

MASTER PLAN



Acknowledgments

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CLEARWATER CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Brian J. Aungst Sr.

Mark Bunker

David Allbritton

Kathleen Beckman

Lina Teixeira

CITY OF CLEARWATER STAFF

Art Kader

Mike Lockwood

John McDowell

Reynold Choo

Nathan Pandey

Cory Dunbar

Sara DeLorenzo

Shaun Beasley

Kyle Brotherton

Carla Scrivener

Dylan Prins

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Lauren Matzke

Sam Moullet

Ellen Ayo

Jay Ravins

Erika Escamilla

Allie Chandler-Baier

Micah Maxwell

Ricky Ryals

Kris Koch

Paul Mack

Javante Scott

Dave Scrivener

Matt Anderson

Maleah Hinkle

Nate Brigman

Brian DeWitt

Ricky Allison

Denise Sanderson

Kayleen Kastel

Nicole Hernandez

Sandra Clayton

Todd Vaughan

ADDITIONAL INPUT AND INSIGHT PROVIDED BY:

AMPLIFY Clearwater

Kristina Park, Chief Operating Officer

The Arc Tampa Bay

Brian Siracusa, Executive Director

Boys & Girls Club of the Suncoast

Mandy Burnette, Chief Operating Officer

Clearwater Neighborhoods Coalition

Carl Schrader, President

Environmental Advisory Board

Jared Leone

Friends of Clearwater Beach Recreation

Linda Owens

Hispanic Outreach Center

Amanda Markiewicz, Chief Executive Officer

Juvenile Welfare Board

Beth A. Houghton, Chief Executive Officer

Martin Luther King Neighborhood Family Center

Terry Jones, Executive Director

Parks & Recreation Board

Patrick Raftery

Philadelphia Phillies and Clearwater Threshers

John Timberlake, Director of Florida Operations at Phillies Florida LLC

Pinellas County Parks and Conservation Resources

Paul Cozzie, Director

Suncoast YMCA

Summer Cruff, Director of Community Health Programs

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Coachman Park Playground



Del Oro Park Playground



Coachman Park Walkways



Juneteenth Celebration



Morningside Recreation Center



Pier 60 Park

Vision Statement

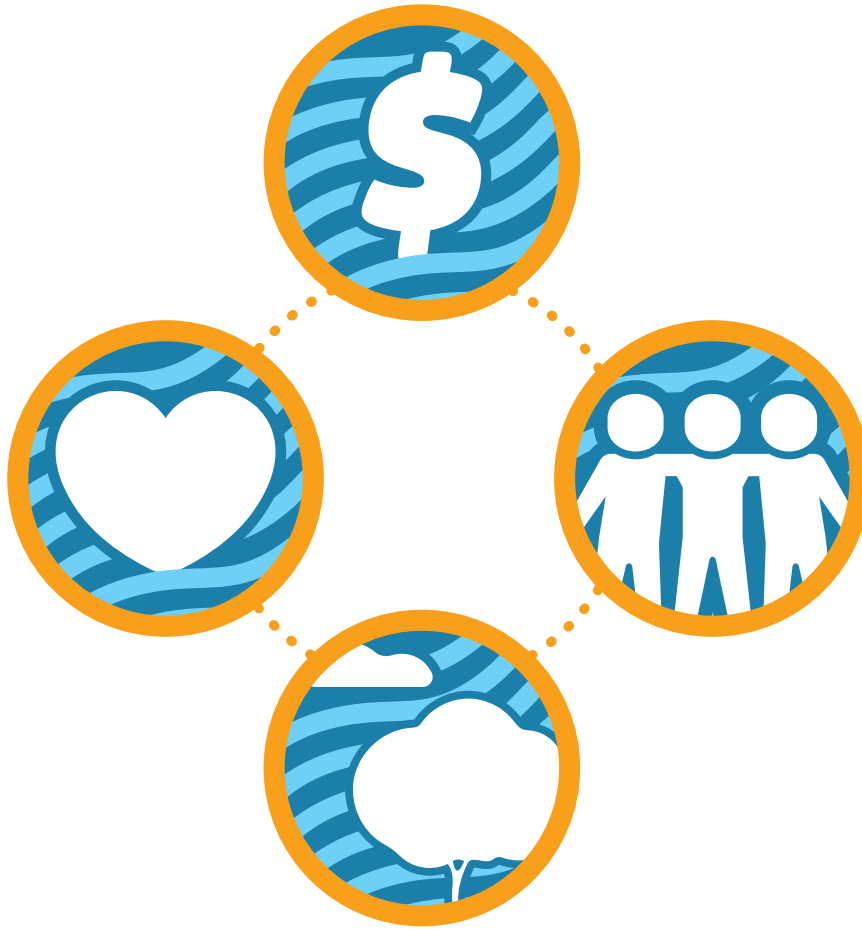
“The Clearwater Parks & Recreation Department provides best-in-class parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities that bring people together and allow the community to thrive.”

CHAPTER 1

Role and Benefits of a Parks and Recreation System in a Thriving Community



Clearwater's system of parks, trails, beaches, and green spaces provide significant benefits for residents, visitors, and the environment. These benefits fall along the dimensions of physical health, economic benefits, social cohesion, and environmental resiliency. This chapter presents research findings on park systems nationwide and the benefits they provide in these areas, with a focus on what these findings imply for the importance of and potential returns of investment in the City of Clearwater's parks system.



Economic Benefits

Clearwater's park system provides significant economic benefits to the city through direct expenditures and indirect value created economic development. Tourism is a significant factor, as regional destinations like Clearwater Beach generate direct revenue through use fees such as parking, while tourist spending supports the local economy and provides tax revenue. Furthermore, the City of Clearwater estimates that in the '21-'22 fiscal year, the economic impact of athletic tournaments surpassed \$141 million – revenue based on the number of nights that participants and their families stayed locally during tournaments at city facilities.

A healthy parks system also serves an economic development function. Research on the City of Cleveland's parks system (Ohio) found that the diverse recreational opportunities provided by the local trail and park network attract residents and employers.¹ Proximity to parks can also positively impact residential property values, increasing property tax revenues in turn.² This is especially true in the areas near Clearwater's beach, where hotels and residential properties draw tourists and residents based on the proximity to clean and safe beach facilities.

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- 1** The Trust for Public Land. (2013). The Economic Benefits of Cleveland Metroparks.
 - 2** The Trust for Public Land. (2013).



Physical Health

Parks benefit physical health by providing space for and encouraging physical activity, with researchers finding that proximity to parks and amount of nearby park space highly correlates with increased physical activity.³ Studies also highlight the connection between higher physical activity levels and health outcomes such as a reduced risk of heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.⁴

Reduced risks translate into avoided medical expenditures. The Florida Recreation and Parks Association cites health care economics research that values the annual medical costs savings of a park user at \$1,230.⁵ For park users over age 65, this medical savings value increases to \$2,406, presenting significant potential for reduced healthcare expenditures in Clearwater, where one in four residents are over the age of 65.

Investment in the parks system can create further positive impacts on physical health, as research has found that perceptions of park quality are associated with higher rates of physical activity in parks.⁶ This suggests that the City of Clearwater can have a strong return on investment on park improvements through improved health outcomes.

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- 3** Cohen, M., Burrowes, K., & Gwam, P. (2022). The Health Benefits of Parks and their Economic Impacts.
 - 4** Cohen, M., Burrowes, K., & Gwam, P. (2022).
 - 5** Florida Recreation & Parks Association. (n.d.). Health Savings Messaging and Resources. <https://www.frpa.org/calculator/healthsavingsresources>
 - 6** Cohen, M., Burrowes, K., & Gwam, P. (2022). The Health Benefits of Parks and their Economic Impacts.



Social Capital

Parks, and especially the community centers within the parks system, have an additional function of building social capital and cohesion. A 2023 report by the U.S. Surgeon General on loneliness and isolation explored the link between a lack of social connection and negative health outcomes. The report found that social isolation can increase the risk of premature death by 29%, underscoring the need for social connection in improved public health outcomes.⁷ The report also found that a lack of social connection can increase susceptibility to anxiety, depression, stroke, and respiratory illness.⁸

Parks serve an important function in creating social cohesion, as they provide social infrastructure in which individuals can connect with each other and their community, with research affirming the positive effect of parks on social cohesion, sense of belonging, and community attachment.⁹

According to the Parks & Recreation Department's Key Performance Indicators for the '21-'22 fiscal year, Clearwater had 11,031 registered recreation pass holder members at park facilities, and saw 498,551 annual visits to one of the six recreation facilities (Clearwater Beach Library & Recreation Complex; Countryside Recreation Center; Long Center; Morningside Recreation Complex; Ross Norton Recreation & Aquatic Complex; North Greenwood Recreation & Aquatic Complex).

Additionally, there were 978,996 annual visits to athletic facilities. These numbers highlight the parks system's role in providing recreation and community spaces that have the potential to build further social cohesion and connection among Clearwater residents.

⁷ U.S. Surgeon General. (2023). Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation.

⁸ *ibid*

⁹ Cohen, M., Burrowes, K., & Gwam, P. (2022).

Environmental Benefits

Parks and green spaces strengthen local environmental health through improved air quality, lower temperatures, and reduced flood risk.¹⁰ Parks with large green spaces or tree canopies can help sequester carbon from the air and remove pollutants, important in urban areas which more commonly suffer from lower air quality.¹¹ The presence of a tree canopy can also help reduce temperatures.¹²

Parks and green spaces can also reduce flood risk and lower stormwater management costs by capturing precipitation and reducing runoff.¹³ During storms, soil, grassy areas, and wetlands act as natural absorbent materials, capturing rainwater.¹⁴ An analysis of the City of Cleveland's study The Trust for Public Land (2013) found that their park areas reduced stormwater management costs by \$5.12 million annually.¹⁵ Furthermore, when rainwater flows off impervious surfaces, such as roads and parking lots, it can lower water quality and create ecological issues such as algal blooms.¹⁶

These environmental benefits can translate into health benefits, as improved air quality can lead to better respiratory health outcomes in children.¹⁷



Summary

Further investment by the City of Clearwater into their parks and recreation system offers calculable returns, and intangible improvements on residents' quality of life. These benefits span across economic, social, physical and environmental dimension, and present an opportunity for the city to further cement their parks system as a keystone institution, and source of pride, for its residents.

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- 10** Cohen, M., Burrowes, K., & Gwam, P. (2022).
 - 11** ibid
 - 12** ibid
 - 13** The Trust for Public Land. (2013).
 - 14** Cohen, M., Burrowes, K., & Gwam, P. (2022).
 - 15** The Trust for Public Land. (2013).
 - 16** ibid
 - 17** Cohen, M., Burrowes, K., & Gwam, P. (2022).

CHAPTER 2

Trends

Communities recognize the vital role that parks, recreational spaces, and services play in promoting public health, social equity, and environmental sustainability. The process of parks and recreation planning has evolved to better meet multifaceted community needs. To address these needs, the Clearwater Parks & Recreation Department developed a comprehensive master plan. The plan was created by reviewing recent successes, analyzing industry trends and identifying future-facing strategies. The following section provides a high-level overview of trends in parks and recreation planning and highlights the key strategies and approaches that have emerged in response to changing community needs and environmental challenges.

Facilities



Electrification



Public
Restrooms



Resilience Hubs

Programs



ATV Wheelchairs



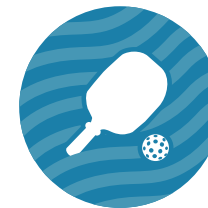
Public Health



Public Art



Smart
Technology



Pickleball

Facilities

Electrification of Parks & Recreation

Electrification – the transition to electric power as the main power source – of fleet vehicles, facilities and maintenance equipment is a growing priority for departments across the United States. Currently, only a few park systems have begun the process of electrification, which requires evaluating upfront and long-term costs, estimating timelines, and understanding charging infrastructure.

Public Restrooms

Lack of adequate access to public restroom facilities is a nationwide crisis that parks and recreation departments across the country are often in the front lines of addressing. Access to clean, accessible facilities are a public health, quality of life and human rights issue. Parks departments are recognizing that limited access to restroom facilities means limited access to outdoor recreational spaces and the exclusion of certain populations, including parents with young children, older park visitors, runners, and people with disabilities, from community services and spaces.

The equity impact of public restrooms is not limited to availability; and many departments are conscientiously updating their existing facilities to be more accessible to those with disabilities and/or mobility limitations. This includes considering the presence of caretakers and more carefully reflecting on the design needs of those who use wheelchairs, of families, including adding baby changing tables to men's bathrooms, and of people of all genders, with the conversion of single-gender bathrooms to single stall gender neutral bathrooms.

Cities around the country are experimenting with ways of providing greater access to appealing, sanitary public restrooms for all users.

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit (MARTA) piloted a smart restroom featuring a 'virtual' room attendant that prevents loitering by contacting users after 10 minutes of inactivity.¹⁸ This restroom also includes fixtures that are "break- and chip-resistant, as well as vandal- and graffiti-proof."¹⁹ Vandal-proofing restrooms, replacing existing fixtures for more damage resistant, tamper-proof, often stainless-steel versions, redesigning building elements to hide exposed plumbing, and using anti-graffiti paint has been done in Durham,²⁰ North Carolina and Bakersfield California.²¹

The Portland Loo, is a pre-built single occupancy free-standing public bathroom that incorporates anti-graffiti wall panels, open grating, and standardized and easy to change components in an effort to reduce the use of the facility for illegal activities, while maintaining a hygienic and safe user experience. Results of this restroom, and preventative design measures in general, have been mixed, and such measures often come with a high price tag.²² Generally, in areas with a history of vandalism, the presence of restroom attendants and rangers, remains the most effective way of ensuring public restrooms are used as intended.

Aside from preventative design, parks and recreation departments are increasingly using smart technology to facilitate use, improve energy savings and increase hygiene. Touch-free sensors to dispense soap, turn on faucets and dry hands, are used to create hand-free cleaning experience, and reduce waste.

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18 Katie Navarra, K. (2018). A few safety and security solutions for restrooms: Operations: Parks & Recreation Magazine: NRPA. National Recreation and Park Association.

19 ibid

20 Going Public: An Assessment of restroom facilities in City of Durham Parks. (2014)

21 Trageser, C. (2015). San Diego installed Public Loos, but now they're flush with problems. NPR.

22 ibid

Resilience Hubs

In response to the increase in severity and frequency of severe weather events, some communities, such as the Cities of Orlando and Portland, are transforming community centers into Resilience Hubs. These centers, which also host year-around community programming, are outfitted with improved HVAC systems, additional generators and electrical upgrades that will allow residents a safe place to access wi-fi, charge devices, contact loved ones and/or apply for benefits while also doubling as a distribution center during times of emergency.

Programs

ATV Wheelchairs

Five state park systems in Colorado, Michigan, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Georgia, and one national park, Sleeping Dunes National Lakeshore in Michigan, have loaner track chairs for public use. These wheelchairs are off-road, tracked, powered wheelchairs that persons with disabilities can borrow to access areas of the park systems previously inaccessible with typical wheelchairs.

Public Health Programming

Spurred in part by the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been an increased demand in programming focused on social, mental, and emotional wellbeing.²³ Workshops, programs, and classes such as tai chi, mindfulness workshops, forest bathing, yoga, guided meditations, and nature therapy – are rapidly growing in popularity. Nature therapy in particular is often jointly programmed with civic engagement activities, helping participants rejuvenate in green spaces and develop a sense of

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23 [CD. Parks, Recreation and Green Spaces | Active People, Healthy Nation | Physical Activity](#)

ownership over these spaces.²⁴

Hosting health screenings at public parks, are also used to provide residents with access to health resources and to help install a culture of wellness into the community.²⁵ These screenings are typically for preventive care and often include screenings for high blood pressure and diabetes.^{26 27}

Public Art

There is a growing trend of incorporating public art into facility designs to enhance the aesthetic and cultural value of public spaces. Parks and recreation areas provide an ideal canvas for public art, as they are often high-traffic areas with a diverse range of visitors and can serve as a platform for artists to showcase their work to a broader audience.²⁸ Public art - including sculptures, murals, and installations - can be used to create a sense of place, foster community engagement, and promote cultural and social values. In park settings public art can be incorporated in various ways: functional art, such as themed picnic tables, bike racks or public restrooms; integrating art into park infrastructure such as footbridges and paths or into wayfinding elements like trailheads and park entrances; and incorporating installations that invite a new appreciation of the space.

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24 **Public Lands Engagement. National Environmental Education Foundation. (2022) Health & Wellness In Nature.**

25 **Matthew Clark. (2017) Field Guide for Creative Placemaking in Parks. The Trust fund for Public Land & City Parks Alliance**

26 **Public Lands Engagement. National Environmental Education Foundation. (2022) Health & Wellness In Nature.**

27 Top trends in parks and recreation for 2023: Feature: Parks & Recreation Magazine: NRPA. National Recreation and Park Association.

28 **Town of Cary, North Carolina. (2012) Public Art Master Plan**

Smart Technology

Technology is being used to provide services and enhance visitors experience. For example, wi-fi enabled smart parks help address inequitable access to broadband and allow for remote work in parks locations. Connectivity is further encouraged through charging stations, including, solar powered charging benches. Some parks now offer mobile apps that provide information about park amenities, activities, and events, as well as wayfinding tools that help visitors navigate the park more easily. Mobile apps and digital kiosks are also being used as educational tools, providing visitors information about the history of the area, relevant landmarks, and the surrounding flora and fauna.²⁹ This can help to create a more engaging and enjoyable experience for visitors, while also promoting greater use of park facilities and resources.³⁰

Pickleball

As of 2023, pickleball remains the fastest growing sport in U.S.³¹ The accessibility and simplicity of the game, coupled with its ability to accommodate players with varying abilities, have contributed to its rapid growth and widespread appeal. While some parks and recreation departments have responded to this surge in popularity by organizing pickleball leagues, tournaments, and instructional programs, others have found pickleball's surging popularity to cause tension, forcing departments to balance competing interests with limited funds and space. Conversion of tennis courts to pickleball is a point of contention.³²

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29 Stapleton, B. (n.d.). How park and recreation departments are using technology to strengthen local communities: NRPA. National Recreation and Park Association.

30 Dellner, T. (n.d.). Parks using technology to engage and Inspire. National Recreation and Park Association.

31 **USA Pickleball. (2023).** Pickleball annual growth report.

32 Stoltz, M. A. (2022). Ridgewood, NJ soundproofing panels. North Jersey Media Group.

Development Standards

As urban areas grow and develop, parks and recreational spaces are an increasingly valuable means of promoting public health and well-being and providing opportunities for community engagement and social cohesion. Land use policies such as mixed-use developments that incorporate parks and open spaces, zoning regulations that require developers to set aside land for public parks, and partnerships between parks and recreation departments and private developers to create shared public-private spaces³³ are being recognized as foundational to ensuring that parks and recreation systems are integrated into urban development plans and remain accessible to all residents, regardless of income or socioeconomic status. Additionally, there is growing interest in using parks and recreational spaces to promote sustainable development, including supporting initiatives like green roofs, urban agriculture, and sustainable transportation facilities such as bike lanes and trails.³⁴

Staffing

The hiring, professional development and retaining of staff in parks and recreation departments, especially in leadership positions, is a growing priority. A recent survey completed by the Academy of Parks & Recreation Administration (AAPRA) found that members were citing staff issues as an area of great concern.³⁵ One of the biggest trends in parks and recreation staffing in recent years has been the rise of paid and unpaid volunteer programs, which can help supplement the work of full-time

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33 Land use and community design. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022).

34 *ibid*

35 Management challenges in park and recreation agencies: Feature: Parks & Recreation Magazine: NRPA. National Recreation and Park Association. (n.d.).

staff and provide additional support for park maintenance, educational programs, and other activities. Parks and recreation departments have also placed a greater emphasis on hiring diverse staff members who can better represent and connect with the communities they serve.

Maintenance

With many agencies facing budgetary constraints, maintenance and replacing of aging infrastructure is becoming a pressing concern.³⁶ Some cities, such as Bakersfield, California, have decided to shift focus from constructing new facilities and expanding programming, to ensuring that existing facilities are well-maintained and meet the needs of the community.

Furthermore, parks and recreation planning is increasingly focused on designing new facilities with low maintenance in mind. This involves using specific strategies such as selecting durable materials that are easy to clean and maintain, designing irrigation systems that conserve water and reduce maintenance needs, and implementing sustainable practices that minimize environmental impact. Design considerations might include using native plant species that require less water and maintenance or incorporating automated maintenance systems that reduce the need for manual upkeep. The goal is for these strategies to reduce maintenance costs over time and to ensure that facilities remain functional and attractive, improving the overall quality of the recreational experience for park visitors.

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36 Ibid



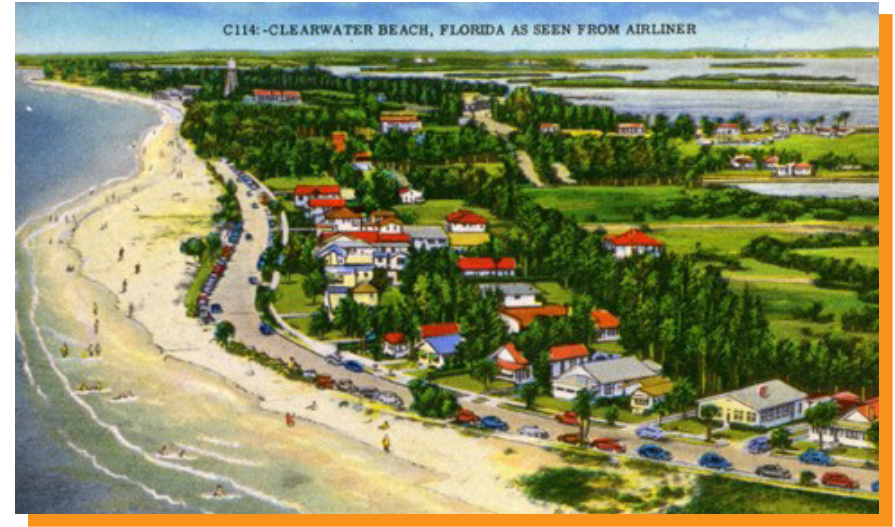
Marketing

Parks and Recreation Systems as Anchor Institutions

Parks and recreation systems, sometimes reduced to providers of amenities, are now being seen and marketed as anchor institutions – institutions that respond and evolve to community needs and invest in the long-term health and wellness of their community. This new framework has led to the development of Community Wellness Hubs, an increased focus on providing community-specific public health services, addressing historic and structural inequities, and building community bonds. By positioning parks and recreation systems as anchor institutions, communities can better understand and utilize the resources that are available to them, while also recognizing the value that these systems bring to their overall well-being. As a result, marketing efforts are shifting towards advertising park and recreation services in conjunction with other government services.³⁷

Community Wellness Hubs aid in this combined outreach effort by consolidating services, such as healthcare and child aftercare services, at a central location and often proactively locating residents who might benefit from services.

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37 Top trends in parks and recreation for 2023: Feature: Parks & Recreation Magazine: NRPA. National Recreation and Park Association. (n.d.).



Ecotourism

There has been a growing trend in utilizing ecotourism as a marketing and promotional tactic to attract visitors to Florida's outdoor recreational spaces. The state's natural environment, which includes its wetlands, springs, and beaches, has always been a major draw for tourists. As the demand for outdoor recreation-based tourism increases, there has been a greater focus on developing eco-friendly recreational opportunities that allow visitors to experience the state's natural beauty without harming the environment. This includes promoting low-impact activities such as hiking, kayaking, and bird watching, as well as developing educational programs and guided tours that highlight the state's natural ecosystems.³⁸

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38 State of Florida, Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Recreation and Parks, Bureau of Planning and Grants, Outdoor Recreation in Florida: A comprehensive program for meeting Florida's Outdoor Recreation Needs (2019). Tallahassee,

Equity

Prioritizing community needs, especially those that have been historically and structurally underinvested in has been a guiding goal for parks and recreation programs nationwide. This includes identifying areas without parks access, identifying neighborhoods lacking adequate tree canopy, locating gaps in services, and identifying factors limiting access. Universal design principles are being incorporated in more parks and recreation planning through features like accessible trails, playgrounds, restrooms that can be used by people with a range of abilities, and even the creation of ATV wheelchair loaning programs.³⁹ Additionally, planners are designing parks with a focus on providing a variety of activities and experiences that can be enjoyed by all visitors, regardless of their age, ability, or background.

Florida's aging population

Florida's population is rapidly aging, with a significant portion of the state's residents over the age of 65.⁴⁰ This demographic shift has had a considerable impact on parks and recreation planning in the state. To meet the unique needs of an aging population, there is an emphasis on providing accessible and safe outdoor spaces that cater to older adults. This includes creating walking trails, fitness areas, and other low-impact recreational opportunities that are suitable for individuals with mobility issues. Additionally, planners must now consider how to provide shaded areas and cooling stations in parks to help older adults cope with the hot and humid Florida climate. The social and community aspect of parks for older adults has also been a consideration, with planners looking to create spaces for socializing and engaging in group activities. Furthermore, as the population ages, there is a greater demand for more passive recreational opportunities such as bird watching, gardening, and outdoor meditation spaces.

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39 Top trends in parks and recreation for 2023: Feature: Parks & Recreation Magazine: NRPA. National Recreation and Park Association.

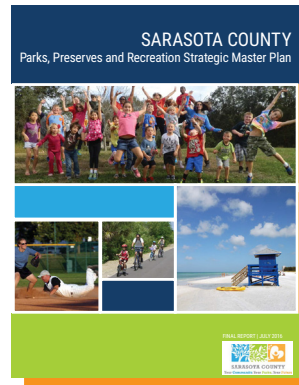
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40 State of Florida, Dept. of Natural Resources, Division of Recreation and Parks, Bureau of Planning and Grants, Outdoor Recreation in Florida: A comprehensive program for meeting Florida's Outdoor Recreation Needs (2019). Tallahassee,

CASE STUDIES

Two recent parks and recreation plans for Florida counties were referred to as case studies. Trends and challenges identified in these plans are expanded on below.

Sarasota County: Parks, Preserves, and Recreation Strategic Master Plan Access to Nature

The Sarasota County Master Plan recognized residents request for more access to natural areas for hiking, biking, fishing, and hunting; a request consistent with nationwide feedback for better connections to nature. To improve connections the plan suggested focusing on providing quality outdoor experiences for all ages. This included providing more areas for children to get dirty and explore, and cleaner and more accessible facilities with different educational, nature and fitness programs for adults.

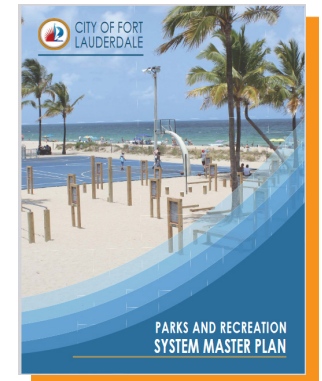


Impacts of Tourism and Travel Sports

Sarasota County's facilities are being visited by an increasing number of non-residents each year. However, level of service calculations account for only year-round residents – not winter residents or visitors. Visitors frequent beaches, trails, natural areas, and sporting venues, straining capacity. The growth of travel sports has increased pressure on local governments to provide higher quality facilities, regardless of where players reside. Increased investments in these facilities could take away from parks, trails, and programs that are used by residents.

Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Master Plan Facilities

The Fort Lauderdale Parks & Recreation Master Plan described how increased demand for recreation programs and services have required public agencies to get creative when finding appropriate sites for activities – some have partnered with private companies and other agencies to fill the demand. Examples of outside partners include fitness centers, dance studios, YMCA's, Boys & Girls Clubs, and cultural arts centers.



Programming Trends

Specific programming trends include:

- Developing programs that are a single day or no more than four sessions at a time
- Developing programs for youth during non-school days
- A variety of summer camps
- More Saturday programs and the introduction of some Sunday programming
- Introducing programs that are oriented toward specific ethnic groups
- Developing a baseline of programs that appeal to the family unit
- Staggering the days and times of similar programs that are offered at multiple locations
 - Drop-in pay as you go fitness classes
 - Expanded older adult programming to include a greater focus on the Baby Boomer generation

Programs are grouped into:

- **Primary Programs**
 - It is a primary responsibility of parks and recreation agencies to provide these
- **Secondary Programs**
 - Lower priority to be provided directly by parks and recreation agency but may be offered by other organizations through contract with the agency
- **Support Programs**
 - Not a priority for parks and recreation agencies to provide or contract but the agency may provide promotion support for other organizations

Maintenance of Parks and Recreation Facilities

There have been significant changes in how maintenance is accomplished, significant trends include:

- **Responsibilities**
 - Maintenance and custodial services vary considerably by agency. Many have moved parks maintenance to public works and recreation maintenance to a separate facilities maintenance group.
 - Specialized maintenance still typically remains with parks and recreation agencies.
 - Right-of-way maintenance activities are now being moved from public works to parks operations.
- Maintenance plans are essential.
- More parks recreation departments are contracting out specific maintenance activities and conducting a cost/benefit assessment to determine feasibility.
- Maintenance supervisors are becoming more involved in the design review process.
- Many agencies are developing energy management plans for buildings and structures.
- Agencies have multiple Certified Playground Safety Inspectors on staff.

Impact on Plans Update

These trends demonstrate how the role that parks and recreation departments play in the development of their community has expanded, and delineate the steps that departments are taking to ensure that this expansion occurs in a manner that advances equity. Trends were carefully considered when drafting this plan and include:

- Investing in improving access to public restrooms;
- Inclusion of community programs through parks and recreation facilities acting as centralized hubs;
- Providing diverse experiences through public art and programming; and
- Ensuring that access to facilities and parks remain easily achievable to people of all backgrounds, abilities, and ages, now and in the future.

With an already successful parks and recreation program, it is a priority to ensure that the City of Clearwater's Parks & Recreation planning looks to the future and outlines a path to growth that provides greater enjoyment, improves access, and strengthens community ties.



CHAPTER 3

Success Stories

As we look to the future of the city's parks and recreation system, it is important to acknowledge the success of the City of Clearwater and its Parks & Recreation Department in both meeting many of the goals set out in the 2013 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, and in their maintenance and creation of an exceptional parks and recreation system. Facilities have been renovated, a new signature park has been opened, and the parks system has grown to be a source of pride for the city and its residents. This chapter highlights some of these success stories and offers insight into the future of the Parks & Recreation Department.

Coachman Park

The opening of Coachman Park, located in the heart of Downtown Clearwater, is the culmination a multi-year effort to improve the connection between the waterfront and downtown. What resulted is a 19-acre park that includes open green spaces, a brand new 9,000 capacity music venue, a themed playground, and a variety of community centered amenities. It has been embraced by the Clearwater community with high attendance at its inauguration events. With its opportunities for diverse and multi-scale programming, it is quickly becoming one of the city's best assets in drawing visitors downtown.

Maintenance and Quality of Service

The 2013 Master Plan outlined a vision of the parks system that includes 'providing the highest standard of excellence in public service through cooperative partnership [with the] diverse community'. A resounding

theme emerging from site visits and conversations with stakeholders and community members was the quality of service at existing facilities, particularly at recreation centers, and the ease and pleasantness of communicating and coordinating with parks and recreation staff. Maintenance at the most popular parks and facilities, Coachman Ridge Park, Del Oro Park and Countryside Recreation Center, were also generally seen as exceptional.

Wide Variety of Amenities, Programming and Facilities

The Clearwater parks and recreation system has also succeeded in offering a variety of facilities, programming options and amenities. From neighborhood playgrounds, to walking paths and trails, kayak launches, sports and fitness facilities, the offerings of the Clearwater Parks & Recreation Department are one of its biggest strengths.



Del Oro Park Walking Trail



Crest Lake Park Playground

Amenities, Programming and Facilities



Cultural Programming



Morningside Recreation Center



Coachman Park



Flexible Programming



Northeast Coachman Park



Charter Oaks Park

CHAPTER 4

Planning Process Highlights



The 2023 Parks & Recreation Master Plan was developed as a collaborative process between the City of Clearwater Parks & Recreation Department staff and the Clearwater community.

A consultant team, led by Toole Design Group and supported by Dalton Studio, LLC, facilitated the process. Data collection and an analysis of existing conditions began in the spring of 2023, but a more public-facing introduction to the effort occurred in conjunction with the opening of Coachman Park with various events between June 28 and July 4, 2023. A project webpage was launched to share information and scheduled events. The webpage is also used to gather input through a linked survey and an interactive web map on which community members could mark special places, indicate needs or desires, or show a park or facility that

needed something. During the summer of 2023, a total 626 surveys were completed, three in-person community workshops were held throughout the city, and the project team met with over 30 stakeholders.

Using the existing conditions analysis, evaluation of national trends in parks and recreation planning, and community and stakeholder input, the project team facilitated a series of work sessions with city staff from the Parks & Recreation Department, Planning and Development Department, Public Works Department, and Budgeting to update the Vision and develop recommendations and an action plan.

The project team also reviewed historic resources and public art as they related to parks and recreation. This resulted in a chapter that summarizes the historical significance of the city's park system and an exploration of the ways in which arts and cultural initiatives can enhance the enjoyment and value of parks and recreational facilities.

The community-driven 2023 Parks & Recreation Master Plan reflects the public's values and priorities and will guide the department in actions and investments in the years ahead.

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Total number of community workshops July-December 2023

626

Number of parks and recreation surveys completed

62

Number of favorite park drawings submitted by children

6

Number of recreation complexes

1924

Year the Clearwater Lawn Bowls Club was established

1916

First wooden bridge to Clearwater Beach constructed

CHAPTER 5

Existing Conditions

Introduction

The City of Clearwater has been extraordinarily productive in the decade since the last Parks & Recreation Master Plan was completed in 2013. Today, the city can safely boast of a world-class parks and recreation system with well-distributed facilities, diverse programming, and largely satisfied constituents. This chapter documents the status and conditions of the city's parks, facilities, and programs in the context of broader city planning efforts, changing demographics, and changing trends.

This chapter includes:

1. A review of existing plans and documents
2. An analysis and review of current Clearwater demographic characteristics and trends
3. An evaluation of park and program performance, including desktop and site visit reviews
4. A review of the benefits and value of Clearwater's parks and recreation system

An analysis of existing conditions provides the planning team with a foundation upon which to develop forward-facing recommendations for improvement and ensures consistency with council-adopted plans. This data also helps the planning team understand how Clearwater's current demographics are changing, which can support prioritizing investments and ensuring equitable access to parks and recreation facilities.

The desktop review includes an analysis using smartphone-derived person movement data from Streetlight, which provides estimates of visitors at each park, and reveals preferences such as the times of day parks are most popular and how far people travel to visit parks.

Clearwater's parks saw more visitors between mid-2021 and mid-2022 than in 2019, showing a greater post-pandemic desire for recreation and outdoor spaces, even as the population stayed the same.

Reviewing the locations of park facilities and amenities relative to neighborhood demographics reveals where there are strengths and gaps in Clearwater's parks system. The project team reviewed locations of facilities and amenities such as recreation centers, basketball courts, and tennis courts, including gaps relative to median household income. In the site visit, the project team visited 69 out of 109 parks and recreation facilities and reviewed the quality of park facilities and amenities in detail.

Finally, the Parks Benefits and Value section will help explain the park system's value proposition along with the dimensions of physical health, environmental health, economic benefits, and social capital. This includes a summary of recent research on these areas as well as specific data points from the City of Clearwater.

Document Review

This section includes a review of existing plans and documents related to Clearwater's Parks & Recreation system.

Plan	Year	Key takeaways
City of Clearwater Comprehensive Plan	2008	City's existing comprehensive plan – to be replaced by Clearwater 2045
Clearwater 2045	2023	<p>The city's updated comprehensive plan serves as a guiding document for the development of Clearwater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lays out goal for equitable design in the creation of trails, open spaces and parks and recreation facilities • Considers programs that would assist residents with disabilities to easily access these spaces • Emphasizes need for trails, open spaces, and parks and recreation facilities to be located throughout the city • Establishes LOS as four acres of parkland per 1,000 persons • Goal of continuing to increase availability of facilities and parks in areas with identified deficits, near schools and transit routes • Goal of continuing to develop greenways and trails as identified in Shifting Gears: Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan • Encourages protection of lands designated as Recreation/Open Spaces • Reinforces need to preserve and expand the natural features of Clearwater, including natural ecosystems • Goal of continuing educational programs • Notes the use of an impact fee to improve open spaces, parks and recreation facilities and create new trails • Recommends expanding publicly accessible electric vehicle charging infrastructure and shift of vehicle fleet to cleaner fuels and more fuel-efficient vehicles
City of Clearwater Parks & Recreation Master Plan	2013	<p>Existing Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Proposes projects for a 20-year time frame ending in 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established guiding principles: Place making, be tailored to resident needs, preserve natural communities, increase resident health, sustainable, maximize access and equity • Level of Service (LOS) of outdoor facilities was found satisfactory at the time, excluding bike trails • Park coverage analysis revealed generally satisfactory coverage at the time of publishing • Public engagement revealed a desire for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving community physical health • Increasing programming for kids and teens • Prioritizing green and natural spaces • Beautifying community and creating a greater sense of place

Plan	Year	Key takeaways
Clearwater Downtown Redevelopment Plan	2018	<p>This plan lays down the foundation for revitalizing Downtown Clearwater through a redesigned waterfront, increased pedestrians and transportation facilities, increased linkages within the and environmental preservation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes lack of small pocket parks and that playgrounds and various recreational facilities are located on the perimeter of the downtown • Highlights need for active transportation and mobility investments, including multi-use paths, bicycle parking and cycle tracks • Major city parks and recreation projects identified in this plan include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown Waterfront Park – expanding and enhancing existing parks and open spaces • Clearwater Harbor Marina – planned enhancements • Seminole Boat Ramp – improvements for the city’s main boat launching facility • Prospect Lake Park • Stevenson Creek Linear Greenway Improvements • Mercado – a gathering place for the Hispanic/Latine community • Pinellas and Druid Trail extension and improvements
Clearwater Greenprint 2.0	2021	<p>Advances 2011 Climate Action Plan that identified tangible actions across eight topic areas that have the potential to reduce energy consumption, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions while stimulating the local economy and improving the quality of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City is investing in maintaining passive parks and maximizing natural greenspaces and will continue to support and expand support for community greenspaces • City should implement a program to educate about and expand existing tree canopy through policy, educational programs, and implementation programs • Notes that the city will consider a forest carbon sequestration project on municipal land • Environmental conservation pushes should include educational programs about preservation and the region’s natural resources, becoming a certified community under the National Wildlife Federation Habitat Program and creating endangered lands conservation/purchasing program (Mentions increasing awareness of Moccasin Lake Nature Park) • City will create an integrated pest management plan to alleviate city-owned properties of invasive species, problematic insects, and will provide guidance on non-native invasive species, including their removal • Identifies a 2025 goal for three new urban agricultural/centers available for the community
Imagine Clearwater	2017	<p>Imagine Clearwater envisions how to reconnect the downtown waterfront and the downtown, with goal of drawing more visitors and spurring economic development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines the concept plan for the now opened Coachman Park • Notes a conservancy group should be established to partner with the preparing and executing the revitalization of the waterfront.

Plan	Year	Key takeaways
Forward Pinellas: Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan	2017	Identified proposed location of trails, pedestrian and bicycle facilities that may connect to parks and recreation facilities.
National Citizens Survey Report	2020	<p>This Clearwater survey asks residents about their experience living in Clearwater and covers topics such as livability, community characteristics, leadership and governance, services and amenities, and the sense of community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents generally expressed positive opinions concerning safety and the natural environment • Land use, planning and zoning was the lowest rated survey • Residents used local media outlets and the website as their major sources of information
North Marina Area Master Plan (2016)	2016	<p>The master plan envisions the North Marina Area as a mixed-use neighborhood supporting the downtown employment base with residential, neighborhood commercial, office and community uses. Redevelopment in the area should include a connection to the Pinellas Trail, multi-modal connections, and improvements to the Seminole Boat Ramp to enhance both waterfront access and appearance needs of the boating community, residents and developers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasizes the need to continue to improve energy and water efficiency by expanding the reclaimed water system and emphasizing landscaping that is native to the area • City should create a program to activate public spaces; Temporary uses such as festivals, farmers markets, pop-up shops, and food trucks should be encouraged in proposed green spaces • Community engagement found that additional green park space was considered the most appropriate amenity for the North Marina Area, and that public restroom access was named as one of the most appropriate amenities for the Seminole Boat Ramp • Parks and recreation projects mentioned in the plan include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A connection to the Pinellas Trail • Multi-modal connections • Improvements to the Seminole Boat Ramp

Plan	Year	Key takeaways
Community Assessment Survey of Older Adults	2019	<p>Study aims to assess the strengths and needs of older adults in Pasco and Pinellas County, with the goal of supporting the creation of empowered communities that support vibrant older adult populations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness and recreation opportunities, as well as access to community parks were viewed as strengths, while outdoor community park amenities were perceived as neutral, and access to information was viewed as a challenge • Most prevalent needs of older residents included lack of productive activities and difficulty accessing information for existing support programs, programming and activities • Low community readiness scores were earned by outdoor spaces and buildings (including ease of access, condition of sidewalk and community park amenities), receiving a readiness score of 15 out of 100, and community information, which received a score of 48 out of 100
City of Clearwater Strategic Plan	2023	<p>Clearwater's strategic plan outlines the vision, mission, values, and priorities of the city.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission: Clearwater is committed to quality sustainable, cost-effective municipal services that foster and sustain a healthy residential and economic environment • Priority Area: High performing government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain public infrastructure, natural lands, environmental resources, and historic features through systematic management efforts • Adopt responsive level of service (LOS) for public facilities and amenities and identify resources required to sustain that LOS • Priority Area: Economic and housing opportunity • Promote Clearwater as a premier destination for entertainment, cultural experiences, tourism, and national sporting events • Priority Area: Community well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support neighborhood identity through services and programs that empower community pride and belonging • Promote marketing and outreach strategies that encourage stakeholder engagement, enhance community education, and build public trust. • Inspire citizen participation through civic engagement and volunteerism to build strong, inclusive, and engaged community. • Priority Area: Environmental stewardship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support proactive climate resiliency strategies based in science to protect natural and built environments from impacts associated with sea level rise. • Protect the conservation of urban forests and public green spaces to promote biodiversity and reduce carbon footprint.

Plan	Year	Key takeaways
Community Development Code with Revised Impact Fee Ordinance	Updated 2023	<p>The Community Development Code (CDC) is used to implement the city's Comprehensive Plan. The CDC impact fee ordinance revision recognizes that growth in the City of Clearwater requires that parks and recreation facilities be expanded to maintain adequate levels of service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes outdoor lighting standards • 1% of Capital Improvement Projects (up to \$200,000) shall be allocated to public art • Updated the parks and recreation facility impact fee to revise the type, amount and cost of projected parks and recreation improvements needed to serve new growth and development • Recreation facilities funds to be expended as determined by the document guidelines and in by other considerations determined to be relevant by the Director of the Parks & Recreation Department and approved by the City Manager/designee
	2022/2023	<p>Outlines the city's anticipated annual revenue, expenditures, and strategic goals for all of the city's departments and programs. It is used for planning, controlling, and evaluating performance of city assets and resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual budget • Total Parks & Recreation FTE's 240.8 • \$38.16 general fund budget • 5.4M budgeted to support maintenance and major renovations • Public works maintains three city park pool pumps and fountain pumps; Streets, sidewalk and street tree maintenance was recently transferred from Parks & Recreation Department to Public Works • ADA Transition Plan funds includes improvements at park facilities • Environmental Park Remediation and Protection provides funding to protect natural resources at underdeveloped parks and sensitive lands within the parks system • New projects added to the Capital Improvement Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood Parks repair and renovate • Carpenter/BayCare repair and renovate • Recreation center repair and renovate • Parks and beautification repair and renovate • Athletic fields repair and renovate
Annual Budget and Capital Improvement Plan		

Key Themes and Takeaways

Based on the review of the above documents, a number of overarching themes emerged.

- Residents often pointed to difficulty in accessing information about events and programming.
- Equity, in terms of access and design, are key principles in multiple plans and point to a city-wide effort to increase access to facilities, promote inclusivity and provide programming that fulfill community needs.
- Creating resilient spaces that adapt to changing community needs, hotter temperatures and severe weather conditions are a city priority.
- The downtown and waterfront area is a key area for redevelopment and revitalization.
- There is expressed interest in increasing cultural programming, including festivals, markets and events, as well as in serving the specific needs of different communities within Clearwater by providing tailored facility designs.
- There is a regional effort to increase mobility. Connecting people to parks through active transportation modes is a high priority.
- Efforts to preserve and promote the natural beauty of Clearwater are heavily encouraged. Use of sustainable maintenance practices, providing educational programming and acquiring and protecting open greenspace are particularly emphasized.

Demographic Analysis

Background

Over the past decade, Clearwater's demographics have seen shifts in total population, race and ethnicity, vehicle ownership, income and age. The following section reviews these notable demographic trends, using data from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS).¹

Overall Population Statistics

Between 2012 and 2021, Clearwater's total population increased to 117,000 residents, a 7% increase. This growth has leveled out since 2019, as shown in Figure 1. The gender ratio has remained largely even and is almost exactly evenly split between male and female residents as of 2021, shown in Figure 2.

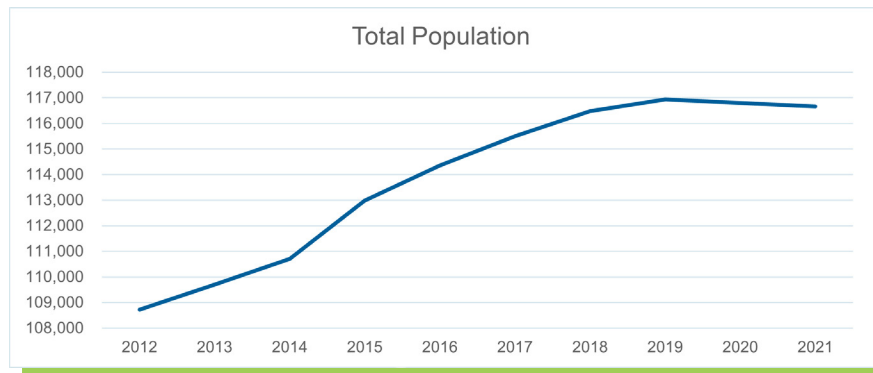


Figure 1: Total Clearwater Population

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¹ 1-Year ACS estimates are not available for 2020 due to pandemic-related sampling issues. 2020 values in these charts are interpolated between 2019 and 2021.

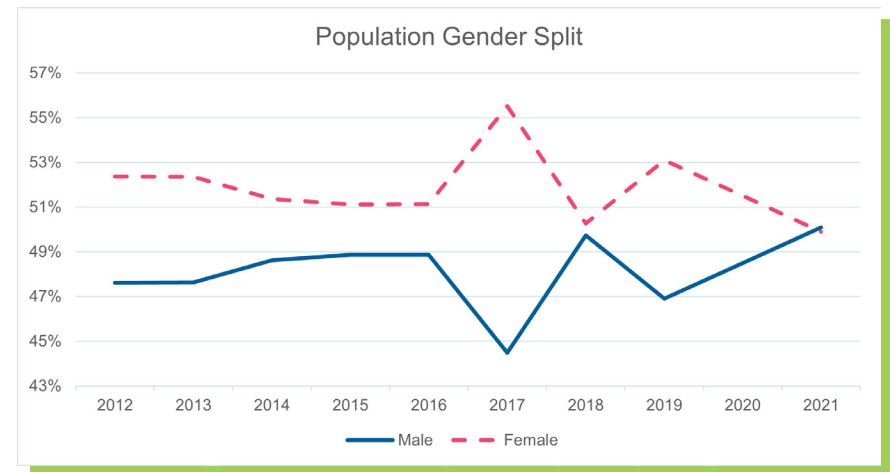


Figure 2: Clearwater Population Breakdown by Gender

Over the past decade, the population share of age groups changed, as shown in Figure 3. The share of population aged 65 and over grew from 21% to 25% and the share under 18 decreased from 19% to 12%, with most of this decline occurring after 2017. With one in four Clearwater residents now aged 65 and older, additional investment in programming and facilities for older adults might be needed. Figure 4 shows the geographic distribution of this age group.

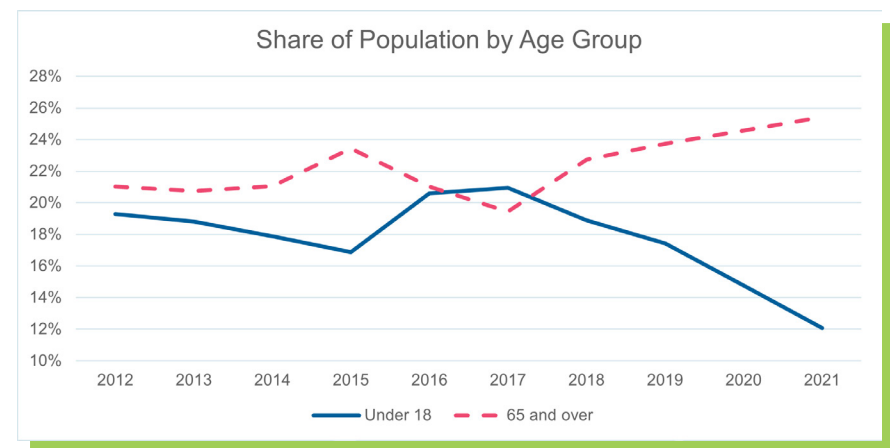


Figure 3: Share of Population by Age Group for Specific Age Categories

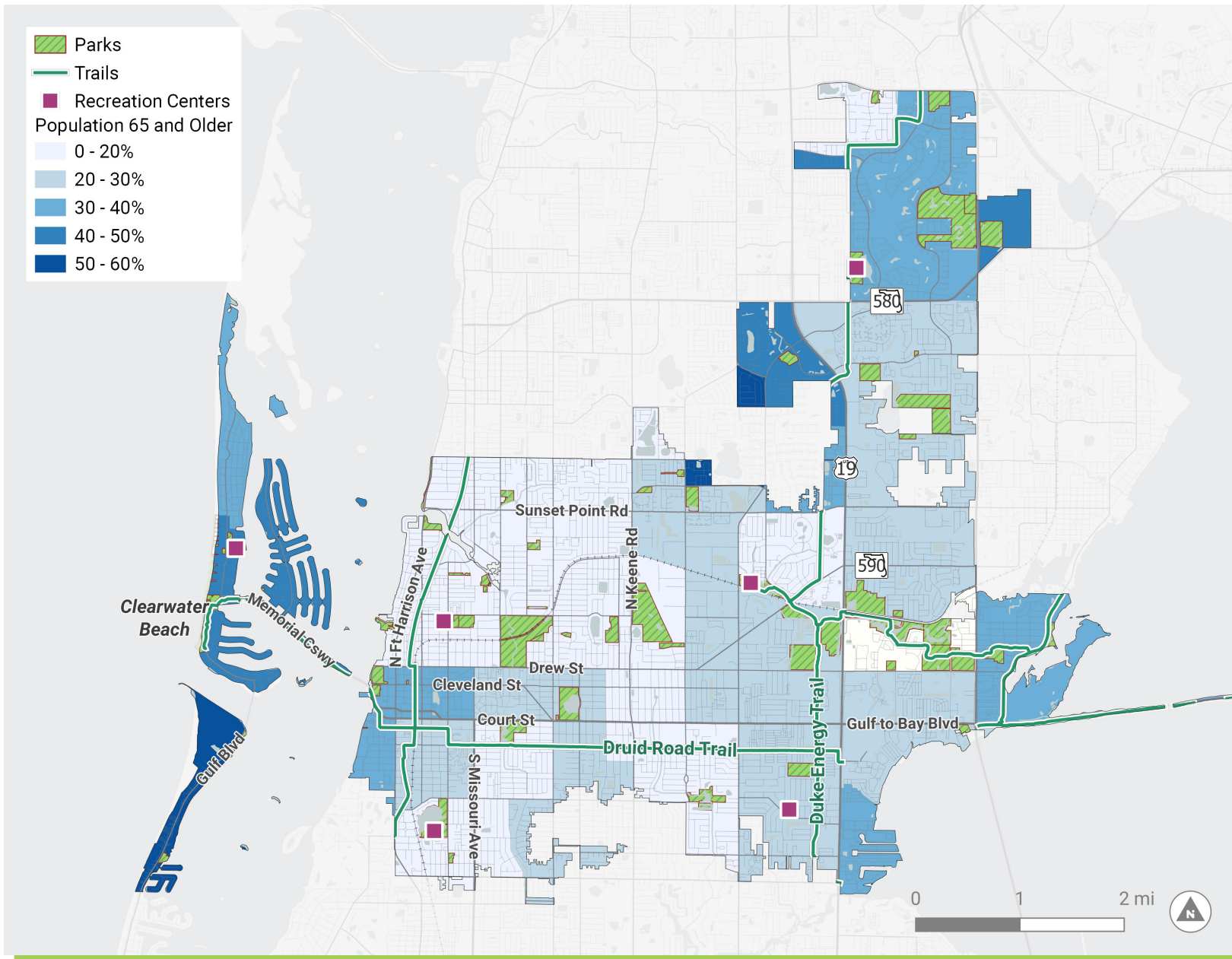


Figure 4: Share of Population Age 65 and Older, Census Tracts (2021)

Race, Ethnicity, and Language

As seen in Figure 5, Clearwater's population has become more racially and ethnically diverse. The Non-Hispanic/Latine White population decreased from 70% in 2014 to 64% in 2021, while the Hispanic/Latine population (of any race) increased from 14% to 17% over the same period. The Non-Hispanic/Latine Black population decreased from 12% to 9% from 2014 to 2016 but has since increased to 11%. The Non-Hispanic/Latine Asian population remained relatively steady at 3-4%.

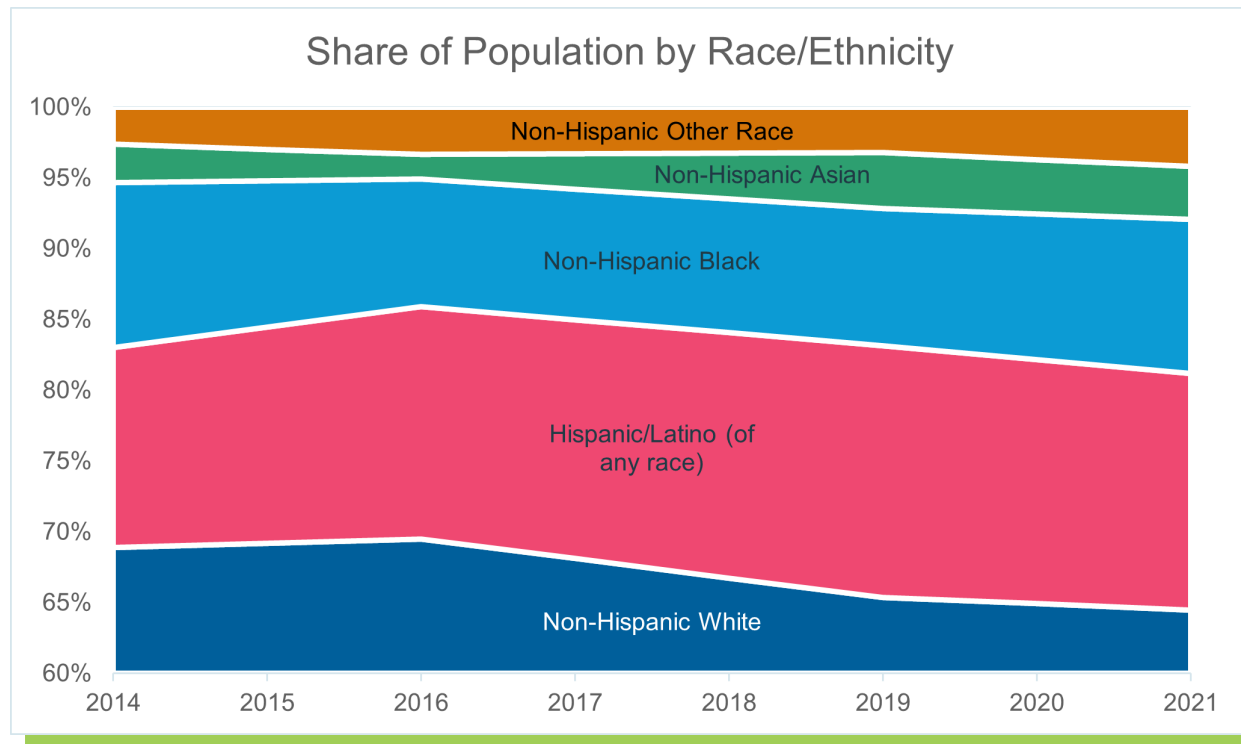


Figure 5: Clearwater Population by Race/Ethnicity²

In terms of geographic distribution, people of color in Clearwater are present in most neighborhoods in the city but make up a relatively higher percentage of the population closer to Downtown Clearwater and in the western sections of the city as shown in Figure 6.

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2 1-year American Community Survey estimates are only available for the years 2014, 2016, 2019, and 2021. Other year values are interpolated between years with data available.

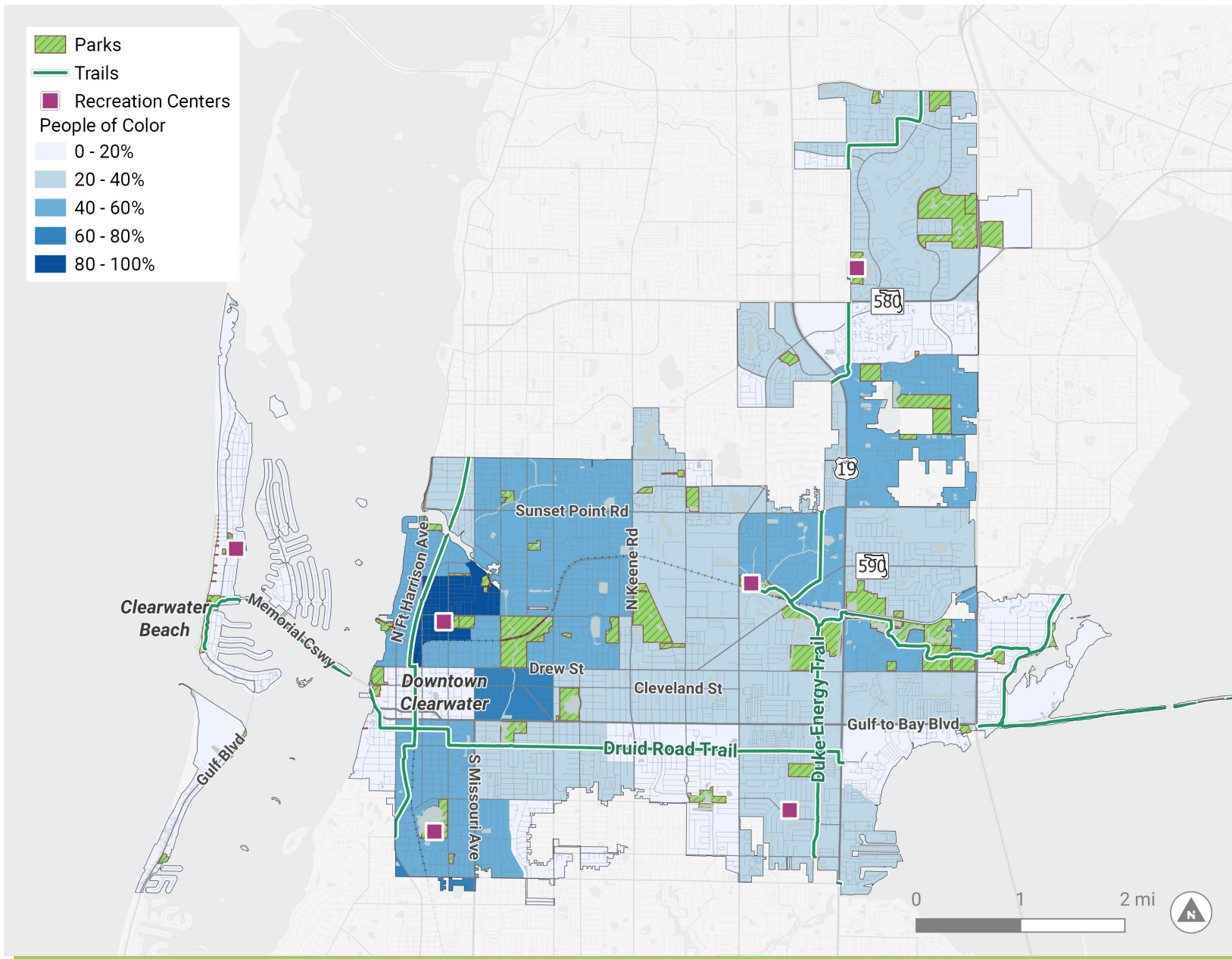


Figure 6: Share of People of Color (Hispanic/Latine Population and Non-Hispanic/Latine, Non-White Population), Census Tracts (2021)

Figure 7 shows the change in language spoken at home since 2012. While the numbers have varied over time, the overall trend over the past decade has been an increase in the share of population who speak Spanish at home from 8% to 12%, a 50% increase. Potentially signaling a need for increased programming, park signage, and outreach for Spanish speakers in Clearwater.

Over the same period, the share of population who speak English at home has decreased from 84% to 80%. The share of population who speak languages other than English or Spanish peaked at 11% in 2019 but has since decreased, resulting in an upward trend in the share of population who speak English at home in the past few years.

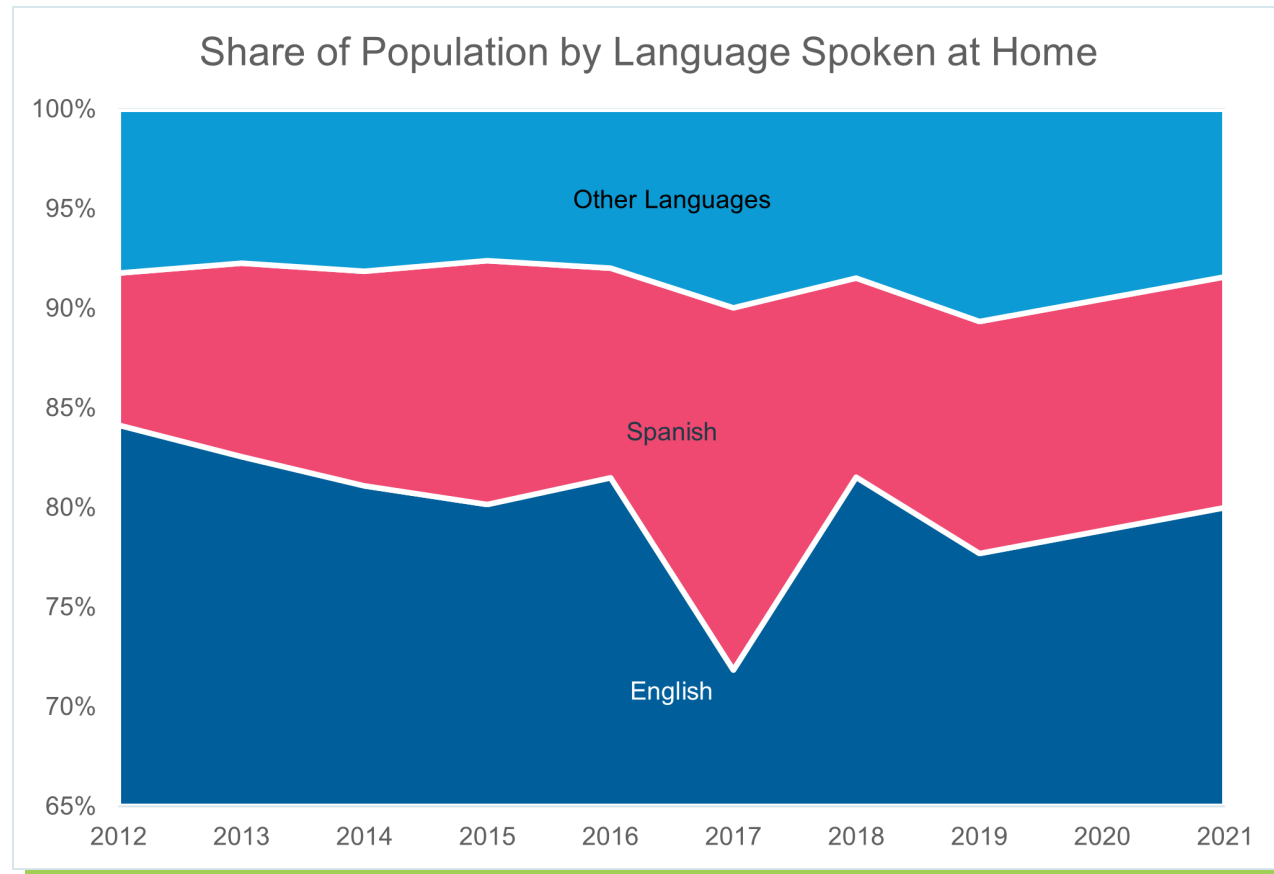


Figure 7: Clearwater Population by Language Spoken at Home

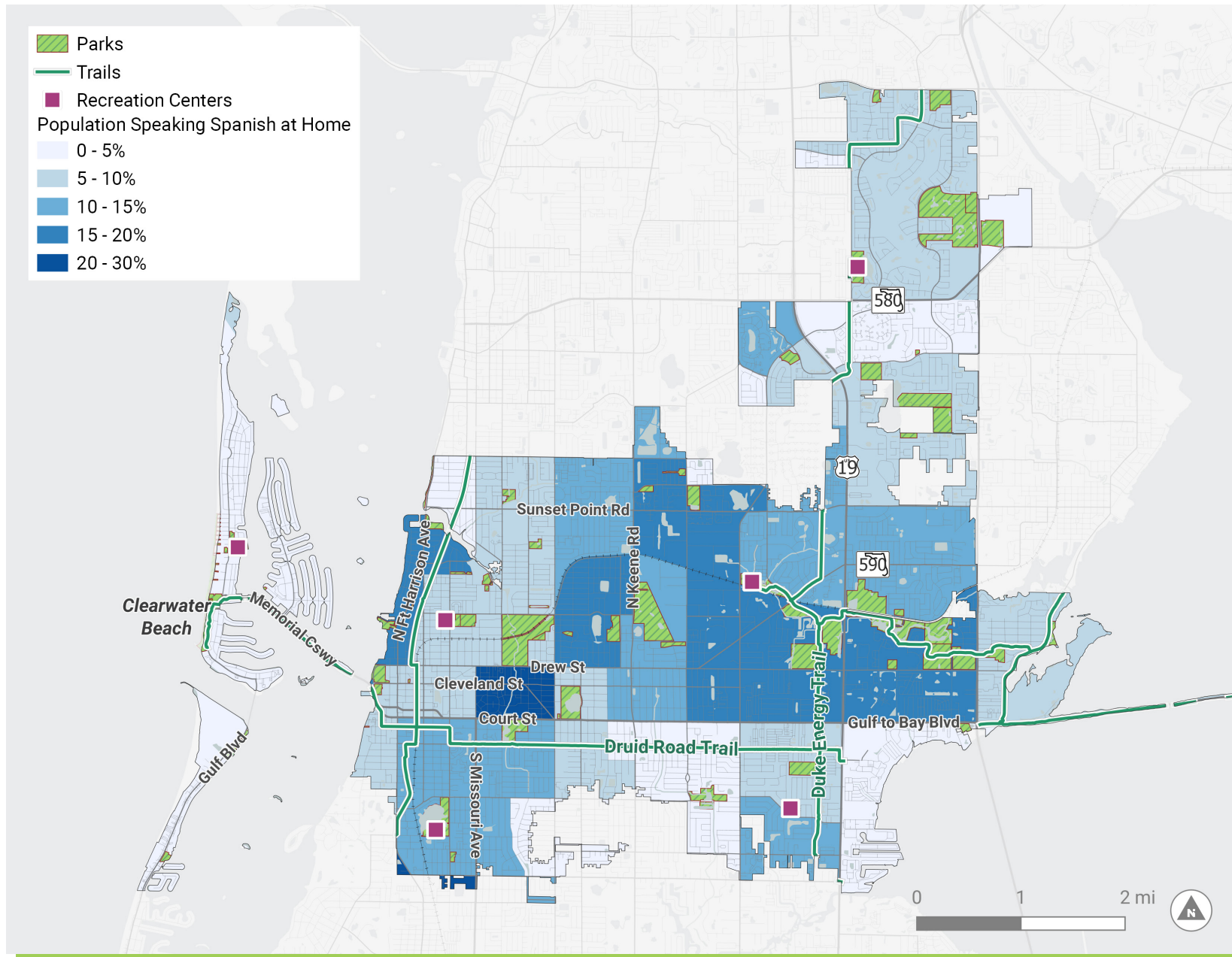


Figure 8: Share of Population that Speaks Spanish at Home, Census Tracts (2021)

Income and Household/Vehicle Ownership

Median household income in Clearwater has grown over the past decade from about \$43,000 in 2012 to over \$56,000 in 2021. Pinellas County and the State of Florida have both seen slightly faster growth, growing by an average of 3.3% per year relative to Clearwater's annual growth rate of 2.7%. Lower-income households are more prevalent in areas on the western side, including neighborhoods west of Crest Lake Park, shown in Figure 10.

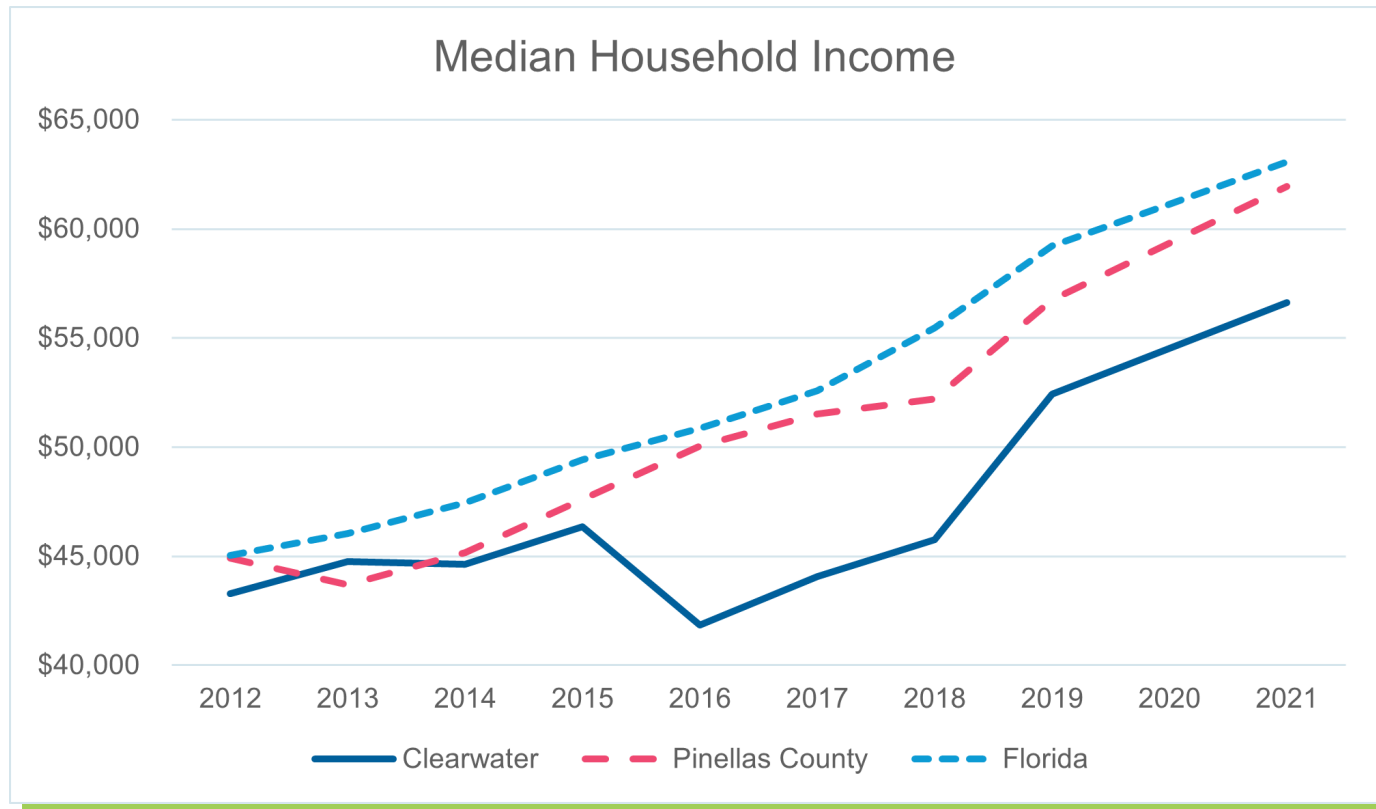


Figure 9: Median Household Income for Clearwater and Parent Geographies

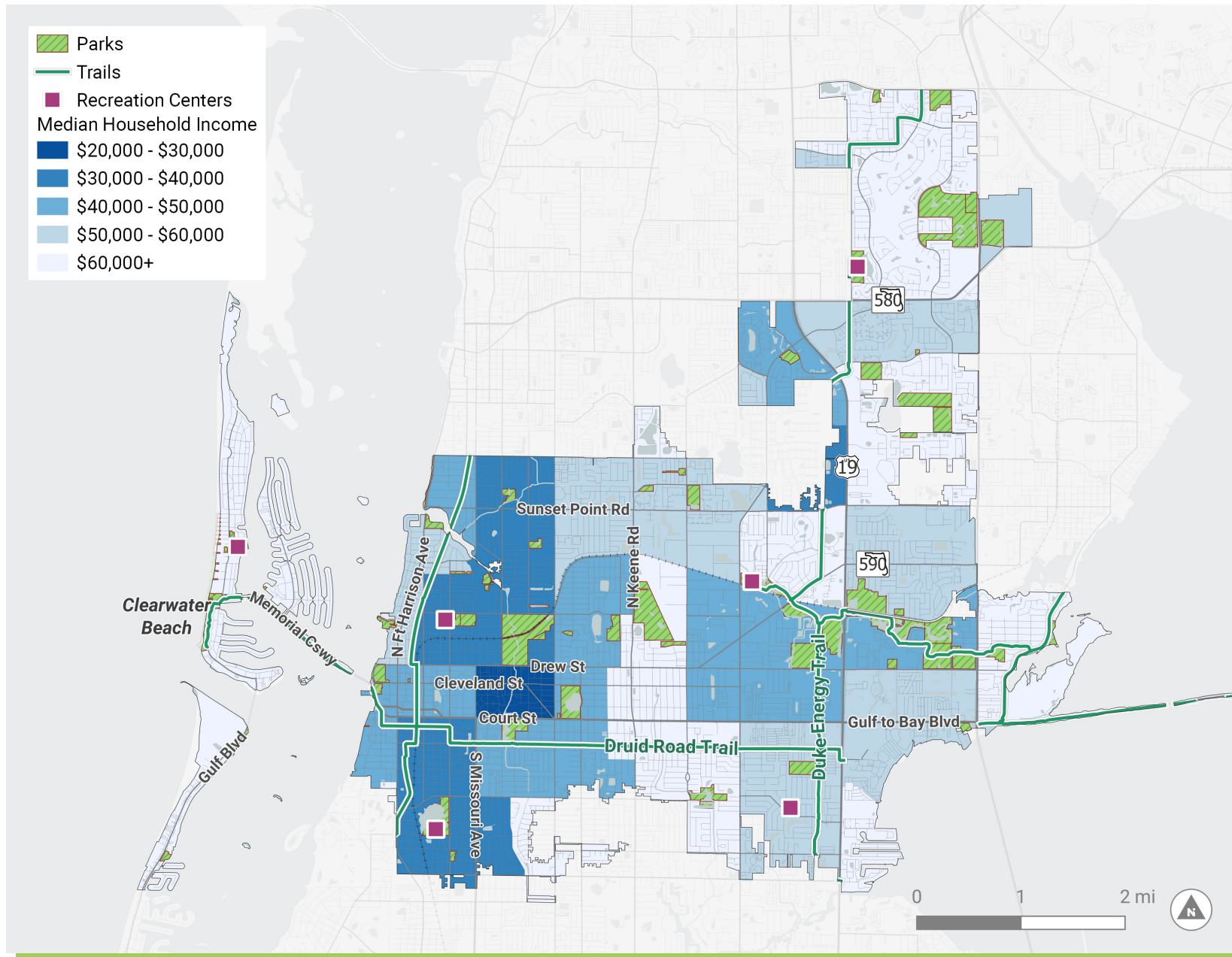


Figure 10: Median Household Income, Census Tracts (2021)

The majority of households in Clearwater are owner-occupied, with about 60% of households owning their home as of 2021. This figure has increased slightly since 2012 from about 57% but has generally remained steady.

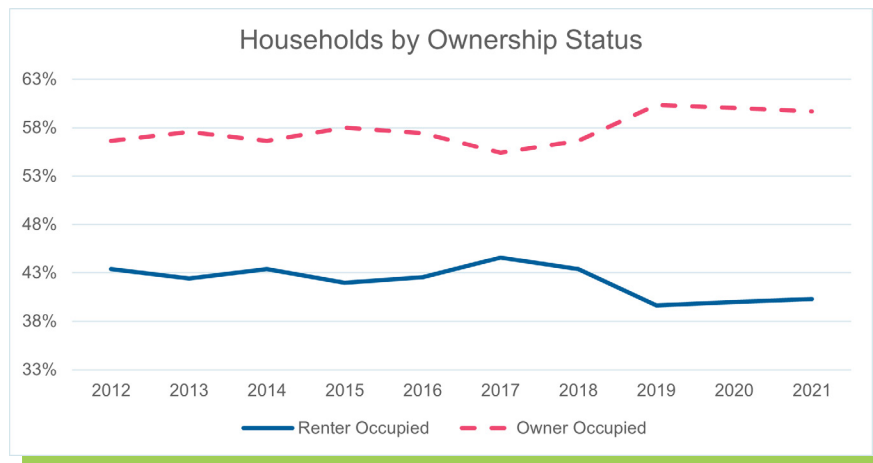


Figure 11: Clearwater Household by Home Ownership Status

The number of households with zero vehicles declined slightly from 14% of households in 2012 to 10% as of 2021. This number has fluctuated over the decade but has remained at about 10% since 2019. As such, Clearwater is a city where most people tend to get around by car, though there are pockets where vehicle ownership is lower relative to other parts of the city, as shown in Figure 12. These could be areas to consider amenities for park visitors who do not arrive by car, such as bicycle racks.

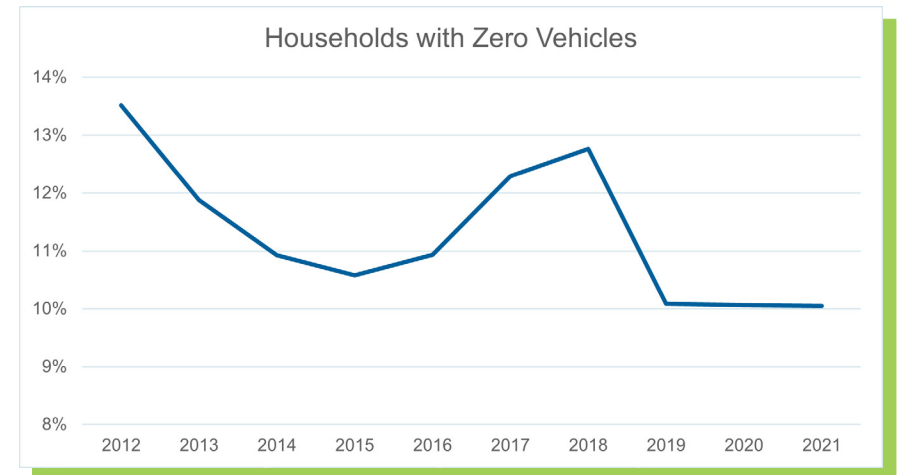


Figure 12: Zero Vehicle Households as a Share of Total Households

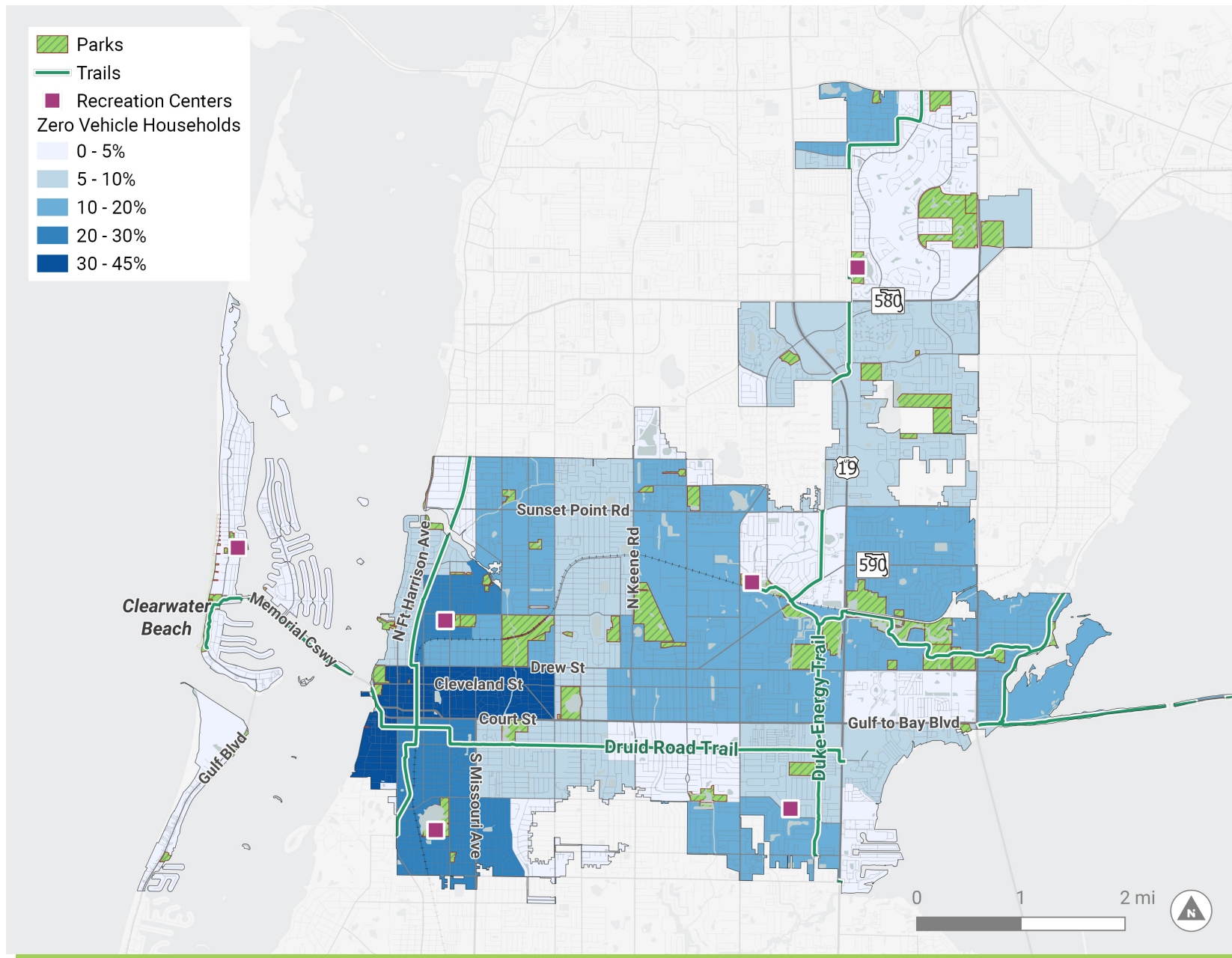


Figure 13: Share of Households with Zero Vehicles, Census Tracts (2021)



State Street Park



Horseshoe Club



Montclair Park



Sid Lickton Complex



Marymont Park



Glen Oaks Park

Park Performance Evaluation

Background

The park performance evaluation includes the following three sections:

1. Park visits analysis – an analysis of park visitors over two time periods, 2019 and mid-2021 to mid-2022, using smartphone-derived person movement data from Streetlight. This analysis highlights the relative popularity of parks over time, including breakdowns by day of the week, time of day, demographics, and the distance traveled to parks.
2. Facility and amenities distribution – a review of park facility locations, such as recreation centers and basketball courts, relative to demographics to reveal strengths and gaps in the park facility and amenities network.
3. Site visit – a detailed summary of findings from the parks site visit, which included individual visits to 69 parks to understand park and recreation facility and programming quality.

Park Visits Analysis

Methodology

This section includes summary statistics from a broad analysis of parks throughout the City of Clearwater using person movement data from Streetlight. There are a total of 109 parks and facilities within the parks system. Not all parks could be evaluated in depth due to data limitations and budgetary constraints; however, a large, geographically distributed subset of parks was used in this analysis to enable the project team to draw general conclusions, and to identify areas or parks warranting further study. The analysis includes 48 parks and facilities out of the 69 visited. For a full list of parks included in the analysis and site visit, see page 76.

Overall Visit Trends

To better understand the behavior of park visitors in Clearwater, the project team used data from Streetlight, a data vendor that licenses aggregated, anonymized data of smartphone GPS location information. These data allow the city to understand the relative numbers of visitors to parks, where these visitors tend to come from, and which times of day and days of the week parks are most popular.

The data from Streetlight also allows for comparisons across time periods to better understand how visits to parks have changed in recent months and years. The project team selected two primary year-long study periods: January to December 2019, to understand pre-pandemic trends, and May 2021 – April 2022, the most recent full-year period of data available from Streetlight.

Park Types

The analysis reviewed four park types (excluding the city's 22 open space parks) and 48 out of 109 of Clearwater's total parks and facilities.

- **Special Facilities** – includes facilities such as golf courses, ball fields, stadiums, and docks; 21 out of 27 special facilities in the city were reviewed in the analysis.
- **Environmental** – these parks tend to have trails and wooded recreational areas. Out of a total of 28 environmental parks, nine were reviewed in the analysis.
- **Community** – includes community and recreation centers such as the Long Center and the Countryside Recreation Center. There are a total of eight community parks, all were reviewed in the analysis.
- **Neighborhood** – neighborhood parks are relatively small parks that tend to be surrounded by residential areas. There are 24 neighborhood parks and ten were reviewed in the analysis.

Between the study periods, most park types saw an increase in visits, as shown in Figure 14.

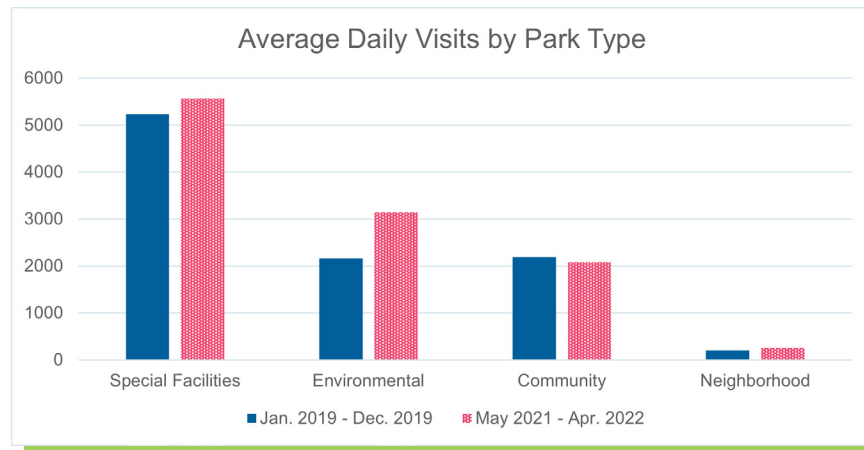


Figure 14: Estimated Average Daily Visits by Park Type and Study Period

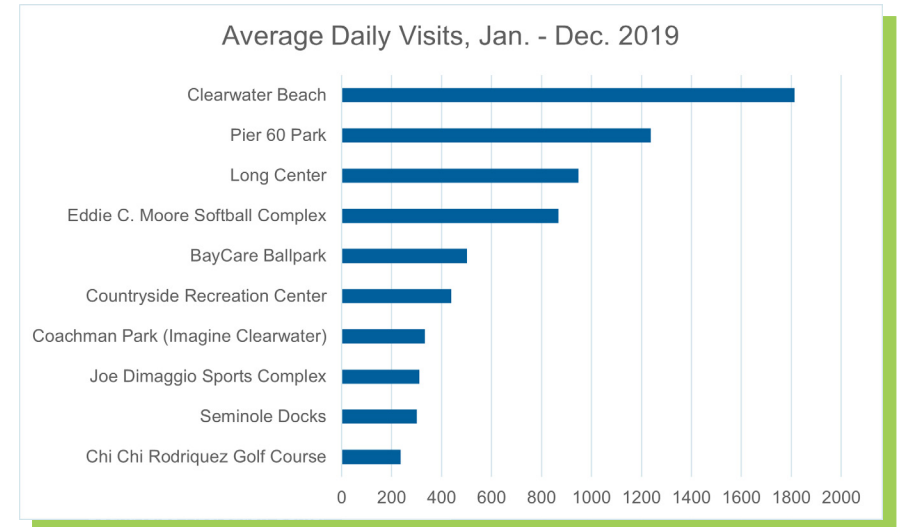


Figure 15: Top Ten Parks by Estimated Average Daily Visits, 2019

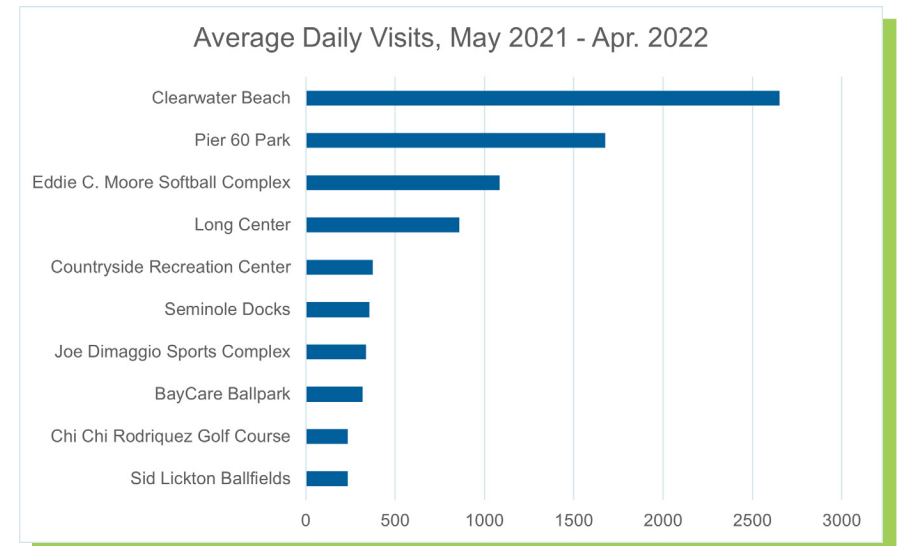


Figure 16: Top Ten Parks by Estimated Average Daily Visits, May 2021 - Apr. 2022

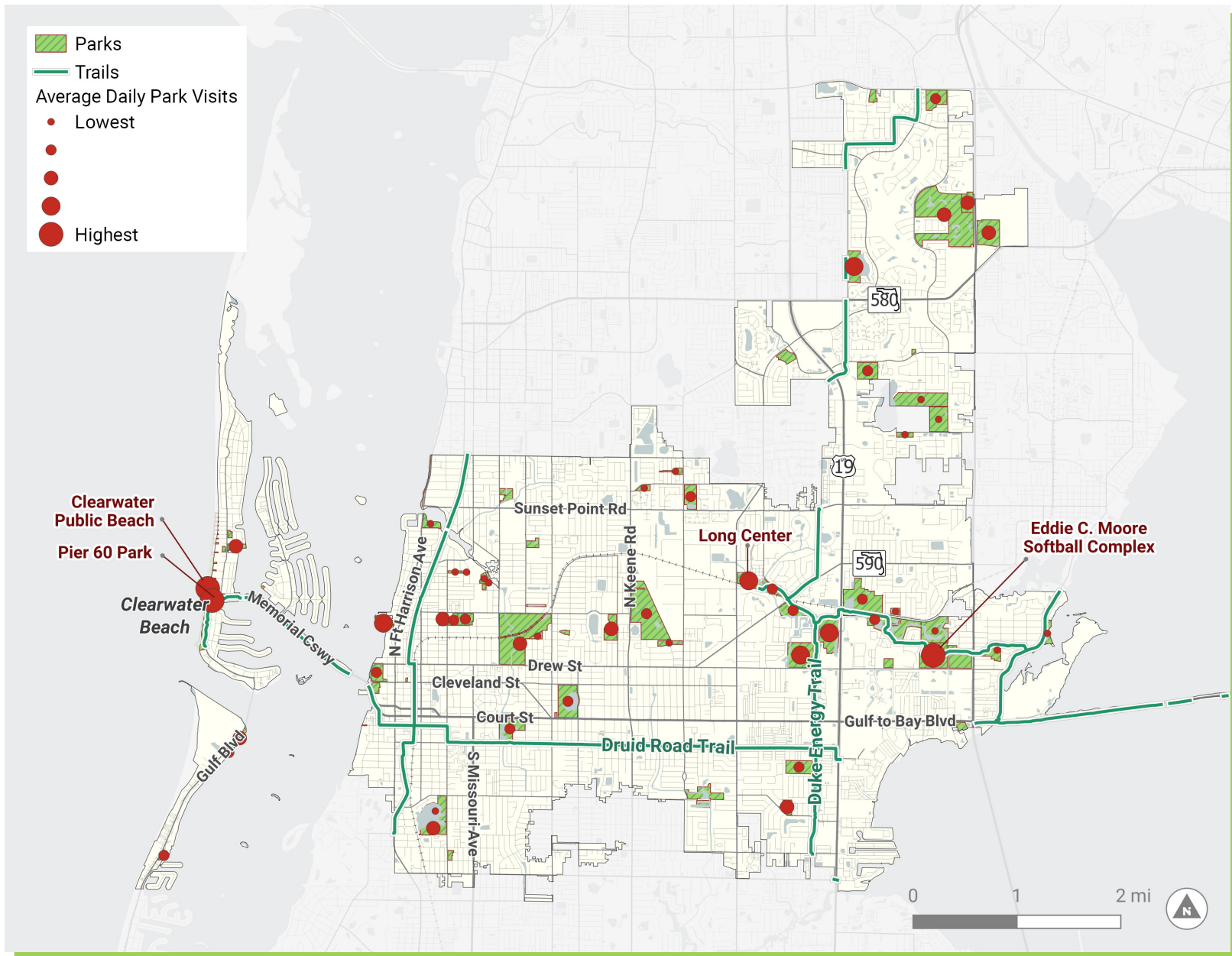


Figure 17: Estimated Average Daily Park Visitors (Relative Scale), May 2021 - Apr. 2022, with Most Visited Parks Labeled

Parks in the Environmental category saw the largest increase in visits between study periods, primarily driven by the increase at Clearwater Beach. In the more recent study period, Clearwater Beach made up the vast majority of visits to parks in the Environmental category, shown in Figure 18. Other parks in the Environmental category include Glen Oaks Park, Sand Key Bayside Park, Cliff Stephens Park, Moccasin Lake Nature Park, Cooper's Bayou Park, Kapok Park, Lake Chautauqua Park, and Lake Chautauqua Equestrian and Nature Preserve.

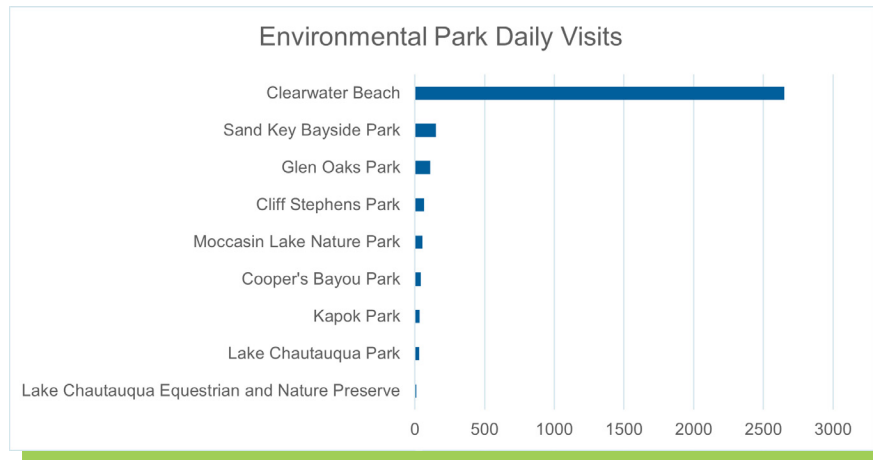


Figure 18: Estimated Average Daily Visits to all Environmental Parks analyzed, May 2021 - Apr. 2022

Special Facilities, which saw the greatest number of daily visitors in both study periods, include facilities such as Pier 60 Park, BayCare Ballpark, Coachman Park, and the Eddie C. Moore Softball Complex. Parks in this category saw a slight increase in daily visits despite declines at two parks: BayCare Ballpark and Coachman Park. BayCare Ballpark saw fewer visitors in 2021 due to rules regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, and Coachman Park saw fewer visitors due to closure for renovations.



Figure 19: Estimated Average Daily Visits to Special Facilities analyzed, May 2021 - Apr. 2022

Parks in the Community category include centers such as the Long Center, which was the most popular park in this category in the more recent study period, as well as Countryside Recreation Center and Morningside Recreation Complex. Parks in this category collectively saw a slight decline in visitors between study periods, as shown previously in Figure 14.

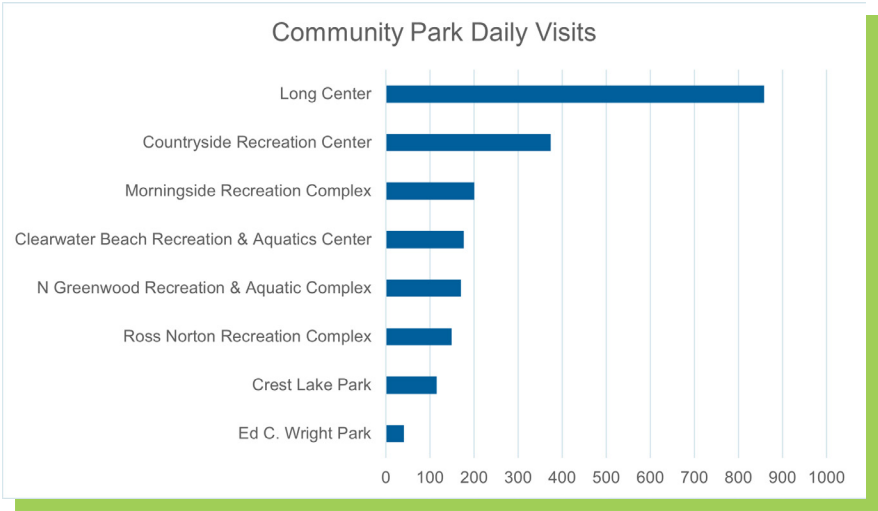


Figure 20: Estimated Average Daily Visits to Community Parks analyzed, May 2021 - Apr. 2022

Neighborhood parks tend to be smaller and have relatively few daily visitors, though this category as a whole saw an increase in visitors between study periods. Parks in this category include Bay Park on Sand Key, Forest Run Park, Coachman Ridge Park, and Del Oro Park. As these parks have a much smaller sample size than other, larger parks, note that these figures should be treated as directional estimates rather than exact numbers.

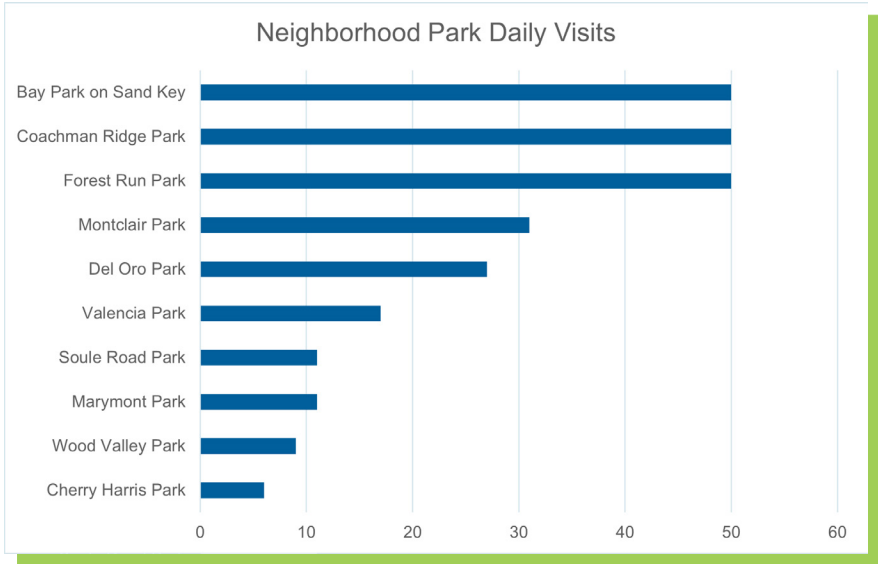


Figure 21: Estimated Average Daily Visits to all Neighborhood Parks analyzed, May 2021 - Apr. 2022

For more detail on the change in average daily visitors, Figure 22 and Figure 23 show the top ten parks by the estimated change in average daily visitors between study periods. Clearwater Beach and the adjacent Pier 60 Park saw the largest increase in visits between study periods, along with the Eddie C. Moore Softball Complex, Sand Key Bayside Park, and the Driving Range at Chi Chi Rodriguez Golf Course. Coachman Park saw the greatest decrease in visitors between study periods, likely due to the closure for redevelopment that overlapped with the second study period. BayCare Ballpark also saw a decrease in visitors due to restrictions on attendance in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

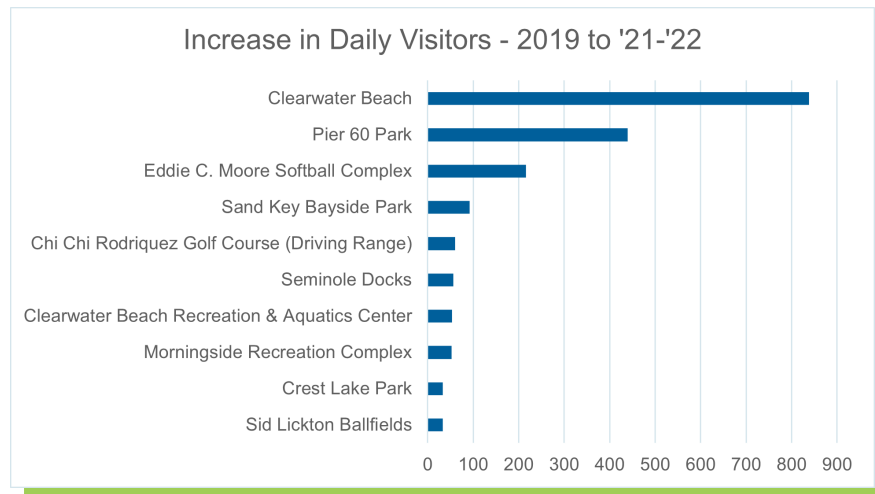


Figure 22: Top Ten Parks by Estimated Increase in Average Daily Visitors Between Study Periods

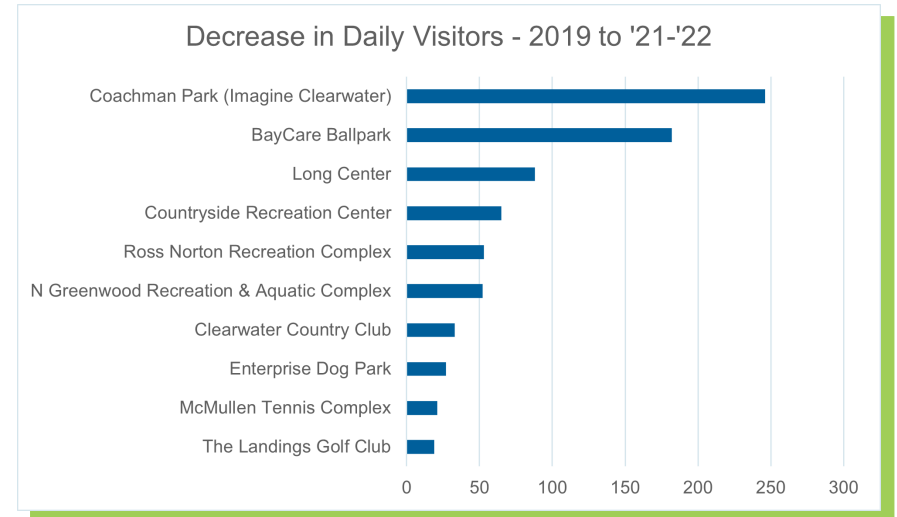


Figure 23: Top Ten Parks by Estimated Decrease in Average Daily Visitors Between Study Periods



Visits by Time-of-Day and Day-of-Week

Park visit data was analyzed to understand the days of the week and times of day that are most popular with park visitors. As shown in Figure 24, weekends see greater average daily visitors than weekdays and saw a greater increase in visitors between study periods (15%) than weekdays (9%).

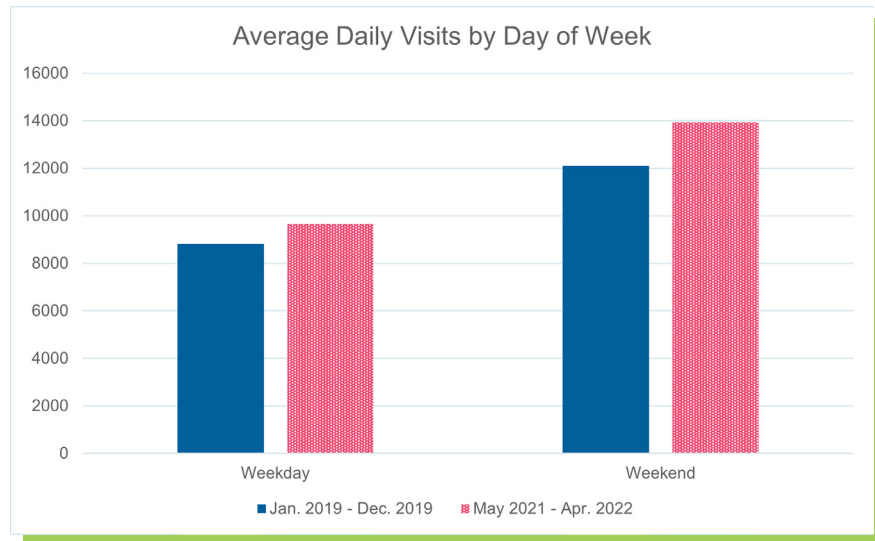


Figure 24: Estimated Average Daily Visits by Weekday vs Weekend

On weekdays, parks are most popular during the late afternoon and evening hours between 3 and 7 p.m.. The mid-day time period of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. is almost as popular. Both these time periods, along with the late-night period of 7 p.m. to midnight, saw an increase in visits between the 2019 and 2021-2022 study periods. The morning hours before 10 a.m. saw a slight decrease in visits.

Weekends, by comparison, see greater numbers of overall visitors, with the mid-day time period of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. being the most popular. Parks also see more morning visitors (6 to 10 a.m.) on weekends than on weekdays. However, the number of visitors in the later afternoon and

evening hours of 3 to 7 p.m. are roughly even and late-night visitors (7 p.m. to midnight) are actually fewer in number on weekends. All times of day saw an increase in visitors between study periods.

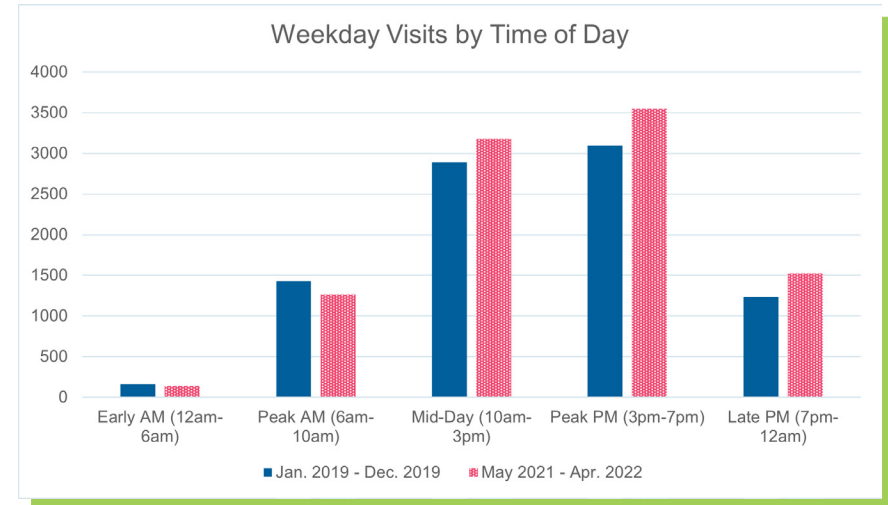


Figure 25: Estimated Average Daily Visits by Time-of-Day Periods on Weekdays

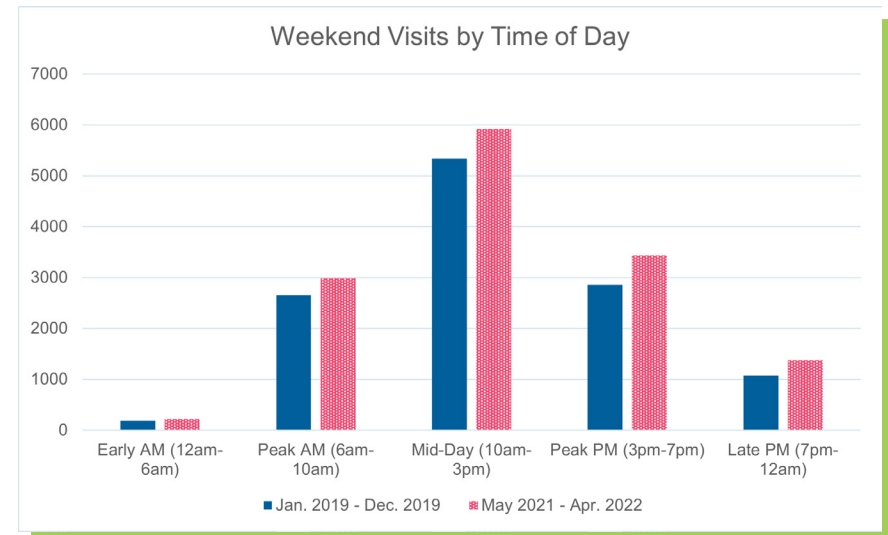


Figure 26: Estimated Average Daily Visits by Time-of-Day Periods on Weekends

Park Visitor Trip Origins

Park visitors vary greatly in terms of how far they travel to visit parks. Additionally, parks have very different patterns in terms of where park visitors originate. The average trip length to parks increases from an average of 12 miles on weekdays to about 16 miles on weekends, as shown in Figure 27. The weekday figure stayed about the same between study periods, while the average distance traveled to parks on the weekend decreased slightly from the 2019 study period to the 2021-2022 study period.

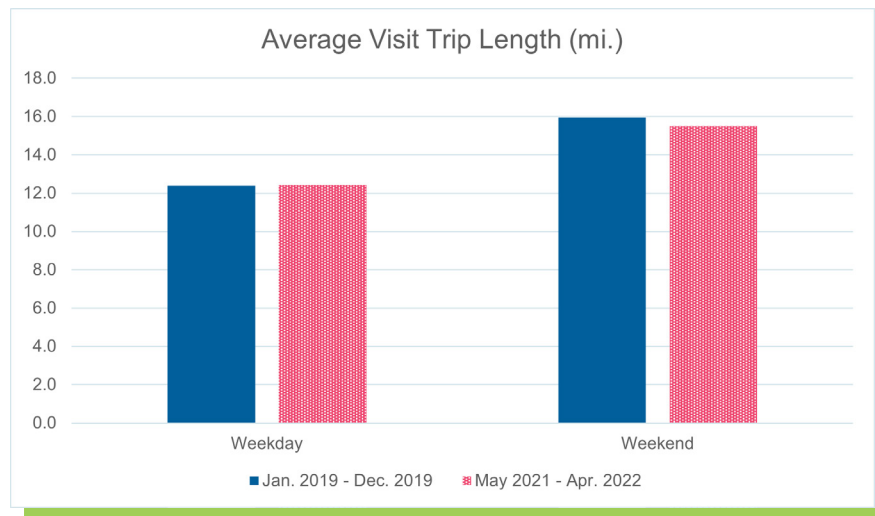


Figure 27: Estimated Average Trip Length to Parks by Day of Week

These figures are weighted by the number of visitors, and some of the parks with greater visitor numbers tend to have larger average trip distances. For example, some of the parks, facilities, and centers near the beach have longer average trip lengths, such as the Clearwater Beach Recreation & Aquatics Center, Pier 60 Park, Sand Key Bayside Park, and Clearwater Beach. The top ten parks by trip distance are shown in Figure 28.

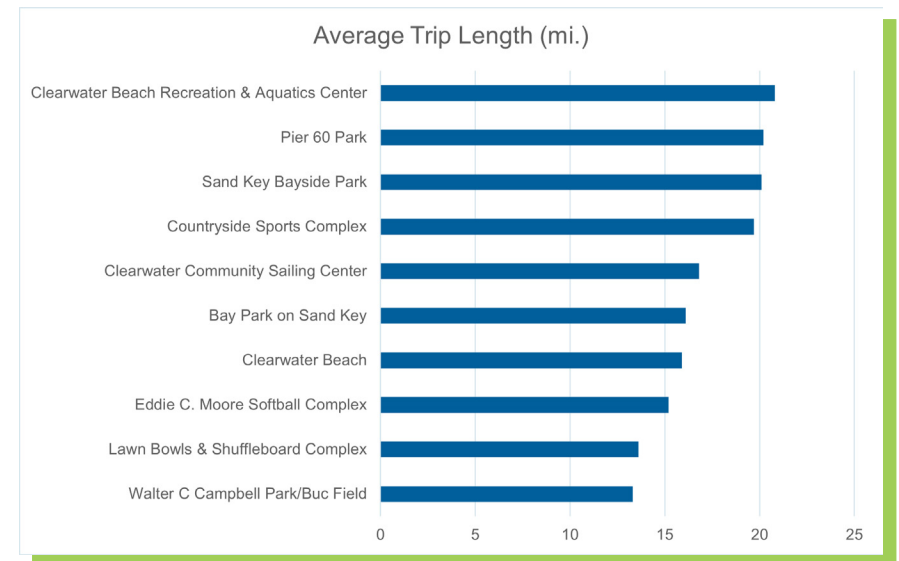


Figure 28: Top Ten Parks by Longest Estimated Average Trip Length (Miles)

The parks with the shortest trip distances, shown in Figure 29, are more likely to be neighborhood parks such as Soule Road Park, Montclair Park, and Forest Run Park.

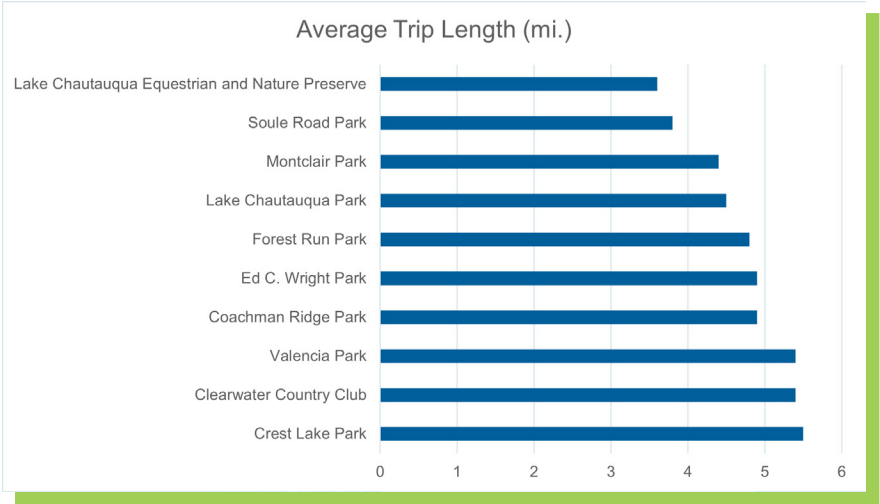


Figure 29: Top Ten Parks by Shortest Estimated Average Trip Length (Miles)

Distance traveled to visit parks also varies based on the park type and the geographic location. Figure 30 shows the average trip distance to parks by park type, weighted by the average daily park visitors. Clearwater Beach is listed separately from other Environmental parks given the significant difference in average trip distance between the Beach and other Environmental parks.

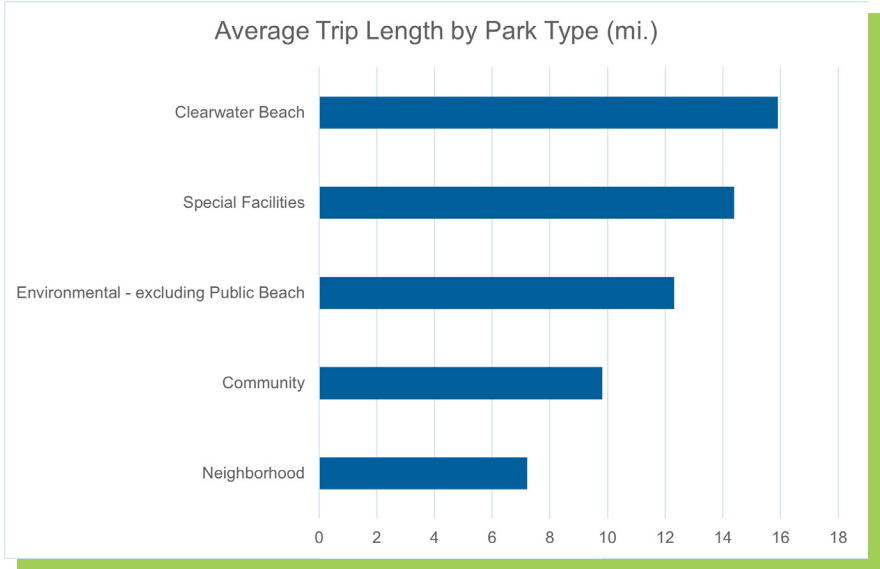


Figure 30: Average Trip Length to Parks by Park Type (Miles), Weighted by Park Visits

While these trip distances may seem relatively high, there are significant differences between parks located on Clearwater Beach relative to parks located in the remainder of the city, labeled in Figure 31 as “Clearwater Mainland”. On average, trips to visit parks located on Clearwater Beach tend to be two to three times the distance as trips to visit parks located in the rest of the city, across all park types.

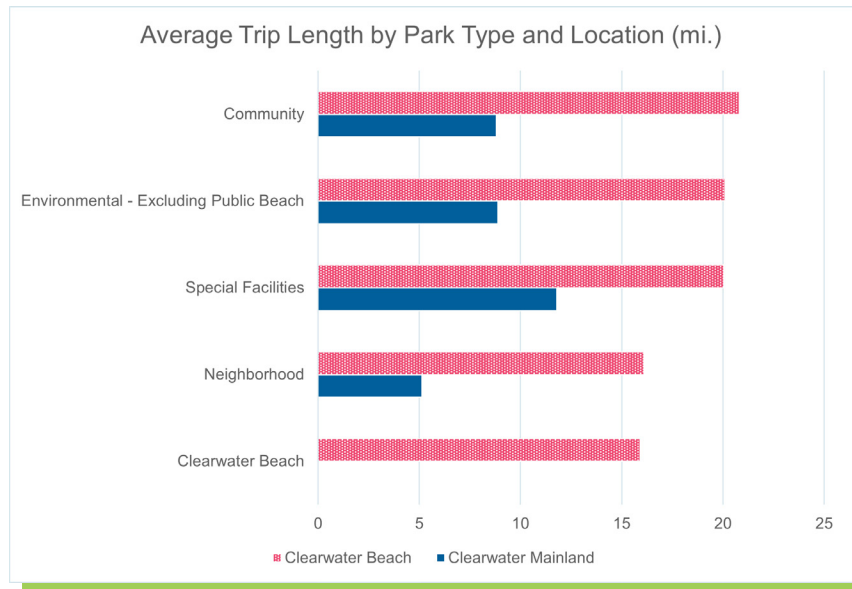


Figure 31: Average Trip Length to Parks by Park Type and Park Location (Miles), Weighted by Park Visits

In terms of where park visitors originate, the majority of visitors on weekdays and weekends across both study periods were from the Tampa Bay Metropolitan Area. These figures decreased slightly between study periods, from about 71% to 64% on weekdays and 69% to 63% on weekends. However, parks vary widely in terms of the share of visitors from the local metropolitan area. The parks with the greatest share of residents living in the Tampa Bay Area, shown in Figure 33, include recreation centers and neighborhood parks that attract a more local crowd.

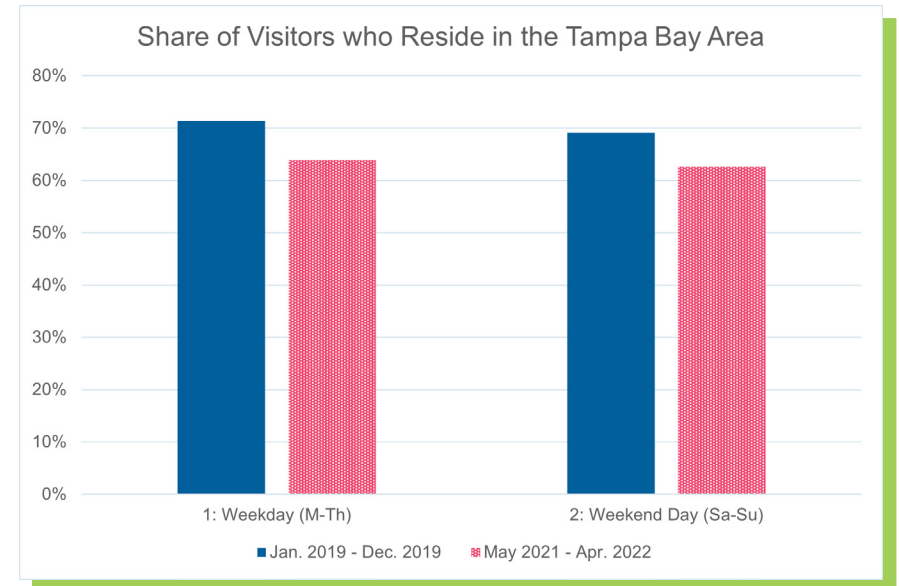


Figure 32: Park Visitors by Estimated Share Living in the Local Metropolitan Area (Tampa Bay)

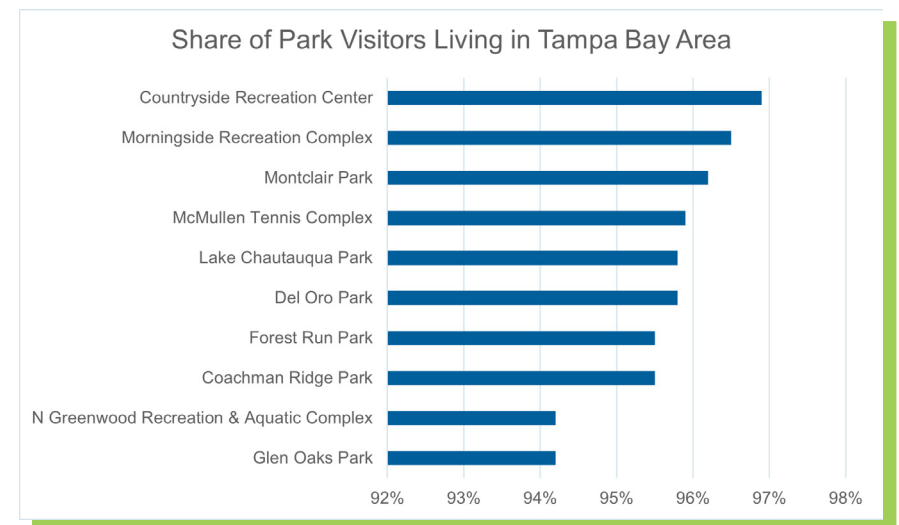


Figure 33: Top Ten Parks by Greatest Share of Visitors Living in the Local Metropolitan Area

At the same time, other parks, especially those near the beach, have a much smaller share of visitors from the local metropolitan area. At Clearwater Beach, for example, only an estimated 32% of visitors are visiting from the Tampa Bay Area. McKay Playfield, located near the beach, as well as Pier 60 Park and Mandalay Park all have smaller shares of local visitors.

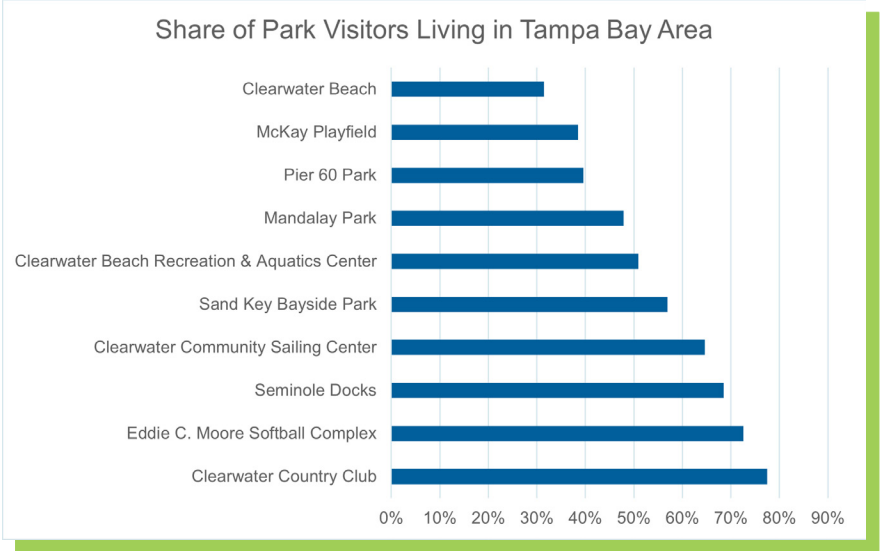


Figure 34: Top Ten Parks by Lowest Share of Visitors Living in the Local Metropolitan Area



The Streetlight data also includes the Census Block Group where park visitors reside, which can help reveal where the majority of park visitors live for each individual park. The following four figures show maps of the radius in which 50% of park visitors live, for individual parks. For example, at Valencia Park, a neighborhood park, half of all visitors live within less than two miles of the park, shown in Figure 35.

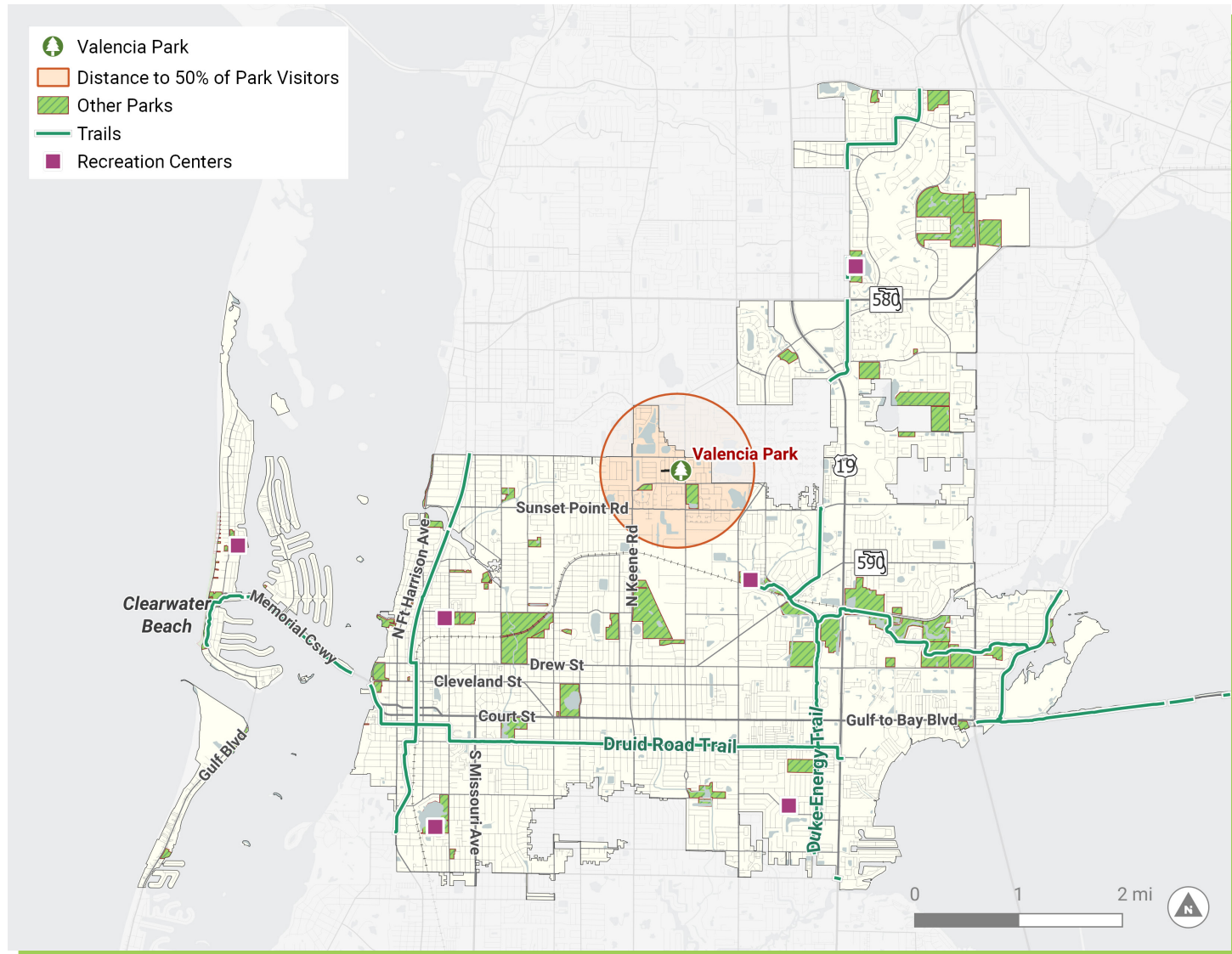


Figure 35: Radius in which 50% of Valencia Park visitors reside

Cliff Stephens Park, shown in Figure 36, has a larger radius in which half of visitors live, showing a slightly larger draw geographically, though not the entire city.

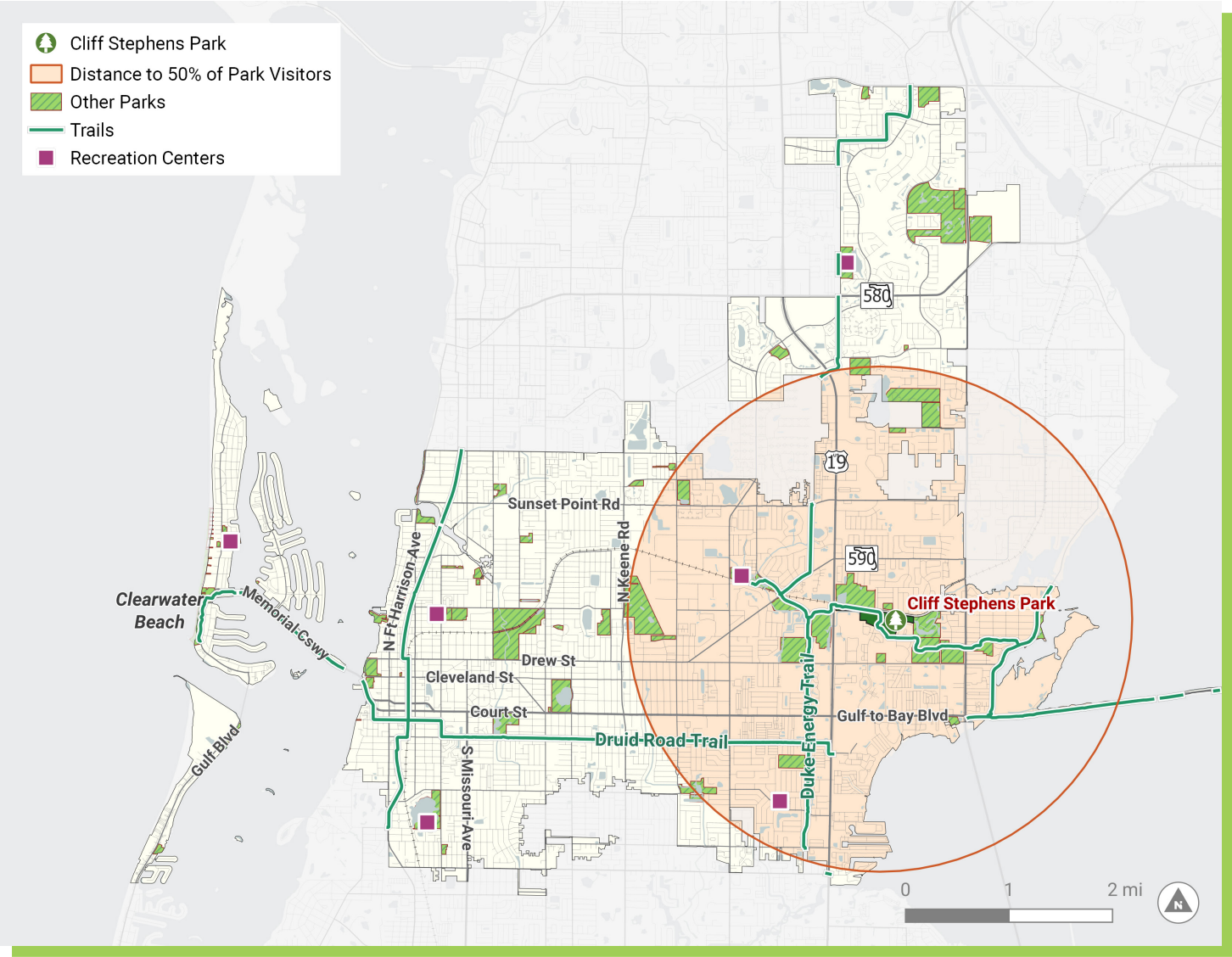


Figure 36: Radius in which 50% of Cliff Stephens Park visitors reside

Figure 37 shows a similar radius for Sid Lickton Ballfields visitors.

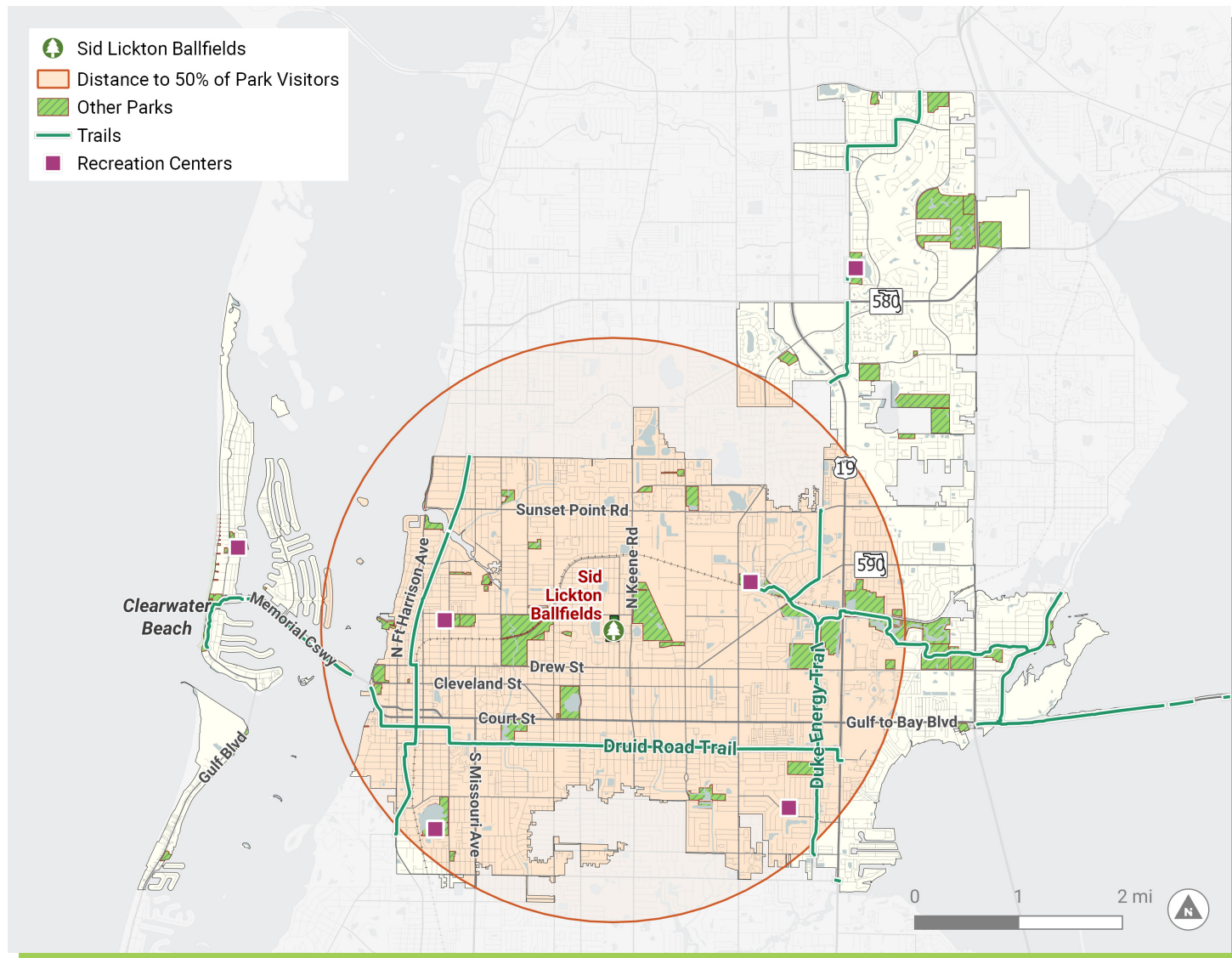


Figure 37: Radius in which 50% of Sid Lickton Ballfields visitors reside

Figure 38 shows the radius in which half of Long Center visitors live, which makes up most of the city outside of Clearwater Beach.

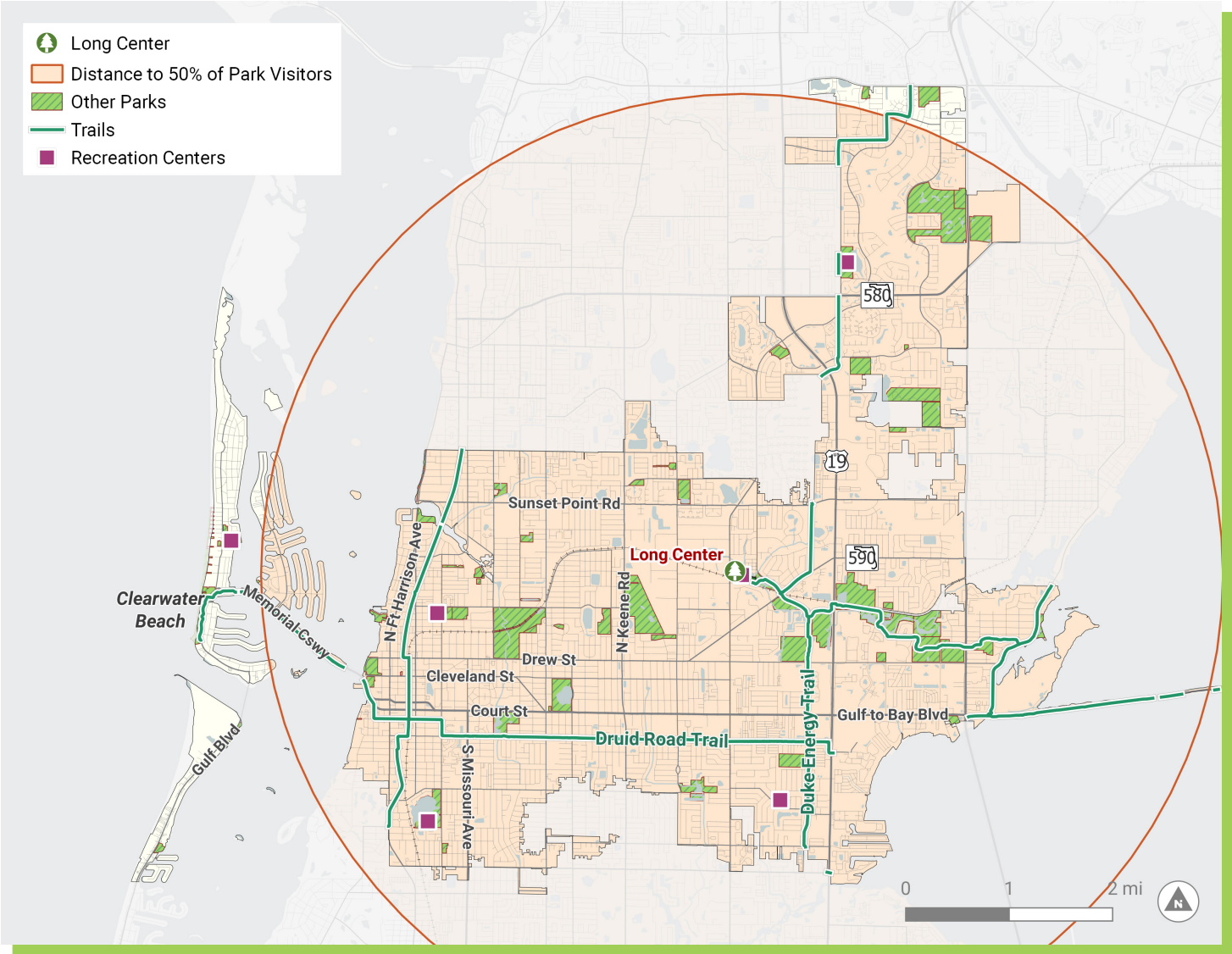


Figure 38: Radius in which 50% of Long Center visitors reside

Park Visitor Demographics

Streetlight data was used to analyze visit patterns based on demographic indicators, including race, ethnicity, family status, and vehicle ownership.

In terms of race and ethnicity, Clearwater parks tend to have slightly more visitors who are people of color during weekends, as shown in Figure 39 and Figure 40.

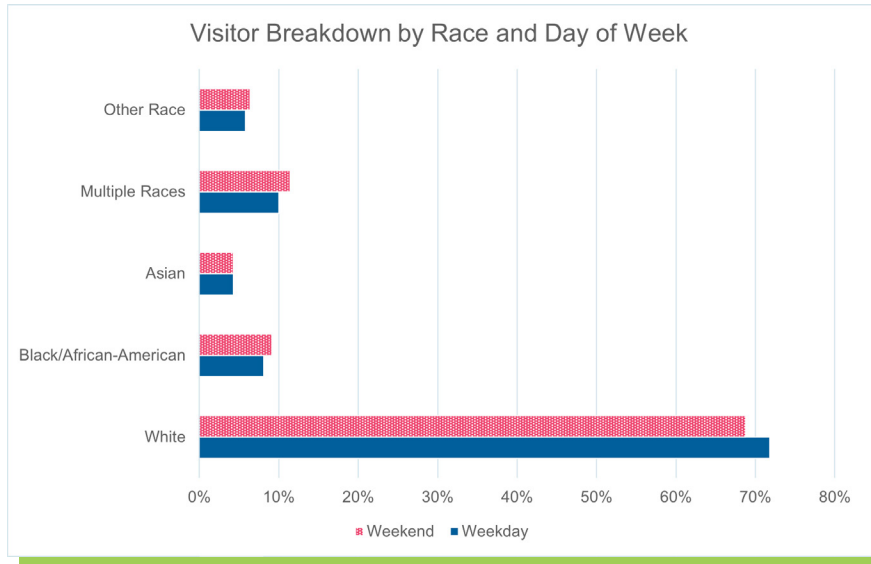


Figure 39: Share of Clearwater Park Visitors by Race and Day of Week

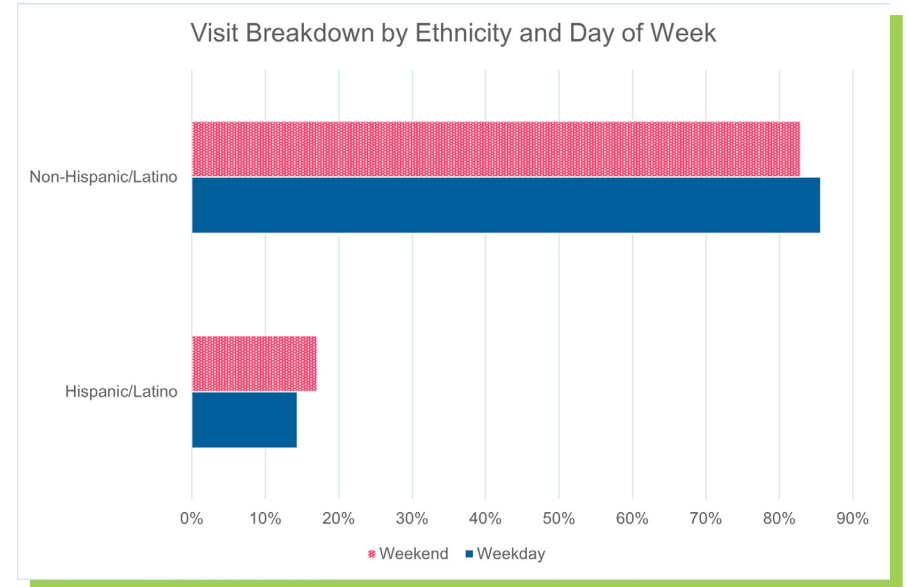


Figure 40: Share of Clearwater Park Visitors by Ethnicity and Day of Week



Understanding the share of visitors from households with children can reveal which parks are most popular with families and the facilities they may need, such as playgrounds and play spaces, shade, and restrooms. Figure 41 shows the top ten parks by the share of visitors from households with children. Cherry Harris Park has the highest share of visitors from these households, and is the only park in which over half of all visitors are from households with children. Cherry Harris is a neighborhood park, and during the site visit, the project team found this park to be relatively busy during the day with primarily Black visitors, and that the restroom facilities were locked unless space had been previously reserved. This created a hardship for park visitors, particularly families with children and older adults. Both groups expressed anecdotally that it was difficult, time-consuming, or not practical due to urgency of need, to walk home to use the restroom and this discouraged them from enjoying the park.

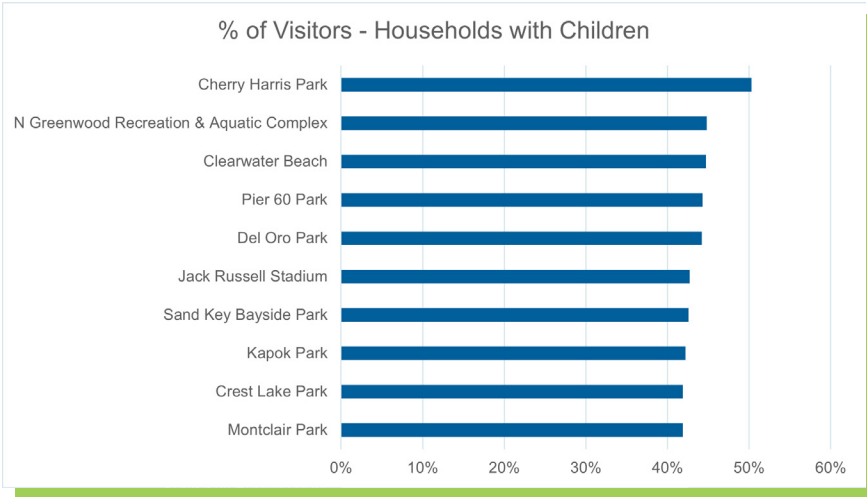


Figure 41: Top 10 Parks by Share of Visitors from Households with Children

Figure 42 shows the top ten parks in Clearwater by the share of visitors from households with zero vehicles. Understanding vehicle ownership among park visitors can help determine the need for amenities specific to park visitors who arrive by means other than a car. In addition to having the highest share of visitors from households with children, Cherry Harris Park also has the highest share of visitors from households with no vehicles. With about 20 percent of visitors in this category, this is about double Clearwater’s citywide share of car-less households of about 10 percent. Other parks relatively high in share of visitors from zero-vehicle households include other neighborhood parks and the North Greenwood Recreation and Aquatic Complex.

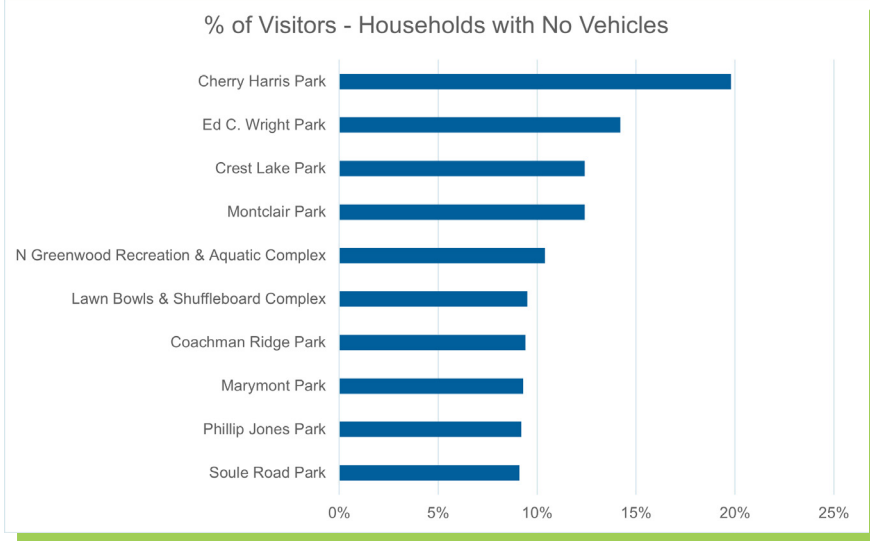


Figure 42: Top 10 Parks by Share of Visitors from Households with No Vehicles

Park Facility Distribution

This section reviews the geographic distribution of key park facilities and amenities, including sport courts, recreation facilities, playground equipment, and the presence of canopies or shade structures. The maps reveal strengths and gaps in Clearwater’s park system, with an additional focus on the presence of facilities relative to household income and school locations, where relevant. The displayed amenities data is from the City of Clearwater and has been augmented by a desktop review and site visits.

Recreation Centers

Clearwater has six recreation centers within the parks system, offering indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. These facilities are relatively well distributed throughout the city, as shown in Figure 43. The map also shows the locations of K-12 public and private schools, for reference.

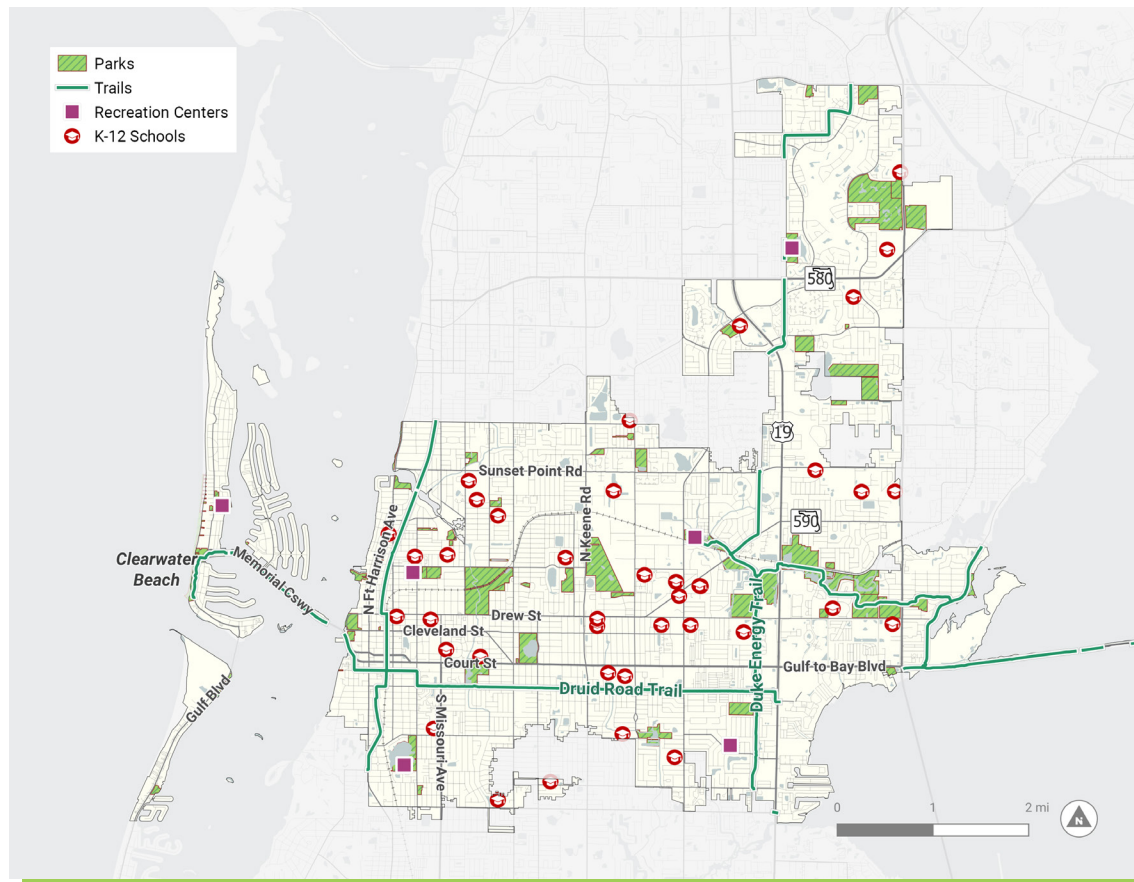


Figure 43: Recreation Centers in Clearwater Parks and School Locations (Public and Private K-12)

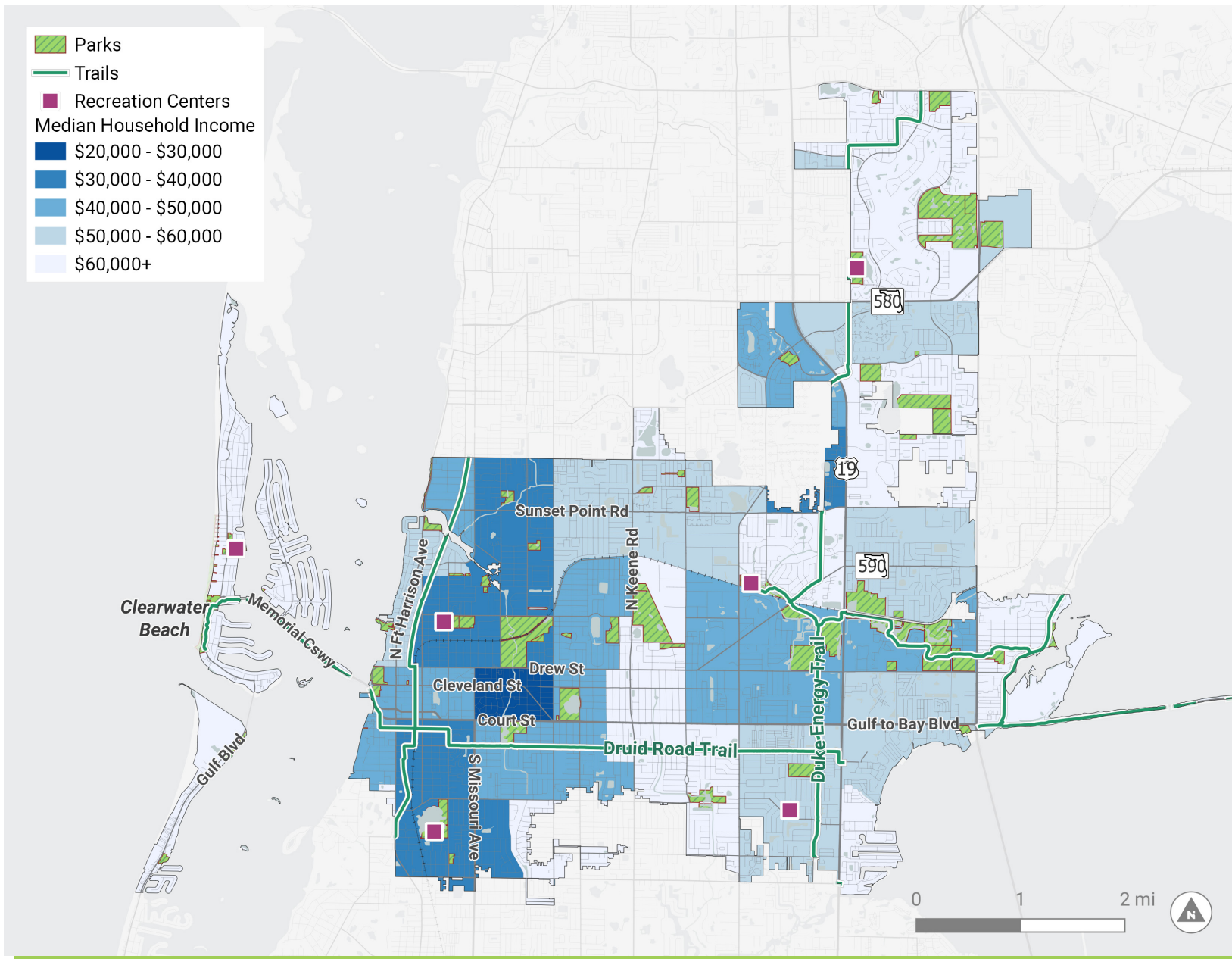


Figure 44: Recreation Centers and Median Household Income

Playgrounds

Playgrounds are well distributed geographically across the park system (Figure 45), including areas across the income spectrum, shown in Figure 46. While the scale of playgrounds vary from park to park, most Clearwater residents have access to playground facilities within a short distance.

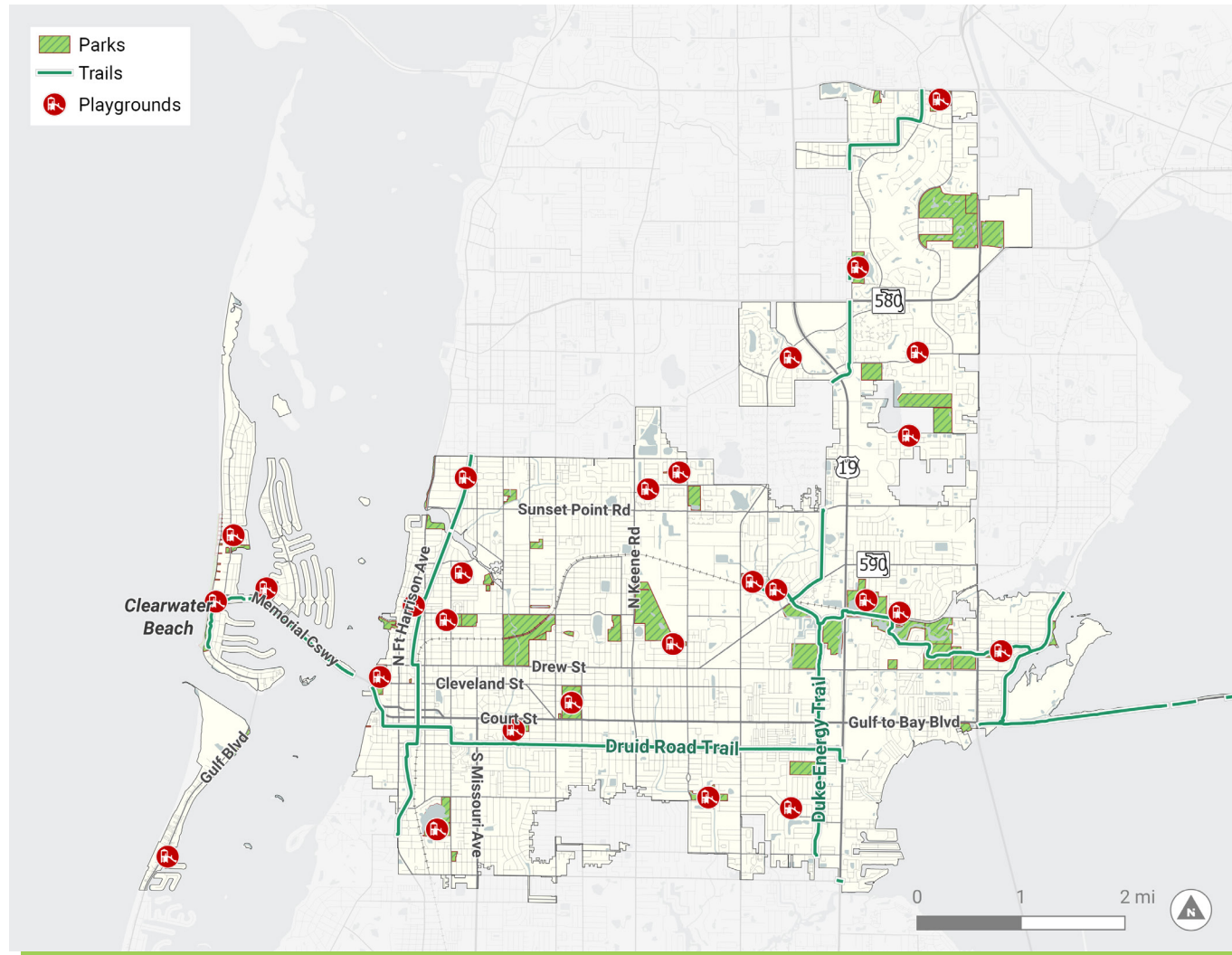


Figure 45: Playgrounds in Clearwater Parks

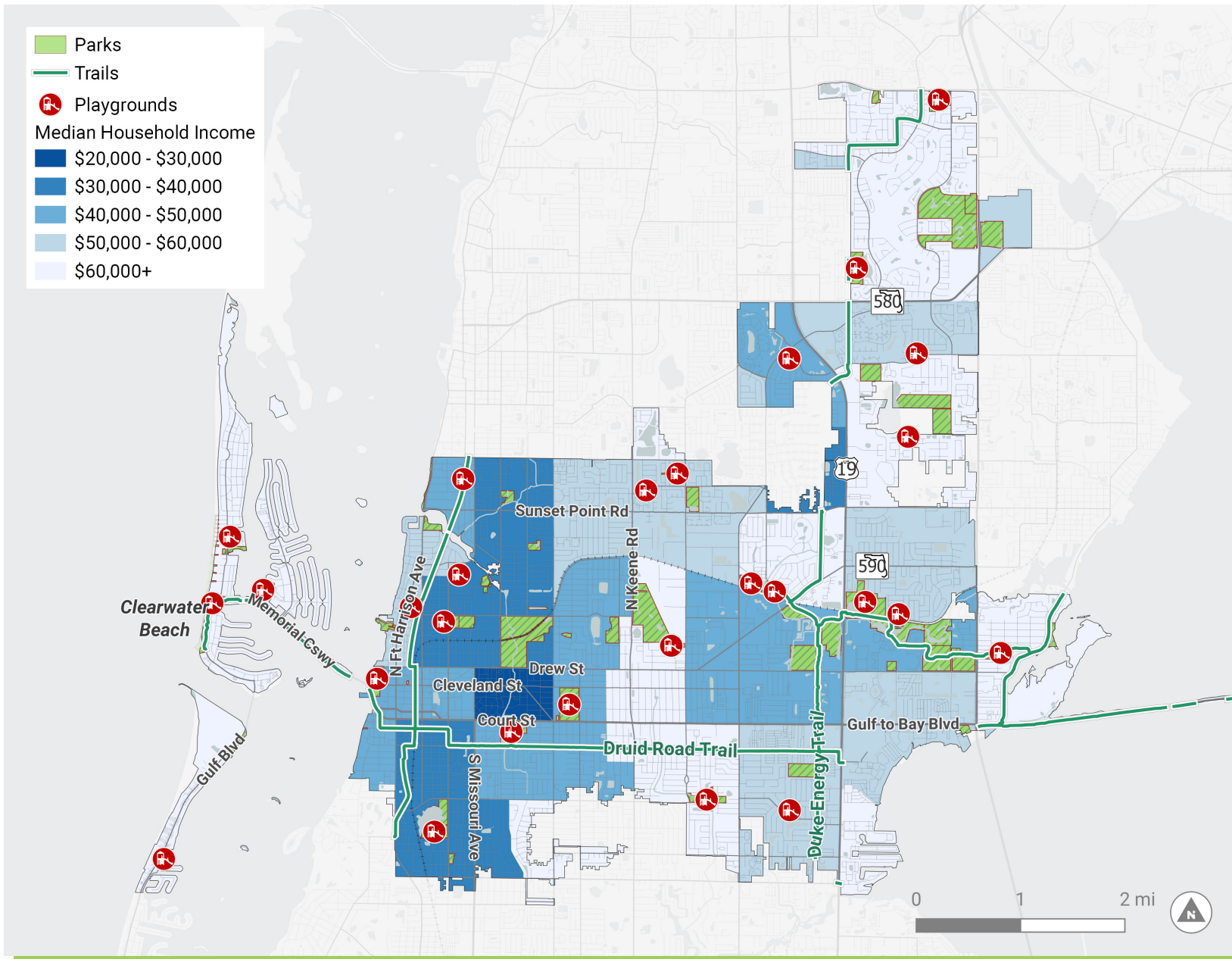


Figure 46: Playgrounds and Median Household Income

Basketball Courts

Several parks include outdoor basketball courts, shown in Figure 47. While there is a presence of a total of 12 locations and 14 courts throughout the city, the lower-income areas in the western half of the city have relatively few outdoor courts, as shown in Figure 48. For example, the lowest-income Census Tract in Clearwater, in the area west of Crest Lake Park and between Drew Street and Court Street, does not have any outdoor basketball courts within one mile.

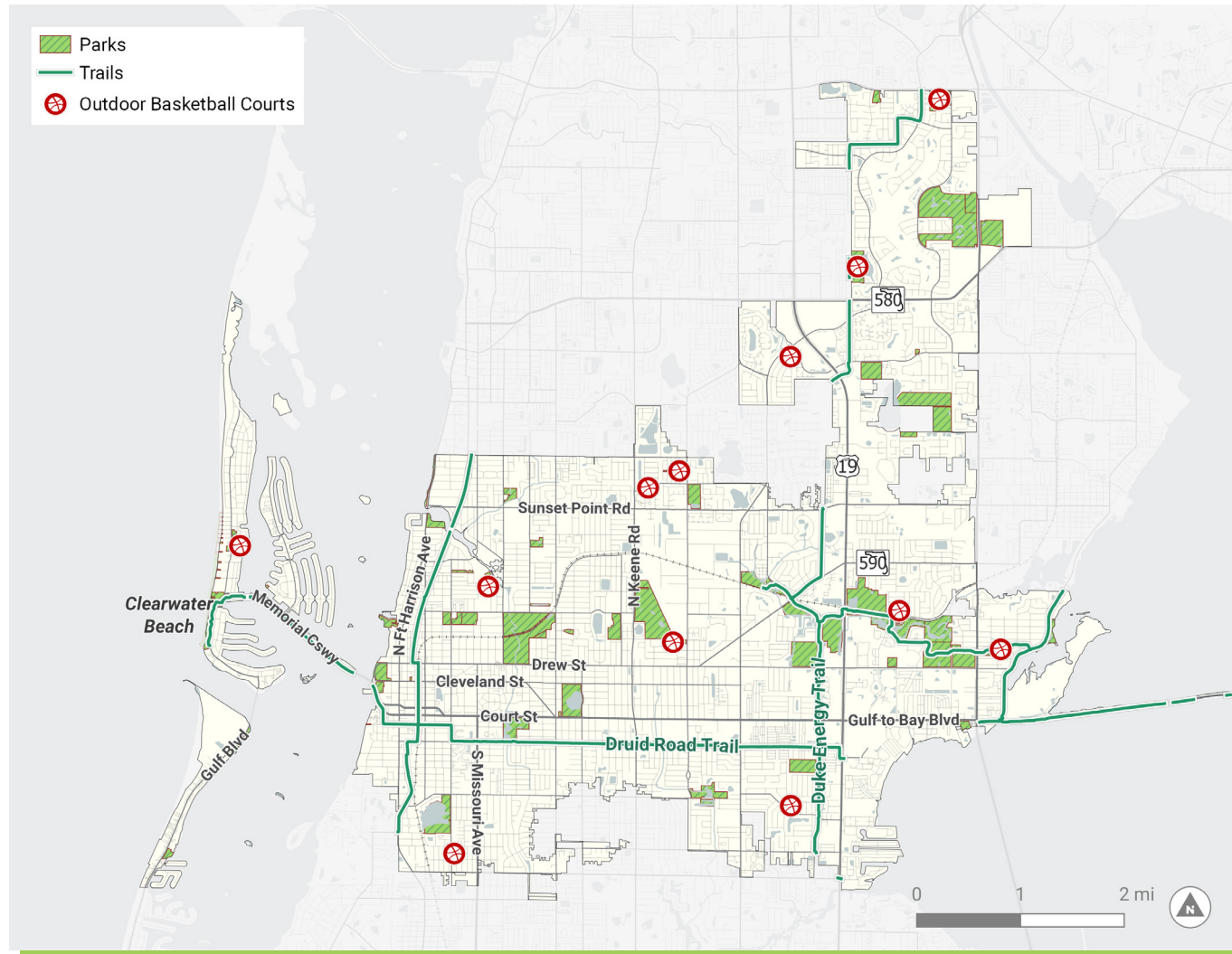


Figure 47: Outdoor Basketball Courts in Clearwater Parks

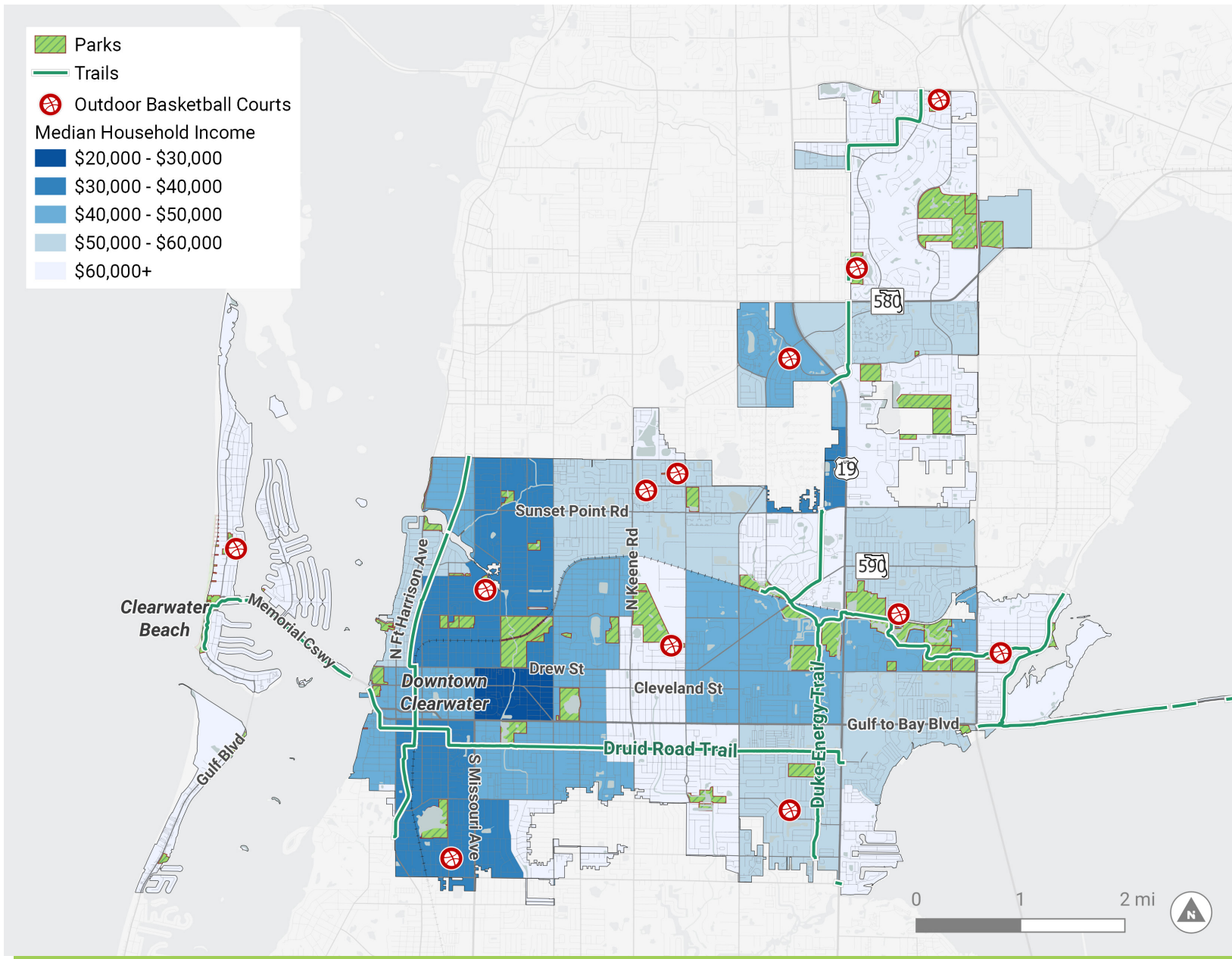


Figure 48: Outdoor Basketball Courts and Median Household Income

Tennis Courts

A total of 13 locations and 46 outdoor tennis courts also exist throughout the city, as shown in Figure 49, though like basketball courts, are further from the city's lowest income areas (Figure 50).

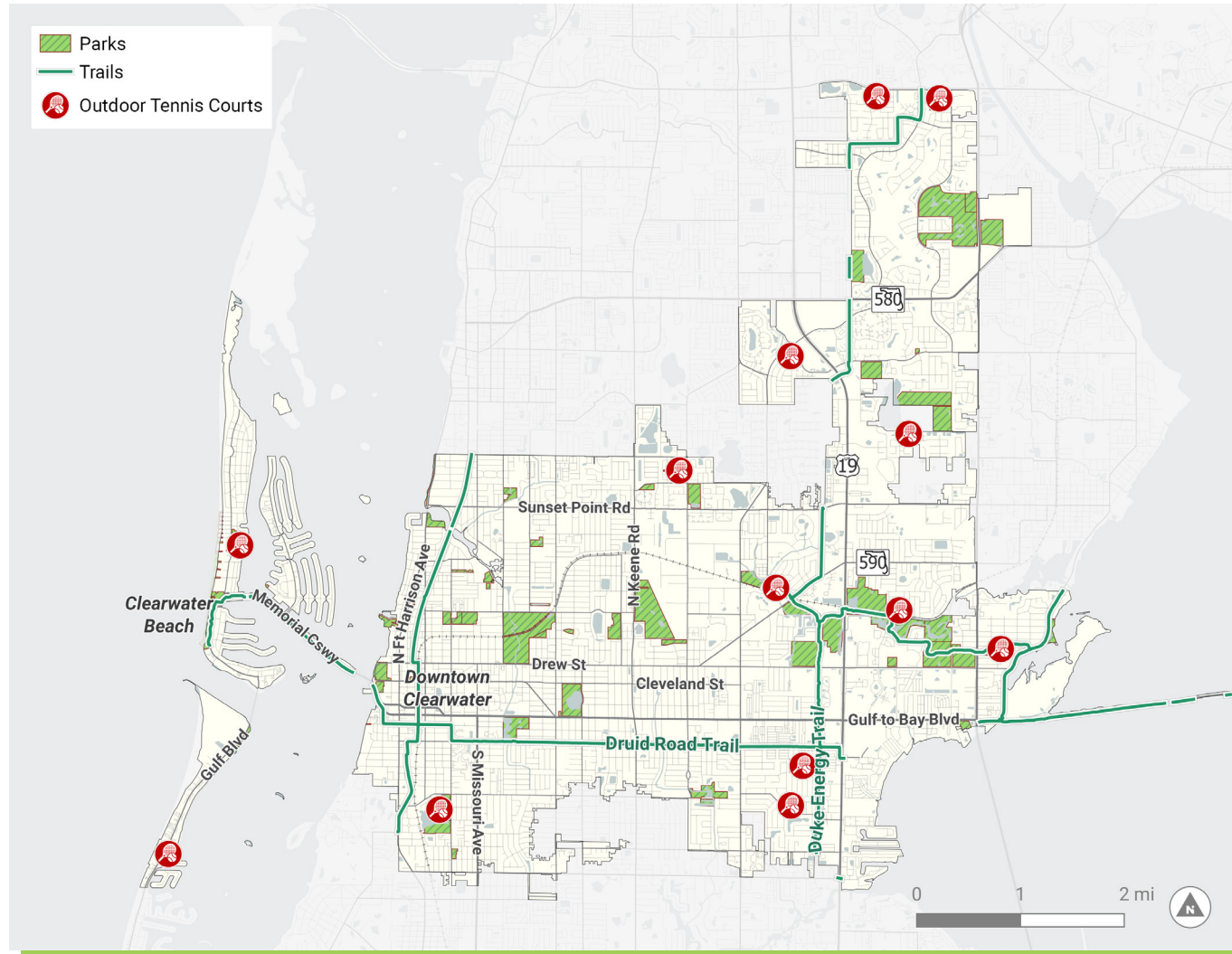


Figure 49: Outdoor Tennis Courts in Clearwater Parks

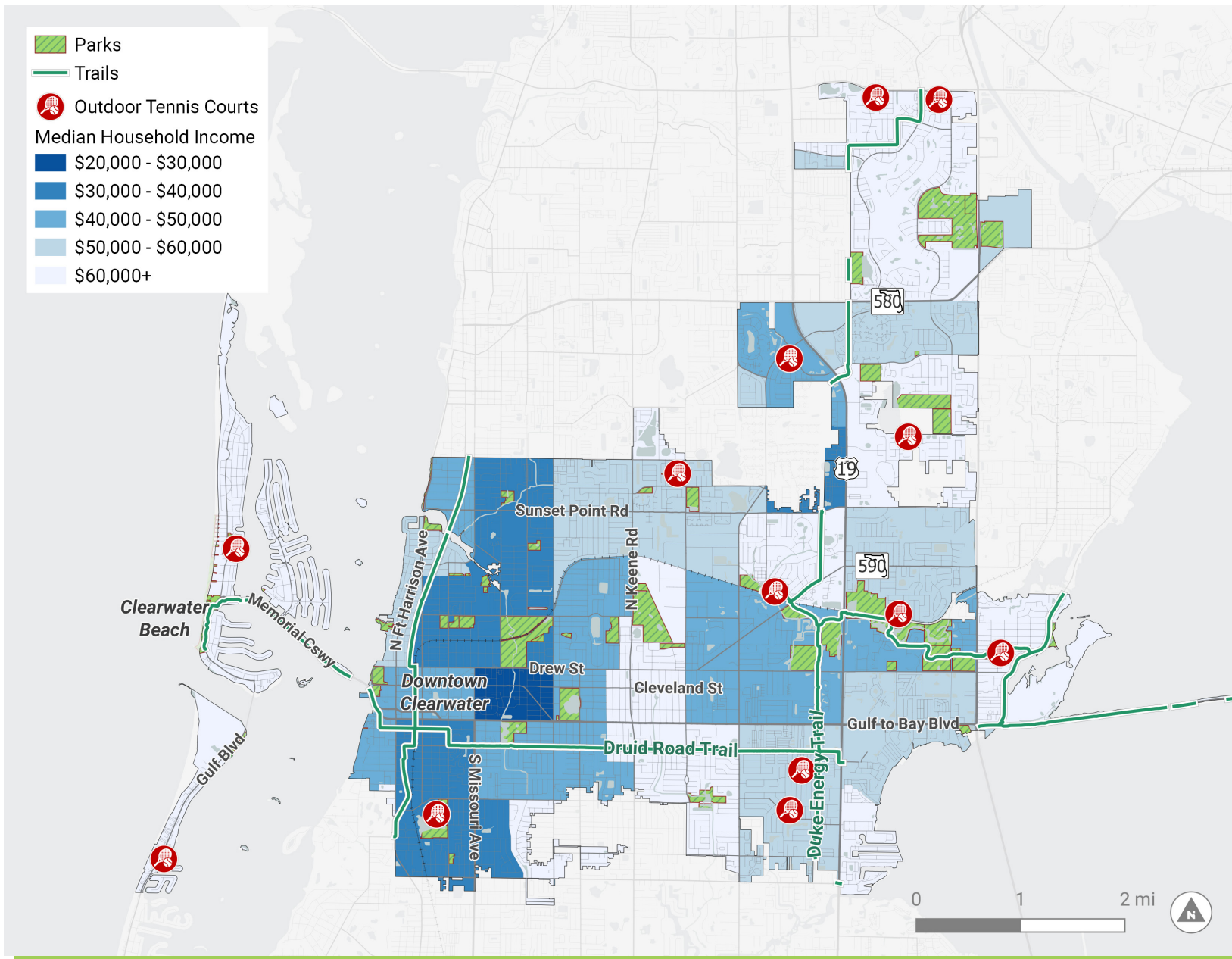


Figure 50: Outdoor Tennis Courts and Median Household Income

Canopies and Shade Structures

There are 19 canopies and shade structures that provide relief from the sun and heat and are often found above playgrounds, picnic tables, benches, or programming space. As Figure 51 shows, many parks have these structures, especially the parks with playgrounds or places to sit.

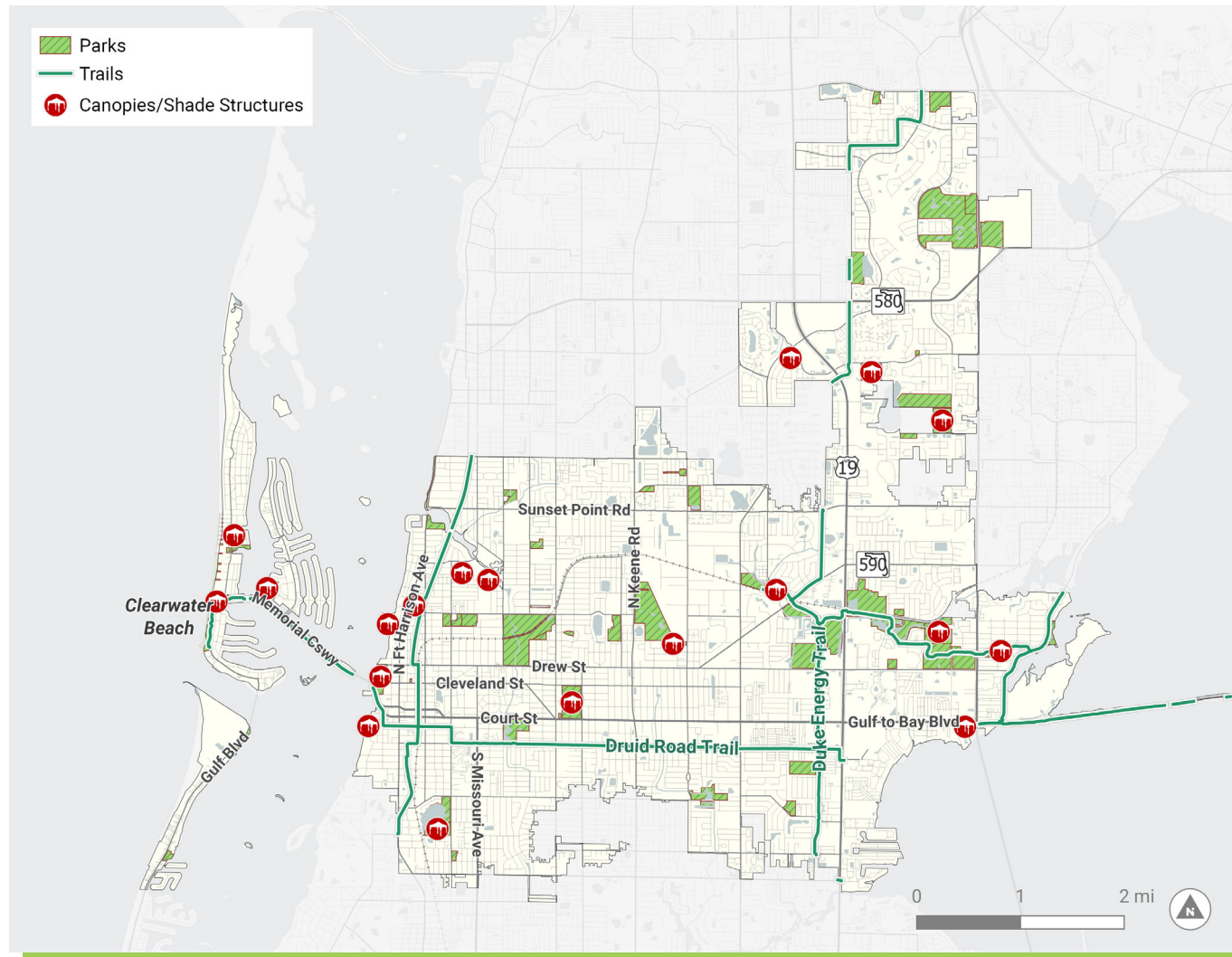


Figure 51: Canopies and Shade Structures in Clearwater Parks

Park Site Visits

The project team visited 69 of Clearwater's facilities to assess the strengths, weaknesses, and performance of Clearwater's parks and recreation system.

On average, facility site visits took 30 minutes. Due to the varying sizes and complexities of facilities, some visits required as little as 15 minutes and others as much as two hours. Each site was documented with photographs that captured the general sense of place of the facility. A detailed evaluation form was also used to capture more quantitative measures such as facility maintenance, condition, and perceived use of amenities and programs offered.

The evaluation form assessed, on a scale, many elements such as:

- Ease of walking to the facility
- ADA Considerations
- Signage/Wayfinding
- Feeling of Safety
- Cleanliness
- Multi-modal Capacity
- Public Art
- Sense of Place

These qualitative and quantitative measures were used together to gain a broad understanding of the status of the Parks & Recreation System and to identify areas that are working well, need improvement, or may be missing.



Full List of Parks Used in Park Visit Analysis:

Allen's Creek Park	Countryside Recreation Center*	Kings Hwy Rec Ctr (Artz for Life)	Ross Norton Recreation Complex*
Bay Park on Sand Key*	Countryside Sports Complex*	Lake Chautauqua Equestrian and Nature Preserve*	Sand Key Bayside Park*
BayCare Ballpark*	Crest Lake Park*	Lake Chautauqua Park*	Seminole Docks*
Bayview Park	Del Oro Park*	Lawn Bowls & Shuffleboard Complex*	Sid Lickton Ballfields*
Belmont Park	Ed C. Wright Park*	Magnolia Street Dock	Soule Road Park*
Charles Park	Eddie C. Moore Softball Complex*	Mandalay Park	State Street Park
Cherry Harris Park*	Edgewater Drive Park	Martin Luther King Jr. Park	Station Sq Park
Chi Chi Rodriguez Golf Course*	Enterprise Dog Park*	Marymont Park*	Sunset Sam Park
Chi Chi Rodriguez Golf Course (Driving Range)*	Forest Run Park*	McKay Playfield	The Landings Golf Club*
Clearwater Beach Recreation & Aquatics Center*	Frank Tack Park*	Moccasin Lake Nature Park*	The Long Center*
Clearwater Community Sailing Center*	Garden Ave Park	Montclair Park*	Turner Street Dock
Clearwater Country Club*	Glen Oaks Park*	Morningside Recreation Complex*	Valencia Park*
Clearwater Beach*	Glenwood Park	North Greenwood Recreation & Aquatic Complex*	Walter C Campbell Park/Buc Field*
Cliff Stephens Park*	Henry L. McMullen Tennis Complex*	NE Coachman Park*	Wood Valley Park*
Coachman Park (Imagine Clearwater)*	Hibiscus Lake Park	Northwood Park	Woodgate Park
Coachman Ridge Park*	Hillcrest Park	Phillip Jones Park*	
Cooper's Bayou Park*	Jack Russell Stadium*	Pier 60 Park*	
Country Hollow Park	Joe Dimaggio Sports Complex*		
	Kapok Park*		

* Denotes parks and facilities used in the GIS and Streetlight analysis



CHAPTER 6

Community Engagement

Process Overview and Goals

With the aim that this plan reflect the parks and recreation needs and wants of the residents of Clearwater, engagement with the community and relevant stakeholders was a priority throughout the creation of this plan. The information and perspectives gathered through this process informed and helped direct the outcome and direction of this plan. The approach to community engagement was guided by and anchored by three overarching goals:



PROVIDE AN OPEN AND TRANSPARENT PROCESS

The public engagement process was created to be accessible by all members of the community. Information about the planning process, existing conditions analyses, and other relevant information were provided during engagement activities and made accessible to the public.



LISTEN FIRST

Activities and events were structured so that people in the community had an opportunity to share their experiences with the city's park facilities and programs.



CREATE INCLUSIVE OPPORTUNITIES

The people providing feedback on the plan should be reflective of the people who make up the City of Clearwater. With equity and accessibility serving as guideposts for the project team, the planning process was designed to be as inclusive and inviting as possible.

The process

The engagement process for the plan was comprised of three components; public workshops, focus group and stakeholder interviews, and online engagement activities including a survey. Each component was crafted to interact with a broad cross-section of the community, targeting key community groups and public entities within the City of Clearwater; aiming to both gather qualitative information about residents’ needs and priorities and to inform the community about the planning process.

Stakeholder Interviews:

Interviews were conducted with various key stakeholders to identify significant issues, needs, and priorities for the Parks & Recreation Department. These virtual interviews were held between July and September 2023. Stakeholders interviewed included:

CITY DEPARTMENTS AND BOARDS

- Community Services
- Economic Development and Housing
- Finance
- Office of Innovation
- Planning and Development
- Park and Recreation Advisory Board
- Juvenile Welfare Board (County) and MLK Center

CO-SPONSORS

- AMPLIFY Clearwater
- Chargers Soccer Club
- Clearwater Neighborhood Coalition
- Clearwater Threshers
- Horseshoe Club
- Lady Bomber Fast Pitch
- Lawn Bowl Club
- Philadelphia Phillies
- Suncoast YMCA

Each agency was asked:

- What do you like? What is working well?
- What do you not like? What is not working or could be improved?
- What are your priorities?
- What themes are you hearing from the public?

Summary of responses:

WHAT IS WORKING WELL?

- Parks & Recreation does a phenomenal job with programs
- Regarding recreation centers, Clearwater is a “shining star” compared to other cities in the county
- Diversity of parks and programming for all ages and abilities
- Beach maintenance goes above and beyond normal
- Newer playground equipment is welcoming and accessible

WHAT COULD BE DONE BETTER?

- Additional resources for beach cleaning during peak seasons and events
- Maintenance budget has not increased much over the years
- Parks could have more shade
- Access to some parks could be improved and increased
- Not enough public art in parks
- Limited availability of fields

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES?

- Use recreation open space fees for an art center like a museum or a cultural affairs facility.
- Focus on properly maintaining facilities versus adding more facilities.
- More educational and interpretive signage at parks.
- Consistency in the level of maintenance/beautification for neighborhood roads and parks.
- Maintain the pools.
- Advocate for increase in Parks & Recreation budget.
- More playgrounds and amenities for children.

WHAT THEMES ARE YOU HEARING FROM THE PUBLIC?

- Most fields are not accessible (fenced and locked) for the public use.
- Lack of availability of basketball courts.
- Access to bathrooms is very limited.
- Have issues with unhoused presence in parks.
- Too much spent on beach beautification, traveling teams, and sports tournament facilities compared to local neighborhoods and communities.
- Disappointment when city cuts down large trees
- Better enforcement, education, and wayfinding signage throughout the city and not just the beach parks.
- Not enough lighting and security for trail use.

Community Workshops

In-person community workshops were held on July 28th, July 29th, and July 30th, at the North Greenwood Recreation Center, Long Center and Clearwater Main Library, respectively. Participants were introduced to the project, goals, and current findings of the planning process, and then asked to share their perspective on the state of the city's parks and recreations facilities and programs, as well as their hopes for its future evolution. This was accomplished through two main activities: a dot exercise designed to allow participants to express preferences for different amenities, programming, recreational facilities, and sports facilities, and comment cards that prompted participants to share their perspective on current department successes, and areas that would benefit from further investment. Community workshops were staffed by the consultant team and city staff from various departments including Parks & Recreation and Neighborhood Services. Discussions were held in English and Spanish.



Clearwater residents indicated priorities and desires through dot exercise July 27-29, 2023.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

- Comment cards
- Tablets for online survey
- Dot boards
- Drawing activity for children
- Spanish interpreter

Dot Exercise

In this exercise, community residents placed sticky dots on four different boards, each corresponding to different categories within the parks and recreation system - sports facilities, amenities, recreational facilities, and programming. Each board included photos depicting options – e.g. different sports courts or park amenities – and participants placed dots on the option they preferred or prioritized. At the conclusion of the workshops, the following were found to be the most preferred:

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP RESPONSES TO WHAT IS WORKING WELL:

Recreational Facilities

Gymnasium
Walking and Biking Trails
Playgrounds

Sports Facilities

Basketball Courts
Indoor Pools
Pickleball Courts

Amenities

Restrooms
Water Fountains
WiFi Hotspots

Programming

Youth Sports
Nature Education
Arts and Cultural Programming

Comment Cards

54 community comment cards were collected over the course of the three community workshops. These cards asked participants for feedback on their use of and preferences for parks and recreation facilities

and amenities. Common themes distilled from these responses are described below.

INCREASE INVESTMENT IN INDOOR FACILITIES

34 participants desired more indoor facilities, citing rising outdoor temperatures, lack of sufficient outdoor amenities and the high frequency of severe weather as motivating factors. The addition of an indoor gymnasium, with basketball courts particularly highlighted, was mentioned 32 times. Most of these comments were associated with members of a new Hispanic/Latine youth basketball team, who noted the difficulty of practicing outside with variable and, often hot, weather conditions, and the lack of availability of outdoor basketball facilities, public restrooms and water fountains.

IMPROVING INCLUSIVITY AND INCREASING ACCESS

Various comments mentioned a desire to increase inclusivity within Clearwater. These included increasing access to facilities by reducing costs and eliminating non-resident fees.

INCREASING FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY AND PRESERVATION

Participants also expressed a desire for more environmentally conscious practices within parks and recreation facilities. In terms of maintenance, this included comments asking for the use of pesticides and herbicides to be reevaluated due to impacts on native seagrass, for permaculture to be preserved and for native plants to be prioritized. Increased availability of EV chargers at facilities was also mentioned.

ARTS/CULTURAL CENTER AND ACTIVITIES

Some participants asked for the creation of a cultural center with dedicated space for dance performances and practices, as well as space for cultural clubs and organizations to host events. Designated space for arts-and-crafts oriented programming was also requested.

INCREASING PROGRAMMING FOR OLDER PARTICIPANTS

Increasing the availability of dedicated programming for age groups 13+ was a recurring theme.

- **Teens:** The lack of programming and facilities (outside of group sports) for ages 13-17 was noted by a few participants. The creation of a skatepark as a facility specifically targeting this demographic was suggested. Creating tutoring and/or mentoring programs was also requested.
- **Adults:** Generally increasing activities aimed for adults was mentioned multiple times, with participants specifically requesting more indoor exercise classes and wellness events.
- **Older Adults:** Increased programming through the creation of social clubs such as checkers and tutoring/mentoring programs was requested.

TEAM SPORTS

Comments were split on whether youth sports teams require additional attention – with a greater amount of investment and number of teams – or if they felt those resources could be better spent on other programming.

KIDS PLAY AREAS

Comments expressed a general satisfaction with existing play areas, noting their cleanliness; however, additional play areas with a greater diversity in design were called for. Examples mentioned included natural playgrounds, ‘creative playgrounds’, splashpads, and multi-use fields.

AREAS WORKING WELL

Community members expressed strong satisfaction with the quality of many existing facilities and expressed satisfaction with the natural beauty and ongoing maintenance of existing parks.

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

The consultant team provided a presentation to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board at a regularly scheduled and publicly noticed meeting on July 29, 2023. The meeting was open to the public and broadcast on YouTube. At this meeting the team provided an overview of the process, highlights of community feedback received to date, and observations from park visits throughout the city.

Online Survey

A short 19 question survey, including four demographic questions, was uploaded to the City of Clearwater website. It was designed to allow residents to share their thoughts on parks and recreation facilities, programming, and operations. The survey was open from July 3, 2023 to August 14, 2023. It received 626 complete responses and 91 partial responses, an 87.2% completion rate.

Demographics

Respondents predominantly identified as female (60%) and white (77%). These percentages are higher than the city’s demographic makeup, where 51.2% of residents identify as female, and 65.3% as white, not Hispanic or Latine.³ Only 9% of respondents identified as Hispanic/Latine, compared to 17.1% of the city’s residents, 4% as Black, compared to 12.3%, and 1.6% as Asian, compared to 3.1%.

.....

3 <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/clearwatercityflorida>

The age of respondents also skewed older than the city's demographic makeup. While 23% of city residents are 65 years or older, 33% of survey respondents were within this age category.

Parks and Facilities Current Use

The survey asked city residents about their use of and experience visiting city parks and facilities.

The most visited parks were:

1. Clearwater Beach (16%),
2. Coachman Park (17%) and
3. Coachman Ridge Park (11%)

The most visited facilities were:

1. The Long Center (20%)
2. Coachman Park (13%)
3. Crest Lake Park (10%)
4. Countryside Recreation Center (10%)

City residents visited parks and facilities often, with most respondents visiting one to two times per week (29%) and three to five times per week (26%), while 8% of respondents visited daily.

Respondents rated park and facility cleanliness, maintenance, landscaping and beautification, and safety very highly, although public restrooms received less favorable rankings.

The survey offered the option to write in a category and provide a rating. Notably shade availability, especially at playgrounds, had 17 write in responses expressing a neutral or dissatisfied rating, making up roughly 10% of the 157 write-in responses.

Access

Most respondents (76%) were satisfied with the operating times of recreation facilities. Those dissatisfied commonly chose the most visited recreational facility, the Long Center (29%), as the facility whose operating time they would like to change. Other facilities commonly chosen included the Clearwater Beach Aquatic Center (12%), the Ross Norton Recreation Complex (10%) and the North Greenwood Recreation and Aquatic Center (10%).

Desired changes to operating time were varied, with most responses focusing on changing operating times on Monday and on the weekend. 38.8% wanted extended operating hours on Sunday, 20.1% on Saturday and 16.7% on Monday, with a 9 AM opening time and 8 PM close as the most requested operating time.

Survey respondents were also asked how they accessed facilities. Driving was the most used mode of transportation, used by 97.6% of residents, followed by walking (used by 59.3%), biking (used by 48.8%) and public transportation (used by 17.25%). Most reached their desired facility or park in under 15 minutes using all transportation modes except public transit – 65% of respondents who used transit reported trips taking more than 30 minutes.

Respondents were generally satisfied with this level of access, with 83.5% of respondents claiming to be satisfied or very satisfied with the level of access to parks and facilities within a 30-minute drive or transit ride. Satisfaction rates for access to parks within a 15-minute walk or bike ride was lower at 65.3%.

Parking availability was perceived less positively. Compared to other facility satisfaction categories asked in the survey, parking availability had the highest level of dissatisfaction, with 23% of respondents very dissatisfied or dissatisfied.

Handicap accessibility was also perceived less positively with 58.8% of respondents giving either a very satisfied or satisfied response and while the bulk of the responses gave a (35%) neutral rating.

Information

A small majority (54.9%) of residents find it easy to access information regarding parks and recreation programs and events. Most acquire this information using online resources – including the parks and recreation website and the city website. Analog sources, such as the city's newsletter, were uncommon.

Of the remaining respondents, roughly a quarter (25.9%) find it difficult to find programming and event information, while the rest (19.2%) have not looked for the information.

Only 60.9% of respondents are aware of the benefits of the recreation card and its associated fees. Even with lower levels of awareness 79.8% of respondent believed that the fees were reasonable.

Priorities Facilities

When asked what facilities should be prioritized over the next five years, green natural spaces and walking/biking trails received the greatest number of high priority rankings, 71.7% and 69.5%, respectively. Recreational facilities such as fitness centers, playgrounds, splash parks and swimming pools were also ranked as higher priority, though at lower levels than green spaces and biking trails. The percentage of respondents classifying them as high priority hovering around 40-55%

Sports facilities are important to some but not all. Basketball courts had the highest percentage (16.7%) of residents considering them a high priority. The only exception was pickleball where responses were more split – 29.6% of responses classified them as not a priority, 37.2% as low priority and 33.2% as high priority.

Other facilities that received split support included dog parks and multi-purpose fields.

Programming

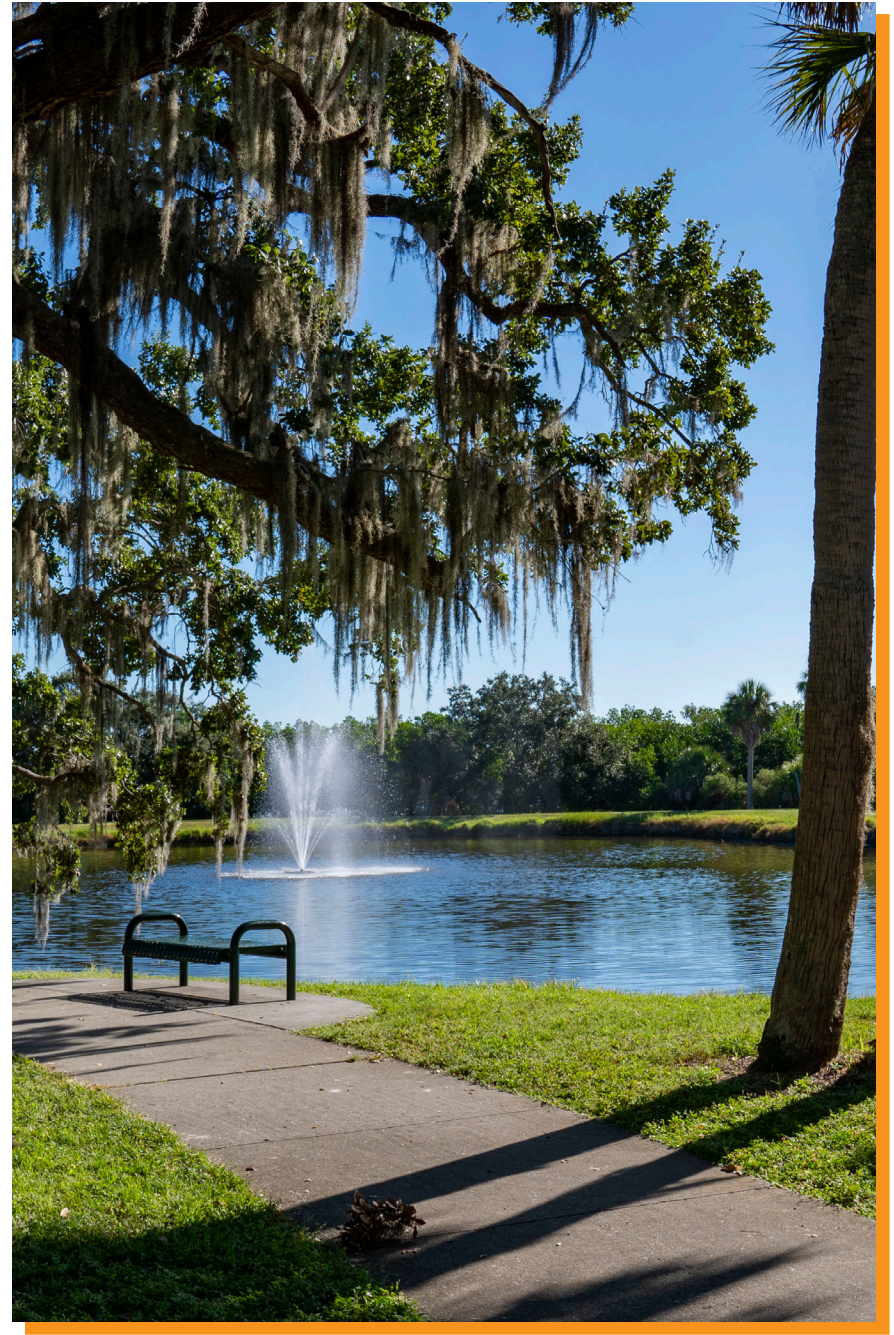
Respondents were then asked to select what five programming categories, out of a selection of 10 and including a write-in option, the city should prioritize. Participants were asked to rank their top five by order of importance.

The five most ranked programs included adult activities, which was often ranked first, art and culture programs, older adult/aging well programs, youth and teen activities and fitness activities. Afterschool programs was not ranked as a top five priority as often, coming in sixth overall in number of ranking votes, however when it was ranked it tended to be ranked as the highest priority.

Community

In addition to facility and programming priorities, respondents were also asked to rank their top three community priorities. Having parks and recreation facilities and their associated increase in quality of life received the highest number of rankings, and was often ranked as highest priority. This was followed by access to restrooms/water fountains and lots of programs and events offered. User fees ranked fourth overall in number of rankings received but most of its rankings placed it as the highest priority rank.

When asked what facilities should be prioritized over the next five years, **green natural spaces** and **walking/biking trails** received the greatest number of high priority rankings, 71.7% and 69.5%, respectively.



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CHAPTER 7

Recommendations

Recommendations were developed based on community engagement responses and evaluation results of the City of Clearwater’s existing parks and recreation facilities and programs. These recommendations were categorized into three focus areas: **Operations**, **Parks and Comfort**, and **Programs and Culture**. Focus Areas are further categorized based on responsible agencies, funding sources, and partnerships or cosponsors.

Operations

Pertains to city administration, staffing, maintenance, and the daily tasks that it takes for the Parks & Recreation Department to operate.



Phillip Jones Park

Access to Sports Courts and Fields

Timeframe: 0 – 5 Years

Description: Provide the public with access to baseball, soccer, tennis, and open fields.

Rationale: Community Support: Survey respondents, community meeting attendants, and stakeholder interview participants all expressed a need for more fields, particularly baseball fields, to be open to the public for un-reserved free play.

Approach: Allocate dedicated days and hours per day for un-reserved free use of facilities of each type. Ensure one facility of each type is available per quadrant of the city.

Park Attendants

Timeframe: 0 – 5 Years

Description: Increase number of park attendants to better monitor and provide access to fields, facilities, and park restrooms.

Rationale: Community Support: There is a strong community desire for increased public access to a variety of fields, facilities and restrooms. Unattended locations, however, raise safety and vandalism concerns. Increasing the number of park attendants will allow for better monitoring and an increased frequency of maintenance, aiding in the deterrence of vandalism and providing more hours of access.

Approach: Focus on providing attendant services at parks and fields with special amenities like restrooms, fountains, or community buildings that must be locked or monitored, and begin with parks that have the highest attendance. Develop a daily or weekly park attendant schedule for identified locations that is adaptable to seasonal activity peaks.

Landscaping and Beautification

Timeframe: 5 – 10 Years

Description: Improve the consistency of landscaping and beautification across the city and include native planting, rewilding and xeriscaping strategies.

Rationale: Stakeholders expressed a desire for more consistent attention to landscaping and beautification across the city. The utilization of xeriscapes, which aim to reduce or eliminate the need for irrigation, rewilding, the process of transitioning managed landscape areas to natural uncultivated states that support the local ecosystem (e.g wildflower medians), and native plantings aid in water conservation, reduce maintenance needs and have numerous cost benefits. This recommendation is in alignment with goals and objectives outlined in the Comprehensive Plan and the Greenprint 2.0.

Approach: Work with a landscape architect to develop an efficient irrigation design plan and to create a succession plan documenting native plantings to be used throughout the city. Continue to install a maintainable and replicable style of plantings that can be seen in landscapes from the beach to the mainland and throughout the city.

Electrification of Parks & Recreation

Timeframe: 10 – 15 Years

Description: Develop and implement a strategic plan to support Greenprint 2.0

Rationale: The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) reports electrification as one of the trends with the most significant impacts to parks and recreation planning. Electrification includes the changeover from fossil-fueled power to electric power in buildings, fleet vehicles, power equipment, mowers, and landscape equipment—all of which have varying degrees and availability of technology. This is a far-reaching trend that would be in alignment with the objectives of the Greenprint 2.0 and the city’s sustainability initiatives.

Approach: The immediate focus is continued coordination in support of the Greenprint 2.0 plan. Currently only a few park systems across the country have begun the process of electrification. This is a process that will take time to implement and can begin in small stages. Initial steps can include progressively replacing gas-powered fleet vehicles with electric vehicles as the availability of charging stations increases throughout the city and the life cycle of electric vehicles improve; implementing electric powered mowers and landscaping equipment as efficiency in power and battery-life increases; upgrading building and facility equipment and mechanical systems to increase energy efficiencies and integrate solar power.

Beach Maintenance

Timeframe: Ongoing

Description: Increase beach maintenance during holidays and major events.

Rationale: Community Support: Community and stakeholder responses identify beach cleanliness as a priority. During holidays and special events there is a need for more frequent cleanup and trash pickup.

Approach: Continue to coordinate with other city departments on a schedule for increased preparation and cleanup during peak season and major events.



Ross Norton Recreation & Aquatic Complex

Parks and Comfort

- Pertains to capital assets including buildings, structures, land and property acquisition, fields, trails, and amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, restrooms, shade structures, and water fountains.

Increase Comfort Amenities

Timeframe: 0 – 5 Years

Description: Utilize an inventory database to increase drinking fountains, trash receptacles, benches, and shade structures.

Rationale: Strong community support: A large number of comment cards received expressed a desire for more comfort amenities like water fountains and shade. Furthermore, establishing a plan to install drinking fountains, trash receptacles, benches, and shade structures where needed based on prioritized criteria will also aid in park level of service.

Approach: Prioritize high use parks within each city quadrant with playgrounds, outdoor courts, and athletic activities. Comfort amenity prioritization should be as follows: shade structures, seating, water fountains, and trash receptacles.

Basketball Court Access

Timeframe: 0 – 5 Years

Description: Increase basketball court access.

Rationale: Community Support: A large percentage of survey respondents expressed a lack of availability and of access to indoor basketball courts. Paired with the difficulty of practicing at outdoor basketball courts due to variable, and often extreme weather, and lack of public restrooms and water fountains, the respondents requested additional access to indoor basketball facilities. Most of these comments were received from parents and members of a Hispanic/Latine youth basketball team.

Approach: The city has 22 basketball courts, exceeding the recommendation of 16 courts based on the NRPA guideline of 1 court per 7,340 persons. Of the 22 courts, 12 are outdoor courts. A primary approach to address concerns raised by survey participants is to prioritize the availability of comfort amenities (shade structures, seating, water fountains, and restrooms) at the outdoor basketball court locations most utilized by this interest group. A secondary approach is to coordinate with club sponsors to facilitate day of the week and time of day access to existing indoor basketball court facilities located near to these athletic groups.

Beach Accessibility

Timeframe: 0-5 Years

Description: Increase beach accessibility.

Rationale: Community Support: Stakeholders expressed a need for improved beach access for visitors who require the use of custom wheelchairs. The city currently offers electric wheelchairs with oversized tires (two all-terrain motorized scooters and two manual beach wheelchairs) for guests to easily move around on the sand. Currently, mats are installed at three locations outside of the turtle nesting season and, due to environmental regulations, end 175 feet before the wet sand begins.

Approach: Permitting is required by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and Florida Fish and Wildlife and should be scheduled to protect sea turtles during their nesting season from May 1st to October 31st.

Restrooms

Timeframe: 0 – 10 Years

Description: Increase the number of restrooms at parks and improve access to existing public restrooms.

Rationale: Community Support: Stakeholders and public meeting attendees described a need for increased and consistent access to restrooms. Access to existing public restrooms is currently inconsistent due to the use of a limited number of key fobs, instead of pin pads, to unlock public restrooms during events. Limited access to clean, accessible restroom facilities reduces access to outdoor recreational spaces and excluding vulnerable populations like young children, older visitors, and people with disabilities.

Approach: Prioritize high use parks, located within each city quadrant, with playgrounds, outdoor courts, and athletic fields. Increasing park attendant staff to allow for improved restrooms access and maintenance during park hours is recommended. A secondary, though less effective, option is to implement Smart technology. Smart technology (virtual room attendants that help prevent loitering; vandal/graffiti-proof materials, touch-free sensory dispenser) can be used to address safety, access, and sanitary concerns. The higher installation price tags are partially offset by long-term energy, reduced waste, and potential reduced vandalism costs savings.

Kayak Launches

Timeframe: 0 – 10 Years

Description: Add new kayak launches.

Rationale: Community Support: Stakeholders and staff expressed a desire to increase the number and location of kayak launches available throughout the city at key water access areas.

Approach: Focus on areas within northwest, southwest, and eastern Clearwater. Consider a location at Bay Park on Sand Key, on Stevenson Creek and at the Barrier Island

Tree Canopy

Timeframe: 0 – 15 Years

Description: Coordinate with the Urban Tree Program to establish a plan to increase tree canopy and maintenance within park areas.

Rationale: The staff and community expressed support for increasing the number of shade trees within parks and along greenways and trails. This is in alignment with an objective of the Greenprint 2.0. (to help with off-set where not replaceable in the ROW).

Approach: Focus on increasing tree plantings inside park areas, especially along trails and sidewalk connections. Encourage co-location of comfort amenities (benches, fitness and play equipment) with trees to provide shade. Coordinate with the Urban Forest Master Plan and Public Works to meet city sustainability goals.



Clearwater Horseshoe Club

Programs and Culture:

Consists of athletic clubs and classes, afterschool and seasonal programs, and arts and entertainment activities.

Intergenerational Programming

Timeframe: 0 – 5 Years

Description: Promote intergenerational programming.

Rationale: Community Support: Stakeholders and staff expressed the desire to promote intergenerational collaboration and engagement during athletic and cultural activities currently recognized as older adult activities.

Approach: Coordinate with club sponsors who have expressed a desire to reduce stereotype of shuffleboards, horseshoe, and lawn bowling as ‘senior activities’ and advertise and promote activities at locations such as the Shuffleboard & Lawn Bowling Complex. To promote these activities across all age groups, support partnerships between afterschool and season youth programs at recreation centers and the shuffleboards, horseshoe, and lawn bowling clubs.

Beach Event Programming

Timeframe: Ongoing

Description: Increase beach event programming.

Rationale: Community Support: Survey respondents, community meeting attendants, and stakeholder meeting participants responded that they would like to experience more beach programming.

Approach: Continue to develop partnerships when programming special events. Consider opportunities to pair events between the beach and downtown such as a Pier-to-Pier Walk-Run (Pier 60 to Coachman Park Pier) or a simultaneous concert and art festival.

CHAPTER 8

Action Plan

Action Plan Matrix

The 2023 Clearwater Parks & Recreation Master Plan contains a list of Capital Improvement Projects and Program Priorities, some of which were carried over from the 2013 Master Plan. Both lists were reviewed to identify what projects and programs have been completed; which ones have not been completed and should remain on the list; and which ones should be removed from the list.

Possible funding for the Capital Improvement Projects and Program priorities include General, Operating and Local funds; Penny for Pinellas IV funding; future Penny for Pinellas funding; impact fees; grant funds; and user fees. All of these fees have been used for many years to support Parks & Recreation capital investments and programming and it is expected that this should continue into the future.

Capital Improvement Action Plan Project Priorities

The Capital Improvement Action Plan includes a series of projects and actions, some of which are derived directly from the Recommendations listed in the previous chapter, while others are ongoing and have been identified in previous plans. Some actions are never “complete.” For example, establishing and maintaining partnerships, and participating in regional planning efforts, among others, are considered best practices.

All of the listed Capital Improvement Projects support the needs expressed by the participants in the community engagement process and align with Chapter 8 Recommendations. All Capital Improvement projects should be included in the city’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Capital Improvement Projects

#	Proposed Projects	Rationale	2013 Estimated Initial Cost	2023 Estimate	Add'l Staff Needed	Possible Funding	Time Frame
1	Resurface Ream Wilson Trail	Identified Maintenance Need. Community Support: A strong majority of survey respondents indicate that providing trails is an essential or very important purpose of the Parks & Recreation Department.	\$250,000	\$353,000	NA	Penny for Pinellas IV	1 - 5 Years
2	Perform major renovation of the community parks including Clearwater Beach Recreation Center, Long Center, Ross Norton Recreation Complex, Countryside Community Park and North Greenwood Recreation Center and Aquatic Complex (NGRAC)	Staff identified facilities based on current capacity levels. Community Support: There was strong support for the improvement of facilities and activities specific to community parks such as additional access to swimming pools & basketball courts. In addition, there were requests for sport-related lessons. These recreation facilities receive high use volumes and will need major renovation in the next 10 years.	\$8,000,000	\$11,285,000	NA	Penny for Pinellas IV	10 - 15 Years

#	Proposed Projects	Rationale	2013 Estimated Initial Cost	2023 Estimate	Add'l Staff Needed	Possible Funding	Time Frame
3	Aquatic facility renovations and replacement at the 5 aquatic facilities	Normal routine maintenance items such as pumps and machinery have been completed through the current CIP program. However, there is an additional need to renovate all pools and amenities, particularly at the Long Center, Ross Norton, & NGRAC. Community Support: There is strong support for increasing access to aquatic facilities, especially at the Morningside and the Long Centers.	\$750,000	\$1,058,000	NA	Penny for Pinellas IV	Ongoing
4	Complete Trail Projects (all projects complete except trail head at FDOT building)	LOS Gap - According to guidelines, the City of Clearwater has a 40-mile trail deficiency. Community Support: A strong majority of survey respondents indicated that providing trails is an essential or very important purpose of the Parks & Recreation Department, with >80% supporting bike trails and >70% supporting nature trails.	\$3,000,000	\$4,232,000	1 Full Time Equivalent	In the CIP: Penny for Pinellas - \$750,000 annually for four years for a total of \$3,000,000	1 - 5 Years
5	Renovate and expand Henry L. McMullen Tennis Complex to include 4 additional clay courts, 8 to 12 new pickleball courts, a new club house, improved parking, and a championship court	Staff identified based on current capacity levels at the complex. Community Support: Workshop participants identified support for the construction of pickle ball courts. 65% of survey respondents identified offering tennis courts and complexes as very important. Identified in CIP budget.	\$1,600,000	\$2,257,000	1.5 Full Time Equivalent	\$200,000 from Grant; \$200,000 from CIP; remaining Penny for Pinellas IV	5 - 10 Years
6	Replace basketball, tennis and racquetball courts due to deterioration, cracks and aging at various community and neighborhood parks when normal resurfacing will no longer suffice	Ongoing maintenance has extended the useful life of these facilities for some; however, total replacement is soon needed. Community Support: 70% of respondents indicate it is important to provide amenities for sports courts like basketball.	\$500,000	\$706,000	NA	Penny for Pinellas IV	Ongoing

#	Proposed Projects	Rationale	2013 Estimated Initial Cost	2023 Estimate	Add'l Staff Needed	Possible Funding	Time Frame
7	Complete items identified in Moccasin Lake Nature Park Master Plan including the interpretive center, Environmental Explorer's Cove and interpretive trail, lake improvements, trail addition	Ongoing - There was strong community support during the development of the Master Plan in 2013. Identified as a Penny III Project. Lake and trail improvements remain to be completed.	\$400,000	\$565,000	1 Full Time Equivalent	Local Funding	1 - 5 Years
8	Renovate Cooper's Bayou Park. Expand parking and expand access to Cooper's Point through the construction of a boardwalk system and look-out tower	Community Support: There was support for improving parks' facilities such as providing picnic tables, restrooms and installing a kayak rack. In addition, trails were identified as one of the main purposes of parks and recreation by a majority of survey respondents.	\$5,000,000	\$7,053,000	NA	Penny for Pinellas IV	5 - 10 Years
9	Expand Enterprise Road Dog Park	Due to overwhelming support from the public and the popularity of the existing dog park, a second phase enlarging the park and adding areas for smaller dogs is needed.	\$400,000	\$565,000	NA	Penny for Pinellas IV	1 - 5 Years
10	Open pools longer	Community workshop participants expressed a strong support for extending the open season and the hours of operation at pools at the Morningside and the Long Centers. Partially complete.	\$0	\$0	1.2 Full Time Equivalent	Operating funds	Ongoing
11	Beach Walk Rehabilitation	Identified maintenance need. Beach Walk is well used and opened in 2008. Community Support: A majority of survey respondents and community workshop participants consider it very important to offer beach facilities, and they strongly oppose reducing beach maintenance, indicating the importance of maintaining the beach, as well as the Beach Walk, as an attractive destination. Ongoing project.	\$3,000,000	\$4,232,000	NA	Penny for Pinellas IV	5 - 10 Years

#	Proposed Projects	Rationale	2013 Estimated Initial Cost	2023 Estimate	Add'l Staff Needed	Possible Funding	Time Frame
12	Improved parking at NE Coachman Park	This park has one of two disc-golf courses in the city and there is a need for improved parking facilities. Patrons are currently parking in a dirt parking lot.	\$250,000	\$353,000	NA	Penny for Pinellas IV	1 - 5 Years
13	Redevelop Lake Chautauqua Park	Community Support: A majority of survey respondents indicate providing trails as one of the main purposes of parks and recreation.	\$500,000	\$706,000	NA	Penny for Pinellas IV	1 - 5 Years
14	Increase funding for the various maintenance CIP budget including, fitness equipment, swimming pools, parking lot/ bike trails, boardwalk & docks, sidewalks, park amenities, tennis courts, playgrounds and fencing annually by 10%	Over the years, the city has attempted to address the repair and replacement needs of various park components by establishing annual maintenance CIPs. Prior to the 2013 Plan update, these CIP budgets had not been increased for over 10 years and the regular maintenance requirements of the park system were falling behind. In 2013, the budget received a 25% increase. To maintain the park system, an annual 10% increase has been established to keep pace with facility additions and inflation.	\$205,000	\$290,000	NA	General Fund	Ongoing
15	Renovation of BayCare Ballpark	Identified maintenance need. The stadium is well used and opened in 2005. Community Support: Over 50% of survey respondents indicated having attended an event at the stadium within the past year, and over 70% of respondents indicated it is important for the city to offer this facility. Identified in current CIP.	\$12,000,000	\$16,928,000	1 Full Time Equivalent	Penny for Pinellas IV, grants, assistance from county and state	10 - 15 Years

#	Proposed Projects	Rationale	2013 Estimated Initial Cost	2023 Estimate	Add'l Staff Needed	Possible Funding	Time Frame
16	Renovate Woodgate Park to include parking, two new basketball courts, two multipurpose turf fields and six to eight pickleball courts	Staff identified based on the current capacity levels at the complex. Community Support for improvements specific to this park demonstrated through the Community Workshops. Overall, Woodgate Park was ranked among the top five of all the neighborhood parks. This project is identified in current CIP.	\$800,000	\$1,129,000	1 Full Time Equivalent	Local funding and Penny for Pinellas IV	1 - 5 Years
17	Acquire land for additional parking at Crest Lake Park	Community support for improvements at this park was very strong.	\$500,000	\$706,000	NA	Impact fees	1 - 5 Years
18	Renovate Frank Tack Park and add new parking, restrooms, and storage facility	Community Support 2013 survey: 69% of survey respondents indicated the importance of providing and maintaining fields for sports like baseball and softball. Staff identified based on the current capacity and usage levels. Identified in current CIP.	\$400,000	\$565,000	NA	Local funding	1 - 5 Years
19	Renovate Ed Wright Park	This park is one of the oldest parks in the city and needs renovation to accommodate increased neighborhood use and horseshoe club members. Renovations will include removing outdated facilities and constructing more user-friendly amenities.	\$500,000	\$706,000	NA	Penny for Pinellas IV	5 - 10 Years
20	Renovate Eddie C. Moore to include a new concession building and press box, improvements to dugouts and fields	Identified as a Penny III project. Community support: the 2013 survey indicates that over 60% of survey respondents find it important to provide fields for sports like baseball and softball, which are the kind of amenities available at this park. The 2023 survey rates investing in baseball and softball fields as a low priority for the next 5 years.	\$300,000	\$424,000	NA	Local funding	5 - 10 Years

#	Proposed Projects	Rationale	2013 Estimated Initial Cost	2023 Estimate	Add'l Staff Needed	Possible Funding	Time Frame
21	Provide pickleball courts throughout the city	Staff identified based on the current capacity levels at the complex. Continued support and a surge in interest in this sport among residents, especially older adults. To date, there are five existing courts and six additional courts to be dedicated to pickleball to be installed in the fall of 2024.	\$60,000	\$85,000	NA	Existing funds in tennis court maintenance CIP	1 - 5 Years
22	Increase comfort amenities	Recommendation - to increase drinking fountains, trash receptacles, benches, and shade structures.	NA	\$500,000-\$2,000,000	NA	Future Penny for Pinellas	0-5 Years
23	Beach accessibility	Recommendation to provide additional accessible mats for beach access	NA	\$100,000-\$200,000	0.5 Full Time Equivalent	Future Penny for Pinellas	0-5 Years
24	Increase restrooms	Recommendation to increase number of restrooms at parks and to improve access to existing restrooms.	NA	\$50,000-\$350,000	1.5 Full Time Equivalent	Future Penny for Pinellas	0-10 Years
25	Kayak Launches	Recommendation to add new kayak launches in areas within northwest, southwest, and eastern areas of the city. Consider new locations such as Bay Park on Sand Key and the Barrier Islands.	NA	\$50,000-\$200,000	NA	Future Penny for Pinellas	5-10 Years
26	Inventory existing bicycle parking and install where needed	Community Support: Many survey respondents indicated that providing trails is a high priority. With the recommendation for the increase in trail amenities, it is encouraged to increase the availability of bicycle parking at parks and recreation facilities, prioritizing parks and facilities that are located within neighborhoods and closest to existing and planned trails, schools, and transit stops.	NA	\$150,000-\$200,000	NA	Future Penny for Pinellas	1 - 5 Years

Program Priorities

The Program Priorities enhance the Recommendations and Capital Improvement Project Priorities and are aligned with the primary themes and responses received during the community engagement process.

Program Priorities

Priority	Focus Area	Item	Rationale
1	Programming and Culture	Continue to establish partnerships with schools and community organizations	Best Practice - Community Workshops: During open question sessions, participants indicated interest in community and MPO involvement with the city.
2	Programming and Culture	Expand partnerships with the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, and other similar social/recreation-orientated agencies	Ongoing - Community Support: Survey respondents demonstrated support for additional recreation activities for both children and adults, which are the kind of activities these partnerships can sponsor.
3	Operations	Continue to aggressively participate in regional planning through the County/Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)	Best Practice
4	Programming and Culture	Continue to partner with the Ruth Eckerd Hall, Inc. to expand cultural/performing arts opportunities	Ongoing - Community Support: A majority (54%) of respondents indicated having attended an event at Ruth Eckerd Hall during the past year. The high degree of participation by the community makes the partnership a worthy endeavor.
5	Programming and Culture	Continue to partner with healthcare providers	Ongoing - Community Support: Over 90% of survey respondents indicate that one of the most important roles of parks and recreation is to provide opportunities for residents to maintain or improve physical health.
6	Operations	Continue to conduct an annual fee/market study of user fees and charges	Best Practice
7	Programming and Culture	Aggressively promote parks and recreation opportunities	Best Practice - Community Support: Some participants of the community workshops indicated during an open-question session that they would like to see more information on the kind of recreation activities available to the public. Greater awareness is needed.

Priority	Focus Area	Item	Rationale
8	Operations	Utilize new technologies in the delivery methods of the parks and programs; recommend on full time employee (FTE)	Ongoing
9	Parks and Comfort	Develop a citywide signage program to tie parks facilities into neighborhoods	Project started 2022
10	Operations	Pursue the continuation of the Pennies for Pinellas program	Ongoing
11	Operations	Continue/Expand use of business partnerships and corporate sponsorships	Ongoing - Community Survey indicated majority (>86%)support for supplementing the operating costs of parks via different revenue sources including sponsorships and donations.
12	Operations	Continue pursuit of grant dollars	Ongoing - Community Survey indicated majority (>86%)support for supplementing the operating costs of Parks via different revenue sources including grants.
13	Operations	Adopt the Parks & Recreation System Master Plan Update; include projects in CIP	Best Practice
14	Operations	Create a Blueways Plan	Carryover from 2013 Master Plan - Staff identified: Request at Community Workshop for additional kayak ramps.
15	Operations	Provide the public with access to baseball, soccer, tennis, and open fields	Recommendation - based on community feedback to allocate days and hours for un-reserved free use of facilities of each type. Establishing a schedule for un-reserved free use, in addition to increasing the number of park attendants to monitor, will help to maintain the quality of these facilities.
16	Operations	Increase number of park attendants to better monitor and provide access to fields, facilities, and park restrooms	Recommendation - There is strong community support for an increase in access to fields and restrooms. Having more park attendants will help to monitor the facilities and will provide for opportunities to make the facilities more accessible.
17	Operations	Improve consistency of landscaping and beautification across the city and include native planting, rewilding and xeriscaping strategies	Recommendation - Community feedback supports having uniform landscaping throughout the city, from the coastal beach areas to the inland areas. The use of native planting is consistent with existing plans and supports city initiatives. The implementation of xeriscaping strategies is also consistent with other city plans and is cost effective.

Priority	Focus Area	Item	Rationale
18	Operations	Electrification of parks and recreation	Recommendation to develop and implement a strategic plan to support Greenprint 2.0. This is consistent with existing plans and supports city initiatives.
19	Operations	Increase beach maintenance during holidays and major events	Recommendation - Based on community feedback and stakeholder responses beach cleanliness was identified as a priority. During holidays and special events there is a need for more frequent cleanup and trash pickup.
20	Operations	Increase the number of restrooms at parks and improve access to existing public restrooms	Recommendation - Stakeholders and public meeting attendees described a need for increased and consistent access to restrooms. Access to existing public restroom is currently inconsistent due to the use of a limited number of key fobs, instead of pin pads, to unlock public restroom during events. Limited access to clean, accessible restroom facilities reduces access to outdoor recreational spaces and excludes vulnerable populations like young children, older visitors, and people with disabilities.
21	Operations	Develop plan to increase tree canopy and maintenance	Recommendation - to coordinate with the Urban Tree Program to establish a plan to increase tree canopy and maintenance within park areas. A focus would be to increase the number of shade trees inside park areas and along greenways and trails.
22	Programming and Culture	Promote intergenerational programming	Recommendation - based on community feedback and support to promote intergenerational collaboration and engagement during athletic and cultural activities currently recognized as senior activities.
23	Programming and Culture	Increase beach event programming and/or promote events that link Downtown Clearwater and the beach	Recommendation - Community feedback is in support of increasing beach event programming. Survey respondents, community meeting attendants, and stakeholder meeting participants responded that they would like to experience more beach programming. One recommendation is to coordinate the and promote events that link Downtown Clearwater and the beach.

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CLEARWATER
PARKS & RECREATION

