Chapter 4: Vision

Highlighted by extensive public input, the Parks and Recreation Department launched a three-day workshop of visioning sessions to better understand the community's aspirations for its parks and recreation system. Combining the results from the workshop with previous steps allows the community to provide a comprehensive vision for the future. The following chapter describes these results.

Chapter 4

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Purpose

The vision for the City of Fort Lauderdale's parks and recreation facilities and programs is linked to the vision of the city as a whole. The city's system of parks, open spaces, recreation facilities, arts, and natural areas, all elements of the public realm, are woven into the fabric of what makes Fort Lauderdale a great place to live, work and play. This vision integrates components of previous and on-going city-wide efforts to achieve the overall vision for the City defined in previous planning efforts (see **Section 2.1**).

Approach

The approach for developing the parks, recreation and recreation system vision is a three-part effort:

1. Through a multi-faceted community involvement process (**Chapter 3**), residents indicated their needs and priorities for parks and recreation facilities and programs. Though most residents recognize that there are multiple providers of parks and recreation services, many continue to see a major role for the city in the provision of these services.
2. Supplementing this community involvement, city staff and the consultant team completed a technical review of the existing parks system that identified continued improvements needed in order to maintain a high level of service for residents.
3. Community input was gathered on seven themes identified through the needs assessment phase during a three-day workshop of visioning sessions at the Beach Community Center in Fort Lauderdale.

The Vision is built upon a framework distilled from input and analysis conducted as part of this three-step effort.

4.1.2 Mission and Vision

The vision is intended to guide the parks and recreation system over the next ten years. Objectives have been developed to reflect the combined results of input and analysis completed in Chapter 2 (Existing System Overview) and Chapter 3 (Needs and Priorities Assessment) of this planning document. These objectives are intended to be modified as needed to ensure achievement of the overall vision identified in the City's Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale and Press Play Fort Lauderdale

Parks and Facilities Vision Workshop

Mission, Values and Guiding Principles

Plans. In the next chapter, action items are identified to implement this vision (see Strategic Plan, Chapter 5) within the focus of community priorities, funding strategies and defined roles. These actions items are intended to be updated on a regular basis by staff to reflect the changing trends, priorities and roles within the community.

Over the past ten years alone, the city has continued to grow and rebound from the recent economic recession; established a new vision for the city through the adoption of Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale and Press Play Fort Lauderdale; and received numerous accolades for its high quality of life, business climate, and diversity of culture. By setting social, environmental and economic goals, the three pillars of sustainability, the city recognizes the important relationship between quality of life and its parks and recreation facilities and programs. By weaving together the social history with the economic and environmental goals, Fort Lauderdale continues to be a special place to live, work, start a business and play.

Launched in January 2015, the visioning effort for the City's parks and recreation system began with an extensive series of public sessions held during a three-day community workshop of visioning sessions. Individual sessions, seven in total, were facilitated on themes identified during the Needs and Priorities Assessment phase with public input. The System Plan is based on the input of participants from these workshops and from the needs and priorities assessment (see **Chapter 3**). The visioning efforts balanced community input with strategic direction provided by guiding documents to develop a new vision. This vision strives to integrate the parks and recreation system into the city's infrastructure, while also addressing evolving trends and changing needs of the community.

In addition to the themed vision sessions, a series of focus groups were held with department staff to discuss the Mission and values of the Department. Participants provided insight into both the internal and external values that they felt embodied a successful department.

Constructing the Mission and Vision

These focus groups were then followed by a Mission, Values and Guiding Principles session with department leaders to present findings from the focus group and construct a new mission statement for the Parks and Recreation department.

Below are the public and department staff developed Mission and Vision Statements:

Mission:

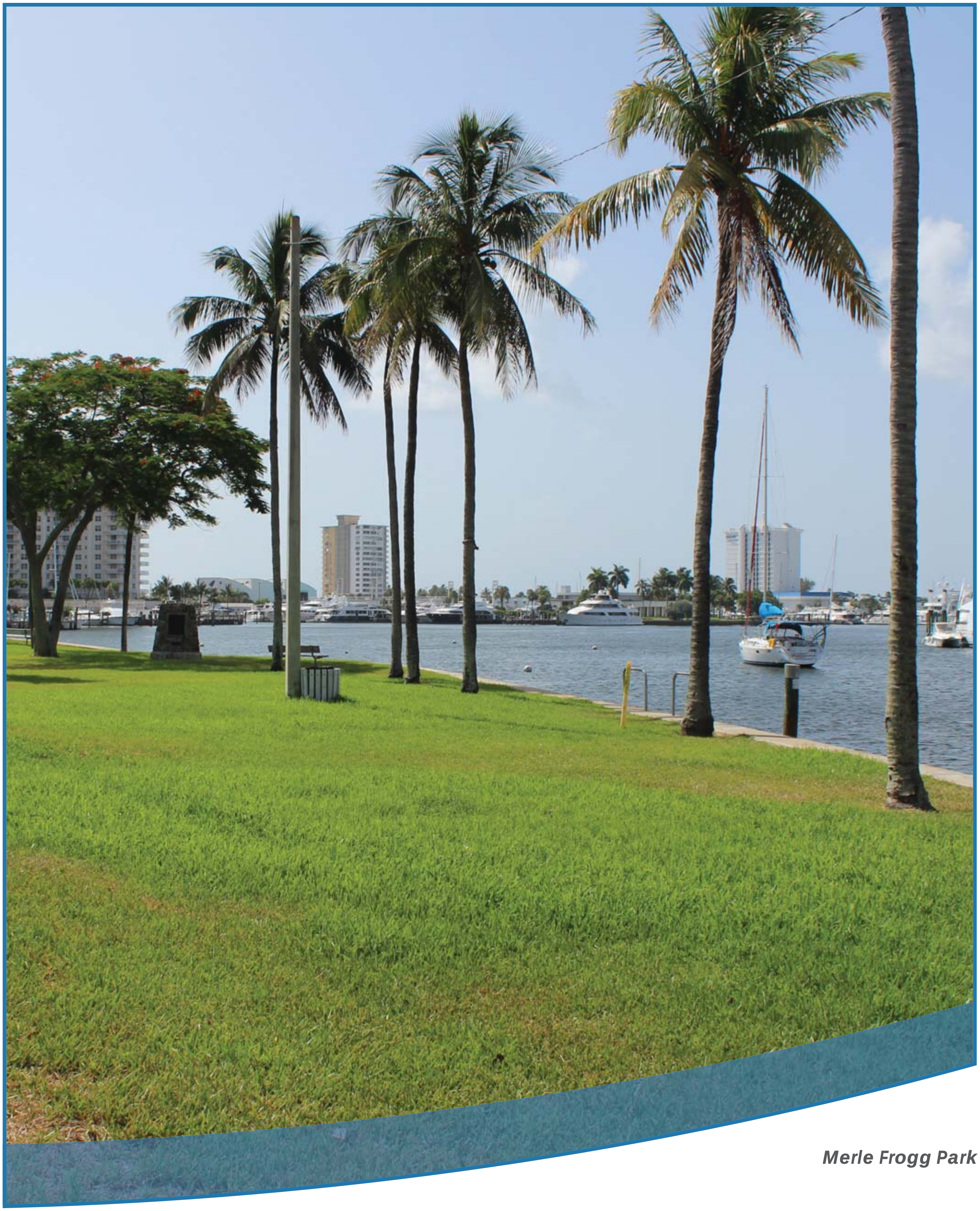
The Mission of the Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department is to provide fun and rewarding activities - in safe, attractive environments - accessible to all.

Vision:

The Vision of the Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department is to be a national leader in providing high quality facilities, activities, and experiences to our neighbors and visitors.

4.1.3 Components of the Vision

As a result of the previously discussed efforts, the Vision is built upon a framework distilled from broad public input and comprehensive analysis. A unique approach was taken for Fort Lauderdale, which established a set of sub-systems that help guide the development of the parks and facilities, and the management of a diverse system. These subsystems, shown in the figure below, are:



Merle Frogg Park

4.2 Subsystem Vision

4.2.1 Introduction

Collectively these subsystems form a rich, vibrant and dynamic system that contributes to a high quality of life for all residents and furthers the achievements of Fort Lauderdale's overall vision. Each sub-system was developed through community input and an analysis of the existing physical system. The vision identified for each sub-system describes the community's aspirations for the overall park and recreation system and its physical elements. Accomplishment of this Vision will be dependent upon City Staff, existing and future partners and the support of residents.

4.2.2 Parks & Facilities

Riverside Park

Guiding Principles

Fort Lauderdale parks serve as a major contributor to the sense of community and quality of life. They provide neighbors and visitors an opportunity to refresh, explore and play. Parks also contribute significant economic and environmental benefits. Using community input from the Needs Assessment and Visioning Workshop, the following guiding principles were developed for parks and facilities:

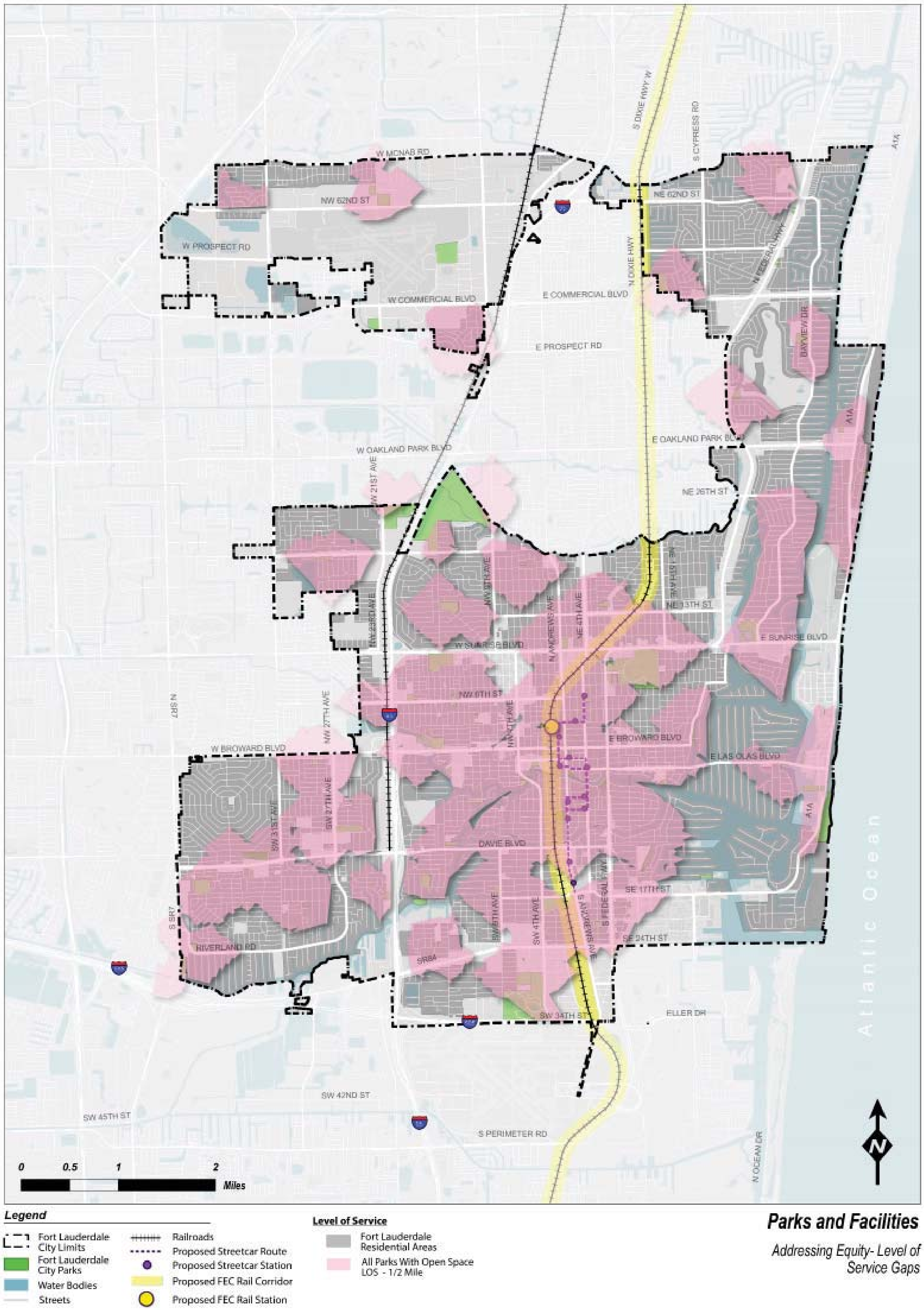
- **Equity and Access** - Increase the access to neighborhood parks and open space, and provide better connectivity and walkability
- **Meeting Growth**- Identify areas of future high levels of growth, and insure that access to open space is provided in these areas
- **Continued Enhancement of School Parks** - Explore opportunities to incorporate facilities located in school parks, in order to increase access to parks and athletic facilities

Equity and Access

The Needs and Priorities Assessment identified small neighborhood parks as a top priority for neighbors in Fort Lauderdale. While the community input indicated a desire to improve existing facilities, there are many Fort Lauderdale residents that live in areas that lack small neighborhood facilities within walking distance. The vision for Fort Lauderdale is to identify gaps in service and determine, where needed, opportunities to provide additional parks and facilities or increase access in areas. **Map 4-1** shows the current level of service for all Fort Lauderdale parks that provide open space access at a 1/2-mile service area, a walkable distance supported by community neighbors through quantitative research. This translates to the open spaces that are within walking distance for the neighbors served.

Also shown on this map are residential areas of Fort Lauderdale to further identify areas where residents are without access to open space. The analysis identifies gaps in the northern portion of the city, as well as pockets in the southwest and southeast areas of the city. These areas all primarily residential neighborhoods where access to park and open spaces is desired.

Map 4-1: Existing Open Space in Park Access Level of Service (LOS) + Residential Zoning



Meeting Growth

As stated in **Section 2.2**, Fort Lauderdale is expected to experience significant growth and increase in density in the next ten years. The increase in population will place a greater demand on existing park and open spaces, and creative solutions will need to be explored in order to provide for future residents. **Map 4-2** identifies LOS gaps and residential areas with population growth between 2015 and 2040 shown.

Areas that are already experiencing gaps will have these conditions amplified by increases in population and density. The northeastern portion of the city has the greatest number of gaps, and may also experience moderate population growth. The same conditions are replicated on the southernmost edge of the city, as well as the northwestern area south of West Prospect Road. The most intense growth is projected to occur downtown and the surrounding areas, especially along the FEC corridor which will house the All Aboard Florida railroad line. While overall coverage in the downtown areas is relatively adequate, small gaps do occur, and the intense growth will require additional open space to maintain current standards.

Surplus Properties

An increase in population and density, coupled with a decrease in available land and increasing property values, will create the need for creative solutions to provide parks and open space.

SkyHouse Uptown Parking Deck, Charlotte, NC -(photo credit: Charlotte Observer)

Map 4-2 identifies locations of City-owned surplus properties that may be converted into park sites. As one of the largest property owners, the City evaluates land holdings for needs on a regular basis. Where need overlaps with availability of land, a potential solution is to utilize surplus parcels for park or recreation facility needs. Development of these sites may help provide additional access for areas currently experiencing gaps.

Rooftop Parks

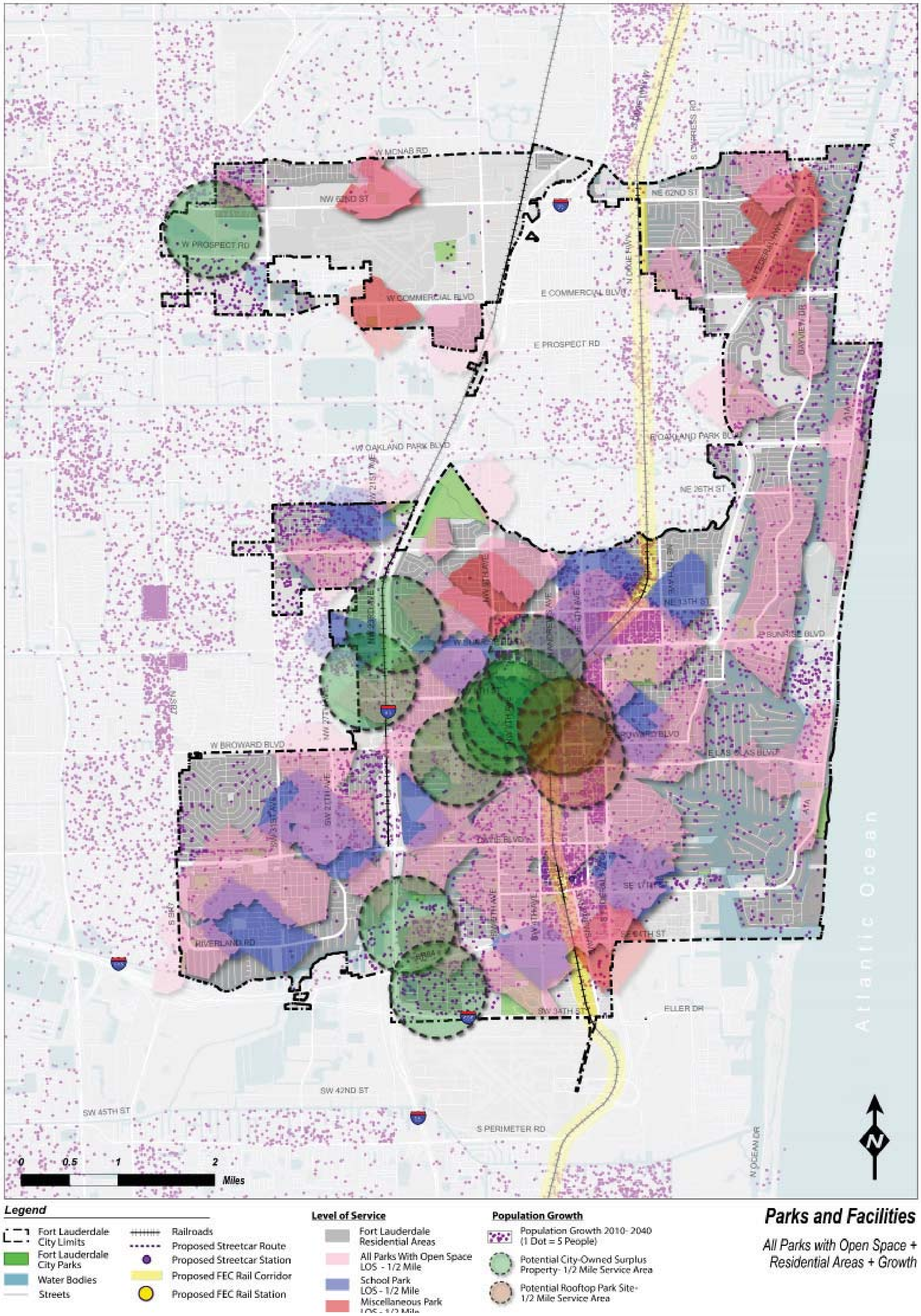
An additional solution that is being utilized by urban cities is to develop rooftops for open space. This is particularly useful in dense, urban areas, where property values make the acquisition of ground-level open space difficult. While rooftops can be used for a variety of purposes, the most common application of this strategy is for athletic facilities such as tennis or basketball courts. Rooftops can also incorporate sustainable strategies such as bio-filtration systems or community gardens. Parking garages are often suitable structures to implement rooftop parks, and **Map 4-2** highlights locations in Fort Lauderdale where these opportunities may exist.

Continued Enhancement of School Parks

In addition to surplus sites and rooftop parks, school parks also present an opportunity to provide access in areas where there may be level of service gaps. The City currently has agreements with the Broward County School District for several school parks, however expansion of this type of park is needed. **Section 3.6** provides a list of parks and recreation facilities that are currently in school sites, as well as access LOS maps showing the potential service areas these facilities may provide.

Map 4-2 layers the addition of additional school parks with a walkable 1/2-mile service area to the framework for additional parks. While public access to some of these school parks is currently limited, the sites provide the potential for additional open space access that could help eliminate existing gaps in

Map 4-2: Open Space in Park Access LOS + Residential Zoning + Growth and Opportunities + School Sites LOS

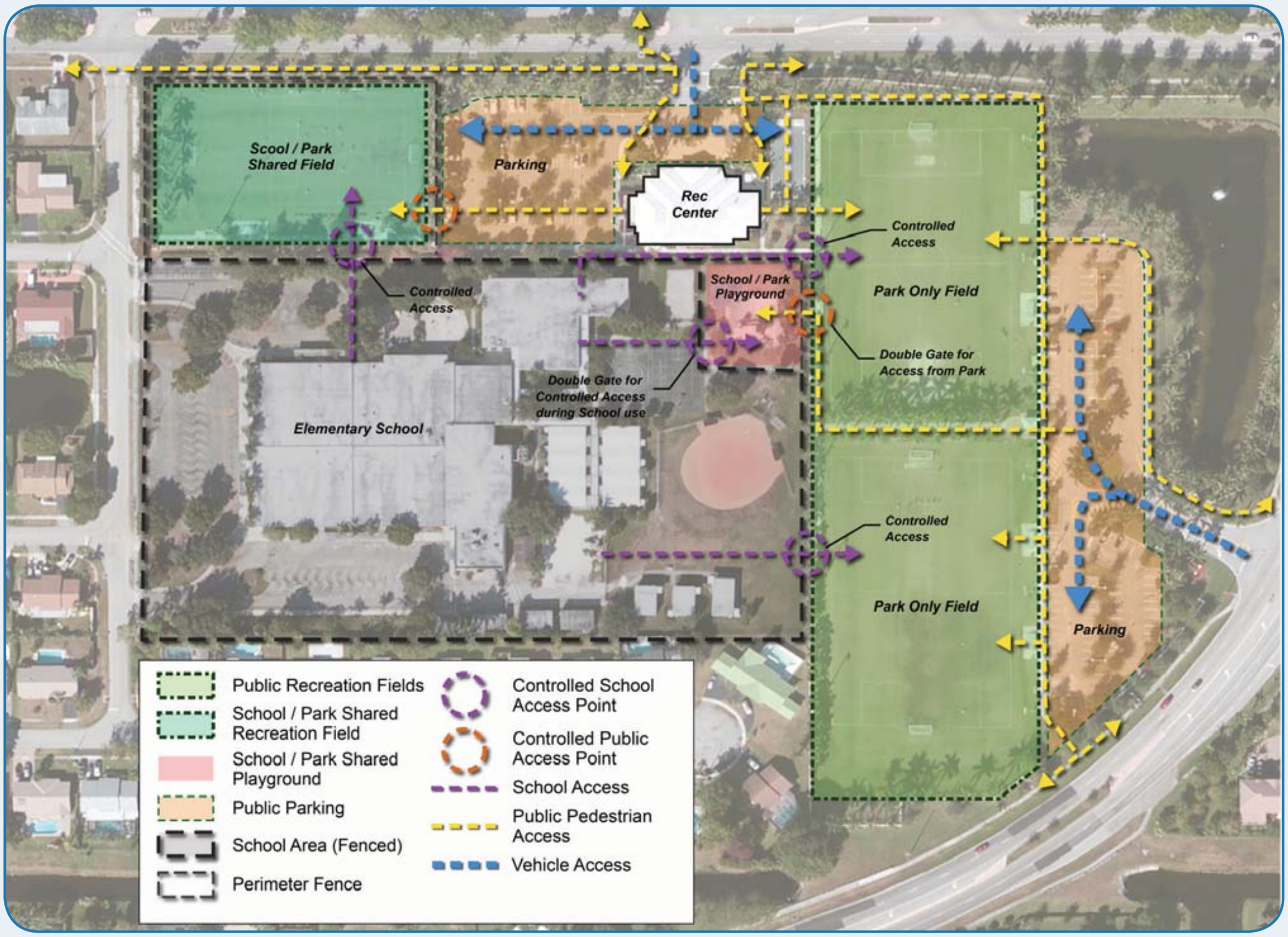


service. Existing security practices at school sites have resulted in public facilities being fenced off and inaccessible, even while not in use for school needs. Maintaining the safety and security intent is required, however there are moderate options typically available to also allow for controlled access to public recreation facilities. A case study below, Nob Hill Park and Elementary School in Sunrise, Florida, shows how these techniques can be implemented to provide recreation benefits to the public.

Case Study: Nob Hill Elementary School and Soccer Club Park - Sunrise, Florida

Nob Hill Elementary School is an elementary school in Sunrise, Florida and is part of the Broward County school system. Immediately adjacent to the school is the Nob Hill Soccer Club Park, operated by the City of Sunrise. The 14-acre site utilizes a city-county partnership to provide an additional athletic field and a playground area that are accessible by both the public and the school. While there is a fence surrounding these areas, controlled access points allow for students and faculty to utilize the adjacent facilities for classes or special events, and for the public to use during non-school hours. These controlled access points also prevent the public from accessing the school when the areas are open. **Figure 4-1** illustrates the functions of the site, highlighting the recreation amenities, circulation and access points.

Figure 4-1: Nob Hill Elementary and Soccer Club Park Functional Diagram, Sunrise, Florida

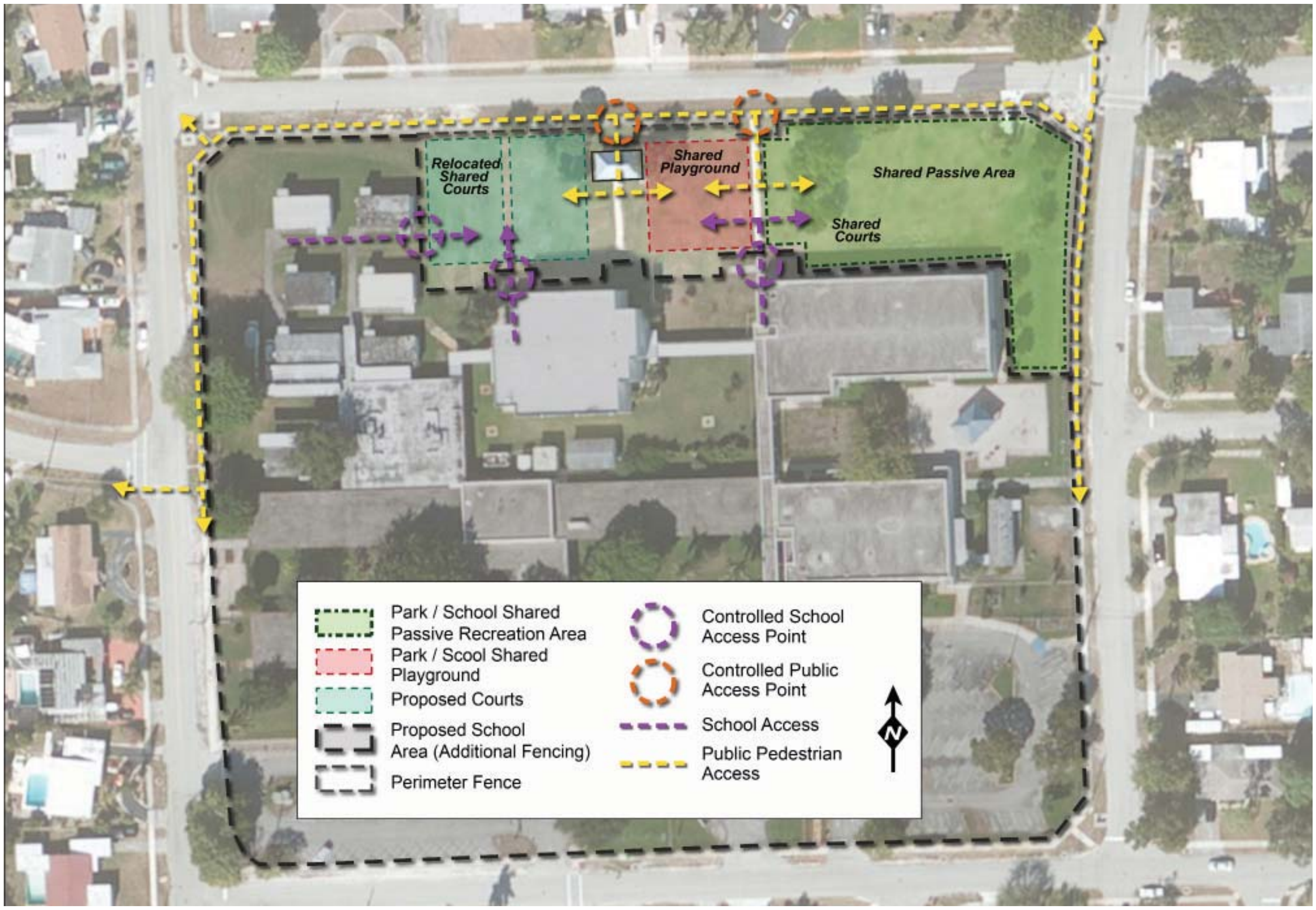


The Fort Lauderdale School Park sites may present opportunities to implement techniques such as those utilized at Nob Hill, especially at sites that contain existing athletic facilities. The following page provides an example of these principles applied within the Fort Lauderdale Parks system.

Application - Stephen Foster Elementary, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

While Stephen Foster Elementary does not have any large athletic fields, it is similar to the Nob Hill case study in that recreation amenities are on the perimeter of the site. Because of this, it may be possible to implement similar access controls to allow adjacent neighbors access to park amenities, so that the amenities may be used by the public while the school remains secure. Currently, the school property is completely surrounding by a fence, limiting access to the recreation amenities. **Figure 4-2** shows how adding an additional security fence that runs along the school building can create a small park area that is accessible to the neighborhood. This "neighborhood park" would provide a playground, two courts, a pavilion and a small open space for passive activities. Controlled access points could also be implemented to allow students to use the park, while public access can be limited. The public can use the park without having access to the school grounds during non-school hours.

Figure 4-2: Stephen Foster Elementary Proposed Functional Diagram



4.2.3 Recreation & Athletics

Carter Park

Guiding Principles

Athletics were also a topic of neighbors and stakeholder input during the community involvement phase as well as the visioning workshops. Sports and athletics have emerged as a priority for many neighbors in Fort Lauderdale and the following principles were developed to guide the approach to addressing athletic needs in the future:

- **Access to Recreate** - Improving access for neighbors to facilities through addition of new facilities and improving those that are existing
- **Capacity** - Providing high quality athletic facilities that meet the needs of a diverse population

Access to Recreate

Fort Lauderdale currently provides a large number of athletic facilities including 38 baseball/ softball fields in 14 parks, 24 rectangle sports fields in 12 parks, and nine swimming pools at six facilities. When compared to SCORP Southeast Region averages, the city is adequate in the number of facilities provided. However, as stated in **Section 3.6**, access LOS is an important factor in determining the equity of facilities throughout the city. During the community involvement phase, public input regarding athletic facilities highlighted that access was often difficult for neighbors for a number of reasons. These included scheduling conflicts, field closures, accessibility issues and general unavailability of facilities. The following pages further evaluate the access LOS for athletic facilities and provide strategies that will help alleviate capacity and access issues.

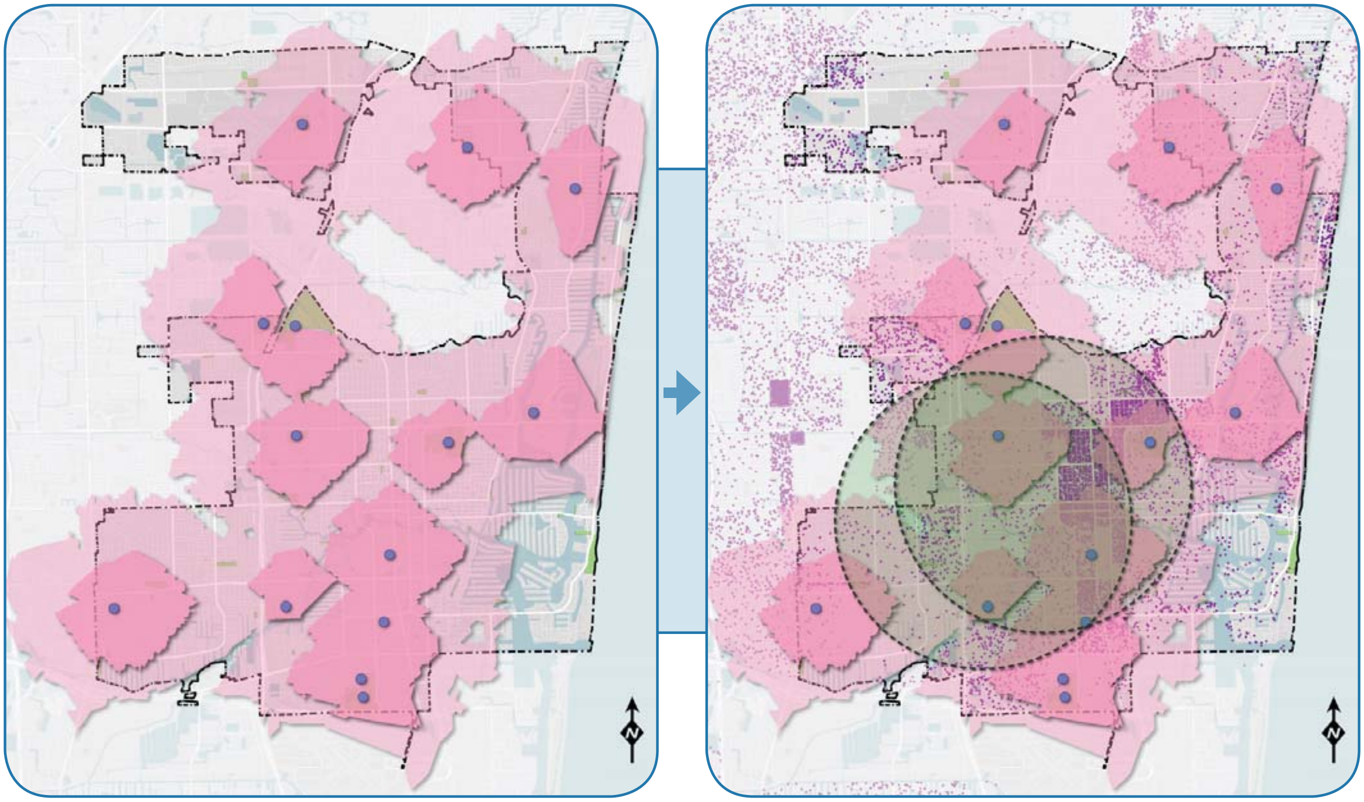
Access to Athletic Facilities

Existing service area radius for athletic fields is a range from 1/2-mile for neighborhood parks, two-miles for community parks, up to 1/2-hour of travel for large urban parks and special-use parks. For purposes of this study, 1/2-hour travel could be ten miles by vehicle or transit, to five miles by bicycle; however both distances are typically too great for user to walk comfortably. As the city continues to become more dense and in response to input from neighbors, a reduction in radius of athletic facilities to two-miles is desired. In the more dense areas of Fort Lauderdale a further reduction to one-mile may be appropriate in the future. As such, the following analysis will include one and two-mile radii to identify where existing gaps in access for athletic facilities are in the city.

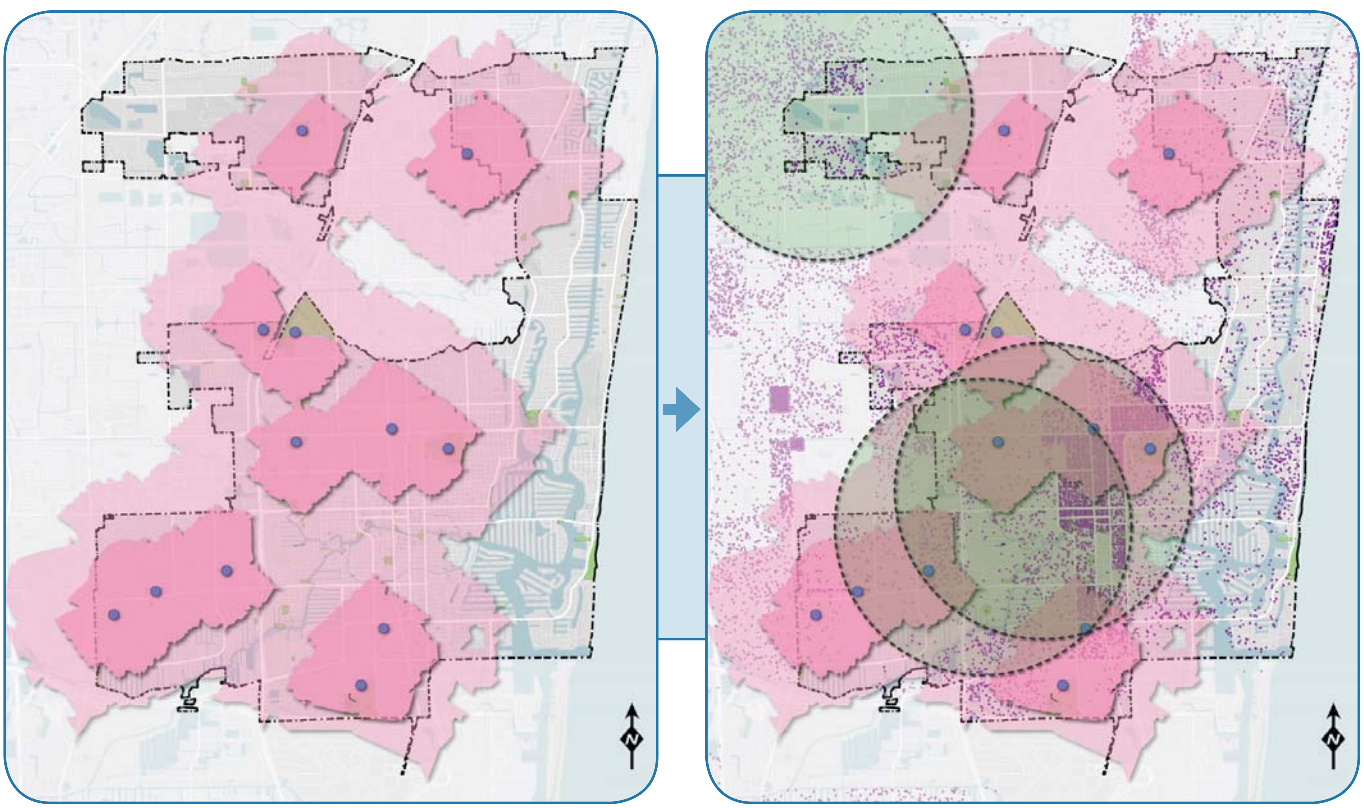
At a two-mile (or community park level) service area, baseball/ softball fields and soccer fields provide coverage throughout most of the city, with the exception of the northwest and southeast corners and some beach areas. At a one-mile level notable gaps appear in the downtown area. Swimming pools have significant coverage as well, but only in the portion of the city south of Oakland Park Boulevard.

Legend for Map 4-3 through 4-5

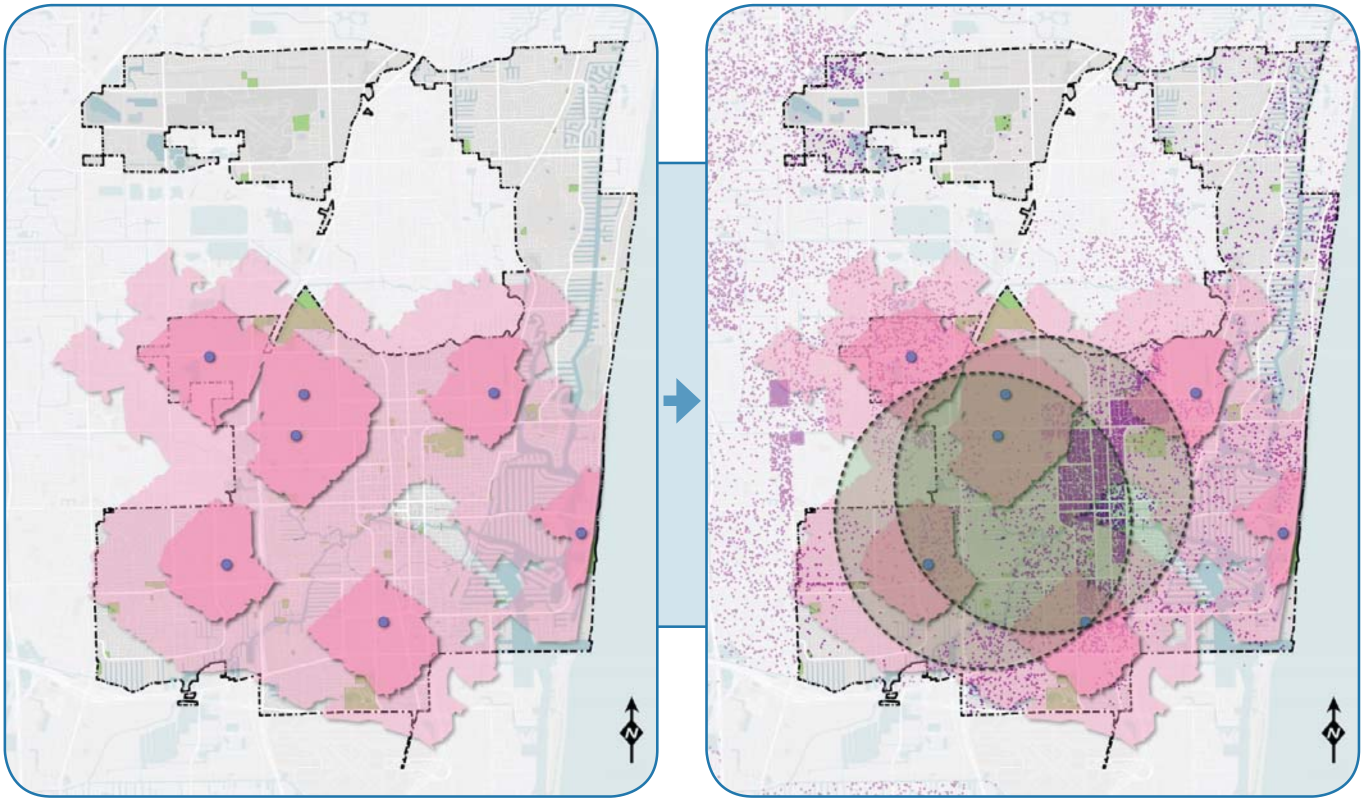
Map 4-3: Baseball / Softball Field LOS and Potential Surplus Properties



Map 4-4: Soccer Field LOS and Potential Surplus Properties



Map 4-5: Swimming Pool LOS and Potential Surplus Properties



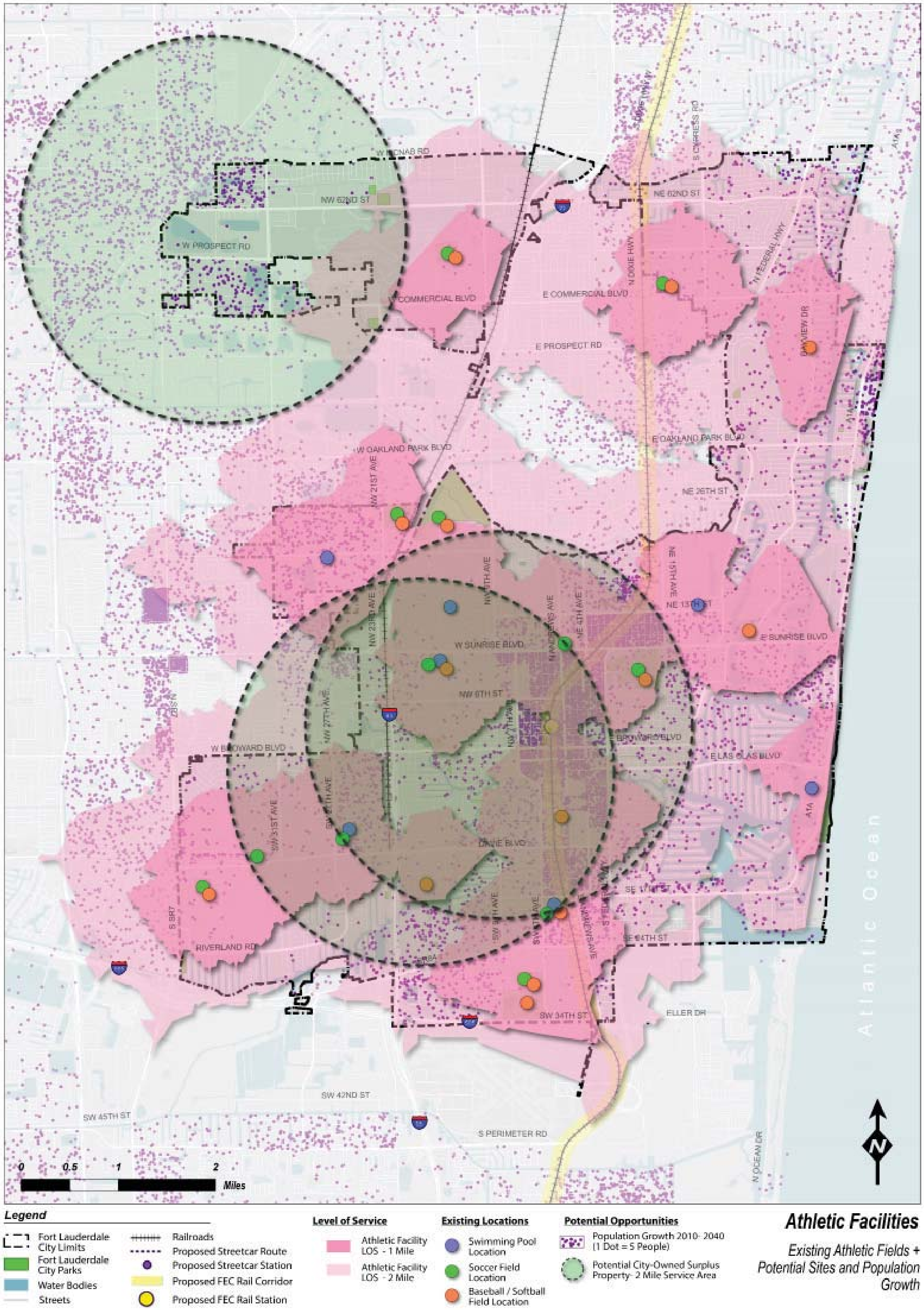
Improving Access

While a two-mile level of service indicates that many neighbors have adequate access to baseball/ softball fields throughout the city, and neighbors in the southern half of Fort Lauderdale have access to swimming pools. However, due to the community input expressing need for improved access, utilizing unique opportunities to address gaps may be necessary. Development of city-owned surplus properties may help to provide additional access to athletic facilities. **Maps 4-3** through **4-5** identify the city-owned surplus properties that are large enough to support athletic facilities, with a two-mile service area. Projected growth is also shown as dots (one per five future residents) in order to highlight areas where need may grow in the future.

Athletic Field at Holiday Park

The inclusion of surplus properties shows that significant improvements can be made in the northwest and southwest areas of Fort Lauderdale and current coverage can be bolstered in areas of high growth, especially in the downtown area. **Map 4-6** shows a synthesis of all athletic facilities and corresponding service areas, along with two-mile service areas for facilities that could be developed on city-owned surplus land. When these elements are combined, nearly all of Fort Lauderdale's neighbors have access to an athletic facility. Further evaluation of the suitability of each surplus site will need to be completed in order to determine if athletic facilities are applicable.

Map 4-6: Athletic Facility Synthesis Access LOS and Potential Surplus Properties



Case Study: Doral Meadows Park

Doral Meadow Park is a 14-acre park with two lighted baseball fields, two lighted artificial turf field soccer/football fields, a covered playground, covered pavilion and walking trail. The park is open from 7:00 am to 9:30 pm, and serves a variety of youth and adult sports leagues. The complex is also adjacent to a K-8 school, which uses the athletic facilities.

The park provides examples of features that can increase the accessibility and capacity of athletic fields. By combining turf fields with lighting, the park is able to stay open well into the evenings, and the fields exhibit less wear and tear than traditional grass fields. This is especially important due to the wide range of users, including adult and youth sports leagues and school athletics. The proximity to the school is also beneficial as the two facilities share parking, allowing for more space for recreation amenities.

Additional improvements that can maximize the capacity of facilities could include removing the central path and lighting between the two soccer/ football fields. This would create more space for alternative configurations such as youth fields. By locating paths and lighting at the perimeter of athletic fields, more flexibility in field configuration and type of sport can be achieved.

Layout of Doral Meadow Park

Lighted Fields at Doral Meadow Park

Turf Field at Doral Meadow Park

Capacity

In addition to the potential utilization of city-owned surplus properties, improvements to existing athletic facilities can improve capacity on a site-by-site basis. Specific concerns expressed during the community involvement phase included limited access to existing facilities and an inability to use fields during convenient times.

The city may not have a tremendous need for additional fields currently, however, additional fields should be planned for future growth. Additional recreation facilities such as skate parks, volleyball courts, disc golf and indoor facilities for fitness, tennis and swimming, all have higher unmet needs but may not have high need for many new facilities. In the case of skate parks, there is a only a slight identified community-wide need for such a specialized facility with no clearly identified concentration of need. This may result in a future need for up to one skate park, however, with such a low community-wide prioritization, development of a skate park is not recommended at this time.

Strategies for Capacity Improvement

Implementing artificial turf can not only reduce the amount of maintenance, but also allow fields to be open more frequently, therefore increasing the capacity of existing facilities. This alternative allows users more opportunities to use fields for both organized league play and informal "pick-up" activities, reducing the potential for conflict between user groups.

Improved lighting can also increase the availability of athletic facilities. Using new technology such as LED bulbs and Dark Sky Compliant lighting can reduce energy consumption, and improve efficiency.

Due to the weather conditions experienced in South Florida, many communities have moved towards developing new indoor aquatic facilities. Besides the elimination of the need to shut down the pools during storms, the ability to operate the facility for longer hours and in consistent conditions makes these facilities more attractive for league and resident use. Furthermore, co-locating aquatic facilities with senior programs, and after-school programs, at community centers allows for better access and more efficient use of a costly facility.

Baseball Field at Floyd Hull Stadium

Lighted Athletic Fields at Croissant Park

Pool at Riverland Park

4.2.4 Community Health

Fitness Station in Harbordale Park

Guiding Principles

Community health is a critical concern for neighbors of Fort Lauderdale. Top priority facilities such as walking and biking trails, nature trails and indoor fitness facilities, and programs such as adult fitness and wellness and senior programs indicate residents' desire for a recreation system that encourages a healthy lifestyle. Findings from the statistically valid survey indicate that 98% of residents agree that parks contribute to better health, while 92% agree that parks help reduce stress and improve mental health. Health and wellness benefits are also the most important to Fort Lauderdale neighbors; more than preservation of lands, increases in property values and attracting new residents and businesses. Using this information, as well as additional input from the vision workshops, the following guiding principles will help guide the vision for Community Health:

- **Health and Wellness** - Exploring the benefits of a healthy community, and the methods by which the parks system can help achieve health and wellness goals
- **Safety**- Improving overall safety of the parks system, with a focus on application at an individual park level

Health and Wellness

Parks, playgrounds, greenways, trails, and community open spaces help the residents of Fort Lauderdale and their neighborhoods stay fit and healthy. The short and long-term benefits these parks and facilities provide have profound affect on not only individual health, but the overall health of the community.

Benefits of a Healthy Community

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has performed extensive research on the benefits of parks and how parks contribute to the health of communities. Physical activity is necessary to maintain good health and increases strength, flexibility, and endurance; relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety; improves mood; and enhances psychological well-being.

Despite the importance of parks and other recreational open spaces to health, many residents do not have adequate access to parks and open space. This is particularly true in cities, where park access is often inequitably distributed, putting certain populations at risk for health problems associated with inactivity.

Incorporating natural areas into a parks system can help improve psychological and social health. Exposure to nature can aid in surgical recovery, improve therapeutic treatment for mental health, and provide a setting for children who suffer from Attention Deficit

Health Benefits of Parks

- **Parks, greenways, and trails enable and encourage people to exercise**
- **Exposure to nature improves psychological and social health**
- **Play is critical for child development**
- **Parks help build healthy, stable communities**

Disorder (ADD) to improve concentration and focus. Parks provide children with opportunities for outdoor play, which is a critical component in the development of muscle strength and coordination, language, and cognitive abilities.

Parks also build healthy communities by creating stable neighborhoods and strengthening community development. Parks achieve this by providing opportunities for people to work together, build trust, and foster companionship.

Supporting a Healthy Community in Fort Lauderdale

Fort Lauderdale is currently providing a wide range of settings for active and healthy lifestyles. **Section 4.2.1** highlighted opportunities for the improvement of access to open space, and further sections will expand on sustainable strategies that will insure continued integration of natural areas, as well as connectivity improvements that encourage alternative transportation for pedestrians and cyclists. Many parks contain outdoor fitness stations, and parks along the beach provide opportunities for active lifestyles.

Input from the community involvement phase of the system plan has indicated that there is a desire for more indoor fitness and exercise facilities, as well as programs that promote senior and adult fitness. Viewing this in conjunction with demographic findings from the community inventory and assessment, the need for indoor facilities that support an aging population seeking to remain active will become a priority for Fort Lauderdale for the next ten years.

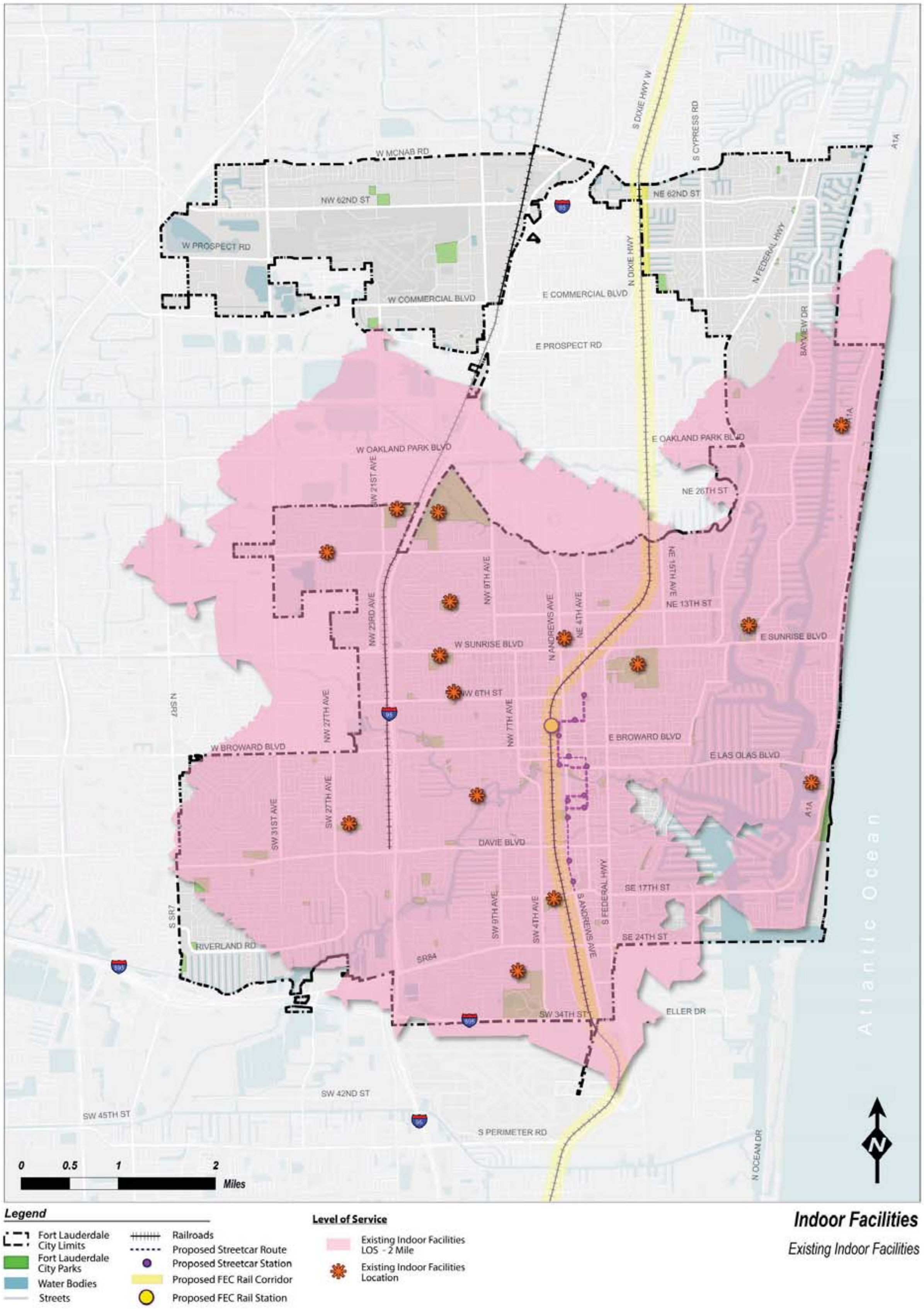
The city currently provides 14 gyms, community and recreation centers, and other indoor facilities that provide opportunities for indoor recreation and fitness programs. Shown in **Map 4-7**, these facilities are well distributed throughout the southern half of Fort Lauderdale and provide a high level of service when analyzed at a target walkable and bikeable 2-mile service area. Small gaps do exist in the extreme southwest and southeast areas, and areas north of Commercial Avenue are largely unserved.

Analyzing city-owned surplus properties (**Map 4-8)** identifies the potential additional facilities that could be developed to include an indoor facility. Development of these sites may help provide additional access to indoor facilities, as well as provide additional access in parts of the city that are projected to experience heavy growth.

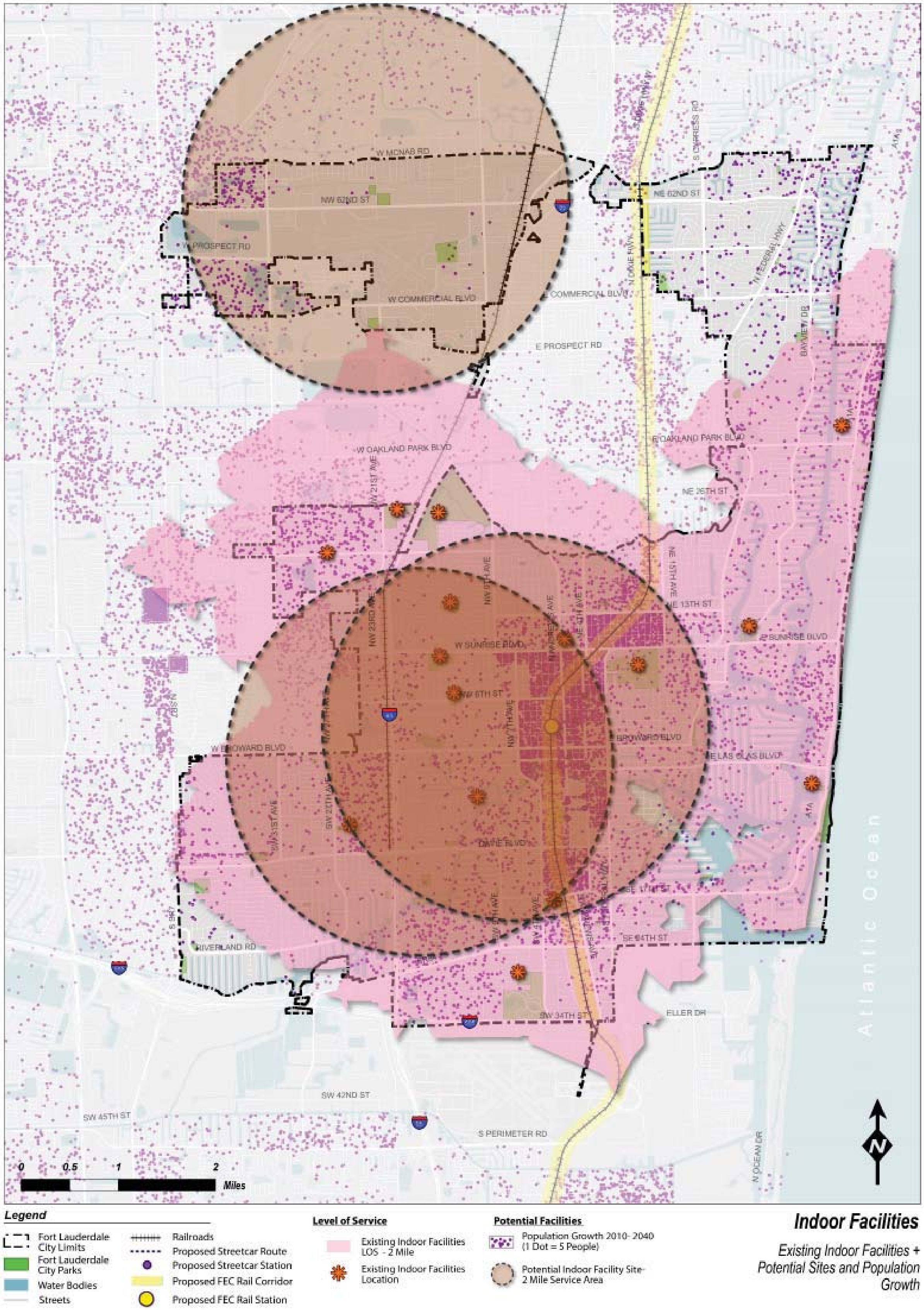
Recreation Center at Osswald Park

Community Center at Riverside Park

Map 4-7: Indoor Facility Locations and Access Level of Service (LOS)



Map 4-8: Indoor Facility Locations and Access Level of Service (LOS) + Potential Opportunities



Case Study: Anniversary Park, Hollywood, Florida

Anniversary Park - Before Improvements

Anniversary Park in Downtown Hollywood, Florida serves as a good example of how design improvements can be utilized to bolster safety in a park and its surrounding areas. In 1990, the park had become a nuisance public space dominated by homeless, drunks, and drug users. Few others entered the park, even in the daytime, and the park was holding back progress for the growing downtown revitalization efforts.

The overgrowth of shrubs, trees and other vegetation had compromised natural surveillance, as had the mounds meant to buffer the park from passing traffic. The same vegetation had a major impact on the consistency of lighting in the park after dark. Designed as a passive park, there was also an extensive array of benches and tables used for sleeping, drinking, and drug use. The park also abutted an alley that provided easy escape when police or others entered the park to confront the current users. Being a corner site, the park had many such escape routes.

Extensive and elaborate plans had been completed to improve the park at a cost of around $30,000 for designs, and the budget for constructing the "makeover" exceeded $250,000. Those plans had been put on hold, primarily for budgetary reasons.

Under the new plan, physical design changes for the park included trimming up existing trees, removal of shrubs and other undergrowth, and leveling of the site to remove the mounds to greatly enhance natural surveillance. Installation of a decorative white perimeter fence (40") with gates and about 10% opacity maintained the natural surveillance while greatly improving access control and providing enhance territoriality. Most seating was enhanced to provide natural surveillance of anyone using them.

The majority of the park rebuild was accomplished on a Saturday in December using volunteers, donated services of a local construction company, and City Parks and Public Works staff. The fence, play equipment, and mural were completed shortly thereafter. Local artists were paid to design and paint the mural, but some volunteers helped as well. The transformation was fast, inclusive, and exciting for businesses and residents to help achieve – or even just watch. Two months later, a community "peace pole" was added with colorful flowers at the base. Positive media coverage was extensive for several months, adding to the reputation of downtown Hollywood as safe and family-friendly.

The problems with homeless camping, alcohol consumption, and drug use stopped immediately. No additional police patrols were needed or added. At the same time, through a matching grants program, a variety of non-profit groups were encouraged to use the park during the evenings for family oriented activities. Once such event on Friday nights has continued for the last 25 years. Use of the park during the daytime also escalated.

Anniversary Park - After Improvements

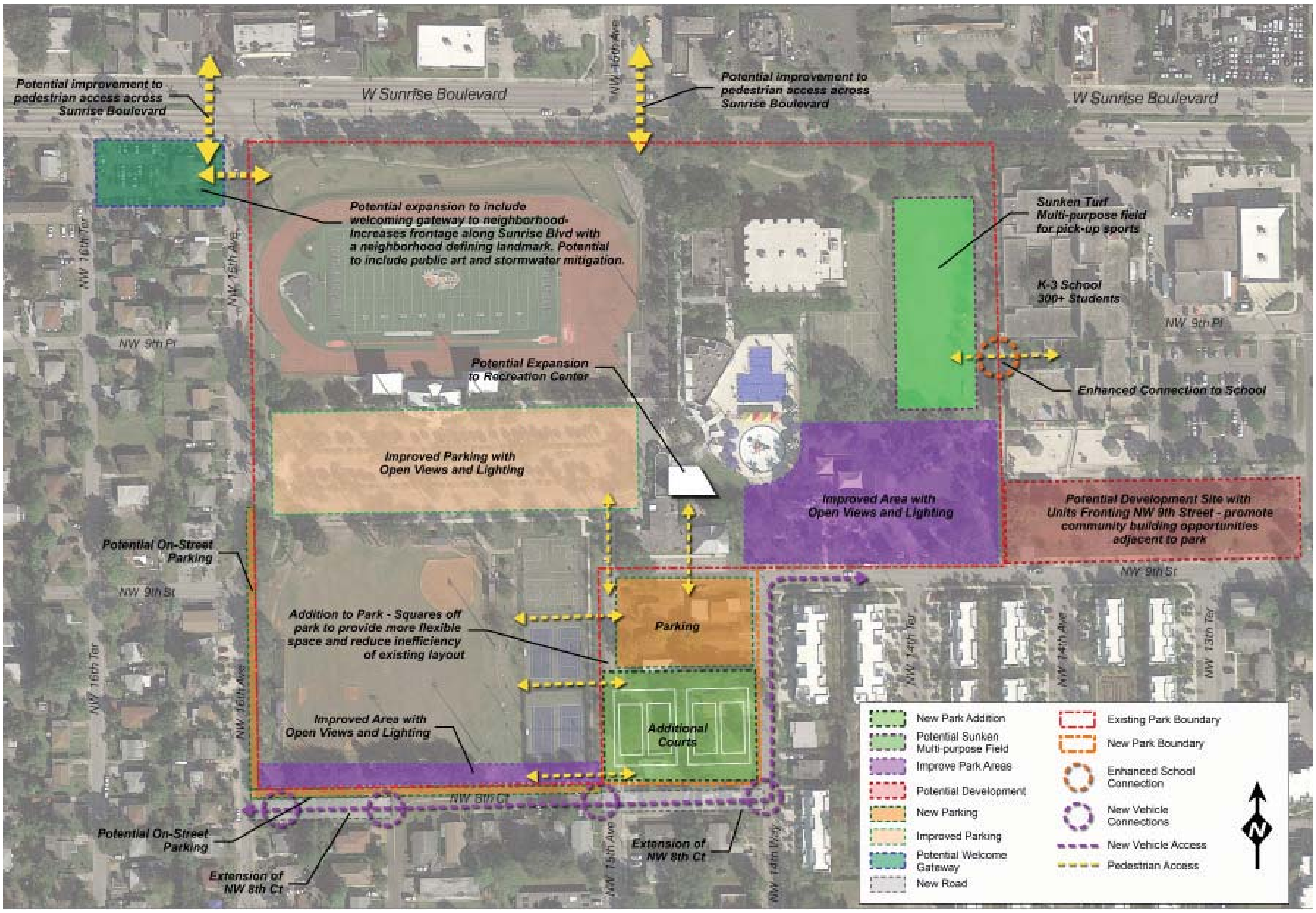
Safety

During the Public Involvement phase, many Fort Lauderdale neighbors indicated a desire for improved safety and security throughout the park system. While each park has its own unique circumstances, design improvements can have a significant impact on the safety and security of a park and its surrounding area. The case study on the previous page provides examples of features that can be implemented at a park to address safety issues, and the application at Joseph C. Carter Park below demonstrates how a park in Fort Lauderdale System could be improved .

Practical Application - Joseph C. Carter Park

Joseph C. Carter Park is an important part of the Fort Lauderdale Parks system, as well as the surrounding community that utilizes the site for their recreation needs. **Figure 4-4** shows how improvements in the park, and modifications to the context and perimeter of the park can create a safer environment that is more integrated into the surrounding neighborhood. Enhancing the borders of the park to include more efficient street connections, improved lighting, on-street parking, and clear sight lines can help minimize the potential for security issues. Strengthening the connection to the adjacent school as well as other pedestrian connections in the park will create safer access for park users. Improving the park frontage along Sunset Boulevard will also create a more inviting site, especially with the potential incorporation of a gateway landmark for the park and the neighborhood. Upgrades to the existing facilities will also promote increased usage, further reducing the potential for safety and security issues.

Figure 4-4: Joseph C. Carter Park Proposed Functional Diagram



4.2.5 Art in Public Places

Bubier Park

Guiding Principles

Art in public places is an important part of the culture of a diverse community such as Fort Lauderdale. While not only aesthetically pleasing, public art provides opportunities for local artists to contribute to the image and economics of the City, and exposes residents and visitors to the diversity and culture that makes Fort Lauderdale unique. Using input from the community involvement and vision workshops focusing on public art, the following guiding principles were identified provide a framework for strategies that should be utilized in future park development and improvement:

- **Diversity of Public Art** - Different styles and mediums used to produce and display public art
- **Integration of Art into the Communities' Open Space Fabric** - Explore parks that would be ideal locations for public art installations, and other opportunities that may exist in conjunction with future projects.

Diversity of Public Art

Public Art can take many forms and exists in a wide variety of public spaces in a City. Common types of public art generally fall within one of the following categories:

- Sculpture
- Architecture
- Murals / Paintings
- Earthworks
- Memorials
- Signage
- Installation Art
- Interactive Art

Fort Lauderdale currently features several different types of public art throughout the city, with unique initiatives being implemented in the last few years. One element present in many Fort Lauderdale parks are bike racks that are also art works. These bike racks are unique and provide aesthetic value and functionality. Sculptures can also be found in many parks throughout the city, specifically in parks that line the New River as well as those on the beach front. Many sculptures are colorful and incorporate elements that relate to Fort Lauderdale's history and beach culture. Several parks also contain historical tributes to the Native American heritage of Florida, as well monuments to notable citizens and members of the armed forces.

Architectural elements are also present in Fort Lauderdale parks, providing aesthetic value and in some cases, incorporating historical elements. Signage has also been utilized as a medium for art installations. Some parks contain painted book-share installations that contribute to the welcoming character of the public parks.

A notable piece of public art is the mural at Sistrunk Park. Murals are significant contributions to the public realm in other cities in South Florida and opportunities for additional wall murals may be present in future park and public facilities.

Fort Lauderdale has also begun to incorporate murals in a creative, more horizontal approach, by painting intersections on Las Olas Boulevard. Part of the Connecting the Blocks Initiative aimed at creating a more walkable and bikable community, these painted intersections present an imaginative way to create a safer balance between vehicles and pedestrians. **Figure 4-5** provides examples of existing public art throughout Fort Lauderdale.

Locations of Public Art in Fort Lauderdale

The Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation System has a wealth of public art installations, including many of the examples discussed in the previous section. Observations identified significant pieces of public art in 22 parks and open spaces throughout the city. **Table 4-1** provides a list of parks that feature public art, many of which are shown in **Figure 4-5** below.

Figure 4-5: Examples of Public Art in Fort Lauderdale Parks

Sculptures, Statues and Monuments

Bike Rack - Ann Herman Park

Sculpture - Esplanade Park

Native American Art - D.C. Alexander Park

Native American Monument- Lewis Landing Park

Architectural and Welcome Elements

Gates from Repurposed Materials - Harbordale Park

Architectural Structure - Peter Feldman Park

Murals and Pavement Paintings

Seat Wall Mural - Sistrunk Park

Painted Intersection on Las Olas Boulevard

Painted Book Exchange - Dottie Mancini Park

Table 4-1: Fort Lauderdale Parks with Public Art

Ann Herman Park	George W. English Park
Bill Keith Preserve	Harbordale Park
Bubier Park	Holiday Park
Colee Hammock Park	Huizenga Plaza
D.C. Alexander Park	Jack and Harriet Kaye Park
Dolphin Isles Park	Lewis Landing Park
Dottie Mancini Park	Loggerhead Park
Earl Lifshey Park	Peter Feldman Park
Esplanade Park	Sistrunk Park
Fort Lauderdale Beach Park	Townsend Park
Francis L. Abreau Place	Vista Park

The parks listed in **Table 4-1** are a mix of different park types, from large urban parks and community parks, to small plazas and open spaces. **Map 4-9** on the following page provides the location and context of these parks. A majority of these are found in the Downtown area or near the beach. This is beneficial to the park system, as these are some of the most visited parks, and tend to be the greater tourists attractions. However, like all other aspects of the park system, public art should be equitable and easily accessible by neighbors in all areas of the city.

Integration of Art into the Communities' Open Space Fabric

Fort Lauderdale has many opportunities to further the collection of public art within the parks system and provide opportunities for residents to enjoy the diverse culture of the city.

Urban Open Spaces and Gateways

The city currently operates 29 small parks and urban open spaces, many of which do not feature public art. In addition, many of these are situated along major entry points into the city or individual neighborhoods. These spaces may serve as gateways that are ideal locations for public art installations that help reflect the culture of Fort Lauderdale. **Map 4-9** shows the location of 15 parks and open spaces that could

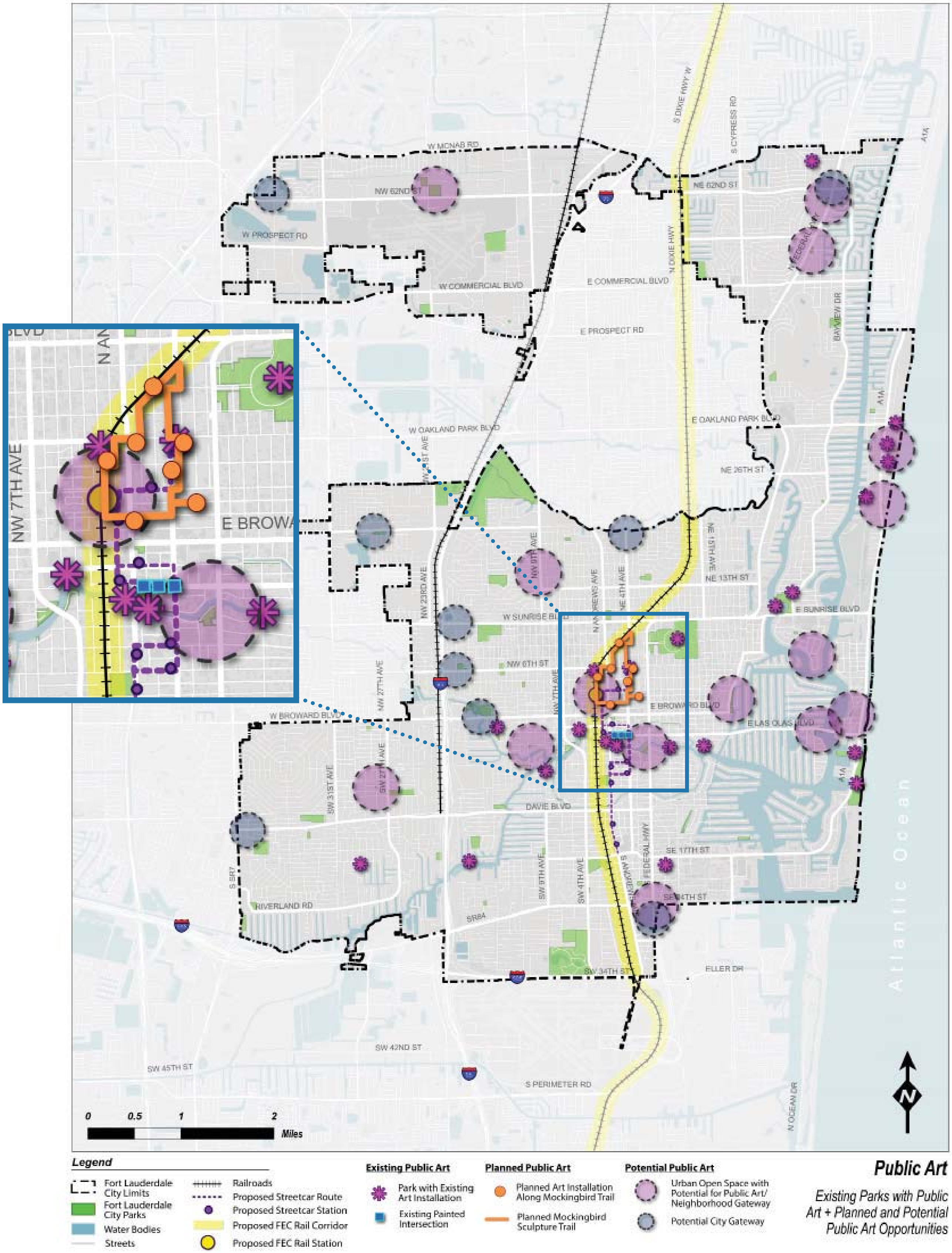
Examples of Underutilized Gateways

Welcome Park along S Federal Highway

Imperial Point Entranceway Seen from N Federal Highway

Cortez Triangle Park Along S Atlantic Blvd

Map 4-9 Existing Public Art Locations and Potential Opportunities



serve as ideal locations for public art. These gateways will help to provide defined points of public access to areas currently not served.

The Mockingbird Trail

In addition to small parks and open spaces, a trail planning initiative is underway in Flagler Village that seeks to combine outdoor recreation with urban public art. Named the Mockingbird Trail, this Urban Art Trail will feature over two miles of verdant walkways, various outdoor seating elements, exercise routes, contemporary urban design street furniture and over a dozen public art installations. The concept encourages neighborhoods to connect with natural flora and fauna through the use of public art. The trail has garnered significant public support and has received financial contributions from private and non-profit donors, as well as the Community Foundation of Broward's 2014 Art of Community: The Engagement Challenge Fund Grant.

Map 4-9 on the previous page includes the Mocking Bird Trail Route as well as proposed locations of art installations. Features of the trail include:

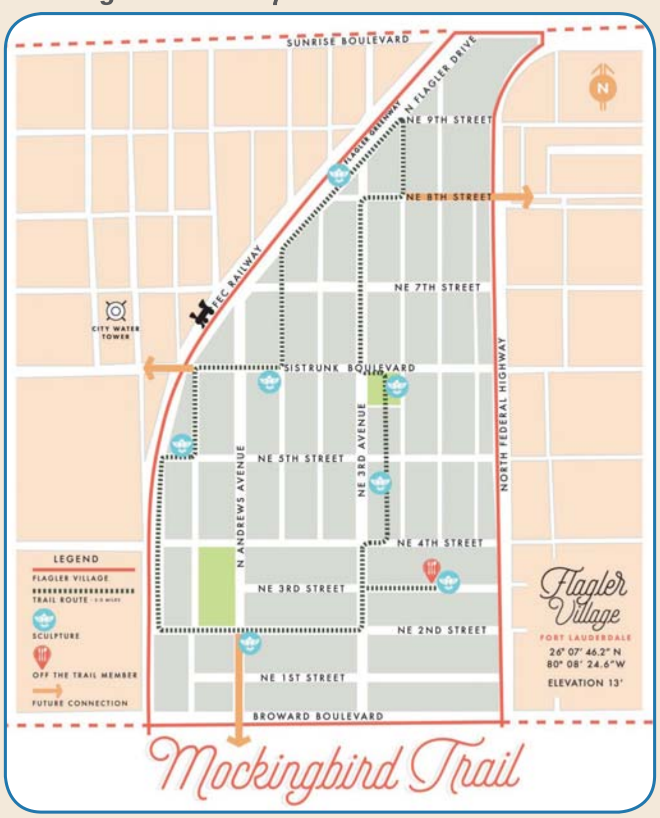
- Sculpture Art
- Murals
- Sidewalk Improvements
- Greenway Paths
- Native Plants
- Stormwater Planters
- Decorative Lighting
- Custom-design Seating
- Connections to Future Trails

Phase One of the Trail will include a two-mile route and six trail stops with art installations in the neighborhood of Flagler Village. The project could serve as a catalyst for additional streetscape, planting improvements and public art throughout the city.

Trail Along the FEC Rail Corridor

Art Installation on NE 3rd Street

Mockingbird Trail Map



4.2.6 Sustainability and Resiliency

Stormwater swale at Riverland Park

Guiding Principles

The City's parks system offers a diverse range of user experiences and opportunities to engage the natural environment in various ways. A key part of the experience is due to the promotion of natural system function, biodiversity and conservation of resources.

While the City has been successful in addressing Sustainability and resiliency, there are opportunities within the park system to incorporate city-wide initiatives. The following guiding principles provide a framework for strategies that should be utilized in future park development and improvement:

- **Sustainability at the Park Level** - Promoting system-wide sustainable efforts with small-scale interventions at each park
- **A Resilient System** - Opportunities for the implementation of resilient environmental practices within the park system

Sustainability at the Park Level

A sustainable park system begins with best practices and strategies for each individual park. Incorporation of these strategies establishes a culture in which every park contributes to the success of the system and the natural environment throughout the city. The following diagram (**Figure 4-6**) shows a prototypical community park similar to urban parks in Fort Lauderdale. While typical facilities and amenities associated with such a park are shown, there are many sustainable features that contribute to the overall environmental quality of the park also highlighted. These features can be incorporated to parks throughout the city in situations where they are applicable, and will provide ecological benefits.

In addition to the amenities and physical attributes of the park that contribute to sustainability, the following maintenance strategies can also be implemented in order to achieve long-term sustainability over the life of a park.

- **Energy Management Plan** - controls energy costs at facilities and promotes conservation and alternative energy
- **Native Plants** - reduces water consumption through irrigation, as well as the amount of resources to maintain landscapes
- **Life Cycle Analysis** - promotes efficient use of resources throughout the life of a park or facility
- **Variable Maintenance Standard Levels** - enables the efficient use of maintenance resources for a diverse system and promotes natural areas and habitats

Cortez Triangle Park Along S Atlantic Blvd

Figure 4-6: Prototypical Community Park and Sustainable Strategies

LID Parking

1. **Permeable Pavement** - reduces surface runoff and allows for water filtration.
2. **Grass Parking** - serves as flexible green space and overflow parking when needed, reduces surrounding temperatures.
3. **Shade Trees** - provide aesthetic benefits and reduces heat in parking area.
4. **Heat Islands/ Rain Gardens** - provide shade for temperature reduction, increased tree canopy and water filtration.

Lighting and Energy

5 **LED Light Fixtures** - reduce energy consumption and maintenance and replacement costs.

6 **Dark Sky Compliancy** - minimizes light pollution and unnecessary energy consumption.

7 **Solar Panels on Pavilions and Light Fixtures** - provides alternative energy source for amenities at the point of need.

8 **Large Wind Turbines** - provides additional energy to the park site, as well as education value for alternative energy demonstration.

Sustainable Amenities

13 **Reusable Materials** - use of recyclable materials reduces landfill needs.

14 **Green Roofs**- incorporates water filtration into vertical structures with large surface areas.

Drainage and Water Filtration

9 **Swales** - grading the site to drain into swales allows for efficient drainage and storage, and can be designed to benefit drainage from surrounding areas.

10 **Rain Gardens** - provides drainage and water filtration for surface runoff from adjacent areas.

11 **Native Plants** - use of native plants allows for naturally stabilized areas and decreased maintenance and irrigation needs.

12 **Educational Signage** - increases awareness of the importance of natural systems, stormwater management, water quality, and sustainable energy.

Community Gardens

15 **Edible Plants** - helps increase education and awareness of health and wellness, urban agriculture and food access.

16 **Sustainable Irrigation** - utilize cisterns, water barrels, and drip irrigation for irrigation with on-site water sources.

A Resilient System

Fort Lauderdale will be presented with many climate challenges and opportunities in the future. It is essential that the parks system provides resiliency and long-term stability in order to maintain balance of natural resources and recreation needs while adapting to environmental and climate-related changes.

Benefits of Resiliency

The City of Fort Lauderdale is a signatory of the Durban Adaptation Charter which was launched by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2011 to help local governments respond to and cope with climate change risks.

As a signer of the Durban Adaptation Charter the city commits to:

1. **Key information of all local government development planning**
2. **Ensuring that adaptation strategies are aligned with mitigation strategies**
3. **Promoting the use of adaptation that recognizes the needs of vulnerable communities and ensuring sustainable local economic development**
4. **Prioritizing the role of functioning ecosystems as core municipal green infrastructure**
5. **Seeing innovative funding mechanisms**

Climate impacts are felt at a local level. It is at the local level where residents are at the highest risk for damage to the social, economic and environmental stability of the community. Local governments are most equipped to take action and prepare for and adapt to the impacts of climate change, by focusing on the following strategies:

- Use past experience to inform future decisions
- Recognize ways to use resources
- Prioritize shared ownership in decision making
- Bring together a range of distinct systems and institutions
- Form well-conceived, constructed, and managed systems
- Plan for spare capacity purposively created to accommodate disruption
- Be willing and able to adopt alternative strategies in response to changing circumstances

Opportunities for Resilient Strategies in the Fort Lauderdale Parks System

As Fort Lauderdale continues to grow in density, the sustainability and resiliency of its natural systems will become more critical. Fort Lauderdale's coastal location, and the abundance of water habitats and natural corridors will provide the setting for environmental challenges that require both man-made interventions and environmental changes. The parks and recreation system's deep integration into these environments presents a unique opportunity to implement strategies that can help communities respond to these challenges and continue to have access to a diverse recreation system.

Section 2.4 provides a list of potential actions that the city can take in both the short-term and the long-term that can begin to address the physical elements by utilizing resilient techniques. The following section highlights how one element of resiliency- stormwater management, can be applied across the park system to varying degrees and context sensitivity.

Stormwater Storage

Due to the coastal environment and numerous rivers and canals that are found within Fort Lauderdale, large storm events coupled with tidal events can often result in severe flooding throughout the City.

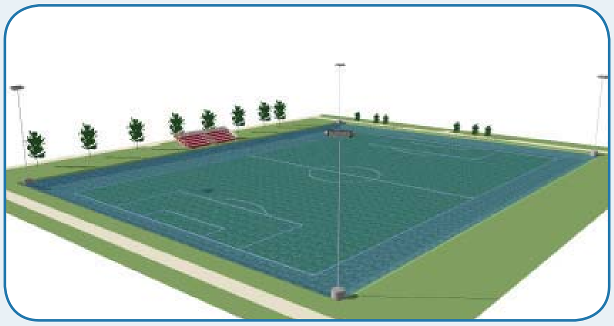
One unique strategy that can be implemented in larger parks is to use recreation fields as detention basins for severe stormwater events. Parks in close proximity to rivers and canals are especially applicable for this strategy, as they can be early receptors of the flood water before it reaches surrounding neighborhoods. The following diagrams illustrate how this concept could be implemented at Mills Pond Park using sunken athletic fields as detention basins. **Figure 4-7** illustrates how the four large multi-use fields can serve in this capacity. Diverting drainage towards these fields by sinking them by three feet can result in nearly two million gallons of water being detained for each field. **Figure 4-8** shows the location of these fields, as well as the direction of the water sources. While the conservation area of the park helps buffer potential flooding, severe events may require additional precautions such as the sunken fields. A unique approach that can be taken at Mills Pond park is to use the fields as multiple tiers for storage.

Figure 4-8: Potential Flood Control at Mills Pond Park

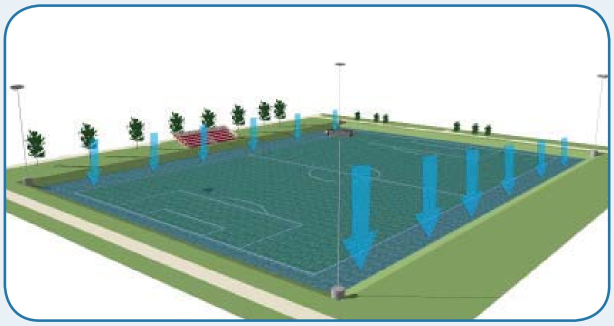
Figure 4-7: Typical Sunken Field Detention Basin

In flood events, water is directed into the sunken fields from multiple directions, transforming the field and its surrounding banks into a detention basin.

Water continues to fill the basin until the capacity is reached. In the case of Mills Pond Park, a series of fields can be treated as tiered basins, where one fills first and then overflows into the next if necessary. Note that the light posts are encased concrete pillars.



Once the flood event is over and the basins are stabilized, the fields begin to drain the water, and are restored to their original state, with artificial turf ready for immediate play.



Neighborhood Stormwater Control

While Mills Pond Park's location adjacent to water bodies makes it an ideal location for large stormwater control methods, other parks within the Fort Lauderdale system perform similar functions in neighborhood settings. Severe storm events can affect areas that are not near water bodies, especially if the stormwater system has difficulty handling unexpected volumes of water. Parks within neighborhoods can serve as drainage areas for neighborhood stormwater and can be designed to manage large amounts of surface runoff.

An example of a park that fits this scenario is Riverland Park, which already incorporates low impact strategies such as swales, and rain gardens. While the stormwater management features contribute to on-site drainage and water filtration, enhancement of the facility and the surrounding streets can provide benefits to the neighborhood. **Figure 4-9** shows Riverland Park and the surrounding areas, highlighting existing water management facilities and potential improvements that can be made to enhance the functions of the park. The following is a list of improvements/enhancements:

1. **Existing Swales and Bioretention** currently provides minimum levels of stormwater management on site
2. **Perimeter Swales and Bioretention** can be added to expand stormwater collection basins with native plantings.
3. **Sunken Multi-use Field** can serve as a large detention area for excessive runoff during large storm events.
4. **Permeable Pavement** in parking areas that are underused can reduce surface runoff.
5. **Grass Parking** to the rear of the site provides a flexible green space that does not produce additional runoff.

Figure 4-9: Potential Neighborhood Drainage at Riverland Park

Drainage Swale in Riverland Park

Improved Stormwater Management and Water Quality

While managing stormwater runoff and incorporating flood controls are strategies that contribute to stormwater control, parks can further enhance the quality of water entering the system. Many parks' close proximities to sensitive watersheds present opportunities to incorporate natural buffers that improve natural habitats.

An example is Snyder Park, which contains two large water features in the park. This 92-acre park is programmed to incorporate natural settings and is home to a Tropical Hardwood Hammock ecosystem. Numerous species of native plants and wildlife are present, and a newly created butterfly garden has added to the ecological diversity of this park site.

The park's western lake is currently undergoing habitat restoration with an aim of removing invasive species and replacing with native plant communities that support local and migrating wildlife. These efforts are critical to water quality as well as long-term maintenance and should be incorporated where possible throughout the park system.

The establishment of buffers can be highlighted at Snyder Park with the opportunity to reclaim leased acreage between Floyd Hull Stadium and the western lake. The addition of this reclaimed acreage could provide space to treat stormwater runoff from the stadium complex before entering the lake or stormwater system. In addition, this area could provide an opportunity to develop a nature center which is one of the top facilities with city-wide need, as well as an apiary for enhancement of natural flora and promotion of healthy food sources.

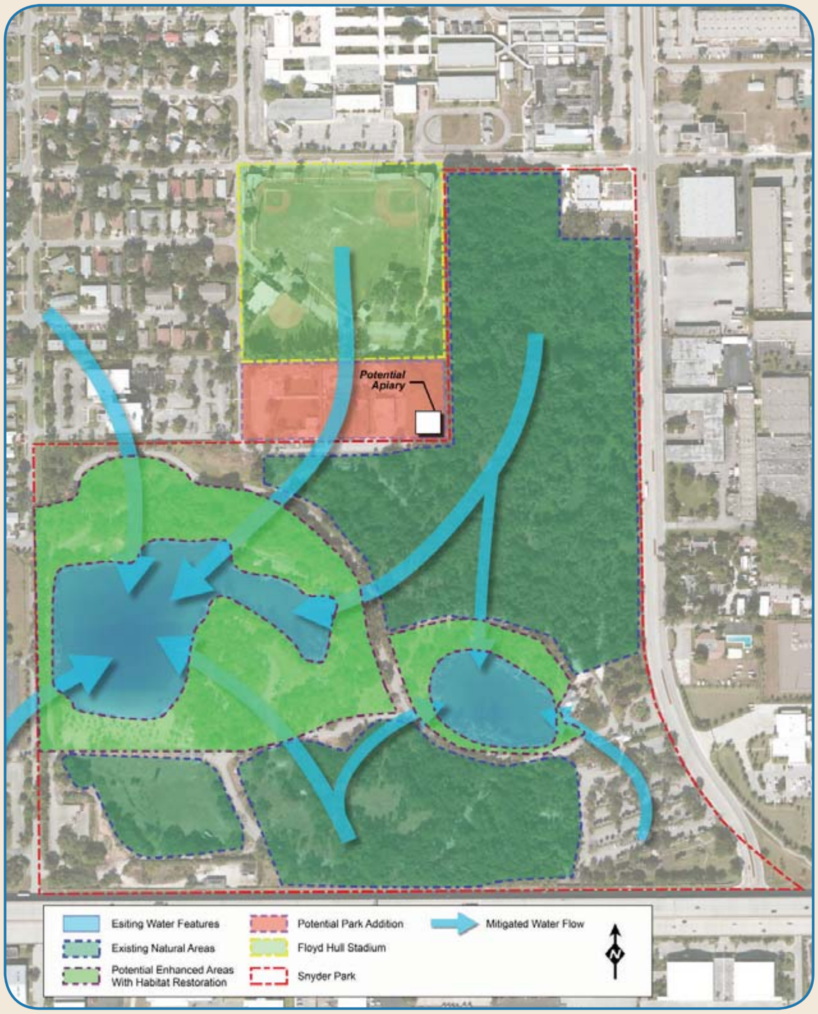
Figure 4-10 shows the location of the areas in Snyder Park where enhanced habitat restoration efforts should continue to be incorporated to further improve on site water quality. The map also highlights the leased site that could possibly be incorporated into the park, and the potential benefits that the site could provide. Using existing natural areas and enhancing the habitats on the edges of the lake, Snyder Park can serve as a model for water quality improvement and the integration of natural systems.

Native plantings in Snyder Park

Habitat Restoration Sign - Efforts are already underway to remove invasive species and replace them with native plants

West Edge Conditions - Utilizing these areas as a natural buffer is critical to maintaining water quality and healthy habitats

Figure 4-10: Snyder Park Water Management



4.2.7 Connectivity

Fort Lauderdale Beach Walkway

Guiding Principles

The demand for connectivity between parks and communities has already been widely prevalent during the community involvement process, and connectivity is a concept that the parks system can apply to its overall vision. The guiding principles for connectivity through the parks and recreation system are supported by other City and Broward County initiatives that seek to improve access and quality of life for neighbors and stimulate economic growth throughout the city. The guiding principles for connectivity established through the Needs Assessment and Visioning workshop are:

- **Regional Connectivity-** Provide access to regional trails and transit systems to further promote alternative transportation
- **Complete Streets-** Create safe bicycle and pedestrian friendly streets that provide access to major destinations within the city.
- **Recreational Walking and Biking-** Connect every neighborhood through trails and greenways, sidewalks and bike lanes to promote recreational use.

Regional Connectivity

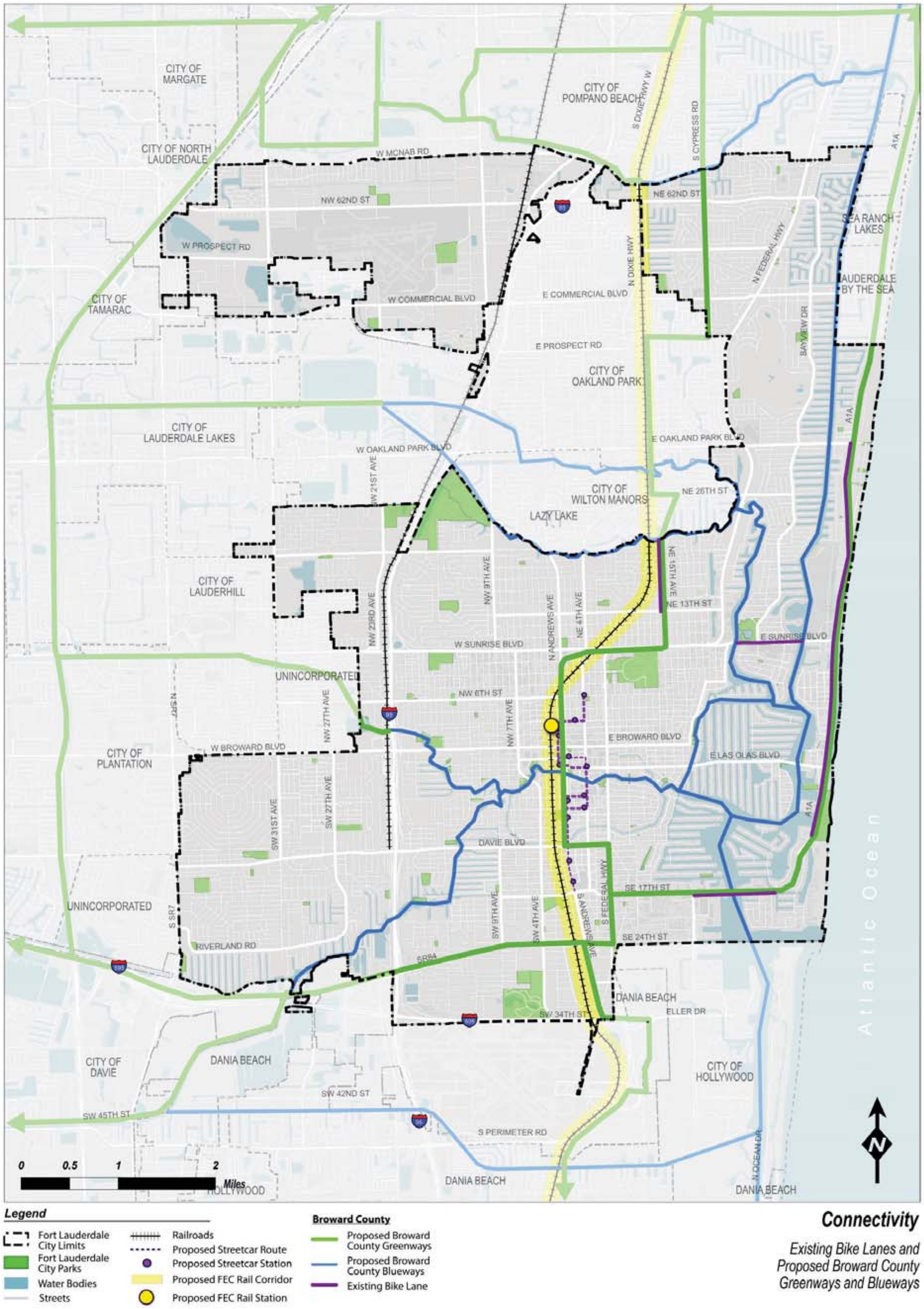
Using these guiding principles, the vision carries forward and builds upon recommendations from the 2014 Broward County Complete Streets Greenway Integration Study for priority and proposed greenways and blueways. The proposed trails network connects important areas of Broward County, including areas of Fort Lauderdale such as the downtown core, beach access along A1A, and several other park and canal access points. **Map 4-10** shows the Broward Greenways Master Plan for Fort Lauderdale and the surrounding areas. The proposed greenways provide the opportunity to connect Fort Lauderdale to other communities within the County, to conservation areas to the west, and to Palm Beach County and Miami-Dade County. These greenway connections will not only provide recreation opportunities in coastal and inland areas but strengthen the South Florida region as a whole.

Complete Streets

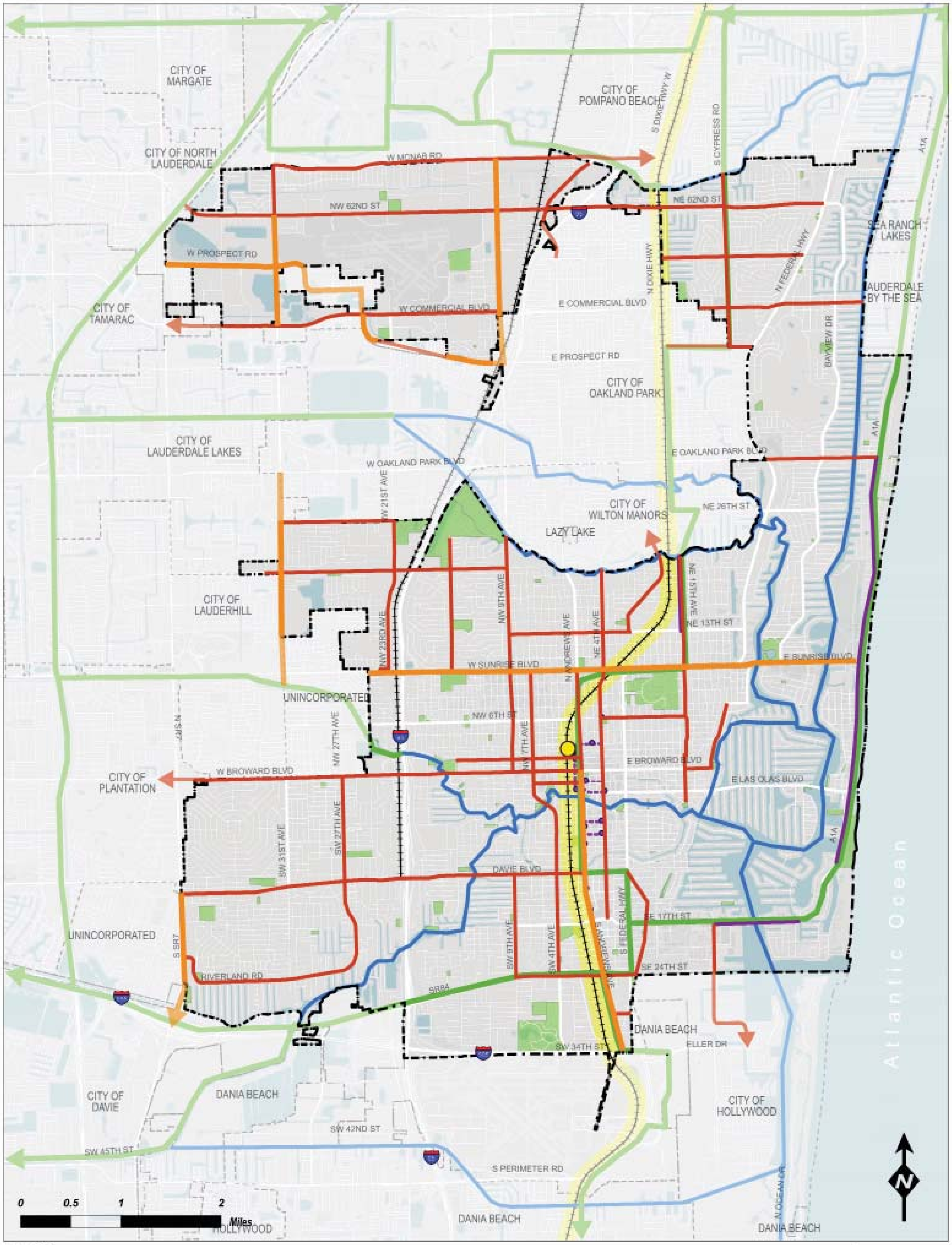
The vision for connectivity also builds upon the 2015 Connecting the Blocks Plan. This initiative focuses on increasing the walkability and bikeability of Fort Lauderdale. The plan establishes typologies and standards for complete streets, as well as improvement projects and cost estimates. One of the plan's major goals is to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety throughout the city. Proposed improvements include the addition of bike lanes to existing roads, as well as protected bike lanes on major roads.

Map 4-11 shows the proposed bike lanes and protected bike lanes that are included in the Connecting the Blocks Plan. Implementation of these recommendations would provide strong bicycle connections throughout Fort Lauderdale, especially between the beach areas and the downtown core. In addition, the Parks System will also benefit from these improvements, with proposed lanes connecting major parks and facilities and providing a much higher level of access for Fort Lauderdale neighbors.

Map 4-10: Broward County Proposed Regional Greenways and Blueways within Fort Lauderdale



Map 4-11: City of Fort Lauderdale Proposed Local Bike Facilities



Legend

- Fort Lauderdale City Limits
- Fort Lauderdale City Parks
- Water Bodies
- Streets
- Railroads
- Proposed Streetcar Route
- Proposed Streetcar Station
- Proposed FEC Rail Corridor
- Proposed FEC Rail Station

Broward County

- Proposed Broward County Greenways
- Proposed Broward County Blueways
- Existing Bike Lane

Connecting the Blocks

- Proposed Protected Bike Lane
- Proposed Bike Lane

Connectivity

Connecting the Blocks - Proposed Bike Lanes and Protected Bike Lanes

Recreational Walking and Biking

While existing plans provide a foundation for regional connectivity and increased bicycle and pedestrian safety, this vision seeks to build upon approved plans and provide recommendations for further connectivity improvements that will encourage recreational use of the greenway and blueway network. **Map 4-12** on the following page identifies additional recommendations. This includes adding more bike lanes, and upgrading some areas to protected bike lanes. Additionally, a greenway connection is recommended from SR 84 to Snyder Park.

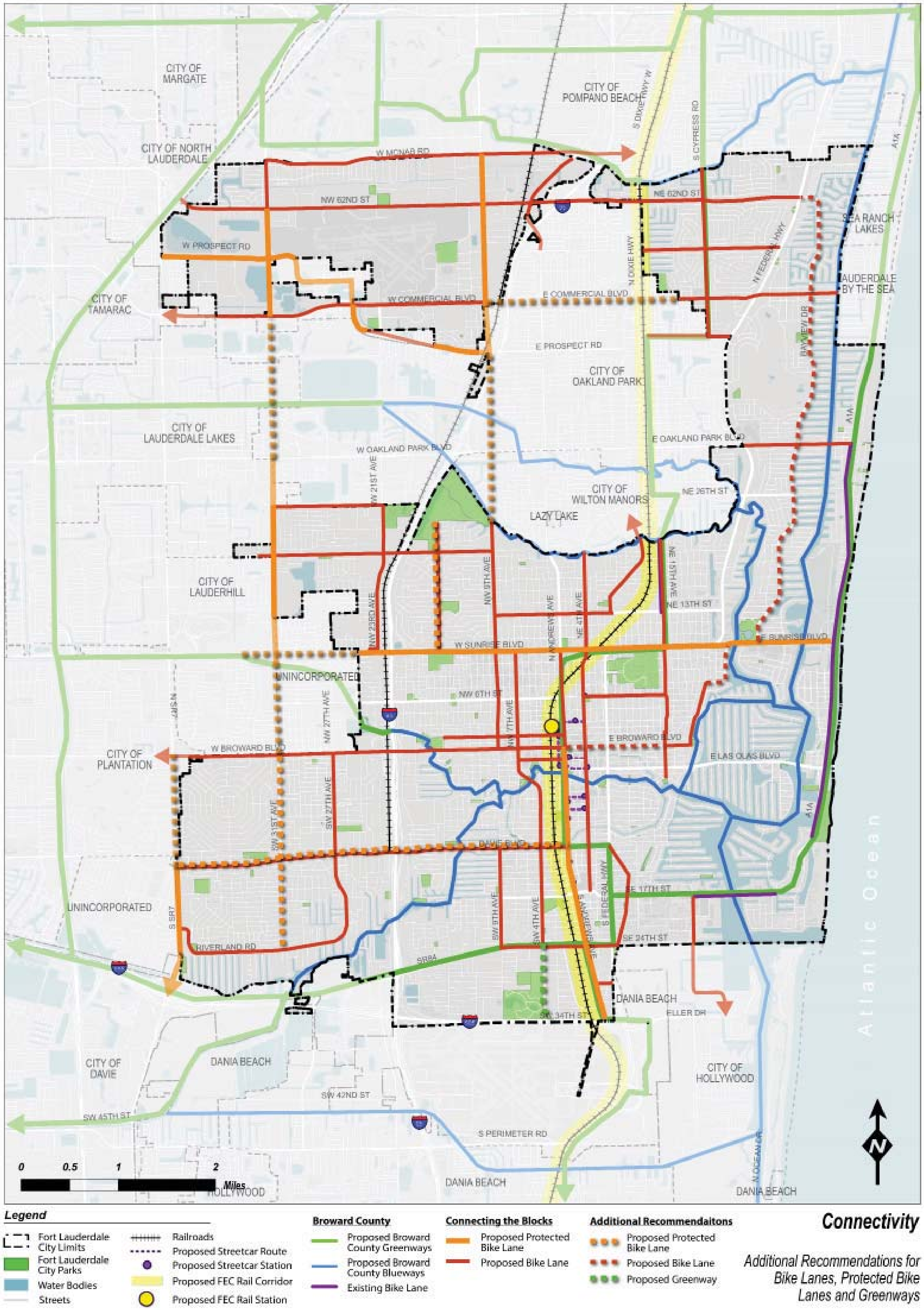
In order to increase connectivity and access to all neighborhoods, some bike lane recommendations have been extended into neighboring municipalities in order to connect with other parts of Fort Lauderdale. These proposals will require coordination with neighboring cities in order to maintain continuous connections. Combined with the proposed greenways and bike lanes from the previously discussed plans, these additional recommendations provide a higher level of connectivity that improves the walkability and bikeability of Fort Lauderdale and helps provide safe access to the parks and facilities throughout the City for recreational use.

Bike Lanes on Seabreeze Boulevard in Fort Lauderdale

Protected Bike Lane on the Pinellas Trail, St. Petersburg, FL

Separated, Shared-Use Path, Indianapolis Cultural Trail

Map 4-12: City of Fort Lauderdale Recommended Local Greenways and Bike Facilities



4.3 Vision Summary

With a new vision established for the city's parks and recreation system, along with the guiding principles for six individual subsystems, advancement of the themes of the city's planning initiatives and other guiding documents is ensured. As noted, the parks and recreation system will play a key role in the continued development of Fort Lauderdale and its communities. This vision outlines a continuation of investment in these contributing community assets and is consistent with the needs and priorities expressed through public involvement.

The six subsystems, illustrated in **Figure 4-11**, combine to form a comprehensive, system-wide vision that provides a diverse collection of resources for the neighbors of Fort Lauderdale to experience, and provides the base for the development of a community that will not only attract people to Fort Lauderdale, but improve the lives of neighbors.

The following chapter provides a strategic plan that identifies phasing strategies and defines priority projects based on this vision.

Figure 4-11: City of Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation System Master Plan Subsystems

While the subsystems represent unique qualities of the Fort Lauderdale parks system, they are intended to function in conjunction with each other, and elements of each system are also connected to and influenced by other subsystems.

Coordinated improvement efforts across the six subsystems can help ensure that each is contributing to the success of the parks system, and providing recreation experiences that contribute to a high quality of life for Fort Lauderdale neighbors.

Parks & Facilities

- Increase **access and equity** of parks in the residential areas of the city;
- Utilize the **existing parks system, surplus properties, rooftop parks, and other potential opportunities** to continue to provide a **high level of service** as the City grows and develop; and
- Enhance **school parks** to provide controlled access to park amenities, while retaining **safety and security** for students.

Recreation & Athletics

- Improve **access to recreate** by **enhancing existing athletic facilities** and **utilizing opportunities to provide additional facilities** at surplus properties; and
- Incorporate strategies such as **artificial turf and advanced lighting technologies** to **increase the capacity of new and existing fields** to allow for greater use from Fort Lauderdale neighbors.

Community Health

- Explore the **benefits of a healthy community** and opportunities to incorporate **additional facilities and programs that promote health and wellness** within Fort Lauderdale; and
- Improve **safety and security of parks and nearby areas** in order to contribute the overall safety of the parks system, and provide **high-quality recreation experiences** for Fort Lauderdale neighbors.

Art in Public Places

- Continue to **encourage the incorporation of diverse styles and mediums of public art** throughout the park system; and
- Explore parks and open spaces that could serve as **potential opportunities for public art installations**, as well as other projects within the city that could contribute to the public art system.

Sustainability & Resiliency

- Incorporate **sustainable interventions at each park** in order to establish a system-wide effort to **increase sustainability throughout the system**; and
- Explore opportunities to incorporate **resilient strategies within the parks system** that benefit the surrounding neighborhoods and communities including **stormwater storage and control and improving water quality**.

Connectivity

- Provide **access to regional trails and transit systems** to encourage **alternative transportation**;
- Create **safe bicycle and pedestrian access** to major destinations by utilizing **Complete Streets**; and
- Continue to **improve neighborhoods connections** through **trails, greenways, sidewalks, bike lanes and safe crosswalks** to promote recreational use.