

# City of Jacksonville Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan



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## CHAPTER ONE - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Jacksonville was authorized as a town in 1842 to honor President Andrew Jackson and the town was laid out in 1849. Historical writer Bill Sharpe described the time as “the river yielded world-famous oysters and the hogs, world-famous hams”. The county at the time was home to a slow paced mildly growing population with limited development. That changed after December 1940 when the decision was made to locate Camp Lejeune in Onslow County. Within a few days, the population doubled from 800, with hundreds more workers coming to the area to work on defense projects as part of the war effort.



The same qualities that drew the Marine Corps to build the “World’s Most Complete Amphibious Base” in Onslow County were also some of the same qualities that caused the City to be formed along the New River.

The City of Jacksonville’s growth was steady until 1990 when the City annexed portions of Camp Lejeune. The growth from then on has been far above national averages – from the 2000 Census population of 66,715, the U.S. Census estimates the 2009 population to already have crossed 80,000 and growing. Jacksonville is also the ‘youngest’ City in the country with a median age of 22.8 years which is driven primarily by the marines living on base or within the City boundaries.

It is precisely to meet the needs of the growing population and continue to position the City of Jacksonville as an attractive place to call home, the Jacksonville Parks and Recreation Department sought to undertake a Master Plan in 2010. The plan focuses on developing a system-wide regional approach to meet the parks, trails and recreation needs of the Jacksonville community in the most fiscally sustainable manner possible.

The following pages provide the executive summary and detailed analysis, findings and recommendations as a part of this Master Plan.



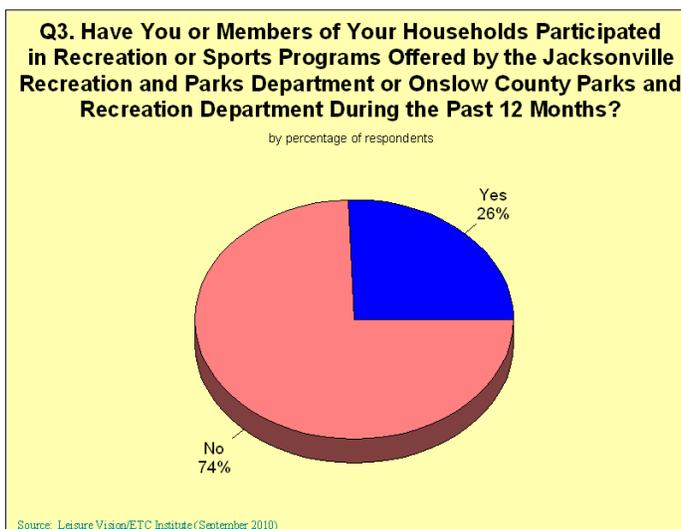
## 1.2 PLAN OUTLINE AND PROCESS STEPS

<b><u>Sections</u></b>	<b><u>Sub-sections</u></b>
<b>Community Input Results</b>	
<b>Community Needs Assessment Survey</b>	
<b>Demographic and Trends Analysis</b>	
<b>Park and Facility Analysis</b>	
	<i>Physical Analysis / Individual Site Assessment</i>
	<i>System-Wide Recommendations</i>
<b>Program Assessment</b>	
<b>Facility and Program Priority Rankings</b>	
<b>Operational and Financial Assessment</b>	
<b>Implementation</b>	
	<i>Vision</i>
	<i>Mission</i>
	<i>Tag Line</i>
	<i>Community Vision for Land and Facilities</i>
	<i>Community Vision for Recreation Programs</i>
	<i>Community Vision for Operations and Maintenance</i>
	<i>Community Vision for Finance</i>
	<i>Community Vision for Marketing and Communications</i>

### 1.3 STATISTICALLY-VALID SURVEY

The City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department conducted a Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey during August and September of 2010 as part of the process to develop a Master Plan that will establish priorities for the future improvement of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services within the community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Jacksonville and Onslow County. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone and the results of the random sample of 444 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-4.7%.

- Twenty-six percent (26%) of households have participated in City or County recreation or sports programs during the past 12 months.
- Of the 26% of households that have participated in City or County recreation or sports programs during the past 12 months, 92% rated the overall quality of the programs as either excellent (47%) or good (45%).

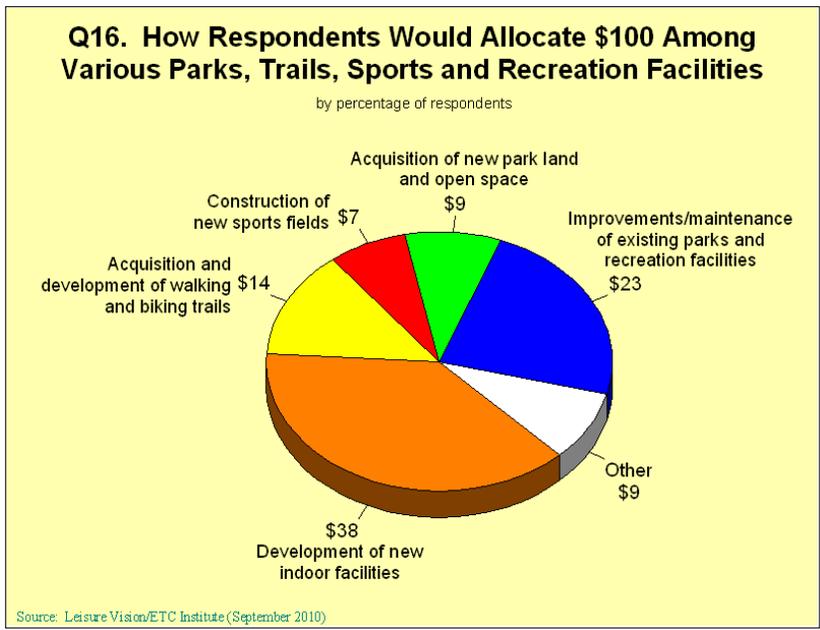


- The organizations that the highest percentage of households have used for indoor and outdoor recreation activities are: military facilities (37%), churches (32%), Onslow County Parks and Recreation (28%), City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department (28%), and school facilities (28%).
- The most frequently mentioned ways that households learn about programs and activities in the City of Jacksonville and Onslow County are: from friends and neighbors (51%), newspaper articles (47%), newspaper advertisements (33%), website (26%), and flyers/posters at Department facilities (26%).
- The City and County parks used by the highest percentage of households are: Jacksonville Commons park and picnic shelters (42%), Jacksonville Commons Trail (28%), Onslow Pines Park (24%), Wilson Bay Park (17%), Riverwalk Park (16%), and Northeast Creek Park Nature/Boardwalk Trail (15%).
- The City and County indoor facilities used by the highest percentage of households are the Jacksonville Commons Recreation Center (22%) and the Jacksonville Commons Senior Center (12%).
- The parks and recreation facilities that the highest percentage of households have a need for are: walking and biking trails (49%), outdoor swimming pools/water parks



(42%), indoor swimming pools/leisure pools (39%), nature center and nature trails (36%), small neighborhood parks (35%), indoor fitness and exercise facilities (35%), and green space and natural areas (34%).

- For all 28 parks/facilities, less than 50% of households with a need for parks/facilities feel that their needs are being completely met.
- Based on the sum of their top four choices, the parks and recreation facilities that are most important to households are: walking and biking trails (26%), outdoor swimming pools/water parks (24%), indoor swimming pools/leisure pools (16%), indoor fitness and exercise facilities (14%), and small neighborhood parks (13%).
- The sports and recreation programs that the highest percentage of households have a need for are: special events (46%), adult fitness and wellness programs (35%), water fitness programs (29%), youth learn to swim programs (27%), nature programs/environmental education (25%), and adult continuing education programs (25%).
- For all 24 programs, less than 35% of households with a need for programs feel that their needs are being completely met.
- Based on the sum of their top four choices, the sports and recreation programs that are most important to households are: special events (23%), adult fitness and wellness programs (19%), youth learn to swim programs (15%), water fitness programs (12%), and adult programs for 50 years and older (12%).



- The reasons preventing the highest percentage of households from using City of Jacksonville or Onslow County parks, facilities and programs more often are: “I do not know what is being offered” (34%), “use military facilities” (26%), “program or facility not offered” (21%), and “I do not know locations of facilities” (18%).
- Forty-three percent (43%) of respondents are either very willing (13%) or somewhat willing (30%) to pay an increase in taxes to fund the parks, trails, recreation and sports facilities that are most important to their household.
- Forty-four percent (44%) of households are either very satisfied (18%) or somewhat satisfied (26%) with the overall value their household receives from the City of

Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department and Onslow County Parks and Recreation.

## 1.4 DEMOGRAPHICS OVERVIEW

At the time of the Census 2000, it was reported that 58.3% of all persons aged 16+ in the labor force were in the Armed Forces. At that time, approximately 50%, or 33,135 persons, lived on the base. This influence is manifested throughout the entire spectrum of demographic composition.

The preferred alternative of the latest initiative from the Department of Defense, the U.S. Marine Corps Grow the Force, is, based on the latest figures, expected to increase the Camp Lejeune force by 11,000 personnel. This data is not accounted for in the demographic statistics that ESRI has compiled; for this, PROS will assume that the 11,000 additional personnel will mimic the trends of the 2000 survey (“What the Census says about Jacksonville & Onslow County”), with nearly half living on base (49.7%) and half living off base (50.3%). Assuming that all 11,000 Marine Corps personnel are already on site – the initiative calls for a five year phased approach from 2007 to 2011 – and that these 11,000 persons accounts for a single unit of measure (i.e. not accounting for spouses and/or offspring), the current estimated population would be 82,582 persons.

The City of Jacksonville has grown at a modest pace over the last decade. From 2000 to 2009, the **total population** grew by 7.4%, from a reported 66,648 to the reported population of 71,582; the Grow the Force initiative increases this total to an estimated 82,582. This growth comes after a decade in which the City lost nearly 10% of its population. Over the next five years, it is projected that the City will remain rather stagnant, as projections place the 2014 population at 82,508 persons. Due to the heavy military presence, the gender composition for the City heavily favors the male populace; currently, 64% of the total population is male, a trend that is projected to remain constant.

The **population by major age segment** is starkly different than the national norms. In contrast to the typical aging trends, Jacksonville’s largest individual age segment – 20-24 years of age – suppresses the median age of the City to a youthful 23.2 years. Only 8.4% of the population is 55+, nearly 20% below the national averages.

As with other demographic characteristics, the City has a fairly diverse populace. Currently, **race and ethnicity** is comprised of persons identified as white (59.8%) and black (23.2%), with the remaining 17% distributed among all other races. The biggest shift is witnessed in the ethnicity of the City, where those persons classified as being of Hispanic/Latino origin of any race has grown exponentially since 1990, as this ethnic group has grown from 6.95% of the total population to an estimated 14.41% in 2009.

The **income characteristics** do mimic typical national averages and are projected to increase, albeit marginally, in the upcoming years. The City’s median household income was \$32,999 in 2000 and is currently estimated at \$44,154. These numbers compare favorably with state averages (median household income of \$46,574 in 2008), while lagging below the national median household income of \$54,719.



## 1.5 PARK AND FACILITY ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

In March 2010, the PROS team visited the following eighteen (18) City of Jacksonville Recreation and Park facilities. The summary from the assessment is provided below.

### 1.5.1 FACILITY ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

- Parks are well-maintained and in good condition. Almost uniformly, the City's park facilities are well-maintained and show few major problems with upkeep
- Many park sites have challenging locations that limit access, and/or "eyes on the park". Many of the City's parks are located at the back of neighborhoods, and some are even completely surrounded by backyards, such as Brook Valley Park. These locations are challenging because it makes the parks difficult to locate and access. They are also more prone to vandalism and other issues because the sites lack "eyes on the park", meaning the passive surveillance provided by adjacent homes or businesses
- There is need to improve signage and way-finding for better customer service and brand building. Because of the challenging locations of many of the City's parks, there is a greater need for signage and way-finding to help users find park sites and facilities.
- Neighborhood Center buildings are small and outdated and lack the features that make neighborhood centers appealing today, such as ample natural light and multiple activity rooms. The City is currently in the process of updating a few of the centers and that will certainly assist with enhanced programming opportunities however, the overall footprint of the entire center will still remain the same
- A number of larger park facilities have the elements of a successful park, but seem to lack a centralized plan to integrate their individual pieces and create greater synergy. A good example of this is Northeast Creek Park
- Playground surfaces are outdated and inaccessible. Most playgrounds in Jacksonville have sand surfaces, which are inaccessible by ADA standards and are prone to maintenance problems.
- There are excellent opportunities to develop a City-wide bikeways and trails system

**1.5.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Prioritization of recreation and parks facility improvements should be rooted in the results of the needs assessment. It should also be recognized that the current economic environment provides an excellent opportunity to plan for the future, and begin acquisition of new park lands while prices are lower. With this in mind, the PROS team recommends the following as the first steps in implementation:

**BEGIN REGIONAL PARK “HUB” MASTER PLANS**

The vision for Jacksonville’s system is anchored by the four proposed recreation and parks hubs of Jacksonville Commons Complex, Northeast Creek Park, Williamsburg Park and City Park. Because of the priority need for swimming pool facilities, the City should begin to plan and fundraise for an aquatics facility at Jacksonville Commons Complex. The master planning process for City Park should also begin as soon as possible, as the project will likely be complex and require a great deal of coordination between agencies and property owners.

<b>Hub</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Theme</b>
<b>Jacksonville Commons Complex</b>	Create a single place for majority of sports activities	Active Recreation
<b>Northeast Creek Park</b>	Capitalize location on the New River for kayaking, fishing, boating etc.	Water-based recreation
<b>Williamsburg Park</b>	Utilize natural environment for hiking, interpretation, environmental education programs	Nature-based recreation
<b>City Park (combine L.P. Willingham Waterfront, Kerr Street Center and Park, Riverwalk Crossing)</b>	Create a community gathering space for special events and celebrations	Signature park and open space destination

**UNDERTAKE SHORT TERM IMPROVEMENTS FOR AGING PARKS**

Some of the City’s park facilities have assets or amenities that need to be updated or replaced. The PROS team recommends prioritizing the short term improvements for Georgetown Park, Jack Amyette Center and Park, Northwoods Center and Park, and Wooten Park to help bring these sites close to the quality seen in other City facilities.

**CONTINUE IMPLEMENTATION OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN**

Trails and walking/bicycling facilities were among the highest priority needs of Jacksonville residents. The PROS team recommends that the Department proactively support the ongoing implementation of the plan and work closely with other City departments to see the plan to fruition.



### 1.5.3 FACILITY STANDARDS

PROS evaluated park facility standards using a combination of resources ranging from National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines, recreation participation rates by American Sports Data, community and stakeholder input and general observations by PROS. These are guidelines provided to help establish consistency in future growth and document the extent of need. Detailed information and notes documenting the assumptions are provided in **Chapter 6**.

PARKS: 2009 Inventory - Developed Facilities										2009 Facility Standards			2014 Facility Standards							
Park Type	Jacksonville	Schools	Other Provider's	Military	Total Combined Inventory	Current Service Level based on population			Recommended Service Levels; Revised for Local Service Area			Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities / Amenities Needed	Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed					
Neighborhood Park	34.63	-	6.01	-	40.64	0.49	acres per	1,000	1.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	42 Acre(s)	Need Exists	42 Acre(s)					
Community Park	73.23	-	-	-	73.23	0.89	acres per	1,000	2.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	92 Acre(s)	Need Exists	92 Acre(s)					
Regional Park	183.24	-	1.20	-	184.44	2.23	acres per	1,000	4.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	146 Acre(s)	Need Exists	146 Acre(s)					
Open Space / Natural Areas	8.46	-	-	-	8.46	0.10	acres per	1,000	0.75	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	53 Acre(s)	Need Exists	53 Acre(s)					
<b>Total Park Acres</b>	<b>299.56</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7.22</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>306.78</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>acres per</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>7.75</b>	<b>acres per</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>Need Exists</b>	<b>333 Acre(s)</b>	<b>Need Exists</b>	<b>333 Acre(s)</b>					
Special Use Areas	-	245.57	-	-	245.57	2.97	acres per	1,000	n/a	acres per	1,000	-	-	-	-					
<b>OUTDOOR AMENITIES:</b>																				
Playground Area	18.00	6.67	1.00	5.34	31.01	1.00	structure per	2,663	1.00	structure per	3,000	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)					
Basketball Court; Outdoor	10.00	2.67	-	3.67	16.34	1.00	structure per	5,055	1.00	structure per	7,000	Meets Standard	- Court(s)	Meets Standard	- Court(s)					
Tennis Court; Outdoor	14.00	6.67	-	5.34	26.01	1.00	structure per	3,175	1.00	structure per	4,000	Meets Standard	- Court(s)	Meets Standard	- Court(s)					
Diamond Field; Mounded - Small (60ft or under)	4.00	-	-	2.00	6.00	1.00	field per	13,761	1.00	field per	10,000	Need Exists	2 Field(s)	Need Exists	2 Field(s)					
Diamond Field; Mounded - Large (75ft and larger)	-	2.00	-	0.67	2.67	1.00	field per	30,953	1.00	field per	20,000	Need Exists	1 Field(s)	Need Exists	1 Field(s)					
Diamond Field; Non-Mounded - Small	3.00	4.00	-	2.00	9.00	1.00	field per	9,173	1.00	field per	15,000	Meets Standard	- Field(s)	Meets Standard	- Field(s)					
Diamond Field; Non-Mounded - Large	8.00	-	-	1.33	9.33	1.00	field per	8,847	1.00	field per	20,000	Meets Standard	- Field(s)	Meets Standard	- Field(s)					
Trails (Hard and Soft Surface Trails)	16.20	-	-	-	16.20	0.20	miles per	1,000	0.45	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	21 Mile(s)	Need Exists	21 Mile(s)					
Soccer / Football / Multipurpose Field	8.00	4.67	1.00	5.34	19.01	1.00	field per	4,345	1.00	field per	4,000	Need Exists	2 Field(s)	Need Exists	2 Field(s)					
Shelter; Large (100+ people)	8.00	-	-	4.00	12.00	1.00	structure per	6,881	1.00	structure per	10,000	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)					
Shelter; Medium (50 - 99 people)	3.00	0.67	-	4.67	8.34	1.00	structure per	9,907	1.00	structure per	10,000	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)					
Shelter; Small (up to 50 people)	5.00	-	-	13.34	18.34	1.00	structure per	4,503	1.00	structure per	7,500	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)					
Skateboard Park	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	1.00	site per	82,582	1.00	site per	40,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	1 Site(s)					
Outdoor Pool	-	-	-	1.50	1.50	1.00	site per	55,055	1.00	site per	40,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	1 Site(s)					
Splash Pad / Spray Grounds	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	30,000	Need Exists	3 Site(s)	Need Exists	3 Site(s)					
Dog Parks	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	25,000	Need Exists	3 Site(s)	Need Exists	3 Site(s)					
Disk Golf Course	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	1.00	site per	82,582	1.00	site per	40,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	1 Site(s)					
Nature Center	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	100,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	1 Site(s)					
Indoor Aquatic Recreation Space	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	SF per	n/a	0.50	SF per	Person	Need Exists	41,291 Square Feet	Need Exists	41,254 Square Feet					
Recreation Center	38,964.00	-	-	207,441.67	246,405.67	0.47	SF per person		1.50	SF per Person		Meets Standard	- Square Feet	Meets Standard	- Square Feet					
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Estimated Population: 2009</td> <td>82,582</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Projected Population : 2014</td> <td>82,508</td> </tr> </table>																	Estimated Population: 2009	82,582	Projected Population : 2014	82,508
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Projected Population : 2014	82,508																			

## 1.6 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND OVERVIEW

The Department offers a wide gamut of programs ranging from sports leagues to senior programs and trips to classes. An evaluation of the overall program offering indicates that the recreation program offerings are on the upswing but need more consistency and better measurements to ensure maximum accountability and efficiency.

Some overall observations from the program assessment sheets that were filled out follow:

- The **program descriptions** overall do a good job promoting the benefits of participation
- **Age segment distribution** is good, but needs to be annually monitored to ensure program distribution aligns with community demographics
- **Program lifecycles:** Very few programs are in the introduction stage with a large number in the saturated to decline stage, which is not ideal.
- There are some **similar providers**, with the majority of them being neighboring agencies including Boys and Girls Club, Camp Lejeune, Community Schools, Onslow County Parks and Recreation Department, and Onslow Senior Services being the closest ones. Other private providers might include Junior Tarheel Camp, Future Legends Girls Soccer Academy, and other similar providers. These others are probably not true competitors due to the services being higher priced.
- **Program performance measures** are tracked in several areas, though it is inconsistent system-wide and is not measured or communicated Department-wide
- Limited system-wide **volunteer support** and tracking of volunteer hours. Programs such as youth basketball and youth baseball have good volunteer support from community members. However, the same cannot be said of all program areas. Developing a system-wide volunteer management approach would be advisable.
- From a **marketing and promotions** standpoint, the staff undertakes a variety of promotions with a number of programs using the brochures and flyers, website, in-facility signage, website, Facebook, and direct mail as a part of the marketing mix.
- Most commonly used **customer feedback methods** are post program evaluations, user surveys and the website.
- Pricing strategies are varied across the board and the different ones used are cost recovery rates, group discounts, age segments or residency. These are good practices and must be continued but there is an opportunity to better incorporate variable pricing strategies system-wide. In addition, it is essential to understand current cost of service in order to determine ideal cost recovery goals.
- **Financial performance measures** seem to be at a high level, particularly programs such as adult softball that are over 100% cost recovery. However, it is important to factor in all direct and indirect costs in computing true cost recovery goals. Additionally, a focus on developing consistent earned income opportunities would be beneficial to the Department's overall quest for greater fiscal sustainability.



## 1.7 OPERATIONS ASSESSMENT

### 1.7.1 INTRODUCTION

The Operations Assessment includes an analysis of the culture and internal business practices of the Department and was centered on topics pertaining to staffing, workload, structure, Strategy and direction setting, technology, employee growth, HR requirements, and use of data for decision-making among other areas.

Staff members had an important role in this assessment as the analysis relies heavily on thoughts and perspectives from the staff. Those interviewed for this included the Recreation and Parks Director, Parks Superintendent, Recreation Program Supervisors and Coordinators and Maintenance and Admin Staff.

### 1.7.2 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Some key recommendations include:

- Review the organizational structure to identify areas to re-allocate priorities
- Broaden the span of control and use the labor savings to develop marketing support
- To address future needs, develop a future (five year) organizational chart that reflects positions of growth. This will enable current employees to identify areas of interest in future positions and be in a position to gain necessary skills to qualify for future positions
- Reposition Department from focusing on tactics to focusing on strategies
- Implement a documented strategic planning process that includes institutionalizing the implementation of the Master Plan and organizational goals and objectives
- As opposed to directly using Taleo, the Department needs to work with the City to develop a hybrid model to combine City's model with the Department's developed goals and objectives
- Develop a Departmental strategic marketing plan, supplemented with brief business plans for key programs and facilities. The business plans should be aligned with the Departmental marketing plan
- Develop a system-wide approach to measuring customer satisfaction that includes surveys, program evaluations, focus groups, customer interviews, lost customer research, and transaction surveys
- Dedicate part of a staff person's time to oversee the development of a Department-wide volunteer program, including identifying volunteer jobs, recruitment, retention, and recognition systems
- Focus on moving the Department from a social management model to a business management model

- Develop financial projections that provide information about operating impacts of new initiatives to ensure the Department’s ability to remain viable and financially sustainable
- Expand the use of technology to derive data and aid in decision-making
- Develop a performance measurement system to determine results and share these results with City management and staff on a regular basis, using technology to provide the data
  - These can include measures such as customer satisfaction, registration numbers, cost of service for key facilities and programs, maintenance per acre costs, and employee satisfaction
- Develop an organizational culture that supports sustainability efforts, develop a sustainability policy (purchasing, use of energy, recycling, design, park maintenance practices, etc.), an overall plan that includes the vision and goals for sustainability, and establish targets and measures
- Regularly perform employee satisfaction surveys to determine employees’ satisfaction toward work life, training, compensation, and supervision received
- Perform a policy review and identify policies that need updating, and identify policies that do not exist and need to be developed. In addition, develop a documented process to continuously review existing policies



## 1.8 FACILITY AND PROGRAM PRIORITY RANKINGS

The purpose of the Facility and Program Priority Rankings is to provide a prioritized list of facility/amenity needs and recreation program needs for the residents served by the Department.

These rankings evaluate both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data includes the statistically valid Community Survey, which asked residents of Jacksonville and Onslow County to list unmet needs and rank their importance. Qualitative data includes resident feedback obtained in Focus Group meetings, Key Leader Interviews, and Public Forums.

A weighted scoring system was used to determine the priorities for Recreation and Park facilities/amenities and recreation programs. That included 30% for Unmet Need, 30% for Importance and 40% for Consultant Evaluation. For greater details on the methodology, please refer to **Chapter 8**. The results of the priority ranking were tabulated into three categories: High Priority (1), Medium Priority (2), and Low Priority (3).

*Note: Since the City of Jacksonville serves a large audience that is drawn from the County and seeks to develop a regional partnership strategy, it was deemed beneficial to consider the survey input from Onslow County in the rankings so as to obtain a holistic picture.*

The following charts shows that walking and biking trails, outdoor swimming pools / water parks and indoor fitness and exercise facilities were the top three facilities/amenities.

<b>Jacksonville / Onslow County</b>	
<b>Facility/Amenity Priority Rankings</b>	
	<b>Overall Ranking</b>
Walking and biking trails	1
Outdoor swimming pools / water parks	2
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	3
Nature center and trails	4
Indoor running / walking track	5
Indoor swimming pools / leisure pools	6
Small neighborhood parks	7
Green space and natural areas	8
Off-leash areas	9
Amphitheater	10
Playground equipment	11
Large community parks	12
Youth Soccer Fields	13
Camping facilities	14
Arts Center	15
Riverside picnic areas	16
Teen / youth center	17
Multi-purpose fields	18
Senior center	19
Indoor basketball / volleyball courts	20
Public golf course	21
Youth Baseball and Softball Fields	22
Skateboarding park	23
Adult soccer fields	24
Outdoor tennis courts	25
Adult baseball and softball fields	26
Outdoor basketball courtts	27
Disc golf	28



Special events, youth learn to swim programs, and adult fitness and wellness programs were the top three program priorities in the community.

<b>Jacksonville Program Priority Rankings</b>	
	<b>Overall Ranking</b>
Special Events	1
Youth learn to swim programs	2
Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs	3
Water fitness programs	4
Adult Programs for Age 50+	5
Nature programs / environmental education	6
Outdoor adventure programs	7
Youth Sports Programs	8
Adult Art, Dance and Performing Arts	9
Youth Summer Camp Programs	10
Adult continuing education programs	11
Travel programs / trips	12
Preschool Programs	13
Programs for People with Disabilities	14
Before and After School Programs	15
Programs for Teens	16
Youth Fitness and Wellness Programs	17
Programs with your pets	18
Youth development programs	19
Youth Art, Dance and Performing Arts	20
Adult Sports Programs	21
Birthday parties	22
Golf Lessons and Leagues	23
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	24

## 1.9 EQUITY MAPPING

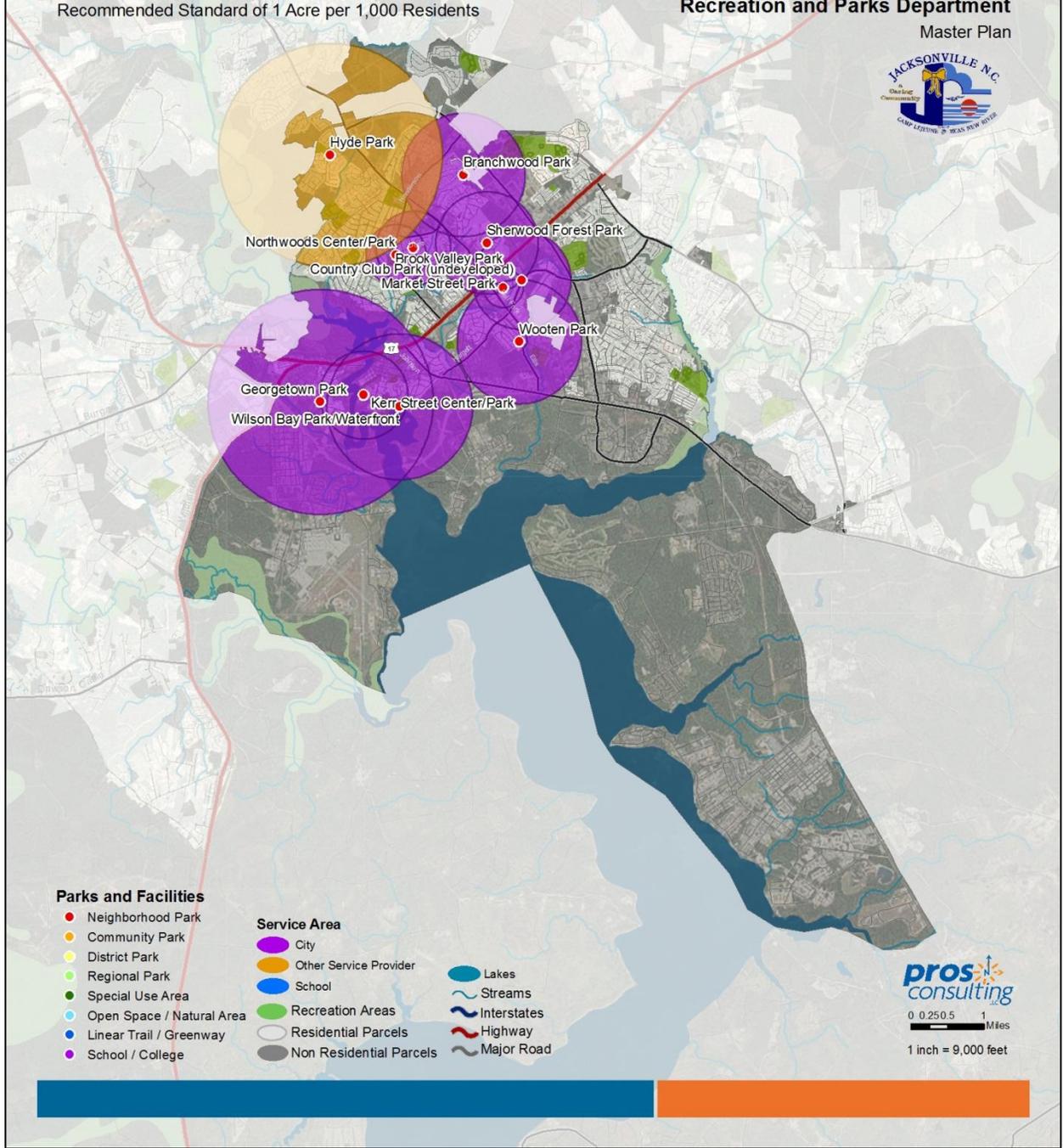
Equity maps provide a visual depiction of the location and service area targeted by the City's parks and facility/amenity offerings. The source for the population used for standard development is the estimated 2009 population and projected 2019 populations as reported by Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI). The shaded areas in the Equity Maps indicate the service level (e.g. the population being served by that park type/amenity) as outlined in the Facility/Amenity standards in **Chapter 6**.

The next page provides a sample map for Neighborhood Parks Service Area while **Figures 51-74** show the service area maps for all the major assets in the system.



**Neighborhood Parks**  
Recommended Standard of 1 Acre per 1,000 Residents

**City of Jacksonville, NC  
Recreation and Parks Department  
Master Plan**



## 1.10 COST ESTIMATES

The detailed cost estimates are provided in **Chapter 9**. It should be noted that this is an *order of magnitude cost estimate*, which is intended to give a broad idea of how much the improvements described in **Chapter 3** will cost.

### 1.10.1 RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS TO EXISTING PARKS

Park Name	Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate
Branchwood Park	\$187,400
Brook Valley Park	\$156,875
City Park	\$2,730,700
Georgetown Park	\$498,650
Jack Amyette Center and Park	\$4,083,500
Jacksonville Commons Complex	\$10,059,850
Northeast Creek Park	\$5,911,120
Northwoods Center and Park	\$579,000
Phillips Park and Waterfront	\$2,065,150
Richard Ray Park	\$60,000
Sherwood Forest Park	\$615,000
Sturgeon City Park	\$55,000
Wilson Bay Park	\$132,000
Woodlands Park	\$1,455,000
Wooten Park	\$1,112,750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$29,701,995</b>



**1.10.2 DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING UNDEVELOPED PARKS**

<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate</b>
Carolina Forest Park	\$644,000
Country Club Park	\$325,000
Foxhorn Village Park	\$283,000
Mill Creek Park	\$291,000
Williamsburg Park	\$5,824,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,367,000</b>

**1.10.3 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKS**

<b>New Parks</b>	<b>Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate</b>
Far North Neighborhood Park	\$561,000
Liberty Road Neighborhood Park	\$438,000
Pine Valley Neighborhood Park	\$501,000
White Oak Community Park	\$7,622,000
Warehouse Park Community Park	\$7,605,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$16,727,000</b>

**GRAND TOTAL: \$71,734,491 (includes contingency and design fees)**

## 1.11 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1.11.1 VISION

*We create community by making Jacksonville the best place to live, work and play*

### 1.11.2 MISSION

*“The City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department will offer exceptional leisure opportunities that contribute to continuous improvements in individual health and wellness, a sense of community, environmental stewardship, and economic development.”*

### 1.11.3 VISION AND GOALS BY KEY AREAS

**Chapter 10** provides the detailed Strategies and Tactics to achieve the Vision and meet the individual goals established as a part of this Master Plan.

<b>Vision</b>	<b>Goal</b>
<b><i>Our Vision for Financing the Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department is to maximize every available financial resource to create and meet the expectations of residents of the community for recreation and park services</i></b>	Achieve a cost recovery level (including direct and indirect costs) of 25% by 2015 and 40% by 2020.
<b><i>Our Vision for Operations is to develop a strong functional Department of staff, systems, policies, technology and maintenance components that incorporate effective cultural and business practices to achieve maximum efficiency and success to carry the Department forward in the most productive manner</i></b>	Develop an outcome based Department that focuses on key performance indicators such as efficiency, revenue production, capacity management, and standards of care in the delivery of parks and recreation services, facilities and programs.
<b><i>Our vision is to develop a wide variety of multi-generational sustainable core programs that provide current and future residents with memorable experiences and lifetime skills that they will cherish in the years ahead</i></b>	To increase program participation to 30% by 2015 and 35% by 2020
<b><i>Our vision is to develop a balanced and equitable system of parks, facilities and open space offerings to serve the diverse community in Jacksonville</i></b>	To meet the levels of service standard recommendations and use these spaces to create a sense of place and a regional draw for the community.
<b><i>Our vision is to create a recognized brand and an effective marketing campaign that focuses on maximum outreach to the diverse audience and helps drive sales</i></b>	To increase program participation to 30% by 2015 and 35% by 2020 and to help increase cost recovery to 40% system-wide by 2020



## CHAPTER TWO - COMMUNITY INPUT RESULTS AND DEMOGRAPHIC AND TRENDS ANALYSIS

### 2.1 COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

PROS undertook the Community Input Process for the City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department (“Department”) during the month of March 2010. Meetings included nine (9) key leader interviews with City leadership and Department staff as well as ten (10) focus group interviews with community members. Additionally, PROS held four (4) large public input meetings to evaluate the vision for recreation and parks, identify community values, strengths and weaknesses of the Department. The summarized meeting results are mentioned below:

#### 2.1.1 WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS OF THE JACKSONVILLE RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT THAT WE NEED TO BUILD ON FOR THIS LEVEL OF SERVICE MASTER PLAN?

The primary strengths listed by the respondents were the staff, The Commons, and the programs offered. The staff was mentioned multiple times as being attentive, friendly, and knowledgeable. Respondents felt comfortable asking for help or talking to staff about issues. The Commons is a park that the respondents seem to measure other parks by and they view it extremely favorably.

Respondents are also extremely positive when it comes to the programs offered. They appreciate the wide variety of programs available and the fact that they are available in so many different areas instead of just at one location.

Other notables mentioned were the strength of partnerships within the community, primarily between the Department and the schools and the maintenance level on the existing facilities.

#### 2.1.2 WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES FACING JACKSONVILLE AS IT APPLIES TO RECREATION AND PARKS THAT WE NEED TO ADDRESS IN THIS LEVEL OF SERVICE MASTER PLAN?

The primary issues that respondents believe need to be addressed were funding, the lack of aquatic facilities, and the need for more types of facilities. They noted a lack of funding for a broader range of events and activities and to have more staff on hand.

The main weakness, repeated more than anything else, was the need for a pool or water feature of some kind. Most respondents want a pool, either indoor or outdoor, while some would be content with a spray park. However, nearly all agreed that an aquatic facility of some kind was needed.

Respondents would like to see more facilities like The Commons, but also more facilities that cater to more specific groups: the very young, the older residents, and the disabled. They would like to have more parks and facilities in the underserved areas as well as to have several of the existing facilities undergo some type of renovation.

### 2.1.3 WHAT DO JACKSONVILLE RESIDENTS VALUE MOST ABOUT RECREATION AND PARKS?

The main value mentioned was that the parks are clean and safe. Respondents appreciate having well maintained, safe parks where they can take their families to recreate. They also appreciate and value the wide range of sports and programs available for all ages.

### 2.1.4 HOW BALANCED DO YOU THINK THE RECREATION AND PARK SYSTEM IS IN JACKSONVILLE IN TERMS OF ACCESSIBILITY TO VARIOUS PARK TYPES (NEIGHBORHOOD, COMMUNITY, REGIONAL, AND TRAILS)?

The respondents do not feel that the Recreation and Parks system in Jacksonville is very well balanced. They would like to see more parks in the newer and/or underserved areas of the City, with more fields and parks for all to enjoy, citing difficulty in attaining use of them at times. Again, aquatic facilities were mentioned as something that was needed/desired by many.

### 2.1.5 TYPES OF RECREATION FACILITIES OR AMENITIES NEEDED?

There are many things that respondents would like to see, but first and foremost is a pool. After that, multiple types of sports fields and parks were mentioned, among them lacrosse fields, additional skate parks, more green parks, mountain biking trails, and ATV riding areas. They would like to see up-to-date equipment in lower income areas of the City and neighborhood sports leagues.

### 2.1.6 WHAT ARE THE RECREATION PROGRAM NEEDS YOU HEAR ABOUT FOR JACKSONVILLE?

The primary types of programs that respondents would like to see are arts programs. They would like more dance and performance classes and more programs for specific groups: adults between 20 and 40, seniors, and disabled residents. They would also, again, like to see aquatic facilities and corresponding programs. Another repeated program is outdoor adventure programs, echoing the desire for mountain biking trails and ATV trails from the previous question.

### 2.1.7 ARE THERE ANY OPERATIONAL OR MAINTENANCE ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED IN JACKSONVILLE PARKS IN THE LEVEL OF SERVICE MASTER PLAN?

The main issues respondents felt needed to be addressed were funding, staffing, and maintenance on existing facilities. They feel that there is not enough funding to adequately care for the existing parks and they feel that many of these parks need renovations, which would cost additional funds. The additional funding is also needed to increase staffing so that the facilities are properly staffed. For maintenance, they feel several facilities need to be renovated and updated as well as new facilities added.



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**2.1.8 ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERING IN JACKSONVILLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OR DELIVERY OF PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES OR PROGRAMS THAT THE CITY SHOULD BE WORKING TOWARDS?**

The main organizations respondents felt could be good for partnerships were the County, schools, military, library system, Chamber of Commerce, Boys and Girls Club, sports associations and other not-for-profit groups. Also mentioned was Camp Lejeune and banking organizations as possible partners.

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**2.1.9 WHAT ROLE DO YOU SEE RECREATION AND PARKS PLAYING IN THE LONG TERM QUALITY OF LIFE AND SUSTAINABILITY FOR JACKSONVILLE?**

The respondents see the Recreation and Parks Department as being integral in the health and environment in the future of the City. They see a need for safe places for the children to play and for youth to “hang out” and they feel that the Department can provide that. Additionally, they see it as a key component of economic development and one that plays a critical role in the progression of the City being a family oriented place to raise kids

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**2.1.10 IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING IN RECREATION AND PARK SYSTEM IN JACKSONVILLE IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

The respondents would like to improve the City’s appreciation for the value of Recreation and Parks. They would like to see more events in the future, such as Music or Movies Under the Stars, outdoor concerts and the like. They would like to see better funding for the Department so that more facilities could be built and the existing facilities could be updated and maintained. Additionally, respondents would like to see more programs for all ages and some type of community gardens or a way of getting the public involved in the natural aspect of the parks. Once again, aquatic facilities were mentioned by more than one respondent. Better partnerships and accessibility to offerings in the community were also mentioned.

## 2.2 RECREATION AND PARKS COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The Department conducted a Recreation and Parks Needs Assessment Survey during August and September of 2010 as part of the process to develop a Master Plan that will establish priorities for the future improvement of Recreation and Parks facilities, programs and services within the community. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout the City of Jacksonville and Onslow County. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone.

Leisure Vision worked extensively with City of Jacksonville officials, as well as members of the PROS Consulting project team in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

In August 2010, Leisure Vision mailed surveys to a random sample of 2,000 households throughout the City of Jacksonville and Onslow County. Approximately three days after the surveys were mailed each household that received a survey also received an automated voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. In addition, about two weeks after the surveys were mailed Leisure Vision began contacting households by phone. Those who indicated they had not returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 425 completed surveys, with 300 from City of Jacksonville households, and 125 from households outside of the City of Jacksonville, but inside Onslow County. These goals were accomplished with a total of 444 surveys having been completed, including 315 from City of Jacksonville residents, and 129 from households outside of the City of Jacksonville, but inside Onslow County. The results of the random sample of 444 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 4.7%.

The following pages summarize major survey findings:



**2.2.1 PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION PROGRAMS DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS**

Twenty-six percent (26%) of households have participated in City or County recreation or sports programs during the past 12 months (Figure 1). This is lower than national averages that are around 29% and best practice rates around 45% or higher.

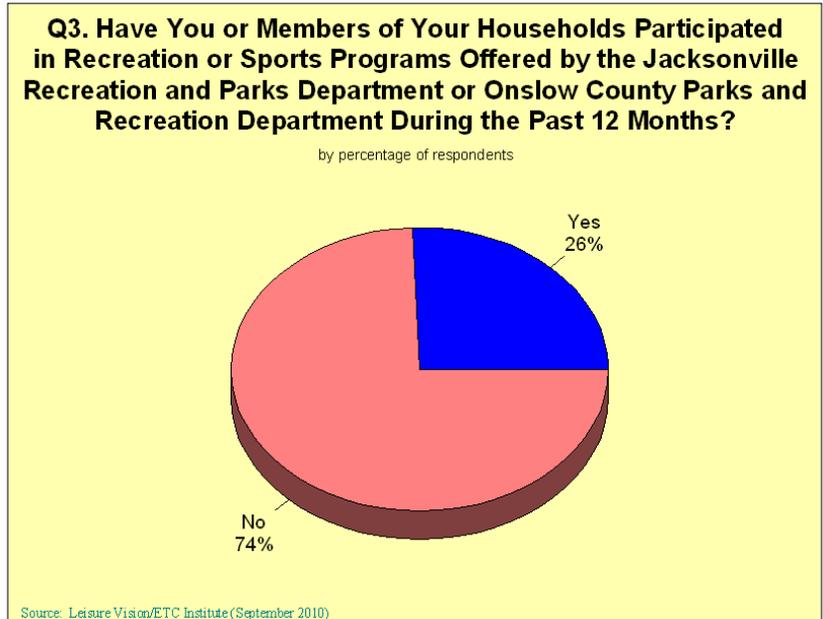


Figure 1 - Participation in Recreation Programs During the Past 12 Months

**2.2.2 NUMBER OF RECREATION PROGRAMS PARTICIPATED IN OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS**

Of the 26% of households that have participated in City or County recreation or sports programs during the past 12 months, 52% have participated in two or more programs during that time (Figure 2).

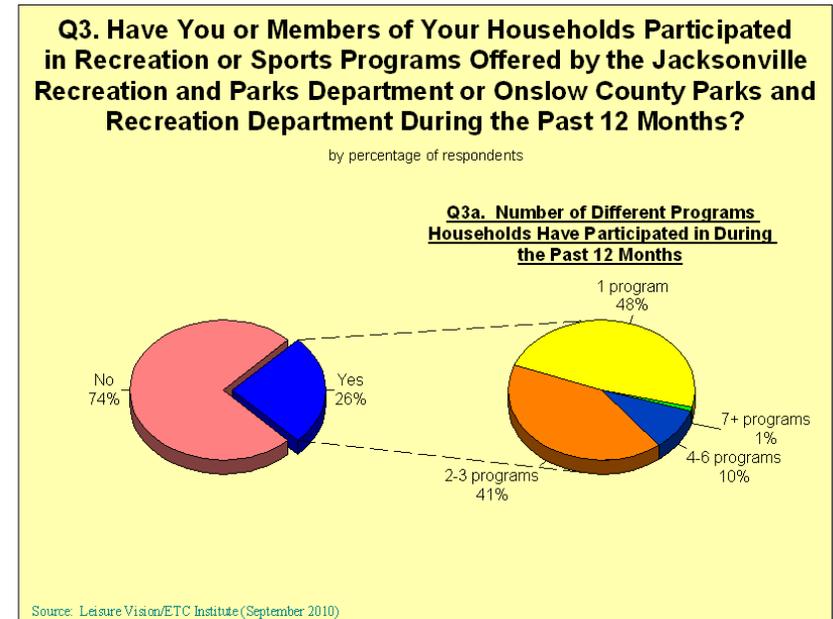


Figure 2 - Number of Recreation Programs Participated in Over the Past 12 Months

**2.2.3 OVERALL QUALITY OF RECREATION PROGRAMS**

Of the 26% of households that have participated in City or County recreation or sports programs during the past 12 months, 92% rated the overall quality of the programs as either excellent (47%) or good (45%). In addition, 8% of households rated the programs as fair, and no respondents rated the programs as poor (Figure 3). This is very good in comparison to national averages of less than 80% rating overall quality as excellent or good.

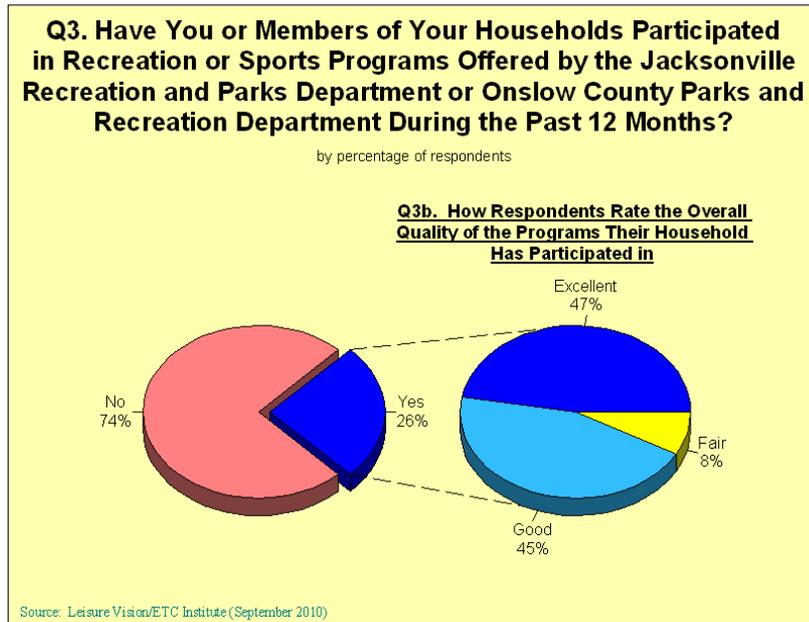


Figure 3 - Overall Quality of Recreation Programs

**2.2.4 ORGANIZATIONS USED FOR INDOOR & OUTDOOR RECREATION & SPORTS ACTIVITIES**

The organizations that the highest percentages of households have used for indoor and outdoor recreation activities are: military facilities (37%), churches (32%), Onslow County Parks and Recreation (28%), City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department (28%), and school facilities (28%) (Figure 4).

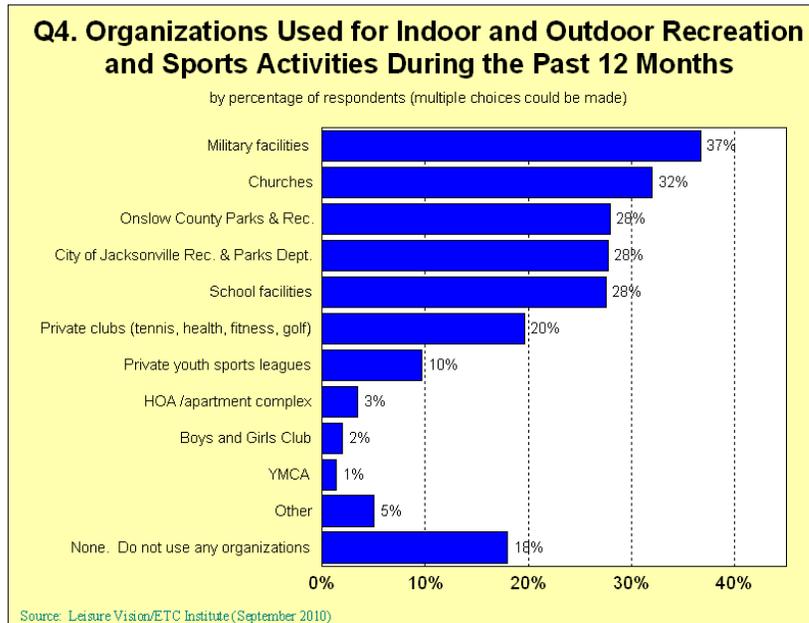


Figure 4 - Organizations Used for Indoor and Outdoor Recreation & Sports Activities



### 2.2.5 WAYS RESPONDENTS LEARN ABOUT PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

The most frequently mentioned ways that households learn about programs and activities in the City of Jacksonville and Onslow County are: from friends and neighbors (51%), newspaper articles (47%), newspaper advertisements (33%), Website (26%), and flyers/posters at Department facilities (26%) (Figure 5).

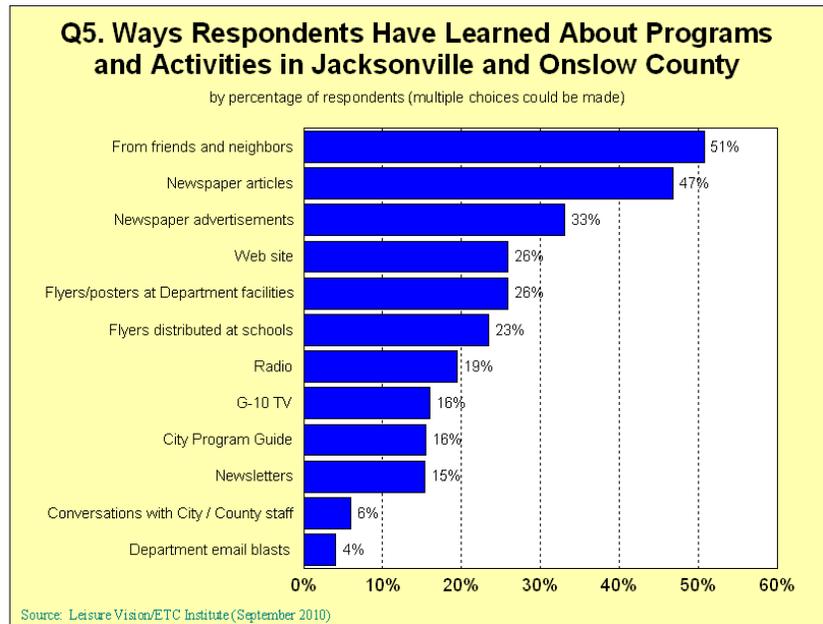


Figure 5 - Ways Respondents Learn About Programs and Activities

### 2.2.6 USE OF CITY AND COUNTY PARKS

The City and County parks used by the highest percentage of households are: Jacksonville Commons Park and picnic shelters (42%), Jacksonville Commons Trail (28%), Onslow Pines Park (24%), Wilson Bay Park (17%), Riverwalk Park (16%), and Northeast Creek Park Nature/Boardwalk Trail (15%) (Figure 6).

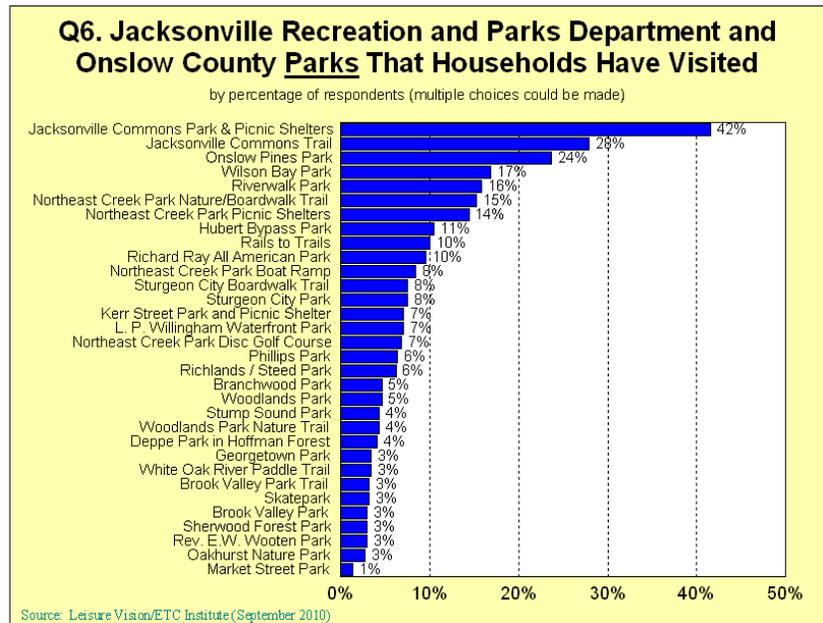


Figure 6 - Use of City and County Parks

2.2.7 CONDITION OF CITY AND COUNTY PARKS

For 29 of the 32 City and County parks, over 50% of households rated the condition of the parks they've used as either excellent or good (Figure 7). This is significantly higher than national averages which range between 30% - 35%.

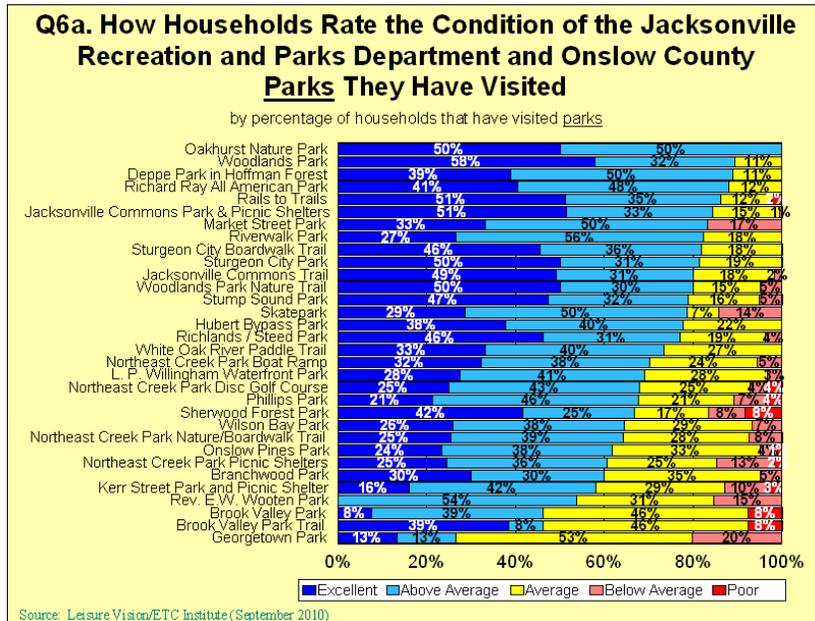


Figure 7 - Condition of City and County Parks

2.2.8 USE OF CITY AND COUNTY INDOOR FACILITIES

The City and County indoor facilities used by the highest percentage of households are the Jacksonville Commons Recreation Center (22%) and the Jacksonville Commons Senior Center (12%) (Figure 8).

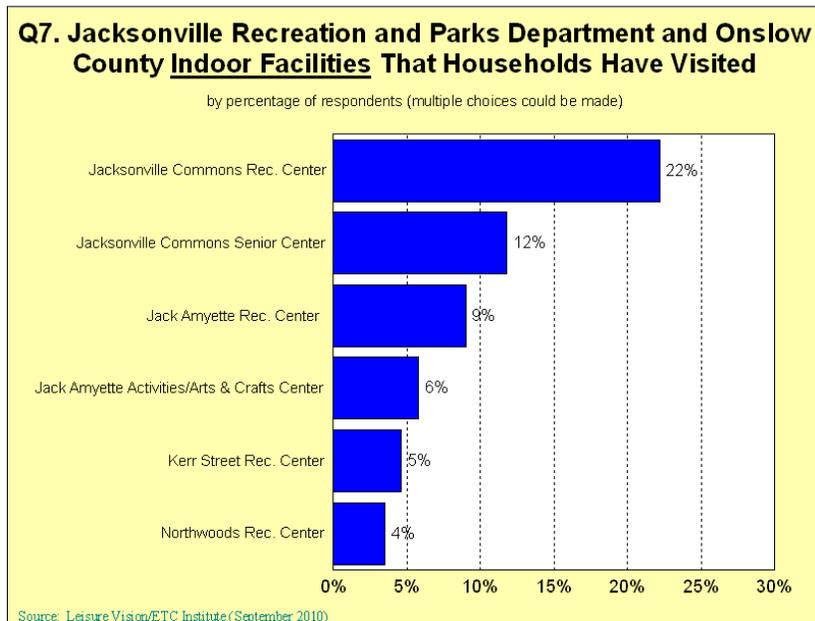


Figure 8 - Use of City and County Indoor Facilities



**2.2.9 CONDITION OF CITY AND COUNTY INDOOR FACILITIES**

For all six City and County indoor facilities, over 50% of households rated the condition of the indoor facilities they've used as either excellent or good (Figure 9).

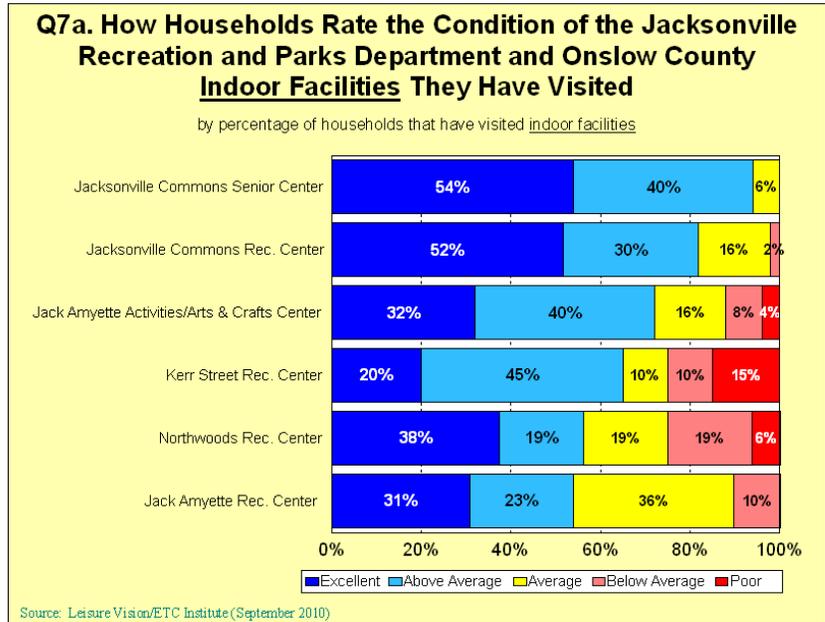


Figure 9 - Condition of City and County Indoor Facilities

**2.2.10 USE OF CITY AND COUNTY SPORTS FIELDS/COURTS**

The City and County sports fields/courts used by the highest percentage of households are the Jacksonville Commons Athletic Fields (18%) and Northeast Creek Park Athletic Fields (7%) (Figure 10).

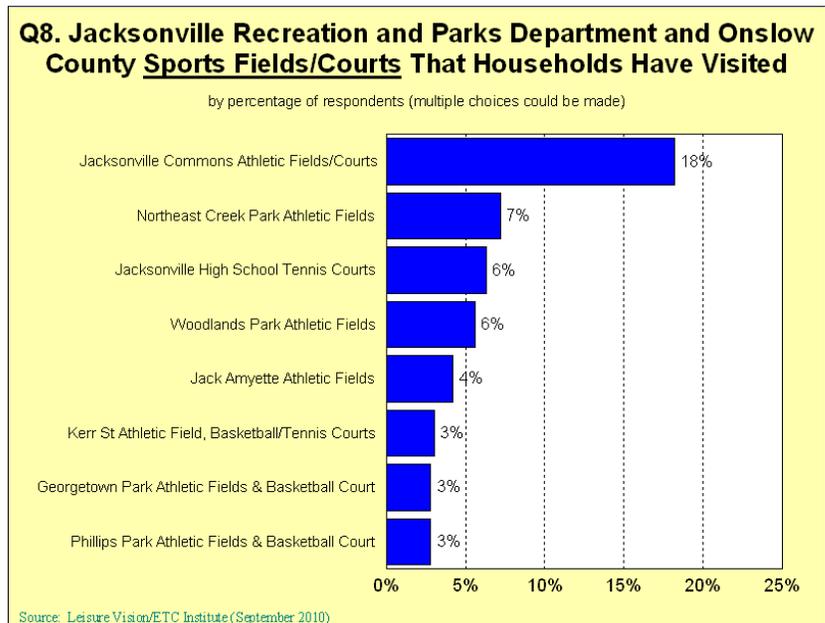


Figure 10 - Use of City and County Sports Fields/Courts

2.2.11 CONDITION OF CITY AND COUNTY SPORT FIELDS/COURTS

For 6 of the 8 City and County sports fields/ courts, at least 50% of households rated the condition of the sports fields/ courts they've used as either excellent or good (Figure 11).

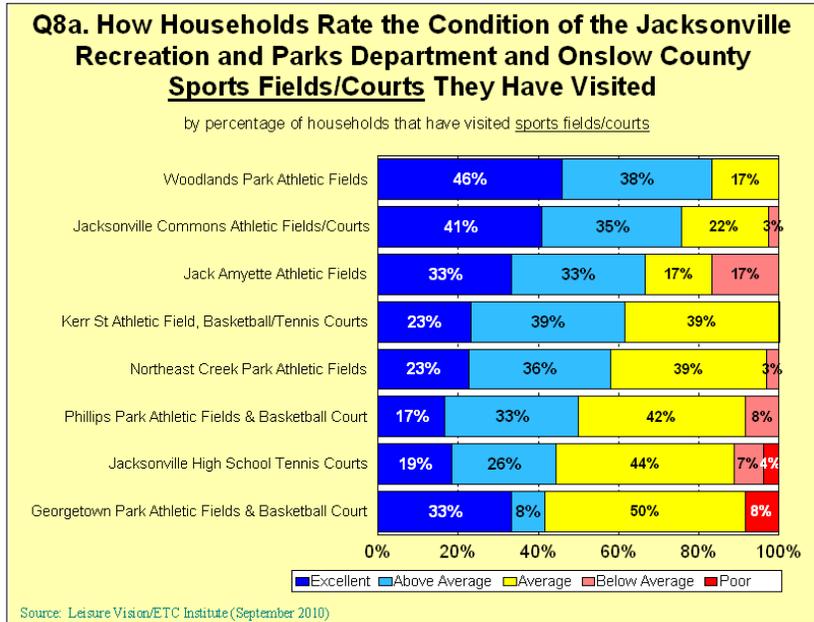


Figure 11 - Condition of City and County Sports Fields

2.2.12 NEED FOR RECREATION AND PARK FACILITIES

The Recreation and Park facilities that the highest percentage of households have a need for are: walking and biking trails (49%), outdoor swimming pools/water parks (42%), indoor swimming pools/leisure pools (39%), nature center and nature trails (36%), small neighborhood parks (36%), indoor fitness and exercise facilities (35%), green space and natural areas (35%), indoor fitness and exercise facilities (35%), and green space and natural areas (34%). See Figure 12.

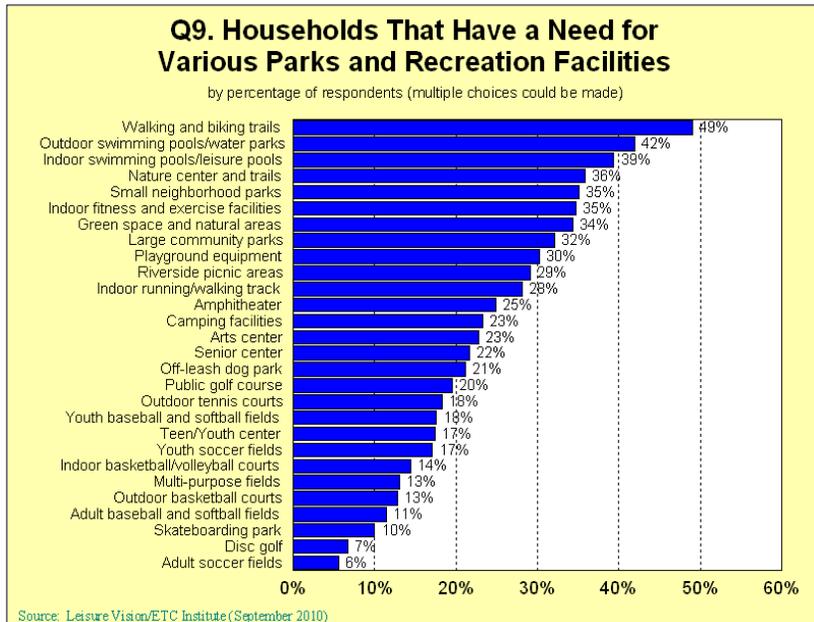


Figure 12 - Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities



### 2.2.13 NEED FOR RECREATION AND PARKS FACILITIES IN JACKSONVILLE

From a list of 28 Recreation and Parks facilities, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones for which members of their household have a need. **Figure 13** shows the estimated number of households in the City of Jacksonville that have a need for various Recreation and Parks facilities, based on 17,782 households in the City.

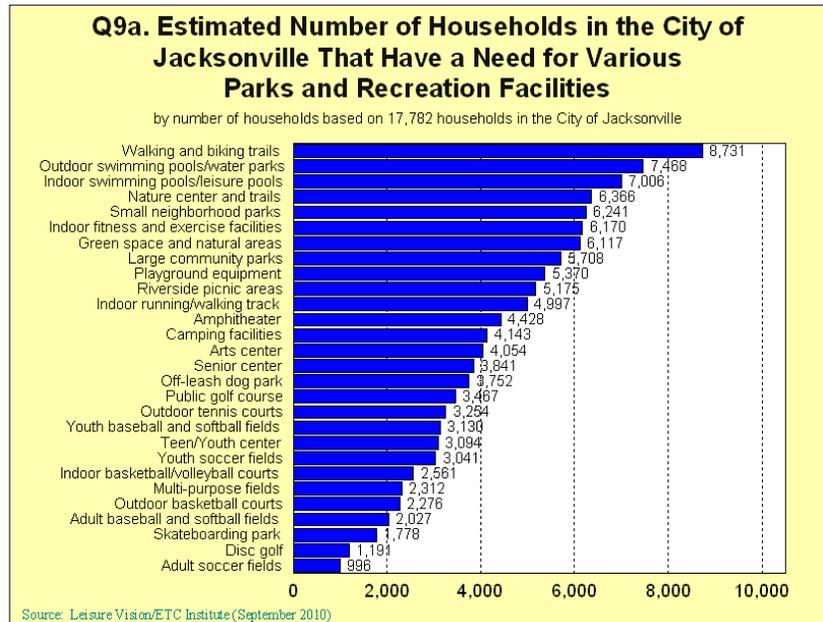


Figure 13 - Need for Parks and Recreation Facilities in Jacksonville

### 2.2.14 HOW WELL RECREATION AND PARK FACILITIES MEET NEEDS

For all 28 parks/facilities, less than 50% of households with a need for parks/facilities feel that their needs are being completely met (**Figure 14**).

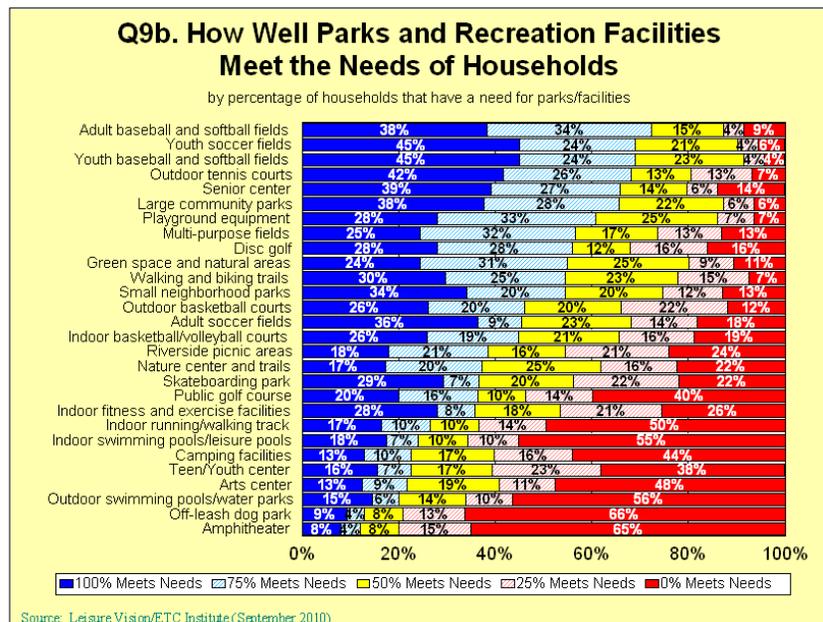
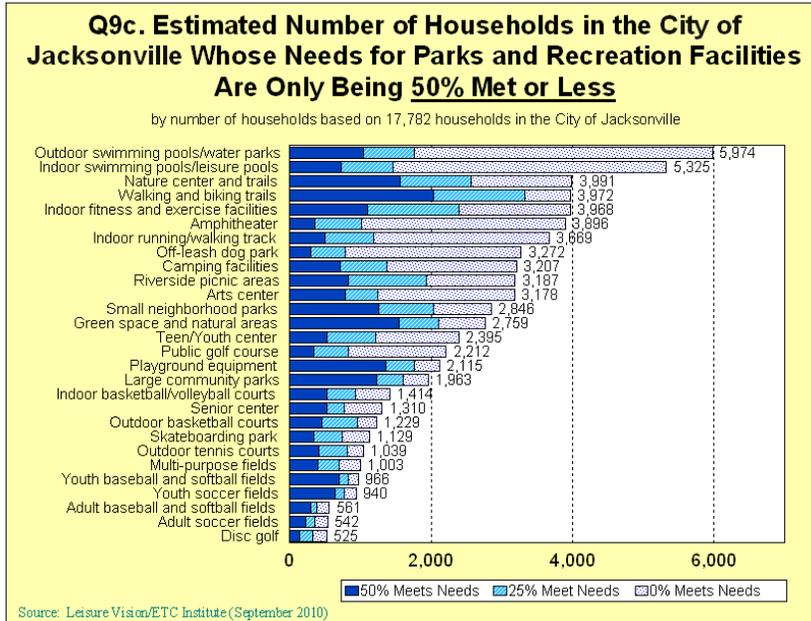


Figure 14 - How Well Parks and Recreation Facilities Meet Needs

**2.2.15 JACKSONVILLE HOUSEHOLDS WITH THEIR FACILITY NEEDS BEING 50% MET OR LESS**

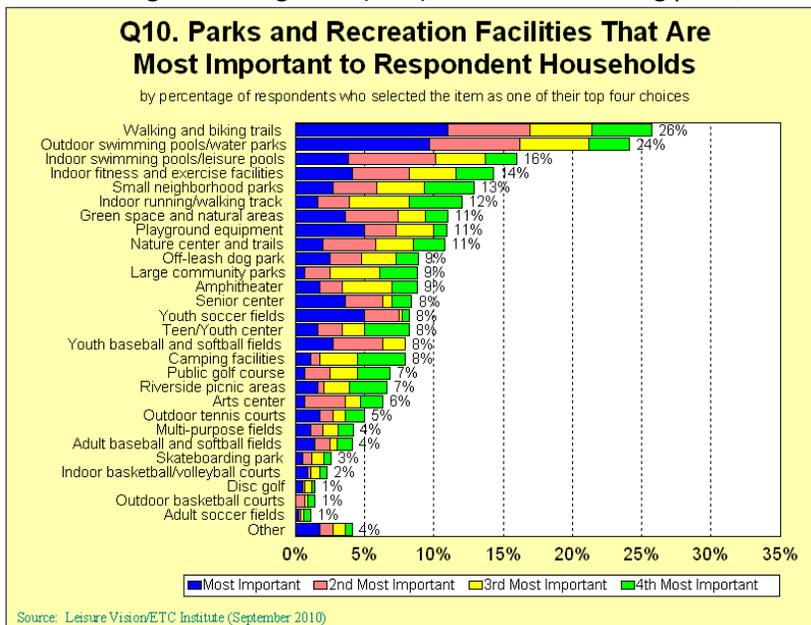
From a list of 28 Recreation and Park facilities, households that have a need for parks/facilities were asked to indicate how well these types of parks/facilities meet their needs. **Figure 15** shows the estimated number of households in the City of Jacksonville whose needs for parks/facilities are only being 50% met or less, based on 17,782 households in the City.



**Figure 15 - Jacksonville Households with Their Facility Needs Being 50% Met or Less**

**2.2.16 MOST IMPORTANT RECREATION AND PARK FACILITIES**

Based on the sum of their top four choices, the Recreation and Park facilities that are most important to households are: walking and biking trails (26%), outdoor swimming pools/water parks (24%), indoor swimming pools/leisure pools (16%), indoor fitness and exercise facilities (14%), and small neighborhood parks (13%). It should also be noted that walking and biking trails had the highest percentage of households select it as their first choice as the most important park/facility (**Figure 16**).



**Figure 16 - Most Important Parks and Recreation Facilities**

### 2.2.17 NEED FOR SPORTS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

The sports and recreation programs that the highest percentage of households have a need for are: special events (46%), adult fitness and wellness programs (35%), water fitness programs (29%), youth learn to swim programs (27%), nature programs/environmental education (25%), adult continuing education programs (25%), travel programs/trips (24%), youth sports programs (24%), adult programs for 50 years and older (23%), outdoor adventure programs (22%), youth summer camp programs (20%), adult art, dance, performing arts (19%), programs for teens (18%), before and after school programs (17%), youth art, dance, performing arts (17%), youth fitness and wellness programs (17%), birthday parties (17%), pre-school programs (17%), youth development programs (17%), programs with your pets (16%), programs for people with disabilities (15%), adult sports programs (15%), tennis lessons and leagues (13%), and golf lessons and leagues (13%).

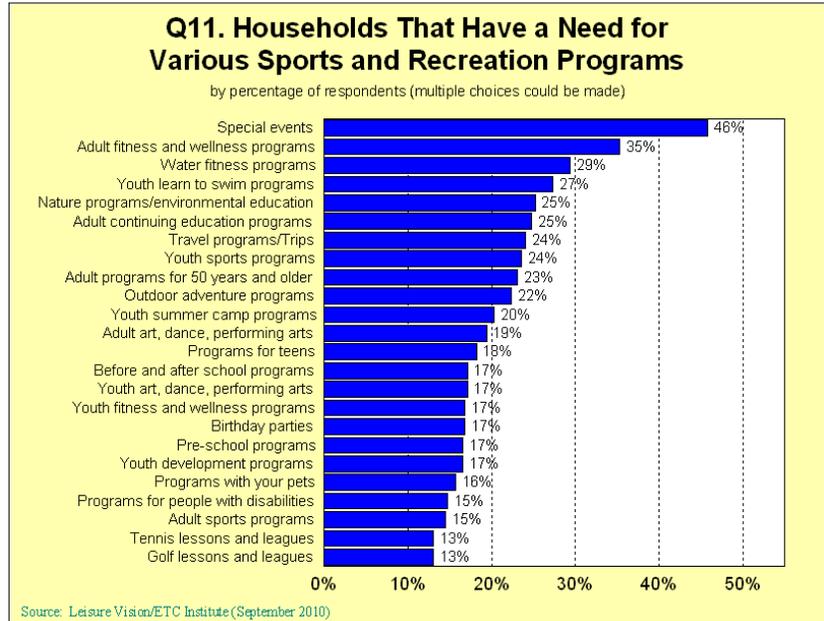


Figure 17 - Need for Sports and Recreation Programs

### 2.2.18 NEED FOR SPORTS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS IN JACKSONVILLE

From a list of 24 sports and recreation programs, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ones for which members of their household have a need. Figure 18 shows the estimated number of households in the City of Jacksonville that have a need for sports and recreation programs, based on 17,782 households in the City.

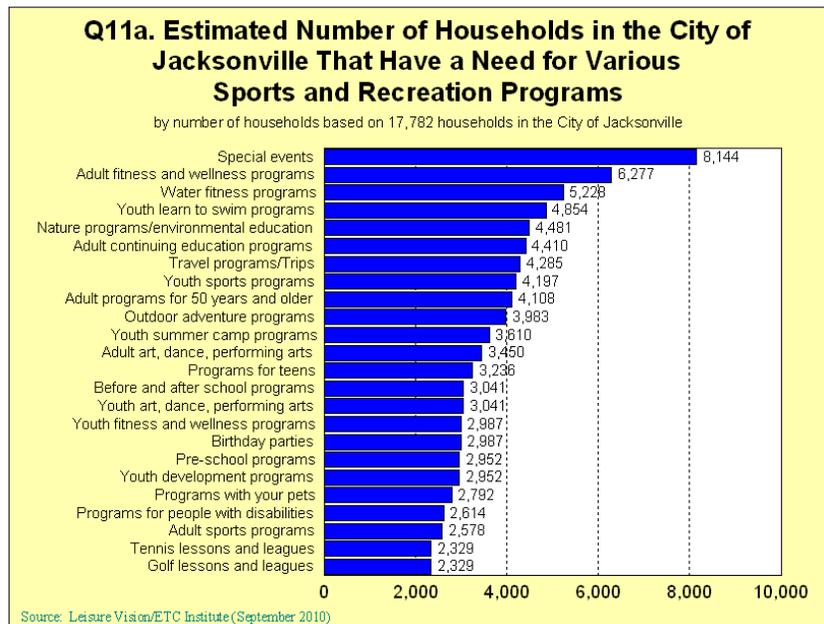


Figure 18 – Need for Sports and Recreation Programs in Jacksonville

2.2.19 HOW WELL SPORTS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS MEET NEEDS

For all 24 programs, less than 35% of households with a need for programs feel that their needs are being completely met (Figure 19).

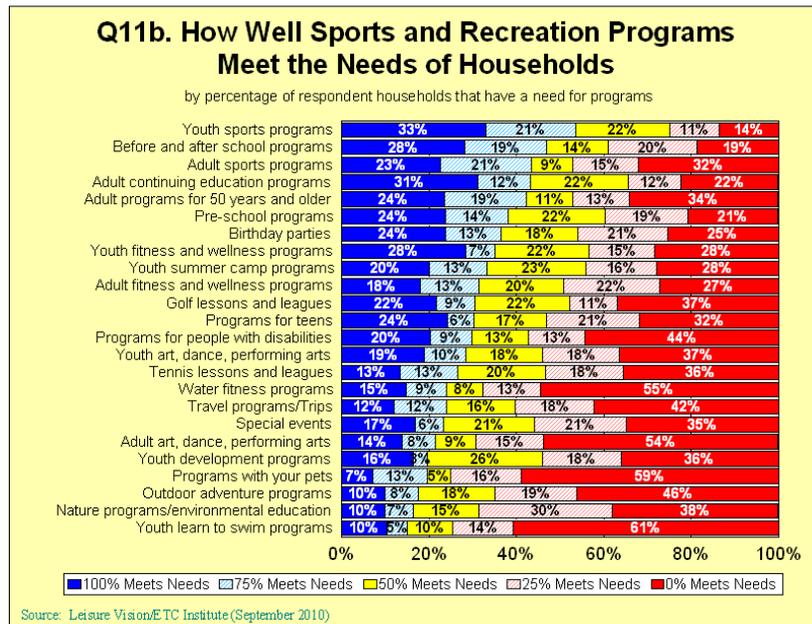


Figure 19 - How Well Sports and Recreation Programs Meet Needs

2.2.20 JACKSONVILLE HOUSEHOLDS WITH THEIR PROGRAM NEEDS BEING 50% MET OR LESS

From a list of 24 sports and recreation programs, households that have a need for programs were asked to indicate how well those programs meet their needs. Figure 20 shows the estimated number of households in the City of Jacksonville whose needs for programs are only being 50% met or less, based on 17,782 households in the City.

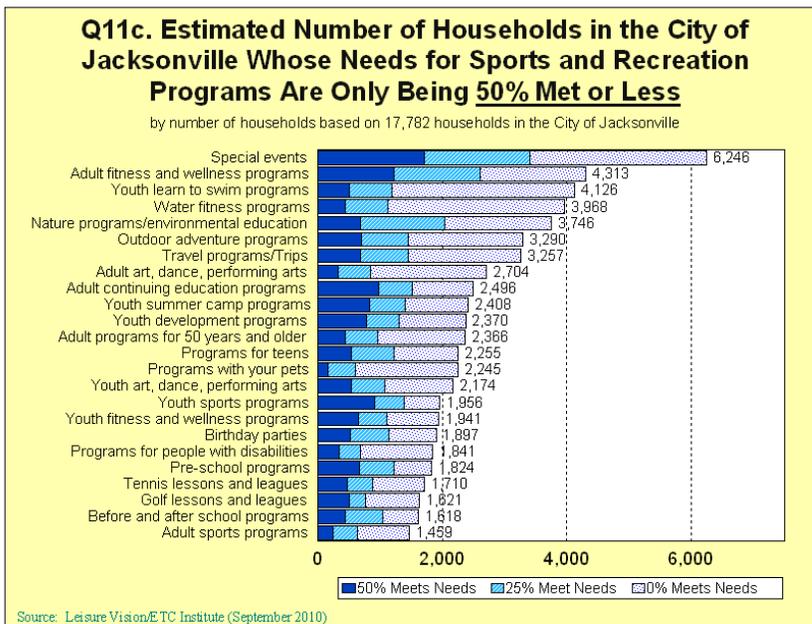


Figure 20 - Jacksonville Households with their Program Needs Being 50% Met or Less

### 2.2.21 MOST IMPORTANT SPORTS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

Based on the sum of their top four choices, the sports and recreation programs that are most important to households are: special events (23%), adult fitness and wellness programs (19%), youth learn to swim programs (15%), water fitness programs (12%), and adult programs for 50 years and older (12%). It should also be noted that youth learn to swim programs had the highest percentage of respondents select it as their first choice as the most important program for their household (Figure 21).

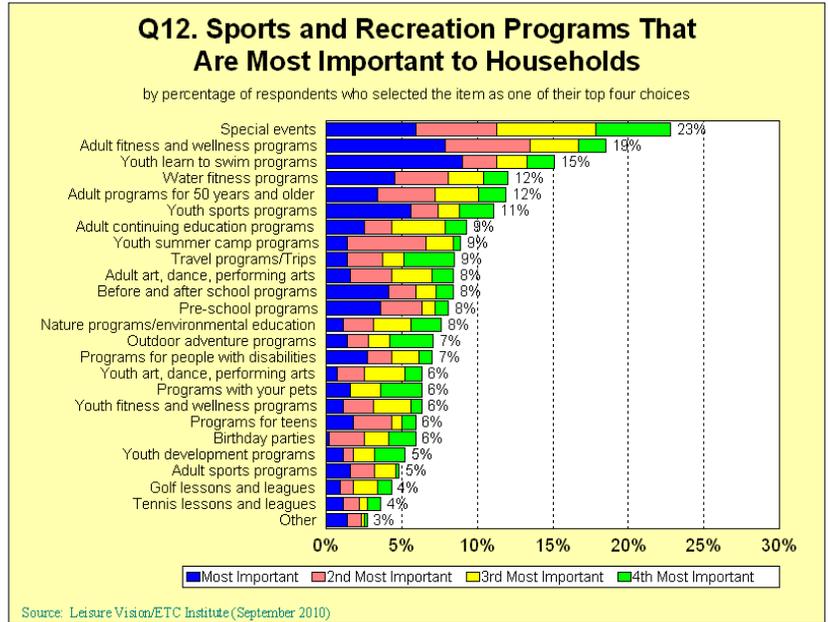


Figure 21 - Most Important Sports and Recreation Programs

### 2.2.22 PROGRAMS CURRENTLY PARTICIPATED IN MOST OFTEN AT CITY FACILITIES

Based on the sum of their top four choices, the programs that households currently participate in most often at City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department facilities are: youth sports programs (9%), special events (8%), and adult fitness and wellness programs (6%). It should also be noted that youth sports programs had the highest percentage of households select it as their first choice as the program they participate in most often at City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department facilities (Figure 22).

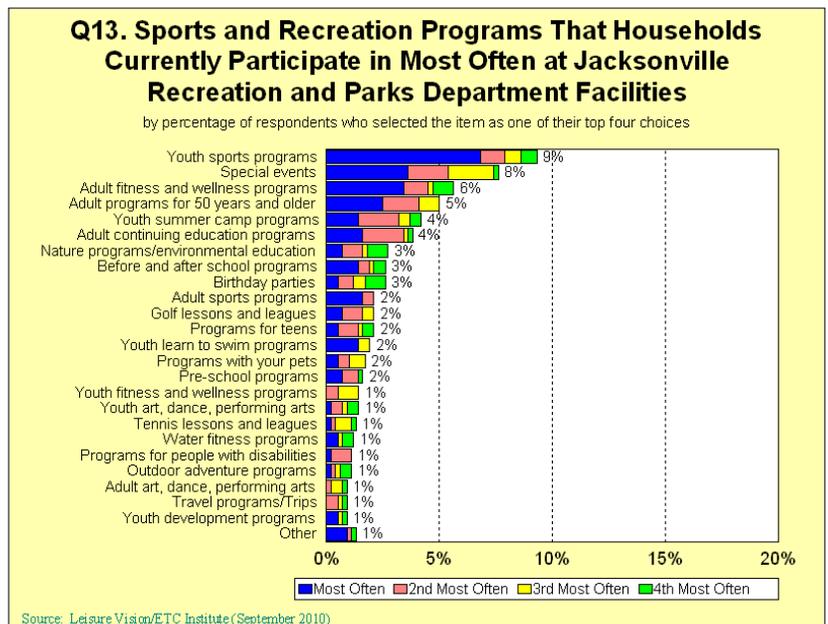


Figure 22 - Programs Currently Participated in Most Often at City Facilities

**2.2.23 REASONS PREVENTING THE USE OF PARKS, FACILITIES OR PROGRAMS MORE OFTEN**

The reasons preventing the highest percentage of households from using City of Jacksonville or Onslow County parks, facilities and programs more often are: “I do not know what is being offered” (34%), “use military facilities” (26%), “program or facility not offered” (21%), and “I do not know locations of facilities” (18%) (Figure 23). Lack of awareness is often in the top 3-4 reasons for preventing greater participation. However, it is typically in the 15% - 20% range nationally and seldom as high as 34%.

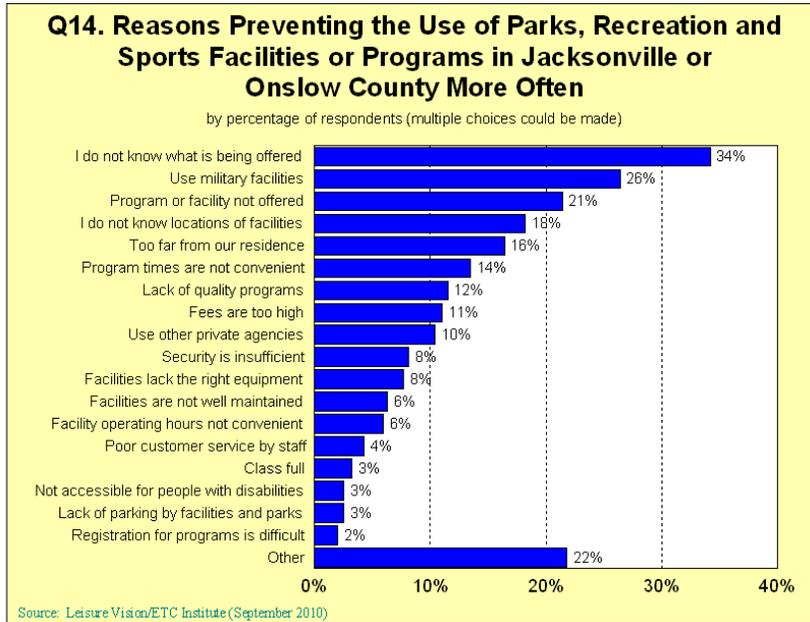


Figure 23 - Reasons Preventing the Use of Parks, Facilities or Programs More Often

**2.2.24 POTENTIAL USE OF NEW INDOOR PROGRAMMING SPACES**

The indoor programming spaces that the highest percentage of households would use are: leisure pool (51%), walking and jogging track (48%), weight room/cardiovascular equipment area (36%), aerobics/fitness/dance class space (36%), and performing arts (32%) (Figure 24).

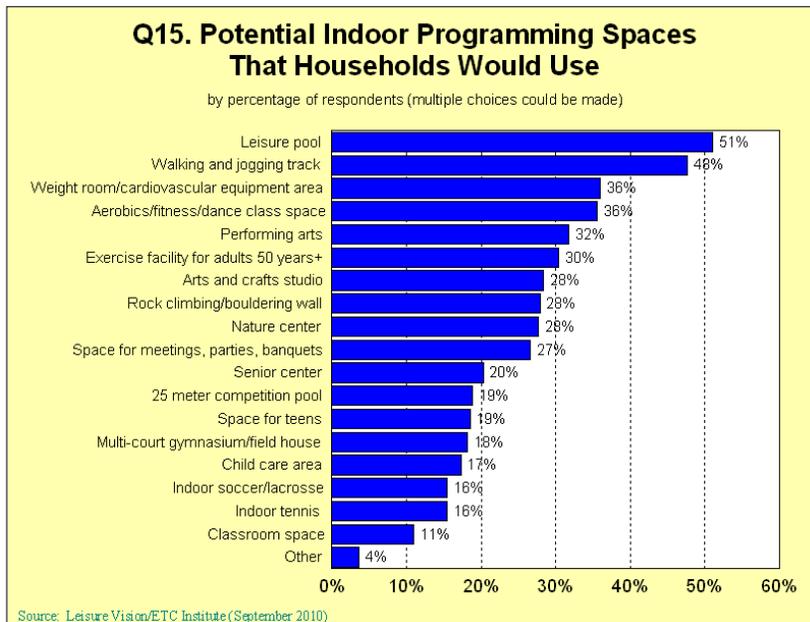


Figure 24 - Potential Use of New Indoor Programming Spaces



**2.2.25 ALLOCATION OF \$100 AMONG VARIOUS PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

Respondents allocated \$38 out of every \$100 to the development of new indoor facilities. The remaining \$62 were allocated as follows: improvements/maintenance of existing Recreation and Park facilities (\$23), acquisition and development of walking and biking trails (\$14), acquisition of new park land and open space (\$9), construction of new sports fields (\$7), and “other” (\$9) (Figure 25).

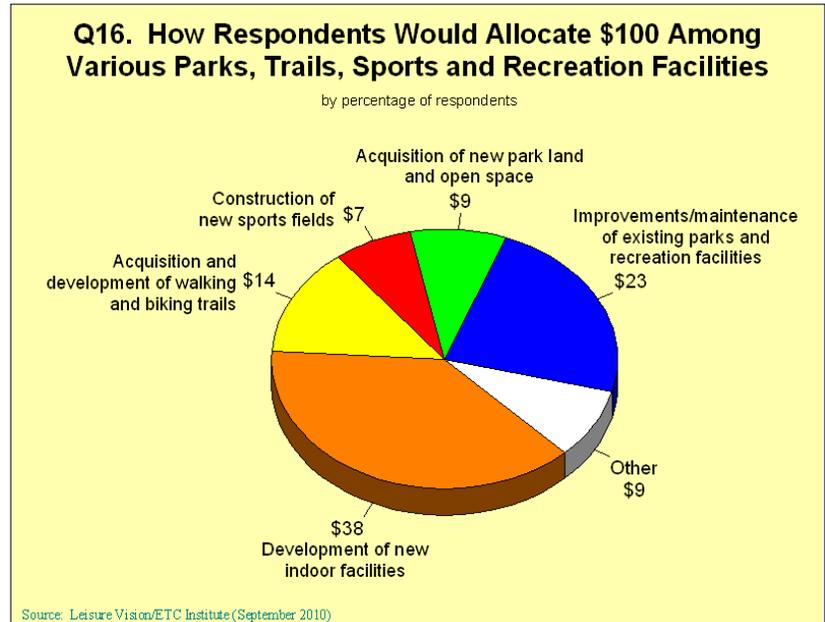


Figure 25 - Allocation of \$100 among Various Parks, Trails and Recreation Facilities

**2.2.26 WILLINGNESS TO PAY A TAX INCREASE TO FUND RECREATION AND PARK FACILITIES**

Forty-three percent (43%) of respondents are either very willing (13%) or somewhat willing (30%) to pay an increase in taxes to fund the parks, trails, recreation and sports facilities that are most important to their household. In addition, 28% of respondents are not willing to pay an increase in taxes, 8% are somewhat unwilling, and 21% indicated “not sure” (Figure 26).

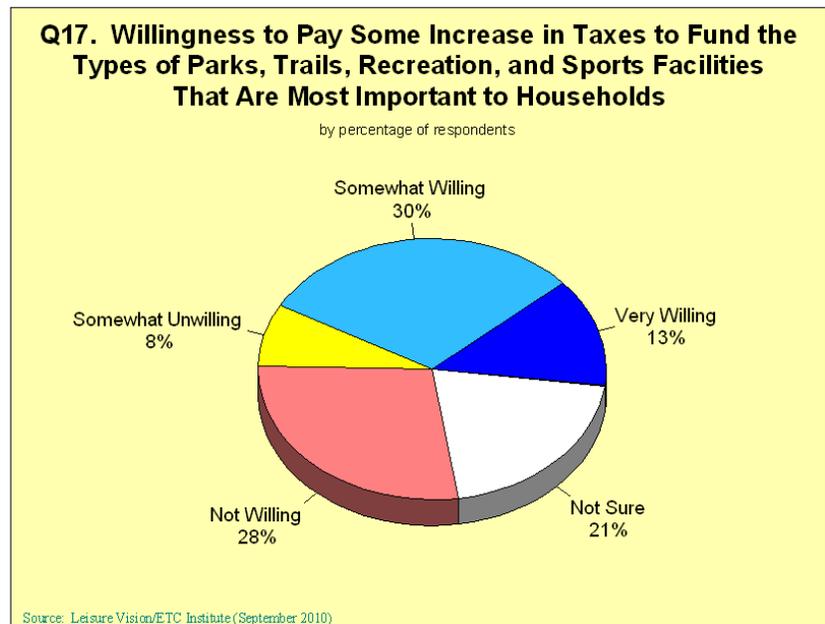
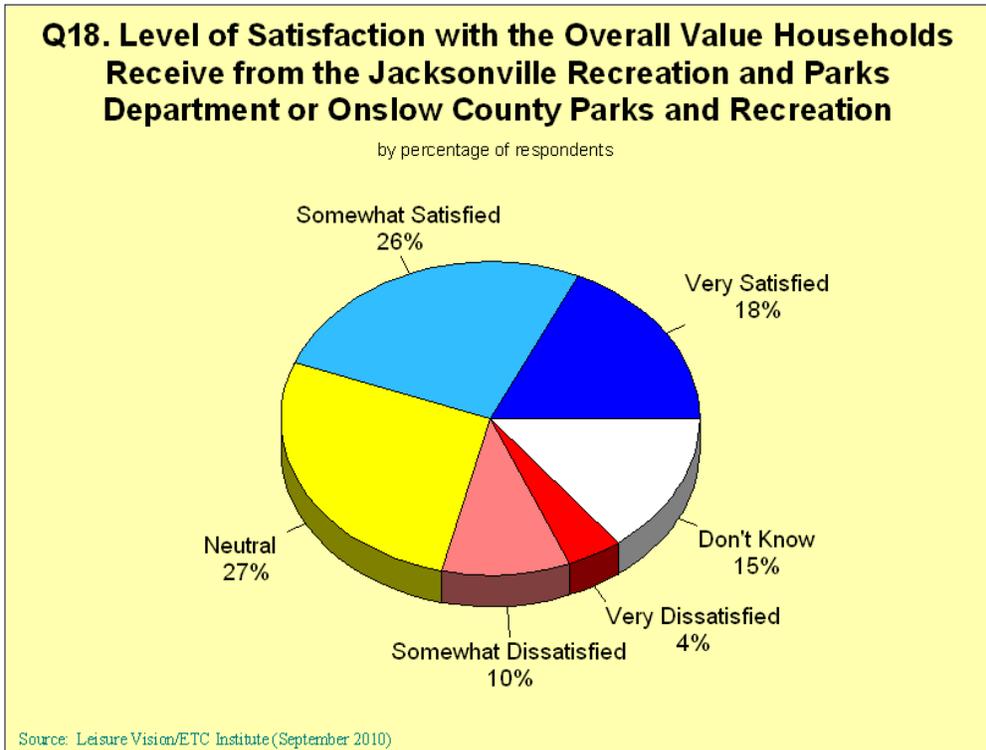


Figure 26 - Willingness to Pay a Tax Increase to Fund Parks and Recreation Facilities

**2.2.27 OVERALL LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH THE JACKSONVILLE RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT AND ONSLOW COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION**

Forty-four percent (44%) of households are either very satisfied (18%) or somewhat satisfied (26%) with the overall value their household receives from the Department and Onslow County Parks and Recreation. In addition, 14% of households are either very dissatisfied (4%) or somewhat dissatisfied (10%) with the value received from the City or County. An additional 27% of respondents indicated “neutral”, and 15% indicated “don’t know” (Figure 27).



**Figure 27 - Overall Level of Satisfaction with the Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department and Onslow County Parks and Recreation**



## 2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND TRENDS ANALYSIS

The Demographic Analysis provides an understanding of the general populace of the City of Jacksonville. This analysis demonstrates the overall size of total population by specific age segment, race and ethnicity, and the overall economic status and disposable income characteristics of the residents through household income statistics.

All future demographic projections are based on historical trends. All projections should be utilized with the understanding that unforeseen circumstances during or after the time of the projections could have a significant bearing on the validity of the final projections.

### 2.3.1 JACKSONVILLE DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

The City of Jacksonville, along with the southern neighbor Wilmington, is the economic hub of south-eastern North Carolina. The major difference in the two is in the composition of the populace – a significant portion of the Jacksonville population base can be attributed to the Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune. At the time of the Census 2000, it was reported that 58.3% of all persons aged 16+ in the labor force were in the Armed Forces. At that time, approximately 50%, or 33,135 persons, lived on the base. This influence is manifested throughout the entire spectrum of demographic composition.

The preferred alternative of the latest initiative from the Department of Defense, the U.S. Marine Corps Grow the Force, is, based on the latest figures, expected to increase the Camp Lejeune force by 11,000 personnel. This data is not accounted for in the demographic statistics that ESRI has compiled; for this, PROS will assume that the 11,000 additional personnel will mimic the trends of the 2000 survey (“What the Census says about Jacksonville & Onslow County”), with nearly half living on base (49.7%) and half living off base (50.3%). Assuming that all 11,000 Marine Corps personnel are already on site – the initiative calls for a five year phased approach from 2007 to 2011 – and that these 11,000 persons accounts for a single unit of measure (i.e. not accounting for spouses and/or offspring), the current estimated population would be 82,582 persons.

Due to the lack of detailed, census tract information relating to the Grow the Force initiative (typically demographic data is 6 months to 1+ years outdated due to constant migration/egression), detailed analysis for age segmentation, gender, and race/ethnicity will be based on the ESRI estimates.

The City of Jacksonville has grown at a modest pace over the last decade. From 2000 to 2009, the **total population** grew by 7.4%, from a reported 66,648 to the reported population of 71,582; the Grow the Force initiative increases this total to an estimated 82,582. This growth comes after a decade in which the City lost nearly 10% of its population. Over the next five years, it is projected that the City will remain rather stagnant, as projections place the 2014 population at 82,508 persons. Due to the heavy military presence, the gender composition for the City heavily favors the male populace; currently, 64% of the total population is male, a trend that is projected to remain constant.

The **population by major age segment** is starkly different than the national norms. In contrast to the typical aging trends, Jacksonville’s largest individual age segment – 20-24 years of age – suppresses the median age of the City to a youthful 23.2 years. Only 8.4% of the population is 55+, nearly 20% below the national averages.

As with other demographic characteristics, the City has a fairly diverse populace. Currently, **race and ethnicity** is comprised of persons identified as white (59.8%) and black (23.2%), with the remaining 17% distributed among all other races. The biggest shift is witnessed in the ethnicity of the City, where those persons classified as being of Hispanic/Latino origin of any race has grown exponentially since 1990, as this ethnic group has grown from 6.95% of the total population to an estimated 14.41% in 2009.

The **income characteristics** do mimic typical national averages and are projected to increase, albeit marginally, in the upcoming years. The City’s median household income was \$32,999 in 2000 and is currently estimated at \$44,154. These numbers compare favorably with state averages (median household income of \$46,574 in 2008), while lagging below the national median household income of \$54,719.

### 2.3.2 METHODOLOGY

Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in March 2010 (i.e. *Source: ESRI; 2010 03*), and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 1990/2000 Census and demographic projections for 2009 and 2014 as estimated by ESRI. The jurisdictional boundaries reported by the Census 2000 were utilized for the demographic analysis (**Figure 28**). Race / Ethnicity data including definitions and participation trends by race / ethnicity are provided in **Appendix 4**.

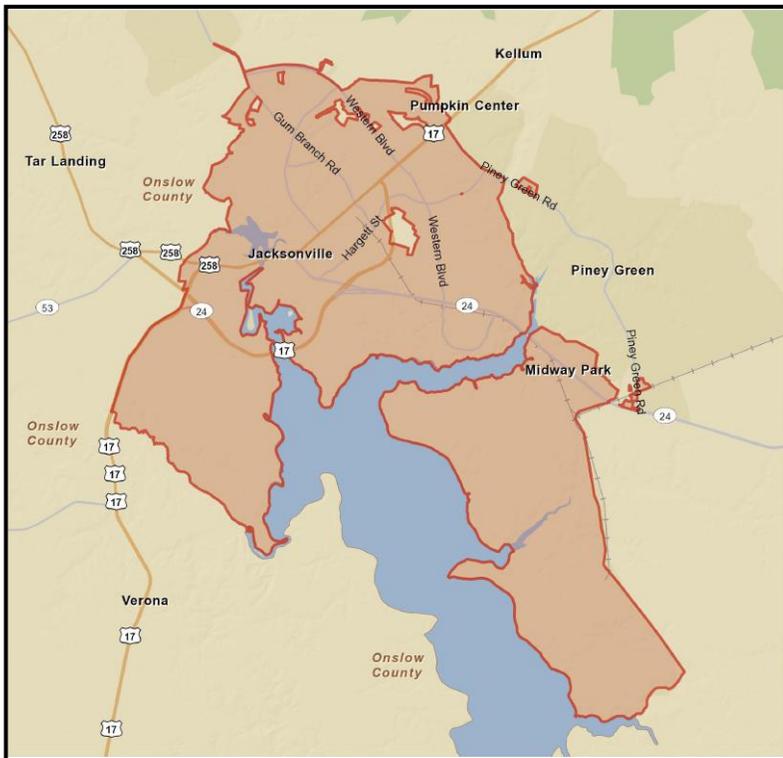


Figure 28 - City of Jacksonville Jurisdictional Boundaries (Source: ESRI 2010 03)



### 2.3.3 THE JACKSONVILLE POPULACE

#### POPULATION

Following a nearly 10% decrease in population during the 1990s that most likely coincided with the reduction in armed forces, the City of Jacksonville has grown at a temperate pace since 2000. From 1990 to 2000, the population declined by -9.8% from a 79,316 to 66,648, respectively. Following this contraction, a temperate annual growth rate of 0.8% from 2000 to 2009 has brought the population up to an estimated 71,582. As a result of the Grow the Force initiative, Camp Lejeune is projected to add 11,000 personnel, bringing the current estimate to 82,582. Five year projections reflect a stagnant populace; from 2009 to 2014 it is projected the City's population will remain unchanged (**Figure 29**).

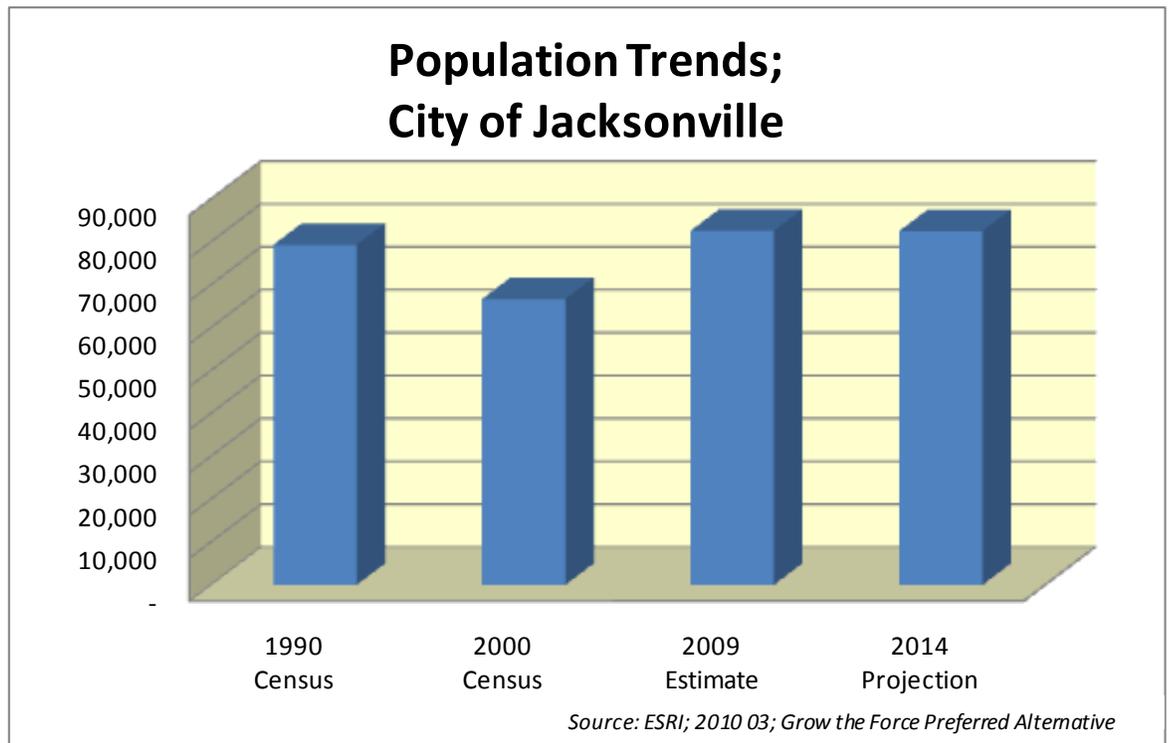


Figure 29 – Total Population Trends

#### AGE SEGMENT

Population by major age segment demonstrates the youthfulness of the City that is fueled by Camp Lejeune. Since Census 2000, the top three age segments in terms of total persons have been and are projected to remain, in order of magnitude, 20-24 years of age, 25-34 years of age, and 15-19 years of age. This large segmentation of young adults would typically be a threat to overload a traditional Recreation and Park system. However, due to recreational outlets on base, some of this demand is alleviated. Atypical of general demographics, the four smallest age segments consist of persons aged 55+ (55-64, 65-74, 75-84, and 85+); this group generally comprises 25% of the populace.

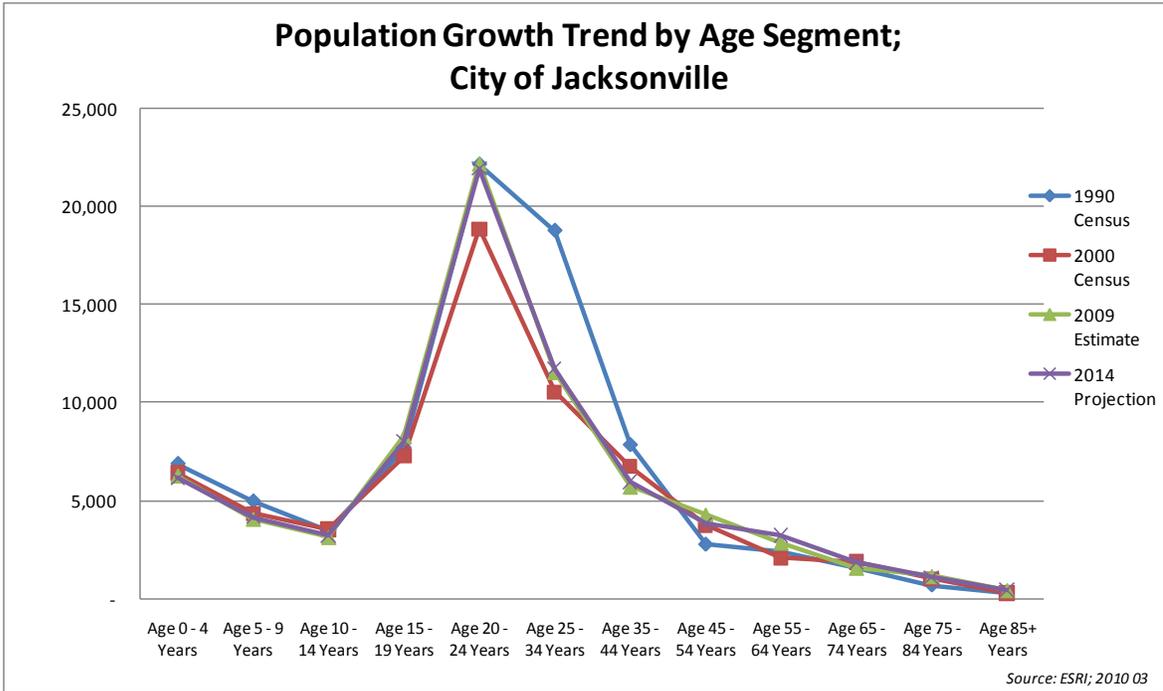


Figure 30 - Population by Major Age Segment

Typically, most Recreation and Park systems provide a wide variety of recreational, health and wellness, educational and entertainment options focused on family activities as well as active adult programming. Jacksonville’s population composition is unique in that roughly half of the populace is stationed at Camp Lejeune. Depending on the historical registrant and participation data as well as the mission and vision of the Department, the administration and delivery of recreational services could become over-extended if a large quantity of participation is base related. This is due to the type of program participation that this demographic – young, adult male participants – typically participates in, i.e. court sports and field sports. These same assets generally service the largest and most frequent of participants – the youth market.

Population by Age	1990 Census	2000 Census	2009 Estimate	2014 Projection
Age 0 - 4 Years	6,880	6,405	6,287	6,150
Age 5 - 9 Years	4,967	4,336	4,072	4,147
Age 10 - 14 Years	3,473	3,536	3,143	3,218
Age 15 - 19 Years	7,616	7,272	8,287	8,009
Age 20 - 24 Years	22,143	18,880	22,218	21,953
Age 25 - 34 Years	18,770	10,541	11,573	11,727
Age 35 - 44 Years	7,839	6,738	5,715	5,935
Age 45 - 54 Years	2,762	3,736	4,286	3,790
Age 55 - 64 Years	2,354	2,068	2,858	3,218
Age 65 - 74 Years	1,581	1,868	1,572	1,859
Age 75 - 84 Years	684	1,001	1,143	1,073
Age 85+ Years	247	267	429	429
Median Age	23.8	23.1	23.2	23.2

Figure 31 - Population by Age Segment and Median Age (Source: ESRI 2010 03)



## GENDER

The gender distribution for the City is drastically skewed towards the male demographic. Male totals account for 64.0% of the total population (**Figure 32**). This distribution is projected to remain constant throughout the next five years.

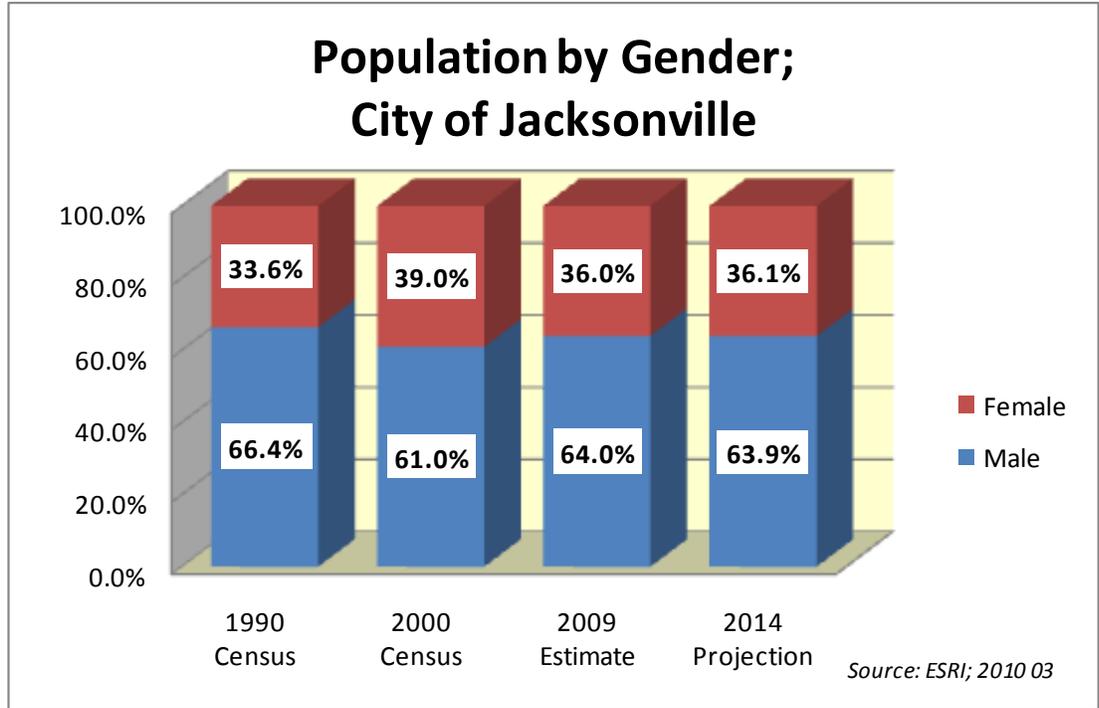


Figure 32 – Population by Gender

**RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Racial composition of a populace provides guidance for decision making based on historical and cultural heritage. In the case of Jacksonville, persons classified as white account for 60% of the populace; persons classified as black make up the only other racial category that is of significant size – 23% of the population (Figure 33).

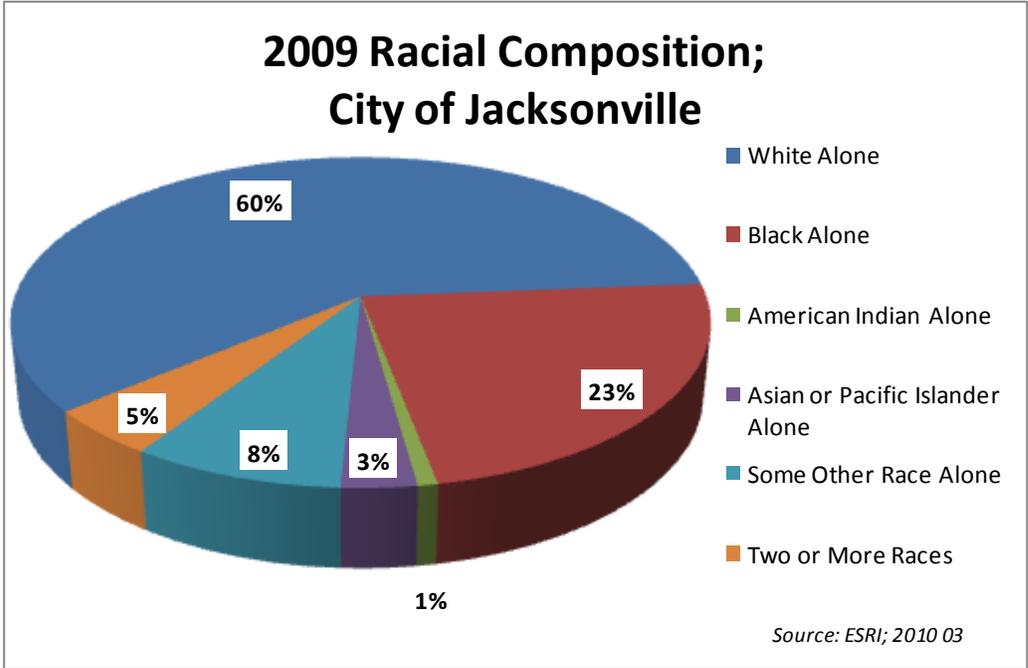


Figure 33 - Population by Race/Ethnicity

To put the racial composition in perspective, current estimates place the white populace at 42,719, the black populace at 16,573 persons, and all other categories at a combined 12,073. Ethnicity as it pertains to those classified as Hispanic/Latino origin of any race make up a significant portion of the populace as well. Based on a percentage increase, this segment has experienced the greatest *percentage* increase of all since the Census 1990. The Hispanic/Latino populace has increased by nearly 100% since 1990; this growth accounts for a total of 10,287 persons currently, or 14.41% of the total population (Figure 34).

Race and Ethnicity	1990 Census	2000 Census	2009 Estimate	2014 Projection
White Alone	52,839	42,631	42,719	40,760
Black Alone	19,766	16,012	16,573	16,375
American Indian Alone	512	534	571	644
Asian or Pacific Islander Alone	1,841	1,534	2,143	2,503
Some Other Race Alone	2,941	3,603	6,072	7,580
Two or More Races	1,417	2,468	3,286	3,718
Hispanic Origin	5,512	6,672	10,287	12,371

Figure 34 – Population Trends by Race and Ethnic Origins (Source: ESRI 2010 03)



## HOUSEHOLDS AND INCOME

The City's household count has changed from 17,175 as reported in Census 2000 to an estimated 17,444 in 2009; a change of 0.2% annually. The five-year projection places household totals at 17,609 in 2014, a projected change of 0.2% annually from the 2009 total. Average household size is currently estimated at 2.73 persons, compared to 2.83 in the year 2000. The number of families in the current year is 13,398 in the market area.

Currently, 34.7% of the 19,579 housing units in Jacksonville are owner occupied; 54.4% are renter occupied, and 10.9% are vacant. These metrics are roughly unchanged since the Census 2000. Home values statistics are:

- Median home value (2009) in Jacksonville is \$124,623, compared to a median home value of \$162,279 for the U.S.
  - It is projected that in 2014 the median home value will increase by an annual rate of 3.4%, reaching \$147,144
  - From 2000 to 2009, median home value changed by 4.52 percent annually

Household income characteristics are considerably lower than the national averages. This can be attributed to the large composition of young military personnel (average median age of the community, which is nearly half military, is 23 years); statistics are:

- Current median household income is \$44,154, compared to \$54,719 for all U.S. households
  - Median household income is projected to reach \$48,313 by 2014
  - In 2000, median household income was \$32,999; median household income was reported as \$23,806 in 1990
- Current average household income is \$54,360, compared to \$71,437 for all U.S. households
  - Average household income is projected to reach \$56,150 in 2014
  - In 2000, average household income was \$40,768; average household income was reported as \$29,385 in 1990
- Current per capita income is \$17,870, compared to the U.S. per capita income of \$27,277
  - The per capita income is projected to be \$19,025 in 2014
  - In 2000, the per capita income was \$14,237; 1990 the per capita income was reported as \$11,350

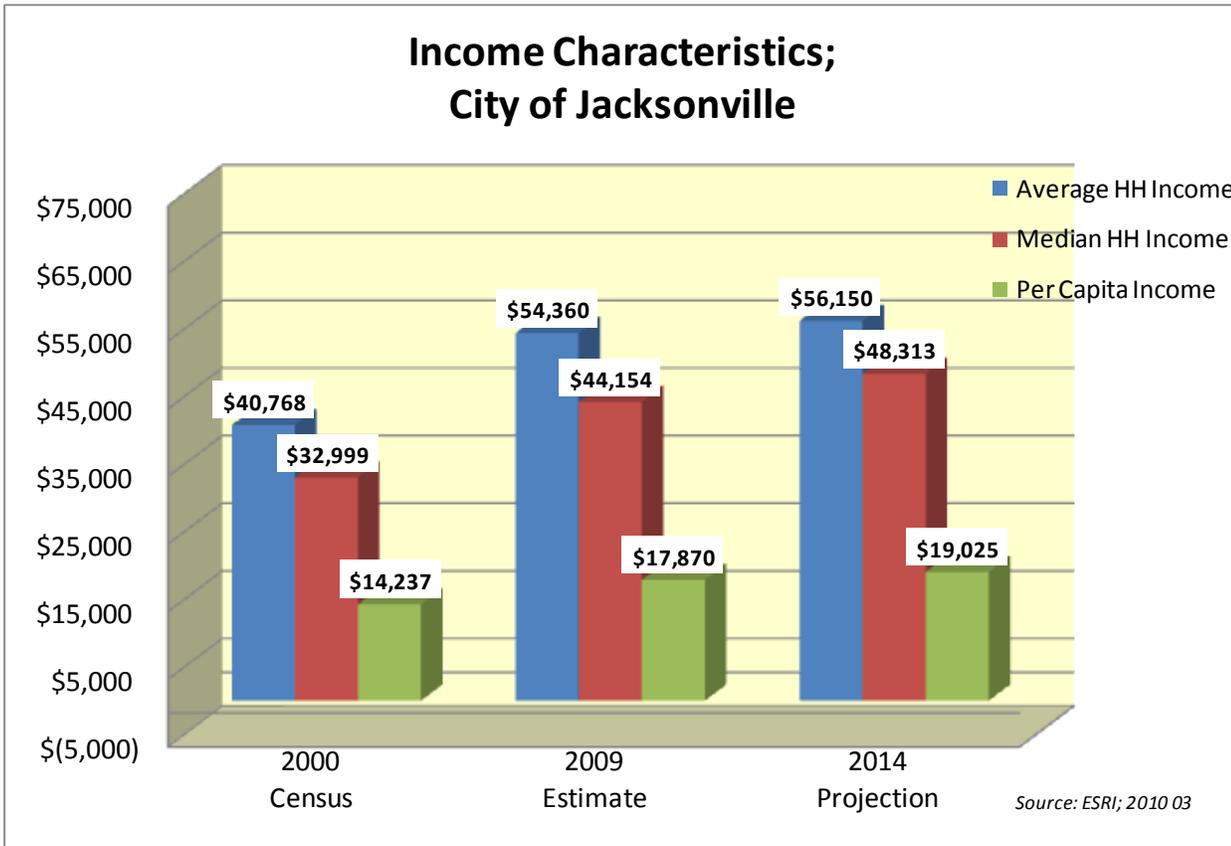


Figure 35 –Income Characteristics

In terms of disposable income – income available for household and personal expenditures after all applicable taxes – Jacksonville has an estimated average disposable income of \$43,996. Average disposable income – or discretionary income available to the consumer – extrapolates to \$3,666 per month for households. Average disposable income by age of householder ranks as follows:

- Age of householder 45-54 – \$56,102 average disposable income
- Age of householder 55-64 – \$53,203 average disposable income
- Age of householder 35-44 – \$49,207 average disposable income
- Age of householder 65-74 – \$48,726 average disposable income
- Age of householder 75+ – \$48,394 average disposable income
- Age of householder 25-34 – \$39,970 average disposable income
- Age of householder <25 – \$29,946 average disposable income



Typically, the economy’s performance has a trickle-down effect on recreation – a poor performing economy leads to less disposable income by requiring individuals and families to dedicate larger sums of money to necessities and less to discretionary items.

When viewed in context with average household expenditures, the disposable income available for Jacksonville residents does not appear to be a great threat to entertainment and recreational spending. Household spending on all entertainment and recreation ranks a respectable sixth out of eighteen categories (**Figure 36**). On average, entertainment and recreation spending accounts for approximately 4.8%, or \$2,446 of the total household budget. Interestingly, the top ranked and 4<sup>th</sup> ranked categories – retail goods and food away from home, respectively – predominantly only meet the discretionary needs of the consumer. The top five categories are retail goods, shelter/housing, food at home, food away from home, and healthcare.

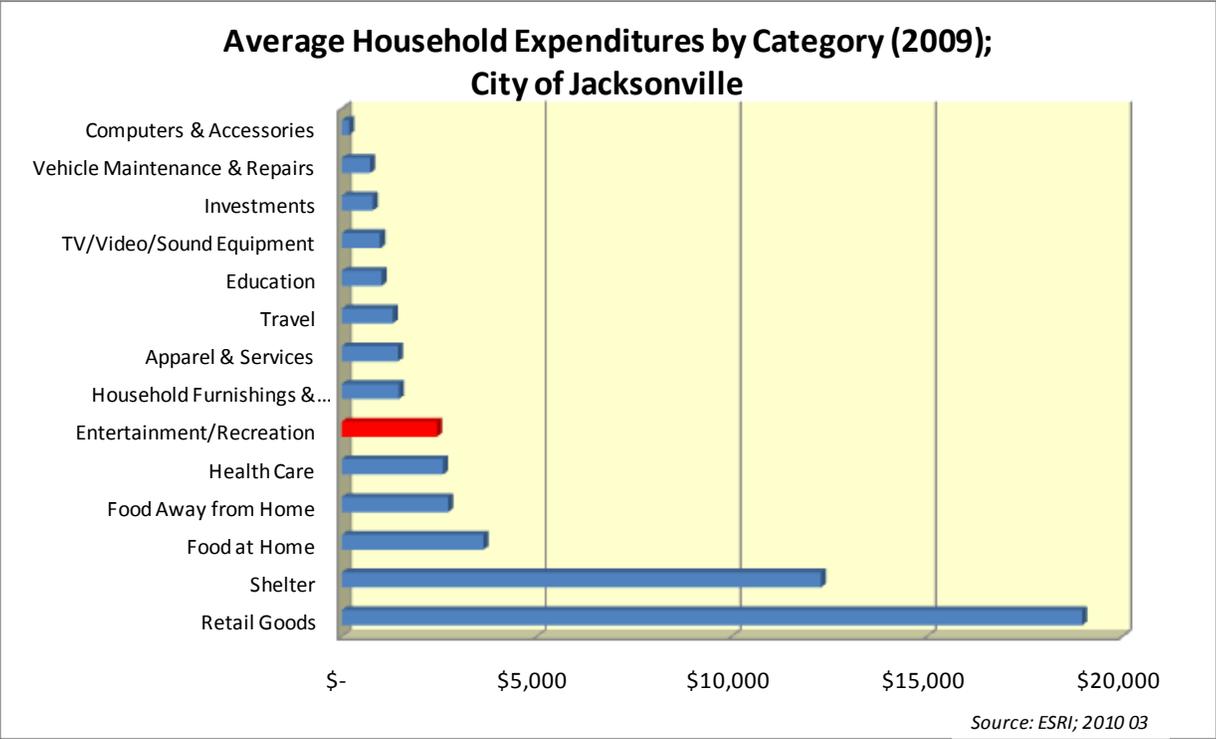


Figure 36 - Average Household Expenditures; 2009 (Source: ESRI 2010 03)

## 2.4 BENCHMARK INFORMATION

The table below depicts the benchmark data provided by the Department staff as collected in October 2010. The comparison has been made with the City (including and excluding base population of approximately 38,000).

While it is difficult in some cases to gauge true apples to apples comparison, the data below does shed light on some key deficiencies and areas of focus for the City. The areas in red below are the biggest concerns.

Based on this data, the City has 1.00% as park land which is significantly less in comparison to the rest. This fact is corroborated in Chapter 6 – Facility / Amenity Service levels which demonstrate below average total acreage levels.

Additionally, the staffing levels for programming staff too are lower in comparison. To put it in perspective, Greenville with an almost identical population has over 50% more recreation programming staff than Jacksonville. From the standpoint of parkland acres per maintenance staff, the Department is comparable to some other agencies such as Rocky Mount, Goldsboro and New Bern. The operations assessment in **Section 5.1** does identify additional staffing resources for maintenance and programming as one of the recommendations. It is however, important, that the increased staffing resources are tied to outcomes such as a higher level of service and greater efficiencies exhibited by the staff. It would be helpful for the staff to update and expand the benchmarking information annually to keep track of how the Department is performing.

	Greenville	Greensboro	Rocky Mount	Goldsboro	New Bern	City of Jacksonville (with base population)	City of Jacksonville (without base population of 38,000)
<b>Est 2010 Population</b>	81,747	257,997	60,220	38,313	28,988	82,508	44,508
<b>City Area (square miles)</b>	31.80	131	35.57	28.15	28.83	45.49	19.92
<b>Total Acres of City Parkland</b>	1,009	4,000	558	400	282	291	291
<b>% of City as City Parkland</b>	4.96%	4.77%	2.45%	2.22%	1.53%	1.00%	2.28%
<b>LOS (acres/1000 population)</b>	12.3	15.5	9.3	10.4	9.7	3.5	6.5
<b>Parks Dept Staff (parks/maintenance)</b>	29	92	34	30	14	18	18
<b>Parks Dept Staff (recreation/programs)</b>	36	104	35	13	16	21	21
<b>Parkland Acres per Staff</b>	34.78	43.48	16.41	13.33	20.14	16.17	16.17
<b>Parks Dept Operating Budget</b>	\$6,149,597	\$19,483,642	\$8,200,000	\$2,827,627	\$2,800,000	\$4,057,020	\$4,057,020
<b>Park Dollars per Resident</b>	\$75.23	\$75.52	\$136.17	\$73.80	\$96.59	\$49.17	\$91.15

Note: The acreage levels listed here for the City of Jacksonville are very minimally different from those depicted in Chapter 6 which includes an additional 8 acres as natural areas / open space which is not maintained by the staff.

Figure 37 - Benchmark Information



## CHAPTER THREE - PARK AND FACILITY ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides an assessment of individual sites as well as the state of parks and facilities within the entire system. Each individual site assessment is accompanied by recommendations specific to the site. Following that, overall system-wide recommendations along with the methodology used to develop them have been provided. Lastly, the visual depiction of all these recommendations on a single image has been captured in the Vision Map.

### 3.1 PHYSICAL ANALYSIS

In March 2010, the PROS team visited the following eighteen (18) City of Jacksonville Recreation and Park facilities:

- Branchwood Park
- Brook Valley Park
- Georgetown Park (County-owned)
- Jack Amyette Center + Park / the Activities Center
- Jacksonville Commons Complex
- Kerr Street Center + Park
- L.P. Willingham Waterfront
- Market Street Park
- Northeast Creek Park + Waterfront
- Northwoods Center + Park
- Phillips Park + Waterfront
- Richard Ray Park
- Riverwalk Crossing
- Sherwood Forest Park
- Sturgeon City Park
- Wilson Bay Park
- Woodlands Park
- Wooten Park

During each site visit, the planning team made observations regarding park access, the site's comfort and image, and uses and sociability. An evaluation of each park can be found on the following pages. Detailed site specific recommendations are provided in Chapter 9.

### 3.2 PHYSICAL ANALYSIS SUMMARY

- Parks are well-maintained and in good condition. Almost uniformly, the City's park facilities are well-maintained and show few major problems with upkeep

- Many park sites have challenging locations that limit access, and/or “eyes on the park”. Many of the City’s parks are located at the back of neighborhoods, and some are even completely surrounded by backyards, such as Brook Valley Park. These locations are challenging because it makes the parks difficult to locate and access. They are also more prone to vandalism and other issues because the sites lack “eyes on the park”, meaning the passive surveillance provided by adjacent homes or businesses
- There is need to improve signage and way-finding. Because of the challenging locations of many of the City’s parks, there is a greater need for signage and way-finding to help users find park sites and facilities. In addition, from a brand identity standpoint, for the Department to create its unique identity, it is important to develop design standards for signage system-wide and ensure consistency and look and feel throughout
- Neighborhood Center buildings are small and outdated. The City’s neighborhood centers all appear to be built around the same time in the 1960s. As a result, these facilities are small, outdated, and lack the features that make neighborhood centers appealing today, such as ample natural light and multiple activity rooms. Other communities have faced this problem as well, and nationwide many towns and cities are streamlining their resources by providing fewer—but larger and better-equipped—community centers. The City is currently in the process of updating a few of the centers and that will certainly assist with enhanced programming opportunities however, the overall footprint of the entire center will still remain the same
- A number of larger park facilities have the elements of a successful park, but seem to lack a centralized plan to integrate their individual pieces and create greater synergy. A good example of this is Northeast Creek Park
- Playground surfaces are outdated and inaccessible. Most playgrounds in Jacksonville have sand surfaces, which are inaccessible by ADA standards and are prone to maintenance problems. Recent product technology has produced a number of surface alternatives that are attractive, accessible, and easy to maintain, but do require a larger upfront investment
- There are excellent opportunities to develop a City-wide bikeways and trails system

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### 3.2.1 THE HUB APPROACH

The outlook for the future system is anchored in four regional park “hubs”:

- Jacksonville Commons Complex
- Northeast Creek Park
- Williamsburg Park
- The renovation of existing downtown park spaces into a single “City Park”



Each of these hubs has a different recreation focus. Building on its existing collection of facilities, Jacksonville Commons Complex is envisioned to be the center for active recreation in the City, providing a single place for almost every kind of sport and activity.

Northeast Creek Park can capitalize upon its beautiful location on the New River and become the hub for water-based recreation, such as kayaking, fishing and boating. Williamsburg Park would merge with the Hyde Park property and evolve into the hub for nature-based recreation, such as hiking and environmental interpretation.

The City Park hub will combine the existing L.P. Willingham Waterfront, Kerr Street Center and Park, and Riverwalk Crossing into a single, seamless urban park experience that will serve as the City’s signature open space and the primary place for community gathering and celebrations. The table below provides a brief snapshot for the themed repositioning.

These four hubs are augmented by a system of community and neighborhood parks that provide recreation facilities close to home. Neighborhood parks provide easy access to multi-purpose green space, playgrounds, and informal picnic areas within a mile of residents’ homes. Community parks are larger, and contain additional facilities such as ball fields, tennis courts, and basketball courts, and are reachable within a three mile trip from every resident. With the implementation of the City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, all parks are accessible on foot or by bicycle through an interconnected system of sidewalks, paved shoulders, bicycle lanes, and multi-use paths.

The table below provides a snapshot of the proposed Hub Approach along with the objective and theme for each one.

Hub	Objective	Theme
<b>Jacksonville Commons Complex</b>	Create a single place for majority of sports activities	Active Recreation
<b>Northeast Creek Park</b>	Capitalize location on the New River for kayaking, fishing, boating etc.	Water-based recreation
<b>Williamsburg Park</b>	Utilize natural environment for hiking, interpretation, environmental education programs	Nature-based recreation
<b>City Park (combine L.P. Willingham Waterfront, Kerr Street Center and Park, Riverwalk Crossing)</b>	Create a community gathering space for special events and celebrations	Signature park and open space destination

Combined as a whole, these regional park hubs, neighborhood parks, community parks, and connections will create a green framework that will enrich the daily life of every resident, worker, and visitor to Jacksonville. **Figure 38** illustrates this vision for the City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks facilities.

# CITY of JACKSONVILLE | Parks + Open Space Vision Map

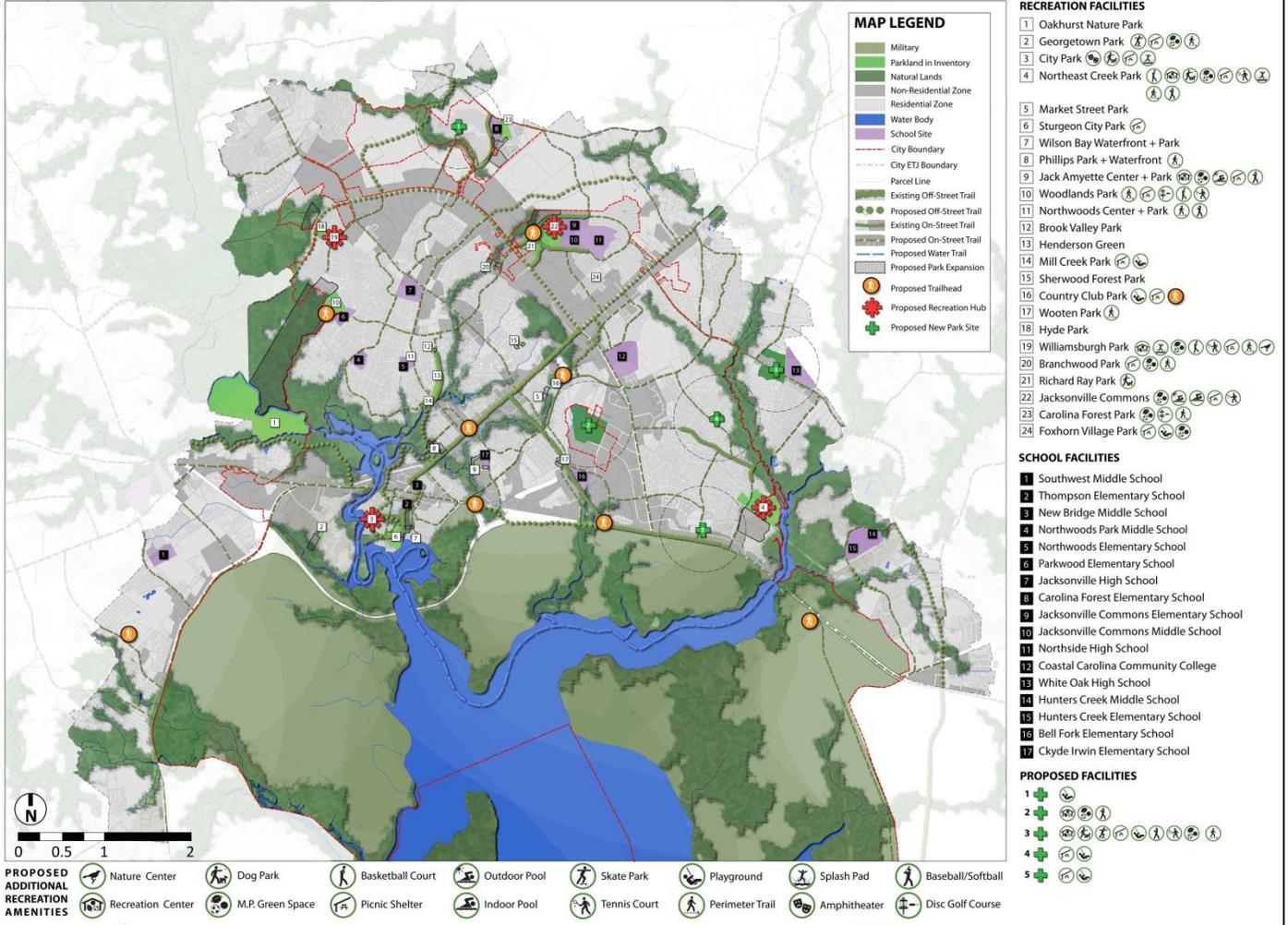


Figure 38 - Parks + Open Space Vision Map



### 3.3 INDIVIDUAL SITE ASSESSMENT + RECOMMENDATIONS

This section outlines the major components present at the various sites along with observations gleaned from the site visits undertaken by the PROS team. The major focus of the facility recommendations is to maximize existing recreation and parks spaces to provide the greatest benefit to the community. As the City is able to raise additional funding, the PROS team recommends the development of existing City property that has already been identified as future parkland.

Along with enhancements to existing sites, it is important that the City also focus on new sites by planning for the acquisition of park land to meet the acreage standards proposed in **Chapter 6**. It should be noted that these recommendations ought to be vetted by the community through a public process for each park before final implementation.

The individual recommendations are structured in the following manner:

- Current and Proposed Park Classification (for a detailed description, see **Appendix 1**)
- Recommendations for each park for the short-term (1-5 years)
- Recommendations for each park for the long-term (5 – 15 years).

Short Term recommendations are the “low-hanging fruit”—projects that can be accomplished in the next few years that do not require a major outlay of funds or aspects of site planning that should start as soon as possible. Long term recommendations are generally projects that will be more expensive and/or may require securing easements or the acquisition of additional parkland.

Jacksonville’s Regional Parks form the four “hubs” of the park system, and each has a particular focus:

- City Park: Urban recreation hub
- Jacksonville Commons Complex: Active recreation hub
- Northeast Creek Park: Water recreation hub
- Williamsburg Park (when expanded/developed): Nature-based recreation hub

### 3.3.1 BRANCHWOOD PARK

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Playground
- Grills
- Open space

#### OBSERVATIONS

Branchwood Park is a well-maintained neighborhood park located at the terminus of Audubon Drive. Staff reports that there are consistent problems with vandalism, especially to the play area and the picnic tables. This is likely due to the fact that there are no “eyes on the park”, meaning that there are no houses or businesses fronting the site that provide passive surveillance.

There is little evidence of neighborhood stewardship, and staff noted that the park is seldom in use. Additionally, the park lacks signage and physical connections to the neighborhood other than Audubon Drive. Revenue opportunities are limited to the size, location, and program of the park.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Proposed Classification:** Neighborhood Park

The primary issue with Branchwood Park is its external visibility - “lack of eyes” on the park, which has led to vandalism and under-use. To help address this problem, the PROS team recommends developing additional uses at the park and improving access.

#### SHORT-TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Begin land acquisition** as mentioned below

#### LONG-TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- **Increase Acreage.** Sufficiently increasing neighborhood park acreage will be one of the challenges that the City will face in reaching its acreage goals. Branchwood Park is surrounded by undeveloped land. Increasing its acreage will further help attain acreage goals and increase visibility of the park if it is expanded to front a roadway, and could accommodate uses that will provide opportunities for active recreation. Approximately four additional acres are recommended
- **Develop a perimeter walking path.** One of the primary needs in the community is more facilities for walking. Currently Branchwood Park has no internal circulation



system, and the sidewalk connection from Audubon Drive ends abruptly. A perimeter walking trail is recommended to help increase activity within the park. With the expanded acreage, the perimeter path could add 0.5 miles of trail

- **Add a multi-purpose field.** With the expansion of the site, a multi-purpose field is recommended
- **Add a small picnic shelter**
- **Connect to Epworth Drive.** Branchwood Park is currently only accessible from Audubon Drive despite its proximity to other streets. A paved walking path connecting Epworth Drive to the proposed perimeter walking path is recommended to improve access to the park and expand the system of pedestrian trails
- **Create an unpaved nature trail.** As a way to bring natural experiences closer to residents, there may also be an opportunity to create an unpaved nature trail along the stream corridor directly west of the park.
- **Add parking.** Expansion/redevelopment of the park may necessitate the addition of an appropriate number of parking spaces (which would be determined by the final use of the space).



### 3.3.2 BROOK VALLEY PARK

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Picnic Shelter
- Playground
- 4 Tennis Courts
- Grills

#### OBSERVATIONS

Brook Valley Park is a small neighborhood park located at the back of a number of residential properties. Because of its location behind homes, there are few “eyes on the park”, and the site is difficult to find. There are, however, two access points: one from Estate Drive and one from the Henderson Green Trail. The connection to the trail is particularly strong, and prevents the park from feeling isolated. Maintenance at the site is good, and most facilities appear to be well-used except for the tennis courts.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Proposed Classification:** Neighborhood Park

Like other neighborhood parks in the City of Jacksonville, Brook Valley Park is challenged by its “backyard” location and lack of street frontage. The major upgrade needed at the site is to improve street frontage and points of access for the neighborhood, but there are facility changes that would provide more immediate improvements.

#### SHORT-TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Begin land acquisition** as mentioned below
- **Re-surface play areas.** The existing play equipment is on sandy surfaces which limits use and poses maintenance issues. The PROS team recommends resurfacing the existing play areas with recycled tire surface (such as that at Richard Ray Park) or a similar material
- **Remove tennis courts.** Park staff noted that the tennis courts at Brook Valley are underused, and they have not been maintained as well as other facilities in the City. The PROS team recommends soliciting feedback from the neighborhood about removing the four tennis courts and replacing them with another facility, such as a



multi-purpose green space. The removed courts will be relocated to the Jacksonville Commons Complex, which will help to better meet established access LOS and equity goals for tennis courts in Jacksonville.

### LONG-TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- **Expand acreage.** As opportunities arise, the City should consider expanding Brook Valley Park by another two acres. This additional acreage will not only enable more flexible programming, it will also extend the park so that it has road frontage and enhanced accessibility and “eyes” on the park.

### 3.3.3 GEORGETOWN PARK

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Restrooms
- 1 Baseball/Softball Field
- 2 Basketball Courts
- 1 Lighted Picnic Shelter
- Playground

#### OBSERVATIONS

Georgetown Park is actually a County-owned park that is located adjacent to a number of County facilities to the west, and is screened by forest from residences to the east. The recommendations have been retained as a way to encourage partnerships between the two agencies to develop and program this site. A unique feature of the park is a small, neighborhood cemetery at the park’s western edge. The main access to the park is off of Georgetown Road, and pedestrian connections to the neighborhood are weak. The park is not as attractive as other City of Jacksonville facilities, but is well-maintained and the mature pine trees provide shade. Staff reports that the park, particularly the sports fields, is very busy after school and on weekends.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**New Park Classification:** Neighborhood Park

According to staff, Georgetown Park is one of the busiest parks in the City. Recommendations are directed at improving the existing facilities and adding new uses that will maximize benefits of the park.



### SHORT TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Onslow County can begin land acquisition** as mentioned below
- **Re-surface play areas.** The PROS team recommends resurfacing the existing play areas with recycled tire surface (such as that at Richard Ray Park) or a similar material
- **Connect to Darden Street.** Striping a crosswalk to make the connection to Darden Street will make the connection to the park official and alert motorists to pedestrians crossing in the area
- **Buffer adjacent land uses.** The County facilities located adjacent to the park do not provide an attractive setting for the park. A landscaped buffer of shrubs and trees are recommended to soften the edges of the park and provide a more aesthetically pleasing environment, and also to improve the experience along the proposed perimeter path
- **Add a medium-sized shelter**, if possible



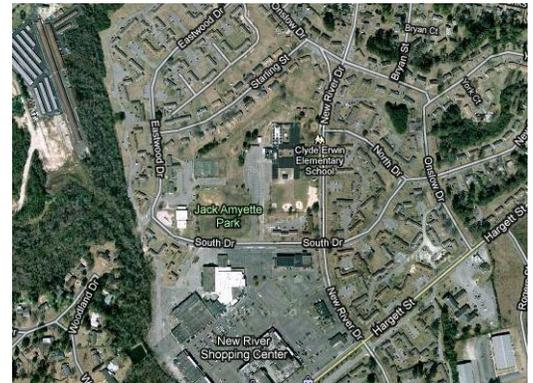
### LONG-TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- **Expand acreage.** Because of the lack of intense development in the area, there is an opportunity to expand Georgetown Park's acreage. This will not only provide more space for programmed elements, it will also help the City meet its goal for park acreage. To achieve this, a partnership with Onslow County may be beneficial.
- **Develop perimeter path.** Because of the relatively large size of Georgetown Park and the lack of sidewalks in the surrounding neighborhood, the PROS team recommends the construction of a walking path within the park's perimeter. The distance of the path would probably be approximately 0.5 miles once the park is expanded
- **Add a multi-purpose field facility.** Upgrade the existing space to a more formalized soccer/football/multi-purpose field
- **Add a skateboard park**
- **Connect to Erastus and Georgetown Road.** In addition to the crosswalk proposed on Darden Street, the PROS team recommends the development of a paved path to improve residents' access to the park and provide a safer path that is off-road

### 3.3.4 JACK AMYETTE CENTER/PARK + THE ACTIVITIES CENTER

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Restrooms
- 1 Baseball/Softball Field
- 2 Lighted Basketball Courts
- 1 Indoor Basketball Court
- Playground
- Recreation Center



#### OBSERVATIONS

Jack Amyette Center and Park is a small community center with active athletic facilities. It is co-located with Clyde Erwin Elementary School, the Activities Center and facilities of the Onslow County Boys and Girls Club. Pedestrian linkages to the immediate neighborhood are good, but Onslow Drive lacks crosswalks and may pose an access barrier to those living in Bell Fork. Overall the park and the center are well-maintained, but the building is aging and in need of an update. Because of the lack of an internal circulation system and the awkward orientation of the building, there is a sense that the facility was developed in an ad hoc manner, and it is unclear which buildings are open to the public, and which are not. Staff reports that the center is busiest with after-school programs, but use of the community center is lower during the day. The Activities Center is currently used for arts and crafts, day camps and classes, special needs programming and additional storage. Additionally, the majority of the property at Jack Amyette Park is owned by Onslow County Public Schools.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Community Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Community Park

The Jack Amyette Center and Park is one of the City facilities most in need of a renovation, both in terms of the site design and function, and the age of its facilities. The PROS team recommends a new master plan for the site and the eventual replacement of the neighborhood center building.

#### SHORT TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Begin land acquisition** as mentioned below
- **Develop a master plan** – To maximize the opportunities at Jack Amyette Center and Park, the PROS team recommends that the site be redesigned to provide better flow

between the different program elements and provide a more enjoyable recreation environment.

### LONG TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- **Expand acreage** – Jack Amyette has a centralized location with potential opportunities to expand. This will not only allow greater flexibility in developing the space-intensive facilities proposed in the long term, but it will also address the park acreage goals outlined in Chapter 6. If possible, adding at least eight acres is recommended.
- 
- **Replace the existing Jack Amyette Center with a new building.** The current neighborhood center is aging and nearing the end of its lifespan. The City could consider building a new center that reflects the needs of today’s citizens: a welcoming structure with natural light, clear entrances, and an ability to serve multiple functions, such as a local arts center. A size of at least 15,000 – 20,000 square feet is recommended to accommodate additional uses and also to help the City meet recreation center square footage goals
  - **Removal of the Activity Center and other small structures.** With the construction of a new center, ample space should be allocated for storage and other anticipated uses. Once new spaces have been developed, the existing structures should be removed and replaced with other recreation facilities.
  - **Add a soccer/football/multi-purpose field**
  - **Add an outdoor swimming pool and/or splashpad:** To ensure equity, an outdoor pool is needed in a more centralized area of Jacksonville. The redevelopment of Jack Amyette Center and Park is a good opportunity to provide a pool, which could also serve Clyde Irwin Elementary School in warmer months
  - **Add a small picnic shelter**
  - **Transition the existing large mounded baseball/softball field into a small mounded baseball/softball field**
  - **Connect to Woodland Drive:** To improve access to neighborhoods southwest of the site, the PROS team recommends creating a paved pedestrian path connecting Woodland Drive to South Drive’s sidewalk network

## 3.3.5 JACKSONVILLE COMMONS COMPLEX

### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Restrooms
- 4 Baseball Fields
- 4 Softball Fields
- 1 Outdoor Basketball Court

- Fitness/Nature Walk
- 2 Horseshoe Pits
- 2 Lighted Shelters
- Playgrounds
- 1 Gymnasium
- Shuffleboard Courts
- 1 Skateboard Park
- 8 Lighted Tennis Courts
- 2 Indoor Volleyball Courts
- 2 Indoor Pickleball Courts
- 2 Outdoor Volleyball Courts



### OBSERVATIONS

The Jacksonville Commons Complex is a large site located in northeast Jacksonville, adjacent to Richard Ray Park, Jacksonville Commons Elementary School, and Northside High School. It has the largest number of facilities and things to do of all City of Jacksonville Parks. As a relatively new park, it is very well-maintained and facilities are in good condition but the site lacks trees and shade, making it feel exposed and uncomfortable in hot weather.

The large size of the park also enables a number of “empty spaces” that are not used, but are still being heavily maintained. Overall the aesthetic is neat and clean, but also stark because of the lack of landscaping. The building facilities are excellent, particularly the gymnasium, and the senior center appears to be well-used by the community. The tennis courts are separated from the site by a substantial wooded area, and are disconnected from the rest of the park facilities.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Regional Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Regional Park

The vision for Jacksonville Commons is to be the active recreation hub of the community. In addition to key new facilities, the PROS team’s recommendations focus on enhancing the site from a comfort and accessibility perspective.

### SHORT TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Begin land acquisition** as mentioned below
- **Convert “dead space” to native plantings.** Jacksonville Commons is a large facility with multiple under-used spaces. These spaces are currently mowed and present

opportunities to decrease maintenance costs. By converting these underused spaces to areas with native plantings, the aesthetic of the park will also improve and can help create outdoor “rooms” and break up the vast space

- **Connect the tennis courts to the rest of the site.** The tennis courts located along Commons Drive are obscured from view from the rest of the park. A second walkway is recommended; the City should also consider removing select trees to create a stronger visual connection to the courts
- **Add a small picnic shelter**
- **Add parking.** Expansion/redevelopment of the park may necessitate the addition of an appropriate number of parking spaces (which would be determined by the final use of the space)
- **Plant additional shade trees.** Multiple areas of the site are uncomfortable in hot weather due to the lack of shade. The PROS team recommends the addition of shade trees near the playgrounds, the skate park, and along walkways
- **Buffer the gymnasium.** A landscaped buffer of shrubbery and/or trees is recommended to soften the hard edges of the gymnasium building and its back parking area
- **Re-surface play areas.** The PROS team recommends resurfacing the existing play areas with recycled tire surface or a similar material (such as that at Richard Ray Park)
- **Transition the large non-mounded baseball/softball field into a mounded field**
- **Highlight the canals.** The existing drainage canals in the park should be upgraded to serve as park amenities with additional plantings. It is also an opportunity for interpretive signage

#### LONG TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- **Expand acreage.** Expanding the acreage at Jacksonville Commons due to its location near undeveloped land would be a key element to meeting the park, facility and amenity service level goals established in Chapter 6
- **Develop an aquatics center.** One of the most consistent findings from the needs assessment is the community’s desire for a swimming pool. As the active recreation hub of Jacksonville and its co-location with three schools, Jacksonville Commons Complex could be the most appropriate location for this major investment. The PROS team recommends maximizing economies of scale and having the indoor aquatics center, an outdoor pool, and a spray ground/splash pad at the same location.
- **Add two soccer/football/multi-purpose fields.**
- **Add outdoor tennis courts.** Add four courts to replace the ones removed from Brook Valley Park. The City is not deficient in the number of tennis courts that it provides, however this transition of facilities from Brook Valley to Jacksonville Commons will help to better meet established access LOS and equity goals for tennis courts in Jacksonville, while keeping the same quantity of facilities.

### 3.3.6 KERR STREET CENTER + PARK

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Restrooms
- Neighborhood Center
- 1 Baseball/Softball Field
- 1 Lighted Basketball Courts
- 1 Lighted Picnic Shelter
- Playground
- 2 Lighted Tennis Courts



#### OBSERVATIONS

Kerr Street Center and Park is a small neighborhood center with active recreation facilities, and is adjacent to the L.P. Willingham Waterfront and Riverwalk Crossing. Like other centers in the City, the building is well-maintained but outdated in its style and size. The grounds of the park are beautiful, particularly with the different types of trees and the high level of maintenance. Also like other park facilities in the City, the Kerr Street Center and Park is located in the back of a neighborhood, but there are some “eyes on the park” and the site feels safe.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Neighborhood Park/Regional Park/Regional Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Regional Park

The most substantial contribution the parks and open space system can make to the economic health of Jacksonville is to develop its downtown park spaces into a signature urban waterfront park. The vision is for Kerr Street Center, L.P. Willingham Waterfront, and Riverwalk Crossing to combine into the hub for urban open space in Jacksonville: *the* place that people picture when Jacksonville is mentioned.



This space would be connected to the open space vision shown in the Downtown Master Plan and combined would create a four-mile walking loop (about three miles of which should be pedestrian/bicycle trail). **Figure 39** illustrates this concept.

### SHORT-TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Develop a master plan.** Creating a single urban park experience out of multiple properties is a complex project. An intensive master planning process is recommended including extensive public involvement.
- **Begin land acquisition.** To realize the full economic development potential of waterfront park space, the City should begin exploring opportunities for land acquisition while real estate values are comparatively low.

### LONG-TERM (5-15 YEARS)

Based on the findings and recommendations from the facility/amenity service level standards and Equity Maps in **Chapter 6** and **Chapter 7** respectively, as well as comparable urban waterfront spaces, the following facilities and enhancements should be considered.

- **Build an amphitheater/performance space.** A waterfront event space will provide an attractive venue for special events year-round and draw people from downtown to the waterfront.
- **Replace the existing Kerr Street Center with a new building facility.** A new, larger facility should be developed to visually interact more with the waterfront; with thoughtful design, it could serve as another venue for special events and rentals and should be about 8,000 square feet in size.
- **Remove active sport facilities.** In keeping with the urban, passive recreation intent of City Park, the baseball field facilities should be removed from the existing Kerr Street Center property. The City has expressed interest in maintaining the basketball courts at this location however, as the park redevelops, they should be integrated in a fashion that maintains the openness and flexibility of the site.
- **Add a dog park.** As the most urban, dense area of Jacksonville, City Park is a logical location for a dog park. This would provide an opportunity for people without private yards to have a place to take their dogs, and would also provide a meeting/gathering space.
- **Add a spray ground/splash pad.** Splash pads are very popular components of parks, and are effective for activating spaces. They are also small in size and provide a water experience in urban environments without the larger investment of a swimming pool.
- **Add a medium-sized shelter.** The shelter should be designed to blend with the urban environment, and should look different than other shelters in the system.
- **Connect to Sturgeon City and the existing boardwalk.** There is an opportunity to build upon the existing boardwalk linkages and use creek systems to create a nature trail connecting to Spargo Street.
- **Add an amphitheater.** An outdoor performance space would help to activate the park, and may provide additional revenue generation opportunities.

**CITY of JACKSONVILLE | Downtown Parks + Open Space Vision Map**

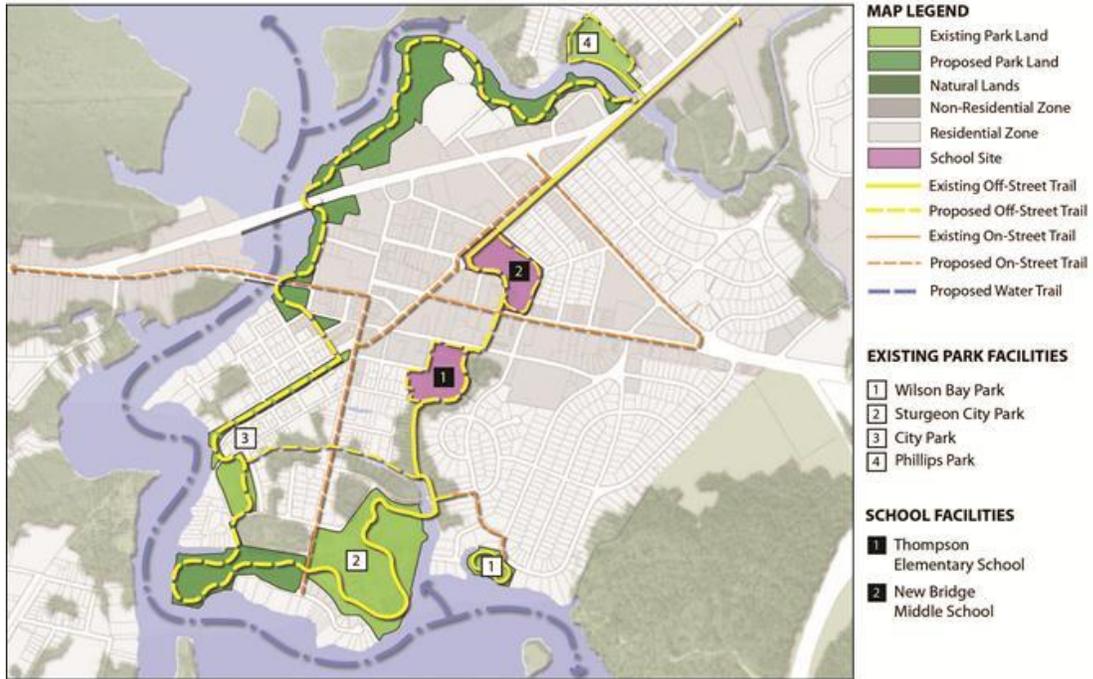


Figure 39 - City Park Concept



Figure 40 - Comparable Waterfront Park in FL

### 3.3.7 L.P. WILLINGHAM WATERFRONT

#### COMPONENTS

- Pier
- Gazebo

#### OBSERVATIONS

L.P. Willingham Waterfront is a fishing pier adjacent to the Kerr Street Center and Park, and Riverwalk Crossing. Its two facilities—the pier and the gazebo—are both in good condition. The site appears to have developed in an ad hoc manner, and lacks direct pedestrian connections to the nearby parks. However, it does serve its purpose of providing fishing access to the river.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Please see section 3.3.6.3 for the combined recommendation for Kerr Street Park, L.P. Willingham Waterfront, and Riverwalk Crossing.





### 3.3.8 MARKET STREET PARK

#### COMPONENTS

- Playground

#### OBSERVATIONS

Market Street Park is a very small neighborhood park with limited facilities. According to staff, it is seldom used now that the day care center next door has closed. Although the playground equipment is well-maintained, it is older than that seen at other City park facilities. There is little to do at the park, and very little to draw someone in. An effort has been made to connect to the neighborhood via a footbridge to 3rd Avenue, but there are no sidewalks in the surrounding blocks. A large sign with park rules does not give the appearance of a welcoming place.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, the City is in the process of re-evaluating its direction for the Market Street Park property. The City is exploring the possibility of selling the property to Community Development with the intention of building affordable housing on the site. With that understanding, there are no future, park-related recommendations for this location.



### 3.3.9 NORTHEAST CREEK PARK + WATERFRONT

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Restrooms
- Boat Access
- 2 Lighted Baseball/Softball Fields
- 1 Disc Golf
- 1 Fitness Walk
- 1 Nature Walk
- 2 Boardwalks
- 2 Lighted Picnic Shelters
- Gazebo
- Pier



#### OBSERVATIONS

Northeast Creek Park is essentially a park with three sections: a tot lot/playground area; an active recreation area with athletic fields and a disc golf course; and a passive recreation area with boating and nature trails. Although all three sections are accessible by vehicle, their disparate locations make the park feel disjointed. Access to the park is via Corbin Street, and there may be an opportunity to develop a trail along the nearby utility corridor to improve connectivity. The surrounding neighborhood does have a sidewalk system, but this does not extend into the park. Maintenance at the site is good, but the boardwalk has suffered from numerous storms and is warped in some places. Staff reports that this is one of the busiest parks in the City, and at the time of the site visit there were numerous people using the facilities. The park also has one of only two public boat ramps in the City, which causes congestion problems on the weekends.



#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Regional Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Regional Park

As the waterfront “hub” of the park system Northeast Creek Park has a dual role: the center for water recreation experiences in the City, and the park serving southeastern Jacksonville.



Like many of the other City parks, a new site master plan is recommended to balance these dual purposes with a particular focus on improving the site's circulation.

#### SHORT TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Begin land acquisition** as mentioned below
- **Develop a site master plan.** The “pieces” of a great park already exist at Northeast Creek Park, but just need to be tied together more cohesively. The PROS team recommends a master planning process that will emphasize connectivity within the park and focus on enhancing the water recreation experiences that the site can afford.
- **Remove playground fencing.** The fencing around the playground is unnecessary and negatively affects the comfort, accessibility and image of the park
- **Resurface play areas.** The PROS team recommends resurfacing the existing play areas with recycled tire surface (such as that at Richard Ray Park) or a similar material

#### LONG TERM (5-15 YEARS)

In the long term, the proposed master plan should guide the City in developing Northeast Creek Park into the regional hub for water-based recreation and the hub on the southeastern side. Anticipated improvements include:

- **Expand acreage.** As seen from the equity maps in Chapter 7, the southeast area of the City is the most underserved in parks and recreation facilities. To provide the additional facilities needed for equitable access, the PROS team recommends a substantial expansion (20 acres) of the park
- **Develop a recreation/community center.** The southeast also lacks a recreation/community center, which would be appropriately located at Northeast Creek Park once it is expanded. At least 20,000 - 22,000 square feet is recommended
- **Build new basketball courts.** Although the population-based standards in Chapter 6 do not demonstrate a need for additional basketball courts, there are currently none to serve the southeast. Conversely, there is overlap in court access in the center of the City; the PROS team recommends removing the court at the Kerr Street Center if the current level of use is not able to be maintained, and building a new basketball court at Northeast Creek Park
- **Build two new tennis courts.** Similar to basketball courts, Jacksonville has enough courts per capita, but they are inequitably distributed. The PROS team recommends removing the two courts at the Kerr Street Center and building two new courts at Northeast Creek.
- **Add a small, non-mounded baseball/softball field.** The southeast currently lacks this facility type, and Northeast Creek Park is the only park space potentially large enough to accommodate it.
- **Add a soccer/football/multi-purpose field**
- **Add a medium sized picnic shelter**

- **Add a spray ground/splash pad**
- **Add a dog park**
- **Develop a perimeter trail.** The park’s large size is conducive to creating a substantial walking/bicycling experience as part of a loop trail

### 3.3.10 NORTHWOODS CENTER + PARK

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Neighborhood Center
- 1 Basketball Court (half court)
- Playground

#### OBSERVATIONS

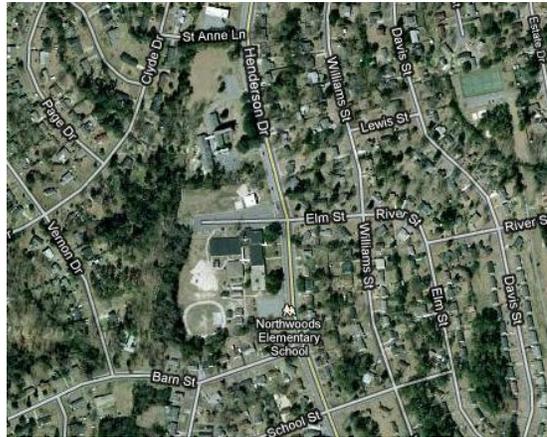
Northwoods Center and Park is a small neighborhood center and recreation space co-located with Northwoods Elementary School, and is adjacent to St Anne’s Parish Day School. The site has good visibility from Henderson Drive, and crosswalks are available for pedestrians. The building at Northwoods is similar to the other neighborhood centers in the City in that it is small in size and is outdated, though well-maintained. The center does not relate well to the outdoor recreation facilities, some of which are also outdated, and will likely need to be replaced soon. There is a large open space behind the center that can serve multiple purposes. Staff reports that the center’s primary function is as a place for after school programs.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Community Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Neighborhood Park

It would be useful to evaluate the level of use at Northwoods Center to identify its financial viability. The PROS team recommends undertaking a cost/benefit analysis of the center and exploring options to consider relocating the after-school programming next door at the Northwoods Elementary School. Due to the high level of need within the surrounding community for this type of facility, a new location/facility would need to be developed prior to the removal of the services provided by the existing facility.





**SHORT TERM (1-5 YEARS)**

- **Develop a master plan.** The Department should coordinate with the School District and St Anne’s to re-design the park space and the adjacent outdoor space of the school to take better advantage of the acreage and co-location of facilities
- **Create a perimeter path.** With cooperation and joint planning from the school district and St. Anne’s, a perimeter path around the three facilities could add almost one mile of trail towards achieving the City’s trail mileage requirement
- **Replace aging playground equipment and resurface.** Remove smaller playground equipment with newer models and resurface with recycled tire or similar material
- **Enhance the stream.** The stream is the most distinguishing feature of the park, and should be a greater part of the recreation experience with plantings and interpretive signage, where appropriate



**LONG TERM (5-15 YEARS)**

- **Remove existing neighborhood center.** If the results of the recommended cost/benefit analysis support it, the City may consider removing the neighborhood center in the future and reallocating maintenance funds to facilities that serve a larger number of residents. As can be seen from the Equity Map in **Figure 73**, the service area for the center is small, and the same area is completely served by the facility at the Jacksonville Commons Complex. As previously stated there is a high level of need within the surrounding community for this type of facility. A new location/facility would need to be developed prior to the removal of the services provided by the existing facility.
- **Add a small, non-mounded baseball/softball field.** The two adjacent schools currently lack formal active sports facilities; by adding a field here, this will help the City attain its facility service level goals and also maximize field usage and access for school children

### 3.3.11 PHILLIPS PARK + WATERFRONT

#### COMPONENTS

- Restrooms
- 2 Lighted Baseball/Softball Fields
- 1 Basketball Court
- 1 Lighted Picnic Shelter
- Playground

#### OBSERVATIONS

Phillips Park is one of the most centrally located facilities in the City. Despite its location on US-17, the park is difficult to see because it is blocked by commercial uses, and lacks prominent signage. A second point of access from Phillips Road and Louise Road is available from the neighborhood, and some adjacent homes have built small footbridges into the park.

Currently the park has some maintenance issues, such as the riverfront walkway, which was fenced off at the time of the site visit. There is a mixture of things to do, but some facilities are hidden (such as the basketball court) and there is no internal system of circulation or paths. The dirt parking lot is also a maintenance problem, particularly after heavy rains. Overall Phillips Park does not exhibit the same high level of maintenance and care seen at other City facilities.

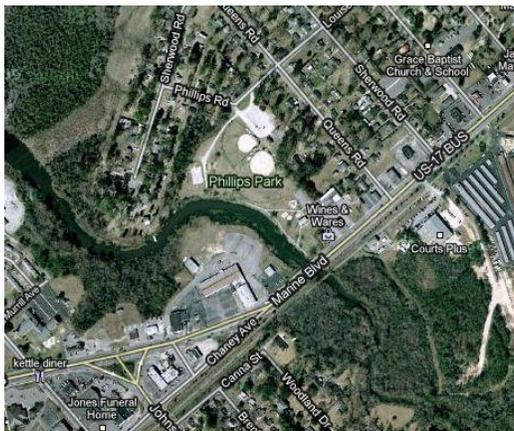
#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Community Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Community Park

#### SHORT-TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Begin land acquisition** as mentioned below
- **Develop master plan.** To maximize the park’s acreage and waterfront setting, the PROS team recommends developing a new master plan that focuses on enhancing water view/access, providing better internal circulation among park elements, and connecting to the City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan improvements
- **Install new entry signage.** A large, visible entry sign to the park is recommended to help people find Phillips Park
- **Pave ball field parking lot.** Pave the back parking lot with a pervious material that will not only improve parking, but be easier to maintain than the existing dirt surface



- **Improve existing shelter.** Upgrade the existing shelter to accommodate more people and additional amenities and new site furniture

#### LONG-TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- **Expand acreage.** To improve visibility of and into the park, and to increase programming flexibility, the PROS team recommends the acquisition of additional acreage (approximately five acres), particularly along Marine Boulevard
- **Transition the non-mounded large baseball/softball field.** To meet the City’s LOS goal for small, mounded baseball/softball fields, the space utilized by the existing ball field should be transitioned into one (1) full size baseball field (325’ fences), and a second small mounded field.
- **Develop perimeter trail.** With an expanded site, a perimeter trail around the park would help serve the trail needs and connect into the City’s proposed bike network
- **Connect to Jack Amyette Center and Park.** An unpaved trail linking Phillips Waterfront and Jack Amyette Center and Park along the creek would not only add mileage to the City’s trail count, but would also provide a natural experience close to the core of the City. This would also connect into the City’s proposed bicycle/walking plan.
- **Potential Nature Component.** As part of CIP conversations, the City has discussed the possibility of making Phillips Park a location for the nature center, due to its proximity to Chaney Creek. With the adoption of the Hub Concept, the PROS Team feels that Williamsburg Park would be a more appropriate location for the Nature Center component due to the potential areas open for expansion and its adjacency to a major trail component. With this said, there may still be an opportunity for the development of a nature component at Phillips Park, at a decreased scale.



### 3.3.12 RICHARD RAY PARK

#### COMPONENTS

- Restrooms
- 1 Fitness Walk
- 1 Picnic Shelter
- Playground
- 1 Garden

#### OBSERVATIONS

Richard Ray Park is a large, well-maintained passive park located across the street from the Jacksonville Commons Complex. Access to the park is good via Gateway Drive off of Western



Boulevard, but the park can also be accessed from the perimeter path of Commons Drive. The site has two sections, separated by a small buffer that occasionally is a wetland/stream. The southern section has a playground that is frequently in use, and a large amount of open space with scattered trees. The northern section is more open, has a network of pathways, and planted areas representing different regions of the United States, but lacks shade trees and feels exposed. Despite the large size of the park there are few things to do, and overall there is a sense that the park is not fully developed.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Community Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Community Park

Richard Ray is currently an under-developed park with great potential to expand its facilities and amenities.

### SHORT TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Create a dog park.** The City of Jacksonville currently lacks a dog park. Because of its location adjacent to the recreation “hub” of the Jacksonville Commons Complex and the available land—and lack of adjacent residences—the PROS team recommends building a dog park at Richard Ray
- **Enhance the garden.** The existing garden has an interesting theme, but would be enhanced with interpretive signage, more plantings, and shade
- **Add parking.** Any development of the park would necessitate the addition of an appropriate number of parking spaces (which would be determined by the final use of the space).



### LONG TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- None at this time

### 3.3.13 RIVERWALK CROSSING

#### COMPONENTS

- Train Depot
- Stage

#### OBSERVATIONS

Riverwalk Crossing is an urban linear park space located between West Railroad Street and L.P. Willingham Parkway. Although the site contains a network of brick paths, there are no sidewalks in the surrounding neighborhoods. The park lacks a strong physical linkage to the adjacent L.P. Willingham Waterfront, and feels disconnected from downtown. Maintenance at the park is good, and the design details—particularly the brick—is attractive. Other than attending a special event or sitting on the park bench, there are few “things to do” at the park. The *2007 Jacksonville Downtown Master Plan* shows the land uses around Riverwalk Crossing redeveloping into medium-density residential, which should help activate the space.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Please see section 3.3.6.3 for the combined recommendation for Kerr Street Park, L.P. Willingham Waterfront, and Riverwalk Crossing.



### 3.3.14 SHERWOOD FOREST PARK

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- 1 Picnic Shelter
- Playground

#### OBSERVATIONS

Sherwood Forest Park is a small neighborhood park completely surrounded by the backyards of residences. Because of this, the park is very hidden and the location is difficult to find. The lack of dense trees and shrubbery at the park’s perimeter, however, allows for some “eyes on the park” from the adjacent homes’ backyards. The park is well-maintained, though some of the playground equipment is outdated and should be replaced. Multiple trees provide a pleasant amount of shade, and the removal of the tennis courts has created a substantial multi-purpose green space. Staff reports that the community embraces this park and shows a strong sense of stewardship towards it.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Neighborhood Park

Sherwood Park is located entirely behind residences, making it difficult to locate and providing few “eyes” on the park. Aside from a few facility upgrades, recommendations are focused on addressing its lack of street frontage and visibility.



#### SHORT TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **If possible, begin land acquisition** as mentioned below
- **Improve entry signage.** To help people find the park, the PROS team recommends improving signage that indicates the park’s location and how to reach it
- **Replace playground equipment.** The smaller playground equipment is outdated and should be replaced; all play areas should be resurfaced with recycled tire or similar material

### LONG TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- **Expand acreage.** Street frontage is a major need for Sherwood Forest Park; the City should consider the acquisition of one or two acres to provide street frontage to the park, and increase programming options



### 3.3.15 STURGEON CITY PARK

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Restrooms
- 1 Fitness Walk
- 3 Picnic Shelters (no electricity)
- Playground
- Boardwalks

#### OBSERVATIONS

Sturgeon City Park is a relatively new, large passive park located on Wilson Bay. The park developed as part of the Riverworks project, an environmental education initiative that is now based out of the old wastewater treatment plant adjacent to the park. The park has excellent linkages to the community with its sidewalk and boardwalk system, particularly to Walter Thompson Elementary School. Aesthetically the park is simple but very attractive, and emphasizes the natural beauty of the water and the wetlands. The park feels well-designed, and the network of pathways provides a substantial network for jogging or walking. A new kayak launch has recently been installed, and there are plans for a butterfly garden. At the time of the site visit, there were few people using the park.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Community Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Community Park

Sturgeon City Park is an excellent facility that should continue to develop according to its existing master plan.



**SHORT-TERM (1-5 YEARS)**

- Add a medium-sized picnic shelter (currently three (3) are existing)

**LONG-TERM (5-15 YEARS)**

- **Expand acreage.** To help attain the City’s park, facility/amenity goals, the PROS team recommends acquiring additional land either east and/or north of the current site, or evaluating acquiring Wilson Island as a destination for kayaking/canoeing tours



**3.3.16 WILSON BAY PARK + WATERFRONT**

**MAJOR COMPONENTS**

- Restrooms
- Boardwalk
- Gazebo
- Pier
- 1 Lighted Picnic Shelter
- Playground



**OBSERVATIONS**

Wilson Bay Park is a beautiful neighborhood park located on Wilson Bay. The park is well-maintained overall and appears to be cared for by the community. Access to the park can be difficult during the weekends due to a lack of parking, and there are no sidewalks in the neighborhood to facilitate pedestrian connections. There is plenty of shade at the park and it is an attractive, comfortable place to spend time. For a small park, there are a number of things to do, and staff reports the park is heavily used and the picnic shelter is often rented out.



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Current Park Classification:** Community Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Neighborhood Park

Wilson Bay Park is a beautiful park with few problems to address at this time.



### SHORT-TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Re-surface play areas.** The existing play equipment is on sandy surfaces which are not only inaccessible, but also pose maintenance issues. The PROS team recommends resurfacing the existing play areas with recycled tire surface (such as that at Richard Ray Park) or a similar material



### LONG TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- **Connect to Sturgeon City Park.** Though very close to Sturgeon City Park “as the crow flies”, the physical connection between the parks is weak. As part of the larger City Park concept, the PROS team recommends constructing a sidewalk from Wilson Bay Park to connect to the existing boardwalk parallel to Wardola Drive

## 3.3.17 WOODLANDS PARK

### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Restrooms
- Hiking Path
- 1 Lighted Picnic Shelter
- 2 Playgrounds
- 7 Soccer Fields
- 1 Volleyball Court



### OBSERVATIONS

Woodlands Park is located behind Parkwood Elementary School. It can only be accessed via a driveway on Northwoods Drive and from the residential street of Drayton Hall Road. Pedestrian connections to nearby neighborhoods are weak. The park is difficult to find because of its location behind the school and in the back of the neighborhood. Program-wise, the park is centered on the soccer fields, which are primarily used by a single league that has the responsibility of maintaining the facilities. Forest surrounds the park on three sides, and there is a substantial unpaved walking path with interpretive signage that skirts the park’s exterior. Overall the park is well-maintained and comfortable, but is primarily used as a sports complex for soccer.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Community Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Regional Park

Like many other City parks, Woodlands Park is a good quality facility but lacks roadway frontage and visibility - “eyes on the park”. Most recommendations for improvement focus on improving connectivity to the park, and ultimately expanding it. Although it is not proposed to be a hub, the expanded acreage and proposed use of the site drive the recommendation to re-classify Woodlands Park as a regional park.



### SHORT TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Begin land acquisition** as mentioned below
- **Install entry signage.** Signage to direct people from Northwoods Drive is needed due to the lack of park frontage on any street
- **Re-surface play areas.** The PROS team recommends resurfacing the existing play areas with recycled tire surface (such as that at Richard Ray Park) or a similar material

### LONG TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- **Expand Acreage.** In order to meet the acreage goals for regional parks, the PROS team recommends evaluating a partnership with Onslow County to leverage Woodlands Park’s location and significantly expand the facility. Ultimately, it would be ideal to extend the park to the southwest towards Oakhurst Nature Park. In the shorter term, expanding northwest towards Williamsburg Parkway would improve access for those residents, and provide additional acreage for recreation facilities
  - It should be noted that the vast majority of the additional, proposed improvements to woodlands park will occur within the proposed, expanded acreage of the park, and should not interfere with the current level of use by JASA; a local youth soccer organization.
- **Expand hiking trail system.** As Woodlands Park expands, there is the potential for additional unpaved hiking trails
- **Add a medium-sized shelter**
- **Add two (2) small shelters**
- **Add a disc golf course**
- **Add a basketball court**
- **Add a tennis court**
- **Connect to Hendricks Avenue.** Though located in close proximity to the park, residents from Hendricks Avenue currently have to travel away from the park onto Northwoods Drive to access the site. The PROS team recommends evaluating an

option to provide a direct linkage with an unpaved walking path that connects to the existing nature trail in the park

- **Connect to Dover Circle.** Like Hendricks Avenue, Dover Circle is located almost adjacent to the park yet lacks a direct linkage; a paved pedestrian path is recommended
- Over time, the Department could work with the administration at Parkwood Elementary School to maximize recreation opportunities created by the co-location of the school with the park. This would also help establish a greater street presence for Woodlands Park

### 3.3.18 WOOTEN PARK

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Restrooms
- 1 Fitness Walk
- 1 Lighted Picnic Shelter
- 2 Playgrounds
- 1 Volleyball Court

#### OBSERVATIONS

Wooten Park is a small neighborhood park serving the Bell Fork neighborhood, and is accessible from both Bell Fork Road and Cole Drive but not very visible from either due to trees and residences. Despite its noisy location adjacent to Bell Fork Road and near the Jacksonville Bypass, staff reports that the park is very well-used and supported by the neighborhood. The presence of the recently completely Rail-to-Trails project now has the park doing double-duty as an informal trailhead, particularly on the weekends.

The park is well-maintained but most of its facilities are outdated and reaching the end of their life spans. There are also a number of utility structures that mar the aesthetic of the park.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

**Current Park Classification:** Neighborhood Park

**Proposed Park Classification:** Neighborhood Park

Wooten Park is a popular neighborhood park that can be improved greatly with facility upgrades and better visibility from the neighborhood. During the site visits, this site was identified as a potential location for a splashpad, however further LOS analysis revealed that either Williamsburg Park and/or Jack Amyette Park are more appropriate locations.



### SHORT TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Begin land acquisition** as mentioned below
- **Replace playground.** Replace outdated play equipment with newer models, and resurface with recycle tire or similar material
- **Resurface basketball court.** Repair maintenance issues observed on the court's surface
- **Install walking path.** To provide interior circulation, the PROS team recommends developing an internal walking path
- **Buffer utility areas.** The presence of a utility structure in the middle of the park detracts from the site's image; the PROS team recommends installing a dense landscape buffer to screen it from park users
- **Install bicycle racks.** Enhance the park's role as a trailhead by installing additional bicycle facilities



### LONG TERM (5-15 YEARS)

- **Expand acreage.** To provide street frontage in the neighborhood, the PROS team recommends acquiring additional land along Cole Drive, Armstrong Drive, and/or Bell Fork Road

## 3.3.19 WILLIAMSBURG PARK COMMUNITY PARK

### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Park is currently undeveloped

### OBSERVATIONS

- The PROS Team did not physically assess this park.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, both Williamsburg Park and the heavily vegetated Hyde Park property to the immediate north are undeveloped. To become the City's fourth hub, the PROS Team recommends joining the two (2) undeveloped properties to create a much larger Williamsburg Park with an active recreation center component fronting Williamsburg Parkway and a nature center with a trail network occupying the Hyde Park property to the north (access provided via Fairmont Lane).

### SHORT TERM (1-5 YEARS)

- **Undertake a park master planning process**
- **Begin land acquisition** as mentioned below
- **Install entry signage.** Signage to direct people from both Williamsburg Parkway and Fairmont Lane is needed due to the lack of park frontage on any street
- **Add parking** (size/space requirements to be determined by final master plan)
- **Add a basketball court**



- **Add a tennis court**
- **Expand/relocate existing playground**
- **Develop hiking system**

#### **LONG TERM (5-15 YEARS)**

- **Expand Acreage.** Joining the Hyde Park parcel to the north would add a significant amount of acreage to Williamsburg Park. Additionally, the natural state of that property would serve as an appropriate site for the proposed nature center and associated hiking trails.
- **Add a large-sized shelter**
- **Add a medium-sized shelter**
- **Add two (2) small shelters**
- **Connect to Fairmont Lane.** Though located in close proximity to the park, residents from Fairmont Lane currently have to travel into the park. The PROS team recommends evaluating an option to provide a direct linkage with a paved walking path that connects the existing sidewalk network to the park.
- **Build Recreation Center.** The addition of a recreation center that offers indoor recreation facilities and community gathering space (approximately 25,000 square feet is recommended) would add significant activity value to the site and make a large contribution to the overall facilities LOS.
- **Develop a nature center.** As the new nature-based recreation hub of Jacksonville, the development of a nature center of approximately 5,000 square feet is recommended.
- **Add a splashpad**
- The PROS team recommends the identification and acquisition of approximately 15 more acres to the existing Williamsburg Park site.

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### **3.3.20 CAROLINA FOREST COMMUNITY PARK**

#### **MAJOR COMPONENTS**

- Park is currently undeveloped

#### **OBSERVATIONS**

- The PROS Team did not physically assess this park

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Like Williamsburg Park, more acreage may be needed at Carolina Forest Park in order to move to a higher service level standard as recommended in Chapter 6. In addition to about ten more acres of park space, the following elements are recommended to help meet the needs identified by the facility standards:

- Soccer/football/multi-purpose field (1)
  - Currently, the City is proposing to build two (2) soccer/football/multi-purpose fields at this location. Adding two fields instead of one would

exceed the proposed LOS for soccer/football/multi-purpose fields, but may require additional space to accommodate the remainder of the proposed amenities for this park space. A detailed site planning study would need to take place after the additional land is acquired to make an accurate determination on exactly what type of quantity of facilities the park site can sustain.

- Large picnic shelter (1)
- Perimeter path (0.5 miles)
- Disc golf (1)

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### 3.3.21 COUNTRY CLUB NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Park is currently undeveloped

#### OBSERVATIONS

- The PROS Team did not physically assess this park.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Country Club Park is the City’s only current undeveloped neighborhood park space. Currently, the City is exploring the viability of a seven (7) acre site adjacent to the Country Club Neighborhood Park parcel. If the City does decide to develop this space, the following programs/amenities may be considered for this space:

- Playground (1)
- Medium-sized picnic shelter (1)
- Linkage to proposed trail along power line corridor

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### 3.3.22 MILL CREEK SITE

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Park is currently undeveloped

#### OBSERVATIONS

- The PROS Team did not physically assess this park.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

This is one of the two sites that are currently undeveloped with the other being the Foxhorn Village Site. This site is a low lying area with non-existent parking that may or may not be suitable to a lot of development. In the future, if there is an increased deficit in equitably serving the population in terms of neighborhood parks, the PROS team recommends evaluating the option of developing the Mill Creek site into a neighborhood park with the following amenities.

- Playground (1)
- Connection to trail corridor (from the City Bike and Pedestrian Plan)
- Multi-purpose open space



- Small-sized picnic shelter (1)
- Water access, such as a pier or small dock
- Bridge to the townhomes on Richlands Avenue

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### 3.3.23 FOXHORN VILLAGE SITE

#### MAJOR COMPONENTS

- Park is currently undeveloped

#### OBSERVATIONS

- The PROS Team did not physically assess this park.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned earlier, this is the other undeveloped site in Jacksonville. Similar to the Mill Creek Site, this site does not have parking spaces and a playground on this site was removed due to frequent vandalism. In this case too, should the population growth and community need create the need for a greater level of service, the Department could evaluate developing a neighborhood park here. Some suggested amenities within the park could be:

- Playground (1)
- Small-sized picnic shelter (1)
- Parking, if necessary (to be determined when developing the site master plan)
- Multi-purpose open space

## 3.4 PROPOSED NEW PARKS

In order to meet the new acreage standards, the City will need to acquire additional parkland on top of developing its existing sites.

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### 3.4.1 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

The expansion of Branchwood, Brook Valley, Georgetown, Sherwood Forest, and Wooten Parks, and the development of Mill Creek and Foxhorn Village into neighborhood parks will add 26.5 acres of neighborhood parks to the City's inventory.

According to the recommended standard of 1 acre per 1,000 people, the City will need to acquire 17.8 additional acres for new neighborhood parks. Gauging from the equity maps in Chapter 7, about three new neighborhood parks are needed to provide equitable access for the east side of the City:

- **Far North Park.** This neighborhood park could be located in the Carolina Forest neighborhood, ideally west of the school and future community park. Facilities should include a playground, a small picnic shelter, and multi-purpose open space
- **Pine Valley Park.** Pine Valley Park, located near Pine Valley Road, could provide close-to-home recreation amenities such as a playground, a small picnic shelter, and multi-purpose open space

- **Liberty Road Park.** Located near Liberty Road, this neighborhood park will help fill the equity gap in the Southeast. A playground and small picnic shelter is recommended

If/when the population of Jacksonville reaches 100,000 residents, additional neighborhood parks will be needed, but may be increasingly difficult to provide. The PROS team recommends evaluating a process that additional neighborhood parks needed beyond the 2014 population should be provided by the developer as part of the permitting and land development process.

### 3.4.2 COMMUNITY PARKS

According to the City’s new standard for community park acreage, an additional 88 acres are needed. The expansion of Jack Amyette Center and Park, Phillips Waterfront Park, and Sturgeon City Park will potentially add 18 acres. There may also be potential for the undeveloped community parks of Williamsburg and Carolina Forest Parks to be expanded, which could add another 25 acres.

Despite these aggressive expansions, another 45 acres of community park land would still be needed to meet the standard. Opportunities to acquire this amount of acreage within the current City boundaries are few. The PROS team recommends that the Department partner with Onslow County and the School Board to develop a new community park just beyond Jacksonville’s existing limits near White Oak High School. This location was selected because of the dearth of recreation facilities in eastern Jacksonville, and opportunities for partnerships and co-location.

Recommended facilities for the new community park, **White Oak Park**, include:

- Playground (1)
- Small, mounded baseball/softball fields (2)
- Soccer/football/multi-purpose fields (2)
- Large picnic shelter (1)
- Medium picnic shelter (1)
- Skateboard park (1)
- Dog park (1)
- Recreation center (25,000 square feet)
- Tennis courts (2)
- Perimeter path (1 mi)

If/when the population reaches 100,000, another large community park will be needed (approximately 35 acres). There are very few large tracts of undeveloped or under-developed land available within the current City limits. Ideally, the undeveloped area adjacent to Route 17 (near Bell Fork Road) could be annexed and developed into a community park facility. For the purposes of this plan, it will be referred to as “Warehouse Park”.



Proposed facilities at **Warehouse Park** (undeveloped area adjacent to Route 17 near Bell Fork Road):

- 2 mounded baseball fields – small
- 2 mounded baseball fields – large
- 1 recreation/community center (26,000 square feet)
- 2 soccer/football/multi-purpose fields

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### 3.4.3 REGIONAL PARKS

Over time, Williamsburg Park will transition into a regional sized park. Additionally, the PROS team recommends substantial expansions of Jacksonville Commons Complex, Northeast Creek, and Woodlands Park. Also, the re-design of the downtown parks into City Park will add to the Regional Park acreage total.

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### 3.4.4 OPEN SPACE/NATURAL SITES

Because of the large expansion of Woodlands Park and Williamsburg Park and their inherently flexible, largely undeveloped state, the PROS team recommends fulfilling the open space goal of acquiring 62 additional acres (Foxhorn Village and Mill Creek were removed from this total in their transition to neighborhood parks) with these park expansions.

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### 3.4.5 TRAILS

In addition to the 8 miles of trails recommended at existing and future park sites, another 9.5 miles are needed to meet the City's trail mileage requirements. The City recently completed a Bike and Pedestrian Plan, but the majority of recommendations were for on-street bicycle lanes, paved shoulders, and signed/shared roads. From the multi-purpose trail identified, the following 9.5 miles of trails would be higher priorities from a parks and recreation perspective:

- Connection between Phillips Waterfront Park and Chaney Creek Trail (0.75 miles)
- Route 17 trail connection between Preston Road and Bell Fork Road (0.6 miles)
- North trail from Drummer Kellum Road to Western Boulevard (1.75 miles)
- Western Boulevard/Williamsburg Trail (3.8 miles)
- Corbin Street/Hemlock Drive Connection (0.25 miles)
- Camp Lejeune Trail (1.8 miles)

The existing utility corridor adjacent to the southwest of the site, though not a part of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, may be a future opportunity for the City to expand its network of multi-use trails. A 3.5-mile paved multi-purpose path would connect Northeast Creek Park to Marine Boulevard.

## 3.5 SYSTEM–WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

True to its mission statement, the Department can play a major role in realizing the City’s potential for growth and improvement. Maximizing existing parks, facilities and open space offerings and strategically developing additional sites will be key factors in enhancing the quality of life in Jacksonville.

This section outlines the five key elements utilized to drive recommendations, followed by system-wide recommendations to supplement the recommendations provided in **Section 3.4** for current and proposed sites. The summary of the site specific recommendations are presented in **Appendix 2**.

### 3.5.1 KEY ELEMENTS FOR DEVELOPING RECOMMENDATIONS

#### EXISTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The City of Jacksonville has undergone a number of major planning efforts in recent years. Three documents in particular were informative in understanding the existing conditions—and the desired direction—of the City’s recreation and parks facilities: the Growth Management Plan (GMP), the Downtown Master Plan, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The GMP provided an overarching framework for growth and community values, and in particular informed many of the vision’s goals.

Both the Downtown Master Plan and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan are blueprints in achieving these goals; where pertinent, recommendations from these plans have been directly incorporated into the recreation and park facility vision recommendations.

#### FACILITY/AMENITY STANDARDS AND SERVICE LEVELS

A major component of this plan is the establishment of facility / amenity standards, detailed in **Chapter 6**. The extent of new facilities recommended in the vision is based on meeting these standards for 2014. The number of facilities was also calculated for what facilities Jacksonville will need when the population reaches 100,000 (“LOS 100K”), and have been incorporated where appropriate.

#### EQUITY MAPPING RESULTS

The equity mapping analysis provided the initial basis on where to locate additional facilities needed according to the facility standards—the first priority was to fill the “gaps” identified in the maps. In areas where there is significant overlap in coverage, the equity mapping revealed opportunities to relocate or transition surplus facilities into other uses.

#### OBSERVATIONS FROM SITE VISIT

In addition to recommending additional facilities, there are specific recommendations for upgrades for each park site. These were based on the team’s observations from the site visits and the evaluation of each park’s accessibility, comfort and image, and sociability.

#### BEST PRACTICES IN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING

The overall vision and guiding principles of the system vision are firmly rooted in today’s best practices in parks and open space planning. There is an emphasis on maximizing existing resources; providing safe, accessible green spaces; improving community connectivity; using parks as a tool for economic development; and creating places that will define Jacksonville’s quality of life.



## 3.6 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritization of recreation and parks facility improvements should be rooted in the results of the needs assessment. It should also be recognized that the current economic environment provides an excellent opportunity to plan for the future, and begin acquisition of new park lands while prices are lower. With this in mind, the PROS team recommends the following as the first steps in implementation:

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### 3.6.1 BEGIN REGIONAL PARK “HUB” MASTER PLANS

The vision for Jacksonville’s system is anchored by the four proposed recreation and parks hubs of Jacksonville Commons Complex, Northeast Creek Park, Williamsburg Park and City Park. Because of the priority need for swimming pool facilities, the City should begin to plan and fundraise for an aquatics facility at Jacksonville Commons Complex. The master planning process for City Park should also begin as soon as possible, as the project will likely be complex and require a great deal of coordination between agencies and property owners.

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### 3.6.2 UNDERTAKE SHORT TERM IMPROVEMENTS FOR AGING PARKS

Some of the City’s park facilities have assets or amenities that need to be updated or replaced. The PROS team recommends prioritizing the short term improvements for Georgetown Park, Jack Amyette Center and Park, Northwoods Center and Park, and Wooten Park to help bring these sites close to the quality seen in other City facilities.

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### 3.6.3 CONTINUE IMPLEMENTATION OF BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN

Trails and walking/bicycling facilities were among the highest priority needs of Jacksonville residents. The PROS team recommends that the Department proactively support the ongoing implementation of the plan and work closely with other City departments to see the plan to fruition.

## CHAPTER FOUR - RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

PROS performed an assessment of the recreation program offerings of the Department. The recreation program assessment offers an in-depth perspective of the recreation program offerings and helps identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in programming. The assessment also assists in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, key system-wide issues and areas of improvement and in determining future program offerings for residents.

The PROS team based these program findings and comments from program assessment forms, website review and discussions with the recreation staff.

The Department program staff selected the core programs to be evaluated and entered the data into the program assessment matrix provided by PROS. This report addresses the program offerings from a



systems perspective for the entire repertoire of programs, as well as individual program information. It identifies key issues and presents recommendations for these issues, while also offering recommendations to elevate the core programs to the next level.

### 4.1 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND OVERVIEW

The Department offers a wide gamut of programs ranging from sports leagues to senior programs and trips to classes. An evaluation of the overall program offering indicates that the recreation program offerings are on the upswing but need more consistency and better measurements to ensure maximum accountability and efficiency.

Some overall observations from the program assessment sheets that were filled out follow:

The **program descriptions** overall do a good job promoting the benefits of participation

**Age segment distribution** is good, but needs to be annually monitored to ensure program distribution aligns with community demographics

**Program lifecycles:** Very few programs are in the introduction stage with a large number in the saturated to decline stage, which is not ideal.

There are some **similar providers**, with the majority of them being neighboring agencies including Boys and Girls Club, Camp Lejeune, Community Schools, Onslow County Parks and Recreation Department, and Onslow Senior Services being the closest ones. Other private providers might include Junior Tarheel Camp, Future Legends Girls Soccer Academy, and other similar providers. These others are probably not true competitors due to the services being higher priced.



**Program performance measures** are tracked in several areas, though it is inconsistent system-wide and is not measured or communicated Department-wide

Limited system-wide **volunteer support** and tracking of volunteer hours. Programs such as youth basketball and youth baseball have good volunteer support from community members. However, the same cannot be said of all program areas. Developing a system-wide volunteer management approach would be advisable.

From a **marketing and promotions** standpoint, the staff undertakes a variety of promotions with a number of programs using the brochures and flyers, website, in-facility signage, website, Facebook, and direct mail as a part of the marketing mix.

- Better identify marketing Return on Investment for all marketing initiatives
- Opportunity to increase the number of cross-promotions.
- Use of Web 2.0 technologies including micro-blogging, blogs / webinars / podcasts could be expanded.

Most commonly used **customer feedback methods** are post program evaluations, user surveys and the website.

Pre-program surveys are non-existent. Pre-program surveys are useful to gauge potential user interest before offering programs so as to limit cancellation rates and maximize resources.

Lost customer surveys would also be a valuable addition, particularly for programs with high attrition rates. By utilizing available information for all past and present users, the staff can track lost customers on an annual basis. These could then be surveyed to identify reasons for customer drop-outs.

On-going online surveys through [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) are employed on the website and must be continued.

**Pricing strategies** are varied across the board and the different ones used are cost recovery rates, group discounts, age segments or residency. These are good practices and must be continued but there is an opportunity to better incorporate variable pricing strategies system-wide. In addition, it is essential to understand current cost of service in order to determine ideal cost recovery goals.

Greater use of strategies using prime-time / non-prime time and weekday / weekend rates could be employed to help alleviate some capacity utilization issues, where applicable

**Financial performance measures** seem to be at a high level, particularly programs such as adult softball that are over 100% cost recovery. However, it is important to factor in all direct and indirect costs in computing true cost recovery goals. Additionally, a focus on developing consistent earned income opportunities would be beneficial to the Department's overall quest for greater fiscal sustainability.

## 4.2 AGE SEGMENT DISTRIBUTION

In addition to the lifecycle analysis, staff also assessed age segment distribution of programs. The distribution follows:

Age Segment Identification								
Preschool	Elem. School (Grade K-5)	Middle School (Grades 6-8)	High School (Grades 9-12)	Young Adult (Age 18-24)	Adults (25-44)	Middle-age Adults (Age 45-64)	Senior Adults (Ages 65+)	Families
Special Events	Youth Basketball	Youth Basketball	Youth Basketball	Youth Athletics Special Events (s)	Youth Athletics Special Events (s)	Adult Softball League (s)	Senior Programs	Special Events
Summer Day Camp (s)	Youth Baseball	Youth Summer Athletic Camps	Youth Summer Athletic Camps	Adult Softball League	Adult Softball League	Adult Basketball League (s)	Senior Trips	Summer Day Camp (s)
	After-school	Youth Baseball	Youth Baseball	Adult Basketball League	Adult Basketball League	Senior Programs (s)	Trips	
	Trips	Youth Athletics Special Events	Youth Athletics Special Events	Trips	Trips	Senior Trips (s)	Special Events (s)	
	Special Events	After-school	After-school	Special Events (s)	Special Events	Trips	Classes (s)	
	Summer Day Camp	Trips	Trips	Classes	Classes	Special Events (s)		
		Special Events	Special Events (s)	Summer Day Camp (s)		Classes (s)		
		Summer Day Camp	Classes (s)					
			Summer Day Camp (s)					

The balance of age segment distribution is good as can be seen in the chart above. An area of improvement is programs for the middle aged (25-44 year olds). It is typical nation-wide for agencies to focus heavily on youth and active adults/seniors while minimally serving the middle-aged audience.

Additionally, the Department currently classifies those over the age of 50 as seniors. Most agencies nationwide have changed it to 55 or even 60 years old. It is recommended that the Department evaluate an option to emulate those practices.

Also, creating program types to allow for greater family participation i.e. more special events, parent-child programs etc. would be a good strategy to draw additional participation from working professionals or younger parents who would otherwise be too busy to participate in programs by themselves.

Going ahead, a way to obtain greater balance would be to review the age segment distribution on an annual basis. Also, rather than categorizing the senior group as one program area, the trend is moving toward having two to three segments of older adults. The Department must look into further splitting program offerings into 55–74 and 75 plus program segments.



### 4.3 LIFECYCLE ANALYSIS

The program assessment included a lifecycle analysis by staff members. The listing of programs is included in the chart on the following page. This assessment was not based on quantitative data, but based on staff’s knowledge of their program areas. The following list shows the percentage distribution of the various lifecycle categories of the Department’s recreation programs.

- Introduction stage (New program; modest participation) =5%
- Take off stage (Rapid participation growth) = 15.5%
- Growth stage (Moderate, but consistent participation growth) = 26%
- Mature stage (Slow participation growth) = 40%
- Saturation stage (Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition) = 2%
- Decline stage (Declining participation) = 12%

Stage in Program Lifecycle					
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>Take-Off</i>	<i>Growth</i>	<i>Mature</i>	<i>Saturated</i>	<i>Decline</i>
Trips - Minor League Baseball Halloween Festival Teen Voyager Camp	Adult softball Trips - Wicked Trips - Tyler Perry Trips - Adventure Camps Starlight Friday's Zumba Self Defense Class	AARP Pickleball Table Tennis Day Trips Overnight Trips T-ball and Baseball Basketball Summer Athletic Camps Jack Amyette Northwoods Trips - Panthers Trips - Hurricanes Family Fun Days Easter Egg Hunts Voyager Day Camp	Fitness Room Senior Exercise Line Dancing Ballroom Dancing Billiards Board Games Bunko Group Wii Bowling Bingo Lunch Program Ext. Comm. Assoc. Sr. Act/Evnts Comm Service for the Blind Red Hat Society Kerr Street JCM Summer Athletic Camps Trips - Christmas Story Flashlight Egg Hunt Dance Classes M.A.D Elite Fitness Stroller Strides Base Camps Adventure Camp	Skateboard Competition	Golden Age Club Walking Program Law n Games Bridge Group NFL Punt, Pass, and Kick Adult Basketball Trips - NASCAR
<i>New program; modest participation</i>	<i>Rapid participation growth</i>	<i>Moderate, but consistent participation growth</i>	<i>Slow participation growth</i>	<i>Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition</i>	<i>Declining participation</i>

These percentages were obtained by comparing the number of programs in each individual stage with the total number of programs listed in the program worksheets.

The lifecycles indicate an imbalance with a large number of programs in the mature to decline stage (54%). The PROS team recommends at most percentage of 40% combined in the mature, saturated and decline stages.

One area that must be tracked immediately is the high number of programs that are in the decline stage yet continue to be offered, while at the same time having a limited number of new programs as evidenced by the 5% of programs in the introduction stage.

Based on discussions with the staff, there is also a sense that the growth in some program areas may be hindered due to limited availability of space on occasion.

The overall strategy includes moving more Mature and Saturated programs to the Introduction stage and continuing to add newer programs based on community needs and trends.

It is recommended that the recreation team implement an annual program innovation audit to identify programs in the decline stage to reposition or eliminate them and continue to refresh the program pipeline. Furthermore, the Department could include a performance measure of percentage of total number of new programs offered annually as an incentive for more innovation. An example of promoting innovation in the recreation program development culture could include developing a network of national best-in-class agencies and creating an on-line discussion about programming trends.

#### 4.4 CORE PROGRAMS

The PROS team believes in the importance of identifying core programs based on current and future needs. This assists in creating a sense of focus around specific program areas of greatest importance to the community. Public recreation is challenged by the premise of being all things to all people, especially in a community as diverse as Jacksonville. The core program philosophy assists staff in being able to focus on what is most important. Programs are categorized as core programs if they meet a majority of the following categories:

- The program has been provided for a long period of time (over 4-5 years)
- Offered 3-4 sessions per year
- Wide demographic appeal
- Includes 5% or more of recreation budget
- Includes a tiered level of skill development
- Requires full-time staff to manage the program area
- Has strong social value
- High level of customer interface exists
- High partnering capability
- Facilities are designed to support the program



During the programming meeting with the staff, the following core program areas were identified:

- Senior Programs
- After School Programs
- Trips
- Camps (Day Camps / Summer Camps)
- Classes
- Special Events
- Adult Athletics
- Youth Athletics

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#### 4.4.1 RECOMMENDED CORE PROGRAMS

The following list includes recommendations to reposition/combine current programs or add newer core programs to the existing ones:

##### Repositioned Program Areas

- Combine Special Events into one program area
- Combine Trips into one program area
- Evaluate repositioning or eliminating Adult basketball based on its stage in the lifecycle

##### New Program Areas

- Outdoor skills/Adventure programs (Adventure Trips, 5K races, Biathlons, Triathlons etc.).
- Volunteerism



While PROS understands that the current program areas (special events, trips) are offered by different staff members under different program areas, combining the offerings would be ideal from an efficiency and promotional standpoint.

Nationally, **Outdoor skills/adventure programming** is a growing trend and this could be an area that has the potential to become a core program. Currently, the staff offers a Summer Adventure Camp program but this can be extended to a year-round offering targeting a wider age segment base.



Program types can include rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, paragliding, dirt biking, driving off-road vehicles, running, and triathlons. The staff can add in outdoor adventure trips too as a new program area.

From an endurance/triathlon standpoint, there is an opportunity to create a branded special event for the Department in conjunction with Camp Lejeune. The Jacksonville 5K/10 K/Half Marathon could be good events to capitalize around the Mixed Martial Arts or Boxing events held by Camp Lejeune as well.

The largest growth segment by age for triathlons is the youth market. In particular, the women's market is the fastest growing segment in the sport of triathlon. According to USA Triathlon, USAT female membership has increased from 11% in the early 90s, to 37% today. In partnership with Onslow County, there could be an opportunity to create a regional triathlon event that seeks to leverage sports tourism dollars in the community.

There is some volunteer support and the Department staff is well appreciated in the community, but there is an absence of a system-wide program that focuses on volunteer recruitment and retention. Focusing on **volunteerism** as a core program in order to build greater advocacy and support in the system as well as control operational costs would be a recommended approach. More details are provided in **Section 4.6**– Partners / Sponsors and Volunteers.



## 4.5 SPONSORS/PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS

### 4.5.1 SPONSORS/PARTNERS

At present, there is limited to no focus on developing earned income streams through system-wide sponsor/partner support. In order to truly sell the potential benefits of partnering with the system, there is a need to develop a sponsorship brochure and a proposal for tiered sponsorship levels.

By detailing the event calendar, participation metrics and user demographics, the Department will provide potential sponsors an opportunity to identify how well the park system participants align with the sponsor's target market and choose the right fit for them. These metrics will also help the Department evaluate its return on investment (ROI) for sponsorships / partnerships for various events. Some other recommendations would be to publish these metrics on the website and promote them aggressively.

**Sponsor Recognition** - Recognizing all existing or past sponsors for their support would certainly help build goodwill. The brochure's images could provide some sample images of promotions that may have been done or could be done. The images should also focus on conveying an emotional appeal to potential sponsors.

**Tiered Sponsorship Levels** - It is essential to create tiered levels of sponsorship in order to allow all potential sponsors the ability to choose the level of support they wish to exhibit.

**Package Offerings** - It has been seen that the greater the opportunities to package the offerings, the more the likelihood of selling sponsorship. Providing sample packaging options that tie-in some signature special events with some of the less popular events would ensure that the staff up-sells events that may not get sold otherwise, while the partner gets more bang for their buck.

**Experiential Marketing** - The ability to offer a potential partner / sponsor the chance to maximize the experiential marketing opportunities they offer is a huge plus. As an example, using Dell or Apple signage and images would not hold the same value as Dell or Apple products being displayed at the event where the users have the ability to touch and feel the product, i.e. experience the product they may want to purchase.

Another local example could be a partnership with Stevenson Auto Dealer (Stevenson Honda, Stevenson Toyota, Stevenson Hyundai, Stevenson Chevrolet, and Stevenson Chrysler Jeep). Instead of the Stevenson signage or logos on marketing material, an example of experiential marketing could be placing cars from their dealership on display during special events, sports leagues etc. for potential users to be able to explore.

Also, it would be useful to develop and implement a partnership plan for the next five years to maximize existing resources and serve the community's needs. Identify potential partners, reasons for involvements and desired strategic outcomes from the given partnerships are important steps to bear in mind as the Department embarks on expanding the partner/sponsor base. Additionally, teaching and training staff to negotiate and manage partnerships will assist in empowering them and helping ensure the successful implementation of partnership/sponsorship agreements.

#### 4.5.2 VOLUNTEERS

Based on comments and review of volunteer use, the Department lacks a system-wide approach to the use of volunteers and integrating them into operations. In the absence of set guidelines, there is significant variation in the way volunteers are managed. It is important to ensure streamlined procedures and standard guidelines for volunteer



management since they are the ideal complement to paid staff and a valuable asset in reducing operational costs. In addition, they can also serve as the primary advocates for the Department and its offerings.

The staff must seek to enhance the desirability of volunteering for the Department's programs and events by developing a good reward and recognition system, similar to Frequent Flier airline programs. Volunteers can use their volunteer hours to obtain early registration at programs, or discounted pricing at certain programs, rentals or events, for programs at the Commons or any other Department offering.

Other recommendations for improvement include:

- Allocate a portion of a staff person's time in order to develop a system-wide program, as well as to oversee it or have a team of employees involved in oversight
- Identify volunteer opportunities system-wide, develop job descriptions and conditions to volunteer (such as background checks)
- Develop a tracking system to quantify the number of volunteer hours and document cost savings
- Develop documented volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition systems
- Promote volunteer opportunities system-wide through all available communication mediums in order to maximize opportunities for volunteer participation

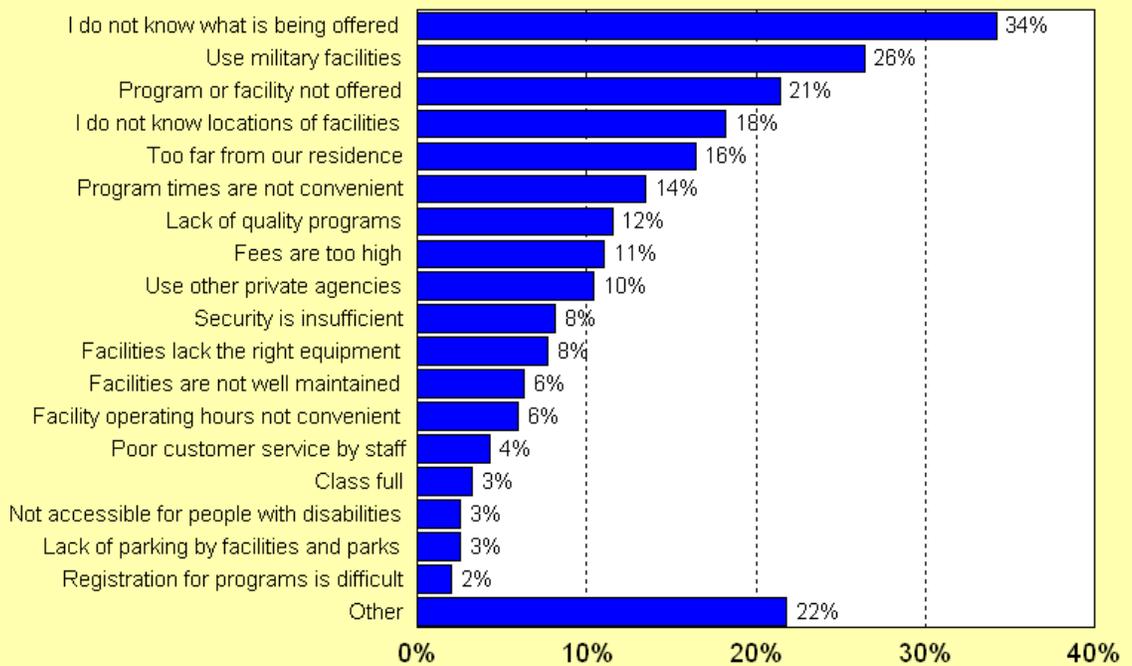


## 4.6 MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

This section reviews the Department’s marketing approaches, the brochure and online promotions. As can be seen in the survey response below, respondents stated “I don’t know what’s being offered” as the single biggest reason that prevented them from accessing offerings more often. The lack of awareness directly links to below average program participation and limits the ability of the Department to maximize its cost recovery potential.

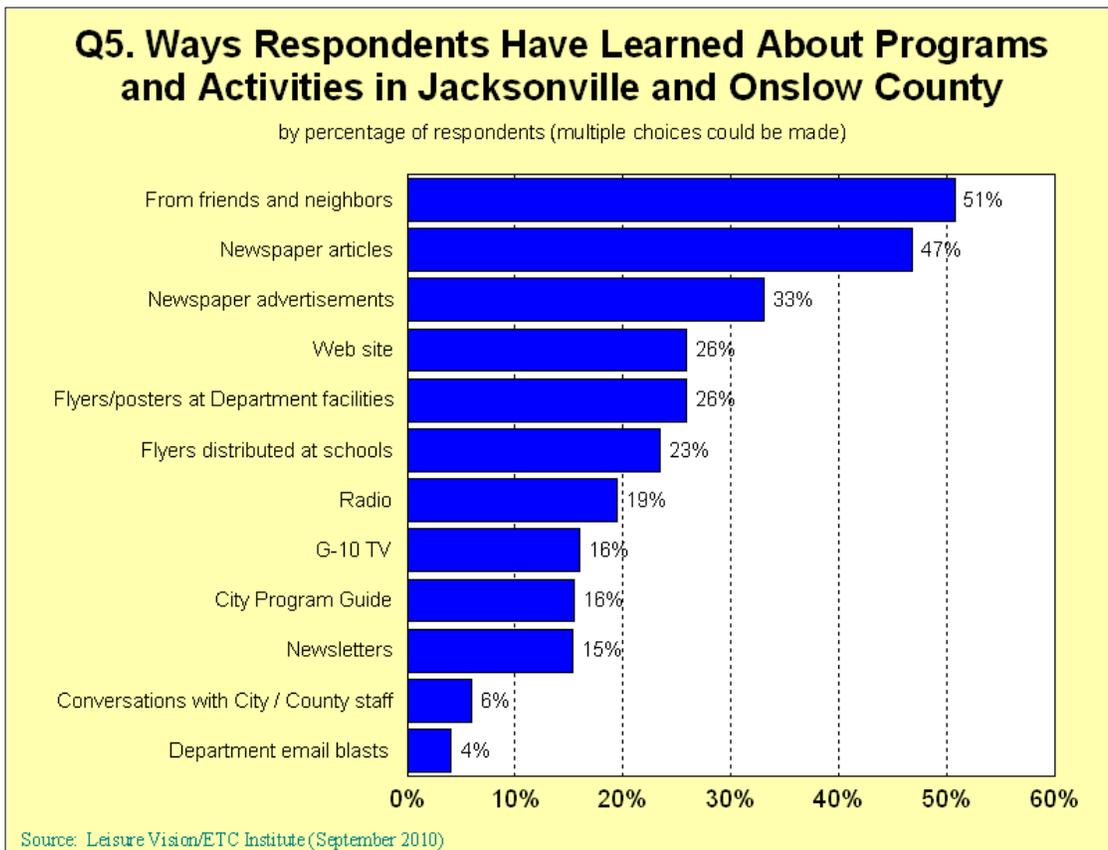
### Q14. Reasons Preventing the Use of Parks, Recreation and Sports Facilities or Programs in Jacksonville or Onslow County More Often

by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (September 2010)

From the statistically valid survey responses, the most frequently mentioned ways that households learn about programs and activities are: from friends and neighbors (51%), newspaper articles (47%), newspaper advertisements (33%), website (26%), and flyers/posters at Department facilities (26%).



However, based on current marketing and promotions activities undertaken, as stated in the program assessment worksheets, most programs are promoted via the program guide, the website, direct mail, flyers and brochures and even some in-facility signage. All of these mediums vary in effectiveness but it does seem that some consistently are perceived as being more effective than others. These include: direct mail, brochures and flyers, word of mouth and in-facility signage. All of these do not necessarily seem to correlate with the responses provided by the community in the survey and it would be helpful for the Department to undertake a marketing return on investment assessment to truly evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing mediums undertaken.

Only the Summer Day Camp program stated that they regularly promote at Special Events. This indicates a limited presence of cross-promotions at such programs. It is imperative that the Department take advantage of the presence of high numbers of engaged participants in the special event environment to cross-promote other programs, facilities and rental offerings.

Another unutilized but effective and affordable means of promotion is ‘On-hold pre-programmed messages’ that highlight upcoming classes, events or key registration dates for



everyone who calls in to the Department. These do not cost anything and can be set up as well as changed periodically as required by seasons, events or even programs.

Emails blasts are another medium that need to be used with greater frequency to ensure targeted outreach and ensure top of mind recall for the user base.

Additionally, the use of Web 2.0 technology is employed and is off to a good start. The Department has just started a Facebook account and is doing a wonderful job promoting its various programs. The key is to move the participants from awareness to action and creating greater user engagement. This could be done by:

- Allowing controlled ‘user generated content’ by encouraging users to send in their pictures from the Department special events or programs they participated in.
- Introducing Facebook-only promotions to drive greater visitation to Facebook.

**Twitter** – can be updated daily/hourly with promo codes and special events as well as information about sports game cancelations etc.

Additionally, there is an opportunity to expand into other elements of social networking such as Blogging, Webinars and Podcasting.

**Blogs** – This could be written by alternating staff members or could be ‘from the Director’s desk’ where upcoming events, past successes or plain community outreach could be undertaken. This is a very personalized form of communication and helps build an affinity for the staff and Department as a whole. However, blogs do offer an opportunity for almost instant feedback which may need to be controlled or monitored on a regular basis.

**Webinars/Podcasting** – These allow for a focused topic-based discussion where staff and other special interest groups and community members at large can participate in the creation of a webinar or podcast that may be of interest. These could reside on the website and users can be solicited on a monthly basis to provide feedback to identify the topics of most interest to them.

**Section 6.1.4** details the key marketing recommendations that the Department needs to undertake to maximize its outreach and enhance program participation.

## 4.7 WEBSITE / ONLINE MEDIUMS

The Department’s Website is a part of the overall City Website and thus exhibits a look and feel that is consistent with the rest of the site. The commitment to mission and diversity is evidenced in the front and center placement of the Department’s mission as well as pictures demonstrating a variety in age and ethnicity of participants.

The navigational tool bar has a listing of Home, Contact Us, Doing Business, etc. This relates to overall City government. It would be ideal if there were a separate micro-site altogether for the Department. It’s important for the users to be able to easily find out about programs and services that specifically relate to the Department. Additionally, it is important to also create unique social network accounts (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube channel) to promote the Department specifically and not have the Recreation and Parks information lost amidst the larger clutter of the City’s information.

Overall, the Website can do better in terms of focusing more on a sales-approach than an awareness approach. Greater opportunities for call to action and driving user behavior would be useful in that regard.

Within the Home Page for Recreation and Parks, there is a long listing of menu items on the left panel. It may be helpful for the ease of reading to make this list shorter by categorizing the information according to facilities, parks and programs. Athletics can be a part of the overall programs section too.

There need to be additional areas identifying partners and sponsors. The Helpful Links section at the bottom of the Home Page is a good practice, so are the Upcoming Events and the Facebook notification. A section on the website titled 'Volunteers' would also be useful as opposed to the current nomenclature 'Would you like to help your community?'

The Facilities page with information and maps for all the different facilities is also well done. It would be helpful to create a separate sub-section for Rentals since they are an area of revenue generation for the Department and must be promoted accordingly. The PROS Team recommends that each of the rental areas have professionally done pictures that highlight the layout and visual appeal of the rental space. Each of the rental rooms/facilities should have a photograph included in the Website. Some systems, recognizing the importance of revenue generation for rentals, have virtual tours of facilities and much more prominently displayed rental information as well.

The contact information along with all the designations is a good practice. It would personalize it even more if there were personal bios about the staff involved along with pictures. This would allow staff, especially those that encounter frequent community interaction, to be seen as someone community members can relate to even more.

The signal to noise ratio can be improved on certain sections throughout the website. The signal to noise ratio describes the relative amount of "clean or blank" space versus written words and graphics. The home page is somewhat text heavy and the site is static in nature. However, there are a number of areas with good visuals for example, the Summer Day Camp picture collage is well done. Also, providing pictures of individual instructors and trainers is a great way of creating greater personal relations and interactions.

Overall, it would be ideal if the marketing efforts were supported by a Department –wide marketing and branding plan, supplemented by business plans for core programs and facility operations.

Take me on an adventure. We're sure to see a lot. Experience the world. Friends

With the winter's cold and rainy grasp, it seems Adventure Camp is the cure.



are what we've got. Sing, laugh, dance and run. Who knew that adventuring.

Could lead to so much fun. Memories worth saving. Friends I'll keep for sure.

## 4.8 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Customer service is at the root of the success of any organization. A true community-service organization prides itself on identifying its customers’ preferences and acting in accordance to help fulfill their needs. In order to do this, an ongoing and system-wide feedback mechanism is of vital importance.

Currently, the Department does not have a system-wide approach but rather a program-wise approach towards garnering customer feedback. Most of the feedback is limited to ‘Post-program evaluation’ and ‘User Surveys’. The Department is also using online surveys through [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com), which is a good practice. Maximizing the use of the website, utilizing online survey tools such as [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) and incorporating pre-program feedback system-wide are recommended tactics for the Department staff to implement.

	Pre-program evaluation		Post-program evaluation		User Surveys		Focus Groups		Statistically Valid Survey		Trailer Calls		Website		In-park or on-site surveys	
	Current	Recommend	Current	Recommend	Current	Recommend	Current	Recommend	Current	Recommend	Current	Recommend	Current	Recommend	Current	Recommend
Adult Basketball	No	Yes	Yes		Yes		No		No		No		Yes		No	
Adult Softball	No	Yes	Yes		No		No		No		No		Yes		No	
After School Program	No		Yes		Yes		No	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	Yes	
Athletics - Special Events	No		Yes		Yes		No		No		No		No		No	
Youth Sports Camps	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		No		No		No		No		No	
Classes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No		No		No		No	Yes	No	
Special Events	No	Yes	Yes		No		No		No		No		No	Yes	No	
Day Camp	No		Yes		Yes		No		No		No		Yes		Yes	
JC, JCE, JCMS	No		Yes		Yes		No	Yes	No	Yes	No		No	Yes	Yes	
Youth Athletics	No		Yes		Yes		No		No		No		Yes		Yes	
Seniors (on-site)	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		Yes		No		No		No	Yes	No	
Trips	No		Yes		No	Yes	No		No		No		No	Yes	No	

Pre-program surveys and lost customer surveys too would be a useful addition to identify true needs or causes of attrition or dwindling program popularity, where applicable.

At the beginning of a year or a season, the Department could also conduct targeted ‘Open Houses’ to provide potential users an opportunity to preview the upcoming program offerings and provide feedback on the types of offerings they would be most interested in. This provides a constant input mechanism for programming ideas and ensures that offerings are need-based not personality based. Additionally, users are more likely to participate in programs that they have had a chance to provide input on.

It is important that the Department continue to capture the customer feedback data and develop a database that can be used over the years to track trends and changes. The feedback obtained must be communicated with the staff so as to ensure an open and transparent process and one that looks at improving as a team without focusing on individual blame.

As for instructors, it is imperative to continue implementing quality control mechanisms to ensure effectiveness and build credibility. Outside of post-program customer feedback and occasional use of the website as well as in-park or on-site surveys, the Department does not undertake any mechanism of evaluating overall customer feedback as well as glean information pertaining to instructor quality. Having an ongoing instructor quality check, as well as establishing lesson plans at the beginning of each class, would certainly help elevate



the level of the offerings which would in turn enable the Department to further price the programs to their true value.

## 4.9 SERVICE SYSTEM REVIEW

The relationship between the service delivery process and program revenues is of critical importance. With an understanding of this important dynamic, the following section provides an analysis of the service system and includes building on the service foundation that already exists in the Department. As observed from the discussions with the staff, the community does seem to exhibit a relatively high level of satisfaction with the offerings of the City of Jacksonville's Recreation and Parks offerings. Based on the Consultant's operational experience, too, the Department's operations and program offerings are above average based on nationwide trends. This section is intended to move the Department to a higher level of sophistication in its service approaches and move it into the best practice realm where it aspires to be.

It is important for the Department to manage service as an overall system in which all program areas consistently apply similar service standards. This is first and foremost in working on continuously improving overall service excellence. One method to achieve this is to follow established standards for customer satisfaction. This can be accomplished through a cross functional 'voice-of-the-customer' team.

ISO 9000:2001 (International Standards Organization) develops standards for various industries worldwide). These are best-practice components that are employed across multiple industries as a mechanism of developing an overall excellent customer satisfaction system. The Department might consider adopting portions of these standards to improve customer satisfaction. These four components include:

- Top management commitment
- On-going needs assessment of customers
- Overall customer satisfaction system
- Overall customer dissatisfaction system

Top management commitment is demonstrated by allocating resources to continuously improve services, such as technology, registration system improvements, staffing to support excellent service, development of overall service training, and recognizing staff for excellent service. Part-time staffing recruitment, retention, salary and benefits are all typical areas to focus on for delivering excellent service. Top management should regularly review data relating to customer satisfaction. This can be achieved by including customer feedback as a regular discussion item in staff meetings.

The Needs Assessment surveys are a good starting point in determining customer needs. This formalized approach should be completed approximately every five years. In interim years, it is helpful to do less formal approaches in determining customer needs by core program areas through program evaluations, consumer advisory panels, secret shoppers, and focus groups. Good service systems identify future customer needs as well as current needs.

Customer satisfaction rates should be included as part of a performance measurement system. Results should be shared with the Recreation and Parks Advisory Commission, staff, and the public. It is important to ensure that the evaluation criteria match the key customer requirements which should be established for each program area.

Customer satisfaction processes should occur not only with recreation programs, but also with general park maintenance and athletic field quality, new park design, and community events.

Another best-practice suggestion for enhancing the customer satisfaction process is to use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) score criteria, developed at the University of Michigan. Their customer satisfaction index includes three overall satisfaction scores:

- How satisfied are customers with the Department overall?
- How likely is it that the customer will repurchase the program or service?
- How likely is it that the customer will refer the service to a friend?

The averages of all three percentages are then included as one overall score. These questions should be included on all surveys and program evaluations

Survey questions need to correlate with the most important customer requirements. No standardized process exists for determining customer requirements. The most effective method to determine important customer requirements is through interviews/focus groups with customers. Staff input into the process is valuable as well; particularly staff who interface with customers on a regular basis.

Another component of excellent standards for customer satisfaction is the development of a system wide approach to handling customer dissatisfaction. Standards should exist for handling complaints and inquiries. Furthermore, if one does not already, then a database should exist that tracks all of the inquiries or comments about needed improvements. This information should be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the senior management team. Consistent suggestions for improvements or dissatisfaction areas should become a focus for the following year's strategic objectives.

As mentioned previously, a voice-of-the-customer team can be responsible for overseeing the service system. This is a cross-functional team comprised of several staff interested in service quality and they assume responsibility for overseeing the organization's service system.

This process ensures consistency in the customer experience throughout the entire organization. This team should have the responsibility of developing an overall customer satisfaction measurement system, the development of standards, and the development of customer requirements for core program areas. The team should also monitor customer service training.

The team should identify specifications for excellent service and develop an audit system to verify that specifications are being met by staff. The audit system could be performed by secret shoppers or staff members who do not have direct responsibility for an audited area. Audits can be as simple as a listing on a check list of important service requirements.



The voice-of-the-customer team can develop a Department-wide approach to service, supplemented by site-specific individual training and orientation.

## 4.10 QUALITY APPROACHES TO RECREATION PROGRAMMING

This is an area that is applicable to agencies seeking to establish best practice standards aspiring to be in the top echelons among its peers. The following section provides an inventory of innovative practices for recreation programming that should be considered for the Department. This does not necessarily reflect the current practices or deficiencies in the system but is merely a listing of some key practice areas that help ensure a consistently high quality experience for customers. Recommendations addressing several of these best practice areas have been provided throughout this report.

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### 4.10.1 RECREATION PROGRAM STANDARDS

In reviewing the program assessment information, there are limited numbers of performance measures used throughout the system to gauge performance. Recreation programs should have standard measures in place. Some examples include:

- Customer retention
- Customer satisfaction toward the registration system
- Specific cleanliness ratings
- Cost recovery rates
- Household percentage of program participation
- Percent of programs in introduction and growth stage
- Market penetration by age group
- Program distribution by age group

Currently, the Department has limited standards in place. System-wide standards reduce service variation and provide customers with reliable and consistent service throughout the system. They help to reinforce to part-time and seasonal staff what is most important to customers and significantly help with the brand building process. Standards include such items as:

- Facility cleanliness standards
- Safety standards
- Signage standards
- Program cancellation standards
- Instructional quality standards, such as instructor toolkits
- Internal communication standards for part time and seasonal staff, such as instructors
- Class minimums and maximums
- Registration process standards

- Telephone answering standards
- Customer service standards

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#### 4.10.2 ANNUAL REVIEW PROCESS OF PROGRAMS

Another method of ensuring quality programming is to develop an annual program review process, in which recreation staff present their yearly goals for program areas to other divisions and senior management of the Department. This would include policy reviews, financial and registration performance, customer issues, and plans for the future. This helps to ensure good communication and cooperation for supporting divisions, such as parks, administration and technology as well.

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#### 4.10.3 DOCUMENTED PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

This is required in order to reduce service variation and assist in training new staff. This is a how-to-process map that provides guidance to staff in consistently developing new programs. It will help to diminish the learning curve for new staff and reinforce program development as a core competency. This is created in a flow chart format showing the steps in the process for program development including writing class descriptions, process steps, hiring staff, using contractual employees, and the list of standards.

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#### 4.10.4 IDENTIFICATION OF CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS

Staff should also identify customer requirements for core program areas. Again, this is important to emphasize with staff that directly interface with customers. Customer requirements relate to those service and product attributes that are most important to a customer. A core program area should include a listing of approximately five key customer requirements. For example, in a youth gymnastics program, key requirements could include: overall safety of the program, instructional quality, convenience and ease of registration, cost of the program, and skill development.

Key requirements should be identified by customers and can be included as part of an importance/performance matrix (asking what is most important and asking how the City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department is performing). Key requirements should be reinforced in the training process. Additionally, in developing surveys or program evaluations, the survey questions should relate to the key requirements.

Lastly, the staff should undertake a trends research process to identify program opportunities for the future (a good source is American Sports Data and Outdoor Recreation Trends report).

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#### 4.10.5 SIMILAR PROVIDER/COMPETITOR ANALYSIS – BENCHMARKING WITH BEST-IN-CLASS AGENCIES

Another good practice includes a similar provider review. This includes identifying key competitors or similar providers of core program areas and can build on the benchmark information comparing park acreages, budgets and employee counts that the Department's staff compiled.



Every two years or so, staff should develop a matrix of information to compare services in areas that have the greatest importance to customers. Benchmarking other nationally renowned agencies also can provide a process to continuously improve programming

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#### 4.10.6 EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION PROGRAM

**Training program** for staff, particularly customer service training

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#### 4.10.7 ON-GOING POLICY REVIEW

This must be undertaken to ensure relevance and effectiveness of established policies

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#### 4.10.8 INSTRUCTOR TOOLKIT

An **Instructor toolkit** that outlines information about the Department, including mission, vision, values, goals, organizational structure, etc.

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#### 4.10.9 ON-GOING PROCESS TO CONNECT PART-TIME PROGRAMMING STAFF WITH THE DEPARTMENT

**On-going process to connect part-time programming staff with the Department** through meetings, email, newsletters, staff recognition, and random visits by management as well as determining their job satisfaction

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#### 4.10.10 ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

**Root cause analysis** to determine cause of turnover, quantifying resultant associated costs

## CHAPTER FIVE - OPERATIONS AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 OPERATIONS ASSESSMENT

#### 5.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Operations Assessment includes an analysis of the culture and internal business practices of the Department. The deployment of a Master Plan is dependent upon the internal business processes, culture, and leadership qualities of the organization. As a result, it provides recommendations to ensure the existence of an ideal leadership infrastructure to effectively implement the Master Plan.

In addition, the ability of the Department to learn, grow, and develop competencies, aligned with strategy, is significantly important to the Plan's success. The intent of the Operational Assessment is to provide feedback and recommendations about the City's operations and to provide suggestions about continuously improving and strengthening internal operations.

An additional outcome is to develop a more strategic focus for the Department. This fosters a more focused path to the future, rather than having more random and reactive approaches to labor allocation.

Staff members had an important role in this assessment as the analysis relies heavily on thoughts and perspectives from the staff. Those interviewed for this included:

- Recreation and Parks Director
- Parks Superintendent
- Recreation Program Supervisors
- Maintenance Staff
- Recreation Coordinators
- Administration Staff

The operational review included six staff focus group/interview meetings. In the following section, the criteria for the assessment are outlined. The focus group questions are listed with a consensus of responses from employees. All of the staff members were involved in responding to a series of questions addressing internal operations. Topic areas included:

- Staffing, workload, structure
- Strategy and direction setting
- Technology
- Financial systems
- Employee growth and development
- Human resource requirements
- Ensuring quality of operations through processes
- Sustainability practices



- Review of processes
- Use of data for decision making

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### 5.1.2 ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE/STAFFING/LEADERSHIP

This area explores how leaders guide and sustain the agency in order to achieve high performance. As a result of the importance of labor resources and the percentage of the budget dedicated to staffing, structure and staffing hold a significant level of importance for the Department.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

There were differing opinions on the Department's structure. There is some feeling the Department is somewhat top heavy. There were also some thoughts about the need for better workload balance between top management and the rest of the employees. Better definition of roles for individual positions was also mentioned as an area to improve. Along with these comments, there was also significant support for changes the Director has made to the structure.

#### STAFFING

The overall sentiment from a staffing standpoint was that additional staff are needed, primarily for parks maintenance, marketing, athletics, and programming staff in general. Based on the benchmark data of comparable agencies provided in Chapter 2 - Section 4, this sentiment is certainly grounded in reality. A few of the employees feel the staffing levels are currently adequate. The marketing needs are detailed more fully later in this assessment. As for athletics, adult athletic leagues are a significant area of growth, which requires additional staff.

As for general programming, a request was to have more part-time staff assist with trips in order for full-time staff to be able to focus on programming. Given the increased growth in After School programs in the past year and its recognition as a core program, staff also indicated a need for full-time staff at each site supported by part-time staff. Furthermore, instructors need additional support, but with the limit of 600 hours per year for part-time employees, it is difficult to have enough support from part-time staff to support the instructional staff. This may be an area for volunteers to offer support.

From a parks standpoint, the staffing levels were expressed to be barely adequate at the current level of service. However, increased service offering in the form of parks or facilities would need to be complemented with associated staff. Additionally, from a staffing composition standpoint, the need pertains to specialty positions such as horticulturalists, ball field specialists, landscaping experts, etc. In discussions with the Department leadership, it is understood that some of these needs have been expressed in the current budget cycle.

#### FUTURE SERVICE DEMANDS

Given below are some of the specific comments from the interviews. It must be noted that these are not statements of fact or consultant recommendations. They are simply individual comments as obtained from all the interviews and pertain to future service needs based on anticipated growth:

- More full-time programming positions for nature programs, water safety programs and other specialty programmers to make them feel like a part of the organization and get greater buy-in
- Need a position for marketing and special events
- Additional Environmental education staff
- One full-time staff at each after school site
- Staffing for adult leagues and convert part-time to full-time staff
- Adaptive and inclusion recreation programs to continue with recent hiring for therapeutic recreation
- Additional staff to manage newer facilities or parks as they come on board. For example: the Youth Center
- Support staff for aquatics

### RECOMMENDATIONS

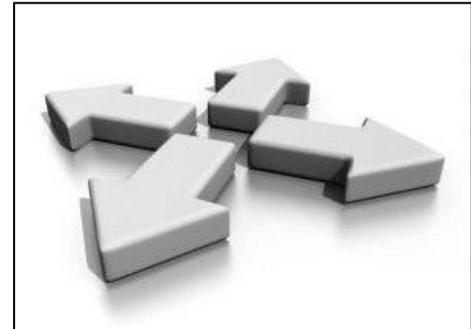
- Review the structure to identify areas to re-allocate priorities
  - The span of control for the recreation management positions is very small, with one or two direct reports reporting to the Athletic Program Supervisor, and other Recreation Program Supervisor positions
  - This results in a disproportionate amount of labor resources going toward management and supervision
- One thought is to broaden the span of control and use the labor savings to develop marketing support
  - Supervisors should directly supervise at least four positions. The references to the Department being top heavy are visible in some cases
- As for future service demands, develop a future (five year) organizational chart that reflects positions of growth. This will enable current employees to identify areas of interest in future positions and be in a position to gain necessary skills to qualify for future positions
  - This also results in the leadership's ability to motivate and challenge their staff and consequently, minimize attrition
- Focus on developing updated job descriptions for the current and future positions and solicit employee feedback in it so they can see themselves in those roles
- Evaluate the opportunity to introduce specialized staffing positions but continue to focus on cross-training opportunities simultaneously



**5.1.3 ESTABLISHING DIRECTION**

This category examines how the agency develops strategic objectives and action plans. In addition, it describes how the Department determines its strategic challenges through documented key strategic objectives, goals, and how progress is measured.

Typically, direction setting fails not in the development of plans, but rather in the deployment or institutionalization of plans.



The aspirational challenge currently facing the Department is in cementing its place in the community’s minds as a valued asset and one that contributes significantly to the quality of life and well-being of the community members.

**DEVELOPING DIRECTION**

Since the current Director has been with the Department, employees claim to have seen visible progress in this area. The direction setting process is currently being developed. There has been turnover in key positions, which has hampered some direction setting efforts. The Master Plan process will help with the vision, mission and future goal setting. The mission statement prior to this Master Plan (see **Chapter 10** for recommended statement) read as follows:

*The mission of the City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department is to help make Jacksonville the best place to live, work, and visit by providing exceptional active and passive leisure opportunities for our citizens that will contribute to the development and improvement of individual health and wellness, a sense of community, environmental appreciation, and economic development.*

The mission statement is lengthy and not top of mind for staff. In order for it to be deployed and institutionalized into a meaningful statement, the mission statement should be shorter. Additionally, as a part of the Master Plan visioning process, the vision statement too will be developed and rolled out.

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

In observing the current situation, there is the existence of some Department-wide goals but they seem to be more broad and general in nature. It was mentioned that the Department does have Quad 2 meetings whose objective is to determine the Department’s vision and identify the optimum implementation strategies to help achieve that vision. As mentioned earlier, these meetings are on hold for the duration of the Master Plan process so as to not replicate the plan’s efforts. Employees commented that within the program areas, goals and objectives are being developed. Also a suggestion was made to focus on goals in the customer service area.

**TRACKING MECHANISMS**

This is certainly an area that PROS has identified as having a high potential for improvement. In evaluating tracking mechanisms, there were two key themes –

- Minimal system-wide tracking
- Focus on output versus outcomes

There are some tracking mechanisms in place, such as cost recovery data tracking, but are only specific to certain areas. The mechanism used is adopted from the City’s model (Taleo) and all its templates may not be truly customized to the Department’s unique needs.

The current tracking efforts seem to be more supervisor-driven. Also, employees can record and rate their own accomplishments (e.g. class completion) which can be evaluated by the supervisors and then discussed or modified in consultation with the employee. In other areas, such as cleaning the performance tracking of the contracted company’s performance is done primarily visually as opposed to having measurable outcomes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Department needs to move from being very tactical oriented toward a greater strategic focus. When the Master Plan is completed, the Department should use it as the basis for developing yearly goals and objectives on a system wide basis
  - In addition, each Division (Recreation, Parks, Administration) should also have their own goals and objectives, aligned with the organization
- The Department needs to implement a documented strategic planning process that includes institutionalizing the implementation of the Master Plan and organizational goals and objectives
  - This includes regular review of Departmental strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, long term organizational sustainability, ability to execute the Master Plan, human resource requirements, and shifts in technology, markets, customer preferences, and competition
- The Department needs to develop an action plan for deploying the Master Plan and organizational goals and objectives, with timelines and staff responsibility
- Develop key performance indicators for tracking progress of action plans
- As opposed to directly using Taleo, the Department needs to work with the City to develop a hybrid model to combine City’s model with the Department’s developed goals and objectives

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### 5.1.4 CUSTOMER AND MARKET KNOWLEDGE

This section focuses on how the Department determines requirements, needs, expectations, and preferences of customers to ensure the continuing alignment between service and offerings and community needs. Also included are the methods used to build relationships with customers and how customer satisfaction and loyalty is determined.

### MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS’ EFFECTIVENESS

This area generated more discussion than all other topics. A few staff members feel as though marketing is fairly effective. Areas of stated effectiveness includes email blasts sent out to special events database, radio, banners, newspaper and school flyers in County schools were all deemed as being successful. In addition, the Department has added information in the City’s water bills. When it comes to school flyers, the Department relies on teachers to get the information out, which is not always a dependable process.



More staff feel marketing is a significant area of weakness for the Department. There is no strategic approach to marketing and an absence of a marketing plan to provide direction. The area is personality driven rather than evaluating marketing's return on investment. Staff commented about a lack of a dedicated marketing budget. Currently, any marketing expenditures come from general supplies. As an internal support function, it is imperative for marketing to exist to promote programs, facilities, and services.



In addition, branding is another area that does not get its due share of importance. There is a general feeling that the Department gets lost in having to be a part of the City's logo, rather than having its own Departmental logo. Another notable absence was that of a Department slogan or tag line.

From a web presence standpoint, being a part of the City's Website limits the ability to maintain content and create differentiation for a Department that is unlike any other within typical City Government operations. The current Website presence is similar to other City agencies that focus on awareness and informational marketing.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations for Customer and Market Knowledge

- Develop a Departmental strategic marketing plan, supplemented with brief business plans for key programs and facilities. The business plans should be aligned with the Departmental marketing plan
- Allocate labor resources dedicated to marketing and earned income. This can start as a part-time position that can grow into full-time
- Develop an in-house customer service and diversity training program to complement the external training that staff may be receiving
- Develop the Department's brand, in alignment with City requirements and develop sub brands for key programs and facilities
  - In internal and external communication, seek to highlight the Department's brand through the values of economic development, social benefits, health and wellness, and sustainability (both financial and environmental)
- Focus on inspirational marketing, not informational marketing by highlighting the emotional connection and benefits of participation



- Provide front desk staff training on the importance of their interactions with the customers, including first impression, cross selling techniques, and promoting offerings
- Develop customer service standards to decrease service variation which results in more consistent customer experiences
- Continue to maximize opportunities for online marketing and social networks as the most cost-effective mediums for customer outreach
- Develop opportunities to package offerings for participants and potential sponsors
- Develop a system-wide approach to measuring customer satisfaction that includes surveys, program evaluations, focus groups, customer interviews, lost customer research, and transaction surveys
- Identify time slots with maximum exposure for G-10 segments as opposed to late night slots with limited viewership
- Maximize use of online and social network mediums to increase awareness and build loyalty in a dynamic and cost-effective manner

#### 5.1.5 ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

This section assesses the operations of the Department and how the agency is performing. This relates to key external and key internal support processes, policies, use of technology, and sustainable practices. This section also reviews how performance is measured, analyzed, and improved.



#### POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Many policies had traditionally been absent in the Department but the staff have recently developed or have been developing new policies. Many comments about policies related to pricing, cost recovery, partnerships, and fees. The Department recently developed a fees and charges policy and a chart to help guide pricing and cost recovery. It will need to be communicated to staff and included as part of a job orientation program for new staff and training for existing staff.

Policies should be reviewed during the orientation program and on an annual basis to ensure relevancy. On-going communication about policy development and changes to all staff levels would greatly help in avoiding miscommunication and ensure consistency in operations Department-wide.



Staff is also improving in projecting costs and revenues/expenses on a monthly basis – an after-action report is developed to provide revenue / expenses and brief program summary. Another policy recently developed includes the Key Policy to ensure adequate access and control.

Usually agencies develop a lot of policies, but the commitment to them is lacking. It may be helpful to have a checklist and prioritize needed policies to ensure all important areas are covered. A key area of operations that could benefit from developed policies is the sponsorship and partnership area. Other key areas of policy development include:

- Staff development
- Personnel policies
- Center management
- Financial policies
- Harassment
- Diversity
- Use of internet
- Earned income
- Department vehicle use
- Sustainable practices

#### **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

The City does have a technology plan in place and PROS' overall assessment indicates that the currently technology needs are largely being served. Staff also concurred that they have most of the hardware and software components that they need. In addition, the IT Department currently has a hardware lifecycle program in place and is also developing remote access through Citrix, which is available for exempt employees. At this time, though, there is no internal teleconferencing capability in place. WebEx or Skype could be easily implemented to resolve that issue.

The staff has access to intra-net and Webmail. While RecTrac is used for scheduling and reservations, it is not being used to its fullest capabilities to maximize its ability to provide data to aid in decision-making. It would be useful to assign a staff person to be the RecTrac lead and learn new modules with an aim of educating the rest of the staff on it.

Geo-Trimble – the GIS software for mapping trees and mowing areas has also been budgeted for and would be very helpful in increasing efficiencies for the maintenance staff.

HTE is used for financial management but staff does spend time manually for financial review as well. Staff thought the use of a video camera would be helpful to shoot clips of classes and special events and upload on the Website and G-10 local channels.

Current communication methods to employees include use of text-messaging services and the staff also uses Connect CTY to inform participants of rain-outs or schedule changes.

## FINANCIAL RESOURCES

In this area, despite the current economic conditions, the employees expressed satisfaction with current level of financial resources that are allocated to meet daily operational needs. However, from a capital expenditure standpoint, current spending patterns point to a more reactive spending behavior. The current Master Plan will certainly help alleviate some of those concerns.

Also, as the Department embarks on a planned growth phase, it will be imperative to identify additional dedicated and non-traditional revenue streams to support the Department's goals. As mentioned earlier, the Department's brand is not adequately evolved and the Department needs to proactively undertake efforts to communicate its story – that of a valuable economic and social player that enhances the livability index of the City of Jacksonville. It is important that this message is firmly entrenched in the minds of the community and the City's leadership as the Department seeks access to greater funding sources.

Lastly, from an internal perspective, the staff is slowly transitioning from a social mindset to a business philosophy as it applies to fiscal management behavior. Within Department budgets, there has been a spend-it-or-lose-it philosophy, rather than spending with a good return on investment.

## SUSTAINABILITY

The Department has recognized the importance of sustainability and is in the early phases of implementing sustainable practices. Some of them include recycling at youth sports fields at Jacksonville Commons, recycling bins at parks, moving more to a paperless office such as scanning rather than making copies, more frequent use of the Website and email blasts, and concession stands switching to CFLs.

A sustainability audit has been provided in **Appendix 3**.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a process to annually review policies to ensure they are still current and accurate
  - Communicate this on an on-going basis to the staff
- Dedicate part of a staff person's time to oversee the development of a Department-wide volunteer program, including identifying volunteer jobs, recruitment, retention, and recognition systems
- Focus on moving the Department from a social management model to a business management model
  - Develop financial projections that provide information about operating impacts of new initiatives to ensure the Department's ability to remain viable and financially sustainable
- Expand the use of technology to derive data and aid in decision-making
- Develop a performance measurement system to determine results and share these results with City management and staff on a regular basis, using technology to provide the data

- These can include measures such as customer satisfaction, registration numbers, cost of service for key facilities and programs, maintenance per acre costs, and employee satisfaction
- Develop an organizational culture that supports sustainability efforts, develop a sustainability policy (purchasing, use of energy, recycling, design, park maintenance practices, etc.), an overall plan that includes the vision and goals for sustainability, and establish targets and measures

#### 5.1.6 HUMAN RESOURCES

This area includes an assessment of how the Department engages, manages, and develops the workforce to utilize its full potential in alignment with the agency's overall mission and strategy.

##### TEAM CULTURE

As in any other Department, this is an area that can always get better. Overall, the staff echoed the sentiment that the workplace is a fairly relaxed atmosphere and there existed good working relationships among staff. Staff commended the open-door policy where leadership encouraged them to engage in a dialogue and promoted an open communication process. Another praise-worthy area was the relationship between program staff and park/field maintenance staff. This area often turns into an 'us versus them' conflict in many agencies – however, in this case there was hardly any trace of that and the program staff was very complimentary of the responsiveness and cooperation exhibited by the maintenance staff.



Opportunities for improvement included additional training and workload management. There were some references to instances where staff felt that should have had greater involvement in decision-making for areas directly impacting them. Given the relatively unchanged nature of operations in the past, there might be some semblance of resistance to change and the change management process too must be undertaken in a manner that does not foster resentment. There were indications about a lack of teamwork at times when budgets are moved from one place to another to fulfill a Department need, and there is reluctance by some staff about letting go. Administration staff expressed frustration in being compelled to keep asking for information they need from internal areas.

Overall, staff talked about the visible efforts undertaken by the Department leadership in working together as a team rather than individual business silos.

##### INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Internal communication processes are generally a difficult process to manage. Considering the dynamics involved in the number of part-time and seasonal staff, along with full-time staff and multiple locations, it is difficult to manage internal communication effectively. According to employees, the Department has fairly good communication. Much of the

communication is through email, making it efficient and transparent. Comments were made that communication has improved lately, but it can always be better. The use of smart phones is helpful for real-time communication as well. Time constraints at times get in the way of employees' ability to follow up effectively. As a result, there are times when important items slip through the cracks, but that is common in all organizations.

Relationships between Administration and Recreation were mentioned as an area in need of improvement, related to internal communications. Suggestions included having a monthly meeting to provide information to administration for program and league details when answering phone calls, managing customers, and providing program updates, though monthly meetings have started. Administrative staff stated occasional difficulties communicating with center staff as a result of their noon arrival time and front desk staff starting at 8:00 am.

From the City standpoint, internal communications can certainly be improved. It could start with developing the Department's brand and identity and then adequately communicating it to all City employees as well as promoting the Department at City Hall, Community College and other gathering places such as bowling alleys, etc.

#### **TRAINING**

Training is an area offering great growth potential in the Department. Training opportunities do exist, and the number of opportunities has improved recently. Although, there is not a systematic approach to improvement areas needed or alignment with strategy. The Department leadership is very supportive of training initiatives, and that is certainly an encouraging sign.

The Master Plan will help with the ability to organize training around strategic need. Training needs to continue through different learning methods such as webcasting and webinars, in addition to classroom, facilitated training. Conference attendance is included in training and staff is rotated to attend to ensure there is opportunity for many staff to benefit. Additional training opportunities could be developed by leveraging the presence of the community college as well. Examples would be diversity training, and leadership/management training. Additional training areas include:

- Policy-oriented training like sexual harassment, difficult people etc.
- Part-time programming staff training
- Workshops on grant writing / ball field maintenance / team building
- Pesticide training
- Cost of service and pricing
- Customer service /guest relations training
- Safety training (CPR / Fire extinguisher)

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Conduct an assessment to measure employees' satisfaction towards cooperation with one another and establish an action plan for improvements



- The Future Goals area of the new performance appraisal process should include information about employees' career aspiration and learning and development needs
- Develop core competencies for Department positions and align training dollars around the development of these competencies
- Develop leadership competencies through a Departmental leadership development program that provides continuous improvement in leadership, trains future leaders, and creates succession opportunities
- Develop an evaluation process for training and development programs in order to constantly improve the training opportunities and methods of training
- Conduct an "Innovation Round Table" to discuss and develop new ideas and foster a culture of innovation in the Department
- Regularly perform employee satisfaction surveys to determine employees' satisfaction toward work life, training, compensation, and supervision received

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#### 5.1.7 WORK SYSTEMS

This area reviews key work processes, utilization of employees in support of work processes, and how the Department works toward improving efficiencies.

##### PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Based on staff input, it was inferred that there are various areas that are undergoing change with respect to developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). There exist examples of SOPs for recreation centers and administration is also developing SOPs for daily administration operations.

A user manual for RecTrac users is also being developed. Special events/trips have not documented their process, but have awareness of process steps. Senior Center operations have SOPs developed and similar models can be replicated for other facilities system-wide.

There is a need to document basic procedures for web management and online updates. An employee suggested keeping binders that keep track of vendors, equipment, receipt, invoices, etc. that are used and capture all event related information for an effective post event recap. Additional enhancements could be in the area of documenting a program development process.

##### WORKLOAD

Strides have been taken to improve productivity and efficiency, though workload issues do exist. One employee mentioned developing better skills in delegation and relying on others. Another example was cross training staff for improved efficiency. Converting part-time staff to full-time has helped as well.

In the long term, improved efficiency will also occur when supporting staff are fully trained. Other staff feels their workload is generally manageable aside from the seasonality of the job and busy times during peak periods.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Perform a policy review and identify policies that need updating, and identify policies that do not exist and need to be developed. In addition, develop a documented process to continuously review existing policies
- Document key external customer and internal support processes, such as program development and customer feedback
  - Lost customer surveys
  - Continue with online surveys through [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)
  - Add incentives such as early bird registration or discounted fees to ensure people provide feedback
  - Track and communicate feedback results to staff and external customers on an on-going basis
- Suggestions for improving efficiencies include:
  - Need to have refreshers about newly implemented practices
  - Continue to centralize operations, where practical and possible
  - Streamlining program information and making sure registration information is accurate and consistent
  - Upload special events forms / request forms / special consideration forms online
  - Ensure consistency in volunteer registration

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### 5.1.8 CONCLUSION

Overall, the Department is undergoing a process of transition and seems to be headed in the right direction. There is greater emphasis on teamwork, staff training and accountability and the overall culture is moving to a more business-oriented and sustainable mindset. The development of the Master Plan will provide greater impetus to the leadership's initiatives and offer staff greater guidance and objective direction.

Over time, it is realistic to expect that these initiatives will help make the Department more proactive and better positioned in the community as a valuable regional economic resource and a key contributor to the quality of life and wellbeing of the community.



## 5.2 FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

This section assesses the financial trends of the Department and focuses on key financing strategies to support the Master Plan. It is a review of the revenues and expenditures of the Department. Where data is available, cost recovery has been analyzed by activity type to present the expenditure recovery through fees and charges. The components of the analysis will help provide better guidance and a roadmap for future financial planning decisions made by staff.

### 5.2.1 DATA REVIEWED

PROS reviewed the available information of the Department. PROS reviewed the revenue and expenditure for fiscal years ending 2008 through projected 2010, and the budget for 2011. Some information included fiscal years ending 2006 and 2007.

### 5.2.2 FINANCIAL TRENDS

The total revenues and expenditures for fiscal years 2006 through 2011 are shown in **Figure 41** and indicate that revenues have remained constant while the expenditures have increased annually.

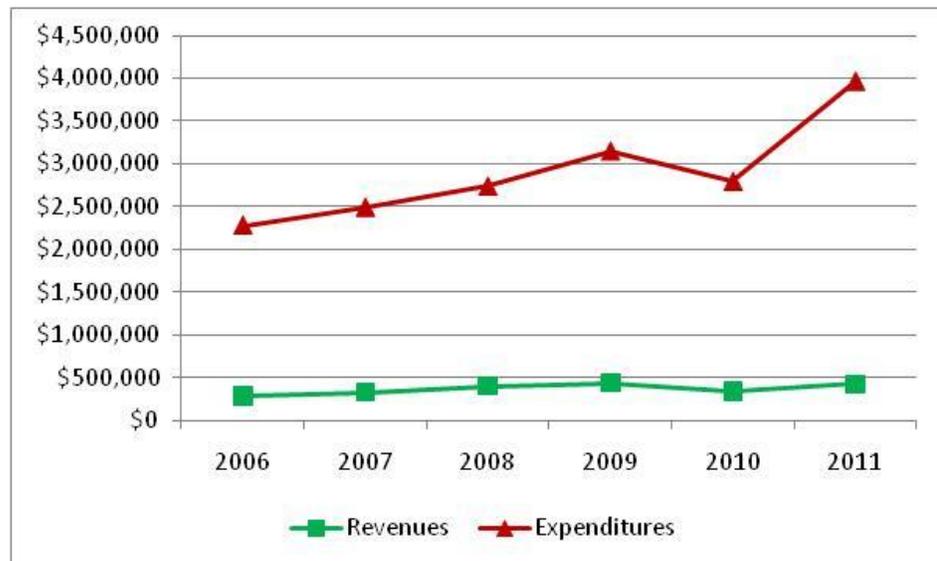


Figure 41 - Total Revenues and Total Expenditures

The overall department cost recovery has been between 11% and 15% for the years analyzed as shown in **Figure 42**. The typical anticipated overall cost recovery is between 30% and 40%. This indicates that there are opportunities for additional revenue generation through programs and services. The relatively flat revenue trend indicates that the pricing has not been updated to reflect the increased value provided by the offerings.

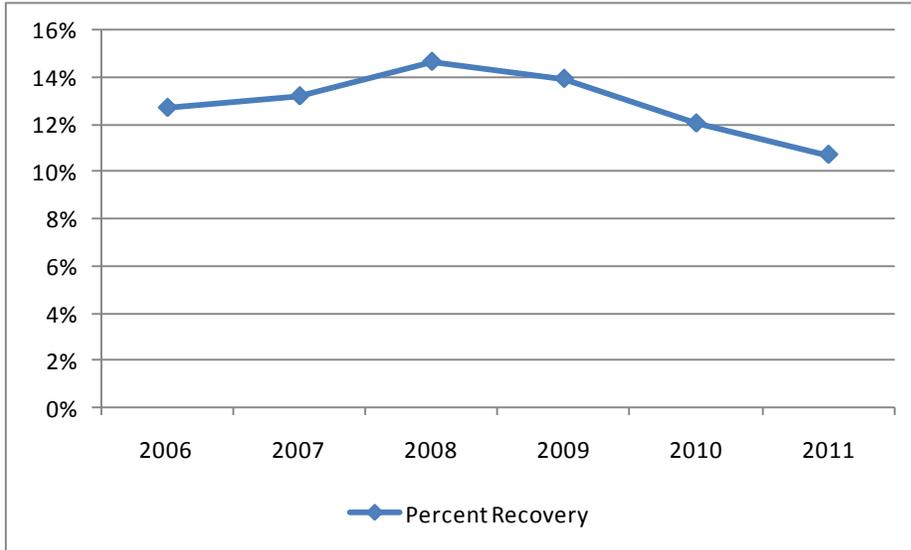


Figure 42 - Percent Cost Recovery of Department Expenditures

### MAJOR COST CENTERS

The following cost centers were evaluated:

- Recreation Centers
- Athletics
- Senior Programs
- Special Events
- Parks
- Administration

### RECREATION CENTERS

The revenues and expenditures related to the Recreation Centers for fiscal years 2008 through 2011 as shown in **Figure 43** indicate that revenues have slightly decreased while the expenditures have fluctuated from year to year. The cost recovery rates have decreased from 33% to 25%. This trend indicates that the pricing for services and programs needs to be revised. Recreation centers generally recover 40% to 75% of the cost of operations and maintenance.

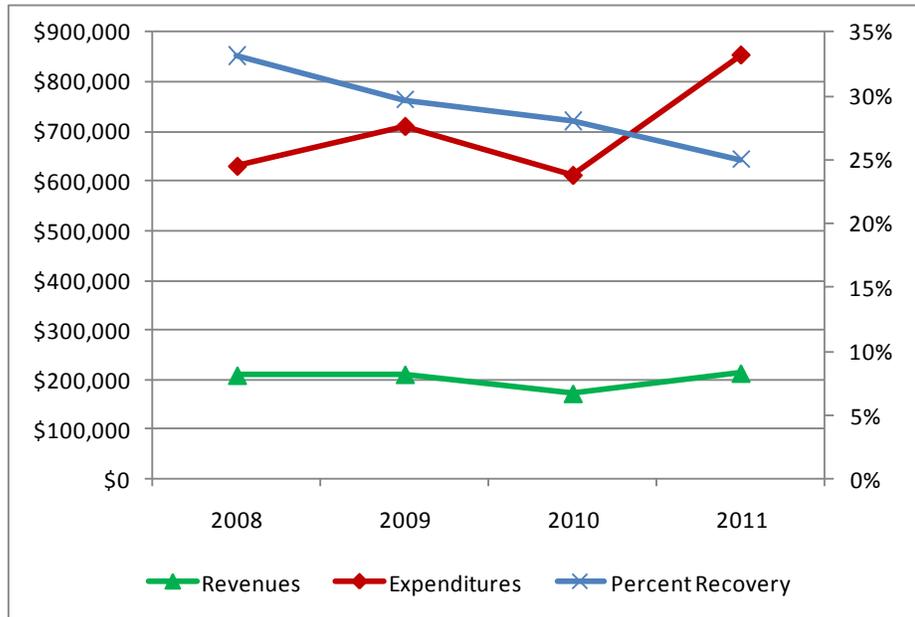


Figure 43 - Recreation Center Trends

### ATHLETICS

The revenues and expenditures related to Athletics for fiscal years 2008 through 2011 as shown in **Figure 44** indicate that revenues have slightly increased while the expenditures have fluctuated from year to year. The cost recovery rates have decreased from 39% to 23%. Athletic programs generally recover 40% to 80% of the cost of operations and maintenance. The Department seeks to eventually achieve a 40% recovery rate.

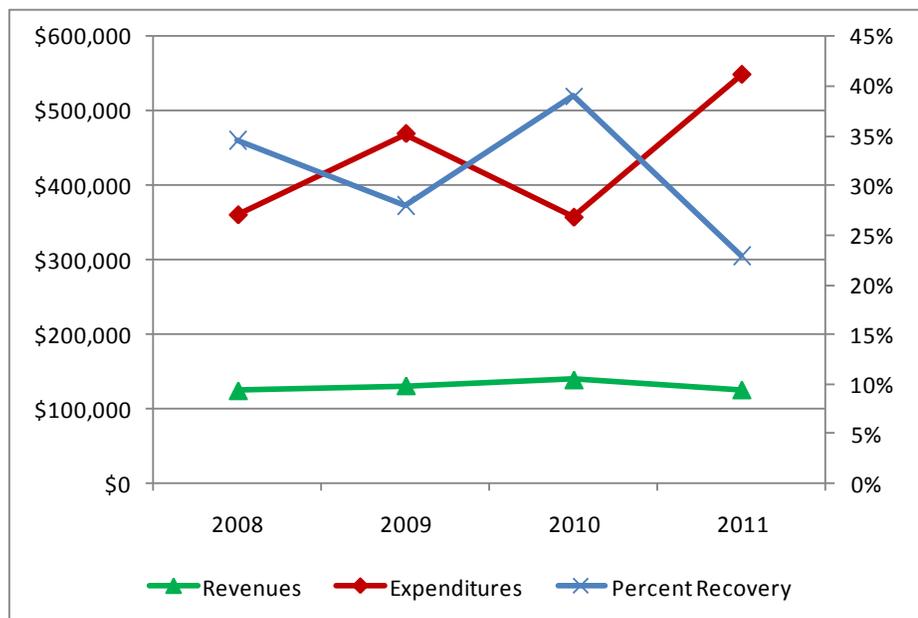


Figure 44 - Athletic Trends

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

The revenues and expenditures related to the Special Events for fiscal years 2008 through 2011 as shown in **Figure 45** indicate that revenues have fluctuated year to year while the expenditures have decreased for the historic years. The 2011 Budget anticipates a sharp increase in expenditures. The cost recovery rates have decreased from 26% to 21%. Special Events generally recover 20% to 60% of the cost of operations and maintenance. The cost recovery rate indicates that there are opportunities for partnerships and sponsorships to help fund special events and programs.

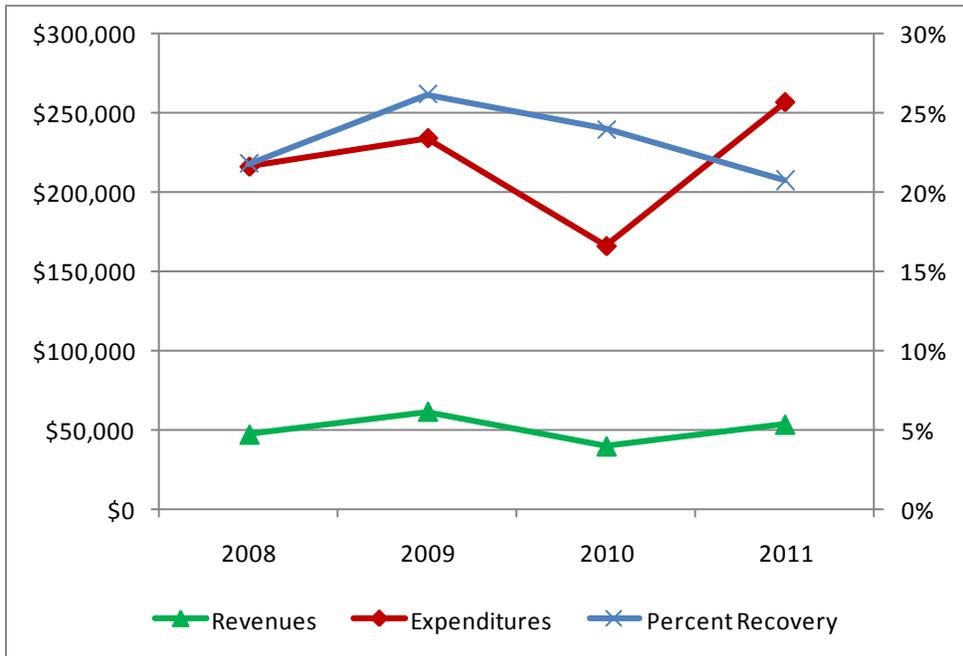


Figure 45 - Special Events Trends



### SENIOR PROGRAMS

The revenues and expenditures related to the Senior Programs for fiscal years 2008 through 2011 as shown in **Figure 46** indicate that revenues have increased for the historic years while the expenditures have decreased for the historic years. The 2011 Budget anticipates a sharp increase in expenditures. The cost recovery rates have increased from 4% to 15% for years 2008 to 2010. A decrease in revenues is anticipated for the 2011 year. Senior Programs generally recover 20% to 50% of the cost of operations and maintenance.

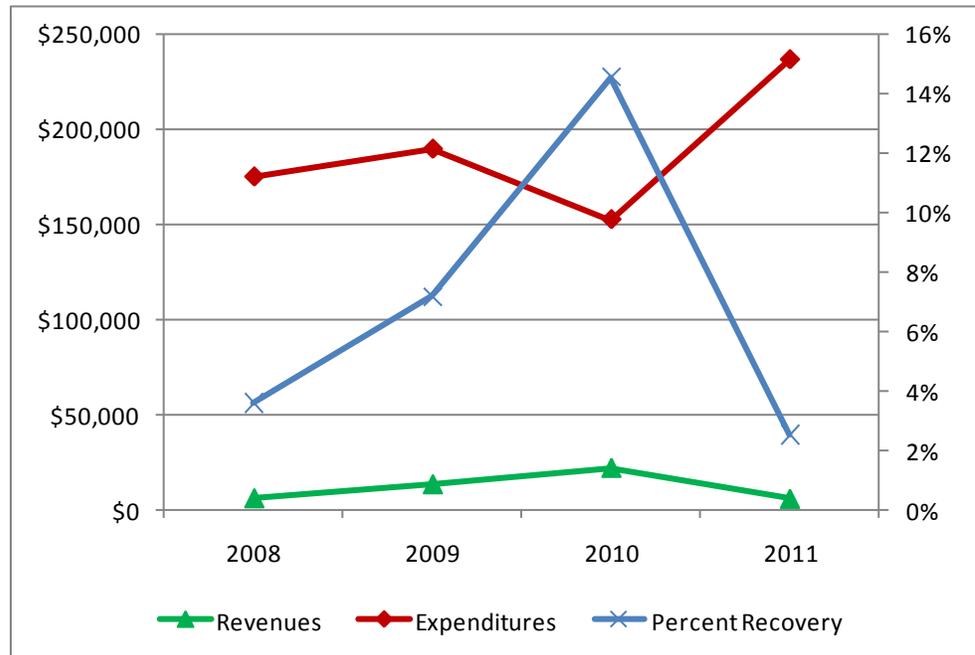


Figure 46 - Senior Programs Trends

**PARKS**

The expenditures related to the Park operations and maintenance for fiscal years 2008 through 2011 are shown in **Figure 47**. No venues were identified for park operations and maintenance. The park expenditures have increased over the study period. The budgeted expenditures for fiscal year 2011 are \$1,441,041. With the 299.56 acres of parkland to maintain, the average cost per acre is \$4,810. Nationally, park operations spend approximately \$6,000 per acre annually for operations and maintenance. The Department should consider seeking sponsorships and partnerships to support parks.

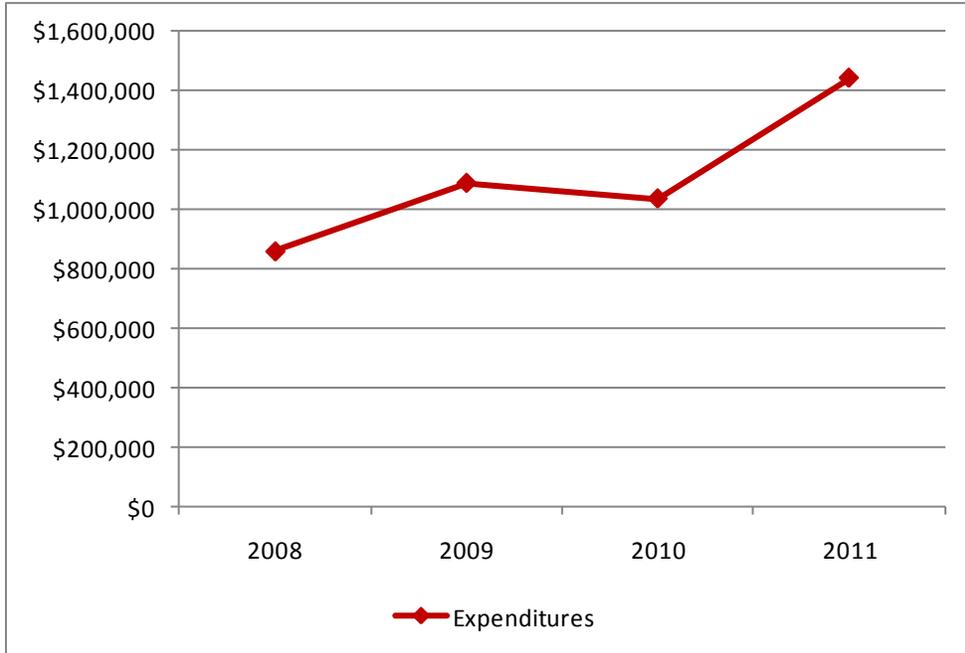


Figure 47 - Parks Expenditure Trends



### ADMINISTRATION

The expenditures related to the Department administration for fiscal years 2008 through 2011 are shown in **Figure 48**. No revenues were identified for Department administration, since rental fees collected by them are tied back to the facility or park they are collected from. The Department administration is approximately 35% of the total Department operations. The Department seeks to maintain administrative at 35% or less of total costs.

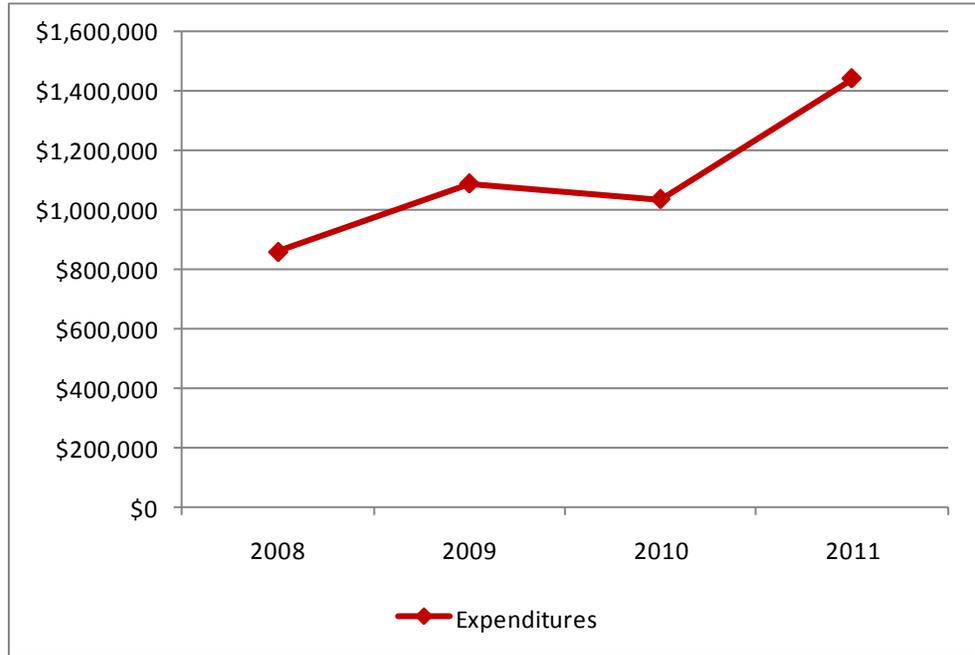


Figure 48 - Administration Expenditure Trends

### 5.2.3 FINANCIAL GOALS

The Department should consider adopting recovery goals for each cost center to maintain financial sustainability. **Figure 49** shows proposed ranges of goals and recommended short-term and long-term targets

Program Area	Direct Cost Recovery Nationally	Recommended Recovery Cost	Recommended Short-Term Recovery Cost
Overall Department	25% - 40%	40%	20%
Recreation Centers	40% - 75%	60%	35%
Athletic Programs	40% - 80%	50%	40%
Special Events	20% - 60%	50%	30%
Senior Programs	20% - 50%	35%	20%
Park Operations & Maintenance	5% - 20%	10%	5%

Figure 49 - Recovery Goals

### 5.2.4 PRICING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The PROS team recommends that written pricing policies be established to guide the maintenance of fees and charges to the level of service provided. Any program subsidy should be communicated to the program participants to demonstrate the investment that the Department is making to the Recreation and Park programs. This communication should include the cost of operating the program and facilities even if facilities costs are not being recovered in the fee.

#### FEES AND CHARGES GUIDELINES

The guidelines should include age segment, exclusive use, contractual and special event pricing classifications. A pricing guideline should consider the following elements:

- Cost Recovery Goal Pricing
- Age Segment Pricing
- Group Discounting and Packaging
- Non-primetime
- Level of Exclusivity Pricing
- Incentive Pricing
- Primetime

Guidelines should include incentive pricing for programs that provide significant social benefits, group discounts, and primetime/non-primetime classifications. Incentive pricing may also be used for new programs to test the program content and adequacy of the facilities. Cost recovery guides also help programmers in developing program content, number of sessions, and materials and supplies that may be included in the program fee.



## PRICING POLICY PHILOSOPHY

A pricing policy provides the Department with consistent guidelines in pricing services and programs. This allows users to better understand the philosophy behind pricing a service. Furthermore, the level of service and benefits users receive is translated into a price that is based on a set subsidy level, or on the level of individual consumption or exclusivity that is involved outside of what a general taxpayer receives.

Cost-of-service documentation with adopted pricing policies provides the Department with the tools to adjust the pricing of programs and services as operation and maintenance costs increase against a fixed tax revenue stream.

The objectives of pricing user fees are four-fold:

- Equity
- Revenue production
- Efficiency
- Redistribution of income

**Equity** means that those who benefit from the service should pay for it; and those who benefit the most should pay the most. The type of service will directly determine the cost recovery strategy or pricing strategy to be used in pricing services. Public agencies offer three kinds of services. They are as follows:

- **Public services** normally have no user fee associated with their consumption. These services are subsidized with taxes.
- **Merit services** can be priced using either a partial overhead pricing strategy or a variable cost pricing strategy. Partial overhead pricing strategies recover all direct operating costs and some determined portion of fixed costs. The portion of fixed costs not covered by the price established represents the tax subsidy. Whatever the level of tax subsidy, the Department needs to effectively communicate the level of tax subsidy being incurred.
- **Private services** are where a specific user or user group receives a benefit above and beyond what the general public receives. Most park and recreation agencies use a full cost recovery strategy for these services and often look to these kinds of programs to subsidize the other public services.

**Revenue production** means that user fees from recreation and park programs and activities will assist in the overall operation of the recreation and park budget. It offers flexibility in providing services not normally provided through tax dollars. Example: promotional dollars for programs and services. Revenue production provides the Department with in-kind dollars for grant matches and the ability to enhance facilities.

**Efficiency** is maintained by pricing and prioritizing activities based on community input and availability of funding. Priorities in management of park lands, resources and activities are clearly defined. Activities in highest demand are priced accordingly. Cost tracking of dollars spent for each activity is documented. Pricing can achieve six positive results:

- Reduces congestion and overcrowding

- Indicates clientele demand and support
- Increases positive consumer attitudes
- Provides encouragement to the private sector (so it can compete with the Department, and the Department can reallocate resources when appropriate)
- Provides incentive to achieve societal goals
- Ensures stronger accountability on agency staff and management

**Redistribution of income** involves setting fees to cover operational costs as well as future improvements associated with the activity. Example: Adult softball player fees include additional funds for facility maintenance and capital improvements.

The Department should regularly review and adjust the funding potential for the sources that best fit the agency’s mission and objectives.

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### 5.2.5 CAPITAL PROJECT FUNDING

The Department relies on Capital funding from several funding sources including:

- Capital Reserve
- Capital Reserve Developer Contribution
- General Fund
- Grants
- Installment Purchase
- CDBG Funding

For most capital projects, the Capital Improvement Plan presents short-term financial impacts to the operating budget. This is an example of best practices for project planning. The Department should consider including operational impacts on all major facilities that require operational staffing, such as recreation centers and aquatics facilities.

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### 5.2.6 POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Recreation and parks systems across the United States have learned to develop a clear understanding of how to manage revenue options to support recreation and park services in a City based on the limited availability of General Fund dollars. Recreation and parks systems no longer rely on taxes as their sole revenue option and have developed new sources of revenue to help support capital and operational needs. A detailed breakdown of funding sources and implementation feasibility of each source has been provided separately in an excel worksheet to the Department staff.

The Department should consider additional funding sources to provide for operations and capital projects. In order to continue to build and maintain a great park system, the Department should consider the applicability of the funding sources presented below to support the operations and capital needs of the Department.

The following examples provide external funding opportunities for the Department to consider for the future. Each of these sources can be evaluated in more detail to determine



the level of funding they would yield if pursued aggressively. The goal is to develop a “package” of diversified sources to support the Department’s capital and operational needs for the future.

Amounts shown are reasonable expectations to achieve within a five year timeframe. These are new funds above and beyond any existing amounts collected.

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### 5.2.7 EXTERNAL SOURCES

The following examples provide external funding opportunities for the Department to consider. Each of these sources can be evaluated in more detail to determine the level of funding they would yield if pursued aggressively. Amounts shown are new funds above and beyond any existing amounts collected.

#### CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS

This revenue-funding source allows corporations to invest in the development or enhancement of new or existing facilities in park systems. Sponsorships are also highly used for programs and events.

Additional Estimated O&M and Capital Funding - \$ 5,000 annually

#### PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are joint development funding sources or operational funding sources between two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit and a public agency, or a private business and a public agency. Two partners jointly develop revenue producing recreation and park facilities and share risk, operational costs, responsibilities and asset management, based on the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

Additional Estimated O&M and Capital Funding - \$ 12,000 annually

#### FOUNDATIONS/GIFTS

These dollars are raised from tax-exempt, non-profit organizations established with private donations in promotion of specific causes, activities, or issues. They offer a variety of means to fund capital projects, including capital campaigns, gifts catalogs, fundraisers, endowments, sales of items, etc.

Additional Estimated O&M and Capital Funding - \$ 2,200 annually

#### PRIVATE DONATIONS

Private Donations may also be received in the form of funds, land, facilities, recreation equipment, art or in-kind services. Donations from local and regional businesses as sponsors for events or facilities should be pursued.

Additional Estimated O&M and Capital Funding - \$ 1,000 annually

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### 5.2.8 CAPITAL FEES

Capital fees are assessed for new development that uses capacity in existing facilities and services.

### DEDICATION/DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES

These fees are assessed for the development of residential properties with the proceeds to be used for Recreation and Park purposes, such as open space acquisitions, community park site development, neighborhood park development, regional park acquisition and development, etc.

Additional O&M and Capital Funding available – \$81,553 annually

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### 5.2.9 FUNDING STRATEGIES CONCLUSION

The Department has identified potential additional funding of \$102,253 annually. The Department management estimates that \$10,250 would be available for operations and maintenance and \$91,803 would be available for capital projects. If the capital projects estimated funds were used for debt service, the projected funds would support \$1,368,927 bond issue based on 25 year bonds at 5.5% annual interest rate.

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### 5.2.10 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department should consider the following actions:

- Adopting a pricing policy for fees and charges
- Establish cost recovery rates for each major program and service
- Review fees and charges annually and update to attain financial goals
- Include financial impact analyses for all capital projects that require operating staff
- Develop sponsorship and partnerships policies to support Department operations
- Seek sponsorships and partnerships for major programs, major facilities, and special events
- Seek to maintain and improve park maintenance funding



## CHAPTER SIX - FACILITY / AMENITY STANDARDS AND SERVICE LEVELS

For the Department to identify the extent of future needs and build its Capital Development Plan, it is essential to be able to document existing levels for its variety of park, facility and amenity offerings. In order to do that, one must document the existing inventory available for the existing population which will depict the level of service afforded to the population within the City of Jacksonville's service area. The pre-condition for including a site or an amenity within the existing inventory is its availability to the community at large.

The cumulative inventory (City, School, other comparable providers) is assessed against the population it potentially serves in order to demonstrate the level of existing service standards. Since standards are determined based on inventory available and population, they will continue to evolve as the available offerings and population demographics change over time.

**Figure 50** demonstrates the existing inventory and service levels and the recommended levels based on current and anticipated future populations. These recommendations help determine the extent of additional offerings required in the community. These must be met by a combination of repositioning existing offerings, building new sites and developing partnerships for joint-use along with other providers.

The facility/amenity service level recommendations were developed through a multitude of resources. They included: National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines, recreation activity participation rates reported by American Sports Data, key leader, community and stakeholder input, staff discussion, and general observations by the PROS team. This ensures that the recommended service levels are customized to the City of Jacksonville based on its population, the community values and unmet needs of the population.

As seen in **Figure 50**, Based on the 299.56 acres of park land (not counting Special Use Areas and acreage available on the Marine base in Camp Lejeune) and an estimated 2009 population of 82,582, the current service level for park acres is 3.63 acres per 1000 population. This does not include additional acreage through other service providers which would increase the existing service level to 3.71 acres per 1000 population.

The recommended standard is 7.75 acres per 1,000 which would entail an additional increase of 333 acres by 2014 for a population of 82,508. These service level recommendations have been depicted in the Equity Maps provided in **Chapter 7**.

**The PROS team recognizes that the recommended service level would entail doubling the entire existing park acreage and may take time to achieve or may not be completely achieved. However, the goal is to aspire to reach the service level standards as best as possible and in a balanced manner to ensure parity and equity in the overall offerings.**

Also, the recommendations have been mindful of the fact that a portion of the community does have access to some recreation facility/amenity offerings on the Marine base. Hence the overall approach has been to focus on a fiscally sustainable delivery model by minimizing service offering duplication and maximizing service offerings to the community in Jacksonville.

PARKS: 2009 Inventory - Developed Facilities						2009 Facility Standards			2014 Facility Standards						
Park Type	Jacksonville	Schools	Other Provider's	Military	Total Combined Inventory	Current Service Level based on population		Recommended Service Levels; Revised for Local Service Area			Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities / Amenities Needed	Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed	
Neighborhood Park	34.63	-	6.01	-	40.64	0.49	acres per	1,000	1.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	42 Acre(s)	Need Exists	42 Acre(s)
Community Park	73.23	-	-	-	73.23	0.89	acres per	1,000	2.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	92 Acre(s)	Need Exists	92 Acre(s)
Regional Park	183.24	-	1.20	-	184.44	2.23	acres per	1,000	4.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	146 Acre(s)	Need Exists	146 Acre(s)
Open Space / Natural Areas	8.46	-	-	-	8.46	0.10	acres per	1,000	0.75	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	53 Acre(s)	Need Exists	53 Acre(s)
<b>Total Park Acres</b>	<b>299.56</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7.22</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>306.78</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>acres per</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>7.75</b>	<b>acres per</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>Need Exists</b>	<b>333 Acre(s)</b>	<b>Need Exists</b>	<b>333 Acre(s)</b>
Special Use Areas	-	245.57	-	-	245.57	2.97	acres per	1,000	n/a	acres per	1,000	-	-	-	-
<b>OUTDOOR AMENITIES:</b>															
Playground Area	18.00	6.67	1.00	5.34	31.01	1.00	structure per	2,663	1.00	structure per	3,000	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)
Basketball Court; Outdoor	10.00	2.67	-	3.67	16.34	1.00	structure per	5,055	1.00	structure per	7,000	Meets Standard	- Court(s)	Meets Standard	- Court(s)
Tennis Court; Outdoor	14.00	6.67	-	5.34	26.01	1.00	structure per	3,175	1.00	structure per	4,000	Meets Standard	- Court(s)	Meets Standard	- Court(s)
Diamond Field; Mounded - Small (60ft or under)	4.00	-	-	2.00	6.00	1.00	field per	13,761	1.00	field per	10,000	Need Exists	2 Field(s)	Need Exists	2 Field(s)
Diamond Field; Mounded - Large (75ft and larger)	-	2.00	-	0.67	2.67	1.00	field per	30,953	1.00	field per	20,000	Need Exists	1 Field(s)	Need Exists	1 Field(s)
Diamond Field; Non-Mounded - Small	3.00	4.00	-	2.00	9.00	1.00	field per	9,173	1.00	field per	15,000	Meets Standard	- Field(s)	Meets Standard	- Field(s)
Diamond Field; Non-Mounded - Large	8.00	-	-	1.33	9.33	1.00	field per	8,847	1.00	field per	20,000	Meets Standard	- Field(s)	Meets Standard	- Field(s)
Trails (Hard and Soft Surface Trails)	16.20	-	-	-	16.20	0.20	miles per	1,000	0.45	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	21 Mile(s)	Need Exists	21 Mile(s)
Soccer / Football / Multipurpose Field	8.00	4.67	1.00	5.34	19.01	1.00	field per	4,345	1.00	field per	4,000	Need Exists	2 Field(s)	Need Exists	2 Field(s)
Shelter; Large (100+ people)	8.00	-	-	4.00	12.00	1.00	structure per	6,881	1.00	structure per	10,000	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)
Shelter; Medium (50 - 99 people)	3.00	0.67	-	4.67	8.34	1.00	structure per	9,907	1.00	structure per	10,000	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)
Shelter; Small (up to 50 people)	5.00	-	-	13.34	18.34	1.00	structure per	4,503	1.00	structure per	7,500	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)	Meets Standard	- Structures(s)
Skateboard Park	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	1.00	site per	82,582	1.00	site per	40,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	1 Site(s)
Outdoor Pool	-	-	-	1.50	1.50	1.00	site per	55,055	1.00	site per	40,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	1 Site(s)
Splash Pad / Spray Grounds	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	30,000	Need Exists	3 Site(s)	Need Exists	3 Site(s)
Dog Parks	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	25,000	Need Exists	3 Site(s)	Need Exists	3 Site(s)
Disk Golf Course	1.00	-	-	-	1.00	1.00	site per	82,582	1.00	site per	40,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	1 Site(s)
Nature Center	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	site per	n/a	1.00	site per	100,000	Need Exists	1 Site(s)	Need Exists	1 Site(s)
Indoor Aquatic Recreation Space	-	-	-	-	-	1.00	SF per	n/a	0.50	SF per	Person	Need Exists	41,291 Square Feet	Need Exists	41,254 Square Feet
Recreation Center	38,964.00	-	-	207,441.67	246,405.67	0.47	SF per	person	1.50	SF per	Person	Meets Standard	- Square Feet	Meets Standard	- Square Feet
Estimated Population: 2009	82,582														
Projected Population : 2014	82,508														

Figure 50 - Facility / Amenity Standards Service Level

Notes:

- The matrix in **Figure 50** will be provided to the Department staff in an excel form for their use and a 11 x 17 worksheet will be a larger fold-out in the printed report
- The recommended facility service levels have been adjusted downwards to reflect the portion of the total population being served by the facilities on the Military Base at Camp Lejeune
- Classifications for Park Sites are:
  - Neighborhood Park: 0 to 7.9 Acres (e.g. Branchwood Park)
  - Community Parks: 8 to 29.9 Acres (e.g. Jack Amyette Park / Center)
  - Regional Parks: Over 30 Acres (e.g. Jacksonville Commons Complex)
  - District Parks: Classification used by the County (e.g. Onslow Pines Park)
  - Special Use Areas: Areas with special, unique uses (e.g. New River Waterfront Park)



4. Other Service Providers (OSPs) include county sites and one HOA site
5. OSP Beach Access Areas classification changed from Regional/State Park to Special Use Areas
6. OSP Water Trailheads classifications changed from Regional/State Parks to Special Use Areas
7. Mounded Diamond Fields are typical of baseball use
8. Non-Mounded Diamond Fields are typical of softball use (or baseball use with a portable mound)
9. School inventories are counted at 66.7% of full asset value to account for non-public daytime use and the presumption of evening and weekend public use
10. Wilson Bay Waterfront Park classification changed to Neighborhood Park from Community Park
11. Williamsburg Park (undeveloped) Park classification changed from Open Space/Natural Area to Regional Park
12. Riverwalk Crossing Park classification changed from Regional Park to Special Use Area
13. Northwoods Center/Park classification changed from Community Park to Neighborhood Park
14. L.P. Willingham Waterfront Park classification changed from Regional Park to Special Use Area
15. Country Club Park (undeveloped) changed from Open Space/Natural Area to Neighborhood Park
16. Carolina Forest Park (undeveloped) changed from Open Space/Natural Area to Community
17. Bike Paths are counted as Linear Trails/Greenways and not included as Trails
18. Soccer/Football fields at Northside High School, Soccer/Football fields at Jacksonville High School and Soccer Field at New Bridge Middle School are unavailable for public use and not counted in the inventory
19. Diamond Fields and Rectangular Fields include inventories for both game and practice facilities
20. Military Assets are counted at 67% to account for discounted lack of public accessibility
21. Outdoor pools are accounted at 50% since all the outdoor pool facilities captured in the inventory are on the Military Base and there is a high unmet need for outdoor pools with full public accessibility

## CHAPTER SEVEN - EQUITY MAPPING

Equity maps provide a visual depiction of the location and service area targeted by the City's parks and facility/amenity offerings. These are objective and transparent tools that assist the City and Department leadership and staff in understanding how equitable the service distribution and delivery is across the City.

In addition, looking at guidelines with reference to population enables the Department to assess gaps and overlaps in service areas by each facility/amenity type and thus make appropriate capital improvement decisions to address system-wide equity and access.

**Figures 51-74** show the service area maps that were developed for each of the following major assets:

- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Regional Parks
- Open Space, Natural Areas
- Playground areas
- Basketball Courts; Outdoor
- Tennis Courts; Outdoor
- Diamond Field; Mounded – Small
- Diamond Field; Mounded – Large
- Diamond Field; Non-Mounded – Small
- Diamond Field; Non-Mounded – Large
- Trails; Hard and Soft Surface
- Soccer, Football and Multipurpose Fields
- Shelter; Large
- Shelter; Medium
- Shelter; Small
- Skateboard Parks
- Outdoor Pools
- Splash Pads, Spray Grounds
- Dog Parks
- Disk Golf Courses
- Nature Centers
- Indoor Aquatic Recreation Spaces
- Recreation Centers



The source for the population used for standard development is the estimated 2009 population and projected 2019 populations as reported by Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI). Estimated population for 2009 is 82,418. The shaded areas in the Equity Maps indicate the service level (e.g. the population being served by that park type/amenity) as outlined in the Facility/Amenity standards in **Chapter 6**.

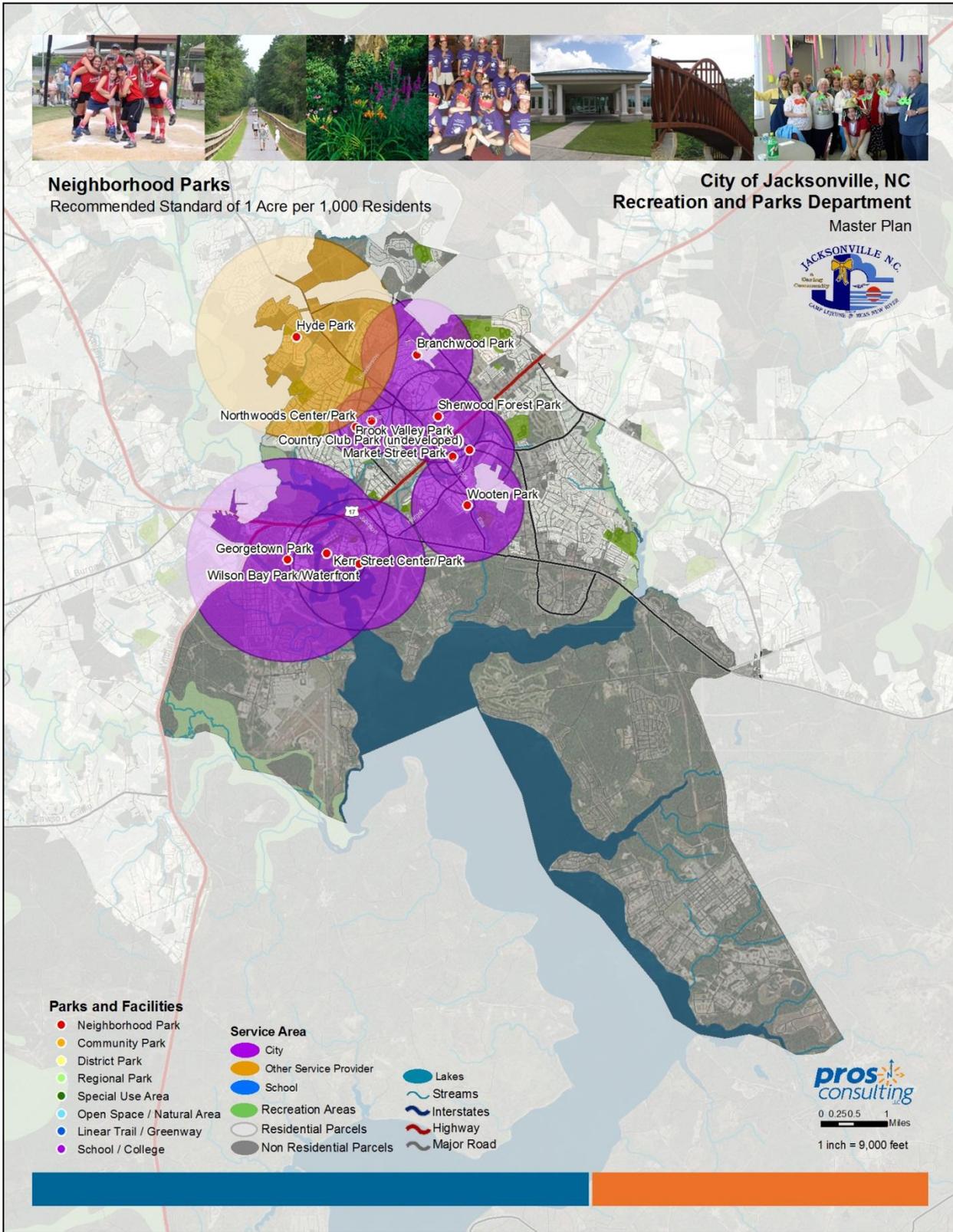


Figure 51 - Neighborhood Parks

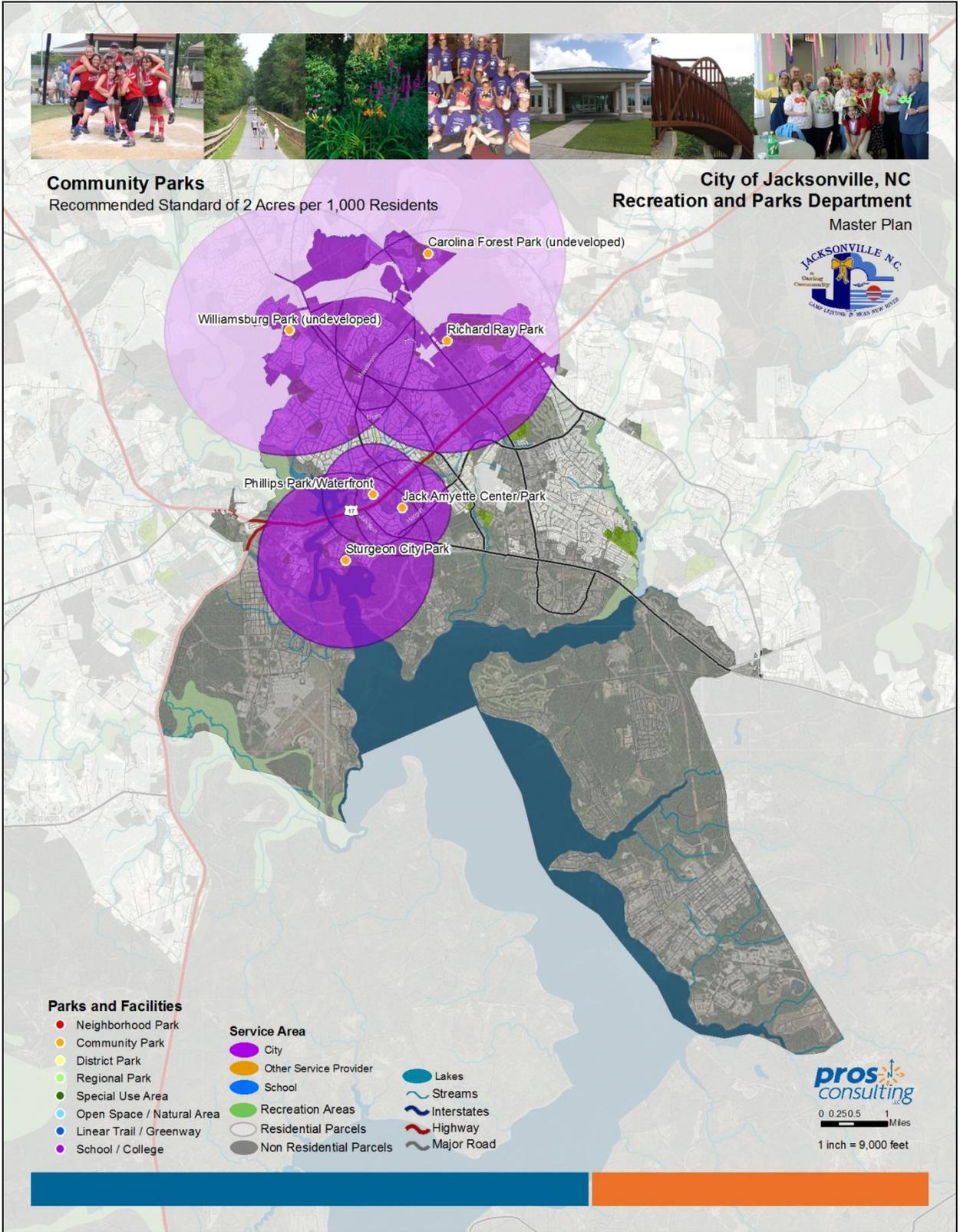


Figure 52 - Community Parks

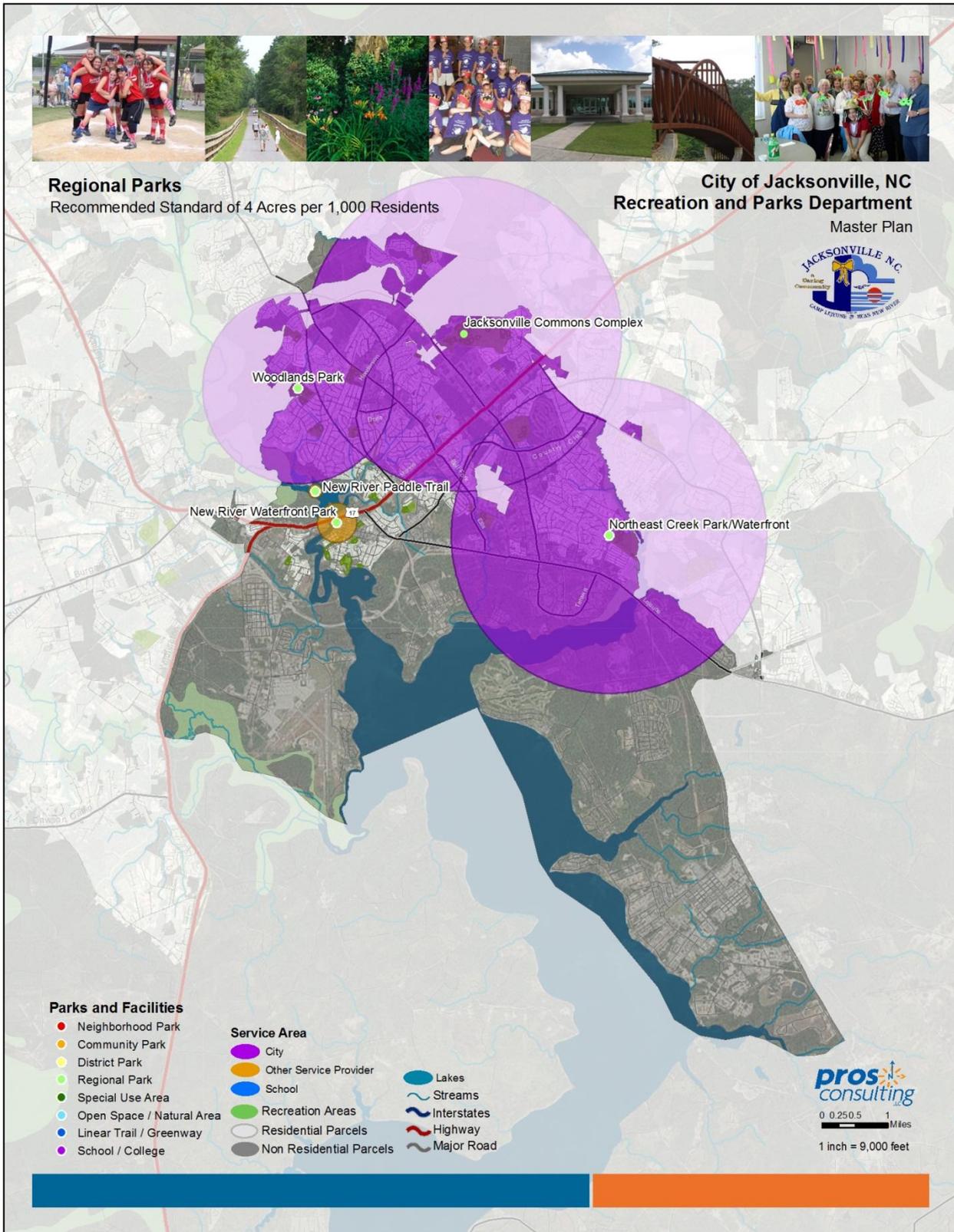


Figure 53 - Regional Parks

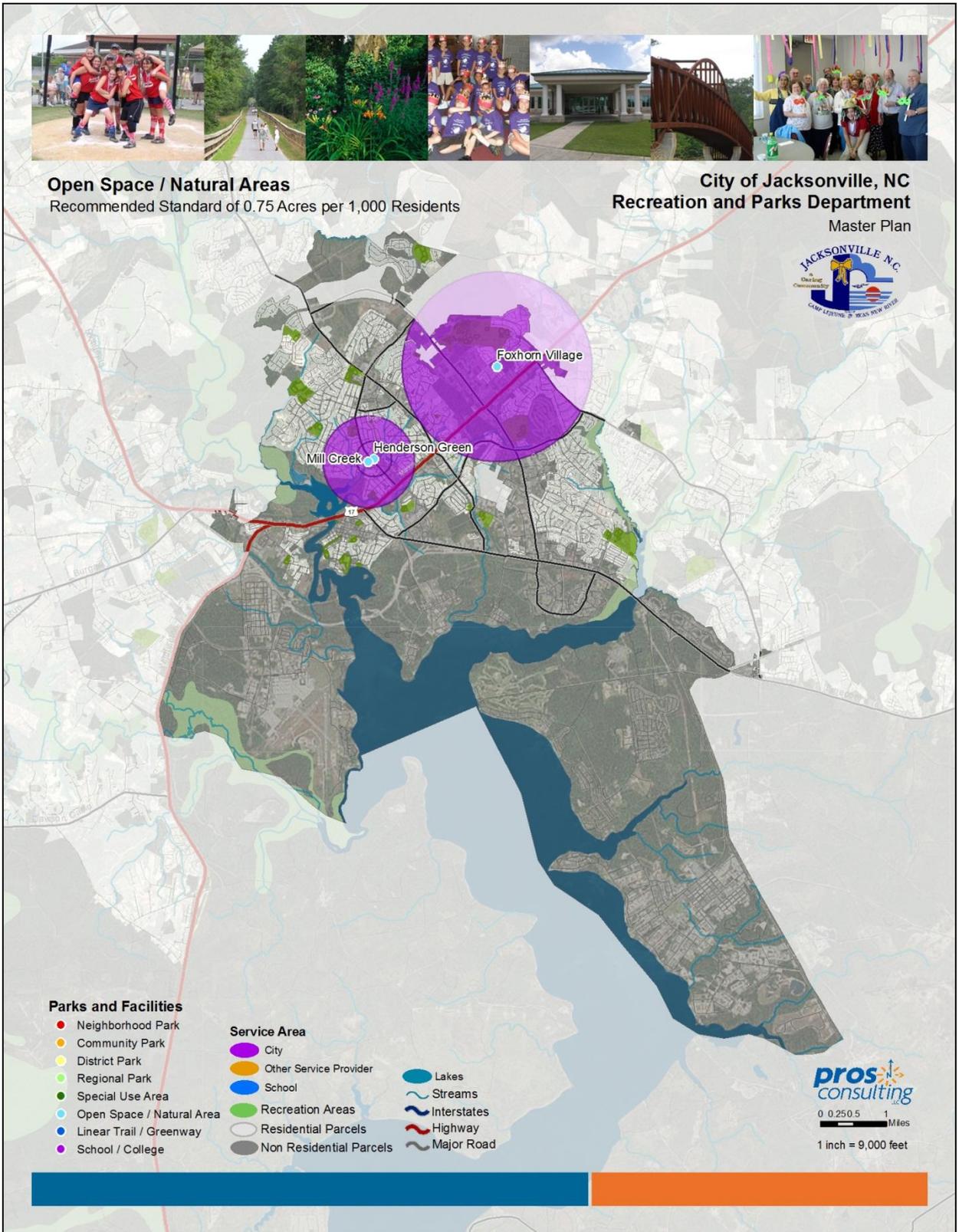


Figure 54 - Open Space / Natural Areas

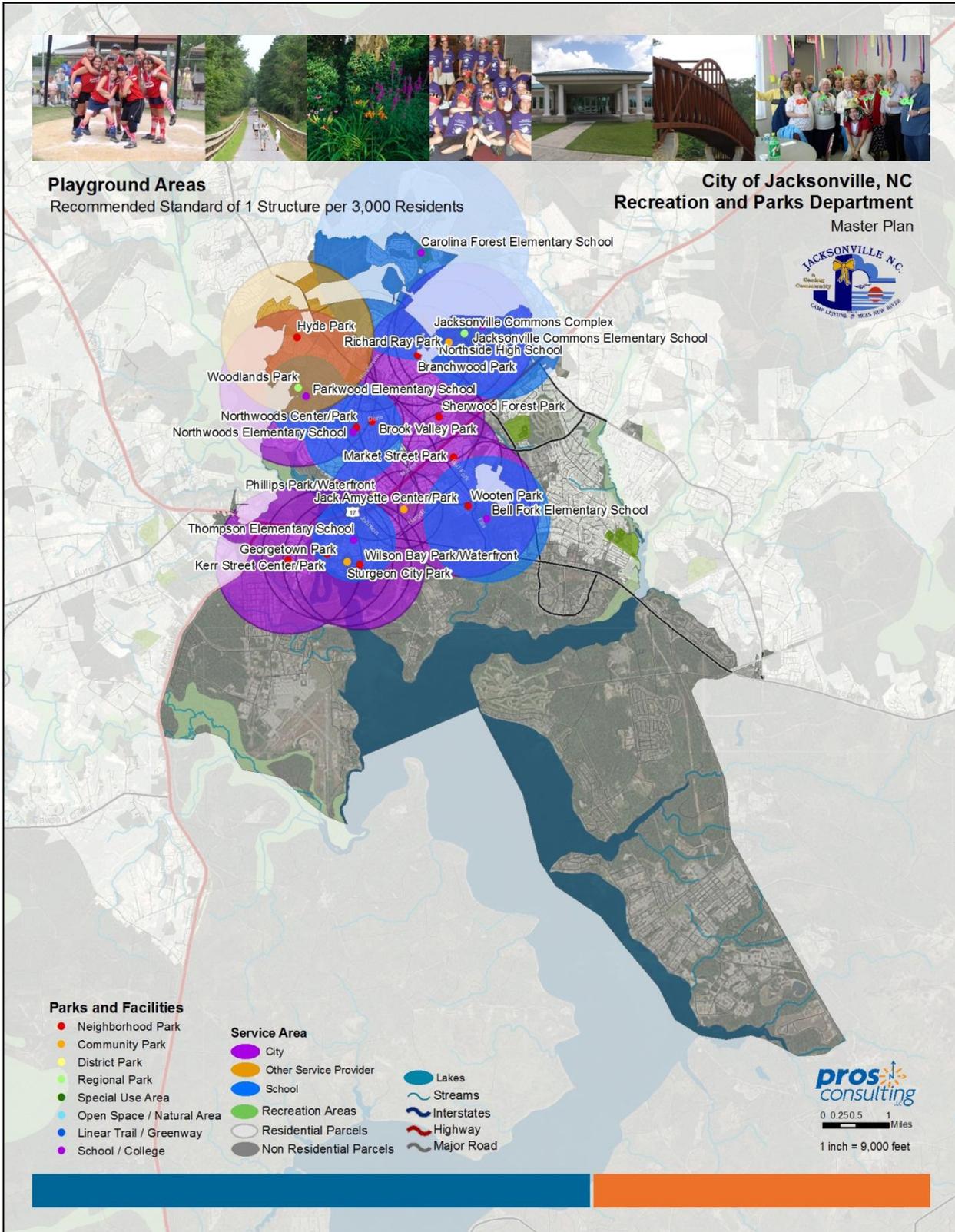


Figure 55 - Playground Areas



**Basketball Courts; Outdoor**

Recommended Standard of 1 Structure per Acres per 7,000 Residents

**City of Jacksonville, NC  
Recreation and Parks Department  
Master Plan**

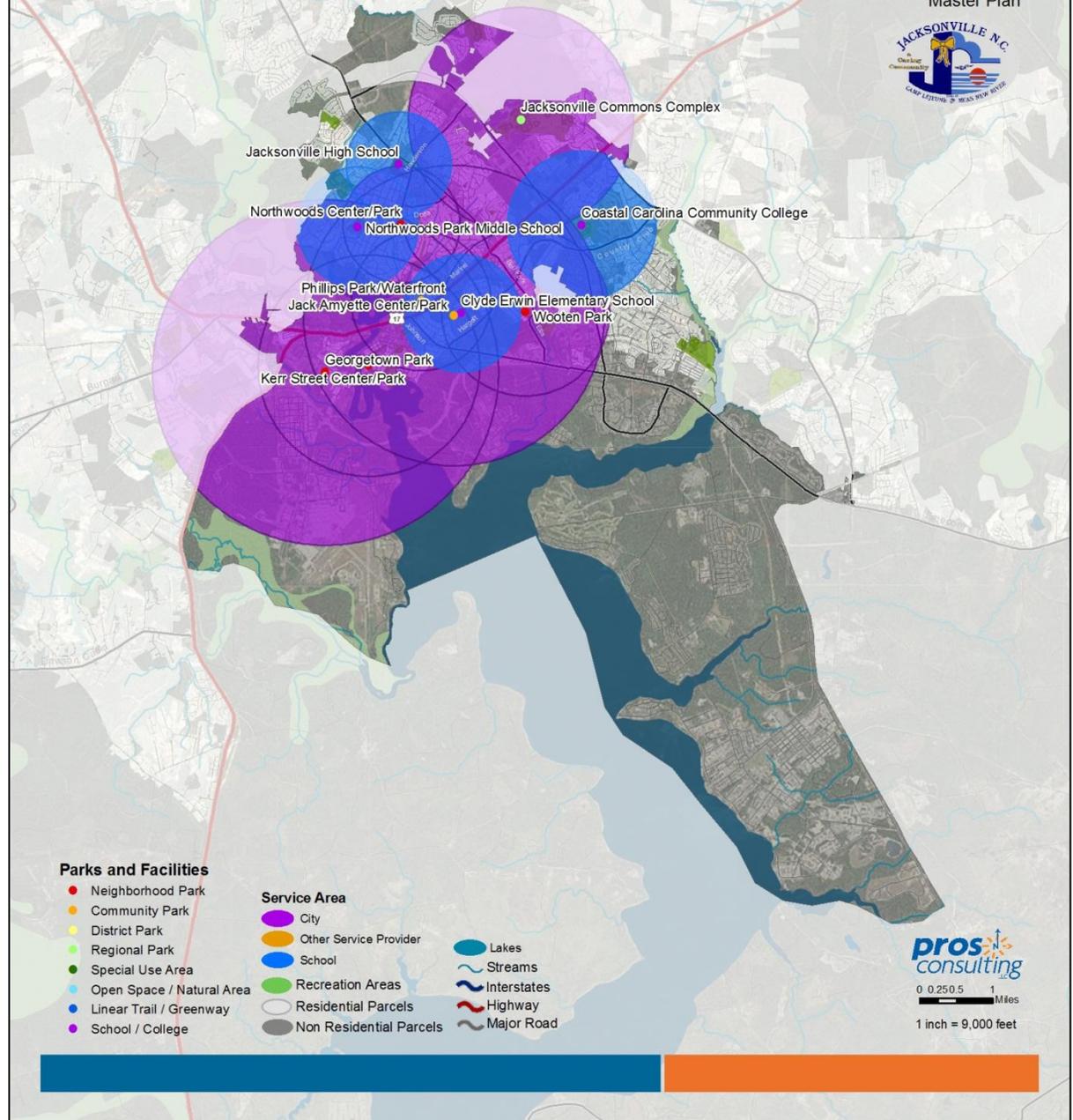


Figure 56 - Basketball Courts: Outdoor

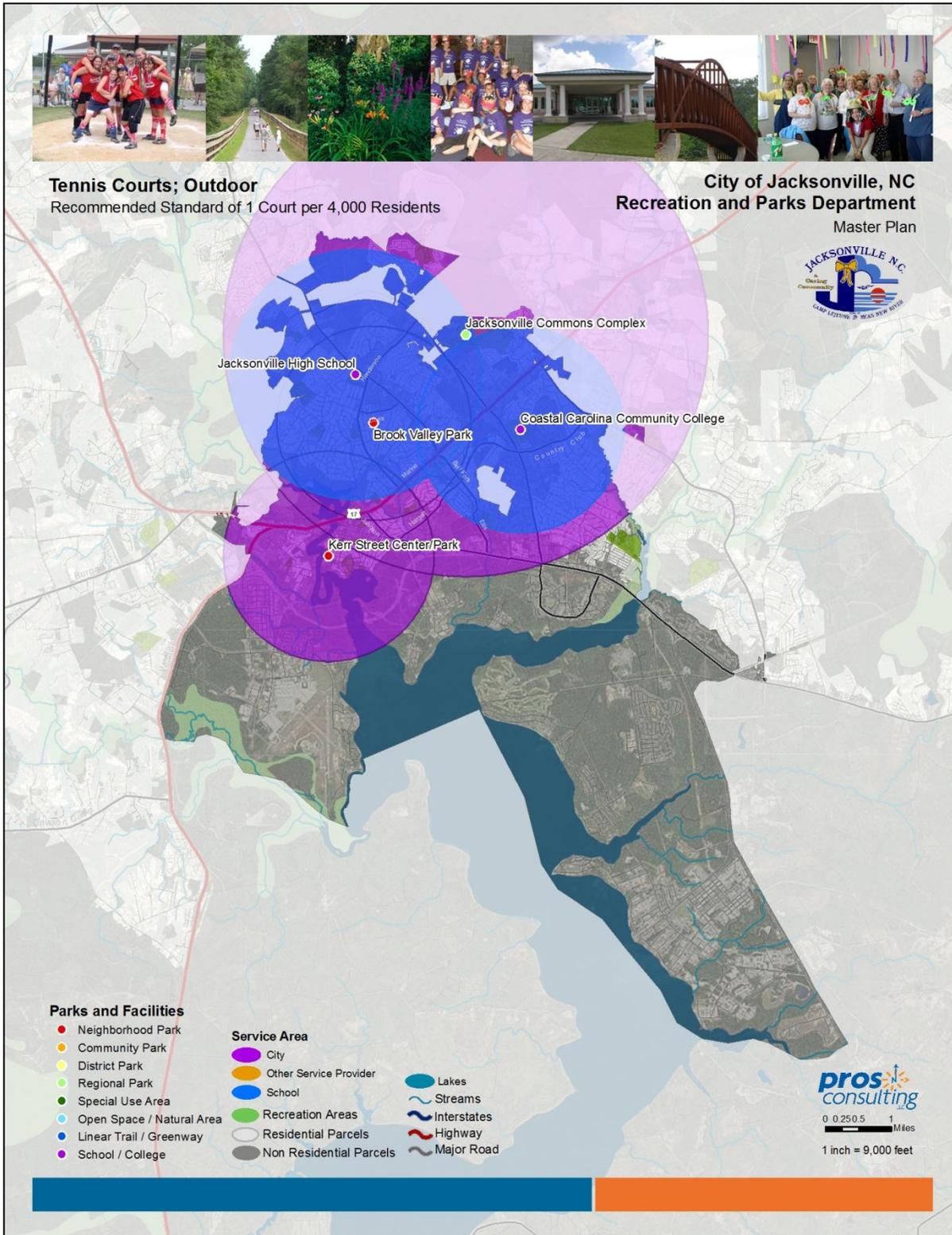


Figure 57 - Tennis Courts; Outdoor

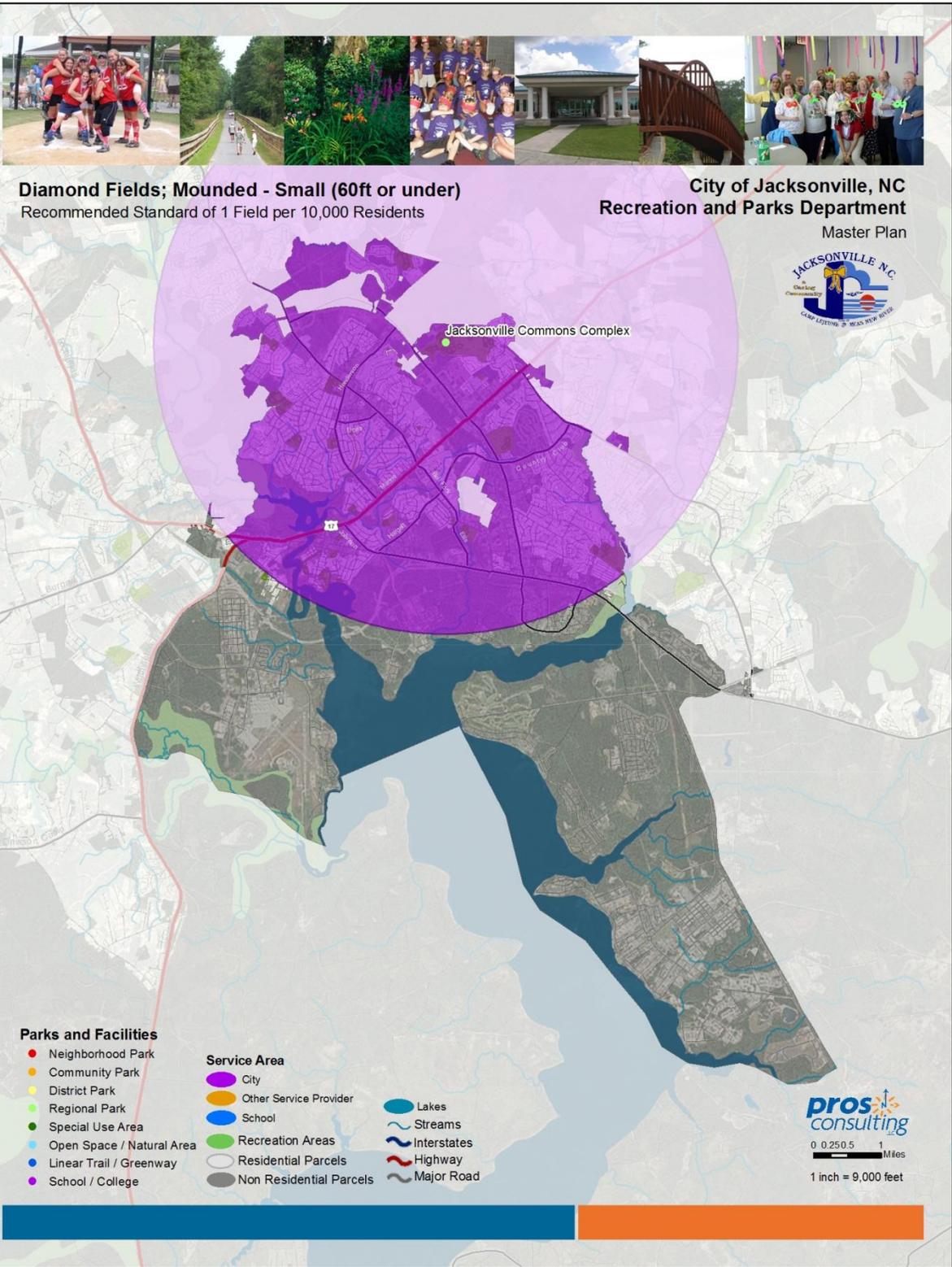


Figure 58 - Diamond Fields: Mounded - Small (60 ft. or under)

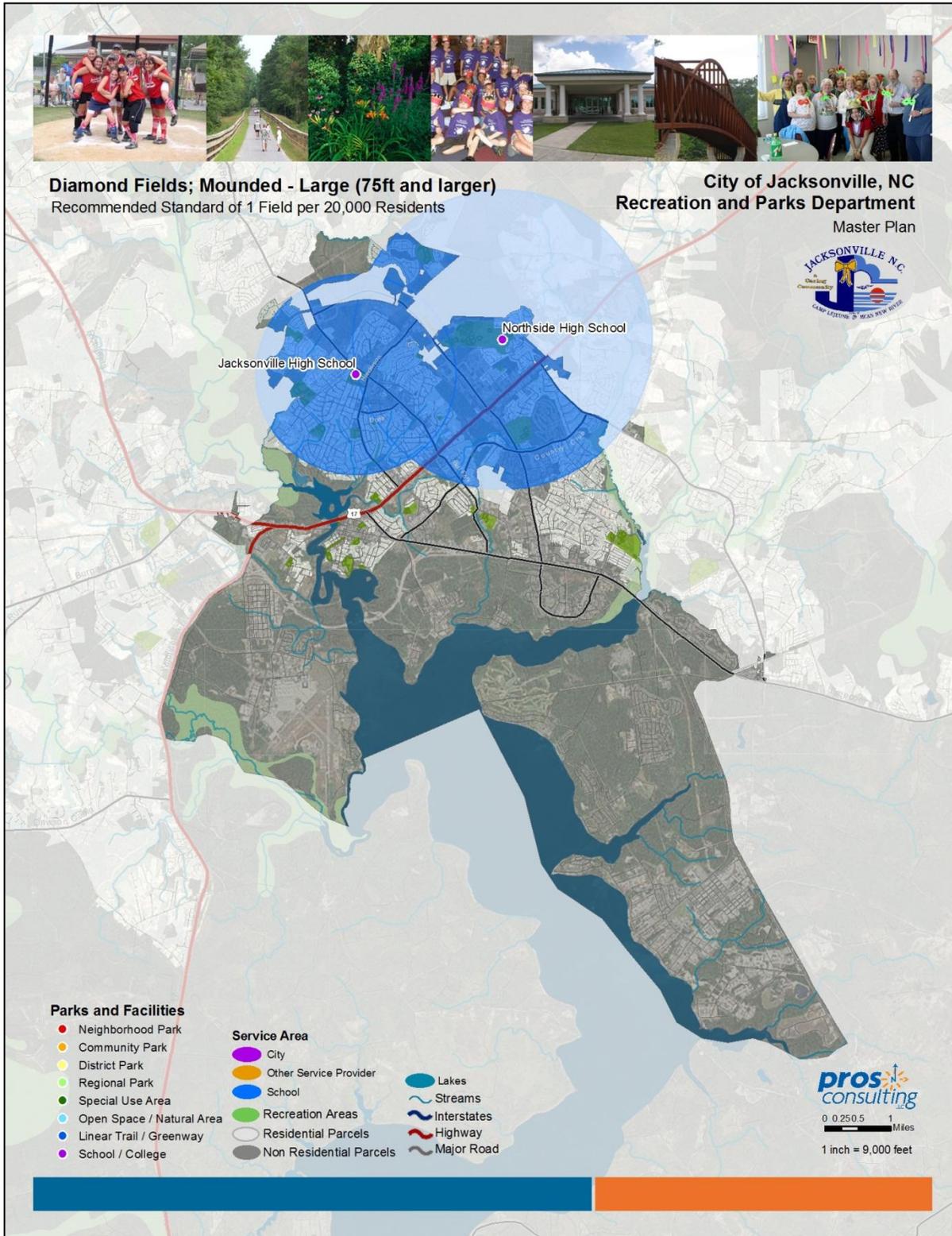


Figure 59 -Diamond Fields: Mounded – Large (75 ft. or under)

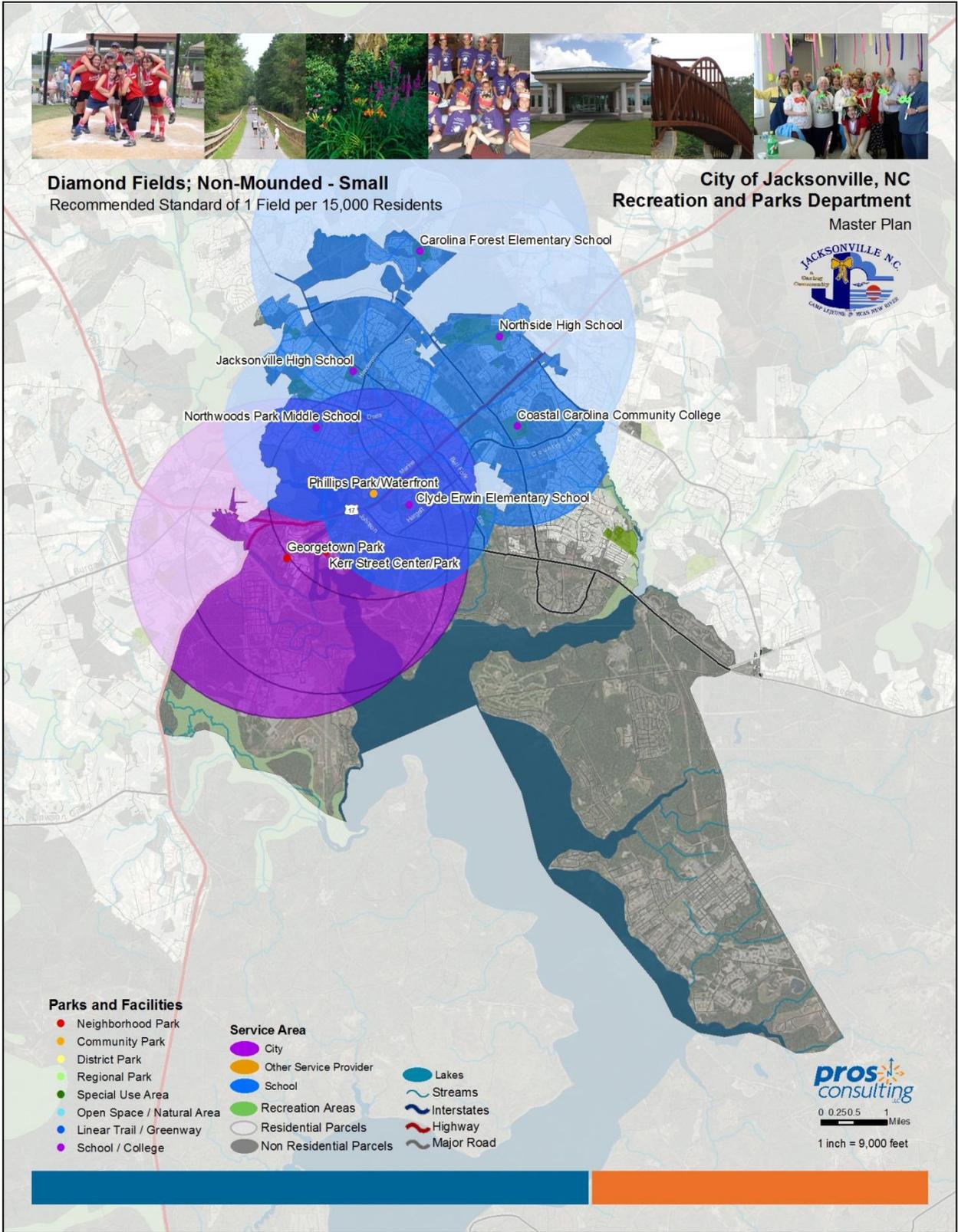


Figure 60 – Diamond Fields - Non-Mounded: Small

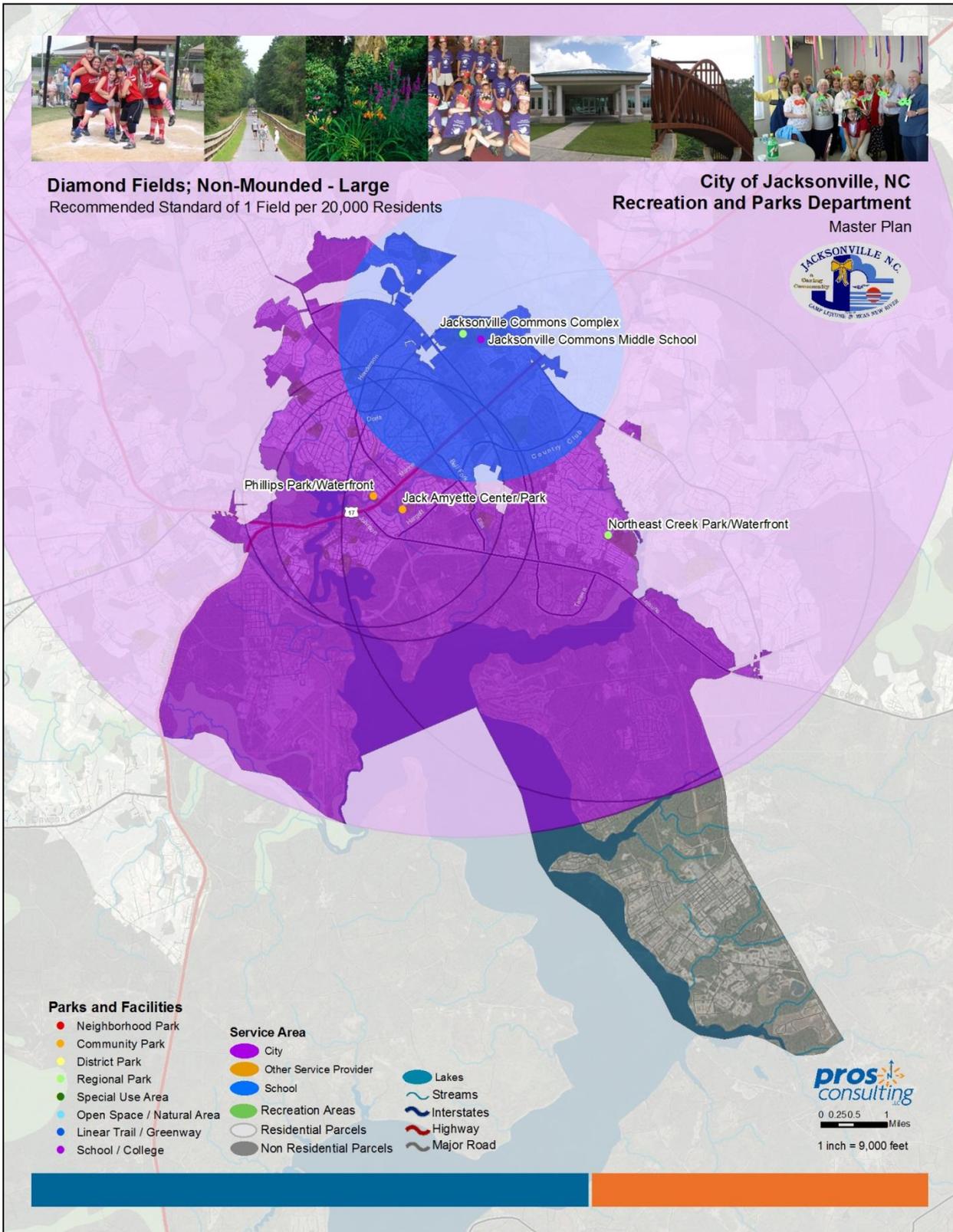


Figure 61 - Diamond Fields; Non-Mounded - Large



**Trails (Hard and Soft Surface Trails)**  
 Recommended Standard of 0.45 Miles per 1,000 Residents

**City of Jacksonville, NC  
 Recreation and Parks Department  
 Master Plan**

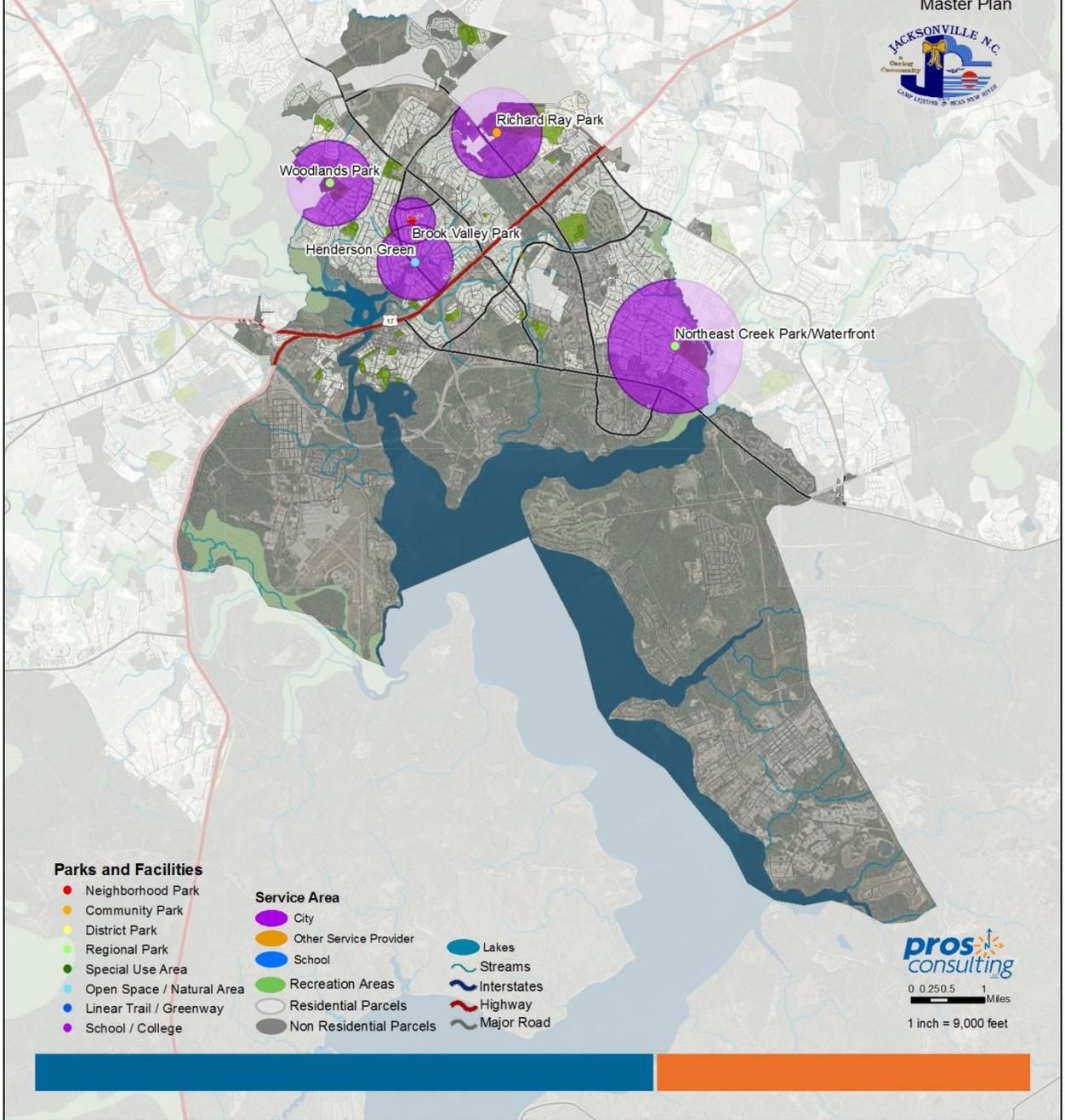


Figure 62 - Trails (Hard and Soft Surface Trails)

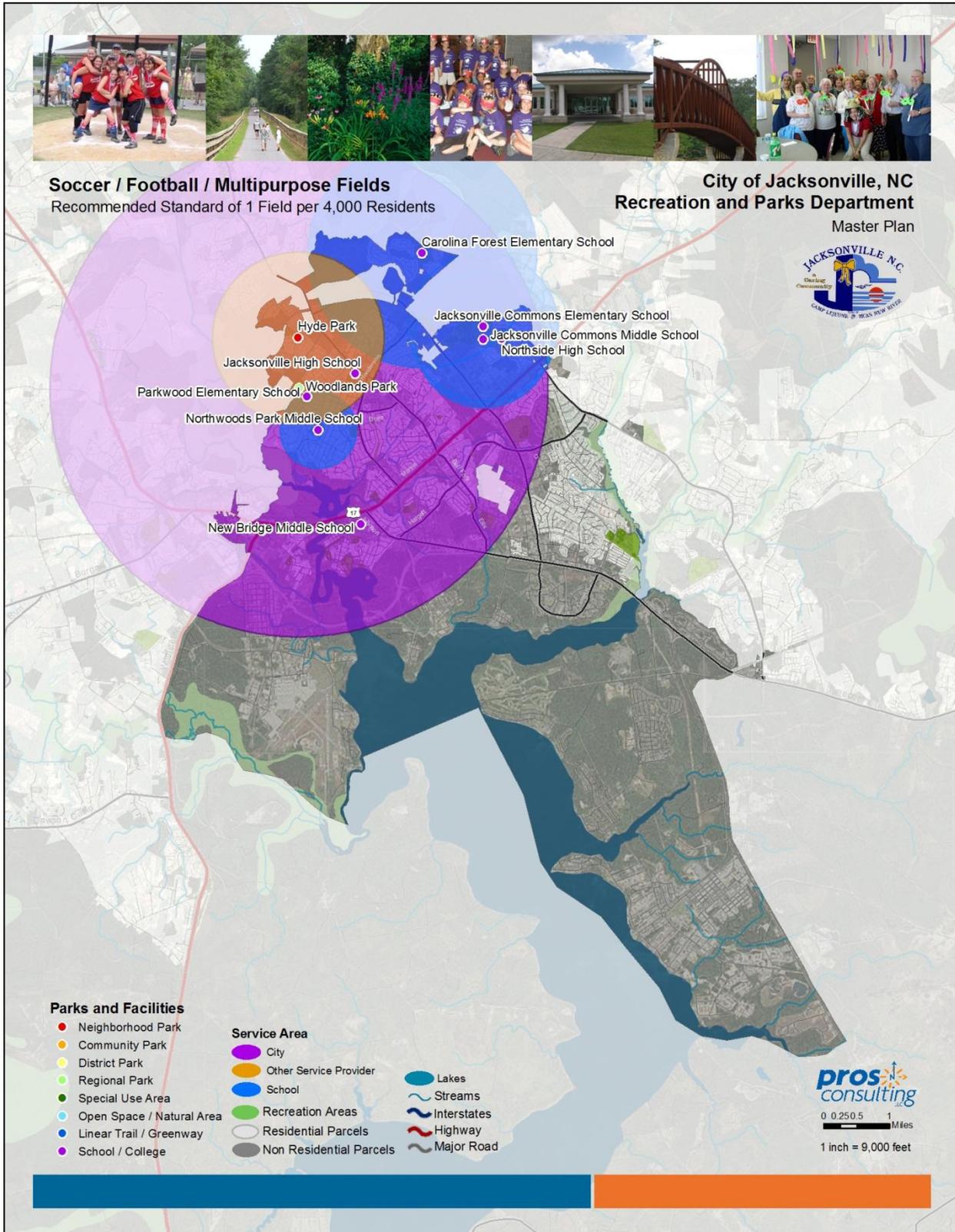


Figure 63 - Soccer / Football / Multipurpose Fields

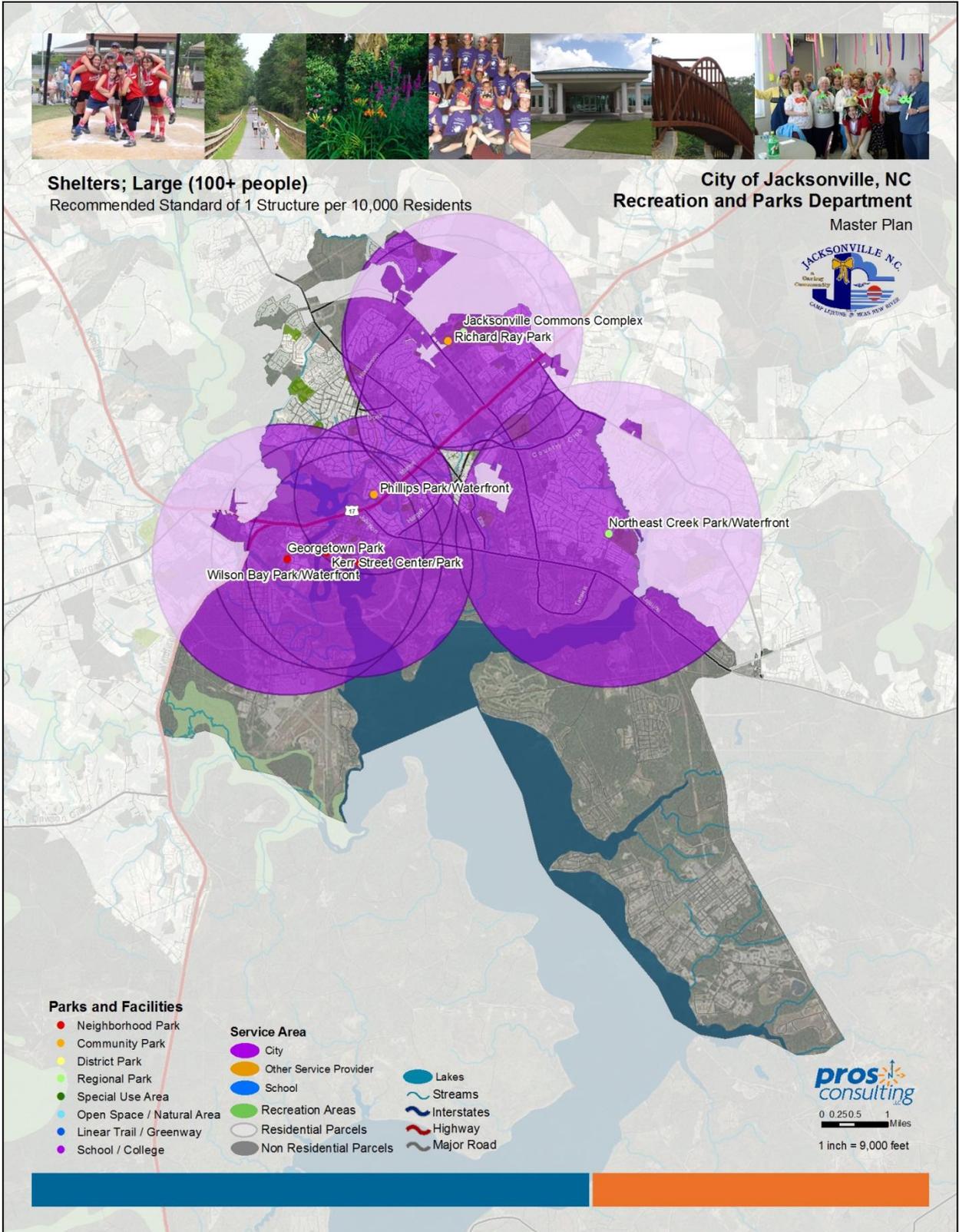


Figure 64 - Shelters; Large (100+ shelters)

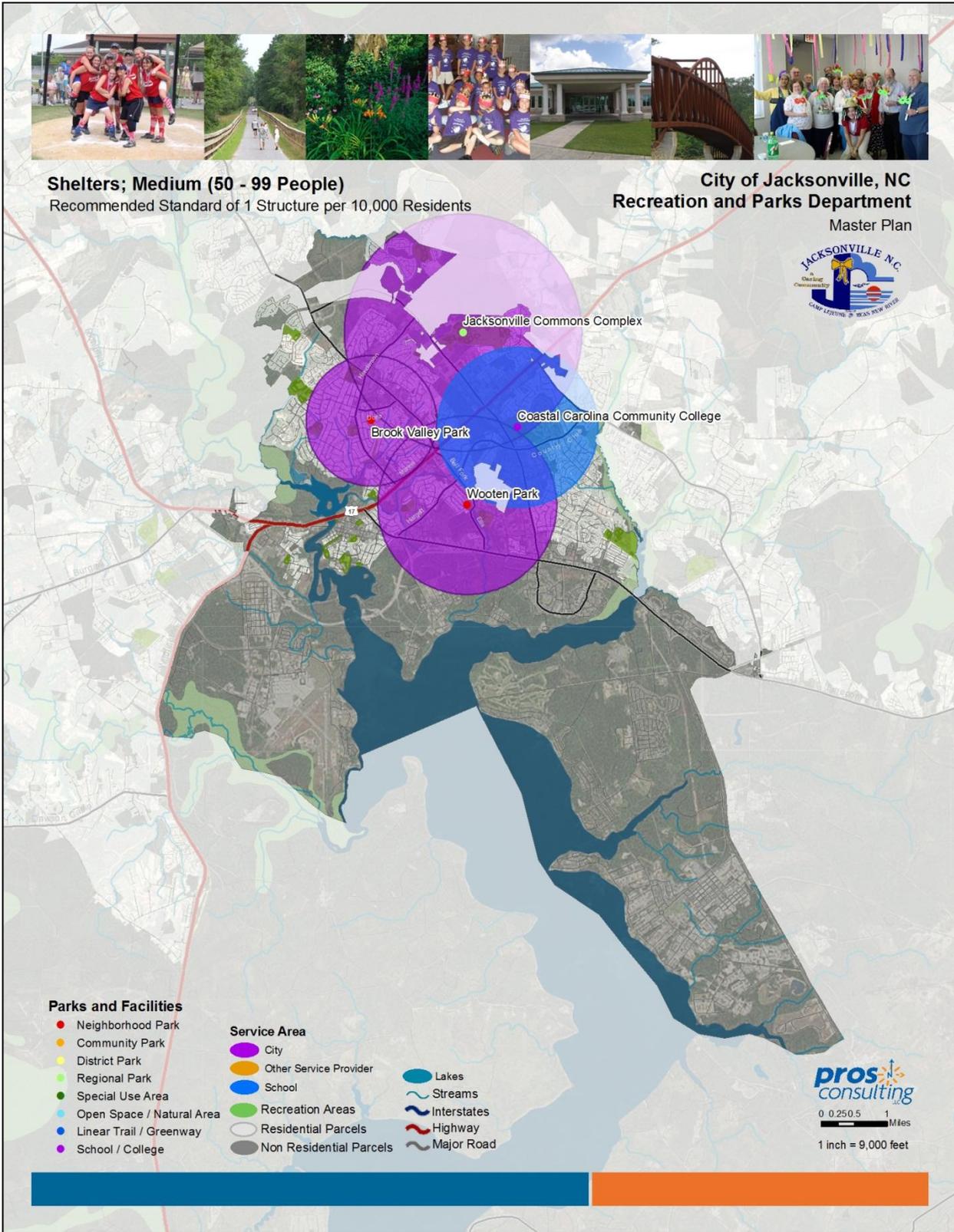


Figure 65 - Shelters; Large (100+ people)

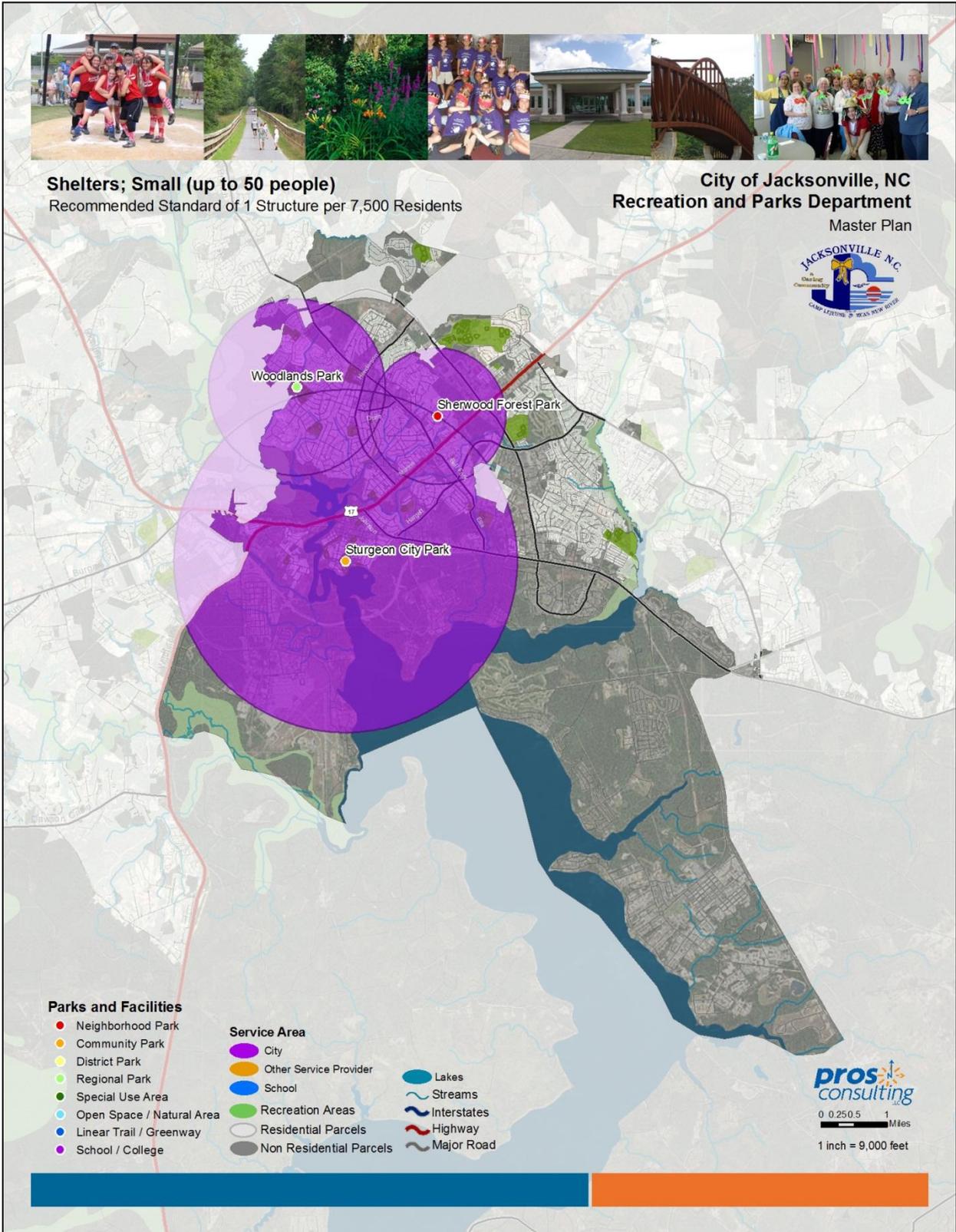


Figure 66 - Shelters: Small (up to 50 people)

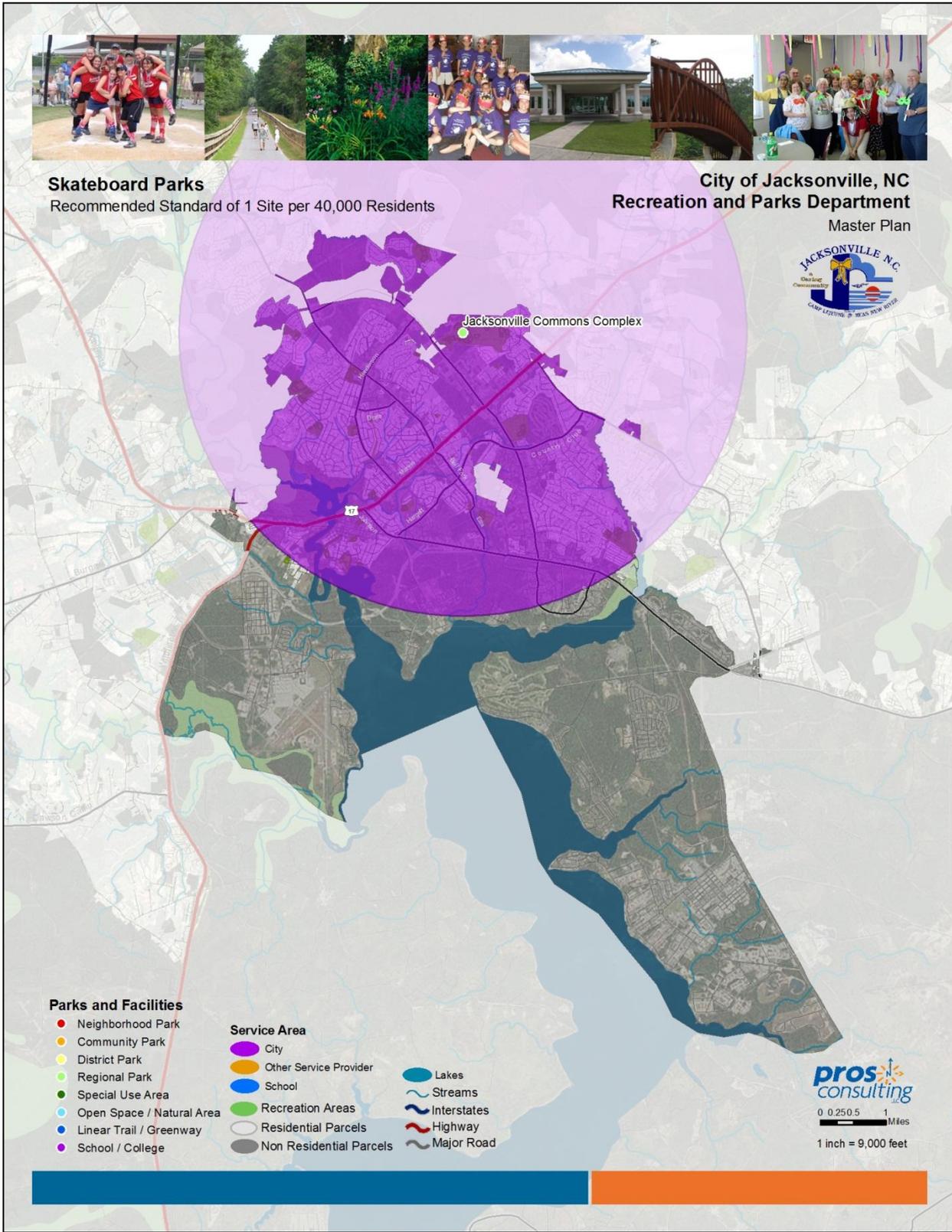


Figure 67 - Skateboard Parks

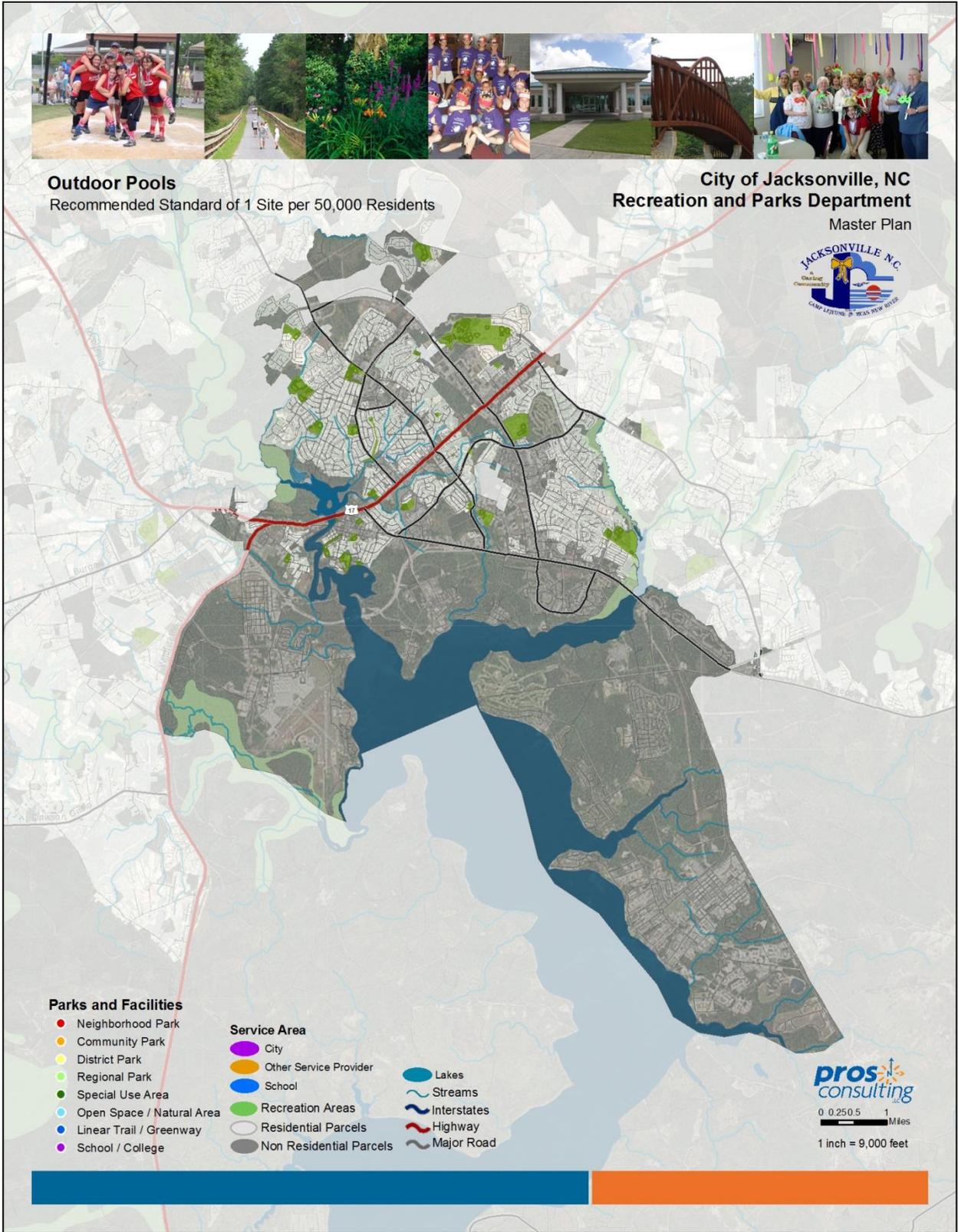


Figure 68 - Outdoor Pools

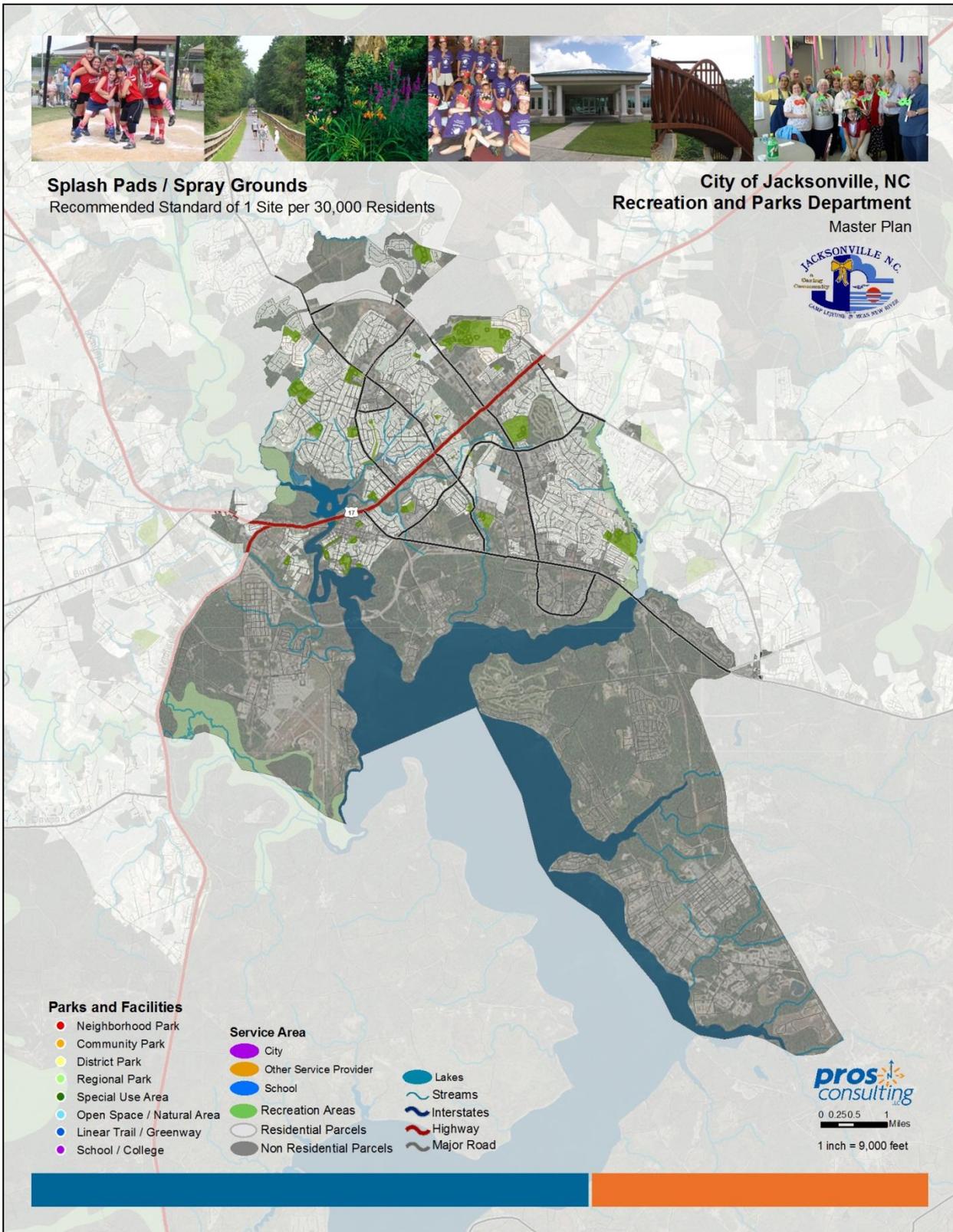


Figure 69 - Splash Pads / Spray Grounds

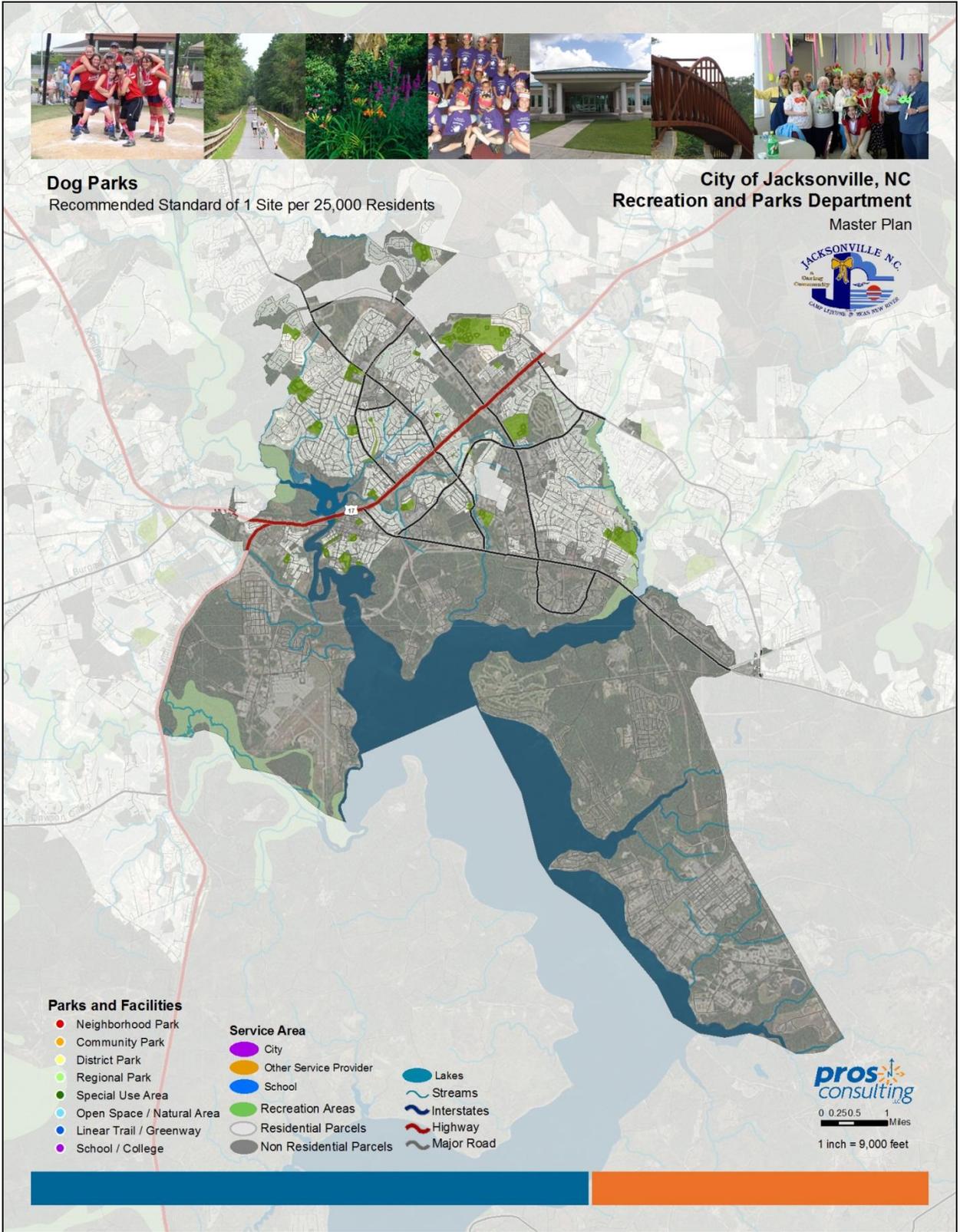


Figure 70 - Dog Parks

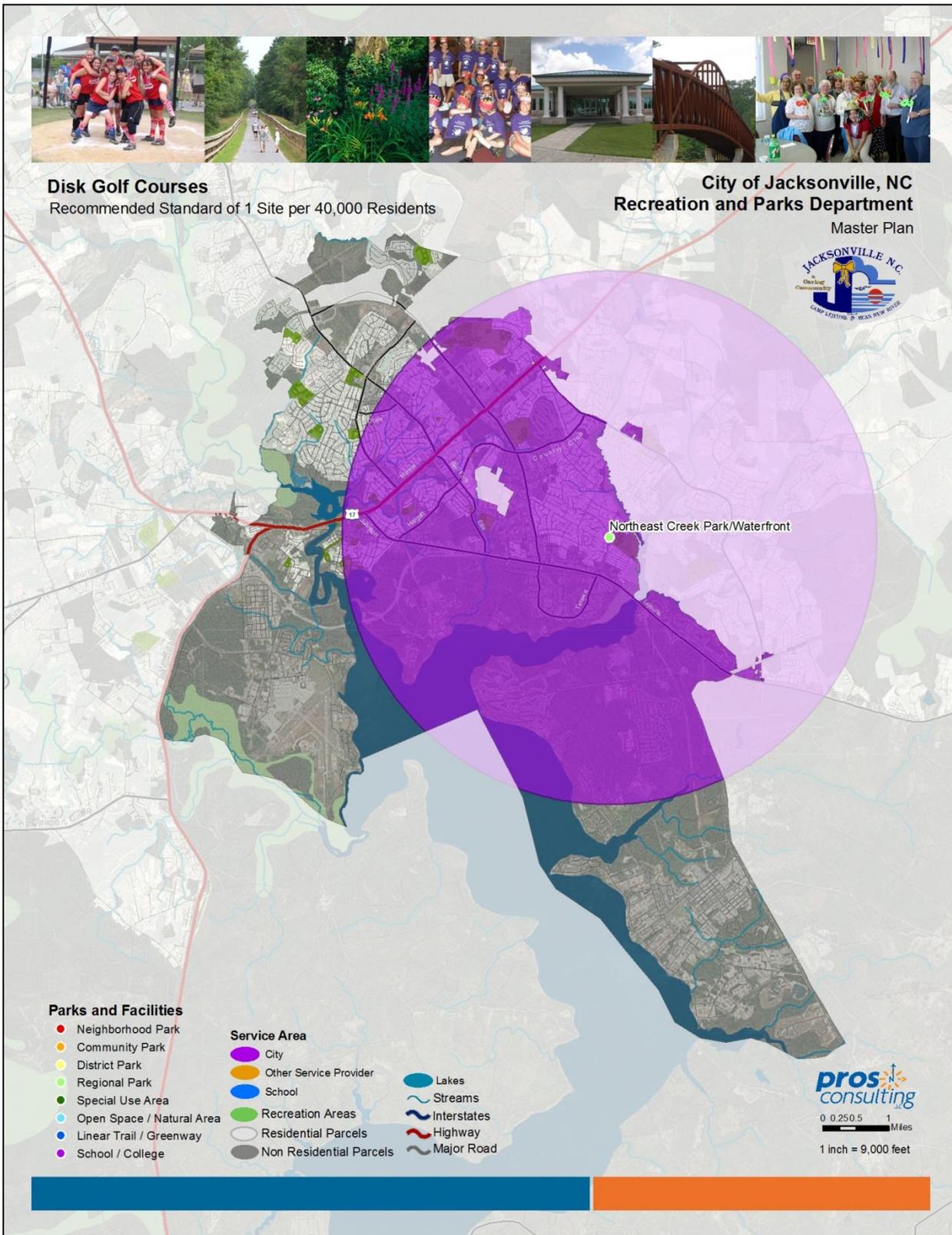


Figure 71 - Disc Golf Courses



**Nature Centers**  
Recommended Standard of 1 Site per 100,000 Residents

**City of Jacksonville, NC  
Recreation and Parks Department  
Master Plan**

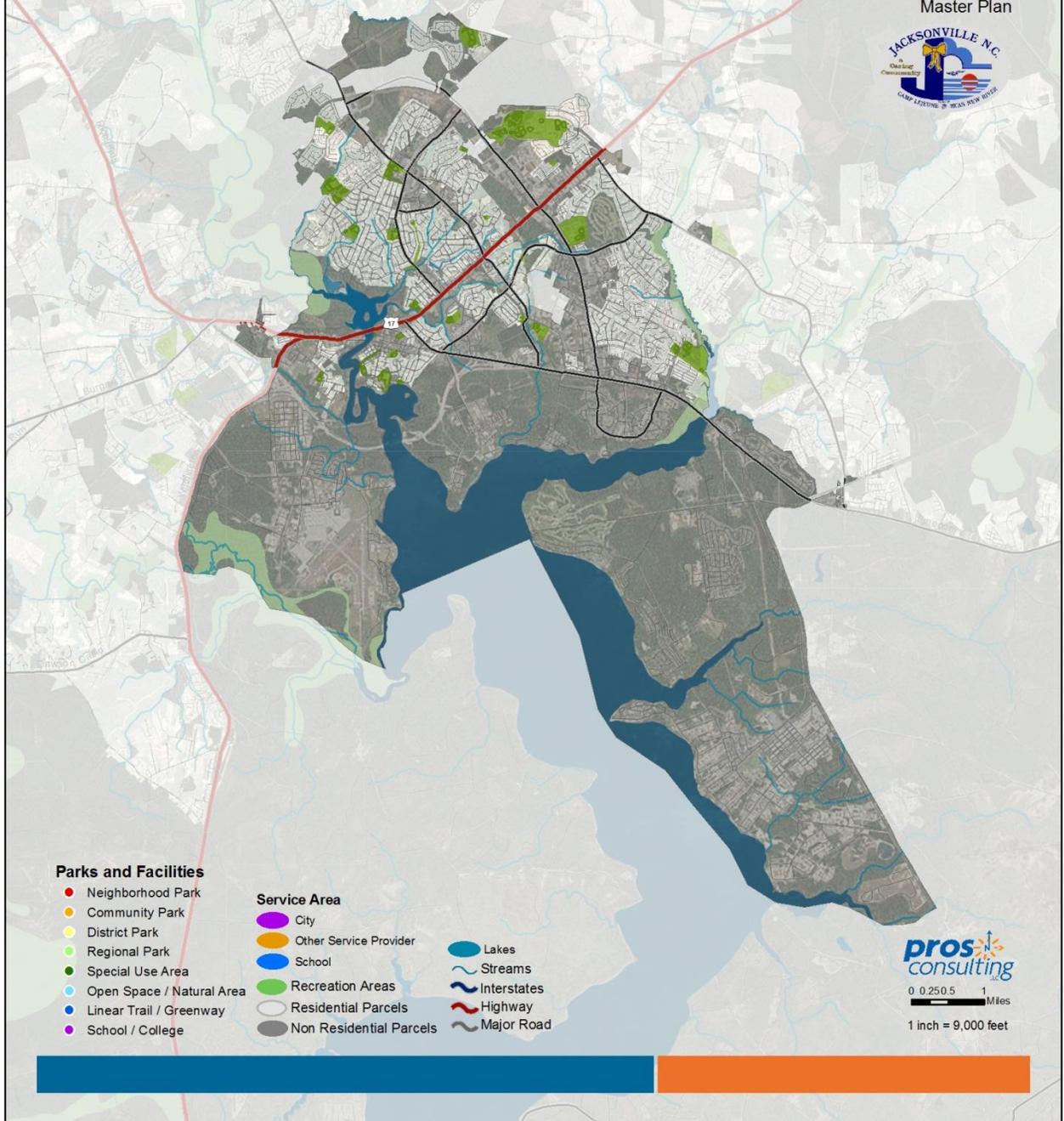


Figure 72 - Nature Centers

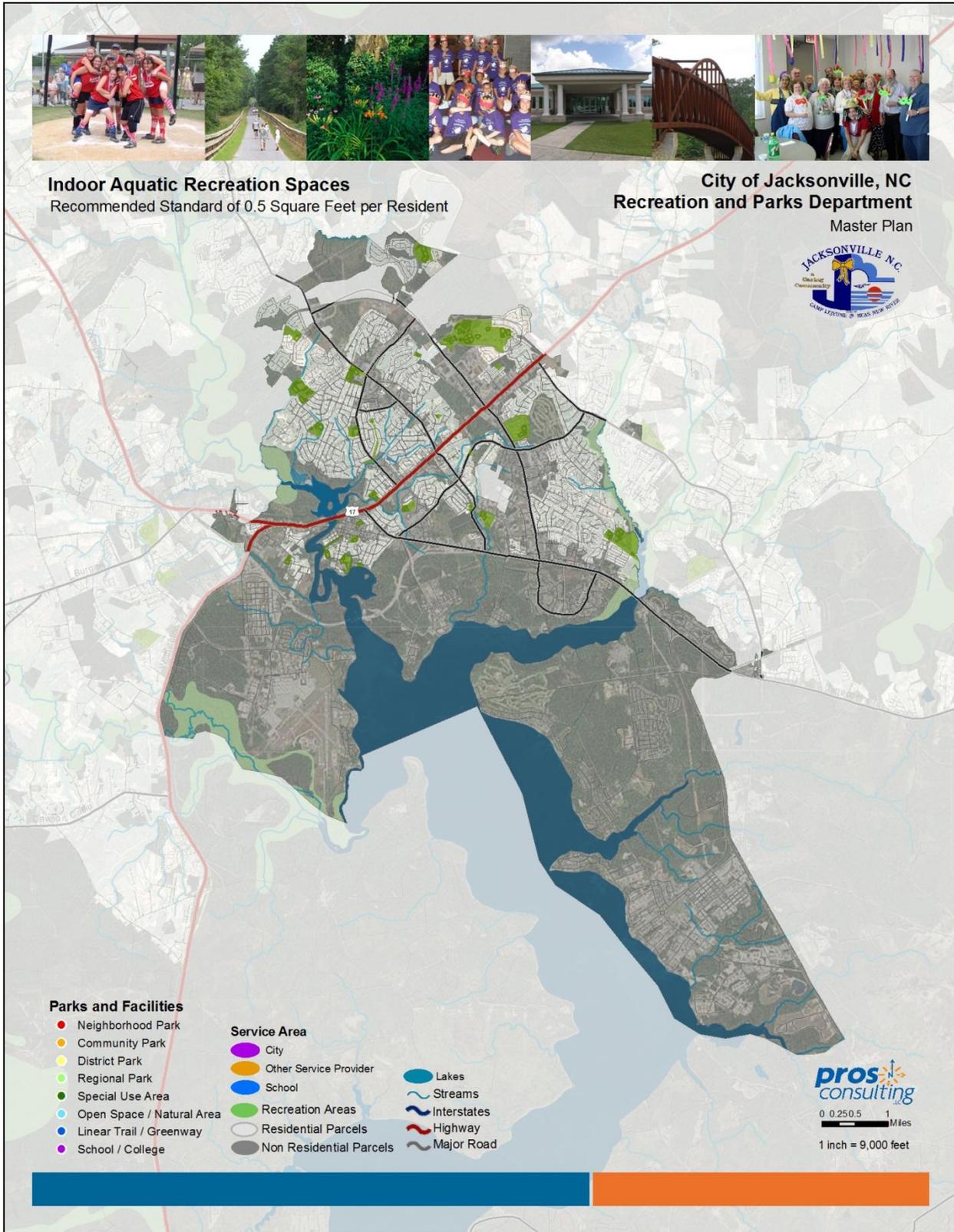


Figure 73 - Indoor Aquatic Recreation Space

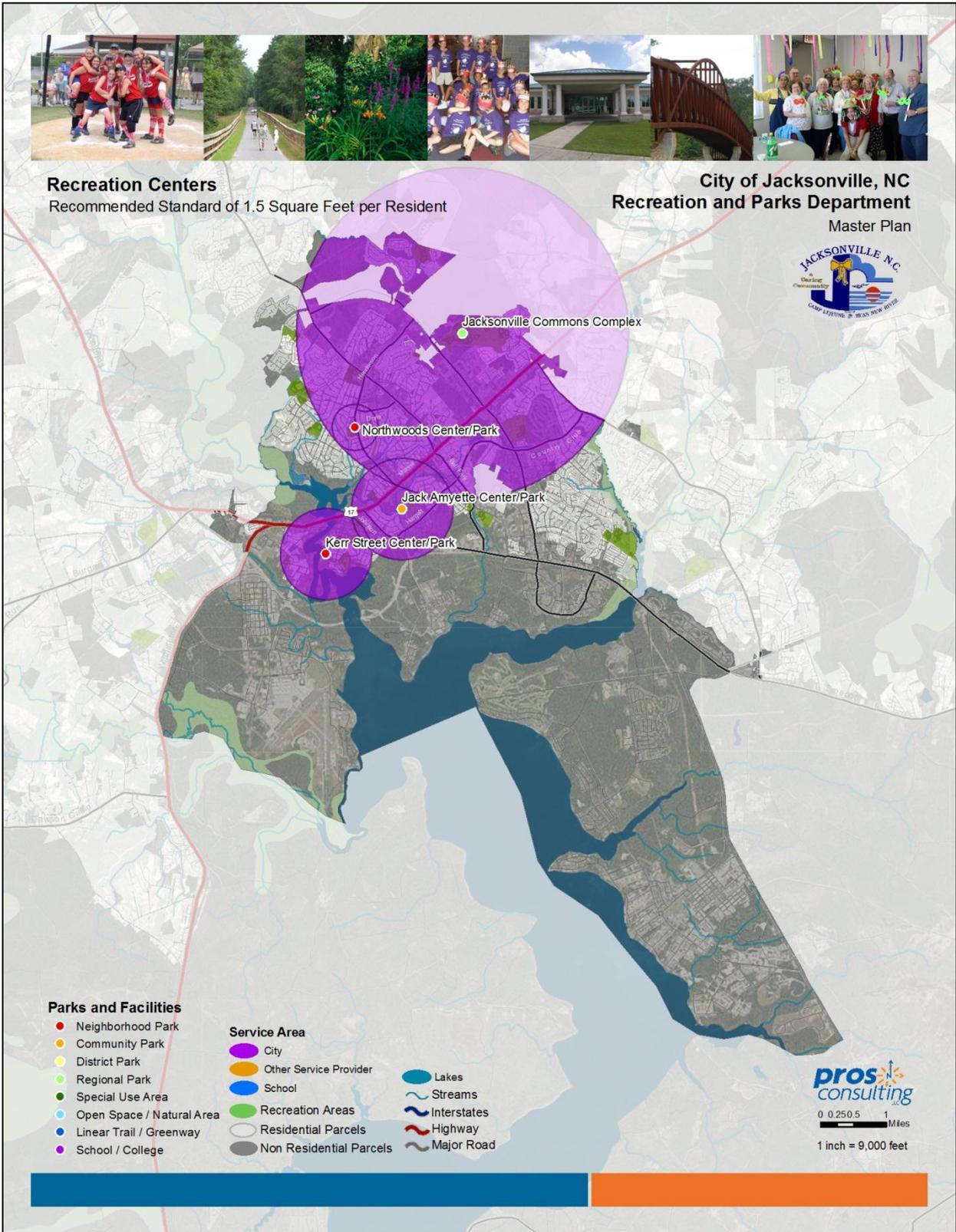


Figure 74 - Recreation Centers

## CHAPTER EIGHT - FACILITY / AMENITY AND PROGRAM PRIORITY RANKINGS

The purpose of the Facility and Program Priority Rankings is to provide a prioritized list of facility/amenity needs and recreation program needs for the residents served by the Department.

These rankings evaluate both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data includes the statistically valid Community Survey, which asked residents of Jacksonville and Onslow County to list unmet needs and rank their importance. Qualitative data includes resident feedback obtained in Focus Group meetings, Key Leader Interviews, and Public Forums.

*Note: Since the City of Jacksonville serves a large audience that is drawn from the County and seeks to develop a regional partnership strategy, it was deemed beneficial to consider the survey input from Onslow County in the rankings so as to obtain a holistic picture.*

The information in the Facility and Program Needs Assessment will be supplemented with the recommended Level of Service Standards to develop the strategic recommendations to identify the facilities/amenities and programs of highest priority for the community.

A weighted scoring system was used to determine the priorities for Recreation and Park facilities/amenities and recreation programs. For instance as noted below, a weighted value of 3 for the Unmet Desires means that out of a total of 100%, a value of 30% would be attributed to unmet desires or support identified in the survey in regard to the need or desire of this criteria to the ranking system. This scoring system considers the following:

- Community Survey
  - Unmet desires for facilities and recreation programs – This is used as a factor from the total number of households mentioning whether they have a need for a facility / program and the extent to which their desires for facilities and recreation programs has been met. Survey participants were asked to identify their desire for or support of 28 different facilities / amenities and 24 recreation programs. Weighted value of 3.
  - Importance ranking for facilities and recreation programs – This is used as a factor from the importance allocated to a facility or program by the community. Each respondent was asked to identify the top four most important facilities and recreation programs. Weighted value of 3.
- Consultant Evaluation
  - Factor derived from the consultant’s evaluation of program and facility priority based on survey results, demographics, trends and overall community input. Weighted value of 4.

These weighted scores were then summed to provide an overall score and priority ranking for the system as a whole. The results of the priority ranking were tabulated into three categories: High Priority (1), Medium Priority (2), and Low Priority (3).



The combined total of the weighted scores for Community Unmet Needs, Community Importance and Consultant Evaluation is the total score based on which the Facility/Amenity and Program Priority is determined. **Figure 75** and **Figure 76** depict the Facility/Amenity and Recreation Program Priority Rankings for the City.

Since this is a community-wide survey, it is obvious that facilities/amenities or program areas that benefit the widest demographic cross-sections of the community would tend to be ranked higher than those that serve a niche market. Thus, it is typical in such assessments nationwide that broad categories, such as walking trails or neighborhood parks tend to rank higher than individual facilities or programs.

**Figure 75** shows that walking and biking trails, outdoor swimming pool/water parks, and indoor fitness and exercise facilities were the top three facilities/amenities.

<b>Jacksonville</b>	
<b>Facility/Amenity Priority Rankings</b>	
	<b>Overall Ranking</b>
Walking and biking trails	1
Outdoor swimming pools / water parks	2
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	3
Nature center and trails	4
Indoor running / walking track	5
Indoor swimming pools / leisure pools	6
Small neighborhood parks	7
Green space and natural areas	8
Off-leash areas	9
Amphitheater	10
Playground equipment	11
Large community parks	12
Youth Soccer Fields	13
Camping facilities	14
Arts Center	15
Riverside picnic areas	16
Teen / youth center	17
Multi-purpose fields	18
Senior center	19
Indoor basketball / volleyball courts	20
Public golf course	21
Youth Baseball and Softball Fields	22
Skateboarding park	23
Adult soccer fields	24
Outdoor tennis courts	25
Adult baseball and softball fields	26
Outdoor basketball courts	27
Disc golf	28

Figure 75 - Facility / Amenity Priority Rankings

Figure 76 shows that Special Events, Youth Learn to Swim Programs, and Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs were the top three program priorities in the community.

<b>Jacksonville Program Priority Rankings</b>	
	<b>Overall Ranking</b>
Special Events	1
Youth learn to swim programs	2
Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs	3
Water fitness programs	4
Adult Programs for Age 50+	5
Nature programs / environmental education	6
Outdoor adventure programs	7
Youth Sports Programs	8
Adult Art, Dance and Performing Arts	9
Youth Summer Camp Programs	10
Adult continuing education programs	11
Travel programs / trips	12
Preschool Programs	13
Programs for People with Disabilities	14
Before and After School Programs	15
Programs for Teens	16
Youth Fitness and Wellness Programs	17
Programs with your pets	18
Youth development programs	19
Youth Art, Dance and Performing Arts	20
Adult Sports Programs	21
Birthday parties	22
Golf Lessons and Leagues	23
Tennis Lessons and Leagues	24

Figure 76 - Program Priority Rankings



**CHAPTER NINE - COST ESTIMATES**

The tables in this chapter provide a summary of the estimated facility improvement costs. A detailed chart including assumptions will be provided to the Department staff in an excel worksheet.

It should be noted that this is an *order of magnitude cost estimate*, which is intended to give a broad idea of how much the improvements described in **Chapter 3** will cost. The City should develop site specific master plans in order to create more detailed estimates.

**9.1 RECOMMENDED ENHANCEMENTS TO EXISTING PARKS**

<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate</b>
Branchwood Park	\$187,400
Brook Valley Park	\$156,875
City Park	\$2,730,700
Georgetown Park	\$498,650
Jack Amyette Center and Park	\$4,083,500
Jacksonville Commons Complex	\$10,059,850
Northeast Creek Park	\$5,911,120
Northwoods Center and Park	\$579,000
Phillips Park and Waterfront	\$2,065,150
Richard Ray Park	\$60,000
Sherwood Forest Park	\$615,000
Sturgeon City Park	\$55,000
Wilson Bay Park	\$132,000
Woodlands Park	\$1,455,000
Wooten Park	\$1,112,750
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$29,701,995</b>

## 9.2 DEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING UNDEVELOPED PARKS

Park Name	Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate
Carolina Forest Park	\$644,000
Country Club Park	\$325,000
Foxhorn Village Park	\$283,000
Mill Creek Park	\$291,000
Williamsburg Park	\$5,824,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$7,367,000</b>

## 9.3 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKS

New Parks	Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate
Far North Neighborhood Park	\$561,000
Liberty Road Neighborhood Park	\$438,000
Pine Valley Neighborhood Park	\$501,000
White Oak Community Park	\$7,622,000
Warehouse Park Community Park	\$7,605,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$16,727,000</b>

**GRAND TOTAL: \$71,734,491 (includes contingency and design fees)**



## CHAPTER TEN - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### 10.1 VISION

The following vision presents how the City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department desires to be viewed in the future:

We create community by making Jacksonville the best place to live, work and play

### 10.2 MISSION

The following is the proposed mission for the City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department:

“The City of Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department will offer exceptional leisure opportunities that contribute to continuous improvements in individual health and wellness, a sense of community, environmental stewardship, and economic development.”

### 10.3 VISION FOR FINANCING

“Our Vision for Financing the Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department is to maximize every available financial resource to create and meet the expectations of residents of the community for recreation and park services.”

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#### 10.3.1 GOAL

Achieve a cost recovery level (including direct and indirect costs) of 25% by 2015 and 40% by 2020.

#### STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

- Develop a culture and approach towards managing parks, recreation facilities and services in a sustainable manner through effective policy development and pricing strategies
  - Seek City Council approval of a pricing policy to work towards achieving the established cost recovery goals
  - Establish specific cost recovery rates for each core program area and facility managed by the Department
  - Communicate pricing changes to users based on the level of benefit and exclusivity received
  - Update pricing of services and facilities on a yearly basis
  - Develop a parks foundation to raise matching monies for grants and needed recreation facilities in the City
  - Hire a contract grants coordinator to obtain grants to help build the recreation and parks system in underserved areas of the City
  - Conduct on-going training on cost of service, return on investment and fundamentals of effective price setting and communication
- Focus on a regional approach to partnerships

- Develop partnership policies for public/public partnerships, public/not-for-profit partnerships and public/private partnerships to support and leverage Department resources
- Initiate a regional partnership summit with the County, Military Growth Task Force, Onslow County Public Schools, Coastal Carolina Community College and other agencies to discuss potential opportunities
- Consider public/public partnerships for a new or expanded aquatic facility and indoor recreation space
- Leverage developer impact fees to seek park land acquisition for neighborhood and community parks
- Develop an effective sponsorship policy to address potential sponsorship opportunities
- Develop a structure to help support on-going maintenance needs of existing Recreation and Park facilities in the system
  - Develop a user impact fee to support operations and maintenance costs
  - Develop a recreation service fee for groups using recreation and park facilities for private gain
  - Create a park maintenance endowment
- Develop an earned income policy to seek new funding sources for the Department to access
  - Seek City Manager and City Council approval of an earned income policy to leverage new revenue sources to help develop and maintain parks, recreation facilities and programs
  - Develop a financial plan for the Department using new revenue sources
  - Develop new dedicated funding sources for land acquisition, facility development and operations

## 10.4 VISION FOR OPERATIONS

“Our Vision for Operations is to develop a strong functional Department of staff, systems, policies, technology and maintenance components that incorporate effective cultural and business practices to achieve maximum efficiency and success to carry the Department forward in the most productive manner.”

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### 10.4.1 GOAL

Develop an outcome based Department that focuses on key performance indicators such as efficiency, revenue production, capacity management, and standards of care in the delivery of parks and recreation services, facilities and programs.



## STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

- Determine core and non-core services based on a set criteria that determines “core essential, important and discretionary services” and how to manage each type of service to its highest level of capacity and efficiency
  - Develop a workshop with staff to determine core and non-core services
  - Determine how the Department will manage each type of service for the future and measure the impact on the Department finances
- Transition to a functional organizational structure that incorporates a wider span of control for the Department
  - Develop a new functional organizational chart that increases the span of control for key administrators in the system and determines the areas of growth as the Department expands to meet the needs of the community
  - ‘Right staff’ the organization based on putting people in the appropriate job for the desired outcome based on the right cost for the right benefit
  - Update job descriptions for current and future positions and solicit employee feedback
  - Evaluate the opportunity to introduce specialized staffing positions but continue to focus on cross training opportunities simultaneously
- Develop a yearly work plan for the Department to achieve to support the recommendations in the Master Plan
  - Develop individual and division work plans with timelines that are tied to meeting the goals and recommendations in the Master Plan on a monthly and yearly basis
  - Develop measurable outcomes associated with each work plan to demonstrate how effective the implementation efforts have been on meeting community needs outlined in the Master Plan
  - Document and track changes so as to institutionalize the change management process Department-wide
- Ensure concurrency and relevance of policy and process documents to maximize efficiencies
  - Set up a committee to review policies and a committee to review procedures
  - Develop a flow chart for each process to eliminate any unnecessary processes
  - Teach and train staff how to work within a policy to manage the system forward
  - Perform a policy review and identify policies that need updating, need developing and provide an annual policy update to the Department

- Focus on moving the Department from a social management model to a financial and green sustainability management model
  - Develop a performance measure system to determine results and share outcomes with City management and City Council
  - Utilize the sustainability audit provided in the Master Plan to expand and track the sustainable initiatives conducted by the Department
  - Track and communicate the cost benefit of the sustainable initiatives
- Expand the use of technology to derive data and aid in decision-making
  - Develop a technology plan for the Department and a replacement schedule for software and hardware
  - Teach and train staff on how to effectively work with technology to maximize their efficiency
  - Subscribe to sources such as American Sports Data, Outdoor Recreation Trends Report, etc. to ensure staff is aware and proactively programs to current industry trends
- Emphasis on customer feedback as one of the key drivers of program development and enhancement
  - Develop program and process standards such as registration standards, form relevance, and an inspection program
  - Develop lost customer surveys to determine why participants leave a program
  - Continue on-line surveys to determine ways to develop programs to what people want and desire
  - Add incentives such as early bird registration or discounted fees to ensure people provide feedback
  - Track and communicate feedback results to staff and external customers on an on-going basis; develop trend analysis and annual program audit to update dwindling programs
- Develop a maintenance management plan for all parks and recreation facilities
  - Develop maintenance standards based on a set task, frequency, right person to do the work and the right equipment to perform the work
  - Track the cost of maintenance on a unit cost basis such as the cost per mile of trail to maintain or the cost of an acre
  - Develop an effective maintenance work order system to manage assets
  - Develop an asset management plan for the Department to manage the asset needs and the capital costs needed to keep the Department parks and facilities well positioned in the future



- Develop a cost benefit capital improvement process to determine priorities in capital improvements

## 10.5 VISION FOR RECREATION PROGRAM SERVICES

“Our vision is to develop a wide variety of multi-generational sustainable core programs that provide current and future residents with memorable experiences and lifetime skills that they will cherish in the years ahead.”

---

### 10.5.1 GOAL

To increase program participation to 30% by 2015 and 35% by 2020.

### STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

- Focus on need based program development starting with core program areas
  - Develop or enhance core programs in youth and adult fitness and wellness, special events, volunteerism, trips, outdoor adventure, nature and environmental education, youth and adult sports, active adult and teen programming, cultural programming
  - Using survey data and findings from the plan, document priorities for core programs
  - Develop a pricing policy for core programs to support operational costs and a cost recovery rate
  - Develop at least one new core program each year over the next five years so as to build a robust program base which will support future recreation facility development
- Focus on a regional strategy for recreation program planning
  - Using information and recommendations from the Master Plan, undertake a more in-depth GAP analysis to determine program needs in the region and build a regional recreation program plan
  - Track age segments served and add new programs where applicable
  - Develop key special events around competition, food, art, entertainment, and culture
- Ensure standardization in program delivery to limit service variation and strengthen brand building
  - Develop program standards and performance measures for all programs provided
  - Teach and train all staff on program standards
  - Ensure appropriate pricing consistency for the benefits received
  - Ensure consistent signage, use of logos, color schemes and verbiage in all Department communications in-print and on-line

- Increase awareness and participation rates of program offerings among Jacksonville residents and beyond
  - Identify primary and secondary target markets and conduct focus groups to identify specific program needs and reasons for lack of participation in some core program areas
  - Conduct lost customer surveys from the database of past participants to identify reasons for dropping-out and solutions to address the reasons
  - Geo-code (map participants by zip code) to identify where program participants come from to ensure greater targeted marketing in those areas
  - As a part of the registration process, inquire about the source of information that drove the participation behavior and thus track marketing return on investment
- Develop volunteerism as a core program
  - Create a branded volunteer program with reward systems similar to an airline or a hotel rewards program – volunteers can accumulate points for hours volunteered which can be redeemed for Department offerings
  - Develop volunteer policy and training manual outlining information for volunteer recruitment, retention and appreciation
  - Create a volunteer database to maximize cross-functional volunteer use
  - Create volunteer leaders to maximize word-of-mouth publicity and advocacy for the Department’s offerings
  - Develop volunteer job descriptions
  - Partner with Camp Lejeune volunteer program

## 10.6 VISION FOR PARKS AND FACILITIES

“Our vision is to develop a balanced and equitable system of parks, facilities and open space offerings to serve the diverse community in Jacksonville.”

---

### 10.6.1 GOAL

To meet the levels of service standard recommendations and use these spaces to create a sense of place and a regional draw for the community.

### STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

- Provide appropriate acreage levels of various park types
  - Provide adequate acreage of park land to meet the population’s needs
  - Provide at least 1 acre of neighborhood park land for every 1,000 residents
  - Provide at least 2 acres of community park land for every 1,000 residents
  - Provide at least 4 acres of regional park land for every 1,000 residents
  - Provide at least 0.75 acres of open space / natural areas for every 1,000 residents



- Provide adequate numbers of recreation facilities to meet the population's needs
  - Provide 1 playground structure for every 3,000 residents
  - Provide 1 outdoor basketball court for every 7,000 residents
  - Provide 1 outdoor tennis court for every 4,000 residents (currently, the City meets the LOS for tennis courts from a population standpoint, however there are inequities in access which necessitate the additions/modifications of these facilities that are proposed in Chapter 3).
  - Provide 1 small, mounded baseball/softball field for every 10,000 residents
  - Provide 1 large, mounded baseball/softball field for every 20,000 residents
  - Provide 1 small, non-mounded baseball/softball field for every 15,000 residents
  - Provide 1 large, non-mounded baseball/softball field for every 20,000 residents
  - Provide 0.45 miles of trail (paved or unpaved) for every 1,000 residents
  - Provide 1 soccer/football/multi-purpose field for every 4,000 residents
  - Provide 1 large picnic shelter for every 10,000 residents
  - Provide 1 medium picnic shelter for every 10,000 residents
  - Provide 1 small picnic shelter for every 7,500 residents
  - Provide 1 skateboard park for every 40,000 residents
  - Provide 1 outdoor pool per every 40,000 residents
  - Provide 1 splash pad/spray ground for every 30,000 residents
  - Provide 1 dog park for every 25,000 residents
  - Provide 1 disk golf course for every 40,000 residents
  - Provide 1 nature center for every 100,000 residents
  - Provide ½ square foot of indoor aquatic recreation space per person
  - Provide 1.5 square feet of recreation center space per person
- Provide equitable access to key recreation and park facilities for all residents
  - Provide green spaces, paved trails, and playgrounds within a half mile trip of every resident
  - Provide picnic areas and neighborhood parks within a one mile trip of every resident
  - Provide practice fields and basketball courts within a two mile trip of every resident
  - Provide community parks, tennis courts, water features, picnic shelters, and restrooms within a three mile trip of every resident

- Provide regional parks, recreation centers, skate parks, dog parks, boat ramps, game fields, indoor gymnasiums, swimming pools, canoe/kayak launches, amphitheaters, art centers and fishing piers within a five mile trip of every resident
- Ensure that all parks can be safely accessed by foot or bicycle through a network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Support economic development through providing high quality recreation and park facilities that attract new residents and encourage those stationed at Camp Lejeune to remain in the area
  - Develop a signature urban park downtown that connects people to the New River
  - Provide multiple types of flexible spaces for community gatherings and events
  - Use park spaces as catalysts for redevelopment of neighborhoods and corridors
- Use parks and open spaces as a means to express community character and sense of place
  - Use parks as opportunities to protect natural and cultural resources
  - When developing and renovating parks, take advantage of the opportunity to enhance the brand of Jacksonville through signage and public art
  - Use native plants, where feasible
- Celebrate Jacksonville’s natural beauty by creating opportunities for nature-based recreation
  - Provide additional points of visual and physical access to the New River
  - Where feasible, protect stream corridors and provide access via unpaved paths
  - Maintain at least 30% of parks space as open or natural space

## 10.7 VISION FOR MARKETING AND BRANDING

“Our vision is to create a recognized brand and an effective marketing campaign that focuses on maximum outreach to the diverse audience and helps drive sales.”

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### 10.7.1 GOAL

To increase program participation to 30% by 2015 and 35% by 2020 and to help increase cost recovery to 40% system-wide by 2020.

### STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

- Develop a marketing plan, brand, and communication strategy for the Department
  - Continue to expand online registration system for people to access services



- Develop a promotional plan to let residents know what programs are available and build on the existing program guide
- Incorporate all promotional efforts in using the best technology available to promote the services available including a more effective Website, use of social networks, radio, and on-line links to other agencies
- Hire or contract with someone to manage the marketing and promotional requirements
- Develop an in-house marketing, sales, customer service and diversity training program
- Focus on inspirational marketing, not informational marketing by highlighting the emotional connection and benefits of participation
- Provide front desk staff training on the importance of their interactions with the customers
- Maximize on-line marketing and social networks as the most cost-effective mediums for customer outreach
- Identify time slots with maximum exposure for G-10 segments as opposed to late night slots with limited viewership
- Focus on developing a strong brand and positive brand equity for the Department
  - As a part of the marketing plan development, conduct a branding workshop to identify what the department wants to stand for and what values it wishes its brand to communicate
  - Create a 'brand book' as a part of a continuing education process of existing employees and an orientation program for new staff – full-time, part-time, seasonal and volunteers
  - As mentioned earlier, ensure consistency in service delivery and in visual appeal from a design and signage standpoint for all parks, facilities and trails
  - Incorporate Department brand information within the instructor support kits as well as volunteer manuals

## CHAPTER ELEVEN - CONCLUSION

The City of Jacksonville has been fortunate to have a growing community, committed leadership and staff and tremendous potential to leverage natural resources. This planning initiative will certainly help provide a shot in the arm for future growth and development.

While economic constraints may continue for the foreseeable future, it is encouraging to note that the community has indicated a need for additional facilities and programming and willingness to support it as well.

It will be important to focus on regional partnerships with Camp Lejeune and Onslow County in order to maximize efficiencies and develop a robust organizational culture to ensure the successful implementation of this Master Plan. Based on all the indicators seen so far, from the City and Department leadership, the staff and the community, there is every reason to believe that the Jacksonville Recreation and Parks Department can provide the impetus to create an exciting and vibrant community while also making the City of Jacksonville a desirable regional destination for the years to come.



**CHAPTER TWELVE APPENDIX**

**APPENDIX 1 - NOMENCLATURE**

Classifying parks into a typology can be a challenge, as parks typically serve multiple functions in a community. Also, various agencies use varying naming conventions though the park spaces may be designed and operated for similar types of uses.

For administrative purposes, the PROS team recommends using the following park classifications to ensure consistency system-wide. In alignment with nomenclature used for the facility/amenity service levels in Chapter 6, the following general nomenclature is suggested:

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Primary Function</b>	<b>Size (acres)</b>	<b>Typical Facilities</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Neighborhood Park	Close-to-home basic recreation	Less than 10 acres	Multi-purpose green space, playgrounds, picnic areas	Branchwood Park, Brook Valley Park, Georgetown Park, Market Street Park, Northwoods Park, Sherwood Forest Park, Wilson Bay Park, Wooten Park
Community Park	Close-to-home active and passive recreation opportunities	10 acres – 30 acres	Multi-purpose green space, playgrounds, picnic areas, basketball courts, tennis courts, practice fields, game fields, fishing piers, recreation centers, trails	Jack Amyette Center and Park, Phillips Park, Richard Ray Park, Sturgeon City Park
Regional Park	Recreation hub with specialized facilities	Over 30 acres	Any	Jacksonville Commons Complex, Northeast Creek Park

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Primary Function</b>	<b>Size (acres)</b>	<b>Typical Facilities</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Special Use Areas	Areas providing unique, often unduplicated uses	Any	Waterfront access sites, amphitheater, golf courses, shooting ranges	New River Waterfront Park
Open Space / Natural Areas	Passive, green spaces often used for conservation purposes	Any	Limited active recreation elements, some trails	Mill Creek, Henderson Green
District Park	Current classification nomenclature used by Onslow County.	Any	A combination of elements included within community and regional park	Onslow Pines Park



## APPENDIX 2 - ACREAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

### SUMMARY OF ACREAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

PARK TYPE	CURRENT ACREAGE	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR 2014	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR LOS 100K	LOCATIONS
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	34 acres	+49 acres	<i>+17.5 acres* (locations for LOS 100k TBD by development)</i>	<p><b>Expansion of existing parks:</b> Branchwood Park (4 acres); Georgetown Park (5 acres); Sherwood Forest Park (2 acre); Wooten Park (4 acres) Brook Valley Park (2 acres)</p> <p><b>Development of existing sites:</b> Mill Creek (3.5 acres); Foxhorn Village (4.7 acres)</p> <p><b>New neighborhood parks:</b> Far North Park (7.5 acres); Pine Valley Park (5.5 acres); Liberty Park (5.8 acres)</p>

FACILITY TYPE	CURRENT NUMBER	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR 2014*	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR LOS 100K	LOCATIONS
<b>Community Parks</b>	76.82 acres	+88 acres	+ 35 acres	<p><b>Expansion of existing parks:</b> Jack Amyette Center and Park (8 acres); Phillips Waterfront Park (5 acres); Sturgeon City Park (5 acres)</p> <p><b>Expansion of existing undeveloped sites:</b> Carolina Forest (10 acres); Williamsburg (15 acres)</p> <p><b>New community parks:</b> White Oak Park (45 acres); Warehouse Park (35 acres)</p>
<b>Regional Parks</b>	185.19 acres	+145 acres	+70 acres	<p><b>Expansion of existing parks:</b> City Park (10 acres); Jacksonville Commons Complex (15 acres); Northeast Creek Park (20 acres) Woodlands Park (100 acres). <i>Woodlands Park (70)</i></p> <p><b>New Regional Parks:</b> none</p>
<b>Open Space/Natural Areas</b>	8.46 acres	+53 acres	+13 acres	<p><b>Expansion of existing parks:</b> Woodlands Park (62 acres); removal of Foxhorn Village and Mill Creek (8.2 acres)</p>



**SUMMARY OF FACILITY SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

FACILITY TYPE	CURRENT NUMBER	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR 2014*	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR LOS 100K	LOCATIONS
Playground area	25.67	2	5	<p><b>Development of existing sites:</b> Mill Creek (1); Foxhorn Village (1);</p> <p><b>Future Parks:</b> Country Club Park (1); Far North Park (1); Pine Valley Park (1); Liberty Park (1); Williamsburg Park (1)</p>
Basketball court, outdoor	12.67	0	2	<p><b>Existing parks:</b> <u>removal</u> of existing courts at Phillips Park (-1); Northeast Creek Park (1);</p> <p><b>Development of existing sites:</b> Williamsburg Park (1) Woodlands Park (1)</p>
Tennis court, outdoor	20.67	0	6	<p><b>Existing parks:</b> <u>removal</u> of courts at Brook Valley (-4); Jacksonville Commons Complex (4); Northeast Creek Park (2);</p> <p><b>Development of existing sites:</b> Williamsburg Park (1) Woodlands Park (1)</p> <p><b>Future Parks:</b> White Oak Park (2)</p>

FACILITY TYPE	CURRENT NUMBER	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR 2014*	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR LOS 100K	LOCATIONS
Diamond field; mounded – small	5.334	3	2	<p><b>Existing parks:</b> transition facilities at Jack Amyette Center and Park (1) and Phillips Waterfront Park (1) into mounded fields</p> <p><b>Future parks:</b> White Oak Park (2); Warehouse Park (2)</p>
Diamond field; mounded – large	4.669	0	1	<p><b>Existing parks:</b> transition large non-mounded field at Jacksonville Commons (1) into a mounded field</p> <p><b>Future parks:</b> White Oak Park (1); Warehouse Park (2)</p>
Diamond field; non-mounded – small	6.336	0	0	<p><b>Existing parks:</b> <u>removal</u> of existing field at Kerr Street (-1); Northeast Creek (1)</p> <p><b>Development of existing sites:</b> Northwoods Center and Park (1)</p>
Diamond field; non-mounded – large	8.667	0	0	<p><b>Existing parks:</b> transition the facilities at Jacksonville Commons (-1) and the field at Phillips Waterfront into a small mounded field (-1)</p>



FACILITY TYPE	CURRENT NUMBER	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR 2014*	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR LOS 100K	LOCATIONS
Trails - Hard and soft surface (miles)	16.2	21	7.9	<p><b>Trails from City's Bike Master Plan:</b> 9.5 miles of prioritized multi-purpose trails</p> <p><b>Additional proposed paths:</b> <i>Marine-to-NE Creek (3.9 mi)</i></p> <p><b>Existing parks:</b>            City Park (3 mi.);            Georgetown Park (0.5) mi;            Branchwood Park (0.5 mi); Northeast Creek Park (1 mi);            Northwoods Center (1 mi); Phillips Park and Waterfront (1.5 mi);            Woodlands Park (4 mi); Woodlands Park (4 miles)</p> <p><b>Development of existing sites:</b>            Carolina Forest Park (0.5 mi); Williamsburg Park (1.5 mi)</p> <p><b>Future parks:</b> White Oak (1 mi)</p>

FACILITY TYPE	CURRENT NUMBER	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR 2014*	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR LOS 100K	LOCATIONS
Soccer/football/multi-purpose fields	13.67	7	4	<p><b>Existing parks:</b> Georgetown Park (1); Jack Amyette Center (1); Jacksonville Commons (1) Branchwood Park (1); Northeast Creek Park (1) <i>Jacksonville Commons (1); Carolina Forest (1)</i></p> <p><b>New parks:</b> White Oak Park (2); Warehouse Park (2)</p>
Shelter; large	8	1	2	<p><b>Existing Parks:</b> Woodlands Park (1);</p> <p><b>Development of existing sites:</b> <b>Williamsburg Park (1)</b> <b>Woodlands Park (1)</b></p> <p><b>Future Parks:</b> <i>Carolina Forest Park (1); White Oak Park (1)</i></p>
Shelter; medium	4	5	2	<p><b>Existing parks:</b> Northeast Creek Park (1); Sturgeon City Park (1); City Park (1); Woodlands Park (1)</p> <p><b>Development of existing sites:</b> Country Club Park (1), Williamsburg Park (1)</p> <p><b>Future parks:</b> <i>White Oak Park (1)</i></p>



FACILITY TYPE	CURRENT NUMBER	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR 2014*	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR LOS 100K	LOCATIONS
Shelter; small	5	6	3	<p><b>Existing parks:</b> Jack Amyette Center and Park (1); Jacksonville Commons Complex (1) <i>Woodlands Park (2); Branchwood Park (1)</i></p> <p><b>Development of existing sites:</b> Mills Creek (1), Foxhorn Village (1) Williamsburg Park (2)</p> <p><b>Future parks:</b> Pine Valley Park (1), Liberty Road Park (1)</p>
Skateboard park	1	1	1	<p><b>Existing Parks:</b> Georgetown Park (1)</p> <p><b>Future Parks:</b> <i>White Oak Park (1)</i></p>
Outdoor pool	0	1-2	0	<p><b>Existing Parks:</b> Jack Amyette Center and Park (1); Jacksonville Commons (1)</p>
Splash pad/spray ground	0	3	1	<p><b>Existing Parks:</b> City Park (1); Jacksonville Commons (1); Northeast Creek Park (1)</p> <p><b>Future Parks:</b> <i>Williamsburg Park (1) Jack Amyette Center (1)</i></p>
Dog parks	0	3	1	<p><b>Existing Parks:</b> City Park (1); Richard Ray Park (1); <i>Northeast Creek Park (1)</i></p> <p><b>Future Parks:</b> <i>White Oak Park (1)</i></p>

FACILITY TYPE	CURRENT NUMBER	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR 2014*	ADDITIONAL FACILITIES FOR LOS 100K	LOCATIONS
Disc golf course	1	1	1	<b>Existing Parks:</b> Woodlands Park (1) <b>Development of existing sites:</b> <i>Carolina Forest Park (1)</i>
Nature center	0	1	0	<b>Existing Parks:</b> Williamsburg Park (1)
Indoor aquatic recreation space (sq. ft.)	0	41,254	4,375	<b>Existing Parks:</b> Jacksonville Commons (45,000 sf.)
Recreation center (sq. ft.)	38,964	84,798	26,250	<b>Existing parks:</b> City Park (8,000 sf.); Jack Amyette Center and Park (9,000 sf.); <u>removal</u> of Kerr Street Center(-2,600 sf.); <u>removal</u> of Northwoods Center (-2,000, it may be beneficial to survey sites available for acquisition near the current facility to determine the opportunities for expansion or development of a new facility near the existing site); Northeast Creek Park (22,000 sf.) <b>Development of existing sites:</b> Williamsburg Park (25,000 sf.) <b>Future parks:</b> White Oak (25,000 sf.); Warehouse Park (26,000) sf.



## APPENDIX 3 - SUSTAINABILITY AUDIT

Green and sustainable practices are becoming increasingly vital to an organization's operations not just from an environmental standpoint but also from an economic standpoint. The Department currently does undertake many sustainable practices as mentioned in the Sustainability section in **Chapter 5**. The following are straight-forward self-audit practices that can be incorporated into various areas of daily operations.

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### ORGANIZATIONAL

- Does your agency have a board/council approved environmental policy or set of guidelines that helps it become more environmentally responsible?
- Does your agency apply for grants related to sustainability?
- Does your agency utilize green purchasing policies, using the EPA's Environmentally Preferred Products program or Greenseal.org?
- Does your agency seek vendors of environmentally friendly products?
- Does your agency have a recycling program for facilities, offices, and parks?
- If so, are recycling containers visible, well-marked and easy to locate?
- Do you require vendors to use recycled materials?
- Does your agency use electronic communication as much as possible as a way of conserving paper?
- Do you allow telecommuting and flexible work time to decrease staff time in commuting?
- Do you offer incentives to employees who bike to work or offer bus passes (if applicable) and/or discounts?
- Do you use variable workdays, such as a four-day workweek to reduce commuting?
- Do you participate in webinar training and in house training in order to decrease travel and related energy consumption?
- Do you encourage the use of video conferencing to conduct business with remote sites and vendors?
- Do you reinforce your commitment to sustainability through ongoing communication and briefing with staff?
- Do you offer old computers to schools, libraries, and charities?

## FACILITIES

- Do restrooms, locker rooms, bathrooms, etc. have water saving devices? (low flow faucets, toilets and/or motion activated faucets and have hand dryers as opposed to paper towels)
- Do you use motion activated lighting systems, compact fluorescent lights?
- Do you use any alternative energy systems to provide energy such as passive or active solar, geothermal, or wind energy?
- Does your agency conduct energy audits?
- Do you use energy efficiency as a specification when purchasing or replacing major appliances?
- Do facility HVAC systems include energy saving features?
- Does your agency use green cleaning products? (non-toxic and/or biodegradable)
- Do you use non-toxic carpet and paint in facilities?

## FLEET

- Do you perform regular preventative maintenance on motorized vehicles?
- Does your agency properly dispose of all vehicle fluids and engine parts?
- Do you properly dispose of hazardous materials?
- Do you purchase vehicles that use alternative fuel or hybrid/electric vehicles?
- Does your agency apply for grants that promote and provide the means for the use of clean energy? (bio-diesel, E85, LPG)
- Do you geographically locate maintenance areas in order to reduce travel time?

## PARK MAINTENANCE

- Does your agency promote the use of integrated pest management to reduce the use of pesticides?
- Does your agency have a maintenance and management plan for natural areas?
- Does your agency follow natural resource management best environmental practices in attempting to improve natural areas, control exotic species, and increase biodiversity?
- Does your agency follow resource management best practices as a way of optimizing resources, reducing environmental impact and lowering costs?
- Does your agency utilize Xeriscape techniques as a way to reduce water use?



- Does your agency try to reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides in parks by utilizing drought and disease resistant native plant species and eliminating mowing in some areas?
- Is landscaping around facilities designed to promote energy conservation through windbreaks, shading, and using drought tolerant plants?
- Does your agency use alternative and/or biological pest control practices in place of traditional chemical solutions?
- Does your agency use prairie or woodland restoration or bio-swales to reduce maintenance costs, control erosion, or promote wildlife habitats?
- Has your agency ever applied for Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Certification?

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#### PROGRAMS/PARK AMENITIES

- Is there an establishment of trails and connectivity (greenways) to encourage walking and biking?
- Does your agency offer programs related to sustainability and environmental stewardship?
- Does your agency offer a website or e-newsletter to provide information on various topics related to sustainability?
- Do you offer places to recycle Christmas trees as mulch for trails or tires to be recycled as mulch for playgrounds?

## APPENDIX 4 – RACE/ETHNICITY DATA

### RACE AND ETHNICITY DEFINITIONS

The minimum categories for data on race and ethnicity for Federal statistics, program administrative reporting, and civil rights compliance reporting are defined as below. The Census 2000 data on race are not directly comparable with data from the 1990 Census and earlier censuses; caution must be used when interpreting changes in the racial composition of the US population over time. The latest (Census 2000) definitions and nomenclature are used within this chapter of the Business Plan.

- American Indian – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment
- Asian – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam
- Black – This includes a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands
- White – This includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa
- Hispanic or Latino – This is an ethnic distinction, a subset of a race as defined by the Federal Government; this includes a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race

### PARTICIPATION TRENDS BY RACE/ETHNICITY

The white population as a whole participates in a wide range of activities, including both team and individual sports of a land and water based variety; however, the white populace has an affinity for outdoor non-traditional sports.

Ethnic minority groups in the United States are strongly regionalized and urbanized, with the exception of Native Americans, and these trends are projected to continue. Different ethnic groups have different needs when it comes to recreational activities. Ethnic minority groups, along with Generations X and Y, are coming in ever-greater contact with white middle-class baby-boomers with different recreational habits and preferences. This can be a sensitive subject since many baby-boomers are the last demographic to have graduated high school in segregated environments, and the generational gap magnifies numerous ideals and values differences which many baby-boomers are accustomed to. This trend is projected to increase as more baby-boomers begin to retire, and both the minority and youth populations continue to increase.

The black population has historically been an ethnic group that participates in active team sports, most notably football, basketball, and baseball. The African-American populace exhibits a strong sense of neighborhood and local community through large special events and gatherings with extended family and friends, including family reunions. Outdoor and



water based activities, such as, hiking, water skiing, rafting, and mountain biking, are not much of a factor in the participatory recreational activities.

Hispanic and Latino Americans have strong cultural and community traditions with an emphasis placed on the extended family, many times gathering in large recreational groups where multiple activities geared towards all age segments of the group may participate. Large group pavilions with picnicking amenities and multi-purpose fields are integral in the communal pastime shared by many Hispanics.

The Asian population is a very different and distinct ethnic group compared with the three main groups in the U.S. – Caucasian, African-American, and Hispanic. The Asian population has some similarities to the Hispanic population, but many seem to shy away from traditional team sports and outdoor and water based activities.

Utilizing the Ethnicity Study performed by American Sports Data, Inc., a national leader in sports and fitness trends, participation rates among recreational and sporting activities were analyzed and applied to all major race/ethnic groups in the City.

A participation index was also reviewed. An index is a gauge of likelihood that a specific ethnic group will participate in an activity as compared to the U.S. population as a whole. An index of 100 signifies that participation is on par with the general population; an index less than 100 means that the segment is less likely to participate, more than 100 signifies the group is more likely than the general public to participate.

The most popular activities for those classified as **white** in terms of total participation percentage, the percentage by which you can multiply the entire population by to arrive at activity participation of at least once in the past twelve months, are:

1. Recreational Swimming – 38.9% participation rate (38.9% of the population has participated at least once in the last year)
2. Recreational Walking – 37.0% participation rate
3. Recreational Bicycling – 20.6% participation rate
4. Bowling – 20.4% participation rate
5. Treadmill Exercise – 19.1% participation rate

High participation percentages in freshwater fishing (17.3% participation rate), hiking (17.2% participation rate), and tent camping (17.2% participation rate) demonstrate the high value that the Caucasian population places on outdoor activities. Sailing (Index of 124), kayaking (Index of 121), and golf (Index of 120) are three activities that the Caucasian population is more likely to participate in than the general public.

Analyzing the top five activities that the **black** populace participates in at the greatest rate results in:

6. Recreational Walking – 26.7% participation rate
7. Recreational Swimming – 20.2% participation rate
8. Basketball – 19.8% participation rate
9. Bowling – 17.5% participation rate

10. Running/Jogging – 14.3% participation rate

The African-American population, like the Hispanic population, is more than twice as likely to participate in boxing (Index of 208). Football (Index of 199) and basketball (Index of 160) are also among the higher participated in activities among the African-American populace.

The five most popular activities for those of **Hispanic/Latino** descent are:

11. Recreational Swimming – 33.2% participation rate
12. Recreational Walking – 31.2% participation rate
13. Recreational Bicycling – 19.7% participation rate
14. Bowling – 18.5% participation rate
15. Running/Jogging – 18.0% participation rate

In terms of participation index, the Hispanic populace is more than twice as likely as the general population to participate in boxing (Index of 264), very likely to participate in soccer (Index of 177), and more likely to participate in paintball (Index of 155) than any other ethnic group. For comparison reasons, although Hispanics are nearly twice as likely to participate in soccer as any other race, only 9.0% of the Hispanic population participated in the sport at least once in the last year.

The top five recreational activities for the **Asian** populace in regards to participation percentages are:

16. Recreational Walking – 33.3% participation rate
17. Recreational Swimming – 31.9% participation rate
18. Running/Jogging – 21.6% participation rate
19. Bowling – 20.5% participation rate
20. Treadmill Exercise – 20.3% participation rate

The Asian populace participates in multiple recreational activities at a greater rate than the general population, with lacrosse being the activity boasting the greatest index of 615. Squash (Index Of 414), mountain/rock climbing (Index of 262), yoga/tai chi (Index 229), martial arts (227), artificial wall climbing (224), badminton (222), and rowing machine exercise (206) each represent an activity that Asian's are more than twice as likely to participate in than the general public.