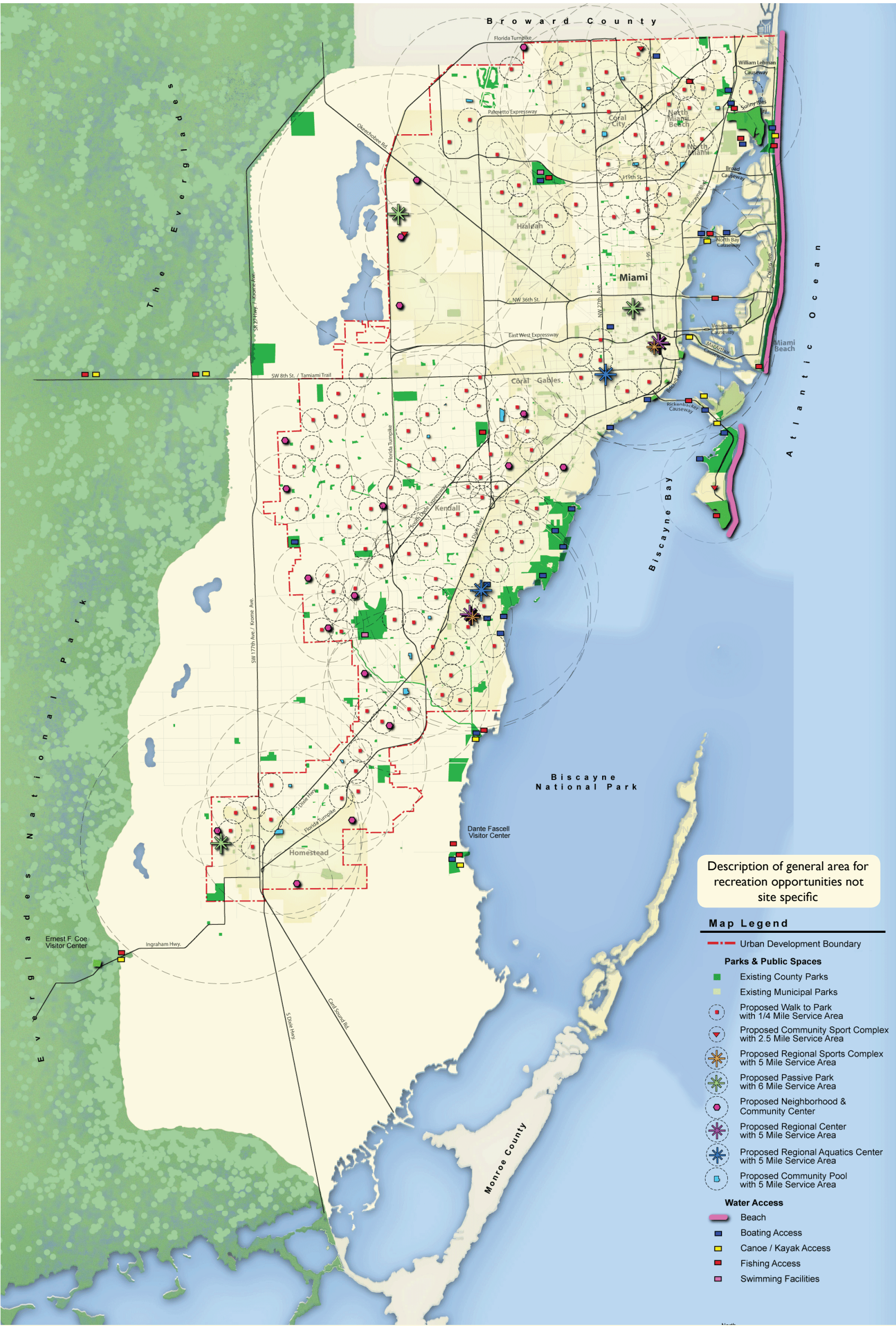


Great Parks Vision

This map illustrates the approximate locations of new parks and open spaces within the Urban Development Boundary to achieve “Equitable Access” to parks and open spaces in accordance with the new “Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria”. (next page)



A STRATEGY FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS AND DISTRIBUTION

Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria

As discussed previously, Miami-Dade County has a great existing Parks System, currently comprised of over 250 parks and over 12,000 acres of land. Additionally, the County's 35 municipalities also own and manage hundreds of other parks and recreation areas. As the County and municipalities have grown, however, the location of these facilities has resulted, in part, in an inequitable distribution of facilities and programs throughout the County. Some residents can walk or bicycle to a nearby park or community center, for example, while others have to drive for miles to get to a similar facility. The Vision for the County's Parks System emphasizes **equitable access for every resident**, rather than the traditional measure of a certain number of County-wide park acres or facilities per County resident.

The first measure of "equitable access" is the absence of barriers to existing parks and recreation facilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment and transportation. To this end Miami-Dade County must continually evaluate each of its existing park and recreation facilities to identify and address any "deficiencies" or barriers to access. This evaluation also includes the presence or absence of sidewalks, bicycle paths or lanes and transit service to each park and facility; many residents cannot drive, or do not have access to an automobile. Additionally, a reduced dependency on automobiles is a key element of the Vision for a more sustainable community.

The second measure of equitable access is the distance people have to walk, bicycle or drive to participate in the daily or weekly activities generally associated with **local (neighborhood) parks and open space**. Residents should be able to safely participate in the following activities close to home:

- Walk for fun or exercise
- Walk the dog
- Ride a bike for fun or exercise
- Sit outside to read, contemplate or meet friends
- Play with other kids on a playground
- Play a game of catch or Frisbee
- Picnic and/or sun bathe on a lawn
- Play pick-up sports or practice baseball, soccer, football, skateboard, basketball, tennis, racquetball or other sports
- Exercise, attend classes, lectures, social functions
- Swim



The Parks and Open Space Vision proposes that every resident has equitable access to these basic activities, and that every neighborhood within the County in time should be upgraded if necessary – to meet residents' needs. The type of facilities required to meet these needs may vary according to context. A resident living in a high rise condominium in an urban area may walk on local streets and sidewalks, for example, while a resident in suburban Miami-Dade County may walk on a trail at a nearby Community Park. Similarly, a rural resident may play catch in someone's large rural yard, while an urban resident will walk to a nearby neighborhood green or square. The "Activity-Based Parks and Open Space Criteria" on the next page outlines criteria for evaluating existing and proposed neighborhoods in Miami-Dade County, as well as potential improvements to ensure equitable local access.

The "Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria" also outlines the third measure of equitable access, the distance people have to walk, bicycle or drive to participate in the **area-wide recreational activities** generally found outside of people's neighborhoods such as:

- Swimming recreationally or competitively in a public pool
- Fishing from land or a boat
- Paddling a canoe or kayak
- Observing nature and wildlife
- Motor boating
- Attending festivals, concerts or special outdoor events
- Playing in organized competition sports
- Participating in exercise classes, lectures, social functions



Generally the types of facilities needed to accommodate these activities require either

1. a major natural resource,
2. a large facility that generates noise and traffic, and is incompatible with residential land uses,
3. a facility that cannot be supported by a single neighborhood.

Therefore these facilities are generally located along major collector or arterial roads, away from residential uses. The Parks and Open Space Vision proposes that these area-wide facilities should be distributed equitably throughout the County, based on the "Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria", to ensure that every resident has equal opportunity to participate in the activities outlined above, and to reduce dependency on automobile access. Transit and bicycle access are particularly critical to ensure access to these facilities.

Public Parks and Open Space Activity Criteria

ACTIVITY		PARK OR OPEN SPACE TYPE		EQUITY ACCESS CRITERIA	
Every resident should be able to:	This activity takes place in:				
NEIGHBORHOOD				Measured by walking Distance/access from every household	
AT WILL ACTIVITIES					
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	ACCESS MEASUREMENT
WALKING	Sidewalks, Nearby Park or Waterfront, Promenade, and Public Spaces	Sidewalks, Trails, Nearby Parks	Roads and Trails	All residents, regardless of location, should be able to safely and comfortably walk around their neighborhood, connecting to a safe, wide, shaded sidewalk system.	URBAN: Immediately accessible SUBURBAN: Immediately accessible RURAL: Immediately accessible
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
WALKING THE DOG	Sidewalks, Private Amenity Areas, Nearby Parks	Streets, Sidewalks, Private Amenity Areas, Nearby Neighborhood/ Regional Park	Sidewalks, Private Amenity Areas, Nearby Parks	All residents, regardless of location, should be able to safely walk their dog around their neighborhood and at parks designated for dog use.	URBAN: Immediately accessible SUBURBAN: Immediately accessible RURAL: Immediately accessible
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
RIDE A BIKE	Bike Lanes(on-street), Bike Paths (off-streets), Nearby Parks	Bike Lanes, Nearby Parks	Nearby Parks, Bike Lanes (on-street)	All residents should be able to safely ride their bicycle from urban to rural areas using a combination of on-street/off-street bike lanes. Additionally they should be able to enjoy recreational bicycle rides inside large parks, accessible by transit or greenway network.	URBAN: Immediately accessible SUBURBAN: Immediately accessible RURAL: Immediately accessible
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
SITTING OUTSIDE, READING, CONTEMPLATING, MEETING FRIENDS	Nearby Parks, Public Spaces, Waterfront Promenade	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 5-10 minutes SUBURBAN: 10-15 minutes RURAL: n/a
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
GOING TO A PLAYGROUND	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	Nearby Park and Public Spaces	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 5-10 minutes SUBURBAN: 10-15 minutes RURAL: n/a
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
PLAYING CATCH, FRISBEE, PICNICKING, SUN BATHING	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	Nearby Parks and Public Spaces	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 5-10 minutes SUBURBAN: 10-15 minutes RURAL: n/a
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
PLAYING "PICK-UP SPORTS"	Nearby Parks and Schools	Nearby Parks and School	Parks and Schools	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 15-20 minutes SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes RURAL: n/a
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
RECREATIONAL SWIMMING, FAMILY FUN	Nearby Parks and Schools	Nearby Parks and School	Parks and Schools	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 15-20 minutes SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes RURAL: n/a
PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES					
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
LEARNING TO PLAY A SPORT, SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM	Nearby Parks and Schools	Nearby Parks and Schools	Parks and Schools	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 15-20 minutes SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes RURAL: n/a
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
LEARN TO SWIM	Nearby Parks and Schools	Nearby Parks and Schools	Parks and Schools	All resident should be able to safely and comfortably, walk, ride or take transit to a nearby park or public space	URBAN: 15-20 minutes SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes RURAL: n/a
REGIONAL				Measured by Transit Distance/access from every household	
AT WILL ACTIVITIES					
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
RECREATIONAL SWIMMING, LEARN TO SWIM, FAMILY FUN	Parks and Schools	Parks and Schools	Parks and Schools	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 15-20 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 15-20 (5 miles drive/transit)
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
SHORELINE FISHING	Public Access Dock/Pier/Shoreline/Causeway/Bridge	Public Access Dock/Pier/Shoreline/Causeway/Bridge	Public Access Dock/Pier/Shoreline/Causeway/Bridge	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 15-20 minutes (2 miles bike/drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 15-20 minutes (2 miles bike/drive/transit) RURAL: 15-20 (2 miles bike ride/drive/transit)
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
CANOEING OR KAYAKING	Public Access to Launch Area, Water Trails	Public Access to Launch Area, Water Trails	Public Access to Launch Area, Water Trails	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive) SUBURBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive) RURAL: 30 minutes (10 miles drive)
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
OBSERVING WILDLIFE, ENJOYING NATURE	Waterfronts, Promenades, Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas, Greenways, Water Trails	Waterfronts, Promenades, Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas, Greenways, Water Trails	Waterfronts, Promenades, Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas, Greenways, Water Trails	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit)
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
MOTOR BOATING OR SAILING	Water trails, Launch Areas/Marinas, Facilities that Allow Water Access, Docks	Water Trails, Launch Areas/Marinas, Facilities that Allow Water Access, Docks	Water Trails, Launch Areas/Marinas, Facilities that Allow Water Access, Docks	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 30 minutes (10 miles drive/transit)
PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES					
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
ATTENDING FAIRS, FESTIVALS, CONCERTS, MARKETS OR OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS	Waterfront Promenade, Neighborhood Park, Streets, Public Spaces	Waterfront Promenade, Neighborhood Park, Streets, Public Spaces	Waterfront Promenade, Neighborhood Park, Streets, Public Spaces	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 5 minutes (bike ride/transit) SUBURBAN: 10-15 minutes (bike ride) RURAL: 30 minutes (drive)
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
PARTICIPATING IN ORGANIZED OUTDOOR COMPETITION SPORTS	Parks (sports complex), Schools	Parks (sports complex), Schools	Parks (sports complex), Schools	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit)
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
PARTICIPATING IN ORGANIZED INDOOR COMPETITION SPORTS	Parks (sports complex), Schools	Parks (sports complex), Schools	Parks (sports complex), Schools	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit)
	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL	ACCESS	
EXERCISE, ATTEND CLASSES/ LECTURES/ SOCIAL FUNCTIONS	Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas (nature center)	Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas (nature center)	Parks, Public Spaces, Natural Areas (nature center)	All residents should be able to safely and comfortably drive, ride transit to a park	URBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) SUBURBAN: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit) RURAL: 15 minutes (5 miles drive/transit)

Elements of a Great Park: *Park Planning and Design Principles*

In addition to providing equitable access to parks and open spaces throughout the County, every park should be designed to contribute to the environmental, social and economic well-being of the surrounding neighborhood and community. Parks cannot be planned and designed as independent “recreation islands”; they must respond to the context of adjacent streets and land uses as well.

Key attributes include:

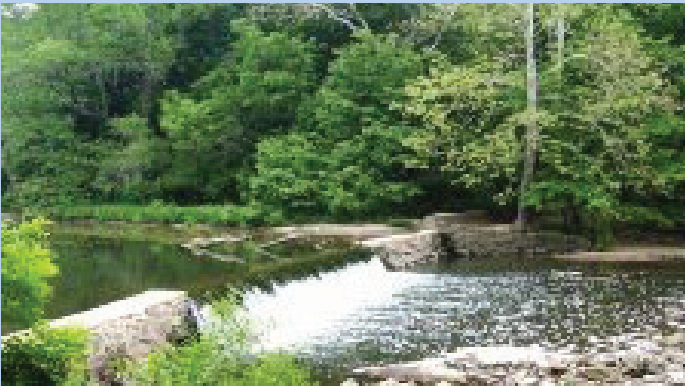
- Native shade trees that are planted to reduce heat; provide shaded walks, parking lots and recreation facilities; provide wildlife habitat; reduce dependency on irrigation; and improve aesthetics
- Park pathways and sidewalks that are connected to a regional bicycle/pedestrian network to provide access to and from transit, neighborhoods, schools, work places and commercial activity centers
- Public art and interpretive displays that are incorporated into the park design to provide a sense of place, based on the local culture, environment and history
- Residential and commercial development located across the street, should face the park (rather than backing up to the park) to provide for increased security and “eyes on the park”; to incorporate the public street, sidewalk and street trees into the park design; to better delineate the line between public and private realms; and to enhance the value of the properties fronting the park
- On-street parking that is provided to calm traffic, provide a buffer between the park and street, and to reduce the need for land-consuming, expensive and hot off-street parking lots
- Sports fields that are clustered to maximize their use for multiple activities and events, and to reduce maintenance costs
- Nearby or adjacent schools that are connected to the park through wide sidewalks and cross walks to maximize opportunities for the joint use of meeting space, playgrounds, sports fields and other common park/ school facilities
- Multiple access points from surrounding neighborhood to the park
- Park signage that is minimized to avoid clutter, and is integrated with the County’s public art and sign/ wayfinding programs
- Park management that emphasizes sustainable best management practices such as the use of native plants, xeriscaping and reclaimed irrigation water; use of green building materials; and minimal use of pesticides and fertilizers

Design Principles

- Shade parking to reduce glare and heat build up
- Secure pick-up/drop-off area
- Integrate parks with regional greenways
- Provide 50% tree canopy and incorporate best management practices for ecological sustainability
- Shade walkways
- Provide shade structures
- Incorporate environmental art
- Plan parks with schools
- Allow on-street parking
- Plan transit connections
- Zone housing to face park for security
- Bound parks with perimeter roads to eliminate in holdings
- Shared use parking
- Minimize signage and visual clutter
- Plan connections to area-wide activities for parks and open spaces
- School frontage on collector street
- Acknowledge historic and cultural significance of the area

The Economics of Great Parks

- In Philadelphia, a study of neighborhood values in the impoverished, urban neighborhood of New Kensington found that adjacency to vacant land decreases neighborhood values by 18 percent, while tree plantings increased values by 14 percent and being within one-quarter mile from a park increased values by ten percent. In the vicinity of the city’s 1,300 acre Pennypack Park, property values correlate significantly with proximity to the park. In 1974, the park accounted for 33 percent of the value of a plot of land when the land was located 40 feet away from the park, nine percent when located 1,000 feet away, and 4.2 percent at a distance of 2,500 feet.
- A 2003 study of almost 7,000 single family homes in Leon County, Florida showed that homes within 200 feet of a park were worth an estimated \$6,015 increase in value. Homes between 200 and 1,320 feet of the park increased in value by an average of \$1,773. In more densely populated areas (over 2,500 people per square mile) the premiums for property within 200 feet of the park rose to approximately \$14,000.
- In Tallahassee, Florida homes within 200 feet of Myers Park, a 47-acre natural park, sold for \$24,600 more than comparable homes farther away. Homes bordering Maclay State Gardens Park had a premium of \$47,000. Those within 200 feet showed a premium of \$21,000. The total properties within 200 miles of Maclay State Gardens Park added over \$6 million to the property tax base.
- Within two years of the reopening of Manhattan’s Bryant Park, neighboring Sixth Avenue saw a 60 percent increase in leasing activity on 60 percent over the prior year. Area brokers referred to the park as the “deal-clincher.” Between 1990 and 2000, rents for commercial office space near the park increased between 115 and 225 percent, compared with increases of between 41 percent and 73 percent in the surrounding submarkets, according to a study conducted by Ernst & Young. The same study, which analyzed 36 neighborhood parks in all five boroughs of New York City, concluded that “commercial asking rents, residential sale prices, and assessed values for properties near a well-improved park generally exceeded rents in surrounding submarkets.”



Neighborhood Park Revitalization

Conversion of a vacant lot into a neighborhood park can be a catalyst for the redevelopment of surrounding properties and the creation of higher density, affordable homes.

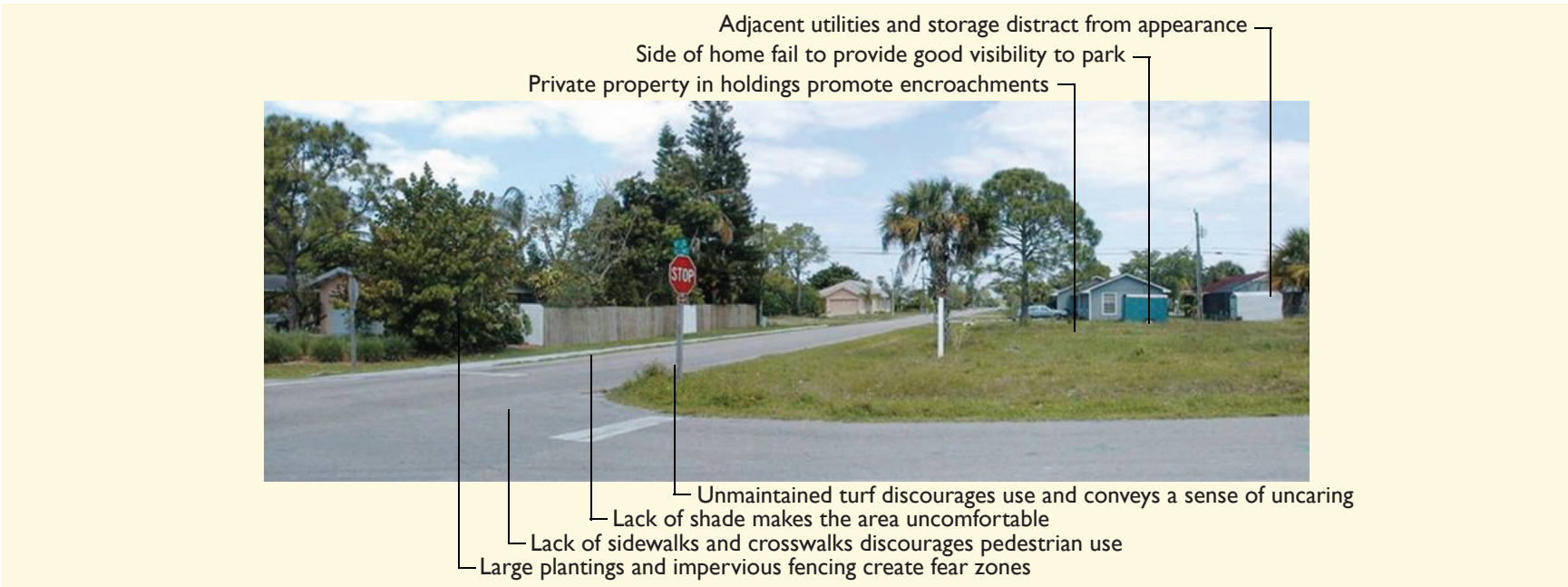


Image by:
Dover Kohl & Partners

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) summarizes the benefits of parks in its recently published report **The Benefits of Parks: Why American Needs More City Parks and Open Space**:

“Strong evidence shows that when people have access to parks, they exercise more. Regular physical activity has been shown to increase health and reduce the risk of a wide range of diseases, including heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and diabetes. Physical activity also relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety, improves mood, and enhances psychological well-being. Beyond the benefits of exercise, a growing body of research shows that contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health. Despite the importance of exercise, only 25 percent of American adults engage in the recommended levels of physical activity, and 29 percent engage in no leisure-time physical activity. The sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy diet of Americans have produced an epidemic of obesity. The Centers for Disease Control Prevention has called for the creation of more parks and playgrounds to help fight this epidemic. Numerous studies have shown that parks and open space increase the value of neighboring residential property. Growing evidence points to a similar benefit on commercial property value. The availability of park and recreation facilities is an important quality-of-life factor for corporations choosing where to locate facilities and for well-educated individuals choosing a place to live. City parks such as San Antonio’s Riverwalk Park often become important tourism draws, contributing heavily to local business.

Green space in urban areas provides substantial environmental benefits. Trees reduce air pollution and water pollution, they help keep cities cooler, and they are a more effective and less expensive way to manage stormwater runoff than building systems of concrete sewer and drainage ditches. City parks also produce important social and community development benefits. They make inner-city neighborhoods more livable; they offer recreational opportunities for at-risk youth, low-income children, and low-income families; and they provide places in low-income neighborhoods where people can feel a sense of community. Access to public parks and recreational facilities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and in particular to reduced juvenile delinquency.”