

# City of New Port Richey Parks Master Plan

## Interim Report:

- Chapter 1 - Evaluation of Existing Conditions
- Chapter 2 – Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment

NOTE: THIS IS AN INTERIM, DRAFT DOCUMENT OF CHAPTERS 1 AND 2 OF THE CITY OF NEW PORT RICHEY PARKS MASTER PLAN, FOR INTERNAL REVIEW. UPON ACCEPTANCE OF CHAPTERS 1 AND 2, WE WILL PROCEED WITH THE VISIONING AND IMPLEMENTATION PHASES OF THE PROJECT. ONCE THE CONTENT OF THE DRAFT MASTER PLAN HAS BEEN FINALIZED AND APPROVED, THE DOCUMENT WILL BE REFORMATTED INTO A COLOR, GRAPHIC REPORT.

**January 2017**

Barth Associates, LLC  
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Littlejohn | An S&ME Company

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CHAPTERS 1, 2)**

### **Introduction**

The City of New Port Richey is a small coastal city known for its rich history and natural character. As the “Gateway to Tropical Florida,” the City’s parks and recreation facilities plays a key role in the City’s quality of life and sense of place. Currently, the City has 14 parks and recreation sites, ranging from riverside parks to neighborhood pocket parks, to the 97-acre James E. Grey Preserve. The Parks and Recreation Department is highly regarded and has been the recipient of numerous awards and designations.

This high quality is reflected in residents’ overall satisfaction with their parks: according to the City’s 2012 Citizen Survey, respondents were very pleased with New Port Richey’s parks and recreation facilities and services. Therefore, the purpose of this Master Plan is to make a good system even better, focusing on the unmet needs of the community.

The City’s Request for Qualifications (RFQ) stated that the purpose of this Parks Master Plan is “to ensure that quality recreation and park facilities and services are available to the community into the future”, taking into account “the existing parks and amenities, available open space areas within the City limits, the impact and accessibility of parks and recreation facilities on the environment and the community, and community education and health”.

The Master Plan was completed in four phases over a six-month period, including an evaluation of the existing parks system; an assessment of community needs and priorities; the development of a long-range vision; and the development of the Master Plan document, including an implementation strategy/ action plan.

### **Needs Assessment Summary**

The purpose of the parks and recreation needs assessment is to identify the needs and priorities of New Port Richey residents and stakeholders. Needs Assessment techniques included an evaluation of the existing parks system; a level-of-service (LOS) analysis; a statistically-representative survey; an on-line survey; a public outreach meeting; and stakeholder/ focus group interviews.

The figure below illustrates the top priority action, facilities, and program needs identified from each of the different needs assessment techniques. There is a broad-based consensus that the top priority facilities include:

- Improvements to existing parks, including additional facilities, programs, amenities, and marketing;
- Additional walking, hiking, and biking trails;
- Additional off-leash dog parks;
- Additional small neighborhood parks; and
- Natural areas and nature parks

Top priority programs include:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs;
- Summer concerts; and

- Nature programs

**Summary Needs**

	Needs Assessment Techniques					
	Site Evaluations	LOS Analysis	Statistically Valid Survey	On-line Survey	Public Meeting	Stakeholder / Focus Group Interviews
<b>Actions</b>						
Improve Marketing and Outreach Efforts	X		X		X	X
Improve Existing Parks	X				X	X
Reduce Program Fees			X	X		X
<b>Facilities</b>						
Paved bike trails		X	X	X	X	X
Off-leash dog parks		X	X	X	X	X
Walking and hiking trails		X	X	X	X	
Small Neighborhood Parks		X	X	X		
Natural areas/ nature parks			X	X		X
<b>Programs</b>						
Adult fitness and wellness programs			X	X	X	
Nature programs			X	X	X	
Summer concerts			X	X		
Pet exercise programs			X		X	
50+ programs			X			

## CHAPTER 1: EVALUATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The purpose of this section is to summarize the context of the Parks Master Plan. Evaluation of Existing Conditions included a review of existing plans, demographics analysis, and parks and recreation facility inventory. Following are the findings from the evaluation.

### 1.1 Existing Plans and Context Review

The 2012 Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Redevelopment Plan and the elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan were reviewed for implications for the Parks Master Plan:

#### **2012 Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Redevelopment Plan**

The CRA Plan includes several concepts, policies, and /or recommendations relevant to the Parks Master Plan. These include:

- Policy FLU 1.2.6 encourages neighborhood plans to include open space for active and passive uses; reuse of the alley system for mobility enhancement; planting of regularly-spaced shade trees on key streets to encourage pedestrian activity year-round; and sidewalk connectivity within and external to the neighborhood, especially sidewalks which link residential areas to schools.
- Policy FLU 1.6.6 encourages the use of the river waterfront through enhanced public facilities.
- Policy TRA 2.1.2 promotes bicycle and pedestrian ways that provide connectivity between residential areas, to recreation areas, schools, shopping areas, transit terminals and the bicycle facilities of other jurisdictions.
- Policy ROS 1.5.6 continues to pursue state and federal funding to enhance the City's parks and recreational program. This is particularly important for the enhancement of the James E. Grey Preserve.
- Objective LIV 1.10 proposes to preserve, enhance and extend the pattern and character of the streets and alleyway system including the prevailing grid as a means to facilitate multi-modal mobility and reducing the future need for wider streets.

The CRA Plan also notes that there are issues and concerns common to most of the neighborhoods within the City that "would seem to lend themselves to City-wide solutions". Proposed CRA actions with potential implications for the Parks Master Plan include:

- Improve Community Communication
- Revise the Financial Approach to the Use of City Resources
- Re-institute the Neighborhood Planning Program
- Coordinate Festival Planning
- Practice Partnering
- Use the Cotee River as a Major Community Asset
- Improve the Economic Performance of US Highway 19:
- Design and Implement a City-Wide Wayfinding System
- New Port Richey as a Destination
- The Cotee Blueway

The CRA Plan also states that the character of the community should be emphasized through recreational opportunities:

“The CRA includes a system of approximately 160 acres of existing parks and open spaces that serve the current needs of residents and visitors alike. A healthy variety of recreational experiences is critical to serve the residential population. The Redevelopment Plan recommends strengthening connections between several neighborhood parks and open spaces to the riverfront by means of enhanced streetscapes, sidewalks, bike paths and multi-use trails that can be implemented over time as funding is available. The investment in the Recreation and Aquatic Center provides a significant enhancement to the immediate neighborhood and surrounding community. Partnership with North Bay Hospital is encouraged for projects including the development of a trail to the Recreation Center.

Access to the river is important for all residents, especially those that do not own waterfront property. There is public access to water resources in all of the City’s water-based parks. The City should coordinate with adjacent municipalities, county and appropriate agencies to ensure adequate sites for water-dependent uses and ensure access. Observation decks and other similar structures could be constructed at the terminus of key road rights-of-way as another means to guarantee access and enhanced scenic views.”

Finally, the Redevelopment Plan calls for a traffic circulation system, which mitigates congestion, enhances community character and provides for efficient parking resources and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The bicycle/pedestrian facilities are particularly important to provide equitable access to parks for all residents.

### **Comprehensive Plan**

Barth Associates reviewed the elements of the Comprehensive Plan including the Capital Improvements Element, Coastal Management Element, Conservation Element, Future Land Use Element, Housing Element, Infrastructure Element, Livable Cities Element, Public School Facilities Element, Intergovernmental Coordination Element, and Recreation and Open Space Element. Key implications include:

- The City’s 5-year Capital Improvements Program includes proposed improvements to Sims Park, the Recreation and Aquatics Center, the Pine Hill Baseball Field, James E. Grey Preserve, sidewalks and multi-use trails.
- A variety of funding sources are potentially available to implement the recommendations of the Parks Master Plan, including “Local Resources” such as the General Fund, Redevelopment Trust Fund (CRA), Impact Fees, Stormwater Utility Fees, Special Assessments, and Municipal Share of County Business Tax Receipts; “County Resources” (Local Option Taxes) such as the Tourist Development Tax, County Gas Tax (transportation), Pasco County Local Option Gas Tax (transportation), and Local Option Sales Taxes (Penny for Pasco); and “Alternative Financing Methods” such as General Obligation Bonds and Revenue Bonds. Other potential funding sources include “State Sources”, “Developer Agreements”, and “Grants and Loans” (Capital Improvements Element).

- The City's parks and conservation areas have the potential to help accomplish the City's objectives to protect and enhance the Pithlachascotee River, provide native habitat, protect existing natural areas, treat stormwater runoff, store flood waters, and improve energy efficiency system (Conservation Element)
- The City's parks, conservation areas, sidewalks, and trails have the potential to contribute to the livability and sustainability objectives including the creation of great public spaces; stabilizing neighborhoods; providing pedestrian/ bicycle access; and generating other economic, social, and/or environmental benefits outlined in the Livable City.
- The City should continue to seek partnerships with public schools, developers, Pasco County, and others to maximize resources in order to sustain/improve the quality of life for City residents (Public School Facilities Element, Intergovernmental Coordination Element).
- The City should continue to maintain or exceed the parks and recreation level-of-service (LOS) standards established in the Recreation and Open Space Element. It is important to note, however, that these standards are based in part on the 2000 Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which has been updated. The latest SCORP (2013) includes benchmark data rather than standards and encourages communities to develop their own LOS standards.

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## 1.2 Demographic Analysis

The most effective parks and recreation systems are those that are tailored to the needs of their residents, both present, and future. The following section analyzes demographic data for the City of New Port Richey and discusses how the findings may relate to City residents' parks and recreation needs. It is important to note that these findings are not recommendations, but rather preliminary observations that will be considered and examined further alongside the findings from subsequent parks and recreation needs assessment techniques.

In order to better understand the demographic data, City of New Port Richey data is compared to data from Pasco County and the State of Florida. Key demographics examined include:

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

In each category, 2015 U.S. Census American Community Survey data was compared to 2000 U.S. Census data to identify demographic trends. A summary of the key findings and possible implications for City parks and recreation needs are presented below first, followed by more detailed discussions of each of the demographics examined.

### **Summary of Demographic Analysis**

Based on the review of demographic data from 2000 to 2015, it appears that the City of New Port Richey has experienced various demographic shifts during the last fifteen years. These may suggest shifts in parks and recreation desires and needs based on the following demographics examined.

#### **Population Density + Percent Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures**

In the year 2015, the City of New Port Richey had the highest population density of the jurisdictions analyzed. However, almost 60 percent of residents live in single-family homes. The high population density and a high percentage of single-family homes may suggest small residential lots with small backyards and front yards. This may limit the amount of private greenspace available for basic, everyday recreational activities that a family living in a single-family home may enjoy in their front or back yard.

Additionally, the City has the highest percentage of housing units in multi-unit structures of the jurisdictions analyzed. Based on these factors, City residents may have a need for small, close-to-home recreational opportunities that provide typical every day recreational facilities such as playgrounds, a lawn to play catch, picnic pavilions, or a place for dogs to run without a leash.

## **Population + Population Growth**

While the City of New Port Richey lost population between the years 2000 and 2015, the City is projected to grow by about 2,400 residents by the year 2020. This represents a projected growth rate of about 15.78 percent, which is higher than the projected growth rates for Pasco County and the State of Florida. This increase in residents may suggest that more park acreage, facilities, and amenities may be needed to maintain the quality of life that residents currently enjoy.

## **Ethnicity**

In the year 2015, the City of New Port Richey had a majority 88.7 percent White residents. However, between the years 2000 and 2015, the City experienced a 5.0 percent decrease in White residents and a 12.8 percent increase in Hispanic, Black, and Asian minority residents. The City may wish to monitor these demographic changes to see if it should offer ethnic and culturally influenced programming and activities.

## **Age Distribution + Household Types**

2015 Age Distribution and Household Type census data both suggests that the City of New Port Richey's population is predominantly comprised of adults ages 35 to 64, with younger aged seniors on the rise. This may suggest that the City may continue to experience a higher demand for adult and younger senior-oriented recreation programs, activities, and facilities such as tennis, pickle ball, walking, biking, and hiking in nature, versus youth programs, activities, and facilities.

## **Household Income + Poverty**

In the year 2015, the City of New Port Richey had the lowest median household income and highest poverty rates of the jurisdictions analyzed. While the household income grew between the years 2000 and 2015, the growth rate was the lowest of the jurisdictions analyzed. Poverty rates on the other hand, grew at faster rates than the jurisdictions analyzed.

This data suggests that residents may have limited disposable income, and may rely on more affordable recreation options, social programs, and services.

## **Education**

2015 Education census data suggests that a high percentage of residents in the City of New Port Richey have a low educational attainment (high school equivalency or less). This is consistent with the City's high poverty rates and low household income. Fortunately, the data suggest that this condition appears to be changing with a slight increase in the percentage of residents receiving college degrees.

## **Housing Characteristics**

In the year 2015, the City of New Port Richey had the lowest percentage of occupied and owner-occupied housing units of the jurisdictions analyzed. The City also had the highest percentage of vacant and renter-occupied housing units of the jurisdictions analyzed. Additionally, between the years 2000 and 2015, the City experienced the highest growth rates of vacant and renter-occupied housing units and a decrease of owner-occupied housing units of the jurisdictions analyzed.

These findings may suggest a degree of community instability, where neighborhood turnover may be high and people may be less invested in their homes and community as a whole. There may be a need to enhance the sense of community. This can be partially accomplished through an investment in community amenities and places where people can gather

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

**Population Density + Percent Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures**

Population Density and Percent Housing Units in multi-unit structures are important to consider in parks system planning because they impact lifestyles and the manner by which residents enjoy parks and recreation services. For example, cities with high population densities may have more residents living in a smaller area. This may create a larger demand on and for parks, recreation facilities, and programs within a given area. Similarly, residents living in multi-unit structures typically rely more on public parks to provide basic, close-to-home recreational opportunities such as a playground, a lawn to play catch, a community garden, or a place for dogs to run. These are some of the basic, everyday activities that a family living in a single-family home may enjoy in a front or back yard.

Figure 1.1 below shows the major difference in Population Density and Percent Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures between the three jurisdictions analyzed. The City of New Port Richey has the highest density and highest percentage of housing units in multi-unit structures of the jurisdictions analyzed. However, almost 60 percent of residents live in detached housing units (single-family homes). The high density and high percentage of single-family homes may suggest smaller single-family home properties with small backyards and front yards, which may indicate a need for more public open space such as neighborhood parks.

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

	Population Density (Population per Acre)	Percent of Housing Units in Multi-Unit Structures*
City of New Port Richey	5.3	41.0%
Pasco County	1.0	17.4%
State of Florida	0.6	33.4%

\*Source: US Census

**Population and Population Growth**

Population and population growth are two important demographics to consider in parks system planning. The larger the population growth, the more need there may be to expand parks and recreation services in the future. Figure 1.2 below compares the past, existing, and projected population and population growth of New Port Richey to Pasco County and the State of Florida.

Figure 1.2 - Population + Population Growth

Year	City of New Port Richey	Change in %	Pasco County	Change in %	State of Florida	Change in %
2000*	16,117	-	344,765	-	15,982,378	-

2015**	15,260	-5.32%	479,288	39.02%	19,645,772	22.92%
2020	17,668^	15.78%	540,400^^	12.75%	21,141,318^^	7.61%

\*Source: US Census

\*\*Source: US Census American Community Survey

^Source: City of New Port Richey Comprehensive Plan

^^Source: University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEER)

As represented in Figure 1.2 above, the City of New Port Richey lost about 900 residents between the years 2000 and 2015. However, based on population figures included in the City's Comprehensive Plan, the City is projected to grow by about 2,400 residents by the year 2020 which represents a growth rate of about 15.78 percent. This projected growth rate is higher than the projected growth rate for Pasco County and the State of Florida. This increase in residents may suggest that more park acreage, facilities, and amenities are needed to maintain the quality of life that residents currently enjoy. This need will be further analyzed in subsequent sections.

### **Ethnicity and Race**

Ethnicity and race can be an interesting indicator of recreation program and facility needs and desires.

Figure 1.3 below demonstrates the ethnic shifts that the City of New Port Richey and comparable jurisdictions have experienced from the year 2000 to 2015. The data reveals that overall, the City has remained majority White. However, the City does appear to be becoming more diverse with a decrease in White residents (-5.0 percent) and an increase in Hispanic, Black, and Asian residents (collectively 12.8 percent). For the most part, this rate of change appears to be happening at a faster rate than Pasco County and the State of Florida. The City may wish to monitor these changes to see if it should explore offering ethnic and culturally influenced programming and activities. Additionally, needs assessment techniques discussed in subsequent chapters will explore this idea further.

**Figure 1.3 – Ethnicity and Race**

Year	City of New Port Richey		Change in %	Pasco County		Change in %
	2000*	2015^		2000*	2015^	
White	93.7%	88.7%	-5.0%	94.1%	91.5%	-2.6%
Black	2.1%	5.1%	3.0%	1%	2.6%	1.6%
American Indian	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%	0.9%	0.4%
Asian	0.9%	2.3%	1.4%	0.9%	1.2%	0.3%
Other Race	1.5%	1.2%	-0.3%	1.6%	1.3%	-
Two or More Races	1.4%	2.4%	1.0%	1.9%	2.5%	0.6%
Hispanic   Latino (any	5.7%	13.1%	7.4%	5.2%	13.1%	7.9%

race)						
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	State of Florida		Change in %
	2000*	2010^	
Year	2000*	2010^	
White	78.0%	76.0%	-2.0%
Black	14.6%	16.1%	1.5%
American Indian	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%
Asian	1.7%	2.6%	0.9%
Other Race	3.0%	2.6%	2.5%
Two or More Races	2.4%	2.4%	0.0%
Hispanic   Latino (any race)	16.8%	23.7%	6.9%

\*Source: US Census

^Source: US Census American Community Survey

**Age Distribution**

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

Figure 1.4 below shows the change in age distribution and median age from the year 2000 to 2015 for the City of New Port Richey. In 2015, the City of New Port Richey had the highest median age of all the jurisdictions analyzed. The median age increased from age 44.2 in 2000 to 47.4 in 2015 suggesting that the population in the City is getting older. In 2015, 65.1 percent of the population in New Port Richey was over the age of 35. The City experienced a slightly higher increase in population ages 35 to 64 than the jurisdictions analyzed and a decrease in younger age cohorts. This suggests that adults and younger aged seniors may continue to remain the dominant population cohort in the City of New Port Richey, with younger aged seniors on the rise. This may suggest that the City may continue to experience a higher demand for adult and younger senior-oriented recreation programs, activities, and facilities such as tennis, pickle ball, walking, biking, and hiking in nature, versus youth programs, activities, and facilities.

**Figure 1.4 – Age Distribution**

Year	City of New Port Richey		Change in %	Pasco County		Change In %
	2000*	2015^		2000*	2015^	
Median Age	44.2	47.4	-	44.9	40.9	-
Ages 0-9	10.9%	9.5%	-1.4%	11.0%	11.0%	0.0%
Ages 10-19	10.4%	9.2%	-1.2%	11.1%	11.8%	0.6%
Ages 20-34	16.6%	16.2%	-0.4%	14.3%	15.7%	1.4%
Ages 35-54	24.4%	24.6%	0.2%	25.8%	26.4%	0.5%
Ages 55-64	9.4%	13.5%	4.1%	11.0%	13.2%	2.2%
Ages 65+	28.3%	27.0%	-1.3%	26.8%	22.0%	-4.8%

Year	State of Florida		Change in %
	2000*	2015^	
Median Age	38.7	41.4	-
Ages 0-9	12.4%	11.2%	-1.2%
Ages 10-19	13.0%	11.8%	-1.1%
Ages 20-34	18.8%	19.2%	0.3%
Ages 35-54	28.5%	26.3%	-2.2%
Ages 55-64	9.8%	12.9%	3.1%
Ages 65+	17.6%	18.6%	1.0%

\*Source: US Census

^Source: US Census American Community Survey

### Household Type

Occupied households and family types often mirror age distribution and can be used to further confirm the trends noted in the City's age distribution analysis. As noted in Figure 1.5, occupied households in the City of New Port Richey saw the largest percentage decrease (-9.1 percent) over the last fifteen years of the jurisdictions analyzed. Family households in the City of New Port Richey also decreased at a faster rate than Pasco County and in contrast to the State of Florida. Non-family households in the City of New Port Richey on the other hand, grew by about 3.1 percent, which is a higher growth rate than Pasco County (1.2 percent) and the State of Florida (2.0 percent). Moreover, households with their own children under 18 years also saw a decrease between the years 2000 and 2015 (-5.4 percent). These findings suggest that the City of New Port Richey may continue to attract adults and younger senior populations and may

therefore continue to see a need for adult and younger senior based recreation programs, activities, and facilities.

**Figure 1.5 – Household Types**

	City of New Port Richey		Change in %	Pasco County		Change in %
	2000*	2015^		2000*	2015^	
<b>Year</b>	<b>2000*</b>	<b>2015^</b>		<b>2000*</b>	<b>2015^</b>	
<b>Total occupied households</b>	7,231	6,575	-9.1%	147,556	137,465	-6.8%
<b>Family households</b>	54.8%	50.6%	-4.2%	67.1%	68.6%	1.5%
<b>Non-family households</b>	45.2%	48.3%	3.1%	32.9%	34.1%	1.2%
<b>Households with own children under 18 years</b>	21.6%	16.2%	-5.4%	23.5%	23.8%	0.3%

	State of Florida		Change in %
	2000*	2015^	
<b>Year</b>	<b>2000*</b>	<b>2015^</b>	
<b>Total occupied households</b>	6,337,929	7,300,494	15.2%
<b>Family households</b>	66.4%	64.4%	-2.0%
<b>Non-family households</b>	33.6%	35.6%	2.0%
<b>Households with own children under 18 years</b>	28.1%	24.7%	-3.4%

\*Source: US Census

^Source: US Census American Community Survey

**Household Income**

Household income provides parks planners with a glimpse of the purchasing power of city residents. The lower the household income, the more residents may rely on the local government to provide more affordable parks, recreation, and social programs and services.

Figure 1.6 below illustrates the median household income and percentage distribution of income ranges in the City of New Port Richey in comparison to the other jurisdictions analyzed. The City

of New Port Richey has the lowest median household income (\$29,882) of the jurisdictions analyzed. More than half (57.9 percent) of the population has a median household income of less than \$34,999. While the median household income increased by 13.4 percent from 2000 to 2015, this increase was at a lower rate than Pasco County and the State of Florida.

**Figure 1.6 – Household Income**

Year	City of New Port Richey		Change in %	Pasco County		Change in %
	2000*	2015^		2000*	2015^	
Median Household Income	25,881	29,882	13.4%	32,969	45,064	26.8%
Less than \$10,000	14.0%	11.7%	-2.3%	9.2%	7.1%	-2.1%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	13.2%	12.1%	-1.1%	8.7%	6.1%	-2.6%
\$15,000 to \$24,000	21.5%	18.1%	-3.4%	18.5%	13.2%	-5.3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	17.8%	16.0%	-1.8%	16.4%	12.6%	-3.8%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	14.9%	16.1%	1.2%	18.8%	15.9%	-2.9%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	11.6%	13.8%	2.2%	16.6%	18.4%	1.8%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	4.1%	6.2%	2.1%	6.3%	11.2%	4.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1.4%	5.0%	3.6%	3.8%	10.2%	6.4%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0.6%	0.7%	0.1%	0.9%	3.1%	2.2%
\$200,000 or more	0.9%	0.4%	-0.5%	0.9%	2.3%	1.4%

Year	State of Florida		% Change
	2000*	2015^	
Median Household Income	38,819	47,507	18.3%
Less than \$10,000	9.6%	7.8%	-1.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6.7%	5.6%	-1.1%
\$15,000 to \$24,000	14.5%	12.1%	-2.4%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	14.2%	11.6%	-2.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	17.4%	15.0%	-2.4%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	18.5%	18.2%	-0.3%

<b>\$75,000 to \$99,999</b>	8.7%	11.1%	2.4%
<b>\$100,000 to \$149,999</b>	6.3%	10.8%	4.5%
<b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>	1.8%	3.8%	2.0%
<b>\$200,000 or more</b>	2.3%	4.1%	1.8%

\*Source: US Census

^Source: US Census American Community Survey

The low median income suggests that residents may have limited disposable income, and may rely on more affordable recreation options, social programs, and services.

**Poverty**

Poverty rates can be used to further confirm the trends noted in the household income analysis. High poverty rates may suggest vulnerable families in need for free and affordable recreation options, social programs, and services. Figure 1.7 below illustrates various poverty indicators in the City of New Port Richey in comparison to the other jurisdictions analyzed. The City of New Port Richey had the highest poverty rates for all but one of the indicators in the year 2015. Notable indicators included population in poverty (24.7 percent), population under 18 years of age in poverty (43.4 percent), families in poverty (31.7 percent), female householder, no husband present in poverty (30.0 percent), and female householder, no husband present with related children under 18 in poverty (38.6 percent). The City saw the largest increase in population in poverty (8.1 percent) from the year 2000 to 2015 in comparison to Pasco County (3.3 percent) and the State of Florida (4.0 percent). Female householder, no husband present with related children under 18 was the only indicator that decreased between 2000 to 2015.

**Figure 1.7 – Poverty**

Year	City of New Port Richey		Change in %	Pasco County		Change in %
	2000*	2015^		2000*	2015^	
Population for whom poverty status is determine	16.6%	24.7%	8.1%	10.7%	14.0%	3.3%
Under 18	28.7%	43.4%	14.7%	15.9%	17.9%	2.0%
65 years and over	8.7%	11.2%	2.5%	7.7%	8.9%	1.2%
Families in poverty	12.3%	15.5%	3.2%	7.6%	9.9%	2.3%
With related children under 18	22.4%	31.7%	9.3%	12.8%	15.6%	2.8%
Female, householder, no husband present	40.2%	30.0%	-10.2%	23.0%	24.6%	1.6%
With related children under 18	48.2%	38.6%	-9.6%	32.0%	33.7%	1.7%

	State of Florida		Change in %	
	Year	2000*		2015^
Population for whom poverty status is determine		12.5%	16.5%	4.0%
Under 18		17.6%	24.1%	6.5%
65 years and over		9.1%	10.3%	1.2%
Families in poverty		9.0%	12.0%	3.0%
With related children under 18		14.2%	19.8%	5.6%
Female, householder, no husband present		25.3%	29.0%	3.7%
With related children under 18		32.8%	38.6%	5.8%

\*Source: US Census

^Source: US Census American Community Survey

Consistent with the suggested findings from the household income analysis, these high poverty rates suggest that a portion of the City of New Port Richey’s population may have a need for more affordable recreation and/or social programs and services.

**Education**

Education is often associated with household income and poverty rates. Low educational attainment may limit a resident’s potential to generate income, which may influence their quality of life. Figure 1.8 below contains various education indicators for the City of New Port Richey in comparison to the other jurisdictions analyzed.

**Figure 1.8 – Education**

	City of New Port Richey		Change in %	Pasco County		Change in %	
	Year	2000*		2015^	2000*		2015^
Population 18 to 24							
Less than high school graduate		22.2%	23.6%	1.4%	30.5%	16.3%	-14.2%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)		42.9%	35.9%	-7.0%	34.7%	37.0%	2.3%

Some college or associate's degree	34.1%	33.7%	-0.4%	32.3%	41.3%	9.0%
Bachelors degree or higher	0.8%	6.7%	5.9%	2.5%	5.4%	2.9%
<b>Population 25 or over</b>						
Less than high school graduate	26.4%	16.0%	-10.4%	22.4%	12.0%	-10.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	39.6%	40.0%	0.4%	36.5%	33.7%	-2.8%
Some college or associate's degree	20.3%	19.9%	-0.4%	21.2%	22.3%	1.1%
Associate's degree	6.0%	10.0%	4.0%	6.4%	10.6%	4.2%
Bachelors degree or higher	5.0%	9.6%	4.6%	8.8%	14.2%	5.4%

	State of Florida		Change in %
	2000*	2015^	
<b>Population 18 to 24</b>			
Less than high school graduate	28.3%	16.4%	-11.9%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	29.3%	30.0%	0.7%
Some college or associate's degree	36.0%	45.4%	9.4%
Bachelors degree or higher	6.4%	8.1%	1.7%
<b>Population 25 or over</b>			
Less than high school graduate	20.1%	14.1%	-6.0%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	28.7%	29.5%	0.8%
Some college or associate's degree	21.8%	20.7%	-1.1%
Associate's degree	7.0%	9.4%	2.4%
Bachelors degree or	14.3%	17.5%	3.2%



\*Source: US Census

^Source: US Census American Community Survey

In 2015, the City of New Port Richey had the highest population rate (59.5 percent) of residents that were aged 18 to 24 with a high school equivalency education or less in comparison to Pasco County (53.3 percent) and the State of Florida (46.4 percent). The City also had the highest population rate (56.0 percent) of residents that were over 25 years of age with a high school equivalency education or less in comparison to Pasco County (45.7 percent) and the State of Florida (43.6 percent).

The City did however, experience a 7.0 percent decrease in population ages 18 to 24 with a high school equivalency education between the years 2000 and 2015, in contrast to Pasco County and the State of Florida that experienced an increase of 2.3 percent and 0.4 percent respectively. Additionally, the City of New Port Richey saw the largest percentage change (5.9 percent) of populations ages 18 to 24 with a Bachelor's degree or higher between the years 2000 and 2015 in comparison to Pasco County and the State of Florida that saw increases of 2.9 percent and 1.7 percent respectively. The City also experienced an increase of 4.6 percent in populations over 25 years with a Bachelor's degree or higher. While this percentage change was not as high as Pasco County (5.4 percent) it was higher than the State of Florida (3.2 percent).

This data suggests that a high percentage of residents in the City of New Port Richey have a low educational attainment. This is consistent with the City's high poverty rates and low household income. Fortunately, the data suggest that this condition appears to be changing with a slight increase in the percentage of residents receiving college degrees.

### **Housing Characteristics**

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

Figure 1.9 below illustrates the housing characteristics of the City of New Port Richey between the years 2000 and 2015 as compared to the other jurisdictions analyzed. In 2015, the City of New Port Richey had the lowest percentage of occupied housing units (74.9 percent) versus 80.4 percent in Pasco County and 80.3 percent in the State of Florida. Vacant units in the City of New Port Richey increased by 4.8 percent to 25.1 percent in 2015, the highest of the jurisdictions analyzed. Owner-occupied housing units decreased by 2.0 percent from the 58.9 percent in the year 2000 to 56.9 percent in 2015, also the highest of the jurisdictions analyzed. Renter-occupied housing units also increased by 2.0 percent to 43.1 percent in 2015, also the highest of the jurisdictions analyzed.

These findings may suggest a degree of community instability, where neighborhood turnover may be high and people may be less invested in their homes and communities as a whole. There may be a need to enhance the sense of community. This can be partially accomplished through an investment in community amenities and places where people can gather.

**Figure 1.9 – Household Characteristics**

	City of New Port Richey		Change in %	Pasco County		Change in %
	2000*	2015^		2000*	2010^	
<b>Year</b>	<b>2000*</b>	<b>2015^</b>		<b>2000*</b>	<b>2010^</b>	
<b>Total housing units</b>	8,693	8,780	1.0%	173,717	231,612	25.0%
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	79.7%	74.9%	-4.8%	84.9%	80.4%	-4.5%
<b>Vacant housing units</b>	20.3%	25.1%	4.8%	15.1%	19.6%	4.5%
<b>Owner-occupied housing units</b>	58.9%	56.9%	-2.0%	82.4%	73.8%	-8.6%
<b>Renter-occupied housing units</b>	41.1%	43.1%	2.0%	17.6%	26.2%	8.6%

	State of Florida		Change in %
	2000*	2010^	
<b>Year</b>	<b>2000*</b>	<b>2010^</b>	
<b>Total Housing Units</b>	7,302,947	9,049,999	19.3%
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	86.8%	80.3%	-6.5%
<b>Vacant housing units</b>	13.2%	19.7%	6.5%
<b>Owner-occupied housing units</b>	70.1%	65.3%	-4.8%
<b>Renter-occupied housing units</b>	29.9%	34.7%	4.8%

\*Source: US Census

^Source: US Census American Community Survey

### 1.3 Parks and Recreation Facility Inventory

The City of New Port Richey has fourteen public parks within its City limits totaling 157 acres. The City's Comprehensive Plan organizes these parks into six categories. Specifically, these include the following:

- **Special Purpose Facility** - Park or recreational facility that typically provides a single or predominant recreation facility, or has a very limited number of recreational facilities that serve a specific recreational purpose for the entire community.
  - **Service Area** – Citywide
  - **Acreage** – Varies based on activity space needs.

**Figure 1.10 – Sims Boat Ramp – Example of a Special Purpose Facility**



- **Community Park** - Park typically providing a diverse range of recreational and leisure activities, or may contain useable areas where residents can gather to share community events or activities in an aesthetic natural environment. Facilities and activities at community parks may include, athletic fields, swimming pools, gymnasiums, performing and designing art centers, crafts buildings, large open areas for community events, and any facilities associated with the neighborhood or mini-park recreation areas. Unlike special purpose facilities, community parks offer more than one recreation facility or leisure activity, and in most cases, offer several.
  - **Service area:** Citywide.
  - **Acreage:** Varies based on activity space needs (typically 5 to 25 acres).

**Figure 1.11 – Recreation & Aquatic Center – Example of a Community Park**



- **Neighborhood Park** - Recreational facilities sized for neighborhood needs or passive recreation. Typical facilities are playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis courts, basketball courts, and open play areas or small multi-purpose field, and landscaping.
  - **Service area:** One-half mile radius (walking/biking distance).
  - **Acreage:** Based on activity space needs (typically 2 to 5 acres).

**Figure 1.12 – Frances Avenue Park – Example of a Neighborhood Park**



- **Mini-Park** - Similar to but smaller than neighborhood parks. Often referred to as tot-lots, these parks typically contain open lawns and play areas, mini-parks may also provide play apparatus for small children, a half to a full-size basketball court, one or two tennis courts, or picnic areas, landscaping, or natural areas. Mini-parks usually do not provide automobile parking.
  - **Service area:** One-quarter mile radius (walking distance).
  - **Acreage:** Based on activity space needs (typically less than 2 acres).

**Figure 1.13 – Grand Boulevard Park – Example of Mini Park**



- **Linear Park** - Linear facilities that accommodate bicycling, hiking, jogging, roller skating, or similar recreational activities.
  - **Service area:** Citywide.
  - **Acreage:** No minimum.

**Figure 1.14 – Cottee River Park – Example of Linear Park**



- **Open Space** - is undeveloped lands suitable for passive recreation, leisure, or conservation uses. Types of open space include undeveloped parkland, lakes, rivers, wetlands and floodplains, Conservation and Preservation designated lands on the Future Land Use Map, plazas, and beautified corridors.
  - **Service area:** Not applicable
  - **Acreage:** 0.1-acre minimum.

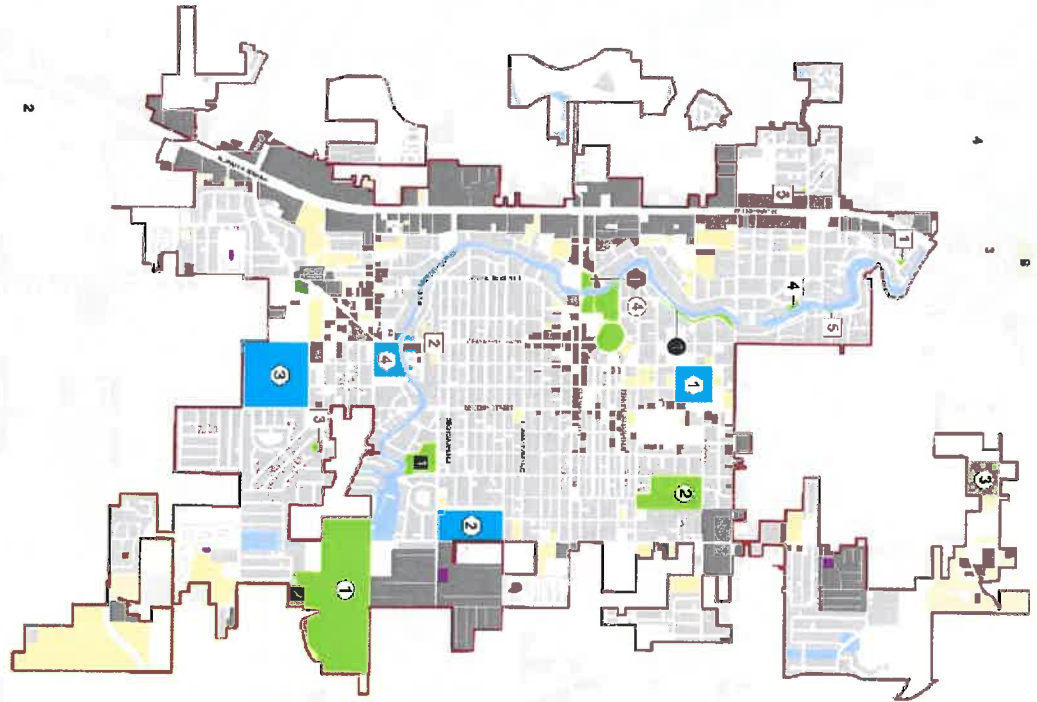
Thirteen of the fourteen parks are maintained by the City of New Port Richey's Parks Division, which, according to the City of New Port Richey, Florida Annual Budget 2015-2016, was moved to the Grounds Maintenance Division under the direction of the Public Works Department to better help with the maintenance of all City properties. One of the City's parks, Pinehill Park, is maintained and managed by the Pasco County through a joint-use agreement. Capital improvement responsibilities are shared between the City and the leagues that play in Pinehill Park. Figure 1.15 below provides an inventory of the City's parks system.



schools are not accessible to the general public, these facilities are not included in the scope of analysis for the City's Parks Master Plan. In order for them to be accessible to the public, the City would have to establish an interlocal agreement with these providers. Figure 1.17 below maps the City's park system including Pasco County Public School and private recreation locations.

**Figure 1.17 City of New Port Richey Parks System**

INTERIM DRAFT



## CHAPTER 2: PARKS AND RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this section is to identify the needs and priorities of New Port Richey residents and stakeholders. Needs Assessment techniques included an evaluation of the existing parks system; a level-of-service (LOS) analysis; a statistically-representative survey; an on-line survey; a public outreach meeting; and stakeholder/ focus group interviews. Following are the findings from each of the techniques.

### 2.1 Evaluation of the Existing Parks System

The Barth Associates Team and City of New Port Richey Parks and Recreation Department staff visited and evaluated the City's parks during the month of November 2016. These parks were evaluated using the following five key criteria:

#### **ACCESS: Proximity, Access, and Linkages**

- Visibility from a distance. Can one easily see into the park?
- Ease of walking to the park. Can someone walk directly into the park safely and easily?
- Clarity of information/signage. Is there signage that identifies the park, and/or signage that provides additional information for users?

- ADA Compliance. Does the site generally appear to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) laws for accessibility?
- Lighting. Is the park lighted appropriately for use at night? (if applicable)

#### **COMFORT: Comfort and Image**

- First impression/overall attractiveness. Is the park attractive at first glance?
- Feeling of safety. Does the park feel safe at the time of the visit?
- Cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance. Is the park clean and free of litter?
- Comfort of places to sit. Are there comfortable places to sit?
- Protection from bad weather. Is there a shelter in case of bad weather?
- Evidence of management/stewardship (Exterior Site). Is there visual evidence of site management?
- Evidence of management/stewardship (Interior). Is there visual evidence of management in interior spaces of park buildings?

#### **USE: Uses, Activities, and Sociability**

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

#### **SUSTAINABILITY: Environmental Sustainability**

- Stormwater management. Is green infrastructure present to help manage stormwater?
- Multi-modal capacity. Is the park accessible by many modes of transportation?
- Facility energy efficiency. Has the site been updated with energy efficient components?

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

- Image and aesthetics. Is the building attractive?
- Clarity of entry and connection to the park. Is the building integrated into its surroundings?
- Interior finishes, furniture, and equipment. Are the furnishings and equipment inside the building of good condition and quality?
- Building enclosure. Is there any obvious need for repairs to the building shell?
- Building systems. Are all mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems in working order?

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

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

Each whole number represents a performance tier. Scores were assigned based on an evaluation of the site and the buildings compared to other sites in the city. Although the process of scoring is inherently subjective, multiple evaluators were present to discuss each score and reach consensus.

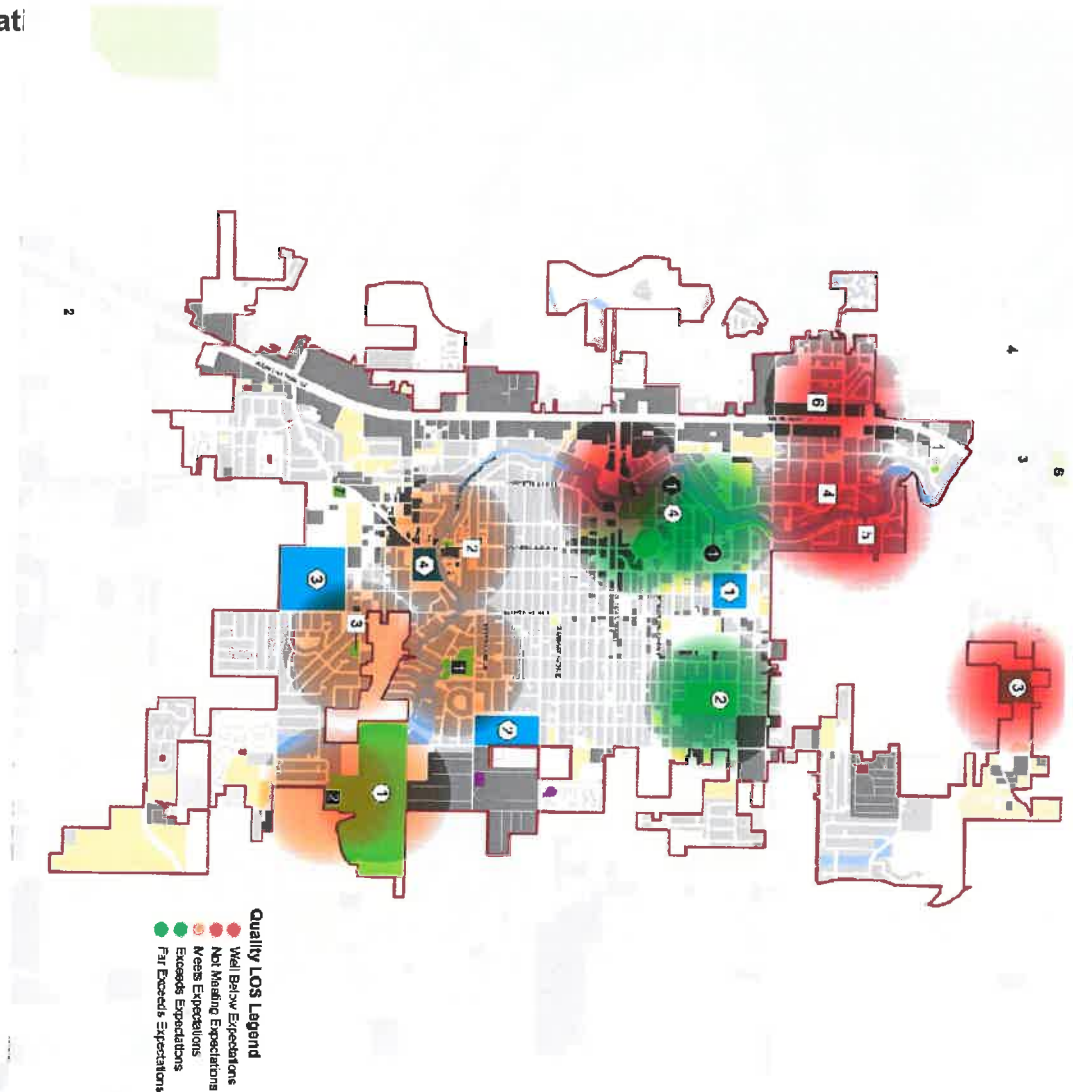
The purpose of the scoring was to establish an understanding of how the parks rates in terms of quality and its ability to serve users. Figure 2.1 below provides a summary chart of the park system's average scores and Figure 2.2 maps these findings. This is followed by a discussion associated with the apparent strengths and weaknesses of the park system. Detailed observations for each of the parks can be found in Chapter 3: Long Range Vision and Implementation Strategy, which have been integrated into the park improvement recommendations.

**Figure 2.1 Site Evaluation Summary**

INTERIM DRAFT

	Pinehill Park	Russ Park	Jasmin Park	Sims Boat Ramp	Sims Park/Orange Lake	Peace Hall	Cotee River Park	Orange Grove Park	Frances Avenue Park	James E. Grey Preserve	Meadows Park	Grand Boulevard Park	Recreation & Aquatic Center	Total
<b>Proximity/ Access/ Linkages (Max 5.0)</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>3.2</b>
Visibility from a distance	2	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	3	-	1	4	3	3.8
Ease in walking to the park	1	2	5	3	5	5	5	4	3	2	3	3	4	3.5
Clarity of information/ signage	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	5	2	3	4	2.1
ADA Compliance	5	1	1	5	5	5	5	1	4	3	3	5	5	3.7
Lighting	4	1	1	3	5	5	5	1	3	-	1	3	5	3.1
<b>Comfort and Image (Max 5.0)</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.6</b>
First Impression/overall attractiveness	2	2	4	3	5	5	5	2	4	4	2	4	4	3.5
Feeling of safety	2	1	4	2	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	4	3.3
Cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance (Exterior)	3	4	4	3	5	5	5	3	4	4	4	4	4	4.0
Cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance (Interior)	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.0
Comfort of places to sit	2	1	4	2	5	5	5	2	4	4	4	4	4	3.5
Protection from bad weather	1	1	2	2	5	5	5	2	4	4	3	5	2	3.2
Evidence of management/stewardship (Exterior Site)	3	4	4	3	5	5	5	3	4	4	3	4	4	3.9
Evidence of management/stewardship (Interior)	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.0
<b>Uses and Activities and Sociability (Max 5.0)</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>
Mix of uses/things to do	1	1	3	3	5	5	4	1	4	4	4	4	5	3.4
Level of Activity	5	1	2	4	5	4	5	1	4	3	4	3	5	3.5
Sense of pride/ownership	3	3	4	3	5	5	5	2	4	4	3	3	5	3.8
Programming Flexibility	1	2	2	2	5	5	3	2	4	4	3	2	5	3.1
Ability of Facility to Effectively Support Organized Programming	2	-	-	1	5	3	1	-	4	4	-	-	5	3.1
<b>Environmental Sustainability (Max 5.0)</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.4</b>
Stormwater Management	3	4	4	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	5	4.1
Multi-modal Capacity	1	2	3	3	5	5	4	1	5	4	3	3	4	3.3
Facility Energy Efficiency	1	1	1	3	4	4	4	1	3	-	-	2	4	2.5
<b>Buildings/Architecture (Max 5.0)</b>						<b>3.8</b>								<b>4.4</b>
Image and Aesthetics	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.0
Clarity of Entry and Connections to Park	-	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5.0
Interior Finishes and Furniture and Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.0
Building Enclosure	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.0
Building Systems	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.0
<b>Average Score Without Building/Architecture (Max 5)</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>4.3</b>	
<b>Average Score with/for Building/Architecture (Max 5)</b>					<b>4.4</b>									
<b>Overall Average</b>														<b>3.4</b>

Figure 2.2 Site Evaluation



### Park System Observations

Overall, the City of New Port Richey’s park system appears to be meeting expectations and providing residents and visitors with an acceptable recreational experience. This is represented by the overall average system score of a 3.4 noted in Figure 2.1. Ten of the thirteen visited parks scored in the range of 3.0 – 4.7 (Meeting and Exceeding Expectations). Three of the parks scored in the range of 2.1 to 2.3 (Not Meeting Expectations).

The highest scoring park was Sims Park (4.7). As such, it displays many great qualities and principles that should be integrated throughout the City’s park system. Sims Park meets expectations in Proximity/Access/Linkages (4.0) and Environmental Sustainability (4.7) and exceeds expectations in the categories of Comfort and Image (5.0) and Uses, Activities, and Sociability (5.0). The park provides the best overall first impression, has the highest level of overall quality of maintenance and stewardship and sense of safety, and provides the highest overall variety of shaded comfortable places to sit. It also provides residents and visitors of all ages with a variety of “things to do” including playing in the large playgrounds for kids of various ages, playing in the splash pad, exercising on the outdoor exercise equipment, walking/ running/ jogging on the paths located throughout the park, picnicking, relaxing on the open lawn areas

located under large oak canopy trees, listening to a concert in the amphitheater, and canoeing/kayaking on the Cotee River.

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

Sims Park connects well to the surrounding neighborhood through sidewalks, parking, ample visibility into the park, and appropriate lighting. The park also displays good Environmental Sustainability (4.7) characteristics with ecological treatment of stormwater in the park, use of energy efficient fixtures, and multi-modal access via walking and bicycling through low-stress streets and sidewalks that lead into the park.

The lowest scoring parks were Russ Park and Orange Grove Park (2.1). They scored poorly in all the categories and display qualities and principles that the City should try to avoid in its parks. In the Proximity/Access/Linkages category, they scored poorly due to the lack of signage, ADA compliant facilities, and lighting. In the Comfort and Image category, they scored poorly due to their unattractive overall first impressions and lack of comfortable and shaded places to sit. It is important to note that the grounds in both parks are actually well mowed and maintained. However, the limited amenities present in both parks are outdated and in poor condition, which negatively influenced the appearance of the parks.

In the Uses and Activities and Sociability category, the parks scored poorly due to the lack of “things to do”, low levels of activity, and limited flexibility for programming. Lastly, in the Environmental Sustainability category, the parks scored poorly due to their inability to be accessed by residents through multiple means of transportation (e.g. no safe bicycle routes or parking, no sidewalks to get to the park, and no parking spaces), and lack of facility energy efficient amenities.

In addition to looking at how specific parks scored, it is important to examine how the parks system as a whole scored in each of the categories and sub-categories. As noted in Figure 2.1, most of the categories and subcategories scored between the range of 3.1 and 3.9 (Meeting Expectations). However, there were a few subcategories that scored particularly high and others that scored particularly low.

The subcategories that scored high included cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance (exterior) (4.0), cleanliness/overall quality of maintenance (interior) (5.0), evidence of management/stewardship (interior) (5.0), stormwater management (4.1), and Buildings/Architecture (4.4), image and aesthetic (4.0), clarity of entry and connections to park (5.0), and interior finishes and furniture and equipment (4.0). Most of these subcategories deal with park and building upkeep and maintenance. The high scores are an indication of how well the City’s Parks and Recreation Department and Public Works Department are maintaining the City’s parks and park buildings. This in turn, encourages park users and visitors to be good stewards of the park, which leads to great looking parks.

Subcategories that scored the lowest were clarity of information/signage and facility energy efficiency. Most of the signage in the City's parks is limited to a park monument sign. Many of the parks lack park amenity signage and wayfinding, park regulatory signage, and system-wide signage and wayfinding. The City is currently implementing a City-wide wayfinding program, which should include park directional and entrance signs. Additionally, the City should continue to upgrade as many park feature as possible to be energy and water efficient.

As noted previously, detailed observations for each of the parks can be found in Chapter 3: Long-Range Vision and Implementation Strategy, which have been integrated into the park improvement recommendations.

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## 2.2 Existing Level of Service Analysis

There is no industry standard or regulation regarding how a community should establish Levels of Service (LOS) for parks and recreation services. Both the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and the Florida State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) have discontinued the exclusive use of traditional population-based LOS standards such as park acres and facilities per 1,000 residents. Instead, cities are encouraged to conduct community-wide needs assessments and benchmark themselves against other similar communities in order to establish their own LOS standards. The National Recreation and Parks Association has developed its benchmarking website PRORAGIS, and SCORP publishes regional LOS averages around the state to assist local communities in establishing their LOS. For the City of New Port Richey, three different LOS methods were used to determine how well the City's parks and recreation system is meeting residents' needs:

- **Acreage LOS:** Measures the quantity of parkland acreage that is available per 1,000 residents.
- **Facilities LOS:** Measures the number of recreation facilities available per capita.
- **Access LOS:** Measures the geographic areas served by parks or recreation facilities.

### Acreage Level of Service

The City's Comprehensive Plan establishes a total LOS target of 6 acres of park land per 1,000 residents. This 6-acre target is divided into two acreage categories: 5 acres per 1,000 residents for "Local Parks" and 1 acre per 1,000 residents for Open Space. Local Parks are defined in the Comprehensive Plan as Mini-Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Linear Parks, and Special Purpose Facilities. These are the parks that allow the development of recreation facilities such as ball fields, playgrounds, sports courts, and dog parks. Open Space is defined in the Comprehensive Plan as undeveloped lands suitable for passive recreation, leisure, or conservation uses. Types of open space include undeveloped parkland, lakes, rivers, wetlands and floodplains, Conservation and Preservation designated lands on the Future Land Use Map, plazas, and beautified corridors. Recreation facilities such as ball fields, playgrounds, sports courts, and dog parks are typically not permitted to be built in these types of parks. As noted in Figure 1.10, the City of New Port Richey has a total of 157.32 acres of park land, 26.16 acres of which are considered Open Space and 131.16 Local Parks.

Figure 2.3 below analyzes the City's park acreage LOS using the population estimates for the years 2015 and 2020. Park land acreage is organized into three categories 1) Total Park Acreage, 2) Local Parks and, 3) Open Space.

Based on the City's Acreage LOS target of 6 acres per 1,000 population, it appears that there may not be a need to acquire additional parkland in the near future. Furthermore, based on the City's Local Park target of 5 acres per 1,000 residents and Open Space target of 1 acre per 1,000 residents, it appears that there may not be a need for the City to acquire additional Local Parks or Open Space Parks. However, this analysis does not consider the differences in the distribution of park acreage between the various part of the City, which is discussed in the section below regarding "Access Level of Service".

**Figure 2.3: City of New Port Richey Acreage Level of Service Analysis**

Park Acreage Calculation	Acreage	New Port Richey Comprehensive Plan Acreage LOS Target (X/1,000 Population)	2015* 15,260			2020** 17,668		
			2000 Acres per 1,000 population	2000 Target Acreage	Acreage Need / Surplus	2014 Acres per 1,000 population	2020 Target Acreage	Acreage Need / Surplus
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>157.32</b>	<b>6.00</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>91.56</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>106.01</b>	<b>51</b>
Local Parks	131.16	5.0	8.6	76.30	55	7.4	88.34	43
Open Space	26.16	1.0	1.7	15.26	11	1.5	17.67	8

\* Source: US Census

^ Source: City of New Port Richey Comprehensive Plan

It is also sometimes useful to compare a city’s target Acreage LOS to national acreage LOS benchmarks. Figure 2.4 below identifies the National Acreage LOS Median for Agencies with Population Density’s similar to the City of New Port Richey. This Acreage LOS is 12.9 acres per 1,000 population.

When looking at the City’s total park land, the City of New Port Richey’s current Acreage LOS is higher than the City’s target of 6.0 acres per 1,000 population but below the National Median Acreage benchmark of 12.9 acres per 1,000 people. To match the National Median Acreage LOS benchmark, the City would need to acquire approximately 40 acres based on 2015 population figures. Factoring in population growth, the analysis shows that the projected Acreage LOS for 2020 will remain higher than the City’s target but below the National Median Acreage LOS. The City would need to acquire approximately 71 acres by the year 2020 to match the National Median Acreage LOS benchmark.

When only looking at park acreage that allows the development of recreation facilities, the City of New Port Richey’s current Acreage LOS is higher than the City’s target of 5.0 acres per 1,000 population but below the National Median Acreage benchmark of 12.9 acres per 1,000 people. To match the National Median Acreage LOS benchmark, the City would need to acquire approximately 66 acres based on 2015 population figures. Factoring in population growth, the analysis shows that the projected Acreage LOS for 2020 will remain higher than the City’s target but below the National Median Acreage LOS. The City would need to acquire approximately 97 acres by the year 2020 to match the National Median Acreage LOS benchmark.

**Figure 2.4: National Recreation and Parks Association PRORAGIS National Median Acreage LOS**

Park Acreage Calculation	Acreage	New Port Richey Comprehensive Plan Acreage LOS Target (X /1,000 Population)	National Acreage LOS for Agencies with Population Densities between 1,501 and 2,500 per Square Mile	2015*			2020**		
				2015 Acres per 1,000 population	2015 National Acreage LOS Median Target Acreage	Acreage Need / Surplus	2020 Acres per 1,000 population	2020 National Acreage LOS Median Target Acreage	Acreage Need / Surplus
Total Park Acreage	157.32	6.00	12.9	10.3	196.85	(40)	8.9	227.92	(71)
Local Parks	131.16	5.0	12.9	8.6	196.85	(66)	7.4	227.92	(97)
Open Space	26.16	1.0	-	1.7	15.26	11	1.5	17.67	8

\* Source: US Census

^ Source: City of New Port Richey Comprehensive Plan

Analyses of population to park acreage alone provides mixed results. When comparing the City’s existing Acreage LOS to the City’s Comprehensive Plan target of 6.0 acres per 1,000 residents for total park land and 5.0 acres per 1,000 for local parks, the analysis suggests that the City may not have to acquire any additional park land through the year 2020. When comparing the City’s existing Acreage LOS to the National Median Benchmark of 12.9 acres per 1,000 residents, the analysis suggests that the City may have to acquire additional park land through the year 2020. Findings from Chapter 2: Needs Assessment, may provide additional guidance on this need.

**Facilities Level of Service**

Each community must establish its own standards for Facilities LOS, expressed as the number of facilities required to serve the population. The City of New Port Richey’s Comprehensive Plan does include Facilities LOS targets for Swimming Pools, Basketball Courts, Tennis Courts, Baseball/softball Diamond, Picnic Areas, Shuffleboard Courts, Multi-use trails, fishing sites, and boat ramps. Figure 2.5 below lists these targets and analyzes the City’s Facilities LOS using the population estimates for the years 2015 and 2020.

In addition to the City’s Facilities LOS targets, a Facilities LOS target for Pickleball Courts is included in Figure 2.5. This Facilities LOS target is based on the Barth Associates Team’s experience working with communities throughout the State of Florida. It is important to note that

the City has not adopted this particular Facilities LOS target. It is merely being used as a benchmark for this phase of the project.

**Figure 2.5: City of New Port Richey Facilities Level of Service Analysis**

Outdoor Facility Type	City of New Port Richey Comprehensive Plan Facilities Level of Service (1 per X persons)	Number of City of New Port Richey Facilities	Need Based on 2015 Population		Need Based on 2020 Population	
				Need / Surplus to meet City LOS Target		Need / Surplus to meet City LOS Target
Basketball Courts	5,000	3	3	(0.05)	4	(0.53)
Boat Ramp Lanes	5,000	2	3	(1)	4	(2)
Diamond Field Sports	3,000	4	5	(1)	6	(2)
Picnic Areas	6,000	8	3	5	3	5
Shuffleboard Courts	5,000	2	3	(1)	4	(2)
Swimming Pools	25,000	2	1	1	1	1
Tennis Courts	2,000	4	8	(4)	9	(5)
Fishing Sites (Feet)*	800 per 5,600	8,870	2,180	6,690	2,524	6,346
Multi-Use Trails (Mile)*	3,000	3	9	(6)	10	(7)
Pickleball Courts	2,000	1	8	(7)	9	(8)

\*Source: City of New Port Richey Comprehensive Plan

Based on the City's Facilities LOS targets, it appears that there may be a need to for additional Basketball Courts, Boat Ramp Lanes, Diamond Field Sports, Shuffleboard Courts, Tennis Courts, and Multi-Use Trails. Additionally, based on the Facilities LOS target used by the Barth Associates Team for Pickleball Courts, it appears that there may be a need for additional Pickleball Courts.

Comparing the City's existing and future Facilities LOS to state and national averages is also a useful way to understand potential needs.

Figure 2.6 below compares available National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) PRORAGIS database national median Facilities LOS standards to the City of New Port Richey's existing and future Facilities LOS. Out of the 10 facilities included in Figure 2.6, the City of New

Port Richey has LOS targets for four of them. Through the City’s Parks Master Plan process, the City may wish to establish targets for the other six facilities. This would be discussed in the Visioning phase of the project

**Figure 2.6: National Recreation and Parks Association PRORAGIS Facilities LOS Benchmarking**

National Recreation and Parks Association PRORAGIS Benchmark	City of New Port Richey Facilities		National Median Level of Service (1 per X persons)	2015	2020
	City of New Port Richey Facilities	City of New Port Richey Facilities LOS ( 1 per X persons)		2015 City of New Port Richey Facilities Level of Service (1 per X persons)	2020 City of New Port Richey Facilities Level of Service (1 per X persons)
Diamond Fields	4	3,000	3,333	3,815	4,417
Rectangle Fields	0	-	8,124	-	-
Playgrounds	5	-	3,899	3,052	3,534
Dog Parks	1	-	53,915	15,260	17,668
Tennis Courts	4	2,000	4,413	3,815	4,417
Basketball Courts	3	5,000	7,526	5,087	5,889
Indoor Recreation Center	1	-	24,804	15,260	17,668
Swimming Pools	2	25,000	33,660	7,630	8,834
Senior Center	1	-	50,000	15,260	17,668
Golf Course (population per 9 holes)	0	-	26,288	-	-

When compared to NRPA’s PRORAGIS database, it appears that the City’s existing and projected Facilities LOS are lower than the national *median* for most recreation facilities through the year 2020, except Basketball Courts. This means that when compared to other park systems throughout the nation with similar population densities, the City of New Port Richey may not have a need for most additional facilities. The Facilities LOS for Basketball Courts however, is above the national median after the year 2020, which may suggest that the City of New Port Richey may have a need for additional Basketball Courts. Additionally, the City currently does not have any Rectangle Fields or Golf Courses. While in the past it appears that the City may not have had a need for these facilities, this Facilities LOS techniques suggest that

the City may have a need for these facilities. The findings from this Facilities LOS technique will be compared to the findings from other techniques to confirm these needs.

Figure 2.7 below benchmarks the City of New Port Richey's outdoor facilities to available Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Facilities LOS for agencies in Florida's Central West Region for the years 2015 and 2020.

**Figure 2.7: Florida Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Facilities LOS Benchmarking for Facilities in the Central West Region**

Outdoor Facility Type	Central West Region LOS X/1000 Participants	Number of City of New Port Richey Facilities	Need Based on Participants in 2015		Need Based on Participants in 2020	
				Need / Surplus to meet Central West Region LOS		Need / Surplus to meet Central West Region LOS
Baseball Fields	1.04	4	2.38	1.62	2.76	1.24
Outdoor Basketball Courts	1.43	3	2.84	0.16	3.28	(0.28)
Football Fields	0.57	-	0.87	-	1.01	-
Tennis Courts	1.31	4	2.20	1.80	2.55	1.45
Soccer Fields	0.54	-	0.91	-	1.05	-
Outdoor Swimming Pools	0.06	2	0.27	1.73	0.31	1.69
Paved Trails (Miles)	0.09	-	0.55	-	0.64	-
Fresh Water Boat Ramps (Lanes)	0.16	2	0.49	1.51	0.57	1.43
Picnic Area	3.22	8	19.65	(11.65)	22.76	(14.76)

This analysis suggests that the City may have a need for additional Outdoor Basketball Courts and Picnic areas.

**Access Level of Service**

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

The City of New Port Richey’s Comprehensive Plan establishes Access LOS standards for the six park categories. It suggests that residents should be able to reach a neighborhood park within ½ mile and a mini-park within ¼ of a mile. The rest of the park categories, specifically community parks, linear parks, special use facilities, and open spaces have a city-wide Access LOS. Informed by the City’s Comprehensive Plan, the following distances were used to analyze Access LOS for the City’s park system:

- All Parks – 1/4 mile, 1/2 mile, and 1 mile
- Mini Parks – 1/4 mile and Neighborhood + Community + Linear + Special Use Parks - 1/2 mile

Access LOS analyses for recreation facilities were also conducted. Facilities chosen for analysis include some of those that were identified in previous LOS techniques is being needed. The analyses distances were determined based on industry best practices. Following are the recreation facilities analyzed along with the distance parameters:

- Picnic Areas – 1/2 mile and 1 mile
- Basketball Courts – 1/2 mile and 1 mile
- Tennis Courts – 1/2 mile and 1 mile
- Pickleball Courts – 1/2 mile and 1 mile

Figures 2.8 – 2.20 in subsequent pages illustrate where the gaps appear to be in the City based on the above-noted analyses. Figure 2.8 below provides a summary of these findings. Specifically, this summary suggests that while the City overall may have a need for all of the parks analyzed, the degree of need may be less based on the Access LOS Analysis distance used. The appropriate Access LOS distance that the City should establish will be further discussed in Chapter 4: Long Range Vision.

**Figure 2.8 – Summary of Park Needs Based on Access LOS Parameters**

Distances	Access Level of Service Needs per Distance		
	¼ Mile	½ Mile	1 Mile
<b>Parks Analyzed</b>	Takeaways from Access LOS		
All Parks	Most City residents do not have access to parks	More than half of the City’s residents have access to parks	All City residents have access to parks
Mini Parks + Neighborhood Parks	More than half of the City’s residents have access to parks that function as Mini Parks and Neighborhood Park		
Picnic Areas	N/A	More than half of the City’s residents have access to Picnic Areas	Most City’s residents have access to Picnic Areas
Basketball Courts	N/A	Most City residents do not have access to Basketball Courts	More than half of the City’s residents have access to Basketball Courts
Tennis Courts	N/A	Most City residents do not have access to Tennis Courts	Less than half of the City’s residents have access to Tennis Courts

Pickleball Courts	N/A	Most City residents to do not have access to Pickleball Courts	Less than half of the City's residents have access to Pickleball Courts
Playgrounds	N/A	Less than half of the City's residents have access to a Playground	Most City residents to do not have access to Playground

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Figure 2.9 – All Parks – ¼ Mile Access LOS

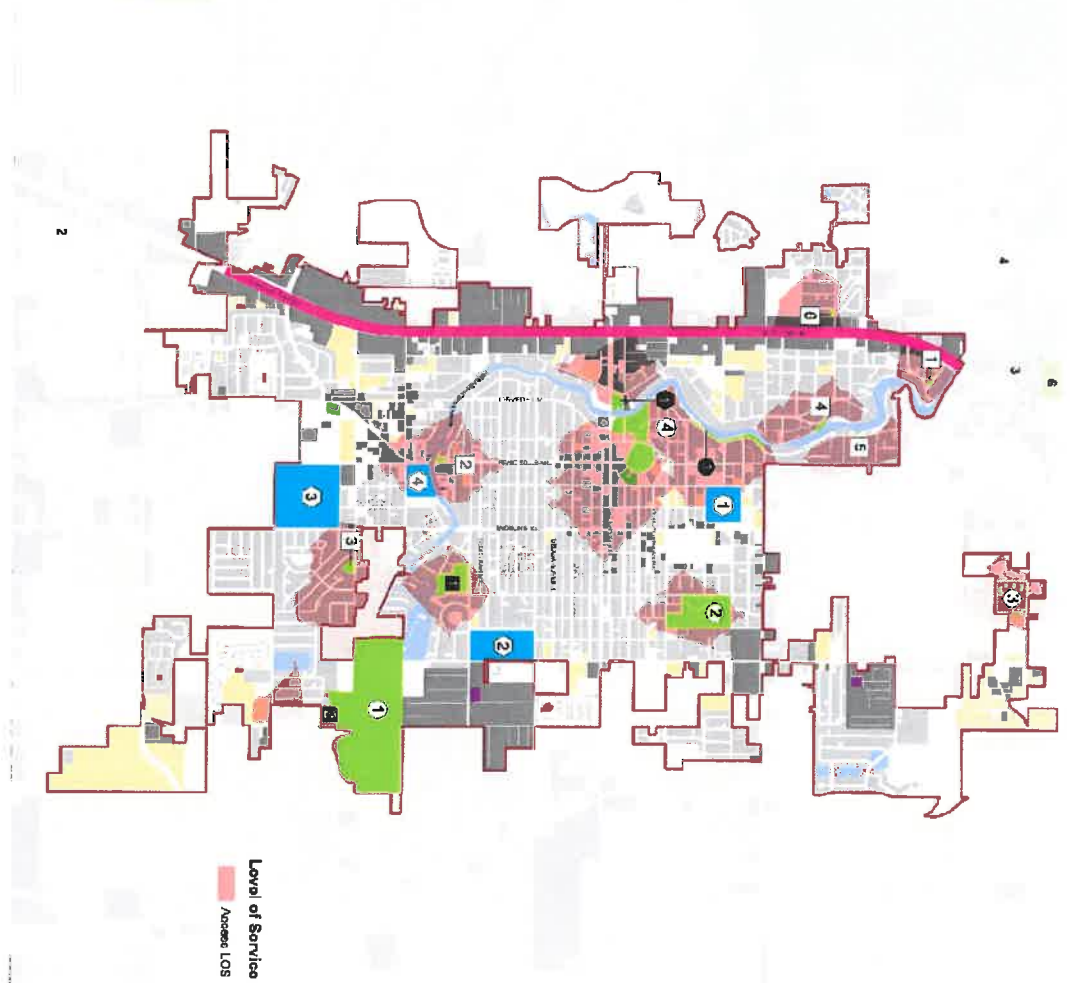


Figure 2.10 – All Parks – ½ Mile Access LOS

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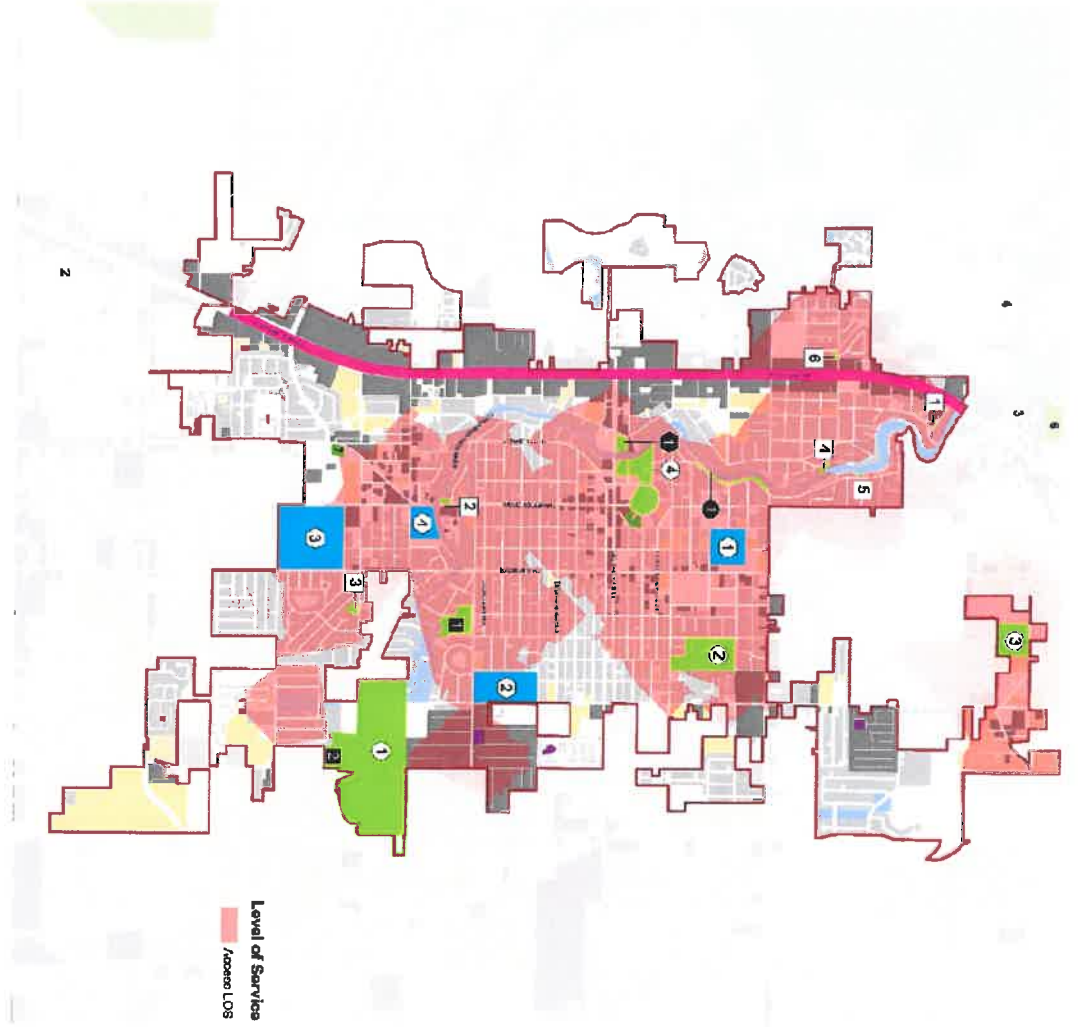
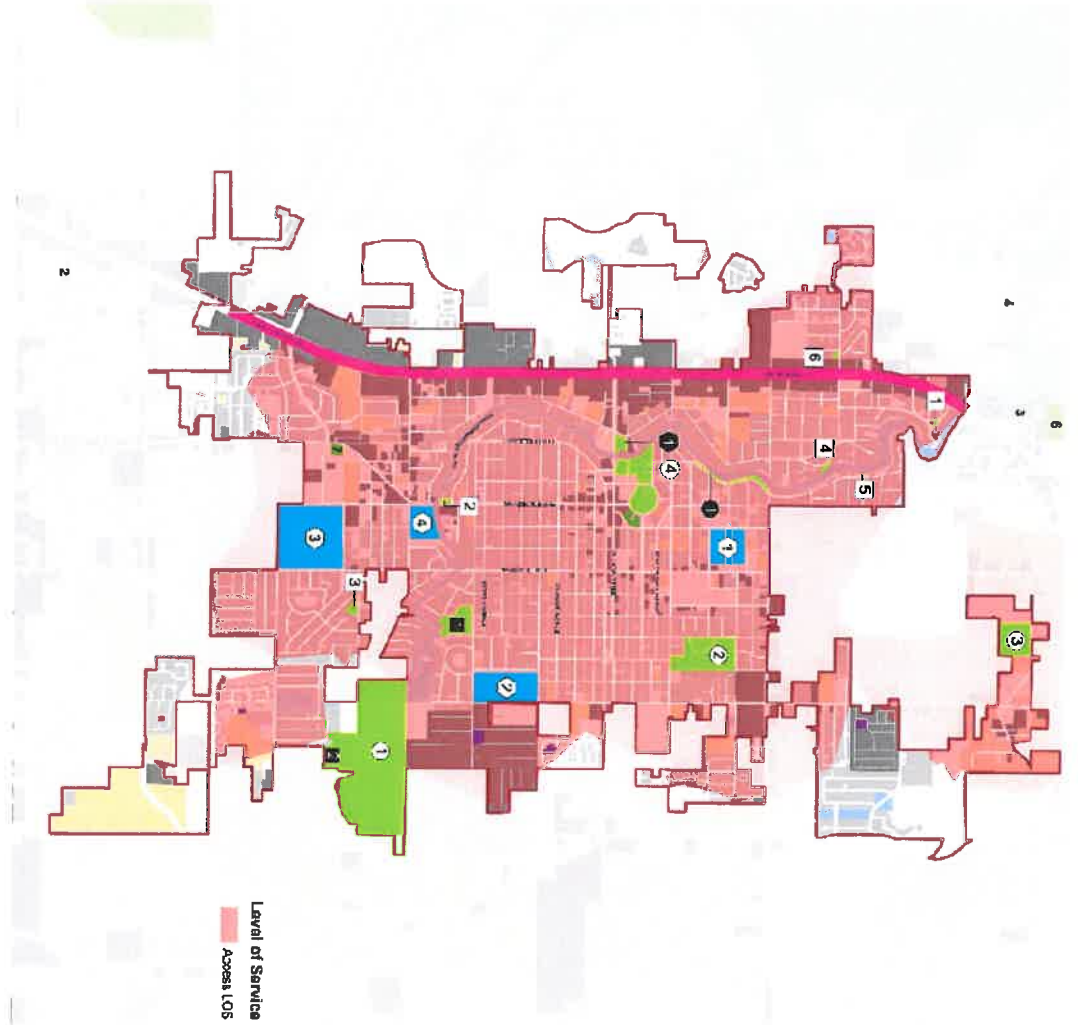


Figure 2.11 – All Parks – 1 Mile Access LOS

Let



**Figure 2.12 – Mini Parks 1/4 Mile and Neighborhood + Community + Linear + Special Use Facilities 1/2 Mile Access LOS**

Let

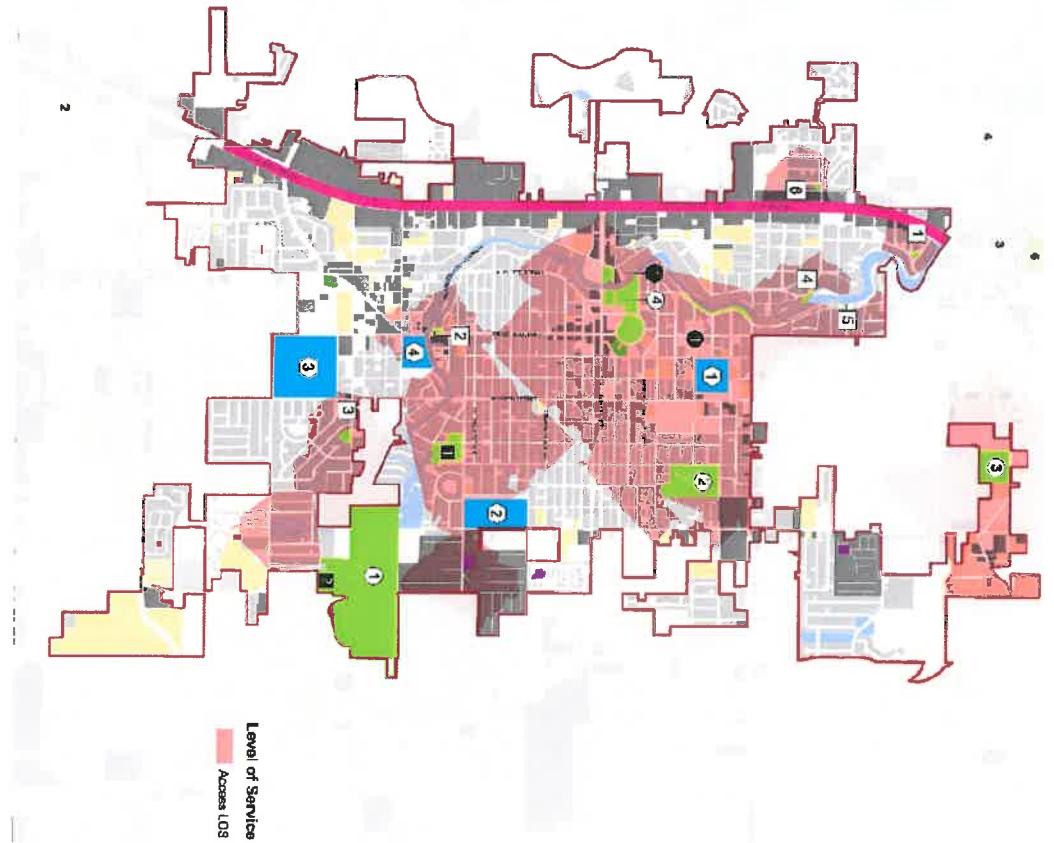


Figure 2.13 – Picnic Areas 1/2 Mile Access LOS

LOS

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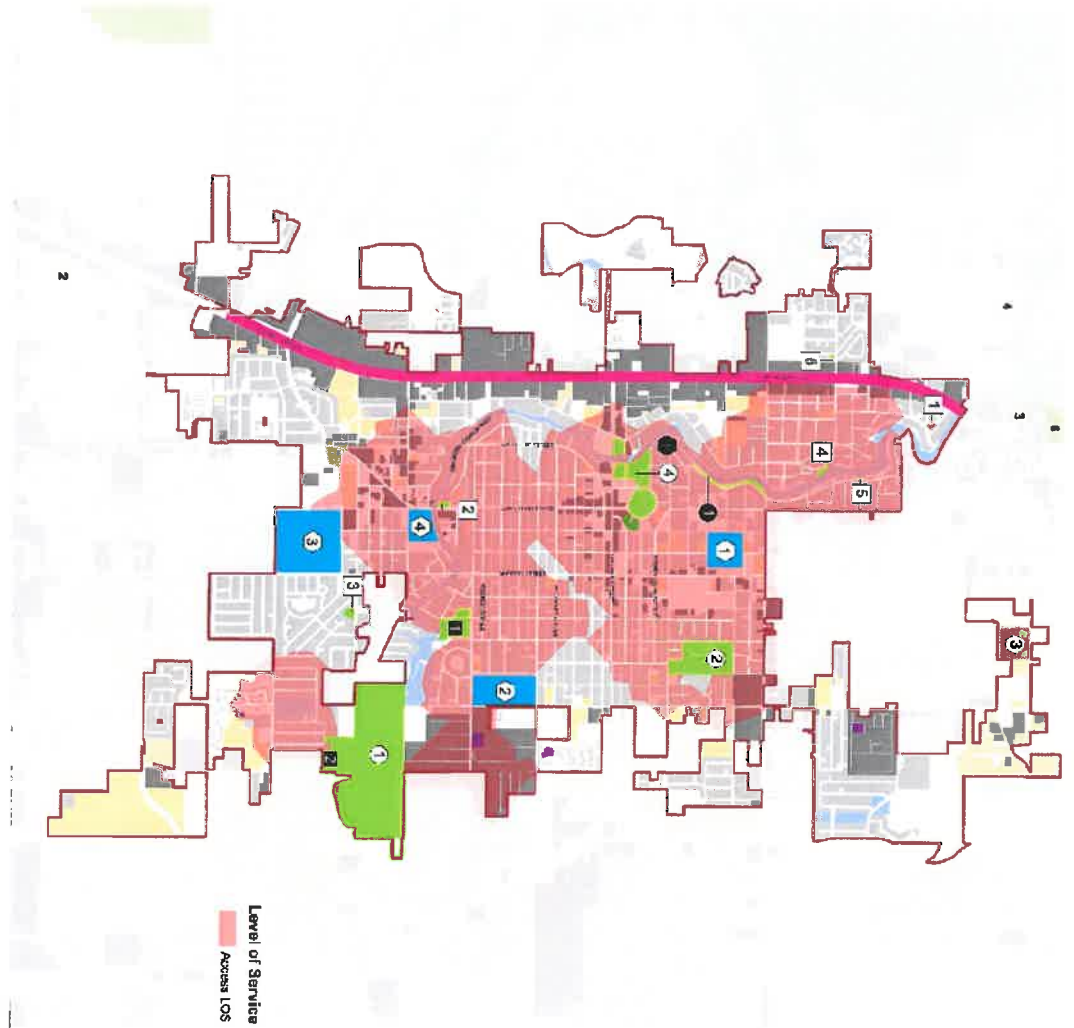


Figure 2.14 – Picnic Areas 1 Mile Access LOS

Let

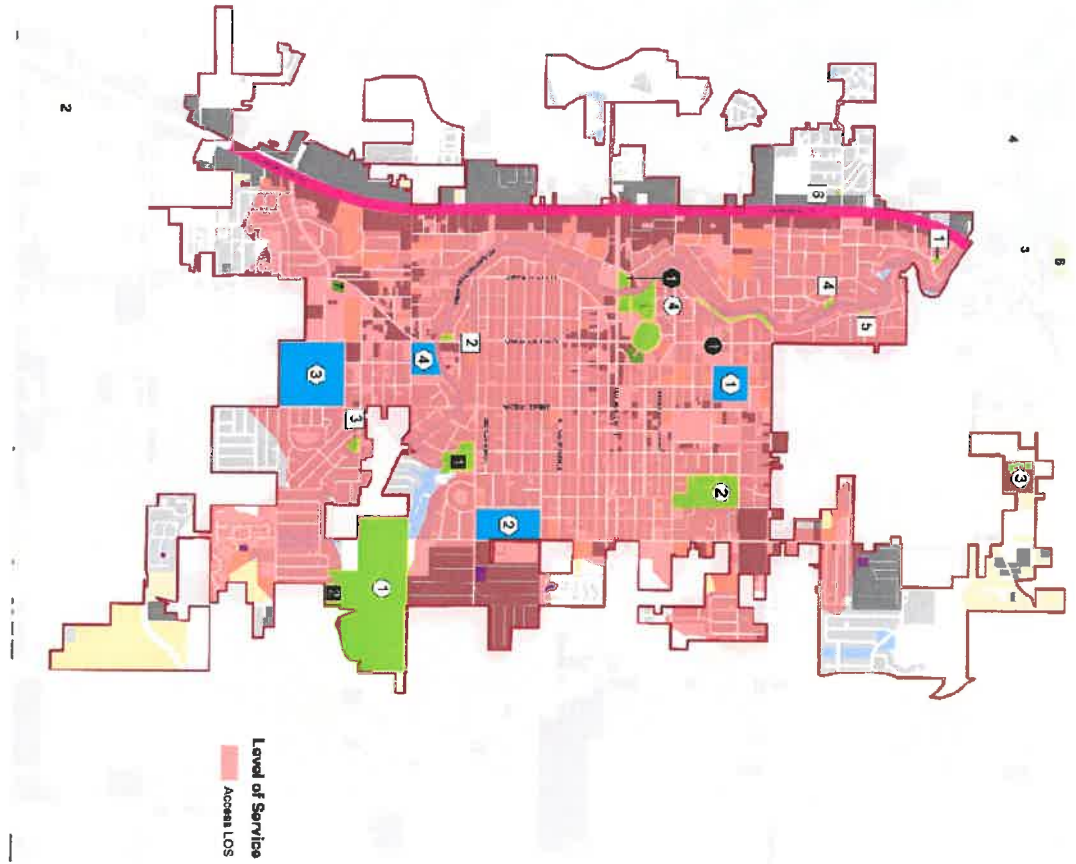


Figure 2.15 – Basketball Courts 1/2 Mile Access LOS

Log

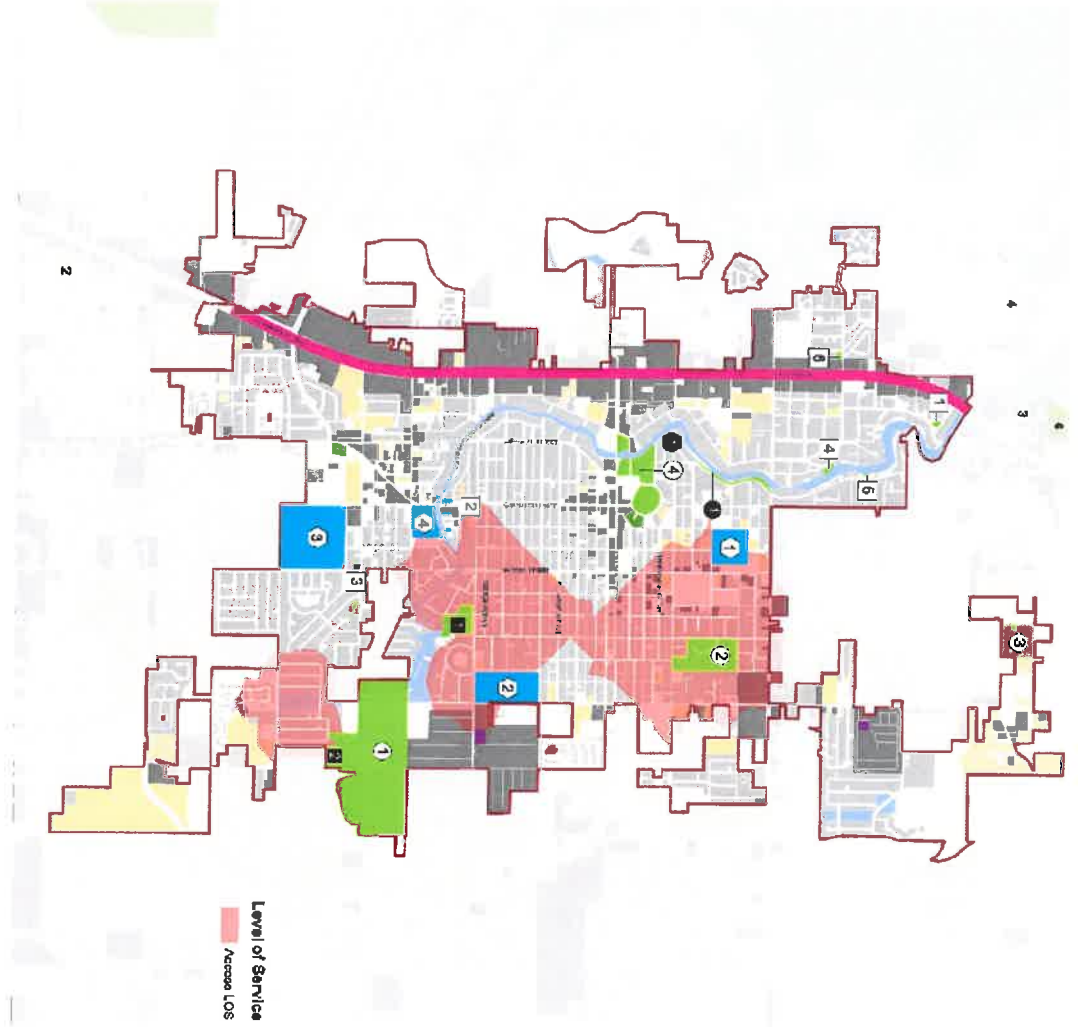


Figure 2.16 – Basketball Courts 1 Mile Access LOS

Let

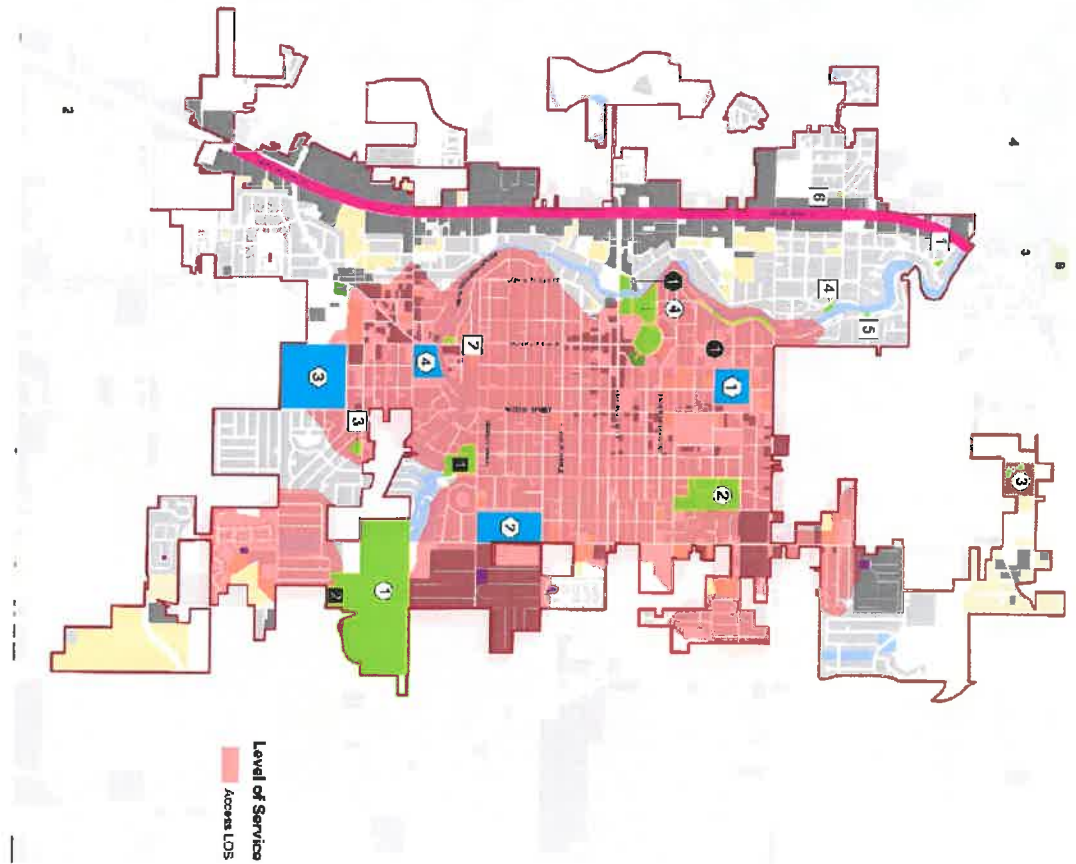


Figure 2.17 – Tennis Courts 1/2 Mile Access LOS

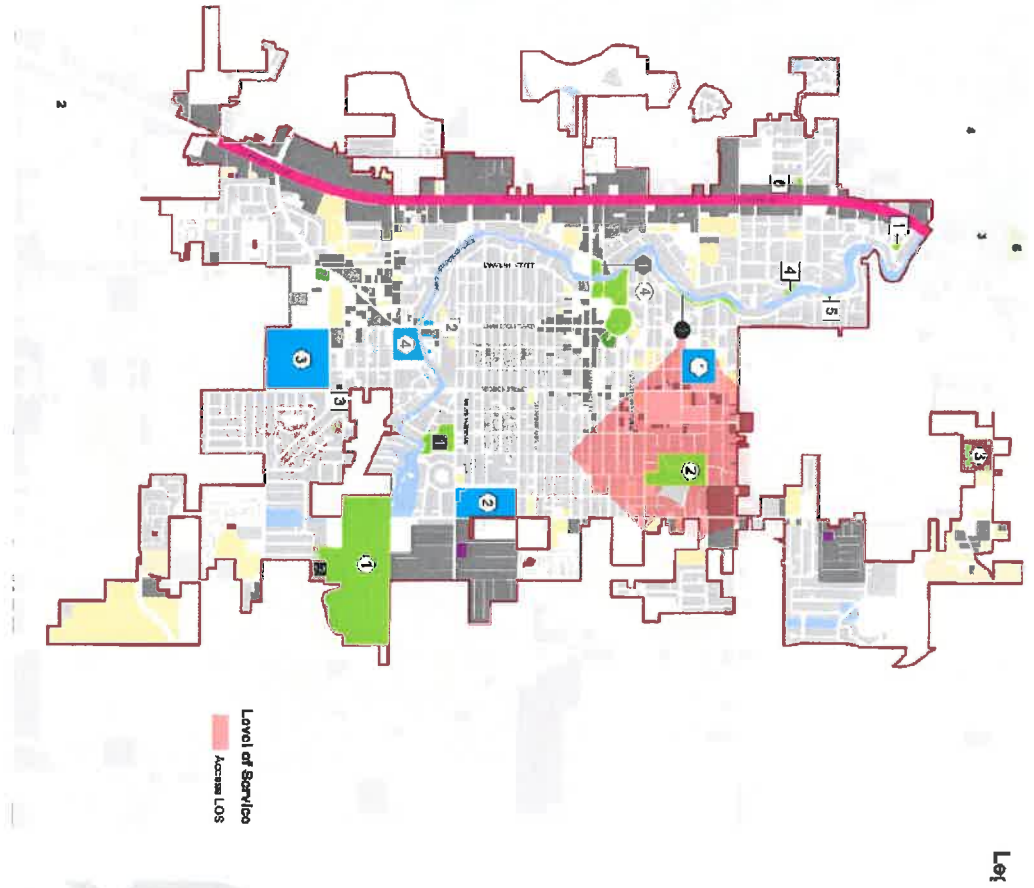


Figure 2.18 – Tennis Courts 1 Mile Access LOS

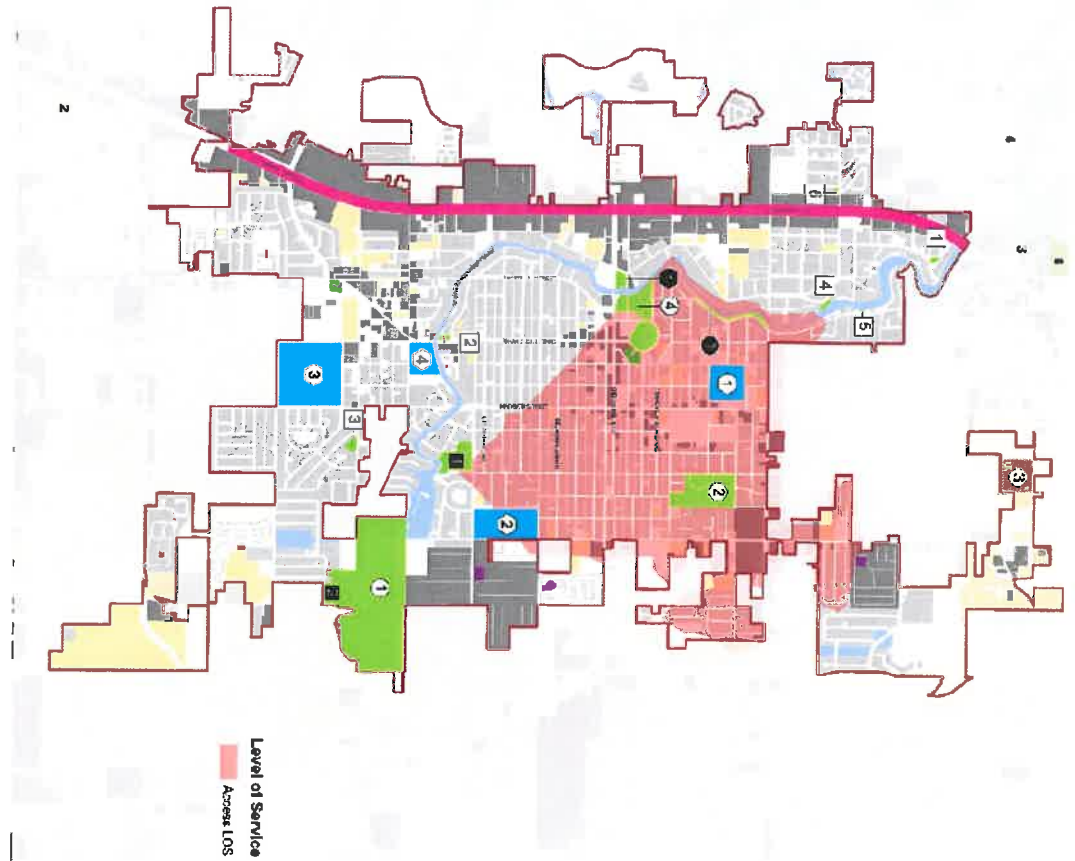


Figure 2.19 – Pickleball Courts 1/2 Mile Access LOS

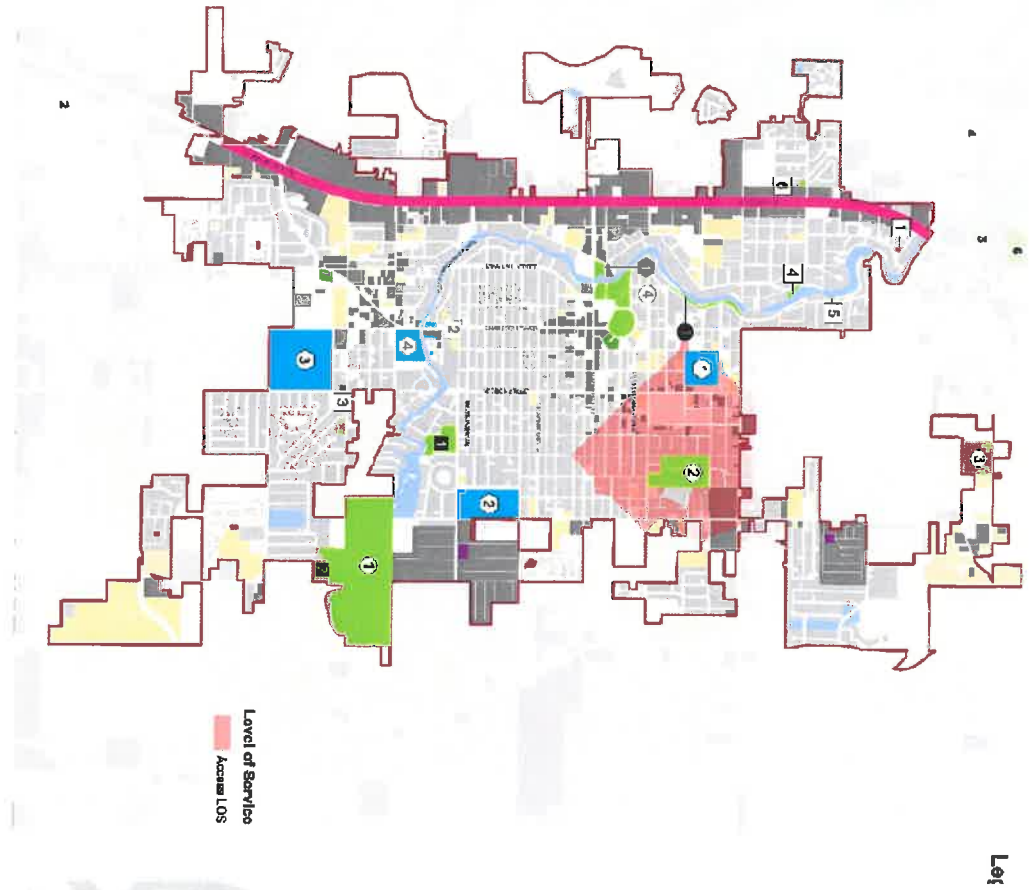


Figure 2.20 – Pickleball Courts 1 Mile Access LOS

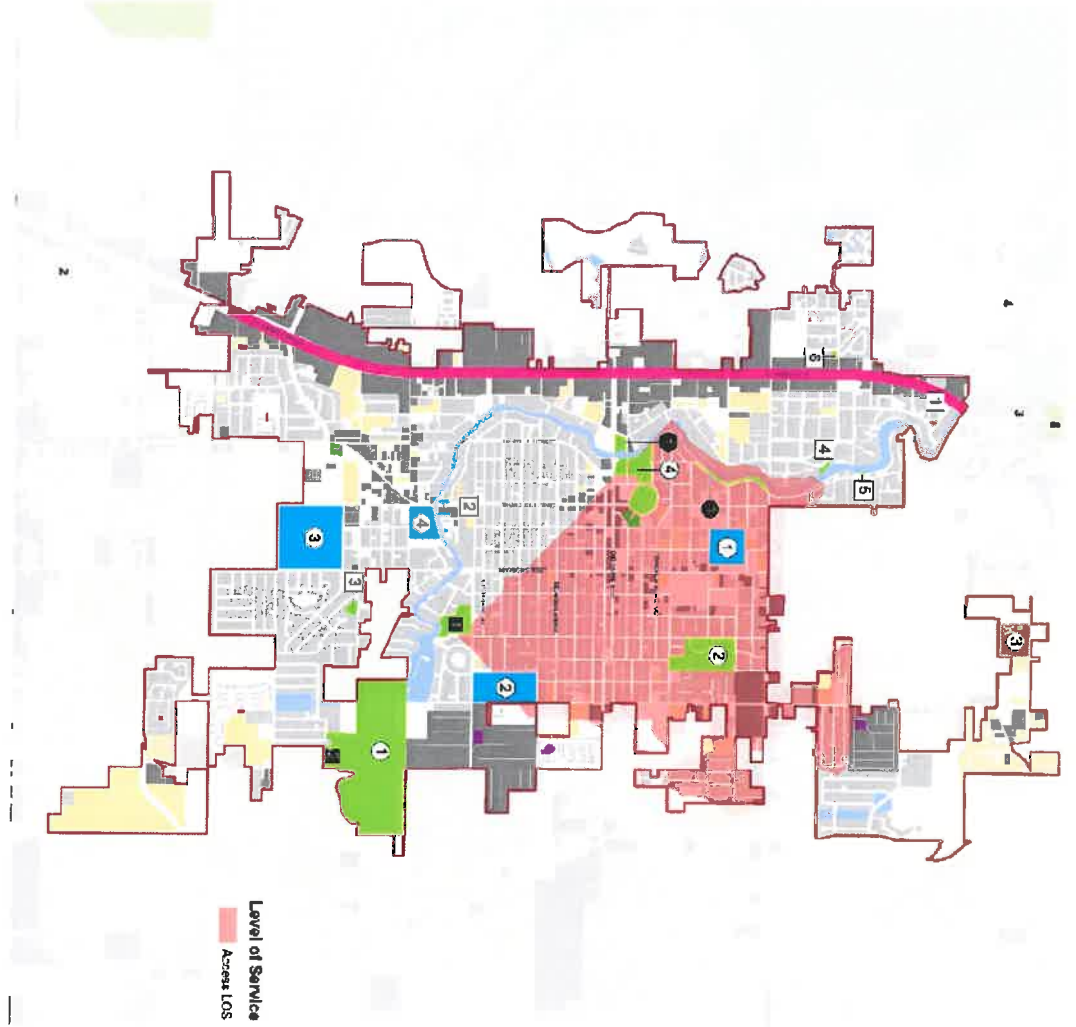


Figure 2.21 – Playgrounds 1/2 Mile Access LOS

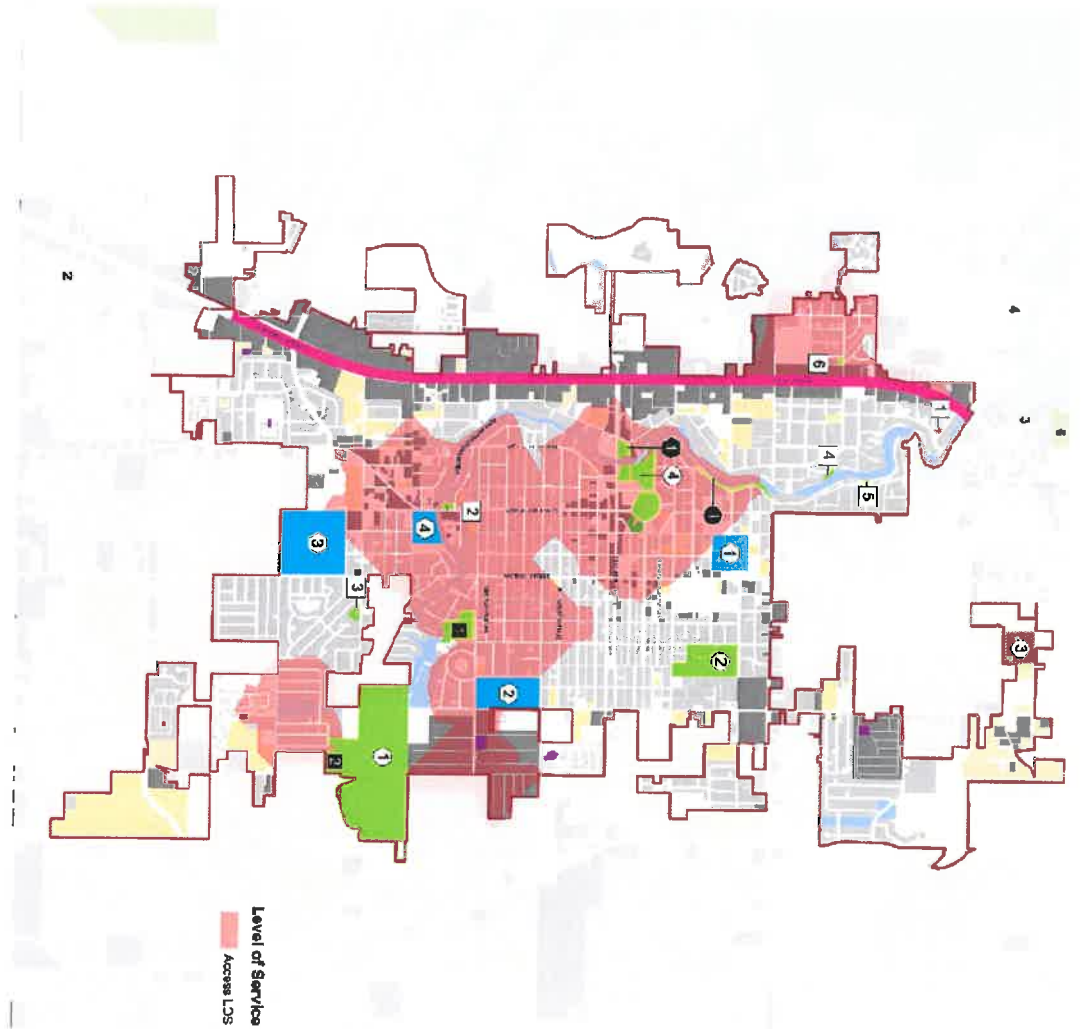
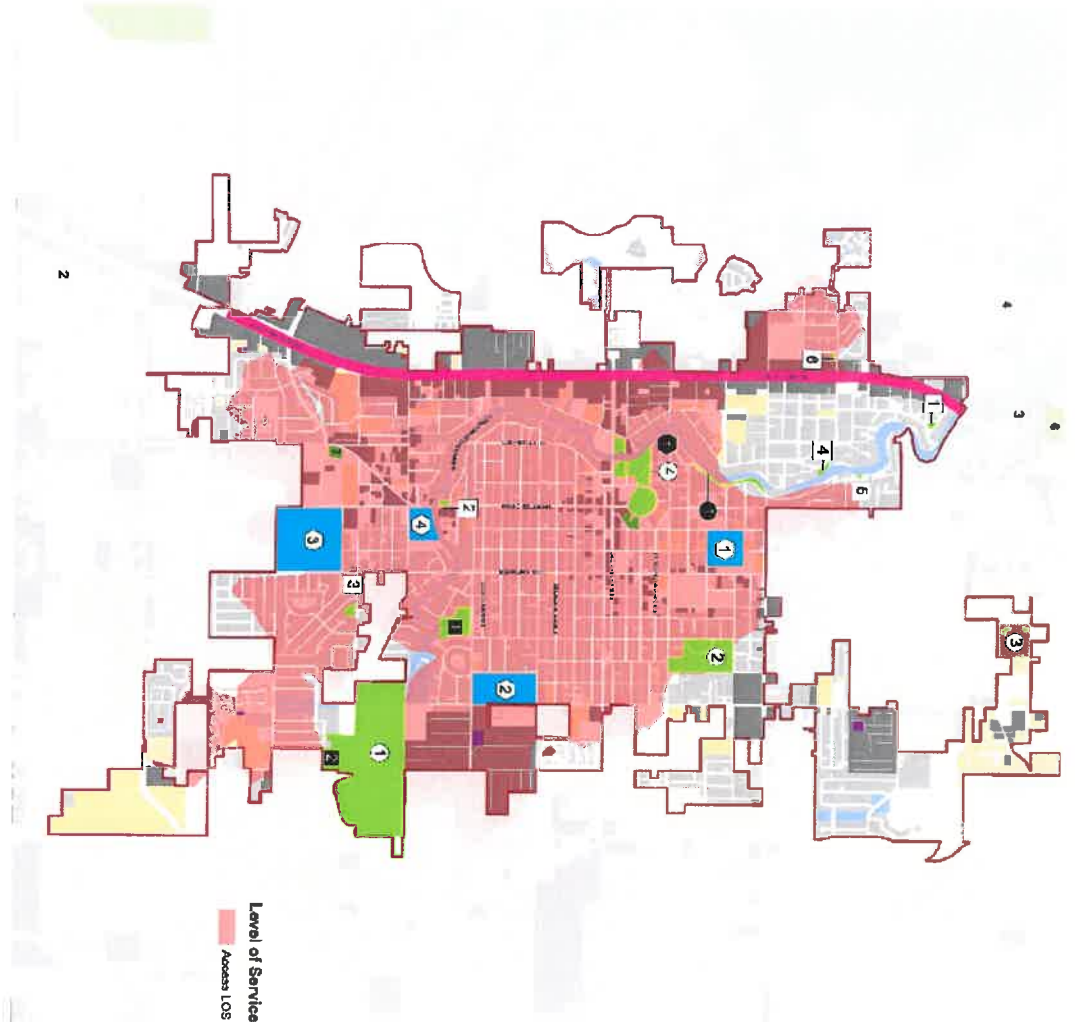


Figure 2.22 – Playgrounds 1 Mile Access LOS



### Level-of-Service Analysis

While the City appears to have sufficient park acreage when compared to the City's Acreage LOS target, it is below the National Median Benchmark.

- Based on the City's Access LOS targets, parks do not appear to be equitably distributed throughout the City with areas throughout the City lacking access to greenspace, which may suggest the need to acquire additional park land to address these gaps or change the City's Access LOS standards
- Facilities that the City may have a need for in the future may include:
  - Basketball Courts
  - Rectangle Fields
  - Diamond Fields
  - Boat Ramp Lanes
  - Multi-Purpose Trails
  - Tennis Courts
  - Pickleball Courts
  - Shuffleboard Courts

## **2.3 Statistically Representative Survey**

### **Overview and Methodology**

ETC Institute administered a needs assessment survey for the City of New Port Richey during the fall of 2016. ETC Institute mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households in the City of New Port Richey. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. Residents who received the survey were given the option of returning the survey by mail or completing it on-line at [www.NewPortRicheyGov.org](http://www.NewPortRicheyGov.org).

Ten days after the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute sent emails and placed phone calls to the households that received the survey to encourage participation. The emails contained a link to the on-line version of the survey to make it easy for residents to complete the survey. To prevent people who were not residents of the City of New Port Richey from participating, everyone who completed the survey on-line was required to enter their home address prior to submitting the survey. ETC Institute then matched the addresses that were entered on-line with the addresses that were originally selected for the random sample. If the address from a survey completed on-line did not match one of the addresses selected for the sample, the on-line survey was not counted.

The goal was to obtain completed surveys from at least 400 residents. The goal was exceeded with a total of 502 residents completing the survey. The overall results for the sample of 502 households have a precision of at least +/-4.4% at the 95% level of confidence. Following is a summary of the findings.

### **Overall Facility Use and Ratings**

**Overall Use:** Eighty-three percent (83%) of households surveyed indicated they had visited any of the City of New Port Richey parks and/or recreation facilities during the past 12 months. A majority of respondents (55%) made between one and 10 visits during the past year, 12% of respondents made 11 to 19 visits, and a third of respondents (33%) made 20 or more visits.

**Ratings:** A majority of respondents (68%), who visited a City of New Port Richey park or recreation facility, indicated the physical condition of the park they visited was “excellent”. Sixty-eight percent (68%) is more than double the national average of 31%.

### **Program Participation and Ratings**

**Overall Participation:** Nineteen percent (19%) of households surveyed indicated that they had participated in the City of New Port Richey recreation programs during the past 12 months.

**Ratings:** A majority of respondents (90%), who participated in a program offered by the City of New Port Richey, indicated the quality of the program was either “excellent” (56%) or “good” (34%). The national averages are nearly a mirrored reversal, a majority of national respondents (53%) indicated the programs they participated in were “good”, while 36% of national respondents indicated the programs they participated in were “excellent”.

### **Organizations and Facilities Used for Parks and Recreation Programs and Cultural Facilities**

Over half of the respondents (57%) indicated their household uses parks and recreation programs and facilities offered by the City of New Port Richey. The top three organizations, not including the City of New Port Richey, households use most often include neighboring cities/counties/state parks (34%), churches (20%), private clubs (11%).

### **Barriers to Park, Facility, and Program Usage**

Respondents were asked from a list of 19 potential reasons to identify why households use private fitness centers or other facilities instead of the City's recreation and aquatics center. The top four reasons selected were: not knowing what is offered (43%), fees are too high (36%), program or facility is not offered (24%), and program times are not convenient (24%).

### **Facility Needs and Priorities**

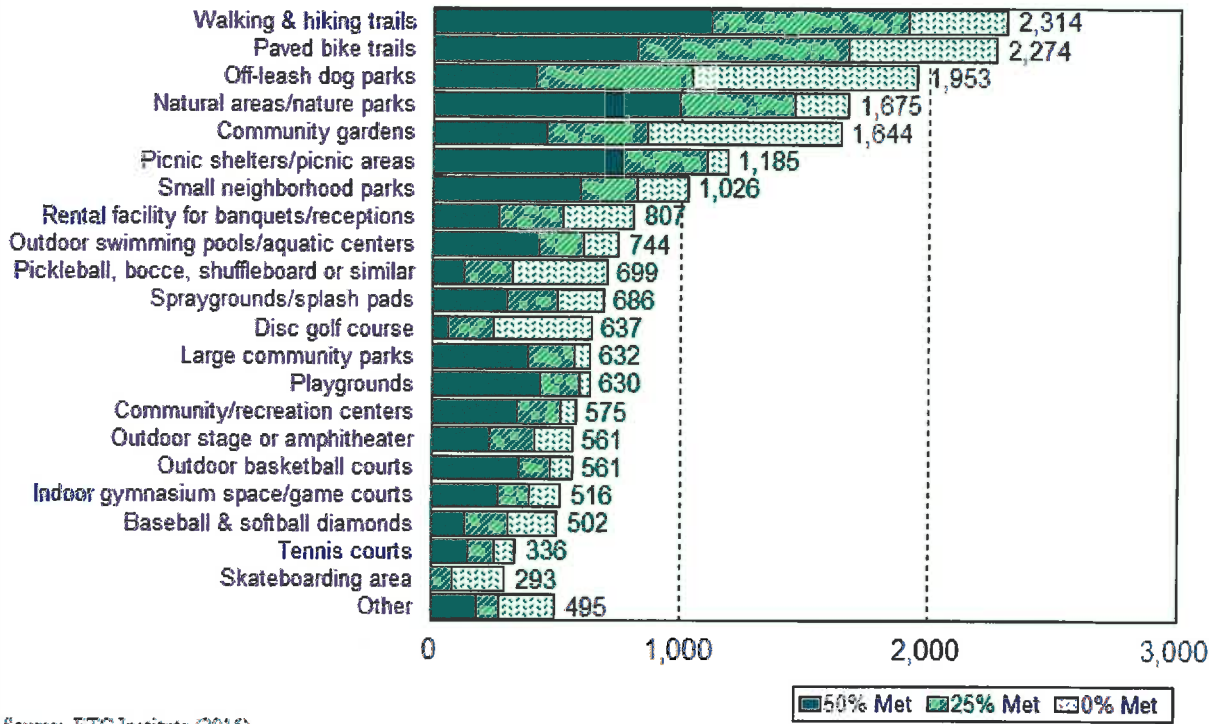
Facility Needs: Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 22 recreation facilities and amenities and rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest "unmet" need for various facilities.

The three recreation facilities with the highest percentage of households that indicated a need for the facility were: small neighborhood parks (56%), natural areas/nature parks (56%), and walking and hiking trails (55%). When ETC Institute analyzed the needs in the community, only two facilities, walking and hiking trails and paved bike trails, had a need that affected more than 2,000 households. ETC Institute estimates a total of 2,314 of the 8,780 households in the City of New Port Richey have unmet needs for walking and hiking trails. The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 22 facilities that were assessed is shown in the table below.

**Figure 2.23 – Number of Households Whose Needs for Facilities Are Only Being Met 50% or Less**

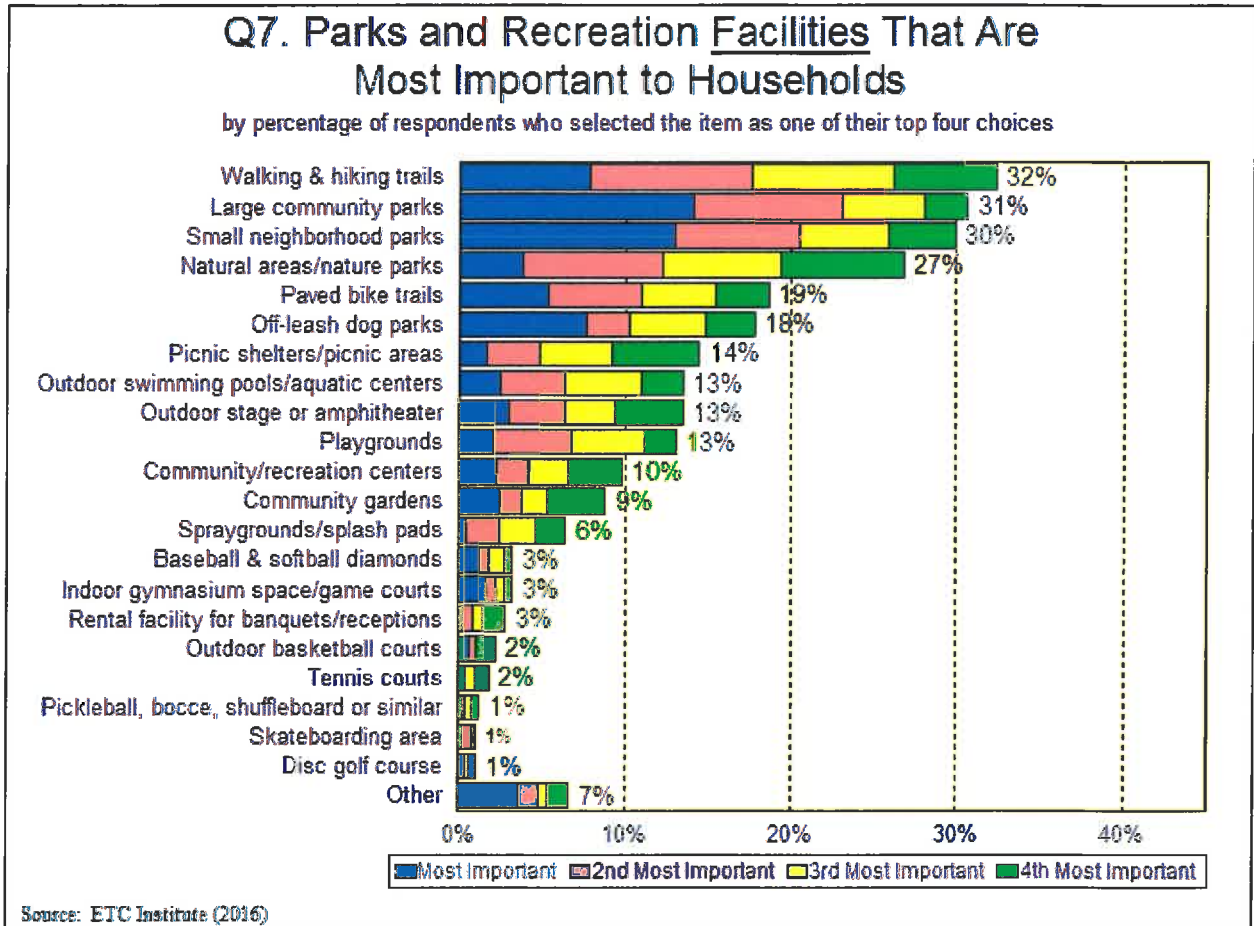
### Q5-3. Estimated Number of Households in the City of New Port Richey Whose Needs for Parks and Recreation Facilities Are Only Being Met 50% or Less

by number of households based on 8,780 households in New Port Richey



Facility Importance: In addition to assessing the needs of each facility, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each facility. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, the three most important facilities to residents were: walking and hiking trails (32%), large community parks (31%), and small neighborhood parks (30%). The percentage of residents who selected each facility as one of their top four choices is shown in the chart at the top of the following page.

Figure 2.24 – Parks and Recreation Facilities That are Most Important to Households

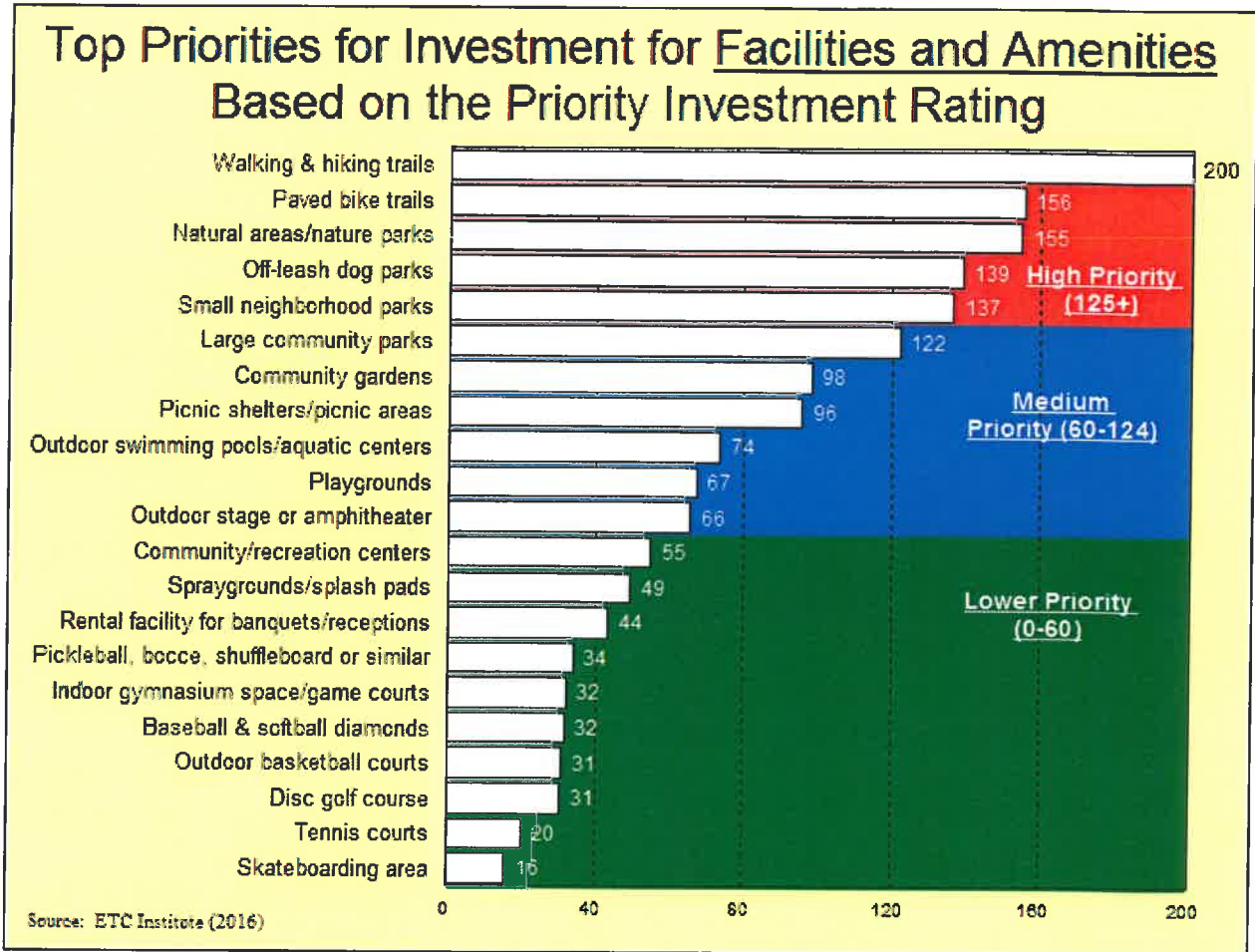


Priorities for Facility Investments: The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on Parks and Recreation investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facility. Based on the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following five facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Walking and hiking trails (PIR=200)
- Paved bike trails (PIR=156)
- Natural areas/nature parks (PIR=155)
- Off-leash dog parks (PIR=139)
- Small neighborhood parks (PIR=137)

The chart on the following page shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 21 facilities/amenities that were assessed on the survey.

**Figure 2.25 – Top Priority Facilities and Amenities**

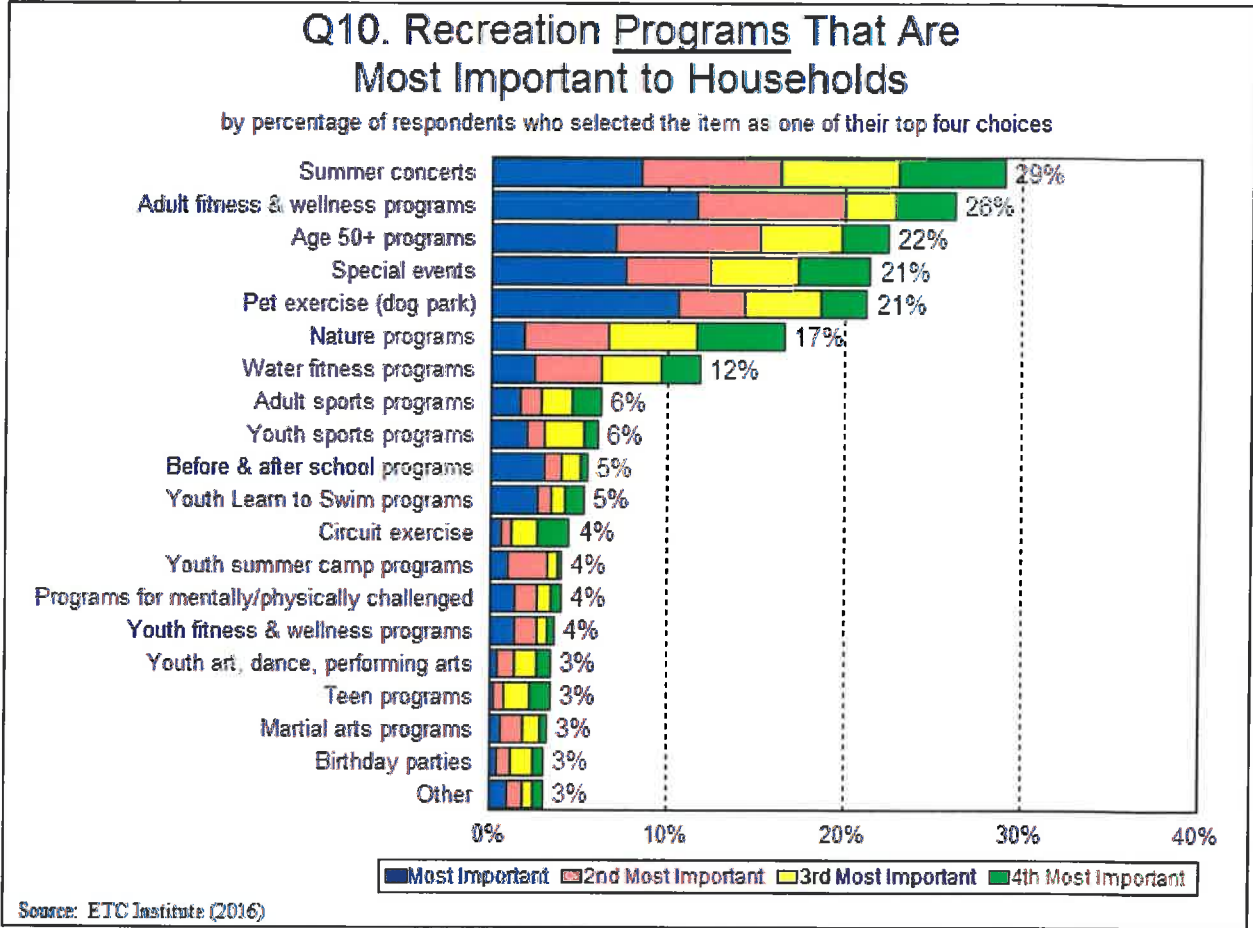


### Programming Needs and Priorities

Respondents were also asked to identify if their household had a need for 20 recreational programs and rate how well their needs for each program were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had “unmet” needs for each program.

The three programs with the highest percentage of households that had needs were: summer concerts (48%), adult fitness and wellness programs (47%), and age 50+ programs (36%). In addition to having the highest total need, two of the top three most needed programs also have the highest unmet need among the 20 programming-related areas that were assessed. ETC Institute estimates a total of 2,500 households have unmet needs for adult fitness and wellness programs and 2,257 households have unmet needs for age 50+ programs. The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 20 programs that were assessed is shown in the chart at the top of the following page.

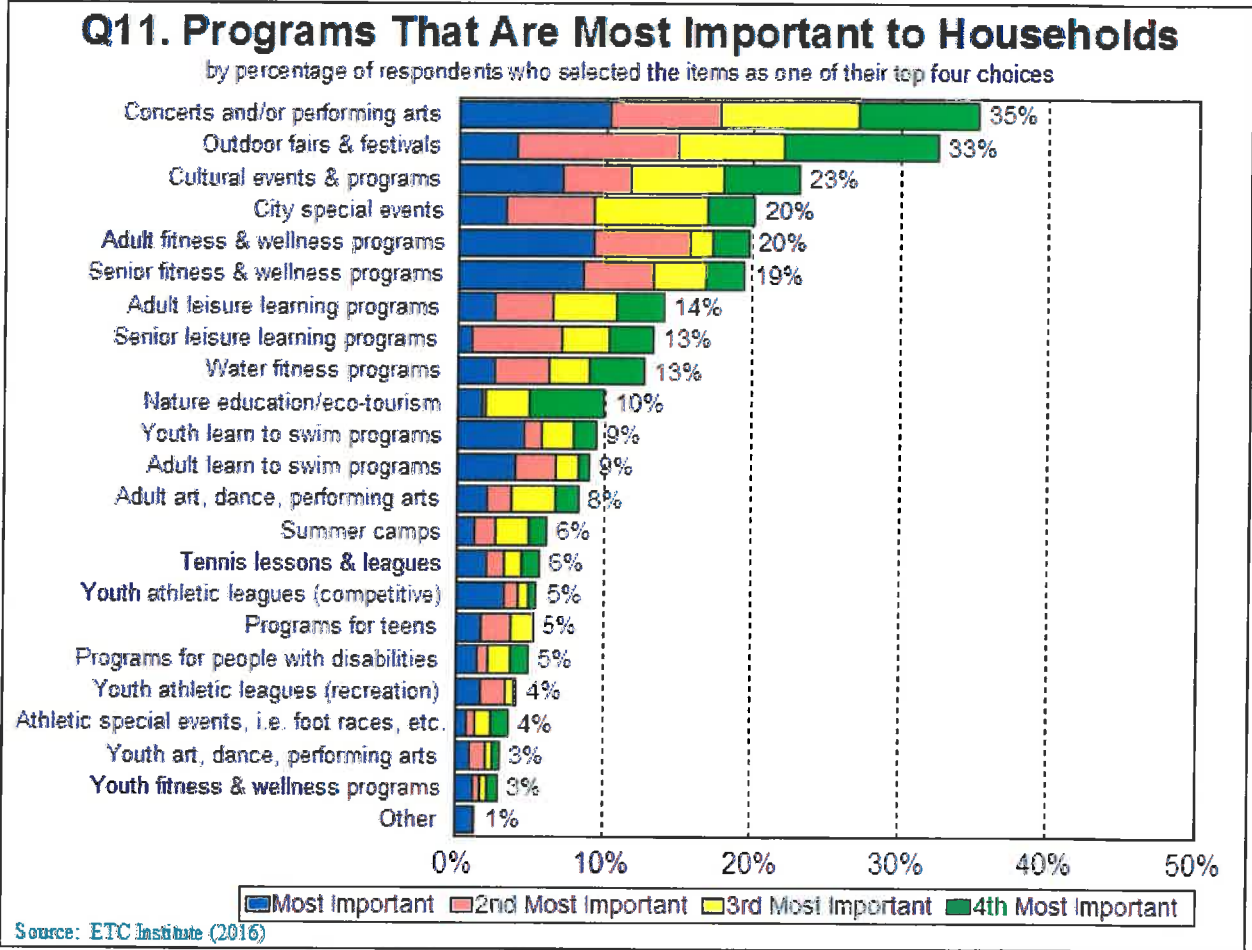
**Figure 2.26 – Recreation Programs That are Most Important to Households**



In addition to assessing the needs of each program, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents place on each program. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, the three most important programs to residents were: summer concerts (29%), adult fitness and wellness programs (26%), age 50+ programs (22%).

The percentage of residents who selected each program as one of their top four choices is shown in the table at the top of the following page.

**Figure 2.27 – Programs That are Most Important to Households Who Selected Program as One of Their Top Four Choices**

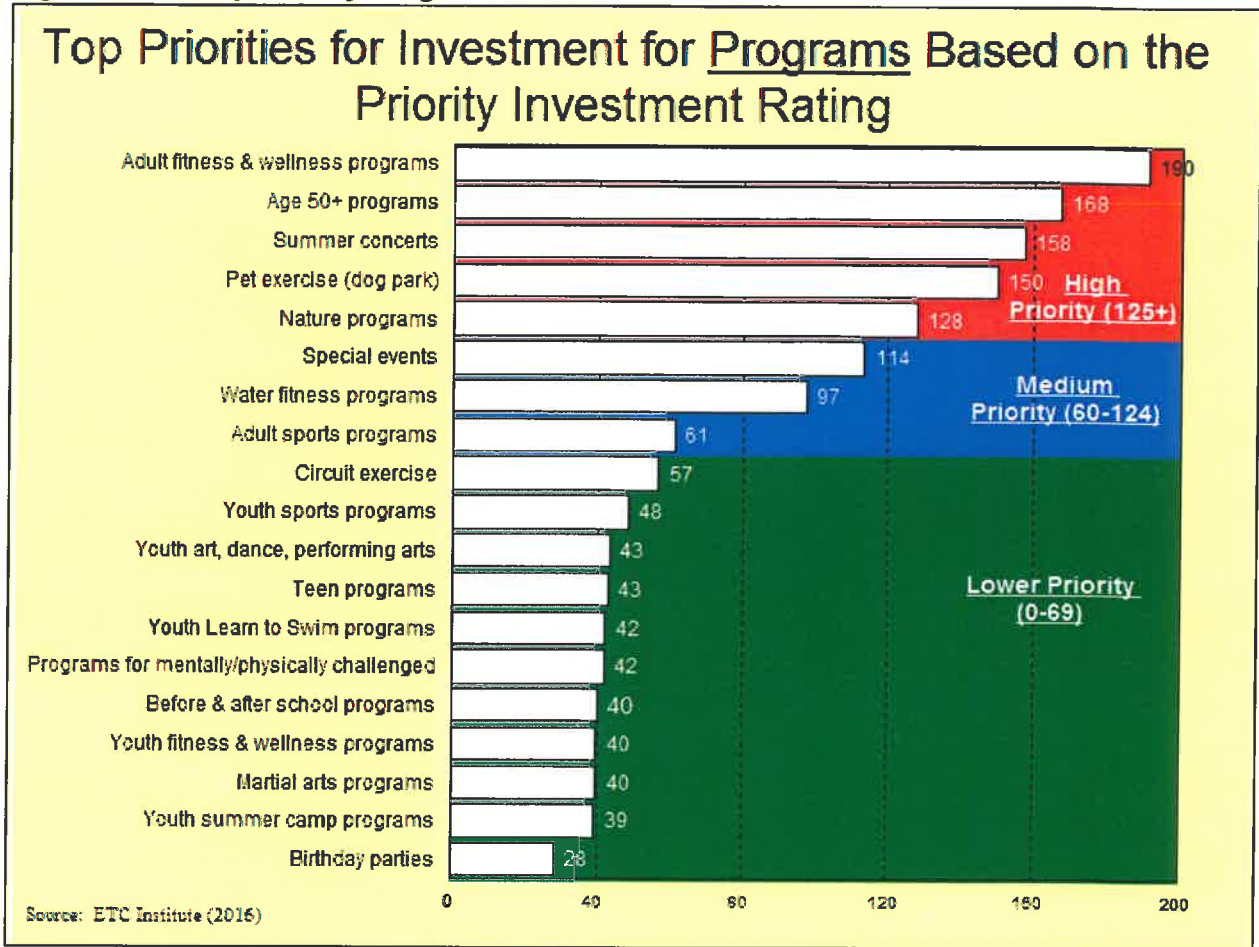


Priorities for Programming Investments. Based the priority investment rating (PIR), which was described briefly on page iv of this Executive Summary and is described in more detail in Section 2 of this report, the following five programs were rated as “high priorities” for investment:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=190)
- Age 50+ programs (PIR=168)
- Summer concerts (PIR=158)
- Pet exercise (dog park) (PIR=150)
- Nature programs(PIR=128)

The chart on the following page shows the Priority Investment Rating (PIR) for each of the 19 programs that were rated.

Figure 2.28 – Top Priority Programs



### Conclusions and Recommendations

The City of New Port Richey finds itself in a unique position compared to cities around the nation. They have fantastic support from their constituents, and over 90% of respondents feel that it is either “very important” (77%) or “somewhat important” (14%) for the City to provide high-quality parks and recreation facilities and programs. The key phrase from that statement is “high-quality”, residents of New Port Richey have very high expectations for their parks and recreation facilities and programs, and the City is doing a fantastic job of ensuring most needs are met within the community. When compared to the national average, more respondents from New Port Richey indicated the parks they’ve visited, and the programs they’ve participated in were “excellent”. Nationally, respondents are more likely to indicate their parks and recreation programs and facilities are more “good” than “excellent”, the City should pride itself knowing that they have high standards and are meeting those standards by setting the bar nationally.

One important factor that may be contributing to lower rates of program use in the City of New Port Richey is that respondents do not know what is being offered. Focusing on the ways respondents learn about recreation programs and activities, namely the newspaper and word of mouth could go a long way in closing the participation gap seen here.

When analyzing the programs offered by the City of New Port Richey the same item was the among the most important to respondent’s households, had the highest level of unmet need,

and was the number one most important facility to households. Focusing on walking and hiking trails within the district would provide the greatest benefit for the largest number of residents within the City of New Port Richey.

In order to ensure that the City of New Port Richey continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community, ETC Institute recommends that the Parks and Recreation a sustain and/or improve the performance in areas that were identified as "high priorities" by the Priority Investment Rating (PIR). The facilities and programs with the highest PIR ratings are listed below.

**Facility Priorities**

- Walking and hiking trails (PIR=200)
- Paved bike trails (PIR=156)
- Natural areas/nature parks (PIR=155)
- Off-leash dog parks (PIR=139)
- Small neighborhood parks (PIR=137)

**Programming Priorities**

- Adult fitness and wellness programs (PIR=190)
- Age 50+ programs (PIR=168)
- Summer concerts (PIR=158)
- Pet exercise (dog park) (PIR=150)
- Nature programs(PIR=128)

## 2.4 On-line Survey

The survey instrument used for the statistically-valid survey was modified for use as an on-line survey, administered by the City. Approximately two hundred and forty people responded to the survey; the survey results are included in Appendix \_\_\_\_ (to be included with final report).

Highlights from the survey include:

- Over 94% of respondents have visited parks and/or recreation facilities in the City of New Port Richey during the past 12 months
- The three most frequently visited parks are the Recreation and Aquatics Center (43%), Sims Park/ Orange Lake (37%), and the James E. Grey Preserve (5%)
- Over 92% of respondents rated the physical condition of the parks they visited as good or excellent
- Over 46% of the respondents have participated in a recreational program offered by the City of New Port Richey over the past 12 months
- Over 95% of respondents rated the quality of the program they attended as good or excellent
- 50% or more of respondents indicated a need for more of the following recreation facilities:
  - Paved bike trails (78%)
  - Walking and hiking trails (68%)
  - Community gardens (66%)
  - Natural areas/nature parks (61%)
  - Small neighborhood parks (54%)
  - Off-leash dog parks (60%)
  - Picnic shelters/picnic areas (50%)
  - Spray-grounds/splash pads (50%)
- 50% or more of respondents indicated a need for more of the following recreation programs:
  - Nature programs (66%)
  - Adult fitness and wellness programs (58%)
  - Summer concerts (58%)
  - Teen programs (57%)
  - Before and after school programs (54%)
  - Adult sports programs (53%)
  - Youth fitness and wellness programs (54%)
  - Water fitness programs (50%)
- The top three reasons why respondents use private fitness centers or other facilities instead of the City's Recreation and Aquatics Center are:
  - Fees are too high (38%)
  - Facility operating hours not convenient (19%)
  - Program times are not convenient (19%)

## 2.5 Public Outreach Meeting

The City hosted a public meeting Monday, December 5 to solicit residents' input regarding parks and recreation needs and priorities. Approximately 30 people attended the meeting. The agenda included:

- Welcome, Introductions
- Overview, Purpose of the Master Plan
- Exercises:
  - Facility and program priorities (“dots”)
  - Individual park improvements (“post-its” on aerials)
  - Open station - flipchart
- Questions, discussion, adjourn

Following are the findings from the three needs assessment exercises.

### **Facility and Program Priorities**

Participants were asked to indicate which types of recreation facilities and programs are “important, but not being provided adequately in New Port Richey”. The top three priority facilities included “paved bike trails” (indicated by 18 participants), “off-leash dog parks” (10 people), and “walking and hiking trails” (9 people). Other needs included a “skateboarding area”, “outdoor pool/aquatics”, and “outdoor stage/amphitheater” (7 people each).

The top four priority programs included “river activities” (indicated by 13 participants), “pet exercise (dog park)” (11 people), and “adult fitness/wellness” and “circuit exercise” (8 people each). Other needs included a “summer concerts” and “special events” (7 people each), and “nature programs” (6 people).

### **Individual Park Improvements**

Participants were asked to write down specific improvements needed at each of the City's existing parks. Proposed improvements included:

#### **Cotee River Park**

- Blow sidewalks more often
- Favorite Sunday walk
- Stop water runoff from Kentucky sprinklers
- Continue the bayou in Part Richey
- Docks at street end
- Wider multi-use sidewalks
- Sidewalks between Sims Park and Cotee River Park are too narrow, often over-grown
- Continue lighting, add lamp posts to Sims Park along Grand, improve sidewalk

#### **Frances Avenue Park**

- Larger playground area
- Enclosed dog park
- Dog park in a shaded area
- Add bigger slides and equipment for bigger kids
- Equipment for special needs kids
- No more improvements
- Paved access to boat launch

### **Grand Boulevard Park**

- Great park
- Add a restroom

### **High Street Park**

- Dog park and pond
- Play area fenced in

### **James E. Grey Preserve**

- Allow dogs
- Love it, leave it alone
- Bike path next to river
- Real bike paths, not wide sidewalks
- Bike park (2)
- Real bike path, directions to it from main roads
- More playground equipment
- More shelters

### **Jasmin Park**

- Get rid of sand spurs
- More benches or covered picnic areas
- No playground
- Porch swing
- Quit driving up with heavy trucks to empty trash cans; sidewalks are cracked

### **Meadows Park**

- Time-out cages, areas
- Community area for both small and large dogs
- More shade trees
- Look at new Tarpon Springs dog park
- Put a barrier in the river to prevent dogs from swimming away, protection from alligators
- Grass to replace sand
- Walking trail around periphery of park
- Trees, shade, and grass
- Is river clean enough for dogs to swim in?

### **Orange Grove Park**

- Covered picnic area
- Dock and benches
- Casual space areas

### **Peace Hall**

- "No" to return of the gardens
- Gardens back
- Beautiful landscape and shell art sculptures
- Sections with shade
- Yes, bring the green
- Gardens/plants

- Kitchen for events
- Make building bigger for parties
- More community-pleasing acoustic music inside

#### **Pine Hill Park**

- Adult softball fields

#### **Recreation and Aquatics Center (grounds)**

- No changes needed
- Do not spend more money on brick, use existing space more effectively
- Additional parking
- Skatepark
- More parking out front
- Bigger slide pool
- Staff is great, wonderful place
- Expanded recreation services, hours of operation

#### **River Drive Park**

- Make it a playground, get prostitutes out
- Lots of light

#### **Russ Park**

- Sell it
- Have no clue where it is

#### **Sims Boat Ramp**

- Ramp use free
- Parking fee, especially for non-City residents
- Sidewalk on Main is undermining (washing out) by the bridge on the Chamber side
- Charge for the boat ramp
- Charge for parking meters or charge \$5 to use the boat ramps or sell permits, especially for non-residents
- Don't charge citizens for boat ramp
- More boat ramps and parking
- Purchase abutting properties

#### **Sims Park (including Orange Lake)**

- Docks along entire seawall
- More shade in front of the stage
- Move swings
- Improve street (repave?)
- Make splash pad more of a spray ground'
- More handicapped swings and equipment
- More bike paths linking all parks
- Do not want crazy improvements made to circle boulevard Orange Lake walk, leave as is
- Dog park area under shade
- Lake used to be crystal clear, bring clear water back, new area for ducks

- Finish all phases before spending \$ on rec center
- More shade structures
- More boat docks

## **2.6 Stakeholder/ Focus Group Interviews**

The Barth Associates team conducted interviews with key stakeholders and focus groups (invited by the City) on December 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Interview questions included:

1. Review of Scope/ Schedule: Do you have any questions about the project scope/ methodology?
2. Needs: Based on what you know, see and hear about your community, what do you believe are the top priority parks and recreation needs?
3. Priorities: Of the needs listed above, what are your top 3 priorities?
4. Benchmark Communities: As we analyze your system, who should we compare you to? Are there any communities that you wish to emulate?

Following is a summary of responses related specifically to needs and priorities. Interview notes are included in Appendix \_\_\_\_ (to be included with final report).

### **Council Member and Manager Priorities**

Top priority improvements identified by the five members of City Council and the City Manager included:

- Complete phase 2 of Sims Park (including Orange Lake)
- Improve Grey Preserve, including new amenities and programs
- Coordinated marketing, broad and inclusive (not in silos)
- Upgrade other parks throughout the City, including Frances Park, Pine Hill Park, Russ Park, and Jasmin Park, including:
  - Playground equipment, other passive amenities in neighborhood parks
  - Improved maintenance and quality
  - Free programs and activities
  - Incorporation of public art, history, iconic images
  - Incorporation of natural elements, e.g. bat house and programs

### **Priorities of other Key Stakeholders**

In addition to interviewing Council members and the City Manager, Barth Associates also met with representatives of the following recreation interest groups to discuss their needs and priorities: tennis, pickleball, swimming, skateboarding, Pinehill Baseball, fitness and runners, kayaking, playgrounds, and dog parks. Following is a summary of their priority needs:

Tennis:

- Adjust tennis lighting to encourage night-time play
- 6 lighted har-tru courts
- 5 permanent children's courts

Pickleball:

- 4 lighted outdoor courts in one park

**Swimming:**

- Marketing
- 50-meter heated pool (heated)
- Heated plunge pool
- Additional programming provided by 50-meter pool and heated plunge pool

**Skateboarding:**

- New skatepark
- Skate programs

**Pinehill Baseball:**

- Parking
- Sidewalks
- Upgrade on concession stand.

**Fitness and Runners:**

- Dedicated multi-purpose trail, minimum 5 miles long
- Safe, well-lighted running routes

**Kayaking:**

- Acquisition of land for boat ramps (parking will come).
- Boat parking (Charge for boat parking at the church lot near the Sims Boat Ramp.)
- Better canoe/kayak at James E. Grey Preserve

**Playgrounds:**

- More playgrounds for kids under 5, especially infit swings
- Maintenance of swings – fix seatbelts
- Larger pavilions, additional tables
- More dog parks

**Dog Parks:**

- Better signage to get to the dog park, park, and walk to the park
- Better and more parking
- Better location for the dog park

## 2.7 Summary of Needs and Priorities

Figure 2.29 below illustrates the top priority action, facilities, and program needs identified from each of the different needs assessment techniques. There is a broad-based consensus that the top priority facilities include:

- Improvements to existing parks, including additional facilities, programs, amenities, and marketing;
- Additional walking, hiking, and biking trails;
- Additional off-leash dog parks;
- Additional small neighborhood parks; and
- Natural areas and nature parks

Top priority programs include:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs;
- Summer concerts; and
- Nature programs

**Figure 2.29: Summary Needs**

	Needs Assessment Techniques					
	Site Evaluations	LOS Analysis	Statistically Valid Survey	On-line Survey	Public Meeting	Stakeholder / Focus Group Interviews
<b>Actions</b>						
Improve Marketing and Outreach Efforts	X		X		X	X
Improve Existing Parks	X				X	X
Reduce Program Fees			X	X		X
<b>Facilities</b>						
Paved bike trails		X	X	X	X	X
Off-leash dog parks		X	X	X	X	X
Walking and hiking trails		X	X	X	X	
Small Neighborhood Parks		X	X	X		
Natural areas/ nature parks			X	X		X
<b>Programs</b>						
Adult fitness and wellness programs			X	X	X	
Nature programs			X	X	X	
Summer concerts			X	X		
Pet exercise programs			X		X	
50+ programs			X			