



**AGENDA
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING
APRIL 22, 2021
5:00 PM
ATLANTIC RECREATION CENTER
2500 ATLANTIC AVENUE
FERNANDINA BEACH, FL 32034**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. COMPILATION OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN**
 - 3.1 Discussion of Draft Outline
 - 3.2 Entry of Items/Elements to be Transferred from Existing 2015 Master Plan
- 4. ADJOURNMENT**

All members of the public are invited to be present and be heard. Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations in order to participate in this program or activity should contact the City Clerk at 904-310-3115 or TTY/TDD 711 (for the hearing or speech impaired).

Compilation of the 2021 Parks and Recreation Assessment and Action Plan

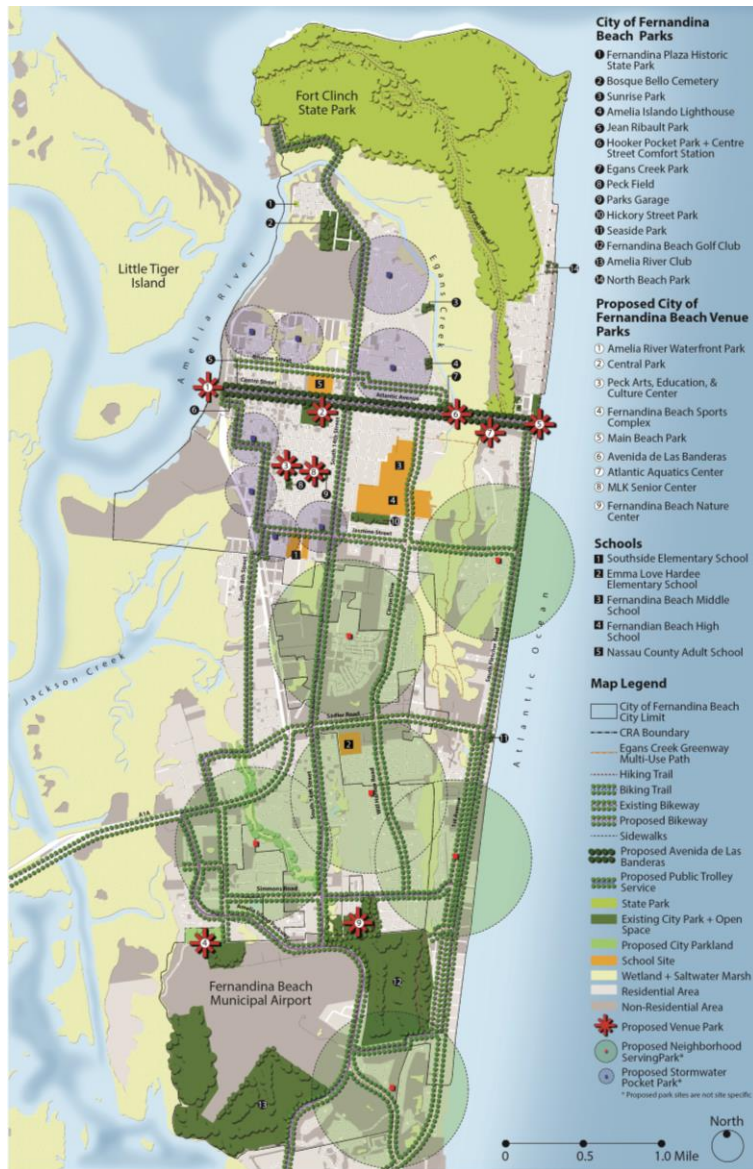
2021.04. 22 DRAFT

Scope of Work Outline

- I. Briefly review the 2015 Master Plan
 - a. Assess the accomplishment of any goals.
 - b. Assess further needs to be met.
 - c. Select key elements to add to the 2021 AAP.
- II. Distribute Applicable Sample Master Plans from Other Entities
 - a. Select style approach
 - b. Select key elements that are applicable to Fernandina Beach
 - i. Introductions
 - ii. History
 - iii. Demographics
 - iv. Existing Facilities and Programs
 - v. Assessment of Current Facilities
 - vi. Assessment of Citizen Participation
 - vii. Meeting Federal Disability Goals
 - viii. Methods of Presenting Data
 - ix. Methods of Analyzing the Data
 - x. Graphic Displays of Data
- III. Analyzing the Survey Results
- IV. Compiling the 2021 AAP
- V. Distribution of the 2021 AAP to the City Manager
- VI. Public Meetings to Gain Public Input
- VII. Committee Approval to forward the 2021 AAP to the City Commission for Approval

City of Fernandina Beach Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2015

FINAL AS APPROVED BY DEO/PAB Changes/Staff Edits



Acknowledgements

City of Fernandina Beach City Commission

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Vice-Mayor Johnny Miller
Commissioner Pat K. Gass
Commissioner Robin C. Lentz
Commissioner Tim Poynter

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The purpose of this Master Plan is to establish the role of the parks, recreation, and open space system within Fernandina Beach. Parks, recreation facilities, and open space not only assist with the recreational needs of citizens and visitors, but they also contribute to the quality of life within the community by providing access to natural resources, sports facilities, and leisure activities. A formalized parks and recreation system has been in place in Fernandina Beach since as early as the 1950's.

This Master Plan (the Plan) was developed from January – April 2015 in a collaborative process between City of Fernandina Beach staff and Barth Associates, the City's parks planning consultants. The Plan was completed in the following five steps:

- 1 - Existing Conditions Analysis
- 2 - Needs and Priorities Assessment
- 3 - Long Range Parks and Recreation Vision
- 4 - Implementation Plan
- 5 – Master Plan Report

Over 650 residents and stakeholders participated in the development of the plan through public meetings, interviews, surveys, and focus group meetings. Their ideas and priorities shaped the long range vision for the City's parks and recreation systems, as well as the phased implementation plan.

Throughout the planning process, City residents voiced their belief in parks and recreation as a valuable public service. The National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) finds three values that make parks and recreation essential public services to communities (www.nprpa.org). The first is economic value. NPRA finds that parks improve the local tax base and increase property values, and businesses cite quality parks and recreation as one of the top three reasons to relocate to an area. Additionally, the ecology of parks, such as trees and wetlands, contribute to a local economy by providing ecosystem services. Parks and recreation not only generate direct revenue for a community through fees, but also contribute to indirect revenue through special events, tournaments, and festivals which generate economic activity in other sectors such as tourism.

Secondly, NPRA finds that parks and recreation provide community health and environmental benefits. Parks and recreation facilities provide avenues for physical fitness for children, youth, adults, and seniors. Providing places for physical fitness can improve community health and increase the number of residents who engage in exercise. Visits to parks have been shown to reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and contribute to an overall sense of well-being by visitors. The health of the environment is also increased, as parks and protected open space or public lands can improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve air quality, provide buffers to development, and protect wildlife and their habitat. This healthy environment in turn provides a place for children and families to connect with nature and enjoy the outdoors. This connection with the natural world has been shown to contribute to physical and mental health both in children and adults. The recently launched federal initiative "America's Great Outdoors" and the growing influence of organizations such as the Children and Nature Network highlight the importance of access to the natural environment.

Lastly, NPRA finds that parks and recreation are socially important. Availability of parks and recreation services are often utilized to determine how livable communities are, and contribute to the perception of a community having a good quality of life. Parks and recreation areas provide gathering places for communities, regardless of age or economic status. In the past ten years, voter approval rates for bond measures to acquire parks and conserve open space nationwide have exceeded 75%, which illustrates a high level of public support for parks and open space. Parks and recreation areas are important to communities and contribute to a sense of civic pride.

This Master Plan is intended to assist the City in generating all of the benefits identified by NPRA, including economic, environmental, health and social benefits.

Section 1 – Overview of Existing Conditions

Because the City's parks and recreation system touches nearly every aspect of life in Fernandina Beach – and is influenced by so many different factors and variables - this section provides a broad overview of existing conditions including:

- Background Information
- Changes in Land Area
- Population Growth
- Land Use
- Vacant and Developable Land
- Demographic Profile
- Employment
- External Economic Forces

Most of the information in this section was copied directly from the current Future Land Use Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan 2030. The City secured data from a variety of sources, including the Nassau County Growth Management Department, Nassau County Property Appraiser, the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC), the U.S. Census Bureau, the City's GIS mapping, and the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR).

1.1 Background

Fernandina Beach is the official county seat of Nassau County (County). It is located on the northern end of a barrier island called Amelia Island and represents the northeastern edge of the County. Amelia Island is situated between the Amelia River to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, with Duval County/ City of Jacksonville to the south and Camden County, Georgia to the north. The City has an extensive publicly acquired greenway system of over 300 acres, known as the Egans Creek Greenway, which lines the eastern interior border of the island, beginning at the southern edge of the existing City limits and ending at Fort Clinch State Park. The City's National Register historic downtown Central Business District lies along Centre Street, where buildings host a vibrant mix of retail, office, and residential uses. Surrounding streets support a less intensive mix of office and retail with the predominant land use being historic single-family homes in the downtown area. A strong civic presence is maintained downtown and includes City Hall, the County Courthouse, the Main Branch Library, and the United States Post Office.

Since the mid-1970's Fernandina Beach has witnessed its historically dynamic commercial fishing and shrimping industry dwindle. Despite this struggling economic sector, the City has maintained a heavy industrial presence along its waterfront area. The "Waterfront Area" is located along Front Street running perpendicular to the City's downtown on the Amelia River. David Yulee's 1853 rail line has continued to support two mills (Rayonier and Smurfit Stone) and a deep sea port. The economic viability of water-dependent commercial business, coupled with changing demographics, has forced a shift in the historical use patterns of this area.

Today, the waterfront area contains transitional commercial uses, a City marina, public boat ramp, and vacant or underutilized land. Each end of the waterfront area is anchored by heavy industrial uses and a rail line which splits Fernandina's downtown from its waterfront. The City has already taken steps to foster redevelopment through the creation of a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) comprised of 54 properties; thirteen of which are publicly owned. In 2005, the City became a designated Waterfronts Florida Partnership Community.

Beyond the downtown and waterfront area, the City's commercial activities are primarily located along three corridors: 8th Street (SR 200/ A1A), Sadler Road and 14th Street. These corridors consist of both light and medium intensity commercial land uses with several bordering areas offering mixed office and residential opportunities. Less intense commercial options are sprinkled throughout the City and provide retail and office locations bordering the City's residential areas.

1.2 Changes in Land Area

The City's current boundaries measure at 12.198 square miles. ~~representing 1.8% of Nassau County's land area of approximately 650 square miles.~~ Between 2000 and 2010, the City ~~has~~ annexed 648 acres of land, increasing its incorporated area by just over one square mile. Most of the annexations were properties totaling less than ten acres. The largest annexation occurred in 2008 with the incorporation of roughly 415 acres of submerged lands added to create the City's mooring field, located in the Amelia River. The second major annexation furthered the City's conservation goals through the acquisition of several properties within the Egans Creek Greenway and bringing an additional 21 acres into its jurisdiction. ~~Table LU 1 provides a list of the annexations in this time period.~~ Recent annexations include the Palms Condominiums, Gateway at Amelia, Dunes of Amelia and Riverbend.

1.3 Population Growth

Fernandina Beach has experienced fairly stable growth increases over the past 40 years. During the decade between 1960 -1970 the City's population dropped by roughly 300 people; this may be attributed in part to the September 1964 hurricane, Hurricane Dora. Dora, with 110 mph winds, severely damaged the City's waterfront and downtown CBD causing over \$3.1 billion (1995 USD) in damages to the Northeast Florida region (NOAA- American Meteorological Society). Another factor that may attribute to the decline in population through this period is college age population leaving the City to obtain advanced degrees. The City did recover from a 4% population decrease by 1980 and grew at a more rapid rate of roughly 20% in the two decades (1980-2000) that followed, respectively. Table 1.1 displays the population estimates and changes for the City for the decades between 1960 and 2010 and a nearly 60% population increase over the 60 year span.

TABLE 1.1 Fernandina Beach Census Counts 1960-2010
Historical Census Count for the City of Fernandina Beach, FL 1960-2010

YEAR	POPULATION ESTIMATE	NUMERICAL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
1960	7,276		
1970	6,955	-321	-4.41%
1980	7,224	269	3.87%
1990	8,765	1,541	21.33%
2000	10,654	1,889	21.55%
2010	11,487	833	7.82%
GROWTH 1960-2010			57.88%

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, 1960-2010

BEBR estimates the City's current population at 11,510 as of April 2011. As shown in Table 1.2, this estimate represents population increase of roughly 12.6% since 2000, when the US Census Bureau estimated the City's population to be 10,654. The 2010 US Census Bureau data estimated the City's population at 11,487, which reflects a decrease of 568 between the 2009 BEBR estimate. Both figures were factored into the analysis to reflect overall population changes since 2000. Further, the table describes the City's average growth rate of 1.4% annually.

TABLE 1.2 Fernandina Beach Population Change 2000-2011

Population Change for the City of Fernandina Beach, FL 2000-2011			
YEAR	POPULATION ESTIMATE	NUMERICAL CHANGE	PERCENTAGE CHANGE
2000*	10,654		
2001	10,984	330	3.10%
2002	11,122	138	1.26%
2003	11,172	50	0.45%
2004	11,290	118	1.06%
2005	11,316	26	0.23%
2006	11,354	38	0.34%
2007	11,543	189	1.66%
2008	11,998	455	3.94%
2009	12,055	57	0.48%
2010*	11,487	-568	-4.71%
2011	11,510	23	0.20%
GROWTH 2000-2010			12.61%
AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE 2000-2011			1.40%

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau* and B.E.B.R. 2011 Estimate

The City's population has a projected increase of 4.8% by 2015 to 12,824 from its 2009 population estimate and will continue climbing to almost 20%, equaling 14,404 people within the planning horizon of 2030. Using BEBR's mid-range projections it is estimated that the City can expect an average annual increase of 108 people. The City is likely to experience an estimated annual growth rate less than one percent (1%) through 2030. This projection describes a third less annual average population change from that experienced in the last eight years. The City will continue to grow; however, its growth will be a little slower than experienced in previous decades.

Table 1.3 Population Projection for Fernandina Beach 2009-2030

Population Projection for Fernandina Beach 2009-2030						
2009	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	TOTAL CHANGE
12,209	12,331	12,824	13,337	13,523	14,010	14.75%
AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATE: 0.86%						

Source: BEBR, University of Florida, Population Projections, 2011

Data obtained from the City's utility providers and based on conversations with a couple of the Amelia Island resort communities (Amelia Island Plantation and Summer Beach) indicate that the City does not experience any major seasonal population fluctuations unlike communities in the South Florida region where there are strong "snow bird" season influences that impact their growth planning measures. Summer seasons have become noticeably more busy in recent years.

Nassau County, in its 2010 EAR based Comprehensive Plan Amendments data and analysis estimated its seasonal population. The City has used this same data to depict its seasonal population. In order to estimate the seasonal population, the permanent population estimates and projections for 2009-2030 were subject to a multiplier of 1.095 in order to obtain the maximum population projection for permanent and seasonal residents. This multiplier is based on analysis of information from the University of Florida's Shimborg Center for Affordable Housing and the U.S. Census Bureau American Communities Survey (ACS) (2007) that found housing units for seasonal population presently account for approximately 9.5 percent of the County total housing inventory. Projected demand for additional seasonal housing units is based on the assumption of a similar 9.5 percent of the total housing units in the County being maintained for seasonal use. Thus, in order to estimate the seasonal population, it was assumed that permanent population estimates for 2010-2030 were subject to a multiplier of 1.095 in order to account for seasonal residents. Also, based on this data it was assumed that the majority of seasonal residents (82 percent) are residing in unincorporated areas of the County, with the remainder (18 percent) assigned to the City of Fernandina Beach. Seasonal population estimates are shown in Table 1.4 below.

Table 1.4 Seasonal Population Projection for Fernandina Beach 2009-2030

Fernandina Beach Seasonal Population Estimates & Projections 2009-2030						
	2009	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Permanent Population	12,209	12,331	12,824	13,337	13,523	14,010
Seasonal Population	1,145	1,160	1,198	1,239	1,285	1,331
Total Permanent. + Seasonal Populations	13,354	13,491	14,022	14,576	14,808	15,341
Source: Nassau County Growth Management Department based on University of Florida Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing						

1.4 Land Use

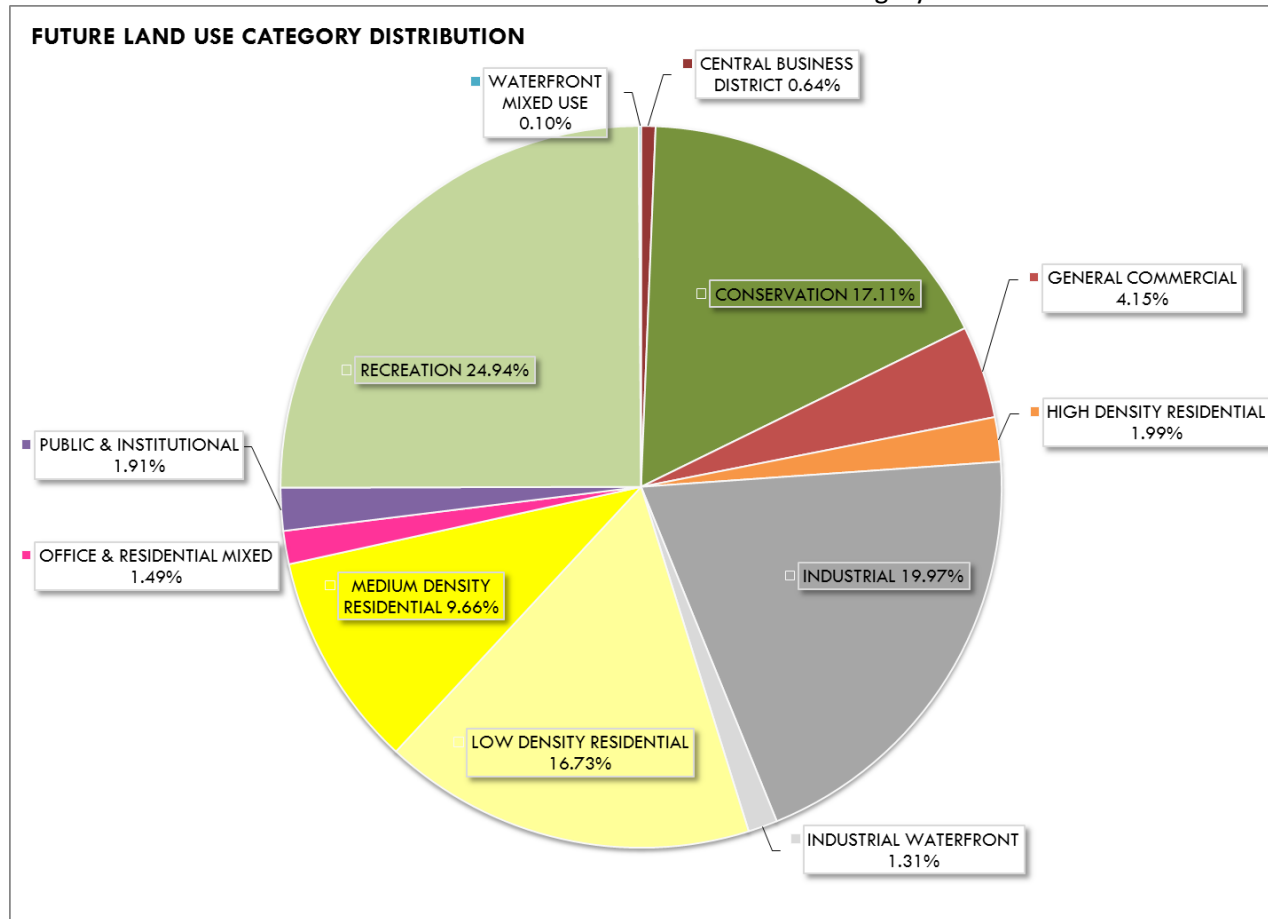
The City is comprised of approximately 12 miles² and has twelve (12) land use categories which can be assigned to property within its municipal limits. Table 1.5 identifies the land use categories and provides details of the total amount of acreage assigned within each category. This table also identifies the “unclassified” properties within the City that have not been assigned a land use category as they are either City rights-of-way (ROW) or the newly created mooring field within the Amelia River. ~~The Future Land Use Map Series contained as Appendix A reflects the future land use categories as assigned to properties in the City. There are no future land use map amendments contained as part of the EAR-based amendments.~~

Table 1.5 Fernandina Beach Future Land Use Categories

LANDUSE CATEGORY	ACREAGE	SQUARE MILES
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	42.20	0.07
CONSERVATION	1,121.22	1.75
GENERAL COMMERCIAL	271.84	0.42
HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	130.43	0.20
INDUSTRIAL	1,308.79	2.04
INDUSTRIAL WATERFRONT	86.12	0.13
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	1,096.13	1.71
MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	633.22	0.99
OFFICE & RESIDENTIAL MIXED	97.45	0.15
PUBLIC & INSTITUTIONAL	125.43	0.20
RECREATION	1,634.21	2.55
UNCLASSIFIED- ROW/ MOORING FIELD	1,126.40	1.76
WATERFRONT MIXED USE	6.70	0.01
TOTAL	7,680.14	12.00
Source: City of Fernandina Beach, GIS		

The City’s land use categories can be summarized into of six primary land use categories: Conservation/ Parks & Open Space, Residential, Commercial, Mixed Use, Institutional, and Industrial. Almost half (42%) of the City is held in conservation or recreational land use. The City’s available residential land makes up another 29%. Just over 21% of the City is held as industrial land and about 4% of the City is commercial. The remaining land use designations are mixed use districts comprised of both commercial and residential uses (CBD, ORMU, and WMU) and public/ institutional lands (PI); combined, these categories hold the remaining 4% of the City’s available land uses.

Chart 1.6 Fernandina Beach Future Land Use Category Distribution



Source: Fernandina Beach Future Land Use Map, 2011

Residential land uses in Fernandina Beach vary from low densities of four units per acre to high density allowing up to a maximum of ten units per acre. Higher densities are found primarily along the North/South Fletcher Avenue (A1A) beach area and the City's historic "Old Town" area, where the City maintains the original 1811 Spanish plat. The City permits residential, office and retail mixed uses in its Central Business District (CBD), Office & Residential Mixed Use (ORMU), and Waterfront Mixed Use (WMU) future land use categories. Commercial uses within the City are clustered around the dominant commercial "corridors," located along the major roadways of A1A/S.R.200/ 8th Street, 14th Street and Sadler Road. Only a few commercial land use designations are found along the Fletcher Avenue/ A1A corridor.

Industrial (I) and Industrial Waterfront (IW) land use categories surround the City's National Register designated historic downtown Central Business District area. Smurfit Stone and Rayonier pulp/paper mill factories are located on the north and south ends of downtown. Front Street historically held industrial waterfront related uses such as shrimp docks, processing plants and marinas. Today, the Front Street area is within the City's Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) and most of these small IW properties are eligible to apply for a Waterfront Mixed Use land use designation that provides the opportunity to have both commercial/waterfront industrial and low density residential uses. The area surrounding the City's Airport is the other area allocated for industrial land uses.

The City's Future Land Use Map (FLUM) has been amended 42 times since the 2002 Comprehensive Plan update. The FLUM was amended ten (10) times due to "decade's old scrivener's errors" to fix previous mapping impracticalities and seven (7) amendments were part of City annexations requiring an assignment of a future land use category. An additional seven (7) changes were brought forward due to the establishment of the City's Community Redevelopment Area (CRA), once industrial waterfront lots are now either part of the Central Business District or have taken advantage of the recently created "Waterfront Mixed Use" land use category. Two (2) changes placed properties in the Office & Residential Mixed Use category from Medium Density Residential. Two (2) amendments were from Medium to High

Density Residential. One (1) property changed from General Commercial to High Density Residential while another one (1) went from Medium Density Residential to General Commercial.

In 2000, the City recognized the need to enhance protection of the Egans Creek Greenway. The Greenway is partially salt water marsh and partially fresh-water marsh which runs through the middle of Amelia Island. Through a bond referendum the City was able to acquire many of the environmentally sensitive properties bordering the Greenway. The City purchased several parcels totaling 12.37 acres and placed it under Conservation Land Use. In 2010, the City noted several additional scrivener's errors within several of its existing recreational facilities and took action to remedy those errors by placing them under the Recreational Land Use category. These corrections brought an additional 16.71 acres of land under Recreation Land Use.

In summary, over the past five years, there were 87.85 acres of involved in land use category changes. Of that total 33% of the changes were related to the City's efforts to protect and enhance the Egans Creek Greenway. With the exception of several scrivener's errors related to digitizing the map itself, the FLUM seems to be functioning quite well. In the future, the City should anticipate witnessing additional land use changes within its CRA as these property owners will likely take advantage of the categories that afford them mixed use residential density options.

1.5 Vacant and Developable Land

According to the Nassau County Property Appraiser's Office, approximately 856.46 acres within City limits are classified as vacant. Table 1.7 describes the City's generalized existing land uses. ~~while tables LU-8 and LU-9 describe the amount of vacant land within each of the Future Land Use categories.~~ Vacant lands were determined using the Nassau County Property Appraiser property use description codes. Developable lands were calculated within each of the Future Land Use categories. The appropriate density or intensity rates were applied to provide an estimated development potential within each category. This analysis does not account for wetlands or other environmental constraints that may be present on individual properties. With less than 6% vacant land available; the City is nearing build-out within its existing municipal limits. This figure further supports the City's intent to provide for infill and redevelopment opportunities that incentivize low impact development strategies and green building techniques.

Table 1.7 and Chart 1.8 describe the City's existing land use consumption acreage. This data was generated using the Nassau County Property appraiser data use description codes and aggregated (as appropriate) to provide generalized land use categories. Over one-third of the City's existing development has been categorized as residential. Another third of the City is held in public/institutional holdings including such uses as schools, parks and open space, beach access locations, the airport, marina and golf course. Eleven percent of the land is described as waste, miscellaneous or unknown. These descriptions tend to be acres that are "not developable" or held under common ownership by local home owners associations. Nearly 6% of the land is classified as vacant and developable to accommodate future population needs. Just over 4% of the land is described as industrial with just under 4% carrying commercial uses. Less than 1% of existing land is utilized for non-profit, community or church uses.

Table 1.7 Fernandina Beach Existing Uses (Aggregated)

NC PROPERTY APPRAISER AGGREGATED USES	TOTAL ACREAGE	% OF TOTAL
NON-PROFIT/ CHURCH	140.68	0.91%
COMMERCIAL	588.92	3.82%
INDUSTRIAL	633.06	4.11%
VACANT	856.46	5.56%
WASTE/MISC/ UNKNOWN	1751.97	11.37%
PUBLIC	5664.02	36.74%
RESIDENTIAL	5779.46	37.49%
TOTAL	15414.58	100.00%

Source: Nassau County Property Appraiser

Chart 1.8 Fernandina Beach Existing Uses

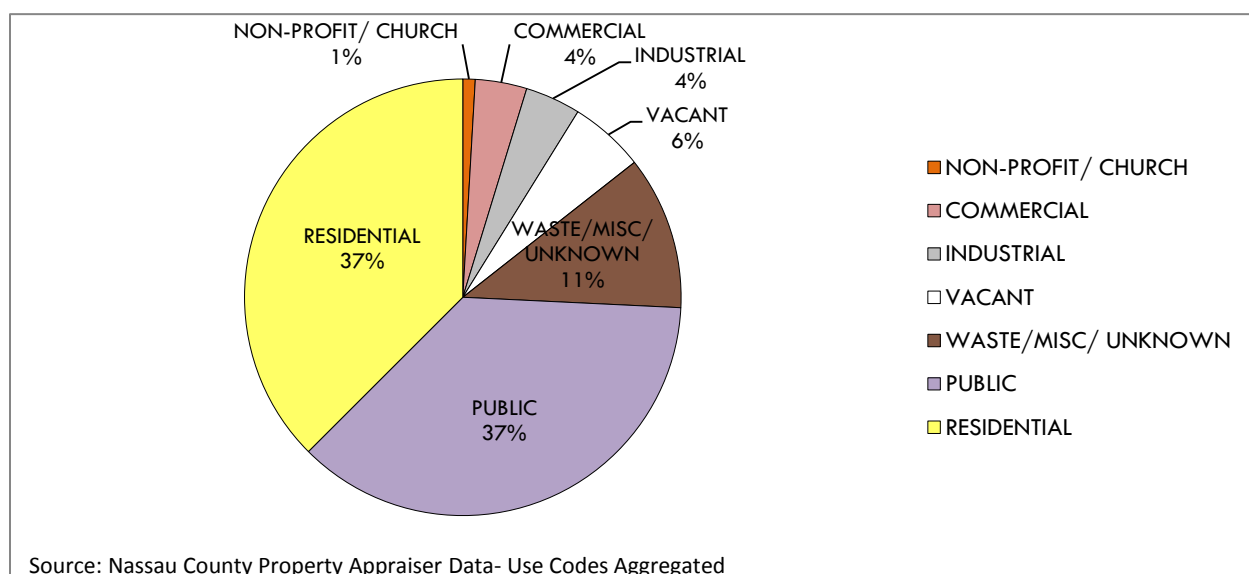


Table 1.9 describes how many units the City's available residential vacant acreage could generate at its existing allowable densities. Vacant residential lands total about 413 acres and could generate just over 2,600 dwelling units if built to its maximum potential. The City's population is expected to increase by roughly 2,500 people in the next 19 years. With an average household size of 2.30 people per unit (2010 Census), the City has more than double the necessary capacity depicted on its Future Land Use Map to provide housing for its future population.

Table 1.9 Development Potential on Vacant Residential Land

Residential Vacant Lands Analysis			
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY	CALCULATED ACREAGE VACANT LAND	OF DENISTY (units/acre)	POTENITAL UNITS
LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	179.79	4	719.16
MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	157.76	8	1,262.08
HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	22.71	10	227.1
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	3.41	8	27.28
OFFICE RESIDENTIAL MIXED USE	49.12	8	392.96
WATERFRONT MIXED USE	0	2	0
TOTAL			2,628.58
Source: Fernandina Beach FLUM and Nassau County Property Appraiser Data			

Table 1.10 describes the amount of available commercial and industrial lands as depicted on the City's Future Land Use Map. The vacant commercial and industrial acreage totals less than 435 acres. However, this figure may be slightly inflated in its industrial land use calculation due to the fact that portions of the City's municipal airport properties which are classified as vacant lands by the Nassau County Property Appraiser's Office. Its classification as such somewhat skews the amount of acreage that is actually "developable." Additionally, there are parcels owned by Smurfit-Stone WestRock and Rayonier, the City's major manufacturing employers, which have likely been separated from their overall property holdings to better depict their "vacant and undevelopable" land allowing them some tax burden relief. Portions of both of their property holdings can be described as undevelopable due to the large amount of wetlands contained on those pieces of property, most of which has been assigned a Conservation future land use category. Table 1.10 does not reflect these assumptions in its analysis and describes the figures as reported by the Nassau County Property Appraiser's Office.

The ~~proposed FAR-based Comprehensive Plan Amendments consider~~ current Comprehensive Plan implemented several changes to its commercial and industrial land use categories. Its General Commercial category reflects an intensity increase in FAR from 0.5 to 1.5 and its Mixed Use category ~~proposes~~ reflects an intensity increase in FAR from 0.5 to 1.0. Both of these ~~proposed~~ changes will serve to support the City's desire to obtain a more compact urban development form and as an incentive for green building and low impact development techniques. The Industrial category also reflects an increased intensity in FAR from 0.5 to 0.75. The resulting FAR is consistent with the permissible FAR in the City's Industrial Waterfront category and reflects the actual industrial building patter which exists in the City today. As discussed in the Public Facilities and Services data and analysis, the City has more than adequate infrastructure in place to support the increased intensities ~~proposed by this amendment package~~ as well as its anticipated population increase through 2030.

Table 1.10 Development Potential on Vacant Commercial and Industrial Land

Commercial and Industrial Vacant Lands Analysis							
FUTURE LAND USE CATEGORY	CALCULATED ACREAGE OF VACANT LAND	VACANT ACREAGE TO SQ FT	INTENSITY (Floor Area Ratio)- Current	POTENTIAL SQ FT- Current	INTENSITY (Floor Area Ratio)- Proposed	POTENTIAL SQ FT- Proposed	SQ FT INCREASED BY PROPOSED AMENDMENTS
GENERAL COMMERCIAL	41.53	1,809,047	0.5	904,523	1.5	1,206,031	301,508
MIXED USE	49.12	2,139,667	0.5	1,069,834	1	2,139,667	1,069,833
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT	3.41	148,540	2	297,079	SAME	SAME	SAME
WATERFRONT MIXED USE	0	0	0.75	0	SAME	SAME	SAME
INDUSTRIAL	324.69	14,143,496	0.5	7,071,748	0.75	18,857,995	11,786,247
INDUSTRIAL WATERFRONT	15.73	685,199	0.75	513,899	SAME	SAME	SAME
Source: Fernandina Beach FLUM and Nassau County Property Appraiser Data							

1.6 Demographic Profile

The City of Fernandina Beach demographic profile comparison based on 2000 and 2010 US Bureau Census data is summarized in Table 1.11. In 2010, City's household size was nearly 12% less than the national average (2.6) and its population is about seven (7) years older than the US average age (36.5). Not unlike other Florida cities, Fernandina Beach tends to have an older population with roughly 7.5% more people aged 65 and over compared to the national average of 12.6%. Its population tends to be wealthier than the national average with individual(s) and family incomes ranging between \$2,500 to \$3,200 higher but, is on par with the US estimates of roughly 10% of individual(s) and families living below the poverty level. The City's home ownership rates also on average with the national average. On average the mean travel time to work is less than 2 minutes different than the national average of 25.2 minutes.

There are several noteworthy changes that took place between the years 2000 and 2010. The City has attained an increase in its high school degree achievement with 89.8% of its population, nearly 5% higher than the national average. There has been a 4% decline in the number of civilian veterans within the City however; this figure remains nearly 7% higher than the national average. While the percentage of those who speak a language other than English in their home has increased, the City remains well below the national average (19.6%) in this social characteristic. In terms of race, over two-thirds (2/3) of the City is white, roughly the same as the national average, and although its African American population has decreased over the past 10 years, its average exceeds the national average by 3.5%. One of the more

drastic changes the City experienced over the past decade was 129% increase in the median value of its single family homes. The City's single family home values are almost 70% higher than the national average.

Table 1.11 2000 and 2010 US Census Demographics Snapshot

Fernandina Beach Demographics 2000 and 2010			
	2000	2010	Change
Social Characteristics			
Average Household Size	2.28	2.3	0.02
Median Age (years)	43	43.1	0.1
Male	47.7%	48.9%	1%
Female	52.3%	51.1%	-1%
Under 5 years old	5%	6%	1%
65 years and over	12%	20%	8%
High School Degree	87.1%	89.8%	3%
Bachelor's Degree of higher	32.4%	32.2%	-0.2%
Civilian Veterans	19.8%	15.7%	-4.1%
Speaks a language other than English at home	6%	11%	5%
Race			
White	81.5%	77.3%	-4.2%
African American	16.2%	15.9%	-0.3%
Other	2.3%	6.8%	4.5%
Economic Characteristics			
Per Capita Income (1999 \$/ 2009 \$- adjusted for inflation)	\$24,517	\$30,236	\$5,719
Median Household Income	\$40,893	\$53,945	\$13,052
Average Family Size (people)	2.78	2.81	0.03
Median Family Income (1999 \$/ 2009 \$- adjusted for inflation)	\$54,806	\$64,946	\$10,140
Individuals below Poverty Level	10.2%	13.2%	3%
Housing Characteristics			
Median Value of Single Family Homes	\$134,500	\$308,000	\$173,500
Owner Occupied Housing Units	3,118	3,198	80
Renter Occupied Housing Units	1,407	1,601	194
Vacant Housing Units	1,063	1,820	757
Mean Travel Time to Work (in minutes)	22.6	23.9	1.3

Source: 2000 and 2010 US Census Bureau Data, American Community Survey

1.7 Employment

Fernandina Beach is located about 35 miles from downtown Jacksonville on Amelia Island, roughly half an hour from Jacksonville International Airport. The City is served by two major railways (First Coast Rail and CSX) and is home to a natural deepwater port. Fernandina Beach provides a unique combination of pristine beaches and a small-town atmosphere. The City's economy is diverse, ranging from tourism based employment to pulp and paper mill industries to charter fishing and shrimping. The Port of Fernandina, operated by the Nassau County Ocean Highway and Port Authority, continues to play a crucial role in future economic development. The significance of its role has been recognized by its inclusion in the Florida Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Plan of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). The Fernandina Beach Airport, located on 602 acres and operated by the City, has general

aviation and transport facilities. Sufficient land is owned by the airport to provide for future growth and expansion needs for both airport operations and commercial businesses.

In June 2008, the Hass Center for Business Research and Economic Development completed a report on the economic impact of Amelia Island tourism on Nassau County for the Amelia Island Tourism and Development Council. The report finds that tourism on Amelia Island:

- “generates ~\$346 million in total sales (retail plus business-to-business) locally;
- results in the creation of about 4,781 jobs that are directly or indirectly related to tourism and
- creates local income and wages of ~ \$94 million.”

The accommodation, food service and retail industries (visitors and hospitality sectors) employ the largest share of Fernandina Beach’s workforce making up over 35% of its economic base. The County’s economy is twice as dependent on tourism as the average Florida County, according to Florida Legislative Research. Government operations (City and County operations, Nassau County School Board, Department of Health, US Post Office, and Florida Park Service) make up roughly 16% of Amelia Island’s economic base. Manufacturing makes up another 14% of its economic base (Rayonier and Smurfit Stone WestRock pulp mills.) Table 1.12 identifies the City’s major employers.

Table 1.12 Major Employers in Fernandina Beach

Employer	Industry	# of Employees
Smurfit Stone WestRock	Industry	445
Baptist Medical Center- Nassau	Healthcare	413
Nassau County School Board	Education	360
Rayonier	Manufacturing	280
Fernandina Beach	Government	278
Wal-Mart	Retail	200

Source: Nassau County Economic Development Board, Fernandina Beach, Nassau County School Board, 2011

The Nassau County Economic Development Board (NCEDB) has identified eight target industry clusters that are the focus of economic development efforts. The targeted industries are: Aviation-Aerospace, Corporate Headquarters, Pharmaceuticals and Biotechnology, Electronics and Semiconductors, Medical Equipment and Technologies, Customer Service and Technical Support Centers, Internet Technology, and Motor Vehicle Parts and Accessories.

Nassau County completed its EAR report in July 2008. Their community assessment analyzed both vacant and agricultural lands as “developable” and found that the County on whole had a surplus development potential of 65,365 dwelling units to accommodate its 2030 housing estimates. At this time the County has reviewed and approved for development totaling roughly 5,100 dwelling units.

The East Nassau County Planning Area (ENCPA) is scheduled to come online within Nassau County over the coming years. This +/- 24,000 acre master planned development is being developed by Terrapointe, a subsidiary of Rayonier. Most of the property lies between I-95 and Chester Road north of SR200/A1A. This development is a 20+ year buildout and anticipates a maximum of 24,000 residential dwelling units and 11,000,000 square feet of non-residential uses.

1.8 External Economic Forces

Several external factors also affect economic and land development within Nassau County and Fernandina Beach. Improvements in the Jacksonville port facilities and new developments will generate more jobs for the northeast Florida region. These new jobs and residents are likely to bring their families and friends to Fernandina Beach whether it is to live, work or play.

The Jacksonville Port Authority, known as JAXPORT, is an international trade seaport. JAXPORT expansion plans include improvements to its three marine terminals (Talleyrand, Blount Island and Dames Point). Additional improvements will

be completed to the Jacksonville harbor. At the Dames Point terminal, JAXPORT recently completed construction of a 158 acre container handling facility. This facility will be used by the Tokyo based shipping line known as Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL), and terminal operating partner, TraPac, to unload and load container ships sailing to and from Asia. MOL's operations are estimated to create more than 1,600 new private sector port jobs in the greater Jacksonville area, while supporting operations in trucking, distribution and related services could generate a total of 6,000 direct and indirect local jobs throughout the northeast Florida region. Jacksonville's new port facilities will enable northeast Florida businesses to export directly to nations throughout Asia- opening a huge new consumer market and providing an opportunity to boost sales. This, along with planned expansions of the Panama Canal to be completed by 2014, will make northeast Florida more attractive for a host of businesses to grow operations in the region by enabling local companies to easily import and export goods with Asia.

These advantages will create new opportunities in manufacturing, distribution and warehousing all linked to trade with these new markets. For example, home improvement and department stores may now look to open distribution centers in northeast Florida because these facilities will provide them with a direct local link to their Asian suppliers. Similarly, manufacturing plants which rely on parts or materials from Asia may consider northeast Florida for their operations because they now have a direct link to their Asian suppliers.

Jacksonville- based CSX railroad company, plans new expenditures totaling \$40 million to upgrade its tracks and build a link through Nassau County to connect the rails along U.S. 17 to the main line running north toward Waycross, GA. JAXPORT projections call for a tripling of cargo in the next few years largely because of the new MOL terminal and a pending agreements with the Korean shipping company, Hajin. The rail connections will enable the ship to move their cargo from on- shore and provide an enhanced distribution network of these goods.

Located 17 miles west of downtown Jacksonville and approximately 40 miles from Amelia Island, the proposed Cecil Field Commerce Center will provide 8,300 acres of new and existing commerce facilities. The City of Jacksonville has spent over \$180 million for infrastructure improvements to enhance the area and attract businesses to locate at Cecil Field. The area's current master plan provides over 30 million square feet of warehouse/distribution space; 727,000 square feet of retail space; 320,000 square feet of office space; and a 660 room hotel location.

The Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base is located in Camden County, Georgia, near the Florida-Georgia border adjacent to the City and about a 35 mile car ride. The Villages of Kingsland is a planned development on 15,000 acres recently annexed into the City of Kingsland in Camden County, Georgia, west of U.S. 17 and north of SR 40. On the 15,000 acres, of which approximately one-third is wetlands, the developer has plans to build approximately 40,000 residential units, 13.5 million square feet of industrial development, and 9.5 million square feet for commercial use.

In adjacent Baker County, proposed large-scale developments are changing the rural character of this area. Located about 65 miles from Fernandina Beach, currently under review are the 3,200-acre Cedar Creek project with 7,000 homes and 425,000 square feet of commercial use; and Navona Creek, a 3,654-acre development with 8,300 homes, a 1.5-million square feet business park, and a 330,000 square feet village center. It is estimated that these new developments will triple the Baker County population.

These new developments are likely to generate additional spending on Amelia Island as the area continues to be recognized for its beautiful white sandy beaches, unique shopping opportunities and fine dining experiences. New residents and their visitors may travel from their home locations to hike, bike and explore the City's vast natural resources.

Section 2 – Existing Parks + Recreation System

2.1 Inventory of Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

Most of the information in this section was copied directly from the current Recreation and Open Space Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan 2030.

The City Parks and Recreation Department currently use several classifications to identify the type of park or recreation facility available: heritage, community, public access, neighborhood, conservation, open space, pocket, and beach. Table 2.1 identifies and classifies the following parks, recreation facilities, and open space as follows:

Table 2.1 Fernandina Beach Recreational Amenity Functional Classification

Park/Facility/Open Space	Type	Acreage
<i>Amelia Island Lighthouse</i>	<i>Heritage</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Atlantic Park</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>6.4</i>
<i>Beach Accesses</i>	<i>Public Access</i>	<i>10.51</i>
<i>Central Park</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Egans Creek Park</i>	<i>Neighborhood</i>	<i>2.2</i>
<i>Egans Creek Greenway</i>	<i>Conservation</i>	<i>316</i>
<i>Hickory Street Park</i>	<i>Neighborhood</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Ilan Circle</i>	<i>Open Space</i>	<i>0.85</i>
<i>MLK Park</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>5.6</i>
<i>Main Beach Park</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Ash Park</i>	<i>Pocket</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<i>North Beach Park</i>	<i>Beach</i>	<i>2.5</i>
<i>Peck Fields</i>	<i>Neighborhood</i>	<i>2.4</i>
<i>Seaside Park</i>	<i>Beach</i>	<i>2.6</i>
<i>Sunrise Park</i>	<i>Neighborhood</i>	<i>2.84</i>
<i>Ybor Alvarez Fields</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Downtown Beautification</i>	<i>Heritage</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Jean Ribault Pocket Park</i>	<i>Pocket</i>	<i>0.4</i>
<i>Hook Pocket Park</i>	<i>Pocket</i>	<i>0.11</i>
<i>Waterfront Park</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>8.24</i>
<i>Bosque Bello Cemetery</i>	<i>Heritage</i>	<i>30</i>

The State of Florida Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) lists the following classifications for user-based recreation facilities:

- equipped play area and tot lot – open areas with play apparatus for preschool and school-age children. It is recommended that play area serve neighborhoods of between 500 and 2500 people on a minimum of a ¼ acre at a site adjoining an existing recreation facility or elementary school.
- neighborhood park – “walk to” park, generally located along streets where people can walk or bicycle without encountering heavy traffic. These serve the population of a neighborhood in a radius of up to ½ mile, and should have at least two acres for each 1,000 population. The size usually ranges from 5 to 10 acres, and serves a population of up to 5,000.
- community park – “ride to” park, located near major streets. These parks are designed to serve the needs of four to six neighborhoods, and serve an area with a radius of up to three miles, or a service population of up to 25,000. A minimum of 20 acres for each community park is recommended, with two acres per 1,000 population. A minimum of 5 acres is recommended.

- urban open space – landscaped or natural open areas located within built-up areas. These sites may serve populated areas ranging in size from a single neighborhood to an entire city. Urban open space areas may vary from 1/10 of an acre to several acres depending on intended use.
- urban-district park – designed to serve the recreation needs of several communities, a city, or county, and usually provides resource-based areas and facilities. Examples are a zoo, golf course, or botanical garden.
- regional park – large, resource-based areas that serve two or more communities or counties and are within an hour's driving distance of residents that they serve. A space allowance of 20 acres per 1000 population is suggested. The park should serve a population of over 100,000 and range in size from a minimum of 250 acres to several thousand acres. The location is dependent on the availability of high quality natural resources.
- beach access site – support facilities for public-owned beaches. Sites may range from 10 to more than 100 feet in width, and parking may or may not be available. Three parking spaces should be provided for every 100 square feet of beach at public access points. A distance of ½ mile between access sites has been developed as a guideline for the spacing of access sites.

The SCORP also lists the following classifications for resource-based facilities:

- freshwater and saltwater beach
- freshwater and saltwater piers or catwalks
- boat ramps – freshwater and saltwater
- camping facilities (RV/trailer and tent)
- picnic tables
- recreational trails
- archaeological and historical sites
- hunting land

The City currently has sixteen (16) user-based recreation facilities and six (6) resource-based recreation areas (not counting the beach access points individually). These are detailed as follows in Tables 2.2 and 2.3:

Table 2.2 User-Based Recreation Facilities in Fernandina Beach

User-Based Recreation Facility	Type of Facilities Available
Atlantic Recreation Center <i>Atlantic Recreation Center is the administrative center for the Parks and Recreation Department. It houses a pre-school, after school and summer camp programs, aquatics office, karate classes, senior programs, and many other programs.</i>	Auditorium Swimming Pool Kid's Activity Pool Playground Outdoor Basketball Court Teen Center Baseball Practice Field Pavilion with Restroom Aquatics Building with Concession and Sundry Shop
Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreation Center <i>The MLK, Jr. Center offers such programs as after school tutoring, summer learning center, summer food service, open card night, horseshoe tournaments, a co-ed exercise class, and many other programs.</i>	Auditorium Swimming Pool Kid's Activity Pool Playground Outdoor Basketball Court (lighted) Baseball Practice Field Baseball Playing Field Batting Cage 2 Pavilions with Picnic Tables Baseball Concession Stand and Restrooms
Peck Center and Gymnasium <i>The Peck Center is a 104-year old former school converted to a multi-purpose center. There are two parts to this facility, Peck Gymnasium and Peck Center. Peck Gymnasium provides recreational opportunities. The Peck Center is home to 8 non-profit organizations, the City Attorney, Finance Department, Information Technology Department, and Fire Administration . It also features a computer lab, a library, an auditorium and a reception room.</i>	Indoor Basketball Court 2 Volleyball Courts Weight Room/Cardio Equipment 2 Practice Baseball Fields Open Recreation Field
Buccaneer Fields <i>These sports fields are home to the Pop Warner football and Babe Ruth baseball leagues.</i>	Football Field 3 Baseball Fields 1 Softball Field Batting Cages 2 Concession Stands Restrooms 1 Pavilion
Hickory Street Park <i>These sports fields are utilized for baseball, football, and soccer.</i>	2 Baseball Practice Fields Multipurpose Field

User-Based Recreation Facility	Type of Facilities Available
Ybor Alvarez Fields <i>These recreational fields are adjacent to the City Airport.</i>	4 Softball Fields Soccer Fields Concession Stand 2 Restrooms
Central Park <i>Central Park is centrally located between downtown and the beach. In addition to offering recreational opportunities, many community events are held at this park.</i>	Baseball Practice Field Open Recreation Field 4 Tennis Courts Playground Gazebo Picnic Tables Restrooms
Main Beach Park <i>Main Beach Park is the largest beach park within the City, offering many recreational opportunities. Like Central Park, many community events are also held at Main Beach Park.</i>	Playground 2 Volleyball Courts Outdoor Multipurpose Courts Skate Park Picnic Shelters Boardwalk Gazebos Restrooms Showers Water Fountain
Egans Creek Park <i>This park offers open space and limited recreation directly adjacent to Egans Creek.</i>	Baseball Practice Field Open Recreation Field Playground Picnic Tables
Sunrise Park <i>Sunrise Park offers limited recreation adjacent to Egans Creek.</i>	Playground Open Space Picnic Tables
Seaside Park <i>Seaside Park is a beach access point at the end of Sadler Road. This access is larger than many of the other beach access points and offers pavilions, picnic tables, and limited open space.</i>	Pavilions Picnic Tables Open Space Boardwalk Restrooms Showers
North Beach Park <i>Like Seaside Park, North Beach is larger than most access points and offers pavilions and picnic tables in addition to a boardwalk to the beach.</i>	Pavilions Picnic Tables Boardwalk
Ash Street Park <i>This small park adjacent to City Hall offers limited picnic seating.</i>	Picnic Tables

User-Based Recreation Facility	Type of Facilities Available
Anchor and Hook Pocket Parks <i>The two pocket parks are located off Centre Street downtown and offer landscaped seating areas.</i>	Benches

Table 2.3 Resource-Based Recreational Sites in Fernandina Beach

Resource-Based Recreational Sites	Uses Available
Egans Creek Greenway <i>This 300-acre natural area alongside Egans Creek is preserved in an undeveloped state for passive recreational use.</i>	Biking Hiking Bird Watching Kayaking
Golf Course <i>The City's 27-hole Golf Course is operated as an individual department within the City. The golf course offers tee times, tournaments, and instruction.</i>	Golfing Driving Range
Fernandina Harbor Marina <i>The City's Marina is operated by Westrec Marinas and is the first stop in Florida for boaters traveling south. The Marina offers 60 slips and a mooring field.</i>	Boating
City Boat Ramp <i>Located at the foot of Ash Street, this public boat ramp is the only boat ramp within City limits. This boat ramp is currently within the downtown waterfront park area.</i>	Boating
Beach Accesses <i>The City maintains 48 public beach access points.</i>	Swimming Surfing Walking/Running Multipurpose Use
Downtown Waterfront Park <i>This park along the Amelia River is in the early phases of construction. A master plan has been adopted by the City for this park.</i>	Boating Walking Nature Study Multipurpose Use
Amelia Island Lighthouse <i>This 19th-century lighthouse is still active and is open to the public.</i>	Heritage Education Maritime Education

<i>Ilan Circle</i> <i>This small open space is located within a neighborhood.</i>	<i>Open Space</i>
<i>Bosque Bello</i> <i>Dating to approximately 1798, this historic cemetery is still utilized. The historic section offers opportunities to learn about the community's heritage in a quiet, natural landscape.</i>	<i>Heritage Education</i> <i>Walking</i> <i>Nature Study</i>

Maintaining public access to the water is an important mission to the City, which is a Waterfronts Florida Partnership Community. One of the program goals of Waterfronts is to ensure and protect public access. Currently, the City offers 48 public beach access points. No fee or permit is required to utilize these access points or their parking, and they are operated on a first-come, first-served basis. Beach accesses are currently the only public access type that is inventoried. Table 2.5 lists the beach access locations in Fernandina Beach.

2.2 Unique City Recreation and Open Space Resources

Bosque Bello Cemetery - The City Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for operating and maintaining the historic Bosque Bello Cemetery, which is included within the City's Old Town Historic District. Municipalities throughout Florida operate their municipal cemeteries through varied city departments, with parks and recreation being a common operator. Historically, cemeteries were utilized as passive leisure centers, providing opportunities for being outdoors in a maintained, peaceful setting. Beginning in the 19th century, cemeteries were planned with visitors in mind and designed to accommodate this type of recreating. While there is no evidence of Bosque Bello being planned in this manner, it does afford visitors the opportunity to experience the City's heritage in a beautiful outdoor setting, noted particularly for an extensive tree canopy.

Bosque Bello, or "Beautiful Woods," is said to have been established by the Spanish in 1798, with the oldest identifiable grave dating to 1813. Many notable citizens of Fernandina's past are buried at Bosque Bello. In 1945, the "new" section of the cemetery was added on land donated to the City, and the cemetery is still utilized. In 1987, the General Duncan Lamont Clinch Historical Society of Amelia Island completed a survey of the original section of the cemetery. This survey was updated in 1997 by the Amelia Island Genealogy Society, and included the "new" section as well. As of the 1997 survey, approximately 4000 people are buried in the "old" and "new" sections of the cemetery.

Due to the cemetery's historic significance, provisions for the ongoing maintenance and protection of the cemetery have been included in the Historic Preservation Element in addition to the Recreation and Open Space Element. It is strongly recommended that the Parks and Recreation Department, the Planning Department, and the Historic District Council coordinate regarding objectives and policies related to the preservation of Bosque Bello.

Egans Creek Greenway - The City Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains Egans Creek Greenway, which was funded by a general obligation bond and the Florida Communities Trust program. The Greenway, established in 2000, is a 300 acre undeveloped park open during daylight hours for passive recreational opportunities such as walking, jogging, bird watching, and bicycling. A pavilion with restrooms and picnic area is located at the northern entrance at Atlantic Avenue, and two bridges over Egans Creek and a raised boardwalk at the south entrance at Sadler Road offer enhanced opportunities for wildlife viewing. Benches, located throughout the park, offer peaceful resting places for park users. The Greenway is zoned as conservation land and is also designated as conservation in the Future Land Use Map (FLUM).

Prior to the Egans Creek Greenway land acquisition by the City, this area was owned by multiple private land owners and was largely managed and manipulated by Amelia Island Mosquito Control. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, Egans Creek, for which the Greenway was named, was diked, ditched, and deprived of its tidal waters to

support surrounding development and flood and mosquito control efforts. In 2003, the FDOT undertook a restoration project of the 70 acres in the northern Greenway. This mitigation project restored tidal flow to the area, bringing back the salt marsh habitat that had been absent for over 50 years. Unfortunately, the tidal flow unexpectedly extended beyond the established restoration site, adversely affecting fresh water habitat to the south. Many acres of a long-established monoculture forest of red maple were affected. In 2009, FDOT completed construction of a second water control device at Jasmine Street which stemmed the flow of salt water to the south but continues to allow excess fresh water to drain to the north. The fresh water vegetation in the south Greenway is currently undergoing a successful recovery process, and this project is still under monitoring.

The easy access to the northern Greenway makes it ideal for use as an outdoor classroom for local high school and middle school classes. Both schools are located on Citrona Drive, within walking distance of the Greenway. Community-based education is emphasized via the use of graphics and regular tours, as well as information available online and at the Nature Center. Educational opportunities are presented by City staff and local volunteers. The Greenway is a tool for educating the public about the values of natural spaces, wetlands, endangered and threatened species, invasive species, and human impacts on ecosystems.

Egans Creek Greenway is part of the Great Florida Birding Trail. Users may pick up an informational brochure and map at each entrance, and brochures containing a self-guided walking tour are available at the adjacent Parks and Recreation Department administrative office on Atlantic Avenue. Information is also available on the City's website.

A management plan has been created as part of the grant funding requirements associated with the land acquisition for the project. It is strongly recommended that the Parks and Recreation Department ensure the management plan is created and updated for the Egans Creek Greenway. ~~including at a minimum ensuring that it is addressed separately in the parks and recreation master planning process.~~ This plan needs to be referenced in relationship to overall parks and recreation master planning, and is incorporated by reference here.

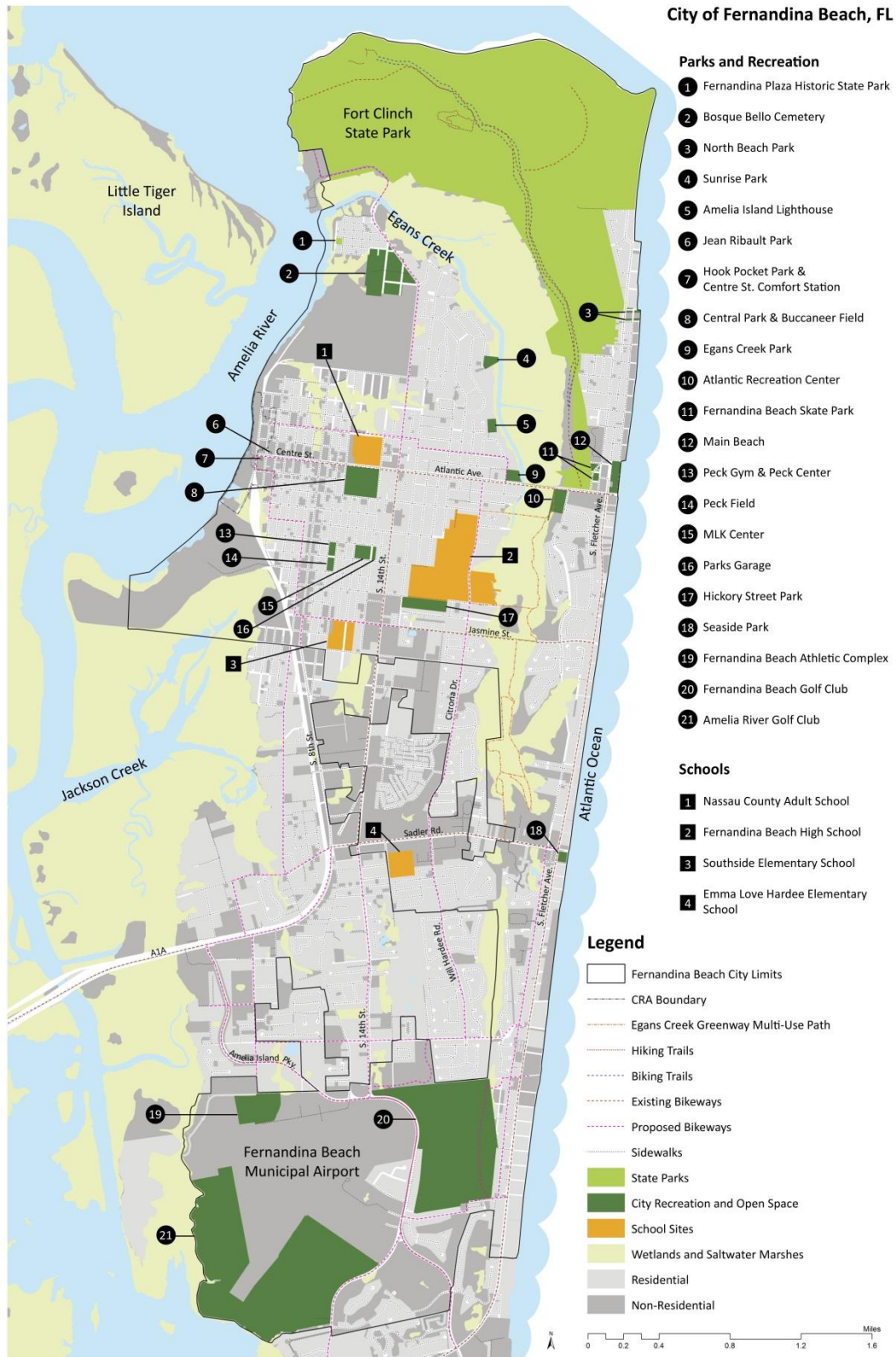
2.3 Non-City Recreation Facilities within City Limits

Fort Clinch State Park is located within the City limits of Fernandina Beach, but is owned and operated by the State. Fort Clinch offers numerous recreational opportunities, including: beach activities, bicycling (on-road and off-road), camping, fishing, hiking, picnicking, swimming, nature study, and wildlife viewing. In addition, the Park is home to Fort Clinch, a Civil War-era fort that is open to visitors.

The State also owns and operates nearby Plaza San Carlos, known as Fernandina Plaza, which was the parade ground for the former site of a 19th-century Spanish fort. Although the fort is no longer present, the open grassy site allows for picnicking and beautiful views of the Amelia River. Fort Clinch State Park charges an entrance fee; however, the Plaza does not.

The YMCA facility is located within City limits, and offers swimming, basketball, exercise classes, youth activities, and exercise equipment. There is a membership requirement and fee associated with the use of the YMCA facility. Additionally, there are several privately-owned health and fitness facilities within the City that have membership requirements or fee-based services. Though accessible to City residents, the City prefers to provide a full range of services via City properties and facilities.

Figure 2.4 Existing Parks and Recreation System



2.4 City Parks and Recreation Services and Programs

In addition to facilities, the City Parks and Recreation Department provides many services to the community. Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department offers the following youth services, senior services, and activities:

Youth Services:

- Teen Center – Pool, ping pong, foosball, video games, cable TV, theme nights and concession stand
- Camp Amelia – afterschool care and summer camp
- Amelia Preschool – during school year only
- Kids night out
- After school tutoring and summer learning center
- Summer food service
- Scuba Camp
- Aquatic Camp

Senior Services:

- Bridge
- Open card nights
- Senior meet and greets
- Senior trips

Activities:

- Youth sports – softball and tennis
- Adult sports – volleyball, softball, basketball, tennis, and scuba diving
- Tournaments – tennis, softball, flag football, volleyball, dodgeball, horseshoes, kickball, and ultimate frisbee, Amelia Island Open Water Challenge
- Classes – karate, swim, water aerobics, tennis, weights/fitness
- Special events – carnivals, movie nights at the park or beach, Easter egg hunt, barbeque cook-off, community yard sale, family fun days, kite festival, Wild Amelia Festival

The City also provides services to the community by allowing community sports leagues to utilize City recreation facilities. Sports programs that use City parks and recreation facilities include Babe Ruth Baseball, Little League Baseball, Pop Warner Football, Amelia Island Youth Soccer, the Fernandina Stingray Swim Team, and the Fernandina Beach, Yulee and West Nassau High Schools Swim Teams.

Specific recreation programs provided by the City of Fernandina Parks and Recreation Department include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Adult Basketball Leagues | • Dodge ball Tournaments |
| • Adult Softball Leagues | • Duplicate Bridge |
| • Adult Volleyball | • Greenway Tours |
| • After School “Camp Amelia” | • Gymnastics |
| • After School Tutoring Program | • Halloween Carnival |
| • Amelia Island Lighthouse Tours | • Home School Swim clinic |
| • Amelia Island Open Water Challenge | • Horseshoe Throwing Tournament |
| • American Red Cross Swim Programs | • Irish Dance Lessons |
| • Aquatics Camps | • Junior Lifeguard Program |
| • Aikido | • Karate |
| • Barbecue Cook-off | • Kayak Club |
| • Bridge | • Kickball Tournaments |
| • Christmas Tree Lighting Event | • Kid’s Night Out |
| • Community Yard Sales | • Laps for Lunch |

- Lifeguard Training
- Music Festivals
- Open Cards Night
- PADI Discover Scuba
- PADI Open Water Scuba
- Photo Scavenger Hunts
- Pickle Ball
- Pre-school and Pre-K Program and Daycare
- Private Swimming Lessons
- Senior Meet and Greet
- Senior Trips
- Snorkeling
- Softball Tournaments
- Stroke Clinics
- Summer “Camp Amelia”
- Summer Food Service
- Summer Learning Center
- Teen Trips
- Tennis Camps
- Tennis Clinics
- Tennis Tournament
- Water Aerobics
- Water Safety Instructor Training
- Wiffleball Tournaments
- Wild Amelia Festival
- Winter Wonderland
- Yoga Pod classes
- Youth Basketball Clinics

Table 2.5 Beach Access Locations in Fernandina Beach

ACCESS	STREET NAME	WALKOVERS	HAND RAILS	RAMPS	PARKING	FOOTPATH	TRASH CAN	PROPERTY DIMENSIONS	ACREAGE	ACCESSIBLE	RENOVATED	CONSTRUCTED
	N KIMBERLY	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO					
16N	FERRIERA	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	50X50	.50		2008	
n/a	LOWENSTIEN	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO					
n/a	COOPER	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO					
12N	NORTH BEACH	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES		1.37	YES		2002
	EAST 8 TH ST.	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES					2006
	EAST 7 TH ST.	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES					2006
9N	EAST 6 TH ST.	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES					
	EAST 5 TH ST.	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO					
	EAST 4 TH ST.	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES					2007
6N1	EAST 3 RD ST.	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES					
	EAST 2 ND ST.	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES					2007
4N	EAST 1 ST ST.	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES					
PARK	DOLPHIN/MB	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES			YES		

		WALKOVERS	HAND RAILS	RAMPS	PARKING	FOOTPATH	TRASH CAN	PROPERTY DIMENSIONS	ACREAGE	ACCESSIBLE	RENOVATED	CONSTRUCTED
ACCESS	STREET NAME											
1	NASSAU	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	35X200	.18			
2	AMELIA	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	YES	35X250	.20			
5	ALABAMA	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	60X50	.06			
6	NEW YORK	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	60X50	.06			
8	MARYLAND	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	60X50	.06			
9	JASMINE	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	60X50	.06		05-06	
10	WISCONSIN	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES	25X75	.04		05-06	
10S	KENTUCKY	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	25X85	.04			
11	COLORADO	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	25X100	.05			
13	*JEFFERSON	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	10X100	.03			
14		NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO					
15	MADISON	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	10X150	.03			
16	CLEVELAND	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	10X150	.03			
18	ROOSEVELT	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	10X250	.10		2010	
19		NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	10X50				
Park	SEASIDE PARK	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	100X330	2.7	YES		2003
21	JOHN ROBAS	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	25X375	.22		2002	
21S	B STREET	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	NO	25X335	.18			
22	C STREET	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	25X340	.19			2007
23	D STREET	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES	25X355	.20		2009	
24	*ASKINS	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	50X415	.48		2005-06 2008	
25	*MIZELL	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	50X486	.56		2007	
27	*ALLEN	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	50X505	.58		2007	
28	N. CASINO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	50X530	.60		2005-06	
29	S. CASINO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	50X540	.62		2007	
30	*SIMMONS	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	50X550	.63			
31	*HUTCHINS	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	50X380	.44			2005
33	OCKLAWAHA	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO	40X485	.44			

		WALKOVERS	HAND RAILS	RAMPS	PARKING	FOOTPATH	TRASH CAN	PROPERTY DIMENSIONS	ACREAGE	ACCESSIBLE	RENOVATED	CONSTRUCTED
ACCESS	STREET NAME											
34	MANTANZAS	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	40X500	.45	YES		2006
35	MANATEE	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES	40X530	.49		2005-06	
35S	*SUWANNEE	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	40X500	.46			
36	*KISSIMMEE	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	40X480	.44		2008	
37	*ALACHUA	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	50X474	.54		2009	
38	*OSCEOLA	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	40X450	.54		2010	
39	*OZELLO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	40X559	.51		2009	
40	PASCO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	40X585	.54		2002	
* ACCESS = STAIRS AT ONE END AND RAMP AT THE OTHER END												

2.5 Evaluation of Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

Barth Associates visited City Parks and Recreation Facilities to evaluate existing conditions. Five categories of evaluation were used to analyze the parks. The evaluation criteria was based on the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) place making criteria, a non-profit organization known nationally for assisting communities in creating lasting environmentally, socially, and financially sustainable public spaces that strengthen communities. (Project for Public Spaces, <http://www.pps.org/reference/grplacefeat>). These criteria were:

1. ACCESS: Proximity, Access and Linkages.

- Visibility from a distance. *Can one easily see into the park?*
- Ease in walking to the park. *Can someone walk directly into the park safely and easily?*
- Transit access. *Is there a public transit stop nearby?*
- Clarity of information/signage. *Is there signage that identifies the park, and/or signage that provides additional information for users?*
- ADA Compliance. *Does the site generally comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws for accessibility?*
- Lighting. *Is the park lighted appropriately for use at night?*

2. COMFORT: Comfort and Image

- First impression/overall attractiveness. *Is the park attractive at first glance?*
- Feeling of safety. *Does the park feel safe at the time of the visit?*
- Cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance. *Is the park clean and free of litter?*
- Comfort of places to sit. *Are there comfortable places to sit?*
- Protection from bad weather. *Is there shelter in case of bad weather?*

3. USE: Uses, Activities, and Sociability.

- Mix of uses/things to do. *Is there a variety of things to do given the type of park?*
- Evidence of Use. *How much does the park appear to be used?*
- Sense of pride/ownership. *Is there evidence of community pride in the park?*

- Programming flexibility. *How flexible is the park in accommodating multiple uses?*
- Ability of facility to effectively support current organized programming. *Is the site meeting the needs of organized programs?*
- Marketing or promotional efforts for the facility. *Is the site being marketed effectively?*

4. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Stormwater management. *Is green infrastructure present to help manage stormwater?*
- Multi-modal capacity. *Is the park accessible by many modes of transportation?*
- Co-location/integration of infrastructure. *Does the park provide a number of community infrastructure services?*
- Facility energy efficiency. *Has the site been updated with energy efficient components?*

5. BUILDINGS: Buildings and Architecture (If a building is present on the site)

- Image and aesthetics. *Is the building attractive?*
- Clarity of entry and connection to the park. *Is the building integrated into the landscape?*
- Interior layout. *Is the layout functional?*
- Interior finishes, furniture, and equipment. *Are the furnishings and equipment inside the building of good condition and quality?*
- Functional dimensions of spaces. *Does the organization of space support the building's intended function?*
- Structural integrity. *Is the building safe?*
- Building enclosure. *Is there any obvious need for repairs to the building shell?*
- Building systems. *Are all mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems in working order?*
- Code compliance. *Does the building meet code?*
- Energy and sustainability. *Is there evidence that the building is energy efficient?*

Criteria were given a ranking of 1 to 5.

- 1 = Needs Significant Improvement
- 2 = Needs Improvement
- 3 = Adequate
- 4 = Good
- 5 = Excellent

Barth Associates along with the Parks Director visited each of the parks and discussed how each criterion should be ranked for each of the parks. Table 2.6 identifies the findings for each of the parks analyzed:

Table 2.6 - Evaluation of Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities Findings (updated)

	Proximity, Access + Linkages	Comfort + Image	Uses, Activity, + Sociability	Environmental Sustainability	Buildings + Architecture	PARK AVERAGE
Atlantic Recreation Center	3.2	2.7	3.3	3.0	2.6	2.97
Egans Creek Park	3.0	2.2	3.2	2.0	N/A	2.58
Fernandina Beach Athletic Complex	1.8	1.9	2.8	2.5	N/A	2.25
Hickory Park	2.0	2.4	3.0	1.5	N/A	2.23
Main Beach Park	3.8	2.9	3.7	3.0	N/A	3.34
Martin Luther King Center	3.0	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.56
North Beach Park	4.0	3.5	1.8	3.5	N/A	3.19
Peck Center	3.4	3.6	3.0	2.5	3.9	3.28
Waterfront	4.0	3.2	3.5	2.5	N/A	3.29
CATEGORY AVERAGE	3.1	2.7	3.0	2.6	3.0	2.9

As noted in Table 2.6 above, overall, the park system scored a 2.9, which while on the high end of “Needs Improvements”, is still far from “Excellent” and denotes that the park system is in need of enhancements. This was found to be particular true for the categories of “Comfort + Image” and “Environmental Sustainability”. Many of the City’s parks are appear tired and dated and are need of capital improvements and facility upgrades.

The park system scored highest in Proximity Access and Linkages, predominantly based on the City’s gridded street network and low traffic streets with sidewalks that allow some good connectivity and access to the parks. This was particular true for the parks located in the historic part of the City. The parks located in new parts of the City did not score as well. Overall, the score was 3.1 which is in the low end of “Adequate”. Figure 2.7 provides a summary of findings for each of the sub-categories.

Figure 2.7 – Summary of Sub-Category Findings

Needs Significant Improvement
Co-location/Integration of infrastructure
Clarity of entry/Connection to Park (Buildings)
Interior layout (Buildings)
Needs Improvement
Ease of walking into the park
Clarity of information/signage
First impression/Overall attractiveness
Cleanliness/Overall quality of maintenance
Comfort of places to sit
Protection from bad weather
Evidence of stewardship/management
Ability to easily supervise facility (interior)
Mix of things to do
Sense of pride/ownership
Stormwater management
Multi-modal capacity
Image + aesthetics
Interior finishes + furniture (Buildings)
Functional dimensions of space (Buildings)
Adequate
Visible from a distance
ADA compliance
Lighting
Feeling of safety
Level of activity
Programming flexibility
Ability to support current programming
Marketing/Promotional efforts
Facility energy efficiency
Building enclosure
Building systems
Good
Condition/Effectiveness of equipment
Structural integrity
Energy + sustainability
Excellent
Code compliance

The City used the following techniques to determine residents' needs and priorities:

- Level of Service Standards (LOS): Service area analysis/Access LOS of select park and facility types, LOS for acreage, and LOS for facilities based on the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
- Public workshops,
- Interviews and focus group meetings with elected officials, City manager, and other key stakeholders, and
- Public survey.

Following are the results and findings from each technique.

Overview: Level of Service Standards

Level of service standards (LOS) are traditionally used in planning to help evaluate community needs. According to the American Planning Association's A Planner's Dictionary, levels of service are defined using several sources:

An indicator of the extent or degree of service provided by, or proposed to be provided by, a public facility based on and related to the operational characteristics of the facility. "Level of service" shall indicate the capacity per unit of demand for each public facility. (Growing Smart Legislative Guidebook)

The quality and quantity of existing and planned public facilities. . . . (Jefferson County, Colo.)

A measure of the relationship between service capacity and service demand for public facilities. (Boise City, Idaho)

An indicator of the extent or degree of service provided by, or proposed to be provided by, a facility based on, and related to, the operational characteristics of the facility. Level of service shall indicate the capacity per unit of demand for each public facility. (Loveland, Colo.)

A standard used by government agencies to measure the quality or effectiveness of a municipal service, such as police, fire, or library, or the performance of a facility, such as a street or highway. (California Planning Roundtable)

As illustrated, utilizing a specific unit of demand is typical for determining level of service. In Florida, Ch. 163.3164(28), F.S. defines level of service as: "an indicator of the extent or degree of service provided by, or proposed to be provided by, a facility based on and related to the operational characteristics of the facility. Level of service shall indicate the capacity per unit of demand for each public facility."

The purpose of a LOS analysis in a park master plan is to quantify how well the existing parks system is meeting the recreation needs of residents. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA)'s definition of LOS is "an allocation mechanism for the delivery of park land and basic recreation facilities throughout a community. By adoption of such a standard, a community in essence says that all citizens, regardless of the taxes they pay or the use they will make of the services provided, will have an equal opportunity to share in the basic menu of services implicit in the standard and accompanying spatial distribution and allocation policies." Recent shifts in thinking in the parks and recreation field have moved away from recommending a single standard for all communities. Instead, the new emphasis is on communities setting their own goals, and benchmarking against similar towns and/or their region.

3.1 Service Area Analysis (or Access Level of Service Standard)

One way to illustrate a level of service could be to look at service areas or access LOS. Service areas measure the distance that residents need to travel (on foot, by bike, by auto or transit) to access particular facilities and can also be considered an access level of service standard. It is recommended the City incorporate these service areas into their Comprehensive Plan. No state or national standards exist regarding service areas; each community must determine its own appropriate access LOS. Residents of most cities consider "walking distance" to be ½ - 1 mile of a facility, and

“bicycling distance” to be 2-3 miles. “Driving or transit distance” could be between 3 – 10+ miles, depending on average travel times; development patterns (e.g. urban, suburban, rural); and resident’s preferences for various modes of transportation.

Proposed services areas/access LOS for Fernandina Beach include:

Trails	-	1/2 mile
Playgrounds (shaded)	-	1/2 mile
Sports courts (e.g. Basketball, Tennis, Multipurpose, Petanque)	-	1/2 mile
Multi-purpose open space	-	1/2 mile
Small Pavilion	-	1/2 mile

Based on these service area distances, the following maps illustrate gaps in access to parks and various facility types.

Figure 3.1 shows the current 1/2 mile Access LOS for all City Parks as a basis of reference.

Figure 3.1 Access LOS for All City Parks using ½ mile radius

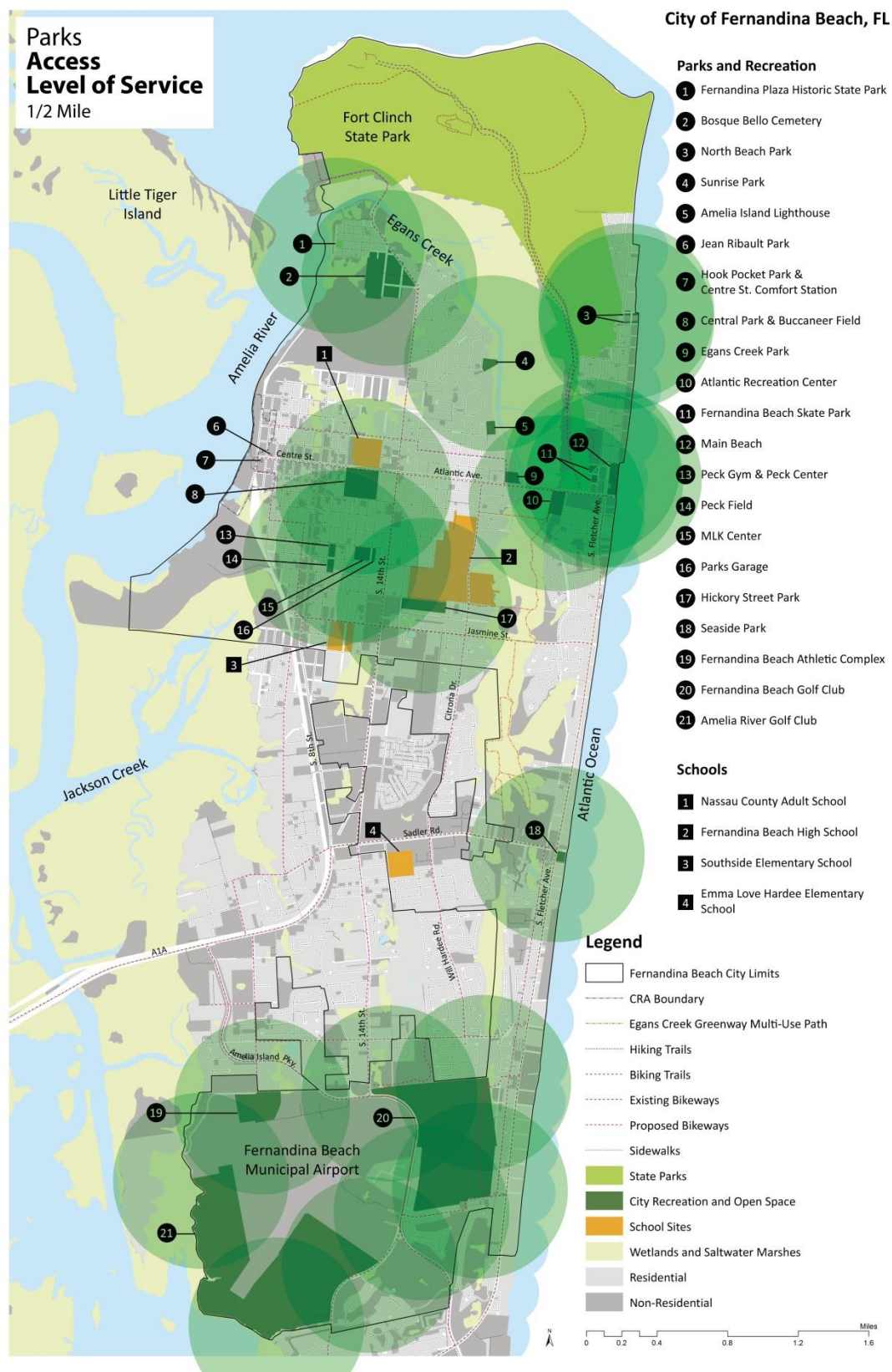


Figure 3.2 Access LOS for Trails using ½ mile radius

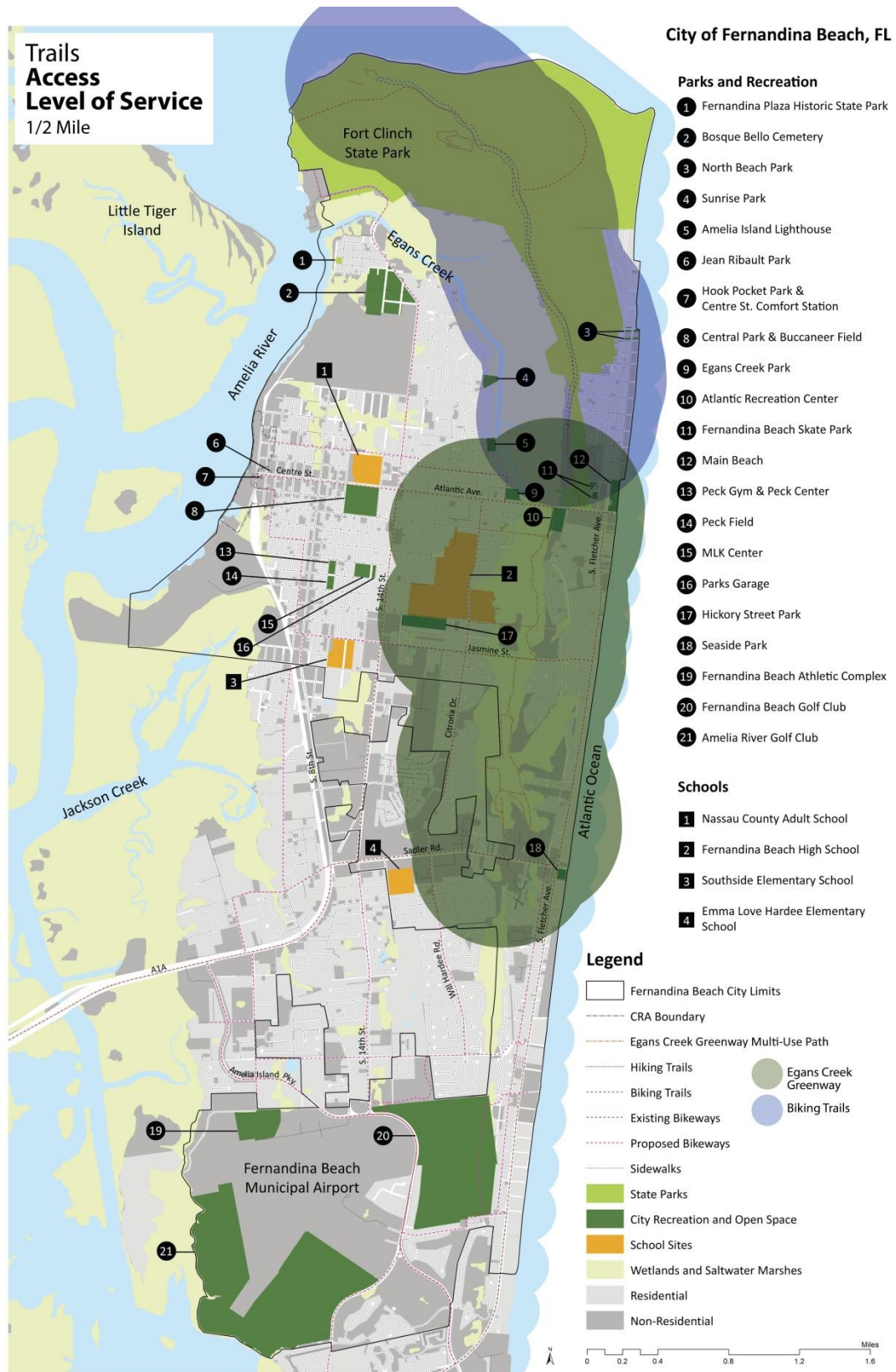


Figure 3.3 Access LOS for Playgrounds using ½ mile radius

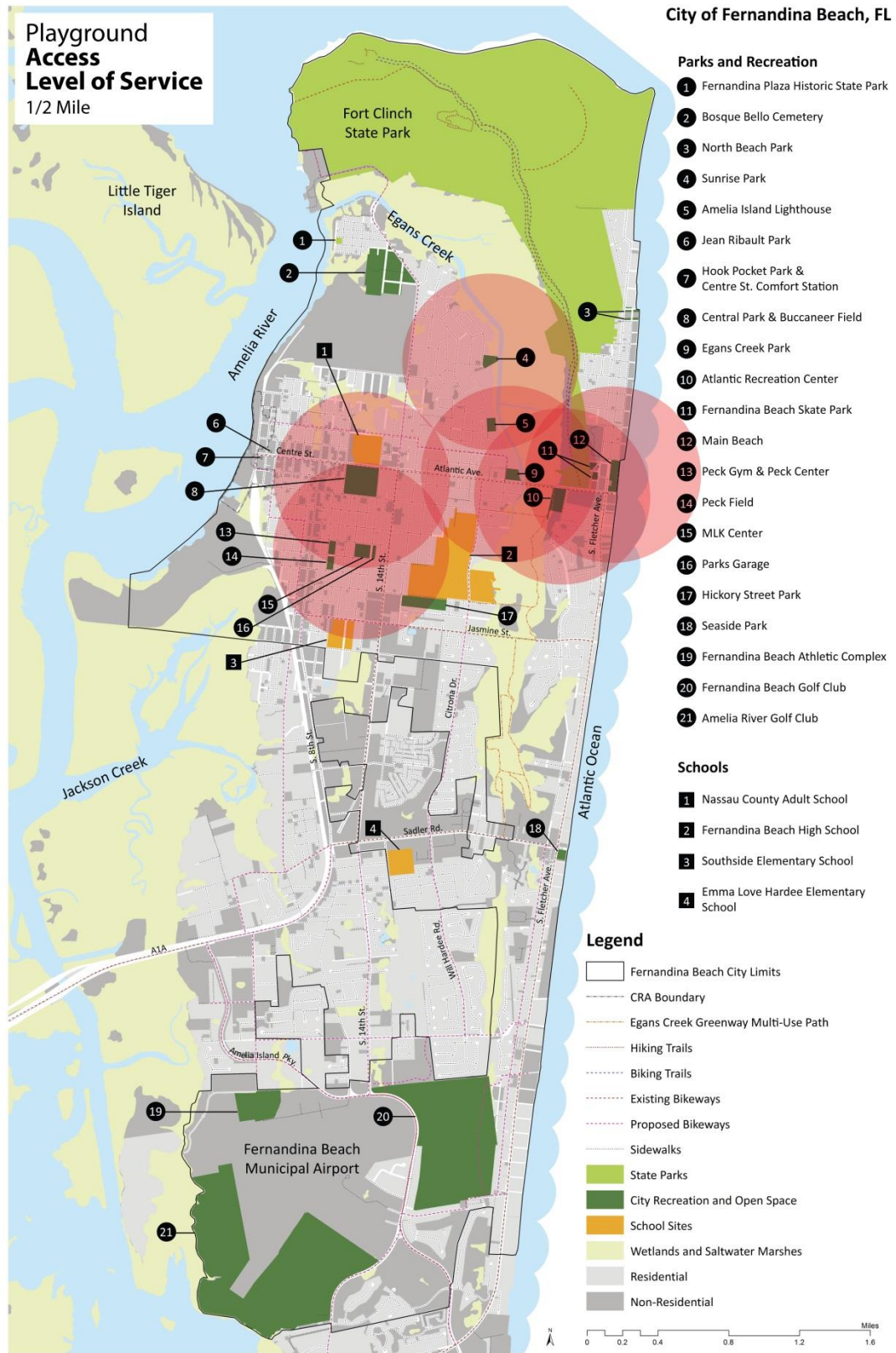


Figure 3.4 Access LOS for Sports Courts using ½ mile radius

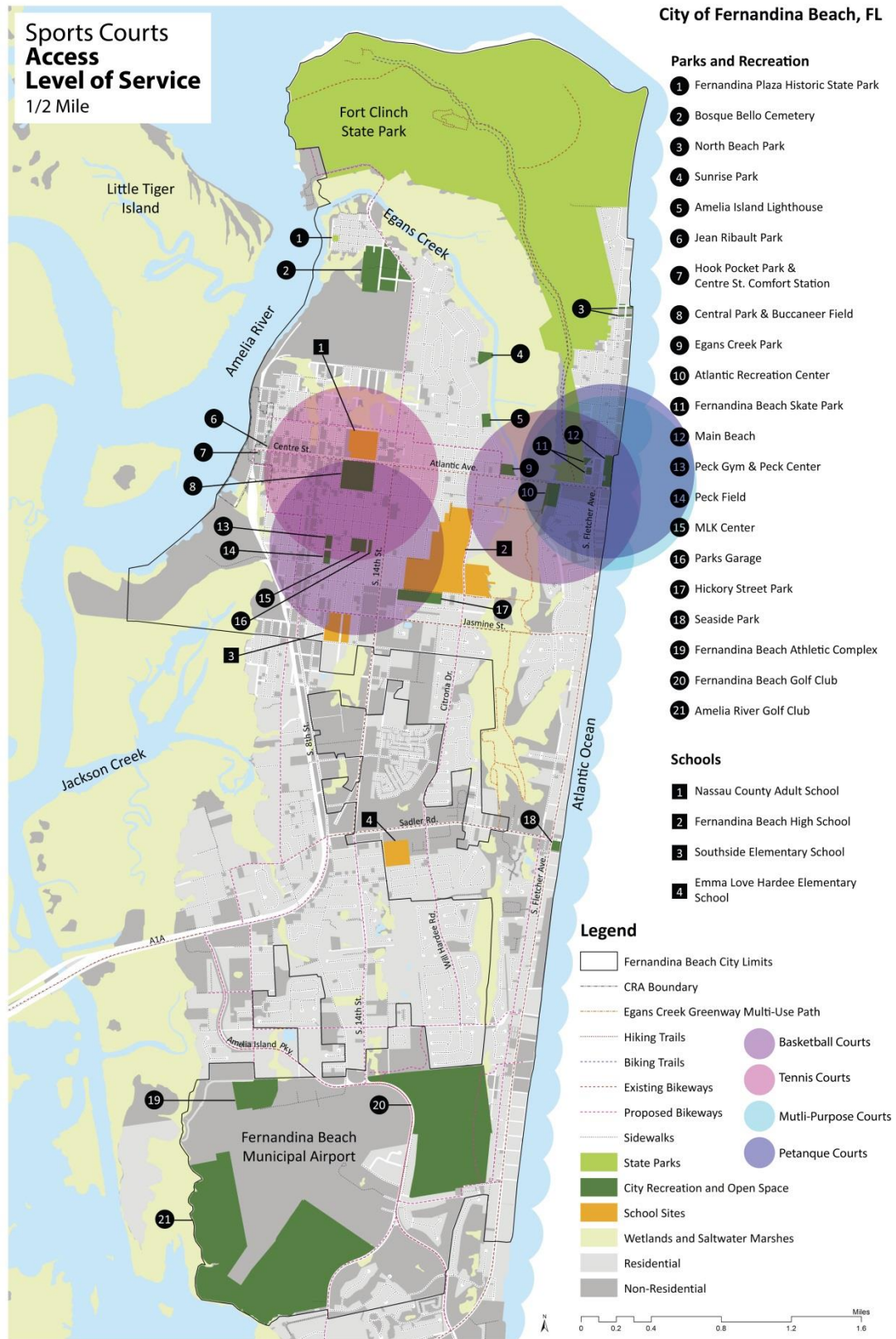
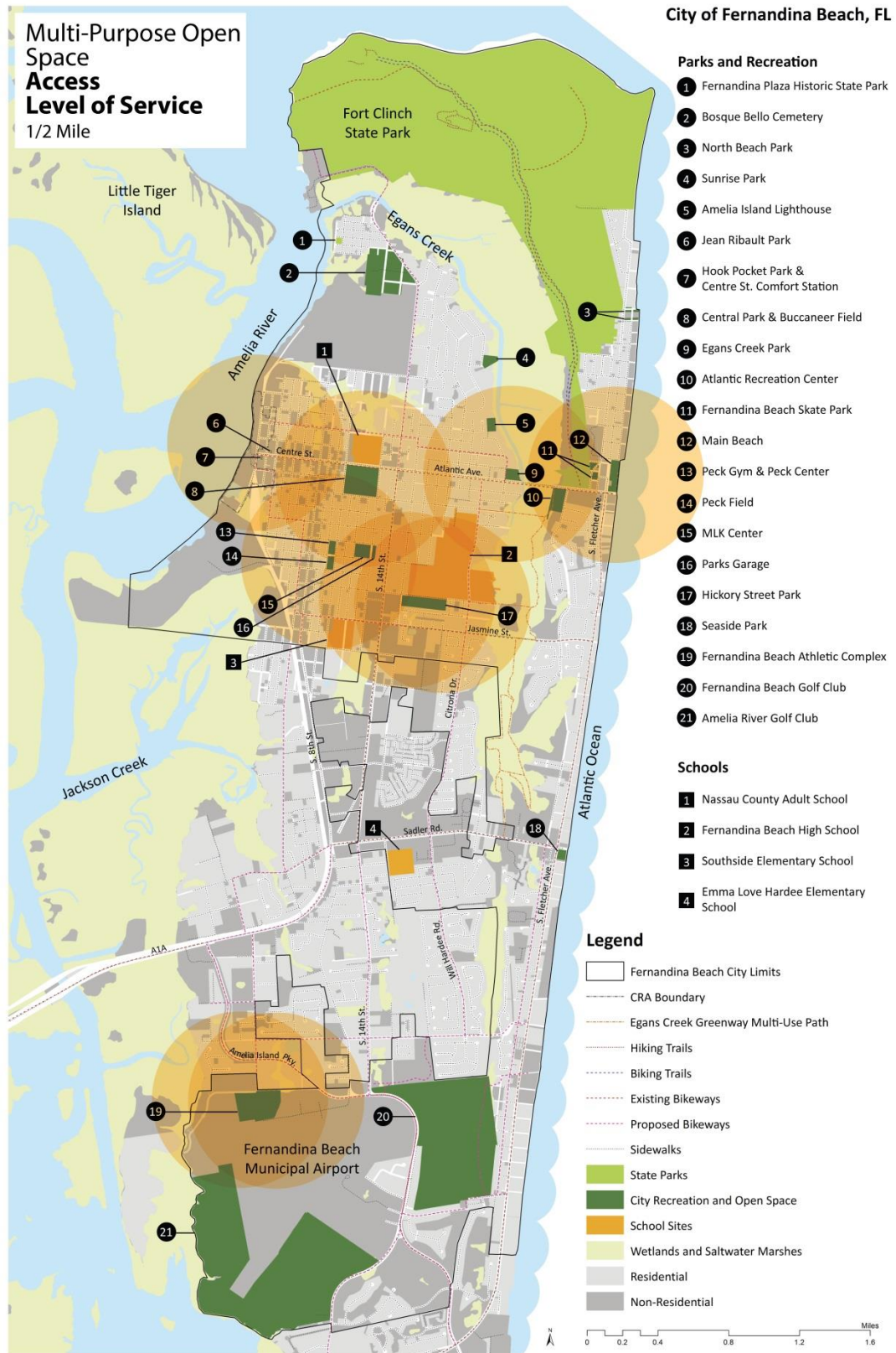


Figure 3.5 Access LOS for Multi-Purpose Open Space using ½ mile radius



This service area/access LOS analysis reveals that the City of Fernandina Beach appears to have inequitable access to park land and the analyzed recreation facilities. For example, the northern and southern areas of the City have good access to parks. However, access to parks is limited in the central part of the City, specifically south of Jasmine Street and north of Amelia Island Parkway. Consequently, the central and southern areas also have limited access to recreation facilities; specifically playgrounds, multi-purpose open spaces; and sports courts. The southern portions of the City are where annexations and new subdivision growth is occurring.

Similarly, the City has inequitable access to multi-use trails. The eastern part of the City is well served by Egans Creek Greenway and the bikeways located within Fort Clinch State Park. However, the western and southern parts of the City do not have access to multi-use trails within ½ mile. It should be noted a multi-purpose trail is planned for Simmons Road in the current southern part of the City and has been funded by FDOT. The City should continue to coordinate with the County and plan for proposed trail networks to interface with future recreation sites.

From an Access LOS analysis perspective, it appears that the City may need additional **park land, playgrounds, sports courts, multi-purpose open spaces, and multi-use trails**; particularly in the central and southern parts of the City located south of Jasmine Road and north of Amelia Island Parkway. An option would be to establish “neighborhood-serving parks” with these amenities for residents within each 1/2 mile. Small pavilions to provide resting spots and shade for recreation participants and optional restrooms would further the comfort level of recreation participants at these 1/2 mile neighborhood-serving parks. In this instance, the access LOS (aka the capacity per unit of demand) would be one neighborhood-serving park per residents within a 1/2 mile radius.

3.2 Analysis of Acreage and Facilities LOS

Another common way is to evaluate a system’s LOS is through acreage and number of facilities per a community’s population.

Acreage LOS

Acreage of park land per 1,000 residents remains the most common technique of expressing equal opportunity, even though conditions and needs vary greatly between areas. There is no universally accepted methodology that defines the minimally acceptable number of acres per 1,000 residents—it is up to each community to determine what is appropriate for its own needs and circumstances. However, the underlying principle for Acreage LOS is that most communities believe that significant open space should be set aside for recreation, environmental protection, aesthetics and health.

The community also must define what “counts.” In the case of Fernandina Beach, should the Fernandina Beach Golf Club be included? What about nearby parks managed by other agencies, such as Fort Clinch State Park? Does undeveloped parkland “count”? Also, should the analysis include only City residents, or also incorporate visitors? For the purpose of this analysis, a number of scenarios were used to help determine the City’s acreage LOS.

The most straight-forward calculation is shown in Table 3.6 uses the City’s resident population and only City-owned and managed parks spaces. This calculation assumes that no additional park acreage is acquired, and uses projections for the City’s population until 2030.

Table 3.6 – Park Acreage LOS for All City Parks based on the Permanent Population

LOS: Permanent Population, All City Parks				
	2015	2020	2025	2030
City Population	12,824	13,337	13,523	14,010
Total Acres of Parkland	471.5	471.5	471.5	471.5
LOS	36.77	35.35	34.87	33.65

By this measure, the City of Fernandina Beach currently has an acreage LOS of 36.77 acres per 1,000 residents. By 2030, if no other parkland is acquired in addition to the existing 471.5 acres, this LOS will fall slightly to 33.65 acres.

If seasonal residents or visitors are factored in, acreage LOS only changes slightly:

Table 3.7 – Park Acreage LOS for All City Parks based on the Permanent and Seasonal Population

LOS: Permanent + Seasonal Population, All City Parks				
	2015	2020	2025	2030
City Population	12,824	13,337	13,523	14,010
Seasonal Population	1,198	1,239	1,285	1,331
Total Acres of Parkland	471.5	471.5	471.5	471.5
LOS	33.63	32.35	31.84	30.73

As shown in Table 3.7, the 2015 acreage LOS would then be 33.63 acres per 1,000 people in 2015, and 30.73 acres per 1,000 people in 2030.

Many communities calculate their LOS using only developed park land, excluding natural areas such as Egans Creek Greenway. At 316 acres, the Greenway accounts for 67 percent of the City's total park acreage. Table 3.8 shows the park acreage LOS without Egans Creek:

Table 3.8 – Park Acreage LOS for All City Parks except Egans Creek Greenway based on the Permanent Population

LOS: Permanent Population, Excluding Egan's Creek Greenway				
	2015	2020	2025	2030
City Population	12,824	13,337	13,523	14,010
Total Acres of Parkland	155	155	155	155
LOS	12.09	11.62	11.46	11.06

There are also numerous parks owned and/or managed by other agencies that very likely provide recreation benefits to Fernandina Beach residents. These facilities include Fort Clinch State Park (Florida Department of Environmental Protection), Fernandina Plaza (Florida Department of Environmental Protection), Fernandina Beach Golf Club (managed by Billy Casper Golf), Peters Point Beachfront Park (Nassau County), and Dee Dee Bartels Boat Ramp (Nassau County). However most communities do not include other agency's lands in their LOS calculations in order to avoid "double-counting" of the same properties.

In summary, excluding the park acreage from Egans Creek Greenway, **the City's current parkland acreage LOS is approximately 12 acres/ 1000 residents**, which is considered to be adequate by industry standards. This represents an increase from the July 2004 City Comprehensive Plan, which established a standard of 7.5 acres per 1000 residents. **The City should implement the 12 acres per 1000 residents Level of Service and strive to maintain this level of service moving forward.**

Facilities LOS Based on SCORP

In Florida, the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), has been used in the past for evaluating LOS standards and benchmarking a communities' facilities.

There is no consensus in the field of recreation planning as to the most appropriate methods for measuring current and future demand for outdoor recreation resources and facilities. Since outdoor recreation resources and facilities are generally felt to be "free" goods and services, "demand," as an economic concept, does not readily lend itself to

practical application. No commonly accepted methods exist for determining, on a statewide or broad regional basis, the amount of outdoor recreation a person would “consume” under certain conditions of cost and availability’ (page 47).

For this reason the latest SCORP no longer publishes standards, but estimates recreation “demand” based on a survey completed in 2011. To estimate outdoor recreation demand in Florida, the Division of Recreation and Parks conducts periodic surveys of resident and tourist participation in outdoor recreation activities. The 2011 Florida Outdoor Recreation Participation Study was conducted by Responsive Management, a natural resource survey research firm. The study surveyed Florida residents by telephone between April and September 2011 regarding their participation in 26 different outdoor recreation activities. Participants were asked to identify each activity they participated in during the preceding 12 months. A survey of tourists was conducted in three phases: May, August and October 2011. Responsive Management completed 3,961 surveys with residents and 2,890 surveys with tourists’.

The result is that SCORP no longer publishes facility standards, but publishes “supply” based on data from local governments, and “demand” based on the statewide survey. It’s interesting information, but not of much use for a uniquely small, coastal town.

The latest National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines (1996) states that “each outdoor recreation provider should...select the guidelines that best serve its specific planning needs” (p. 61). They note that the information in a state’s SCORP “should be used by local communities to establish their relative position within the context of the region and the state” (p. 63). We chose to establish LOS guidelines for acreage and access, but not for facility types. However we did benchmark facility LOS against the SCORP regional averages, but didn’t feel that it was very relevant to Fernandina Beach. We placed equal emphasis on the qualitative techniques such as interviews and the survey.”

In sum, SCORP does not establish a Classification System or Level-of-Service Standards for parks and recreation facilities. SCORP simply provides an estimate of recreation supply and demand for “26 different outdoor recreation activities”. Both the SCORP and NRPA advise local governments to create their own standards, based on their residents’ unique needs, desires, and values.

Because the City’s current Comprehensive Plan directs evaluation of LOS based on SCORP, the following data was collected on SCORP/Facility LOS. The 2013 Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) provides average regional facility LOS figures as a benchmarking tool. Fernandina Beach is part of SCORP’s northeast region, which includes Nassau, Duval, St Johns, Flagler, Putnam, Clay, and Baker Counties.

Table 3.9 shows facility LOS for the City of Fernandina Beach facilities only. These calculations account for typical participation rates observed in the northeast region, including both permanent and seasonal residents/visitors. Compared to other northeastern Florida communities, Fernandina Beach is providing a high LOS for saltwater beach activities, saltwater boat ramps, nature study opportunities, picnicking, hiking trails, baseball fields, football fields, outdoor swimming pools, soccer fields, and tennis. Facilities with an LOS lower than the regional average are historic/archaeological sites, unpaved bicycle trails, and basketball courts. Facilities with an LOS of 0.00 are not currently provided by the City of Fernandina Beach, and include saltwater non-boat fishing (piers), freshwater non-boat fishing (piers), freshwater boat ramps, paved bicycle riding trails, RV/trailer camping, tent camping, off highway vehicle riding, horseback riding trails, hunting areas, and golf.

Table 3.9 – Facilities LOS for City of Fernandina Beach Facilities (updated)

						2015		2020		2025		2030		
		% Partic. Residents	% Partic. Seasonal	NE Florida LOS(2020)	# FB Facilities	Estimated # FBPartic.	LOS	Estimated # FBPartic.	LOS	Estimated # FBPartic.	LOS	Estimated # FBPartic.	LOS	
Facility Type														
WATER-BASED	Saltwater Beach Activities	64%	49%	59.63	31,280.00	8,794	3,556.82	9,143	3,421.28	9,284	3,369.10	9,619	3,252.04	linear SF/participant
	Saltwater Non-Boat Fishing	15%	7%	34.77	0.00	2,007	0.00	2,087	0.00	2,087	0.00	2,195	0.00	FT of jetty/ pier/ catwalk/ 1000 participants
	Saltwater Boat Ramp Use	23%	7%	0.08	1.00	3,033	0.33	3,154	0.32	3,200	0.31	3,315	0.30	# lanes/ 1,000 participants
	Freshwater Non-Boat Fishing	10%	2%	82.92	0.00	1,306	0.00	1,358	0.00	1,378	0.00	1,428	0.00	FT of jetty/ pier/ catwalk/ 1000 participants
	Freshwater Boat Ramp Use	23%	3%	0.27	0.00	2,985	0.00	3,105	0.00	3,149	0.00	3,262	0.00	# lanes/ 1000 participants
LAND-BASED	Visiting Historic/ Archae. Sites	48%	26%	0.21	1.00	6,467	0.15	6,724	0.15	6,825	0.15	7,071	0.14	sites/ 1,000 participants
	Nature Study	14%	8%	0.2	3.90	1,891	2.06	1,966	1.98	1,996	1.95	2,068	1.89	miles of trail/ 1,000 participants
	Picnicking	40%	37%	1.81	60.00	5,573	10.77	5,793	10.36	5,885	10.20	6,096	9.84	tables/ 1,000 participants
	Bicycle-Riding: Paved Trails	43%	13%	0.05	0.00	5,670	0.00	5,896	0.00	5,982	0.00	6,197	0.00	miles of trail/ 1,000 participants
	Bicycle-Riding: Unpaved Trails	17%	4%	0.63	0.80	2,228	0.36	2,317	0.35	2,350	0.34	2,435	0.33	miles of trail/ 1,000 participants
	Hiking	25%	22%	0.27	3.90	3,470	1.12	3,607	1.08	3,663	1.06	3,795	1.03	miles of trail/ 1,000 participants
	RV/ Trailer Camping	10%	9%	5.2	0.00	1,390	0.00	1,445	0.00	1,468	0.00	1,521	0.00	sites/ 1,000 participants
	Tent Camping	29%	7%	0.75	0.00	3,803	0.00	3,954	0.00	4,012	0.00	4,156	0.00	sites/ 1,000 participants
	Off Highway Vehicle Riding	15%	8%	0.06	0.00	2,019	0.00	2,100	0.00	2,131	0.00	2,208	0.00	miles of trail/ 1,000 participants
	Horseback Riding	6%	6%	0.75	0.00	841	0.00	875	0.00	888	0.00	920	0.00	miles of trail/ 1,000 participants
USER-ORIENTED	Hunting	10%	3%	721	0.00	1,318	0.00	1,371	0.00	1,391	0.00	1,441	0.00	acres/ 1,000 participants
	Baseball	13%	3%	1.32	7.00	1,703	4.11	1,771	3.95	1,797	3.90	1,861	3.76	fields/ 1,000 participants
	Basketball	16%	4%	1.2	2.00	2,100	0.95	2,183	0.92	2,215	0.90	2,295	0.87	courts/ 1,000 participants
	Football	13%	2%	0.51	9.00	1,691	5.32	1,759	5.12	1,784	5.05	1,848	4.87	fields/ 1,000 participants
	Golf	17%	11%	1.19	3.00	2,312	1.30	2,404	1.25	2,440	1.23	2,528	1.19	holes/ 1,000 participants
	Outdoor Swimming Pool Use	26%	29%	0.05	4.00	3,682	1.09	3,827	1.05	3,889	1.03	4,029	0.99	pools/ 1,000 participants
	Soccer	7%	2%	0.71	9.00	922	9.77	958	9.39	972	9.26	1,007	8.93	fields/ 1,000 participants
	Tennis	15%	5%	0.99	4.00	1,984	2.02	2,063	1.94	2,093	1.91	2,168	1.84	courts/ 1,000 participants

Like the acreage LOS analysis, however, incorporating nearby recreational facilities can make a marked difference in facility LOS levels. When the facilities at Fort Clinch State Park, Fernandina Plaza, Fernandina Beach Golf Club, Peters Point Beachfront Park, and Dee Dee Bartels Boat Ramp are included, multiple LOS deficiencies disappear.

Table 3.10 – Facilities LOS for City of Fernandina Beach and Nearby Facilities

						2015		2020		2025		2030		
		% Partic. Residents	% Partic. Tourists	NE Florida LOS (2020)	# FB Facilities + Nearby	Estimated # FB Partic.	LOS	Estimated # FB Partic.	LOS	Estimated # FB Partic.	LOS	Estimated # FB Partic.	LOS	
Facility Type														
WATER-BASED	Saltwater Beach Activities	64%	49%	59.63	49,130.00	8,794	5,586.52	9,143	5,373.63	9,284	5,291.69	9,619	5,107.82	linear SF/participant
	Saltwater Non-Boat Fishing	15%	7%	34.77	2,686.00	2,007	1,338.01	2,087	1,286.84	2,087	1,286.84	2,195	1,223.87	FT of jetty/pier/catwalk/1000 participants
	Saltwater Boat Ramp Use	23%	7%	0.08	3.00	3,033	0.99	3,154	0.95	3,200	0.94	3,315	0.90	#lanes/1,000 participants
	Freshwater Non-Boat Fishing	10%	2%	82.92	0.00	1,306	0.00	1,358	0.00	1,378	0.00	1,428	0.00	FT of jetty/pier/catwalk/1000 participants
	Freshwater Boat Ramp Use	23%	3%	0.27	0.00	2,985	0.00	3,105	0.00	3,149	0.00	3,262	0.00	#lanes/1000 participants
LAND-BASED	Visiting Historic/Archae. Stes	48%	26%	0.21	3.00	6,467	0.46	6,724	0.45	6,825	0.44	7,071	0.42	sites/1,000 participants
	Nature Study	14%	8%	0.2	3.90	1,891	2.06	1,966	1.98	1,996	1.95	2,068	1.89	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	Picnicking	40%	37%	1.81	111.00	5,573	19.92	5,793	19.16	5,885	18.86	6,096	18.21	tables/1,000 participants
	Bicycle-Riding: Paved Trails	43%	13%	0.05	0.00	5,670	0.00	5,896	0.00	5,982	0.00	6,197	0.00	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	Bicycle-Riding: Unpaved Trails	17%	4%	0.63	6.80	2,228	3.05	2,317	2.94	2,350	2.89	2,435	2.79	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	Hiking	25%	22%	0.27	10.15	3,470	2.93	3,607	2.81	3,663	2.77	3,795	2.67	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	RV/Trailer Camping	10%	9%	5.2	51.00	1,390	36.68	1,445	35.29	1,468	34.74	1,521	33.54	sites/1,000 participants
	Tent Camping	29%	7%	0.75	40.00	3,803	10.52	3,954	10.12	4,012	9.97	4,156	9.62	sites/1,000 participants
	Off Highway Vehicle Riding	15%	8%	0.06	0.00	2,019	0.00	2,100	0.00	2,131	0.00	2,208	0.00	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	Horseback Riding	6%	6%	0.75	0.00	841	0.00	875	0.00	888	0.00	920	0.00	miles of trail/1,000 participants
USER-ORIENTED	Hunting	10%	3%	721	0.00	1,318	0.00	1,371	0.00	1,391	0.00	1,441	0.00	acres/1,000 participants
	Baseball	13%	3%	1.32	7.00	1,703	4.11	1,771	3.95	1,797	3.90	1,861	3.76	fields/1,000 participants
	Basketball	16%	4%	1.2	2.00	2,100	0.95	2,183	0.92	2,215	0.90	2,295	0.87	courts/1,000 participants
	Football	13%	2%	0.51	9.00	1,691	5.32	1,759	5.12	1,784	5.05	1,848	4.87	fields/1,000 participants
	Golf	17%	11%	1.19	27.00	2,312	11.68	2,404	11.23	2,440	11.06	2,528	10.68	holes/1,000 participants
	Outdoor Swimming Pool Use	26%	29%	0.05	4.00	3,682	1.09	3,827	1.05	3,889	1.03	4,029	0.99	pools/1,000 participants
	Soccer	7%	2%	0.71	9.00	922	9.77	958	9.39	972	9.26	1,007	8.93	fields/1,000 participants
	Tennis	15%	5%	0.99	4.00	1,984	2.02	2,063	1.94	2,093	1.91	2,168	1.84	courts/1,000 participants

With other agencies' facilities included, the only facilities showing a deficiency are freshwater non-boat fishing (piers), freshwater boat ramps, paved bicycle-riding trails, off highway vehicle riding, horseback riding, hunting, and basketball.

The majority of these remaining deficiencies are either not feasible to address, or not appropriate for a small island community. Fernandina Beach's location surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean precludes any sort of freshwater resources from being accessible. Likewise, its location on a small island makes setting aside large tracts of land for hunting and off highway vehicle riding impractical. Horseback riding trails may be desired by a small fraction of the community, but the beach provides an opportunity for this, and there is a commercial ranch located at the southern tip of the island that may meet the need.

When other facility providers are considered and inappropriate facility types are removed from the analysis, the most likely “true” deficiencies of Fernandina Beach are **paved bicycle trails** and **basketball courts**.

Access, Acreage, and Facilities LOS Summary Findings

In general, the City of Fernandina Beach has enough parks acreage to meet resident needs. Likewise, the City has a high LOS for facilities when these nearby spaces are included. However, park acreage and facilities are not equitably distributed leaving certain residents in the City without access to parks and recreation facilities within ½ mile of their home. Additionally, the total amount of **basketball courts** and **paved bicycle trails** available to the City’s population also appear to be low. Therefore, the City should strive to address these deficiencies by providing additional or better access to **park land, playgrounds, sports courts, multi-purpose open spaces, and multi-use trails**.

3.3 Public Workshops

On Wednesday February 25, 2015, the City hosted a Public Workshop in City Hall Commission Chambers to solicit input from residents regarding their parks and recreation needs and priorities. More than 30 residents attended the public workshop. Attendees were asked three questions:

1. City-wide Parks and Recreation Discussion Question: What types of parks, recreation facilities, and/or programs are needed most in Fernandina Beach?
2. Individual Park Improvements Open House Exercise: Are there any facilities that you believe are NOT USED/NOT NEEDED in each of the City’s Parks? What NEW Facilities, Amenities, Programs, and Improvements need to be ADDED in each of the City’s Parks?
3. Funding Question: How should we pay for needed park improvements, acquisition, development, operations and maintenance?

The top proprieties that emerged from the Public Workshop were:

- Upgraded facilities and more amenities
- Better use of existing park space
- More nature in parks
- More things to do, particularly for teenagers
- More linkages and trails

Attendees also identified many improvements to each of the City’s parks that ranged from additional petanque (a French game that is a blend of horseshoes and bocce ball) courts to upgrading the equipment in all the parks. Attendees also supported using a combination of funding sources to pay for improvements; specifically, they noted the following:

- Redirect existing revenues, E.G. TDC Funds,
- Bonds at low interest rate,
- Need to match proposed improvements with funding sources,
- Joint use of schools, and
- Volunteers to assist with improvements.

A second public workshop was held on March 19, 2015, in which David Barth and Adrienne Burke shared a presentation with findings to date and an overview of the survey results.

3.4 Interviews and Focus Group Meetings

In addition to the Public Workshop, one-on-one interviews were conducted with various community stakeholders including each of the City Commissioners, the Mayor, the City Manager, Park Advisory Committee, and other influential community members. The meetings took place on Thursday February 26, 2015 at the Peck Center. Each stakeholder was asked three questions:

1. **Needs and Priorities:** Based on what you know, see, and hear about the community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs in the City, both facility and programs?
2. **Funding/ Implementation Opportunities:** Assuming that the Parks Master Plan will identify millions of dollars in desired/ needed improvements, what funding source(s) would you support?
3. **Comparable Communities:** What Community(s) or City(s) do you feel we should use as benchmarks for the City of Fernandina Beach?

The top priority response for needs and priorities identified by the Commissioners and the Mayor included:

- Improve existing facilities
- Trails
- More options for teens
- Improved access to swimming (facilities and programs)
- Special event spaces
- Implement Waterfront Master Plan
- Address duplication of facilities/services

Other stakeholders interviews noted the following priority needs:

- Improve existing facilities
- Special events spaces
- Waterfront improvements/ redevelopment
- Better/full-sized swimming pool

All of the stakeholders agreed that they would support using a combination of funding sources to pay for park improvements including pay as you go, borrowing, and partnerships.

While many of the stakeholders noted that the City of Fernandina Beach was a unique community with no true comparables, the Commissioners and Mayor identified the following communities as having certain attributes and characteristic that were comparable to the City of Fernandina Beach:

- Palm Coast
- Beaufort/Charleston, Savannah
- New Smyrna Beach
- Winter Park
- Portsmouth, NH

Other stakeholders identified the following cities as comparable to the City of Fernandina Beach:

- Fairhope, AL
- St. Mary's, GA
- St. Augustine, FL
- Jekyll Island, GA
- Decatur, AL
- Augusta, GA
- Naperville, IL riverwalk
- San Antonio, TX

- Tampa, FL
- Halifax, NS
- Florida Keys, FL

A group of over 30 youth from the City of Fernandina Beach Middle School were also interviewed. They identified the following top priority needs:

- New basketball gym, open every day
- Better access to the Peck center
- Movie night
- Park with skate park, concession, field, things together
- Update parks
- Water park
- More fields near Main St.
- Zip line
- Rebounders, indoor trampoline
- Ice skating, laser tag
- Expanded/ Olympic size pool
- Affordable ,heated pool
- Flyers, better communication
- Weight lifting gyms
- Hot tubs
- Roller rink
- Spider web at playground, obstacle courses
- Rock climbing wall/ center, ropes course
- Freshwater fishing ponds , go-cart rentals
- Food concessions
- Local zoo
- Cross-country trails
- Hammocks at the beach
- Archery , paintball, banana boats, bungee jumping

3.5 Public Survey

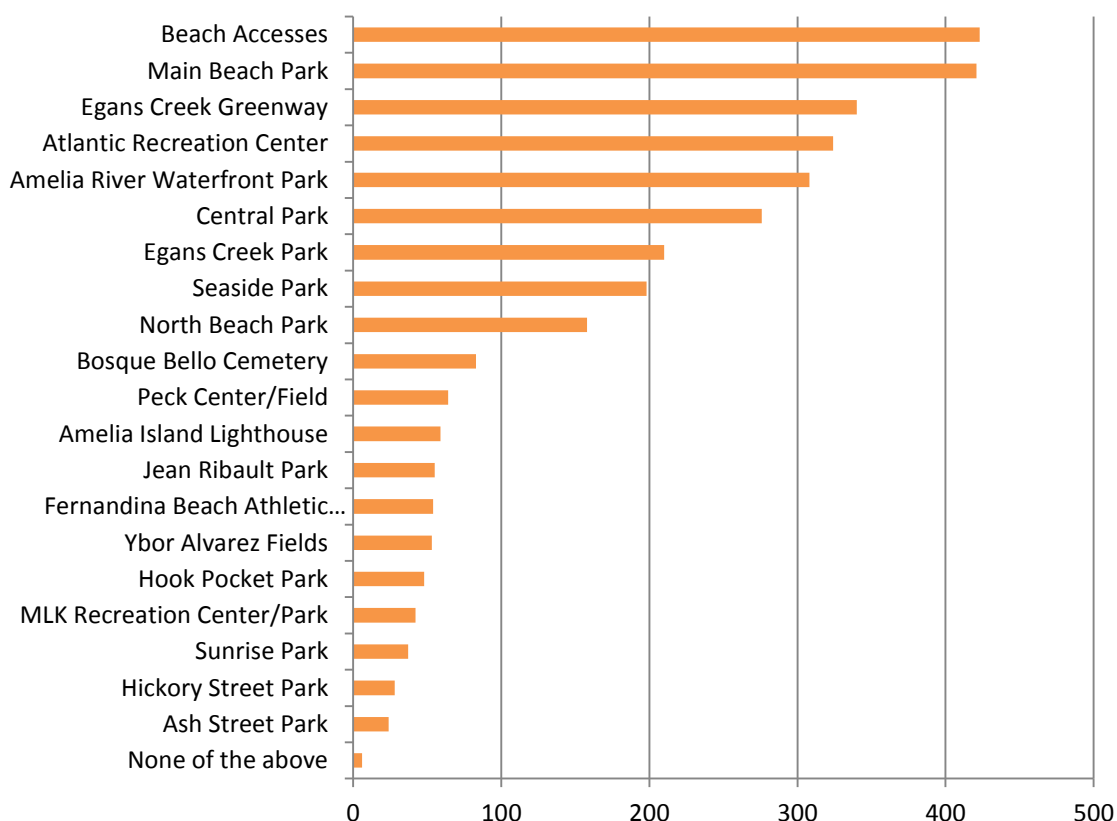
Between the dates of January 23, 2015 and February 28, 2015, the City of Fernandina Beach posted a 17-question survey to gather resident opinions on parks and recreation facilities. A total of 624 people responded the survey; following is a summary of the results from each question. The survey was mailed in hard copy through City utility bills and also available online via Survey Monkey.

Question 1: Please enter your home address.

This question was used to establish the residency of respondents. Approximately 2/3 of respondents were Fernandina Beach residents; another quarter were residents of Nassau County beyond City boundaries.

Residence	# of Respondents	% of All Respondents
City of Fernandina Beach	424	66%
Nassau County, outside Fernandina Beach	165	26%
Jacksonville	4	1%
Out of State	9	2%
Unknown	22	5%

**Question 2. Which City parks, open spaces, or recreation facilities do you visit most often?
Check all that apply.**

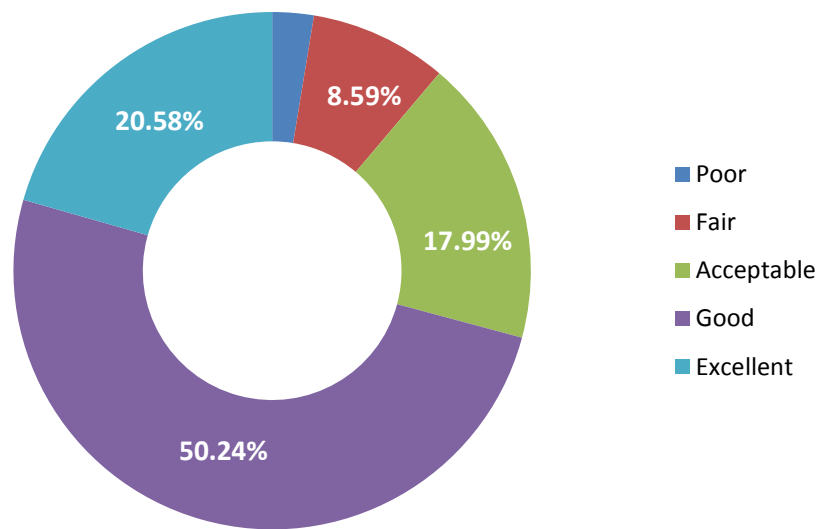


Respondents were able to select up to 21 parks and recreation facilities. In general, recreation facilities that are resource-based, such as the beaches and Egans Creek Greenway, were the most popular. The facilities most often used by respondents were beach access points (68.78 percent), followed closely by Main Beach Park (68.46 percent) and Egans Creek Greenway (55.28 percent). Parks that are more oriented towards active recreation had lower levels of visitation, with the lowest being Ash Street Park (3.90 percent), Hickory Street Park (4.55 percent), and Sunrise Park (6.02 percent).

Question 3. What do you like most about the parks that you visit?

A total of 483 respondents provided open-ended answers to this question. The most common types of responses included beach access, well maintained parks, and cleanliness, and nature.

Question 4. How would you rate the level of maintenance of the City's parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces?



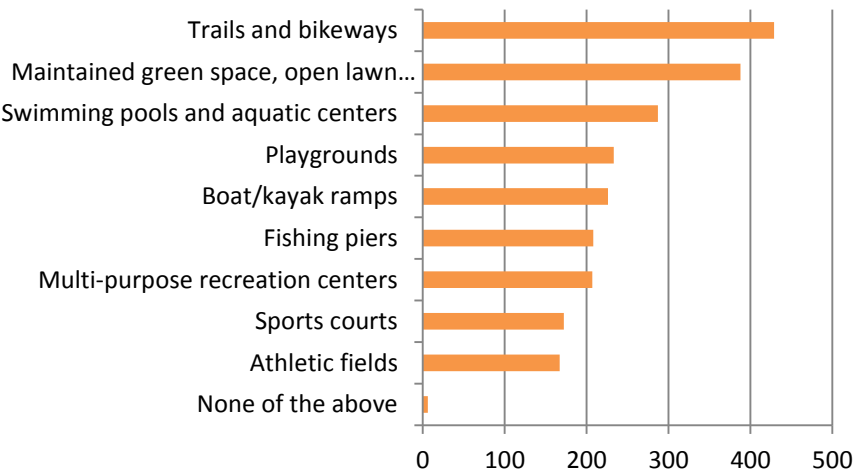
Approximately half the respondents indicated that parks and recreation maintenance is “Good.” About one fifth rated maintenance as “Excellent”, and slightly fewer marked it as “Acceptable.” Only 8.59 percent said maintenance is “Fair”, and a small minority (2.59 percent) rated it as poor. Overall, these percentages are generally positive.

Question 5. What improvements should be made to the parks you visit, and/or any other parks in the City?

A total of 402 respondents provided comments. Most responses included new and/or updated equipment and facilities, more restrooms and seating (preferably in the shade), better trash pickup, maintenance (bathrooms, drainage at fields, outdoor showers at beach, etc.)

Varied responses as to new facilities included playgrounds, kayak launch, public dog park, improved skate park, tennis courts, pickleball, stage, splash pads, etc.

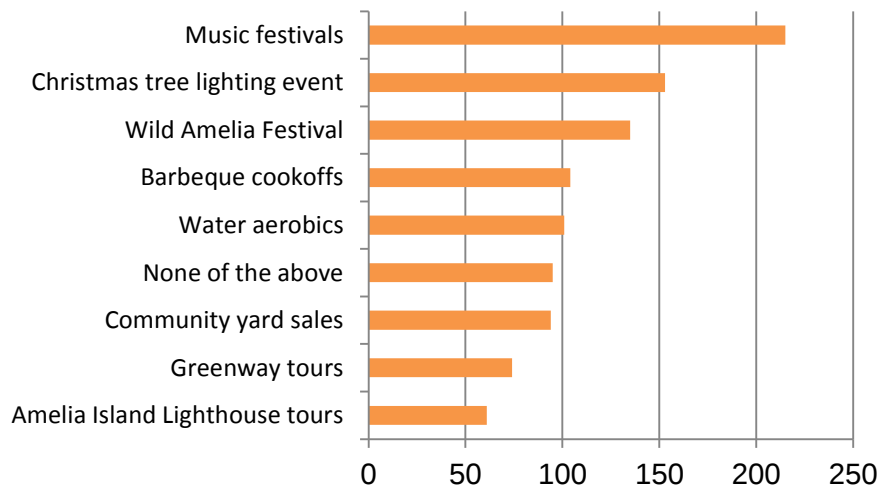
Question 6. What types of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces are most important to you? Check all that apply.



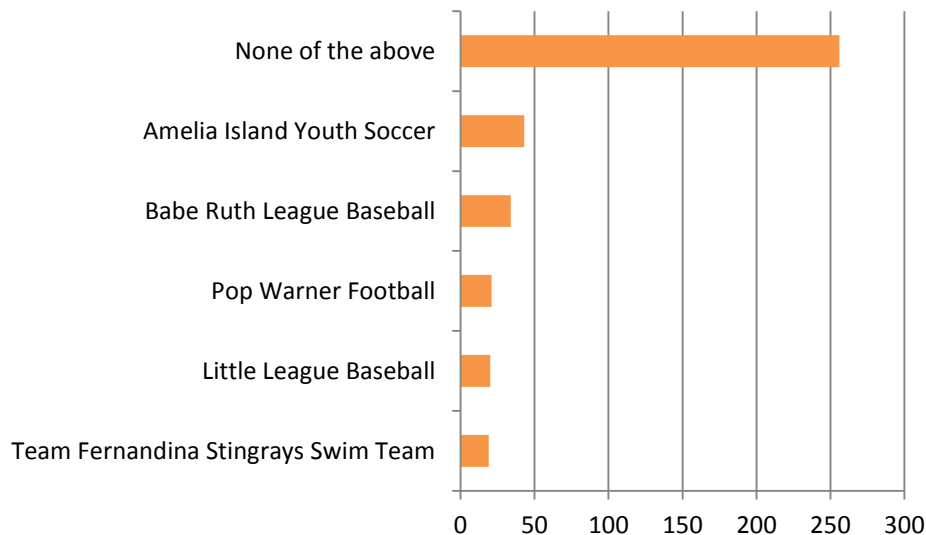
Most survey respondents (602) provided feedback to Question 6. The facility that is important to the largest amount of respondents is trails/bikeways, with 429 “votes.” This was followed closely by maintained green space/open lawns with 388. Sports courts and athletic fields ranked the lowest with 172 and 167 responses, respectively.

Question 7. Do you participate in any of the City's recreation programs? Check all that apply.

A total of 55 different recreation programs were listed as options for Question 7. Of the 511 responses, programs with the highest levels of participation were special events such as music festivals (215), the Christmas tree lighting event (153), Wild Amelia Festival (135), barbeque cook-offs (104), and community yard sales (94). Tours and trips also had significant participation, such as greenway tours (74), Amelia Island Lighthouse tours (61), and Senior Trips (41). The only class with high participation among respondents was water aerobics (101). Programs with low participation included home school swim clinics (2), open card tournaments, wiffleball tournaments (2), adult basketball leagues (3), horseshoe throwing tournaments (3), Irish dance lessons (3), and kickball tournaments (3).



Question 8. Do you participate in recreation programs provided by other organizations?



Slightly over one half (340) of respondents chose to provide answers to Question 8, and the majority (256) indicated that they did not participated in any of the programs list. Amelia Island Youth Soccer had the largest participation among respondents (43), followed by Babe Ruth League Baseball (34) and Pop Warner Football (21).

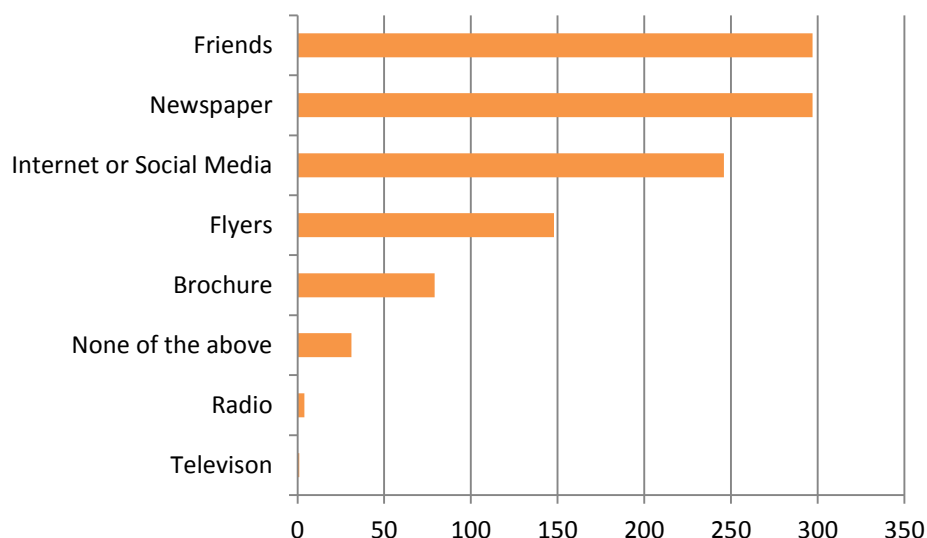
Question 9. What do you like most about the programs you participate in?

258 respondents provided answers. Top responses included the instructors, the people, and their organization. Specific programs that were highlighted by respondents included water and aerobic programs.

Question 10. What improvements should be made to the City's programs, including any new programs the City should offer?

207 respondents provided answers. Top response included advertising and marketing of programs and events. Varied responses as to new programs included pickleball, skate clinics and camps, classes on finance, language, arts, history, more senior activities, more water aerobics times, toddler/Mommy and me activities, etc.

Question 11. How do you find out about the parks and recreation facilities and programs offered by the City?



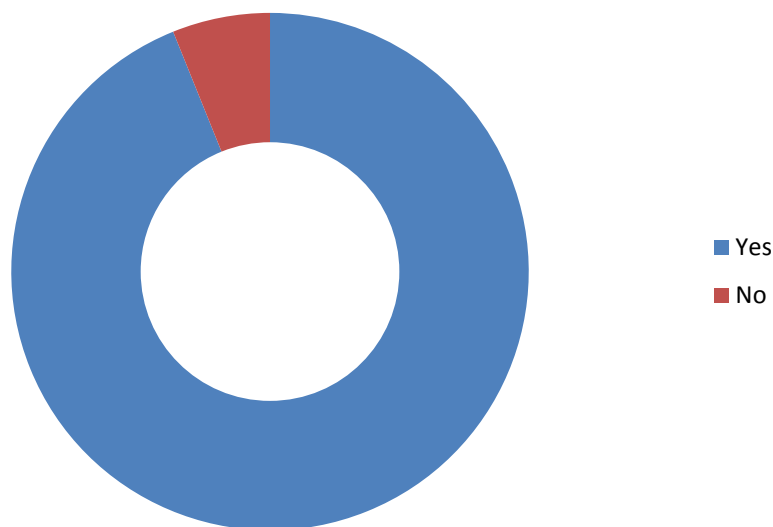
544 respondents provided answers. The most common ways of learning about facilities and programs were through friends (297) and the newspaper (297), followed by the internet or social media (246). Less common ways of learning about facilities and programs were flyers (148) and brochures (79). Very few respondents indicated the radio (4) or television (10) as sources of parks and recreation information.

Question 12. How could the City communicate to residents about parks and recreation opportunities more effectively?

325 respondents answered. Top responses included Facebook, social media, website, newspaper, and flyers.

Question 13. Does the Parks and Recreation Department provide opportunities for all residents to participate in parks and recreation programs and facilities, regardless of gender, race, age, ethnicity, disability?

The vast majority (93.89 percent) indicated that the Parks and Recreation Department provides equal opportunity for participation across ages, genders, races, ethnicity, and disability.



Question 14. How could the City improve opportunities for all residents to participate in parks and recreation programs and facilities?

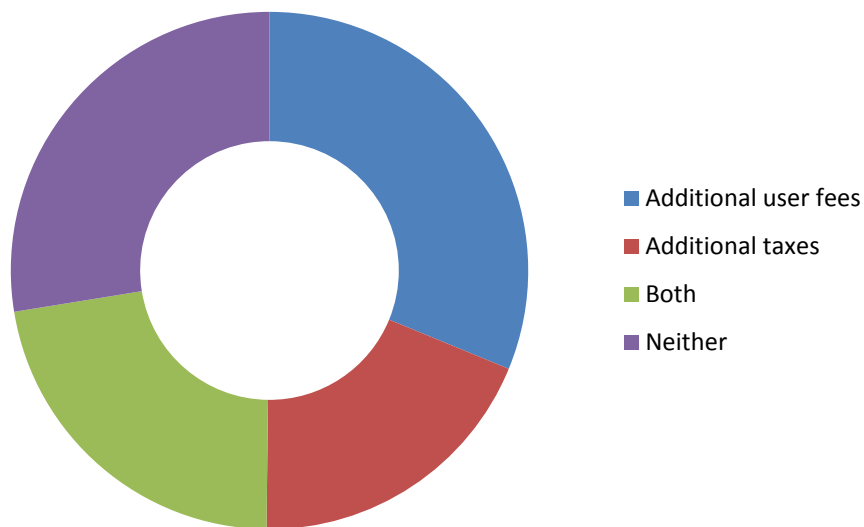
184 answers were recorded. Top responses included advertising and marketing of programs and events, including off the island, and improved ADA accessibility at all facilities including the beach.

Varied responses included more activities in evenings/weekends for working people, programs/activities for teenagers and seniors, public transportation, etc.

Question 15. Do you have any other suggestions for how the City could improve the parks, recreation, and open space system?

211 respondents answered the question. Varied responses included more natural areas, buy more land to protect open space, more landscaping, kayak launch, fishing pier or area, more lighting at parks, new aquatic center to replace existing pools, new skate park, ADA accessibility improvements, more walking/biking trails, band shell downtown or Main Beach, free dog park, enforce dog and trash ordinances, better wayfinding/signage, have County or County residents contribute more money.

Question 16. Would you support additional fees or taxes to pay for improvements to the City's parks, recreation, and open space system?



Of the 528 people who answers question 16, the majority demonstrated some level of support for funding parks. Some supported just additional user fees (32.39 percent), just additional taxes (19.70 percent), and both (23.11 percent). Only 28.60 percent of respondents supported neither.

3.6 Summary

Based on the all the various techniques used, the summary needs and priorities for the City of Fernandina Beach Park system included:

- Improve maintenance, create new design standards – minimum standard of care consistent with City regulations, historic district
- Provide facilities and programs to meet current needs, including basketball courts, paved multi-use trails, playgrounds, sports courts, and multi-purpose open spaces
- Improve connectivity
- Improve communications
- Design, construct, program, and maintain each element of the system as a 1st class public facility: waterfront, beaches, streets, aquatics, sports complexes, community centers, parks, trails, special event spaces, playgrounds, amenities

The following section provides recommendations on how to address these needs and priorities.

Section 4 – Long Range Parks + Recreation Vision

The long-range Vision for the Parks and Recreation System includes five key elements: first class venues, improved connectivity, equitable access, improved communications, and improved design and maintenance. In an effort to address some of the water quality issues that the City of Fernandina Beach and the St. John's River Water Management District (SJWMD) is facing, the vision also includes ideas and opportunities to address water quality through greenspace.

First Class Venues

First, the proposed vision is to gradually transform the City's major parks and recreation facilities into specialized, 1st class public venues that serve the entire community. The following table outlines the proposed transition:

Existing:

- Egans Creek Greenway
- Central Park + Buccaneer Field
- Atlantic Recreation Center
- Main Beach
- Peck Center
- MLK Center
- Athletic Complex
- Waterfront
- 30 Acre Airport Site
- Atlantic Avenue

Proposed:

- Egans Creek Greenway
- Central Park
- Atlantic Aquatics Center
- Main Beach
- Peck Arts, Education + Culture Center
- MLK Senior Center
- Fernandina Beach Sports Complex
- Amelia River Waterfront Park
- Fernandina Beach Nature Center
- Avenida de Banderas (Avenue of the Flags)

The heart of the vision is the Atlantic Avenue Corridor, proposed as the "Avenida de las Banderas" (Avenue of the Flags) in recognition of the City's rich history (See Figure 4.1). Anchored by the City's new waterfront on the Amelia River, and the revitalized Main Beach on the Atlantic Ocean, the Avenida is envisioned as a bustling two mile corridor lined by the eight national flags that once flew over the City; shady street trees; wide sidewalks for pedestrians, and bike lanes for cyclists; and festive trolleys ferrying residents and visitors between the two anchors, Central Park, and the Aquatics Center.

Figure 4.1 – Avenida de Las Banderas (Avenue of the Flags)



Figure 4.2 – Examples of Flags Lining a Street



Figure 4.3 – Example of a Complete Street



The Amelia River Waterfront will be redeveloped as a pedestrian-oriented gathering/festival space along the river. Adequate space will be provided for strolling, bicycling, vendors' carts, festival booths, café tables and chairs, a trolley stop, and other visitor amenities. Parking will be removed from the river front, and provided through on-street parking and a new parking structure on the edge of the historic district. Waterfront communities around the US have determined that parking is not the best use of valuable waterfront land; it is impossible to meet the total demand, and parking lots detract from the highly-valued pedestrian experience. For example the City of St. Augustine directs visitors to a centralized parking garage and visitors' center, connected via trolley to the historic district and waterfront.

Figure 4.4 – Kissimmee Lakefront Park, Kissimmee – Florida



Central Park is envisioned as the City's central gathering space, as established in the town's original plat. Proposed uses include a central, multi-purpose lawn for festivals, sports, special events, picnicking, and open play; a new civic center; picnic shelters; an expanded tennis complex; and a children's playground. The existing Buccaneer Field Complex would be moved to the expanded Fernandina Sports Complex. Central Park would continue to host pick-up games, practice, and recreational leagues, while the Sports Complex would host competitive games and tournaments. A lighted sports complex is not an appropriate use for the City's a central urban park; it monopolizes over 2/3 of the park land for a single, specialized use; and the outfield fences, lights, maintenance building, parking, and noise are not compatible with adjacent residential uses. The proposed vision would increase park use by both visitors and residents; increase adjacent property values; help stabilize the surrounding neighborhood, and provide a true "Signature Park" for the City. Examples of similar small town, signature parks in Florida include the City of Winter Park's Central Park; the Baldwin Park (City of Orlando) Bluejacket Park; and the City of Kissimmee's Lakefront Park.

Figure 4.5 – Conceptual Plan of Central Park

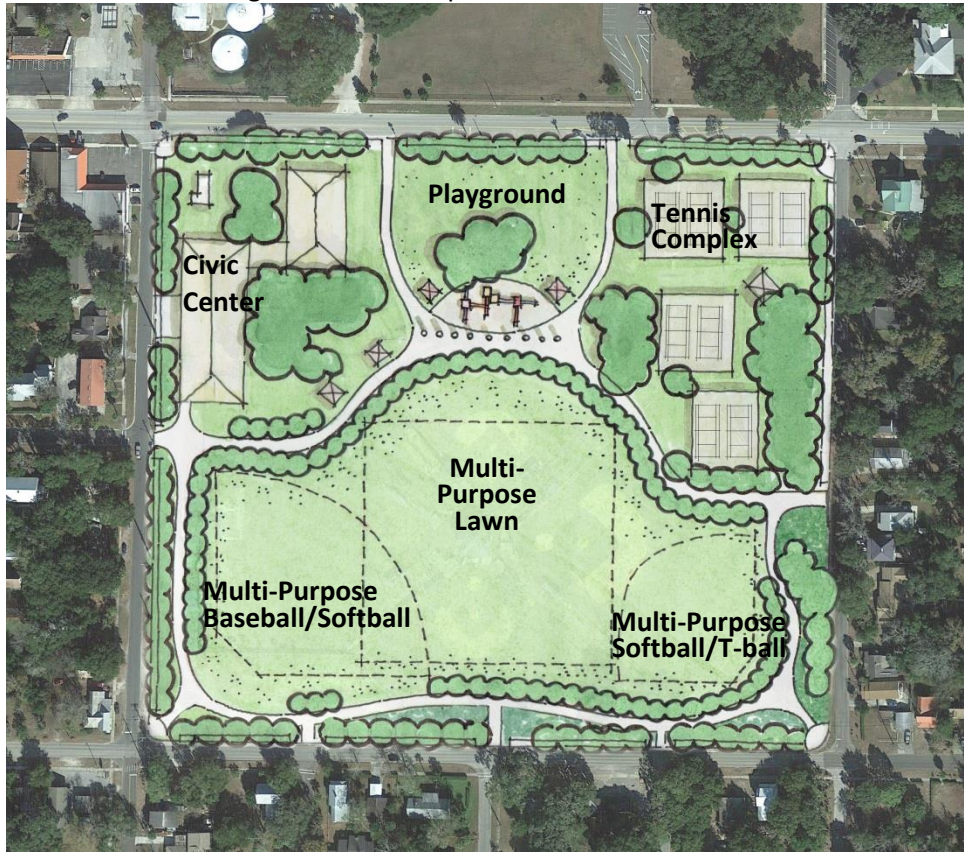


Figure 4.6 – Multi-Purpose Lawn in Blue Jacket Park, Orlando, Florida.



The Atlantic Recreation Center is proposed as the Atlantic Aquatics Center. In addition to the existing lap pool and children's pool, the Center would also provide a waterslide, lazy river, and expanded deck space. Existing buildings would be renovated to provide classrooms, concessions, meeting space, and water related programs. The Center would attract both residents and visitors, helping to reinvigorate the eastern anchor of the Avenida in conjunction with the renovated Main Beach.

Figure 4.7 – Conceptual Plan for Atlantic Recreation Center



A new Master Plan should be developed for Main Beach to reflect current needs and priorities, and to create an exciting and vibrant eastern anchor to the Avenida. Potential uses could include new concessions, restaurants, and shops; multi-purpose event lawns; a beachfront promenade; individual and group picnic pavilions; an expanded skate/ extreme sports park; beach volleyball courts; new restrooms; and other “place making” amenities. Figures 4.8 - 4.9 provide examples from Venice Beach, California that could serve as inspiration for the space. The improved skate park is included based on feedback received from the survey and public workshops.

Figure 4.8 – Skate Park in Venice Beach, California

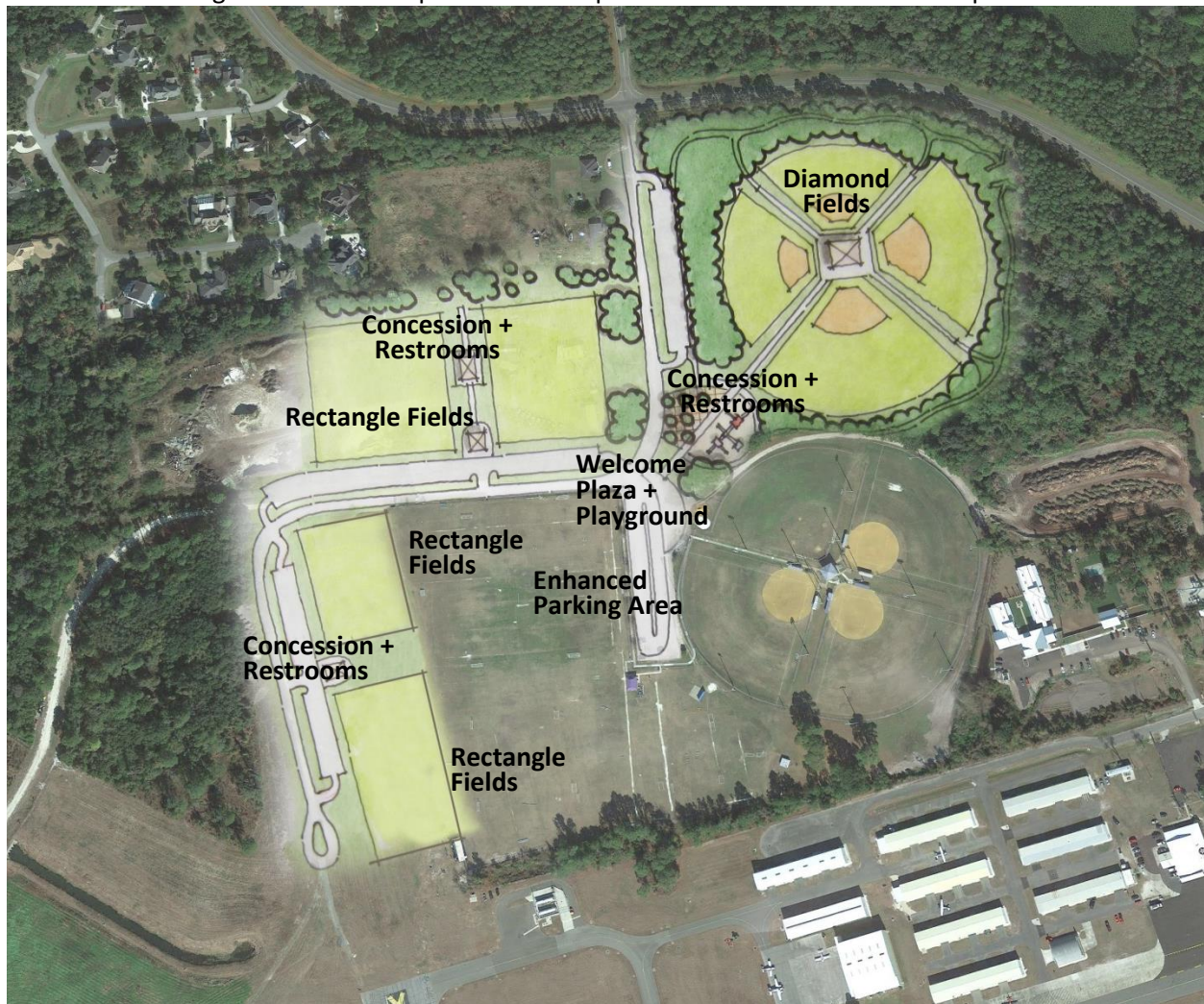


Figure 4.9 – Beach Park in Venice Beach, California illustrating playground and walkways



In addition to the venues along the Avenida, the Master Plan also envisions the revitalization of the Peck Center into a multi-cultural, multi-dimensional Arts, Education, and Culture Center; the conversion and renovation of the MLK Center into the MLK Senior Center, serving the needs of residents City-wide; and the expansion of the existing Athletic Complex into the Fernandina Beach Sports Complex, providing competition-level facilities for baseball, softball, soccer, football, and lacrosse (see Figure 4.10). It is recognized that this site may not be available for use; however, the concept of an expanded sports complex on the island is still something to consider.

Figure 4.10 – Conceptual Plan of Expanded Fernandina Athletic Complex



Egans Creek Greenway would be enhanced to restore native habitat where appropriate, provide additional opportunities for environmental education, and enhance visitor's recreation experience. The existing 30 acre airport site would be developed into the Fernandina Beach Nature Center, focused on the preservation of the City's natural resources while offering environmental education programs and activities.

Improved, Multi-modal Connectivity

The parks and recreation vision also includes improved connectivity between neighborhoods and venues through "complete streets", bikeways and trails, and public trolley service (see Figure 4.15). Every street within the City should provide wide sidewalks and street trees to accommodate safe and comfortable walking and bicycling. Bike lanes should be added along major corridors where there's adequate right-of-way. Trolley or transit service should be provided to every major City park or venue, and covered bus shelters should be provided at each stop. The City's goals should include 1) restoring the pre-development oak canopy through its street tree program; and 2) reducing the need for parking through multi-modal connectivity.

Equitable Access to Neighborhood Recreation

The vision also includes providing neighborhood-serving facilities within walking distance of every resident, including a playground, multi-purpose open space, multi-purpose sports court, picnic shelter, and restrooms. It is possible that

many of these facilities can be constructed on existing City or State parkland. The City should conduct an audit for each neighborhood to determine existing recreation assets or deficiencies; meet with neighborhood residents to discuss audit findings, and neighborhood needs; and identify opportunities to meet existing needs through partnerships, the development of existing sites, and /or acquisition of available sites.

Improved Communication with Residents and Visitors

The parks and recreation vision also includes updated communications networks – including the use of social media – to engage residents in the planning and programming of the parks system, and to inform residents of special events and programs. Parks and recreation agencies throughout the U.S. use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest to promote their programs and keep residents updated. For example the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) encouraged its members to use these and other forms of social media to promote national Parks and Recreation month this past July Facebook. The City should also work with area hotels, businesses, and the County’s Tourist Development Council to inform visitors of recreation opportunities, programs, and special events at the City’s venues.

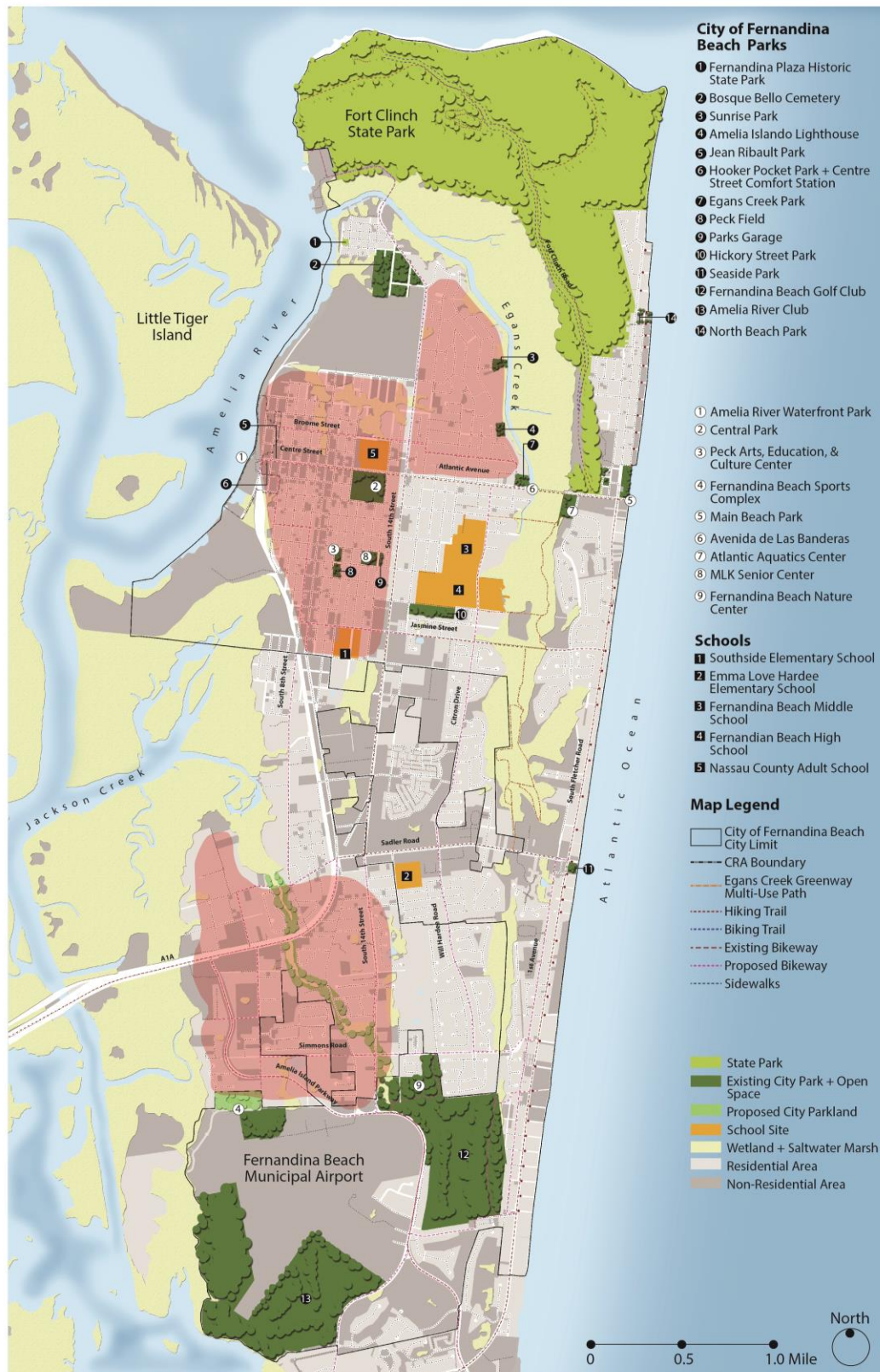
Improved Design, Aesthetics, Quality, and Maintenance

Finally, the vision includes the development of design standards and maintenance standards to ensure that the city’s entire “public realm” is designed, constructed, and maintained to reflect the values, brand, and desired image of the City of Fernandina Beach. Park buildings and structures should be designed to reflect the City’s historical architecture; materials should be selected based on their value, character, and longevity, not just low cost. Similarly, site amenities such as tables, chairs, benches, and trash containers should be selected for comfort, convenience, and aesthetics. Parks should be designed in accordance with commercial development codes, including requirements for paving, curbing, drainage, and landscaping. Maintenance of city parks should be improved to the level of the historic district and residential homes; poor park maintenance detracts from the overall impression of the City, and lowers property values.

Integrated Stormwater Water + Greenspace Strategy

In an effort to address some of the water quality issues that the City of Fernandina Beach and the St. John’s River Water Management District (SJWMD) are facing, the vision also includes ideas and opportunities to address water quality through greenspace. During the visioning phase of the project, Barth Associates worked with SJWMD staff to identify areas within the City that were facing water quality issues. Figure 4.11 identifies these areas.

Figure 4.11 – Areas with Water Quality Issues



Working with the SJWMD, Barth Associates proposed the strategic use and acquisition for park land to help capture and treat stormwater before it is discharged into the Amelia River, Egans Creek, and Jackson Creek. This strategic use would enable the City of Fernandina Beach to leverage SJWMD funding earmarked for stormwater quality projects. The parks would be strategically designed to address water quality as well as provide desired recreational, social, and culture

community needs. Figure 4.12 below shows examples of what integrated stormwater and greenspaces parks may look like and Figure 4.13 shows their proposed locations. The stormwater potential of these parks could also be expanded by linking them to streets that also address stormwater quality. Figure 4.14 shows an example of what these streets could look like. Figure 4.15 shows the complete City of Fernandina Beach Parks and Recreation System Framework.

Figure 4.12 – Integrated Stormwater + Greenspace Parks

Franklin County Government Center located in Columbus, Ohio



Manassas Park Elementary School Outdoor Classroom –
Manassas Park, Virginia



Tanner Springs Park, Portland, Oregon

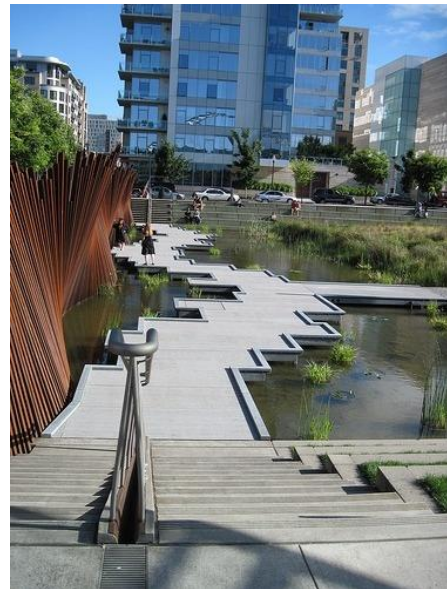


Figure 4.13 – Proposed Location for Integrated Stormwater + Greenspace Parks



Figure 4.14 – Green Infrastructure Street – Portland, Oregon

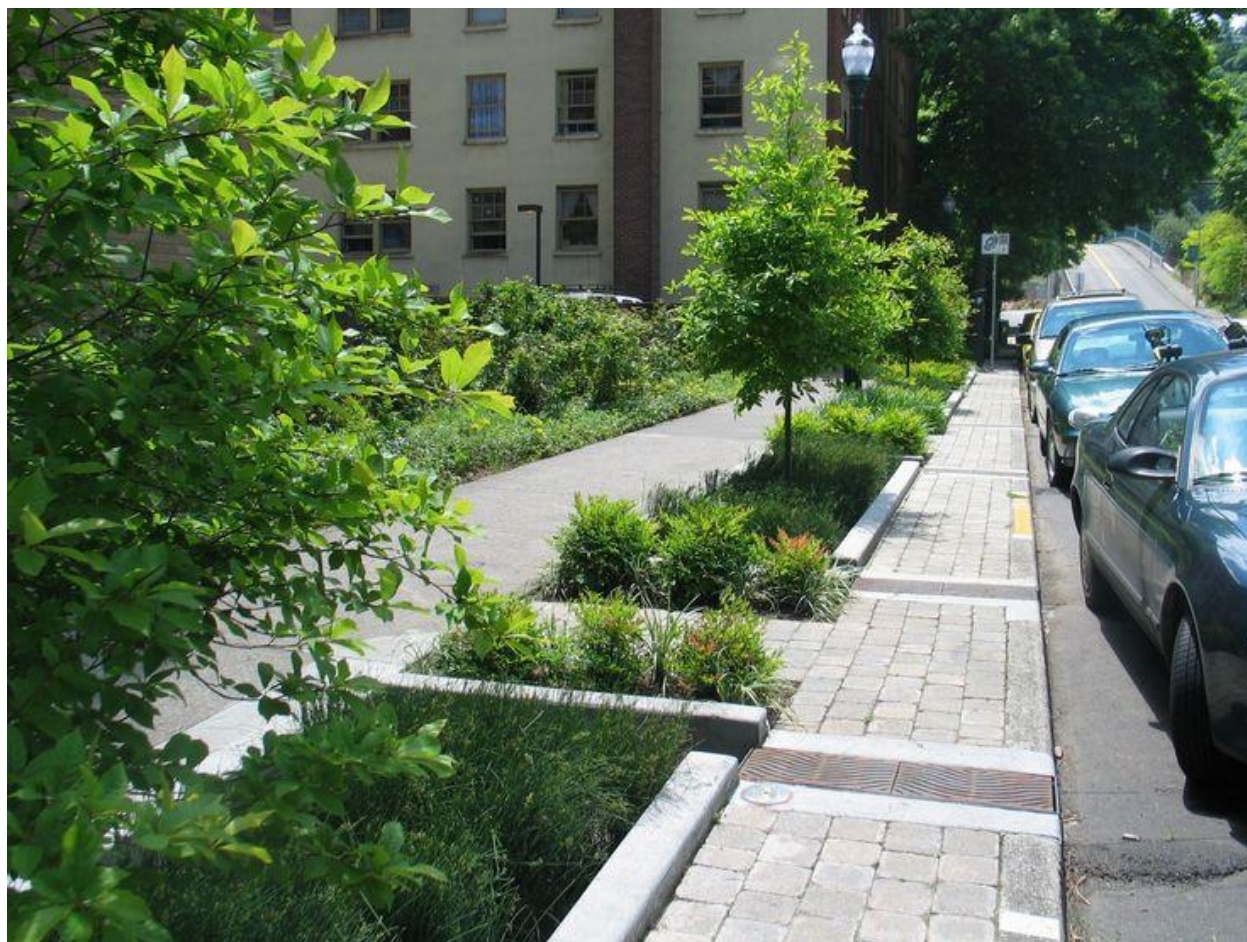
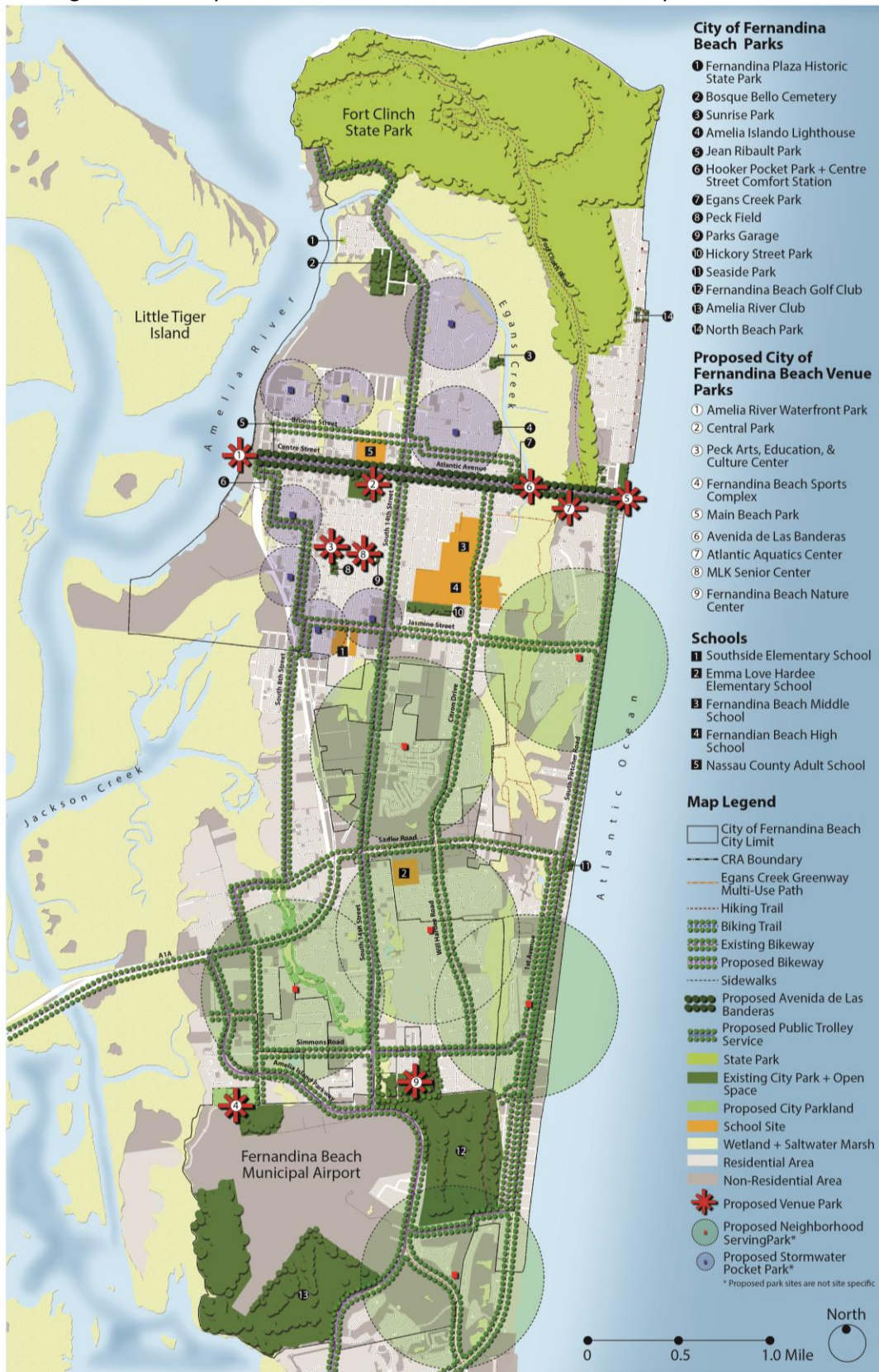


Figure 4.15 – City of Fernandina Beach Parks and Recreation System Framework



Level of Service Recommendations

Based on the LOS of Service Analysis completed in *Section 3.2 - Analysis of Acreage and Facilities LOS*, and the proposed vision established in the previous pages, the following are proposed LOS Criteria informed by the NE Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP):

	FACILITY/ACTIVITY	NEFlorida LOS(2020)	LOSCity	
WATER-BASED	Saltwater Beach Activities	59.63	3,252	linear SF/participant
	Saltwater Non-Boat Fishing	34.77	1,200	FT of jetty/pier/catwalk/1000 participants
	Saltwater Boat Ramp Use	0.08	0.30	#lanes/1,000 participants
	Freshwater Non-Boat Fishing	82.92	0.00	FT of jetty/pier/catwalk/1000 participants
	Freshwater Boat Ramp Use	0.27	0.31	#lanes/1000 participants
LAND-BASED	Visiting Historic/Archae. Sites	0.21	0.14	sites/1,000 participants
	Nature Study	0.2	1.89	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	Picnicking	1.81	9.84	tables/1,000 participants
	Bicycle-Riding: Paved Trails	0.05	0.05	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	Bicycle-Riding: Unpaved Trails	0.63	0.33	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	Hiking	0.27	1.03	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	RV/Trailer Camping	5.2	0.00	sites/1,000 participants
	Tent Camping	0.75	0.00	sites/1,000 participants
	Off Highway Vehicle Riding	0.06	0.00	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	Horseback Riding	0.75	0.00	miles of trail/1,000 participants
	Hunting	721	0.00	acres/1,000 participants
USER-ORIENTED	Baseball	1.32	3.76	fields/1,000 participants
	Basketball	1.2	0.87	courts/1,000 participants
	Football	0.51	4.87	fields/1,000 participants
	Golf	1.19	1.19	holes/1,000 participants
	Outdoor Swimming Pool Use	0.05	0.99	pools/1,000 participants
	Soccer	0.71	8.93	fields/1,000 participants
	Tennis	0.99	1.84	courts/1,000 participants

It is important to note that an LOS criteria is not proposed for some of the amenities noted above such as RV/Trail Camping, Hunting, or Off Highway Vehicle Riding, just to mention a few. These facilities were felt to not be necessary or appropriate in the City of Fernandina Beach at the time this plan was completed. However, the City should update these

LOS standards periodically so they reflect the current needs and desires of residents. The current level of 12 acres of parkland per 1000 residents should be maintained.

In addition to these LOS Standards, the City should strive to enhance the City's existing parks to become 1st class Venue Parks and provide the following basic recreation amenities in Neighborhood-Serving Parks located within a ½ mile of every resident as illustrated in Figure 4.15 on page 63:

- Shaded Playground,
- Multi-Purpose Open Space,
- Sport Court,
- Trails,
- Small Pavilion (optional), and
- Restrooms (optional).

The City's population and size is small enough that the number and type of "venue" parks illustrated in Figure 4.15 will suffice in addressing the future recreation needs and desire of residents. No capacity LOS criteria are required for these facilities. Proposed neighborhood-serving parks can be re-evaluated as the population and City boundaries potentially grow, and be remapped at a 1/2 mile radius to ensure the 1/2 mile access standard is still applicable.

Section 5 – Implementation Plan

Implementation of the vision will require a significant investment by the City over an extended period of time, using a variety of funding sources.

The first step of implementation is approval of the Parks and Recreation Plan as a “framework” for a long range vision. It is particularly important that the community reach consensus regarding the five key elements of the vision; the specific details can be worked out in the future.

Once the vision is approved, the City’s Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) should meet to prioritize the proposed improvements, and make recommendations to the Commission regarding top priorities over the next 1 – 5 years. The PRAC should first develop prioritization criteria, which may include:

- The project will help meet resident’s top priority needs (see the Needs Assessment).
- The project will generate economic, social, and environmental benefits for the City.
- The project will encourage or strengthen partnerships with other public/private agencies.
- The project will leverage public funds.
- The project will create high quality, long-lasting facilities that represent the City’s values, brand, and image.
- The project will help the City achieve its ultimate parks and recreation vision.

It is important to note that several priorities can be implemented concurrently, depending on available staff and funding.

Assuming the Commission approves the PRAC’s recommendations, City staff should then explore funding alternatives for each of the top priorities; each project may require a different combination of funding techniques. Based on information provided by the City’s Finance Department, it appears that the City currently funds approximately \$1.7 million - \$3,000,000/ year in capital improvements for parks and streets through:

Capital Improvements Program (General Fund):	+/- \$500,000 - \$1,000,000
Impact Fees	+/- \$100,000
City/ County Revenue Bonds	+/- \$600,000
Grants	+/- \$500,000 - \$2,000,000

Other potential funding sources include:

Pay As You Go:

- Sales Tax
- Increased Park Impact Fees
- User Fees
- Special Assessments

Borrowing:

- General Obligation Bonds

Partnerships:

- Public-Private
- Public-Public
- Public-Non-profit

Public/private partnerships have already proven to be successful in Fernandina Beach. The Pirates Playground, created as a partnership between the City and 8 Flags Playscapes, Inc., has been extremely popular and is a great example of a partnership. 8 Flags Playscapes, Inc. is a community non-profit that started specifically to create a playground for children of all abilities. Their mission has expanded to enhancement of the community through the development of recreational environments that are universally accessible to all.

With the success of the Pirates Playground, 8 Flags is moving on to work with the City in redeveloping Egans Creek Park. Part of the plan for Egans Creek park is to provide an accessible fitness trail and accessible kayak launch. Like with Pirates Playground, 8 Flags has committed itself to fundraising, design work, and overall planning for the site, working with City staff. This model will likely prove itself to be successful in the years to come as well.

City staff and the PRAC should reconcile projected funding with top priorities to create a 5 year, Phase 1 implementation plan, and make recommendations to the Commission for proceeding with design and implementation.

Section 6 - Recommendations for Comprehensive Plan Goals, Objectives, + Policies

In light of recommendations in the master plan, updates to the City's Recreation and Open Space Element in the Comprehensive Plan will be required. The following are two options:

OPTION 1

To implement the provisions of Objective 6.01 and implementing policies in the City's comprehensive plan:

- Maintain the existing level of service for parks and recreation facilities by facility type per 1000 persons as set forth in Table 6.
- Base level of service on City owned and operated facilities only.
- Establish a service area: facilities are to be located within ½ mile of each residence.
- Emphasize multi-modal accessibility to all community facilities.
- Require that new development pay for the acquisition of additional parkland, the construction of new facilities, and/or the improvement of access necessary to maintain current levels of service.
- Update impact fees to reflect the costs of implementing the vision for new facilities.
- Require an update to the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan every five years to 1) track progress towards the vision, and 2) make sure that the system is being responsive to residents' needs.
- Develop a strategy to provide additional parkland and recreation facilities in underserved areas.

OPTION 2 (RECOMMENDED)

To implement the Vision in the Master Plan, revise the Comprehensive Plan to:

- Simplify acreage and service area requirements to maintain current 2015 acreage levels of 12 acres of parkland per 1000 residents as a level of service standard.
- Define "parkland" as: Any public or private land, facility, or open space available for active or passive recreational, educational, cultural, or aesthetic/scenic use.
- Utilize the recommended SCORP benchmarks on page 73 as LOS in addition to 12 acres of parkland per 1000 residents.
- Focus on access LOS for parks and recreation facilities, using a standard of a neighborhood-serving park per 1/2 mile radius.
- Replace the current Comprehensive Plan requirement to utilize LOS based on facility classifications and standards found in the SCORP with the five elements of the proposed long range Vision and a focus on venue-based facilities and neighborhood-serving parks.
- Emphasize multi-modal accessibility to all community facilities.
- Require that new development pay for the acquisition of additional parkland, the construction of new facilities, and/or the improvement of access necessary to maintain current levels of service.
- Update impact fees to reflect the costs of implementing the vision for new facilities.
- Require an update to the Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan every five years to 1) track progress towards the Vision, and 2) make sure that the system is being responsive to residents' needs.
- Develop a strategy to provide additional parkland and recreation facilities in underserved areas.
- Delete mandatory concurrency for parks and recreational facilities.

END OF PLAN