

Draft 1

Open Space and Recreation Element

Data, Inventory, and Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s, parks and open space planning has generally focused on providing activity-based recreation opportunities through athletic fields and play equipment. Parks, however, provide more functions than structured recreation—they maintain natural resources and systems; provide cultural, economic, social, and public health benefits; and create informal experiences with nature that elevate the quality of life of a community's citizens. Beyond the basic dictionary definition of a park, the fundamental question relates to “what is a park and why is that an important question?” The purpose of parks has changed over time, but it has always described a wide variety of public (and even private) spaces. Parks “provide a signature for the community by contributing to its identity and personality. They provide beauty, respite, and opportunity for organized and spontaneous play. They complete the urban living experience...” Parks and open space provide a definitive sense of place and are a place making tool for cities. (Source: “From Recreation to Re-creation: New Directions in Parks and Open Space System Planning.” American Planning Association. Planning Advisory Services Report Number 551. 2008).

The location of the City of Delray Beach along the Atlantic coast with the natural features of the Atlantic Ocean and Intracoastal Waterway, coupled with a climate perfect for the enjoyment of outdoor activities, has enabled the development of exemplary parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities within the city. Providing and facilitating access to public open space through high quality systems of parks, greenways and other natural areas is a major step towards creating and maintaining active, healthy communities.

The City of Delray Beach parks system provides recreation opportunities through a wide range of facilities, including neighborhood parks, urban open spaces, community centers, cultural facilities, athletic fields, aquatic facilities, tennis facilities, nature preserves, the beach, and water access facilities. The provision of open space and recreation in a community is an important factor in the quality of life of its residents, the experiences of its visitors, and, the economic development of the community.

WHAT IS THE PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

The Parks and Recreation Element describes the City of Delray Beach's plan for ensuring a high quality system of open space, recreation facilities and programs are provided now and to meet future projected demands and recreation trends.

Parks and recreation are interconnected in varying degrees to other elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Far beyond the provision of leisure activities, quality parks and recreation programs foster economic benefits by promoting tourism, and revitalizing communities by creating safer, more desirable neighborhoods. Community open spaces expand cultural ties through the provision of public art and the celebration of historic venues providing a unique sense of place for the community that promotes civic pride and engagement. The provision and maintenance of parks and open space support sustainability efforts through the protection and preservation of natural resources. The

provision of recreation opportunities throughout the City promotes, healthier lifestyles, improving the mental and physical wellbeing of the citizens.

Delray Beach is a diverse community whose fabric is a rich blend of cultures, ages, and both seasonal and year-round residents. While the diverse needs, interests, and experiences of Delray Beach residents enrich the City, it also provides challenges on how to best serve the varied needs and desires of all residents. To ensure that a high quality of life remains a priority for current and future generations, it is necessary that the park system addresses the growing population and demographic changes, and changes in cultural trends and interests to continue to provide exemplary parks and recreation services into the future.

INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

The following inventory of open space and recreation facilities is prepared in compliance with state requirements (Florida Statutes 163.3177). The City of Delray Beach provides for and maintains a variety of safe and enjoyable recreation opportunities on nearly 500 acres of parkland located within the City. The City's parks and open space inventory consists of both private and public sites for recreation, nature preserve areas, community centers, parks and open spaces, playgrounds, beaches, and public access to beaches, and waterways.

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the coordination, planning and operation of a comprehensive recreational, beautification and parks maintenance program. The department manages 50 parks and recreation facilities throughout the City. The City of Delray Beach's park system is comprised of a wide range of spaces, including athletic fields, neighborhood parks, community parks, beach and oceanfront parks, swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses, community centers, nature preserve areas, cultural facilities and marina.

Parks and Recreation Land Inventory

Recreation areas can be classified as either "resource based" or "activity based". Resource based facilities exist around natural resources such as beaches and lakes, and are generally used for hiking, swimming, boating, picnicking, and other activities adaptable to the resource. Activity based facilities are built for a particular activity, such as tennis or baseball. Recreation facilities can also be classified as active or passive. The City's Parks and Recreation Department seeks to provide sufficient facilities in all these categories to meet the needs of its citizens and visitors.

The City provides 184 acres of activity based recreation facilities, excluding golf courses. An additional 293 acres are considered resource based, including the municipal beach, conservation parcels, and the golf courses. Not counted in these totals, but contributing to the recreation and open space inventory of the City, are specialty facilities such as nature centers, cultural facilities, schools whose recreation facilities are available to the

community under joint use agreements, and the Lake Ida Park and Delray Oaks Preserve both of which are managed and operated by Palm Beach County.

Table OSR-1	
Open Space & Recreation Land Inventory by Category	
Activity Based Recreation Facilities	
I-95 Gateway Parks	1.4 acres
13 th Street Playground	0.3 acres
505 Teen Center and Skate Park	1.6 acres
Anchor Park	2.5 acres
Barwick Park	9.6 acres
Bexley Trail Community Park	11.0 acres
Carver Square Pocket Park	0.2 acres
Catherine Strong Center (Splash Park and Boys & Girls Club)	9.8 acres
Community Center and Delray Beach Tennis Facility	9.9 acres
Cornell Park	3.5 acres
Currie Commons	3.1 acres
Del Ida Park (Ida's Cool Spot)	0.1 acres
Delray Swim and Tennis Club	5.5 acres
Eagle Park	3.7 acres
Fern Court Park	0.09 acres
La Hacienda Gardens Park	0.3 acres
Libby Wesley Park	0.2 acres
Martin Luke King Drive Public Plaza	0.8 acres
Merritt Park	3.9 acres
Mike Machek Boy Scout Park	4.8 acres
NW 13 th Avenue Park	0.3 acres
Oakmont Park	1.4 acres
Old School Square Park	1.3 acres
Orchard View Park	5.9 acres
Table OSR-1	
Open Space & Recreation Land Inventory by Category	
Activity Based Recreation Facilities	
Pine Grove Park	4.7 acres
Pioneer Park	1.17 acres
Plumosa Park	2.9 acres
Pompey Park and Pool	13.9 acres
Rev. J.W.H. Thomas Jr. Park	0.35 acres
Robert P. Miller Park	32.8 acres

Rosemont Park	0.3 acres
Seacrest Soccer Complex & Hilltopper Stadium	35.3 acres
Sunshine Park	0.3 acres
Veterans Park	4.2 acres
Western Community Center (Family Recreation and Fitness Center Playground)	6.7 acres
Worthing Park	0.3 acres
TOTAL	184.11 Acres
Resource Based Recreation Facilities	
Atlantic Dunes Park	7.0 acres
City Marina	2.0 acres
Delray Beach Memorial Gardens	29.1 acres
Donnelly Tract Preservation Area	1.7 acres
Ingraham Park	0.8 acres
Knowles Park	3.2 acres
Lake Ida Open Space	5.05 acres
Lakeview Golf Course	41.2 acres
Lakeview Park	3.3 acres
Leon Weekes Environmental Preservation Area	12.4 acres
Mangrove Park	5.0 acres
Municipal Beach	23.0 acres
Delray Beach Municipal Golf Club	159.8 acres
TOTAL	293.55 acres

Schools with Joint Use Agreements

The City of Delray Beach has entered into agreements with the Palm Beach County School Board for the joint use of their educational facilities. Under these agreements, the City is allowed to utilize the school facilities during non-school hours. Joint use agreements are valuable as they complement the Parks and Recreation program, reduce the duplication of resources, and free up limited funds for other capital improvements. Below is a list of the school facilities that the City has joint use agreements with the School District.

Atlantic High School	Plumosa School of the Arts
Banyan Creek Elementary	Orchard View Elementary
Carver Middle School	Spady Elementary
Pine Grove Elementary	Village Academy

Inventory of Open Space & Recreation by Functional Classification

A key component of park inventory is also the City's classification of the varied types of parks and recreation facilities. While comparable to both the county and state guidelines, these classifications/definitions for open space and recreation, provide certain modifications based on the unique features of the specific facility. For example, a community park may include all the facilities of a neighborhood park, but can be much larger.

The City's functional park classifications are listed in Table OSR-2 "Inventory of Recreation Facilities by Functional Classification and are defined as follows:

Neighborhood Parks: The smallest class of park, neighborhood parks are generally less than five (5) acres in size, and in many cases are less than one (1) acre in size. Recreational facilities are typically few in number due to size constraints and are developed according to the demands and character of the specific neighborhoods that they serve. Access is primarily pedestrian-oriented with no support facilities such as parking lots or restrooms provided. Examples of these neighborhood parks include Cornel Park and the Rev J.W. H Thomas Jr. Park. **Photo of neighborhood parks**

Community Parks: Community parks are usually more than five acres but less than 25 acres in size, providing active and, to a lesser degree, passive recreational facilities to population areas within three (3) miles of the facility. Recreational facilities include play areas, small groups of lighted fields or courts suitable for programmed activities, and community centers. Bicycle and automobile parking areas and pedestrian paths provide access to the facility. **Photo of Catherine Strong Community Park**

District Parks: District parks are generally greater than twenty-five (25) acres in size and primarily provide active recreational facilities and, to a lesser degree, passive recreational facilities. Recreational facilities typically include groups of lighted fields or courts suitable for scheduled athletic league activities, exercise trails and support facilities such as restrooms and concessions with bicycle and automobile parking areas and pedestrian path systems to accommodate park users. Special facilities such as recreation centers, competition swimming pools, golf courses, and boat ramps and docks may also be provided within district parks. The Robert P. Miller Park and Lake Ida Park (owned by Palm Beach County) are examples of district parks which offer different activities but intrinsically serve a broader community and purpose. **Photos highlight athletic fields at Miller Park**

Special Facilities Park: The special use classification covers a broad range of parks and facilities oriented towards a single-purpose use, such as, the municipal beach, golf courses and the cemetery. Other facilities such as cultural facilities, marine facilities, greenways and linear parks and preserve areas are also incorporated within the special facilities parks category. **Photos Delray Beach Golf Course**

Cultural Facilities: The City's cultural facilities are the Cason Cottage, the Delray Beach Center for the Arts at Old School Square, the Sandoway Discovery Center and the SD

Spady Cultural Arts Museum. **Photos SD Spady Cultural Arts Museum and Sandoway Discovery Center**

Boat and Marine Facilities: Delray Beach waterfront assets include the municipal beach, the Intracoastal Waterway, several lakes and canals. The promotion of recreation and marine facilities is a major priority of the city's park system. These facilities include the City Marina, and boat/marine access facilities located at Knowles Park, Lakeview Park and Mangrove Park. **Photos Knowles Park (boating)**

Greenway/Linear Parks: These parks are primarily located along the streets and provide interest, public art and unique landscape features. Four greenway/linear parks are located within the City and include the I-95 Gateway Parks, the Martin Luther King Drive Public Plaza, Pioneer Park and the Beach Promenade, which is also incorporated within the municipal beach. **Photos I-95 and Atlantic Avenue**

Preserve Area Parks: Preserve Area Parks are natural areas protected for their environmental or ecological value and preserved and managed for conservation purposes. Improvements are usually limited to the provision of nature trails. The Delray Oaks Preserve (owned by Palm Beach County), Lake Ida Open Space, Leon Weekes Environmental Preserve and the Donnelly Tract are four Preserve Area Parks within the City of Delray Beach. **Photos Leon Weekes Environmental Preserve**

**Table OSR-2
Inventory of Recreation Facilities by Functional Classification**

Neighborhood Parks				
NW 13 th Ave	0.3 Ac		Merritt Park	3.9 Ac
Bexley Trail	11.0 Ac		Mike Machek Boy Scout Park	4.8 Ac
Carver Square	0.2 Ac		Oakmont Park	1.4 Ac
Cornell Park	3.5 Ac		Orchard View Park	5.9 Ac
Currie Commons	3.1 Ac		Pine Grove	4.7 Ac
Del Ida Park	0.1 Ac		Plumosa Park	2.9 Ac
Eagle Park	3.7 Ac		Rev. J.W.H. Thomas Jr. Park	0.35 Ac
Fern Court Park	0.09 Ac		Rosemont Park	0.3 Ac
La Hacienda Garden Park	0.3 Ac		Sunshine Park	0.3 Ac
Libby Wesley Park	0.2Ac		Worthing Park	0.3 Ac
Community Parks				
505 Teen Center	1.6 Ac		Family Recreation and Fitness Center Playground	6.7 Ac
Barwick Park	9.6 Ac		Old School Square Park	1.3 Ac
Catherine Strong Park	9.8 Ac		Pompey Park	13.9 Ac
Community Center/Tennis Center	9.9 Ac		Veterans Park	4.2 Ac
Delray Swim and Tennis Club	5.5 Ac			
District Parks				
Aqua Crest Swimming (owned by Palm Beach County)	2.7 Ac		Robert P. Miller Park	32.8 Ac
Lake Ida Park West & Dog Park (owned by Palm Beach County)	109.3 Ac		Seacrest Soccer/Hilltopper (acreage includes the school facility)	35.3 Ac
Lake Ida East & Playhouse (owned by Palm Beach County)	2.42 Ac			
Special Facilities				
Anchor Park	2.5 Ac		Ingraham Park	0.8
Atlantic Dunes	7.0 Ac		Lakeview Golf Course	41.2 Ac
Delray Beach Golf Club	159.8 Ac		Municipal Beach (including the Beach Promenade)	23.0 Ac
Delray Beach Memorial Gardens	29.1 Ac		Sandoway Park Sarah Gleason Park	1.67 Ac Unknown

Table OSR-2 Inventory of Recreation Facilities by Functional Classification				
Cultural Facilities				
Cason Cottage	0.76 Ac		Sandoway Discovery Center (acreage includes Sandoway Park)	1.67Ac
Delray Beach Center For the Arts at Old School Square	3.67 Ac		SD Spady Cultural Arts Museum	0.15 Ac
Boat Marine/Facilities				
City Marina	2 Ac		Lakeview Park	3.5 Ac
Knowles Park	3 Ac		Mangrove Park	5.0 Ac
Greenway/Linear Parks				
I-95 Gateway Parks	1.4 Ac		Pioneer Park	1.17 Ac
MLK Drive Public Plaza (included in right-of-way)	Unknown			
Preserve/Natural Area Parks				
Delray Oaks Preserve (owned by Palm Beach County)	24.4 Ac		Lake Ida Open Space	5.05 Ac
Donnelly Tract Preservation	1.63 Ac		Leon M. Weekes Environmental Preserve	12.4 Ac

Recreation Facilities Inventory

Within recreation areas, amenities and facilities are provided to meet the demand for leisure opportunities for all segments of the community. Besides facilities provided by the City and County (Table OSR-3), numerous recreational amenities are provided by local schools (Table OSR-4) and by private residential developments (Table OSR-5).

With the expansion of the City during the 1970's when much of Delray Beach's residential growth occurred west of I-95, the residential development pattern during that period, consisted of planned communities. These communities provided some or all of the recreational needs of their residents. Swimming pools, tennis courts, racquetball courts, shuffleboards courts, and exercise rooms, were common. Today, these private facilities complements the city-owned parks facilities within the western communities.

**TABLE 0SR-3
INVENTORY OF PUBLIC RECREATION FACILITIES**

FACILITIES	SWIMMING	GOLF COURSE	FISHING AREA	BOAT RAMP	TRAILS	PICNIC SHELTER/GAZEBO/PAVILION	PICNIC AREA	RESTROOMS	SWIMMING POOL (LARGE)	SWIMMING POOL (SMALL)	CLUBHOUSE/RECREATION CENTER/GYM	SHUFFLEBOARD	TENNIS (ul)	TENNIS (i)	RACQUETBALL/HANDBALL	BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL/SOCCER (ul)	FOOTBALL/SOCCER (i)	BASEBALL FIELD (ul)	BASEBALL FIELD (i)	SOFTBALL FIELD (ul)	SOFTBALL FIELD (i)	LITTLE LEAGUE (ul)	LITTLE LEAGUE (i)	PLAYGROUND	VOLLEYBALL	PICKLEBALL		
Merritt Park								1									1		1				1	1					
Mike Machek Boy Scout Park					1	1		1			1													1					
Municipal Golf Course		1				1		4			1																		
Municipal Beach			2			3		2																			5		
NW 13th Avenue Park																											1		
Oakmont Park								1																			1		
Old School Square Park					1	1		1																			1		
Orchard View Park					1	6		1																			1		
Pine Grove Park								1																			1		
Plumosa Park																			1										
Pompey Park & Pool						2	1	3	1		3			2	2	4			1					1	1	1	1		
Rev. J.W.H. Thomas Jr. Park								1																			1		
Robert P. Miller Park						1		3									2		2		1		3	1			1		
Rosemont Park					1																						1		
Seacreat Soccer & Hilltopper Stadium								2			1						3												
Sunshine Park					1																								
Veterans Park			1			2	1	1			1	16													1		1		
Western Community Center											1																1		
Worthing Park								1																					
TOTAL	2	2	8	6	16	32	20	44	1	1	18	16	2	47	2	8	2	7	2	3	3	8	25	7	3	8	25	7	3

**TABLE 0SR-4B
INVENTORY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL RECREATION FACILITIES**

FACILITIES	SWIMMING	GOLF COURSE	FISHING AREA	BOAT RAMP	TRAILS	PICNIC SHELTER/GAZEBO/PAVILION	PICNIC AREA	RESTROOMS	SWIMMING POOL (LARGE)	SWIMMING POOL (SMALL)	CLUBHOUSE/RECREATION CENTER/GYM	SHUFFLEBOARD	TENNIS (u)	TENNIS (i)	RACQUETBALL/HANDBALL	BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL/SOCCER (u)	FOOTBALL/SOCCER (i)	BASEBALL FIELD (u)	BASEBALL FIELD (i)	SOFTBALL FIELD (u)	SOFTBALL FIELD (i)	LITTLE LEAGUE (u)	LITTLE LEAGUE (i)	PLAYGROUND	VOLLEYBALL	PICKLEBALL
Atlantic High						1		1			1					2	1	1	1	1							
Banyan Creek							1													2					1		
Carver Middle					1						1		4	4	4	4	1	1	1		1					1	
Orchard View																1									1		
Pine Grove Elementary											1														1		
Plumosa School of the Arts						1			1		1					2									1		
Spady Elementary School																									1		
Village Academy																1									1		
TOTAL					1	2		2	1		4			8	4	10	1	1	1	3	1	1			6		4

Table OSR-5

INVENTORY OF PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES

FACILITIES	SWIMMING	GOLF COURSE	FISHING AREA	BOAT RAMP	TRAILS	PICNIC SHELTER/GAZEBO/PAVILION	PICNIC AREA	RESTROOMS	SWIMMING POOL (LARGE)	SWIMMING POOL (SMALL)	CLUBHOUSE/RECREATION CENTER/GYM	SHUFFLEBOARD	TENNIS (UL)	TENNIS (I)	RACQUETBALL/HANDBALL	BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL/SOCCER (UI)	FOOTBALL/SOCCER (I)	BASEBALL FIELD (UI)	BASEBALL FIELD (I)	SOFTBALL FIELD (UI)	SOFTBALL FIELD (I)	PLAYGROUND	VOLLEYBALL	PICKLEBALL
BERMUDA HIGH CONDO								1		1															
BERMUDA HIGH SOUTH CONDO								1		1															
BERMUDA HIGH WEST CONDO								1		1															
BEXLEY PARK										1	1														
CANNERY ROW						1		1		1												1			
CASA LA BRISA								1		1													1		
CASA PLAYA								1		1															
CASPIAN										1															
CAROLINA VILLAGE								1		1															
CHATEAU WOODS								1		1			1												
CHURCHILL CONDO								1		1															
CITATION CLUB								1		1	1		2												
CITY WALK								1		1															
CLEARBROOKE								1		1	1														
COCONUT KEY								1		1	1												1		

Table OSR-5

INVENTORY OF PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES

FACILITIES	SWIMMING	GOLF COURSE	FISHING AREA	BOAT RAMP	TRAILS	PICNIC SHELTER/GAZEBO/PAVILION	PICNIC AREA	RESTROOMS	SWIMMING POOL (LARGE)	SWIMMING POOL (SMALL)	CLUBHOUSE/RECREATION CENTER/GYM	SHUFFLEBOARD	TENNIS (UL)	TENNIS (I)	RACQUETBALL/HANDBALL	BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL/SOCCER (UI)	FOOTBALL/SOCCER (I)	BASEBALL FIELD (UI)	BASEBALL FIELD (I)	SOFTBALL FIELD (UI)	SOFTBALL FIELD (I)	PLAYGROUND	VOLLEYBALL	PICKLEBALL
HAMILTON PLACE							1	1		1															
HAMMOCK RESERVE							1	1		1	1														
HARBOURSIDE				1			1	1		1			1												
HARBOUR EDGE							1	1		1	1														
DELRAY HARBOR CLUB							1	1		1															
HAMILTON PLACE							1	1		1			2												
WINDY CREEK							1	1		1															
HAMILTON HOUSE							1	7		7		42	4									2			
HIGH POINT						1		1		1	5											1			
HIGHLAND GROVE ESTATES							1	1		1		4													
HIGHLAND TRAILER PARK							1	1		1															
HIGHLANDS							1	1		1		3													
IMPERIAL VILLAS							1	1		1	1														
JARDIN DEL MAR							1	1		1												1			
KUKOMO KEY							1	1		1	1												1		1

Table OSR-5

INVENTORY OF PRIVATE RECREATION FACILITIES

FACILITIES	SWIMMING	GOLF COURSE	FISHING AREA	BOAT RAMP	TRAILS	PICNIC SHELTER/GAZEBO/PAVILION	PICNIC AREA	RESTROOMS	SWIMMING POOL (LARGE)	SWIMMING POOL (SMALL)	CLUBHOUSE/RECREATION CENTER/GYM	SHUFFLEBOARD	TENNIS (UL)	TENNIS (I)	RACQUETBALL/HANDBALL	BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL/SOCCER (UI)	FOOTBALL/SOCCER (I)	BASEBALL FIELD (UI)	BASEBALL FIELD (I)	SOFTBALL FIELD (UI)	SOFTBALL FIELD (I)	PLAYGROUND	VOLLEYBALL	PICKLEBALL
VILLAGE SQUARE PHASE I						1		1			1	1													
VILLAGE SQUARE PHASE II							1	1	1	1	1			1									1		
WATER'S EDGE							1	2	1	1	1			2				1					1		
WATERFORD PARK								1	1	1	1														
TOTAL		3	3	5	2	8	20	153	1	174	58	122	124	9	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	34	0	0

Future Parkland Supply

Delray Beach has been a mature City for some time, with just 1.1% of the City's land area currently vacant. Coupled with the anticipated growth in population to 76,054 by 2035 and the pressure for future development, opportunities for the City to acquire large areas of additional parkland will become increasingly difficult. Several initiatives should be undertaken to further opportunities for the expansion of the park system.

Utilization of City-Owned Properties: The adaptive re-use of city-owned properties provides great potential for meeting future recreation needs. Maintaining existing city-owned parcels for parkland uses must remain a high priority.

Land Donations and Dedications: The City remains open to and continues to pursue opportunities for expanding its parkland through the donation of land. The benefits of such acquisitions must be evaluated in terms of the population to be served, accessibility, development and maintenance costs. Donations should also be explored as an alternative to mitigation. The dedication of land either via easements or the rights-of-way can be truly effective in the expansion of trails and greenway corridors.

Impact Fees: The City currently imposes an impact fee for developments that create a demand on public services and facilities. The City's policy for evaluation of park impacts addresses both residential and hotel developments. As the entire community enjoys the benefits of a well-developed and maintained park system, expansion of the park impact fee beyond residential and hotel developments should be considered.

Creating Multi-Purpose Parks and Facilities: Expansion of recreation experiences is not restricted to obtaining new parkland area. Renovation of existing facilities to accommodate multiple park experiences provides efficient uses of limited resources. All city parks should be designed to encourage family-centered activities that appeal to both youth and adults. This multi-generational approach will join all ages in a shared appreciation for natural open space areas and reduce the need to duplicate facilities.

Parks and Recreation Programming

The City provides a comprehensive array of programmed activities throughout its parks and recreation facilities. While some programs are offered year round, others are seasonal. These programmed activities include all ages ranging from infants and tots to adults, and the elderly to meet the physical, social, cultural, educational, and health expectations of city residents and visitors. Physical activities are primarily accommodated through indoor gyms, outdoor athletic fields, tennis courts, pickle ball courts, swimming pools, golf courses.

Delray Beach's Parks and Recreation program is also centered around water related recreation activities. The natural resources of the ocean, waterways, canals and lakes provide recreational opportunities for boating, fishing, diving and swimming for city residents and visitors. The Parks and Recreation Department manages the Delray Marina facility located along the Intracoastal Waterway. Knowles Park, Mangrove Park and

Lakeview Park are equipped with boat ramps which provide boat access to the Intracoastal Waterway and Lake Ida.

Other programmed activities include health and exercise programs, such as aerobics, aquatic fitness to martial arts and dance; educational activities including the “The Out of School Program”, homework assistance and computer lab programs; and civic programs like the DREAM Youth Council and GFWC Women’s Club of Delray Beach Inc. which promotes volunteer services.

Cultural activities featuring “the arts,” such as acrylics art classes and interactive acoustic music and art in the park offer social interactions through the occurrence of planned city events.

The Parks and Recreation Department provides support for the City’s Public Art program. Public art is increasingly being used to create a sense of place, identity, and interest the community. Widespread support exists within the community to expand this program, which is supported by national trends:

“One way communities are attracting people to particular settings is to include public art as a part of the landscape. Public art is essentially defined by its location in a public place, whether it is indoors or outdoors. Some suggest public art may be one of a community’s most overlooked and underappreciated cultural resources. However, the aforementioned Knight Foundation survey found Philadelphia residents ranked viewing public art as the second most popular activity in the city, beating hiking, jogging and biking.

Public art can help give identity to a community and become a symbol of that place. Iconic public art pieces have the potential to attract tourists and indirectly contribute to the local economy. Tourists who come to experience public artwork may spend the night at a local hotel, eat in local restaurants and buy souvenirs. According to a 2014 study by Americans for the Arts, tourists seeking cultural experiences typically spend more money than tourists who do not. For this reason, many communities, both large and small, are developing public art programs as an economic development strategy.”
Source: NPRA Making Small Towns Special: How to Afford Public Art September 1, 2016.

The continued changes in population, lifestyle and trends require innovative planning to maintain a recreation program that meets the expectations of the citizens. This is evident where the destinations of programmed activities are increasingly being accommodated at various venues within the community rather than at a singular location. Technological advances must be incorporated to provide opportunities for creating new park experiences as well as a tool to distribute information and educate the citizens and visitors about the parks and recreation programs offered.

Management and Stewardship

As a steward of public land, recreation and cultural facilities, the City must manage with a goal of efficiency, equitable access, and providing a long term public benefit. Management and stewardship includes maintenance of existing developed parks and facilities, as well as natural areas. Successful management requires a commitment from City employees, the public, and elected representatives to plan and secure operating funds necessary to maintain park sites, structures, and systems at the highest quality for their expected life cycle. Additionally, new capital development projects for renovation of existing facilities and replacement of facilities when life-cycles are over should be planned and funded to ensure continuity of the assets.

A comprehensive analysis of the Parks and Recreation program was undertaken in 2002 with the adoption of the “City of Delray Beach Parks and Recreation System Master Plan.” An updated inventory of 13 parks and facilities that focused on four community centers, aquatic facilities and athletic fields was undertaken beginning in 2016. “The Parks and Recreation Parks Master Plan Update,” December 2017, provided a vision for the development and renovation of park and facilities to accommodate future population changes, new trends and addresses the expectations of the residents.

The City of Delray Parks Master Plan recommends improvements to several parks and recreational facilities that would create multi-functional use of space. The Master Plan identifies that the Community Center with its gym, lacks smaller spaces for small group activities, fitness rooms for group exercise, fitness equipment rooms with weights and cardio equipment, meeting rooms, and classrooms facilitating opportunities for several activities to be accommodated simultaneously. Improvements required to extend the park experience and create multi-usage, do not necessarily require extensive renovation and may be limited to inclusion of a new playground or fitness trail. Implementing the improvements proposed in the Master Plan Update will result in a more efficient delivery of services but will require significant capital expenditures and commitment by the City.

Park Safety: Park Safety is crucial to a successful parks and recreation program. The type of physical design in and around parks can either create a risk factor for crime or a protective factor for park visitors. Narrow pedestrian paths located between dense planting; dense shrubs that block the view of the park from streets or residences; secluded and unmonitored pedestrian routes that accommodate misuse; and inadequate lighting increases the apprehension of park users. The design of the City’s parks as well as the area leading to the park shall be evaluated to ensure that amenities and landscaping are carefully incorporated and enhance safety. Other design features such as the provision of covered areas, to protect park users from inclement weather and lightening also improves safety. Engagement of the community and their participation as stewards in maintaining the cleanliness of the parks will also improve park safety.

Best Management Practices:

Municipalities often approach park safety planning by removing all amenities such as shade and seating, but these types of strategies reduce the quality of public spaces. Park safety planning is multi-disciplinary. It includes appropriate design, programming, maintenance, and citizen involvement—all of which activate the space, to serve as the community asset it was designed to be. Park managers should begin with a safety audit of perceived risks in a given park, as well a review of design, operations and programming. Safe parks should meet the needs of users, be diverse and interesting, connect people and place, and leave park visitors with a positive experience. Park planning for safety should select the appropriate location for amenities and activities, activate the space with regular users, be visually interesting, provide clear sightlines, and involve residents in the design process (Source: “Creating Safe Park Environments to Enhance Community Wellness,” National Recreation and Park Association, No Date).

Green Infrastructure: The integration of conservation and sustainability practices must be incorporated with the management program of the park system. Green infrastructure is multifunctional: it functions as part of an open space network and it provides storm water management through natural processes. In parks and open space planning, incorporating green infrastructure to include practices such as expanding tree canopy percentage by maintaining the preservation of stands and clusters of mature trees, utilizing green space for water retention and storage, and constructing bio swales, must be considered.

The open areas available within some parks provide new opportunities for increased sustainability efforts through the development of community gardens. The community orchard garden within the Catherine Strong Park is an innovative example of utilizing public-private partnership in the development of a community garden for the benefit of the surrounding residents. Community gardens should be encouraged and new partnerships explored for their development and maintenance.

Public-Private Partnership: The Parks and Recreation Department must engage other community partners, including religious and social organizations to join in the effort to provide leisure programs and activities for the community as a whole. Through the development such partnerships resources such as athletic fields and meeting rooms may be available for city events.

Level of Service (LOS)

The City has traditionally utilized a citywide (per capita) level of service (LOS) standard for parkland acreage. The amount of land currently provided in activity based recreation facilities, the municipal beaches, and the two public golf courses, represented a level of service of 6.2 acres per 1,000 residents, based on population data from 2015.

While these measurement techniques help to ensure a commitment to maintaining adequate parkland and facilities, they do not measure equitable access to the inherent park experiences expected by the citizens.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO THE PARK SYSTEM

The City of Delray Beach is committed to the provision of high quality parks, natural areas and recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of all residents. To achieve this goal, equitable access must be provided to its residents of all ages, physical and developmental abilities, all income levels and all ethnic and cultural groups.

Meeting these expectations does not inherently require the provision of all park types to be accommodated within every neighborhood. A community park geared to serve a broader segment of the city or a special facility, such as the Old School Square Center for the Arts, designed to serve the entire city and beyond could not be provided in every neighborhood. Equity in access is promoted when park designs, locations and recreational activities remove barriers and allow adequate provision of park facilities and programs for all residents.

Connectivity and Access

“Long distances to parks are a deterrent of park use. Research demonstrates that people who have easy access to parks are 47 percent more likely to walk at the daily-recommended level than those who do not have easy access. While long distances from parks is a clear barrier to walkability, lack of physical infrastructure is also a deterrent to park use”. Source National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Publication: Safe Routes to Parks. Disconnected streets and a lack of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings present difficulties for pedestrians, deterring walking to parks.

A recurring theme during the public input process was the need to better connect existing recreational opportunities with schools and neighborhoods in order to improve the overall quality and access to recreation opportunities. Improved connectivity and access will reduce unnecessary duplication of resources, avoid deficits, resulting in better connected parks and open spaces areas, thereby providing healthier and more vibrant communities.

Not including the private residential communities that contain their own open space and recreation facilities, the remaining area citywide is significantly served with either a public open space and recreation facility or a school (recreation) facility within ¼ mile radius (Map OSR-2 -5 Minute Walk Radius with Bus Routes, Sidewalks and Schools).

Continued attention must be focused on the areas of the community that are close to parks and open space areas but have unsafe access, which hinders connectivity between the park facilities and the surrounding neighborhoods that they are intended to serve.

The Set Transformation Plan highlights this scenario and the unique opportunity that Delray Beach possesses for improving connectivity through in its street grid systems and states. “With its street grid system, alleys and mature tree canopies, The Set lends itself to an ideal neighborhood for a neighborhood bicycle trail network. While the City does not currently have an adopted citywide bicycle master plan, The Set Transformation Plan identifies opportunities to better connect destinations within the area and its surrounding neighborhoods. The Plan identifies NW/SW 8th Avenue, NW/SW 12th Avenue, NE 2nd

Street and SE 2nd Street as designated ped-bicycle routes. The alley, while currently functioning informally as alternate pedestrian and bicycle routes should also be integrated into the network through appropriate signage”. Source: The Set Transformation Plan, November 2017.

As the City implements its adopted complete street policy, street improvements that include the provision of sidewalks and bike lanes are programmed, connectivity to park facilities must be included.

Expansion of the park and open space experience can also be accomplished by the use of trails and greenways. A well planned trail system can connect public parks, lengthen and enhance experiences, and provide a viable source for alternative transportation within and between communities.

The development of a greenway corridor connecting parks, schools and other destinations must be explored. Delray Beach’s waterways, canals system and lakes provide natural features that could be enhanced to create interconnected scenic routes for pedestrians and bicyclists. The location of canals, which traverse the city from north to south and from west to east lend themselves to natural trails, which could be extended to interconnect with larger open spaces areas, such as the Lakeview and the Delray Golf Club golf courses, the Lake Ida Park, the Delray Oaks Preserve and other city parks and open spaces. These canals are under the jurisdiction of the South Florida Water Management District and the Lake Worth Drainage District. The fulfillment of this goal will require intensive coordination and collaboration with these agencies, the identification of funding sources including grants for these improvements and employing resources from private and non-profit entities.

Quick fact check Source: Trust for America’s Health

Every \$1 spent on biking trails and walking paths could save approximately \$3 in medical expenses.

- American Heart Association

Equity in Parks Provision

The City of Delray Beach parks and recreational facilities coupled with the provision of private recreational facilities provides a comprehensive park and recreation network for all residents. In evaluating equity in the provision of parks, several indicators were assessed, including population groups under 18, and over 65 ages, income levels and ethnic and cultural groups.

Age and Access

A core goal of the Parks and Recreation program is the provision of investments in park facilities and programs to promote a healthy community by providing access to open space and recreation activities for all age groups. Universally, health disparities due to the lack of access to open space and recreational activities are especially high amongst seniors and children. The proximity of parks and recreation facilities were mapped with respect to residences with children under 18 years of age and seniors over 65. Within the “children under 18” age group, Map OSR-3 “Open Space and Recreational Facilities in Proximity to Children Younger than 18 Years” shows the highest concentration of youth is located within The Set. This geographic area has several neighborhood parks, two community parks (Pompey Park and the Catherine Center Splash Park), a cultural facility (the SD Spady Cultural Arts Museum) and gateway linear parks.

The City has a recreation facility specifically programmed for youth activities which is housed at the 505 Teen Center and Skate Park. This community park serves the youths of the entire city and is equipped with basketball courts, benches, bicycle rack, drinking fountain, game rooms, meeting room, recording studio, recreation center, restrooms, skate park, vending machines and houses the Youth Council.

As the baby boomer generation, which marked the sharpest period of population growth in our nation’s history, begins to settle into retirement, the 65 and older population comprises a significant segment of Delray Beach’s population. Active lifestyles are equally as important for this age group as they are for youth, and strategies must be developed to ensure that this age group maintains an active and healthy lifestyle. Throughout the City, the areas with higher concentrations of older adults generally have access to parks and recreational facilities which are largely provided within their private residential communities (Map OSR-4 Facilities in Proximity to Adults 65 +). The duplication of city facilities and resources within areas that are already served by private amenities would be an ineffective use of resources. Consideration must be given as to how best to continue to serve this population. Creative solutions, such as partnering with private communities to utilize their existing facilities for new recreational programs may be more effective than constructing new city-owned facilities in these areas.

Similar to the city-owned recreation facility provided for the youth, the City has an adult-oriented recreational facility managed by the Mae Volen organization, located at The Family Recreation and Fitness Center Playground campus. During the park planning process, design criteria shall ensure that improvements to existing City parks and recreation facilities continue to incorporate amenities that serve the specific needs of this age group.

Best Management Practice: Age-friendly Parks (Case Study). The Philadelphia Corporation for Aging conducted a study on components of an age-friendly city. Despite an extensive park system, seniors in the city do not visit parks regularly—either from lack of access to a nearby public recreation area, concerns with safety, mobility concerns, or lack of shade. A senior-friendly park should ensure:

- There is accessible, sheltered, well-marked public transportation to the park.
- Sidewalks are free of obstructions, wide enough for wheelchairs and have curb cuts.
- There are plenty of shaded areas and paths to avoid overexposure to heat and the sun.
- All stairways feature a railing.
- Public toilets (outdoors and indoors) are sufficient in number, clean, well-maintained, and accessible.
- All signage in the park is large enough with clear lettering.
- Programming is designed with particular age groups in mind and conducted at suitable time.

(Source: "Laying the Foundation for an Age-friendly Philadelphia: A Progress Report," Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, 2011)

Ethnic and Cultural Groups and Access

Delray Beach is a diverse community. Map OSR -5 provides a snapshot of the location of current park and recreation facilities with respect to the location of minority groups. The areas with the highest concentration of minority populations are within The Set, the west Lake Ida Road/Military Trail area and the north Linton Boulevard Area between Congress Avenue and the E-4 Canal.

Within The Set geographic area, numerous parks and recreation facilities are provided; however, constraints with respect to access and connectivity exist. These facilities are older and some exhibit signs of deterioration. The City Parks Master Plan Update has identified four park facilities within The Set for renovations and improvements: The Community Center, Pompey Park Catherine Strong Park and Merritt Park.

The communities within the west Lake Ida Road/ Military Trail area and the north Linton Boulevard Area between Congress Avenue and the E-4 Canal have limited public park facilities. This area remains a challenge for the city to provide additional parks and recreation facilities as it is already developed.

Income and Access.

Map OSR-6 depicts the location of Open Space and Recreation facilities in Delray Beach in relation to their distance from households portrayed by per capita income. The map does not reveal a disparity in the provision of parks and recreation facilities for those households that have lower incomes than those that have the highest incomes. Delray Beach's Parks and Recreation program has been successful with the broad span of providing facilities in all income sectors of the city.

Disabilities and Access.

Equity also involves ensuring appropriate accessibility for children and adults with physical or developmental disabilities. Great efforts must be made in future planning efforts to improve park infrastructure features that are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Park improvements projects should implement the removal of physical barriers and reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure that facilities, programs and services are accessible to all city residents. It is important to note, accessibility also requires that programs shall

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION FRAMEWORK

The Knight Foundation Soul of the Community Initiative identified a range of community characteristics that lead to citizen attachment to a community. Attachment is a function of perception of social offerings, openness, and aesthetics. High positive perceptions of the availability of arts and cultural opportunities; social community events; parks, playgrounds, and trails; and a physically beautiful place increases community attachment. And high levels of community attachment are directly linked to the growth of the local economy (Source: Knight Foundation, 2010).

The Parks and Recreation Department's mission aligns with this philosophy: *"The City of Delray Beach Parks and Recreation Department will enrich the quality of life for the people of Delray Beach by providing significant recreational opportunities in exemplary park environments."*

In keeping with its mission, the City of Delray Beach exemplary parks and recreation program has been the recipient of several awards and recognition. The City Beach Patrol was rated first in the State in 1999, and the Ocean Rescue competition team placed first in the 2000 US Lifesaving Association's Southeast Regional Competition. In 2017, the City was recognized for the second time by KaBOOM!, a national non-profit dedicated to providing children (particularly those in families of low-income) access to play through advocacy and funding, for its excellence in providing play spaces in underserved communities. In 2013, the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association, Delray Beach was presented with the "Best Restored Beach" award and has been designated as a Blue Wave Beach by the Clean Beached Council for its cleanliness and well-managed environment.

The following highlight key points are considered in Delray Beach's parks and recreation planning efforts:

- Park design and policies should welcome all users to public recreational spaces.
- The community must be actively engaged in the planning of parks and amenities.
- Park maintenance is critical to successful recreation programming. Adequate maintenance ensures that the physical appeal of the park is maintained over time.

The City of Delray Beach vision aspires to create the highest quality recreation opportunities for its residents of all ages and backgrounds and has developed a multi-faceted approach that involves five primary steps:

1. **Identify Citizens Expectations:** Expand public outreach events to all segments of the community to be informed of what the citizens want within parks.
2. **Park Lands and Facilities Development** Develop long-range master plans to ensure the provision of quality park system, and recreation programs for the entire community that accommodates population increases and trends.
3. **Promote Park Usage:** Facilitate active marketing campaigns, to ensure high citizen usage of park land and recreation programs.
4. **Prioritize Park Improvements and Funding:** Categorize future improvements where the benefits exceed the investment and capture new funding sources.
5. **Expanding Public-Private Partnerships:** Explore new strategies to invite the private and non-profit sectors and neighborhood associations to be active participants in expanding recreation opportunities.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION NEEDS & RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of the Always Delray Comprehensive Plan update process, the City conducted a public workshop on November 3, 2016 to discuss the Coastal Management & Conservation and Open Space & Recreation elements. The Open Space and Recreation subgroup of the Always Delray Play Steering Committee also provided valuable feedback. The needs and recommendations provided below are based on both public input, subject matter feedback, existing conditions analysis, and best practice information.

Park Lands and Facilities

The City of Delray Beach aspires to maintain a system of parks that meet resident interests, specifically the need for an adequate supply of active recreation facilities, conservation and passive facilities, and, improved access to waterways, lakes and beaches for all residents. In addition, the City desires to provide urban open spaces and downtown civic spaces that provide a place for residents and visitors to sit, eat and congregate. To adequately plan parklands and facilities, the City must consider the following as a list of priorities: acquisition of additional lands that are suitable for recreation; provision of various park types (size and amenities) throughout the City; increased emphasis on educating residents about the health and environmental benefits of recreation activities; and, establishing connected park amenities and greenways.

Recommendation (Facilities and Land Acquisition):

- Develop a program to establish parkland areas to enhance the visual appeal of neighborhoods and to provide additional areas for community interaction. Ideally, this program would include identification of vacant or surplus parcels and strategies to assure that the neighborhood determines the parameters of the park. Participation of existing neighborhood associations should be required.
- Work with the Delray Beach Community Redevelopment Agency to identify agency-owned properties that would be suitable and appropriate for park development.
- Encourage endowments and donations for open space and recreation facilities.
- Explore opportunities for preserving natural areas.

Recommendation (Creative Open Space):

- Develop a program to use open spaces, such as parking lots and water retention areas for temporary sports activities.
- Explore locations for bio-swales, including their use in pocket parks as part of a flood-control management system.
- Be creative about greening of unused spaces, such as alleyways.
- Explore suitable locations for urban agriculture and community gardens for youth and adults.
- Develop a municipal inventory of residual spaces that are appropriate for parklets, and develop design guidelines to guide the use of the space.

Recommendation (Tree Canopy):

- Expand tree canopy within parks and other recreation locations to improve community health benefits, reduce heat islands, and encourage conservation effort. Prioritize expanding the tree canopy within the public rights-of-way in areas that are largely developed with few opportunities to establish new parks and open space.

Recommendation (Connectivity & Greenways):

- Develop and improve an interconnected network for pedestrians and bicyclists to link recreation facilities, neighborhoods, and schools. This network would make use of existing resources where possible, such as, alleyways and canal rights-of-way detailed as linear parks and greenways. The network could be a strolling and biking destination, separate from the street system, which could take advantage of natural areas and views.
- Improve the visibility of parks, both through wayfinding and through communications and marketing.

Recreation Programs for the Entire Community

The City of Delray Beach should evaluate park designs and programming for their suitability to accommodate a diverse mix of users.

Recommendation:

- Evaluate parks in terms of age-friendly features such as connectivity, adequate shade, and sufficient seating.
- Create diverse opportunities for recreation for older adults.
- Expand fitness stations at parks and trails
- Add community gardening and associated activities to the City's parks and recreation spectrum.
- Dedicate a specific portion of the City's capital improvements budget to park upgrades related to accessibility amenities.
- Support accessibility for disabled individuals by incorporating special programs.
- Support and expand bicycle safety education programs offered by the Palm Beach County Schools, Palm Beach Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and other agencies for both children and adults.
- Provide "Little Free Libraries" in City parks to increase access to reading materials for all ages.

Efficient Administration, Operations, and Maintenance

Recommendation:

- Conduct safety audits of perceived risks in a given park, as well as a review of design, operations and programming.
- Encourage the establishment of community-based leisure and recreation programming by continuing to provide non-profit organizations, who offer youth recreation, conservation and nature based educational programs, and mentoring, facilities space.
- Improve partnerships with the School District to increase access to public schools' recreation facilities.
- Encourage non-profit organizations recreation development through incubator spaces.
- Encourage other community partners, including religious and social organizations, to join in the effort to provide leisure programs and activities for the community as a whole. Develop a policy for joint use agreements.
- Expand the outreach and marketing of the parks, through new social media platforms and better way-finding signage