City of Venice Parks System Master Plan

July 2016

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Toole Design Group

in association with

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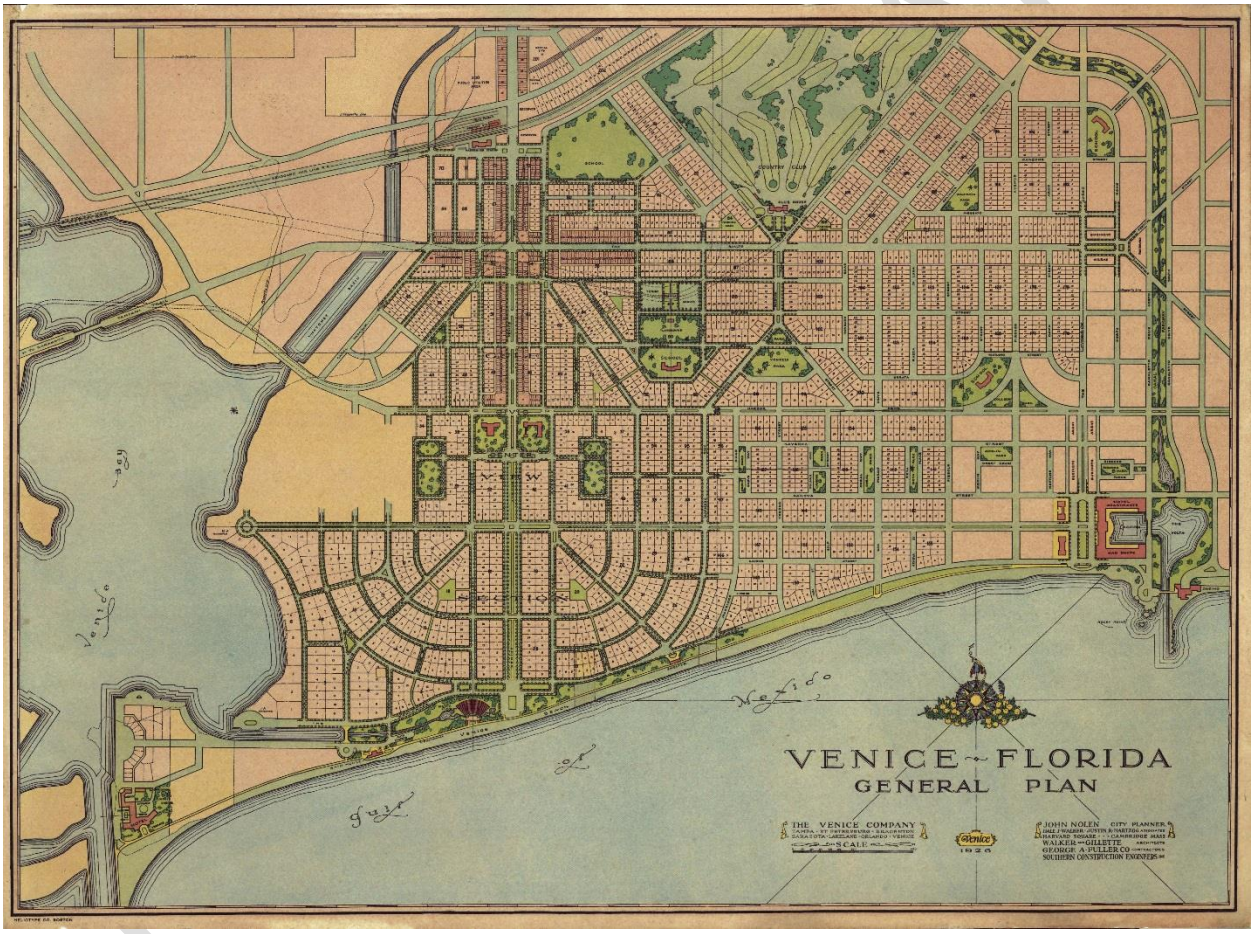
INTRODUCTION

Parks, recreation, and natural areas have always been integral to the City of Venice's image and appeal. Designed by John Nolan in the early 1920's, the plan for the City of Venice sought to find a balance between two primary ideals - "the promotion of civic virtue through the harmonizing effect of urban planning, and the humanizing influence of the beauty of nature."

This balance was made possible in part by allowing nature and beauty to infiltrate into the City from surrounding natural areas through an interconnected park system comprised of streets, linear parks, greenways, parks, and open spaces designed to meet the every-day social and recreational needs of residents.

1926 John Nolan Plan for the City of Venice



Additionally, the presence of the Barnum and Bailey Circus and the Venice Army Air Field had an influence on the City's culture and growth. From 1960 to 1990, the circus was the major tourist attraction for the city. Thousands of City residents and visitors greeted "The Greatest Show on Earth" as it would arrive at the Seaboard Air Line Railroad Station (now the Venice Train Depot), and watch and cheer as the animals would disembark from the train and walk towards the circus headquarters on the airport property. In 1968 the Clown College in Venice, renowned as one of the most prestigious training schools in the world for professional clowns,

was founded. Circus employees made the Venice area their permanent home and contributed to the City's circus reputation.[1]

Elephants disembarking from the Ringling Brothers Train

Source: City of Venice

In 1942, the United States. government began construction of the Venice Army Air Base on property south of the city. The base trained fighter pilots throughout World War II and was a major influence on the development of the city.[2]

The City of Venice Parks System Master Plan strives to maintain the City's balance of culture and nature, ensuring that the parks system continues to provide for both the recreational and social needs and desires of City residents.

To achieve this, the City of Venice Parks System Master Plan is organized into four chapters:

1.0 Evaluation of Existing Conditions - This chapter provides an overview of the City's park system by reviewing the existing and planned conditions of the City, its

[1] Sarasota County Historical Commission. "Circus in Venice". Sarasota County – Historical Resources. Accessed on June 22, 2016. https://www.scgov.net/History/Pages/CircusinVenice.aspx

[2] Venice Florida! Dot com. "Venice Florida History". Accessed on June 22, 2016. http://www.veniceflorida.com/history.htm

population, and its parks and recreation facilities. It includes an analysis of relevant plans and studies, demographics analysis, and overview and inventory of the City's parks system.

2.0 Park System Analysis - This chapter includes an evaluation of the City's park system based on the assessment of a spectrum of park sites and various Level of Service (LOS) Analysis. Findings from this chapter form the anecdotal and portions of the quantitative analysis methods typically used for parks and recreation needs assessments.

3.0 Outreach and Needs Assessment - This chapter is informed by a community driven needs assessment process that uses qualitative and quantitative analysis methods to identify the programmatic and park facilities needs and priorities of City residents. Methods used include public workshops, stakeholder interviews, and an on-line survey. Findings specific to the City of Venice area taken from the Sarasota County Parks Preserves, and Recreation Master Plan Statistically Valid Mail-In/Telephone Survey are also included in this assessment.

4.0 Long Range Vision - Based on the findings from the Evaluation of Existing Conditions, Park System Analysis, and Outreach and Needs Assessment, this chapter establishes a vision for the City's parks system that builds on the historic Nolan Plan and is grounded in industry best practices and community input. This section also includes a planning level, estimate of probable costs for land acquisitions, and park/facility development.

5.0 Implementation - Based on the proposed long-range vision, the implementation strategy establishes a phased 5, 10, 15, and 20-year funding and implementation strategy to realize the proposed vision.

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CHAPTER 1: EVALUATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Evaluation of Existing Conditions included a review of existing plans, demographics, parks and recreation facility inventory, and evaluation of parks and recreation facilities.

1.1 Existing Plans and Context Review

The TDG Team reviewed several existing documents to understand the context for the City of Venice Parks Master Plan. Plans reviewed included:

- 1926 Nolan Plan
- City Adopted Comprehensive Plan
- 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update Process

John Nolan General Plan for the City of Venice

Completed in 1926 for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE), the General Plan for the City of Venice was comprehensive in scope. It was based on the idea of providing for 1920's modern, everyday life conveniences integrated with City Garden Era idealistic design principles. A student of the City Beautiful Movement of the early 1900's, Jon Nolan believed that creating a beautiful, well design public realm was integral to creating a high quality of life and higher level of civilization. Nolan wrote:

> "Venice is the first city built to demonstrate what Florida can do to produce a community that is at once a fine resort of great charm and refreshment and a city serving all the every-day needs of a well –conceived, well-designed a soundly construction municipality. The result is an inspiration to those who would make this a word a better place to live in."

The General Plan was designed for gradual implementation. It included a strong street and urban design framework, public facilities, commercial uses, industrial uses, open spaces and parks, and a variety of opportunities for housing. Architecture was intended to be designed in the "Northern Italian" or "Mediterranean Revival" architectural style.

The streets, open spaces, and parks proposed by Nolan were an integral and defining element of the General Plan. Streets were conceived as linear parks with planted medians fronting homes and extending "nature" into the center of the City. Homes were designed to be no more than a block or two from a large park that provided common green space and playgrounds. Certain parks were planned to provide field type activities, specifically Venezia and John Nolen Park, while other parks protected and provided communal access to natural features. Integrated into this web of greenspaces were public facilities. These included a bathing casino and an amphitheater along the beach. Public parking was also designed into many of these facilities which was unique for the 1920's.

The City of Venice remains one of the most fully realized John Nolan Plans. It also remains one of the most complete examples in the United States of a City Garden Era city plan.

City Adopted Comprehensive Plan

Adopted in 2010, the City's Comprehensive Plan contains elements that guide the management of growth and the quality of life in the City of Venice. It is comprised of six chapters, each with various Elements. Chapter 2 – Transportation and Community Connectivity, Chapter 4 –

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Environment, and Chapter 6 – School Concurrency and Facilities have direct bearings on the Parks Master Plan. Following is an overview of each of these chapters and their respective elements.

Chapter 2 – Transportation and Community Connectivity

This chapter is comprised of two Elements, Element - 1 Transportation Infrastructure and Services Standards and Element 2 – Community Linkages and Design. The primary goal of Element 1 is to provide for a safe, convenient, efficient and environmentally sensitive intermodal transportation system which meets the needs of current and future generations. An important objective is to coordinate transportation facility and infrastructure needs with development demands to minimize the negative impacts from existing or proposed roadways within existing neighborhoods and natural environment. It also requires the City to develop a comprehensive transportation plan that addresses a variety of multi-modal alternatives including sidewalks, bike lanes, and urban trails that connect to the Sarasota Regional Trail System. It also identifies the City's existing and potential sidewalks, bicycle lanes, and trails.

The primary goal of Element 2 is to provide a multi-modal transportation system that links activity centers and neighborhoods and improves the City's quality of life. It directly references the Parks and Public Space Element and encourages the establishment of a comprehensive connectivity system that provides for the needs of pedestrian, bikers, transit rider, and motorist. It also encourages the City to strive to be recognized as a Bicycle Friendly Community that supports a continuous seamless urban trail system and enhances the pedestrian and biking environment.

Chapter 4 – Environment

This chapter contains three Elements – Element 1 – Parks and Public Spaces, Element 2 – Conservation and Open Space, and Element 3 – Coastal and Waterfront Management. The primary goal of Element 1 is to ensure that the City's public spaces, parks, and recreational resources enhance the City's neighborhoods, sense of place, and livability, while preserving and protecting environmental integrity and sensitive habits. It encourages the development of a Parks Master Plan that addresses active and passive parks and park facilities, open and Florida friendly green spaces, unique habitat protection and conservation, and trails.

It also establishes a recreational level of services. It states that the City should maintain at least a minimum level of service of 7 acres of parks and public green spaces for each 1,000 functional residents. It also states that Neighborhood Parks should be located within ¼ of mile of the neighborhoods so residents can walk or bike to the parks. It requires that developers meet this level of service with their new development.

The primary goal of Element 2 is to protect, maintain, and conserve open space and natural resources for the sustainability of the community. It achieves this by requiring sustainable environmental practices, establishing open space corridors to provide urban green areas and key environmental features, establishing preservation strategies, and encouraging regional coordination.

The primary goal of Element 3 is to preserve Venice's water-based lifestyle and community character by protecting and improving the City's Coastal areas, waterways, and lands adjacent to them. It achieves this by encouraging the protection and preservation of coastal waterway

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priorities such as marine/beach access, water-based facilities, and natural resources; encouraging the improvement of Venice's coastal and water front areas by establishing standards that improve access and character; and encouraging the preservation, restoration, and protection of marine resources. Marin resources include the Gulf of Mexico, Roberts and Dona Bays, Intracoastal Waterway, Myakka River, Curry and Hatchett Creeks, and their associated tributaries.

Chapter 6 – Public School Facilities Element

The primary goal of this element is to encourage collaboration and coordination with the school board of Sarasota County to provide and maintain a high quality education system. This includes utilizing intergovernmental partnerships to provide the Venice community with high quality of life and adequate level of public services. It achieves this by, amongst other things, encouraging the co-location of schools with parks, ball fields and other community facilities to take advantage of shared-use opportunities.

2016 Comprehensive Plan Update Process

The City is currently in the process of updating the comprehensive plan. The update includes gathering information from residents and other interested parties. The Planning Commission and City Council will then review all elements and approve a final document to be submitted to the state.

Implications for the Parks Master Plan

These plans provide a foundation for the parks master plan. A key finding from this review is the realization of the compelling public realm legacy that the City of Venice inherited from the John Nolan Plan. Through the Comprehensive Plan, the City has established goals, objectives, and policies that have effectively preserved the framework of the Nolan legacy through the continued growth of the City. The role of the Parks System Master Plan is to ensure and, where necessary, enhance this continued stewardship while addressing and providing for the current and future recreation needs of city residents.

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1.2 Demographic Analysis

The most effective parks and recreation systems are those that are tailored to the needs of their residents, both present and future. The following section analyzes demographic data for the City of Venice and discusses how the findings may impact the City's parks and recreation planning process. City of Venice data is compared to data from the City of North Port, Sarasota County and the State of Florida. Key demographics examined include:

- Population Density + Percent Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures
- Population + Population Growth
- Ethnicity + Race
- Age Distribution
- Household Types
- Household Income
- Housing Characteristics

In each category, U.S. Census data was used for the benchmark years of 2000 and 2010 unless otherwise noted. A summary of key findings and implications to the City's parks system are presented first, followed by additional discussion of each of the demographics examined.

Summary of Demographic Analysis

Based on the review of demographic data from 2000 to 2010, it appears that the City of Venice has experienced minor demographic shifts during the last two census periods. These may suggest minor shifts in parks and recreation desires and needs based on the following demographics examined:

Population Density + Percent Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures

- The City of Venice has the highest density and highest percentage of housing units in multi-unit structures of the jurisdictions analyzed. As population and density continue to increase, the City may experience more demand for small close-to-home park spaces that provide typical every day recreational facilities such as playgrounds, communities gardens, multi-purpose open space, and dog runs.

Population + Population Growth

- By the year 2030 the City of Venice is expected to add approximately 5,000 new residents, a +/- 30% population increase from the year 2010. This is slightly higher than Sarasota County's expected +/ 27% increase, and much less than the City of North Port's projected +/ 77% increase. This anticipated population increase suggests that additional park acreage, facilities, and programs may be needed to maintain the quality of life that residents currently enjoy. This may require the City to begin planning for expanding access to park land, facilities, and programs in the coming years. This will be further analyzed in subsequent chapters.

Ethnicity

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- The City of Venice is predominately white and has not experienced notable changes in its ethnic and racial make-up during the last two census periods. Because there have not been significant changes in the racial and ethnic composition of the City, there does not appear to be a need for a new approach to programs or facilities based on changing demographics. Public involvement and needs assessment findings discussed in subsequent chapters will explore these ideas further.

Age Distribution + Household Types

- Age Distribution and Household Type census data both confirmed that the City of Venice's population is dominated by seniors age 65 and over with a growing population of younger seniors ages 55 and 64. This suggest that the City may continue to experience a higher demand for senior-focused recreation programs, activities, and facilities such as tennis, pickle ball, shuffleboard, walking, biking and hiking, versus youth programs, activities, and facilities.

Household Income + Housing Characteristics

- Household income and housing characteristics revealed that the City of Venice has the lowest median income of the jurisdictions analyzed, though there is a small and growing population of higher income households. Additionally, in comparison to the other jurisdictions, the City of Venice has the highest percentage of vacant housing and seasonal, recreational, and occasional use housing. These findings may suggest a need for seasonal affordable recreation programs and activities with the seasonal influx of residents leading to a high demand for parks and recreation services during certain periods of the year and less demand during others. This seasonal influx may suggest a scalable approach to parks operations and maintenance with more attention provided during seasonal peak periods and less provided during off-season periods.

More detail on each of the demographic categories analyzed is presented below.

Population Density + Percent Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures

Population Density and Percent Housing Units in multi-unit structures are important to consider in parks system planning because they impact lifestyles and the manner by which residents enjoy parks and recreation services. For example, cities with high population densities may have more residents living in a smaller area. This may create a larger demand on and for parks, recreation facilities, and programs within a given area. Similarly, residents living in multi-unit structure typically rely more on public parks to provide basic, close-to-home recreational opportunities such as a playground, a lawn to play catch, a community garden, or a play for dogs to run without a leash. These are some of the basic, every-day activities that a family living in a single-family home may conduct in a front or back yard. Figure 1.1 below shows the major difference in Population Density and Percent Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures between the four geographies analyzed. The City of Venice has the highest density and highest percentage of housing units in multi-unit structures of the jurisdictions analyzed.

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Figure 1.1 - Comparison of Population Density + Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures, Percent

	Population Density (Population per Acre)	Percent of Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures*
City of Venice	2.1	42.1%
City of North Port	1.2	7.1%
Sarasota County	1.1	25.0%
State of Florida	0.5	30.1%

*Source: US Census

Population and Population Growth

Population and population growth are two important demographics to consider in parks system planning. The larger the population growth, the more need there may be to expand parks and recreation services in the future. Figure 2 below compares the past, existing, and projected population and population growth of Venice to the City of North Port, Sarasota County, and the State of Florida.

Figure 1.2 - Population + Population Growth

Year	City of Venice	% Change	City of North Port	% Change	Sarasota County	% Change	State of Florida	% Change
2000*	17,764	16.80%	22,797	151.61%	325,961	16.41%	15,982,378	17.64%
2010*	20,748		57,360		379,448		18,801,310	
2015^	22,325	30.22%	-	77.69%	412,900	27.63%	-	25.52%
2020^	23,777		74,635		454,800		21,141,318	
2030^	27,020		101,926		484,300		23,601,075	

*Source: US Census
^Source: City of Venice and University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR)

As represented in Figure 1.2 above, the City of Venice added approximately 3,000 new residents and enjoyed a population growth rate of 16.8 percent between the years 2000 and 2010. This is similar to Sarasota County's growth rate for that same time period, slightly lower than the growth rate of the State, and about ten times less than nearby City of North Port.

By the year 2030, the City of Venice is expected to add about 5,000 new residents. This increase in residents may or may not suggest that more park acreage is needed to maintain the quality of life that residents currently enjoy. This need will be further analyzed in subsequent sections.

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Ethnicity and Race

Ethnicity and race can be an interesting indicator of recreation program and facility needs and desires. Various academic studies have shown that certain races tend to show preferences towards specific park settings, activities, or amenities. For example, one study published in 2002 used surveys to study the preferences of 900 park users in Chicago. The study reported that Asians show a strong preference for scenic beauty, Whites expressed a stronger preference for trees and vegetation, and Blacks expressed a preference for cultural facilities and maintenance.[3] Another study found that Blacks and Hispanics tended to participate more in sports, but less in activities that took place in remote areas or undeveloped facilities then Whites.[4]

Figure 1.3 below demonstrates the ethnic shifts that the City of Venice and comparable jurisdictions have experienced from the year 2000 to 2010. The data reveals that the City maintained its ethnic and racial homogeneity. Sarasota County as a whole showed a similar trend to the City of Venice while the City of North Port experienced a comparatively larger increase in minority populations. This may suggest a continuity of ethnically and racially influenced recreation needs and desires in the City of Venice. Public involvement findings discussed in subsequent chapters will explore this idea further.

Figure 1.3 – Ethnicity and Race

	City of Venice		Change in %	City of North Port		Change in %
Year	**2000**	**2010**		**2000**	**2010**	
White	98.7%	97.2%	-1.5%	92.7 %	87.6 %	-5.1%
Black	0.5%	0.6%	0.1%	4.2%	7.0%	2.8%
American Indian	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.1%
Asian	0.4%	0.7%	0.3%	0.5%	1.2%	0.7%
Other Race	0.2%	0.5%	0.3%	0.7%	1.8%	1.1%
Two or More Races	0.5%	0.7%	0.2%	1.7%	2.2%	0.5%
Hispanic | Latino (any race)	1.1%	2.7%	1.6%	3.2%	8.7%	5.5%

Source: US Census

[3] Gobster, P.H. (2002). Managing urban parks for a racially and ethnically diverse clientele. Leisure Sciences, 24, 143 – 159.

[4] Dwyer, J.F. (1993). Outdoor recreation participation: An update on Blacks, Whites, Hispanics, and Asians in Illinois. In P.Gobster (Ed.), Managing urban and high-use recreation settings (pp. 1991-1211).

	Sarasota County		Change in %	State of Florida		Change in %
Year	2000	2010		2000	2010	
White	92.6 %	91.0 %	-1.6%	78.0%	75.0%	-3.0%
Black	4.2%	4.0%	-0.2%	14.6%	16.0%	1.4%
American Indian	0.2%	0.1%	-0.1%	0.3%	0.4%	0.1%
Asian	0.8%	1.4%	0.6%	1.7%	2.4%	0.7%
Other Race	1.1%	1.2%	0.1%	3.0%	3.6%	0.6%
Two or More Races	1.0%	2.2%	1.2%	2.4%	2.5&	0.1%
Hispanic | Latino (any race)	4.3%	8%	3.7%	16.8%	22.5%	5.7%

Source: US Census

Age Distribution

The type of programs and recreation facilities that a city provides its residents is directly related to the age distribution of the city's population. Cities with a high concentration of population ages 0-9 and 10 –19 for example, may offer more before school or after school care programs, youth athletics, and may therefore require more playgrounds, athletic fields, and stronger joint-use agreements with schools; whereas cities with a high concentration of population ages 65 and older, may require more senior programs, senior center space, and transportation services to transport seniors from activity to activity.

Figure 1.4 below shows the change in age distribution and median age from the year 2000 to 2010 for the City of Venice. The City of Venice has the highest median age of all the jurisdictions compared. In 2010, 74.7 percent of the population in Venice was over the age of 55. The City experienced a slightly higher increase in population ages 55 to 64 than the jurisdictions compared and a decrease in younger age cohorts. This suggests that seniors may continue to remain the dominant population cohort in the City of Venice, with younger aged seniors on the rise. This may suggest that the City may continue to experience a higher demand for senior-oriented recreation programs, activities, and facilities such as tennis, pickle ball, shuffleboard, walking, biking, hiking in nature, and the like, versus youth programs, activities, and facilities.

Figure 1.4 – Age Distribution

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	City of Venice		Change in %	City of North Port		Change In %
Year	2000*	2010*		2000*	2010*	
Median Age	68.8	67.6	-1.7%	40.8	40.9	0.2%
Ages 0-9	3.3%	2.9%	-0.4%	13.3%	12.9%	-0.4%
Ages 10-19	4.3%	3.8%	-0.5%	11.6%	13.5%	1.9%
Ages 20-34	5.1%	5.1%	0%	16.0%	15.6%	-0.4%
Ages 35-54	15.1%	13.4%	-1.7%	25.5%	27.2%	1.7%
Ages 55-64	14.7%	17.7%	3.0%	10.3%	13.0%	2.7%
Ages 65+	57.5%	57.0%	-0.5%	23.4%	17.9%	-5.5%

*Source: US Census

	Sarasota County		Change in %	State of Florida		Change in %
Year	2000*	2010*		2000*	2010*	
Median Age	50.5	52.5	4.0%	36.6	39.1	5.2%
Ages 0-9	8.5%	8.0%	-0.5%	12.4%	11.5%	-0.9%
Ages 10-19	9.3%	9.5%	0.2%	13.0%	12.5%	-0.4%
Ages 20-34	12.4%	12.2%	-0.2%	18.8%	18.7%	-0.1%
Ages 35-54	25.6%	23.7%	-1.9%	28.5%	27.5%	-1.0%
Ages 55-64	12.8%	15.4%	2.6%	9.8%	12.4%	2.7%
Ages 65+	31.5%	31.2%	-0.3%	17.6%	17.3%	-0.2%

*Source: US Census

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Household Type

The distribution of household types often mirrors age distribution and can be used to further confirm the trends noted in the City's age distribution analysis. As noted in Figure 5, household and family size in the City of Venice have remained consistent. Moreover, households with their own children under 18 and households with individuals under 18 both saw a decrease between the years 2000 and 2010 (-1.1 percent and -0.9 percent, respectively). Sarasota County experienced a similar decrease while the City of North Port experienced an increase. The City of Venice also saw a slight decrease of 0.5 percent in households with individuals 65 years and over

and slight increase of 1.1 percent in nonfamily households. This suggests that the City of Venice may continue to attract younger senior populations and may therefore continue to see a need for senior based recreation programs, activities, and facilities.

Figure 1.5 – Household Types

	City of Venice		Change in %	City of North Port		Change in %
Year	**2000**	**2010**		**2000**	**2010**	
Household with own children under 18 years	7.0%	5.9%	-1.1%	28.8%	29.6%	0.8%
Nonfamily household	44.6%	45.7%	1.1%	27.2%	27.8%	0.6%
Households with individuals under 18 years	7.6%	6.7%	-0.9%	31.4%	32.9%	1.5%
Household with individual 65 years and over	68.3%	67.8%	-0.5%	39.0%	32.1%	-6.9%
Average household size	1.7	1.7	0.0	2.4	2.5	0.1
Average family size	2.2	2.2	0.0	2.8	2.9	0.1

Source: US Census

	Sarasota Country		Change in %	State of Florida		Change in %
Year	**2000**	**2010**		**2000**	**2010**	
Household with own children under 18 years	18.3%	17.1%	-1.2%	28.1%	26.0%	-2.1%
Nonfamily household	37.0%	39.1%	2.1%	33.6%	34.8%	1.2%
Households with individuals under 18 years	20.1%	19.2%	-0.9%	31.3%	29.8%	-1.5%
Household with individual 65 years and over	45.3%	46.2%	0.9%	30.7%	31.4%	0.7%

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Average household size	2.1	2.1	0.0	2.4	2.4	0.0
Average family size	2.6	2.6	0.0	2.9	3.0	-0.1

Source: US Census

Household Income

Household income provides parks planners with a glimpse of the purchasing power of city residents. Simply stated, the higher the household income, the greater the potential that residents have disposable income to spend on fee-based leisure programs and activities. The lower the household income, the more residents may rely on the local government to provide affordable and/or free parks, recreation, and social programs and services.

Figure 1.6 below illustrates the median household income and percentage distribution of income ranges in the City of Venice in comparison to the other jurisdictions analyzed. The City of Venice has the lowest median household income of the jurisdictions analyzed. More than half (56.3 percent) of the population has a median household income of less than $49,000. However, the City did experience an increase in median household incomes from 2000 to 2010.

Figure 6 – Household Income

	City of Venice		Change in %	City of North Port		Change in %
Year	**2000**	**2010**		**2000**	**2010**	
Median Household Income	37,536	44,975	16.5%	36,560	47,655	23.3%
Less than $10,000	6.2%	6.6%	0.4%	8.8%	4.0%	-4.8%
$10,000 to $14,999	6.7%	5.8%	-0.9%	5.6%	5.1%	-0.5%
$15,000 to $24,000	16.1%	13.1%	-3.0%	16.6%	10.4%	-6.2%
$25,000 to $34,999	17.2%	13.2%	-4.0%	16.5%	14.6%	-1.9%
$35,000 to $49,999	19.3%	16.7%	-2.6%	23.2%	18.5%	-4.7%
$50,000 to $74,999	16.5%	20.0%	3.5%	19.5%	21.7%	2.2%
$75,000 to $99,999	8.9%	11.8%	2.9%	6.3%	14.4%	8.1%
$100,000 to $149,999	5.4%	6.5%	1.1%	2.6%	7.6%	5.0%
$150,000 to $199,999	1.8%	3.4%	1.6%	0.6%	2.4%	1.8%
$200,000 or more	1.8%	2.8%	1.0%	0.2%	1.4%	1.2%

Source: US Census

	Sarasota Country		% Change	State of Florida		% Change
Year	2000	2010		2000	2010	
Median Household Income	41,957	49,388	15.0%	38,819	45,637	14.9%
Less than $10,000	6.7%	5.5%	-1.2%	9.6%	8.0%	-1.6%
$10,000 to $14,999	5.5%	5.6%	0.1%	6.7%	6.1%	-0.6%
$15,000 to $24,000	14.2%	11.1%	-3.1%	14.5%	12.5%	-2.0%
$25,000 to $34,999	14.3%	12.4%	-1.9%	14.2%	12.1%	-2.1%
$35,000 to $49,999	18.3%	15.9%	-2.4%	17.4%	15.2%	-2.2%
$50,000 to $74,999	19.4%	19.2%	-0.2%	18.5%	18.2%	-0.3%
$75,000 to $99,999	8.9%	11.6%	2.7%	8.7%	10.8%	2.1%
$100,000 to $149,999	7.0%	10.4%	3.4%	6.3%	10.2%	3.9%
$150,000 to $199,999	2.1%	3.7%	1.6%	1.8%	3.4%	1.6%
$200,000 or more	3.6%	4.5%	0.9%	2.3%	3.5%	1.2%

Source: US Census

Considering this increase in median household income within the context of previously discussed demographic factors, further confirms that younger-seniors may be moving into the City of Venice. These other factors include:

- Increase in the City's population,
- Decrease in median age,
- Decrease in households with individuals under 18 years of age, and
- Decrease in households with individuals 65 years of age or older

These younger senior households may have more buying power than traditional senior residents and may be able to spend more for leisure programs and activities. This suggests that while most City residents may continue to rely on affordable recreation options, social programs, and services, it may be important to identify the recreation needs and desires of younger seniors with more buying power to ensure that recreation programs and facilities are provided to sustain and attract them while also addressing the needs of the broader senior population.

Housing Characteristics

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Analysis of housing characteristics can provide further insights into a City's population. For example, high percentages of homeownership typically suggest stable populations and economies while high percentages of rental and vacant properties may suggest transient and, at times, less stable populations and economies.

Figure 1.7 below illustrates the housing characteristics of the City of Venice between the 2000 and 2010 as compared to the other jurisdictions analyzed. Vacant units in the City of Venice increased by 4.7 percent to 33.1 percent in 2010, the highest of the jurisdictions analyzed. Seasonal, recreational, and occasional use housing increased by 4.5 percent to 23.5 percent in 2010, also the highest of the jurisdictions analyzed. This may suggest a transitional economy with seasonal residents leading to a high demand for parks and recreation services during certain periods of the year and reduced demand during other periods.

Figure 1.7 – Household Characteristics

	City of Venice		Change in %	City of North Port		Change in %
Year	**2000**	**2010**		**2000**	**2010**	
Total Housing Units	13,516	17,328	22.0 %	10,302	27,986	63.2%
Occupied housing units	71.6%	66.9%	-4.7%	88.4%	80.2%	-8.2%
Vacant housing units	28.4%	33.1%	4.7%	11.6%	19.8%	8.2%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	19.0%	23.5%	4.5%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Owner-occupied housing units	77.9%	74.2%	-3.7%	87.8%	75.7%	- 12.1%
Renter-occupied housing units	22.1%	25.8%	3.7%	12.2%	24.3%	12.1%

Source: US Census

	Sarasota County		Change in %	State of Florida		Change in %
Year	**2000**	**2010**		**2000**	**2010**	
Total Housing Units	182,467	228,413	20.1 %	7,302,947	8,989,580	18.8 %
Occupied housing units	82.2%	79.6%	-2.6%	86.8%	82.5%	-4.3%

Vacant housing units	17.8%	20.4%	2.6	13.2%	17.5%	4.3%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	62.9%	59.5%	-3.4%	6.6%	7.3%	0.7%
Owner-occupied housing units	79.1%	75.0%	-4.1%	70.1%	67.4%	-2.7%
Renter-occupied housing units	20.9%	25.0%	4.1%	29.9%	32.6%	2.7%

Source: US Census

1.3 Existing Parks System

The City of Venice has 44 parks within its City limits totaling 491.94 acres. These range from small Neighborhood Pocket Parks varying in size from 0.10 to 1 acre that provide close-to-home recreation and respite opportunities, to Beach Access Parks along the City's Gulf Coast, to larger parks ranging in size from 30 to 160 acres with access to athletic fields, sports courts, playgrounds, natural areas, and trails. The park system also includes a Civic Center measuring approximately 32,000 square feet. Of the 44 parks within the City's limits, 30 are owned by the City of Venice, four by Sarasota County, two by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation (GCCF), and one by the West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND).

24 of the parks within City limits are maintained by the City of Venice's Public Works Department. Within the Department, there are two Divisions– the Maintenance Division and the Parks Division. The Parks Division oversees the daily care and maintenance of the City's parks.

The other 20 parks within the City limits are maintained by Sarasota County through an interlocal agreement with the County. This agreement specifies the routine maintenance and the Level of Service that the County will provide. Additionally, it states that the County will provide capital repairs not to exceed $5,000 per park, per year. Any capital costs over $5,000 would be covered by the City. The interlocal agreement also states that the County is responsible for scheduling the usage of athletic fields and parks to third party users.

While the City's Comprehensive Plan does not provide guidance or a definition for park classifications, the parks system is organized into eight classifications:

- Beach Access Parks
- Boat Access Park
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Preserve
- Resource-Based Park
- Spots Complex Park
- Urban Open Space

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Furthermore, many of the gated communities in the eastern portion of the City of Venice provide their residents with access to private recreational facilities that may address their basic, every day, close-to-home recreational needs. Typically, these may include such facilities as tennis courts, community centers, pools, and/or indoor exercise facilities. An example of these types of private recreational facility can be found in the Bay Indies Resort Community. This private community offers its residents a variety of recreation facilities including shuffleboard courts, horseshoe pits, tennis courts, and a clubhouse with a pool, meetings rooms, and an exercise/fitness center. Additionally, these communities typically offer a variety of private recreation programs and activities for their residents such as community tournaments, game nights, and fitness and exercise programs.

The more recently built communities, such as Venetian Golf and River Club, expand the type of private recreational facilities that they provide their residents to include recreation facilities such as fishing areas, fresh water canoe/kayak and boat ramps, and trails. While these private recreational facilities are not open to the general public, they do help address the recreation needs and desires of City residents. However, these private recreation facilities do not typically address the large recreational needs of city residents such as ball fields, sports courts, and multi-purpose open spaces.

Figure 1.8 below provides an inventory and Figure 1.9 a map of the City's parks system.

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Figure 1.8 City of Venice Parks Inventory

			Facilities																											
Park Name	Acres	Park Type	Baseball/Softball	Basketball	Benches	Bike Racks	Boardwalk	Boat Ramp	Clock	Concession Building	Croquet	Drinking Fountain	Football	Fountain	Gazebo/Pavillion	Grills	Lighting	Picnic Shelter	Picnic Tables	Playground	Restrooms	Showers	Shuffleboard	Soccer/MP Field	Statues	Tennis Court	Walks/Trails	Volleyball	Owner	Maintenance Responsibility
Armada, Barcelona & Madrid	1.07	Neighborhood Pocket Park																											Venice	Venice
Brohard Park	67	Beach Access					Y									Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y						1	Venice	Sarasota*
Centennial Park	4	Urban Open Space			Y				Y					Y	Y		Y		Y		Y								Venice	Venice
Chauncy Howard Park	0.70	Beach Access				Y	Y															Y							Venice	Sarasota*
Chuck Reiter Park	9.15	Sports Complex	4							Y		Y					Y			1	Y								Venice	Sarasota*
City Hall Park	3.00	Urban Open Space			Y												Y		Y										Venice	Venice
Curry Creek Preserve	80.00	Preserve						1																			1.6		Sarasota	Sarasota
Dr. Fred Albee	0.50	Urban Open Space			Y														Y						Y		0.1		Venice	Venice
East Blalock Park (VCC, etc.)	10.25	Urban Open Space			Y												Y												Sarasota	Sarasota
East Gate Park	0.50	Neighborhood				Y						Y						Y	Y	1									Venice	Venice
Fountain Park	0.01	Urban Open Space			Y									Y			Y												Venice	Venice
Granada, Castille & Armada	1.02	Neighborhood Pocket Park																											Venice	Venice
Graser Park	0.90	Beach Access			Y									Y															Venice	Venice
Harbour, Ponce De Leon & Pedro	0.40	Neighborhood Pocket Park																											Venice	Venice
Heckser Park	3.20	Community		1													Y	Y	Y	1	Y		18			6			Venice	Sarasota*
Heritage Park	4.00	Urban Open Space			Y																						0.5		Venice	Venice
Higel Marine	2.75	Boat Access			Y			1								Y	Y	Y	Y		Y								Venice	Sarasota*
Humphris (South Jetty) Park	2.00	Beach Access			Y					Y							Y		Y		Y	Y							Venice	Venice
John Nolen Park	3.00	Neighborhood																	Y	1					Y		0.2		Venice	Venice
Legacy Park	10.00	(un-developed)																											Venice	Venice
Legacy Trail	10.00	Resource-Based																									11		Sarasota	Sarasota
Marina Park	3.00	Boat Access						1								Y	Y	Y	Y		Y								WCIND	Sarasota*
Maxine Barritt Park	18.00	Beach Access													Y						Y	Y					0.7		Venice	Sarasota*
Michael Biehl Park	0.31	Urban Open Space			Y									Y			Y												GCCF	Venice
Mundy Park	1.50	Neighborhood	1	1	Y														Y	1									Venice	Venice
Nassau, Pensacola & Milan	0.03	Neighborhood Pocket Park																											Venice	Venice
Patriots Park	3.50	Urban Open Space			Y														Y		Y								Sarasota	Sarasota
Ponce De Leon Park	0.07	Urban Open Space			Y							Y		Y			Y								Y				Venice	Venice
Prentice French Park	3.25	Neighborhood																	Y	1							0.3		Venice	Venice
Ruscelletto Park	1.20	Urban Open Space			Y														Y								0.1		Venice	Venice
Sawgrass Park	8.00	(un-developed)																											Venice	Venice
Service Club Park	7.00	Beach Access			Y	Y	Y									Y		Y	Y		Y							2	-	Sarasota*
South Brohard Beach	22.25	Beach Access										Y									Y	Y			Y				Venice	Sarasota*
South Brohard Beach Paw Park	1.00	Beach Access										Y											Y		Y				Venice	Sarasota*
Tampa, St Augustine & Nokomis	0.10																												Venice	Venice
Venetian Waterway Park	5.75	Resource-Based			Y											Y		Y	Y		Y						10		Venice	Sarasota
Venezia Park	4.20	Neighborhood			Y	Y													Y	1									Venice	Venice
Venice Beach	5.00	Beach Access								Y					Y				Y		Y							2	Venice	Sarasota*
Venice Community Center		-																											Sarasota	Sarasota*
Venice Fishing Pier	18.75	Beach Access			Y		Y										Y				Y								Venice	Venice
Venice Myakka River Park	10.00	Boat Access						1							Y						Y						0.2		Venice	Sarasota*
Volunteer Park	0.83	Urban Open Space																											GCCF	Sarasota
West Blalock Park/Arboretum	4.75	Urban Open Space			Y												Y										0.3		Venice	Venice
Wellfield Park	160.00	Sports Complex	5	1						Y	Y		1				Y	Y	Y	1	Y			5		2	1.3		Venice	Sarasota*
	491.94		**10**	**3**	**19**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**5**	**1**	**5**	**4**	**5**	**15**	**8**	**19**	**8**	**16**	**5**	**18**	**5**	**5**	**8**	**26**	**5**		

Source: City of Venice

* Included in the Interlocal Agreement between City of Venice and Sarasota County

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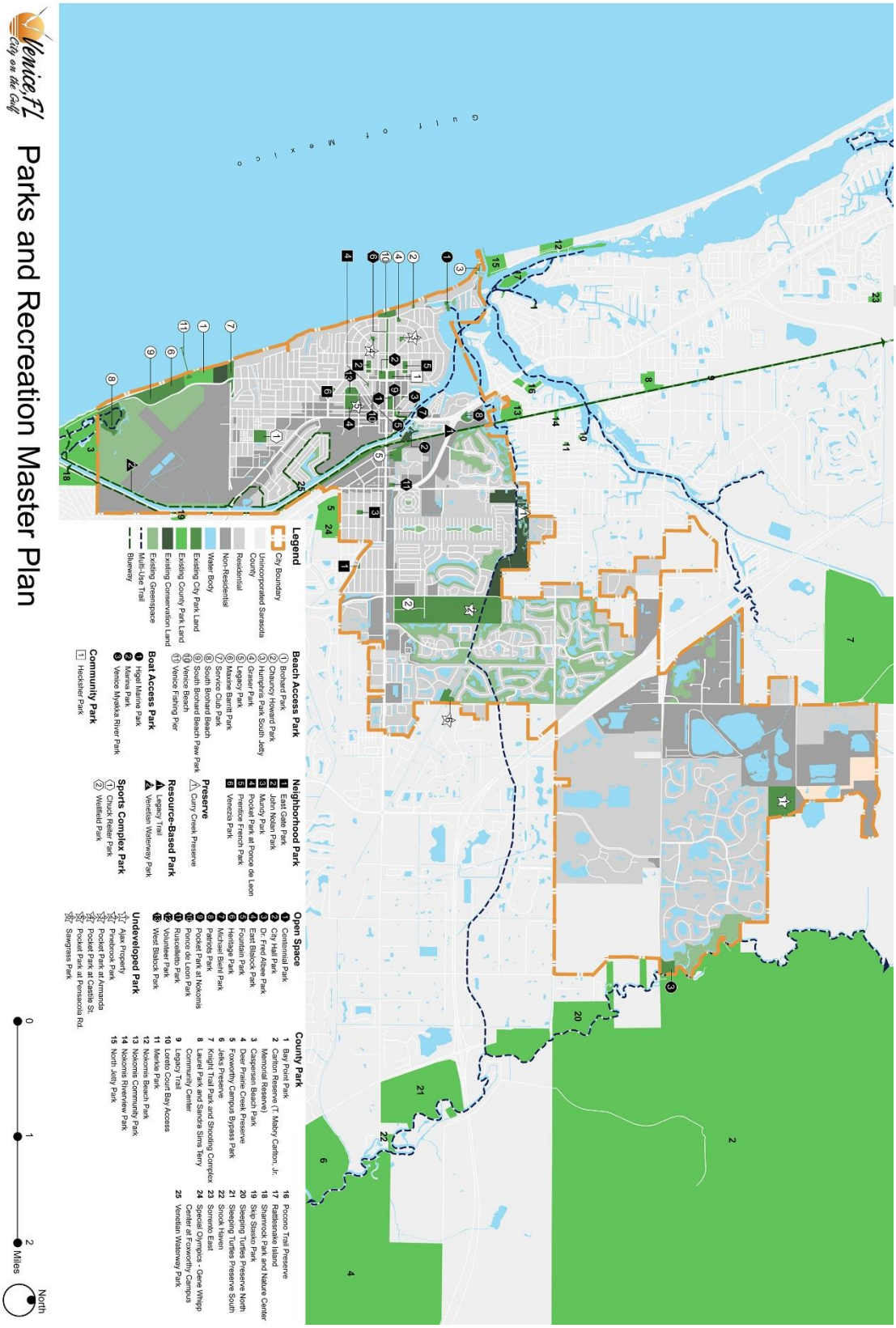
Figure1.9 City of Venice Parks Map



CHAPTER 2: PARKS SYSTEM ANALYSIS

The Park System Analysis included two primary phases: Individual Park Evaluation and System-wide Level of Services Analysis. Following is an overview of the findings from these analyses.

2.1 Individual Park Evaluation Criteria and Findings

The Toole Design Group Team and City staff visited and evaluated thirteen City parks during the month of February 2016. These park were evaluated using the following five key criteria:

ACCESS: Proximity, Access and Linkages

- Visibility from a distance. Can one easily see into the park?
- Ease of walking to the park. Can someone walk directly into the park safely and easily?
- Transit access. Is there a public transit stop nearby?
- Clarity of information/signage. Is there signage that identifies the park, and/or signage that provides additional information for users?
- ADA Compliance. Does the site generally appear to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws for accessibility?
- Lighting. Is the park lighted appropriately for use at night? (if applicable)

COMFORT: Comfort and Image

- First impression/overall attractiveness. Is the park attractive at first glance?
- Feeling of safety. Does the park feel safe at the time of the visit?
- Cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance. Is the park clean and free of litter?
- Comfort of places to sit. Are there comfortable places to sit?
- Protection from bad weather. Is there shelter in case of bad weather?
- Evidence of management/stewardship. Is there visual evidence of site management?
- Ability to easily supervise and manage the park or facility (interior). How difficult it is to supervise the park and its facilities?
- Condition and effectiveness of any equipment or operation systems. Is the equipment and/or operating system in good condition?

USE: Uses, Activities, and Sociability

- Mix of uses/things to do. Is there a variety of things to do given the type of park?
- Level of activity. How active is the park with visitors?
- Sense of pride/ownership. Is there evidence of community pride in the park?
- Programming flexibility. How flexible is the park in accommodating multiple uses?
- Ability of facility to effectively support current organized programming. Is the site meeting the needs of organized programs?
- Marketing or promotional efforts for the facility. Is the site being marketed effectively?

SUSTAINABILITY: Environmental Sustainability

- Stormwater management. Is green infrastructure present to help manage stormwater?
- Multi-modal capacity. Is the park accessible by many modes of transportation?
- Co-location/integration of infrastructure. Does the park provide a number of community infrastructure services?
- Facility energy efficiency. Has the site been updated with energy efficient components?

BUILDINGS: Buildings and Architecture (If a building is present on the site)

- Image and aesthetics. Is the building attractive?

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- Clarity of entry and connection to the park. Is the building integrated into its surroundings?
- Interior layout. Is the layout functional?
- Interior finishes, furniture, and equipment. Are the furnishings and equipment inside the building of good condition and quality?
- Functional dimensions of spaces. Does the organization of space support the building's intended function?
- Structural integrity. Is the building safe?
- Building enclosure. Is there any obvious need for repairs to the building shell?
- Building systems. Are all mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems in working order?
- Code compliance. Does the building meet code?
- Energy and sustainability. Is there evidence that the building is energy efficient?

The criteria were scored for each park, using a scale of 1 to 5:

1.0 – 1.9 = Well Below Expectations **(dark red)**
2.0 – 2.9 = Not Meeting Expectations **(red)**
3.0 – 3.9 = Meets Expectations **(orange)**
4.0 – 4.9 = Exceeds Expectations **(green)**
5.0 = Far Exceeds Expectations **(dark green)**

Each whole number represents a performance tier. Scores were assigned based on an evaluation of the site and the buildings compared to other sites in the city. Although the process of scoring is inherently subjective, multiple evaluators were present to discuss each score and reach consensus. The purpose of the scoring was to establish an understanding of how the parks rates in terms of quality and its ability to serve users. Figure 2.1 below provides a summary chart of the park system's average scores.

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Figure 2.1 Site Evaluation Summary

	Brohard Park	Centennial Park	Chuck Reiter Park	Hecksher Park	Heritage Park	Higel Marine Park	Legacy Trail	Marina Park	Maxine Barritt Park	Service Club Park	Venice Community Center	Venice Myakka River Park	Venetian Waterway Park	Venezia Park	Total
Proximity/ Access/ Linkages (Max 5.0)	3.5	3.8	3.0	3.4	3.8	2.3	3.0	4.2	3.3	2.0	4.0	2.0	2.7	3.0	3.1
Visibility from a distance	3	5	5	4	5	3	3	4	3	2	4	1	3	5	3.6
Ease in walking to the park	2	5	3	4	5	1	2	5	3	2	4	1	3	4	3.1
Transit Access	5	-	1	-	-	1	4	5	3	1	4	1	2	2	2.6
Clarity of information/ signage	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	2	2	3.0
ADA Compliance	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	2	5	2	3	3	3.4
Lighting	4	3	2	3	2	3	2	4	4	2	4	3	3	2	2.9
Comfort and Image (Max 5.0)	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.0	3.5	3.7	3.3	3.2	3.7	3.2	4.5	3.5	3.3	2.0	3.4
First Impression/overall attractiveness	4	4	4	2	4	3	4	2	4	3	5	4	4	2	3.5
Feeling of safety	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	3	5	2	3	3	3.9
Cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance (Exterior)	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	5	4	4	2	3.8
Cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance (Interior)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5.0
Comfort of places to sit	4	4	3	4	4	3	2	3	3	4	4	4	3	2	3.4
Protection from bad weather	3	3	2	3	1	4	2	2	2	3	4	3	2	1	2.5
Evidence of management/stewardship (Exterior Site)	3	4	4	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	5	4	4	2	3.6
Evidence of management/stewardship (Interior)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	5.0
Ability to Easily Supervise and Manage the Park or Facility (Interior)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Condition and Effectiveness of any Equipment or Operating Systems	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3.0
Uses and Activities and Sociability (Max 5.0)	4.2	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.3	3.3	2.5	3.8	2.8	3.7	2.8	3.3	2.5	3.1
Mix of uses/things to do	4	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	2	2.6
Level of Activity	5	3	4	5	4	2	4	2	5	4	3	3	4	2	3.6
Sense of pride/ownership	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	5	3	4	4	4	3	3.8
Programming Flexibility	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	2	4	2	2	3	2.5
Ability of Facility to Effectively Support Organized Programming	4	4	4	2	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	3.6
Marketing or Promotional effots for the Facility or Activities	4	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	4	2	3	2	2.4
Environmental Sustainability	4.5	3.5	2.5	3.5	3.5	2.0	3.5	4.0	3.0	2.5	4.0	2.0	3.5	2.5	3.2
Stormwater Management	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	2	3.1
Multi-modal Capacity	5	4	2	4	4	2	4	5	2	2	4	1	4	3	3.3
Co-Location/Integration of Infrastructure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Facility Energy Efficiency	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	4.0
Buildings/Architecture (Max 5.0)											4.4				4.4
Image and Aesthetics	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-
Clarity of Entry and Connections to Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Interior Layout	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-
Interior Finishes and Furniture and Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Functioning Dimensions of Space	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-
Structural Integrity	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-
Building Enclosure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Building Systems	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-
Code Compliance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-
Energy and Sustainability	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-
Average Score Without Building/Architecture (Max 5)	4.0	3.5	3.0	3.2	3.5	2.6	3.3	3.5	3.5	2.6	4.0	2.6	3.2	2.5	
Average Score with/for Building/Architecture (Max 5)											4.1				

Overall Average

3.3

- Far Exceeding Expectations
- Exceeding Expectations
- Meeting Expectations
- Not Meeting Expectations
- Well Below Expectations

Overall, the quality of the City of Venice park system is relatively consistent. The park system as a whole appears to be meeting expectations and providing residents and visitors with an

acceptable recreational experience. This is represented by the overall average system score of a 3.3. Almost all of the City's parks scored in the range of 3.0 – 3.9 (Meeting Expectations).

The highest scoring parks were Brohard Park (4.0) and Venice Community Center (4.1) Brohard Park scored particularly well in the category of Uses, Activities, and Sociability (4.2) and Environmental Sustainability (4.3). The park has a high level of activity. It provides residents and visitors with a variety of things to do ranging from laying on the beach to playing at the playground, walking and jogging on the paved trail, hiking through a natural area, to letting dogs run loose at the enclose paw park and the beach paw park. The beach paw park draws people from all over Sarasota County and adjoining counties.

Brohard Park Paw Park

Brohard Park displays a high sense of pride and ownership from residents and visitors that use the facility and provides flexibility and ample space to support programming. The park also provides a variety of shelters that provide refuge during inclement weather. This is particularly important in Florida where sever weather such as heavy rains and thunderstorms can occur quickly. These shelters also provide refuge from the hot Florida sun which can lead to uncomfortable conditions, especially for small children and seniors.

Brohard Park also displayed good Environmental Sustainability (4.3) characteristics with ecological treatment of stormwater in the park, use of energy efficient fixtures in the restroom building, and multi-modal access via bicycles through low stress streets that lead to the park and transit via the City of Venice Trolley Bus Stop.

City of Venice Trolley Bus Stop

Venice Community Center scored well in variety of categories including Proximity Access, and Linkages (4.0); Comfort and Image (4.6); and Environmental Sustainability (4.0). The Center integrates well into the community and has clear visibility from a distance, is easy to walk or bike to, and is served by a transit stop. The Community Center is very well maintained, managed, and operated and provides a great overall first impression and feeling of safety. The center is also very flexible in its ability to support different types of events. It contains a variety of rooms designed to fit a variety of events ranging from small group gatherings and meetings to events with large audiences and performances.

The lowest scoring park was Venezia Park (2.5), followed by Service Club Park (2.6) and Higel Marina Park (2.6). Venezia Park scored low in the categories of Comfort and Image (2.0); Uses,

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Activities, and Sociability (2.4); and Environmental Sustainability (2.5). The park contains limited facilities, has less programmed spaces compared to other parks, and contains a variety of underutilized and underused spaces. The park is also surrounded by invasive Australian Pine Trees that impact the soil and limit the growth of native ground covers and plants. This combination of factors makes the park appear abandoned and unsightly. These influences create for an overall poor first impression of the park, poor cleanliness and overall quality of maintenance, and poor evidence of management and stewardship. The park also does not have shelters or protection from inclement weather.

Venezia Park

Service Club Park and Higel Marina Park scored low in the categories of Proximity, Access, and Linkages; Uses, Activities, and Sociability; and Environmental Sustainability. Both parks scored particularly low in the Proximity, Access, and Linkages sub-categories of Ease in Walking to the Park and Transit Access. They also have a limited mix of facilities, low sense of pride and ownership, and limited multi-modal capacity.

While most of the categories scored between the range of 3.0 and 3.9 (Meeting Expectations), some of the sub-categories scored particularly low. These included Transit Access (2.6), Protection from Bad Weather (2.5), Mix of Uses/Things to Do (2.6), Programing Flexibility (2.5), and Marketing or Promotional efforts for the Facility or Activity (2.4). Many of the parks do not have access to transit, do not have any shelters or protection from inclement weather, have a limited mix of facilities and activities for residents to enjoy, and are spatially constrained to provide programming flexibility.

The highest scoring criteria for the parks system was Buildings/Architecture (4.4). This is due to the high quality of the Venice Community Center, which scored high in criteria for Cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance - interior (5.0) and Evidence of management/stewardship – interior (5.0).

Lastly, it appears that most of the City's parks would benefit from an overall upgrade of facilities and amenities that create a consistent, high quality "brand" representative of a John Nolan, Garden City era planned park system. A common set of design standards should be created for a variety of park and public realm elements including site furnishings, amenities, hardscapes, landscapes, park architecture and even park and street layout and designs.

For example, the City currently uses a variety of styles of park furnishings and amenities such as benches, bollards, trash receptacles, shelters, and water fountains. Images of some of these furnishings and styles are included in the following page.

INTERIM DRAFT

City of Venice Park Furnishings and Amenities Styles

Only a few of these amenities appear to be consistent with the City's unique character. However, the amenities at Ponce De Leon Park, shown below, are more consistent with the City's heritage.

Ponce De Leon Park
Furnishing and Amenities

Additionally, some of the City's park buildings incorporate the "Northern Italian" or Mediterranean Revival" style theme established by the John Nolan Plan. Images of these buildings are shown below.

Northern Italian or Mediterranean Revival Style Inspired Park Architecture

The City has an opportunity to build on the unique and valuable John Nolan legacy and enhance the quality of the parks system so that it commemorates and celebrates this wonderful public space heritage. These ideas will be explored further during Chapter 4: Long Range Vision.

INTERIM DRAFT

2.2 Existing Level of Service Analysis

There is no industry standard or regulation regarding how a community should establish Levels of Service (LOS) for parks and recreation services. Both the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and the Florida State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) have discontinued the exclusive use of traditional population-based LOS standards such as park acres and facilities per 1,000 residents.

Instead, cities are encouraged to conduct community-wide needs assessments and benchmark themselves against other similar communities in order to establish their own LOS standards. The National Recreation and Parks Association has developed its benchmarking website PRORAGIS, and SCORP publishes regional LOS averages around the state to assist local communities in establishing their LOS.

For the City of Venice, four different LOS methods were used to determine how well the City's parks and recreation system is meeting residents' needs:

- **Acreage LOS**: Measures the quantity of parkland acreage that is available per 1,000 residents.
- **Indoor Recreation Facility Square Footage LOS**: Measures the quantity of indoor recreation center square footage per capita.
- **Facilities LOS**: Measures the number of recreation facilities available per capita.
- **Access LOS**: Measures the geographic areas served by parks or recreation facilities**.**

<u>Acreage Level of Service</u>

The City's Comprehensive Plan establishes a total LOS target of 7 acres of park land per 1,000 residents, including parks owned by other entities and available for public use. However, a more accurate measure of Acreage LOS includes only developable parkland such as neighborhood and community parks, and excludes natural areas such as beach access and preserves. Figure 2.2 below analyzes the City's park acreage LOS using the population estimates for the years 2015, 2020, 2025, and 2030. Park land acreage is organized into three categories 1) total park land, 2) park land that allows the development of recreation facilities (e.g. Community Park, Neighborhood Park, Urban Open Space, Sports Complex, and Undeveloped Park Land) and, 3) park land that may limit the development of recreation facilities (e.g. Beach Access Parks, Boat Access Parks, Preserves, and Resource Based Parks).

Based on the City's Acreage LOS target of 7 acres per 1,000 population, it appears that there is no need to acquire additional parkland in the near future. However, this analysis does not consider the differences is the distribution of park acreage between the southwest, central, and northeast areas of the City, which is discussed in the section below regarding "Access Level of Service".

Figure 2.2: City of Venice Acreage Level of Service Analysis

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Park Acreage Calculation	Acreage	Venice Comprehensive Plan Acreage LOS Target (X /1,000 Population)	2015 22,325			2020 23,777			2025 25,170			2030 27,020		
			2015 Acres per 1,000 population	2015 Target Acreage	Acreage Need / Surplus	2020 Acres per 1,000 population	2020 Target Acreage	Acreage Need / Surplus	2025 Acres per 1,000 population	2025 Target Acreage	Acreage Need / Surplus	2030 Acres per 1,000 population	2030 Target Acreage	Acreage Need / Surplus
Total Park Acreage	**491.94**	**7.00**	**22.0**	**156.28**	**336**	**20.7**	**166.44**	**326**	**19.5**	**176.19**	**316**	**18.2**	**189.14**	**303**
Community Park, Neighborhood Park, Urban Open Space, Sports Complex, Undeveloped Park Land	237.84		10.7	-	0	10.0	-	-	9.4	-	-	8.8	-	-
Beach Access Park, Boat Access Park, Preserve, Resource-Based Park	254.10		11.4	-	0	10.7	-	-	10.1	-	-	9.4	-	-

It is also sometimes useful to compare a city's target Acreage LOS to national acreage LOS benchmarks. Figure 2.3 below identifies the National Acreage LOS Median for Agencies with Population Density's similar to the City of Venice.

Figure 2.3: National Recreation and Parks Association PRORAGIS Acreage LOS

Park Acreage	National Acreage LOS Median for Agencies with Population Density's between 500	City of Venice 2015 Acreage LOS (Acres per 1,000 population)	City of Venice 2020 Acreage LOS (Acres per 1,000 population)	City of Venice 2025 Acreage LOS (Acres per 1,000 population)	City of Venice 2030 Acreage LOS (Acres per 1,000 population)
Total Acreage	12.1	22.0	20.7	19.5	18.2
Community Park, Neighborhood Park, Urban Open Space, Sports Complex, Undeveloped Park Land		10.7	10.0	9.4	8.8

Beach Access Park, Boat Access Park, Preserve, Resource-Based Park		11.4	10.7	10.1	9.4

When only looking at park acreage that allows the development of recreation facilities, the City of Venice's current Acreage LOS is higher than the City's target of 7.0 acres per 1,000 population but below the National Median Acreage benchmark (12.1 acres per 1,000 people). To match the National Median Acreage LOS benchmark, the City would need to acquire approximately 32 acres based on 2015 population figures. Factoring in population growth, the analysis shows that the projected Acreage LOS for 2030 will remain higher than the City's target but below the National Median Acreage LOS. The City would need to acquire approximately 89 acres by the year 2030 to match the National Median Acreage LOS benchmark.

When comparing the City's Acreage LOS for park land acreage that may limit the development of recreation facilities (e.g. Beach Access Parks, Boat Access Parks, Preserves, and Resource Based Parks) it appears that the City's Acreage LOS is also below the National Median. However, it is important to note that this type of park land acreage typically is not assigned a target Acreage LOS.

Analysis of population to park acreage alone provides mixed results. When comparing the City's existing Acreage LOS to the City's Comprehensive Plan target of 7.0 acres per 1,000 residents, the analysis suggests that the City may not have to acquire any additional park land through the year 2030. When comparing the City's existing Acreage LOS to the National Median Benchmark of 12.1 acres per 1,000 residents, the analysis suggests that the City may have to acquire additional park land through the year 2030. Findings from Chapter 3: Outreach and Needs Assessment, may provide additional guidance on this need.

Indoor Recreation Facility Level of Service

Just as important as outdoor park land acreage is indoor recreation center space. This is especially true considering Florida's hot summer months and volatile weather. Industry benchmarks suggest that agencies should provide 1.0 - 1.5 square feet of indoor recreation center space per capita.

Figure 2.4 to the below analyzes the City's existing indoor center square footage to this target for the years 2015, 2020, 2025, and 2030.

INTERIM DRAFT

Figure 2.4: City of Venice Indoor Recreation Center Level of Service Analysis

	Industry Benchmark (Square Feet Per Capita)	City of Venice Community Center Square Footage*	2015 Population 22,325		2020 Population 23,777		2025 Population 25,170		2030 Population 27,020	
			2015 Benchmark Target	Square Footage Need / Surplus	2020 Benchmark Target	Square Footage Need / Surplus	2025 Benchmark Target	Square Footage Need / Surplus	2025 Benchmark Target	Square Footage Need / Surplus
City of Venice Community Center Space	1.5	32,000	33,488	(1,488)	35,666	(3,666)	37,755	(5,755)	40,530	(8,530)

* Square footage based on aerial photograph area calculation.

This analysis suggests that the City currently needs an additional 1,488 square feet of indoor recreation center space to meet the industry benchmark. By the year 2030, the City would need an additional 8,530 square feet. This need may be particularly important for the City of Venice since the existing City of Venice Community Center functions more as a Civic Center that provides arts and cultural opportunities versus a recreation center that may provide traditional recreational opportunities such as exercise and fitness classes, computer labs, games rooms, indoor gym, and the like. Findings from Chapter 3: Outreach and Needs Assessment, may provide additional guidance on this need.

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Facilities Level of Service

Each community must establish its own standards for Facilities LOS, expressed as the number of facilities required to serve the population. The City of Venice's Comprehensive Plan does not contain such Facilities LOS targets. However, comparing the City's existing and future Facilities LOS to state and national averages is a useful way to understand potential needs.

Figure 2.5 below compares available National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) PRORAGIS database national median Facilities LOS standards to the City of Venice' existing and future Facilities LOS.

Figure 2.5: National Recreation and Parks Association PRORAGIS Facilities LOS Benchmarking

National Recreation and Parks Association PRORAGIS Benchmark	City of Venice Facilities	National Median Level of Service (1 per X persons)	2015	2020	2025	2030
			2015 City of Venice Facilities Level of Service (1 per X persons)	2020 City of Venice Facilities Level of Service (1 per X persons)	2025 City of Venice Facilities Level of Service (1 per X persons)	2030 City of Venice Facilities Level of Service (1 per X persons)
Diamond Fields	10	3,333	2,233	2,378	2,517	2,702
Rectangle Fields	6	8,124	3,721	3,963	4,195	4,503
Playgrounds	8	3,899	2,791	2,972	3,146	3,378
Dog Parks	2	53,915	11,163	11,889	12,585	13,510
Tennis Courts	8	4,413	2,791	2,972	3,146	3,378
Basketball Courts	3	7,526	7,442	7,926	8,390	9,007
Indoor Recreation Center	0	24,804	-	-	-	-
Swimming Pools	0	33,660	-	-	-	-
Senior Center	1	50,000	22,325	23,777	25,170	27,020
Golf Course (population per 9 holes)	1	26,288	22,325	23,777	25,170	27,020
Pickleball Courts	0	24,804	-	-	-	-

When compared to NRPA's PRORAGIS database, it appears that the City's existing and projected Facilities LOS are lower than the national *median* for most recreation facilities through the year 2030. The Facilities LOS for Basketball Courts dips above the national median after the year 2020. Additionally, not including the Venice Community Center as a recreation center, this analysis suggests that the City of Venice may need an Indoor Recreation Center and a Swimming Pool.

Figure 2.6 below benchmarks the City of Venice's outdoor facilities to available Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Facilities LOS for agencies in Florida's Southwest Region.

Figure 2.6: Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Facilities LOS Benchmarking

Outdoor Facility Type	Southwest Region LOS X/1000 Participants	Number of City of Venice Facilities	Need Based on Participants in 2015	Need / Surplus to meet Southwest Region LOS	Need Based on Participants in 2020	Need / Surplus to meet Southwest Region LOS	Need Based on Participants in 2025	Need / Surplus to meet Southwest Region LOS	Need Based on Participants in 2030	Need / Surplus to meet Southwest Region LOS
Baseball Fields	0.85	10	2.09	7.91	2.22	7.78	2.35	7.65	2.53	7.47
Outdoor Basketball Courts	0.86	3	1.73	1.27	1.84	1.16	1.95	1.05	2.09	0.91
Football Fields	0.48	1	0.96	0.04	1.03	(0.03)	1.09	(0.09)	1.17	(0.17)
Tennis Courts	1.46	8	4.24	3.76	4.51	3.49	4.78	3.22	5.13	2.87
Soccer Fields	0.45	5	1.00	4.00	1.07	3.93	1.13	3.87	1.22	3.78
Outdoor Swimming Pools	0.09	0	0.56	(0.56)	0.60	(0.60)	0.63	(0.63)	0.68	(0.68)
Paved Trails (Miles)	0.24	22	2.41	19.59	2.57	19.43	2.72	19.28	2.92	19.08
Fresh Water Boat Ramps (Lanes)	0.16	4	0.89	3.11	0.95	3.05	1.01	2.99	1.08	2.92

This analysis suggests that the City already needs an Outdoor Swimming Pool and by the year 2020, may need additional Football Fields.

Access Level of Service

Access LOS measures the distance residents have to travel to access parks and recreation facilities. It is used to understand how park access varies between different neighborhoods in a city. Similar to other LOS metrics, each community must determine its own standards. Access LOS may be determined based on recreational lifestyles, land use patterns, transportation networks, population densities and/or other variables.

The distance used in the calculation of LOS is important; for example, should a City aim for all residents to have a park within 1 mile of their homes, within ½ mile, or even less? The City of Venice's Comprehensive Plan states residents should be able to reach a neighborhood park within ½ mile. Informed by the City's Comprehensive Plan and industry best practices, the following distances were used to analyze Access LOS for the City's park system:

Access LOS Analysis Distances

- All Parks - 1/4 mile, 1/2 mile (Not including County Parks)
- Neighborhood Parks and Community Parks - 1/4 mile, 1/2 mile, 1 mile

- Multi-Use Trails - 1/4-mile buffer, 1/2-mile buffer
- Natural Area Parks - 1 mile, 2 miles for the following Parks:
    - Curry Creek Preserve
    - Pine brook Park
    - Venice Myakka River Park
    - Service Club Park

Figures 2.8 – 2.17 in subsequent pages illustrate where the gaps appear to be in the City based on the above noted analysis. Figure 2.7 below provides a summary of these findings. Specifically, this summary suggests that while the City overall may have a need for all of the parks analyzed, the degree of need may be less based on the Access LOS Analysis distance used. The appropriate Access LOS distance that the City should establish will be further discussed in Chapter 4: Long Range Vision.

Figure 2.7 – Summary of Park Needs Based on Access LOS Parameters

	Access Level of Service Needs per Distance			
Distances	**¼ Mile**	**½ Mile**	**1 Mile**	**2 Miles**
Parks Analyzed	Takeaways from Access LOS			
All Parks	Parks needed throughout the City	Parks needed throughout the City	Parks needed predominantly east of I-75.	N/A
Neighborhood Parks + Community Parks	Parks needed throughout the City	Parks needed throughout the City	Parks needed predominantly east of the Venetian Waterway	N/A
Multi-Use Trails	Multi-Use Trails needed throughout the City	Multi-Use Trails needed throughout the City	N/A	N/A
Natural Area Parks	N/A	N/A	Natural Areas Parks needed through the City	Natural Areas Parks needed predominantly east of I-75

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Figure 2.8 – All Parks – ¼ Mile Access LOS

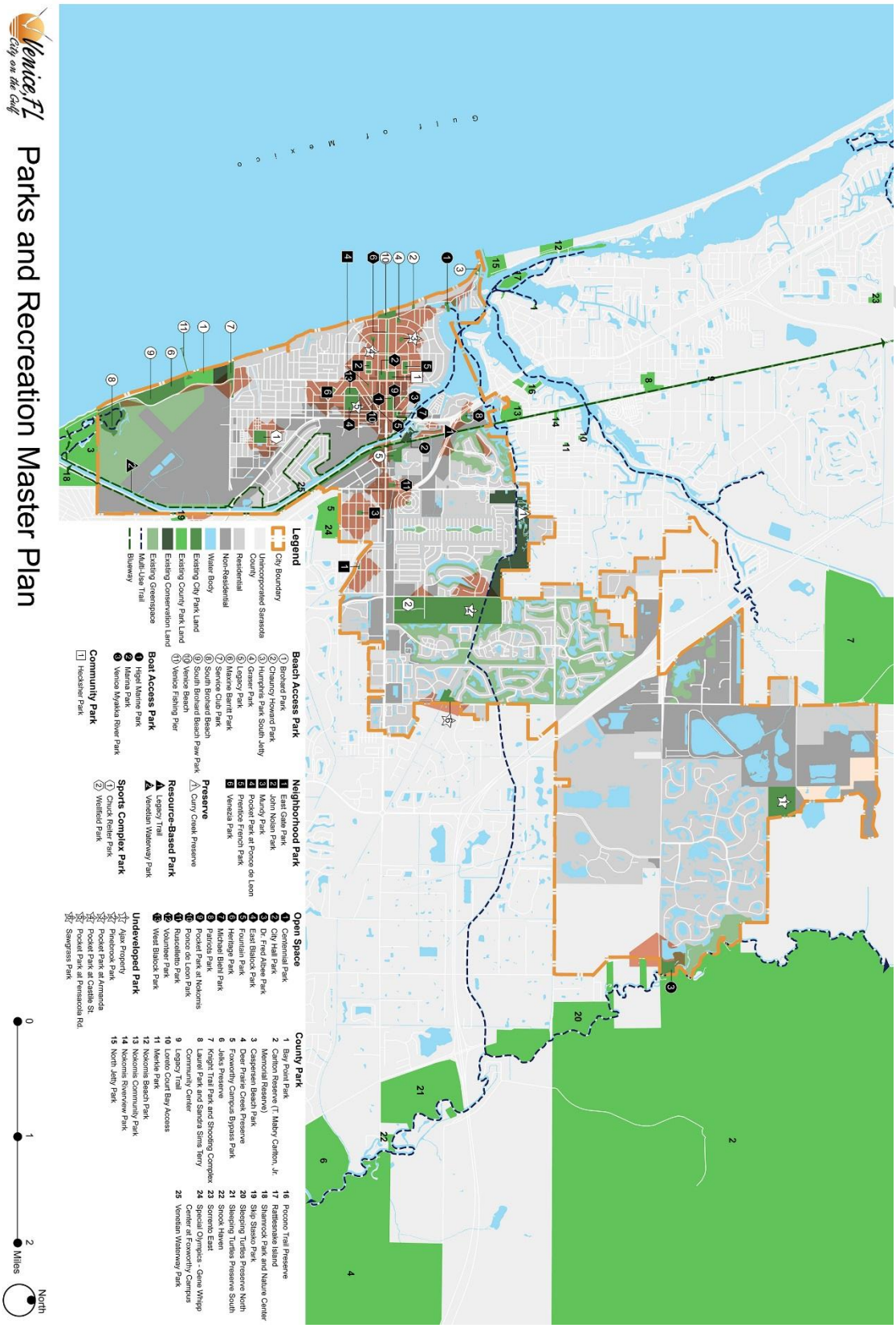


Figure 2.9 – All Parks – ½ Mile Access

LOS

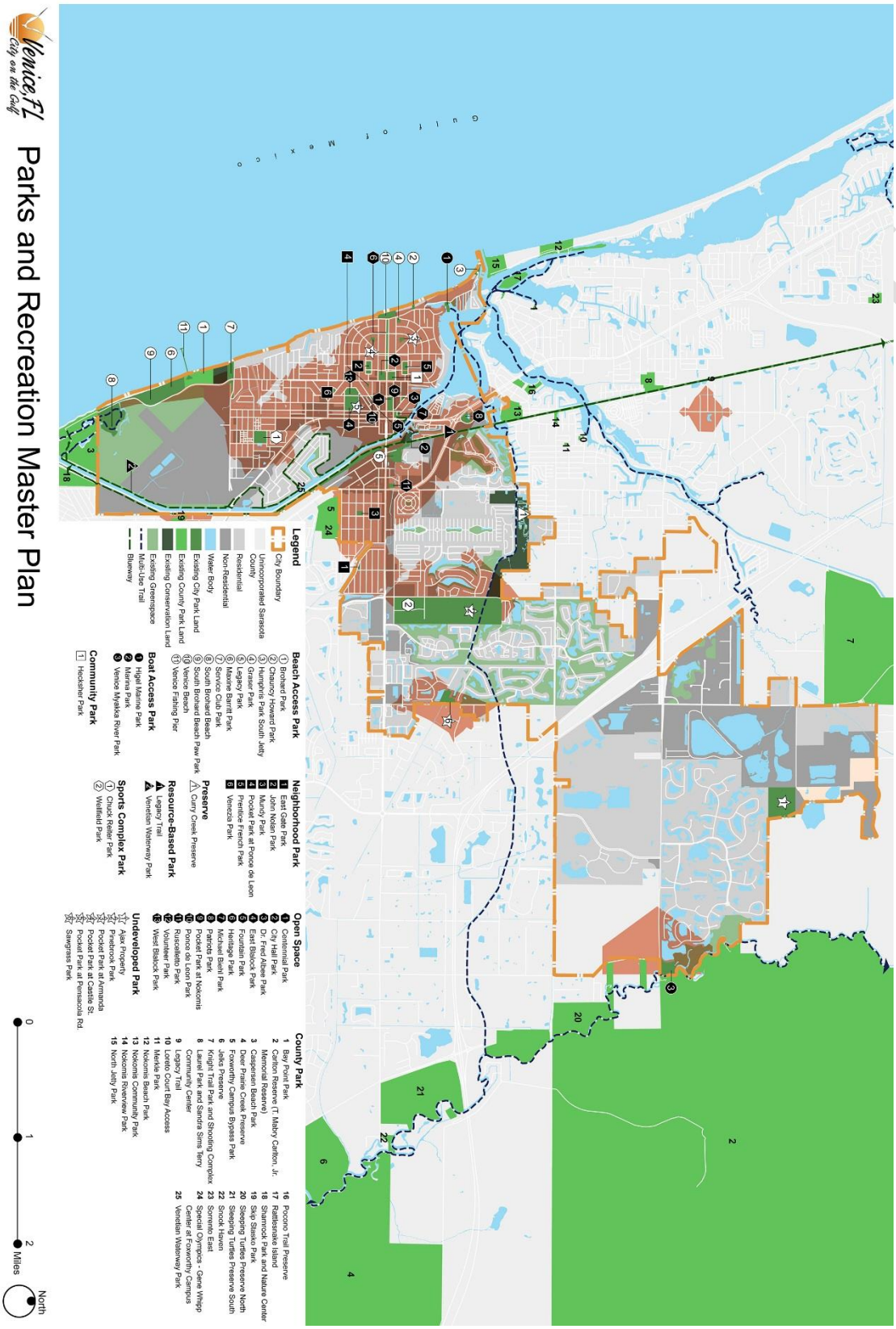


Figure 2.10 – All Parks – 1 Mile Access LOS

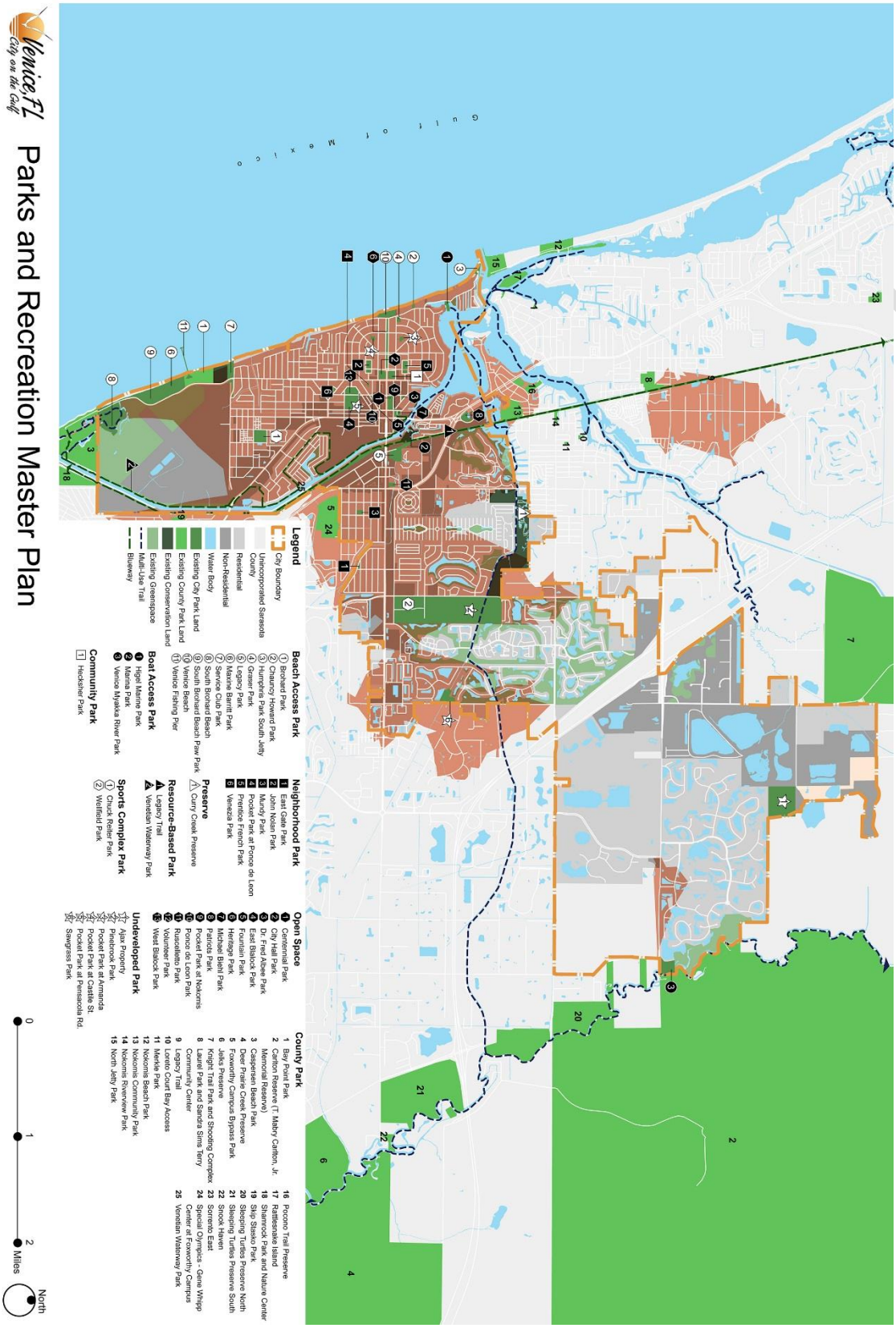


Figure 2.11 – Neighborhood + Community Parks – ¼ Mile Access LOS

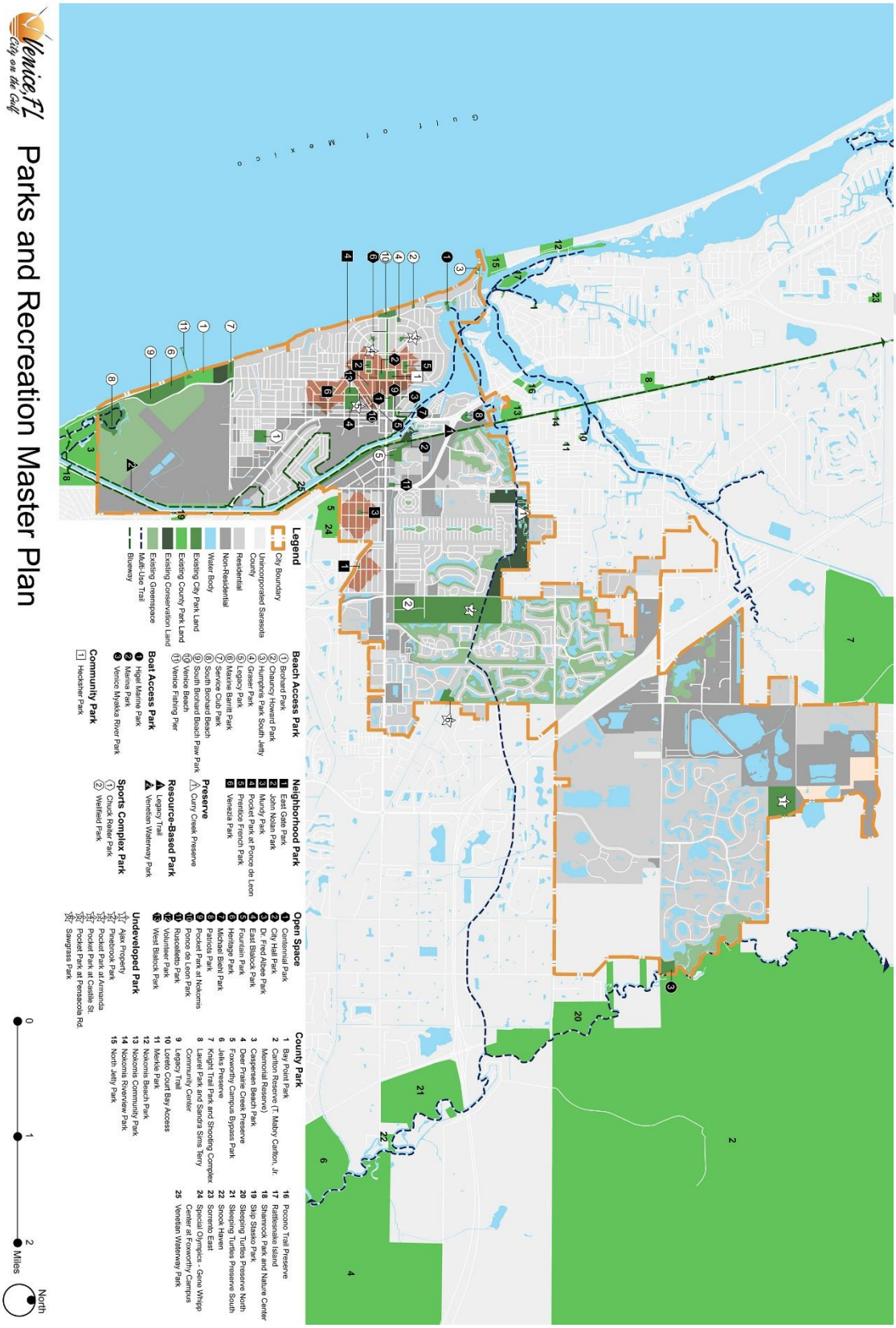


Figure 2.12 – Neighborhood + Community Parks – ½ Mile Access LOS

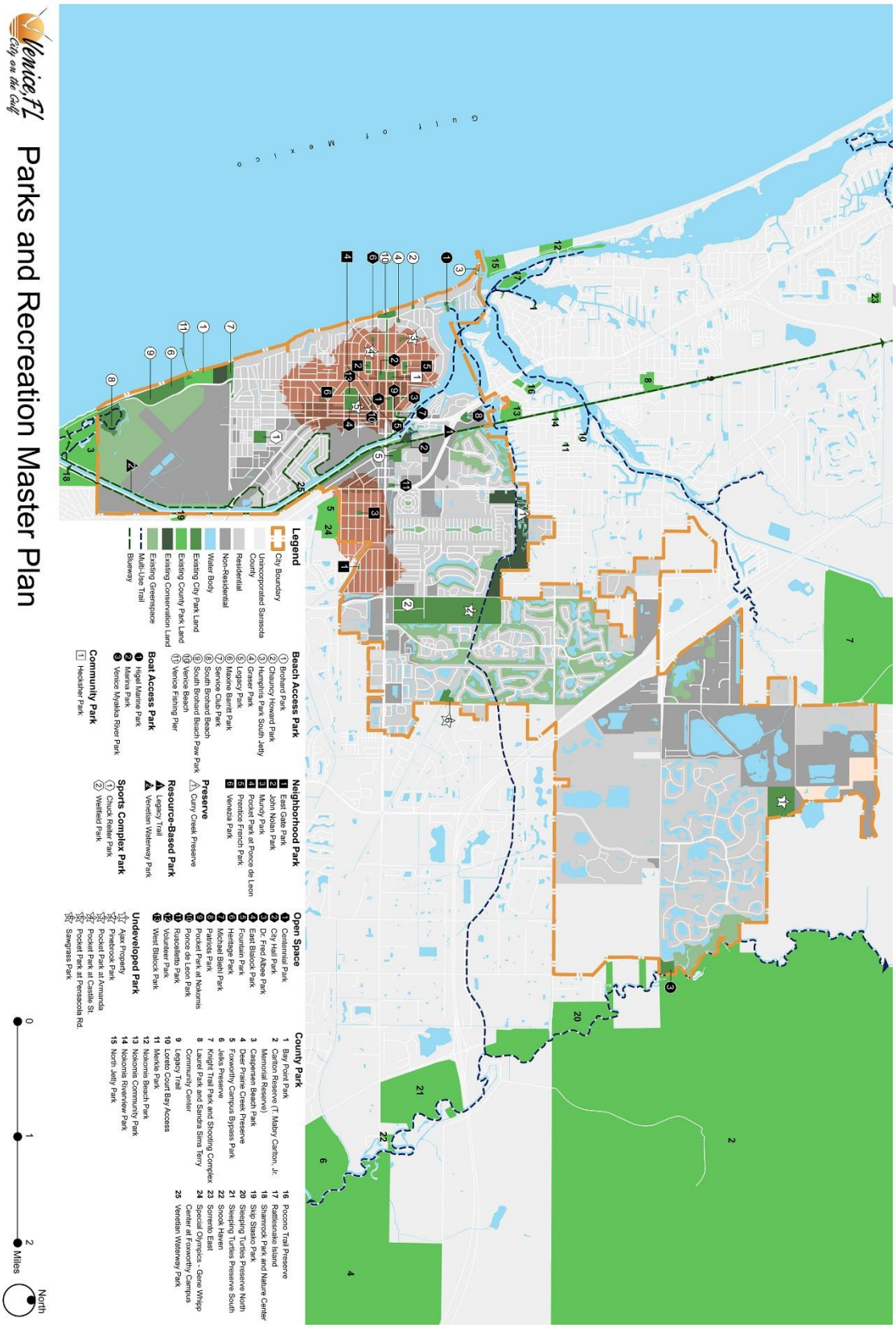


Figure 2.13 – Neighborhood + Community Parks – 1 Mile Access LOS

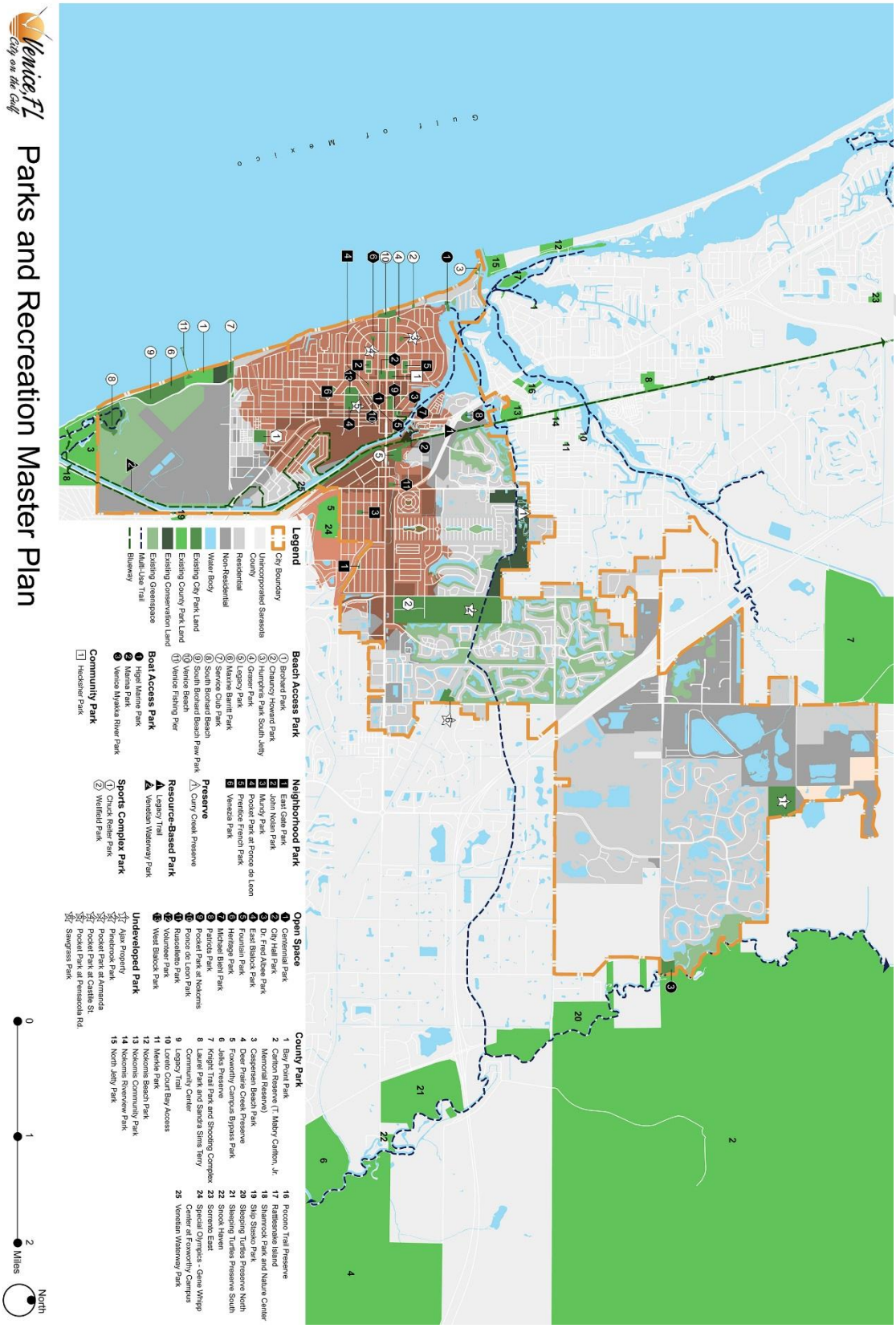


Figure 2.14 – Multi-Use Trails – ¼ Mile Access LOS

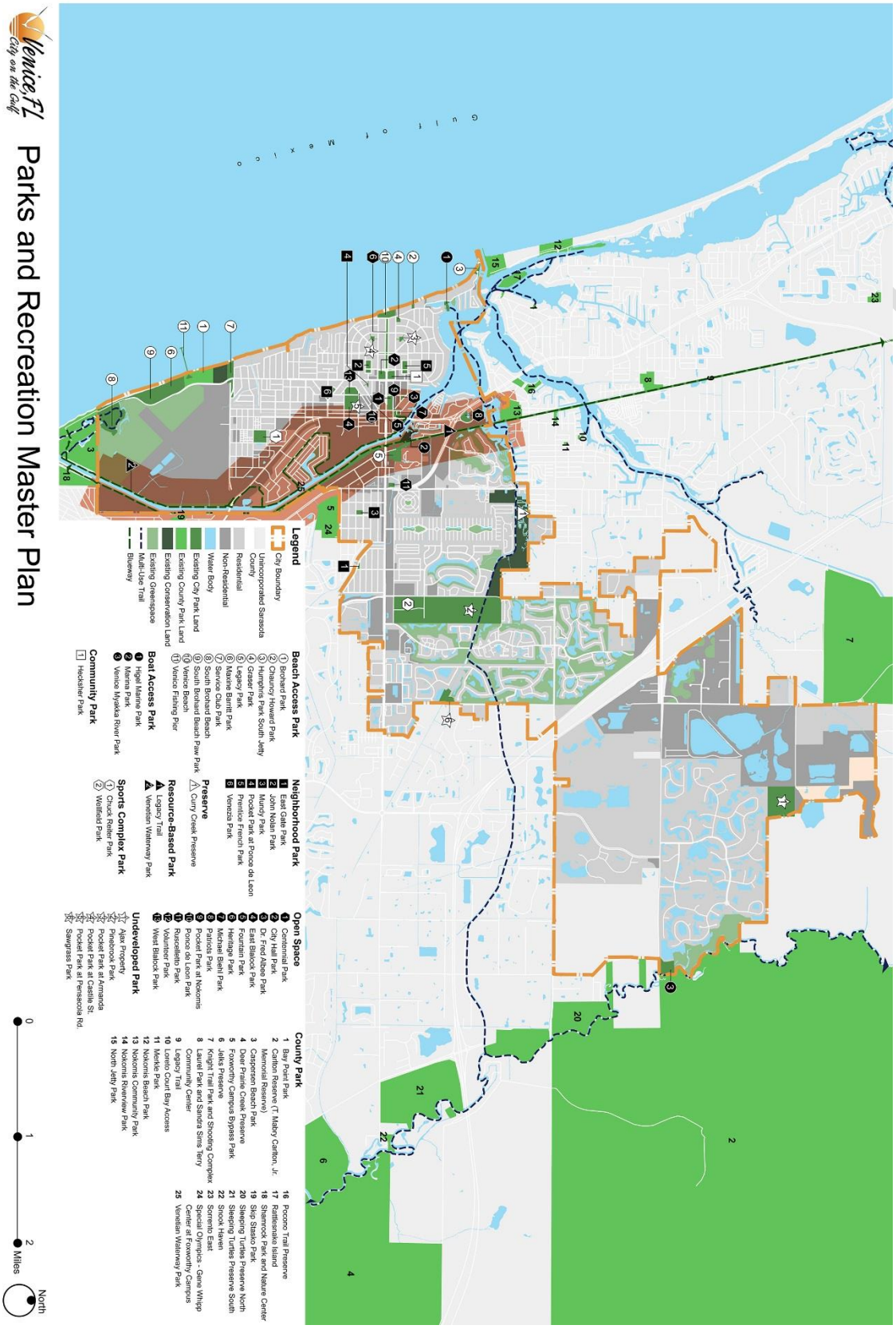


Figure 2.15 – Multi-Use Trails – ½ Mile Access LOS

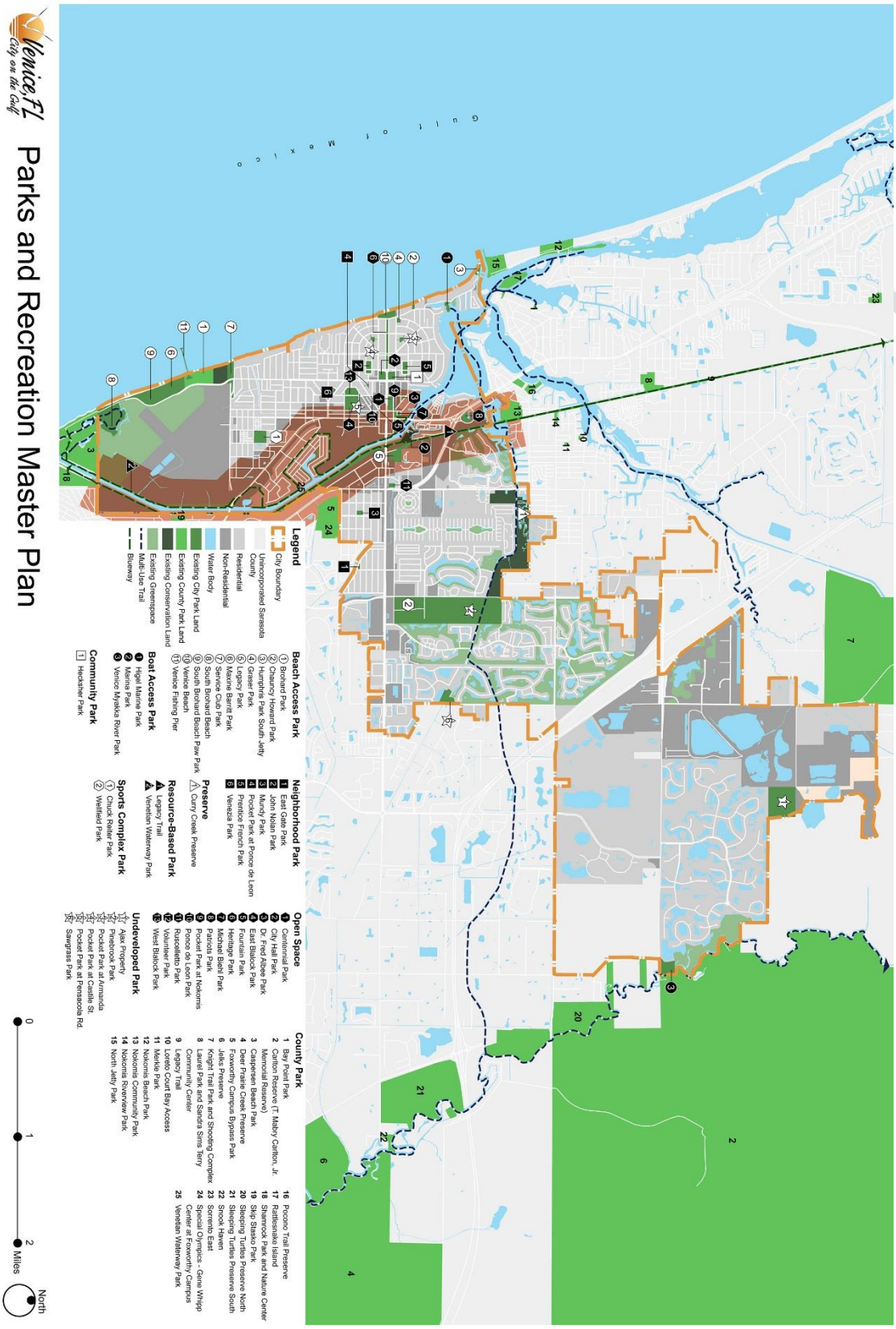


Figure 2.16 – Multi-Use Trails – 1 Mile Access LOS

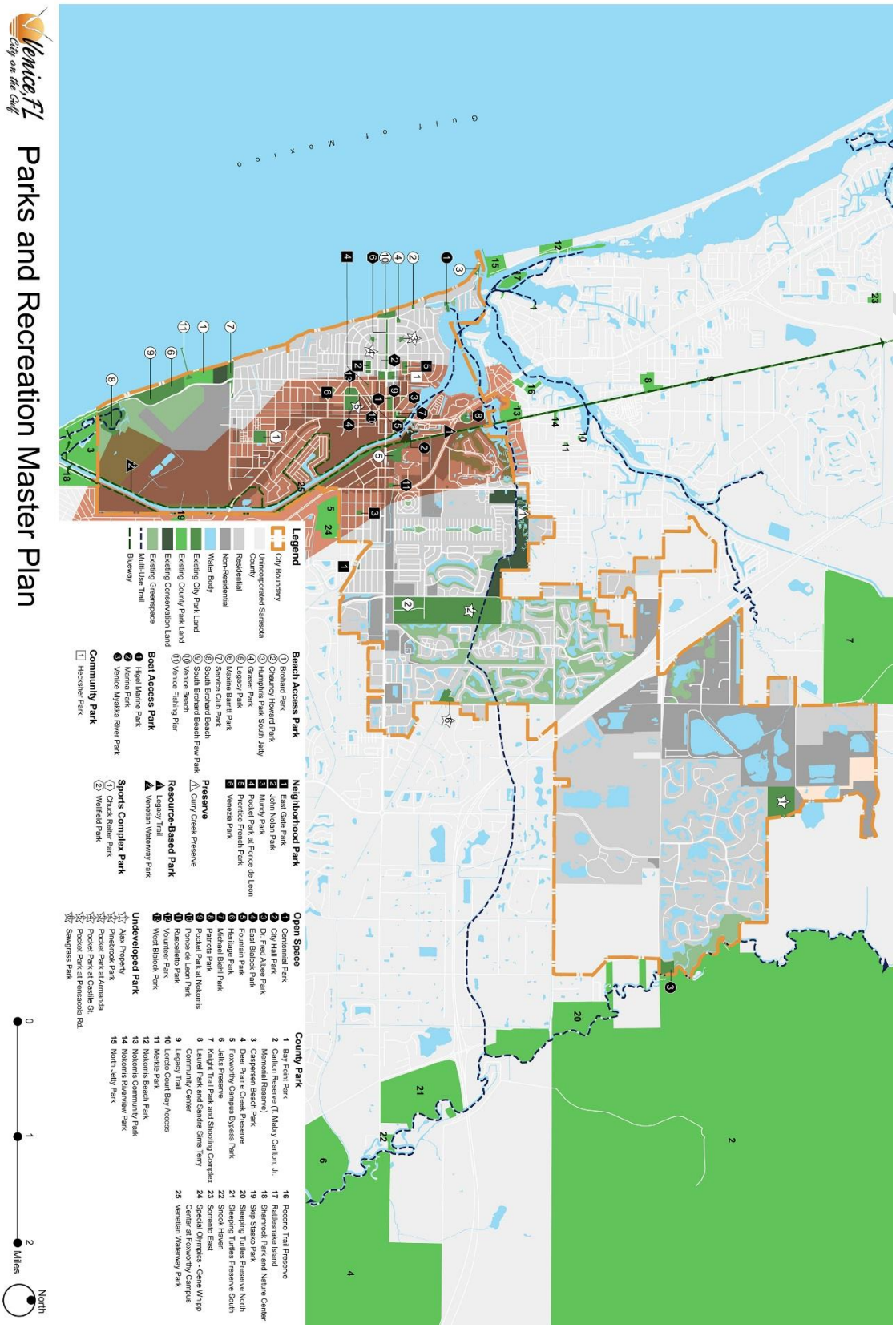


Figure 2.17 – Natural Areas – 1 Mile Access LOS

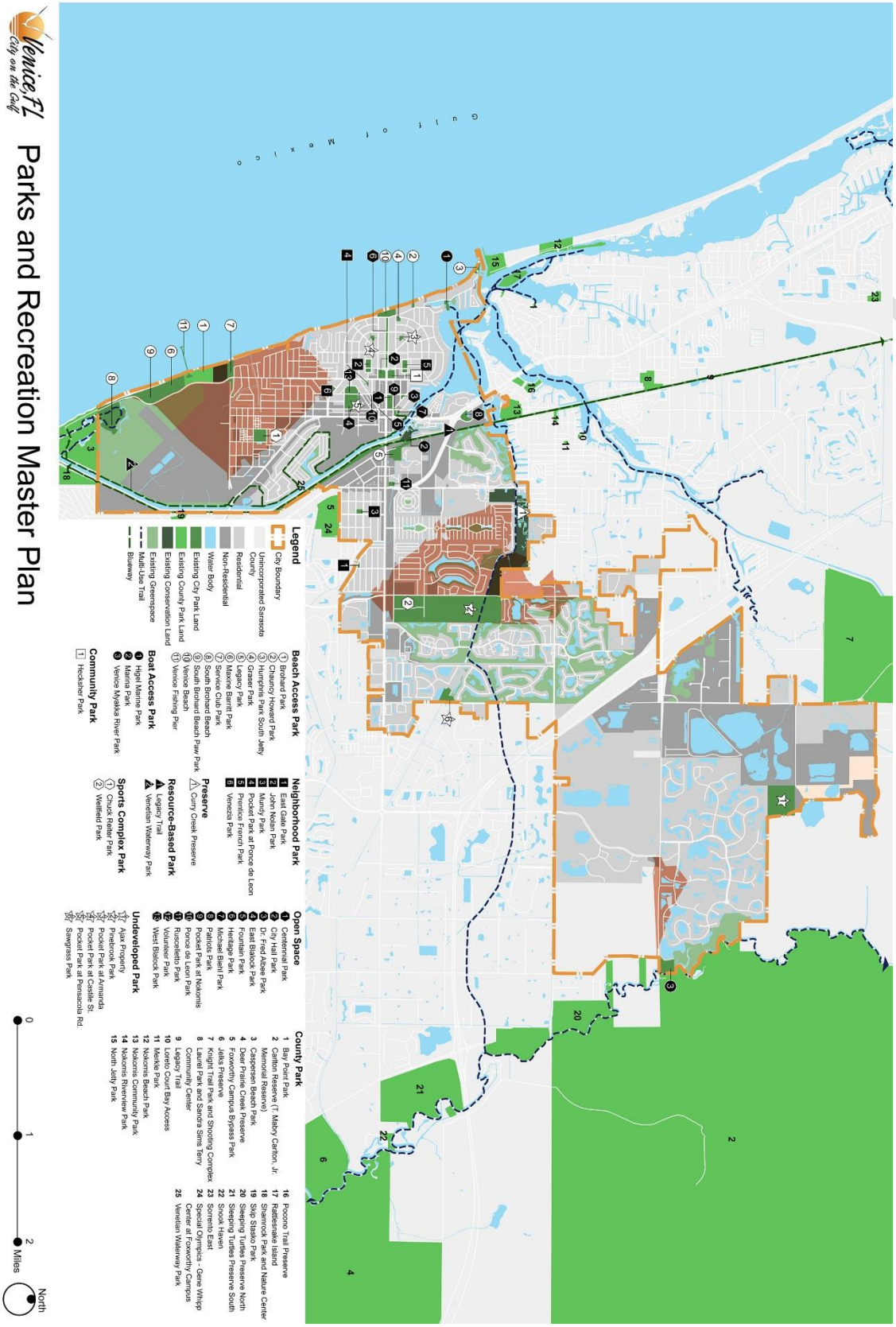
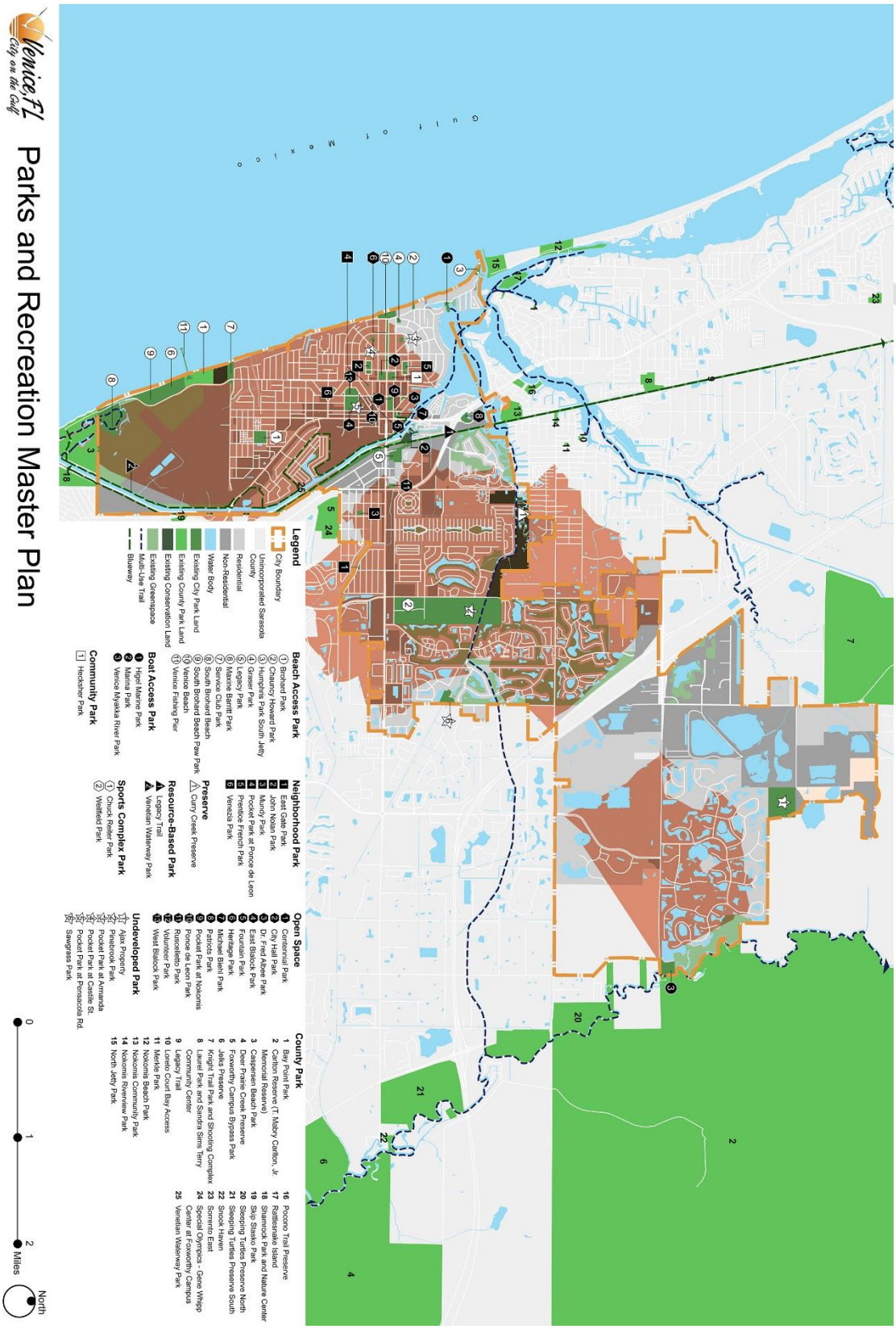


Figure 2.18 – Natural Areas – 2 Mile Access LOS


Venice, FL
City on the Gulf
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Legend
City Boundary
Unincorporated Sarasota County
Residential
Non-Residential
Water Body
Existing City Park Land
Existing County Park Land
Existing Conservation Land
Existing Greenspace
Multi-Use Trail
Blueway
Beach Access Park
1 Brohard Park
2 Caspersen Beach Park
3 Humphris Park South Jetty
4 Grosser Park
5 Legacy Park
6 Marine Barrit Park
7 Service Club Park
8 South Brohard Beach
9 South Brohard Beach Paw Park
10 Venice Beach
11 Venice Fishing Pier
Boat Access Park
1 Higel Marine Park
2 Marina Park
3 Venice Myakka River Park
Community Park
1 Heckstrier Park
Neighborhood Park
1 East Gate Park
2 John Nolen Park
3 Murdy Park
4 Pocket Park at Ponce de Leon
5 Prentice French Park
6 Venezia Park
Preserve
1 Curry Creek Preserve
Resource-Based Park
1 Legacy Trail
2 Venetian Waterway Park
Sports Complex Park
1 Chuck Reiter Park
2 Wellfield Park
Open Space
1 Centennial Park
2 City Hall Park
3 Dr. Fred Albee Park
4 East Blalock Park
5 Fountain Park
6 Heritage Park
7 Michael Blehl Park
8 Patricia Park
9 Pocket Park at Nokomis
10 Ponce de Leon Park
11 Ruscilletto Park
12 Volunteer Park
13 West Blalock Park
Undeveloped Park
1 Ajax Property
2 Pinebrook Park
3 Pocket Park at Amanda
4 Pocket Park at Castile St.
5 Pocket Park at Pensacola Rd.
6 Sawgrass Park
County Park
1 Bay Point Park
2 Carlton Reserve (T. Mabry Carlton, Jr. Memorial Reserve)
3 Caspersen Beach Park
4 Deer Prairie Creek Preserve
5 Foxworthy Campus Bypass Park
6 Jetks Preserve
7 Knight Trail Park and Shooting Complex
8 Laurel Park and Sandra Sims Terry Community Center
9 Legacy Trail
10 Loreto Court Bay Access
11 Merkle Park
12 Nokomis Beach Park
13 Nokomis Community Park
14 Nokomis Riverview Park
15 North Jetty Park
16 Pocono Trail Preserve
17 Rattlesnake Island
18 Shamrock Park and Nature Center
19 Skip Staiko Park
20 Sleeping Turtles Preserve North
21 Sleeping Turtles Preserve South
22 Snook Haven
23 Sorrento East
24 Special Olympics - Gene Whipp Center at Foxworthy Campus
25 Venetian Waterway Park
Gulf of Mexico
0
1
2
Miles
North

2.3 Implications for the Parks Master Plan

Based on the individual park evaluations of a spectrum of the City's parks system as well as the various LOS Analysis techniques completed, following is a summary of the key technical findings. As noted previously, it is important to note that findings from these analyses are not recommendations, but rather observations made by the Toole Design Group Team. These findings will be combined with the findings from Chapter 3: Outreach and Needs Assessment to suggest overall parks and recreation needs and priorities. Chapter 4: Long Range Vision will consider these findings and in coordination with public and staff input, suggest the appropriate response to the findings.

- Overall, the quality of the City of Venice park system is relatively consistent. The park system as a whole appears to be meeting expectations and providing residents and visitors with an acceptable leisure experience with some parks doing better than others.
- Specific areas of concern appear to include:
    - Limited multi-modal access to parks such as limited transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity opportunities;
    - Limited shelters and pavilions in parks to protect users from inclement weather and provide refuge from the hot Florida sun;
    - Limited facilities and amenities in parks that limit the things residents and visitors can do in parks;
    - Limited flexibility of use and programming in parks due to limited multi-purpose space;
    - Limited marketing and park promotion; and
    - Lack of consistency in design or design standards and guidelines that celebrate the rich parks and public realm heritage inherited through the John Nolan Plan.
- While the City appears to have sufficient park acreage when compared to the City's Acreage LOS target, it does not appear to have sufficient park acreage when compared to the National Median Benchmark.
- The parks do not appear to be equitably distributed throughout the City with less parks located east of the Venetian Causeway and I-75.
- While the City appears to have sufficient indoor center space in the Venice Community Center, the indoor space is used predominantly for civic and cultural uses and not traditional indoor recreational uses such as for fitness and wellness, games, indoor sports, and the like.
- Facilities that the City may have a need for in the future include:
    - Basketball Courts; and
    - Football Fields.

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Chapter 3: OUTREACH AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This chapter summarizes the findings from the different qualitative and quantitative methods used to identify residents' top priorities recreation needs.

Qualitative needs assessment techniques included interviews, workshops, focus group meetings, and an on-line survey. Quantitative needs assessment techniques included the Level of Service (LOS) analysis (discussed in Section 1) and the County's statistically valid survey. Findings from these different techniques were combined to determine top priority parks and recreation needs in the community. Following are the findings from the various techniques.

3.1 Community Input Meetings

Two public meetings provided opportunities for residents to share parks and recreation needs and priorities with the planning team: February 23 at the Waterford Golf Club, attended by 43 residents who live east of Pinebrook (Waterford, NE Venice); and February 24, 2016 at the Venice Community Center, attended by 9 people who live on the "island."

Each meeting began with a brief overview of the Parks Master Plan project and process, followed by a series of participant exercises:

- Exercise #1 – City-wide Needs: Charts were placed on the easels for 1) Recreation Facilities, and 2) Recreation Programs. Participants placed dots besides those facilities or programs that they believed were important but not being met adequately in the City of Venice.

- Exercise #2 – Improvements to Existing Facilities: Aerial photographs of the City's major parks and recreation facilities were printed and placed on tables. Participants placed post-it notes to suggest improvements that should be made to each park and/or recreation facility.

- Exercise #3 – Priority Spending: 7 different buckets representing 7 different parks and recreation funding categories were placed on a table. 10 coins, each worth $10, were given to participants to distribute among the appropriate buckets based on their desired spending priorities.

- Exercise #4 – Other Comments: Participants were given the opportunity to share any additional comments with the Public Works Directors and a Toole Design Group Team member. These comments were recorded on a flip chart.

<u>Exercise #1 - City-wide Needs</u>

Figure 3.1 below shows the priorities of the participants at the 2 workshops. Participants at Waterford (northeast area of the City) indicated that their top priority needs included:

- Natural areas and wildlife habitat
- Outdoor pickleball courts
- Nature programs
- Adult fitness and wellness programs, including fitness trainers

Participants at the Community Center (historic, southwest area of the City) indicated that their top priority needs included:

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- Off-leash dog park
- Canoe/ kayak launches
- Outdoor pickleball courts

Figure 3.1 - Exercise #1 – City-wide Needs

	Waterford Clubhouse (43 participants)	Venice Community Center (9 participants)
FACILITIES	**Public Meeting 1**	**Public Meeting 2**
A Youth soccer fields	1	0
B Youth baseball fields	2	0
C Youth softball fields	2	1
D Lacrosse fields	0	0
E Adult softball fields	4	3
F Small neighborhood parks	7	2
G Large community parks	5	0
H Off-leash dog park	5	5
I Outdoor swimming pools/water parks	2	1
J Spray parks	0	0
K Outdoor basketball courts	1	1
L Outdoor tennis courts	0	0
M Outdoor sand volleyball courts	0	1
N Paved walking and biking trails	4 Benches to rest	2 sidewalks
O Mountain biking trails	2	0
P Nature hiking trails	7	0
Q Boating and fishing areas	1	0
R Boat ramps	1	3
S Canoe/kayaking launches	4	5
T Natural areas and wildlife habitats	13	1
U Playground equipment	2	1
V Picnic areas and shelters	4	1
W Amphitheater/bandshell	7	4
X Outdoor pickleball courts	10	5
Y Shuffleboard courts	2	0
Z Racquetball courts	1	0
1 Croquet courts	4	2
2 Lawn bowling	3	0
3 Skate parks	3	0
4 Indoor running/walking track	5	1
5 Indoor swimming pools/leisure pool	6	0
6 Indoor basketball/volleyball courts	1	1
7 Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	6	1
8 Indoor pickleball courts	4	3

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9 Bocce ball	1	0
10 Band shell	1	0
PROGRAMS	**Public Meeting 1**	**Public Meeting 2**
A Youth Learn to Swim Programs	1	1
B Parent/grandparent-tot programs	0	0
C Before and after school programs	3	1
D Youth sports programs	2	0
E Youth fitness and wellness programs	0	1
F Martial arts programs	0	0
G Adult sports leagues	6	0
H Adult fitness and wellness programs	8 Trainers (exercise)	1
I Water fitness programs	5	0
J Tennis lessons and leagues	0	1
K Youth arts and crafts programs	1	0
L Youth drama/performing arts programs	2	0
M Youth gymnastics and cheerleading	0	1
N Senior adult programs	4	0
O Adult arts and crafts programs	7	1
P Adult drama/performing arts programs	5	0
Q Music lessons	0	0
R Programs for the disabled	5	0
S Special events (Concerts, Movies, Etc.)	5	0
T Dog training	2	0
U Archery programs	3	0
V Fishing programs	2	0
W Nature programs	10	1
X Other Community garden	2	
Y Other: Dog Park	1	
Z Other: Friends of Sarasota County Parks	2	
1 Yoga on the beach		1
2 Rec center		1

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Exercise #2 – Improvements to Existing Facilities

Participants at the two workshops listed the following proposed improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities:

Blalock Park
- Clean up the shrubbery

Brohard Park
- Control animal/human/pesticide waste flowing into Gulf
- Water quality (stormwater)
- More parking
- Easier access to the pier/pedestrian way to pier
- Marked crosswalk on Harbor Dr.

Centennial Park
- Leave as is
- Make it a full park
- Build parking garage where “Classics” is
- Widen entry/exit at the west end on Nassau
- Add picnic tables/benches to enjoy carry-out from local restaurants

Chuck Reiter Park
- Expand parking capacity or direct to school lot across street
- Fill ditch and create pull-in parking and a sidewalk down the east side
- Parking needs paving
- Make former agreement with Student Leadership School for jointly used parking so it could be marked as such

Hecksher Park
- Updated bathrooms needed
- Love the courts
- Love the nature here

Heritage Park
- Improve walkway through park
- Light the planned newly renovated walkway

Higel Marine Park
- Double the size of boat ramp
- More dock spaces on east side

Marina Park
- Needs a park sign
- Restroom is needed

Maxine Barritt Park
- Water quality
- More parking
- Improve grounds maintenance

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- Plant additional shade trees
- Good place for amphitheater between pavilion and parking
- Upgrade the landscape
- Awesome park
- More beach view platforms/tables

Pinebrook Park

- Leave alone
- Lighting
- Upgrade walking path, exercise stations
- More pickleball courts
- Trash receptacles
- Keep as a bird sanctuary
- Wildlife area from Water St. to Creek
- Needs a flashing caution light on stoplight
- Clean up/fix up exercise stations
- Benches to sit on
- Keep 3-way stop sign at Water and Pinebrook
- Keep wooded area
- Improve grounds and facility maintenance – including trails and bridge
- Use more of this area – not just walking trails
- Kayak launch on Curry Creek
- We need this to remain a preserve – save our eagles
- Parking

Service Club Park

- Water quality
- Expand parking area
- 2-4 more picnic areas as people seem to enjoy a picnic at this park
- Create community garden with hedges to shield from neighboring site
- Sand volleyball not used convert to tennis or pickleball court
- Make east of Harbor Dr. overflow parking more attractive to users

Venetian Waterway

- Extend bike trail full length of intracoastal on west bank
- Water quality
- Improved maintenance
- Shaded rest stops with tables for lunch
- Plant trees
- Added restrooms along ICW near Circus Bridge
- Create trail access across Route 41
- Extend trail to the beach
- Better signage

Venezia Park

- Shell for summer concerts
- More pocket parks in city
- Leave park in its natural state

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- Need curb cuts for car access
- Leave Australian Pines
- Take out invasive trees and plant with native trees
- Add special interest like art
- Can lions and associated brush be removed for traffic visibility at stop signs
- Needs an area to swing a golf club
- No more benches for the homeless to sleep on – scary at night when walking the dog
- Park should be completely renovated with a walking path installed

Venice Myakka River Park

- Paved Parking
- Make more effort to publicize Park so residents know about it
- Improve canoe/Kayak launch
- Keep as natural as possible
- Kayak launch on Curry Creek
- We need this to remain a preserve – save our eagles
- Parking

Wellfield Park

- Keep preserve as is
- Keep the pinebrook trail – don't change it
- Work-out trail is great, just right, keep as is
- Keep it maintained
- Improve the drainage on the baseball fields
- Improve facility maintenance
- Plant additional trees
- Leave park in its natural state
- Need curb cuts for car access
- Reconsider the whole use of land
- Piecemeal development has resulted in poor facilities layout

Exercise #3 – Priority Spending

The top spending priorities for residents in the northeast included:

1. Improvements/ maintenance of existing parks, community center, and recreation facilities
2. Improvements/ maintenance of existing trails
3. Improvements/ maintenance of existing beach access parks
4. Purchase of additional park land

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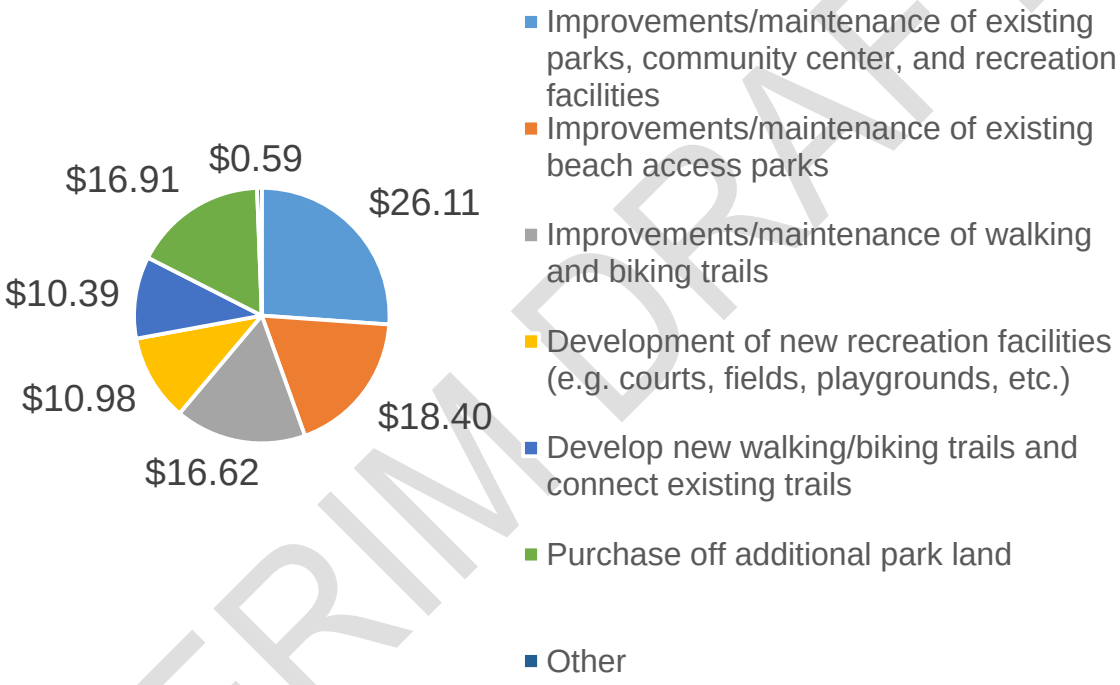
The top spending priorities for residents on the island included:

1. Improvements/ maintenance of existing beach access parks
2. Development of new recreation facilities
3. Purchase of additional park land
4. Develop new walking/biking trails and connect existing trails

Figure 3.2 below shows the priorities based on the combined meetings:

Figure 3.2 – Combined Public Workshop Top Spending Priorities (Participants each had $100 to "spend" between priorities)



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Exercise #4 – Additional Comments

Participants' additional comments included:

Workshop #1, Waterford:

- Take other agency facilities (e.g. County) into account when in planning
- Incorporate Master Plan, LOS Standards, into land development codes
- Help us organize waterway cleanups including e-mail lists and media exposure
- Need new Parks in NE Venice, including:

  Facilities
  Adult softball fields
  Off-leash dog park
  Outdoor basketball courts

Outdoor pickleball courts
Indoor pickleball courts
Bocce ball courts

Programs
Adult leagues
Adult fitness and wellness programs
Senior adult programs
Adults arts and crafts programs
Fishing programs
Pickleball lessons and leagues

Priorities
Adult Recreational Facilities in Northeast Venice (East of I-75 and North of Border), in order of priority, include outdoor pickleball courts, off-leash dog parks, bocce ball courts

Additional Comments:

When considering the use of Park Impact Fees, neighborhood areas in which the funds are generated should be top priority when it comes to the spending those funds. For example, most all the City Park Impact Fees over the past several years have been generated in an area east of I-75 and north of Border Road (Northeast Venice). That will be even more so for this FY and coming FY's. Yet, of the 31 parks in the City of Venice, Northeast Venice has only 1 of those parks and that on land donated by a developer building homes in Northeast Venice.

Workshop #2, Venice Community Center:

- Blalock Park getting too crowded, over-developed, cluttered – needs to be simplified
- Each park needs a master plan
- Proposed improvements need to be reviewed by park professional
- Impact fees from building in the NE need to be spent in the NE

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3.2 Stakeholder Interviews

The Toole Design Group Team conducted interviews with the Mayor, members of City Council, and other stakeholders on February 24 and 25. Participants included (in order of interviews):

1. Bob Lentz, Sarasota County Croquet Club
2. Barry Snyder, Chair, Planning Commission
3. Deborah Anderson, City Council member
4. Kit McKeon, City Council member
5. Bob Daniels, City Council member
6. Linda Andrews, Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
7. Jeanette Gates, City Council member
8. Phil Ellis, President, Venice Area Beautification, Inc.
9. Kathleen Weeden, City Engineer, Capital Projects
10. Rich Cautero, City Council member
11. Monty Andrews, Bicycling advocate
12. Joan Piper, Vice-Chair, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
13. James Hagler, Director of Historic Resources
14. Fred Fraize, City Council member
15. Mark Reese, Venice Youth Soccer Association
16. John Holic, Mayor

Full interview notes are included in Chapter 6: Appendices.

Priority Needs

Almost half of the participants felt that the redevelopment of Wellfields Park is the City's #1 parks and recreation priority. Proposed improvements include new croquet courts, restrooms, additional lighted multi-purpose fields, parking, and a playground.

Two other top priorities mentioned by several participants include:

1) improved connectivity through trails, bike lanes, sidewalks, and complete streets including the River-to-River Trail, and Pinebrook and Border Roads

2) general improvements to existing parks such as pickleball courts, site furnishings, historic markers, signage, and more things for younger people to do

Other priority needs listed by participants included:

- Upgrade beach
- Equal treatment by the County
- Define "open space" in the Comp Plan
- Purchase property for conservation
- New south County sports complex
- New community park in NE Venice
- Reconstitution of the Parks Board to be more representative
- Re-negotiate inter-local agreements with the County
- Acquire and develop the Ajax property

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- Development of a County urban forest
- Dog friendly park(s)
- Venezia Park
- City-wide design standards for historic markers, signage, site furnishings, and amenities

Funding/ Implementation

Most participants supported the City's typical parks and recreation funding sources including the general fund, county surtax, grants, user fees, and impact fees. Over 50% of the participants also supported a referendum to ask voters to support bonds to pay for needed improvements.

Other funding techniques mentioned by participants included:

- Amendment 1 funds
- FAA support at fairgrounds
- Developer donations in lieu of fees
- Venice Area Beautification (VABI) fundraising
- Volunteers
- Public Private Partnerships (P3s)
- Naming rights
- Penny sales tax

Comparable Communities

Participants mentioned the following comparable communities as possible benchmarks for Venice:

- Other cities with Nolan plans
- St. Petersburg, FL
- Marymount, OH
- North Muskegon, MI
- Downtown Greenville, SC
- Sanibel Island, FL
- Naples, FL
- Vero Beach, FL
- Winter Park, FL

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3.3 Sarasota County Statistically Valid Mail-In/Telephone Survey Findings

As part of the Sarasota County Parks, Preserves and Recreation Master Plan, Toole Design Group Team member ETC Institute conducted a Statistically Valid Community Interest and Opinion Survey for Sarasota County. The survey was completed during the summer of 2015 to help determine parks, recreation and cultural priorities for the community. The survey was mailed to a random sample of households in Sarasota County, with an option to complete the survey in Spanish. Households that did not return the survey by mail received a follow-up phone call to complete the survey over the telephone if desired. A total of 748 households throughout the County completed the survey. 15 percent of these respondents (approximately 127 households) lived in the City of Venice. Following are key findings from City of Venice respondents.

It is important to note that while the findings from the County-wide survey are considered to be statistically valid, the findings from the City of Venice respondents are not. This is due to the small sample size of residents that responded from the City of Venice. These findings will be compared with the City of Venice Survey Monkey On-line Survey findings to compare results.

Key Findings

- **77.4 percent of respondents from the City of Venice indicated the primary reason they use Sarasota County-owned or operated facilities and activities is because they are close to their home/residence**. Other reasons households use facilities and activities include: enjoyment of the outdoors (42.7 percent), quality of natural aspects (29.8 percent), and that facilities have the right amenities (23.4 percent).
- **41.9 percent of respondents from the City of Venice indicated the primary reason most likely to prevent or limit households from using Sarasota County owned or operated facilities and activities is because they are too far from our residence**. Other reasons likely to prevent or limit households include: facilities are too crowded/classes full (30.6 percent), they do not know what programs are offered (24.2 percent), or security is insufficient/feels unsafe (17.7 percent).
- Based on the sum of households programs, special events and activities participated in most often, **83.6 percent of respondents from the City of Venice indicated they use beach recreation most often**. Other programs, special events and activities participated in most often include: walking/hiking/running (65.5 percent), swimming (recreationally) (50 percent), and cycling/biking (49.1 percent).
- **79.8 percent of households from the City of Venice indicated that they have a need for public recreational beach space. Other facilities respondents have a need for include: nature trails & centers/wildlife habitats (58.1 percent), water access locations (56.5 percent), paved trails (55 percent),**
- **53.2 percent indicated that public recreational beach space is most important type of recreational facility to their household**. Other facilities that respondents indicated as “most important” were nature trails and centers/wildlife habitats (35.5 percent), water access locations (26.6 percent), and paved trails (23.4 percent).

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- Based upon the combined percentage of “very important” and “somewhat important” responses among City of Venice respondents, **93.3 percent indicated that allocating funds to repair, replace or expand beach parks is most important.** Other facilities that respondents felt were important to invest in include park restrooms (83.9 percent), hiking, walking, and biking trails (79.1 percent) and public access at existing preserves (74.4 percent).
- **69.4 percent learned about Sarasota County’s Programs and Activities during the past 12 months from friends and neighbors**. Other ways respondents learned about programs and activities include: website/parks online (60.9 percent), newspaper articles (62.1 percent), and newspaper advertisements (34.7 percent).

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3.4 Online Survey

The Toole Design Group Team worked with the City of Venice Public Works Director to develop an On-line Survey Monkey Survey that would allow residents throughout the City an opportunity to provide input regarding a variety of parks and recreation needs and desires. A total of 396 responses were received over the course of 6 weeks in the months of February and March of 2016. The full survey findings are included in Chapter 6: Appendices. Key City-wide findings include:

- 85.9 percent of respondents have visited a parks or recreation facility owned in operated by the City of Venice during the past 12 months.
- 41.9 percent of respondents identified Venice Beach as the most visited Park, followed by Legacy Trail (29.3 percent), and Centennial Park (25.2 percent).
- 92.2 percent of respondents rated the overall physical conditions of park as “Good” or better.
- The three primary reasons that most likely prevented respondents from using City of Venice owned and operated parks included Distance from their residence (60.6 percent), Not knowing what programs are offered (36.9 percent), and Lack of parking (32.1 percent).
- Paved walking and biking trails (46.9 percent), Small neighborhood parks (41.8 percent), Nature and hiking Trails (40.9 percent), Natural areas and wildlife habitat (37.1 percent), and Off-leash dog parks (34.5 percent) were the top five facilities respondents noted they need more of.
- Paved walking and biking trails (46 percent), Nature and hiking trails (38.9 percent), Small neighborhood parks (31.1 percent), and Natural areas and wildlife habitat (31.1 percent) were identified as the four most important facilities to respondent households.
- Adult fitness and wellness programs (41.1 percent), Senior adult programs (37.8 percent), Nature programs (36.7 percent), Concession/vending in beaches and parks (26.9 percent), and Adult arts and craft programs (23.6 percent) were the top five programs respondents noted that there are not enough of.
- Adult fitness and wellness (44.2 percent), Nature programs (37.7 percent), Senior adult programs (37.3 percent), and Special events (27.2 percent) were identified as the four most important programs to respondent households.
- 57.4 percent of respondents noted that they participate in City of Venice or Sarasota County recreation programs due to the location of the facility/program.
- 62.3 percent of respondents attend special events due to live music and 59.3 percent attend because they enjoy outdoor festivities.
- 65.6 percent of respondents noted that they would be very supportive of upgrading existing beach access parks (i.e. grounds, restrooms, concession, parking, shuttle access, etc.); 64.1 percent of respondents noted that they would be very supportive of developing new walking/biking trails and connecting existing trails; 59.8 percent of respondents noted that they would be very supportive of upgrading existing walking and biking trails (i.e. repaving, widening, signage/wayfinding, water fountains, shaded seating areas, etc.); and 56.2 percent of respondents noted that they would be very supportive of upgrading existing neighborhood and community parks.
- Respondents noted that they would allocate$100 in the following categories:

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Improvements/maintenance of existing parks, pools, and recreation facilities	$23.34
Improvements/maintenance of existing beach access parks	$26.54
Improvements/maintenance of existing walking/biking trails	$19.99
Development of new recreation facilities (e.g. courts, fields, playgrounds, etc.)	$25.89
Develop new walking/biking trails and connect existing trails	$26.95
Purchase land and develop new Festival Grounds	$15.85
Purchase additional park land	$30.61
Other	$15.40

In addition to allowing for the analysis of city-wide response, the On-Line Survey was designed to allow for the geo-coding of survey respondents based on three primary areas of the City. Figure 3.3 below identifies the percentage of respondents that responded to the Survey from each of the survey response areas.

Figure 3.3 Survey Response Area

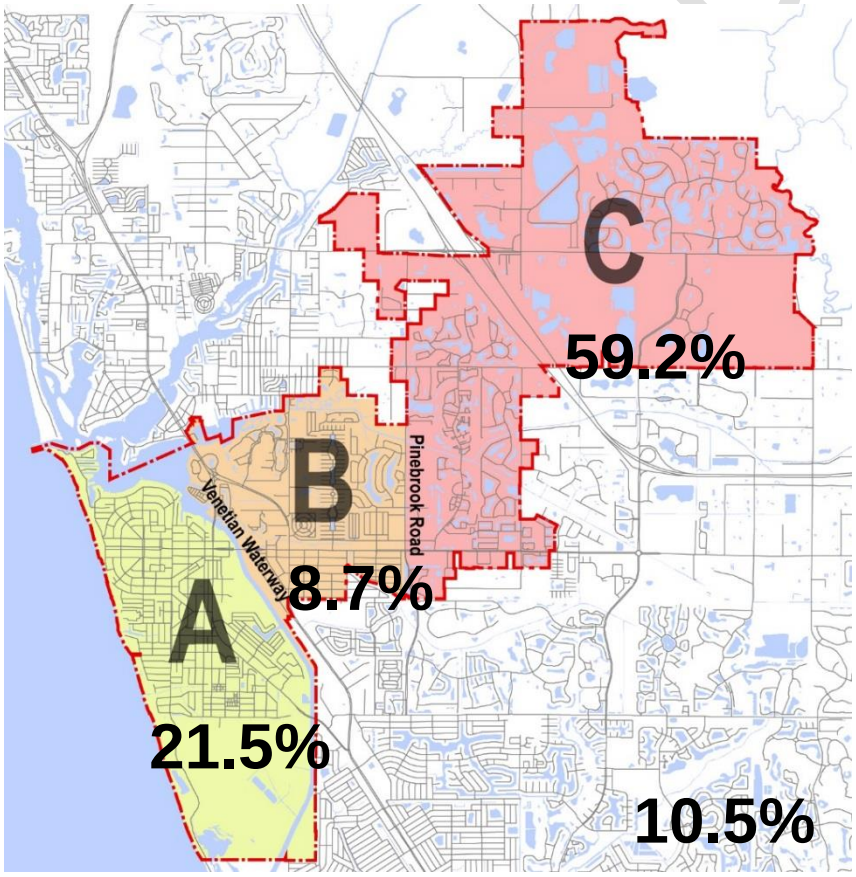

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Figure 3.4 below provides a summary matrix that compares the response of a few key questions from the survey, based on where respondents lived in the City. Complete survey responses based on geographic locations can be found in Chapter 6: Appendices.

Figure 3.4 – Key Question Survey Response Per City of Venice Geography Area

	Survey Responses Per City of Venice Geographic Area		
Survey Question	**A – On-Island** 85 Respondents 21.5 %	**B – Central Venice** 34 Respondents 8.7 %	**C- North East Venice** 234 Respondents 59.2 %
Q2 – Have you visited a City of Venice Park in the last 12 months?	Yes – 94%	Yes – 84.8%	Yes – 82.5%
Q3 – Top three City of Venice Parks that you visit most.	1. Venice Beach 2. Centennial Park 3. Humphris (South Jetty) Park	1. Humphris (South Jetty) Park 2. Venice Beach 3. Legacy Trail	1. Venice Beach 2. Venice Myakka River Park 3. Legacy Trail
Q5 – Three primary reasons that are most likely to prevent you from using a City of Venice Park.	1. Don't know what is being offered 2. Lack of parking 3. Facility too crowded/classes full	1. Other 2. Too far from residence 3. Facility too crowded/classes full	1. Too far from our residence 2. Don't know what is being offered 3. Lack of parking
Q6 – Facilities that you need more of.	1. Nature, hiking trails 2. Paved walking and biking trails 3. Natural areas and wildlife habitat 4. Canoe/kayak launches, Outdoor swimming pools/water park, Small neighborhood parks	1. Nature, hiking trails 2. Paved walking and biking trails 3. Amphitheater/band shell 4. Off-leash dog park	1. Small neighborhood parks 2. Paved walking and biking trails 3. Outdoor pickleball courts 4. Off-leash dog park
Q7 – Four facilities that are most important to your household.	1. Paved walking and biking trails 2. Nature, hiking trails 3. Natural areas and wildlife habitat 4. Small neighborhood parks	1. Paved walking and biking trails 2. Nature, hiking trails 3. Natural areas and wildlife habitat 4. Small neighborhood parks, Canoe / kayak launches	1. Paved walking and biking trails 2. Nature, hiking trails 3. Small neighborhood parks 4. Natural areas and wildlife habitat
Q8 – Programs that there aren't enough of.	1. Nature programs 2. Adult fitness and wellness programs	1. Concession/vending in beaches and parks 2. Nature programs	1. Senior adult programs 2. Adult fitness and wellness programs

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	3. Senior Adult programs, Concession /vending in beaches and parks 4. Adults arts and crafts programs	3. Water fitness programs 4. Youth arts and crafts programs, programs for disabled.	3. Nature programs 4. Concession /vending in beaches and parks
Q9 – Four programs that are most important to your household.	1. Adult fitness and wellness programs 2. Nature programs 3. Senior adult programs 4. Special events	1. Adult fitness and wellness programs 2. Nature programs 3. Senior adult programs 4. Concession /vending in beaches and parks	1. Adult fitness and wellness programs 2. Senior adult programs 3. Nature programs 4. Concession /vending in beaches and parks
Q15 – Actions that you would be Very Supportive of. (50% of respondents or more)	1. Developing new walking/biking trails 2. Upgrade existing beach access parks 3. Upgrade existing neighborhood community parks 4. Upgrade existing walking/biking trails	1. Upgrade existing beach access parks 2. Develop new walking/biking trails 3. Upgrade existing neighborhood and community parks 4. Upgrade existing walking/biking trails	1. Upgrade existing beach access parks 2. Develop new walking/biking trails 3. Upgrade existing walking/biking trails 4. Upgrade existing neighborhood and community parks
Q16 – How would you allocate an additional $100 dollars (Top 3)	1. $28.72 – Develop new walking/biking trails 2. $25.93 – Improvements / maintenance to existing parks 3. $25.10 -- Improvements / maintenance of existing walking/biking trails	1. $43.08 – Purchase additional park land 2. $ 39.64 – Improvements / maintenance of existing parks 3. $29.50 – Improvements /maintenance of existing beaches	1. $32.14 – Purchase additional park land 2. $ 30.27 – Development of new recreation facilities 3. $27.30 – Improvements /maintenance of existing beaches

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3.6 Summary of Needs and Priorities

Figures 3.5 illustrate the top priority action, facilities and program needs identified from each of the different needs assessment techniques.

Figure 3.5: Summary Needs

	Needs Assessment Techniques					
ACTIONS	On-Line Survey	Statistically Valid Survey	Community Input Meetings	Stakeholder Interviews	LOS Analysis	Site Evaluations
Improvements/maintenance of existing beach access parks	X	X	X	X		X
Improvements/maintenance of existing parks, pools, and recreation facilities	X		X	X		X
Purchase additional park land	X		X	X	X	
Develop new walking/biking trails and connect existing trails	X	X		X	X	
Improvements/maintenance of existing walking/biking trails			X	X		X
Development of new recreation facilities (e.g. courts, fields, playgrounds, etc.)	X				X	
FACILITIES						
Paved walking and biking trails	X	X		X	X	
Natural areas and wildlife habitat	X	X	X		X	
Nature, hiking trails	X	X				
Small neighborhood parks	X				X	
Off leash dog park	X		X			
Outdoor pickleball courts	X		X			
Outdoor swimming pools/water parks	X				X	
Outdoor basketball courts	X				X	
Canoe/kayak launch	X					
PROGRAMS						
Beach recreation	X	X				
Adult fitness and wellness programs	X		X			
Nature programs	X		X			
Water fitness programs	X	X				
Senior adult programs	X					
Adult arts and crafts programs	X					
Special events	X					
Fishing Programs	X					

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CHAPTER 4: LONG RANGE VISION

City of Venice staff, stakeholders, and consultants met on May 17, 2016 to develop a long range vision that responded to the City of Venice's Parks System Master Plan Needs Assessment top priority improvements. As discussed in Chapter 3: Outreach and Needs Assessment, top priority improvements included improvements to existing parks; acquisition of new parkland, primarily in the northeast; new walking/biking trails, and connections to existing trails; and natural areas and wildlife habitat. The agenda for the workshop included discussion about:

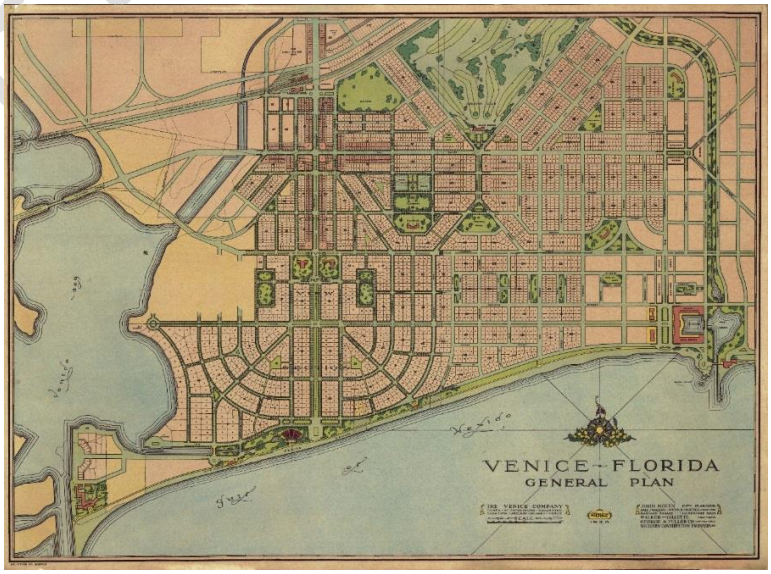
1. Maintaining the Integrity and Character of a John Nolen Public Realm
2. Beach Access Parks
3. Parks (Neighborhood, Community, Sports Complex, and Open Space Parks)
4. Natural Areas and Habitat
5. Trails and Bikeways

The workshop concluded with a public Open House, providing an opportunity for residents to review, discuss, and comment on the preliminary long range vision developed throughout the day.

Following is a summary of the long range parks and recreation vision. The summary includes proposed improvements to select parks that, per the scope of the project, were evaluated by the Toole Design Group Team and displayed in the form of aerial photographs during the Public Workshops for residents to provide input regarding desired improvements.

4.1 Maintaining the Integrity and Character of a John Nolen Public Realm

The workshop began with a discussion of the implications of John Nolen's historic plan for Venice. Nolen was a "visionary planner who brought European-style, walkable communities to the United States in the early 20th century. […]. City planners and academics regularly make pilgrimages to Venice, which Nolen designed in the mid-1920s, to experience what they call an example of one of the best-planned cities in the United States".[5]



[5] Hackett, Kim. "Venice Rethinks John Nolen's Historic City Plan." April 13, 2015. Accessed on June 15, 2016. https://www.venicemagazineonline.com/articles/2015/4/13/john-nolen-venice-city-plan.

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Nolen's vision for Venice included walkable neighborhoods for diverse income levels clustered around a central downtown; streets designed as linear parks, bringing the "country into the city"; parks within walking distance (1 or 2 blocks) of every home; parks used to buffer and protect natural areas; park designed for a variety of uses, including civic, active, and passive spaces; and use of a common Northern Italian/Mediterranean Revival architectural style for prominent buildings.

According to a recent article in Venice Magazine, this vision was embraced by City leaders and developers up until the real estate collapse of 2008. "But today, as building and development have recovered and Venice is expanding northeast, with about 4,000 approved housing units in a half-dozen communities on and near what used to be the Henry Ranch, Nolen's plan has been left behind in favor of suburban-style gated communities… "There are two Venices," says Don O'Connell, former president of the Venice Area Historical Society and owner of 30 apartments in the historic district. "We've got the island and then everything else.""[6]

The discussion focused on the relevance of Nolen's vision for both the historic downtown ("the island") as well as the suburban communities to the northeast. Topics included the parks system and "public realm" as a planning framework to connect the City; design character; relevance of historic pocket parks; and changing park needs and demands. Participants concluded the following:

- The general Nolen principles are still valid, but it will not be realistic to apply some of the urban metrics to the suburban northeast, such as providing a park within 1-2 blocks of every resident.
- The need for walkability (and "bike-ability") could be at least partly satisfied through wide sidewalks and bike lanes within existing roadway rights-of-ways.
- The historic parks system needs to be preserved and enhanced through improved maintenance, use of high quality site furnishings and amenities, additional facilities, and improved signage and way-finding.
- Park Design Standards should be developed for the city-wide parks system, including site furnishings, park shelters and structures, recreational facilities, and amenities. Use of these standards will help unify and visually connect the historic downtown with the rest of the City's residential/commercial areas.
- Architectural Design Standards should be developed for significant civic, institutional, and historical buildings, and codified into a City ordinance. Less significant buildings, such as picnic pavilions, and beach shelters, would be exempt from these standards and could be designed in a variety of styles.
- There are several upcoming opportunities to re-enforce the City's civic identity; the new library, the proposed heritage center and museum, and new recreation center space.

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[6] Hackett, Kim. "Venice Rethinks John Nolen's Historic City Plan." April 13, 2015. Accessed on June 15, 2016. https://www.venicemagazineonline.com/articles/2015/4/13/john-nolen-venice-city-plan.

The City should be proactive in making sure that new civic buildings reflect the City's desired character and image.

- It appears that there are at least three predominant architectural themes in the historic areas of the City: the beach theme, e.g. the Inn at the Beach; the modernist architecture considered part the Sarasota School of Architecture; and the Mediterranean Revival theme. The architectural design within the City's parks should be context sensitive, reflecting the predominant character of the area.
- Several commissions and boards share responsibility for architectural design, including the Historic Commission, Planning Commission, Public Art Advisory Council, and Architectural Review Board. These groups should convene for a one day "Architectural Summit" to discuss desired Architectural Design Standards, and the process for building consensus.
- It is important to protect the existing oak canopy along the City's boulevards and linear parks, which significantly contributes to the City's character and ambience. If planted as part of the Nolen Plan, many of these trees may be nearing the end of their natural lives and will need to be replaced. An Urban Forestry Plan should be developed by a qualified Arborist to protect – and gradually replace - this important resource.
- As the City has expanded to the northeast, it is not possible for all residents to walk or bike to the beach, parks, civic buildings, shops, restaurants, and other destinations. Demand for parking will continue to increase along with the number of visitors and suburban residents. The City should continue to manage traffic and access through public transit, parking, sidewalks, bikeways, and trails.

The resultant vision is to *"preserve and enhance the legacy of the historic Nolen Plan, while applying relevant Nolen-inspired planning principles throughout the City".*

North Italian / Mediterranean Revival Architecture Style proposed by the Nolen Plan

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North Italian / Mediterranean Revival Architecture Style in Existing Park Building

4.2 Beach Access Parks

The City's vision for beach access is "*to continue to provide safe, convenient access to enjoyable beach experiences for both residents and visitors".* Key elements of the vision include physical access (walking, bicycling, driving, parking, transit); capital improvements; and programming. The workshop discussion included access to both the Gulf Coast beaches, and the Intracoastal Waterway.

Gulf Coast Waterway Beach Access

The City of Venice and Sarasota County provide 11 beach access parks to approximately 14 miles of Gulf Coast beaches within the City limits. Primary beach parks include Venice Beach, Brohard Park, Maxine Barritt Park, and Service Club Park. According to residents and City staff, some of these parks and access parking areas exceed capacity during the peak winter season. Proposed improvements include:

- Make residents and visitors aware of all of the City's beach access parks, including those that are not as popular or well-known.
- Add, improve, and/or expand facilities and amenities such as restrooms, changing rooms, concessions, picnic tables, and shade structures.
- Add off-beach parking using roadway rights-of-ways such as the Esplanade and Golden Beach Boulevard. Such off-beach parking could be used in some cases to replace on-beach parking spaces to create space for expanded beach facilities.
- Construct a new pedestrian/bicycle trail and boardwalk access along the "Deer Gulley" Greenway, adjacent to Gulf Drive in south Venice.
- Provide spaces for food trucks or additional concessions at the most popular sites.
- Identify other opportunities for off-beach parking and shuttles (from downtown and area hotels) during peak season.
- Provide additional opportunities for popular programs such as fitness, yoga, music, each volleyball, and special events at the beach. Such programs need to consider emergency access requirements, nesting sea turtle regulations, nesting birds, and post-event clean

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up. Any commercial (fee-charging) programs require prior an approved permit from Sarasota County.

Intracoastal Waterway Access

Beach access could also be enhanced through improved access to the Intracoastal Waterway. One idea discussed at the visioning workshop included the establishment of a multi-modal hub along the Venetian Waterway and Seaboard Avenue. “Port Venice”, as it is being called for this plan, could be a multi-modal transportation and entertainment hub that includes parking, restaurants and shops, access to the Legacy Trail, bike rentals, shuttles to downtown and the beach, water taxis, gondolas, sunset dinner cruises, and/or other multi-modal connections to improve access. Themed architecture, educational exhibits, and programs could also help preserve and interpret Venice’s rich history and its relationship to the Gulf Coast.

Improvements to Specific Beach Access Parks and Intracoastal Waterway Access Parks

During the Needs Assessment process, City of Venice residents provided input regarding specific improvements that they would like to see implemented in various Beach Access Parks. Additionally, the Toole Design Group Team added recommendations to improve these parks based on findings from the park site evaluations and the needs assessment.

Following is list of improvements proposed for specific Beach Access Parks. The City should consider using the improvements identified below as a starting point. While some of these improvements can be achieved through maintenance and capital improvements, others may require the development of conceptual park master plans due to the size and role of the park in the City’s park system.

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Brohard Park

Brohard Park is the City's largest Beach Access Park. At 67 acres, the park is divided into four parks, Brohard Park, Maxine Barritt Park, South Brohard Park, and South Brohard Paw Park. Collectively, these parks provide visitors with a variety of experiences ranging from sunbathing to playing at the playground, walking and jogging on paved trails, hiking through natural areas, and letting dogs run loose in the enclosed paw park or at the beach paw park.

Brohard Park

Improvements that the City may consider include:

- Constructing the planned boardwalk and pavilions
- Adding more parking
- Providing easier access to the pier/pedestrian way to pier
- Improving pedestrian circulation to the park by adding a crosswalk on Harbor Drive
- Improving maintenance associated with turf management and horticultural maintenance to enhance the appearance of the park
- Planting additional shade trees
- Adding more beach view platforms/tables
- Replacing furnishings to be consistent with the City's desired character and image
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental/interpretive signage

Higel Marine Park

Higel Marine Park is just under three acres in size. It provides City residents with access to the Venetian Waterway and the Gulf of Mexico. The park is comprised of two boat lanes, a wooden dock, vehicle and boat trailer parking, and a restroom building.

Higel Marine Park

Improvements that the City may consider include:

- Doubling the size of the boat ramp
- Improving maintenance associated with turf management and horticultural maintenance to enhance the appearance of the park
- Replacing furnishings to be consistent with the City's desired character and image
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental/ interpretive signage

INTER

Legacy Park

Legacy Park is the City's newest park. Encompassing three acres, the park is comprised of a canoe/kayak launch, picnic shelters and pavilions, a restroom building, a multi-purpose open space, and a multi-purpose loop trail that connects to the Legacy Trail.

Legacy Park

Improvements that the City may consider include:

- Adding additional amenities such as exercise equipment, a playground, and bocce ball courts
- Replacing furnishings to be consistent with the City's desired character and image
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental/ interpretive signage

INTER

Service Club Park

Service Club Park is a seven-acre Beach Access park. The park is comprised of shell and grass parking spaces, a restroom building, a volleyball court, picnic shelters, and a beach access boardwalk with multiple picnic shelters.

Service Club Park

Improvements that the City may considerinclude:

- Reconstructing the boardwalk
- Expanding parking area
- Restoring Scrub Jay Habitat
- Adding 2-4 more picnic areas
- Replacing the underutilized sand volleyball court with more parking
- Replacing furnishings to be consistent with the City's desired character and image
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental/interpretive signage

INTER

Venetian Waterway

The Venetian Waterway is one of the City's premier linear parks. It contains approximately 10 miles of trails along most of the waterway.

Venetian Waterway

Improvements that the City may consider include:

- Improving maintenance associated with turf management and horticultural maintenance to enhance the appearance of the park
- Adding shaded rest stops with tables along the trail
- Planting shade trees
- Adding restrooms along the waterway near Circus Bridge
- Extending the trail to the beach
- Adding and replacing furnishings to be consistent with the City's desired character and image
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental/ interpretive signage

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4.3 Parks (Neighborhood, Community, Sports Complex, and Open Space Parks)

The City's vision for parks is *"to provide equitable access to passive and active recreational opportunities throughout the City".* Thanks to the Nolen Plan, the City of Venice enjoys a relatively high level of service for parks acreage. However, the new residential communities in the northeast are served primarily by private parks and recreation facilities, and lack access to public parks and facilities such as athletic fields, trails, dog parks, and natural areas. Therefore, the visioning discussion for parks focused on the future of the existing Wellfield Park near the center of the City, and the proposed Ajax property to the northeast.

Wellfield Park

The 160-acre Wellfield Park is owned by the City, and maintained by the County through an inter-local agreement. Existing facilities include one football field, 2 multi-purpose fields, three soccer fields, two softball fields, three baseball fields, batting cages, disc golf, croquet club field, restrooms, and a police and fire training facility. The northern undeveloped portion of the park, often referred to as Pinebrook Park, has two lighted tennis courts, a basketball court and fitness/nature trail.

Current issues at Wellfield Park, identified during the planning process, include:

- A need for better maintenance, particularly associated with turf management and horticultural maintenance around common and parking areas
- Drainage problems
- A need for facility improvements
- A need for improved pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation
- A need to provide more facilities that meet the needs of local Venice residents; most of the athletic fields are used by non-resident, youth sports associations
- A desire to keep the northern portion of the park in its existing natural state

Workshop participants indicated that soccer use is high at Wellfield; football and girls' softball are "holding steady"; and baseball use is declining. Participants also noted that there is inadequate parking for attendees at football and soccer games, and traffic congestion and noise has had an adverse impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

Participants concluded that the park should be redesigned as a multi-purpose community park that serves the needs for both athletic leagues and local residents, including:

- Improved drainage, circulation, parking, and drainage
- Upgraded athletic fields for softball, soccer, and football
- New dedicated pickleball courts
- Off-leash dog park
- Trails, including connections to Pinebrook Park
- Playground(s)
- Picnic areas and pavilions
- Bicycle trail/transit access
- Concessions
- New/improved restrooms

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- Formally splitting the park and designating the undeveloped northern portion of the park as “Pinebrook Preserve” and keeping the northern portion undeveloped and as a bird sanctuary
- Connecting to Curry Creek Preserve
- Removing lime sludge pits
- Bridging to connect the north and south halves of the site
- Upgrading walking path and exercise stations
- Improving pedestrian connectivity to the park by adding a flashing caution light on street crossings to the park
- Adding a canoe/kayak launch along Curry Creek located to the north of the site
- Adding and replacing furnishings to be consistent with the City’s desired character and image
- Adding additional seating areas
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental/interpretive signage

Based on the declining demand for baseball, the City may be able to eliminate one or two fields to create more land for the other desired park facilities. Relocation of the police and fire training facility could also free up space for park improvements. The County is also considering the construction of several regional sports complexes within the next decade, which could eventually relieve demand for some of the other athletic fields at Wellfield Park.

A master plan should be developed for the park that explores various alternatives, phasing options, and cost alternatives. Operations and maintenance costs, roles, and responsibilities should also be discussed. Participants in the master planning process should include the City, County, residents, sports association representatives, and other key stakeholders. Because of the number of stakeholders, it will be particularly important to define the consensus-building and decision-making process at the beginning of the process.

Ajax Property

The City is acquiring the 34-acre Ajax Paving site in the northeast area of the City. The site has been used for paving equipment, materials, production, and storage. Much of the vegetation has been cleared. The site has potential to meet some of suburban residents’ parks and recreation needs that are not being met within their neighborhoods.

Workshop participants concluded that the park should be designed as a multi-purpose community park including:

- Pickleball courts
- Dog park
- Playground
- Wellness trail
- A multi-purpose softball field (multi-purpose)
- Kayaking/canoeing access to 400-acre County lake
- Fishing
- Picnic shelters
- Restoration of native habitat and landscape

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- Parking
- Restrooms
- Shade trees

Participants also concluded that the park should not include other athletic fields, lighting, or a band shell. Informed by the input collected through the Parks Master Plan, the City should consider developing a master plan for the site. The master plan should include a robust public engagement process.

Other City Park Improvements

As noted previously, during the Needs Assessment process, City of Venice residents provided input on specific improvements that they would like to see implemented in various parks. These improvements ranged from maintenance enhancements, to adding specific facilities, to leaving parks unimproved. Additionally, the Toole Design Group Team added recommendations to improve specific parks based on findings from the park site evaluations and the needs assessment.

Following is list of improvements proposed for specific parks. The City should consider using the improvements identified below as a starting point. While some of these improvements can be achieved through maintenance and/or incremental improvements, others may require the development of conceptual master plans and construction drawings due to the scope of proposed improvements and the significance e of the park.

Pocket Parks at Armada, Castile Street, Barcelona, and Pensacola Road

The Pocket Parks at Armada Road, Castile Street, Barcelona Avenue, and Pensacola Road were part of the original Nolen Plan. The purpose of these parks was to provide residents with close-to-home leisure opportunities, while also facilitating pedestrian access to the beach. Over time, these parks have been forgotten, misused, and even encroached upon. For example, the Pocket Park at Castile Street commonly referred to as the Granada Pocket Park is currently used as a trash dump site. Additionally, one of the adjacent residents constructed a carport on the access-way.

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Trash Dump Site at Pocket Park at Castile Street

Residential Car Port Built on Access Way to Pocket Park at Castile Street

The City should reclaim these parks as an integral part of the Nolen Plan and the City's park system. Additionally, the City should look to improve these pocket parks by adding amenities

and furnishings that that help activate the space while not creating a nuisance for surrounding residents. These improvements may include, but not be limited to benches, movable tables and chairs with shade umbrellas, a central water feature, a small open greenspace, a small community garden, or the like. The style of amenities and furnishings should be consistent with the City's desired character and image. The following page contains images of comparable small pocket parks in the community of Seaside, Florida. The design of this community is based on many of the principles used by John Nolen for the City of Venice. These pocket parks play an integral role in the community's parks and open space system.

Pocket Park in Seaside, Florida

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Pocket Park in Seaside, Florida

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Centennial Park

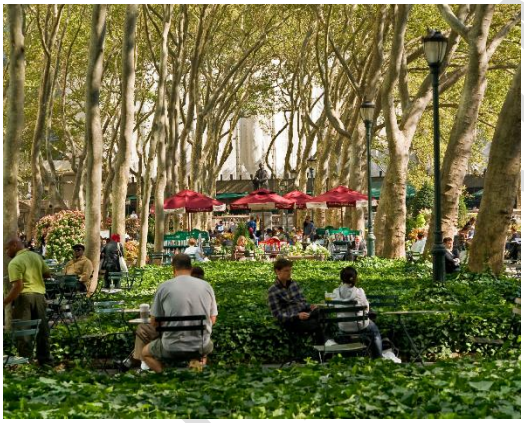
Centennial Park is a two-acre park located in the heart of the City. The park is comprised predominately of a parking lot with a small restroom building, pavilion, and seating area. The park is used as the primary parking location for downtown stores and restaurants. During the needs assessment process, mixed ideas for park improvements were expressed by residents. Some residents expressed a desire to see the park remain as a parking lot, while others expressed a desire to see the park transformed into an urban park.

Centennial Park

Figure 4.1 below shows a concept of how the park might be transformed into an urban park. On-street parking could line the entire park to provide some parking spaces. Signage and wayfinding could point residents and visitors to alternate parking locations located throughout the downtown area. Additionally, if deemed necessary, a parking structure could be built in an adjacent location to provide additional parking.

Park amenities could include, but not be limited to a multi-purpose open space for picnicking, sun bathing, informal pick-up games, and festivals; stage/band shell for concerts; plaza spaces for movable tables and chairs and small urban sports such as bocce ball, horseshoe pit, corn hole, and the like; a playground and/or splash pad; and furnishings, signage, wayfinding, and environmental / interpretive signage that are consistent with the City's desired character and image.

Figure 4.1 Centennial Park – Urban Park Concept



Urban park space images including spaces with movable tables and chairs and bocce ball courts under tree canopy, and yoga classes in multi-purpose lawn.

Another option could be developing a portion of the park as a parking structure and leaving the rest of the park to be transformed into an urban park. The parking structure could be lined with storefronts on the first floor and residences on the upper floors to mask the parking structure from the street and activate the surrounding streets and park. Figure 4.2 below includes in illustration of what the transformation of the space might look like.

Figure 4.2 Centennial Park – Urban Park + Mixed-Used Development with Parking Structure Concept

Liner buildings in front of parking structure in Mizner Park, Boca Raton, FL.

The City of Naples' Cambier Park provides another example of a small, downtown urban park that draws residents and visitors downtown for concerts, festivals, tennis, children's play, picnicking, and people-watching.

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Chuck Reiter Park

Chuck Reiter Park is a nine acre Sports Complex. Home to the Venice Baseball Little League, the park is comprised of four ball fields, multiple batting cages, dated buildings including a concession building with restrooms, and unimproved parking spaces. The park is surrounded by a variety of housing types including manufactured housing, single-family homes, condominiums, and a charter middle school.

Chuck Reiter Park Ball Field

The City will be adding a playground to the park in the near future. Additional improvements that the City may consider include:

- Completing a park master plan
- Improving maintenance associated with turf management and horticultural maintenance in common and parking areas to enhance the appearance of the park
- Improving circulation
- Improving park buildings
- Expanding parking capacity of the park by adding on-street parking along the edges of the park and/or establishing a parking agreement with the charter school to share parking
- Paving parking lots
- Relocating some facilities to a nearby park to decompress the park and create more multi-purpose open space/un-programmed park space and seek opportunities to add amenities for multiple age groups including adult exercise equipment, wellness trail, shelters, movable tables and chairs, and the like
- Replacing furnishings to be consistent with the City's desired character and image
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental / interpretive signage

Hecksher Park

Hecksher Park is a 3.2-acre Community Park located in downtown Venice, next to City Hall. The Park is comprised of six tennis courts; one full-court basketball court with two additional half-courts; 18 shuffle board courts, two playgrounds, and a parking lot. The park is home to the Venice Shuffleboard Club and is heavily used by shuffleboard players and tennis players.

Hecksher Park

Maintained by the County, the park appears dated and is in need of maintenance and capital improvements. Improvements that the City may consider include:

- Completing a park master plan
- Improving maintenance associated with turf management and horticultural maintenance to enhance the appearance of the park
- Improving circulation
- Updating park structures including bathrooms, shelters, storage buildings, and Shuffleboard Club Building
- Improving playground area
- Relocating some facilities to a nearby park, (e.g. Venezia Park) to decompress the park and create more multi-purpose open space/un-programmed park space
- Replacing furnishings to be consistent with the City's desired character and image
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental/interpretive signage

Heritage Park

Heritage Park is a four-acre linear Urban Open Space in the center of Venice Avenue. The linear park connects City Hall to the beach. The park is comprised of an asphalt path that winds through a mature tree canopy. The path is bounded by seating areas and various historical and cultural monuments, exhibits, plaques, and artwork that “tells the City’s story”.

Heritage Park

Improvements that the City may consider include:

- Improving walkway through the park by widening and evening the path (Currently under design)
- Lighting the walkway (Currently under design)
- Improving maintenance associated with turf management and horticultural maintenance to enhance the appearance of the park
- Replacing existing park furnishings (e.g. bollards, benches, trash receptacles, etc.) to be consistent with the City’s chosen design standards
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental / interpretive signage

Venezia Park

Planned as a field park by John Nolen, Venezia Park is an approximately four-acre Neighborhood Park located half a mile south of Hecksher Park. The park has limited facilities and amenities including a playground, picnic tables, and an unimproved multi-purpose open space. There is sufficient space in the park to add additional facilities and amenities, especially considering that other nearby city parks are over programmed spatially and have very limited multi-purpose open space/un-programmed areas. The edge of the park is bordered by exotic-invasive Australian Pine Trees that provide great shade, but inhibit healthy ground cover growth. Additionally, limited irrigation and maintenance deters from the overall aesthetic of the park.

Venezia Park

Improvements that the City may consider include:

- Completing a park master plan
- Relocating facilities from Hecksher Park and adding additional facilities such as tennis courts, pickleball courts, and shuffleboard courts that would decompress Hecksher Park and provide residents with multi-purpose open space/un-programmed areas
- Improving maintenance associated with turf management and horticultural maintenance to enhance the appearance of the park
- Adding a gazebo for modest gatherings
- Removing invasive trees and replacing them with native shade trees
- Adding additional facilities and amenities such as a wellness path, exercise equipment, picnic areas, movable table and chairs with umbrellas, and the like
- Adding and replacing furnishings to be consistent with the City's desired character and image
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental/interpretive signage

Venice Myakka River Park

Venice Myakka River Park is the City's eastern most park. This 10-acre park provides residents with a multi-purpose trail, picnic shelters, and a canoe/kayak launch to the Myakka River.

Venice Mayakka River Park

Improvements that the City may consider include:

- Improving canoe/kayak launch
- Adding signage, wayfinding, and environmental/interpretive signage

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4.4 Natural Areas and Habitat

Nature parks were rated as a top priority by City residents. As discussed in the first workshop, the preservation and/or restoration of natural areas is consistent with Nolen's legacy of protecting natural resources and bringing the "country" into the City. A tag line was suggested at the workshop to promote the City's natural areas:

"Put the **"e" (environment)** back in V**e**nic**e".**

Workshop participants proposed the restoration of wildlife corridors and/or native habitat wherever possible including the Florida Power and Light (FPL) corridor, storm water canals and corridors, utility corridors, parks, and other public lands. When corridors cross privately owned lands, the City should require and enforce wildlife access. Figure 4.3 illustrates corridors identified in the workshop.

The City (including the Environmental Advisory Group) could advocate for native planting along canals; protection of wetlands and nesting areas; greenways and habitat/wildlife corridors; more stringent code requirements; and elimination of exotic vegetation. Specific projects identified by participants include:

- Restoring Curry Creek
- Protecting wetlands, nesting, areas, birding

Additionally, the City should work with Sarasota County to develop a City-wide management plans for its natural areas and habitat that includes management goals and objectives; site management plans, including recreational access; best practices; and specific management actions. The management plan should address both public and private lands, and incorporate the Venice Area Beautification Inc. (VABI) "ribbons of Venice".

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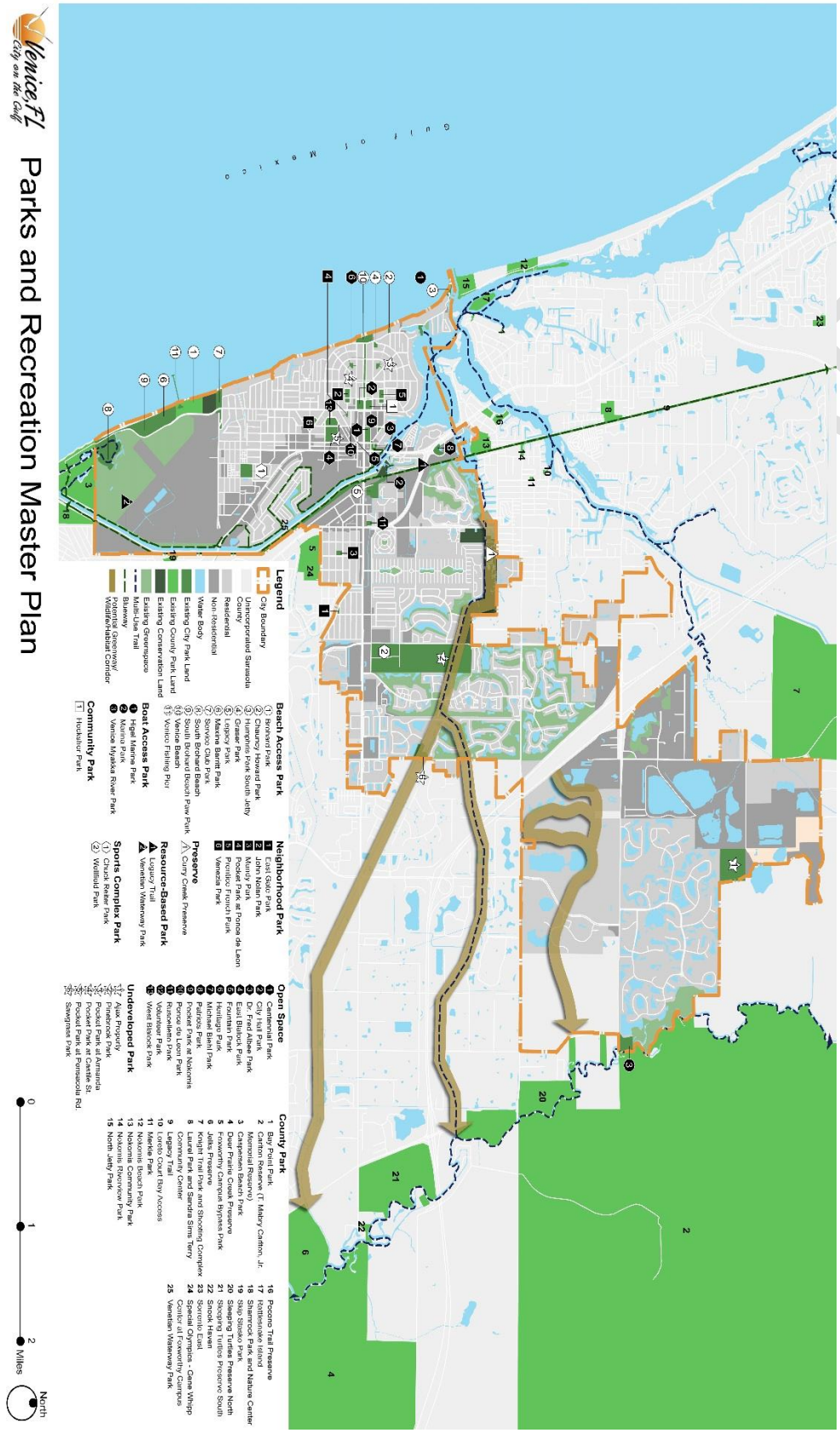
Figure 4.3 Proposed Greenway/Wildlife/Habitat Corridors



4.5 Trails and Bikeways

While the downtown area was designed for bicycle/pedestrian connectivity, the eastern suburban areas were planned and designed to be automobile-centric. A well-planned and designed City-wide bikeways and trails system could make the entire City bicycle/pedestrian friendly, including “sharrows” (shared roadways), bike lanes, cycle tracks, sidewalks, and multi-purpose trails.

Figure 4.4 illustrates the trails and bikeways improvements identified by workshop participants. These improvements enhance the City’s existing bikeways system illustrated in the Comprehensive Plan.

Specific improvements identified at the workshop include expanding sharrows throughout Downtown Venice, constructing safe bicycle/pedestrian crossings at U.S. 41 and Venice Avenue bridge, connecting Downtown Venice to Wellfield Park and the northeast portion of the City, and exploring the feasibility of running a ferry to provide bike/pedestrian connectivity between South Jetty Park to North Jetty Park.

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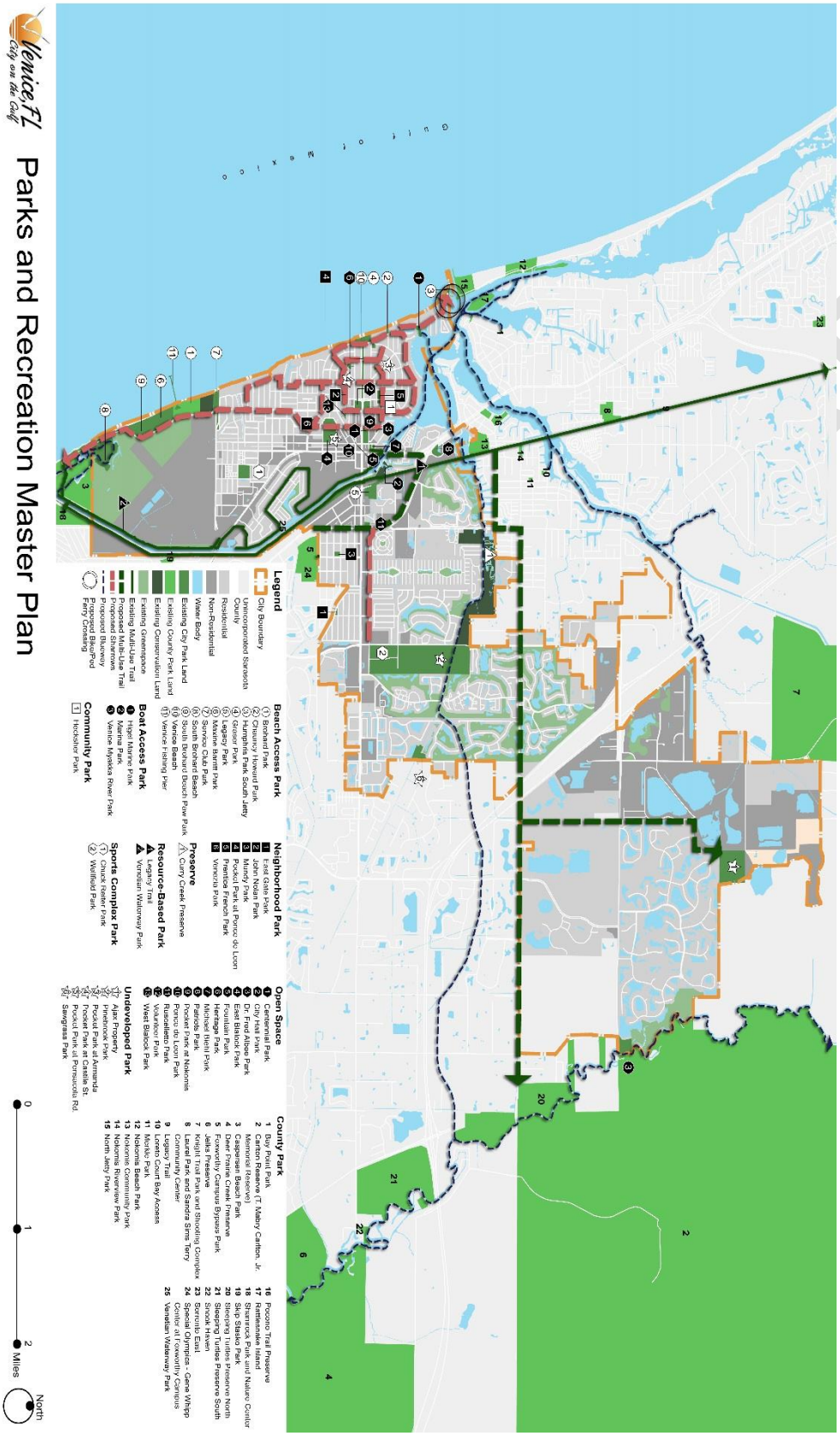
Figure 4.4 Proposed Trails and Bikeways



CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTATION

This section outlines recommendations to implement the vision outlined in the previous chapter, including proposed Level of Service (LOS) standards; improved operations and maintenance; and potential funding and phasing strategies.

5.1 Level of Service Recommendations

As discussed in Chapter 2: Parks System Analysis, the City's Comprehensive Plan establishes a total Acreage LOS target of 7 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. No other LOS metrics are currently suggested for parks and open spaces. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan suggests that as long as there is an interlocal agreement between the City and the owner of the park that allows public access and use of the park, this target LOS is inclusive of all types of parks, regardless of ownership and classification. Including all of the City's park acreage in this calculation however, can be deceiving. Certain park classifications, such as Beach Access Parks, Boat Access Parks, Preserves, and Resource Based Parks may limit the types of recreational facilities that can be provided in the park, such as playgrounds, athletic fields, sports courts, pools, and the like.

The City should consider refining the Acreage LOS to differentiate between "developable park land" and park land that cannot be developed into recreation facilities, such as preserves or other natural areas. This will ensure that the City maintains adequate park land for active recreation facilities such as athletic fields, pickleball courts, playgrounds, dog parks and other facilities desired by City residents.

As discussed in Chapter 2: Parks System Analysis, currently, it is estimated that City residents have access to approximately 237 acres of developable park land out of a total of 494 acres of parks and open space land, resulting in a developable park land Acreage LOS of 10.7 acres per 1,000 residents for the year 2015. The City recently initiated conversations to purchase approximately 34 acres of developable park land in the northeast portion of the City. This would increase the total acreage of developable park land to 271 acres, resulting in a developable park land Acreage LOS of 12.2 acres per 1,000 residents for the year 2015. As discussed in the Chapter 3: Outreach and Needs Assessment, one of the top priority needs identified by residents was the acquisition of additional park land. The City's desire to purchase these additional 34 acres of developable park land is consistent with the findings from the needs assessment and should be completed. Additionally, the purchase of the site will increase the City's developable park land Acreage LOS to just above the National Median Acreage LOS benchmark. Moving forward, the City should seek to maintain this enhanced Acreage LOS.

In summary, in addition to refining the current Acreage LOS standard in the Comprehensive Plan to a "developable park land" Acreage LOS, the City should consider increasing the target from 7 acres per 1,000 residents to at least 12 acres per 1,000 residents. Based on this enhanced Acreage LOS, the City would need to acquire an additional 55 acres of parkland by the year 2030.

5.2 Estimated Cost Range

Following is a list of projects derived from the long range vision discussed in the previous section, along with approximate cost range. These projects have not been prioritized or ranked.

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Costs range are described as low, medium, or high and are based on planning-level costs (no detailed feasibility studies or design plans have been completed). “Low” cost projects are projects that may cost less than $500,000 to implement; “Medium” cost projects are projects that may cost between $500,000 to $1,000,000; and “High” costs projects are projects that may cost over $1,000,000.

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City of Venice Parks Master Plan Order of Magnitude Costs		
Item	**Cost Range**	**Comments**
1. Maintain the Integrity and Character of the John Nolen Public Realm		
Develop Park and Street Design Standards	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
Develop Architectural Design Standards for new, improved civic buildings	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
Develop an Urban Forestry Plan	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
2. Beach Access Park		
Develop hard copy and digital "Beach Access" guides including beach parks and accesses, parking, and bike/ped routes	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
Construct a trail and boardwalk along Deer Gulley Greenway	Medium	2,800 linear feet
Develop an Urban Forestry Plan	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
Explore the feasibility of the "Port Venice" multi-modal hub	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
Improvements to Brohard Park	High	500 lf of boardwalk; 200 parallel parking spaces along Harbor Drive; 2 beach view platforms; 40 shade trees; replaced furnishings; signage, wayfinding, and environmental signage
Improvements to Higel Marine Park	Low	2 new boat ramps; improved restroom; replaced furnishings; signage, wayfinding, and environmental signage
Improvements to Legacy Park	Low	10 exercise stations; 1 playground; 2 bocce ball courts; replaced furnishings; signage, wayfinding, and environmental signage

Item	Cost Range	Comments
2. Beach Access Park (cont'd)		
Improvements to Service Club Park	Medium	500 lf of boardwalk; 10 shade trees; restored 5.8 acre Scrub Jay habitat; replaced volleyball court with 2 pickleball courts; replaced furnishings; added two picnic areas; signage, wayfinding, and environmental signage
Improvements to Venetian Waterway	High	600 shade trees; 10 picnic shelters; replaced furnishings; signage, wayfinding, and environmental signage
3. Parks (Neighborhood, Community, Sports Complex, and Open Space Parks)		
Complete Well Field Park Master Plan	Medium	Fee may vary depending on scope
Construct Improvements to Wellfield Park in partnership with the County	High	Cost per acre based on comparable community park
Complete Ajax Property Master Plan	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
Construct Improvements to Ajax Park	High	Cost per acre based on comparable community park
Complete Pocket Park Master Plans	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
Construct Pocket Park at Armanda Road	Low	Cost per acre based on 50% of comparable neighborhood park cost per acre
Construct Pocket Park at Castile Street	Low	Cost per acre based on 50% of comparable neighborhood park cost per acre
Construct Pocket Parks at Pensacola Road	Low	Cost per acre based on 50% of comparable neighborhood park cost per acre
Complete Centennial Park Master Plan	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
Construct Centennial Park	High	Cost per acre based on comparable urban park
Improvements to Chuck Reiter Park	High	Cost per acre based on 50% of comparable community park per acre cost
Improvements to Hecksher Park	Low	Cost per acre based on 50% of comparable community park per acre cost

Item	Cost Range	Comments
3. Parks (Neighborhood, Community, Sports Complex, and Open Space Parks) Cont'd		
Improvements to Heritage Park	Low	Widen and evened path; replaced furnishings; signage, wayfinding, and environmental signage
Complete Venezia Park Master Plan	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
Construct Venezia Park Improvements	Medium	Cost per acre based on comparable neighborhood park
Improvements to Venice Myakka River Park	Low	Paved parking area; improved canoe/kayak launch; replaced furnishings; signage, wayfinding, and environmental signage
4. Natural Areas and Habitat		
Complete Curry Creek Park Master Plan	Low	Fee may vary depending on scope
Construct Improvements to Curry Creek Park	High	Cost per acre based on comparable preserve/natural area improvement cost
5. Trails, Greenways, and Bikeways		
Implement Sharrows in Downtown Venice	Low	51,500 LF of streets with Sharrows
Implement Sharrows along Ridgewood Avenue between Venice Bypass and Wellfield Park	Low	5,200 LF of streets with Sharrows and two Rapid Flash Beacons
Multi-purpose trail along Tamiami Trail north of Venice Avenue to Legacy Trail Overpass, to Venetian Waterway	High	7,000 LF of multi-purpose trail, expanded curb to create greenspace buffer with shade trees, pedestrian lights, one pedestrian activated crossing signal, signage and wayfinding
Multi-purpose trail along Colonial Lane East from the Legacy Trail to Albee Farms Road	High	3,900 LF of multi-purpose trail, expanded curb to create greenspace buffer with shade trees, pedestrian lights, signage and wayfinding

Item	Cost Range	Comments
5. Trails, Greenways, and Bikeways Cont'd		
Multi-purpose trail along Albee Farms Road between Colonial Lane East and Laurel Road East	High	10,500 LF of multi-purpose trail, expanded curb to create greenspace buffer with shade trees, pedestrian lights, and signage and wayfinding
Multi-purpose Trail along Laurel Road East from Albee Farms Road to Venice Myakka River Park	High	23,200 LF of multi-purpose trail, expanded curb to create greenspace buffer with shade trees, pedestrian lights, and signage and wayfinding
Multi-purpose Trail along Mestre Place from Laurel Road East to Ajax Property	High	6,500 LF of multi-purpose trail, shade trees, and signage and wayfinding

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5.3 Funding

City staff estimates that approximately $500,000 per year will be available for park improvements from the City's general fund and County surtax. Additional funds may become available from grants, bonds, donations, impact fees, and/or other funding initiatives.

As mentioned above, residents' priorities include improvements to existing parks; acquisition of new parkland, primarily in the northeast; new walking/biking trails, and connections to existing trails; and natural areas and wildlife habitat. Based on these priorities, following are proposed phasing strategies for Year 1, Years 2 - 6, and Years 7 - 20.

City of Venice Parks Master Plan Order Implementation Strategy

Item	Qty	Unit	Unit Cost	Subtotal Cost	Comments
Year 1				**$ 500,000**	
Develop Park and Street Design Standards	1	ALW	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	Fee may vary depending on scope
Develop Architectural Design Standards for new, improved civic buildings	1	ALW	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	Fee may vary depending on scope
Complete Ajax Property Master Plan	1	ALW	$ 65,000	$ 65,000	Fee may vary depending on scope
Upgraded facilities and amenities at existing parks, including site furnishings, pickleball courts, dog parks, and fitness trails	1	ALW	$ 335,000	$ 335,000	Consider building stand along pickleball courts in Venezia Park. Upgrade Heritage Park trail and furnishings, Pinebrook Park Nature and Fitness Trail, and amenities and furnishings in Service Club Park and Hecksher Park.
Years 2 to 6				**$ 2,500,000**	
Construct Improvements to Ajax Park	1	ALW	$ 1,250,000	$ 1,250,000	Assumes $250,000 worth of improvements per year for five years. Improvements to be constructed would be based on priorities identified through the Ajax Park Master Planning process. Total park construction costs is assumed to be $8,500,000 (34 acres @ $250,000 per acre).

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Beach improvements including Beach Access Park facility improvements	1	ALW	$ 465,000	$ 465,000	City should complete yearly surveys to monitor resident's priority needs and desires and adjust capital improvement priorities accordingly.
Upgraded facilities and amenities at existing parks.	1	ALW	$ 465,000	$ 465,000	City should complete yearly surveys to monitor resident's priority needs and desires and adjust capital improvement priorities accordingly.
Explore the feasibility of running a ferry to provide bike/pedestrian connectivity between South Jetty Park to North Jetty Park.	1	ALW	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	Fee may vary depending on scope
Complete Joint City/County Master Plan at Wellfield Park	1	ALW	$ 50,000	$ 50,000	$100,000 fee split 50/50 with the County

Implement Sharrows in Downtown Streets	1	ALW	$ 245,000	$ 245,000	51,500 LF of streets with Sharrows
Years 7 to 20				**$ 7,500,000**	
Complete an update to the City of Venice Parks Master Plan	1	ALW	$ 90,000	$ 90,000	Fee may vary depending on scope
Construct Improvements to Ajax Park	1	ALW	$ 3,750,000	$ 3,750,000	Assumes $250,000 worth of improvements per year for 15 years. Improvements to be constructed would be based on priorities identified through the Ajax Park Master Planning process. Total park construction costs is assumed to be $8,500,000 (34 acres @ $250,000 per acre).

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Jointly Construct Improvements to Wellfield Park	1	ALW	$ 750,000	$ 750,000	Assumes $50,000 worth of improvements per year for 15 years. Improvements to be constructed would be based on priorities identified through the Wellfield Park Master Planning process. Total park construction costs is assumed to be $20.8 Million (160 acres @ $1300,000 per acre and designating the north portion of the park as Pinebrook Preserve).
Construct a trail and boardwalk along Deer Gulley Greenway	1	ALW	$ 750,000	$ 750,000	2,800 linear feet
Implement Sharrows along Ridgewood Avenue between Venice Bypass and Wellfield Park	1	ALW	$ 190,000	$ 190,000	5,200 LF of streets with Sharrows and two Rapid Flash Beacons
Jointly construct multi-purpose trail along Tamiami Trail north of Venice Avenue to Legacy Trail Overpass, to Venetian Waterway with Florida Department of Transportation	1	ALW	$ 750,000	$ 750,000	Assumes $5.8 Million construction costs for 7,000 LF @ $600 / LF including multi-purpose trail, expanded curb to create greenspace buffer with shade trees, pedestrian lights, one pedestrian activated crossing signal, signage and wayfinding.
Beach improvements including Beach Access Park facility improvements	1	ALW	$ 610,000	$ 610,000	City should complete yearly surveys to monitor resident's priority needs and desires and adjust capital improvement priorities accordingly.

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Years 7 to 20 (Cont'd)					
Upgraded facilities and amenities at existing parks.	1	ALW	$ 610,000	$ 610,000	City should complete yearly surveys to monitor resident's priority needs and desires and adjust capital improvement priorities accordingly.

5.4 Operations and Maintenance

The City of Venice Park system is maintained and operated by both the City of Venice and Sarasota County. The City of Venice maintains and operates 24 parks totaling 58.89 acres while Sarasota County maintains and operates 12 parks totaling 309 acres. According to the 2015 City budget, the City of Venice Public Works - Parks and Recreation budget is approximately $2,704,489. This includes $751,718 for personnel services, $742,771 for operating expenditures, and $1,201,000 for capital. Currently, there are 12.7 Full Time Equivalent positions in the budget.

According to the Sarasota County Parks and Recreation Annual Report 2015 City of Venice, Sarasota County allocated approximately $2,153,294 for maintaining 12 parks totaling approximately 309 acres in 2015. $60,000 was allocated to capital improvements leaving approximately $2,093,294 for personnel services and operating expenditures. While no information was available to determine the cost breakdown between personnel services and operating expenditures, based on the County Parks, Recreation, and Natural Resources' overall budget percentage breakdown between personnel services (56.49 percent) and operating expenditures (43.41 percent) from the combined total of these two services, it can be inferred that $1,182,577 may have been allocated to personnel services and $910,717 may have been allocated to operating expenditures.

Two metrics used to gauge whether a city is adequately funded to manage, operate, and maintain its parks and recreation system are Operating Budget Per Acre and Acres of Land Maintained and Managed per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) positions. Figure 5.1 calculates operating budget per acre managed in the City of Venice and benchmarks it to National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) PRORAGIS data.

Figure 5.1 – Operating Budget per Acre Benchmark Analysis

	City of Venice	National Benchmarks*		
		Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Acres of park land maintained and managed by the City of Venice**	58.59	-	-	
Acres of park land maintained and managed by the Sarasota County	309.05			

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Total Acres of park land maintained in the City of Venice by the City of Venice and Sarasota County	367.94			
City of Venice Department Operating Budget^	$742,771	-	-	-
Sarasota County Operating Budget (Inferred)^^	$910,717			
Total Operating Budget allocated by City of Venice and Sarasota County (Inferred)	$1,653,488			
Combined City/ County Operating Budget Per Acre	$4,493	$4,163	$8,884	$17,597

*Source: National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) PRORAGIS Field Report, 2015
**Source: City of Venice
^Source: City of Venice Budget, Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2016
^^Source: Sarasota county Parks and Recreation Annual Report 2015 – City of Venice, and Sarasota County, Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2015

As noted in Figure 5.1, the total operating budget allocated for park land managed and maintained in the City of Venice is well below the national median and just above the lower quartile. Lower quartile benchmarks may represent operating budgets for municipalities that have a lower maintenance level of service. Based on the findings from the needs assessment, City of Venice residents identified improved parks and maintenance as the top priority need. This analysis may suggest that the City and County may need to increase their operating budgets for parks maintenance to at least match the national median.

Figure 5.2 calculates the Acres of Land Maintained and Managed per FTE positions and benchmarks it to NRPA PRORAGIS data. The figure only compares acres maintained to FTE's from the City of Venice and does not include data from the County since the information was not available for review.

Figure 5.2 – Acres of Land Maintained and Managed per FTE

	City of Venice	National Benchmarks*		
		Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile
Acres of park land maintained and managed by the City of Venice**	58.89	-	-	-
Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions^	12.7	-	-	-
Acres of City Land Maintained and Managed per FTE	4.64	5.4	12.8	24.1

*Source: National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) PRORAGIS Field Report, 2015
**Source: City of Venice
^Source: City of Venice Budget, Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2016

As noted in Figure 5.2, the City of Venice maintains approximately three-quarters less park land per FTE than the national median benchmark and less than the lower quartile benchmark. Lower quartile benchmarks may represent municipalities that have a higher maintenance level of service. This suggest that the City maintains an appropriate number of acres per FTE.

In order to maximize maintenance resources, the City may consider developing a comprehensive maintenance plan that also focuses on preventive maintenance tasks. The plan should not only deal with an overall plan for the city but also specific plans for each park or facility. This plan should include:

- Classification of outdoor parks, right of ways and open space into six levels of maintenance standards (see below).
- A listing of specific maintenance tasks that need to be performed, their frequency and the quality level that is expected (some of this is currently in place).
- A determination of manpower, equipment and operating supplies that are required to complete the tasks.
- Tracking of maintenance tasks and overall performance.
- The establishment of a preventative maintenance plan.

The City may consider developing specific levels of service for each facility that is under their responsibility utilizing the NRPA's maintenance standards that divides outdoor park maintenance into six different levels. These include:

- *Level 1* – High visibility areas that require the highest level of maintenance.
- *Level 2* – Is the normal standard and what an individual expects to see on a regular basis.
- *Level 3 and 4* – These two levels are just below the norm and include reductions in frequency of maintenance with a focus on safety. These levels are often utilized when there are budget and manpower reductions.
- *Level 5* – This level is one step above allowing the land to return to its original state.
- *Level 6* – This level allows the land to return to its original natural state or open space that is already in its natural condition.

In addition, a depreciation schedule for major equipment and facilities should be developed. The City should take the time to classify all existing parks by the existing level of maintenance with specific recommendations to increase or decrease maintenance levels for specific parks in the future.

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CHAPTER 6: APPENDICES

To be completed

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