



CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM AND STANDARDS

Open space and recreation areas are classified with respect to service area, size, type, and degree of facility development and primary function. This chapter presents a classification system used to identify various types of open spaces and sets standards to determine needs for open space and recreation facilities. Emphasis is placed on resources commonly provided by government.

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Open space used for public recreation and conservation should be designed to fit into one of nine categories that are of metropolitan or sub-metropolitan significance. Metropolitan areas serve the entire county and are administered by the federal, state, county, or municipal governments. Sub-metropolitan areas serve portions of Dade County and may be administered by a county or municipality.

Sub-Metropolitan

Mini-Parks
Neighborhood Parks
Community Parks

Metropolitan

Metropolitan Parks
Nature Preserves

Sub-Metropolitan or Metropolitan

Wayside Parks
Greenways
Ornamental Areas
Special Activity Areas

Mini-Parks

Mini-parks are small parks where children can play or adults can relax in a pleasant setting. The parks are not designed for organized programs, but simply to provide a common ground "just down the street" where neighbors can meet on a casual, day-to-day basis. As local play areas, mini-

parks are intended to serve any residential area where a need exists for children's play apparatus but where there is no larger park in which such apparatus could be placed; and, also, in any high density residential area (36 or more dwelling units per net residential acre) whether a need exists for play apparatus or not. Mini-parks in high density areas help compensate for the lack of private yards to play in and break the monotony of asphalt and buildings. (See Figure 9).

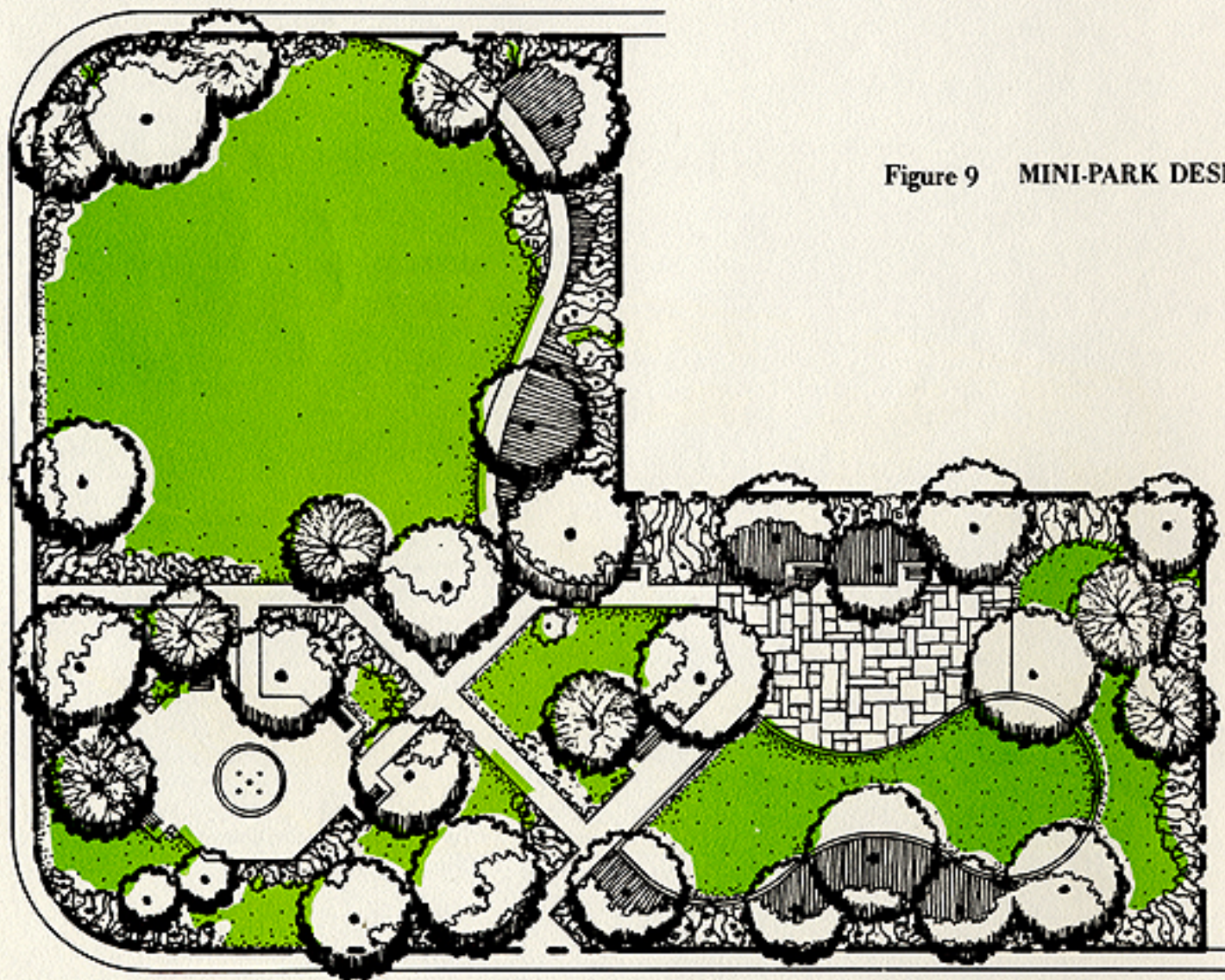


Figure 9 MINI-PARK DESIGN

Neighborhood Parks

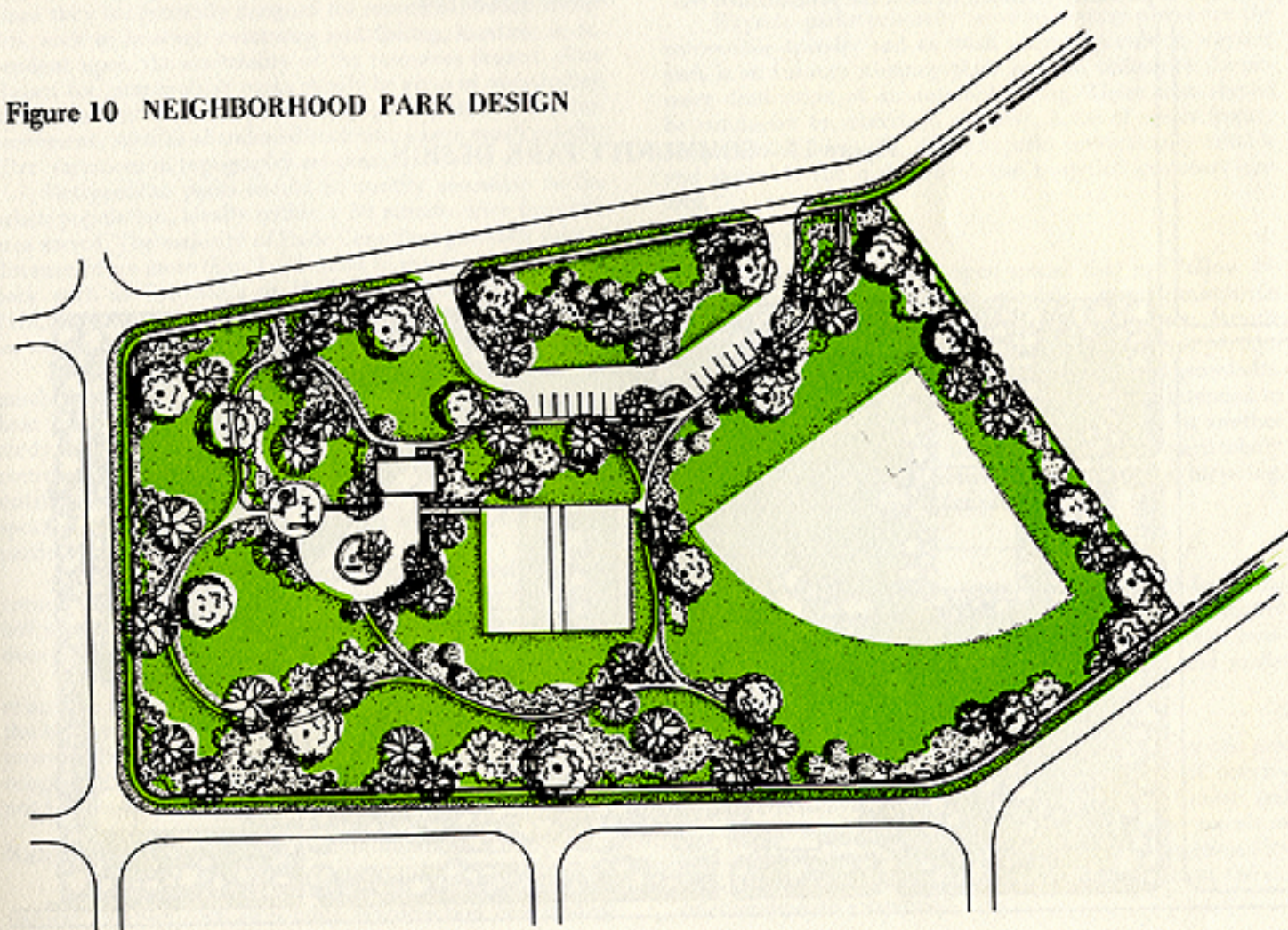
A neighborhood park is a "walk-to" park serving primarily the people of the neighborhood, the smallest planning unit of the urban area.

Neighborhood planning units generally are bordered by heavily traveled streets, but not transversed by them. Within the neighborhood, children can usually walk or ride bicycles without competing with thoroughfare traffic. Because of this, neighborhood parks are designed primarily for children's activities with organized recreation programs primarily for 6-12 year olds. When there is a preponderance of senior citizens, facilities and programs at the neighborhood parks also should be structured to meet these needs.

The park service area often coincides with the service area for an elementary school. The population required to support a neighborhood park closely coincides with that needed to justify an elementary school. Because elementary schools and neighborhood parks serve the same age group, they should be located adjacent to each other. They are compatible land uses and, because of a common need for recreation facilities, can be mutually beneficial to one another.

The most important function of a neighborhood park is to meet the distinctive recreation needs of the neighborhood it is serving. Because the recreation needs vary from one neighborhood to another, depending upon the income, age and social background of its residents, the facilities and the programs of a neighborhood park should not be rigidly

Figure 10 NEIGHBORHOOD PARK DESIGN



standardized but structured to meet the particular needs of the neighborhood.

They should include such basic facilities as a recreation building, multi-purpose courts, open field for play and a play apparatus area. It is essential that a neighborhood park include a "park-like" setting and a well-shaded, passive area where parents can gather to chat and watch their children. (See Figure 10.)

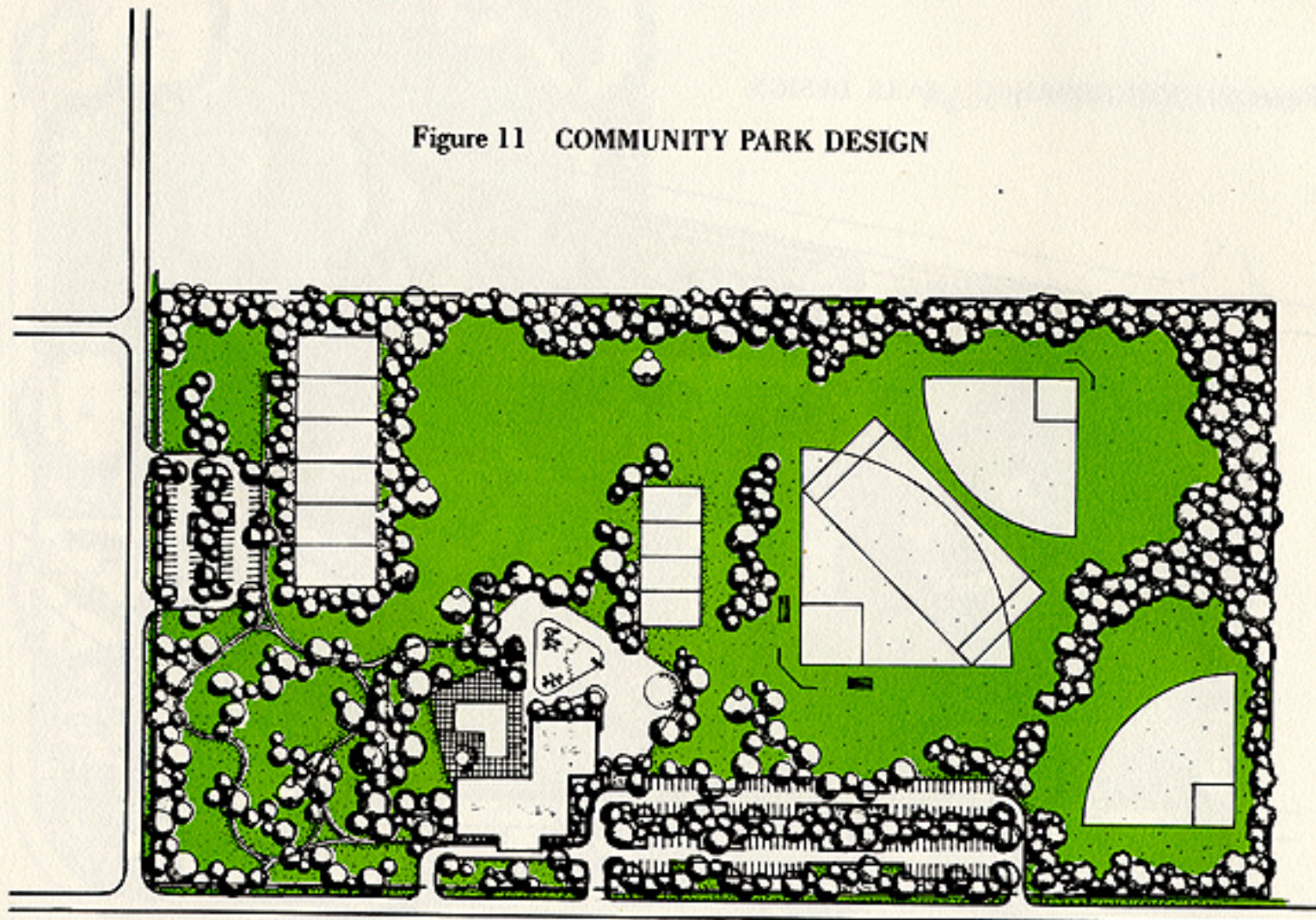
Community Parks

A community park is a "ride-to" park designed to serve the residents of a group of neighborhoods, usually four to six, constituting a community. A community park is larger and contains more facilities than mini-parks or neighborhood parks and is primarily intended to meet the programmed rec-

reation needs not met by these smaller parks. At the community park, activities for teenagers and adults are introduced. Essentially, they are family recreation centers with programs and facilities for all age groups.

Typical community park facilities include athletic fields, tennis courts, a swimming pool, play apparatus area and a recreation building designed for arts and crafts, games and meetings. In addition to facilities for active play, pleasantly landscaped acreage for passive activity should be provided at a ratio of one acre for passive use to two acres for active. Without adequate passive area, a park has little more "park-like" atmosphere than a school athletic field. (See Figure 11.) As with neighborhood parks, programs and facilities should be adapted to the particular needs of the community it is serving.

Figure 11 COMMUNITY PARK DESIGN



The service area for a community park generally coincides with the service area of a junior or senior high school. The park and school should be located adjacent to each other because both require similar recreation facilities and a larger percentage of park users are school students.

Community parks also should be located near major streets and arterials to provide better access. Because community parks attract fairly large numbers of people they should be well-buffered from adjacent residences.

Metropolitan Parks

Metropolitan parks are intended to serve all Dade Countians and tourists as well. They are developed primarily to make available special natural resources for recreational use. Since they are generally designed for resource-oriented activities, such as boating, swimming and fishing, location is dependent upon the availability of the resources desired. Sites chosen for metropolitan parks should be areas of outstanding natural beauty or have particularly good potential for improvement, such as abandoned rockpits, where much sought-after variations in topography are present.

Metropolitan parks should be readily accessible to the urban population, ideally within a 30 minute drive from the area served. The majority of Dade Countians generally drive a distance of no more than 7 - 9 miles to reach a metropolitan park such as Greynolds or Matheson Hammock. Crandon Park, probably because of the zoo, is an exception. The service area is much greater than most of the others.

Metropolitan parks are the primary areas where the much demanded access to water can be provided. Marinas, boat ramps, beaches, picnic grounds, campgrounds, nature study trails, and hiking trails are generally provided. Some metropolitan parks, where the natural environment is not outstanding, can be suitably developed as major athletic and sports centers, and for other activities which do not require particular natural resources.

As urban development rapidly expands and destroys natural areas, metropolitan parks are among the few places left where the public can go within a single day to enjoy outdoor recreation in a naturalistic environment.

The facilities provided must, above all, be designed and related to each other in such a way that they do not destroy the beauty and serenity the metropolitan park is intended to provide. The need for a place to retreat from the noise and congestion of the urban area and to "return to nature" cannot be over-emphasized.

Nature Preserves

Nature preserves are areas vital to the maintenance of natural function such as wildlife reproduction and feeding.

The primary purpose is to preserve nature in its untouched form for public enjoyment. Because they are intended for the study and enjoyment of nature, development is and should be primarily directed toward providing access and nature study facilities. Compatible recreational facilities for nature preserves may include, in addition to nature study facilities, camp sites, boat launching facilities, beaches, and bridle paths. Nature preserves of immense proportions, such as the Everglades National Park and Water Control Conservation Area, could support a larger variety of recreational facilities without destroying the overall natural character. Nature preserves are of countywide and, in some instances, national significance.

Wayside Parks

Wayside parks primarily serve as resting places for the automobile traveler and as small picnic grounds. A wayside park is an enroute stopping place and not ordinarily the primary destination of an automobile trip. These areas should be conducive to relaxation and rest. Areas of scenic beauty are preferable locations. Wayside parks are especially suitable and desirable for inclusion in the proposed greenway system.

Greenways

Greenways are linear open spaces that can follow canals, rivers, the bay shoreline, electric power transmission line rights-of-way, streets and highways or even bicycle paths. Names frequently given to greenways serving a particular function include parkways, boulevards and greenbelts. Regardless of the form they take, greenways are intended to make movements from one part of the county to another more pleasant. Because of linear form, they are particularly conducive to recreational activities such as hiking, bicycling, horseback riding or driving for pleasure.

Ornamental Areas

Ornamental areas are green spaces designed for visual enjoyment. Most frequently they are provided to enhance the rights-of-way of streets and highways. Examples of ornamental areas are median green strips, triangles and malls.

Special Activity Areas

Special activity areas are designed and used for one predominant activity. Examples of existing special activity areas are: Vizcaya, Venetian Pool, LeJeune Golf Course, and the Orange Bowl. They usually exist where large parcels of land are not available for development of a multi-facility area or when a facility can fulfill a function without the aid of complimentary facilities.

STANDARDS

Standards have been developed for determining the quantity and design of open space areas and recreational facilities that are provided to the public in large quantity and have comparatively high unit costs. Other areas and facilities do not lend themselves to standardization.

The standards presented are general guides and objectives for an open space and recreation facility development program. They should not be accepted as absolute but adjusted to meet the socio-economic conditions of service areas. Many variables, not practical to measure, affect demand and the need for open space areas and recreational facilities. Not only does demand create need for facilities but a facility creates a demand. The need for many facilities, such as a zoo, cannot be numerically measured but nevertheless is in great demand and provides health and desirable means for utilizing leisure time.

Developing standards for estimating open space and recreation facility needs is necessarily subject to some value judgments. What constitutes need can range from what people will settle for, to that which can satisfy total demand. Needs should fall somewhere between the two extremes; that is, facilities should be provided to meet as much of the demand as possible within the framework of existing financial and physical limitations.

Open Space

Spatial standards have been developed to determine the acreage needs for open space and recreation areas of less than metropolitan significance. (See Table 1) The spatial standard for all open space and recreational areas serving the local needs of the community and sub-community level is 4.5 acres per 1,000 total resident population. Of this amount, 1.25 acres are needed for neighborhood parks and 1.5 for community parks. The remaining 1.75 acres can be in any other form of usable open space that is serving the people at a local level. Other forms of usable open space that could meet this need include mini-parks, bicycle paths, linear park lands, and certain special activity areas.

Unlike open space areas serving a community or sub-

community need, the need for metropolitan parks and nature preserves cannot be satisfactorily quantified with the use of standards. As Ann Louise Strong so aptly stated, "The development of quantitative standards to guide the preservation of open space for conservation . . . does not appear to be feasible or desirable. The amount of land to be designated for these purposes is dependent on the region's natural features and on regional comprehensive planning objectives. Each of these factors is unique to a particular region. General goals, rather than standards, are more useful for determining requirements for conservation lands."¹

Site size standards have been developed for mini-parks, neighborhood parks, community parks and metropolitan parks. (See Table 1.) The site acreage recommended for these areas is necessary for accommodating minimum facilities and a desirable amount of natural or landscaped environment. The functions of smaller areas, such as a neighborhood park, sometimes can be combined with a larger area, such as a community park. When functions are combined the spatial requirements must include the needs of both areas.

Table 1. DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA STANDARDS FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION AREAS

| Area | Spatial Standards (Acres per 1,000 Resident Population) | Site Size Standards (Acres) | Service Area Radius (Miles) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sub-Metropolitan | | | |
| Mini-Park | | 1 or less | 0.25 |
| Neighborhood Park | 1.25 | 5 ¹ | 0.5 |
| Community Park | 1.50 | 20 ² | 0.5-3 |
| Other Areas | 1.75 | | |
| Total | 4.50 | | |
| Metropolitan | | | |
| Metropolitan Park | | 500 ³ | |

¹Minimum. 2 additional acres for passive activity desirable

²Minimum. 10 additional acres for passive activity desirable

³Minimum

¹Open Space for Urban America. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C., 1965, p. 20.



TABLE 2. DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA STANDARDS FOR RECREATION FACILITIES

| Facility | User Group Age | Spatial Facility | Standards Per Number Persons in User Group | Minimum Facility | Facility And Acres | | Service ¹ Area | Miscellaneous |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | | Within Park Total Acres | Outside Park Total Acres | | |
| Lighted League Play Ball Diamonds ² | 10-40 | 1 | 6,000 | 1 | 2.2 | 4.5 | 2-3 miles | Adjacent to high school,, buffered from residential property |
| Lighted Regulation Tennis Courts | 12-64 | 1 | 4,000 | 6 | 3.5 | 4.5 | 2-3 miles | |
| Lighted Shuffleboard Courts | 60+ | 1 | 1,000 | 12 | 0.5 | 1.0 | | Provide sheltered sitting area adjacent courts; near public transit and major arterials |
| Regulation Basketball Courts | 12-19 | 1 | 500 | 2 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.5 miles | |
| Swimming Pools | 6-15 | 1800 sq.ft. | 1,000 | 1 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 1-1.5 miles | Optimum pool size 5000 sq. ft., shallow wading areas separate from diving pool. |
| Play Apparatus Areas | 3-12 | 1 | 500 | 1 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.5 mile | Includes sitting areas, play-ground equipment for children, small open areas for free play |
| Golf Courses (private included) ³ | All ages | 18 holes | 50,000 | 1 | 110-150 | 110-150 | 30 min. driving time | Rectangle most desirable shape extending north to south, gently rolling terrain preferred |
| Picnic Grounds | All ages | 1 acre | 6,000 | | | | 30 min. max. driving time | Located in natural beauty areas preferably adjacent to bodies of water, well-shaded, well-buffered from surrounding conflicting uses |
| Beaches ³ | All ages | 0.2 acre sand and 50' shore-line | 1,000 | 1 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 30 min. max. driving time | |
| Boat Ramps | All ages | 2 linear ft. | 1,000 | 200' | 6.5 | 8 | | Minimum 0.6 parking space per linear ft. of ramp |

¹Includes acreage for auxiliary facilities

²primarily 60 to 75 foot combination diamonds

³Peak season tourist population as well as resident population

Recreation Facilities

Table 2 presents standards for developing facilities in metropolitan and sub-metropolitan open space areas. Spatial standards are expressed in terms of facilities per number of persons in a user group (predominant age group using the facility). User groups were made a part of the standards for purposes of locating or distributing the need realistically. With the exception of two facilities, the standards derived were limited to resident population. Standards for golf courses and beaches include both resident and peak season tourist population since out-of-town visitors contribute significantly to the use-pressure of these areas.

Most of the recommended standards for determining facility needs are based on the findings of a use-pressure survey conducted in 1968 at public parks in Dade County. This survey indicated the percent of capacity that each facility was used on an average peak day. If a facility was not greatly overused or underused, assumptions were made that the needs of these people in the service area were adequately met. Where this was the case, the ratio of facility to number of people in the user group was determined. Ratios derived in this manner were used as a basis for formulating facility standards. Other factors were used to modify these ratios including data on league play, data on recreation or athletic classes, and demand as expressed in the user survey.

The facility standards are intended to be applied to the effective supply of a facility. Effective supply is not neces-

sarily the total existing or actual supply. Because of sub-standard conditions, an existing facility may not be used to the capacity for which it was designed. In such cases, the facility is less than 100 percent effective. For this reason, the actual supply should be adjusted to account for effectiveness in meeting demand. Three factors are most influential in determining the effectiveness of a facility: quality, lighting, and grouping.

As a rule, the higher the quality of a facility, the higher is the demand for that facility and, consequently, the more effective it will be in meeting the needs. Facilities for adult use, particularly, have to be of high quality to be used.

Night lighting can increase the effectiveness of facilities by one-third. Facilities for court and field games are especially adaptable for night lighting. The daytime heat of summer makes night use of recreational facilities highly desirable.

The use-pressure survey indicated that in order to be most effective, some facilities should be grouped or constructed to size specifications. This is especially true for tennis courts, shuffleboard courts, basketball courts, ball diamonds and swimming pools. For such facilities, the size or number of facilities grouped will determine significantly effectiveness in attracting users. Standards for facility groupings or size specifications are, therefore, presented.

Standards not based on findings of the use-pressure survey were drawn from standards which are nationally accepted.