be studied. Of the several public administrative lenses to choose from, I felt I had to start at the heart of the issue. The decision that was made to remove the courts was the logical beginning and focus I wanted to pursue. Public administration theory recognizes the decision-making process in general as a significant source of controversy surrounding public policy and implementation (Milakovich & Gordon, 2012). Milakovich and Gordon in Public Administration in America describe the rational approach model as "...drawn from economic models of decision-making" and calls for decision-makers to direct their behavior toward the achievement of conscious goals (2012, p. 196). The conscious goals that the City of Lakewood were attempting to solve when removing the basketball courts were public safety related. At its core, the economic model in which the rational approach is based compares potential benefits against probable costs and is based on three grounds: substantive, political, and

organizational (Milakovich & Gordon, 2012). Substantive grounds are those that are based in data and evidence, political grounds are qualitative in nature and vary with the local administration and citizenry, and the organizational grounds look to include the greater good in the analysis of the costs versus benefits. Using Milakovich and Gordon's discussion of this theory as a base, I intend to relate Herbert A. Simon's discussion of the concept of 'Bounded Rationality' with a comparison of theory to applicability in real-life situations. Simon argues through bounded rationality "...decision makers are intendedly rational; that is, they are goal oriented and adaptive, but because of human cognitive and emotional architecture, they sometimes fail, occasionally in important decisions" (Jones, 1999, p. 298). Through this argument, I seek to determine whether the Mayor's decision was based in rationality, and if this rationality failed him in this decision.

Methodology

The sources reviewed and called upon in support of this study range from personal interviews to public administration theory scholarly reviews. As mentioned previously, this research called upon Milakovich and Gordon's Public Administration in America text to recount the PA topic of the rational approach to decision-making, further study brought the research to Simon's theory of Bounded Rationality as it applies to decision-making. I conducted a personal interview with Nadhal Eadeh, one of the founding members of a local non-profit organization called the Lakewood Outdoor Basketball Committee. I reviewed archived interviews with former Lakewood Mayor Tom George and former Lakewood Police Chief, reviewed course texts in public administration theory and practice. For assistance with the analysis of these interviews, Luton's Qualitative Research Approaches for Public Administration was utilized. Further

research was conducted of literature reviews of peer-reviewed journal articles with themes of theoretical enhancements to the social context that sport has in a community, namely Hartmann and Depro's study titled *Rethinking Sports-based Crime Prevention*. Local newspaper articles were called upon for a contextual framework of reported events as they occurred, and Lakewood City Council Meeting Minutes for review of discourse and discussion in and around the basketball courts removal. Non-fiction books were reviewed, such as The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams, seeking empirical evidence in the practical use of basketball in the real world. Data sources called upon for analysis were the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) website spanning from years 2006 to 2011, and the City of Lakewood's reported incidents of crime on their website from 2008 to 2011. In the interest of discovering what precedents are set for the installation and use of basketball courts, I sought information from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). The NRPA sets the national standard on location and placement of parks and recreation facilities in the United States. For analysis of demographics and population data, I called upon the 2010 United States Census; this information was analyzed under the comparative analysis framework. All of these sources together allowed me to understand why the decision was made, and how it compares to decisions and practices in other communities and organizations.

Many different sources have been called upon throughout the research process in this study, it is important to understand the methodology behind the analysis of those sources. The method for identifying relevant information in the Public Administration peer reviewed articles and texts was literature review and qualitative case study reviews. The personal interview and archived interviews called for a more in-depth approach, Luton's principles of conducting an effective qualitative interview analysis (Luton, 2010). Open-ended questions were used to

stimulate narrative, the interview started as a data-seeking mission at first, then based on the responses further information gathering would follow. This data would later be checked against public record and timelines to confirm accuracy. Lastly, a qualitative comparative analysis was conducted of the uniform crime report data. The intent was to find the correlation of crime and the existence of basketball courts by comparing the rates before and after removal of courts, both locally and nationally. These methods are ones that have been established as cornerstones of the public administration research process, my intentions were fact-finding in nature to establish a framework for how and why the decision was made.

Findings

Milakovich and Gordon highlight the importance of Public Administrators as an impartial body (2012). The repeated concept throughout Dr. Jennifer Alexander's Ethics in Public Administration course is that of objectivity. By having the objective view on a situation or policy, the decision-maker is more likely to act in the most rational "toward the achievement of conscious goals" (Milakovich & Gordon, 2012). The conscious goal in the case of Mayor George was that of public safety and protection of the citizens. As was found in the archived interviews with former Mayor Tom George and former Lakewood Police Chief Hassings, "...recommendations made by police to Mayor George repeatedly to act on behavioral concerns at local parks" was the basis for the decision-making (LOBC, 2012). The political environment was primed for action due to a stabbing incident at Madison Park, one of the commonly cited locations of the criminal activity. These two circumstances ultimately led to the decision to remove the courts in Lakewood. Information presented to Mayor Tom George resulted in him deciding and standing-by his decision. George was acting in the best interest of the community. He was listening to those that were most educated in the field of public safety, and as Mayor of

Lakewood, he was also charged with performing the duties of Public Safety Director. By relying on the given information, and trusting those appointed to their public office, George concluded to remove the courts in total (George, 2007).

Based on the research and analysis, decision-making does not stop until there is a policy that works for the whole. The core concept of Milakovich and Gordon's rational approach model has three parts: substance, politics, and organization. The substantive concept deals with reliable quantifiable data and benchmarks that can be compared to the situation at hand. Next, the political atmosphere must to be accounted for; the internal pressure from Police Department was enough to engage George's attention. Lastly, the impact on the organization must be considered – in this case, the organization is the community. Based on the research, this component was not factored into the equation. The thought of *what does this mean to the community as a whole?* was not included in this decision. In the years following the decision, the community felt the City was 'taking away' from the community; penalizing the entire community for the criminal behavior by a select few.

Within the study of public administration and decision-making, Milakovich and Gordon highlight using rationality and a rational approach as a guide to the *right* decision (2012). This normative value implies that there would be a consequently be a *wrong* decision. Real world scenarios are far too complicated and affect too diverse a population for them to be as concrete as right and wrong. These conscious goals are weighed by the potential benefits of the outcome versus the probable costs. This short-term mindset will only beget short-term gains. In George's case, the potential benefits were that of public safety and a satisfied police department. Comparing this benefit against the probable monetary cost of the labor hours to go around and remove the courts the choice fell back to the removal. Herbert Simon's characteristics of the

concept of bounded rationality can be applied in this decision. Four characteristics are associated with bounded rationality. The first characteristic is the “*Limitation on the organism’s ability to plan long behavior sequences, a limitation imposed by the bounded cognitive ability of the organism as well as the complexity of the environment in which it operates*” (Jones, 1999, p. 301). Simon is demonstrating that public administrators are human, there is a limit that one person can mentally account for. The second is “*The tendency to set aspiration levels for each of the multiple goals that the organism faces*” (Jones, 1999, p. 301). This is a common trait among people and organizations; it means to define what success will look like for a given goal, and knowing when the goal has been met. The third trait is “*The tendency to operate on goals sequentially rather than simultaneously because of the ‘bottleneck of short-term memory’*” (Jones, 1999, p. 301). This trait is associated with the previous in that there are capacitive restrictions on the human brain that prohibit one from looking beyond the next step. This can impact the efficiency and effectiveness of a rational thought sequence of cause, effect, and next steps. The fourth and final trait is “*Satisficing rather than optimizing search behavior*” (Jones, 1999, p. 301). Simon defines satisfice as a mix of where satisfied and suffice meet, setting the bar at mediocrity and relying on a “Good enough” approach to decision-making.

Simon would say that the City of Lakewood’s bounded rationality is “showing through” in the decision to remove courts. In a case where there is bounded rationality occurring, Simon recommends that there be outside influences involved to get a broader perspective to enhance not only the cognitive processing ability, but to step back and see if the intention of the decision actually fits the situation (Barros, 2010). This concept is known in the social psychological discipline as groupthink and can have a negative effect on the decision-making process (Janis, 1972). The fourth trait of the concept of satisficing is the critical element. This trait allows the

administrator to self-rationalize and feel most of the intent is being met. Milakovich and Gordon's concept of being "directed towards the achievement of conscious goals" is not being met in the case of George's decision (2012). George's decision satisfied the police department and the Mayor/Public Safety Director's Office by eliminating the place that the crime was occurring, not necessarily the crime itself. The discussion of the uniform crime report data and analysis will show the results of the goal. The community would have their day in court.

Using the information gathered from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) website, one may review the outcomes of the decision. The dataset for this study was of the total number of incidents of crime within Lakewood, Ohio with a comparison to Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Cleveland Heights is similar to Lakewood in population, diversity, and socioeconomic composition (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The FBI defines violent crime as Murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault; and Property Crime is defined as Burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2012). In Lakewood in 2007, the year the courts were removed, there were 1,416 (Table 1) reported incidents of violent and property crimes (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2012). This number has trended down each year since the courts were removed with a total decrease from 2007 to 2010 of 31% since the basketball courts were removed in 2007 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2012). Cleveland Heights, a similar city of economic and population make up, has seen a 30% increase in incidents of crime from 2007 to 2010 (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2012). Nationally, there has been a 6% decrease since 2007. Using the local reporting information, local nuisance calls declined from 2008 to 2010, and rose again in 2011 (City of Lakewood, 2012). These findings pose the question: "Is there a clear correlation between courts and crime?" On the surface, it would appear that there is. The percentages tell a

tale that Mayor George would be proud of; unfortunately, there are too many externalities that affect these counts and percentages that cannot be directly related to the existence or removal of basketball courts. An example of an externality is former (2008-2010) Lakewood Mayor Ed Fitzgerald's primary objective of public safety and increase in police force in 2009 (Sberna, 2009). Fitzgerald's campaign platform was that of public safety. He saw the need to change the behavior of the City's government and increased the police presence in the community (Sberna, 2009). Future study is necessary to determine the specific cause and effect of the removal of the courts for the long-term reduction in crime; the numbers alone do not effectively tell the tale of cause. There is a national trend of decreasing crime, but not as sharp as Lakewood's has decreased. This is indicative of factors in Lakewood that have affected this trend, but cannot automatically be assigned to the removal of basketball courts. Other communities have not removed courts to resolve criminal activity; some have actually looked to parks and basketball as an opportunity for crime reduction.

Studies have been conducted in the arena of community sports and their relation to crime prevention. Hartmann and Depro analyzed the impact Chicago's implementation of a midnight basketball league in 1994 (2006). This concept was introduced by G. Van Standifer in the late 1980's (Hartmann & Depro, 2006). Standifer was concerned with the little number of activities that were available in the late hours (10:00pm to 2:00am) in which crime was occurring at an increased rate in Washington D.C. (Hartmann & Depro, 2006). One of the components in this program was the requirement of two uniformed police officers present at every midnight basketball game. Former congressional representative Jack Kemp brought this program into national news when the Chicago Housing Authority matched a \$50,000 grant from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to get the program off the ground (Hartmann &

Depro, 2006). Before there was any substantial data to determine the program a success or failure, it caught the attention of the national media and other communities began adopting this framework. This increase in popularity proved beneficial in the availability in data to analyze. Hartmann and Depro report the findings of their analysis as “cities that adopted midnight basketball programs experienced greater declines in crime rates than those cities that lacked midnight basketball leagues. This result holds for violent crime rates and property crime rates” (2006, p. 189). While the implementation of a midnight basketball program shows significance in the data, Hartmann and Depro’s findings are likely attributed to the bundling of crime initiatives and publicity effects (2006). The bundling of crime prevention initiatives speaks to the City’s attention to the crime issue and has a unified approach to fighting crime. This is evidenced by the involvement of the police department in every midnight basketball game that Standifer recommended in his initial development of the concept. The other factor of publicity effects, as Hartmann and Depro describe is that of the increased media attention to criminals and has a slight impact on whether or not they will engage in criminal behavior (2006).

Scholars have long studied the impact of physical activity on youth as it relates to their development. Lee et al. conducted a study of school health policies and programs that analyzed public and private schools’ physical education programs (2007). The study intended to convey the importance of physical activity to youth and adolescent development (Lee, Burgeson, Fulton, & Spain, 2007). Physical activities and a physical lifestyle taught in and around the schools will stay with these young people and according to Lee, et al. will lead to healthier life as adults (Lee, Burgeson, Fulton, & Spain, 2007). The removal of the basketball courts on public grounds, along with the shared governance of the City over the public school grounds, ultimately led to the removal of basketball courts on school grounds. While 20% of elementary schools and 26%

of middle schools surveyed in Lee et al.'s study did not have outdoor basketball courts, it concludes that the availability of facilities for physical education is indicative of the quality of the physical education being delivered in these communities (Lee, Burgeson, Fulton, & Spain, 2007). Lakewood City Schools were responsible for the majority of the removal of the basketball courts. Based on observation and research, of the twenty outdoor basketball courts in Lakewood in 2007, sixteen were on school grounds. Darcy Frey's book titled, The Last Shot: City Streets and Basketball Dreams (2004), focuses on personal accounts of youth in urban areas that relied on basketball to help them through life. These tales are evidence of the empirical value that basketball courts bring to a community and its sustainability. Frey narrates impactful stories of basketball games and interaction of National Basketball Association All-star Stephon Marbury during his formative years. This narrative provides further evidence that courts in a community can have far greater benefit to the residents than the potential costs of allegations of crime.

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association, the national standard based on residency count is one court for every 5,000 residents (NRPA, 2012). Given Lakewood's population of 52,131 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), the recommended count of outdoor basketball courts would be 10 courts. Nationally, the actual average reports one court for every 15,500 residents (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2012). This calculation would indicate that at the national average, Lakewood would need three outdoor basketball courts. There were no outdoor basketball courts within the city limits until spring 2011. Prior to removal, the twenty courts were twice the national standard, and 6 times the national average.

I conducted a personal interview with Nadhal Eadeh, one of the founding members of the Lakewood Outdoor Basketball Committee (LOBC). The interview was conducted over several

email questionnaires over the span of a few months. I also called upon previous discussions had with Nadhal and an article he wrote in the Lakewood Observer, *Hoops vs. Safety: the Culture of Recreation in Lakewood* (2007) for background information. The current state of basketball courts in Lakewood has seen recent advancements; two half-courts were added to the centralized location of Kaufmann Park in spring 2011. These half courts were installed perpendicular to a previously existing tennis court (Figure 1).



Figure 1 (Google Maps, 2012)

They were installed as pilot courts to determine the need from the community to play basketball again. The courts have seen resounding success; the citizen response is a steady stream of youngsters, roughly 25-30 players per evening with the average player 12 years of age (Eadeh, 2012). The immediate response by the citizens has shown both positive and negative. While the courts are seeing active use during allotted hours, the surrounding residents have not been as welcoming (City of Lakewood, 2011). Some of the complaints have been noise, (swearing specifically), and concerns about afterhours use. The concerns have been repeatedly voiced to the local police, these likely accounts for increase in nuisance calls in 2011 as compared to previous years (City of Lakewood, 2012). To deal with these concerns, the City and LOBC have agreed that an LOBC representative shall be present during the hours of peak use. The LOBC

held a courtside meeting that was open to residents to allow for open dialogue and discussion. This meeting and open discussion has had a positive effect on the number of calls and the behavior of the ball players. The LOBC has gained support from local City Council members, Mayor Mike Summers, State House Representative Nickie J. Antonio, and Congressman Dennis Kucinich. This written support (Figures 3, 4, and 5) has enabled LOBC to seek funds and engage in fundraising events such as festivals, webpage requests for support, and the opening of another basketball court. Planned to open in June 2012, LOBC announced the approval by the City to install two additional half-courts at the City's largest park, Lakewood Park. These courts will be named in honor of Lakewood resident Mark V. Dickens. "Mark was born in Lakewood and graduated from Lakewood High School in 1996. Like most of us, he grew up playing basketball in Lakewood Park for countless hours after school and throughout the summer. Just as they affected many other kids growing up in Lakewood, the courts were a large part of Mark's upbringing. Many of his long-lasting friendships and bonds were formed there. In 2009, after a two year battle with testicular cancer, Mark passed away one month short of his 30th birthday" (LOBC, 2012). The courts will be erected near the site of the original half-court that was removed in 2007. The installation of the courts at Kaufmann Park, and the approval of the plan for additional courts at Lakewood Park and beyond is a testament to the LOBC leadership and their passion for their Mission.

This research called upon several reliable sources but there are limitations that come with the nature of research around a politically heated subject. Decision-making in the public sector is not often based in checklists and policy. There is little data available for analysis regarding the connection between the City's decision of removing the courts and the Lakewood School Board's decision to go along with this decision. At the time of the City's removal of the courts,

Lakewood City Schools were in the midst of a large-scale construction project that involved nearly all of the schools in the district. During the course of this research, the plans for the project removed the re-installation of the courts at those schools that were being renovated – the schools that were not being renovated had the rims removed from the backboards (Figure 2).



Figure 2 (Eadeh, Hoops vs Safety: The Culture of Recreation in Lakewood, 2007)

These backboards are left as a reminder of what used to be. This research project is limited in its ability to effectively speak to the connection between the decision to remove courts from the City and the school grounds.

Another limitation in this research is that of conceptual study in opposition to this research topic. Although Milakovich and Gordon's discussion on the rational approach to making decisions and Herbert Simon's concept of bounded rationality are widely understood and respected concepts, there is research that opposes these concepts. Dwight Waldo, public administration expert, argues that public administration is not a science; it is a political theory and is not completely objective (American Society for Public Administrators, 2012). The science being practiced is done so with intent and direction. It is important that public administrators relying on Milakovich and Gordon's rational approach account for Waldo's theory.

Recommendations

This research crests in recommendations based on the above findings. The intent of this research was to find information on a social problem, utilize concepts and techniques gained in public administrative theory to analyze the information, and then develop valuable recommendations that can be implemented to improve the future of public administration. Out of the above findings, it is apparent that future decision-making should be based in rational logic, while avoiding the pitfalls that are associated with Simon's theory of bounded rationality. These bounds are what limit the decision-making ability of an organization or governmental unit. The structured decision-making model that Milakovich and Gordon outlined would be an effective framework to compare against. The first of the three grounds is that of substance, decisions should be based in substantive information; that which is informed of actual issue and intent of a message. A common approach is the use of benchmarks, comparing an issue to another community and determining if precedents set have worked for them. The second ground is that of politics. The decision should be made with the political impact on public trust limited as much as possible. Some suggestions to eliminate community angst are to keep decision-making in open community meetings only. This transparency will allow for the building of public trust. Another suggestion to allowing for improving public trust and the political environment is enhancing the ease of public comment for city council meetings. City council meetings are rigid in their agenda and timeliness, implementing timely email alerts to enrolled citizens for proposed ordinance amendments and agenda items and allowing for electronic request for public comments would allow citizens the ability to get their concern onto the Council's agenda. If these topics were brought to light it would potentially lead to an improved political environment. The third and final facet to Milakovich and Gordon's model is the organizational ground. The

community's needs should be considered when developing a policy, when a public administrator takes office they are swearing an oath to uphold that in which would represent the constituency the best; considering the impact on community, and citizens, always operating towards conscious goals.

The notion of the potential benefits versus probable costs seeks to minimize the risk in a decision. In Mayor George's case, the benefit was that the police could focus on other areas to affect change, while the monetary cost would be that of the labor to remove hoops. Looking back at the decisions made by the mayor's office and city council, this research has the benefit of hindsight; this decision is merely limited in bounded rationality and the decision was to satisfy the police department. This is a call to the future administrators and decision-makers at all levels of public organizations to challenge those that challenge you. Simon's first characteristic implies that humans are limited in their immediate cognitive ability but the other three characteristics are adaptable to each decision and each scenario. By acting with the organization's interest – in this case the community's – in mind and not allowing for mediocre outcomes, these decisions are more likely to be impactful and successful in the long-term.

As the success of the midnight basketball program would suggest, collaborating with the local police department is a likely component of a successful public safety program. To avoid the discussion and issue of basketball courts as a contributor to the safety concerns in the city, a recommendation for the continued reinstallation of basketball courts in Lakewood is for LOBC to collaborate with the Lakewood Police Department. One of the primary concerns of former Police Chief Hassings was that of open visibility of the courts (LOBC, 2012). A recommendation to improve upon the safety of the parks is to utilize the existence of video monitoring in the public parks to increase this visibility. As indicated by the interview with Nadhal Eadeh, LOBC

provides supervision during peak hours of activity (2012). Training for these adult chaperones through the city's police department or other similar training agency would adequately prepare the volunteer for mitigating incidents as they occur, with an open line of communication to Lakewood Police. To build upon the recommendation of police involvement, I recommend periodic meetings with LOBC and Lakewood Police Department to report on incidents and provide two-way communication of known issues and opportunities for improvement.

The current availability of relatively inexpensive technology provides an opportunity for a program analysis. By having volunteers available at the courts provides an opportunity to monitor sign-in/sign-out logs, attendance records, demographic data, and incident reports. Use these inputs for future study to determine the impact of having basketball courts in a community. While measuring inputs at the periodic review will give only a brief analysis of what is occurring at the courts, this data could potentially be used later to determine outcomes of a urban program.

Opportunities for future study

One of the immediate opportunities that would prove beneficial to both this research and the future of public safety in communities would be to determine what alternative solutions for reducing crime would have worked in Lakewood. This study focused back on the decision that was made as compared to the theories of decision-making in public administration, future study and application of other research could determine what might have met Mayor George's intent of removing the courts. Based on the records available, he acted with a conscious goal of reducing crime when he removed the courts, but scholarly research and case studies do not agree with his decision.

Another opportunity for study is that for the placement of additional courts in Lakewood. With Lakewood Park's *Mark V. Dickens Memorial Courts* coming online in June 2012, LOBC has set their sights on the next location. Opportunity for study exists between the police department, city planning department, and LOBC for the next location. Prior to their removal, Madison Park on Lakewood's southeast side had two full basketball courts. A preliminary study conducted by this researcher shows that there is currently Lakewood Police Department video monitoring in place, a caged-in area on former tennis court with lockable enclosure exists, and this location helps meet the NRPA's recommendation for distance range between parks of $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to $\frac{1}{4}$ mile (NRPA, 2012). This location is an opportunity for increasing the physical activity opportunities to the youth in the immediate walking area of Madison Park. While funding was not a contributor to the removal of the courts, it is a necessary component to having them replaced. Further study on cost factors and budgetary arrangements for the long-term existence of basketball courts in Lakewood is essential if any other courts are to be installed.

Hartmann introduced a study on the midnight basketball programs prior to the 2006 article he co-wrote with Depro. This earlier study revealed some concerns to scholars regarding the implications of race in the implementation and introduction of the midnight basketball; he himself indicates that future study on race implications and social intervention would be necessary (Hartmann, 2001). I agree with the study that race plays into decision-making at the organizational level. An opportunity here is for further research is into how race and diversity played into Lakewood's decision in 2007.

Conclusion

To summarize the research conducted in the case of Lakewood, the changing of the guard of the mayoral and council administration allows for a new decision-making body at each cycle, there are always opportunities to improve. The intent of this research has been to challenge the decision-making practices that occurred in Lakewood that led to the removal of courts as they compare to the theories in the school of public administration. The findings revealed here are available for interpretation by a varying body of scholars; but the recommendations given are those of this researcher based on the research conducted.

This research is not impactful to only Lakewood, Ohio. There are decisions made throughout both the public sector and non-profit organizations that are not based in the rational logic framework and are not considered erroneous. However, it is important to understand that one does not know when those decisions will be, that is why it is important to treat each one as the most important one at the time.

Policy making without regard for rational logic and bounded rationality will ultimately result in unsuccessful and undesirable outcomes in a community. As evidenced by the installation of the basketball courts, the issue of basketball in a community has been effectively resolved. The hope for the future is to keep other valued services and amenities from being removed or cancelled without appropriate due process.

Lessons learned from the MPA program

How did MPA program help in this capstone?

The Masters in Public Administration program at Cleveland State University has taught me to think big, bigger than my assumptions. I have learned to approach a problem objectively and to be critical of sources. The courses in Applied Reasoning and Organizational Behavior were the most impactful for me. Dr. Joel Elvery has an approach to statistics that conveys the concepts very well for me. I was able to understand that not all statistics relate to one another, even if someone is presenting that way. This is how I learned to remain critical of my sources. As for organizational behavior, I had the pleasure of taking two courses at once with Dr. Richard Steiner. I simultaneously took Introduction to Public Administration and Organizational Behavior; the two courses went very well together since Dr. Steiner had a similar curriculum for both courses. The same concepts were approached from different angles in each course and opened my eyes to real world scenarios. This approach provided a height to reach when I developed my project, and will continually have me reaching higher than minimum requirements.

Although I do not currently function under the rules of the federal human resources office, Dr. Christine Rush had an impact on my understanding of human resources management (HRM). The overall concept in HRM is alarmingly simple – treat people like human beings. I will take this simple concept with me throughout my career.

Leadership and the MPA Program

I provided this statement in my opening paragraph in the Capstone leadership paper earlier in the semester; this speaks to how the MPA program has taught me what a leader is, and how it influenced my leadership ability:

Leaders take risks, encourage people to do their best, motivate, remove barriers to allow success, allow others to pursue their vision, recognize they are not the most technical or experienced, and place talented people in positions that bring out their best work. This is a strong list, but I would be better served to call upon the experts in the field, to recognize that I am not the leader in this business, sociological, and managerial topic. Leadership is not one discipline's subject to master. It spans across all scholarly subject matter, all occupations have leaders – whether formal or informal.

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Charts and Tables

Table 1

		Violent crime	Property crime		
Year	Population group	Number of offenses known	Number of offenses known	Estimated population	National
2006	TOTAL ALL AGENCIES:	1,319,961	9,103,824	265,518,902	10,423,785
2007	TOTAL ALL AGENCIES:	1,310,062	9,026,804	270,507,141	10,336,866
2008	TOTAL ALL AGENCIES:	1,292,693	8,994,167	274,715,428	10,286,860
2009	TOTAL ALL AGENCIES:	1,254,358	8,775,197	283,878,605	10,029,555
2010	TOTAL ALL AGENCIES:	1,180,839	8,544,651	287,379,482	9,725,490
					Lakewood
2006	Lakewood	108	1,278	53,309	1,386
2007	Lakewood	90	1,326	51,606	1,416
2008	Lakewood	101	1,249	50,690	1,350
2009	Lakewood	91	740	50,098	831
2010	Lakewood	76	901	49,526	977

Appendices

13th District
City of Lakewood
Parts of Cleveland's West Side
Wards 3, 14, 15, 16, & 17
(614) 466-5921
(614) 719-3913 (fax)

Committees:
Commerce and Labor
Education
Health and Aging

Nickie J. Antonio
State Representative

May 20, 2011

The Honorable Michael P. Summers
Mayor of Lakewood
Lakewood City Hall
12650 Detroit Ave.
Lakewood, OH 44107

Dear Mayor Summers,

The youth in our community deserve a space to play and exercise. It is my pleasure to recommend and support more outdoor basketball hoops in the city of Lakewood. First Lady Michelle Obama encourages the youth of America to get out and enjoy the game of basketball in her public service announcement that airs on ESPN. Her Let's Move Campaign focuses on the health of families and children. Lakewood can follow and support the First Lady's message by installing basketball hoops and courts throughout our great city. Our children must not be absent of sports and recreation.

Basketball courts are low maintenance yet provide priceless benefits such as fun, the spirit of competition, learning and best of all exercise. I am pleased to offer my recommendation for more basketball courts in our community and hope that you will give favorable consideration.

Sincerely,



Nickie J. Antonio
State Representative
House District 13

C: City Council President Mary Louise Madigan
Lakewood City Council Members

Figure 3



2000 DETROIT AVE JE 44127 216/528-0025 FAX 216/528-0028
WILLIAM H. MADIGAN
Lakewood City Council
BRIAN POWERS, PRESIDENT
MARY LOUISE MADIGAN, VICE PRESIDENT

Council at Large:
RYAN P. NOWLIN
BRIAN E. POWERS
MONIQUE SYLVE

Ward Council
DAVID W. ANDERSON, WARD 1
THOMAS R. BULLOCK III, WARD 2
SHAWN P. JURIS, WARD 3
MARY LOUISE MADIGAN, WARD 4

March 19, 2012

Dear Community Member:

The undersigned Mayor and members of City Council in Lakewood, Ohio support the efforts of the Lakewood Outdoor Basketball Committee ("LOBC") to install a basketball court at Lakewood Park. LOBC is a grassroots organization comprised of local residents who are strong advocates of youth fitness. They are working in conjunction with the City of Lakewood to provide safe and healthy places to play outdoors with volunteer supervision.

We hope to continue working in a supportive way with LOBC for the benefit of our community. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Michael P. Summers
Mayor

Respectfully,

David W. Anderson
Council, Ward 1

Thomas R. Bullock, III
Council, Ward 2

Shawn P. Juris
Council, Ward 3

Mary Louise Madigan
Council, Ward 4

Ryan P. Nowlin
Council at Large

Brian E. Powers
Council at Large

Figure 4

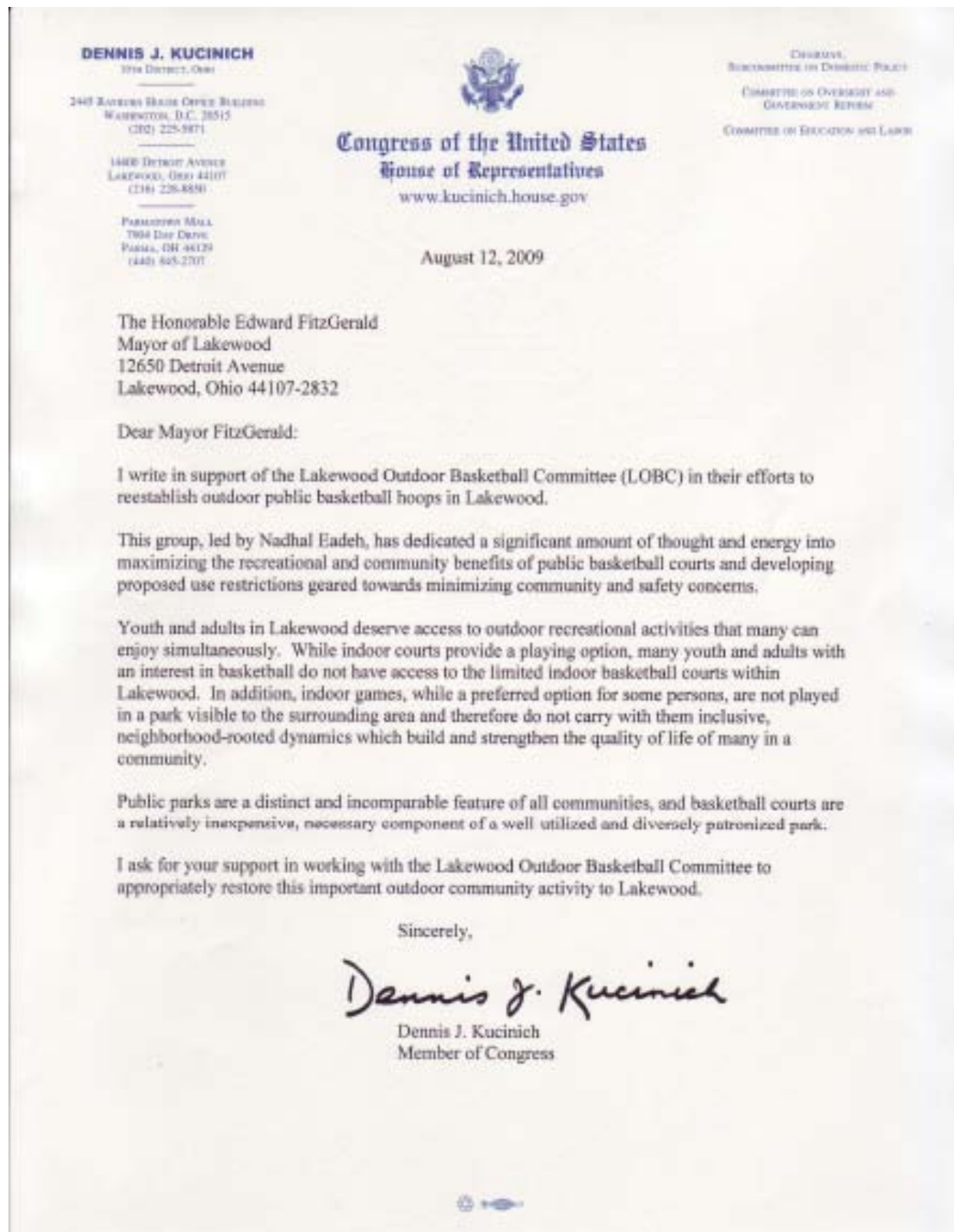


Figure 5