



The
Recreation and
Open Space
Chapter

Sarasota City Plan

and

Support Document

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**The
Recreation
and
Open Space
Plan**

INTENT AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the Recreation and Open Space Chapter is to provide and maintain a high quality and environmentally sensitive system of open spaces and recreation facilities which meet the needs of the community through the year 2010. The foundation for this Chapter is **Sarasota's Strategic Plan** and Florida statutory requirements.

Sarasota's Strategic Plan Goals

In 2004, the City Commission adopted "Sarasota's Approach to Strategic Planning", which provides the foundation for the Strategic Plan and six Strategic Goals that have particular relevance to the Recreation and Open Space Chapter:

"Viable, safe and diverse neighborhoods and businesses that work together."

Neighborhood recreation and open spaces play a key role in providing viable neighborhoods. They facilitate recreation and they foster neighborhood communication - often serving as the central gathering place. They are a source of neighborhood pride and identity.

"An attractive, environmentally-friendly community that is safe and livable and provides an array of cultural and aesthetic enjoyments."

The City's recreation and open spaces are critical to the City's attractive, clean and aesthetically pleasing image.

"Well maintained and future-oriented infrastructure."

Maintaining existing parks and open spaces and recognizing changing demographics are important to providing recreation and open spaces that meeting the needs of the community.

It is the intent of the Recreation and Open Space Plan to pursue actions that further **Sarasota's Strategic Plan**.

Florida Statutory Requirements

Section 9J-5.014, that addressed the subject matter of this chapter, was repealed February 20, 1996.

Organization of the Recreation and Open Space Plan

The Recreation and Open Space Plan consists of a goal followed by objectives and action strategies pursuant to the goal.

The Recreation and Open Space Plan is organized around objectives addressing the following topics:

- Objective 1. A System Consistent with the Needs of the Population;
- Objective 2. Accessibility and Safety;
- Objective 3. Efficient and Environmentally Sensitive Facilities;
- Objective 4. Coordination with Public Agencies and the Private Sector; ~~and~~;
- Objective 5. Festivals and Cultural Celebrations; and
- Objective 6. Parks + Connectivity Master Plan.

The Recreation and Open Space Plan is one of the eleven plans which collectively represent the Sarasota City Plan. This Plan can neither stand alone nor be interpreted independent of the others.

Implementation of the Sarasota City Plan

Implementation of the Sarasota City Plan will require actions by both the public and private sectors. In this regard many of the plan components speak to “the City” pursuing certain actions to:

promote, provide, consider, identify, enhance, create, maintain, conserve, support, reduce discourage, coordinate, and employ.

While these actions may be initiated by City government itself, City government will also be expecting applicants seeking development approvals to pursue these same type of actions as part of their applications.

GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STRATEGIES

Goal

It shall be the goal of the City of Sarasota to provide and maintain a high quality and environmentally sensitive system of open spaces, and recreation facilities which meet the needs of the community.

Objective 1 - A System Consistent with the Needs of the Population

The City shall continue to plan, acquire, develop and maintain a system of open spaces and recreation facilities, consistent with the needs of the population as determined by the level-of-service standards.

Action Strategies

- 1.1 **Level-of-Service Standards:** The level-of-service standards for open space and recreation facilities will be a minimum of 10 acres per 1,000 resident population.
- 1.2 **Bayfront Park and Island Park:** The City will develop a Master Plan for Bayfront Park and Island Park. The Master Plan will seek to maintain and improve open vistas to the water, provide for the highest level of maintenance, and reestablish a pedestrian connection with the Downtown Proper. The Master Plan will exclude the development of structure parking at the parks.
- 1.3 **Gulf Coast Heritage Trail System:** The City, in conjunction with the Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program (SBNEP) and other agencies, shall continue to support and promote the Gulf Coast Heritage Trail System for Sarasota and Manatee Counties.
- 1.4 **Bay and Gulf Access in Residential Development:** Access to Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico shall be considered in the review of proposed residential developments in coastal areas.
- 1.5 **Pedestrian Access to Shoreline:** Public pedestrian access to Sarasota Bay and the Gulf of Mexico shall be required incident to the development of properties in coastal areas for non-residential uses, unless waived at the time of site plan approval.

- 1.6 **Compatibility:** Open spaces and recreation facilities will be compatible with adjacent land uses. Buffering of active recreation facilities shall be provided when necessary to mitigate any potential incompatibility with adjacent land uses.
- 1.7 **Bayfront Mooring Field:** A bayfront mooring field shall be developed and maintained adjacent to Bayfront Park to address the needs of the community.

Objective 2 - Accessibility and Safety

The City shall continue to ensure public accessibility and public safety of open spaces, recreation facilities, beaches and shores.

Action Strategies

- 2.1 **Handicapped Accessibility:** Park, recreation, and open space facilities will be designed to provide for accessibility by handicapped persons in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.
- 2.2 **Public Accessibility:** Where a developer provides park, recreation, or open space facilities for the general public, such facilities shall be planned and located so as to maximize public accessibility.
- 2.3 **Mass Transit Accessibility:** The City will support expansions of the Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) system operated by Sarasota County, to link major residential developments with open spaces and recreation facilities.
- 2.4 **Public Safety:** Park and Recreation facilities shall employ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles whenever possible.

Objective 3 - Efficient and Environmentally Sensitive Facilities

The City shall continue to provide for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of open spaces and recreation facilities, consistent with the adopted level-of-service and the Sarasota City Plan, in an economically efficient and environmentally sensitive manner.

Action Strategies

- 3.1 **Resource Preservation:** The City will continue to preserve and protect naturally occurring habitats, such as beaches, dunes, and coastal vegetation.
- 3.2 **Impact Minimization:** Open spaces and recreation facilities shall be designed so as to minimize the impact of human activities on natural systems, consistent with the relevant action strategies of the Environmental Protection and Coastal Islands Plan.
- 3.3 **Development Incentives:** The City will explore providing certain development incentives, in the Land Development Regulations, in exchange for the provision and maintenance of open space and recreation facilities.
- 3.4 **Federal and State Funds:** The City shall pursue funds from various sources, including, Federal, ~~and~~ State, and County agencies and private providers, for the acquisition, preservation, and maintenance of open space and recreational facilities.
- 3.5 **Developer Funded Public Art:** The City recognizes that public art has broad public benefits and will require developer funded public art or the deposit of a monetary contribution into a public art fund for development located in select zoning districts.
- 3.6 **Public Funded Art:** The City recognizes that public art has broad public benefits and will analyze the feasibility of cosponsoring public art acquisitions and events with other public and private entities.
- 3.7 **Public Art in Neighborhoods:** The City shall consider locating public art in neighborhoods.

Objective 4 - Coordination with Public Agencies and the Private Sector

The City shall continue to coordinate with other public agencies and the private sector in the acquisition and development of open spaces and recreation facilities with the Future Land Use Chapter.

Action Strategies

- 4.1 **Coordination:** The City shall coordinate development and maintenance of open spaces and recreation facilities with the private sector, including neighborhood associations, and with Sarasota County, Manatee County, the School Board of Sarasota County, and the Town of Longboat Key.
- 4.2 **Consolidation of Service Provision:** Programs for the provision and maintenance of open space and recreation facilities shall be consolidated, where feasible, with similar programs of other public agencies, to increase efficiency.
- 4.3 **Adopt a Park Program:** The City, in conjunction with “Sarasota County Keep Sarasota Beautiful”, will continue to encourage such programs as: “Adopt-a-Street”, “Adopt-a-Park” or “Adopt-a-Beach” to maintain and beautify the City’s parks and beaches.

Objective 5 - Festivals and Cultural Celebrations

The City shall continue to encourage festivals and other cultural celebrations as part of the City’s annual budget process.

Action Strategies

- 5.1 **Coordinating Festivals and Special Events with Neighborhoods:** The City will coordinate the programming of festivals and special events with neighborhoods that are impacted by these events.

Objective 6 - Parks + Connectivity Master Plan

The City shall continue to develop, maintain, and improve upon its recreational system of parks, trails, and open spaces by implementing the Parks + Connectivity Master Plan when cost feasible.

Action Strategies

- 6.1 **Eastside Park:** The City will evaluate the development of a new park in the eastern area of the municipality. If an Eastside park is developed, it should be located proximate to residential uses and existing recreation facilities or schools, and may include amenities such as basketball courts, a playground, family aquatic center, and open space.
- 6.2 **New Recreational Facilities:** The City shall consider developing the following recreational facilities as identified in the Parks + Connectivity Master Plan:

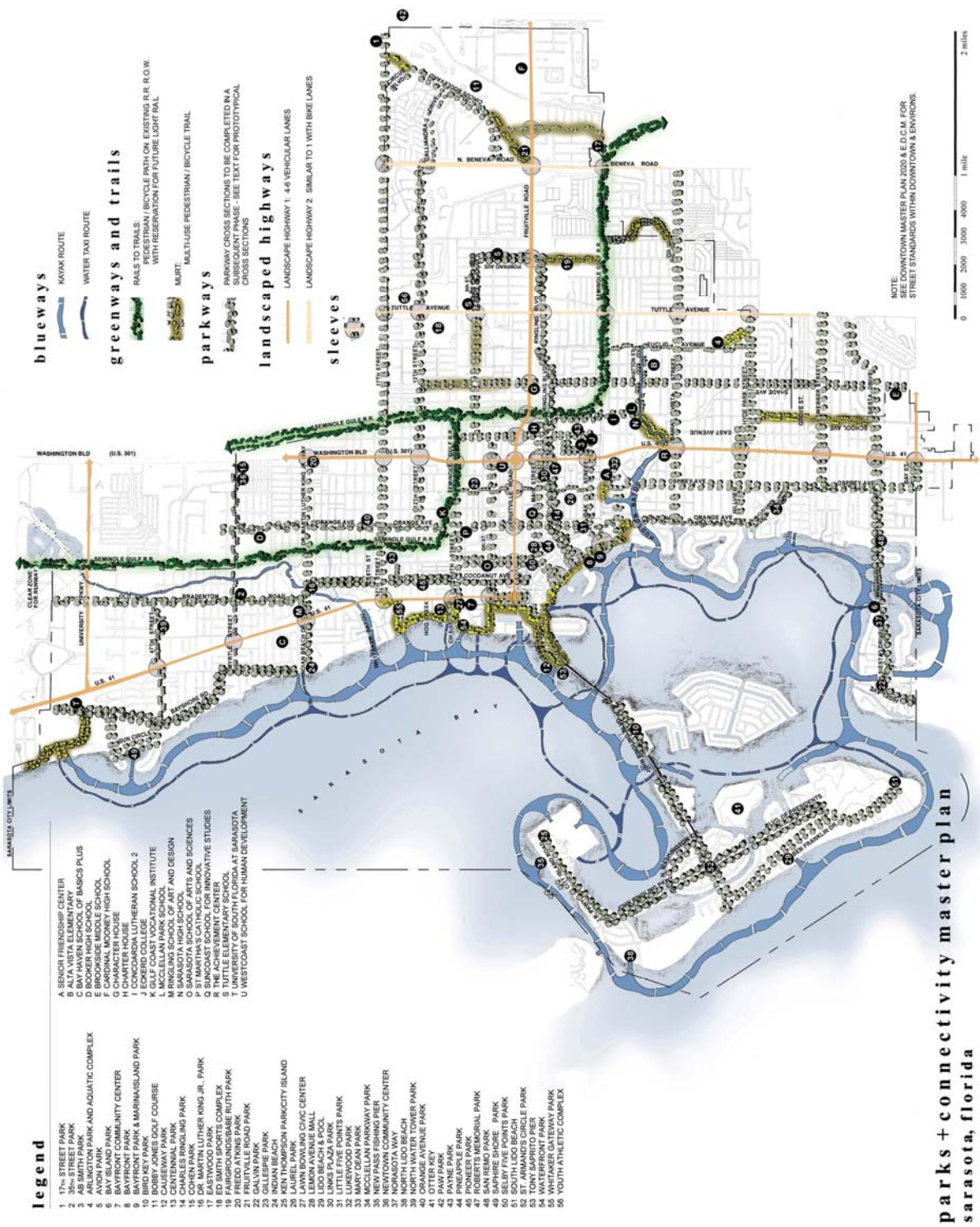
Facility Type	Recommendation
Soccer/football	2 new fields
Tennis courts	3 new courts at Payne Park
Basketball courts	4 new courts
Playgrounds	1 new playground with sections for (a) tots and (b) older children
Community pools	1 new family aquatic center
Boat ramps	Work on parking availability to include consideration of remote parking served by shuttle or valet system
Community centers	Renovate Newtown Community Center and consider adding an outdoor sprayground
Shuffleboard courts	Add courts to Payne Park Shuffleboard Center to allow for tournament play

- 6.3 **Connectivity Plan:** The City shall consider making improvements to its transportation facilities in order to create a system of interconnected pathways consisting of blueways, greenways and trails, parkways, landscaped highways, and sleeves as displayed on Illustration R-1, Parks + Connectivity Plan.
- 6.4 **Blueways:** The City shall consider developing kayak and canoe launching areas and allow for the private development of water taxi service at various locations along the coast.
- 6.5 **Greenways and Trails:** The City shall consider creating interconnected greenways and trails consisting of off-road multi-use paths suitable for cycling,

running, and walking. Greenways and trails encompass (1) multi-use recreation trails (MURTs) and (2) rails-to-trails facilities

- 6.6 **Parkways:** The City shall consider transforming selected streets, as depicted on Illustration R-1, Parks + Connectivity Plan, into parkways. Parkways are streets that provide safe, pleasant pedestrian experiences, and where feasible, also include dedicated bicycle lanes. Parkways will have appropriate landscaping, lighting, and signage.
- 6.7 **Landscaped Highways:** The City shall consider providing for landscaping of major thoroughfares, as depicted on Illustration R-1, Parks + Connectivity Plan, to enhance the driving experience for residents and visitors.
- 6.8 **Sleeves:** The City shall develop “sleeves” at the intersections of trails and parkways with landscaped highways in order to make it safe for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the high-volume, highways.
- 6.9 **Identification and Wayfinding:** The City shall consider standardizing identification signs for its park facilities and improve the wayfinding system by including entrance signs into the City and developing a standard system for directing drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians to parks and other points of interest.
- 6.10 **Landscaping for Parks and Streetscapes:** In developing landscaping for parks and streetscapes, the City shall use the plant lists as recommended in the Parks + Connectivity Master Plan as a guide.

Illustration R-1 Parks + Connectivity Master Plan



Legend

- 1 17th STREET PARK
- 2 35th STREET PARK
- 3 AB SMITH PARK
- 4 BAYVIEW PARK AND AQUATIC COMPLEX
- 5 AVON PARK
- 6 BAY ISLAND PARK
- 7 COMMUNITY CENTER
- 8 BAYFRONT PARK
- 9 BAYFRONT PARK & MARINA/ISLAND PARK
- 10 BIRD KEY PARK
- 11 BIRCHWOOD PARK
- 12 CAUSEWAY PARK
- 13 CENTENNIAL PARK
- 14 COHEN PARK
- 15 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. PARK
- 16 ED BARRY SPORTS COMPLEX
- 17 FARGO/ROUNDBAY RUTH PARK
- 18 FREDDY ATKINS PARK
- 19 GALVIN PARK
- 20 GILLESPIE PARK
- 21 HENRI HENNING PARK
- 22 KEN THOMPSON PARK/CITY ISLAND
- 23 LAUREL PARK
- 24 LAWN BOWLING CIVIC CENTER
- 25 LIDO BEACH & POOL
- 26 LIVERWOOD PARK
- 27 MARY DEAN PARK
- 28 NEW PASS FISHING PIER
- 29 NEW TOWN COMMUNITY CENTER
- 30 NORASOTA WAY
- 31 NORTH WATER TOWER PARK
- 32 ORANGE AVENUE PARK
- 33 PAYNE PARK
- 34 PIONEER PARK
- 35 ROBERTS MEMORIAL PARK
- 36 SAMPSON SQUARE PARK
- 37 SELBY FIVE POINTS PARK
- 38 SOUTH LIDO BEACH
- 39 TONY SARRITO PIER
- 40 WATERFRONT PARK
- 41 WESTCOAST PARK
- 42 YOUTH ATHLETIC COMPLEX

- blueways**
- KAYAK ROUTE
- WATER TAXI ROUTE
- greenways and trails**
- RAILS TO TRAILS
- PEDESTRIAN / BICYCLE PATH ON EXISTING R.R. R.O.W. WITH RESERVATION FOR FUTURE LIGHT RAIL
- MURT
- MULTI-USE PEDESTRIAN / BICYCLE TRAIL
- parkways**
- PARKWAY CROSS SECTIONS TO BE COMPLETED IN A SUBSEQUENT PHASE - SEE TEXT FOR PROTOTYPICAL CROSS SECTIONS
- LANDSCAPE HIGHWAY 1: 4-6 VEHICULAR LANES
- LANDSCAPE HIGHWAY 2: SIMILAR TO 1 WITH BIKE LANES
- sleeves**

NOTE: SEE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN 2020 & D.C.M. FOR STREET STANDARDS WITH DOWNTOWN & ENVIRONS

The Recreation and Open Space Support Document

The inventory and analysis in the Support Document provide the foundation for the Plan portion of this Chapter.

The Support Document is not adopted.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW

In September of 1989, the City of Sarasota and Sarasota County entered into an interlocal government agreement consolidating the recreation departments of the two agencies for a period of 20 years, beginning in 1990 and continuing to 2010. The County assumed maintenance responsibility and recreational day-to-day programming for many of the City's park sites and recreation facilities. However, the City retains the responsibility for long-range recreational planning.

Providing recreational facilities and services must be done within the constraints of a fixed amount of land, water and shoreline. These recreational facilities and services offer an unusually wide array of cultural and leisure time activities available to residents of the City and the region.

Parks and recreation services transcend the limits of the City of Sarasota. Even though a park or recreation facility may be located inside the City, people who reside outside the City may travel to visit and use the facility. The reverse is also true. Some facilities located outside of the City serve regional areas, including residents of the City. Examples of such park sites and/or recreation facilities include Everglades National Park in south Florida, Disney World near Orlando (both of which attract visitors from all over the world), Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, the St. Pete Times Forum in Tampa, Tropicana Field (formerly known as the Thunderdome) in St. Petersburg, and Myakka River State Park in Sarasota County.

In 2002, a Parks + Connectivity Master Plan was prepared for the City. The Parks + Connectivity Master Plan includes a complete inventory of City park and recreational facilities, an existing conditions analysis, and recommendations for future improvements. The Parks + Connectivity Master Plan, located in Appendix 3, serves as the Support Document text for this Recreation and Open Space Chapter.

APPENDIX 1

9J-5 Requirements Index

This Chapter was prepared to meet requirements outlined in the Florida Administrative Code, Chapter 9-J5. This appendix references the relevant headings from Chapter 9-J5 to the location in this Chapter where these requirements are met.

Section 9J-5.014 was repealed February 20, 1996.

APPENDIX 2

Sarasota's Strategic Goals

In 2004, the City Commission, Commission adopted "Sarasota's Approach to Strategic Planning", which provides the foundation for the Strategic Plan and six Strategic Goals that are the foundation upon which the *Sarasota City Plan* is based. This appendix references objectives and action strategies in the *Sarasota City Plan* that implement these goals.

Our Vision

"A City where urban amenities meet small town living."

The Goals of the City of Sarasota

1. **A responsible and accessible government that has sound financial and administrative practices.**

Applicable Action Strategies: 1.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, and 4.2.

2. **Viable, safe and diverse neighborhoods and businesses that work together.**

Applicable Action Strategies: 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 4.3, 5.1, and 6.1 through 6.10.

3. **An economically sustainable community.**

Applicable Action Strategies: 3.4, 4.2, and 4.3.

4. **A workplace that attracts and retains an outstanding workforce.**

Applicable Action Strategies: None.

5. **An attractive, environmentally-friendly community that is safe and livable and provides an array of cultural and aesthetic enjoyments.**

Applicable Action Strategies: 1.2, 1.3, 1.7, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 5.1, and 6.1 through 6.10.

APPENDIX 2 (continued)

6. Well maintained and future-oriented infrastructure.

Applicable Action Strategies: 1.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 6.1 through 6.10.

Appendix 3

Parks + Connectivity Master Plan



CITY OF SARASOTA, FLORIDA

PARKS + CONNECTIVITY MASTER PLAN



EDAW

Leon Younger and PROS
Hoyt Architects

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Mary Anne Servian, Commissioner

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Note: This **Parks + Connectivity Master Plan** document provides a summary of existing conditions as well as recommendations for future development of Sarasota's parks and connectivity system. The separate **Support Document** includes technical information used to formulate the recommendations included in this plan.

introduction



Arlington Park - trail



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Park – canoe launch

PURPOSE

The City of Sarasota is a scenic Florida Gulf Coast community with a rich cultural history and spectacular physical location. With miles of pristine white beaches as well as its own symphony, ballet and opera companies, excellent schools, and a healthy economic climate, Sarasota offers an outstanding quality of life. *Forbes* magazine named Sarasota as the winner in its small city category for Best Places 2000.

An essential component of any community's quality of life is the opportunity for recreation and experiencing the outdoors. Sarasota enjoys an excellent park system that provides citizens and visitors a range of opportunities for physical fitness as well as connecting to each other and the environment. From Lido Beach and Ken Thompson Park to Ed Smith Stadium and the Bobby Jones Golf Course, residents and guests have many opportunities to enjoy passive and active recreation in the gorgeous climate that makes Sarasota a great place to live and visit. Parks enhance the City whose vision is:

*A City of urban amenities with
small town living and feeling.*

Parks, open space and trails are urban amenities that connect citizens to nature, provide opportunities for physical fitness, and provide alternatives to transportation by car. In addition, parks enhance the small town atmosphere expressed in the vision statement, ensuring that neighbors have places to meet and be outdoors.

The City of Sarasota Parks + Connectivity Master Plan provides the framework for enhancing the City's system of parks and open space, with specific emphasis on connecting Sarasotans to each other, to nature, and to urban amenities such

as schools, museums, retail centers, public buildings, parks and transit.

PRINCIPLES OF PARK PLANNING AND DESIGN

Frederick Law Olmsted, noted landscape architect and America's founding father of parks system design, had seven principles for planning and designing parks. They are:

1. **Build community**

This principle refers to the role of the park system in connecting citizens to each other as well as providing community identity. Most great cities are known for their great parks: New York has Central Park, Chicago has Lincoln Park, and San Francisco is known for Golden Gate Park. Sarasota should be no different; a "signature" park can enhance community identity and civic pride.

2. **Respect the local landscape**

Respecting the local landscape means respecting the environment and responding to its cues. Sarasota's coastal environment is beautiful and fragile, and the park system must enhance and respect the native flora and fauna.

3. **Enjoy scenery**

To be successful parks must provide users the opportunity to experience and enjoy nature. Parks should be aesthetically pleasing and provide opportunities to enjoy views within and outside the parks. In particular, pathways and greenways can enhance travelers' experiences and views of the City.

4. **Integrate built elements into the park plan**

A comprehensive parks system includes facilities for active recreation and human comfort, as well as undeveloped open spaces. Built elements should respect the landscape and complement the natural environment.

5. **Define the city**

Parks, greenways and open spaces can clearly define the boundaries between urban and undeveloped areas. In addition, as described earlier, an excellent parks and open space system will enhance the city's identity for citizens and visitors alike.

6. **Increase property values**

Numerous recent studies confirm that properties adjacent to parks have higher values because of their proximity to this important urban amenity. Parks must be well designed and well maintained to enhance their surroundings.

7. **Elevate the lives of citizens**

This principle, which summarizes and encompasses the previous six, expresses the value that parks and open space have in building excellent communities. Parks make citizens feel better about themselves and their communities by providing opportunities for connections: connecting citizens to each other, connecting citizens to nature, connecting citizens to important destinations like schools, open spaces, neighborhoods, museums, libraries, and other urban amenities.

After discussion of these principles in Sarasota, the steering committee added an eighth principle for the Sarasota plan:

8. **Make parks accessible for all**

Accessibility refers to easy travel to parks by foot, by car, by bicycle, and by boat. Accessibility also refers to the community's obligation to provide facilities for citizens with disabilities. Finally, making parks accessible for all also means providing equitable distribution of open space and facilities throughout the community. This ensures equal access to open space and recreation opportunities to all citizens, regardless of age, income and location.

GOALS OF THE PLAN

The overall purpose of the plan is to provide direction developing and maintaining an optimal system of connected landscape, park and open space elements within the City. The City determined that the master plan must:

- Respond to the City's visions and goals;
- Respond to the demographics of the City's residents;
- Respond to the City's physical environments, including the existing inventory of landscape, park and open space features;
- Be integrated into the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) so that the plan can be used and easily updated; and
- Be fiscally responsible.

As indicated above, a guiding factor for the development of the *City of Sarasota Parks + Connectivity Master Plan* is the high value of recreation citizens expressed in the *1998 Sarasota City Plan (City Plan)*. In addition, the *City of Sarasota Downtown Master Plan 2020 (Downtown Plan)* set out several themes that relate to and are incorporated in this plan:

- Connecting the City and the bayfront
- Walkable streets
- Balanced transportation
- Walk-to-town neighborhoods
- Civic improvements
- Pragmatic implementation

As noted, the *City Plan* vision placed a high value on parks, open space, and recreational programs. It also stated the need to prepare a parks and recreation plan to address future needs incorporating public input and cooperation with other recreational providers. This plan has been prepared in response to this need.

NATIONAL TRENDS

National trends in parks planning take into account both the aging and greening of America, while allowing maximum flexibility for a rapidly changing recreation setting.

With baby boomers aging, more opportunities are being provided for passive recreation. At the same time, the children of the baby boomers (and their children) continue to require facilities for traditional as well as new youth activities. Meanwhile, as cities and suburbs continue to develop, the value of open space has never been higher, and attention is being paid to the environmental impact of artificially groomed parklands.

Perhaps the most significant national recreation trend sweeping the country is the popularity of multi-use recreational (non-motorized) trails, blueways and greenways. Greenways and blueways have numerous benefits to the community:

- They provide opportunities for exercise for all ages.
- They provide opportunities for exercise with limited equipment (and expense).
- They connect neighborhoods to each other.
- They connect neighborhoods with schools, libraries, commercial centers, parks, beaches, and other destinations.
- They provide opportunities to reduce auto trips, by providing safe, pleasant alternatives such as walking, biking, and boating.

Other national trends include:

- According to the *Outdoor Recreation in American Life: A National Assessment of Demand and Supply Trends*, published in 1999, the most popular activities in the U.S. are walking, viewing a beach or waterside, outdoor family gatherings, and sightseeing.
- The same publication states that among the fastest-growing outdoor recreation activities through 2050 are expected to be visiting historic

places, sightseeing, and viewing wildlife.

- The slowest-growing activities include fishing, primitive camping, and hunting.
- Basketball and softball continue to enjoy strong participation rates, while participation in football and tennis are declining in some areas of the country. Soccer, on the other hand, is soaring in popularity, particularly among younger and immigrant populations. Girls' fast-pitch softball is also experiencing explosive growth.
- Popular themed playgrounds go beyond the normal powder-coated swings and jungle gyms found in older parks to more interactive playground appropriate for various age ranges.
- Skate parks, roller hockey rinks, and other active amenities not imagined 20 years ago are becoming standard in cities of all sizes. Parks systems need to be flexible to accommodate new, currently unimagined activities that will become popular in years to come.
- The popularity of static lap pools is fading in favor of more dynamic family aquatic centers, which can include traditional lap pools, but also feature water play structures, fountains, spraygrounds, zero-depth entry, and other family-friendly amenities.
- Traditional recreation centers geared toward youth activities are being replaced by larger, more diverse centers that provide facilities and activities for all ages, improving interaction and communication among generations. Cardio and strength training facilities, commonly found in community recreation centers, are seeing growth in both younger and older populations.
- Providing activities to attract teens challenges communities all over the country. Research suggests that teens are less interested in structured recreation activities than in unstructured environments where they can be with friends. Unprogrammed open spaces and recreation centers can attract teens and encourage positive behavior, providing a structured environment with unstructured activities. In addition, facilities, which provide

for supervised unstructured play such as basketball clinics, as well as facilities such as roller hockey rinks and skate parks, provide facilities for desirable recreation activities.

- Partnerships are the way of the future for park and recreation agencies across the country. These include public/public, public/private, and public/not-for-profit partnerships. All three types of partnerships are designed to allow a community to leverage resources and build community support.
- Integrating a citywide parks maintenance program with the tenets of new urbanism is a challenge facing many American cities. New urbanism calls for more, smaller parks, within walkable distance of neighborhoods. Smaller pocket parks can be a strain on parks maintenance budgets. A balance must be struck between livable, walkable neighborhoods with appropriate recreation and proper allocation of municipal maintenance funds. One way this balance has been achieved is through public-private partnerships.

The most important national trend to note is that parks planning at the master plan level must create a flexible system that responds to the needs of the current population while ensuring that changes can be made to accommodate future as-yet-unknown recreation needs.

PLANNING PROCESS: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Any well developed plan needs to respond to the needs and goals of the system stakeholders. In Sarasota these included park users as well as City and County employees, City Commissioners and others with an interest in the system. Discussions with staff, City Commissioners, and stakeholders complemented public meetings.

In September 2001 three meetings were held to solicit additional input:

- On September 24, 2001, the City sponsored a public meeting. The planning team summarized the analysis and inventory phase, outlined major issues and preliminary

directions for development of the draft plan, and sought input. Key comments included requests for better maintenance, requests for better coordination with the school system, requests for smaller neighborhood parks that residents can walk to, and requests for better canoe and kayak access to blueways.

- During a joint workshop on September 25 with the City’s Planning Board and Parks, Recreation and Environmental Protection Advisory Board the consultant team reviewed the topics of the public forum; summarized public input; and received comments from these two advisory boards.
- At a workshop with the City Commission on September 28, the consultant team reviewed the topics of the forum, input from the public, and comments of the advisory boards. Based upon this review, the City Commission gave direction for the next phase of the plan.

In February 2002, a draft plan was completed and distributed to the City Commission, Planning Board and the Parks Recreation, Environmental Protection Advisory Board (PREPAB), and other interested groups. The draft plan was also posted on the web. In addition to the meetings below the planning department met with many special interest groups (e.g. bicyclists, trail advocates, etc.)

- On March 5, 6, and 7, community forums were held to receive additional public input from residents.
- A joint session of the Planning Board and the PREPAB met along with consultants on March 25 to review comments on the Master Plan and Supporting Documents.
- On April 4, a City Commission workshop was conducted to review the Master Plan and Supporting Documents.
- At the May 6 City Commission meeting, the Commission provided final direction for completion of the plan.

Additional community meetings were held with the National Park Service (NPS) and other service providers to understand future greenway and trail plans in the City and surrounding area.

Programming, maintenance, and operations of active parks were reviewed with Sarasota County Parks and Recreation staff. Program and facilities audits identified current conditions, inefficiencies, opportunities for improvement, and other characteristics. The team visited all parks within the City and special facilities such as Bobby Jones Golf Course, Ed Smith Stadium and Lido Beach. County parks located close to the City limits were also visited and reviewed.

This document contains summaries of extensive examination and analysis of the Sarasota parks existing conditions and plan recommendations. A separate volume—the *Support Document*—contains all relevant background information.

existing conditions



Links Plaza



North Water Tower Park - path

ISSUES + OPPORTUNITIES

Condition of existing parks

Overall, the condition of parks and recreation facilities in the City of Sarasota is satisfactory. There are a few gaps in service, but the most critical consideration of parks and recreation facility modifications should be in upgrading facilities and creating connections between parks. This interconnectivity will give Sarasotans the options of walking, biking, paddling or driving to get around town.

Our inventory revealed that Sarasota's park system features a wide range of recreation opportunities, from passive parks and open areas to recreation centers, swimming pools, golf courses and basketball facilities. These facilities are spread across the city evenly, except for the southern side of the mainland and the extreme eastern portion of the City.

According to the *City Plan*, the City of Sarasota owns more than 45 parks sites with a total of 750.98 acres. In addition, there are 25 County and privately owned facilities in the City. These include the Boys & Girls Club, YMCA, Jewish Community Center and Cool Girls, Inc. Other recreation facilities such as the active 17th Street Park fall immediately beyond the City limits but provide recreation for city residents.

Sarasota Park System

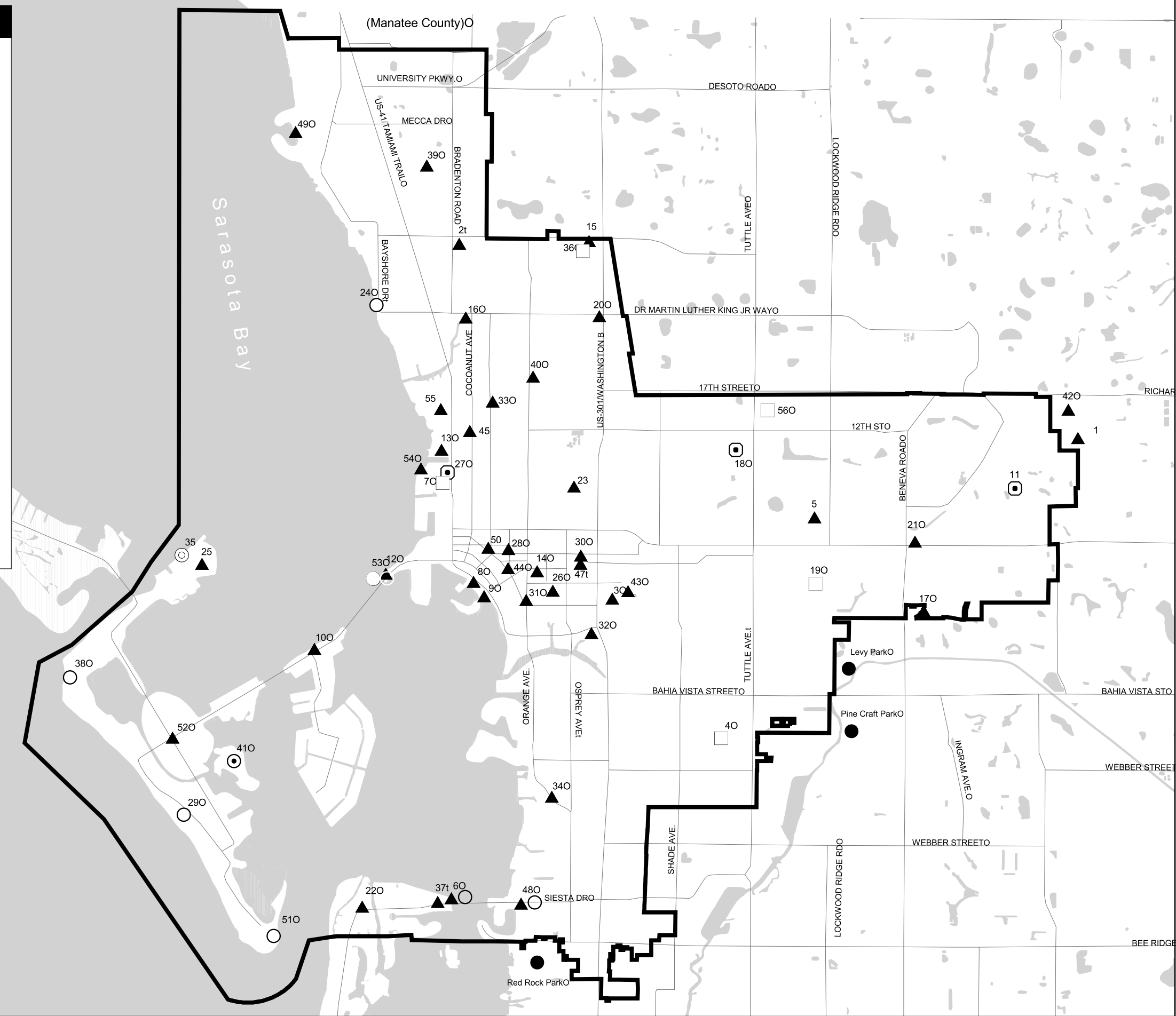
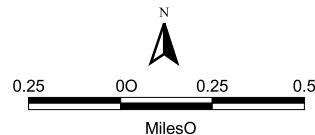
Legend:

- Parks**
- Beach
 - Fishing
 - ▲ Park
 - Preserve
 - Recreation Facility
 - Sports Facility
 - County parks near city, not included in study
- Sarasota City Limits
- Roads

Park Key:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 17TH STREET PARK (COUNTY OWNED) 2. 35TH STREET PARK 3. AB SMITH PARK 4. ARLINGTON PARK AND AQUATIC COMPLEX 5. AVION PARK 6. BAY ISLAND PARK 7. BAYFRONT COMMUNITY CENTER 8. BAYFRONT PARK 9. BAYFRONT PARK & MARINA/ISLAND PARK 10. BIRD KEY PARK 11. BOBBY JONES GOLF COURSE 12. CAUSEWAY PARK 13. CENTENNIAL PARK 14. CHARLES RINGLING PARK 15. COHEN PARK 16. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., PARK 17. EASTWOOD PARK 18. ED SMITH SPORTS COMPLEX 19. FAIRGROUNDS/BABE RUTH PARK 20. FREDD ATKINS PARK 21. FRUITVILLE ROAD PARK 22. GALVIN PARK 23. GILLESPIE PARK 24. INDIAN BEACH 25. KEN THOMPSON PARK/CITY ISLAND 26. LAUREL PARK 27. LAWN BOWLING CIVIC CENTER 28. LEMON AVENUE MALLO | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 29. LIDO BEACH & POOL 30. LINKS PLAZA PARK 31. LITTLE FIVE POINTS PARK 32. LUKEWOOD PARK 33. MARY DEAN PARK 34. MCCLELLAN PARKWAY PARK 35. NEW PASS FISHING PIER 36. NEW TOWN COMMUNITY CENTER 37. NORADOTA WAY 38. NORTH LIDO BEACH 39. NORTH WATER TOWER PARK 40. ORANGE AVENUE PARK 41. OTTER KEY 42. PAW PARK (COUNTY OWNED) 43. PAYNE PARK 44. PINEAPPLE PARK 45. PIONEER PARK 47. ROBERTS MEMORIAL PARK 48. SAN REMO PARK 49. SAPPHIRE SHORES PARK 50. SELBY FIVE POINTS PARK 51. SOUTH LIDO BEACH (COUNTY OWNED) 52. ST. ARMAND'S CIRCLE PARK 53. TONY SAPRITO PIER 54. WATERFRONT PARK 55. WHITAKER GATEWAY PARK 56. YOUTH ATHLETIC COMPLEX (COUNTY OWNED) |
|--|--|

EDAW



Classification of Existing Sarasota Parks

Name	Type of Park
ARLINGTON PARK AND AQUATIC COMPLEX	Community
BAYFRONT PARK	Community
BAYFRONT PARK & MARINA/ISLAND PARK	Community
GILLESPIE PARK	Community
KEN THOMPSON PARK/CITY ISLAND	Community
NEWTOWN COMMUNITY CENTER	Community
NORTH WATER TOWER PARK	Community
PAYNE PARK	Community
PIONEER PARK	Community
WHITAKER GATEWAY PARK	Community
OTTER KEY	Natural Resource
35TH STREET PARK	Neighborhood
AB SMITH PARK	Neighborhood
AVION PARK	Neighborhood
BAY ISLAND PARK	Neighborhood
BIRD KEY PARK	Neighborhood
CAUSEWAY PARK	Neighborhood
CHARLES RINGLING PARK	Neighborhood
COHEN PARK	Neighborhood
DR MARTIN LUTHER KING JR PARK	Neighborhood
FREDD ATKINS PARK	Neighborhood
FRUITVILLE ROAD PARK	Neighborhood
LEMON AVENUE MALL	Neighborhood
LUKEWOOD	Neighborhood
MARY DEAN PARK	Neighborhood
NEW PASS FISHING PIER	Neighborhood
ORANGE AVENUE PARK	Neighborhood
ROBARTS MEMORIAL PARK	Neighborhood
SAPPHIRE SHORES PARK	Neighborhood
SELBY FIVE POINTS PARK	Neighborhood
ST. ARMAND'S CIRCLE PARK	Neighborhood
TONY SAPRITO PIER/CAUSEWAY PARK	Neighborhood
BOBBY JONES GOLF COURSE	Special Use
CENTENNIAL PARK	Special Use
ED SMITH SPORTS COMPLEX	Special Use
FAIRGROUNDS/BABE RUTH PARK	Special Use
CIVIC CENTER/LAWN	Special Use
BOWLING/BAYFRONT REC	Special Use
LIDO BEACH AND POOL	Special Use
NORTH LIDO BEACH	Special Use
PAW PARK (see 17th Street Park)	Special Use
SOUTH LIDO BEACH	Special Use
17TH STREET PARK	Sports Complex
YOUTH ATHLETIC COMPLEX	Sports Complex

The table above illustrates our suggested categorization of existing parks, consistent with NRPA standards. See Table 10 in the Support Document for details regarding these classifications. All parks not listed are considered mini-parks.



Lido Beach

Standardizing the parks system categories will help managers understand resources and clarify the City-County agreement.

Connectivity Opportunities

Multiple connectivity opportunities include designated bike lanes, undesignated bike lanes, sidewalks, proposed bike lanes and trails, the Multi-Use Recreational Trail (MURT), greenways, and blueways. These different types of connections can be accomplished by using canals, abandoned rail corridors, drainage areas and stormwater easements, and the areas alongside bayous.

Currently, connections to parks and neighborhoods are provided mainly through sidewalks and bike lanes. In addition to the need to provide a cohesive system within the City, there are opportunities to connect with the unincorporated portion of Sarasota County, Manatee County, Longboat Key and a larger regional network.

Recommendations for connections are included in the *Recommendations* section of the plan.

Environment

Sarasota's physical environment encompasses a variety of individual ecosystems that contribute to the area's overall quality of life. These ecosystems not only improve air and water quality and protect beaches and other areas from erosion, but also serve as habitats for threatened and endangered species.

The preservation of these areas is critical to the City of Sarasota's future. Efforts to protect habitats, flora, and fauna should include, but not be limited to, functional and native landscaping, reduced impervious surfaces, minimization of area disturbance, and public education.

Current environmental efforts by the City of Sarasota include Ordinance No. 89-3344 Section 5-21-90, which calls for the eradication of the Brazilian Pepper plant. The County has also created an ordinance (2001-05) with that goal. Other initiatives include the City of Sarasota codes that call for pollution permits, tree protection, and mandatory recycling, provision of sewage treatment to Sarasota County residents along Phillippi Creek, and creation of brownfield redevelopment processes.

Regional efforts have included the distribution of *Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Environmentally Friendly Landscaping*, which was published by the University of Florida and Sarasota Bay and Tampa Bay Estuary Programs. This booklet explains the importance of design and maintenance of yards. More specifically, it addresses the importance of native plants, composting, using slow-release fertilizers, non-toxic pesticides, and minimal irrigation, and other methods to prevent stormwater runoff.

Future Sarasota parks should be designed with environmental sensitivity in mind, respecting their locations and taking advantage of environmental assets. The recent restoration of Hog Creek is a great example of creating a park space that acknowledges the environmental assets of an estuary; creating a passive open space as well as an educational opportunity for the park patrons.

Structure of City/County Relationship

In 1990, the City of Sarasota and Sarasota County entered into an agreement that allowed the County to conduct all recreational programming and maintenance of 30 parks that are owned by the City. The remaining parks, Bobby Jones Golf Complex, and Ed Smith Stadium would be maintained by the City. The agreement was for 20 years and contains three amendments that address the addition of new facilities.

Despite the agreement, the relationship between the City and County is not well-defined in terms of who is responsible once new facilities have been added and how funding should be allocated throughout the park system.

Of particular issue is the appropriate level of maintenance required and capital expenditure planning. The agreement between the City and the County should be updated to define these issues clearly.

Similarly, the City does not have standards and levels of expectations for the County's program delivery, projected revenues, or outcomes. Therefore, any new contract or amendments to the contract should clearly define these issues. A sample of a City/County agreement is included in the *Support Document*.

STANDARDS AND LEVELS OF SERVICE

To direct Sarasota in its future planning for parks, it was necessary to look at Sarasota's existing system and compare it to both national standards and similar cities in the region. Of course no direct comparison is completely accurate because every municipality is unique; this comparison is merely a starting point for recommendations.

For benchmarking purposes we collected data from other cities with demographics, geography, and services similar to Sarasota. (See *Support Document* for full discussion of comparison benchmark cities.) The municipalities are:

- Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
- Pensacola, Florida
- Boca Raton, Florida

Acres of Parkland Per Person

A rough method of assessing level of service takes the acres of parkland and divides it by thousands of residents. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) suggests as a rough guide 10 acres per thousand population.

City of Sarasota total park acreage is approximately 750 acres (*City Plan*). Census data indicate that the 2000 resident population for Sarasota is 52,715 (www.census.gov). This results in approximately 14 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. The following table shows Sarasota compared to the NRPA Guideline and other cities sampled.

Acres of Parkland per Thousand Population

City/Source	Acres per thousand	Acres per thousand w/o golf
<i>NRPA Guideline</i>	10.0	NA
Sarasota	14.2	8.3
Myrtle Beach	23.1	14.3
Pensacola	10.7	8.4
Boca Raton	10.0	7.3

Source: EDAW, 2001

Therefore, in terms of total acreage, the City has adequate parks for the population. This rough analysis, however, does not include issues of quality, geographic distribution, demographic characteristics, programs, types of facilities related to need, or connectivity. When golf courses are taken out of the calculation, Sarasota compares well with two of the three benchmark cities. (The NRPA standard includes golf courses, so this standard is not applicable when golf is not considered.)

Facilities

The maps on the following pages illustrate the geographic distribution of playing fields, swimming pools, recreation centers, basketball courts, and boat ramps. These maps, which also indicate in some cases the densities of children from five to seventeen years of age per acre for a particular Census tract, are useful tools in analyzing the geographic equity of recreation service delivery throughout the City. The age group of five to seventeen years is analyzed due to the high levels of use of recreation facilities for that particular age group. In general, the maps indicate a need for active recreation facilities in the

eastern portion of the City. The *Support Document* provides a more detailed analysis of specific facility needs and recommendations.

CONCLUSION

Sarasota has an excellent system that serves the community well. Major recommendations for enhancing the system are to:

- Develop an extensive system of parkways, greenways and blueways to connect citizens to each other, the environment, and parks and other destinations
- Develop a new community park in the east side of the City
- Redevelop Payne Park, Fredd Atkins Park, and North Water Tower Park
- Revise or replace the City-County agreement to clarify roles and expectations

These and other recommendations are described in more detail in the next section of the plan.

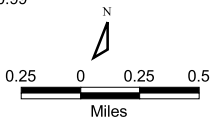
Baseball and Soccer Fields

Description:

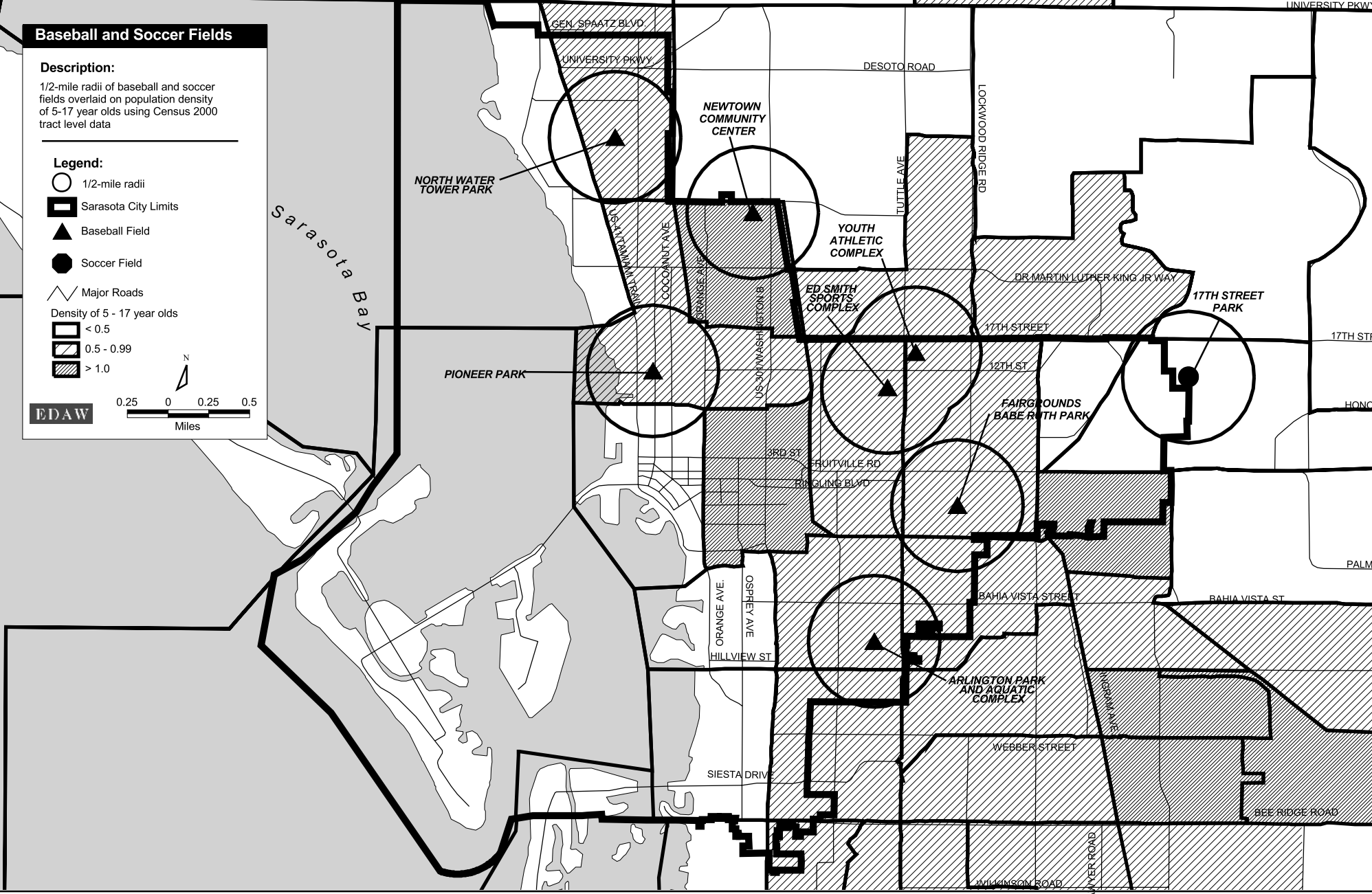
1/2-mile radii of baseball and soccer fields overlaid on population density of 5-17 year olds using Census 2000 tract level data

Legend:

-  1/2-mile radii
-  Sarasota City Limits
-  Baseball Field
-  Soccer Field
-  Major Roads
- Density of 5 - 17 year olds
 -  < 0.5
 -  0.5 - 0.99
 -  > 1.0



EDAW



Swimming Pools

Description:

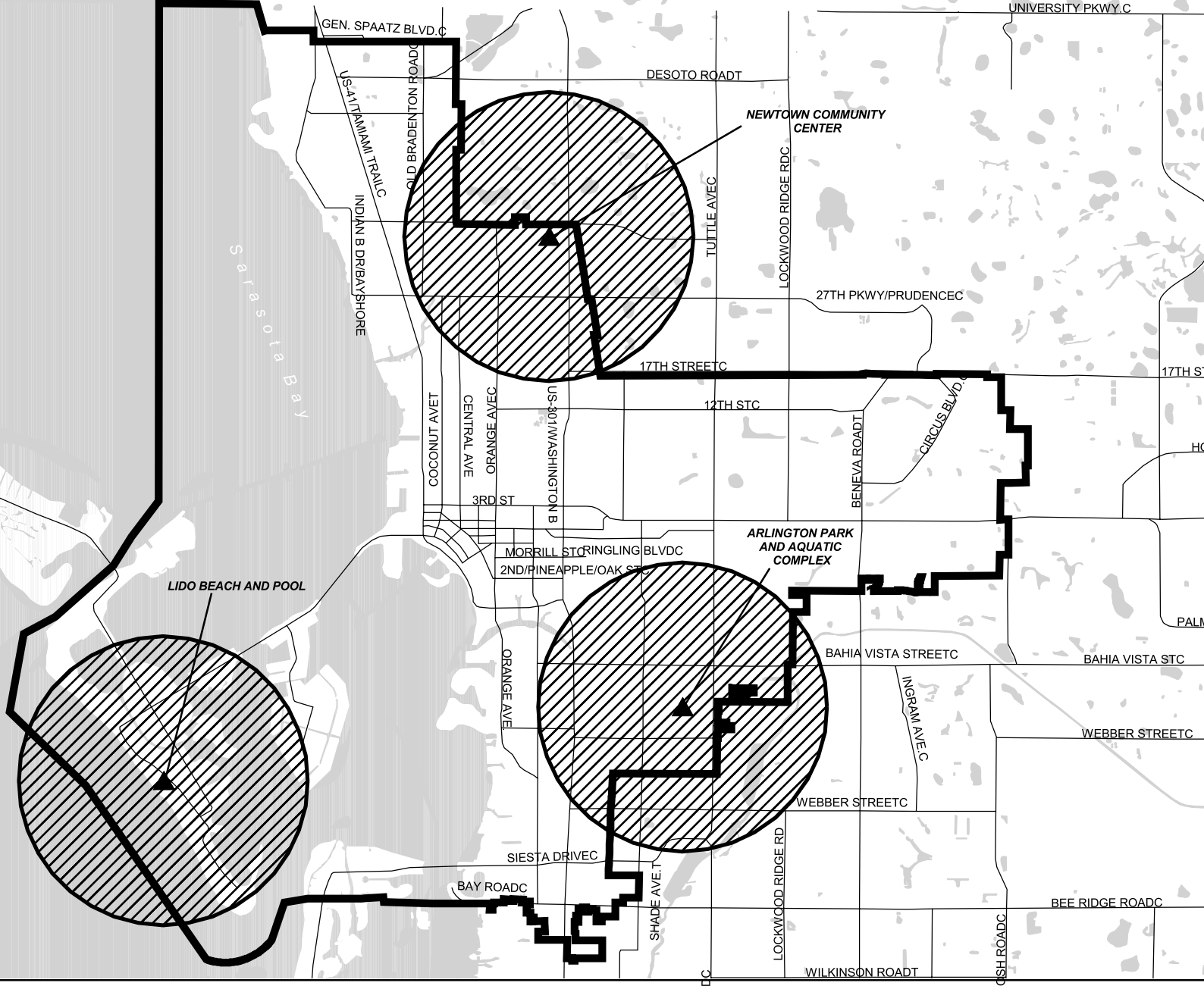
1-mile radii of swimming pools

Legend:

- ▲ Swimming Pool
- ▭ Sarasota City Limits
- ▨ 1-mile radii
- ⚡ Major Roads
- Water Body



FDAW







Basketball Courts




Description:

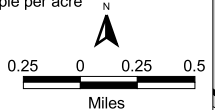
1/4-mile radii of basketball courts overlaid on population density of 5-17 year olds using Census 2000 tract level data

Legend:

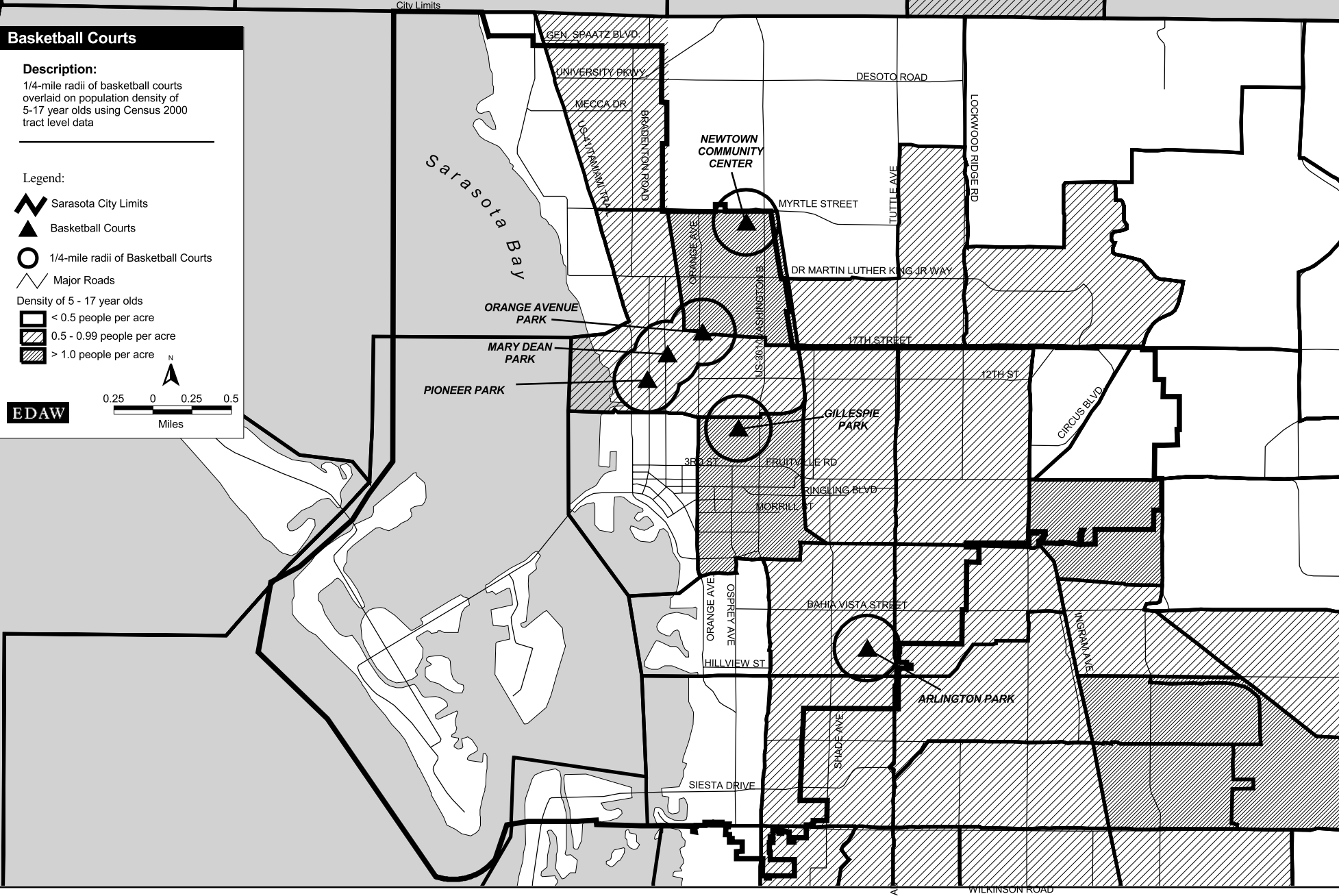
-  Sarasota City Limits
-  Basketball Courts
-  1/4-mile radii of Basketball Courts
-  Major Roads

Density of 5 - 17 year olds

-  < 0.5 people per acre
-  0.5 - 0.99 people per acre
-  > 1.0 people per acre



EDAW



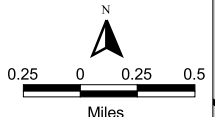
Recreation Centers

Description:

1/4-mile and 1/2-mile radii of recreation centers overlaid on population density of 5-17 year olds using Census 2000 tract level data

Legend:

-  1/4-mile radii
-  1/2-mile radii
-  Sarasota City Limits
-  Recreation Center
-  Major Roads
- Density of 5 - 17 year olds
 -  < 0.5
 -  0.5 - 0.99
 -  > 1.0



EDAW

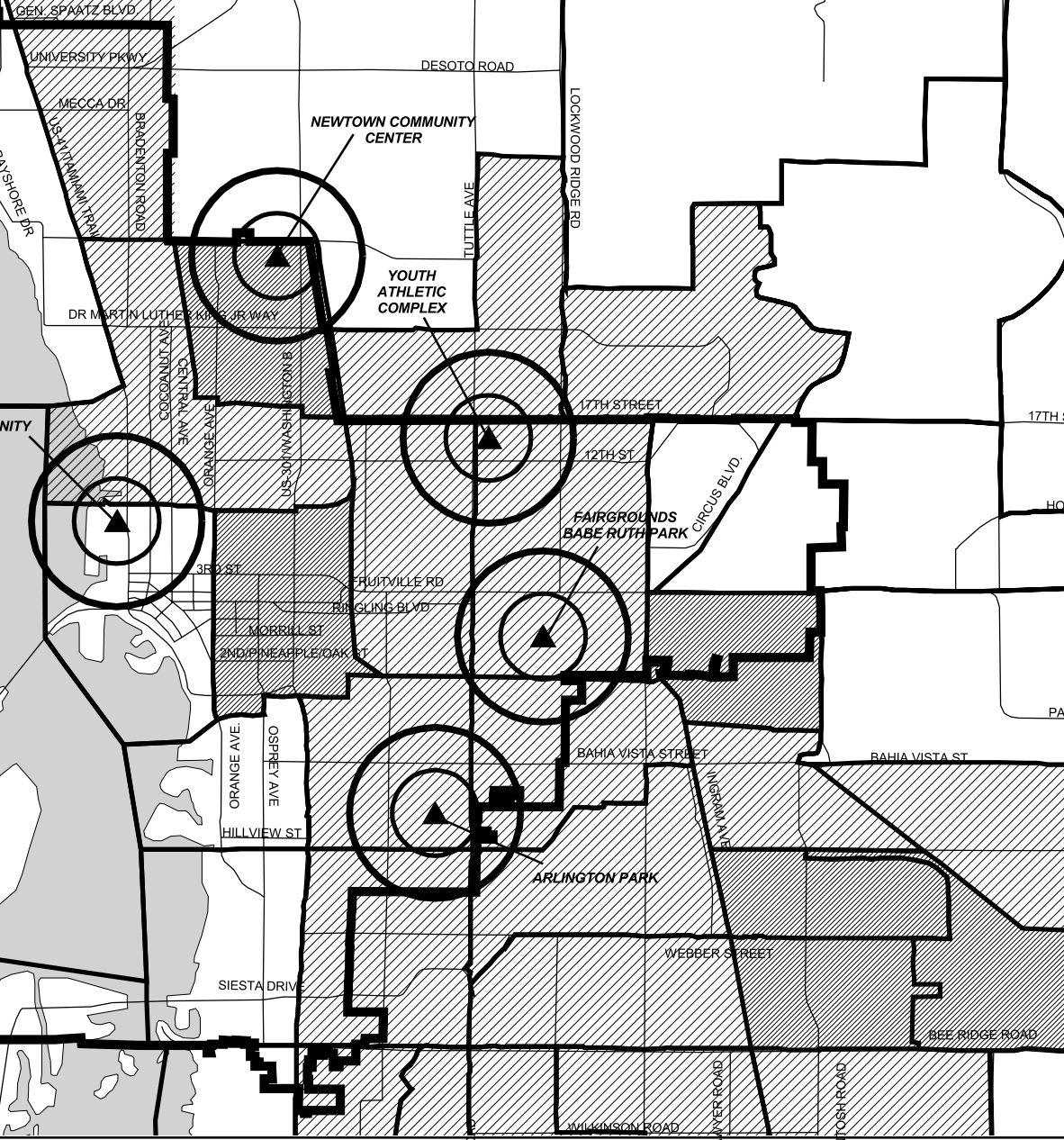
BAYFRONT COMMUNITY CENTER

NEWTOWN COMMUNITY CENTER

YOUTH ATHLETIC COMPLEX

FAIRGROUNDS BABE RUTH PARK

ARLINGTON PARK



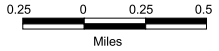
Boat Ramps

Description:

1-mile radii of boat ramps

Legend:

- ▲ Boat Ramp
- ∩ Roads
- ▭ Sarasota City Limits
- ▨ Water Body
- ▩ 1-mile radii



EDAW

KEN THOMPSON PARK

CENTENNIAL PARK

GEN. SPAATZ BLVD.

OLD BRADENTON ROAD

US-41 TAMMAMIT TRAIL

DESOTO ROAD

TUTTLE AVE

LOCKWOOD RIDGE RD

UNIVERSITY PKWY.

27TH PKWY/PRUDENCE

17TH STREET

12TH ST

US-301 WASHINGTON B

BENEVA ROAD

CIRCUS BLVD.

MORRILL ST RINGLING BLVD
2ND/PINEAPPLE/OAK ST

ORANGE AVE.

BAHIA VISTA STREET

INGRAM AVE

WEBBER STREET

SIESTA DRIVE

BAY ROAD

SHADE AVE.

LOCKWOOD RIDGE RD

WILKINSON ROAD

CASH ROAD

Sarasota Bay

recommendations



Paths can provide varied recreation opportunities



Passive park space can provide a respite from urban conditions

Sarasota is a beautiful city whose residents enjoy wonderful weather, sparkling beaches and many opportunities for outdoor recreation. In our analysis of facility level of service, we found that parks are generally in good condition; we also noted that some facilities were old and despite good maintenance may need to be replaced. In addition, we noted that residents in the east side of the City are not served as well with certain kinds of park land and recreation facilities.

The recommendations in this section respond to these findings, as well as public input and national trends.

NEW PARKS

Given recreation trends and the demographics of Sarasota as well as the geographic distribution of existing facilities, we suggest that a new park be created on the eastern edge of the city. Included in the new park should be unprogrammed open space, three new basketball courts lighted and configured for supervised play, a playground, and a new family aquatic center.

The map on the following page illustrates the general area where a site should be acquired for the new park; the area is east of Tuttle Avenue. Criteria in determining the specific location of the parkland to be acquired include:

- Adequate land for recommended facilities, parking and open space. Minimum size is 30 acres.
- Areas adjacent to public lands are preferred.
- Areas accessible via planned trails, blueways and parkways preferred.

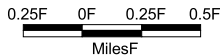
Potential New Park Location

Description:

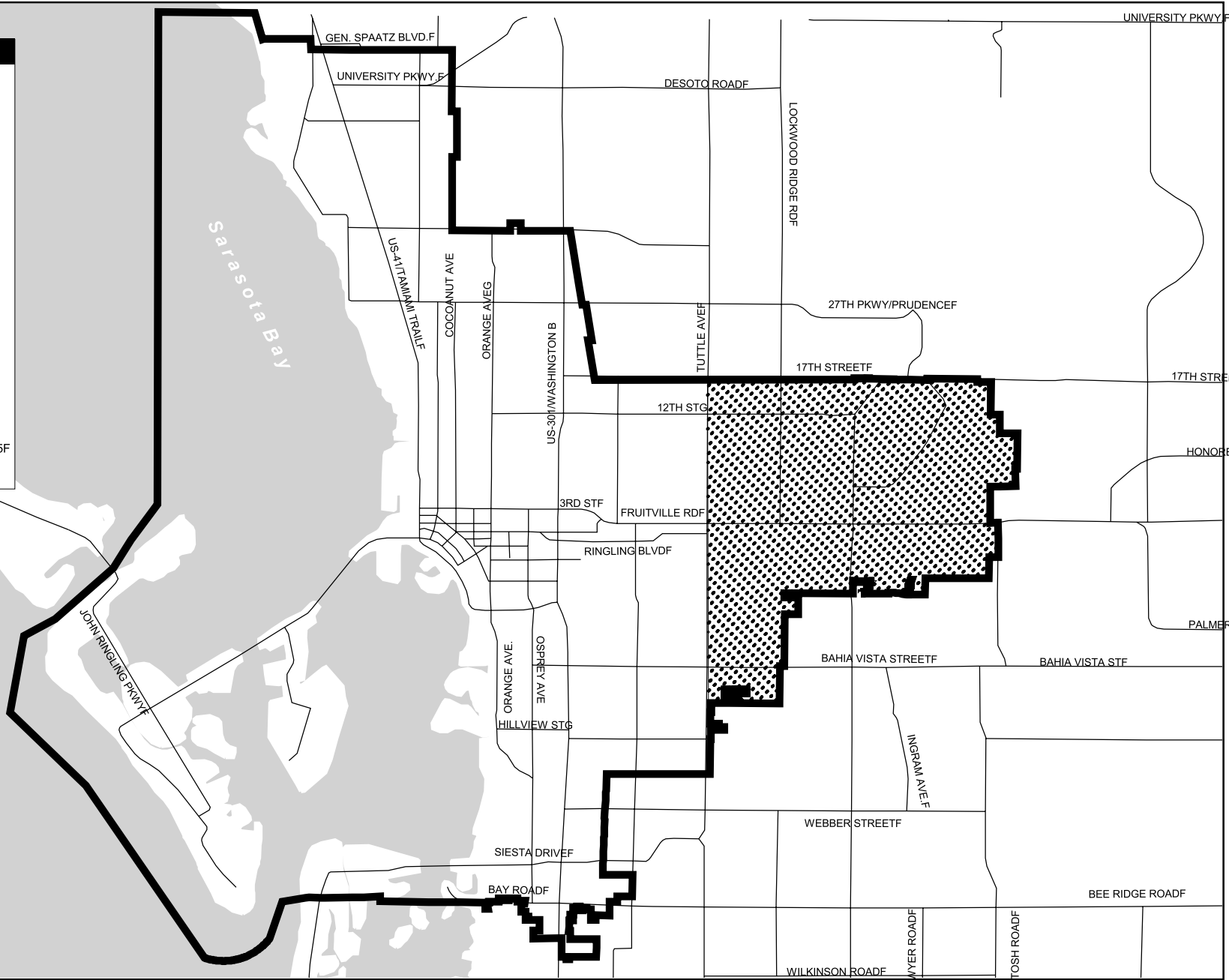
General location of proposed park

Legend:

-  New Park
-  Sarasota City Limits
-  Major Roads



EDAW



- Areas adjacent to residential land uses are preferred. The ideal configuration is separation of the park from facing residential properties across a roadway.
- Opportunities to protect and preserve natural resources should be considered.
- Areas adjacent to existing private or not-for profit recreation facilities and/or schools (public and private) to increase the potential for partnerships.

As noted in the *City of Sarasota Downtown Master Plan*, other park areas that are recommended include Lemon Avenue Mall, Rosemary Neighborhood Public Square at Boulevard of the Arts and Central Avenue, and a park at East Avenue between 7th Street and 8th Street.

NEW FACILITIES

Considering national recreation trends, the demographics of Sarasota, public input, and the benchmark cities, we analyzed the number and location of existing recreation facilities in several categories. This analysis is documented in Section 2 of the *Support Document*. The table below summarizes our recommendations for new facilities.

Facility Recommendations

Facility Type	Sarasota Existing	Sarasota Recommendation
Baseball/softball Fields	26	Sufficient
Soccer/Football	4	2 new fields
Tennis Courts	26	3 new courts at Payne Park
Basketball Courts	6	4 new courts
Golf Courses	3	Sufficient
Playgrounds	18	1 new playground
Community Pools	5*	1 family aquatic center
Boat Ramps	6	Work on parking availability
Community Centers	5	Renovate Newtown Community Center; provide new center in new park
Shuffle Board Courts	12	Add courts to Payne Park Shuffleboard Center to allow for tournament Play

Source: EDAAW, 2001
 * Note three of the five pools are located at Arlington Park

Baseball/Softball Fields

Sarasota’s 26 ballfields generally meet current needs and are consistent with national and benchmark cities standards. This is not a priority for new development.

Soccer

Soccer is a growing sport and there is a lack of fields in the City. Keeping in mind the facilities at the 17th Street Park and multipurpose fields, we suggest two new fields. These fields could be located in the newly developed eastside park. When not in use for scheduled play, the fields would function as open space and could be used for other events.

Tennis

The tennis center at Payne Park is an excellent facility, centrally located and convenient to all Sarasotans. Although the overall number of courts in the city is adequate, there is congestion at the Payne Park Facility. Therefore, three courts should be added to the tennis center at Payne Park. This facility is supplemented by other city and county courts and private facilities across the City.

Basketball

Basketball continues to be a popular sport, especially among teenagers. Analysis of the number (four) and location of existing courts suggests a new facility with at least three courts and a fourth court located in another park. The three-court facility can be located in the new park or in Payne Park and developed basketball-academy-style, providing adult supervision and coaching as well as opportunities for free play. Gillespie Park would be a good location for a new basketball court; the existing basketball facilities there should be renovated.

Golf

Bobby Jones Golf Course is in good condition and, with the large number of private courses, provides sufficient opportunities for golfing in the City.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds are well distributed across the City but tend to be somewhat outdated. We suggest at least one new playground, in addition to the playground currently being planned at Bayfront Park. The new playground should have at least two sections, one for tots and one for older kids.

Community Pools

Three of the city's pools are located at the Arlington Park and Aquatic Complex (two lap pools and a kiddie pool), with another at Lido and a fifth at Newtown Community Center. These last two pools are older and in need of substantial repair and renovation. The Newtown pool is slated for a full rehabilitation; the City should consider adding an outdoor sprayground to complement the swimming facilities.

The Lido pool was badly damaged in tropical storm Gabriel and may cost more to repair than what would be required to build a new pool. However, this facility has played an important role in the history of the community therefore the City should look for ways to highlight and increase use of the facility, both for the neighborhood and community at large—though not high intensity uses. New facilities should be designed to be consistent with the City's image of quality design with consideration of the historic Lido Casino. The facilities should also be designed to incur minimum damage from storms.

In addition to the upgrade/repair of existing facilities, we recommend the City provide a new family aquatic facility located in the proposed new east-side park. The facility should be designed with areas for toddlers, children and adults.

Boat Ramps

There are no general standards for boat ramps per population; boat ramps, of course, can only be located in areas suitable for boat launching.

Limited parking space at the Centennial Park facility restrict boat-launching capacity. Adding another boat ramp in another location, particularly north of downtown or in the County, could solve these capacity problems, but suitable sites are

lacking. Alternatively, increasing parking capacity at Centennial Park would increase boat-launching capacity land costs, making this option unappealing. Sharing parking with the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall could also be an option when events are not planned; however, this may not be a long-term solution.

Another option is to develop a remote parking and shuttle or valet system for cars and trailers after the boats have been unloaded.

Since many users of the boat ramps come from outside of the City, another alternative for easing the congestion at the Centennial Park ramps is to institute a user's fee with a sliding scale for City and non-City residents. This fee could help defray maintenance costs.

The small ramps at the eastern bridgehead of the John Ringling Bridge will be replaced with a new park to be constructed below the bridge.

Vegetation intrusion at Ken Thompson Park has reduced boating capacity at that site; however, scheduled renovation will improve launching at that site.

Recreation Centers

Recreation centers should respond to the programming needs of all ages, especially in a city of Sarasota's diversity. While the number of Sarasota's recreation centers is adequate for the number of people served, the facilities are old and no longer serve the needs of all the citizens. Throughout the country, new centers are planned as intergenerational, providing opportunities for children, teens, adults and seniors to meet and participate in joint activities as well as activities geared for certain age groups. In addition, newer recreation centers often provide more meeting space for community activities. We recommend that the community center at Newtown be substantially renovated to meet new recreation center standards and better connected to (or combined with) the adjacent Cohen Park.

CONNECTIVITY PLAN

In January 2002 Sarasota was featured in *The New York Times* travel section. The author notes that

“... things have changed dramatically since I moved here in 1985. Sarasota has become younger, richer and infinitely more stylish. Hip people can successfully vacation here.

“.... There are 35 miles of [beaches], many with pure white sand. These are Caribbean-style beaches, with languid blue-green water set against palm trees. They are Sarasota's pot of gold.”

The article also describes the many and varied arts and recreation opportunities available in Sarasota. Supporting the idea that Sarasota is a great place to live and vacation, we focussed our connectivity plan on local strengths and national trends. Connecting Sarasota—from the east side to the coast and from north to south as well as creating alternative routes for getting around the City without a car—is a major feature of the plan.

The most significant recommendations therefore are to create a system of interconnected pathways for bikes, pedestrians, and paddlers. These allow the citizens of Sarasota and their visitors to enjoy the parks and beaches, as well as other urban amenities, without necessarily getting into their cars and driving.

After analyzing the connecting possibilities among Sarasota's parks, schools, transit and other amenities, we developed a plan that addresses blueways, trails and parkways, and landscaped highways. We developed the connectivity plan around active and passive modes of transportation. In addition, the plan is coordinated with the Sarasota County Trails Master Plan effort.

legend



- 1 17TH STREET PARK
- 2 35TH STREET PARK
- 3 AB SMITH PARK
- 4 ARLINGTON PARK AND AQUATIC COMPLEX
- 5 AVION PARK
- 6 BAY ISLAND PARK
- 7 BAYFRONT COMMUNITY CENTER
- 8 BAYFRONT PARK
- 9 BAYFRONT PARK & MARINA/ISLAND PARK
- 10 BIRD KEY PARK
- 11 BOBBY JONES GOLF COURSE
- 12 CAUSEWAY PARK
- 13 CENTENNIAL PARK
- 14 CHARLES RINGLING PARK
- 15 COHEN PARK
- 16 DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR., PARK
- 17 EASTWOOD PARK
- 18 ED SMITH SPORTS COMPLEX
- 19 FAIRGROUNDS/BABE RUTH PARK
- 20 FREDD ATKINS PARK
- 21 FRUITVILLE ROAD PARK
- 22 GALVIN PARK
- 23 GILLESPIE PARK
- 24 INDIAN BEACH
- 25 KEN THOMPSON PARK/CITY ISLAND
- 26 LAUREL PARK
- 27 LAWN BOWLING CIVIC CENTER
- 28 LEMON AVENUE MALL
- 29 LIDO BEACH & POOL
- 30 LINKS PLAZA PARK
- 31 LITTLE FIVE POINTS PARK
- 32 LUKEWOOD PARK
- 33 MARY DEAN PARK
- 34 MCCLELLAN PARKWAY PARK
- 35 NEW PASS FISHING PIER
- 36 NEWTOWN COMMUNITY CENTER
- 37 NORASOTA WAY
- 38 NORTH LIDO BEACH
- 39 NORTH WATER TOWER PARK
- 40 ORANGE AVENUE PARK
- 41 OTTER KEY
- 42 PAW PARK
- 43 PAYNE PARK
- 44 PINEAPPLE PARK
- 45 PIONEER PARK
- 47 ROBERTS MEMORIAL PARK
- 48 SAN REMO PARK
- 49 SAPPHIRE SHORE PARK
- 50 SELBY FIVE POINTS PARK
- 51 SOUTH LIDO BEACH
- 52 ST. ARMAND'S CIRCLE PARK
- 53 TONY SAPRITO PIER
- 54 WATERFRONT PARK
- 55 WHITAKER GATEWAY PARK
- 56 YOUTH ATHLETIC COMPLEX

- A SENIOR FRIENDSHIP CENTER
- B ALTA VISTA ELEMENTARY
- C BAY HAVEN SCHOOL OF BASICS PLUS
- D BOOKER HIGH SCHOOL
- E BROOKSIDE MIDDLE SCHOOL
- F CARDINAL MOONEY HIGH SCHOOL
- G CHARACTER HOUSE
- H CHARTER HOUSE
- I CONCORDIA LUTHERAN SCHOOL 2
- J ECKERD COLLEGE
- K GULF COAST VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE
- L MCCLELLAN PARK SCHOOL
- M RINGLING SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN
- N SARASOTA HIGH SCHOOL
- O SARASOTA SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
- P ST MARTHA'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL
- Q SUNCOAST SCHOOL FOR INNOVATIVE STUDIES
- R THE ACHIEVEMENT CENTER
- S TUTTLE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- T UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA AT SARASOTA
- U WESTCOAST SCHOOL FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT


blueways

-  KAYAK ROUTE
-  WATER TAXI ROUTE



greenways and trails

-  RAILS TO TRAILS:
PEDESTRIAN / BICYCLE PATH ON EXISTING R.R. R.O.W.
WITH RESERVATION FOR FUTURE LIGHT RAIL
-  MURT:
MULTI-USE PEDESTRIAN / BICYCLE TRAIL

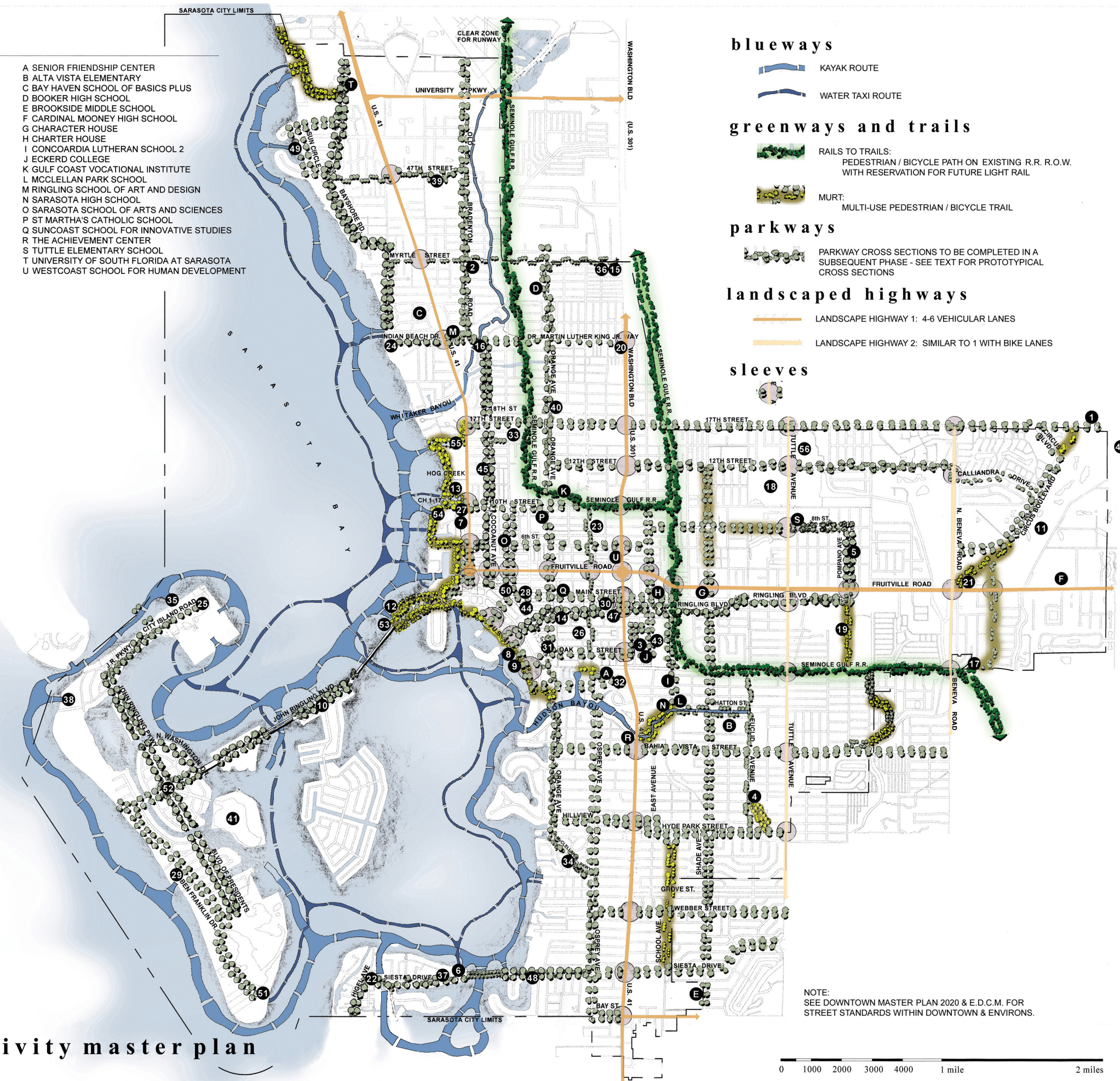
parkways

-  PARKWAY CROSS SECTIONS TO BE COMPLETED IN A
SUBSEQUENT PHASE - SEE TEXT FOR PROTOTYPICAL
CROSS SECTIONS

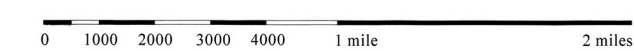
landscaped highways

-  LANDSCAPE HIGHWAY 1: 4-6 VEHICULAR LANES
-  LANDSCAPE HIGHWAY 2: SIMILAR TO 1 WITH BIKE LANES

sleeves



NOTE:
SEE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN 2020 & E.D.C.M. FOR
STREET STANDARDS WITHIN DOWNTOWN & ENVIRONS.



Blueways

From north to south, the blueway skims the coast touching down in parks and connecting through Whitaker Bayou and Hudson Bayou into internal blueways. Kayak and canoe input areas would take advantage of existing parking at parks and schools. The blueway envisions inputs to the north, the south, and in the estuaries. It also takes advantage of stops in downtown as well as other points of interest throughout the city. The plan anticipates that paddlers would have a wide variety of scenery to choose from and could use many miles of paddling.

The implementation plan includes projects to create these connections. The most significant action would be to connect the mouth of Whitaker Bayou north to the edge of the City near University Parkway and the Seminole Gulf Railroad corridor. This will create an interesting urban blueway connecting north Sarasota to the coast. The blueway would require the cleaning up of the stream above MLK Park, resulting in important environmental benefits.



Kayak Input Dock

A third project would connect coastal Hudson Bayou to the schools at its terminus; McClellan Park School, Sarasota High School, and the Senior Friendship Center.

The plan for blueways also includes a water taxi, which would provide an alternative and fun mode of transportation for residents and visitors. The water taxi would link important destinations such as USF, The Ringling Museum, St. Armand’s Key, Mote Marine, Selby Gardens, and downtown as well as

provide an enjoyable, scenic experience en route. In addition to its appeal to visitors, the water taxis could offer an alternative form of transportation for residents and workers. Jacksonville and Fort Lauderdale, Florida provide examples of successful water taxi operations.

An appropriate regulatory framework would need to be created for this action. While this plan is conceptual we found a tremendous amount of interest in this idea, and a desire to further explore the issues of parking, concessions, stop locations, and the larger regulatory framework for the water taxi idea. All kayak/canoe inputs and water taxi areas should meet ADA accessibility standards.

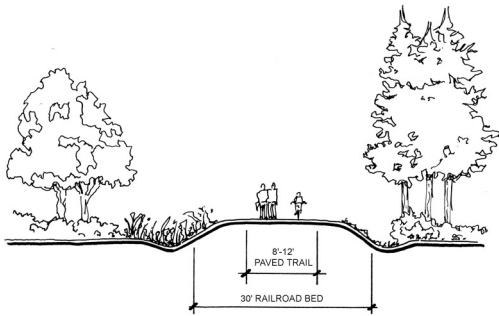
Greenways and Trails

Greenways and trails refer to off-road multi-use paths suitable for cycling, running and walking. The plan indicates two kinds of greenways and trails: multi-use recreation trails, or MURTs, and rails-to-trails, which use former railroad corridors.



CSX Railroad Corridor

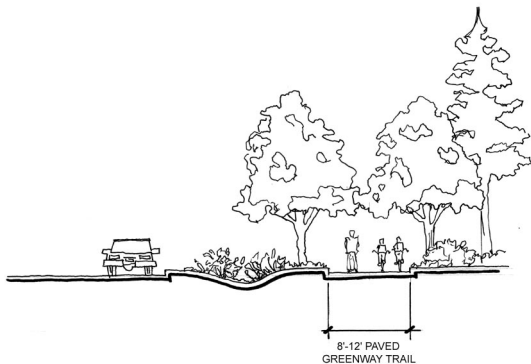
For rails-to-trails, we recommend securing the much discussed railway rights-of-way running from the southeast corner of the City to the north. The rail line splits near Boulevard of the Arts, and we recommend obtaining rights-of-way for the west corridor first. The east-west portion of the west line is an especially important piece since it will provide a crucial link in the east-west trail connection.



Example of Rail-to-Trail Development

MURTs include a bayside trail extending from Whitaker Gateway Park south to Hudson Bayou. Other segments include:

- From USF north to the Sarasota city limit.
- A small segment along Alderman Street west of Osprey.
- A section of Hudson Bayou from Bahia Vista Street northeast to School Avenue.
- A portion of the School Avenue right-of-way between Datura Street and Siesta Drive.
- Segments southwest and northeast of Circus Boulevard in the eastern portion of the City.



Example of MURT development

Other connections to individual parks make it possible to safely connect most parks to the major trails.

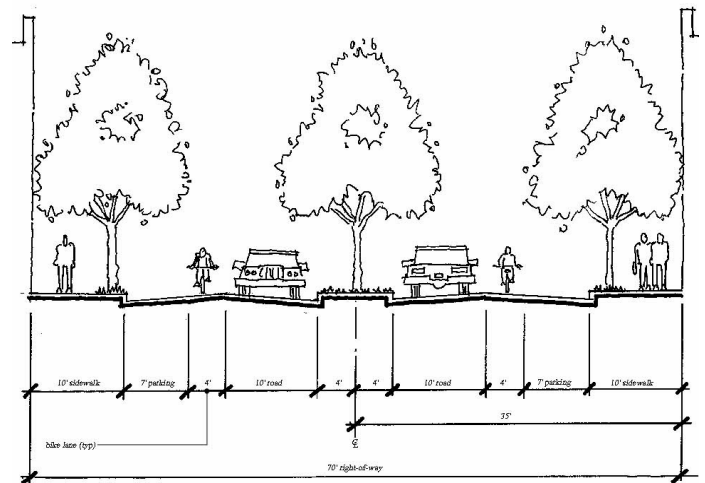
Parkways

Parkways are streets that provide safe, pleasant pedestrian experiences and, where feasible, also include dedicated bicycle lanes. These streets will have appropriate landscaping, lighting and signage. Downtown streets (including parkways) are described in the Downtown Master Plan and in the City’s Engineering Design Criteria Manual (EDCM).

Parkways include:

- 17th Street, from U.S. Highway 41 to the City limits.
- Bahia Vista, from Orange Avenue to the City limits.
- Webber, from Osprey to the City limits.
- Osprey, between the City limits on the south and its connection with the Seminole Gulf Trail.
- Orange Avenue for its entire length.
- Shade Avenue (in combination with a MURT).

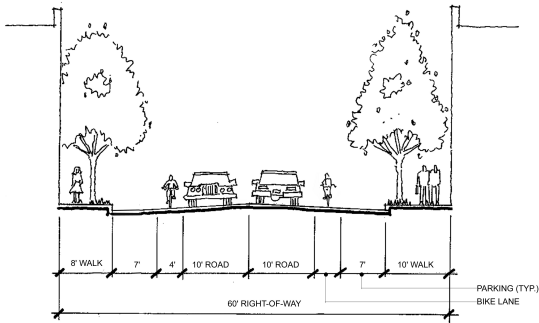
As illustrated on the Connectivity Plan, the plan proposes parkways on several different kinds of streets. To implement the plan, detailed designs will be needed to address a variety of conditions. We have provided three examples of how streets can be developed into parkways.



Primary Parkway

Primary Parkway (70' Right-of-Way)

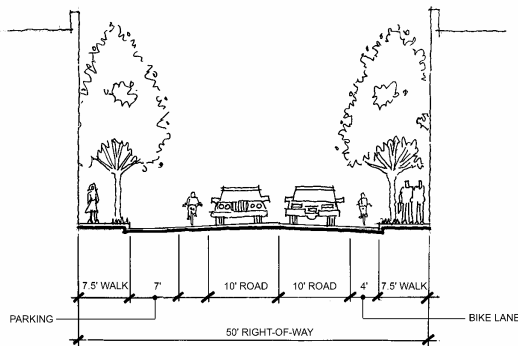
This street section illustrates a local, free-moving thoroughfare suitable for higher-density mixed-use buildings. The street is urban in character with raised curbs, wide sidewalks including continuous tree-lined planting strips, two parallel parking lanes and two designated bike lanes. The character of the street may vary to respond to the corresponding adjacent commercial, residential or mixed-uses.



Secondary Parkway

Secondary Parkway (60' Right-of-Way)

This level of parkway is a local, free-moving thoroughfare suitable for higher-density residential and commercial buildings. The street is urban in character with raised curbs, wide sidewalks including continuous tree-lined planting strips, two parallel parking lanes and designated bike lanes on either side of the parkway. The character of the street may vary to respond to the corresponding adjacent commercial or residential uses.



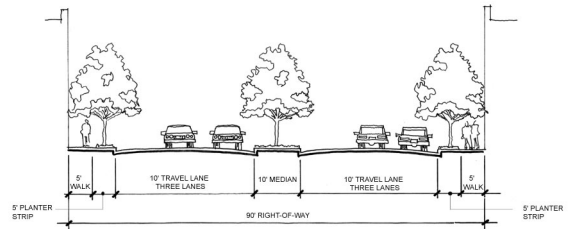
Tertiary Parkway

Tertiary Parkway (50' Right-of-Way)

This street section illustrates a local, free-moving thoroughfare suitable for lower and higher-density residential buildings. The street is urban in character with raised curbs, wide sidewalks including continuous tree-lined planting strips, one lane of parallel parking on one side and two designated bike lanes on either side of the travel lanes. The character of the street may vary to respond to the corresponding adjacent residential densities.

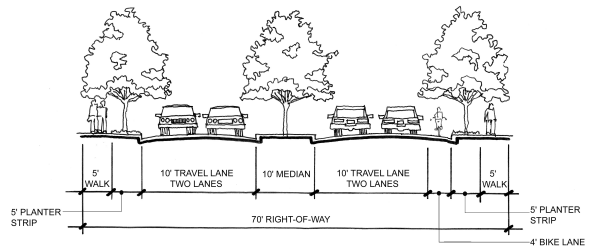
Landscaped Highways

Landscaped highways are major thoroughfares that will remain suitable primarily only for vehicular traffic. Designating and improving these corridors as landscaped highways will provide a more pleasant driving experience for residents and visitors. In addition, safe, comfortable pedestrian crossings (sleeves) should be provided everywhere that trails and parkways intersect with landscaped highways.



Prototypical Six-lane Landscape Highway Treatment

U.S. Highway 41 is designated as Sarasota's primary landscaped highway. Some nicely landscaped medians already exist along U.S. Highway 41—the treatment should be continued.



Prototypical Four-lane Landscape Highway Treatment

Other primary landscaped highways include U.S. 301, University Parkway from USF to the City limits and Fruitville Road from U.S. Highway 41 to the City limits.

Designated secondary landscaped highways are Tuttle Avenue and Beneva Road.

Sleeves

Sleeves refer to intersections of trails and parkways with landscaped highways. Components of a sleeve include a traffic signal, special paving, lighting, signs, and buildings with minimal setbacks—all designed to signal to motorists, cyclists and pedestrians that this is a place where pedestrians and cyclists can safely cross.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Interlocal Agreement

As described in the existing conditions section, the City and County entered into an inter-local agreement that allowed the County to conduct all recreation programming and maintenance of 30 parks that are owned by the City. We recommend that the City and County re-draft an agreement that defines more clearly the specific roles of each entity, as well as detailed standards for maintenance, programming and management.

A resource management plan should be developed for the parks, perhaps as a joint City-County venture. This should examine structured maintenance as well as capital improvements. As part of maintenance requirements, items such as mowing schedules and standards, sidewalk and path clearing for low branches and other obtrusive vegetation, and pest management should be included.

Technical Memo 3 in the Support Document has a more in-depth discussion of the interlocal agreement and resource management plan.

Identity and Wayfinding

We also recommend that the City standardize all identification signs for parks based on a new design or adopt one of the current schemes. In addition, citizens and visitors alike would benefit

from an improved wayfinding system, which could include signs celebrating entrances into the city and a standard directional system pointing drivers, cyclists and pedestrians to parks and other points of interest.

In addition to Citywide way-finding sign systems, each park should be signed with appropriate matching system-wide parks sign system.

Partnerships

One common way to get more use from public funds within a city is to partner with school boards, other government agencies, not-for-profits and private interests to share physical and programmatic assets.

In addition to increased assets these partnerships can help bring cross-generational activities and understanding, particularly in a city such as Sarasota with such a large and active senior population.

Partnerships with the School Board (and other targeted partners) should be expanded to share facilities and programs, including associated costs.

A primary example of partnering opportunity is the Indian Beach/Sapphire Shores neighborhoods on the north side of the city, community groups have created small tot lots but the neighborhood would like to see more parkland in the area. Without conflicting with the eastside park's high priority, the City should actively explore options with the neighborhood and other parties for lowering the public cost of purchasing land for a park in the area.

Native Plants

The City of Sarasota falls into two general native plant communities: coastal uplands and pine flatwoods¹. The coastal uplands area of Sarasota consists mainly of beach and dune related vegetation. Soils are composed of coarse sand and shell fragments and support plants that are adapted to hot, arid, and windy conditions.

¹ Association of Florida Native Nurseries. *Xeric Landscaping with Florida Native Plants*. San Antonio, Florida: AFNN Publications Committee, 1991.

The pine flatwoods are characterized by open woodlands and comprised of a variety of pine species along with saw palmetto, shrubs, and grasses. Soils in the pine flatwoods community are sandy with an impervious clay layer below the surface and sustain vegetation that is tolerant of a wide range of moisture and intolerant of salt and shade.

The City of Sarasota has recently adopted landscape guidelines. The primary intent of the guidelines “is to promote the public health and welfare by specifying minimum standards for landscaping that will enhance the appearance of the city, help improve air and water quality, conserve soil, screen unattractive views, and muffle sound” (Section VII-301 of the City’s Zoning Code).

Once adopted, all landscaping plans must meet certain criteria, which includes using landscaping materials wherever feasible that are native to the area as determined by soil characteristics, wind and salt tolerances, drought tolerance, and maintenance demands. The regulations found in Section VII-308 ensure the use of native trees and understory plant materials by requiring that 50 percent of required canopy trees be native to Florida. The regulations reference plant materials that can be used for the remaining 50 percent and also provide a list of accent/understory trees, and nuisance species.

Based on the City of Sarasota future guidelines and expertise, the following is a recommended list of plants for streetscaping and park design. The list contains both native and non-native plants. While these native plant materials may not be available or suitable for every situation, the City should attempt to use native plants wherever possible.

This list is also a valuable guide for homeowners and other entities seeking guidance for landscaping. The list has been developed at three levels: a natural palette, a neighborhood palette (less formal) and a town center palette (more formal). For further information regarding the use of these lists, please call the Sarasota County Cooperative Extension Service at 941-316-1000 or visit the Florida House at 4600 Beneva Road South.

The Cooperative Extension Service for Sarasota County, City of Sarasota Public Works, and the Serena Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society

participated in the development of these recommendations.

Natural Areas – Trees

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Acer Rubrum</i>	Red Maple	Y
<i>Eugenia axillaris</i>	White Stopper	Y
<i>Eugenia foetida</i>	Box Leaf Stopper	Y
<i>Gordonia lasianthus</i>	Loblolly Bay	Y
<i>Ilex cassine</i>	Dahoon Holly	Y
<i>Ilex x attenuata</i>	East Palatka Holly	Y
<i>Juniperus silicicola</i>	Southern Red Cedar	Y
<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	Sweet Bay	Y
<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	Wax Myrtle	Y
<i>Persea borbonia</i>	Red Bay	Y
<i>Pinus elliotii</i>	Slash Pine	Y
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	Live Oak	Y
<i>Sabal palmetto</i>	Cabbage Palm	Y
<i>Tabebuia spp.</i>	Trumpet Tree	
<i>Taxodium distichum</i>	Bald Cypress	Y

Natural Areas – Shrubs

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	Beauty Berry	Y
<i>Chrysobalanus icaco</i>	Cocoplum	Y
<i>Coccoloba uvifera</i>	Sea Grape	Y
<i>Dodonaea viscosa</i>	Varnish Leaf	Y
<i>Hamelia patens</i>	Firebush	Y
<i>Hypericum spp.</i>	St. John's Wort	Y
<i>Myrica cerifera</i>	Wax Myrtle	Y
<i>Myrcianthes fragrans</i>	Simpson Stopper	Y
<i>Psychotria nervosa</i>	Wild Coffee	Y
<i>Serenoa repens</i>	Saw Palmetto	Y
<i>Sophora tomentosa</i>	Necklace Pod	Y
<i>Stachytarpheta urticifolia</i>	Blue Poterweed	Y
<i>Viburnum obovatum</i>	Walter Viburnum	Y
<i>Zamia floridana</i>	Coontie	Y

Natural Areas – Groundcovers/Vines

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Kosteletzkya virginica</i>	Salt Marsh Mallow	Y
<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Coral Honeysuckle	Y
<i>Stachytarpheta jamaicensis</i>	Jamaican Blue Porterweed	Y

Natural Areas – Aquatics

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Canna flaccida</i>	Yellow Canna	Y
<i>Crinum americanum</i>	String Lily	Y
<i>Hymenocallis latifolia</i>	Spider Lily	Y
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft Rush	Y
<i>Nymphaea odorata</i>	Fragrant Water Lily	Y
<i>Sagittaria spp.</i>	Arrowhead	Y
<i>Scirpus spp.</i>	Giant Bulrush	Y
<i>Thalia geniculata</i>	Arrowroot	Y

Neighborhood Areas – Trees

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Bucida buceras</i> 'Shady Lady'	Black Olive	
<i>Eriobotrya deflexa</i> 'Coppertone'	Coppertone	<i>Eriobotrya deflexa</i> 'Coppertone'
<i>Eriobotrya japonica</i>	Loquat	
<i>Ilex cassine</i>	Dahoon Holly	Y
<i>Juniperus silicicola</i>	Southern Redcedar	Y
<i>Lagerstroemia spp.</i>	Crape Myrtle	
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Southern Magnolia	Y
<i>Podocarpus gracilior</i>	Weeping Podocarpus	
<i>Platycladus orientalis</i>	Arborvitae	
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	Live Oak	Y
<i>Sabal palmetto</i>	Cabbage Palm	Y
<i>Swietenia mahogany</i>	Mahogany	
<i>Syagrus romanzoffiana</i>	Queen Palm	
<i>Tebebuia species</i>	Citrus Species	Y
<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>	Desert Fan Palm	

Neighborhood Areas – Shrubs

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Acalypha hispida</i>	Chenille Plant	
<i>Allamanda cathartica</i>	Allamanda	
<i>Alpinia spp.</i>	Ginger	
<i>Acalypha wilkesiana</i>	Copperleaf	
<i>Acca sellowiana</i>	Pineapple Guava	
<i>Calliandra haematocephala</i>	Powder Puff	
<i>Cassia alata</i>	Candle Bush	Y
<i>Chrysobalanus icaco</i>	Cocoplum	Y
<i>Coccoloba uvifera</i>	Sea Grape	
<i>Eugenia uniflora</i>	Surinam Cherry	
<i>Fatsia japonica</i>	Fatsia	
<i>Galphimia glauca</i>	Thyallis	

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Hamelia patens</i>	Firebush	Y
<i>Hibiscus rosa-sinensis</i>	Chinese Hibiscus	
<i>Ixora coccinea</i>	Flame of the Woods	
<i>Jasminum multiflorum</i>	Downy Jasmine	
<i>Myrcianthes fragrans</i>	Simpson Stopper	Y
<i>Nerium oleander</i> 'Petite Pink'	Dwarf Oleander	
<i>Plumbago capensis</i>	Plumbago	
<i>Podocarpus macrophylla</i>	Podocarpus	
<i>Schefflera arboricola</i>	Dwarf Schefflera	
<i>Syzygium paniculatum</i>	Bush Cherry	
<i>Tabernaemontana divaricata</i>	Crape Jasmine	
<i>Tecomaria capensis</i>	Cape Honeysuckle	
<i>Tibouchina granulosa</i>	Purple Glory Tree	
<i>Viburnum obovatum</i> 'Walters'	Walters Viburnum	
<i>Zamia maritima</i>	Cardboard Palm	

Neighborhood Areas – Groundcovers/Vines

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Agapanthus africanus</i>	Lily of the Nile	
<i>Cyrtomium falcatum</i>	Holly Fern	
<i>Dietes vegeta</i>	African Iris	
<i>Gamolepis chrysanthemoides</i>	African Daisy Bush	
<i>Hemerocallis sp.</i>	Evergreen Daylily	
<i>Juniperus conferta</i>	Shore Juniper	
	Dwarf Carisa	
<i>Trachelospermum asiaticum</i>	Asian Jasmine	

Town Center – Trees and Palms

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Bucida Buceras</i> 'Shady Lady'	Black Olive	
<i>Cocos nucifera</i>	Coconut Palm	
<i>Ilex cassine</i>	Dahoon Holly	Y
<i>Lagerstroemia spp.</i>	Crape Myrtle	
<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i>	Southern Magnolia	Y
<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i>	Date Palm	
<i>Quercus laurifolia</i>	Laurel Oak	Y
<i>Quercus virginiana</i>	Live Oak	Y
<i>Roystonea elata</i>	Florida Royal Palm	Y
<i>Tabebuia impetiginosa</i>	Purple Trumpet Tree	
<i>Washingtonia robusta</i>	Washington Palm	

Town Center – Shrubs

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Allamanda cathartica</i>	Allamanda	

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Alpinia spp.</i>	Ginger	
<i>Bougainvillea spp.</i>	Bougainvillea	
<i>Chamaerops humilis</i>	European Fan Palm	
<i>Codiaeum variegatum</i>	Croton	
<i>Dietes vegeta</i>	White African Iris	
<i>Feijoa sellowiana</i>	Pineapple Guava	
<i>Gamolepis chrysanthemoides</i>	African Daisy Bush	
<i>Heliconia spp.</i>	Heliconia	
<i>Hibiscus spp.</i>	Hibiscus	
<i>Ligustrum japonicum</i>	Japanese Privet	
<i>Livistona chinensis</i>	Chinese Fan Palm	
<i>Philodendron selloum</i>	Philodendron	
<i>Philodendron 'Xanadu'</i>	Xanadu Philodendron	
<i>Phoenix robellini</i>	Pygmy Date Palm	
<i>Podocarpus macrophylla</i>	Podocarpus	
<i>Rhapis excelsa</i>	Lady Palm	
<i>Russelia equisetiformis</i>	Firecracker Plant	
<i>Strelitzia nikolai</i>	White Bird of Paradise	
<i>Strelitzia reginae</i>	Bird of Paradise	
<i>Trachelospermum jasminoides</i>	Star Jasmine	

Town Center – Groundcover/Vines

Botanical Name	Common Name	Native
<i>Agapanthus africanus</i>	Lily of the Nile	
<i>Bougainvillea spp.</i>	Bougainvillea	
<i>Bromeliads</i>	Bromeliads	
<i>Coleus hybridus</i>	Coleus	
<i>Cuphea hyssopifolia</i>	Mexican Heather	
<i>Dietes vegeta</i>	White African Iris	
<i>Jasminum multiflorum</i>	Downy Jasmine	
<i>Justicia brandegiana</i>	Shrimp Plant	
<i>Liriope muscari</i> 'Evergreen Giant'	Liriope	
<i>Nephrolepis exaltata</i>	Sword Fern	
<i>Trachelospermum asiaticum</i>	Asian Jasmine	
<i>Zamia spp.</i>	Coontie/Cardboard Plant	

Invasive Species

Invasive Exotic Pest Plants are biological pollutants that wipe out more natural habitat every year than development. Exotic plants are introduced accidentally through shipping materials or deliberately for ornamental or commercial purposes. The aggressiveness common to some of these introduced species is often not recognized immediately. These species disrupt native

ecosystems with such intensity that natural systems can no longer function.

In February of 1999, President Clinton issued an executive order to amend the endangered species act and other pertinent statutes to prevent the introduction of invasive species and provide for their control and to minimize economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species cause. A major element was a call for a management plan for dealing with invasive species.

The state of Florida set up a task force made up of FNGA (Florida Nurserymen and Growers Association), FLEPPC (Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council), and TBWA (Tampa Bay Wholesale Growers) to develop a list of invasive species. The latest issued list is from 2001. The purpose of the list is to focus attention on the following:

- the adverse effects of exotic pest plants on Florida's biodiversity and ecosystems,
- the habitat losses from exotic pest plant infestations,
- the impacts on endangered species via habitat loss and alteration,
- the need to prevent habitat losses through pest-plant management,
- the socioeconomic impacts of these plants,
- changes in the seriousness of different pest plants over time,
- the need to provide information that helps managers set priorities for control programs.

Within the City of Sarasota, a large number of invasive plant species are prevalent (see Technical Memorandum – Section 1 in the Support Document). These include *Australian Pine, Night Blooming Cereus, Indian Rosewood, Castor Bean, Orchid Tree, Carrotwood, Chinaberry, Oyster Plant, Brazilian Pepper, Air Potato Plant, Arrowhead and Punk Tree*, to name just a few. Many of these species are found in City parks, especially the larger areas that are more natural and have continuous water sources such as drainage ways or streams. Lack of regular maintenance in some of the larger parks that have natural areas—such as Water Tower Park, Lido Beach Park, and the areas around the pond in Arlington Park—provide increased opportunities for these species to spread.

Arlington Park recently went through an elimination project but work remains to be done both to decrease the exotics and to increase visibility for safety. This exotics removal was also part of the improvements to Hog Creek that winds through Centennial Park and Pioneer Park. Every effort should be made to continue these elimination efforts. In addition, an on going surveillance and management strategy should be adopted for parks throughout the City to prevent the introduction and spread of additional invasive plants.

EXISTING PARKS CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

From our inventory and analysis of existing parks within the City of Sarasota, three were chosen for conceptual design or redesign: Payne Park, North Water Tower Park, and Fredd Atkins Park.

Payne Park

Payne Park was a focal point for the *Downtown Plan*, which included combining nearby land of an almost-vacant mobile-home park to create a high-profile city park. This is an outstanding opportunity for the City of Sarasota to create a new signature park that will enhance the vitality of downtown, provide identity for the City, and give the City a focal point for civic gatherings.

The plan for Payne Park illustrates a concept for a new central community gathering place. The central feature of the park is a lake surrounded by an elliptical path. North and south of the grand ellipse, formal allées (tree-lined paths) provide pleasant pedestrian entrances into the park. Opportunities exist for historic markers in the park.

Open fields would provide open space for free play, picnicking, enjoying the outdoors, and gathering for special events. The tennis center will expand by three courts. The shuffleboard courts will also expand to 24 courts. The only other recreation facility proposed is the skate park east of the tennis center. Payne Park's central location makes it suitable for this important facility. The skateboard park will complement the tennis center and shuffleboard courts, ensuring that the park will attract people of all ages.

Access to the park would also be improved, with Alderman Street extended along the southern boundary of the park, and parking provided around the park's perimeter.

The development of Payne Park as the city's signature park will increase the value of surrounding property and should spur redevelopment, particularly to the east. A mix of uses along School Avenue, including residential, would complement the park.

Fredd Atkins Park

Fredd Atkins Park is located on U.S. Highway 301 and is a passive park area. The park is heavily used by the neighborhood and shows signs of overuse with worn grass and trash.

The park is used by the neighborhood as a gathering place and should retain that function. Neighbors believe that illicit activity occurs in the park; along with the re-design of the park, the City must develop a strategy for enforcement that will allow all to feel comfortable in this urban space. We suggest that the park be closed between midnight and 6am.

Our redesign of the park includes permanent benches and tables, as well as a playground and lighting. Park visitors will continue to park on the streets surrounding the park.

By creating an inviting environment one of Sarasota's most heavily used parks will respect the dignity of its users and create an entrance gateway to the neighborhood off of US 301.

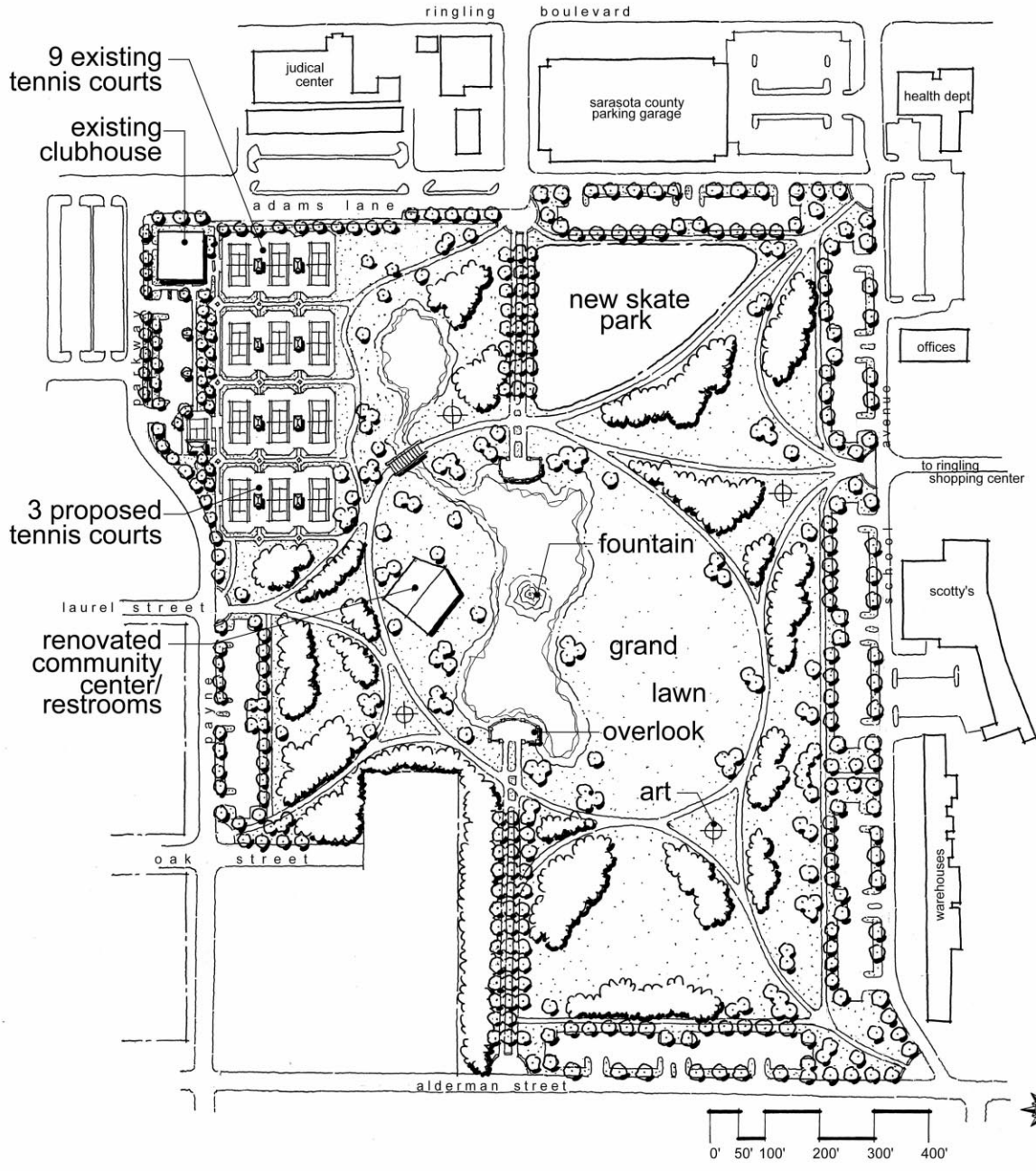
North Water Tower Park

The 20-acre North Water Tower Park is located near the northern boundary of the City and includes the only public disc-golf facility in the area.

The park is very difficult to find because it is hidden within a neighborhood and surrounded by houses backing onto the park. There has been a concern about redevelopment due to location and accessibility issues. Also, neighborhood residents are apprehensive about traffic generated from the enhancement of services and access to the park.

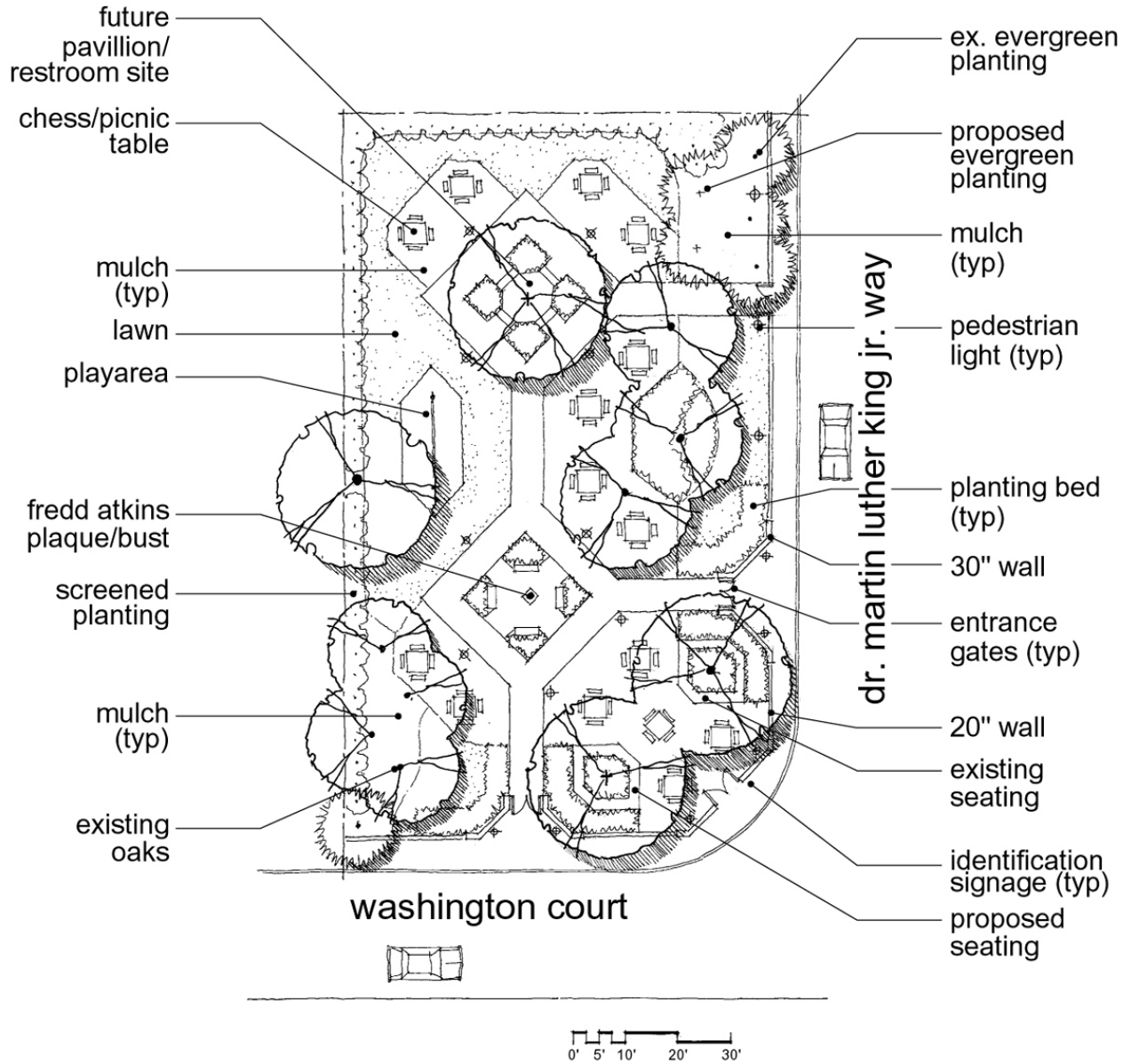
The park has been renovated with the assistance of volunteer labor into a disc-golf facility. The disc golfers currently use almost the entire park, leaving little room for other uses. We recommend that the park users come to some agreement on how to share park facilities. This could entail creating a system for scheduling disc golf tee times, allowing the park to be used by other recreationists when not programmed for golf. Another option considered was to reduce the course to nine-holes, after much discussion and debate it was decided that this was not an option to be followed since, the 18-hole course is the only disc golf facility in the area and it is used quite intensively. It also brings revenue into the City as it holds statewide and national tournaments on many weekends during the year

The park is currently scheduled for some renovation and enhancement. These improvements are in keeping with the conceptual plan. However, further emphasis should be placed on continuing to develop this large recreational amenity for the city.



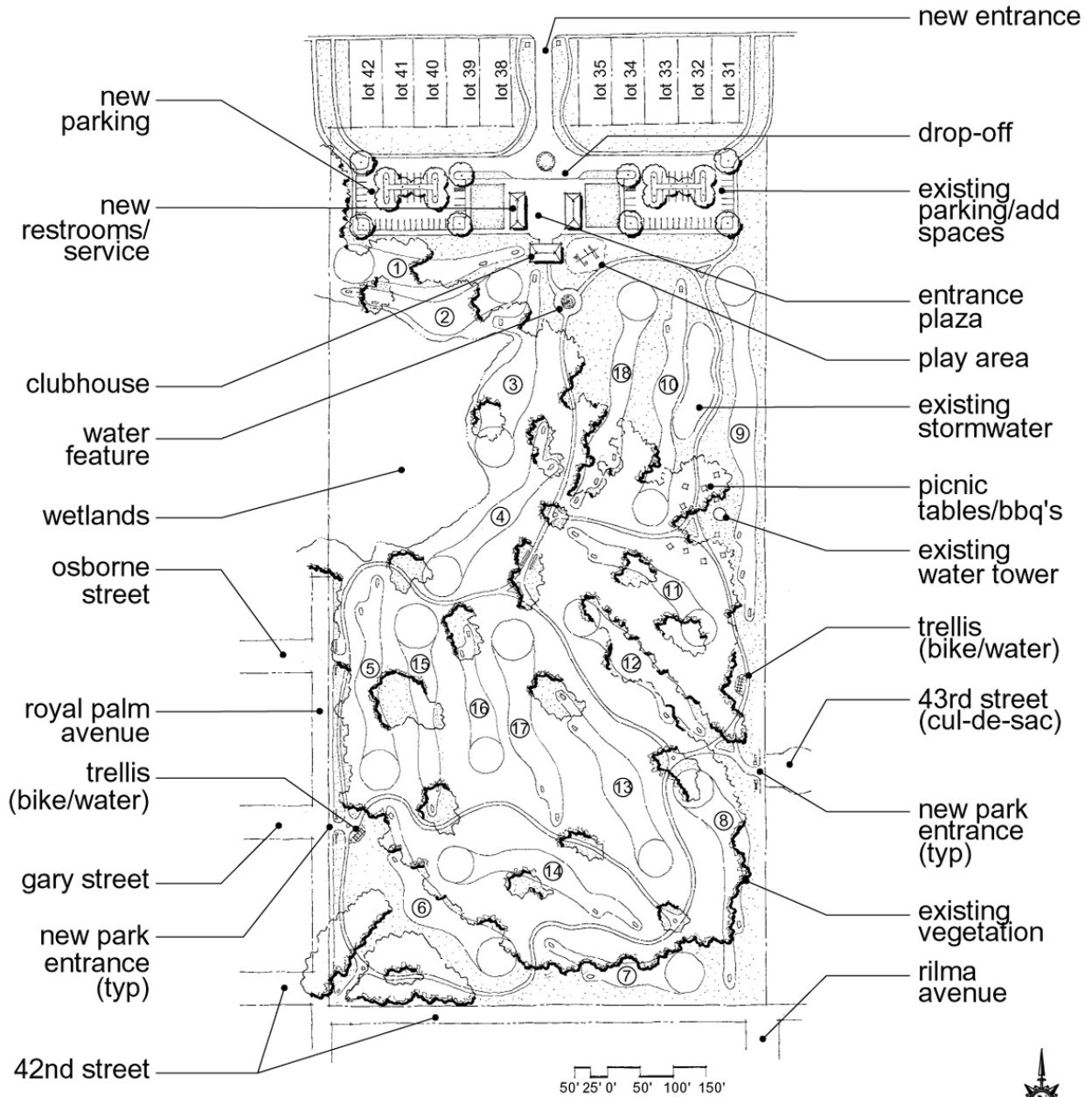
conceptual master plan for payne park
 city of sarasota, florida





fredd atkins park - concept plan
city of sarasota, florida





north water tower park - 18 hole option
 city of sarasota, florida



IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The effectiveness of a plan is directly related to its ease of implementation. For this 20-year master plan we have proposed a number of large capital projects as well as smaller changes to management functions. For these recommendations we have delineated projects, estimated costs, suggested potential partners and funding sources, and recommended phasing. The implementation matrix was then discussed among the City’s project team and the matrix was refined based on their recommendations.

An underlying principle of this plan is that implementation will occur over the next 20-years. It does not address very small, short-term or quick fix items but rather concentrates on the overall system and improvements thereto. This plan must be considered a roadmap to improving Sarasota’s parks, recreation and open space development and

a flexible tool for the City as it meets the needs of citizens.

It is the nature of a planning process when planning implementation to want to front-load projects, to get all the exciting project rolling and completed in the first phase. Rarely does funding permit this. Sarasota must be particularly careful in this respect because of the recent long-term planning for both the Downtown Master Plan and Parks + Connectivity Master Plan. Implementation will occur over 20 years. The details of these projects,

Action	Probable Cost ²	Potential Funding/Partner(s)	Five-Year Phasing (years)			
			0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20
Develop Payne Park						
Develop master plan, design and construct	\$8 to 10 million for other development (\$2.7 m already committed)	Sarasota County, Penny Sales Tax	■			
Skate Park	\$600,000 for skate park	Private Contributions	■			
Other Park-Specific Construction Projects						
Identify and acquire site for new eastside park	\$6,000 – 12,000 per acre	Florida Forever	■			
Develop new eastside park	\$8 - 10 million	Corporate Sponsorships, User Fees, Bonds	■	■		
Find Partners for Indian Beach/Sapphire Shores park land acquisition		Neighborhood Association, Florida Forever	■	■		
Make improvements to Fredd Atkins Park	\$300,000	Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP)	■			
Make improvements to Water Tower Park	\$500,000 for land acquisition; \$500,000 for construction	FRDAP, User Fees, Concession rents, Volunteer				■
Lido Beach Facilities Master Plan	\$75,000	Special Improvement District	■			

² General order-of-magnitude costs for budgeting purpose; most projects need conceptual design for more detailed budgeting.

Action	Probable Cost ¹	Potential Funding/Partner(s)	Five-Year Phasing (years)			
			0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20
Lemon Avenue Mall (from Downtown Master Plan)	\$900,000	CRA	■			
Rosemary Neighborhood Public Square at 6 th & Central (from Downtown Master Plan)	Land swap possibility	CRA/Public-Private Partnership			■	
Linear Park, on Shade between 8 th & Blvd. of the Arts (from Downtown Master Plan)	\$1.5 million	CDBG	■			
Identify and acquire land for additional parking at Centennial Park OR institute off-site parking with shuttle or valet	TBD	Concessionaire (for valet option)		■		
Gillespie Park: Upgrade existing basketball courts and add one court	\$70,000	CDBG, Corporate Sponsors, FRDAP, Foundations		■	■	
Construct "sprayground" at Newtown Park	\$500,000	NPS (UPARR)	■			
Replace recreation center at Newtown Park	\$3,750,000 ²	CDBG, Corporate Sponsors, FRDAP, Foundations		■		
Parkways						■
Create parkway typical cross-section and set priorities for projects	\$20,000	FDOT	■			
Construct parkways	\$200-225/LF, 50' section \$250-275/LF, 60' section \$350-375/LF, 70' section ³	FDOT; foundations, NPS, DEP, CDBG, Urban Infill, federal, state and local grantors	■	■	■	■
Trails						■
Acquire right-of-way for trails	\$6,000-acre	Foundations, Florida Greenways and Trails Acquisition Program	■	■	■	■
Create Trails typical cross-section and set priorities for projects	\$15-20,000	City, FRDAP, Recreational Trails Program	■			
Construct trails	Budget approximately \$130,000 per mile	Foundations, T-21, FDOT, NPS		■	■	■
Blueways						■
Extend Whitaker Bayou	TBD Based upon design criteria	Sarasota County Storm Water Mgt., SWFWMD, SBNEB, Florida Coastal Management Program (FCMP)		■	■	
Extend Hudson Bayou	TBD Based upon design criteria	Sarasota County Storm Water Mgt., SWFWMD, SBNEB, FCMP			■	■

²Assumes \$200/SF for new and \$100/SF for renovation

³These estimates are based upon the assumption that existing conditions are perfect. It is important to note that should relocation of curbs, gutters, water lines, storm sewers or other utilities be required estimates will be much higher

Action	Probable Cost ¹	Potential Funding/Partner(s)	Five-Year Phasing (years)			
			0-5	5-10	10-15	15-20
Construct Kayak Takeouts/put-ins	\$70-100K each	FCMP, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Volunteer, Corporate Sponsorship	■	■		
Create water taxi system: legal framework, RFP, negotiations	Staff time	Concessionaire		■		
Other Projects						■
Design and construct landscaped highways	Project-based costs	FDOT, Metropolitan Planning Agency		■		
Develop new City/County agreement	Staff time	City and County	■			
Negotiate City/School Board Partnering Agreement	Staff time	School Board	■			
Negotiate Other Agencies Partnering Agreement	Staff time	Agencies as identified		■		
Create City-wide Wayfinding	\$50,000 – 75,000	Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Development Council		■		
Design and implement standard park sign system ⁴	\$750,000	County; FDOT, Corporate Sponsorship		■		
Develop Resource Management Plan	\$50,000	County	■			
General upgrade for existing parks	\$4.5 million ⁵	City and County	■	■	■	■

⁴ Includes informational signs (one for each park), as well as wayfinding, regulatory, and informational signs.

⁵ Calculated at approximately \$100,000 for each neighborhood, community, and special purpose park, plus \$20,000 for each minipark.